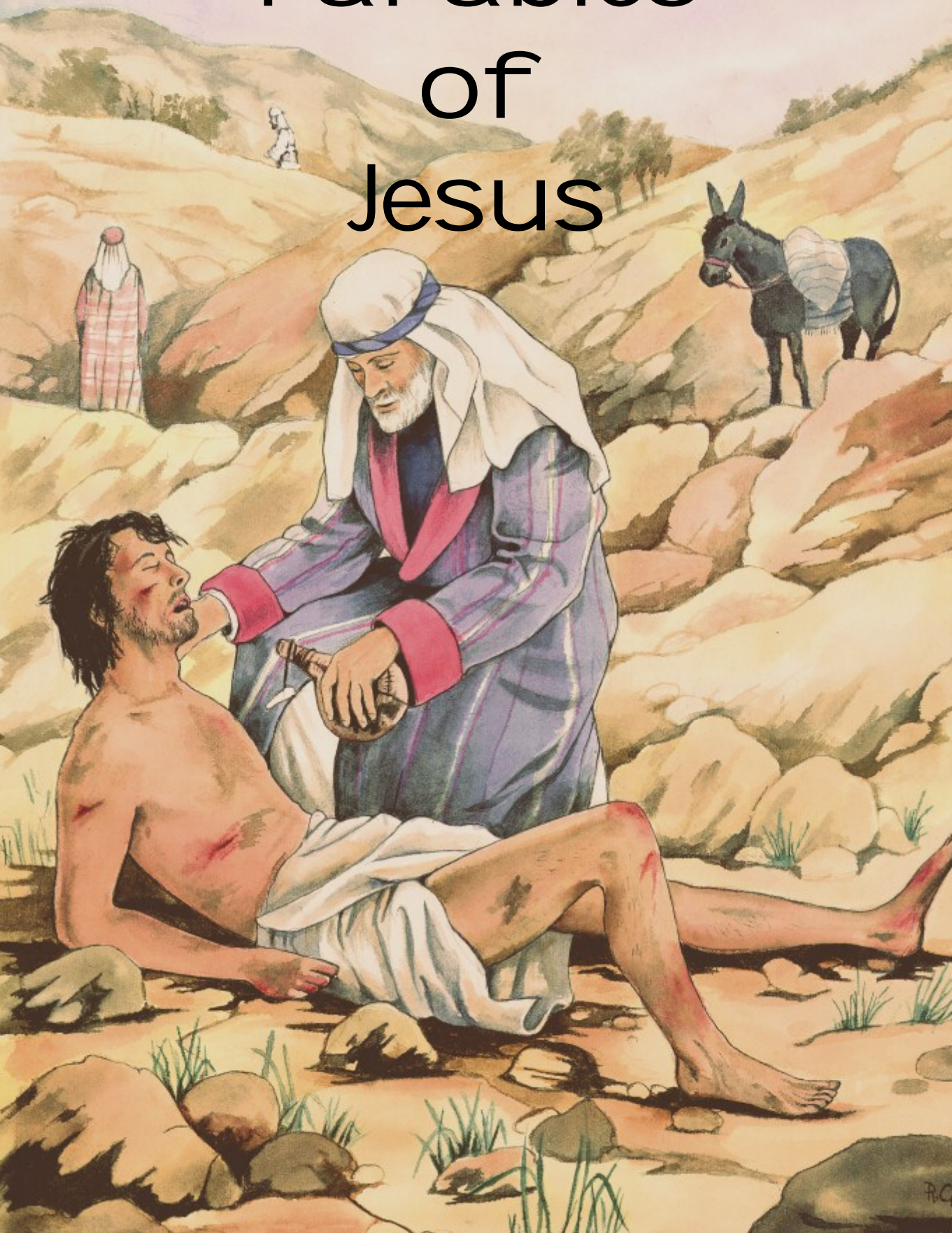


Parables of Jesus



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Parables of Jesus

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The Lost Sheep

The Lord Jesus often told interesting stories. We call them parables. They have a hidden meaning. They teach us about God and about ourselves. A parable is “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning”.

Have you ever seen a flock of sheep grazing in the fields, or up in the hills? Perhaps there were a few little lambs frisking around. It is a lovely sight to see the sheep and their lambs.

