

DEAR READER,

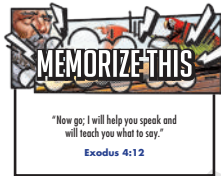
Welcome to *The NIV Action Study Bible*. Did you know that the Bible is thousands of years old? Okay, not this one, but the earliest books of the Bible were written at least 3,500 years ago. And did you know that the Bible is the bestselling book of all time? We don't always think of it this way. Many expressions come from the Bible: The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), "Carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), "There is a time for everything" (Ecclesiastes 3:1), "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12), and more.

Within the pages of this Bible, you will find all sorts of features that will help you understand God's Holy Word, written for you. Experience dramatic stories, meet fascinating characters, travel to ancient worlds, and most of all, see God in action everywhere—including in your own life.

The Bible translation that is used for this Bible is the New International Version (NIV). Bible experts worked with the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts to create this translation.

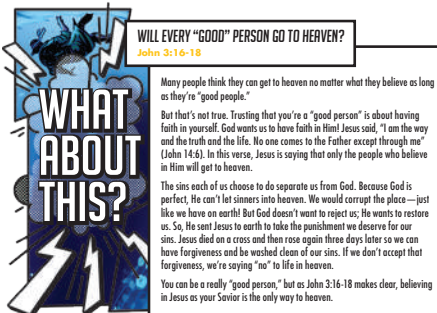
Here are features added to help you understand God's Word:

Memorize This



Look for these colorful boxes that highlight key verses to memorize.

What About This?

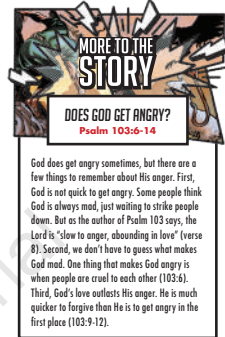


Gain insights to tough questions about faith. At the back of the Bible you'll find an index that tells you where to locate every "What About

This?" feature. As you begin pondering (thinking about) what you read, consider engaging a friend or family member in conversation about the topic. These questions are based on the top 50 questions we ask about faith—kids and adults alike. Questions help us process information, and conversations with trusted friends and family help us determine what we personally believe.

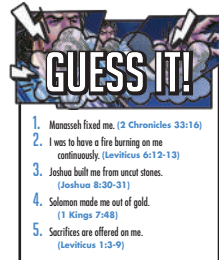
More to the Story

Who did what, when, and where ... and *why*? Sometimes when we first read something in the Bible, we have more questions than answers or something simply doesn't make sense. This feature gives you insight about what's happening in this section of God's Word. If you want a little more context, or the bigger story, around some Bible passages, look for this feature and find out.



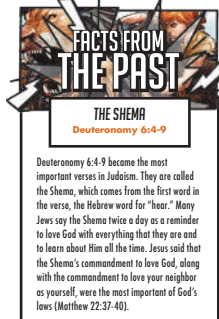
Guess It!


Person, place, or thing? Take the challenge with five clues. How well do you know your Bible? Or how well can you look up the hints written throughout your Bible to find the answers? Challenge a friend or family member to test their Bible knowledge. Not sure what the answer is? Check out the index at the back of the Bible for a full list.



Facts from the Past

Because the Bible was written thousands of years ago, the cultures were different from today. For a quick look at history, go here to learn about weapons, food, clothes, houses, celebrations, traditions—all things ancient!





TAKE ACTION

GOD PROMISES TO SAVE
Genesis 8:1–9:17

It's fun to receive an out-of-the-ordinary gift from a friend. You know, the pirate hat or the clever T-shirt. Who doesn't like to receive a witty gift from someone? And it can be just as fun to give a gift and watch the reaction of the person you gave it to. What's the best gift you've ever received?

In Genesis, we discover that Noah and his family received the gift of safety and a new start. Now read Ephesians 2:8. God spared no expense to send you an out-of-the-ordinary gift—one you could never earn for yourself. The gift? Jesus, who came to earth to extend God's love and forgiveness, to wash away your wrongs and make you part of His family forever. No one can top this gift!

What's it like to feel you need to believe a certain way or get good grades to earn a gift? What do you think about Jesus' free gift of eternal life? Create a card, a video clip, or a text message this week about God's great gift of Jesus.

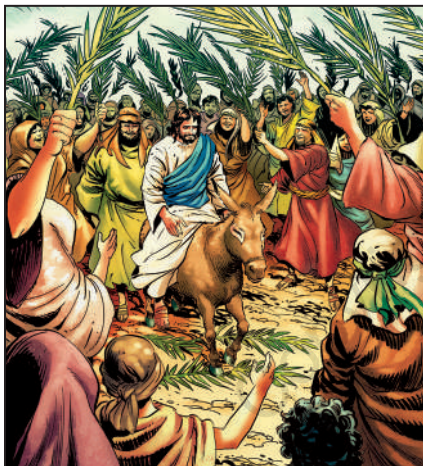
Take Action

This feature offers ideas for ways you can grow your faith. It includes some pretty funny and real situations. Consider how they connect to your everyday life.

