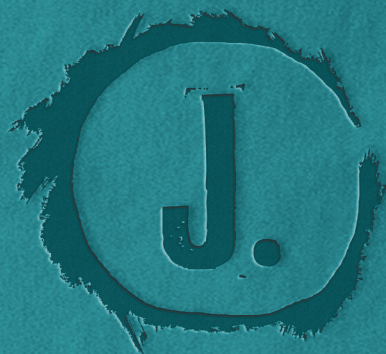
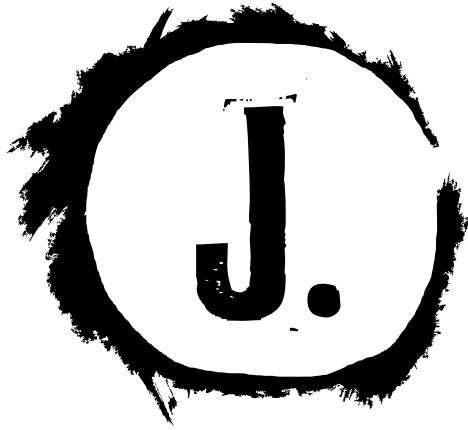


JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE





JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE





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ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

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Amos	932	Jeremiah	768	Numbers	136
1 Chronicles	414	Job	526	Obadiah	942
2 Chronicles	448	Joel	926	1 Peter	1296
Colossians	1240	John	1106	2 Peter	1302
1 Corinthians	1190	1 John	1306	Philemon	1272
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Esther	516	Judges	248	Ruth	276
Exodus	58	1 Kings	346	1 Samuel	282
Ezekiel	844	2 Kings	380	2 Samuel	316
Ezra	486	Lamentations	834	Song of Songs	690
Galatians	1218	Leviticus	104	1 Thessalonians	1246
Genesis	4	Luke	1064	2 Thessalonians	1252
Habakkuk	962	Malachi	990	1 Timothy	1256
Haggai	974	Mark	1038	2 Timothy	1262
Hebrews	1276	Matthew	998	Titus	1268
Hosea	914	Micah	950	Zechariah	978
Isaiah	698	Nahum	958	Zephaniah	968

A NOTE TO READERS

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

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

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

The Publishers



THE HEART BEHIND THE JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE

In a way, we are all like caterpillars longing to emerge into our butterfly life—where the numbing rhythms of everyday life are replaced by the deep sense that who we are and what we do *really matters* in the world. Life can be ugly, but we long for beauty. We want to be released from the captivity of our diminished dreams and set free into a life that deeply satisfies. And what is our pathway into that kind of life? A lot of us have been seduced into traveling the false roads of financial success or physical pleasure or social popularity. But anyone who has ventured down these roads very far knows there is always a dead-end around the bend.

A little over 150 years ago, the British pastor C.H. Spurgeon was the most famous person in the world—but it's likely you've never heard of him. He earned the nickname “the prince of preachers” when he was just 22 because of his inspiring sermons as the pastor of London's famous downtown church, New Park Street Chapel. Every Sunday he'd preach twice, to congregations of 6,000 people, before the days of microphones and amplification. Today, he still has more books in print than any pastor in history, including more than 2,500 sermons.

Spurgeon's path out of a caterpillar life was guided by a very simple conviction—he “beelined” everything in his life and ministry to Jesus. Of course, “beeline” is a funny word to us—it means that no matter what he was preaching or teaching about, Spurgeon was always headed to Jesus. He lived and urged the Jesus-centered life. Once, a young pastor asked Spurgeon to critique his preaching, and the older man was blunt: “That was a poor sermon.” When the young man asked for an explanation, Spurgeon replied: “Because there was no Christ in it.” The young man protested that his chosen Scripture verse had nothing to do with Jesus. Spurgeon responded: “Don't you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London? And so from every text in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ.”

Spurgeon's passion for Jesus, and his determination to track everything in the Bible back to the “metropolis” of Christ, is the light we need to find our way through a life that can seem like a dark jungle. And as we draw near to the heart of Jesus, the transformation we experience will feel like we've been set free into a life that is bursting with fruit—everywhere we go, with everyone we meet, we leave a trail of good impact. When we, like the Apostle Paul before us, can say, “I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2), then we are caught up in a caterpillar-to-butterfly transformation. The closer we get to Jesus, the more we discover our true identity and purpose in life.

And that's the heart that fuels the passion behind the *Jesus-Centered Bible*—the story of God contained in its pages revolves around a person, not a set of principles. Here, you'll take the plunge into a Jesus-centered life as you experience him in every book, from every vantage point, and in surprising new ways. There has never been a Bible like this before, where every page points you to Jesus in a fresh way. This Bible will energize you. Challenge you. Change you. And, like the “rabboni” from Nazareth himself, draw you back again and again and again.

Rick Lawrence, *General Editor*

BLUE-LETTER TEXT

Many Bibles use red-colored text to highlight Jesus' words in the New Testament. The *Jesus-Centered Bible* highlights blue letters to point out references to Jesus throughout the Old Testament. From Genesis to Malachi, it's amazing how often the things Jesus said and did, and prophecies that specifically reference him, are woven into the ancient texts. The blue-letter text and explanations jump off the page, so you get an unforgettable experience of the breadth and depth of Jesus in all of Scripture. And that makes perfect sense, because Jesus is the focal point for all of the Bible. Jesus offers us a perfect way to see and understand the God described in the Old Testament. In *Ruthless Trust*, author Brennan Manning writes: "It must be noted that Jesus alone reveals who God is... We cannot deduce anything about Jesus from what we think we know about God; however, we must deduce everything about God from what we know about Jesus."

When we get to know Jesus, we get to know the God we can't see, because Jesus gives

us a "perfect mirror" of God. And as you "taste and see" God's plans for Jesus unfold throughout the Bible, you get a clearer understanding of his plans for your life, too. The more you draw near to Jesus, the more obvious his purpose for you becomes.

Blue-Letter Text Editor Ken Castor, along with General Editor Rick Lawrence, worked together to find and unveil Old Testament examples of Jesus threading into the narrative. In the end, they selected close to 700 blue-letter texts to highlight—and could've chosen many more if space had allowed. Likely, as you get used to reading the Old Testament through a "blue letter" filter, you'll uncover your own "beeline to Jesus" passages. We encourage you to read with a blue highlighter, marking these passages for yourself and scribbling your own beeline connections in the margins. As you do, you'll discover a growing conviction in your soul—that all of life, and all of God's message to his people, orbits around the redemptive presence of Jesus.

Blue-Letter Text & Explanation

⁷ Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel?
When the LORD restores his people, Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice.

15 A psalm of David.

- ¹ Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?
- ² Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts.
- ³ Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.
- ⁴ Those who despise flagrant sinners,

What a wonderful inheritance!

- ⁷ I will bless the LORD who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me.
- ⁸ I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.
- ⁹ No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.* My body rests in safety.
- ¹⁰ For you will not leave my soul among the dead*

1 PSALM 14:7—David longs for salvation to come from Zion. Paul, in his letter to the followers of Jesus in Rome, references Jesus when he says: "The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness" (Romans 11:26).

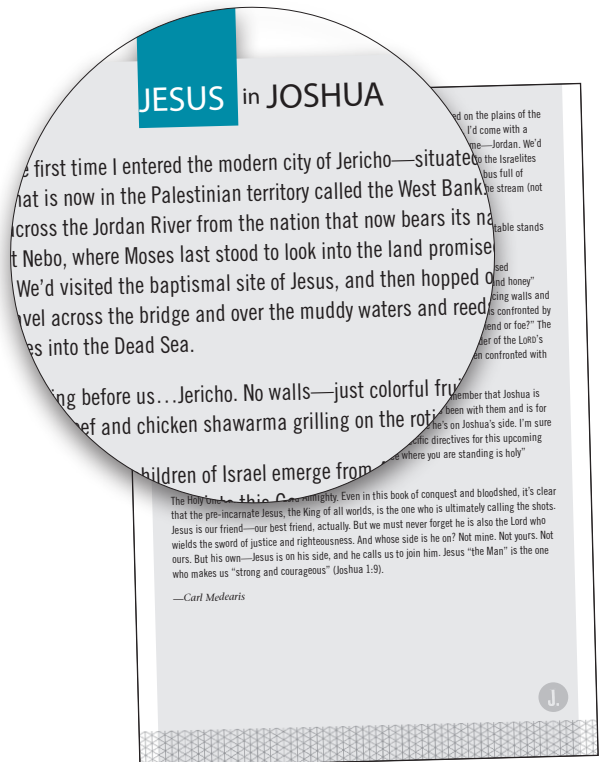
JESUS IN EVERY BOOK

Whether you're a lifelong biblical scholar or have just been introduced to the Story of God for the first time, our Bible Book Introductions are designed to give you a surprising, profound, and personal experience of the "hovering presence" of Jesus in every nook and cranny of this ancient collection of God-breathed writings. The Bible is often called "God's Word," and the apostle John begins his Gospel with this stirring connection to Jesus:

In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He existed in the beginning with God.
God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.
The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it (John 1:1-5).

