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Glossary of Terms

Synoptic Gospels (Matthew-Luke)

Andrew -- an **Apostle** from **Bethsaida**; brother of **Simon Peter**. (Mk. 1, 3)

Apostles -- literally "sent-out ones." Men chosen by Christ to learn of Him and bear witness of Him to the world. Originally twelve (often called "the twelve"); **Simon** (Peter), **Andrew**, **James**, **John**, Philip, Bartholomew (Nathanael), Matthew (Levi), Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Judas son of James (Thaddaeus), Simon the Zealot, and **Judas Iscariot**. **Judas Iscariot** was later replaced by Matthias (Acts 1). Paul, Barnabas, and others are also called apostles (Acts 14; Gal. 1; Rom. 16).

Beelzebul -- or "Beelzebub." A heathen deity, believed to be the prince of evil spirits; probably another name for Satan. Jesus was accused of casting out evil spirits by his power. Probably means "lord of the house," but may mean "god of dung." (Mt. 10, 12; Mk. 3; Lk. 11)

Bethany -- a town about 2 miles east of **Jerusalem**, on the eastern slope of the **Mount of Olives**. Jesus spent much time here with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and raised Lazarus from the dead. (Mt. 26; Mk. 11; Jn. 12)

Bethlehem -- a town about 5 miles SE of **Jerusalem**. Jesus was born here. (Mt. 2)

Bethsaida -- a town in **Galilee**, on the northwestern shore of the **Sea of Galilee**. **Peter** and **Andrew** were natives of this town. A blind man was healed here, and the city was later denounced for its unbelief. (Mt. 11; Mk. 8)

Caesarea Philippi -- a town formerly called Paneas, North of the **Sea of Galilee** and at the foot of Mount Hermon. Expanded by **Herod the Great** and his son, Herod Philip, and renamed after the Roman emperor, Tiberius Caesar. Jesus and His disciples visited here. (Mt. 16; Mk. 8)

Caiaphas -- son in law of the high priest Annas; appointed as high priest by the Romans. One of the rulers who tried Jesus. Unknowingly prophesied that it was better for Jesus to die for the nation than for the nation to perish. (Jn. 11, 18)

Capernaum -- a town on the northern shore of the **Sea of Galilee**. Jesus spent much time in this region, and preached here after miraculously feeding 5000 people. He healed many here, including a Roman centurion's servant girl and Peter's mother-in-law. He denounced the city for its unbelief. (Mt. 8, 9, 11; Mk. 1-2, 9; Jn. 4, 6)

Christ -- the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term "Messiah," meaning "the anointed one." Jesus was anointed by the Father to be the Savior, to deliver His people from the bondage of sin.

cross -- a Roman (not Jewish) method of execution, considered a curse. Christ's death on the cross paid the penalty for man's sin, reconciling him to God.

Decapolis -- ten Greek cities south and east of the **Sea of Galilee**. They joined together in a league in the first century BC after the Roman occupation of Palestine, then became a Roman district. (Mk. 5, 7)

Denarius -- a Roman silver coin, equivalent to about a day's wages for a common laborer. (Mk. 6, 12, 14)

Galilee -- the northern-most of the three provinces of western Palestine in the time of Christ. Jesus' ministry was primarily in Galilee.

Gennesaret -- or "Chinnereth." The name given to a town and a district in an extended plain on the western shore of the **Sea of Galilee**. The name was also given to the **Sea of Galilee** itself. (Mt. 14; Lk. 5)

Gerasenes -- or "Gergesenes" or "Gadarenes." Inhabitants of the region of Gadara, SE of the **Sea of Galilee**. This surrounded the city of Gadara, one of the cities of the **Decapolis**, situated about 5 miles SE of the **Sea of Galilee**. Jesus healed a demoniac here, in what someone has noted is the first reference to "deviled ham." (Mk. 5)

Gethsemane -- a location in the Kidron Valley, on the lower slopes of the **Mount of Olives**, where Jesus prayed to the Father on the evening that He was betrayed by **Judas Iscariot**. (Mk. 14)

