NOW WHILE THE PHARISEES were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying: “What does it seem to you about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him: “David’s.” He said to them: “How is it, then, that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put your enemies as a footstool of your feet’?” (22.41–44) Those who had gathered to tempt Jesus and who were endeavoring to ensnare the Truth by their fraudulent question offered an opportunity for their own confutation and are asked about the Christ, “Whose son is he?” The question of Jesus still helps us today against the Jews. For even those who confess that Christ is going to come assert that he will be a mere human being and a holy man from the family of David. As those who have been taught by the Lord, then, let us ask them: If he is simply a man and merely David’s son, how is it that David calls him his own Lord? And he calls him this, not by an uncertain error, nor in his own will, but in the Holy Spirit. Now the testimony that he cited was taken from the one hundred ninth Psalm.1 Therefore, he is called David’s Lord, not according to the fact that he was born from him, but in accordance with the fact that, having been born from the Father, he has always existed,2 preceding the very father of his flesh.3 To elude the truth of the question, the Jews fabricate many frivolous things. They claim that that text refers to Abraham’s home-born slave, whose son was Eliezer of Damascus,4 and that the Psalm was written under his persona. For (they say) that after the slaughter of the five kings,5 the Lord God said to Abraham his lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I put all your en-

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1. Ps 110.1.
2. Cf. Jn 8.58: “Before Abraham was born, I am.”
emies as a footstool of your feet.” Let us ask them: How is it that God said to Abraham the things that follow: “With you is the rulership in the day of your strength in the brightness of your saints; from the womb before the day star I have begotten you” and: “The Lord has sworn and he will not repent it: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”?

Let us indeed compel them to explain how Abraham was born before the day star and became a priest according to the order of Melchizedek, for whom Melchizedek offered bread and wine and from whom he received a tithe of the booty.

22.46. And no one was able to answer him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day to ask him any more questions. The Pharisees and Sadducees were seeking to find a pretext for a malicious charge and some word that would expose him to their treacherous plot. They ask no further questions because they have been put to silence by his words. Yet they very openly hand him over to the Roman authority, once they have him arrested. From this we learn that the poison of envy can indeed be overcome, but it is put to rest with difficulty.

Chapter 23

23.1–3. Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying: “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, observe and do everything that they tell you, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.” What could be gentler, what could be more kind than the Lord? He is tempted by the Pharisees, their plots are wrecked, and according to the Psalmist: “The little children’s arrows have become their wounds.” Nonetheless, on account of the priesthood and the dignity of their office he exhorts the people to be subject to them and to take into consideration their teaching, but not their works. Now, as for what he says: “The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat,” by “seat” he is pointing to the learning of the Law. Therefore, we ought to understand this as referring to learning both what is said in

the Psalm: “He does not sit on the seat of pestilence,”10 and: “He overturned the seats of those selling doves.”11

23.4. “They bind heavy burdens hard to bear and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they are unwilling to move them with their finger.” This has general application to all teachers who command grand things but do not do lesser things. Now one should note that the shoulders, finger, burdens, and chains with which the burdens are bound are to be understood spiritually.

23.5. “But all their works they do in order to be seen by men.” Therefore, whoever does anything in order to be seen by men is a scribe and a Pharisee.

23.5–7. “For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the first places at feasts and the first seats in the synagogues and salutations in the market places and being called rabbi by men.” Woe to us wretched ones to whom the vices of the Pharisees have passed! The Lord, when he gave the commandments of the Law through Moses, added at the end: “You will bind these on your hand and they will be unmoved before your eyes.”12 And this is the meaning: My precepts are in your hand that they might be fulfilled in conduct. Let them be before your eyes for you to meditate on them day and night. The Pharisees, interpreting this perversely, wrote on small parchments the Decalogue of Moses, that is, the ten words of the Law. Folding them up, they even bound them to their forehead and made a crown, so to speak, on their head, so that they would always be moving before their eyes. The Indians and Babylonians do this up to the present day, and among the people the one who has this crown is judged as religious. Moses had commanded something else too, that in the four corners of the robes they should make crimson fringes13 to distinguish the people of Israel. Thus just as circumcision gives the sign of the Jewish nation in the bodies, so their clothing has some differentiation. Superstitious teachers who were desirous of publicity among the people and seeking a profit from little women14 made their fringes long and bound very sharp thorns to them. They did this, evi-

dently, so that as they walked about and sat down they might at times be pricked, and by this reminder as it were they would be drawn back to their duties toward God and ministries in his service. When the Lord had said: “All their works they do in order to be seen by men,” he was making a general accusation. But now he divides it into parts. They called those little depictions of the Decalogue “phylacteries” because whoever had them had his own protection and fortification as it were.15 Now the Pharisees did not understand that these things need to be carried in the heart, not in the body. But chests and boxes hold books and do not have the knowledge of God. Among us there are superstitious little women who keep doing this up to the present day with little Gospels and with the wood of the Cross and with things of this sort. They have a zeal for God, to be sure, but not according to knowledge.16 Straining out a gnat, they swallow a camel.17 There was a small and short fringe of this sort that had been commanded from the Law. That woman who had the flowing of blood touched it on the Lord’s robe,18 but she was not pricked by the superstitious thorns of the Pharisees; rather, she was healed by contact with him. And since they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long in vain, since they desire glory from men, they are exposed in the remaining matters. Why do they seek the first places at dinners and the first seats in the synagogues? Why do they pursue gluttony and glory in public? Why are they called “rabbi” by men? In the Latin language “rabbi” means “teacher.” Finally, he adds:

23.8–10. “But you are not to be called rabbi, for one is your Teacher, and do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father, who is in heaven, nor shall you be called teachers, for your Teacher is one, the Christ.” No other should be called “teacher” or “father” except God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ: Father, because from him are all things;19 Teacher, because through him are all things, or because by his dispensation in the flesh we have all been reconciled to God.20 It is asked why, in contradiction to

15. The Greek word ψυλάζω means “to protect.”
18. Cf. Mt 9.20; Lk 8.44; Mk 5.27.
19. Cf. 1 Cor 8.6; Col 1.16.
this command, the apostle claims that he is the “teacher” of the Gentiles;\(^{21}\) or how it is that in common language, especially in the monasteries of Palestine and Egypt, they call one another Fathers. This is resolved in the following manner: It is one thing to be a father or teacher by nature, something else to be one by tender feeling. If we call a man “father,” we are conferring honor to his age; we are not pointing out the Creator of our life. One is called a “teacher,” too, by one’s association with the true Teacher. And lest I repeat things without end, just as the one God and the one Son by nature does not prejudice others from being called gods and sons by adoption,\(^ {22}\) so also one Father and Teacher does not prejudice others from being called fathers and teachers in an improper sense.

23.13. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven before men; you neither enter yourselves, nor do you allow those entering to enter.” The scribes and Pharisees have knowledge of the Law and the prophets. They know that Christ is the Son of God; they are not unaware that he was born of a virgin. Yet so long as they seek to exploit the people subject to them, they do not enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor do they permit those who were able to enter. This is the accusation that the prophet makes in Hosea: “The priests have hidden the way, they have killed Shechem”;\(^ {23}\) and again: “The priests have not told where the Lord is.”\(^ {24}\) Or, at least, every teacher who scandalizes his disciples by his evil works shuts the kingdom of heaven before them.

23.15. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you go round about the sea and dry land to make one proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves.” We do not preserve things that have been sought with the same zeal with which we seek them. The scribes and Pharisees went around the whole world on account of business negotiations and various profits that they desired from their disciples so earnestly that they were able, under the appearance of sanctity, to proselytize from the Gentiles through their image of

\(^{21}\) Cf. 1 Tm 2.7.  
\(^{22}\) Cf. Jn 10.34; Rom 8.14.  
\(^{23}\) Hos 6.9.  
\(^{24}\) Jer 2.8.
zeal for holiness, that is, to integrate into the people of God an uncircumcised foreigner. But he who previously while he was a pagan was simply lost and was a son of Gehenna once, when he sees the vices of the teachers and understands that they ruin by their conduct what they were teaching by their words, he returns to his vomit. And this one, who had become a member of the household, now as a transgressor will be worthy of greater punishment. But he is called a son of Gehenna in the same way that he speaks of a son of perdition and a son of this age. For each one is called a son of that thing whose works he carries out.

23.16–22. “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the Temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the Temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the Temple that sanctifies the gold? And [you say]: ‘If any one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gift that is on it, he is bound by his oath.’ You are blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore, he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and he who swears by the Temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.”

We explained above, as it seemed to us, what was the meaning of the tradition of the Pharisees who say: “Whatever from me would be a benefit to you is a gift.” Now here, a twofold tradition of the Pharisees is being condemned, which also brings in its wake an occasion for greed. Thus they are convicted of doing everything for the sake of profit and not for the love of God. For just as by their lengthened phylacteries and fringes the reputation of sanctity was striving to acquire glory and was seeking profits through the occasion of glory, so another ruse invented from the tradition exposes the teachers of impiety. If anyone in a dispute or in some quarrel or in a disputed case swore by the Temple and afterward was convicted of lying, he was not held to be responsible for the charge. But if he swore by the gold and money that was offered in the Temple to the priests, at once he

was compelled to pay what he swore on oath. Again, if anyone swore by the altar, no one held him as guilty of perjury; but if he committed perjury by the gift or the offerings, that is, by the sacrifice or victims, and by other similar things, which are offered to God on the altar, they very zealously demanded payment of these things. Therefore, the Lord exposes both their folly and fraudulence. For the Temple is much greater than the gold that is sanctified by the Temple, and the altar is greater than the sacrifice that is sanctified by the altar. But everything they did was not for the fear of God but for the desire of wealth.

23.23. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faithfulness; it was necessary to do these things and not to omit those things.” There are many precepts in the Law that hold forth types of future things. Some are clear, according to the Psalmist, who says: “The command of the Lord is lucid, illuminating the eyes.” 30 Some call for works at once, for instance: “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not speak false testimony,” etc. 31 Now the Lord had given a precept for the support of priests and Levites whose portion was the Lord, 32 namely, a tithe of all things offered in the Temple 33 (for the moment we should forego the mystical interpretation of this precept). But the Pharisees were zealous for this one precept, namely, the accumulation of what had been commanded. Other things that were of greater importance mattered little to them. They did not care whether anyone did them or not. And so, he accuses them of greed on this point, that they zealously exact a tithe even of common herbs, yet they neglect justice in business disputes, and mercy toward poor orphans and widows, and faithfulness to God, which are great matters.

23.24. “Blind guides, straining out a gnat, but swallowing a camel!” In this context and in view of the importance of the precepts, I think that the camel refers to justice, mercy, and faith; the gnat, on the other hand, refers to the tithe of mint, dill, and cumin, and of the other common herbs. Contrary to God’s precept, we devour and neglect these things that are great. Un-

der the impression of being religious, we show diligence toward trivial matters that bring a profit.

23.25–26. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside you are full of rapacity and uncleanness. You blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.” With different words, but with the same sense as above, he accuses the Pharisees of pretense and lying. For they show one thing outwardly to men, but at home they do something else. It is not that their superstition lingered in the cup and the plate, but that they were showing their sanctity outwardly to men, by their dress, speech, phylacteries, fringes, the length of prayers, and other things of this sort. Yet inwardly they were filled with the defilements of vices.

23.27. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful to men, but within they are full of dead men’s bones and all filth.” What he pointed out in regard to the cup and the plate, that they were fine on the outside but inwardly filthy, he now repeats this in the example of the tombs. Just as tombs are smoothed over on the outside with chalk, adorned with marble, and distinguished with gold and colors, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones, so also are bad teachers. They teach one thing and do something else. They may show purity in the quality of their clothing and in the humility of their words, but inwardly they are full of all filth, avarice, and lust. Finally, he expresses this same thing more openly when he adds:

23.28–31. “So you also outwardly appear just to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the just, and you say: ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in [shedding] the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.” He exposes them to be sons of murderers with a very skillful syllogism. Under the reputation of goodness and glory among the people, they build the tombs of the prophets whom their forefathers killed. They say: If we had lived at that time, we would not have done the things that
our fathers did. But even this they speak by their conduct, if they do not say it in words, from the fact that they ambitiously and magnificently build memorials of those who were murdered, whom they do not deny were cut down by their own fathers.

23.32. “And you fill up the measure of your fathers.” Let it be taken as proven from the preceding statements that they were sons of murderers and of those who killed the prophets. He now sums up what he meant and records, as it were, the last part of the syllogism:34 “And you fill up the measure of your fathers.” That is to say: What they left out, you fill in; they killed the servants, you crucify the Lord; they killed the prophets, you kill the one who was predicted by the prophets.

23.33. “Serpents, brood of vipers, how shall you escape from the judgment of Gehenna?” This is exactly what John the Baptist had also said.35 So then, just as vipers are born from vipers, so you murderers, he says, are born from your murderous fathers.

23.34. “Therefore, behold, I am sending to you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city.” We said earlier that the words: “You fill up the measure of your fathers” apply to the person of the Lord, because he was to be killed by them. But these words can also refer to the disciples. For now he says about them: “Behold, I am sending to you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify and scourge in your synagogues and you will persecute from city to city.” Thus you fill up the measure of your fathers. At the same time, observe that according to the apostle, as he writes to the Corinthians,36 there are diverse gifts of the disciples of Christ. Some are prophets who predict things to come; others are wise men who know when they should bring forth words; others are scribes, very learned in the Law. Stephen was one of these [disciples] and was stoned.37 Paul was killed; Peter was crucified.38 In the Acts of the Apostles disciples were scourged,39 and they persecuted them from city to city, expel-

34. See above on Mt 23.28–31.
35. Cf. Mt 3.7–10; cf. Lk 3.7.
36. Cf. 1 Cor 12.1, 8–10.
ling them from Judea so that they moved on to the people of the Gentiles.

