Scholia on the Gospel of Luke

Origen of Alexandria (c. AD 233–250)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Contents

Book 1 **1**

Luke 1 **2**

Luke 2 **8**

Luke 3 **9**

Book 2 **10**

Luke 1 **11**

Luke 3 **12**

Luke 4 **13**

Luke 7 **14**

Luke 8 **15**

Luke 9 **18**

Luke 10 **24**

Luke 11 **26**

Luke 12 **28**

Luke 13 **29**

Luke 14 **32**

Luke 15 **34**

Luke 16 **35**

Luke 17 **36**

Luke 18 **37**

Luke 19 **38**

Luke 20 **39**

Book 1

Luke 1

Verse 1. “Since many have undertaken to compile an account of the matters that have been fully established among us.” Since it was a presumptuous undertaking for a mere man to write down God’s teaching and words, Luke fittingly defends himself in the preface. Among the ancient people many claimed to prophesy, but some of them were false prophets and some were truly prophets. There was a gift, the discernment of spirits, and by this gift the true prophet was distinguished from the false. So it is now in the new covenant: many have wished to write Gospels. But the approved money-changers did not accept everything; they chose certain ones out of them. Perhaps the word “undertook” also carries a hidden accusation against those who came rashly, and without the gift, to the writing of Gospels. Matthew did not “undertake”; he wrote, moved by the Holy Spirit. So too Mark, and John likewise, and Luke. But the Gospel entitled “according to the Egyptians” and the one entitled “of the Twelve”: their writers “undertook” the task. The Gospel according to Thomas is also circulated. Basilides, too, has dared to write a Gospel “according to Basilides.” Many, then, have undertaken it, including the one according to Matthias and several others. But the Church of God approves only the four. He did not say simply “believed” but “fully established,” bearing witness that what is said cannot be overturned. He said “matters” (things actually done), overthrowing the heresy of those who say that what was done through the Savior happened only in appearance, and his incarnation too. By speaking of “the matters fully established,” he also shows his own state of mind.

He was fully convinced and had no doubt at all whether things were so or not. That he received his information from eyewitnesses and those who heard with their own ears, he plainly confessed when he said: “Just as they handed them down to us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word.” He asserts that he followed everything closely from the start, not just some of the things mentioned but all of them. Some may reasonably suppose that he wrote the Gospel for a certain Theophilus, one of the believers, so fervent in spirit and so insatiable for the Lord’s deeds and words, whom what is now written would make more secure. Another says: if we are all such that we are loved and cherished by God, we are “Theophilus,” that is, God-loved. And no weak person could be a Theophilus. Every

Theophilus is “most excellent,” having the strength and power that come from God and his Word; and so he will come to know the certainty of the teachings in which he was instructed. Luke therefore promises firmness of knowledge, so that what Theophilus received by hearing he may now also meet in writing and so keep his faith more securely. (40) In Exodus it is written that the people saw the voice of the Lord, though a voice is not seen but heard. This was to show, paradoxically, that God’s voice is seen by those by whom it is seen. In the Gospel, however, it is not the voice that is seen but the Word, who is greater than the voice. Hence: “Just as they handed down to us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word.” For if having seen the Lord in the body were what it meant to be an eyewitness of him,

then Pilate was an eyewitness of the Word when he condemned him, and so was Judas the betrayer, and all who said, “Crucify, crucify him.” So knowing the Word must be understood in the sense in which the Savior said, “The one who has seen me has seen the Father who sent me.” Luke also teaches us here, almost unnoticed, a good lesson: for some matters of contemplation the end is contemplation itself, but for others the end is action. By “eyewitnesses” he indicates the contemplative side, and by “servants” the practical side. You can also take “servants of the Word” another way: either the Word of teaching, which the Savior handed on, or the very Word of God, whom the disciples served by being present with him. Luke shows his own state of mind: he was fully convinced and had no doubt at all whether things were so or not. This happens with those who believe firmly. The Apostle too says of the firm: “that you be rooted and grounded in the faith.” For nothing brings full conviction as mind and reason do. Sight does not give full conviction, since matters are not judged by visible signs and wonders; rather, it is by reason that we judge which things are true and which are false. He says “matters” because Jesus did not play out his coming in the flesh merely in appearance, as the children of the heretics claim; being truth, he carried out these matters in truth.

Verse 3. “To write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus.”

So that you may know the certainty of the words in which you were instructed.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abia. His wife was one of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

They were both righteous before God. It is reasonable to suppose that Luke wrote the Gospel to a certain Theophilus, who was one of the believers, so fervent in spirit and so eager for the actions and words of the Lord. What was now being written made him more secure still. If all of us are the kind of people who are loved and cherished by God, we are “Theophilus,” lovers of God, or loved by God. And no one who is weak could be a Theophilus. For just as it is written of the people coming out

of Egypt, “There was no one weak among their tribes,” so I would say that every Theophilus is “most excellent,” having the strength and power that come from God and his Word. In this way a person will come to know the certainty of the words in which he was instructed, by understanding the word of the Gospel. Luke therefore promises firmness of knowledge, so that what Theophilus received by hearing he may now hold more securely by reading it in writing, and so keep his faith. To be righteous before God is complete praise. For he alone knows the hearts of people. It is possible for someone to appear righteous before people, and yet in the hidden part of the heart not to be so, since he harbors evil thoughts lurking within. The Apostle says something like this: “Their praise is not from people but from God.” For people do not praise worthily, since they see only what appears. But God makes the judgment of the blameworthy and the praise of the praiseworthy according to what each deserves. Verse 6: Walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.

Verse 7: They had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Verse 8: While he was serving as priest in the order of his division before God,

Verse 9: According to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to burn incense, and he went into the temple of the Lord.

Verse 10: And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense. Perhaps someone will ask: why is “blameless” placed before these people? It would have been enough for them to walk in all the ways and ordinances of God, unless it is possible to walk in all the commandments and yet not blamelessly. My answer to him is this: if that were not so, it would not be said, “Justly you shall pursue what is just.” So when we do the commandments in such a way that we have in our conscience no stain of vainglory, or of pleasing people, or of anything else of that kind, we do the commandments blamelessly.

Verse 11: An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Verse 12: Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

Verse 13: The angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, because your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.”

Verse 14. “And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.” (44) The angel appeared to Zechariah by way of condescension. For no one can see an incorruptible body with the eyes of a corruptible body. The angel was seen standing on the right side of the altar, because he was about to announce good news to him. “Zechariah was troubled when he saw him.” A dazzling appearance, when

it shows itself to a human being, is hard to bear. Even so, the angel turns Zechariah back from his alarm and revives him, saying, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah.” (45) Know that God does not appear to everyone, and neither do the angels. They appear to those who have a pure heart and are worthy to see. For God is found by those who do not test him, and he shows himself to those who do not disbelieve him. Of the same. All who saw angels were afraid. They feared that the angels had come to take their souls, as Manoah also says. So the angel, to relieve Zechariah’s anguish, said, “Do not be afraid.” For not only will you not die (where there is grief and tears), but you will live and have children, and you will have great joy. For Elizabeth will bear you a son, and among those born of women none has been greater than he. Then he says, “And many will rejoice at his birth.” For even if not all the Jews did, many rejoiced at the coming of the forerunner, who announced the visit of the Savior. (46) In the spiritual reading, this is the silence of the Prophets among the people who belonged to God of old. For God no longer speaks to them, but the Word who was in the beginning has passed over to us. With us he is not silent; with them he has fallen silent. For this reason the prophet Zechariah is silent. As for the making of signs, (47) [the text breaks off here: “remaining mute”].

