

Biblical Allusions

Aaron. Son of Amram the Levite, brother of Moses and Miriam and head of the Levite priesthood (Numbers 18:1-7). He was Moses' spokesman and helper during the Ten Plagues; his rod turned into a serpent, and in the presence of Pharaoh, and swallowed the Egyptians' rods that had also turned into serpents (Exodus 7:8-12). While Moses was away on Mount Sinai, he made the Golden Calf. The Lord refused to allow Aaron and Moses to enter the Promised Land because they had rebelled against His word; on His order, Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Aaron's son Eleazar. See also: Plagues of Egypt. Walt Whitman, in *Democratic Vistas*, indicates the type of reference in modern times: "The magician's serpent in the fable ate up all the other serpents, and the money-making is our magician's serpent, remaining sole master of the field."

Abraham's bosom. Paradise, symbolically. Abraham is the first of the great Old Testament patriarchs, the founder of the Hebrew nations, to whom God revealed the tenets of the Jewish religion. When Lazarus the beggar died he "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22-23). The contemporary reference is to heavenly rest and peace. See also: Lazarus and Dives.

Absalom, o my son. "And the King (David) said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushie answered, The enemies of my lord the king...be as that young man is. And the king...wept: and as he wept, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son, my son" (II Samuel 18:24-33). Absalom, the ambitious son of King David, rebelled against his father and was killed by Joab. His loss symbolizes the loss to a father of a favorite, handsome, popular but rebellious son.

Adam. In the Bible, the first man, created by God out of the dust of the earth. Adam and Eve, who formed from Adam's rib while he slept, lived in innocence in the Garden of Eden until the serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and Eve convinced Adam to eat, too. In punishment, God decreed that henceforth Adam must earn his bread "in the sweat of thy face," and that Eve must bear children in sorrow. He banished them from Eden. Allusions to Adam usually refer to his fall from innocence or to the "original sin" he committed with Eve. See also: In the Sweat of Thy Face; Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge.

Adam's rib. "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now the bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:21-23). Hebrew: ishshah, woman: ish, man. This story is the origin of the false notion that men have one rib fewer than women. Today, a lightly ironic term for woman.

Ahab. The king of Israel (I Kings 16-22) who married Jezebel and converted to the pagan worship of Baal. Later Ahab was killed in battle "and the dogs licked up his blood." In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851), Ahab is the name of the captain of the whaling ship

Pequod who obsessively hunts the white whale. Because he betrayed the god of his people and supported the worship of the pagan gods, Ahab's name became a byword for wickedness.

Alpha and Omega. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, used metaphorically by Christ to signify He was all things: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Revelations 22:13). In modern reference, "the first and the last" of any concept or philosophy.

Anathema. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (I Corinthians 16:22). Anathema: originally, "dedicated to God." Since the ancient Hebrews dedicated their defeated enemies to God by sacrificing them (I Samuel 15), the word came to mean something hateful and to be destroyed. In the New Testament, it means "accursed" (Romans 9:3); thence it passed into Christian usage in formulas of imprecation (e.g., in the Athanasian Creed). In English, it is a noun meaning (1) the thing accursed or (2) the act of cursing; also a quasi-adjective used only in the predicate (not the attributive) position. "Maranatha" is actually two Aramaic words meaning "the Lord has come" (cf, Phillipians 4:5). It should be read as a separate sentence, which Paul uses in Corinthians 17 as a concluding benediction for his epistle. Most Corinthians, not knowing any Aramaic, erroneously took Paul's formula as a solemn intensification of "anathema," and read the two words as a double curse.

Apocalypse. Greek for disclosure or revelation, refers to the Revelation of St. John the Divine, the final book of the Bible that foretells God's ultimate purpose, the final battle of good and evil, and the Last Judgment. Apocalypse is also a generic term for a category of religious writings in Judaism, Christianity and Islam that depicts the world on the brink of a final and decisive battle between good and evil. Apocalyptic has come to be an adjective for total destruction or universal disaster. See also: John of Patmos.

Apocrypha. Greek word meaning "obscure" or "hidden," later "unauthoritative." In Biblical literature, those books rejected by the Jews as uninspired, and hence excluded from the Old Testament, although they were later accepted by the Roman Catholic Church (Council of Trent, 1546) and the Greek Orthodox Church (Synod of Constantinople, 1638) as canonical and divinely inspired. Among them are I and II Maccabees, Judith, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus. Hence, by extension, literature of questionable authorship or authenticity.

Apple, the forbidden fruit. Called also the "apple of knowledge," it hung from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were forbidden by God to taste of it, but were tempted by Satan to disobey Him (Genesis 2). A piece is supposed to have stuck in Adam's throat; hence, "Adam's apple." See also: Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge.

Ararat. The mountain in eastern Turkey, near the Iranian border, upon which Noah's Ark is said to have come to rest after the flood waters receded (Genesis 8:4). Sometimes called the second cradle of the human race.

Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was a box carried by poles and containing the tablets of the law given by God to Moses. It accompanied the Israelites in their wanderings and was regarded as a Palladium for protection against their enemies (I Samuel 5). It was so charged with numinous power that to touch it, even accidentally, brought instant death; the walls of Jericho fell down before it (Joshua 6:4-12). Solomon placed it in the temple at Jerusalem, where it remained until the Babylonian Captivity; thereafter, nothing more is heard of it, and the Holy of Holies of the Second Temple was empty. In modern synagogues, the Ark is a chest or closet facing the congregation and containing the Torah. A small coffer representing the Ark is the most sacred feature of the Christian churches of Abyssinia. In proverbial usage, "to lay hands on the Ark" is to treat sacred things irreverently. Alluded to in the movie *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Armageddon. "He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon...and the cities of the nations fell" (Revelation 16:16). According to prophecy, the place where the forces of evil will make their last desperate stand against God. In modern usage, Armageddon is the battleground of good and evil before Judgment Day; also, the final and totally destructive battle, as in "nuclear Armageddon." See also: Day of Judgment.

Baal. The male consort of Ashtoreth (or Astarte) and the god of fertility of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, Baal has come to represent the false pagan worship to which the Israelites fell prey.

Babel. "And the whole earth was of one language, and they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach heaven...And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and have all one language; and this they begin to do...let us go down and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech...Therefore is the name of it called Babel" (Genesis 11:1-9). The story of the tower of Babel in the land of Shinar (Babylonia) preserves confused memories of the Babylonian ziggurats, great towers in the shape of stepped pyramids, used for ancient sanctuaries. Here the tower is a symbol of man's aspiring arrogance, rebuked by God. The name Babel (literally, "the gate of God") is a Hebrew rendering of the name Babylon. In modern English, Babel simply means a noisy confusion.

Babylon. The grand, luxurious and wicked city on the Euphrates River, the place to which the Jews were exiled. References to it occur throughout the Bible. Refers today to grandeur, wickedness and wealth. See also: Babylonian Captivity.

Balaam's ass. Balaam, a heathen prophet, refused the command of the king of Moab to curse the Israelites (Numbers 22:1-20). He is remembered now only for his talking ass, who remonstrated with her master in reasonable language when Balaam tried to beat her.

Balm in Gilead. “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?” (Jeremiah 8:22). Gilead was known for medicines and aromatic herbs; the phrase “balm of Gilead” is now applied generally to any kind of healing or solace. Referenced in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven.”

Barabbas. It was the custom in the Holy Land during Roman times that the people could choose to free one condemned man after his trial. At the trial of Jesus, Barabbas the thief (and, according to Luke and Mark, a seditionist and murderer as well) was chosen to be freed instead of Jesus. The case has become one of the popular examples of rank injustice, and a Barabbas is any criminal who escapes unfairly the consequences of his crime.

Bathsheba. The wife of Uriah, and beloved of King David. After Bathsheba became his mistress, David ordered that Uriah be killed in the forefront of battle. The King subsequently married her, and she bore his son Solomon (II Samuel 11).

Beatitudes. The opening words of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-11) are nine short verses, each beginning with the word “blessed” (Latin: *beatus*) and called on that account the “beautitudes.” In context, they constitute an eschatological prophecy that the humble of this world will inherit the messianic kingdom. In modern quotations, they are cited separately and applied as needed; for example, “blessed are the peacemakers.”

Beelzebub. Literally “the lord of the flies,” the prince of devils, and generally one of Satan’s closest chiefs. He is mentioned in Matthew 10:25, 12:24-27; Mark 3:22, Luke 11:17-19 and figures prominently in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.

Bethel. In Hebrew, “the house of God.” For the story of the founding of the shrine at Bethel, see Jacob’s Ladder. In English usage, a Bethel (as a common noun) is a nonconformist chapel.

Better to marry than to burn. “I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn” (I Corinthians 7:8-9). Paul’s estimate of matrimony may strike married people as churlish and insensitive, but then, Paul was a bachelor. “To burn” is translated in the Revised Standard Version as “to be aflame with passion.” There is no indication, as some have thought, that it means “to burn in Hell as a punishment for fornication.” See also: Paul, Saint.

Blind lead the blind. “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39). Jesus’ condemnation of the Pharisees (q.v.) often applied generally to any misguided leadership or instruction.

Book of life. The book in which the names of those who are to be saved on Judgment Day are written, “and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelations 3:5, 20:12-15; 21:27)

Bread cast upon the waters. “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:15). That is, be generous without thought of reward, and the reward will come to you.

Brother’s keeper, Am I my? See Cain and Abel. This is the question Cain asked God when he inquired about the whereabouts of Abel, Cain’s brother. Cain had killed him out of anger and jealousy.

Burning bush. “Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush was not consumed. And...God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses,...I am the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Exodus 3:1-6). The episode of the burning bush is one of several epiphanies (appearances of the deity) of Yahweh in the form of fire. The angel of the Lord is identical with the Lord himself; at this early period, the angels are not a separate order of beings, but rather a temporary embodiment of the deity. The burning bush is a symbol of God’s immanence in nature; the crucial element in the image is the power of the divine fire to burn without consuming.

Caiaphas. After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, it being “expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not” (Matthew 26:3, 57; John 18:14, 24, 28). He made sure that Jesus was found guilty at his trial. Caiaphas is a type of the cold blooded, hypocritical politician.

Cain and Abel. “And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? And He said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear...it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the Land of Nod, on the East of Eden” (Genesis 4:8-16). The conflict between Cain and Abel is now remembered as the original and archetypal fratricide. The question “Am I my brother’s keeper?” is always quoted ironically, since the only correct answer is “Yes.” Asking this question is equivalent to asking whether one has a responsibility to one’s fellow man. The Mark (or brand) of Cain was meant both to identify the fratricide and to protect from punishment, but in later literature it is understood as the stigma of punishment itself, and usually conceived (as in Shelley’s “Adonais”) as a scarlet

mark upon the forehead. Nod means “wandering”; the Land of Not in the sense of “Dreamland” is a misinterpretation possible only in English.