23.35–36. “That upon you may come all the just blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of just Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, who was murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.” There is no doubt that Abel is the one killed by his brother Cain. He is acknowledged as just not only by the Lord’s judgment, but by the testimony of Genesis, where his gifts are described as having been accepted by God. But we do need to ask who this Zechariah son of Barachiah is. For we read about many Zechariahs. He even removes the possibility of error for us by adding: “whom you killed between the sanctuary and the altar.” I have read diverse things in diverse sources, and I ought to record the opinions of each of these. Some say that Zechariah son of Barachiah is the eleventh of the twelve prophets. The name of his father is in agreement with this, but the Scripture does not say when he was killed between the sanctuary and the altar, chiefly since in his time there were scarcely even ruins of the Temple. Others want this Zechariah to be understood as the father of John. They approve of certain daydreams from apocryphal writings that say that he was killed because he had predicted the Savior’s advent. Since this view does not have the authority of the Scriptures, it is rejected with the same facility with which it is approved. Others want this Zechariah to be the one who was killed between the sanctuary and the altar by Joash king of Judea, as the history of Kings narrates. But one should

45. Cf. Lk 1.5, 13.
46. Cf. Origen, In Matth. comm. series, 25; Epiphanius, Haer. 26.12.1–4. The apocryphal writing in question is the Genna Marias or “Birth of Mary,” also called The Protevangelium of James, which records that Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, was murdered by the same Herod who ordered the slaughter of the babies at Bethlehem. Probably this legend was suggested by the reference in Matthew’s text. See Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NTA 1, 344–45; ANF 8, 366.
48. Cf. 2 Chr 24.22.
observe that that Zechariah was not the son of Barachiah, but the son of Jehoiada the priest. This is why the Scripture relates: “Joash did not remember the good deeds of Jehoiada his father, which he had done for him.” Since, then, we should also retain Zechariah and the place of the killing is in agreement, we need to ask why he is called the son of Barachiah, and not of Jehoiada. Barachiah means “blessed of the Lord” in our language, and the justice of the priest Jehoiada is shown in the Hebrew language. In the gospel that the Nazarenes use, in place of “son of Barachiah” we have found it written: “son of Jehoiada.” Rather simple brothers point out reddish stones among the ruins of the sanctuary and the altar, or at the exits of the gates which lead to Siloam. They think that these were stained by the blood of Zechariah. We should not condemn their error, because it arises from their pious faith and from the malice of the Jews. We should briefly explain what he means when he says that the blood of just Abel until Zechariah son of Barachiah is required from this generation, seeing that [this generation] has put neither of them to death. The pattern of the Scriptures is to record two [kinds of] generations, [namely,] those who are good or those who are evil; that is, each generation is noted for the one or the other. Let us consider examples of the good: “Who ascends on the mountain of the Lord, or who rests on his holy mountain?” And since he has described very many who would ascend the mountain of the Lord, who lived in various ages, afterward he adds: “This is the generation of those who seek the Lord, of those who seek the face of the God of Jacob.” And in another passage it speaks of all the saints: “The generation

49. Cf. 2 Chr 24.20. H. Ridderbos, Matthew, Bible Student’s Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 433, thinks that the best explanation is to assume that the name of the prophet Zechariah’s father was added later by an uninformed copyist.
50. 2 Chr 24.22.
52. See Pref., n. 6. It is interesting that immediately above this Jerome can condemn Origen (anonymously) for citing an apocryphal writing with approval, and then shortly thereafter cite one himself.
53. Ps 24.3.
54. Ps 24.6.
of the just will be blessed.”⁵⁵ But of the evil it speaks as in the present passage: “A generation of vipers,” and “all things will be required of this generation.” And in Ezekiel, when he had described the sins of the land, the prophetic words added: “If Noah and Job and Daniel were found there, I would not forgive the sins of this land.”⁵⁶ By Noah, Job, and Daniel, he wants all the just to be understood, who are like them in their virtues. Therefore, even those who committed deeds against the apostles similar to [those of] Cain and Joash are referred to as being of a single generation.

23.37. “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who have been sent to you, how often have I wanted to gather your sons as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” By Jerusalem he does not mean the stones and buildings of the city, but its inhabitants. He laments for it with the feeling of a father, just as also in another passage we read that when he saw it, he wept.⁵⁷ Now his words: “How often have I wanted to gather your sons,” testify to the fact that all the prophets in the past had been sent by him. We even read a similitude of a hen gathering her chicks under her wings in the song of Deuteronomy: “Just as an eagle protected her nestlings and longingly desired her chicks, spreading her wings, she has taken them up and borne them upon her pinions.”⁵⁸

23.38. “Behold, your house will be left to you deserted.” Earlier he had already said this very thing under the persona of Jeremiah: “I have left my house; I have abandoned my inheritance; my inheritance has become to me like the den of a hyena.”⁵⁹ We can prove with our eyes that the house of the Jews was deserted, that is, that Temple that was previously shining, inspiring awe. For it destroyed the one who dwelled in it, Christ, and, being eager to seize the inheritance, it killed the heir.⁶⁰

23.39. “For I say to you: You will not see me from now on until you say: ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’” He is speaking to Jerusalem and to the people of the Jews. Now the little verse is the one that the little children and nursing infants used

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⁵⁵. Ps 112.2.
⁵⁸. Dt 32.11.
⁵⁹. Jer 12.7–8.
at the entry of the Lord and Savior into Jerusalem, when they said: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.”\textsuperscript{61} He took it from the one hundred seventeenth Psalm, which is manifestly written about the coming of the Lord.\textsuperscript{62} And he wants his words to be understood as follows: Unless you do penance\textsuperscript{63} and confess that I am he of whom the prophets sang, the Son of the Almighty Father, you will not see my face. The Jews have a time given to them for repentance. Let them confess as blessed he who comes in the name of the Lord, and they will see the face of Christ.\textsuperscript{64}

\textit{Chapter 24}

24.1–2. And having left the Temple, Jesus went away. And his disciples came to him to show him the building of the Temple. But he answered and said to them: “Do you see all these things? Amen I say to you: Not a stone shall be left here upon a stone which will not be destroyed.” The meaning of the historical narrative is manifest. As the Lord was leaving the Temple, all the buildings of the Law and the construction of the commandments were destroyed in such a way that nothing could be fulfilled by the Jews. Once the head was removed, all the members fight among themselves.

24.3. Now as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying: “Tell us, when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the consummation of the world?” He is sitting on the Mount of Olives where the true light of knowledge was arising.\textsuperscript{65} The disciples come to him privately. They were longing to know mysteries and revelation about the future. And they ask three questions: At what time is Jerusalem to be destroyed, when is Christ going to come, and when is the consummation of the world going to happen?

24.5. “For many will come in my name, saying: ‘I am the Christ,’

\textsuperscript{61} Mt 21.9.
\textsuperscript{63} Cf. Lk 13.3.
\textsuperscript{64} Cf. 2 Cor 2.10; 4.6.
\textsuperscript{65} The Mount of Olives suggests the theme of light because the ancients used olive oil in their lamps.
and they will seduce many." One of these is Simon the Samaritan, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles. He claimed to be the great power of God. Among other things, he left the following written statements in his books: "I am the Word [Sermo] of God, I am the Beautiful, I am the Paraclete, I am the Omnipotent, I am God's All." But John the apostle says in his epistle: "You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, but now there are many antichrists." I am of the opinion that all heresiarchs are antichrists and teach things in the name of Christ that are contrary to Christ. It is not surprising that we see some seduced by them, since the Lord said: “And they will seduce many.”

24.6. “For you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See to it that you are not alarmed; for these things must happen, but the end is not yet.” When we see these things happening, then, we should not think that the day of judgment is imminent. Rather, it is reserved for that time, whose sign is clearly recorded in what follows.

24.7–8. “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be pestilences and famines and earthquakes in various places. All these things are the beginning of the sorrows.” I do not call into question that these things that are written down are indeed predictions of future things according to the letter. But it seems to me that “kingdom against kingdom” and “pestilences” can be understood more of those whose words creep in like a cancer. The famine is the one for hearing the word of God. The shaking of the whole earth and the separation from the true faith occur among the heretics. By battling against one another, they assure victory to the Church. But what he has said: “But these are the beginning of the sorrows,” is better translated “of the birth-pains.” Thus the coming of the Antichrist should be understood as a kind of conception, but not a bringing to birth.

24.9. “Then they will hand you over to tribulation and they will kill

68. 1 Jn 2.18.
69. In spite of this statement, Jerome does not deny that there will also be an Antichrist who will come at the end of the world, namely, a man in whom the devil will dwell. Cf. In Dan. 7.8; In Abacuc. 2.15; Ep. 121.11. See J. P. O’Connell, The Eschatology of Saint Jerome, 25.
70. Cf. 2 Tm 2.17.
71. Cf. Am 8.11.
you.” The persona of all believers is designated by the apostles. For at that time no apostles will be found in the flesh.

24.12. “And because iniquity has abounded, the love of many will grow cold.” He has not denied the faith of all, but of many.72 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”73 For among the apostles and those like them, love will endure. Of love it is written: “Much water cannot quench love.”74 And Paul himself says: “Who shall separate from the love of Christ? Tribulation or anguish?” etc.75

24.14. “And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the consummation will come.” The sign of the Lord’s coming is the proclamation of the Gospel in the whole world. Thus no one will have an excuse. We perceive that this is either already completed or will be completed in a short time. For I do not think any nation remains that is ignorant of the name of Christ. Even if it does not have a proclaimer, yet it cannot be ignorant of the report of the faith [coming] from the surrounding nations.76

24.15. “Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, let the reader understand.” Whenever we are summoned to understanding, what has been said is shown to be mystical. Now, we read it in Daniel in this way: “And for half a week my sacrifice and libations will be removed, and in the Temple there will be an abomination of desolations until the consummation of the time, and the consummation will be given over the devastation.”77 The apostle also speaks of this, that the man of iniquity and the ad-

72. J. P. O’Connell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 27, attempts to synthesize Jerome’s understanding of the great apostasy of which Christ has spoken here by suggesting that for Jerome the departure of which Paul speaks (2 Thes 2.3) is identical with this religious defection, and it will be realized in a political defection of the Antichrist from the Roman Empire. Cf. In Dan. 7.25; Eph. 121.11.

73. Mt 20.16; 22.14. 74. Song 8.7.

75. Rom 8.35.

76. J. P. O’Connell, *The Eschatology of Saint Jerome*, 26, observes: “Jerome must have been unaware of the vast extent of pagan lands still to be evangelized. For he felt that already in his time there was hardly a portion of the earth that had not heard of Christ.”

77. Dn 9.27.
versary is to be lifted up against everything that is called God or that is worshiped. He will dare to stand in the Temple of God and show that he himself is God,\(^{78}\) that his coming in accordance with the working of Satan destroys them,\(^{79}\) and that it reduces those who received him to a devastation, void of God.\(^{80}\) Now this can be interpreted either literally of the Antichrist, or of the image of Caesar that Pilate placed in the Temple, or of the equestrian statue of Hadrian, which stands to the present day in the very location of the holy of holies.\(^{81}\) According to the old Scripture,\(^{82}\) an “abomination” is also called an “idol,” and this is why “of desolation” is added, because an idol will be placed in the desolated and destroyed Temple.

24.16–18. “Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take anything from his house, and let him who is in the field not turn back to take his tunic.” The “abomination of desolation” can also be understood of all perverted doctrine. When we see it standing in the holy place, that is, in the Church, and showing itself as God, we should flee from Judea to the mountains; that is, when the letter that kills\(^{83}\) and Judaic depravity have been abandoned, let us draw near to the eternal mountains\(^{84}\) from which God illuminates marvelously. Let us be on the housetop and in the home where the flaming arrows of the devil\(^{85}\) cannot reach. Let us not go down and take anything from the house of our former way of life, nor seek the things that are below.\(^{86}\) Rather, let us sow in the field of the spiritual Scriptures, that we might receive fruit from it. Let us not take another tunic, which the apostles are forbidden to have.\(^{87}\) Concerning this passage, that is, the “abomination of desolation” that is spoken of by the prophet Daniel as standing in the holy place, Porphyry in the thirteenth volume of his work wrote many blasphemous things against us.\(^{88}\) Eusebius

78. Cf. 2 Thes 2.3–4. 79. Cf. 2 Thes 2.8–9. 80. Cf. Lv 26.31; Jer 25.18. 81. Cf. Origen, fragm. 469. 82. That is, the Old Latin (the Latin translation of the LXX). 83. Cf. 2 Cor 3.6. 84. Cf. Ps 76.4. 85. Cf. Eph 6.16; Ps 76.3. 86. Cf. Col 3.1–2. 87. Cf. Mt 10.10. 88. In the prologue of his Commentary on Daniel (PL 25: 491A; CCSL 75A, 771), Jerome indicates that Porphyry wrote his twelfth volume (not thirteenth,
the bishop of Caesarea responded to him in three volumes: the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth. Apollinaris also wrote on this subject in great detail. And it is a superfluous endeavor to wish to discuss in one little section a question on which disputations of so many thousands of lines have been written.

24.19. “And woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days.” Woe to those souls that have not brought their offspring through to the point of being the perfect man. They have the beginnings of the faith but in such a way that they lack the nourishment of teachers. This can also be explained in the following manner. During the persecution of the Antichrist or of the Roman captivity, pregnant women and nursing mothers, being weighed down by the burden in their womb or of their children, will be unable to escape very easily.

24.20. “Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath.” If we want to take this of the captivity of Jerusalem when it was captured by Titus and Vespasian, the meaning is that they should pray that their flight will not be in winter or on a sabbath. For in the former season, the harshness of the cold hinders from traveling in the wastelands and hiding in the mountains and deserts. On the sabbath either it is a transgression of the Law if they wanted to escape, or there would be imminent death if they remain. But if it is understood of the consummation of the world, he is commanding that our faith in and love for Christ not grow cold, and that on the sabbath of the virtues we may not grow torpid and lazy in the work of God.

24.22. “And if those days had not been shortened, no flesh would be saved, but on account of the elect those days will be shortened.” The days are shortened, not in accordance with the delusions of as here) of his great work, Contra Christianos, against the prophecy of Daniel. Since Porphyry's work is not extant, it is not possible to determine in which volume of Porphyry the allegations occur.

89. Cf. Col 1.28.
90. “Nourishment” (enutritio) is cognate with “nursing mothers” (nutrientibus) in the lemma.
91. Jerome interprets Jesus' saying both literally of the time of the Antichrist and allegorically, as he also does in Ep. 121.4.
92. Notice again that Jerome has offered both a literal and an allegorical interpretation.
some who think that the motion of time is altered. They forget the Scripture that says: “The day abides by your appointment.” Rather, we ought to understand this in terms of the quality of time; that is, they are shortened not in measure but in number. Thus, just as in the benediction it is said: “I will fill him with the length of days,” so also now days are understood to be shortened in order to prevent the faith of believers from being shaken by the delay of time.

24.23. “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ!’ or: ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.” At the time of the Judaic captivity, many leaders rose up who claimed to be the Christ. This occurred to such an extent that when the Romans were conducting their siege, there were three factions within [Jerusalem]. But it is understood better of the consummation of the world.

24.24–25. “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will give great signs and prodigies, so that even the elect, if it were possible, would be led into error. Behold, I have told you ahead of time.” As I said earlier, the passage here ought to be explained in a threefold way, either concerning the time of the Roman siege, or concerning the consummation of the world, or concerning the battle of the heretics and antichrists of that sort against the Church, who fight against Christ under the pretext of false knowledge.

24.26. “So then, if they say to you: ‘Behold, he is in the desert,’ do not go out; ‘Behold, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.” If anyone promises you that Christ is staying in the desert of the Gentiles and in the doctrine of the philosophers, or in the inner rooms of the heretics who promise “the secret things of God,” do not go out; do not believe it. Or, since at the time of persecution and anguish, false prophets always find an opportunity for deceiving, if anyone wants to vaunt himself under the name of Christ, you should not at once put faith in him.

24.27. “For just as lightning comes out of the east and appears as

94. Ps 119.91.
95. Ps 91.16.
96. The leaders of these factions were named John, Eleazer, and Simon. Cf. Josephus, BJ 5.1.2.
97. See above on Mt 24.7–8.
98. Cf. 1 Tm 6.20.
far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man." Do not go out; do not believe that the Son of man is either in the desert of the Gentiles or in the inner rooms of the heretics. Believe rather that faith in him shines in the Catholic churches from the east as far as the west. The following should also be said: that the second coming of the Savior will be manifested not in humility, as the first, but in glory. And so, it is foolish to look in a small or hidden place for him who is the light of the whole world.

24.28. "Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered." We are being instructed in the mystery of Christ from a natural example that we see every day. Eagles, and vultures likewise, are said to sense carcases across seas and to be gathered for food of this sort. If, then, irrational birds by a natural feeling, though separated by such great stretches of land and by the waves of the sea, sense where a small carcass is lying, how much more ought we and the entire multitude of believers hasten to him whose lightning flash goes out from the east and appears as far as the west. The Latin word cadaver expresses more clearly the meaning of the word body, that is, πτῶμα. For through the death of the body, it falls (cadat). This term refers to the Passion of Christ, to which we are summoned, so that whenever the Passion is read in the Scriptures, we are gathered together, and through it we can come to the Word of God. This is expressed, for instance, in the following words: "They have pierced my hands and feet," and in Isaiah: "like a lamb led to the slaughter," and other similar things. Now it is the saints who are called "eagles." Their youth is renewed like an eagle’s, and according to Isaiah they have feathers and take up wings that they may come to the Passion of Christ.