Simply, the only way to truly understand the message and significance of the Bible is to embrace its central focus, which is the person of Jesus. The "good news" of the Bible is that we have a champion and a rescuer and a lover who will set us free from our captivity to the expectations and limitations of a broken world. Jesus is our promised Messiah, the one who will save us, and his story is a thread that runs through all of Scripture. Close your eyes and stab your finger anywhere in the Bible, and you'll find the fingerprints of Jesus.

The artists, writers, pastors, and theologians who crafted our one-page Jesus-Centered Bible Book Introductions are all connected to the Simply Jesus movement. It's a loose collective of friends and allies from all over the world who are "ruined by Jesus and ruined for Jesus." It's our hope that you experience Jesus' singular presence through these thoughtful, creative, and story-based "on-ramps" to all 66 books of the Bible. To learn more about our writing team, go to page A16.



REFRAMING JESUS INSIGHTS

Beauty is in the details, and that's never truer than when our focus is on Jesus. When he performed his first miracle, turning water into wine at a wedding in Cana, the guests observed to the host that he'd obviously saved his best wine for the end of the party, instead of serving it at the beginning, when it's customary to lead with the finest vintage (John 2). The metaphor embedded in this story is an overriding truth about Jesus: He makes every little thing beautiful, and always turns the mundane into the "best wine at the party." But we have to pay attention to find the true depths of his beauty. And that is our aim in the 150 Reframing Jesus Insights that we've scattered throughout the Old and New testaments.

These short pieces offer interesting context, surprising backstories, and penetrating theological insights that highlight the beauty of Jesus threaded through Scripture. When we understand the true impact of Jesus on the people around him, we're drawn to worship him. And when we focus on the details of the things he says and does, we're astonished by his goodness.

We recruited a small team of college, university, and seminary professors who share our passion for a Bible that proactively points the reader to Jesus no matter where the finger lands in its pages. Their Reframing Jesus pieces function like a smart, engaged friend who knows how to spot Jesus in all the obscure places he likes to hang out. To learn more about our writing team, go to page A18.

// 1 SAMUEL 17

allowed to sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine.

me reply. 41 Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, 42 sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. 43 "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods. 44 "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled.

ow about 45 David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 Today the LORD will conquer

plied. "I
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me thing
n David's
d the king

David told

. "There's
d possibly
a man of

en taking
f he said.
al a lamb
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mal turns
to death.
ears, and
for he has
The LORD
lion and
stine!"
o ahead,"
ou!"

J. REFRAMING JESUS

1 SAMUEL 17:40-51

JESUS LOOKS BEYOND HUMAN LABELS

If there's one thing we learn in the pages of 1 Samuel, it is this: God frequently messes up all the "rules" we set up for how life should work. Young shepherds, for example, shouldn't defeat giants. And when Jesus comes on the scene, he lives out God's values. He has a habit of breaking the "rules," and it drives the religious leaders crazy. During Jesus' time, there are strict labels about who is "in" and who is "out"—people deemed acceptable by the religious establishment and those who are rejected and labeled as "sinners" by the religious elite. But Jesus rips up those labels and throws them away. Knowing that even society's outcasts are people made in the image of God, Jesus dines with them, speaks to them, touches them, and befriends them. Jesus' life beyond labels reveals the dignity of each human being.

THE JESUS QUESTIONS

One of Jesus' favorite teaching strategies was to ask surprising, personal, and specific questions—a recipe that made people think deeply, long after their encounter with him. In the spirit of his love for time-bomb questions, we've scattered more than 100 of our own surprising questions about Jesus, and questions about our relationship with him, throughout the New Testament. Every question is designed to help you slow down and chew on a truth about Jesus and how you relate to him—and to get you thinking long after you've moved on. A few sample questions:

- What does it mean to be shrewd, and why are Christians typically bad at it? (Luke 16:1-9)
- Good friendships are based on mutual giving—what can we offer Jesus that he doesn't already have? (Romans 16:1-6)
- What's the one thing you'd want Jesus to know about you if you sat down to dinner with him? (1 Corinthians 11:20-26)
- How are other people's expectations of you and Jesus' expectations of you similar—and different? (2 Corinthians 3:1-6)
- Which word comes closest to describing the way you see Jesus—*nice*, *fierce*, or *mysterious*? Explain. (Revelation 5:5)

HOW IS A
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS
AFFECTED BY THE FACT THAT
WE CAN'T SEE, TOUCH, OR
AUDIBLY HEAR HIM?
(ACTS 1:9)

to do and
up to heaven
further instruc-
spirit. ³During the forty
and died, he appeared to
to time, and he proved to
that he was actually alive.
them about the Kingdom of

the Mount
¹³When they are
room of the house
Here are the names
present: Peter, John, Ja
Thomas, Bartholomew, M
Alphaeus), Simon (the zea
of James). ¹⁴They all met
constantly united in
Mary the mother
other women,
of Jesus.

¹⁵During
about 12
together
stood up
¹⁶“Bro
Scriptu
cor
men, and the brothers

was eating with
anded them,
usalem until
you the gift
told you
ed with*
ew days
th the

them,
“Do not let
the Father send
he promised, as I told
before. ²John baptized with
water, but in just a few days
you will be baptized with the
Holy Spirit.”

The Ascension of Jesus
⁴So when the apostles were with
Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has
the time come for you to free Israel and restore
our kingdom?”
“He replied, “The Father alone has the authority
to set those dates and times, and they are not
for you to know. ⁸But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you
will be my witnesses, telling people about me
everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in
Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹After saying this, he was taken up into a
cloud while they were watching, and they could
no longer see him. ¹⁰As they strained to see him
rising into heaven, two white-robed men sud-
denly stood among them. ¹¹“Men of Galilee,”
they said, “why are you standing here staring
into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into
heaven, but someday he will return from heav-
en in the same way you saw him go!”

WE CAN'T SEE, TOUCH, OR
AUDIBLY HEAR HIM?
(ACTS 1:9)

WE CAN'T SEE, TOUCH, OR
AUDIBLY HEAR HIM?
(ACTS 1:9)

“Brothers,” he said, “the
Scriptures had to be fulfilled
concerning Judas, who guided
those who arrested Jesus. This was
predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit,
speaking through King David. ¹⁷Judas was one of
us and shared in the ministry with us.”
¹⁸Judas had bought a field with the money
he received for his treachery. Falling headfirst
there, his body split open, spilling out all his in-
testines. ¹⁹The news of his death spread to all the
people of Jerusalem, and they gave the place the
Aramaic name Akeldama, which means “Field of
Blood.”
²⁰Peter continued, “This was written in the
book of Psalms, where it says, ‘Let his home be-
come desolate, with no one living in it.’ It also
says, ‘Let someone else take his position.’”
²¹“So now we must choose a replacement
for Judas from among the men who were with
us the entire time we were traveling with the
Lord Jesus—²²from the time he was baptized
by John until the day he was taken from us.

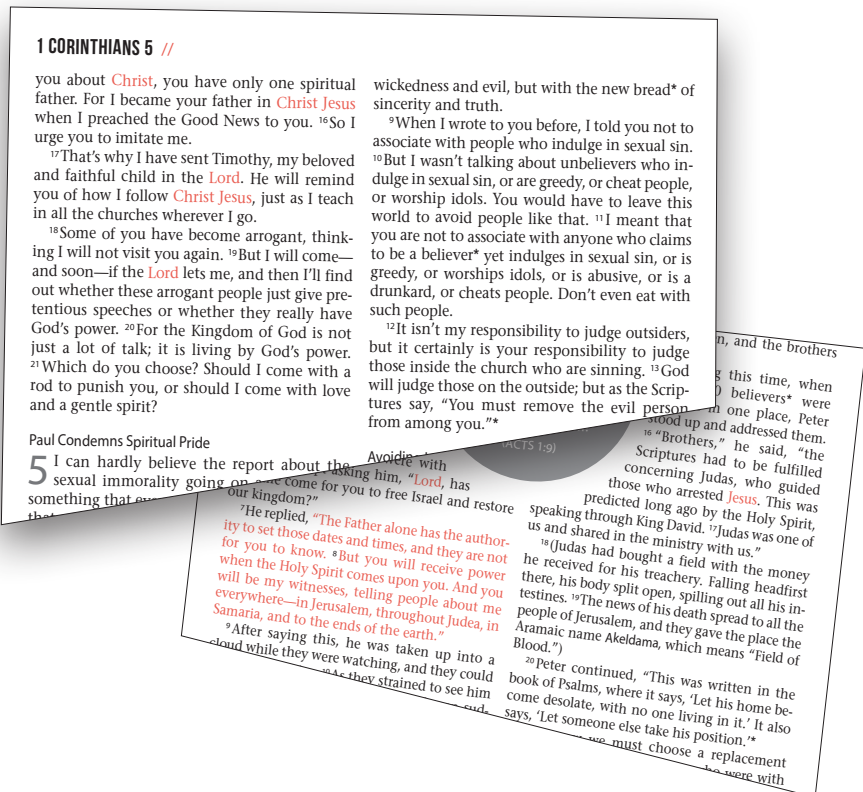
1:1 The reference is to the Gospel of Luke. 1:5 Or, also in 1:5b. 1:12 Greek a Sabbath day's journey. 1:15 Greek brothers.