Calf, Golden. “And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said...make us gods which shall go before us...And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives...and bring them unto me. And he received them at their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf; and he said, These by thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:1-4). When Moses returned from Sinai and discovered the idolatry of the people, he broke the tablets of the Law in his anger. The episode is recalled (in Psalms 106:20) as a shocking apostasy, and today to worship a golden calf means to worship false ideals, especially wealth.

Camel through a needle’s eye. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:23-24, Mark 10:23-25, Luke 18:24-25). For a camel to go through a needle’s eye is a fine, bold, proverbial expression of an impossibility; it should not be weakened by trying to read “camel” as a Greek word for “rope,” or by suggesting that the “needle’s eye” was the name of a narrow gate. The same phrase appears in the Koran, and the Talmud has a similar one about an elephant. Millionaires who are discouraged by this text may take consolation from the verses that follow: “And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus...sayeth, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible” (Mark 10:25-26).

Canaan. Of the three sons of Noah, Ham, the father of Canaan, looked on his father naked in his tent, for which Noah declared that Canaan was cursed, “a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” The words have been interpreted as justifying slavery, since the descendants of Canaan are traditionally said to be Africans (Genesis 9:18-27). See Promised Land.

Cast money changers out of the temple. “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but he have made it a Den of Thieves: (Matthew 21:12-13; cf. Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-6; John 2: 13-16; Jeremiah 7:11). The money changers performed a necessary function: Doves were sold for ritual sacrifices, and changers exchanged Roman money for Hebrew to pay the temple taxes. Inevitably they introduced an inappropriate commercial note to the premises. The episode is proverbial for any attack on commercialism in religion or any other spiritual endeavor.

Cast the first stone. “And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery...They said unto him,...Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?...But Jesus...said unto them, He that is without sin among

you, let his first cast a stone at her..." (John 8:3-8). Jesus' defense of the woman taken in adultery is a warning against self-righteousness and a reminder that all men are sinners.

Chariot of fire. "Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (Kings 2:11). The story of Elijah's translation to heaven is part of a large body of miraculous legend about the prophet. Marvelous chariots appear in the folklore of many nations as vehicles for heavenly beings, and fire is especially associated with the God of the Old Testament. Since Elijah went to heaven without dying first, popular piety looked for his eventual return as the forerunner of the Messiah (Luke 9:19). A chariot of fire is thus an image of transcendence or miraculous overcoming of natural obstacles. William Blake uses it in his prefatory hymn to the long poem "Milton," and this usage was alluded to in the title of the recent film *Chariots of Fire* (1981).

Cherub. In the Bible, the cherubim were celestial beings who carried the throne of God; theologians assigned them the place of angels of the second order. In Western art, they are usually represented as beautiful, chubby babies with wings. The adjective cherubic implies sweet, childish innocence.

Chosen people. The Jews, chosen by God in the Old Testament to fulfill His purpose on earth.

Clay in the potter's hand. "As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand" (Jeremiah 18:6). In current usage, it has come to mean easily led or influenced.

Coat of many colors. Joseph, favorite son of Jacob, and Rachel's first born, was given a "coat of many colors" as a symbol of affection and preference. The jealousy aroused in his older brothers led them to sell Joseph into slavery. They stained his coat with blood, brought it to Jacob, and told him Joseph had been devoured by a wild animal (Genesis 30).

Come, let us reason together. "Come now, And let us reason together, saith the Lord: Through your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). Cited frequently as an offering of hope to the fallen and depraved.

Crooked shall be made straight. "The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" (Isaiah 40:4; cf. Isaiah 45:2; Luke 3:5). One of the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah.

Crossing of the Red Sea. When the Hebrews, led out of Egypt by Moses and pursued by the Egyptians, came to the barrier of the Red Sea, the waters were parted by a strong east wind sent by God. After the Hebrews had all passed through the corridor in the waters, Moses lifted his hand and the waters engulfed the Egyptians (Exodus 10:19; 14:1-31). In allusion, the phrase signifies either a miraculous escape or an act of divine intervention and destruction.

Cross over Jordan. The Israelites under the leadership of Joshua invaded Canaan from the east, and so had to cross the Jordan. According to Joshua 3, the waters stopped flowing and piled up in a heap until the whole nation had passed over. In certain Negro spirituals, to cross over Jordan and to enter the Promised Land are metaphors for going to heaven.

Crown of thorns. In the New Testament, Jesus is taken by Pilate's soldiers "and when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head...and they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying Hail, King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2-5). A symbol of suffering and humiliation. See also: Pilate, Pontius.

Cup runneth over. "Thou preparest a tablet before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (Psalms 23:5). Probably no chapter in the Bible is more universally known and loved than the 23rd Psalm, from which these three sentences come. All are images of God's superabundant generosity. Oil, a valuable product throughout the Mediterranean world, was a symbol of gladness and prosperity; it was used for the consecration of priests, but also by private persons for their own pleasure.

Daily bread. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). One of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, it implies that man may legitimately ask that his physical needs be met, but it also inculcates a spirit of trust that is not overly concerned for the future (cf. Matthew 6:25-34). Roman Catholics are authorized to understand the words as applying to the bread of the Eucharist, but this interpretation is not mandatory.

Daniel in the lion's den. "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions..." (Daniel 6:16). Daniel was a Jew who retained his faith during the Babylonian captivity under Kings Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius. He interpreted dreams and foretold the future (see Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin). When the princes of Babylon plotted against Daniel and caused him to be sealed inside a den of lions, God miraculously shut the lions' mouths. The story signifies faith and courage in the face of extreme danger.

David. The famous king of the Hebrews, whose name means "beloved" or "chieftain." He is noted for his songs, for the miraculous slaying of Goliath with his sling when still a boy, for his friendship with Jonathan, for his many wives the most famous among whom was Bathsheba (whose husband Uriah was sent by David into the heat of the battle to die) and for his anguish at the treachery of his son Absalom. He is represented as wise, brave, prudent and handsome. Luke traces the ancestry of Christ back to David (I and II Samuel, *passim*). See also: Absalom, O My Son.

Day of judgment. The day following the ultimate destruction of the world, when the Lord will judge each soul as good or evil and pronounce its salvation or its doom (Revelation 20:11-15). Also referred to as Judgment Day, Doomsday or the Last Judgment.

Dead bury their dead. "And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me the first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead" (Matthew 8:21-22; Luke 9:60). The burial of the dead is an act of piety so imperative that

Jesus' hearers must have been shocked by his insistence on the still greater urgency of the kingdom of God. His reply should not be understood as flippant or callous. Today it is used with a weakened application, meaning simply, "Let us think about the concerns of the present time, not the past."

Death, where is thy sting? "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory?" (I Corinthians 15:54-55). This passage is especially familiar because of its use at funerals; see, for example, the Book of Common Prayer.

Deep calleth unto deep. "Deep calleth unto deep" (Psalms 43:7). In the original context, this phrase refers to the tumult of a storm at sea; now used symbolically in reference to a profound spiritual communion or response.

Delilah. The seductress responsible for discovering the secret that Sampson's great strength lay in his long hair. While he slept, she cut his hair, and betrayed him to the Philistines, who blinded and imprisoned him (Judges 16:1-21). By extension, any treacherous woman. See also: Samson and Delilah.

Den of thieves. When Jesus threw the money changers out of the temple, he accused them of making the house of prayer into a den of thieves (Matthew 21:12-23; Mark 11:15-17, Luke 19:45-46). See also: Cast Money Changers Out of the Temple.

Doubting Thomas. "But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). The disciple Thomas would not believe the resurrection except upon tangible proof, and Jesus, though permitting him to satisfy his doubts, nevertheless rebuked them. In popular speech, a doubting Thomas is the equivalent of the proverbial man from Missouri (the "show me state"), who must see in order to believe.

Dust and ashes. "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27; also Job 30:19; 42:6). Here, dust and ashes means something worthless, and the phrase expresses humility and repentance. The formula "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" is familiar from its use in the Book of Common Prayer for the burial of the dead; in that context it simply refers to the mortality of the physical or "earthly" body. See also: Sackcloth and Ashes.

East of Eden. The place to which Cain was exiled after he killed his brother Abel (Genesis 4:16). John Steinbeck used the phrase as the title for a novel about conflict between brothers. See also: Cain and Abel.

Eat, drink and be merry. This phrase is from Jesus' parable of the rich man who looked forward to enjoying the wealth he had accumulated, without knowing that his soul would be required of him that very night (Luke 12:16-20; cf. Ecclesiastes 8:19, Isaiah 22:13). The expression is proverbial for any short-sighted enjoyment.

Ecclesiastes, Book of. The Old Testament book characterized by its pessimistic and cynical indictment of all worldly things, the book is perhaps most famous for its emphatic statement of worldly fatuity and futility: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity, saith the preacher..." (Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:11, 17, 26; 4-4, 16; 6-9, etc.).

Eden, Garden of. The garden described as an earthly paradise in the Book of Genesis, the locale of the brief life of innocence and grace of Adam and Eve before Satan tempted them to taste the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, causing their fall into sin. After they ate of this fruit, they were banished from the garden of paradise to a land "to the East of Eden." Today the term signifies any blissful and perfectly innocent place or state of being. See also: Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge.

Elijah. After King Ahab and Jezebel became followers of the god Baal, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to test the true God. Baal did not answer his prophets, and Elijah mocked them, building his own altar surrounded by a trench filled with water. God's fire then came down, and "licked up the water that was in the trench." Elijah went up to heaven in a "chariot of fire," an apotheosis witnessed by Elisha, who happened to be plowing a field. The mantle of Elijah then fell to Elisha, who had asked that "a double portion of [Elijah's] spirit be upon me" (I Kings 18:17-40; 19:19; II Kings 2:8-14).

Enoch. The father of Methuselah and the archetype of the upright man (Genesis 5:21-24).

Esau. The elder son of Isaac and Rebekah, described as a red, hairy man and a skillful hunter. Jacob, his crafty younger twin brother, fought with him while they were still in the womb, and later tricked Esau out of his birthright and Isaac's paternal blessing. Esau became the progenitor of the Edomites, whose traditional rivalry with the Israelites was thus explained. Later, Jacob took pains to be reconciled with his brother (Genesis 25, 27, 33).

Esther. In the Old Testament Book of Esther, King Ahasuerus of Persia, at a seven-day feast, ordered Queen Vashti to appear before the guests. She refused and was deposed, and Esther was then chosen from among the virgins in the kingdom to replace her. Subsequently, her cousin Mordecai aroused the anger of Haman, the king's counselor, because he refused to bow to him. Haman determined to kill all the captive Jews and execute Mordecai. Esther, however, dissuaded the king, and when Haman himself was killed, the Jews triumphed over their enemies. The feast of Purim commemorates these events. Esther remains one of the best-loved heroines of the Jews.

