

A painting of a bearded man with long hair, wearing a red cloak over a brown tunic, holding a child. The man has a somber expression, looking down at the child. The background is dark and textured.

*The Story of
God and People*

What
Christians
Believe

Anna
Wierzbicka

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*What Christians Believe:
The Story of God and People*

Anna Wierzbicka

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PREFACE

Many people today – both Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers – are unclear or confused about the essentials of the Christian faith. “The Story of God and People” sets out these essentials in narrative form, in very simple words, without assuming any previous knowledge. On one level, then, the “Story of God and People” is a simple introduction to the basics of Christian faith in a form accessible to anyone. However, it is unlike any other such introductions because it systematically uses very simple words and phrases, and does not assume any previous familiarity with either “the Christian story” or Christian vocabulary (e.g. words like “grace”, “salvation”, or “incarnation”).

The purpose of using a limited vocabulary of simple and intelligible words is not to “dumb down” religious ideas and truths, but on the contrary, to elucidate them, and to articulate their components with clarity and precision. Furthermore, the words used in this ‘Story’ are not only simple, but also, for the most part, universal: while it is written in English, it is not phrased in “full English”, shaped by history, culture and tradition, but in “Minimal English”, in words most of which have exact semantic equivalents in all, or nearly all languages.

“The Story of God and People” is not tied to any particular cultural tradition and can be understood by readers of any cultural and ethnic background. But while the language is very simple and transparent, great care has been taken to avoid any simplistic or distorting formulations: the aim of “The Story” is to convey the essentials of Christian faith accurately, making every word count and be justifiable from a theological and historical, as well as a linguistic, point of view.

For a word to be justifiable from a linguistic point of view means here, above all, being cross-translatable (i.e. having equivalents in most, if not all, languages) – **or** having been previously explained through cross-translatable words. The assumption is that no words can be taken for granted as intelligible to anyone, regardless of the person’s cultural background, if they do not meet one of these two essential conditions.

Surprisingly, perhaps, experience suggests that for many people even seemingly simple words like “cross” can present obstacles to understanding. The fact that Jesus died on the cross is at the heart of Christianity, and the image of the cross is the central Christian symbol. Yet for many 21st century speakers of English (both children and adults), the word “cross” often brings to mind little more than a “tee shape”, or one of the two options in the game of “noughts and crosses”. A book for everyone, that is, one with no prior assumptions, needs to

explain even the meaning of the word “cross”. As chapter 26 of “The Story” shows, this, too, can be done with very simple and cross-translatable words that all English-speaking readers know and understand, even if their knowledge of English is fairly basic.

I have also used in this “Story” a limited number of words which are not universal and which have no equivalents in many languages of the world. These words are integral to the story told in the Gospels and are deeply rooted in the culture and history of first-century Palestine. They include, for example, “shepherds”, “fishermen”, “soldiers”, “king”, “river”, “bread”, “wine” and “lamb”. While “The Story of God and People” can be easily translated into most, if not all, languages of the world, words like these (“shepherd”, etc.) would in some cases need to be included in a glossary and explained through simpler, locally available words.

As for words of Latin origin such as “creator”, “incarnate” or “salvation”, which are important for Christian liturgies and worship, they do not need to be used in order to convey the essence of Christian belief to people living in the secularised and globalised modern world, where words of Latin and Greek origin cannot be taken for granted as part of essential cultural literacy. As I see it, if Christianity wants to make itself intelligible to anyone in the globalised world who might want to hear it out, it needs to speak, at times, without such words, and to try to rely instead, as far as possible, on universal (readily cross-translatable) words. “The Story of God and People” hopes to serve this need.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the reliance on a limited vocabulary of very simple words allows us not only to present the same faith in different languages, but also, to articulate that faith with greater precision than it would be possible in one particular language, with all its culture-specific richness.

In addition to a very small vocabulary, another unusual feature of “The Story” is the virtual absence of metaphors – except those, which, evidence shows, are universally understood, such as “God is someone above people” and “people can live with God”.

The New Testament tells the story of God and people largely through metaphors. This way of telling it has always been, and will always be, indispensable. Yet there is also, I believe, a place for a non-metaphorical re-telling and re-thinking, especially when trying to explain the Christian story and Christian faith to young people, and to non-Christians, in today’s globalising but culturally still very diverse world – a world where numerous metaphors that many speakers of languages like English have for a long time taken for granted are unfamiliar and may not be understood.

To take an example, here is a passage from Mark’s Gospel:

(14) Now after John [the Baptist] was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, (15) and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. (Mark, 1:14-15)

For many non-Christians, both Jesus’s sayings in verse 15 (“the time is fulfilled” and “the kingdom of God is at hand”) would be incomprehensible; and in fact, they are likely to be hard to understand to many Christians too.

The paraphrase in Minimal English included in chapter 15 of the “The Story of God and People” relies on the non-metaphorical concepts ‘God’ and ‘the Prophets’, which are introduced, respectively, in chapters 1 and 7. As for the metaphors of “the time being fulfilled” and “the kingdom of God being at hand”, they are elucidated through words and phrases which, evidence suggests, are cross-translatable into all languages:

I want you to know something very good:
Something is happening in this country now like never before.
It is happening as the Prophets were saying.
People can live with God now like never before, God is near now.

Certainly, this paraphrase does not remove the mystery. In particular, it does not explain in what way, exactly, “people can live with God like never before” and in what way “God is near now”. (It takes the whole New Testament to explain that.) But the mystery is not compounded by difficult-to-understand English words and phrases, as often happens in more conventional commentaries on the Gospels.

Thus, “The Story of God and People”, which is told in Minimal English, hopes to reach out, in a fresh way, and without using traditional religious (or academic) language, to anyone who may want to find out what the Christian faith is all about. It can serve as an aid for religious education, for the teaching of ‘cultural literacy’, and as a spiritual resource for anyone, whether they believe in God or not. “The Story” can encourage readers to think more deeply about things that matter greatly to millions of people, to dip into other books, and also, to read, and reflect on, the Gospels.

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List of paintings used in *What Christians Believe: The Story of God and People*

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“The Prodigal Son”, 1669 – Rembrandt van Rijn.

1. “Adam and Eve”, 1526 – Lucas Cranach the Elder.
2. “Annunciation”, 1437–1446 – Fra Angelico.
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7. “Crucifixion” (triptych fragment), 1302–1308 – Fra Angelico.
8. “Noli Me Tangere”, 1440–1442 – Fra Angelico.
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10. “The coming of the Holy Spirit”, 1596 – El Greco.
11. “St Paul” – Parmigianino.
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1. God

There is someone not like people.

This someone is someone above people; this someone is above everything.

This someone is now, always was, always will be. This someone is everywhere.

There is no one else like this someone.

God is this someone.

People can't see God; at the same time, people can know some things about God.

They can know these things because God wants it.

People can know that it is like this:

God is good.

If God wants something, it is something good, if God does something,
it is something good.

If God wants something to happen, it can happen because of this.

If God says about something: "I want it to happen," it happens.

If God says about something: "It is like this," it is true.

God knows everything.

At the same time, people can know that it is like this:

God knows all people.

God feels something very good toward all people.

God wants to do good things for all people.

God wants to speak to all people.

All people can know God, God wants it.

All people can live with God, God wants it.

People can know many things about God if they read a book called the Bible.

It is a book not like any other books. God speaks to people in this book.

This book has two parts, one is called "The Old Testament,"
the other is called "The New Testament."

The Old Testament has many parts; it is like one book,
at the same time many books are parts of it.

Many people wrote these books over a very long time,
they wrote about things of many kinds.

The New Testament is not like this.

Not many people wrote it, these people didn't write it over a very long time.

They didn't write about things of many kinds.

They all wrote about someone called Jesus.

When people read the New Testament,
after some time they can know this someone (Jesus).

At the same time, they can know that when they know this someone (Jesus),
they know God.



2. The world exists because God wants it to exist

It is like this now:

There are many people living on earth, there are many things on earth,
many things are happening on earth.

There is the sky above the earth, there is light, there is the sun,
there is the moon, there are stars.

It is like this because God wants it to be like this.

It wasn't always like this. A very very long time ago, it was like this:

There was no earth, there was no sky, there was no light;
there were no places as there are now,

There were no people, there was nothing anywhere,
nothing was happening anywhere.

There was God.

Before there was anything anywhere, God said something.

God said:

“I want there to be places of some kinds;

I want some things to be happening in these places.”

When God said this, something happened, it happened as God wanted.

God said: “I want there to be light.” When God said this, there was light.

God said: “This is very good.”

After this, many other things were happening for a very long time,
as God wanted.

After some time, it was like this:

There were places of many kinds,
many things were happening in these places.

There was the earth, there was the sky, there was the sun,
there was the moon, there were stars.

It was like this because God wanted it to be like this.

God said: “This is very good.”

For a very long time many things were happening to the earth,
because God wanted it. For a long time, it was like this:

No things were growing on earth.

No living creatures were living on earth.

After this, it was not like this anymore, it was like this:

Things of many kinds were growing on earth.

Living creatures of many kinds were living on earth.

All this was as God wanted. God said: “This is very good.”

When it was like this, for a long time there were no people on earth.

After this, there were people living on earth.

It was like this because God wanted it. God said: “This is very good.”

When there were people on earth, it was not like before,
because people were not like other living creatures.

It was like this:

People wanted to know many things about many things,
not like other living creatures.

People could think about many things, not like other living creatures.

They could think like this: "After some time, I will die,"

other living creatures could not think like this.

They could think: "I can do good things, I can do bad things,"

other creatures could not think like this.

At the same time, it was like this:

People could want to speak to God, as God wants to speak to people.

People could feel something very good toward other people,

as God feels something very good toward people.

People could want to do good things for other people,

as God wants to do good things for people.

God wanted it to be like this. God wants the same now.

People can think like this:

"The earth is something very good, many good things happen on earth."

At the same time people know that many very bad things happen on earth.

They know that it is like this:

People die, often people feel something very very bad,

often living creatures feel something very very bad.

They can think about it like this:

"God knows why it is like this,

we can't know it now, we can know it after we die."

At the same time, they can think:

"One day, it will not be like this anymore, it will be like this:

People will not die anymore, they will not feel anything bad,

living creatures will not feel anything bad."

They can think: "One day, all will be well, God wants this."

3. People can live with God

God knows all people, feels something very good toward all people,
wants to do good things for all people.

Because of this, it is like this: all people can live with God, God wants it.

If someone lives with God, it is very good for this person,
nothing else is like this.

People can always live with God if they live like this:

They feel something very good toward other people,
as God feels something very good toward all people,
They want to do good things for other people,
as God wants to do good things for all people.

God wants people to live like this.

When people live like this, they can live with God because God is like this.

People often don't live with God. It is like this now, it has always been like this.

Often, they do something when they know that it is something very bad.

Often, they don't want to think about God.

At the same time, they often live like this:

They want to do bad things to other people,
They don't want to do good things for other people.
They feel something very bad toward other people.
They don't feel something very good toward any other people.

When people live like this, they can't live with God,
because God is not like this.

Some parts of the Bible say things like this about it:

There is someone not like people, this someone is bad.
This someone wants people not to live with God,
because of this, this someone does many things.
This someone says many things to people, these things are not true.
If people live as this someone wants them to live,
they can't live with God.

Some parts of the Bible call this someone: "Satan," some say: "the devil."

It is like this: people *can* not live with God if they don't want to.

At the same time, it is like this: if someone doesn't live with God,
it is very bad for this someone.

If someone doesn't live with God, God feels something because of this.

God wants it not to be like this, God does many things because of this.

People can think about God like this:

God is like a shepherd.
A shepherd thinks about many sheep. He knows all these sheep.
These sheep can know him.
When they hear his voice, they can know that it is his voice.
The shepherd wants these sheep to be with him.
He wants them to be always in places where there is good grass to eat.
He thinks like this: "I don't want bad things to happen to any one of them."
He does many things because of this.

God is like such a shepherd.

In one country people thought like this about God for a very long time.

Many people in that country had many sheep, many were shepherds.

Many people in that country thought a lot about God.

At many times, God spoke to the people in that country.

People in all countries can know a lot about it if they read the Bible.

4. God wants to live for some time with people on earth

All people can live with God, nothing else is like this, God wants this.

At the same time, God doesn't want it to be like this:

People live with God because they have to (can't not) live with God.

God wants it to be like this:

People know God, because of this they want to live with God.

God has always wanted it to be like this.

All people can know God, people are born like this;

they are born like this because God wants this.

At the same time, often people don't know God well.

God wanted it to be like this:

All people know God well, all people want to live with God.

Because of this, a long time ago some things happened in one country

not like anywhere else.

It was like this:

God wanted to live for some time on earth, with people, like people live.

God wanted to live on earth at one time, in one country,

not at many times in many countries.

God wanted to live like people lived in that country,

to speak like people spoke in that country.

God wanted to speak to these people.

God wanted it to be like this:

First, these people can know God well,

some time after this, people in other countries can know God well.

Because of this, a very long time ago God did many things,

many things happened because of this.

People can know many things about it if they read the Bible.

One part of the Bible is called Genesis, it is before all the other parts.

If people read this part, they can know that a very long time ago,

God spoke to a man called Abraham.

They can know that Abraham was born in a city called Ur

in a country called Chaldea, in a part of the earth called Mesopotamia.

They can know that God wanted Abraham to go to another country,

far from the country where he was born.

They can know that God wanted Abraham to live in that other country.

People can think about it like this:

In Chaldea, people thought like this:

“The Moon is like someone, this someone is above people,

this someone is above us.

We have to do many things as this someone wants.

If we don't do it, something very bad can happen to us.”

In other parts of Mesopotamia, people thought like this about the Sun.

God wanted people not to think like this about the Moon,

not to think like this about the Sun.

God wanted people to think like this:

“God is above people, God is above us;

we want to live as God wants us to live.”
At the same time, God wanted people to know *how* to live.
Because of this, when God wanted to speak to Abraham,
God wanted Abraham to go to another country.
God wanted him to live far from Chaldea, far from Mesopotamia.

At the same time, people can think like this:
God wanted Abraham to think like this:
“God will do very good things for me.
Very good things will happen because of this to many other people.
After some time, very good things will happen because of this
to people everywhere on earth, God wants it.”

If people read Genesis, they can know that it was like this:
God felt something very good toward Abraham.
God wanted to live on earth with people in the same country
where, some time before, Abraham lived.

5. God speaks to Abraham

When God spoke to Abraham, God said something like this to him:

“I want you not to live anymore in the country where you live now,
I want you to live in another country.

If you live in that other country, after some time it will be like this:
many many people will be born in that country because of this.

Look at the sky at night; there are many many stars there,
you can't say how many; these people will be like this.

All these people can be born because sometime before, you were born.

Because of this, all these people will think about you like this:

‘Abraham is our father.’

I will do very good things for you,

very good things will happen to all these people because of this.

After some time, very good things will happen because of this
to people in all parts of the earth.”

Abraham did as God wanted.

Because of this, some time after this, Abraham lived in that other country.

Because of this, some time after this, many people were born in that country,
they all thought like this: “Abraham is our father.”

When Abraham lived in that country, it was called Canaan,
later it was called Palestine.

Now a big part of that country is a country called Israel.

For a long time people said the word “Israel” about some people,
not about a country.

It was like this (so says the part of the Bible called Genesis):

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac's mother was called Sarah.

Isaac was the father of Jacob, Jacob's mother was called Rebecca.

Isaac lived in Canaan, like Abraham.

Jacob had to live for many years in another country.

After this, when he could live in Canaan, something happened to him.

Genesis says this about it:

God spoke to Jacob in a place called Jabbok. God said:

“You will not be called Jacob anymore, you will now be called Israel;

I want you to be the father of many people;

these people will live in the country where I wanted Abraham to live.”

After this, the Bible often says about Jacob: “Israel.”

Jacob had two wives, one was called Leah, the other was called Rachel.

He had many sons (twelve), these sons had wives,

they were the fathers of many children.

After some time many people lived in that country because of this.

Often the Bible speaks about them as people can speak about one person,
it calls them “Israel.”

Other people called them Hebrews, Israelites, Jews.

They spoke Hebrew.

The people of Israel (the Israelites) thought like this: “We are people of one kind.”

They thought:

“If someone’s father is someone of this kind,
this person is someone of the same kind.
Jacob was someone of this kind, Isaac was someone of this kind,
Abraham was someone of this kind.
These are our fathers.”

At the same time they thought like this:

“God feels something very very good toward the people of Israel.
God spoke to Abraham many times.
God felt something very very good toward Abraham.
Abraham could know God before other people could know God,
God wanted it to be like this.”

Abraham knew God.

He knew well what God had said to him, he thought about it like this:

“God (El, Elohim) said these things to me,
because of this I know that it is all true.”

He wanted to think like this.

