

# BREAK THROUGH!

## THE BIBLE FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS

This Bible is yours. Read it when you feel happy and thankful, and also when you're sad, lonely, or things aren't going well. Study it when you're in a group and when you're by yourself too. Use its words when you pray, and take some time to reflect on what you read. This Bible is for you.

This Bible belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.

I started reading *Breakthrough!* in \_\_\_\_\_ grade.

I hope \_\_\_\_\_

I want to explore \_\_\_\_\_.

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_.

God, you have taught me from my youth;  
to this day I proclaim your wondrous deeds.

—Psalm 71:17

# CONTENTS

Bible People Encounters . . . . .	4
Bible Events . . . . .	5
About this Bible . . . . .	6
God Breaks Through: Salvation History Time Line . . . . .	8
Preface to the New American Bible: Revised Old Testament . . . . .	12
Old Testament Introduction . . . . .	14

## OLD TESTAMENT

### Pentateuch

Genesis . . . . .	16	Numbers . . . . .	211
Exodus . . . . .	104	Deuteronomy . . . . .	264
Leviticus . . . . .	171		

### Historical Books

Joshua . . . . .	311	2 Kings . . . . .	523
Judges . . . . .	347	1 Chronicles . . . . .	567
Ruth . . . . .	384	2 Chronicles . . . . .	601
1 Samuel . . . . .	392	Ezra . . . . .	641
2 Samuel . . . . .	440	Nehemiah . . . . .	656
1 Kings . . . . .	479		

### Biblical Novellas

Tobit . . . . .	676	1 Maccabees . . . . .	733
Judith . . . . .	694	2 Maccabees . . . . .	772
Esther . . . . .	715		

### Wisdom and Poetry Books

Job . . . . .	804	Song of Songs . . . . .	1044
Psalms . . . . .	856	The Book of Wisdom . . . . .	1055
Proverbs . . . . .	981	Ben Sira . . . . .	1084
Ecclesiastes . . . . .	1032		

### Prophets

Isaiah . . . . .	1151	Obadiah . . . . .	1493
Jeremiah . . . . .	1248	Jonah . . . . .	1496
Lamentations . . . . .	1333	Micah . . . . .	1501
Baruch . . . . .	1343	Nahum . . . . .	1511
Ezekiel . . . . .	1354	Habakkuk . . . . .	1516
Daniel . . . . .	1426	Zephaniah . . . . .	1522
Hosea . . . . .	1455	Haggai . . . . .	1527
Joel . . . . .	1470	Zechariah . . . . .	1531
Amos . . . . .	1477	Malachi . . . . .	1545

# NEW TESTAMENT

Preface to the New American Bible: Revised New Testament . . . . .	1551
New Testament Introduction . . . . .	1554

## Gospels and Acts of the Apostles

Matthew . . . . .	1556	John . . . . .	1741
Mark . . . . .	1630	Acts of the Apostles . . . . .	1794
Luke . . . . .	1671		

## Letters and Revelation

Romans . . . . .	1851	Titus . . . . .	1984
1 Corinthians . . . . .	1878	Philemon . . . . .	1988
2 Corinthians . . . . .	1906	Hebrews . . . . .	1991
Galatians . . . . .	1923	James . . . . .	2011
Ephesians . . . . .	1934	1 Peter . . . . .	2019
Philippians . . . . .	1942	2 Peter . . . . .	2027
Colossians . . . . .	1951	1 John . . . . .	2033
1 Thessalonians . . . . .	1958	2 John . . . . .	2041
2 Thessalonians . . . . .	1963	3 John . . . . .	2043
1 Timothy . . . . .	1967	Jude . . . . .	2045
2 Timothy . . . . .	1977	Revelation . . . . .	2048

Copyright Information . . . . .	2081
Acknowledgments . . . . .	2082
Collaborators on the New American Bible . . . . .	2083

# STUDY AND PRAYER HELPS

Bible Story Index . . . . .	2086
Article Index . . . . .	2089
Glossary . . . . .	2098
Catholic Prayers . . . . .	2111
Catholic Teachings . . . . .	2115
Maps . . . . .	2117
Make It Stick! . . . . .	2126
Go Forth! . . . . .	2127
Bible Books—Alphabetical List with Abbreviations . . . . .	2128

*For the text of the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) RESCRIPT: In accord with canon 825 §1 of the Code of Canon Law, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops hereby approves for publication The New American Bible, Revised Old Testament, a translation of the Sacred Scriptures authorized by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc.*

The translation was approved by the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2008 and September 2010. It is permitted by the undersigned for private use and study.

Given in the city of Washington, the District of Columbia, on the Feast of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church, the 30th day of September, in the year of our Lord 2010.

†Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Chicago  
President, USCCB

The Revised New Testament

*Nihil Obstat:*

Stephen J. Hartdegen, O.F.M., S.S.L.  
Censor Deputatus

*Imprimatur:*

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Archbishop of Washington  
August 27, 1986



# BIBLE PEOPLE ENCOUNTERS

**God breaks through to individual people throughout salvation history.** Imaginative conversations throughout *Breakthrough!* explore the roles some of these people played in God's plan. Let them inspire you to answer God's call and to reflect on how God breaks through in your life!



Adam  
& Eve  
22



Sarah  
43



Abraham  
46



Isaac  
56



Leah  
& Rachel  
60



Jacob  
72



Joseph  
78



Moses  
108



Miriam  
& Aaron  
128



Joshua  
318



Deborah  
354



Samson  
373



Ruth  
388



Samuel  
416



Saul  
421



David  
449



Solomon  
488



Elijah  
& Elisha  
526



Josiah  
558



Judith  
708



The  
Maccabees  
745



Job  
852



Lady  
Wisdom  
1062



Isaiah  
1206



Jeremiah  
1307



Ezekiel  
1357



Amos  
1487



Jesus  
the Teacher  
1564



John  
the Baptist  
1632



Jesus  
at Prayer  
1648



Jesus Gives  
Himself  
1660



Mary  
1673



Jesus  
Is Born  
1677



Mary  
Magdalene  
1692



Jesus  
the Healer  
1764



Jesus  
Is Risen  
1781



Peter  
1784



Paul  
1810



Priscilla  
& Aquila  
1827



Timothy  
1973



# BIBLE EVENTS

**God breaks through in both dramatic and everyday events.**

Artwork throughout *Breakthrough!* helps you see some of these events up close. Consider how the events affected the people who experienced them and what the events might mean in your life.

## Old Testament

The Beauty of Creation . . . . .	19
Am I My Brother's Keeper? . . . . .	25
Rebekah Looks Out for Jacob . . . . .	55
Joseph Betrayed by His Brothers . . . . .	71
The Israelites' Miraculous Escape . . . . .	125
The Israelites Lose Faith . . . . .	152
Caleb Encourages the People . . . . .	230
Samuel Hears God's Call . . . . .	397
Saul Becomes First King . . . . .	406
David Shows His Trust in God . . . . .	419
Nathan Confronts David . . . . .	457
Dedicating the Temple . . . . .	493
Josiah Hears God's Law . . . . .	557
Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem . . . . .	658
Esther Bravely Goes Before the King . . . . .	724
Job's Friends Confront Him . . . . .	808
God Calls Jeremiah . . . . .	1250
Three Men Saved from Fire . . . . .	1433
Jonah Calls Out to God . . . . .	1499

## New Testament

Jesus and His Family Escape into Egypt . . . . .	1559
Jesus Resists Temptation . . . . .	1561
Jesus Tells the Story of a Sower . . . . .	1580
Lord, When Did We See You? . . . . .	1602
Jesus Calls the First Disciples . . . . .	1633
Jesus Raises Jairus's Daughter . . . . .	1641
Jesus Teaches a Rich Young Man . . . . .	1652
Jesus in His Father's House . . . . .	1679
Who Is a True Neighbor? . . . . .	1699
Jesus Teaches Martha and Mary . . . . .	1700
The Forgiving Father . . . . .	1711
Jesus Heals Ten Lepers . . . . .	1715
Jesus Breaks Bread at Emmaus . . . . .	1730
Mary Shows Her Faith in Jesus . . . . .	1745
Samaritan Woman Encounters Jesus . . . . .	1749
Jesus Demonstrates True Service . . . . .	1769
Jesus Dies on the Cross . . . . .	1778
Filled with the Holy Spirit . . . . .	1797
Escaping a Mob . . . . .	1824
Paul Imprisoned for Christ . . . . .	1944
A New Heaven and a New Earth . . . . .	2073

# ABOUT THIS BIBLE

**Welcome to *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*.** God never stops trying to break through and let you know that he loves you. That is why this Bible for young people is named *Breakthrough!*

God speaks to all people through the Bible. This story of God's love relationship with us is told in many different ways. The Bible is not one book; it is a collection of books.

*Breakthrough!* helps young people read and understand the Bible. Its short articles help you understand what you read.



## Catholic Connections

### Catholic Connections

**articles** explain how Catholic beliefs are part of God's Revelation and are taught through the Bible.

They provide a great introduction to what we believe!



## Live It!

**Live It! articles** explain how Bible stories apply to your life. They show how the Bible can guide you to build good relationships with your friends, family, and others in your school and community. They also show how God wants us to serve people in need and promote justice and peace.



## Pray It!

**Pray It! articles** help you talk to God and listen for God's voice. Sometimes they connect with the way we pray at Mass. As you read, consider keeping a journal to record your thoughts and prayers.



## Study It!

**Study It! articles** help you understand what the author of a story was trying to share. They focus on symbols, the history behind the story, and the way people lived back then.

## Who wrote the Bible?

Many Bible stories were first told around campfires and in religious gatherings. Others were shared by prophets and evangelists. Eventually these were written down. We have no idea who most of these original writers were. We do know that the Holy Spirit inspired these authors to communicate God's truth.

## How do I find Bible passages?

The Bible is organized to help you locate specific passages. Each of its books is divided into chapters. Chapter numbers are the larger ones on the page. Each chapter is divided into verses. Verse numbers are the smaller numbers in each chapter.

A citation has a book name, a chapter number, and verse numbers. Here's an example: Genesis 1:1–2. In this example, the book is Genesis, the chapter is 1, and the verse numbers are 1 to 2. Try to find Genesis 1:1–2. The chart in the back of *Breakthrough!* will help you find Bible books.

Name of Book      Verse(s)  
Chapter  
 Genesis 1:1–2

## Where can I learn more?

You will find important Study and Prayer Helps in the back of *Breakthrough!* An index will help you find the stories of important Bible events and Jesus' miracles, parables, and teachings. Another index lists topics covered in the Pray It!, Study It!, Live It!, and Catholic Connections articles. A glossary will help you understand unfamiliar Bible words. There are sections to help you find important Catholic prayers and teachings. Nine maps show the location of important events in the Bible. Make It Stick! suggests Bible passages that could apply to important moments in your life. Finally, Go Forth! helps you share the joy of the gospel with the people you encounter.

## Why do we say the Bible is the Word of God?

The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible's human authors. God helped them communicate what he wanted us to know. God is the Bible's ultimate author. God wants to communicate his truth and love to us. God inspired human authors to accurately communicate what we need to know about him.

Inspiration does not mean that the Holy Spirit took over the minds of the Bible's authors. They used the knowledge and language they had available. Being inspired did not change their limitations. Under the Holy Spirit's guidance they communicated the truth we need to know God's plan for us.

## What is a good way to study the Bible?

Start with a book that interests you and read a chapter or two every day until you finish it. Then pick another book and keep going.

It is good to have a ritual when you read. This will help you focus on what God wants to say to you.

Try these steps:

1. Pray that God will help you understand what you read.
2. Read carefully. Don't rush. Try to hear every word.
3. Think about what you read. Imagine yourself in the story. How would you feel? What do you think God is saying to you?
4. Read any articles connected to the passage you read.
5. Consider how the reading applies to your life. Is God comforting you? Is God calling you to try something new? Talk with God about whatever you are thinking or feeling.



# GOD BREAKS THROUGH: SALVATION HISTORY TIME LINE

## Primeval History

Creation – 2000 BC

### Bible Book

Genesis,  
chapters 1–11

### Bible People

• Adam & Eve

**The Bible begins** with imaginative stories about how God created everything. These are sometimes called *primeval* stories, meaning they involve events that happened before recorded history. The stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, and the Tower of Babel teach us that God created everything and that human beings have a special place in creation. They teach us that sin destroys our relationships with God and with one other. They teach us that sin spreads and that without God's help, it leads to death and destruction.

To start this period, go to:  
Genesis 1:1–2:3



## Patriarchs

2000 BC – 1700 BC

### Bible Book

Genesis,  
chapters 12–50

### Bible People

• Abraham • Sarah  
• Isaac • Jacob  
• Leah & Rachel  
• Joseph

**God begins to form** a special relationship with a chosen race of people. He makes a special promise, called a *covenant*, with Abram and his wife, Sarai (as part of the covenant, he changes their names to Abraham and Sarah). God promises that their descendants will be numerous and that they will inherit a Promised Land. We then read about Abraham and Sarah's son, Isaac; their grandsons, Jacob and Esau; and their great-grandchildren, including Joseph. These stories show us that even though Abraham and Sarah's descendants had many problems, God was faithful to his covenant. Jacob's sons become the patriarchs—that is, founding fathers—of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

To start this period, go to:  
Genesis 12:1–9

These boxes throughout the Bible will direct you to important passages in each period. After reading the passage, think about the question or comment that follows. Remember: God wants us to understand how the Bible connects to our lives!

**The Bible shows how God breaks through to save human beings from sin and bring us to eternal life.** History told from the perspective of God's breaking through is called *salvation history*. This time line shows the major periods of salvation history. Each section lists Bible books that tell stories from that period, lists important people of that period, and describes what God is doing in that period.

## Egypt and the Exodus

1700 BC – 1250 BC

### Bible Books

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

### Bible People

- Moses
- Miriam & Aaron

**At the beginning** of the Book of Exodus, we discover the descendants of Jacob's children—now called Israelites—enslaved in Egypt. God hears their cries and calls Moses to lead them out of slavery. But Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader, has a hard heart. God sends terrible plagues to make him let the Israelites go. Their escape from Egypt and journey to the Promised Land is called the Exodus.

On their journey, the Israelites stop at Mount Sinai. There God extends the covenant he made with Abraham to all the Israelites. He gives Moses the Ten Commandments, which the people must obey as part of the covenant.

To start this period, go to:  
Exodus 1:15–2:22



## Settling the Promised Land

1250 BC – 1050 BC

### Bible Books

Joshua, Judges, Ruth

### Bible People

- Joshua • Deborah
- Samson • Ruth

**Moses dies** before the Israelites enter the Promised Land. God calls Joshua to lead the people into the land. Much of it is inhabited by other people. The Israelites must fight to gain control of the land. When they trust God, they succeed in their battles; when they do not trust God, they fail. Eventually they gain control of the land, and each of the Twelve Tribes receives its own section.

New invaders, the Philistines, try to capture the land. At this time, the Israelites have no king, because God is their ruler. But God calls special prophets and warriors, called judges, to help deliver justice and defend the land against the Philistines.

To start this period, go to:  
Joshua, chapters 1–2

## Kingdoms of Judah and Israel

1050 BC – 587 BC

### Bible Books

1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah

### Bible People

- Samuel • Saul • David
- Solomon • Elijah • Elisha
- Josiah • Isaiah
- Jeremiah • Amos

**At the end of the period** of the judges, the Israelites want their own king. God tells Samuel—the last judge—to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. David succeeds Saul as king. David is a mighty warrior and unites the Twelve Tribes into one kingdom. David's son, Solomon, builds a Temple at Jerusalem, the capital city.

After Solomon's death, there is disagreement among the tribes, and the kingdom splits in two. Israel is the northern kingdom and Judah is the southern kingdom. Many kings of Israel and Judah worship foreign gods and allow injustice in their kingdoms. Prophets like Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah call the people to stop worshiping idols, to practice justice, and to care for people in need.

To start this period, go to:  
1 Samuel 1:9–2:11



## Exile and Return

587 BC – AD 1

### Bible Books

Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Esther, 1 & 2 Maccabees, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ben Sira, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

### Bible People

- Judith • the Maccabees
- Esther • Ezekiel

**Despite the prophets' warnings**, the people of Israel and Judah continue to turn away from God's covenant with them. So God lets their kingdoms be conquered. The Assyrians conquer Israel in 721 BC. In 587 BC, the Babylonians conquer Judah. Many people are made captives, so this time is called the Exile. Prophets like Ezekiel comfort the Israelites with the promise that God is still with them. Israel's exile lasts fifty years. Then a new king allows the people—now called Judeans or Jews—to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. The people see God's hand at work. During this troubled time, they hope for a messiah, or savior, to make them great again.

To start this period, go to:  
Nehemiah, chapters 8–9



## Life of Jesus Christ

AD 1 – AD 33

### Bible Books

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

### Bible People

- Mary • John the Baptist
- Peter • Mary Magdalene
- The Twelve Apostles
- Mary & Martha

**When the time is right**, God sends his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. When Jesus is born, the Romans rule Israel. Some Jews are hoping for a mighty warrior and king like David, who would drive the Romans out. Instead, Jesus shows a different way. He preaches love, justice, and forgiveness. He heals and works miracles as signs of God's power.

Jesus' followers, called disciples, come to see that he is the promised Messiah, the Savior. Jesus shows that salvation comes through faith in God and a change of heart, not through violence and political power. When the Romans kill Jesus—with the approval of the Jewish leaders—his followers think that all is lost. Instead, after three days God raises Jesus from the dead!

To start this period, go to:  
Matthew 2:1–12



## Early Christian Church

AD 33 – AD 100

### Bible Books

Acts of the Apostles, Romans; 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians; Ephesians, Philippians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Philemon; Hebrews; James; 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2, & 3 John; Jude; Revelation

### Bible People

- Paul • Timothy
- Priscilla (Prisca) & Aquila

**After his Resurrection**, Jesus instructs his closest followers, the Apostles, to go and spread the Good News of salvation to all people. The Holy Spirit gives them the courage to tell others about Jesus. They first preach to other Jews. Sometimes Jewish leaders who do not believe in Jesus persecute them.

One of those persecutors—who would come to be known as Paul—has a vision of Jesus and becomes a Christian. God reveals to Paul that Christ came for all people. So Paul begins preaching to non-Jews, who were called Gentiles. Wherever he travels, he starts new Christian communities. He is helped by many other believers, women and men alike. Soon Christianity spreads throughout the Roman Empire.

To start this period, go to:  
Acts 1:1–14

# Preface to the NEW AMERICAN BIBLE

## Revised Old Testament

The first step in the genesis of the New American Bible was taken in 1936 when His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edwin V. O'Hara, D.D., chairman of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, invited a group of Catholic Scripture scholars to plan for a revised edition of the Challoner-Rheims New Testament, primarily on the basis of the Vulgate; the plans soon expanded to include the revision of the Old Testament. Archbishop O'Hara's initiative resulted in the formation of the Catholic Biblical Association, whose principal activity in its early years was this work of revision and translation. (For information on the work done on the New Testament, see the "Preface to The New American Bible: First Edition of the New Testament" and "Preface to the Revised Edition.") In 1943 His Holiness Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu*, which encouraged Scripture scholars to translate the Scriptures from the original languages. He wrote: "We ought to explain the original text which was written by the inspired author himself and has more authority and greater weight than any, even the very best, translation whether ancient or modern. This can be done all the more easily and fruitfully if to the knowledge of languages be joined a real skill in literary criticism of the same text." Although at this point work on almost twenty of the Old Testament books was completed or near completion, that work was abandoned and the new project of translating from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic was undertaken.

The completed books of the Old Testament were initially published, as they became available, in four volumes: Genesis-Ruth (1952), Job-Sirach (1955), Isaiah-Malachi (1961), and Samuel-Maccabees (1969). Some fifty scholars collaborated on this project; these were mainly Catholics, but, in accord with the suggestion of Vatican II that "with the approv-

al of the church authority, these translations be produced in cooperation with separated brothers" so that "all Christians may be able to use them" (*Dei Verbum*, No. 22), non-Catholics also participated in the work. To this point the translation had been known under the name of the "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" or CCD for short, but when these parts of the Old Testament were combined with the New Testament in a single volume, it was given the name "New American Bible," in part to reflect its ecumenical character. In producing the new volume certain changes were made from the original four volumes: a retranslation of the Book of Genesis, cross-references, new and expanded exegetical notes.

New translations and revision of existing translations are required from time to time for various reasons. For example, it is important to keep pace with the discovery and publication of new and better ancient manuscripts (e.g., the Dead Sea scrolls) so that the best possible textual tradition will be followed, as required by *Divino afflante spiritu*. There are advances in linguistics of the biblical languages which make possible a better understanding and more accurate translation of the original languages. And there are changes and developments in vocabulary and the cultural background of the receptor language. An obvious example of this is the abandonment in English of the second person singular (use of "thee," "thou," "sayest," "hearest"), which had a major impact on Bible translations. Other changes are less obvious but are nevertheless present. There have been changes in vocabulary; for example, the term "holocaust" is now normally reserved for the sacrilegious attempt to destroy the Jewish people by the Third Reich. Concerns such as these are reflected in what Pope John Paul II spoke of as

the “three pillars” of good biblical translation: “A good translation is based on three pillars that must contemporaneously support the entire work. First, there must be a deep knowledge of the language and the cultural world at the point of origin. Next, there must be a good familiarity with the language and cultural context at the point where the work will arrive. Lastly, to crown the work with success, there must be an adequate mastery of the contents and meaning of what one is translating”—and he praised the translation that “utilizes the vocabulary and idioms of everyday speech” (“le parole e le forme della lingua di tutti i giorni”). (From an address to the United Bible Societies, November 26, 2001.)

This new edition is a thorough revision of the already excellent *New American Bible* Old Testament of 1970. Work on most books of the Old Testament, begun in 1994 and completed in 2001, was done by forty revisers and a board of eight editors. The 1991 revision of the Psalter, the work of thirty revisers and six editors, was further revised by seven revisers and two editors between 2009 and 2010. As suggested in the comments above, the revision aimed at making use of the best manuscript traditions available (see below), translating as accurately as possible, and rendering the result in good contemporary English. In many ways it is a more literal translation than the original *NAB* and has attempted to be more consistent in rendering Hebrew (or Greek) words and idioms, especially in technical contexts, such as regulations for sacrifices. In translating the Psalter special effort was made to provide a smooth, rhythmic translation for easy singing or recitation, and to retain the concrete imagery of the Hebrew.

Where the Old Testament translation supposes the received text—Hebrew, Aramaic, or

Greek, as the case may be—ordinarily contained in the best-known editions, as the original or the oldest extant form, no additional remarks are necessary. Where the translators have departed from those received texts, e.g., by following the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic text, accepting a reading of what is judged to be a better textual tradition, as from a Qumran manuscript, or by emending a reading apparently corrupted in transmission, such changes are recorded in the revised edition of the *Textual Notes on the New American Bible*. Additional information on the textual tradition for some books may be found in the introduction to the book in the same *Textual Notes*.

