

NLT Study Bible®

Ask. Seek. Knock.

*"For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds.
And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."*

MATTHEW 7:8

NLT Study Bible

NLT Study Bible®



New Living
Translation®

Tyndale House
Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

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

Features and Bible helps copyright © 2017 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Color maps copyright © 2016 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Interior illustrations, pp. 583, 1753, 1787, 1813, copyright © 1995, 1982, 2005, 2000 by Hugh Claycombe. All rights reserved.

Other interior maps, illustrations, timelines, and diagrams copyright © 2017 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Cover illustration pattern copyright © Curly Pat/Shutterstock. All rights reserved.

Presentation pages copyright © 2017 by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

NLT Study 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.

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, *NLT Study Bible*, and *LeatherLike* are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. *TuTone* is a trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bible. English. New Living Translation. 2008.

NLT study Bible.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8423-5570-4 (hc : alk. paper)

ISBN 978-1-4143-2448-7 (bndd blk : alk. paper)

[etc.]

I. Title.

BS195.N394 2008

220.'20834—dc22

2008017304

ISBN 978-1-4964-1665-0 Hardcover

ISBN 978-1-4964-1664-3 Hardcover Indexed

ISBN 978-1-4964-1666-7 LeatherLike Brown/Slate

ISBN 978-1-4964-1667-4 LeatherLike Brown/Slate Indexed

ISBN 978-1-4964-1668-1 LeatherLike Twilight Blue/Brown

ISBN 978-1-4964-1669-8 LeatherLike Twilight Blue/Brown Indexed

Printed in Italy

23 22 21 20 19 18 17
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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

<i>NLT Study Bible</i> Contributors . . .	A7
<i>NLT Study Bible</i> Introduction . . .	A9
How to Study with the <i>NLT Study Bible</i> . . .	A11
A Note to Readers . . .	A15
Introduction to the New Living Translation . . .	A17
NLT Bible Translation Team . . .	A22
Master Timeline . . .	A24
Overview Maps . . .	A30

OLD TESTAMENT

<i>Introduction to the Old Testament</i> . . .	3
<i>Archaeology and Sources for Old Testament Background</i> . . .	7
<i>Introduction to the Pentateuch</i> . . .	11
Genesis (Gen) . . .	14
<i>Chronology of Abraham to Joshua</i> . . .	118
Exodus (Exod) . . .	122
Leviticus (Lev) . . .	192
Numbers (Num) . . .	246
Deuteronomy (Deut) . . .	312
<i>Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books</i> . . .	369
Joshua (Josh) . . .	372
<i>Chronology of the Time of the Judges</i> . . .	414
Judges (Judg) . . .	416
Ruth (Ruth) . . .	456

1 Samuel (1 Sam) . . .	464
2 Samuel (2 Sam) . . .	516
<i>Chronology of Israel's Monarchy</i> . . .	562
1 Kings (1 Kgs) . . .	566
2 Kings (2 Kgs) . . .	626
1 Chronicles (1 Chr) . . .	682
2 Chronicles (2 Chr) . . .	726
<i>Historical Background of Israel's Exile and Return</i> . . .	782
Ezra (Ezra) . . .	786
Nehemiah (Neh) . . .	808
Esther (Esth) . . .	834
<i>Introduction to the Books of Poetry and Wisdom</i> . . .	849
Job (Job) . . .	852
Psalms (Ps) . . .	900
Proverbs (Prov) . . .	1026
Ecclesiastes (Eccl) . . .	1070
Song of Songs (Song) . . .	1084

<i>Introduction to the Books of the Prophets</i> . . .	1101
Isaiah (Isa) . . .	1104
Jeremiah (Jer) . . .	1204
Lamentations (Lam) . . .	1300
Ezekiel (Ezek) . . .	1310
Daniel (Dan) . . .	1388
Hosea (Hos) . . .	1422
Joel (Joel) . . .	1440
Amos (Amos) . . .	1450
Obadiah (Obad) . . .	1468
Jonah (Jon) . . .	1474
Micah (Mic) . . .	1480
Nahum (Nah) . . .	1494
Habakkuk (Hab) . . .	1502
Zephaniah (Zeph) . . .	1510
Haggai (Hag) . . .	1518
Zechariah (Zech) . . .	1524
Malachi (Mal) . . .	1544
<i>Historical Background of the Intertestamental Period</i> . . .	1552

NEW TESTAMENT

<i>Introduction to the New Testament</i> . . .	1557
<i>Introduction to the Four Gospels</i> . . .	1561
<i>Chronology of the Life of Jesus</i> . . .	1564
<i>NLT Harmony of the Four Gospels</i> . . .	1567
Matthew (Matt) . . .	1572
Mark (Mark) . . .	1642

Luke (Luke) . . .	1694
John (John) . . .	1764
<i>Chronology of the Apostolic Age</i> . . .	1818
Acts (Acts) . . .	1820
<i>Introduction to the Letters of Paul</i> . . .	1887
Romans (Rom) . . .	1888
1 Corinthians (1 Cor) . . .	1924

2 Corinthians (2 Cor) . . .	1954
Galatians (Gal) . . .	1976
Ephesians (Eph) . . .	1994
Philippians (Phil) . . .	2010
Colossians (Col) . . .	2020
1 Thessalonians (1 Thes) . . .	2030
2 Thessalonians (2 Thes) . . .	2040

<i>Introduction to Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus . . .</i>	Hebrews (Heb) . . .	3 John (3 Jn) . . .
<i>2047</i>	James (Jas) . . .	Jude (Jude) . . .
1 Timothy (1 Tim) . . .	1 Peter (1 Pet) . . .	Revelation (Rev) . . .
2048	2 Peter (2 Pet) . . .	<i>2160</i>
2 Timothy (2 Tim) . . .	1 John (1 Jn) . . .	<i>Introduction to the Time after</i>
2060	2 John (2 Jn) . . .	<i>the Apostles . . .</i>
Titus (Titus) . . .		<i>2201</i>
2068		
Philemon (Phlm) . . .		
2076		

REFERENCE HELPS

Table of Ancient Weights, Measures, and Coins . . .	2208
Hebrew and Greek Word Studies . . .	2209
Features Index . . .	2221
Notes Index . . .	2237
Dictionary & Concordance . . .	2292

NLT Study Bible

Contributors

BIBLE PUBLISHING TEAM

Douglas R. Knox (Publisher)
Blaine A. Smith (Associate
Publisher)
Kevin O'Brien (Brand Manager)

EDITORS

Sean A. Harrison (General Editor)
Mark D. Taylor (Executive Editor)
Philip W. Comfort (Development
Editor)
Mark R. Norton (Development
Editor)
G. Patrick LaCosse (Associate
Editor)
David P. Barrett (Assistant Editor)
Bradley J. Lewis (Assistant Editor)
Henry M. Whitney III (Assistant
Editor)
Keith Williams (Assistant Editor)
Linda Schlafer (Content Stylist)

COPYEDITORS

Keith Williams (Copyediting
Coordinator)
Leanne Rolland (Proofreading
Coordinator)
Paul Adams
Jason Driesbach
Adam Graber
Annette Hayward
Judy Modica
Jonathan Schindler
Caleb Sjogren
Cindy Szponder
Lisa Voth
Matthew Wolf

DESIGNERS

Timothy R. Botts (Graphic
Designer)
Dean Renninger (Graphic
Designer)
Dan Farrell (Revision Designer)

GENERAL REVIEWERS

Daniel I. Block (Genesis—
Deuteronomy)
Barry J. Beitzel (Joshua—Esther,
Maps)
Tremper Longman III (Job—
Song of Songs)
John N. Oswalt (Isaiah—Malachi)
Grant R. Osborne (Matthew—Acts)
Norman R. Ericson (Romans—
Revelation)
Kenneth N. Taylor (special
reviewer)

CONTRIBUTING SCHOLARS

Carl E. Armerding (Judges,
Obadiah)
Daniel I. Block (selected articles)
Gerald L. Borchert (Revelation)
Dale A. Brueggemann (Job)
Gary M. Burge (John)
Eugene E. Carpenter (Daniel,
Micah)
Joseph Coleson (Joshua, Ruth)
Philip W. Comfort (1–3 John)
Owen Dickens (Hosea, Joel)
Iain M. Duguid (Ezekiel)
Norman R. Ericson (James)
Daniel C. Fredericks
(Song of Songs)
Gene L. Green
(1 & 2 Thessalonians)
George H. Guthrie (Hebrews)
Victor P. Hamilton (1 & 2 Samuel)
Sean A. Harrison (Ruth,
Ecclesiastes, Galatians, selected
features)
Andrew E. Hill (Haggai, Zechariah,
Malachi)
August H. Konkel
(1 & 2 Chronicles)
Jon C. Laansma (1 & 2 Timothy,
Titus)
G. Patrick LaCosse (Jonah)

G. Herbert Livingston (Jeremiah,
Lamentations)
Tremper Longman III (Proverbs,
Song of Songs, OT Profiles)
Ralph P. Martin (2 Corinthians)
Gerald L. Mattingly (Numbers)
Scot McKnight (Matthew)
Eugene H. Merrill (Deuteronomy)
Roger Mohrland (1 Corinthians,
Ephesians, Philippians,
Philemon, NT Profiles)
Douglas J. Moo (Romans,
Colossians, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude)
John N. Oswalt (Exodus)
Richard D. Patterson (1 & 2 Kings,
Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah)
Allen P. Ross (Genesis)
Andrew J. Schmutzer (Genesis)
Gary V. Smith (Ezra, Nehemiah,
Esther)
Robert H. Stein (Mark)
Mark L. Strauss (Luke)
James A. Swanson (Word Study
System)
Allison A. Trites (Acts)
Willem VanGemeren (Psalms,
Isaiah)
Daniel H. Williams (*After the
Apostles*)
William C. Williams (Leviticus,
Amos)

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

David P. Barrett (Cartographer)
Hugh Claycombe (Illustrator)
Luke Daab (Illustrator)
Joel Bartlett (Typesetter)
Gwen Elliott (Typesetter)
Peachtree Editorial Services
(Proofreaders)
Karen Schmitt (Indexing)

NLT Study Bible

Introduction

The *NLT Study Bible* was first launched in the fall of 2008. The product of over seventy scholars, writers, reviewers, editors, and designers, it was designed to help people understand the Bible clearly and accurately. The 2017 edition includes updates to the NLT text, a more refined interior, and easier-to-use indexes.

When Kenneth Taylor founded Tyndale House Publishers, his vision was to make the Bible accessible to everyone. Both the NLT and the *NLT Study Bible* continue that fifty-year legacy. The New Living Translation has become one of the most popular English translations, combining the readability of its predecessor, *The Living Bible*, with the perspective and wisdom of ninety world-class Bible scholars. These scholars created a clear, readable English text that is faithful to the ancient Hebrew and Greek originals.

Because the NLT is so clear, the features in the *NLT Study Bible* focus on the meaning and significance of the text in light of the world in which it was first written. For help in getting the most out of the features, see the article "How to Study the Bible with the *NLT Study Bible*" on p. A11.

The *NLT Study Bible* contains a myriad of features, including study notes, introductions, maps, timelines, profiles, and theme notes highlighting some of the most important ideas in the Bible. But it is more than just a tool for transferring information. It is an aid to living out the call and command of Jesus: "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind" (Matt 22:37).

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit would be at work within you as you read and study God's word in the pages of this Bible. We believe that it will enable you to draw closer to God by opening your eyes to his living and powerful message. Take to heart the message of Jesus as you use this study Bible:

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

(Matt 7:7-8)

THE PUBLISHING TEAM

How to Study the Bible with the *NLT Study Bible*

Many people have set out to read and understand the Bible only to put it aside in confusion and frustration. How can we “hear God speak” when his words seem so hard to understand? The questions we bring to the Bible can get lost when we try to figure out what it is saying. The people and places and the laws and customs in the Bible are often completely foreign. Some things are relatively easy to grasp, but others are almost impossible to understand even when the words are clear. The *NLT Study Bible* makes understanding the Bible easier. The following article will help you get the most out of your Bible study as you use the *NLT Study Bible*.

BASIC STUDY PRINCIPLES

Read the Bible text first. No feature of the *NLT Study Bible* is more important than the Bible text, and the New Living Translation text itself will help you to understand its message more fully because of its emphasis on making the message of Scripture clear (see the “Introduction to the New Living Translation” on p. A17 for more information about the translation).

The Bible is not simply a set of theological propositions or moral instructions, although it does include them. Instead, it is primarily the record of God revealing himself and his purposes to people and forming loving and faithful relationships with them. As you read, seek to understand the significance of what he was doing for them and saying to them. God does not change (1 Sam 15:29; Jas 1:17), so who he was in relation to the people of the past is who he still is to the people of today, and he will continue to be the same God in the future and for all eternity (Heb 13:8). Read the Bible text with the purpose of knowing God himself.

Read more than just the verse you are looking for. Context matters, so pay attention to the entire passage or even book to gain better understanding. Remember, each book is a unified whole, and each verse is a part of that whole. The more you understand what the specific author or book is saying, the better you will understand individual verses, themes, and teachings. Many Bibles, including the *NLT Study Bible*, contain features that will help you understand the big picture:

Book Outlines: See the flow of the book and how the passage you are reading fits into it.

Cross-references: Find parallel passages, quotations of the OT in the NT, and passages related to the passage you are reading.

Indexes and Concordance: Easily find more information on themes and passages.

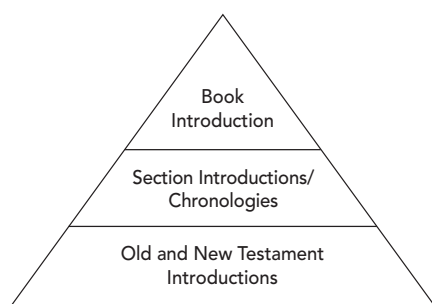
Read carefully. Give yourself time to read, understand, and ponder the words in the Bible text and the study materials—the notes, articles, and visual aids—that appear alongside it. Consider using a journal to write down your questions, interesting things

that you learn, connections you find, what you think God might be saying to you, and your prayers to God about what you have studied.

USING THE RESOURCES OF THE *NLT STUDY BIBLE*

The *NLT Study Bible* includes several types of tools, providing a unique, integrated study experience that will help answer the questions that naturally arise as you read the text.

Read the background materials. The many study helps in the *NLT Study Bible* help explain what the Bible *meant* to its first readers and what it therefore *means* to us who read it today. These materials are found in three layers that work together to bring the Bible to life. Take the extra time to use these so that you get the most out of your study. Our recommendation is to think of these three layers as building blocks as shown below:



- *Old and New Testament Introductions*, along with the *NLT Study Bible Master Timeline* and *Overview Maps*, give a broad and stable foundation for understanding the Bible centered on the setting, story, and makeup of the Bible. The structure of each testament is explained, along with how the books in each testament were collected and recognized as a part of the canon. These introductions also provide steps for proper interpretation. Look at the “Meaning and Message” section to identify major themes.
- *Section Introductions* and *Chronologies* build on this foundation, exploring the major divisions of the English Bible. Each of the seven section introductions (the Pentateuch, Israel’s history, poetry and wisdom, prophets of Israel, the Gospels and Acts, letters of Paul, and pastoral epistles) gives a detailed overview of the books in that section. Special attention is paid to specific issues affecting the interpretation of those books. The introduction to the intertestamental period sets the stage for understanding the world Jesus lived in, and the introduction to the time after the apostles briefly explores the expansion of the church after the writing of the New Testament.
- *Book Introductions* form the third layer, focusing on specific issues for each book, including setting, timelines, literary structure, authorship, and of course, the meaning and message of that book. A list of further study resources is also provided.

Use the study notes, word studies, and visual aids.

- *Study Notes* at the bottom of each page focus on meaning, not just facts. There are notes on words, phrases, sentences, verses, paragraphs, and whole sections. Historical and literary notes help draw us into the world of the Bible to increase our understanding and ability to apply God’s word. The study notes also include nearly all the NLT textual footnotes, which identify variations in the Hebrew and Greek text as well as providing alternate translation possibilities.

- *Hebrew and Greek Word Studies*, 100 Hebrew and 100 Greek terms representing key biblical ideas, are included in the cross-reference column. Each entry includes the word, its Strong's number, which can be looked up in the glossary at the back of the Bible, and the next occurrence of that word. Each word study includes enough occurrences to illustrate the range of meaning for that word.
- *Visual Aids*, including charts, maps, illustrations, timelines, and diagrams, have been included to help organize information from the biblical text in a form that is easy to grasp and understand.

Get to know the people of the Bible. Nearly 100 individuals are explored in profiles throughout the Bible. By getting to know them, the story of Scripture will become more real and its teaching more clear. God works first and foremost through people. Their victories and their mistakes can teach us a great deal.

Explore the theme notes. Sometimes we need to step back from a specific verse to see the larger point of a passage. Nearly 300 short articles identify and explain major ideas in the Bible and can be found adjacent to relevant passages. Each one also points to other passages and sometimes other theme notes to expand your understanding.

Start reading today. Don't worry about trying to do everything that we have suggested here. Take small, manageable steps, but start.

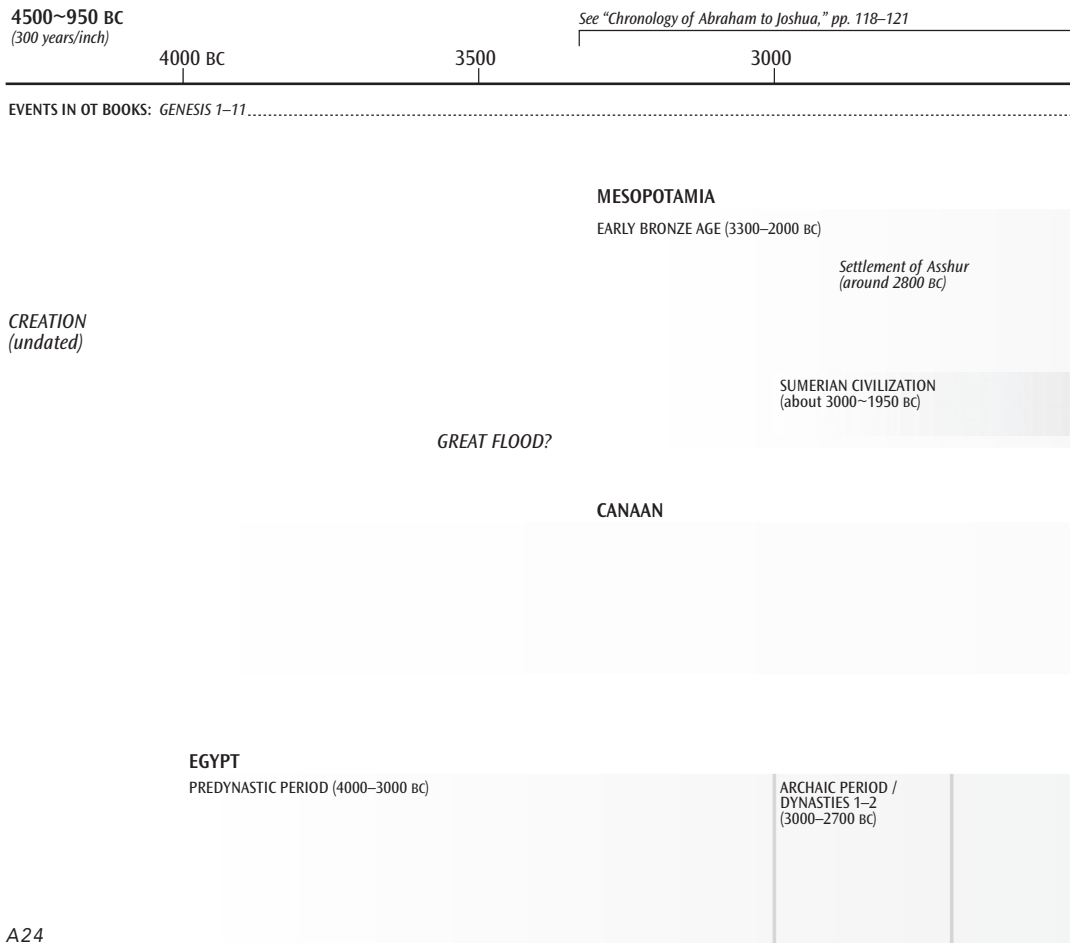
Finally, remember that the *NLT Study Bible* is a tool, a catalyst for connecting with the heart of God. It is not the full and final word on any topic or passage. We have packed in as much as we could, but it is only a small fraction of what could be said. Therefore, treat the notes and features as a very helpful but incomplete guide on your journey. For those who wish to go further with some aspect of study, there are many other resources available. To help point you in the right direction, each book and section introduction includes a list of "Further Reading" materials.

Master Timeline

How do the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob relate to history? What was going on in the world at the time of David and Solomon? How do the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah fit together? What was happening during the time between the OT and the NT? How do the events in the life of Jesus and the early church correlate with other things that were happening in the Roman world?

CREATION TO ABRAHAM

Many of the events of Genesis 1–11 predate writing, so it is difficult to assign precise dates to these early events. We can, however, observe a close correlation between the biblical account and what is known from other historical sources. After the Flood, which Noah and his family survived, humanity spread out across the known world, and the ancient



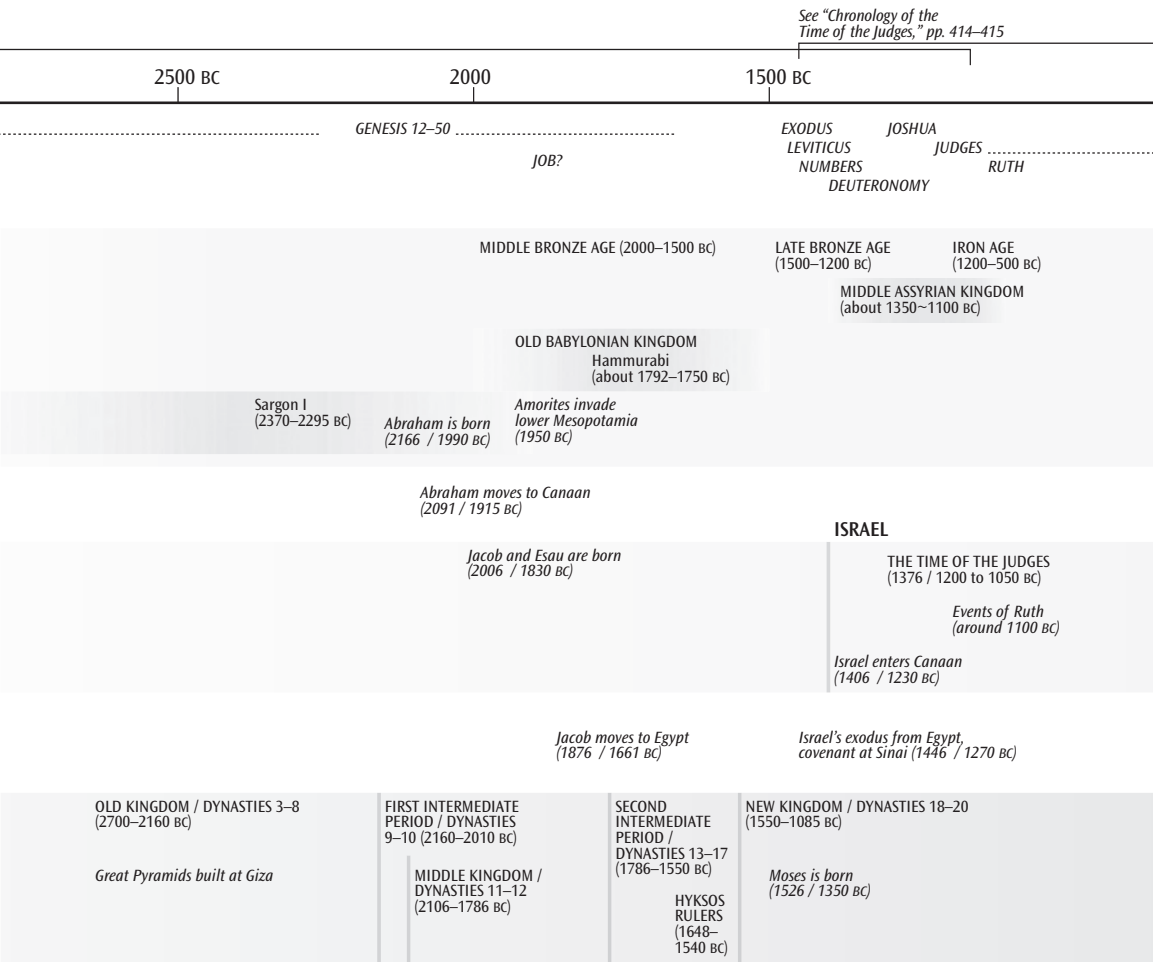
civilizations began. By the time of Abraham, Egypt was well established, while Sumerian civilization in Mesopotamia was coming to a close.

ABRAHAM TO JOSHUA

We know that Abraham lived around 2000 BC, but we are not completely certain about the dates for his life. This uncertainty results from our uncertainty about the date of Israel’s exodus from Egypt. Two dates for the Exodus are accepted as possibilities by biblical scholars, 1446 or 1270 BC. The dates for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are simply calculated from the date for the Exodus on the basis of information given in the biblical text. Although there is uncertainty, it is also quite clear that the things Scripture says about these people and their lives fit well with what we know about conditions in Canaan and Egypt during this period of history. For more information, see “Chronology of Abraham to Joshua,” pp. 118–121.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

After Joshua led Israel’s conquest of Canaan and the people of Israel began to settle in the land, a period of growing anarchy ensued. Periodic chaos and oppression were punctuated by rescue through the inspired leadership of the judges. For more information, see “Chronology of the Time of the Judges,” pp. 414–415.



Overview Maps

Where did Abraham live, travel, and obey God's instruction to sacrifice his son (Gen 12-22)?
Why did Josiah confront Pharaoh Neco and lose his life (2 Kgs 23:29-30; 2 Chr 35:20-27;
Jer 46)? When Jesus was making his final trip to Jerusalem, why did he go through Samaria



(John 4:4)? How did Paul follow up with the churches he established during his first missionary journey (Acts 13–14, 16)? The answers to questions such as these can be understood more readily through the study of the geography of the Bible.

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NEAR EAST

The events in the Bible took place in the lands around the eastern MEDITERRANEAN SEA and in the Near East—the area from EGYPT through CANAAN and ARAM, to MESOPOTAMIA and PERSIA. The ancient Near East is the setting for the earliest events of recorded history, and it is the world in which the nation of Israel was formed and grew. Abraham journeyed from HARAN in upper Mesopotamia to Canaan (Gen 12). His descendants then moved to Egypt (Gen 46) and spent hundreds of years there before returning to Canaan and establishing the nation of Israel (Exod—Josh).



Almost 1,000 years later, after living in the land of Israel (see below), the descendants of Abraham returned to Mesopotamia as exiles (2 Kgs 17; 24–25). The Jewish people later returned to JERUSALEM and JUDEA and reestablished their community (Ezra—Nehemiah). After Jesus’ death and resurrection, the Christian community that began in Jerusalem spread as Paul and the other apostles took the Good News throughout the known world (Acts 2–28).



ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS

Many of the key events in the history of God’s people took place in and around Canaan, which came to be called the land of Israel (from DAN in the north to BEERSHEBA in the south). Not only did much of Abraham’s life take place in this land, but the nation of Israel lived here (Joshua—Nehemiah). Israel’s neighbors included other descendants of Abraham—namely, the people of EDOM, MOAB, and AMMON (see Gen 19; 25). In addition, the people of ARAM lived to the northeast, the people of PHILISTIA to the west, and the people of PHOENICIA to the north along the coast in and around TYRE and SIDON.

After the Exile, many Jews returned and reestablished the Jewish community in JERUSALEM and JUDEA (Ezra—Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah). Later, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, grew up in NAZARETH of Galilee, and died in Jerusalem (Matthew—John). He arose from the dead there, and the church had its beginning there (Acts). Even as the Good News about Jesus was spreading throughout the Mediterranean world, Jerusalem and Judea continued to play a role in the life of the Christian community until the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (e.g., Acts 15).

UNDERSTANDING the geography of these and the other events of the Bible can provide a much clearer picture of what was happening and what it means. For this reason, many maps are included throughout the interior of the *NLT Study Bible*. Most books of the Bible include a map in the book’s introduction. All of the maps and many of the places on them are listed in the Features Index, pp. 2221–2236.

**OLD
TESTAMENT**

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is God's word to his people through the ages. It describes the creation of the world and humanity, the origin of sin, and the beginning of God's plan of redemption. Through it we gain a much clearer understanding of who God is, what he is doing, and how we should live.

The Old Testament stimulates our imaginations and arouses our emotions. It is made up of gripping stories of real events, stirring poems, and bracing exhortations. It teaches us God's plan, reveals God's will, and helps us make decisions. Reading the Old Testament is like looking into a mirror, for it reveals our soul. It plants a seed that grows, ultimately transforming our character.

Jesus emphasized the importance of understanding the Old Testament (Luke 24:25-27), and Paul was speaking primarily of the Old Testament when he wrote, "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" (2 Tim 3:16). The Old Testament provides us with a profound knowledge of God, ourselves, and the world.

SETTING

Israel's geography encompasses rugged *wadis* (seasonally dry river beds), agriculturally rich valleys, rolling hills, arid wilderness, and sandy coasts. The Bible describes Israel as a fertile land, one "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod 3:8, 17; Num 13:27). But a lack of rainfall can trigger devastating famines.

The land of Israel was previously called Canaan. Before the people of Israel occupied the land, Canaan was composed of a number of loosely allied city-states, each with its own king. The Canaanite people remained a political threat until the time of King David, who decisively defeated both the Canaanites and the Philistines. The Canaanite worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, however, continued to plague Israel.

Compared to the superpowers of the day (Assyria, Babylon, the Hittites, Egypt, and Persia), Israel was a small but strategically significant nation, located along the main route between Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Various nations controlled Mesopotamia throughout the OT: Assyria to the north, Babylon to the south, and Persia to the east. All three of these powers constantly tried to expand their borders.

Egypt was also a superpower during much of the OT period. The Nile River defined ancient Egypt and was the source of its wealth. During the time between Joseph and the Exodus, Egypt oppressed and enslaved the people of Israel as they grew from a family of seventy

individuals to a great nation. Egypt continued to play a role in the story of Israel. Toward the end of Israel's kingdom period, the last desperate kings hoped that Egypt would save Judah from the Babylonians. Egypt turned out to be "a reed that splinters beneath your weight and pierces your hand" (2 Kgs 18:21).

Directly north of Israel was Aram (Syria), with Damascus as its chief city. Israel experienced frequent conflicts with Aram, beginning during the time of David.

Toward the end of the OT period, the Persian empire gained power. Persia occupied the region just east of Mesopotamia. Persia's rise to power began in the mid-500s BC and included the defeat of Babylon in 539 BC. Judea became a province in the Persian empire and remained so until Alexander the Great defeated Persia in 331 BC.

THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY

The Bible begins with the account of creation (Gen 1–2). God created the heavens, the earth, and the first humans, and he pronounced it all "very good." God provided Eden, a wonderful place for human beings to live. Adam and Eve enjoyed a harmonious and fulfilling relationship with God and with each other.

All this changed quickly. Genesis 3 introduces the serpent, who injected discord into this harmonious world. The serpent taught Eve and Adam to distrust God, and they chose to rebel against God in the belief that they knew bet-

ter than God. This sin placed a barrier between God and humans and brought death to all humanity. God's holy presence became deadly to Adam and Eve, and God ejected them from Eden. Even in the midst of judgment for their sin, however, God remained involved, working for their redemption.

After Eden, the OT describes a split between those who chose to follow God and those who rejected him: for example, Abel and Seth versus Cain, righteous Noah versus his wicked generation, Isaac versus Ishmael, and Jacob versus Esau and Laban.

A crucial transitional point came when God offered great promises to Abraham. He called Abraham to leave Ur (around 2100/1900 BC) and "go to the land that I will show you" (Gen 12:1). Unlike Adam and Eve, Abraham trusted God and responded obediently to him. As a result, God began carrying out his redemptive plan for humanity through Abraham and his descendants. Thus, Abraham became the father of a great nation, with many descendants and much land. Genesis 12–Joshua 24 describes how God multiplied the descendants of Abraham and ultimately brought them into possession of the Promised Land of Canaan.

God desired that Abraham's descendants, the nation of Israel, would obey God and prosper in the land he gave them and that the surrounding nations would turn to the true God. However, like Adam and Eve in Eden before them, the

Israelites were not satisfied with all that God gave them, instead turning to false gods to find happiness. The rest of the OT continues the story of Israel's persistent sin and God's unwavering commitment to them. Although God consistently judged their sin, he also remained patiently involved with his people.

Following Israel's settlement in Canaan, the period of the judges was marked by political fragmentation and spiritual confusion. God then allowed the people to choose a king to rule them. The monarchy began with the anointing of Saul (around 1050 BC), and it reached a high point with David (1011–971 BC) and the early part of Solomon's reign (971–931 BC). Due to Solomon's sin, however, God divided Israel into two parts, the northern and southern kingdoms, after Solomon's death in 931 BC.

From the beginning of the divided monarchy (931 BC) to the end of the OT period (about 400 BC), the prophets called the people of Israel and Judah to return to God, but most trusted the surrounding nations and their false gods. The northern kingdom of Israel, with its capital Samaria, lasted until 722 BC, when Assyria conquered it and deported its people. The southern kingdom of Judah, with its capital Jerusalem, lasted until the Babylonians defeated it in 586 BC, destroying the Temple and taking many of the people of Judah into exile.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile of the Israelites did not end Israel's story. Even as the prophets had proclaimed devastating judgment on God's people, they also announced a future hope for the remnant. The Exile lasted until 539 BC, when Persia defeated Babylon and allowed the Jews to return to Judah to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. By 515 BC, the Jews had rebuilt a smaller, second Temple (see Ezra 6:15). Ezra arrived in 458 BC and reestablished God's law in Judah. In 445 BC, Nehemiah became governor of Judah and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. During the period after the Exile, many people of Judea finally worshiped the Lord, the God of Israel, exclusively. They also came to recognize the true significance of the OT records: God

had been giving them a written revelation of his will, his purposes, and his acts in Israel's history.

The prophecy of Malachi, written a little before 400 BC, closes the OT story. The OT does not end with a strong sense of closure, but with anticipation of even greater things to come. The return to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple was a "down payment" of God's redemption for his people. However, the prophets understood that these events were not the ultimate realization of hope.

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The text of the OT was written over a period of approximately 1,000 years, beginning with Moses and extending to the Persian period following the Jews' return to Judah from exile. God used Moses and many others—judges like Samuel, kings like David and Solomon, prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, priests like Ezra, and other people whose names we don't even know—to write parts of Israel's history and literature.

The Order of the Hebrew Bible

The order of books in the Hebrew Bible differs from the order of the books in English Bibles (see charts, below and at right). The Hebrew Bible is divided into three parts: Instruction (*Torah*), Prophets (*Nebi'im*) and Writings (*Ketubim*). Jesus re-

ferred to these divisions as "the law of Moses," "the prophets," and "the Psalms" (Luke 24:44). Jewish readers of the Hebrew Bible sometimes refer to their Scripture by taking the first letters of these three parts and forming the word "Tanak."

The Hebrew Bible combines into twenty-four books the same material that is presented as thirty-nine books in the English OT. In the Hebrew Bible, the first five books constitute the *Torah*. This section, also called the Pentateuch, is unchanged in English Bibles. The second section, the Prophets (*Nebi'im*), has two parts. The Former Prophets, called the historical books in English Bibles, are followed in the Hebrew Bible by the Latter Prophets. The third section, the Writings (*Ketubim*), contains miscellaneous books, including the books of poetry and wisdom.

In later Judaism, the "Five Scrolls" (*Megilloth*) were read at the important feasts and arranged in order of their observance in the holiday calendar (see chart, "Israel's Festivals," p. 235): Ruth was read at the Festival of Pentecost, Song of Songs at Passover, Ecclesiastes at the Festival of Shelters, Lamentations at the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem (the 9th of Ab), and Esther at Purim.

The Order of the English OT

English Bibles follow the order of the Greek translation of the OT (the

1. Instruction (<i>Torah</i>)	2. Prophets (<i>Nebi'im</i>)	3. Writings (<i>Ketubim</i>)
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<i>Former Prophets</i> Joshua Judges Samuel (1 & 2) Kings (1 & 2) <i>Latter Prophets</i> Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve: Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Psalms Job Proverbs Five Scrolls (<i>Megilloth</i>): Ruth Song of Songs Ecclesiastes Lamentations Esther Daniel Ezra–Nehemiah Chronicles (1 & 2)

Septuagint), which groups books according to genre and places the books within each genre in chronological order. The Greek and English OT begins with the Pentateuch. Next come the historical narratives; then the poetical books, arranged in chronological order according to their setting or traditional date of composition; and finally the prophets, in two parts. The major (largest) prophets appear in chronological order. They are followed by the twelve minor (shorter) prophets, which also follow a general chronological arrangement.

**INTERPRETING
THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Christians sometimes find the OT difficult to read and understand, with content that seems strange and distant. What is the connection between Christianity and animal sacrifices, religious circumcision, strange dietary laws, the curses of the Psalms, and the history of ancient Israel? To understand the OT better, we must realize that it is an ancient book, with the oldest parts written some 3,500 years ago. It also comes from a culture, the ancient Near East, vastly different from ours. Most importantly, the books were written before the coming of Christ.

The following principles can help readers as they study the OT.

Read Each Passage in Context

With the Bible, as with all good literature, gaining a grasp of the whole helps us appreciate and understand the parts. We should

not treat a biblical book as a collection of isolated sayings. Rather, the books contain connected stories, instructions, and poems. The meaning of the individual verses can be discovered only in the flow of the whole literary piece, which occurs by reading large blocks at a time. While this principle does not stop us from turning to the middle of a biblical book to read a few verses, we should also seek to develop an understanding of the message of the whole book. In other words, we should exercise great caution not to distort God’s message when we read small pieces of Scripture. The book introductions in the *NLT Study Bible* help with this process by providing an overview of each book’s contents and message.

Identify the Genre of the Book and Passage

Contemporary readers are familiar with a variety of genres such as biographies, textbooks, and newspaper editorials. The content of the OT can also be grouped into genres. The genres in the OT include history (e.g., Samuel), treaty/covenant (e.g., Exod 19–24), sermon (e.g., Deuteronomy), poetry and prayers (e.g., Psalms), wisdom (e.g., Proverbs), prophecy (e.g., Jeremiah), and apocalyptic (e.g., Dan 7–12). Different genres should trigger different reading strategies. Just as we approach a biography differently than we approach a novel, we should try to understand how to approach the different genres of the OT. The book and section introductions in the *NLT Study Bible* offer help in understanding OT genres.

Consider the Historical and Cultural Background of the Book

The inspired authors of the OT lived and wrote in a time and culture very distant from ours. We should seek to understand what was taking place during the time period the author describes as well as the (often different) time period when the author was writing. For example, the book of Chronicles describes events that took place from the time of David to the Exile (about 1000–600 BC), but it was probably written in Judea following the return from exile (around 400 BC). Knowing the details and setting—both of the events that are described and of the time in which the book was written—will help us understand Chronicles and its message more clearly. The same holds true for other books of the OT.

Read the Old Testament in the Light of Christ’s Coming

Jesus said that the whole OT anticipated his coming, suffering, and glory (Luke 24:25-27). Jesus is the center of biblical revelation. The OT anticipates him, and the NT describes him.

NT authors recognized this, so they frequently cited the OT to explain that the glorious events happening in their day were foreshadowed and foretold by the OT. Christians, too, should read the OT from the perspective of the death and resurrection of Christ. While it is crucial first to interpret each OT passage or book in the context of its original audience, we understand the OT better when we read it in light of its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

MEANING AND MESSAGE

Scripture describes God’s nature and explains his acts in history. By reading the OT, God’s people learn about who God is by observing and participating in what he does.

God’s Nature, Character, and Acts

God’s special name in the OT is *Yahweh*. The name comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to be.” God told Moses that his name means, “I AM WHO I AM” (Exod 3:14). In other words, God defines

Pentateuch	Historical Books	Poetry and Wisdom	Prophets
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Songs	Daniel
	1 Kings		Minor Prophets:
	2 Kings		Hosea
	1 Chronicles		Joel
	2 Chronicles		Amos
	Ezra		Obadiah
	Nehemiah		Jonah
	Esther		Micah
			Nahum
			Habakkuk
			Zephaniah
			Haggai
			Zechariah
			Malachi

himself. Nothing else defines him, but he defines everything. In most English translations, including the NLT, this name for God is usually translated “the LORD” (capitalized).

Most often, the OT describes God by picturing him in relationship. God relates to people as savior, king, shepherd, warrior, husband, and in many other roles. God also reveals who he is by what he does: for example, dividing the Red Sea, causing the walls of Jericho to fall, establishing David as king, allowing the Babylonian army to defeat Jerusalem, and restoring his people to the land after the Exile.

The primary message of the OT is that God saves his people and judges those who resist him. He passionately pursues his sinful people in order to establish a community that is in harmony with him, a kingdom that recognizes and serves its divine King.

There Is One God

The OT launches a sustained attack on the prevailing worldview of the ancient Near East, which was that the heavens and the earth, infused with deities, constitute the sum total of reality. The implications of this false worldview, which continues in much of the world today, are many and far-reaching:

- Because the heavens and the earth contain many diverse parts, many gods exist.
- Because the gods are the cosmos, we can manipulate the gods by manipulating the cosmos.
- Because humans are obsessed with sex, the gods are also.
- Because the universe exists without purpose, the gods have no purpose except survival through the acquisition of power—and so humans must pursue power as well.
- Because the gods are selfish and unmerciful, humans must seek their favor by appeasing their appetites.
- Because there are many gods, humans must seek the protection of their own gods against other people's gods.

The OT asserts the very opposite of these beliefs and all others that grow out of a pagan worldview:

- The universe is unified as the creation of the one true God.
- He alone is God, in no way comparable to other so-called gods, and he has a completely separate existence from the cosmos.
- God cannot be manipulated through the cosmos because he is not the cosmos.
- God created the world as a universe with his own unified purposes. Human beings have meaning by fulfilling God's purposes for them.
- Human beings are designed not to appease capricious and power-hungry gods but to worship and obey a loving Creator.
- Ultimate security and peace come from trusting and worshiping the Creator.

From beginning to end, the OT makes these and many related points in order to correct the seductive but incorrect and deadly pagan worldview.

God's Covenants with His People

The concept of *covenant* is central to the message of the OT. From Genesis onward, the covenant becomes the most persistent metaphor for God's relationship with his people (see “God's Covenant Relationships” at Gen 12:1-9, p. 44). A covenant is a relationship that gives promises and imposes obligations. OT covenants were similar to treaties between two nations, where a Great King would enter into a relationship with a vassal nation (see Deuteronomy Introduction, “Literary Form,” p. 314). The term *covenant* describes the relationships God established with humanity and all creation through Noah (Gen 9:1-17), with Abraham and his descendants (Gen 15:1-21), with Israel through Moses (Exod 19:3–24:11), and with David and his offspring (2 Sam 7:8-16). God's relationship with Adam also had the character of a covenant, complete with commands, promises, and warnings.

Each of God's covenants builds on the previous ones; new covenants do not replace the old.

Through his covenants, God established special relationships between himself and his people. In the covenants, God made promises, stated obligations, and threatened judgment if his people did not obey him. When they disobeyed, God sent his prophets to warn his disobedient people, urging them to turn from breaking his law and return to faithful obedience. The curses stipulated in the covenant provide the basis for God's judgment (see Deut 28), which he ultimately brought: Jerusalem was destroyed and most of the Israelites were sent into exile.

Yet God was not finished with his people: He brought some of them back from exile. They had been humbled and were more obedient—they finally stopped worshipping other gods and worshiped the Lord alone. God also promised to make a new covenant with them (Jer 31:31-34). In the context of this new covenant, God would “forgive their wickedness” and “never again remember their sins” (Jer 31:34), causing all Israel finally to know and obey him.

The establishment of the new covenant came with the Messiah. Jesus Christ, God's promised Savior and King, fulfilled the old covenant (Matt 5:17-20) and initiated the new covenant, a relationship with all who trust in him (John 3:16; Acts 2:38-39) based on his own sacrifice (Luke 22:20). Those who participate in this relationship inherit eternal fellowship with God and all his people (John 3:36; 5:24; Rom 5:21; 1 Jn 2:24-25).

FURTHER READING

BILL T. ARNOLD AND
BRYAN E. BEYER

*Encountering the Old Testament:
A Christian Survey* (1999)

CRAIG BARTHOLOMEW AND
MICHAEL GOHEEN

*The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our
Place in the Biblical Story* (2004)

RAYMOND B. DILLARD AND
TREMPER LONGMAN III

*An Introduction to the Old Testament,
2nd edition* (2006)

ARCHAEOLOGY AND SOURCES FOR OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

In the past two hundred years, archaeology has experienced a huge information explosion in terms of both artifacts and texts from the ancient Near East. Every item must be placed into a large historical context, and, where relevant, must cautiously be placed in a proper relationship to biblical materials. Properly identified and interpreted, archaeological materials may illustrate, illuminate, demonstrate, confirm, or challenge the biblical text. These same artifacts and texts cannot be used at a theological level to “prove” the spiritual, religious, or theological claims of the biblical text. It is obviously impossible for a spade or a trowel to prove or disprove the spiritual revelations and assertions of Scripture. But these materials may confirm and make plausible certain historical perspectives and claims of those texts. It is fair to say that archaeology validates Hebrew history and explains many formerly obscure terms and traditions in both the OT and NT. It thus provides an authentic background for the prophecies culminating in Jesus Christ.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Modern archaeology in the Middle East began when Napoleon took with him into Egypt (1798) a team of specialists to record the ancient wonders of Egypt. They happened to find the Rosetta Stone (1799), which provided the unexpected key to the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics (1819, 1822). The floodgates opened to a heightened interest in the wonders of the ancient Near East and to the light they might shed on the Bible—the ancient Near East’s greatest religious, literary, and historical artifact. In 1845, Akkadian (the language of old Babylon) was deciphered using the Behistun Inscription (518 BC), which, like the Rosetta Stone, was inscribed in three languages. The deciphering of several other languages soon followed.

After that, the archaeology of the ancient Near East prospered and drew worldwide attention. Archaeologists, scholars, and treasure hunters were amazed at the creation and flood stories, legal documents, ancient civilizations and languages, religious and theological systems, sacrificial rituals, tabernacles, temples, palaces, wisdom literature, covenants and covenantal forms and rituals, war stories, birth stories, king lists, pagan prophetic parallels, and much more.

