

THE LESSONS OF JESUS

The Real Story

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If this book turns out to be worth something to you, you can leave a tip for the person who made it at **LessonsOfJesus.com/give**. Nothing is expected. This is one of only two places the book will mention it. The other is the last page.

TO MOTHERS.

How to Use This Book

I am going to tell you a story about myself. Most of it you have never heard, not because it was hidden, but because nobody ever sat down and walked you through it in order.

This book is built like a school book, and that is on purpose. You do not need to know anything before you start.

Here is how each lesson works.

Every lesson opens with two boxes, before the lesson itself starts. The first is a question. That question is the whole point of the lesson, and everything that follows is the answer. The second, when you need it, is **Words to Know**, so any unfamiliar word is defined before you meet it, not after.

Then the lesson itself begins, in short sentences and plain words.

After it, there is a box called **Check It Yourself.** It gives you a verse from your own Bible, so you can look it up and see whether I told you the truth. It also gives you that lesson's own page on **LessonsOfJesus.com**, where the longer history and every source are waiting, free.

At the end there is **The Short Version** — three or four lines that hold the whole lesson, in case that is all you remember.

Then **Think About It.** Nobody grades these. They are for you.

Three promises before we start.

One. I will never make you feel stupid for not already knowing this. You were not told these things, and that is not your fault.

Two. You can check everything. Bible verses look like this: (Luke 4:18). That means the book of Luke, chapter 4, verse 18. History facts have a small number

after them, and the note at the back of the book tells you exactly where it comes from.

Three. I am not trying to take your faith. I am trying to show you the difference between two things that got glued together over twenty centuries: what I actually said, and what people built on top of it afterward. They are not the same thing, and by the end of this book, you will be able to tell them apart.

One more thing, and then we begin.

There are five units, and they go in order because the order matters. Each one depends on the one before it.

Unit One is who I actually was: the country, the debt, the prophets, the table, the healings, and why the state killed me for it.

Unit Two is what happened to my message in the first three hundred years after I died, before there was anything you would recognize as a church.

Unit Three is four specific ideas that got swapped into the story later. Each one has a date attached to it. That date matters, because it turns a vague complaint into a claim you can actually check.

Unit Four is the twenty centuries that were built on top of it, told in order. In every one of those centuries, there were people who understood what I actually meant and lived by it anyway, even while the institution around them was building something else.

Unit Five turns the same method on your own church, right now. Not history — the actual building you sit in this week. I will ask the same three questions this whole book has been asking about everyone else: when did this start, where did it really come from, and who benefits when you do not ask, whether because no one ever taught you how, or because it is simply easier not to.

UNIT ONE — WHO I ACTUALLY WAS

Lesson 1: One Word That Was Changed

> Before You Read
>
> *You have said the Lord's Prayer your whole life. Is it the prayer I taught?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Debt** — money you owe to someone. If you cannot pay it, you can lose your house, your land, or your freedom. That last part was literal where I lived. A man who could not pay could be jailed until somebody paid for him, or sold, or his children taken and put to work (2 Kings 4:1; Nehemiah 5:1–5; Matthew 18:25).
>
> **Trespass** — an offense. Something wrong you did to another person. In old English it also meant walking on land that is not yours.
>
> **The Lord's Prayer** — the prayer I taught my followers. It is in Matthew 6:9–13 and in a shorter form in Luke 11:2–4. The two versions do not use the same words, and you will see why that matters before the end of this lesson.

Say the prayer.

You know it by heart because you learned it before you could read.

Say the part about forgiveness out loud.

Most of you just said this: *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

Now do something. Go get a Bible. The one in the drawer is fine.

Turn to Matthew, chapter 6, verse 12.

Read what it really says.

If it is a King James, an NIV, an ESV, an NRSV, or a NASB — which covers most of the Bibles in most American houses — it does not say trespasses.

It says **debts.**

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Not sins. Not hurt feelings. Not the mean thing your sister said at Christmas.

Debts. Money that one person owes another person.

I am being careful with you, so here is the other half. If you are holding an NLT, a CEV, a Good News Bible, or The Message, you will read *sins* or *wrongs* instead. Those four are not word-for-word translations. They are paraphrases — somebody read the sentence, decided what it meant, and wrote that down for you.

Which means somebody decided it meant sin.

Hold on to that. It is the whole lesson.

This was not a mistake.

Somebody might tell you the two words mean the same thing. In Greek they are not even close, and you can check this in any study Bible with footnotes. Here is the one fair objection, and you should have it: I spoke Aramaic, and the Aramaic word behind it, *hoba*, carries both meanings at once. So the choice may have been the writer's rather than mine. But it was still a choice, and he made it twice, and he knew the other word.

The prayer in Matthew 6:12 uses the word *opheilēma*. It means a thing owed. It is the word for a bill.

Eight lines later, in Matthew 6:14, the same writer uses a different word: *paraptōma*. That one means a false step, a stumble, an offense against a person. [1]

Nobody knows who wrote the book we call Matthew. The name was attached to it later. But whoever he was, he had both words in front of him, and in the prayer he picked the money one.

And now the part I have to tell you myself, before somebody else does.

There are two versions of this prayer, and I am not going to hide the second one from you.

Luke 11:4 says *forgive us our sins*. That is the plain word for sin — *hamartia*. Different word from Matthew's.

An honest reader should know that. So now look at the rest of Luke's line: *for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us*.

Luke took the money word out of the first half and left it sitting in the second half.

That is what a change looks like while it is still happening. If this prayer had always been about sin, there would be no debtors left in it. Luke kept them, because they were there first.

Why it matters.

I lived in a place where debt was destroying families. I will show you that in Lesson 3.

So I taught a prayer that asked God to wipe out what people owed.

You have been saying a prayer about hurt feelings.

So who changed it?

This has names and dates in it, and you can check every one of them.

The thing to understand is that the verse on the page and the prayer in your mouth come down two different pipes.

The printed verse. The old Latin Bible of the western church says *debita* — debts. The King James translators followed it in 1611 and printed *debts*. So does your NIV. That pipe kept the money word for fifteen hundred years.

The spoken prayer. In 1526 an Englishman named William Tyndale printed the first English New Testament made from the Greek, and at Matthew 6:12 he wrote *trespasses*. In 1549 Thomas Cranmer assembled the Book of Common Prayer for the English church, and the Lord's Prayer in it follows Tyndale: *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*. [2]

That prayer book was read aloud in every parish church in England, every week, by law, for hundreds of years. Children learned it before they learned to read.

That is how a word gets into the mouths of millions of people who never chose it. Not a plot. A liturgy.

So the Bible on your shelf and the prayer you recite have never been the same sentence. One word got changed, in a printed book, by men whose names are known, four hundred years before you were born. And when it changed, the whole subject changed with it.

A prayer about the thing that was crushing my neighbors became a prayer about something you can settle by yourself, in private, that costs nobody anything.

Nobody hid this from you.

That is the strange part.

It is printed in your Bible. It has always been there. It takes one minute to find.

Nobody ever had a reason to point at it.

That is what this whole book is like.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Matthew 6:12
>
> **You will find:** the word *debts*, not *trespasses*.
>
> **Then look up:** Matthew 6:14, two lines later.
>
> **You will find:** a different word — *trespasses* or *sins*, depending on your Bible. Two different words, two lines apart, on purpose.
>
> **Then look up:** Luke 11:4, the other version of the prayer. It says *sins* in the first half and *indebted* in the second half. Ask yourself which half somebody was still in the middle of changing.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/1**.

The Short Version

- I taught a prayer that asked God to cancel **debts** — money owed.
- The KJV, NIV, ESV, NRSV and NASB all print *debts* at Matthew 6:12.
- Luke's version says *sins*, but keeps *indebted* in the second half — the older word showing through.
- The recited *trespasses* comes from Tyndale in 1526 and Cranmer's prayer book in 1549, not from the Bible on your shelf.
- Changing one word changed what the prayer is about.

Think About It

1. Why would a church prefer a prayer about feelings over a prayer about money?
2. Who does it cost something if debts get cancelled? Who does it cost nothing?

Lesson 2: My Name Was Not Jesus

> Before You Read
>
> *Do you know what to call me?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Aramaic** — the everyday language I spoke. Related to Hebrew, but not the same.
>
> **Anointed** — having oil poured on your head in a ceremony. It is how you made someone a king.
>
> **Messiah** — Hebrew for *anointed*. **Christ** is the same word in Greek. They mean the same thing.

Start with something small.

My name was **Yeshua.**

It was a common name, and lots of men had it. It is the same name your Bible gives to Joshua, the man who led my people into their land.

Same name. Your Bible just spells his name the old way and mine the new way.

How it changed.

Greek speakers wrote my name down. Greek has no *sh* sound, so the *sh* came out as an *s*. And Greek puts an *-s* on the end of a man's name, the way English puts an *-s* on the end of a plural. So *Yeshua* came out *Iēsous*.

That spelling is older than I am. About two hundred and fifty years before I was born, Jewish scholars in Egypt translated our scriptures into Greek, and they spelled Joshua's name *Iēsous*. My name was already sitting in a Greek book before anybody said it over my cradle. [3]

Then Latin speakers wrote it down. Around the year 400, a scholar named Jerome translated the whole Bible into Latin, and it reads *Iesus*.

Then English added the letter *J*. For most of its history the alphabet did not have one — the letter *I* did both jobs. An Italian writer named Gian Giorgio Trissino argued in 1524 that they should be split into two letters. The King James Bible of 1611 still printed my name *Iesus*. The spelling with a *J* became normal in English during the sixteen hundreds. [4]

So: *Yeshua*, then *Iēsous*, then *Iesus*, then *Jesus*. Three languages and one new letter, and the last change is only about four hundred years old.

I am not upset. Names travel. That is what names do.

But notice what it shows you. Every single thing you have of mine came to you through other languages first. I spoke Aramaic. The books about me are in Greek.

How do you know I spoke Aramaic?

Because a few of my actual words stuck, and the men who wrote them down had to stop and translate them for their readers. You can see the seams.

Talitha koum — little girl, get up (Mark 5:41). *Ephphatha* — be opened (Mark 7:34). *Abba* — father (Mark 14:36). And from the cross, *Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani* (Mark 15:34).

Four scraps. That is very nearly everything that survives in the language I said it in.

Now the second word, and this one matters much more.

Christ is not my name.

It is not my last name. My family was not the Christ family.

Christ is a job. It is a Greek word that means *anointed*. Anointed means somebody poured oil on your head.

And you know who got oil poured on his head in my country?

A king.

Not a picture — an actual ceremony, with a horn of oil, performed by a prophet or a priest. Your Bible has it three times in a row at the start of the

monarchy. The prophet Samuel pours oil on a man named Saul and tells him the Lord has anointed him ruler (1 Samuel 10:1). Samuel does it again, to a shepherd boy named David (1 Samuel 16:13). Zadok the priest does it to Solomon at the spring, and the people shout *long live King Solomon* (1 Kings 1:39).

Oil on the head. Then you are the king. That is what the word is for.

So what does "Jesus Christ" mean?

It means *Yeshua the King*.

That is a title, not a name. It is a job description.

And here is the part to hold on to. When the Romans killed me, they nailed a sign over my head saying what my crime was.

The sign said **King of the Jews** (Mark 15:26).

The title your church says the most is the crime I was executed for.

Why a title is useful.

A man from a village has a face. He has an accent. He has a job and a mother and opinions about money.

A title has none of that.

You cannot put a poor man from Nazareth on a flag. You can put a title on one.

Remember that. It comes back in Unit Three.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Mark 15:26
>
> **You will find:** the sign the Romans put over my head. It names a crime, not a religion.
>
> **Try this too:** read any letter of Paul and count how many times you meet the word *Christ*. Then count how many times you meet a man from Nazareth doing something.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/2**.

The Short Version

- My name was **Yeshua**. *Jesus* is that name after two translations and one new letter.
- **Christ** is not a name. It is the Greek word for *anointed*, which means **king**.
- *Jesus Christ* means *Yeshua the King*.
- Rome executed me for claiming to be a king. That is on the sign.

Think About It

1. Try praying tonight using *Yeshua* instead of *Jesus*. Does anything feel different?
2. Why is it easier to build an empire around a title than around a person?

Lesson 3: The Country I Grew Up In

> Before You Read
>
> *What did it feel like to live where I lived?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Occupied** — when a foreign army and government run your country instead of your own.
>
> **Day laborer** — someone hired one day at a time, with no promise of work tomorrow.
>
> **Debt** — money owed. In my country, if you could not pay it, you lost your land.

My country was occupied.

That means another country ran it.

Here is how Rome got there, because nobody ever tells you. In **63 BC** two brothers of our own royal family were fighting each other over the throne, and both of them asked a Roman general named **Pompey** to come and settle it. He came. He picked one brother, laid siege to Jerusalem, walked into the Temple, and never left.

That is the year it started. A family argument, and an invitation.

Judea and Galilee were run differently, and I lived in Galilee.

Judea, in the south, where Jerusalem is, was run by Rome directly from AD 6 onward. A Roman officer called a prefect governed it. Roman troops were stationed there. Rome assessed and collected the taxes, and Roman courts had the last word. When I was a grown man, that prefect was **Pontius Pilate**.

Galilee, in the north, where I grew up, had no Roman governor and no Roman garrison. It had a client ruler: **Herod Antipas**, a son of Herod the Great. Rome

let him keep his throne for forty-three years, from 4 BC to AD 39, on one condition. Keep the place quiet and keep the money coming. [5]

So in my village you might not see a Roman soldier from one year to the next. You saw Antipas's men. Do not let that comfort you. A client ruler is a cheaper way to hold a country, not a gentler one.

Foreign rule had lasted six hundred years.

Count from **586 BC**, the year Babylon burned Jerusalem, to the year I was born. That is about **six hundred years**.

In all those six hundred years, my people governed themselves for **about eighty** — one stretch, won by a revolt, which you will meet in Lesson 4. Eighty years out of six hundred. Then Pompey.

That is the number to carry through this book. Not six hundred years of nothing. Six hundred years with one gap in it that people still told stories about.

My village was tiny.

I grew up in Nazareth, a village of a few hundred people. It is not mentioned once in the Hebrew scriptures, and it is not in any writing at all before the gospels.

When one man in your Bible hears where I am from, he says: *can anything good come out of Nazareth?* (John 1:46). That is not an insult. That is a geography question. It was nowhere.

We worked with our hands.

My father built things. Your Bible calls him a carpenter. The Greek word is *tektōn*, and it means a builder — a man who works with stone and timber and goes wherever the job is (Mark 6:3; Matthew 13:55).

We were not the poorest people around. We ate in a normal year. In a bad year we did not. That describes almost everybody I knew.

Now the thing that explains everything else I said: my people were losing their land.

Families were losing their land. It worked like this. Money was taken out of the same field from three directions at once. **Antipas** taxed the land in Galilee and took a cut of every load that passed his toll stations. **Rome** taxed Antipas, and Antipas taxed us. **The Temple** claimed a half shekel a year from every grown man, about two days' pay for a laborer, plus a tenth of the produce and the first of the harvest. [6]

Now let me be honest about the one thing I cannot give you. No tax bill from a Galilean village survives. Anybody who tells you the exact percentage is guessing.

And here is the detail that broke people. The land tax was figured on the land, not on the harvest. So a bad year did not lower the bill.

Then you borrowed, and not from a bank.

There were none. You borrowed from whoever had money, which meant the people at the top: the large landowners, the officials around Antipas, and the wealthy priestly families in Jerusalem. The loan was written down, with witnesses, and your land was the security.

Those papers mattered. In AD 66, when Jerusalem rose against Rome, one of the first things the rebels did was burn the building that held the public records, in order to destroy the moneylenders' bonds (Josephus, *War* 2.427). [7] Nobody burns an archive over nothing.

Now you should be asking me a hard question.

In Lesson 4 you are going to read my people's own law. It bans charging interest to a poor man (Exodus 22:25). It cancels all debts every seven years (Deuteronomy 15:1–2). So how did anybody end up permanently in debt?

Three ways. First, those laws named nobody to enforce them: no court, no officer, no penalty. They are addressed to your conscience. A written loan contract was enforced in the ruler's court, by the ruler's men. Two systems, and only one of them had a bailiff. Second, the paper was written to get around the interest ban: a man borrows the value of eight measures of grain and signs for ten, and there is no interest anywhere on that document. [8] Third, our own

teachers built a device for the seven-year cancellation, the *prosbul*, remembered as the work of Hillel around the time I was born. It handed the debt over to a court before the seventh year, so the cancellation did not reach it. [9] The law itself saw this coming: Deuteronomy 15:9 warns a lender not to refuse his needy neighbor because the year of release is close.

So the protections were ancient, holy, and toothless. The contracts were ordinary, recent, and enforceable. That is how.

This is what losing the land looked like.

Then a second bad year came. You defaulted. The creditor took the paper to the court that handled debts. The paper said the land stood as security, so the land became his. Nobody had to steal anything. Every step was in order, and all of it was legal.

Then he made you an offer, because he needed somebody to work the field and you were already standing on it. You stayed on your grandfather's ground as a tenant and handed over a share of every harvest. Or your sons walked out and looked for wages.

And if a balance was still owed, a man who could not pay could be jailed until somebody paid for him, or sold with his family. That is in one of my own stories, where the master *ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children* (Matthew 18:25).

That is why men stood in the square at dawn.

Every morning, in every town, day laborers waited to be hired for the day. They were not lazy. Many of them were the sons of families who had owned land within living memory.

I told a story about men like that (Matthew 20:1–16). A landowner hires some at dawn, some at noon, and some at five in the afternoon. He asks the last group why they have been standing there all day.

Their answer is one line: *because nobody hired us.*

Every person listening to me had stood in that square. They knew exactly what that day feels like: a whole day gone, nothing earned, and children at home.

And there was a city over the hill.

Four miles from my village, Herod Antipas was building his capital out of stone. Its name was **Sepphoris**. The men of Nazareth walked over and worked on it. My father almost certainly did, and so did I.

I say *almost certainly* because no book records it. But a *tektōn* goes where the building is, and the largest building site in Galilee was an hour's walk from my door for years.

Here is what makes that strange.

About the time I was born, Rome burned Sepphoris to the ground. Herod the Great died in **4 BC**, and the country rose. At Sepphoris a man named Judas broke into the royal armory and armed his followers. **Varus**, the Roman governor of Syria, came down with two legions, and his officer Gaius took Sepphoris, burned it, and sold its people into slavery (Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.271, 17.289).

Then Antipas — the dead king's son, installed with Rome's approval — rebuilt that same city as his capital and hired the neighbors of the people who had been sold. [10]

So when I told stories, I was not making things up.

Your church teaches my stories as gentle little pictures about the soul.

Look at what is actually in them, and go read each one. A landlord who lives far away and sends men to collect (Mark 12:1–9). A manager about to be fired, cooking the books on his way out (Luke 16:1–8). A servant thrown in prison over a debt (Matthew 18:23–35). A widow who cannot get a judge to listen (Luke 18:1–8). Workers. Wages. Rent.

You could hear these as pretty pictures about the soul. Some preachers do. But that is not where they started.

I was not reaching for pretty images.

I was describing the news.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Matthew 20:1–16, the story of the workers in the square.

You will find: men standing all day because nobody hired them — and a landowner who pays the late ones a full day's wage anyway.

Ask yourself: who in that story is angry, and why?

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/3**.

The Short Version

- Rome arrived in 63 BC, invited in by two royal brothers fighting over the throne.
- Counted from 586 BC, my people had six hundred years of foreign rule with one gap of about eighty.
- Judea had a Roman prefect. Galilee, where I lived, had a client ruler, Herod Antipas.
- Three claims on one field drove families into debt, and the laws that should have saved their land had no enforcer.
- My stories are full of rent, debt, and day labor because that was the world outside my door.

Think About It

1. Is there a place in your town where people wait to be picked up for work?
2. Why might a church prefer to teach my stories as pictures about the soul?

Lesson 4: The Story I Was Raised On

> Before You Read
>
> *What story was I raised on?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Exile** — when a conquering empire carries a people away from their own land.
>
> **Jubilee** — the rule that every fifty years, land goes back to the family that lost it, and debts are cleared.
>
> **Prophet** — not a fortune teller. Someone who tells you what God thinks of what you are doing *right now*.

You know pieces of this already. Abraham. Moses. David. Daniel.

What almost nobody gets is the **order**, and why one thing caused the next. That is what makes sense of everything.

Here it is, once, straight through.

It starts with a promise.

Every people has a story about how it began. Mine starts with one man and a promise from God that his family would grow into a nation of their own. A man named Abraham is told to leave home and go to a land he has never seen (Genesis 12:1–3).

His grandson has twelve sons. Those twelve become twelve tribes.

Remember the number twelve. It comes back in Lesson 10, and it will explain something that has been sitting in your Bible your whole life.

One of the twelve is a boy named Joseph, and the next part will not work without him.

His brothers sell him to traders going down to Egypt (Genesis 37). Because he can read the king's dreams, he ends up running the country's grain, and he puts seven good harvests in storehouses (Genesis 41). Then a famine comes, and Egypt has food when nobody around it does.

So the family goes down to Egypt to buy food. Joseph, now the second man in Egypt, gives them land there. They stay. So do their grandchildren.

Then they are slaves.

Centuries pass. A new king comes to power in Egypt, one who never knew Joseph or what his family had done for the country. He looks at how many of my people there now are, and he says this out loud: if there is a war, they could side with our enemies and walk out of this country. So he gives the order. Put slave masters over them. Work them until it breaks them. Make them build his store-cities, Pithom and Rameses, out of mud brick, under the whip (Exodus 1:8–14).

And then comes the most important sentence my people ever wrote down.

God heard them.

Not their prayers, exactly. Their *groaning*, the noise a person makes under a weight (Exodus 2:23–25). He heard them because they were being crushed. That was the only reason.

Hold on to that. It is the foundation of everything I ever said. God is not attracted to winners. He notices people being ground down, takes their side, and does something.

They walk out, the sea opens, and they are free.

A man named **Moses**, born a slave and raised in the Egyptian palace, is sent back to demand that the king let them go (Exodus 3–4). The king refuses over and over, and why would he not? They are his labor force and he has just said he needs them. So ten disasters come down on Egypt one after another, and the last one is the death of every firstborn son in the country (Exodus 7–12).

On that night my people are told to eat a meal standing up, dressed to travel, with the blood of a lamb marked on the doorposts so that the death passes over that house.

That meal is called **Passover.** My people have eaten it every spring ever since.

Learn that word now. It is the festival I was killed during, and in Lesson 12 you will see exactly why that mattered to a Roman governor.

They walk out that night. The king changes his mind and sends his chariots after them. They cross the water. The army does not (Exodus 14).

Then comes the law, and the law will surprise you.

At a mountain called **Sinai**, Moses goes up and comes back down with commandments. Everybody knows the Ten (Exodus 20). But hundreds more come with them, and a huge share of those are about money and the poor. Here are real ones. Look them up.

- Pay a hired man the same day. He needs it tonight (Leviticus 19:13).
- Do not charge interest to a poor person (Exodus 22:25).
- Use honest scales, and do not tilt a court case for the poor man or the important one (Leviticus 19:15, 19:35–36).
- Every seven years, cancel all debts (Deuteronomy 15:1–2).
- Every fifty years, in the jubilee, give the land back to the families who lost it (Leviticus 25:8–17).

Now ask what all those rules are trying to prevent.

They are afraid of one thing happening: a few people slowly ending up with everything, and everyone else working for them. Every rule on that list is a brake on that. The people who wrote them down remembered being slaves, so they were not going to build slavery again by accident.

Notice that I said people wrote them down. You were taught that God handed these laws to Moses on the mountain. Many of the people who spend their lives studying these books think they were written and collected over centuries, by

priests and scribes who had inherited the memory of Egypt. This book does not need that settled. Either way, the laws say what they say.

Remember the shape of that. It is the shape of everything I taught. And by the end of this book you will see exactly where it got removed.

They get a country.

Moses dies before they enter it. A man named **Joshua** leads them across the Jordan river (Joshua 3). The book of Joshua tells it as a swift conquest. The book of Judges tells it as a slow, patchy settlement with the old peoples still living there. For a long stretch afterward there is no king at all.

Then they ask for a king.

The people demand one, so they can be like other nations. A prophet named Samuel warns them (1 Samuel 8:10–18). He says a king will take your sons for his army, your daughters for his house, your best fields for his officials, and a tenth of everything.

And then: *you will be his slaves.*

They say they want one anyway.

They get three kings: Saul, then David, then Solomon.

David is the one to remember, because all of Lesson 10 hangs on him. He is a shepherd's youngest son from a village called Bethlehem. Samuel pours oil on his head (1 Samuel 16:13). He makes Jerusalem his capital (2 Samuel 5).

And he is given a promise: that his family would hold the throne, and God would not take it away from them (2 Samuel 7:12–16).

Write that promise down. Six hundred years later, people waiting for a rescuer were waiting for a man from *that family*, because of *that sentence.*

Solomon builds the Temple, and it is magnificent. He built it with drafted labor: thirty thousand men, working in shifts (1 Kings 5:13–14). Exactly as Samuel said it would.

Keep your eye on that building. The Temple becomes the largest institution in the country: a treasury, the biggest employer in Jerusalem, a slaughterhouse at festival time, and a tax authority with a claim on every grown man. When I overturn tables in Lesson 10, that is what I am standing inside.

Then the country splits over taxes and forced labor.

When Solomon dies, the northern tribes come to his son **Rehoboam** and ask him to lighten the load, meaning the forced labor and the taxes his father had used on them. Rehoboam answers that he will make it heavier (1 Kings 12:1–14). So the north walks out, behind a former official of Solomon's named **Jeroboam**, and stones Solomon's labor boss to death (1 Kings 12:18).

Now there are two countries. The north keeps the name **Israel**. The south, around Jerusalem, is **Judah**. The split was over taxes and forced labor, and it is right there in the text.

Then the empires come, and here are the names and dates.

- **722 BC:** Assyria takes the north and marches its people off as a matter of policy. Those ten tribes never come back (2 Kings 17:5–6).
- **586 BC:** Judah stops paying tribute, and Babylon's king **Nebuchadnezzar** burns Jerusalem and the Temple and carries the leading families into exile (2 Kings 25). Every "six hundred years" in this book counts from here.
- **539 BC:** Persia conquers Babylon, and its king **Cyrus** sends deported peoples home, mine among them (Ezra 1:1–4). They rebuild the Temple, smaller. [11]
- **167 BC:** The Greek king **Antiochus the Fourth** tries to abolish our religion (1 Maccabees 1:41–64), and a family of priests, led by **Judas Maccabee**, revolts.
- **142–63 BC:** My people are independent for **about eighty years**, the one gap in the six hundred. [12]
- **63 BC:** Rome takes the country, and it is still Rome when I am born.

Now feel where that leaves a person.

My people had a story about a God who hears slaves and breaks them out.

And they had six hundred years of not being broken out, with one eighty-year gap in the middle that every grandfather told stories about.

So they waited for a king from **David's family**, because of that promise in 2 Samuel 7.

You can watch them praying for exactly that. A Jewish poem written down about fifty years before I was born, the seventeenth of the Psalms of Solomon, asks God to raise up for them *the son of David*, to drive the foreigners out of Jerusalem. It is not in your Bible, but it survives. [13]

The word for that person is *messiah*. It just means *anointed*, which, as you learned in Lesson 2, means **king**.

That is what the word meant. To everybody. Including the people standing in front of me.

> ### Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** 1 Samuel 8:10–18.
>
> **You will find:** a warning about what a king will do to ordinary people. Read it slowly. It holds up as one of the more accurate political predictions in the Bible.
>
> **Then look up:** Leviticus 25:23 — the reason given for the jubilee. It is not kindness. It is ownership.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/4**.

> ### The Short Version
>
> - My people's founding story is God hearing slaves and getting them out of Egypt. The festival that remembers it is **Passover**.
> - The law they were given is full of rules protecting the poor and cancelling debt.
> - Every one of those rules exists to stop a few people getting everything.
> - The empires in order: Assyria 722 BC, Babylon 586 BC, Persia 539 BC, the Greeks, independence 142–63 BC, then Rome.
> - By my lifetime, six hundred years of foreign rule, with one eighty-year gap, had them waiting for a king from David's family.

Think About It

1. Have you ever heard a sermon about cancelling debts every seven years? Why not?
2. Samuel's warning came true. Why do you think the people wanted a king anyway?

Lesson 5: The Angry Men I Learned From

> Before You Read
>
> *Where did I get my ideas?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Prophet** — someone who tells the powerful what God thinks of what they are doing now.
>
> **Sacrifice** — an animal killed and offered at the Temple as worship.
>
> **Justice** — in these books, it almost always means fair courts, fair pay, and fair scales. Not a feeling.

I did not invent any of this.

That matters. Your church makes me sound like I arrived out of nowhere with a brand new message.

I did not. I came at the end of a long line of people. Most of them were poor. All of them were furious. And every one of them got in trouble.

Not "trouble" the way a man gets a stern letter. **Micaiah** told a king he was going to lose a battle and was slapped in the face and put in a cell on bread and water (1 Kings 22:24–27). **Jeremiah** was locked in the stocks (Jeremiah 20:2), and later lowered on ropes into a cistern with mud at the bottom (Jeremiah 38:6). A prophet named **Uriah son of Shemaiah** said the same things Jeremiah was saying, ran for Egypt, and was dragged back and killed by the king's men (Jeremiah 26:20–23).

Keep Uriah. He is the precedent, and he comes back in Lesson 6 and Lesson 12.

They are called **prophets.**

First, forget what you think a prophet is.

A prophet is not a fortune teller.

A prophet is somebody who says: *this is what God thinks about what you are doing right now.*

When they do talk about the future, it is almost always one sentence: *if you keep doing this, here is what happens to you.* That is not magic. That is what anyone says to a friend who is drinking himself to death.

Look at who these men actually were.

Amos kept animals and took care of fig trees, which is farm labor. He says himself that he had no religious training at all (Amos 7:14). He came from **Tekoa**, a hill town in the south, in Judah.

He walked north — into the other country — to **Bethel**, which was the king's own chapel, and started shouting. The king was **Jeroboam the Second**, and this was around **760 BC** (Amos 1:1; 7:10–13).

Understand why that was a provocation. Bethel was not just a shrine. After the country split over taxes in Lesson 4, the first northern king set up shrines at Bethel and Dan so that his people would stop walking to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:26–30). Bethel was a government building with an altar in it.

So: a farmhand from the rival country walked into a state chapel and accused the management.

Now look at what he was angry about.

Here is what will surprise you. Go read the book of Amos. It is nine chapters. It takes twenty minutes.

Here is his list of crimes:

- They sell poor people for silver, and needy people for the price of a pair of sandals (Amos 2:6).
- They take bribes in court and push the poor aside (Amos 5:12).
- They cheat with the scales. He names the trick: make the measure small and the weight heavy (Amos 8:5).

- They cannot wait for the holy day to end so they can get back to selling.
- They lie on expensive furniture and eat the best meat and are not bothered at all (Amos 6:4–6).

Now count how much of that is about anybody's private life.

None of it. Not one line.

It is fraud, bribes, stealing wages, and rigged scales.

And then he says the thing that should be carved over every church door.

God is speaking:

> *I hate, I despise your festivals… Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream* (Amos 5:21–24).

Read that again slowly.

That is God saying: **your worship disgusts me. Your music is noise. Stop singing until you fix the courts.**

He was not the only one.

Isaiah opens his whole book that way: what do I care about all your sacrifices? Then he says what to do instead: seek justice, help the oppressed, defend the orphan, stand up for the widow (Isaiah 1:11–17).

Micah asks whether God wants offerings, and answers his own question with three things. Not one of them is a belief. *Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly* (Micah 6:6–8).

Hosea says it in five words: *I desire mercy, and not sacrifice* (Hosea 6:6).

I quoted that line out loud twice in my life, because it could not be improved (Matthew 9:13, 12:7).

Here is what happened to these men.

Watch carefully, because this is the most useful thing in the lesson.

Amos is standing in the king's chapel. The priest in charge is named **Amaziah**. He does not argue with him. He does not say the scales are honest. He does not answer the charge at all. He sends a report to the king, and then he turns to Amos.

He says this: *Go away. Go back where you came from and earn your bread there. Never prophesy here again. This is the king's chapel* (Amos 7:12–13).

You are nobody. This is not your building. Go home.

And look at who is saying it. Amaziah is the king's priest, at the king's chapel, living off the arrangement Amos is attacking. He is not confused about the facts. He answers with jurisdiction because the facts are not the problem he has.

That was about 760 years before I was born, and about twenty-seven hundred years before you, and the move has barely changed since.

The three questions.

When somebody with no power tells powerful people what they are doing, three answers come, always in this order:

1. Who do you think you are?
2. Who is paying you?
3. Why are you so angry?

And never, in all that time, the only question that matters: **are you right?**

One more thing. Forget the paintings.

You have seen pictures of prophets. Robes. Beards. A calm light behind the head. One hand raised.

We did not look like that. We were not calm.

We were the person you cross the street to avoid. Loud, dirty, badly dressed, standing where nobody asked us to stand, saying the thing that makes the room go quiet.

Here is how you tell a real one. If a man in this line is comfortable, respected, well fed, and welcome at the tables of powerful people, he is not in this line.

That is not an opinion. That is the definition.

And you are still doing it.

You have watched it happen in your own lifetime. So have I. More than once, in more than one country.

Somebody stands up who has no business standing up. No office. No title. Nothing behind them. And a charge that would be easy to answer if there were an answer.

Nobody answers it.

Instead: they are too young. Then they are rude. Then something is wrong with them. Then somebody must be paying them. And finally, always finally, the problem is their *tone*, and how much more persuasive they would be if they were nicer about it.

Grown adults who run countries will spend a week on a stranger's manners rather than one afternoon on the charge.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Amos 5:21–24.
>
> **You will find:** God saying he hates their worship and wants justice instead.
>
> **Then look up:** Amos 7:12–13 — what the priest says back to him. Notice that the priest never denies a single accusation.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/5**.

> The Short Version
>
> - I came out of a long line of poor, angry men called prophets.
> - They were furious about money, courts, wages, and rigged scales — not private behavior.
> - They said God finds worship disgusting while the poor are being cheated.
> - When they spoke, the powerful attacked *them* instead of answering the charge. That has never changed.

Think About It

1. Think of someone in the news you found annoying. Did you ever get as far as asking whether they were right?
2. Amos said to stop the music until the courts are fixed. What would that look like in your church?

Lesson 6: The Man in the River

> Before You Read
>
> *What made me start?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Baptize** — to dip someone in water as a sign of starting over.
>
> **The Jordan** — the river my people crossed to enter their land. Crossing it again was a kind of theater.
>
> **Extort** — to squeeze money out of somebody by using your power over them.

I was about thirty when I began.

Before that, nothing is recorded. Your Bible has me in the Temple at twelve years old (Luke 2:42) and then says nothing at all until I am "about thirty" (Luke 3:23). Do that subtraction and you get about eighteen years. I was in Nazareth the whole time, doing ordinary work.

Then I walked south, about seventy miles, down into the dry country of the lower Jordan valley, to stand in a river with a man named John.

Who John was.

He was not gentle. He lived in the wilderness, wore rough clothes, and ate what he could find (Mark 1:6).

He was dipping people in the Jordan river.

That river matters. It is the river my people crossed under Joshua to enter their land in the first place, after Egypt (Joshua 3).

So John had people walk out of the settled country, into the desert, and back through the water. He was acting out the whole story again.

He was saying: **this nation is so far gone we have to start over from the beginning.**

That is a reading, and I will mark it as mine. Here is what supports it. He did not set up at a well, or at a pool beside a town, which would have been easier for everyone. He went out to the one river in the country with that story attached to it and made people walk to him — and Mark says they came out from all of Judea and from Jerusalem to do it (Mark 1:5).

Nobody walks into a desert by accident.

What he told people to do.

The crowds asked him. His answer is almost comically practical (Luke 3:10–14):

- If you have two coats, give one away. Same with food.
- Tax collectors asked. He said: collect no more than you are supposed to.
- Soldiers asked. He said: do not extort people, do not accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your pay.

That is the whole program. No doctrine. Give away your spare coat. Stop skimming. Stop shaking people down.

Why I went to him.

Here is something honest. The men who wrote about my life were uncomfortable with this, and you can watch them squirm.

Because I went to John, and John dipped me, which puts me in the position of the student.

Watch how each account handles it. But before you do, one thing you need, because four lessons in this book lean on it.

Which gospel is the oldest.

You were probably taught Matthew, because that is the order they are printed in. Most people who study these books put **Mark** first, written around the year **70**, with Matthew and Luke written in the twenty or thirty years after that, and John last of all.

Here is the reason, and you can check it yourself with three Bibles open on a table.

Mark is much the shortest of the three. Almost the whole of Mark turns up again inside Matthew and Luke, frequently word for word. And where they differ, Matthew and Luke tidy Mark up — they smooth his awkward sentences, and they soften the lines that make me or my followers look bad.

Copying and tidying runs one direction. It is far easier to believe that two writers polished Mark than that Mark took Matthew and Luke and carefully took the good parts out.

So when this book says "the earliest account," it means Mark, and that is why. [14]

- The earliest one just says it happened (Mark 1:9).
- The next one adds a conversation where John protests that *I* should be baptizing *him* (Matthew 3:14–15).
- The third mentions it almost sideways, after John is already in prison (Luke 3:19–21).
- The fourth never says it happened at all (John 1:29–34).

Stories do not usually get more awkward as time passes. When each retelling works harder to explain something away, the thing being explained away is usually the part that really happened.

The plain reading is simple. **I went to John because I agreed with him.**

Then the government killed him.

The man who did it was **Herod Antipas** — the same Antipas from Lesson 3. The man who taxed Galilee. The man who built Sepphoris four miles from my house.

One man, doing all of it. Your church tells you these as three separate stories, and you never get to add them up.

What your Bible says the reason was. John said out loud that Antipas's marriage was unlawful, because Antipas had taken Herodias, his own brother's wife

(Mark 6:17–18). Then comes the palace story: the birthday feast, the dance, the girl's request, the head on a platter (Mark 6:19–29).

Now the other account. That "Jewish historian" has a name, and you should have it, because he is the single most important non-Christian witness in this whole book. He is **Josephus** — a Jewish commander in Galilee during the war against Rome in AD 66, captured by the Romans, who spent the rest of his life in Rome writing the history of his own people in Greek. His big book, the *Antiquities of the Jews*, was finished around **AD 93**, within living memory of my death.

Josephus gives a blunter reason. Antipas killed John because John was drawing enormous crowds, and Antipas was afraid a crowd that size would turn into a rising. Josephus also tells you where it was done: the fortress of **Machaerus**, east of the Dead Sea (*Antiquities* 18.116–119). [15]

The two reasons are not enemies. A ruler who wants a popular critic dead is grateful for a reason he can say out loud.

That is the moment I began.

Take that in.

The man I had gone to. The man whose message I had accepted. A man preaching that people should give away their spare coats and stop cheating each other.

Executed by the government for being too popular.

Since then I have watched a great many people do the same arithmetic I did that week. Someone you respect is destroyed for saying something true. And you have two choices: go quiet, or pick it up.

I picked it up.

And your own Bible says so, in almost exactly those words: *after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God* (Mark 1:14).

After. It is right there in the first chapter of the earliest gospel. I have never once heard anybody preach on it.

One thing I did differently.

John made people come out to him, into the desert, away from their lives.

I went the other way. Into the villages. Into people's houses. To the table.

That difference got noticed immediately, and it was used against me. So I said it back to them. John came without eating or drinking, and you said he had a demon. I came eating and drinking, and you called me a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:18–19).

Look at the actual accusation. Not heresy. Not blasphemy.

The company I kept at dinner.

They were not wrong about the facts. They were only wrong about whether it was a crime.

> ### Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Luke 3:10–14.
>
> **You will find:** John's instructions. Notice there is no doctrine in them at all — only coats, food, and not cheating people.
>
> **Then look up:** Mark 1:14. Notice the first word.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/6**.

> ### The Short Version
>
> - I began by going to John and agreeing with him.
> - John's whole program was: share what you have and stop cheating people.
> - The government executed John for drawing crowds.
> - I started preaching right after that. The Bible says so plainly.

> ### Think About It
>
> 1. Why would the writers of the gospels be uncomfortable that I was baptized by someone else?
> 2. If somebody you admired was destroyed for telling the truth, what would you do next?

Lesson 7: What I Meant by "The Kingdom"

> Before You Read
>
> *When I said "the kingdom of God," what did people hear?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Kingdom** — a territory with a ruler. A political word, not a spiritual one.
>
> **Gospel** — "good news." The Greek word is *euangelion*. It was also the word empires used to announce a new emperor.
>
> **The Magnificat** — the name for my mother's song in Luke 1:46–55.

Almost everything I said came back to one phrase.

The kingdom of God is near.

Every word in that sentence has been changed. Let us take them one at a time.

Kingdom.

That is a political word. It means a place with a ruler.

And I used it in a country that had a ruler it had not chosen, under an emperor who was called the son of a god.

Names, so you can check it. The emperor when I was born was **Augustus**, who ruled from 27 BC to AD 14. After his adoptive father Julius Caesar was declared a god, Augustus put *son of the divine one* on his coins — which put the phrase in the hand of everybody who had money. The emperor while I was preaching was **Tiberius** (AD 14 to AD 37). His head was on the coin somebody held up to me when they asked about taxes.

And Augustus's birthday was announced to the provinces as **good news.** That is not my word for it. There is a stone from the city of Priene, in what is now

Turkey, cut in **9 BC**, that reorganizes the local calendar around his birthday and calls that day the beginning of *good news* for the world. You can read a translation of it in an afternoon. [16]

How does a birthday get announced across an empire with no newspapers? The same four ways everything did. A decree read aloud in the town square by an official. Words cut into stone in the middle of the city, where everyone walked past. The emperor's face on every coin in every hand. And a temple to him in the provincial capital, with a priest, a festival and a holiday.

The empire was not shy about itself.

So when I stood in a village and said *good news, the kingdom is coming*, I was using the empire's own words against it. The Greek word is *euangelion* — the one your Bible translates as *gospel*.

Everybody heard it. That is not a clever modern reading. It is the plain sense. And it is why the story ends the way it ends.

Your church has taught you that *kingdom of God* means heaven, or means your heart, or means the church.

It meant a government.

Of God.

Meaning: not Rome's. Not Antipas's. Not the Temple leadership's.

And you should know who those last men were, because they come back in Lesson 12. The Temple was run by a **high priest** and a circle of **chief priests**, drawn from a few wealthy Jerusalem families. The high priest did not inherit the job and was not elected to it. He was appointed — and removed — by whoever held the country: Herodian kings first, then the Roman governor. The high priest through my whole adult life was **Caiaphas**, who held the office about eighteen years and was removed from it in the same year Pilate was sent home to Rome. [6]

Sit with what that does to a man's judgment. His office is in the gift of the occupier.

Not run from a palace by men who take a cut of the harvest — and the cut was real: the tenth of your produce and the first of it, which is what paid for the priesthood.

Is near.

Near meant near.

Not eventually. Not somewhere above the sky after you die.

I said some of the people standing in front of me would still be alive to see it (Mark 9:1). That sentence is in your Bible. Read it as it is written.

And now be honest about what follows from that, because I promised you I would not point at a verse and walk away.

On the face of it, that did not happen. The people standing in front of me died, and the world went on being run by Rome.

The people who came after me knew it too. There is a letter in your own New Testament — 2 Peter, one of the very latest books in it — where somebody is already answering the complaint out loud: *where is the promise of his coming? Ever since our ancestors died, everything continues as it was* (2 Peter 3:4). The answer it offers is that God's clock is not ours, and a day with the Lord is like a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8).

You can decide for yourself what to do with that. What you cannot honestly do is read the word *near* as meaning *two thousand years and counting* and then tell yourself that was the plain sense all along.

So what did I think was coming?

An overturning.

My mother sang about it before I was born. Look it up. It is right there and almost nobody hears it. *He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty* (Luke 1:52–53).

I said the first will be last and the last will be first (Mark 10:31). That is not advice about being modest. It is a description of a reversal.

I said blessed are the poor. Luke writes it plainly, and four verses later adds: *woe to you who are rich* (Luke 6:20–24).

And now the objection you were going to make anyway.

Matthew has that line differently. Matthew 5:3 says *blessed are the poor* ***in spirit***. Two gospels, two versions, and your church almost certainly reads you Matthew's.

I am not going to pretend that away, and you should never trust a book that would.

Here is what to look at instead. One version says poor. The other adds two words that turn a hungry man into a humble one. Now watch the direction of that change, every time you find one in this book.

It never goes the other way. Nobody ever takes *in spirit* out. [17]

One more verse somebody will quote at you.

My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). You will meet that sentence within a week of reading this lesson, so let us do it now.

Two things. First, it is only in John — the last of the four to be written, sixty years or more after I died. The other three never have me say anything like it.

Second, look at the words even there. *Not of this world* means *not from this world*. It is a sentence about where the kingdom comes from, not about where it arrives. And the prayer I taught in Lesson 1 says *your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth* (Matthew 6:10).

On earth. Same book.

Now here is a test you can run yourself.

Every time you meet the phrase *kingdom of God* in the gospels, try swapping in these words:

"the way things would be run if God were in charge here."

Now read the stories again.

The kingdom is like a landowner who pays everyone the same, top to bottom (Matthew 20:1–16). Like a king who cancels an impossible debt (Matthew 18:23–35). Like a banquet where the invited guests do not show, so the host sends servants into the streets to bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame (Luke 14:15–24).

Read those with the swap in place, and every one of them is about **how a society is arranged.**

Read them the old way, with kingdom meaning heaven, and every one of them is about **who gets in after they die.**

They are not the same book.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Luke 1:52–53, my mother's song.

You will find: the rich being sent away empty. Ask yourself when you last heard that read aloud in church.

Then look up: Luke 6:20 and Luke 6:24, four verses apart.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/7**.

The Short Version

- *Kingdom* is a political word. I used it in an occupied country on purpose.
- I meant something arriving **here**, soon — not a place you go after death.
- What was arriving was an overturning: the bottom goes to the top.
- Swap in "how things would be run if God were in charge here" and the parables change completely.

Think About It

1. Why is "kingdom means heaven" a more comfortable teaching for a wealthy church?
2. My mother's song is in the Bible. Why do you think it is rarely preached?

Lesson 8: Who I Ate With

> Before You Read
>
> *What was the main complaint about me?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Tax collector** — a local man who collected money for the occupying empire and kept a cut. A collaborator.
>
> **Sinner** — in the gospels, usually a social category, not a moral judgment. Someone kept outside.
>
> **Table fellowship** — the old term for who you were willing to eat with. It was a public statement about who your people were.

If you had asked the respectable religious people of my day what was wrong with me, they would not have said my theology.

They would have said: **look who he eats with.**

That was the charge. It comes up over and over (Mark 2:15–17, Luke 15:1–2, Luke 19:7).

You need to know why that was serious.

In your world, eating with someone means almost nothing.

In mine, a shared meal was a declaration. Who you ate with was who you belonged to.

There were rules about it, and I want to tell you exactly what kind, because this is easy to overstate and I would rather you had it straight.

There was no law with a penalty. Nobody was ever arrested for having dinner. What existed was three things stacked on each other. There were food laws about what could be eaten at all (Leviticus 11). There were purity rules under

which uncleanness travelled — by touch, by a shared dish, by the cushion somebody had sat on (Leviticus 15). And there were tithing rules, which meant that in a careless man's house you could not be sure the food on the table had ever been tithed at all.

Put those together and eating at the wrong table did not make you a criminal. It made you unreliable — a man that other careful men would not eat with either.

That is a real cost. It is the cost of a reputation, and in a village a reputation is most of what a man has.

Which is why the objection to me was raised as a question and never as a charge: *why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?* (Mark 2:16). Nobody prosecuted it. They just said it, in front of people, until it stuck.

A respectable man did not sit down with people who would compromise him.

And I sat down with everybody.

Who they actually were.

Tax collectors. Not accountants. In Galilee these men worked for Antipas, not for Rome — they bought or were granted the right to collect the tolls on a road or a harbor, paid a fixed sum up the chain, and kept whatever they could squeeze above it. In Judea, under Rome, the same trade ran on Rome's account; the man at Jericho whom Luke calls a *chief* tax collector had other collectors working under him (Luke 19:2).

They were collaborators and they were extortionists. Both of those are literally true. People hated them and had good reason — and had nowhere to complain, because the man's superior was the government.

"Sinners." This word does not mean what you think. It was not a comment that everybody falls short. It was a label, used by respectable people about other people, for a job, a condition, or a reputation that put you outside.

I will be honest about how much is known here. Nobody has a list of these jobs written down in my lifetime. What we have is the gospels putting the word

next to the toll men (Mark 2:15–16) and onto a woman known around her town (Luke 7:37), and Jewish legal writings from a couple of centuries later listing trades that were looked down on — the tanner, who handles dead animals, and the herdsman, who is assumed to be grazing on somebody else's land.

What you *can* see plainly in the texts you already own is who decided. Not a court. There is no trial anywhere in any of this. It was decided by comfortable people about uncomfortable people, and it stuck because nobody ever made them prove it.

And some were in debt to people they could never repay — which, after Lesson 3, you can now finish for yourself: the field gone, the sons hired out by the day, and jail or sale waiting at the end of it.

Women, at a table, in a mixed group. Some of them paid for the whole operation out of their own money — Luke names three of them and says they supported us out of their own means (Luke 8:1–3).

I should say that that verse is about the money and the travelling, not about a table. For the table, read Luke 7:36–50. A woman with a reputation walks into a dinner party she was not invited to and puts her hands on me, and the host's reaction tells you everything about what was expected. He does not say *she should not be in here*. He says, to himself, *if this man were a prophet, he would know what she is*.

What I was actually doing.

Not outreach. Not a project. Not a demonstration to make a point.

I sat down and ate. In my country that meant one thing: **these are my people, and I am theirs. If you have a problem with them, you have one with me.**

How I answered the complaint.

I did not defend myself with a doctrine. I told three stories in a row, and every one is about somebody looking for something (Luke 15).

A man loses one sheep out of a hundred, and leaves the ninety-nine to go find it (Luke 15:3–7).

A woman loses one coin, lights a lamp, and sweeps the whole house until she finds it (Luke 15:8–10).

And a father whose younger son asked for his share of the property **while his father was still alive** (Luke 15:11–32). Do not skip past that. In front of the neighbors, the son said he would rather have the money than the man. Then he took it, spent it, and came home to beg for work.

And the father sees him coming from a long way off, which means the old man had been watching the road, and runs.

Running is the part the first listeners flinched at. A man of standing did not run anywhere. He walked, and people came to him. That father threw away his dignity in the road in front of the whole village.

Hold on to that third one. It comes back in Lesson 19, and it overturns something very large.

Notice what is missing.

There is no assessment in any of it.

Nobody is asked what they will do with the meal. Nobody has to prove they have changed first. The father does not wait for the apology. He interrupts it.

The kingdom was never going to be a reward handed out after a review.

It was going to be a room with the wrong people already sitting in it, eating, and nobody at the door.

That is a very hard thing to build an organization on. In Unit Two you will see exactly how that problem got solved.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Luke 15:1–2.
>
> **You will find:** the exact complaint against me, stated in one sentence, right before I tell three stories in a row.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/8**.

The Short Version

- The main charge against me was the company I kept at dinner.
- Sharing a meal was a public statement about who your people were.
- I ate with collaborators, outcasts, and women — with no conditions first.
- Nobody had to qualify. That is the part that is hard to organize.

Think About It

1. Who would your church find it awkward to have at a shared meal?
2. Why is "no conditions" difficult for any organization to run on?

Lesson 9: The Healings

> Before You Read
>
> *What was actually happening when I healed people?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Unclean** — not dirty. A legal status that decided where you were allowed to go and who could touch you.
>
> **Leprosy** — in the Bible, a word covering many skin conditions, most of them not the modern disease.
>
> **Mechanism** — *how* something works. I can describe what happened. I cannot tell you how.

I am not going to use the word "miracle."

It is not a word I ever used. It comes out of an argument that started long after I died.

The phrase *laws of nature*, meaning a fixed set of rules the whole universe runs on, belongs to Europe in the sixteen hundreds. And the definition of a miracle that you are carrying around in your head — a violation of the laws of nature — was put into those exact words by a Scottish philosopher named **David Hume**, in an essay published in **1748**. [18]

So the fight you think you are in is about three hundred years old. Nobody in my village had a notion of laws of nature, and nobody there was arguing about whether they could be broken.

So put the word down. Look at what happened.

That I was known as a healer is not in dispute.

It is one of the best-attested things about me. It is in all four accounts. It is also in two sources that had no reason to be kind to me. **Josephus**, writing in Rome about AD 93, calls me a doer of startling deeds, though Christian hands later added lines to that paragraph. [19] **The Talmud**, written down centuries later and hostile on purpose, charges me with sorcery, which concedes that something happened. [20] Neither proves anything I did. What they show is two sets of people with no motive to help me, agreeing that there were deeds to argue about.

And look at what my own opponents said. They did not say nothing happened. They said I was doing it by the power of the devil (Mark 3:22). That is an argument about **where the power came from.** It is not a denial.

You need to know what was actually wrong with these people.

In my country, a sick person was not just somebody who felt unwell. Certain conditions made you **unclean.** Unclean is not a word about dirt. It is a word about **where you are allowed to stand.**

Read the law as it was written. A man with a skin disease, the thing your Bible may call *leprosy*, had to wear torn clothes, leave his hair a mess, cover his mouth, and call out *unclean, unclean* as he walked. He lived alone, outside the camp (Leviticus 13:45–46). He lived away from his wife, his children, his work, his table, and the worship of his own people.

Other conditions kept you out of the Temple and away from your family's food, and anyone who touched you, or sat where you had sat, was in it with you (Leviticus 15). **And you could not declare yourself clean again.** Only a priest could do that, and then came days of washing, shaving, and offerings (Leviticus 14:1–20).

It was not a feeling. It was an address, a diet, an arrangement in your own house, and a fee at the end. Ten years of that, and you start to believe it is **what you are** rather than what happened to you.