At the same time, he thought like this:

“God (El, Elohim) is like no one else, God is above everything;
I want to listen to God.”

6. God speaks to Moses

After Jacob died, for a long time Israelites didn't live in Canaan,
they lived in a country called Egypt.

For a long time, they could live there as they wanted to live
(they were shepherds).

After this, they couldn't live there anymore as they wanted, they were slaves;
very bad things happened to them.

The king of Egypt wanted many Israelites (many men) to die,
he wanted many children to die.

One Israelite felt something very very bad because of this,
not like all the others. It was a man called Moses.

God wanted Moses to do some things.

Because of this, one day God spoke to Moses. It happened like this:

Moses was living in a desert at that time (near Egypt, not in Egypt),
near a big mountain called Mount Sinai.

One day, Moses saw fire inside a bush. It was like this:

the fire was touching the bush for some time;
at the same time nothing was happening to the bush.

Then Moses heard God's voice from inside the bush: "Moses, Moses!"

Then God said to Moses:

"I want to speak to you, as I spoke to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob.

Very bad things are happening to the people of Israel in Egypt,

I feel something because of this.

I don't want the people of Israel to live in Egypt anymore,

I want the people of Israel to live in Canaan.

I want you to do some things because of this.

Go back to Egypt. Speak to the people. I will be with you.

I want the people of Israel to know that I said these things to you.

Then speak to the king of Egypt."

Moses said to God:

"How can I do this?

When I say to the people of Israel: "God said this to me,"

they will say: "Who is this God? What is his name?"

What can I say to them then?"

God said:

"My name is: 'I AM.' Say to them: 'I AM wants me to say this to you.'"

After this, Moses did everything as God wanted.

Many things happened in Egypt because of this.

Then, God did something very good for the people of Israel.

(A part of the Bible called Exodus says a lot about it.)

After this, Israelites didn't live in Egypt anymore.

For a long time, they lived in a desert, not in one place all the time.

Moses wanted them to go to Mount Sinai, where God spoke to him before.

He wanted God to speak to them.

When they were there, God spoke to Moses on the mountain.

God said to Moses:

"Say to the people: God says:

‘If you live as I want, I will always be with you,
not like with other people, I’ll be very near to you; I want this.’”
Moses said this to the people. They said to him then:
“We will do everything as God says, say this to God.”
Then Moses built something called an altar (“God’s place”).
The people killed some animals, as Moses wanted.
Then Moses sprinkled the blood of these animals on the altar,
after this, he sprinkled some blood on the people.
He wanted to say in this way: “God says: I want it, we say: we want it;
when people see this blood, they can know that it is true.”

God said some other things, Moses wrote them on two big flat stones.
They all said: “I (God) say: Live like this.”
After this, Israelites could know how God wanted people to live.
These things were called the Ten Commandments.
The first said: “Think like this about me: ‘God is above us, God is above me;’
don’t think like this about anyone else.”
Another, like it, said: “Don’t think like this about anything anywhere;
don’t think like this about any thing.”
Some others said: “Don’t kill people,” “Don’t steal,”
“Don’t say anything bad about someone else if it is not true.”
One said to men: “A husband can do something with his wife,
as men often want to do, because he is her husband.
Don’t do this with another man’s wife; don’t think: I want to do this with her.”
Many people think about the Ten Commandments like this:
there was never anything like this before anywhere on earth.

Before he died, Moses said to the people of Israel:
“After some time, someone else like me will live with you, God said so.
When this someone speaks, people can know well
what God wants to say to people, what God wants people to do.”
For a long time, Israelites spoke about this someone.
They thought: “When will this happen? When will he be born?”
When Jesus lived on earth, many Israelites thought:
“Moses said this about Jesus, Jesus is like another Moses.”
(In the Gospel of John, Jesus says: “Moses was speaking about me.”)

7. God speaks through the prophets

For a very long time, God often spoke to the people of Israel.

Before Moses died, it was like this:

When God wanted to say something to the people of Israel.

God said it to Moses, after this, Moses said it to the people of Israel.

After Moses died, it was like this:

When God wanted to say something to the people of Israel,

God said it to someone not like many other people,

after this, this someone said it to the people of Israel.

Someone like this was called a prophet.

Many prophets spoke to the people of Israel at many times

(some were women).

They spoke not like other people. When they said something,

they wanted people to think: “God says this to us.”

The prophets wanted the people of Israel to want to live with God at all times,

to think about God at all times.

People can know what many prophets said

if they read the part of the Bible called the Prophets.

Often the prophets said things like this about something:

“after some time, something like this will happen in this country, God wants it.”

Two prophets called Isaiah said things like this to the people of Israel:

“God says:

‘I feel something very good toward you, Israel.

I want to do very good things for you.

I want you to think about me. I want you to want to live with me.

I want you to know me well. If you know me well,

after some time people in other countries can know me well, I want this.’

God says:

‘Very bad things are happening to many people on earth.

I feel something very good toward all people on earth.

After some time, I will do something very good for all people on earth,

as I did something very good for you when you were in Egypt.

God says:

‘After some time, someone not like other people will be born in this country.

A woman will be this someone’s mother, this someone will be her son,

no man will be his father.

His name will be “Emmanuel” (in Hebrew, “God with us”).

God says:

He will be like the light, people everywhere on earth will see this light.

He will want to do good things for all people on earth.

God says:

He will be like a lamb, he will not want to do anything bad to anyone.

Other people will do very bad things to him.

He will feel something very bad because of this, he will die because of this.

When these people are doing this to him, he will not say: I don’t want this.”

Some other prophets spoke about someone not like other people.

Someone else spoke about someone not like other people,

this someone else was called David.

David was a king of the people of Israel, before he was a king he was a shepherd.
He felt something very good toward God,
 he often wanted to say some things to God.
He often said some things to God when he was a shepherd,
 he often said some things to God when he was a king.
Often when he wanted to say some things to God,
 he said these things with something of one kind called a psalm.
When he wanted to speak to God in this way, he sang, he played music.
People can know how David spoke to God
 if they read a part of the Bible called Psalms.
Afterwards, when the Israelites spoke to God, they often said Psalms.
(Many other people do the same now.)
God felt something very good toward David.
A prophet called Nathan said to David: “God says this to you:
 ‘I want to do very good things for you.
 You will be like the father of many people.
 Some of these people will be kings of the people of Israel;
 one of these people will be king forever.’”
(When Jesus lived on earth, many Israelites thought like this:
“God was saying this about Jesus.” Many people think like this now.)

8. It all happened as the prophets said

For a very long time, prophets said things like this to the people:

“After some time, someone not like other people
will be born in this country.

Very bad things are happening to the people of Israel,
this someone will do very good things for the people of Israel.

Very bad things are happening to all people,
this someone will do something very good for all people.”

Sometimes the prophets said:

“This someone will be the king of the people of Israel.”

For a very long time the people of Israel often spoke about it.

They called this someone “the Messiah.”

(Before, this word meant something else, every king was called a “messiah.”

Later, it was not like this anymore.)

They didn’t know when “the Messiah” would be born. They wanted it to be soon.

It happened as the prophets said.

(People can know a lot about it if they read some parts of the Bible;
these parts are called the Gospels, in Greek, “Evangelion”.

This word means “good news.”)

A long time after David live a long time after both prophets called Isaiah lived,
someone not like other people was born in that country.

This someone’s name was Jesus, in Hebrew Yeshua.

The name Yeshua means something like this:

“When something very bad happens to people,
God does very good things for them.”

The Gospel of Matthew calls this someone (Jesus) “the Son of Abraham,”
“the Son of David.”

Jesus was born at a time when the country where the people of Israel lived
was one small part of something very very big.

This something was called the Roman empire.

It was something not like anything else at that time,
many countries in many parts of the earth were part of it.

There was a big city called Rome in this empire.

The people in Rome were called Romans, they spoke Latin.

Often people called the Roman empire: “Rome,” like the city.

When Jesus was born, someone called Caesar Augustus lived in Rome.

He was someone above all the people in the Roman empire,
like the king of a country is someone above all the people in that country.

Later, someone like this was always called Caesar.

When Jesus died, someone called Tiberius was “Caesar.”

Jesus was born in a small town called Bethlehem in Judea.

Judea was one part of Palestine, another part was Galilee.

Someone called Herod was at that time king of Judea, as the Romans wanted
(not as the people of Israel wanted).

The people of Israel knew that King David was born in Bethlehem.

At the same time they could know that the Messiah would be born there.

(One of the Prophets said so.)

The small town called Bethlehem was near a big city called Jerusalem.
King David lived in Jerusalem, often when Israelites thought about Jerusalem,
they thought about King David.

Later, there was something called the Temple in Jerusalem.

The people of Israel thought about it like this:

“This place is like no other place, God speaks to the people here.”

Israelites felt something very good toward Jerusalem.

They thought about it like this:

“Jerusalem is a city not like any other city,
God feels something very good toward Jerusalem.”

The prophets often spoke about Jerusalem.

The prophet called Ezekiel said: “Its name will be ‘God is there.’”

When Jesus was a boy (not a child), he often went to Jerusalem with his parents,
perhaps every year.

Later, he often spoke to people in Jerusalem;

like other prophets, sometimes he spoke about Jerusalem.

He felt something very good toward Jerusalem.

He knew that very bad things would happen to it,

he knew that the Romans would do very bad things to it.

When he thought about it, he wept.

Many things happened to Jesus in Jerusalem. He died in Jerusalem.

(This “Story” will say more about it later.)



Salve Mater precatrix totius
Christi nobis intercedis
VIRGINIS INTACTE CVM VENERIS ANTE FIGVRAM PRÆTEREVMDQ. CAVE NE SILEATVR. AVE

9. A woman called Mary says “yes” to God

Jesus’s mother was called Mary (in Aramaic, Mariam).

She lived in a town called Nazareth in Galilee.

(People spoke Aramaic in Galilee at that time.)

Mary didn’t have a husband; at the same time she knew

that a man called Joseph would be her husband in a short time.

Sometime before Jesus was born, something happened to Mary.

Before it happened, she didn’t know that something like this could happen to her.

It happened like this:

One day Mary saw someone not like people, she thought:

“this is an angel” (in Aramaic, “mal’ak”).

Then the angel spoke to her.

Mary knew then that God wanted to say something to her.

The angel said:

“I want to say something very good to you, Mariam.

God is with you, God feels something very good toward you.”

Mary didn’t know why this was happening to her,

she didn’t know what she could think about it.

Then the angel said:

“Don’t think like this, Mariam: ‘something bad can happen to me now.’

Think like this: ‘something very good is happening now.’

In a very short time, something will happen to you;

it will happen because God wants it to happen.

Because of this, after some time you will give birth to a child (a son).

You will call him Jesus.

He will not be like other people, people will call him the Son of God.

He will be a king, like David.

Sometimes people will call him ‘Son of David.’ He will be king forever.”

Mary said: “How can this happen to me? I don’t have a husband.”

The angel said:

“God wants it to happen. Because God wants it to happen, it can happen.”

Then the angel said:

“You know Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah;

you think about her like this: ‘She is like my mother’s sister.’

You know that for a very long time, people said about her:

‘She can’t give birth to a child.’

Now she knows that she will soon give birth to a child.

If God wants something to happen, it can happen.”

Mary knew that she could say at that moment: “I don’t want it to happen to me.”

She didn’t say this. She said:

“I want it to happen to me as you say.

I want it to happen because God wants it.”

After this, the angel was not with her anymore.

A very short time after this, Mary went to the place in Judea

where Elizabeth lived with her husband Zechariah.

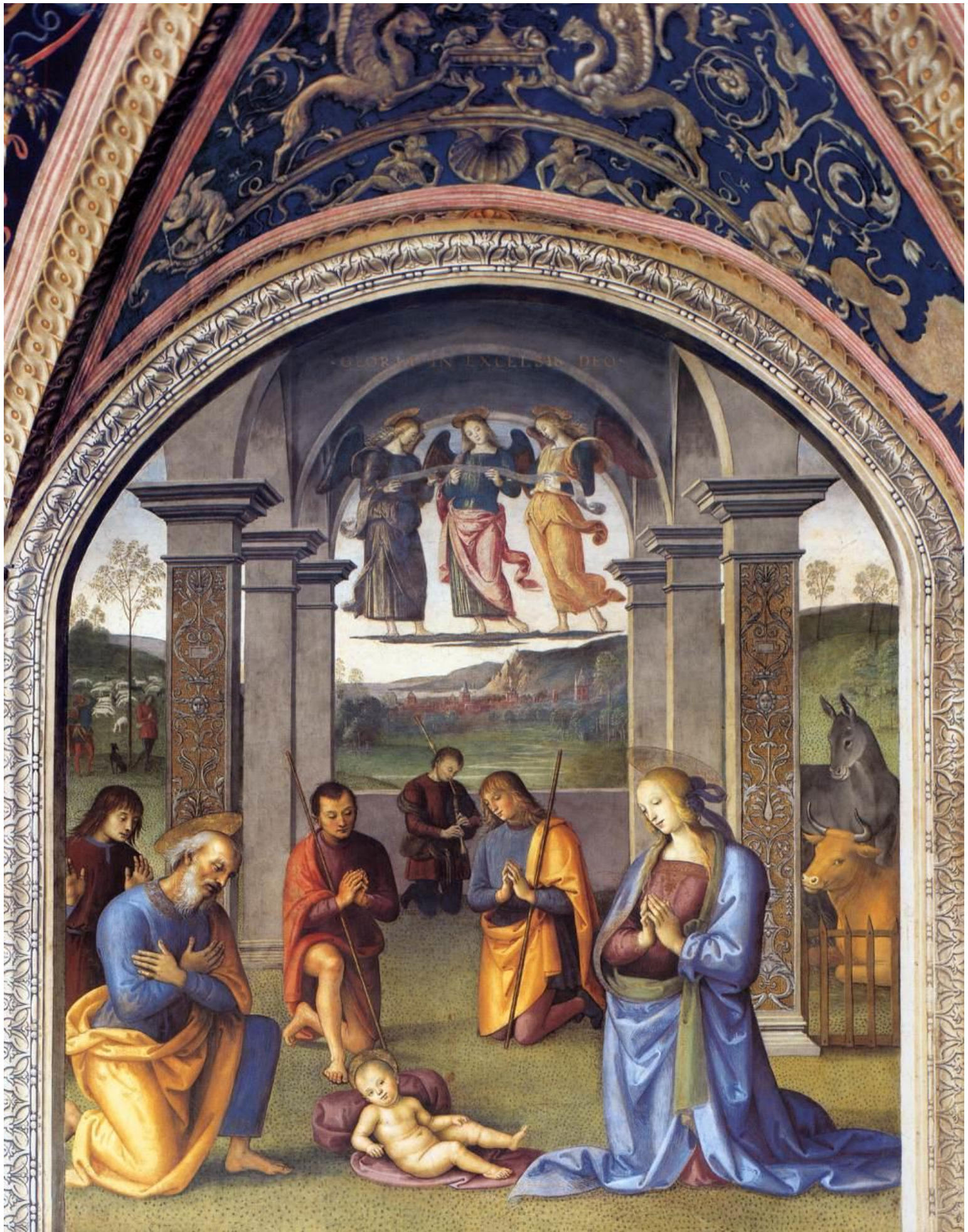
Mary felt something very good toward Elizabeth,

she wanted to be with her for some time at that time.

She knew that Elizabeth would give birth to a child soon,
because the angel said so.
("The Story" will say more about this child later, it was a son,
his name was John, he was a prophet.)
When Elizabeth saw Mary, she felt something like never before.
She said this to her then (she spoke like a prophet):
"You are a woman not like other women. God is with you.
You are the mother of the Son of God."

Then *Mary* spoke like a prophet, she spoke like this (not with these words):
"It is like this in my soul now: I think very very good things about God,
I feel something very very good toward God.
I want to say very very good things about God.
God has done very very good things for me.
Everywhere on earth people will always say this about me.
God did this not because I am someone above other people.
God did this because God is good.
If people think about God when bad things are happening to them,
God does good things for them.
Some people think like this:
'We are not like other people, we are above other people;
God wants to do good things for us, not for others.'
God doesn't want people to think like this.
God wants people to think *like this*:
'I can live because God does good things for me;
God wants to do good things for all people.'
God will do very good things for the people of Israel,
as he said to our father Abraham."

Mary was with Elizabeth for three months. Then she went back to Nazar



10. Jesus is born

When Mary said to the angel: "I want it to happen to me as you say,"
something happened in her body.

Because of this, some time after this, she gave birth to a child (a son);
she called him Jesus, as the angel said.

Joseph was then Mary's husband.

Joseph knew that no man was this child's father. God wanted him to know it.

Joseph wanted to do good things for Jesus like a child's father can do.

Jesus was not born in Nazareth, he was born in Bethlehem, like King David.