1137

THE RED-LETTER NAMES OF JESUS

Of course, it's not only a sign of honor when we highlight in red the words of Jesus throughout the New Testament, but it also helps us to zero in on his voice. To live a Jesus-centered life, we pay closer attention to what he says, and what he does. But outside of the gospel accounts in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (and a few brief places elsewhere, including the first pages of Acts), the red goes away. So our team decided to weave the "red thread" of Jesus through the rest of the New Testament by highlighting in red every time his name is mentioned, including all of the "nicknames" the writers of the Bible use for him. As you read, his name will rise to the surface, over and over. "Centering" our life on Jesus means accentuating his voice and presence in every aspect of what we do, and our highlighted red-letter names will help. "Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

One important note: Sometimes the New Testament writers use the title *Lord* when talking about God the Father, while other times they use it in reference to God the Son, Jesus. We have done our best to determine when the title *Lord* specifically refers to Jesus, but it's sometimes ambiguous. So when the context makes it clear that *Lord* is about Jesus, we have chosen to highlight it in red. If the context is unclear, we have chosen to not highlight.



JESUS ANSWERS LIFE'S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

At some point in our lives, we all grapple with the BIG questions that represent the universal mysteries of our humanity. To borrow a phrase from Winston Churchill, life can seem like “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” And so, in the *Jesus-Centered Bible*, we address humanity’s nine biggest questions, and highlight how Jesus answers these questions, over and over:

- What’s my purpose in life?
- Is God real?
- Why do bad things happen?
- What is the meaning of life?
- Is this all there is?
- Will everything be OK?
- What is truth?
- What is love?
- What is right and wrong?

Not only will you discover Jesus’ penetrating responses to each of these questions, you’ll also marvel at how sensitive he is to your raw reality. Along the way, you’ll learn to trust more deeply in the only One who can guide you through life’s toughest challenges. By sinking into Jesus’ own responses to these nine questions, you’ll tackle your uncertainties, with his perspective as your context. Jesus will help you make sense of your personal struggles, doubts, and fears. No question is too big, and no answer is too small.

J. JESUS ANSWERS LIFE'S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

MATTHEW 5:17-20—ESSENTIAL QUESTION: WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG?

The Pharisees have super-charged the quest for “what is right and wrong” and made it into a kind of extreme competition. They have taken the basics of the “law” that God delivered to them—ways of relating to him and to each other—and exploded that simple outline into hundreds and hundreds of tiny rules and regulations designed to guarantee “righteousness.” And here Jesus says that “unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!” And then, through the rest of Matthew 5, he drives home his point by comparing common standards for what’s right and wrong to the standard he’s set. He’s saying it’s essentially impossible to live a “righteous” life by working harder at it—our solitary hope for living righteously is to allow the only Righteous Presence in the universe to live in us, to live through us. We will know right and wrong not when we try harder to meet God’s standards of righteousness, but when we yield ourselves to Jesus, who will help us to live righteously from the inside-out.

A SAMPLER GUIDE TO ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS JESUS ANSWERED

Jesus has a job description, first prophesied in the book of Isaiah and then repeated by him at the start of his ministry (Luke 4:18-19): “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.” Setting captives free is at the core of Jesus’ heart. And that’s why our deepest human questions—the questions that go right to our core—always find an answer in Jesus. Here we’ve pointed to a sampling of those times when Jesus answered our nine essential questions.

WHAT’S MY PURPOSE IN LIFE?

Matthew 28:18-20
Mark 1:16-20
Mark 2:14-17
Mark 9:50
John 21:15-18

IS GOD REAL?

Matthew 6:1-6
Luke 7:1-10

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN?

Matthew 7:24-27
Matthew 13:24-30
John 9:1-5
John 11:1-44

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?

Matthew 25:31-46
Mark 4:1-20
Luke 14:25-33

IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

Mark 5:1-17
Luke 6:17-23
Luke 20:27-40

WILL EVERYTHING BE OK?

Matthew 10:25-28
Luke 8:22-25
Luke 12:22-31
John 6:16-21

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Luke 4:1-13
John 6:53-69
John 15:1-8

WHAT IS LOVE?

Matthew 11:28-30
Matthew 20:1-16
Mark 8:34-9:1
Luke 13:34-35
Luke 15:3-7

WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG?

Matthew 5:17-20
Matthew 21:28-32
Matthew 23:1-36
Mark 2:23-28
John 4:43-54



MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Rick Lawrence

(General Editor)—Rick is an author, ministry leader, and the longtime executive editor of Group Magazine, the world's leading youth ministry resource. He leads the Simply Youth Ministry Conference, and is the author, co-author, or editor of 37 books, including *The Jesus-Centered Life*, *Skin in the Game*, *Jesus-Centered Youth Ministry*, *Shrewd*, *Sifted*, *99 Thoughts on Jesus-Centered Living*, and the adult small-group curriculum *In Pursuit of Jesus*. Rick wrote or edited all of the featured additional material in the *Jesus-Centered Bible*.

Carl Medearis

(Book Introductions Curator)—Carl is an international expert in Arab-American and Muslim-Christian relations. He's a catalyst for movements in the Middle East to promote peace-making and cultural, political, and religious dialogue for reconciliation. He founded the Simply Jesus movement, and leads a yearly gathering for that community. He's the author of *Adventures in Saying Yes*, *Speaking of Jesus*, *Tea With Hezbollah*, and *Muslims, Christians, and Jesus*. Carl recruited and "curated" our lineup of Bible Book Introduction contributors.

Dr. Ken Castor

(Old Testament Blue Letters Editor)—Ken, a professor of Christian ministry studies at Crown College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, served as a next-gen pastor for 20 years. He's the author of *Grow Down: How to Build a Jesus-Centered Faith*, *Make a Difference: 365 World-Changing Devotions*, and many other resources on ministry leadership and discipleship.



PUBLISHING TEAM

Joani Schultz—Chief Creative Officer

Andy Brazelton—Publisher

Tim Gilmour—Publisher

Stephanie Krajec—Project Manager

CONTENT AND GRAPHIC PRODUCTION TEAM

Rick Lawrence—Executive Editor

Veronica Preston—Art Director

Rob Cunningham—Editor

Jeff Storm—Art Director

Joyce Douglas—Graphic Designer

Peachtree Editorial—Copy Editing and Proofing



BIBLE BOOK INTRODUCTION AUTHORS

The artists, writers, pastors, and theologians we recruited to create our one-page Jesus-centered introductions to each book of the Bible are all connected, in one way or another, to the Simply Jesus movement founded by Carl Medearis. Simply Jesus is a loose collective of friends and allies from all over the world who are “ruined by Jesus and ruined for Jesus.” We’re honored to include their voices as the “on-ramps” to all 66 books of the Bible.

Lina AbuJamra—A Bible teacher, author, speaker, and pediatric emergency room doctor, Lina has a Bible-teaching podcast on iTunes, is the host of *Today’s Single Christian* on Moody Radio, and blogs regularly at livingwithpower.org.

Mark Braverman—Program director for Kairos USA, and author of *A Wall in Jerusalem: Hope, Healing, and the Struggle for Peace in Israel and Palestine*.

Dr. Craig Blomberg—Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary and author of many books, including *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* and *Contagious Holiness: Jesus’ Meals with Sinners*.

Dr. Rickey Bolden—A former NFL player and a pastor who now serves the less fortunate in Washington, D.C., through “859,” a mentoring program for young people.

Barry Brown—Has served as a pastor, a mentor for groups serving at-risk youth, and a graduate studies program adviser.

Phil Callaway—A speaker, radio show host, and the award-winning author of 25 books, including *Tricks My Dog Taught Me (About Life, Love, and God)*.

Bruxy Cavey—Author of *The End of Religion* and the teaching pastor at the multi-site church The Meeting House in Toronto, Canada.

Derwin L. Gray—Founder and lead pastor of the multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi-site Transformation Church just south of Charlotte, North Carolina, and author of *Limitless Life*.

Rick Lawrence—Executive Editor of Group Magazine and the author of many books, including *Sifted*, *Shrewd*, *Jesus-Centered Youth Ministry*, and *The Jesus-Centered Life*.

Carl Medearis—Founder of the Simply Jesus movement, an expert in Arab-American and Muslim-Christian relations, and the author of *Muslims, Christians, and Jesus*, *Tea With Hezbollah*, and *Speaking of Jesus*.

Steve Merritt—The executive director of Youth Dynamics and a counselor, Steve is the owner of Northwest Adolescent Counseling and serves on the faculty of Trinity Western University. He's the Personal Growth columnist for Group Magazine and author of *Search Me and Know My Heart: Being a Reflective Person in a Non-Reflective World*.