In the beginning, it was treasure hunters who made many of the significant finds, and their methods were often haphazard and caused

destruction of important archaeological sites. The scientific study of ancient tells (strata of dirt and cultural debris compacted together into mounds over the millennia) began in Palestine in 1890, when Flinders Petrie adopted methods used to excavate Troy, systematically unearthing and studying the various strata (layers of occupation) of a city. This approach to archaeology in Palestine flourished as appropriate techniques, tools, and record-keeping developed. Today, a combination of methods is employed, including “surface surveys” and aerial photography used to get information about whole regions.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Various ancient Near Eastern texts and artifacts have helped scholars paint—both with a broad brush and in some cases with detail—a cultural and historical backdrop of OT eras across the centuries. Ancient texts and artifacts help us see the OT in its larger context and better understand its history, its literary qualities, and even its theological perspectives.

In principle, archaeologists have no particular interest in “proving the truth” of the Scriptures. And in fact, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile interpretations of archaeological data and the evidence of Scripture. Such conflicts are few in number, however, and tend to diminish noticeably as new infor-

mation is forthcoming. The huge cache of ancient Near Eastern material makes the historical reliability of the OT arguably firm.

These archaeological source materials show the people of Israel as fellow participants in the ancient Near East of their day. It is possible to see the men and women of Scripture as real persons, as true children of their age, grappling with life’s problems. And from time to time they catch a vision of God as all powerful and all holy, as guiding the destinies of individuals and nations, and as bringing about his purposes in history. Ancient texts and artifacts show that Israel shared in the social structures and worldviews of the surrounding cultures. But these texts and artifacts also show striking contrasts between the people of Israel and the world in which they lived—for Israel claimed a relationship with the Lord, the one true God, and did not worship many gods as neighboring nations did. The people of Israel’s faith in and experience of the Lord make them unique in the ancient world, a uniqueness that comes into vibrant, colorful relief through the texts and artifacts of the ancient Near East.

PRIMARY SOURCES

[RANE] Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (2002)

[COS] William W. Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture* (2003)

[AEL] Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (1971–1980)

[OTP] Victor H. Matthews & Don C. Benjamin, eds., *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (2006)

[ANET] James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (1969)

[ATSHB] Kenton L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (2005)

FURTHER READING

Susan Wise Bauer, *The History of the Ancient World* (2007)

Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (2007)

Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (1998)

K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (2006)

John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (2006)

Michael O. Wise, et al., *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (2005)

Ancient Texts and Artifacts Relating to the Old Testament. The Old Testament was written in a complex era of history, and many parallels to the OT have been found in ancient artifacts and documents. This chart lists many of these items with their original date and a description. The “Sources” column lists English translations of the texts of these artifacts; the abbreviations are listed under “Primary Sources,” above. The final column lists OT passages that parallel these sources in some manner: In some cases, the ancient source is similar to its OT parallels or provides cultural background; in other cases, the ancient source corroborates specific OT details.

Title	Date	Description	Sources	OT Parallels
Memphite Creation	2700 BC	Egyptian creation account	RANE 63–65; OTP 3–6	Gen 1–2
Famine Stela	2700 BC	Egyptian monumental texts with seven years of famine as a motif	COS 1.53	Gen 12, 41
Sumerian Proverbs	2600–2000 BC	Examples of Sumerian proverbs	COS 1.174–175	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes
Ebla Archives	2500 BC (about)	A huge cache of Sumerian texts that depict the pre-patriarchal world	OTP 240–243	Background of Genesis
Instructions of Ptah Hotep	2500 BC (about)	One of Egypt’s great wise men teaches his son how to succeed in life and vocation	OTP 283–288; RANE 182–184	Prov 2, 6, 23, 25–26; Ecclesiastes
Ra and the Serpent	2400 BC	Egyptian story that pictures the sun and a serpent in opposition	OTP 28–31	Gen 3
Gudea Cylinders	2000s BC	Sumerian instructions to build a temple	ANET 268–269	Exod 25–40; 2 Sam 7–8; 1 Kgs 6
Sargon Legend	2000s BC	An Akkadian legend: Sargon I rescued from a river in a basket	RANE 75–76; OTP 55–58	Exod 2
Dream Interpretation	2000 or 1300 BC	An Egyptian list of how to interpret a dream	COS 1.33	Gen 40–41
Lament over Ur	2000 BC (about)	A Sumerian laments the fall of the city of Ur and abandonment by the gods	RANE 222–225	Lamentations
Prophecies of Neferti	1990 BC (about)	Egyptian prophecies: Neferti “predicts” Pharaoh Amenemhet I (1991–1960 BC)	RANE 210–212; OTP 235–240	1 Kgs 13; Dan 2–6
Epic of Gilgamesh	1900 BC	Sumerian and Akkadian epic: the great flood, death, a “Noah” figure, and the search for eternal life	RANE 66–70; COS 1.132; OTP 11–20	Gen 6–9
Lipit-Ishtar Laws	1800s BC	Collection of Sumerian laws	RANE 106–109	Exod 19–24; Deut 12–26
Travels of Sinuhe	1800–1000 BC	An Egyptian narrative that includes descriptions of Canaan and Syria	RANE 76–82; COS 1.38	Gen 37–50
Code of Hammurabi	1750 BC (about)	Akkadian laws that parallel the laws of Moses	RANE 111–114	Exod 20–24; Lev 16–26; Deut 12–26
Sumerian King Lists	1700s BC	Lists of Sumerian kings, including long life spans before the flood	RANE 150–151; OTP 21–32	Gen 5; Deut 17:14–20; 1 Sam 8; 12
Mari Tablets	1700s BC	Akkadian correspondence between famous kings reflecting conditions during the patriarchal era; mention of “Habiru”	OTP 318–322	Genesis—Numbers
Atrahasis Epic	1700s BC	Sumerian creation and flood stories; “Noah” figure	RANE 21–31; COS 1.130	Gen 1–11
Hittite Laws	1650–1200 BC	Hittite legal texts arranged by topics; scapegoat laws and levirate laws	RANE 115–116; OTP 70–72	Exod 19–24; Deut 12–26; Lev 17–26
Emar Tablets	1550–1200 BC	Akkadian tablets containing important legal, ritual, and religious texts	RANE 127; COS 1.123–126; 2.137	Lev 8:30; 23:1–44; Num 28–29; Deut 16, 31–32

Title	Date	Description	Sources	OT Parallels
Amarna Letters and Tell el-Amarna Tablets	1550~1150 BC	Akkadian letters written by Canaanite kings seeking Egypt's help against invading enemies, including "Habiru"	RANE 166–168; OTP 77–80	Joshua (Israel's invasion might be reflected)
Egyptian Love Songs	1400~1000 BC	Egyptian dialogues and monologues using sensual language	RANE 192–193; OTP 297–301	Song of Songs
Nuzi Tablets	1400s BC	Hurrian texts describing various social, religious, legal, and political customs	RANE 72–74; COS 3.121	General OT background; references to Baal cult
Ras Shamra Tablets	1400s BC	Hundreds of tablets that illuminate pagan religion in Ugarit and perhaps in Canaan	COS 1.88, 104; OTP 263–274	Understanding of pagan religious practices; references to Baal cult
Hittite Treaties	1400–1200 BC	Hittite documents that illustrate covenantal forms	RANE 97–100	Exod 19–24; Deuteronomy; Josh 24
Rituals against Reptiles	1350 BC	Ugaritic prayers to render a serpent's venom powerless	COS 1.94	Num 21:4-9; Deut 32:33
Hymn to Aten	1300s BC	An Egyptian poem praising the sun	RANE 196–197	cp. Ps 104
Urim and Thummin	1300, 800s, 600s BC	Hittite, Akkadian, and Egyptian texts related to discovering the gods' will	COS 1.78, 127	Exod 28:30; Lev 8:8; Deut 33:8; Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65
Tale of Two Brothers	1225 BC	An Egyptian tale: A man rejects his sister-in-law's advances	COS 1.40	Gen 39
Merneptah Stela	1209 BC	Pharaoh Merneptah's monument recording his campaigns; first mention of Israel outside of OT	RANE 160; OTP 81–84; COS 2.6	Joshua
Hittite Proverbs	1200s BC?	Various Hittite proverbs	COS 1.81–82	Proverbs; Jer 31:29
Kherem: A Thing Devoted	1200s BC	A Hittite text that records things "devoted" to a god for destruction	COS 1.72	Lev 27:28-29; Josh 6:17-19, 24; 1 Sam 15:2-3
Annals of Rameses III	1200 BC (about)	Egyptian annals describing battle(s) of Rameses III with the Sea Peoples, including the future Philistines	ANET 262–263; OTP 151–154	Judg 13:1–16:31; 1 Samuel
Neo-Assyrian Laws	1100s BC	Laws of the Neo-Assyrian Empire	RANE 114–115	Exod 19–24; Deut 12–26
Travels of Wenamun	1090 BC	An Egyptian semi-fictional travelogue that includes descriptions of Canaan	RANE 212–215; COS 1.41	Gen 34
Ludlul Bel Nemeqi	1000s BC	The sufferings of a noble Babylonian, somewhat reminiscent of Job	RANE 177–179; COS 1.153	Job
Enuma Elish	1000 BC (about)	Akkadian cosmology and creation	RANE 31–50	Gen 1–2
Babylonian Theodicy	1000~500 BC	A sufferer and a companion dialogue about life and suffering	RANE 179–182	Job, Ecclesiastes
Dialogue of Pessimism	1000~500 BC	A slave and his master discuss the lack of real value in anything	COS 1.155	Job, Ecclesiastes
Inscription of Shoshenq I	920 BC	An inscription by Egyptian pharaoh Shoshenq I (Shishak)	ANET 242–243	1 Kgs 11:40; 14:25-28
Assyrian Eponym Canon	910–612 BC	A list of selected officials for each year along with natural events that facilitate dating with the modern calendar	COS 2.1131	1–2 Kings; see "The Chronology of Israel's Monarchy," p. 562
Gezer Calendar	900 BC	Oldest example of Canaanite (old Hebrew); describes agricultural cycles	RANE 171	
Annals of Shalmaneser III	850~824 BC	Royal annals describing Shalmaneser III's incursion into Syria–Palestine and mentioning Ahab and Hadadezer	OTP 176–181	1 Kgs 16–22; 2 Kgs 9:1–10:33
Tell Dan Inscription	850 BC (about)	An Aramaic inscription containing the first reference outside the OT to the "house of David"	RANE 165; COS 2.39; OTP 160–161	1 Samuel—2 Kings
Mesha Stela, Moabite Stone	850 BC	Moabite monuments that list Omri, Ahab, King Mesha, and possibly the house of David; concept of <i>kherem</i>	RANE 160–162; OTP 157–159	Deut 7:26; Josh 6:17, 40; 1 Kgs 11:44; 16:21-28; 2 Kgs 3:4; 25:30
Black Obelisk	827 BC	Akkadian monument that describes the successor of Shalmaneser III and mentions Jehu and Ahab	RANE 144–145; OTP 122–124	1 Kgs 19:16; 2 Kgs 8:7-15; 9:1-13; 10:31-36

Title	Date	Description	Sources	OT Parallels
Zakkur Inscription	800 BC	Zakkur, king of Hamath, honors his god, mentions Ben-hadad	RANE 163–165	1 Kgs 15; 19–20; 2 Kgs 6; 8; 13
Babylonian Chronicles	745–120 BC	Yearly records covering a period that included many biblical events, including 722, 605, 597, and 539 BC	RANE 155–159; COS 1.137	1 Kgs 2:10; 11:43; 2 Kgs 17–24; Jer 37:1; Dan 5:30; 6:28
Annals of Tiglath-Pileser IV (Pul)	744–727 BC	Annals of the king who founded the Neo-Assyrian empire; encounters with Israel	RANE 145; OTP 125–126	2 Kgs 15–16; 2 Chr 28:16–21; Isa 7:1–8:10
Annals of Sargon II	722–706 BC	Akkadian king Sargon II describes his conquest of Samaria and destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel	RANE 145–146; COS 2.118A; OTP 127–129	cp. 2 Kgs 17–18; Isa 10:27–32; 14:1–32; 20:1
Siloam Inscription	701 BC	Hebrew inscription describing the completion of Hezekiah's tunnel	RANE 171–172	2 Kgs 20:20; 2 Chr 32:30
Sennacherib Prism	701 BC	Akkadian inscription describing Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and siege of Jerusalem	RANE 146–147; OTP 139–140	2 Kgs 18–20; Isa 36:1–39:8
Balaam Inscription	700 BC	Inscription in Aramaic recording the name of Balaam, a "good prophet" who died as a result of his actions	RANE 225–226; COS 2.27; OTP 124–126	Num 22–24, 26
Wisdom of Ahiqar	700–650 BC	An Assyrian court tale and the instructions of a wise court official	RANE 189–191; OTP 283–288	Gen 37–50; Proverbs, Daniel, Esther
Yavneh Yam Ostrakon	600s BC	A short inscription in Hebrew: A fieldworker pleads for his cloak, which his supervisor had unjustly confiscated	RANE 170; COS 3.41; OTP 331–332	Exod 22:25–27; Deut 24:12–17; Prov 14:9; 25:20
Seal of Baruch	600 BC (about)	A clay impression found in Jerusalem with Baruch's name		Jer 36; see "Baruch the Scribe," p. 1283
Instructions for Amenemope	600s–500s BC	Egyptian wisdom teaching: self-control, kindness, altruism, and the ideal man	RANE 187–189; COS 1.47	Prov 22–24
Babylonian Administrative Document	595–568 BC	Documents describe the good fortune of Judah's king Jehoiachin at the court of Babylonian king Evil-merodach	ANET 308	2 Kgs 25:27–30
Lachish Ostraca	589–586 BC	Clay tablets in Hebrew describing royal military administration and the plight of those under siege	RANE 168–169; OTP 134–136	1 Kgs 17:19; 19:7; Jer 26:20–22; 34:6–7
Nabonidus Chronicle	556–539 BC	Nabonidus's chronicle of his stay in Tema and the fall of Babylon	ANET 305–307; COS 1.89	Dan 5 (Belshazzar)
Seal of Temah	538–445 BC	A stone seal used by one of the Levitical families who went into exile	<i>The Jerusalem Post</i> , Jan 17, 2008	Neh 7:55
Cyrus Cylinder	518 BC	Cyrus recorded his conquest of Babylon in 539 BC and gave his theological explanation of the events	RANE 147–149; OTP 193–195	2 Chr 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 6:1–15; Isa 44:26–28; Dan 5:30; 6:28
Elephantine Papyri	400s BC	These Aramaic papyri describe life among Jews who fled to Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem	ANET 222, 491, 548–549	Jer 42–44
Murashu Tablets	400s BC	Akkadian tablets describing economic transactions between Babylonians and Jews who remained in Babylon	ATSHB 41	Ezra—Esther
Dead Sea Scrolls	300 BC (about)—AD 100	Some of the oldest copies of OT manuscripts and many extracanonical documents	Wise et al., <i>The Dead Sea Scrolls</i>	

INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH

*Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy!
I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.
I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin.
But I do not excuse the guilty.*
EXODUS 34:6b-7a

The Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, tells the story of how sin entered God's perfect world and how God responded. It introduces Abraham and his descendants as agents of blessing in a world under the curse of sin and death. This collection, Israel's foundational documents, thus offers a sobering yet inspiring picture of God's relationship with humankind.

SETTING

To help them remain true to God, the Israelites who had left Egypt needed a written record of their own history and mission. The Pentateuch recounts the story of God's grace to Israel. God rescued the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, called them to a special covenant relationship with himself, revealed his will to them, and took care of them as they traveled through the wilderness. Finally, they stood on the verge of entering the land of Canaan, which God had promised to their ancestors.

SUMMARY

The Pentateuch begins with the book of Genesis, which recounts God's grace in the beginnings of human history and in the lives of Israel's ancestors. God created humankind in his image and authorized humans to govern the world in his place (cp. Ps 8). When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, he

did not destroy them immediately, but their sin put them and their descendants under the curse of death. Eventually God judged humanity, but mercifully spared righteous Noah and his family. While the curse of sin and death continued to hang over the human race, God called Abraham and his family and established an eternal covenant with them that included a series of generous promises: innumerable descendants, permanent title to the land of Canaan, rule over the land, and blessing to all the nations of the earth. Often, Abraham's descendants proved themselves faithless and unworthy of the privilege. But God kept his commitment to save and bless the human race.

As the book of Exodus opens, the favored family had been enslaved by the Egyptians, and seventy individuals had grown into the nation of Israel. Then God rescued the Israelites from Egypt (Exod 1-18) so that he could establish them as his covenant people, a holy nation

(Exod 19:4-6). God's revelation of himself at Sinai (Exod 19-40) is the pivotal event in the Pentateuch.

In the book of Leviticus, God revealed to his people how to maintain a relationship with him, the means of forgiveness for their sin, and how they should live.

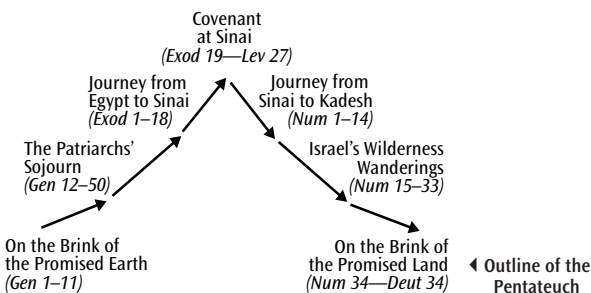
Numbers describes Israel's journey from Sinai to the plains of Moab. God accompanied and provided for his people on their journey, despite their repeated rebellion.

Finally, Deuteronomy records Moses' final pastoral addresses to the community of Israel. Moses detailed the significance of God's covenant and urged the Israelites to stay true to their Redeemer. If the people were to enjoy the blessings of the covenant, they needed to be faithful to God. So Moses challenged them to devote themselves anew to God and God alone as they prepared to cross the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land.

AUTHORSHIP

Jewish and Christian tradition recognize Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, and many scholars continue to believe that Moses wrote much of the Pentateuch and that the entire document bears his stamp and authority.

Yet this view is not universal. Critical scholars since the mid-1800s have argued that the Pentateuch was written no earlier than the 600s BC and is the product of a complex literary evolution. The prevailing critical view, the *Documentary Hypothesis*, is that Genesis—Deuteronomy were



compiled from various sources by different groups of people. This hypothesis uses the different names for God, repeated stories, and theological emphases to propose that the Pentateuch comes from four sources: J ("Jahwist," from "Yahweh"), E ("Elohist," from "Elohim"), D ("Deuteronomic," from Deuteronomy), and P ("Priestly"). It is thought that these sources were written and collected between 850 BC and 445 BC, gradually being combined and edited until around Ezra's time (400s BC). This theory has prevailed in the scholarly world since Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) made it popular.

However, advances in literary studies are again pointing back to Moses as the primary author of the Pentateuch. Critical scholars do not agree on the underlying sources for many passages, and additional sources have been invented to cover passages that do not fit the theory. The theory also fails to satisfactorily explain the emergence of Israel's monotheism in a totally polytheistic world. It assumes that the biblical writers borrowed most of their religious ideas from pagan predecessors. According to the biblical records, however, everything the Israelites borrowed from their neighbors was polytheistic and idolatrous. Israel's monotheism could not have been borrowed.

Archaeological discoveries have also called into question many of the criteria used in the Documentary Hypothesis. For instance, other writings from the ancient world confirm the use of different names for God, repeated stories, and ideas that were supposedly too advanced for ancient Israel, and the stories about the patriarchs fit their surrounding culture. These discoveries give background to the texts and contradict the assumptions of the Documentary Hypothesis. Archaeological finds continue to erode the rationale for dating the writing or editing of these books to later eras.

In recent years, with increased awareness of archaeology, critical scholars have begun to study the literary forms in the ancient Near East and in the Bible. *Form criticism* proposed that there was an oral tradition that lay behind the later written texts; by comparing these proposed oral forms, we could understand both the meaning and

the function of the text. Other approaches have focused on tracing how the traditions developed, how the traditions were used in religious settings, or how the literary genres functioned.

Such theories often seem unnecessarily complicated and conjectural. Evidence in the Pentateuch itself suggests that Moses did keep records of some of Israel's experiences during the wilderness wanderings (Exod 17:14; 24:4, 7; 34:27; Num 33:1-2; Deut 31:9, 11). Many features in specific accounts point to a date of composition in the late Bronze Age (1500s–1200s BC, the era of the Exodus). The OT frequently credits Moses with writing the Pentateuch or portions of it (e.g., Josh 1:8; 8:31-32; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; Ezra 6:18; Neh 13:1; Dan 9:11-13; Mal 4:4), and the New Testament strongly connects the Torah with Moses (Matt 19:8; John 5:46-47; 7:19; Acts 3:22; Rom 10:5).

Do these facts confirm that Moses wrote the Pentateuch as we have it? Not necessarily. Several difficult factors remain. First, following the custom of literary works in the ancient Near East, the Pentateuch nowhere names its author. Second, Moses could not have recorded the account of his own death (Deut 34). Further, he would not have known of a place in northern Israel called Dan (Gen 14:14; cp. Josh 19:47; Judg 18:28-29), and he would not have referred to the conquest of Canaan as a past event (Deut 2:12). Thus, the text itself shows signs that it was updated for completeness (e.g., the death of Moses) or clarification for a later audience (e.g., Gen 14:14; 36:1; Deut 2:10-12). Some suggest that the reason the grammar and syntax of Deuteronomy resemble that of Jeremiah, who lived more than 500 years after Moses, is that later scribes updated the language. Such changes would be similar to updating translations of the Bible by replacing old expressions ("Behold") with contemporary ones ("Look").

We can conclude that Moses probably wrote down the speeches he delivered (Deut 31:9-13) and either wrote or arranged for the transcription of the revelation he received on Mount Sinai. It is plausible that he authorized others to write the stories and genealogies of the patriarchs that previously

had been passed on orally. Just as the pieces of the Tabernacle were constructed and woven by skilled craftsmen and then finally assembled by Moses (Exod 35–40), so literary craftsmen might have composed bits and pieces that make up the Pentateuch and submitted them to Moses, who ultimately approved them. We can only speculate when these pieces were finally edited in their present form, although the narrative frame of Deuteronomy suggests it occurred sometime after the death of Moses. But by the time David organized Temple worship, the content of the Pentateuch as we know it was apparently fixed.

Genesis and the other books of the Pentateuch can thus be understood as the product of Moses' genius under God's inspiration, with later editorial adjustments. Later writers—including the New Testament authors—spoke of "The Torah of Moses," or "The Book of the Torah of Moses," or, as Jesus himself said, "Moses . . . wrote about me" (John 5:45-46). Moses might not have been the only author or editor of the Pentateuch, but the Pentateuch fundamentally and substantially comes from Moses, and the Israelites accepted it as bearing the full force of his authority.

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY

A number of critical scholars view the early chapters of Genesis as mythological *representations* of cosmic and human origins, like similar Babylonian accounts, rather than historical *presentations* of what actually happened. Recently, this same kind of skepticism has characterized views toward the patriarchs, as well as toward Moses and the Exodus. These scholars note that archaeological discoveries do not specifically identify any of the characters or the events in the Pentateuch. However, the issue is not quite so simple. When it comes to archaeological proof, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Discoveries during the past century enable us to reconstruct patterns of life and an outline of ancient Near Eastern history in which the events described in the Pentateuch are quite at home.

LITERARY GENRES

We often call the first five books of the Bible the *Pentateuch* ("five

containers"). The New Testament refers to these books as "the law of Moses" (Luke 24:44). This designation comes from the early Greek translators of the Old Testament, who almost always rendered the Hebrew term *torah* as *nomos* ("law"), even though the Hebrew word *torah* actually means "instruction."

It is misleading to refer to the Pentateuch as "the law," because large portions are not law at all. It is, however, fitting to call the whole collection *torah* ("instruction"). The Torah includes inspired narrative (Genesis; Exod 1–20; 32–40; Lev 8–10; Numbers); poems and hymns (Gen 49; Exod 15; Deut 32; 33); genealogies (Gen 5, 10, 11, 36); covenant documents (Exod 19–24; Deuteronomy); civil, ceremonial, and moral laws (Exod 21–23); sermons (Deuteronomy); and prayers (Exod 32; Num 14).

INTERPRETATION

Several principles guide us as we read and interpret the Pentateuch:

1. These texts were originally read aloud, and the reading involved large sections at a time. Chapter and verse divisions were not part of the original and can detract from our understanding. Each verse and paragraph should be read within its larger context.

2. The Pentateuch was written more than 3,000 years ago. It used ancient literary standards and addressed ancient issues. For example, although Genesis 1–2 affects how Christians today respond to theories of evolution, the passage was written to address ancient rather than modern concerns.

3. The differences among genres of text require that we interpret them differently. Therefore, as we read the narratives and delight in the human interest elements, we should recognize that God is the ultimate hero in all the stories. Similarly, as we read the laws of Exodus and Leviticus, we should try to establish the theological significance that these regulations had for OT Israel and reflect on how their message applies to us today.

4. The Pentateuch records only the beginning and the early chapters of the larger story of divine

revelation that ultimately culminates in Jesus Christ. The seeds of promise for a Messiah are found in God's promise to crush the head of the serpent through the offspring of the woman (Gen 3:15); in the offspring of Abraham (Gen 22:17); in the descendants of Judah (Gen 49:10), who received eternal title to the scepter of Israel; and in the star that the pagan prophet Balaam saw on the distant horizon (Num 24:17). These seeds bore fruit later in the biblical record.

MEANING AND MESSAGE

The Pentateuch provided ancient Israel with an awesome picture of God, an image that separated him from the false gods of other nations. Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the only God—no other god exists (Deut 4:32–40). Yahweh, the God of Israel, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Yahweh, the God of Israel, is a God of grace; he deals patiently with sinners, saving them and calling them to covenant relationship with himself, revealing his name and his will to them, providing for their needs, and walking with them in fellowship and love.

In the account of creation, the Pentateuch reveals important lessons about the universe. God created the world by speaking it into being. He created a perfect world, characterized by light and life and order. But the devastating effects of sin replaced light with darkness, life with death, and peace and order with confusion and pain. Yet God promised ultimate victory, guaranteeing that the head of the serpent who introduced sin to humankind would be crushed.

The Pentateuch introduces us to God's covenant relationships with human beings. All of God's covenants are gracious. He invites his human partners into a special relationship and calls on them to respond with holy living because of the special role they play in his plan of redemption. By grace, God drew Noah into covenant relationship by saving him from the Flood. By grace, God called Abraham out of the pagan city of Ur in Babylonia to establish a covenant relationship. By grace, God called Israel to

be his people, and at Mount Sinai God confirmed for the nation his covenant with Abraham.

Although the covenants all originated in God's gracious heart, they still called for an obedient response from the human partners. However, God never wanted this obedience to be driven by a mere sense of duty or quid pro quo. Instead, the text of the Pentateuch reveals a consistent pattern of conduct for the Lord's people to follow in loving obedience and grateful response to God's saving work. Because God chose Israel to be his people and bound himself to them in covenant relationship, he desired that they express their faithfulness to him.

Despite the unified message of Scripture that people have never been saved by keeping the law (see Gen 15:6; Deut 7:7–8; Pss 40; 51; Isa 1:10–20; Rom 4:1–17; Gal 3:6–7), many people erroneously think that people in the Old Testament were saved by keeping the law. However, grace has always preceded law. God rescued Israel from their slavery in Egypt *before* he gave them the law. While God required the Israelites to obey the law in order to receive blessing and to fulfill the plan God had for them, the motivation for their obedience should have been gratitude that God had saved Israel and revealed his will to them.

In short, the Pentateuch contains the Torah—the instruction—that God gave Israel at its founding. Priests were to teach it and model it (Deut 33:10; 2 Chr 15:3; 19:8; Mal 2:6, 9; cp. Ezra 7:10; Jer 18:18; Ezek 7:26). Psalmists praised it (e.g., Ps 19:7–14; 119), prophets appealed to it (Isa 1:10; 5:24; 8:20; 30:9; 51:7), faithful kings ruled by it (1 Kgs 2:2–4; 2 Kgs 14:6; 22:11; 23:25), righteous citizens lived by it (Ps 1), and unfaithful Israel was judged by it (Deut 28:15–68; 2 Chr 36:11–21). Only Jesus Christ kept it and completely fulfilled it (Matt 3:15).

FURTHER READING

VICTOR HAMILTON
Handbook on the Pentateuch (2005)
G. HERBERT LIVINGSTON
The Pentateuch in Its Cultural Environment (1974)

THE BOOK OF Genesis

Genesis is the book of beginnings—of the universe and of humanity, of sin and its catastrophic effects, and of God’s plan to restore blessing to the world through his chosen people. God began his plan when he called Abraham and made a covenant with him. Genesis traces God’s promised blessings from generation to generation, to the time of bondage and the need for redemption from Egypt. It lays the foundation for God’s subsequent revelation, and most other books of the Bible draw on its contents. Genesis is a source of instruction, comfort, and edification.

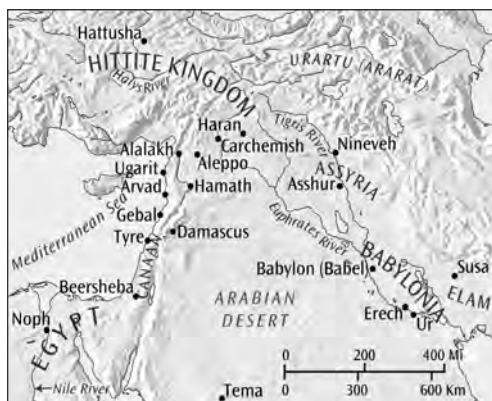
SETTING

When Genesis was written, the children of Israel had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years. They had recently been released from bondage and guided through the desert to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai, where he had established his covenant relationship with them and had given them his law through Moses. Israel was now poised to enter the Promised Land and receive the inheritance that God had promised Abraham.

While enslaved in Egypt, the Israelites had adopted many pagan ideas and customs from their Egyptian masters (e.g., Exod 32:1-4). They were influenced by false concepts of God, the world, and human nature (e.g., Exod 32), and were reduced to being slaves rather than owners and managers of the land. Perhaps they had forgotten the great promises that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or perhaps they had concluded that the promises would never be fulfilled.

Before entering the Promised Land, the Israelites needed to understand the nature of God, his world, and their place in it more clearly. They needed to embrace their identity as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis provided the needed understanding.



◀ The Ancient Near East, about 2100 bc. Humanity spread out from the mountains of URARTU (ARARAT) and populated the early centers of civilization. By the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), many of the cities were ancient.

ASSHUR 2:14; 10:22; 25:3; 25:18
 ASSYRIA 10:11
 BABYLON (BABEL), BABYLONIA 10:9-10; 11:1-9; 14:1, 9
 CANAAN 9:18-27; 10:18-19; 12:5-10
 DAMASCUS 14:15; 15:2
 EGYPT 12:10-13:1; 15:18; 37:28-36; 39:1-50:26
 ELAM 10:22; 14:1, 9
 ERECH 10:10; Ezra 4:9
 HAMATH 10:18; 2 Sam 8:9-10; 2 Kgs 14:28; 23:33
 HARAN 11:26-32; 12:4-5; 27:43; 28:10; 29:4; Acts 7:2-4
 SUSA Ezra 4:9; Neh 1:1; Esth 1:2; Dan 8:2
 UR 11:28, 31; 15:7; Neh 9:7
 URARTU (ARARAT) 8:4

SUMMARY

Genesis traces God's work to overcome with blessing the curse that came on humankind because of sin. The book arranges family traditions, genealogies, historical events, and editorial comments into a single, sustained argument.

Every section but the first has the heading, "This is the account" (or *These are the generations*; Hebrew *toledoth*); each of the *toledoth* sections explains

OUTLINE

1:1–2:3

Creation

2:4–4:26

What Happened to the Creation

5:1–6:8

The Account of Adam's Descendants

6:9–9:29

The Account of Noah's Family

10:1–11:9

The Account of Noah's Sons

11:10–26

The Account of Shem's Descendants

11:27–25:11

The Account of Terah's Descendants

25:12–18

The Account of Ishmael's Descendants

25:19–35:29

The Account of Isaac's Descendants

36:1–37:1

The Account of Esau's Descendants

37:2–50:26

The Account of Jacob's Descendants

the history of a line of descent. In each case, a deterioration of well-being is followed by an increasing focus on God's plan to bless the world. This plan is the basis for God's covenant with his people; as the blessing develops, the covenant is clarified. By the end of the book, the reader is ready for the fulfillment of the promises in Israel's redemption from bondage (see Exodus).

The first section (1:1–2:3) does not have the *toledoth* heading, and logically so—it is the account of creation "in the beginning" (1:1). The work of creation is wrapped in God's approval and blessing as he fulfills his plan.

The next section (2:4–4:26) focuses on the creation of human life (2:4–25) and traces what became of God's creation because of Adam's and Eve's sin (3:1–13), the curse on their sin (3:14–24), and the extension of sin to their descendants (4:1–24). Humanity no longer enjoyed God's rest; instead, they experienced guilt and fear. So they fled from God and developed a proud civilization.

Independence from God resulted in the downward drift of human life (5:1–6:8). The genealogy of 5:1–32 begins by recalling that human beings were made in God's image and were blessed by him (5:1–2). As the genealogy is traced, the death of each generation reminds the reader of the curse, with Enoch providing a ray of hope that the curse is not final. In 6:1–8, we learn that God regretted having made humans and decided to judge the earth. Noah, however, received God's favor and provided a source of hope (5:29; 6:8).

The next section (6:9–9:29) brings the curse of judgment through the flood followed by blessing in a new beginning. A renewed creation began, purged of the abominable evil that had invaded and ruined the human race.

The world's population expanded into various nations (10:1–11:9) whose people were bent on disobedience. The population of the earth by Shem,

TIMELINE

2166 / 1990 BC*

Abraham is born

2091 / 1915 BC

Abraham moves to Canaan

2080 / 1904 BC

Ishmael is born

2066 / 1890 BC

Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, Isaac is born

2006 / 1830 BC

Jacob and Esau are born

1898 / 1722 BC

Joseph is sold into slavery

1885 / 1709 BC

Joseph begins governing Egypt

1876 / 1661 BC

Jacob moves to Egypt

1446 / 1270 BC

Israel leaves Egypt (the Exodus), moves to Mount Sinai

1406 / 1230 BC

Israel enters Canaan

* The two dates

harmonize with the traditional "early" chronology and a more recent "late" chronology of the Exodus. All dates are approximate. Please see "Chronology: Abraham to Joshua," p. 118.

Ham, and Japheth seemed fruitful (10:1-32), but the nations were divided by languages and boundaries (10:5, 20, 31). Because of their rebellion, God dispersed them to prevent greater wickedness (11:1-9).

After the chaos of the scattered nations, 11:10-26 brings the focus to Abram, through whom God chose to bring blessing to all. The rest of the book (11:27–50:26) tells of God's blessing Abram and his descendants. God first made a covenant with Abram (11:27–25:11), promising him a great nation, land, and name. As time went on, God made the specific terms of the covenant clearer, and Abram's faith grew deeper.

In each generation, Genesis gives a brief account of the families that are not Israel's ancestors before turning to the line of Israel. After briefly reporting what became of Ishmael (25:12-18), Genesis traces in detail what happened to Isaac and his family (25:19–35:29).

True to the pattern of the book, Esau's line (Edom) is dealt with briefly (36:1–37:1) before the chosen line of Jacob the heir. The final section (37:2–50:26) concerns Jacob's family, centering on the life of Joseph. In the land of Canaan, the family became corrupt under Canaanite influence to the point of beginning to merge with them (ch 38). To preserve the line of blessing, God sent the family into Egypt where they could flourish, remain separate (43:32; 46:34), and become a great nation. The book closes with the promise of the Lord's coming to rescue his people from Egypt (50:24-26).

"God rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. And he blessed the seventh day. . . ." And we ourselves will be a "seventh day" when we shall be filled with his blessing and remade by his sanctification. . . . Only when we are remade by God and perfected by a greater grace shall we have the eternal stillness of that rest in which we shall see that he is God.

St. Augustine
City of God, sec. 22.30

AUTHORSHIP

Both Scripture and tradition attribute the Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy) to Moses. No one was better qualified than Moses to have written this book. Since he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22), he had the literary skills to collect and edit Israel's traditions and records and to compose this theological treatise. His unique communion with God gave him the spiritual illumination, understanding, and inspiration needed to guide him. He had good reason to write this work—to provide Israel with the theological and historical foundation for the Exodus and the covenant at Sinai, and to establish the new nation in accord with the promises made to their ancestors.

Most scholars, however, do not accept that Moses wrote Genesis. The prevailing critical view, called the *Documentary Hypothesis*, is that Genesis was compiled from various sources by different groups of people. In such approaches, there is seldom a word about divine revelation or inspiration. For those who understand the Bible as God's inspired word, such theories often seem unnecessarily complicated and conjectural. Genesis can be understood much more straightforwardly as the product of Moses' genius under God's inspiration with later editorial adjustments. (See further "Introduction to the Pentateuch: Authorship," p. 12).

COMPOSITION

Biblical scholars of all stripes have always acknowledged that various sources were used in writing Genesis and other historical texts in the Bible (such as Kings and Luke). Moses used collections of family records, oral traditions, ancient accounts of primeval events, and genealogies to write Genesis. Those sources could have been incorporated as received, or the author may have changed their style and wording, stitching them together with additional material for the particular purpose of tracing the foundations of Israelite faith.

Genesis also includes passages and expressions that are obviously later editorial glosses. Some sections (such as the list of Edomite kings, 36:31-43) could have been added during the early days of the monarchy. There is no conflict in saying that Genesis was authored by Moses and augmented by subsequent editors whose work was guided by the Holy Spirit. Given these considerations, conservative scholars find it plausible that the biblical material accurately records actual events.

LITERARY CHARACTER

Genesis includes various types of literature. Several suggestions have been made as to the nature of the materials.

Myth. Mythological literature explains the origins of things symbolically through the deeds of gods and supernatural creatures. For ancient peoples, myths were beliefs that explained life and reality. Whole systems of ritual activities were developed to ensure that the forces of fertility, life, and death would continue year by year. Some of these rituals gave rise to cult prostitution (see 38:15, 21-22).

It would be very difficult to classify the material in Genesis as myth. Israel had one God, not a multitude. The nation of Israel had a beginning, a history, and a future hope. They saw God, rather than gods and other supernatural creatures, as the primary actor in the world. Their worship was not cosmic, magical, or superstitious, but a reenactment of their own rescue from Egypt and a celebration of God's factual intervention in history and their hope in his promises.

If Genesis uses elements of mythological language, it is to display a deliberate contrast with pagan concepts and to show that the Lord God is sovereign over such ideas. For example, the ancients worshiped the sun as a god, but in Genesis the sun serves the Creator's wishes (1:14-18). The book of Genesis is a cemetery for lifeless myths and dead gods. Genesis is not myth.

Etiology. A number of scholars describe the Genesis narratives as *etiologies*, stories that explain the causes of factual reality or traditional beliefs. The implication is that such stories were made up for explanatory purposes and do not describe historical events. For example, if one says that the story of Cain and Abel was made up to explain why shepherds and farmers do not get along, the account loses its integrity as factual history.

Etiological elements certainly occur in Genesis, because the book gives the foundation and rationale for almost everything that Israel would later do. For example, the creation account of Gen 2 ends with the explanation, "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother. . . ." The event as it happened explains why marriage was conducted the way it was, but to say that a story explains something is quite different from saying that the story was fabricated to explain it. The stories of Genesis are not fictional tales invented to explain later customs and beliefs.

History. Many scholars object to regarding Genesis as history, for two basic reasons: (1) Genesis explains events as caused by God, and the inclusion of the supernatural is regarded as proof that the material is theological reflection and thus not historically reliable; and (2) the events in Genesis cannot be validated from outside sources; no other records have demonstrated that Abraham existed or that any of his family history occurred.

Genesis is not interested in parading Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as examples of morality. Therefore, it does not moralize on them. [Genesis] is bringing together the promises of God to the patriarchs and the faithfulness of God in keeping those promises.

Victor P. Hamilton
The Book of Genesis:
 Chapters 1–17, p. 46

Modern philosophies of history exclude the supernatural as an explanation of historical events, but there is no reason to do so arbitrarily. If God exists and is able to act, then he might very well be the ultimate cause of all historical events and the immediate cause of specific historical events. The Israelites were not as distrustful of supernatural events as are modern critics; they experienced such events frequently as God acted among them to fulfill the promises recorded in Genesis.

It is true that no direct evidence of the patriarchs or the events in Genesis has been found, but archaeology confirms the plausibility of Genesis by showing that the historical situation in that era (Middle Bronze I, 2000–1800 BC) corresponds closely to what Genesis portrays. It is unlikely that this would be so if Genesis were not an accurate record of the facts. When all the archaeological and historical data are assembled around the events, they fit perfectly within the setting, and the details of the narratives make perfectly good sense.

Theological Interpretation. Genesis was not intended as a chronicle of the lives of the patriarchs, a history for history's sake, or a complete biography. It is clearly a theological interpretation of selected records of the nation's ancestors, but this does not destroy its historicity. Interpretations of an event can differ, but the offering of interpretations is a good witness to the actuality of the events. The author retold the events in his own way, but he did not invent them.

Tradition. What was thus committed to writing is tradition in the reverent care of literary genius. Scholars prefer words such as "traditions" or even "sagas" to describe these narratives. Doing so only makes the claim that the stories preserve the memory of the people of Israel; it makes no claim that the events themselves are historical. The biblical understanding, however, is that these stories were recorded under divine inspiration and are therefore historically true and reliable.

In all probability, Abram brought the primeval accounts and the family genealogies from Mesopotamia, and stories about the family were added to these collections. Joseph could easily have preserved all the traditions, both written and oral, in Egypt with his own records. Moses could then have compiled the works substantially in their present form while adding his editorial comments. Since he worked under God's inspiration and guidance, the narratives record exactly what God wanted written and correspond precisely to reality.

Instructional Literature. Since Genesis is the first book of the Pentateuch (the "Torah" or Law), it may be best to classify it as "Torah Literature" (Hebrew *torah*, "instruction, law"). Genesis is instructional literature that lays the foundation for the Law. It is theological interpretation of the historical traditions standing behind the covenant at Sinai. In the way it is written, one may discern that Moses was preparing his readers to receive God's law and the fulfillment of the promises made to their forefathers. Genesis is therefore a unique work. Theology, history, and tradition come together to instruct God's people and prepare them for blessing.

MEANING AND MESSAGE

Israel's most important questions were answered by the Genesis narratives. Life and death, the possession of the land of Canaan, and how Israel ended up in Egypt are explained as God's providential working in history. Israel was part of God's plan in this world. His plan had

a starting point at creation and will have an end point in the future when the promises are completely fulfilled.

Israel, the Chosen People. The central theme of Genesis is that God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. He promised to make them his own people, heirs of the land of Canaan, and a blessing to the world. Genesis gave Israel the theological and historical basis for its existence as God's chosen people.

Israel could trace its ancestry to the patriarch Abraham and its destiny to God's promises (12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-8). Because the promise of a great nation was crucial, much of Genesis is devoted to family concerns of the patriarchs and their wives, their sons and heirs, and their birthrights and blessings. The record shows how God preserved and protected the chosen line through the patriarchs. Israel thus knew that they had become the great nation promised to Abraham. Their future was certainly not in slavery to the Egyptians, but in Canaan, where they would live as a free nation and as the people of the living God, and where they could mediate God's blessings to the people of the world.

Blessing and Curse. The entire message of Genesis turns on the motifs of blessing and cursing. The promised blessing would give the patriarchs innumerable descendants and give the descendants the land of promise; the blessing would make them famous in the earth, enable them to flourish and prosper, and appoint them to bring others into the covenant blessings. The curse, meanwhile, would alienate, deprive, and disinherit people from the blessings. The effects of the curse are felt by the whole race as death and pain and as God's judgment on the world.

These motifs continue throughout the Bible. Prophets and priests spoke of even greater blessings in the future and an even greater curse for those who refuse God's gift of salvation and its blessings. The Bible reminds God's people not to fear human beings, but to fear God, who has the power to bless and to curse.

Good and Evil. In Genesis, that which is good is blessed by God: It produces, enhances, preserves, and harmonizes with life. That which is evil is cursed: It causes pain, diverts from what is good, and impedes or destroys life. Genesis traces the perpetual struggle between good and evil that characterizes our fallen human race. God will bring about the greater good, build the faith of his people, and ultimately triumph over all evil (cp. Rom 8:28).

God's Plan. Genesis begins with the presupposition that God exists and that he has revealed himself in word and deed to Israel's ancestors. It does not argue for the existence of God; it simply begins with God and shows how everything falls into place when the sovereign God works out his plan to establish Israel as the means of restoring blessing to the whole world.

God's Rule. Genesis is the fitting introduction to the founding of theocracy, the rule of God over all creation that was to be established through his chosen people. Genesis lays down the initial revelation of God's sovereignty. He is the Lord of the universe who will move heaven and earth to bring about his plan. He desires to bless people, but he will not tolerate rebellion and unbelief. His promises are great, and he is fully able to bring them to fruition. To participate in his plan has always required faith, for without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb 11:6).

FURTHER READING

VICTOR P. HAMILTON
The Book of Genesis (1990)

DEREK KIDNER
Genesis (1967)

KENNETH A. MATHEWS
Genesis (1996)

ALLEN P. ROSS
Creation and Blessing (1988)
*Genesis in Cornerstone
Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1
(2008)

GORDON WENHAM
Genesis 1-15 (1987)
Genesis 16-50 (1994)

1. CREATION (1:1–2:3)***In the Beginning (1:1–2)***

1 In the beginning God ^acreated the ^bheavens and the ^cearth. ²The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the ^dSpirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

Six Days of Creation (1:3–31)***Day One: Light, Darkness***

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.

Day Two: Sky, Waters

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.

Day Three: Land, Sea, Vegetation

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.”

1:1
Ps 89:11; 102:25
Isa 42:5; 48:13
John 1:1–2
^a*bara*’ (1254)
^bGen 1:27
^c*shamayim* (8064)
^dExod 16:4
^e*erets* (0776)
^fGen 9:11

1:2
Isa 45:18
^a*ruakh* (7307)
^bGen 45:27

1:3
Isa 45:7
2 Cor 4:6

1:6
Job 26:10
Ps 136:5–6

1:9
Ps 95:5
Prov 8:29
Jer 5:22
2 Pet 3:5

Ps 33:6–9
Prov 3:19; 8:22–31
Isa 40:26–28; 45:11–12, 18–19
Jer 10:11–16
John 1:1–4
Rom 8:18–25
2 Cor 5:17
Col 1:15–20
Rev 4:11; 21:1–5

The Creation (1:1–2:3)

The creation account in Genesis is foundational to the message of the entire Bible, not just of Genesis or the Pentateuch. Understanding the early chapters of Genesis is thus crucial to forming a biblical worldview.

This part of Genesis deals with fundamental questions: Who created the world, and for what purpose? Why is the world in its present condition? Genesis answers these questions, dispelling the idolatry that Israel had acquired from their pagan masters in Egypt. In the Promised Land, they would also be surrounded by people who believed in many false gods and worshiped created things rather than the Creator. Genesis taught Israel that the one true God created and has absolute authority over all things; he alone is worthy of worship.