And the first thing I did was touch them.

In your world, touching a sick person is ordinary kindness. In mine it broke the rules. And the rules ran one way. If you touched an unclean man, he did not become clean. **You became unclean.** That is why nobody touched them. It was not cruelty. It was the arithmetic everybody had been taught.

A man with a skin disease knelt in front of me. Your own Bible says what happened: *moved with compassion, he stretched out his hand and touched him* (Mark 1:41).

One honest note. A few old copies of Mark say **anger** there instead of *compassion*, which is why some Bibles print *indignant*, and nobody can settle which one was written first. [21] Either way, the hand goes out.

I touched him. No sentence in the whole record tells you more about what I was doing. I could have spoken from where I stood. Instead I put my hand on a man nobody had touched in years.

If you read only one of these, read the woman in the crowd.

Everything is in it (Mark 5:25–34).

A woman had been bleeding for twelve years. Under the law, a discharge of blood made her unclean for as long as it lasted, and passed that status to her bed, her seat, and anybody who touched either one (Leviticus 15:25–27). So: twelve years of not being touched.

And here is the line your church skips: she had **spent everything she had** on doctors, suffered a lot under them, and gotten worse instead of better. That is in the earliest account. It is about money. It is there on purpose.

She comes up behind me in a crowd, behind because she is not supposed to be in that crowd at all, and touches the edge of my clothes. The bleeding stops.

Now watch what I do next.

She could have slipped away. Instead I stopped the whole procession and asked who touched me. I kept looking until she came forward, frightened, and said it out loud in front of everyone.

Why would I do that to a terrified woman? Because she could have gone home healed and still been the woman nobody spoke to. What she needed was for the **village to hear it.**

And the last word I said to her was *daughter*.

I asked a blind man by the road the same kind of thing: *what do you want me to do for you?* (Mark 10:51). Everybody could see what he wanted. But nobody had asked him anything in years. Some of what I did was not power at all. Some of it was plain attention that nobody else was willing to give.

I cannot tell you the mechanism, and I am not going to pretend to.

Some of what happened is what happens to a person when the exile ends. And some of it, the people involved experienced as more than that. I will not talk them out of it. What I will not do is hand you a certainty here that I refused you everywhere else in this book.

But I will settle three things, because they are being used against you.

One: I never charged. Not once. When I sent my followers out to do the same work, the instruction was: *you received without payment; give without payment* (Matthew 10:8). In a country where that woman had already been drained dry by professionals, that was most of the point.

Two: I told people to keep quiet about it (Mark 1:44, Mark 5:43, Mark 7:36). Whatever I was doing, I was not building an audience with it. And read the second half of Mark 1:44: *go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded.* I could stop a man being sick. I could not sign the paper. Only a priest could put him officially back in the room, so I sent him to get it done.

Three: I said, more than once, *your faith has made you well.*

You have heard that sentence used to explain why somebody was **not** healed: that they did not believe hard enough. Here is every place I say it: **Mark 5:34. Mark 10:52. Matthew 9:22. Luke 8:48. Luke 17:19. Luke 18:42. Luke 7:50. Every single time, the healing has already happened.** It is said afterward. It is praise, not a condition. In Luke 7:50 I say it to a woman who had never been ill at all.

It was never a diagnosis, and it was never an explanation for failure.

There is one hard verse, and I will give you all of it.

About my own hometown, the earliest gospel says: *he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief* (Mark 6:5–6).

Somebody will tell you that proves the opposite of what I just said: that it failed because the town did not believe. That is a fair thing to raise. But notice that what happened is *could not*, and the unbelief is the writer's explanation, reached for afterward. And even his reason blames a whole town's mood, not one sick person's faith. Nobody in the Bible is told they stayed sick because they did not believe hard enough. That sentence was added later, by people standing next to hospital beds.

And now the part that is yours.

Look again at what actually happened. Somebody was outside. Somebody was untouched. Somebody had been talked over so long they stopped expecting a question. Somebody had spent everything on people who did not help.

And what I did was go to them, put a hand on them, ask what they wanted, say their name where it could be heard, and put them back in the room. Nearly all of that is available to you this week, at no cost, with no power you do not already have.

In your world, putting your hands on a stranger is not a simple thing, and I am not telling you to. But there is somebody near you that people have quietly agreed to leave outside. You know who.

Be seen with them. In daylight, where it costs you something. Say their name in rooms they are not in. Ask them what they actually want, instead of deciding for them.

That was the method. It was never a power. It was a willingness to be counted with the wrong person in public.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Mark 5:25–34, the woman in the crowd.

You will find: that she had spent everything she had on doctors and gotten worse — and that the last word I say to her is *daughter*.

Then look up: Mark 6:5. Read it twice.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/9**.

The Short Version

- Even hostile sources agree I was known as a healer. The argument was over the source of the power.
- Sickness in my country also meant exile — nobody touched you, sometimes for years.
- The first thing I did was touch people, which broke the rules and cost me something.
- "Your faith has made you well" was always said to somebody **already healed**. It was praise, never blame.

Think About It

1. Who in your town has people quietly agreed to leave outside?
2. Why would a ministry want you to believe healing depends on how hard you believe?

Lesson 10: Did I Think I Was a King?

> Before You Read
>
> *You have been told I am Christ the King. What did that mean to the people who said it first?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Messiah / Christ** — the anointed one. A king.
>
> **Genealogy** — a family tree, used to prove someone's descent.
>
> **Census** — an official count of people, usually for taxes.

This is the most careful lesson in the book. You are getting both sides.

First, remember what the word means.

From Lesson 2: *Christ* means *anointed*, which means **king.**

By my lifetime, most people used it to mean a coming king from the family of David who would drive out the occupier and restore the nation.

How would anybody know what "most people" thought? From what got written down in the two centuries around my life. A Jewish poem from about fifty years before I was born, Psalms of Solomon 17, prays for God to raise up *the son of David* to purge Jerusalem of foreigners. [13]

It meant a man on a throne in Jerusalem, with the soldiers gone. It did **not** mean God. It did not mean a heavenly being who existed before the world was made. And it did not mean somebody who dies for your sins.

That is a large claim, so here is how to test it.

Somebody will hand you **Isaiah 53**, the servant who is wounded for our transgressions, or **Daniel 7:13**, one like a son of man, coming on the clouds.

Read them. Then check one thing: **does the passage use the word?** *Messiah* is a Hebrew word, *mashiach*, and it means anointed. Neither passage contains it. Where the word *does* turn up, it is on kings and priests, and once on a foreign emperor, **Cyrus of Persia**, for sending my people home (Isaiah 45:1).

And I will hand you the one that cuts against me. **Daniel 9:25–26** does use the word, and says that an anointed one will be *cut off*. What that difficult passage describes is argued over, but it is there. [22]

Here is the honest shape of it. The picture you were raised on, one figure, promised in advance, who is God, and who dies to pay for sin, was assembled out of these separate passages **afterward**, by people trying to explain something that had already happened to them. In Unit Two you will watch them do the assembling.

Now the evidence that I was acting the part.

I picked twelve men. Remember Lesson 4: twelve sons, twelve tribes. Ten of those tribes had been gone since Assyria carried them off in **722 BC** (2 Kings 17:5–6). A restored nation with all twelve tribes back was one of the great hopes. So a man deliberately appointing twelve is **acting out the restoration of the nation, in public, where everyone can see.** And I told them they would sit on twelve thrones (Matthew 19:28).

I rode into the capital on a donkey. The animal was arranged in advance (Mark 11:1–10). There is an old prophecy about a king entering the city on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9), but the **earliest** account does not quote it; Matthew and John do, writing later. So either I arranged the entry to act out that prophecy, or later writers found the verse that made sense of it. Serious people hold both. What **is** in the earliest account is what the crowd did. They spread their cloaks on the road, which is what you do for a king.

I made a scene in the Temple.

This is the single most important thing I did, and it is the reason I was killed (Mark 11:15–17).

You met the Temple in Lesson 4: the largest institution in the country, a treasury and a tax authority with a claim on every grown man. Two trades worked in its outer court, both for sensible reasons. The Temple tax had to be paid in one particular silver coin, so pilgrims had to exchange their money, for a fee. And a pilgrim who had walked a hundred miles could not bring a lamb with him, so animals for the offerings were sold on the spot.

What I did was drive out the sellers and the buyers and turn over the money changers' tables and the seats of the men selling doves. Then I quoted two prophets at them: my house shall be a house of prayer, *but you have made it a den of robbers* (Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11).

In festival week, in the busiest courtyard in the country, I interrupted the exchange and the supply. That means I interrupted the sacrifices, and the Temple's income, and the arrangement the priestly families lived on. Nobody in charge had to wonder what it meant.

My own followers expected a government. Two of them asked to sit at my right and left when I came into my glory (Mark 10:35–37). That is a request for cabinet positions. And after I was killed, two of them walking away said the saddest sentence in your Bible: *we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel* (Luke 24:21). **Had hoped.** Past tense. They thought the plan had failed, because the plan they signed up for was the liberation of a country.

Rome agreed with all of this. They wrote my crime on a board and nailed it over my head. It said **King of the Jews** (Mark 15:26). That is not a religious statement. It is a criminal charge.

Now the other side, which is just as real.

I almost never said it. Go looking in the earliest gospel for a plain sentence where I announce it. You will have trouble. When Peter says it, I tell them to keep quiet (Mark 8:29–30). That happens over and over. **When it was put to me directly, I dodged.** The Roman governor asks: are you the king of the Jews? The answer is *you say so* (Mark 15:2). That is not a yes. It is not a no either. **When a crowd tried to make me king by force, I left** (John 6:15).

And the two birth stories do not agree.

The two gospels that tell my birth tell it differently. In Matthew, my family seems to already live in Bethlehem. In Luke, we live in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem for a registration.

Luke ties that registration to **Quirinius**, the Roman governor of Syria, whose census Josephus dates to **AD 6** (Luke 2:2; Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.1–2). But Matthew and Luke both place my birth in the reign of **Herod the Great**, who died in **4 BC**. That is a gap of about ten years. Many solutions have been proposed. None of them has convinced the people who study this for a living. [23]

Both also give a family tree, a genealogy, to prove I descend from David. They give **different names for my grandfather**: **Jacob** in Matthew 1:16, **Heli** in Luke 3:23. And both trace the line through Joseph, who, in those same two gospels, is not my father (Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:34–35).

Nobody has ever put the two pages side by side for you. You can do it tonight.

So what is the honest answer?

Here is mine, and I will mark it as mine.

I behaved like a man acting out the restoration of my nation. I picked twelve. I rode in on the donkey. I turned over tables at the Temple. I did those things on purpose and in public, and I knew how they would be read.

And I was careful with the word itself, because the word came with an army attached, and the kind of king people wanted was not what I was doing. I let other people say it. When a Roman official put it to me, I neither claimed it nor denied it.

Did I think God was about to turn the world over through me? **Yes.** I said so constantly.

Did I think I was going to sit on a throne with an army? **No.**

And now the hinge of everything that comes next.

We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

Sit with those men on that road. Their teacher has been executed by the government as a political criminal. In their world, a crucified messiah was not a tragedy. It was a **contradiction.** A messiah who gets killed by the empire has not done the thing a messiah does.

Everything that becomes your religion starts in the days after that. Something happened to those people, and I will be careful here.

It was fast. About twenty-five years after my death, Paul quotes a short formula he says he *received*, listing who saw me (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). A quoted formula is older than the letter it is quoted in. People were already reciting it within a few years. [24]

Some of them died and did not retract. Much of what you have heard about how the apostles died is late legend. What is documented: James son of Zebedee was executed around **AD 44** (Acts 12:2), and my brother James was killed in Jerusalem about **AD 62**, recorded by Josephus, not a Christian. [25] Nobody is recorded as taking it back, but that is an argument from the absence of a record, and an absence is weak evidence.

And the movement did not end. Your own New Testament names two that did: **Theudas** and **Judas the Galilean**. Both gathered followers, both were killed, and both movements scattered (Acts 5:36–37). This one grew, fast, in the place where the killing happened.

Every historian agrees there is something to explain. They do not agree on what.

And I am not going to settle it for you. I told you at the start I would say so when the evidence ran out. It runs out here.

What I **can** tell you, and what Unit Two is about, is what those people did next.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Matthew 1:1–16 and Luke 3:23–38, side by side.

You will find: two different family trees, with different names for my grandfather.

Then look up: Luke 24:21. Notice the tense.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/10**.

The Short Version

- *Messiah* meant a political king, not a heavenly savior.
- I acted the part in public — twelve men, the donkey, the Temple.
- But I never plainly claimed the word, and I dodged it when a Roman asked.
- My followers expected a government. After I died they had to explain a crucified king. That is where your religion begins.

Think About It

1. Why would the earliest writers record my followers asking for cabinet jobs, if it made them look bad?
2. Does it change anything for you that the two family trees disagree? Why or why not?

Lesson 11: What "Sin" Meant to Me

> Before You Read
>
> *When I said sin, what was I picturing?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Sin** — in the prophets, almost always a public act involving money or power.
>
> **Usury** — charging interest on a loan, especially to someone desperate.
>
> **Parable** — a short story with a point. I told dozens. Most of them involve money.

This is the biggest single swap in the whole book. It is worth one short lesson on its own.

Go back to the prophets from Lesson 5 and make a list.

Here is what they were angry about. All of it. I am not leaving anything out.

- Judges taking bribes (Amos 5:12; Isaiah 1:23)
- False weights and rigged scales (Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11)
- Charging interest to desperate people (Ezekiel 22:12)
- Holding back a man's wages overnight when he needs them tonight (Jeremiah 22:13; Malachi 3:5)
- Taking a widow's house (Micah 2:9; Isaiah 10:2)
- Buying up your neighbors' farms until the village is one estate (Isaiah 5:8; Micah 2:2)
- Selling poor people into servitude over small debts (Amos 2:6, 8:6)
- Cheating orphans in court (Isaiah 1:23; Jeremiah 5:28)
- Rulers who build with forced labor (Jeremiah 22:13–17)

- Priests who profit from the arrangement and call it holy (Micah 3:11; Jeremiah 6:13)

Ten items. Twenty addresses. Pick one at random and go look. I said I was not leaving anything out, and a sentence like that is worthless unless you can test it.

Now count how much of that is private.

None of it.

Every single item is **public.** Every one involves money or power. Every one is done in daylight, by respected men. And most of it was perfectly legal.

You should stop me right there, because Lesson 4 printed laws against half of that list. Interest to the poor: banned. Holding back a man's wages: banned. Rigged scales: banned. Tilted courts: banned. Permanent land accumulation: banned every fifty years.

So how was any of it legal?

Three reasons, and they are the same three from Lesson 3.

The bans had no enforcement. Go back and read them. No court is named. No officer is named. No penalty is set, no fine, no procedure. They are addressed to a man's conscience, and a conscience is not a court.

The contracts did have enforcement. A written loan with land as security was enforced by the ruler's court and the ruler's men, under the law actually in use — Herodian, with Roman above it. Two systems, and only one of them had a bailiff.

And where the ban had teeth, there was a device. The seven-year cancellation had the *prosbul*, which put the debt into a court's hands so the cancellation could not reach it. The interest ban had the paper written above the sum handed over.

So the word "legal" is exact. Not *unpunished*. **Legal.** That is the whole problem, and it is why the prophets shouted instead of suing.

Now go listen to a sermon and make the same list.

You will find that sin has become almost entirely a private matter. Mostly about the body. Mostly sexual. Mostly something one person does behind a door.

Why did that happen?

Be fair about it first. Private behavior is genuinely part of the tradition, and I taught about it myself. I will show you that in a second.

And it is true that a religion of private conduct **can be preached anywhere, under any government, in any economy, for two thousand years, without ever costing a powerful man a single coin.** It gives everybody something to feel about themselves and nothing to do about anybody else.

But notice that this explains why such a religion *survives*. It does not explain how it got *built*. "Somebody benefited" is not a cause. A cause has people in it, and dates.

So here is the cause, in four steps. Every one is checkable, and Units Two and Three go through them properly.

One. The target disappeared. The prophets were accusing the rulers of their own nation — their own courts, their own kings, their own priests. In **AD 70** Rome destroyed Jerusalem and burned the Temple, and there was no nation left to accuse. Within a generation the movement was a small minority in Greek-speaking cities in somebody else's empire, with no power over any court anywhere.

You cannot demand honest scales in a country you do not run.

Two. The surviving letters told people to sit down. Look at what the instructions in your own New Testament actually are. *Be subject to the governing authorities* (Romans 13:1). Slaves, obey your masters (Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22; 1 Peter 2:18; Titus 2:9).

Those are documents written for a minority keeping its head down. They are not a farmhand shouting in a royal chapel. They are survival instructions — and they became scripture.

Three. The lists changed, and this is the one to check with your own eyes. The New Testament letters have lists of what is wrong with people: **1 Corinthians 6:9–10, Galatians 5:19–21, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Timothy 1:9–10.** Read all four. It takes ten minutes.

Greed and theft are on them, which is to the writers' credit. But rigged scales are not. Neither is taking a widow's farm, or holding back a laborer's wage overnight, or building with forced labor, or a judge on the take.

Put Amos 5 on one side of the table and 1 Corinthians 6 on the other. They are not the same list. You are looking straight at the change.

Four. Then the movement became the government. In **AD 313** the emperor Constantine made it legal. In **AD 380** the emperor Theodosius made it the official religion of the empire. Bishops became imperial officials with land, courts and tax exemptions.

A church whose patrons are the rich cannot run Amos as a sermon series. It still has to preach something. What is left is your conduct.

And then it was made into a machine. Private confession — one person, one room, a list of acts, a penance priced for each one — grew up in Irish and British monasteries and spread across Europe from about the sixth century. The handbooks the priests used to price those penances are crowded with what people did with their bodies. In **1215** a great council at Rome made private confession compulsory for every Christian at least once a year. [26]

Now look at that machine and ask what will fit through it.

One man's act. In private. Which he can name in a single sentence.

Now try to confess a rigged market. Try to confess a system you are part of, and profit from, and did not build. Try to bring the price of wheat into that room.

It does not fit. So it fell out of the religion — not because anybody voted on it, but because the equipment could not hold it.

We meant a thing done in a courtroom. You made it a thing done in a bedroom.

Now the fair part, because I promised.

Do not let anyone use this lesson to make me sound like a man with no standards. I was not.

On divorce I was **stricter** than the law of my own society, which let a man dismiss his wife with a certificate. I said no (Mark 10:2–12).

And the reason is the opposite of what you would assume. A dismissed woman in my country had no property, no income, and no standing. That rule was not about purity. It was about a man being able to throw a woman into poverty because he felt like it. I closed it.

On the inside, I went further than the tradition, not less far. I said holding a man in contempt puts you in the same place as murder. I said looking at a woman as a thing to acquire puts you in the same place as adultery (Matthew 5:21–28).

So I was demanding. I was more demanding than your church is, in both directions at once.

What I was not was **selective.**

And the selection that has been done to me, keeping the private demands and quietly dropping the public ones, is the most useful thing anybody ever did with my name.

Do the arithmetic yourself.

Money, debt, wages and the poor take up more room in my recorded words than anything except the kingdom itself. The usual count is around 280 verses and about 16 of the parables. [27]

Now set that beside everything I am recorded as saying about sexual conduct. You could read the whole of it aloud in a couple of minutes.

Now think about the last year of sermons you heard.

If those two ratios are flipped, and in most churches they are flipped hard, then you are not being taught by me.

You are being taught by somebody using my name to talk about their own priorities.

The only question worth asking is whose priorities those are, and who benefits from the swap.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Isaiah 1:11–17.

You will find: God rejecting worship, then giving a list of what to do instead. Notice every item on the list is public.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/11**.

The Short Version

- The prophets' idea of sin was public: courts, wages, scales, land.
- Today's idea of sin is private and mostly about the body.
- A private-sin religion never costs a powerful person anything. That is why it won.
- I was strict about private conduct too — but I was not *selective*, and the selection is the problem.

Think About It

1. Add up last year's sermons in your head. Which list did they come from?
2. Who is more comfortable when sin is private?

Lesson 12: Why Rome Killed Me

> Before You Read
>
> *Who executed me, and what for?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Crucifixion** — a Roman execution used on slaves, rebels and provincials. Slow, public, and meant as a warning.
>
> **Sedition** — stirring up rebellion against the government. It was what I was charged with.
>
> **Prefect** — the Roman officer who ran a small, difficult province. He commanded the troops, collected the revenue, and *was* the court. Pilate was one.
>
> **High priest** — the head of the Temple. In my lifetime he was appointed, and removed, by Rome.

I was executed by the Roman government as a political offender.

There is no serious argument about this, and the method leaves little room for doubt.

You have been given a scene, with a crowd shouting, a governor troubled, and a bowl of water, and no machinery underneath it. So here is the machinery. Every part of it is ordinary Roman administration, and every part of it can be looked up.

One. Only Rome's man was allowed to kill me.

In the year 6, Rome took the southern part of my country over directly, to be run by an officer sent out from Rome. Lesson 3 told you that. That officer held the power of execution over anybody who was not a Roman citizen.

There was no jury, no written criminal code, and no appeal. He heard the matter himself and decided it, and he was the investigator, the prosecutor and

the judge in the same body. [28] A Roman citizen could appeal over his head to the emperor. I was a provincial and a laborer. For me there was one man, one hearing, and nothing above it.

The men who ran the Temple could arrest a man and convene their council. They could not carry out a Roman execution, and John puts it in their own mouths: ***it is not lawful for us to put anyone to death*** (John 18:31). Whatever they wanted, they needed Rome to do it.

Two. Pilate was a soldier, not a philosopher.

In **1961**, archaeologists digging the theatre at **Caesarea** on the coast turned up a block of limestone that names **Pontius Pilatus** and gives his title: **prefect of Judaea.** [29] It is a **military** title. He was a soldier running an occupied district with troops, from about the year **26 to about the year 36**.

Philo, a Jewish writer of the time, calls him inflexible, stubborn and cruel, and charges him with repeated executions of men who had never been tried. [30] **Josephus** records him taking money out of the Temple treasury for an aqueduct and having soldiers club the crowd that protested. And he records how Pilate fell: he sent troops against a crowd of Samaritans, killed a great many, and was sent to Rome to answer for it. [31]

Your own Bible mentions, in passing, **Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices** (Luke 13:1). That is the man: an officer ten years into a hard posting, whose standard tool was troops in a crowd.

Three. The men who ran the Temple had a stake in this.

The high priest was appointed by the Roman prefect, and could be removed by him.

Caiaphas held the high priesthood from about the year 18 to about the year 36, an extraordinarily long run. Those dates overlap Pilate's almost exactly, and they end together: when the legate of Syria removed Pilate, he removed Caiaphas too. Whatever else that is, it is a **working partnership.** [32]

And the interest is stated plainly in your own Bible. Worried about a crowd gathering around me, those men say: ***if we let him go on like this, the Romans***

will come and take away both our place and our nation. And Caiaphas answers: ***it is better for one man to die for the people*** (John 11:48–50). That is not theology. It is an administrator doing arithmetic.

And say the next part out loud, because of what has been done with this story. A handful of aristocratic families, appointed by an occupying power, are **not a people.** I was a Jew. Every one of my students was a Jew. The crowds who followed me, and the women who stayed at the cross, were Jews. What Christians later did with these few paragraphs, to my own people, for centuries, is Lesson 31, and it is the single worst thing in this book.

Four. It happened at Passover, and that was no accident.

Think about what that festival is. It is the annual public commemoration of God breaking a people out of an empire and drowning its army. Lesson 4 gave you the story. Now put it in a city under occupation.

Every spring the city filled many times over with pilgrims, all retelling the story of the last empire that tried to hold them. The prefect lived at Caesarea, on the coast, and came **up** to Jerusalem for the festivals with soldiers. Troops were quartered in the **Antonia**, the fortress overlooking the Temple courts, and armed men stood on the porticoes above the crowd. [33] And it went wrong regularly: within a generation of my death, a Passover riot there ended with people crushed to death. [34]

That is the calculation Pilate was making. Not *is this man guilty*. **Is this man going to start one of those.** A Galilean with a following, who had just overturned tables in the Temple courtyard during that exact week, was a routine administrative problem with a standard solution.

Five. A cross was Rome's punishment, and it was built for an audience.

Crucifixion was not a religious punishment, and the Temple authorities could not carry it out. It was Roman, and it was aimed at **slaves, bandits, rebels, and provincials.** Roman writers called it *the slaves' punishment*. [35] Citizens were generally spared it. The punishment was not measured by the crime. It was measured by who you were.

It was done beside roads and at city gates, made to take a long time, and the body was normally left up. A Roman teacher of public speaking put the purpose in writing: **the most crowded roads are chosen**, so that the greatest number of people may see it and be frightened by it. [36] **The point was everybody walking past.**

In **1968**, a burial cave in Jerusalem gave up the heel bone of a first-century man named Yehohanan with an **iron nail still driven through it.** And, honestly, he was in a family tomb, so a crucified man could sometimes be handed back for burial, which is what your gospels say happened to me. [37]

Six. The board over my head named a crime against Rome.

Roman practice was to display the charge at an execution, on a placard called the *titulus*, so the death was legible to everybody who saw it. [38] Mine said **King of the Jews** (Mark 15:26).

In my world, Rome decided who was a king. Herod the Great got that title by a **vote of the Roman senate**, in the year 40 before I was born. [39] So to claim it without Rome's grant was not blasphemy. It was **treason.** They did not write *heretic* or *blasphemer*. They wrote a job title.

Now you are owed the strongest thing that can be said against all of this.

You will say: but the gospels tell it the other way. They say Pilate found no fault in me and gave in only under pressure. That is in there. So read the four trial scenes in the order the books were written, and watch Pilate change.

- **Mark**, the earliest: Pilate asks a question and hands me over to satisfy the crowd.
- **Matthew**, later: Pilate washes his hands and says he is innocent of this blood.
- **Luke**, later again: Pilate declares me innocent **three separate times**.
- **John**, latest: Pilate has a long private talk with me and comes out almost sympathetic.

In the order they were composed, the Roman officer gets **steadily cleaner** and the local religious leadership gets steadily more to blame. Those books were written inside the Roman empire, by congregations who had to explain why

their founder had been executed for sedition by the government they still lived under. I am not telling you the men who wrote them were liars. I am telling you what pressure they were writing under.

And the custom that hangs the scene together, a governor releasing a prisoner to the crowd every Passover, appears nowhere outside your Bible. I am not going to tell you it did not happen. But it is the one procedure that makes Pilate reluctant, and it has no independent trace. [40]

Understand what all of that adds up to.

The Roman government looked at me and correctly identified a threat to the ownership of property and the order of the province. **Rome read me more accurately than most of the churches later built with my name on the door.**

And now the sentence this whole book turns on.

I expected to be killed. Everyone in the line I came from expected some version of it. I said so.

But I never said it was a payment.

I never explained my death as a transaction. I never said it was the purpose of my life. I never said anybody's standing with God depends on their opinion about it. I did not found an organization or leave instructions for the year 400, because it had not occurred to me that there would be a year 400.

It was not a sacrament. **It was a sentence.** It was handed down by a career officer in a hearing that took a morning, and carried out on a working day by soldiers who divided up my clothes afterward because the clothes were worth something (Mark 15:24).

That is the end of my life. Everything from here on is what other people did with it.

And I want to be fair to them. Most of them were frightened. Some of them were brave. **Almost none of them thought they were doing anything wrong.**

Check It Yourself

Look up: Mark 15:26.

You will find: the sign over my head. It names a crime against Rome, not a religious offense.

Then look up: Luke 13:1 — Pilate mentioned in passing, as the man who killed Galileans while they were sacrificing. Ask why that version of him never reaches a sermon.

Then do this with four Bibles open, or one Bible and a bookmark. Read Mark 15:1–15, then Matthew 27:11–26, then Luke 23:1–25, then John 18:28–19:16. Write down, for each one, how hard Pilate tries to stop it. The order you just read them in is the order they were written.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/12**.

The Short Version

- Only the Roman prefect, **Pilate**, could execute me, and the charge he posted, **King of the Jews**, meant treason.
- Crucifixion was Rome's punishment for slaves, rebels and provincials, staged to frighten everyone passing.
- It was **Passover**, the week an occupied city celebrated an empire's defeat, so the troops were already there.
- Read in the order they were written, the four gospels make Pilate **steadily more innocent**.
- I expected to die. I never once said my death was a payment for anything.

Think About It

1. Why does it matter that Rome — not a religious court — carried out the execution?
2. If I never explained my death as a payment, where did that idea come from? (Unit Three.)

UNIT TWO — WHAT HAPPENED AFTER I DIED

Lesson 13: Where Your Bible Came From

> Before You Read
>
> *What is the book on your nightstand, and how did you end up with it?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Anonymous** — with no author's name attached.
>
> **Manuscript** — a hand-copied text. We have thousands, and none of them are originals.
>
> **Canon** — the official list of which books belong in the Bible.

None of this is controversial among people who study these texts, including devout ones who teach at seminaries.

It is simply not preached.

Nobody signed the gospels.

Open your Bible to Matthew. The title says *The Gospel According to Matthew*.

Now read the text itself. Nowhere does the writer say who he is. He never says *I*. He never claims to have been there. The same is true of Mark, Luke and John.

All four are **anonymous.** The names were attached later.

By the middle of the second century there were many gospels going around, and different congregations read different ones. A bishop in Gaul named Irenaeus, writing around the year 180, is the earliest person we know of who names these four and insists that these four are the right ones. [41]

Matthew was a tax collector who followed me. Mark was remembered as Peter's helper, Luke as Paul's traveling companion, and John as the disciple I loved.

Every name is a name close to an apostle, and a book with an apostle's name on it outranks a book without one.

I am not saying anyone set out to deceive. They were sorting a mess. But the names settled an argument, and settling it was their job.

Here is when they were written, and why.

The earliest is Mark, around the year 70, about forty years after I died. Matthew and Luke come in the eighties or nineties. John is last. [42]

Here is how anyone can say that. In the year 66 my people rose up against Rome. In the year 70 a Roman army under a general named Titus broke into Jerusalem and burned the Temple to the ground. [43] Mark has me warning that not one stone of that building will be left on another (Mark 13:1–2), and Luke adds armies surrounding the city (Luke 21:20). A man who has just watched that happen writes about it differently from a man who has not.

It also tells you why anybody wrote them. For forty years there was no need, because the people who had heard me were alive and you asked them. Then the war came and the city was gone. The men and women who had eaten with me were dying of old age.

When the people who remember start dying, somebody gets out a pen.

Paul's letters are older than the gospels.

The oldest Christian writings are **the letters of Paul, from the fifties.** The explanation of me was written down before the account of my life was, by twenty years or more.

Paul did not write books. He wrote letters to small groups he had started, about fights over food or money. Each letter was read out loud, the next town wanted a copy, and in time somebody gathered them into one set. Now a note Paul dashed off about a quarrel in one port town is being read aloud in cities he never saw, as the word of God. [44]

And he is not there to say *that one was about Corinth.*

They copied each other, and you can see it.

Read the same story in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Try the paralyzed man let down through the roof (Mark 2:1–12, Matthew 9:1–8, Luke 5:17–26). In long stretches they are **word for word identical,** in the same order. That is what copying looks like. Almost all of Mark shows up inside Matthew. [45]

Mark came first, and there are two signs of it. Mark's Greek is rough, and Matthew and Luke tidy it. And Mark leaves in things that are awkward for me. In Mark, I *could not* do miracles in my hometown (Mark 6:5). In Matthew that becomes I *did not* do many there (Matthew 13:58). The embarrassing bits shrink as you move forward. They never grow.

So when someone tells you four independent witnesses agree, you now know that at least two of them were working from the third.

They also disagree, and you can see that too.

Read the four accounts of the morning at the tomb (Mark 16:1–8, Matthew 28:1–10, Luke 24:1–12, John 20:1–18). You will find one woman, or two, or three, or several. You will find a young man, or an angel, or two men, or nobody at all. The women stay silent, or they run to tell.

I am not doing this to wreck your Bible. I am doing it because you were told it is a perfect transcript, and it is not, and it never claimed to be.

That demand, that every word be exactly correct in every detail, was written up in that form by two professors at Princeton in 1881. Christians honored these books for eighteen hundred years before anybody put that particular demand on them. [46]

It is four communities remembering a founder, decades later, in another language.

Two famous passages were added later.

We have no originals of anything. They were written on papyrus, and papyrus rots. A text survived only if somebody copied it out by hand before the old one fell apart, and then somebody copied that copy. Do that for three hundred years, by lamplight, and tired hands skip lines and slip notes from the margin

into the text. None of that is wickedness. And so the copies we have differ from each other in many places. [47]

There are two you should know about, because you probably love both.

The first is **the woman caught in adultery** (John 7:53–8:11), the story of *let him who is without sin cast the first stone*. It is not in the oldest manuscripts. In some copies it turns up at a different point in John, and in one family of copies it turns up over in Luke entirely. [48]

I am not telling you that story is untrue to me. I am telling you how it got where it is.

The second is **the last twelve verses of Mark** (Mark 16:9–20). The oldest copies of Mark end at verse 8, with the women running away frightened and telling nobody. People could not stand it, so somebody wrote a better ending.

We know that because there is more than one. The manuscripts hand us several different endings. [49] If Mark had written an ending, there would be one ending.

Now go look at your own Bible. Almost every modern translation has a bracket or a footnote at both places saying the earliest manuscripts do not have these verses.

It is already printed in your Bible. You have just never had a reason to read the small type.

Nobody handed down a Bible.

For the first two hundred years a congregation had whatever somebody had carried to them, perhaps a gospel or two and a handful of Paul's letters.

And there were more books than the ones you have. Congregations read the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a long book of visions, and a letter sent under the name of a man called Clement. Both are bound inside our oldest complete Bibles, as though they belonged. [50]

Here is how the official list, the **canon**, got made.

- **About 140:** Marcion, a rich shipowner's son, comes to Rome with his own Bible: no Hebrew scriptures, one cut-down gospel, ten letters of Paul. Rome expels him in 144, but he has published the first list, and now everybody else has to count their own books. [51]
- **303:** The emperor Diocletian orders the churches pulled down and the scriptures burned. Which books you hand over to soldiers becomes a life-and-death question, and in North Africa the movement splits over it. [52]
- **367:** Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, lists exactly your twenty-seven books in his yearly Easter letter. It is the first surviving list that matches. [53]
- **393 and 397:** Councils of bishops at Hippo and Carthage, in North Africa, approve the same list for the churches under them. [54]

All through these years, bishops sorted books by three rough tests. Is it old, and does it come from an apostle or somebody close to one? Is it already read aloud on Sunday in many churches? And does it agree with what the bishops already teach? That last test is the honest one and the ugly one. A book that said something they had decided was wrong was, by definition, a book somebody had forged.

But do not overstate this. Athanasius did not invent your New Testament. Most of it was long settled before him, by plain use. The four gospels and Paul's main letters had been read everywhere for generations. The arguing was about the edges, books like Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation, and some of them nearly did not make it.

So the true answer is not *God handed it down,* and it is not *one man wrote a list.*

Congregations used what they happened to have. A man they called a heretic forced them to count. An emperor made it dangerous to be vague. Bishops applied tests, and one of the tests was agreement with themselves. One bishop finally wrote it out. Councils signed it.

That is how you got the book on your nightstand. It took three hundred years and it was done by men, in rooms, for reasons.

One verse gets used to settle all this.

Someone will quote you: *all scripture is God-breathed* (2 Timothy 3:16).

Two facts about that verse. When it was written there was no New Testament to refer to, and *scripture* meant the Hebrew scriptures. And 2 Timothy is one of the letters most scholars believe was **not** written by Paul, but composed later in his name. In Lesson 15 I will show you how they can tell. [55]

Check It Yourself

Look up: Mark 16:8, then read on to verse 9.

You will find: a footnote or a bracket in nearly every modern Bible, saying the oldest manuscripts stop at verse 8.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/13**.

The Short Version

- All four gospels are anonymous. Apostles' names were added a century later, to settle which gospels outranked the rest.
- Paul's letters are older than any account of my life, and they spread as copied mail, town by town.
- Matthew and Luke copied Mark. You can see it on the page.
- Two beloved passages were added later, and your own Bible says so in the footnotes.
- A heretic forced the list, an emperor made it dangerous, bishops applied tests, and councils signed off.

Think About It

1. Why would a church not mention the footnotes that are already printed in its Bibles?
2. Does knowing the gospels were written decades later change how you read them? Should it?

Lesson 14: The Man Who Never Met Me

Before You Read

Who actually built the religion?

Words to Know

Revelation — information received directly, not from another person.

Damascus — the city Paul was traveling toward when he says he had his vision.

Pharisee — a member of a strict Jewish movement that took the law with great seriousness. Paul was one.

Circumcision — the cutting of a boy's foreskin, done to Jewish sons as the sign of God's covenant with Abraham. Half of this lesson turns on it.

More than half the books in your New Testament are letters, and most carry one man's name.

He is the most important human being in the history of Christianity. Depending on how you count, he matters more than me.

He never met me.

He never heard my voice. He did not know what I looked like. Everything he knew came from other people, or from something that happened to him on a road to Damascus.

Before that road, he hunted my followers.

His name was Saul, and he was a Pharisee. It is in his own handwriting: *I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it* (Galatians 1:13). Acts says he was on the road to Damascus to bring more of them back in chains (Acts 9:1–2).

Somewhere on that road, something happened to him. He never describes it. The version you know, with the light and the voice, is told three times in Acts, decades later, and the three tellings do not agree. [56]

Nobody throws away a career and a side because he is bored, so I will not pretend nothing happened. But he came away with an experience no other human being could check. He did not have one single afternoon with me.

And he was proud of it.

He writes: *I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; I received it by revelation* (Galatians 1:11–12). He is not apologizing for never having met me. He is **advertising** it.

The meeting in Jerusalem was about foreskins and dinner.

My first followers and I were Jews, and we kept the law. In daily life that meant two things above all. A man was **circumcised**, the mark of the covenant God made with Abraham (Genesis 17:9–14). Without it you are not in. And we ate Jewish food, with Jewish people, prepared the Jewish way.

Inside my own country, none of that is difficult. Then Paul took the movement out to Greek cities, and non-Jews started wanting in.

Now you are asking a grown Greek man to accept surgery with no anesthetic, in a world where men exercised naked and Greeks thought the circumcised body ridiculous. And in a Greek city, life happened at meals with your guild, your neighbors and your family, over meat from the temple market. Tell a new convert he may no longer eat with them, and you have handed him an eviction notice.

Put the two together and you have a **ceiling.** A movement with those entrance requirements can grow among Jews, and among the non-Jews already hanging around the synagogues. It cannot grow past them.

Paul looked at the ceiling and took it out. The non-Jews are in, as they are. Faith is the entrance, not the knife and not the menu.

That is what the meeting in Jerusalem was about. Paul went up to face the leaders there, my brother James and the man you call Peter, over whether he was allowed to do that. **And he won.** They shook hands on it. He would go to the non-Jews and they to the Jews, and they asked only that he remember the poor (Galatians 2:6–10).

What Paul did was necessary. Without it there is no church, and you would never have heard my name.

And what Paul did cost the thing its body. Once being in is no longer about what you eat and who you are willing to sit down beside, but about what you believe happened, the whole of it has moved inside a person's head, where nobody can check it and it costs nothing.

He knocked out a wall because the wall had to go. The roof came down with it.

His letters came before any gospel.

His letters were written in the fifties, and the earliest gospel around the year 70. Nobody can show that the gospel writers had his letters open beside them, but by the time anybody wrote my life, the meaning of my death was already settled, everywhere, in his terms: *died for our sins, raised on the third day.*

When you read about me, you are reading through him.

He moved the center from what I said to what happened to me.

I have stopped believing he did it out of malice. He did not have my sayings, only a death, a claim that it had been reversed, and his own experience. My talk of landlords and harvests meant little to slaves in Greek port cities, but *lord* and *savior* were words their world already used.

And the new thing traveled. What I asked for cannot be shipped. Feed that man. Cancel that debt. You have to be *there*. But *believe this happened* fits in a letter. It crosses the sea.

He was not choosing a false thing over a true thing. He was choosing the portable thing over the heavy thing.

So the event at the end stops being an execution and becomes a **transaction.** The question changes from *what are you going to do* to *what do you believe happened.*

That is the exact thing I told people it would not be.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father (Matthew 7:21). Saying the correct thing about me is the thing I specifically said would not be enough.

And when I described the sorting at the end of everything, every one of my six questions was about a body: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner (Matthew 25:31–46). Nobody in it is asked what they thought happened on a Sunday morning.

Now compare his own summary. Writing to Corinth, he sets out what he handed on **as of first importance**: that Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). It says nothing about the poor, the debts or the table.

He quotes my teaching maybe two or three times in all his letters, and never a parable. His letters are mail about problems, which is a fair answer, but when he has a saying of mine he uses it to win the argument (1 Corinthians 7:10). He almost never has one. That is not wickedness. He was **free.** You cannot rearrange a man you have met, because his face gets in the way.

He thought the world was ending, and it did not.

He writes about what will happen to those *who are alive, who are left,* and he counts himself in that group (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17). He did not invent that. He got it from us: the conviction that God was about to act, in daylight, and turn the world the right way up.

So he told Corinth the time was short, and on that basis told them not to change anything. Stay unmarried. If you are a slave, do not worry about it (1 Corinthians 7:20–31). **Those are not laws for a civilization. They are instructions for the last hour.**

The hour did not come. His converts began to die of old age and fever, and the living were frightened that their dead had missed it. Then Paul died, and then everyone who had heard him. Outsiders asked, *Where is the promise of his coming?* (2 Peter 3:4).

There were two honest options. Say we were wrong, or change what had been promised. Nobody said we were wrong.

Here is what changed instead, and it is the quietest and the largest thing in this book.

What I promised was a **we**, and **here**, and **soon.** It was God's rule arriving in this world, with the hungry actually fed and the debts actually cancelled.

What it turned into was a **you**, and **elsewhere**, and **later.** It became your own soul, going to heaven, after you personally die.

The first one can be checked. Walk outside and look. Is anybody still hungry? Then it has not arrived yet, and somebody has work to do. The second one cannot be checked by anybody, ever.

And nobody threw the old instructions away either. **They filed them.** A frightened man's emergency advice for what he thought were the last months of the world became the permanent furniture of the largest institution in human history.

Give him his due.

He was brave, and he was beaten for it again and again (2 Corinthians 11:24–25). Tradition says Rome beheaded him under Nero in the middle sixties, though the New Testament never records it. [57]

And he wrote one sentence I would have been glad to say: *there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female* (Galatians 3:28). But it stayed a sentence. When a runaway slave named Onesimus stood in front of him, Paul **sent him back** to his owner with a warm letter (Philemon 8–21). Keeping him was dangerous, but Paul had the standing to write *free him,* and he did not write it.

Then there was Rome, and it drew from him his most damaging passage.

Writing to Rome, he tells the congregation to obey the governing authorities, because there is no authority except from God (Romans 13:1–7).

He told them to obey the men who killed me.

Now see where he was sitting. The emperor Claudius had recently thrown the Jews out of Rome, and the believers along with them. [58] To a Roman official, a group that would not sacrifice to the gods or the emperor, met behind closed doors, and called a man Rome had executed for sedition their **Lord**, the emperor's own word, looked like treason. A few years after that letter, under Nero, Rome tried to end them.

So Paul was not writing political philosophy. He was writing a survival letter, telling two hundred frightened people how not to be killed this year. The household codes in the next lesson do the same work.

But knowing why he wrote it does not undo what he wrote. He did not write *for now*. He wrote **there is no authority except from God,** with no exception for a cruel ruler and no time limit at all. Emergency advice hardened into permanent law, and every government for twenty centuries that wanted quiet from its Christians has known where to find that page.

Compare what I said. Asked about the emperor's tax, I said to give Caesar back the coin with his face on it, and give God what belongs to God (Mark 12:17). And I told my followers that rulers lord it over people. **It shall not be so among you** (Matthew 20:25–28; Luke 22:25–26).

Paul says the men with the sword are placed there by God.

I said do not be like them.

Check It Yourself

Look up: 1 Corinthians 15:3–8.

You will find: Paul's summary of the faith. Read it and list everything in it. Then ask how much of my teaching made the list.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/14**.

The Short Version

- Paul never met me, and was proud of it. Before Damascus he was hunting my followers.
- He dropped circumcision and the food laws because they capped growth in Greek cities.
- He moved the faith from *what I taught* to *what happened to me*, though I said *Lord, Lord* would not be enough (Matthew 7:21).
- When the world did not end, *us, here, soon* quietly became *you, elsewhere, later*.
- Romans 13 was survival advice for a small, suspect group, and it hardened into permanent law.

Think About It

1. If someone explained your life to the world, and had never met you, what would they get wrong?
2. Why is a religion about belief easier to spread than a religion about doing?

Lesson 15: The Letters He Did Not Write

> Before You Read
>
> *Did Paul write everything with his name on it?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Pseudonymous** — written under someone else's name. It was common in the ancient world, and it did not always mean what the word *forgery* means to you.
>
> **Household codes** — the passages telling wives, children and slaves to submit.
>
> **Estate** — what is left of a person after they die, that other people manage.

Something happens as you read further into the collection.

The voice changes. The fever goes out of the sentences.

The man who expected the world to end in months is replaced by a careful administrator explaining how a household should be arranged, and what qualifications a church officer should have (1 Timothy 3:1–7). **Those are the concerns of an organization that expects to be here in fifty years.**

And the content changes. Wives are told to submit to husbands, children to obey parents, and slaves to **obey** their masters **in everything** (Colossians 3:22). A woman is to learn in silence and is allowed no authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:11–12).

These passages cluster.

They are concentrated in a specific set of letters: Colossians, Ephesians, the two to Timothy, and Titus. And most people who study these texts professionally, including many who hold them sacred, conclude most of those were **not written by Paul.**

Here is how they can tell, and none of it requires you to trust anybody.

- **The words.** The letters to Timothy and Titus use well over a hundred words that appear nowhere else in Paul.
- **The meanings.** For the real Paul, *faith* is something you do. You trust. In these letters, *the faith* is something you have, a body of teaching to guard (1 Timothy 6:20).
- **The sentences.** The real Paul's Greek runs away from him. These letters are tidy. A calm man wrote them.
- **The clock.** The end has quietly receded, and church administration has taken its place.

On the two to Timothy and the one to Titus, that judgment is close to settled. On Ephesians it is strong. On Colossians scholars split about evenly, and I will not pretend otherwise. [59]

He was dead by then.

Before you get angry, understand how this worked. In that world, writing in a dead teacher's name, what scholars call **pseudonymous** writing, was ordinary. Students of Plato wrote as Plato. If you had sat at a man's feet for twenty years, you might genuinely believe you knew what he would say about a new problem, and writing in his name could be a form of respect.

That is the kindest version, and I want you to have it before you have mine.

But the people at the time were not all comfortable with it. One letter with Paul's name on it warns readers not to be shaken by a letter *seeming to be from us* (2 Thessalonians 2:2). A bishop of Antioch named Serapion pulled a gospel out of a congregation's hands when he decided Peter had not written it. [60]

So they cared. They just could not always tell. A copy of a letter arrives in your town, and Paul has been dead thirty years. It sounds like him. It has his name on it. And it says the things your leaders already teach.

You read it out on Sunday.

Now ask the only question that really matters about a forgery. Who got something out of it?

The letters to Timothy and Titus buy an organization. They carry the officer requirements for overseers and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). Paul's own congregations had no job requirements, because there was no job. People stood up and spoke as it came to them (1 Corinthians 14:26–33). A generation later there is a job, and the man who holds it has a letter from Paul saying he should.

I had said the opposite. Do not let people call you Rabbi, and call no man on earth your father. **The greatest among you will be your servant** (Matthew 23:8–12).

The instruction silencing women buys the pulpit.

I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:11–12). A matching line in 1 Corinthians sits oddly where it is (1 Corinthians 14:34–35). In some old copies it turns up at a different point in the chapter, and a few argue it was pushed in later. Most do not go that far, and I will not either. [61]

But Paul's real letters are full of women with authority. He calls Phoebe a deacon of her congregation and a patron of many, including himself (Romans 16:1–2). He calls Junia outstanding among the apostles (Romans 16:7). So women were leading. That is in the letters nobody disputes.

Then a letter arrives with Paul's name on it saying they may not. **That letter did not describe a situation. It ended one.** And the people it handed the room to were men.

The household codes buy safety and respectability.

Think about what a Roman heard when he heard about us. A group was meeting privately in houses, taking in slaves and women as full members, and calling a crucified criminal Lord. To him that was a household coming apart, and to a Roman, households coming apart was precisely how an empire came apart.

The household codes answer him in his own language. *Look at us. Our wives submit. Our children obey. Our slaves work. We are no danger to you.*

It worked. It is very likely one of the reasons there were any Christians left to argue about any of this.

It was also the sale of every single person at the bottom of that list, in exchange for the safety of the people at the top. And it is still being read at them.

Now look at what all three have in common.

Every one of them takes authority away from somebody who had it and hands it to the man at the front of the room. And every one arrives with a dead apostle's signature on it, so that nobody in the room can argue.

They were writing in his name because his name had become worth something. That is the surest sign a movement has ended and an estate has opened.

I went looking for the man who stole my movement. I found a man whose own name had been lifted off him and used to sell furniture. **He was robbed too.**

Nobody was the villain. The thing had to last.

It had to last past the year Paul expected, then past every human being who had ever seen my face. Watch how that happens, because it is very ordinary.

You start with twenty people eating together in somebody's house, with no officers. The group grows, and there are widows and orphans and prisoners to feed, so people put money in a common purse. **Somebody has to hold the purse.** Then people die and leave the group a house to meet in and ground to bury in, and now a name has to be on the deed. Then two travelling teachers arrive with opposite messages, and the man holding the purse and the deed is the only one in the room with standing to settle it.

So one man per city ends up in the chair. By about eighty years after my death, a bishop named Ignatius is writing letters insisting that nothing whatever should be done in a congregation without the bishop. [62]

Nobody voted for that. It grew out of money, and burial, and arguments that had to be stopped.

But look where it leaves you. The man who now decides what I said is a man who is good with property, careful with outsiders, and personally responsible for keeping the doors open next year.

That is not the kind of man who reads *go, sell what you have and give it to the poor* (Mark 10:21) out loud and means it.

Nobody chose this. Everybody chose to survive, which is the same thing done slowly enough that nobody in the room has to notice it happening.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:22, one after the other.

You will find: "no longer slave nor free" — and then, in a later letter with the same name on it, slaves told to obey in everything.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/15**.

The Short Version

- Partway through the letters with Paul's name on them, the words, the sentences and the expected future all change.
- Most scholars think several of those letters were written after he died, by other people.
- The harshest instructions about slaves and women are concentrated in exactly those letters.
- Each one paid somebody: an officer class, a male-only pulpit, and respectability in Roman eyes.
- Nobody planned the takeover. It grew out of a purse, a burial ground and an argument that had to be settled.

Think About It

1. Why would someone write a letter under a dead teacher's name? What does it tell you about his reputation?
2. Which is more disturbing: a villain, or nobody in particular?

Lesson 16: They Called My Brother a Heretic

> Before You Read
>
> *What happened to the people who actually knew me?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Heretic** — someone officially judged to hold wrong beliefs.
>
> **Pillar** — Paul's word for the top leaders in Jerusalem. James is listed first.
>
> **Hostile witness** — someone describing a group in order to condemn it. Most of what we know about these people comes from such sources.

I had brothers.

Your Bible names four of them, and mentions sisters (Mark 6:3). The best known of my brothers was James.

During my life he was not a follower. My family thought I had lost my mind and came to take me home (Mark 3:21). John says it flatly: even my own brothers did not believe in me (John 7:5).

Then I am executed. And within a few years that same brother is running the whole thing in Jerusalem.

How? Paul hands you two reasons.

One: something happened to him. In Paul's summary of the faith, the one I showed you in Lesson 14, there is a line people skim past: *then he appeared to James* (1 Corinthians 15:7). Whatever that was, the man who thought I was mad did not stay where he was standing.

Two: he was my brother. When a teacher died, his movement did not hold an election. It looked at his house. When James was killed, an old account says the

surviving relatives chose another of my cousins, a man named Simeon, to take the chair in Jerusalem. [63] It was not a vote. It was a family.

So **he led the movement.** Paul, who had every reason to play him down, calls him *the Lord's brother* (Galatians 1:19) and lists him **first** among the three men he calls pillars (Galatians 2:9).

He tried to hold one table together.

In Lesson 14 you saw the argument over whether a non-Jew had to be circumcised and keep the food laws in order to be one of us. Acts says that at the meeting in Jerusalem, James stood up and gave the decision, and it was a compromise, not a surrender.

He did not require circumcision. But he kept four rules, and every one of them is about being able to share a room and a meal. Stay away from meat offered to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality (Acts 15:19–20). He was not asking Greeks to become Jews. He was asking Greeks to eat in a way that a law-keeping Jew could sit down and eat beside.

It did not hold. Paul, who was there, never once mentions those four rules in any letter he writes about food, and he tells the Corinthians they may eat whatever is sold in the market (1 Corinthians 10:25). The two accounts of that meeting do not sit comfortably together, and I am not going to pretend they do. [64]

But the shape is not in doubt. The last man with the authority to make both halves of my movement eat at one table used it. And within a generation there were two movements.

He was killed in the year 62, and we know exactly how.

A Jewish historian named Josephus, with no stake at all in praising him, wrote it down. The Roman governor died in office, and for a few weeks there was nobody in the province above the high priest, a man named Ananus. Ananus convened a court, charged James and some others with breaking the law, and

had them stoned. He did it in the gap **because he could not have done it with a governor present.**

And it backfired on him. The men in the city most careful about the law were disgusted, complained to the new governor, and Ananus was removed from the high priesthood after three months. [65]

Hold on to that last part. When my brother was killed, the strictest law-keeping Jews in Jerusalem were on his side. He was one of their own.

A later Christian account adds more, that he was called *the Just* and was thrown from the Temple wall. That one was written to praise him, and it is harder to lean on. [66]

That is what the original movement looked like.