Exodus. The second book of the Old Testament, from the Greek exodus, "marching out." It chronicles the birth of Moses, the Israelites' bondage in Egypt and their final escape into the desert. With Moses as their leader, they cross the Red Sea. Thereafter, they wander in the Sinai wilderness for 40 years until they reach the promised land of Canaan. By extension, any departure of a large group of people, a mass migration.

Eye for an eye. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:38-39). The allusion here is to the *lex talionis*, “principle of retaliation,” in the Mosaic law (see Exodus 21:23-24; Leviticus 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:21). In its original context, the *lex talionis* was not an expression of vindictiveness so much as an attempt to set limits to vengeance. Jesus’ injunction to eschew vengeance entirely, therefore, does not deny the law but extends it. Today the expression is used primarily to refer to any harsh and primitive system of injustice that requires retribution to be exactly equal to the crime. See also: Sermon on the Mount; Turn the Other Cheek.

Faith that moves mountains. “Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not...if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done” (Matthew 21:21). Today the phrase is used to evoke the power of belief.

Fall, The. The “fall” of Adam and Eve from God’s grace, and their subsequent exile from the Garden of Eden for disobeying His command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3). The title of Albert Camus’ novel (in French, *La Chute*, 1956). Now used as a metaphor for any lapse from a happy or blessed state. See also: Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge.

False prophets. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Matthew 7:15-17). “Wolf in sheep’s clothing” is a proverb now used with no awareness of its Biblical origin; it can apply to “false prophets” or to anyone who is dangerous but deceptively fair-spoken.

Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. See Seven Last Words. Last words spoken by Jesus as he hung on the cross during the crucifixion. Now, an example of unconditional love and forgiveness since Christ in human form suffered in the extreme yet still interceded on behalf of humans who were directly responsible for his suffering.

Fat of the land. “I will give you the gold of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land” (Genesis 45:18). Now a proverbial expression meaning to live in luxury.

Fatted calf, Kill the. See Prodigal Son Parable.

Feet of clay. “Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image...This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay” (Daniel 2:31-33). In Daniel’s prophecy, the two feet of the image are the kingdoms of the Seleucids and Ptolemies (Macedonian and Greek dynasties that ruled in Asia Minor and Egypt from the fourth century B.C); in current usage an “idol with feet of clay” means anything that is much admired, but proves to have a fatal weakness.

Fig Leaves. “Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Genesis 3:7). The act of Adam and Eve was an expression of sexual shame springing from their loss of innocence. In the 19th century, museum curators regularly provided their Greek statues with fig leaves, and a good many works in the Papal collections of the Vatican still wear them. Consequently, the fig leaf has become a symbol of Victorian prudery.

First born of Egypt, The slaying of. In the Old Testament, the tenth plague that the Lord inflicted upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians: “And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first born in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the cattle” (Exodus 11:4-6; 12:29-30). The Angel of Death did not strike the firstborn of the Hebrews because Moses had instructed the people “to strike the lintel and the two side posts” of their doors with “a bunch of hyssop” dipped in the blood of a lamb (Exodus 12:21-28). See also: Plagues of Egypt.

Fishers of men. “Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him” (Matthew 4:18-20; repeated in Mark 1:16-18; Luke 5:10; John 1:35-41). “Fishers of men” is a metaphor for “winners of souls.” Since the Roman Pontiff is heir to Saint Peter, the ring used for the investiture of the Pope is called the “fisherman’s ring.”

Flaming sword. After their disobedience, God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, keeping them from the Tree of Life with a flaming sword “which turned every way” (Genesis 3:24). See also: Eden, Garden of.

Fly in the ointment. “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor” (Ecclesiastes 10:1). The proverb now means simply the one drawback in an otherwise satisfactory situation.

Forbidden fruit. Specifically the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which God commanded Adam and Eve never to eat. He expelled them from the Garden of Eden when, heeding the temptation of the snake, they did so anyway (Genesis 3:1-16). By extension, any desired but prohibited object. See also: Eden, Garden of; Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge.

Four Horseman of the Apocalypse. Four riders symbolizing Pestilence, War, Death and Famine (Revelation 6:1-8).

Frankincense, gold and myrrh. See Magi. Gifts presented to the Christ child after he was born and placed in a manger.

Gabriel. One of the archangels and messenger of God. He was the interpreter of Daniel’s vision, and announced the births of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ (Daniel 8:16, 9:21;

Luke 1:19, 26). In Christian eschatology, Gabriel's trumpet will announce the Day of Judgment; in Islamic tradition, Gabriel dictated the Koran to Mohammed.

Gadarene swine. See My Name is Legion. Parable told by Jesus Luke 8: 26-39.

Gehenna. From the Hebrew ge-hinnom, literally, "valley of the son of Hinnom," a valley where bloody sacrifices of children were made by their parents in the worship of the god Moloch; also called Tophet, hence the expression "as hot as Tophet" (II Kings 23:10; Isaiah 30:33; Jeremiah 7:31-32; 19:1-5; 32:35). Today, it signifies hell.

Generation of vipers. "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matthew 3:7; 12:34, 23:33; Luke 3:7). An attack on the Pharisees

Genesis. From the root of the Greek word meaning "to be born." The first book of the Old Testament, it deals with the creation of the world, followed by accounts of Israel's patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. See also: Abraham's Bosom.

Gethsemane. "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder...My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:36-38; Mark 14:32-34; Luke 22:39 ff.) Gethsemane was a garden at the foot of Mount Olivet, about a mile from Jerusalem, where Jesus went to pray on the night of his betrayal. Although he asked his disciples to watch with him, they fell asleep, leaving him alone. Thus Gethsemane now typifies any lonely ordeal or describes any scene of suffering. The incident is also known as "the agony in the garden." See also: Mount of Olives.

Get thee behind me, Satan. "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33). The words of Jesus to Peter, when the latter suggested that Jesus ought not to be crucified. Now a proverbial formula for renouncing a temptation.

Gideon. A man of great religious zeal and military ability, who led the Israelites in their combat against the Midianites and Amalekites (Judges 6-8). The Gideon Society, which places Bibles in hotel rooms, is named after him.

Gifts of the Magi. See Magi. Matthew 2: 1-12

Gird up the loins. "And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab" (I Kings 46; cf. II Kings 4:29; 9:1). A common expression meaning to tighten one's belt in preparation for action.

Gog and Magog. Two nations who will wage war with Satan against the people of God (Revelation 20:8). They signify the coming of the great war of the Apocalypse.

Golden calf. The idol of the golden calf was made from jewelry by Aaron, and worshipped by the Israelites when Moses had gone to Mount Sinai (Exodus 32:1-14). Colloquially, today: money or materialism.

Golden rule. “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” as tradition has paraphrased the original lines in Matthew 7:12, a part of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount.

Goliath. The huge, supposedly invincible warrior who daily came out to challenge any Israelite. David, while still a young shepherd, accepted the challenge and slew Goliath with a stone from his sling (I Samuel 17:23-54).

Good Samaritan. “A certain lawyer...willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering said A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead...But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was...And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him...Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:30-37). The Samaritans were a schismatic Jewish sect who accepted only the Pentateuch as canonical. The rivalry between Samaria and Judea is mentioned in Ezra 4 and Nehemiah 4. In Jesus’ time Jews still regarded Samaritans with contempt (John 4:9, 8, 48, etc.). In choosing a Samaritan as hero of his parable, Jesus intended a rebuke to national pride and religious intolerance. The word now applies to any charitable person, especially one who, like the man in the parable, rescues or helps out a needy stranger.

Good shepherd. The Bible abounds with images of sheep and shepherds, the latter used as metaphors for the Lord (Psalms 23) or for the pastor of a Christian congregation (John 10:1-18). Thus the good shepherd, in the biblical sense, is someone charged with the religious care and guidance of others.

Good tidings of great joy. The news brought to the shepherds in the field by the angel of the Lord, informing them of Christ’s birth (Luke 2:10).

Go and sin no more. When the scribes and Pharisees brought to Christ the woman taken in adultery and asked what to do, Christ replied. “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her...And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one...and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus...saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more” (John 8:9-11). A rebuke to hypocrisy.

Gospel. Literally, “good tidings” or “good news,” from the Anglo-Saxon “godspell,” a translation of the Latin evangelium, which derives from the Greek euangelion (see Evangelist). Refers to the written accounts of the life of Jesus collected in the New

Testament and ascribe to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (known as the four evangelists) (see John, Saint). Also a general term for the teachings of Christ, the Christian revelation. By extension, the word has come to mean an assertion or statement of unimpeachable source or character, as in “the gospel truth,” or a teaching or cause propounded with great fervor.

Greater love hath no man. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). This line is from Jesus’ last address to his disciples, recorded only by John; Jesus continues by explaining, “I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.”

Haman. Angered by the Jew Mordecai’s refusal to bow down before the Persian King Ahasuerus, Haman, the enemy of the Jews, plotted to kill the captive Jews and hang Mordecai. Esther, the Jewish wife of Ahasuerus, frustrated his plan and it was Hamn who was hanged. This episode from the Book of Esther is celebrated at the Jewish festival of Purim. The hamantaschen or triangular filled pastries eaten at the season are “Haman’s purses.”

Hannah. Mother of the prophet Samuel. She was barren until God answered her prayers and gave her a son (I Samuel 1:2).

Heap coals of fire. “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee” (Proverbs 25:21-22). In other words, evil is best overcome by repaying it with goodness. The coals of fire may be understood as the embarrassment and remorse felt by the enemy.

Heaven’s gate. After Jacob awoke from his vision of Jacob’s Ladder, he exclaimed, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:16-17).

Herod Antipas. Pontius Pilate sent Christ before Herod Antipas, who “set him at nought, and mocked him” (Luke 23:7-15). The son of Herod the Great, he served as tetrarch (ruler of one quarter of a Roman province) from 4 B.C to 39 A.D. His marriage to his niece, Herodias, was denounced by John the Baptist, whose beheading was sought by Salome. Herod Antipas was eventually exiled to Gaul in 39 A.D. He is remembered chiefly for the beheading of John the Baptist. See also: Pilate, Pontius.

Herod the Great. Not to be confused with Herod Antipas, he was king of Judea at the time of Christ’s birth; he ordered the Massacre of the Innocents, hoping by killing all male children under two years of age to destroy the “Prince” who was prophesied to take his throne from him. Unjustly suspecting his wife Mariamne of adultery, he ordered her executed. Allusions to Herod (73 B.C – 4 B.C) usually refer to the ferocious cruelty of his slaughtering innocent children. Quick to lash out at what he feared and could not control, he stands as an archetypal tyrant.