24.29. "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; then the stars of

101. Jerome’s etymology is also sustained in the Greek, since πτῶμα is derived from πίπτω (“fall”).
102. Cf. Ps 22.16.
104. Cf. Ps 103.5.
heaven will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.” The sun and moon will be darkened and will not give their light. The other stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. This is not going to happen by a lessening of light, for elsewhere we read that the sun will have seven times its light.106 Rather, the meaning is that in comparison with the true light,107 all things will seem dark.108 And so, that sun that now grows red throughout the whole world, and the moon that illuminates in the second place, and the stars that are aflame as a solace to the night, and all the powers, which we understand as the multitudes of angels, will be reckoned as darkness at the coming of Christ. If this is so, let the arrogance of those be struck down who regard themselves as saints109 and have no fear of the presence of the Judge.

24.30. “And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven.” The sign here refers either to the Cross, just as according to Zechariah and John, the Jews will look upon the one they have pierced;110 or it is the banner of victory of the triumphant one.

24.30. “Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.” Those will mourn who did not have a home and citizenship in heaven, but who were enrolled on the earth.111

24.31. “And he will send his angels with a trumpet.” The apostle also speaks of this trumpet.112 We read about it in the Apocalypse of John,113 and in the Old Testament he commands trumpets to be made that are hammered out thin from gold, bronze, and silver.114 The reason for this is that they will resound deep mysteries of doctrines.115

24.32–33. “From the fig tree, learn the parable. As soon as its branches become tender and its leaves have sprouted, you know that summer is near,” etc. By the example of the tree, he has taught

108. Elsewhere (In Naum 1.5), Jerome interprets the physical phenomena that occur at Christ’s second coming literally, while still admitting a figurative interpretation.
111. Cf. Heb 12.23. 112. Cf. 1 Cor 15.52; 1 Thes 4.16.
114. Cf. Nm 10.2; 8.4. See In Joelem 2.1.
115. Jerome does not say whether or not the trumpet is to be taken literally.
the coming of the consummation. Just as, he says, when the little stalks in the fig tree become tender and the bud bursts forth into flower and the bark produces leaves, you understand the coming of summer and the commencement of the west wind and of spring; so when you see all these things that are written, do not think that the consummation of the world is already here. On the contrary, certain preludes and precursors are coming in order to show that it is near and at the gates.

24:34. “Amen I say to you, that this generation will not pass away until all these things happen.” We have said above\footnote{See on Mt 23.35–36.} that the generations of both the good and the evil are distinct. Therefore, either he is indicating the entire human race, or the race of the Jews in particular.

24:35. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will not pass away.” Heaven and earth will pass away by being changed, not by being annihilated.\footnote{Cf. In Is. 51.6; 65.18.} Otherwise, how will “the sun be darkened, and the moon not give its light, and the stars fall”?\footnote{Mt 24.29.} For this would be impossible if the heaven and the earth did not exist, since this is where these things are located.

24:36. “But of that day and hour, no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, save only the Father alone.” In some Latin manuscripts is added: “nor the Son,” though in the Greek copies,\footnote{Jerome is apparently referring to the Greek copies to which he had access. In reality, the reading “nor the Son” is well attested in the Greek manuscript tradition and should be read. In fact, Jerome essentially adopts this reading below. The words “nor the Son” were probably omitted because of the doctrinal difficulty they presented. See Metzger, \textit{Textual Commentary}, 62.} and of Pierius,\footnote{The name Adamantius refers to Origen. Cf. Eusebius, \textit{HE} 6.14.10; Jerome, \textit{Ep.} 43. Origen’s text does in fact have the words “nor the Son” (GCS 38.2.126–27), so Jerome must be thinking of other references in Origen’s writings that omit these words.} this addition is not found. Yet because it is read in some, it seems necessary to
discuss it. Arius and Eunomius rejoice, as if the ignorance of the teacher is the glory of disciples. They say: He who knows and he who does not know cannot be equal. The following things need to be said briefly against these men. Since Jesus, that is, the Word of God, made all time, for "all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made," but the day of judgment is included among all time, by what consistency can he be ignorant of a part of which he knows the whole? This too should be said: What is greater, knowledge of the Father or of the judgment? If he knows the greater, how is he ignorant of the lesser? We read that it is written: "All things that are the Father’s have been given to me." If all things of the Father are the Son’s, by what account has he reserved for himself the knowledge of a single day and been unwilling to communicate it with his Son? But the following should be added as well. If he is ignorant of the last day of time, he is ignorant also of the penultimate day, and of all the days in back of it. For it is impossible that one who is ignorant of the first would know which is the second. Therefore, since we have proven that the Son is not ignorant of the day of consummation, the reason needs to be given for why he is said not to know. The apostle writes of the Savior: "In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden." Therefore, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, but they are hidden. Why hidden? After the Resurrection, when asked by the apostles about the day, he answered openly: "It is not yours to know the times and moments that the Father has set by his authority." When he says: "It is not yours to know," he shows that he himself knows, but it is not expedient for the apostles to know. Thus, since they are always uncertain about the coming of the Judge, they will live every day in such a way as though they will be judged on another day. Finally, even the following words of the Gospel compel this interpretation, when he says that the Father alone knows. In the Father he has comprehended also the Son; for to speak of a father is always to name a son.

122. Jn 1.3.
123. Mt 11.27.
124. Col 2.3.
125. Acts 1.7.
127. Lit., "for every father is the name of a son" (omnis enim pater filii nomen est). See below on Mt 26.29. Cf. Homily 8 on Ps 74 (75) in FOTC 48, 61.
24.37–38. “But just as in the days of Noah, so also will be the coming of the Son of man. For just as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,” etc. It is asked, How is it that above this it is written: “For nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be pestilences and famines and earthquakes,” and now he mentions future things that are indications of peace? But one must consider this in accordance with the apostle: After the conflicts, dissensions, pestilences, famines, earthquakes, and the other things by which the human race is devastated, a brief peace is going to ensue, which promises a complete period of peace. In this way the faithfulness of believers will be tested to see whether they will hope for the coming of the Judge when the evils have passed. For this is what we read in Paul: “When they say: Peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as the pain of a woman in labor, and they will not escape.”

24.40–41. “Then there will be two in a field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and the other will be left.” Then, he says, there will be two in a field. When? Namely, at the time of the consummation and judgment: Two will be found equally in a field, doing the same labor and sowing the same seed, as it were. But they do not receive the same fruit from their labor. Likewise, two women will be grinding together; one will be taken, the other will be left. By the two men who are lingering in the field and the two women who are equally grinding, understand the synagogue and the Church. For they would seem to be grinding together at the Law. From the same Scriptures they seem to crush the same flour of God’s precepts. Or understand the other heresies that seem to grind the flour of their doctrines either from both Testaments or from one of them. Though they have the intention of having the

128. Mt 24.7. 129. Cf. 1 Thes 5.3. 130. For example, the Marcionite sect rejected the Old Testament in its entirety and drew its doctrine from a badly mutilated form of the New Testament (parts of Luke and ten of Paul’s letters). Other heresies, such as Valentinian Gnosticism, used both the Old and New Testaments in eclectic fashion. Jerome seems to be conceding, however, that certain heretical sects will be received into the kingdom, and others will be rejected.
name of Christian, they will not receive the same reward. For some of them will be taken and others forsaken.

24.42. “Watch, therefore, for you do not know at what hour your Lord will come.” He is clearly showing why he had said above: “But concerning that day no one knows, neither the Son of man, nor the angels, save only the Father alone.” It is not expedient for the apostles to know this. Thus they will always believe that he is coming with the uncertainty of an imminent expectation. For they do not know when he will come. And he did not say: “For we do not know at what hour the Lord will come,” but: “you do not know.” He had spoken earlier about this in the example of the householder. Now he shows more manifestly why he is silent about the day of consummation, saying:

24.44–46. “Be ready, because you do not know at what hour the Son of man is coming. Who, do you think, is the faithful and wise servant whom his master has appointed over his household that he should give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing.” He impresses more fully and he repeats the reason why he said earlier that neither the angels nor he himself knows about the day and hour of the consummation, but only the Father: because it is not expedient for the apostles to know. And he introduces the example of the householder, that is, himself, and of the faithful servants, that is, the apostles, as an encouragement to solicitous minds. With the expectation of receiving rewards, they are to serve their fellow servants the food of doctrines at the proper time.

24.48–49. “But if that wicked servant says in his heart: ‘My master is delayed,’ and he begins to beat his fellow servants,” etc. These words depend on what precedes. Just as a solicitous servant and one who is always expecting the coming of his master gives food to his fellow servants at the proper time, and afterward he is appointed over all the goods of the householder, so on the contrary he who does not think that his master will come soon becomes rather secure and he takes it easy with feasting and

131. Notice that now Jerome reads “neither the Son of man” as the authentic text of Matthew’s Gospel. See his discussion above under Mt 24.36.
132. Mt 24.36.
luxury. This agrees with Ezekiel who says: “That will happen in a long time.”

In the householder he will encounter not leniency but a most severe judge.

24.50–51. “The master of that servant will come on a day that he does not expect, and at an hour he does not know, and he will divide him and put his share with the hypocrites.” He teaches the same thing, that they might know that the Lord is going to come at a time when he is not being thought of. He admonishes the stewards to vigilance and solicitude. What he says further, “He will divide him,” does not mean that he will cut him in two with a sword. Rather, it means that he will separate him from an allotment with the saints and put his share with the hypocrites, namely, with those who were in the field and who were grinding and nevertheless were left behind. We have often said that a hypocrite is one thing, but shows something else. In this way he too was seen in the field and at the millstone doing the same thing that the man of the Church was doing, but the outcome showed that they were of different wills.

Chapter 25

25.1–2. “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride; five of them were foolish and five were wise,” etc. To some this parable, that is, similitude, of the ten virgins, foolish and wise, is interpreted literally of virgins. According to the apostle, some are virgins in both body and mind; others, preserving the virginity of their body only, either do not have other works that are

134. Ezek 12.22.
136. Cf. Mt 6.2, 16; 7.3; 22.18.
137. The omission of “and the bride” in many ancient manuscripts (and in the modern versions) may have been due to the belief that these words were incompatible with the Pauline (cf. Eph 5.29–32) and Johannine (cf. Rv 21.2) view that Christ, the Bridegroom, would come to fetch his bride the Church. Jerome’s reading could easily be the right one.
139. Cf. 1 Cor 7.34.
similar by their own intention, or, having been preserved by the protection of their parents, nonetheless have married in their minds. But from what precedes, it seems to me that the meaning expressed is different. The comparison applies not to virginal bodies but to the whole human race. For above he spoke of the two in the field and the two grinding at the mill as representing two peoples,\textsuperscript{140} that of the Christians and that of the Jews, or that of the saints and that of sinners. The latter indeed seem to be established in the Church, and they seem to be plowing and grinding, but they do everything in hypocrisy. In the same way now the ten virgins embrace all men who seem to believe in God. They congratulate themselves for their possession of the Holy Scriptures. For members of the Church do this, and so do the Jews and the heretics. The reason they are all called virgins is that they boast in the knowledge of the one God, and their mind is not violated\textsuperscript{141} by the mob of idolatry.\textsuperscript{142} The virgins who have oil are those who are adorned with works as well as with faith. Those who indeed seem to confess the Lord with similar faith, but who neglect the works of the virtues, do not have oil. In the five wise and five foolish virgins, we can interpret the five senses. Some of the senses hasten to heavenly things and desire the things above;\textsuperscript{143} others cast longing eyes at earthly corruption and do not have the solace of the truth by which they may illuminate their hearts. For the Scriptures speak of sight, sound, and touch in a spiritual sense, for example: "What we have seen, what we have heard, what we have beheld with our eyes and our hands have touched."\textsuperscript{144} Concerning taste it says: "Taste and see that the Lord is good."\textsuperscript{145} Concerning smell we find: "We run after the fragrance of your ointments",\textsuperscript{146} and: "We are the good fragrance of Christ."\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{140} See above on Mt 24.40.
\textsuperscript{141} Lit., “is not raped” (non constupratur).
\textsuperscript{142} This is a dominant theme in the prophets: when they reproach Israel for idolatry, they accuse them of adultery and compare the people of God to a prostitute. Cf. Ezek 16–23; Jer 3.6–13.
\textsuperscript{143} Cf. Col 3.2.
\textsuperscript{144} 1 Jn 1.1.
\textsuperscript{145} Ps 34.8.
\textsuperscript{146} Song 1.3.
\textsuperscript{147} 2 Cor 2.15.
25.5. “But when the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.” For no small amount of time passes between the first and the second coming of the Lord. “They all slumbered”: that is, they died, since the death of saints is called sleep.\(^{148}\) It is consistent that it is said, “They slept,” since later they will be roused.\(^{149}\)

25.6. “But at midnight there was a cry: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him.’” For suddenly, as if in the dead of night and with everything secure, when slumber is deepest, the coming of Christ will resound with the shout of angels and the trumpets of the powers that will precede him.\(^{150}\) We should say something that may perhaps be useful to the reader. According to Jewish tradition, the Christ will come at midnight. This correlates with the time in Egypt when the Passover was celebrated, the destroyer came, the Lord passed over the tabernacles, and the fronts of our doorposts were consecrated with lamb’s blood.\(^{151}\) I think this is also why the apostolic tradition continued that on the day of the Passover vigil it is not permitted to dismiss the people before midnight, as they await the coming of Christ. Once that time has passed, the safety of all who celebrate the feast day is assured. This is also why the Psalmist said: “I rose at midnight to give praise to you for the judgments of your justice.”\(^{152}\)

25.7. “Then all those virgins rose and adorned their lamps.” All the virgins rose and each of them adorned her lamp. The lamps stand for the senses by means of which they received the oil of knowledge. Thus do they nourish the works of the virtues that shine forth before the true Judge.

25.8. “But the foolish ones said to the wise: ‘Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’” Those who complain that their lamps are going out show that they are shining in part. Yet they do not have an unfailing light or perpetual works. If any-

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\(^{148}\) Cf. Acts 7.60; 1 Thes 4.13. See *Vita Pauli* 11; *Contra Vig.* 6; *Ep.* 127.14.


\(^{150}\) Cf. 1 Thes 4.16; Mt 26.64.

\(^{151}\) Cf. Ex 12.3–23.

\(^{152}\) Ps 119.62.
one therefore has a virginal soul and is a lover of chastity, he
should not be content with mediocre things which quickly fade.
For when the heat rises, they become dry.\footnote{Cf. Mt 13.6; Jb 30.30.} On the contrary, let
him pursue the perfect virtues that he may have eternal light.

25.9. “The wise answered and said: ‘No, for perhaps then there would
not be enough for us and for you.’” They give this response not out
of greed but out of fear. For each one will receive a reward for
his works,\footnote{Cf. 2 Cor 5.10.} nor can the virtues of some remove the vices of oth-
ers on the day of judgment. And just as at the time of the captiv-
ity in Babylon, Jeremiah was unable to help sinners, and it was
said to him: “Do not pray for this people,”\footnote{Jer 7.16.} so that day will be
dreadful, when each one will be concerned for himself.

25.9. “Go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.” This oil,
which we understand as consisting in alms and in all the virtues
and counsels of the teachers, is sold and bought at a great price,
and it is acquired with difficult effort.

25.10. “But while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came.” In
their apparent wisdom they give the counsel that they must not
meet the bridegroom without oil in their lamps. But because
the time of buying had now passed and the day of judgment was
approaching, there was no opportunity for repentance. As the
Psalmist says: “Who will confess to you in the underworld?”\footnote{Ps 6.5.}
They are compelled to pay the account for the past deeds, not
to accomplish new works.