Every worldview attempts to explain where the world came from, what is wrong with the world, and how it can be set right again. The creation account in Genesis teaches that as God made the world, it was “very good” (1:31). Through creation, God turned disorder into restful order and emptiness into the fullness of abundant life. In this environment, humans enjoyed unbroken fellowship with their Creator until their rebellion severed that fellowship and implanted evil in human hearts (ch 3; see chs 4–6). The world’s evil does not come from some defect in creation; God put the world under a curse because of human rebellion.

Since that first rebellion, humans have been alienated from the Creator and no longer recognize his presence and authority. This alienation results in shame, fractured relationships with God and other humans, estrangement from the rest of creation, and death (3:7–19). Since that time, God has been working purposefully in history to restore humans to fellowship with him, which he is doing through Jesus Christ. Restored humans are a new creation (Gal 6:15); through Jesus, eternal life is open to all and God will one day renew all things (see Isa 65:17–25; Rom 8:19–22). The whole cosmos will be made new (Rev 21:1).

1:1–2:3 These verses introduce the Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy) and teach Israel that the world was created, ordered, and populated by the one true God and not by the gods of surrounding nations. • God blessed three specific things: animal life (1:22–25), human life (1:27), and the Sabbath day (2:3). This trilogy of blessings highlights the Creator’s plan: Humankind was made in God’s image to enjoy sovereign dominion over the creatures of the earth and to participate in God’s Sabbath rest.

1:1 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth*, . . . or *When God began to cre-*

ate the heavens and the earth, . . .): This statement summarizes the entire creation account (1:3–2:3). Already a key question—Who created the world?—is answered (see also Prov 8:22–31; John 1:1–3). Although the modern naturalistic mindset rejects this question and that of creation’s purpose, Genesis affirms God’s role and purpose in creation. • The common name for *God* (Hebrew *’elohim*) emphasizes his grand supremacy. The word *’elohim* is plural, but the verbs used with it are usually singular, reflecting the consistent scriptural proclamation of a single, all-powerful God. • *created* (Hebrew *bara*’): In the OT, God is always the agent of creation

expressed by this verb. It describes the making of something fresh and new—notably the cosmos (1:1, 21; 2:3), humankind (1:27), the Israelite nation (Isa 43:1), and the future new creation (Isa 65:17). • *The heavens and the earth* are the entire ordered cosmos.

1:2 This verse gives the background for the summary in 1:1 and the detailed description in 1:3–2:3. God’s creative utterances bring order to the chaotic state of the universe. • *formless . . . empty* (Hebrew *tohu . . . bohu*): This terse idiom means something like “wild and waste.” It sets a stark contrast to the final ordered state of the heavens and the earth (1:1). • *deep waters*

1:10
Ps 33:7; 95:5

1:11
Gen 2:9
Ps 104:14
Matt 6:30

1:14
Ps 74:16; 104:19

1:15
Gen 1:5

1:16
Ps 8:3; 19:1-6;
136:8-9
1 Cor 15:41

1:18
Jer 33:20, 25

1:20
Gen 2:19
Ps 146:6
**nepesh* (5315)
*Gen 2:7

1:21
Ps 104:25-28

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.

Day Four: Sun, Moon, Stars

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.

Day Five: Birds, Fish

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

Formless	CHAOS	Empty
DAY 1 (1:3-5) Light, Dark	HEAVENS	DAY 4 (1:14-19) Sun, Moon, Stars
DAY 2 (1:6-8) Water, Sky	WATER & SKY	DAY 5 (1:20-23) Birds, Fish
DAY 3 (1:9-13) Sea, Land	EARTH	DAY 6 (1:24-31) Animals, Humans
Formed	COSMOS	Filled
	DAY 7 (2:2-3) Rest	

◀ **The Structure of the Creation Account** (1:1-2:3). God transformed chaos into the present cosmos. In the first three days, he transformed the formless void into the structured universe—the HEAVENS (outer space), the WATER and SKY, and the EARTH (cp. Exod 20:11; Ps 135:6). In the second three days, he populated each empty realm. The seventh day (2:1-3) stands apart: As God's day of rest, it provides the weekly pattern for human activity (Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17) and speaks of the rest that God promised to those who live by faith in him (see Heb 3:7-4:11).

two collections of water (cp. Job 37:18; Ezek 1:22). In the ancient Near East, the cosmos was understood as a three-tier system, with rain originating from the outermost tier (see 7:11-12 and note).

1:9-10 *Let the waters . . . flow together:* Other ancient cultures viewed the sea as a hostile force. Genesis shows God as further restraining chaos (see note on 1:2) by prescribing specific boundaries for the sea. The flood—an act of God's judgment (6:7)—undid these boundaries and returned the earth to chaos (7:1-24).

1:14-31 On days 4-6, God filled the domains that had been formed during days 1-3 (1:3-13).

1:14 *Let them . . . mark the seasons, days, and years:* The movement of the heavenly bodies defined Israel's liturgical calendar, whose roots in creation gave a sacred timing to Israel's festivals and celebrations (see Exod 23:15; Lev 23:4).

1:16 In the surrounding pagan cultures, the *two great lights* were worshiped as deities, but in Genesis they serve God and humanity (see Ps 136:7-9; Jer 31:35). The sun and moon are not named; they are simply called the *larger one* and the *smaller one*. Not including their names may have reminded Israel that they were not gods. • *govern:* Cp. 1:26, 28; Ps 136:9. • *the stars:* The starry heavens testify to God's creative power as they proclaim his glory (Ps 19:1; 148:3). They do not predict the future, as Israel's neighbors believed (see Jer 10:2).

1:21 Contrary to the pagan idea that the *great sea creatures* were co-eternal with God, Genesis states that *God created* them and is sovereign over them. The Hebrew word *tanninim* ("creatures") elsewhere refers to crocodiles (Ezek 29:3), powerful monsters (Jer 51:34), or the sea creature, Leviathan (Isa 27:1; cp. Job 41:1-34).

(Hebrew *tehom*): Some scholars say this alludes to the Mesopotamian goddess Tiamat (representing chaos), but Genesis views *tehom* as inhospitable chaos, not as a deity or goddess that God engaged in cosmic battle. • *the Spirit of God:* God directly superintended the creation process.

1:3-13 In the first three days, God formed the chaos into a habitable world.

1:3 *Then God said:* Nothing in Gen 1 is created apart from God's powerful word (cp. Ps 33:6, 9). • *"Let there be . . . ,"* and *there was:* God's command enacted his will to create the world. God is not a part of creation or limited by it; he is the supreme ruler over everything (cp. Neh 9:6).

1:4 *Light* is antithetical to chaotic *darkness* (1:2); the light is declared *good* but the darkness is not (cp. John 1:5). God is the source of this light (cp. 1:14-19). God *separated* the light, as he did water

(cp. 1:6-8), by his creative word. Light is associated with life and blessing (Job 38:19-20; Ps 19:1-6; 97:11; 104:19-20; Isa 60:19-20) and sets a boundary on the darkness that would destroy cosmic order. Darkness often typifies terror, death, and evil (see 15:12; Job 18:6, 18; Ps 88:12; Eph 5:11-12; 1 Jn 1:5).

1:5 *God called* (or *named*): To name something is to exercise authority over it (see also 2:19-20). • *day:* The Hebrew *yom* can refer to daylight (1:5a), to a 24-hour period (1:5b), or to an unspecified time period (2:4b, "When," literally *in the day*; cp. Exod 20:8-11). • *evening . . . morning:* The Hebrew day began at sundown, just as the first day began with darkness and brought the first morning light.

1:6-8 The creation account describes the appearance of things from a human perspective. The *sky* is viewed as a shiny dome that is a buffer between

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.

Day Six: Animals, Humankind

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 ^fcreated human beings in his own image.

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

Sabbath Rest (2:1-3)

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 ^gblessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of ^hcreation.

1:24
Gen 2:19

1:26
Gen 5:1; 9:6
Ps 8:6-8
Acts 17:28-29

1:27
*Matt 19:4
*Mark 10:6
*bara' (1254)
* Gen 2:3

1:29
Gen 9:3
Ps 104:13; 136:25

1:30
Ps 104:14; 145:15

1:31
Ps 104:24

2:1
Deut 4:19; 17:3
Ps 104:2
Isa 45:12

2:2
Exod 20:11; 31:17
*Heb 4:4

2:3
Isa 58:13
*barak (1288)
* Gen 12:2
*bara' (1254)
* Gen 6:7

2:4
Gen 1:3-31
Job 38:4-11

1:22 God blessed them: God's blessing commissions and enables the fulfillment of what God has spoken (see “Blessing” at 48:8-20, p. 113; see also 17:16; Deut 7:13). • **Let the fish . . . let the birds:** These directives define the blessing. The fish and birds are fertile by God's command, not by pagan ritual, as some of Israel's neighbors thought.

1:26 Let us make is more personal than the remote “Let there be” (e.g., 1:3, 6). • The plural *us* has inspired several explanations: (1) the Trinity; (2) the plural to denote majesty; (3) a plural to show deliberation with the self; and (4) God speaking with his heavenly court of angels. The concept of the Trinity—one true God who exists eternally in three distinct persons—was revealed at a later stage in redemptive history, making it unlikely that the human author intended that here. Hebrew scholars generally dismiss the plural of majesty view because the grammar does not clearly support it (the plural of majesty has not been demonstrated to be communicated purely through a plural verb). The plural of self-deliberation also lacks evidence; the only clear examples refer to Israel as a corporate unity (e.g., 2 Sam 24:14). God's speaking to the heavenly court,

however, is well-attested in the OT (see 3:22; 11:7; 1 Kgs 22:19-22; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; 38:7; Ps 89:5-6; Isa 6:1-8; Dan 10:12-13). • **human beings:** Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*. • The descriptors *in our image and like us* are virtually synonymous in Hebrew. Humans enjoy a unique relationship with God. • **They will reign:** Humans represent the Creator as his ambassadors, vice-regents, and administrators on earth. • **all the wild animals on the earth:** As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*.

1:27 The first poetry of Genesis reflectively celebrates God's climactic feat in creating humankind. • **human beings (Or the man;** Hebrew reads *ha-adam*); This term is often used to denote humanity collectively (see 6:1, 5-7; 9:5-6). Though traditionally translated “man,” gender is not at issue here; both *male and female* are included.

1:28 said: God's message to humankind is direct and intimate; we are stewards of his delegated authority. • **govern. . . . Reign:** As God's vice-regents, humans are entrusted with the care and management of the world God created (see also 9:2; Ps 8:5-8).

1:29-30 These verses highlight the extent (*throughout the earth*) and variety (*every seed-bearing plant . . .*

all the fruit trees) of God's provision for humans, *animals*, and *birds*.

1:31 The Creator declares his work *good* seven times in ch 1; following the creation of human beings, God declares it all *very good*.

2:1-3 Humankind is the high point of God's creative acts (1:26-31), while day 7 is the climax of the creation week. When God *rested* (or *ceased*), he endorsed all of creation—there was nothing more to do! This seven-day framework structured Israel's week, with the *seventh day* as the precedent for their weekly Sabbath. The Sabbath was intended to celebrate God's finished work; the seventh day would be set apart as *holy* and dedicated to the Creator, who also rested (see Exod 20:8-11; 31:12-17; cp. Matt 12:1-8; Rom 14:5-6; Col 2:16-17; Heb 4:1-11).

2:3 The first six days of creation involved separation (light from darkness, day from night, water from dry land). The last act of creation separated what is ordinary from what is *holy*, thus laying the foundation for Israel's worship. It also anticipated a coming age of rest (Heb 4:1-11; 12:2; 13:14). • The absence of the usual “morning and evening” reflects the Creator's willingness to enter into unending fellowship with humankind.

2:5
Gen 1:11

2:7
Gen 3:19
Job 33:4
Ps 103:14
Ezek 37:5
Zech 12:1
John 20:22
*1 Cor 15:45
*inephes (5315)
*Deut 12:23

2. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CREATION (2:4–4:26)

Superscription (2:4a)

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

Creation of Man and Woman (2:4b-25)

Creation of the Man

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.

Human Sexuality (1:27-28)

When God created the first human beings in his own image, he created them as sexual beings, male and female (1:27). Through their sexuality, they were to fill and govern the world (1:28) and provide intimate companionship for one another in marriage (2:18-25). Male and female sexuality is central to what it means to be human.

Sexual intimacy united the first man and woman as one being, an effect that sexual intimacy continues to have. Since biblical sexuality is not just physical but has the total person in view, it validates sexual relations only as part of the partners' mutual commitment to each other's ultimate good. The Bible speaks of engaging in sexual intercourse as literally "knowing" another person intimately (see note on 4:1). Since creation, the purpose of sexuality has been to join people in an intimate union of marriage—a permanent and loving heterosexual commitment—that God blesses and calls "very good" (1:27-28, 31). The sexual relationship cements the marriage bond in an intimacy that continues even when reproduction is no longer possible.

Although sexuality was created before sin, it did not emerge unscathed from human rebellion. Sexuality is a powerful force that is easily corrupted if not carefully channeled (see Lev 18; 1 Thes 4:3-8). Sexual intimacy apart from marital commitment perverts the order that God intended for creation. Incest, for example, violates sexual boundaries (see Lev 18:7-14), collapses family structures (see 19:30-38), and fragments the community. Whereas perverted sexuality tears the community down (see 38:1-30; 39:7-9; Judg 19:1–20:48) and exalts the individual (see 2 Sam 13:11-14), biblical sexuality builds up the sexual partners and the community.

Our sexual identity has been damaged through our fall into sin (ch 3), but God has redeemed it through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see 1 Cor 6:12-20; Eph 5:31-33). He restores sexual wholeness in those who trust his work in their lives by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:9-11, 15-20; 1 Thes 4:1-5). Those who commit their sexuality to Christ can testify to God's love for his people (Eph 5:25-33).

Gen 2:18-25
Lev 18:1-30
Deut 22:13-29
Ruth 4:11-13
2 Sam 11:2-27
Ps 127:3-5
Eccl 2:8-11
Song 1-8
Mal 2:15-16
Matt 19:3-12
1 Cor 6:12–7:40
Eph 5:31-33
1 Thes 4:3-8

2:4–4:26 This account (see note on 2:4) of the heavens and the earth is not a second creation account; rather, it is a theological and historical expansion on 1:1–2:3. The focus is now on what the cosmos produced rather than on its creation. Special attention is given to the first man and woman. As the story progresses, it is colored by contrasts of good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, harmony and discord.

2:4 This is the account (literally *These are the generations*): This or a similar phrase is repeated throughout Genesis, creating an internal outline for the book. In other occurrences, it introduces the genealogy or story of a key personality (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2). • Some have argued that the first half of 2:4 belongs with 1:1–2:3, but it is more likely the

introduction to the account that follows.

• **LORD God** (Hebrew *Yahweh Elohim*) is the second name used for God in the early chapters of Genesis. *Elohim* (1:1–2:3) describes the all-powerful creator God. *Yahweh Elohim* speaks of the eternal God who formed a lasting covenant with Israel (Exod 3:6, 13-15). Accordingly, 2:4-25 focuses on God as provider more than as creator. The three themes of sexuality, dominion, and food in ch 1 are now addressed in reverse order (food, 2:8-17; dominion, 2:18-20; sexuality, 2:21-25).

2:5 cultivate: Work does not result from sin; it was part of the original structure of creation and is directly tied to human identity and purpose (1:28; 2:15).

2:6 springs (Or *mist*, as traditionally rendered): The word refers to subterranean springs that rose to the surface of the ground.

2:7 In 1:1–2:3, creation happens at a distance, by divine command ("Let there be . . . and that is what happened"). In this account, the creative act is much more intimate (see also 2:8-9, 21-22). • **from the dust of the ground:** In Hebrew, *'adamah* ("ground") forms a wordplay with *'adam* ("man"). The earth remains the definitive reference point for humans, who in death return to dust (3:17-19; 4:11; Job 4:19; 10:8-9; Isa 29:16). • **breathed . . . into the man's nostrils:** God's *breath* is not imparted to other animals; only humans are formed in God's image (1:27) and enjoy dialogue with their Creator (2:16-17; 3:8-13). They alone have spiritual awareness and moral conscience (see Job 32:8).

Creation of the Garden

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.

The First Command

¹⁵The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.

2:8
Gen 3:23; 13:10
Isa 51:3
Joel 2:3

2:9
Gen 3:22
Prov 3:18; 11:30
Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14

2:10
Rev 22:1, 17

2:14
Gen 15:18
Deut 1:7
Dan 10:4

2:15
Gen 2:8

Biblical Marriage (2:18-25)

At the first wedding, God the Father gave the bride away to the groom and witnessed the couple's interaction in his sanctuary-garden (2:18-25). Married love is thus a binding covenant commitment before God. Breaching that covenant (e.g., through adultery) is a crime against persons and against God, who is a divine witness to and guarantor of the marriage covenant (see Mal 2:10-16; cp. Gen 39:6-9; Jer 3:1; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Heb 13:4). Although marriage is exclusive, it is not private. It is legally declared in public, with community recognition, witness, and accountability (see Lev 20:10-12; Deut 22:22; Jer 29:20-23).

Marriage is also a metaphor of the Lord's relationship with his people, first with Israel (see Exod 19:3-6; 20:2-6; 34:14; Isa 54:5; Ezek 16:1-63; Hos 2:19-20), and then with the church (see 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:21-33). A marriage points to something greater than itself—God's people (Christ's "bride") await the return of Christ (the "groom"). Married Christians are called to live in unity and dignity as they anticipate the wedding feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:6-9). Christ will live forever with his faithful people in glory (Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9).

Gen 24:65-67
Ps 45:8-15
Is 54:5
Hos 2:19-20
Mal 2:10-16
1 Cor 7:1-40
2 Cor 6:14-16
Eph 5:21-33
Heb 13:4
1 Pet 3:1-7

2:8-14 Analogous to the sacred time marked out on the seventh day of creation (2:2-3), the sacred space of the *garden in Eden* was separate from the surrounding world. It functioned as a garden-temple or sanctuary because the Lord manifested his presence there in a special way.

2:8 *Eden* was the general location in which the *garden* was placed, not the garden itself. The term could mean "plain," "delight," or "fertility." The description that follows favors the idea of fertility. • *in the east*: The exact location of Eden is left to speculation, but it was east of Canaan, Israel's later home. • God *placed the man* in the garden for divine fellowship and physical blessing (see also 2:15 and note).

2:9 Beauty and bounty characterized humanity's original environment (cp. 13:10). • *The tree of life* represented God's presence and provision. The one who ate of it would have everlasting life (3:22), which made it a rich image for later Israelite and Christian reflection (Prov 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). The candlestick in Israel's Tabernacle may have been a stylized representation of it (Exod 25:31-35). • Eating the fruit of the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* enabled humanity's capacity for wisdom (3:6) and moral discernment (3:5, 22; cp.

Deut 1:39, "innocent"). Eating from it represented a human grasp for autonomy and wisdom that were God's alone (cp. Prov 30:1-4). Humans side-stepped God's revelation as the means of moral discernment, flaunting their independence rather than submitting to God's will (cp. Prov 1:7). Choosing human wisdom over God's instruction brings death and destruction (see Ps 19:7-9; Ezek 28:6, 15-17).

2:10-14 This detailed description portrays the eastern region around Eden as a mountain with rivers flowing out to the world. Eden's beauty and fertility enriched the whole earth.

2:10 The *river* that was *watering the garden* was a material blessing (bringing agricultural fertility) and a symbol of God's presence (cp. Ps 46:4; Ezek 47:1-12; Zech 14:8; Rev 22:1-2). • *dividing into four branches* (literally *heads*): The common understanding is that one river had its source in Eden, flowed down through the garden, and then split into the four rivers named.

2:11 *The Pishon* and the Gihon (2:13) cannot be identified with certainty. If *the land of Havilah* was in southeast Arabia or on the African coast, as some biblical data suggest (see 10:7; 25:18; 1 Sam 15:7), then the Pishon was possibly the Nile River. Josephus thought that Havilah and the Pishon were in India

(*Antiquities* 1.1.3). Two other proposals suggest: (1) rivers in the mountains of eastern Turkey where the Tigris and Euphrates (2:14) also flow, and (2) the marshy delta near the Persian Gulf. Current geographical conditions make any theory impossible to prove conclusively.

2:12 The magnificence and fertility of the garden are pictured as spreading to the surrounding regions through the rivers flowing out from it. The four rivers possibly imply that the garden's bounty flowed out to the four corners of the earth. • *Gold* and *onyx* were later used for decorating the Tabernacle, the Temple (Exod 25:3-9; 1 Chr 29:2), and the priests' clothing (Exod 28:9-14, 20). • *Resin* was used in sacred incense (Exod 30:34).

2:13 *Gihon*: Though unknown, proposals have included the Nile (as in the Greek version of Jer 2:18; Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.1.3), the Jordan, or, according to Jewish tradition, a river that formerly ran through the Kidron Valley (1 Kgs 1:33; 2 Chr 33:14). • Although *Cush* is the name of ancient Ethiopia, Mesopotamian regions associated with Babylon seem to be the immediate setting (see 10:8); Cush is possibly the land of the Kassites, a dynasty ruling in Babylonian.

2:14 *Tigris . . . Euphrates*: These well-known rivers flow from the mountains of eastern Turkey.

2:16
Gen 3:1-3

2:17
Gen 3:1, 16-17
Deut 30:15, 19-20
Rom 6:23
Jas 1:15

2:18
Gen 3:12
Prov 18:22

2:19
Gen 1:20-25

2:22
1 Cor 11:8-9
1 Tim 2:13

2:23
Gen 29:14
Eph 5:28-30

2:24
*Matt 19:5
*1 Cor 6:16
Eph 5:31

2:25
Gen 3:7, 10-11

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."

Creation of the Woman

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 Location of Eden (2:8-14).** Eden might have been located in the mountains of Ararat or near the Persian Gulf (see notes on 2:8-14). Possibilities for the four rivers (2:10-14) exist in either location (see note on 2:11). Eden represented God's presence on earth that was withdrawn at the Fall and re-inaugurated at Sinai (see Exod 3:1-6; 24:9-18; 40:34-38).

distinctions (cp. 29:14). • Adam declares that "*She will be called 'woman'* (Hebrew *'ishah'* because *she was taken from 'man'* (Hebrew *'ish'*)." He understood the nature of their connection (see Eph 5:28-29). Adam had earlier assessed the animals without finding the characteristics he needed in a partner. How different this evaluation is!

2:24 Marriage between a man and a woman is not just a human social construct but is rooted in the created order. • *a man leaves . . . and is joined:* Marriage entails a shift of loyalty from parents to spouse. • *the two are united into one:* Marriage and its commitments make it the most fundamental covenant relationship observed among humans. Marriage is a powerful image of Israel's covenant with God (Hos 2:14-23) and of Christ's relationship to the church (Eph 5:22-32). Marriage is designed as an inseparable, exclusive relationship between a man and a woman. The family unit it creates is the basic building block of human society.

2:25 both naked: Prior to the Fall (ch 3), nakedness reflected innocence and trust. After the Fall, it denoted vulnerability and *shame* (see 9:22-23; Lev 18:1-23; Isa 47:3). Shame is more than embarrassment; it connotes exploitation and humiliation (see Deut 28:48; Isa 58:7; Jas 2:15-16).

2:15 to tend and watch over: The garden required maintenance and oversight. Tending the *Garden* was humanity's dignifying work. These roles in God's garden-sanctuary were later applied to God's Tabernacle (see Lev 8:35; Num 3:5-10; 4:46-49).

2:17 except (literally *but you must not eat*): This prohibition is given in the same legal format as Israel's Ten Commandments (see Exod 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21). The Lord built law and obedience into the fabric of his covenant relationship with humanity. • *the knowledge of good and evil:* See note on 2:9. • *you are sure to die:* The consequences of disobedience would be immediate spiritual death (loss of relationship with God) and eventual physical death (see 3:22-23; Eccl 12:6-7).

2:18-23 As human creation was the climax of ch 1, so human intimacy is the high point of ch 2. God's concern for mutual human support and companionship finds no parallel in ancient Near Eastern literature.

2:18 It is not good: This is God's first negative assessment of an otherwise excellent creation (1:31). *The LORD God* is portrayed as a father who obtains a bride for his son (cp. 24:1-67). • The answer to the man's need is *a helper who is just right for him*; she is his perfect complement, made in the same image of God (1:26-27), given the same commission (1:28; 2:15), and obligated by the same prohibition (2:17). The man cannot fulfill his created purpose alone.

2:19-20 to see what he would call them: Following God's example (1:5, 8, 10), the man *chose a name for each* of the creatures. In so doing, he was exercising his reign over creation (1:26, 28).

2:19 the man: Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

2:21 took out one of the man's ribs (or *took a part of the man's side*): Cp. 2:23; Eph 5:28.

2:23 Adam recognized the woman as a "helper just right for him" (2:20). His celebration of her in poetry and song observed his unity with her, not their

The Ruin of God's Creation (3:1-24)

Temptation to 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."

Man and Woman Rebel against the Creator

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 hus-

band, 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.

God Interrogates the Man and Woman

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?"

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?"

3:1
2 Cor 11:3
Rev 12:9; 20:2

3:2
Gen 2:16

3:3
Gen 2:17
Exod 19:12

3:4
John 8:44
2 Cor 11:3

3:5
Gen 2:17; 3:22
Isa 14:14
Ezek 28:2

3:6
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:14
Jas 1:14-15
1 Jn 2:16

3:8
Lev 26:12
Deut 23:14
Job 31:33

3:9
Gen 4:9; 18:9

3:10
Deut 5:5

3:12
Prov 28:13

3:13
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:14

3:1-24 The rebellion of the man and the woman shattered their unity and harmony with earth, animals, each other, and God.

3:1 Genesis describes the deceiver as a *serpent*, one of the animals God created (see also 3:14 and note). He is later identified as Satan, the great enemy of God's people (Rev 12:9; 20:2). His manipulative language and his disguise as a serpent, *the shrewdest of all creatures*, show him as a master deceiver. Satan has various methods for opposing God's people (see 1 Chr 21:1; Zech 3:1-2); deception remains among his key strategies (cp. 2 Cor 11:3, 14). The Hebrew term for shrewd (*arum*) can be positive ("prudent," Prov 14:8) or negative ("cunning," as here; Job 5:12). It forms a wordplay with "naked" (*'arummim*) in 2:25. Adam and Eve were naked and vulnerable; the serpent was shrewd and cunning. • Probably the serpent *asked the woman* because the prohibition was given to Adam prior to Eve's creation (see 2:16-17). Adam was probably aware of the serpent's cunning, having assessed and named all the animals before Eve was created (2:19-20, 23). • *Did God really say?* The deceiver began by twisting God's language to cast doubt on God's goodness. God's original prohibition applied to only one tree (2:16-17), not to all (*any*) of them.

3:2-3 The woman attempted to set the record straight; in the process, she belittled the privileges God had given her and her husband in several ways: (1) She reduced God's "freely eat" (2:16) to *may eat*; (2) she downplayed God's emphasis on the availability of fruit

from every tree but one (2:17); (3) she added not touching to God's prohibition against eating (2:17); and (4) she softened the certainty of death (2:17).

3:4-5 *You won't die!* This is the exact negation of God's clear and emphatic words: "you are sure to die" (2:17). The serpent capitalizes on the woman's uncertainty by baldly denying the penalty and quickly diverting her attention to the supposed prize—to *be like God, knowing both good and evil*. The deceiver falsely implies that this would be an unqualified good for them. The term rendered God is *Elohim*; it can also mean "divine beings" (i.e., God and the angels; e.g., Ps 29:1; 89:7).

3:6 *She saw . . . she wanted:* The woman made two grave errors. (1) She assumed the right to decide what was and was not good, though God alone has this right; and (2) she coveted God's wisdom (see Deut 5:21). • *her husband . . . with her:* Although Scripture is clear about the woman's central role in the Fall (cp. 1 Tim 2:14), the man was clearly present and culpable as well. He comes to center stage in the verses that follow and in biblical theology. The consequence of his sin for the entire human race was immense. The Good News is that in Jesus Christ, the "second Adam," God has made salvation universally available (Rom 5:12-21).

3:7 *Shame* is opposite to the naked innocence Adam and Eve enjoyed prior to their rebellion (2:25). Their relationship with one another and with God was fractured. • *sewed fig leaves together:* These covered their physical bodies, but

not their shame. They could not mend their broken relationships (see also 3:21 and note).

3:8 *When the cool evening breezes were blowing:* The Hebrew has traditionally been interpreted as referring to the cool part of the day, most likely the evening. Others think that the language refers to a powerful manifestation of God's presence (a *theophany*; see Exod 19:16-25; 1 Sam 7:10) as a storm. If this view is correct, the man and the woman were hiding from the sound of the Lord appearing in judgment (see 2 Sam 5:24; Ps 29). • *the man:* Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. • God put *trees* in the garden as an environment for humanity to enjoy fellowship with God. Now the man and woman used them to evade the divine presence.

3:9-10 *Where are you?* The true intent of this rhetorical question is revealed in the man's answer (3:10). The real question was, why are you hiding? (cp. 4:9-10). • *I was afraid because I was naked:* Modesty was not the issue. The shame brought on by rebellion drove Adam and his wife to hide. Possibly they also feared punishment (see note on 3:8).

3:12 *It was the woman you gave me:* Rather than confessing, the man became evasive. He blamed the woman for giving him the fruit and God for giving him the woman.

3:13 *What have you done?* is another rhetorical question that is really an exclamation of horror (cp. 4:10). • *The serpent deceived me:* As the man implicated the woman (3:12), the woman accused the serpent. The serpent did play

3:14
Deut 28:15
Isa 65:25

3:15
John 8:44
Rom 16:20
Heb 2:14
izera (2233)
• Gen 12:7

3:16
1 Cor 11:3
Eph 5:22
1 Tim 2:15

3:17
Job 5:7
Eccl 1:3
Rom 8:20-22

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

God Indicts and Convicts

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,

Adam (2:4–3:24)

Gen 1:26-31;
4:25–5:5
Hos 6:6-7
Luke 3:38
Rom 5:12-21
1 Cor 15:22, 45-49
1 Tim 2:13-14

Adam was the first man, the father of the human race. God created the first couple in his image to populate the earth and rule the created order (1:26-31). God made Adam from earth and breathed life into him (2:7); he was to cultivate the garden (2:15), name the animals (2:19-20), and follow God's instructions (1:28; 2:16-17). God created the woman as a companion and helper for Adam (2:18-22). Eve's creation from Adam's rib portrays the unity that God intended for man and woman in marriage (2:23-25).

After the serpent deceived Eve into rejecting God's rule, Adam also rebelled (3:1-6). Their willful disobedience disrupted their relationship (3:7) and separated them from God. God looked for Adam after his rebellion; he was hiding among the trees, already aware of his alienation (3:8). When God questioned him, Adam blamed Eve and, by implication, God (3:12). Adam's rebellion brought hardship in governing the earth as well as physical and spiritual death (3:17-19, 22). God provided animal skins to cover Adam and Eve (3:21), and promised that Eve's offspring would defeat Satan (3:15; see Rom 16:20; Rev 12:1-9; 20:1-10).

Adam was a historical individual (4:25; 5:1-5; 1 Chr 1:1; Hos 6:7; Luke 3:38; Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22, 45; 1 Tim 2:13-14; Jude 1:14) who represents humanity as a whole. God's mandates (1:26-30) and curses (3:16-19) affected not only Adam and Eve, but the entire human race. Adam represents the separation from God that all humanity experiences.

The apostle Paul contrasted those represented by Adam, the first man, with those who follow Christ, the "last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45-50; see Rom 5:12-21; 8:5-11, 20-22). Those represented by Adam live only in him; they partake of his sin, his alienation from God and creation, and his spiritual death. Those who follow Christ live by faith in him. They are recreated in Christ's image and become "new people" who partake of a new creation (see Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 5:17). The barriers Adam raised are removed by Christ (Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 5:19; Gal 3:27-28; 6:15; Eph 2:14-16); Christ restores what Adam lost.

a role and would be punished (3:14), but that did not release the woman or the man from their guilt.

3:14-19 The parties were judged in the order of their transgression—serpent, woman, man. Each received a punishment unique to his or her situation, and each had a key relationship altered. God is principled in judgment, not fickle; each punishment is proportionate to the offense.

3:14 to the serpent: Though later revelation identifies the deceiver as Satan, it is the created animal who was cursed, like the ground (3:17). • *Groveling in the dust* is a posture of humiliation and defeat (Ps 72:9; Mic 7:17).

3:15 hostility: The prophet Isaiah envisions the day when the Messiah's

kingdom will restore all of creation to a harmonious state like the Garden of Eden before humans sinned (see Isa 11:8). • *her offspring* (literally *her seed*): This collective noun can refer to a single descendant or many. The ancient Near Eastern concept of corporate solidarity (e.g., "you and your descendants," 28:14) is also behind this description of the ongoing hostility that would exist between humans and snakes. The pattern is set using singular terms (*He . . . you*). Christian interpreters have traditionally understood this verse as a prophecy of Christ, the seed of Abraham and the culmination of the woman's seed (Gal 3:16; 4:4). • *strike* (Or *bruise*, in both occurrences): The striking of *his heel* is a reference to the suffering of God's servant (see Isa 53),

while striking the serpent's *head*—a more definitive blow—is ultimately fulfilled in Christ's death, resurrection, and final victory over Satan (1 Cor 15:55-57; Rev 12:7-9; 20:7-10).

3:16 Judgment falls on the woman's unique role of childbearing and on her relationship with her husband. • *And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you* (Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you*): The marriage relationship now included an element of antagonism rather than just security and fulfillment. New life in Christ allows for the restoration of a man and a woman's marriage relationship (Eph 5:18-32; cp. Matt 20:25-28).

3:17-19 God highlighted his original

“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.”

Expulsion and Hope

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

²² Then 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 ^kforever!” ²³ So 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. ²⁴ After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty ^acherubim 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.

Results of Rebellion (4:1-24)

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!” ² Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³ When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴ Abel 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? ⁷ 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

3:18

Job 31:40

Heb 6:8

3:19

Gen 2:7

Ps 90:3; 104:29

Ecc 12:7

1 Cor 15:47

3:20

2 Cor 11:3

1 Tim 2:13

3:21

2 Cor 5:2-3

3:22

Gen 1:26

^kalam (5769)

^a Gen 9:16

3:24

Ezek 10:1

Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14

^akerub (3742)

^a Exod 25:18

4:2

Luke 11:50-51

4:3

Lev 2:1-2

Num 18:12

4:4

Exod 13:12

Heb 11:4

4:6

Jon 4:4

4:7

Rom 6:12, 16

Jas 1:15

command *not to eat* the fruit by speaking of eating several times in 3:17-19. The judgment affected humanity’s ability to get food, and it was proportionate to their offense of eating what had been prohibited. • *the ground is cursed*: The relationship of the man to the ground (see note on 2:7) was now antagonistic as judgment fell on his primary role (2:5, 15). He must labor and toil to work the ground, but with diminished productivity. Human sin has broad effects on creation (see 4:12; 6:7; Lev 26; Deut 11:13-17, 28; Rom 8:22).

3:20-24 Soon after they were judged for their sin, Adam and Eve were banished from the garden.

3:20 *Eve* (Hebrew *khawah*) sounds like a Hebrew term (*khayah*) that means “to give life.” Following God’s pronouncement of Adam’s impending death (3:19), Adam expressed hope by giving Eve a name associated with life. Adam’s naming of Eve in such close proximity to 3:16 may suggest that the narrator views it as Adam’s first act of ruling over the woman after the Fall (see note on 2:19-20).

3:21 God mercifully provided more substantial clothing for Adam and Eve (cp. 3:7) before expelling them into the harsh environment outside the garden.

3:22 *human beings*: Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. • *like us*: The

plural probably reflects God’s conversation with his angelic court (see note on 1:26). • *the tree of life . . . live forever!*: Mercifully, God prevented humankind from eating of the tree of life and having to live forever in a fallen state. Through Jesus Christ, however, eternal life is once again made available (see Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19).

3:23 *So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden*: Before the Fall, the garden was a sanctuary in which humans could move freely in God’s holy presence. Now their sin required expulsion from that environment. This same principle was behind the laws that restricted an Israelite’s access to God’s presence in the Tabernacle or Temple (e.g., Lev 16:1-2; Num 5:3).

3:24 *Cherubim* are a class of angelic beings that guard access to God’s presence (Exod 26:31; Ezek 28:14). • *east . . . of Eden*: In Genesis, movement eastward often implies leaving the presence or blessing of God, whether in judgment (see also 4:16), self-aggrandizement (11:2; 13:11), or estrangement (25:6).

4:1 *Adam: Or the man*; also in 4:25. • *had sexual relations* (literally *knew*): In certain contexts, the Hebrew term meaning “to know” is an idiom for sexual knowledge of another person (4:17; 19:33, 35). It is never used of animals, which mate by instinct. • *With the*

LORD’s help: Eve fulfilled her God-given role of procreation despite the negative effects of the Fall (see 3:16, 20). • *I have produced*: Or *I have acquired*. *Cain* (Hebrew *qayin*) sounds like a Hebrew term (*qanah*) that can mean “produce” or “acquire.”

4:2 *his brother . . . Abel*: The name (Hebrew *habel*) means “breath,” “vapor,” or “meaningless,” anticipating his tragically brief life (cp. Ecc 1:2).

4:3 There was nothing wrong with offering grain to the Lord (Lev 2:14; Deut 26:2-4), but Cain brought only a token gift (*some of his crops*), whereas God requires the first and best (Exod 23:16, 19; 34:22, 26). Cain’s heart attitude made his offering inferior to Abel’s (cp. Heb 11:4).

4:4-5 *the best portions of the firstborn lambs*: Or *the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions*. Abel was giving God the best animals and the richest parts. Abel’s offering, in contrast to Cain’s, was the best he had to offer. True worship is a costly privilege.

4:7 *Sin is crouching at the door . . . you must subdue it*: Sin is pictured as a vicious animal lying in wait to pounce on Cain (cp. note on 3:16). Either sin will dominate Cain, or Cain will resist the temptation to sin. There is no neutral ground in that conflict.

4:8
Matt 23:35
1 Jn 3:12

4:9
Gen 3:9

4:10
Num 35:33
Deut 21:1
Heb 12:24

4:11
Deut 27:15-26

4:12
Deut 28:15-24

4:14
Gen 9:6
Job 15:22

4:17
Ps 49:11

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 sevenfold 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

Original Sin (3:1-19)

Genesis 3 describes how human moral innocence collapsed through rebellion (3:11, 17). What God declared as "very good" (1:31) was no longer completely so. Man and woman ate the fruit that promised knowledge of good and evil and thus broke God's command (2:17). Worse, they tried to become like God (3:5) and thus fell from their sinless state. Alienated from God, one another, and creation, they also became subject to death.

The term "original sin" denotes sin's complete, universal infiltration into individual lives and human society as a result of human rebellion. When the first man and woman ate the fruit in disobedience to God, they forfeited their own innocence and that of their children, the entire human race (Rom 5:12-14; 1 Cor 15:21-22, 45-49). All humans are "fallen," born in sin, predisposed to sin (8:21; Job 4:17-21; Ps 51:5; 103:10; 143:2; Prov 20:9), and awaiting death. As people yield to their inherited predisposition to sin, they become responsible for their own wrongdoing (Eccl 7:20; Rom 3:23).

The first man, Adam, introduced sin, but the "second Adam," Jesus Christ, is sin's antidote (1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21). When Christ died as Redeemer, he made God's salvation from sin available to all (John 3:16; Rom 1:16).

Gen 8:21
Exod 34:7
Job 4:17-21
Ps 51:5
Prov 22:15
Ezek 36:16-36
John 8:1-11
Rom 1:18-3:20;
5:12-21
1 Cor 15:21-22
Gal 3:22; 5:17-24
Eph 2:1-10
1 Jn 3:14

4:8 The effects of the Fall on human relationships are tragically expressed in the first murder. • The word **brother** is used seven times in 4:2-11, highlighting Cain's fratricide in the face of familial responsibility. • **Let's go out into the fields:** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks this phrase.

4:9 *Where is your brother?* The questions God asked Cain (4:6, 9, 10) recall those that God asked Cain's parents (3:9-13). In both cases, humans put up evasive answers (cp. 3:12-13). Cain's answer is shockingly defiant—another clue that the problem with his token offering was the attitude that lay behind it.

4:10 *What have you done?* is more an expression of horror and rebuke than a fact-finding question (cp. 3:13). • **Abel's blood** is personified as a legal witness that **cries out** against Cain. • **from the ground:** See note on 4:11-12.

4:11-12 As with his father (cp. 3:9-12, 17-19), Cain's interrogation (4:9-10)

was followed by God's verdict. Adam's sin had already caused **the ground** to be cursed. Now Cain was **cursed** and **banished** from the land he farmed because he had contaminated it with innocent blood. • **homeless wanderer:** Cain was condemned to ceaseless roving in a land that would provide neither sustenance nor security. The effects of sin were escalating.

4:13-14 For Cain, eviction **from the land**—the domain of his vocation as a farmer (see 4:2; cp. 3:23)—amounted to exile from God's **presence**. The Israelites were warned that unfaithfulness to the Sinai covenant would similarly result in eviction from the Promised Land and from God's presence in the Temple (see, e.g., Lev 26:27-32).

4:13 *My punishment: Or My sin.*

4:15 **Sevenfold punishment** was the full weight of justice. Cain complained that his punishment was too great, but the full sentence that would fall on anyone who committed Cain's crime against him shows how gracious the Lord

was to Cain. Cain deserved death (see 9:5-6). • **The mark** graciously provided protection following Cain's judgment (cp. 3:21).

4:16 **Nod** means "wandering." The name speaks more of Cain's fate (see 4:12, 14) than of a specific geographical area (the location is unknown). Cain's sin denied him rest and a sense of belonging. • Cain's exile **east of Eden** is another point of connection with Adam's story (cp. 3:24). Cain did not learn from his father's mistake, so he also suffered estrangement from the ground and exile to the east (see note on 3:24).

4:17-5:32 These back-to-back genealogies do more than list names for the record. They contrast the ways that human culture spread, some in rebellion against God (Cain, 4:17-24) and some in obedience to God (Seth, 4:25-5:32). In Genesis, the history of the rejected branch is generally explained before carrying forward the line that led to Israel. Two points of contrast are especially worth noting: (1) Lamech, the seventh from Adam through the lineage

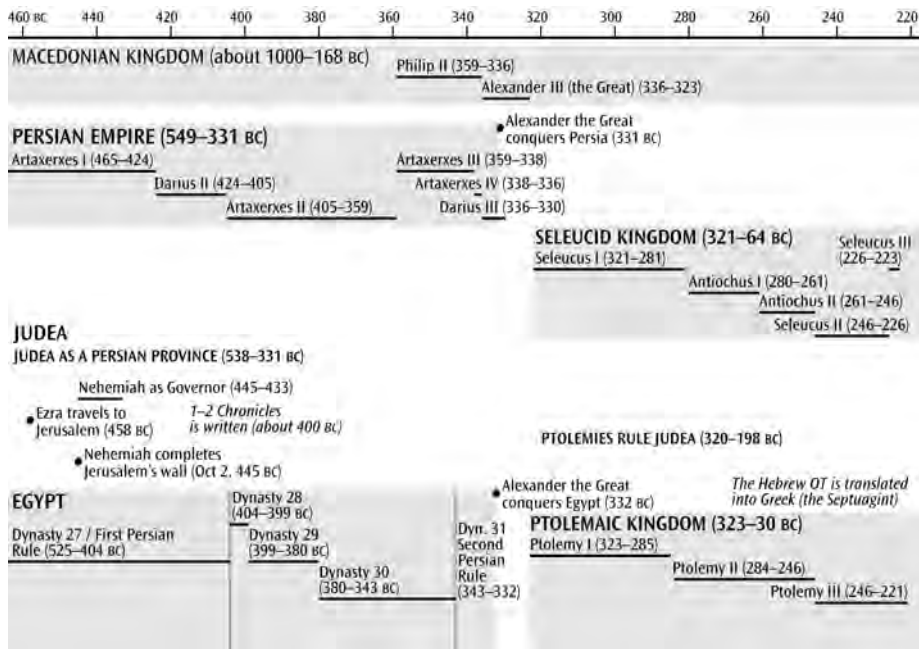
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

The Old Testament ends with the Jewish people reestablished in their land. During the time from Malachi to Christ, the people of Israel lived under six different governments: the Persian empire, the Greek empire, the Ptolemies of Egypt, the Seleucids of Syria, self-rule under the Maccabees (Hasmoneans), and finally Roman rule.

THE INTER-TESTAMENTAL PERIOD

The Persian Empire (549–331 BC). Cyrus II (559–530 BC) inaugurated the Persian empire with his conquest of Media in 549 BC and Babylonia in 539 BC. Cyrus's policy was to allow peoples exiled by the Babylonians to return to their homelands, rebuild, and reinstitute their forms of worship. From 538 to 430 BC, many Jewish people returned to Judea, restored Jerusalem, rebuilt the Temple, and reestablished their lives in relative peace. Meanwhile, Jews who remained in Mesopotamia enjoyed prosperity. The last historical narratives of the OT recount this period (Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther; see also Josephus, *Antiquities* 11).

Greek Rule (331–323 BC). When Alexander the Great of Macedonia (336–323 BC) conquered and annexed the Persian empire, very little changed for the people of Judea. Alexander's rule, though brief, was nevertheless formative for culture: (1) He extended the use of the Greek language around the Mediterranean world and the Near East; (2) he founded the city of Alexandria in Egypt, which became a Greek cultural center for several hundred years; and (3) during his reign, Alexander was recognized as a god, setting a precedent for later rulers. Following Alexander's death, his generals (the Diadochoi) struggled for dominance in their own realms. By 320 BC, the divisions were settled (see map, p. 1409). The two kingdoms that most impacted the Jewish people were Egypt, under the Ptolemies (323–30 BC), and Syria, under the Seleucids (321–64 BC).



NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament both fulfills (Matt 5:17-20) and completes (Rom 10:4) the Old Testament. What the prophets looked forward to and longed to see (1 Pet 1:10-12a), and what the angels intensely watched (1 Pet 1:12b), came in the person of Jesus, Israel's Messiah, God's Son, the God-man. The coming of the "unique One, who is himself God" (John 1:18) is the central point not only of human history but of eternity itself. The NT tells the story of his coming and its effects in the inaugural group of believers, the early church.

In the pages of the NT we encounter a holy God as he exhibits his justice and love, both judging sin, and forgiving and overcoming sin. We also encounter sinful mankind as some people repent and others resist God's offer of salvation. Every reader is asked to identify with the people whose stories are told and come to a decision regarding his or her own relationship with this holy God. In the Gospels, theology becomes drama as we see the story of salvation acted out in living events. In the letters, theology is presented as the writers address problems in the early church and give divinely inspired solutions.