In particular, important manuscripts from Cave 4 of Qumran, as well as the most useful recensions of the Septuagint, have been consulted in the preparation of 1 and 2 Samuel. Fragments of the lost Book of Tobit in Aramaic and in Hebrew, recovered from Cave 4 of Qumran, are in substantial agreement with the Sinaiticus Greek recension used for the translation of this book. The lost original Hebrew text of 1 Maccabees is replaced by its oldest extant form in Greek. Judith, 2 Maccabees, and parts of Esther are also translated from the Greek. The translation of The Wisdom of Ben Sira is based on the original Hebrew as far as it is preserved, with corrections from the ancient versions; otherwise, the Greek of the Septuagint is followed. In the Book of Baruch the basic text is the Greek of the Septuagint, with some readings derived from an underlying Hebrew form no longer extant. In the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel (3:24–90; 13:1–14:42), the basic text is the Greek text of so-called Theodotion, occasionally revised according to the Greek text of the Septuagint.



# The Old Testament

**The Bible is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.** The Old Testament in Catholic Bibles contains forty-six books.

The Old Testament books include many different kinds of writing. You will find history, poetry, legends, laws, wise sayings, short stories, and prophecy. The Old Testament books focus on God's relationship with his Chosen People. God breaks through and calls the Chosen People to recognize him as their only God. God promises to bless them in a special way, and he asks the Chosen People to be faithful to his commands.

This holy promise between God and the Chosen People is called a covenant. *Testament* is another word for *covenant*, so the Old Testament tells of the covenant between God and his special people—the Jews. For this reason, most of the books of the Old Testament are also the Sacred Scriptures of the Jewish people. Because most of the books were written in Hebrew, they are sometimes called the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Old Testament isn't "old" because it is out of date. It is "old" because it is the story of how God first made his covenant with his Chosen People.

The Bibles that most Protestants use have thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. Those Bibles do not include the books of Tobit, Judith, First and Second Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and some parts of Esther and Daniel.

At different times, God's Chosen People are called Hebrews, Israelites, Judeans, and Jews.

To fully understand God's plan for the human race, we need both the Old and the New Testaments. In the Old Testament, God reveals his love for us. The stories teach us how sin keeps us from fully experiencing God's love. The Old Testament shows how God broke through to put his Chosen People on the right path. The stories prepare us to understand how Jesus Christ fulfills God's promise to save us from sin and death.

**The Old Testament in Christian Bibles is often divided into smaller sections. This translation has five sections. Here is what happens in each one:**

### **The Pentateuch or Torah**

These five books are the heart of the Old Testament. They teach about Creation and how sin entered the world. They tell how God broke through the separation caused by human sinfulness to first make his covenant with Noah and Abraham. The Book of Exodus tells how God led his people out of slavery through the leadership of Moses. At Mount Sinai, God extended the covenant to all his Chosen People and gave them the Ten Commandments.

### **The Historical Books**

These eleven books are mostly religious history. They tell how the Chosen People settled in the Promised Land. Eventually the people became a kingdom led by kings like Saul, David, and Solomon. But the rulers and the people often worshipped false gods and ignored people in need. So God sent prophets like Elijah and Elisha to call the people to be faithful to the covenant.

### **The Biblical Novellas**

These five books tell stories of people who remained true to God in times of hardship. Tobit, Judith, and Esther are imaginative stories written to encourage the Israelites during times of exile and persecution. First and Second Maccabees are histories of the Jewish people under Greek rule.

### **The Wisdom and Poetry Books**

These seven books contain the collected wisdom of the Chosen People. They contain the songs the people used in worship and prayer. They contain advice for living a holy life. For example, Song of Songs has poetry about the goodness of sexuality, and the Book of Job is a debate about why good people suffer bad things.

### **The Books of the Prophets**

These eighteen books contain the messages of important prophets. The prophets delivered God's message to the Chosen People. They warned against worshiping false gods. They challenged the Chosen People to act fairly and to care for the poor. The prophets also offered comfort and hope when the people thought God had abandoned them. And some prophets promised a future savior, the Messiah, who would bring God's love, justice, and peace to the world.

## THE BOOK OF

# GENESIS

**Jake's mom keeps photo albums and scrapbooks.** Chantal's dad records the major moments in Chantal's life—and the not-so-major ones. Dylan's grandparents tell stories about what life was like when they were young. Human beings need to keep track of their memories. They also need to understand where they came from and where they are going.

The Book of Genesis does these things for the family of God. It starts out with stories about how God created the world, how evil came to be, and what God did about it. Then it tells the history of God's people—people who are holy (sometimes), good (except when they're bad), and faithful to God (eventually). Most of all, the Book of Genesis is the beginning of a love story between God and us.

## Headlines

- God Creates Stars, Seas, and Slimy Things (chapters 1–2)
- First Sin Leads to First Punishment (chapter 3)
- Flood Warning! Noah Evacuates (chapters 6–8)
- God Calls, Abram Listens (12:1–9)
- Treachery and Trickery: Twin Steals Inheritance (27:1–45)
- Jacob Tricked, Marries Wrong Sister! (29:14–30)
- Pharaoh Appoints Israelite Governor (41:37–57)

## Did You Know?

**Who wrote this book?** A tradition says Moses wrote Genesis, but that is unlikely. It was probably written by one or more authors who collected stories that were passed from generation to generation by word of mouth.

**Why was it written?** Genesis was written to explain how God created the world, how sin became part of life, and how the Israelites came to be God's Chosen People.

**How does it fit into the Bible?** Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It is part of the Pentateuch, the five books of the Bible that Jews call the Torah.

**How is it organized?** The first eleven chapters tell the story of Creation, the Fall, and God's covenant with Noah. The rest of the book starts the history of God's Chosen People, beginning with Abraham and Sarah.

## Important themes

- Everything God created is good and holy.
- Sin and evil are real.
- God promises to care for those who are faithful.



## Preamble. The Creation of the World

### The Story of Creation\*

**1** <sup>1</sup>In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth<sup>a—2\*</sup>and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—<sup>b</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light.<sup>c</sup> <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.\*

<sup>6</sup>Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other. <sup>7</sup>God made the dome,\* and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened.<sup>d</sup> <sup>8</sup>God called the dome “sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

<sup>9</sup>Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared.<sup>e</sup> <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land “earth,” and the basin of water he called “sea.” God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup><sup>f</sup>Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: <sup>12</sup>the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

<sup>14</sup>Then God said: Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years,<sup>g</sup> <sup>15</sup>and serve as lights in the dome of the sky, to illuminate

**Read:** Genesis 1:1–2:3

God gave humans a unique role in caring for his beautiful creation. How can you help do this?

**Up Next:** Genesis, chapter 3

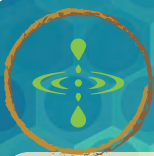
the earth. And so it happened: <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night, and the stars.<sup>h</sup> <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup><sup>i</sup>Then God said: Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky. <sup>21</sup>God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of crawling living creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw that it was good, <sup>22</sup>and God blessed them, saying: Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth.<sup>j</sup> <sup>23</sup>Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup><sup>k</sup>Then God said: Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: tame animals, crawling things, and every kind of wild animal. And so it happened: <sup>25</sup>God made every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, and every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. God saw that it was good. <sup>26</sup>Then God said: Let us make\* human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

<sup>27</sup> God created mankind in his image;  
in the image of God he created  
them;  
male and female\* he created them.

a 1:1 Gn 2:1, 4; 2 Mc 7:28; Ps 8:4; 33:6; 89:12; 90:2; Wis 11:17; Sir 16:24; Jer 10:12; Acts 14:15; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2–3; 3:4; 11:3; Rev 4:11. b 1:2 Jer 4:23. c 1:3 2 Cor 4:6. d 1:7 Piv 8:27–28; 2 Pt 3:5. e 1:9 Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22. f 1:11 Ps 104:14. g 1:14 Jb 26:10; Ps 19:2–3; Bar 3:33. h 1:16 Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7–9; Wis 13:2–4; Jer 31:35. i 1:20 Jb 12:7–10. j 1:22 Gn 8:17. k 1:24 Sir 16:27–28. l 1:26–27 Gn 5:1, 3; 9:6; Ps 8:5–6; Wis 2:23; 10:2; Sir 17:1, 3–4; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6; Jas 3:7; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10.



## Live It!

### And God Was Pleased

The Bible says that every time God created something, God was pleased. God never made a mistake in creation, never started over, never even said “oops!” Poison ivy, grizzly bears, hurricanes, spiders, bacteria, vultures, and aardvarks—all were worthy of God’s pride.

God was especially proud of the human beings he made on the sixth day (Genesis 1:26–31). No human being who lives on this planet was a mistake. You are here because God wanted you at this time, in this place, and for a special reason. The same goes for the person at school whom you really don’t like and the person halfway across the world who lives in an “enemy” country.

The next time you’re down on yourself or someone else, remember that everyone has a bad day once in a while and try to imagine God saying, “I am very pleased! I do great work!”

Genesis 1:1–2:3

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.\* Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.<sup>m</sup> <sup>29</sup><sup>n</sup>God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; <sup>30</sup>and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened. <sup>31</sup>God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.<sup>o</sup>

**2**<sup>1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.<sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>\*On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.<sup>b</sup> <sup>3</sup>God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.<sup>c</sup>

## I. The Story of the Nations

### The Garden of Eden

<sup>4</sup>This is the story\* of the heavens and the earth at their creation. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—<sup>5</sup>there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man\* to till the ground, <sup>6</sup>but a stream\* was welling up out of the earth and watering all the surface of the ground—<sup>7</sup>then the LORD God formed the man\* out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,\* and placed there the man whom he had formed.<sup>e</sup> <sup>9</sup>\*Out of the ground the LORD God made grow every tree that was delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>10</sup>A river rises in Eden\* to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>The gold of that land is good; bdellium and lapis lazuli are also there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush.<sup>g</sup> <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

*m* 1:28 Gn 8:17; 9:1; Ps 8:6–9; 115:16; Wis 9:2. *n* 1:29–30 Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14–15. *o* 1:31 1 Tm 4:4. *a* 2:1 Is 45:12; Jn 1:3. *b* 2:2 Ex 20:9–11; 31:17; Heb 4:4, 10. *c* 2:3 Ex 20:11; Dt 5:14; Neh 9:14. *d* 2:7 Gn 3:19; 18:27; Tb 8:6; Jb 34:15; Ps 103:14; 104:29; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Wis 7:1; Sir 33:10; 1 Cor 15:45. *e* 2:8 Is 51:3; Ez 31:9. *f* 2:9 Gn 3:22; Prv 3:18; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14. *g* 2:13 Sir 24:25.



Have you cared  
for a pet or  
babysat a child?  
How did you feel  
in that role?

### The Beauty of Creation

For the full story, read Genesis, chapters 1–2.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.<sup>h</sup> <sup>16</sup>The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden<sup>i</sup> <sup>17</sup>except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die.<sup>j</sup>

<sup>18</sup>The LORD God said: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him.<sup>k</sup> <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each living creature was then its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all the tame animals, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be a helper suited to the man.

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.<sup>l</sup> <sup>22</sup>The LORD God then

built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man, <sup>23</sup>the man said:

"This one, at last, is bone of my  
bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
This one shall be called 'woman,'  
for out of man this one has been  
taken."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>24m</sup>That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.\*

<sup>25</sup>The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.\*

### Expulsion from Eden

**3**<sup>1</sup>Now the snake was the most cunning\* of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup>The woman answered the snake:

<sup>h</sup> 2:15 Sir 7:15. <sup>i</sup> 2:16 Ps 104:14–15. <sup>j</sup> 2:17 Gn 3:2–3; Rom 6:23. <sup>k</sup> 2:18 Tb 8:6; Sir 36:24; 1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tm 2:13. <sup>l</sup> 2:21 Sir 17:1; 1 Cor 11:8–9; 1 Tm 2:13. <sup>m</sup> 2:24 Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7; 1 Cor 7:10–11; Eph 5:31.



**Read:** Genesis, chapter 3

How does getting caught doing something wrong make you feel?

**Up Next:** Genesis 6:5–7:5

## Genesis

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3a</sup>it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.’” <sup>4</sup>But the snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die!<sup>b</sup> <sup>5</sup>God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know\* good and evil.” <sup>6</sup>The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.<sup>c</sup> <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

<sup>8</sup>When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day,\* the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.<sup>d</sup> <sup>9</sup>The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? <sup>10</sup>He answered, “I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid.” <sup>11</sup>Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat? <sup>12</sup>The man replied, “The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it.” <sup>13</sup>The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, “The snake tricked me, so I ate it.”<sup>e</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD God said to the snake:

Because you have done this,  
cursed are you



## Study It!

### Uncovering the Truth

The first two chapters of Genesis tell two different stories of creation. Some people believe that everything happened just as the Bible says it did. But Bible scholars tell us that neither of these stories gives us the scientific or historical *facts* about creation. For example, God did not really create the world in six twenty-four-hour days. Neither God nor Adam named anything. And God did not take a rib from Adam to create Eve.

The stories in Genesis are symbolic stories. They do not teach scientific facts, but they do tell us some important truths about God:

- God always was, even before the universe was created.
- God created everything.
- God loves all of creation.
- God created humans in the image of God.
- God created us to be happy and live in perfect harmony with him, each other, and all creation.

There are many ways to communicate religious truth, and the Bible uses most of them. Believing the religious truth that the Bible teaches is the thing that really matters.

Genesis 2:4–25

among all the animals, tame or wild;

On your belly you shall crawl,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.\*<sup>f</sup>

- <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
They will strike at your head,  
while you strike at their heel.\*<sup>g</sup>

a 3:3 Gn 2:17; Rom 6:23. b 3:4–5 Wis 2:24; Sir 25:14; Is 14:14; Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 11:3. c 3:6 Gn 3:22; 1 Tm 2:14. d 3:8 Jer 23:24. e 3:13 2 Cor 11:3. f 3:14 Is 65:25; Mi 7:17; Rev 12:9. g 3:15 Rom 16:20; 1 Jn 3:8; Rev 12:17.



## Catholic Connections

### Original Sin

In Genesis, chapter 3, a snake tells Adam and Eve that they can be just like God if they eat fruit from a certain tree. The trouble is that God told them not to. Knowing it is wrong, they eat it anyway. As a consequence God tells them to leave the garden and promises that they will now have a hard life. Their problems were passed to all future generations—including ours.

Just like the creation stories, the story about the snake is symbolic and teaches a great truth: human beings turned away from God. The Church calls this turning from God original sin. Just as you got your brown eyes from your mom or your gift for music from your grandfather, you were born with original sin because of the sin of the first human beings—Adam and Eve.

Because of original sin, human beings are more likely to disobey God; there is evil in the world; our relationships are sometimes difficult. But through our Baptism, original sin is forgiven and we are born to a new life as sons and daughters of God.

Genesis 3:1–24

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said:

I will intensify your toil in childbearing;  
in pain\* you shall bring forth  
children.

Yet your urge shall be for your  
husband,  
and he shall rule over you.

<sup>17</sup>To the man he said: Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, You shall not eat from it,

Cursed is the ground\* because of you!  
In toil you shall eat its yield  
all the days of your life.<sup>h</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Thorns and thistles it shall bear for  
you,  
and you shall eat the grass of the  
field.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow  
you shall eat bread,  
Until you return to the ground,  
from which you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>20</sup>The man gave his wife the name “Eve,” because she was the mother of all the living.\*

<sup>21</sup>The LORD God made for the man and his wife garments of skin, with which he clothed them. <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God said: See! The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil! Now, what if he also reaches out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life, and eats of it and lives forever?<sup>i</sup> <sup>23</sup>The LORD God therefore banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken. <sup>24</sup>He expelled the man, stationing the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.

### Cain and Abel

**4**<sup>1</sup>The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, saying, “I have produced a male child with the help of the LORD.”\* <sup>2</sup>Next she gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel became a herder of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the ground.\* <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought an offering

<sup>h</sup> 3:17 Gn 5:29; Rom 5:12; 8:20; Heb 6:8. <sup>i</sup> 3:19 Gn 2:7; Jb 10:9; 34:15; Ps 90:3; 103:14; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Wis 15:8; Sir 10:9; 17:2; Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 9:27. <sup>j</sup> 3:22 Gn 2:9; Rev 22:2, 14.



# Adam and Eve

For their full story, read Genesis 2:4–3:24.

**Breakthrough!:** So, if you had a do-over from that day in the garden, what would you do?

**Eve:** I would have said, “What do you know? A talking snake!” and run away!

**Adam:** Truth be told, that hissing she heard was really the voice of evil in our minds.

**B:** I don’t get it. You mean there was no sneaky snake?

**Eve:** It helps to understand that we are in a symbolic story. The snake is a symbol of the power of temptation, and even of Satan.

**B:** Then you’re also symbolic?

**Adam:** Oh no, we were real people. But our names are symbolic; no one remembers what our names really were. We also embody the challenges people face.

**B:** What was so challenging about your setup? The world was perfect. God made you good! All you had to do was not eat fruit from that tree. You had one job!

**Eve:** Well, our perfect life in the garden is also a symbol. It shows how things should be between God and humans.

**Adam:** God gave us one gift that’s very real—our free will. It’s the ability to choose between good and evil. God trusted us, despite the fact that we’re only human.

**Eve:** And we couldn’t handle it. Being human, we wanted more. We wanted to be God. So we gave in to temptation.

**B:** You are like me! I get pretty insecure sometimes. The gifts God gave me sometimes don’t seem good enough. So I go too far and I wind up feeling far from God.

**Adam:** Exactly! It’s a weakness. But we’re not alone. Since our first sin, everybody is born somewhat separated from God and has a tendency to choose sin.

**B:** But because of your weakness, you lost it all.

**Adam:** Not quite. God’s love is stronger than our weaknesses.

**Eve:** And although we sometimes turn from God, we can’t lose God’s love. Nobody can take that away from us!



to the LORD from the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup>while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion\* of the firstlings of his flock. <sup>a</sup>The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain: Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? <sup>7</sup>If you act rightly, you will be accepted;\* but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it. <sup>b</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field."\* When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>c</sup><sup>9</sup>Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup>God then said: What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! <sup>11</sup>Now you are banned from the ground\* that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>d</sup><sup>12</sup>If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a constant wanderer on the earth. <sup>13</sup>Cain said to the LORD: "My punishment is too great to bear. <sup>14</sup>Look, you have now banished me from the ground. I must avoid you and be a constant wanderer on the earth. Anyone may kill me at sight." <sup>15</sup>Not so! the LORD said to him. If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged seven times. So the LORD put a mark\* on Cain, so that no one would kill him at sight. <sup>16</sup>Cain then left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,\* east of Eden.

### Descendants of Cain and Seth

<sup>17</sup>\*Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. Cain also became the founder of a city, which he named after his son Enoch. <sup>18</sup>To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael; Mehujael became the father of Methusael, and Methusael became the father of Lamech. <sup>19</sup>Lamech took two wives; the name of the first was



## Pray It!

### Am I Like Cain?

*Am I like Cain, God?*

Sometimes I hurt those who do well at the things I'd like to be good at. I hurt them with my words, my attitudes, and my actions.

*Am I like Cain, God?*

When I'm punished for something I did wrong, I complain about the unfairness of it all. I don't take responsibility for what I did.

*Am I like Cain, God?*

I know I sometimes don't do my best. I do just enough to barely get by. Then when someone tells me it's not good enough, I get angry.

*Am I like Cain, God?*

If I'm like Cain, God, I'm sorry. Please help me let go of the anger and jealousy that's in my heart. Replace it with kindness, fairness, and the ability to see myself as you see me.

Amen.

Genesis 4:1-16

Adah, and the name of the second Zillah. <sup>20</sup>Adah gave birth to Jabal, who became the ancestor of those who dwell in tents and keep livestock. <sup>21</sup>His brother's name was Jubal, who became the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the reed pipe. <sup>22</sup>Zillah, on her part, gave birth to Tubalcain, the ancestor of all who forge instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. <sup>23</sup>\*Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
wives of Lamech, listen to my  
utterance:

I have killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for bruising me.

<sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged seven times,  
then Lamech seventy-seven  
times."



## Catholic Connections

### Respecting Life

Cain tried to hide it at first. When God asked about Abel, Cain said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). But God knew the truth: Cain had killed his brother.

In many parts of the world (including the United States), if someone kills another person, he or she can be put to death for the crime. But God spared Cain from that fate. He even put a mark on Cain to warn others not to kill him. The rest of his life was miserable, but he lived.

The Catholic Church teaches that all of life is sacred—even the life of a person who has taken someone else's life. For that reason the death penalty must not be used if there are other ways to keep the murderer from hurting someone else. God calls us to respect all life.

Genesis 4:8–16

<sup>25</sup>Adam again had intercourse with his wife, and she gave birth to a son whom she called Seth. "God has granted me another offspring in place of Abel," she said, "because Cain killed him." <sup>26</sup>To Seth, in turn, a son was born, and he named him Enosh.

At that time people began to invoke the LORD by name.<sup>e</sup>

### Generations: Adam to Noah\*

(1 Chronicles 1:1–4)

**5** <sup>1a</sup>This is the record of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings, he made them in the likeness of God; <sup>2</sup>he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and named them humankind.

<sup>3b</sup>Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when he begot a son in his likeness, after his image; and he named him Seth.<sup>c</sup> <sup>4</sup>Adam lived eight hundred years after he begot Seth, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup>The whole lifetime of Adam was nine hundred and thirty years; then he died.

<sup>6</sup>When Seth was one hundred and five years old, he begot Enosh. <sup>7</sup>Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he

begot Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup>The whole lifetime of Seth was nine hundred and twelve years; then he died.

<sup>9</sup>When Enosh was ninety years old, he begot Kenan. <sup>10</sup>Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after he begot Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup>The whole lifetime of Enosh was nine hundred and five years; then he died.

<sup>12</sup>When Kenan was seventy years old, he begot Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup>Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after he begot Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup>The whole lifetime of Kenan was nine hundred and ten years; then he died.

<sup>15</sup>When Mahalalel was sixty-five years old, he begot Jared. <sup>16</sup>Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he begot Jared, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup>The whole lifetime of Mahalalel was eight hundred and ninety-five years; then he died.

<sup>18</sup>When Jared was one hundred and sixty-two years old, he begot Enoch. <sup>19</sup>Jared lived eight hundred years after he begot Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup>The whole lifetime of Jared

<sup>e</sup> 4:26 1 Chr 1:1; Lk 3:38. <sup>a</sup> 5:1 Gn 1:27; Wis 2:23; Sir 17:1; Jas 3:9. <sup>b</sup> 5:3–32 1 Chr 1:1–4; Lk 3:36–38. <sup>c</sup> 5:3 Gn 4:25.



Who is counting on you? What do your friends and family expect from you?

### Am I My Brother's Keeper?

For the full story, read Genesis 4:1–16.

was nine hundred and sixty-two years; then he died.