25.10. “The bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in
with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.” After the day of
judgment, the opportunity for good works and for justice will
disappear.\footnote{J. P. O’Connell, The Eschatology of Saint Jerome, 11–12, notes that
during the Origenist quarrel there is little mention of death (as opposed to the
future day of judgment) as the end of the Christian’s opportunity to do good
works and earn merit, because this was not the precise point of Origen’s teach-
ing on which the controversy turned. The present passage, however, is of rele-
ance: “Our author [Jerome] seems here to say that the end of a Christian’s
opportunity to merit is not death but the last judgment. . . . Jerome many times
speaks as though he were completely unaware of what happens between death
and the last judgment. However, the interpretation of such texts . . . allows no}
25.11. “But at last the other virgins came also, saying: ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’” To be sure, this is an illustrious confession in the title of the Lord, and it is a repeated indication of their faith. But what benefit is there in calling upon him with your voice when you deny him by your deeds?

25.12. “But he responded and said: ‘Amen I say to you: I do not know you.’” “The Lord knows those who are his,”158 and “he who does not know will be unknown.”159 The Lord does not know the workers of iniquity.160 Though they are virgins, and in two senses they are honored, for the purity of their body and for their confession of the true faith, yet, since they do not have the oil of knowledge, it is sufficient for their punishment that they are not known by the Bridegroom.

25.13. “Watch therefore, because you do not know the day or the hour.” I always warn the wise reader not to subscribe to superstitious interpretations and those that are spoken “line by line”161 by people who fabricate things by their own arbitrary will. Instead, let the reader consider what precedes, what is in the middle, and what follows. And let him connect to one another all the things that are written.162 And therefore, everything that he said can be understood from added words: “Watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.” This applies to the two who are in the field, to the two women grinding,163 to the householder who entrusted his property to his servant,164 and to the ten virgins.165 The reason the parables were given first was so that we might carefully prepare the light of good works for ourselves, since we men do not know the day of judgment.166 Otherwise, the Judge may come when we do not know it.

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158. 2 Tm 2.19. 159. 1 Cor 14.38. 160. Cf. Mt 7.23. 161. Lat., commatice. A cognate of this word (commaticum) is used in the Preface (4) to describe one of Origen’s works on Matthew. Jerome probably has Origen in mind in this section. 162. This text is important for appreciating Jerome’s method of biblical interpretation. 163. Cf. Mt 24.40–41. 164. Cf. Mt 24.45. 165. Cf. Mt 25.1–12. 166. Cf. Mt 25.7.
25.14–15. “For just as when a man going on a journey called his servants and delivered to them his goods and to one he gave five talents, to another two, but to another one.” Doubtless this human householder is none other than Christ. When he was about to ascend to the Father as a victor after the Resurrection, he called the apostles and delivered to them the evangelical doctrine.\(^{167}\) It was not on account of lavishness and stinginess that he gave more to one and less to another, but on account of the abilities of those who receive. This correlates with what the apostle also says, that he fed milk to those who were incapable of taking in solid food.\(^{168}\) After all, he receives with a similar joy both him who had made ten talents from five and him who had made four from two. He did not consider the size of the profit but the intention of their zeal. In the five, two, and one talents, we should understand either diverse graces, which have been delivered to each one; or, in the first, all the senses that have been examined [above],\(^{169}\) in the second, understanding and works, and in the third, reason, by which we men are separated from the beasts.

25.16. “He who had received the five talents went off and put them to work. He gained another five.” By using the earthly senses that he had received, he doubled the knowledge of the heavenly things for himself. He understood the Creator from the creatures,\(^{170}\) incorporeal things from those with bodies, invisible things from visible ones, eternal things from things that are ephemeral.

25.17. “He who had received two gained another two.” In proportion to his abilities, whatever he had learned in the Law, he doubled it in the Gospel. Or: he understood that knowledge and works of the present life are types of the future blessedness.

25.18. “But he who had received one went away and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money.” The wicked servant neglected and defiled God’s commands by earthly works and by the pleasure of the world. In another evangelist it is written that he

\(^{167}\) Cf. Mt 28.19.
\(^{168}\) Cf. 1 Cor 3.2.
\(^{169}\) He means the (five) senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell. See under Mt 25.1–2.
\(^{170}\) Cf. Rom 1.20.
wrapped it in a napkin;\(^{171}\) that is, he took the vigor out of the doctrine of the householder by living softly and delicately.\(^{172}\)

25.19. “But after a long time the master of those servants came.” The time between the Savior’s Ascension and his second coming is great. Now if the apostles are going to render an account and rise up with fear of the Judge, what ought we to do?

25.21. “The lord said to him: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; since you were faithful over a few things, I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’” As I have already said earlier,\(^{173}\) the householder speaks affectionately to the two servants with the same words, both to the one who from five talents made ten, and to the one who from two made four. And one should note that all things that we have in the present, though they may seem great and many, nevertheless are small and few compared with future things. He says, “Enter into the joy of your master,” and receive “the things that neither eye has seen nor ear heard nor have ascended into the heart of man.”\(^{174}\) Now what greater thing could be given to the faithful servant than to be with the master\(^{175}\) and to see the joy of his master?

25.24–25. “But he also who had received one talent approached and said: ‘Lord, I know that you are a hard man; you reap where you have not sown, and you gather where you have not scattered; so I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Behold, you have what is yours.’” Truly, the words of Scripture: “to make excuses to excuse sins”\(^{176}\) apply to this servant as well, as he adds the crime of arrogance to his laziness and negligence. For the one who ought to have confessed his inactivity and to have pleaded with the householder speaks evil instead. He claims that he has acted by wise counsel and that he was afraid of endangering the capital while seeking to make a profit on the money.

25.26–28. “But his master answered and said to him: ‘You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I do not sow, and gather where I have not scattered? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who

\(^{171}\) Cf. Lk 19.20.  
\(^{172}\) Cf. Lk 15.13.  
\(^{173}\) See on Mt 25.14–15.  
\(^{174}\) 1 Cor 2.9.  
\(^{175}\) Cf. Phil 1.23.  
\(^{176}\) Ps 141.4.
has ten talents.” What he thought he had said as an excuse is turned into a charge against him. The servant is called “wicked” because he maligns his master, “lazy” because he was unwilling to double the talent. Thus he is condemned for arrogance on the first point and for negligence on the second. If, he says, you knew that I am hard and cruel, that I run after other people’s things and reap where I have not sown, why did this consideration not strike fear into you? You should have known that I was going to seek what was mine more diligently. Then you would have put my money, or silver, with the bankers. For the Greek word ἀργύριον means both. It says: “The things spoken by the Lord are pure utterances, silver examined and proven by fire, purified of earth seven times.”

Therefore, the money and silver refer to the preaching of the Gospel and the divine words which must be given to the bankers and money-changers. These latter may refer to other teachers, for this is exactly what the apostles did in each province when they ordained priests and bishops. Or they may refer to all believers who can double the money and render it with interest, as they fulfill in deed whatever they have learned in words. But the talent is taken away and given to him who had made ten talents. We can understand this to mean that, although the master’s joy in the labor of each one is equal, that is to say, both for him who doubled the five into ten and for him who made two into four, yet the reward owed is greater to him who had labored more with the Lord’s money. This is exactly why the apostle says: “Honor the priests who are truly priests, especially those who labor in the word of God.”

From what the wicked servant has dared to say: “You reap where you have not sown, and you gather where you have not scattered,” we understand that the Lord accepts the good life even of the Gentiles and philosophers. He regards those who behave justly one way, and those who behave unjustly in another way. Those who neglect the written law will be condemned in comparison with the one who serves the natural law.

25.29. “For to everyone who has, it will be given and he will abound, but to him who does not have, even what he seems to have will be tak-

177. Ps 12.6.
178. 1 Tm 5.17.
179. Cf. Rom 2.12, 27.
Many are wise by nature and have an acute natural intelligence. But if they become negligent and corrupt the good of nature by idleness, they can lose the good of nature and seem to pass the reward that had been promised to them to others, namely, to those who in comparison with them had by labor and diligence compensated somewhat tardily for what they had less of to begin with. It can also be understood in this way: The good judge will give to him who has faith and a good will in the Lord, even if, being human, he has something less in works; but he who does not have faith will lose even the other virtues that he seemed to possess by nature. And it is elegantly said: “what he seems to have will be taken from him.” For whatever is apart from faith in Christ ought not be imputed to him who has badly abused it, but to him who gave the good of nature even to the wicked servant.

25.30. “And cast the useless servant into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The Lord is light. He who lacks the true light is sent outside by him. Above we have discussed what the weeping and gnashing of teeth refer to.

25.31–33. “Now, when the Son of man comes in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his majesty, and before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.” Being about to celebrate the Passover after two days and to be handed over to the cross and mocked by men and given a drink of vinegar and gall, he rightly promises the glory of the triumphant one. He wants to compensate for the stumbling blocks that are about to follow with the reward of promise. We should note that he who is to be seen in majesty is the Son of man. And as for what follows: “He will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left,” understand it in accordance with what you read elsewhere: “The heart of a wise man is on his right hand, and the heart of a fool is on his left.” Also, above in this same Gospel it says: “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” The sheep are commanded to stand to

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the right on the side of the just; the goats, that is, sinners, to the left. In the Law goats are always offered for sin.\textsuperscript{184} He did not say “she-goats.” These can have young, and “when shorn they come up from the washing all bearing twins, and not one among them is sterile.”\textsuperscript{185} Instead he said “goats,” a lascivious animal, apt to butt, and always burning for intercourse.

25.34. “‘Come, O blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” This is to be understood in accordance with the foreknowledge of God, with whom future things are already done.\textsuperscript{186}

25.40. “‘Amen I say to you: As you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.’” The interpretation is clear. The hungering Christ was fed in each of the poor; thirsting, he received drink; a guest, he was invited in under the roof; naked, he was clothed; weak, he was visited; shut up in prison, he had the solace of a visitor. As for the words that follow: “When you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me,” it does not seem to me that he said this generally of the poor, but of those who are poor in spirit.\textsuperscript{187} For it was to them that he reached out his hand and said: “My brothers and my mother are those who do the will of my Father.”\textsuperscript{188}

25.46. “And they will go into eternal punishment, but the just into eternal life.” Wise reader, pay attention to the fact that the punishments are eternal,\textsuperscript{189} and that, from that time on, the perpetual life has no fear of falling away.\textsuperscript{190}

\textsuperscript{184} Cf. Ex 12.5. \textsuperscript{185} Song 4.2.
\textsuperscript{186} Cf. 1 Pt 1.2 (Greek, not RSV). Jerome follows the Greek interpreters in explaining predestination as foreknowledge of merit. Augustine was alone among the Fathers in rejecting election according to foreseen merits.
\textsuperscript{187} Cf. Mt 5.3. \textsuperscript{188} Cf. Lk 8.21; Mt 12.50.
\textsuperscript{189} This text is the strongest one in Jerome’s writings that appears to affirm that once being a Christian is not an absolute assurance of final entrance into heaven. Jerome reminds his Christian readers here that eternal punishments await those whom Christ, at the general judgment, will be able to accuse of a lack of charity during this life. There is not the slightest evidence to suggest that those who are so accused must also lack faith. In spite of this seeming clarity, J. P. O’Connell, \textit{The Eschatology of Saint Jerome}, 175, persists in his view that Jerome was probably a mercyist (see note on 5.29), and that this present text “is not irrefutably anti-mercyist.”
\textsuperscript{190} Jerome is probably directing this second clause against Origen’s teach-
26.1–2. And it came about that when Jesus had finished all these words he said to his disciples: “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be handed over to be crucified.” Let them[^191] blush who think that the Savior feared death and that it was out of dread of suffering that he said: “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.”[^192] He was about to celebrate the Passover after two days. He knew that he was going to be handed over to be crucified; and yet, he does not avoid the plots, nor does he flee out of terror. To such an extent is he intrepid that he goes on, even when the others are unwilling to go, as when Thomas says: “Let us go, that we too might die with him.”[^193] And wanting to put an end to the fleshly festivity, and to restore the truth, as the shadow of the Passover passes away, he said: “With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”[^194] “For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed,”[^195] if we eat it “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”[^196] As for what he says further: “After two days the Passover will come,” let us search for what is holy and leave aside the literal understanding. After two days of the clearest light (of the Old and New Testaments), the true Passover is celebrated for the world. In Hebrew the Passover is called Phase. The name derives not from the word passion (passio),[^197] as the majority think, but from passing (transitus), because the destroyer, upon seeing the

[^191]: M. Simonetti, Matthew 1b (ACC), p. 236, thinks that Jerome’s adversaries here are pagans, specifically Porphyry, who used Jesus’ request that his cup be taken from him to maintain that he could not have been of a divine nature. Jerome may also have the heretics Arius and Eunomius in mind. See below at 26.37.

[^192]: Mt 26.39.

[^193]: Jn 11.16.

[^194]: Lk 22.15.

[^195]: 1 Cor 5.7.

[^196]: 1 Cor 5.8.

[^197]: According to this commonplace but mistaken Greek etymology, Phase is derived from paschein, to suffer. Cf. Melito of Sardis, Peri Pascha (SC 123, 84); Tertullian, Adv. Judaeos 10.18.
blood on the doors of the Israelites, passed through and did not strike them.\textsuperscript{198} Or it was because the Lord himself offered his help to the people and walked above them. Read the book of Exodus. I will discuss this in greater detail if life permits.\textsuperscript{199} Now our passing, that is, Phase, is thus celebrated if we hasten toward heavenly things, leaving earthly things and Egypt behind.

26.3–4. \textit{Then the chief priests and elders of the people were gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. And they took counsel that they might seize Jesus by means of deceit and kill him.}\ With the Passover near, those who should have been preparing victims, making smooth the walls of the Temple, sweeping the pavement, cleansing the vessels, and purifying themselves in accordance with the rite of the Law,\textsuperscript{200} that they might become worthy to eat the lamb, are gathered together and enter into counsel to determine how to kill the Lord. They do not fear a tumult, as the literal words show, but they are on guard, lest [Jesus] be removed from their hands with the help of the people.

26.6. \textit{Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper.} He was about to suffer for the whole world and to redeem all nations by his blood. He stays in Bethany, “the house of obedience,”\textsuperscript{201} which at one time belonged to Simon the leper. It is not that he remained a leper even at that time, but that he was formerly a leper and afterward was cleansed by the Savior. His original name remained with him in order that the power of the one who cured him might appear. For even in the list of apostles, though Matthew is called a tax-collector\textsuperscript{202} according to his former vice and duty, he had certainly ceased being a tax-collector. Some\textsuperscript{203} want the house of Simon the leper to be understood as that portion of the people that believed in the Lord and was cured by him.\textsuperscript{204} Simon, too, is himself called “the one who obeys.” According to another understanding his name can be translated “clean.” It was in his house that the Church was healed.

26.7. \textit{A woman came to him, holding an alabaster jar of precious

\textsuperscript{198} Cf. Ex 12.13.
\textsuperscript{199} Jerome never composed this commentary on Exodus.
\textsuperscript{200} Cf. Lv 23.3–5; Nm 28.16.
\textsuperscript{201} Cf. De interpr. hebr. nom., p. 60, line 27.
\textsuperscript{202} Cf. Mt 10.3.
\textsuperscript{203} Who?
\textsuperscript{204} Cf. Homily 84 in FOTC 57, 189.
ointment, and she poured it on his head as he was reclining. Let no one think that she who poured ointment on his head and she who poured it on his feet are the same woman. For the latter also washes them with her tears and wipes them with her hair and is openly called a prostitute. But no such thing is written about this woman. For a prostitute could not at once become worthy of the Lord’s head. Another evangelist recorded “pure nard” for “an alabaster jar full of precious ointment.” (Alabaster is a kind of marble.) “Pure” (pisticus) means “true” and “without deceit.” Thus the other evangelist is showing the faith (pistis) of the Church and of the Gentiles.

