

6-12. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. But Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. And He told His disciples, that a small boat should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many; so much so that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had scourges. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And He sternly charged them that they should not make Him known. Who were the Herodians? They were either soldiers of Herod, or adherents to a newly appeared heresy which taught that Herod himself was the messiah, because with him the succession of Judaic kings had come to an end. For the prophecy of Jacob clearly stated that when the line of princes from Judah would fail, then the Christ would come.¹ Therefore since there was no Judaic prince during Herod's years, and Herod, a native of Idumea, ruled as a foreigner, there were those who thought that he was the messiah. They formed a heretical faction, and it was they who were attempting to kill the Lord. But the Lord withdrew, for it was not yet time for the Passion. But He also withdrew from those ungrateful ones so that He might do good to others as well. For many followed Him and He healed them, and even those of Tyre and Sidon, who were foreigners, received His help. But those of His own kin drove Him away, showing that kinship of blood is of no benefit without kinship of heart. So the foreigners came to Jesus from afar, but the Jews, to whom Jesus came, drove Him away. Observe as well the absence of vainglory in Him: so that the multitude would not throng around Him, He asked for a small boat in which He could enter and be seen without the people crowding around Him. "Scourges" mean illnesses. For indeed illnesses are often laid upon us for chastisement, God disciplining us as a father does his children. Understand this as well, that the Herodians, who are fleshly and carnal, desire to kill Jesus, for "Herod" means "fleshly". But those who follow Him are those who

¹ Gen. 49:10

depart from their own homes and cities, that is, who leave behind all relations according to the flesh. Whereupon their scourges are healed, I mean, their sins which scourge the conscience, and the unclean spirits are driven out. Take heed how Jesus gives orders to His disciples that a boat should be made ready for Him so that the multitude would not throng Him. For Jesus is the Word within you, Which commands that your boat, signifying your body, should wait on Him and not set forth into the tempest of life's affairs, lest the crowds, signifying the turmoil of life's affairs, throng Christ within you.

13-19. And He goeth up onto a mountain, and calleth unto Him those whom He wanted: and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons: and Simon He surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder: and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. He goes up onto the mountain to pray. Since He has worked miracles, He prays after the demonstration of miracles, teaching all of us that we should give thanks to God whenever we have labored and achieved some good, and that we should attribute that good to God's power. Or, by another interpretation, He ascends the mountain to pray because He was about to ordain the apostles, so that we might learn that when we intend to ordain someone, we too should first pray that the worthy candidate might be revealed to us lest we share in the transgressions of another. The Lord makes even Judas an apostle, teaching us that God does not reject a man now because of the evil that he will do in the future; but rather He deems him worthy of honor now for the sake of the virtue which he now possesses, even though later he will turn out to be evil. The evangelist lists the names of the apostles because of false apostles, so that it would be known which were the true apostles. The Lord names Zebedee's sons "the sons of thunder", because they were great preachers, filled with theology.

19-22. And they went into an house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And