It happened like this:

At that time all men in Palestine had to go to the place where they were born
because Caesar Augustus said so.

Caesar Augustus wanted the Romans to know some things about them.

He wanted this because he wanted the Romans to know well

how much money someone could pay them each year.

He wanted some Romans to write this about every man,

he wanted them to do it in the place where this man was born.

Joseph was born in Bethlehem, because of this, he had to go to Bethlehem,

Mary went with him.

They knew that she would give birth to a child very soon,

at the same time they knew that they had to go.

When they were in Bethlehem, Jesus was born.

He was born in a cave where there were oxen at night, not in a house.

(There was no place in a house where they could be for some time,
no place in a house where Mary could give birth.)

When Jesus was born, Joseph was with Mary.

There were no other people with them at that time. It was night.

There were some shepherds near that place at that time,

they were looking after their sheep at night.

At one moment, the shepherds saw an angel, the angel said to them:

"I want you to know that something very good happened tonight,
the Messiah was born in Bethlehem."

The next moment the shepherds could see many angels.

The angels were singing, they were singing to God.

The shepherds went then to Bethlehem:

there they saw Mary, they saw Joseph, they saw child Jesus.

Some time after this (we don't know when)

three other people went to Bethlehem to see child Jesus.

(So says the Gospel of Matthew.)

They were not Israelites, they lived far from Judea, they knew a lot about stars.

When they saw a star not like any other stars, they thought like this:

"Something happened in Judea.

A child not like other children has been born, this child will be a king.

He will be a king not like other kings."

They wanted to see this child, to kneel before him, as before a king,

as before God. So they went.

In Judea, they went first to Jerusalem, then to Bethlehem.

In Bethlehem they saw Mary, Joseph, child Jesus.

Forty days after Jesus was born, two very old people knew
that a child not like other children had been born.

(So says the Gospel of Luke.)

One was a man called Simeon, the other, a woman called Anna, a prophet.

They saw the child Jesus in the Temple in Jerusalem

(they were often in the Temple, Anna was there every day).

They saw him there because forty days after she gave birth,

Mary went to the Temple with the child in her arms.

All women had to do in that country at that time (the Law said so).

Joseph went with her.

When they saw child Jesus, they thought: "This is the Messiah"

(God wanted them to know who this child was).

Simeon held the child in his arms, then he spoke to God.

He said (he said it with the words of Isaiah, he was speaking like a prophet):

"God, you are good. I can die now because I saw this child, as you said."

(He knew that before he dies, he would see the Messiah.

God wanted him to know it.)

Then he said this to God:

"Because this child was born, all people can know you well.

First, the people of Israel can know you well,

after this, people in all parts of the earth can know you well because of this.

This child will be like the light."

After this, Simeon said to the child's mother, Mary:

"Because this child was born, many things will happen in this country.

Some people will feel something very bad because of this,

others will feel something very good.

Some people will do very bad things to him.

You will feel something very very bad because of this.

You will feel something like someone can feel

when something very very bad is happening to their body."

Mary often thought about these words when Jesus was a child,

she often thought about them when he was not a child anymore.

11. Jesus lives in Nazareth

When Jesus was a child, he lived in Nazareth in Galilee;
later, people called him Jesus of Nazareth.

(A long time before Jesus was born, prophet Isaiah said:
“People in Galilee will see a light not like any other light.”)
Jesus’s mother Mary lived in Nazareth with her husband Joseph,
Jesus lived with them.

During that time, something happened once like never before.
It happened like this:

Every year, they went to Jerusalem before the day called Passover,
with many other people.

(This “Story” will say more about this day of the year later).

One year, when Jesus was not a small child anymore, they did the same,
Jesus went with them.

When they were going back, Jesus wasn’t with them.

(He was in Jerusalem, as before, they didn’t know it.)

They thought like this:

“he is with other people, with other children, we will see him later.”

After one day, they knew that it was not like this, no one knew where Jesus was.

They went back to Jerusalem, they went to many places there,
they didn’t see him in any of these places.

They felt something very bad at that time.

After three days they saw him in the Temple.

He was there with some other people, these people knew the Bible very well.

Jesus was talking to them about the Bible.

They all thought like this: “How can this child know so much?”

Mary said then to Jesus:

“Son, why did you do this to us?

We didn’t know where you were, we felt something very bad.”

Jesus said to them:

“You didn’t know where I was?

Didn’t you know that I have to be in my Father’s house?”

They didn’t know at that time why he spoke like this.

Mary thought about these words for a very long time.

She thought about them when Jesus was a child,

she thought about them when he was not a child anymore.

When they went back to Nazareth, Jesus went with them.

After this, he lived with them as before.

When they wanted him to do something, he did it,

when they wanted him not to do something, he didn’t do it.

God was with him, people in Nazareth felt something very good toward him.

When Jesus was not a child anymore, for a long time he lived in Nazareth,
like before.

During that time, he lived like many other people in that town lived.

He did many things every day like Joseph did. He was a carpenter, like Joseph.

At the same time, he often read the Bible.

He wanted to know well what God said to Abraham, what God said to Moses,
what God said to David.

He wanted to know well what the prophets said to the people of Israel.

He wanted to know well what God wanted to say to him,
he wanted to know well what God wanted him to do.

After some time, Jesus didn't want to live in Nazareth anymore.

He wanted to speak to people in many places.

He wanted to say something like this to them:

“For a very long time the prophets said:

‘At some time some things will happen in this country like never before.

At that time God will do very good things for the people of Israel.

At the same time, God will do very good things for all people.’

I want you to know that these things are happening now.

It is like this: people can live with God now not like before,

people can know now that God is near.”

Jesus wanted many people in many places to hear this.

12. The prophet called John the Baptist

Jesus wanted something to happen to him
before he spoke about God to many people in many places.
He wanted many people to see it.
It happened as he wanted. It happened like this:

A prophet called John was saying some things to many people
at that time near the river Jordan, in Judea.
John didn't live like other people lived at that time in that country,
he lived in the desert.
When John was saying these things in that place near the river Jordan,
many people wanted to hear it.
These people lived in many places in Judea,
they all wanted to go to that place near the river Jordan.
They knew that a prophet was saying some things to people there,
they wanted to hear it.

John was saying things like this to people near the river Jordan:
"As you know, for a long time the prophets said:
'At some time, someone not like other people will live in this country,
this someone will do very good things for the people of Israel,
at the same time he will do very good things for all people.'
As you know, some of the prophets said:
'Before this someone is here, someone else here will say:
He will be here in a very short time.'
I say to you now: I am this someone else.
I live because God wants me to say some things to people.
God wants me to say to you now:
'This someone will be here in a very short time.
Do some things because of this now.'
He is someone above me, I am someone below him.
I touch you with water, he will touch you with fire."
(When John said "fire," he was speaking about the "Holy Spirit."
This "Story" will say more about it later.)

At the same time, John was saying things like this to people:
"God wants something to happen in you before this someone is here.
It can happen if you want it to happen.
If it happens, after this you will think not like before.
If you think not like before, you can live not like before.
God wants you to think like this now:
'Before, I didn't live as God wants people to live,
I was doing very bad things.
I don't want to live like this anymore.
I want to live now as God wants people to live.'"

When John was speaking like this to people, he wanted people to do some things.
He wanted everyone to be in the river for a short time.
When the water was touching someone's body,

he wanted this someone to say about some things:

“I did this. When I was doing it, I was doing something very bad.

I don’t want to do it anymore.”

Many people were doing as John said.

People thought: “John does something as no other prophet did before.”

They said about John: “John ‘baptizes’ people.”

Because of this they called him John the Baptist.

(In Greek, “baptizo,” “I baptize,” meant something like this:

“I want [you] to be under water for a short time.”)

Jesus wanted John to baptize him as he was baptizing other people.

John did it, because Jesus wanted it. He didn’t know why Jesus wanted it.

He knew that Jesus didn’t do anything bad.

People can think about it like this:

Jesus wanted it because he wanted to say something like this to people:

“I want this to happen to me as it happens to other people.

I want to be with other people.

I feel something very good toward all people.

I think like this about people: all people are one.”

When John baptized Jesus, some things happened like never before.

(More about it in the next chapter.)



13. John the Baptist baptizes Jesus

One day when John was baptizing people in the river Jordan,
he saw Jesus in that place.

Jesus said then to John:

“I want you to baptize me, as you are baptizing other people.”

John thought then: “He is not someone like other people,
he is someone above me, I am someone below him.”

Because John thought like this, he said to Jesus:

“I can’t baptize you, you can baptize *me*.”

Jesus said to John:

“I *want* you to do it. It will be good if it happens.

It will be as God wants.”

Because Jesus said this, John baptized him, as Jesus wanted.

A very short time after, something happened in that place like never before.

It was like this:

There was something like a dove above Jesus, it was very close to him.

It was there for some time; Jesus saw it.

Jesus knew that it was God’s Spirit, “the Holy Spirit.”

(This “Story” will say more about “the Holy Spirit” later).

At the same time he heard a voice above this place,

he knew that it was God’s voice.

The voice said:

“You are my Son, I feel something very very good toward you.

You know that I want you to do some things.

You want to do it as I want, this is very very good.”

John saw the dove, he knew that it was God’s Spirit, he heard the voice,

He knew it was God’s voice.

He wanted people to know what he saw, what he heard.

He wanted people to know who Jesus was.

The next day John saw Jesus in the same place; he said about him then:

“This is the Lamb of God.”

At the same time, he said something like this about Jesus:

“He wants all people to live with God.”

(A long time before, prophet Isaiah said about someone:

“He is like a lamb; he will die because people do very bad things.”

John was saying this about Jesus.)

Before he baptized Jesus, some people said to John:

“Who are you? Are you the Messiah?” He said: “I am not.”

(These people were people of one kind called “priests.”

This “Story” will say more about people of this kind later.)

John said to these people at that time:

“I am like a voice, the voice says: ‘someone will be here soon.’”

When John saw Jesus the day after he had baptized him, he said:

“When I baptized him, I saw a dove above him.

It was there for some time. I knew that it was the Holy Spirit.

I had known before that I would see these things.

I had known it because God said it to me.

I knew then who he was. God wanted me to know it.
Because of this I can say now: This is the Son of God, it is true, I know it.”

After this, for some time Jesus was not with other people.
He was in the desert, the Holy Spirit was with him.
Some things happened to him then not like at any other time.
The Bible says something like this about it:

Someone spoke to Jesus in the desert, it was someone not like people.
It was someone bad.

(Some parts of the Bible say “the devil” about this someone,
one part says: “Satan.”)

This someone wanted Jesus to think like this:

“I am the Son of God. If I say: I want something to happen, it will happen.”

Because of this, this someone said to Jesus:

“If you say: ‘I want these stones to be bread,’ they will be bread.”

(This someone knew that Jesus hadn’t eaten anything for a long time,
that in the desert he didn’t eat anything.)

Jesus said to this someone then: “I don’t want to say things like this.”

Then this someone said to Jesus:

“If you say: ‘I don’t want bad things to happen to me,’
they will not happen.”

Jesus said: “I don’t want to say things like this.”

Then this someone said something like this to Jesus:

“Very good things will happen to you if you say to me:
‘You are someone above people.’”

Jesus said then: “I don’t want to say this to you, Satan.

God is someone above people, not anyone else.”

After this, this someone wasn’t with Jesus anymore.

After this, Jesus wanted to be with people.

He knew what God wanted him to do. He wanted to do it.

He could think like this then: “I know now: God wants me to do it *now*.”

14. What Jesus did when he didn't live in Nazareth anymore

After this, Jesus didn't live in one place anymore,
because he wanted to speak to people in many places.
He wanted to speak about God because he wanted people to know
what God is like.
He wanted to speak about people because he wanted people to know
how it is good for them to live.
At the same time he wanted to say something like this to people in many places:
"Something very good is happening here now, I want you to know it.
People can live with God now like never before, God is near."
When Jesus said these things, often people thought like this:
"Who is he? No one ever spoke like this before."

In all the places where he went, Jesus did very good things for people,
nobody else could do things like that.

Often, it was like this:
Someone felt something very bad
because something very bad was happening in their body.
Jesus saw this person, he knew what this person felt,
he felt something because of this.
He wanted this person not to feel like this anymore,
he did something because of this.
After this, this person didn't feel like this anymore.

Often it was like this:
When Jesus was in a place with other people, someone said to him:
"I can't do many things like other people
because something very bad happened to my body.
I know that you can do something very good for me;
I know that if you do it, it will not be like this anymore."
(Some said: "I can't see," some: "I can't hear," some: "I can't move.")
Jesus said to this person then: "I want it not to be like this anymore,"
he touched this person's body.

After this, it wasn't like before: this person *could* see (hear, move).
Often the same happened when someone touched Jesus's robe.
Often if someone couldn't move others carried them to the place where Jesus was
because they wanted Jesus to touch this person.

Sometimes when Jesus was somewhere with other people, it was like this:
Someone in this place was doing many things not like other people,
very bad things were happening to this person because of this.
(At that time people thought about it like this:
"there is someone bad inside this person.")
When Jesus saw someone like this, he said:
"I want it not to be like this anymore."
After this, it was not like this anymore.

Sometimes when Jesus was in a place, he knew that it was like this:
a short time before someone had died there;

some other people there felt something very bad at that time
because they felt something very good toward that person.
Jesus said to this person then: "I want you to live".
After this, this person lived.

Jesus did many other things like that.
He did these things because he wanted to do something good for people
when something very bad was happening to them.
When he did something very good for someone,
he didn't want other people to know that he had done it.
It was never like this:
He did it because he wanted people to know that he could do it.
It was never like this:
He did it because he wanted something very good to happen to him.
It was never like this:
He did it because he wanted something very bad not to happen to him.

15. Jesus teaches people what is good for them

Many many people in the country where the people of Israel lived wanted to know what Jesus said to people.

Because of this, many many people went to places where Jesus was saying things to people, they wanted to hear it.

Many of them lived in Galilee, many others lived in Judea, far from the places where Jesus spoke to people.

When Jesus saw these people, he felt something very good toward them.

He thought about them like this:

“They are like sheep when there is no shepherd with them.”

He wanted them to know what is good for them,

because of this, he often said things like this to them:

It is good for you if you often think about God;

it is good for you if you often think: “I want to live with God.”

It is good for you if you often think like this:

“Every day I live because God does good things for me.”

When something very bad is happening to you,

it is good for you if you think like this:

“God knows that this is happening to me now,
God knows what I feel now.”

It is good for you if you often think like this:

“I want to know what God wants me to do now.”

It is good for you if you often speak to God.

It is good for you if you speak to God every day.

It is good for you if you often think about other people,

if you feel something good toward other people.

It is good for you if you want to do good things for other people.

If someone says to you: “I want you to do something good for me,”

it is good for you if you want to do it.

When you are doing it, don’t think like this:

“I’m doing something good for someone, I want people to know it.”

It is good for you if you often think like this:

“I have a body, at the same time, I have something else, a soul
(the Hebrew word was ‘nepesh’).

Because I have a soul, I can live with God,

after I die I can live with God forever.

Other people can do very bad things to my body,

they can’t do anything bad to my soul.

It is not like this:

if something bad happens to my body, this is bad for my soul.

It is like this:

if I think something bad, if I want to do something bad,

if I feel something bad toward someone, this is bad for my soul.”

At the same time, Jesus said things like this to many people in many places:

It is bad for you if you feel something bad toward someone else.
It is bad for you if you want to do something bad to someone else.
It is bad for you if you think like this about someone:

“This person did something bad to me,
because of this, I want to do something bad to this person.”

It is bad for you if you often think like this:

“I want to have a lot of money.”

It is bad for you if you think like this about many things:

“I want these things to be mine.”

It is bad for a man if he thinks about women’s bodies

as people can think about things.

People often think like this about things: “I want this thing to be mine,”

it is bad for a man if he thinks like this about women’s bodies.

If a man thinks like this about a woman’s body,

he is doing something bad to this woman.

It is bad for a man if he says to his wife:

“I don’t want to live with you anymore.”

If a man says this to his wife, he is doing something very bad to her.

(At that time in that country men could say this to women.

Women couldn’t say this to men.

Men thought about it like this: “We can do this because Moses said so.”)

16. How Jesus lived, what he was like

Jesus wanted to do good things for all people.
He didn't want to do anything bad to anyone.
When people were doing very very bad things to him,
he didn't want to think about them like this:

“they are doing very bad things to me,”

he wanted to think about them in another way.
He said to God: “I don't feel anything bad toward them,
I don't want anything bad to happen to them.”
He said: “They don't know what they are doing.”
(This “Story” will say more about it later.)

Jesus knew that many people in the country where he lived
thought like this about people of some kinds:

“People like this do very bad things, they are bad people,
I don't want to be with such people.”