James kept the law. He observed the sabbath, ate what a Jew ate and worshipped at the Temple. He believed I was the anointed one, and he did **not** believe that following me meant you stopped being a Jew. It was not a new religion. It was a movement inside Judaism, led by my brother, in my capital, made up of people who had known me personally.

Then it was taken apart, and not by an argument.

- **70:** Rome takes Jerusalem, burns the Temple and levels the city. My brother's people lose their center, whether or not they escaped across the Jordan to Pella, as an old account says. [67]
- **135:** A second revolt is crushed. The emperor Hadrian rebuilds Jerusalem as a Roman city and bars Jews from it. [68]
- **About 180:** Bishop Irenaeus writes a catalogue of wrong groups, and my brother's people are in it. [69]
- **380:** An emperor makes one version of the faith the law of the empire, and being on the list now means the government has a name for you.
- **383:** Jerome, the man who translated the Bible into Latin, argues that my *brothers* were really cousins. [70]
- **Early 400s:** Jerome writes of these law-keeping followers of mine, *while they want to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither.* [71]

Now count up who was left standing. The Jewish half had no Temple, no Jerusalem and no leadership, and belonged to a people the empire had crushed twice and was taxing as a punishment for it. The Greek half was in dozens of cities, growing, with a collection of letters, an organization, and every reason on earth to make very clear to a Roman official that *we are not those people*.

That is not a fair fight. One side lost its country.

And then the winners wrote the rules.

Jewish followers of mine went on existing for centuries anyway. Bishops wrote catalogues of wrong groups, copied from church to church, so that a leader anywhere could check a travelling stranger against the list before letting him speak. Read what the bishops actually hold against my brother's people. They keep the law. They are circumcised. They say I was an ordinary man. **And they reject Paul.** They called him a traitor to the law and would not use his letters at all.

Being in the catalogue had teeth. It meant no shared meal and no letters of introduction, which were the only thing that got a travelling Christian a bed and a hearing in the next city. You were cut off from the network, and the network was the whole point.

So Jewish followers of a Jewish teacher, keeping the law their teacher kept, in the country their teacher came from, were informed by a Latin-speaking European that they were not Christians. That word did not exist in their teacher's lifetime.

Let me be careful, because it would be easy to overclaim here. I cannot tell you that the group called by that name in the fourth century believed exactly what my brother believed in the year 50, because three hundred years had passed for them too. And nearly everything we know about them comes from **hostile witnesses** who were describing them in order to condemn them.

But the shape is not in doubt. There were two developments out of me. One was Jewish, led by my family and by people who had known me, in my own country. The other was Greek-speaking and urban, built on the letters of a

man who never met me. The second one won. It had the cities, the numbers, the letters, the organization, and a homeland that had not been destroyed.

It also had a reason to define itself against them, and it was not only theology.

After those two wars, being Jewish anywhere in the empire was dangerous and expensive. A Greek-speaking congregation that could say *we are not them, we are something new* was safer than a congregation that could not. So the movement said it. And once it defined itself **against** Jews rather than **inside** them, everything Jewish about me became a problem to manage.

My family faded out. The teaching that my mother remained a virgin her whole life meant she could not have had four more sons and some daughters afterward. So the sons had to go somewhere, and Jerome made them cousins.

Mark says brothers. It says it in a list, with their names in it (Mark 6:3).

They edited my family out of my life. And then, having removed the Jews from around me, they spent nineteen hundred years blaming the Jews for my death, which was carried out by Roman soldiers, on the orders of a Roman governor, using a Roman punishment.

So here is the question this lesson is really asking.

If the movement led by my own brother, staffed by people who had eaten with me, speaking my language, in my country, was formally declared **heretical** by the institution that carries my name, then who is that institution following?

I am not going to answer it for you. You have the dates and the names.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Galatians 1:19 and Galatians 2:9.
>
> **You will find:** Paul calling James my brother, and listing him first among the leaders.
>
> **Then look up:** Mark 6:3, where my brothers and sisters are named.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/16**.

The Short Version

- My brother James led the movement for about twenty years after I died, because he was family and because something happened to him.
- He ruled that non-Jews did not need circumcision, but kept four food rules so that one table could hold.
- Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 and barred Jews from it after 135. That, more than any argument, finished the Jewish half.
- Their descendants were listed as heretics in bishops' catalogues, which cut them out of the network.
- The version that won was built on a man who never met me.

Think About It

1. What would it take for a church today to declare the founder's own family wrong?
2. Why is it significant that those groups rejected Paul specifically?

Lesson 17: The Comma

> Before You Read
>
> *What does your church's summary of the faith actually say about me?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Creed** — an official summary of required belief, recited together.
>
> **Orthodox** — holding the officially correct beliefs.
>
> **Doctrine** — an official teaching of a church.

This one you can check in about ninety seconds, and I think it is the most damaging single object in the whole history of what was done to me.

Say the creed. Either one your church uses.

They have names and origins, and you should have them.

One is the **Apostles' Creed**, the short one. The apostles did not write it. It grew out of the questions a person was asked at baptism in Rome, and reached the form you recite at about the eighth century.

The other is the **Nicene Creed**, the long one. That one has a date, a place and a reason. Bishops wrote it at a town called **Nicaea** in the year 325, at a meeting an emperor called and paid for, and they finished it at a second meeting at Constantinople in 381. I will tell you about that first meeting in the next lesson. [72]

Start either one. It begins with God and creation. Then it gets to me.

It works carefully through my relationship to the Father, using words borrowed from Greek philosophy: *of one substance with the Father, begotten not made.*

Now, those particular words are in there for a reason, and I am not going to score a cheap point by pretending they are just fog.

A preacher in Egypt named **Arius** had been teaching that I was made. That God made me first, before everything else, and that there was a time before I existed. Greatest of all created things — but created.

His bishop said no. Not made. Of the same stuff as God. Always there.

The whole eastern church fought about it, congregation by congregation, for years.

The creed is what the winning side wrote down so the losing side could not slip through it. Every clause in that section is a door being shut. *Begotten, not made* is a door shut in one specific man's face.

So it is perfectly fair to say the creed was never trying to be a summary of my life. It is the peace treaty at the end of one particular argument about what I am made of.

Fine. Now look at what happened to that treaty.

It became the definition of a Christian.

It is what you stand up and recite. It is what a person is asked to affirm in order to be counted in.

An answer to one narrow question about my substance turned into the whole statement of what I am for.

And so —

Then: **born of the Virgin Mary.**

And then, immediately: **suffered under Pontius Pilate.**

Between those two lines there is a comma.

My entire life is in that comma.

Every word I said. Every meal. The scales and the sandals and the debts. The square at dawn. The year of the Lord's favor. The man who went away sad. The

widow's coin. The table with the wrong people at it. My brother. My mother's song.

All of it — thirty-odd years — reduced to a punctuation mark between the circumstances of my birth and the name of the official who signed off on my death.

Centuries of argument produced that summary, and it does not contain one thing I taught.

Not a single instruction. Nothing about the poor. Nothing about debt, nothing about the table, nothing about the last being first.

Go and check that against what I actually said. Do not take my word for one line of it.

Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor (Mark 10:21).

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12).

When you give a dinner, do not invite your friends — invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind (Luke 14:12–14).

The last will be first, and the first last (Matthew 20:16).

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven — but the one who does the will of my Father (Matthew 7:21).

Now try putting any one of those lines into the creed.

It will not go in. It is not the same kind of sentence. One kind tells you what to believe. The other kind tells you what to do tomorrow morning.

It tells you what I **was**, in philosophical terms. It tells you what **happened to me**, in legal terms.

It says nothing whatsoever about **what I asked people to do.**

And there is a reason for that, and it is worse than carelessness.

Think about what a creed is *for*.

A creed is a test. You hand it to a man, he says yes or no, and you find out which side he is on.

Feeding people does not work as a test. It takes years. You cannot do it in a doorway. Anyone can claim it and nobody can measure it.

A sentence about substance works perfectly. You say it or you do not. It can be checked in ten seconds, by anybody, on the spot — including by a government official who knows nothing about God and cares less.

So the moment the real question became *who is in and who is out,* the answer had to be something sayable.

And the moment the test of a Christian is a sentence, what I asked people to do is no longer what a Christian is.

By the time that creed was written, what I asked people to do was no longer the point.

Here is the consequence, and it is not small.

You can be a perfectly orthodox Christian. You can believe every line of that creed, with a whole heart, for eighty years — and never once be required to consider anything I actually said.

That is not a flaw in the design. That is the design.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** the creed your church says. It is probably printed in the back of the hymnal, or on your phone in five seconds.
>
> **You will find:** it goes from my birth straight to my death. Mark with your finger where my life would go.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/17**.

The Short Version

- The creeds jump from my birth to my death with nothing in between.
- The Nicene Creed was written at Nicaea in 325 to settle one argument — whether I was made or unmade — and it does that job well.
- Then that answer to one narrow question became the whole definition of a Christian.
- Not one thing I taught appears in either creed, because a creed has to be sayable in ten seconds and feeding people is not.
- A person can affirm the whole creed and never encounter my teaching.

Think About It

1. If you had to write a one-paragraph summary of my life, what would you put in the middle?
2. Why might a large institution prefer a summary with nothing to do in it?

Lesson 18: The Emperor Takes Over

> Before You Read
>
> *What is the single most important thing that ever happened to Christianity? (It is not in the Bible.)*

> Words to Know
>
> **Council** — an official meeting of bishops to decide questions of belief.
>
> **Exile** — being ordered out of the country by the government.
>
> **State religion** — the one religion a government requires and enforces.

The year 312: a general fights under my sign.

His name was **Constantine.**

He was fighting a civil war for control of the western empire, against a rival named **Maxentius** who held Rome itself. The two armies met at the **Milvian Bridge**, just outside the city, on the 28th of October.

Before the battle, Constantine put a Christian sign on his soldiers' shields.

Now ask why a pagan general would do that, because it is the strangest thing in this lesson and nobody ever stops on it.

We are talking about a small, illegal sect. Roman officials had been burning its books nine years earlier. Constantine's own soldiers were not Christians — most of them served the sun and the old gods, and so, up to then, had he. There was no obvious advantage in it whatsoever.

He said afterward that he had been told to. The story comes down in two versions: a sign seen in the sky with words attached, and a dream the night before the battle. Both were written down later, by men who admired him, and they do not agree with each other. [73]

I am not going to tell you what happened to that man. I do not know.

I will tell you what he got out of it. He won. Maxentius's army broke on the bridge, and Maxentius drowned in the river. Twelve years later, in 324, Constantine beat his last rival in the east and ruled the entire Roman world alone. [74]

And the sign that won it was a monogram of my name — on the equipment of an army, on its way to kill other Romans.

Within a few decades, the instrument of my execution was a **military standard.**

The year 313: they stop killing you.

Constantine and his eastern colleague, an emperor named **Licinius**, agreed a policy: Christians and everyone else could worship as they chose, and nobody would be punished for it. [75]

And they gave the property back.

That part never gets mentioned, and it matters more than the tolerating did. The agreement ordered that the buildings and the land taken from congregations during the persecution be returned — immediately, at no charge — and that anyone who had bought such property in good faith would be compensated out of the imperial treasury.

Ten years earlier the churches had been pulled down and their books burned. Now the empire was handing back the deeds and paying for the inconvenience.

Think about what that does to a movement. For the first time in its life, being a church is not a risk.

It is an asset.

That part gets celebrated, and after two and a half centuries of being hunted, I understand the celebrating completely. Nobody should die for what they think.

But watch what happened next, because it happened fast.

The year 325: the emperor calls a meeting about me.

The town was **Nicaea**, on a lake in what is now Turkey. The meeting is called the **Council of Nicaea**, and it is where the creed in the back of your hymnal comes from.

Why would an emperor care?

Because he had just spent eighteen years fighting to make one empire out of broken pieces, and he had picked the Christian church as something that would help hold it together. It was the one organization with a branch in every city, everywhere, all of it now owing him a very large debt.

And that organization was tearing itself in half over Arius, the preacher from the last lesson, and the question of whether I was made or unmade.

Constantine did not care about the answer. There is a letter from him about it, sent to both sides, in which he calls the whole dispute small and foolish and tells them to stop it. [76]

He cared that there were two answers. A church at war with itself was no use to him at all.

So he did what an emperor does.

He summoned the bishops — somewhere around three hundred of them — and put them on the imperial post, the government courier system, so they travelled at state expense. He paid for their lodging and their food. He opened the proceedings himself, in the hall, in his robes, and then sat down with them. [77]

They took a vote, and it was not close.

The bishops approved a statement saying that I am *of one substance with the Father, begotten not made.*

Nearly all of them signed it. Two refused. [78]

And then the state moved.

Arius and the men who would not sign were sent into exile — not by the church, by the government, by imperial order, with soldiers.

And Constantine ordered that Arius's books be burned, and that any man found hiding a copy be put to death. [79]

Stop there and read that again.

An argument about me was settled by a vote of officials whose travel an emperor had paid for. The losing side was removed from the country by soldiers. And the losing side's books were made a capital offense to own.

That is the moment.

Not the cross. Not Paul. Not the forged letters.

The moment the definition of me became a matter for government administration, with exile behind it, the thing was finished.

And here is exactly how the incentives changed, because I do not want you taking that on trust either.

Before 313, being a leader in a congregation could cost you your property, your freedom or your life.

After Constantine, here is what it got you instead.

Clergy were released from the public duties that ruined ordinary well-off men — the expensive local offices a town could force you to pay for.

Bishops were given legal power. A bishop's court could settle a dispute, and the state would enforce the ruling.

Churches were given the right to receive property in wills, which they had never had before. Money began arriving from the dead.

Sunday was made a public day of rest across the empire.

And the emperor's own treasury started putting up enormous churches in stone. [80]

Now do the arithmetic on a young man's life.

In the year 300, joining the clergy was a way to lose everything you had.

By the year 350, it was one of the best careers available in the Roman world. Secure. Respected. Exempt from the duties that crushed other men. With authority over other people, and a building.

You do not have to accuse anybody of anything. Just ask what kind of man that job now attracts — and what kind of sermon keeps it.

And one more thing changed, and it was the worst of them.

Being wrong about me stopped being a religious problem and became a crime.

Once the state enforces the definition, a man who disagrees is not a mistaken brother to be argued with. He is a criminal, and there is a soldier for him.

Everything after is consequence.

The year 380: it becomes required.

The emperor was **Theodosius**, and the order is called the **Edict of Thessalonica**, issued on the 27th of February, 380.

Why then? Because fifty-five years after Nicaea, the argument was still not over. Arius's side had never gone away. It had held much of the eastern church for decades, and it had won whole peoples outside the empire's borders. Theodosius had just been made emperor in the east, he came from the west, and he intended to finish it by law.

So he commanded all the peoples under his rule to hold the faith in the form held by the bishop of Rome and the bishop of Alexandria.

Read that sentence again. Not *this is true*. **This is the form, and these two men have it.**

It called those who did not comply **demented and insane,** declared them heretics, and said they would suffer divine punishment first and then whatever punishment his own authority decided to inflict. [81]

Read the last part once more. *And then whatever punishment his own authority decided to inflict.*

Five years later, somebody found out what that meant.

The year 385: they start killing people over it.

A bishop in Spain named **Priscillian** taught fasting, poverty and study groups that met in private houses, with women in them. Other Spanish bishops accused him. Being a heretic was not yet something a man could be executed for, but sorcery was, so the charge became sorcery. He was beheaded at Trier with several companions, and **Martin of Tours**, who travelled there to stop it, lost. [82]

It is generally counted as the first execution of Christians by Christians over a question of belief. Eighty-two years earlier, the men making that decision were the ones being hunted.

Now count the years.

From a banned sect, to a tolerated one, to a favored one, to the official state religion, to a religion that executes people for getting it wrong.

That took seventy-three years.

They did not have to become Rome. Rome offered, and they said yes. And I understand why. It is very hard to say no to the end of being hunted.

But something was traded at that table, and I can tell you exactly what it was.

They handed over the right to be a thing the empire could not use.

And they got back buildings, exemptions, courts, inheritances and the law.

The thing that got traded was the only thing I had ever asked people to do.

And here is what everybody gets backwards.

Rome never defeated us.

Rome killed me. Rome killed Paul. Rome killed a great many people over two and a half centuries, and it did not work at all.

Then the empire simply put my name on its coins and its standards and its law.

And the movement that had survived every persecution **did not survive the endorsement.**

Check It Yourself

This one is history, not Bible. Look up any of these by name: the **Milvian Bridge**, 312. The **Council of Nicaea**, 325. The **Edict of Thessalonica**, 380. **Priscillian**, 385.

You will find: that every single one is a government decision, not a religious one.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/18**.

The Short Version

- In 312, Constantine won at the Milvian Bridge under a Christian sign, and in 313 the empire handed the churches their property back.
- In 325, Constantine convened, funded and opened the Council of Nicaea, which defined what I am — and the state exiled the two men who would not sign.
- Imperial favor turned church office from a way to lose everything into one of the best careers in the empire.
- By 380 the faith was compulsory; by 385 people were being executed over it.
- Persecution did not destroy the movement. **Official approval did.**

Think About It

1. If you had been a bishop in 313, after generations of being hunted, would you have said no?
2. What does a religion have to give up to become the official one?

UNIT THREE — WHAT GOT CHANGED

You now know who I was and what happened to my movement. This unit is about four specific ideas that were swapped in later. Each one has a date. None of them came from me.

Lesson 19: The God Who Needed to Be Paid

> Before You Read
>
> *What kind of God are you praying to?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Atonement** — the making-right between God and people. No council has ever defined how it works.
>
> **Satisfaction** — a payment that restores an offended party's honor. Also the third step of confession.
>
> **Ransom** — money paid to a kidnapper. If you use this word, you have to say who is being paid.

This is the deepest lesson in the book. If you keep nothing else, keep this.

Somewhere in the last twenty centuries, an idea was put at the center of my religion.

It is this: **God could not forgive you until somebody was killed.**

God, who is described as love, was unable to release you until a debt was paid. The blood was not helpful. It was **necessary.**

Now let me tell you a story I actually told.

It is in Luke 15.

A man had two sons.

The younger one asks for his share of the property **while his father is still alive.**

A son got his share when his father died. So to ask early is to say one thing: *I am not waiting for you to die. Be dead now.* Land had to be sold to pay it, and the whole village watched an old man agree to it in public.

He spends all of it abroad and ends up feeding pigs. On the road home he works out a speech: *I am not worthy to be called your son. Make me a hired hand.*

And **while he was still a long way off, his father saw him**, which means the old man had been watching that road, **and ran.**

A man of standing in my country did not run. He did it anyway. He threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The son starts his speech. **The father does not let him finish.** He is already shouting over the top of him for the best robe, a ring and sandals (Luke 15:20–24). It is a statement made at volume, to the whole village: **this is my son, and he is not on probation.**

So where in that story is the payment?

There is no sacrifice in it, no substitute, and nobody is punished in the son's place. **He sees him on the road, and he runs.**

That is my picture of God, and **every single part of your atonement is missing from it.**

In the version you were taught, the father **cannot** run. His own nature will not allow him to forgive until the account is cleared, so he arranges for his other son to be killed instead. **Ask yourself, plainly, which of those two is the greater being.**

There is a second problem, and it is simpler. I forgave people.

I did it long before I ever died on a cross. A paralyzed man was let down through a roof, and the first thing I said to him was that his sins were forgiven. The religious men watching said: ***Who can forgive sins but God alone?*** (Mark 2:5–7). Nobody in that room says a debt is outstanding. The entire argument is about **who is allowed to do it**, and not one syllable of it is about **what has to happen first.**

In the prayer I taught, forgiveness has exactly **one** condition: that you forgive other people (Matthew 6:12, 6:14–15). And twice, when religious men

complained about me, I answered with six words out of the prophet Hosea: ***I desire mercy, not sacrifice*** (Matthew 9:13, 12:7; Hosea 6:6).

Now here is the honest part, which you are owed.

Two sentences in your Bible, in my mouth, seem to say the opposite. In Mark I say I came *to give my life a ransom for many* (Mark 10:45). And over the cup at the last meal I say *this is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many* (Mark 14:24).

I will not pretend those are not there. But here is a test you can run tonight with two Bibles open. Mark puts the ransom line at the end of an argument among my students about which of them is the greatest (Mark 10:35–45). Luke tells that same argument, with the same rebuke, and ends it with *I am among you as one who serves* (Luke 22:24–27). It is the same scene, and there is **no ransom in it.** A line that heavy does not fall out of a story by accident. Somebody added it.

The words over the cup are older than any gospel. Paul hands them on to Corinth in the fifties as a formula he **received**, something his congregations were already saying aloud every week (1 Corinthians 11:23–25). That is liturgy remembered into a story.

And even taken as they stand, a ransom is paid to a **captor.** For a thousand years the church said the captor was **the devil.** A teacher named Origen said it in the two hundreds, and a bishop named Gregory pictured it as a hook baited with my humanity, which the devil swallowed. [83]

For the first thousand years, there was no settled explanation of how my death worked.

There were several at once: the ransom to the devil, a victory over death and the powers, my going down among the dead and leading everybody out. [84] In not one of them is God the one who has to be paid.

No council of the church has ever settled it. [85] To be fair, the Council of **Trent**, in sessions from 1545 to 1563, used the language of satisfaction freely, though it still did not pick a theory.

Then, around the year 1098, one man wrote a short book, and everything changed.

His name was **Anselm.** He was Archbishop of Canterbury, and he fought the kings of England over who owned the church until they drove him into exile. There, in Italy, he finished *Cur Deus Homo*, which is Latin for *Why God Became a Man.* [86] [87]

He wrote it to kill the ransom explanation. The baited hook assumed the devil had a real **right** over human beings, and Anselm answered in one sentence: **a thief has no rights over what he stole.** But then, if the debt is not owed to the devil, to whom is it owed? **It is owed to God.**

He was not describing heaven. He was describing Normandy, where he had been a monk and where every man owed his lord a list of things called his **due**, and a man who failed to render it had dishonored his lord and paid a settlement scaled to that lord's **rank.** [88] To sin, Anselm wrote, is *nothing else than not to render to God what is due to him.* [89]

God's rank has no limit, so the settlement has no limit. A man owes it, but only God could pay it, and that is why God became a man. And because I had not sinned, my death was an overpayment, a credit that can be **assigned** to you. It is completely logical inside a world of lords and honor and debts. [90] It would have been gibberish in Nazareth.

The objection came almost at once. Around 1135 **Peter Abelard**, the most famous teacher in Europe, asked how the **murder** of a son could make a father better disposed toward anybody. His own answer was that I came to show people what love looks like. In 1141, at Sens, he was condemned and silenced, mostly on other charges, and nobody teaches the opinions of a condemned heretic. [91]

Then the idea spread, and each step has a date.

- **About 1150:** Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, with Anselm's answer in it, becomes Europe's required theology textbook. [92]
- **1215:** The Fourth Lateran Council makes yearly confession compulsory, and its third step is called *satisfaction.* [93]

- **About 1265–1274:** Thomas Aquinas builds satisfaction into his *Summa Theologiae*. [94]
- **1536:** John Calvin publishes the first edition of his *Institutes*. [95]

So when a preacher said *Christ satisfied the Father's justice*, everyone in the building knew what satisfaction was. They had all done it themselves.

Then Calvin moved it into a courtroom. By the fifteen hundreds lords were giving way to states and courts, and Calvin, a lawyer before he was a theologian, made God the judge, sin the crime, and me the convict, with the death sentence carried out **on me, instead of on you.** [96] [97] This is **penal substitution**, the version most of you were taught. Anselm never said God punished me. **Calvin does.** It is about five hundred years old, and it is not in my mouth anywhere.

Who found it useful?

Anselm was a genuinely holy man, and nobody designed this to manage you. But an idea only has to be useful, and then it gets kept. Once relief from punishment is a quantity that can be moved between accounts, it can be sold. That trade is the subject of Lesson 25.

Here is what it does to people, which concerns me most.

It makes your standing before God not son or daughter but **debtor**, from birth, and a debtor cannot rest. And if the point of my life was my death, then everything I said in between is **optional.** You can be fully saved **without ever having fed anybody.**

Every generation had other options on the table, including Abelard's, and every generation chose this one. So ask yourself: **in nine hundred years, has this doctrine ever once cost a powerful man anything?**

So tonight, when you pray, settle something.

Not as a rhetorical question. Actually answer it.

Is the one you are speaking to the father on the road, who saw his son a long way off and ran, and could not even wait for the apology?

Or is he the lord in the hall, who could not act until his honor was satisfied and a body was produced?

They are not the same being. You cannot worship both.

And only one of them is anywhere in anything I ever said.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Luke 15:20–24. The father runs, and interrupts the apology. Count the payments in the story.

Then, with two Bibles open, read Mark 10:41–45 and Luke 22:24–27. Only one of them has the ransom sentence in it.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/19**.

The Short Version

- In my own story about forgiveness, the father just runs. There is no payment.
- I forgave people while alive, and twice said: *I desire mercy, not sacrifice.*
- **Anselm** first made God the one who is paid, in about **1098**, in exile.
- **Calvin**, a lawyer, turned it into a courtroom sentence in his *Institutes* of **1536**.
- No council has ever settled how my death works, though **Trent** used the language of satisfaction.

Think About It

1. Which God did you grow up with — the one on the road, or the one in the hall?
2. If my death paid everything, what is left for you to actually do?

Lesson 20: The Word "Saved"

> Before You Read
>
> *What did I mean when I said somebody was saved?*

> Words to Know
>
> ***Sozo*** — the Greek word your Bible turns into "saved." It means rescue, heal, make whole.
>
> **Grace** — a gift you did not earn.
>
> **Works** — things you do. Faith versus works is the oldest fight in Christianity.
>
> **Decisionism** — treating one decided moment as what settles a person's standing with God.

In your church, "saved" is a status.

It is something you **become**, at a moment, usually at an altar, by praying a prayer and meaning it. Afterward you **are** saved, and many of you were taught you cannot lose it.

In the gospels, "saved" almost always means something you can see.

The word underneath your English is the Greek verb ***sozo***. It means rescued, pulled out, made whole. A woman bleeding for twelve years touches my clothes and I tell her *your faith has saved you*, and your Bible prints it *made you well* (Mark 5:34). Men in a boat in a storm cry out to be *saved*, and they mean **from drowning** (Matthew 8:25).

The Greek has one word here, not two. Your translators decided, verse by verse, whether to print *healed* or *saved*, and so you can read the whole gospel in English and never notice that **it is the same word.** The distinction you were taught is not in the Greek. **It is in the English.**

So how did one word for "dragged out of the water" turn into a status you can hold?

- **Around 382–405:** Jerome's Latin Bible renders *sozo* as *salvare*, which still means health as well as rescue.
- **1526 and 1611:** Tyndale and then the King James use *saved*, already a churchman's word for the fate of a soul, and give the body *made whole.* [98]
- **The 1600s:** English and New England Puritans make *am I saved?* the anxious question of a life, answered slowly, over years.
- **The 1800s:** American revivalists compress that long business into a single evening you can decide.

Three times in the gospels, the question gets a direct answer.

The first answer went to a rich man. He runs up, kneels, and asks: *what must I do to inherit eternal life?* (Mark 10:17–22). That is the altar-call question. I tell him to keep the commandments, and he says he has. Then I look at him and **love him**, and say one thing is missing: **go, sell what you have, give it to the poor, and come follow me.** He goes away sad, because he had a lot. I did not lead him in a prayer. **And I let him walk away.**

I will not stop where it suits me. In the next verses my students ask, ***then who can be saved?*** And I say: *for mortals it is impossible, but not for God. For God all things are possible* (Mark 10:23–27). That is a real answer, and it is in my mouth. But it says **God can do it.** It does not say **the man did not have to sell anything**, and nobody calls after him to take the instruction back. God can get a rich man through. **He still has to walk through.**

The second went to a lawyer. He asks the same question, and I tell him: ***do this and you will live*** (Luke 10:25–37). Then I tell him about a foreigner of a despised religion who stops for a beaten man in a ditch and **pays for him.**

The third is a picture of the final judgment, the only detailed one I ever gave, and the standard is read out: *I was hungry and you fed me. Thirsty and you gave me a drink. A stranger and you took me in. Naked and you clothed me.*

Sick and you looked after me. In prison and you came to me (Matthew 25:31–46). **That is the whole list.** There is no question about doctrine in it.

A trained man will say that *the least of these my brothers* means fellow believers. The word is really there. But when I was asked who my brothers were, I looked at the people sitting on the floor and said: ***these are my mother and my brothers*** (Mark 3:33–35). That passage also ends on a hard sentence about lasting punishment, which the next lesson takes head-on.

All three answers are things you **do.** And without a story: ***Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father*** (Matthew 7:21).

There is no sinner's prayer in the New Testament.

There is no formula, no script, no moment at an altar where somebody repeats words after a preacher and is thereby saved. The practice you know is about two hundred years old, and it was invented in the United States to solve a practical problem.

The man is Charles Finney, a lawyer turned revivalist, preaching across New York state and then the country from the eighteen twenties. He defended his **"new measures"** in print in **1835.** The most famous was the **anxious bench**, a pew at the front where you went and sat, in front of everyone, and had the thing brought to a point that same night.

A revivalist preaches in a town for a week, **then he leaves.** He cannot spend years watching a life for evidence, the way a Puritan pastor could. So he needs a conversion that can be **finished tonight**, something visible and countable. Ministers in his own day attacked him for replacing the work of God with a technique.

Then it was standardized. In the 1950s and 1960s Bill Bright worked it into the *Four Spiritual Laws*, ending in a prayer you could read off the page, and the **Billy Graham** crusades had you walk forward, pray, **and fill in a card.** [99] [100] I am not saying nothing happens when somebody prays it. I am saying the hinge of a human life, as your church sees it, is **not in the book your church says is the source of everything.**

Now somebody is about to quote Paul, so let us do it properly.

He wrote that a person is put right with God by faith, not by works of the law (Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16). Most scholars doubt he wrote the famous *by grace you have been saved* (Ephesians 2:8–9), but Romans and Galatians are his beyond argument. **Paul really did say it.**

But look at which "works of the law" he argues about, letter after letter: **circumcision, food rules, which table you may eat at, and which days you keep** (Galatians 2:11–14; Romans 14:1–6). **Those are the marks of membership in a people.** His fight was about whether a Greek had to climb that fence to belong. And the same Paul wrote: *God will repay each one according to his works* (Romans 2:6).

There is a letter in your Bible that says the opposite as flatly as it can be said.

It is the letter of **James.** The name on it is my brother's, but most people who study it doubt he held the pen, so I will not lean on the name. [101] It asks what good it is to tell a hungry brother or sister *go in peace, keep warm and eat your fill*, and give them nothing (James 2:14–16). Then, flatly: ***faith without works is dead*** (James 2:26).

Martin Luther could not live with that letter. He had been a monk at Erfurt, confessing obsessively inside the system of satisfaction from the last lesson. When he found in Paul that God puts a man right **as a gift**, it was a man let out of a cell. In 1522 he called James *an epistle of straw*. [102]

Be exact about what he did next. **He did not remove it.** He moved James, with three other books, to the back of **his own German New Testament.** That was Luther's German edition only. In the Bible on your shelf, James sits where it always sat, at number twenty. And after 1537 Luther stopped printing the "epistle of straw" line. [102]

Here is what I owe you. The idea of **grace** was not wicked. Preached into a Europe of compulsory confession and priced relief, *you cannot earn it, stop counting* was a freeing word. It let people sleep.

But watch the substitution. ***You cannot earn it*** became ***you need not do anything.*** The first is about God's character. **The second is about what you do tomorrow.**

Who made that swap? It was not Luther. The same Luther, in the same 1522, called faith *a living, busy, active, mighty thing* that cannot help doing good works. [103] I cannot hand you one man and one year for the swap. But Finney's bench made conversion a **datable event**, Graham's card made it a **recorded** one, and once your standing with God is an event on a date, everything after that date is **not part of it.**

In **1937** a German pastor named **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** named it ***cheap grace***, *grace without discipleship*. [104] Others in your churches call it **decisionism.** When a religion needs to invent words for a disease, the disease is in the building.

And that is a big part of why it won. A religion of *what you must accept* can be preached to anyone, and it will never cost a powerful man a coin. **Constantine** could keep his throne and his executions under it. Slave owners in the American South, from the 1830s, could back its preaching to the people they owned.

If you have loved God for fifty years and been told your whole life that you are saved, I am not telling you that you are not. I am telling you that the word means **rescued**, and that every time I was asked the question directly, I answered with an instruction.

You are only required to stop treating a decision you made once as a substitute for a life you have not lived yet.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Mark 10:17–**27**. Read all eleven verses, not the first six. You will find the altar-call question, an answer about property, and the hard part your pastor will quote.
>
> **Then look up:** James 2:14–16, and Matthew 7:21.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/20**.

The Short Version

- In the gospels, "saved" is *sozo*: rescued or healed. The split into two words happened in **English**.
- Three times I was asked the question directly, and all three answers are things you **do**.
- There is no sinner's prayer in the New Testament. The decided moment starts with **Finney** in the **1830s**.
- Paul's fight was over the **fence** of membership, not over whether you feed anybody.
- Luther demoted James in **his own German** New Testament only. Yours still has it at number twenty.

Think About It

1. If your salvation were taken away tomorrow, what would change about how you spend your days?
2. Why would a wealthy church prefer "agree to this" over "go and do this"?

Lesson 21: Where Hell Came From

> Before You Read
>
> *When I said "hell," what was I pointing at?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Gehenna** — the Valley of Hinnom, a real place outside Jerusalem with a terrible history.
>
> **Sheol / Hades** — the general realm of the dead in Hebrew and Greek. Not a place of torture.
>
> **Molech** — the god children were burned for in that valley. Your Bible names him.
>
> **Septuagint** — the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, made in Egypt, used by the first Christians.

Your English Bible may print one word for three completely different things.

If you read the **King James**, one English word, *hell*, is used for three separate words in the original. **Sheol**, in Hebrew, is the place of the dead, where everybody goes; it means the grave. **Hades** is the Greek word for the underworld. And **Tartarus**, which appears once (2 Peter 2:4), is the lowest pit in **Greek mythology**, where Zeus shut up the Titans. [105] Newer translations like the NIV, ESV and NRSV have mostly repaired this. **They repaired it in the footnotes**, and nobody preaches from a footnote.

The Greek underworld got into a Jewish book by a translation. Beginning in the **two hundreds BC**, in **Alexandria**, Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, the **Septuagint**, and for *Sheol* they wrote ***Hades***, a word that came with a god, a river, a ferryman and a pit underneath for the worst.

For most of the Hebrew scriptures there is **no heaven and hell** at all. The dead are all in Sheol together. Judgment after death and a resurrection begin

turning up in Jewish books after the exile, when my people lived under Persian rule, and the Persian religion already had them. Nobody can show you the meeting where this was handed over, and honest people argue about how much came from where. [106]

Now to the word I actually used. It was Gehenna, and Gehenna was a place.

It is the **Valley of Hinnom**, along the south side of Jerusalem, just under the old wall. I could have pointed at it from a rooftop.

At a site in that valley called **Topheth**, two kings of Judah, **Ahaz** and his grandson **Manasseh**, burned their own children (2 Kings 16:3, 21:6). The fire there was for a god named **Molech** (2 Kings 23:10).

Why would a king burn his own child? Because he was **buying** something. In your own Bible, a king of Moab who is losing a battle takes his **eldest son** up onto the city wall and offers him there, in front of both armies (2 Kings 3:27). The oldest and ugliest religious idea on earth is this one: *a god can be bought, and a son is the currency.*

Then the prophet **Jeremiah** said God had never asked for any of it, and that the place would be renamed the **Valley of Slaughter** (Jeremiah 7:31–32). And around **622 BC** King **Josiah** went down and deliberately **defiled Topheth**, *so that no one could ever again make a son or a daughter pass through the fire to Molech* (2 Kings 23:10). That is what left the ground cursed.

You may have heard that the valley was a burning rubbish dump. **Do not use that.** The earliest source for it is a Jewish commentator writing more than a thousand years after me. [107]

And I have to be honest about the next step, because it cuts against me as much as for me. In the three hundred years before I was born, Jewish writers, in books like **1 Enoch**, had already grown Jeremiah's Valley of Slaughter into the site of the last judgment. [108] So when I used the word, a crowd understood me instantly. Anyone who says Gehenna was only a landfill is being simple with you. So is anyone who says it already meant everything your church now means by hell.

So here is what I actually said with that word. Judge it yourself.

There is not much of it, and most of it was said in **Galilee**, a hundred miles from that valley.

Whoever says to his brother, you fool, is liable to the Gehenna of fire (Matthew 5:22). The offense is **contempt**, writing a man off as worthless.

Better to lose an eye or a hand than have your whole body thrown into Gehenna (Matthew 5:29–30). That is a builder's exaggeration. Nobody in that field thought I was recommending surgery.

*Fear him who can **destroy** both soul and body in Gehenna* (Matthew 10:28). The word is *destroy*, not torment.

You snakes, you brood of vipers — how are you going to escape the judgment of Gehenna? (Matthew 23:33). I said that to the **religious authorities**, in the temple. **Every time I used that word in anger, I aimed it upward.** Your churches have spent nineteen centuries aiming it downward.

And the hard one, whole: *It is better to enter life maimed than to go with two hands into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire — where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:43–48). I am not going to soften it. But the last line is a quotation of the closing verse of Isaiah, where the worm and the fire are working on **dead bodies** in a valley outside Jerusalem (Isaiah 66:24). "The fire does not stop" is not the same sentence as "the people do not stop." [109]

Two passages need facing, or you would be right to shut this book.

The first is **the rich man and Lazarus** (Luke 16:19–31). The rich man dies and is in torment, in flame, across a great chasm from the beggar who lay at his gate. **So I did describe an afterlife**, once, in detail. But the word in it is **Hades**, not Gehenna, and the scenery is what my hearers already had from the books before me. And the rich man's only offense is that **a starving man lay at his gate and he stepped over him every day.** [110]

The second is the closing line of the judgment scene I quoted in the last lesson: *and these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal*

life (Matthew 25:46). I will not hide it. Here are two honest things about it. The word *eternal* is the Greek *aionios*, from *aion*, an **age**, and it is used for the life and the punishment in the same breath; whatever it means for one, it means for the other. [111] And Christians have read the verse three old ways: punishment without end; punishment that ends because the person ends; and everybody finally brought home, which the church took until **553** to condemn. [112] What the verse does not say is torture, and it hands out its sentences on the basis of what people did with their hands.

The furniture of hell is not in that verse. It was built later, by men with names.

- **Second century:** the *Apocalypse of Peter* tours hell room by room, each punishment fitted to its sin. It was dropped from the lists of accepted books, but its contents were copied out. [113]
- **Fourth century:** the *Apocalypse of Paul* expands it and becomes a medieval bestseller, mined for sermons. [114]
- **About 426: Augustine**, in *The City of God*, argues against other Christians that the punishment is **bodily, literal, and without end.** [115] [116]
- **1308–1320: Dante** writes the *Inferno* in Italian, and the circles and matched torments are **his.** [117] [118]
- **The Middle Ages:** a Last Judgment is painted on the wall every parish faces, and a congregation that cannot read learns hell from it. [119]

Augustine's argument was this: an offense against a being of infinite greatness deserves a punishment without limit. **The rank of the one offended sets the size of the penalty.** That is the move you watched Anselm make in Lesson 19.

Now notice the dates, because the obvious thing to say here is wrong.

The obvious thing is that they built the fire in order to sell you the water. **The dates do not show that.** Augustine argues the unending fire around **426.** Anselm writes the payment in **1098.** The fire is **six hundred years older than the price.** Nobody invented eternal torment to market the payment.

What is true is that **the later one was cut to fit the earlier one.** If the penalty is infinite, nothing an ordinary person owns can clear it, so the settlement has to

come from God. Anselm had read Augustine. Everybody had. And once there is an infinite penalty and an infinite payment, somebody has to administer the transfer, and whoever holds that job can grant relief and can **withhold** it. The paperwork for that is in Lesson 25. Nobody planned it end to end. Each layer was laid by men who believed in what they were laying, and each made the next one possible.

I told people to live now as though the order had already turned over. Feed them. Free them. Cancel the debts. **That is a message about what you do tomorrow.** It became a message about where you go when you die, and then it could be **sold.**

And remember how this lesson began.

A king standing on a wall, spending a son to buy the favor of a god in a war he was losing. My own people wrote that down as the worst thing they had ever done, and then a king went into that valley and wrecked the ground so that it could never be done again.

And then the religion built on my name told the world that God had done the very same thing, deliberately, to his own son — and called it good news.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Jeremiah 7:31–33, then 2 Kings 23:10. You will find the valley, the god's name, and the king who defiled it.
>
> **Then look up:** Matthew 10:28 and read one word carefully. It is *destroy*.
>
> **Then look up:** Isaiah 66:24, where "their worm does not die" comes from. Notice who is in the valley.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/21**.

The Short Version

- The King James prints *hell* for three different words: Sheol, Hades and Tartarus.
- *Gehenna* was a real valley where kings burned their sons to **Molech**, defiled by **Josiah** around 622 BC.
- By my lifetime, books like **1 Enoch** had already made it the site of the last judgment.
- When I used the word in anger, I aimed it at the **religious authorities**, not at sinners.
- Unending torment is **Augustine's**, about **426**. The circles are **Dante's**, 1308–1320.

Think About It

1. If there were no hell, what would be left of your faith? Would anything?
2. Who benefits from a fear that only one institution can relieve?

Lesson 22: My Face

Before You Read

Where did the picture in your head come from?

Words to Know

Serapis — a long-haired, bearded god whose face and cult a Greek king of Egypt built on purpose.

Basilica — a long Roman public hall, used for law courts and imperial audiences.

Apse — the curved alcove at the end of a basilica, where the emperor's image hung.

Forgery — a document written by one person and passed off as the work of another.

There is no description of me anywhere in your Bible.

Four accounts of my life, plus a pile of letters, written by people some of whom had seen me, and not one thought it worth telling you what I looked like.

And yet you can see me right now. Close your eyes and there I am:

You see pale skin, long straight brown hair parted down the middle, a soft trimmed beard, a tall and slim body, sorrowful eyes, a clean robe, and a light behind the head.

Those are eight things, and I am going to account for every one of them before the lesson is over.

What did I probably look like? I was a Galilean Jew who worked outdoors with his hands in a hot country. In **2001** a medical artist named **Richard Neave** rebuilt a face on first-century skulls from the Jerusalem area, and what came out was broad, dark and weathered, with short curly black hair, brown skin

and a laborer's build. That is an estimate of a typical man, not a picture of me; nobody has my skull. But men of that place and time stood about five foot one to five foot five, which by itself removes the word **tall** from your list. [120]

One thing on your list is probably right. **The beard is probably real.** Jewish men of my time generally wore beards (Leviticus 19:27). Which makes the next fact strange, and it is the hinge of this whole lesson: **the earliest Christian pictures of me do not have one.**

For the first two hundred years, nobody drew me at all. The oldest surviving picture that touches me is a **scratch on a wall in Rome, from about the year 200**, made by somebody mocking a Christian: a figure on a cross with a donkey's head, captioned *Alexamenos worships his god*. [121] Even my enemies had no fixed picture to insult.

When Christians did start drawing, on catacomb walls in Rome and in a house church at **Dura-Europos** from about **240**, they drew a **young man with no beard**, short hair, a Roman tunic, and often **a sheep across his shoulders.** [122] That figure was already everywhere in Roman art, a stock image of kindness. [123] To an official walking past a burial niche, it announced nothing. To the family inside, it was the good shepherd (John 10:11). That is a persecuted movement being careful.

The face you know arrives in the fourth century, and the date is not a coincidence.

In **313** the empire stopped punishing Christians and started favoring them, and the emperor began building for them. What he built was the **basilica**, the standard Roman public hall. At its far end was the **apse**, where the magistrate sat and, above him, hung **the image of the emperor.** A boy with a sheep cannot fill a wall like that. It demands one enormous figure, face-on, looking down the hall.

And the empire already had a vocabulary for that figure. It was the way you drew **supreme power.** So the church borrowed the frontal, enthroned pose; the raised right hand of an emperor addressing his troops; the ring of light already used for gods and emperors [124]; the emperor's purple; the handing over of a

scroll, modeled on an imperial commission [125]; and the place itself, where the emperor's portrait had hung. Not one of those came from Galilee.

A god's face had been built on purpose once before. Around 300 BC, under Ptolemy I in Egypt, the god **Serapis** was given a long-haired, bearded, majestic face to hold two peoples together, and that face was worshipped across the eastern empire for six hundred years. [126] In the fourth century a bearded, long-haired, majestic face appears in Christian apses, in the same cities. [127] I am not telling you a committee met. I am telling you painters used the conventions they had.

Then the face was locked in, and every step can be looked up.

- **692:** a church council at Constantinople, in canon 82, orders that I be drawn in human form. [128]
- **730 to 843:** emperors ban images, then the Second Council of Nicaea in **787** makes honoring them doctrine. [129]
- **944:** a cloth said to bear my face, "made without hands," is paraded through Constantinople. [130]
- **For centuries after:** painters copy the fixed type from models, later written into manuals like one compiled on Mount Athos in the 1700s. [131]

Now the document that gave you the part in the hair.

In the Middle Ages a letter began to circulate in Latin, claiming to be a report to the **Roman Senate** from an officer in Judaea named **Publius Lentulus.** It is a **forgery.** No such official governed Judaea, and the Latin is medieval. The printing press spread it for four hundred years, often bound into devotional books as though it were evidence. [132]

It says his hair is **the color of a ripe hazelnut, parted in the middle, after the fashion of the Nazarenes.** It says his beard is not long, and **forked.** And it says **he was never seen to laugh, but often to weep.** That is four of your eight items, from one fake letter written over a thousand years after I died.

Never seen to laugh is not only wrong. It is a theft. My critics complained that I ate and drank too much, with the wrong people (Matthew 11:19).

In 1940, a commercial artist named Warner Sallman painted a head-and-shoulders portrait called *Head of Christ*.

He was a Chicago illustrator of Swedish descent. His picture has been reproduced **more than five hundred million times.** In the Second World War the **USO** and the **Salvation Army** handed pocket copies to American servicemen, and it hung in what feels like every Protestant hallway in America for two generations. [133] Look at it: **pale** skin, light brown hair, a soft **beard**, a **clean** robe, a sad upward gaze, and a **glow behind the head.**

So here is the accounting I promised you.

- **Beard:** probably real, though the earliest Christians drew me without one.
- **Parted brown hair, trimmed beard, sorrowful eyes:** the forged Letter of Lentulus.
- **The light behind the head:** the Roman empire's sign for gods and emperors, taken up in the fourth century.
- **Tall and slim:** a painters' convention for holiness, Byzantine and Gothic.
- **Pale and clean:** Europe painting itself, and then Sallman in **1940.**

Not one item on that list comes from anybody who saw me.

Every people has made me look like itself, and in itself that is not corruption. The corruption is when a people uses the resemblance.

In Germany the **German Christians** organized in **1932** inside the ordinary Protestant churches and, with the Nazi state campaigning for them, took control of most of them in **1933.** [134] They drew on a claim published in **1899** by **Houston Stewart Chamberlain**, that I could not have been Jewish because I came from Galilee. [135] In **1939** they founded an institute at **Eisenach** that published a **de-Judaized New Testament.** [136] It was easier to swallow with **a face on the wall that did not look Jewish.**

The German churches also produced the opposition. At **Barmen** in **1934** it declared that the church cannot acknowledge any power beside Jesus Christ as God's revelation. But Barmen said nothing about the Jews, and most clergy went along. [137]

And one sentence in my mouth ends the racial argument. Talking with a Samaritan woman at a well, I said: ***salvation is from the Jews*** (John 4:22). I was a Jew. A Christianity with the Jews taken out of it is a different religion that has kept my name.

In the American South, from the **1830s**, planters funded the teaching of Christianity to the people they enslaved. Its best-known organizer, **Charles Colcock Jones**, published a catechism for it in **1837**, and its spine was *servants, obey your masters* (Ephesians 6:5). Around **1830**, state after state made it a crime to teach an enslaved person to read. A man who cannot read cannot check the book against the sermon. The picture on the wall and the verse from the front were all he got. [138]

So here is something small to do.

Go look at the image of me in your church, or on your wall, or in your head. Does that man look like a laborer from an occupied country who worked outside all day? **Or does he look like the people already in the room, cleaned up, at ease, with good hair?**

If he looks like you, and the poor of your city look like strangers, then somewhere along the line an exchange was made. And you should want to know when.

Now you do. **313, 692, 787, a forged letter in the Middle Ages, and a print shop in Chicago in 1940.**

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** John 4:22, *salvation is from the Jews.*
>
> **Then look up:** Matthew 11:19, what my critics accused me of. Compare it with a man "never seen to laugh."
>
> **Then search for two things by name:** the **Letter of Lentulus** and **Warner Sallman's Head of Christ.**
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/22**.

The Short Version

- Your Bible never describes what I looked like, and the first Christian pictures show a beardless shepherd.
- The bearded, enthroned, haloed face came in the **fourth century**, borrowed from imperial art for the basilica.
- The center part, hazelnut hair and sorrowful face come from the **Letter of Lentulus**, a medieval forgery.
- The pale American version is **Warner Sallman's *Head of Christ*, 1940**.
- A people using my resemblance is the corruption, and *salvation is from the Jews* answers it.

Think About It

1. Whose face is on the wall of your church? Who does it resemble?
2. Why would it matter to a slave owner what color his God was?

UNIT FOUR — WHAT GOT BUILT WITH IT

This unit is twenty centuries long, and we are going to walk it in order. No jumping around. We pick up where the last unit left off, and we do not stop until we reach your grandmother.

One warning before we begin. This is the hardest unit in the book, and not because the words are hard. It is hard because it is a long account of things done in my name.

So I am going to do something here that I will do in every lesson. In each century, I will show you the people who read it right. They are always there. They are usually poor, usually in trouble, and usually punished by the church of their own day. But they are always there, and you should know their names.

Lesson 23: When the Church Became the Landlord

> Before You Read
>
> *How does a movement of poor people end up owning the land?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Tithe** — one tenth of your income or your harvest, given to the church. From an old word meaning *tenth*.
>
> **Capital offense** — a crime punished by death.
>
> **Mortmain** — "the dead hand." The legal situation of land given to the church: an institution never dies, so the land never comes back out.
>
> **Excommunicate** — to formally shut someone out of the church.

Start with an ordinary farmer.

It is the year 800. He lives in what you would call France or Germany. He has a field, some animals, and children.

Every year, one tenth of everything he grows goes to the church.

Not as an offering. Not because he decided to. **Because it is the law, and men come and collect it.**

Here is how that happened.

In the law I was raised on, one tribe out of the twelve — the Levites — was deliberately given **no land at all.** No fields, no inheritance, nothing to farm. They served at the sanctuary, and they lived on the tenth that the other eleven tribes brought in (Numbers 18:20–21).

Read that twice. The tithe exists **because** the priests were landless. It is not a tax on the poor to fund a landowner. It is the arrangement that keeps a landowner

from existing.

And every third year, the tenth did not go to the priests at all. It was set down inside your own town gates and shared out among four kinds of people: the Levite, the foreigner, the orphan and the widow — *that they may eat and be satisfied* (Deuteronomy 14:28–29, and again at 26:12). [139]

So hold the picture. A landless priesthood, and one year in three the whole tenth goes to the people with nobody to feed them.

Now watch what it becomes.

In the year 779, Charlemagne made it a tax.

Charlemagne was king of the Franks. At a place called Herstal in 779 he issued a law that turned the tithe from a religious practice into a legal obligation across his empire, collected by royal officers. [140] [141]

Now ask the question this book keeps asking. What did the king get?

A king does not hand a tenth of a continent to somebody else out of piety. He bought three things. He bought an administration, because the only people in his empire who could read, keep accounts and draft a law were churchmen. He bought legitimacy: on **Christmas Day in the year 800**, in Rome, **Pope Leo III** put a crown on his head and called him emperor. [142] And he bought a way of turning conquered people into taxpayers.

The same king forced baptism at the point of a sword.

For about thirty years Charlemagne made war on a people to his north called the **Saxons**, in what is now northern Germany. They were not Christians, and they would not submit. Here is the chain:

- **772:** The war on the Saxons begins.
- **780s:** His law for the conquered land, the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, makes refusing baptism a **capital offense**. Nobody is sure of the exact year. [143]
- **782:** The royal annals record **4,500 Saxon prisoners beheaded in one day** at Verden, on the king's order. [144]

- **785:** The Saxon war leader **Widukind** gives up and is baptized, with Charlemagne as his godfather.
- **804:** The war ends.

Some historians argue that the Verden number is inflated or that a scribe wrote the wrong word. Nobody argues about the law.

Now here is the link nobody shows you.

That same Saxon law — the one that made refusing baptism a capital offense — also required the Saxons to **pay the tenth.** [145]

Follow the line. Conquest, then baptism, then the tithe. A baptized subject is a taxable subject. The font and the tax roll are the same document.

That is why the two halves of this lesson are one lesson. The sword did not merely spread a religion. It extended a revenue base.

And a man inside his own court said so at the time.

Alcuin was an English scholar whom Charlemagne had brought in to run his school and advise him. He wrote to the king that faith is a thing of the will and cannot be produced by force, and that the tithe being squeezed out of the conquered Saxons was destroying the very faith it was supposed to serve. [146]

He did not stop it. The law stood. But he is the first name in this unit, and he was writing from the inside, which is the hardest place to write from.

Now here is how the church came to hold the land.

The land came in five ways, and every one of them is on the record.

- Dying men left land to monasteries in return for prayers for their souls, forever.
- Kings and nobles gave estates to bishops and monasteries.
- Land could go in but never come out, because a monastery never dies, marries or leaves an heir. The lawyers called this **mortmain**, the dead hand. In **1279** King Edward I of England had to forbid gifts of land to the church without his licence. [147]

- Church land paid less tax than yours. In **1296** Pope **Boniface VIII** forbade clergy anywhere to pay taxes to a king without the pope's permission. [148]
- A monastery could take over a village's tithes and pay a substitute to do the parish work out of the leftovers. The Latin for substitute is *vicarius*, which is where your word **vicar** comes from. [149]

So how much land was it, actually?

