

HOLY BIBLE

Compact Edition



New Living
Translation®

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale online at www.newlivingtranslation.com and www.tyndale.com.

This Bible is an edition of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation.

Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. All rights reserved.

The text of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, may be quoted in any form (written, visual, electronic, or audio) up to and inclusive of five hundred (500) verses without express written permission of the publisher, provided that the verses quoted do not account for more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the work in which they are quoted, and provided that a complete book of the Bible is not quoted.

When the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, is quoted, one of the following credit lines must appear on the copyright page or title page of the work:

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

When quotations from the NLT text are used in nonsalable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, newsletters, transparencies, or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initials *NLT* must appear at the end of each quotation.

Quotations in excess of five hundred (500) verses or twenty-five percent (25%) of the work, or other permission requests, must be approved in writing by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Send requests by e-mail to: permission@tyndale.com or call 630-668-8300, ext. 5023.

Publication of any commentary or other Bible reference work produced for commercial sale that uses the New Living Translation requires written permission for use of the NLT text.

Zips edition cover photograph of plaid pattern © Hong Li/iStockphoto; propeller © Baris Simsek/iStockphoto; eagle © CSA Images/iStockphoto; illustration of grunge © Roman Okopny/iStockphoto; watercolor background © bloodsugar/Shutterstock. All rights reserved.

For manufacturing information regarding glipit product, please call 1-800-323-9400.

This Bible is typeset in the typeface *Lucerna*, designed by Brian Sooy & Co. exclusively for Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

TYNDALE, *New Living Translation*, *NLT*, the New Living Translation logo, and *LeatherLike* are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. *The Truth Made Clear*, *Tu Tone*, *Zips*, *glipit*, and *express your faith your way* are trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

ISBN 978-1-4143-0172-3 Bonded Leather Black
ISBN 978-1-4143-0173-0 Bonded Leather Burgundy
ISBN 978-1-4964-3349-7 Bonded Leather Navy
ISBN 978-1-4143-2201-8 Canvas Green Camo
ISBN 978-1-4143-2202-5 Canvas Pink Camo
ISBN 978-1-4143-0930-9 LeatherLike Magenta/Pink
ISBN 978-1-4143-1399-3 LeatherLike Pink Flower with Burnt Sienna/Sour Apple
ISBN 978-1-4143-1400-6 LeatherLike Fuchsia Floral/Plum
ISBN 978-1-4143-6341-7 LeatherLike Brown/Tan Guitar Pick
ISBN 978-1-4143-6342-4 LeatherLike Strawberry/Kiwi
ISBN 978-1-4143-6344-8 LeatherLike Black Cross
ISBN 978-1-4143-9772-6 LeatherLike Pink/Brown
ISBN 978-1-4143-9773-3 LeatherLike Brown/Tan
ISBN 978-1-4143-9774-0 LeatherLike Black/Onyx
ISBN 978-1-4143-9775-7 LeatherLike Rustic Brown
ISBN 978-1-4143-5372-2 LeatherLike White
ISBN 978-0-8423-7233-6 Metal, Silver Thirsty
ISBN 978-1-4143-1357-3 Metal, Pink He Loves Me
ISBN 978-1-4143-5454-5 Metal, Metal Diamond Plate
ISBN 978-1-4143-5455-2 Metal, Silver 4-GVN
ISBN 978-1-4143-7860-2 Zips, Canvas with Blue Zipper
ISBN 978-1-4143-8513-6 Zips, Canvas with Red Zipper
ISBN 978-1-4143-8514-3 Zips, Canvas with Yellow Zipper
ISBN 978-1-4143-9771-9 Zips, Shimmery Canvas with Pink Zipper
ISBN 978-1-4143-8124-4 glipit blue silicone
ISBN 978-1-4143-8125-1 glipit purple silicone
ISBN 978-1-4964-1663-6 The Higher Bible

Printed in China

24	23	22	21	20	19	18
29	28	27	26	25	24	23

Tyndale House Publishers and Wycliffe Bible Translators share the vision for an understandable, accurate translation of the Bible for every person in the world. Each sale of the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, benefits Wycliffe Bible Translators. Wycliffe is working with partners around the world to accomplish Vision 2025—an initiative to start a Bible translation program in every language group that needs it by the year 2025.

CONTENTS

Alphabetical Listing of Bible Books	A4
A Note to Readers	A5
Where Can I Find It?	A6
Great Stories of the Bible	A6
Great Chapters of the Bible	A7
Great Verses to Memorize	A7
Welcome to the Bible!	A10
Historical Journey through the Bible	A13
You Can Know God Personally	A29

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	3	2 Chronicles	333	Daniel	667
Exodus	44	Ezra	362	Hosea	679
Leviticus	79	Nehemiah	371	Joel	688
Numbers	104	Esther	384	Amos	692
Deuteronomy	139	Job	390	Obadiah	699
Joshua	168	Psalms	415	Jonah	701
Judges	188	Proverbs	481	Micah	703
Ruth	208	Ecclesiastes	505	Nahum	709
1 Samuel	211	Song of Songs	512	Habakkuk	712
2 Samuel	235	Isaiah	517	Zephaniah	715
1 Kings	257	Jeremiah	570	Haggai	718
2 Kings	282	Lamentations	621	Zechariah	720
1 Chronicles	307	Ezekiel	627	Malachi	728

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	733	Ephesians	895	Hebrews	920
Mark	761	Philippians	899	James	930
Luke	779	Colossians	902	1 Peter	934
John	809	1 Thessalonians	905	2 Peter	938
Acts	830	2 Thessalonians	908	1 John	941
Romans	857	1 Timothy	910	2 John	945
1 Corinthians	870	2 Timothy	914	3 John	946
2 Corinthians	882	Titus	917	Jude	947
Galatians	890	Philemon	919	Revelation	949

Alphabetical Listing of Bible Books

Acts	830	James	930	Nehemiah.....	371
Amos	692	Jeremiah.....	570	Numbers.....	104
1 Chronicles.....	307	Job	390	Obadiah	699
2 Chronicles.....	333	Joel	688	1 Peter.....	934
Colossians.....	902	John	809	2 Peter.....	938
1 Corinthians.....	870	1 John	941	Philemon	919
2 Corinthians.....	882	2 John	945	Philippians.....	899
Daniel	667	3 John	946	Proverbs	481
Deuteronomy.....	139	Jonah	701	Psalms	415
Ecclesiastes	505	Joshua	168	Revelation.....	949
Ephesians	895	Jude	947	Romans.....	857
Esther	384	Judges	188	Ruth	208
Exodus.....	44	1 Kings	257	1 Samuel.....	211
Ezekiel.....	627	2 Kings	282	2 Samuel.....	235
Ezra	362	Lamentations.....	621	Song of Songs	512
Galatians.....	890	Leviticus	79	1 Thessalonians.....	905
Genesis	3	Luke	779	2 Thessalonians.....	908
Habakkuk.....	712	Malachi	728	1 Timothy.....	910
Haggai	718	Mark.....	761	2 Timothy.....	914
Hebrews	920	Matthew	733	Titus.....	917
Hosea.....	679	Micah.....	703	Zechariah	720
Isaiah	517	Nahum.....	709	Zephaniah	715

A NOTE TO READERS

The *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, was first published in 1996. It quickly became one of the most popular Bible translations in the English-speaking world. While the NLT's influence was rapidly growing, the Bible Translation Committee determined that an additional investment in scholarly review and text refinement could make it even better. So shortly after its initial publication, the committee began an eight-year process with the purpose of increasing the level of the NLT's precision without sacrificing its easy-to-understand quality. This second-generation text was completed in 2004, with minor changes subsequently introduced in 2007, 2013, and 2015.

The goal of any Bible translation is to convey the meaning and content of the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts as accurately as possible to contemporary readers. The challenge for our translators was to create a text that would communicate as clearly and powerfully to today's readers as the original texts did to readers and listeners in the ancient biblical world. The resulting translation is easy to read and understand, while also accurately communicating the meaning and content of the original biblical texts. The NLT is a general-purpose text especially good for study, devotional reading, and reading aloud in worship services.

We believe that the New Living Translation—which combines the latest biblical scholarship with a clear, dynamic writing style—will communicate God's word powerfully to all who read it. We publish it with the prayer that God will use it to speak his timeless truth to the church and the world in a fresh, new way.

The Publishers

*A full introduction to the NLT can be found at www.TheNLT.com/NLTintro.
A complete list of the translators can be found at www.TheNLT.com/scholars.*

WHERE CAN I FIND IT?