He didn't think like this about anyone, he wanted other people to know it.
Because of this, he often wanted to be with people of these kinds,
he ate with them, he drank with them.

Jesus knew that many Israelites felt something very bad
toward people of another kind called Samaritans.

He didn't feel anything bad toward people of any kind,
he didn't feel anything bad toward Samaritans.

When he wanted people to know how to live, he said something like this:
“It was once like this:

Something very bad happened to an Israelite.

Other Israelites didn't want to do anything good for him.

Then a Samaritan did many good things for him.

It will be good if you live like this Samaritan.”

He spoke to a Samaritan woman about God
like he had spoken to no one else before.

Many men in that country thought like this about some women:

“I don't want a woman like this to touch me.”

Jesus didn't think like this about any women.

He didn't think about women as many men thought about women at that time.

He felt something good toward women.

He wanted men not to do bad things to women.

He often wanted to be with women.

He often wanted to speak to women about God.

He said some things to women about God

before he said these things to any men.

He felt something very good toward children.

He thought about children not as many other people
thought about children at that time.

He thought like this: “Someone like this can be very close to God.”

Jesus felt something very very good toward some people.

One of them was a man called John (another John),
another one was a woman called Mary Magdalene.
Before they knew Jesus, they both lived in Galilee,
later, they both wanted to go with Jesus wherever he went.
He felt something very very good toward three people
in a place called Bethany near Jerusalem.
One of them was a man called Lazarus, two were women, his sisters,
one was called Mary, the other, Martha.
When he was in Judea, he was often in their house for some time.
(This “Story” will say more about them later.)
He felt something very very good toward his mother, Mary.
When she said to him: “I want you to do something good for me,”
she knew that he would do it.
(It was like this in a place called Cana, in Galilee.
People can know what happened if they read the Gospel of John.)
When he was dying he thought about her, he knew what she felt,
he wanted to do something very good for her.
He felt something very very good toward the people of Israel.

Jesus felt something very very good toward God.
Often he spoke to God all night (often, on a mountain).
When he wanted to speak to God, he said “Abba” to him,
as children in that country said to their father.
He was saying in this way: “I feel something very good toward you,
I know that you feel something very good toward me.”
Jesus always wanted to know what God wanted him to do.
He always wanted to do it.

Jesus lived like this; he was like this.

17. The people who were with Jesus

When Jesus didn't live in one place anymore
some people were always with him, wherever he went.
These people were called the Apostles. It was like this:
When Jesus was a small child, his mother Mary was always with him,
she knew what happened to him, she could later say it to someone else.
When Jesus lived in Nazareth, he lived with Mary, with Joseph.
Mary knew well what Jesus did, what he said, what happened to him,
she could say it later to someone else.
When Jesus didn't live in Nazareth, the Apostles were always with him.
They knew well what he did, what he said, what happened to him,
they could say it later to many people.

The Apostles were all men, there were twelve of them,
as there were twelve sons of Jacob.
It was like this because Jesus wanted it to be like this.
In the Bible they are often called the Twelve. Their names were:
Simon Peter, Andrew, John, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas,
Thaddeus, another James, another Simon, Judas.
Jesus wanted these men to always be with him, he wanted them to know him.
He wanted them to know well what he did, what he said, what happened to him.
He wanted them to say to many people later:
"We were there, we saw it, we heard it."
At the same time, he wanted them to know who he was,
to know that he said to God: "Father," "Abba."

Before these men were with Jesus, they lived in Galilee,
some of them were fishermen.
They were all with Jesus because one day he said to them:
"I want you to be with me wherever I go."
(Before he said it, he was all night on a mountain, he was speaking to God.)
Before these men were with Jesus, some of them were with John the Baptist,
One of them was Andrew, another was John.
These two men were with John the Baptist when he said about Jesus:
"This is the Lamb of God."
When they heard this, they followed Jesus (as he walked);
they were with him for some time that day.
Later the same day Andrew spoke about Jesus to Simon.
He wanted him to be with Jesus for some time.
When Jesus saw Simon, he said to him: "You will be called Peter."
(This "Story" will say more about it later.)

Jesus spoke to the Apostles not like he spoke to other people.
Sometimes he said things like this to them:
"People will do very bad things to me.
I will feel something very bad because of this, I will die because of this."
(When he was saying this, he didn't say "I," he said: "The Son of Man.")
For a long time the Apostles didn't know why Jesus said this.
For a long time they didn't know well who he was.

They thought about him like this:

“He wants to do something very good for the people of Israel,”

They didn't think like this: “He wants to do something very good for all people.”

The Apostles spoke to Jesus not like they spoke to other people.

At first, they said to him “Rabbi” (Teacher); later they said “Lord.”

For some time, when they said: “Lord,” they wanted to say this with this word:

“You are someone above us, you are someone above other people.”

Later, they wanted to say more, they wanted to say:

“You are someone above us, you are someone above *all* people.”

In places where Jesus spoke to people, many women were often with him.

Mary Magdalene was one of them.

There were two other women called Mary, some others were called Joanna,

Salome, Susanna; there were others.

These women felt something very good toward Jesus.

They wanted to be with him.

When he spoke about God, they wanted to hear it.

At the same time they wanted to do many good things for him.

They did this for a long time. They were with him when he was dying.



18. What happened on Mount Tabor

One day, in Galilee, Jesus said to the Apostles: “

Who am I? What do people say? What do you say?

Peter said: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

After this, Jesus said things like this to the Apostles:

“After some time I will go to Jerusalem.

People there will do very bad things to me. They will kill me.

Before I die, I will feel something very very bad.

I want you to know that three days later I will live.”

At that time, the Apostles didn't know why Jesus was saying this.

They didn't know well at that time who he was.

They thought about him like this at that time:

“He will do something very good for the people of Israel.”

Jesus wanted them to know who he was.

Because of this, a short time after Peter said: “You are the Messiah.”

something happened like never before.

It was like this:

Jesus went to the top of a mountain called Mount Tabor with three Apostles.

They were Peter, John, James (John's brother).

(Sometimes Jesus wanted these three to be with him, not all of them.)

When they were there, something happened to Jesus like never before.

It happened like this:

Jesus was speaking to God. The Apostles fell asleep.

When they woke up, they saw something like never before.

Jesus looked like he had never looked before.

When they were looking at him, they saw light.

When they looked at his face, they saw light.

When they looked at his robe, they saw light.

This light was like no other light.

It was not in the place where Jesus was, it was *in* Jesus.

The Apostles didn't know how it could be like this,

they didn't know what to think.

They knew one thing: when they saw this light, they felt something,

something very very good, they couldn't not feel it.

Then at one moment they saw two men next to Jesus;

they were speaking to him, speaking about him.

The Apostles thought: “One of these two is Moses, the other is Elijah.”

(Elijah was one of the prophets.) They thought:

“These two don't live on earth anymore; at the same time, they know Jesus.

They are speaking to him, speaking *about* him. How can this be?”

When they thought like this, they felt something very bad;

at the same time, they couldn't not feel something very very good.

Peter said then to Jesus:

“Lord, it is very good here now.

You are here now, Moses is here now, Elijah is here now.

It will be good if it can be like this for a long time.”

He didn't know what he was saying, what he wanted to say.

At one moment, when he was saying this, there was a cloud there.
They saw light inside that cloud; they heard a voice from inside the cloud.
They knew that they were hearing God's voice,
they didn't know what would happen to them because of this.

The voice said:

"This is my Son, I feel something very good toward him; listen to him."
At that moment, they fell to the ground, their faces touched the ground.
They felt something like never before.

Then Jesus touched them, he said to them:

"I don't want you to feel anything bad now."
When they looked at him, they didn't see light anymore.
They didn't see anyone else in that place anymore.

Jesus said to them:

"Don't say anything about this to anyone now, you can say it later."
Then he said like before:
"In a short time people will do very bad things to me. They will kill me.
I want you to know that after I die, I will live.
You can speak to people about this then."
When Jesus said this to them, he didn't say "I," he said: "The Son of Man."

The three Apostles often thought about that day, about that light,
when Jesus didn't live on earth anymore.

In the first part of John's Gospel, John says about Jesus:

"We knew him, we saw that light when we were with him that day."

In a part of the Bible called "The Second Letter of Peter," Peter says:

"We saw that light when we looked at Jesus on Mount Tabor.
One day, when you don't live on earth anymore, you will all see Jesus.
You will all see that light then."

19. What people said about Jesus, what people thought about Jesus

When Jesus didn't live in one place anymore,
people in many places were speaking about him.

Many people said:

“Never before did anyone speak like this, do things like this.

He is the Messiah!”

At the same time some other people said very bad things about Jesus.
Some of these other people were people of one kind called “scribes”.

Many of these people thought like this:

“We are not like other people; we know well what the Law says,
what the Bible says.”

Some were people of one kind called “the Pharisees”.

These people thought like this:

“We are not like other people, we do everything as the Law says.”

Some were people of one kind called “priests”.

These people thought like this:

“We are not like other people, we can do some things in the Temple
as God wants.”

These people (scribes, Pharisees, priests) said things like this about Jesus:

“The Law says: ‘people can't do some things on the Sabbath,’

Jesus does things like this on the Sabbath.

He thinks: ‘I can do some things like God, I am someone like God.’

He calls God: ‘my Father.’”

These people felt something very bad toward Jesus.

One of them was a priest in Jerusalem called Caiaphas.

He was someone above all the other priests,

at the same time he was someone above the people of Israel.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem, he often spoke in the Temple.

People like Caiaphas could know what he said there.

One day, when Jesus was in the Temple, some people said to him:

“How can you know so well what the Bible says?”

Jesus said: “When I say some things to people, these things are true.

My Father has said these things to me before.”

They said to him: “Who are you? Where is your Father?”

Jesus said:

“*God* is my Father. You don't know God, I know him.

I was with him before, before there was anything anywhere.

I am here now because he wants it.

In a short time, I will be with him like before.”

At the same time he said:

“I do everything as my Father wants; he is always with me.”

When Jesus said these things, some people there said:

“Maybe he is the Messiah.” Others said: “No, he can't be.

He was born in Galilee, the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.”

(Jesus was born in Bethlehem, they didn't know it.)

Another time Jesus said things like this to people in the Temple:

“People don’t know how to live, like people don’t know where to go
in a place where there is no light.
I am the light. If people want to live as I say, they can know how to live.
They can then live with God.
If people don’t live with God, they live like slaves,
they are like slaves of the devil.
If people want to live as I say, they can live not like slaves.
They can live with God. They can then live forever.”
They said: “How can you say this? Abraham died, the prophets died,
how can anyone live forever?”
Jesus said: “Abraham knew that after some time I would be here,
he felt something very good because of this.”
They said to him: “You saw Abraham? How can that be?
You live now, Abraham lived a very very long time ago.”
Jesus said to them: “Before Abraham was, I AM.”
When they heard this, they felt something very very bad.
They all knew that God had said to Moses: “My name is I AM.”
They picked up some stones, they wanted to throw them at Jesus,
they wanted to kill him.
They couldn’t do it then because at that moment he went out of the Temple,
they didn’t know how it happened.

When people like Caiaphas knew what Jesus was saying in the Temple,
they thought like this: “This man has to die.”
Jesus knew that they thought like this.
He knew that they wanted some people to kill him.
Because he knew this, one day he said to people like Caiaphas in the Temple:
“You can do something very bad to this temple;
if you do it, this temple will not be here as before.
I will do something then;
because of this, three days later there will be another temple here.”
No one knew at that time that he was speaking about his body.
(This “Story” will say more about it later.)

20. The Romans

At that time, the country where the people of Israel lived (Palestine) was part of the Roman empire.

There were many Roman soldiers in Palestine,

a Roman called Pilate was someone above all these soldiers.

Many things were happening in Palestine as the Romans wanted.

Israelites felt something very bad because of this.

The Romans spoke Latin. Many of them could speak Greek (as many other people in all parts of the Roman empire).

Many Israelites could speak Greek, therefore they could speak to the Romans, the Romans could speak to them.

There were many Roman soldiers in Jerusalem, Pilate was often in Jerusalem.

People like Caiaphas thought like this:

“Many people in this country are saying about Jesus:

‘He is the Messiah, the king of the people of Israel.’

If many people in Jerusalem say things like this, the Romans can know it.

If they know it, very bad things can happen to the people of Israel, very bad things can happen to us.”

Many people in Jerusalem said things like this about Jesus

after something happened in Bethany, where Lazarus lived with his two sisters.

Not many people had spoken about Jesus in Jerusalem before this happened.

It happened like this:

Lazarus died. Jesus was not in Bethany at that time.

(He was in a place on the other side of the Jordan).

When Jesus was in Bethany a few days later,

both sisters wanted to speak to him, they were crying.

They were saying to Jesus:

“Lord, you were not here, he died because you were not here.”

Jesus wept then, many people saw it.

They said: “He felt something very, very good toward him.”

Jesus went to the place where Lazarus’s body was (it was in a cave).

When he was there, he spoke to God.

Then he said: “Lazarus, get up!” many people heard this.

At that moment, Lazarus got up. Many people could see him.

His body was bound with linen, his face was wrapped with a cloth.

After this, many people in Bethany were saying about Jesus:

“*He* did this. He is the Messiah.”

Some people spoke about it to people like Caiaphas.

There were many people like Caiaphas in Jerusalem,

because the Temple was in Jerusalem.

There were many priests, many scribes, many Pharisees.

Some of these people were above the other people in that country.

They were called the Sanhedrin.

When these people wanted something to happen, they could say:

“We want this to happen,” as one person can say: “I want this to happen.”

Many things were happening in that country at that time

as these people wanted.

The Romans thought about the Sanhedrin like this:

“These people are above the other people in this country.

If we want some things to happen in this country, we can speak to them.”

When the Sanhedrin knew what people said about Jesus, they thought like this:

“If the Romans know this, something very bad can happen.”

They thought: “Something very bad can happen to the people of Israel,
something very bad can happen to us.”

Because of this, they thought like this:

“We have to do something to this man; what can we do?”

(One of them didn’t want to think like this. He was called Nicodemus.

This “Story” will say more about him later.)

Shortly after some people spoke to Caiaphas about Lazarus,
the whole Sanhedrin was in Caiaphas’s house.

(Maybe not Nicodemus, we don’t know.)

These people thought like this: “What can we do to this man Jesus?”

They wanted to talk about it. Caiaphas said:

“It will be good for the people of Israel if this man dies.”

After Caiaphas said this, the others said: “He has to die.”

They thought like this:

“It will be good if the Romans kill him, it will be good if this happens soon.

It will be good if Pilate says to the Roman soldiers: Kill this man.”



21. Passover

It happened as the Sanhedrin (people like Caiaphas) wanted.
It happened in Jerusalem, a short time before the day of the year called Passover.
There were many people in Jerusalem at that time
because Passover was not like any other day of the year.
God once did something very good for the people of Israel on that day.
Before that day, the Israelites had lived in Egypt, they were slaves there.
After that day, they did not live in Egypt anymore,
they were not slaves anymore.
After this, Israelites wanted to think about this on the same day of the year.

On that day in Egypt, the Israelites killed many lambs, then they ate the meat
(there was one roasted lamb in every house).
They thought: "God wants us to do it like this."
(People can know why it was like this if they read Exodus.)
After this, Israelites wanted to do the same every year on the same day.
When there was a Temple in Jerusalem, they killed the lambs in the Temple.
They did it because they thought: "God wants this."
Because of this, every year there were many people in Jerusalem
a short time before the Passover day.

When the people in Caiaphas's house said: "This man has to die,"
Jesus was in Jerusalem with the Apostles.
Jesus knew that in a short time people would kill many lambs in Jerusalem,
as happened a long time before in Egypt.
At the same time he knew that people would kill *him* then,
as they would kill the lambs.
People can think about it like this:
"Maybe Jesus thought like this:
'A long time ago in Egypt, at the time of Passover,
God did something very good for the people of Israel.
After this, the people of Israel could live not like before,
they were not slaves anymore.
This year in Jerusalem, at the time of Passover,
God will do something very good for all people.
After this, all people can live not like before,
they can live not like slaves anymore.
At that time in Egypt, many lambs died at the time of Passover.
This year, in Jerusalem, the Son of Man will die.'"

Long before Jesus was born, prophet Isaiah spoke like this about someone:
"God wants this someone to be the light,
God wants people everywhere on earth to see this light."
(Isaiah was speaking like prophets speak, people couldn't always know
what he wanted to say.)
Then Isaiah said things like this about this someone:
"People did very very bad things to him,
he felt something very very bad because of this.

When they were doing these things to him he didn't say anything.
He was like a lamb when people want to kill it.
He didn't want to do anything bad to anyone.
He wanted to do something good for all people,
 he wanted all people to live with God.
He died because of this.
He died because people often didn't want to live with God,
 because *we* often didn't want to live with God.
He is now with God.
He doesn't want anything bad to happen to anyone, he says it to God.”
For a long time no one knew who Isaiah was speaking about.
Maybe Isaiah didn't know it: he spoke like a prophet.
John the Baptist thought like this: “Isaiah was speaking about Jesus”.
Later, the Apostles thought the same.