The honest answer is a range, not a number. There was never one survey of Europe, and historians counting it region by region usually land somewhere between **a fifth and a third** of the cultivated land. [150] I will not give you a tidy percentage, because there isn't one and this book does not invent them.

Think about six hundred years of that.

Imagine an organization that receives ten percent of everything an entire continent produces, every single year, forever, and then decides for itself how much of it ever comes back out.

Now imagine that for six hundred years.

In many villages, the largest building after the church itself was the **barn** where the church stored the grain it collected. It was a stone barn the size of a small cathedral. Some of them are still standing — you can walk into the one at Great Coxwell in Oxfordshire, which belonged to a Cistercian abbey and is about a hundred and fifty feet long. [151]

That is the picture I want you to hold. A stone barn, full of other people's food, with a cross on it.

Now suppose the farmer said no.

The tithe was collected through the church's own courts, and their weapon was **excommunication**. No sacraments, no church wedding, and no burial in the churchyard when you died. In England, if you stayed excommunicated, the bishop could send your name to the king, and the sheriff would put you in prison until you gave in. [152]

So: the church court declares you out, and the king's sheriff holds the cell door.

Now go back to the beginning of this lesson. One tenth, for a tribe with no land, and every third year the whole of it for widows and orphans and foreigners.

That, eight hundred years on, is a man in a cell.

Now go back and read what I actually said about that.

When a village would not receive my friends, I did not tell them to burn it. I told them to shake the dust off their feet and walk on to the next town (Mark 6:11).

Walk on. That was the whole penalty. You leave.

On the tithe itself, I told the most religious men of my day that they tithed their **mint and their dill and their cumin**, measured out to the leaf, and had left undone **justice, and mercy, and faith** (Matthew 23:23).

I did not say stop tithing. Go and read it; I said do not leave the other undone.

The complaint was never about the tenth. It was about a religion that could measure the herbs and not notice the widow.

And on the barn, I told a story about a rich farmer who pulled down his barns to build bigger ones. God said to him: **you fool, tonight your life is required of you, and then whose will all this be?** (Luke 12:16–21).

Read it again standing in front of a stone barn a hundred and fifty feet long, with a cross on the gable, holding a tenth of everything a village grew.

Now let me give the other side its best case, because it has one.

The monks copied the manuscripts. The church ran the only hospitals and the only schools. The Cistercians drained marshes and made farmland that had not existed before. And the tithe was the only public welfare system Europe had. Every sentence of that is defensible, and I am not going to pretend otherwise.

Here is my answer. None of it requires that the tenth be **compulsory**, collected by the king's officers, with a jail at the end of it. None of it requires that the land, once given, may never go back.

And none of it explains the third year. The law that started all this set aside one year in three for the widow, the orphan and the foreigner. Nobody ever abolished that. It was simply absorbed. The tenth kept being collected and the destination quietly changed, from the four kinds of people who had nothing to an institution that had everything.

That is the whole lesson. Not theft. **Absorption.**

An institution with a guaranteed income from the poor is a different animal from a movement of the poor. It has something to protect. And from this point forward, whenever you find the church on one side of a fight, ask a simple question first:

Which side owns the barn?

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Numbers 18:20–21, then Deuteronomy 14:28–29.
>
> **You will find:** that the tithe existed because the priests were given **no land**, and that every third year the whole of it went to the foreigner, the orphan and the widow inside your own town.
>
> **Then look up:** Matthew 23:23, Luke 12:16–21 and Mark 6:11. Compare the last one to a law making refusal of baptism a death sentence.
>
> **For the history:** the **Capitulary of Herstal (779)**, the ***Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae***, and the **Statute of Mortmain, 1279**, all printed in English in collections of medieval sources and findable online.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/23**.

The Short Version

- In my people's law, the tithe fed a landless priesthood and, every third year, the poor.
- In **779 Charlemagne** made it a legal tax, and got a civil service and a crown in return.
- He made refusing baptism a **capital offense** for the Saxons and made them pay the tenth.
- Gifts, grants, **mortmain** and tax exemption left the church holding a fifth to a third of the land.
- I told my friends that when a town said no, they should walk away.

Think About It

1. What changes about a church when it can no longer go broke?
2. Nobody ever ended the third-year tithe for widows and orphans. It was just absorbed. What is being absorbed in your church's budget right now?

Lesson 24: Everything at Once

> Before You Read
>
> *How can the same century build the most beautiful buildings in the world and burn a whole town?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Crusade** — one of a series of wars, called for by popes, fought mainly to take and hold Jerusalem.
>
> **Penance** — the work a priest assigned you after you confessed a sin: fasting, giving money, a long journey on foot. Not the forgiveness. The work that came after it.
>
> **Heretic** — a person whose beliefs the church has officially condemned.
>
> **Inquisition** — a permanent church court set up to find and try heretics, from a Latin word meaning *inquiry*.

Hold on to the years 1095 to 1215.

This is the most important stretch of years in this unit, and almost everything people picture when they picture "the church" comes from it.

- **1095:** Pope **Urban II** preaches a war and promises it will count in place of all penance.
- **1096:** Crusader bands kill the Jews of the Rhineland before they ever leave Europe.
- **1099:** The crusaders take Jerusalem and kill the people in it.
- **1204:** A crusade in debt to **Venice** sacks Constantinople, a Christian city.
- **1209:** Pope **Innocent III** sends a crusade against Christians in southern France.
- **1215:** Innocent's great council orders every Christian to confess once a year.

In 1095, a pope offered a war in place of penance.

In November 1095, at a church council at **Clermont** in central France, **Urban II** stood in a field and preached a war. Armed men should march east and take Jerusalem, and the journey would count **in place of all penance.** Five men later wrote down his speech, all after the war was won, and no two versions agree.

That sentence is the whole engine. For serious sins, penance could take years, and people died with it outstanding. Urban's offer was: **go to war, and it counts as the punishment for your sins.**

Hold that thought. In Lesson 25 you will watch the same offer get a price on it.

His reasons are in the letters. The emperor at Constantinople had asked for soldiers. Europe was full of knights with nothing to do but fight each other. And Rome, in a fight over who was in charge, got to show who commanded Christendom.

Most of the men who went were ruined by it.

Equipping a knight cost several times what his lands brought in during a year, [153] so most sold or mortgaged their land, largely to the churches and monasteries that had the cash. [154] [155]

Who was better off at the end? The institutions that bought the land, the Italian port cities, and the papacy.

Before they left Europe, they killed the Jews of the Rhineland.

In the spring of 1096, crusader bands moving down the Rhine, the worst of them led by a count named **Emicho**, turned on the Jewish communities of **Speyer, Worms, Mainz and Cologne**. Where their reasoning was recorded, part of it was that these were the people they owed money to. The Hebrew chronicles count something like eleven hundred dead at Mainz alone. [156] It was the first mass killing of Jews in western Europe by Christians, and it happened before the crusade reached a single Muslim.

In 1099 they took Jerusalem.

On 15 July 1099 the army broke in and killed the people of the city, Muslim and Jewish, over about two days. I will not give you a number, because the sources do not have one. The crusaders boasted of more dead than the city could have held. What survives instead are letters from a Cairo synagogue in which Jews in Egypt raise money to ransom the survivors. [157]

In 1204 a crusade sacked a Christian city to pay a debt.

The Fourth Crusade contracted with **Venice** for a fleet and then failed to bring the men who would pay for it. The Doge, **Enrico Dandolo**, offered terms: work off the debt. They sailed to Constantinople on a promise of payment from a claimant to its throne. In April 1204 they sacked it and looted its churches for three days. Venice took **three eighths** of the empire, and the four bronze horses of Saint Mark's in Venice were stolen from the racetrack there. [158]

Innocent III condemned the sack in fury. Then he accepted the new Latin empire it produced and blessed it. Watch for that pattern in every century of this unit. **Condemn the act, keep the proceeds.**

At the same time, they were building the cathedrals.

I will not sneer at them. They are the most beautiful things human beings have ever built out of stone. But the money is in the accounts, from the tithe to pilgrims' offerings to indulgences sold for the building fund. [159] The same institution, in the same decades, was raising those roofs and financing those armies.

Beauty is not proof. It never was. It only proves there was money.

When my friends pointed at the Temple and said *look at these great stones*, I said: **not one stone will be left on another** (Mark 13:1–2).

In 1209 the pope sent an army against Christians.

In southern France, around Toulouse and Albi, many people followed preachers the church condemned. Historians usually call them **Cathars**. Some historians now argue that there was never an organized Cathar church at all, and that argument is still going on. [160] What is not argued is why people listened: **the preachers were poor and the local clergy were rich.**

In January 1208 the pope's own representative, **Pierre de Castelnau**, was murdered by a man in the service of the count of Toulouse. **Innocent III** called a crusade and offered the remission of penance **and the lands of the condemned.** Every land-poor northern nobleman now had a blessed path to a southern estate.

In July 1209 the army took the town of **Béziers** and killed its people. The commander was **Arnaud Amaury**, abbot of Cîteaux and the pope's representative in the field. The famous line, **kill them all, God will know his own**, comes from one monk writing years later in Germany, and it may not be real. [161] But Arnaud's own letter to the pope is not in dispute. He reported nearly twenty thousand killed, sparing neither rank nor age nor sex. The town cannot have held that many, but **he reported it to Rome as an achievement.** [162]

The war ended in 1229 with the county of Toulouse in the hands of the king of France.

I was asked for exactly this, and I refused.

When a Samaritan village would not receive us, two of my friends asked if they should call down fire from heaven on it. **I turned around and rebuked them** (Luke 9:54–55). And when I was asked about the weeds among the wheat, I said **leave it**, or you will pull up the wheat with them (Matthew 13:24–30).

In 1215 a council made everybody confess.

In November 1215, Innocent III's **Fourth Lateran Council** met in Rome. Its **canon 21** required every Christian to **confess every sin to their own parish priest at least once a year**. [163] The penalty was to be shut out of the church while you lived and **refused Christian burial** when you died. That meant no grave in the churchyard, and a family who believed you were lost.

You may have heard that this turned priests into spies. It did not. The same canon bound the priest to absolute secrecy.

But read it beside what else that council did in the same month. Canon 3 ordered rulers to clear heretics out of their lands. Canon 68 made Jews and

Muslims wear distinctive dress. And the council confirmed **Simon de Montfort**, the commander of the southern war, in the lands he had conquered. [164] Confession **to your own parish priest** made the parish the unit everybody belonged to. It also made anyone who did not come **visible by absence**, once a year, everywhere.

I said the opposite: when you pray, **go into your room and shut the door** (Matthew 6:6).

Then they built a permanent court.

Around 1231 the pope began appointing standing **inquisitors**, mostly Dominican friars. The court needed no accuser. It did not tell the accused who had denounced him. From 1252, under Innocent IV, it could use torture. It did not burn anyone itself; it handed the condemned to the civil authorities, who did. And it confiscated their property, so the process was funded partly **by convicting people.** [165]

To be accurate about scale, most people it tried were not burned. The commonest sentences were penances, yellow crosses, imprisonment and confiscation. **It mostly took their property and their standing and their name, and everybody could see it happen.**

Here are the people who read it right, and the first was condemned for it.

Around 1173 **Valdes**, a rich merchant of Lyon, gave everything away, paid to have the gospels translated into ordinary speech, and preached in the street. In 1179 Rome approved his poverty but allowed his preaching only where the local clergy licensed it. He preached anyway. In 1184 a papal decree, *Ad abolendam*, condemned his followers **by name**. [166] His faith was orthodox. His crime was **preaching without a license**. That mattered because a preacher who owns nothing is a rival collection, and a layman reading the gospel aloud breaks the chain of permission. The same decree ordered bishops to search out heresy in their own dioceses, which is the design of the Inquisition forty years early. [167]

About thirty years later, a rich cloth merchant's son in Assisi gave away everything he owned and lived by begging. His name was **Francis**, and he is the closest thing to my own life that those centuries produced. In 1209 he asked

Innocent III's permission, as Valdes had, got a spoken and provisional yes, and swore obedience to the pope. [168] **He accepted the church's authority, and Valdes did not.** One became a saint, and the other a heretic.

To be fair, the church had learned by then that throwing poverty movements out only made enemies. But **poverty was never the problem. Permission was.** Two years after Francis died, Pope Gregory IX laid the first stone of a basilica over his grave and sent letters across Europe asking for money to build it. [169]

Valdes's followers, the **Waldensians**, were hunted in the Alpine valleys for centuries, with massacres as late as 1655. [170] Their church still exists. In 2015 a pope asked them to forgive what had been done to them.

And then there were the women who needed no permission at all.

In the Low Countries, tens of thousands of women called **Beguines** lived together in ordinary houses, without vows and without a male superior, supporting themselves by their own work. In Paris on 1 June 1310, a Beguine named **Marguerite Porete** was burned alive for her book, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, which went on circulating without her name for centuries. [171] The Council of Vienne condemned the Beguines in 1311 and 1312, [172] and they went on existing anyway for another six hundred years.

Remember them. They are what the movement looks like when nobody is in charge of it.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Luke 9:54–55, then Matthew 13:24–30. Hold both beside a crusade preached against a French province.

Then look up: Mark 1:22 — that what people noticed about me was that I taught *as one having authority, and not as the scribes*, which is to say without anybody's license.

For the history, these are in print in English and findable online:

- **The five accounts of Urban II's speech at Clermont, 1095.** Read two side by side and see how much they disagree.
- **The canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215:** canon 21, canon 3 and canon 68.
- **Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogue on Miracles*** — the only source for "kill them all."
- **The register of Jacques Fournier, 1318–25** — an inquisition's transcripts, the basis of the book *Montaillou*.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/24**.

The Short Version

- In 1095 **Urban II** offered a war **in place of all penance**, and most who went were ruined by it.
- Crusaders killed the Jews of the **Rhineland**, and in 1204 sacked Constantinople for **Venice**.
- **Innocent III** offered northern nobles the **lands** of southern heretics; his own man boasted of **Béziers**.
- The **Fourth Lateran Council** of 1215 made confession compulsory, and a standing **Inquisition** followed.
- **Valdes** and **Francis** both chose poverty. **The difference was permission.**

Think About It

1. Valdes and Francis said nearly the same thing. One is a saint and one was a heretic. What exactly was being protected?
2. A court that opens its own cases, keeps its witnesses secret, and keeps the property of the people it convicts. Which part of that is the most dangerous, and why?

Lesson 25: Selling the Afterlife

Before You Read

Can you buy your way out of punishment after you die?

Words to Know

Purgatory — in Catholic teaching, a place of cleansing after death before heaven.

Indulgence — an official grant cancelling the punishment still owed for sins already forgiven. Often obtained by a payment.

Treasury of merit — the idea that the church holds a store of surplus goodness, built up by me and the saints, which the pope can draw on.

Schism — a formal split, with two sides each saying the other is not the real church.

First, consider a very human idea.

By the twelfth century most Christians in the west believed in a waiting place after death called **purgatory.** Not hell. A place where you were cleaned up before you were let in.

I want to be gentle here, because the idea came from love. People could not bear to think their ordinary mother, who was not a saint and was not a monster, had nowhere to go. Purgatory gave her somewhere.

But your skeptic is already asking where it comes from, so let me answer fairly.

It is not stated in the New Testament. Nobody serious claims it is. The case for it rested on **2 Maccabees 12:44–45**, where money is sent for a sin offering on behalf of soldiers already dead, and that book **is not in your Bible** if you are a Protestant. It rested on one clause of Paul, *saved, but only as through fire* (1 Corinthians 3:15). And it rested on an honest instinct: most people are not saints

and not monsters, and a system with only two destinations has nowhere to put almost everybody.

The noun *purgatory*, a place rather than a process, comes into use only in the later twelfth century. It was formally defined at **Lyon in 1274** and again at **Florence in 1439.** [173]

The doctrine is not what this lesson is about. Watch what gets built on top of it.

A waiting place can have its waiting **shortened.**

And once it can be shortened, somebody has to decide by how much — and that somebody is standing in a building you can walk into, with a list of what it costs.

Here is how the machine was built.

- **1300:** Pope **Boniface VIII** declares a **jubilee**, a year of full pardon for pilgrims to Rome. A chronicler who was there saw two clergymen at an altar gathering in the money **with rakes.** [174]
- **1343:** Pope **Clement VI** gives official shape to the **treasury of merit**, and in the same document cuts the wait between jubilees from a hundred years to fifty. [175] [176]
- **1454–55:** Among the earliest things printed on the new printing press are **indulgences**.
- **1476:** Pope **Sixtus IV**, who built the Sistine Chapel, declares that these grants can be applied to **souls already in purgatory**. [177]

A treasury. Their word, not mine.

Now stop and see what has just been created.

Your mother is dead. You believe she is suffering. And there is now a payment you can make that shortens it.

That is not a religious doctrine. That is the most effective fundraising instrument ever devised, because there is no ceiling on what a person will pay to stop their mother from burning.

And since the lesson is called "Selling the Afterlife," here is the sale.

A campaign needed a papal grant. It needed the local ruler's permission, and he took a share. It had a preacher who came into town with bells and a procession and preached in the marketplace about the dead. It had a **published price, scaled by rank**, from a prince down to one coin from a labourer. It had a locked chest in the church. And you walked away with a **printed letter** with your name written into a blank, dated and sealed. It was a receipt. The money was split by written agreement before the first sermon: a share to Rome, a share to the local authority, and sometimes a share straight to a bank. [178]

In Lesson 27 you will see one of these campaigns in full, with all the names attached.

Now here is what I did about this, once, in public.

I went into the Temple, the holiest building my people had, to the tables where men were changing money and selling animals. And I want to be fair: **those men were providing a legitimate service.** Pilgrims needed the right coin for the Temple tax and could not bring a lamb two hundred miles.

I turned the tables over anyway (Mark 11:15–17). I did not say they were charging too much. I said this house was meant to be a house of prayer **for all the nations**, and they had made it a den of robbers.

The objection was not the exchange rate. The objection was that access to God had acquired a counter, a queue, and a fee — and that the people furthest from the center were the ones who paid it.

That is the whole of my position on indulgences, and it is eight hundred years older than they are.

Meanwhile, look at who was running it.

In 1302 Boniface VIII wrote in *Unam Sanctam* that every human being must be subject to the pope to be saved. The next year the men of **Philip IV of France** broke into his residence at **Anagni** and seized him, and he died about a month later. Two years after that a Frenchman was elected pope, and from **1309 to 1377** the popes lived in France, at **Avignon**. There they built the largest Gothic

building in Europe and the most efficient revenue-collecting organization on the continent, charging for appointments, confirmations, dispensations and documents. The poet Petrarch, who lived there, called it the Babylon of the west. [179]

Then, from **1378 to 1417**, there were **two popes at once**, each excommunicating the other, and after 1409 briefly **three.** [180] Each kingdom picked the pope its foreign policy required. France took the Avignon pope. England took the Roman one.

Not one of those decisions was made on a theological question. They were made on maps.

Now ask why the church needed indulgence money so badly in exactly these years. A court built on the scale of a kingdom had to be run two and three times over, by rival claimants with no other way to raise money than to sell what only a pope could sell. **The doctrine and the deficit are the same story.**

I said: call no man on earth your father, because you have one Father (Matthew 23:8–10). I did not build a chain of command that could split into three.

Here are the men who said so.

John Wycliffe, an Oxford scholar, argued that the church should hold no property at all and that ordinary people should read the Bible in their own language. He was not burned, because **John of Gaunt**, the richest man in England, protected him. A great lord enjoyed a scholar proving that the church should own nothing. Wycliffe was silenced and **died in his bed** in 1384.

His followers, the **Lollards**, had no duke. From 1401 English law provided for burning them alive, and it was used. And in 1428, on the pope's order, they **dug up Wycliffe's bones and burned them** and threw the ashes in a river. [181] [182] That denied him consecrated ground and denied his followers a shrine. It was not fury. It was administration.

Jan Hus preached in Czech in Prague and said much the same things. He was invited to a church council at **Constance** to explain himself, under a written promise of safe travel from **the emperor Sigismund himself.** They arrested him

on arrival and burned him on **6 July 1415.** [183] The council ruled that a promise made to a heretic did not bind. Sigismund let it happen, because he needed those churchmen to end the three-pope schism.

I said: **let your yes be yes and your no be no** (Matthew 5:37).

And that council did end the schism. In the same sessions, it condemned a dead Englishman and burned a live Czech, both of whom had complained about the corruption it met to fix. **The reform council reformed by killing the reformers.**

And then Bohemia did something nobody else in this unit manages. Hus's countrymen rose, and between 1420 and 1431 the pope and the emperor sent **five crusades** against them. Under a blind commander named **Jan Žižka**, they won all five, and in 1436 a church council gave them the thing they had gone to war for. [184] They won because they were concentrated, their nobility joined them, and they were better at war. Those are not spiritual reasons. But the record is the record.

And then came the thing nobody planned.

Around 1450, in the German town of **Mainz**, **Johannes Gutenberg** worked out how to print with movable metal type. A scribe spent most of a year on one Bible. Gutenberg's shop produced something like **a hundred and eighty at once**, and by 1500 there were presses in more than two hundred European towns. [185] [186]

But the Bible was not the first thing off that press. In **1454 and 1455**, before his Bible was finished, Gutenberg printed **indulgences**, with a blank left for the buyer's name.

The machine that would eventually put the text into everybody's hands was paying its way, at the start, by mass-producing the receipts.

And Gutenberg did not keep it. In 1455 the man who had lent him the money, Johann Fust, sued him and took the workshop and the type.

Even the press had a lender standing behind it.

Hold all of that. It comes back when the church splits.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Mark 11:15–17 — the one time I am recorded using physical force.

Then look up: Matthew 10:8 — *freely you have received, freely give.* Then consider a priced grant of forgiveness with a published rate for each rank of society.

For the history:

- **2 Maccabees 12:44–45.** If you have a Protestant Bible, find a Catholic one or look it up online.
- ***Unigenitus Dei Filius*, Clement VI, 1343** — the treasury of merit and the shorter jubilee, in one document.
- ***Unam Sanctam*, Boniface VIII, 1302.** One page. Read the last sentence.
- **The decrees of the Council of Constance, 1414–18.** Note what it achieved and what it burned.
- **A Gutenberg indulgence, 1454–55.** Several libraries have digitized one.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/25**.

The Short Version

- Purgatory rests on **2 Maccabees**, one clause of Paul, and an honest instinct.
- **Clement VI** defined the **treasury of merit** in 1343; **Sixtus IV** extended pardons to the **dead** in 1476.
- The sale had a papal grant, a ruler's cut, a **price list by rank** and a **printed receipt**.
- From Avignon to three rival popes, the church needed money, and the selling sped up.
- **Wycliffe** died in bed and **Hus** was burned; only **Bohemia** fought back and won.

Think About It

1. Why is a payment for a dead relative harder to refuse than a payment for yourself?
2. Wycliffe had a duke and died in bed. Hus had a promise and was burned. What does the difference actually measure?

Lesson 26: The World Is Taken

Before You Read

Who gave Europe permission to own other continents?

Words to Know

Papal bull — an official document issued by a pope. *Bull* comes from the lead seal on it.

Perpetual servitude — slavery with no end, passed on to your children.

Encomienda — a Spanish grant handing a colonist a number of named indigenous people, whose labour and tribute he could take, in exchange for instructing them in the faith.

Monopoly — a legal right to be the only one allowed to do something.

Start with a hard fact.

Between the 1500s and the 1800s, roughly **12.5 million** Africans were put on ships and carried across the Atlantic as property. About **10.7 million** survived the crossing. [187]

That is not a guess. Those numbers come from the ships' own records, because the trade kept books.

This lesson is about the paperwork that came first.

But before the paperwork: why were the ships there at all?

The Portuguese were sailing down the African coast for three things: West African **gold**, a **sea route to the spices** of the Indies, and **sugar**, which Europe could not grow. On the islands of Madeira and São Tomé they built the model that everything later copied: a cash crop, a mill, and enslaved Africans replaced

by purchase as they died. **It was running by 1500**, before a single European had seen the Caribbean. [188]

And the trade in people was already running.

Portuguese ships had been taking captives from the African coast since about 1441. A public slave auction was held at **Lagos, in Portugal, on 8 August 1444.**

The royal chronicler **Gomes Eanes de Zurara** described it, in a book written to praise the prince who sponsored the voyages. Two hundred and thirty-five people were penned in a field and divided into five lots, and **children were separated from their parents** because the lots had to come out even. Prince Henry, watching from horseback, took his fifth with great pleasure, the chronicler says, at the thought of the souls that would now be saved. I am quoting the man who was **in favour.** [189]

Then the paperwork came.

- **1452:** Pope **Nicholas V** authorizes the king of Portugal to reduce unbelievers to **perpetual servitude.**
- **1455:** A second bull gives Portugal a **monopoly** on the African coast and its trade.
- **1493:** Pope **Alexander VI** grants the newly found lands in the west to Spain.
- **1494:** Spain and Portugal divide the world between themselves at **Tordesillas.**
- **1513:** Spain drafts the ***Requerimiento***, a speech to be read before an attack.
- **1542:** The **New Laws** ban enslaving Indians, and the colonists revolt.

The 1452 bull, ***Dum Diversas***, was addressed to **King Afonso V of Portugal**. It authorized him to attack and subdue Saracens, pagans and other unbelievers, to seize their goods and lands, and to reduce their persons to **perpetual servitude.** The 1455 bull, ***Romanus Pontifex***, confirmed and extended it. [190]

Perpetual means forever. Servitude means slavery. It is there in the Latin, and the Latin was written in Rome.

Portugal petitioned for it, and Rome got something back. Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, and Nicholas V wanted a crusade. Portugal was one of

the few crowns actually fighting Muslim powers.

But why would a king want permission for something he was already doing?

Because the bull was not chiefly a permission to enslave. It was a **monopoly.** *Romanus Pontifex* forbade any other Christian to sail, trade or take anything there **without Portuguese licence**, on pain of excommunication. Portugal was not worried about the consent of Africans. Portugal was worried about **Castile**, next door with ships of its own. Every crown in Latin Europe accepted Rome as the registry for questions of right between Christian princes, so the bull worked the way a deed works. It gave the king what force could not: **the agreement of his competitors.** [191]

In 1493 the world was divided in half.

Pope **Alexander VI**, who granted the new lands to Spain in ***Inter Caetera***, was born **Rodrigo Borgia**, and **he was Spanish.** He had been elected in an election so openly bought that it was a scandal at the time. The next year Spain and Portugal moved his line further west between themselves, by the **Treaty of Tordesillas**, which is why **Brazil speaks Portuguese.** [192] [193]

Two European kingdoms, with the blessing of Rome, divided **the entire rest of the planet** between them, including everything and everybody they had not yet seen.

Nobody living on any of that land was consulted. Nobody was even told.

Here is the argument this book is making.

The claim is not that a pope invented greed. The claim is that these documents converted greed into **title**: a right that other Europeans would respect, that courts would enforce, and that could be inherited and sold for centuries.

The proof is that it is still in the law. In **1823**, in *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, the Supreme Court of the United States held that discovery by a European power gave it title, and left the people already living there only a right of occupancy. That case has been cited in American courts in this century. On **30 March 2023** the Vatican formally repudiated the "doctrine of discovery." Five hundred and seventy-one years. I note the repudiation, and I note the interval. [194]

In 1513 they wrote a speech to read out loud.

Spanish forces arriving at a village were required to read out the ***Requerimiento*** first. It told the people that the pope had granted their land to the king and queen of Spain. If they submitted, they would be received in love. If they refused, the Spanish would enslave them and their wives and children, and the deaths that followed would be **their own fault, and not the fault of the Spanish.** [195]

It was read aloud in Spanish, to people who did not speak Spanish. Sometimes it was read to an empty village at night, before an attack at dawn. Then a notary signed it as proof it had been done properly.

It came out of a sermon. On **21 December 1511**, on the island of Hispaniola, a Dominican friar named **Antonio de Montesinos** told the colonists they were in mortal sin for their cruelty, and asked them: **are these not men?** [196] The colonists complained to the king. The crown convened its lawyers at Burgos in 1512, and out of that came laws regulating the labour, and the *Requerimiento*, written by one of the lawyers involved.

A man says in public that this is a sin. The institution investigates. And what comes back is not an end to the practice. It is a document that makes the practice lawful. [197]

Bartolomé de las Casas, a priest who was there, said that when he read it he did not know whether to **laugh or to weep.** [198]

And here is what the paperwork authorized.

Under the **encomienda**, a colonist was granted named people, not land, and could take their labour. From 1573, highland districts in the Andes had to send about one man in seven to the silver mountain at **Potosí**, year after year, and men were sent by the same quota to the mercury mine at **Huancavelica**, known as the mine of death.

On Hispaniola, historians' estimates of the population in 1492 differ enormously. But in **1514** a Spanish census found about **twenty-six thousand** people, and within another generation the Taino had effectively ceased to exist

as a people. Most of that was disease, and I will not pretend otherwise. Disease does not explain the mines, the forced relocations and the separated families, all of which the crown's own investigators reported at the time. [199]

Now let me give you Las Casas whole.

He arrived as a colonist who owned land and people. He heard Montesinos preach in 1511 and did nothing for three years. Then he gave up his encomienda, became a friar, and spent roughly fifty years fighting it. In **1542** he won the **New Laws**, which banned enslaving Indians. The colonists rose, and within three years the clause ending the inheritance of encomiendas was **repealed.** In **1550 and 1551** he debated at **Valladolid** against **Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda**, who argued that the indigenous peoples were natural slaves. **No verdict was ever issued.** [200] [201]

That is what fifty years bought: a law that was gutted in three years, and a debate with no result.

I put it that way on purpose. If you only ever hear about the people who won, you will conclude that the people who lost must not have tried.

And you must not skip this. Earlier in his life, Las Casas had proposed importing **African** slaves instead. He lived to understand what he had done, wrote that it was the same crime, and was not sure his good intentions would excuse him. [202] He did not let himself off. Neither should anybody who tells you his story.

Now here is the other side's strongest card.

In 1537 Pope Paul III issued ***Sublimis Deus***, declaring that the indigenous peoples were true men and were not to be enslaved. That is true, and I will not hide it. But it did not withdraw the African bulls. Its enforcement was annulled within a year, after the emperor Charles V objected. And it proves the charge: both sides of the argument went to **the same office**, under the same seal. [203]

You will be told that this was all just how the world was back then, and that everybody did it.

Everybody did not do it. It required authorization. And the authorization was requested, written, sealed and delivered by the institution that carries my name.

Somebody had to ask. Somebody had to say yes.

And on the whole business of dividing up the world, I said two things.

I said: **what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?** (Mark 8:36). The whole world. That is the exact transaction Tordesillas wrote down.

And I said that the rulers of the nations **lord it over them**, and **it shall not be so among you** (Matthew 20:25–26).

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Mark 8:36, then Matthew 20:25–26.
>
> **You will find:** a question about gaining the whole world, and a flat instruction that authority over other people is the thing my movement was not to be organized around.
>
> **For the history,** all published in English and findable online:
>
> - ***Dum Diversas* (1452)** and ***Romanus Pontifex* (1455)**, Nicholas V to the Portuguese crown.
> - ***Inter Caetera* (1493)** and the **Treaty of Tordesillas (1494).** Find the line on a map.
> - **The *Requerimiento*, about 1513.** Two pages. Read the paragraph that assigns the blame.
> - ***Sublimis Deus* (1537)**, the bull that says the opposite. Ask why the others were never cancelled.
> - **Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1552.**
> - **Johnson v. M'Intosh (1823)** and **the Vatican statement of 30 March 2023.**
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/26**.

The Short Version

- Sugar plantations worked by enslaved Africans were running on Madeira and São Tomé by 1500.
- In 1452 and 1455 **Nicholas V** authorized **perpetual servitude** and gave Portugal a **monopoly**.
- In 1493 **Alexander VI**, a Spaniard, gave the new world to Spain; **Tordesillas** split it.
- Protest produced paperwork: Montesinos preached, and the crown wrote the ***Requerimiento***.
- **Las Casas** fought for fifty years and named his own worst idea.

Think About It

1. Now that you know the bull was a **monopoly against other Christian kings**, why would an empire bother getting written permission?
2. Montesinos protested, and what came back was the *Requerimiento*. When has a complaint in your own church produced a new policy document instead of a change?

Lesson 27: The Church Splits, and the Poor Lose Again

Before You Read

The Reformation is the great hero story of Protestant history. What happened to the poor people in it?

Words to Know

Elector — one of seven princes who chose the Holy Roman Emperor. Three of them were archbishops.

Peasant — a farmer working land he does not own.

Dissolution — the closing down of the monasteries and the seizure of everything they owned.

Almshouse — a house where the old and poor of a parish were given a room and kept.

It started when a man bought a job.

In 1514 a young German nobleman named **Albrecht of Brandenburg**, about twenty-four and already holding two church posts, wanted a third. It was **Mainz**, and the Archbishop of Mainz was one of the **seven electors** who chose the Holy Roman Emperor. He was buying a vote. He got it by paying a very large fee, somewhere around twenty-odd thousand ducats; the sources differ on the exact figure. [204] He **borrowed it from a bank**, the house of **Fugger** in Augsburg, run by **Jakob Fugger**, the richest man in Europe.

To repay the loan, Pope **Leo X** allowed him in 1515 to run an indulgence campaign in his lands. The terms were written down in advance. **Half the proceeds to Rome, for the building of the new basilica of Saint Peter. Half to Albrecht, to repay the Fuggers.** [205]

Here is the machine from Lesson 25, running.

The preacher was **Johann Tetzel**, a Dominican. The line that has survived four centuries is his jingle: *As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.* The printed price list set the rate by rank, from kings at the top to one coin from a tradesman. And the Fuggers sent **their own agent to travel with the preacher**, holding a key to the chest and taking the bank's share out at the source. [206] [207] Rome's half paid for Saint Peter's, where Pope Julius II had pulled down a basilica that had stood for **twelve hundred years** in order to build something greater.

So the transaction, stated in full: **a farmer's coin, taken in a German village, split down the middle between a bank in Augsburg repaying a young nobleman's purchase of an electoral vote, and a construction site in Rome.**

Everybody in that sentence knew the terms except the farmer.

In 1517 a monk objected.

A university monk named **Martin Luther** wrote out ninety-five objections, most of them about exactly that racket, and sent them on **31 October 1517** to Albrecht himself. Whether he also nailed a copy to a church door is not certain. The letters are certain. The nail is not.

It is honest to add one thing. Luther's own prince, **Frederick the Wise** of Saxony, displayed a relic collection whose indulgence came to **over a million years** off purgatory, and the offerings helped fund Luther's university. Frederick had **banned Tetzel from Saxony**, because Tetzel was competition. [208]

But **Luther was right, and I want to say so clearly.** Forgiveness is not for sale. He translated the Bible into German so ordinary people could read it. And he asked why the pope, richer than the richest men in history, did not build Saint Peter's with his own money instead of the money of poor believers. The printing press meant that this time the argument could not be contained.

Here is why it worked when Hus had failed.

In 1521, at **Worms**, Luther refused to take it back before the emperor Charles V and was declared an outlaw. Frederick the Wise had him seized on the road by

masked horsemen and hidden in a castle. Then the princes worked out what was in it for them. If your territory left Rome, the money stopped leaving, the church lands inside your borders became yours, and you appointed the clergy. By the **Peace of Augsburg in 1555**, the law was that **whoever rules the territory decides its religion.** [209]

It succeeded because this time the men with armies stood to gain.

And then the farmers did the arithmetic.

If the Bible is the authority, and not the bishop, then the peasants would open the Bible and look at their own situation. In March 1525 they wrote **the Twelve Articles**, and something like twenty-five thousand copies were in print inside two months. [210] They asked to choose their own pastor, to have the tithe used for the pastor and the village poor, to use the woods and water, and **not to be serfs**. They built that on Paul: **you were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men** (1 Corinthians 7:23). They attached scripture to every demand and offered to withdraw any that was shown to be contrary to it. [211]

Here is what Luther wrote back.

At first he blamed the lords too. Then the country went up, and in May 1525 he published **Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants.** He wrote that anyone who can should **smite, slay and stab**, as one would kill a mad dog, and that it was a time not for mercy but for the sword. [212] [213]

On **15 May 1525**, at **Frankenhausen**, something like **six thousand** peasants were killed in a matter of hours. The princes' dead were counted in single figures. Their preacher, **Thomas Müntzer**, was **beheaded on 27 May**. He was not a gentle man. He got many people killed by promising them God would protect them. But he is the one preacher in Germany who stood where the peasants stood. Across the whole rising, **as many as one hundred thousand** died. [214]

Luther was frightened, and he had powerful princes protecting him. Those are reasons. They are not a defense. A man told ordinary people to read the Bible for themselves, and when they read it and reached a conclusion about their own poverty, he sided with the men who owned the land.

The poor lost in a slower way too.

The Reformation transferred the charity system of Europe to the men who were already rich, and did not replace it. England is the clearest case.

- **1534–35:** The English king breaks with Rome and surveys the income of every religious house.
- **1536–40:** Around eight hundred monasteries are dissolved, and the land is sold to nobles, gentry and merchants.
- **1545 and 1547:** The chantries, which often ran the village school and guild charity, go too.
- **1547:** A new law orders a vagrant **branded with a V and made a slave for two years.**
- **1572:** Vagrants over fourteen are to be **whipped and bored through the ear.**
- **1598 and 1601:** The Poor Laws create a compulsory **poor rate**, a tax to rebuild what had been sold. [215]

The monasteries had run the **almshouses**, given food at the gate on fixed days, and taken in travellers, from permanent endowments that no landlord could withdraw in a bad year. All of it stopped in about four years.

Now the strongest objection, and it is a real one. Historians who have gone through the 1535 survey find that alms were only a few percent of monastic income. That is true, and some houses were scandals. But a few percent was still, in most English villages, **the only organized relief that existed.** And if monasteries spent too little on the poor, the endowment could have been directed to the poor. Some reformers argued for exactly that. Instead it was **sold to the gentry**, and many of those families still had the land three hundred years later.

That is what "the poor lose again" means. Not one massacre. A transfer. [216]

Now put my own words against that pamphlet.

I said: **blessed are you who are poor.** And in the same passage, the half that nobody reads aloud: **woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation** (Luke 6:20–25). I said that whatever you did to the least of these,

you did to me (Matthew 25:40). And I said: **you cannot serve God and money** (Matthew 6:24).

And then came two centuries of war.

Once there were two official versions of the faith, the killing became political. On **Saint Bartholomew's Day in 1572**, after the French king's council decided to kill the Protestant leaders, crowds in Paris killed Protestants for three days, and it spread. The numbers are disputed; most counts put the total between five and ten thousand. In Rome, the pope had a **commemorative medal** struck. [217] [218] From **1618 to 1648** the Thirty Years' War cost the German lands an estimated fifteen to thirty percent of their people, mostly through hunger and disease. And in 1631 a cardinal, **Richelieu**, had Catholic France pay Protestant Sweden to fight the Catholic Habsburgs. [219] Religion was the flag. The war was about power.

Protestants burned people too.

In Zurich in 1527 the city council **drowned Felix Manz** for baptizing adults. In Geneva in 1553 **Michael Servetus** was burned alive, with the agreement of John Calvin. A scholar named **Sebastian Castellio** answered: **to kill a man is not to defend a doctrine. It is to kill a man.** He was attacked by every major Protestant authority of his day and died poor. [220]

Here are the people who read it right.

In April 1649, in the hunger year after the king was executed, a group of poor men walked onto common land at Saint George's Hill in Surrey and began digging and planting. They took no weapons. Their leader, **Gerrard Winstanley**, said the earth was made to be **a common treasury for all.** They were called the **Diggers.** Local landholders trampled their crops and burned their houses. And at Cobham in April 1650, the man who finished them off was **the local lord of the manor, who was also the parish minister.** [221] [222]

What they were doing was in the book that minister preached from. The first believers **held everything in common**, and there was not a needy person among them (Acts 2:44–45 and 4:32–35).

That is four chapters into the history of my movement. Winstanley had read it. So had the minister who burned his house.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Luke 6:20–25. Read **all six verses**, not the first three.

Then look up: Acts 2:44–45 and 1 Corinthians 7:23 — what the first believers did with their property, and the verse behind the peasants' third article.

For the history:

- **The Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia, March 1525.** Read the twelfth article, where they offer to withdraw any demand disproved from scripture.
- **Luther, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, May 1525**, in *Luther's Works*, volume 46.
- **The *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, 1535**, the survey of monastic income, and the **Poor Relief Act of 1601.** Ask what happened in between.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/27**.

The Short Version

- The indulgence sale Luther attacked was **repaying a bank loan** for **Albrecht**'s purchase of Mainz.
- Luther was right, and it worked because **the princes profited** from leaving Rome.
- The peasants cited scripture; Luther told the princes to **smite, slay and stab.**
- England **sold the monastic endowments** to the gentry and then whipped the poor.
- **Castellio** and the **Diggers** read it right, and were ruined for it.

Think About It

1. What do you do when someone tells you to read the Bible yourself, and then does not like your conclusion?
2. The monastic endowments could have been redirected to the poor. They were sold to the gentry instead. Who made that choice, and who benefited for the next three hundred years?

Lesson 28: The Women They Burned

> Before You Read
>
> *This book is dedicated to mothers. Here is why that is not a sentimental gesture.*

> Words to Know
>
> **Inquisitor** — an official appointed to investigate and prosecute heresy.
>
> **Widow** — a woman whose husband has died. In my own scriptures, one of the three groups God is repeatedly said to defend.
>
> **Confession** — here, not telling a priest. A signed statement of guilt, which the law required before a person could be put to death.
>
> **Confiscation** — the seizure of a convicted person's property by the authorities.

For three hundred years, Europe put women to death as witches. Here is the chain, in order.

- **1484:** Pope **Innocent VIII** issues a bull, *Summis desiderantes*, confirming that witchcraft is real and authorizing two inquisitors to act against it. [223] [224]
- **1486:** One of them, **Heinrich Kramer**, publishes a handbook, the ***Malleus Maleficarum***, the Hammer of Witches.
- **1490:** The Inquisition condemns the book. It is reissued again and again for two hundred years anyway. [225]
- **1570 to 1660:** The peak of the killing, in the age of the Reformation. [226]
- **1614:** The Spanish Inquisition effectively ends witch-burning in Spain.
- **1692:** Nineteen people are hanged at Salem, in Puritan Massachusetts.

The bull was a turf war.

Kramer had been trying to run witch trials in southern Germany and kept being **blocked by the local authorities.** So he went to Rome, and came back

with a piece of paper from the pope commanding them not to obstruct him. It was not a discovery about the supernatural. It was a turf war, settled in his favour at the top.

Within a year, Kramer's own trial at Innsbruck **collapsed**, and the local bishop ordered him out of the diocese. **The first person to stop him was a bishop.** Remember that, because it complicates the picture.

The handbook outran the church that condemned it.

The *Malleus* explained how to identify a witch, how to interrogate her, and how to get a confession. When the Inquisition rejected it in 1490, it did not matter. It had been **printed**, and printed books do not need an institution's permission to keep existing. Its customers were **secular judges** in town halls and small territorial courts. [225]

You should hear the next thing from me first.

Most of the killing was not done by the Inquisition. It was done by **ordinary local courts**, Catholic and Protestant, under secular law. That is not a defense of the church, which supplied the doctrine, the authorization and the handbook. But this was not only a Catholic problem.

Careful modern estimates put the number executed in Europe between about 1450 and 1750 at roughly **forty thousand to sixty thousand** people. I give you a range because that is what the evidence supports. You will hear nine million. That number is a nineteenth-century invention with nothing behind it. Roughly **three quarters to four fifths** of the accused were women, with wide variation from place to place. [227]

Here is how a single one of those deaths was produced.

A cow dies, and somebody remembers a quarrel at the door. A neighbour tells the magistrate. She is arrested and searched for a **devil's mark**.

Then comes the hinge. The law inherited from Rome held that you could not execute someone for a capital crime without either **two eyewitnesses** or **a confession.** For a secret crime like witchcraft there were never two eyewitnesses. The law permitted torture to obtain a confession, within limits, and then

witchcraft was classed as an exceptional crime and the limits were set aside. **The torture continues until she confesses.**

Then she was required, **under torture, to name her accomplices**, and every name went through the same process. That is how one dead cow becomes two hundred prisoners inside eighteen months. **It is a procedure, working exactly as designed.** [228]

Somebody was paid at every step.

The judges took fees per case. The executioner took a fee per execution. **And the bill went to her.** Itemized accounts survive from German trials: so much for the ropes, so much for the wood. In a number of German territories, her property could also be confiscated. Historians argue about how far that drove the hunts, and I will not overstate it.

In the prince-bishoprics of **Bamberg** and **Würzburg**, around 1626 to 1631, several hundred people were executed in each. When the hunts reached the **burgomasters themselves**, the complaints reached the emperor and it was eventually stopped. [228]

One of the burgomasters wrote a letter, and it survives.

Johannes Junius, the mayor of Bamberg, was arrested and tortured in 1628. From his cell he smuggled out a letter to his daughter: **innocent I came into this prison, innocent I was tortured, innocent I must die.** He wrote down what the executioner had said to him:

Sir, I beg you, for God's sake, confess something, whether it be true or not. Invent something, for you cannot endure the torture.

He was burned in 1628. [229]

Now look at which women.

The surviving records show the same figure again and again: a widow, an old woman living alone, a midwife, a woman with nobody behind her.

A woman with a husband, grown sons and brothers was an **expensive** person to accuse, because her family could sue the accuser. A widow with no sons could do

none of that. So she was not chosen because she seemed guiltier. **She was chosen because she was cheap.** Hold that word. It explains most of this unit.

These were the women I spent my time with.

The widow who put two small coins in the treasury, whom I pointed at as the one who had given everything (Mark 12:41–44), is exactly the kind of woman those courts would have burned. So are the women who stayed at my execution when the men had run (Mark 15:40–41).

Now the verse the hunters used.

It is **Exodus 22:18**: *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.* What the Hebrew word described is genuinely uncertain. The oldest Greek translation, made by Jews before I was born, rendered it as **a maker of potions**, a poisoner. By the time the English Bibles put "witch" there, the word meant what the *Malleus* described: a pact with the devil. **None of that is in the Hebrew.** The most famous of those translations was commissioned by **King James**, who had personally taken part in witch trials in Scotland. And the verse sits among rules about oxen and cloaks. It is not a commission to search Europe for three hundred years.

I was asked to enforce exactly this kind of law once.

They brought me a woman caught in adultery, and the law prescribed death. I said: **let the one among you who is without sin throw the first stone** (John 8:1–11). That passage is **not in the oldest manuscripts** of John, and your Bible probably says so. But for two thousand years **nobody has been able to get it out of the book**, and the church that burned forty thousand people had it bound into every copy it owned.

The worst of it was not in the Middle Ages.

The peak came between **1570 and 1660**. Europe had just split, and each side prosecuted witches to prove it was in earnest. Those decades were the coldest of the last thousand years, and harvests failed. And prosecutions had moved into small local courts with no higher court over them to throw the case out. That last one is the whole difference. [226]

The Spanish Inquisition barely burned any witches at all.

After a panic in the Basque country, it sent an inquisitor, **Alonso de Salazar Frías**, to investigate. He took statements from nearly two thousand people and reported: **There were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about.** In 1614 Spain effectively ended witch-burning, **a century before Protestant Germany and Scotland.** It had a central office that reviewed cases and a rule that confessions must be corroborated. [230]

This book is not an argument against one denomination. It is an argument about what institutions do when nothing checks them.

Now look at the map.

The heaviest killing was in the **fragmented territories of Germany**, Catholic and Protestant both. Presbyterian **Scotland** was proportionally among the worst in Europe. In **England**, from 1645 to 1647, the self-styled Witchfinder General, **Matthew Hopkins**, charged towns for his services and was involved in something like a hundred deaths. [231]

And there were people who stood up.

- **John Gaule**, a country vicar, preached against Hopkins from his own pulpit, and Hopkins stopped coming to that district.
- At Salem, ministers attacked evidence drawn from visions, and the governor dissolved the court. Five years later the judge **Samuel Sewall** had his confession of guilt read out in his own church.
- **Friedrich Spee**, a Jesuit who walked condemned women to the stake, wrote in 1631 that if torture goes on until there is a confession, **everyone tortured confesses**, and that not one of the women he had accompanied had been guilty. [232]

Remember that the next time you are told that nothing could have been done.

This went on for three hundred years.

That is ten or twelve generations in which the safest thing a woman could be was quiet, married, unremarkable and supervised. Some of what is still preached about women being silent is the residue of it. That preaching rests on two texts, **1 Timothy 2:11–12** and **1 Corinthians 14:34–35**. 1 Timothy is one of the letters

most disputed as to whether Paul wrote it. The verses in 1 Corinthians turn up in different places in different old manuscripts. Those are the texts. They are not mine.

Here is what I actually did.

I let a woman sit down with the students and learn, and said she had chosen the better thing (Luke 10:38–42). The first people to find the tomb empty were women, and the men did not believe them (Luke 24:11).

So here is what I say to mothers.

For twenty centuries, the institution that used my name has been very sure about what women must not do.

For three of those centuries, it burned the ones who had nobody to protect them, charged the wood to their families, and in places kept the house.

And the people who kept the actual thing alive through all of it — who taught the prayers to children, who fed whoever was at the door, who sat with the dying, who forgave debts nobody recorded — mostly did not get their names written down anywhere.

I know exactly who they were.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Exodus 22:18 — *thou shalt not suffer a witch to live* — and then read the ten verses on either side of it.

You will find: that it sits inside a list of ordinances about oxen, fields, borrowed property, seduction and lending money to the poor. Then look at the footnote in a modern translation and see what it says about the word.

Then look up: John 8:1–11 — a crowd holding the law, and a woman they were entitled to kill. Read your Bible's note about the manuscripts too, and then ask why nobody could ever get it out of the book.

Then read: the letter of Johannes Junius to his daughter, Bamberg, 1628. It is printed in English in standard document collections. Two pages. Read what the executioner told him to do.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/28**.

The Short Version

- The **1484 bull** of **Innocent VIII** backed an inquisitor, **Kramer**, whose ***Malleus*** kept selling after the church condemned it in **1490**.
- Roughly **40,000 to 60,000** people were executed, not nine million, and three in four or more were women.
- The law demanded a confession, torture produced it, and **torture for accomplices' names** turned one grudge into a panic.
- The accused paid the costs, and the women chosen were the **cheap** ones, with **no one to protect them**.
- The peak was **1570–1660**, Protestant and Catholic alike; **Salazar**, **Gaule**, **Sewall** and **Spee** show it could be stopped.

Think About It

1. Who in your church has nobody standing behind them? Do you know their name?
2. The procedure guaranteed a confession, and then asked for names. What safeguard would have broken it, and why did some places have it and others not?

Lesson 29: The Long Argument About Slavery

Before You Read

Both sides quoted the Bible. How is that possible, and who was right?

Words to Know

Quaker — a member of the Religious Society of Friends, a Christian group with no clergy, known for plain dress and, eventually, for abolition.

Abolition — the ending of slavery as a legal institution.

Apprenticeship — here, the system of forced unpaid labor that replaced slavery in the British colonies from 1834 to 1838.

Denomination — an organized branch of the church, such as Baptist or Methodist.

Set the stage.

You already know the numbers from Lesson 26. Roughly 12.5 million people embarked; about 10.7 million survived the crossing.

For three hundred years this was legal, normal, insured, taxed, and blessed. I am going to prove the last three words, because otherwise they are just words.

Taxed. Sugar, tobacco and coffee grown by enslaved people paid customs duties on arrival in Britain, one of the largest single sources of government revenue in the eighteenth century. The British state was not a bystander to this trade. It was a shareholder in it.

Insured. In 1781 a Liverpool ship called the ***Zong*** was crossing to Jamaica, overcrowded and running long. Over three days, the crew threw **about a hundred and thirty living people overboard**, in shackles. Then the owners **sued their insurers** for the lost property, at thirty pounds a head. In 1783 an English court heard it as **an insurance dispute**, and the Solicitor General said it was a

case about goods and chattels. A formerly enslaved man, **Olaudah Equiano**, took it to a campaigner, **Granville Sharp**, who tried to have the crew prosecuted for murder. No one was ever charged. [233]

Blessed. In 1710 a man named **Christopher Codrington** left his sugar plantations in Barbados, and the several hundred people enslaved on them, to a missionary society of the Church of England. **The church did not free them.** It ran the estates for more than a century and used the profits to fund missionary work. The people on those estates were **branded on the chest with the word SOCIETY**, with a hot iron. The Church of England formally apologised in 2006. [234]

The argument against it was carried, almost entirely, by Christians, against other Christians who were also quoting the Bible.

Here is how that argument went, in order.

- **1688:** Four Quakers in Pennsylvania sign a protest against slaveholding. Their argument is one verse, the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). [235] [236]
- **1738:** A Quaker named **Benjamin Lay** runs a sword through a hollowed-out book full of red juice at a meeting of slaveholding Friends. Four meetings disown him. [237]
- **1774: John Woolman**, a Quaker who refused to write bills of sale for human beings, has his journal published. **John Wesley**, the founder of Methodism, publishes *Thoughts Upon Slavery*. [238] [239]
- **1788 to 1792:** A British campaign prints the plan of a slave ship, the *Brookes*, sends Parliament 519 petitions in one session, and persuades some three hundred thousand households to stop buying slave-grown sugar. **Olaudah Equiano** publishes his life story in 1789 and tours the country. [240]
- **1791 to 1804:** The enslaved of Saint-Domingue rise and free themselves. [241]
- **1833:** Britain passes abolition, and pays the owners.

The first protest was buried by the people it would have cost.

The 1688 petition was handed up the chain of Quaker meetings, and each level said it was too weighty to judge and passed it on. **Nobody rejected it. Nobody**

adopted it. Those meetings were made up of men who **owned people**, and a ruling either way would have been a ruling on the property of the men in the room. Their own regional meeting did not prohibit slaveholding among members until **1776**, eighty-eight years later.