<sup>21</sup>When Enoch was sixty-five years old, he begot Methuselah. <sup>22</sup>Enoch walked with God after he begot Methuselah for three hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup>The whole lifetime of Enoch was three hundred and sixty-five years. <sup>24</sup>Enoch walked with God,\* and he was no longer here, for God took him.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>25</sup>When Methuselah was one hundred and eighty-seven years old, he begot Lamech. <sup>26</sup>Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years after he begot Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>27</sup>The whole lifetime of Methuselah was nine hundred and sixty-nine years; then he died.

<sup>28</sup>When Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two years old, he begot a son <sup>29e</sup>and named him Noah, saying, "This one shall bring us relief from our work and the toil of our hands, out of the very ground that the LORD has put under a

curse."<sup>\*</sup> <sup>30</sup>Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he begot Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup>The whole lifetime of Lamech was seven hundred and seventy-seven years; then he died.

<sup>32</sup>When Noah was five hundred years old, he begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.<sup>\*f</sup>

### Origin of the Nephilim\*

**6** <sup>1</sup>When human beings began to grow numerous on the earth and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup>the sons of God\* saw how beautiful the daughters of human beings were, and so they took for their wives whomever they pleased.<sup>a</sup> <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said: My spirit shall not remain in human beings forever, because they are only flesh. Their days shall comprise one hundred and twenty years.

<sup>4</sup>The Nephilim appeared on earth in those days, as well as later,\* after the sons of God had intercourse with the daughters of human beings, who bore them sons.



**Read:** Genesis 6:5–7:5

How would you feel if you advised a friend to do the right thing, but she chose to do something bad instead?

**Up Next:** Genesis 7:6–9:29

They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.<sup>b</sup>

### Warning of the Flood

<sup>5</sup>When the LORD saw how great the wickedness of human beings was on earth, and how every desire that their heart conceived was always nothing but evil,<sup>c</sup> <sup>6</sup>the LORD regretted making human beings on the earth, and his heart was grieved.\*

<sup>7</sup>So the LORD said: I will wipe out from the earth the human beings I have created, and not only the human beings, but also the animals and the crawling things and the birds of the air, for I regret that I made them.\* <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and blameless in his generation;<sup>d</sup> Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup>Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>But the earth was corrupt\* in the view of God and full of lawlessness.<sup>e</sup> <sup>12</sup>When God saw how corrupt the earth had become, since all mortals had corrupted their ways on earth,<sup>f</sup> <sup>13</sup>God said to Noah: I see that the end of all mortals has come, for the earth is full of lawlessness because of them. So I am going to destroy them with the earth.<sup>g</sup>

### Preparation for the Flood

<sup>14</sup>Make yourself an ark of gopherwood,\* equip the ark with various compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch. <sup>15</sup>This is how you shall build it: the length of the ark will be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.\* <sup>16</sup>Make an opening for daylight\* and finish the ark a cubit above it. Put the ark's entrance on its side; you will make it



## Live It! Finding Hope

God had lost hope in most human beings. Even though they were created in God's image, they were evil and violent. Discouraged, God decided to destroy everyone and start from scratch.

I will wipe out from the earth the human beings I have created, and not only the human beings, but also the animals and the crawling things and the birds of the air, for I regret that I made them. (Genesis 6:7)

But there was one hopeful sign: Noah and his family. They were good people who always put God first in their lives. They were the only ones in the world who lived as God wanted them to live. Because of them, God decided that the world was worth saving after all.

Do you, like Noah, put God first in your life? Where do you find hope when discouraged by evil in the world?

Genesis 6:5–12

with bottom, second and third decks. <sup>17</sup>I, on my part, am about to bring the flood waters on the earth, to destroy all creatures under the sky in which there is the breath of life; everything on earth shall perish.<sup>h</sup> <sup>18</sup>I will establish my covenant with you. You shall go into the ark, you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives with you.<sup>i</sup> <sup>19</sup>Of all living creatures you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, one male and one female,\* to keep them alive along with you. <sup>20</sup>Of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal, and of every kind of thing that crawls on the ground, two of each will come to you, that you may keep them alive. <sup>21</sup>Moreover, you are to provide yourself with all the

<sup>b</sup> 6:4 Wis 14:6; Bar 3:26. <sup>c</sup> 6:5 Ps 14:2–3. <sup>d</sup> 6:9 Wis 10:4; Sir 44:17. <sup>e</sup> 6:11 Jb 22:15–17. <sup>f</sup> 6:12 Ps 14:2. <sup>g</sup> 6:13 Sir 40:9–10; 44:17; Mt 24:37–39. <sup>h</sup> 6:17 Gn 7:4, 21; 2 Pt 2:5. <sup>i</sup> 6:18 Gn 9:9; Wis 14:6; Heb 11:7; 1 Pt 3:20.

food that is to be eaten, and store it away, that it may serve as provisions for you and for them. <sup>22</sup>Noah complied; he did just as God had commanded him.\*

**7** <sup>1</sup>Then the LORD said to Noah: Go into the ark, you and all your household, for you alone in this generation have I found to be righteous before me.<sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>Of every clean animal, take with you seven pairs, a male and its mate; and of the unclean animals, one pair, a male and its mate; <sup>3</sup>likewise, of every bird of the air, seven pairs, a male and a female, to keep their progeny alive over all the earth. <sup>4</sup>For seven days from now I will bring rain down on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and so I will wipe out from the face of the earth every being that I have made.<sup>b</sup> <sup>5</sup>Noah complied, just as the LORD had commanded.

### The Great Flood

<sup>6</sup>Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth. <sup>7</sup>Together with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, Noah went into the ark because of the waters of the flood.<sup>c</sup> <sup>8</sup>Of the clean animals and the unclean, of the birds, and of everything that crawls on the ground, <sup>9</sup>two by two, male and female came to Noah into the ark, just as God had commanded him.<sup>d</sup> <sup>10</sup>When the seven days were over, the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

<sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month: on that day

All the fountains of the great abyss\*  
burst forth,  
and the floodgates of the sky were  
opened.

<sup>12</sup>For forty days and forty nights heavy rain poured down on the earth.

<sup>13</sup>On the very same day, Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and

**Read:** Genesis 7:6–9:29

What do you think it was like for Noah's family to completely start over? When have you wanted to start over?

**Up Next:** Genesis 12:1–9

Noah's wife, and the three wives of Noah's sons had entered the ark, <sup>14</sup>together with every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, every kind of crawling thing that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird. <sup>15</sup>Pairs of all creatures in which there was the breath of life came to Noah into the ark. <sup>16</sup>Those that entered were male and female; of all creatures they came, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

<sup>17</sup>The flood continued upon the earth for forty days. As the waters increased, they lifted the ark, so that it rose above the earth. <sup>18</sup>The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth, but the ark floated on the surface of the waters. <sup>19</sup>Higher and higher on the earth the waters swelled, until all the highest mountains under the heavens were submerged. <sup>20</sup>The waters swelled fifteen cubits higher than the submerged mountains. <sup>21</sup>All creatures that moved on earth perished: birds, tame animals, wild animals, and all that teemed on the earth, as well as all humankind.<sup>e</sup> <sup>22</sup>Everything on dry land with the breath of life in its nostrils died. <sup>23</sup>The LORD wiped out every being on earth: human beings and animals, the crawling things and the birds of the air; all were wiped out from the earth. Only Noah and those with him in the ark were left.

<sup>24</sup>And when the waters had swelled on the earth for one hundred and fifty days,

**8** <sup>1</sup>God remembered Noah and all the animals, wild and tame, that were with him in the ark. So God made a wind sweep over the earth, and the waters began to subside. <sup>2</sup>The fountains of the abyss and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the downpour from the sky

was held back. <sup>3</sup>Gradually the waters receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days, the waters had so diminished <sup>4</sup>that, in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.\* <sup>5</sup>The waters continued to diminish until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared.

<sup>6</sup>At the end of forty days Noah opened the hatch of the ark that he had made, <sup>7</sup>\*and he released a raven. It flew back and forth until the waters dried off from the earth. <sup>8</sup>Then he released a dove, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. <sup>9</sup>But the dove could find no place to perch, and it returned to him in the ark, for there was water over all the earth. Putting out his hand, he caught the dove and drew it back to him inside the ark. <sup>10</sup>He waited yet seven days more and again released the dove from the ark. <sup>11</sup>In the evening the dove came back to him, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! So Noah knew that the waters had diminished on the earth. <sup>12</sup>He waited yet another seven days and then released the dove; but this time it did not come back.

<sup>13</sup>\*In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water began to dry up on the earth. Noah then removed the covering of the ark and saw that the surface of the ground had dried. <sup>14</sup>In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah: <sup>16</sup>Go out of the ark, together with your wife and your sons and your sons' wives. <sup>17</sup>Bring out with you every living thing that is with you—all creatures, be they birds or animals or crawling things that crawl on the earth—and let them abound on the earth, and be fertile and multiply on it.<sup>a</sup> <sup>18</sup>So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives; <sup>19</sup>and all the animals, all the birds, and all the



## Live It! Got Gratitude?

When Noah and his family left the boat, the first thing Noah did was build an altar and offer prayers of thanksgiving to God. He was grateful to God for saving them and giving them a chance to start all over again. After receiving Noah's act of gratitude, God decided never to destroy the world again.

If you never say thank you to the people in your life, they might feel like you take them for granted or don't appreciate them. Gratitude is also an important part of your relationship with God. Have you thanked God lately? For what are you grateful?

Genesis 8:20–22

crawling creatures that crawl on the earth went out of the ark by families.

<sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and choosing from every clean animal and every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>When the LORD smelled the sweet odor, the LORD said to himself: Never again will I curse the ground because of human beings, since the desires of the human heart are evil from youth; nor will I ever again strike down every living being, as I have done.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>22</sup> All the days of the earth,  
seedtime and harvest,  
cold and heat,  
Summer and winter,  
and day and night  
shall not cease.<sup>c</sup>

## Covenant with Noah

**9** <sup>1</sup>\*God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fertile and multiply and fill the earth.<sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>\*Fear and dread of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon



all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered. <sup>3b</sup>Any living creature that moves about shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants. <sup>4c</sup>Only meat with its lifeblood still in it you shall not eat.\* <sup>5</sup>Indeed for your own lifeblood I will demand an accounting: from every animal I will demand it, and from a human being, each one for the blood of another, I will demand an accounting for human life. <sup>d</sup>

6\* Anyone who sheds the blood of a human being,  
by a human being shall that one's blood be shed;  
For in the image of God  
have human beings been made. <sup>e</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Be fertile, then, and multiply; abound on earth and subdue it. <sup>f</sup>

<sup>8</sup>\*God said to Noah and to his sons with him: <sup>9</sup>See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you <sup>g</sup> <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that was with you: the birds, the tame animals, and all the wild animals that were with you—all that came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth. <sup>h</sup> <sup>12</sup>God said: This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: <sup>13i</sup>I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant between me and you and every living creature—every mortal being—so that the waters will never again become a flood to destroy every mortal being. <sup>i</sup> <sup>16</sup>When the bow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant



## Pray It!

### A Promising Sign

"I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Genesis 9:13). After it was all over, God sent a rainbow as a sign to Noah, his family, and all living beings that God would never leave them and would never use a flood to destroy the world again. The rainbow was a symbol of God's *covenant*, a solemn promise made to Noah and to everyone who lived after him—including you.

*Dear God,*

*When I am overwhelmed by the destruction and evil that exists in the world today, help me to remember the promise you made to Noah and his family. When I am fearful, fill me with your peace. Each time I see a rainbow, may it remind me that you are always with me and will never leave me. Amen.*

Genesis 9:8–17

between God and every living creature—every mortal being that is on earth. <sup>17</sup>God told Noah: This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and every mortal being that is on earth.

### Noah and His Sons

<sup>18</sup>\*The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. <sup>k</sup> <sup>19</sup>These three were the sons of Noah, and from them the whole earth was populated.

<sup>20</sup>Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. <sup>21</sup>He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and lay naked inside his tent. <sup>l</sup> <sup>22</sup>Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness, and he told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup>Shem and Japheth, however, took a robe, and

<sup>b</sup> 9:3 Gn 1:29–30; Dt 12:15. <sup>c</sup> 9:4 Lv 7:26–27; 17:4; Dt 12:16, 23; 1 Sm 14:33; Acts 15:20. <sup>d</sup> 9:5 Gn 4:10–11; Ex 21:12. <sup>e</sup> 9:6 Gn 1:26–27; Lv 24:17; Nm 35:33; Jas 3:9. <sup>f</sup> 9:7 Gn 1:28; 8:17; 9:2; Jas 3:7. <sup>g</sup> 9:9 Gn 6:18. <sup>h</sup> 9:11 Sir 44:18; Is 54:9. <sup>i</sup> 9:13 Sir 43:12. <sup>j</sup> 9:15 Is 54:9. <sup>k</sup> 9:18 Gn 5:32; 10:1. <sup>l</sup> 9:21 Lam 4:21; Hb 2:15.



# Sarah

For highlights of Sarah's story, read Genesis, chapter 12; 17:15–18:15; 21:1–13.

**Breakthrough!:** I like that you laugh more than other people in the Bible. What's so funny about God?

**Sarah:** God is full of surprises! When you're as old as I was and somebody says you're going to have a baby, you can only laugh.

**B:** Does God have a weird sense of humor?

**Sarah:** I wouldn't say that. But God does have good ears! He caught me laughing. Then he caught me lying about laughing!

**B:** How'd that go for you? Isn't God pretty serious?

**Sarah:** God made his point. He said, "Is anything too marvelous for the Lord to do?" And sure enough, I became pregnant.

**B:** And God changed your name, and your husband's too. So is the lesson that God's gonna do what God's gonna do?

**Sarah:** It's deeper than that. God helps us discover our place in his plan. I had given up on having kids. I even told my husband to sleep with my maidservant, Hagar, so he could have a son. Then I got jealous and ran her off.

**B:** Wow, what drama! My friends also get pretty jealous sometimes. I've given up on people before. I've even given up on God.

**Sarah:** People do that. But God knows better. God had a plan for Hagar and her son, so he called her back. And God had great plans for me and Abraham.

**B:** So you wound up accepting God's way?

**Sarah:** I did! We named our son Isaac, which means "God laughs." When he was born, I said, "God has caused me to laugh, and all who hear of it will laugh with me."

**B:** So you wanted people to share your joy?

**Sarah:** And people do. Isaac was the start of a family line that leads to Jesus. If you love Jesus, you share my joy!

it will laugh with me.<sup>e</sup> <sup>7</sup>Who would ever have told Abraham," she added, "that Sarah would nurse children! Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." <sup>8</sup>The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great banquet on the day of the child's weaning.

<sup>9</sup>Sarah noticed the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham playing with her son Isaac; <sup>10</sup>so she demanded of Abraham: "Drive out that slave and her son! No son of that slave is going to share the inheritance with my son Isaac!"<sup>f</sup> <sup>11</sup>Abraham was greatly distressed because it concerned a son of his.\* <sup>12</sup>But God said to Abraham: Do not be distressed about the boy or about your slave woman. Obey Sarah, no matter what she asks of you; for it is through Isaac that descendants will bear your name.<sup>g</sup> <sup>13</sup>As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also,\* since he too is your offspring.

<sup>14</sup>Early the next morning Abraham got some bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. Then, placing the child on her back,\* he sent her away. As she roamed aimlessly in the wilderness of Beer-sheba, <sup>15</sup>the water in the skin was used up. So she put the child down under one of the bushes, <sup>16</sup>and then went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away; for she said to herself, "I cannot watch the child die." As she sat opposite him, she wept aloud. <sup>17</sup>God heard the boy's voice, and God's angel called to Hagar from heaven: "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not fear; God has heard the boy's voice in this plight of his.<sup>h</sup> <sup>18</sup>Get up, lift up the boy and hold him by the hand; for I will make of him a great nation." <sup>19</sup>Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, and then let the boy drink.

<sup>20</sup>God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert bowman. <sup>21</sup>He lived in the



## Live It! Jealousy

Tina was beautiful, smart, and athletic. Her closets were bursting with the latest fashions. If Tina wanted something, she got it. Rene had the things she needed, but seldom got anything just because she wanted it. Both girls were on the softball team.

Everyone liked Rene. She was a great softball player and captain of the team. Just like Sarah was jealous of Hagar, Tina was jealous of Rene's success and happiness. Tina tried hard to get everyone on the team to turn on Rene. Some people did. Most did not.

It was a good year for Rene. She loved softball and loved being captain of the team. For Tina it wasn't a great season. Her jealousy got the best of her. She hurt a lot of people. Finally, she quit the team.

Jealousy is a feeling that keeps on growing like mold on a peach. It destroys the goodness of a person and hurts everyone around him or her. Are you jealous of someone? How does your jealousy affect your relationship with that person? Ask God to help you to let go of your jealousy.

Genesis 21:9-21

wilderness of Paran. His mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

### The Covenant at Beer-sheba

<sup>22</sup>\*At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham: "God is with you in everything you do. <sup>23</sup>So now, swear to me by God at this place\* that you will not deal falsely with me or with my progeny and posterity, but will act as loyally toward me and the land in which you reside as I have acted toward you." <sup>24</sup>Abraham replied, "I so swear."





## Catholic Connections

### The Ultimate Sacrifice

God asked Abraham to do the unthinkable: kill his son Isaac. Abraham must have been horrified! After all, God had promised him that he would have many descendants. Nonetheless Abraham trusted God, so he loaded his donkey with wood and took Isaac up the mountain. Just as Abraham raised the knife, an angel stopped him. This story teaches us two things. First, that Abraham had complete faith in God. Second, that human sacrifice is against God's will.

In the New Testament, God again asks the unthinkable: he asks Jesus to be willing to sacrifice his life. Like Abraham, Jesus totally trusts his Father and obeys. Those who wish to kill Jesus do not listen to God as Abraham did. Jesus suffers a horrible death. But that is not the end, for God raises Jesus from the dead, thus sealing once and for all the New Covenant through which all people can have eternal life.

Because Abraham trusted God, his descendants would become God's special people. Because Jesus trusted God, all people can become part of God's family.

Genesis 22:1-19

<sup>25</sup>Abraham, however, reproached Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had seized by force. <sup>26</sup>"I have no idea who did that," Abimelech replied. "In fact, you never told me about it, nor did I ever hear of it until now."

<sup>27</sup>Then Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech and the two made a covenant. <sup>28</sup>Abraham also set apart seven ewe lambs of the flock, <sup>29</sup>and Abimelech asked him, "What is the purpose of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?" <sup>30</sup>Abraham answered, "The seven ewe lambs you shall accept from me that you may be my witness that I dug this well." <sup>31</sup>This is why the place is called Beer-sheba; the two of them took an oath there. <sup>32</sup>When they had thus made the covenant in Beer-sheba, Abimelech, along with Phicol, the commander of his army, left to return to the land of the Philistines.\*

<sup>33</sup>Abraham planted a tamarisk at Beer-sheba, and there he invoked by name the LORD, God the Eternal.\* <sup>34</sup>Abraham resided in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

### The Testing of Abraham\*

**22** <sup>1</sup>Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test and said to him: Abraham! "Here I am!" he replied. <sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>Then God said: Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you. <sup>b</sup> <sup>3</sup>Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey, took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac, and after cutting the wood for the burnt offering, set out for the place of which God had told him.

<sup>4</sup>On the third day Abraham caught sight of the place from a distance. <sup>5</sup>Abraham said to his servants: "Stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over there. We will worship and then come back to you." <sup>6</sup>So Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two walked on together, <sup>7</sup>Isaac spoke to his father Abraham. "Father!" he said. "Here I am," he replied. Isaac continued, "Here are



# Abraham

For highlights of Abraham's story, read Genesis, chapters 12-13; 17-18; 21-22.

**Breakthrough!:** Abraham, you actually tied your only son to an altar and raised your knife, ready to sacrifice him. What were you thinking?

**Abraham:** Imagine what Isaac was thinking! His crazy dad forgot to bring a sheep.

**B:** But seriously, how did it reach that point that you were ready to sacrifice your son?

**Abraham:** God and I had been through a lot together. God had asked me to make big sacrifices, and I did whatever God asked.

**B:** Sounds like you trusted God!

**Abraham:** Trust goes both ways. One time, God trusted me with a secret. He was going to destroy a city because evil people lived there. But good people lived there too. So I asked God to spare the city if fifty good people could be found there. Slowly, I bargained him down to save the city for only ten good people.

**B:** So you and God made a lot of deals. What was in it for you?

**Abraham:** God made special agreements, called covenants. God had big plans for me and for his people. God guided and protected me. And God gave Sarah and me a son, Isaac, even though we were too old to have a child.

**B:** Didn't God say that your descendants would come through Isaac? But then God asked you to kill Isaac. Did God think you were crazy?

**Abraham:** Far from it! God prepared me for that moment. God was testing that I trusted him beyond a doubt. I raised the knife, knowing that God knew what he was doing.

**B:** Wow, there are times I wish I was sure I could trust God.

**Abraham:** Trust God enough to talk to him. Then listen. Let God guide you. God gave his only Son for you. Give God a chance.

brothers also proceeded to fling themselves down before him and said, "We are your slaves!"<sup>19</sup> But Joseph replied to them: "Do not fear. Can I take the place of God?"<sup>20</sup> Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good, to achieve this present end, the survival of many people.<sup>c</sup> <sup>21</sup> So now, do not fear. I will provide for you and for your children." By thus speaking kindly to them, he reassured them.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Joseph remained in Egypt, together with his father's household. He lived a hundred and ten years. <sup>23</sup> He saw Ephraim's children to the third generation, and the

children of Manasseh's son Machir were also born on Joseph's knees.<sup>e</sup>

## Death of Joseph

<sup>24</sup> Joseph said to his brothers: "I am about to die. God will surely take care of you and lead you up from this land to the land that he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."<sup>f</sup> <sup>25</sup> Then, putting the sons of Israel under oath, he continued, "When God thus takes care of you, you must bring my bones up from this place."<sup>g</sup> <sup>26</sup> Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. He was embalmed and laid to rest in a coffin in Egypt.<sup>h</sup>

c 50:20 Gn 45:5. d 50:21 Gn 47:12. e 50:23 Nm 32:39; Jos 17:1. f 50:24 Ex 3:8; Heb 11:22. g 50:25 Ex 13:19; Heb 11:22. h 50:26 Sir 49:15.

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## NOTES TO GENESIS

Notes are indicated by an asterisk (\*) in the text.

**1:1–2:3** This section, from the Priestly source, functions as an introduction, as ancient stories of the origin of the world (cosmogonies) often did. It introduces the primordial story (2:4–11:26), the stories of the ancestors (11:27–50:26), and indeed the whole Pentateuch. The chapter highlights the goodness of creation and the divine desire that human beings share in that goodness. God brings an orderly universe out of primordial chaos merely by uttering a word. In the literary structure of six days, the creation events in the first three days are related to those in the second three.

1. light (day)/darkness (night) = 4. sun/moon
2. arrangement of water = 5. fish + birds from waters
3. a) dry land = 6. a) animals  
b) vegetation b) human beings:  
male/female

The seventh day, on which God rests, the climax of the account, falls outside the six-day structure.