The NT is the word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21) by people who were giving God's words to mankind. As such, it is the most important book ever written and the only possible guide for the Christian life. Believers must make its teaching the center of their life and conduct, and every nonbeliever must be given the opportunity to hear its truths.

SETTING AND BACKGROUND

The events of the NT take place in the central regions of the Roman empire, from the land of Palestine west to Rome. During the period 167–142 BC, Judea won its freedom from the Hellenistic Seleucids of Syria due to the rebellion instigated by Mattathias and his sons. Then Rome conquered the lands west of the Euphrates under Pompey. Beginning in 63 BC, Palestine was under Roman authority, and continued to be for the entire period of the NT.

Palestine was composed of three

districts: Judea to the south, Samaria in the center, and Galilee to the north. From the time of the return from exile under Ezra and Nehemiah, Samaria had been the enemy of the other two. Those tensions were very real in the time of Jesus' ministry and early in the book of Acts.

The land of Judea had somewhat sparse vegetation, but Galilee was a rich agricultural land. As a result, Galilee was bought up by wealthy landowners who divided up their estates into tenant farms, with half the crops belonging to the owners and half to the farmers. Many of Jesus' parables reflect this reality. Moreover, Galilee had many Gentile cities and many Gentiles living in it, so it was not as conservative as Judea in the south and was looked down on by southern Jews. Most of the Pharisees came from Judea.

The Jordan River flowed from the Sea of Galilee (a lake 13 miles long by 7 miles wide [21 by 11 kilometers]) in the north down to the Dead Sea in the south and formed the eastern boundary of Palestine. On to the east and to the north lay Gentile lands, including the Decapolis, a group of ten Gentile towns east of the Jordan River and near the lake. Jesus deliberately ministered there on several occasions.

After Pentecost, the Good News moved out into the Gentile lands, beginning with Antioch, the capital of Syria. The church in Antioch became Paul's sponsoring church; from there he and Barnabas took their first missionary journey to the island of Cyprus west of Syria and to the province of Galatia (the western part of modern Turkey). It was a rugged, mountainous area, and we have little idea of the rigors of these

travels. Then, on the next two missionary journeys, Paul traversed the rest of Asia Minor and went over to Greece. In Acts 18:18-23, Paul covered 1500 miles from the end of his second missionary journey to the beginning of his third.

Toward the end of his third missionary journey, Paul again traveled a great distance from Corinth, through Macedonia, and finally to Jerusalem. After being arrested in Jerusalem and held as a prisoner in Caesarea, Paul was taken to Rome, where a growing church was located. Paul's desire was to spend the rest of his life in the western part of the Roman empire (from Rome to Spain; see Rom 15:20-29), but God had other plans. When Paul was released, he went back to Greece and the province of Asia. Later, the province of Asia was the focus of the book of Revelation, written by the apostle John.

THE STORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Like the OT, the NT begins by identifying the "beginning" (John 1:1). A new, spiritual creation begins with the appearance of the incarnate God, Jesus the Messiah. Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus' virgin birth and childhood, showing the way a sovereign God intervened in human history to bring his Son into an evil world. Born around 6 BC, Jesus began his ministry about AD 28 (the fifteenth year of Tiberius, Luke 3:1; the forty-sixth year of rebuilding the Temple, John 2:20). His ministry lasted until he was crucified in AD 30 or 33. During these years, Jesus confronted and challenged four main groups—the disciples (who believed but struggled), the crowds (who were enamored

but would not commit), the religious leaders (who rejected him and plotted to take his life), and the demons (who knew exactly who he was but were overpowered and bound by him). Jesus encountered each group with the reality that the Kingdom had come through him and all must repent and believe in him; in the cosmic war with the unclean spirits, he had absolute power and gave his authority over them to his disciples (Mark 3:15).

At the third of three Passovers (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55), Jesus was arrested, brought up on false charges, and crucified. But he was not just an innocent victim—he died at the God-appointed time (John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23), and he went to the cross voluntarily and in full control. He knew that he was the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, whose death was a vicarious atonement: He was dying as a substitute for us (Mark 10:45; 14:24). His death and resurrection show him to be the glorified Messiah (John 3:17; 8:28; 12:32; 19:19-21). On the third day after his death, God raised him from the dead as the first of a great harvest of those who have died (1 Cor 15:20), guaranteeing the reality of resurrection and eternal life. He appeared many times over a forty-day period (Acts 1:3) both in Jerusalem and Galilee, proving to the disciples that he was alive, bringing to himself his brothers who formerly were unbelievers (1 Cor 15:7), and launching the church in its mission to all the world (Matt 28:19; Acts 1:8).

At first, the church did not understand the command to go to the nations, even after Pentecost, and so the Spirit led them step by step out of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-3), into Samaria (Acts 8:4-25) and to the ends of the earth (the rest of Acts). He did so by leading Peter to Cornelius (Acts 10) and then by confronting Paul (an implacable enemy of Christianity until Jesus confronted him personally on the way to Damascus, Acts 9) and calling Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Antioch of Syria, the third-largest city in the Roman world, became the hub of the mission, and all three of Paul's missionary journeys proceeded from there. Paul's pattern remained constant throughout his ministry (as noted in Rom 1:16): He

would begin proclaiming the Good News in Jewish synagogues. All of his sermons to the Jews centered on Jesus' fulfillment of OT expectations and ended with Jesus' death and resurrection as the basis of salvation and a call for repentance. When the Jews rejected Paul (often violently), he would go to the Gentiles and proclaim Jesus as the fulfillment of their pagan hopes. The book of Acts proclaims the power of the Holy Spirit in bringing Jews and Gentiles to belief in Jesus and helping believers recapitulate the life and ministry of Jesus in their own lives and ministries.

When Paul was arrested, imprisoned, and sent to Rome, a new phase of persecution of Christians and proclamation of the Good News ensued. Paul's two years in prison (AD 60-62) saw a great deal of evangelistic fervor (cp. Phil 1:12-14, which might have been written during this time). Yet at the same time Jewish opposition increased. Jewish opponents denounced Christians to the Roman authorities, arguing that the new movement was not a Jewish sect and should be declared an illegal foreign religion. This strategy was successful, leading to increased Roman persecution—as seen in the terrible slaughter under Nero, when Paul and Peter were executed (AD 64-65). Yet throughout this time of rejection and death, the church responded with spiritual power and "rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:41). Their numbers continued to grow throughout the first century.

At the same time, however, certain heresies began to develop. Some Jewish Christian teachers demanded that all Gentiles who wanted to be Christians needed to first become Jewish. Paul indicted them as false teachers because they replaced the cross with Judaism (Gal 1:6-8; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Phil 3:18-19). There were also those who combined Judaism with Hellenism (Greek religion; see Colossians, 1-2 Timothy). Finally, there was a brand of proto-Gnosticism

that stressed salvation through *gnosis*, or knowledge, and allowed immorality (see 1 John, Rev 2). These kinds of heresies continued in the following centuries and prompted the early church to develop both a canon and a set of doctrines that defined true orthodoxy.

THE CANON OF THE NT

The term *canon* means "measuring rod" or "norm" and was originally used to identify the set of standard doctrines for the church. From the 300s AD, it has referred to those books of the OT and NT that are considered authentic Scripture. There is no evidence of a movement toward an official canon before the middle of the 100s AD, but there were three preliminary stages during the first century. First, the words of Jesus were treated as canonical from the beginning, as seen in Paul's use of Luke 10:7 alongside Deut 25:4 (1 Tim 5:18). Second, early Christian creeds and hymns (containing official summaries of orthodox truth) were used in the same way as OT passages to anchor important arguments (e.g., Rom 1:3-4; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3-4). Third, Paul's epistles were collected and recognized early (2 Pet 3:15-16). These steps did not constitute an official collection, but they were recognized as authoritative materials.

The church fathers of the 100s AD (Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, the *Didache*) similarly recognized the authority of the writings now constituting the NT, but they did not call them Scripture.

In the 200s and 300s AD, a set of criteria for accepting works as genuine slowly emerged. An accepted book had to have been (1) written by an

The NT Canon ►

1. Narrative	2. Paul's Letters	3. General Letters
Matthew Mark Luke John Acts	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude Revelation

apostle or someone connected with an apostle (e.g., Mark in connection with Peter, Luke in connection with Paul); (2) accepted by a majority of the churches; and (3) understood as containing orthodox doctrine. The churches eventually came to a consensus, and the NT canon was formalized: In AD 367, Athanasius of Alexandria gave the first official list of the twenty-seven books that are accepted today. Of the official church councils, the council in Laodicea (AD 363) accepted all but Revelation, while councils in Hippo (AD 393) and Carthage (AD 397) accepted all twenty-seven.

Even though the process of officially recognizing the canon of the NT took over 300 years, all the books of the NT were quoted, alluded to, and accepted by a wide number of churches very early. The early church recognized those books that God had inspired through the apostles and their associates; the inspiration of those books was indicated by their apostolic authorship and their agreement with "the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people" (Jude 1:3). For more on the development of the NT canon, see "Introduction to the Time After the Apostles," p. 2201.

INTERPRETING THE NT

Many Christians take a subjective, individualistic stance toward the meaning of Scripture; we tend to think that, as long as my heart is touched, I have found the meaning. We also tend to think that if we read and memorize Scripture, its meaning will automatically become clear. It is not so.

All true interpretation seeks the meaning that the author intended to convey. For the Bible, the focus on the author's intent is even more important, for there is both the human author who penned the words and the divine Author who inspired the text. In order to perceive the true intent of the human author and the divine Author of Scripture, we must carefully study the context, culture, and background behind each book. The following instructions will help guide our study:

1. Consider the passage as part of a larger whole

Words and sentences have no meaning (only possible meanings) apart

from the context in which they are embedded. No author ever writes sentences by themselves; they are always part of a developing message, and each part is chosen for what it adds to the whole communication. The student must study how the words fit together and which meaning the words have in a particular context (because each word might have many possible meanings). Consider the whole section and then the paragraph, asking what the words as well as the sentences add to the whole. How does the author develop the argument, and what does the author want the readers to do with it?

2. Consider the cultural background of the text

The NT was produced within the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures of the first century. Those ways of life have been gone for nearly 2,000 years, and we have no access to them without serious study. Fortunately, the scholars who produced the study materials in the *NLT Study Bible* are experts in these areas, and they explain the cultural background behind each book and passage. For example, Jesus' parables (in the Gospels) and John's apocalyptic writing (in the book of Revelation) come alive with such background studies. So, too, it is important to know who the Pharisees were (see "The Pharisees" at Matt 3:7, p. 1581) and what a "talent" was (see Matt 25:15 and note) when trying to understand individual passages.

3. Identify the genre or type of literature for each passage

Recognizing the genre of each passage helps us to know how it was intended to be understood.

- The Gospels and Acts are theological narrative. We must study the point of view and flow from story to story, noting the theological message of each as well as the larger plot development of the whole.
- The Gospels also contain parables. We must recognize the background behind each parable (e.g., the commercial or agricultural metaphors at play) and distinguish those parts that carry theological meaning from those that are simply part of the story line (i.e., we must avoid

allegorizing every element of the parables). Above all, we must ask what Jesus meant by the parable in its context, not what we can read into it.

- The letters of Paul and others are straightforward didactic letters, but we still need to see the cultural background behind each individual letter as well as the rhetorical flow of passages like Romans 7 or Hebrews 6.
- Many books contain apocalyptic sections (e.g., Mark 13; 2 Thes 2; 2 Pet 2; Revelation). The difficult symbols in these sections take their meaning from a common core of symbols inherited from the OT and intertestamental Jewish literature. While there will always be debates regarding the meaning of apocalyptic sections for today, the basic contours of meaning can be established with reference to the commonly understood symbolism. The study materials on these passages will help the reader to understand what is going on (see also Revelation Introduction, "Apocalyptic Writing," p. 2163).

There are many levels to understanding the text of Scripture. The deeper we go into the meaning of the biblical texts, the more treasures are waiting.

MEANING AND MESSAGE

The NT has several primary themes, but all flow from the OT concept of a holy God who is characterized by justice and love. Sin was brought into this world by Adam, so every person is controlled by sin and naturally rejects God's offer of salvation.

The overarching story of Scripture asks the question, how can a loving God be just and at the same time bring a people to himself as his chosen children? Both the OT and the NT answer this question. God is absolutely sovereign and Lord of all he created, yet he created this world in order to have fellowship with those made in his image.

1. The OT and the NT

The relationship between the testaments is one of promise and fulfillment. Both the OT and the NT describe a gracious, merciful God

who draws his people to himself. At the same time, he is a God of justice and judgment who must punish sin. The purpose of the law was to point out sin and to prepare for Christ (see Romans, Galatians). Thus Jesus fulfilled the law by summing it up in himself and in his teaching (Matt 5:17-20).

Most of the arguments in the NT letters are directly grounded in the OT. There are about three hundred quotations and thousands of allusions to the OT; Revelation has 400–600 allusions by itself. Since the OT is inspired Scripture (2 Tim 3:16), the writers wanted to build their arguments on it.

2. *Jesus: Messiah, Lord of All, and Son of God*

The central figure of the NT is Jesus Christ. Born of the virgin Mary (cp. Isa 7:14), he was the expected Messiah who inaugurated God's Kingdom. With him the last days have begun but are yet to be consummated. He did not come as the conquering king that people expected but as the suffering servant (Isa 52:13–53:12) who suffered and died. He came in order to die on the cross for us (Phil 2:6-8). He was not only human but was "the unique One, who is himself God" (John 1:18; cp. John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30) and took on human flesh (John 1:14). In his life he defeated the powers of evil and exercised authority over the natural forces he had created. In his death and resurrection he satisfied God's judgment against sin and conquered death for all who believe. As the glorified Lord he will come again to end human history, vindicate his holy people, and destroy evil once and for all (1 Thes 4:13–5:10; Rev 19).

3. *Sin and Salvation*

Jesus came to give himself on the cross as the sacrifice for sin in our place. Sin is an invading army that enters our realm, establishes

a bridgehead in our life, defeats us, and then enslaves us (see Rom 5:12–7:8). There is only one answer: the salvation that God has made possible in Jesus Christ. His death atones for sin (i.e., satisfies the penalty it requires), provides the ransom payment that frees us from slavery to sin, and results in God's declaring all who believe in Jesus to be innocent and right with him (see Rom 3:24-25). Through faith in Jesus' work of atonement and resurrection, we are "born again" (John 3:3), adopted as God's children (Rom 8:14-17), and given the promise of eternal life (John 3:16).

4. *Christian Responsibility*

When God declares us righteous through Christ, he begins the process by which we are transformed and enabled to live rightly before him. This is called sanctification, the growth of the believer in holiness (separation from the world and for God). Good deeds do not save us (Eph 2:8-9), but good deeds are the necessary result of salvation and prove that one has indeed been saved (Eph 2:10; Jas 2:14-26). Jesus demands absolute surrender to himself and will not accept a halfhearted commitment (Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:57-62). We have not truly heard God's word until we obey it (Jas 1:19-27).

5. *Christian Community*

Jesus established not so much a movement called Christianity or an institution called "the church," but a community of people who together make up the church. Believers are commanded to gather regularly, form communities, and share the Christian life together (Heb 10:24-25). Nearly all of the commands in the NT are in the plural, meaning they are to be obeyed by a community and not only by individuals. We must help one another follow the Lord and keep his word.

6. *Final Judgment and the End of Evil*

The NT is absolutely clear: This world will end and a new world will begin. Jesus will return, end this created order tainted by sin (Rom 8:18-22; 2 Pet 3:7, 10), and destroy evil once and for all. At that event all people, both believers and nonbelievers, both saved and unsaved, will stand before God and give account of their lives (Heb 13:17; Jas 3:1). Every person, both believers and nonbelievers, will be "judged by their works" (2 Cor 5:10; Rev 14:13; 18:6; 20:13; 22:12) by a just God who gives to all people as they deserve. God's people who trust in him will receive the crown of life, while God's enemies who rebel against him will receive eternal torment. (Those who claim that eternal punishment is unjust do not understand the wickedness of sin or the holiness of God, who abhors sin.) When God brings final justice, his people will rejoice at the destruction of evil and the coming of the eternal, holy kingdom of God (Rev 19:6-8).

FURTHER READING

- F. F. BRUCE
The Canon of Scripture (1988)
- D. A. CARSON AND DOUGLAS J. MOO
Introduction to the New Testament (2005)
- WALTER A. ELWELL AND ROBERT YARBROUGH
Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey (2005)
- ROBERT H. GUNDRY
Survey of the New Testament (2003)
- SCOT MCKNIGHT AND GRANT R. OSBORNE
The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research (2004)

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR GOSPELS

How could an obscure Galilean peasant and carpenter with no academic training and no social status, one who died the most ignominious death imaginable, establish a movement that would conquer the Roman world and become a worldwide religious force? Moreover, how do we affirm the historical trustworthiness of such incredible stories about a man who controlled nature's forces, healed the sick, cast out demons, raised the dead, and was raised himself after being crucified?

The Gospels tell us the story of Jesus—his virgin birth and childhood; his inauguration to ministry; his impact on the people of Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Phoenicia during his messianic ministry; and his death and resurrection. It is the most important story that history will ever tell, for it chronicles the life of the extraordinary Son of God who has come into this world.

SETTING

The setting for the Gospels includes both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures (see also "The Historical Background of the Intertestamental Period," p. 1552). Jesus lived and died in the Jewish world of the first century, and Jesus and his disciples ministered primarily to the Jewish people. But Jesus was raised in Galilee and conducted his ministry mainly in "Galilee where so many Gentiles live" (Matt 4:15), so he also reached out to Gentiles, and his resurrection inaugurated the mission to Gentiles (Matt 28:19).

During the time of Jesus, Jewish territories were ruled by the descendants of Herod the Great and by Roman governors like Pontius Pilate who resided at Caesarea but came to Jerusalem for festivals. Jewish civic affairs were handled by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high council that consisted mainly of Sadducees and Pharisees (see "The Pharisees" at Matt 3:7, p. 1581; "The Sadducees" at Matt 16:1-12, p. 1610).

THE FOUR GOSPELS

Each of the four Gospels presents Jesus' life in a different way with different themes, showing different nuances of Jesus the man and of the various groups who encountered him.

- Matthew's Gospel is the Jewish Gospel. It shows how Jesus fulfilled the Torah and provided the final understanding of it. It represents Jesus as the descendant of David who fulfills the OT promises for the Messiah, the King of Israel. In Matthew, Jesus

gives the principles for living as citizens of God's Kingdom (e.g., Matt 5-7). Jesus leads the disciples to overcome their failures and find understanding, in spite of their "little faith."

- Mark centers on Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Mark reports the disciples' difficulties: They misunderstand and fail as they try to follow Jesus. Mark shows the nature of true discipleship through characters who appear briefly, like the woman from Phoenicia, the father of the demon-possessed boy, and blind Bartimaeus.
- Luke has more on the subject of social concern than any other Gospel. Luke also highlights the importance of prayer, the Spirit, and worship. He shows how, through Jesus, God has worked out his salvation in human history and become Lord of all.
- In John, Jesus is the living revealer of God who encounters all people with the "light of the world" and the "bread of life" and with the need to believe. Jesus is "the unique One, who is himself God" and has entered this world and brought the glory of God's presence into the world and among his own people.

Each Gospel is meant to be studied on its own. Each has unique perspectives and theological messages that supplement the others and challenge readers in important ways. God chose to inspire four different writers because each perspective is important for the church.

SUMMARY

All four Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Two of the Gospels (Mark and John) contain prologues that describe Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, the "Word" or living voice of God, and God incarnate. The other two Gospels (Matthew and Luke) begin with accounts of Jesus' genealogy, birth, and childhood. Matthew relates how God supernaturally overcame Herod's evil attempt to thwart the divine plan of Jesus' coming into the world. Luke relates the births of the prophet John the Baptist and Jesus, the greater prophet.

Only John tells of the early months of Jesus' ministry, how he drew his first disciples from the group following John the Baptist and then traveled frequently from Galilee to Jerusalem for festivals (John 1-7). Matthew, Mark, and Luke—the "synoptic" Gospels that have the "same look"—focus on Jesus' ministry in Galilee.

None of the Gospel writers take a chronological approach to Jesus' life. Instead, the Gospels are more topical, organized to provide a theological portrait of Jesus' actions, teachings, and impact.

From the start Jesus combined miracles with teaching, so that the crowds were astounded with his words and deeds (Mark 1:21-28). He controlled every aspect of his creation: He could stop the forces of nature, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons (Mark 3:27), and he gave the same authority to his disciples (Mark 3:14-15). He chose twelve disciples, included them in his ministry, and frequently sent them out on missions (Luke 9-10). The

crowds were enamored with Jesus and flocked after him, but they were unwilling to commit themselves to him. In the end, they called for his death (Mark 15:8-15). The Jewish leaders, by contrast, utterly opposed him and plotted to kill him almost from the beginning (Mark 3:6).

The turning point in Jesus' ministry was at Caesarea Philippi, when Peter called him Messiah but refused to accept that it meant suffering and death (Mark 8:27-33). Shortly afterward Jesus was transfigured, his preexistent glory radiating through his humanity (Mark 9:1-8). Then Jesus "resolutely set out for Jerusalem" to fulfill his mission (Luke 9:51). His journey to his God-ordained destiny saw him gradually retreat from public ministry and focus on his disciples (Luke 9:51-19:27). He knew that he was destined to die as the substitute for our sins in order to ransom us from judgment (Mark 10:45).

Jesus arrived at Jerusalem one week before Passover, was anointed for burial, and then entered the city on a donkey. In doing this, he announced that he did not come as a conqueror but as the humble Messiah, the King who brings peace (John 12). Throughout the week leading up to Passover, when the people purified themselves for the festival, Jesus prepared the nation for judgment by cleansing the Temple, cursing the fig tree, and teaching on the Mount of Olives about the coming judgment. He also debated the Jewish leaders and showed himself to be the true interpreter of the law. He then concluded the preparation of his disciples at the Last Supper. There he prophesied his betrayal by Judas, his desertion by all of them, and the giving of his body and blood for the forgiveness of humanity. He had four "trials" that night—a meeting with Annas (John 18:13), then with the Sanhedrin, a trial before Pilate, and a meeting with Herod (Luke 23:7-12). Though Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, he relented to the demands of the Jewish leaders and turned him over to be crucified.

Jesus was crucified at 9:00 a.m. It turned absolutely dark at noon, and he died at 3:00 p.m. He was given a royal burial in an unused tomb that Friday before dusk and was in the tomb until Sunday morning (three

days and nights in Jewish reckoning). Jesus was then vindicated and exalted by rising as Messiah and Lord. He showed himself to his followers for forty days in three venues: in Jerusalem (Luke, John); in Galilee (Matthew, John); and finally at his ascension on the Mount of Olives (Luke, Acts). During this time Jesus also met his brothers who had never believed in him, and they became followers (see 1 Cor 15:7; James Introduction, p. 2110; Jude Introduction, p. 2156). Jesus also strengthened and commissioned his disciples to carry on his work (Matt 28:18-20; John 21:1-25).

AUTHORSHIP

The Gospels are anonymous; they do not explicitly name their authors. Thus it is common for critical scholars to assume the title of each Gospel does not reflect the author. Yet the Church Fathers were nearly unanimous in asserting the reliability of each Gospel's authorship. For example, Papias wrote early in the 100s AD that Matthew wrote in the Aramaic dialect, and affirmation of authorship by Matthew was widespread (e.g., Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Origen). For more about authorship, see the introduction to each Gospel.

COMPOSITION AND SOURCES

Mark was most likely the first Gospel written. The synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are related literarily. Many passages have nearly the same wording (e.g., Matt 19:13-15 // Mark 10:13-16 // Luke 18:15-17) or order of events (Matt 12:46-13:58 // Mark 3:31-6:6 // Luke 8:19-56). From the time of Augustine it was thought that the order of composition was Matthew, Mark, Luke. But in the last 200 years the majority of scholars have come to the conclusion that Mark was first and that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source. Matthew tended to abbreviate Mark while adding his own emphases.

There are also 250 verses of Jesus' sayings that are shared by Matthew and Luke but not found in Mark, so most scholars believe that they both used a common source, perhaps oral, referred to as Q (from German *Quelle*, meaning "source").

John is separate from the others. Over 85% of his material is unique, and he follows a very different organization. John has long been thought of as the "spiritual Gospel," but scholars have been realizing that John actually has more on the historical and chronological aspects of Jesus' life than the others (although his organization is still not strictly chronological). He is the one who tells us that Jesus' ministry included three Passovers and several trips to Jerusalem. Some scholars think John was written by a group of John's disciples, but the book has a literary unity that belies that thesis, and there is nothing in it that could not have been written by the apostle John himself.

HISTORICAL RELIABILITY

There has been significant debate regarding the historicity of the Gospels. In the twentieth century, Rudolf Bultmann and his disciples (along with the more recent Jesus Seminar) argued that very little trustworthy material was to be found in the four canonical Gospels, that the sayings and stories about Jesus had been composed for the preaching needs of the early church. However, the 1970s and 1980s saw a reappraisal. More and more scholars began to assert that history and theology were not antithetical but complementary in the Gospels. A renewed "quest for the historical Jesus" began in the mid-1980s. Looking at the Jewish background, scholars like J. P. Meier, N. T. Wright, Craig Blomberg, and Darrell Bock have shown that the deeds and words of the Gospels can be affirmed as serious objects of historical study. Historical narrative can be differentiated from fictional narrative, and the Gospels are seen as combining narrative and historical interests. The historical narrative in the Gospels claims to portray real, eyewitness material (Luke 1:1-4; John 19:35, 21:24; 1 Cor 15:6; 2 Pet 1:16-18). These claims should be taken seriously.

INTERPRETATION

The word "Gospel" (Greek *euangelion*) means "Good News." In its verb form, it means "to proclaim Good News," so the Gospels are in a sense sermons about Jesus. They do not just tell the facts about Jesus' life;

they interpret his life. Each Gospel has as much theology as it does history. Therefore, the task of the reader is to catch the theological message as much as the historical story.

1. Study the context in which the passage is embedded

Each Gospel has its own structure, and sometimes stories or sayings are found in different contexts. The authors of the Gospels were not providing a day-by-day description of Jesus' ministry, but rather a topical or thematic presentation. Each Gospel's order has a theological purpose. For instance, Mark 4:35–5:43 collects four different types of miracles—controlling nature, casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead—into a single episode to emphasize the authority of Jesus. In light of this type of arrangement, it is important to study how the larger sections of the Gospels are organized and then how individual episodes are related to that arrangement. For example, Matt 8–9 has a careful outline: It consists of three blocks of three miracles each (8:1–17; 8:23–9:8; 9:18–34) divided by sections about discipleship (8:18–22; 9:9–13, 14–17).

2. Study the grammar and words of the passage

The words an author chooses are the key to the meaning of the sentence, and it is necessary to determine how they are being used. For instance, does the Greek word often translated "to save" mean, in a given context, to give a person spiritual salvation, or does it mean more generally to rescue that person from some danger? Does the Greek word translated "shameless persistence" in Luke 11:8 have that meaning in that context, or does it mean "avoiding shame"? Either meaning is possible, but it changes the meaning of the passage.

3. Study the cultural background behind the passage

Both the historical narrative and the parables assume cultural situations in the first-century Jewish world. Understanding that world helps greatly in understanding the Gospels. For instance, the man who wanted to go bury his father (Luke 9:59) could have meant it as an idiom for helping his father until he

died, thus asking for an indefinite postponement, but it more likely refers to the sacred responsibility of a son's burial duties (Gen 25:9; 35:29). The background behind the parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1–8) could be commercial, reflecting a loan of money, or a tenant farm situation where the farmers owed the owner half the crops. Understanding the background helps in determining what is happening in such situations.

4. Study the editorial differences in the texts

Each Gospel author tells the story of Jesus in a way that fits his theological purpose. There were far more events in Jesus' ministry and far more of his sayings than the Gospel writers could include, so they chose those details that fit their purpose. We can study the authors' editorial decisions by comparing the same story in, say, Mark and Matthew. For instance, in the story of walking on water in Mark 6:45–52, Mark ends at the point where the disciples failed to recognize Jesus, so Mark's account centers on their hardened hearts. Matthew tells the rest of the story, relating how Jesus allowed Peter to try walking on the water; he failed, but in the process they came to understand that Jesus really is "the Son of God" (Matt 14:33). Matthew and Mark tell the same story but highlight different messages from it.

MEANING AND MESSAGE

The Gospels teach about God the Father and Jesus Christ as his Son. Jesus has a unique relationship with his Father and ours—Jesus' every prayer except the one from the cross (Mark 15:34) begins with "Father." The coming of Jesus makes new intimacy with God available to those who put their trust in Jesus.

Jesus is the expected Messiah, the promised King of Israel. But he did not come to fulfill the Jewish expectations of a divine warrior who would defeat the Romans. He is the suffering servant who came to die for the sins of mankind. At the same time he is the Son of Man (the glorified figure of Dan 7:13–14 who will have dominion over all) and the "unique One, who is himself God" (John 1:1, 14, 18; 10:30).

Jesus brought God's Kingdom,

God's reign, into this world. Jesus has achieved a new age of salvation through his atoning death on the cross, along with a new certainty about the afterlife through his resurrection. Through him the last days have begun, and those who trust in him have become God's people, citizens of his Kingdom. They have been given a new direction for living "righteous" lives through Jesus' teaching, and they have new authority as Jesus has constituted the church and given it the "keys of the kingdom" (Matt 16:18–19).

The disciples are the nucleus of the church, and they represent the church in their struggles to understand, in their failures, and in their triumphs due to the presence of Jesus. In contrast are the crowds and religious leaders. The crowds sought Jesus without being willing to commit. The leaders rejected Jesus at every turn and implacably opposed all that he stands for. Finally, the demons alone knew exactly who Jesus is and yet they are engaged in cosmic war against him. Above all this, Jesus is sovereign and reigns supreme. He went to the cross because it was his God-appointed destiny, and he knew he would be the substitute for our sin (Mark 10:45; 14:24).

Although Jesus has inaugurated the Kingdom age, the final consummation is still to come. God is the final Judge who will come with a final harvest to reward the righteous and doom the wicked to eternal suffering (Matt 13:40–43, 49–50; 24:29–31). Jesus will come again with his holy angels to bring about a final accounting with God.

FURTHER READING

CRAIG L. BLOMBERG

Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey (1997)

DARRELL L. BOCK

Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels (2007)

JOEL B. GREEN,
SCOT MCKNIGHT, AND
I. HOWARD MARSHALL

Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (1992)

DAVID WENHAM AND
STEVE WALTON

Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Gospels and Acts (2005)

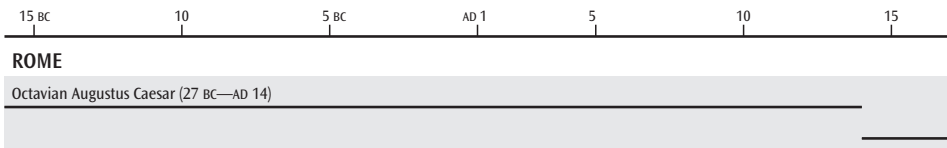
THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

Jesus’ life is recorded in the four Gospels, which include quite a few details that help us to set Jesus’ life chronologically into the flow of history. Nevertheless, some of the key dates in Jesus’ life are uncertain. Three central issues are the date of his birth, the beginning of his ministry, and the date of his crucifixion and resurrection.

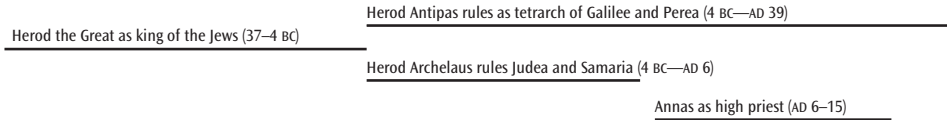
JESUS’ BIRTH *The Reign of Herod the Great.* When Jesus was born, Herod the Great was king of the Jews (Matt 2:1; Luke 1:5); Herod reigned from 37 to 4 BC and died in mid-March 4 BC. Jesus was a small child at the time, probably having been born at least several months before Herod died.

The Census Recorded in Luke. Jesus was born during a census of the Roman world commanded by Augustus Caesar, according to Luke (Luke 2:1-5). Roman historians, however, make no mention of a census around 4 BC. Yet we know that the Romans took their censuses throughout the empire, and we have documentation that censuses were taken in Egypt every fourteen years from AD 33/34 to AD 257/258. Furthermore, recent evidence has revealed that censuses were taken in Egypt in 11/10 BC, 4/3 BC, AD 4/5, and AD 11/12. It is reasonable to suppose that the census of Egypt in 4/3 BC also included Judea, or that a similar one was carried out there, in harmony with Luke 2:1.

Another difficulty is that Luke locates the census in the time when Quirinius served as governor of Syria. Josephus noted that Quirinius became governor after AD 6, and subsequently took a census (*Antiquities* 18.1.1; 20.5.2). Some scholars have argued, though, that according to ancient inscriptions, Quirinius also served in Syria as a special legate of Emperor Augustus before 6 BC. That could be the period to which Luke 2:2 refers. Another possibility is that Luke 2:2 could be translated as, “the previous census, before Quirinius was governor of Syria”; in this case, Luke would simply be noting Quirinius’s term as governor and the census he



JEWISH TERRITORIES



6~4 BC
Birth of Jesus
in Bethlehem

Jesus in
the Temple
at age 12

conducted as a reference point to highlight the difficult time when Jews were first subjected to a Roman census and taxation, losing the last semblance of self-rule (see “The Historical Background of the Intertestamental Period,” pp. 1552–1554).

Jesus was therefore born around 6~4 BC,¹ within about two years of the death of Herod.

John the Baptist. The beginning of Jesus’ ministry can be dated after the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry. According to Luke 3:1-2, John the Baptist began preaching and baptizing in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar (AD 14–37), so John’s ministry began about AD 27. Although the length of time from the beginning of John’s ministry to the baptism of Jesus is not stated in the NT, Jesus’ ministry seems to have begun shortly after John’s, perhaps in AD 28.

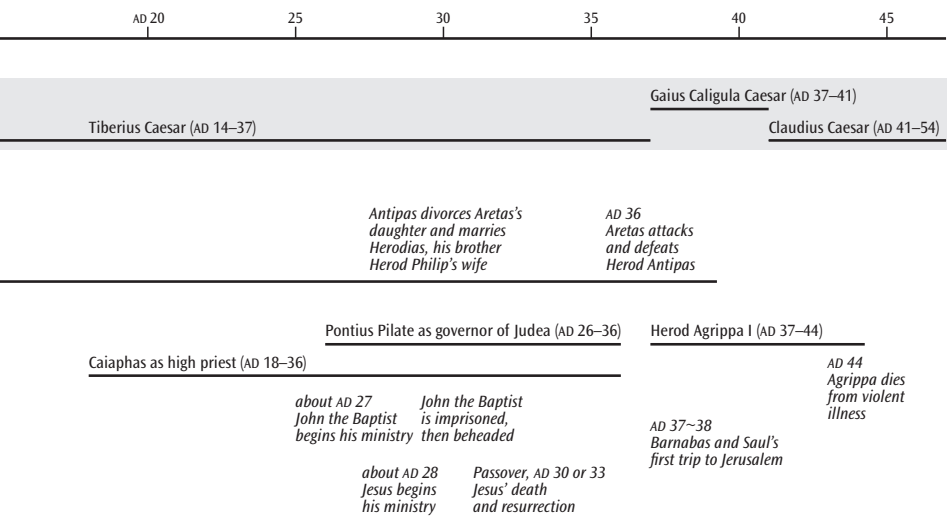
JESUS’ MINISTRY

The Temple. When Jesus visited Jerusalem at Passover early in his ministry (John 2:13–3:21), he was told that the Temple had been under construction for forty-six years (John 2:20). Herod’s work on the rebuilding of the Temple began in the eighteenth year of his reign (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.1), which was 20/19 BC. So that occasion of Jesus’ visit to the Temple occurred about AD 28.

Jesus’ Age at the Beginning of His Ministry. According to Luke, Jesus began his ministry when he was “about thirty years old” (Luke 3:23). This description is approximate, giving a rough indication of time (cp. John 8:57). Luke, as a responsible historian, placed the public ministry of Jesus in relation both to world history (Luke 3:1-2) and to the national repentance movement spearheaded by John the Baptist. If Jesus’ ministry began around AD 28, he was 32~34 years old.

The Length of Jesus’ Ministry. Although the synoptic Gospels only mention one Passover festival during Jesus’ ministry (Matt 26:17; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1), the Gospel of John records three (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). Thus, different scholars have proposed that Jesus’ ministry was as short as one year and as long as four. Most scholars see Jesus’ ministry as lasting at least three years.

¹ Jesus’ birth has a BC or “before Christ” date because Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century made a mistake in calculations, and this mathematical error has remained in our calendar.



JESUS' DEATH *The Day of Jesus' Death.* All four Gospels report that Jesus was crucified on a Friday, the day before the beginning of the Sabbath (Matt 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31, 42). They all agree that Jesus was raised on Sunday, the third day according to Jewish reckoning.

Jesus' last supper with his disciples occurred in conjunction with the Passover celebration. According to the synoptic Gospels, the Last Supper was the Passover meal (Matt 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-38). In these three accounts the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus take place on the day following the Passover meal. John's account seems to suggest that the Last Supper took place one day before Passover, but a careful reading of John's description indicates that he is in harmony with the other Gospel writers (see note on John 19:14).

The Year of Jesus' Death. In the Jewish calendar, the Friday on which Jesus died was 14 Nisan, the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (see charts, "Israel's Annual Calendar," p. 145, and "Israel's Festivals," p. 235). Therefore, Jesus' death occurred in a year in which 14 Nisan fell on a Friday. He must have died after AD 29 (even by the shortest calculation his ministry was at least a year) and before AD 36, the year that Caiaphas ended his high priesthood and Pontius Pilate ceased governing Judea. The two years that meet these criteria are AD 30 and 33. If his ministry was no longer than two or three years, he died in AD 30 at about 35 years old. If his ministry was longer, he died in AD 33 at about 38 years old.

CONCLUSION The record of Jesus' life can be set into known historical facts without much difficulty, and the available evidence gives us confidence to believe that Jesus' life is historical and that the record of his life in the four Gospels is accurate. Yet there are many gaps in our historical knowledge of Jesus' life. As the apostle John later said about Jesus' ministry, "Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

THE NLT HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

Ever since the time of Christ, many attempts have been made to harmonize the four Gospels, either into a single narrative or into a synopsis showing the relationships among the Gospel passages. Tatian's *Diatesseron* (about AD 170) is the earliest example of a single narrative made from the Gospels. Later, Eusebius of Caesarea (early 300s AD) developed a well-known synopsis and tables of cross-references for use in comparing the four Gospels. Many other similar works have since been done.

The *NLT Harmony of the Four Gospels* is a synopsis. Its primary purpose is to help readers understand the relationship among the Gospel passages, not to establish a strict chronology of Jesus' life. The authors of the Gospels themselves were more concerned with Jesus' message and the meaning of his life, death, and resurrection than with the details of historical chronology. By comparing and contrasting similar accounts in the different Gospels, readers can understand the message that each Gospel writer was emphasizing and their differences in perspective concerning the events of Jesus' life and his teachings (see "Introduction to the Four Gospels: Interpretation," p. 1562).

In addition to this synopsis, the *NLT Study Bible* includes parallel passage notations in the NLT text of the four Gospels. Those parallel notations are somewhat different from this synopsis, because they serve a different purpose. Whereas this synopsis provides an overview and includes every passage in the Gospels, the parallel passage notations provide much finer detail in comparing the different Gospel accounts. The reader is encouraged to use this synopsis for general overview and comparison, and then to use the parallel passage notations to compare the Gospel parallels more closely.

FURTHER READING

KURT ALAND, ED.
*Synopsis of the Four
Gospels* (1987)

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. The Prologue to John's Gospel				1:1-18
2. The Preface to Luke's Gospel			1:1-4	
3. The Record of Jesus' Ancestors	1:1-17		3:23-38	
4. The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold			1:5-25	
5. The Birth of Jesus Foretold			1:26-38	
6. Mary Visits Elizabeth			1:39-45	
7. Mary's Song of Praise			1:46-56	
8. The Birth of John the Baptist			1:57-66	
9. Zechariah's Prophecy			1:67-79	
10. The Growth of John the Baptist			1:80	
11. The Birth of Jesus	1:18-25		2:1-7	
12. Shepherds Visit Jesus			2:8-20	
13. Jesus Is Circumcised			2:21	
14. Jesus Is Presented in the Temple			2:21-24	
15. The Prophecy of Simeon			2:25-35	
16. The Prophecy of Anna			2:36-38	
17. The Visit of the Wise Men	2:1-12			
18. The Escape to Egypt	2:13-18			
19. The Return to Nazareth	2:19-23		2:39	
20. The Growth of Jesus			2:40	

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
21. Jesus Speaks with the Teachers			2:41-50	
22. Jesus Grows in Wisdom and Stature			2:51-52	
23. John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus	3:1-12	1:1-8	3:1-18	1:19-28
24. The Baptism of Jesus	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-22	
25. Satan Tempts Jesus in the Wilderness	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13	
26. John the Baptist's Testimony about Jesus				1:29-34
27. The First Disciples				1:35-51
28. The Wedding at Cana				2:1-12
29. Jesus Clears the Temple (cp. #163)				2:13-22
30. Jesus Ministers in Jerusalem				2:23-25
31. Jesus and Nicodemus				3:1-21
32. John the Baptist Exalts Jesus				3:22-36
33. Jesus Leaves for Galilee after Herod Arrests John	4:12	1:14a	3:19-20	4:1-3
34. Jesus Passes through Samaria				4:4-38
35. Many Samaritans Believe				4:39-42
36. Jesus Preaches in Galilee	4:13-17	1:14b-15	4:14-15	4:43-45
37. Jesus Heals an Official's Son				4:46-54
38. Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth (cp. #79)			4:16-30	
39. Fishermen Follow Jesus	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:1-11	
40. Jesus Exorcises a Demon and Teaches with Authority		1:21-28	4:31-37	
41. Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law and Others	8:14-17	1:29-34	4:38-41	
42. Jesus Preaches throughout Galilee	4:23-25	1:35-39	4:42-44	
43. Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
44. Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	
45. Jesus Calls Matthew and Dines at His House	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
46. A Discussion about Fasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
47. Jesus Heals a Lame Man				5:1-15
48. Jesus Claims to Be the Son of God				5:16-47
49. The Disciples Pick Wheat on the Sabbath	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	
50. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath	12:9-15a	3:1-6	6:6-11	
51. Large Crowds Follow Jesus	12:15b-21	3:7-12	6:17-19	
52. Jesus Selects the Twelve Disciples		3:13-19	6:12-16	
53. Jesus' Sermon	5:1-7:29		cp. 6:20-49	
54. The Faith of a Roman Officer	8:5-13		7:1-10	
55. Jesus Raises a Widow's Son from the Dead			7:11-17	
56. Jesus Eases John the Baptist's Doubts	11:1-19		7:18-35	
57. Judgment for the Unbelievers	11:20-24			
58. Jesus' Prayer of Thanksgiving	11:25-30			
59. A Sinful Woman Anoints Jesus			7:36-50	
60. The Women Who Traveled with Jesus			8:1-3	
61. Jesus Is Accused of Being Empowered by Satan	12:22-37	3:20-30	cp. 11:14-23	
62. The Sign of Jonah	12:38-45		cp. 11:24-32	
63. Jesus' True Family	12:46-50	3:31-35	8:19-21	
64. The Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed	13:1-9	4:1-9	8:4-8	
65. Jesus Explains the Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed	13:10-23	4:10-25	8:9-18	
66. The Parable of the Growing Seed		4:26-29		
67. The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds	13:24-30			
68. The Parable of the Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19	
69. The Parable of the Yeast	13:33		13:20-21	
70. Comment on Jesus' Use of Parables	13:34-35	4:33-34		
71. Jesus Explains the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds	13:36-43			
72. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure	13:44			

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
73. The Parable of the Pearl Merchant	13:45-46			
74. The Parable of the Fishing Net	13:47-52			
75. Jesus Calms the Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
76. Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Man	8:29-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	
77. Jesus Heals a Woman and Raises a Girl from the Dead	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
78. Jesus Heals the Blind and Mute	9:27-34			
79. Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth (cp. #38)	13:53-58	6:1-6a		
80. Prayer for More Workers	9:35-38			
81. Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Disciples	10:1-15	6:6b-13	9:1-6	
82. Jesus Warns the Disciples of Persecution	10:16-42			
83. Herod Mistakes Jesus for John the Baptist Back from the Dead	14:1-2	6:14-16		
84. Herod Executes John the Baptist	14:3-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
85. Jesus Miraculously Feeds 5,000	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-15
86. Jesus Walks on Water	14:22-33	6:45-52		6:16-21
87. All Who Touch Jesus Are Healed	14:34-36	6:53-56		
88. Jesus Is the True Bread of Heaven				6:22-59
89. Many Disciples Desert Jesus				6:60-71
90. Jesus Argues with the Pharisees	15:1-20	7:1-23		
91. A Woman from Phoenicia Believes in Jesus	15:21-28	7:24-30		
92. Jesus Heals Many People	15:29-31	7:31-37		
93. Jesus Miraculously Feeds 4,000	15:32-39	8:1-10		
94. Religious Leaders Demand a Sign	16:1-4	8:11-13		
95. Jesus Warns the Disciples about Corrupt Teachings	16:5-12	8:14-21		
96. Jesus Heals a Blind Man		8:22-26		
97. Peter Declares Jesus Is the Christ	16:13-20	8:27-30	9:18-21	
98. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection the First Time	16:21-28	8:31-9:1	9:22-27	
99. The Transfiguration of Jesus	17:1-13	9:2-13	9:28-36	
100. Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy	17:14-21	9:14-29	9:37-43a	
101. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection the Second Time	17:22-23	9:30-32	9:43b-45	
102. Jesus Is Questioned about the Temple Tax	17:24-27			
103. Argument about Who Is the Greatest	18:1-5	9:33-37	9:46-48	
104. The Disciples Forbid Another Man from Using Jesus' Name		9:38-41	9:49-50	
105. Jesus Warns against Temptation	18:6-10	9:42-50		
106. Correcting Another Believer	18:15-20			
107. The Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor	18:21-35			
108. Jesus' Brothers Ridicule Him				7:1-9
109. The Mistaken Zeal of James and John			9:51-56	
110. The Cost of Following Jesus	8:18-22		9:57-62	
111. Jesus Teaches Openly at the Temple				7:10-39
112. Division and Unbelief				7:40-52
113. Jesus Forgives an Adulterous Woman				7:53-8:11
114. Jesus Is the Light of the World				8:12-20
115. Jesus Warns the Unbelieving				8:21-30
116. Jesus Identifies God's True Children and Claims Deity				8:31-59
117. Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind				9:1-34
118. Spiritual Blindness				9:35-41
119. Jesus Is the Good Shepherd				10:1-21
120. Jesus Sends Out Seventy-Two Disciples			10:1-24	
121. The Parable of the Good Samaritan			10:25-37	
122. Jesus Visits Mary and Martha			10:38-42	
123. Jesus Teaches about Prayer			11:1-13	
124. Jesus Is Accused of Being in League with Satan			11:14-28	
125. The Sign of Jonah			11:29-32	

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
126. The Light Within			11:33-36	
127. Jesus Criticizes the Religious Leaders			11:37-12:12	
128. Jesus Speaks about Worldliness and Spiritual Alertness			12:13-59	
129. Jesus Calls the People to Repent			13:1-9	
130. Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman			13:10-21	
131. Jesus Claims to Be God's Son				10:22-39
132. Jesus Departs Jerusalem				10:40-42
133. The Narrow Door into the Kingdom			13:22-30	
134. Jesus Grieves over Jerusalem	23:37-39		13:31-35	
135. Jesus Heals on the Sabbath			14:1-6	
136. Jesus Teaches about Humility			14:7-14	
137. The Parable of the Great Feast (cp. #169)			14:15-24	
138. The Cost of Being a Disciple			14:25-35	
139. The Parable of the Lost Sheep	18:12-14		15:1-7	
140. The Parable of the Lost Coin			15:8-10	
141. The Parable of the Lost Son			15:11-32	
142. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager			16:1-13	
143. Jesus Confronts Scoffing Pharisees			16:14-18	
144. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus			16:19-31	
145. Jesus Teaches about Forgiveness and Faith			17:1-10	
146. Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead				11:1-44
147. The Religious Leaders Plot to Murder Jesus				11:45-57
148. Jesus Heals Ten Men with Leprosy			17:11-19	
149. The Coming of the Kingdom			17:20-37	
150. The Parable of the Persistent Widow			18:1-8	
151. The Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector			18:9-14	
152. Jesus Teaches about Marriage and Divorce	19:1-12	10:1-12		
153. Jesus Blesses the Children	19:13-15	10:13-16	18:15-17	
154. The Rich Young Ruler	19:16-30	10:17-31	18:18-30	
155. The Parable of the Vineyard Workers	20:1-16			
156. Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection the Third Time	20:17-19	10:32-34	18:31-34	
157. Jesus Teaches about Service	20:20-28	10:35-45		
158. Jesus Heals the Blind	20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
159. Jesus Brings Salvation to Zacchaeus			19:1-10	
160. The Parable of the Ten Servants			19:11-27	
161. A Woman Anoints Jesus	26:6-13	14:3-9		cp. 12:1-11
162. Jesus Rides Triumphantly into Jerusalem [Sunday]	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:28-44	12:12-19
163. Jesus Clears the Temple (cp. #29) [Tuesday]	21:12-17	11:15-19	19:45-48	
164. The Significance of Jesus' Approaching Death				12:20-50
165. A Lesson from the Fig Tree [Wednesday]	21:18-22	11:12-14, 20-25		
166. Religious Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8	
167. The Parable of the Two Sons	21:28-32			
168. The Parable of the Evil Farmers	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19	
169. The Parable of the Wedding Feast (cp. #137)	22:1-14			
170. Taxes for Caesar	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26	
171. Discussion about the Resurrection	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40	
172. Discussion about the Greatest Commandment	22:34-40	12:28-34		
173. A Question about the Messiah	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44	
174. Jesus Denounces the Religious Leaders	23:1-36	12:38-40	20:45-47	
175. The Widow's Offering		12:41-44	21:1-4	
176. Jesus Foretells the Future	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-38	
177. The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids	25:1-13			

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
178. The Parable of the Three Servants	25:14-30			
179. The Final Judgment	25:31-46			
180. The Religious Leaders Continue Their Plot to Murder Jesus	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2	
181. Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6	
182. Preparation for the Passover [Thursday]	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	
183. Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet				13:1-20
184. The Last Supper	26:20-30	14:17-26	22:14-30	13:21-30
185. Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:31-38
186. Jesus' Farewell Discourse				14:1-16:33
187. Jesus' Intercessory Prayer				17:1-26
188. Jesus Agonizes in the Garden	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:39-46	
189. Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested [Friday]	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:1-11
190. Annas Questions Jesus				18:12-23
191. Jesus Is Brought before Caiaphas	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54a, 63-65	18:24
192. Peter Denies Knowing Jesus	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:54b-62	18:25-27
193. Religious Leaders Condemn Jesus	27:1-2	15:1	22:66-71	
194. Judas Hangs Himself	27:3-10			
195. Jesus' Trial before Pilate	27:11-14	15:2-5	23:1-7	18:28-37
196. Jesus' Trial before Herod			23:8-12	
197. Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:38-19:16a
198. Roman Soldiers Mock Jesus	27:27-31	15:16-19		
199. Jesus Is Led Away to Be Crucified	27:32-34	15:20-23	23:26-32	19:16b-17
200. Jesus Is Crucified	27:35-56	15:24-41	23:33-49	19:18-37
201. Jesus Is Laid in the Tomb	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:38-42
202. Guards Are Posted Outside the Tomb [Saturday]	27:62-66			
203. Women Come to the Empty Tomb and Report This to the Disciples [Sunday]	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-11	20:1-2
204. Peter and John See the Empty Tomb and John Believes			24:12	20:3-10
205. Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene and Another Mary	28:9-10	16:9		20:11-17
206. Mary Magdalene Tells the Disciples She Has Seen Jesus		16:10-11		20:18
207. The Guards Report to the Sanhedrin	28:11-15			
208. Jesus Appears to Cleopas and His Companion		16:12-13	24:13-35	
209. Jesus Appears to the Disciples in Jerusalem		16:14	24:36-49	20:19-23
210. Jesus Appears to the Disciples with Thomas				20:24-29
211. Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples				21:1-23
212. Jesus Gives the Great Commission	28:16-20	16:15-18		
213. Jesus Ascends into Heaven		16:19-20	24:50-53	
214. The Reason John Wrote His Gospel				20:30-31
215. The Epilogue of John's Gospel				21:24-25

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO Matthew

Matthew demonstrates that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Messiah, the king of Israel, who fulfills the Old Testament promises yet turns the expectation of his contemporaries on its head. The Gospel of Matthew shows how both Jewish and non-Jewish people fit together in God's unfolding Kingdom. It challenges the reader to live with total commitment to Jesus Christ as king.