The Creation Account	Genesis 1:1–2:7	The Lord's Prayer	Matthew 6:9-13
The Great Flood	Genesis 6:1–9:17	The Golden Rule	Luke 6:31
The Ten Commandments . . .	Exodus 20:1-17	The Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11-32
The Shepherd's Psalm	Psalms 23	The Last Supper	Matthew 26:20-25
The Sermon on the Mount . . .	Matthew 5–7	The Love Chapter	1 Corinthians 13
The Beatitudes	Matthew 5:3-11	The Faith Chapter	Hebrews 11

GREAT STORIES OF THE BIBLE

Cain and Abel	Genesis 4:1-16	David's Mighty Men . . .	1 Chronicles 11:10-25
The Flood	Genesis 6:1–9:17	Esther Saves the Jews	Esther 1:1–10:3
The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:1-9	Job Is Tested	Job 1:1-22
Abraham's Call	Genesis 12:1-9	Ezekiel's Vision	Ezekiel 37:1-14
Abraham's Obedience	Genesis 22:1-19	The Fiery Furnace	Daniel 3:1-30
Joseph as a Slave	Genesis 37:18-36	The Lions' Den	Daniel 6:1-28
Moses Is Born	Exodus 2:1-10	Jonah and the Fish	Jonah 1:1–2:10
The Burning Bush	Exodus 3:1-22	Jesus Is Born	Matthew 1:18-25
The Ten Plagues	Exodus 7:14–12:30		Luke 2:1-20
The Exodus	Exodus 12:31-51	Wise Men Visit Jesus	Matthew 2:1-12
The Red Sea	Exodus 14:21-31	Jesus Is Tempted	Matthew 4:1-11
The Gold Calf	Exodus 32:1-29	Jesus Feeds 5,000	Matthew 14:13-21
The 12 Scouts	Numbers 13:1-33		Mark 6:30-44
The Bronze Snake	Numbers 21:4-9	Jesus Walks on Water . . .	Matthew 14:22-36
Jericho Falls	Joshua 6:1-27	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
Gideon as Judge	Judges 6:1–7:25	The Lost Son	Luke 15:11-32
Samson as Judge	Judges 13:1–16:31	Jesus and Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1-10
God Provides for Ruth	Ruth 1:1–4:22	Jesus Raises Lazarus	John 11:1-44
Samuel Is Born	1 Samuel 1:1-28	The Triumphant Entry	Matthew 21:1-11
David Kills Goliath	1 Samuel 17:1-51	The Last Supper	Matthew 26:17-30
David and Jonathan	1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-42		John 13:1-30
David and Bathsheba	2 Samuel 11:1-27	Jesus' Crucifixion	Matthew 27:32-56
Solomon Judges Wisely . . .	1 Kings 3:16-28		John 19:16-42
Elijah's Challenge	1 Kings 18:1-40	Jesus' Resurrection	Matthew 28:1-15
God Speaks to Elijah	1 Kings 19:1-18		Luke 24:1-34
Elisha Heals Naaman	2 Kings 5:1-19	Jesus' Ascension	Luke 24:50-53
			Acts 1:6-11

The Holy Spirit Comes	Acts 2:1-13	Saul Encounters Jesus	Acts 9:1-19
Ananias and Sapphira	Acts 5:1-11	Paul Is Shipwrecked	Acts 27:1-28:10

GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE

Genesis 1	Creation	Mark 12	Greatest Commandment
Exodus 12	Passover	Luke 15	Parables of the Lost
Exodus 20	Ten Commandments	John 1	The Eternal Word
Deuteronomy 6	Commitment	John 14-16	The Holy Spirit
Psalms 23	God's Love	Acts 2	Peter's Sermon
Psalms 51	Repentance	Romans 3	Salvation
Psalms 119	God's Laws	Romans 8	Hope
Psalms 139	God's Knowledge	1 Corinthians 13	Love
Proverbs 1	Wisdom	2 Corinthians 12	Dependence
Proverbs 31	A Godly Woman	Ephesians 6	Spiritual Armor
Ecclesiastes 3	Timing	Philippians 2	Christ's Humility
Isaiah 6	Isaiah's Vision	Colossians 3	Righteous Living
Isaiah 7	Sign of Immanuel	1 Timothy 3	Leadership
Isaiah 52:13-53:12	The Suffering Servant	Hebrews 11	Faith
Jeremiah 18	God's Power	James 1	Temptation
Ezekiel 33	Israel's Watchman	1 Peter 4	Suffering
Hosea 14	Healing of Sins	1 John 1	Fellowship
Matthew 5-7	Sermon on the Mount	Revelation 21-22	Heaven

GREAT VERSES TO MEMORIZE

Exodus 14:14	God's Protection	Job 36:26	Mystery of God
Exodus 20:12-17	Commandments	Psalms 1:1-6	God's Way
Leviticus 20:7	Holiness	Psalms 3:3	God's Protection
Deuteronomy 6:4-9	Loving God	Psalms 9:1	Thankfulness
Deuteronomy 16:17	Giving	Psalms 16:8	God's Presence
Deuteronomy 33:27	God's Protection	Psalms 19:1	Creation
Joshua 1:9	Courage	Psalms 19:9-10	God's Laws
Joshua 24:15	Serving God	Psalms 19:14	Thoughts/Words
1 Samuel 15:22	Obedience	Psalms 23:1-6	God Our Shepherd
2 Samuel 22:31	God's Protection	Psalms 24:1	God's Reign
1 Chronicles 28:9	Seeking God	Psalms 30:4-5	God's Forgiveness
1 Chronicles 29:11	God's Reign	Psalms 32:8	Guidance
2 Chronicles 7:14	Humility/Repentance	Psalms 40:8	Joy
2 Chronicles 16:9a	Commitment	Psalms 46:1	Strength
Nehemiah 9:6	God the Creator	Psalms 51:4-5	Sin
Job 9:10	God's Power	Psalms 51:6-7	Purity

Psalms 51:8-10	Restoration	Habakkuk 3:19	Confidence in God
Psalms 55:16-17	Prayer/Rescue	Malachi 3:10	Giving
Psalms 56:3-4	Fear/Trust	Matthew 5:3-11	Blessings in Christ
Psalms 86:11	Purity	Matthew 5:43-45	Love for Enemies
Psalms 91:1	Rest in God	Matthew 20:26-28	Servant Leadership
Psalms 92:1	Thankfulness	Mark 11:25	Forgiveness
Psalms 96:3	Testimony	Luke 6:31	Loving Others
Psalms 100:3	God the Creator	Luke 11:2-4	Prayer
Psalms 102:25-27	God Is Unchanging	Luke 14:26-27	Following Christ
Psalms 103:13	God Our Father	John 3:16	God's Love
Psalms 107:1	Testimony	John 11:25	Resurrection
Psalms 116:1	Prayer	John 14:1	Trust
Psalms 116:15	Grief at Death	John 14:6	Christ Alone
Psalms 119:9	Purity/God's Word	John 14:27	Peace
Psalms 119:105	God's Word/Guidance	John 15:18	Persecution
Psalms 139:13-16	God the Creator	Acts 16:31	Faith
Proverbs 1:7	Fear of God/Wisdom	Romans 1:4	Jesus
Proverbs 1:8	Education/Obedying Parents	Romans 1:16	Good News
Proverbs 3:5-6	Trust in God	Romans 3:23	Sin/Salvation
Proverbs 11:2	Pride/Humility	Romans 5:1-2	Faith/Peace with God
Proverbs 15:1	Gentleness/Speech	Romans 6:23	Spiritual Death/Eternal Life
Proverbs 18:24	Friendship	Romans 8:28	God's Plan
Proverbs 19:1	Honesty	Romans 12:1-2	Commitment to God
Proverbs 21:21	Godliness	1 Corinthians 10:13	Temptation
Ecclesiastes 12:1	Honoring God	2 Corinthians 1:3-4	Comfort
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14	Duty/Fear of God	2 Corinthians 4:7	God's Power
Isaiah 26:3	Peace	2 Corinthians 5:17	New Persons
Isaiah 40:6-8	Humanity/God's Word	2 Corinthians 9:7	Giving Cheerfully
Isaiah 40:29-31	Renewed Strength	Galatians 5:22-23	Fruit of the Spirit
Isaiah 41:10	Fear/Strength	Galatians 6:4	Responsibility
Isaiah 53:6	Christ Our Substitute	Galatians 6:9	Discouragement
Isaiah 55:6	Seeking God	Ephesians 3:20	God's Power
Isaiah 55:9	God's Power	Ephesians 4:25	Truth
Isaiah 58:11	Guidance/Provision	Ephesians 4:26-27	Anger
Isaiah 65:24	Prayer	Ephesians 4:28	Stealing
Jeremiah 15:16	God's Words	Ephesians 4:29	Bad Language
Jeremiah 29:11	God's Plan	Ephesians 6:1	Family Relationships
Jeremiah 31:3	God's Love	Philippians 4:6	Joy and Peace
Lamentations 3:22-23	God's Love	Philippians 4:13	Strength
Amos 5:24	Justice	Philippians 4:19	Needs
Micah 6:8	Duty/Righteousness	Colossians 1:15-17	Christ the Creator

Colossians 3:2	Thoughts	Hebrews 13:5-6	Money
Colossians 3:13	Forgiveness	James 1:5-8	Wisdom/Prayer
Colossians 3:15	Peace from Christ	James 1:17	God's Goodness
1 Thessalonians 3:12	Loving Others	James 1:19	Listening/Patience
1 Thessalonians 4:3	Sexual Sin	James 4:7-10	Humility/Repentance
1 Thessalonians 5:17-18	Prayer	1 Peter 5:7	Worry
Hebrews 2:18	Temptation	1 John 1:9	Confession/Forgiveness
Hebrews 4:12	God's Word	1 John 2:3-6	Obedying God
Hebrews 4:16	Grace/Mercy	1 John 3:18-19	Love in Action
Hebrews 10:24-25	Encouragement	1 John 5:18	God's Family
Hebrews 11:1	Faith	Revelation 3:20	Salvation

WELCOME TO THE BIBLE!