Until modern times the first line was always translated, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Several comparable ancient cosmogonies, discovered in recent times, have a "when...then" construction, confirming the translation "when...then" here as well. "When" introduces the pre-creation state and "then" introduces the creative act affecting that state. The traditional translation, "In the beginning," does not reflect the Hebrew syntax of the clause.

**1:2** This verse is parenthetical, describing in three phases the pre-creation state symbolized by the chaos out of which God brings order: "earth," hidden beneath the encompassing cosmic waters, could not be seen, and thus had no "form"; there was only darkness; turbulent wind swept over the waters. Commencing with the last-named elements (darkness and water), vv. 3–10 describe the rearrangement of this chaos: light is made (first day) and the water is divided into water above and water below the earth so that the earth appears and is no longer "without outline." *The abyss*: the primordial ocean according to the ancient Semitic cosmogony. After God's creative activity, part of this vast body forms the salt-water seas (vv. 9–10); part of it is the fresh water under the earth (Ps 33:7; Ez 31:4), which wells forth on the earth as springs and fountains (Gn 7:11; 8:2; Prv 3:20). Part of it, "the upper water" (Ps 148:4; Dn 3:60), is held up by the dome of the sky (vv. 6–7), from which rain descends on the earth (Gn 7:11; 2 Kgs 7:2, 19; Ps 104:13). *A mighty wind*: literally, "spirit or breath [*ruah*] of God"; cf. Gn 8:1.

**1:5** In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset.

**1:7** *The dome*: the Hebrew word suggests a gigantic metal dome. It was inserted into the middle of the single body of water to form dry space within which the earth could emerge. The Latin Vulgate translation *firmamentum*, "means of support (for the upper waters); firmament," provided the traditional English rendering.

**1:26** *Let us make*: in the ancient Near East, and sometimes in the Bible, God was imagined as presiding over an assembly of heavenly beings who deliberated and decided about matters on earth (1 Kgs 22:19–22; Is 6:8; Ps 29:1–2; 82; 89:6–7; Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). This scene accounts for the plural form here and in Gn 11:7 ("Let us go down..."). Israel's God was always considered "Most High"

over the heavenly beings. *Human beings*: Hebrew *ʾādām* is here the generic term for humankind; in the first five chapters of Genesis it is the proper name Adam only at 2:25 and 5:1–5. *In our image, after our likeness*: "image" and "likeness" (virtually synonyms) express the worth of human beings who have value in themselves (human blood may not be shed in 9:6 because of this image of God) and in their task, dominion (1:28), which promotes the rule of God over the universe.

**1:27** *Male and female*: as God provided the plants with seeds (vv. 11, 12) and commanded the animals to be fertile and multiply (v. 22), so God gives sexuality to human beings as their means to continue in existence.

**1:28** *Fill the earth and subdue it*: the object of the verb "subdue" may be not the earth as such but earth as the territory each nation must take for itself (chaps. 10–11), just as Israel will later do (see Nm 32:22, 29; Jos 18:1). The two divine commands define the basic tasks of the human race—to continue in existence through generation and to take possession of one's God-given territory. The dual command would have had special meaning when Israel was in exile and deeply anxious about whether they would continue as a nation and return to their ancient territory. *Have dominion*: the whole human race is made in the "image" and "likeness" of God and has "dominion." Comparable literature of the time used these words of kings rather than of human beings in general; human beings were invariably thought of as slaves of the gods created to provide menial service for the divine world. The royal language here does not, however, give human beings unlimited power, for kings in the Bible had limited dominion and were subject to prophetic critique.

**1:29** According to the Priestly tradition, the human race was originally intended to live on plants and fruits as were the animals (see v. 30), an arrangement that God will later change (9:3) in view of the human inclination to violence.

**2:2** The mention of the seventh day, repeated in v. 3, is outside the series of six days and is thus the climax of the account. The focus of the account is God. The text does not actually institute the practice of keeping the Sabbath, for it would have been anachronistic to establish at this point a custom that was distinctively Israelite (Ex 31:13, 16, 17), but it lays the foundation for the later practice. Similarly, ancient creation accounts often ended with the construction of a temple where the newly created human race provided service to the gods who created them, but no temple is mentioned in this account. As was the case with the Sabbath, it would have been anachronistic to institute the temple at this point, for Israel did not yet exist. In Ex 25–31 and 35–40, Israel builds the tabernacle, which is the precursor of the Temple of Solomon.

**2:4** *This is the story*: the distinctive Priestly formula introduces older traditions, belonging to the tradition called Yahwist, and gives them a new setting. In the first part of Genesis, the formula "this is the story" (or a similar phrase) occurs five times (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10), which corresponds to the five occurrences of the formula in the second part of the book (11:27; 25:12, 19; 36:1[9]; 37:2). Some interpret the formula here as retrospective ("Such is the story"), referring back to chap. 1, but all its other occurrences introduce rather



than summarize. It is introductory here; the Priestly source would hardly use the formula to introduce its own material in chap. 1.

The cosmogony that begins in v. 4 is concerned with the nature of human beings, narrating the story of the essential institutions and limits of the human race through their first ancestors. This cosmogony, like 1:1–3 (see note there), uses the “when...then” construction common in ancient cosmogonies. The account is generally attributed to the Yahwist, who prefers the divine name “Yhwh” (here rendered LORD) for God. God in this story is called “the LORD God” (except in 3:1–5); “LORD” is to be expected in a Yahwist account but the additional word “God” is puzzling.

**2:5** *Man*: the Hebrew word *’adam* is a generic term meaning “human being.” In chaps. 2–3, however, the archetypal human being is understood to be male (Adam), so the word *’adam* is translated “man” here.

**2:6** *Stream*: the water wells up from the vast flood below the earth. The account seems to presuppose that only the garden of God was irrigated at this point. From this one source of all the fertilizing water on the earth, water will be channeled through the garden of God over the entire earth. It is the source of the four rivers mentioned in vv. 10–14. Later, with rain and cultivation, the fertility of the garden of God will appear in all parts of the world.

**2:7** God is portrayed as a potter molding the human body out of earth. There is a play on words in Hebrew between *’adam* (“human being,” “man”) and *’adama* (“ground”). It is not enough to make the body from earth; God must also breathe into the man’s nostrils. A similar picture of divine breath imparted to human beings in order for them to live is found in Ez 37:5, 9–10; Jn 20:22. The Israelites did not think in the (Greek) categories of body and soul.

**2:8** *Eden, in the east*: the place names in vv. 8–14 are mostly derived from Mesopotamian geography (see note on vv. 10–14). Eden may be the name of a region in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), the term derived from the Sumerian word *eden*, “fertile plain.” A similar-sounding Hebrew word means “delight,” which may lie behind the Greek translation, “The Lord God planted a paradise [= pleasure park] in Eden.” It should be noted, however, that the garden was not intended as a paradise for the human race, but as a pleasure park for God; the man tended it for God. The story is not about “paradise lost.”

The garden in the precincts of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem seems to symbolize the garden of God (like gardens in other temples); it is apparently alluded to in Ps 1:3; 80:10; 92:14; Ez 47:7–12; Rev 22:1–2.

**2:9** The second tree, the tree of life, is mentioned here and at the end of the story (3:22, 24). It is identified with Wisdom in Prv 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4, where the pursuit of wisdom gives back to human beings the life that is made inaccessible to them in Gn 3:24. In the new creation described in the Book of Revelation, the tree of life is once again made available to human beings (Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). *Knowledge of good and evil*: the meaning is disputed. According to some, it signifies moral autonomy, control over morality (symbolized by “good and evil”), which would be inappropriate for mere human beings; the phrase would thus mean refusal to accept the human condition and finite freedom that God gives them. According to others, it is more broadly the knowledge of what is helpful and harmful to humankind, suggesting that the attainment of adult experience and responsibility inevitably means the loss of a life of simple subordination to God.

**2:10–14** *A river rises in Eden*: the stream of water mentioned in v. 6, the source of all water upon earth, comes to the surface in the garden of God and from there flows out over the entire earth. In comparable religious literature, the dwelling of god is the source of fertilizing waters. The four rivers represent universality, as in the phrase “the four quarters of the earth.” In Ez 47:1–12; Zec 14:8; Rev 22:1–2, the waters that irrigate the earth arise in the temple or city of God. The place names in vv. 11–14 are mainly from southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), where Mesopotamian literature placed the original garden of God. The Tigris and the Euphrates, the two great rivers in that part of the world, both emptied into the Persian Gulf. Gihon is the modest stream issuing from Jerusalem (2 Sm 5:8; 1 Kgs 1:9–10; 2 Chr 32:4), but is here regarded as one of the four great world rivers and linked to Mesopotamia, for Cush here seems to be the territory of the Kassites (a people of Mesopotamia) as in Gn 10:8. The word Pishon is otherwise unknown but is probably formed in imitation of Gihon. Havilah seems, according to Gn 10:7 and 1 Chr 1:9, to be in Cush in southern Mesopotamia though other locations have been suggested.

**2:17** *You shall die*: since they do not die as soon as they eat from the forbidden tree, the meaning seems to be that human beings have become mortal, destined to die by virtue of being human.

**2:18** *Helper suited to him*: lit., “a helper in accord with him.” “Helper” need not imply subordination, for God is called a helper (Dt 33:7; Ps 46:2). The language suggests a profound affinity between the man and the woman and a relationship that is supportive and nurturing.

**2:23** The man recognizes an affinity with the woman God has brought him. Unlike the animals who were made from the ground,

she is made from his very self. There is a play on the similar-sounding Hebrew words *’ishsha* (“woman,” “wife”) and *’ish* (“man,” “husband”).

**2:24** *One body*: lit., “one flesh.” The covenant of marriage establishes kinship bonds of the first rank between the partners.

**2:25** *They felt no shame*: marks a new stage in the drama, for the reader knows that only young children know no shame. This draws the reader into the next episode, where the couple’s disobedience results in their loss of innocence.

**3:1** *Cunning*: there is a play on the words for “naked” (2:25) and “cunning/wise” (Heb. *’arum*). The couple seek to be “wise” but end up knowing that they are “naked.”

**3:5** *Like gods, who know*: or “like God who knows.”

**3:8** *The breezy time of the day*: lit., “the wind of the day.” Probably shortly before sunset.

**3:14** Each of the three punishments (the snake, the woman, the man) has a double aspect, one affecting the individual and the other affecting a basic relationship. The snake previously stood upright, enjoyed a reputation for being shrewder than other creatures, and could converse with human beings as in vv. 1–5. It must now move on its belly, is more cursed than any creature, and inspires revulsion in human beings (v. 15).

**3:15** *They will strike...at their heel*: the antecedent for “they” and “their” is the collective noun “offspring,” i.e., all the descendants of the woman. Christian tradition has seen in this passage, however, more than unending hostility between snakes and human beings. The snake was identified with the devil (Wis 2:24; Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9; 20:2), whose eventual defeat seemed implied in the verse. Because “the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3:8), the passage was understood as the first promise of a redeemer for fallen humankind, the protoevangelium. Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. A.D. 130–200), in his *Against Heresies* 5.21.1, followed by several other Fathers of the Church, interpreted the verse as referring to Christ, and cited Gal 3:19 and 4:4 to support the reference. Another interpretive translation is *ipsa*, “she,” and is reflected in Jerome’s Vulgate. “She” was thought to refer to Mary, the mother of the messiah. In Christian art Mary is sometimes depicted with her foot on the head of the serpent.

**3:16** *Toil...pain*: the punishment affects the woman directly by increasing the toil and pain of having children. *He shall rule over you*: the punishment also affects the woman’s relationship with her husband. A tension is set up in which her urge (either sexual urge or, more generally, dependence for sustenance) is for her husband but he rules over her. But see Sg 7:11.

**3:17–19** *Cursed is the ground*: the punishment affects the man’s relationship to the ground (*’adam* and *’adamah*). *You are dust*: the punishment also affects the man directly insofar as he is now mortal.

**3:20** The man gives his wife a more specific name than “woman” (2:23). The Hebrew name *hawwa* (“Eve”) is related to the Hebrew word *hay* (“living”); “mother of all the living” points forward to the next episode involving her sons Cain and Abel.

**4:1** The Hebrew name *qayin* (“Cain”) and the term *qaniti* (“I have produced”) present a wordplay that refers to metalworking; such wordplays are frequent in Genesis.

**4:2** Some suggest the story reflects traditional strife between the farmer (Cain) and the nomad (Abel), with preference for the latter reflecting the alleged nomadic ideal of the Bible. But there is no disparagement of farming here, for Adam was created to till the soil. The story is about two brothers (the word “brother” occurs seven times) and God’s unexplained preference for one, which provokes the first murder. The motif of the preferred younger brother will occur time and again in the Bible, e.g., Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and David (1 Sm 16:1–13).

**4:4** *Fatty portion*: it was standard practice to offer the fat portions of animals. Others render, less satisfactorily, “the choicest of the firstlings.” The point is not that Abel gave a more valuable gift than Cain, but that God, for reasons not given in the text, accepts the offering of Abel and rejects that of Cain.

**4:7** *You will be accepted*: the text is extraordinarily condensed and unclear. “You will be accepted” is a paraphrase of one Hebrew word, “lifting.” God gives a friendly warning to Cain that his right conduct will bring “lifting,” which could refer to acceptance (*lifting*) of his future offerings or of himself (as in the Hebrew idiom “*lifting of the face*”) or *lifting up* of his head in honor (cf. note on 40:13), whereas wicked conduct will make him vulnerable to sin, which is personified as a force ready to attack. In any case, Cain has the ability to do the right thing. *Lies in wait*: sin is personified as a power that “lies in wait” (Heb. *robes*) at a place. In Mesopotamian religion, a related word (*rabisu*) refers to a malevolent god who attacks human beings in particular places like roofs or canals.

**4:8** *Let us go out in the field*: to avoid detection. The verse presumes a sizeable population which Genesis does not otherwise explain.

**4:11** *Banned from the ground*: lit., “cursed.” The verse refers back to 3:17 where the ground was cursed so that it yields its produce only with great effort. Cain has polluted the soil with his brother’s blood and it will no longer yield any of its produce to him.

# Preface to the **NEW AMERICAN BIBLE** Revised New Testament

The New Testament of the *New American Bible*, a fresh translation from the Greek text, was first published in complete form in 1970, together with the Old Testament translation that had been completed the previous year. Portions of the New Testament had appeared earlier, in somewhat different form, in the provisional Mass lectionary of 1964 and in the *Lectionary for Mass* of 1970.

Since 1970 many different printings of the New Testament have been issued by a number of publishers, both separately and in complete Bibles, and the text has become widely known both in the United States and in other English-speaking countries. Most American Catholics have been influenced by it because of its widespread use in the liturgy, and it has received a generally favorable reception from many other Christians as well. It has taken its place among the standard contemporary translations of the New Testament, respected for its fidelity to the original and its attempt to render this into current American English.

Although the scriptures themselves are timeless, translations and explanations of them quickly become dated in an era marked by rapid cultural change to a degree never previously experienced. The explosion of biblical studies that has taken place in our century and the changing nature of our language itself require periodic adjustment both in translations and in the accompanying explanatory materials. The experience of actual use of the New Testament of the *New American Bible*, especially in oral proclamation, has provided a basis for further improvement. Accordingly, it was decided in 1978 to proceed with a thorough revision of the New Testament to reflect advances in scholarship and to satisfy needs identified through pastoral experience.

For this purpose a steering committee was formed to plan, organize, and direct the work of revision, to engage collaborators, and to serve as an editorial board to coordinate the

work of the various revisers and to determine the final form of the text and the explanatory materials. Guidelines were drawn up and collaborators selected in 1978 and early 1979, and November of 1980 was established as the deadline for manuscripts. From December 1980 through September 1986 the editorial board met a total of fifty times and carefully reviewed and revised all the material in order to ensure accuracy and consistency of approach. The editors also worked together with the bishops' ad hoc committee that was appointed by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1982 to oversee the revision.

The threefold purpose of the translation that was expressed in the preface to the first edition has been maintained in the revision: to provide a version suitable for liturgical proclamation, for private reading, and for purposes of study. Special attention has been given to the first of these purposes, since oral proclamation demands special qualities in a translation, and experience had provided insights and suggestions that could lead to improvement in this area. Efforts have also been made, however, to facilitate devotional reading by providing suitable notes and introductory materials, and to assist the student by achieving greater accuracy and consistency in the translation and supplying more abundant information in the introductions and notes.

The primary aim of the revision is to produce a version as accurate and faithful to the meaning of the Greek original as is possible for a translation. The editors have consequently moved in the direction of a formal-equivalence approach to translation, matching the vocabulary, structure, and even word order of the original as closely as possible in the receptor language. Some other contemporary biblical versions have adopted, in varying degrees, a dynamic-equivalence approach, which attempts to respect the individuality of each language by expressing the meaning

of the original in a linguistic structure suited to English, even though this may be very different from the corresponding Greek structure. While this approach often results in fresh and brilliant renderings, it has the disadvantages of more or less radically abandoning traditional biblical and liturgical terminology and phraseology, of expanding the text to include what more properly belongs in notes, commentaries, or preaching, and of tending toward paraphrase. A more formal approach seems better suited to the specific purposes intended for this translation.

At the same time, the editors have wished to produce a version in English that reflects contemporary American usage and is readily understandable to ordinary educated people, but one that will be recognized as dignified speech, on the level of formal rather than colloquial usage. These aims are not in fact contradictory, for there are different levels of language in current use: the language of formal situations is not that of colloquial conversation, though people understand both and may pass from one to the other without adverting to the transition. The liturgy is a formal situation that requires a level of discourse more dignified, formal, and hieratic than the world of business, sport, or informal communication. People readily understand this more formal level even though they may not often use it; our passive vocabulary is much larger than our active vocabulary. Hence this revision, while avoiding archaisms, does not shrink from traditional biblical terms that are easily understood even though not in common use in everyday speech. The level of language consciously aimed at is one appropriate for liturgical proclamation; this may also permit the translation to serve the purposes of devotional reading and serious study.

A particular effort has been made to insure consistency of vocabulary. Always to translate a given Greek word by the same English equivalent would lead to ludicrous results and to infidelity to the meaning of the text. But in passages where a particular Greek term retains the same meaning, it has been rendered in the same way insofar as this has been feasible; this is particularly significant in the case of terms that have a specific theological meaning. The synoptic gospels have been carefully translated so as to reveal both the similarities and the differences of the Greek.

An especially sensitive problem today is the question of discrimination in language. In recent

years there has been much discussion about allegations of anti-Jewish expressions in the New Testament and of language that discriminates against various minorities. Above all, however, the question of discrimination against women affects the largest number of people and arouses the greatest degree of interest and concern. At present there is little agreement about these problems or about the best way to deal with them. In all these areas the present translation attempts to display a sensitivity appropriate to the present state of the questions under discussion, which are not yet resolved and in regard to which it is impossible to please everyone, since intelligent and sincere participants in the debate hold mutually contradictory views.

The primary concern in this revision is fidelity to what the text says. When the meaning of the Greek is inclusive of both sexes, the translation seeks to reproduce such inclusivity insofar as this is possible in normal English usage, without resort to inelegant circumlocutions or neologisms that would offend against the dignity of the language. Although the generic sense of *man* is traditional in English, many today reject it; its use has therefore generally been avoided, though it is retained in cases where no fully satisfactory equivalent could be found. English does not possess a gender-inclusive third personal pronoun in the singular, and this translation continues to use the masculine resumptive pronoun after *everyone* or *anyone*, in the traditional way, where this cannot be avoided without infidelity to the meaning.

The translation of the Greek word *adelphos*, particularly in the plural form *adelphoi*, poses an especially delicate problem. While the term literally means brothers or other male blood relatives, even in profane Greek the plural can designate two persons, one of either sex, who were born of the same parents. It was adopted by the early Christians to designate, in a figurative sense, the members of the Christian community, who were conscious of a new familial relationship to one another by reason of their adoption as children of God. They are consequently addressed as *adelphoi*. This has traditionally been rendered into English by *brothers* or, more archaically, *brethren*. There has never been any doubt that this designation includes *all* the members of the Christian community, both male and female. Given the absence in English of a corresponding term that explicitly includes both sexes, this translation retains the usage of *brothers*, with the



inclusive meaning that has been traditionally attached to it in this biblical context.

Since the New Testament is the product of a particular time and culture, the views expressed in it and the language in which they are expressed reflect a particular cultural conditioning, which sometimes makes them quite different from contemporary ideas and concerns. Discriminatory language should be eliminated insofar as possible whenever it is unfaithful to the meaning of the New Testament, but the text should not be altered in order to adjust it to contemporary concerns. This translation does not introduce any changes, expansions, additions to, or subtractions from the text of scripture. It further retains the traditional biblical ways of speaking about God and about Christ, including the use of masculine nouns and pronouns.

The Greek text followed in this translation is that of the third edition of the *Greek New Testament*, edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, and published by the United Bible Societies in 1975. The same text, with a different critical apparatus and variations in punctuation and typography, was published as the twenty-sixth edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* in 1979 by the Deutsche Bibelstiftung, Stuttgart. This edition has also been consulted. When variant readings occur, the translation, with few exceptions, follows the reading that was placed in the text of these Greek editions, though the occurrence of the principal variants is pointed out in the notes.

The editors of the Greek text placed square brackets around words or portions of words of which the authenticity is questionable because the evidence of textual witnesses is inconclusive. The same has been done in the translation insofar as it is possible to reproduce this convention in English. It should be possible to read the text either with or without the disputed words, but in English it is not always feasible to provide this alternative, and in some passages the bracketed words must be included to make sense. As in the first edition, parentheses do not indicate textual uncertainty, but are simply a punctuation device to indicate a passage that in the editors' judgment appears parenthetical to the thought of the author.

Citations from the Old Testament are placed within quotation marks; longer citations are set off as block quotations in a separate indented paragraph. The sources of such citations, as

well as those of many more or less subtle allusions to the Old Testament, are identified in the biblical cross-reference section at the bottom of each page. Insofar as possible, the translation of such Old Testament citations agrees with that of the *New American Bible* Old Testament whenever the underlying Greek agrees with the Hebrew (or, in some cases, the Aramaic or Greek) text from which the Old Testament translation was made. But citations in the New Testament frequently follow the Septuagint or some other version, or were made from memory; hence, in many cases the translation in the New Testament passage will not agree with what appears in the Old Testament. Some of these cases are explained in the notes.

It is a further aim of the revised edition to supply explanatory materials more abundantly than in the first edition. In most cases the introductions and notes have been entirely rewritten and expanded, and the cross-references checked and revised. It is intended that these materials should reflect the present state of sound biblical scholarship and should be presented in such a form that they can be assimilated by the ordinary intelligent reader without specialized biblical training. While they have been written with the ordinary educated Christian in mind, not all technical vocabulary can be entirely dispensed with in approaching the Bible, any more than in any other field. It is the hope of the editors that these materials, even if they sometimes demand an effort, will help the reader to a fuller and more intelligent understanding of the New Testament and a fruitful appropriation of its meaning for personal spiritual growth.