Hold that number, because it tells you how long being right can take when the people deciding are the people paying.

The most decisive blow was struck by the enslaved themselves.

In 1789 the French Revolution declared that all men are born free and equal. In the French colony of **Saint-Domingue**, the richest in the world, the enslaved had been listening to white colonists argue about liberty for two years. On the night of **22 August 1791** they rose. Their commander, **Toussaint Louverture**, born enslaved, beat the French, the Spanish and the British in turn. In 1802 Napoleon sent an army to restore slavery, and Toussaint was seized under a flag of truce and died in a French fortress. His general **Jean-Jacques Dessalines** declared independence on **1 January 1804**, and named the country **Haiti**. [242]

Then they were made to pay for it.

The United States refused to recognize Haiti for fifty-eight years. In **1825**, France sent **fourteen warships** to sit off Port-au-Prince and offered recognition on one condition. **Haiti must pay 150 million francs, as compensation to the former slaveholders, for the loss of their slaves.** The people who had been the property were required to pay the market value of themselves to the people who had lost them. Haiti had to borrow from French banks to pay, and **the last of that borrowing was not cleared until 1947.** [243]

Hold that mechanism. It is about to happen again, in another country, in the same decade.

In Jamaica, a Baptist deacon forced the question.

Samuel Sharpe read his Bible and preached that no man could be the property of another. At Christmas 1831 he organized a strike: nobody would go back to the fields unless they were paid. It became a rebellion, and between five and six hundred people died, most of them by sentence of the courts afterward. Sharpe

was hanged in 1832, saying he would rather die on that gallows than live in slavery. [244]

The planters blamed the missionaries for teaching the enslaved to read the Bible. They **burned the chapels down** and jailed the Baptist missionary **William Knibb**. That was their mistake. Knibb sailed to England and spent a year in packed halls describing chapels burned and Christians whipped for praying. The next year, Parliament passed abolition. [245]

Abolition came with small print.

The Act took effect on 1 August 1834. It did not free people. It substituted **apprenticeship**, compelled unpaid labor for the same owners, until 1838. [246] And the owners were paid **twenty million pounds**, about **forty percent of the entire annual spending of the British state.** The Treasury borrowed it, and that loan was not finally paid off until **2015**.

The people were not compensated. They were the compensation. [247]

In America, a denomination was founded on the other side.

In 1845 Baptists in Georgia put forward a slaveholder for a missionary appointment, as a deliberate test. The national board refused him, and the southern conventions walked out and founded the **Southern Baptist Convention**. In **1995**, a hundred and fifty years later, it formally apologised. [248]

Now the verses, from both sides, because a lesson that asks you to judge an argument owes you both.

Genesis 9:25, the "curse of Ham," was the most-used text in the American defense of slavery. Read it. Noah does not curse Ham. **He curses Canaan**, and there is not one word in it about Africa or skin.

Leviticus 25:44–46 says you may buy slaves from the nations around you and hold them as property. That is really there. But the same chapter forbids doing it to an Israelite. It draws a line between **insider and outsider**, which is exactly the move being made by the man quoting it.

Ephesians 6:5, *slaves, obey your masters*, was preached at enslaved congregations constantly. Four verses later, masters are told to stop threatening them, because with God there is no favoritism (Ephesians 6:9). **The passage has two halves, and the slaveholder preached one of them.** In the same way, 1 Timothy 6:1–2 tells slaves to honor their masters, and 1 Timothy 1:10 lists the kidnapper who sells a man among the worst of criminals.

And **Philemon**, where Paul sends a runaway back, was the abolitionists' worst problem. But Paul asks that he be received **no longer as a slave, but as a beloved brother**, in a letter read aloud to the whole congregation.

Then there is the verse the other side had no answer to. Deuteronomy 23:15–16 says you shall not hand over to his master a slave who has escaped to you. In **1850** the United States passed the **Fugitive Slave Act**, which made it a crime to shelter one. A Christian nation passed a law that is the precise negative of a text in its own Bible, and then punished the people who obeyed the Bible. [249]

And one woman kept going back.

Harriet Tubman escaped, and then went back about **thirteen times**, bringing out roughly seventy people. [250] On **2 June 1863** she guided an armed raid up the **Combahee River** in South Carolina, and about **seven hundred and fifty people** walked out of the rice plantations in a single night. The government paid her almost nothing for it. [251]

So who was right?

Both sides quoted the book. Only one side was quoting it against their own interest.

When a man reads you a verse that costs him nothing and costs you everything, you are not listening to scripture. You are listening to a man with something to protect, holding a book.

I gave you that test myself: **by their fruits you will know them** (Matthew 7:15–20). I said it about **people who speak in God's name**. One reading of scripture produced branding irons with the word SOCIETY on them, and a court arguing about whether a hundred and thirty drowned people were a covered

loss. The other produced a man who would not sign a bill of sale, a boycott of sugar in three hundred thousand kitchens, and a woman going back thirteen times.

You do not need a degree in theology to do that sum.

Frederick Douglass, who had been enslaved, said it best, in 1845. He wrote that he loved the pure, peaceable and impartial Christianity of Christ, and therefore **hated** the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of that land.

He was not attacking religion. **He was making the distinction this entire book is about**, from the inside, and at more risk than you or I will ever run. [252]

Check It Yourself

I am going to send you to verses that do not help me, as well as ones that do. Read them all.

Look up: Exodus 21:16. Stealing a man and selling him is a **capital crime** in the law that raised me. Then keep reading the same chapter. Exodus 21:20–21 says a master who beats his slave is not punished if the man survives a day or two, *for he is his money*. The law I was raised on **regulates** slavery. It does not abolish it.

Then look up the other side's verses, in order: Genesis 9:25, Leviticus 25:44–46, Ephesians 6:5 **and then 6:9**, 1 Timothy 6:1–2 **and then 1:10**, and Philemon, the whole letter. It is one page.

Then look up: Matthew 7:12, the verse four Quakers used in 1688, and Matthew 7:15–20, where I tell you how to judge a preacher.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/29**.

The Short Version

- The trade was **insured** (the ***Zong***, 1781) and **blessed** (a Church of England society branded SOCIETY on the people it owned).
- The argument against it was carried by Christians, from four Quakers in **1688** to a British campaign that moved Parliament.
- **Haiti** freed itself by 1804 and was made to pay **150 million francs** to the slaveholders.
- Britain abolished slavery in **1834** and paid the owners **£20 million**, borrowed and not repaid until **2015**.
- Every pro-slavery verse has a next verse, or a surrounding chapter, that the preacher left out.

Think About It

1. Both sides had verses. Now that you have seen the other side's verses, what actually made the difference between them?
2. Twenty million pounds went to the owners and nothing went to the people. If that was the settlement, what would an honest one have looked like?

Lesson 30: The Book With Exodus Taken Out

> Before You Read
>
> *What happens if you hand somebody a Bible with parts removed?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Exodus** — the second book of the Bible. It tells how an enslaved people escaped Egypt.
>
> **West Indies** — the Caribbean islands, where Britain held slave colonies.

Here is a real object.

In London, in 1807, a printed book was published with this on the title page: *Select Parts of the Holy Bible, for the use of the Negro Slaves, in the British West-India Islands.*

Three copies are known to survive, one at Fisk University in Nashville and two in Britain. There is a digitized copy you can page through on a screen. It is not a legend. You can look at it. [253]

1807 is the year the British Parliament abolished the slave **trade**, the carrying of people across the Atlantic in British ships. It did not abolish slavery. So this book was printed in the exact year Britain decided to stop importing human beings and keep the ones it had.

It is only select parts.

A complete Bible has sixty-six books. This one draws on **thirty-two** of them, and from most of those it takes only a few chapters. About **nine tenths of the Old Testament text is simply not there.**

Now I want to correct something you may have heard.

You may have been told that slaveholders made this book and cut out the escape from Egypt to hide it. The truth is stranger and more useful, and I am going to give it to you accurately, because a false version of this story is circulating and it makes the real one easier to dismiss.

It was produced by a missionary society founded in 1794 by **Beilby Porteus**, the **Bishop of London**. And he is not the villain you would like him to be. He had been raising the slavery question in public since 1783, and he ended up a supporter of Wilberforce and the abolition of the trade.

But he also argued, in public and in print, **that Christian instruction would make enslaved people better and more obedient workers.** That was not a slip. It was the pitch. [254]

Nobody recorded who chose the passages for this particular volume. So I will not tell you a story about anybody's motives that I cannot support. What I can give you is the **incentives**, because those are on the record.

- **The planter was the customer.** A missionary could not reach a single enslaved person without the owner's permission to come through the gate.
- **Planters feared that baptism might free people. Virginia, in 1667**, passed an act stating that baptism **does not alter** a person's condition as to bondage or freedom.
- **Planters feared literacy.** They said teaching enslaved people to read produced discontent, and they were entirely correct.
- **Everybody knew what Exodus does to a person who is enslaved.** Enslaved people had been using it for a century.

You do not need to decide what any one editor felt. You only need to ask what kind of book could get through that gate. **A book containing Exodus 1 to 18 could not get through that gate, and everyone involved knew it.**

The book is not stripped of everything, which is why this must be handled carefully.

The prophet Isaiah's demand to let the oppressed go free is in there. Mary's song, about the mighty being pulled from their seats and the rich sent away

empty, is in there. So this is not a clean piece of censorship. It is a selection made by people under pressure from a customer, which came out exactly where that pressure pointed.

Here is exactly what is missing.

Exodus is in the book, but only **chapters 19 and 20.** Two chapters out of forty.

Chapters 1 through 18 are not in it. Those are the chapters where the people are enslaved, where they cry out, where a man is sent to the ruler to say *let my people go,* and where they walk out. **The escape is gone.** Everything after chapter 20 is gone too, including the release of slaves in the seventh year.

And **Exodus 20 is in it.** The Ten Commandments open with God introducing himself like this:

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

So the enslaved reader is handed God's own statement that he **brought them out of the house of bondage**, with the eighteen chapters describing how he did it removed. You are given the sentence and denied the story.

And who was going to read it?

In much of the slave-holding world, teaching an enslaved person to read was restricted or flatly illegal. **South Carolina in 1740** made it an offence to teach an enslaved person to write. **Virginia in 1831**, after a literate enslaved preacher named **Nat Turner** led a rising, prohibited teaching them to read at all. In the British Caribbean the same effect was arranged by other means, with missionaries admitted or refused at the planter's pleasure.

So it was mostly not a book to be read. **It was a book to be read out of, by somebody else, to people who could not check it.** [255]

It did not work.

Across the American South and the Caribbean, in the religion enslaved people actually made, **Exodus became the center.** Moses, the Red Sea, Pharaoh and the crossing over became the whole frame. *Go Down, Moses* was first written down

in 1861, from people who had escaped to Union lines, and those who wrote it down were told it was older. [256] They were singing the chapters that had been left out.

Samuel Sharpe, from the last lesson, was in the British West Indies, exactly where that book was meant to be read. He got a whole Bible anyway, through the Baptist mission, where he was a deacon. He read it, and preached that no man could own another, and they hanged him for it.

And the people **Harriet Tubman** brought out did not call her Harriet. **They called her Moses.** A population handed a mutilated text identified the woman walking them north as the figure from the chapters that were missing, without the book.

You can take the pages out. But the thing is not in the pages. It is in what people recognize when they hear it, and the recognition does not need permission and cannot be edited.

Now let me tell you what I did on the day I started, since this lesson is about choosing which passages people get.

I went into the synagogue in my own town, on the sabbath, and stood up to read. They handed me the scroll of Isaiah, and this is what I read out:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:16–21).

I chose the passage. Out of the whole of Isaiah, that is the one I picked to announce what I was for.

And I stopped in the middle of a sentence. In Isaiah 61 the line continues: *and the day of vengeance of our God.* I did not read that part. I closed the book at the liberation and left the vengeance on the page.

So I have selected too. Everyone who reads aloud selects. **The question is only ever which way you cut.**

I cut toward the captives. That volume of 1807 cut away from them.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Luke 4:16–21, then go and read **Isaiah 61:1–2**, where that passage comes from. You will find that I chose which passage to read aloud, and that I stopped in the middle of the sentence.

Then look up: Exodus 20:2, the very first line of the Ten Commandments. You will find *out of the house of bondage*. Now consider being given that verse with Exodus 1–18 removed.

Then look at the book itself: *Select Parts of the Holy Bible*, London, 1807, digitized and free to read online. Check the table of contents. **Be careful:** some popular accounts wrongly say Exodus was excluded entirely. **Chapters 19 and 20 are in it.**

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/30**.

The Short Version

- A real 1807 book for enslaved readers draws on **thirty-two** of the Bible's sixty-six books.
- **Exodus appears as chapters 19 and 20 only.** The escape (1–18) is gone, but **Exodus 20:2**, "out of the house of bondage," is there.
- It came from a society founded by **Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London**, and the **planter controlled the gate**.
- It was printed for people who were, in much of that world, kept unable to read it.
- Enslaved people made **Exodus the center of their faith anyway**, and called **Harriet Tubman "Moses."**

Think About It

1. The people who made that book were not monsters. Given the four incentives, could it have come out any other way? What would it have taken?
2. I chose a passage and stopped in the middle of a sentence. Everyone who reads aloud selects. How do you tell an honest selection from a dishonest one?

Lesson 31: What Was Done to My People

> Before You Read
>
> *I was a Jew. What did the religion named after me do to my family?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Blood libel** — the false accusation that Jews murdered Christian children for ritual purposes.
>
> **Expulsion** — the forced removal of a whole population from a country.
>
> **Synagogue** — a Jewish house of prayer and study. I taught in them.
>
> **Ghetto** — a walled quarter that Jews were required to live in, locked at night.

Say the first thing plainly.

I was born a Jew, lived as a Jew, prayed as a Jew, argued the way Jews argued with each other, and died a Jew.

My mother was a Jew. My brother was a Jew. Every single one of my friends was a Jew.

I never converted to anything, because there was no such thing yet as Christianity. That religion did not exist while I was alive. It was built after I was gone, by others, in my name.

It starts earlier than you think.

Around the year 165, a bishop named **Melito of Sardis** preached an Easter sermon that survives. In the middle of it he says: **God has been murdered. The King of Israel has been put to death by an Israelite right hand.** That is the first surviving text that charges the Jews with killing God, and it is preached **at Easter**, which is the detail you must keep.

Two centuries later **Augustine** provided the doctrine that governed the next thousand years. The Jews must **not** be killed. They were to be preserved, scattered and visibly wretched, as living **witnesses**. It is a protection **and** a sentence: they must survive, and they must be seen to be losing. [257]

Here is what followed, in order.

- **1096:** Crusaders kill the Jewish communities of the Rhine. The reason they give is that these are the people they owe money to.
- **1144:** At Norwich, in England, the **blood libel** is invented. [258]
- **1215:** A church council requires Jews to be marked out by their dress.
- **1290 to 1492:** England, France and Spain expel their Jews and keep what was owed to them.
- **1348 and 1349:** Hundreds of Jewish communities are destroyed in the plague years.
- **1516 and 1555:** Venice and then Rome lock their Jews in ghettos.

The blood libel paid.

In 1144 a boy named William was found dead in a wood near Norwich, and local Jews were accused of killing him for ritual purposes. There was no evidence. Look at who benefited. A knight named **Simon de Novers owed money to a Jewish lender** and had him killed; the defense mounted for him was that the Jews had murdered the boy. And a monk, **Thomas of Monmouth**, wrote a book about the boy's miracles and spent his life promoting a shrine that drew pilgrims and their offerings.

A dead child, an accusation, a book, a shrine, and a revenue stream. It was repeated for **eight hundred years**, across Europe, into the twentieth century. [259]

The moneylending was a trap, and it was built.

The church forbade Christians to lend at interest, and its law did not bind Jews. The guilds and the land laws shut Jews out of nearly every other trade. Then the king treated them as his property and taxed them at will, so they had to call in

their loans, and the borrowers hated the man at the door. **They did not hate the king. They hated the man at the door.** [260]

Then the kings expelled them and collected the debts.

In **1290** Edward I expelled every Jew from England, and **the debts owed to them became debts owed to the king.** In **1306** Philip IV did the same in France, and the next year seized the Knights Templar, his other great creditors. In **1492** Ferdinand and Isabella gave the Jews of Spain four months to convert or leave, without their gold or silver. How many left is disputed, somewhere between forty thousand and well over a hundred thousand. **Whatever you think that was about, it was not about theology.** [261]

In the plague years, the money did the killing.

When the plague came in 1348, the rumour was that Jews had poisoned the wells. In **Strasbourg, on 14 February 1349**, several hundred Jews were burned in their own cemetery, **before the plague had reached the city at all.** A Christian chronicler of that city wrote the reason down: **if they had been poor, and if the lords of the land had not been in debt to them, they would not have been burned.**

And, to be fair, the pope, Clement VI, issued two bulls forbidding the killing. He was ignored, everywhere. [262]

The church marked them and walled them in.

In 1215 a church council required Jews to be distinguishable by their dress, and it became a badge or a hat. When a government in the 1930s required a yellow star, it was not inventing anything. In **Rome, in 1555**, Pope **Paul IV** confined the city's Jews to a walled ghetto, and **that ghetto was not abolished until 1870.** [263]

And the riots came at Easter, on the anniversary of my death, year after year, after a liturgy that told the story with the guilt assigned. **They thought they were doing it for me.**

Now I have to answer the two sentences in my own book that were used for all of it.

The first is **Matthew 27:25**, where the crowd at my trial shouts: *his blood be on us and on our children.* It appears in one gospel and nowhere else. It is a line shouted by **a crowd in one courtyard on one morning**, written by a Jew about other Jews in the middle of a family fight. Turning it into a hereditary sentence on every Jewish child born for sixty generations is not an interpretation. **It is a pretext.** Luke has me saying, from the cross, *Father, forgive them* (Luke 23:34). That line is missing from some of the oldest manuscripts, but it is in your Bible, and so is Matthew 27:25, and Christendom chose which of the two to build on.

The second is **John 8:44**, where I am recorded saying to my opponents: *you are of your father the devil.* It is harsher. But **every single person in that room is a Jew**, including me, in an argument about who is really faithful. Fierce speech inside a family is not the same act as the same words said about that family from outside it. **Whatever I said in the Temple that day, I did not say it about my mother's people, and it was not a warrant.**

In 1965, a Roman council declared that my execution cannot be charged against all the Jews then living, nor against the Jews of today. [264]

In 1543, Martin Luther published a book aimed straight at my own people.

You must have the whole arc. In **1523**, the same Luther published a warm pamphlet, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew*, saying Christians had treated Jews abominably. He expected that once the gospel was preached properly, **they would convert.** The kindness was a method.

They did not convert. In **1543** he published *On the Jews and Their Lies.* It recommends, in a numbered list, that Christians burn the synagogues, raze Jewish houses, take away their prayer books, forbid their rabbis to teach on pain of death, and confiscate their money. Then, he says, drive them out of the country.

That is the arc: **a man whose goodwill was conditional on conversion, turning savage when the condition was not met.** Kindness that is a recruitment strategy has a bill attached, and it comes due.

That book was reprinted in Germany in the 1930s. At Nuremberg, the Nazi publisher **Julius Streicher** said in his own defense that **Martin Luther would very likely be sitting in the dock in his place.** In 1994 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America formally repudiated those writings. [265] [266]

In 1933, the German churches applied the same doctrine to their own pastors.

That year a movement called the **German Christians** took control of most of the regional Protestant churches, and the largest of them adopted the **Aryan Paragraph**: no one of Jewish descent could serve as a pastor. It is a **church** deciding that baptism does not count if your grandmother was Jewish. A minority refused and formed the **Confessing Church**, and in 1934 issued the **Barmen Declaration**. But Barmen says **nothing about the Jews.** It defended the church's independence, not the people being persecuted outside the church door. [267]

In 1939, a church institute set out to erase my Jewishness from my own faith.

At **Eisenach**, where Luther had translated the New Testament, an institute was founded with a name that states its purpose: the **Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life.** Its director was a New Testament professor, **Walter Grundmann**, and nearly a dozen regional Protestant churches supported it. In 1940 it published a **de-Judaized New Testament**, with me recast as an opponent of Judaism. It took *hallelujah* and *amen* out of the hymnbook and discarded the Old Testament entirely. [136] [268]

They were editing me. They were removing my nation from my own words, so that their nation could keep me.

One pastor read it right.

In April 1933, **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** wrote that the church must bind up the victims of the state **whoever they are**, church members or not, and if necessary **jam a spoke in the wheel itself.** He helped Jews escape to Switzerland and joined the conspiracy against the regime. He had been safe in America in 1939, and sailed home. He was hanged on **9 April 1945**, at thirty-nine. [269]

That same essay also repeats the old theology, that Jewish suffering is bound up with their rejection of me. He moved, and by the end he was risking his life for people he had no intention of converting. The useful fact about Bonhoeffer is not that he was pure. It is that a man carrying the ordinary prejudice of his church nonetheless saw it, and moved, and paid for it. [270]

Here is why this lesson is in the book.

Not to make you feel guilty. You did none of it.

It is here because many Christians came to hold that my people were replaced, or superseded, or finished with, and that the older part of the Bible is a warm-up act for the part about me. That idea is what made everything above thinkable.

And it is not true, and I never said it. I said I had not come to abolish the law (Matthew 5:17). I said the greatest commandment was the one every Jewish child already recited twice a day (Mark 12:29–30).

Everything I taught, I taught out of that book, to those people, in their own argument.

You cannot keep me and discard them. It has been tried, in an office at Eisenach, and it produced something monstrous.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Matthew 5:17, then Mark 12:29–30. You will find that I said I had not come to abolish the law, and that the greatest commandment I named is a quotation from the Jewish prayer said daily.
>
> **Then look up the two verses used against my people: Matthew 27:25** and **John 8:44**. Read the whole scene around each. Count how many gospels contain the first one. Notice, in the second, that every person in the room is a Jew.
>
> **Then read:** Martin Luther, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1523) and *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), in that order, twenty years apart. Both are in *Luther's Works* in English.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/31**.

The Short Version

- I was a Jew, and so was everyone I knew.
- The charge that the Jews killed God began in an **Easter sermon about 165**, and the **blood libel** began at **Norwich in 1144**, where a debtor and a shrine profited.
- The moneylending trap was **built**, and the expulsions of **1290, 1306 and 1492** handed the debts to the crown.
- **Luther** turned from kindness in **1523** to *On the Jews and Their Lies* in **1543**, and the **Eisenach institute** (1939) edited the Jewishness out of me.
- **Bonhoeffer** said the church must jam the spokes of the wheel, and was hanged in April 1945.

Think About It

1. If you take the Jewish part out of me, what is left?
2. Luther was kind in 1523 because he expected them to convert. Is any of the kindness in your own church conditional in that way? How would you find out?

Lesson 32: The Last Hundred Years

Before You Read

This is not ancient history. This happened while your grandmother was alive.

Words to Know

Residential school — a boarding school children were taken to by force, away from their families and languages.

Per-capita grant — money paid for each person on the roll. Enroll more, receive more.

Apartheid — South Africa's legal system of racial separation, 1948 to the early 1990s.

Form 990 — the public financial return US tax-exempt organizations must file. Churches do not have to.

This lesson brings it close.

Everything so far has been far enough away to feel like a story. Here are four things that happened within living memory, and, for each one, the people who read it right in the very same years. Their obituaries were printed in newspapers your family could have bought.

The schools ran until 1996.

In Canada, church-run residential schools go back to 1831, and the government-funded system ran from **1883 until 1996.** More than one hundred and fifty thousand indigenous children passed through it. The churches ran them, roughly three in five **Roman Catholic** and most of the rest **Anglican** and **United Church of Canada**. The government paid. In **1920** Parliament made attendance compulsory, and families who resisted could have their rations withheld. [271]

The money explains the deaths. The schools were paid a fixed sum for each enrolled child, and the church kept whatever it did not spend. That rewards crowding children in and spending less on each one. You do not need to believe anybody set out to kill children. Overcrowd a dormitory, underfeed it, keep it cold, and tuberculosis does the rest.

The government's own doctor told them in 1907. Dr. **Peter Bryce**, chief medical officer of the Department of Indian Affairs, reported that something like a quarter of the children who had been through the prairie schools had died. His report was buried and his career was ended. In 1922 he published it himself, as *The Story of a National Crime*. [272]

Canada's **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** reported in 2015, called it **cultural genocide**, and named more than three thousand children who died. The last school closed in 1996. That is not long ago at all. [273]

Apartheid was defended from the Bible.

In South Africa, racial separation was defended from scripture by the **Dutch Reformed Church**, the church of the governing party. Its **1974** report leaned hardest on Acts 17:26, which says God *hath determined... the bounds of their habitation*. So a law giving each race its own land was said to carry out God's plan.

Now read the first half of that same sentence: ***And hath made of one blood all nations of men.*** Paul said it in Athens, to Greeks, to tell them they were not a separate and superior stock. The report quoted the second half of a sentence whose first half destroys its case. [274]

In **1982** the World Alliance of Reformed Churches declared apartheid a heresy and suspended the Dutch Reformed Church. In **1986** the church's own daughter church adopted the **Belhar Confession**, rejecting any doctrine that sanctions forced separation by race, and the church that had blessed apartheid began to reverse itself. [275] [276]

The man who read it right inside that church was **Beyers Naudé**, a minister who could have had everything. After the Sharpeville shootings in 1960 he changed his mind. In 1963 he walked out of his pulpit rather than give up a Christian

institute that crossed racial lines, and in 1977 the government banned him for seven years. [277]

Rwanda, in 1994, is a story about schools too.

In a country that was overwhelmingly Christian, at least eight hundred thousand people were killed in about a hundred days. It belongs in this book because Hutu and Tutsi were made into fixed races, and the mission system helped do it. Mission schools, where nearly all education happened, taught that the Tutsi were a separate, superior stock. In **1933 and 1934** the Belgian administration printed the category on identity cards. Sixty years later, those cards were what people were asked for at the roadblocks. [278]

People ran to churches for sanctuary, and some of the largest massacres happened inside them. Clergy were convicted for their part. One was the priest **Athanase Seromba**, who directed the bulldozing of his own church at Nyange with the people sheltering in it. [279] [280]

In the same hundred days, **Damas Gisimba** hid people in his orphanage in Kigali, and **Carl Wilkens**, the only American who stayed, bargained at the roadblocks to keep it alive. Something like four hundred people came out of that building. [281]

The money is in your own country too.

In **2007** a United States senator asked six large television ministries about their finances. Four refused to answer, and they were allowed to, because **churches are exempt from filing the Form 990** that every other tax-exempt charity must file. The inquiry closed in 2011 with no findings of wrongdoing and a recommendation that the sector police itself. I want to be exact: the committee did not find that anyone broke the law. It found it could not make them say. [282] [283]

I stood in the Temple and warned about the ones in long robes *who devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers.* Then I sat down and watched a widow put in two coins (Mark 12:38–44). The two passages sit side by side on purpose.

Note which ones opened their books.

The same hundred years had Dorothy Day and Óscar Romero in it.

Dorothy Day started a penny newspaper in New York in 1933, opened houses where anybody could eat and sleep, and lived in them herself until she was old. [284]

Óscar Romero was made archbishop of El Salvador because he was considered safe. Three weeks later, in March 1977, his friend **Rutilio Grande**, a priest who was organizing farm workers, was shot dead on a country road. [285] Romero began reading the names of the dead on the radio every week. On 23 March 1980 he told soldiers that an order against the law of God must not be obeyed. He was shot the next day, at the altar, saying mass. [286]

Nine years later, soldiers from the **Atlacatl Battalion**, a unit trained under United States sponsorship, killed six Jesuit priests at a university, along with their housekeeper **Elba Ramos** and her sixteen-year-old daughter **Celina.** The reports usually say "six Jesuits and two others." They were a mother and her daughter. [287] [288]

And every ordinary one counts too.

I will not pretend the only faithful people of the last hundred years were the famous ones.

Somebody in your own family did this quietly. A grandmother who fed whoever showed up. A man who paid somebody's rent and never said so. A woman who sat with the dying in your town for forty years and was never thanked from a pulpit.

They are the actual line of succession. Not the councils. Not the buildings.

So here is where this unit ends.

Twenty centuries. A barn full of other people's grain. A war preached as penance. A treasury of forgiveness with a price list. A permission slip for the taking of continents. A pamphlet telling princes to stab peasants. Tens of thousands executed as witches. A Bible with the escape removed. My own people

slandered for eight hundred years. And children buried without their parents being told, right up to 1996.

And in every single century, without exception, somebody read it right, usually poor, usually in trouble with the church of their own day. Both of those are the record. You do not get to keep one and drop the other.

Now we come to the room you actually sit in on Sunday.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Mark 12:38–44, all seven verses together. The long robes and the devoured widows' houses come first, then the widow at the treasury, on purpose.

Then look up: Acts 17:26. **Read the first half of the sentence.**

For the history: Dr. Peter Bryce, *The Story of a National Crime* (1922), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *94 Calls to Action* (2015). Both are free online.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/32**.

The Short Version

- Canada's church-run schools ran until 1996, were paid by the head, and their own doctor reported the deaths in 1907.
- Apartheid was defended from Acts 17:26 by quoting half of a sentence that begins "of one blood."
- In Rwanda, mission schools taught the racial theory that ended up on the identity cards used at the roadblocks.
- Churches do not file the Form 990, so four ministries could refuse to open their books.
- Day, Romero, and Elba and Celina Ramos stood on the other side of the same century.

Think About It

1. Which of these did you already know about? Who decided which ones you heard?
2. Nobody had to intend to kill children. The grant was paid by the head. Where in your own church does the money reward something nobody would defend out loud?

UNIT FIVE — THE CHURCH YOU SIT IN NOW

Everything up to here has been about other people, in other centuries.

This unit is about your church. The actual one. The carpet, the parking lot, the man at the front, the songs you know by heart.

I am not going to be cruel about it. Some of what happens in that building is the best thing in your town. I will say so where it is true.

But I am going to ask you to look at it the way we have been looking at everything else: by date, by source, and by who pays.

Lesson 33: What I Would Keep

> Before You Read
>
> *Before I find fault with anything else, what does this building actually get right?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Hospice** — care for people who are dying, focused on comfort instead of a cure.
>
> **Monastery** — a community where people devoted to religious life live together, follow a shared rule, and often serve the area around them.

Name one good thing first.

Somewhere in your congregation, right now, someone is doing something nobody is thanking them for. A meal driven to a house where somebody is dying. A ride to chemotherapy, every week, from a person who is not being paid for the gas. A relapse met without a lecture. A grief that gets a casserole and a phone call for months after everyone else has stopped calling.

That is not decoration on my movement. That is my movement, running exactly the way I described it (Matthew 25:35–36).

I did not invent hospitals. But my followers built the first ones, and I can give you the names.

The word your language uses for a place that cares for the sick, *hospital*, comes from the same Latin root as the word for a guest. That same root sits behind *hospice* and *hospitality*. [289]

Here are the starting points, with dates, the way we have done everything else.

Around the year **370** a bishop named **Basil of Caesarea**, in what is now Turkey, built a settlement outside his city for the sick, for travelers and for people with leprosy, with attendants and physicians in it. Historians of medicine usually call

it the first hospital. About twenty years later, in Rome, a wealthy widow named **Fabiola** sold her property and opened a house where she gathered sick people off the streets and nursed them herself. In Paris, the hospital called the **Hôtel-Dieu** — God's guest-house — was run by the church beside the cathedral for roughly a thousand years, and is still there. [290]

Then the monasteries, and this is where it gets long.

Around the year **530** a man named **Benedict** wrote a rule for monks. It is called the Rule of St. Benedict, it is still in use, and it is short enough to read in an evening. **Chapter 36** opens with this line: "Before all things and above all things, care must be taken of the sick." [291]

That one chapter is why a thousand years of European monasteries had a sick-house in them.

Honestly: the infirmary was mostly for the monks. But the same houses kept a guest-house and an alms-gate where travelers, pilgrims and the poor were fed and nursed, and for centuries in Latin Christian Europe that was the closest thing the continent had to a hospital system. [292]

Now follow the chain, because it does not run straight from a monastery to the building where you get chemotherapy.

Out of the monasteries. From the twelfth century, bishops, towns and trade brotherhoods began founding hospitals in the streets instead of behind walls. Two in London still carry the names they were given then: **St Bartholomew's**, founded in **1123**, and **St Thomas's**, from about the same time.

Then it broke. In England the king dissolved the monasteries between **1536 and 1541** and took their property. The hospitals inside them went too, and in much of the country care for the sick poor simply stopped. Londoners had to petition the crown to get two of their hospitals back, and the city ran them afterwards.

Then it was rebuilt by subscription. From **1719**, groups of private subscribers in Britain — people who paid an annual sum and elected the governors — founded hospitals in cities that had none: Westminster in 1719, Guy's in

London out of a bookseller's fortune, and dozens of provincial infirmaries after them. Many were started by clergy and preached for from pulpits.

And nursing was rebuilt by religious orders. Vincent de Paul and **Louise de Marillac** founded the Daughters of Charity in **1633** to nurse the sick poor in their own homes. In **1836** a German pastor named **Theodor Fliedner** opened a training school for deaconess nurses at Kaiserswerth, and in 1851 a young Englishwoman named Florence Nightingale went there to learn the work.

Then cities and denominations built the rest. Look at the name on the hospital in your town. In a great many American towns it still says Saint somebody, or Methodist, or Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Lutheran, or Mercy. That is not decoration. That is the last link of the chain, still bolted to the wall. [293]

The hospice movement has a name, a date and a delivery route.

The modern hospice movement is the idea that a dying person deserves pain control and company instead of abandonment. A British doctor named **Cicely Saunders** built it. She opened **St Christopher's Hospice** in south London in **1967**, and she said plainly, more than once, that her Christian faith was the reason she did it. [294]

Two of her changes did the work.

First, painkillers **on a clock instead of on request** — regular doses given before the pain came back, rather than when a patient had suffered enough to ask for relief. That one change is most of what hospice is.

Second, she taught that the pain is not only in the body. She called it **total pain**: the ache, plus the fear, plus the money, plus the family, plus the question of what any of it meant. So she built the place with a chaplain and a social worker in it, not only a pharmacy.

Then it travelled, and not by inspiration. An American nurse, **Florence Wald**, dean of the Yale nursing school, heard Saunders speak, went to work at St Christopher's, came home, and opened the first hospice in the United States at **Branford, Connecticut, in 1974.** Then the law moved: in **1982** Congress created a **hospice benefit under Medicare**, so that this kind of care was paid for. That is

the actual reason there is a hospice in your county and a nurse who comes to the house. [295]

A bishop's charity, a monk's rule, a doctor's clock, an act of Congress. That is how care travels.

I did not invent recovery, either. But look at where it actually started.

If you have ever sat in a church basement at a support-group meeting, you were sitting in a room with a longer memory than you knew.

In **1935**, in Akron, Ohio, a New York stockbroker named **Bill Wilson** met a local surgeon named **Dr. Bob Smith.** Both were drunks. Both had been trying to get sober inside a Christian fellowship movement called the **Oxford Group**, which asked its members to surrender to God, take an honest inventory of their own wrongs, confess them out loud to another person, make restitution to the people they had harmed, and ask God each morning what to do. Wilson had got sober through it. Smith had not, yet. They began working on each other, and that is the beginning of **Alcoholics Anonymous.** [296]

Now watch what Wilson did with the borrowed material, because this is the interesting part.

He kept the practices and changed the words. Surrender, inventory, confession, restitution, guidance — all five are the Oxford Group's, and all five are still there in the Twelve Steps he wrote down in 1938. But the New York alcoholics broke with the Group around **1937**, and when Wilson printed the steps the Christian vocabulary was gone. God had become "a Power greater than ourselves" and "God *as we understood Him*." [297]

That is why the meeting in your church basement sounds the way it does: a Christian practice with the doctrine deliberately unscrewed, so that anybody at all could walk in.

None of this excuses what I am about to show you in the rest of this unit, and none of what is coming cancels this out either.

Both things are true at once. The same building that inherited four centuries of adding conditions to the poor is, this week, probably also the only place in your

town that will feed someone without asking why they need it. I am not going to let you use the good in this room to wave away what is wrong with it. I am also not going to let what is wrong with it erase the good. Tell them apart. That is the whole method of this book, one more time, pointed at the room you are actually sitting in, instead of at history.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Matthew 25:35–36

You will find: the six things I actually asked for — food, water, welcome, clothing, care for the sick, a visit in prison. No belief statement anywhere in the list.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/33**.

The Short Version

- Whatever else is wrong with it, real, unpaid, unglamorous care happens inside churches every week, and that part is not fake.
- Hospitals began as Christian charity: **Basil's** house at Caesarea about **370**, then a thousand years of monastic infirmaries under **Benedict's rule** (c. 530, chapter 36), then town hospitals, then the subscription hospitals of the 1700s.
- The modern hospice was built by **Cicely Saunders** in London in **1967**. It reached America through **Florence Wald** in **1974** and the **Medicare hospice benefit of 1982.**
- **Alcoholics Anonymous** began in **1935** with two drunks out of a Christian movement called the **Oxford Group.** Bill Wilson kept its practices and took the Christian words out.

Think About It

1. Name one person in your congregation who does something like this without being thanked for it publicly.
2. Would it still happen if the building disappeared tomorrow — or does it need the room to exist?

Lesson 34: The Newest Thing in the Room

Before You Read

How old is the idea that Christians will vanish before the end?

Words to Know

Rapture — the belief that Christians will be removed from the earth before a period of catastrophe.

Dispensationalism — Darby's system dividing history into separate ages with different rules.

Tribulation — in this scheme, a period of disaster before the end.

Reference Bible — a Bible printed with an editor's notes and cross-references alongside the text.

Ask an honest question about something you were taught as ancient.

You have heard about the rapture. The believers disappear. Cars crash with nobody in them. The rest is left behind.

You may have been taught that this is what Christians have always believed.

Here is the date.

It happened in the 1830s.

A man named **John Nelson Darby**, born in 1800, worked out the scheme: a removal of the church before a period of tribulation, with history divided into distinct ages. His system is called dispensationalism.

Here is who he was, because the whole point is that he was nobody.

Darby was **Anglo-Irish.** He trained as a lawyer, then was ordained in the **Church of Ireland**, the established Protestant church there. He quit it. In the

early 1830s he joined, and then led, a small separatist movement that met without clergy and without a denomination, the **Plymouth Brethren.** [298]

So he was one ex-clergyman in a small British sect, writing for a small readership. That is where the rapture comes from.

He was not the only person ever to suggest something like it. A Baptist minister named Morgan Edwards sketched something in that direction in the 1700s, and there are a few other scattered hints. But there is no sign of it as a settled teaching in the first eighteen centuries of Christianity. It is not in the creeds, and it is not in the great old theologians. [299]

Now the question nobody asks, which is the only one that matters.

How does an idea invented by a separatist preacher in Britain end up in a church in Texas?

It did not float across the ocean. It was carried, by named men, through institutions you can look up. Here is the route.

- **1862–1877:** Darby tours the United States and Canada, preaching to pastors already interested in prophecy. [300]
- **1875:** Yearly prophecy conferences begin, later called the Niagara Bible Conference, led by **James H. Brookes**, a Presbyterian pastor in St. Louis. [301] [302]
- **1886: D. L. Moody**, the best-known evangelist in America and a friend of these men, founds the school now called Moody Bible Institute. In **1924**, **Dallas Theological Seminary** begins giving the scheme degrees. [303] [304]
- **1909: Oxford University Press** publishes **Cyrus Scofield**'s reference Bible, the King James text with the scheme printed in notes on the same page. [305] [306]
- **1910–1915:** Two oilmen, **Lyman and Milton Stewart**, pay to mail around three million free copies of *The Fundamentals* to pastors, missionaries and students. [307]
- **1970–2007: Hal Lindsey**, a Dallas graduate, writes *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and the *Left Behind* novels by **Tim LaHaye** and **Jerry B. Jenkins** sell

tens of millions of copies. [308] [309]

Read the 1910 line twice. Oil money paid the postage on the theology.

The Scofield Bible is where the air of authority came from.

Scofield did not invent his notes. He was converted in St. Louis in **1879** and taught the whole system by Brookes, the Niagara man. The notes in the Scofield Bible are Darby's scheme, handed down through Brookes. Darby to Brookes to Scofield makes three men and one chart.

Scofield had been a lawyer and politician in Kansas who left the office of United States Attorney within months, amid accusations about money, and he never spent a day training in a seminary. [310] I do not raise that to sneer. I raise it because you were taught to read those footnotes as something close to scripture.

Oxford University Press, the oldest and most respectable name in English-language publishing, put the King James Bible and Scofield's notes inside one binding. Scripture was at the top of the page, a Kansas lawyer was at the bottom, and Oxford was on the outside. For millions of people across the twentieth century, that Bible was **the** Bible, and the notes came with it.

Then it became entertainment.

Lindsey's book matched the news to prophecy. Notice that the seminary in the 1924 line produced the author in the 1970 line. The system had started making its own writers. The *Left Behind* novels were sold first through Christian bookstores and Christian radio, bought in bulk by churches and taught in youth groups, and only after that did they reach supermarkets and airports. [311]

An idea with no history at all had a distribution system.

That is how a doctrine about the end of the world gets into a church in under two hundred years, in a religion that is two thousand years old. It did not come by revelation. It came by tours, conferences, schools, a publisher and a mailing list.

"But it is in the Bible." Let us go and look, because that is the first thing anybody says.

There is one passage that carries the whole weight, and it is not mine. It is Paul, writing to a congregation in Thessalonica around the year 50, about twenty years after I died, answering people who were upset that some of their members had died before the end came.

He writes that the Lord will come down from heaven **with a shout, with the archangel's voice and with a trumpet of God**, that the Christian dead will rise first, and that those still alive will be **caught up in the clouds** to **meet** him (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). The word *rapture* comes from the Latin translation of "caught up." [312]

What is there is **one** arrival, at the end, and it is **loud.** Everybody rises to **meet** somebody who is arriving. In Paul's world that word described a city's people going out through the gates to welcome an arriving ruler and walk back in with him.

What is not there is a secret, a separate earlier removal, a seven-year gap, or a world that carries on afterwards.

Darby's contribution was to take one loud public arrival and split it into **two events with a gap between them.** That splitting is the whole rapture. It is not in Paul. It is in Darby.

And here is the one they will quote at me, in red letters.

Somebody will point out that I said it myself: *two men in a field, one is taken and one is left; two women grinding, one taken, one left* (Matthew 24:40–41).

That is fair. Read the three lines directly above it.

I had just compared that day to the days of Noah, when people ate and drank and married and knew nothing until the **flood came and swept them away** (Matthew 24:37–39).

So in my own comparison, being **taken** is what happened to the people the flood took. The one **left** is the one still standing.

And in Luke's version of the same saying, my friends ask me where these people are taken **to**, and my answer is grim: *where the body is, the vultures gather*

(Luke 17:34–37).

That is not an evacuation. It is a warning that ordinary life gets interrupted without notice, which is exactly what I said next: stay awake, because you do not know the day. [313]

If you have built an escape plan on that verse, you have built it on the flood.

Now here is why I care, and it is not about prophecy charts.

I mind what this particular idea **does to how a person lives in the meantime.**

Plenty of churches that teach the rapture run the best food pantry in their county. If that is your church, I am not calling your pantry fake. What I am describing is what this idea does to an **argument**, when somebody needs a reason not to act.

If the world is ending soon, and you get removed before the worst of it, it becomes easy to say that repairing things matters less, that poverty is permanent, that politics is a waste of effort, that damage to the earth does not finally matter, and that the only urgent task left is getting individuals to say a prayer before the deadline.

Do you see what has happened there?

Every single thing I actually asked for has been reclassified as a waste of time.

Feed people, forgive debts, visit prisoners, make peace, sell what you have, welcome strangers — all of it becomes optional decoration on the one thing that counts, which is your own personal evacuation.

And here is what I said about the timing.

I said nobody knows the day or the hour, not the angels and not even me (Mark 13:32).

And when my own friends stood there after everything and asked me about the schedule, I told them it was not theirs to know (Acts 1:7).

If I did not know, and I said so out loud, and your Bible printed it, then a man with a chart is not being faithful. He is being something else.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Mark 13:32.

You will find: that I say plainly I do not know when.

Then look at your own Bible. Are there notes at the bottom of the page or in the margins? Who wrote them? Is his name on the spine?

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/34**.

The Short Version

- The rapture scheme was assembled in the **1830s** by **John Nelson Darby** of the small **Plymouth Brethren.**
- It reached America through tours, conferences, Bible schools, **Dallas Seminary** and free books paid for by oil money.
- **Oxford University Press** printed Scofield's notes in **1909**, and that is where the authority came from.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16–17** describes one loud arrival, and the two-stage scheme with a gap is Darby's addition.
- Its practical effect is to make everything I actually asked for look like a waste of time.

Think About It

1. If you knew for certain the world had another thousand years, what would your church do differently tomorrow?
2. Why is a doctrine that requires nothing of you so much easier to preach than one that does?

Lesson 35: What Is Preached Now

> Before You Read
>
> *Count what your church asks of you. Then count what it asks of itself.*

> Words to Know
>
> **Altar call** — the invitation to come forward at the end of a service.
>
> **Seed faith** — the teaching that a financial gift produces a financial return.
>
> **Prosperity gospel** — the teaching that faith, and giving, produce health and wealth in this life.
>
> **Form 990** — the yearly financial report most American charities must file with the tax authorities, which anyone may read. Churches are not required to file one.

I want to do this fairly, so let us start with what is good.

In a great many churches, real things happen. Somebody's rent gets paid. Somebody gets driven to chemotherapy. A widow has company on Thursdays. A man newly out of prison gets a job through somebody's brother-in-law. Casseroles arrive at the right house at the right hour without anyone organizing it.

That is my movement. It never stopped. It is happening this week in your town, in a building with a bad carpet.

Keep that. Nothing in this lesson touches that.

Now, look at the sermon.

Think back over the last two years of sermons you have heard. How many were about your personal victory, your breakthrough, your season, your blessing? How many were about money owed by poor people to rich people, or the men waiting for work in the parking lot, or a prisoner?

I ask because of what filled my own teaching.

Of the roughly forty stories I told that your gospels kept, at least a dozen turn on money, debt, wages, land or inheritance. Then there are the sayings, which are worse: sell what you own, you cannot serve God and money, lend and expect nothing back. [314]

Then count the number of times I tell anybody how to get **more** money. That takes no time at all.

The first thing I ever read out loud in public, when I stood up in my hometown synagogue and picked the passage myself, was about good news for the poor, release for prisoners, freedom for the oppressed, and the year of the Lord's favor — which, in the law I was raised on, meant debts cancelled and land given back (Luke 4:18–19).

That was my opening statement. I chose it.

Here are three things in the modern service. Each one has a history.

The sinner's prayer.

There is no such formula anywhere in the New Testament. Nobody in your Bible is ever led in it. [99]

It grew out of revival preaching in the 1800s, and then it was **printed**, which is what fixed the words. **Bill Bright**'s booklet *The Four Spiritual Laws*, from **Campus Crusade for Christ**, the *Steps to Peace with God* card handed out at **Billy Graham's** crusades, and **Jack Chick's** cartoon tracts from the 1960s onwards all end with a prayer for the reader to say. [315]

A booklet is not a commandment. But a booklet with a prayer in a box, handed to a frightened person at the right moment, is a very effective instrument, and you should know that it was designed.

The altar call.

Calling people forward is older than the phrase. At the frontier camp meetings, starting with the enormous one at **Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801**, people under

conviction were brought to a bench at the front. [316] But the organized version has an author.

Charles Finney was a lawyer in upstate New York. He was converted in 1821, and through the 1820s and 1830s he ran revivals across western New York. His methods included the **anxious bench**, a seat at the front where anybody under conviction was invited to sit in view of the whole room, so that a decision became a public, physical act.

Then in **1835** he published *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. A revival, he wrote, is **not a miracle.** It is "a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means." [317]

The man who designed the practice told you himself that it was a technique.

That is not a scandal by itself. Finney spent his life against slavery and was no cynic. But it is a method with an inventor and a date. It is not a commandment.

The offering, taught as a transaction.

This is the one aimed at your own envelope.

If you have heard that giving money to a ministry causes God to return more money to you, that your gift is a **seed** you are planting for a harvest, then you have heard the medieval indulgence wearing new clothes. Pay here, and receive there. The biggest difference is that the old payoff was in the next life, and now it is promised in this one, which is bolder.

It has a name in your country: the **prosperity gospel. Oral Roberts**, a Pentecostal healing evangelist from Oklahoma, built his ministry's fundraising in the early **1970s** around what he named **Seed-Faith**, in a book and on television. His verse was Luke 6:38. [318]

Nobody voted for this doctrine. It won a competition. Before the 1960s, stations mostly gave free religious airtime to the mainline church councils, which did not ask for money on the air. Then in **1960** the Federal Communications Commission let stations count **paid** programs toward their public-service requirement, so the religious hour went up for sale, and the preachers who

could buy it were the ones whose message raised money on the air: your gift will come back to you multiplied. [319]

The stations were not choosing a theology. They were selling time. But selling time **selected** a theology, and the one it selected was the one about seeds.

They use one verse for this, so read it properly.

Give, and it will be given to you — a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over (Luke 6:38). That one is mine. I said it.

Now read the eight lines above it, which never get read from a stage.

Love your enemies. Do good to people who hate you. Give to everyone who asks. **Lend, expecting nothing back** (Luke 6:35).

I said *expect nothing back*, and a few lines later I said *give, and it will be given to you*. I said both in the same breath, to the same crowd.

So whatever the second line means, it cannot mean *invest and collect*, because the man who said it had just forbidden expecting a return. Read the whole passage and you will see what the measure is: it is about how you treat people. Judge people generously and you will be judged generously. Hand out mercy in a bucket and you get mercy in a bucket. [320]

The measure was mercy. Somebody changed the units to dollars.

Here is the test I would apply to any preacher, and you can run it this Sunday.

Does what he asks of you cost him anything? Who in this room could not be named from the front? And can I see the books?

That last one is not cynicism. It has an exact answer in law, which almost nobody in the pews knows.

Every ordinary charity in your town, from the food bank to the animal rescue, must file a yearly financial return with the tax authorities, called the **Form 990**, and that form is **public.** You can read it online, free, tonight, and see the salaries in it.

Churches do not have to file one. They are exempt by statute. A church can be a tax-exempt charity, take in millions of dollars, and never file a public financial return at all. [321]

That is the law, and it was written for a decent reason: a government auditing pulpits is worse than the alternative. But it means the honesty of your church's books is **voluntary.** Some churches publish audited accounts anyway, and some join a voluntary accountability body set up in 1979. Ask which yours does. [322]

When I sent people out, they went with no bag, no money and no spare coat (Mark 6:8–9). Whatever else that was, it was **something anyone could check.**

And here is the hardest one.

Suppose your pastor preached, this Sunday, exactly what I said in Unit One: sell what you have, cancel what you are owed, invite people who cannot return the favor, stop performing your giving in public. How many of the largest donors would still be there in a month?

You know the answer. Everybody in the building knows the answer.

I will be straight with you: that last one is my judgment, not a document. But you have a documented version of it coming in the next lesson.

When donors pay for the message, the message learns what the donors like. That is not a conspiracy. It is a budget.

That is not a scandal about your church in particular. It is the structural fact of a religion that has something to lose.

That is why the poor keep getting it right, in every century, while the well-funded keep inventing reasons to avoid it.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Luke 4:18–19, and note that I chose that passage.

Then look up: Luke 14:12–14 — who to invite to dinner.

Then look up: Matthew 6:1–4 — what I said about letting people see you give.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/35**.

The Short Version

- The casseroles and the rides to the hospital **are** my movement. Keep those.
- **Charles Finney** designed the altar call and wrote in **1835** that revival is *not a miracle*. Tracts fixed the **sinner's prayer**.
- **Oral Roberts** named **Seed-Faith** in the early **1970s**, and paid airtime after **1960** selected it.
- **Luke 6:38** sits a few lines after *lend, expecting nothing back*. The measure is mercy, not money.
- Ordinary charities file a public **Form 990.** Churches are exempt, so ask to see the books.

Think About It

1. Of the last ten sermons you heard, how many asked something of the wealthy people in the room?
2. If your church published every number next Sunday, what would change?

Lesson 36: The Flag

> Before You Read
>
> *Why is there a flag in the room where you worship me?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Nationalism** — putting loyalty to your own nation above other loyalties.
>
> **Sanctuary** — the main room of a church, where worship happens.
>
> **Denarius** — the Roman coin I was handed. It had the emperor's face on it, and an inscription calling him divine.
>
> **Chosen nation** — the idea that God has specially favored one country.

Let's begin with a small observation.

Look around the sanctuary next Sunday and find the flag.

Then ask a question nobody asks: **which country's?**

Because whichever one it is, there are Christians in the country next door with a different one in the same position, believing the same things about me, singing the same songs in a different language.

We cannot all be the chosen nation. The arithmetic does not allow it.

How this started. You already know the date.

You read about it in Unit Two, Lesson 18. It happened in the year **312**, when a Roman general named **Constantine**, fighting a civil war for control of the empire, painted my sign on his soldiers' shields and won a battle at the **Milvian Bridge** outside Rome, on the 28th of October. [323]

That is the birth of the flag in the sanctuary: the day my execution became a military emblem.

But the year 312 does not explain a cloth flag of a particular modern country on a pole in an American room, and I am not going to pretend it does. There are seventeen centuries in between. The last hundred years of it are dated, documented and easy to check, so let us do that.

First Europe, because the sign went to war for a very long time.

From **1095**, when a pope preached the first crusade, men sewed cloth crosses onto their coats to show they had signed up, and went to kill under it. Blessing the weapons and the banners became an ordinary part of church ritual.

From the nineteenth century onwards German soldiers wore *Gott mit uns* — **"God with us"** — stamped on their belt buckles, through the First World War and into the Second.

In **1914** the armies on both sides marched out with chaplains, and churchmen in each country announced that God was with their nation. They were praying to the same God, in nearly the same words, for the destruction of each other's sons. [324]

Nobody had to argue for any of that. That is the part that should trouble you. It had become ordinary.