Life needs certain things to sustain it and provide for growth—food, air, and water. If these ingredients are in short supply, any living thing will shrivel, weaken, and even die. The same is true of our spiritual lives, and reading God’s Word is one of the essentials for a healthy spiritual life.

The Bible is the most powerful book ever written—countless lives have been changed through its truth. That’s because this book was inspired by God. Over hundreds of years, he chose certain people to write down what he wanted to communicate. As the Bible itself says, “No prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Although the Bible was written long ago, its message is timeless, personal, and practical. Each day, readers all over the world turn to it for words of comfort, encouragement, hope, inspiration, and guidance. In one of his letters, the apostle Paul reminds Timothy: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right” (2 Timothy 3:16).

But the Bible is more than just an answer book. It is a library of books filled with inspiring stories, wisdom poetry, worship songs, and direct messages and instructions for living. And they all take part in telling one great story—the story of how God created our beautiful world, how it was broken and scarred by sin, and how our loving God has throughout history reached out to heal what was broken, ultimately through his visit to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The Scriptures also teach us how we can participate in God’s work by becoming part of his family through a relationship with Jesus. (To find out more, see *You Can Know God Personally* on page A29.)

Although the authors of Scripture wrote in ancient Hebrew or Greek, their words have been carefully translated into many languages, including modern English. You can be confident that this is an accurate translation of these ancient Scriptures.

Where Do You Begin?

Eventually, you will want to read every word of the Bible. But you don’t have to read straight through from the beginning. Since the Bible is a library of books, you can begin almost anywhere.

If the Bible is fairly new to you, start your reading in the New Testament with the book of Mark (page 761). This book will give you a dramatic introduction to the events that changed the world. It is a short, fast-moving biography of Jesus Christ, written by

a young man who probably witnessed most of Jesus' three-year ministry. In addition, Mark probably knew Jesus' disciples well and drew on their memories to help write this book.

Then follow the growth of Christianity by reading the book of Acts (page 830). This picks up where Mark ends and continues the story of the first Christians and how they spread the Good News of Jesus all over the world. Next read the book of Romans (page 857). This is one of the many letters written by the apostle Paul, sent to a group of first-century Christians in Rome. In it Paul clearly tells how selfish, sinful humans can find acceptance with God. After you finish Romans, read some of the shorter books in the New Testament before turning to the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, begin with the people stories in Genesis. Then continue with some of the other books named after the main characters—Joshua, Ruth, Ezra, Job, Daniel, Jonah, and others. Be sure to read complete stories instead of stopping at the end of a chapter. For instance, the story of Gideon is covered in Judges 6–8 (pages 192-195). The story of Jonah is covered by all four chapters of the book with his name (pages 701-702). Turn to Psalms (page 415) and read enough of them to get a sense of what it means to worship God and pour out your feelings to him. (You may want to begin with Psalms 1, 18, 23, 24, 100, 121, and 139.) Also read from Proverbs (page 481) to discover just how practical God's wisdom can be.

For more direction in your reading, take a look at the list of *Great Stories of the Bible* (A6) for accounts of how God works in and through his people, the list of *Great Chapters of the Bible* (A7) for excellent passages for study and application, and the list of *Great Verses to Memorize* (A7) for verses you should take the time to commit to memory.

How to Understand What You Read

The following three steps will be helpful as you interpret Scripture. Following them in order should help you to avoid some of these common pitfalls in interpretation.

Observation: The first step is to observe carefully what the author actually wrote. What is he saying? What is the obvious point? It might help if you stop and restate what the passage says in your own words. You might want to underline key phrases and words that seem to sum up what the author is saying. You can then try to understand what he means.

Interpretation: The second step is to try to interpret what the author meant when he wrote the passage. What is going on in the original context that would have prompted the message? Why did the author write what he did? What did it mean to him when he wrote it? For instance, in the book of John, the author says there were a lot of other things he could have written, "But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life

by the power of his name” (John 20:31). As you read John 5, you might wonder why John included the story about the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. This requires the use of your imagination.

Application: The third step involves applying the meaning of the passage to your life. You want to discover what use you can make of the timeless truth discovered in the Scripture passage you have just read. Ask the questions, *So what?* and *What difference does this passage make in my life?* When you apply the meaning of the Bible to your life, you will find that the Bible’s purpose is to “teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right” (2 Timothy 3:16).

It is important that you don’t stop with just understanding the Bible’s message, or even with knowing how to apply it. You need to actually put God’s truth into action. Otherwise, you won’t experience the benefits of living by God’s plan. So after discovering God’s truth and realizing what God wants you to do, take steps to obey him. The Scriptures tell us, “Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it” (James 1:22-25).

You may find it helpful to read the *Historical Journey through the Bible* (page A13). This article presents the sweeping story of the Bible by dividing it into ten major historical eras. Understanding the entire flow of biblical history and how each part fits into the whole will help you get your bearings as you begin your own great journey through Scripture.

HISTORICAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE

Biblical history spans the entire course of time from the creation of the world to the era of the early Christian church in the late first century A.D. At its most basic level, it is simply the story of God fashioning a people for himself and redemptively interacting with them throughout history. From the creation of the world and the first human beings to the fall of humanity; to the calling of Abraham and the rise of Israel; to the return of Judah from exile in Babylon; to the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and finally to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in all believers—God continually works to redeem a people for himself, a people he can lovingly bless with good things as they seek him and find their hope in him, the source of all good things.

Beginnings: Creation—2100 B.C.

The story begins with the very creation of the world, when God formed the heavens and earth and then all living things to inhabit them. All that he created was “good,” but God distinguished human beings from the rest of creation by creating them in his very own image. He abundantly provided for Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, by placing them in a specially prepared garden, and he enjoyed unbroken fellowship with them. But this perfect world was soon poisoned by sin when Adam and Eve sought to be their own masters and disobeyed God. Instead of trusting and obeying God, they swallowed the lie of the serpent, who told them they could be like God. Because of their sin, Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden and from then on suffered pain, sorrow, hardship, and even death. But thankfully, the story of God’s people did not end there. In fact, that was just the beginning.

Sadly, the curse of sin brought into the world by Adam and Eve was passed down to all their descendants as well. Every human being is “bent,” so to speak, just like their ancestors. This can be seen as early as their first child: Cain killed his brother out of jealousy. The curse of sin continued until the whole world was so wicked that God chose to wipe it all out and start over, in a sense, with a new people, a people descended from a righteous man named Noah.

God instructed Noah to build a giant boat to save his family and pairs of every kind of animal living on the earth. Then God made it rain for 40 days until the whole earth was covered with water, and every living thing that was not on the boat—including human beings—died. After the floodwaters subsided, Noah and his family left the boat to start a new humanity. God told them to multiply and fill the earth, and he promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood.

Noah’s descendants multiplied. Everyone spoke a single language, enabling them

to easily work together. So they decided to build a great tower to the heavens, a testimony to their own greatness. But God chose to confuse them with different languages, making it virtually impossible for them to continue with their great project, since they could no longer understand each other. As a result, the people soon dispersed and spread out over all the earth, which is what God had commanded them to do in the first place.

God's Chosen Family: 2100–1800 B.C.

It appears that with each generation after Noah, people drifted further and further from God. God chose once again to create a new people for himself *within* the rest of humanity—this time through a man named Abram (eventually renamed Abraham). Through this chosen people, God would ultimately bless all of humanity. Interestingly, the Bible does not mention why God chose Abram. It simply says God told him to leave his family and his home country and go to a new land that God would show him. God promised to bless Abraham and make a great nation from his descendants. And Abraham obeyed God. Thus begins the rest of the story of the Old Testament—the story of God's chosen people.

In obedience and faith, Abraham left his home and traveled to the land of Canaan. God told Abraham that this was the land he was going to give him, and he sealed his promise with a solemn covenant ceremony. God also reaffirmed his promise to give Abraham many descendants. After an agonizing wait, God finally gave Abraham and his wife, Sarah, a son, Isaac. Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 91. Then God tested Abraham's faith by telling him to sacrifice Isaac. This was the ultimate demonstration of Abraham's faithful trust in God since Isaac was the only son born to Abraham and Sarah, the only visible hope that God would fulfill his promise to bless Abraham with many descendants. Abraham obeyed, and God spared Isaac's life.