The *New American Bible* is a Roman Catholic translation. This revision, however, like the first edition, has been accomplished with the collaboration of scholars from other Christian churches, both among the revisers and on the editorial board, in response to the encouragement of Vatican Council II (*Dei Verbum*, 22). The editorial board expresses gratitude to all who have collaborated in the revision: to all the revisers, consultants, and bishops who contributed to it, to reviewers of the first edition, and to those who voluntarily submitted suggestions. May this translation fulfill its threefold purpose, "so that the word of the Lord may speed forward and be glorified" (2 Thes 3:1).

# The New Testament

**The Bible is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.** The New Testament contains twenty-seven books.

These books contain several kinds of writing. You will find Gospels, religious history, letters to individuals, letters to communities, homilies, and visions. All these writings relate to God's biggest breakthrough: the coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament stories tell how Jesus' mission starts with God's Chosen People, whom today we call the Jews. They also describe how Jesus' first disciples quickly expanded the mission to include non-Jews, who were called Gentiles.

Remember that *testament* is another word for *covenant*, and a covenant is a holy promise made between God and human beings. The Old Testament is about the Original Covenant that God made with his Chosen People. The New Testament shows how Jesus fulfilled the promises of this Original Covenant. Through Jesus, God extended the covenant beyond just the Chosen People to the whole human race. We call this the New Covenant, the promise that every person—Jew or Gentile—can have eternal life with God. This New Testament tells how this was made possible by Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.

**Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics divides the New Testament into two sections. Here's what happens in each section:**

### **The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles**

The word *gospel* literally means “good news.” We call Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John Gospels because they tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. These four books each have their unique picture of Jesus. It is believed that Mark was written first. The writers of Matthew and Luke probably used Mark as the foundation for creating their Gospels. That is why these Gospels have some very similar stories.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the *synoptic* Gospels because of their similarities. *Synoptic* means “seen together.”

The Gospel of John is quite different from the other Gospels. There are fewer miracles and parables, and John more clearly presents Jesus as God’s Son. Having four Gospels gives us a fuller understanding of Jesus than having just one.

The Acts of the Apostles picks up where the Gospels leave off. It was written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke and tells the exciting story of the first Christians. By traveling and preaching, these Christians spread the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the known world.

### **The Letters and Revelation**

Jesus lived long before telephone, television, radio, or Internet. So when the early leaders of the Church wanted to communicate, they wrote letters. These letters were written to groups and to individuals. They helped the first Christians—and they help us—understand what it means to follow Jesus.

Saint Paul or people writing in his name wrote most of the letters. It was common at that time to honor a great person by writing letters or books in his or her name. So some letters that say they were written by Saint Paul or Saint Peter almost certainly were written by other early Christians.

The Revelation to John is a collection of prophecies and visions. It is about the struggle between the good and evil forces of creation. Revelation promises that even though believers will suffer and be persecuted, God will make everything right in the end.

To fully understand God’s plan for the human race, we need both the Old and the New Testaments. The New Testament reveals the great love God showed for us by sending his Son into the world. Through the Gospels and letters, God shows us that we can be saved from fear, anxiety, sin, and even death by putting our faith in Jesus. Then, as disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can bring God’s love to other people.



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

If the Gospel of Matthew were a popular movie, it might be titled **God Saves**. Then the Old Testament books might be titled *God Is Faithful*. In the Old Testament, we hear the story of a God who loves his people even when they turn away, and wants to save them from sin and the effects of sin. In the Gospel of Matthew—really in all the books of the New Testament—we hear how God’s faithful love takes on human flesh and is fulfilled in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus takes the ancient teachings of Judaism and makes them new. He challenges his followers, including us today, to love as completely as he does. And keep watching! Matthew gives a preview of the final act of God’s faithful and saving love, in which Jesus will conquer evil and death once and for all at his Second Coming.

## Headlines

- Jesus’ Extreme Message: Love Your Enemies (5:43–48)
- Dead Girl Brought Back to Life! (9:18–26)
- Jesus Responds to Critics (12:1–42)
- Jesus Seen Talking to Dead Prophets (17:1–13)
- Women See Resurrected Jesus! (28:1–10)
- Jesus’ Followers Sent to the Whole World (28:16–20)

## Did You Know?

**Who wrote this book?** An old tradition says it was the Apostle Matthew, but no one knows for sure. We do know that the author was a Jew who had become a Christian.

**When was it written?** Probably between AD 75 and 90, or about fifty years after Jesus’ Resurrection.

**Whom was it written for?** It was originally written for Jews who had become followers of Christ. These Jewish Christians were becoming outcasts in the Jewish community.

**Why was it written?** Matthew was written to reassure the early Jewish Christians that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures.

## Important themes

- Jesus proclaims the kingdom of heaven.
- Jesus is in conflict with religious leaders who are not open to his message.
- Jesus has miraculous power over sickness, storms, evil, and even death.

## I. The Infancy Narrative

### The Genealogy of Jesus\*

(Luke 3:23–38)

**1** <sup>1a</sup> The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.\*

<sup>2b</sup> Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. <sup>c</sup> <sup>3</sup> Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. <sup>d</sup> Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, <sup>4e</sup> Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5f</sup> Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, <sup>6g</sup> Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. <sup>7h</sup> Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. <sup>8</sup> Asaph

**Read:** Matthew 2:1–12

The magi are told to search diligently for Jesus. What would you spend this much energy searching for?

**Up Next:** Matthew, chapter 5

became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. <sup>9</sup> Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. <sup>10</sup> Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos,\* Amos the father of Josiah. <sup>11</sup> Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile.

<sup>12i</sup> After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, <sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, <sup>14</sup> Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, <sup>15</sup> Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, <sup>16</sup> Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah.

<sup>17</sup> Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.\*

### The Birth of Jesus\*

(Luke 2:1–7)

<sup>18</sup> Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,\* but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,\* yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. <sup>20i</sup> Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord\* appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to



### Study It! King of Kings

The Gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy, or listing of Jesus' ancestors. The genealogy shows that God is doing what he promised to do. Look at some of the names in the list. Many of them are names that you will recognize from the Old Testament. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (Genesis 12:2; 17:4–5). God promised David that the Messiah, the one who would save the people, would be a descendant of David's (2 Samuel 7:12–16).

Matthew 1:1–17

a 1:1 Gn 5:1; 1 Chr 17:11; Gn 22:18. b 1:2–17 Lk 3:23–38. c 1:2 Gn 21:3; 25:26; 29:35; 1 Chr 2:1. d 1:3 Gn 38:29–30; Ru 4:18; 1 Chr 2:4–9. e 1:4 Ru 4:19–20; 1 Chr 2:10–11. f 1:5 Ru 4:21–22; 1 Chr 2:11–12. g 1:6 2 Sm 12:24; 1 Chr 2:15; 3:5. h 1:7–11 2 Kgs 25:1–21; 1 Chr 3:10–15. i 1:12–16 1 Chr 3:16–19. j 1:20 2:13, 19; Lk 1:35.



## Catholic Connections

### The Liturgical Year

After the genealogy Matthew continues with the stories about Jesus' birth and the visit of the wise men, or magi. The Catholic Church celebrates these events during the Christmas season. This is one of the special seasons during the Church year.

The Church has its own calendar, called the liturgical calendar. It moves through seasons just like any other calendar does. The seasons are connected to the important moments in Jesus' life. Advent is the season before Christmas. During Advent we remember and celebrate the events leading up to and surrounding the birth of Jesus. The Liturgical Year reminds us that God's saving action continues today and will be fulfilled when Jesus returns at the end of time.

Matthew 1:18–2:12

take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,\* because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>\*k "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. <sup>25</sup>He had no relations with her until she bore a son,\* and he named him Jesus.<sup>l</sup>

### The Visit of the Magi•

**2**<sup>1</sup>When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,\* behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star\* at its rising and have come to do him homage."<sup>a</sup> <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he

inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.\* <sup>5b</sup> They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. <sup>8</sup>He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." <sup>9</sup>After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>They were overjoyed at seeing the star, <sup>11</sup>\*c and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.





**Jesus and His Family Escape into Egypt**  
For the full story, read Matthew, chapter 2.

When has your family faced a difficulty or danger together?

### The Flight to Egypt

<sup>13</sup>\*When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,\* and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." <sup>14</sup>Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. <sup>15</sup>\*He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet<sup>d</sup> might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

### The Massacre of the Infants

<sup>16</sup>When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

<sup>18</sup>\*e "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more."

### The Return from Egypt

<sup>19</sup>When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt <sup>20</sup>and said,<sup>f</sup> "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."\* <sup>21</sup>He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup>But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod,\* he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>\*g He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazorean."



## Study It!

### Remember Moses?

Jesus was hidden as a baby so that he would not be killed. The same thing happened to Moses (see Exodus 1:22–2:10). The story of Moses was important to the people for whom Matthew's Gospel was written. They were Jews. They would have recognized this comparison to Moses, one of their greatest leaders. Matthew's Gospel includes other similarities between Jesus and Moses. For example, by fleeing to Egypt and returning to Israel, Jesus takes the same journey that Moses and his people, the Israelites, took.

Matthew 2:13–18



## Pray It!

### Announcing God's Kingdom!

John the Baptist went ahead of Jesus. He let everybody know that something special was about to happen. The way his clothes are described would have reminded people of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). People of Jesus' time believed that Elijah would return from heaven to announce the coming of the Day of the Lord. The author compares John to Elijah to let people know that Jesus is the one they have been waiting for.

*Saving God,*

*Help me to be like John*

*by my words and actions.*

*Help me to announce Jesus' coming.*

*Help me to make a path for Jesus in my heart. Amen.*

Matthew 3:1–12

## II. The Proclamation of the Kingdom

### The Preaching of John the Baptist<sup>a</sup>

(Mark 1:1–8; Luke 3:1–18; John 1:19–28)

**3**<sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea\* <sup>2</sup>[and] saying, "Repent,\* for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"<sup>b</sup> <sup>3</sup>It was of him that the prophet Isaiah<sup>c</sup> had spoken when he said:

"A voice of one crying out in the desert,

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'"

<sup>4</sup><sup>d</sup> John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him <sup>6</sup>and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.\*

<sup>7</sup>When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees\* coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?<sup>e</sup> <sup>8</sup>Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. <sup>9</sup>And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones.<sup>f</sup> <sup>10</sup>Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup><sup>g</sup> I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.\* <sup>12</sup><sup>h</sup> His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."





### Jesus Resists Temptation

For the full story, read Matthew 4:1–11.

What advice in the Bible helps you resist temptation to do something wrong?

### The Baptism of Jesus\*

(Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21, 22)

<sup>13</sup>*i* Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>\*John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. <sup>16</sup>*i* After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. <sup>17</sup>And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son,\* with whom I am well pleased.”<sup>k</sup>

### The Temptation of Jesus

(Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1–13)

**4** <sup>1</sup>*a* Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>*b* He fasted for forty days and forty nights,\* and afterwards he was hungry.

<sup>3</sup>The tempter approached and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread.” <sup>4</sup>\*He said in reply, “It is written: <sup>c</sup>

‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.’”

<sup>5</sup>\*Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, <sup>6</sup>and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

‘He will command his angels concerning you’ and ‘with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”<sup>d</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord, your God, to

<sup>i</sup> 3:13–17 Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22; Jn 1:31–34. <sup>j</sup> 3:16 Is 42:1. <sup>k</sup> 3:17 12:18; 17:5; Gn 22:2; Ps 2:7; Is 42:1. <sup>a</sup> 4:1–11 Mk 1:12–13; Lk 4:1–13. <sup>b</sup> 4:2 Ex 24:18; Dt 8:2. <sup>c</sup> 4:4 Dt 8:3. <sup>d</sup> 4:6 Ps 91:11–12.





## Pray It!

### Facing the Devil

Jesus is hungry, tired, and probably lonely after fasting for forty days and nights in the desert. The devil chooses this time to come and tempt him. It is often when we are feeling our worst that temptation is the strongest. When things are going badly at school or at home, when we feel lonely or lost, it is easy to listen to the voice of doubt. It is easy to think that God has abandoned us. Where does Jesus find strength? Jesus relies on God.

*Dear God,*

*I don't feel very good right now.*

*Like Jesus in the desert, I'm tired.*

*I feel weak.*

*Be my strength and my courage.*

*Help me to rely on you*

*when I'm tempted to do things that  
I know I shouldn't.*

*I know that you will get me through.*

*Amen.*

Matthew 4:1–11

the test."<sup>e</sup> <sup>8</sup>Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, <sup>9</sup>and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." <sup>10</sup>At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written:

*'The Lord, your God, shall you worship  
and him alone shall you serve.'*" <sup>f</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

## The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry\*

(Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:14, 15)

<sup>12g</sup>When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup>He left

Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali,<sup>h</sup> <sup>14</sup>that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

- <sup>15</sup> "Land of Zebulun and land of  
Naphtali,<sup>i</sup>  
the way to the sea, beyond the  
Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles,  
<sup>16</sup> the people who sit in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
on those dwelling in a land  
overshadowed by death  
light has arisen."<sup>i</sup>

<sup>17</sup>\*From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say,<sup>k</sup> "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

## The Call of the First Disciples\*

(Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:1–11)

<sup>18l</sup>As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup>He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup>\*At once they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup>He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, <sup>22</sup>and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

## Ministering to a Great Multitude\*

(Luke 6:17–19)

<sup>23</sup>He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,\* proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.<sup>m</sup> <sup>24</sup>\*His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them. <sup>25n</sup>And

<sup>e</sup> 4:7 Dt 6:16. <sup>f</sup> 4:10 16:23; Dt 6:13. <sup>g</sup> 4:12–13 Mk 1:14–15; Lk 4:14, 31. <sup>h</sup> 4:13 Jn 2:12. <sup>i</sup> 4:15–16 Is 8:23 LXX; 9:1. <sup>j</sup> 4:16 Lk 1:79. <sup>k</sup> 4:17 3:2. <sup>l</sup> 4:18–22 Mk 1:16–20; Lk 5:1–11. <sup>m</sup> 4:23 9:35; Mk 1:39; Lk 4:15, 44. <sup>n</sup> 4:25 Mk 3:7–8; Lk 6:17–19.



## Study It!

### Jesus' Most Famous Sermon

Many well-known teachings of Jesus are collected in chapters 5–7 of the Gospel of Matthew, including the Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, and the Lord's Prayer. This section of Matthew's Gospel is called the Sermon on the Mount. Some of these teachings echo ideas that were already present in Jesus' time. Some of them are radical. Jesus says all these things, and then in the chapters to come, we see him live out all these teachings. He trusts in God. When he is treated cruelly, he responds with forgiveness and mercy. Read Matthew, chapters 5–7, carefully. It is a sneak preview of what lies ahead.

Matthew, chapters 5–7

great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,\* Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

### The Sermon on the Mount

**5** <sup>1</sup>When he saw the crowds,\* he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>He began to teach them, saying:

### The Beatitudes\*

(Luke 6:20–23)

- 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,\*  
for theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven.<sup>a</sup>
- 4\* Blessed are they who mourn,<sup>b</sup>  
for they will be comforted.
- 5\* Blessed are the meek,<sup>c</sup>  
for they will inherit the land.
- 6 Blessed are they who hunger and  
thirst for righteousness,\*  
for they will be satisfied.
- 7 Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.<sup>d</sup>

**Read:** Matthew, chapter 5

Pray today for someone who has bullied you or someone you know. If you've bullied others, seek forgiveness.

**Up Next:** Matthew 6:5–15

- 8\* Blessed are the clean of heart,<sup>e</sup>  
for they will see God.
- 9 Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of  
God.
- 10 Blessed are they who are persecuted  
for the sake of righteousness,\*  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me.<sup>g</sup>  
<sup>12</sup>\*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.<sup>h</sup> Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### The Similes of Salt and Light\*

(Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34, 35)

<sup>13</sup><sup>i</sup> "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.\* <sup>14</sup>You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.<sup>i</sup>  
<sup>15</sup>Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house.<sup>k</sup> <sup>16</sup>Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.<sup>l</sup>

### Teaching About the Law

<sup>17</sup>\*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup>Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.<sup>m</sup> <sup>19</sup>Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do

a 5:3–12 Lk 6:20–23. b 5:4 Is 61:2–3; Rev 21:4. c 5:5 Gn 13:15; Ps 37:11. d 5:7 18:33; Jas 2:13. e 5:8 Ps 24:4–5; 73:1. f 5:10 1 Pt 2:20; 3:14; 4:14. g 5:11 10:22; Acts 5:41. h 5:12 2 Chr 36:16; Heb 11:32–38; Jas 5:10. i 5:13 Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34–35. j 5:14 Jn 8:12. k 5:15 Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16; 11:33. l 5:16 Jn 3:21. m 5:18 Lk 16:17.



For highlights of Jesus' teaching, read Matthew, chapters 5–7; Luke, chapter 12; John, chapters 6; 8.

**Breakthrough!:** Matthew, Jesus has quite a reputation as a teacher. The Gospels say he taught “as one having authority” (Matthew 7:29). What does that mean?

**Matthew:** Jesus taught like he had a right to teach. When he said something, you knew he meant it and that what he said was true. His words captivated many people!

**B:** Do you have an example?

**Matthew:** Sure, let's look at the Beatitudes.

**B:** Those are the statements that begin with “Blessed are,” right?

**Matthew:** That's right. Although they are comforting, they're also very challenging. For example, he said that blessed are those who are poor, who mourn, who are merciful, who are persecuted.

**B:** Hold on! When I was sad because my grandma died, or when we didn't have enough money to visit my brother, I was supposed to feel blessed?

**Matthew:** Well, yes. But not because of the bad things. Jesus tells us we're blessed in

these situations because we can experience God's love in a different way. It makes us look for God and realize that he has always been there. Can you think of a time when, say, you were really happy?

**B:** Oh yeah! I got a new phone for Christmas, and we had relatives over. All day I was talking to my cousins, or downloading new apps, or. . . . Oh, I think I get it. It didn't feel like I needed God at all.

**Matthew:** Exactly. Having good things or being happy isn't bad—God wants us to rejoice in those gifts! What's bad is when we forget that God should be the center of our lives—or we forget to reach out to our neighbor.

**B:** So when we are mourning, or poor, or humble, there's more room for God in our lives.

**Matthew:** Now you've got it! Blessed are the poor . . . because it's easier for them to see God.

**B:** Thanks! I think I'll read the Beatitudes and see how to make room for God.





## Catholic Connections

### A New Law

The Old Covenant is what people of Jesus' time were used to. The Old Covenant was a promise. God promised that the Israelites would be his special people, and the people promised that they would worship him alone. As a sign of their commitment, they followed the special Law that God gave to Moses. This Old Law was summed up in the Ten Commandments.

But the Israelites failed over and over again to be faithful to God. So Jesus brought a New Covenant. The New Covenant had a New Law that did not do away with the Old Law (Matthew 5:17–20) but fulfilled and completed it. The New Law focuses not just on our actions but also on what is in our hearts. In chapter 5, watch for the sentence, "You have heard that it was said." Each time this appears, Jesus gives a teaching from the Law of Moses and focuses on its true meaning.

The first section of the Sermon on the Mount is called the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes summarize what God's New Law is all about. They focus on the attitudes in our hearts rather than on specific actions. They are the key to human happiness. In the Beatitudes, we see the wisdom of the Old Law brought to a new level.

Matthew 5:1–12

so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.\* <sup>20</sup>I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

### Teaching About Anger<sup>r</sup>

<sup>21</sup>"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors,<sup>n</sup> 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.'<sup>\*</sup> <sup>22</sup>But I say to you, whoever is angry<sup>\*</sup> with his brother will be liable to judgment,<sup>o</sup> and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. <sup>23</sup>Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you,<sup>p</sup> <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup>Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him.<sup>q</sup> Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge,

and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.

### Teaching About Adultery

<sup>27</sup>"You have heard that it was said,<sup>r</sup> 'You shall not commit adultery.'<sup>s</sup> <sup>28</sup>But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.<sup>s</sup> It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

### Teaching About Divorce

(Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18)

<sup>31</sup>"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.'<sup>t</sup> <sup>32</sup>But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful)

**Read:** Matthew 6:5–15

Jesus encourages us to go to our inner room to pray. Where is a quiet place where you can be alone with God?

**Up Next:** Matthew 8:1–15

causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.<sup>u</sup>

### Teaching About Oaths

<sup>33v</sup> “Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.’ <sup>34w</sup> But I say to you, do not swear at all;\* not by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup> nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one.

### Teaching About Retaliation

(Luke 6:29, 30)

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said,<sup>x</sup> ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ <sup>39y</sup> But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> Should anyone press you into service for one mile,\* go with him for two miles. <sup>z</sup> <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.<sup>a</sup>

### Love of Enemies\*

(Luke 6:27, 28, 32–36)

<sup>43b</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>c</sup> <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise



## Pray It!

### Shine Bright!

In this passage, we are told, “Your light must shine before others” (Matthew 5:16). Light a candle in a dark room. Now shield the flame with your hand. Notice how dark the room gets. Now hold the light up over your head. See how it lights up the whole room? God wants us to do the same thing with our lives. God asks us to live so that the good we do shines on others and lights up the whole world.

Matthew 5:14–16

on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors\* do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same?\* <sup>48</sup> So be perfect,\* just as your heavenly Father is perfect.<sup>d</sup>

### Teaching About Almsgiving

**6** <sup>1</sup> “[But] take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them;<sup>a</sup> otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. <sup>2</sup> When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites\* do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.<sup>b</sup> <sup>3</sup> But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your almsgiving may be secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

### Teaching About Prayer

(Luke 11:2–4)

<sup>5</sup> “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in



## Live It! No Show-Offs

Hypocrites are people whose beliefs and actions don't match. They say one thing and do the opposite. Or they may do the right thing, but it is just for show. Their good action doesn't really mean anything because their hearts aren't in it. In this section, Jesus criticizes this kind of behavior. He tells his followers that when they do something good, they should keep it a secret. When you pray, don't show off. When you help someone else, don't brag about it. Then you know that you are doing the right thing for the right reason.

Matthew 6:5-7

the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. <sup>7</sup>In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

### The Lord's Prayer

<sup>9</sup>"This is how you are to pray: <sup>c</sup>

Our Father in heaven,\*  
hallowed be your name,  
<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,\*  
your will be done,

on earth as in heaven. <sup>d</sup>

<sup>11</sup>\*e Give us today our daily bread;  
<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts,\*  
as we forgive our debtors; <sup>f</sup>

<sup>13</sup> and do not subject us to the final  
test,\*  
but deliver us from the evil one. <sup>g</sup>

<sup>14</sup>\*If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>h</sup> <sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. <sup>i</sup>

### Teaching About Fasting

<sup>16</sup>"When you fast,\* do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup>so that you may not appear to others to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you.