SETTING

Matthew wrote his Gospel when the early Christian community was at a crossroads. Would it remain a sect of Judaism or separate itself from Judaism and become a separate faith? Matthew's Gospel derives from a Christian community near Jerusalem, surrounded by Jews who had not left their Jewish faith. This community, unlike the Christians of Paul's churches, had to answer socially to the stipulations of Jewish law on a daily basis.

The Christians reading Matthew's Gospel were challenged to live as Jewish Christians among Jews who were fully committed to the Torah.

The letter from James similarly evokes a Christianity that is still firmly attached to the synagogue (Jas 2:1-13). It uses categories so typical of Judaism that one is unsure if it is Christianity or Judaism (Jas 1:26-27; 2:14-26) as it presents its own vision of Christianity in terms of wisdom and obedience (Jas 3:13-18; 4:1-12). Here is a Jewish Christianity that remains as firm in its commitment to the Jewish community as to its glorious Lord (cp. Acts 15).

Matthew's Gospel tells how the life of Jesus affected Jewish Christians who were struggling with ritual, legal, social, and political concerns. For those early Chris-



◀ **Key Places in the Gospel of Matthew.** Jesus was born in BETHLEHEM (1:18-25), grew up in NAZARETH (2:19-23), began his ministry in GALILEE (4:12-17), and died in JERUSALEM (26:36-27:66). At the time of Jesus' birth, Herod the Great ruled as king of GALILEE, SAMARIA, JUDEA, IDUMEA, PEREA, the part of DECAPOLIS encompassing HIPPIUS and GADARA, and the regions NE of the SEA OF GALILEE (borders shown). Upon Herod's death in 4 BC, his kingdom was divided among his sons: Antipas became tetrarch of GALILEE and PEREA; Archelaus became ethnarch of JUDEA (see 2:22); and Philip became tetrarch of the regions NE of the Sea of Galilee. When Archelaus died in AD 6, Judea began to be ruled by Roman governors (*prefects*), including Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36), until the kingship of Herod Agrippa I (AD 37-44), who acquired all the territory that his grandfather Herod the Great had held.

tians, Matthew answered the pressing question, “How are we to follow Jesus in our day, surrounded as we are by Judaism, while seeking to declare the Good News of the Kingdom to all?”

SUMMARY

Matthew’s story follows Jesus from before his birth until after his death and resurrection. Jesus experiences a series of potential dangers as a child (2:1-23). As an adult, he embarks on a very short career, proclaiming God’s righteousness (5:1-7:29) and performing astounding miracles (8:1-9:34); he broadens his reach by sending out twelve apostles (9:35-

OUTLINE

- 1:1-2:23
Prologue—The Birth of Jesus
- 3:1-4:11
Introduction—Preparation for Jesus’ Ministry
- 4:12-11:1
The Messiah Confronts Israel
- 11:2-20:34
The Responses to the Messiah
- 21:1-28:20
The Messiah Accomplishes Salvation

11:1). Most of Jesus’ experience, however, is utter rejection at the hands of Galilean and Judean Jews (chs 11-17). He confronts the Jewish leaders in the Temple during his last week (chs 21-22), announces a final series of woes against authority figures who lead people astray (ch 23), and predicts that God will judge and destroy Jerusalem (chs 24-25). Jesus is arrested, tried, and executed by crucifixion (chs 26-27) for opposing the Jewish leaders and challenging the status quo. Then he is vindicated by his resurrection and gives the great commission to his disciples, to make disciples of all the nations (ch 28).

Matthew shapes his Gospel according to two structural principles. First, following an introduction (chs 1-4), Matthew alternates teaching material with narrative material. Thus, we have discourse and teaching in chs 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 23-25; and we have narrative in chs 8-9, 11-12, 14-17, 19-22, 26-28. Second, Matthew records Jesus’ confrontation of Israel with God’s message about the arrival of his Kingdom in the last days (4:12-11:1; see 4:17), followed by the responses this message evoked from various people (11:2-20:34). Matthew then tells of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection (21:1-28:20) for the salvation of humankind.

AUTHORSHIP

Matthew therefore composed the oracles in the Hebrew language [or, “in a Hebrew style”] and each interpreted them as he was able.

PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS, *Eusebius, Church History* 3.39.15-16

Matthew was a tax collector whom Jesus befriended and called to a life of justice and obedience (9:9). Matthew invited many friends to spend an evening with Jesus (9:10-13), and Matthew is named among the twelve apostles (10:2-4; see also Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). Early church tradition reports that after he composed the first Gospel, Matthew

TIMELINE

- about 6-4 BC
Birth of Jesus
- about AD 28
Jesus’ baptism by John
- Passover, AD 30 or 33
Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection
- AD 49-50
The council in Jerusalem
- AD 65-80
▶ *Matthew writes the Gospel of Matthew*
- AD 66-70
War between Romans and Jews at Jerusalem
- AD 70
Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed

moved from Palestine in the AD 60s to evangelize India (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.24.6).

An important statement was made in the early AD 100s by Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (see above). Papias's statement is traditionally understood to mean that the apostle Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic, and that this Gospel was later translated into Greek, perhaps by someone who also knew the Gospel of Mark. Recent studies suggest that Papias was referring to Matthew's Jewish style, not to his language (Hebrew or Aramaic), because Matthew's Gospel does not appear to be "translation Greek" (i.e., the type of Greek that is often found in materials translated from other languages).

In the 1800s, scholars became convinced that Matthew had used Mark's Gospel as a source. These scholars argued that since an apostle would not have used another Gospel (and one written by a non-apostle at that!) to record Jesus' life, Matthew was not the author of the Gospel bearing his name. Early tradition connects the Gospel of Mark with the apostle Peter, a fact that makes Matthew's dependence on Mark more understandable. There is no conflict with one apostle (Matthew) using the accounts of another apostle (Peter) as a convenient source from which to shape his own report.

*The Gospel
according to
Matthew is among
the most influential
books ever written.
... It is wonderfully
complete, linking
Jesus with his
Jewish origins and
Old Testament
background,
pointing forward
to the growth
of the Gentile
Christian mission,
and embodying
... the teaching,
actions, parables,
miracles, death,
and resurrection of
the central figure.*

OCCASION OF WRITING

Unlike the letters of Paul or the Revelation of John, the settings of the Gospels must be inferred from comments and emphases within the books themselves (see 24:15; 27:46; 28:15), since direct evidence is unavailable. Matthew appears to have been written at a time when Christians and Jews were fiercely debating such issues as how to obey the law (5:17-48; 15:1-20), who the Messiah is (1:1-2:23), who the true people of God are (Israel or the church; 21:33-46), who the rightful leaders of God's people are (4:18-22; 10:2-4; 21:43; 23:1-36; 28:16-20), and how Gentiles are related to the church and to Israel (2:1-12; 3:7-10; 4:12-16; 8:5-13; 15:21-28; 28:16-20).

There is serious debate as to whether Matthew's Gospel sprang from a community that was still within Judaism or one that was already outside Judaism. In other words, had Matthew's Christian community separated from Judaism, or was it still within Judaism's umbrella? Or, was Matthew written for a general audience rather than a specific community? Early Christianity was diverse; some Christian leaders, such as James, maintained a long-term relationship with the Jewish communities. In discussing this question, scholars examine the following passages: 2:1-12; 4:12-16; 8:5-13; 10:5-6; 15:21-28; 17:24-27; 19:28; 21:43; 22:7; 23:1-39.

DATE AND LOCATION

Matthew was probably written sometime between AD 65 and 80. Those who argue that Matthew used Mark's Gospel as a source usually date Matthew after AD 70; those who claim it is independent tend to date it earlier. Some have suggested that Matthew's Gospel was written in the AD 50s. Many today think that Matthew was first written at Antioch in Syria, which is more probable than any other proposed setting.

MEANING AND MESSAGE

Matthew argues the case that Jesus fulfills the ancient faith of Israel and the OT hope: In him the Messiah and the day of the Lord have come.

Michael Green,
The Message of Matthew,
p. 11

A few do follow Jesus. In following the instruction of Jesus, these disciples would evangelize the whole world and build a community (the church) that would include both Jews and Gentiles. In general, however, Israel refuses to follow its Messiah, and Jesus utters disastrous warnings that they will experience the judgment of God (chs 23–25) unless they repent.

Matthew's Gospel is distinctive in its presentation of Jesus as Messiah and Teacher, its emphasis on the Kingdom of Heaven, its strong call to discipleship, its constant pattern of OT fulfillment, its incisive criticism of the Jewish religious leaders, and its universal outlook that includes Gentiles in the Kingdom.

The Messiah (Christ). Matthew emphasizes Jesus as the Messiah (Christ) (1:1, 16–18; 11:2–3; 16:16, 20; 23:10). He focuses on Jesus as the fulfillment of OT expectations, though not in the manner his Jewish contemporaries expected. For Matthew, Jesus is clearly the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary in order to bring salvation to his people (1:21). In short, Jesus is "Immanuel, God with us" (1:23; 28:20).

The Kingdom of Heaven. The expression "Kingdom of Heaven," used thirty times by Matthew, is a roundabout way for Jews to say "Kingdom of God." Matthew uses this term to evoke (1) the invisible but present rule of God on earth through the saving work of Jesus the Messiah; (2) the fulfillment of OT promises (4:17; 11:11–15); (3) the saving activity of God, often through quiet and humble means (11:25; 13:24–30, 36–43); (4) the power and strength of God's activity (11:2–6, 12–13; 12:28); (5) the coming of the Kingdom within a "generation" (10:23; 16:28; 24:34); (6) the final, climactic judgment of God (25:31–46); and (7) the final, perfect fellowship of all God's holy people with the Father (8:11–12; 13:43; 22:1–14; 26:29). The Kingdom of Heaven shows God's perfect reign through Jesus the Messiah among his people, beginning with the church and consummated in the eternal Kingdom of glory and fellowship.

Discipleship. Matthew's Gospel stresses Jesus' call to men and women to be baptized, to follow him as disciples, to obey his teachings (28:20), and to enjoy fellowship with him. Jesus summarizes the requirements of discipleship in his Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:29), and this theme recurs throughout Matthew (e.g., 10:1–42; 16:24–26). Matthew shows the disciples overcoming their failures through Christ's help (see 14:28–33; 16:5–12).

Fulfillment of the OT. More than any other Gospel, Matthew stresses the deep correspondence between OT expectations and promises and their fulfillment in Jesus. In the style of a Jewish commentary, Matthew links OT texts to events in the life of Jesus that fulfill those texts and frequently draws out analogies between the OT and the NT. Matthew's procedure is anchored in the belief that what God has done once in Israel, he is doing again, finally and fully, in Jesus the Messiah.

Universal Outlook. In a book so strongly Jewish in orientation, it is surprising to find such an emphasis on the inclusion of Gentiles in the Messiah's saving work. More than any other, this Gospel emphasizes that the Good News is for all, including Gentiles. This stance put Matthew at odds with the Jewish community of his time on two

Matthew's story of Jesus . . . is a masterpiece. . . . More often than not we know the teaching of Jesus in . . . Matthew's formulations.

Donald A. Hagner,
Matthew 1–13, p. xi

FURTHER READING

CRAIG L. BLOMBERG
Matthew (1992)

D. A. CARSON
Matthew in Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 8 (1984)

R. T. FRANCE
Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher (1989)

MICHAEL GREEN
The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven (2000)

CRAIG S. KEENER
A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (1999)

DAVID TURNER
Matthew in Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (2005)

fundamental questions: Who are the people of God? What future is there for the nation of Israel? The birth narratives show that God saves Gentiles, and throughout the book Gentiles are portrayed positively. Since God is sovereign, his Messiah is King of all creation. Though God has worked especially in and through the nation of Israel (see 10:5-6; 15:24), the inauguration of the Kingdom of Heaven shares God's good favor with the nations as well (see 28:18-20).

1. PROLOGUE—THE BIRTH OF JESUS (1:1–2:23)

The Ancestors of Jesus the Messiah (1:1-17)
Matt 1:1-17; cp. Luke 3:23-38

1 This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Ram.

⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).

Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).

Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶ Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.

Abijah was the father of Asa.

⁸ Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.

Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.

⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham.

Jotham was the father of Ahaz.

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amon.

Amon was the father of Josiah.

¹¹ Josiah was the father of Jehoiahchinn and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).

¹² After the Babylonian exile:

Jehoiahchinn was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Akim.

Akim was the father of Eliud.

¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.

Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

1:1-17
//Luke 3:23-38

1:1
Gen 22:18
2 Sam 7:12-14
1 Chr 17:11
Ps 89:3-4; 132:11
Isa 9:6; 11:1
Matt 22:42
John 7:42
Rom 1:3
Gal 3:16
Rev 22:16

1:2
Gen 21:3, 12; 25:26;
29:35
1 Chr 1:34

1:3
Gen 38:29-30
Ruth 4:12, 18-19
1 Chr 2:4-5, 9

1:4-5
Ruth 4:13, 17-22
1 Chr 2:10-12, 15
Heb 11:31

1:6
Ruth 4:17, 22
2 Sam 12:24
1 Chr 2:13-15

1:7-10
1 Chr 3:10-14

1:11
2 Kgs 24:14-16
1 Chr 3:15-16
Jer 27:20
Dan 1:1-2

1:12
1 Chr 3:17, 19
Ezra 3:2

1:16
Matt 27:17, 22
Luke 2:11

1:1–2:23 This account demonstrates that Jesus' lineage and birth (ch 1), as well as the geography of his early years (ch 2), fulfilled OT expectations, and that attempts to thwart God's will do not succeed (2:1-15; see also 27:62-66).

1:1 The phrase *a record of the ancestors* introduces 1:1-17. A similar phrase is used in Genesis to introduce each section of that book (see Genesis Introduction, "Summary," p. 15). • *Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham* (literally *Jesus the Messiah, Son of David and son of Abraham*): These names are repeated in reverse order in the genealogy, an example of a literary form known as *chiasm* (arrangement of elements in mirror-image). Being identified as a *descendant of David* introduces Jesus as Messiah (see 12:23; 22:42-45), while the connection to *Abraham* emphasizes God's covenant with Israel and the extension of that

covenant to include all nations (see Gen 12:3; Matt 28:16-20).

1:3 *Ram*: Greek *Aram*, a variant spelling of Ram; also in 1:4. See 1 Chr 2:9-10.

1:5 *Rahab* was the Gentile prostitute who risked her life to harbor Joshua's two spies in Jericho (Josh 2:1-21). Her inclusion in the ancestry of the Messiah emphasizes the grace of God. Elsewhere she is commended for her faith in the God of Israel and for righteous deeds (Heb 11:31; Jas 2:25).

1:7 *Asa* (Greek *Asaph*, a variant spelling of Asa; also in 1:8. See 1 Chr 3:10): Probably the OT king (1 Kgs 15:9-24; 1 Chr 3:10) and not the psalmist (Asaph; 1 Chr 6:39; 25:1-2; Pss 50, 73-83). Matthew's focus is on the ancestral line from David to the Messiah.

1:8 *Jehoram*: Greek *Joram*, a variant spelling of Jehoram. See 1 Kgs 22:50 and note on 1 Chr 3:11. • *father of* (or *ancestor of*; also in 1:11): The term

includes several generations here (2 Chr 21:1–26:1), as it does in the case of Josiah (1:11) and Shealtiel (1:12). The genealogy omits Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (2 Kgs 8:24; 1 Chr 3:11; 2 Chr 22:1, 11; 24:27), perhaps because of their association with Ahab and Jezebel.

1:10 *Amon*: Greek *Amos*, a variant spelling of Amon. See 1 Chr 3:14.

1:11-12 *father*: Josiah was the grandfather of *Jehoiahchinn* (Greek *Jecooniah*, a variant spelling of Jehoiahchinn); see 2 Kgs 23:34; 24:6; note on 1 Chr 3:16.

1:12-16 Although the OT is clearly the source for 1:1-11, Matthew is probably also dependent upon royal archives and oral traditions for 1:12-16.

1:12 *Shealtiel*: See 1 Chr 3:17-19; Ezra 3:2.

1:16 This genealogy is traced through *Joseph*, who stands in David's line (see also notes on Luke 3:23-38).

1:18-25
// Luke 2:1-7

1:18
Luke 1:27, 35
Gal 4:4

1:19
Deut 24:1

1:20
Luke 1:35

1:21
Luke 1:31; 2:11, 21
Acts 5:31; 13:23
Heb 7:25

¹⁷All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.

OT Patterns Fulfilled (1:18–2:23)

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

Matt 1:18-25; cp. Luke 2:1-7

¹⁸This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she

became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17)

Gen 12:1-3
2 Sam 7:16
Luke 3:23-38

Both Matthew and Luke provide genealogies of Jesus (1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). The two genealogies differ from David to Joseph, Jesus' legal father. Matthew follows the line of David's son Solomon, while Luke follows the line of Nathan, another of David's sons. One possible explanation is that Matthew records Joseph's genealogy while Luke records Mary's (see note on Luke 3:23).

Genealogies were kept quite accurately in Judaism, as Josephus confirms (Josephus, *Life* 1). Genealogies were important in the OT and in Judaism because land rights were apportioned to families in Israel and because certain offices, such as priest and king, were inherited from father to son. Genealogies sometimes ran a record from the past to the present to illustrate religious themes, family descent, or political ties, as well as simple chronology (1 Chr 1-9). Most such lists were representative rather than a complete list of every individual.

The purpose of Matthew's genealogy, unlike Luke's (Luke 3:23-38), is to show Jesus' heritage as running from Abraham through David. Jesus' genealogy confirms him as a legitimate heir to the throne of David. While Jesus' genealogy in Matthew goes back to Abraham, the father of the Jewish race, the genealogy in Luke goes all the way back to Adam. This is consistent with Luke's emphasis on Jesus as the Savior for all people everywhere.

The unusual mention of women with stained reputations (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba), several of them Gentiles, is noteworthy in Matthew's genealogy. Their mention here emphasizes God's gracious acts of redeeming even those deemed unworthy by others.

Jesus' genealogy does not prove that Jesus is the Messiah, but it does make him a possible candidate. His identity as the Messiah becomes evident in other ways (11:2-6). God had providentially guided the course of history to its climax in Jesus Christ. Jesus is presented as the anticipated Messiah of the OT, the Savior of his people, and the King descended from David assuming his throne (see 2 Sam 7:16). He is heir to Abraham and ultimately fulfills God's promises to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

1:17 Matthew states that each period has *fourteen generations*, but the first and third periods list only thirteen. A legitimate Jewish and OT approach would count David in both the first and second groupings and include Jesus in the third grouping. This further reinforces that Matthew is probably stressing the *gematria* (letters representing numbers): The letters in the Hebrew word *david* ("David") also add up to fourteen. Matthew is highlighting Jesus' credentials as the Messiah (1:1).

1:18 *Jesus the Messiah* (literally *Jesus the Christ*): Using *Messiah* in the translation accurately communicates that it is a title rather than a personal name ("Jesus Christ"). • *engaged to be married*: In Judaism, engagement (or betrothal) meant

a permanent relationship (Mal 2:14) that could be broken only by legal process; thus, Mary was considered Joseph's wife and he her husband (see 1:20; Deut 22:23-24), even though they had not had sexual relations. Mary's status as a *virgin* at the time of Jesus' conception *through the power of the Holy Spirit* helps authenticate Jesus' divinity.

1:19 As a *righteous man*—that is, as one who obeyed the law (see Luke 1:6)—Joseph could not take Mary as his wife since she was a suspected adulteress. He could exonerate himself by publicly exposing Mary to trial and having her put to death (Deut 22:23-27; Num 5:11-31), or pay a fine and *break the engagement* (literally *divorce her*; see also *Mishnah Sotah*

1:1-5). Joseph mercifully decided to do the latter *quietly*.

1:20 The *angel of the Lord* declared to Joseph *in a dream* (see 2:12-13, 19, 22) that Mary had been neither seduced nor violated; instead, the baby was *conceived by the Holy Spirit* (Luke 1:34-35), who often has a creative and life-generating role (Gen 1:2; Ezek 37:1-14; John 3:5-8).

1:21 *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Yeshua*, which means "The LORD saves." The name appropriately describes his role: *he will save his people from their sins*. • *His people* may refer either to Israel as a nation (2:6) or to the Messiah's people, the church, which is comprised of both Jews and Gentiles (4:15-16; 16:18; 28:18-20).

²²All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

Visitors from the East

2 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About

that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ²"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him."

³King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the 'Messiah supposed to be born?'"

⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,

1:23
^aIsa 7:14; 8:8, 10
 John 1:14
 1 Tim 3:16
 Rev 21:3
1:25
 Luke 1:31
2:1
 Luke 1:5; 2:4-7
2:2
 Num 24:17
 Jer 23:5
 Matt 2:9
 Rev 22:16
2:4
^achristos (5547)
^bLuke 2:11
2:5
 John 7:42
2:6
^aMic 5:2

Herod the Great (2:1-20)

Luke 1:5

Herod the Great was the Roman-appointed king of Judea (37–4 BC) at the time of Jesus' birth (2:1; Luke 1:5). He was a strong military leader, a brilliant politician, and a cruel tyrant. Born into an Idumean (Edomite) family with links to the Romans, he rose to power by gaining Roman favor and retained it by cruelly suppressing his opponents. Herod was known for his large building projects, especially his magnificent reconstruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, begun 20–19 BC (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.8.1). Herod earned the title "the Great" because of his reputation as a great builder. He was the one who built Caesarea and made it the Roman headquarters in Palestine.

Herod the Great was also known for his family troubles and his brutal treatment of those who opposed him or whom he considered threats. He murdered two of his wives and three of his own sons when he suspected them of plotting against him. Caesar Augustus once said that he would rather be Herod's *swine* than his *son* (a play on words in Greek since the two words sound alike—*hus*, *huios*). When Jesus was born toward the end of Herod's reign and Herod heard him referred to as a future "king," Herod attempted to have him killed also. Unable to locate the boy, Herod then ordered the massacre of all the boys less than two years old in the Bethlehem area (see 2:1-20)—an act typical of his ruthlessness and paranoia.

Though Herod gained the title "king of the Jews," the Jewish people never accepted him as a legitimate king because he was not from the line of David and because he was an Edomite (a descendant of Esau) rather than a Jew. His greatest accomplishment was the rebuilding and beautification of the Jerusalem Temple, making it one of the most magnificent buildings in the ancient world.

1:22-23 *Look! . . . Immanuel:* Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 (Greek version). Jesus' birth from a *virgin* fulfills Isa 7:14. The Hebrew term '*almah* (virgin or young maiden) was translated *parthenos* ("virgin") in the Greek OT that Matthew quotes. Matthew understands the '*almah* of Isaiah as foreshadowing the Virgin Mary.

1:25 *Until* probably implies that Joseph had *sexual relations* with Mary after the birth of Jesus. • *And Joseph named him Jesus*, thus showing his acceptance of the child as his own.

2:1-2 Attentiveness to the *star* indicates that the *wise men* were astrologers; their awareness of the OT (perhaps Num 24:17) suggests that they were from Babylonia, where Jews were numerous. The men were Gentiles, which anticipates Gentile acceptance

into the Kingdom of God (8:11-12; 15:21-28; 28:16-20). Throughout the entire Gospel, unlikely Gentiles worship the Jewish Messiah, while the Jewish leaders (Herod, high priests, teachers of religious law, Pharisees) oppose him.

2:1 *Bethlehem* (see note on 2:6) was David's hometown (1 Sam 16:1-13; John 7:42). • *King Herod*, or Herod the Great, had a meteoric career; he rose from being governor of Galilee to being king of Galilee, Judea, and Samaria (37–4 BC). His career was marked by unflinching loyalty to Rome, magnificent building enterprises (including a substantial renovation of the Temple in Jerusalem), family hostility, suspicion, and ruthless murder of his own family members (Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.7.1-5) and of innocent children (2:16-18). • *wise men:*

Or *royal astrologers*; Greek reads *magi*; also in 2:7, 16.

2:2 *star as it rose:* Or *star in the east*.

• Matthew regularly describes Jesus as receiving *worship* (2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17), thus identifying Jesus as God.

2:3 *Herod was deeply disturbed* because he feared this child would rival him as king of the Jews.

2:4 *The leading priests* had political and religious clout and ministered predominantly in the Temple (see 21:23). Herod gathered the *teachers of religious law* because they were trained to know OT prophecies and were often influential Pharisees.

2:6 The quotation is from Mic 5:2-4; 2 Sam 5:2. • *Bethlehem*, a small village,

^b*pōimainō* (4165)
• Matt 9:36

2:9
Matt 2:2

2:11
Ps 72:10
Isa 60:6

2:12
Matt 2:22

2:13
Matt 1:20; 2:19

2:15
• Hos 11:1

2:18
• Jer 31:15

2:19
Matt 1:20; 2:12

are not least among the ruling cities
of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the ^bshepherd for my
people Israel.^c

⁷Then Herod called for a private meeting
with the wise men, and he learned from
them the time when the star first appeared.
⁸Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and
search carefully for the child. And when
you find him, come back and tell me so that
I can go and worship him, too!"

⁹After this interview the wise men went
their way. And the star they had seen in
the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went
ahead of them and stopped over the place
where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the
star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹They en-
tered the house and saw the child with his
mother, Mary, and they bowed down and
worshiped him. Then they opened their
treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold,
frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²When it was time to leave, they returned
to their own country by another route, for
God had warned them in a dream not to re-
turn to Herod.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³After the wise men were gone, an angel
of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.
"Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his
mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I
tell you to return, because Herod is going to
search for the child to kill him."

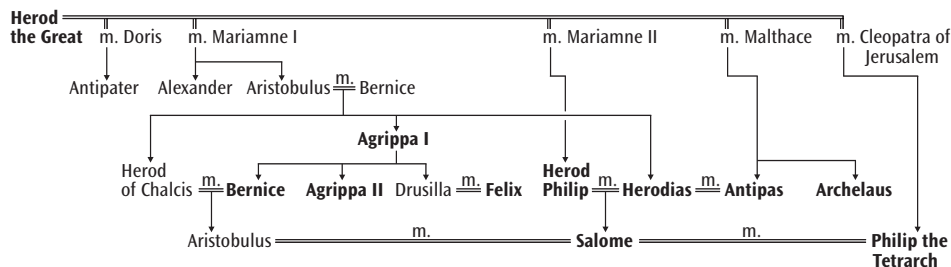
¹⁴That night Joseph left for Egypt with
the child and Mary, his mother. ¹⁵and they
stayed there until Herod's death. This ful-
filled what the Lord had spoken through
the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt."

¹⁶Herod was furious when he realized
that the wise men had outwitted him. He
sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and
around Bethlehem who were two years old
and under, based on the wise men's report
of the star's first appearance. ¹⁷Herod's bru-
tal action fulfilled what God had spoken
through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ "A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead."

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord
appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.



▲ **The Herod Family (2:1-20).** Those whose names are in bold type appear in the NT. • **HEROD THE GREAT:** See profile, facing page. • **HEROD PHILIP:** See Mark 6:17. • **ARCHELAUS:** See 2:22. • **HEROD ANTIPAS:** See profile, p. 1659. • **PHILIP THE TETRARCH:** See Luke 3:1; notes on Mark 8:22-26, 27-28. • **HEROD AGRIPPA I:** See profile, p. 1851. • **HERODIAS:** See 14:3-11; Mark 6:17-29. • **SALOME:** See 14:6-8; Mark 6:22-28. • **HEROD AGRIPPA II:** See profile, p. 1879. • **BERNICE:** See Acts 25:13, 23; 26:30. • **FELIX:** See Acts 23:24-24:27. • For more about the Herod family, see Josephus, *Antiquities* 17-18.

had a privileged status as the birthplace of King David. The religious leaders knew from the prophets (1:22) that the Messiah would be born there. • **the ruling cities:** Literally *the rulers*. • King David had been a *shepherd* in his youth, and as king he became the shepherd of Israel (2 Sam 5:2). Micah 5:2-4 foresees the Messiah as a shepherd (cp. Ps 23:1).

2:8-10 The *star* was placed by God to guide the *wise men* to the Messiah (see Num 24:17); the details are unknown.

2:11 The wise men offered extravagant *gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh* to the King (see Ps 72:10-17; Isa 60:1-22).

The tradition that there were three wise men originated from the number of gifts, but the text does not specify how many wise men there were.

2:13-15 *Flee to Egypt . . . until I tell you to return:* This fulfills Hos 11:1 (see note on 4:1-11; see also Gen 15:13-16; 46:1-5; Exod 15:1-21).

2:15 *I called my Son out of Egypt:* See Hos 11:1, which refers to the Exodus.

2:16 *kill all the boys:* Herod was notorious for his viciousness—he killed his own son to protect his throne, which led to the saying, "It is safer to be

Herod's swine [Greek *hus*] than his son [Greek *huios*]," because Herod kept kosher. • **two years old and under:** Herod calculated the probable age of the child from the *wise men's report*.

2:18 The quotation is from Jer 31:15. • **Ramah,** a village near Bethlehem, is the place of *Rachel's* burial (Gen 35:18-20; Jer 31:15-17).

2:19 After *Herod the Great died* in 4 BC, Caesar split up his kingdom. Herod's son Archelaus (2:22) was appointed over Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, while Antipas (14:1-12; Luke 13:31-32) was appointed over Galilee and Perea.

20“Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

21So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. 22But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. 23So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

2. INTRODUCTION—PREPARATION FOR JESUS’ MINISTRY (3:1–4:11)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for the Messiah

Matt 3:1–3 // Mark 1:2–3 // Luke 3:2b–6 // John 1:23

Matt 3:4–6 // Mark 1:4–6

Matt 3:7–10 // Luke 3:7–9

Matt 3:11–12 // Mark 1:7–8 // Luke 3:15–18 //

John 1:24–28

3 In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of ‘Heaven is near.’” 3The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the ‘LORD’s coming! Clear the road for him!’ ”

4John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. 5People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. 6And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

7But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? 8Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. 9Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 10Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

11“‘I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will

2:20
Exod 4:19

2:22
Matt 2:12

2:23
Judg 13:5, 7
Luke 2:39

3:1–12
//Mark 1:1–8
//Luke 3:1–18
//John 1:19–28

3:2
Matt 4:17; 10:7
Mark 1:15
‘ouranos (3772)
• Matt 16:3

3:3
*Isa 40:3
Mal 3:1
Luke 1:76
*kuros (2962)
• Matt 12:8

3:4
Lev 11:22
2 Kgs 1:8

3:6
Mark 1:4

3:7
Matt 12:34; 23:33
John 8:44
Rom 5:9
Eph 5:6
Col 3:6

3:8
Acts 26:20

3:9
John 8:33, 37, 39
Acts 13:26
Rom 2:28–29; 4:12

3:10
Mark 7:19
Luke 13:7
John 15:6

2:20–21 Jesus’ return to Israel fulfills Hos 11:1 (see 2:13–15).

2:22 **Archelaus**, like his father, governed brutally, immorally, and tyrannically. • Joseph fulfilled prophecy in moving to **Galilee** to avoid Archelaus’s jurisdiction (cp. 4:12–16).

2:23 “**He will be called a Nazarene**”: Matthew associates the name **Nazareth** with words in **the prophets** (see Isa 11:1, where the Messiah is called a “Branch,” [Hebrew *netser*]; and Judg 13:5, where Samson is called a “Nazirite”).

3:1 **John the Baptist** announced Jesus’ coming (see Mark 1:1–11; Luke 3:1–22; John 1:6–8, 19–34) and prepared people to receive him (3:3). John attracted large crowds (3:5) and a group of disciples (9:14). This group continued for a short time as a movement, even as the Christian church emerged (see Acts 18:24–28). • John’s locale in **the Judean wilderness** had symbolic significance: The wilderness was associated with the giving of the law (see Exod 19:1) and with God’s final redemption of Israel at the end of history (see Isa 40:3).

3:2 **is near** (or *has come*, or *is coming soon*): The prophetic call to return to God in repentance (cp. Isa 1:16–20) involves total reorientation from pride and sin to humble obedience to

God (see Jer 3:11–22). John’s message included specific practical application (Luke 3:11–14).

3:3 **Isaiah** had spoken of a messenger preparing a highway in the wilderness for Israel’s God to return to the land (Isa 40:1–11). John’s ministry prepared the way for Jesus’ arrival (see 11:10; cp. John 12:41). • The quotation is from Isa 40:3 (Greek version).

3:4 **John’s clothes** and **food** correspond to those of his prophetic predecessor, Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8; Mal 4:5; *Sirach* 48:10–11).

3:5–6 John’s ministry became so popular that many **people from Jerusalem and Judea** came to hear him. • **they confessed their sins**: Those who responded to John’s preaching and turned away from sin were prepared to receive Jesus’ ministry (Luke 7:27, 29). • **he baptized them**: John’s practice of baptism may have originated with the OT idea of purification (see Isa 1:16; 4:4; Ezek 36:25).

3:7 **The Pharisees’** name derives from the Hebrew term *perushim*, meaning either *separated ones* or *exact interpreters*. • **The Sadducees**, a priestly class, probably derive their name from Zadok the priest (2 Sam 15:24–29; Ezek 44:10–16). • **coming to watch him baptize**: Or *coming to be baptized*.

3:8 **Prove . . . that you have . . . turned to God** (literally *make fruit that accords with repentance*): John calls for action and true ethical change; mere lip service will not do (see Luke 3:10–14; cp. Matt 5:19–20, 46; 7:21; 23:3).

3:9 **We’re safe**: Some had wrongly assumed that, since they were **descendants of Abraham**, they were exempt from judgment. • A prominent theme in Matthew is how **God will create new children of Abraham** by bringing the Gentiles into God’s people and removing from his people Jews who reject the Messiah (see 8:11–12; 21:43; 22:1–14; 28:16–20; Rom 4:9–25; Gal 3:6–14, 29).

3:11 **with water**: Or *in water*. • **who is greater than I am**: Despite his popularity and growing following, John had a clear sense of his role as subordinate to the Messiah. • **I’m not worthy even to be his slave**: In Jewish culture, to remove and carry someone’s sandals, even those of a rabbi, was too lowly a task even for the rabbi’s disciple. It was a job reserved for slaves. • **with the Holy Spirit and with fire** (or *in the Holy Spirit and in fire*): This happened at Pentecost (see Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2); the ministry of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit (see 12:28; Luke 4:14), may also be included. **Fire** may refer to purification (Zech 13:9) or judgment (Mal 4:1; see Isa 1:25; 4:4;

3:11
John 1:26-27, 31, 33
Acts 1:5; 2:3-4; 19:4
^abaptizō (0907)
• Matt 28:19

3:12
Matt 13:30

3:13-17
//Mark 1:9-11
//Luke 3:21-22

3:16
Isa 11:2
John 1:31-34

3:17
Gen 22:2
Ps 2:7
Matt 17:5

“baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹²He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus:

God Proclaims His Messiah

Matt 3:13-17 //Mark 1:9-11 //Luke 3:21-22 //John 1:29-34

¹³Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John

tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵But Jesus said, “**It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.**” So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

The Pharisees (3:7)

Matt 5:20; 9:10-14, 34; 12:1-14, 22-24, 38-40; 15:1-14; 16:1-12; 19:3; 21:45;
22:15, 34; 23:1-7, 13-31; 27:62-64
Mark 2:23-25; 3:1-6; 7:1-13; 8:11-12;
12:13-17
Luke 5:17-21, 29-32; 6:6-11; 7:28-30, 36-49; 11:37-54;
12:1-3; 13:31; 14:1-6; 15:1-2; 16:13-15;
17:20-21; 18:9-14;
19:38-40
John 1:24-25; 3:1;
7:31-32, 45-52; 8:3-10, 13; 9:13-34, 40;
11:46-57; 12:17-19, 42; 18:3
Acts 5:27-40; 15:5;
23:6-10; 26:4-5
Phil 3:5-7

The Pharisees were one of three major Jewish sects, along with the Sadducees and the Essenes. The Pharisees were a non-political lay movement within Judaism. They arose from the *hasidim* (pious ones), who opposed the syncretizing (combining together) of Greek culture and religion with Judaism in the 100s BC. They attempted, by rigorous examination of the details of the OT law, to make the law accessible and practical to people seeking to be obedient Jews. They taught strict adherence to the law, not only the written law of Moses (*torah*), but also the oral traditions which they claimed Moses had passed down to them. Their goal was to defend the written law against any possible infringement. They were God-fearing and law-abiding people. They were famous for passing their interpretations from generation to generation by word of mouth, establishing an oral tradition concerning legal matters. They made the law applicable by extracting from it specific guidelines for many possible situations. They argued that if the law were obeyed by all, the nation would be purged of sin and God would establish his Kingdom over all the nations. This gave their concern for obedience a goal in the future. Although the Pharisees were small in number, their influence on Israel was widespread (e.g., 15:12-14; see Josephus, *War* 2.8.14; *Antiquities* 13.10.5). The primary influence of the Pharisees was in the local synagogue communities, while the Sadducees were more influential in the Temple worship in Jerusalem and in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high council. The traditions of the Pharisees developed into the rabbinic writings known as the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*.

Unlike the Sadducees (see “The Sadducees” at 16:1-12, p. 1610), the Pharisees had a strong belief in the resurrection of the dead (see Acts 23:8). After the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Pharisees provided leadership and direction for the people of Israel.

Jesus often came into conflict with the Pharisees, accusing them of hypocrisy and of elevating human rules over God’s righteous standards. Jesus opposed the Pharisees because they were leading people away from God’s plan for redemption. In Matthew, the Pharisees oppose the work of God from the outset (3:7), mostly because of their meticulous observance of the law (23:23-26) and Jesus’ shocking disregard of their traditions (15:1-20). They were the theological shepherds of Israel (12:38; cp. 9:36), but Jesus castigates them as hypocrites for their perversions of doctrine and practice (see ch 23).

Mal 3:2-3). It is a “Spirit-and-fire baptism”; the Messiah puts into effect what John could only prepare—thoroughgoing judgment and purification.

3:12 Farmers would use a *winnowing fork* to toss harvested grain into the air, allowing the useless husks (*chaff*) to blow away. The Messiah’s ministry divides all humanity into two groups: (1) *the wheat*, that is, those who respond, forming the new people of God; and (2) *the chaff*, the unrepentant (see 3:8).

3:14 As John had already confessed (3:11-12), he was lesser than the Messiah, so he felt unfit to baptize him.

3:15 *for we must carry out all that God requires: Or for we must fulfill all righteousness.* This statement refers to accomplishing what the OT demanded or foreshadowed (e.g., Jer 31:31-34). “Righteousness” in Matthew refers to behavior that conforms to God’s will (see 5:20; 6:1, 33; 21:32).

3:16 *opened:* Some manuscripts read *opened to him*. • *The Spirit of God descending like a dove* was anointing Jesus, through whom salvation would come. This event was like a king’s being anointed with oil at his coronation. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to accomplish God’s salvation and defeat Satan

(see 12:18, 28). This same Spirit empowers Jesus’ followers (10:20; Acts 1:8).

3:17 *my dearly loved Son* (see Ps 2:7): The title “Son of God” reveals and clarifies Jesus’ nature and role (see 4:3, 6; 14:33; 16:16; 17:5; 26:63; 27:54; 28:19). In his unique relationship to the Father, Jesus accomplishes salvation as the trusting and obedient Son. • *who brings me great joy:* God the Father confirmed his Son’s ministry with language from Isaiah (Isa 42:1) and so prepared Israel for his ministry.

The Temptation of Jesus: Satan Tests the Messiah

Matt 4:1-11 // Mark 1:12-13 // Luke 4:1-13

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the ¹devil. ²For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

⁴But Jesus told him, "No! **The Scriptures say,**

'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"

⁷Jesus responded, "**The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'**"

⁸Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹"I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰"Get out of here, **⁸Satan,**" Jesus told him. "**For the Scriptures say,**

'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'"

¹¹Then the devil went away, and ¹¹angels came and took care of Jesus.

3. THE MESSIAH CONFRONTS ISRAEL (4:12-11:1)

Narrative: Introduction to Jesus' Ministry (4:12-25)

The Ministry of Jesus Begins

Matt 4:12-17; cp. Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15

¹²When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

¹³He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

4:1-11
//Mark 1:12-13
//Luke 4:1-13

4:1
Gen 3:1-7
1 Thes 3:5
¹*diabolos* (1228)
• Matt 25:41

4:2
Exod 34:28
1 Kgs 19:8

4:4
*Deut 8:3

4:6
*Ps 91:11-12

4:7
*Deut 6:16

4:10
*Deut 6:13
⁸*satanas* (4567)
• Matt 16:23

4:11
1 Kgs 19:4-8
Luke 22:43
Heb 1:14
Jas 4:7
¹¹*angelos* (0032)
• Matt 22:30

4:12-17
//Mark 1:14-15
//Luke 4:14-15

4:1-11 Parallels between Adam and Jesus are obvious in this account of Jesus' temptation. Jesus is the second Adam (see Rom 5:12-19) and the second Israel (2:15). In contrast to the ancient Israelites, he fulfilled Israel's history by successfully wandering through the desert without sinning. He proved himself the obedient Son of God by defeating Satan in spiritual combat. And because he underwent temptation himself as a human, Jesus is able to sympathize with the temptations we face (see Heb 2:14-18; 4:15) and help us overcome them as he did (1 Cor 10:13).