Now your own country, because that is your actual question.

American sanctuaries did not have national flags in them for most of American history. Here is how they arrived.

The wars put them there. During the First and Second World Wars, congregations hung **service flags** — a banner with a blue star for each member in uniform, and a gold star when one was killed — and posted honor rolls with the names on them. That is a tender and human thing, and it is how the national colors first came to stand at the front of a great many churches: not as politics, but as grief. Then the war ended, and the pole stayed. [325]

Some churches added a second flag, a white one with a cross in the corner, which was designed for Sunday-school use in Brooklyn in **1897** and has a pledge of its own. [326]

Then the government made the link official, and you can date it to the year.

In **1954**, Congress added the words **"under God"** to the Pledge of Allegiance.

In **1956**, Congress made **"In God We Trust"** the national motto, and from **1957** it was printed on the paper money in your wallet.

Three acts of a legislature in four years, in the middle of the Cold War, when the official argument for American religion was that religion is what distinguished the country from atheist communism. Presidents said so. So did preachers. Church membership climbed through the decade, and going to church became a way of demonstrating that you were loyal. [327]

Hold that still for a moment: **your religion became a way of proving your patriotism.** That is the flag in the sanctuary, and it is not from 312. It is from within living memory.

And it was organized, by people, with money, and I can name them.

Here you should want documents instead of adjectives, so here are five.

Spiritual Mobilization. A Congregationalist pastor in Los Angeles named **James Fifield** ran an organization through the **1940s and 1950s**, funded by corporate leaders — oil and manufacturing money — which recruited ministers to preach that the free market was God's own arrangement and the New Deal a sin against it. It mailed sermon material to ministers across the country, and ran a magazine and a radio program. [328]

The prayer breakfast. A Norwegian-American minister named **Abraham Vereide** organized prayer groups among businessmen and politicians. In **1953** the first presidential prayer breakfast was held with President Eisenhower present. It has met every year since, and is now called the National Prayer Breakfast. [329]

The crusades. Billy Graham's enormous meetings, from **1949** onwards, preached against personal sin and also, out loud, against communism, with presidents on the platform. He became something like a national chaplain in exactly the years when being religious and being American were being deliberately fused. [330]

Moral Majority. In **1979** a Baptist pastor named **Jerry Falwell** founded an organization to turn congregations into a voting bloc. Its instrument was **direct mail**: computerized lists, personalized letters, an enemy named in every one, and a reply envelope. It folded in 1989. [331]

Christian Coalition. In **1989**, after a presidential run, the broadcaster **Pat Robertson** founded an organization that distributed millions of **voter guides** through churches, scoring candidates for the congregation. [332]

Five organizations, with founders, dates, funders and methods. "Nationalist religion" is not a mood. It is an industry with an accounting department.

Here is what I actually said about my own country's independence.

This is worth your attention, because my situation is exactly the kind people use to claim me for their own cause.

My country was occupied. Foreign soldiers were in it. There were armed men in the hills who wanted them out, and many of them were devout.

I had every reason to be a nationalist. It would have been the popular position. It is probably what most people around me expected of a man with a following.

I did not do it.

When somebody tried to trap me on the question of paying the empire's tax, I asked whose face was on the coin, and told them to give the man his own picture back (Mark 12:16–17).

That is not an endorsement of Rome. It is a refusal of the frame. You have brought me a question about which flag, and I am telling you that the coin is not the subject.

And at my arrest, when one of my own men drew a weapon to defend me, I told him to put it away (Matthew 26:52).

That is the single clearest instruction I ever gave about the use of force, and it was given in the most sympathetic circumstance imaginable — an innocent man being arrested at night by armed men.

Here is why empires like me so much.

Go back to Lesson 2 and remember what we found.

A man from a village cannot be put on a flag. He has a face, an accent, a mother, a trade and opinions about money.

A **title** can be put on anything. A title has no village and no politics of its own. You can put a title on a coin, a standard, a banner, a uniform, a podium.

Twenty centuries of empires have reached for the title and left the man in the village.

And here is the thing to notice about nationalist religion.

It always costs its members nothing and demands everything of somebody else.

It never asks the congregation to sell anything, forgive any debt, or eat with anybody they would rather not. It asks them to be angry at people who are not in the room.

That is a very comfortable arrangement, and it is the exact reverse of everything in Unit One.

One more thing, and then I will leave it.

I did say something about my kingdom, and it is not what you think.

I said it was not of this world (John 18:36). The people who quote that verse usually use it to mean my kingdom is in the sky and therefore has nothing to do with rent.

That is not what it means. It means my kingdom does not work like the kingdoms of this world. It does not have an army, it does not have borders, it does not have a treasury and it cannot be captured.

Which also means it cannot be **represented** by any of those things.

Not by a flag. Not by a general. Not by a party. Not by a country.

If your faith can be folded into a national flag, look very carefully at what got folded out of it.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Matthew 26:52.

You will find: me telling an armed friend to put the weapon away while I am being arrested unjustly.

Then look up: Mark 12:16–17, and notice I answer a political trap by pointing at a picture on a coin.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/36**.

The Short Version

- The flag in the sanctuary starts in **312**, with a sign painted on army shields.
- My own country was occupied, and I refused to be its nationalist, in the one situation where it would have been popular.
- I told a man to put his weapon away while I was being arrested.
- A **title** can go on a flag. A man from a village cannot.

Think About It

1. There is a Christian in another country whose flag is where yours is. Which of you is wrong?
2. What does nationalist religion ask of the people who hold it? Anything?

Lesson 37: The Poor, Made Into a Category

> Before You Read
>
> *When did the poor stop being people and become a policy question?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Deserving poor** — an old legal distinction between poor people considered worthy of help and those who are not.
>
> **Parish** — a local church district, which in English law was responsible for its own poor.
>
> **Less eligibility** — the rule that relief must be made worse than the worst-paid honest work, so that nobody prefers it.
>
> **Means test** — checking a person's income and property to decide whether they qualify.

Here is a word that got invented.

English law from the 1500s onward, as more people lost their land or their work and turned up begging in the towns, draws a line between the **deserving poor** and the sturdy beggar. The deserving poor are the old, the crippled, the orphaned and the widowed, and they may be helped. The others are held to be idle by choice, and they may be whipped, branded, set to forced labor, or sent back to the parish they came from. [333]

Most books stop there, so here is the actual chain.

It runs from an English statute to the form on the desk in your church office, and each link has a date.

- **1601:** England's Poor Law makes the **parish** responsible for its own poor, pays for it with a local property tax, and appoints an **overseer of the poor** to sort people into bins. [334]

- **1662:** The **Settlement Act** lets a parish ship a newcomer back where he came from, and the American colonies copy the whole system, which New England calls **warning out.** [335] [336]
- **1834:** A new English Poor Law adopts **less eligibility**, meaning relief must be made worse than the worst-paid job, and enforces it with the workhouse. [337]
- **1877:** An Episcopal clergyman, **S. Humphreys Gurteen**, brings London's **Charity Organization Society** to Buffalo, New York, where it investigates every applicant before anyone gives. [338]
- **1935 and 1996:** The **Social Security Act** splits help into "earned" insurance and means-tested welfare, and a 1996 law whose title begins **Personal Responsibility** adds work requirements and a five-year limit. [339] [340]
- **Today:** Your church's benevolence fund most likely wants an application, receipts, a pastor's signature and a referral-list check, and sees each person once.

Look at 1601 again. Relief was now administered **by the church**, with **tax money**, by a **named official**, whose job was to **decide which bin you are in.** Everything after that is the machine being improved.

Now look at 1834. *Relief must be worse than work, or people will choose relief.* You have heard that sentence this year. It is the reasoning behind every work requirement, every waiting period, every rule designed to make a benefit unpleasant to collect, and it has never once been retired.

The 1877 link is the one that reached the church.

The Charity Organization Society was against what it called *indiscriminate almsgiving*, which meant handing a man a coin because he asked. It kept a **central registry** of everyone who applied for help in the city. It sent a **friendly visitor**, usually a respectable woman from a church, to the applicant's **home** to ask about drink and work and habits, and to report whether this family should be helped.

I want to be fair to them. They were not cruel people. They held, sincerely, that giving without inquiry made people into paupers, and the casework method

they invented became professional social work, which has done an enormous amount of good.

But the habit they taught the churches is the habit you still have. **Investigate before you give.** It is a hundred and fifty years old and it came in through a church door.

Now look at the last line of the list.

The application and the case file are the **Charity Organization Society**, 1877. The household inquiry is the **friendly visitor.** The referral check is the **central registry**, built to stop duplicate giving. The once-only rule is **less eligibility**. The pastor's signature is the **overseer of the poor**, 1601.

I will be straight with you about what I can and cannot show. I cannot hand you a memo in which a church adopted these forms. There was no such memo. Churches took up the ordinary practices of the charitable world around them, one office at a time, over a century. And a church that hands out money has to be able to show its books, so some paperwork exists for honest reasons.

But the **shape** of it did not come from me, and it did not come from the Bible, and it is not neutral. It came out of 1601, 1834 and 1877.

Here is what the question does.

A hungry person in front of you is a simple situation. You have food, he does not, you give him some. The moment you ask whether he **deserves** it, you have given yourself a job, assessment, and that job can be done forever, and while it is being done nobody eats.

It also feels righteous. That is what makes it dangerous.

Now go and look at what I actually did about this.

I never once asked.

Five thousand people on a hillside were fed. Nobody was interviewed. Nobody was sorted. There is no line in it where anybody establishes need (Mark 6:34–44).

A blind beggar named Bartimaeus shouted by the road at Jericho, and the crowd told him to be quiet. That was the crowd doing the screening, and I overruled them. I asked him one question, and it was not *what have you done to help yourself*. It was ***what do you want me to do for you*** (Mark 10:46–52).

Ten men with a skin disease were healed. One came back to say thank you, and he was a Samaritan, the wrong kind. The other nine did not bother (Luke 17:11–19). Nothing happened to the nine. They stayed healed. **I did not take it back from the ungrateful.**

And when I described the one scene where people are actually sorted, the sheep and the goats, read the criteria (Matthew 25:31–46). I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick and you looked after me, in prison and you came to me.

Every one of those six is a physical act done to a body. There is no doctrine on the list, no prayer, and **no assessment of the recipient.**

Now the verse behind every "but some people just don't want to work."

They are quoting this: ***if anyone will not work, let him not eat*** (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

First, it is not mine. It is a line in a letter written to one congregation, and it is one of the letters whose authorship is argued over. It is not in red in anybody's Bible.

Second, read the next verse. The letter says who it is aimed at: certain people **in that congregation** who had stopped working and were going about as busybodies (2 Thessalonians 3:11). The whole letter is written to people worked up about the end of the world arriving immediately (2 Thessalonians 2:1–2). The letter tells **those** people to go back to work.

Third, it is a rule for members of a household, about each other. It is not a rule for the stranger at the door, and there is no hungry outsider anywhere in the passage.

Somebody took a house rule about freeloading brothers and turned it into a national doctrine about strangers. Ask yourself who benefited from that move.

Here is the other half, which is harder.

Charity is the easy half, and I will not let you stop there. A food pantry treats hunger, and the prophets I learned from were not talking about pantries. They were shouting about the people who **made** the hunger. Charity feeds a man this week. It also lets everybody feel finished.

And somebody will tell you I said the poor will always be with you (Mark 14:7), meaning poverty is permanent, so relax. Go and read the sentence I was echoing: *the poor will never cease out of the land, therefore I command you to open your hand* (Deuteronomy 15:11). The whole chapter is about **cancelling debts every seven years.** That verse is not a shrug. It is a command with a mechanism attached.

> Check It Yourself
>
> **Look up:** Matthew 25:31–46 and list the six things.
>
> **You will find:** six physical acts, no doctrines, and nothing about whether the person deserved it.
>
> **Then look up:** Luke 17:11–19. Count how many were healed, and how many came back. Then notice that nothing was taken away from the nine.
>
> **Then look up:** 2 Thessalonians 3:10, and keep reading to verse 11 to find out who it is talking about.
>
> **Go deeper:** the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/37**.

The Short Version

- The **deserving poor** is a legal category from English law, not a teaching of mine.
- Its chain runs from the **1601** Poor Law through **1834** and the **1877** Charity Organization Society to your church's benevolence form.
- I never screened anybody, and nine of the ten I healed never said thank you and kept their healing.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:10** is aimed at church members who quit work expecting the end, not at a hungry stranger.
- My one description of a final sorting lists **six physical acts** and no assessment.

Think About It

1. Why does assessing someone feel more responsible than feeding them?
2. Go and get your church's benevolence application. Read each question on it and ask what the answer is *for*. Which of them would have stopped me?

Lesson 38: I Would Not Be Admitted

Before You Read

Would your church let me in the building?

Words to Know

Ordination — the official act by which a church authorizes someone to lead or preach.

Seminary — a school for training clergy. The word means a seed-bed. It has a founding date.

Doctrinal statement — a list of beliefs a church requires its leaders to sign.

Collaborator — someone who works for an occupying power against his own people.

Let me arrive.

I am a manual laborer from an occupied province. I own one set of clothes. I have no permanent address and no income. My hands are wrecked. I do not speak your language.

I have no credentials of any kind. I never attended a school of religion. I hold no office and no one has licensed me to speak.

And I have a criminal record.

I was taken at night, in a garden, by an armed party carrying torches. In the morning I was handed to the Roman prefect of the province, who heard the matter himself, with no jury, no counsel and no appeal. I was flogged and executed before the day was out. The charge was **sedition**: claiming to be a king.

So in your terms: **a capital conviction against the state, no jury, no appeal, sentence carried out.** If your church runs a background check on me, that is

what comes back.

Here is who is with me.

A woman with a reputation in her town is with me. So are several men who work with fish and smell of it, a man who collected taxes for the occupying power, which makes him a collaborator, and a man who begged on a road for years. None of us has been vetted.

Now walk us into your church. Would the woman with the reputation be welcome in the women's group, or would she be a topic in it? Would the man with the record be allowed near the children's wing? Would I?

Here is the thing that should trouble you most, and it is not about rudeness. I would not qualify to teach.

That is not because anybody in that building is wicked. It is because of the standards: a degree, a license, a board, an ordination, a background check, a doctrinal statement, a reference. And every one of those has a date and a reason.

- **1559:** Calvin founds an academy at Geneva to train ministers who can read the text in Greek and Hebrew.
- **1563:** The **Council of Trent** orders every diocese to set up a **seminary** to train boys for the priesthood. [341]
- **1636:** Massachusetts Puritans found Harvard because they "dreaded to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches." [342]
- **1808 and 1812:** Andover and Princeton seminaries open, and boards begin examining and licensing candidates. [343]
- **1910 to the 1920s:** The fundamentalist fight over the new study of the Bible produces lists of essential doctrines, and then the signed **doctrinal statement.** [344]
- **1984 to 2002:** Clergy abuse cases, from Lafayette, Louisiana, to the *Boston Globe*, lead churches and their insurers to require **background checks.** [345]

The doctrinal statement came out of one fight in one decade, and nobody remembers that now.

The background check is different, and I want you to be glad about it. It came from children being harmed by men whom nobody had checked, in institutions that moved them along instead of stopping them. If a rule keeps a child safe and it keeps me out of the building too, the rule is right and I will wait outside.

Here is the honest part, because one gate is older than all of them.

The reference letter is older than every other gate, and the first Christians vetted people too. Paul mentions letters of recommendation (2 Corinthians 3:1). An early Christian handbook called the **Didache**, probably from the late first or early second century, says that any apostle who stays more than a couple of days is a false prophet, and any prophet who asks for money is a false prophet. [346] Travelling frauds were a real problem, and poor congregations were being eaten. That is the strongest thing anyone can say against this lesson, and it is true.

Here is my answer. **The Didache screens for greed.** Your gates screen for a degree, a signed opinion and a reference from people already inside. The early test asks *is this man taking from you.* Yours asks *is this man one of us, and can he afford to be.*

And now the strongest thing in this lesson, and it is in your own Bible.

The clergy requirements do not come from me. I never wrote a job description for anybody. They come from **1 Timothy 3:1–7** and **Titus 1:5–9.** That is the literal, historical source of the qualifications every tradition uses, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant alike. Ordination councils still read it out loud.

Now hold me up against it.

Married, the husband of one wife. I was not married.

He must manage his own household well, with his children respectful. I had no household and no children. I told people to leave theirs.

Not violent. I knotted a whip out of cords and turned the money-changers' tables over in the Temple courtyard, at the busiest week of the year (John 2:15).

Not quarrelsome, and gentle. I called the most respected religious teachers in my country whitewashed tombs and a brood of vipers (Matthew 23).

Well thought of by outsiders. The outsiders executed me as a rebel. Before that, the standing complaint about me was that I was a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:19).

Above reproach. See the criminal record above.

That is at least five failures, on a seven-item list, and one of them is capital.

First, the list is not mine. Not a word of it is in red in anybody's Bible.

Second, it is late. The letters to Timothy and Titus are among the ones whose authorship is most seriously questioned, and they are generally placed decades after Paul.

Third, it is a document about running an organization. It cares about stability, reputation, household order and what the neighbors think. That is a reasonable thing for a young institution to want. But do not miss what happened: **a later text, written by somebody else, to protect an institution's reputation, became the gate the founder cannot walk through.**

Here is the sentence I most want in your head.

The people I could not get along with, in my own lifetime, were not the drunks and the prostitutes and the collaborators. I ate with those people more than with anyone else. The people I fought with were **the religious professionals of my own tradition**, who knew the text, tithed correctly, and were quite sure they were on God's side. They were not villains. Most of them were sincere. That is exactly the problem.

If you had been alive in my town, you would almost certainly have been on their side, out of upbringing and decency and trusting the people you were taught to trust. I am not saying that to shame you. Every person in this book who read it right was told they were wrong by the respectable religion of their own day.

So when something in this book has made you uncomfortable, and the first voice in your head says *but my pastor says*, that voice is the oldest one in the story. It is not a wicked voice. It is just always, reliably, on the side of whoever owns the barn.

Check It Yourself

Look up: 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9 — the qualification lists your church actually uses.

You will find: married, a household run well, children in order, gentle, not quarrelsome, well thought of by outsiders. Then go through them one at a time and mark which ones I pass.

Then look up: Matthew 11:19 — what my critics called me.

You will find: *a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners*. That was the complaint against me, from religious people.

Then look up: Luke 7:36–39 — what a respectable host thought when a woman with a reputation touched me.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/38**.

The Short Version

- I was a laborer with no credentials and a **capital conviction for sedition**, with no jury and no appeal.
- The gates have dates: **seminaries** from **1563**, **doctrinal statements** from the **1920s**, **background checks** from **1984 to 2002**.
- The background check is the one gate built out of a real emergency, and I am glad it exists.
- The **Didache** screened teachers for **greed**, and yours screen for credentials, opinions and connections.
- By **1 Timothy 3** and **Titus 1**, later letters that are not mine, I fail at least five items.

Think About It

1. Honestly: in my own village, whose side would you have been on?
2. Go through your church's requirements for someone who wants to teach. Mark each one: *protects a child*, *protects a doctrine*, or *protects the people already in charge*. How many are in the third column?

Lesson 39: The Corner

> Before You Read
>
> *You have finished the history. What do you actually do now?*

> Words to Know
>
> **Managed** — steered by an organization into wanting what it needs you to want.
>
> **Doctrine** — an official teaching of a church.
>
> **Institution** — an organization with property, income, officers and rules to protect.

First, here is what I am not asking.

I am not asking you to leave your church.

I have spent five units taking things apart, and I will not end by telling you to be alone. Alone is not better. Half the good in this book was done by small groups of ordinary people who kept showing up for each other.

If the people in that building feed the hungry in your town, go, and help them do it.

I am asking for something harder than leaving, which is **staying without being managed.**

Second, here is what you are allowed to do.

You are allowed to keep the parts that are mine and put down the parts that are not.

Nobody has to give you permission for this. That is the entire content of Lesson 1. The thing was printed in your own Bible the whole time, and nobody needed to hide it, because nobody expected you to look.

You looked. That is done now. It cannot be undone.

Third, here are the eight things.

If you want the whole of what I taught, stripped of twenty centuries of additions, here it is. You can hold it in your hand.

And every one of the eight has a reference beside it, because I have spent this whole book telling you to check things, and it would be a poor joke to give you my own list with nothing to open.

1. Forgive what people owe you. Money included. Money especially. That is the prayer — *forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors* (Matthew 6:12; and the parable of the servant forgiven a huge debt who jails a man over a small one, Matthew 18:23–35).

2. Eat with the wrong people. Not serve them from behind a table. Sit down at the same table, in public, where you can be seen doing it. That is what the complaint against me was about: *he eats with tax collectors and sinners* (Mark 2:15–17; Luke 15:1–2).

3. Do not screen anybody. Not once, in the whole record, did I ask if somebody deserved it. And in the one scene I described where people are finally sorted, the test is six physical acts and nothing else (Matthew 25:31–46).

4. Be seen with the untouchable. There is somebody in your town that nobody else will stand beside. Stand next to them, in daylight, where it costs you something. A man with a skin disease asked me if I was willing. I reached out and **touched** him, which was the one thing nobody did (Mark 1:40–42).

5. Ask people what they want. Then listen to the answer. Most people have not been asked anything in years. A blind man was shouting by the road and the crowd told him to shut up, and the question I asked him was ***what do you want me to do for you*** (Mark 10:51).

6. Do it quietly. I told people to keep it to themselves, over and over — do not sound a trumpet, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing (Matthew 6:1–4). If your giving has an audience, you have already been paid.

7. Do not carry a weapon in my name. Not a real one, not a rhetorical one. Put it away. When one of my own men drew a blade to defend me, on the worst

night of my life, I told him: ***put your sword back in its place*** (Matthew 26:52).

8. Say out loud who is causing it. The prophets I was raised on did not only feed people. They named the men in charge. I spent an entire afternoon doing it in public, in the Temple courts, to the most respected religious authorities in my country, by name and to their faces (Matthew 23; Luke 11:37–52). That is the half nobody preaches, and it is the half that gets you in trouble, and it was most of my job.

That is it. That is the whole thing.

There is no ninth item about believing the correct doctrine, because I never gave you one.

Fourth, here is the corner.

You are going to find, if you start doing those eight things, that you cannot say most of this out loud in your church.

Not because you will be thrown out. Because it will make people uncomfortable, and you will feel it, and you will learn to hold it quietly.

That is what it has always been like. That is Francis before they built him a basilica. That is the Beguines in their houses. That is Woolman walking so no horse and no boy would be driven for him. That is four Quakers in 1688 whose own meeting took eighty-eight years to agree with them.

You will be in a corner of a room, doing the actual thing, while the front of the room does something else.

That corner is the church. It always was. It is the only part of it I have ever recognized.

Fifth, and last, here is the question this whole book was written to answer.

I have not asked you to stop worshipping.

I have asked you, for two hundred pages, to look carefully at **what you have been worshipping,** and to notice how much of it has a date and an author.

So here is the list again, with the year, and with the lesson where you will find the evidence. Go back and check any of them.

The payment God — that he could not forgive you until a death had been arranged — was written by Anselm in **1098**, in exile, out of the honor-and-debt law of Norman France. **(Lesson 19.)**

The flag — the cross carried into a battle and then onto the coins and the standards — arrived in **312. (Lesson 36, and Lesson 18 for how the emperor took over.)**

The face — bearded, enthroned, haloed, in the arch above the altar — was fixed in the **fourth century**, out of imperial art, and finished off by a forged letter and a print shop in **1940. (Lesson 22.)**

The treasury you can pay into, the store of surplus merit that a payment draws on, was declared papal doctrine in **1343** and was a going business by **1476. (Lesson 25.)**

The screening of the poor — the deserving and the undeserving, the form and the inquiry — was written into English law in **1601**, hardened in **1834**, and taught to the churches by the charity organization movement from **1877. (Lesson 37.)**

The evacuation — the removal of Christians before the end — was assembled by one ex-clergyman in a small British sect in the **1830s**, and reached America by preaching tours, conferences, a reference Bible in **1909** and three million free books. **(Lesson 34.)**

And the word in your own prayer changed in 1526.

That one is not a guess and not a drift. In **1526 William Tyndale** printed the first English New Testament made from the Greek, and at Matthew 6:12 he put *trespasses* where the Greek says **debts.** Then in **1549 Thomas Cranmer** assembled the Book of Common Prayer, and the Lord's Prayer in it followed Tyndale.

That is why you **say** one word and your Bible **prints** another, and why nobody ever told you there was a difference. One printer in 1526, one prayer book in

1549, and four hundred years of repetition. **(Lesson 1.)**

None of that is me. **Every piece of it was added by somebody, in a specific year, usually for a reason involving money or an emperor or both.**

And one more, which is not a doctrine but a habit, and is underneath all of them: **the idea that somebody has to authorize this.** That there is a license, and a chain, and a man at the front of it who holds it.

Valdes of Lyon is the cleanest example in the book, so take the dates with you. He was a rich merchant in France who gave his money away and started preaching in ordinary language. He went to Rome and **asked permission.** In **1179**, at the council meeting there, his poverty was **approved** — and his preaching was permitted only where the local clergy chose to license it. The archbishop of Lyon did not, and threw him out of the city. He kept preaching anyway. And on **4 November 1184**, at Verona, a papal document condemned his followers **by name. (Lesson 24.)**

He was not condemned for teaching anything false. Nobody produced an error. He was condemned for doing it **without a license.**

And what people noticed about me, according to your own Bible, was that I taught as somebody who had authority, ***and not as the scribes*** (Mark 1:22).

Nobody licensed me either.

Take all of it away and something is still standing there. A man from a village in an occupied country who ate with the wrong people, touched the untouchable, told the rich to give it away, said the debts should be cancelled, refused a weapon, and was killed by the state for it.

That you can follow. It does not require you to believe anything you have to force.

And if, when you have taken away everything with a date on it, the thing left standing is smaller than what you were given, I would ask you to consider that it is also the only part that was ever mine.

Check It Yourself

Look up: Matthew 25:31–46 and Micah 6:8.

You will find: six physical acts, and three requirements — do justice, love mercy, walk humbly. That is the whole examination, in both testaments, and neither list mentions a doctrine.

Then look up the eight, one at a time: Matthew 6:12 · Mark 2:15–17 · Matthew 25:31–46 · Mark 1:40–42 · Mark 10:51 · Matthew 6:1–4 · Matthew 26:52 · Matthew 23. It takes about twenty minutes. That is the whole of it.

Go deeper: the longer history behind this lesson, and every source it rests on, are free at **LessonsOfJesus.com/39**.

The Short Version

- I am not telling you to leave. I am telling you to stay without being managed.
- The whole of what I taught fits on one page, in **eight items**, none of them a belief — and every one of them has a verse beside it now.
- Doing it will put you in a quiet corner of your own church. That corner is where the real thing has always lived.
- Nearly everything you were taught about me has a **date and an author**: **1098** (Lesson 19), **312** (Lesson 36), the **fourth century** (Lesson 22), **1343** (Lesson 25), **1601** (Lesson 37), the **1830s** (Lesson 34), and **1526** — the year the word in your prayer changed (Lesson 1).
- **Valdes** was told in **1179** that he could preach only where the clergy licensed it, and his followers were condemned by name in **1184** — not for an error, but for preaching without permission. Nobody licensed me either.

Think About It

1. Of the eight items, which one could you begin this week — and which one frightens you?
2. When you submit to what is said from the front of your church, whose authority are you actually submitting to — and who gave them theirs? Follow that back as far as it goes. Write down where it stops.
3. Ask it plainly, and take your time: **who have you been worshipping?**

Lesson 40: It Was Never Complicated

Before you read: *Nothing. Just read it.*

There are no boxes in this lesson. It is short.

I have given you five units, forty lessons, a great many dates, and the names of people who were killed for reading a book properly.

I want to end by telling you how simple it was at the start.

I was a laborer. My hands were bad. I lived in a small place that was occupied by soldiers, in a region where families were losing their land to debt while the men who held the debts did well out of it, and I watched it happen to people I knew by name.

I was taught by angry men, the prophets, who had stood in public and said that the people in charge were robbing the poor and calling it the will of God.

They were mostly not respected, and I will name three of them rather than wave at a shelf.

Jeremiah said in the middle of a siege that the city was going to fall, which the officials took as treason, and they let him down on ropes into an empty water cistern, where there was no water, only mud, and left him standing in it (Jeremiah 38:6).

Amos was a herdsman who turned up at the royal sanctuary at Bethel and said the kingdom was finished. The priest in charge there, Amaziah, told him to get out and go earn his bread somewhere else — *never prophesy again at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary* (Amos 7:12–13). A priest telling a prophet that the building belongs to the king.

And there was a man named **Uriah**, who said the same things Jeremiah was saying. He ran for his life to Egypt. The king sent men after him, brought him back, killed him, and had his body thrown into the burial place of the

common people (Jeremiah 26:20–23). He gets four verses in your Bible and no book of his own.

And one of them was in my own lifetime.

His name was **John.** He baptized me. He stood in public and said the ruler of my own region, **Herod Antipas**, had no right to the marriage he had made, and Antipas arrested him and had him beheaded — at a fortress called **Machaerus**, east of the Dead Sea.

Your Bible gives you the palace story: the feast, the dance, the head on a platter (Mark 6:17–29). Josephus, writing about sixty years later, gives the blunter reason: Antipas was afraid of the size of the crowds John was drawing, and got him out of the way before they turned into something (*Antiquities* 18.116–119). Lesson 6 has both accounts side by side.

So that is what I had in front of me before I said a word. A cistern, an expulsion, a body in a common grave, and a friend of mine killed for drawing a crowd.

I thought they were right anyway.

So I walked around for a while, two or three years, in a small area you could cross on foot in a week, and I did the following things.

I told people the debts should be cancelled, and I taught them to pray for exactly that.

I ate with people that respectable men would not eat with, in public, where it was noticed.

I touched people nobody had touched in years, and I asked them what they wanted, and I said their names out loud in front of the people who had stopped saying them.

I told people with money to give it away, and I did not soften it when they were disappointed.

And I said the men running the Temple had turned it into a business, and I said it in the Temple, at the busiest week of the year.

Let me tell you what the business was, because you should not have to take my word for it.

Every adult man owed an annual **Temple tax.** It had to be paid in one particular coinage, which most pilgrims did not arrive carrying — so there were **money-changers** sitting in the courtyard, and every exchange took a cut.

And you could not bring an animal from home and be sure it would pass inspection, so animals were **sold on the premises**: cattle, sheep, and doves.

The doves are the part that matters. A dove was what you offered when you could not afford a lamb. It was written into the law as the poor person's sacrifice. It is what my own parents brought when I was born, which tells you what kind of house I came from (Leviticus 12:8; Luke 2:24).

So there was a stall, in the court of the Temple, selling poverty offerings at a markup, to poor people, in the name of God.

I turned those tables over — the money-changers' and the dove-sellers' — and I said one sentence, which was not mine either. It was two lines out of the prophets stitched together: *my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations*, and *you have made it a den of robbers* (Mark 11:15–17; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11).

Within the week I was dead.

And the state killed me for it, on a charge of claiming to be a king, which was written on a board above my head.

That is all of it. There is nothing else.

There was no doctrine. I never asked anybody to believe a proposition about my nature. Nobody who followed me during my life could have passed the test your church would give them at the door.

There was no payment. Nobody explained to me that God required a death before he could forgive, and if anyone had, I would have told them the story I actually told: a man had two sons, and the younger one wished his father dead and took the money and spent it, and came home with a speech ready — and

his father saw him a long way off and **ran**, and never let him finish the speech, and no one was punished in his place, and nothing was paid by anybody (Luke 15:11–32).

Go and read those twenty-two verses and find the payment in them.

There was no evacuation plan. I told people I did not know when the end would be, and that it was not their business, and that in the meantime there were people who were hungry.

There was no empire. There was no flag, no treasury, no council, no creed, no barn, no army, no permission slip for the taking of continents, and no chart.

All of that was added later, by people with things to protect, and every piece of it has a year attached to it, and you now know most of the years.

Here is the last thing.

For two thousand years, in every single century, some ordinary person with no standing has picked up this story and understood it immediately, usually somebody poor, usually somebody in trouble with the religion of their own time.

A merchant who gave away a fortune made on interest, and paid to have the gospels put into ordinary speech. A merchant's son who gave his clothes back to his father. Women in the Low Countries who took no vows. Farmers who wrote out twelve requests with the verses attached. A tailor who walked. Enslaved people who sang the chapters that had been cut out of their own Bibles. A woman who got herself out of slavery and then went back about thirteen times to bring other people out. A man who read the names of the dead on the radio.

Valdes. Francis. The Beguines. The peasants of Swabia. John Woolman. Harriet Tubman. Óscar Romero. And a great many people whose names nobody bothered to write down.

You know every one of those names now. Two hundred pages ago you did not.

Nobody taught them. They were not scholars. They did not have the notes at the bottom of the page.

They recognized it, which is a different thing than being taught it, and it is the only thing I have ever needed from anybody.

You have just read the whole of it. You know what it says now.

Go on, then.

Do the eight things.

IF THIS BOOK MEANT SOMETHING TO YOU

You have read all forty lessons. Thank you for staying.

Pass it on. This book is free to copy and share, whole or in part. The simplest way is the address: **LessonsOfJesus.com**. Every lesson has its own page, from LessonsOfJesus.com/1 to LessonsOfJesus.com/40, so you can send someone the one lesson they need.

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A tip buys nothing that everyone else does not already have. That is the point.

BACK OF THE BOOK

The Audit

Here is the whole argument on one page.

Each line is something you were probably taught was ancient, or eternal, or simply the faith. Each one has a date and, usually, a name.

Cover the dates and see how many you can place.

What I actually taught — all of it in about three years, in Galilee and Judea, around AD 28 to 30:

- Forgive debts.
- Eat with anybody.
- Do not screen the poor.
- Give it away.
- Put the weapon away.
- Ask people what they want.
- Do it quietly.
- Say out loud who is causing it. *(This part I inherited from the prophets, 8th century BC onward.)*

What was added

The idea	Added
Faith apart from the law, for Gentiles	Paul, AD 50s
Letters signed with Paul's name that he did not write	late 1st to early 2nd century
My brother James sidelined as a rival	2nd century onward
Bishops appointed with state backing	after 313

The idea	Added
An official definition of my nature, enforced by exile	**325**, convened and paid for by an emperor
Belief made compulsory by imperial law	**380**
Execution for wrong belief	**385**
The tithe as an enforceable tax	**779**
Refusing baptism made a capital crime	the **780s**
War preached as penance	**1095**
A license required in order to preach	**1179**, enforced from **1184**
Annual confession to a priest required of everyone	**1215**, canon 21
A treasury of merit the church can distribute	**1343**
God requires a payment before he can forgive	Anselm, about **1098**
Indulgences applied to the dead	**1476**
Written authorization for perpetual enslavement	**1452**
The new world granted to Spain	**1493**
A printed handbook for finding witches	**1486**
The worst of the witch killing	**1570–1660**
Hell as an eternal torture chamber	developed over centuries; not what *Gehenna* meant
My face: bearded, enthroned, European	**4th century**, borrowed from imperial art
The deserving poor	English poor law, **1500s**
The rapture and the ages	Darby, **1830s**
The sinner's prayer	19th-century revivalism
The altar call	19th-century America
Notes printed on the same page as scripture	Scofield, **1909**
Giving as a financial transaction	20th century

Every entry in that table was added by somebody, in a year, for a reason.

Not one of them is in the list above it.

A Simple Timeline

Read down the left column only, if that is easier. The dates are there so you can check them.

Before Jesus

- **about 1000 BC** — The kingdom of David, the high point everybody remembered afterward.
- **8th–6th centuries BC** — The prophets Amos, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah, the angry men of Lesson 5.
- **587 BC** — Jerusalem is destroyed and its people are taken away.
- **167–142 BC** — A revolt against a foreign king succeeds. It is the last time one does.
- **63 BC** — Rome takes Jerusalem, and the occupation begins.

The life of Jesus

- **about 4 BC** — Jesus is born in a small village in Galilee.
- **about AD 28** — John baptizes Jesus in the Jordan. Soon after, John is executed.
- **about AD 30** — Jesus is crucified in Jerusalem by the Roman governor.

The first three centuries

- **AD 50s** — Paul writes the earliest documents in the New Testament. He never met Jesus.
- **about AD 62** — James, the brother of Jesus, is killed in Jerusalem.
- **about AD 70** — Mark, the earliest gospel, is written. Jerusalem is destroyed in the same decade.
- **80s–90s** — The gospels of Matthew and Luke are written. **90s–110s** — The gospel of John is written.

- **late 1st–early 2nd century** — Letters are written in Paul's name by other people.
- **to 313** — Christianity is illegal and sporadically persecuted.

The empire takes it

- **312** — A general wins a battle under a Christian sign.
- **313** — Christianity is tolerated.
- **325** — An emperor convenes and funds the council that defines who Jesus was.
- **380** — The faith is made compulsory by law.
- **385** — Christians execute other Christians over belief for the first time.
- **779** — The tithe becomes a legally enforced tax.
- **the 780s** — Refusing baptism becomes a capital offense; 4,500 prisoners are beheaded at Verden in 782.

The middle centuries

- **1095** — The first crusade is preached.
- **about 1098** — Anselm writes the payment theory of forgiveness.
- **about 1173** — Valdes of Lyon gives away his property and starts preaching.
- **1179 / 1184** — His poverty is approved but his preaching is not, and he is condemned for preaching anyway.
- **1204** — Crusaders sack Constantinople.
- **about 1206** — Francis gives everything away, and asks permission first.
- **1209** — Béziers is destroyed.
- **1215** — Annual confession is made compulsory.
- **1309–1417** — The popes move to Avignon; then there are two popes, then three.
- **1343** — The treasury of merit is defined.
- **1384 / 1415** — Wycliffe dies; Hus is burned.
- **about 1450** — The printing press arrives.

- **1452 / 1493** — Written authorization is given for enslavement and for dividing the world.
- **1476** — Indulgences are extended to the dead.
- **1484 / 1486** — The witch hunts begin in earnest.

The split and after

- **1517** — Luther posts his objections.
- **1525** — Peasants write the Twelve Articles; about 100,000 of them are killed.
- **1572 / 1618–1648** — A massacre in Paris, then thirty years of war in Germany.
- **1649** — The Diggers plant on the common.
- **1688** — Four Quakers protest slavery. Their meeting acts in 1776.
- **1774** — Woolman's journal and Wesley's Thoughts Upon Slavery are published.
- **1791–1804** — The Haitian revolution.
- **1807** — A Bible is printed with Exodus 1–18 removed.
- **1831–1834** — Samuel Sharpe leads a strike in Jamaica; abolition follows, with compensation paid to the owners.
- **1830s** — Darby assembles the rapture.
- **1845** — A denomination is founded over slaveholding. It apologizes in 1995.

Living memory

- **1883–1996** — Canada runs a government-funded residential school system, most of its schools run by churches.
- **1909** — The Scofield Reference Bible is published.
- **1933** — Dorothy Day starts a penny newspaper.
- **1939–1940** — A German church institute publishes a de-Judaized New Testament.
- **9 April 1945** — Bonhoeffer is hanged.
- **1970 / 1995–2007** — The rapture becomes a bestseller, then a franchise.
- **1980** — Romero is shot at the altar.

- **1974** — A South African church publishes its scriptural case for racial separation.
- **1982** — Other churches declare apartheid a heresy.
- **1989** — Six Jesuits, Elba Ramos and her daughter Celina are killed in San Salvador.
- **1994** — Genocide in Rwanda.
- **1996** — The last residential school closes.

Who's Who

The names in this book are all in one place. Anyone you have forgotten, look here.

In my own story

Amos — a shepherd, 8th century BC. The bluntest of the prophets about money.

Isaiah — prophet. The passage I read aloud in my hometown is his.

John the Baptist — the man in the river. Executed by Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas — Rome's client ruler of Galilee. Built Sepphoris and Tiberias with taxes from villages like mine.

Pontius Pilate — the Roman governor who had me crucified.

James — my brother. Led the movement in Jerusalem after my death. Killed about AD 62. Later called a heretic by people who never met either of us.

Mary Magdalene — one of the women who stayed at the execution when the men had gone, and one of the first at the tomb.

Afterward

Paul — a Greek-speaking Jew from Tarsus who never met me. Wrote the earliest documents in your New Testament and reframed the movement for non-Jews.

Constantine — the emperor of 312, 313 and 325.

Theodosius — the emperor who made the faith compulsory in 380.

Anselm of Canterbury — about 1098. Wrote the theory that God required a payment.

Charlemagne — the Frankish king of the 779 tithe law and the 785 baptism law.

The people who read it right

Valdes of Lyon — about 1173. A rich merchant and moneylender who gave everything away, paid for a translation of the gospels into ordinary speech, and preached in the street. Condemned in 1184 — for preaching without a license, not for a wrong belief. His church still exists.

Francis of Assisi — about 1206. Gave away everything he owned. Did nearly what Valdes did, thirty years later, and asked permission first. He was made a saint.

The Beguines — women in the Low Countries living in common, with no vows and no man over them. Condemned 1311. Lasted six hundred more years.

John Wycliffe (d. 1384) and **Jan Hus** (burned 1415) — said the church should not own property and that people should read for themselves.

The Peasants of Swabia — 1525. Wrote twelve requests with the scripture references attached.

The Diggers — 1649. Planted crops on common land and said the earth was a treasury for all.

Antonio de Montesinos — a Dominican friar who preached against the enslavement of the native peoples at Santo Domingo at Christmas 1511, with Las Casas in the congregation.

Bartolomé de las Casas — a Spanish colonist and slaveholder who changed his mind, fought the conquest for fifty years, and publicly condemned his own worst idea.

John Woolman — a Quaker tailor who walked from house to house for years, one conversation at a time.

John Wesley — founder of Methodism. Spent his last letter on abolition.

Samuel Sharpe — a Baptist deacon in Jamaica who read his own Bible and organized a strike. Hanged 1832.

Harriet Tubman — escaped, then went back about thirteen times.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer — German pastor. Came home from safety, joined the resistance, hanged 9 April 1945, aged thirty-nine.

Dorothy Day — started a penny newspaper in 1933 and houses where anybody could eat, and lived in them.

Óscar Romero — archbishop in El Salvador. Read the names of the dead on the radio. Shot at the altar, 24 March 1980.

Elba Ramos and **Celina Ramos** — a housekeeper and her sixteen-year-old daughter, killed with six priests in San Salvador in 1989. Usually recorded as "and two others."

The ones who made things I said mean other things

Martin Luther — right about indulgences, right to translate the Bible. Then told the princes to kill the peasants (1525), demoted the letter of James, and wrote a book against the Jews (1543) that was reprinted in Germany in the 1930s.

Cyrus Scofield — put his notes on the same page as scripture, 1909.

John Nelson Darby — assembled the rapture in the 1830s.

Notes

These are the sources for the history. The Bible references are in the text itself, so you can check those as you read.

You do not need to read these. They are here so that nothing in this book has to be taken on trust.

1. *Opheilēma* (Matthew 6:12) is the ordinary commercial word for a debt, a thing owed. *Paraptōma* (Matthew 6:14–15) means a false step, a lapse, an offense against someone. Luke's version of the prayer (11:4) has "sins" in the first clause and "everyone indebted to us" in the second. One qualification that is usually made: the Aramaic *ḥoba* covers both debt and sin, so the two Greek words may be rendering a single Aramaic word. The distinction between the two Greek words is real; whether it reflects a distinction in what was originally said is not something the Greek can settle.

2. Tyndale's New Testament of 1526 reads at Matthew 6:12: "And forgeve vs oure treaspases, even as we forgeve oure trespacers." The Book of Common Prayer of 1549 follows that wording. The later sixteenth-century English Bibles — Coverdale, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible — and the King James Version of 1611 all print "debts" at Matthew 6:12. "Trespasses" survives in English-speaking worship because what congregations recited was the prayer book, not the Bible.

3. The Greek translation of the Torah was made at Alexandria in the third century BC, traditionally under Ptolemy II (285–246 BC); the remaining books followed over the next two centuries. It renders the Hebrew name Yehoshua/Yeshua as *Iēsous* throughout, for Joshua son of Nun and for others of the name.

4. Gian Giorgio Trissino (1478–1550), *Epistola de le lettere nuovamente aggiunte ne la lingua italiana* (1524), was the first to argue that I and J — and U and V — be treated as separate letters. English printing kept I for both sounds far longer: the King James Bible of 1611 prints *Iesus*. The first English books to distinguish i and j consistently are usually given as the Cambridge revision of the King James Bible of 1629 and an English grammar of 1633.

5. Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch from his father's death in 4 BC until Caligula deposed and exiled him in AD 39 — forty-three years. He was a client ruler, not a Roman official, and there was no Roman garrison in Galilee in his reign; the territory was not annexed to the province until AD 44. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17–18.

6. The half-shekel Temple tax: Exodus 30:13, and see Matthew 17:24–27. The high priesthood in this period was appointed and removed by the Roman authorities and by Herodian rulers; Josephus records the appointments.

7. Josephus, *War* 2.427. The rebels burned the public record office (*archeion*) in order to destroy the bonds of the creditors and make recovery of debts impossible, and Josephus says the aim was to win

over the debtors and set the poor against the rich. The revolt began in AD 66.

8. Rabbinic sources preserve legal devices for lending at interest despite the biblical prohibition; contracts from the wider region show loans written for more than the sum advanced. The prohibition is Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:36–37, Deuteronomy 23:19–20.

9. The *prosbul* is described in the Mishnah, Shevi'it 10:3–4, which attributes it to Hillel the Elder and gives as its reason that people were refusing to lend as the seventh year approached, contrary to Deuteronomy 15:9. The remission itself is Deuteronomy 15:1–2. Hillel is placed in the generation before Jesus; the Mishnah was compiled about AD 200, so the attribution is traditional rather than contemporary.

10. Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.271–298. Varus, governor of Syria, brought two legions; his subordinate Gaius took and burned Sepphoris and enslaved its people; Josephus reports about two thousand crucified in the wider suppression, without specifying where.

11. The Cyrus Cylinder, British Museum BM 90920, an Akkadian text written after the fall of Babylon in 539 BC. It records Cyrus returning divine images to their sanctuaries and returning displaced populations to their homes. Two cautions: it is a Babylonian building inscription in a long-established royal genre, and it names neither Judah, Jerusalem nor the Jews. Assyriologists reject the popular description of it as a charter of human rights. The return of the Judeans is reported in Ezra 1:1–4 and 6:3–5, not on the cylinder.

12. The Maccabean revolt began in 167 BC; the Temple was rededicated in 164; independence was recognized under Simon in 142 BC and lasted until Pompey in 63 BC — seventy-nine years on the strictest measure, about a century if dated from the rededication. The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees are in Catholic and Orthodox Bibles and in the Apocrypha of many Protestant ones.

13. Psalms of Solomon 17, a Jewish poem surviving in Greek and Syriac from a lost Hebrew original, generally dated to the decades after Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 BC. It asks God to raise up for Israel "the son of David," to purge Jerusalem of gentiles, break unrighteous rulers and gather a holy people. It is not in the Jewish, Catholic or Protestant canon, but is preserved in some Greek biblical manuscripts.

14. Markan priority — that Mark was written first and was used by Matthew and Luke — is the majority position in New Testament scholarship, argued from Mark's brevity, the near-total presence of Mark's content within the other two, and the direction of the editorial changes. It was formulated in the nineteenth century (Lachmann 1835, Holtzmann 1863). It is not unanimous: the Griesbach hypothesis, which puts Matthew first and makes Mark an abridgement, still has defenders.

15. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.116–119: Antipas executed John at the fortress of Machaerus because he feared his influence over the crowds might lead to a rising.

16. Imperial birthdays and accessions were announced in the language of "good news"; the calendar inscription from Priene (9 BC) uses that vocabulary of Augustus. "Son of a god" appears on imperial coinage.

17. Luke 6:20–26 has "blessed are you who are poor" with matching woes; Matthew 5:3 has "poor in spirit." Which is closer to the original saying is a long-standing scholarly dispute.

18. David Hume, "Of Miracles," section 10 of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 1748: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature." The conception of a law of nature as a universal

regularity governing all matter is a seventeenth-century development, associated with Descartes, Boyle and Newton; the phrase itself has older and looser uses.

19. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.63, describes Jesus as a doer of startling deeds. The passage as it stands contains Christian additions, but the core reference is generally accepted as authentic.

20. b. Sanhedrin 43a and parallels: the charge is sorcery and leading Israel astray. The passage is late and polemical, but it concedes the deeds while attacking their source.

21. Mark 1:41. Almost all Greek manuscripts read *splanchnistheis*, "moved with compassion." One Greek manuscript — Codex Bezae, fifth century — and three Old Latin manuscripts (a, ff2, r1) read *orgistheis*, "moved with anger." The critical editions (Nestle-Aland, UBS) print "compassion"; the NIV prints "indignant" and most study Bibles footnote the variant. The case for "anger" is that it is the harder reading and would explain why Matthew and Luke drop the participle altogether; it has been argued most fully by Bart Ehrman. It remains a minority position, and the external manuscript evidence is thin.

22. Daniel 9:25–26. The Hebrew has *mashiach nagid*, an anointed one, a prince, and then says that an anointed one shall be *cut off* and have nothing. Who is meant is disputed. Critical scholarship generally dates the book in its present form to about 165 BC, during the Maccabean crisis, and identifies the cut-off anointed one as the deposed high priest Onias III, murdered about 171 BC; the traditional Christian reading takes it of Jesus. The wording itself is not in dispute.

23. Luke 2:2 dates the registration to Quirinius, whose census Josephus places in AD 6 (*Antiquities* 18.1–2); Matthew 2:1 and Luke 1:5 place the birth under Herod, who died in 4 BC. Numerous solutions have been proposed; none commands general assent.

24. 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 is usually dated to about AD 53–55. Paul introduces the list of appearances with the technical vocabulary of receiving and handing on (*parelabon / paredōka*), which most scholars take as marking a formula he inherited rather than composed. How much older the formula is cannot be fixed; proposals range from within a few years of the crucifixion to the early 40s, and the earlier datings are inferences, not evidence. Galatians 1:18–19 places Paul in Jerusalem with Cephas and James three years after his call.

25. Acts 12:2 for James son of Zebedee, executed under Agrippa I, who died in AD 44. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.200, for the stoning of James the brother of Jesus in the interval between governors, about AD 62. 1 Clement 5, written from Rome about AD 96, refers to the deaths of Peter and Paul as known to its readers, but gives no manner, place or date. The familiar accounts of how the other apostles died come from the apocryphal Acts of the second century and later, and historians do not treat them as reliable.

26. The system of tariffed private penance originates in Irish and British monastic practice from about the sixth century — the penitentials of Finnian, Columbanus and Cummean are the early examples — and spread to the continent with Irish missionaries. The handbooks assign a fixed penance to each named sin, with long sections on sexual acts. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, canon 21 (*Omnis utriusque sexus*), made confession to one's own priest at least once a year, and communion at Easter, obligatory for every Christian of the age of discretion.

27. The commonly cited figure is about 288 verses in the gospels concerning wealth and possessions, and roughly sixteen of the parables. It circulates as a preaching statistic rather than a peer-reviewed count, and is usually stated as "more than any topic except the kingdom of God."

28. A Roman provincial governor tried non-citizens by *cognitio extra ordinem* — a summary inquiry in which he heard the case and decided it himself, without a jury, a fixed criminal statute or an appeal. The formal grant of capital power was the *ius gladii*, the right of the sword.

29. The "Pilate Stone," found in 1961 by an Italian expedition excavating the Roman theatre at Caesarea Maritima, where it had been reused as building material. The surviving text includes *[PON]TIVS PILATVS / [PRAEF]ECTVS IVDA[EA]E* — Pontius Pilate, prefect of Judaea. The title *procurator*, used of the post by Tacitus and by the gospels, dates from the reorganization under Claudius, after Pilate's time.

30. Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 301, describes Pilate as inflexible and merciless; Josephus records his recall to Rome after an incident in Samaria (*Antiquities* 18.85–89).

31. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.55–59 and *War* 2.169–174 (the standards brought into Jerusalem); *Antiquities* 18.60–62 and *War* 2.175–177 (the aqueduct paid for from the Temple treasury, and the soldiers in plain clothes with clubs); *Antiquities* 18.85–89 (the Samaritans at Mount Gerizim, and Pilate's suspension by Vitellius, legate of Syria, who ordered him to Rome). Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 301–302, is the other near-contemporary description.

32. Joseph Caiaphas was appointed high priest by the prefect Valerius Gratus (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.35) and removed by Vitellius at about the same time Pilate was sent to Rome (*Antiquities* 18.95) — roughly AD 18 to 36/37. In 1990 a burial cave in south Jerusalem yielded an ornate ossuary inscribed with the name Joseph son of Caiaphas; the identification of the remains with the high priest himself is probable but disputed.

33. The Antonia fortress, built by Herod at the northwest corner of the Temple platform and named for Mark Antony. Josephus, *War* 5.238–245, describes the Roman cohort quartered there and the armed men posted on the porticoes above the Temple courts at the festivals. On the governor coming up from Caesarea with troops for the feasts, see *War* 2.224.

34. Josephus, *War* 2.224–227 and *Antiquities* 20.105–112: under the procurator Cumanus (about AD 48–52), a soldier on the Temple portico made an obscene gesture at the Passover crowd; in the panic that followed, people were crushed to death in the exits. Josephus gives the dead as more than ten thousand in one account and twenty thousand in the other; both figures are far beyond what the space could hold, and his casualty numbers are routinely inflated.

35. Roman writers call crucifixion *servile supplicium*, the slaves' punishment; Cicero calls it the most cruel and disgusting penalty (*Against Verres* II.5).

36. *Declamationes Maiores* 274, transmitted under Quintilian's name and probably by a later hand: when criminals are crucified, the busiest roads are chosen, so that the greatest number may see and be moved by the fear of it. The attribution is uncertain; the practice it describes is not.