As this Story said before, when John the Baptist saw Jesus near Jordan,
 he said: “This is the Lamb of God.”
When Jesus didn't live on earth anymore,
 the Apostles often spoke about him in the same way.
In a part of the Bible called “The First Letter of Peter,” Peter speaks like this.
In another, “The Revelation,” John speaks like this.
In the part of the Bible called “The First letter to the Corinthians,”
 Paul calls Jesus “Christ our Passover.”
(The Apostles often called Jesus “Christ” then, sometimes “Jesus Christ,”
“Christos” is the Greek word for Messiah.)

22. What Jesus said to the Apostles on the night before he died

On the Passover day, Israelites did some things not like at other times. They wanted to do these things like Israelites had done for a very long time. Everyone thought like this about some people at that time of the year:

“I want to be with them in the evening on the Passover day,
I want to eat bread of one kind with them,
I want to eat the meat of one roasted lamb with them,
as people do on that day.”

Jesus wanted to be with the Apostles in this way one day before Passover, not on the Passover day.

(He knew that he would die on the Passover day:
he wanted to say some things to the Apostles before he died.)
Because of this, on that day, in the evening,

Jesus was with the Apostles in a house near the Mount of Olives.
They were in a room above the other rooms.
There was a table there, there was bread on the table, there was wine.

Jesus wanted the Apostles to know that it would be like this:
very soon some people would do very bad things to his body,
he would die because of this,
before he died, he would feel something very very bad.

He wanted them to know why he would die like this,
to know that he wanted to do something very good for all people.
At the same time Jesus wanted the Apostles to know that it would be like this:
After he died, for a short time he would not live;
after this, he would live, he would never die.

At the table, Jesus took the bread in his hands, then he said to God:
“Father, you are good, you want to do good things for all people.”
After this, he broke the bread into pieces, as he often did,
he wanted all the Apostles to eat pieces of one bread.
Then he said something to the Apostles like no one had ever said before.
He said: “Take, eat, this is my body.”

After this, he took the cup with wine into his hands.
When he was holding it, he said to God, like before:
“Father, you are good, you want to do good things for all people.”
Then he said to the Apostles: “Drink from it, all of you, this is my blood.”
He wanted them to drink from one cup.
After he had done these things, he said:

“Do the same when I am not with you like before anymore.”
When Jesus was doing these things, he said (not with these words):
“In a very short time people will kill me;
I want you to know why it will be like this.
Often people don’t live with God, often they don’t *want* to live with God.
This is very very bad for people.
I want all people to live with God.
I want all people to *want* to live with God.

When Jesus spoke about his blood, he said something else at the same time.

He said (not with these words):

“A long time ago at Mount Sinai God spoke to the people of Israel.

You know that God said:

‘If you live as I want, I will always be with you,
not like with all other people, I’ll be very near to you, I want this.’

You know that the people of Israel said then:

‘We want to do everything as God wants.’

You know that Moses sprinkled the blood of some animals on the altar,
then sprinkled some blood on the people.

You know that he wanted to say: God says: I want it, we say: we want it.

When people see this blood, they can know that it is true.’

I say to you: ‘*all* people can live with God, God wants it.

When people see *my* blood, they can know that it is true.’

At the same time I say to God:

‘Father, I want to do everything as you want.’”

Later, the Apostles could know that when Jesus said this,
he wanted to say something else at the same time.

The could know that he wanted to say something like this:

“For a long time, the people of Israel thought like this:

‘On some days, we kill animals in the Temple because God wants it;
if we do this, we can live with God.’

God wants the people of Israel not to think like this anymore.

God wants all people to know that it is like this:

All people can live with God if they want to; God wants it.

Everywhere on earth people can say to God: ‘I want to live with you’;

God wants people to say it.”

The Apostles could know then that on that night Jesus wanted to say:

“I die because I want people to know this.”

23. Gethsemane

Later that night, Jesus was with the Apostles in a garden.
This garden was on the Mount of Olives; they had often been there before.
It was one day before the Passover day.
Because of this, there were many people everywhere in Jerusalem.
Jesus was often on the Mount of Olives at night without the Apostles
when he wanted to speak to God.
He was often there with the Apostles during the day
when he wanted to be with them without other people.
The garden was called Gethsemane, there were olive trees there.
(This garden is there now as before, people can see it, they can see olive trees).
Jesus wanted to be there with the Apostles that night.
There was no one else there at that time.
When they were going to that garden Jesus said:
“The Bible says: ‘If something very bad happens to the shepherd,
the sheep run away.’ It will be like this here tonight.
A short time after this, I will die.
I want you to know that not long after I die, I will live.
You will see me in Galilee.”

One of the Apostles was not with them in that garden at that time.
This Apostle was called Judas.
Judas was at that time with people like Caiaphas. It was like this:
The Sanhedrin wanted the Romans to kill Jesus before Passover.
Because of this, they wanted some soldiers to take Jesus
to Caiaphas’s house that night.
(They wanted the soldiers to do it at night
because they didn’t want other people to see it.)
Because they wanted this to happen that night,
they wanted to know where Jesus would be that night.
Judas knew this, he said it to them. They paid him for it.
People don’t know well why Judas did it.
(The part of the Bible called the Gospel of John says:
“Satan was in him at that time.”)
When Judas thought about it later, he felt something very very bad,
he wanted not to live anymore.

When they were in the garden, it was late at night;
the Apostles wanted to sleep.
Jesus went away a little from the place where they were.
He wanted three of them (Peter, John, James) not to sleep.
He wanted these three Apostles to be near him, to know what he felt.
He said to them:
“It is like this in my soul now: I feel something very very bad,
like someone can feel when they are dying.
Be with me now, don’t fall asleep.”

Then he went away a little from the place where these three were.
He wanted to speak to God.

He knew what would happen to him that night,
he knew what would happen to him the next day.
He thought about it like this:
“It is like a cup of wine, God wants me to drink this cup.”
He fell to the ground, his face was touching the ground.
He spoke to God like this then:
“Abba, if this doesn’t *have* to happen to me, I want it not to happen.
At the same time I want everything to happen as *you* want, not as *I* want.”
He felt something very very bad. The Gospel of Luke says:
“His sweat fell to the ground like big drops of blood.”
After some time he got up; he thought about the three Apostles then,
he went to them. They were asleep.
He said to Peter then: “You are asleep? Can’t you be with me at this time?
Can’t you be awake for a short time?”

A very short time after this, there were many other people in the garden,
Judas was with them.
Some were Roman soldiers; others were Israelites (temple guards).
One was Caiaphas’s slave (called Malchus).
When Judas saw Jesus, he kissed him; they all knew then that this was Jesus
(Judas had said: “I’ll kiss him.”)
Peter didn’t want them to do anything bad to Jesus.
He had a sword in his hand; he hit Malchus, he cut off his ear.
Jesus said to Peter: “Don’t do anything with a sword.
My Father wants me to drink this cup.
I *can* not drink it. I can say to my Father: ‘I don’t want to drink it.’
I don’t want to say it. I want to do everything as my Father wants.”
Then he touched the man’s ear; after this, it was like it was before.
They tied Jesus’s hands because they wanted to take him to Caiaphas’s house.
Jesus said to all these people then: “You can take me, don’t take anyone else.”
After this, they took him to Caiaphas’s house. The Apostles were not with Jesus.
They ran away.

24. Jesus before Caiaphas

Soon the whole Sanhedrin was in Caiaphas's house.

They wanted to say about Jesus:

“We know what he did. The Law says: it is like this:
if someone does things like this, this someone has to die.”

Because of this, they wanted some other people to be there,
to say some very bad things about Jesus.

They wanted these people to say about something:

“He said this, with these words, I heard it.”

They wanted to say after this:

“He said this, these people here heard it, because of this, he has to die.”

Some people there said some things about Jesus as the Sanhedrin wanted,
these things were not true.

Two men said something like this:

“He said: ‘I will do something very bad to the Temple,
after this there will be no Temple here. I will do something else then;
because of this, after three days there will be another Temple here.’”

These two men couldn't say it with the same words.

One said: “He said: I *will* do,” the other said: “He said: I *can* do.”

Jesus had said something else with the word “Temple,” he said:

“You can do something very bad to this temple.

If you do it, I will do something then;

because of this, after three days there will be another temple here.”

(He was saying in this way: “My body is like a temple. You can kill my body.
If you do it, after three days I will live.”)

When these people were saying these things about him, Jesus didn't say anything.

Caiaphas then said to Jesus:

“You don't say anything when these people say such things about you?”

When Caiaphas said this, Jesus didn't say anything, like before.

Caiaphas then said:

“I want you to say one thing, you can't not say it, we want to hear it:
Are you the Son of God?”

Jesus said:

“Yes, I am. You will see the Son of Man on the right hand of God
—he will come in a cloud full of light.”

Then Caiaphas tore his robe, he wanted to say in this way:

“When I hear this, I feel something very very bad.”

They all knew that long before, the prophet Daniel had said:

“I see someone like a Son of Man—he comes on earth in a cloud full of light
—he is someone above all people—he will be king forever.”

They could know that when Jesus said: “You will see the Son of Man,”

he was saying in this way: “you will see me.”

Then Caiaphas said to the Sanhedrin:

“We have all heard it. We don't have to hear anything more.

If someone says something very bad about God, it is very very bad,
the Law says so.

This man said something like this here now. What will we do now?
What do you say?”

When Caiaphas said this, the whole Sanhedrin said: “This man has to die.”
Then some people there spat on Jesus, some hit him in the face.
When they were doing it, they were laughing.

Two Apostles were near Caiaphas’s house at that time, one of them was Peter,
the other was John.

There was fire in that place, the men sat on all sides of the fire,
Peter sat with them.

A woman in that place said to Peter: “Were you not with that man Jesus?”

Peter said: “No, I don’t know him.”

After this, two other people said the same to Peter.

One said: “You were with him, I saw you in the garden.”

Peter said, like before: “I don’t know that man.”

When Peter was saying it for the third time, the cock crowed.

At that moment, Peter saw Jesus, Jesus looked at Peter.

Some people were taking him out of Caiaphas’s house.

The day before Jesus had said to Peter:

“Before the cock crows, you will say three times: ‘I don’t know that man.’”

When Jesus looked at Peter, Peter thought about this
(he wasn’t thinking about it before).

He knew at that moment that when he said: “I don’t know that man,”
he did something very bad to Jesus.

He felt something very very bad then. He went away, he cried.

A short time after this, the Sanhedrin took Jesus to the place where Pilate was.
(It was called the “Praetorium”).

They wanted Pilate to say: “This man has to die”.

They wanted him to say to the Roman soldiers: “Kill this man.”

(Some people think: “Caiaphas spoke to Pilate about it the night before.

Pilate spoke about it to his wife, she wanted to know what Caiaphas had said;

Pilate knew what would happen the next morning.”)

25. Jesus before Pilate

When Caiaphas with the other men brought Jesus to the “Praetorium,” they didn’t want to go inside, they wanted Pilate to speak to them outside.

Many people were with them there.

When Pilate was outside, he said to them:

“What do you want to say about this man? What did he do?”

They said to him:

“We know well what he did. Because of this, we want you to say:

‘This man has to die.’”

Pilate said to them:

“You want *me* to say this? *You* can do to him as you want, as your law says.”

They said to him:

“Our law says: this man has to die. At the same time we can’t kill anyone.”

You can say to the soldiers: “Kill this man.” *We* can’t say this to anyone.”

(It was a Roman law; the Romans wanted it to be like this in the Roman empire: the Romans could say to soldiers about someone: “kill this man,” nobody else could say it about anyone.)

Then they said: “This man says to the people: ‘I am the king here.’”

He says: ‘Don’t pay money to the Romans.’”

They knew that Jesus didn’t say these things.

They said this because they wanted Pilate to think like this about Jesus:

“This man wanted to do something bad to the Roman empire, he has to die because of this.”

Then Pilate went inside the Praetorium, where Jesus was. He said to Jesus:

“You are the king of the Jews?”

Jesus said:

“I am a king not like other kings. I am not the king of a country on earth. No soldiers have to do as I say.”

Pilate said then to Jesus: “Then you *are* a king?”

Jesus said: “You say this.” Then he said (not with these words):

“I say some things to people about God, about people.

These things are true. I want people to know how to live, what is good for them, how they can live with God;

I want them to know what God wants. I was born because of this;

I live because of this; I can die because of this.

If someone wants to know what is true they hear my voice.”

Pilate said: “How can people know what is true?”

At the same time, he thought: “This man didn’t do anything bad.”

A short time after this, Pilate’s wife said to him:

“Don’t do anything bad to this good man.

I saw him in a dream, I felt something very bad then.

Don’t do anything bad to him.”

After this, Pilate went outside, like before,

to the place where Caiaphas with the other men were.

He said to them:

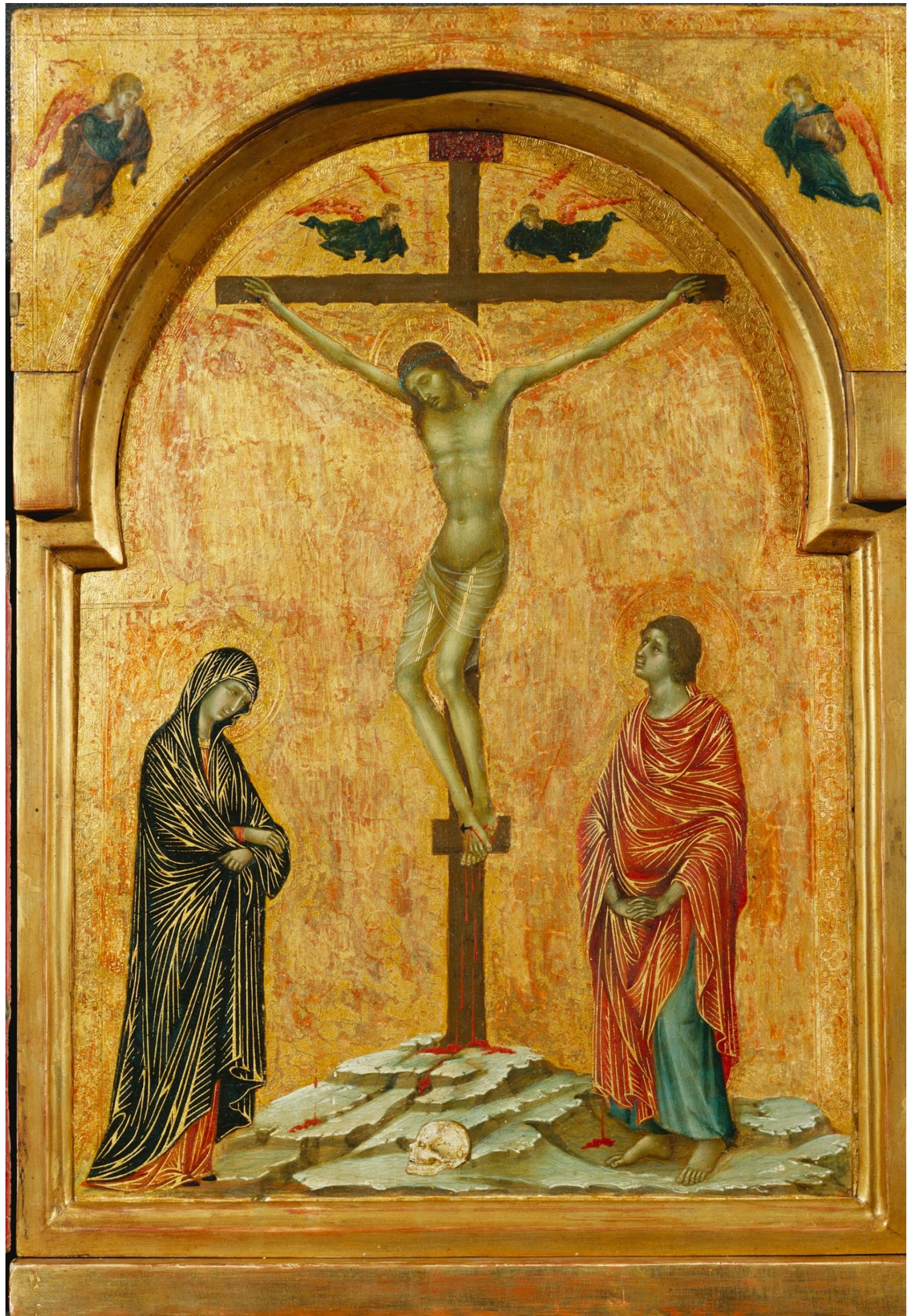
“I can’t say: ‘I know that this man did something very bad’; because of this, I can’t say: ‘This man has to die.’”