Herod the Great -- an **Idumean**; appointed by Rome as King over Israel in about 37 BC Paranoid; murdered a number of relatives, including his father Antipater, his wife Mariamne, and two sons. Slaughtered babies in **Bethlehem** in an attempt to kill Jesus. Died in 4 BC (Mt. 2)

Herod Antipas -- a son of **Herod the Great**; became tetrarch (ruler of one-fourth) of **Galilee** in 4 BC Married **Herodias**, his niece and his brother Philip's wife. Killed **John the Baptist** for condemning him in this. (Mt. 14; Lk. 13, 23)

Herodias -- granddaughter of **Herod the Great**. Deserted her husband and uncle, Herod Philip, to marry his brother, **Herod Antipas**. Schemed to have **John the Baptist** killed for condemning this. (Mk. 6)

Hosanna -- an exclamation of praise. Literally means "save please" or "save now." The crowd cried this at Jesus' entry into **Jerusalem**, a week before they demanded to crucify Him. (Mt. 21; Mk. 11)

Idumea -- the Greek and Roman spelling for the country of Edom, and for the area around Hebron, in southern **Judea**. (The ancient Edomites had settled in a region SE of the Dead Sea, but by the time of Christ had been driven westward to southern **Judea**.) Though non-Jews, the Idumeans had been forced by the Jews to accept circumcision and some other Jewish practices. **King Herod** was an Idumean. (Mk. 3)

James -- an **Apostle**; elder brother of **John the Apostle**; son of **Zebedee** and Salome. Along with his brother and **Simon Peter**, enjoyed a very close relationship with the Lord. The first **Apostle** to be martyred. (Mk. 1, 3, 5, 9, 14; Acts 12)

Jerusalem -- a city in the hills of **Judea**, 14 miles west of the Dead Sea, and 33 miles east of the Mediterranean. Made capitol of Israel by David and center of worship by Solomon. Visited numerous times by Jesus, who was crucified, buried, and raised just outside the walls of the city. (Jn. 5, 9)

John the Apostle -- an **Apostle**; younger brother of **James**; son of **Zebedee** and Salome. Along with his brother and **Simon Peter**, enjoyed a very close relationship with the Lord. Later wrote a gospel account, three letters, and the book of Revelation. Refers to himself in his gospel as "that other disciple" or "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (Mk. 1, 3, 5, 9, 14-15)

John the Baptist -- the forerunner and baptizer of Jesus. Beheaded for rebuking **Herod Antipas** and **Herodias**. (Mt. 3, 9, 14; Mk. 6; Lk. 1, 5, 11)

Jordan -- a 160-mile long N-S valley in Palestine, and the 65-mile long river which flows in its central portion. The Jordan River takes water from the Sea of Galilee south to the Dead Sea.

Joseph of Arimathea -- a secret disciple of Jesus; probably a member of the Sanhedrin. Became more bold after the crucifixion; asked for Jesus' body and buried it in his own tomb. (Mt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 19)

Judas Iscariot -- an **Apostle**; betrayed Christ into the hands of the Romans. Felt remorseful afterward, but instead of repenting committed suicide. (Mt. 27; Mk. 3, 14)

Judea -- the southern-most of the three provinces of western Palestine in the time of Christ, west of the Dead Sea.

King Herod -- see "**Herod the Great**."

leaven -- yeast, used in baking to make bread rise. Because of its rapid spreading to affect an entire lump of dough, it is universally used in Scripture as a symbol of sin and evil. (Mt. 13, 16, 22-23; Mk. 3, 8)

Mary Magdalene -- a woman from whom seven demons were cast. She accompanied Jesus afterward, and was with Him at the cross and the tomb. (Mt. 27-28; Mk. 16; Lk. 8, 23-24; Jn. 19-20)

Matthew -- also called "Levi." A tax collector who became an **Apostle**. Later wrote a gospel account. (Mt. 9; Mk. 2; Lk. 5)

Mount of Olives -- a ridge of hills just east of **Jerusalem**, separated from it by the Kidron valley. Jesus entered **Jerusalem** from here a week before He was crucified, prayed here on the night He was betrayed, ascended from here, and will return here when He comes to earth again. (Mt. 2,26; Mk. 11,13; Lk. 19; Jn. 18; Zech. 14)

nard -- or "spikenard." A perennial herb, from which a strongly aromatic oil was derived. Imported to Palestine from India. (Jn. 12)

Nazareth -- a town in southern **Galilee**, in a basin. The home of Joseph and Mary, and the boyhood home of Jesus. (Mt. 2; Lk. 1-4)

parable -- a brief story intended to illustrate a single idea. Used commonly by Jesus to reveal truth to His followers while revealing it from others. (Mt. 13)

Peter -- see "**Simon**."