Kelley Nikondeha—Co-director and chief storyteller for Communities of Hope in Bujumbura, Burundi, and Phoenix, Arizona.

Dr. Dave Rahn—Youth ministry researcher, author, futurist, and missional leadership strategist, Dave is the past president of the North American Professors of Christian Education and general editor of Tyndale's *Three Story Bible* (2015) and *The Life, a Gospel of John Bible-zine* (2014).

Dr. Justin Rossow—A pastor of St. Luke-Ann Arbor in Michigan, and seminary teacher whose doctoral work focused on preaching an image-rich text for an image-driven culture.

Dr. Jonathan Salgado—A minister and psychologist who's been an adjunct professor at universities in the United States and Latin America.

Jo Saxton—A former college pastor at St. Thomas Church in Sheffield, England, as well as a speaker, teacher, trainer, coach, leader in the discipleship-focused 3D Movements, and author of three books, including *More Than Enchanting*.

Brian Zahnd—Pastor of Word of Life Church in St. Joseph, Missouri, and the author of *Beauty Will Save the World* and *A Farewell to Mars*.



REFRAMING JESUS CONTRIBUTORS

We recruited a small team of academic friends who share the heart and vision for a Bible that proactively points the reader to Jesus no matter where the finger lands in its pages. Their Reframing Jesus contributions throughout the Old and New Testaments function as a smart, engaged friend who knows how to spot Jesus in all the obscure places he likes to hang out.

Dr. Ken Castor—Professor of Christian Ministry Studies at Crown College in Minnesota. Ken served as a next-gen pastor for 20 years and is the author of *Grow Down: How to Build a Jesus-Centered Faith, Make a Difference: 365 World-Changing Devotions*, as well as many other resources on ministry leadership and discipleship.

Dr. Karen Jones—Professor of Youth Ministry and Chair of Ministry and Missions at Huntington University in Indiana. She has served on the boards of the North American Professors of Christian Education and on the executive leadership team for the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry. She is currently on the executive board of the Association of Youth Ministry Educators. She's a prolific writer of Bible study and discipleship resources.

Dr. Terry Linhart—Professor of Youth Ministry and Chair of the Religion and Philosophy Department at Bethel College in Indiana. Terry speaks and leads internationally, and his interest in global ministry development has fueled his last two books—*What Can We Do? Practical Ways Your Youth Ministry Can Have a Global Conscience* and *Global Youth Ministry: Reaching Adolescents Around The World*. He's recognized on Twitter as one of the top 50 professors on leadership, strategy, and innovation.

Dr. Laura Widstrom—Assistant Professor of Ministry in the Department of Theology at Spring Arbor University in Michigan. She was the director of youth and children's ministry for a large church in a suburban setting for more than a decade. There, she developed a two-year experiential confirmation curriculum and an eight-year Sunday school curriculum that takes learners sequentially through Scripture. An expert on service learning, she's led more than 50 work camps around the world.

Rev. Bob Whittet—Associate Professor of Christian Ministries and Director of Church Relations at Gordon College in Massachusetts. He's the founder and president of the Center for Student Leadership, connecting young adults with service leadership opportunities all over the world. He was an associate pastor in a church for more than a decade before earning his graduate degree and entering academia.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY

English Bible translations tend to be governed by one of two general translation theories. The first theory has been called “formal-equivalence,” “literal,” or “word-for-word” translation. According to this theory, the translator attempts to render each word of the original language into English and seeks to preserve the original syntax and sentence structure as much as possible in translation. The second theory has been called “dynamic-equivalence,” “functional-equivalence,” or “thought-for-thought” translation. The goal of this translation theory is to produce in English the closest natural equivalent of the message expressed by the original-language text, both in meaning and in style.

Both of these translation theories have their strengths. A formal-equivalence translation preserves aspects of the original text—including ancient idioms, term consistency, and original-language syntax—that are valuable for scholars and professional study. It allows a reader to trace formal elements of the original-language text through the English translation. A dynamic-equivalence translation, on the other hand, focuses on translating the message of the original-language text. It ensures that the meaning of the text is readily apparent to the contemporary reader. This allows the message to come through with immediacy, without requiring the reader to struggle with foreign idioms and awkward syntax. It also facilitates serious study of the text’s message and clarity in both devotional and public reading.

The pure application of either of these translation philosophies would create translations at opposite ends of the translation spectrum. But in reality, all translations contain a mixture of these two philosophies. A purely formal-equivalence translation would be unintelligible in English, and a purely dynamic-equivalence translation would risk being unfaithful to the original. That is why translations shaped by dynamic-equivalence theory are usually quite literal when the original text is relatively clear, and the translations shaped by formal-equivalence theory are sometimes quite dynamic when the original text is obscure.

The translators of the New Living Translation set out to render the message of the original texts of Scripture into clear, contemporary English. As they did so, they kept the concerns of both formal-equivalence and dynamic-equivalence in mind. On the one hand, they translated as simply and literally as possible when that approach yielded an accurate, clear, and natural English text. Many words and phrases were rendered literally and consistently into English, preserving essential literary and rhetorical devices, ancient metaphors, and word choices that give structure to the text and provide echoes of meaning from one passage to the next.

On the other hand, the translators rendered the message more dynamically when the literal rendering was hard to understand, was misleading, or yielded archaic or foreign wording. They clarified difficult metaphors and terms to aid in the reader’s understanding. The translators first struggled with the meaning of the words and phrases in the ancient context; then they

rendered the message into clear, natural English. Their goal was to be both faithful to the ancient texts and eminently readable. The result is a translation that is both exegetically accurate and idiomatically powerful.

TRANSLATION PROCESS AND TEAM

To produce an accurate translation of the Bible into contemporary English, the translation team needed the skills necessary to enter into the thought patterns of the ancient authors and then to render their ideas, connotations, and effects into clear, contemporary English. To begin this process, qualified biblical scholars were needed to interpret the meaning of the original text and to check it against our base English translation. In order to guard against personal and theological biases, the scholars needed to represent a diverse group of evangelicals who would employ the best exegetical tools. Then to work alongside the scholars, skilled English stylists were needed to shape the text into clear, contemporary English.

With these concerns in mind, the Bible Translation Committee recruited teams of scholars that represented a broad spectrum of denominations, theological perspectives, and backgrounds within the worldwide evangelical community. (These scholars are listed at the end of this introduction.) Each book of the Bible was assigned to three different scholars with proven expertise in the book or group of books to be reviewed. Each of these scholars made a thorough review of a base translation and submitted suggested revisions to the appropriate Senior Translator. The Senior Translator then reviewed and summarized these suggestions and proposed a first-draft revision of the base text. This draft served as the basis for several additional phases of exegetical and stylistic committee review. Then the Bible Translation Committee jointly reviewed and approved every verse of the final translation.

Throughout the translation and editing process, the Senior Translators and their scholar teams were given a chance to review the editing done by the team of stylists. This ensured that exegetical errors would not be introduced late in the process and that the entire Bible Translation Committee was happy with the final result. By choosing a team of qualified scholars and skilled stylists and by setting up a process that allowed their interaction throughout the process, the New Living Translation has been refined to preserve the essential formal elements of the original biblical texts, while also creating a clear, understandable English text.

The New Living Translation was first published in 1996. Shortly after its initial publication, the Bible Translation Committee began a process of further committee review and translation refinement. The purpose of this continued revision was to increase the level of precision without sacrificing the text's easy-to-understand quality. This second-edition text was completed in 2004, with minor changes subsequently introduced in 2007, 2013, and 2015.

WRITTEN TO BE READ ALOUD

It is evident in Scripture that the biblical documents were written to be read aloud, often in public worship (see Nehemiah 8; Luke 4:16-20; 1 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 1:3). It is still the case today that more people will hear the Bible read aloud in church than are likely to read it for themselves. Therefore, a new translation must communicate with clarity and power when it is read publicly. Clarity was a primary goal for the NLT translators, not only to facilitate private reading and understanding, but also to ensure that it would be excellent for public reading and make an immediate and powerful impact on any listener.

THE TEXTS BEHIND THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

The Old Testament translators used the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible as represented in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977), with its extensive system of textual notes; this is an update of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart, 1937). The translators also further compared the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and other Greek manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and any other versions or manuscripts that shed light on the meaning of difficult passages.

The New Testament translators used the two standard editions of the Greek New Testament: the *Greek New Testament*, published by the United Bible Societies (UBS, fourth revised edition, 1993), and *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Nestle and Aland (NA, twenty-seventh edition, 1993). These two editions, which have the same text but differ in punctuation and textual notes, represent, for the most part, the best in modern textual scholarship. However, in cases where strong textual or other scholarly evidence supported the decision, the translators sometimes chose to differ from the UBS and NA Greek texts and followed variant readings found in other ancient witnesses. Significant textual variants of this sort are always noted in the textual notes of the New Living Translation.