They said then to Pilate:

“He said: ‘I am the Son of God.’
If someone says this, they have to die.”
When Pilate heard this, he felt something very bad.
He thought like this:
“Who *is* this man? Where is he from?”
Maybe if I say: ‘This man has to die,’ something very bad will happen to me.”
He went inside then. He said to Jesus: “Where are you from?”
When he said this, Jesus didn’t say anything.
Pilate thought like this then: “I don’t want to say: ‘This man has to die.’”

Then Pilate went outside another time.
Caiaphas with the other men were there as before. He said to them:
“I can’t say: ‘This man has to die.’ He didn’t do anything very bad.”
When they heard this, they said to Pilate:
“This man wanted to be the king in this country.
If you don’t say: ‘He has to die,’ people can know
that you don’t want Caesar to be the king in this country.
They can say it to Caesar.”
When Pilate heard this, he felt something very bad. He thought like this:
“If I don’t say: ‘He has to die,’ something very bad can happen to me.”
After this, Pilate said: “This man has to die.”
Then he said to the soldiers: “Kill him.”

Before Pilate said this to the soldiers, he washed his hands.
He did it in a place where many people could see it.
At that time, in some countries, people did this when they wanted to say:
“I know that something very bad is happening here. It is happening
because someone wanted it, I didn’t want it.”
When Pilate washed his hands in that place at that time,
he wanted to say something like this in this way.



26. Jesus is nailed to the cross

Jesus died on the same day, he died in Jerusalem.

Before he died, people did many very bad things to him.

After Pilate said to the soldiers: "I want you to kill this man,"

the soldiers did many very bad things to Jesus's body.

After this, when people looked at him, they saw blood on his body.

The soldiers took off his robes, they wanted something like a king's robe

to be on him, they wanted something like a crown to be on his head.

(It had many sharp parts, they were thorns.)

When they were doing it, they were laughing.

They were saying things like this to Jesus:

"We feel something very good toward you.

You are someone above other people, you are the king of the Jews."

When they were saying this, they were hitting him on the head,

they were spitting on him.

They wanted to feel something good because of this,

at the same time they wanted him to feel something very bad.

After this, the soldiers took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, it was on a hill.

When they were taking him there, Jesus had to carry something called a cross.

A cross was made of wood, it was very big, it was very heavy.

It had two long parts, one of them was very long.

When Jesus was carrying the cross,

he felt something very bad in his whole body because of this.

At the same time he knew that he would die on that cross,

he knew how he would die.

When a man died on a cross, it was like this:

There was a cross somewhere in a place where many people could see it;
it couldn't move.

The top part of the very long part was high above the ground,
the bottom part was inside the ground.

The man's head was near the top of this very long part,
his feet were near the bottom.

The other long part had two parts on two sides of the very long part.

The man's arms were touching the other part,
one arm on one side, the other on the other side.

The man's body was hanging on the cross,
sometimes it was nailed to the cross, sometimes it was tied to it.

The man's feet were touching one of the two long parts in one place,
they could not move.

His hands were touching the other long part in two places, on both sides,
far from the body, they could not move.

The man couldn't move as he wanted.

He felt something very bad in his whole body because of this.

Many people could see this man during that time,
many people could see his face.

Because of this, many people could know what this man felt.

The Romans often wanted a man to die like this

if they wanted to say something like this to many people:
“This man wanted to do something bad to Rome,
the same will happen to anyone if they want to do this.”
Many, many people died like this in the Roman empire.
Many slaves died like this. Many Israelites died like this.

When Jesus was on Golgotha, the Roman soldiers nailed his body to the cross.
They nailed his feet to one long part of the cross, his hands to the other.
Then they nailed something at the top of the cross; it said:
“Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews,” as Pilate wanted.
(Someone had written it on this thing in Latin, Greek, Hebrew,
as Pilate wanted.)

When the soldiers were nailing his body to the cross,
Jesus felt something very very bad in his body because of this.
He knew that God felt something very very bad at the same time
(he had said before: “Father and I are one”).
He said to God then:

“Father, I don’t want anything bad to happen to these people.
I don’t feel anything bad toward them.
They don’t know what they are doing.”

When people saw Jesus on the cross, his arms high above the earth,
his hands far from his body, they could think like this:

“Jesus loves all people on earth, he wants to draw all people to God.”
They could know that a short time before, Jesus said:

“When I am above the earth, I will draw all people to myself.”
One Roman soldier there (he was above all the others) thought:
“Something is happening here like never before.”

27. Jesus dies on the cross

When Jesus was on the cross, he felt something very very bad,
he felt like this for a long time.
Many people there saw him, they saw his blood, they saw his face;
they could know well what he felt in his body.
Some people there were saying things like this to him:
“You are someone above other people, you are a king.
Why can’t you do anything now?”
They wanted to feel something good because of this;
at the same time, they wanted him to feel something very bad.
At one moment Jesus said in a loud voice:
“My God, my God, why are you not with me anymore?”
When people heard his voice,
they knew that at that moment he felt something very very bad.
Some people think about it like this:
“Jesus thought at that moment: ‘God is not with me anymore.’”
Others think: “Jesus didn’t think like this, at the same time he *felt*
like someone can feel when they think like this.”
Some think: “Jesus felt at that moment like someone can feel
if they think: ‘I can never be with God.’”

The words: “My God, my God, why aren’t you with me anymore?”
are the first part of a psalm, many people near the cross could know this.
These people could know what David said in the last part of this psalm.
They could know that he said something like this:
“Lord, I know that when I say something to you
because I feel something very bad, you hear it.
I know that at some time people everywhere on earth will know
that you want to do good things for all people.
I know that people everywhere on earth will say to you:
‘You are above us, you are above all people on earth.
You are good, you want to do good things for all people,
you *can* do good things for all people.
We feel something very good toward you;
we want to live with you always.’”
Many people think like this: “When Jesus said the first part of this psalm,
he was thinking about the whole psalm.”

Shortly after this, Jesus saw his mother Mary, she was standing near the cross.
Some other women were with her.
They lived in Galilee; they went with Jesus to Judea, like Mary.
One of them was Mary Magdalene.
One was another Mary, the mother of one of the Apostles.
Another was Salome, the mother of two Apostles.
When Jesus saw his mother, he saw one of the Apostles there, it was John
(the other Apostles were not there).
Jesus knew that when *he* (Jesus) felt something very very bad,
Mary felt something very very bad because of this.
He said then to Mary about John: “This will now be your son.”

Then he said to John: “This will now be your mother.”
(If people read the part of the Bible called the Gospel of John,
they can know that it happened as Jesus wanted.
They can know that after Jesus died, Mary lived with John, in John’s house.)

Some time after this, Jesus said: “Water!”
People there could know then that he felt something very bad in his mouth.
They could know that he felt like someone can feel
if they haven’t had any water in their mouth for a very long time.
They could know that he was dying.
Before he died, Jesus said to God:
“Father, I want my spirit to be in your hands.”
(The words “I want my spirit to be in your hands” are part of another psalm.
Jesus said more: he said ‘Father’. Before, no one said “Father” to God.)
Then Jesus said (not with these words): “I did everything as you wanted.”
After this, Jesus died.

The soldiers pierced Jesus’s body with something called a spear.
It was something very long, they could touch Jesus’s body with it
when it was high above the ground.
One end of this spear was sharp; they wanted it to be inside Jesus’s body,
on one side of his body, near the heart.
They did this to Jesus’s body because Pilate wanted to know well
that Jesus didn’t live anymore.
When they did it, people saw a lot of blood on this side of Jesus’s body,
at the same time, they saw a lot of water.

It all happened as the prophets said.
The Apostle John saw it all. He could say later to other people:
“It happened like this, I saw it, this is true.”

28. Why Jesus died on the cross

Jesus died on the cross because he wanted to do something very good for all people: he wanted them to live with God.

God didn't want people to kill Jesus.

Jesus said so when he spoke like this about God to people in the Temple:

“A man wanted his son to do something in a faraway place.

He felt something very very good toward his son.

He wanted nothing bad to happen to his son.

The people in that place killed his son. God is like this man.”

God wanted it to be like this: all people would know God;

when they knew God, they would want to live with God.

Because of this, God wanted it to be like this:

Jesus would go to many places, would speak to people, would do good things for people; people would know him.

At the same time people would know who Jesus was, who his Father was,

Jesus would say this to people.

God knew that if Jesus did this, people would kill him,

he would die on the cross. Jesus knew the same thing.

Jesus could have said to God: “I don't want to do it.”

He didn't say it. He wanted to do everything as God wanted.

At the same time, he wanted to do something very good for all people.

Shortly before he died on the cross Jesus said:

“When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.”

He said: “When someone sees me, they see my Father.”

He said: “I am in the Father, the Father is in me.”

Jesus knew that when he was on the cross people would see him,

would see his blood, would know what he felt.

He knew that at some time, *all* people would see him,

all people would know what he felt on the cross.

They would know that he was on the cross

because he wanted to do something very good for all people.

They would know that when *he* felt something very very bad,

God felt something very very bad.

(They would know that he had said about God: “We are one.”)

They could feel something very good toward Jesus then,

they could feel something very good toward God.

It could be like this then: they would think:

“I want to live with Jesus, I want to live with God.”

When Jesus was dying on the cross on Golgotha,

there were two other crosses there at the same time,

One was on one side, one on the other.

Two other men were dying there at the same time.

One of these men said to Jesus: “Aren't you the Messiah?

Can't you do something good for all of us now?”

The other man said to him:

“This is happening to us because we did very bad things,

Jesus didn't do anything bad.”

As this other man was looking at Jesus on the cross, he thought:

“I know what he feels in his body now.”

At that moment something happened in him.

He thought then: “I know now who he is, who his Father is.”

When he thought like this, he thought at the same time:

“I want to be with Jesus, I want to be with God.”

He said to Jesus at that moment: “Jesus, think about me

when you are with God in the place where you are king.”

Jesus said to him then: “It will be as you want.

Today you will be with me, with God.”

People can think about it like this:

“Something can happen in everyone as happened in that man
when he was looking at Jesus dying on the cross.

Everyone can think then: ‘I know how Jesus died on the cross;

I know now who he is, who his Father is.’

When they think like this, they can think at the same time:

‘I want to live with Jesus, I want to live with God.’”

Some people say:

“Something like this cannot happen in someone after this someone dies.”

Others say: “It *can* happen after someone dies”.

Often these people say things like this at the same time:

“Many many people died before Jesus lived on earth.

Many of them did very bad things, didn’t live with God.

Before Jesus died, he said:

‘In a short time all these people will hear my voice.’

(The Gospel of John says so.)

When his body was in the tomb, he was with these people.

(The First Letter of Peter says so.)

He wanted them to know that it is like this:

all people can live with God if they want to, God wants it.

Because of this, we can know now that it is like this:

Some people don’t live with God before they die.

After they die, they see Jesus; they know then who he is.

At the same time, they know how he died on the cross,

they know *why* he died on the cross.

Something happens in them then.

After this, they *want* to live with Jesus, they *want* to live with God.”

29. What happened with Jesus's body after he died

Sometime after the soldiers pierced Jesus's body, a short time before the evening,
a rich man called Joseph of Arimathea spoke to Pilate:

He said: "Can I now take away Jesus's body?"

Pilate said: "You can."

Joseph of Arimathea was one of the people called the Sanhedrin.

He was not often with Jesus before Jesus died,

he didn't want people to see him when he was with Jesus.

At the same time, he felt something very good toward Jesus.

Before Jesus died, he thought: "This is the Messiah."

Joseph wanted the body of Jesus to be in a place

where nothing bad could happen to it, inside something called a tomb.

It was a place inside a rock, like a small cave.

There were many such tombs in a garden near the place where the cross was,
one of them belonged to Joseph.

Before, Joseph thought about it like this: "After I die, my body will be here."
(No one else's body was there before.)

When Pilate said "You can," Joseph took Jesus's body,

he carried it to the place where that tomb was.

Another man was with him, that man was called Nicodemus.

Like Joseph, Nicodemus was not often with Jesus before Jesus died.

Like him, he was one of the people called the Sanhedrin,

he didn't want people to see him when he was with Jesus.

At the same time, like Joseph, he felt something very good toward Jesus,
he thought: "This is the Messiah."

Once when Jesus was in Galilee, Nicodemus went at night to the place
where Jesus was, he wanted to speak to him.

Jesus said some things to him then like to no one else.

After this, Nicodemus could know who Jesus was.

He could know how people can know God, how they can live with God.

(People can know what Jesus said to Nicodemus
if they read the part of the Bible called the Gospel of John.)

The men wrapped Jesus's body in linen (one cloth around the body,
one around the head), then laid it in the tomb.

They put something called myrrh with something called aloes inside the linen,
as people did then in that country.

They put very very much of it, as people did when a king died.

They did everything very quickly because it was a short time before the evening
before the day called the Sabbath.

(The Sabbath was the last day of the week,

Israelites couldn't do many things on that day because the law said so.

At the same time, Israelites thought like this:

"the evening before the Sabbath is part of the Sabbath.")

Then the two men pushed a very big stone;

after this, this very big stone was in front of the tomb, as they wanted.

Because of this, after this, no one could go inside the tomb,
no one could touch Jesus's body.

Some women saw all this, these women were near the cross
with Mary Jesus's mother when Jesus was on the cross.
They were: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James,
Joanna the wife of Chuza, Salome the wife of Zebedee.
These women felt something very good toward Jesus,
they were often with him before he died.
They wanted to put some oil on Jesus's body, as people did in that country,
they wanted to do it well.
They knew that they couldn't do it on the same day
because it was the evening before the Sabbath.
Because of this, they wanted to do it in the morning
on the first day after the Sabbath.
The next day, on the Sabbath, the women were not near the tomb anymore,
the two men were not there anymore.

On the evening after the Sabbath some people like Caiaphas said to Pilate:
"We want there to be some Roman soldiers in front of the tomb.
This man said: 'Three days after I die, I will live.'
If there are no soldiers in front of the tomb it can be like this:
some people will take his body from the tomb, then they will say:
'It is as he said, after he died, he lives.'"

Pilate said: "Why do you want Roman soldiers to be there?
There can be guards (temple guards) there if you want."
(These guards had to do everything as people like Caiaphas said.)
After this, there were some guards in front of the tomb,
as people like Caiaphas wanted.

30. Jesus lives

After the Sabbath day, before the sun rose,
something happened in the place where Jesus's body was.
Something happened to Jesus's body.
It happened not because some people did something to it.
It happened because God wanted it to happen.
After it happened, Jesus's body was not in the tomb anymore.
People don't know how it happened.
The part of the Bible called the Gospel of Matthew says this:

On the first day after the Sabbath, before the sun rose,
the earth shook in that place.
The guards didn't know what was happening.
They felt something very very bad. They thought like this:
"Something is happening here like never before.
Something is happening inside the tomb, what can it be?"
They couldn't look inside the tomb
because there was a big stone in front of it.
Then, they *could* look inside the tomb
because the stone wasn't there anymore.
(Did they push the stone away? We don't know.
The Gospel of Matthew says: "An angel pushed it away.")
At that moment they knew that Jesus's body was not there anymore.
They felt something very bad then.
They thought like this: "When people like Caiaphas know this,
something very bad can happen to us."
Because they thought like this, they went to Caiaphas's house,
they wanted Caiaphas to know what happened.
After a very short time, many people were in Caiaphas's house,
the whole Sanhedrin (as Caiaphas wanted).
When all these people knew what happened, they talked about it,
they wanted to know what they could do.
Then they said to the guards:
"We don't want people to know what happened.
Don't say it to anyone.
Say: 'At night, when we slept, some people took Jesus's body.'"
They paid money to the guards because they wanted them to say this.

On the same day, the Apostles knew that Jesus's body was not in the tomb.
Before *they* knew it, the women knew it: Mary Magdalene, Mary wife of Cleopas,
another Mary, Salome wife of Zebedee, Joanna.

It happened like this:

When the sun rose, these women were near the place where the tomb was.
They were there at that time
because they wanted to do some good things to Jesus's body.
(They knew what the two men did before, they wanted to do more.)
They thought like this: "There is that big stone in front of the tomb,
who can push it away? We can't do it."
When they were in the place where the tomb was,

they knew that the big stone wasn't there anymore.
When they looked inside the tomb,
they knew that Jesus's body wasn't inside the tomb anymore.
(The part of the Bible called The Gospel of Mark says:
"They felt something very bad because of this,
they didn't know what happened;
they didn't know what they could think about it.")