Pharisees -- a Jewish sect, which began as a pious, "fundamentalist" reaction to secularism in the second century BC. They developed an "oral law" in an attempt to interpret and apply the written law of Scripture. They tended to be strict, legalistic, and separatistic, and many had become hypocritical by the time of Christ. Also called Hasidim. (Mt. 5)

Pilate -- the procurator (Roman governmental representative) in Palestine at the time of Christ's crucifixion. He delivered Jesus to be crucified. Thought to be imaginary by some critics until his name was found on an inscription at Caesarea in 1961. (Mt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 3, 23; Jn. 18-19)

Rabboni -- or "Rabbi". A title of honor given to teachers of the Law, meaning "my teacher." Though having the same meaning, it seems that the term "rabboni" was a more elevated term than "rabbi." (Mt. 23; Jn. 1,3,6,20)

Sadducees -- a Jewish sect, generally from aristocratic, wealthy, and powerful families. They followed only the written law of Moses, and rejected the future resurrection and judgment of man. (Mt. 16, 22)

Samaria -- the central of the three provinces of western Palestine in the time of Christ. The inhabitants were a mixed race, formed by intermarriage of Jews with Mesopotamians and Syrians. They only accepted the five books of Moses, and were despised by the Jews. (Lk. 9; Jn. 4)

Scribes -- originally copyists; they developed into a Jewish sect of professional students and teachers of the Law. They acted like lawyers and developed some interpretations and extensions to the Law which deviated from its original intent.

Sea of Galilee -- a harp-shaped lake in northern Palestine, about 60 miles north of **Jerusalem**, in Galilee. Also called the sea or lake of Chinnereth (meaning "harp"), **Gennesaret**, or Tiberias. Much of Jesus' ministry was in this area.

Simon -- also called "Peter." An **Apostle** from **Bethsaida**; brother of **Andrew**. Very zealous and impetuous. Denied the Lord, but later repented and became a strong leader of the early Church. Preached a powerful sermon at Pentecost to an international Jewish audience; took the gospel to the gentiles.

Zebedee -- a Galilean fisherman; father of the **Apostles James** and **John**. (Mt. 4; Mk. 1)

Glossary of Terms

Acts

Note: *Students are not responsible for terms in brackets []; these are included simply for completeness.*

Achaia -- one of the two provinces into which Rome divided Greece (the other was **Macedonia**). Originally just the northwest portion of the Peloponnesus, then the entire Peloponnesus. In **Paul's** day it included even more (roughly half of the region covered by modern-day Greece, including **Athens**). (Acts 18)

Agabus -- a true prophet in **Antioch**; perhaps one of the seventy sent out by the Lord. Accurately predicted a famine and the imprisonment of **Paul** in Jerusalem. (Acts 11, 21)

Agrippa -- Herod Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great, and through political dealings eventually became king over all the land that his grandfather had controlled. It was he who murdered James the Apostle and tried to murder Peter. God killed him for accepting divine honors. His son, Herod Agrippa II, was made Procurator of parts of **Palestine**. It was he who heard **Paul's** defense before **Festus**. (Acts 12, 25-26)

Ananias -- 1) a man who schemed, with his wife **Sapphira**, to lie to God. He was rebuked by Peter and killed by God for this. (Acts 5)
2) a devout disciple who ministered to **Paul** in **Damascus** immediately after his conversion, restoring his sight and filling him with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9)
[3) a pro-Roman high priest who tried **Paul** prior to **Festus** doing so. (Acts 23)]

Antioch of Syria -- a commercial center about 15 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea and 300 miles north of Jerusalem. Due to persecution in Jerusalem, this became a center of early Christianity. Followers of Christ were first called "Christians" here. **Paul's** first two missionary journeys began here. (Acts 11, 13, 15)