He that is without sin. See Cast the First Stone. John 8:7

Hide your light under a bushel. See Light of the World. Matthew 5:15

Hope deferred. “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life” (Proverbs 13:12).

Horsemen of the Apocalypse. “And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer...and there went out another horse that was red: the power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth...And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:2-8). In the apocalyptic vision of Saint John, when the Lamb opens the Book of the Seven Seals, John sees four horsemen symbolic of the last judgment. The rider on the red horse is war and bloodshed; the rider on the black horse represents famine; the rider on the pale horse represents death; the rider on the white horse is probably Christ (cf. Revelation 19:11). See also: Apocalypse, Day of Judgment; John of Patmos.

House divided. “Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matthew 12:25; also Mark 3:25). The words of Jesus, referring to Satan and his kingdom. “House” means a household or family. Abraham Lincoln applied this allusion to the divided condition of the United States, “Half slave and half free,” in a speech delivered in 1858; today Lincoln’s allusion is perhaps even better known than the original use of the phrase in the New Testament.

How are the mighty fallen. “The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places: how are the mighty fallen!” (2 Samuel 1:19). From David’s elegy for Saul and Jonathan, now generally applied in any appropriate context. See also: Tell it not in Gath.

If thy right eye offend thee. “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:29). From the Sermon on the Mount. This text, with its rather ferocious insistence on righteousness, has sometimes been used as an argument for the expulsion of unwanted church members.

I.H.S. Monogram of the name of Jesus, in Greek Iesous. “H” is not the Roman “aitch,” but the capital form of the Greek eta. The mistaken notion that these initials correspond to Roman letters gave rise to the erroneous interpretation that I.H.S. is an acronym for Iesus Hominum Salvator, “Jesus savior of men,” or worse still, “I have suffered.” This monogram often appears on vestments, chalices, altar cloths, and other Christian ceremonial objects.

In the beginning was the Word. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-5). From the Greek logos, “word.” This term has a long history in Greek philosophy. In

Heraclitus, it designates the principle of rational order amid the flux of things. The Stoics saw it as the principle for divine reason, from which all things derive. Philo Judaeus (Jewish theologian and philosopher who lived in Alexandria around the time of Christ) conceived of it as a kind of Demiurge, distinct from God, but the instrument of His creation. John, in this passage from the fourth gospel, corrects Philo by asserting that *logos* is to be identified with God, and further declares (1:14) that the Word has become incarnate in Christ. John is using Greek concepts to reinterpret for his own time the Hebraic belief in a creative God and in the Messiah. This usage is not to be confused with “the word of God,” in the sense of divine revelation, or scripture. See also: John, Saint.

Inherit the wind. “He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind” (Proverbs 11:29; Hosea 8:7). “House” means family, household. To inherit the wind is to cause trouble, to raise a storm.

In the sweat of thy face. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Part of Adam’s punishment for his disobedience to God; ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, men must toil and sweat for their livelihood and for this reason work is sometimes called “Adam’s curse.”

Isaac. The son of Abraham and Sarah, born to them when they were 100 and 91 years respectively. To test Abraham’s faith, God ordered him to sacrifice the boy, and when his readiness to do so was clear, God substituted the traditional ram for the human sacrifice (Genesis 21:1-8; 22:1-14). Isaac was the father of Esau and Jacob by his wife Rebekah.

Isaiah. Hebrew prophet (eighth century B.C.) after whom the biblical Book of Isaiah is named. Isaiah foresaw the destruction of Israel by its enemies, the Assyrians, and warned his people that deliverance depended on their return to proper devotion to Yahweh (God, Jehovah). The later chapters prophesy the destruction of Babylon and the return of the Jews to their homeland. Although the earlier chapters convey a grim message of doom, the Book of Isaiah is often quoted for its prophecy of peace, “and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4). The Christian Gospels draw more heavily from the Book of Isaiah than from any other prophetic text.

Ishmael. The disaffected, meditative narrator of Herman Melville’s (1819-1891) *Moby Dick* (1851), which opens with the famous line, “Call me Ishmael.” Ishmael, who goes to sea whenever life on land makes him restless and disenchanted, signs aboard the Pequod under Ahab and gets swept up in his mad pursuit of the white whale. The name is an allusion to the biblical Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, the maid of Abraham’s wife Sarah. When Sarah bears Abraham a child of her own (Isaac), she asks Abraham to drive Hagar and Ishmael away, and the two wander in the wilderness (Genesis: 11-12; 21; 9-21). Ishmael, which means “God is hearing,” is a prototype of the outlaw or dweller in the wilderness.

Jacob. The patriarch of the book of Genesis whose twelve sons became the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. As a young man, he purchased the birthright of his brother Esau “for

a mess of pottage,” and then with the help of his mother Rebekah he impersonated Esau and obtained the blessing from his aged blind father, Isaac. When traveling to Paden-Aram to escape Esau’s anger, he dreamed of the ladder “set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.” (See Jacob’s Ladder.) Another well-known story of Jacob tells of how, when he was returning home one evening he wrestled with a man until the break of day, not releasing him until he blessed Jacob. The man was an angel of God, who then changed Jacob’s name to Israel. His later life centers on his two sons by his wife Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin (Genesis 24-51).

Jacob’s Ladder. “And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night...And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. And behold the Lord stood above it...And Jacob awakened out of his sleep and said, Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not...and he called the name of that place Bethel” (Genesis 28:10-19). Taken at face value, this story explains the origin of the shrine at Bethel (Hebrew for the house of God), which remained an important cult center until its destruction by King Josiah. Modern scholarship suggests that the place was already an established shrine where visitors who slept in the sacred precincts could consult the oracle in dreams. Jacob’s exclamation, “This is the house of God,” would then indicate the fusion of the local cult with the worship of Jacob’s god, Yahweh. In modern allusion, the ladder from heaven to earth symbolizes the communion of man with the Divine.

Jehosaphat. One of the kings of Judah in the Old Testament, ruled 873-849 B.C. (I Kings 22). Today often used as a mild oath, sometimes in combination with “jumping.”

Jehovah. The word used by Christians for the God of the Old Testament, whose incommunicable name is represented in Hebrew by the letters Y, H, W, H. Called the tetragrammaton, the word is never spoken when the Jews read scripture, but instead pronounced as Adonai or Elohim. The actual pronunciation has been lost, but may have been Yahweh or Yave. In any case, it was not Jehovah.

Jeptha’s daughter. When Jeptha, judge of Israel, led the people against the invading Ammonites, he vowed to sacrifice to God, as the price of victory, the first creature that came to meet him on his return. This proved to be his daughter, his only child, but Jeptha kept his vow, after allowing her two months to go into the mountains to bewail the fact that she was dying a virgin (Judges 11:29-40). The theme of the rash promise is a common one in folklore, often with the detail added that the person making the vow expects to be greeted by his dog. Today, the story is remembered for its tragic quality, recalling the Greek legend of Iphigenia.

Jeremiah. One of the great prophets of the Old Testament, who lived during the time of the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the period of despair that followed. After the temple was destroyed, Jeremiah stressed the individual rather than the nation and saw the source of religion in the human heart. His prophecies are in the Book of Jeremiah, and he is credited as author of the Book of Lamentations.

Jericho. “Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the Children of Israel. See, I have given unto thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor. And ye shall compass the city...And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams’ horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and priests shall blow with the trumpets...So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets...that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city...and they took the city” (Joshua 6:1-20). Jericho lies in the Dead Sea depression below Jerusalem. Archaeological evidence in part confirms and in part modifies the story in Joshua; the city was apparently destroyed not once but twice. The miraculous collapse of the walls of Jericho at the blast of a trumpet is sometimes used to describe a victory won without striking a blow.

Jeroboam. The son of Nebat, Jeroboam was known for his wickedness and idol-worship. He incited the ten tribes to rebel against Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and himself became king of the state that resulted. He is referred to as “a mighty man of valor,” and hence the use of his name to denote a very large bottle or flagon (three liters, to be precise) (I Kings 11, 14).

Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. After Jesus had preached three years in various places in Palestine, he made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem the Sunday before his crucifixion, riding upon an ass. A crowd of worshipers “took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna.” The entry is commemorated as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19.

Jezebel. “And it came to pass, when Joram (Jehoram, son of Ahab) saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many” (II Kings 9:22). Jezebel, the queen of Ahab, king of Israel, was an abomination to Elijah and other worshipers of Yahweh because she imported the worship of Baal into the kingdom of the Israelites. The Jezebel of Revelation (2:20) was a false prophetess in the church of Thyatira who incited the faithful to immortality and to eat food offered to idols. Today, a Jezebel means any loose woman, often in the combination “painted Jezebel,” since cosmetics were at one time regarded as virtually the sign of a prostitute.

Job. The upright, God-fearing, and good man of Uz, who was made to suffer greatly when God tested his faith and loyalty by allowing Satan to have his way with him. Despite his undeserving misfortunes, Job remained steadfast. In the end God restored his substance to him, and granted him happiness and prosperity (Book of Job). Job’s patience in the face of suffering is proverbial.

John the Baptist. The son of the aged Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist preached repentance and prophesied the coming of Christ, and later baptized Him in the river Jordan. Subsequently, John denounced Herod Antipas and was beheaded at the wish of his wife Herodias and her daughter, Salome.

Jonah. Jonah, a minor Jewish prophet, refused to preach to the Ninevites, embarking instead on a ship for Tarshish. A storm arose, and the sailors threw Jonah overboard, knowing him to be the cause of the tempest. He was swallowed by a large fish (traditionally the whale) and spent three days in its belly. It then vomited Jonah out, and he went to preach to the Ninevites although dismayed that God had granted them mercy (Book of Jonah). Jonah is often represented as a bearer of bad luck.

Jonathan. The son of King Saul, famous for his friendship with David (I Samuel 20).

Joseph. The son of Jacob by his wife Rachel. Joseph was favored by Jacob, thus incurring the jealousy of his older brothers. When he was given the “coat of many colors,” they determined to kill him, but, relenting, instead they imprisoned him in a deep well and abandoned him, showing their father the coat stained with blood to deceive him into believing Joseph had been killed by wild animals. They then sold him into slavery in Egypt, where because of his general abilities and especially because of his interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream as the coming of famine, he rose to a very high position. When the famine fell upon the land, Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt begging grain from him. He was at last reconciled with them and returned to his father (Genesis 37-48). He is a model of the powerful person who loyally rescues his own, less privileged people. In addition, the earthly father of Jesus was named Joseph (Luke 2:4; Matthew 1:18; Luke 2: 8-15; Matthew 1:25; Matthew 2:13).