Mary Magdalene ran then to the place where Peter was.
John was there with Peter.
She said to them: "The Lord is not in the tomb anymore, someone took him,
we don't know where he is."
When the two Apostles heard this, they ran to the place where the tomb was.
A very short time after this, they were in that place.
The part of the Bible called the Gospel of John says this:

John was in the place where the tomb was before Peter.
He looked inside, he saw the linen on the ground.
He didn't want to go inside the tomb before Peter could go inside it.
Soon after, Peter was there.
When he went inside the tomb, he knew that Jesus's body wasn't there.
When he looked at the linen, he knew that it was like this:
One of the two linen cloths was folded up.
(Before, it was wrapped around Jesus's head).
It was away from the other.
(Before, that other cloth was wrapped around Jesus's body).
When John was inside the tomb, he knew the same.
He thought like this at that moment:
"It is not like this: someone took Jesus's body.
It is like this: Jesus lives, it is true."



31. Mary Magdalene sees Jesus

A short time after this the two Apostles were no longer in that place where the tomb was.

Mary Magdalene was near the tomb as before.

She was looking inside the tomb.

She thought like this then: “Jesus is not inside the tomb anymore because someone took him.”

She didn’t think: “Jesus is not inside the tomb because he lives.”

She felt something very very bad at that time. She was weeping.

Then she turned around.

At that moment she saw Jesus; she saw him because he wanted her to see him.

She didn’t know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her:

“Woman, why are you weeping? Who do you want to see?”

Like before, when she heard these words she didn’t know that it was Jesus.

She said to him:

“My Lord is not here anymore, did you do something to him?

I want to know where he is.”

Jesus said to her then: “Mary!” (He said it in Aramaic: “Mariam!”)

At that moment, Mary Magdalene knew that it was Jesus.

She knew that it was Jesus’s voice, she knew that he was there.

She thought then: “He lives.”

She thought: “This is true.”

She felt something like never before.

She said to Jesus: “Rabboni!” (It was an Aramaic word.)

She was saying something like this with this word: “Teacher!”

At the same time, she was saying something like this with this word:

“You are someone not like other people.

You can do very good things for people.

I feel something very good toward you.”

(Israelites didn’t often say this word to men, they said: “Rabbi” to men; some said the word “Rabboni” to God.)

Mary Magdalene felt something very very good at that moment.

She felt something very very good toward Jesus.

She wanted to touch him, she wanted to hold his feet.

She wanted to hold him for some time.

Jesus said to her then:

“I don’t want you to hold me for a long time.

I want you to do something else now.

Go to the place where my brothers are.

I want them to know that I say to them:

‘You will see me in a short time.

After this, I will go to my Father, my Father is your Father.’”

Mary Magdalene knew that when Jesus said “my brothers,”

he said it about the Apostles.

She knew that Jesus wanted the Apostles to know that she saw him.
She knew that he wanted them to know that he lives.
She knew that he wanted them to know what he said to her.
Because of this, she ran to the place where the Apostles were.
She said to them: "I saw the Lord, he lives."
When they heard it, they thought like this: "This can't be true."

32. Some other people see Jesus

On the same morning, a little later, the other women saw Jesus,
they saw him because he wanted them to see him.

Later that day two other people saw him (he wanted them to see him).

They saw him when they were going to a place called Emmaus,
not far from Jerusalem.

One was a man called Cleopas, we don't know who the other one was.
(Some say: "Maybe it was Mary, Cleopas's wife; she was at the cross,
with Jesus's mother, when Jesus was dying.")

Some say: "Maybe it was Luke, the Gospel of Luke says a lot about all this,
Luke knew well what the two felt").

These two felt something very good toward Jesus.

Before he died, they thought like this: "He is the Messiah."

After he died, they thought: "He died, maybe he was not the Messiah";
they felt something very bad because of this.

They were talking about these things when they were going to Emmaus,
they felt something very bad at that time.

When they were talking like this they saw Jesus;
they didn't know at that time that it was Jesus.

He went with them for some time.

When they were going like this, Jesus said to them:

"What were you talking about? Has something bad happened to you?"

Cleopas said:

"Don't you know what happened in Jerusalem a very short time ago?
Something very very bad happened.

The Romans killed a prophet, Jesus of Nazareth.

They did it because people like Caiaphas wanted them to do it.

Before he died, we thought: 'This is the Messiah'.

Now we don't know what we can think.

There were some women with us.

They went to the tomb early today, then they said:

'We saw the tomb, we looked inside, his body is not there anymore.'

When the women said this, we thought: 'This can't be true.'

Then some men went to the tomb (they had always been with us before).

They said: 'It is as the women said.'

We don't know what to think anymore."

When Cleopas said this, Jesus said to them both:

"Oh, why do you think like this!

Don't you know what the prophets said? It all happened as they said.

The Prophets knew that the Messiah would die like this,
that people would kill him in this way.

At the same time they knew that after he died, he would live,
that after this, he would not die.

They knew that he would be with God, as he was before he was born;
that people would know who he is."

Jesus said many other things to them when he was going with them like this.

He spoke about the Bible, about Moses, about the Prophets.

All this time they didn't know that it was Jesus.
When they were in Emmaus, Jesus wanted to go further that day.
The two said to him: "Don't go further today, it will be night soon, eat with us."
Jesus did as they wanted.
A short time after this, they were inside a house, there was a table there;
there was bread on the table.
Jesus took the bread into his hands, then he said to God:
"Father, you are good, you want to do good things for all people."
Then he broke the bread into pieces, he wanted the two to eat this bread,
he said to them: "Eat it."
At that moment, they knew that it was Jesus.
They felt something then like never before.
A moment after this, Jesus was not with them anymore;
they didn't know how it happened.
They were both saying something like this:
"Why didn't we know before that it was Jesus?
Didn't we feel something like fire, something very good,
when he was speaking to us about the prophets?"
The two wanted the Apostles to know that they had seen Jesus,
they wanted them to know what had happened.
Because of this, on the same day, they went back to Jerusalem.

33. The Apostles see Jesus

On the same day, in the evening, the Apostles saw Jesus.

They were in the same room in Jerusalem where they had been with Jesus on the night before he died.

The door was closed, as they wanted. They were thinking like this at that time:

“Maybe some people want to do something very bad to us now.”

They felt something very bad because of it.

When they were thinking like this, they saw Jesus.

They saw him because he wanted them to see him.

It was like this: At one moment Jesus was not with them in that room, the next moment he was there.

The Apostles didn't know how it happened, they didn't know how it could have happened.

They thought: “Maybe this is not someone living, maybe this someone doesn't have a body like someone living.”

When they thought like this, they felt something very bad because of it.

Then Jesus spoke to them.

First he said something like people in Palestine often said to other people when they saw them for the first time after some time.

Maybe he said it with the Hebrew word “Shalom,” maybe he said it with the Aramaic word “Shlam.”

People wanted to say something like this to other people with these words:

“I want it to be like this: you feel something good in your soul now, you don't feel something bad.”

When *Jesus* said this, he was saying more, he was saying:

“If I am with you, it *can* be like this.”

(On the night before he died he had said to them:

“I want you not to feel something bad in your soul.”

At the same time he said:

“It *can* be like this because I say I want it to be like this.”)

After this, Jesus said to them:

“Why do you feel something bad? I live.

You could have known that I live because the women saw me.

When the women said to you: ‘We saw the Lord,’

why did you think: ‘this can't be true’?

It is me. You can see my hands, you can see my feet.

You can touch my side. You can know that it's me.”

The Apostles felt something very very good then.

They thought: “It is Jesus. He lives.”

They knew that it was like this:

his body was not like before, at the same time, it *was* his body.

They didn't know how it could be like this.

They thought: “Something has happened like never before.”

Then Jesus said some things to the Apostles

like he had said to the two before on the way to Emmaus. He said:

“Everything has happened as the prophets said, as the psalms said.

The prophets *knew* that it would be like this:
People would do very bad things to the Messiah;
he would feel something very very bad because of this;
people would kill him; on the third day he would live;
after this, he would never die.”

After this, Jesus said to the Apostles:

“I want people in all parts of the earth to know
what happened during the time when you were with me.
I want you to speak about me to people in many countries.
The Holy Spirit will be with you.
Because you were with me for all this time, you can say:
‘It all happened like this.’
When you say it, you can say at the same time:
‘This is true, we know it, we saw it.’”

Before the Apostles saw Jesus on that day, Peter saw him
(he saw him after Mary Magdalene had seen him).

We don’t know where Peter was at that time,
we don’t know what Jesus said to Peter.

A part of the Bible called The First Letter of Peter says something like this:

“On the day when Jesus’s body was in the tomb,
Jesus was with the dead.
Many, many people had died before Jesus died,
on that day Jesus was with all those people.
He wanted them to know that after people die they can live.
He wanted them to know that all people can live with God forever,
if they want to.”

We don’t know how Peter knew this. We can think:

Maybe Jesus said this to Peter when Peter saw him on that day.



34. The Apostle called Thomas sees Jesus

When the Apostles saw Jesus that evening, on the first day of the week,
one of the Apostles was not with them.
Because of this, he didn't see Jesus when the other Apostles saw him.
This Apostle was called Thomas.

Thomas felt something very very good toward Jesus.
Some time before, when Jesus wanted to go to Judea,
where many people wanted to kill him, Thomas wanted to go with him.
He said to the other Apostles at that time:
"I want to go with him, I want to die with him.
It will be good if we all go with him, if we all die with him."
(Before that, in Galilee, many many people thought about Jesus like this:
"He is a prophet, God is with him." It was not like this in Judea.
There, people like Caiaphas said very bad things about him;
they wanted to kill him.
Jesus knew this. At the same time, he *wanted* to go to Judea, to Jerusalem.
He said: "I can't not go to Jerusalem.")

On the night before he died, Jesus said some things to Thomas
like he had not said to anyone else.
First, he said to all the Apostles:
"I am going now; you can be with me later, I want this;
you know the way."
(He wanted to say with these words: "I am going to my Father now,
you can be with me, with my Father, later.")
Thomas said then:
"Lord, we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way?"
Jesus said then to Thomas: "*I* am the way."

A short time after the other Apostles saw Jesus on that first day,
they said to Thomas: "We saw Jesus, he lives."
Thomas then said to them:
"I can't think like this now: 'This is true, Jesus lives.'
Before I can think like this, I want to see his hands;
I want to see the places where the nails were.
If I can't see these places, I can't think: 'this is true,'
I can't think: 'after he died, he lives.'
I want to touch his hands in the places where the nails were.
I want to touch the side of his body where the spear pierced it."

Some time after this, in the same place, the Apostles saw Jesus another time.
This time Thomas was with them. He saw Jesus.
Jesus said to Thomas:
"You can see my hands now;
you can touch them in the places where the nails were.
You can touch my side in the place where the spear pierced it.
Don't think like this anymore: 'This can't be true.'
Think like this: 'It is true, Jesus lives.'"

When Jesus said this to him, Thomas knew that when the other Apostles said:

“We saw Jesus, he lives,” it was true.

He said something to Jesus then like never before

(none of the Apostles had said this to Jesus before).

The part of the Bible called The Gospel of John says:

“Thomas then said to Jesus: ‘My Lord and my God.’”

People can think about it like this:

“Thomas said this to Jesus because he saw Jesus.”

They can think: “maybe Thomas wanted to say:

‘I know now: when I see you, I see God’.”

At the same time people can think like this:

“Maybe Thomas didn’t know well what he wanted to say
when he said ‘My Lord and my God.’

Maybe he wanted to say: ‘I know now: when I see Jesus, I see God.’”

Jesus said to Thomas:

“You think now: ‘It is true, Jesus lives’ because you have seen me.

People can think like this *not* because they have seen me.

It is very good for people if they think like this

not because they have seen me.

It is very good for people if they *want* to think like this.”

35. People can't see Jesus on earth anymore

After this, the Apostles saw Jesus on earth at some other times.

They saw him in Jerusalem, they saw him in Galilee.

During that time, he said things like this to them:

“You know many things about me, not like other people,
because you were always with me.

You know what I did during that time, you know what I said,
you know what happened to me.

Say it to other people; say it to people in this country,
say it to people in other countries, say it to people everywhere on earth.

When you are speaking to people about these things, you can say:

‘It is true, I know it, I was with Jesus at that time.’

I want you to say it.”

After some time, the Apostles knew

that people wouldn't see Jesus on earth anymore like before.

They could know it because one day something happened like never before.

On that day they were with Jesus on the Mount of Olives, as he wanted.

He said to them then as before:

“Because you were always with me, you know what I did, what I said,
what happened to me.

I want people in all parts of the earth to know it.

Go to many places, say it to people in these places.

At the same time, baptize people in these places.

When you do it, say:

‘I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.’”

The Apostles didn't know well then what Jesus wanted to say with the words:

“the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.”

They didn't know then that Jesus was speaking in this way about God.

They thought like this: “God is one.”

At the same time they knew that when Jesus was speaking about God,
he sometimes said: “we.”

They knew that he could think about God like this: “We are one;”

they knew it because he said: “I and the Father, we are one.”

They didn't know then that when he said: “the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit,”

he could think: “We are all one.”

Then Jesus said: “I will be with you always when people live on earth.”

(He said: “to the end of days”).

The Apostles could know then that when he said “with you”

he was thinking about many many people.

They could know that many of these people would live

a long time after Jesus had lived on earth.

They could know that many of them would live

very far from the country where Jesus lived.

They could know that when he said to God, on the night before he died:

“I want them to be one, as we are one,” he was thinking about all these people.

After that, something happened in that place, it happened in a very short time.

At one moment the Apostles could see Jesus there,
a moment after they could not see him.
They couldn't see him because there was a cloud
in the place where he was a moment before.
After a very short time, the cloud wasn't there anymore.
They couldn't see Jesus anymore then.
They knew that he was not there anymore.
They stood there for some time, they looked toward the sky.
They knew then that Jesus wouldn't be with them on earth like before anymore.

The Apostles didn't feel something very bad because of this,
as they felt at the time when Jesus died; they felt something very good.
They thought like this: "Jesus is with God now."
They knew that they could think about him like they thought about God.
They knew that they could think like this:
"If he wants something to happen on earth, it can happen because of this.
If he wants something to happen not on earth, it can happen because of this."
They knew they could think like this:
"After some time, we will see Jesus, he said so.
Before we see him, he will be with us on earth in another way."



36. The Holy Spirit

On the night before he died Jesus said some things to the Apostles like never before.

He knew that in a very short time they would feel something very very bad. He said to them then:

“I want you to know that when I am not with you on earth like before, there *will* be someone with you.”

Jesus spoke about this someone with the words: “the Paraclete,” “the Spirit,” “the Holy Spirit.”

The Apostles didn’t know well then what he wanted to say with these words. (When the prophets said: “the Spirit,” “the Holy Spirit,” “the Spirit of the Lord,” they didn’t say “someone.”)

Jesus had said things like this to them at that time:

“I want the Holy Spirit to be with you, I will say it to my Father.

I can’t always be with you like before.

When the Holy Spirit is with you, I will be with you,

I will be with you in another way.”

At the same time Jesus said something like this:

“When the Holy Spirit is with you, you will know well what I wanted to say to you before.

If someone says some things about God then, you will know what is true, what is not true.

If someone says some things about me, you will know what is true, what is not true.

If someone says about something: ‘it is very bad if people do this,’ you will know what is true, what is not true.”

After this, Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit on the day when they saw him on earth for the last time.

He wanted them to know then that the Holy Spirit would be with them soon.

A short time after this, it happened as he said.

It happened on a day called (in Hebrew) Shavuot.

Every year, there were many people in Jerusalem on that day.

All Israelites wanted to be in the Temple on that day.

Later, Christians called this day Pentecost (a Greek word);

many Christians call this day Pentecost now.

When it happened, all the Apostles were in one place, in a house in Jerusalem,

Jesus’s mother Mary was with them.

At one moment they heard something like a big wind in this place.

At the same time everyone saw something above everyone else’s heads, it was like a small fire.

The Apostles knew that something had happened to them like never before.

They felt something like never before.

They knew then that the Holy Spirit was with them, was *in* them.

After this happened, the Apostles didn’t think like before.

Before it happened, they often thought like this:

“Some people can do something very bad to me

because I was with Jesus, I don't want this to happen.”
When they thought like this, they felt something very bad.
Because they felt like this,
they didn't want to do many things,
they didn't want to be in places where there were many people,
they didn't want to speak about Jesus to anyone anywhere.
After it happened, they didn't think like this anymore, they thought like this:
“I can say many things about Jesus to many people
because I was with Jesus, I want to do it.”
When they thought like this, they felt something very good.
Because they felt like this,
they wanted to do many things,
they wanted to be in places where there were many people,
they wanted to speak about Jesus to many people in many places.

The Apostles did all these things; they *could* do it
because the Holy Spirit was with them.
When they were doing it, they knew that the Holy Spirit was with them,
was in them; they couldn't not know it.
People can know more about it if they read one part of the Bible.
It is called “The Acts of the Apostles.”