4:1 *Jesus was led by the Spirit:* The temptation was providentially arranged by God as a test of the Messiah's character (see Deut 8:2). • *to be tempted there by the devil:* This test of character, initiated by God (who tempts no one; see Jas 1:13-14), was accomplished through the devil's own desire to lure Jesus into sin.

4:2 *forty days and forty nights* (see Exod 24:18; 34:28; 1 Kgs 19:8): Israel was tested in the wilderness for forty years (Exod 16:35; Deut 1:3).

4:3-4 Jesus refused to use his supernatural power to obtain the food that he trusted God to provide. Unlike the people of Israel, who sorely tested God through complaint and unbelief (see

Exod 16), Jesus refused to question God's faithfulness. Instead, he trusted God to provide for his true need, the sustenance of *every word that comes from the mouth of God*.

4:3 *the devil:* Literally *the tempter*.

4:4 Jesus was quoting Deut 8:3.

4:5-7 Jesus refused to test God by presuming upon God's protection.

4:6 Now the devil quotes Ps 91:11-12.

4:7 *The Scriptures also say:* Countering the devil's appeal to Scripture, Jesus invoked a deeper scriptural principle of honoring God, which the devil ignored. See Deut 6:16.

4:8-10 Satan, called the ruler of this world (John 12:31), offered to hand over *all the kingdoms of the world and their glory* to Jesus to keep him from accomplishing the will of his Father. • *Glory* refers to political power and dominion (e.g., 6:29). Satan's strategy was to get Jesus to abuse his sonship, thus diverting him from the path of suffering and obedience that climaxed at the cross. • *You must . . . only him:* Deut 6:13.

4:11 *Then the devil went away:* Jesus' rebuff of Satan here foreshadows his victory over demons (12:28), Satan's defeat through the Cross (Col 2:14-15), and the final victory at the end of history (Rom 16:20; Rev 12:7-17; 20:2-3, 10). • *Angels*, who had already been involved in the Messiah's arrival and

protection (1:20, 24; 2:13, 19), now *came and took care of Jesus* after his temptation, in fulfillment of the OT (4:6; see Ps 91:11-12).

4:12-11:1 Having been announced by John and the Father (3:13-17), and having obediently endured the testing in the wilderness (4:1-11), the Messiah was prepared for his ministry. He first confronted the Galilean Israelites with the message of the Kingdom.

4:12 *John had been arrested* by Herod Antipas (see 14:1-12). Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, where John was probably working at the time. • *When Jesus heard . . . he left Judea and returned to Galilee:* As in Joseph's flight to Nazareth (2:22-23), an escape from danger can also be God's providential direction (4:14-16). Jesus withdrew to avoid martyrdom before finishing his work of revealing the Kingdom.

4:13 *Capernaum* was in Galilee, a district viewed negatively by the religious establishment in Judea and Jerusalem (see John 1:46; 7:41-42, 52). Many Judeans considered Galileans to be uncultured, with a lazy command of the language (cp. 26:73), a factor sometimes thought to affect the accuracy of their teachings. Galilee also had a proportionately larger Gentile population than Judea did.

4:14-16 *through the prophet Isaiah:* See Isa 9:1-2 (Greek version).

4:15-16
 *Isa 9:1-2; 42:6-7
 Luke 2:32
 John 1:5

4:17
 Matt 3:2; 10:7

4:18-22
 //Mark 1:16-20
 //Luke 5:1-11

4:19
 Matt 16:17-18
 John 1:43

4:20
 Mark 10:28
 Luke 18:28

4:23-25
 Luke 6:17-19

4:23
 Matt 9:35
 Mark 1:39
 Luke 4:15

15 "In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali,
 beside the sea, beyond the Jordan
 River,
 in Galilee where so many Gentiles
 live,
 16 the people who sat in darkness
 have seen a great light.
 And for those who lived in the land
 where death casts its shadow,
 a light has shined."

17 From then on Jesus began to preach,
**"Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the
 Kingdom of Heaven is near."**

The First Disciples

Matt 4:18-22 // Mark 1:16-20

18 One day as Jesus was walking along the
 shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two
 brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and An-
 drew—throwing a net into the water, for
 they fished for a living. 19 Jesus called out to
 them, **"Come, follow me, and I will show you**

how to fish for people!" 20 And they left their
 nets at once and followed him.

21 A little farther up the shore he saw two
 other brothers, James and John, sitting in a
 boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing
 their nets. And he called them to come, too.
 22 They immediately followed him, leaving
 the boat and their father behind.

Crowds Follow Jesus

23 Jesus traveled throughout the region of
 Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and
 announcing the Good News about the King-
 dom. And he healed every kind of disease
 and illness. 24 News about him spread as far
 as Syria, and people soon began bringing to
 him all who were sick. And whatever their
 sickness or disease, or if they were demon
 possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he
 healed them all. 25 Large crowds followed
 him wherever he went—people from Gali-
 lee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over
 Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.



◀ **Jesus' Ministry in Galilee** (Matt 4:12–15:20; see also 15:29–16:12; 17:22–18:1; Mark 1:14–21; Luke 4:14–31; John 4:43–54). After Jesus learned that John the Baptist had been put in prison (4:12), he moved to the Galilean seaside town of CAPERNAUM and made it his base of operations for much of his ministry.

CAPERNAUM 4:13;
 8:5; 11:23; 17:24
 SEA OF GALILEE 4:13,
 18; 15:29
 NAZARETH 2:23; 4:13

main features: **teaching, announcing . . . the Kingdom**, and healing. • **The synagogues** were centers for prayer, study, and exposition of Scripture and tradition. They were the social centers of many Jewish villages. The hypocrisy and hostility of the Jewish leaders was evident at the synagogues (6:2, 5; 10:17; 12:9–14; 13:54; 23:6, 34). • **Announcing the Good News** means presenting the message **about the Kingdom** of Heaven (9:35; 24:14; 26:13; also Mark 1:1; Rom 1:16). Most often, the message evokes hostility (see 9:32–34; 10:27–28; 13:1–9, 18–23).

4:24–25 During Jesus' day, much of Palestine was in the Roman jurisdiction of Syria (a term that could refer to the entire eastern shore of the Mediterranean). Matthew mentions **Syria** to show how widespread the news of Jesus was. • The word translated **epileptic** refers to epilepsy or demonic oppression. In 17:15, one so described "falls into fire and water," that is, the boy was unable to control himself. • **The Ten Towns** (Greek *Decapolis*) was a federation of ten cities, most of which were east of the Jordan and southeast of the Sea of Galilee (Damascus, Raphana, Hippus, Abila [or Canatha], Gadara, Scythopolis, Pella, Dion, Gerasa, and Philadelphia [Amman]). These cities were predominantly Gentile and Hellenistic in culture.

4:17 Jesus' message centered on the imminent arrival of the **Kingdom of Heaven** and the repentance that it necessitates (see 3:2; 10:7). • **is near**: Or *has come*, or *is coming soon*.

4:18–22 The call of the first disciples illustrates one of the purposes of Jesus' ministry: to call people to follow him in self-denying obedience (cp. 4:17, 23–25).

4:18 **Simon, also called Peter**, became the leader of the apostles (see 14:28; 15:15; 16:16) and the representative disciple (14:29–30; 16:15–19, 22–23).

4:19 **Come, follow me**: This involved accepting the beliefs and lifestyle of a master as one's own (16:24; Deut 5:33; 1 Kgs 19:19–21). • **fish for people**: The

disciples would participate in the saving and judging work of the Kingdom (see 10:5–15; 13:47–51; Ezek 29:4–5; Amos 4:2).

4:20–22 **leaving the boat and their father**: Following Jesus as his disciples involved both commitment and cost on the part of the brothers (see 8:18–22; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21).

4:23–25 This summary marks the central theme of the section (4:23–9:38): the ministry and message of the Messiah. In ancient writings, chapter divisions were unknown; authors would instead begin and end a section with the same expression (called an *inclusio*; see 9:35).

4:23 The Messiah's ministry has three

The Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' Call to Righteousness (5:1–7:29)

Introduction

5 One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him,² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

Matt 5:3-12 // Luke 6:20-23

- ³ "God **bles**ses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
- ⁴ God **bles**ses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ God **bles**ses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.
- ⁶ God **bles**ses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.
- ⁷ God **bles**ses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- ⁸ God **bles**ses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.
- ⁹ God **bles**ses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.
- ¹⁰ God **bles**ses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

¹¹ "God **bles**ses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Teaching about Salt and Light

Matt 5:13; cp. Mark 9:49-50; Luke 14:34-35

Matt 5:15 // Mark 4:21 // Luke 8:16; 11:33

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But what

5:1
Luke 6:12
John 6:3

5:3-12
// Luke 6:20-23

5:3
Isa 57:15
Matt 25:34
*makarios (3107)
• Luke 6:20

5:4
Isa 61:2-3

5:5
Ps 37:11
Rom 4:13

5:7
Jas 2:13

5:8
Ps 24:3-5
*kardia (2588)
• Matt 15:18

5:9
Heb 12:14
Jas 3:18

5:10
2 Tim 2:12

5:11
1 Pet 4:14

5:1–7:29 This is the first of five lengthy discourses in Matthew (see also 9:35–11:1; 13:1–53; 18:1–19:2; 23:1–26:1). The theme of the Sermon on the Mount is the Messiah's call to righteousness. Paul understood righteousness in terms of God's saving acts and of a person's standing before God. Jesus uses the term for moral behavior that conforms to God's will, as James does. Specifically, righteousness is doing the will of God as Jesus reveals it. This "revelation of righteousness" unifies the entire Sermon.

5:3 *poor and realize their need for him* (literally *poor in spirit*; cp. Luke 6:20, 24): In the OT, the poor are often depicted as especially pious because oppression by the wealthy leads them to trust in the Lord for salvation and deliverance rather than relying on the power of wealth (11:5; Ps 37:14–15; 40:17; 69:28–33; Isa 61:1; 66:2). In both Matthew's and Luke's accounts, the "poor" are indeed physically poor, but their trust in God, not their poverty, is what makes them blessed (Isa 57:15; 66:2).

5:4 *Those who mourn* were those who lamented the spiritual and national condition of Israel (see 23:37–39; Isa 61:2–3; Joel 1:8–13; 2:12–13, 18–19; Rom 9:1–5; 1 Cor 5:2; Jas 4:9). Personal grief, whether caused by sin or tragedy, may also be in view (Mark 16:10; Rev 18:11, 19). • *will be comforted*: The passive voice is used out of reverence for the holy name of God; the phrase could also be rendered *God will comfort them* (see also 5:6–7, 9). Comfort will accompany the fulfillment of all that God has promised (Isa 40:1–2; 61:2–3).

5:5 *those who are humble*: See Ps 37:11, which Jesus practically quotes

here. Elsewhere, Jesus describes himself in similar terms—in contrast to other teachers (11:29) and as one who shuns pride (12:17–21; 21:5). This trait of Jesus is exemplified in his death on the cross (1 Pet 2:23; 3:9). • *The whole earth* could also be rendered *the land*, thus referring to God's promise of land to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:7; 17:8; see Isa 60:21). A wider sense may also be intended, such as God's reign over the entire earth (19:28; 28:18–20; Ps 115:16).

5:6 *those who hunger and thirst for justice* (or for righteousness): This refers either to the follower of Jesus whose driving purpose in life is to obey the Lord (cp. 3:15; 5:10, 20) or to the disciple's desire to see justice for all people (Ps 11:7; 85:10–12; Isa 11:4–4; Jer 23:5–6; 33:16). One with such a longing often prays, "May your will be done on earth" (6:10). • Christ has brought *justice* and righteousness (Rom 3:21–22; 5:1); the disciples *will be satisfied* with it (cp. Ps 42:1–2; 63:1–2).

5:7 Jesus made a cardinal virtue of being *merciful*, that is, showing kindness to those in distress (see 6:12, 14–15; 9:13; 12:7; 18:23–35; 23:23; 25:31–46). Those who are merciful now will find God's mercy in the final judgment.

5:8 *Those whose hearts are pure* (see Ps 24:3–5; 51:7; Isa 6:5) are contrasted with those who thought that they had satisfied God's will through ceremonial conformity to tradition (23:25–26). Jesus insisted on simple, true heart-righteousness (see 6:1–24; 15:1–20; 23:23–28; Deut 6:5). • *They will see God* and thereby attain even more than Moses did (see Exod 33:18–23; 34:5–7; see also Ps 73:1).

5:9 This beatitude probably targeted zealots—Jewish revolutionaries who advocated the overthrow of Roman domination through violent resistance. The Messiah's Kingdom would be established by other means. • *those who work for peace*: Jesus is not calling for pacifism per se, but rather a different kind of activism. • *Peace* is the absence of enmity and the presence of God's salvation (Lev 26:6; 1 Sam 16:4–5; Isa 9:5–6; Zech 8:16; Eph 2:14; Col 1:20). Jesus' disciples are to work for justice, righteousness, reconciliation, and mercy as the *effects* of God's salvation through Christ (5:43–47; Luke 10:5–6).

5:10–11 Jesus' first disciples were *persecuted* by hostile Jewish leaders who were offended by Jesus' new and authoritative revelation (see 10:17–23; 11:2–6; 12:1–8; 15:1–20; 23:34–36). Since then, *doing right* by associating with Jesus and obeying his teachings has often been a source of persecution (10:24–25; 2 Tim 3:12).

5:12 *The great reward* Jesus mentions is not something earned by suffering for doing right; it is God's blessing to those who have expressed his grace to others (see 10:41–42; 20:1–16). • The *ancient prophets* are closely connected with the NT apostles (see also 13:16–17; 23:29–36; Eph 2:20).

5:13–16 The disciples' good deeds will have profoundly positive effects on the world around them, to the glory of God. With this comes a warning from Jesus: Do nothing that might jeopardize that positive impact.

5:13 *Salt* was used for cleansing and preservation from decay (Ezek 16:4), in forming covenants (Lev 2:13;

5:12
2 Chr 36:16
Acts 7:52
Jas 5:10

5:14
Phil 2:15

5:16
1 Pet 2:12
**pater* (39:62)
* Matt 6:9

5:17
Rom 3:31

5:18
Luke 16:17; 21:33

5:19
Jas 2:10

5:21
*Exod 20:13
*Deut 5:17
Rom 13:9
Jas 2:11

5:22
Eph 4:26
Jas 1:19-20

good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.

¹⁶In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise you heavenly Father.

Teaching about the Law

Matt 5:17-20; cp. Luke 16:17

¹⁷"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not

even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

¹⁹So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

²⁰"But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Teaching about Anger

Matt 5:25 // Luke 12:57-59

²¹"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' ²²But I

The Blessings of Jesus (5:3-12)

Matt 11:6; 13:16;
16:17; 24:46; 25:34
Ps 1:1-3; 106:3;
112:1; 119:1-2
Isa 56:1-2
Luke 6:20-26

The blessings of Jesus are called Beatitudes because the Latin Vulgate translates the Greek word for *blessed* as *beati*. No single word can capture all that Jesus is communicating with this term here. He is describing the special favor of God toward his people, both physically and spiritually, and the consequences of living within that favor. Jesus calls men and women to follow him as he proclaims the message of the Kingdom to Israel (see also 11:6; 13:16; 16:17; 24:46). The Beatitudes describe the lifestyle and character of a follower of Jesus. Those who are blessed have repented in response to the proclamation of the Kingdom (4:17-22). The Beatitudes (5:3-12) are connected with Isa 61:1-3. The Spirit endows, leads to proclamation, and blesses the poor, the humble, and the righteous.

The NLT's use of "God blesses" conveys the ideas of divine origin and approval (see 25:34), fulfillment (see 11:6; 13:16; 16:17), reversal (see Luke 1-2; 6:20-26), and the condition of obedience required in order to enjoy the blessings (see Ps 1:1, 3-6; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1-2; Prov 8:32; Isa 56:2). The blessings are inaugurated with the Messiah's coming, with a confident hope that they will be enjoyed eternally and completely.

Num 18:19; see note on 2 Chr 13:5), and as flavor (Job 6:6; Mark 9:50).

• Salt that *lost its flavor* became useless, insipid, or dull (see Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34).

5:14 light of the world . . . city on a hilltop: The attractive quality of the disciples' lives will draw other people to live similarly and to glorify God (see Isa 2:2-5; 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; 56:6-8; 60:1-3; Phil 2:15).

5:16 praise your heavenly Father: Religious hypocrites seek praise for themselves; Jesus' disciples should seek praise for God (see 1 Pet 2:12).

5:17 Abolish would mean to eliminate and replace the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets (i.e., the whole OT) as the revelation of God's will. • **Accomplish their purpose** might mean to obey perfectly, to complete the teaching of, or to bring about OT prophecies (see 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23). Jesus himself is the realization of all that both the Prophets and the Law taught and ex-

pected. Now that Christ, the fulfillment, has come, the OT must be understood in light of him (Luke 24:26, 44).

5:19 The realization of the law in Christ means that obedience to all of his commands (see 28:20) is the only acceptable response for his disciples. • **Commandment** refers to the OT commands (5:18) as now fulfilled in Christ's teaching (see 5:21-48). • **the least in the Kingdom of Heaven:** Jesus may mean that such an individual will enter the Kingdom, but only barely and with low status; alternatively, some Jewish evidence suggests that he is referring to damnation (cp. 8:12, where "those for whom the Kingdom was prepared" are eternally excluded).

5:20 unless your righteousness is better: Jesus' disciples must have the substantially new kind of righteousness that Jesus teaches and makes possible (illustrated in 5:21-47 and summed up in 5:48); it is both quantitatively and qualitatively distinct. Just as Jesus

is greater than the Temple (12:6) and Jonah (12:41), so the righteousness of his followers far outstrips that of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees (see 3:7-9).

5:21-47 You have heard. . . But I say: Jesus contrasts his own teaching to six misinterpretations of the law. Each antithesis provides an example of the surpassing righteousness of Jesus. Jesus reveals the will of God as it contrasts with traditions.

5:21 our ancestors were told: The expression refers to the traditional interpretation of the teachers of religious law and Pharisees. Though their traditions prohibited *murder*, they did not prohibit hatred. The surpassing righteousness of Jesus demands reconciliation (5:23-24); merely refraining from committing murder is not sufficient (5:22). • **'You must not murder . . .':** Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17.

5:22 angry with someone: Some manuscripts add *without cause*.

say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of ^ahell.

²³“So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

²⁵“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.

Teaching about Adultery

²⁷“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ ²⁸But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹So if your eye—even your

good eye—^bcauses you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into ^chell. ³⁰And if your hand—even your stronger hand—^bcauses you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into ^chell.

Teaching about Divorce

Matt 5:31–32; cp. Matt 19:9; Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18

³¹“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ ³²But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

Teaching about Vows

³³“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’ ³⁴But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not

^ageenna (1067)
• Matt 5:29

5:25–26
Matt 18:34–35
Luke 12:58–59

5:27
• Exod 20:14
• Deut 5:18
Matt 19:18
Mark 10:19
Luke 18:20
Rom 13:9
Jas 2:11

5:29–30
Matt 18:8–9
Mark 9:43–47
• skandalizō (4624)
• Matt 16:23
• geenna (1067)
• Matt 11:23

5:31
• Deut 24:1
Matt 19:7
Mark 10:4

5:32
1 Cor 7:10–11

5:33
Lev 19:12
Num 30:2
Deut 23:21

5:34
Isa 66:1
Matt 23:22
Jas 5:12

5:35
Ps 48:2
Isa 66:1

5:37
Jas 5:12

• *judgment . . . the court . . . hell*: The second and third punishments are more severe than would have been typical in Jesus’ day, emphasizing the surpassing righteousness of Jesus and his followers (see 5:20). They did not tolerate unreciprocated relationships or any devaluation of others. • *If you call someone an idiot*: The Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: *if you say to your brother, “Reqa!”* The Aramaic term *reqa* means something like “empty head,” and the clause probably means the same as *if you curse someone* (literally *if you say, “You fool!”*; see Jas 2:20). Devaluation of people is a sin that manifests itself in various ways. • *hell*: Greek *Gehenna*; see note on 5:29.

5:23–26 Jesus gives two illustrations of reconciliation in community and society.

5:23 sacrifice: Literally *gift*; also in 5:24.

5:26 the last penny: Greek *the last kodrantes* (i.e., quadrans), the smallest Roman coin (cp. Luke 12:59).

5:27–30 Jesus’ righteousness uncovers sin at a deeper level than the external; he reveals the true intent of the law.

5:27 You must not commit adultery: Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18.

5:29–30 good eye . . . gouge it out . . . stronger hand . . . cut it off: These graphic images call for radical separation from sin. But even self-mutilation, radical as it would be, cannot stop a lustful mind. Jesus is calling for the surpassing righteousness that only he can bring.

5:29 your eye—even your good eye: Literally *your right eye*. • *hell* (Greek *Gehenna*): Gehenna originally referred to a valley outside Jerusalem where some of the kings of Judah worshiped idols and performed human sacrifice by fire (2 Chr 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31; 32:35). The site was eventually destroyed by Josiah (2 Kgs 23:10). In the NT, Gehenna describes the place of punishment by God. Unless disciples have surpassing righteousness, they will not enter the Kingdom (5:20) but will be punished eternally (5:22; 23:33).

5:30 your hand—even your stronger hand: Literally *your right hand*.

5:31–32 Jesus challenges the misapplication of the OT provision for *divorce* (see Deut 24:1–4; cp. Matt 19:3–9). Following the rules does not make divorce acceptable. Jesus allows only one legitimate reason for divorce, sexual infidelity, and forbids casual divorce (see also 1 Cor 7:10–11).

5:31 A man can divorce his wife . . . notice of divorce: Deut 24:1. A notice of divorce is a document stating the legality of a divorce. Evidence suggests that such a document permitted remarriage. “The essential formula in the notice of divorce is, ‘Lo, you are free to marry any man.’ . . . The essential formula in a writ of emancipation is, ‘Lo, you are a freedwoman: lo, you belong to yourself’” (*Mishnah Gittin* 9:3).

5:32 The exception clause permits but

does not demand divorce when one partner has *been unfaithful* (see also 19:9). Notably, Jesus does not demand death for the guilty party (see Deut 22:21–22). • The implication seems to be that by divorcing his wife for illegitimate reasons, the man *causes her to commit adultery* by wrongly putting her in a situation where she remarries and so breaks the law. • *anyone who marries a divorced woman*: It is not clear whether Jesus is referring to any woman who is divorced, regardless of the reason, or only to a woman who is divorced without an acceptable reason (unfaithfulness). The underlying assumption in Jewish divorce law was simple: Legitimate divorces permitted remarriage.

5:33–37 Jesus here summarizes the OT teaching on oaths (Lev 19:12; Num 30:2–4; Deut 23:21–23; Ps 50:14; Zech 8:17). The Pharisees had degrees of commitment for oaths—for example, ones that did not mention God were not as binding. Jesus shows that because God is related to all things (*heaven, earth, Jerusalem, my head*; see also 23:16–22), breaking any oath breaks God’s command (see Exod 20:7). The point is that one must be altogether truthful. Jesus’ righteousness elevates the disciple’s everyday yes and no to the level of binding oath. Oaths become superfluous to the honest person (Jas 5:12).

5:33 You must not break your vows . . . to the Lord: Num 30:2.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TIME AFTER THE APOSTLES

The most pertinent issue that Christians faced at the end of the first century and into the second was that of self-identity. Ever since the council of apostles met in Jerusalem (Acts 15), Christians had wrestled with distinguishing their faith from contemporary Judaism and Greco-Roman religious culture. With the death of the apostles and their disciples, the eyewitnesses of Jesus were gone. With greater urgency many believers asked, "Who are we?" The process of answering this question pushed believers for the following centuries to clarify and define their own unique identity.

By the end of the first century AD, scores of documents were circulating that claimed to be written by one or more of the original disciples.¹ All Christian groups drew on the Hebrew Scriptures, but the writings of the apostles were still in process of being compiled into a collection that most churches would accept as equal in authority to the OT. Every Christian group appealed to apostolic authority: Jewish Christians honored the Gospel of Matthew and *The Gospel of the Nazarenes* (now lost); Gnostics heralded the Gospel of John and a variety of esoteric documents; followers of Marcion promoted the apostle Paul as the preferred interpreter of Jesus; and so on. How could believers recognize which documents were to be considered Scripture? What parts of Christian doctrine and practice should function as authoritative standards for Christians? What documents should be considered "canonical"—that is, which documents authoritatively reflected the church's faith and canon of belief? These were the questions at stake for determining genuine apostolic teaching.

THE FIRST "CANON"

The language and concept of *canon* preceded Christianity's use of it. The word meant a plumb line or a stick for making measurements. It came to be used figuratively in the Greco-Roman world to mean a standard or norm by which other things are judged, whether it be artwork, an idea, or a moral principle.

It is with this usage in mind that the first appearance of a "canon" in

a Christian context occurs. In Gal 6:15-16, Paul reminds the Galatians that in relationship to Christ, it doesn't matter whether or not a man has been circumcised. Rather than measuring oneself by the law of circumcision, "what counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation" through faith in Christ's redemption. Paul then says, "May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle" (Greek *kanōn*). The mention of canon here has nothing to do with a list of authoritative texts; instead, it refers to a standard of belief and behavior based on Christ. Earlier, Paul probably referred to this same canon when he complained about those Jewish Christians at Antioch who separated themselves from the Gentiles and thus "were not following the truth of the gospel message" (Gal 2:14). Elsewhere Paul similarly speaks of an existing standard of faith that correlates with his message of Good News (see 1 Cor 15:1-8; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2). This "pattern of wholesome teaching" was by no means something Paul dreamed up—he had received it from the Lord (1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Gal 1:15-17), and he passed it on with the intent that Christians would follow that pattern and pass it on to others (1 Thes 4:1-2; 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:2).

Paul was describing the process by which the faith was being transmitted well before the NT canon was codified. There was indeed a canon of teaching, as the above passages show. The first canon was a standard body of teaching handed down through the

apostles' preaching. This teaching described the revelation of God in Christ, as seen through his incarnate life, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. There was also some initial arrangement for devotion and worship in the life of the church (see, e.g., Acts 2:42) and for the appointing of leaders in the church (see, e.g., 1 Tim 3:1-13).

THE POSTAPOSTOLIC CHURCH

After the death of the apostles, the concern to preserve apostolic truth was no less active than it had been earlier. Every postapostolic Christian writer acknowledged the supreme and unique authority of the Scriptures, and postapostolic writers submitted themselves to the authority of the apostolic documents. For them, the apostles were the teachers *par excellence*, having unique authority.

The early postapostolic (i.e., the patristic) church, however, was not a different entity from the apostolic church, as if somehow detached from the Christian community of the first century. For the Christians who lived the apostolic faith in the years after the death of the apostles, there was not a radical break in how the churches were preaching, teaching, and defending the Christian faith. The points of continuity from one century into the next were far greater than the differences. The ancient church had an integrity and coherence that ran from the earliest days after Pentecost, through the NT, and into the postapostolic period.

¹ Such as the *Gospel of James* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, accepted as Scripture by some churches but eventually rejected for their questionable teaching.

The leaders of the patristic church were aware of the need for clarifying the connection of the present churches with the apostolic legacy. *Apostolicity*, or that which is apostolic, pertained to the continuation of what the apostles taught and to the ability to trace a historical lineage back to those churches actually founded by the apostles. It was therefore important that Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was called “an apostolic and prophetic teacher” (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 16.2; about AD 156). He had been a disciple of the apostle John and was said to have faithfully preserved and transmitted the teaching given to him by the apostles. Twenty years later, Irenaeus of Lyons argued against Gnostic groups that the true churches are only those churches that stand in the succession of the “tradition which originates from the apostles, and which is preserved by means of the succession of elders” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.2-4). The reality of the church’s faith required an identifiable connection with the apostles.

THE CANON OF APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

The way of faithfulness to the gospel was further defined and lived out by those we call the “fathers” of the church. The church fathers of the earliest centuries can be considered authors and exponents of a founding tradition. Protestants might insist that tradition is not

revelation, yet they will agree that the early tradition was an element of the Holy Spirit’s providential working to define and preserve the Christian faith and the church in its integrity. Even as the Spirit continues to incorporate new expressions of the church’s faith, hope, and love into the body of Christ, it does so always under the guidance of Scripture and in “conversation” with the patristic tradition. We may not be familiar with the terminology used by the postapostolic fathers of the church, or we might object to their use of Platonic or Stoic categories. Nevertheless, the patristic tradition became an indelible part of the Christian faith upon which all theology, spirituality, and exegesis has been built. Practically speaking, this tradition has functioned as a canon of Christian belief, especially through the doctrinal and confessional achievements of the church during the fourth and fifth centuries. This “canon of belief” has operated ever since as the historical and theological precedent for all subsequent Christian doctrinal formulations.

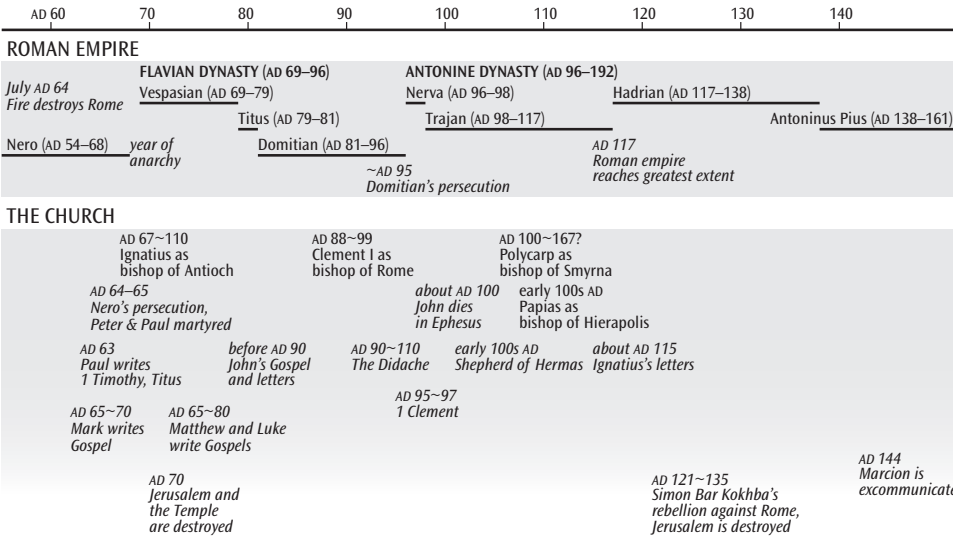
This description of the patristic tradition as “canon” is not meant to equate the authority of the church fathers with that of the Bible. Any of the ancient church fathers would have been horrified to find their written legacy being placed on par with Holy Scripture. The patristic tradition is not revelatory in the way that Scripture is revelatory.

Still, the Christian tradition that was birthed in the apostolic era and formulated throughout the following 400 years has been regarded as the foundation upon which the church’s history has been built. Each period of church history has made its unique contributions and will continue to do so, but the early church was unique for giving Christianity the tradition, the canons of Scripture and doctrine.

Historically, it is through the ancient church fathers that the NT canon was set, the basic professions of faith were composed, and Christian doctrine and theology were defined in response to contemporary culture and heresy. It was also they who formulated the first reflective responses to Scripture within daily pastoral experience and teaching.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

For most of church history, Scripture and tradition were perceived as compatible. Tradition was the distillation of biblical truth and always existed alongside Scripture. For example, in response to a religious leader whose group vaunted themselves as true Christians but rejected the truly human birth of Christ, Augustine replied, “The catholic [i.e., universally held] doctrine, which is also the apostolic doctrine, is that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is both the Son of God in his divine nature and the Son of David after the flesh. . . . This teaching rep-



resents the 'plainest statement in Holy Scripture' " (Augustine, *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean* 23.5). Tradition and the Bible are like streams coming out of the same spring. Like the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, both tradition and Scripture are necessary elements of the Christian faith.

In the ancient church, the practice of reading and hearing Scripture did not occur without the tradition. A Christian writer at the end of the first century addressed a letter to the church at Corinth in order to encourage believers there to avoid worldly practices and to seek heartfelt repentance. In this exhortation, the writer told the church leaders to embrace "the glorious and holy canon of our tradition" (1 *Clement* 7:2-4). This writer frequently cites the OT as declaring the Good News of Jesus Christ, but he displays no knowledge of an operational NT canon. Implicit to the writer's argument is that the apostolic understanding is achieved only when Scripture is read through the lenses of the "canon of our tradition." Only then does accurate theological and spiritual interpretation become possible. Tradition was not from outside the faith but was regarded as the essential teaching of the Bible.

Scripture was the authoritative anchor of the tradition's content, and the tradition stood as the primary interpreter of Scripture. In other words, the tradition was not

a novel set of beliefs and practices added to Scripture, as if it were a separate source of divine revelation. It instead expressed the ancient consensus of the church fathers regarding the meaning of Scripture.

It was in fact the tradition, provided through the apostles' preaching, that formed the basis of the NT and served as the guide for interpreting the OT. As the body of this tradition developed over the next 400 years, it was understood as bearing witness to and interpreting Scripture. The baptismal formulas, catechisms, doctrinal summaries, and later creeds were valued as accurately representing the intent of Scripture. Augustine said, when he was instructing new converts, "Whatever you hear in the Creed is contained in the inspired books of Holy Scripture" (Augustine, *Sermon* 212.2). To describe the tradition was inevitably to speak about the message of Scripture.

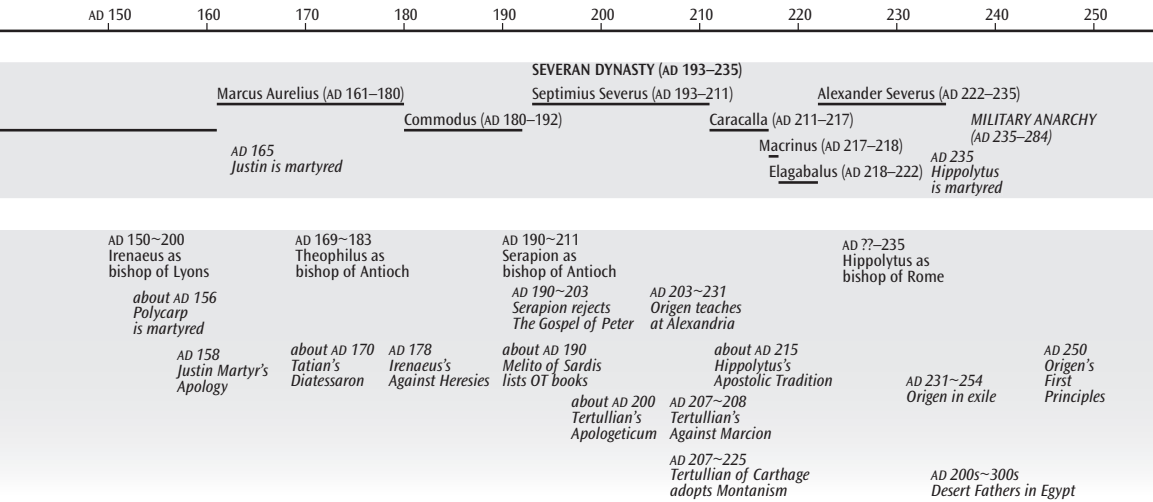
important as determining which texts were and were not "inspired by God" (2 Tim 3:16). As a result, writers from the first to early second century would refer to a particular writing as "Scripture" without wondering whether it was "canonical."

There was not very much doubt about the divine inspiration of the words and deeds of Jesus as accounted in the four Gospels, nor of many of the apostolic letters. But by the middle of the second century there were a growing number of other texts that were regarded by many churches as inspired, such as *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 1 *Clement*, and a puzzling apocalyptic work known as *The Shepherd of Hermas* that enjoyed widespread acceptance. These and other writings appear in some collections of biblical books by the fourth century, but none were read as Scripture in every church.

There was no single principle at work in the canonization process. There was no council of Christian leaders that met and decided which books should be in the Bible. Multiple issues were involved. Certainly, apostolic authorship and the antiquity of a text were important. Authors who were closer to the life of Jesus were believed to have a more reliable account than later writers. But the resemblance of a book's theological content to the church's canon of faith was undoubtedly more important than any other factor.

THE CANONIZATION OF NT TEXTS

The concept of possessing an authoritative canon emerged gradually out of the worship and life of the early churches. With regard to Christian texts, the primary issue on the minds of early believers was inspiration, not canonization. Christian interests followed the Jewish attitude toward the Hebrew Bible. Creating an exclusive list of authoritative books wasn't as



REFERENCE HELPS

Table of Ancient Weights, Measures, and Coins

WEIGHTS	talent (60 minas)	75 pounds	34 kilograms	
	mina (50 shekels)	1.25 pounds	600 grams	
	shekel	0.4 ounces	11.4 grams	
	pim (2/3 shekel)	0.25 ounces	8 grams	
	beka (1/2 shekel)	0.2 ounces	5.7 grams	
	gerah (1/20 shekel)	0.02 ounces	0.6 grams	
	litra	12 ounces	327 grams	
LENGTHS	long cubit	21 inches	53 centimeters	
	cubit	18 inches	45 centimeters	
	span	9 inches	23 centimeters	
	handbreadth	3 inches	8 centimeters	
	fathom	6 feet	1.8 meters	
	rod	10.5 feet	3.2 meters	
	stadion	205 yards	187 meters	
CAPACITIES	Dry Measures			
	cor/homer (10 ephahs)	5 bushels	220 liters	
	letheh (5 ephahs)	2.5 bushels	110 liters	
	ephah	0.5 bushels (20 quarts)	22 liters	
	seah (1/3 ephah)	6.6 quarts	7.3 liters	
	omer (1/10 ephah)	2 quarts	2.2 liters	
	cab (1/2 omer)	1 quart	1.1 liters	
	Liquid Measures			
	bath	5.5 gallons	21 liters	
	hin (1/6 bath)	0.9 gallons	3.5 liters	
	log (1/72 bath)	0.3 quarts	0.3 liters	
	COINS	Roman		
denarius		1 day's wages (for a laborer)		
as		1/16 denarius		
quadrans		1/64 denarius		
Greek				
drachma		~1 denarius		
didrachma		2 drachmas		
stater		4 drachmas		
Jewish				
lepton		1/2 quadrans		

Hebrew and Greek Word Studies

The *NLT Study Bible* includes over 200 Hebrew and Greek word studies throughout the Bible text. These word studies open a window to the original languages of the Bible.

At various places throughout the Bible text, a superscript letter appears at the front of an English word. This letter indicates that there is a word study on that word or phrase. The cross-reference column includes a transliteration of the underlying Hebrew or Greek word or phrase, along with the Strong's number(s) in parentheses. Following the transliteration and Strong's number, the location is given for the next reference in that word chain. If you follow the reference chain, eventually you will read through all of the marked instances of that word or group of words in the entire study Bible. As you follow the entire word chain, note each context in which the word occurs and how it has been translated. You will get a good feel for the range of uses that each word can have.

Here, we have listed and briefly defined all of the words that are included in the Hebrew and Greek word-study chains.

HEBREW AND GREEK WORD STUDIES

Because the Bible was originally written in ancient languages that are quite different from our own, the Hebrew and Greek words of the original text are often seen as strange and wonderful. Sometimes, Greek and Hebrew words are portrayed as though they are somehow a special or “divine” language containing more significant meaning than normal languages like English. In truth, biblical Greek and Hebrew are normal human languages, with words that are similar to the words of any language.

Words are complex animals. Consider, for example, the word *animals* in the previous sentence. In most contexts, that word conjures up images of wildlife. In this particular instance, however, it means something quite different. Words have a dynamic relationship to meaning, neither confined to a dictionary entry nor free to mean anything at all. Few readers whose mother tongue is English would have misunderstood the meaning of the sentence, “Words are complex animals,” but it could certainly cause confusion for a reader whose knowledge of English is minimal.

When confronted with a word from any foreign language, especially an ancient one like the Hebrew or Greek of the Bible, misunderstandings are common. Here is how to avoid some of the common mistakes that are made in studying words in the biblical languages:

- **Don't assume a word means more than it does.** When faced with the range of meanings a given word can have, sometimes interpreters are tempted to think that *every* instance of that word contains *all* of the possible meanings. While it is true that sometimes a writer will purposefully use a word to mean more than one thing, it is not common. Normally, a word has *one* meaning in a given context. For instance, not every instance of the Greek *sarx* (4561) has to do with the sin nature. An important part of original-language Bible study is to discern which meaning a term probably has in a given context.
- **Words cannot be understood by their roots.** Many words share common roots, but this does not necessarily mean their meanings are related. The meaning of a word is related to how it is used in the language, not where it came from. The Greek *ekklesia* (1577) comes from two words that mean “to call” (*kaleō*) and “out of” (*ek*). This does not mean that *ekklesia* means “called out of,” any more than the English word *goodbye* means “it's good that you're leaving” or “good riddance!” It is important to understand the meaning of the word from its usage rather than its roots.
- **Synonyms are sometimes interchangeable, sometimes not.** Many words are synonyms, having very similar meanings in certain contexts. An example in English is

“choose” and “select.” In many cases, the difference is negligible, and a writer could choose between them without changing the meaning at all. But in some contexts the selection is meaningful. In this tool, we sometimes string synonyms together in a single chain, but that does not mean they are completely interchangeable. Each word must be considered on its own terms in each context.

- **Appreciate the difference between words and concepts.** Words are only tools to communicate meaning, so any one word will never be sufficient to get a complete picture of an important concept. If you want to understand the concept of “truth” in the Bible, Hebrew *’emeth* (0571) is a good place to start; but to limit study to words alone will miss important components of the biblical picture of truth. Each concept must be studied as whole, going beyond the study of words.

HEBREW WORD STUDIES

’abal (0056): *mourn*. This verb expresses an attitude of deep sorrow. Often mourning is accompanied by weeping and other physical manifestations of grief or more formal mourning rites.

SEE Gen 37:34; Exod 33:4; 1 Sam 6:19; 2 Sam 13:37; 1 Chr 7:22; Ezra 10:6; Neh 1:4; Isa 3:26; 66:10; Dan 10:2; Amos 9:5

’adonay Yahweh (0136, 3068): *Sovereign LORD*. A compound name and title of God that combines his covenant name, *Yahweh*, with the title *’adonay* (“my lord, my master”). This title occurs over 280 times in the OT and emphasizes God’s power and authority as well as his gracious relationship with his people.

SEE Gen 15:2; Deut 3:24; Josh 7:7; Judg 6:22; 2 Sam 7:18; Ps 73:28; Isa 61:1; Ezek 2:4; Amos 3:7; Hab 3:19; Zeph 1:7

’iwweleth (0200): *foolishness*. This noun is often presented as the opposite of wisdom. It indicates a lack of wisdom and understanding, with overtones of moral deficiency rather than simply intellectual failure.

SEE Ps 69:5; Prov 12:23; 14:17, 24; 15:14, 21; 17:12; 22:15; 26:4-5

’el (0410), **’elohim** (0430): *God*. These two related words are both used to refer to God. Similar to the English word *god*, these words are also used to refer to deity generally (i.e., a god) or other supernatural beings. They can be used to address God directly (“O God, hear my prayer”), as part of a description of God (“the living God,” “my God”), or in describing false gods (“the gods of the Egyptians”).

SEE Exod 3:6; Num 23:21; Josh 24:2; Ps 16:1; 17:6; 36:7; 40:17; 85:4, 8; Isa 42:5

’aman (0539): *believe*. This verb denotes trust. It often involves the active decision to believe in the veracity or trustworthiness of an idea or person but can also signify an ongoing state of belief and the action associated with that faith. The word is often used to refer to faith in God and his promises, though not exclusively.

SEE Gen 15:6; 45:26; Exod 14:31; Num 14:11; Ps 106:12; 119:66; Prov 14:15; Isa 28:16; 53:1; Jon 3:5

’amen (0543): *amen, let it be so*. This word is an affirmation of the truth of what has been said. It can express either the firm belief that something is true (“Yes!”) or the desire that something will happen (“let it be so”). It is also used as a formulaic response in praising God, sometimes doubled for emphasis.

SEE Num 5:22; Deut 27:15; 1 Kgs 1:36; 1 Chr 16:36; Neh 5:13; 8:6; Ps 41:13; Isa 65:16; Jer 11:5

’emeth (0571): *truth, faithfulness*. This word has many nuances around the central idea of truth. It can represent the concept of truth as opposed to falsehood; it can refer to the faithfulness or reliability of a person or standard. It is also used in phrases such as “the true God.”

SEE Exod 34:6; Ps 25:5; 26:3; 86:11; 119:142, 151, 160; Prov 16:6; Isa 38:3; Dan 10:21

’ap (0639): *anger*. This word denotes anger or extreme displeasure toward a person, group, or state of affairs. It is morally neutral, as it is used both for foolish, selfish anger and for righteous anger at injustice. It also means “nose, nostrils”; the flaring of nostrils and reddening of the nose when a person is angry led to the usage of this word to denote anger.

SEE Num 32:13; Deut 7:4; Judg 6:39; 2 Sam 12:5; 2 Kgs 23:26; Ps 6:1; Prov 27:4; 29:8, 22; Isa 12:1; Hab 3:8

’arbeh (0697): *locust*. This word refers to a desert migratory locust in the mature wing stage. These insects can swarm in vast, inordinate numbers, covering scores of square miles and even blotting out broad daylight.

SEE Exod 10:4, 12; Lev 11:22; Deut 28:38; Judg 6:5; 1 Kgs 8:37; Ps 78:46; Prov 30:27; Joel 1:4; 2:25; Nah 3:15

’aron (0727): *ark, chest*. This noun refers to a container for objects. It is generally a rectangular box. Its most common usage is for the Ark of the Covenant, but it can also refer to a coffin or a contribution chest. It is not the same word used for Noah’s large boat, even though it is traditionally called an “ark” in English.

SEE Gen 50:26; Exod 25:22; 40:20; Num 10:33; 1 Sam 3:3; 2 Sam 6:6; 1 Kgs 8:1; 2 Kgs 12:9; 1 Chr 28:2; Ps 132:8; Jer 3:16

’arek ’appayim (0750, 0639): *slow to anger*. Rendered literally, this idiom would be “long of nose,” but it means the attitude or emotion of patience. It pertains to not being easily or quickly angered in a potentially hostile situation. It is often used to describe a person of high moral quality and is a repeated component of God’s character. Cp. **’ap** (0639).