Joseph and Potiphar’s wife. During his stay in Egypt, Joseph became overseer in the house of Potiphar, whose wife attempted to seduce him. The virtuous Joseph resisted, and the angry woman falsely accused Joseph to her husband, causing Joseph’s imprisonment for a time (Genesis 39). Joseph’s name in allusion thus signifies a man of scrupulous virtue in sexual matters.

Joshua. After the death of Moses, the leader of the Israelites during the conquest of the Promised Land. Of his many exploits, popular imagination has fastened chiefly on the conquest of Jericho, where the city walls fell at the blast of a trumpet, and the victory over the Amorites, when Joshua Commands the Sun and the Moon to Stand Still (Joshua 6:1-20; 10:12-14). The Book of Joshua is an idealized account of the conquest, contradicted in many details by the Book of Judges.

Joshua Commands the Sun and the Moon to Stand Still. “Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies” (Joshua 10:2-3). The lines of Joshua’s prayer are quoted from the now vanished Book of Jasher. What was presumably a bit of poetic hyperbole in the original context becomes in the Book of Joshua a prosaic and literal statement of fact which has tested the credulity of the faithful ever since.

Jubilee. The jubilee year was one year after the “space of the seven sabbath of years,” hence the fiftieth year, celebrated in commemoration of the Jews’ liberation from Egypt (Leviticus 25; Luke 4). The jubilee lasted an entire year and during this period Jewish slaves were freed, lands returned to their original owners or his heirs, and all agricultural work was halted. In the Catholic church, it is a year of plenary indulgence, usually occurring every 25 years. In common speech, the celebration of any major anniversary or any time of rejoicing.

Judah. (1) One of the sons of Jacob. (2) One of the twelve tribes, descended from Jacob. (3) After the division of Solomon’s kingdom, the southern portion, with its capital at Jerusalem. Under Roman occupation, the same territory was called Judea. Judah was a common Jewish name, borne by Judas Maccabaeus, the patriot of the second century B.C., by Judas Iscariot, and by Saint Jude, one of the twelve apostles.

Judas Iscariot. One of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, who for thirty pieces of silver betrayed Him, with a kiss of identification, to the priests and elders of Jerusalem. Judas subsequently hanged himself from an elder tree. In common speech, a Judas is anyone who betrays a friend; a hypocrite and traitor. See also: Apostle.

Judge not. “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote of thy brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:1-5). From the Sermon on the Mount; “To see the mote in your brother’s eye” is to criticize the faults of others rather than one’s own. “Judge not, that ye be not judged” is often cited as a reminder of the fallibility of all human decisions.

Judgment day. See Day of the Lord. See Apocalypse. (Matthew 7:13-23; Luke 13: 23-28).

Judgment of Solomon. Two women both claimed to be mothers of a certain child and asked Solomon to decide which one was the real mother. He ordered the child to be cut into two halves, each mother keeping one. One woman agreed to this plan, but the other did not, renouncing her right over the child so that he might live. Solomon promptly identified her as the real mother and awarded her the child (I Kings 3:16-28). An example of Solomon’s proverbial wisdom, as well as a radical method of meting out justice. See also: Solomon’s Judgment.

Kill the fatted calf. See Prodigal Son. Luke 15:11-32

King of Kings. As used in scripture, this expression refers to God; but it is often used secularly for any very powerful king. Also used in “Ozymandias” by Shelley. I Timothy 6:15

Know them by their fruits. “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt

tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-20). A warning against false prophets; from the Sermon on the Mount.

Laban. In the Old Testament, he is the uncle of Jacob and father of Leah and Rachel. Jacob served Laban for 14 years before he was allowed to marry Rachel. Genesis chapters 29-31

A Lamb to the slaughter. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7). In the Acts of the Apostles (8:32): "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer." Isaiah's prophecy alludes to the Suffering Servant, and is understood by Jews to refer to Israel. Philip applies it to Christ (Acts 8). In allusion, signifies the sacrifice of a powerless, innocent soul. See also: Man of Sorrows, for complete Biblical passage.

Land flowing with milk and honey. "I am come..to bring them...unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of Canaanites" (Exodus 3:8, cf. II Esdras 2:19). Canaan, a land rich enough to support herds of cattle and swarms of bees, would have seemed like paradise to the desert-dwelling Israelites; now applied to any fertile land.

Land of Goshen. The fertile land allotted to the Israelites in Egypt. It remained untouched by the plagues (see Ten Plagues) God visited on Egypt for its enslavement of the Israelites. Hence, any land of plenty, a place of peace and freedom from fear and evil (Genesis 14:10).

Land of Nod. The place East of Eden where Cain lived after being banished by the Lord, following the murder of his brother Abel (Genesis 4). Nod here means "wandering," though most writers mistakenly construe it as the "land of sleepiness." See also: Cain and Abel.

The last shall be first and the first last. "The last shall be first, and the first last, for many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16). Additionally, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all" (Mark 9:35). The first quotation is a prophecy of the Kingdom of Heaven; the second is an injunction to humility.

Last Supper. "The Lord Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (I Corinthians 11:23-25; also Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; John 13:1). Scholars disagree as to what kind of ceremony (in Jewish terms) is here being described. Matthew (26:17), Mark (14:12) and Luke (22:7) state that it was a Passover meal, or seder; John places the meal before the Passover (13:1). Whatever the origin, a reenactment of this meal is the most solemn rite of virtually every branch of Christianity, though again, there is no agreement as to its nature. "Last Supper" is not a liturgical term but a historical one, referring to the meal with the disciples at which Jesus presided before his crucifixion or to its representation in art, most notably in the famous mural (1495-98) by Leonardo da Vinci.

Lazarus. A brother of Mary and Martha, and also a friend of Jesus. He died and lay in the grave four days, and when Jesus came he “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth,” and Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11:1-44). One of the most important miracles performed by Christ. The name in allusion signifies the miracle of resurrection.

Leopard change his spots. When the people doubted Jeremiah’s prophecies of future destruction, he replied, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil” (Jeremiah 13:23). In modern idiom, you can’t change human nature.

Let my people go. “And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go...And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2). Black American slaves in the 19th century incorporated this verse into their spirituals.

Leviathan. “Canst thou draw out Leviathan with a hook?” (Job 41:1; see also Psalms 74:14; 104:26; Isaiah 27:1). There are many references in the Bible to a victory of God over a sea monster, variously called Leviathan, Rahab, Tannin, the Serpent, or simply the Sea. These allusions are relics of an ancient and widely diffused myth, found in Canaanite and Babylonian literature, in which the Creator conquers a dragon or monster representing chaos. Modern Biblical scholars have speculated that the Leviathan may have been a whale or crocodile. Now the word is applied to anything immense or monstrous.

Leviticus. The third book of the Old Testament. It contains the fundamentals of Jewish law and religious ceremonial following the rebuilding of the temple about 516 B.C.

Light of the world. “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16). From the Sermon on the Mount; Jesus here exhorts his disciples. In general parlance to hide one’s light under a bushel (i.e., a bushel basket) is to conceal one’s virtues in too modest a fashion. In other contexts the phrase “light of the world” refers to Christ himself (John 8:12).

Lilies of the field. “And why take thee thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Matthew 6:28-29). Christ’s words, from the Sermon on the Mount, suggest that things of the spirit are superior to any material object of this world.

Lion lie down with the lamb. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6). A prophecy of the Messianic kingdom under the rule of a descendant of Jesse (the father of King David); nature will be transformed that even wild animals will be friends. Thus, the phrase describes a future of ideal peace. In

popular allusion, usually on the lion and the lamb, and sometimes the child, are remembered. See also: Messiah.

Little child shall lead them. See Lion lie down with the lamb. Isaiah 11:6

Loaves and fishes. When a great multitude followed Jesus into the desert and it came time to eat, Jesus took “five loaves and two fishes,” blessed the food and gave it out to be eaten, and miraculously all were filled (Matthew 14:15-21; John 6:5-14).

Lot. The son of Haran and nephew of Abraham. He was one of the inhabitants of the iniquitous city of Sodom, and escaped just before God destroyed it with fire and brimstone. Lot was instructed to take his family and not look back at the burning city; his wife, however, disobeyed, presumably out of a longing for the depravities of Sodom, and was turned into a pillar of salt. Bizarre salt formations in the Dead Sea area are still pointed out to travelers as Lot’s wife. Therefore, Lot lived in a cave with his two daughters, who seduced their father because there were no other men on earth (Genesis 19). See also: Sodom and Gomorrah.

Love thy neighbor as thyself. God commanded through Moses and Jesus that “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19). The phrase is commonly used today as a precept for the brotherhood of man and is an injunction to be charitable. See also: Sermon on the Mount.

Love your enemies. “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:44-45). From the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is contrasting the old morality of retaliation with the new morality of forgiveness.

Lucifer. One of the greatest of the angels. His name means “the maker of light.” Rebellious against God, he was hurled from heaven down to hell, where he became Satan, the Devil and incarnation of evil. Reference is made to the event in the Old Testament Book of Isaiah. Milton elaborated the legend in *Paradise Lost*.

Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was the repentant sinner who wept when Jesus was eating in the house of the Pharisee. She washed his feet with her tears, drying them with her hair. She appears also at the Crucifixion (Matthew 27; Mark 16; Luke 7). The word “maudlin” derives from her name; in paintings she is frequently depicted weeping.

Magi. The three Wise Men of the East who journeyed to Bethlehem at the birth of Christ in order to present him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. A magus (pl. magi) is literally a wise man or a magician. The identification of the magi as kings has no basis in the Gospels; it rests on the prophecy in Isaiah (60:3). Later tradition call them Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar.

Mammon. Material wealth. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters...Ye cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:9, 11, 13). Thus mammon has come to signify a personification of worldly riches or an evil god of wealth.

Manna from heaven. “And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost upon the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was” (Exodus 16:14-15). The food with which the Israelites were nourished in their wanderings has been identified with the secretion of the tamarisk tree; in the New Testament it becomes a symbol of divine blessing. Today any unexpected and welcome gift or find may be described as manna.

Man of sorrows. “He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:3-7). Probably every line of this passage is equally as memorable and familiar. It is the prophecy of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, written not by the eighth century B.C. prophet of that name, but by an anonymous author, probably living in Babylonia in the sixth century. It is understood by Jews to refer to Israel, and Christians as a prophecy of the coming of Christ, who suffered for the sins of all mankind. These words are used in the liturgy for Good Friday. See also: Messiah.

Mark of Cain. After God banished Cain for killing his brother Abel (see Cain and Abel), Cain cried unto the Lord, “That everyone that findeth me shall slay me.” The compassionate Lord said, “Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain lest any finding him should kill him” (Genesis 4:15). Though the mark of Cain, commonly called the curse or brand of Cain, was a mark of protection, it has come to mean a mark of punishment, generally conceived as a crimson brand on Cain’s brow.