Isaac lived much like his father, sojourning in various places in Canaan. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, gave birth to twin boys, Esau and Jacob. Esau was older, but he sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew, and Jacob then tricked his father into granting him the blessings that belonged to Esau. So Esau became very angry with Jacob, and Jacob fled to the homeland of his ancestors, where he lived with his uncle Laban for many years. While working for Laban, Jacob married his daughters Leah and Rachel and began to raise a family. He eventually returned to Canaan and reconciled with Esau. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. His 12 sons became the ancestors of the 12 tribes of Israel. God also reaffirmed to Jacob the covenant he had made with his father, Isaac, and his grandfather Abraham.

One of Jacob's 12 sons was named Joseph, clearly Jacob's favorite. Though one of the youngest, Joseph had dreams (literally) of one day becoming master over his brothers. His brothers became very angry with him because of this and sold him to slave traders headed to Egypt. Yet God blessed Joseph even while a slave in Egypt. Through a complicated interplay of circumstances, Joseph was eventually brought

before Pharaoh himself to interpret Pharaoh's dream. God gave Joseph wisdom to understand that the dream foretold of a coming worldwide famine. As a result, Pharaoh made him second in command of all of Egypt in order to prepare. During the famine, Joseph's brothers were forced to travel to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, though they did not know he was their long-lost brother. Eventually Joseph revealed his identity to them, and they were reconciled. Joseph convinced his entire family, including his father, Jacob, to move to Egypt. And there Jacob's descendants flourished and multiplied.

The Birth of Israel: 1800–1406 B.C.

Many years later, a new leader arose in Egypt who did not know of all that Joseph had done, and he began to oppress the Israelites for fear that they might rebel against him. The Israelites were made slaves, and eventually Pharaoh even ordered all Israelite baby boys to be thrown into the Nile River. One Israelite couple, however, hid their baby boy in a basket in the river to keep him from being killed. Pharaoh's daughter found the baby and adopted him, calling him Moses.

Moses grew up in the Egyptian royal court. One day, he witnessed an Egyptian beating an Israelite, so Moses killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. When Pharaoh found out, Moses fled to the land of Midian. There God spoke to Moses from a burning bush, revealing his name—the LORD—and telling him to go back to Egypt and lead his people out of slavery to the land that God was giving them. Moses was reluctant to go, but the Lord assured him that he would be with him and would give him power to do amazing miracles before Pharaoh. God also sent Moses' brother, Aaron, along with him to Egypt.

When Moses arrived in Egypt, he spoke to Pharaoh, telling him God's command to let the Israelites go out into the wilderness to worship God. Pharaoh refused and then treated the Israelites even more harshly. This set in motion a series of 10 plagues that God inflicted on Egypt. Each plague cycle followed essentially the same pattern: Moses told Pharaoh to let God's people go; Pharaoh refused; the plague was unleashed; Pharaoh recanted and agreed to let the Israelites go; Moses prayed for the plague to be stopped; Pharaoh then changed his mind and refused to let the Israelites go. The final plague was a curse upon the firstborn of all people and animals in Egypt. All homes without the blood of a lamb smeared on the doorframe would be visited by the angel of death. The firstborn sons of Egypt were killed by the angel that night, including Pharaoh's own son. The annual feast of Passover commemorates this momentous event.

After this 10th plague, Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt; but once they had left, he again changed his mind and set out in pursuit of them. Just as Pharaoh's army was closing in on the Israelites, who were blocked by the Red Sea, the Lord miraculously parted the sea and allowed the Israelites to pass through on dry land. When the Egyptians tried to follow them, the sea closed over them and they drowned. This whole

event, the Exodus, became a defining moment in the history of the nation of Israel, when God decisively rescued and redeemed his people for himself. Repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, God would refer to himself as the one who led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt with strength and miraculous signs.

With the threat of the Egyptians behind them, the Israelites were now free to journey to the place where God wanted them to worship him. They began to grumble for food, so God provided quail for meat, and each morning manna, mysterious bread-like flakes, fell from heaven. At times, God also provided water from a rock.

Finally the Israelites came to Mount Sinai, and God met with Moses there. God gave him the Ten Commandments and other instructions to give to the people. These essentially defined what it meant to live as the people of God. While the Israelites were at Sinai, God also gave Moses instructions for building the Tabernacle, which would serve as a sort of portable temple as the Israelites moved from place to place on their way to the land that God had promised to their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even while Moses was receiving God's laws, however, the people demonstrated their persistent unfaithfulness by constructing an idol and worshiping it! And Moses' brother Aaron, who had just been appointed high priest over the Israelites, was the one who instructed them to build it!

After the Israelites had camped at the foot of Mount Sinai for a year, God directed them to begin making their way to the Promised Land. God told Moses to send 12 scouts into Canaan. All but Joshua and Caleb reported that the land was good but that the inhabitants were stronger than them. So the Israelites refused to take possession of the land. Because they failed to trust in God for victory, he condemned them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until that entire generation had died, except for Joshua and Caleb. God continued to provide for his people during those forty years, despite their repeated instances of grumbling and unfaithfulness to him. At the end of 40 years, the new generation of Israelites came to Kadesh-barnea, and then they began making their way to the Promised Land once again. They set up camp on the plains of Moab. The Promised Land lay just across the Jordan River to the west. Moses reviewed the history of God's dealings with them up to that point and exhorted them to be faithful to God after they conquered the land. Moses died just before the Israelites entered the land, leaving his assistant Joshua to lead the conquest.

Possessing the Land: 1406–1050 B.C.

The first city to be taken was the imposing city of Jericho, which stood just across the Jordan River in Canaan. But the Israelites did not even have to lay siege to the city or attack its gates to capture it, because God miraculously caused the walls of the city to fall down. Joshua then led the Israelites to capture towns throughout the Promised Land. The entire conquest of the land occurred over many years, but they never fully completed it. God had commanded the Israelites to completely drive out the Canaanites, but they were satisfied to simply live alongside the inhabitants. Several areas within

the land continued to be controlled by Canaanites even after the conquest period was over, and their idolatry was a snare to the Israelites for centuries to come.

After Joshua died, God repeatedly raised up leaders, called judges, to deliver his people from oppression. This oppression was typically a direct result of the Israelites' sin. This cycle of sin, oppression, and deliverance occurred throughout the period of the judges. During this time the Israelites also experienced conflict among themselves as the tribe of Benjamin was almost completely wiped out by the other tribes in a bloody civil war. The period of the judges was a spiritually dark, chaotic time for Israel, all the people doing whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

The United Monarchy: 1050–930 B.C.

The Israelites asked Samuel, the last of the judges, for a king to rule over them like the kings of the nations around them. God told Samuel to agree to their request but to warn them of the hardships a king would bring upon them. God had been their king, but they had rejected his leadership in favor of being more like the other nations.

God led Samuel to anoint Saul from the tribe of Benjamin as the first king (c. 1050 B.C.). Saul was tall and handsome. He also proved to be an able military leader in many ways. But his spiritual character was lacking. On various occasions, he sacrificed God's ways to ensure military success or personal gain. For these reasons, God rejected Saul as king and chose a man after his own heart to replace him: David.

David was an unlikely choice. The youngest of eight brothers, he was not even considered at first. But soon after Samuel anointed David to be the next king, David demonstrated that he was indeed specially chosen by God; for he slew the Philistine giant Goliath when all Israel's soldiers, including his brothers, were too afraid to face the giant in battle.

David joined Saul's warriors at his palace and became close friends with Saul's son Jonathan. David quickly proved himself to be a very able military leader and gained the favor of the Israelite people. This incited Saul's bitter jealousy, and Saul began trying to kill David. David fled, moving from place to place, at times narrowly escaping Saul and his men. When David heard that Saul and his sons had been killed in a battle with the Philistines, he moved to Hebron and was proclaimed king over Judah. But the commander of Saul's army proclaimed Ishbosheth, one of Saul's sons, king over Israel. Eventually Ishbosheth was assassinated by his own men, and David was proclaimed king over all the Israelite tribes.

After becoming king over all Israel around 1000 B.C., David captured the fortified city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites and moved his capital there. David was extremely successful in battle against virtually all the surrounding nations. He established a treaty with the powerful and wealthy city-state of Tyre. The king of Tyre supplied David with stonemasons and coveted cedar, and David built himself a palace and stockpiled materials for building the Temple.

The high point of David's reign was when God chose to establish a permanent

covenant with David and his descendants. David wanted to build a permanent Temple for the Lord in Jerusalem but the Lord had a different plan: God was going to build David a "house," that is, he was going to establish David's family line as the ruling dynasty over Israel forever.