26.8–9. But when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying: “Why this waste? For this could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.” I know that some criticize this passage and ask why another evangelist said that Judas alone was angry, for he held the purse and was a thief from the beginning, whereas Matthew writes that all the apostles were indignant. These critics are unaware of a figure of speech called σύλληψις, which is customarily termed “all for one and one for many.” For even the apostle Paul in his epistle that is written to the Hebrews (although many Latins have doubts about this), when he described the sufferings and merits of the saints, added: “They were stoned, they were tested, they were sawn in two, they died by being cut down by the sword.” And yet, the Jews assert that only one prophet, namely, Isaiah, was cut in two. We can also

207. Cf. Jn 12.3.
208. Cf. Homily 84 in FOTC 57, 189.
209. Who?
211. Above on Mt 12.40 Jerome uses συνεκδοχικῶς (“by synecdoche”) for a similar figure of speech. We call this synecdoche, which consists in taking a part for the whole or the whole for a part. See also below on Mt 27.44.
212. In antiquity there were doubts about the Pauline authorship of the letter to the Hebrews. In the East these doubts did not hinder the acceptance of the letter into the New Testament canon, but in the West the full acceptance of Hebrews came only at the beginning of the fifth century.
explain it in another way: The apostles truly are indignant for the sake of the poor, but Judas was indignant for the sake of his own profits. This is why his grumbling is recorded along with his misdeeds. For he did not care about the poor but wanted to provide for his own thievery.

26.10–11. But Jesus, aware of this, said to them: “Why do you trouble the woman? A good work has been done to me; for you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.” Another question arises: Why did the Lord after the Resurrection say to the disciples: “Behold, I am with you always until the consummation of the world,” but now he says: “But you will not always have me”? It seems to me that he is speaking in this passage of his bodily presence, which will not be with them after the Resurrection, as it is now in all companionship and intimacy. The apostle was mindful of this matter when he said: “And if we knew Jesus Christ according to the flesh, but now we no longer know him.”

26.12. “For in pouring this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.” What you think of as a waste of ointment is a duty for burial. No wonder if she gave the good fragrance of her faith to me, since I am going to pour out my blood for her.

26.13. “Amen I say to you: Wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, even what she did will be told in memory of her.” It is not so much this woman as the Church that is preached in the whole world, because she buried the Savior, because she anointed his head. And notice his knowledge of the future, that he who is about to suffer and die after two days knows that his Gospel will be celebrated in the whole world.

26.15. And he said to them: “What are you willing to give to me and I will hand him over to you?” And they decided upon thirty silver pieces for him. Wretched Judas! He wants to compensate for the loss that he believed he had incurred at the outpouring of the ointment with the price of his master. And yet, he does not demand a definite sum so that at least the betrayal would have appeared lucrative. But as if handing over a vile slave to the authority of the buyers, he proposed an amount that was as

much as they were willing to give. “They decided upon thirty silver pieces for him.” Joseph was sold not for twenty gold pieces, as many think, in accordance with the LXX, but, according to the Hebrew truth, for twenty silver pieces. For the slave could not have more value than the Master.

26.17. Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying: “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” The first day of the Unleavened Bread is the fourteenth day of the first month, when the lamb is sacrificed and the moon is fullest and the leaven is cast out. Now I think that Judas the traitor was also among these disciples who came to the Lord, asking: “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

26.18. But Jesus said: “Go into the city to a certain man.” The new Scripture preserves the usage of the Old Testament. We read frequently: “He said to that one”; and: “In this place and that,” which in Hebrew is said as phelmoni and helmoni, without the names of the persons and places being recorded. “And you will find,” he says, “a certain man carrying a jar of water.” The reason their names have been omitted is so that a free opportunity of festivity might be opened up for all who are going to celebrate the Passover.

26.19. And the disciples did as Jesus instructed them, and they prepared the Passover. In another evangelist it is written that they found a large upper room, furnished and cleansed, and they made preparations for him there. It seems to me that the upper room stands for the spiritual law, which emerges from the confined places of the letter and receives the Savior in a lofty place. Paul says the same thing, that he despised as offscourings and refuse the things that he previously considered as gain, that he might prepare a worthy guest room for the Lord.

26.20. Now when evening came, he was reclining with the twelve disciples. In this way Judas does everything in such a way that the suspicion of his being a traitor might be removed.

221. Cf. Ex 12.1–6.
224. Cf. Phil 3.7–8; Phlm 22.
26.21. *And while they were eating, he said: “Amen I say to you that one of you is going to hand me over.”* The one who had predicted his suffering also predicts his betrayer. He was giving room for repentance, so that when he had understood that Jesus knew his thoughts and secret plans, he might repent of his deed. And yet Jesus does not specifically point him out. For he might have become more impudent, had he been manifestly exposed. He casts the charge against the group, that the one who is aware of it might do penance.

26.22. *And being very saddened, they each began to say: “Is it I, Lord?”* At least eleven apostles knew that they were thinking no such thing against the Lord, but they believe the Master more than themselves. They fear their own weakness and ask him sorrowfully about the sin of which they did not have awareness.

26.23. *But he answered and said: “He will hand me over who dips his hand in the dish with me.”* How admirable is the Lord’s patience! First he said: “One of you is going to hand me over.” The betrayer perseveres in his malice. Jesus exposes him more openly but does not reveal his proper name. While the others are saddened and are retracting their hands and are keeping food from their mouths, Judas, with the temerity and impudence by which he was going to commit the betrayal, even puts his hand in the dish with the Master. Thus he feigns a good conscience by this audacity.

26.24. *“The Son of man goes indeed as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man will be handed over.”* Judas does not retrace his steps, even after being rebuked for his treachery not one time but twice. Instead, the Lord’s patience feeds his impudence, and he treasures up wrath for himself on the day of wrath. Punishment is predicted, that the threatened penalties might correct the one whom shame did not conquer. As for what follows:

26.24. *“It would be good for that man if he had not been born”;* it is not to be thought on account of these words that he existed prior to his birth, on the grounds that it could not be well for any-

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226. Cf. Rom 2.5.
227. Using the variant reading, *eset*; see CCSL 77, 250, note on line 1125.
one except for one who existed.\textsuperscript{228} Instead, it has been spoken literally, that it is much better not to exist than to exist badly.

26.25. But Judas, who handed him over, answered and said: “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him: “You have said it.” The others were sad and had very sorrowfully asked: “Is it I, Lord?” Thus, lest he seem to betray himself by his silence, Judas himself asks in similar fashion: “Is it I, Rabbi?” He who had boldly put his hand in the dish was stung in his conscience. But in his words he adds either the affection of a flatterer\textsuperscript{229} or the sign of unbelief. For the others who were not going to betray say: “Is it I, Lord?” But he who was going to betray calls him not “Lord” but “Teacher.” It is as if he would have an excuse if he betrayed at most a teacher, having denied that he was Lord. “And he said to him: ‘You have said it.’” The betrayer is put to silence with the same response by which [Jesus] would later answer Pilate.\textsuperscript{230}

26.26–27. Now while they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed and broke it, and he gave it to his disciples and said: “Take and eat, this is my body.” And taking the cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, etc. After the figurative Passover had been fulfilled and he had eaten the flesh of the lamb with the apostles, he took bread, which strengthens the heart of man,\textsuperscript{231} and passed over to the true mystery of the Passover. Thus, just as Melchizedek had done, the priest of the Most High God, when he offered bread and wine in the prefiguration of him,\textsuperscript{232} he too would present it in the truth of his own body and blood. In Luke we read of two cups that he passed on to the disciples.\textsuperscript{233} One was for the first month and the other for the second. Thus the one who could not eat lamb among the saints in the first month could eat goat among the penitents in the second month.\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{228} This may be directed against an Origenist interpretation that would affirm the pre-existence of souls.

\textsuperscript{229} See above on Mt 11.26.

\textsuperscript{230} Cf. Mt 27.11.

\textsuperscript{231} Ps 104.15.

\textsuperscript{232} Cf. Gn 14.18; Heb 7.

\textsuperscript{233} Cf. Lk 22.17, 20.

\textsuperscript{234} In Nm 9.1–14, God provided for Israelites who had been unclean during the Passover and were unable to eat of it. On a fixed day one month later they could celebrate it with a sheep. But Ex 12.5 says that it was permitted to take the lamb from the goats. Jerome finds this to be a prefiguration of future mysteries.
26.29. “But I say to you: I will not drink from now on from this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you anew in the kingdom of my Father.” He passes from fleshly things to spiritual things. The vine transplanted from Egypt is the people of Israel, to whom the Lord speaks through Jeremiah: “I planted you as a true vine; how is it that you have changed into the bitterness of a foreign vine?” And Isaiah the prophet sings of it in his song to his beloved. Indeed, all Scripture testifies of it in various passages. Therefore, the Lord says that he is not going to drink from this vine ever again except in the kingdom of his Father. I think that the kingdom of the Father refers to the faith of believers. For the apostle, too, confirms the same thing: “The kingdom of God is within you.” Therefore, when the Jews receive the kingdom of the Father (note what he says: “of the Father,” not “of God”; every father is the name of a son), since, I say, they will believe in God the Father, and the Father will bring them to the Son, then the Lord will drink from their vine, and in the likeness of Joseph reigning in Egypt, will be made merry with his brothers.

26.30. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. This is what we read in a certain Psalm: “All the sleek of the earth have eaten and worshiped.” According to this citation, the one who has been filled with the Savior’s bread and made merry with his cup can praise the Lord and ascend the Mount of Olives, where there is refreshment from labors and solace from grief and there is knowledge of the true light.

26.31. Then Jesus said to them: “All of you will suffer a scandal at me on this night.” He predicts what they are going to suffer, so that when they suffer it, they might not despair of salvation, but by doing penance may be delivered. And he has expressly

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236. Jer 2.21.
238. He means “the Lord” unless he is referring to the evangelist Luke as an apostle.
239. Lk 17.21.
240. See above on Mt 24.36.
241. Lit., “will be inebriated” (inebriabitur).
242. Cf. Gn 43.34.
243. Ps 22.29.
244. Lat., inebriatus fuerit. Cf. nn. 241 and 246.
245. See above on Mt 21.1–3.
added: “on this night you will suffer a scandal.” For just as those who get drunk get drunk at night, so also those who suffer a scandal in the night also endure it in the darkness. But as for us, let us say: “Night has passed and the day has approached.”

26.31. “For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.” This is written in different words in the prophet Zechariah, and, unless I am mistaken, it is said to God under the persona of the prophet: “Strike the shepherd and let the sheep be scattered.” Yet the sixty-eighth Psalm, the whole of which the Lord has just sung, agrees with this meaning: “Because they have persecuted him whom you have struck.” Now the good shepherd is struck, that he may lay his life down for his sheep and that from many flocks of strays there may come one flock and one shepherd. We have spoken in more detail about this testimony in the little book that we wrote on the best method of translating.

26.33. But Peter answered and said to him: “Even if all are scandalized, I will never be scandalized.” This is said not by temerity or falsehood; rather, it shows the faith of the apostle Peter and his burning affection for his Lord and Savior, of which we have spoken above.

26.34. Jesus said to him: “Amen I say to you that on this night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter made the promise out of the ardor of his faith, but the Savior, as God, knew the future. Note also that Peter denies at night, and he denies three times; but after the cock crowed and the approaching light is declared, as the darkness diminishes, he converts and weeps bitterly, washing away the filth of his denial with tears.

26.36. Then Jesus went with them into a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples: “Sit here while I go there and pray.” Gethsemane is interpreted as “very fertile valley.” He commanded

246. Lat., inebriantur. See nn. 241 and 244, above.
252. He means his Ep. 57:7 to Pammachius, where Jerome assembles many inexact references to the Old Testament made by the evangelists.
253. See under Mt 14:28.
the disciples to sit there for a little while and to await his return, while the Lord prayed alone for everyone.

26.37. And when he had taken Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and grieved. What we said above about passion and pre-passion\textsuperscript{255} is also shown in the present section. To prove the truth of the humanity he had assumed, the Lord is truly sorrowful, but lest passion should be dominant in his soul, he began to be sorrowful through pre-passion. For it is one thing to be sorrowful, another to begin to be sorrowful. But he was sorrowful not out of fear of suffering. For he had come to this point in order to suffer, and he had rebuked Peter for fearfulness. Rather, he is sorrowful on account of the most wretched Judas, and the falling-away of all the apostles, who were scandalized, and the rejection of the people of the Jews, and the overturning of pitiful Jerusalem. This is also why Jonah is sorrowful over the withering of the gourd, or ivy.\textsuperscript{256} He was unwilling that his own dwelling place should ever perish.\textsuperscript{257} But if the heretics\textsuperscript{258} interpret the sadness of his soul not as the Savior’s affection for those who are going to perish but as a passion, let them respond: How do they explain what is said by Ezekiel under the persona of God: “And in all these things you made me sorrowful”?\textsuperscript{259}

26.38. Then he said to them: “My soul is sorrowful even to death; remain here and watch with me.” It is his soul that is very sorrowful; and it is very sorrowful not on account of death, but “even to death,” until he delivers his apostles by his Passion. As for his command: “Remain here and watch with me,” he is not forbid-

\textsuperscript{255}. See above on Mt 5.28, n. 136. Simonetti, Matthew 1b (ACC), 255, comments: “To explain Jesus’ agitation, Jerome resorts to the medical distinction between pathos (passio, ‘disease’) and propatheia (propassio, ‘beginning/anticipation of disease’). Pathos in the moral sense is considered evil, while propatheia signifies the beginning of the agitation, not yet morally wrong because voluntary assent is lacking.”

\textsuperscript{256}. Cf. Jon 4.8.

\textsuperscript{257}. As did Jesus himself (cf. Mt 12.40), Jerome sees in Jonah a prefiguring of Christ. This time it is Jonah’s sorrow that anticipates Christ’s. Cf. Commentary on Jonah 4.6 (SC 43, 109–13).

\textsuperscript{258}. He seems to have Arius and Eunomius in mind.

\textsuperscript{259}. Ezek 16.43 (LXX). God says this to Jerusalem. Jerome’s point then seems to be that if God himself knows this sorrow, then the sorrow of Jesus is not a human sorrow, but divine.
ding sleep, for it was not the time for sleep, since the critical moment was imminent, but he forbids the sleep of unfaithfulness and the drowsiness of the mind. Let those who suspect that Jesus took up an irrational soul say how he is very sorrowful and knows the time of sorrow. For although even brute animals grieve, yet they do not know the reasons for their grief or the duration of time in which they must be very sorrowful.

26.39. And going a little farther he fell on his face, worshiping and saying: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.” Having commanded the apostles to remain and watch with the Lord, going a little farther he falls on his face, and shows the humility of his mind by the disposition of his flesh. And he says affectionately: “My Father.” He asks that if it is possible the cup of the Passion might pass from him, concerning which we have spoken above. But he asks not out of fear of suffering but from mercy for the first people, that he should not drink the cup offered by them. This is also why he did not expressly say: “Let the cup pass from me,” but: “this cup,” that is, the one belonging to the people of the Jews. For they can have no excuse for their ignorance if they kill me, since they have the Law and the prophets who predict me every day. And yet, returning to himself, that which he had refused with trepidation from his human persona, he confirms from the persona of the Son of God: “nevertheless, not as I will but as you will.” He is saying: This “Let it be done”: I am saying this not out of human feeling, but because it was by your will that I have come down to earth.