Verse 22. “But when he came out he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.”

Verse 23. “And it happened that when the days of his service were completed, he went away to his house.”

Verse 24. “After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she hid herself for five months, saying:”

Verse 25. “ ‘This is what the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.’ ”

Verse 26. “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,”

Verse 27. “to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” Why was he making signs to them? Having heard beforehand that something desirable was going to happen to him, he did not hurry before the right time; after this he [came] to the husband [the text here is unclear]. In the same way the good things also began with women, so that women might be ashamed of their weakness, put off womanish ways, and become zealous for the lives of these blessed people. Verse 43. “And why is this granted to me, that the mother [of my Lord should come to me]?” and so on. Of the same. Elizabeth speaks in harmony with her son. She says she is unworthy of the visit of the Mother of God, just as John said he was unworthy of standing before Christ. “What great good,” she says, “have I done, that the mother of my Lord

should come to me?" She calls the one who is still a virgin a mother, anticipating the outcome in prophetic speech. By divine arrangement, then, the testimony was brought to Elizabeth. This was so that John's testimony to the Lord from the womb might be confirmed through his own mother Elizabeth. It was also so that Mary, [after] the angel's voice, seeing Elizabeth and the marvelous child in her, might through this believe the greater thing, I mean the seedless birth from the virgin herself. Elizabeth's word agrees with this faith when she says, "And blessed is she who believed that there will be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." For through these words the virgin was made more certain in faith. She was called blessed because she believed, with the angel announcing it beforehand and her relative prophesying in the same way. Of the same. Let us now look at the virgin's prophecy.

Verse 46. "My soul magnifies the Lord." We need to understand how my soul magnifies the Lord. If we live worthily, in the image of the one who created us, and become like the original as far as we can through good works, then we magnify the Lord in words, in deeds, and in thoughts. A person makes him smaller in proportion to the evil that is in him. So Mary's soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior. First her soul magnified him, and then her spirit rejoiced. We should look through the Old and New Scripture to see whether, when sinners' births are described, it is anywhere said, "The time was fulfilled for her to give birth." No one, I think, would find it. It is said only where the child being born is righteous. This is also so with the rest (54). Elisabeth was a prophetess. She had not heard of the revelation given to her husband, yet by the Holy Spirit she declared that the child would be given the name the angel had spoken, and she said he would be called John. When people wanted to learn the name from the father too, they made signs to him, as if he could not hear or speak. He took a writing tablet and wrote the child's name, in agreement with his wife, so that everyone was amazed at this. Then it says, "His mouth was opened." Evidently, after he had written on the tablet that "John shall be his name," the bound voice was released. He received back his tongue, no longer bound by unbelief as before, but blessing God and prophesying what is recorded. It is superfluous to say "and the rest." As I think, our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the whole company of his holy prophets and righteous ones, also enjoyed the presence of Christ.

For if he made peace through the blood of his cross, both for things on earth and things in heaven, as the divine Apostle says, why hesitate to accept that his visit to the fathers, and his going down to Hades, also accomplished this, because of his unsearchable mercy? Even if this has happened only now, it was announced long ago. It was impossible for those words not to come to fulfillment. For he confirmed the promises with an oath, because of their unchangeable nature, so that they would certainly come to pass. And now the faithful are delivered without fear from the hand of their spiritual enemies. (57) Often some are delivered, and the rest.

(58) The angel does not go to the synagogue of the Jews in Jerusalem, to the priests, scribes and Pharisees. Instead he finds shepherds living in the fields and keeping watch by night over their flock. It is to these that he announces the good news of the Savior's birth. They were unpretentious men, who zealously followed the old way of life of the patriarchs. For these too were shepherds, and they ran and reported it to others. The others were corrupted by envy and would have hidden the mystery of the world's salvation. (59) For he alone opened the womb, born of a virgin. Nothing had touched that womb before Christ. All the firstborn, even if they are firstborn, do not themselves open the womb first; the husband does. (60) Perhaps he has left them? In their distress, then, they looked for the Son of God, and in looking for him they did not find him among their relatives, for he was above their kinship.

Luke 2

Verse 49. “Did you not know that I must be in the things of my Father?” As to the wording itself, let us arm ourselves against the godless heresies. They say that the Creator is not the Father of Jesus Christ, and that the God of the law and the God of the temple is not the Father of Christ. Let the followers of Valentinus be ashamed when they hear his voice saying, “I must be in the things of my Father,” if they accept the text. Were they so senseless as not to understand what he meant by “in the things of the Father,” instead of “in the temple”? Or perhaps he hints at some mystery: if any of you belongs to the Father, does he have Christ in himself? For he sees a living temple of the Father, the beautiful and good one, as better than that temple. He went out from that temple, saying, “Your house is left to you,” and he went away to the temple of the Father, the Churches everywhere. Verse 51. “And he was subject to them,” and so on. In the prophetic book that was proclaimed among the Jews alone, only [the reigns] of the kings of the Jews are recorded. For it says, “The vision which Isaiah saw against Judea and against Jerusalem in the reigns of Uzziah, and Jotham, and Ahaz, and Hezekiah.” I know of no other king recorded in the time of that prophecy than the king of Judea. In some prophecies the king of Israel is mentioned as well. But when John was about to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel, the record names not only Herod, king of Judea, nor only Tiberius of the Romans.

Luke 3

If only those from the nations were going to be saved, and salvation were completely shut off from the sons of Israel, it would have been enough to say, “In the fifteenth year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar.” But since those from Galilee, and from Ituraea and Trachonitis, and from Abilene must also believe, these realms are recorded as well. He also mentioned the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, to show that these men were high priests from the time when John came preaching. They began at that time and remained in the high priesthood until the Lord’s passion. By the same author. Never before did a word of God come to any of the prophets in the wilderness. But since many children were going to belong to the desolate woman rather than to her who has the husband, therefore the word of God came to John in the wilderness. Otherwise he would have been preaching in the wilderness for nothing. “And he came into all the region around the Jordan.” Where else should the Baptist go than to the region around the Jordan? Then, if anyone wished to repent, he would at once have the river at hand. For the river of God truly is coming down: the true water, the saving water. “And he preaches,” it says, “a baptism for the forgiveness of sins.” Forgiveness of sins for whom? For the one who no longer sins. Then he brings in Isaiah crying out this very thing. For what? [It says,] “A voice of one crying in the wilderness.” He says this as though Isaiah himself were hearing John’s words. For John was chosen for the mission, and was the perfect one among the prophets. And since John was the forerunner of the Word, he is rightly called a voice, not a word. For the voice comes before the word. The phrase “Prepare the way” [continues in the next section].