Unfortunately, David's reign as king was not without trouble. David himself committed adultery with the wife of Uriah, one of his most valiant warriors, and she became pregnant. Then David sought to cover up his sin by arranging Uriah's death on the battlefield. Later in his reign, David brought a plague upon all Israel because he ordered a census to be taken of all men of military age. Several of David's children brought heartache to him as well. David's son Amnon raped his own half-sister Tamar, and then her full brother Absalom killed Amnon in revenge. Absalom then fled into exile. Years later Absalom returned, but he mounted a rebellion against his father and proclaimed himself king. David was forced to flee Jerusalem for a time and set up his capital in Mahanaim. David's men fought against Absalom's men, and Absalom was killed, so David returned to Jerusalem.

Just before David died in 970 B.C., he appointed his son Solomon as king over Israel. Having received an extensive and powerful kingdom, Solomon was able to focus on tasks such as building a beautiful royal palace and the Temple for the Lord in Jerusalem. At the same time, Solomon capitalized on Israel's strategic position as a land bridge between Egypt and the other major powers of the ancient Near East. Solomon exacted lucrative tolls from those traveling through Israel, and he even engaged in arms dealing, buying horses and chariots from various nations and selling them to others. Solomon expanded his kingdom until it reached as far as the Euphrates River. Solomon's wisdom and riches were renowned throughout the ancient Near East.

However, Solomon's reign was not entirely a success story. He married literally hundreds of wives, primarily to seal political alliances with other nations, and this led to the spread of idolatry in Israel as these wives brought their idolatrous ways with them. Solomon even funded the building of pagan shrines for his wives on the hill across from the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. Solomon's extravagant royal court also placed a huge tax burden on the people of Israel, a burden that became difficult to bear.

Splintered Nation: 930–586 B.C.

These cracks in Solomon's kingdom eventually led to outright rebellion. When his son Rehoboam became king in 930 B.C., the people of Israel demanded that he grant some reprieve from the heavy tax burden placed on them by his father. Rehoboam foolishly vowed instead to tax the people even more. So 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel refused to submit to Rehoboam, and they set up their own king instead. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal. From then on, the kingdom established by the 10 northern tribes was called Israel, and the kingdom in the south that continued to be ruled by Davidic kings was called Judah. The division between these two kingdoms was very real, and they often fought wars against each other.

The northern tribes installed a man named Jeroboam as their king, and he immediately set a wicked precedent of idolatry for Israel. In order to keep his people from traveling to Jerusalem (in Judah) to worship at the Temple, Jeroboam set up calf idols at the northern and southern extremes of his kingdom and encouraged the people to worship there instead. He also appointed priests who were not Levites. His wickedness was so renowned that later wicked kings were said to follow the example of Jeroboam, who led Israel into sin.

The people of Judah continued to worship at the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, and their priests were descended from Aaron, as the law of Moses stipulated. Not that idolatry was never a problem in Judah, but for most of Judah's existence, idolatry did not typically receive the same degree of royal backing and widespread acceptance as it did in the northern kingdom.

Another distinction between the two kingdoms was the frequency with which royal dynasties changed. The northern kingdom experienced numerous assassinations and coups, which led to new dynasties taking power. But the southern kingdom always remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty.

Perhaps one of the most significant kings of Israel was Ahab, who took the throne in 874 B.C. Ahab was a skilled military leader. Spiritually, however, Ahab was very wicked, leading the Israelites into idolatry and other sins. Much of his wickedness was due to the influence of his wife Jezebel, the daughter of a pagan king. Jezebel promoted idolatry throughout the land, and she and Ahab were often condemned by the prophet Elijah.

Around this time a number of prophets gained prominence in Israel and Judah, and they spoke out against many sins that had grown rampant in society, including social injustice, idolatry, and general unfaithfulness to the Lord. They also foretold of a day when God would send his deliverer to Israel, a divine ruler who would set all things right once again. This deliverer is sometimes referred to as the Messiah ("anointed one"). The writings of several of these prophets became part of the Old Testament.

Over time, Assyria regained strength and absorbed nation after nation into its vast empire. Israel's territory was repeatedly reduced by Assyrian attacks until it was less than half its original size. Finally in 722 B.C., Israel's capital city of Samaria fell to the Assyrians, and the northern kingdom came to an end. Many Israelites were exiled to faraway lands, and other foreign peoples were brought in to diffuse the possibility of unified revolt. The Bible makes it clear that this exile was a direct result of the wickedness and idolatry of the people of Israel. Long ago when God gave his laws to Moses, he had forewarned the people that they, too, would be cast out of the Promised Land if they became like the wicked Canaanites. Now the day of reckoning had finally come for Israel's many sins of idolatry and injustice.

Several kings of Judah stand out. Jehoshaphat was regarded as a righteous king by the writers of Scripture, and he earnestly sought the Lord when foreign armies

threatened Judah. However, he formed an alliance with wicked King Ahab of Israel, which had consequences later.

King Ahaz of Judah was deemed a wicked king by the writers of Scripture. When the northern kingdom of Israel teamed up with the Arameans to attack Judah (733 B.C.), Ahaz made the fateful decision to appeal to Assyria for help, essentially making Judah a vassal (subservient) kingdom to Assyria. He also replaced the altar of the Lord with a replica of a pagan one he saw in Damascus, and he got rid of many other sacred Temple items. Eventually he closed up the Temple entirely and allowed idolatry to flourish in Judah.

Ironically, Ahaz's son Hezekiah was one of the most righteous kings of Israel, and he was also a successful military leader. Hezekiah knew that the Assyrians would soon attempt to conquer Judah. Hezekiah prepared the city for this attack, which kept it from falling for a long time. Finally God sent a plague throughout the Assyrian camp, and the few who survived broke off the siege and returned to Assyria. Hezekiah also restored and purified the Temple and the worship of the Lord, purged idolatry from the land, and reinstated the festival of Passover.

Just as quickly as Hezekiah had restored proper worship of the Lord, his wicked son Manasseh corrupted it all once again. Manasseh promoted idolatry throughout Judah like no one else before him. He placed a pagan idol in the Temple of the Lord and even sacrificed his own sons by fire just outside the walls of Jerusalem. Near the end of his life, Manasseh was taken away into exile in Babylon, and he repented of all that he had done. After he was allowed to return to Judah, he strove to undo all the evil that he had done, tearing down pagan altars and restoring worship of the Lord.

By the time Manasseh's grandson Josiah became king of Judah (640 B.C.), Assyria was in decline, and the Babylonians were on the rise in the ancient Near East. Josiah capitalized on the situation, expanding the borders of Judah to include nearly all of the northern kingdom of Israel, whose people had by this time been carried away into exile. Josiah then strove to purge the land of idolatry and restore proper worship of the Lord. He also arranged for extensive repairs to be made to the Temple. Josiah died in 609 B.C. while trying to stop the Egyptians from passing through Judah and Israel to help the Assyrians, who were on the run from the Babylonians and the Medes in the far north.

After Josiah died, the Babylonians essentially took over Judah, installing and quickly deposing several of Josiah's sons as kings of Judah. They also exiled the upper echelon of society to Babylon in several waves (605 B.C., 597 B.C., and 586 B.C.) until finally in 586 B.C. the Babylonians attacked the city of Jerusalem and completely destroyed the Temple, leaving the once-proud nation in ruins.

Exile: 586–538 B.C.

Unlike the experience of the northern kingdom of Israel, the Judeans were, for the most part, allowed to maintain their cultural and religious distinctiveness even in exile, and no large-scale effort was made to repopulate the land of Judah with foreigners. It

was during the Exile that the people of Judah first came to be referred to as Jews (from the term *Judeans*).

This time of exile had a massive impact on virtually every aspect of Israelite life. Only the poor were left in Judah, and the ritual sacrificial system had essentially ceased. At the same time, many of those taken into exile became somewhat prosperous and even occupied positions of significant political power in the governments of their captors. Daniel and his friends were groomed to be part of the royal court, and Daniel was a close adviser to several Babylonian and Persian rulers.

The Babylonian empire were the ones who conquered Judah and took them off into exile, but the Babylonians soon faced a military threat themselves. The mighty Persian empire from the north was growing, and they eventually conquered Babylon and nearly everything else in the known world at the time. Persia had a different stance towards conquered peoples than Babylon had, which led to the end of this period of exile for the Jews.

Return and Diaspora: 538–6 B.C.

King Cyrus of Persia captured Babylon in 539 B.C. and absorbed the Babylonian empire into his vast domain. In order to foster gratitude and loyalty among his subjects, Cyrus quickly decreed that those held captive in Babylon were free to return to their native lands. So around 538 B.C., a small contingent of Jews returned home to the land of Israel and reestablished a semiautonomous state under the dominion of Persia. They repaired the altar, reinstated the daily sacrifices, and rebuilt the Temple as well. As the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah attest, Israel continued to enjoy relative religious freedom under the Persians throughout the remainder of the Old Testament period, despite occasional periods of oppression.