Well, the Lord Jesus told the story of a shepherd who had a flock of a hundred sheep. He was a good, kind shepherd.

One day he found that one of his sheep was missing. It had wandered off, and was lost. (You know, sheep are foolish animals. They often wander away, and they can never find their way back.)

The shepherd, of course, was sad. He didn't forget the lost sheep because there were so many more. Nor did he say, “Well, it doesn't matter really! I have all these others.”

What do you think he did? Carefully he made sure the others were all safe (ninety-nine of them!), and then he went off to search for the one that had strayed.

How long he was looking for it we do not know, nor how far he had to go. But we know the important thing. He found the sheep that had wandered away.

And what did he do when at last his sheep was found? Beat it? Shout at it? No, he was so happy. Lovingly, kindly he picked up the sheep, and carried it on his shoulders all the way back to the fold.

He was so pleased that he called his neighbours together and cried, “Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost.”

Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd. He loves His sheep so much that He died for them. And He goes after the wandering sheep till He finds it, and rejoices as He brings it back to the fold.

But aren't we like poor, wandering sheep? So ready to sin, so ready to go astray. We need the Lord Jesus to seek us and find us.

Here is a good prayer:

“Lord, the wandering sheep behold;
Bring him back into Thy fold;
On Thy shoulders bear him home;
Suffer him no more to roam.”

You can read the story in Luke chapter 15, verses 3 to 7. It is usually called “The Parable of the Lost Sheep”.

The Wicked Judge

There was once an important man. He was a judge. People who were being treated wrongly could come to him for help.

We still have judges today. They are usually good men. They see that the law is kept. They punish those who do wrong. They do not let people harm other people.

But this judge was wicked. Sadly he did not believe in God. Nor was he kind to other people. He did not want to help. He was a really bad man.

Now in the city where the judge lived there was a poor woman. She was a widow. She had no husband to help her. And someone was causing her a lot of trouble.

So she went and told the judge. She hoped he would help her. But no! He was unkind and did not want to help her at all.

So what do you think she did? She kept on going to the judge. She went again and again. In the end he was just weary and tired of her coming to him.

Now see a strange thing! He did not want to help her – but he thought, “I am weary and tired of her coming. She is a nuisance! She won’t take no for an answer!”

So he helped her. He did everything she wanted – not because he liked her, nor because he was kind.



Just to get rid of her. So the poor woman got what she wanted.

Jesus told this parable to encourage us to pray. If this wicked man, who was so unkind, helped the poor woman at last, don't you think that God, who is kind and good, will help His children when they pray to Him?

Do you ever pray to God?

This story is usually called "The Parable of the Unjust Judge". You can read it in Luke chapter 18, verses 1 to 8.



The Good Samaritan

One day a man set out on a journey. It was a long way for he was going from Jerusalem to a place called Jericho. We are not told his name, nor do we know why he was going to Jericho. But he never got there!

The way he had to go was lonely. It was downhill and in places between rocks and hills. Suddenly a band of robbers leaped out. They jumped on the man and began to beat him. Poor man! They showed him no pity. Not only did they wound him, but they even stole his clothes. When they left him, it seemed unlikely that he would live. What a sad end to his journey!