TRANSLATION ISSUES

The translators have made a conscious effort to provide a text that can be easily understood by the typical reader of modern English. To this end, we sought to use only vocabulary and language structures in common use today. We avoided using language likely to become quickly dated or that reflects only a narrow subdialect of English, with the goal of making the New Living Translation as broadly useful and timeless as possible.

But our concern for readability goes beyond the concerns of vocabulary and sentence structure. We are also concerned about historical and cultural barriers to understanding the Bible, and we have sought to translate terms shrouded in history and culture in ways that can be immediately understood. To this end:

- We have converted ancient weights and measures (for example, “ephah” [a unit of dry volume] or “cubit” [a unit of length]) to modern English (American) equivalents, since the ancient measures are not generally meaningful to today's readers. Then in the textual footnotes we offer the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek measures, along with modern metric equivalents.

- Instead of translating ancient currency values literally, we have expressed them in common terms that communicate the message. For example, in the Old Testament, “ten shekels of silver” becomes “ten pieces of silver” to convey the intended message. In the New Testament, we have often translated the “denarius” as “the normal daily wage” to facilitate understanding. Then a footnote offers: “Greek a *denarius*, the payment for a full day’s labor.” In general, we give a clear English rendering and then state the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek in a textual footnote.
- Since the names of Hebrew months are unknown to most contemporary readers, and since the Hebrew lunar calendar fluctuates from year to year in relation to the solar calendar used today, we have looked for clear ways to communicate the time of year the Hebrew months (such as Abib) refer to. When an expanded or interpretive rendering is given in the text, a textual note gives the literal rendering. Where it is possible to define a specific ancient date in terms of our modern calendar, we use modern dates in the text. A textual footnote then gives the literal Hebrew date and states the rationale for our rendering. For example, Ezra 6:15 pinpoints the date when the postexilic Temple was completed in Jerusalem: “the third day of the month Adar.” This was during the sixth year of King Darius’s reign (that is, 515 B.C.). We have translated that date as March 12, with a footnote giving the Hebrew and identifying the year as 515 B.C.
- Since ancient references to the time of day differ from our modern methods of denoting time, we have used renderings that are instantly understandable to the modern reader. Accordingly, we have rendered specific times of day by using approximate equivalents in terms of our common “o’clock” system. On occasion, translations such as “at dawn the next morning” or “as the sun was setting” have been used when the biblical reference is more general.
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the message of the text, its meaning is often illuminated with a textual footnote. For example, in Exodus 2:10 the text reads: “The princess named him Moses, for she explained, ‘I lifted him out of the water.’ ” The accompanying footnote reads: “*Moses* sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to lift out.’ ”

Sometimes, when the actual meaning of a name is clear, that meaning is included in parentheses within the text itself. For example, the text at Genesis 16:11 reads: “You are to name him Ishmael (*which means ‘God hears’*), for the Lord has heard your cry of distress.” Since the original hearers and readers would have instantly understood the meaning of the name “Ishmael,” we have provided modern readers with the same information so they can experience the text in a similar way.

- Many words and phrases carry a great deal of cultural meaning that was obvious to the original readers but needs explanation in our own culture. For example, the phrase “they beat their breasts” (Luke 23:48) in ancient times meant that people were very upset, often in mourning. In our translation we chose to translate this phrase dynamically for clarity: “They went home *in deep sorrow*.” Then we included a footnote with the literal Greek, which reads: “Greek *went home beating their breasts*.” In other similar cases, however, we have sometimes chosen to illuminate the existing literal expression to make it immediately understandable. For example, here we might have expanded the literal Greek phrase to read: “They went home beating their breasts *in sorrow*.” If we had done this, we would not have included a textual footnote, since the literal Greek clearly appears in translation.

- Metaphorical language is sometimes difficult for contemporary readers to understand, so at times we have chosen to translate or illuminate the meaning of a metaphor. For example, the ancient poet writes, “Your neck is *like* the tower of David” (Song of Songs 4:4). We have rendered it “Your neck is *as beautiful as* the tower of David” to clarify the intended positive meaning of the simile. Another example comes in Ecclesiastes 12:3, which can be literally rendered: “Remember him . . . when the grinding women cease because they are few, and the women who look through the windows see dimly.” We have rendered it: “Remember him before your teeth—your few remaining servants—stop grinding; and before your eyes—the women looking through the windows—see dimly.” We clarified such metaphors only when we believed a typical reader might be confused by the literal text.
- When the content of the original language text is poetic in character, we have rendered it in English poetic form. We sought to break lines in ways that clarify and highlight the relationships between phrases of the text. Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism, a literary form where a second phrase (or in some instances a third or fourth) echoes the initial phrase in some way. In Hebrew parallelism, the subsequent parallel phrases continue, while also furthering and sharpening, the thought expressed in the initial line or phrase. Whenever possible, we sought to represent these parallel phrases in natural poetic English.
- The Greek term *hoi loudaioi* is literally translated “the Jews” in many English translations. In the Gospel of John, however, this term doesn’t always refer to the Jewish people generally. In some contexts, it refers more particularly to the Jewish religious leaders. We have attempted to capture the meaning in these different contexts by using terms such as “the people” (with a footnote: Greek *the Jewish people*) or “the Jewish leaders,” where appropriate.
- One challenge we faced was how to translate accurately the ancient biblical text that was originally written in a context where male-oriented terms were used to refer to humanity generally. We needed to respect the nature of the ancient context while also trying to make the translation clear to a modern audience that tends to read male-oriented language as applying only to males. Often the original text, though using masculine nouns and pronouns, clearly intends that the message be applied to both men and women. A typical example is found in the New Testament letters, where the believers are called “brothers” (*adelphoi*). Yet it is clear from the content of these letters that they were addressed to all the believers—male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word as “brothers and sisters” in order to represent the historical situation more accurately.

We have also been sensitive to passages where the text applies generally to human beings or to the human condition. In some instances we have used plural pronouns (they, them) in place of the masculine singular (he, him). For example, a traditional rendering of Proverbs 22:6 is: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” We have rendered it: “Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.” At times, we have also replaced third person pronouns with the second person to ensure clarity. A traditional rendering of Proverbs 26:27 is: “He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.” We have rendered it: “If you set a trap for others, you will get caught in it yourself. If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush you instead.”

We should emphasize, however, that all masculine nouns and pronouns used to represent God (for example, “Father”) have been maintained without exception. All decisions of this kind have been driven by the concern to reflect accurately the intended meaning of the original texts of Scripture.

LEXICAL CONSISTENCY IN TERMINOLOGY

For the sake of clarity, we have translated certain original-language terms consistently, especially within synoptic passages and for commonly repeated rhetorical phrases, and within certain word categories such as divine names and non-theological technical terminology (e.g., liturgical, legal, cultural, zoological, and botanical terms). For theological terms, we have allowed a greater semantic range of acceptable English words or phrases for a single Hebrew or Greek word. We have avoided some theological terms that are not readily understood by many modern readers. For example, we avoided using words such as “justification” and “sanctification,” which are carryovers from Latin translations. In place of these words, we have provided renderings such as “made right with God” and “made holy.”

THE SPELLING OF PROPER NAMES

Many individuals in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, are known by more than one name (e.g., Uzziah/Azariah). For the sake of clarity, we have tried to use a single spelling for any one individual, footnoting the literal spelling whenever we differ from it. This is especially helpful in delineating the kings of Israel and Judah. King Joash/Jehoash of Israel has been consistently called Jehoash, while King Joash/Jehoash of Judah is called Joash. A similar distinction has been used to distinguish between Joram/Jehoram of Israel and Joram/Jehoram of Judah. All such decisions were made with the goal of clarifying the text for the reader. When the ancient biblical writers clearly had a theological purpose in their choice of a variant name (e.g., Esh-baal/Ishbosheth), the different names have been maintained with an explanatory footnote.

For the names Jacob and Israel, which are used interchangeably for both the individual patriarch and the nation, we generally render it “Israel” when it refers to the nation and “Jacob” when it refers to the individual. When our rendering of the name differs from the underlying Hebrew text, we provide a textual footnote, which includes this explanation: “The names ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.”

THE RENDERING OF DIVINE NAMES

In the Old Testament, all appearances of *’el*, *’elohim*, or *’eloah* have been translated “God,” except where the context demands the translation “god(s).” We have generally rendered the tetragrammaton (*YHWH*) consistently as “the LORD,” utilizing a form with small capitals that is common among English translations. This will distinguish it from the name *’adonai*, which we render “Lord.” When *’adonai* and *YHWH* appear together, we have rendered it “Sovereign LORD.” When *’elohim* and *YHWH* appear together, we have rendered it “LORD God.” When *YH*

(the short form of *YHWH*) and *YHWH* appear together, we have rendered it “LORD GOD.” When *YHWH* appears with the term *tseba’oth*, we have rendered it “LORD of Heaven’s Armies” to translate the meaning of the name. In a few cases, we have utilized the transliteration, *Yahweh*, when the personal character of the name is being invoked in contrast to another divine name or the name of some other god (for example, see Exodus 3:15; 6:2-3).