… on the one hand not containing the whole of the Gospel, but on the other bringing in the beginning of the New Testament. It brings in three things, and so on.

Book 2

Luke 1

Verse. See the type in Zechariah. For they have cast out the word [from themselves], and they cannot give an account of anything in the word of the law or the prophets. So they remain mute and without reason.

Verse 63. "And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, 'John is his name.'" Zechariah is interpreted "memory of God," and John "the one who shows." A person remembers what is absent, but shows what is present. For this reason the parents of this child could not bear to call him Zechariah, and wanted to name him John instead. He was not merely going to remember God as though God were absent. He was going to point with his finger at God present, and say, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The all-holy Virgin knew that he was not Joseph's child. Yet in front of these people she approves her betrothed, because of the suspicion of the Jews, who supposed he had been born of fornication. More simply, then, it could be said that the Holy Spirit honored him with the title of father, and so on (75), [lest he had left them]. But the Lord set aside a human answer and gave a divine one, hinting that he was God in the flesh. Or you may understand it this way. The mountains and hills are the opposing powers, which were brought low by Christ's coming. The valleys are people, who have been filled with good works. "All the crooked things have become straight," for each one of us was crooked. So when Christ comes into the soul, the crooked things become straight. Our life was once rough, and our speech uneven. But when the Lord came, he made everything smooth.

Luke 3

Verse 1. “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.” In the prophetic word, which was proclaimed only among the Jews, only the kingship of Judea is recorded. “The vision,” it says, “which Isaiah saw in the days of Uzziah and Jotham and Ahaz, who reigned over Judah.” But the mystery of the Gospel was about to be proclaimed in the whole world. So the rule of Tiberius Caesar is recorded, since he was thought to be king of the whole world. If only those from the nations were going to be saved, and salvation were shut off from all the sons of Israel, it would be enough to mention only Tiberius. But since those from Galilee, Ituraea and Trachonitis must also believe, these kingdoms, or tetrarchies, are recorded. Never before did a word of God come to any of the prophets in the wilderness, but only now, because of a certain mystical vision. For the children of the wilderness were going to be more numerous, that is, the children of the Church from the nations, than the children of her who has the husband. I mean the law of the Jewish synagogue. The statement “A word of God came to John” means a command.

Verse 3. “And he came into all the region around the Jordan.” (76) Where should the Baptist go about, if not into the region around the Jordan? Then, if anyone wanted to repent, he would at once have the river at hand. Jordan is interpreted “descending.” And truly the river of God is a descending one: the true water, the saving water.

Verse 5. (77) They say that the viper, when she conceives, kills the male by whom she conceives. Then the offspring grows and kills the one who conceived it, and so comes out into the light, tearing through its mother’s belly, as a kind of penalty for the father who was destroyed. The Jews are like this too, since with their own hands they destroyed their spiritual fathers and teachers. This is discussed more fully in Matthew.

Luke 4

Verse 9. “And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the wing of the temple.” See how deceitfully, by using the Scriptures, he wants to bring down the glory of the Lord. He makes it seem that the Lord needs angelic help, and that he is about to stumble unless angels help him. But the use of the psalm was not said about Christ. For the master of the angels has no need of angels. I say the opposite to you, devil: unless Jesus helps the angels, they stumble. And you fell from heaven for this reason, because you considered yourself self-sufficient and not in need of Jesus’ help. So that you may know that what is written was not said about Jesus, but is applied to a righteous man, listen. For it is written: “The one who dwells in the help of the Most High will lodge in the shelter of the God of heaven.” This fits a righteous man better than the Son of God. And again: “There shall fall at your side a thousand, and ten thousand,” and what follows. These words too are applied to the righteous man.

Verse 40. As the sun was setting, all who had people sick with various diseases brought them to him. And he laid his hands on each one of them and healed them. They brought them around sunset, either because they were ashamed to do it by day, or because they feared the Pharisees and were busy with other matters. Or perhaps they thought it was not permitted to heal on the Sabbath. For the evangelist pointed out that he was teaching them on the Sabbath. For this reason, around sunset, their relatives brought those who were ill, and he healed them.

Luke 7

Verse 22. Taking it historically: after the little bird is sent away, the one who has been cleansed first washes his clothes, then shaves off all his hair, and after this bathes in water. After that comes the statement, “He will be clean.” The clothes could be a way of life that was not altogether badly woven, since he would have put them off anyway. The hair is the dead growths that have sprouted in the soul. [Samuel’s requests were opposed to these], and they were also counted among the Nazirites and even their disciples. For iron never came upon the head of the Nazirites. Everything they do prospers as they go about it, so that not even a leaf of theirs falls off as they bear fruit. Then he puts off the defilement from the body with water, and baptism is signified in this. After this he becomes worthy of the camp, but he does not enter his own house for seven days, and not until his head is shaved again. [The finer points of doctrines, and to lay aside knowledge, are the man’s sins; and by the eyebrows is meant every kind of conceit.] Why must the leper’s head be uncovered? So that he may be recognized, and so that those who wander may not share in the cleansing. The covering of the mouth shows that he must condemn himself to silence until he returns and is cleansed. According to some, again, when the Law has named the man who is leprous all over, it cleanses him. This shows that God hates what is mixed and variegated. Going further, the Law shows this more clearly in the words: “You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed.” And, “a garment woven of two materials.” And, “You shall not yoke your cattle with one of a different kind.” Everywhere it prefers simplicity, which is what is seen in the man who is leprous all over.

Luke 8

Verse 16. No one lights a lamp and covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed. He puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light.

Verse 17. For there is nothing hidden that will not become visible, and nothing concealed that will not be known and come to light. [Something is missing in the text here:] ... has, it will be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him. Whoever wants to apply the lamp to most of Jesus' disciples will be put to shame by what is said about John: that he was the lamp, burning and shining. But the lamp of the body is the eye, which refers to the mind in each person. Yet the words "Let your lamps be burning" were also spoken to all the disciples of Jesus. So the one who has lit a lamp in a rational soul must not hide it, but set it on the lampstand. Moses put a symbol of this lampstand in the tent of testimony. Let the fellow servants be given their measure of grain by the faithful and wise servant. But let them see the rays of the lamp that sits on the lampstand, that is, on the Church of all. Nor do people put the lamp under the bed, where someone rests, nor under any other vessel. For the one who does this takes no thought for those who are coming into the house. The lamp must be set for them by those who kindle the mind within themselves with the true light, the bright Word, and the rays of wisdom. The mind has the nature in which the Creator made it, like a lamp that needs [to be kept most sharp-sighted in the soul by those who care for it], and it shares in him who said, "I have come as light into the world." For those who light the lamp and set it on the lampstand so that it shines for everyone in the house will urge those in the house, as they see the brightness of the lamp, to kindle their own lamps as well.