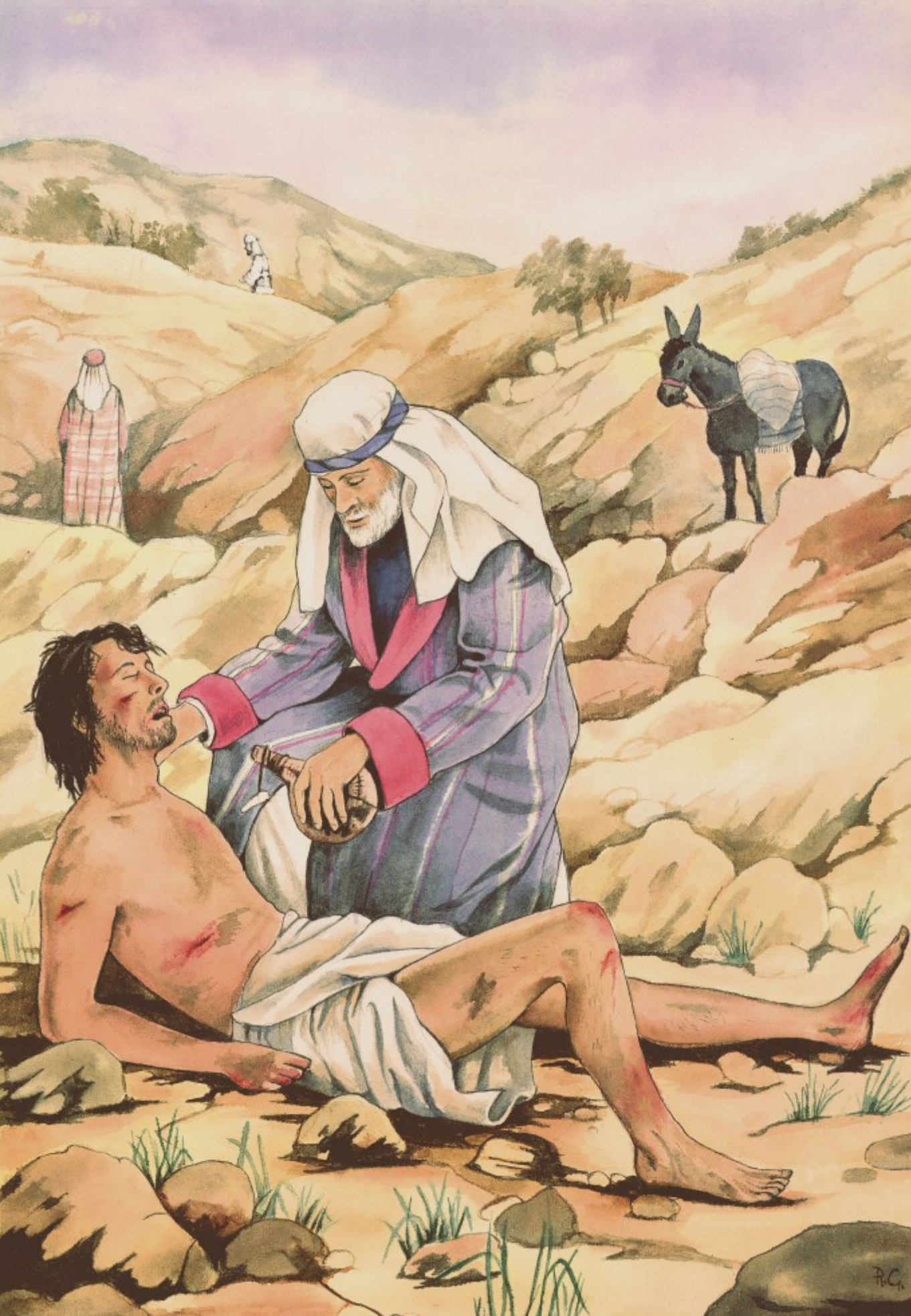
There he lay. But at last there were footsteps. Someone was drawing near. Perhaps help was at hand.

But no! It was a priest. He was the very one who should have helped – but he went past without taking any notice.

Still the poor man lay there, helpless. But now there was someone else coming along the road. It was a man something like a priest. He was called a Levite.

Surely the Levite would help? But no! He did go across to see what had happened – but he just left the poor man where he was.

But now, who is this coming along the lonely



road? He is different from the others. He does not belong to their country. He is a foreigner, a Samaritan.

Now the Jews and the Samaritans did not like one another. It must have been very disappointing for the poor wounded man that, of all people, it was a Samaritan who was coming.

But look! The Samaritan is going right up to him. When he sees him, he feels really sorry for him. Here is a friend at last!

Watch him doing everything he can to help the poor man. He pours oil and wine on his sores (just as we should use ointment). Then he bandages him up. But that is not the end!

Very tenderly the poor man is lifted up onto the Samaritan's donkey. Then he is taken to an inn, and carefully looked after. Don't you think all this was kind of the Samaritan? It is no wonder he is always called "the good Samaritan".

Soon the next day had arrived. We hope the wounded man was feeling better. His kind friend was still with him, but now he must go. What do you think was the last thing he did before he left? He paid the innkeeper for their stay, and told him still to look after his new friend till he was better. He himself would pay for everything.