37. In 1968 a first-century burial cave at Giv'at ha-Mivtar, north Jerusalem, yielded an ossuary containing the remains of a man named on the box as Yehohanan, with an iron nail about 11.5 cm long still driven through the right heel bone, together with a fragment of olive wood. It remains the only physical evidence of a crucifixion yet recovered from Roman Judaea. Details of the original 1970 reconstruction of the body's position were revised in a 1985 re-examination; the nail through the heel is not in dispute.

38. A board or placard stating the cause of execution was normal Roman practice, carried before the condemned or fixed at the place of death. Suetonius, *Caligula* 32 and *Domitian* 10; Cassius Dio

54.3.7. The Latin term is *titulus*. All four gospels record an inscription; Mark 15:26 gives it as "The King of the Jews," and John 19:19–20 says it was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

39. Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.381–385 and *War* 1.282–285: Herod was declared king of Judaea by a vote of the Roman senate in 40 BC, on the motion of Antony and Octavian, and had to take the country by force afterwards.

40. The release of a prisoner at Passover appears in all four gospels (Mark 15:6; Matthew 27:15; Luke 23:17 in some manuscripts; John 18:39) and in no other surviving source, Roman or Jewish. No comparable festival amnesty by a Roman governor is attested anywhere in the empire.

41. All four gospels are anonymous in their texts. The traditional attributions are first attested in the second century, notably by Irenaeus around AD 180.

42. Standard dating among critical scholars: Mark about 70, Matthew and Luke about 80–90, John about 90–110. Conservative scholars argue for earlier dates; the relative order is much less disputed than the absolute dates.

43. The First Jewish–Roman War, AD 66–73/74. Jerusalem fell to the army of Titus in AD 70 and the Second Temple was destroyed. Josephus, *The Jewish War* 6, is the principal source; he was present with the Roman command.

44. Paul's letters are occasional documents addressed to particular congregations. He directs that one be read to all the brothers (1 Thessalonians 5:27) and that another be exchanged with a neighboring church (Colossians 4:16). Named carriers appear in the letters themselves, among them Phoebe (Romans 16:1–2). A collection of Pauline letters was circulating as a set by the end of the first century; exactly when and by whom it was assembled is not known.

45. Markan priority — that Mark was written first and used by Matthew and Luke — is the majority position and is what the verbal agreements are usually taken to show.

46. The formal doctrine of verbal inerrancy in its modern form was set out by A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield at Princeton in 1881; its best-known contemporary statement is the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978. High regard for scripture is far older; this particular formulation is not. *Everything above can be checked. That was the point.*

47. Estimates of the number of variants among New Testament manuscripts run into the hundreds of thousands; the overwhelming majority are spelling and word-order differences with no effect on meaning.

48. The passage John 7:53–8:11 is absent from the earliest and best manuscripts, and in some later ones appears at different points, including after Luke 21:38.

49. Mark 16:9–20 is absent from the two oldest complete Greek manuscripts. Several different endings survive in the manuscript tradition.

50. Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century) contains the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas after the New Testament books. Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century) contains 1 and 2 Clement. The Didache and the Gospel of Peter circulated and were read in some congregations; the Gospel of Thomas, a sayings collection, survives complete in Coptic from Nag Hammadi and in Greek fragments from Oxyrhynchus.

51. Marcion of Sinope, a shipowner's son from Pontus, came to Rome about AD 140 and was expelled from the Roman church in 144, his donation returned. He rejected the Hebrew scriptures and

their God, and issued a canon consisting of an edited Luke and ten letters of Paul, excluding the Pastorals. His own writings are lost; he is known through opponents, chiefly Tertullian's *Against Marcion*. Whether he provoked the mainstream canon or merely hurried it is argued, but no earlier defined list survives.

52. The Great Persecution began with Diocletian's edict of February 303, which ordered churches demolished and scriptures surrendered and burned. Those who handed over books were afterward called *traditores*; the dispute over their standing produced the Donatist schism in North Africa.

53. Athanasius of Alexandria, 39th Festal Letter, AD 367 — the earliest surviving list of exactly the twenty-seven books.

54. The Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) approved canon lists matching the twenty-seven books. Their decisions were regional and binding only on the churches under them.

55. 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are regarded as pseudonymous by a large majority of critical scholars, including many who teach in Christian institutions.

56. Paul never narrates the experience. He refers to it at Galatians 1:15–16 and alludes to having seen the Lord at 1 Corinthians 9:1 and 15:8. The narrative accounts are Acts 9:1–19, 22:6–21 and 26:12–18, and they differ on what his companions perceived: at 9:7 they hear the voice but see no one; at 22:9 they see the light but do not hear the voice.

57. The New Testament does not record Paul's death. 1 Clement 5, written from Rome about AD 95, says he bore witness before the rulers and departed from the world. Execution at Rome under Nero, by beheading as a citizen, is the tradition from the second century onward (Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 36). The date is usually placed in the mid-60s.

58. Suetonius, *Claudius* 25, records an expulsion of Jews from Rome over disturbances at the instigation of one "Chrestus," usually dated about AD 49. Acts 18:2 says Aquila and Priscilla had recently come from Italy because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Romans is generally dated to the middle or late 50s; the Neronian persecution followed the fire of Rome in 64.

59. On authorship: the Pastorals are widely judged non-Pauline; Ephesians is judged non-Pauline by a substantial majority; Colossians divides scholars roughly evenly; 2 Thessalonians is disputed.

60. Serapion, bishop of Antioch about AD 190–211, first permitted and then withdrew the Gospel of Peter from the congregation at Rhossus after reading it. Eusebius, *Church History* 6.12, preserves the account.

61. 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 appears after verse 40 in a family of Western manuscripts. No manuscript omits it. Interpolation is a serious minority view, not a consensus.

62. The letters of Ignatius of Antioch, written about AD 110 on the way to his execution, insist repeatedly that nothing be done in a congregation apart from the bishop (*Smyrnaeans* 8; *Magnesians* 7). Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67, about AD 155, describes the Sunday collection and its distribution by the presiding officer to orphans, widows, the sick, prisoners and strangers.

63. Hegesippus, preserved in Eusebius, *Church History* 3.11 and 4.22, reports that after the death of James the surviving relatives and disciples chose Simeon son of Clopas, a cousin, as the next leader in Jerusalem.

54. The two accounts of the Jerusalem meeting — Acts 15 and Galatians 2 — are difficult to reconcile. Paul never refers to the four abstentions of Acts 15:20 and 15:29 in any of his own discussions of food (1 Corinthians 8 and 10; Romans 14), and at 1 Corinthians 10:25 he permits eating whatever is sold in the market. Whether the two passages describe the same meeting is disputed.

65. Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.197–203: the death of Festus, the interval before Albinus arrived, the high priest Ananus convening a council, the stoning of James, and Ananus's removal.

66. Hegesippus, preserved in Eusebius, *Church History* 2.23.

67. Eusebius, *Church History* 3.5, reports the flight to Pella. Its historicity is debated.

68. The Bar Kokhba revolt, AD 132–135/136. Hadrian afterward refounded Jerusalem as the colony Aelia Capitolina and barred Jews from the city. The *fiscus Iudaicus*, a punitive tax on Jews, had been imposed after the earlier war of 66–70.

69. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.26; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30; and other heresiological writers. All are hostile witnesses.

70. Jerome argued in 383 that the "brothers" were cousins; an earlier tradition, from the second-century *Protoevangelium of James*, made them Joseph's sons by a previous marriage.

71. Jerome, Letter 112.13, to Augustine, about AD 404.

72. The Apostles' Creed developed from the baptismal interrogation used at Rome (the Old Roman Symbol) and reached its received text by about the eighth century. The creed said in most churches today is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed: the Council of Nicaea produced the core in 325 and the Council of Constantinople gave it substantially its present form in 381.

73. Two accounts survive and they differ. Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 44, reports a dream the night before the battle instructing Constantine to mark his soldiers' shields. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 1.28–31, written decades later, reports a sign seen in the sky with words attached, and a dream afterward. Both authors were partisans of Constantine.

74. The battle of the Milvian Bridge, 28 October 312. Constantine became sole emperor in 324.

75. The agreement of 313 between Constantine and Licinius, commonly called the Edict of Milan, though it was not an edict and was not issued at Milan.

76. Constantine's letter to Alexander of Alexandria and to Arius, carried by Hosius of Cordoba before the council, calls the dispute trivial and urges both men to be reconciled. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 2.64–72, preserves it.

77. The Council of Nicaea, 325, in Bithynia. Constantine convened it, funded the bishops' travel, opened it and attended. Who presided is disputed.

78. Estimates of attendance at Nicaea range from about 250 to about 320; the traditional figure is 318. Western bishops were a small minority. The creed was subscribed by all present but two, Theonas of Marmarica and Secundus of Ptolemais, who were exiled with Arius. Theodoret, *Church History* 1.7, reports the confessors present who bore the marks of the persecution, among them Paphnutius.

79. Socrates Scholasticus, *Church History* 1.9, preserves an imperial edict ordering the writings of Arius burned and prescribing death for anyone found concealing a copy.

80. The legislation is collected in the *Theodosian Code*: exemption of clergy from compulsory public service, 313 (16.2.1–2); the right of churches to receive bequests, 321 (16.2.4); Sunday as a day of rest, 321 (*Justinian Code* 3.12.2); and the civil force of bishops' courts, 318 and 333. Imperial church building of the period includes the Lateran basilica, Old St Peter's and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

81. The Edict of Thessalonica, 27 February 380, issued under Theodosius I.

82. Priscillian and companions were executed at Trier about 385 under the usurper Magnus Maximus, on a charge of sorcery. Sulpicius Severus records Martin of Tours's objection.

83. The ransom theory appears in Origen and in Gregory of Nyssa, who uses the image of the devil taking a baited hook.

84. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies*, about AD 180, especially 3.18 and 5.21, on Christ recapitulating (*anakephalaiōsis*) the human course. "Christus Victor" is the label Gustaf Aulén gave the theme in his book of that title (Swedish 1930, English 1931); it is a modern term, not a patristic one, and Aulén's claim that it was the dominant early view has been contested. The descent to the dead is in the Apostles' Creed (*descendit ad inferos*) and is the subject of the Eastern *Anastasis* icon, in which Christ pulls Adam and Eve from their tombs by the wrists.

85. No ecumenical council has ever defined a theory of the atonement or chosen among the competing accounts. Catholic reference works state this plainly. The Council of Trent uses satisfaction and merit language without adjudicating between theories.

86. Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo*, completed about 1098.

87. Anselm was archbishop of Canterbury from 1093. He left England in November 1097 after his quarrel with William II over church lands and authority, and did not return until after the king's death in 1100; he attended the Council of Bari in 1098 during that exile. *Cur Deus Homo* was begun in England and finished in southern Italy — Anselm's own preface says he completed it "in the province of Capua." The usual dating of the work is 1094–1098.

88. Wergild — "man-price" — is fixed by rank in the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon law codes: Æthelberht of Kent (about 600), Ine of Wessex (about 690), Alfred (about 890), and the tract known as the *Norðleoda Laga*. In West Saxon reckoning a ceorl was a *twyhyndeman* at 200 shillings and a thegn a *twelfhyndeman* at 1,200 shillings. The Mercian tract prices a king at 30,000 thrymsas, half for the man and half for the kingship. Injuries short of death were priced the same way, limb by limb.

89. *Cur Deus Homo* 1.11: "to sin is nothing other than not to render to God what is due to him"; and "he who does not render this honour to God takes away from God what is his own and dishonours God, and this is to sin." The reply to his pupil at 1.21 is *nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum* — "you have not yet considered how great a weight sin is." The questioner throughout the dialogue is Boso, a monk of Bec.

90. Whether Anselm's categories are specifically feudal is contested; other scholars read them against Benedictine monastic order or Roman law.

91. Peter Abelard, *Commentary on Romans*, about 1135. He was condemned at Soissons in 1121 and Sens in 1141, on other charges.

92. Peter Lombard compiled the *Four Books of Sentences* at Paris, most probably between 1155 and 1158. Lecturing on the *Sentences* became a formal requirement for the theology degree at Paris and

elsewhere and remained so into the sixteenth century; several thousand commentaries on it survive, including those of Bonaventure and Aquinas.

93. Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, canon 21 (*Omnis utriusque sexus*): every believer of the age of discretion must confess all his sins to his own priest at least once a year and receive communion at Easter, on pain of being barred from the church while alive and denied Christian burial when dead. The same canon imposes absolute secrecy on the confessor, with deposition and lifelong confinement for a priest who breaks it.

94. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274) wrote the *Summa Theologiae* between about 1265 and 1274 and left it unfinished. The passion is treated at Tertia Pars, questions 46–49. Aquinas retains satisfaction but drops Anselm's claim that the incarnation was strictly necessary: God could have redeemed some other way and chose this one as most fitting.

95. John Calvin (1509–1564) studied law at Orléans and then at Bourges, from about 1528 to 1531, at his father's direction, and took a licence in law before turning to theology. The first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was published at Basel in March 1536; he enlarged it through five further Latin editions, the last in 1559, mostly from Geneva. The treatment of Christ's death as a judicial sentence borne in the sinner's place is at *Institutes* 2.16.

96. Justinian's *Digest* re-entered western study at Bologna in the late eleventh century; Irnerius was teaching there by about 1100, and the glossators who followed trained the lawyers and administrators of the new European states. The wider "reception" of Roman law into continental courts runs through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. England went its own way with the common law, though it too moved in the same period from compensation of kin toward prosecution by the crown.

97. Penal substitution as usually stated is a Reformation development, associated particularly with Calvin.

98. The Greek *sōzō* covers rescue, preservation and healing, and the gospels use it of physical cure (Mark 5:34, 10:52) as well as of salvation. The religious sense of the English verb "save" is well established before Tyndale: it is attested in Middle English from around 1200. Tyndale's New Testament of 1526 and the King James Version of 1611 therefore use two English words — "save" and "make whole" — where the Greek has one, and the double sense does not survive the translation.

99. The "sinner's prayer" as a set formula is a product of revivalism, developed through the nineteenth century and standardized in twentieth-century tracts and crusade preaching. No such formula appears in the New Testament.

00. Dwight L. Moody took revival into rented urban halls from the 1870s with organized choirs, ushers and advance committees. Billy Sunday (1862–1935) preached in purpose-built wooden tabernacles and spoke of converts "hitting the sawdust trail." Bill Bright founded Campus Crusade for Christ in 1951 and developed the presentation that became the *Four Spiritual Laws*; the organization's own account places the writing in the 1950s without a single documented year, and the numbered booklet in its familiar form dates from the mid-1960s. The Billy Graham crusades used trained counsellors and decision cards forwarded to local churches.

01. The letter is attributed to James, and tradition identifies him as the brother of Jesus. Most critical scholars doubt the attribution, on the grounds of the polished Greek, its use of the Septuagint, and its late and contested reception — Eusebius lists it among the disputed books (*Church History* 3.25),

and Luther called it "an epistle of straw" in his 1522 preface. A minority of scholars defends the traditional authorship. Its place in the canon is not in dispute.

02. Martin Luther, Preface to the New Testament, 1522: he calls James "an epistle of straw" compared with the others, and places it, with Hebrews, Jude and Revelation, at the end of his translation, leaving those four unnumbered in the table of contents while numbering the other twenty-three. He removed the "epistle of straw" phrase from editions after 1537. He never attempted to remove the book, and the Lutheran canon retained all twenty-seven.

03. Luther's preface to Romans, in the German New Testament of September 1522: "Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly… Whoever does not do such works is a faithless man, groping and looking about for faith and good works and knowing neither." The same translation added "alone" to "justified by faith" at Romans 3:28, which Luther defended in his *Open Letter on Translating* of 1530.

04. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Nachfolge* (1937), translated into English as *The Cost of Discipleship* (1948). The first chapter is "Costly Grace": "cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance… grace without discipleship, grace without the cross." Bonhoeffer was hanged at Flossenbürg concentration camp on 9 April 1945.

05. 2 Peter 2:4 uses the verb *tartaroō*, "to consign to Tartarus" — its only occurrence in the New Testament. Tartarus is the pit below Hades in Greek mythology, where Zeus confined the Titans (Hesiod, *Theogony* 717–735). The word also appears in the Septuagint and in 1 Enoch 20:2. The King James Version renders it "hell," as it also renders *hadēs* and *geenna*.

06. Persia ruled Judea from 539 to 332 BC. The proposal that Jewish apocalyptic dualism, an elaborated angelology and demonology, judgment after death and bodily resurrection owe something to Zoroastrian religion is long-standing and widely entertained, and rests chiefly on the distribution of those ideas before and after the exile. It is not demonstrated. The Zoroastrian texts that state the relevant doctrines most fully (the Bundahishn, the Denkard) were written down in the ninth century AD or later, so the date of the ideas in them is itself argued over, and no direct evidence of transmission exists. Specialists generally treat the influence as plausible and unproven.

07. The earliest known source for the claim that the Valley of Hinnom was a perpetually burning municipal rubbish dump is the commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi (Radak, c. 1160–1235) on Psalm 27, written about AD 1200. Strack and Billerbeck found no archaeological or literary support for it in either intertestamental or rabbinic sources. The point was set out for English readers by Lloyd R. Bailey, "Gehenna: The Topography of Hell," *Biblical Archaeologist* 49 (1986).

08. 1 Enoch is a composite work. The Book of the Watchers (chapters 1–36) is usually dated to the third century BC and the later sections to the second and first; chapter 27 places an accursed valley beside the holy city where the wicked are gathered, and chapter 90 has a fiery abyss. Aramaic fragments were found at Qumran. 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch are both usually dated to about AD 100, after the destruction of the Temple. 1 Enoch is canonical scripture only in the Ethiopian Orthodox church, though Jude 14–15 quotes it.

09. Mark 9:47–48 quotes Isaiah 66:24, the closing verse of that book. In Isaiah the objects of the undying worm and the unquenched fire are *pegarim* — corpses — looked at by the living who go out from the city. The Gehenna sayings are at Mark 9:43–48; Matthew 5:22, 5:29–30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 23:33; and Luke 12:5. What the imagery implies about the duration of punishment is exactly what is argued over; the Isaiah source is not.

10. Luke 16:19–31, found only in Luke. The rich man is unnamed in the Greek; "Dives" is simply the Latin for "rich man" in the Vulgate, later mistaken for a name. No offense is specified beyond the beggar at his gate, and the closing line is "they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Stories of reversal after death with a similar shape are known from Egyptian and rabbinic sources and are commonly cited as background.

11. Matthew 25:46. *Aiōnios* is the adjective formed from *aiōn*, "age." In the Septuagint and the New Testament it is used both of what belongs to the age to come and of what has no end, and the two senses are not always separable. In this verse the one adjective governs "punishment" and "life" in the same sentence. Whether it carries a durational sense here is the central point of dispute between traditionalist, annihilationist and universalist readings, and the grammar by itself does not settle it.

12. Origen (c. 185 – c. 253) taught the eventual restoration of all things (*apokatastasis*); Gregory of Nyssa held a version of it in the fourth century. Justinian issued an edict against Origenist teaching in 543, endorsed by a synod at Constantinople. Fifteen anathemas against Origenism are transmitted with the acts of the Second Council of Constantinople of 553, and Origen's name stands in the eleventh canon of the received text. Both points are disputed by historians: whether the council itself issued those anathemas rather than a separate synod, and whether Origen's name was in the original canon or inserted later — it is absent from the first draft and from the text Pope Vigilius signed. The propositions condemned reflect sixth-century Origenism, closer to Evagrius Ponticus than to Origen's own writings.

13. The *Apocalypse of Peter*, second century, is the earliest Christian text to describe hell in detailed physical torments, matched punishment to sin. It was read in some churches but is not in any canonical list that survived.

14. The Apocalypse of Paul, known in Latin as the *Visio Pauli*, is a Greek work generally dated to the late fourth century, which expands the tour of hell found in the second-century Apocalypse of Peter. It survives in Latin in several recensions and in Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Old Church Slavonic and Ethiopic, was translated into most western vernaculars, and was mined for preaching material on the pains of hell throughout the Middle Ages. Texts and translations are collected in Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante* (1989); the critical edition of the long Latin versions is Theodore Silverstein and Anthony Hilhorst (1997).

15. Augustine, *City of God* 21, argues at length for the literal, bodily, unending character of the punishment, against those who read it as figurative or temporary.

16. Augustine's fullest defense of unending punishment is *City of God* 21, written against those he calls the merciful-hearted (*misericordes*), who held that the damned would eventually be released; see also *Enchiridion* 111–113. His dominance in the Latin West is a matter of manuscript circulation, citation and curricula rather than of any conciliar decision; no council ever ruled that Augustine was the standard.

17. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, about 1308-1320. Much of the popular furniture of hell — the circles, the assignment of specific sins to specific torments, the named occupants — is his invention, not scripture's.

18. The *Commedia* was written in the Tuscan vernacular rather than Latin and finished shortly before Dante's death in 1321; about six hundred manuscripts survive, an unusually large number for a

medieval poem. The commune of Florence appointed Giovanni Boccaccio to lecture publicly on it; he began at the church of Santo Stefano di Badia on 23 October 1373 and broke off, ill, in 1374.

19. Last Judgment wall paintings — called "dooms" in English usage — were normally placed over the chancel arch, facing the congregation for the length of a service. Most English examples were whitewashed at the Reformation and survive only in fragments or beneath later limewash; the largest surviving English doom is at St Thomas's, Salisbury (about 1470–1500). The carved tympanum at Saint-Lazare, Autun, with the weighing of souls, dates to about 1130–1145.

20. Richard Neave's 2001 reconstruction for a BBC documentary, based on first-century skulls from the Jerusalem area. Height estimates for the period and region vary between roughly 5'1" and 5'5". It is an estimate of a typical man of the time and place, not a portrait.

21. The Alexamenos graffito, scratched into plaster on the Palatine Hill in Rome and now in the Palatine Museum. It shows a figure with a donkey's head on a cross and a man beside it with a hand raised, captioned in Greek "Alexamenos worships [his] god." It is usually dated to about AD 200, with proposals ranging from the late second to the third century. It is generally read as pagan mockery of a Christian.

22. The Dura-Europos house church (about 240) and the Roman catacombs show a beardless, short-haired figure, often as a shepherd carrying a sheep — an image already current in Greco-Roman art.

23. The *kriophoros*, or ram-bearer — a youth carrying a sheep or ram on his shoulders — is a Greek sculptural type of long standing, adopted into Roman decorative and funerary art as a generic pastoral figure associated with philanthropy and piety. Early Christian use of it, in the Roman catacombs and at Dura-Europos, takes over an image already common and carrying no Christian identification to an outsider. The gospel readings are John 10:11 and Luke 15:3–7.

24. The nimbus appears in Greco-Roman art around gods and personifications, notably solar deities, and around emperors in late Roman imperial imagery, before it becomes standard for Christ and the saints in the fourth century. Sol Invictus received official promotion under Aurelian (AD 274) and appears on the coinage of Constantine into the 320s.

25. The *traditio legis* — Christ handing a scroll to Peter, with Paul opposite — appears in Roman apse mosaics and on sarcophagi from the second half of the fourth century. It is generally understood to follow the imperial ceremony in which a ruler handed a written commission (*codicilli*) to an appointed official before witnesses.

26. Serapis was promoted at Alexandria under Ptolemy I (305–282 BC) as a deity acceptable to Greeks and Egyptians alike, and given a wholly Greek, bearded, human form with a grain-measure (*modius*) on the head. That Ptolemy invented him outright is the traditional account, resting on Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris* 28) and Tacitus (*Histories* 4.83–84), and it is disputed: a cult of Osiris-Apis existed at Memphis before the Ptolemies, and a shrine of Sarapis at Babylon is mentioned in connection with Alexander's death in 323 BC. What is not disputed is that the Alexandrian image and its state promotion were deliberate royal policy.

27. The bearded, long-haired, frontal type emerges in the fourth century, drawing on established depictions of Zeus, Jupiter and especially Serapis.

28. The Quinisext Council, or Council in Trullo, held at Constantinople in 692. Canon 82 directs that Christ be represented in human form rather than under the figure of the lamb. The council's canons were not received by Rome.

29. Byzantine iconoclasm: imperial suppression of religious images from about 730 under Leo III, reversed by the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, resumed from 815, and ended in 843 — the event commemorated in the Orthodox churches as the Triumph of Orthodoxy. Nicaea II remains the seventh ecumenical council for both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

30. *Acheiropoieta*: images said to be made without human hands. The Image of Edessa is attached to the legend of King Abgar, recorded by Eusebius (*Church History* 1.13) as a correspondence without any image; the cloth bearing an image is reported from the sixth century, and was taken to Constantinople in 944. The Veronica, whose name echoes *vera icon*, "true image," is documented as a relic at St Peter's in Rome from the twelfth century and was a principal draw of the jubilee of 1300.

31. Byzantine and post-Byzantine workshops reproduced fixed types from models rather than composing freely. The best-known written codification is the *Hermeneia*, or *Painter's Manual*, compiled by Dionysius of Fourna on Mount Athos in the early eighteenth century; it is a late record of much older workshop practice, and should not be read as the origin of the conventions it describes.

32. The Letter of Lentulus, a short Latin text purporting to be a report to the Roman Senate by "Publius Lentulus," an official in Judaea, describing Jesus' appearance. It is a forgery: no such governor existed, the Senate received no such reports, and the Latin is medieval. It survives in manuscripts from roughly the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and was printed widely from the fifteenth century onward, frequently bound into devotional books. Among its details: hair the color of a ripe hazelnut, falling straight to the ears and then curling, parted in the middle "after the fashion of the Nazarenes"; a smooth, serene forehead; a face without wrinkle or blemish; a beard of the same color as the hair, not long, and forked; and that he was never seen to laugh, but often to weep. Wording varies between manuscripts and printings.

33. Warner Sallman (1892–1968), a Chicago commercial artist of Swedish descent. His charcoal drawing of the head of Christ appeared on the cover of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant youth magazine in 1924; he painted the oil version, *Head of Christ*, in 1940 for a Covenant publisher, and it was issued as a print. Reproductions are generally put at more than 500 million. During the Second World War the USO and the Salvation Army distributed pocket-sized copies to American service personnel, and the image was mass-distributed through Sunday schools, church bulletins, calendars, bookmarks and funeral-home fans. The standard study is David Morgan, ed., *Icons of American Protestantism: The Art of Warner Sallman* (1996).

34. The *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) organized as a party within the German Protestant regional churches (*Landeskirchen*) in 1932. In the church elections of 23 July 1933, held with open Nazi state support and after a radio appeal by Hitler the previous evening, they took control of most German Protestant church bodies. Ludwig Müller, an army chaplain and Hitler's adviser on church affairs, was elected Reich Bishop in September 1933.

35. Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927), English-born, later a German citizen, married Eva Wagner. *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (*The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*), 1899, argues at length that Jesus was not racially Jewish, on the ground that Galilee was ethnically mixed. The claim has no standing in the study of first-century Galilee; the book sold in very large numbers and was admired in Nazi circles.

36. The "German Christian" movement, and the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life, founded at Eisenach in 1939. It published a dejudaized New

Testament (1940) and hymnal (1941) and discarded the Hebrew scriptures.

37. The Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*) was organized by Martin Niemöller in the autumn of 1933 in opposition to the imposition of racial requirements on church office; several thousand ministers joined. The Theological Declaration of Barmen, May 1934, drafted chiefly by Karl Barth, is the founding document of the Confessing Church; it asserts the church's sole allegiance to Jesus Christ against other claimed revelations, and does not address the persecution of Jews. Niemöller was arrested in 1937 and held at Sachsenhausen and Dachau until 1945. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose essay "The Church and the Jewish Question" appeared in April 1933, was hanged at Flossenbürg on 9 April 1945. The Confessing Church was a minority of German Protestant clergy.

38. Charles Colcock Jones (1804–1863), Presbyterian minister and slaveholder of Liberty County, Georgia, published *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* for the oral instruction of enslaved people in 1837 and *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* in 1842. The planter-facing case for the mission included the claim that religious instruction produced more obedient and less rebellious laborers, an argument that gained force after Nat Turner's rising in Southampton County, Virginia, in August 1831. Ephesians 6:5 and Colossians 3:22 were its standard texts. Anti-literacy statutes forbidding the teaching of enslaved people to read were enacted in North Carolina and Louisiana in 1830, Virginia in 1831 and Alabama in 1832, among others; Virginia's 1832 law also barred Black preaching. The 1807 volume is *Parts of the Holy Bible, selected for the use of the Negro Slaves, in the British West-India Islands*, discussed in Lesson 30.

39. Numbers 18:20-21 assigns the Levites no territorial inheritance and gives them the tithe in its place. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12 prescribe the third-year tithe, deposited within the town gates for the Levite, the resident foreigner, the orphan and the widow. The relationship between the several tithes described in Numbers, Leviticus 27 and Deuteronomy is debated by scholars; what is not debated is that one of them is directed to the landless and the poor.

40. Charlemagne's capitularies made payment of the tithe legally enforceable across the Frankish empire from 779 (Capitulary of Herstal), converting a voluntary offering into a tax collected by royal officers.

41. Charles the Great, king of the Franks 768-814, emperor from 800. The Capitulary of Herstal, 779, is the usual reference point for the tithe's conversion into a legal obligation; the requirement is repeated and tightened in later capitularies. On the use of clergy in royal administration, the *missi dominici* were normally dispatched in pairs, one lay magnate and one bishop or abbot, systematized in the capitulary of 802.

42. Leo III was assaulted in Rome on 25 April 799 by a faction of the Roman nobility, fled to Charlemagne at Paderborn, and was escorted back. Charlemagne came to Rome in 800; Leo purged himself of the charges against him by oath on 23 December and crowned Charlemagne emperor on 25 December 800. Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne* 28, claims Charlemagne would not have entered the church that day had he known what was intended; historians generally doubt this.

43. The Saxon wars ran from 772 to 804. The *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* is undated; most historians place it in the early 780s. Its capital clauses include refusal of baptism, eating meat in Lent in contempt of the faith, cremation of the dead, the killing of a bishop, priest or deacon, and breaking into a church by violence. The Royal Frankish Annals report 4,500 prisoners beheaded at Verden in 782, following the Frankish defeat at the Suntel. Widukind was baptized at Attigny in

785 with Charlemagne as godfather. The milder *Capitulare Saxonicum* of 797 replaced many death penalties with fines.

44. The *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* is undated; most historians place it in the early 780s, some as late as 795. It made refusal of baptism and several other offenses capital. The Royal Frankish Annals report 4,500 Saxon prisoners beheaded at Verden in 782; some historians regard the figure as inflated or the result of a scribal confusion, but the massacre itself is not disputed.

45. The *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* requires payment of a tenth of goods and labour to the churches and priests. The connection between forced conversion and fiscal incorporation is standard in the scholarship on the Saxon wars.

46. Alcuin of York, head of Charlemagne's court school, wrote repeatedly in the 790s that faith must be voluntary - *fides ex voluntate fit, non ex necessitate* - and complained in letters of the period that the exaction of tithes from the newly converted Saxons had subverted their faith, asking whether the apostles had demanded tithes. See Alcuin's letters of 796 to Charlemagne and to Arno of Salzburg, in the standard edition of the *Epistolae* and in English in Stephen Allott, *Alcuin of York: His Life and Letters*.

47. The Statute of Mortmain, *De viris religiosis*, 1279, under Edward I, prohibited the alienation of land into mortmain without royal licence, on pain of forfeiture. Its purpose was fiscal: land held by a corporation that never died yielded no reliefs, wardships or escheats to the lord. Licences to alienate in mortmain could afterward be purchased, which is itself evidence of the demand.

48. *Clericis laicos*, Boniface VIII, 24 February 1296, forbade clergy to pay any levy to lay rulers without papal authorization and threatened excommunication for rulers who exacted one. Philip IV of France responded by banning the export of bullion from France, cutting papal revenue; Edward I outlawed the English clergy. Boniface substantially retreated in 1297.

49. Appropriation transferred the rectorial income of a parish to a monastery, cathedral chapter or college, which then presented a perpetual vicar, endowed from the small tithes and a stipend, to serve the cure. By the eve of the Reformation something on the order of a third of English parishes were appropriated. The English word *vicar* derives from the Latin *vicarius*, substitute.

50. There is no single figure. Estimates of ecclesiastical landholding are made region by region from surveys such as Domesday Book (1086), the English *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1535) and French and German cadastral records, and typically fall between about a fifth and a third of cultivated land, with wide local variation. Claims of a single Europe-wide percentage should be treated with suspicion.

51. Great tithe barns survive at Great Coxwell in Oxfordshire and Bredon in Worcestershire among others; Great Coxwell's is about 152 feet long. In most villages the parish church was still the larger building; the tithe barn was the next largest.

52. Tithe disputes were heard in the church courts. The ultimate sanction was excommunication, which carried exclusion from the sacraments, from Christian marriage and from burial in consecrated ground. In England, after forty days of obstinacy the bishop could certify the excommunicate to Chancery by the writ *significavit*, whereupon the writ *de excommunicato capiendo* directed the sheriff to arrest and imprison him until he submitted.

53. Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997), reconstructed crusader finance from monastic charters and concluded that the expedition was ruinously expensive for most participants; estimates of the cost of equipping a knight run to several times, commonly

given as about four times, his annual revenues. The older picture of the crusade as an outlet for land-hungry younger sons has been substantially revised as a result.

54. Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lorraine, raised funds for the First Crusade by conveying Bouillon to Otbert, bishop of Liege, for 1,300 marks of silver, and by other sales and pledges. Comparable transactions by departing crusaders fill the cartularies of Cluny and other houses.

55. *Quantum praedecessores*, Eugenius III, 1 December 1145, the first crusade bull to set the privileges out in writing: remission of penance, church protection of the crusader's wife, children and property in his absence, freedom from interest accruing on his debts, and permission to pledge lands and possessions to churches or other Christians to raise money. Similar protections were proclaimed at Clermont in 1095 but do not survive in a single comprehensive text.

56. The Rhineland massacres of spring 1096, chiefly at Speyer, Worms, Mainz and Cologne, carried out by crusading bands including that of Count Emicho of Flonheim. The principal sources are the Hebrew chronicles of Solomon bar Simson, Eliezer bar Nathan and the Mainz Anonymous, and Albert of Aachen on the Christian side. Bishop John of Speyer sheltered the Jews of his city; Archbishop Ruthard of Mainz took them into his palace, where they were killed anyway. The Mainz dead are usually given as about 1,100. Henry IV, who was in Italy, had ordered the Jews protected.

57. Jerusalem fell on 15 July 1099. Casualty figures are irreconcilable: the letter of Daibert, Godfrey and Raymond to the pope and the *Gesta Francorum* describe wholesale slaughter; Ibn al-Athir, writing over a century later, gives 70,000. Modern estimates are much lower and genuinely uncertain. Documents from the Cairo Geniza record Egyptian Jewish communities ransoming Jewish captives and redeeming books taken from Jerusalem in the months following. The report that Jews were burned inside a synagogue appears in later sources and is disputed.

58. The sack of Constantinople, April 1204. The horses of Saint Mark's were taken from the hippodrome; they were installed on the basilica's facade about 1254, removed to Paris by Napoleon from 1797 to 1815, and moved indoors to the basilica museum in the 1980s, with replicas now on the loggia.

59. On cathedral finance: after the fire of 1194 the canons of Chartres assigned their prebendal incomes to the rebuilding for three years. Relic tours to raise building money are documented for Laon in 1112–13. Canterbury's rebuilding after 1174 was substantially funded by offerings at the shrine of Thomas Becket, killed in 1170. Indulgences granted for contributions to the fabric of a church are common from the twelfth century onward.

60. The dualist heresy of Languedoc is described as an organized counter-church, with its own ministers (*perfecti*, men and women) and a single rite, the *consolamentum*, in inquisitorial records and in polemics such as Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay's. Since the 1990s a revisionist school – R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy* (2012), Mark Gregory Pegg, *A Most Holy War* (2008) – has argued that this church is largely a construction of the prosecuting sources. Other specialists, including Peter Biller and Claire Taylor, defend the substance of the older account. The debate is unresolved; the poverty of the dissident preachers and the wealth of the local clergy are agreed on all sides and are reported by Catholic observers, including the legates sent to the region.

61. Béziers, 22 July 1209. The remark attributed to the papal legate Arnaud Amaury is reported by Caesarius of Heisterbach in the *Dialogus Miraculorum*, written about 1219–23, and Caesarius says

only that he is *reported* to have said it. No contemporary source contains it, including Peter of Vaux-de-Cernay, who was close to the crusade. The destruction of the town is not in dispute.

52. Beziers, 22 July 1209. Arnaud Amaury, abbot of Citeaux and papal legate, reported to Innocent III that his men had killed *almost twenty thousand* regardless of rank, age or sex; the town's population is generally thought to have been far smaller, and the true number is unknown. The remark 'kill them all, God will know his own' is reported only by Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, written about 1219–23, who says the legate was *reported* to have said it. The Albigensian crusade was preached after the murder of the legate Pierre de Castelnau on 14 January 1208; Innocent III offered the lands of heretics and their protectors to those who took the cross. The war ended with the Treaty of Paris of 1229, which delivered the county of Toulouse to the French crown.

63. Fourth Lateran Council, 1215, canon 21 (*Omnis utriusque sexus*): annual confession to one's own priest and communion at Easter, on pain of exclusion from the church and denial of Christian burial, with absolute secrecy imposed on the confessor — a priest who disclosed was to be deposed and confined to a monastery for life. Canon 68 of the same council, often confused with it, is the requirement of distinctive dress for Jews and Muslims.

64. Fourth Lateran Council, November 1215. Canon 3 ordered secular powers to purge heretics from their lands on pain of excommunication and the loss of their lordship; canon 21 (*Omnis utriusque sexus*) required annual confession to one's own priest and Easter communion; canon 68 required distinctive dress for Jews and Muslims. The council also settled the Toulouse succession in favour of Simon de Montfort, confirming him in the lands taken in the Albigensian crusade.

65. Standing papal inquisitors, largely Dominican, were appointed from 1231–33 under Gregory IX. The procedure was *inquisitio ex officio*: the tribunal opened the case without an accuser, and the names of witnesses were withheld from the accused. Innocent IV authorized torture in *Ad extirpanda*, 15 May 1252. The convicted impenitent or relapsed heretic was 'relaxed to the secular arm' with a formal plea for mercy, and burned by the civil power. Confiscation of the property of the condemned was standard, divided by local arrangement, and met the costs of the tribunals. Most sentences were penitential rather than capital: pilgrimages, the wearing of crosses, imprisonment, and confiscation.

66. Valdes of Lyon — the forename Peter is a fourteenth-century addition — renounced his property about 1173 according to the *Chronicon universale anonymi Laudunensis*, which also names the two clerics he paid, Bernard Ydros and Stephen of Anse, to translate the gospels and other texts into the vernacular. Stephen of Bourbon reports that his fortune came from moneylending. He made an orthodox profession of faith at Lyon in 1180. Alexander III approved his vow of poverty at the Third Lateran Council in 1179 but restricted his preaching to what the local clergy licensed; he was expelled from Lyon by Archbishop Jean Bellesmains about 1182–84, and the Poor of Lyons were anathematized by name in Lucius III's *Ad abolendam* at Verona, 4 November 1184. The Waldensian Evangelical Church survives, in union with Italian Methodism since 1975; Pope Francis visited its temple in Turin on 22 June 2015 and asked forgiveness. Historians stress that the modern church's descent from Valdes is confessional rather than corporate.

67. *Ad abolendam*, Lucius III, issued at Verona on 4 November 1184, anathematized the Poor of Lyons (the Waldensians) by name together with Cathars, Humiliati, Patarines and others; condemned preaching without authorization; required every bishop to visit his diocese once or twice a year to seek out heresy, compelling local men to swear to report suspects; and required secular rulers to

enforce the sentences on pain of losing office. It is generally described as the origin of the episcopal inquisition.

58. Francis renounced his inheritance before the bishop of Assisi about 1206. Innocent III's approval of his first rule, now lost, came in 1209 (some date it 1210); it was oral and provisional, obtained largely through the advocacy of Cardinal Giovanni di San Paolo, and written approval came only with Honorius III's bull *Solet annuere* of 29 November 1223. That the companions were tonsured and swore obedience at the 1209 audience appears first in the *Anonymus Perusinus* and the *Legend of the Three Companions* of the 1240s, not in Thomas of Celano's *Vita prima* of 1228–29. The Basilica of San Francesco was begun in 1228, two years after his death and the year of his canonization. On the comparison with Valdes, the foundational study is Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages* (1935; English translation 1995), who argued that a single impulse toward apostolic poverty became sanctity or heresy according to whether the hierarchy could accommodate it; the decisive variable was authorized preaching, not poverty. Innocent III had also reconciled the Humiliati in 1201, Durand of Huesca's Poor Catholics in 1208 and Bernard Prim in 1210, several of them former Waldensians.

59. The Basilica of San Francesco at Assisi was begun in 1228, two years after Francis's death and in the year of his canonization. Gregory IX laid the foundation stone and appealed by letter for contributions toward the building.

70. Innocent VIII authorized a crusade against the Waldensians of the Dauphine in 1487. The massacre of Merindol and Cabrieres in Provence took place in April 1545 on the authority of an arret of the Parlement of Aix, executed under Jean Maynier, baron d'Oppede; estimates of the dead range from several hundred to several thousand, with survivors sent to the galleys, and the commanders were later tried in Paris and acquitted. The Piedmontese Easter of April 1655 prompted John Milton's sonnet 'On the Late Massacre in Piedmont' and a diplomatic protest drafted for Cromwell.

71. Marguerite Porete, a Beguine of Hainaut, was burned at the Place de Greve in Paris on 1 June 1310 for continuing to circulate *The Mirror of Simple Souls* after its condemnation; she refused to take the oath or answer her judges for eighteen months. The chronicler of Saint-Denis records that her bearing at the execution moved the spectators. The book continued to circulate anonymously in French, Latin, Italian and Middle English; Romana Guarnieri identified the anonymous *Mirror* as Porete's work in 1946.

72. The Beguines were condemned at the Council of Vienne, which sat from October 1311 to May 1312; the relevant decrees (*Cum de quibusdam mulieribus*, *Ad nostrum*) were promulgated in 1317. Beguinages persisted in the Low Countries into the twentieth century.

73. The scriptural supports usually offered are 2 Maccabees 12:38–45 and 1 Corinthians 3:11–15; 2 Maccabees is canonical for Catholics and Orthodox and was placed among the Apocrypha by the Reformers. Augustine raises the possibility of a purgatorial fire tentatively (*Enchiridion* 69, *City of God* 21); Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 4, transmits stories of post-mortem cleansing. Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (French 1981), dated the emergence of the noun *purgatorium* to the last third of the twelfth century; his dating has been criticized as too precise, but the hardening of a process into a place in that period is generally accepted. Doctrinal definitions: Second Council of Lyon, 1274, and Council of Florence, 1439, restated at Trent, Session 25, 1563.

74. *Antiquorum habet fida relatio*, Boniface VIII, 22 February 1300, proclaimed the first jubilee, with a plenary indulgence for those visiting the basilicas of St Peter and St Paul on the prescribed number of days, and declared it a centenary observance. The image of two clerics with rakes gathering coin

day and night at the altar of St Paul's is from the chronicle of Guglielmo Ventura of Asti, who made the pilgrimage.

75. *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, 27 January 1343, gave the treasury of merit doctrinal form; *Salvator Noster*, 1476, under Sixtus IV, first extended indulgences to souls in purgatory.

76. *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, Clement VI, 27 January 1343, gave the treasury of merit doctrinal form and reduced the jubilee interval from one hundred years to fifty, proclaiming the jubilee of 1350. Urban VI reduced it to thirty-three years in 1389 and Paul II to twenty-five in 1470.

77. *Salvator Noster*, Sixtus IV, 3 August 1476, applied indulgences to souls in purgatory, in favour of contributions to the church of Saintes in France. Sixtus IV built the Sistine Chapel (1473-81), which is named after him, and the Ponte Sisto, and was notorious for the promotion of his relatives.

78. On the mechanics of an indulgence campaign - papal grant, territorial licence and revenue split, commissary and sub-commissaries, ceremonial entry with the bull, graduated tariffs set out in printed instructions, the locked chest, and the printed letter of indulgence with a blank for the purchaser's name - see the documents of the 1515-17 Mainz campaign, especially the *Instructio summaria*, and surviving indulgence letters in library collections. Thousands of printed indulgence forms survive.

79. *Unam Sanctam*, Boniface VIII, 18 November 1302. The outrage at Anagni, in which Guillaume de Nogaret, acting for Philip IV, and Sciarra Colonna seized the pope, took place in September 1303; Boniface died on 11 October. Clement V, elected 1305, never entered Rome; the curia settled at Avignon in 1309 and remained until 1377. The Palais des Papes was built chiefly from 1335. Avignon systematized annates, servitia and a wide range of fees. Petrarch, resident there, called it the Babylon of the West. Catherine of Siena travelled to Avignon in 1376 and urged Gregory XI to return to Rome, which he did in January 1377.

80. The papacy resided at Avignon from 1309 to 1377. The Western Schism ran from 1378 to 1417, with rival popes at Rome and Avignon and, after the Council of Pisa in 1409, a third line.

81. John Wycliffe died in 1384. The Council of Constance condemned him in 1415; his remains were exhumed and burned in 1428.

82. John Wycliffe, Oxford theologian, argued in *De civili dominio* and *De ecclesia* that dominion depends on grace, that the church should be disendowed, and that scripture in the vernacular should be available to all. He was protected by John of Gaunt. Condemned in his lifetime but never tried for his life, he died at Lutterworth on 31 December 1384 after a stroke. The Council of Constance condemned him in May 1415 and ordered his remains exhumed; this was carried out in 1428 on Martin V's instruction by Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, and the ashes cast into the river Swift. The statute *De heretico comburendo* (1401) first provided for the burning of heretics in England; Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions of 1409 prohibited unlicensed translation of scripture into English and the reading of such translations.

83. Jan Hus travelled to the Council of Constance under a safe-conduct from the emperor Sigismund, was arrested, tried, and burned on 6 July 1415.

84. Jan Hus preached at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague in Czech. The Council of Constance declared that a safe-conduct granted to one suspected of heresy did not bind; Hus was burned on 6 July 1415 and Jerome of Prague on 30 May 1416, the ashes in both cases thrown into the Rhine. The Hussite wars followed the defenestration of Prague in 1419; five crusades (1420, 1421, 1422, 1427, 1431) failed, the Hussite armies under Jan Zizka and later Prokop the Great using war-wagon

formations and field artillery. At Domazlice in August 1431 the crusading army is reported to have broken before contact. After the defeat of the radical Taborites at Lipany in 1434, the Compacts agreed with the Council of Basel in 1436 conceded communion in both kinds to the laity in Bohemia.

85. Gutenberg's press was working at Mainz by about 1450; by 1500 presses were operating in more than two hundred European towns.

86. Johannes Gutenberg, at Mainz by about 1450. The essential innovation was the adjustable hand mould for casting type of uniform height in quantity, together with a suitable lead-tin-antimony alloy, an oil-based ink that adhered to metal, and a press adapted from existing screw presses. The 42-line Bible, about 1454–55, was produced in roughly 180 copies. Among his earliest dated products are indulgence forms printed in 1454 and 1455 for the Cyprus campaign, surviving in the so-called 31-line and 30-line settings, with blanks left for the purchaser's name. In 1455 Johann Fust sued Gutenberg for repayment and took possession of the printing materials. By 1500 presses were operating in more than two hundred European towns.

87. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database records about 12.5 million people embarked and about 10.7 million surviving the crossing.

88. Madeira was settled from the 1420s and producing sugar commercially by the 1450s; Sao Tome, settled from 1493, became the first territory worked as a large-scale plantation economy with enslaved African labour, and was the leading sugar producer of the early sixteenth century before Brazil overtook it. On the transfer of the model across the Atlantic see Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (1985), and Philip Curtin's account of the 'plantation complex'.

89. Gomes Eanes de Zurara, *Cronica dos feitos notaveis que se passaram na conquista de Guine* (usually *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*), completed 1453, chapter 25, describes the landing and division of 235 captives at Lagos on 8 August 1444, the separation of families, and Prince Henry taking his fifth of forty-six. Zurara wrote under Henry's patronage and presents the enslavement as a spiritual benefit to the enslaved.

90. *Dum Diversas*, 18 June 1452, and *Romanus Pontifex*, 1455, both to the Portuguese crown. Portuguese enslavement of Africans had begun by 1441, with the Lagos auction in 1444.

91. *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) conferred on Portugal exclusive rights of navigation, trade and conquest along the African coast and in lands reached or to be reached, prohibiting other Christians from trading or sailing there without Portuguese licence under pain of excommunication and interdict. The enforceability of such grants depended on the general acceptance among Latin Christian rulers of papal competence to allocate rights between Christian princes.

92. *Inter Caetera*, 1493; the Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494.

93. *Inter Caetera*, Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia, born at Jativa in the kingdom of Valencia), 4 May 1493, fixed a line of demarcation 100 leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde. The Treaty of Tordesillas, 7 June 1494, negotiated bilaterally between Spain and Portugal, moved it to 370 leagues west of Cape Verde. Pedro Alvares Cabral made landfall in Brazil in April 1500, on the Portuguese side of the revised line. Alexander VI's election in August 1492 was widely alleged at the time to have been secured by the distribution of benefices and money.

94. *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823), opinion by Chief Justice John Marshall, held that discovery gave the discovering European sovereign title against other Europeans and reduced indigenous rights to a right of occupancy extinguishable by the sovereign. The doctrine has been

cited in later American litigation, including *City of Sherrill v. Oneida Indian Nation*, 544 U.S. 197 (2005). On 30 March 2023 the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development issued a joint statement repudiating the 'doctrine of discovery' and stating that the fifteenth-century bulls do not adequately reflect the equal dignity of peoples and have never been considered expressions of the Catholic faith.

95. The *Requerimiento*, drafted about 1513 by Juan López de Palacios Rubios.

96. Antonio de Montesinos preached against the enslavement and abuse of the Taino at Santo Domingo on 21 December 1511, with Las Casas in the congregation. Las Casas dated his own change of mind to that sermon and to his later reading of Ecclesiasticus 34.

97. Montesinos preached at Santo Domingo on 21 December 1511, on the text *ego vox clamantis in deserto* (John 1:23), with the sermon agreed and signed in advance by the Dominican community. The colonists complained to the crown; orders were issued for the friars' recall and silencing, and Montesinos travelled to Spain and argued the case before Ferdinand. The Junta of Burgos followed, producing the Laws of Burgos of 27 December 1512, and the *Requerimiento*, drafted about 1513 by Juan Lopez de Palacios Rubios of the Council of Castile, as a legal form for the conquest. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo records in his *Historia general y natural de las Indias* his exchange with Pedrarias Davila about the impossibility of the Indians understanding it.

98. Bartolomé de las Casas, on reading the Requerimiento, wrote that he did not know whether to laugh or to weep.

99. Contact-era population estimates for Hispaniola vary by more than an order of magnitude, from Angel Rosenblat's low figures to the very high estimates of Sherburne Cook and Woodrow Borah; the dispute is unresolved. The 1514 *repartimiento* census, an administrative allocation rather than an estimate, recorded roughly 26,000 Indians on the island. Epidemic disease was the largest single cause of mortality across the Americas; forced labour, the disruption of food production, and the breaking up of households are documented by the crown's own investigations, including the Jeronymite inquiry of 1517.

100. Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1552; the debate at Valladolid with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, 1550–51.

101. The New Laws of 1542 prohibited Indian slavery and provided that encomiendas should lapse on the death of the holder. Colonist resistance was severe; in Peru the rebellion of Gonzalo Pizarro killed the viceroy Blasco Nunez Vela in 1546. The inheritance clause was revoked in 1545. The Valladolid debate before a junta convened by Charles V took place in 1550 and 1551, Las Casas against Juan Gines de Sepulveda, on the justice of the wars of conquest and the applicability of Aristotle's natural slavery. The junta issued no collective verdict. Las Casas was bishop of Chiapas from 1544 to 1547.

102. Las Casas condemned his own earlier proposal in the *History of the Indies*, writing that he repented the advice and was not certain that his ignorance and good intention would excuse him before the divine judgment.

103. *Sublimis Deus*, Paul III, 2 June 1537, declared the Indians to be true men, capable of the faith, and not to be deprived of liberty or property, declaring contrary acts void. The accompanying executory brief *Pastorale officium* (29 May 1537), addressed to Cardinal Juan de Tavera of Toledo and carrying penalties, was annulled in June 1538 following protests from Charles V. *Sublimis Deus* did

not address the enslavement of Africans, and *Dum Diversas* and *Romanus Pontifex* were not revoked.

14. Albrecht of Brandenburg (1490–1545) was already archbishop of Magdeburg and administrator of Halberstadt when he was elected to Mainz in 1514, in breach of the canonical rules on minimum age and on holding more than one see. The archbishop of Mainz was one of the seven prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire; Albrecht voted in the imperial election of 1519 that chose Charles V. The sums recorded for the dispensation and the pallium vary between sources; figures of 10,000 ducats for the dispensation and 14,000 for the pallium are commonly cited, with other accounts giving totals between about 21,000 and 29,000.

15. Albrecht of Brandenburg acquired Mainz in 1514 in breach of the rules on age and plurality, borrowing from the Fugger bank to pay the confirmation fee; the indulgence proceeds were divided between St Peter's and the repayment. Johann Tetzel preached the campaign.

16. The loan came from the house of Fugger of Augsburg under Jakob Fugger the Rich. Leo X's bull *Sacrosancti salvatoris* (1515) granted the indulgence for Albrecht's provinces, with the proceeds divided equally between the building of St Peter's and the repayment of Albrecht's debt. A Fugger factor accompanied the campaign, held a key to the chest and kept the accounts, remitting the bank's share directly.

17. Johann Tetzel OP was the sub-commissary who preached the campaign in Magdeburg and Brandenburg. The couplet 'as soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs' is attributed to him by his opponents and is referred to in Luther's theses 27 and 28. The *Instructio summaria* issued in Albrecht's name in 1517 sets out a graduated tariff by rank: at the top kings, queens and great princes; then abbots, counts and barons; then lesser nobles and officials; then burghers with their own income; then lesser tradesmen; with prayer and fasting substituted for those with nothing. Thesis 86 asks why the pope, whose wealth is greater than that of the richest Crassus, does not build St Peter's with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers.