### Treasure in Heaven

(Luke 12:33, 34)

<sup>19</sup>\*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. <sup>i</sup> <sup>20</sup>But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. <sup>k</sup>

### The Light of the Body\*

(Luke 11:34-36)

<sup>22</sup>"The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light; <sup>23</sup>but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be in darkness. And if the light in you is darkness, how great will the darkness be. <sup>l</sup>

### God and Money

(Luke 16:13; 12:22-31)

<sup>24</sup>\*"No one can serve two masters. <sup>m</sup> He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

### Dependence on God.\*

<sup>25</sup><sup>n</sup>"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or





## Pray It!

### Remember God's Goodness

Do you worry a lot? Many people do. In Matthew, chapter 6, Jesus reminds us that God takes care of us. The next time you find yourself worrying about the future, use this meditation to regain your perspective:

*A flower in the field starts as a seed. The sun warms the seed. The soil feeds the tiny plant through its delicate root system. The rain falls, the plant grows, and finally the bud becomes a bright beautiful blossom. God made this whole process. It takes place without any work or worry on the part of the flower. God has a plan for you, too. You are so much more valuable to God than a tiny flower, so much more complex. Imagine the process that has brought you to where you are today—from a tiny creature growing inside your mother to the person you are now. And God's not through with you! God has a plan to make something bright and beautiful happen with you too!*

Matthew 6:25-34

drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? <sup>27</sup>Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? <sup>28</sup>Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. <sup>29</sup>But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. <sup>30</sup>If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much

more provide for you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup>So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' <sup>32</sup>All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. <sup>33</sup>But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness,\* and all these things will be given you besides. <sup>34</sup>Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.

## Judging Others

(Luke 6:37, 38, 41, 42)

**7** <sup>1a</sup>"Stop judging,\* that you may not be judged.<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup>For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.<sup>c</sup> <sup>3</sup>Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? <sup>5</sup>You hypocrite,\* remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.

## Pearls Before Swine

<sup>6</sup>"Do not give what is holy to dogs,\* or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces.<sup>d</sup>

## The Answer to Prayers

(Luke 11:9-13)

<sup>7e</sup>"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.<sup>f</sup> <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.<sup>g</sup> <sup>9</sup>Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread,\* <sup>10</sup>or a snake when he asks for a fish? <sup>11</sup>If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him.<sup>h</sup>



Based on this story, what kind of “soil” is your faith growing in?

### Jesus Tells the Story of a Sower

For the full story, read Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23.

is my mother? Who are my brothers?”<sup>49</sup> And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers.”<sup>50</sup> For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

### The Parable of the Sower

(Mark 4:1–9; Luke 8:4–8)

**13**<sup>1</sup>\*On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea.<sup>a</sup> <sup>2</sup>Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. <sup>3</sup>\*And he spoke to them at length in parables,\* saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup>Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, <sup>6</sup>and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. <sup>7</sup>Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew

up and choked it. <sup>8</sup>But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. <sup>9</sup>Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

### The Purpose of Parables

(Mark 4:10–12; Luke 8:9, 10)

<sup>10</sup>The disciples approached him and said, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”<sup>11</sup>\*He said to them in reply, “Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted. <sup>12</sup><sup>b</sup>To anyone who has, more will be given\* and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup>\*<sup>c</sup>This is why I speak to them in parables, because ‘they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.’ <sup>14</sup><sup>d</sup>Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

‘You shall indeed hear but not understand,  
you shall indeed look but never see.

## NOTES TO MATTHEW

Notes are indicated by an asterisk (\*) in the text.

**1:1–2:23** The infancy narrative forms the prologue of the gospel. Consisting of a genealogy and five stories, it presents the coming of Jesus as the climax of Israel's history, and the events of his conception, birth, and early childhood as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The genealogy is probably traditional material that Matthew edited. In its first two sections (Mt 1:2–11) it was drawn from Ru 4:18–22; 1 Chr 1–3. Except for Jeconiah, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel, none of the names in the third section (Mt 1:12–16) is found in any Old Testament genealogy. While the genealogy shows the continuity of God's providential plan from Abraham on, discontinuity is also present. The women Tamar (Mt 1:3), Rahab and Ruth (Mt 1:5), and the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba (Mt 1:6), bore their sons through unions that were in varying degrees strange and unexpected. These "irregularities" culminate in the supreme "irregularity" of the Messiah's birth of a virgin mother; the age of fulfillment is inaugurated by a creative act of God.

Drawing upon both biblical tradition and Jewish stories, Matthew portrays Jesus as reliving the Exodus experience of Israel and the persecutions of Moses. His rejection by his own people and his passion are foreshadowed by the troubled reaction of "all Jerusalem" to the question of the magi who are seeking the "newborn king of the Jews" (Mt 2:2–3), and by Herod's attempt to have him killed. The magi who do him homage prefigure the Gentiles who will accept the preaching of the gospel. The infancy narrative proclaims who Jesus is, the savior of his people from their sins (Mt 1:21), Emmanuel in whom "God is with us" (Mt 1:23), and the Son of God (Mt 2:15).

**1:1** *The Son of David, the son of Abraham*: two links of the genealogical chain are singled out. Although the later, David is placed first in order to emphasize that Jesus is the royal Messiah. The mention of Abraham may be due not only to his being the father of the nation Israel but to Matthew's interest in the universal scope of Jesus' mission; cf. Gn 22:18 "...in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing."

**1:7** The successor of Abijah was not Asaph but Asa (see 1 Chr 3:10). Some textual witnesses read the latter name; however, *Asaph* is better attested. Matthew may have deliberately introduced the psalmist Asaph into the genealogy (and in Mt 1:10 the prophet Amos) in order to show that Jesus is the fulfillment not only of the promises made to David (see 2 Sm 7) but of all the Old Testament.

**1:10** *Amos*: some textual witnesses read *Amon*, who was the actual successor of Manasseh (see 1 Chr 3:14).

**1:17** Matthew is concerned with fourteen generations, probably because fourteen is the numerical value of the Hebrew letters forming the name of David. In the second section of the genealogy (Mt 1:6b–11), three kings of Judah, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, have been omitted (see 1 Chr 3:11–12), so that there are fourteen generations in that section. Yet the third (Mt 1:12–16) apparently has only thirteen. Since Matthew here emphasizes that each section has fourteen, it is unlikely that the thirteen of the last was due to his oversight. Some scholars suggest that *Jesus who is called the Messiah* (Mt 1:16b) doubles the final member of the chain: *Jesus*, born within the family of David, opens up the new age as *Messiah*, so that in fact there are fourteen generations in the third section. This is perhaps too subtle, and the hypothesis of a slip not on the part of Matthew but of a later scribe seems likely. On *Messiah*, see note on Lk 2:11.

**1:18–25** This first story of the infancy narrative spells out what is summarily indicated in Mt 1:16. The virginal conception of Jesus is the work of the Spirit of God. Joseph's decision to divorce Mary is overcome by the heavenly command that he take her into his home and accept the child as his own. The natural genealogical line is broken but the promises to David are fulfilled; through Joseph's adoption the child belongs to the family of David. Matthew sees the virginal conception as the fulfillment of Is 7:14.

**1:18** *Betrothed to Joseph*: betrothal was the first part of the marriage, constituting a man and woman as husband and wife. Subsequent infidelity was considered adultery. The betrothal was followed some months later by the husband's taking his wife into his home, at which time normal married life began.

**1:19** *A righteous man*: as a devout observer of the Mosaic law, Joseph wished to break his union with someone whom he suspected of gross violation of the law. It is commonly said that the law required him to do so, but the texts usually given in support of that view, e.g., Dt 22:20–21 do not clearly pertain to Joseph's situation. *Unwilling to expose her to shame*: the penalty for proved adultery was death by stoning; cf. Dt 22:21–23.

**1:20** *The angel of the Lord*: in the Old Testament a common designation of God in communication with a human being. *In a dream*: see Mt 2:13, 19, 22. These dreams may be meant to recall the dreams of Joseph, son of Jacob the patriarch (Gn 37:5–11, 19). A closer parallel is the dream of Amram, father of Moses, related by Josephus (*Antiquities* 2:212, 215–16).

**1:21** *Jesus*: in first-century Judaism the Hebrew name Joshua (Greek *Iêsous*) meaning "Yahweh helps" was interpreted as "Yahweh saves."

**1:23** *God is with us*: God's promise of deliverance to Judah in Isaiah's time is seen by Matthew as fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, in whom God is with his people. The name Emmanuel is alluded to at the end of the gospel where the risen Jesus assures his disciples of his continued presence, "...I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

**1:25** *Until she bore a son*: the evangelist is concerned to emphasize that Joseph was not responsible for the conception of Jesus. The Greek word translated "until" does not imply normal marital conduct after Jesus' birth, nor does it exclude it.

**2:1–12** The future rejection of Jesus by Israel and his acceptance by the Gentiles are retrojected into this scene of the narrative.

**2:1** *In the days of King Herod*: Herod reigned from 37 to 4 B.C. *Magi*: originally a designation of the Persian priestly caste, the word became used of those who were regarded as having more than human knowledge. Matthew's magi are astrologers.

**2:2** *We saw his star*: it was a common ancient belief that a new star appeared at the time of a ruler's birth. Matthew also draws upon the Old Testament story of Balaam, who had prophesied that "A star shall advance from Jacob" (Nm 24:17), though there the star means not an astral phenomenon but the king himself.

**2:4** Herod's consultation with the chief priests and scribes has some similarity to a Jewish legend about the child Moses in which the "sacred scribes" warn Pharaoh about the imminent birth of one who will deliver Israel from Egypt and the king makes plans to destroy him.

**2:11** Cf. Ps 72:10, 15; Is 60:6. These Old Testament texts led to the interpretation of the magi as kings.

**2:13–23** Biblical and nonbiblical traditions about Moses are here applied to the child Jesus, though the dominant Old Testament type is not Moses but Israel (Mt 2:15).

**2:13** *Flee to Egypt*: Egypt was a traditional place of refuge for those fleeing from danger in Palestine (see 1 Kgs 11:40; Jer 26:21), but the main reason why the child is to be taken to Egypt is that he may relive the Exodus experience of Israel.

**2:15** The fulfillment citation is taken from Hos 11:1. Israel, God's son, was called out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus; Jesus, the Son of God, will similarly be called out of that land in a new exodus. The father-son relationship between God and the nation is set in a higher key. Here the son is not a group adopted as "son of God," but the child who, as conceived by the holy Spirit, stands in unique relation to God. He is son of David and of Abraham, of Mary and of Joseph, but, above all, of God.

**2:18** Jer 31:15 portrays Rachel, wife of the patriarch Jacob, weeping for her children taken into exile at the time of the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom (722–21 B.C.). Bethlehem was traditionally identified with Ephrath, the place near which Rachel was buried (see Gn 35:19; 48:7), and the mourning of Rachel is here applied to her lost children of a later age. *Ramah*: about six miles north of Jerusalem. The lamentation of Rachel is so great as to be heard at a far distance.

**2:20** *For those who sought the child's life are dead*: Moses, who had fled from Egypt because the Pharaoh sought to kill him (see Ex 2:15), was told to return there, "for all the men who sought your life are dead" (Ex 4:19).

**2:22** With the agreement of the emperor Augustus, Archelaus received half of his father's kingdom, including Judea, after Herod's death. He had the title "ethnarch" (i.e., "ruler of a nation") and reigned from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6.

**2:23** *Nazareth...he shall be called a Nazorean*: the tradition of Jesus' residence in Nazareth was firmly established, and Matthew sees it as being in accordance with the foreannounced plan of God. The town of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and no such prophecy can be found there. The vague expression "through the prophets" may be due to Matthew's seeing a connection between Nazareth and certain texts in which there are words with a remote similarity to the name of that town. Some such Old Testament texts are Is 11:1 where the Davidic king of the future is called "a bud" (*nēser*) that shall blossom from the roots of Jesse, and Jgs 13:5, 7 where Samson, the future deliverer of Israel from the Philistines, is called one who shall be consecrated (a *nāzir*) to God.

**3:1–12** Here Matthew takes up the order of Jesus' ministry found in the gospel of Mark, beginning with the preparatory preaching of John the Baptist.

**3:1** Unlike Luke, Matthew says nothing of the Baptist's origins and does not make him a relative of Jesus. *The desert of Judea*: the barren region west of the Dead Sea extending up the Jordan valley.

**3:2** *Repent*: the Baptist calls for a change of heart and conduct, a turning of one's life from rebellion to obedience towards God. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*: "heaven" (lit., "the heavens") is a substitute for the name "God" that was avoided by devout Jews of the time out of reverence. The expression "the kingdom of heaven" occurs only in the gospel of Matthew. It means the effective rule of God over his people. In its fullness it includes not only human obedience to God's



word, but the triumph of God over physical evils, supremely over death. In the expectation found in Jewish apocalyptic, the kingdom was to be ushered in by a judgment in which sinners would be condemned and perish, an expectation shared by the Baptist. This was modified in Christian understanding where the kingdom was seen as being established in stages, culminating with the parousia of Jesus.

**3:3** See note on Jn 1:23.

**3:4** The clothing of John recalls the austere dress of the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 1:8). The expectation of the return of Elijah from heaven to prepare Israel for the final manifestation of God's kingdom was widespread, and according to Matthew this expectation was fulfilled in the Baptist's ministry (Mt 11:14; 17:11–13).

**3:6** Ritual washing was practiced by various groups in Palestine between 150 B.C. and A.D. 250. John's baptism may have been related to the purificatory washings of the Essenes at Qumran.

**3:7** *Pharisees and Sadducees*: the former were marked by devotion to the law, written and oral, and the scribes, experts in the law, belonged predominantly to this group. The Sadducees were the priestly aristocratic party, centered in Jerusalem. They accepted as scripture only the first five books of the Old Testament, followed only the letter of the law, rejected the oral legal traditions, and were opposed to teachings not found in the Pentateuch, such as the resurrection of the dead. Matthew links both of these groups together as enemies of Jesus (Mt 16:1, 6, 11, 12; cf. Mk 8:11–13, 15). The threatening words that follow are addressed to them rather than to "the crowds" as in Lk 3:7. *The coming wrath*: the judgment that will bring about the destruction of unrepentant sinners.

**3:11** *Baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire*: the water baptism of John will be followed by an "immersion" of the repentant in the cleansing power of the Spirit of God, and of the unrepentant in the destroying power of God's judgment. However, some see *the holy Spirit and fire* as synonymous, and the effect of this "baptism" as either purification or destruction. See note on Lk 3:16.

**3:12** The discrimination between the good and the bad is compared to the procedure by which a farmer separates wheat and chaff. The *winnowing fan* was a forklike shovel with which the threshed wheat was thrown into the air. The kernels fell to the ground; the light chaff, blown off by the wind, was gathered and burned up.

**3:13–17** The baptism of Jesus is the occasion on which he is equipped for his ministry by the holy Spirit and proclaimed to be the Son of God.

**3:14–15** This dialogue, peculiar to Matthew, reveals John's awareness of Jesus' superiority to him as the mightier one who is coming and who will baptize with the holy Spirit (Mt 3:11). His reluctance to admit Jesus among the sinners whom he is baptizing with water is overcome by Jesus' response. *To fulfill all righteousness*: in this gospel *to fulfill* usually refers to fulfillment of prophecy, and *righteousness* to moral conduct in conformity with God's will. Here, however, as in Mt 5:6; 6:33, *righteousness* seems to mean the saving activity of God. *To fulfill all righteousness* is to submit to the plan of God for the salvation of the human race. This involves Jesus' identification with sinners; hence the propriety of his accepting John's baptism.

**3:16** *The Spirit...coming upon him*: cf. Is 42:1.

**3:17** *This is my beloved Son*: the Marcan address to Jesus (Mk 1:11) is changed into a proclamation. The Father's voice speaks in terms that reflect Is 42:1; Ps 2:7; Gn 22:2.

**4:1–11** Jesus, proclaimed Son of God at his baptism, is subjected to a triple temptation. Obedience to the Father is a characteristic of true sonship, and Jesus is tempted by the devil to rebel against God, overtly in the third case, more subtly in the first two. Each refusal of Jesus is expressed in language taken from the Book of Deuteronomy (Dt 8:3; 6:13, 16). The testings of Jesus resemble those of Israel during the wandering in the desert and later in Canaan, and the victory of Jesus, the true Israel and the true Son, contrasts with the failure of the ancient and disobedient "son," the old Israel. In the temptation account Matthew is almost identical with Luke; both seem to have drawn upon the same source.

**4:2** *Forty days and forty nights*: the same time as that during which Moses remained on Sinai (Ex 24:18). The time reference, however, seems primarily intended to recall the forty years during which Israel was tempted in the desert (Dt 8:2).

**4:4** Cf. Dt 8:3. Jesus refuses to use his power for his own benefit and accepts whatever God wills.

**4:5–7** The devil supports his proposal by an appeal to the scriptures, Ps 91:11a, 12. Unlike Israel (Dt 6:16), Jesus refuses to "test" God by demanding from him an extraordinary show of power.

**4:9** The worship of Satan to which Jesus is tempted is probably intended to recall Israel's worship of false gods. His refusal is expressed in the words of Dt 6:13.

**4:12–17** Isaiah's prophecy of the light rising upon Zebulun and Naphtali (Is 8:22–9:1) is fulfilled in Jesus' residence at Capernaum. The territory of those two tribes was the first to be devastated (733–32 B.C.) at the time of the Assyrian invasion. In order to accommodate Jesus' move to Capernaum to the prophecy, Matthew speaks of that town as being "in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali" (Mt 4:13), whereas it was only in the territory of the latter, and

he understands the sea of the prophecy, the Mediterranean, as the sea of Galilee.

**4:17** At the beginning of his preaching Jesus takes up the words of John the Baptist (Mt 3:2) although with a different meaning; in his ministry the kingdom of heaven has already begun to be present (Mt 12:28).

**4:18–22** The call of the first disciples promises them a share in Jesus' work and entails abandonment of family and former way of life. Three of the four, Simon, James, and John, are distinguished among the disciples by a closer relation with Jesus (Mt 17:1; 26:37).

**4:20** Here and in Mt 4:22, as in Mark (Mk 1:16–20) and unlike the Lucan account (Lk 5:1–11), the disciples' response is motivated only by Jesus' invitation, an element that emphasizes his mysterious power.

**4:23–25** This summary of Jesus' ministry concludes the narrative part of the first book of Matthew's gospel (Mt 3–4). The activities of his ministry are teaching, proclaiming the gospel, and healing; cf. Mt 9:35.

**4:23** *Their synagogues*: Matthew usually designates the Jewish synagogues as *their synagogue(s)* (Mt 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54) or, in address to Jews, *your synagogues* (Mt 23:34), an indication that he wrote after the break between church and synagogue.

**4:24** *Syria*: the Roman province to which Palestine belonged.

**4:25** *The Decapolis*: a federation of Greek cities in Palestine, originally ten in number, all but one east of the Jordan.

**5:1–7:29** The first of the five discourses that are a central part of the structure of this gospel. It is the discourse section of the first book and contains sayings of Jesus derived from Q and from M. The Lucan parallel is in that gospel's "Sermon on the Plain" (Lk 6:20–49), although some of the sayings in Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount" have their parallels in other parts of Luke. The careful topical arrangement of the sermon is probably not due only to Matthew's editing; he seems to have had a structured discourse of Jesus as one of his sources. The form of that source may have been as follows: four beatitudes (Mt 5:3–4, 6, 11–12), a section on the new righteousness with illustrations (Mt 5:17, 20–24, 27–28, 33–48), a section on good works (Mt 6:1–6, 16–18), and three warnings (Mt 7:1–2, 15–21, 24–27).

**5:1–2** Unlike Luke's sermon, this is addressed not only to the disciples but to the crowds (see Mt 7:28).

**5:3–12** The form *Blessed are (is)* occurs frequently in the Old Testament in the Wisdom literature and in the psalms. Although modified by Matthew, the first, second, fourth, and ninth beatitudes have Lucan parallels (Mt 5:3 // Lk 6:20; Mt 5:4 // Lk 6:21b; Mt 5:6 // Lk 6:21a; Mt 5:11–12 // Lk 5:22–23). The others were added by the evangelist and are probably his own composition. A few manuscripts, Western and Alexandrian, and many versions and patristic quotations give the second and third beatitudes in inverted order.

**5:3** *The poor in spirit*: in the Old Testament, the poor (*ʾanāwīm*) are those who are without material possessions and whose confidence is in God (see Is 61:1; Zep 2:3; in the NAB the word is translated *lowly and humble*, respectively, in those texts). Matthew added *in spirit* in order either to indicate that only the devout poor were meant or to extend the beatitude to all, of whatever social rank, who recognized their complete dependence on God. The same phrase *poor in spirit* is found in the Qumran literature (1QM 14:7).

**5:4** Cf. Is 61:2, "(The Lord has sent me)...to comfort all who mourn." *They will be comforted*: here the passive is a "theological passive" equivalent to the active "God will comfort them"; so also in Mt 5:6, 7.

**5:5** Cf. Ps 37:11, "...the meek shall possess the land." In the psalm "the land" means the land of Palestine; here it means the kingdom.

**5:6** *For righteousness*: a Matthean addition. For the meaning of *righteousness* here, see note on Mt 3:14–15.

**5:8** Cf. Ps 24:4. Only one "whose heart is clean" can take part in the temple worship. To be with God in the temple is described in Ps 42:3 as "beholding his face," but here the promise to *the clean of heart* is that they will see God not in the temple but in the coming kingdom.

**5:10** *Righteousness* here, as usually in Matthew, means conduct in conformity with God's will.

**5:12** *The prophets who were before you*: the disciples of Jesus stand in the line of the persecuted prophets of Israel. Some would see the expression as indicating also that Matthew considered all Christian disciples as prophets.

**5:13–16** By their deeds the disciples are to influence the world for good. They can no more escape notice than a *city set on a mountain*. If they fail in good works, they are as useless as flavorless salt or as a lamp whose light is concealed.

**5:13** The unusual supposition of salt losing its flavor has led some to suppose that the saying refers to the salt of the Dead Sea that, because chemically impure, could lose its taste.

**5:17–20** This statement of Jesus' position concerning the Mosaic law is composed of traditional material from Matthew's sermon documentation (see note on Mt 5:1–7:29), other Q material (cf. Mt 18; Lk 16:17), and the evangelist's own editorial touches. *To fulfill* the law appears at first to mean a literal enforcement of the law in

# Study and Prayer Helps

Bible Story Index .....	2086
Article Index.....	2089
Glossary .....	2098
Catholic Prayers .....	2111
Catholic Teachings .....	2115
Maps	
Map 1: The World of the Patriarchs .....	2117
Map 2: The Exodus From Egypt .....	2118
Map 3: Jacob's Children in Palestine .....	2119
Map 4: The Kingdom Years .....	2120
Map 5: The Assyrian Empire.....	2121
Map 6: The Babylonian Empire .....	2121
Map 7: The Ministry of Jesus .....	2122
Map 8: Paul's First and Second Journeys .....	2123
Map 9: Paul's Third and Fourth Journeys .....	2124
Map 10: The Holy Land in Modern Times.....	2125
Make It Stick!.....	2126
Go Forth! .....	2127
Bible Books—Alphabetical List with Abbreviations .....	2128

# BIBLE STORY INDEX

## Old Testament People and Events

These events are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.