Illustrations

Throughout this Bible you'll see illustrations from celebrated artist Sergio Cariello—from the book introductions to the colorful images

alongside the Bible text. His work also includes the full-color, 40-page “miniseries” of God's redemptive story that you'll find in 4-page sections from the beginning to the end of the Bible.



And More

What about those **book introductions**? At the beginning of each of the 66 books of the Bible, find out who wrote each book, how God is in action in each book, and how God's people are in action. Discover key words of faith for each book, and add to your Bible trivia knowledge with “Did You Know?” at the bottom of the page. As you see what God is doing in the lives of His people, ask yourself, *What is God doing in my life?*

Don't forget about the **maps** at the end, created especially for this Bible, which use photo-quality drawings to show actual places and travel routes of God's people.

And if you are looking for how to say a word correctly or what it means, check out the **dictionary**.

Want to go even further with your Bible study? Try using the **concordance**. It will tell you many occurrences of key words in the Bible. For example, how many times does *grace* appear in the Bible, and where? Look it up to find out!

We Would Love to Hear from You

As you discover God and His Word through this Bible, do you have any questions or comments? Please write and let us know!

info@theactionbible.com



It is our prayer that each of us might serve God with a faithful heart, mind, and soul.

The Action Bible Team at David C Cook



PREFACE

The goal of the New International Version (NIV) is to enable English-speaking people from around the world to read and hear God's eternal Word in their own language. Our work as translators is motivated by our conviction that the Bible is God's Word in written form. We believe that the Bible contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, sheds unique light on our path in a dark world and sets forth the way to our eternal well-being. Out of these deep convictions, we have sought to recreate as far as possible the experience of the original audience—blending transparency to the original text with accessibility for the millions of English speakers around the world. We have prioritized accuracy, clarity and literary quality with the goal of creating a translation suitable for public and private reading, evangelism, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use. We have also sought to preserve a measure of continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English.

The complete NIV Bible was first published in 1978. It was a completely new translation made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The translators came from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, giving the translation an international scope. They were from many denominations and churches—including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Covenant, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and others. This breadth of denominational and theological perspective helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias. For these reasons, and by the grace of God, the NIV has gained a wide readership in all parts of the English-speaking world.

The work of translating the Bible is never finished. As good as they are, English translations must be regularly updated so that they will continue to communicate accurately the meaning of God's Word. Updates are needed in order to reflect the latest developments in our understanding of the biblical world and its languages and to keep pace with changes in English usage. Recognizing, then, that the NIV would retain its ability to communicate God's Word accurately only if it were regularly updated, the original translators

established The Committee on Bible Translation (CBT). The committee is a self-perpetuating group of biblical scholars charged with keeping abreast of advances in biblical scholarship and changes in English and issuing periodic updates to the NIV. CBT is an independent, self-governing body and has sole responsibility for the NIV text. The committee mirrors the original group of translators in its diverse international and denominational makeup and in its unifying commitment to the Bible as God's inspired Word.

In obedience to its mandate, the committee has issued periodic updates to the NIV. An initial revision was released in 1984. A more thorough revision process was completed in 2005, resulting in the separately published Today's New International Version (TNIV). The updated NIV you now have in your hands builds on both the original NIV and the TNIV and represents the latest effort of the committee to articulate God's unchanging Word in the way the original authors might have said it had they been speaking in English to the global English-speaking audience today.

The first concern of the translators has continued to be the accuracy of the translation and its faithfulness to the intended meaning of the biblical writers. This has moved the translators to go beyond a formal word-for-word rendering of the original texts. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, accurate communication of the meaning of the biblical authors demands constant regard for varied contextual uses of words and idioms and for frequent modifications in sentence structures.

As an aid to the reader, sectional headings have been inserted. They are not to be regarded as part of the biblical text and are not intended for oral reading. It is the committee's hope that these headings may prove more helpful to the reader than the traditional chapter divisions, which were introduced long after the Bible was written.

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, has been used throughout. The Masoretic Text tradition contains marginal notations that offer variant readings. These have sometimes been followed instead of the text itself. Because such instances involve variants

within the Masoretic tradition, they have not been indicated in the textual notes. In a few cases, words in the basic consonantal text have been divided differently than in the Masoretic Text. Such cases are usually indicated in the textual footnotes. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain biblical texts that represent an earlier stage of the transmission of the Hebrew text. They have been consulted, as have been the Samaritan Pentateuch and the ancient scribal traditions concerning deliberate textual changes. The translators also consulted the more important early versions—the Greek Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Aramaic Targums and, for the Psalms, the *Juxta Hebraica* of Jerome. Readings from these versions, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the scribal traditions were occasionally followed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading. In rare cases, the committee has emended the Hebrew text where it appears to have become corrupted at an even earlier stage of its transmission. These departures from the Masoretic Text are also indicated in the textual footnotes. Sometimes the vowel indicators (which are later additions to the basic consonantal text) found in the Masoretic Text did not, in the judgment of the committee, represent the correct vowels for the original text. Accordingly, some words have been read with a different set of vowels. These instances are usually not indicated in the footnotes.