26.40. And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter: “So, could you not watch with me one hour?” Peter had said above: “Even if all are scandalized at you, I will never be scandalized.” But now he cannot conquer sleep from the greatness of his grief.

26.41. “Watch and pray that you not enter into temptation.” It is impossible for a human soul not to be tempted. This is why in

260. Perhaps Apollinaris of Laodicea.
261. See on Mt 26.37.
262. Mt 26.33. Notice that the words “at you” (in te) are missing from the Mt 26.33 lemma.
the Lord’s prayer we say: “Lead us not into temptation”\textsuperscript{263} that we are unable to bear.\textsuperscript{264} We are not refusing to face temptation altogether, but praying for the strength of endurance in temptation. Therefore, in the present passage he does not say: “Watch and pray” that you not be tempted, but “that you not enter into temptation,” that is, that temptation not overcome and conquer you and hold you in its nets. For instance, a martyr who sheds his blood for the confession of the Lord is tempted, to be sure, but he is not bound in the nets of temptation. But the one who denies\textsuperscript{265} falls into the nets of temptation.\textsuperscript{266}

26.41. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” This is directed against those rash people who think that whatever they believe, they can attain. And so, however much we trust in the ardor of our mind, so too we should fear the frailty of the flesh. And yet, according to the apostle, the works of the flesh are mortified by the spirit.\textsuperscript{267}

26.42. Again, a second time he went away and prayed, saying: “My Father, if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, let your will be done.” He prays a second time that if Nineveh cannot otherwise be saved except that the gourd be withered,\textsuperscript{268} let the will of the Father be done, which is not contrary to the will of the Son, since he himself says through the prophet: “I have willed to do your will, my God.”\textsuperscript{269}

26.43. And he came again and found them sleeping; for their eyes were heavy. Alone he prays for all, just as also alone he suffers for all. But the eyes of the apostles were weak and were overwhelmed by the denial that was near.

26.45. Then he came to his disciples and said to them: “Sleep now and rest; behold, the hour is at hand.” He prayed for the third time so that every word be established by the mouth of two and three witnesses.\textsuperscript{270} Thus he procured that the fear of the apostles

\textsuperscript{263.} Mt 6.13; Lk 11.4.  \textsuperscript{264.} Cf. 1 Cor 10.13.
\textsuperscript{265.} Cf. Mt 10.32–33.
\textsuperscript{266.} In this paragraph Jerome uses three different words for “nets”: \textit{cassis}, \textit{rete}, and \textit{plaga}.
\textsuperscript{267.} Cf. Rom 8.13.
\textsuperscript{268.} Cf. Jon 4.8. See above on Mt 26.37.
\textsuperscript{269.} Ps 40.8.
\textsuperscript{270.} Cf. Dt 19.15. Here the witnesses are the three apostles.
should be corrected by subsequent repentance. After this, he is secure concerning his own suffering and goes on toward his persecutors. Of his own accord he offers himself to be put to death, and he says to his disciples:

26.46. “Rise, let us go; behold, the one who is going to hand me over is at hand.” Let them not find us as ones who are afraid and withdrawn. Let us go to death of our own accord, that they may see the confidence and joy of the one about to suffer.]

26.48. Now, the one who handed him over had given a sign to them, saying: “Whomever I kiss is the one; seize him.” Judas is pitiful, and yet he is not worthy of pity. He handed over his Master and Lord with the same unbelief by which he was thinking that the signs that he had seen the Savior doing were done not by divine majesty but by magic arts. And because he had happened to hear him when he was transfigured on the mountain, he was afraid that he might slip away from the hands of the servants by a similar transformation. Therefore, he gives a sign that they might know that the one whom he reveals with the kiss is he.

26.49. And at once approaching Jesus, he said: “Hail, Rabbi,” and he kissed him. What an impudent and criminal confidence! To call him Teacher and to give a kiss to the one he was handing over! Yet he still has some shame from being a disciple. For he does not hand him over to the persecutors openly, but through the sign of the kiss. This is the sign that God put on Cain, that whoever found him would not kill him.

26.50. And Jesus said to him: “Friend, what have you come for?” The word “friend” should be understood ironically, or at least according to what we have read above: “Friend, how did you enter here without a wedding garment?”

26.51. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and striking the servant of the high priest he cut off his ear. In another Gospel it is written that Peter did this, with the same ardor of mind by which he did other things. It is also stated that the servant of the high priest was

274. Κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν; lit., “according to an anti-phrase.”
277. See above on Mt 14.28, 31; 26.34.
named Malchus and that the ear that he cut off was the right one. In passing one should say that Malchus, that is, “king,” represents the former people of the Jews. It became a servant of impiety and of the voracity of the priests, and it lost its right ear. Thus it hears all the contemptibleness of the letter with its left ear. But among those who were willing to believe from the Jews, the Lord gave back the right ear and made the servant a royal and priestly race.278

26.52. Then Jesus said to him: “Return your sword into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.” Even if he does not bear the sword in vain who is placed as an avenger of the Lord’s wrath against the one who works evil,279 nevertheless whoever takes the sword will perish by the sword.280 But which sword does he mean? By that one, of course, which turns fiery before Paradise,281 and by the sword of the Spirit that is described in the armor of God.282

26.53–54. “Or do you think that I am not able to ask my Father at once to put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?” I, who can have twelve legions of the angelic army, do not need the help of twelve apostles, even if all were to defend me. Among the ancients one legion was comprised of 6000 men. Due to the lack of time, we will not start to explain the number. Let it suffice only to say that it is a symbol: twelve legions come to 72,000 angels. This is how many nations of men into which the languages were divided.283 His appended statement shows how ready his spirit was to suffer. For the prophets would have prophesied in vain if the Lord had not preserved the truth of their words by means of his suffering.

26.55. At that hour Jesus said: “As against a thief have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me? Daily I sat among you teaching in the Temple, and you did not seize me.” It is folly, he says, with swords and clubs to seek him who of his own accord hands him-

self over to your hands, and by means of a traitor to track him
down in the night, as though he is keeping himself hidden and
is staying away from your eyes, a man who teaches daily in the
Temple. But the reason you have gathered against me in the
darkness is because your power is in the darkness.\(^{284}\)

26.56. “But all this has happened that the scriptures of the proph-
ets would be fulfilled.” Which “scriptures of the prophets” does he
mean? “They pierced my hands and feet”;\(^{285}\) and elsewhere: “Just
as a sheep is led to the slaughter”;\(^{286}\) and in another passage:
“He was led to death because of the iniquities of my people.”\(^{287}\)

26.57. But those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the chief
priest, where the scribes and elders had convened. Upon God’s order,
Moses had prescribed that high priests should succeed their fa-
thers and a line of descent should be woven among priests.\(^{288}\)
Josephus records that this Caiaphas had purchased the high
priesthood at a price from Herod for one year only.\(^{289}\) It is no
wonder, then, if an unjust high priest judges unjustly.

26.58. But Peter was following him at a distance. He who was
about to deny the Lord was following him at a distance.

26.58. And having entered inside he was sitting with the attendants
to see the end. Either out of a disciple’s love or from human curi-
osity, he was longing to know what the high priest would judge
concerning the Lord, whether he would condemn him to death
or release him to be lacerated with whips. And in this, there is a
difference between the ten apostles and Peter. They flee, where-
as he follows the Savior, though at a distance.

26.60–61. At last two false witnesses came and said: “He said: ‘I
am able to destroy the Temple of God and after three days to build it.”’
In what sense are they false witnesses, if they say the things that
we have read above that the Lord had actually said?\(^{290}\) Well, a

\(^{284}\) Cf. Lk 22.53.\(^{285}\) Ps 22.16.\(^{286}\) Is 53.7.\(^{287}\) Is 53.8.\(^{288}\) Cf. Ex 29.28–44.
\(^{289}\) Cf. Josephus, AJ 18.2.2; cf. 18.4.3. There is confusion here. According
to Josephus, it was Gratus, the predecessor of Pilate, who deposed successively
the three predecessors of Caiaphas, namely, Ananus, Ismael, and Eleazar. It was
Eleazar who was deprived of the office after holding it for one year. Jerome’s
haste in composing this commentary has cost him some factual errors.
\(^{290}\) Cf. Jn 2.19.
false witness is one who does not understand statements in the same sense in which they are said. For the Lord had spoken of the temple of his body. Moreover, even in the very words they use to accuse him falsely, they added and changed a few things, thus making it a “fair” false accusation, as it were. For the Savior had said: “Destroy this temple.” But they change this to say: “I can destroy the Temple of God.” Jesus had said: You destroy, not I. For it is forbidden for us to lay a hand upon ourselves. Then they convert his words to: “and after three days to build it.” They wanted to make it seem that he had really spoken of the Jewish Temple. But the Lord wanted to point to the living and breathing temple and had said: “And in three days I will raise it up.” It is one thing to build, another to raise up.

26.62–63. _The chief priest stood up and said to him: “Do you answer nothing to the things that they are testifying against you?” But Jesus was silent._ Finding no material for a false charge, rash anger and impatience jolted the priest from his seat. Thus he displays the insanity of his mind by the movement of his body. The more Jesus kept silent before the false witnesses and wicked priests who were unworthy of his response, the more the high priest, overcome by fury, challenges him to respond. He wanted to find material for an accusation by some pretext in his words. Nonetheless, Jesus is silent. For, being God, he knew that whatever response he had given, they would have twisted it into a false charge.

26.63. _And the chief priest said to him: “I adjure you by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Why do you adjure, most wicked of priests? Is it to accuse him, or that you might believe in him? If it is in order to accuse him, others will convict him; so condemn him in his silence. But if it is that you might believe in him, why were you unwilling to believe in him when he admits it?_ 26.64. _Jesus said to him: “You have said it.”_ The response to Pilate and to Caiaphas is similar. Thus they are condemned by their own pronouncement.

26.65. Then the chief priest tore his robes saying: “He has blasphemed. Why do we still need witnesses?” The one whom fury had jolted from his priestly seat is provoked by the same madness to tear his garments. He tears his robes to show that the Jews have lost the glory of the priesthood, and that the high priests have a vacant seat. But it is also a Jewish custom to tear their garments, when they hear something blasphemous and contrary to God, as it were. In fact we read that Paul and Barnabas did this when they were honored in Lycaonia with the worship due to the gods. In contrast, Herod did not give honor to God but acquiesced to the immoderate favor of the people and was at once struck down by an angel.

26.67. Then they spat in his face and struck him with blows. This was to fulfill what is written: “I gave my cheeks to slaps, and I did not turn away my face from the shame of spitting.”

26.67–68. But others slapped him on the face, saying: “Prophesy to us, Christ; who is it that hit you?” It would have been foolish to respond to those who were beating him and to prophesy as to who had given the blow. For the madness of the one who had struck him was openly manifest. But just as he did not prophesy this to you, so he most clearly predicted the fact that Jerusalem would be surrounded by an army and that there would not be left a stone upon a stone in the Temple.

26.69. But Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. He was sitting outside to see the outcome of the affair. He did not draw near to Jesus, lest some suspicion should arise among the servants.

26.72. And again he denied it with an oath: “I do not know the man.” I know that some out of pious feeling for the apostle Peter have interpreted this passage to the effect that Peter did not deny God but “the man.” They say that the meaning is: I do not know the man, because I know that he is God. A prudent reader knows how frivolous this interpretation is. By defending the apostle in this way, these people make the Lord guilty of ly-

ing. For if Peter did not deny him, then the Lord lied when he said: “Amen I say to you that on this night before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Observe what he says: “You will deny me,” not the man.

26.73. “Truly you also are one of them, for even your speech makes you known.” It is not that Peter spoke another language or that he was from an outside nation. For they were all Hebrews, both those who were accusing him and he who was being accused. Rather, they say this because each province and region has its own characteristics and could not avoid a vernacular sound of speaking. This is also why in the book of Judges the Ephrathites could not pronounce σύνθημα.

26.74. Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear that he did not know the man. And immediately a cock crowed. In another Gospel we read that after Peter’s denial and the crowing of the cock, the Savior looked at Peter, and by his gaze he provoked him to bitter tears. For it was impossible for one on whom the Light of the world had looked to remain in the darkness of denial.

26.75. And he went out and wept bitterly. While sitting in the courtyard of Caiaphas, he could not do penance. So he goes outside from the council of the impious in order to wash away the filth of a cowardly denial with bitter weeping.

Chapter 27

27.1–2. But when morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus, in order to hand him over to death. And they brought him bound and handed him over to Pontius Pilate the governor. He was led not only to Pilate but also to Herod. Thus both men mocked the Lord. And notice the care with which the priests do evil. They stayed awake all night in order to commit a murder. “And they handed him over, bound, to Pilate.” For by their custom, anyone they had condemned to death they handed over, bound, to the judge.

301. Mt 26.34.
304. Cf. Ps 1.1.
27.3–4. Then, when Judas, who had handed him over, saw that he had been condemned, he was led by penitence to bring back the thirty silver pieces to the chief priests and elders, saying: “I have sinned in handing over just blood.” The burden of his impiety excluded the strength of his avarice. When Judas saw the Lord condemned to death, he returned the price to the priests, as if it were in his own power to change the verdict of the persecutors. And so, although he may have changed his will, nevertheless he did not change the outcome of the initial will. But if he who handed over just blood sinned, how much more did they sin who had paid for the just blood and who had provoked the disciple by offering a price for the betrayal? Let those who attempt to introduce [the doctrine of] diverse natures and who say that Judas became a traitor by his evil nature, and that he was unable to be saved by his election to the apostleship, explain how an evil nature could have repented.

27.4–5. But they said: “What is that to us? You see to it.” And when he had thrown down the silver pieces in the Temple, he withdrew and going away he hanged himself with a noose. It was of no benefit to have done an act of penance by which he was not able to correct the sin. If at some time a brother sins against a brother in such a way that he is able to amend the sin he committed, it can be forgiven him. But if the works remain, it is in vain that a penance is taken on with words. This is what is said in the Psalm about this same most wretched Judas: “And may his prayer be turned to sin.” Thus he was not only unable to amend the crime of betrayal, but to the first act of wickedness he added as well the sin of his own suicide. The apostle speaks of this sort of thing in the second letter to the Corinthians: “Lest the brother be overwhelmed by excessive grief.”

27.6. But the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said: “It is not lawful to put them in the treasury (corbana) since it is the price for blood.” They truly strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel!

305. See above on Mt 5.45; 7.18. Gnostics and Manichaeans seem to have tried to verify their predestinarian doctrine by the case of Judas, whom Christ called a “son of perdition” (Jn 17.12).

306. Ps 109.7. 307. 2 Cor 2.7.

into the treasury and gifts of God, is because it is the price for blood, why is the blood itself poured out?