In the Gospels and Acts, the Greek word *christos* has normally been translated as “Messiah” when the context assumes a Jewish audience. When a Gentile audience can be assumed (which is consistently the case in the Epistles and Revelation), *christos* has been translated as “Christ.” The Greek word *kurios* is consistently translated “Lord,” except that it is translated “LORD” wherever the New Testament text explicitly quotes from the Old Testament, and the text there has it in small capitals.

TEXTUAL FOOTNOTES

The New Living Translation provides several kinds of textual footnotes, all designated in the text with an asterisk:

- When for the sake of clarity the NLT renders a difficult or potentially confusing phrase dynamically, we generally give the literal rendering in a textual footnote. This allows the reader to see the literal source of our dynamic rendering and how our translation relates to other more literal translations. These notes are prefaced with “Hebrew,” “Aramaic,” or “Greek,” identifying the language of the underlying source text. For example, in Acts 2:42 we translated the literal “breaking of bread” (from the Greek) as “the Lord’s Supper” to clarify that this verse refers to the ceremonial practice of the church rather than just an ordinary meal. Then we attached a footnote to “the Lord’s Supper,” which reads: “Greek *the breaking of bread*.”
- Textual footnotes are also used to show alternative renderings, prefaced with the word “Or.” These normally occur for passages where an aspect of the meaning is debated. On occasion, we also provide notes on words or phrases that represent a departure from long-standing tradition. These notes are prefaced with “Traditionally rendered.” For example, the footnote to the translation “serious skin disease” at Leviticus 13:2 says: “Traditionally rendered *leprosy*. The Hebrew word used throughout this passage is used to describe various skin diseases.”
- When our translators follow a textual variant that differs significantly from our standard Hebrew or Greek texts (listed earlier), we document that difference with a footnote. We also footnote cases when the NLT excludes a passage that is included in the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* (and familiar to readers through its translation in the King James Version). In such cases, we offer a translation of the excluded text in a footnote, even though it is generally recognized as a later addition to the Greek text and not part of the original Greek New Testament.
- All Old Testament passages that are quoted in the New Testament are identified by a textual footnote at the New Testament location. When the New Testament clearly quotes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and when it differs significantly in wording from the Hebrew text, we also place a textual footnote at the Old Testament location. This note includes a rendering of the Greek version, along with a cross-reference to the New Testament passage(s) where it is cited (for example, see notes on Psalms 8:2; 53:3; Proverbs 3:12).

- Some textual footnotes provide cultural and historical information on places, things, and people in the Bible that are probably obscure to modern readers. Such notes should aid the reader in understanding the message of the text. For example, in Acts 12:1, “King Herod” is named in this translation as “King Herod Agrippa” and is identified in a footnote as being “the nephew of Herod Antipas and a grandson of Herod the Great.”
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the meaning of the text, it is either illuminated with a textual footnote or included within parentheses in the text itself. For example, the footnote concerning the name “Eve” at Genesis 3:20 reads: “*Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to give life.’ ” This wordplay in the Hebrew illuminates the meaning of the text, which goes on to say that Eve “would be the mother of all who live.”

As we submit this translation for publication, we recognize that any translation of the Scriptures is subject to limitations and imperfections. Anyone who has attempted to communicate the richness of God’s Word into another language will realize it is impossible to make a perfect translation. Recognizing these limitations, we sought God’s guidance and wisdom throughout this project. Now we pray that he will accept our efforts and use this translation for the benefit of the church and of all people.

We pray that the New Living Translation will overcome some of the barriers of history, culture, and language that have kept people from reading and understanding God’s Word. We hope that readers unfamiliar with the Bible will find the words clear and easy to understand and that readers well versed in the Scriptures will gain a fresh perspective. We pray that readers will gain insight and wisdom for living, but most of all that they will meet the God of the Bible and be forever changed by knowing him.

The Bible Translation Committee

BIBLE TRANSLATION TEAM

HOLY BIBLE, NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

PENTATEUCH

Daniel I. Block, Senior Translator
Wheaton College

GENESIS

Allen Ross, *Beeson Divinity School, Samford University*
Gordon Wenham, *Trinity College, Bristol*

EXODUS

Robert Bergen, *Hannibal-LaGrange College*
Daniel I. Block, *Wheaton College*
Eugene Carpenter, *Bethel College, Mishawaka, Indiana*

LEVITICUS

David Baker, *Ashland Theological Seminary*
Victor Hamilton, *Asbury College*
Kenneth Mathews, *Beeson Divinity School, Samford University*

NUMBERS

Dale A. Brueggemann, *Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions*
R. K. Harrison, *Wycliffe College*
Paul R. House, *Beeson Divinity School, Samford University*
Gerald L. Mattingly, *Johnson Bible College*

DEUTERONOMY

J. Gordon McConville, *University of Gloucester*
Eugene H. Merrill, *Dallas Theological Seminary*
John A. Thompson, *University of Melbourne*

HISTORICAL BOOKS

Barry J. Beitzel, Senior Translator
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

JOSHUA, JUDGES

Carl E. Armerding, *Schloss Mittersill Study Centre*
Barry J. Beitzel, *Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*
Lawson Stone, *Asbury Theological Seminary*

1 & 2 SAMUEL

Robert Gordon, *Cambridge University*
V. Philips Long, *Regent College*
J. Robert Vannoy, *Biblical Theological Seminary*

1 & 2 KINGS

Bill T. Arnold, *Asbury Theological Seminary*
William H. Barnes, *North Central University*
Frederic W. Bush, *Fuller Theological Seminary*

1 & 2 CHRONICLES

Raymond B. Dillard, *Westminster Theological Seminary*
David A. Dorsey, *Evangelical School of Theology*
Terry Eves, *Erskine College*

RUTH, EZRA—ESTHER

William C. Williams, *Vanguard University*
H. G. M. Williamson, *Oxford University*

WISDOM BOOKS

Tremper Longman III, Senior Translator
Westmont College

JOB

August Konkel, *Providence Theological Seminary*
Tremper Longman III, *Westmont College*
Al Wolters, *Redeemer College*

PSALMS 1–75

Mark D. Futato, *Reformed Theological Seminary*
Douglas Green, *Westminster Theological Seminary*
Richard Pratt, *Reformed Theological Seminary*

PSALMS 76–150

David M. Howard Jr., *Bethel Theological Seminary*
Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Immanuel Church, Nashville, Tennessee*
Willem VanGemeren, *Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*

PROVERBS

Ted Hildebrandt, *Gordon College*
Richard Schultz, *Wheaton College*
Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *Eastern College*

ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SONGS

Daniel C. Fredericks, *Belhaven College*
David Hubbard, *Fuller Theological Seminary*
Tremper Longman III, *Westmont College*

PROPHETS

John N. Oswalt, Senior Translator
Asbury Theological Seminary

ISAIAH

John N. Oswalt, *Asbury Theological Seminary*
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OLD TESTAMENT

JESUS *in the* OLD TESTAMENT

Jesus. Do you remember the first time you heard his name? I don't. He's always been in the air I breathe. Maybe that's your story, too. Or maybe he's a more recent acquaintance. Either way, we are, even on our best days, living in the fog of a partial and puny understanding of the most significant person in human history. So, if we really want to know Jesus in greater depth, we'll need to go all the way back to Genesis.

Thirty-nine books. Thirty authors. The Old Testament is a compilation that took more than a thousand years to piece together. Yet, through all its disparate and (on the surface) disconnected narrative, the story points to a singular message—the rescue of the people of God by the Messiah Jesus. The Old Testament is a collection of books like no other. Penned by kings and prophets but breathed by God almighty, the message of the Old Testament is clear: There is a redeemer named Jesus, the Savior of the world, and he's the one we're all waiting for.

The story of humanity begins in perfection...

Jesus, God the Son, is right there with God the Father and God the Spirit, reigning over all. "Let us make man in our image," the triune God says, and Adam and Eve are created. Not long after, "all hell breaks

loose" as Adam and Eve choose their own way and are separated from God. Broken and ashamed, they hide from God. But instead of punishing them or destroying them, God pursues Adam and Eve, lovingly restoring the relationship. And their story becomes our story. We are rebels hiding from a perfect God, but God in his great mercy is always looking for us. He longs to restore us into rich relationship with him. His plan is simple: Jesus will redeem us.

So from Genesis to Malachi we follow the story of humanity in all of its pain and brokenness, longing for healing. And from Genesis to Malachi we see a loving God who pursues his people, longing to redeem them. Just as an Instagram account has one theme but many images, the Old Testament offers us a narrative carousel that circles around the same message: A Savior is coming, and he's the one our hearts long for.

In Genesis 3 Jesus is the seed of the woman who will one day crush Satan. He is foreshadowed in the blood that is shed when Adam first kills and skins an animal, fashioning clothing to cover his shame and brokenness. We see Jesus in the ark, the only refuge of safety in a world filled with evil. We see him in the call of Abram and the promise of a son. We see him as the ram, the perfect provision taking the place of Isaac on the altar. We see him in the

vision of a ladder coming down from heaven for Jacob. We see him in Joseph, the one who would save his people from bondage. We see him in Moses, leading his people out of Egypt.