Verse 38. But Jesus sent him away, saying:

Verse 39: "Go back to your house, and tell all that God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city all that Jesus had done for him. He sends him to his house. The man did not have the capacity to sit, clothed, at the feet of Jesus and take it in. And although he wanted to be with him, since the people of the surrounding region could not bear the presence of Jesus, he still took thought for the salvation of those there who were able to receive it. So he sent

away the one who had sat at his feet long enough, so that he would teach what God had done for him. There could be some who would be hearers and disciples of such a man, who could not take in more but proclaimed from the few things he had received. You could also apply the account to the nature of the man outside Israel, for whose sake Jesus sails over to the country of the Gadarenes, and to whom Jesus came out onto the land. "He did not wear a garment," it says, the man. For he had not put on what covers his shamefulness. "And he did not stay in a house." For he was not, like Jacob, a plain man dwelling in a house. That is why Jesus sent this very man away, saying, "Return to your house." "And he stayed among the tombs," not with the living but with the dead. "Now there was," it says, "a herd of many pigs feeding on the mountain." But perhaps pigs do not feed on the mountain; [text uncertain: "μετὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη" — "the herd rushed down with the cliff"?] Is it not perhaps that the pleasure-lovers, friends of the belly and of what lies below the belly, feed where the tombs are, close to the legion of demons? And in his goodness Jesus destroys the herd of demons in the water along with the pigs. Perhaps through the demons he also blocks the breathing of the evils of those who love pleasure and love the body, and such a person comes to his senses. If anyone is of sound mind, he is with Jesus; but the one who is beginning to be sound in mind is at his feet.

Verse 48: Then he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." Now the more advanced soul, which has served the Word of God well, has boldness to come to the head itself. And the head of Christ is God. So she can pour ointment on it and make a sweet fragrance for the glory of God. God is glorified through the fragrance of the life of the righteous. But the less perfect woman, the less perfect soul, turns to the feet and to the lowlier things, and we are close to her. For we have not even repented of our sins. Where are our tears? Where is our weeping, so that we might at least be able to come to the feet of Jesus? For we are not yet able to reach the head itself. It is a good thing, after sins, to bring the fragrance of repentance, so that someone might be in second place, the one who anoints the feet and not the head. That is, the one who does not touch the more perfect and higher things, but the outermost and last.

Verse 52: And all were weeping and beating their breasts for her. But he said, "Do not weep. She has not died, but is sleeping."

Verse 53: And they laughed at him, knowing that she had died. Such, then, is the history of the miracle. But perhaps we should also look at it in a finer and higher way. Let the simpler and more guileless wonder at the great deeds of God in these terms, for even things understood bodily build people up. But let those who are able to move on to see that these things happened to those people as a type, and were written for our sake, pray to God and ask for a word that makes these things clear too. Why does Jesus go first to the daughter of the synagogue ruler, and not

to the woman with the flow of blood, and yet she, meeting him on the way, is healed first? The Son of God came first to the synagogue of the Jews and found it sick and dead. For the transgressions of Israel made it die. But the woman with the flow of blood, the one on the road, full of uncleanness, flowing not just at the time of separation but always bleeding and sick, she will believe in the Son of God before that one. And while he goes off to the other, she wants to touch the fringe of his garment. And Luke added what Matthew did not say: that the daughter of the synagogue ruler was twelve years old, and the woman with the flow of blood had been bleeding for twelve years.

So the woman began to bleed at the very time that the girl was born. For the synagogue is free from suffering as long as it lives, and the same limit of time marks the end of the one and the beginning of this one's salvation. The girl dies at twelve years, and after twelve years of suffering this woman believes and is healed. She had not been able to be healed by any of the physicians. For many physicians promised to heal those from the nations. If you look at those who practice philosophy and profess to teach truth, they are physicians who try to heal. But she had spent all that she had on them, and she could not be healed by any of the physicians. She touched the fringe of Jesus' garment in faith, and she was healed. If we consider our faith in Jesus Christ, and understand how great the Son of God is, and whom it is that we have touched, we will see that, compared with the fringes that are in him, what we have touched is only a fringe. This fringe heals us, and makes us hear from Jesus, "Daughter, your faith has saved you," and so we are healed. And the daughter of the synagogue ruler will rise. For when the full number of the nations has come in, then all Israel will be saved.

Luke 9

Verse 27. “But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.” Some apply this to Peter, James and John, who went up with Christ onto the high mountain. They did not taste death before they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom, that is, in the glory of his transfiguration. But if we must say something more careful about standing with Jesus and about tasting death: there were some standing where Jesus was, firmly fixed in soul beside him. Their standing was akin to that of Moses. For Moses says, “I too stood on the mountain forty days and forty nights,” having been counted worthy to hear; and, “You also, stand there with me.” Few are friends of God, and these are the ones who have their standing in what is good. So the Baptist says of himself, “The friend of the bridegroom, standing, rejoices with joy.” Even those who stand beside the Word differ from one another in their standing. So not all who stand beside the Savior, but only some of them, as standing better, do not taste death until they see the Word who made his home among people, and for this reason is called Son of man, coming in his kingdom. For he does not always come in his kingdom. To beginners, who might say that he has no form or beauty, he does not come that way. But to the perfect, in the words of David, he appears fair in beauty beyond the sons of men. So the Word has a most kingly dignity, and it is seen by some of those who stand beside Jesus and have been able to follow him as he goes up the high mountain of his manifestation.

This is the mountain to which someone is counted worthy to come, if he is a Peter and has an unshaken faith. Or [sons of thunder] come to it, who also do not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Christ is life. Life’s enemy is death, whether the death that comes through sin or death understood in some other way. Each of us chooses one or the other by what he does. So just as Christ is living bread, his enemy, death, is dead bread. Every rational soul is fed by one of these two. One soul only tastes of it, and another eats of it most of the time. Perhaps those who sin rarely and in small ways only taste death. Those who have taken up virtue do not even taste it, but are always fed on living bread. So for Peter, against whom the gates of Hades did not prevail, it followed that he would not taste death. For a person tastes death when the gates of Hades prevail

against him. But for the sons of thunder too, [born of thunder, a human matter(?)], it was impossible to taste death, [since they were] very far from the thunder that was their mother. Here the word "until" points to the pressing time of what is being described. It does not set a limit, as if what is described only happens after the "until". Compare "And behold, I am with you until the end of the age." So the apostles also did not taste the death of the mind spoken of above, after they had seen the vision of such great goods. It is said in the Psalms, "Who is the man who will live and not see death?" and "Let death come upon them." In one of the prophets it is said, "Death, having grown strong, swallowed them up." And in the Revelation:

"Death and Hades follow some." Perhaps seeing death is the lesser evil, and tasting it is greater. Worse than that is death following someone. And it is worse still when death not only follows, but has already come upon the one it once followed, and overtaken him. Being swallowed up by death seems to me heavier than everything mentioned so far. If you consider what is said and the difference among sins, you will not hesitate, I think, to accept that the Spirit of God, who caused these things to be written in the oracles of God, had something like this in mind. What is shown in seeing the Son of Man coming in his kingdom and in his glory? And what does Mark mean by saying "having come in power"? Whether these things shine in our hearts, or are found by those who seek, or come in under our reasonings, we will set them out more clearly. The one who sees and grasps the surpassing greatness of the Word, as he dissolves and refutes all the persuasive arguments of those who are false but profess to teach truth, sees the Son of Man coming in his own kingdom. If he also sees the Word's own things set out more plainly, he would see him in relation to his kingdom and glory. Such a person would see in himself the kingdom of God having come in power. He would see this as one who is no longer ruled by sin, which reigns in the mortal body of sinners, but is always set under the King, the God of all. His kingdom is in us in potential. But in actuality, as Mark called it, it is found only within the perfect.