27.7. So they took counsel and bought with them the potter’s field as a burial place for strangers. To be sure, they did this with another intention. Thus they left behind an eternal monument to their impiety by the purchase of the field. But still, we who were strangers from the Law and the prophets adopted their faulty zeal for salvation. For we are at rest at the price of his blood. Now it is called the potter’s field because our Potter is Christ.309

27.9–10. Then was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying: “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by the sons of Israel, and they gave them for a potter’s field, just as the Lord appointed for me.” This testimony is not found in Jeremiah.310 Something similar is recorded in Zechariah, who is nearly the last of the twelve prophets.311 Yet both the order and the wording are different, although the sense is not that discordant. Recently I read something in a certain little Hebrew book that a Hebrew from the Nazarene sect312 brought to me. It was an apocryphon of Jeremiah in which I found this text written word for word.313 Yet it still seems more likely to me that the testimony was taken from Zechariah by a common practice of the evangelists and apostles. In citation they bring out only the sense from the Old Testament. They tend to neglect the order of the words.314

27.11. Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked

309. He is a potter in the sense that all things were made by Christ; cf. Jn 1.3; Col 1.16. God is compared with a potter in Gn 2.7; Is 45.9; Jer 18.2.
311. The citation is from Zec 11.12–13 combined with the idea of purchasing a field suggested by Jer 32.6–15. This is linked with Jeremiah’s description of a potter in Jer 18.2–4; 19.1–2.
312. See above on Mt 12.13; 13.53–54; 22.23 n; 23.35–36.
313. Although this sounds like an authentic autobiographical incident in Jerome’s recent past, G. Bardy, “Jérôme et ses maîtres hébreux,” Revue Bénédictine 46 (1934): 161, thinks that Jerome has fabricated the story based on Origen’s conjecture (In Matth. comm. series, 117) about the existence of this apocryphal text. It seems possible that Jerome was inspired by Origen’s reference to consult a “Hebrew from the Nazarene sect.”
314. Jerome gives this same solution to the present difficulty in Ep. 57.7 to Pammachius.
him, saying: “Are you the king of the Jews?” The Jews are convicted of impiety when Pilate asks nothing else concerning the crime except whether he is king of the Jews. For they could not even find a false accusation to raise against the Savior.

27.11. Jesus said to him: “You say so.” He responds in such a way that he both speaks the truth and his words are not open to a false charge. And notice that he did say something in response to Pilate, at least in part, who brought out the sentence of judgment against his will, but he was unwilling to respond to the priests and elders. For he judged them to be unworthy of his words.315

27.13. Then Pilate said to him: “Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?” Doubtless the one who condemns Jesus is a pagan, but he refers the case to the people of the Jews. “Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?” But Jesus was unwilling to respond anything. For had he explained away the charge, he would have been released by the governor, and the benefit of the cross would have been postponed.

27.16. Now at that time he had a notorious prisoner, who was called Barabbas. In the Gospel that is written according to the Hebrews,316 his name is translated as “son of their teacher.”317 On account of sedition and murder he had been condemned. Now Pilate offers to them the option of releasing whomever they want, the thief or Jesus. He did not doubt that Jesus deserved to be chosen, but he knew that he had been handed over on account of envy. Therefore, the cause of the cross is manifestly envy.

27.19. Now while he was sitting before the tribunal, his wife sent to him, saying: “Have nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things today in a vision on account of him.” Note that dreams are frequently revealed by God to Gentiles, and that in Pilate and his wife, who confess that the Lord is just, there is testimony of the Gentile people.

316. For other references to this apocryphal gospel, see Preface, Mt 6.11.
317. For a discussion of this reading, see Hennecke-Schneemelcher, NTA 1, 142.
27.22–23. Pilate said to them: “What then shall I do about Jesus, who is called Christ?” They all said: “Let him be crucified.” But the governor said to them: “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, saying: “Let him be crucified.” Pilate gave multiple opportunities for freeing the Savior: first by offering a thief for a just man; then by adding: “What then shall I do about Jesus who is called Christ?” that is, who is your king. And when they answered: “Let him be crucified,” he did not at once acquiesce, but in accordance with his wife’s suggestion, when she commanded: “Have nothing to do with that just man,” he too responds: “Why, what evil has he done?” In saying this, Pilate absolved Jesus. “But they shouted all the more, saying: ‘Let him be crucified.’” This was to fulfill what was said in the twenty-first Psalm: “Many dogs have surrounded me; a gathering of the malicious has beset me”,318 and in Jeremiah: “My heritage has become to me like a lion in the forest; they have raised their voice against me.”319 Isaiah too is in agreement with this judgment: “And I expected that they would practice judgment, but they did iniquity; and not justice, but an outcry.”320

27.24. So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the people, saying: “I am innocent of the blood of this just man; see to it yourselves.” Pilate took water in accordance with the following prophecy: “I will wash my hands among the innocent.”321 Thus, in the washing of his hands, the works of the Gentiles are cleansed, and in some manner he estranges us from the impiety of the Jews who shouted: “Crucify him.”322 For he contested this and said: I certainly wanted to set the innocent man free, but because a sedition is arising and the crime of treason against Caesar is being attached to me:323 “I am innocent of the blood of this man.” The judge who is compelled to bring a verdict against the Lord does not condemn the one offered, but exposes those who offered him; he pronounces that he who is to be crucified is just. “See to it yourselves,” he says; I am a minister of the laws; it is your voice that is shedding his blood.

Chapter 11

But when John heard in prison of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples to say to him: “Are you he who is to come, or do we wait for another?” (11.2–3) He asks, but not as one who is ignorant of the answer. For he had pointed him out to others who did not know about him when he said: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.”¹ Also, he had heard the voice of the Father, thundering: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”² Rather, it is just as when the Savior asks where Lazarus has been laid. He did this so that those who pointed out the location of the tomb would at least be thus prepared for faith and see the dead man rising.³ Thus, when John was about to be killed by Herod, he sends his disciples to Christ, so that on this occasion, when they see the signs and miracles, they may believe in him and, with their teacher asking, learn for themselves. An earlier question also demonstrated, however, that the disciples of John were puffed up against the Lord. They had caustic feelings toward him that sprang from resentment and envy. The evangelist reports: “Then the disciples of John approached him, saying: ‘Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but your disciples do not fast?’”⁴ And in another passage it says: “Teacher, the one for whom you offered testimony at the Jordan, behold, his disciples are baptizing, and more are coming to him.”⁵ It is as though they had said: This is a rarity, the crowd is flocking to him.

11.3. *Are you he who is to come, or do we wait for another?* It does not say: are you he who has come, but: “are you he who is to

1. Jn 1.29.  
2. Mt 3.17.  
3. Cf. Jn 11.34.  
27.25. And all the people answered and said: “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” This imprecation upon the Jews continues until the present day. The Lord’s blood will not be removed from them. This is why it says through Isaiah: “If you wash your hands before me, I will not listen; for your hands are full of blood.” The Jews have left the best heritage to their children, saying: “His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

27.26. Then he released for them Barabbas; but he had Jesus scourged, and handed him over to them to be crucified. Barabbas the thief, who made seditions among the crowds, who was the author of murders, was released to the people of the Jews. He stands for the devil, who reigns in them until today. It is for this reason that they are unable to have peace. But Jesus, having been handed over by the Jews, is absolved by the wife of Pilate, and is called a just man by the governor himself. Even a centurion confesses that he is truly the Son of God. Let the learned reader ask: How is it consistent that Pilate washed his hands and said: “I am innocent of the blood of this just man,” and afterward had Jesus scourged and handed him over to be crucified? One should know that he was the administrator of Roman laws according to which it was enacted that one who is crucified must first be beaten with whips. And so, Jesus was handed over to the soldiers to be beaten. They cut with a whip that most holy body and breast that contained God. But this was done since it was written: “Many are the scourgings of sinners.” By that scourging, we were delivered from being beaten, since the Scripture says to the just man: “A scourge has not drawn near to your tent.”

27.27–29. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium. They gathered the whole cohort before him, and having stripped him they put a scarlet cloak upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying: “Hail, king of the Jews.” There are soldiers indeed, since he had been named the king of the Jews, and the scribes and priests had hurled the charge at him that

324. Mt 27.25. 325. Is 1.15. 326. Cf. Mt 27.54; Mk 15.39. 327. Ps 32.10. 328. Ps 91.10.
he was usurping power for himself among the people of Isra-
el. They do this mockingly. Thus in place of the red fringe that
ancient kings used, they cover with a scarlet cloak the one they
had stripped of his original clothes. For a diadem they place on
him a crown of thorns; for a royal scepter they give him a reed;
and they do him homage as if he were a king. But we should un-
derstand all these things mystically. For just as Caiaphas said: “It
is necessary that one man die for all,”329 not knowing what he
was saying, so also whatever these men did, even though they
did it with a different frame of mind, nevertheless they were giv-
ing mysteries to us who believe. In the scarlet cloak Jesus carries
the blood-stained works of the Gentiles; in the crown of thorns
he dissolves the ancient curse;330 with the reed he kills poison-
ous beasts; or he held the reed in his hand in order to write
down the sacrilege of the Jews.331

27.30. And spitting on him, they took the reed and struck his head.
At this time was fulfilled: “I have not turned away my face from
the shame of spitting.”332 And yet, though they are striking his
head with a reed, he endures everything patiently. Thus he
shows the truth of Isaiah’s prophecy, who said: “A bruised reed
he will not break.”333

27.31. And after they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak
and put his own clothes on him, and they led him away to crucify him.
When Jesus is scourged and spat upon and mocked, he is not
wearing his own clothing, but that which he had taken on ac-
count of our sins; but when he is crucified and the spectacle of
both the mockery and derision has passed, at that time he takes
his original clothes and assumes his own dress. And at once the
elements are disturbed, and the creation gives testimony to the
Creator.

331. Cf. Origen, In Matth. comm. series, 125. Jerome uses two words for “reed”:
in his translation of the scriptural lemmata, verses 29 and 30, as well as in his
comment on v.30, he chooses harundo, the same noun as that which occurs in
the Isaiah text (see n. 333). In his comment on v.29, however, he employs the
noun calamus, probably for the sake of his image of Christ writing.
332. Is 50.6.
333. Is 42.3.
27.32. But while going out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon; this man they compelled to take up his cross. Let no one think that the narrative of the evangelist John contradicts this passage. For he says that the Lord carried his own cross while he was going out of the praetorium.\textsuperscript{334} But Matthew reports that they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, upon whom under compulsion they placed the cross of Jesus. Now we should understand this as follows: while going out of the praetorium, Jesus himself carried his own cross; but afterward he encountered Simon, upon whom they placed the cross to be carried. Now, there is a mystical interpretation (\textit{anagogē}) here: the nations take up the cross of Jesus, and an obedient foreigner carries the Savior’s disgrace.\textsuperscript{335}

27.33. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of the skull (Calvariae locus). I have heard\textsuperscript{336} that someone has explained that “place of the skull” is the place where Adam is buried and that the reason it is so named is because the head of that ancient man is laid there.\textsuperscript{337} They relate this to what the apostle says: “Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten you.”\textsuperscript{338} This interpretation is attractive and soothing to the ear of the people, but it is not true. For outside the city and outside the gate there are places in which the heads of the condemned are cut off. This is where they took the name “of the skull” (\textit{Calvariae}); that is, it refers to the skulls of the decapitated. But the reason the Lord was crucified there was so that where there was once a site of the condemned, there the banner of martyrdom would be raised; and just as he was made a malediction for us on the cross\textsuperscript{339} and was scourged and crucified, so he is crucified as if a guilty man

\textsuperscript{334} Cf. Jn 19.17.
\textsuperscript{335} In \textit{De interpr. hebr. nom.}, p. 71, line 4, Jerome says that Simon means “obedient.”
\textsuperscript{337} According to A. Plummer, \textit{An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew}, 394, this tradition is not likely to have been pre-Christian, but was no doubt Jewish-Christian, to bring the first Adam into contact with the Second.
\textsuperscript{338} Eph 5.14.
\textsuperscript{339} Cf. Gal 3.13.
among the guilty for the salvation of all. But if anyone should wish to contend that the reason the Lord was crucified there was so that his blood might trickle down on Adam’s tomb, we shall ask him why other thieves were also crucified in the same place. From which it appears that Calvary signifies not the tomb of the first man, but the “place of the decapitated.” Thus where sin abounded, grace would super-abound. But in the book of Joshua the son of Nave we read that Adam was buried near Hebron and Arba.341

27.34. And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall, and when he had tasted it, he was unwilling to drink it. God says to Jerusalem: “I planted you as a true vine; how did you turn into the bitterness of a foreign vine?”342 A bitter vine makes bitter wine. Bitter wine is administered to the Lord Jesus so that what is written may be fulfilled: “They gave gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”343 Now as for the words: “When he had tasted it, he was unwilling to drink it,” this indicates that he did indeed taste the bitterness of death for us,344 but on the third day he rose again.

27.35. But after they crucified him, they divided his garments, casting lots. This too had been prophesied in the same Psalm: “They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my clothing.”345

27.36. And sitting down, they kept watch over him. The vigilance of the soldiers and priests is beneficial to us. Thus the power of the Resurrected One appears greater and more manifest.

27.37. And above his head they put the written charge: “This is Jesus king of the Jews.” I cannot express my astonishment in a way

341. Cf. Jos 14.15 (cf. LXX). The RSV translates: “Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba ['city of Arba’]; this Arba was the greatest man [Heb., adam] among the Anakim.” But Jerome’s Vulgate translation reads: “The name of Hebron before was called Cariath-Arbe: Adam the greatest among the Enacims was laid there” (Douay-Rheims translation). Jerome’s version probably mistranslates the Hebrew. In fact, Scripture does not say where Adam is buried.
342. Jer 2.21.
343. Ps 69.21.
345. Ps 22.18. Actually, this is not the same Psalm. A slip of the memory on Jerome’s part?
that is equal to the magnitude of this event. Though false witnesses had been paid, and the wretched people had been incited to sedition and shouting, they found no charge for his execution other than that he was king of the Jews. Perhaps they did this mockingly and with ridicule. At any rate, even Pilate responds to the unwilling: “What I have written, I have written.” Whether willing or unwilling, O Jews, the whole crowd of the Gentiles responds to you: Jesus is the king of the Jews; he is the ruler of those who believe and confess.

27.38. Then two thieves were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. If Golgotha is the tomb of Adam and not the place of the condemned, and the reason the Lord is crucified there is that he might raise up Adam, why are two thieves crucified in the same place?

27.39. But those passing by were blaspheming him, moving their heads. They were blaspheming because they were passing by the “way” and were unwilling to walk on the true road of the Scriptures. They were moving their heads because they had already previously moved their feet and were not standing on the rock. The foolish people insult him by saying the very same thing that the false witnesses had fabricated.

27.42. “He saved others, he cannot save himself.” Even against their will the scribes and Pharisees confess that he saved others. And so, your own judgment condemns you. For assuredly, he who had saved others could have saved himself, if he had wanted.

27.42. “Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.” What a fraudulent promise! Which is greater? For a man still living to come down from a cross, or for a dead man to rise from the grave? He rose, and you do not believe. In like manner, then, even if he were to come down from the cross, you would not believe. But it seems to me that demons are guiding

346. Cf. Mt 27.20.
349. See on Mt 27.33.
352. Cf. Mt 27.40; 26.61.
this. For immediately when the Lord was crucified, they sensed the power of the cross and understood that their strength was broken. They do this that he might come down from the cross. But the Lord knows the plots of his adversaries and remains on the gibbet in order to destroy the devil.\footnote{Cf. Heb 2.14.}

27.44. \textit{And the thieves who were fastened with him were reviling him in the same way.} Here, by a figure of speech called \textit{σύλληψις},\footnote{In Jerome’s usage this figure is also known as synecdoche, in which a part is named for the whole, or the whole for a part. See above on Mt 12.39–40; 26.8–9.} both thieves, instead of one, are introduced as having blasphemed. Luke, however, asserts that while one was blaspheming, the other made a confession and even rebuked the one who was blaspheming.\footnote{Cf. Lk 23.39–40.} It is not that the Gospels have discrepancies, but that at first both were blaspheming; then when the sun took flight, when the earth quaked, and when the rocks were split and when the darkness was falling, one of them believed in Jesus and amended his initial denial by a subsequent confession. In the two thieves, there are represented the two peoples, that of the Gentiles and that of the Jews. At first they both blasphemed the Lord. Afterward, one of them became terrified by the greatness of the signs and did penance, and until the present day he rebukes the blaspheming Jews.