Mary, Mother of Jesus. The pure and virtuous virgin (also known as the Virgin Mary or the Blessed Virgin), who was visited by the Holy Ghost and conceived Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). Subsequently she was married to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25), with whom she had several other children (Matthew 13:55). She bore the Christchild in a Bethlehem manger (Luke 2:1-20), fled with Joseph to Egypt to escape the Massacre of the Innocents (Matthew 2) and sought him when, as a boy, he remained in the temple speaking with the priests (Luke 2:41-51). She was rebuked by her son at the marriage at Cana (John 2:1-5) and was present at his Crucifixion (John 19:25-27). She is foremost of the Christian saints, beloved for her purity, patience and sympathy for human suffering. See also: Joseph, Saint.

Massacre of the Innocents. When Herod the Great heard that a child had been born in Judea who would someday be a great king over him, he determined to kill the child. As he could not learn who he was, he ordered his soldiers to massacre all male children below a certain age (Matthew 2:1-16). Mary and Joseph saved the infant Jesus by fleeing with him to Egypt. See also: Mary, Mother of Jesus.

Messiah. From the Hebrew *mashiah*, meaning anointed. The ancients used anointing with oil as a sign that priests, prophets and kings were chosen by God for their office; thus Samuel anointed Saul and David as kings over Israel. This custom still survives in the chrism used in coronations and at baptisms and confirmations in certain Christian sects. After the extinction of the kingdom of Judah, the term came to be applied to the hoped-for prince who would restore the Davidic kingdom. At first, the messiah was conceived as an ordinary ruler, and Isaiah even applied the term to Cyrus of Persia (Isaiah 45:1). When the political leader did not appear, the messiah was conceived more and more in transcendent, supernatural terms, as a heavenly savior. In the Gospels, the messiah is commonly called the Son of Man, and the distinctive claim of Christianity is that the messianic expectation was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. The name Christ is simply "messiah" translated into Greek; it is a past participle derived from *chrisma*, meaning "oil." Jesus is therefore commonly called "the Christ," and the form "Jesus Christ" (as if Christ were a proper name) is a later development. The messianic hope continued to flourish in Judaism, producing self-proclaimed messiahs from the time of Bar Kochba (second century A.D.) to Shabbetai Zevi (17th century) and Jacob Frank (18th century). Certain Moslem sects also believe in a messiah, called the mahdi.

Methuselah. The oldest of the Biblical patriarchs, who lived 969 years (Genesis 5:27). Now proverbial for longevity.

Miriam. The elder sister of Moses and Aaron and prophetess of the people. After the Israelites passed through the Red Sea, she led them in music and dance to celebrate the event (Exodus 15:20-21).

Mohammed (or Muhammad, Mahomet, Mahmud, Mehmed). Founder and prophet of the religion of Islam. The central profession of the Islamic faith is "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God." The revelations which Mohammed (c. 570-632 A.D.) believed he received directly from God were subsequently collected in the Koran (or Qur'an), the sacred scriptures of Islam.

Moloch. The brutal god to whom parents sacrificed their children in the Valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem. In the Bible, the Jews are expressly forbidden to offer any sacrifices to Moloch (Leviticus 18:21). By extension, any power to whom awful sacrifice is rendered.

Moses. The principal Old Testament prophet; liberator of the Israelites from captivity in Egypt. Because Pharaoh had ordered all Jewish male children to be killed, Moses' mother placed him in a basket of rushes beside the river, where Pharaoh's daughter found and adopted him. As a grown man, he killed an Egyptian overseer for beating a Hebrew and was obliged to flee to Midian, where he married the daughter of Jethro, a local priest. In Midian, the god of his fathers revealed himself to Moses, commanding him to liberate the Jews.

Accompanied by his brother Aaron, and strengthened with miraculous powers, he confronted Pharaoh, caused ten plagues to descend on Egypt (see Plagues of Egypt), organized his people, and led them out of Egypt through the Red Sea, which the Lord opened, for the Jews, and closed on the pursuing Egyptians. For 40 years the Israelites wandered under Moses' leadership through the Sinai desert. Here the Lord delivered through Moses the Ten Commandments and the extensive system of law and ritual observances, recorded in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), which is still the foundation of traditional Judaism. Moses never accompanied his people into Canaan, the land which God had promised them, but was allowed a glimpse of it from Mount Pisgah shortly before his death. See also: Exodus; Promised Land.

Mount of Olives. Just east of the old city of Jerusalem, this hill or ridge is an important holy place in the Bible. In Jewish tradition the messianic era (see Messiah) will commence there. In Christian tradition, it was the site of the Sermon on the Mount and of the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed just before he was betrayed by Judas Iscariot.

Mount Pisgah (or Nebo). Moses climbed to the top of Mount Pisgah, northeast of the Red Sea, to see the Promised Land of Canaan, which he was forbidden by God to enter (Deuteronomy 34:1). He died shortly thereafter. A reference to Mount Pisgah suggests hope for, or insight into, the future.

Mount Sinai (or Horeb). Renowned as the site where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and the covenant between God and the Hebrews was forged.

My God, why hast thou forsaken me? "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani? That is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46; also Mark 15:34). These words of Jesus on the cross are a quotation from Psalms (22), and although they appear to be a cry of despair, they should be read in the context of the entire psalm, which ends on a note of praise and confidence. See also: Seven Last Words.

My name is legion. "And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many" (Mark 5:9). Jesus, on a preaching tour of the territory of the Gadarenes, encountered a man possessed by a demon. When Jesus adjured the demon to leave, and asked his name, the demon replied through the lips of the man in the words quoted above: My name is Legion. Since a Roman legion consisted of four to six thousand men, a very large number is implied. After leaving their victim, the demons entered a herd of swine, who thereupon rushed madly into the water and were drowned. In modern allusion, "Their name is legion" means simply, "they are many;" it is generally used in an unfavorable sense.

Naboth's vineyard. A vineyard in Jezereel near the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria, who vainly coveted it. Jezebel, wife of Ahab, brought about the death of Naboth, the vineyard's owner, on a false charge. Elijah punished Ahab for the crime; Jezebel was later devoured by dogs (I Kings 21). A "Naboth's vineyard" is any object coveted by another, or a possession to be secured at any cost.

Naomi. The mother-in-law of Ruth. See *Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go*. Ruth 1

Nebuchadnezzar (or Nabuchadnezzar). The king of Babylon from 605 to 562 B.C.; he destroyed the temple at Jerusalem and brought the Jewish people to Babylon and into captivity (see *Babylonian Captivity*). Notorious for his wickedness, he set up a huge “image of gold” in Babylon and commanded all to worship it or be thrown into a fiery furnace (see *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*). Insanity was the king’s punishment for his arrogance. He lived out his life grazing in the field like an animal. Nebuchadnezzar’s name suggests the humiliation that comes to the mighty when they overreach themselves in their wickedness.

New Jerusalem. “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). Thus Saint John (see *John, Saint*) describes his vision of the Christian Paradise. New Jerusalem is the equivalent of heaven, the Celestial City, where God resides with the Christian saints.

New wine into old bottles. “No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment...Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved” (Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 3:21-22; Luke 5:36-37). Jesus is advising his followers that the new spiritual order he is teaching requires new practices. The wine and the bottles metaphorically represent the content and form of institutions or doctrines.

Noah. The Biblical patriarch who was warned by God of the coming flood and who built the ark which was to carry male and female of every species until the waters receded and they could replenish the earth (Genesis 6). Similar stories were told in Babylonia of Utnapishtim, in Greece of Deucalion, and in India of Manu.

Not by bread alone. “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; cf. Deuteronomy 8:3). The phrase “not by bread alone” is still used as a rebuke against materialistic values.

Not peace but a sword. “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace on earth; but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Matthew 10:34-35; cf. Luke 12:51-53). These uncompromising words of Jesus are some source of embarrassment to pacifists; read in context, however, they suggest that Jesus was referring to the conflict between loyalty to the messianic kingdom and loyalty to the family. The sword should probably be understood metaphorically.

Olive branch. “And he (Noah) stayed yet the other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from the earth” (Genesis 8:10-11). In Genesis, the olive leaf is an indication of the extent to which the flood waters have receded, for the olive does not grow at high altitudes. The abating of the flood was a sign of the abating of God’s wrath (8:21-22), and so the dove was the herald of reconciliation between God and man. Although

the later association of the dove and olive branch with peace is not fully supported by the text, this is the most common significance now. In modern usage, a dove is one who advocates a non-belligerent foreign policy, and to extend the olive branch is to make an offer of peace. See also: Dove of Noah.

The parable of the sower. “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way...” (Matthew 13:24ff.). The point of the parable is that God allows good and evil (wheat and tares) to exist together until the Last Judgment.

Parable of the talents. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) tells of a certain man who went on a journey, leaving his money with his servants. Two of them invested their sums with bankers, and received interest equal to their deposits. The third was cautious and hid his sum in the ground, returning it intact. The master on his return praised the first two with the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”; he berated the third. A talent was a measure of weight, differing in amount from place to place. In Jesus’ time a talent of silver would have been worth several thousand dollars by modern reckoning. The modern meaning of talent, a native ability which should be improved or cultivated, derives from this parable. The parable illustrates the reckoning which all men will be called to make at the Last Judgment.

Paradise. From *paradeisos*, a Greek word of Persian origin meaning a garden or park. In the Septuagint (the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament), it is applied to the Garden of Eden (see Eden, Garden of). In the New Testament the word is synonymous with “heaven,” since in heaven, the second Eden, man is restored to the state of happiness he forfeited in the first. The final section of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, in which the poet attains the realm of heaven, is called *Paradiso*. The modern usage of the word has weakened to mean any extremely pleasant place. See also: Earthly Paradise.

Pater noster. In Latin, “Our Father,” the opening words of the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9); also written as one word when it refers to the passage.

Patience of Job. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job” (James 5:11). Job’s proverbial patience appears only in chapters one and two of the Book of Job; elsewhere he appears angry and rebellious.

Paul, Saint. Early Christian missionary and theologian, known as “Apostle of the Gentiles” (see Apostle), perhaps the most important figure in spreading the message of Christ to the world. Born to Jewish parents in Tarsus, Paul (his Hebrew name was Saul) was a prominent Pharisee who converted to Christianity after a vision of Christ risen came to him on the road to Damascus. Paul traveled through the Roman world preaching and converting people to the new World of Christ. His letters (gathered in the New Testament as the Epistles of Paul) are the earliest New Testament writings. Allusions to Saul on the road to Damascus refer to a sudden revelation or conversion.