Not all of the Jews returned to the Promised Land, however. Over the decades in exile, many had largely integrated with the societies in which they were living and had built lives for themselves there. Over time the Hebrew language came to be replaced by Aramaic (the dominant language of the land of their exile) as the primary spoken language among Jews, and many Jews began to intermarry with the local foreign peoples and to regard their place of exile as their permanent home. This large population of Jews living permanently outside of the Promised Land while maintaining some degree of religious and cultural distinctiveness is often referred to as the Diaspora (“scattering”). Some, like Daniel, Mordecai, and Esther, continued to serve God faithfully even in prominent positions while far from the land of Israel. Over time, more and more of the Jews chose to return home, even leaving important positions to do so, such as Nehemiah, who was cup-bearer to the king.

The Intertestamental Period

The time between the last recorded events of the Old Testament and the first recorded events of the New Testament are sometimes referred to as the intertestamental period.

Christians often think of this period as shrouded in mystery and darkness. In reality, quite a bit is known about this very formative period of biblical history, and understanding these events can help us better understand the New Testament. In a real way, the intertestamental period set the scene for the life and ministry of Jesus and his followers. For example, the Pharisees and Sadducees didn't even exist during Old Testament times; but by the time of Jesus, these two groups were key players in the political and religious life of Israel—so much so that Jesus spent considerable time and energy condemning them and instructing his disciples not to follow their example.

A brief review of a few events from the Old Testament will help us better understand the events that came after them. When the Assyrians exiled the northern kingdom *out* of the land, they brought foreign peoples from other lands *into* Israel in order to diffuse the possibility of unified revolt. Inter-marriage among these foreigners and Israelites in Palestine gave rise to a group of people known as Samaritans, who were characterized by their syncretistic blend of Judaism and pagan religious practices. When Babylon conquered and exiled the southern kingdom of Judah, they destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, bringing a halt to the ritual sacrificial system of Israel. This crisis led to a shift in focus away from the Temple and its rituals to the written word of Scripture, which was still accessible even in exile. Thus, it is likely during this time that synagogues and scribes became more widespread in Israelite society.

It is roughly at this point that we quietly exit the period of the Old Testament and enter the time known as the intertestamental period. Perhaps the single most significant event that occurred during this period was the rise of Alexander the Great. After ascending to the throne at the age of 20 (336 B.C.) and securing his grip over Macedonia and the Greek peninsula, young Alexander launched a series of stunning victories over the Persians that eventually culminated in his complete dominion over virtually all former Persian territory. Just as quickly as he rose to power, however, Alexander succumbed to illness and died in 323 B.C. at the age of 32.

One major effect of Alexander's conquest relates to his promotion of the Greek language and culture throughout his conquered lands. Greek soon came to function as a near universal means of communication and understanding throughout the ancient Near East. The pervasiveness and lasting influence of the Greek language can be seen most clearly in the fact that every single book of the New Testament, over 300 years after Alexander's death, was written in Greek.

Upon Alexander's death, his kingdom was broken up among his generals and other successors. A series of wars followed, with each successor vying for territory controlled by another. In time (around 220 B.C.), the Near East came to be dominated by three primary Greek powers: the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt; the Seleucid dynasty in much of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Persia; and the Antigonid dynasty in Macedonia. The land of Israel was initially part of the Ptolemaic realm, and Jews typically enjoyed a great deal of religious freedom and even favor at times. During this time a large number of Jews

moved to Alexandria in northern Egypt, where they became relatively prosperous and influential. It was in Alexandria that a group of Jewish biblical scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek to make it more accessible to the increasing number of Jews who no longer spoke Hebrew. The translation, known as the Septuagint, would later become the Bible of the early Christian church, and most Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament are drawn from it.

In 198 B.C., the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III seized the land of Israel from the Ptolemies. When his son Antiochus IV Epiphanes took the throne in 175 B.C., everything changed for the Jews. Antiochus held ambitions of conquering the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt. In order to shore up his defenses and to prepare for his Egyptian campaign, Antiochus imposed a strict policy of Hellenization upon his subjects, most notably the Jews in Palestine. Compliance was regarded as loyalty, and refusal was interpreted as rebellion. Jews were required to adopt the beliefs and practices of the Greeks (often abhorrent to pious Jews), and they were forbidden to practice many distinctly Jewish rituals and customs, such as circumcision, observance of the Sabbath, and ritual food laws. Copies of the law of Moses were burned. A pagan idol of Zeus was even placed in the Temple in Jerusalem. Antiochus sold the office of high priest in Israel, restricted to the line of Aaron by Mosaic law, to the highest bidder who would promote Antiochus's policies. Unsurprisingly, these policies caused a crisis of conscience for many Jews. The crisis became even more pronounced in 167 B.C. after Antiochus was forced by the Romans to turn back from certain defeat. He vented his anger mercilessly upon many Jews who refused to give up their religious beliefs, and he banned Judaism altogether. The situation was growing ripe for revolt.

Open revolt by the Jews finally broke out under the leadership of a priest named Mattathias and his five sons, who are often referred to as the Maccabees (meaning "hammers"). By 164 B.C. they had recaptured the Temple and ritually purified and restored it (the event commemorated by Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication). The next several decades were characterized by armed resistance against the Seleucid rulers, and several of Mattathias's sons lost their lives. Over time, they established their dynasty as the permanent political leaders of Israel. They were also granted the office of the high priesthood. This concentration of political and religious power in a single family led to various abuses. Ironically, each succeeding Maccabean ruler also became increasingly enamored with the Hellenistic way of life. All this led to dissension among the Jews, and various sects and parties arose with different views on these issues. The Pharisees largely opposed Hellenization and the singular power of the ruler. The Sadducees favored both. Still others, such as the Qumran community, wholly rejected the Maccabean dynasty and the Temple system as completely corrupt and withdrew into their own communities.

Maccabean rule over Israel continued until 63 B.C., when the rising Roman Empire finally engulfed Israel and Jewish independence came to an end. Around 39 B.C., a young Idumean named Herod was named king of Judea by the Roman Senate. Herod

the Great proved to be an extremely shrewd leader, an able builder (including completely refurbishing the Temple in Jerusalem), but fiercely brutal against those who opposed him.

By the end of the intertestamental period, distinct Jewish communities could be found throughout the known world, and each one would have been forced to reconcile how God's people were to continue to live in faithful obedience to God's laws in the midst of their unique cultural setting. In all of this, there also continued to be an ever evolving hope in a Messiah, the anointed one, God's chosen instrument of deliverance and restoration for his people. Various Old Testament passages laid the foundation for this hope, but exactly who the Messiah would be and what he would do were open to about as many interpretations as there were communities of God's people.

Jesus Christ: 6 B.C.–A.D. 30

In the midst of this incredibly complex interplay of religion, political struggle, and social change, God did indeed send his Messiah, the long-awaited hope of his people. But God's Messiah would not be quite like any conceived by human minds. The story of the New Testament opens with the shockingly humble birth of the King of kings.

The birth of the Messiah (called the Christ in Greek) took place in the final years of Herod the Great, probably around 6 or 5 B.C. (The odd phenomenon of Jesus being born "B.C." is due to a miscalculation by church scholars about 500 years after Jesus' death.) The angel Gabriel appeared to a virgin named Mary and foretold that she would conceive and bear a son by the power of the Holy Spirit and that he would be the Son of God and was to be called Jesus. Her fiancé, Joseph, was also told by an angel that Mary would give birth to the Messiah. Caesar Augustus ordered a census of the entire Roman world, so Joseph traveled with Mary to Bethlehem, the town of his ancestors. There Mary gave birth to Jesus, fulfilling prophecies that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Shepherds came to worship him, as did wise men (royal astrologers) from the East, perhaps as much as two years later.

Herod the Great attempted to eliminate this newborn threat to his reign by killing all baby boys in Bethlehem. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus escaped to Egypt and then returned after an angel informed them of Herod's death. They resettled in Nazareth, and Joseph took up work as a carpenter or perhaps a stonemason. The Bible tells nothing more of Jesus' childhood until he was 12, when he amazed the scribes and teachers of the law with his understanding. As Jesus grew into adulthood, it is likely that he took up Joseph's trade.

At about the age of 30, Jesus began his public ministry. John the Baptist had been drawing great crowds throughout Israel with his declaration that "the Kingdom of Heaven is near" and his baptism of repentance. Jesus was baptized by John, after which God the Father verbally affirmed Jesus' Sonship and the Holy Spirit descended upon him. Soon after this, Jesus also began to preach that "the Kingdom of Heaven is near," a key theme in his teaching and parables. Some of John's own followers began

to follow Jesus, apparently with the blessing of John himself, who saw his role as preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah, who had now arrived in the person of Jesus.