It happened about eight days after these words that he took Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.

And it happened, as he was praying, that the appearance of his face became different, and his clothing became white, flashing like lightning.

And behold, two men were talking with him, who were Moses and Elijah.

"They appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to fulfil in Jerusalem." Such, then, is the event and the wonder of the transfiguration. But if I may offer a deeper explanation, it is not for nothing that Mark and Matthew say Jesus went up the mountain with his disciples "after six days." In six days, a perfect number, the whole world came into being. So the person who rises above all the

things of the world, and looks only at what is lasting and eternal, is shown to be taken up by Jesus "after six days." For whoever has passed beyond these six days sees Jesus, who is transformed for none of those below, transformed before him. The Word appears with different forms, to each as that person is able to receive him. To some he has no form; to others he is beautiful and lovely. To those who do not climb through the higher works, and through them to the high mountain of wisdom, he is understood in a rather simple way and known according to the flesh. To the perfect he is spoken of as God, and by their knowledge he is seen in the form of God. His face shines like the sun for the children of light and of day, since he is revealed as the sun of righteousness. His garments too appear white as light to those whom he has led up to the high mountain. These garments are his words, and the letters of the Gospels which he put on; and I think they also mean what is made clear from the writings of the apostles. So when you see someone who gives an exact account of the doctrine of God concerning Jesus and who makes the whole text of the Gospels clear, do not hesitate to say of him that the garments of Jesus have become white as light. For the one who sees Jesus in this way, Moses and Elijah would appear conversing with Jesus: Moses the law, and Elijah the prophetic word. And the one who has seen the glory of Moses, who has understood the spiritual law as one word pointing to Jesus, and who has understood the wisdom hidden in mystery in the prophets, saw Moses and Elijah in glory when he saw them with Jesus.

"And a voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

"And when the voice had come, Jesus was found alone." The voice from the cloud perhaps says "This is he" to Moses and Elijah, and perhaps also to the disciples. When they heard it, they could not bear this glory. They fell on their faces, humbled under the mighty hand of God, and were very afraid, knowing what was said to Moses: "No man will see my face and live." When they lifted up their eyes, they saw only Jesus. For I think Moses the law and Elijah the prophecy became one in Jesus the Gospel. They did not remain three, as they had been before. Understand this in a more mystical sense. According to the lofty intention of the letter, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and spoke with Jesus, and then went back to where they had come from. Jesus is not seen to have told them the things of his glory; for those who heard would have been harmed, especially the crowds, seeing the one so glorified being crucified. So the disciples did not hide it out of envy, but out of fear that they would not be believed. They therefore reported it later, after the ascension and after the coming of the Spirit. For when they were filled with boldness and counted worthy of the Spirit, and had the voice of the signs speaking in their support, everything they said was readily accepted.

Verse 42. "But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father." We should look at these things from a higher viewpoint, and

note that the sufferers, or the relatives of the sufferers, are with the crowds. Jesus comes down to these crowds from the heights, after arranging what concerned the disciples on the mountain. The sufferers could not go up the mountain to him, because diseases held their souls fast. So he comes down to heal them. We must also ask in what kinds of illness the sufferers themselves make the request, believing they will be healed by him or by touching the fringe of his garment. And in what cases others make the request on their behalf: like the centurion for his servant, the royal official for his son, the synagogue ruler for his daughter, the Canaanite woman, and now the man who knelt before him on behalf of his son, who was moonstruck. And we must ask when the Savior heals of his own accord without being asked, as with the paralytic at the sheep pool. If these cases are compared with one another, they will show many teachings to the one who can hear the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery. These concern the different afflictions of souls and the manner of their healing. Just as you rightly refer every disease and sickness that Christ earlier healed among the crowds to the passions in souls, so reason by analogy and examine the lame and the deaf, and also the case of the moonstruck boy. This affliction comes on at certain times but departs for longer periods, and in those periods the sufferer is no different from a healthy person. Some souls, likewise, are perhaps thought to be healthy in self-control and to live as the Word wishes. Then at times they fall from their apparent standing, overthrown by the passions, in the deceit of this age and in the remaining desires. Speaking spiritually, these people are moonstruck. They are struck down by the spiritual forces of wickedness working through the passions hidden in their inner depths, and they fall into the fire of burning passions;

and sometimes into the water, when the king of all the dragons in the waters throws them down. They seemed to breathe freely, but he makes them give way into the depths of the waves of the sea of human life. For this account we may draw on the one who says in the book of Wisdom, about the steadiness of the righteous man: “The talk of the godly is wisdom always,” but about those who have been given up: “The fool changes like the moon.” In such people you can see impulses that are able to draw to praise those who do not look closely at their instability, so that one might say there is something like a full moon in them, or almost a full moon. But again you might see that what seemed to be light in them is only an imitation. It is not daylight but night light, and it wanes so far that what is seen in them no longer even seems to be light. If then every soul is placed under an angel, this father of the moonstruck boy would be a man asking Jesus as for a son, because the boy could not be cured of the affliction by the lesser word of the disciples. The mute and deaf demon is the irrational impulses toward what seems good, which the Word drives out. The boy himself produced them by an irrational drive, and those watching thought he was doing these things in keeping with the teaching of Jesus. This affliction is hard to cure. What is not done well is strongly held to have

been done well. In such people this working is so great that it is compared to a mountain. It needs to be removed from the sufferer through the full faith of the one who heals. All faith is compared to a mustard seed. Faith is despised by men, and is very small, and seems cheap. But when it finds good ground, that is, a soul, it becomes a great tree. So none of the wingless creatures, but only the spiritually winged birds of heaven, can nest in the branches of such faith.

Verse 43. “And while everyone was amazed at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples.”

Verse 44. “Put these words into your ears. For the Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men.” By whom, then, is he about to be handed over? The Apostle says the Son was handed over by God, when he says: “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.” He gave him up to suffer for the whole world, so that he might take away its sin. You will also say that he was handed over by the devil. It was the devil who handed over Job’s yoke of oxen and his donkeys to the captors, then the camels to the horsemen, the sheep to the fire, and his sons and daughters to the wind from the desert. So let it first be said that the Son was handed over by the Father into the hands of men. Then he was handed over by Judas, and by Satan, who entered Judas after the morsel and handed him over as the greater authority behind Judas. But the Father did not spare his own Son, out of his love for humanity and his kindness toward us. Judas did it out of the wickedness of his own choice. When Christ was put to death, he destroyed the devil, who holds the power of death, that is, of sin. For sin is properly death, according to the words: “The soul that sins, it shall die.” The rulers took their stand against Christ. But we, who have been helped by his being killed, say: “Let us break their bonds.” For we have become like Christ in his death, and so we are no longer under the bonds of our adversaries. Rather, they are laughed at by the Father who lives in the heavens, and mocked by the Lord. For by rising, he has made us like him in his resurrection too. We no longer sit in darkness and the shadow of death, because the light of God has risen upon us.