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament is an eclectic one, based on the latest editions of the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. The committee has made its choices among the variant readings in accordance with widely accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism. Footnotes call attention to places where uncertainty remains.

The New Testament authors, writing in Greek, often quote the Old Testament from its ancient Greek version, the Septuagint. This is one reason why some of the Old Testament quotations in the NIV New Testament are not identical to the corresponding passages in the NIV Old Testament. Such quotations in the New Testament are indicated with the footnote "(see Septuagint)."

Other footnotes in this version are of several kinds, most of which need no explanation. Those giving alternative translations begin with "Or" and generally introduce the alternative with the last word preceding it in the text, except when it is a single-word alternative. When poetry is quoted in a footnote, a slash mark indicates a line division.

It should be noted that references to diseases, minerals, flora and fauna, architectural details, clothing, jewelry, musical instruments and other articles cannot always be identified with precision. Also, linear measurements and measures of capacity can only be approximated (see the Table of Weights and Measures). Although *Selah*, used mainly in the Psalms, is probably a musical term, its meaning is uncertain. Since it may interrupt reading and distract the reader, this word has not been kept in the English text, but every occurrence has been signaled by a footnote.

One of the main reasons the task of Bible translation is never finished is the change in our own language, English. Although a basic core of the language remains relatively stable, many diverse and complex linguistic factors continue to bring about subtle shifts in the meanings and/or connotations of even old, well-established words and phrases. One of the shifts that creates particular challenges to writers and translators alike is the manner in which gender is presented. The original NIV (1978) was published in a time when "a man" would naturally be understood, in many contexts, to be referring to a person, whether male or female. But most English speakers today tend to hear a distinctly male connotation in this word. In recognition of this change in English, this edition of the NIV, along with almost all other recent English translations, substitutes other expressions when the original text intends to refer generically to men and women equally. Thus, for instance, the NIV (1984) rendering of 1 Corinthians 8:3, "But the man who loves God is known by God" becomes in this edition "But whoever loves God is known by God." On the other hand, "man" and "mankind," as ways of denoting the human race, are still widely used. This edition of the NIV therefore continues to use these words, along with other expressions, in this way.

A related shift in English creates a greater challenge for modern translations: the move away from using the third-person masculine singular pronouns—"he/him/his"—to refer to men and women equally. This usage does persist at a low level in some forms of English, and this revision therefore occasionally uses these pronouns in a generic sense. But the tendency, recognized in day-to-day usage and confirmed by extensive research, is away from the generic use of "he," "him" and "his." In recognition of this shift in language and in an effort to translate into the "common" English that people are actually using, this revision of the NIV generally uses other constructions when the biblical text is plainly addressed to men and women equally. The reader will frequently encounter a "they," "them" or

“their” to express a generic singular idea. Thus, for instance, Mark 8:36 reads: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” This generic use of the “indefinite” or “singular” “they/them/their” has a venerable place in English idiom and has quickly become established as standard English, spoken and written, all over the world. Where an individual emphasis is deemed to be present, “anyone” or “everyone” or some other equivalent is generally used as the antecedent of such pronouns.

Sometimes the chapter and/or verse numbering in English translations of the Old Testament differs from that found in published Hebrew texts. This is particularly the case in the Psalms, where the traditional titles are often included in the Hebrew verse numbering. Such differences are indicated in the footnotes at the bottom of the page. In the New Testament, verse numbers that marked off portions of the traditional English text not supported by the best Greek manuscripts now appear in brackets, with a footnote indicating the text that has been omitted (see, for example, Matthew 17:[21]).

Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11, although long accorded virtually equal status with the rest of the Gospels in which they stand, have a very

questionable—and confused—standing in the textual history of the New Testament, as noted in the bracketed annotations with which they are set off. A different typeface has been chosen for these passages to indicate even more clearly their uncertain status.

Basic formatting of the text, such as lining the poetry, paragraphing (both prose and poetry), setting up of (administrative-like) lists, indenting letters and lengthy prayers within narratives and the insertion of sectional headings, has been the work of the committee. However, the choice between single-column and double-column formats has been left to the publishers. Also the issuing of “red-letter” editions is a publisher’s choice—one the committee does not endorse.

The committee has again been reminded that every human effort is flawed—including this revision of the NIV. We trust, however, that many will find in it an improved representation of the Word of God, through which they hear his call to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and to service in his kingdom. We offer this version of the Bible to him in whose name and for whose glory it has been made.

The Committee on Bible Translation
September 2010

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