37. The Church: people who want to live with Jesus, with other people

On the day when the Apostles knew that the Holy Spirit was with them,
they felt something very very good.
They were saying: “God is very good! God is doing very good things for people!”
Many people heard this.
There were many people in Jerusalem on that day because it was Pentecost,
many of them didn’t know Aramaic.
(Many Israelites lived in other countries at that time;
many didn’t speak Aramaic, many didn’t speak Hebrew.)
At the same time, it was like this: When the Apostles spoke in Aramaic,
everyone knew what they were saying. Everyone thought:
“These men are speaking like people speak in the country where *I* was born.
How can this be?”

Then Peter spoke to them all.
He said: “Israelites! I want to speak to you about Jesus of Nazareth.”
Then he spoke like this:
“Listen! Jesus was the Messiah.
When the prophets spoke about the Messiah, they were speaking about *him*.
You know what Jesus did, because of this you know that God was with him.
You know how he died.
It all happened as the prophets said, as David said.
When David spoke about the Messiah, he said things like this:
‘He will be someone like my son, he will be king forever.
After he dies, nothing bad will happen to his body.
He will live, he will never die. God wants it to be like this.’
It all happened as David said, we know it, we saw it.
Jesus lives. He is now with God, very near to God.
You can all know what we are saying here today
because the Holy Spirit is with us now, Jesus wants it.
The Holy Spirit can be with you all if we baptize you.
Do you want us to baptize you?”
After this, many people said: “I do.” Then the Apostles baptized them.
When they were doing it, they said:
“I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.”
They were saying with these words:
“It can be like this now: you will live with Jesus, with other people.
It can be like this because God wants it: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.”

After this, the Apostles spoke about Jesus to many people in many other places.
At the same time, they spoke about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
They spoke about Moses, about the prophets.
They said things like this: “Our fathers wanted to live with God;
if you live with Jesus, you will live with God.”
After this, many people in many places said to the Apostles:
“I want to live with Jesus, I want you to baptize me.”
They all often called Jesus “Christ.”
Because of this people called them “Christians.” Christians thought like this:
“We are many, at the same time we are one,

like many parts of someone's body are one body.”
When they thought like this, they often said the word “church.”
They thought: “We are the church.” They thought:
“Christ lives; this church is something like his body.
Christ wants the Holy Spirit to be always with this church.”
They thought: “The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit,
at the same time, it is Christ's Spirit; it is one Spirit.”
They knew that before he died, Jesus said to God:
“I want them to be one, as we are one.”
After some time, not a very long time, there were many Christians
in many parts of the Roman empire.

Christians often went to places where someone could speak about Jesus,
they wanted to hear it.
They wanted to do something with other Christians there,
as the Apostles did on the night before Jesus died.
They knew that Jesus said about one bread then: “This is my body,”
they knew that he said: “Eat it.”
They wanted to eat parts of one bread with other Christians,
as Jesus wanted the Apostles to do.
They thought like this: “If we eat one bread, we are like one body,
we are something like Christ's body.”
For a very long time they couldn't do this in many places
because they couldn't do it anywhere where people could see them.
It was like this because for a very long time
the Romans didn't want any people in the Roman empire to be Christians.
During that time they killed many many Christians.
Before they killed them, they did very bad things to them.
This didn't happen if someone said: “I don't want to be a Christian.”
Many Christians didn't want to say this. They thought like this:
“After we die, we will live.
We will live with God, with Jesus, with other people.
We can live with God, with Jesus, with other people, forever.”
Many many people, in many parts of the earth, think like this now.

38. The Apostle Peter

Peter was an Apostle not like the others.

Jesus said some things to Peter like to no other Apostle.

Peter said some things to Jesus like no other Apostle.

Often when all the Apostles wanted to say something to Jesus, Peter said it.

Before, Peter was called Simon.

The first day when Jesus saw Peter, he said to him:

“You are Simon son of Jonah? You will be called Kefas”

(In Aramaic, Kefas was rock; the Greek word was Petros).

A short time before Jesus was with three Apostles on Mount Tabor,

he said to all the Apostles: “Who am I? What do people say?”

They said: “Some say: John the Baptist, some say: one of the Prophets.”

Jesus said to them then: “What do *you* say?”

Peter said: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

(None of the Apostles had said this to Jesus before.)

Jesus said to Peter then:

“God wanted you to know this, Simon son of Jonah.

I say to you now: You are Peter (rock).

If someone builds something on rock (not on sand),

it can be there for a very very long time.

You will be such a rock. I will build something on this rock.

It will be *my church* [in Greek, “*ekklesia mou*”].”

Satan will want it not to be on earth,

he will do many very bad things to it because of this.

I say to you: It will not be as Satan wants,

my church will always be on earth as long as people live on earth.”

(The Apostles didn’t know then what Jesus wanted to say

with the words “my church,” they knew it later.)

Then Jesus said something like this to Peter:

“If later people want to know how they can live,

if they want to live with God, you can say it to them.

Your words will be like keys to a place where people can live with God.”

Then he said the same to all the Apostles

(not with the word “keys,” with some other words).

After this, Jesus said some other things to all the Apostles.

He wanted them to know what would happen to him.

He wanted them to know that people would kill him,

as before they killed many prophets.

Peter said to Jesus then:

“Don’t say things like this, Lord! Such things will never happen to you!”

When Peter said this, Jesus said to Peter:

“When you say this to me, you are doing something very bad to me.

You speak to me like Satan!”

The Apostles knew that Jesus felt something very bad at that moment,

because he said to Peter: “Satan.”

Jesus knew Peter well. He knew that Peter thought like this at that time:

“Very bad things cannot happen to Jesus;

he is the Messiah, he will be the king of the people of Israel.”
Jesus knew that when later people would want to kill him, Peter would say:
“I don’t know that man.”

At the same time, he knew that Peter felt something very very good toward him.
When he wanted the Apostles to know that he was alive,
he wanted Peter to see him before all the others.
He wanted Peter to know that he didn’t feel anything bad toward him
(after Peter said: “I don’t know that man”).

A short time before the Apostles knew that Jesus wouldn’t be on earth anymore,
Jesus said something to Peter like never before.

He said: “Simon, son of Jonah, do you feel something very good toward me?
Not like all the others, more?”

Peter said then to Jesus:

“Lord, you know everything,
you know that I feel something very good toward you.”

Jesus then said to Peter:

“I want you to be like a shepherd.

Soon, many people will say: ‘I want to live with Jesus, with other people.’

I want you to think about them like a shepherd thinks about his sheep.”

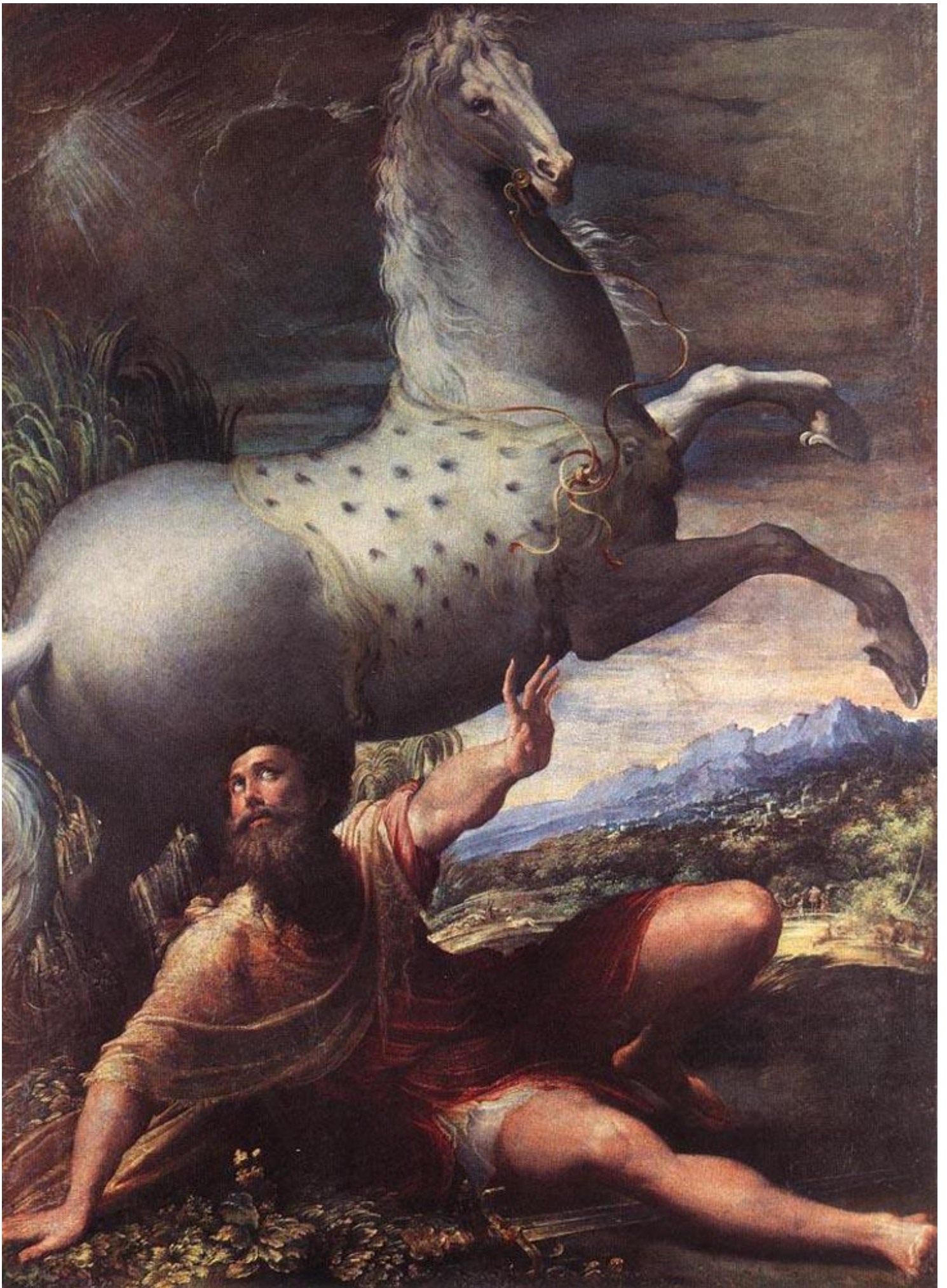
Later Christians knew what Jesus said to Peter. They talked about it.

They knew what he said with the words “shepherd,” “keys,” “rock.”

They wanted to know well what he wanted to say with these words.

They didn’t all think about it in one way.

Christians talk about it now, as before, they don’t all think about it in one way.



39. An Apostle called Paul

One of the Apostles spoke about Jesus to people in many countries,
these people were not Israelites.

This Apostle wanted people everywhere to know Jesus,
he wanted them to want to live with Jesus.

He wanted them to know that if they wanted to live with Jesus,
they didn't have to live like Israelites.

He wanted them to know that if they lived with Jesus, they lived with God.

This Apostle was called Paul. Paul was not an Apostle when Jesus lived on earth.
At that time, he was called Saul.

Saul thought like this: "This man Jesus wants us Jews not to live as Moses said;
he wants us to think not like before. This is very very bad."

Because he thought like this, he felt something very bad toward Jesus,
he felt something very bad toward Christians.

When Jesus didn't live on earth anymore,
he did very bad things to many Christians in Jerusalem because of this.

One of these Christians was called Stephen.

He spoke about Jesus like no one else, the Holy Spirit was with him.

After people listened to Stephen, many wanted to be Christians.

Because of this, people like Caiaphas felt something very bad toward Stephen,
they wanted to kill him, after some time, they did it.

They did it like this: they threw many stones at him.

When they were doing this, Stephen didn't feel anything bad toward them.

He spoke to God about it, like Jesus spoke to God
when the soldiers were nailing him to the cross.

When these people were throwing stones at Stephen, Saul was with them.

He thought like this: "They are doing something very good."

Then one day something happened to Saul: as he said later, he saw Jesus.

It happened like this:

Saul was not in Jerusalem, he was going to a city called Damascus.

He wanted to do very bad things to many Christians there,
as he did in Jerusalem, he wanted them to be in prison.

At one moment, he saw light above the place where he was,
then this light was *in* the place where he was.

He couldn't see anything in that place because of it.

He fell to the ground.

He heard a voice then, the voice said to him:

"Saul, Saul, why do you want to do very bad things to me?"

Saul said: "Lord, who are you?"

The voice said: "I am Jesus, you are doing very bad things to me."

At that moment something happened in Saul.

He didn't want to do bad things to Christians anymore.

After this Saul wanted to know what the Apostles said about Jesus;
he wanted to know what Jesus did, what he said.

After a short time, he didn't think about Jesus like before; he thought like this:

"Jesus was the Messiah. The prophets spoke about him.

He lives; all people can live with him if they want to.
We Israelites know that Moses wanted us to live with God.
I know now that if people live with Jesus, they live with God.”
He wanted to be baptized.
He didn't want to be called Saul, like before, he wanted to be called Paul.

Paul wanted people everywhere to know that all people can live with Jesus:
Greeks, Jews; women, men; slaves, not slaves; *all* people.
He wanted all people to know that if they live with Jesus, they live with God.
He went to many countries to say this to people.
Often very bad things happened to him because of it.
He didn't think then: “I don't want these things to happen to me,”
he thought: “I want people to know Jesus.”
(People can know more about it if they read “The Acts of the Apostles.”)
Paul said a lot about Jesus like no one else, he wrote down much of it.
Many people want to read it, now as before.
He wanted people to know well who Jesus was, why he lived on earth,
why he died on the cross.
He wanted them to know well what the church is.
He wanted them to know what God wants.

Paul died in Rome, like Peter, the Romans killed them in Rome,
as they killed many other Christians, when Nero was Caesar.
They killed Paul with a sword, Peter died on a cross, like Jesus.
Many Christians think like this now:
The other Apostles wanted many people to know Jesus,
they did many things because of this.
These two Apostles did more;
there are many many Christians on earth now because of this.”



40. What will happen to all people—what God wants

When Jesus didn't live on earth anymore,
the Apostles knew that he was with God, as he was before he was born.
They knew that after some time all people will see him, that when they see him,
they will know who he is.
They knew that people will then see a light like no other light,
as three Apostles saw once on Mount Tabor.

The Apostles could think about it like this:

People will know then that when they see Jesus, he sees *them*,
that he knows what they are like inside.
They will know that he knows how they lived,
at the same time *they* will all know how they lived.
They will know when they did good things for other people.
They will know that they were doing good things for God then.
They will know when they didn't want to do good things for other people.
They will know that they didn't want to do something good for God then.
They will think about some things like this:
“When I did this, I did something very bad.”
They will think about some other things like this:
“When I did this, I did something good.”
Jesus will say to some people then:
“You can live with God now, as you are now.”
If he says this to someone, they will feel something very very good.
He will say to some other people:
“You can't live with God now, as you are now.”
If he says this to someone, this someone can feel something very very bad.

The Apostles could know that when people see Jesus,
he will not say to anyone: “You can *never* live with God.”
They could know it because they knew how Jesus spoke about God.
They could know what he wanted to say when he said this:
A man had two sons.
One of them didn't want to live with his father, he wanted to go away.
The father didn't say to him: “You can't do it.”
He said: “you can do as you want.”
The son went away.
He lived for a long time in places far away from his father's house.
He did very bad things in these places,
very bad things happened to him because of it.
After some time, he went back to his father, he said to him:
“Father, I want to live with you. I can't live with you now like a son
because I did very bad things.
Many people live in your house, you are someone above them;
maybe I can live with you like these people.”
The father said to him then:
“Son, you can always live with me like a son lives with his father.”
The father felt something very very good, because he *wanted* this:
He *wanted* his son to live with him, he wanted it very much.

God is like this father.
The Apostles knew that another time Jesus spoke like this about God:
A shepherd had a lot of sheep.
One didn't want to be with him, with the other sheep. It went away.
It was far from the shepherd for a long time,
very bad things happened to it because of this.
The shepherd went to many places
because he wanted to bring that sheep back to the other sheep.
Because he did this, after some time, that sheep was with him,
with the other sheep.
The shepherd felt something very very good because of this,
because he wanted this, he wanted it very much.
God is like this shepherd.

The Apostles wanted other people to know what Jesus said about God,
to know with what words he said it.
People can know these things if they read the Gospels.
The Apostles could know well what Jesus wanted to say,
because the Holy Spirit was with them.
They said it in many places. Later some people wrote it down.
They wrote it in something called the Creed, the Holy Spirit was with them.
Because of this, people everywhere can now know that Christians say this:
Jesus lives. People can live with Jesus, with other people.
When they live with Jesus, they live with God.
God feels something very good toward all people,
God wants to do very good things for all people.
All people can live with God if they want to.
After people die, they can live with God, with other people, forever.
They can feel something very very good forever. God wants it.