Verse 57. As they were going along the road, someone said to him: “I will follow you wherever you go, Lord.”

Verse 58. And Jesus said to him: “Foxes have dens, and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” So if you are ready, like me, to have nowhere to lay your head, then because of my teaching you will choose a life without settled comfort here, in hope of the kingdom of the heavens. You will expect no rest here for anything, but only in the age to come. For my disciples, who practice righteousness, will have tribulation in this world. But the wicked and the deceivers, who are compared to foxes and birds of the heaven, will get ahead in this life, deceiving and being deceived. A loftier reading: when the young man’s father had died and was dead, then he was called by Jesus. We must understand

that, just as the world has been crucified to Paul and was dead, because the affairs of the world had died to him, since he no longer regarded them as things that are seen and last only for a time, so for each righteous person the devil has died, who was alive to him while he sinned. “Everyone who commits sin has been born of the devil.” For everyone who sins and fixes his attention on the things here, the wicked father lives. To everyone to whom the wicked one has died, Christ may say: “Follow me.” And perhaps this is what is meant, understood mystically: that our father must be hated by us, if we are to be worthy of Jesus. The words “bury their own dead” are meant only as allegory. For the dead in some sense bury their own dead within themselves, having become the tombs and monuments of those dead.

The one who obeys Jesus leaves the dead man behind completely and never touches him again, for he knows that whoever touches a dead body is defiled. Luke says these things about those who are more worthy. Mark says that Jesus called the twelve to him and sent them out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits. This practice of serving the word by twos, according to God’s will, seems to be ancient, going back to Moses and Aaron when the people came out of Egypt. For God brought Israel out by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were likewise of one mind, and together they quieted the people who had been stirred up by the ten. Eldad and Medad also prophesied in the camp, and they were likewise of one mind. Later still, God sent out Paul and Barnabas to the nations, and such men were an example of “two on earth agreeing.” The saying “A brother helped by a brother is like a fortified city” also fits them, and so does “Two are better than one.” Matthew shows in his list that the twelve were arranged in pairs, for he sets them in couples. Just as a farmer works the land with a yoked pair of oxen, so the Lord yoked the apostles two by two and sent them out, working the land of those who hear in truth and believe, together with them.

Luke 10

Verse 10. “Into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say:”

Verse 11. “Even the dust that clung to us from your city we wipe off against you.” For the dust, from your sins, would justly come back upon you. In a simpler sense, he meant “shake off the dust” either to show that they had taken nothing from them, or to serve as a witness against them of the long journey the apostles had made for their sake. Notice that the cities that do not welcome the apostles and sound teaching have broad streets. Corresponding to the broad street are the gate and the roomy road that lead to destruction, and many are those who travel by it.

Verse 38. While they were traveling, he entered a certain village. A woman named Martha welcomed him into her house.

Verse 39. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the feet of Jesus and listened to his word.

Verse 40. But Martha was distracted with much serving. She came up and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her, then, to help me.”

Verse 41. Jesus answered, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed.”

Verse 42. “Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.” For “One thing is needed,” the commandment “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” is useful. For “Many things are needed,” you may set beside it “You shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness,” and whatever else is said in the same way. You may take Martha as standing for action and Mary for contemplation. Or the one as standing for Judea and the other for the church from the nations. Or Martha as standing for those from the circumcision who believed and keep the things of the law in a Jewish way, and Mary for those who are freed from these things and sit only at the feet of Jesus. For if you look at it from different angles,

you will find Martha more bodily and caught up in many things, and Mary devoted to contemplation alone and to spiritual things.

Luke 11

Verse 2. “Our Father in heaven, may your name be made holy; may your kingdom come.” I think that no one can say “Father” to God unless he is filled with the Spirit of adoption. A Son who gives glory to the Father would say “Father.” But he must also keep the commandment that says, “Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father who is in heaven.” “May your kingdom come”: that every rule and authority and power may be brought to nothing, and also every kingdom of the world, and the sin that reigns in our mortal bodies. And God will reign over all of these.

Verse 3. “Give us our daily bread.” The words “each day” are added of necessity. For our true life is, as it were, a provision for us, so that the inner man may live according to God.

Verses 5 and 7. “Which of you” is said to the disciples. “Will have a friend” is said to show that God is a friend to the saints, as he was to Moses and to Abraham. Perhaps this “midnight,” this narrowed [or: shut-in] time, is a time of life, when the destroyer enters every house in the Egypt of this world where the doorpost has not been marked with the blood of Christ. The disciple asks the friend for three loaves. He wants to feed the one who has come to him from the road with the teaching about the Trinity, as it is said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” But how does the friend answer from inside? He says, “Do not cause me trouble.” Ask whether those who labor and are burdened pass their own troubles on to the Savior. For this reason he “bears our weaknesses and is pained for us.” Or, just as God is said to be angry at another who sins, so also he is said to be troubled by the one who brings him trouble. [The clause “just as God does not sleep for this one” is uncertain in the Greek.] Consider this too: bread is the soul’s necessary food in knowledge, without which no one can be saved. An example is the exact account of how one must live. Fish, like a relish with the bread, is the love of learning. An example is knowing how the world is put together, how the elements work, the beginning, the end and the middle of the ages, and whatever else wisdom goes on to list. So God does not give a stone in place of bread, which the devil wanted Jesus to eat. Nor does he give a serpent in place of fish, which the Ethiopians eat, who are unworthy

to eat fish. For there, says the [Psalmist], “you crushed the head of the dragon on the water, you gave him as food to the Ethiopian peoples.” Nor, in plain terms, does he give what is inedible and harmful in place of what is nourishing and helpful.

Verse 34. The lamp of the body is the eye. So when your eye is single, your whole body is also full of light. But when it is evil, your body also is dark.

Verse 35. Take care, then, that the light in you is not darkness.

Verse 36. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it dark, it will be wholly full of light, as when the lamp lights you with its flash. I think the meaning of the passage that follows is this. Suppose your body has become full of light, because the body has been lit by the lamp. Suppose no part in you is still dark, because you no longer sin at all. Then the whole body will be so full of light that its rays are compared to a lamp in a lightning flash, which gives light and breaks up the darkness by its brightness. For the illumination that comes from the mind is like the most brilliant lightning. The light in the body, which is by nature darkness, is like the lamp in the lightning, and it is led wherever the mind wishes.