**Creation**, *Genesis, chapters 1–2*

**Original Sin and its punishment**,  
*Genesis, chapter 3*

**Cain and Abel**, *Genesis 4:1–16*

**Noah and the Great Flood**,  
*Genesis, chapters 6–9*

**God's covenant with Abraham**,  
*Genesis 17:1–18:15*

**God's command to sacrifice Isaac**,  
*Genesis 22:1–19*

**Isaac's blessing of Jacob**, *Genesis 27:1–29*

**Jacob's dream**, *Genesis 28:10–22*

**Joseph and his brothers**,  
*Genesis, chapters 37–46*

**birth and youth of Moses**, *Exodus 2:1–10*

**Moses at the burning bush**, *Exodus 3:1–12*

**plagues on Egypt**, *Exodus, chapters 7–12*

**Passover and the Exodus**,  
*Exodus, chapters 12–14*

**Ten Commandments**, *Exodus 20:1–17*

**destruction of Jericho**, *Joshua 5:13–6:27*

**Gideon and the fleece**, *Judges 6:36–40*

**Samson**, *Judges, chapters 13–16*

**Samuel's birth and calling**,  
*1 Samuel, chapters 1–3*

**David and Goliath**, *1 Samuel, chapter 17*

**David and Bathsheba**, *2 Samuel, chapter 11*

**Solomon's wisdom**, *1 Kings, chapter 3*

**Elijah's triumph over the priests of Baal**,  
*1 Kings 18:21–40*

**miracles of Elisha**, *2 Kings 4:1–6:23*

**return from Exile**, *Ezra, chapter 1*

**battles of Judas Maccabeus**,  
*1 Maccabees, chapters 3–5*

**Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones**,  
*Ezekiel 37:1–14*

**Daniel**, *Daniel, chapters 1–6*

**Jonah and the Ninevites**, *Jonah, chapters 1–3*

## New Testament People and Events

These events are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.

**birth of Jesus**, *Matthew 1:18–2:12*;  
*Luke, chapters 1–2*

**baptism of Jesus**, *Matthew 3:13–17*;  
*Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22*

**temptation of Jesus**, *Matthew 4:1–11*;  
*Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13*

**Peter's declaration about Jesus**,  
*Matthew 16:13–20; Mark 8:27–30*;  
*Luke 9:18–20*

**Transfiguration of Jesus**, *Matthew 17:1–13*;  
*Mark 9:2–13; Luke 9:28–36*

**Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem**,  
*Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11*;  
*Luke 19:28–40; John 12:12–19*

**Jesus in the Temple**, *Matthew 21:12–17*;  
*Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48*;  
*John 2:13–17*

**Judas's betrayal of Jesus**,  
*Matthew 26:14–16, 47–56*;  
*Mark 14:10–11, 43–52; Luke 22:1–53*;  
*John 13:21–30; 18:1–5*

**Last Supper**, *Matthew 26:17–30*;  
*Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–38*;  
*1 Corinthians 11:23–26*

**Jesus at Gethsemane**, *Matthew 26:36–56*;  
*Mark 14:32–52; Luke 22:39–53*

**Peter's denial of Jesus**, *Matthew 26:69–75*;  
*Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62*;  
*John 18:15–18, 25–27*

**Crucifixion**, *Matthew 27:32–56*;  
*Mark 15:21–41; Luke 23:26–49*;  
*John 19:16–30*

**Resurrection and appearances**,  
*Matthew, chapter 28; Mark, chapter 16*;  
*Luke, chapter 24; John, chapters 20–21*;  
*Acts 1:1–11*

**Jesus washing his disciples' feet**,  
*John 13:1–17*

**Holy Spirit at Pentecost**, *Acts 2:1–41*

**stoning of Stephen**, *Acts, chapters 6–7*

**conversion of Saul**, *Acts 9:1–30*

**Peter's escape from prison**, *Acts 12:1–19*

**Paul and Silas's escape from prison**,  
*Acts 16:16–40*

**Paul's journey to Rome for his trial**,  
*Acts, chapters 27–28*



## Prayers

These prayers are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.

**The LORD bless you and keep you,**  
*Numbers 6:24–27*

**Hannah's prayer,** *1 Samuel 2:1–10*

**Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening,**  
*1 Samuel 3:9–10*

**Blessed be the LORD,** *1 Kings 8:56–61*

**Tobit's thanksgiving,** *Tobit, chapter 13*

**Judith's hymn of praise,** *Judith 16:1–17*

**The LORD is my shepherd,** *Psalms 23*

**Have mercy on me, O God,** *Psalms 51*

**LORD, you have probed me, you know me,**  
*Psalms 139*

**Holy, holy, holy (Hosanna),** *Isaiah 6:3;*  
*Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9–10;*  
*Luke 19:38; John 12:13; Revelation 4:8*

**Lord's Prayer,** *Matthew 6:9–15; Luke 11:2–4*

**Lord, I am not worthy,** *Matthew 8:8*

**Jesus' prayer for deliverance,**  
*Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36;*  
*Luke 22:42*

**Mary's song of praise,** *Luke 1:46–55*

**Zechariah's prophecy,** *Luke 1:68–79*

**Glory to God in the highest,** *Luke 2:14*

**Simeon's prayer,** *Luke 2:29–32*

**O God, be merciful to me a sinner,**  
*Luke 18:13*

**Lamb of God,** *John 1:29*

**Jesus' prayer for his disciples,**  
*John, chapter 17*

**Paul's prayer for the Ephesians,**  
*Ephesians 3:14–21*

**Amen,** *1 Peter 5:11; Jude, verse 25;*  
*Revelation 1:6–7; 22:20–21*

## Miracles of Jesus

These miracle stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.

### Healing Individuals

**leprosy,** *Matthew 8:1–4; Mark 1:40–45;*  
*Luke 5:12–16*

**centurion's servant,** *Matthew 8:5–13;*  
*Luke 7:1–10*

**many at Peter's house,** *Matthew 8:14–17;*  
*Mark 1:29–34; Luke 4:38–41*

**Gadarene (Gerasene) demoniacs,**  
*Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20;*  
*Luke 8:26–39*

**paralytic,** *Matthew 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12;*  
*Luke 5:17–26*

**woman with hemorrhage (bleeding),**  
*Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34;*  
*Luke 8:43–48*

**two blind men,** *Matthew 9:27–31*

**mute man,** *Matthew 9:32–34*

**man with a withered hand,**  
*Matthew 12:9–13; Mark 3:1–5;*  
*Luke 6:6–11*

**blind, mute demoniac,** *Matthew 12:22*

**Canaanite woman's daughter,**  
*Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30*

**boy with a demon,** *Matthew 17:14–21;*  
*Mark 9:14–29; Luke 9:37–43*

**blind people,** *Matthew 20:29–34;*  
*Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43*

**man with an unclean spirit,** *Mark 1:21–28;*  
*Luke 4:31–37*

**deaf man,** *Mark 7:31–37*

**blind man at Bethsaida,** *Mark 8:22–26*

**crippled woman,** *Luke 13:11–13*

**man with dropsy,** *Luke 14:1–4*

**ten lepers,** *Luke 17:11–19*

**high priest's servant,** *Luke 22:50–51*

**official's son,** *John 4:46–54*

**man at the pool of Bethesda,** *John 5:1–9*

### Controlling Nature

**calming the storm,** *Matthew 8:23–27;*  
*Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25*

**feeding five thousand,** *Matthew 14:13–21;*  
*Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17;*  
*John 6:1–14*

**walking on water,** *Matthew 14:22–33;*  
*Mark 6:45–52; John 6:16–21*

**feeding four thousand,** *Matthew 15:32–39;*  
*Mark 8:1–10*

**fish with a coin,** *Matthew 17:24–27*

**fig tree withers,** *Matthew 21:18–22;*  
*Mark 11:12–14, 20–25*

**huge catch of fish,** *Luke 5:1–11;*  
*John 21:1–11*

**turning water into wine,** *John 2:1–11*

### Raising the Dead

**Jairus's daughter,** *Matthew 9:18–19, 23–26;*  
*Mark 5:21–24, 35–43;*  
*Luke 8:40–42, 49–56*

**widow's son at Nain,** *Luke 7:11–17*

**Lazarus,** *John 11:1–44*

## Parables of Jesus

*These parables are listed in alphabetical order.*

**barren (unfruitful) fig tree**, Luke 13:6–9

**buried treasure and pearl**,

Matthew 13:44–46

**cost of discipleship**, Luke 14:25–33

**dishonest steward**, Luke 16:1–8

**faithful or unfaithful servant**,

Matthew 24:45–51; Luke 12:42–48

**fig tree**, Matthew 24:32–35;

Mark 13:28–31; Luke 21:29–33

**forgiven debts**, Luke 7:41–43

**good Samaritan**, Luke 10:30–37

**great feast**, Luke 14:16–24

**growing seed**, Mark 4:26–29

**honor at a banquet**, Luke 14:7–14

**light of the world**, Matthew 5:14–16

**lost coin**, Luke 15:8–10

**lost sheep**, Matthew 18:12–14; Luke 15:3–7

**lost son**, Luke 15:11–32

**mustard seed**, Matthew 13:31–32;

Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19

**net**, Matthew 13:47–50

**new cloth on an old cloak and new wine in**

**old wineskins**, Matthew 9:16–17;

Mark 2:21–22; Luke 5:36–39

**persistent friend**, Luke 11:5–8

**persistent widow**, Luke 18:2–8

**Pharisee and the tax collector**,

Luke 18:10–14

**rich fool**, Luke 12:16–21

**rich man and Lazarus**, Luke 16:19–31

**salt**, Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50;

Luke 14:34–35

**sheep and the goats**, Matthew 25:31–46

**sower**, Matthew 13:3–8, 18–23;

Mark 4:3–9, 14–20; Luke 8:5–8, 11–15

**talents**, Matthew 25:14–30

**ten coins**, Luke 19:11–27

**ten virgins**, Matthew 25:1–13

**two sons**, Matthew 21:28–31

**unforgiving servant**, Matthew 18:23–35

**unprofitable servants**, Luke 17:7–10

**watchful servants**, Luke 12:35–40

**wedding feast**, Matthew 22:1–14

**weeds among the wheat**,

Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

**wicked tenants**, Matthew 21:33–44;

Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–18

**wise and foolish builders**,

Matthew 7:24–27; Luke 6:47–49

**workers in the vineyard**, Matthew 20:1–16

**yeast**, Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20–21

## Teachings of Jesus

*These teachings are listed in alphabetical order.*

**Beatitudes**, Matthew 5:1–12; Luke 6:20–23

**born from above**, John 3:1–21

**bread of life**, John 6:25–59

**children**, Mark 10:13–16

**discipleship**, Luke 14:25–33

**do not worry**, Matthew 6:25–34;

Luke 12:22–34

**Golden Rule**, Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31

**good shepherd**, John 10:1–18

**greatest commandment**, Matthew 22:34–40;

Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–28

**living water**, John 4:1–26

**Lord's Prayer**, Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4

**mission of the twelve Apostles**,

Matthew 10:1–15

**paying taxes**, Matthew 22:15–22;

Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–26

**rich young man**, Matthew 19:16–30;

Mark 10:17–31; Luke 18:18–30

**Sermon on the Mount**,

Matthew, chapters 5–7

**Sermon on the Plain**, Luke 6:17–49

**vine and branches**, John 15:1–17

**"the way and the truth and the life,"**

John 14:1–14

**"where two or three are gathered together,"**

Matthew 18:20

# ARTICLE INDEX

This subject index is not an index to the Bible itself (sometimes called a **concordance**). Rather, it is an index to the subjects covered in the Pray It!, Study It!, Live It!, and Catholic Connections articles in *Breakthrough!*

## A

### acrostics

943

### Advent

1160, 1681

### advice

482, 501, 556, 822, 944

### Advocate

1771

### Africans

1173

### ageism

1645

### alleluia

929

### All Soul's Day

472

### altars

324

### angels

317, 368, 1443, 1446, 1993

### anger

23, 370, 824, 942, 1015,  
1362, 1635

### animals

644, 1152

### anointing

404, 1604

### apocalypse

1657, 2055

### apocalyptic writings

1440

### Apostles

316, 1574, 1636, 1661

### apostolic succession

1574, 1785

### appearance

403, 414, 1045, 1048, 1096,  
1397, 1756, 2023

### Arabs

1253

### archangels

1443, 1446

### arguments

378, 504, 725, 774, 797, 953,  
1002, 1584

### ark of the covenant

492

### arrogance

413, 501

### Ascension Sunday

891

### Ash Wednesday

1473

### attentiveness

982, 1177, 1286, 1309, 1359

## B

### Baptism

1418, 1747

### Beatitudes

1565

### beauty

1045, 1048, 1397, 2023

### bedtime prayers

858

### Bethlehem

1506

### betrayals

371

### Bible

735, 1222, 1303, 1347, 1746,  
1980

### bishops

1401, 1785

### blaming others

1315, 1725

### blessings

850, 1252, 1687, 1832, 2021

### Body and Blood of Christ

129, 1659, 1752, 1891

### bragging

1567, 1928

### bullying

426, 504

## C

### call of God

396, 512, 839, 1249, 1486,  
1636, 1865

### capital punishment

24, 1727, 1808



**capital sins**

1015

**caring and compassion**387, 1364, 1379, 1577, 1604,  
1779**Catholic Church**

1637

**Catholic social teaching**

1489

**celebrations**

666, 672

**celibacy**

1275

**change**

467, 1035, 1686

**character building**

1882, 1972, 2013

**charity**

661, 1603, 1898, 2035

**cheating**561, 843, 882, 987, 997,  
1012, 1162**choices**40, 321, 408, 540, 984, 987,  
999, 1767**Christian mission**

620, 1229, 1231, 2043

**Christmas**

1678, 1986

**church involvement**

158, 1865, 2024

**clay pot comparisons**

1278, 1863, 1909

**coins**

1720

**common good**

1226, 1489

**Communion**

1752, 1757, 1891

**Communion of Saints**

472, 801

**companionship**

1208, 1697

**complaining**

130, 227, 1690, 1751, 1945

**confession**

1782

**Confirmation**

946, 1232, 1796, 1892

**confusion**

1019

**conscience, examination  
of**

476, 837, 894, 1855

**Consecration**

1659

**consequences**321, 561, 779, 1438, 1464,  
1481**consolation**

1201

**conversion**

1834

**Corinth**

1879

**corruption**

1436

**courage**

322, 352, 723, 1664, 1829

**covenants**29, 37, 91, 141, 330, 451,  
1267, 1565, 1686, 2053**creation**

18, 20, 847, 1861, 2053, 2072

**creeds**

1896

**criticism**

811, 1264, 1579

**cross, veneration of the**

1606

**cruelty**454, 660, 984, 1264, 1280,  
1373, 1719, 1869, 2015**crying**

860

**Cyrus the Great**

643

**D****darkness**

1157

**daydreaming**

1286

**deacons**

146, 1803

**death and dying**366, 442, 472, 525, 679, 796,  
820, 844, 1385**death penalty**

24, 1727, 1808

**dedication**

1947

**dedications**

672

**delight**

1525

**dependence**

865

**depression**

922, 1306

**diamond poem prayers**

1775

**differences**

1814, 1869, 1880

**disabilities**

453, 1760

**discipleship**

1575, 1691, 1744, 1755

**dishonesty**

54, 61

**divorce**

813

**dragons**

2061, 2071

**dreams**

77, 731, 1812

**E****earth**

848

**Easter**

1728

**Easter Vigil**

1768

**Egypt**

1311

**Elijah**

509, 1548

**Elisha**

512

**emotions**

823, 860, 1703, 1763

**encouragement**

646, 807

**end times**

1599, 1657, 2055

**enemies**

320, 725, 778, 1171, 1687

**enthusiasm**

1005

**equality**

334, 431, 1760, 1927

**eternal life**

784, 820, 1888, 1897, 2060

**Eucharist**

129, 1659, 1752, 1891

**euthanasia**

844

**evil**40, 555, 720, 779, 822, 1478,  
2061, 2063**exclusive groups**

1880

**expectations**

312, 1379

**F****faith**33, 331, 1430, 1519, 1581,  
1750, 1856, 2003, 2052**faith expression**

273, 450, 946, 1664, 1695

**false accusations**

74, 111, 1288, 1727

**false prophets**

1272, 1722

**family**

118, 460, 1375, 1682, 1706

**family of God**

1637

**favoritism**

70

**fear**

29, 36, 124, 1203, 1276, 1841

**feeding miracles**

1586, 1643

**foreshadowing**

1583, 1586

**forgiveness**65, 85, 151, 455, 725, 817,  
1373, 1381, 1590, 1635,  
1661**free will**

818

**friends**132, 366, 420, 504, 774, 823,  
826, 897, 1010, 1096, 1223,  
1278, 1399, 1665, 1697,  
1943**frustration**

1763

**funerals**

806, 888

**future**

1292, 1368, 1568

**G****Gabriel**

1443

**genealogies**

1557, 1682

**generosity**

1688

**gifts from God**

39, 150, 666, 1360

**Glory Be**

1647

**gluttony**

1015

# GLOSSARY

## A

### abba

The Aramaic word for "father" that children used to address their fathers. Aramaic was a language spoken in Palestine in Jesus' time. Jesus used *abba* to address God the Father. He taught his disciples to pray to God as a loving parent.

### abyss

A vast, bottomless hole or pit.

### accursed

Doomed or condemned; usually in the sense that someone is out of favor with God.

### Adam

Related to the Hebrew *adamah*, meaning "ground," this name signifies "one formed from the earth." According to the Book of Genesis, Adam was the first man to be formed.

### adultery

Sexual activity between a married person and someone who is not his or her spouse.

### alleluia

From the Hebrew meaning "praise to Yahweh" or "praise to God." *Alleluia* is an exclamation that is used in Christian liturgy as a way of praising God, especially during the Easter season.

### Alpha and Omega

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, symbolic of the beginning and the end. Used as a title for Jesus.

### amen

This Hebrew word means "let it be so" or "let it be done." As a conclusion to prayer, it shows that the person praying agrees with what has been said in the prayer.

### angel

Based on a word meaning "messenger." An angel is an immortal creature, with intelligence and free will, who constantly glorifies God. Angels also serve as messengers of God to humans in order to carry out God's saving plan.

### anointing

This word refers to an act of applying oil in a religious ceremony or as part of a blessing. In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets were anointed as a sign of their divine mission. Today, anointing is part of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.

### antichrist

This word from the Greek literally means "against Christ." In the New Testament, the antichrist is a deceitful figure associated with the sin that will come before the Second Coming of Christ.

### apocalypse

This word means "revelation" or "unveiling." In the Bible, the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation, which is the last book of the New Testament, describes the conflict between good and evil, the end of the world, and Heaven.

### apocalyptic literature

Having roots in both Jewish and Christian tradition, this type of literature appears in the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. It is associated with the end times or the last things and anticipates the time of the Final Judgment when Jesus will return. Apocalyptic literature contains many symbols and dramatic images.

### apostle

The general term *apostle* means "one who is sent." It can refer to any missionary of the early Church and to all believers, who are called to spread the Gospel. *Apostle* can also refer specifically to Jesus' twelve companions. They are the special witnesses of his life, death, and Resurrection on whose ministry the early Church was built. The successors of the Twelve Apostles are the bishops.

### Ark of the Covenant

In the Old Testament, God's holy presence would come to rest in this sacred chest, in order to speak to and guide the Israelites. The ark held the tablets of the Law of Moses, manna from Heaven, and the rod of Aaron. It was also called the ark of God.



### Ascension

The “going up” into Heaven of the risen Jesus forty days after his Resurrection (see Mark 16:19, Luke 24:50–53).

### atonement

A practice or prayer that a person does to make up for a sin or for hurting another person.

## B

### Baal

In the Bible, the word *Baal* most often refers to the practices of idolatry or the worship of gods other than Yahweh, the God of Israel. Baal was both the name of a specific god and a broad title that could refer to any number of gods. The worshippers of Baal were generally seen as enemies of the Israelites (see 1 Kings 18:21–40).

### Babylonian captivity

Babylon attacked the southern kingdom of Judah three times, eventually destroying the holy city, Jerusalem. In 587 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, burned Jerusalem to the ground, and enslaved thousands of the Israelites, sending them into exile in Babylon.

The captivity resulted in the deaths of multitudes, destruction of the land, loss of national identity, and hopelessness. The captivity lasted an entire generation (586–539 BC) until Cyrus the Persian, the king of Elam, conquered the Babylonians. He then let the Israelite people return home to Jerusalem (see Ezra, chapter 1). See *exile*.

### ban, the

This was God’s command that the Israelites destroy all the inhabitants, animals, and material possessions of the towns that they conquered. The ban is included partly as a warning to God’s people against following the immoral practices of other religions.

### Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are the blessings Jesus taught as part of the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 5:3–12) and the Sermon on the Plain (see Luke 6:20–26). The Beatitudes describe the actions and attitudes that should characterize Christians. These actions and attitudes are the way to discover true meaning and blessedness.

### Beelzebul

Another name for Satan, the Devil.

### Bible

This word (from the Greek *biblia*, meaning “books”) refers to the collection of Jewish and Christian writings that are considered inspired by the Holy Spirit. Many of the writings in the Old Testament are also included in the Hebrew Bible, the holy book of the Jews. The New Testament contains the writings of the early Christian community. See *New Testament*, *Old Testament*.

### blaspheme (blasphemy)

To talk disrespectfully about God or holy things.

## C

### cherubim

A type of angel having characteristics of both humans and animals. Cherubim often appeared in visions worshipping at God’s throne in Heaven.

### Chosen People

The Israelites, the descendants of Abraham, with whom God made the Old Testament covenant.

### Christ

A title for Jesus, from the Greek *Christos*. It means “anointed one,” “Messiah,” or “savior.”

### Christian

According to the Acts of the Apostles (see 11:26), the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians in Antioch. Today, all those who profess to follow Christ are called Christians.

### church, Church

The lowercase term *church* refers to the building and to the assembly of believers gathered to celebrate the liturgy, especially the Eucharist. The capitalized term *Church* refers to the entire people of God throughout the world. In the creed, the Church is recognized as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—traits that together are referred to as “Marks of the Church.”

### circumcision

This is the act of surgically removing the foreskin of males. According to Jewish Law, males are to be circumcised eight days after birth (see Genesis 17:12–14).

**compassion**

A special way to love others that shows mercy and pity for their suffering.

**covenant**

In general, a covenant is a solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being in which every one vows to keep a promise forever. See *Old Covenant, New Covenant*.

**Creation accounts**

Genesis presents two different accounts of God's Creation of the world (see 1:1–2:3; 2:4–3:24). Both accounts present Creation as a divine action that affirms the goodness of all creatures. In particular, humans were created in the image of God and are called to live in mutual and life-giving friendships.

**crucifixion**

A method of execution for criminals and people who were considered threats to Roman authority. Victims would be stripped and beaten, tied or nailed by their hands and feet to a cross, and left there until they died.