SEE Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Prov 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:2; Nah 1:3

’erets (0776): *earth, land*. This noun refers to any solid geographic area as contrasted to the sky or bodies of water. It is used in several idiomatic ways as well, such as in the phrase “the heavens and earth,” meaning “the entire created order.” Sometimes the word can refer specifically to a region or territory of the world, as in “the land” promised to Abraham and his descendants.

SEE Gen 1:1; 9:11; 12:1; 13:17; 15:18; 28:13; Num 13:27; Deut 4:39; Josh 1:15; 23:14, 16; Ps 24:1; 47:2; 97:5; Isa 65:17; 66:22

’ashrey (0835): *happy, blessed*. This word points to a heightened state or condition of joy and rejoicing, implying very favorable circumstances and enjoyment. It may be implied that it is a state to be envied or highly desired. This “blessed” is somewhat different from divine favor (a blessing).

SEE Job 5:17; Ps 1:1; 32:1; 34:8; 41:1; 84:5, 12; 94:12; 106:3; Prov 3:13; 14:21; 28:14; Isa 30:18

bakhar (0977): *choose*. This verb denotes making a distinguishing selection, often between items of similar features or qualities. It can refer to human or divine choices. Some contexts have the same general meaning but a different focus; such “choice” is based on a relationship or special loving concern.

SEE Exod 18:25; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 21:5; 1 Sam 2:28; 10:24; 17:40; 1 Chr 28:5; Ps 78:68; 135:4; Isa 40:20; 43:10

beliya’al (1100): *worthlessness, wickedness*. This noun can mean “worthless,” referring to an object that is ruined or devastated. Another meaning is a person who is actively evil, “worthless” in relation to the standard of right living. It is often used in phrases

ing prayer. It is a humble request, often of a servant to a master, with no particular claim that the request must be fulfilled.

SEE 1 Kgs 8:28, 38, 45, 54; 9:3; Pss 6:9; 55:1; 119:170; Jer 36:7; Dan 9:20

tamim (8549): *complete, blameless*. This word pertains to something that is completely intact, free from blemishes or defects. Often the focus is on moral goodness, being guiltless and thus not liable for

sin. It also often describes an animal that is suitable for sacrifice.

SEE Gen 6:9; 17:1; Exod 12:5; Deut 32:4; 2 Sam 22:24; Job 12:4; Pss 15:2; 18:25; 19:7; 119:1, 80; Prov 11:20; 28:10

GREEK WORD STUDIES

abba patēr (0005, 3962): *Abba, father*. This phrase combines two words that both mean "father." *Abba* is a transliteration of an Aramaic term of endearment used by children to address their father ("Daddy"). *Patēr* is the standard Greek word to refer to a father. This phrase is used in the NT only as a title for God, with a focus on God's role as our caregiver and authority.

SEE Mark 14:36; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6

agathōsunē (0019): *goodness, generosity*. This noun refers to a general positive moral quality. There is an implication of good actions, such as generosity, springing from this moral quality. See also **aretē** (0703).

SEE Rom 15:14; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9; 2 Thes 1:11

agapē (0026): *love*. This noun means the attitude or emotion of deep affection for another person, with a focus on loving action and not feelings alone. This love is extolled as a cardinal virtue. The word *agapē* can also refer to a common meal connected to worship for early Christians. SEE John 5:42; 15:9, 13; Rom 5:5; 8:39; 13:10; 14:15; 1 Cor 8:1; 13:1; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2, 15; Phil 1:9; Col 3:14; 1 Thes 3:12; Phlm 1:5; 1 Pet 4:8; 1 Jn 4:7; Jude 1:12; Rev 2:4

angelos (0032): *messenger, angel*. This noun refers to someone who serves as an envoy, often with a message to deliver. While it can refer to a human messenger, in the NT it usually refers to angels, heavenly beings created by God to serve him and his creation. Some angels are fallen and are also known as "demons."

SEE Matt 4:11; 22:30; 25:41; 26:53; 28:2; Mark 8:38; Luke 16:22; 24:23; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7; 27:23; 1 Cor 4:9; 6:3; 11:10; Col 2:18; Heb 1:4; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 1:20

hagiasmos (0038): *sanctification*. This noun means dedication to God, both in faithfulness to him and in active service. There is a sense of process toward godliness, with *hagiasmos* being the goal and the result, which is possible through the work of Jesus and his Spirit.

SEE Rom 6:19, 22; 1 Cor 1:30; 1 Thes 4:3, 4, 7; 2 Thes 2:13; 1 Tim 2:15; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:2

hadēs (0086), **geenna** (1067): *grave, place of the dead, hell*. Similar to the Hebrew *she'ol* (7585), *hadēs* is a place below the surface of the earth, the habitation of the dead for both the righteous and unrighteous. *Geenna* is a more specific Aramaic

term that pictures this place as one of judgment and punishment, i.e., hell. SEE Matt 5:22, 29; 11:23; 16:18; 18:9; 23:33; Mark 9:43; Luke 12:5; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Jas 3:6; Rev 1:18; 20:13, 14

aleiphō (0218): *anoint*. This verb means applying oil or something similar onto someone, usually to mark dedication of the person to a purpose or as an act of devotion. Additionally, it is a welcoming act of hospitality for a guest and a folk remedy for illness.

SEE Matt 6:17; Mark 6:13; Luke 7:38, 46; John 12:3; Jas 5:14

hamartia (0266): *sin*. This noun is a general term for sin, any action or attitude that is contrary to the will of God and the revealed standards of God.

SEE Matt 26:28; Luke 1:77; 3:3; Rom 3:9; 4:7; 5:12; 6:1; 7:8; 8:2; 14:23; 1 Cor 15:56; Eph 2:1; 1 Tim 5:22; Heb 9:26; 12:1; Jas 1:5; 5:15; 1 Jn 1:9

amnos (0286): *lamb*. This noun refers to a lamb, a small sheep. In the NT this word figuratively refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God, an acceptable sacrifice without blemish or defect.

SEE John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet 1:19

ampelos (0288): *vine*. This noun refers to a fruit-bearing vine, particularly a grapevine, with the associated meanings of life and new growth. Jesus refers to himself as the true vine.

SEE Matt 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18; John 15:1, 5; Jas 3:12

anagennaō (0313), **anōthen gennaō** (0509, 1080): *born again, born from above*. These two related concepts mean to be "born again," signifying a change from one state of being into another. Rather than a physical change, a person's spirit is renewed or comes alive by the work of the Holy Spirit. The phrase *anōthen gennaō* is ambiguous and could mean either "born again" or "born from above."

SEE John 3:3, 7, 31; 1 Pet 1:3, 23

anastasis (0386): *resurrection*. This noun means bodily resurrection to life after having been dead. It usually refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the future resurrection of which Jesus is the firstfruits.

SEE Matt 22:28; Mark 12:18; John 5:29; 11:24; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 17:32; 1 Cor 15:12; Phil 3:10; Heb 11:35; 1 Pet 1:3; Rev 20:5

antilutron (0487): See **lutron** (3083)

antichristos (0500): See **pseudochristos** (5580)

anōthen gennaō (0509, 1080): See **anagennaō** (0313)

haplotēs (0572): *generosity, sincerity*. This noun means the positive moral quality of being genuine and authentic as an expression of singularity in purpose and motivation. It can also mean giving to another in a free-handed manner, with the implication that the giving is sincere and not with duplicitous purposes.

SEE Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:11, 13; 11:3; Eph 6:5; Col 3:22

apokalupsis (0602): *revelation*. This noun means a state or action of making something known, usually with the implication that it had been hidden or unknown. It is also the Greek title of the book of Revelation.

SEE Luke 2:32; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:7; 14:6, 26; 2 Cor 12:1, 7; Gal 1:12; Eph 1:17; 3:3; 1 Pet 1:13; 4:13; Rev 1:1

apologeomai (0626), **apologia** (0627): *defense*. This verb (*apologeomai*) and its cognate noun (*apologia*) mean to respond to accusation or blame by giving a rational, logical defense. To defend with an *apologia* is not to give excuses; it is to give reasons.

SEE Acts 19:33; 22:1; 24:10; 25:8, 16; 26:1; Phil 1:7, 16; 1 Pet 3:15

apolutrōsis (0629): *redemption*. This noun refers to buying the freedom of a slave or captive by paying a ransom. In the NT, it is used figuratively of the results of Christ's work, releasing people from the power of sin and death.

SEE Luke 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; 11:35

apostolos (0652), **apostolē** (0651): *apostle*. This noun means a person who functions as a special messenger. In the NT it usually refers to those personally commissioned by Jesus, sent out for disciple-making in all nations. It is also used of those who are commissioned by the church as its messengers or representatives. The office of being an apostle is called "an apostleship" (*apostole*).

SEE Matt 10:2; Acts 1:25; 2:42; 15:2; 1 Cor 9:1; 12:28; 15:7; 2 Cor 12:11; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Pet 3:2; Rev 2:2

aretē (0703): *exceptional virtue, miracle*. This noun means the moral and ethical quality of goodness, with an emphasis on moral excellence. It is conceptually related to **agathōsunē** (0019), only more specific. This word can also mean a manifestation of the power of God.

SEE Phil 4:8; 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 1:3, 5

Features Index

A

Aaron

PROFILE, Exod 4:14-17, 27-31	133
DIAGRAM, Aaron's Family	133

Abiathar

PROFILE, 1 Sam 22:20-23	505
-------------------------	-----

Abishai

PROFILE, 2 Sam 16:9-12	547
------------------------	-----

Abner

PROFILE, 2 Sam 3:6-39	525
-----------------------	-----

Abraham

DIAGRAM, Terah's Family	43
PROFILE, Gen 11:26–25:11	46
CHART, Abraham's Life	47
THEME, God's Covenant with Abraham	51

Abraham to Joshua

TIMELINE	118
----------	-----

Abram in Canaan

MAP, Gen 12:6–25:11	49
---------------------	----

Abram's Journey to Canaan

MAP, Gen 12:1-9	45
-----------------	----

Absalom and David

MAP, 2 Sam 13:23–18:18	543
------------------------	-----

Acts, The Book of

INTRODUCTION	1820
MAP, Key Places in Acts	1820
TIMELINE	1821

Adam

PROFILE, Gen 2:4–3:24	27
-----------------------	----

Afterlife

THEME, Job 19:25-27	877
---------------------	-----

After the Apostles

ARTICLE	2201
TIMELINE	2202

Ahab

PROFILE, 1 Kgs 16:29–22:53	610
----------------------------	-----

Ahaz

PROFILE, 2 Kgs 15:38–16:20	659
----------------------------	-----

Ahaz's Reign in Judah, 732–716 BC

MAP, 2 Chr 28:1-27	767
--------------------	-----

Alliance of Jehoshaphat and Ahab

DIAGRAM, 2 Chr 21:6; 22:2	759
---------------------------	-----

Allotment of the Land

MAP, Josh 13:1–21:45	397
----------------------	-----

Altar of Burnt Offering

ILLUSTRATION, Exod 27:1-8; 38:1-7	173
-----------------------------------	-----

Altars

THEME, Gen 35:1-15	91
--------------------	----

Altars of the Patriarchs

ILLUSTRATION, Exod 35:1-15	91
----------------------------	----

Amos, The Book of

INTRODUCTION	1450
MAP, Israel & Judah, around 753 BC	1450
TIMELINE	1451

Ancient Israel Overview Map

MAP, NLTSB Introduction	A00
-------------------------	-----

Ancient Law Codes

THEME, Exod 20:1–23:33	163
------------------------	-----

Ancient Near East Overview Map

MAP, NLTSB Introduction	A00
-------------------------	-----

Ancient Near East, 1050–550 BC

MAP, 2 Chronicles Introduction	726
--------------------------------	-----

Ancient Near East, about 2100 BC

MAP, Genesis Introduction	14
---------------------------	----

Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Artifacts

CHART, OT Introduction	8
------------------------	---

Angels

THEME, Acts 27:23-24	1833
----------------------	------

Anger

THEME, Prov 14:29	1047
-------------------	------

Annas and Caiaphas

PROFILE, John 18:13-14, 19-24, 28	1808
-----------------------------------	------

Antichrist

THEME, Rev 13:11	2185
------------------	------

Apollos

PROFILE, Acts 18:24–19:1	1867
--------------------------	------

Apostasy and Renewal

THEME, 2 Chr 28:1–31:21	769
-------------------------	-----

Apostasy, Consequences

THEME, Heb 2:1-4	2085
------------------	------

Apostolic Age

ARTICLE	1818
TIMELINE	1818

Apostolic Service

THEME, 2 Cor 10:12-18	1971
-----------------------	------

Ark in Philistia

MAP, 1 Sam 4:1-11; 5:1-7:2	475
----------------------------	-----

Ark of the Covenant
ILLUSTRATION, Exod 25:10-22; 37:1-9 170
THEME, 1 Sam 4:3-11 474

Arnon Gorge
MAP, Num 21:13-15 287

Asa
PROFILE, 2 Chr 14:1–16:14 748

Asa's Reign in Judah, 910–869 BC
MAP, 2 Chr 14:1–16:14 749

The Assyrian Empire, 745–612 BC
MAP, 2 Kgs 15:19–19:37 657

Assyria at the Doorstep
MAP, Isa 10:28-34 1127

Assyrian Invasion, 733–732 BC
MAP, Mic 1:10-15 1485

Atonement
THEME, Lev 16:1-34 223

B

Babylonian Empire, 605–539 BC
MAP, Dan 1:1–5:31 1388

Babylonian Empire, 610–580 BC
MAP, 2 Kgs 24:1–25:30 679

Babylonian Invasions of Judah, 605–586 BC
MAP, 2 Kgs 24:1–25:21 681

Balaam
PROFILE, Num 22:1–25:18 288

Balaam Blesses Israel
MAP, Num 22:21-41 289

Baptism
THEME, Acts 2:38, 41 1828

Barak Defeats Sisera at Mount Tabor
MAP, Judg 4:1–5:31 427

Barnabas
PROFILE, Acts 4:36-37 1833

Barnabas and Paul's First Missionary Journey, ad 47~48
MAP, Acts 13:4–14:28 1853

Baruch the Scribe
PROFILE, Jer 45:1-5 1283

Basis of God's Judgment
THEME, Jer 5:1-9 1219

Bathsheba
PROFILE, 2 Sam 11:1–12:25 539

Battle at Siddim Valley
MAP, Gen 14:1-24 48

Beauty in Nature
THEME, Song 7:10-13 1099

Believing
THEME, John 3:10-18 1775

Belonging to Christ
THEME, 1 Cor 7:20-24 1937

Biblical Law
THEME, Deut 4:1-2 323

Biblical Marriage
THEME, Gen 2:18-25 24

Blessing
THEME, Gen 46:1–50:26 113

Blessings of Jesus
THEME, Matt 5:3-12 1585

Body of Christ, One
THEME, Eph 2:14–3:13 2001

Boundaries of the Promised Land
MAP, Num 34:1-15 309

Bread from Heaven
THEME, Num 11:1-15 267

Bribes
THEME, Prov 17:8, 23 1051

Broken Covenant
THEME, Jer 2:1–3:10 1213

Bronze Snake
THEME, Num 21:4-9 286

Bronze Washbasin
ILLUSTRATION, Exod 30:17-21; 38:8 177

C

Caleb
PROFILE, Josh 14:6-15 399

Calendars
CHART, Israel's Annual Calendar 145

Calling up the Dead
THEME, 1 Sam 28:1-25 512

Canon of the Bible
CHART, The Hebrew OT 4
CHART, The English OT 5
CHART, The NT Canon 1558

Celebration
THEME, 2 Sam 6:1-15 530

Central Sanctuary
THEME, Deut 12:4-7 335

Centrality of God's Word
THEME, Neh 8:1–10:39 823

Charismatic, Inspired Leadership
THEME, Judg 2:16-19 423

Children and Parents
THEME, Prov 22:6, 15 1057

Choice of Life or Death
THEME, Jer 21:8-9 1245

Christian Giving
THEME, 2 Cor 8:1–9:15 1967

Christian Joy
THEME, Phil 3:1; 4:4 2017

Chronicles, The First Book of
INTRODUCTION 682

Notes Index

A

Aaron

death of . . . *Num* 33:38-39
 descendants of . . . *Exod* 6:20-25
 family line as priests . . . *Lev* 1:5;
Num 3:1-4
 roles of . . . *Exod* 4:14-17; 32:2-5, 21-25;
Lev 1:5; 8:1-36; 10:8-10; 16:6;
Num 20:24-26
 staff of . . . *Num* 17:4-11

Abaddon . . . *Job* 26:5-6; 31:12; *Prov* 15:11

abandonment by God . . . *Jer* 33:23-26;
Rom 1:24

Abba . . . *Mark* 14:35-36; *Rom* 8:15; *Gal* 4:6

Abednego (Azariah). See Azariah
 (Abednego)

Abel . . . *Gen* 4:2, 10; *Heb* 11:4

Abel-beth-maacah . . . 2 *Sam* 20:14;
 2 *Chr* 16:4

Abel-meholah . . . 1 *Kgs* 19:15-17

Abiathar . . . 1 *Sam* 22:20; 2 *Sam* 20:25;
 1 *Kgs* 1:7; 2:26-27

Abigail . . . 1 *Sam* 25:3, 26; 2 *Sam* 17:25

Abihu . . . *Lev* 10:1-20

Abijah, the priest . . . 1 *Chr* 24:7-18

Abijam (Abijah), king of Judah . . .
 2 *Chr* 11:18-22

abilities as gifts from God . . . *Exod* 4:11;
 7:1-7; *Rom* 12:3

Abimelech and Abraham . . .
Gen 20:2-10, 14-16; 21:22-23;
 26:1, 6-11

Abimelech and Isaac . . . *Gen* 26:1, 6-11

Abimelech, Philistine king . . .
 1 *Sam* 21:12-13

Abimelech, son of Gideon . . . *Judg* 9:1-57

Abiram . . . *Deut* 11:6

Abishai . . . 1 *Sam* 26:6; 2 *Sam* 2:18; 16:9;
 19:21-22; 21:17; 23:18-23

Abner . . . 1 *Sam* 20:25; 2 *Sam* 2:20-3:1;
 3:7-12, 15, 19-34; 4:1

Abraham
 call of . . . *Gen* 11:28; 12:1-9
 character of . . . *Gen* 12:4-5; 18:22-33
 covenant of God with . . . *Gen* 12:1-9;
 15:1-21; 22:15-19; *Pss* 105:1-45;
 106:40-46
 death and burial of . . . *Gen* 23:9; 25:7-8
 deception and . . . *Gen* 12:10-20;
 20:11-13

faith of . . . *Gen* 12:1, 4-9; 13:14-17;
Heb 11:8-12, 17-19
 family faith . . . *Heb* 11:13-16
 Isaac and . . . *Gen* 22:1-5, 9-19; 24:1-9
 Keturah and . . . *Gen* 25:1, 3-6
 Lot and . . . *Gen* 13:8-13; 18:16-33
 Melchizedek and . . . *Heb* 7:2-8
 name change of . . . *Gen* 17:4-5
 Promised Land, purchase in . . .
Gen 23:1-20
 promises of God to . . . *Gal* 3:16-18;
Rev 7:9

as prophet of the nation . . . *Ps* 105:15
 worship of true God by . . . *Gen* 13:1-7

Abshalom . . . 2 *Sam* 11:3; 13:1; 13:20-14:16;
 14:21-15:1; 15:5-8, 19; 16:8, 16, 19;
 16:21-17:14; 18:5-18, 28-33

abundance, source of . . . *Ps* 78:23-25

Acacia Grove . . . *Num* 25:1; *Josh* 2:1; 3:1;
Mic 6:4-5

acceptance and faith . . . *Job* 2:10

acceptance by God, assurance of . . .
 1 *Jn* 4:17

Achaia . . . *Rom* 15:26

Achaicus . . . 1 *Cor* 16:17

Achan . . . *Josh* 7; 22:20; 1 *Chr* 2:7

achievements
 fear of God vs. . . . *Ps* 147:7-11
 as gifts from God . . . *Ps* 147:10-11
 importance of . . . *Eccl* 1:11-2:8; 2:11
 pride and . . . *Gal* 6:1
 relationships more important than . . .
Ps 88:8-12

Achish, Philistine king . . . 1 *Sam* 21:12-13;
 27:2, 10; 29:3, 6; *Ps* 56:TITLE

Achor, Valley of . . . *Isa* 65:10

acrostics . . . *Pss* 9-10; 25; 34; 37; 38; 103;
 111; 112; 119; 145; *Prov* 31:10-31;
Lam 1:1-22; 2:1-22; 3:1-66; 4:1-22

activism vs. pacifism . . . *Matt* 5:9

Acts, book of
 messages and themes of . . .
Acts 2:32-36; 6:7; 28:31

Aczib . . . *Mic* 1:14

Adad-nirari III, king of Assyria . . .
 2 *Kgs* 12:17; 13:4-5, 24-25

Adam
 creation and . . . *Gen* 2:7, 18-23
 the Fall and . . . *Gen* 3:6
 as representative of humanity . . .
Rom 5:12-17
 as son of God . . . *Luke* 3:38

Admah . . . *Hos* 11:8

administrative districts of Israel under
 Solomon . . . 1 *Kgs* 4:7-19

Adonai ('adonay/adoni). See God,
 names of

Adoni-zedek . . . *Josh* 10:1

Adonijah . . . 1 *Kgs* 1:5-6, 11-14, 42-53;
 2:13-15, 22-25

Adoniram . . . 1 *Kgs* 4:6; 12:18

adoption
 custom of heirs through . . . *Gen* 16:1-3
 of David's dynasty by God . . . *Pss* 2:7-9;
 110:1
 as God's child . . . *Zech* 8:8; *Rom* 8:15, 23;
Eph 1:5; *Rev* 21:7

Adramyttium . . . *Acts* 27:2

Adriel . . . 2 *Sam* 21:8

Adullam . . . 1 *Sam* 22:1; 2 *Sam* 23:13

adultery
 believers and . . . 1 *Cor* 6:9; *Heb* 13:4
 defined . . . *Exod* 20:14
 divorce and . . . *Matt* 19:9; *Mark* 10:11-12
 idolatry as . . . *Jer* 5:7-8; 31:4
 Jesus Christ on . . . *Matt* 5:29-30
 laws and tests for . . . *Num* 5:11-31
 punishments for . . . *Ezek* 16:35-38;
 23:25-29
 regulations pertaining to . . .
Gen 38:24-26; *Lev* 18:20; *Jer* 3:1;
Matt 1:19; *John* 8:4-5
 ritual sex and . . . *Jer* 8:4-7; 13:27; 17:2;
 23:10
 spiritual . . . *Lev* 17:7; *Jer* 3:1-5; *Ezek* 23:4
 warnings against . . . *Prov* 5:15-18, 21-23;
 6:20-35
 wisdom and . . . *Prov* 2:17-19

advice and wisdom . . . *Prov* 15:22; 23:9;
 25:11-12; 28:26

Aeneas . . . *Acts* 9:32-43

affection . . . *Rom* 12:10

afterlife. See life after death

Agabus . . . *Acts* 11:29-30; 21:10-14; *Gal* 2:2

Agag . . . *Num* 24:7b-9; 1 *Sam* 15:8

age and adult responsibility . . .
Isa 7:15-16

age and wisdom . . . *Job* 15:9-10;
Prov 16:31; *Eccl* 12:1-7; *Jer* 26:17-19;
Luke 2:37

agents of God, David's dynasty as . . .
 1 *Kgs* 11:36

agriculture in biblical times . . . *Isa* 37:30;
Matt 3:12; *Luke* 8:5-8; 20:9

Agur . . . *Prov* 30:1-9

- Ahab, king of Israel**
 apostasy of . . . 1 Kgs 16:31-33
 Ben-hadad and . . . 1 Kgs 20:2-34;
 22:29-33
 character of . . . 1 Kgs 20:2-4, 7-9;
 20:42-21:4; 21:25-29; 22:34-36
 death of . . . 1 Kgs 22:34-36
 demise of line of . . . 2 Kgs 9:21-10:27
 disobedience of . . . 1 Kgs 20:35-43;
 2 Chr 18:15-26
 drought and . . . 1 Kgs 18:3-6
 Elijah and . . . 1 Kgs 22:37-38
 Jehoshaphat and . . . 1 Kgs 22:2-9, 43-44;
 2 Chr 17:1; 18:1-7
 Jezebel and . . . 1 Kgs 16:31-33
 Naboth and . . . 1 Kgs 21:2-10, 13-14,
 17-22
 palaces of . . . 1 Kgs 21:1; 22:39-40
 prophets and . . . 1 Kgs 20:35-43
 at Qarqar, battle of . . . 1 Kgs 22:1
 reign of . . . Mic 6:16
- Ahasuerus.** *See* Xerxes (Ahasuerus),
 father of Darius the Mede
- Ahava Canal** . . . Ezra 8:15
- Ahaz, king of Judah** . . . 2 Kgs 16:1-19;
 2 Chr 28:1-4, 22-25; Isa 7:1-25; 36:2;
 38:21-22
- Ahaziah (Jehoahaz), king of Judah** . . .
 2 Kgs 8:22, 25; 9:16, 27-28;
 2 Chr 22:7-9
- Ahaziah, king of Israel** . . . 1 Kgs 22:48-53;
 2 Kgs 1:1-13; 10:12-14; 2 Chr 22:2
- Ahijah, father of Baasha** . . .
 1 Kgs 15:27-29
- Ahijah, the priest** . . . 1 Sam 14:3
- Ahijah, the prophet** . . . 1 Kgs 11:29-36,
 38-39; 2 Chr 9:29
- Ahikam** . . . 2 Kgs 25:22; Jer 26:24; 40:7-12
- Ahimelech, the priest** . . . 2 Sam 8:15-18;
 1 Chr 24:3-6
- Ahinoam** . . . Josh 15:56; 1 Sam 14:50;
 25:43; 2 Sam 12:7-8
- Ahio** . . . 2 Sam 6:3-4
- Ahishar** . . . 1 Kgs 4:6
- Ahithophel** . . . 2 Sam 11:3; 15:12;
 17:1-14, 23
- Ahmose, pharaoh of Egypt** . . . Exod 2:10
- Ai, battle for** . . . Josh 7:2-9; 8:1-29
- Aijalon** . . . 1 Sam 14:31
- Akkadian language** . . . Deut 28:49
- alabaster** . . . Luke 7:37
- alcoholic drinks** . . . Lev 10:8-10;
 Num 6:3-4; Deut 14:26; Prov 20:1;
 23:29-35; 31:4-7
- Alexander of Ephesus** . . . 1 Tim 1:20;
 2 Tim 2:17; 4:14
- Alexander the Great** . . . Dan 8:21-22;
 11:3-45; Mark 7:24
- allegories** . . . Gal 4:21-31
- Almon-diblathaim** . . . Num 33:47
- almond tree** . . . Jer 1:11-12
- aloes** . . . John 19:39
- Alpha and Omega** . . . Rev 1:8
- alphabet** . . . Judg 8:13-17
 numerical values of . . . Rev 13:16-17
- altars**
 Ahaz and . . . 2 Kgs 16:10-16
 Amos and . . . Amos 9:1
 corners of . . . Jer 17:1
 David's era and . . . 2 Sam 15:32
 eastern tribes and . . . Josh 22:10-34
 in Egypt . . . Isa 19:19-20
 Elijah and . . . 1 Kgs 18:31-32
 first mention of . . . Gen 8:20
 Gibeon and . . . 1 Kgs 3:4
 Gideon and . . . Judg 6:24
 Israelite vs. Canaanite . . . Deut 27:5
 Jeroboam and . . . 2 Kgs 23:15-17
 Joshua and Mount Ebal . . . Josh 8:30-32
 pagan . . . Judg 2:2; 2 Kgs 21:3-5; 23:12
 patriarchs and . . . Gen 12:6-7; 26:23-25;
 33:18-20; 35:6-7
 Saul and . . . 1 Sam 14:35
 symbolism of . . . Ps 26:6
 Tabernacle . . . Exod 27:1-19; 30:1-10;
 Lev 4:7
 Temple . . . 1 Kgs 7:48-49; Ezra 3:3;
 Ezek 40:47; 43:13-27
- Amalek** . . . Exod 17:8
- Amalekites** . . . Exod 17:8-16; Num 24:7b-9;
 Deut 25:17-19; Judg 3:12-13;
 1 Sam 14:48-15:9; 27:8; 30:1-2, 13;
 Ps 83:7
- Amasa** . . . 2 Sam 19:13; 20:4-10
- Amaziah, king of Judah** . . . 2 Kgs 14:1-21,
 23; 2 Chr 25:1-6, 14-20; 26:3;
 Amos 7:11-17
- ambition** . . . Jas 3:14
- amen** . . . Deut 27:12-26; Neh 8:6;
 Ps 106:48; Jer 11:5; John 1:51;
 2 Cor 1:20; Rev 1:5b-6; 7:11-12
- Amen, the** . . . Rev 3:14
- Amittai** . . . Jon 1:1
- Ammon** . . . Gen 19:36-38; 1 Sam 11:1;
 Jer 25:21-22; 40:14; Ezek 25:3-14;
 Amos 1:13-14
- Ammonites** . . . Deut 2:19, 37; 23:3;
 Judg 3:12-13; 10:7-8, 17-18; 11:12-28;
 2 Sam 10:1-5; 12:31; 1 Chr 19:1-7, 9-13;
 Neh 13:1-14; Ps 83:6-7; Jer 49:1-6;
 Ezek 21:28-29; 25:3-7; Zeph 2:8
- Amnon** . . . 2 Sam 13:1-15, 21, 31
- Amon, deity** . . . Jer 46:25-26; Ezek 30:14
- Amon, king of Judah** . . .
 2 Kgs 21:19-22, 26; 2 Chr 33:21-24
- Amorites** . . . Num 21:13, 26-29; Deut 1:4;
 7:1; Josh 3:10; 10:5; 1 Sam 7:14;
 2 Sam 21:2; 2 Kgs 21:11; Isa 17:9;
 Ezek 16:44-45
- Amos, book of**
 setting of . . . Amos 1:1
 thematic verses in . . . Amos 4:12; 5:24
- Amos, the prophet**
 Amaziah and . . . Amos 7:11-17
 call to Israel for repentance . . .
 Amos 5:4, 10-16
 on corruption in priesthood . . .
 Amos 7:10-17
- judgment on Israel . . . Amos 2:6-16;
 3:1-5:17
 judgment on Judah . . . Amos 2:4-5
 judgments on nations . . . Amos 1:3-2:16
 life and ministry of . . . Amos 1:1; 7:14
 pronouncements of sorrow . . .
 Amos 5:18-6:14
 on restoration of David's kingdom . . .
 Amos 9:11-15
 visions of . . . Amos 7:1-8:14; 9:1-3, 11-15
- Amoz** . . . Isa 1:1
- Amphipolis** . . . Acts 17:1-3
- Amram, father of Moses** . . . Exod 6:16-25
- amulets** . . . Isa 3:17-25
- Anak** . . . Deut 1:28; Josh 14:12
- Anakites** . . . Judg 1:10
- "analogy of faith"** . . . Rom 12:6
- Ananias and Sapphira** . . . Acts 5:1-11
- Ananias, a believer** . . . Acts 9:10, 17
- Ananias, high priest** . . . Acts 23:2-5
- anathema** . . . Gal 1:8-9
- Anathoth** . . . Jer 10:20; 11:21-23
- anchor, symbolism of** . . . Heb 6:19-20
- ancient highways, symbolism of** . . .
 Jer 18:14-15
- Ancient One (Ancient of Days)** . . .
 Dan 7:9-10, 22; 10:13
- Andrew, the apostle** . . . Mark 1:16-20;
 3:16-18
- angels**
 as agents of judgment and salvation . . .
 Ps 35:6
 announcing Jesus Christ's birth . . .
 Luke 2:9-14
 appearance of . . . Luke 24:4
 archangels . . . Dan 10:13
 David and . . . 1 Chr 21:16-17
 of death . . . 1 Chr 21:16-17
 of destruction . . . Ezek 9:1-2, 4-6
 Elijah and . . . 1 Kgs 19:5-7
 fallen . . . Gen 6:1-2; Zech 5:9; 2 Pet 2:10;
 Jude 1:8
 first-century beliefs about . . . Col 2:18
 Gabriel . . . Dan 8:15-16; 9:20-27
 guiding people in ministry . . .
 Acts 5:19-20; 27:42-44
 heavenly court of . . . Gen 1:26; 11:7;
 Job 1:6-7
 in human form . . . Zech 5:9
 humans as . . . Luke 20:36
 Jesus Christ and . . . Matt 4:11;
 Heb 1:4-14; 2:7
 Joseph and . . . Matt 1:20
 killing of God's enemies and . . .
 2 Kgs 19:35
 Michael . . . Dan 10:21
 names of . . . Luke 1:19
 natural phenomena associated with . . .
 Heb 1:7
 protection under God's . . . 2 Kgs 6:16-17;
 Ps 34:8-14; Matt 24:31
 purity of . . . Job 15:15
 roles of . . . Isa 37:36
 as sons of God . . . 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6
 theophanies and . . . Gen 16:7; Exod 3:2;
 Josh 5:14; Judg 13:15-16; Ps 34:7

- visitations in OT by . . . *Gen* 18:2-8; 19:1-14; 22:11; 32:2; *Exod* 33:1-6; *Josh* 5:14; *Judg* 2:1-5; 6:11-32; 13:6-16
Zechariah and . . . *Luke* 1:19
- anger**
general references to . . . 2 *Kgs* 3:27; *Pss* 4:4; 37:8; *Prov* 22:24-25; 25:21-22; 27:4; *Eph* 4:26-27
of God . . . *Pss* 18:8; 86:15; 90; *Jer* 3:4-5; *Rom* 1:18; 1 *Thes* 5:9
- animals** . . . *Num* 22:28-31; *Pss* 8:7-8
- Anna, prophecy of** . . . *Luke* 2:36-38
- Annas, high priest** . . . *Matt* 26:3; 26:57-27:26; *Luke* 3:2; 22:54; *John* 18:12-14, 19-24
- Anointed One, the** . . . *Dan* 9:25; *Mark* 1:1
- anointed ones** . . . *Ps* 2:2, 9; *Isa* 45:1; *Mark* 1:1; *Acts* 4:26
- anointing with oil**
custom of . . . *Lev* 8:2; *Pss* 23:5; *Luke* 7:44-46
kings, priests and . . . *Lev* 4:3; 1 *Sam* 10:1; 1 *Kgs* 1:39; *Pss* 84:9; 133:2
purpose and symbolism of . . . *Gen* 28:18; *Exod* 29:7; 1 *Sam* 9:16; *Jer* 5:14
- answers from God, waiting for** . . . *Ps* 4:1
- anthropomorphism** . . . *Gen* 8:21; *Deut* 4:34; 8:2; 32:36-40; 1 *Kgs* 18:27
- anti-Semitism in NT** . . . 1 *Thes* 2:15; *Rev* 2:9
- antichrist** . . . *Dan* 9:27; *Mark* 13:14; 1 *Jn* 2:18; 2 *Jn* 1:7
- Antioch of Pisidia** . . . *Acts* 13:14, 42-49
- Antioch of Syria** . . . *Acts* 11:19-26
- Antioch of Syria, church in** . . . *Acts* 11:20-30; 13:1-3; 18:19-23; *Gal* 1:2
- Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), Seleucid king** . . . *Dan* 8:23-26; 9:24-27; 11:21-39; *Mark* 13:14; *John* 10:22; 2 *Thes* 2:4
- Antipatris** . . . *Acts* 23:31
- Antonia Fortress. See fortress of Antonia**
- Aphhek** . . . 1 *Sam* 4:1b; 5:1; 29:1; 1 *Kgs* 20:13-34; 2 *Kgs* 13:15-17
- aphrodisiacs** . . . *Ecll* 12:5; *Song* 2:5-6; 7:13
- apocalyptic literature** . . . *Ezek* 38:1-39:29; *Col* 1:26; *Rev* 1:1
- apocryphal gospels** . . . *Mark* 13:32
- Apollonia** . . . *Acts* 17:1-3
- Apollo** . . . *Acts* 18:24-19:7; 1 *Cor* 1:12; *Titus* 3:13
- apostasy**
of Israel and Judah . . . *Judg* 8:28; 10:6-16; 18:1-31; 2 *Kgs* 21:1-11
judgment on . . . *Isa* 66:17; *Heb* 6:4-8; 1 *Jn* 5:16
of kings . . . 1 *Kgs* 13:33-34; 14:22-24; 2 *Kgs* 14:24; 18:9-12; 2 *Chr* 11:13-17
as preceding day of the Lord . . . 2 *Thes* 2:1-12
themes of . . . *Judg* 8:33-35
warnings regarding . . . *Josh* 23:12-16; *Heb* 2:1-4
- apostles**
general references to . . . *Mark* 6:30; 1 *Cor* 1:1; *Gal* 1:1; *Eph* 2:20
Paul and Barnabas as . . . *Acts* 14:4 and prophets . . . *Matt* 5:12
- apostles, the twelve**
apostleship extended beyond . . . *Acts* 14:4
authority of . . . *Matt* 10:1-2, 7-8; *Mark* 6:7; *Luke* 10:9, 19-20
background of . . . *Acts* 4:13
basis for mission of . . . *Matt* 28:20
call of . . . *Matt* 4:18-22; *Mark* 1:16-20; 3:13-19; *Luke* 5:1-11, 27-32
central message of . . . *Acts* 2:14-36; 3:12-26; 10:43; 1 *Thes* 1:9-10
commissioning of . . . *Matt* 28:18-20; *Mark* 6:7-13; *Luke* 10:1-20; *John* 20:21-23
conflict among . . . *Matt* 18:1; 20:24; *Mark* 10:41
doubts of . . . *Matt* 28:17
empowerment by Spirit and . . . *Matt* 10:19-20
as friends of Jesus . . . *John* 15:14-16
Gentiles, ministry to . . . *Matt* 10:5
greed and . . . *Matt* 10:8-10
guidance by God of . . . *Acts* 1:23-26
healing abilities of . . . *Mark* 9:14-29; *Luke* 10:9; *Acts* 3:1-11
instructions not to fear opposition . . . *Matt* 10:2-4, 28-42
Matthias chosen to join . . . *Acts* 1:23-26
ministry of . . . *Acts* 8:14-17
(mis)understanding by . . . *Matt* 13:11; *Mark* 6:45-52; 8:4, 16-21; 9:10-11; 10:37-38, 41; *Luke* 9:45-50; 18:34; 24:13-34; *John* 4:32-34; 14:8; 16:25
Paul and . . . *Acts* 9:26-28; *Gal* 1:12-2:10
persecution of . . . *Matt* 5:10-11
qualifications and requirements for . . . *Acts* 1:21-22; 5:30-32
rejection of . . . *Matt* 10:23
replacement of Judas Iscariot . . . *Acts* 1:13-26
roles of . . . *Matt* 5:13-16; 10:2; *Luke* 9:1-6; 24:48; *Acts* 10:36-43
shaking dust from their feet . . . *Matt* 10:14; *Mark* 6:11; *Luke* 9:5
signs and wonders in ministry of . . . *Acts* 5:12-16
symbolism of number twelve . . . *Mark* 3:14-15; *Luke* 6:13; *Acts* 1:20-21
- apostolic doctrine** . . . 3 *Jn* 1:11
- apostolic witnesses** . . . *Acts* 10:36-43
- appearances vs. reality** . . . *Prov* 12:9; 13:7; 14:12-13, 18; 31:30-31
- Apphia** . . . *Phlm* 1:2
- apple trees** . . . *Song* 2:3, 5-6; 8:5
- Apries, pharaoh of Egypt** . . . 2 *Kgs* 24:18-20
- aqueducts** . . . 2 *Sam* 2:24; *Isa* 7:3
- Aquila and Priscilla** . . . *Acts* 18:2-3; 2 *Tim* 4:19
- Ar** . . . *Num* 21:14-15; *Deut* 2:9
- Arabah Valley** . . . *Deut* 1:1; 1 *Sam* 23:24
- Arabia** . . . *Isa* 21:11-17; *Jer* 25:23-26
- Arabs** . . . 2 *Kgs* 8:22; 2 *Chr* 17:10-11; 21:16-17; *Acts* 2:9-11
- Arad** . . . *Num* 21:1; *Josh* 15:21
- Aram** . . . *Num* 23:7-10; 2 *Sam* 8:6; 2 *Kgs* 5:2-3; 14:25; 1 *Chr* 19:9-19; *Jer* 49:23-27; *Zech* 9:1
- Aram-naharaim** . . . *Judg* 3:8; *Ps* 60:TITLE
- Aram-zobah** . . . *Ps* 60:TITLE
- Aramaic language** . . . 1 *Kgs* 16:34; 2 *Kgs* 18:26; *Ezra* 4:7; *Neh* 8:7-9; 13:23-24; *Isa* 36:11; *Jer* 10:11; *Dan* 2:4; *Matt* 23:24; *Mark* 5:41
- Arameans** . . . 2 *Sam* 8:5; 2 *Kgs* 6:23; 10:31-33
- Ararat (Urartu)** . . . *Jer* 51:27-28
- Araunah** . . . 1 *Chr* 21:26-22:1
- Arba** . . . *Judg* 1:10
- archaeology, biblical**
Babylon . . . *Jer* 50:11-16
evidence through . . . *Num* 21:1-22:1
- archangels** . . . *Dan* 10:13; *Jude* 1:9
- Archelaus** . . . *Matt* 2:19, 22; *Luke* 19:14
- Archippus** . . . *Col* 4:17; *Phlm* 1:2
- architect, God as** . . . *Prov* 8:30
- Aretas IV, king of the Nabataeans** . . . 2 *Cor* 11:32-33
- Argob** . . . *Deut* 3:4
- arguments** . . . *Prov* 17:14, 19; 18:17; 26:17, 20-21; *Phil* 2:14
- Ariel** . . . *Isa* 29:1-2
- Aristarchus** . . . *Acts* 27:2; *Col* 4:10; *Phlm* 1:24
- Aristobulus** . . . *Rom* 16:10
- ark, Noah's. See Noah's ark**
- Ark of the Covenant**
care and uses of . . . *Exod* 25:10-22; 1 *Sam* 14:18
David and . . . 2 *Sam* 6:17; 15:25
after the Exile . . . 2 *Chr* 5:9-10
God's blessings and . . . 1 *Chr* 14:1-7
human contact with . . . 1 *Sam* 6:19-20; 2 *Sam* 6:6-7
location of . . . *Exod* 25:22
Philistine possession and return of . . . 1 *Sam* 4:11; 5:1-6:17; *Jer* 7:12-15
sacredness of . . . 1 *Kgs* 9:24
significance of . . . *Exod* 25:10-22
specifications for . . . *Exod* 25:10-22; *Deut* 10:1
talisman, Israelite treatment as . . . 1 *Sam* 4:3, 10
Temple and, the . . . 1 *Kgs* 8:1-66
transport of . . . *Josh* 3:3; 2 *Sam* 6:3-15; 1 *Chr* 13:9-15:29; 16:1-43; 2 *Chr* 6:41-42
- armies of God** . . . *Isa* 1:9
- Armoni** . . . 2 *Sam* 21:8
- armor**
general . . . 1 *Kgs* 22:34-36; *Ps* 91:4
of faith and love . . . 1 *Thes* 5:8
of God . . . *Eph* 6:10-20
- armory of Jerusalem** . . . *Isa* 22:8
- Arnon River** . . . *Deut* 2:24; *Josh* 12:1
- Aroer** . . . *Num* 32:35-36; *Deut* 2:36; *Isa* 17:2; *Jer* 48:18-19

Arpad . . . 2 Kgs 18:32b-35; Isa 10:9; 36:19
 arrogance . . . Ps 131:1; Isa 2:5-4:1
 arrows, symbolism and uses of . . .
Job 6:3-4; 34:6; *Eph* 6:16
 Artaxerxes I, king of Persia . . .
Ezra 4:6-23; 7:15-16, 23; *Neh* 1:1, 11;
 2:2-5; 13:6; *Dan* 9:25
 Artemas . . . *Titus* 3:12
 Artemis, deity . . . *Acts* 19:23-41
 Asa, king of Judah . . . 1 Kgs 15:9-23;
 22:41-50; 2 Chr 15:8-17:1
 Asahel . . . 1 Sam 26:6; 2 Sam 2:18, 20-22;
 23:24
 Asaph . . . 1 Chr 6:39; 25:1-7; *Ezra* 2:41-42;
Neh 11:17; 12:46; Ps 73:TITLE
 asceticism . . . 1 Tim 6:17-18
 Ashdod . . . 1 Sam 5:1; 6:17; Isa 20:1-5;
Jer 25:19-20; *Amos* 1:8; *Zech* 9:5-6
 Ashdodites . . . *Neh* 4:7
 Asher, son of Jacob . . . *Gen* 49:20
 Asher, tribe of
 general references to . . . *Deut* 33:24
 territory of . . . *Josh* 17:7; 19:10-48
 Asherah . . . *Deut* 7:5; *Judg* 2:11-13; 3:7-11;
 6:25-32; 1 Kgs 14:15; 2 Kgs 13:6;
 2 Chr 15:16; Isa 17:8; *Jer* 2:23; 17:2;
Lam 1:2; *Ezek* 8:3-6; *Mic* 5:13-14
 ashes
 regulations pertaining to . . . 1 Kgs 13:3
 symbolism of . . . *Job* 13:12; 30:19
 Ashkelon . . . *Judg* 1:18; 1 Sam 6:17;
 2 Sam 1:20; *Jer* 25:19-20; *Amos* 1:8;
Zech 9:5-6
 Ashkenaz . . . *Jer* 51:27-28
 Ashpenaz . . . *Dan* 1:3, 9-13
 Ashtoreth . . . *Judg* 2:11-13; 1 Sam 7:3;
 1 Kgs 11:5; *Jer* 7:17-18; 44:17
 Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria . . .
 2 Kgs 23:29; *Ezra* 4:10; Isa 7:8; 19:4;
Nah 3:9-10
 Asia, province of . . . *Acts* 2:9-11; 16:6-7;
 1 Cor 16:19; 1 Pet 1:1; *Rev* 1:4
 assembly . . . *Josh* 8:35; Ps 22:25;
Heb 12:23
 Assos . . . *Acts* 20:13-15
 assurance
 divine manifestations and . . .
Mark 6:49-50
 of faith . . . *Heb* 11:1
 Immanuel and . . . Isa 7:14
 Assyria
 Ahab, Ben-hadad, and . . . 1 Kgs 20:34
 Ahaz and . . . Isa 7:17
 Babylonian conquest of . . .
Ezek 32:21-30
 boasts of . . . Isa 37:24-29
 destruction of Israel . . . *Mic* 5:5
 empire of . . . 2 Kgs 18:9-12; 23:29;
 Isa 21:11-12; *Nah* 1:12
 exile policies . . . *Ezek* 1:1
 God's use of . . . Isa 7:1-12:6; 13:5; 19:23
 Israel and . . . *Gen* 10:6-12; *Jer* 50:17

Judah and . . . 2 Kgs 21:1-2; Isa 1:7
 location of . . . Ps 83:8
 power of . . . 2 Kgs 18:19-22; 19:10-13;
Ezek 31:1-18
 prophecies of judgment on . . .
 Isa 8:9-10; 10:5-11:16; 14:24-27; 33:1
 at Qarqar, battle of . . . 1 Kgs 10:26
 weapons of . . . Isa 21:15
 Assyrians . . . *Deut* 28:50
 Astarte . . . *Jer* 44:17
 astrology . . . Isa 47:13; *Jer* 10:2-3; *Dan* 2:2;
Matt 2:1-2
 Ataroth . . . *Num* 32:3
 Athaliah, queen of Judah . . . 1 Kgs 22:2-4;
 2 Kgs 11:1-16; 2 Chr 22:2-4, 10-12;
Ezek 9:7
 Athens . . . *Acts* 17:16-17
 atonement
 Ark of the Covenant and . . . *Exod* 25:17
 blood and offerings for . . . *Gen* 9:4;
Lev 1:5; 14:19
 atonement cover . . . *Rom* 3:25
 Atroth-shophan . . . *Num* 32:35-36
 attitude of Christ . . . *Phil* 2:1-11
 authority
 general references to . . .
Ecd 10:5-7; 15-20; *Dan* 3:11;
 1 Pet 2:13-3:7
 of God . . . Isa 45:23; *Jer* 1:4-5
 of husbands . . . 1 Pet 2:13-3:7
 Aven . . . *Hos* 10:8; *Amos* 1:5
 avenger in Israelite law . . . *Deut* 19:6;
Josh 20:3
 Avvites . . . *Deut* 2:23
 awe . . . *Pss* 22:23; 33:8-11
 Azariah (Abednego) . . . *Dan* 1:1-21;
 3:12-25, 28, 30
 Azariah, high priest . . . 1 Kgs 4:2, 5
 Azariah, the prophet . . . 1 Kgs 15:11-13;
 2 Chr 15:1-7
 Azariah (Uzziah). See Uzziah (Azariah),
 king of Judah
 azazel . . . *Lev* 16:8
 Azekah . . . 1 Sam 17:1; *Jer* 34:6-7
 Azmon . . . *Num* 34:4

B

Baal

Ahab and . . . 2 Kgs 3:2
 Ahaziah and . . . 1 Kgs 22:51-53
 description of . . . *Num* 25:3; *Deut* 4:3;
Judg 6:25; Ps 68:4
 Elijah and . . . 1 Kgs 17:1-19:21
 Gideon and . . . *Judg* 6:11-32; 8:33-35
 God compared to . . . *Jer* 10:13; 51:15-16
 home of . . . *Job* 37:22
 Israel and Judah and . . . *Judg* 2:11-13;
 8:33-35; *Jer* 2:8, 23-27; 9:13-14;
 32:28-29; *Lam* 1:2; *Hos* 2:5
 Jehu and . . . 2 Kgs 10:18-29
 priests of . . . 2 Kgs 10:1-27

Satan and . . . *Luke* 11:15
 temple of . . . 2 Kgs 11:18
 water and . . . Ps 104:9
 worship of . . . 2 Chr 17:3-4; Isa 1:29-30;
 65:3; *Jer* 19:4-5; 23:10; 50:6
 Baal-berith, temple of . . . *Judg* 9:3-5,
 46-49
 Baal-hazor . . . 2 Sam 13:23
 Baal-Peor . . . *Num* 25:1-18
 Baal-perazim . . . 2 Sam 5:20
 Baal-zebul . . . 2 Kgs 1:2
 Baal-zephon . . . *Exod* 14:2
 Baalah of Judah . . . 2 Sam 6:2
 Baalath . . . 1 Kgs 9:17-18
 Baanah . . . 2 Sam 4:6
 Baasha, king of Israel . . . 1 Kgs 14:14;
 15:16-22; 15:27-16:7; 2 Chr 16:1-4
 babies, care of newborn . . . *Ezek* 16:4-5
 Babylon, city of
 fall of . . . Isa 21:9; *Jer* 50:11-16
 location of . . . *Gen* 10:10-12; 11:4, 9
 as NT code for Rome . . . 1 Pet 5:13
 water supply of . . . *Jer* 50:38
 wealth of . . . *Jer* 51:33
 Zedekiah and . . . *Jer* 51:59
 Babylonia (Shinar)
 army of . . . *Jer* 5:16-17
 beliefs of . . . Isa 14:9-10
 culture and beliefs of . . . *Ezek* 8:14-15
 deities of . . . Isa 46:1; *Hab* 1:11
 Egypt conquered by . . . *Ezek* 29:18-20
 empire of . . . *Dan* 4:30
 exile policies of . . . *Ezek* 1:1
 fall of . . . Isa 21:9; *Dan* 5:1-30
 general references to . . . *Gen* 10:6-12;
 Isa 21:1
 God's judgment on . . . Isa 13:16-22
 God's use of . . . *Jer* 21:3-7; 50:1-51:64;
Ezek 11:8-10; *Hab* 1:5-11
 history of . . . *Jer* 25:12-14
 Judah and . . . *Jer* 5:6; 50:17
 judgment of God on . . . *Jer* 25:12-14;
Ezek 21:30-32
 language of . . . *Jer* 5:15
 location of . . . *Gen* 10:10-12
 military power and practices of . . .
 2 Kgs 25:9-10; *Jer* 32:24
 Persia and . . . Isa 41:25; *Jer* 51:1-2;
Dan 5:30-31
 prophecies of judgment on . . . Isa 23:13;
 33:1
 representative of all wicked nations . . .
 Isa 13:1
 Tyre attacked by . . . *Ezek* 29:18-20
 wise men in . . . 1 Kgs 4:29-30;
Dan 2:4-26; 5:8, 15
 backsliding . . . *Prov* 14:14
 badge of holiness . . . *Exod* 39:30
 Bahurim . . . 2 Sam 3:16; 16:5; 17:18-20
 Balaam . . . *Num* 22:2-24:25; *Josh* 13:22;
 2 Pet 2:15
 Balak . . . *Num* 22:2-24:25
 "baldy" . . . 2 Kgs 2:23
 balm in Gilead . . . *Jer* 8:22
 Bamoth-baal . . . *Num* 22:41

Dictionary & Concordance

A

AARON First high priest of Israel; elder brother and spokesman of Moses (Exod 4:14-31; 7:1-2); confronted Pharaoh with Moses (Exod 5-12); held up Moses' hands during battle (Exod 17:8-15); led Israel while Moses was absent (Exod 24:14); priestly clothing and accessories (Exod 28); his ordination (Exod 29; Lev 8); his failure with the gold calf (Exod 32; Acts 7:40); spoke against Moses, then interceded on behalf of sister, Miriam (Num 12:1-16); helped stop the plague (Num 16:45-48); priesthood confirmed (Num 17; Heb 5:1-4); failed at Meribah and was denied entry to Promised Land (Num 20:1-13); died (Num 20:22-29; 33:38-39).