Verse 51. “From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias.” So the executioners, having failed to find Elisabeth and the child, vent their anger on Zacharias; so the account goes. For this very reason, indeed, they did the same also because of the virgin Mary, after she gave birth to our Savior. She had come to worship and stood in the place of the virgins. Those who knew she had given birth tried to stop her. But Zacharias said to those who were stopping her that she was worthy of the place of the virgins, since she was still a virgin. So they killed him as a plain lawbreaker, between the temple and the altar, while he was serving and sacrificing to God, and they mingled his blood with the blood [of the others].

Luke 12

Verse 6. Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

Verse 7. “But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.” Notice that he did not say “the fall of a sparrow to the earth,” as Matthew does. Here the five sparrows are a hint about the five senses of the righteous person. These senses perceive things on high, things beyond the human: they see divine things, hear the voice of God, taste the living bread, smell the fragrance of Christ’s perfumes and the oil of gladness, and touch the living Word. Though they are despised by those who judge the things of the Spirit to be foolishness and [folly], they are not forgotten before God. Compare the apparent sense of the saying, that not even the smallest sparrow is forgotten before God, with the passages which plainly show that God forgets some people because of their sin. In the plain sense, then, these words show the fine detail of Providence and a knowledge that reaches down to the smallest things. In the spiritual sense, however, the sensible part falls to the earth, like sparrows. When [you are carried] upward, it seeks the things below, for those caught in the evils of the flesh. Such a person has been handed over to a passion of dishonor and has lost freedom along with honor. Such is the one who has been lifted up by the Word and yet sets his mind on earthly things. Again, according to the plain sense, the words “it will not fall to the earth without your Father” show not his will but his foreknowledge. Of the things that happen, some happen by his will, some by his good pleasure, and some by his permission.

Luke 13

Verse 20. So again he said: “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?”

Verse 21. “It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole was leavened.” One can take this in different ways: the woman as the Church, and the leaven as the Holy Spirit. The three measures are body, spirit and soul. These are made holy by the leaven of the Holy Spirit, so that together with the Holy Spirit they become one lump of dough. Again, the Savior calls the Holy Spirit “leaven,” meaning the power brought to completion from the sowing, and he hints at it in this way. The word of the heavenly kingdom, after the first sowing among people, grows and bears full fruit. It then supplies the provision of the Holy Spirit to those who have been helped through the first stages, like leaven leavening a lump of dough. The woman, the wisdom of God, hides this leaven in three measures of flour. For to those who have gained, through great care and the labor of the sowing, three measures of flour (that is, teachings, the divine knowledge concerning the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), the wisdom of God supplies the Holy Spirit. The same wisdom, in another sense, hides the leaven (the benefit that comes from her) in the three measures of flour, understood as the whole person who is from God, made up of body, soul and spirit, through the supply of divine inspiration, until the whole is leavened.

So this person, shaped and leavened by sharing in the heavenly leaven, will be called a heavenly and spiritual person, and a new lump of dough, since the three flours that were given have become one mixture, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in them. And so, becoming a new and spiritual bread, in keeping with the Apostle who says, “We who are many are one bread and one body,” we shall take on the image and likeness of the life-giving bread of all things, who came down from heaven and made us like himself. He does well to compare the wisdom of God to a woman in these matters. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, in keeping with the example of the leaven. In the parable of the sowing he introduced the figure of a farmer and sower, and a woman would not reasonably have been mentioned there. Nor here, where leaven is put into three measures of

flour, does the parable fit by likening the sower named from that earlier parable to a woman making bread.

Verse 29. “And they will come from east and west and north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God.” In Matthew a parable is also woven in. In it, different workers of different ages are called to the commandments as if into a vineyard: early in the morning, and around the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours. Perhaps the whole life of man is the “day” of the parable. Those called from childhood and earliest youth are the ones the master hired at daybreak. Those called after boyhood are the ones from the third hour. Those who are brought to godliness after the heat and burden of youth, the older men, are around the ninth hour. Those who are already old and right at the point of departure are shown by the eleventh. What is examined is the choice, not the time, that is, what a person has done in faith. So those who have done what fell to them from the moment they were called are given the same wage of salvation. That wage is the denarius, the coin of the divine and most royal image, which at the beginning was seized by the evil one through deceit, in the transgression of the commandment, and [choked out]. By this, it seems to me, the parable hints at the mark of the kingdom itself, because the engraving on the denarius signifies the image of a king stamped upon it. All who have come into the vineyard and into the commonwealth of godliness, and have taken up one and the same work, ought justly to share in the same kingdom. For this reason the denarius, the token of the kingdom, is fittingly given to all. Of these, some were called in youth, some around the age of young manhood, some around the middle of a man’s life, and some when they had already reached full manhood and gone beyond it.

Others were called as old men, already aged and near the sunset of life. Someone might also give another explanation and apply what the parable shows to those who were counted worthy of the divine call from the very first, from the beginning of life until the end of the age. On this reading, “early in the morning” refers to those who were saved first, at the beginning of life, and were called to the work of godliness. The second group are those around Enoch and Noah. The third hour refers to those around Abraham. The sixth refers to those in the times of the prophets. The eleventh refers to those after the saving appearance of God. All of these will be counted worthy of one and the same reward, which is signified by the denarius, as it is referred to the kingdom of God. All these intervals are equal in number to the senses. The first call is [touch]. That is why it was said about the plant, “You shall not touch it.” Smell belongs to the second, which is why, at Noah, “the Lord smelled a fragrant aroma.” Taste belongs to Abraham, which is why he set before the angels loaves baked in the ashes and a calf. Hearing belongs to Moses, when the voice of God was heard from heaven. Sight, more honored than all the senses, belongs to the coming of Christ, when people saw Christ with blessed eyes. Evening is the end of the age, when the last workers receive their wage first. For

those who were earlier given testimony through faith did not receive the promise. We who are Christ's disciples expect to receive the wage first.

Luke 14

Verse 12. He also said to the one who had invited him: “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not call your friends, or your brothers, or your relatives, or rich neighbors. Otherwise they may invite you back in return, and you will have been repaid.”

Verse 13. “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.”

Verse 14. “And you will be blessed, when they have nothing to repay you. For it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous.” [So] according to the letter, we are commanded not to invite friends and neighbors, but the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. Mystically, though, friends may be those who rejoice with us in the teachings of the truth. Brothers are those who hold kindred teachings. Relatives are those who want to draw near to us in these things. Neighbors are those who have not pitched their tents altogether far from our teachings. The word “rich” must be taken as applying to all of these. Those who advertise lectures invite the rich and the poor. But the one who serves the word for true glory is free of vainglory. He invites the poor, that is, those without experience of words, to make them rich. He invites the maimed, that is, those whose understanding is damaged, to heal them. He invites the lame, those who limp in the word, so that they may make straight paths. He invites the blind, those who lack the power of contemplation, so that they may see the true light. The words “they have nothing to repay you” mean the same as: they do not know how to give an argument, in the manner of dialectic, in answer to a question or a reply.