**cubit**

A unit of measurement in ancient times, measuring from a man's elbow to the tip of his middle finger (between 17 and 20 inches).

**D****Day of Judgment**

The biblical name for the time when God's justice will triumph once and for all, also known as the Day of the Lord or the Day of Wrath. In the Old Testament, the prophets described a Day of the Lord, in which all of humanity will share the bounty of the earth and fight no more. The prophets also declared that the Day of the Lord was a time when God would punish those who practiced idolatry and injustice.

In the New Testament, the Day of Judgment came to mean the Final Judgment, when Jesus Christ will judge each person (see Matthew 12:36; 25:31–46).

**demon; devil**

A fallen angel—one created naturally good but who has sinned against God by refusing to accept God's Reign. The term *demon*

refers to an agent of Satan. *Devil* refers to the chief of the fallen angels, often called Satan, Lucifer, or the Evil One.

**disciple**

A follower of Christ. It is based on a word for "pupil" or "student" and is used to designate both people who learned from and followed Jesus in New Testament times and people who strive to follow him today.

**dominion**

To have responsibility for or control over, like the relationship a king has over his people or like the authority God gave humans over creatures and plants.

**E****Elohim**

Elohim is one of the names for God in the Old Testament. This name describes God as an ultimate power who inspires awe.

**Emmanuel**

From the Hebrew, meaning "God with us." Matthew's Gospel calls Jesus by the name Emmanuel (see 1:23).

**epistle**

The letters written by Church leaders to Christian individuals and local communities in the first two centuries AD, especially those letters that are included in the New Testament.

**Eucharist, the**

Also called the Mass or Lord's Supper, the term Eucharist is based on a Greek word for "thanksgiving." It is the main Christian liturgical celebration, established by Jesus at the Last Supper. In the Eucharist, the sacrificial death and Resurrection of Jesus are both remembered ("Do this in memory of me") and renewed ("This is my body, given for you").

**evangelist**

Based on a word for "good news," evangelist describes anyone who actively works to spread the Gospel of Jesus. More specifically, evangelist refers to one of the persons traditionally recognized as an author of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

**Eve**

Related to the Hebrew word for "life." This name was given to the first woman, who

was the wife of Adam and the mother of Cain and Abel.

### exalt

To think or speak highly of someone or something. To lift up in praise. "Whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (see Matthew 23:12).

### exile

An extended absence from one's native land, usually by force. The Babylonian Exile was a tragic part of Jewish history; the Church today considers itself in exile from its true home until the coming of the Risen Lord. See *Babylonian captivity*.

### Exodus

This Greek word meaning "to go out" is the name of the second book of the Bible, which describes the Israelites' escape from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. *Exodus* also refers to the event of the Israelites leaving Egypt. The Exodus is celebrated at Passover as the liberation of the Chosen People.

### expiate

To make up for sins or wrongdoing, usually by doing penance or making some sacrifice. By choosing to suffer and die even though he was sinless, Jesus took on the expiation we deserved, so that if we ask for God's mercy, we will not be punished for our sins.

### exult

To be very joyful, particularly about something God has done for you (see Psalm 35:9).

## F

### Fall, the

Also called "the fall from grace," the Fall is the biblical explanation of how sin and evil entered the world, found in the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis. See *Original Sin*.

### Father

Like many other religions, Christianity looks upon God as a Father; the Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. Jesus called God *abba* (Father) and taught his disciples to pray to God as "Our Father."

### frankincense

A fragrant incense made from tree sap and burned as a sacrifice of sweet-smelling smoke to God. The magi brought frankincense to the baby Jesus to honor him as God.

## G

### Gehenna

The name of the place where children were once sacrificed to Moloch (Baal) (see Jeremiah 19:5). Jesus spoke of Gehenna as a place of punishment for those who refused to repent and be converted.

### Gentile

Usually used in the New Testament to designate a person who is not Jewish; sometimes the word is used to refer to a person who is not Christian.

### Gospel

The "Good News" of the Revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ. The term also refers specifically to those four books of the New Testament that focus on the life, teachings, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

## H

### Heaven

Various meanings: (1) in the ancient world, heaven was often identified with the sky or firmament and considered the dwelling place of God; (2) in Judaism, because they did not pronounce the name of God, *heaven* was sometimes used as a substitute for God's name; (3) among Christians, Heaven represents the final goal of all Christians, where we are once and for all united with God and reunited with our fellow Christians.

### Hebrew

Originally meaning "one from the other side" or possibly "immigrant," the term *Hebrew* can refer to either the Israelite people or their language.

### Hebrew Scriptures

See *Old Testament*.

### high priest

The most important of the Jewish religious officials. He led the most important religious ceremonies and supervised other priests as they offered sacrifices.



# CATHOLIC PRAYERS

## Act of Contrition

My God,  
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our savior Jesus Christ  
suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.

## Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them, who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this faith I intend to live and die. Amen.

## Act of Hope

O Lord God, I hope by your grace for the pardon of all my sins and after life here to gain eternal happiness because you have promised it, who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful. In this hope I intend to live and die. Amen.

## Act of Love

O Lord God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbor for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love. In this love I intend to live and die. Amen.

## Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

## Confiteor (I Confess)

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

## Glory Be

Glory be to the Father  
and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning  
is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen.



## Grace before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Grace after Meals

We give thee thanks, for all thy benefits, almighty God, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.

### The Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

### The Lord's Prayer (also called the Our Father)

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

### Morning Prayer

Almighty God, I thank you for your past blessings. Today I offer myself—whatever I do, say, or think—to your loving care. Continue to bless me, Lord. I make this morning offering in union with the divine intentions of Jesus Christ, who offers himself daily in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and in union with Mary, his Virgin Mother and our Mother, who was always the faithful handmaid of the Lord. Amen.

### Prayer of Saint Francis (Peace Prayer)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so  
much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

### Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. Enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they will be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you have taught the hearts of the faithful. In the same Spirit, help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

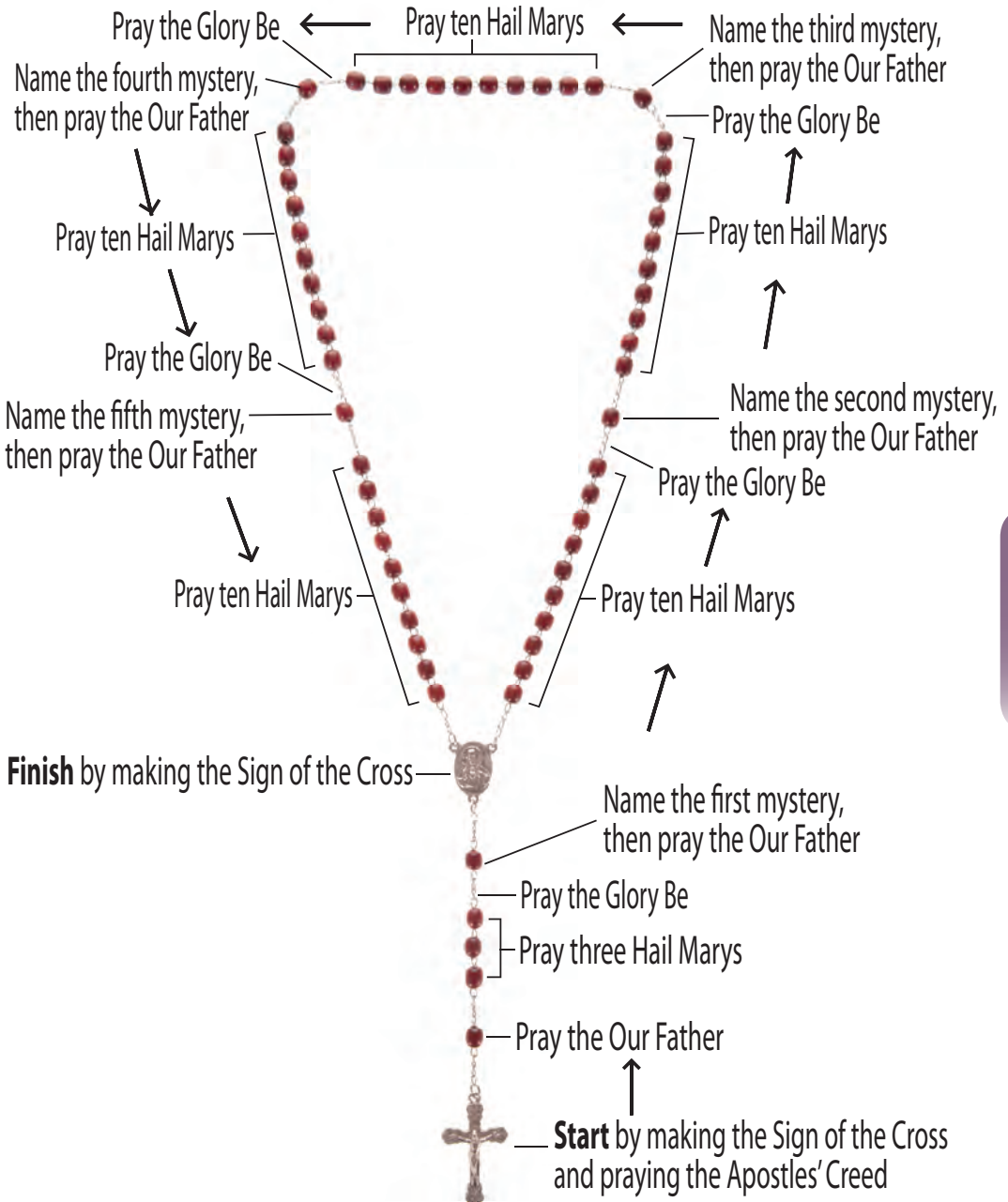


### Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death.
2. Jesus takes up his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets his mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry the cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

## The Rosary

The Rosary is a popular devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. By praying the Rosary, we pray with Mary and we ask her to pray for us. The main part of the Rosary is to recite five sets of ten Hail Marys (each set is called a decade). This diagram shows you which prayers to use with which parts of the Rosary.





### *The Rosary (continued)*

Saying a five-decade Rosary is connected with meditation, or solemn reflection, on what are called the mysteries of the life of Jesus. These mysteries too are collected into sets of five—five joyful, five luminous, five sorrowful, and five glorious mysteries. The mysteries of the Rosary are listed below. When you pray the Rosary, choose one set of mysteries to meditate on while saying the decades of Hail Marys. With a little practice, praying the Rosary regularly can be a source of great inspiration and consolation.

#### **Joyful Mysteries**

- The Annunciation
- The Visitation
- The Birth of Our Lord
- The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
- The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

#### **Luminous Mysteries**

- The Baptism of Jesus
- Jesus Reveals Himself in the Miracle at Cana
- Jesus Proclaims the Good News of the Kingdom of God
- The Transfiguration of Jesus
- The Institution of the Eucharist

#### **Sorrowful Mysteries**

- The Agony of Jesus in the Garden
- The Scourging at the Pillar
- The Crowning of Thorns
- The Carrying of the Cross
- The Crucifixion

#### **Glorious Mysteries**

- The Resurrection of Jesus
- The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (Pentecost)
- The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
- The Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven



# CATHOLIC TEACHINGS

## Two Great Commandments

(see Matthew 22:37–40; Mark 12:29–31; Luke 10:27)

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.
- You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

## Ten Commandments

(see Exodus 20:1–17)

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

## Theological Virtues

(see 1 Corinthians 13:13)

- Faith
- Hope
- Love

## Cardinal Virtues

- Prudence
- Justice
- Fortitude
- Temperance



## Beatitudes

(see Matthew 5:3–10)

- Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
- Blessed are they who mourn; they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek; they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness; they will be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful; they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the clean of heart; they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers; they will be called children of God.
- Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.



## Corporal Works of Mercy

(see Matthew 25:35–36)

- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Clothe the naked.
- Care for the sick.
- Help the imprisoned.
- Bury the dead.

## Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Share knowledge.
- Give advice to those who need it.
- Comfort those who suffer.
- Be patient with others.
- Forgive those who hurt you.
- Give correction to those who need it.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

## Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (see Isaiah 11:2-3)

- **Wisdom.** A wise person recognizes where the Holy Spirit is at work in the world.
- **Understanding.** Understanding helps us recognize how God wants us to live.
- **Counsel.** This gift helps us make choices that will lead us closer to God rather than away from God. The gift of counsel, sometimes called right judgment, helps us figure out what God wants.
- **Fortitude.** The gift of fortitude, also called courage, is the special help we need when faced with challenges or struggles.
- **Knowledge.** This gift helps us understand the meaning of what God has revealed, particularly the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- **Piety.** This gift, sometimes called reverence, gives us a deep sense of respect for God and the Church. A reverent person honors God and approaches him with humility, trust, and love.
- **Fear of the Lord.** The gift of fear of the Lord, sometimes called wonder and awe, makes us aware of God's greatness and power.

## Fruits of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23)

- Charity
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Goodness
- Kindness
- Long-suffering
- Humility
- Faithfulness
- Modesty
- Continence
- Chastity



## Four Marks of the Catholic Church

- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic

## Liturgical Year

- Advent
- Christmas
- Ordinary Time
- Lent
- Easter Triduum
- Easter
- Pentecost
- Ordinary Time



## Seven Sacraments

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- The Eucharist
- Penance and Reconciliation
- Anointing of the Sick
- Matrimony
- Holy Orders

## Precepts of the Church

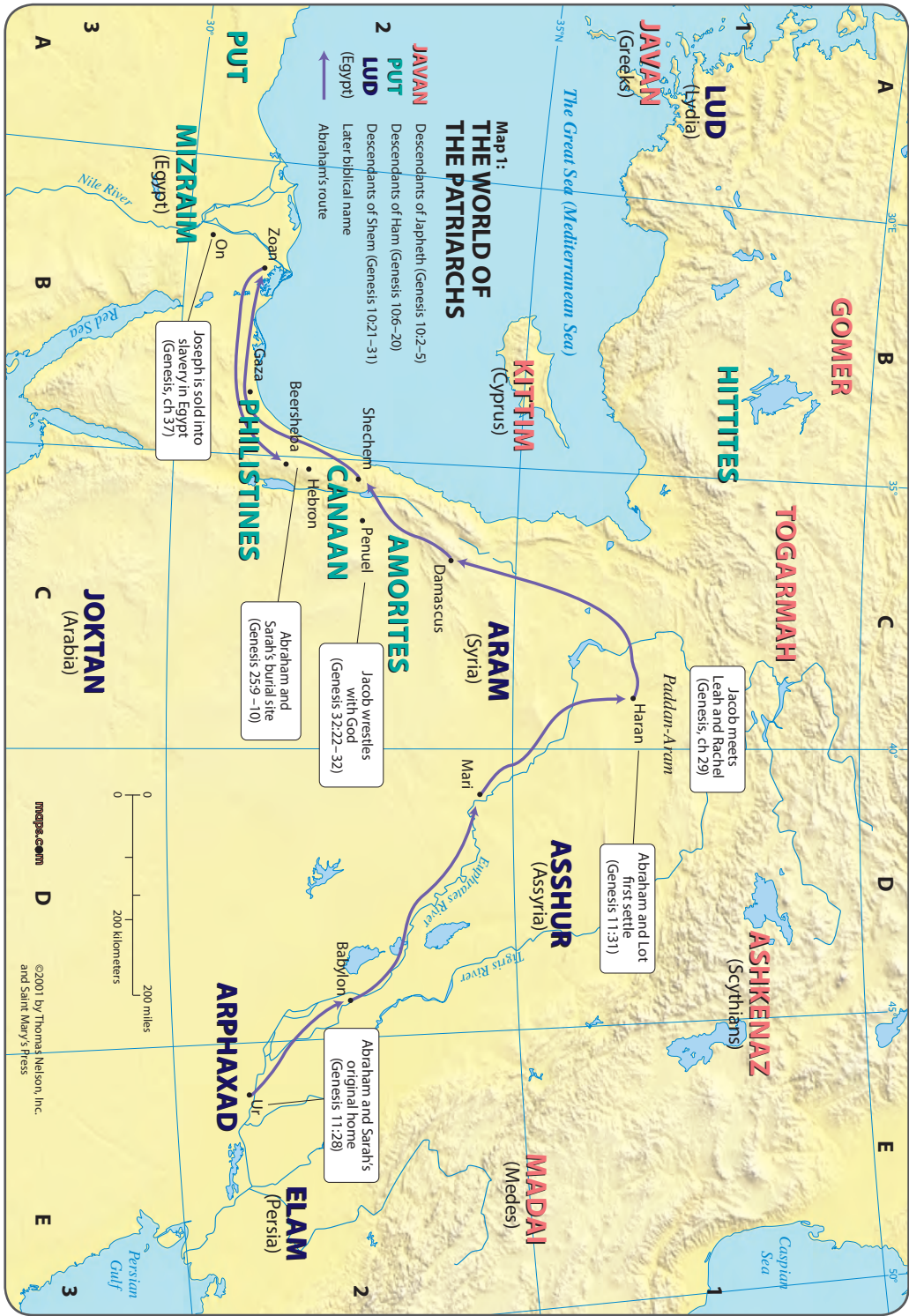
- Attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from unnecessary labor on these days.
- Confess your sins in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation at least once a year.
- Receive the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
- Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
- Help to provide for the material needs of the Church according to your ability.

## Holy Days of Obligation

- Christmas (December 25)
- Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God (January 1)
- Ascension of the Lord (the Sunday that follows forty days after Easter)
- Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15)
- All Saints' Day (November 1)
- Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (December 8)



MAP 1:  
THE WORLD OF THE PATRIARCHS



# MAP 7: THE MINISTRY OF JESUS



# MAKE IT STICK!

**"The Word of God is living and effective" (Hebrews 4:12) when it comes to making a difference in our lives!** We can bring the joys and worries of our lives to God when we read the Bible. And we can find guidance in the Bible that helps us live happier, more fulfilling lives. The following passages will help you apply God's Word and make it stick in your life.

## When You Feel Tempted

Matthew 6:9-13  
1 Corinthians 10:13  
2 Thessalonians 3:3  
1 Timothy 6:6-10  
Hebrews 2:18  
James 1:12-18

## When You Feel Hopeless

Psalms 42  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8  
Lamentations 3:22-26  
Matthew 11:28-30  
Romans 8:18-39  
1 Peter 1:3-9

## When You Feel Angry

Psalms 37:8-9  
Proverbs 15:1  
Matthew 5:21-24  
Luke 6:27-36  
Ephesians 4:25-32  
James 1:19-20

## When You Are Afraid

Psalms 27  
Psalms 91  
Matthew 10:28-33  
Matthew 14:22-33  
John 14:23-27  
Hebrews 13:6-7

## When You Are Happy

Psalms 150  
Ben Sira 25:1-11  
Luke 12:22-34  
Philippians 4:4-9  
Colossians 1:9-14  
1 Peter 1:8-9

## When You Want to Be a Good Friend

Ruth 1:1-18  
1 Samuel 20:1-34  
Ben Sira 6:14-17  
John 15:12-17  
Colossians 3:12-17  
1 Peter 4:8

## When You Need to Make Good Moral Choices

Matthew 5:17-20  
Matthew 12:33-37  
1 Corinthians 6:12-20  
Philippians 2:3-4  
James 3:1-12  
1 John 2:15-17

## When You Want to Build Your Relationship with God

Joel 2:12-18  
Micah 6:8  
Matthew 6:6-8  
Matthew 19:16-21  
Luke 10:38-42  
Luke 15:11-32

## When You Need Forgiveness

Psalms 51  
Matthew 18:21-35  
Mark 11:25  
John 8:2-11  
Colossians 3:12-13  
1 John 1:5-10



# GO FORTH!

**"Go forth, the Mass is ended."** With these words, our celebration of the Eucharist concludes, and our work as **missionary disciples** begins.

## missionary

a disciple who goes forth to preach the gospel and invites others to believe and to be baptized

## disciple

a follower of Jesus, not just in New Testament times, but also people who commit to follow him today

Go Forth

**Pope Francis reminds us that we are all missionary disciples because of our Baptism.** Let's look at how the Bible guides us to **go forth** and live as a missionary disciple.

## WE ARE CALLED TO . . .

### Get Involved

**Matthew 25:31–40**

"Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

**Acts 4:18–20**

"It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard."

### Be Supportive

**Matthew 20:20–28**

"The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve."

**Galatians 6:6–10**

"Let us not grow tired of doing good."

### Rejoice and Be Happy

**Psalms 118**

"This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad."

**Colossians 3:12–17**

"Let the peace of Christ control your hearts."

### Make a Difference

**Matthew 28:19–20**

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

**Luke 10:2–9**

"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few."

**Many people in the Bible encountered Jesus and immediately began to tell others about him.** Pope Francis looks at their responses and then asks us, "So what are we waiting for?" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120). **Go forth and share the love of God** through your words and actions!

# BIBLE BOOKS

## Alphabetical List with Abbreviations

Book	Abbreviation	Page	Book	Abbreviation	Page
Acts	Acts	1794	1 Kings	1 Kgs	479
Amos	Am	1477	2 Kings	2 Kgs	523
Baruch	Bar	1343	Lamentations	Lam	1333
Ben Sira	Sir	1084	Leviticus	Lv	171
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	567	Luke	Lk	1671
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	601	1 Maccabees	1 Mc	733
Colossians	Col	1951	2 Maccabees	2 Mc	772
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1878	Malachi	Mal	1545
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	1906	Mark	Mk	1630
Daniel	Dn	1426	Matthew	Mt	1556
Deuteronomy	Dt	264	Micah	Mi	1501
Ecclesiastes	Eccl	1032	Nahum	Na	1511
Ephesians	Eph	1934	Nehemiah	Neh	656
Esther	Est	715	Numbers	Nm	211
Exodus	Ex	104	Obadiah	Ob	1493
Ezekiel	Ez	1354	1 Peter	1 Pt	2019
Ezra	Ezr	641	2 Peter	2 Pt	2027
Galatians	Gal	1923	Philemon	Phlm	1988
Genesis	Gn	16	Philippians	Phil	1942
Habakkuk	Hb	1516	Proverbs	Prv	981
Haggai	Hg	1527	Psalms	Ps(s)	856
Hebrews	Heb	1991	Revelation	Rev	2048
Hosea	Hos	1455	Romans	Rom	1851
Isaiah	Is	1151	Ruth	Ru	384
James	Jas	2011	1 Samuel	1 Sm	392
Jeremiah	Jer	1248	2 Samuel	2 Sm	440
Job	Jb	804	Song of Songs	Song	1044
Joel	Jl	1470	1 Thessalonians	1 Thes	1958
1 John	1 Jn	2033	2 Thessalonians	2 Thes	1963
2 John	2 Jn	2041	1 Timothy	1 Tm	1967
3 John	3 Jn	2043	2 Timothy	2 Tm	1977
John	Jn	1741	Titus	Ti	1984
Jonah	Jon	1496	Tobit	Tb	676
Joshua	Jos	311	Wisdom	Wis	1055
Jude	Jude	2045	Zechariah	Zec	1531
Judges	Jgs	347	Zephaniah	Zep	1522
Judith	Jdt	694			