Early in his ministry, Jesus based his work in Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. Using figurative and even somewhat cryptic stories called parables, Jesus captured people's interest and taught them about the Kingdom of Heaven. He also healed many sick people, cast out demons, and performed other miracles that demonstrated his divine power and provided a foretaste of life in the Kingdom of Heaven. He began to draw large crowds of followers. Jesus selected a special group of 12 disciples to follow him everywhere he went. Several of these men were previously fishermen, including Peter, Andrew, James, and John. These men would remain with Jesus throughout his ministry and became privy to his most intimate teaching and deeds.

Jesus' ministry likely lasted at least three years, the initial years marked by increasing popularity, the final year marked by increasing dissent and even animosity. Throughout his ministry, Jesus consistently condemned two particular groups of religious leaders: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. These two groups had very differing views from each other on both religion and politics. Jesus repeatedly castigated the Pharisees for their legalistic adherence to the law of Moses that lacked real love for God and people. Jesus exposed the Sadducees' faulty understanding of Scripture and of God's power. Sometimes he lumped the two groups together in his condemnations. At the same time, Jesus often praised prostitutes, tax collectors, and other "sinners" who repented of their sins and followed him. Over time, the combination of Jesus' growing popularity, his condemnation of the religious leaders, and his claims to be the Son of God proved more than the leaders could stomach, and a plot was hatched to end his life.

By the end of his ministry, Jesus began another journey from Galilee in northern Israel to Jerusalem in the south to celebrate the Passover with his disciples. By now Jesus was extremely well known throughout Israel, and many believed him to be—or at least wondered if he might be—the Messiah, as he claimed. No doubt many were hoping for the overthrow of the hated Roman rule. News of Jesus' impending arrival in Jerusalem went ahead of him, and people laid palm branches and cloaks on the road to receive him as king. Jesus, in turn, chose to enter the city on a donkey just as the Old Testament prophet Zechariah had foretold, apparently in recognition of his role as Messiah. Thus, the city was ripe with expectation for the upcoming week of Passover, when Jews celebrated their deliverance from slavery in Egypt many centuries before.

Immediately upon entering the city in triumph, Jesus went up to the Temple and threw out the money changers and merchants, declaring that his Father's house was to be a house of prayer. His actions angered many of the religious leaders, some of whom received a cut of the profits from the Temple sales.

Jesus spent much of the week of Passover teaching in the Temple area and debating with the Pharisees and Sadducees. He also foretold of events to come, including the destruction of the Temple and his eventual return to earth to gather his people. At some

point in the week, Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' 12 closest disciples, agreed to betray Jesus to the religious leaders for 30 pieces of silver.

On Thursday of that week, Jesus shared the Passover meal with his 12 disciples. Judas Iscariot left during the meal to carry out his act of betrayal. Afterward, Jesus and his disciples went just outside the city to Gethsemane, an olive garden where they often relaxed from the busy events of the day in Jerusalem. There Judas carried out his betrayal. The guards arrested Jesus, and most of his disciples fled.

Jesus was interrogated throughout the night in order to find him guilty of a crime worthy of death. Various accusations were made, but none held up to close scrutiny. By morning, they settled on Jesus' own claim to be the Messiah in order to accuse him of treason against Rome. They led him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who held ultimate power to sentence someone to death, and they accused Jesus of treason. Pilate knew the leaders' true motives had nothing to do with loyalty to Rome, but in the end he acquiesced and condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion.

After Jesus was subjected to various abuses, beatings, and ridicule by Roman soldiers, he was nailed to a cross and put on public display as a deterrent to all who might consider committing the same crime of treason against Rome. Jesus' charge was posted: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Jesus continued to suffer on the cross until about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when he cried with a loud voice, "It is finished," and he died.

Pilate granted permission to a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea to bury Jesus' body in his own nearby tomb. Because the Sabbath was fast approaching, Jesus' body was quickly placed in the tomb without being treated with burial spices.

On Sunday, some women who had followed Jesus and cared for his needs went to Jesus' tomb to finish preparing his body for burial. When they reached the tomb, however, they discovered that Jesus' body was gone! Angels at the tomb then told them that Jesus had risen from the dead! The women ran back to tell the other disciples the news. Jesus was alive!

During the 40 days following his resurrection, Jesus appeared to various disciples on different occasions, confirming that he had been raised from the dead, giving them further instructions and teaching, and commanding them to go out and be his witnesses, telling people everywhere about him. He told his disciples to remain in Jerusalem (not their home area of Galilee) until the Holy Spirit came and filled them with power. He then ascended to heaven as his disciples watched, where he remains until he returns in glory for his people.

The Church: A.D. 30–Present

During the festival of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover, the promised Holy Spirit finally came upon Jesus' disciples, and they began proclaiming the great works of God in languages they did not even know. Peter spoke to the crowd about Jesus and his resurrection and implored his listeners to repent and follow him. About 3,000 people became believers in Jesus that day, launching the Christian church.

The depth of Jesus' impact upon these new believers became immediately visible by their commitment to love and care for each other. Many believers voluntarily gave their possessions to help provide for the needs of others in the church, and the church made specific arrangements to care for the needs of widows. God also worked many miracles through Peter and the other leaders, confirming their authority and encouraging the believers.

Persecution soon came, however. A believer named Stephen and James, the brother of John, were killed for their faith in Jesus. Many believers fled Jerusalem, but God used even this to spread the Good News across the known world. Eventually new churches were established as far away as Damascus and Antioch in Syria. Some of the leaders in the Jerusalem church moved to Antioch, including a man named Barnabas. James, the brother of Jesus, became a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

One of the persecutors was a zealous young Pharisee named Saul. As Saul was traveling to Damascus from Jerusalem to pursue Christians there, the Lord Jesus appeared to Saul, temporarily blinding him, and asked why he was persecuting him. After this, Saul completed his journey to Damascus, but as a new man: a zealous servant of Jesus Christ. God would eventually use Saul, who became known as Paul, to reach countless others with the message of the gospel.

In the meantime, the church continued to grow, as did the bounds of the gospel itself. What had originally started out essentially as a Jewish sect had expanded to include Samaritans (despised by many Jews as half-breeds), proselytized Jews (Gentiles who had become Jews), and even God-fearing Gentiles. The church received these changes with joy, but they also introduced some questions that would not be fully resolved until several years later at the Jerusalem council.

Over time Barnabas convinced Paul to join him at Antioch, and later they traveled through Cyprus and Galatia preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike. During this journey, Paul was repeatedly persecuted by Jews, and he eventually decided to begin preaching primarily to Gentiles. This raised a key question: Did these Gentiles need to adhere to the laws of Moses in order to be followers of Jesus? That is, did these Gentiles need to become converts to Judaism (including being circumcised and following strict food laws) before they could become Christians? Soon after Paul and Barnabas returned from their journey, the leaders of the Jerusalem church held a council to decide the issue. After some discussion, the leaders agreed that Gentile believers did not need to be circumcised and become Jewish converts in order to become Christians. They were full-fledged Christians just as they were.

Soon after this Paul embarked on two more missionary journeys. The great distances traveled were made possible in part by Rome's excellent road system and the relative peace ("Pax Romana") due to Rome's unrivaled power in the region. Along the way Paul established churches throughout Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia, and several of his letters to these churches have become part of the canon of the New Testament.

At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul's work among the Gentiles fostered rumor and anger among many Jews who were zealous for the law of Moses. They accused Paul of teaching Gentiles to flout the laws of Moses, and they mistakenly thought he had brought a Gentile into the Jewish section of the Temple courts. A riot erupted, and the Roman commander took Paul into custody for his safety. Paul was then transferred to Caesarea on the coast. He remained in custody for nearly two years until finally he invoked his right as a Roman citizen to appeal his case to Caesar himself. So Paul was sent under guard to Rome.

Paul's journey to Rome proved difficult, as Paul suffered shipwreck off the island of Malta near Sicily. Eventually Paul made it safely to Rome, however, and as he awaited trial in Rome under house arrest, he continued to minister to believers there and probably wrote several other letters of the New Testament. It is not certain exactly what happened to Paul after this, but it appears that he was soon released and embarked on at least one other journey before he was arrested again. Church tradition holds that Paul was finally executed under the emperor Nero.

During these years, other changes were taking place in the church as well. Apparently the apostle Peter moved to Rome, where he, too, suffered martyrdom under Nero. According to tradition, Barnabas's relative John Mark recorded Peter's stories and teachings from Jesus' life and ministry (the Gospel of Mark). Likewise, the apostle John moved to Ephesus (probably along with Mary, the mother of Jesus), where he served as a prominent leader for several churches that had been established in western Asia Minor. John also recorded many stories and teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of John. Eventually John was exiled to the island of Patmos (not far from Ephesus), where he recorded the revelation from Jesus concerning the end of the world. According to church tradition, John died on Patmos. The Gospels of Matthew (another apostle) and Luke (a Gentile companion of Paul's) were also compiled from the testimonies of those who had been eyewitnesses to Jesus' life and ministry.