We see Jesus as the perfect Passover lamb, atoning for the sins of all who receive him. He is the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness. He is the Ark of the Covenant, always near his people. He is the captain of the Lord's host in Joshua. We see him in Judges, delivering his people even when they don't deserve it. He is the "kinsman redeemer" in the book of Ruth. He is David defeating Goliath. We see him in Esther, interceding for his people. He is the good shepherd in the Psalms. We see him in the prophets as king, judge, and "a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief." We see him threaded through the whole of the Old Testament, yearning for relationship with his people. He is hope for the hopeless and healer of the hurting.

And then, at last, comes silence. Four hundred years of silence. It is the silence of waiting. It is the silence of longing. It is the silence of anticipation. And it is in this silence that we recognize the depth of our need and the truth about our desperate condition. We are sinners in need of a Savior. We are waiting for a redeemer, the promised one, who is Jesus the Messiah.

And then one day, one glorious and epic day, the promise finds its port in reality. Jesus is born into the world, after 400 years of waiting. And after such a long time in the liminal space, many fail to recognize their salvation. They have stared at the picture hard but have missed its meaning. Maybe they have studied too closely, or too casually, or maybe they haven't bothered to look at all. They have eyes, but they can't see.

Helen Keller once said, "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision." As you turn the pages of this book and explore the Old Testament, I'm praying that your eyes will be opened to see Jesus on every single page. And when you do, I pray that transformation will cover you like a blanket, and you will find living water for your thirsty heart. Jesus is the only one who can satisfy our deeper thirsts.

The perfect Passover Lamb bled and died for you. May this picture be imprinted on your heart as you seek to know Jesus more deeply.

—*Lina AbuJamra*

When I was a kid, I imagined I could travel backward in time, like watching a movie in fast-rewind. I traveled back before Shakespeare, before Christ, before the pyramids, even before humankind walked the earth. I watched creation unfold in reverse—the animals and plants disappearing until the earth was “formless and void.” And then I went further. Having learned about the “Big Bang” theory, I pretended to see it in reverse, watching everything that exists in our material universe undone, returning to a single point of nothing, from whence it came. In my mind I was arriving at the beginning of all things—no, more like the before-the-beginning, when there was only God.

Why don't you try it now? Close your eyes and time-travel back to the time before time.

So... what's it like? What do you see, feel, hear?

Some people describe feeling lost in the vastness of empty space, like a transcendental vertigo. But, of course, there is no space at the very beginning, since distance itself is a product of the Big Bang. There is only here, and there is only now. Others describe the aloneness they feel, surrounded by only dark, silent nothingness.

But who says it's dark? Who says it's silent? And who says you're alone?

If there is a God, and if this God is anything like the God that Jesus shows us, then our imaginations need an adjustment. At the beginning of all things you would not be surrounded by darkness but by light, because God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). This light, you would realize, is somehow communicating with you, speaking into your soul, and you would feel a rush of welcome, embrace, and acceptance. This is the God of Genesis—powerful and personal. He is not mere energy, not an “it” or a “thing,” but a being—the source of all being. This Infinite Energy that precedes all things is alive and, more than that, is the Personal Power behind all life.

If this imaginary time-travel really happened, yes, you'd see light, and yes, you'd feel loved—but you would also hear something. Conversation. Expressions of delight. You would know that the love you experience is not simply between you and God, but within God. God is relating with himself within himself. God is not only personal, which makes him capable of relationship with another, but God is also communal, which means he is always relating within himself as the Triune God. God is eternally relating, eternally expressing and experiencing love, because God IS love (1 John 4:8, 16).

This is the God who speaks to himself in the plural: “Let us make humans in our image and our likeness.” This is the God who Jesus was and was with (John 1:1), the same yet distinct. This is the God who is so foundationally relational that once he creates us, his identity and story are forever linked with ours. For he is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and me—and you.

—*Bruxy Cavey*

GENESIS

The Account of Creation

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

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

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

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

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

⁹ Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. ¹² The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

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

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

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

¹⁶ God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars.

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

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

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

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

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

²⁴ Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened.

²⁵ God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

J GENESIS 1:1—Jesus is the co-creator of all things, and he was there at the beginning of all things (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-16).

1:1 Or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .*

GENESIS 2 //

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

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

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

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

²⁹ Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food.

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

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

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

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

J. GENESIS 1:26-27—We were created to be like God, which is why Jesus told us that we would do the things he did, and even greater things than he did (John 14:12).

J. GENESIS 2:15—This describes the “rule” of the first Adam, called a “representation” of Jesus, who would come later to “rule” our hearts (Romans 5:12-19).

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

The Man and Woman in Eden

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

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

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

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

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” ¹⁹ So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. ²⁰ He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall

1:26a Or man; Hebrew reads *adam*. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. 1:27 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 2:2 Or *ceased*; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or *mist*. 2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter.

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

²³ "At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called 'woman,'
because she was taken from 'man.'"

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

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

The Man and Woman Sin

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹¹ "Who told you that you were naked?" the

LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

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

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

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

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

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

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

J. REFRAMING JESUS

GENESIS 3:15—JESUS WILL FIGHT FOR HUMANITY

After the serpent leads Adam and Eve into sin, humankind is trapped in a cosmic hostage crisis. But God responds by launching a full-scale covert operation to fight for humanity. His strategy is to squash the serpent through a descendant of Eve—a Rescuer who will give his all to the struggle. And though he would be wounded, this Son of Man would ultimately be victorious in combat. God's scheme pivots on embedding Jesus behind "enemy lines," where he can battle Satan head-on and triumph against sin and death. Reporting on Jesus' assault on the serpent, the apostle Paul describes God's war plans: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" (Romans 16:20).

J. GENESIS 2:24—When the conniving Pharisees try to set a theological trap for Jesus by posing a hypothetical question about divorce, Jesus quotes this passage back to them (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8).

J. GENESIS 3:1—Satan (the "serpent") is a liar, even "the father of lies," according to Jesus (John 8:44).

2:21 Or took a part of the man's side. 3:8 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter.

GENESIS 4 //

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

¹⁶ Then he said to the woman,

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

¹⁷ And to the man he said,

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

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

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

Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

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

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

Cain and Abel

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

she gave birth to his brother and named him
Abel.

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

⁶ “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked
Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷ You will
be accepted if you do what is right. But if you
refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is
crouching at the door, eager to control you. But
you must subdue it and be its master.”

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

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

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my
brother’s guardian?”

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

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

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

The Descendants of Cain

¹⁷ Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she
became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then

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

Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. ¹⁸ Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

¹⁹ Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. ²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. ²² Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. ²³ One day Lamech said to his wives,

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

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

The Birth of Seth

²⁵ Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, “God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed.”

²⁶ When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. **At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.**

The Descendants of Adam

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

³ When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth.

⁴ After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

⁶ When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. ⁷ After the birth of*

Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

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

¹² When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³ After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴ Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

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

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

²¹ **When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. ²² After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.**

²³ **Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴ walking in close**

1 GENESIS 4:26b—This marks the beginning of the worship of the Lord; later, in the book of Revelation, John the disciple says Jesus will be worshiped for eternity (Revelation 4:8b).

1 GENESIS 5:2—The Pharisees try to trap Jesus by asking him what looks like an innocent question about divorce, and Jesus responds by quoting this verse (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6).

1 GENESIS 5:21-24—God delights in us “walking in close fellowship” with him, and Jesus has invited us to “walk in close fellowship” by knowing his heart and mind (Luke 24:35).

4:18 Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. 4:25 Seth probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.” 5:1 Or man; Hebrew reads adam; similarly in 5:2. 5:6 Or the ancestor of; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:7 Or the birth of this ancestor of; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

GENESIS 6 //

fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

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

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed.”

³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

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

A World Gone Wrong

6 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them.

²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.”

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

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. ⁷And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the

small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor with the LORD.

The Story of Noah

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

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

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

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

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

The Flood Covers the Earth

7 When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. ²Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,* and

J. GENESIS 6:11-13—Jesus compares the condition of the world and the surprise of God’s judgment upon it with the circumstances that will surround the time when he returns to earth (Matthew 24:37-39).

5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” **6:2** Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. **6:3** Greek version reads *will not remain in*. **6:14a** Traditionally rendered *an ark*. **6:14b** Or *gopher wood*. **6:15** Hebrew *300 cubits* [138 meters] long, *50 cubits* [23 meters] wide, and *30 cubits* [13.8 meters] high. **6:16** Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit* [46 centimeters]. **7:2** Hebrew *of each clean animal*; similarly in 7:8.

take one pair of each of the others. ³Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. ⁴Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

⁵So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. ⁷He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. ⁹They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

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

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

¹⁷For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. ²¹All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. ²²Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³God wiped out every living

thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. **The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat.** ²⁴And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Recedes

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

⁶After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. ¹⁰After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. ¹²He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

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

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Leave the boat,

1 GENESIS 7:23b-24—Jesus is, metaphorically, our “ark”—those who are “in” him will be saved from God’s judgment (John 3:16-17).