Verse 18. “And they all began, as if from one mind, to make excuses.” That is, as though they had agreed on it beforehand. The first said to him, “I have bought a field, and I have to go out and see it. I ask you, have me excused.”

Verse 19. “And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out. I ask you, have me excused.’ ”

Verse 20. “And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and for this reason I cannot come.’ ” In general, people fall away from the calling in three ways: by the appear-

ance of better teachings, by the pursuit of things perceived by the senses, and by love of pleasure. Those who bought a field and so decline the banquet are those who have taken up other teachings about the divine nature, teachings with great persuasiveness and a variety of argument. They also despise the [field] that holds within itself [field] and powers. So the man who has not seen or tested the teaching he acquired, because he was already taken up with it, leaves the banquet by necessity and not willingly. He leaves the one who invited him, and perhaps even himself. He says "I ask you" as one who shows respect to the one who invited him in word only. The man who bought five yoke of oxen is the one who despises the intelligible nature and is fond of perceptible things. He too did not test from the beginning what had been bought. If the number two is assigned to matter, this man honored material things. For this reason he too declined the intelligible banquet. The other is the one who said, "I have married a wife." He is the one who thinks he has found wisdom, and by sharing in it he turns down the true wisdom. Or he is the one who is united to [a girl], a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God. That, then, is the general sense of the parable. But take the passage in another way as well: so far as we are human, it is not good for us to know the riches of God's kindness.

Of necessity God is made like a human being, so that he may speak to people as people, since they cannot have everything arranged for them by God while God remains as he is. And he will stop being likened to a human being when we have ceased from strife, jealousy and the other evils, and from walking according to man, and are counted worthy to hear from God: "I said, You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High." He has also ceased to be called many other things which sinful man needs: panther, lion and bear, as it is written in the prophets. In the same way I understand the words, "Our God is a consuming fire." For to the one who is not worthy to be consumed, he is light, according to John, who says, "God is light." And again he says, "It has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that if it is revealed, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is." For even if we are now counted worthy to see God with the mind and the heart, we do not see him as he is, but as he becomes for the sake of our dispensation. But in the restoration of all things, of which he spoke through the mouth of his holy ones, we shall not see, as now, what he is not, but, as will be fitting then, what he is. So, among us human beings he was made like a human being. But among those who have made themselves gods, he is like God. For he says, "God is in the assembly of gods."

Luke 15

Verse 23. “And bring the fattened calf, and let us eat and be merry.” If the passage must be looked at on a higher level, it begins with words that are moral, like food, in the phrase “let us eat.” Then it moves to words of the higher vision, like drink, in the phrase “let us be merry.” For wine is the beginning of merriment, as it is written.

Luke 16

Verse 17. “It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of the law to fall.” A single stroke is not only the iota among the Greeks; among the Hebrews too there is the letter they call “iod.” Iota can also be taken symbolically as Jesus, since the beginning of his name is written with iota (iod) among both Greeks and Hebrews. So the Word of God is in the law. He does not pass it by, and he does not fall before everything has come to pass. Then he does fall, so that he may bear more fruit. He is not defeated; he humbles himself and becomes obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Luke 17

Verse 12. And as he was entering a certain village, ten leprous men met him, and they stood at a distance.

Verse 13. And they lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” You may well suppose that the laws about leprosy are a kind of varied portrait of the soul. Who would not be puzzled to see that in one case leprosy makes a person unclean when it appears on living skin, while in another case it frees a person from all uncleanness once he has become leprous all over? For a person is counted unclean when living skin is defiled, after he has become wholly leprous, by what is called leprosy covering the living skin entirely. [This sentence is hard to follow in the Greek and the text may be corrupt.] I take leprosy to stand for the irrational passions of the soul, and living skin to stand for the rational condition. So the passage seems to me to offer a mystery. In the age of infants the soul is blameless, since its lack of reason frees it from every reproach. But if living skin appears in it, that is, if the beginning of reason starts to sprout, then the beginning of sin comes into being. This continues until the living skin gains the upper hand, that is, until reason grows and is made perfect, all the skin becomes living, and the leprosy completely disappears.

Luke 18

Verse 20. “You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother.” The passage refutes the madness of the Marcionites and the Manichaeans, who say that the law is foreign to Christ. For Mark says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. He would not have loved, over the fulfilling of something foreign to him, the man who spoke so boldly about these commandments. But a question arises: how was he loved, when he was not going to follow Jesus to life? The one who kept the things of the law is worthy of love for his earlier conduct. But his neglect of the perfect meant that the love given for what came before could not become complete.

Luke 19

Verse 29. And it happened that as he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, toward the mountain called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

Verse 30. saying, “Go into the village opposite. As you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no human being has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.”

Verse 31. “And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this to him: ‘Its Lord has need of it.’ ”

Verse 32. And those who were sent went and found it just as he had told them.

Verse 33. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

Verse 34. And they said, “Its Lord has need of it.”

Verse 35. And they led it to Jesus. For where there is obedience and a holy place, there the Lord [sends] the apostles to untie a tied colt, on which no word of Moses or Isaiah or any other of the prophets ever sat. But when Christ came, who is Lord by nature and alone, the many fall silent, those who were lords before the Savior became Lord over them. For when someone is a slave to wickedness, he is a slave to many passions. But once the Lord has come to be his Lord, he cannot have many lords. Verse 35 continues: And some of them threw their garments on the colt and set Jesus on it.

Verse 36. And as he went, they spread their garments on the road. The disciples take the word and set it upon the souls of those who hear. The good deeds of the apostles, laid upon us, also adorn us. For they want us even to tread on their garments, as we examine the apostolic words.

Luke 20

Verse 19. And the chief priests and the scribes sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, and they were afraid, for they knew that he had told this parable against them.

Verse 20. They watched him closely and sent spies, who pretended to be righteous men, so that they might catch him in something he said and hand him over to the rule and authority of the governor.

Verse 21. They questioned him: “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and that you show no partiality, but teach the way of God in truth.

Verse 22. Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar, or not?”

Verse 23. But he saw through their craftiness and said to them, “Why are you testing me?

Verse 24. Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it bear?” They answered, “Caesar’s.”

Verse 25. He replied to them, “Then give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Verse 26. They could not catch him in anything he said before the people, and they were amazed at his answer and fell silent. A loftier interpretation: as it is written in Genesis, man was made in the image of God. Later, because of his disobedience, he also took on an earthly image. Just as a coin bears the image of the ruler of the nations, so the one who does the works of the Almighty bears his image. The Savior urges us to give back and put away the earthly image, and to bear the image that was ours from the beginning. In keeping with this Paul says, “As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly.” This, then, is what is shown by the words, “Give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Sources. Greek text: Charles de La Rue's edition (Origenis Opera Omnia, Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857), digitised by Open Greek and Latin and the First Thousand Years of Greek project (CC BY-SA 4.0). The English is a new translation made by SermonIndex with AI directly from the Greek, as a first reading version; it has not been checked line by line by a person and may contain mistakes. No older English translation was used. Where the digital Greek is flagged as damaged, the English is a best reading. Released under CC BY-SA 4.0.