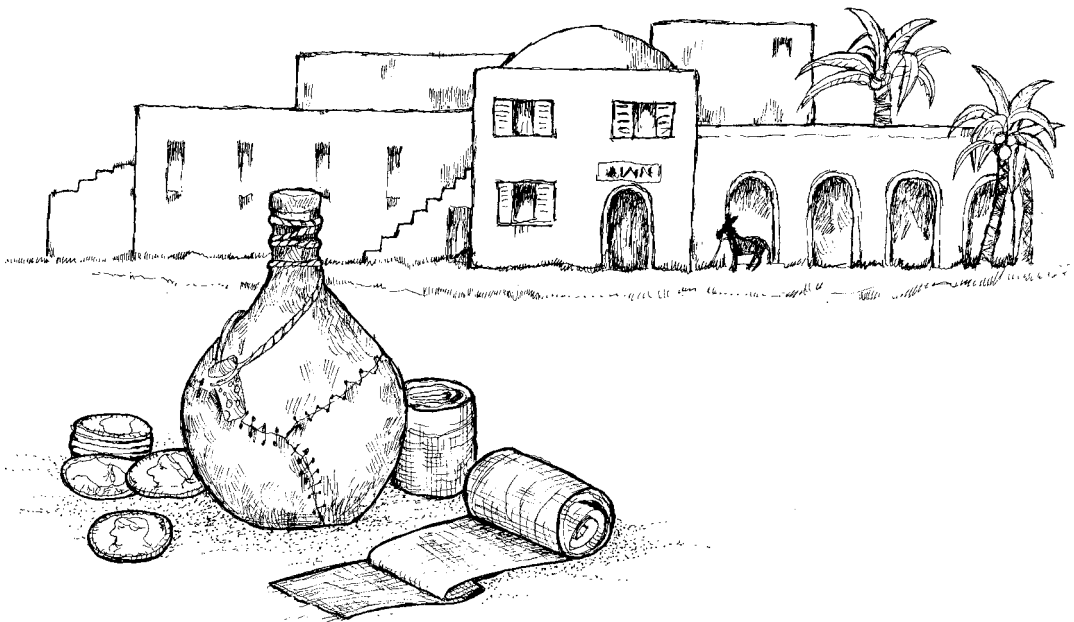
It is a wonderful thing to have a good friend. But there is no friend like the Lord Jesus, the Son of God.

Like the good Samaritan He comes right where His people are, finds them in their sin and sorrow, and does everything for them. Nothing is too hard for Him, and His love is very great.

Do you know the little verse:

“Jesus, Friend of little children,
Be a Friend to me;
Take my hand and ever keep me
Close to Thee”?

This story is called “The Good Samaritan”. You can read it in Luke chapter 10, verses 30 to 37.



The Wonderful Pearl

Have you ever seen a precious stone? Perhaps it has been a deep-red ruby, or a diamond sparkling in a ring.

In the days of Jesus it was the lovely white pearl that people specially thought of as precious.

Jesus once spoke about a man who was searching for these lovely pearls. He would give a lot of money for them. He tried to buy as many as he could.

But one day he saw a wonderful pearl. He had never seen one just like it before. It was so precious. It was so beautiful.

“Oh,” he thought, “if only it were mine!”

He thought he would do anything if only he could have it for his very own. Perhaps you girls and boys sometimes have seen something and you have longed to have it for yourself.

But the man did not have enough money. He could not afford to buy it. So do you know what he did? He gathered together everything he had. Yes, even all the pearls he had already collected. And do you know what he did then? He sold the lot. He sold everything he had.

And then so happily he hurried to buy the wonderful pearl. He must have been so glad to have it at last. But there are not many people who want something so badly that they are willing to get rid of everything else, are there?

Jesus is just like that pearl – so precious. Many men and women, many girls and boys, have wanted Him so badly that they have felt they could give up everything else. You have all heard of Paul. He once said that he would gladly give up everything so that he might know the Lord Jesus for himself.

This parable is usually called “The Pearl of Great Price”. You can read it in Matthew chapter 13, verses 45 and 46.