Antioch of Pisidia -- a city on the border of the provinces of **Galatia**, Pisidia, and Phrygia. **Paul** visited here twice on his first missionary journey. (Acts 13-14)

Apollos -- an Alexandrian Jew who came to **Ephesus** and was instructed by **Aquila** and **Priscilla**. He preached in **Achaia** and had a following in **Corinth**. (Acts 18; 1 Cor. 3)

Aquila -- a Jew of **Pontus** who had moved from Rome to **Corinth**, where he and his wife, **Priscilla**, showed hospitality to **Paul**. They later moved with **Paul** to **Ephesus**, where they instructed **Apollos**. (Acts 18; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16)

Asia -- a province of SW Asia Minor. **Paul** visited here on his third missionary journey, having been prohibited from doing so on his second journey by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2, 16, 21, 24, 27)

Athens -- the capitol of the Greek state of Attica. The cultural and philosophical center of the world in **Paul's** day. **Paul** preached here on Mars Hill. (Acts 17-18)

Bar-Jesus -- a magician and false prophet on the island of **Cyprus**. **Paul** struck him with temporary blindness. (Acts 13)

Barnabas -- a Cypriot who sold his property and gave the proceeds to the poor. He recommended **Paul** to the church in Jerusalem, brought him to **Antioch**, and accompanied him on his first missionary journey. He parted company with **Paul** over a disagreement regarding **John Mark**. (Acts 4, 9, 11, 13, 15)

Berea -- a city in **Macedonia**, near **Thessalonica**, where **Paul's** message was accepted during his second missionary journey. The believers are praised for checking what they heard with the Scriptures, to see if it was true. (Acts 17, 20)

[**Bithynia** -- a province in NW Asia Minor. **Paul** wished to go here on his second missionary journey, but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 16)]

Caesarea -- a coastal city NW of Jerusalem built by Herod the Great. It became the capital of the Roman province of **Palestine**. **Philip** and **Cornelius** were from here, and **Paul** was imprisoned here for two years before being sent to Rome. (Acts 8, 10, 12, 21, 24, 27)

[**Cappadocia** -- a province in eastern Asia Minor, north of **Cilicia**. It was represented at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2; 1 Pet. 1)]

Cilicia -- the most southeasterly province of Asia Minor, on the Mediterranean Sea. **Tarsus** (**Paul's** birthplace) was its capital. It was famous for goat's

hair, and **Paul** learned tentmaking here. (Acts 6, 9, 15, 21; Gal. 1)

Corinth -- a port city and important commercial center of Greece, on the isthmus between the mainland and the Peloponnese. **Paul** spent 18 months here, established a church, and later wrote two letters to them to deal with problems. **Paul** was tried and released by the Romans here. (Acts 18)

Cornelius -- a Roman centurion who believed and was baptized by Peter. (Acts 10)

Crete -- a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, about 150 miles long and 35 miles wide, lying midway between **Syria** and **Malta**. Cretans were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. **Paul's** ship to Rome was caught in a storm near Crete which led to its shipwreck. (Acts 2, 27)

Crispus -- a ruler of the synagogue at **Corinth**. Became a believer and was baptized by **Paul**. (Acts 18)

Cyprus -- a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, about 150 miles long and 50 miles wide, lying midway off the coast of **Syria**. **Barnabas** was from here, and he visited Cyprus with **Paul** on **Paul's** first missionary journey. (Acts 4, 11, 13)

Damascus -- an oasis on a plateau NE of Mount Hermon. An important commercial center, and one of the oldest cities in the East. **Paul** was saved on his way to Damascus, received some training from **Ananias** and other disciples here, and escaped at night to foil a Jewish plot against his life. (Acts 9, 26)

Ephesus -- a seaport city in **Asia**, on the western coast of Asia Minor. **Paul** lived and taught here for 3 years. Artemis (Diana) was the local deity. The city was famous for her temple, which was one of the seven wonders of the world. (Acts 19, 20)

Felix -- the Roman governor of **Caesarea** who tried **Paul** and imprisoned him for two years. (Acts 23-25)

Festus -- the successor of **Felix** at **Caesarea**, who also tried **Paul**. At this trial, **Paul** appealed to Caesar. (Acts 24-25)