ABANDON, ABANDONED, ABANDONS

(v) to desert or forsake
 Josh 1:5 . . . will not fail you or **a** you.
 Josh 24:16 . . . We would never **a** the LORD
 Ezra 9:9 . . . God did not **a** us in our slavery.
 Neh 9:31 . . . completely or **a** them forever.
 Ps 22:1 . . . why have you **a-ed** me?
 Ps 37:25 . . . never seen the godly **a-ed**
 Ps 37:28 . . . he will never **a** the godly.
 Prov 15:10 . . . Whoever **a-s** the right path
 Matt 27:46 . . . why have you **a-ed** me?
 John 16:1 . . . you won't **a** your faith.
 Rom 1:24 . . . So God **a-ed** them to do
 Rom 1:28 . . . **a-ed** them to their foolish
 2 Cor 4:9 . . . down, but never **a-ed** by God.
 Heb 13:5 . . . I will never **a** you.

ABASED (KJV)

Ezek 1:26 . . . mighty will be *brought down*.
 Matt 23:12 . . . themselves will be *humbled*
 Phil 4:12 . . . how to *live on almost nothing*

ABEL Son of Adam and Eve, brother of Cain (Gen 4:1-2); his offering accepted (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4); murdered by Cain (Gen 4:8; Matt 23:35; Luke 11:51; Heb 12:24; 1 Jn 3:11-12; Jude 1:11); replaced by Seth (Gen 4:25).

ABIDE(TH), ABIDING (KJV)

Luke 2:8 . . . shepherds *staying* in the fields
 John 12:46 . . . no longer *remain* in the dark
 John 15:4 . . . be fruitful unless you *remain*

ABOUND(ED) (KJV)

Prov 28:20 . . . person will *get a rich reward*
 Matt 24:12 . . . Sin will be *rampant everywhere*
 Rom 5:15 . . . *even greater* is God's wonderful grace
 Rom 5:20 . . . grace *became more abundant*
 2 Cor 8:7 . . . *excel* also in this gracious act

ABRAHAM (ABRAM) Father of the nation of Israel (Isa 51:2; John 8:37-59); friend of God (Isa 41:8); father of all people of faith (Gen

12-25; Rom 4; Heb 11); made covenant with the LORD (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:12-21; 22:15-18; 50:24; Exod 2:24; 32:13; Lev 26:42; 2 Kgs 13:23; 1 Chr 16:16; Neh 9:8; Ps 105:9; Luke 1:73; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:17-20; Heb 6:13); descendant of Terah from Ur (Gen 11:27-31); husband of Sarah (Sarah) (Gen 11:29); called to leave home (Gen 12:1-9; Acts 7:2-4; Heb 11:8-10); went to Egypt and deceived the Pharaoh (Gen 12:10-20); chose Canaan over the Jordan Plain (Gen 13); rescued Lot from enemies (Gen 14:11-16); blessed by Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-24; Heb 7:1); covenant restated by God (Gen 15); faith counted as righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6-9; Jas 2:21-23); given son (Ishmael) by Hagar (Gen 16); circumcision commanded (Gen 17; Rom 4:9-12); name changed to "Abraham" (Gen 17:5; Neh 9:7); son promised to Sarah (Gen 17:16; 18:10); welcomed heavenly visitor (Gen 18:1-15); bargained to save Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-33); deceived Abimelech (Gen 20); named as a prophet (Gen 20:7); given son (Isaac) by Sarah (Gen 21:1-7; Heb 11:11-12); sent Hagar and Ishmael away (Gen 21:9-14; Gal 4:21-31); offered Isaac as test (Gen 22:1-19; Heb 11:17-19; Jas 2:21); secured burial ground for Sarah (Gen 23); found a wife for Isaac (Gen 24); descendants through wife Keturah (Gen 25:1-6); died (Gen 25:7-11).

ABUNDANCE (n) great quantity, affluence; more than ample
 Job 36:31 . . . giving them food in **a**.
 Ps 66:12 . . . a place of great **a**.
 Jer 31:14 . . . The priests will enjoy **a**.
 Matt 13:12 . . . have an **a** of knowledge.
 Matt 25:29 . . . they will have an **a**.
 John 1:16 . . . From his **a** we have all

ABUNDANT (adj) marked by great plenty, abounding
 Deut 28:11 . . . livestock, and **a** crops.
 Ps 68:9 . . . You sent **a** rain, O God
 Jer 31:12 . . . good gifts—the **a** crops
 John 16:24 . . . you will have **a** joy.
 2 Cor 8:2 . . . are also filled with **a** joy,

ABUSIVE (adj) using harsh, insulting language; characterized by wrong or improper use or action
 1 Cor 5:11 . . . worships idols, or is **a**,
 1 Cor 6:10 . . . drunkards, or are **a**, or
 Eph 4:29 . . . use foul or **a** language.

ABYSS (KJV)

Luke 8:31 . . . send them into the *bottomless pit*
 Rev 9:1 . . . the shaft of the *bottomless pit*
 Rev 9:11 . . . the angel from the *bottomless pit*

ACCEPT, ACCEPTED, ACCEPTS (v) to receive willingly
 Gen 4:4 . . . The LORD **a-ed** Abel

Gen 4:7 . . . be **a-ed** if you do what is right.
 Deut 16:19 . . . Never **a** a bribe, for bribes
 Job 42:8 . . . I will **a** his prayer
 Job 42:9 . . . the LORD **a-ed** Job's prayer.
 Eccl 5:18 . . . to **a** their lot in life,
 Luke 4:24 . . . no prophet is **a-ed** in his
 Luke 10:16 . . . who **a-s** your message
 John 1:12 . . . believed him and **a-ed** him,
 John 17:8 . . . They **a-ed** it and know that
 Rom 11:12 . . . when they finally **a** it.
 Gal 2:9 . . . they **a-ed** Barnabas and me
 Col 2:6 . . . just as you **a-ed** Christ Jesus
 1 Tim 1:15 . . . everyone should **a** it:
 1 Tim 4:9 . . . everyone should **a** it.
 Jas 1:21 . . . **a** the word God has planted

ACCURSED (KJV)

Deut 21:23 . . . anyone who is hung is *curse*
 Josh 6:18 . . . things *set apart for destruction*
 1 Cor 12:3 . . . will *curse* Jesus, and no one
 Gal 1:9 . . . let that person be *curse*

ACCUSE, ACCUSED, ACCUSES, ACCUSING

(v) to charge with fault or offense; to blame
 Job 22:4 . . . **a-s** you and brings judgment
 Ps 27:12 . . . For they **a** me of things
 Dan 6:5 . . . all foods are **a**, but it is
 2 Cor 8:12 . . . is **a** if you give it eagerly.
 1 Tim 4:5 . . . made **a** by the word of God

ACCUSED (KJV)
 Deut 21:23 . . . anyone who is hung is *curse*
 Josh 6:18 . . . things *set apart for destruction*
 1 Cor 12:3 . . . will *curse* Jesus, and no one
 Gal 1:9 . . . let that person be *curse*

ACKNOWLEDGE, ACKNOWLEDGES (v) to express a gratitude of debt; to recognize as valid; to confess (wrongdoing)
 Jer 3:13 . . . Only **a** your guilt. Admit
 Matt 10:32 . . . Everyone who **a-s** me
 Luke 12:8 . . . Son of Man will also **a**
 Rom 1:28 . . . thought it foolish to **a** God,
 1 Jn 2:23 . . . anyone who **a-s** the Son
 1 Jn 4:3 . . . and does not **a** the truth

ADAM First man (Gen 1:26-2:25; Rom 5:14; 1 Tim 2:13-14); son of God (Luke 3:38); sinned (Gen 3:1-19; Hos 6:7; Rom 5:12-21); descendants of (Gen 5); died (Gen 5:5; 1 Cor 15:22-49).

ADD, ADDED (v) to make or serve as an addition
 Deut 4:2 . . . Do not **a** to or subtract from

Deut 12:32 . . . You must not **a** anything to
 Prov 30:6 . . . Do not **a** to his words,
 Eccl 3:14 . . . Nothing can be **a-ed** to it
 Matt 6:27 . . . worries **a** a single moment
 Luke 12:25 . . . worries **a** a single moment
 Acts 2:47 . . . each day the Lord **a-ed** to
 their
 Rev 22:18 . . . God will **a** to that person

ADMONISH(ED) (KJV)

Ecc 12:12 . . . give you *some further advice*
 Jer 42:19 . . . Don't forget this *warning* I
 2 Thes 3:15 . . . *warn* them as you would
 Heb 8:5 . . . God gave him this *warning*

ADMONITION (KJV)

1 Cor 10:11 . . . written down to *warn* us
 Eph 6:4 . . . *instruction* that comes from the
 Lord

Titus 3:10 . . . a first and second *warning*

ADOPT, ADOPTED (v) to take another's
 child into one's own family
 Rom 8:15 . . . when he **a-ed** you as his own
 Rom 8:23 . . . rights as his **a-ed** children,
 Rom 9:4 . . . to be God's **a-ed** children.
 Gal 4:5 . . . so that he could **a** us as
 Eph 1:5 . . . decided in advance to **a** us

ADULTERY (n) unlawful sexual relations
 between a married and an unmarried
 person; symbolic of idolatry
 Exod 20:14 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Deut 5:18 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Prov 6:32 . . . who commits **a** is an utter
 fool,

Matt 5:27 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Matt 19:18 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 Mark 10:11 . . . someone else commits **a**
 Luke 18:20 . . . You must not commit **a**.
 John 8:4 . . . caught in the act of **a**.
 1 Cor 6:9 . . . **a**, or are male prostitutes,

ADVICE (n) recommendation regarding
 a decision or course of conduct; counsel
 1 Kgs 12:8 . . . rejected the **a** of
 2 Chr 10:8 . . . rejected the **a** of
 Prov 12:5 . . . **a** of the wicked is
 Prov 12:26 . . . godly give good **a** to their
 Prov 15:22 . . . Plans go wrong for lack of **a**;
 Isa 44:25 . . . I cause the wise to give bad **a**,
 Rom 11:34 . . . enough to give him **a**?

ADVISE (v) to give advice; to counsel
 Ps 32:8 . . . I will **a** you and watch over
 1 Tim 5:14 . . . **a** these younger widows
 Rev 3:18 . . . I **a** you to buy gold from me—

ADVISERS (n) one who gives advice; coun-
 selor

1 Sam 28:23 . . . his **a** joined the woman in
 1 Kgs 12:14 . . . counsel of his younger **a**.
 Esth 1:13 . . . consulted with his wise **a**,
 Prov 11:14 . . . safety in having many **a**.
 Prov 29:12 . . . all his **a** will be wicked.

ADVOCATE (n) one who pleads the cause
 of another; defender

see also HOLY SPIRIT, COUNSELOR

Job 16:19 . . . My **a** is there on high.
 John 14:16 . . . he will give you another **A**,
 John 14:26 . . . the Father sends the **A**
 John 15:26 . . . I will send you the **A**—
 John 16:7 . . . if I don't, the **A** won't come.
 1 Jn 2:1 . . . an **a** who pleads our case

AFRAID (adj) fearful or apprehensive
 about an unwanted or uncertain situation
 Gen 3:10 . . . I was **a** because I was naked.
 Gen 26:24 . . . Do not be **a**, for I am
 Exod 3:6 . . . he was **a** to look at God.
 Deut 1:21 . . . Don't be **a**!

Deut 20:1 . . . your own, do not be **a**.
 Ps 23:4 . . . I will not be **a**, for you are
 Isa 10:24 . . . do not be **a** of the Assyrians
 Isa 41:10 . . . Don't be **a**, for I am
 Isa 43:1 . . . Do not be **a**, for I have
 Matt 8:26 . . . Why are you **a**?
 Matt 10:31 . . . So don't be **a**;
 Mark 5:36 . . . Don't be **a**.
 John 14:27 . . . don't be troubled or **a**.
 2 Tim 4:5 . . . Don't be **a** of suffering
 1 Pet 3:14 . . . don't worry or be **a**

AGREE, AGREED, AGREEING (v) to admit,
 concede
 Matt 18:19 . . . If two of you **a** here on
 Luke 7:29 . . . **a-d** that God's way was right,
 Rom 7:16 . . . that I **a** that the law is good.
 Phil 2:2 . . . make me truly happy by **a-ing**

ALCOHOL (n) (as wine or beer)
 containing ethanol
 Prov 20:1 . . . **a** leads to brawls.
 Isa 5:22 . . . boast about all the **a** they

ALCOHOLIC (adj) containing alcohol
 Num 6:3 . . . give up wine and other **a**

ALIEN (KJV)

Exod 18:13 . . . *a foreigner* in a foreign
 Job 19:15 . . . I am like *a foreigner* to them
 Eph 2:12 . . . were *excluded from citizenship*

ALIENATED (KJV)

Ezek 48:14 . . . traded or *used by others*
 Eph 4:18 . . . *wander far from the life* God
 Col 1:21 . . . were *once far away from God*

ALIVE (adj) animate, having life; active;
 aware
 Gen 45:7 . . . keep you and your families **a**
 Ps 41:2 . . . them and keeps them **a**.
 Luke 24:23 . . . Jesus is **a**!
 Acts 1:3 . . . ways that he was actually **a**.
 Rom 6:11 . . . the power of sin and **a** to
 God
 Rev 2:8 . . . who was dead but is now **a**:

ALLELUIA (KJV)

Rev 19:1 . . . shouting, "*Praise the Lord!*"
 Rev 19:3 . . . rang out: "*Praise the Lord!*"
 Rev 19:4 . . . "*Amen! Praise the Lord!*"
 Rev 19:6 . . . "*Praise the Lord!*" For the Lord

ALMIGHTY (n) having absolute power
 over all; God
 Gen 17:1 . . . I am El-Shaddai—"God **A**."
 Exod 6:3 . . . as El-Shaddai—"God **A**!"
 Ruth 1:20 . . . **A** has made life very bitter
 Job 6:14 . . . without any fear of the **A**.
 Job 33:4 . . . breath of the **A** gives me life.
 Ps 91:1 . . . rest in the shadow of the **A**.
 Rev 4:8 . . . the **A**—the one who always
 was,
 Rev 15:3 . . . O Lord God, the **A**.
 Rev 19:6 . . . our God, the **A**, reigns.

ALTAR, ALTARS (n) high places of worship
 on which sacrifices are offered or incense
 is burned

Gen 8:20 . . . Noah built an **a** to the LORD,
 Gen 12:7 . . . Abram built an **a** there
 Gen 22:9 . . . Abraham built an **a** and
 Gen 26:25 . . . Isaac built an **a** there
 Exod 30:1 . . . make another **a** of acacia
 Exod 37:25 . . . incense **a** of acacia wood.
 Josh 8:30 . . . Joshua built an **a** to the LORD,
 Josh 22:10 . . . a large and imposing **a**.
 1 Sam 7:17 . . . Samuel built an **a** to the
 2 Chr 4:1 . . . made a bronze **a** 30 feet long,
 2 Chr 4:19 . . . Temple of God: the gold **a**;
 2 Chr 32:12 . . . only at the **a** at the Temple
 2 Chr 33:16 . . . restored the **a** of the LORD

Ezra 3:2 . . . rebuilding the **a** of the God
 Isa 6:6 . . . coal he had taken from the **a**
 Matt 5:23 . . . presenting a sacrifice at the **a**
 Acts 17:23 . . . your **a-s** had this inscription
 Heb 13:10 . . . an **a** from which the priests
 Rev 6:9 . . . I saw under the **a** the souls

ALWAYS (adv) at all times; forever,
 perpetually
 1 Kgs 2:4 . . . will **a** sit on the throne
 Ps 16:8 . . . the LORD is **a** with me.
 Ps 52:8 . . . will **a** trust in God's unfailing
 Ps 102:27 . . . But you are **a** the same;
 Ps 106:3 . . . and **a** do what is right.
 Prov 23:7 . . . They are **a** thinking about
 Isa 16:5 . . . He will **a** do what is just
 Matt 28:20 . . . I am with you **a**, even to
 Mark 14:7 . . . You will **a** have the poor
 John 12:8 . . . you will not **a** have me.
 1 Pet 3:15 . . . **a** be ready to explain it.

AMAZED (v) to fill with wonder, astound
 Matt 7:28 . . . were **a** at his teaching
 Mark 7:37 . . . They were completely **a** and
 Mark 10:24 . . . This **a** them. But Jesus
 Luke 2:33 . . . Jesus' parents were **a** at
 Acts 2:7 . . . They were completely **a**.

AMAZING (adj) causing amazement, great
 wonder, or surprise
 1 Chr 16:24 . . . about the **a** things he does.
 Ps 96:3 . . . about the **a** things he does.
 Ps 126:2 . . . What **a** things the LORD has

AMBASSADOR, AMBASSADORS (n) an
 authorized representative or messenger
 2 Cor 5:20 . . . So we are Christ's **a-s**;
 Eph 6:20 . . . this message **a** of **a**'s **a**.

AMBITION (n) aspiration to achieve
 a particular goal, good or bad
 Gal 5:20 . . . anger, selfish **a**, dissension,
 Phil 1:17 . . . They preach with selfish **a**,
 Jas 3:14 . . . there is selfish **a** in your heart,

ANCESTOR, ANCESTORS (n) one from
 whom a person is descended; forefather
 Exod 3:15 . . . God of your **a-s**—the God of
 Deut 19:14 . . . markers your **a-s** set up
 Isa 9:7 . . . throne of his **a** David for all
 Isa 43:27 . . . your first **a** sinned against me;
 Mark 11:10 . . . Kingdom of our **a** David!
 Luke 1:32 . . . the throne of his **a** David.
 Rom 9:5 . . . Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are
 their **a-s**,
 Gal 1:14 . . . for the traditions of my **a-s**.
 Heb 1:1 . . . to our **a-s** through the prophets.

ANDREW One of the 12 disciples; listed
 second (Matt 10:2; Luke 6:14) and fourth
 (Mark 3:18; 13:3; Acts 1:13); came from
 Bethsaida (John 1:44); brother of Simon
 Peter (Mark 4:18); former fisherman (Mark
 1:16); follower of John the Baptist who
 introduced Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-44).

ANGEL, ANGELS (n) human or super-
 human agent or messenger of God
 Exod 23:20 . . . I am sending an **a**
 2 Sam 24:16 . . . and said to the death **a**,
 Ps 91:11 . . . will order his **a-s** to protect
 Matt 4:6 . . . will order his **a-s** to protect
 Matt 28:2 . . . an **a** of the Lord came down
 Luke 1:26 . . . God sent the **a** Gabriel
 Luke 2:9 . . . an **a** of the Lord appeared
 Luke 20:36 . . . they will be like **a-s**.
 Acts 12:7 . . . The **a** struck him on the side
 1 Cor 6:3 . . . we will judge **a-s**?
 2 Cor 11:14 . . . disguises himself as an **a**
 Gal 1:8 . . . or even an **a** from heaven,
 Heb 1:6 . . . all of God's **a-s** worship him.

Heb 2:7 . . . a little lower than the **a-s**
 Heb 13:2 . . . entertained **a-s** without
 1 Pet 1:12 . . . the **a-s** are eagerly watching
 2 Pet 2:4 . . . even the **a-s** who sinned.
 Jude 1:6 . . . I remind you of the **a-s**

ANGER (n) a strong feeling of displeasure
 Exod 34:6 . . . slow to **a** and filled with
 Num 14:18 . . . slow to **a** and filled with
 Deut 9:19 . . . furious **a** of the LORD,
 Deut 29:28 . . . In great **a** and fury
 2 Kgs 22:13 . . . LORD's great **a** is burning
 Ps 30:5 . . . his **a** lasts only a moment,
 Ps 78:38 . . . Many times he held back
 his **a**
 Rom 1:18 . . . God shows his **a** from heaven
 Rom 2:5 . . . a day of **a** is coming,
 Eph 4:26 . . . by letting **a** control you.
 1 Thes 5:9 . . . pour out his **a** on us.
 Jas 1:20 . . . Human **a** does not produce
 Rev 14:10 . . . the wine of God's **a**.

ANGRY (adj) feeling or showing anger;
 wrathful
 Exod 32:11 . . . so **a** with your own people
 Neh 9:17 . . . merciful, slow to become **a**,
 Ps 103:8 . . . merciful, slow to get **a**
 Prov 22:24 . . . Don't befriend **a** people
 Jon 4:2 . . . slow to get **a** and filled
 Matt 5:22 . . . if you are even **a** with
 Mark 10:14 . . . he was **a** with his disciples.
 John 3:36 . . . under God's **a** judgment.
 Acts 4:25 . . . Why were the nations so **a**?
 Jas 1:19 . . . to speak, and slow to get **a**.

ANGUISH (n) extreme pain, distress,
 or anxiety
 Isa 53:11 . . . by his **a**, he will be satisfied.
 Zeph 1:15 . . . of terrible distress and **a**,
 Matt 24:21 . . . greater **a** than at any time
 Luke 16:24 . . . I am in **a** in these flames.
 Rev 16:10 . . . ground their teeth in **a**,

ANOINT, ANOINTED, ANOINTING (v) to
 smear or rub with oil; used for healing or
 consecration to sacred duty; used for
 grooming or burial; figurative for divine
 appointment
 see also ANOINTED ONE

Exod 30:26 . . . oil to the Tabernacle,
 Exod 30:30 . . . **a** Aaron and his sons
 Lev 8:12 . . . **a-ing** him and making him
 holy
 1 Sam 15:1 . . . told me to **a** you as king
 2 Sam 2:4 . . . David and **a-ed** him king
 over
 2 Sam 23:1 . . . man **a-ed** by the God of
 Jacob,
 Ps 23:5 . . . honor me by **a-ing** my head
 Ps 92:10 . . . You have **a-ed** me with
 Isa 61:1 . . . the LORD has **a-ed** me
 Dan 9:24 . . . and to **a** the Most Holy Place.
 Acts 10:38 . . . you know that God **a-ed**
 Jesus
 Heb 1:9 . . . your God has **a-ed** you,
 Jas 5:14 . . . over you, **a-ing** you with oil

ANOINTED ONE (n) one chosen by divine
 election
 see also MESSIAH
 1 Sam 2:10 . . . the strength of his **a**.
 1 Sam 26:9 . . . attacking the LORD's **a**?
 Ps 132:17 . . . my **a** will be a light for
 Isa 45:1 . . . the LORD says to Cyrus, his **a**
 Dan 9:25 . . . a ruler—the **A**—comes.

ANTICHRIST, ANTICHRISTS (n) opponent
 of Christ; the personification of evil
 1 Jn 2:18 . . . heard that the **A** is coming,
 1 Jn 2:18 . . . many such **a-s** have appeared.

1 Jn 4:3 . . . has the spirit of the **A**,
 2 Jn 1:7 . . . deceiver and an **a**.
ANXIETY, CARE(S) (KJV)
 Ps 139:23 . . . know my *anxious thoughts*
 Phil 4:6 . . . Don't *worry* about anything
 1 Pet 5:7 . . . your *worries and cares* to God,

APPEAR, APPEARED, APPEARING,
APPEARS (v) to come out of hiding and
 show up in public view; to make one's
 presence known
 Gen 1:9 . . . so dry ground may **a**.
 Num 14:10 . . . presence of the LORD **a-ed**
 Deut 33:16 . . . **a-ed** in the burning bush.
 Mal 3:2 . . . and face him when he **a-s**?
 Matt 1:20 . . . angel of the Lord **a-ed** to him
 Matt 24:30 . . . will **a** in the heavens,
 Luke 2:9 . . . angel of the Lord **a-ed** among
 Luke 16:15 . . . You like to **a** a righteous
 Phil 2:7 . . . When he **a-ed** in human form,
 2 Thes 1:7 . . . the Lord Jesus **a-s** from
 2 Tim 1:10 . . . by the **a-ing** of Christ Jesus,
 Heb 9:24 . . . **a** now before God on our
 Heb 9:26 . . . **a-ed** at the end of the age
 1 Pet 5:4 . . . when the Great Shepherd **a-s**,
 1 Jn 3:2 . . . will be like when Christ **a-s**.

APPROVAL (n) an act or instance of
 approving
 Ps 90:17 . . . LORD our God show us his **a**
 John 6:27 . . . the seal of his **a**.
 Rom 14:4 . . . stand and receive his **a**.
 1 Cor 11:19 . . . you who have God's **a**
 2 Tim 2:15 . . . and receive his **a**.
 Heb 11:4 . . . God showed his **a** of his gifts.

APPROVE, APPROVED, APPROVES (v)
 to have or express a favorable opinion of;
 to attest
 Gen 7:2 . . . animal I have **a-ed** for eating
 Prov 12:2 . . . LORD **a-s** of those who
 Rom 14:18 . . . and others will **a** of you,
 Rom 16:10 . . . a good man whom Christ
a-s.
 1 Thes 2:4 . . . speak as messengers **a-ed**

ARARAT (n) a mountain on the far east
 border of modern Turkey; the mountain
 Noah's ark rested on after the Flood
 Gen 8:4 . . . to rest on the mountains of **A**.

ARCHANGEL, ARCHANGELS (n) a leader
 and chief angel; biblically designated as
 Michael
 Dan 10:13 . . . one of the **a-s**, came to help
 Dan 12:1 . . . At that time Michael, the **a**
 1 Thes 4:16 . . . with the voice of the **a**,

ARGUE, ARGUING (v) to contend or
 disagree in words; to dispute
 Job 13:8 . . . Will you **a** God's case
 Job 40:2 . . . to **a** with the Almighty?
 Prov 25:9 . . . **a-ing** with your neighbor,
 Isa 45:9 . . . those who **a** with their Creator.
 Rom 14:1 . . . and don't **a** with them
 1 Cor 11:16 . . . anyone wants to **a**

ARM, ARMS (n) upper limb of the body;
 extension or projection of; lineage; figura-
 tive of power or might
 Num 11:23 . . . Has my **a** lost its power?
 Deut 34:4 . . . a powerful **a**, and terrifying
 Deut 7:19 . . . strong hand and powerful **a**
 Deut 33:27 . . . everlasting **a-s** are under
 Ps 44:3 . . . it was not their own strong **a**
 Ps 98:1 . . . his holy **a** has shown
 Isa 40:11 . . . carry the lambs in his **a-s**,
 Isa 65:2 . . . opened my **a-s** to a rebellious
 Jer 27:5 . . . powerful **a** I made the earth
 Mark 10:16 . . . took the children in his **a-s**

ARMAGEDDON (n) the gathering place for
 the final battle between God's forces and
 Satan's forces associated with Christ's
 second coming
 Rev 16:16 . . . with the Hebrew name **A**.

ARMOR (n) weapons of war or self-
 defense; figurative of spiritual resources
 Ps 91:4 . . . are your **a** and protection.
 Isa 59:17 . . . righteousness as his body **a**
 Jer 46:4 . . . and prepare your **a**.
 Rom 13:12 . . . put on the shining **a**
 Eph 6:11 . . . Put on all of God's **a**
 Eph 6:13 . . . put on every piece of God's **a**
 1 Thes 5:8 . . . protected by the **a** of faith

ARMY, ARMIES (n) large band of men
 organized and armed for war; any large
 multitude devoted to a cause
 Ps 33:16 . . . best-equipped **a** cannot save
 Ps 84:12 . . . LORD of Heaven's **A-ies**,
 Isa 6:3 . . . LORD of Heaven's **A-ies**!
 Isa 45:13 . . . LORD of Heaven's **A-ies**,
 Isa 51:15 . . . the LORD of Heaven's **A-ies**.
 Joel 2:2 . . . great and mighty **a** appears.
 Joel 2:5 . . . like **a** mighty **a** moving into
 Joel 2:11 . . . This is his mighty **a**,
 Hagg 1:5 . . . LORD of Heaven's **A-ies** says:
 Zech 8:6 . . . LORD of Heaven's **A-ies** says:
 Rev 19:14 . . . The **a-ies** of heaven,
 Rev 19:19 . . . the horse and his **a**.

ARROGANCE (n) a feeling or an impres-
 sion of superiority manifested in an over-
 bearing manner or presumptuous claims
 1 Sam 2:3 . . . Don't speak with such **a**!
 Prov 8:13 . . . I hate pride and **a**,
 Isa 16:6 . . . its pride and **a** and rage.
 2 Cor 12:20 . . . slander, gossip, **a**,

ARROGANT (adj) exaggerating or disposed
 to exaggerate one's own worth or impor-
 tance in an overbearing manner
 Ps 31:23 . . . harshly punishes the **a**.
 Ps 119:78 . . . upon the **a** people who lied
 1 Tim 6:4 . . . is **a** and lacks understanding.
 Titus 1:7 . . . not be **a** or quick-tempered;

ASHAMED (adj) feeling shame, guilt, or
 disgrace
 Ps 69:6 . . . be **a** because of me,
 Jer 31:19 . . . I was thoroughly **a** of all I did
 Jer 48:13 . . . were **a** of their gold calf
 Mark 8:38 . . . If anyone is **a** of me
 Luke 9:26 . . . If anyone is **a** of me
 Rom 1:16 . . . I am not **a** of this Good News
 2 Tim 1:8 . . . So never be **a** to tell others
 2 Tim 2:15 . . . who does not need to be **a**

ASLEEP (adj) state of bodily rest; figurative
 for physical death or spiritual dullness
 see also DIE, SLEEP
 Judg 4:21 . . . Sisera fell **a** from exhaustion,
 1 Kgs 18:27 . . . away on a trip, or is **a** and
 Matt 9:24 . . . isn't dead; he's only **a**.
 Matt 26:40 . . . disciples and found them **a**.
 John 11:11 . . . Lazarus has fallen **a**, but
 1 Thes 5:6 . . . be on your guard, not **a** like

ASTRAY (adv) off the right path or route; in
 error, away from what is desirable or proper
 Prov 20:1 . . . Those led **a** by drink
 Isa 47:10 . . . 'knowledge' have led you **a**,
 Jer 50:6 . . . shepherds have led them **a**
 1 Jn 2:26 . . . who want to lead you **a**.

ASTROLOGERS (n) those who study the
 stars and planets to foresee or foretell
 future events by their positions and aspects
 Isa 47:13 . . . all your **a**, those stargazers
 Dan 2:2 . . . enchanters, sorcerers, and **a**,

ATE (v) to partake of food
see also EAT

Gen 3:6 ... some of the fruit and **a** it.
Ezek 3:3 ... And when I **a** it, it tasted as
Matt 15:37 ... **a** as much as they wanted.
Rev 10:10 ... I **a** it! It was sweet

ATHLETE, ATHLETES (n) a person who is trained or excelled in exercises, sports, or games requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina
Ps 19:5 ... like a great **a** eager to run
1 Cor 9:25 ... All **a**-s are disciplined
1 Cor 9:27 ... body like an **a**, training it
2 Tim 2:5 ... **a**-s cannot win the prize unless

ATONE, ATONES (v) to supply satisfaction for; to make amends; to reconcile
see also FORGIVE

Dan 9:24 ... their sin, to **a** for their guilt,
1 Jn 2:2 ... sacrifice that **a**-s for our sins—

ATONEMENT (n) reconciliation; reparation for an offense or injury; cleansing
see also FORGIVENESS

Exod 25:17 ... cover—the place of **a**—
Lev 23:27 ... Day of **A** on the tenth day
2 Chr 29:24 ... to make **a** for the sins
Prov 16:6 ... faithfulness make **a** for sin.

ATTITUDE, ATTITUDES (n) a mental position with regard to a fact or state; a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state
Eph 4:23 ... your thoughts and **a**-s.
Phil 2:5 ... have the same **a** that Christ
1 Pet 3:8 ... keep a humble **a**.
1 Pet 4:1 ... with the same **a** he had,

AUTHORITY, AUTHORITIES (n) the right to govern; the freedom or ability to act; one entrusted with the right to govern
Matt 28:18 ... been given all **a** in heaven
Luke 10:19 ... have given you **a** over
John 5:22 ... absolute **a** to judge,
Acts 1:7 ... **a** to set those dates and times,
Rom 13:1 ... submit to governing **a**-ies.
Rom 13:1 ... For all **a** comes from God,
Rom 13:2 ... anyone who rebels against **a**
Rom 13:3 ... without fear of the **a**-ies?
1 Cor 4:3 ... by any human **a**.
1 Cor 15:24 ... ruler and **a** and power,
Eph 1:22 ... things under the **a** of Christ
Eph 3:10 ... all the unseen rulers and **a**-ies
Eph 6:12 ... against evil rulers and **a**-ies
Col 2:10 ... every ruler and **a**.
Col 2:15 ... the spiritual rulers and **a**-ies.
1 Tim 2:2 ... all who are in **a** so that
Titus 2:15 ... You have the **a** to correct
1 Pet 3:1 ... accept the **a** of your husbands.
1 Pet 3:22 ... the angels and **a**-ies and
1 Pet 5:5 ... accept the **a** of the elders.
Jude 1:6 ... the limits of **a** God gave them

AVOID, AVOIDING (v) to keep away from; to depart or withdraw from
Prov 4:24 ... **A** all perverse talk;
Prov 14:16 ... are cautious and **a** danger;
Prov 16:6 ... By fearing the LORD, people **a**
Prov 20:3 ... **A**-ing a fight is a mark
Eccl 7:18 ... fears God will **a** both
Rom 2:3 ... think you can **a** God's

AWE (n) an emotion variously combining dread, respect, and wonder that is inspired by authority or the sacred
see also FEAR, REVERENCE
1 Kgs 3:28 ... people were in **a** of the king,
Ps 119:120 ... I stand in **a** of your
Luke 5:26 ... with great wonder and **a**,

Acts 2:43 ... sense of **a** came over them
Heb 12:28 ... holy fear and **a**.

AWESOME (adj) characterized by reverent fear; expressive of or inspiring awe
see also WONDERFUL
Exod 34:10 ... the **a** power I will display
Deut 7:21 ... a great **a** and God.
2 Sam 7:23 ... You performed **a** miracles
Neh 1:5 ... the great **a** and God
Job 10:16 ... display your **a** power
Ps 47:2 ... Most High is **a**.
Ps 65:5 ... answer our prayers with **a**
Ps 99:3 ... your great **a** name.
Ps 106:22 ... such **a** deeds at the Red Sea.
Ps 131:1 ... too **a** for me to grasp.
Dan 9:4 ... a great **a** and God!

B

BABY, BABIES (n) infant child; youngest of a group; figurative of new or immature Christians

Exod 2:7 ... women to nurse the **b** for you?
Luke 1:44 ... **b** in my womb jumped for
Luke 2:12 ... find **a** **b** wrapped snugly
Luke 2:16 ... the **b**, lying in the manger.
Acts 7:19 ... abandon their newborn **b**-ies
1 Cor 14:20 ... Be innocent as **b**-ies when
1 Pet 2:2 ... Like newborn **b**-ies, you must

BABYLON (n) capital city of the Babylonian Empire; a city devoted to materialism and sensual pleasure; biblical writers used as model of paganism and idolatry
Ps 137:1 ... Beside the rivers of **B**, we sat
Jer 29:10 ... will be in **B** for seventy years.
Jer 51:37 ... **B** will become a heap of ruins,
Rev 14:8 ... shouting, "**B** is fallen—

BACKSLIDERS, BACKSLIDING (KJV)
Prov 14:14 ... *Backsliders* get what they deserve

Jer 3:22 ... I will heal your *wayward* hearts
Jer 31:22 ... wander, my *wayward* daughter
Hos 14:4 ... heal you of your *faithlessness*

BALAAM Pagan prophet, summoned to curse the Israelites but instead blessed them (Num 22–24; also Deut 23:3–5; 2 Pet 2:15–16; Jude 1:11; Rev 2:14); died (Num 31:8; Josh 13:22).

BAPTISM, BAPTISMS (n) a Christian ordinance; a washing with water to demonstrate cleansing from sin, linked with repentance and admission into the community of faith; figurative of an ordeal or initiation
Matt 3:16 ... After his **b**, as Jesus came up
Luke 3:7 ... crowds came to John for **b**,
Acts 19:3 ... what **b** did you experience?
Rom 6:3 ... joined with Christ Jesus in **b**,
Gal 3:27 ... united with Christ in **b**
Eph 4:5 ... one Lord, one faith, one **b**,
Heb 6:2 ... further instruction about **b**-s,
1 Pet 3:21 ... that water is a picture of **b**,

BAPTIZE, BAPTIZED, BAPTIZING (v) to engage in the ordinance of baptism
(*see above*)
see also WASH
Matt 3:13 ... River to be **b**-d by John.
Matt 28:19 ... of all the nations, **b**-ing
Mark 1:4 ... that people should be **b**-d

Mark 1:8 ... will **b** you with the Holy Spirit!
Mark 10:38 ... suffering I must be **b**-d with?

Luke 3:3 ... that people should be **b**-d
Luke 3:16 ... I **b** you with water;
Luke 3:21 ... Jesus himself was **b**-d.
John 1:28 ... where John was **b**-ing.
John 1:31 ... I have been **b**-ing with water
John 1:33 ... is the one who will **b** with
John 3:22 ... with them there, **b**-ing people.
John 3:26 ... is also **b**-ing people.
John 4:1 ... was **b**-ing and making more
John 4:2 ... Jesus himself didn't **b** them—
John 10:40 ... where John was first **b**-ing
Acts 1:5 ... be **b**-d with the Holy Spirit.
Acts 1:22 ... time he was **b**-d by John
Acts 2:41 ... **b**-d and added to the church
Acts 8:12 ... and women were **b**-d.
Acts 8:38 ... water, and Philip **b**-d him.
Acts 11:16 ... will be **b**-d with the Holy
Acts 16:15 ... her household were **b**-d along
Acts 16:33 ... were immediately **b**-d.
Acts 19:5 ... **b**-d in the name of the Lord
1 Cor 1:13 ... you **b**-d in the name of Paul?
1 Cor 1:14 ... I did not **b** any of you
1 Cor 1:16 ... **b**-d the household of
1 Cor 10:2 ... were **b**-d as followers
1 Cor 15:29 ... **b**-d for those who are dead?
Col 2:12 ... when you were **b**-d.

BARNABAS Levite believer from, generous giver of property (Acts 4:36–37); encourager of Paul (Acts 9:26–29); missionary with Paul (Acts 11:22–30; 12:25; 13:1–3); at Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1–2, 12); disagreed with Paul over John Mark (Acts 15:36–40; *see also* 1 Cor 9:6; Col 4:10).

BATHSHEBA Committed adultery with King David, widow of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11–12); mother of Solomon, her second son with David (1 Kgs 1–2; 1 Chr 3:5).

BEAST, BEASTS (n) devilish creature(s) ravishing the earth during the Tribulation; animals, as distinguished from plants or humans; a contemptible person
Dan 7:3 ... Then four huge **b**-s came up
Dan 7:6 ... authority was given to this **b**.
1 Cor 15:32 ... fighting wild **b**-s—those
Rev 13:18 ... number of the **b**, for it is
Rev 16:2 ... had the mark of the **b**
Rev 19:20 ... accepted the mark of the **b**

BEAUTIFUL (adj) lovely, handsome, or pleasing to the eye; excellent
Gen 2:9 ... trees that were **b**
Gen 6:2 ... sons of God saw the **b**
Prov 11:22 ... **A** woman who lacks
Eccl 3:11 ... everything **b** for its own time.
Isa 53:2 ... was nothing **b** or majestic
Lam 2:15 ... the city called "**b**"
Acts 3:2 ... the one called the **B** Gate,
Rom 10:15 ... How **b** are the feet of

BEAUTY (n) a particularly graceful, ornamental, or excellent quality; the quality in a person or thing that gives pleasure to the senses
2 Sam 11:2 ... a woman of unusual **b**
Ps 50:2 ... the perfection of **b**, God shines
Prov 31:30 ... and **b** does not last;
Isa 28:1 ... but its glorious **b** will fade
Jas 1:11 ... and its **b** fades away.
1 Pet 1:24 ... their **b** is like a flower
1 Pet 3:4 ... **b** of a gentle and quiet spirit,