Pearl of great price. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:45-46). A metaphor for the ultimate value of the spiritual realm, its meaning has been diluted to mean almost anything or anyone of great importance. This idea is alluded to in John Steinbeck’s novella *The Pearl*.

Pearls before swine. “Give not that which is hoy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6). Cast pearls before swine means to lavish good things on those who cannot appreciate them.

Pearly gates. “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every single gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Revelation 21:21-22). John’s picture of the New Jerusalem has passed into the popular imagination, so that any allusion to pearly gates or streets of gold is understood as referring to Heaven.

Pentateuch. From the Greek penta, “five” and teuchos, “book.” The first five books of the Torah or Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are the books traditionally ascribed to Moses, the recipient of God’s first revelation to the Jews on Mount Sinai.

Pharisees. An ancient Jewish sect composed of students, teachers and scholars who advocated strict observance of the forms of religion, and who were accused by Christ of emphasizing outer forms over the true and inner religious reality. Hence they are associated with hidebound traditionalism, hypocrisy and fulsome self-righteousness. See Matthew 3, 23; Luke 18. They were opposed by the Sadducee sect.

Philistine. An uncultured, narrow person capable only of hackneyed ideas and materialistic values, usually associated with the bourgeois of the 19th century. Matthew Arnold established this connotation of the term, adapting it from the Biblical context in which the Philistines were the traditional enemies of the Jews against whom David, Samson and other Jewish heroes waged war (Genesis 21, 34; Judges 16).

Pilate, Pontius. The Roman governor in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion of Christ. He is said to have found Christ innocent of the charges brought against him by the Jews, but bowed to their desire to crucify him, and symbolically “washed his hands” of Christ’s blood. Pilate is an archetypal self-deceiver and hypocrite, and to “wash one’s hands” of a matter means to refuse to take responsibility for one’s own actions, especially wrongful actions.

Plagues of Egypt. The ten plagues that afflicted the Egyptians (Exodus 7-12) were acts in a mighty struggle between God and Pharaoh, culminating in the Passover, the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, and destruction of Pharaoh’s army. The plagues were: (1) the turning of the Nile to blood; (2) frogs; (3) lice; (4) flies; (5) death of cattle; (6) boils; (7) hail; (8) locusts; (9) darkness; and (10) the death of the Egyptian firstborn. As a result of these

plagues, Pharaoh, whose heart had been “hardened – and he refuseth to let the people (Israelites) go,” freed the Israelites from bondage (Exodus 7-12). See also: Moses.

Potter’s field. There are two accounts of the potter’s field. In the Acts of the Apostles it is stated that Judas bought a field with the reward for his betrayal of Jesus. Falling into it, he burst and died, turning it into an “Aceldama,” or “field of blood.” Thus “Aceldama” now means battlefield, or any place where blood is shed (Acts 1:18-19). Matthew records that Judas, before hanging himself, returned the 30 pieces of silver to the priests who had paid him for betraying Jesus. Since the money, being polluted, could not be put into the Temple treasure, the priests bought with it a potter’s field, to be used as a cemetery for foreigners. This came to be known as the Field of Blood in allusion to the blood money (Matthew 27:3-10). Today a potter’s field is a burial place for the poor.

Powers that be. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13:1). The “powers that be” are the existing governing authorities. Paul’s acceptance of civil authority is often cited to show that Christianity tends to perpetuate the status quo, socially and politically. In 20th century America, the phrase “powers that be” always carries a hint of sarcasm.

Pride goeth before a fall. “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). In popular quotation, the proverb is always abbreviated. The notion that God punishes men for their pride is common in the Bible, and appears in such stories as the Tower of Babel, the Plagues of Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar.

Prodigal Son. In this parable of Jesus, a young man took the goods that his father had set aside for him, traveled “into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living...And when he came to himself, he said...I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father...But the father said to his servants...Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:17-24). “Prodigal” means “lavish, spendthrift.” “A prodigal,” a wayward child who repents and returns to his family, takes its meaning from this parable. “To kill the fatted calf” is now a proverbial expression for any lavish welcome.

Promised Land. “And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land” (Genesis 12:7). God’s promise of Canaan to Abraham (later extended to include everything between the Nile and the Euphrates, cf. Genesis 15:18) is renewed when the land is reconquered by Joshua and again in the restoration after the Babylonian captivity; it is one of the most persistent themes in the Old Testament. In Protestant hymns, the promised land sometimes means heaven.

A prophet is not without honor. “And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house” (Matthew 13:57; see also Mark 6:3-4; Luke 4:24; John 4:44), Jesus’ comment after being

unfavorably received in his home village of Nazareth. Modern usage applies to anyone not respected or honored in his own country.

Proverbs. A collection of sententious, wise sayings appearing in the 20th book of the Old Testament. In secular usage, a proverb is a pithy saying that expresses some commonplace or accepted truth.

Psalms. The 19th book of the Old Testament. It contains 150 hymns (songs to God). David, called the “sweet psalmist of Israel” (II Samuel 23:1), is said to have written many of them.

Quick and the dead. “From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead” (Apostles’ Creed; also Acts 10:42; II Timothy 4:1; I Peter 4:5). “Quick” is here used in the archaic sense of “living.”

Race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all” (Ecclesiastes 9:11). A biblical reminder that human events do not always turn out in the way men expect them to.

Rachel. The daughter of Laban and second wife of Jacob, who bore him two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, dying in childbirth with Benjamin. Genesis 30

Rain on the just and the unjust. See Love Your Enemies. Matthew 5:45

Render unto Caesar. “Then saith he unto them Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:15-20; also Mark 12:17; Luke 20:21-25). A group of Pharisees, attempting to trap Jesus in a damaging statement, asks him if it is lawful to pay tribute money to Rome. If Jesus says it is not lawful, he will offend the Roman rulers, and if he answers to the contrary, he will offend the Jewish patriots. He evades the dilemma by pointing out that the money bears Caesar’s likeness and superscription, and that it is not wrong to pay the state in its own coin. The answer thus distinguishes between the claims of the sacred and the secular spheres, and is still quoted in discussions of the relation of church and state.

Rivers of Babylon. Psalm 137, to commemorate the exile of the Jews in Babylon, begins, “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.” The phrase is often alluded to by those mourning for the dead or for the destruction of something passionately valued. Stephen Vincent Benet titled one of his short stories “By the Waters of Babylon” in reference to this idea.

Road to Damascus. Saul, the Hebrew name of Paul (see Paul, Saint), the Apostle of the Gentiles, is on the road to Damascus to find followers of Jesus and to return them bound in chains to Jerusalem when “...suddenly there shine round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul why persecutest thee me?...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” Saul experienced immediate conversion “and straightway he preached Christ in

the synagogue, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-22; 26:1-23). Thus, anyone said to be on the road to Damascus is on the way to conversion of some kind, to some cause or belief.

Rose of Sharon. In the "Song of Solomon," (see Song of Songs) the bride sings of herself as "the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys" (Song of Solomon 2). Sharon was the name of a fertile plain along the coast of ancient Palestine.

Ruth. In the Old Testament, she is a Moabite widow. After her husband dies, she refuses to leave her mother-in-law, saying to her: "Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee; whither thou goest, I will go; and where thy lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:15). Ruth is the epitome of devotion and loyalty.

Sackcloth and ashes. "They would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matthew 11:21; Luke 10:13; Jonah 3:6; Esther 4:1, 3). To wear sackcloth and ashes was a traditional sign of grief and repentance; the expression is used literally in the Bible, metaphorically today.

Salome. The stepdaughter of Herod Antipas and daughter of his wife, Herodias, who in return for dancing before Herod demanded the head of John the Baptist (Matthew 14; Mark 6). Synonymous with a treacherous siren.

Salt of the earth. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13). Salt is a preservative of food, and hence a symbol of incorruption. The coarse salt of Jesus' time contained a large proportion of mineral impurities; if exposed to the weather the solutes would leach out, leaving a tasteless residue ("lose its savor"). In modern usage, to call someone the salt of the earth is an ambiguous compliment; it implies that he is eminently virtuous but possibly a bit unexciting.

Samson and Delilah. "And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightiest be bound to afflict thee" (Judges 16:6). Samson, a judge of ancient Israel renowned for his great strength, was the Hebrew counterpart of Hercules (see Heracles); as a common noun a Samson now means any strong man. Delilah, who robs Samson of his strength by cutting his hair, has come to typify any seductress who brings ruin upon her lovers.

Samuel. Jewish religious leader of the 11th century B.C. whose life and deeds are told in the two Old Testament books of Samuel. He anointed Saul and David, the first kings of Israel. I Samuel 3

Sarah (or Sarai). In the Old Testament, Abraham's wife and Isaac's mother. Childless, she prayed to God for a child. God promised her that in her old age, she would bear a child to Abraham. The child's name was Isaac. Genesis 17:15

Satan. The name of the Devil, meaning the "hater" or the "accuser," often characterized also as "the adversary." The word "devil" is from the Greek "diabolos," which has the same meaning. In the oldest portions of the Bible, Satan is not mentioned. In Job, he appears as a tempter and accuser whose powers are strictly limited by God and who functions only with God's permission. In the intertestamental period, under the influence of Jewish apocalypticism, and perhaps also of Persian

dualism, Satan is conceived as a major power opposed to God and second only to him. In the Gospels, all the kingdoms of the world are in his power (Luke 4:6). In Revelation, his eventual overthrow is prophesied (Revelation 20:10).

Saul. (1) The son of Kish and the first king of the Jews, anointed by Samuel, leader of successful wars against the Philistines. Saul was a melancholy and jealous man, often in conflict with David, Samuel and Jonathan, his son. Following a defeat by the Philistines, he committed suicide with his own sword (I Samuel). (2) The Hebrew name of the Apostle Paul (see Paul, Saint).

Second Coming. In Revelation (see Apocalypse), Saint John foresees the return of Christ in his glory. At the Second Coming will occur the Last Judgment (see Day of Judgment) in which Christ will resurrect the dead and reward the just with everlasting bliss in heaven and the sinners with eternal damnation in hell. The Second Coming is also associated with the Millennium, the thousand-year period of Christ's kingdom of peace and prosperity on earth. Some believe the Second Coming will occur at the end of the Millennium, others that the Second Coming will begin the Millennium. See also: John, Saint.

Seek and ye shall find. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7; cf. Luke 11:9). An encouragement to prayer.

See through a glass darkly. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (I Corinthians 13:12). Through a glass: in a mirror (mirrors then were not well polished, and gave a poor reflection). Paul (see Paul, Saint) is contrasting our present imperfect knowledge with the fullness of knowledge which man will ultimately enjoy when God's purpose is revealed. In allusion, the phrase is used to contrast the limitations of the senses with the higher truth of spiritual perception.

Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is not connected discourse so much as an anthology of sayings of Jesus. The Sermon opens with the so-called Beatitudes, Jesus' singling out of those who are blessed, beginning with "Blessed are the poor in spirit." A comparison with the Gospel of Luke (see Luke, Saint) suggests that these were originally delivered on a number of separate occasions. The scene of the sermon is not specified; Matthew may have located it on a mountain to suggest a parallel to the delivery of the old Law on Mount Sinai. The Sermon on the Mount sets forth a new law of love, extending even to one's enemies, and thus marks a clear departure from the Old Testament law of retribution.

Serve two masters. See Mammon. Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13

Seven Deadly Sins. Pride, Lust, Avarice, Gluttony, Envy, Wrath and Sloth. The list is not Biblical, but derived from patristic literature.

Seven Last Words. The Seven Last Words of Jesus upon the cross are not single words, but the seven last sentences he uttered, compiled from all the Gospels. They are used devotionally in meditations upon the Passion, and have been set to music by Schutz, Haydn and Gounod. The Seven Words are as follows: (1) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke

23:34); (2) "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43); (3) "Woman, behold thy son. Behold thy mother" (John 19:26-27); (4) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46); (5) "I thirst" (John 14:28); (6) "It is finished" (John 19:30); and (7) "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). See also: Father Forgive Them and My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the golden idol, King Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into a fiery furnace, from which they were rescued by the Lord (Daniel 3). They are remembered in allusion for the miracle of their emerging from the fiery furnace unscathed, while the servants who threw them in perished from the heat. Allusions to the Biblical fiery furnace signify a punishment that harms those who attempt to enforce it instead of its intended victims.

Sheba, Queen of. The "queen of the South," the kingdom of Sheba in southwestern Arabia, who came to King Solomon in order to challenge his wisdom, and found him more than equal to her own abilities (I Kings 10; II Chronicles 9).

Shibboleth. A peculiarity (of behavior, dress, speech, etc.) which distinguishes a particular group or class of people. Or a magic charm or a password used to test someone's identity. The victorious Gileadites required those Ephraimites who had escaped battle and tried to cross the Jordan again to pronounce the word "Shibboleth" when they denied their identity; unable to say "sh," the Ephraimites pronounced it incorrectly as "Sibboleth" and were killed. The word literally means "stream in flood" (Judges 12).

Silver cord be loosed. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not...Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:1, 6-7). The destruction of the cord, bowl, pitcher and wheel are all symbols of death. Commentators disagree as to whether this passage contains four images, two, or one. One reading suggests that the bowl and cord are a lamp suspended by a chain, and when the chain is broken, the lamp falls and the light goes out. Similarly, the pitcher and wheel are the bucket and windlass in a well. Thus this passage is organized around two familiar symbols of life: light and water. Henry James used the image of the broken golden bowl as the title and central symbol in his novel *The Golden Bowl* (1904).

Sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. "Come now, And let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). A promise of God's forgiveness of the errors and crimes of mankind.

Sodom and Gomorrah. "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners" (Genesis 13:13). Sodom and Gomorrah were cities traditionally located near the south end of the Dead Sea (hence the phrase, "cities of the plain"), which God destroyed for the corruption and wickedness of their inhabitants. The full story of Sodom, where Lot and his family lived, is told in Genesis (18:16-29). The cities are repeatedly mentioned in the Bible as a warning

against wickedness. The word sodomy (anal intercourse) derives from Sodom, where it was among the sins for which the city was destroyed. Sodom and Gomorrah remain bywords for depravity.

Song of Songs. The Song of Solomon, also called The Song of Songs, and in Roman Catholic usage, Canticles, is a book of the Bible, traditionally ascribed to Solomon, but probably of later composition. It is a love idyll, possibly a wedding liturgy, which has been allegorically interpreted by Jews as expressing the love of God for Israel, and by Christians, the love of Christ for the Church.

The spirit is willing. “The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 24:41; cf. Mark 14:30). These words of Jesus to his disciples were meant as a warning against succumbing to temptation; today they are commonly quoted as an apology for having yielded.

Still small voice. “And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice...and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?” (I Kings 19:11-13). The still small voice came to Elijah on Mount Horeb (see Mount Sinai), telling him to anoint the kings of Syria and Israel, and to make Elisha his successor. In modern parlance the still small voice usually means the conscience, with the further implication that God speaks to men inwardly, and not by noisy, spectacular convulsions.

Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel” (Matthew 23:24). Small insects which had fallen into a drinking cup would have to be strained out. This verse, in which Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their emphasis on outer forms, is an extravagant metaphor meaning, “You quibble about trifles but ignore the really important issues.”

Strait is the gate and narrow is the way. “Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). From the Sermon on the Mount; strait means “narrow.” Straying from the strait and narrow path is now a euphemism for any kind of wrongdoing.

Suffer little children. “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). The disciples reproved the people for bringing their children to Jesus for a blessing, but Jesus insisted that the children be permitted to be brought. Further, Christ identifies the innocence of children with the innocence the soul regains in “the kingdom of heaven.”

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, encouraging his followers to trust in divine Providence, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the

morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:33-34).

Sword into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against a nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3). This oracle, predicting a restoration of Zion and a reign of peace is ascribed both to Isaiah and his younger contemporary, Micah. It is frequently cited in prayers for peace.

Talmud. The traditional body of Jewish law, consisting of the Mishnah, which contains the obligatory precepts of the elders and is a supplement to the Pentateuch and the Gemara, which comments on the contents of the Mishnah. Its codification was completed by the end of the fifth century A.D.

Ten Commandments, The. Atop Mount Sinai in the Holy Land, God inscribed on two tablets of stone for Moses the 10 Hebrew words that are the Ten Commandments. These commandments, given in Exodus (20:1-17), form the basis of Jewish law and morality.

- 1 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- 2 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- 3 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 4 Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God is giveth thee.
- 5 Thou shalt not kill.
- 6 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 7 Thou shalt not steal.
- 8 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- 9 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.
- 10 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

Ten Plagues, The. See Plagues of Egypt. Exodus, chapters 7-12.

They toil not, neither do they spin. See Lilies of the Field. Matthew 6:28; Luke 12:27

Thief in the night. Addressing the Thessalonians, Paul (see Paul, Saint) said: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write to you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:1-11). The reference here is to the suddenness and surprise of Jesus' coming, not the time of day or night.

Thirty pieces of silver. As set forth in the New Testament, Judas Iscariot, disciple and betrayer of Jesus, "went unto the chief priests and said unto them, What will ye give me and

I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.” After the betrayal, Judas repented, and “cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matthew 26:15; 27:3-5). Thirty pieces of silver has become the symbol of the price paid for betrayal.

Thorn in the flesh. “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me” (II Corinthians 12:7). Saint Paul (see Paul, Saint) adds that he “besought the Lord thrice” to have his infirmity removed, but was told to rely instead on divine grace to endure it. It is not clear what troubled Paul; various chronic illnesses, both organic and psychosomatic, have been suggested. In common parlance, a thorn in the flesh is any chronic vexation that hampers the sufferer without completely disabling him.

Torah. The scriptural writings of the Jews containing the word and revelation of God; sometimes, the Pentateuch alone, sometimes the entire Old Testament and sometimes the Old Testament and the Talmud.

Treasure in heaven. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). From the Sermon on the Mount. Thus “treasure in heaven,” when used as an allusion, refers to the enduring value of spiritual wealth.

Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge. “And out of the ground made the Lord God, to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil...” (Genesis 2:9). The tree of life was believed to confer immortality, and the tree of knowledge, wisdom. Modern allusions to eating from the tree of knowledge usually carry the implication that knowledge can be acquired only at the cost of a tragic loss of innocence.

The truth shall make you free. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free: (John 8:32). Christ’s promise to the Jews that they would find freedom and salvation through knowledge of the truth. It continues to be cited in a wide variety of contexts.

Turn the other cheek. “I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matthew 5:39; cf. Luke 6:29). One of the proof-texts for Christian pacifism, the expression has come to mean to offer no resistance to or retaliation for violence.

Two-edged sword. “All iniquity is a two edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be healed” (Ecclesiastes 21:23). The expression is applied to an argument or a policy that cuts both ways, and so may harm either proponent or opponent.

Via Dolorosa. The Via Dolorosa (Latin “sad road”) is a street in Jerusalem, believed to be the one traversed by Jesus on his way to Calvary; sometimes applied by analogy to any painful suffering.

Voice crying in the wilderness. “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Matthew 3:3; repeated in Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23; from Isaiah 40:3). An important New Testament prophecy about the advent of Christ and how this was prefigured in the Old Testament. Today, “a voice crying in the wilderness” generally refers to any prophet who is not listened to.

The wages of sin. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). In his epistle to the Romans, Paul sets forth this statement concerning sin and redemption. The contemporary use of the first four words is often lightly ironic: the wages of sin can be any twinge of moral or physical discomfort.

Wailing wall. The wall in Jerusalem said to be the only part of the temple of Solomon left standing after the destruction of the city by the Romans. At this wall the Jews lamented the fall of their nation. Visitors to Jerusalem today revere this monument as one of the holy places of Judaism; it is customary to slip prayers written on bits of paper into the cracks between the wall’s stones.

Weaker vessel. “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life...” (I Peter 3:7). Peter regards the wife as physically weak and socially subordinate to her husband though not on that account less holy, or excluded from the “grace of life.” The word vessel, as applied to persons, suggests that they are useful instruments and the receptacles of divine grace. “Weaker vessel” is now taken as a less than flattering term for woman and has lost its implication of receptacle for grace. The phrase is not popular with feminists and others who oppose sexism.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:11-12; last phrase repeated in 13:28). A prophecy of the Last Judgment; in this passage Jesus contrasts the faith of a Roman centurion with the disbelief of his own countrymen. “Weeping and gnashing of teeth” is used today in any general reference to frustration or grief.

“What hath God wrought.” Famous as the first message sent by telegraph, May 28, 1844. In Biblical context (Numbers 23:23), meaning “what deeds has God performed!” “Wrought” is an archaic past participle of “work.”

Whither thou goest, I will go. “And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother’s house...Turn again, my daughters, go your way...And Orpah kissed her mother in law, but Ruth clave unto her,...and said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall

be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me..." (Ruth 1:1-22). Ruth's devoted following of her mother-in-law to Bethlehem has, by extension, come to stand for all devotion. See Ruth and see Naomi.

Wormwood and gall. "I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink" (Jeremiah 9:15; 23:15; cf. Deuteronomy 29:18). The secretions of the gall bladder have always been a symbol of bitterness. Wormwood is the bitter herb, *Artemisia absinthium*. God is thus punishing the Jews for their transgressions by making them drink deep of bitterness – a meaning the phrase retains in contemporary allusion.

Yahweh. The ancient Hebrew name for God. Genesis 2.