Galatia -- the central province of Asia Minor. **Paul** visited cities here on all three missionary journeys. (Acts 16, 18)

Gamaliel -- a Pharisee and highly respected teacher of the Law. He taught **Paul**, and wisely recommended that the Jewish leaders leave the Christians alone, and let God deal with them. (Acts 5, 22)

Gaza -- an ancient city in southern **Palestine**, near the Mediterranean coast. A former Philistine capital, and the site of Samson's exploits. **Philip** met the Ethiopian eunuch near here. (Acts 8)

James -- the (half)brother of Jesus. Not to be confused with the Apostles James the son of Zebadee or James the Less. James became a prominent leader of the Jerusalem church, and presided over the **Jerusalem Council**. (Acts 1-2, 15, 21)

Jerusalem Council -- a church council called to discuss the question of circumcision for Gentile Christians. **James** the brother of Jesus was president of the council; testimony was also heard from Peter, **Barnabas**, and **Paul**. (Acts 15)

John Mark -- an evangelist, a relative of **Barnabas**, and a traveling companion of **Paul** and **Barnabas** on **Paul's** first missionary journey. He did not complete the journey, so **Paul** refused to take him on his second journey. He went to **Cyprus** with **Barnabas**. He was close to the Apostle Peter, and is apparently the author of the gospel of Mark. (Acts 12, 13, 15; 1 Pet. 5)

Joppa -- an ancient Philistine city on the Mediterranean coast, about 30 miles NW of Jerusalem. The port for the city of Jerusalem. Peter raised **Tabitha** here, stayed with **Simon the tanner**, and received a vision of a sheet from heaven. (Acts 9-11)

Lycia -- a province in SW Asia Minor. Visited by **Paul** on his third missionary journey and on his journey to Rome. (Acts 21, 27)

[**Lydda** -- or "Lod." A town in the western foothills of Judea near **Joppa**. Peter healed a paralytic here. (Acts 9)]

Lydia -- a woman from Thyatira who sold purple-dyed goods in **Philippi**. She became a believer as a result of **Paul's** teaching and hosted groups of believers in her home. (Acts 16)

Macedonia -- originally a country north of Greece. Conquered by the Romans in 168 BC and made a province of the Roman empire. In **Paul's** day it included the northern part of modern-day Greece, the Macedonian area of Yugoslavia, and part of Albania. **Paul** visited here on his second and third missionary journeys. The cities of **Berea**, **Philippi**, and **Thessalonica** were in Macedonia. (Acts 16, 20)