27.45. \textit{But from the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour.} Those who have written against the Gospels\footnote{Jerome has in mind Porphyry, \textit{Contra Christianos}, fragm. 14, and Celsus. In Origen, \textit{Contra Celsum} 2.33, Celsus explains the darkness of Calvary by proposing an eclipse of the sun. In \textit{In Matth comm. series}, 134, Origen rejects the rationalizing hypothesis of an eclipse of the sun.} suspect that Christ’s disciples, through ignorance, have interpreted an eclipse of the sun in connection with the Lord’s Resurrection. Now these customarily happen at certain set times, though an eclipse of the sun ordinarily occurs only during a new moon.\footnote{Lit., “at the rising of the moon” (\textit{ortu lunae}).} But there is no doubt that at the time of the Passover the moon was completely full. And lest perhaps it should seem that the earth’s shadow or the moon’s orb was in opposition to
the sun and created a brief, twilight-like darkness, it is recorded that the duration was three hours. Thus every pretext for other explanations is removed. And this occurred, in my opinion, that the prophecy might be fulfilled which says: “The sun shall set at midday, and light will become dark on the earth”\(^ {358}\) and in another place: “The sun set when it was still midday.”\(^ {359}\) It seems to me that the clearest light of the world, that is, the “greater luminary,” withdrew her rays either in order to avoid seeing the Lord hanging there, or to prevent impious blasphemers from enjoying her light.

27.46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a great voice, saying: “Eli, Eli, lema sabacthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He has used\(^ {361}\) the beginning of the twenty-first Psalm.\(^ {362}\) Moreover, he leaves out what is read in the middle of the little verse: “Look upon me.”\(^ {363}\) For in the Hebrew it reads: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Therefore, they are impious\(^ {364}\) who think that this Psalm was spoken under the persona of David, or of Esther and Mordecai. For the evangelists understand the testimonies taken from it of the Savior, as for example: “They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my clothing”;\(^ {365}\) and elsewhere: “They have pierced my hands and my feet.”\(^ {366}\) Do not marvel at the humility of the words and the complaint of the forsaken one. For by knowing the “form of a servant,”\(^ {367}\) you see the scandal of the cross.

27.47. And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said: “He is calling Elijah.” It does not say that all, but “some,” thought this. I think they were the Roman soldiers, who did not understand the peculiar nature of the Hebrew language. From his words: “Eli,
Eli,” they were thinking that he had invoked Elijah. Now, if you prefer to understand that it was the Jews who said this, they are doing even this by their accustomed habit. They insulting ac-
cuse the Lord of weakness, since he is praying for the help of
Elijah.368

27.48. *And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it
with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink.* These
things happened that the prophecy might be fulfilled: “In my
thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”369 Up to the present day
the Jews and all who disbelieve in the Lord’s Resurrection give
Jesus vinegar and gall to drink. And they give him wine mixed
with myrrh that they might put him to sleep, and he might not
see their evil deeds.

27.50. *But when Jesus had cried out again with a great voice, he
sent forth the spirit.* To send forth the spirit is an indication of di-
vine power, as he himself had also said: “No one can take my
life370 from me, but I lay it down of my own accord that I might
take it up again.”371

27.51. *And the curtain of the Temple was torn in two parts from top
to bottom.* The curtain of the Temple was torn, and all the myster-
ies of the Law that were previously woven together were made
known and passed to the Gentile people.372 In the gospel that we
have frequently mentioned,373 we read that the upper lintel374 of
the Temple, which was of immense size, was broken and split in
two. Josephus, too, reports that the angelic powers, the former
guardians of the Temple, equally cried out at that time: “Let us
pass from this dwelling place.”375

368. The Gospel text provides interesting evidence for the contempo-
rary Jewish belief that the living could prayerfully invoke the help of departed
saints.

369. Ps 69.21.

370. Or “soul” (*anima*).


372. Cf. Homily 66 on Ps 88 (89) in FOTC 57, 68; Ep. 120.8.2.

373. I.e., the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*. Jerome also mentions this gospel “written
in Hebrew letters” in Ep. 120.8 to Hedibia. In the present work see Pref.;
12.13; 13.53–54; 22.23 n; 23.35–36; 27.9–10. Cf. Hennecke-Schneemelcher,
*NTA* 1, 150.

374. Lat., *superliminare*. The lintel is the horizontal architectural member
spanning and usually carrying the load above an opening.

375. Josephus places this prodigy before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70
27.51–52. The earth trembled, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened. Doubtless what the great signs signify literally is that both heaven and earth and all things were showing that their Lord was crucified. But it seems to me that the earthquake and the other things bear a type of believers, namely, that those who were formerly like tombs of the dead, when their former errors and vices are abandoned and their hardness is softened, afterward they recognize the Creator.

27.52–53. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city, and they appeared to many. Just as the dead Lazarus was resurrected, so also many bodies of the saints were resurrected. Thus they showed the Lord rising again. And yet, though the tombs were opened, they were not resurrected before the Lord was resurrected. Thus he was the firstborn of the resurrection from the dead. Now we should understand the holy city in which they were seen when they were being resurrected either as the heavenly Jerusalem, or this earthly one which was previously holy. Just as Matthew is called a tax-collector, not because as an apostle he continued to be a tax-collector, but because he retains his former title, so the city of Jerusalem was called “holy” on account of the Temple and the Holy of Holies, and in order to distinguish it from other cities in which idols were worshiped. But when it is said: “They appeared to many,” it is shown that this was not a general resurrection that appeared to all, but a special one to many. Thus those who deserved to behold it saw it.

27.54. But a centurion and those who were with him guarding Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, they feared greatly, saying: “Truly he was the Son of God.” The cause of the miracle of the centurion after the earthquake is ex-

A.D. Cf. BJ 6.5.3. The same reference to Josephus is found in Ep. 46.4 from Paula and Eustochium to Marcella. See also Jerome’s Ep. 120.8 to Hedioia; Commentary on Isaiah.

380. For the thought of being deserving of participating in the resurrection, see Lk 20.35.
plained more clearly in another Gospel, which says that when he saw him dismiss the spirit, he said: “Truly he was the Son of God.”  

For no one has authority to dismiss his spirit except the one who is the Creator of souls. Now in this passage we should understand “spirit” for “soul,” either because the spirit is what makes the body spiritual and living, or because the spirit is the substance of the soul itself, according to what is written elsewhere: “You will remove their spirit, and they will fail.” And the following ought to be taken into consideration: in the presence of the cross, at the very scandal of the Passion, the centurion confesses that he is truly the Son of God. Yet in the Church Arius preaches that he is a creature!

27.55. Now there were also many women there [looking on] from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him. There was a Jewish practice, and as an ancient custom of the nation it was not regarded as offensive, that women provided food and clothing for teachers out of their own substance. Paul records that he has set aside this custom, because it could cause a scandal among the Gentiles: “Do we not have authority to lead about women as sisters, as the other apostles also do?” Now they were providing for the Lord out of their own substance. Thus he was reaping material things from them, while they were reaping spiritual things from him. It is not that the Lord was in need of the food of his creatures, but to show a type for teachers, that they should be content with food and clothing from their disciples. But let us see what sort of companions he had: Mary Magdalene, from whom he had expelled seven demons; Mary the mother of James and Joseph, who was the Savior’s own maternal aunt, the sister of Mary the Lord’s mother; and the mother of the sons of Zebedee, who a little earlier had asked for the kingdom for her sons; and others whom we read about in the other Gospels.

27.57. When it was evening, there came a certain rich man from Arimathea by the name of Joseph. He was himself a disciple of Jesus. He is referred to as “rich” not because the writer wanted to boast

and report that a noble and very rich man had been a disciple of Jesus. Rather, it was to show the reason why he was able to procure from Pilate the body of Jesus. For a poor and unknown man could not have gained access to Pilate, the representative of Roman power, and procured the body of a crucified man. In another evangelist, Joseph is called a βουλευτής, that is, a counselor. Some think that the first Psalm was composed about him: “Blessed is the man who does not go in the counsel of the impious,” etc.

27.59. And having taken the body of Jesus, he wrapped it in clean linen. The ambition of the rich is condemned through the simple burial of the Lord. They are unable to be without their wealth, even among tombs. But we can also understand this according to the spiritual understanding. The Lord’s body is wrapped not in gold and jewels and silk, but in a pure linen shroud. This signifies that he wraps Jesus in clean linen who receives him with a pure mind.

27.60. And he placed it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn from rock; and he rolled a great stone over the entrance of the tomb, and he went away. He is placed in a new tomb lest after the Resurrection, while the other bodies remain, it would be fabricated that a different body had been raised. But the new tomb can also point to the virginal womb of Mary. And the stone placed at the entrance, indeed a great stone, shows that the tomb could not have been opened without the help of many.

27.61. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. Though the others had abandoned the Lord, the women persevered in their duty, awaiting what Jesus had promised. This is why they merited to be the first to see the Risen One. For “the one who perseveres to the end shall be saved.”

27.64. “Therefore, give orders to guard the tomb until the third day, lest perchance his disciples come and steal him away.” It would not have sufficed for the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees to have crucified the Lord and Savior without also guarding the
tomb, taking a cohort, sealing the stone, and resisting with all their might the one who was rising again. Thus did their diligence advance our faith. For the more [the tomb] is guarded, so much the more is the power of the Resurrection shown. This is also why he was laid in a new tomb that had been cut in rock. For if it had been built out of many stones, it could have been said that he was removed by theft, once the foundations of the mound had been dug under. That he had to be placed in a tomb is a testimony of the prophet who says: “He dwelt in a deep cave of very strong rock.” And at once, after two little verses, follows: “You will see the king with glory.”

Chapter 28

28.1. Now on the evening of the sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. The fact that different times for these women are described in the Gospels is not a sign of falsehood, as the impious object. Rather, [it shows] the duties of diligent visitation. For they were going away and returning frequently and they could not endure to be absent from the Lord’s tomb even for a short while.

28.2–3. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and coming near rolled away the stone, and he was sitting upon it; but his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was like snow. Our Lord is one and the same Son of God and Son of man. According to both natures, divinity and flesh, he shows signs, now of his greatness, now of his humility. This is why in the present passage, though it is a man who was crucified, buried, and shut in the tomb, whom a stone holds back in opposition, nevertheless the things that are done outside show him to be the Son of God: the sun takes flight, darkness falls, the earth quakes, the curtain is torn, the rocks split, the dead are raised, there are services of angels, which even from the beginning of his birth proved that he was God. For ex-

392. Is 33.16.
393. Is 33.17.
394. Cf. Mt 1.23.
ample, Gabriel comes to Mary,\textsuperscript{395} an angel speaks with Joseph,\textsuperscript{396} it announces the same thing to shepherds;\textsuperscript{397} afterward a choir of angels is heard: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.”\textsuperscript{398} He is tempted in the desert and immediately after his victory angels serve him.\textsuperscript{399} Now, too, an angel comes as a guard of the Lord’s tomb. By his bright clothing he expresses the glory of the triumphant one. And what is more, when the Lord ascends to heaven, two angels are seen on the Mount of Olives, promising the Savior’s second coming to the apostles.\textsuperscript{400}

28.4–5. \textit{And for fear of him the guards were terrified and became like dead men. And the angel answered and said to the women: “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified.”} The guards are completely terrified with fear.\textsuperscript{401} They lie there stupefied like dead men, and yet the angel consoles not them but the women: “Do not be afraid.” Let them be afraid, he says. Panic persists in those in whom abides unbelief. But as for you, since you are seeking the crucified Jesus, hear this: he has been resurrected and has fulfilled his promises.

28.6–7. \textit{“Come and see where he had been placed.”} Thus, if you do not believe my words, you should believe the empty tomb. Go with quick steps and announce to his disciples that he has risen. And he is going ahead of you into Galilee, that is, into the quagmire\textsuperscript{402} of the Gentiles, where previously there was error and slipperiness, and where previously he did not place his footprint with a firm and stable foot.

28.8. \textit{And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, running to announce to his disciples.} Two different feelings occupied the minds of the women: fear and joy. The former came from the greatness of the miracle, the latter from their longing for the Resurrected One. And yet both feelings quickened their feminine steps. They went to the apostles so that through them the seedbed of the faith would be scattered.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{395} Cf. Lk 1.26.
\item \textsuperscript{396} Cf. Mt 1.20.
\item \textsuperscript{397} Cf. Lk 2.10.
\item \textsuperscript{398} Lk 2.14.
\item \textsuperscript{399} Cf. Mk 1.13; Mt 4.11.
\item \textsuperscript{400} Cf. Acts 1.11.
\item \textsuperscript{401} Cf. Origen, \textit{fragm.} 567.
\item \textsuperscript{402} This word is used in 2 Pt 2.22 of a pig’s mire.
\end{itemize}
28.9. And behold, Jesus met them, saying: “Hail!” Those who were seeking in this way, those who were running in such a way, merited to meet the risen Lord and to be the first to hear: “Hail!” Thus the curse of the woman Eve was broken among women.403

28.9. But they came and held his feet and worshiped him. They come and hold his feet, for they worshiped him. But she who was seeking the living among the dead404 and who still did not know that the Son of God had risen, deservedly hears: “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.”405

28.10. Then Jesus said to them: “Do not be afraid.” Both in the Old and in the New Testament406 the following should always be observed: When a more majestic vision appears, at first fear is expelled. Thus, when the mind has been made calm in this way, the things that are said can be heard.

28.10. “Go, announce to my brethren that they should go to Galilee. They will see me there.” He also spoke to these brethren in another passage: “I will announce your name to my brethren.”407 It is not in Judea that they see the Savior, but in the multitude of the Gentiles.

28.12–14. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a generous sum of money to the soldiers, saying: “Say that his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep. And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will convince him and keep you out of trouble.” The guards confess the miracle, return agitated to the city, announce to the chief priests what they saw, the events that they had seen.408 Those who should have converted to repentance and sought the risen Jesus persevere in their malice. They convert the money that had been given for the Temple’s use into a payment for a falsehood, just as they had previously given thirty pieces of silver to Judas the betrayer.409 Therefore, all who misappropriate the donations of the Temple and those that are given for church use for other matters by

406. Lat., instrumentum. This term is common in Tertullian and Origen as well.
which they satisfy their own will, are like the scribes and priests who purchased a falsehood and who paid money for the Savior’s blood.

28.16. Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain that Jesus had appointed for them. After the Resurrection Jesus is seen on a mountain in Galilee, and he is worshiped there, though some doubt, and their doubt increases our faith. Then he manifests himself more openly to Thomas, and he shows his side wounded by a spear and his hands pierced by nails.410

28.18. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Authority has been given to him who a little earlier was crucified, who was buried in a tomb, who lay there dead, who afterward was resurrected. But authority has been given “in heaven and on earth.” Thus he who was previously reigning in heaven reigns on earth through the faith of believers.

28.19. “Go therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” First they teach all nations, then they dip in water those who have been taught. For it is not possible that the body receives the sacrament of Baptism unless the soul first receives the truth of the faith. Now they are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Thus there is one gift from those whose divinity is one.411 And the name of Trinity is one God.412

28.20. “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The sequence is extraordinary. He has commanded the apostles first to teach all nations, then to dip them in the sacrament of faith, and after faith and baptism they are to instruct them in the things that must be observed. And lest we think that the things that are commanded are light matters, he added the few words: “all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Thus those who believe, who are baptized in the Trinity, must do everything that has been taught.

28.20. “And behold, I am with you all the days until the consum-

411. Cf. Origen, fragm. 572.
412. Cf. Homily 69 on Ps 91 (92) in FOTC 57, 92.
mation of the age." He promises to be with his disciples until the consummation of the age. He shows that they will always be victorious and that he will never depart from believers. But he who promises his presence until the consummation of the world is not ignorant of that day on which he knows he will be with his apostles.\footnote{See above on Mt 24.36; 24.42; 24.44–46.}