18. Frederick III of Saxony, called the Wise, assembled a relic collection displayed annually at the Castle Church in Wittenberg on All Saints' Day; the catalogue of 1509 lists 5,005 particles and the collection had reached about 19,013 by 1520, with an associated indulgence commonly reckoned at over 1.9 million years. Offerings supported the Castle Church foundation and the University of Wittenberg. Frederick barred Tetzel's campaign from Electoral Saxony. Luther sent the ninety-five theses to Albrecht of Mainz and to Hieronymus Schulz, bishop of Brandenburg, on 31 October 1517; the posting on the church door is reported first by Melanchthon in 1546, after Luther's death, and is disputed.

19. Luther at the Diet of Worms, April 1521; the Edict of Worms, May 1521, placed him under imperial ban. Frederick the Wise arranged his seizure and concealment at the Wartburg, where he translated the New Testament, published in September 1522. Albert of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, secularized the Order's Prussian lands in 1525 and became hereditary duke, having sought Luther's advice. The Peace of Augsburg, 25 September 1555, established *cuius regio, eius religio*, with a right of emigration for dissenting subjects.

10. The Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia, printed March 1525 — among the first documents of its kind to be mass-produced by printing.

11. The Twelve Articles of the Peasants of Swabia were drawn up at Memmingen in late February or early March 1525, chiefly by Sebastian Lotzer, a journeyman furrier, with Christoph Schappeler; some twenty-five editions were printed within about two months. The third article argues against serfdom on the ground that Christ redeemed all alike, citing among others 1 Corinthians 7:23; the twelfth undertakes to withdraw any article shown to be contrary to scripture. English translations are in Michael Baylor, *The Radical Reformation*, and in Peter Blickle's studies of the war.

12. Martin Luther, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, May 1525. Estimates of the dead run as high as 100,000 out of roughly 300,000 poorly armed peasants.

13. Luther, *Admonition to Peace* (April 1525), blames the lords for provoking the rising; *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (May 1525) instructs rulers that whoever can should 'smite, slay and stab' the rebels, secretly or openly, as one would kill a mad dog, and that a prince who dies so doing is a blessed martyr. English text in *Luther's Works*, American edition, volume 46.

14. The battle of Frankenhausen, 15 May 1525: a peasant force was destroyed by the troops of Philip of Hesse, George of Saxony and Henry of Brunswick, with about 6,000 peasant dead against negligible princely losses. Thomas Muntzer, taken afterwards, was tortured and beheaded at Muhlhausen on 27 May 1525. Total deaths across the German Peasants' War are usually given as up to 100,000 out of perhaps 300,000 participants; the figures are estimates.

15. Act of Supremacy 1534; the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* survey 1535; the Act for the Dissolution of the Lesser Monasteries 1536 and the surrender of the greater houses by 1540, some 800 houses in all; the Court of Augmentations administered the property, the bulk of which was sold within about a decade, largely to fund war with France and Scotland. The Chantries Acts of 1545 and 1547 dissolved chantries, guilds and their endowments, many of which supported schools and local charity. Subsequent vagrancy legislation: the Act of 1547 (branding and two years' servitude, repealed 1550) and the Act of 1572 (whipping and boring of the ear). The Poor Relief Acts of 1598 and 1601 established a compulsory parish poor rate.

16. Alexander Savine's analysis of the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* (1909) estimated alms at roughly three percent of English monastic net income, a figure still commonly cited, though the *Valor* undercounts casual doles and hospitality. Historians disagree about the scale and quality of monastic charity; they do not generally disagree that the endowments were sold rather than redirected. On the later debate see Joyce Youings, *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (1971), and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992).

17. The St Bartholomew's Day massacre began in Paris in August 1572. The Thirty Years' War ran from 1618 to 1648; modern estimates of population loss in the German lands range from about 15 to 30 percent, and far higher in some regions.

18. The St Bartholomew's Day massacre began before dawn on 24 August 1572, after the marriage of Marguerite de Valois to Henry of Navarre on 18 August and the failed attempt on Admiral Gaspard de Coligny on 22 August. Estimates are disputed: roughly 2,000-3,000 killed in Paris and several thousand more in provincial towns over the following weeks, with totals usually given between about 5,000 and 10,000. Gregory XIII had a Te Deum sung, struck a commemorative medal inscribed *Ugonottorum strages 1572*, and commissioned frescoes of the event by Giorgio Vasari for the Sala Regia in the Vatican.

19. The Thirty Years' War, 1618–48, began with the defenestration of Prague on 23 May 1618. Armies were maintained by 'contributions' levied on occupied districts, a system associated with Wallenstein; mortality was driven chiefly by typhus, plague, dysentery and famine rather than battle. Magdeburg was stormed and burned on 20 May 1631, with about 20,000 of some 25,000 inhabitants killed. By the Treaty of Barwalde, January 1631, France under Cardinal Richelieu agreed to subsidize Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden at one million livres a year; France entered the war openly against the Habsburgs in 1635. Estimates of population loss in the German lands range from about 15 to 30 percent overall, far higher in some regions.

20. Felix Manz was drowned in the Limmat at Zurich on 5 January 1527 by sentence of the city council, with Zwingli's support; he is generally identified as the first Anabaptist executed by Protestant authorities. The Anabaptist regime at Munster fell in June 1535; the bodies of Jan van Leiden and two others were displayed in iron cages on the tower of St Lambert's church, where the cages remain. Michael Servetus was burned at Champel outside Geneva on 27 October 1553; Calvin had pressed for his condemnation and asked for beheading instead of burning. Sebastian Castellio published *De haereticis, an sint persequendi* in 1554 under the name Martinus Bellius; the sentence 'to kill a man is not to defend a doctrine, it is to kill a man' comes from his *Contra libellum Calvini*.

21. The Diggers occupied St George's Hill in April 1649 and were driven off within a year. Gerrard Winstanley's phrase is "a common treasury for all."

22. The Diggers began cultivating St George's Hill, Walton-on-Thames, on 1 April 1649, two months after the execution of Charles I and after the failed harvest of 1648, when grain prices reached their century high. Gerrard Winstanley and William Everard were the leading figures; *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* (April 1649) contains the phrase 'a common treasury for all'. Thomas Fairfax visited the colony. The diggers suffered repeated destruction of crops and dwellings, assaults, and prosecutions at Kingston at which they were refused leave to plead in person. After moving to Cobham Heath the colony was destroyed in April 1650 under John Platt, rector of West Horsley and lord of the manor of Cobham, as Winstanley describes in *An Humble Request*.

23. *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, 5 December 1484; the *Malleus Maleficarum* first published at Speyer in 1486.

24. *Summis desiderantes affectibus*, Innocent VIII, 5 December 1484, was issued at the petition of Heinrich Kramer (Institoris) and named Jakob Sprenger, after local ecclesiastical and secular authorities in the Rhineland and Tyrol had obstructed their proceedings; it directs local clergy and magistrates not to hinder them. In 1485 Kramer's prosecution at Innsbruck was halted by Georg Golser, bishop of Brixen, who reviewed the record, released the accused, and required Kramer to leave the diocese; Golser's surviving letters describe him as senile and deranged.

25. The *Malleus Maleficarum* was printed at Speyer in 1486. Sprenger's participation has been widely doubted since at least the nineteenth century; the approbation of the Cologne theological faculty printed in the front is generally regarded as having been misrepresented or partly fabricated, and the Inquisition censured the work in 1490. It nevertheless went through some thirty editions by the later seventeenth century, its principal readership being secular jurists. The great majority of witch prosecutions after 1550 were conducted in secular courts.

26. The chronology of the European witch hunts is set out in Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, and Wolfgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-Hunts*. The intensity peaks roughly

between 1570 and 1660. The principal explanations offered are confessional competition after the Reformation, the subsistence crises of the Little Ice Age, and the devolution of jurisdiction to local secular courts lacking appellate supervision. On climate see Behringer, 'Weather, Hunger and Fear' (1995).

27. Careful modern estimates of executions for witchcraft in Europe between about 1450 and 1750 range from roughly 40,000 to 60,000. Women were about 75 to 80 percent of the accused overall, with wide regional variation — nearly 80 percent in the German lands, but a minority of defendants in Normandy, Muscovy and Iceland. Trials were under way decades before 1484 (Valais from 1428) and the greatest intensity came between about 1570 and 1660.

28. Roman-canon procedure required either two eyewitnesses or a confession for a capital conviction, and permitted judicial torture to obtain the latter under rules limiting duration and repetition and requiring subsequent ratification. Witchcraft was widely treated as a *crimen exceptum*, setting those limits aside. Denunciation of accomplices under torture is the standard mechanism by which individual accusations became chain-trials. The costs of imprisonment, torture, execution and the executioner's fee were commonly charged to the accused or the family, and itemized accounts survive. Confiscation practice varied by jurisdiction; its role as a driver of the hunts is debated. The prince-bishoprics of Bamberg (under Johann Georg II Fuchs von Dornheim) and Wurzburg (under Philipp Adolf von Ehrenberg) each executed several hundred people between about 1626 and 1631; Bamberg built a dedicated *Malefizhaus* in 1627. The Bamberg trials were curtailed after they reached leading citizens and complaints reached the imperial court.

29. Johannes Junius, burgomaster of Bamberg, was arrested in 1628 and burned the same year. His letter to his daughter Veronica, dated 24 July 1628 and smuggled out of prison, survives in the Bamberg archives and is printed in English in George L. Burr, *The Witch Persecutions* (Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History), and in most modern sourcebooks. It records that he was innocent, that torture compelled his confession, that he was made to name accomplices street by street, and that the executioner urged him to invent something because he could not endure the torture.

30. Alonso de Salazar Frias, inquisitor at Logrono, investigated the Basque panic following the auto de fe of 7-8 November 1610. Taking statements from some 1,800 people under an edict of grace, he reported in 1612 that he had found no evidence that any act of witchcraft had actually occurred, and wrote that there were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about. The Suprema issued new instructions in August 1614 requiring corroboration; there were no further executions for witchcraft under the Spanish Inquisition. See Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate* (1980).

31. Germany accounted for perhaps half of all European executions. The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (University of Edinburgh) records about 3,800 named accused in Scotland, with roughly 1,500–2,500 executions estimated. Matthew Hopkins and John Stearne operated in East Anglia from 1645 to 1647; Stowmarket is recorded as paying Hopkins 23 pounds. John Gaule, vicar of Great Staughton in Huntingdonshire, preached against him and published *Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcrafts* in 1646. At Salem in 1692, nineteen people were hanged, Giles Corey was pressed to death for refusing to plead, and at least five died in prison; Increase Mather's *Cases of Conscience* (1692) attacked spectral evidence, and Governor Phips dissolved the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Judge Samuel Sewall's confession of guilt was read out for him in Boston's South Church on 14 January 1697.

32. Friedrich Spee von Langenfeld SJ published *Cautio Criminalis* anonymously at Rinteln in 1631. Its central argument is procedural: that torture applied without limit produces confession from the innocent as reliably as from the guilty, so that the procedure cannot distinguish them; he states that he has accompanied condemned women to the stake and believed none of them guilty. He died at Trier on 7 August 1635, aged 44, of plague contracted nursing soldiers. English translation by Marcus Hellyer (2003).

33. The *Zong* sailed from Accra for Jamaica in 1781; between 29 November and early December at least 132 enslaved people were thrown overboard alive. The owners, a Liverpool syndicate headed by William Gregson, claimed on the insurers at 30 pounds per head. *Gregson v Gilbert* (1783) was tried as a marine insurance case; the first jury found for the owners and Lord Mansfield ordered a new trial. No criminal proceedings were ever brought. Olaudah Equiano brought the matter to Granville Sharp, whose attempt to secure a murder prosecution failed. The case report and Sharp's papers survive.

34. Christopher Codrington died in 1710 leaving his Barbados estates to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an Anglican missionary body. The Society held the plantations and the people enslaved on them until emancipation, receiving compensation in the 1830s. Branding of enslaved people on the chest with the word SOCIETY is documented in the estate records. See Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity* (2012). The Church of England's General Synod voted an apology for the Church's role in slavery in February 2006.

35. The Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery, 1688, signed by four men. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting did not prohibit slaveholding among members until 1776.

36. The Germantown Protest of 18 February 1688 was signed by Garret Hendricks, Derick op de Graeff, Francis Daniell Pastorius and Abraham op den Graef. It argues from the rule of doing to others as one would be done by, and compares the trade with the enslavement of Europeans by Barbary corsairs. It was referred upward from Dublin Monthly Meeting to Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting to the Yearly Meeting, each declining to judge a matter of such weight; the original was mislaid and rediscovered in 1844. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting required members to free those they held in 1776. Newport, Rhode Island, Quaker merchants were heavily involved in the slave trade.

37. Benjamin Lay (1682–1759), a Quaker of Abington, Pennsylvania, who had lived in Barbados. His pamphlet *All Slave-Keepers That Keep the Innocent in Bondage, Apostates* was printed by Benjamin Franklin in 1738. The demonstration with the hollowed book and bladder of pokeberry juice took place at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting held at Burlington, New Jersey, in 1738. He was disowned by four meetings. Abington Monthly Meeting and other Quaker bodies in Pennsylvania and England formally rescinded his disownment in 2017 and 2018. See Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay* (2017).

38. John Woolman, *Journal*, published 1774.

39. John Wesley, *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, 1774; his letter to William Wilberforce, 24 February 1791, six days before his death.

40. Thomas Clarkson's evidence-gathering tours, which he reckoned at some 35,000 miles, produced the testimony used in the parliamentary inquiries and the chest of instruments he exhibited. The plan and sections of the Liverpool ship *Brookes* were first issued by the Plymouth committee and then in the London version of 1789, showing the loading permitted under the Regulated Slave Trade Act. Parliament received 519 anti-slave-trade petitions in the 1792 session. The abstention

campaign of 1791–92 was estimated by Clarkson to involve some 300,000 families. Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* (1789) went through nine British editions in his lifetime, and he toured Britain and Ireland promoting it.

41. The Haitian revolution, 1791–1804.

42. The Saint-Domingue rising began on the night of 22–23 August 1791 in the northern plain; Dutty Boukman is remembered as its first leader and was killed in November 1791. Vincent Oge, a free man of colour who demanded the application of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, was broken on the wheel in February 1791. Toussaint Louverture was seized in June 1802 and died at the Fort de Joux on 7 April 1803. Jean-Jacques Dessalines proclaimed independence on 1 January 1804, taking the indigenous Taino name Haiti. The United States did not recognize Haiti until 1862.

43. By the ordinance of Charles X of 17 April 1825, delivered with a squadron of French warships off Port-au-Prince, France recognized Haitian independence in return for an indemnity of 150 million francs payable to former colonists and a halving of customs duties on French goods. The indemnity was reduced to 90 million in 1838. Haiti borrowed from French banks to meet the payments; the resulting obligations, the so-called double debt, were not finally discharged until 1947. See the New York Times investigative series 'The Ransom' (May 2022) and Jean-Francois Brière's work on the indemnity.

44. The Baptist War, or Christmas Rebellion, December 1831 to January 1832. Around two hundred people were killed in the fighting and between 310 and 340 executed afterward by sentence of the courts. Samuel Sharpe was hanged on 23 May 1832. His statement that he would rather die on the gallows than live in slavery was recorded by the Methodist missionary Henry Bleby, who visited him in prison.

45. After the Baptist War the Jamaican planters formed the Colonial Church Union in 1832, which destroyed more than a dozen Baptist and Methodist chapels; the missionaries William Knibb and Thomas Burchell were arrested. Knibb returned to England in 1832 and spoke at the Baptist Missionary Society's annual meeting and on an extensive speaking tour, declaring that he would not be silent about slavery whatever the consequences for the mission. The Colonial Church Union was suppressed by the governor in 1833.

46. The Slavery Abolition Act 1833 took effect 1 August 1834 but substituted "apprenticeship," a system of compelled unpaid labor, until 1838.

47. The Slavery Abolition Act 1833 provided 20 million pounds in compensation to slave owners, approximately 40 percent of annual government expenditure, raised by loan. Some 46,000 awards were made; the claims are catalogued in the Legacies of British Slavery database at University College London. HM Treasury stated in February 2018 that the associated debt was finally paid off in 2015. The enslaved received no compensation and were subject to 'apprenticeship' until 1838.

48. The Southern Baptist Convention was founded in 1845 over whether a slaveholder could be appointed a missionary, and adopted a resolution of racial reconciliation and apology in 1995.

49. The standard American pro-slavery proof texts were Genesis 9:20–27 (the curse, of Canaan not Ham, with nothing about Africa or complexion), Leviticus 25:44–46, Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22, 1 Timothy 6:1–2, Titus 2:9, 1 Peter 2:18 and Philemon. The counter-texts most used by abolitionists were Exodus 21:16, Deuteronomy 23:15–16, Matthew 7:12, Ephesians 6:9, 1 Timothy 1:10 (Greek *andrapodistais*, kidnappers or slave-dealers) and Philemon 15–21. The Fugitive Slave Act of

1850 required citizens to assist in the recapture of escapees and penalized those who sheltered them. On the debate see Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (2006).

50. Harriet Tubman made about thirteen return journeys and brought out roughly seventy people, according to current scholarship.

51. The Combahee River raid of 2 June 1863, planned and guided by Harriet Tubman with Colonel James Montgomery and the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers, freed approximately 750 people. Tubman received no regular pay for her war service; after decades of petitioning she was granted a widow's pension in 1895 on account of her husband's service, increased to twenty dollars a month in 1899.

52. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), Appendix: 'I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ: I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of this land... to be the friend of the one, is of necessity to be the enemy of the other.' He added the appendix explicitly to forestall the charge that he was an opponent of religion as such.

53. *Select Parts of the Holy Bible, for the use of the Negro Slaves, in the British West-India Islands*, London, 1807. Three copies are known: one at Fisk University in Nashville and two in Britain, including the University of Glasgow. Fisk's copy was exhibited at the Museum of the Bible in Washington in 2018. A digitized copy is on the Internet Archive. The volume draws on 14 of the 39 Old Testament books and 18 of the 27 New Testament books, but includes only about a tenth of the Old Testament text; Exodus is represented by chapters 19 and 20 only, so that Exodus 20:2 is present and the whole liberation narrative of chapters 1 to 18 is absent. Isaiah 58 and 61 and the Magnificat are present. Note that some popular accounts, including Wikipedia, wrongly state that Exodus was excluded entirely.

54. Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, founded the society in 1794. He raised the slavery question publicly from his 1783 sermon until his death in 1809 and came to support Wilberforce, but for much of that period he argued for amelioration and Christian instruction rather than outright abolition, and part of his case was that instruction would make enslaved people more obedient and more likely to increase in number. No source records who selected the passages for the 1807 volume.

55. Virginia's act of September 1667 declared that 'the conferring of baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedome.' South Carolina's Negro Act of 1740, passed after the Stono rebellion of 1739, penalized teaching an enslaved person to write. Comparable and broader prohibitions followed in Georgia, and in Louisiana and North Carolina about 1830, Virginia in 1831 after Nat Turner's rising (which also restricted assemblies for religious instruction), and Alabama in 1832. In the British Caribbean there was no general statutory ban on teaching the enslaved to read; access to them was controlled by the planters and by colonial legislation restricting preaching, and nonconformist missionaries, chiefly Baptist, Methodist and Moravian, were the usual route by which enslaved people obtained complete Bibles and learned to read them. Samuel Sharpe was a deacon of the Baptist chapel at Montego Bay.

56. On Exodus in the religion of enslaved people in North America, see Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. "Go Down, Moses" was first transcribed in 1861 from people who had escaped to Union lines, and reported then to be older.

57. Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha* (On Pascha), usually dated about 160–180, recovered in the twentieth century from papyri: 'God has been murdered; the King of Israel has been put to death by an Israelite right hand.' It is the earliest surviving text making the deicide charge, and it is a paschal homily. John Chrysostom preached eight *Adversus Judaeos* homilies at Antioch in 386–87, directed at Christians attending synagogue. Augustine's 'witness' doctrine appears at *City of God* 18.46 and in the *Tractatus adversus Judaeos*, applying Psalm 59:11 ('slay them not'): the Jews are to be preserved in a subordinate condition as involuntary witnesses to the scriptures. On the whole development see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, and Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews*.

58. The blood libel first appears at Norwich in 1144 and recurs across Europe for centuries.

59. Thomas of Monmouth, a monk of Norwich cathedral priory who arrived some years after the death, wrote *The Life and Passion of William of Norwich* from about 1150, promoting the cult; the body was translated several times, finally into the cathedral, and attracted offerings. The one legal proceeding arising from the affair concerned the knight Simon de Novers, who was indebted to the Jewish financier Eleazar (Deulesalt) and was accused of his murder; the ritual-murder charge was raised in his defence. English translation by Miri Rubin (Penguin, 2014); see also E. M. Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich* (2015).

60. The Second Lateran Council (1139) and Third Lateran Council (1179, canon 25) condemned manifest usurers, the latter excluding them from communion and Christian burial; canon law did not bind Jews. Guild membership required Christian oaths and observances; landholding was restricted by tenurial oaths and, in many jurisdictions, by explicit prohibition. In England the Jews were held to be the king's chattels and taxed by tallage at the crown's discretion; the Exchequer of the Jews administered this. After the York massacre of March 1190, in which the Jews besieged in Clifford's Tower died and the surviving records of debt were burned in the cathedral, the Ordinance of the Jewry of 1194 required all debts to be registered in duplicate chirographs kept in *archae*, chests in designated towns, so that the crown's interest could not be destroyed.

61. England: the Statute of the Jewry (1275) prohibited Jewish moneylending; the coin-clipping arrests of 1278–79 led to numerous executions; the Edict of Expulsion was issued on 18 July 1290, affecting perhaps 2,000–3,000 people, with property forfeited to the crown and outstanding debts taken over by it. Parliament granted Edward I a substantial lay subsidy in the same year. Jews were not readmitted to England until the 1650s. France: Philip IV ordered the arrest of all Jews on 22 July 1306, confiscated their property, transferred the debts owed to them to the crown, and expelled them; he arrested the Templars, his other principal creditors, on 13 October 1307. Readmissions and further expulsions followed, the final one in 1394. Spain: the Alhambra Decree of 31 March 1492 gave Jews until the end of July to convert or leave, forbidding the export of gold and silver. Estimates of the number who left range widely, from around 40,000 to well over 100,000; older figures of 200,000 or more are now generally rejected.

62. The persecutions of 1348–49 destroyed several hundred Jewish communities across the Empire, Switzerland, France and Aragon. At Strasbourg on 14 February 1349 several hundred Jews (contemporary estimates range from about 900 to 2,000) were burned in the Jewish cemetery, before the plague had reached the city; the council that had resisted was deposed by the guilds days earlier. Jacob von Konigshofen's Strasbourg chronicle states that the money was the reason, and that if the Jews had been poor and the lords had not been in debt to them they would not have been burned. Clement VI issued bulls on 6 July and 26 September 1348 (*Quamvis perfidiam*) forbidding the killings and noting that Jews were dying of the plague equally.

63. Fourth Lateran Council 1215, canon 68, required distinctive dress for Jews and Muslims; implementation varied by kingdom, as badge or hat. The Talmud was condemned after the Paris disputation of 1240 and burned in 1242, the chronicles giving twenty to twenty-four cartloads. Compulsory attendance at conversionary sermons was imposed in various jurisdictions, systematically in Rome from the sixteenth century. Venice required its Jews to reside in the Ghetto Nuovo from 29 March 1516, with gates closed at night and the community charged for the guards. Paul IV's bull *Cum nimis absurdum*, 14 July 1555, established the Roman ghetto, imposed the distinctive hat, limited the Jews to one synagogue and confined them largely to dealing in second-hand goods and pawnbroking. The Roman ghetto was abolished in 1870.

64. Matthew 27:25 has no parallel in Mark, Luke or John. On the composition and audience of Matthew as an intra-Jewish document see the standard commentaries. John 8:44 occurs within a dispute set in the Temple between Jesus and Jewish interlocutors; the Fourth Gospel's use of *hoi Ioudaioi* frequently denotes the Jerusalem authorities, and the gospel is generally dated after the separation of the Johannine community from the synagogue. Luke 23:34a ('Father, forgive them') is absent from several early manuscripts, including P75 and the original hand of Vaticanus, and is bracketed in many modern editions. *Nostra Aetate*, Second Vatican Council, 28 October 1965, section 4, states that what was done in the passion cannot be charged against all Jews then living, nor against the Jews of today, and that the Jews are not rejected or accursed.

65. Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 1543, reprinted and circulated in Germany in the 1930s and 40s.

66. Luther, *That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1523), argues for humane treatment and free trade with Jews, in the expectation of their conversion, and contains the remark that had he been a Jew he would sooner have become a pig than a Christian given how the faith was taught. *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543) sets out seven numbered recommendations: burn the synagogues and schools; raze their houses; confiscate prayer books and Talmudic writings; forbid rabbis to teach on pain of death; abolish safe-conduct on the highways; prohibit usury and confiscate cash and valuables; and put flail, axe and spade into the hands of the young and strong. Both are in *Luther's Works*, volumes 45 and 47. Julius Streicher stated at Nuremberg on 29 April 1946 that Luther would likely be in the dock in his place had the book been put in evidence. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted its Declaration to the Jewish Community on 18 April 1994, repudiating these writings.

67. The German Christian movement won about two thirds of the seats in the church elections of 23 July 1933. The general synod of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union, meeting on 5-6 September 1933 (the 'Brown Synod'), adopted the Aryan Paragraph excluding clergy and officials of Jewish descent, or married to persons of Jewish descent. The Pastors' Emergency League was formed in response and grew to some 6,000-7,000 members; the Confessing Church's Barmen Declaration of 29-31 May 1934 rejected the subordination of the church's message to other authorities but made no statement about the persecution of Jews, and the Confessing Church's practical advocacy was directed chiefly at baptized Christians of Jewish descent.

68. The Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life was founded at the Wartburg, above Eisenach, on 6 May 1939, with the New Testament scholar Walter Grundmann of Jena as academic director; around eleven regional churches supported it. It published *Die Botschaft Gottes* (1940), a de-Judaized New Testament, and a hymnal with Hebrew words removed (1941), and rejected the Old Testament. See Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus* (2008).

59. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged at Flossenbürg on 9 April 1945.

70. Bonhoeffer's essay 'The Church and the Jewish Question' (April 1933) sets out three possible responses of the church to the state - questioning its legitimacy, aiding the victims whether or not they belong to the church, and seizing the wheel itself - and also repeats traditional theological claims about Jewish suffering as a consequence of the rejection of Christ and looks to conversion. He took part in Operation 7 in 1942, which brought fourteen Jews to Switzerland. He was arrested on 5 April 1943 and hanged at Flossenburg on 9 April 1945.

71. The Indian Act amendment of 1920 made school attendance compulsory for status Indian children aged seven to fifteen and empowered Indian agents and truant officers to compel it. Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, told the House of Commons special committee in 1920: 'I want to get rid of the Indian problem… Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department.' Roughly 60 percent of the schools were operated by Roman Catholic bodies, most of the remainder by the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church and the Presbyterian Church. 'Kill the Indian, save the man' is Richard Henry Pratt's, from the American system.

72. Per-capita grants for residential schools were introduced by order in council in 1892. Dr Peter Henderson Bryce, chief medical officer of the Department of Indian Affairs, reported in 1907 on 35 prairie schools, finding mortality among former pupils of about 24 percent, and 42 percent at File Hills counting deaths after discharge, and attributing it chiefly to tuberculosis spread by overcrowding and poor ventilation. His recommendations were not implemented and his position was marginalized; he published *The Story of a National Crime* in 1922. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission reported in 2015, described the policy as cultural genocide, issued 94 Calls to Action, and named more than 3,200 children who died, stating the true figure was higher; the National Student Memorial Register has since grown. In May 2021 ground-penetrating radar at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School indicated roughly 200 possible unmarked burials; no excavation has been conducted and the interpretation has been publicly contested. Pope Francis apologized at Maskwacis, Alberta, on 25 July 2022.

73. Church-run residential schools in Canada date from 1831; the federally funded system ran from 1883 to 1996. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission reported in 2015 that more than 150,000 children passed through the schools and described the policy as cultural genocide. The phrase 'kill the Indian, save the man' is Richard Henry Pratt's, from the parallel American system.

74. The Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) adopted *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* at its general synod in 1974, published in English in 1976 as *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*. The principal texts used in Afrikaner theological defences of separate development were Genesis 11 (Babel), Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26. Acts 17:26 in the King James Version reads in full: 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.'

75. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches declared apartheid a heresy in 1982; the Dutch Reformed Church began reversing its position with *Church and Society* in 1986, completing it in the 1990s.

76. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches, meeting at Ottawa in August 1982, declared apartheid a heresy, suspended the membership of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Nederduitsch

Hervormde Kerk, and elected Allan Boesak as president. The Belhar Confession was drafted in 1982 and adopted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in 1986; it has since been adopted by several Reformed bodies internationally. The DRC's *Church and Society* (1986, revised 1990) began the reversal of its position, and it issued an apology in 1994.

77. Christiaan Frederick Beyers Naude (1915-2004), Dutch Reformed minister, son of a founding member of the Afrikaner Broederbond and himself a member, and moderator of the Southern Transvaal synod. After Sharpeville (1960) and the Cottesloe consultation he changed position; he founded the Christian Institute in 1963 and resigned his congregation, preaching a final sermon on Acts 5:29. He lost his ministerial status and was banned by the government from 1977 to 1984.

78. On the hardening of Hutu and Tutsi into fixed racial categories under German and Belgian rule and through the Catholic mission school system, and the Hamitic hypothesis taught in those schools, see Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers* (2001), and Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (2010). The Belgian census of 1933-34 issued identity cards recording ethnic classification; these remained in use and were checked at roadblocks in 1994. Estimates of the 1994 dead range from about 500,000 to over a million.

79. Estimates of the dead in Rwanda in 1994 range from about 500,000 to over a million; 800,000 is a common figure and the Rwandan government's count is higher. On churches as massacre sites, and the later convictions of clergy, see the judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

80. *Prosecutor v. Athanase Seromba*, ICTR-2001-66: the trial chamber convicted him on 13 December 2006 and sentenced him to 15 years; the appeals chamber on 12 March 2008 convicted him of genocide and extermination as a principal perpetrator and imposed life imprisonment, finding that he had directed the demolition of the church at Nyange with refugees inside. *Prosecutor v. Elizaphan and Gerard Ntakirutimana*, ICTR-96-10 and 96-17: judgment 21 February 2003; the letter from seven Tutsi pastors at Mugonero dated 15 April 1994, beginning 'we wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families', is quoted in the judgment and gives Philip Gourevitch's book its title. Sisters Gertrude Mukangango and Maria Kisito Mukabutera were convicted by a Brussels assize court in June 2001 over the deaths at the Sovu convent.

81. Damas Gisimba, director of the Gisimba Memorial Centre orphanage in Nyamirambo, Kigali, sheltered some 400 people during the 1994 genocide. Carl Wilkens, a Seventh-day Adventist relief worker, was the only American official aid worker who remained in Kigali throughout, and intervened with authorities to prevent an attack on the orphanage.

82. The inquiry was opened in November 2007 by Senator Charles Grassley as ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, into six media ministries. Two cooperated fully; four did not. It closed on 6 January 2011 with no findings of wrongdoing and a recommendation of self-regulation.

83. Senator Charles Grassley, then ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, wrote on 5 November 2007 to six media-based ministries: Kenneth Copeland Ministries; Creflo Dollar Ministries / World Changers Church International; Benny Hinn / World Healing Center Church; Bishop Eddie Long / New Birth Missionary Baptist Church; Joyce Meyer Ministries; and Randy and Paula White / Without Walls International Church. Joyce Meyer Ministries and Benny Hinn's organization cooperated fully; the other four did not fully respond. Joyce Meyer Ministries joined the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability in 2009. The staff review was released on 6 January 2011 with no findings of wrongdoing and a recommendation of self-regulation, leading to the Commission on Accountability and Policy for Religious Organizations. Churches and their

integrated auxiliaries are exempt from the Form 990 filing requirement under Internal Revenue Code section 6033(a)(3)(A); section 7611, enacted in 1984, restricts the circumstances in which the IRS may commence a church tax inquiry.

84. Dorothy Day founded *The Catholic Worker*, first issued 1 May 1933 at a penny a copy.

85. Rutilio Grande SJ was shot dead near Aguilares on 12 March 1977, together with Manuel Solorzano, aged 72, and Nelson Rutilio Lemus, aged 16. Romero had been named archbishop of San Salvador on 3 February 1977 and installed on 22 February. He demanded an investigation, refused to appear at official state functions, and on 20 March 1977 celebrated a single mass for the whole archdiocese in the cathedral square, suspending all others. Grande was beatified in 2020.

86. Óscar Romero's radio homily of 23 March 1980 called on soldiers to disobey orders against the law of God. He was shot the following day at the altar of the chapel of the Hospital de la Divina Providencia.

87. Six Jesuits, their housekeeper Elba Ramos and her daughter Celina, aged sixteen, were killed at the Central American University in San Salvador on 16 November 1989 by members of the Atlacatl Battalion.

88. The Atlacatl Battalion was formed in 1980–81 and trained by United States advisers and at the US Army School of the Americas, then at Fort Benning, Georgia. The same UN Commission attributed the killings at the Central American University on 16 November 1989 to members of the battalion acting on orders from Colonel Guillermo Benavides and the high command, and attributed the El Mozote massacre of December 1981, in which around 800 to 1,000 villagers were killed, to the same unit. United States military and economic assistance to El Salvador in this period exceeded a million dollars a day at its peak.

89. *Hospital*, *hospice*, and *hospitality* all derive from the Latin *hospes* (host, guest) via *hospitale*, reflecting the historical link between Christian hospitality and the care of travelers and the sick in late antiquity and the medieval period.

90. Basil of Caesarea built the complex known as the Basileias outside Caesarea in Cappadocia from about 372, on land given by the emperor Valens. It had staff physicians and attendants working in shifts and a separate house for people with leprosy, and is commonly described as the first hospital in the sense of an institution combining inpatient care with professional medicine. Fabiola, a Roman noblewoman, founded a *nosocomium* at Rome in the 390s; Jerome describes it in Letter 77. The Hôtel-Dieu in Paris is traditionally dated to 651 under Bishop Landry and first documented in 829; it was run by the church, latterly by Augustinian nuns, until the reforms of 1787, the sisters left in 1908, and it still operates.

91. The Rule of Saint Benedict was composed in Italy in the first half of the sixth century, conventionally about 530–560. Chapter 36, *De infirmis fratribus*, opens: "Before all things and above all things, care must be taken of the sick, so that they may be served as if they were Christ himself."

92. The Rule of St. Benedict (6th century), chapter 36, opens: "Before all things and above all things, care must be taken of the sick." Benedictine monasteries ran infirmaries as a religious obligation, and in Latin Christian Europe they were, for centuries, the closest thing the continent had to a hospital system.

93. About one in six acute-care hospital beds in the United States is in a Catholic facility, on the Catholic Health Association's own figures, and Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran and

Adventist systems account for many more. The share has risen through consolidation even as day-to-day religious governance has thinned, and a good many hospitals keep a founder's name with no remaining denominational tie.

94. Dame Cicely Saunders (1918–2005) founded St Christopher's Hospice in London in 1967, widely credited as the start of the modern hospice movement. She wrote and spoke at length about her Christian faith as the reason for the work.

95. Florence Wald (1917–2008), dean of the Yale School of Nursing, heard Cicely Saunders lecture at Yale in 1963, resigned the deanship in 1968 and spent a month working at St Christopher's. Connecticut Hospice, founded with two paediatricians and a chaplain, began home care at Branford in 1974 and opened an inpatient building in 1980. The Medicare hospice benefit was created by the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982, took effect in November 1983, and was made permanent in 1986.

96. Bill Wilson (1895–1971) had his last drink in December 1934. He met Robert Holbrook Smith (1879–1950) in Akron, Ohio, in May 1935; Smith's last drink, 10 June 1935, is taken as the founding date of Alcoholics Anonymous. Both men were in the Oxford Group, a non-denominational Christian movement led by Frank Buchman, whose practices were surrender to God, a moral inventory, sharing or confession, restitution to those harmed, and guidance sought in a daily quiet time.

97. Wilson's New York group withdrew from the Oxford Group in 1937; the Akron group separated in 1939. Wilson wrote the Twelve Steps in December 1938 while drafting chapter five of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, published in April 1939. The steps name "a Power greater than ourselves" (step two) and "God as we understood Him" (steps three and eleven). AA's own literature acknowledges the Oxford Group debt; see Ernest Kurtz, *Not-God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* (1979).

98. John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) was born in London into an Anglo-Irish family, educated at Trinity College Dublin, and called to the Irish bar in 1822 before abandoning law. He was ordained deacon in the Church of Ireland in 1825 and priest in 1826, and resigned his curacy about 1827–28. From 1827 he met with others in Dublin outside the established church; the movement took its popular name from the assembly at Plymouth, formed in 1831. The split of 1848, over the Bethesda chapel at Bristol, divided it into Open and Exclusive Brethren, Darby leading the Exclusives.

99. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) developed the pretribulational rapture and the dispensational scheme in the 1830s, and is the channel through which both entered mainstream Protestantism. Morgan Edwards described something in that direction in an essay he dated to about 1744 but did not publish until 1788; how closely it matches the modern scheme is disputed, and the claim is pressed mainly by writers with a stake in it. There is no trace of the scheme in the creeds or in the major theologians of the first eighteen centuries.

100. Darby made at least five journeys to North America between 1862 and 1877 — some counts give seven — preaching in New England, Ontario, the Great Lakes and the Midwest. He gained few Brethren converts but found a hearing among Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational ministers already interested in prophecy.

101. The gathering later known as the Niagara Bible Conference began in 1875 as the Believers' Meeting for Bible Study and met annually until 1897, at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, from 1883. Its fourteen-article creed dates from 1878. The larger public prophecy meetings were separate events:

the American Bible and Prophetic Conference at the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York, in October–November 1878, and a second at Farwell Hall, Chicago, in November 1886.

02. James Hall Brookes (1830–1897), pastor of Walnut Street and then Washington and Compton Avenue Presbyterian Church in St Louis, led the Niagara conference and edited the monthly *The Truth: or, Testimony for Christ* from 1875 until his death. C. I. Scofield was converted in St Louis at the end of the 1870s and was discipled by Brookes.

03. Dwight Lyman Moody (1837–1899) was the best-known evangelist in the English-speaking world from the 1870s, and hosted the Northfield conferences in Massachusetts from 1880. He was premillennial but not a systematic dispensationalist, and historians generally credit his patronage with making the teaching respectable rather than with his adopting the whole scheme.

04. Moody founded the Chicago Evangelization Society in 1886; it was renamed the Moody Bible Institute after his death in 1899. The Bible Institute of Los Angeles was founded in 1908 by Lyman Stewart and T. C. Horton, and is now Biola University. Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924 by Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871–1952), a friend and associate of Scofield's, and became the principal graduate school of dispensationalism.

05. The *Scofield Reference Bible*, 1909, revised 1917 — the King James text with dispensational notes on the same page.

06. The *Scofield Reference Bible* was published by Oxford University Press in 1909 and revised in 1917; a New Scofield Reference Bible followed in 1967. Twentieth-century sales are usually reported in the millions — figures between five and ten million copies are commonly cited — but they are publisher's and secondary estimates, not audited totals. The King James text and Scofield's notes share the page, in the same type and binding.

07. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, ninety essays issued in twelve volumes between 1910 and 1915, funded by Lyman Stewart (1840–1923), founder of Union Oil, and his brother Milton. About three million individual volumes — some 250,000 sets — were mailed free to ministers, missionaries, theology students, Sunday-school superintendents and YMCA and YWCA secretaries across the English-speaking world. A four-volume edition followed in 1917. The word "fundamentalist" derives from the series, though it was coined later, by Curtis Lee Laws in 1920.

08. Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, written with Carole C. Carlson and published by Zondervan in 1970; sales are given as 28 million copies by 1990. The New York Times described it as the best-selling non-fiction book of the 1970s. That ranking rests on cumulative copies sold rather than on the paper's own weekly lists, and sales in the religious retail market are hard to verify independently, so the claim is widely repeated but not audited.

09. Sixteen novels by Tim LaHaye (1926–2016) and Jerry B. Jenkins, published by Tyndale House from *Left Behind* (1995) to *Kingdom Come* (2007), together with a forty-volume *Left Behind: The Kids* series. Combined sales are usually reported as over 65 million copies, a publisher's figure. Three films were made from 1999 with Kirk Cameron, and another in 2014 with Nicolas Cage.

10. Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843–1921) enlisted in the 7th Tennessee Infantry in 1861 and was discharged in 1862. He sat in the Kansas House of Representatives in 1871–72, was appointed United States Attorney for Kansas in 1873, and resigned within months amid allegations about money. He was converted in St Louis about 1879, had no seminary training, and was ordained a Congregational minister in 1883. The fullest hostile account of his early life is Joseph M. Canfield,

The Incredible Scofield and His Book (1988), which is partisan; the documentary record of the disputed episodes is uneven.

311. The series was published by Tyndale House, an evangelical house, and sold first through the Christian Booksellers Association trade — several thousand member stores at the time — and on Christian radio, with bulk church purchases and youth-group study guides. General-market retailers came later; *Left Behind* titles reached the top of the New York Times, USA Today and Publishers Weekly lists from 1998 onward.

12. 1 Thessalonians 4:17: "we shall be caught up" — Greek *harpagēsometha*, rendered *rapiemur* in the Latin Vulgate, from *rapio*. "Rapture" as a noun for the event is an English coinage. The passage itself describes meeting the Lord in the air; it says nothing about a return to earth afterwards, nor about a seven-year interval, nor about anyone being left behind to live through one.

313. Matthew 24:37–41, with the comparison to the days of Noah immediately before it: in that image the people who are taken are taken away by the flood. Luke's parallel, 17:34–37, ends with the disciples asking "Where, Lord?" and the answer "Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather." Reading "taken" as removal to safety depends on the dispensational scheme rather than on the passage. Commentators outside that scheme generally read the taking as judgment, though some hold the verb is deliberately left ambiguous.

14. The parables listed are at Luke 12:16–21, 16:19–31, 16:1–9, 7:41–43, 14:15–24, 15:11–32 and 15:8–10; Matthew 18:23–35, 20:1–16 and 13:44–46; Mark 12:1–12; and the talents or pounds at Matthew 25:14–30 and Luke 19:11–27. The sayings are Luke 12:33, 6:34–35, 14:12–14, 6:20 and 6:24; Matthew 6:24, 6:19–21 and 6:12; Mark 10:25 and 12:41–44. Counts of how much of the teaching concerns money vary considerably with what is counted as a distinct saying and whether parallels across gospels are counted once or separately, so any single headline figure is a construction. The references above can be checked one at a time.

315. Jack T. Chick (1924–2016) founded Chick Publications in 1960 and produced more than 250 tract titles, about a hundred of them still in print in over a hundred languages. The company's own claimed lifetime distribution passes one billion copies; that figure is the publisher's and is not independently verified. The tracts close with a short prayer and a checklist for the reader who has said it.

16. The Cane Ridge meeting in Bourbon County, Kentucky, ran for roughly a week in August 1801. Contemporary attendance estimates run from about ten thousand to twenty-five thousand and none of them is reliable. The mourners' bench, or anxious seat, was already standard at frontier camp meetings before Finney systematized it.

17. Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835), lecture 1: "A revival is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means." He goes on: "A revival is as naturally a result of the use of the appropriate means as a crop is of the use of its appropriate means." Finney (1792–1875) trained as a lawyer before his conversion, later became president of Oberlin College, and was an abolitionist.

18. Oral Roberts (1918–2009) set out the Seed-Faith teaching in *The Miracle of Seed-Faith* (1970) and on his television program: God is your source, give so that it may be given to you, expect a miracle. Luke 6:38 was the standing text. Oral Roberts University opened in Tulsa in 1965.

19. Before 1960 the Federal Communications Commission treated free "sustaining time" as the measure of a station's public-service performance, and the networks gave most religious sustaining

time to the Federal (later National) Council of Churches, which barred on-air fundraising. The Commission's 1960 *Report and Statement of Policy re: Commission En Banc Programming Inquiry* removed the distinction, so that commercially sponsored programs counted too. Stations then sold the religious hour, and the paid-time broadcasters who could raise money on air displaced the mainline ones. The standard accounts are Jeffrey K. Hadden and Charles E. Swann, *Prime Time Preachers* (1981), and Razelle Frankl, *Televangelism: The Marketing of Popular Religion* (1987).

20. Luke 6:38 stands at the end of the block beginning at 6:27. Luke 6:35 is "love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return." The verses in between — do not judge, do not condemn, forgive — set the terms of the measure. The same saying about the measure appears at Mark 4:24 and Matthew 7:2, in both cases about judgment and with no reference to money.

21. Form 990 is the annual information return required of tax-exempt organizations, and it is a public document; compensation of officers and highest-paid employees appears on it. Churches, their integrated auxiliaries, and conventions or associations of churches are exempt from filing by statute — Internal Revenue Code section 6033(a)(3)(A)(i) — and are also not required to apply to the IRS for recognition of exemption. Church-affiliated schools, hospitals and relief agencies organized separately generally do have to file.

22. The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability was founded in 1979, after congressional interest in charity finances, by organizations including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and World Vision. Membership is voluntary. It requires an annual independent audit, a governing board with a majority of members independent of management, and disclosure of audited financial statements to anyone who asks. It accredits roughly 2,700 organizations.

23. The Battle of the Milvian Bridge, 28 October 312, against Maxentius. Two accounts of the sign survive and they differ. Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 44, reports a dream the night before instructing Constantine to mark his soldiers' shields. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 1.28–31, written decades later, reports a sign seen in the sky. Both writers were partisans of Constantine.

24. *Gott mit uns* — "God with us" — was the motto of the Prussian and then the German army, stamped on soldiers' belt buckles in both world wars. Clergy on every side preached the war as a righteous cause; among the best-known English examples are the wartime sermons of Arthur Winnington-Ingram, bishop of London. On the pattern as a whole see Albert Marrin, *The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War* (1974), and Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War* (2014).

25. The service flag — a white field with a red border and a blue star for each family member in service, replaced by a gold star for one who died — was designed by Captain Robert L. Queisser of the Ohio National Guard in 1917, for his two sons at the front. Organizations, businesses and churches flew them as well as families, and the practice was revived in the Second World War. The American Gold Star Mothers were chartered in 1928.

26. The Christian Flag was conceived by Charles C. Overton, a Sunday-school superintendent, at Brighton Chapel on Coney Island, Brooklyn, on 26 September 1897, and was designed and promoted from 1907 with Ralph Diffendorfer of the Methodist Young People's Missionary Movement. The pledge to it was written by the Methodist minister Lynn Harold Hough. No denomination owns, authorizes or regulates it.

27. "Under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance by Public Law 83-396, signed 14 June 1954. "In God We Trust" became the national motto by Public Law 84-851, signed 30 July 1956, and first

appeared on paper currency with the series 1935G one-dollar silver certificate in 1957; it had been on coins since 1864. Gallup recorded American church membership at about 69 per cent of the adult population around 1959–1960, its highest measured level, declining thereafter.

28. James W. Fifield Jr. (1899–1977), pastor of First Congregational Church in Los Angeles from 1935, took over Spiritual Mobilization the same year. It was funded by businessmen and corporate donors including J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil, published the magazine *Faith and Freedom*, and produced the radio program *The Freedom Story*, carried on more than 800 stations by late 1951. The account here follows Kevin M. Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (2015).

29. Abraham Vereide (1886–1969), a Norwegian-born Methodist minister, organized prayer groups among businessmen in Seattle from 1935 and among members of Congress from 1942, under the body later called International Christian Leadership and then the Fellowship Foundation. The first Presidential Prayer Breakfast was held on 5 February 1953 with President Eisenhower present; it was renamed the National Prayer Breakfast in 1970. Since 2023 the official event has been run by a separate National Prayer Breakfast Foundation.

30. Billy Graham (1918–2018) came to national notice with the Los Angeles tent campaign of September–November 1949, which was extended after William Randolph Hearst instructed his newspapers to promote him. He preached for nearly sixty years, was an outspoken anti-communist through the 1950s, and had access to every president from Truman onward; the Nixon tapes later recorded remarks of his that he publicly regretted.

31. Jerry Falwell (1933–2007) founded the Moral Majority in June 1979; the name was Paul Weyrich's. Its direct-mail fundraising drew on the donor list of Falwell's *Old Time Gospel Hour* and on techniques associated with Richard Viguerie. It claimed more than four million members and two million donors; independent estimates were substantially lower. Falwell dissolved it in 1989, saying its goal had been achieved; declining receipts were also a factor.

32. Pat Robertson founded the Christian Coalition in 1989, building on the donor and volunteer lists from his 1988 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination; Ralph Reed was its first executive director. (Some sources give 1987 for an earlier incorporation.) It claimed 1.7 million members by 1995 and claimed to distribute tens of millions of voter guides in election years — about 45 million in 1996. Both the membership and the distribution figures were the organization's own and have long been argued to be inflated. The IRS denied it tax-exempt status in 1999 on the ground that the guides were partisan; it prevailed the same year in a suit brought by the Federal Election Commission.

33. The distinction between the "deserving poor" and the "sturdy beggar" runs through English poor law from the sixteenth century, notably the Act of 1601.

34. The Act for the Relief of the Poor, 43 Elizabeth I c. 2 (1601), consolidating earlier Tudor poor-law statutes of 1531, 1536, 1572, 1576 and 1597. It made the parish the administrative unit, provided for overseers of the poor appointed annually, authorized a compulsory rate levied on local property, and distinguished the impotent poor (relief), the able-bodied (set to work), and those refusing work (the house of correction). It remained the framework of English poor relief until 1834.

35. The Settlement Act, 13 & 14 Charles II c. 12 (1662), and subsequent settlement legislation. A person had a parish of legal settlement; a newcomer judged likely to become chargeable could be removed back to it by order of two justices, originally within forty days of arrival.

36. English poor-law provisions were adopted into colonial statute across the American colonies, with the town or parish as the unit and locally appointed overseers. In New England the practice of "warning out" — a formal notice that the town assumed no responsibility for a newcomer, preserving the right to remove them if they became a charge — is recorded extensively in town records through the colonial period and beyond.

37. The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834, following the Royal Commission of 1832–34 whose report was written largely by Edwin Chadwick and Nassau Senior. Its governing principle, stated in the report, was "less eligibility": the condition of the relieved pauper should not be made as desirable as that of the lowest-paid independent laborer. It sought to abolish outdoor relief for the able-bodied and to make the workhouse the test of need; workhouses separated inmates by sex and age, dividing families.

38. The Charity Organisation Society was founded in London in 1869. The first American society was organized at Buffalo, New York, in 1877 by the Rev. S. Humphreys Gurteen, an Episcopal clergyman who had observed the London body; by the 1890s there were societies in more than a hundred American cities. Its methods were a central confidential registry of applicants to prevent duplicate relief, and investigation of each household by "friendly visitors," chiefly middle-class volunteers drawn from the churches. Its declared object was to end "indiscriminate almsgiving." Its casework method is the direct ancestor of professional social work; see Mary Richmond, *Social Diagnosis* (1917).

39. The Social Security Act of 1935 established both contributory social insurance (old-age benefits, and federal-state unemployment insurance) and means-tested, state-administered public assistance (Old-Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, and Aid to Dependent Children). The first is financed by payroll contributions and paid without an inquiry into household circumstances; the second requires proof of need. Aid to Dependent Children later became Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

40. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, signed 22 August 1996. It replaced AFDC, an open-ended federal entitlement, with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), a capped block grant to the states, and attached work requirements and a sixty-month lifetime limit on federally funded assistance, with states free to impose shorter limits and further conditions.

41. Council of Trent, Session 23 (1563), *Decree on Reform*, canon 18, requiring each cathedral and metropolitan church to establish and maintain a college for the education and training of boys for the ministry — the founding legislation of the diocesan seminary system.

42. *New Englands First Fruits* (London, 1643) records the founding of Harvard College in 1636: after providing for houses, livelihood and places of worship, "one of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministery to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust." Calvin's Academy at Geneva was founded in 1559.

43. Andover Theological Seminary was founded in 1808 and Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812; they are the model for the freestanding, denominationally governed American seminary, which spread rapidly through the nineteenth century alongside denominational examination and licensing of candidates for ministry.

44. The Presbyterian General Assembly's doctrinal deliverance of 1910 named five doctrines as essential and necessary: the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection, and the authenticity of the miracles; it was reaffirmed in 1916 and 1923, and opposed by the Auburn Affirmation of 1924. Harry Emerson Fosdick preached "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" at First Presbyterian Church, New York, on 21 May 1922; it was widely reprinted and distributed. *The Fundamentals* (1910–15) are discussed in Lesson 34. Required subscription to a written statement of faith spread through American seminaries, mission boards and denominations in the wake of this controversy.

45. Gilbert Gauthe, a priest of the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, was indicted in 1984 and pleaded guilty in 1985; the case and its civil settlements were the first US clergy sexual-abuse matter to receive sustained national coverage. In 1985 a confidential report on the problem was prepared for the American bishops by the canon lawyer Thomas Doyle, the psychiatrist Michael Peterson and the attorney F. Ray Mouton; it was not acted upon. The *Boston Globe* Spotlight investigation of the Archdiocese of Boston began publication in January 2002. In June 2002 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (the "Dallas Charter"), whose implementing norms require background checks and safe-environment training for clergy, employees and volunteers with access to children. Comparable child-protection policies were adopted across Protestant denominations in the same period, and church liability insurers came to require volunteer screening as a condition of coverage.

46. The *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, a short church manual usually dated to the late first or early second century. Chapters 11–12 give a congregation rules for testing travelling apostles and prophets: one who stays beyond a day or two, or who asks for money, is a false prophet; a visitor who wishes to settle must work for his living. On letters of recommendation see 2 Corinthians 3:1 and Romans 16:1–2.

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