7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew On the first day of the first month; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13.

GENESIS 9 //

all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

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

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

God Confirms His Covenant

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

⁵“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. ⁶If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings* in his own image. ⁷Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

⁸Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹“I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, ¹⁰and with all the animals that were

on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. ¹¹Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

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

Noah’s Sons

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

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

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

“May Canaan be cursed!

May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

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

²⁷May God expand the territory of Japheth!

J. GENESIS 8:21-22—Here God promises to never again destroy the world because of its sin; instead, he sacrifices his own Son to undermine the power of sin in our lives.

8:20 Hebrew every clean animal and every clean bird. **9:6** Or man; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,* and may Canaan be his servant.”

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

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

Descendants of Japheth

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

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

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

Descendants of Ham

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁵Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,* ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites,

Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

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

Descendants of Shem

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem.* **10:4** As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. **10:9** Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b. **10:10** Hebrew *Shinar*. **10:11** Or *From that land Assyria went out*. **10:14** Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites*. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. **10:15** Hebrew ancestor of Heth. **10:21** Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth*. **10:24** Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah*. Compare Luke 3:36.

GENESIS 11 //

The Tower of Babel

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

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

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

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why the city was called Babel,* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem’s family.

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

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After the birth of

Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Family of Terah

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

³¹One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram’s wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran’s child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

J. GENESIS 11:5-9—Here the Lord scatters his people because they are bent on finding their own way, apart from him. Later, Jesus said, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself” (John 12:32).

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*. **11:9** Or *Babylon*. *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “confusion.” **11:10** Or *the ancestor of*; also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. **11:11** Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. **11:12-13** Greek version reads “When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan. After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. Compare Luke 3:35-36. **11:32** Some ancient versions read 145 years; compare 11:26 and 12:4.

The Call of Abram

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

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

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

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

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

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

and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. “What have you done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!” ²⁰Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. ²(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) ³From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. ⁴This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the LORD again.

⁵Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. ⁶But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. ⁷So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

⁸Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! ⁹The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.”

¹⁰Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land

1 GENESIS 12:2-3—Just as God’s plan was to bless all nations through one man, Abram, he later offered his own Son, Jesus, as the “way” into blessing (John 14:6).

GENESIS 14 //

of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. ¹²So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. ¹³But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

¹⁴After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. ¹⁵I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants* as a permanent possession. ¹⁶And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.”

¹⁸So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim ²fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

³This second group of kings joined forces in

Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). ⁴For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

⁵One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. ⁷Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.* ⁹They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. ¹¹The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. ¹²They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

¹³But one of Lot’s men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram’s allies.

¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer’s army until he caught up with them at Dan. ¹⁵There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

Melchizedek Blesses Abram

¹⁷After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9, 14:10.

14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea*. 14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in

Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,* brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰And blessed be God Most High,
who has defeated your enemies for you.”

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.”

²²Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich.’ ²⁴I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

The LORD's Covenant Promise to Abram

15 Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, “Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great.”

²But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. ³You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir.”

⁴Then the LORD said to him, “No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir.” ⁵Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!”

⁶And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

⁷Then the LORD told him, “I am the LORD

who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession.”

⁸But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?”

⁹The LORD told him, “Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. ¹¹Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. ¹³Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵(As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶After four generations

J. REFRAMING JESUS

GENESIS 14:18-20—JESUS THE KING & PRIEST

The writer of Hebrews in the New Testament connects the role of Melchizedek directly to Jesus. Melchizedek was the king of Salem, a word that means “peace.” It's interesting that the region where Jerusalem is now located is called Salem. Melchizedek, whose name means “King of Justice,” also serves as a priest who leads his people to the Lord. When he encounters Abraham, Melchizedek serves him bread and wine, mediates a blessing, and receives an offering. Hebrews 5:1-10 explores the ways that Jesus is “a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.” Why might people need Jesus, our King of kings, to also serve as our “Highest” priest?

J. GENESIS 15:5-6—In his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul honors Abraham for his unwavering faith, and Jesus makes it possible for God to “count us as righteous” because of our faith in him (Romans 4:18-25, James 2:23).

14:18 Hebrew *El-Elyon*; also in 14:19, 20, 22.

GENESIS 16 //

your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

¹⁷After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. ¹⁸So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt* to the great Euphrates River—¹⁹the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

The Birth of Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. ²So Sarai said to Abram, “The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed with Sarai’s proposal. ³So Sarai,

J. REFRAMING JESUS

GENESIS 15:17-18—JESUS WALKS THROUGH

Imagine the scene: Animals slaughtered—cut in half and arranged in two rows, blood spilled all over the ground, and the smell of death in the air. It must have been a gruesome sight. But still the holy Lord chooses to walk between the two halves of Abram’s sacrifices. In effect, the Lord is saying to his beloved people, “I love you so much that I will subject myself to the brutality of death, just to have a relationship with you.” It’s important to note that the Lord does not require Abram to do the same. It’s the Lord who is uniquely the “light in the darkness,” passing from death to life (John 1:5). How is Jesus, right now, pursuing the same “covenant” relationship with us?

J. GENESIS 16:13—Hagar worships God because he sees her heart like no one else has. And Jesus always sees past our exterior to the essence of who we are, then “marks” our true identity (Matthew 16:18).

Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

⁴So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, “This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she’s pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who’s wrong—you or me!”

⁶Abram replied, “Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit.” Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. ⁸The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” ¹⁰Then he added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.”

¹¹And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress. ¹²This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.”

¹³Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.”* She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” ¹⁴So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.

Abram Is Named Abraham

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. ²I will make a covenant

15:18 Hebrew *the river of Egypt*, referring either to an eastern branch of the Nile River or to the Brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5). **16:13** Hebrew *El-roi*.

with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants.”

³At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, ⁴“This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! ⁵What’s more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham,* for you will be the father of many nations. ⁶I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

⁷“I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants* after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God.”

The Mark of the Covenant

⁹Then God said to Abraham, “Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. ¹⁰This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. ¹³All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.”

Sarai Is Named Sarah

¹⁵Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah.* ¹⁶And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.”

¹⁷Then Abraham bowed down to the ground,

but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. “And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?” ¹⁸So Abraham said to God, “May Ishmael live under your special blessing!”

¹⁹But God replied, “No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac,* and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.” ²²When God had finished speaking, he left Abraham.

²³On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him. ²⁴Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, ²⁵and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen. ²⁶Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day, ²⁷along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

A Son Is Promised to Sarah

18 The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day. ²He looked up and noticed three men standing

J GENESIS 17:3-7—The covenant God made with Abraham is fulfilled in Jesus—it is through the promise of Jesus that we are restored into intimate relationship with God.

J GENESIS 17:10—Jesus was taken to the Temple to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth—that’s when he was given the name of Jesus (Luke 2:21).

17:5 Abram means “exalted father”; Abraham sounds like a Hebrew term that means “father of many.” **17:7** Hebrew *seed*; also in 17:7b, 8, 9, 10, 19. **17:15** Sarai and Sarah both mean “princess”; the change in spelling may reflect the difference in dialect between Ur and Canaan. **17:19** Isaac means “he laughs.”

GENESIS 18 //

nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground.

³“My lord,” he said, “if it pleases you, stop here for a while. ⁴Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. ⁵And since you’ve honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey.”

“All right,” they said. “Do as you have said.”

⁶So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, “Hurry! Get three large measures* of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread.” ⁷Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it. ⁸When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

⁹“Where is Sarah, your wife?” the visitors asked.

“She’s inside the tent,” Abraham replied.

¹⁰Then one of them said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!”

Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. ¹¹Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. ¹²So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?”

¹³Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ ¹⁴Is anything too

hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, “I didn’t laugh.”

But the LORD said, “No, you did laugh.”

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

¹⁶Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

¹⁷“Should I hide my plan from Abraham?” the LORD asked. ¹⁸“For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.”

²⁰So the LORD told Abraham, “I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. ²¹I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know.”

²²The other men turned and headed toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham.

²³Abraham approached him and said, “Will you sweep away both the righteous and the wicked?”

²⁴Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? ²⁵Surely you wouldn’t do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn’t do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?”

²⁶And the LORD replied, “If I find fifty righteous people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake.”

²⁷Then Abraham spoke again. “Since I have begun, let me speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose there are only forty-five righteous people rather than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?”

And the LORD said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five righteous people there.”

²⁹Then Abraham pressed his request further. “Suppose there are only forty?”

And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it for the sake of the forty.”

J GENESIS 18:13-14—The people of God are always underestimating the power of God to supersede “natural law”—just as Jesus amazed the ancient world by performing supernatural miracles.

J GENESIS 18:23-26—Here Abraham persistently “bargains” with God to convince him to do what he would like; later, Jesus tells a parable that encourages his disciples to persistently ask him for what they want (Luke 11:5-13).

18:6 Hebrew 3 seahs, about half a bushel or 22 liters.