YOU CAN KNOW GOD PERSONALLY

God wants each of us to experience a life that has meaning, direction, love, and peace. God makes this kind of life possible through a personal relationship with his Son, Jesus Christ. But before you accept Jesus as your Savior, here are five truths that will help you understand God's desire for you:

God has a plan for your life.

"No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven" (John 3:27). God created you and has good plans for your life. To know those plans, you must know God personally.

God's plan gives meaning.

"Jesus replied, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty'" (John 6:35). Many people seek meaning and purpose for their life. But they never find it because they look for meaning in the wrong things and the wrong people. When you follow God's plans for your life, the most important of which is to know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you will find meaning and purpose in all that you do.

God's plan gives direction.

"Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, 'I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life'" (John 8:12). Without God's direction, you may not know what to do with your life. You may try a lot of things, hoping to find meaning in each one. But if you have God in your life, he will lead you and show you how to make your life count for him and his Kingdom.

God's plan brings peace.

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid" (John 14:27). When you follow Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you will be at peace with God. You will also be filled with God's peace. So when troubles come, you will be able to have peace as you endure hardships.

God's plan is for you to live with him in heaven.

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Before Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3), they had a good relationship with God. Therefore, they were not ashamed to come into God's presence. But after they sinned, their relationship with

God changed, and they were ashamed to come into God's physical presence. Sin had separated them and the entire human race—including you—from God. But God did not want sin to keep people from having a relationship with him. So he provided a way in which people could be cleansed of their sins and live with him in heaven forever. He gave his only Son, Jesus, as the perfect payment for everyone's sins.

Here are three things you must do in order to know Jesus personally as your Lord and Savior:

1. Recognize that you are a sinner. "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23). "As the Scriptures say, 'No one is righteous—not even one'" (Romans 3:10). Because everyone is a sinner, no one deserves eternal life with God in heaven. In addition, no one can work hard enough to earn this life. Instead, God gives eternal life to everyone who believes that Jesus Christ is his Son. Before you can appreciate what Jesus has done for you, you need to recognize that you are a sinner in need of God's forgiveness. If you never acknowledge this, you will never receive God's forgiveness for your sins. And you will never enter into heaven.

2. Ask God to forgive you. "Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault" (Colossians 1:22). If you recognize that you are a sinner, then you may be ready to ask God to forgive you. Do you believe that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, who died to pay for your sins? If you do and you have never thanked Christ for dying for you, thank him right now in a simple prayer. Pray, "Lord, I thank you for paying for the sins I have committed. I give my life to you. Teach me the right way to live. Amen."

If you have believed in Christ now for the first time, write your name and today's date on the blank lines as a record of the time of your salvation.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

3. Turn away from your sins. "Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God" (1 John 3:9). As a Christian, you may sin from time to time. But you should not continue to live a sinful lifestyle. Putting your faith in Jesus means that you are willingly turning away from your old sinful nature. It also means that you are living to please God. You can live to please God by obeying the commands he has given everyone in the Bible. If you obey God, you can be sure that you are a Christian and will one day have eternal life in heaven.

THE
OLD
TESTAMENT

Genesis

The Account of Creation

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ²The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day" and the darkness "night."

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

⁶Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." ⁷And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸God called the space "sky."

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

⁹Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened.

¹⁰God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened. ¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.

¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth." And that is what happened.

¹⁶God made two great lights—the larger one

to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars.

¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

²²Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

²³And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. ²⁵God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,* and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

²⁹Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .* 1:26a Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. 1:27 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

earth and all the fruit trees for your food.

³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

2 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed.

²On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested* from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

⁴This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. ⁶Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. ⁷Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. ⁹The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. ¹¹The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. ¹²The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. ¹³The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. ¹⁶But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹So the LORD God formed

from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs* and closed up the opening. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

²³“At last!” the man exclaimed.

“This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called ‘woman,’
because she was taken from ‘man.’”

²⁴This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

²⁵Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

The Man and Woman Sin

3 The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

²“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³“It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

⁴“You won't die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

⁶The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹“Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

2:2 Or *ceased*; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or *mist*. 2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. 2:21 Or *took a part of the man's side*. 3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

¹²The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike* your head, and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.*"

¹⁷And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return."

Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

²⁰Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.* ²¹And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

²²Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" ²³So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. ²⁴After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b. 3:16 Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.* 3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life." 3:22 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 4:1a Or *the man*; also in 4:25. 4:1b Or *I have acquired*. *Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "produce" or "acquire." 4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields." 4:13 Or *My sin*. 4:16 *Nod* means "wandering." 4:18 Or *the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse.

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, "With the LORD's help, I have produced* a man!" ²Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift,⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

⁶"Why are you so angry?" the LORD asked Cain. "Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

⁸One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's go out into the fields."* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

⁹Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know," Cain responded. "Am I my brother's guardian?"

¹⁰But the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! ¹¹Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother's blood. ¹²No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth."

¹³Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment* is too great for me to bear! ¹⁴You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!"

¹⁵The LORD replied, "No, for I will give a seven-fold punishment to anyone who kills you." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. ¹⁶So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. ¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. ²⁰Adah

gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²²Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.
I have killed a man who attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.

²⁴ If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will be punished
seventy-seven times!"

The Birth of Seth

²⁵Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed." ²⁶When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

The Descendants of Adam

5 This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* he made them to be like himself. ²He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

³When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. ⁴After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

⁶When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. ⁷After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. ²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²³Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." ³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

A World Gone Wrong

6 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. ²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years."

⁴In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

4:25 Seth probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed." 5:1 Or man; Hebrew reads adam; similarly in 5:2. 5:6 Or the ancestor of; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:7 Or the birth of this ancestor of; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26. 5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort." 6:2 Hebrew daughters of men; also in 6:4. 6:3 Greek version reads will not remain in.

The Story of Noah

⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. ¹⁰Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. ¹²God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for I have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!

¹⁴Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. ¹⁵Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

¹⁷"Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. ¹⁸But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁹Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. ²⁰Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals."

²²So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

The Flood Covers the Earth

7 When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others. ³Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. ⁴Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created."

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. ⁷He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various

kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. ⁹They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. ¹²The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

¹³That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. ¹⁴With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. ¹⁵Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. ¹⁶A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

¹⁷For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. ²²Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. ²⁴And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Recedes

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. ²The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the

6:14a Traditionally rendered an ark. 6:14b Or gopher wood. 6:15 Hebrew 300 cubits [138 meters] long, 50 cubits [23 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] high. 6:16 Hebrew an opening of 1 cubit [46 centimeters]. 7:2 Hebrew of each clean animal; similarly in 7:8. 7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4.

floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

¹³Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. ¹⁴Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth."

¹⁸So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. ¹⁹And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.* ²¹And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. ²²As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

God Confirms His Covenant

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. ²All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. ³I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. ⁴But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

⁵And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person's life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person's life will also be taken by

human hands. For God made human beings* in his own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth."

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹"I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth."

¹²Then God said, "I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. ¹³I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. ¹⁴When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. ¹⁶When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." ¹⁷Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth."

Noah's Sons

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

²⁰After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. ²¹One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

²⁴When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. ²⁵Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

"May Canaan be cursed!
May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives."

²⁶Then Noah said,

"May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed, and may Canaan be his servant!

²⁷ May God expand the territory of Japheth! May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,* and may Canaan be his servant."

²⁸Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. ²⁹He lived 950 years, and then he died.

8:13 Hebrew *On the first day of the first month*; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew *The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived*; see note on 8:13. 8:20 Hebrew *every clean animal and every clean bird*. 9:6 *Or man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem*.

10 This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the great flood.

Descendants of Japheth

²The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

³The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁴The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. ⁵Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language, clan, and national identity.

Descendants of Ham

⁶The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

⁷The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.

⁹Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, "This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world."¹⁰He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Capthorites, from whom the Philistines came.*

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites*, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

²⁰These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

Descendants of Shem

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.

²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means "division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother's name was Joktan.

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan. ³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

³¹These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

Conclusion

³²These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. ²As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

³They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) ⁴Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

⁵But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶"Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! ⁷Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.

10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. 10:9 Hebrew a great hunter before the LORD; also in 10:9b. 10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*. 10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out*. 10:14 Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Capthorites*. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. 10:15 Hebrew ancestor of Heth. 10:21 Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth*. 10:24 Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah*. Compare Luke 3:36. 11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*.

⁹That is why the city was called Babel,* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem's family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of* Arphaxad. ¹¹After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. ²¹After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The Family of Terah

²⁷This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. ²⁹Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) ³⁰But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

³¹One day Terah took his son Abram, his

daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

The Call of Abram

12 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, ⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants.*" And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. ¹¹As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!'" ¹³So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."

¹⁴And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai's beauty. ¹⁵When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. ¹⁶Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats,

11:9 Or *Babylon*. Babel sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." 11:10 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. 11:11 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. 11:12-13 Greek version reads "When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan." ¹¹After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. Compare Luke 3:35-36. 11:32 Some ancient versions read 145 years; compare 11:26 and 12:4. 12:7 Hebrew seed.