- Malta** -- an island south of Sicily. **Paul** was shipwrecked here on his journey to Rome, but no lives were lost. He was bitten by a poisonous snake without harm, and healed many people here. (Acts 28)
- Matthias** -- the disciple chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot, at Peter's suggestion. (Acts 1)
- Palestine** -- the site of most biblical events. Old Testament Palestine (Canaan) included the regions occupied by modern-day Israel, Jordan, and parts of southern Lebanon and southeastern **Syria**. In New Testament times, the Romans used the term more restrictively, first for the SW coastal plain of **Phoenicia**, then later for all of Canaan west of the Jordan, which would include modern-day Israel and southern Lebanon. They divided this region into three provinces: Galilee, Samaria, and Judea.
- Pamphylia** -- a coastal province in southern Asia Minor, with **Cilicia** on its east, **Lycia** on its south and west, and Pisidia on its north. It had been united with **Lycia** by **Paul's** time. **Paul** visited here on his first missionary journey. (Acts 2, 13, 27)]
- Paul** -- see "**Saul**."
- Philip** -- an evangelist and one of the first seven deacons of the church in Jerusalem. He evangelized the Ethiopian eunuch, and hosted **Paul** in **Caesarea**. (Acts 6, 8, 21)
- Philippi** -- a city in eastern **Macedonia**, about ten miles up river from the Aegean Sea. **Paul** visited here on his second missionary journey, and later wrote a letter to them. He met **Lydia** here and established a church in her home, and was jailed with **Silas** after exorcising an evil spirit from a slave girl. (Acts 16, 20; Phil. 1; 1 Thess. 2)
- Philippian jailor** -- the jailor of **Paul** and **Silas** in **Philippi**, during Paul's second missionary journey. He asked how to be saved, and he and his household believed and were baptized. (Acts 16)
- Phoenicia** -- the narrow coastland along the NE Mediterranean, north of Galilee. On its east are the Lebanon mountains, and on its south are the hills of Galilee. The cities of Tyre and Sidon are in Phoenicia. This is the western part of modern-day Lebanon. (Acts 11, 15, 21)
- Phrygia** -- an inland province in central Asia Minor. The term was also used of a larger district, incorporating parts of other provinces. **Paul** passed through here on his second and third missionary journeys. The cities of Pisidian **Antioch**, Colossae, Heirapolis, Iconium, and Laodicea were in this province. (Acts 2, 13, 16, 18)
- [Pontus** -- a large district in northern Asia Minor, east of **Bithynia**, along the coast of the Black Sea. It had many Jewish residents; **Aquila** was from here. (Acts 2, 18)]
- Priscilla** -- the wife of **Aquila**. Left Rome with her husband and joined **Paul**. (Acts 18; Rom. 16)
- Sapphira** -- a woman who schemed, with her husband, **Ananias**, to lie to God. She was rebuked by Peter and killed by God for this. (Acts 5)
- Saul** -- a Jew and Roman citizen from **Tarsus**. Raised as a strict Pharisee under **Gamaliel**, he persecuted Christians in his zeal. Miraculously converted on a journey to **Damascus**. Became a powerful preacher and evangelist. Went on three missionary journeys to minister throughout the Roman Empire. The first, with **Barnabas** and **John Mark**, was to **Cyprus** and southern Asia Minor. The second and third, with **Silas** and **Timothy**, were to Asia Minor, **Macedonia**, and **Achaia**. The third journey included cities in **Asia** (southwestern Asia Minor), with a strong concentration on **Ephesus**. Upon returning to Jerusalem, he was accused of disturbing the peace and imprisoned in **Caesarea** for two years. He appealed to Rome and was imprisoned there. He was apparently released, preached in the western Roman empire, and was martyred in Rome in about 67 AD. (Acts 7ff)
- Silas** -- a Roman citizen, active in the church in Jerusalem. Helped communicate the message of the **Jerusalem Council** to **Antioch**, and traveled with **Paul** on parts of his missionary journeys. (Acts 15, 16, 18; 1 Thess. 1; 2 Thess. 1; 2 Cor. 1)
- Simon Magus** -- a Samaritan magician. Became a disciple of **Philip**. Offered money for spiritual power, and was denounced by Peter. The origin of our word "simony." (Acts 8)
- Simon the Tanner** -- a tanner at **Joppa** who hosted Peter. His home was by the sea outside the town, as his trade was considered unclean by the Jews. (Acts 9-10)
- Stephen** -- one of the first seven deacons on the church in Jerusalem. He was stoned for his preaching, becoming the first Christian martyr. (Acts 6)
- Syria** -- a region east of **Phoenicia** and north of **Palestine**. The Roman province of Syria included **Phoenicia**, and may at times have included **Palestine**. (Acts 11, Gal. 1)
- Tabitha** -- or "Dorcas." A Christian woman of **Joppa** who was raised from the dead by Peter. (Acts 9)

Tarsus -- the capital of **Cilicia** in Asia Minor. A commercial and educational center of the early Roman empire. The home town of **Paul**. (Acts 9, 11, 21-22)

Thessalonica -- a city in **Macedonia** visited by **Paul** on his second and third missionary journeys. An important commercial center, and a center of Jewish worship for the surrounding region. (Acts 17, 20; Phil. 4)

[**Thrace** -- a province east of **Macedonia** and west of **Bithynia**. It includes the European portion of modern-day Turkey and part of Bulgaria. On his

second missionary journey, **Paul** sailed near Samothrace, an island off the coast of Thrace. (Acts 16)]

Timothy -- a young man who came to know Christ through **Paul**. Became a close friend, disciple, and traveling companion of **Paul**. Had a Greek father and a devout Jewish mother and grandmother, who taught him the Scriptures. (Acts 16; 1 Tim. 1; 2 Tim. 1, 3; Phil. 2)