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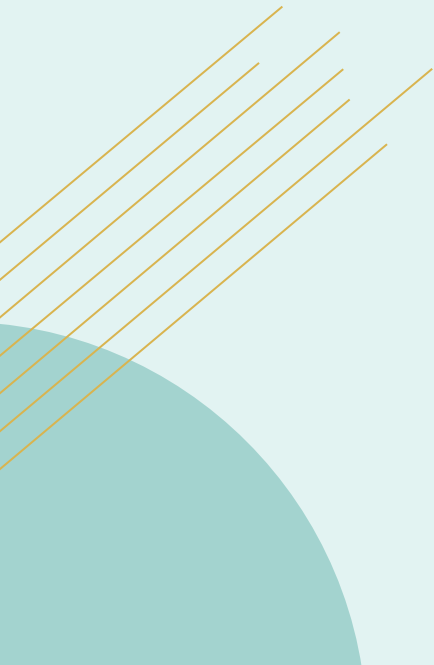

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The Filament Bible app illuminates and amplifies this Bible. By simply scanning Filament-enabled page numbers, it instantly delivers helpful, in-depth content centered on the passage you are reading. Study notes, devotionals, videos, profiles, interactive maps, and more enable you to get the most out of your time in God's Word.

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1. **Grab your device, and open the App Store or Google Play.**
2. **Search for "Filament Bible," and install the app.**
3. **Follow the prompts to learn how it works, and enjoy exploring!**

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A Note to Readers

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

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

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

The Publishers

A full introduction to the NLT can be found at tyndale.com/nlt/process.
A complete list of the translators can be found at tyndale.com/nlt/scholars.

How to Use the *Student Life Application Study Bible*

The Bible is a book for readers of all ages and life situations. This edition of the Bible comes with some extra content—features designed especially to help you get the most out of your reading. The Bible, which is God's Word to us, can certainly be read on its own, but we can all gain from some explanations of the Bible's original historical context, since it was different from our world today, and we can all use help seeing connections between different passages so that we understand the message of the Bible as a whole.

When reading, you'll see that the Bible text is in a larger font and has the most space on the page because it's more important than anything else. All the features included in this Bible fit around the Bible text and point back to it.

A Chronology of Bible Events & World Events

THE TIMELINE on the following pages gives a visual overview of events in biblical times as compared to other famous world events. This timeline gives the scope of biblical history from Creation to the resurrection of Christ and the beginnings of the church along with key events that were occurring in other parts of the world. The individual books of the Bible also contain timelines, focusing on what was occurring in and around the writing and events of each book.

2500 BC | 2400 BC | 2300 BC | 2200 BC | 2100 BC

Creation **undated**

Noah builds the ark **undated**

Abraham born **2166 BC**

Abraham enters Canaan **2091 BC**

2500 BC *Egyptians discover papyrus and ink for writing and build the first libraries; iron objects manufactured in the ancient Middle East*

2400 BC *Egyptians import gold from other parts of Africa*

2331 BC *Semitic chieftain, Sargon, conquers Sumer to become first "world conqueror"*

2300 BC *Horses domesticated in Egypt; chickens domesticated in Babylon; bows & arrows used in wars*

2100 BC *Glass made by the Mesopotamians; ziggurats (like the tower of Babel) built in Mesopotamia; earliest discovered drug, ethyl alcohol, used to alleviate pain*

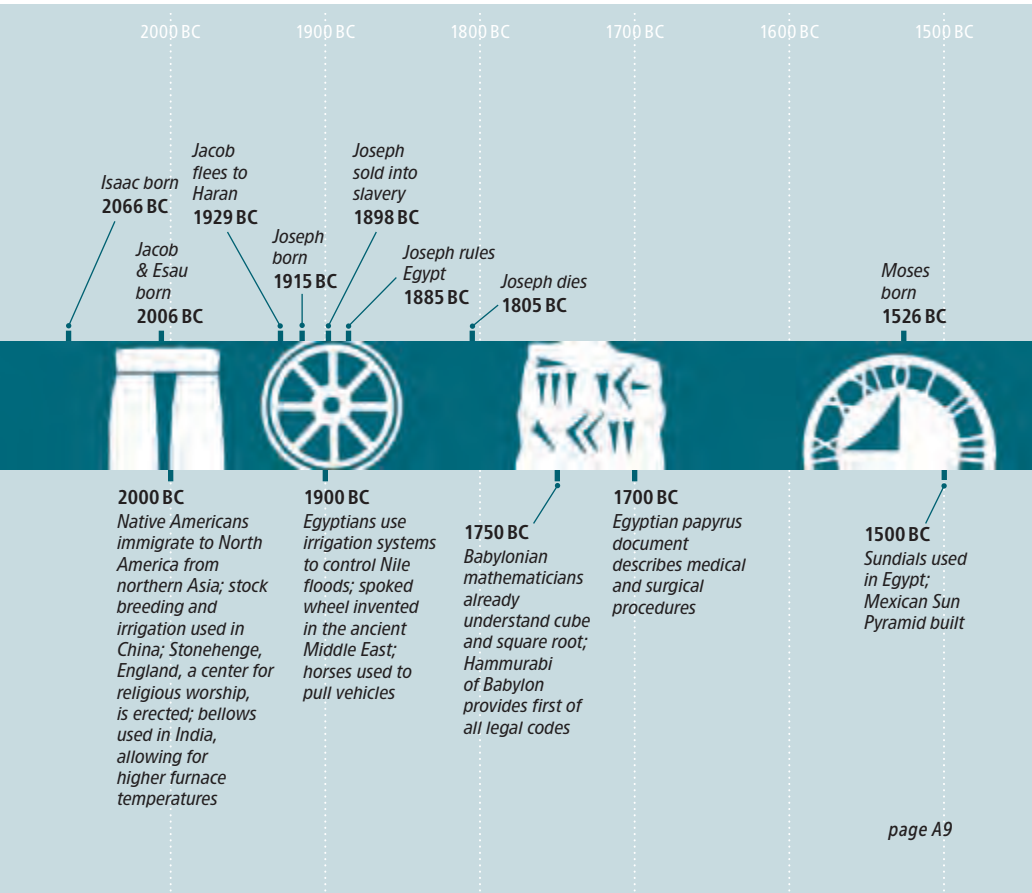
BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Just before each book of the Bible, you'll find a summary that lays out some basic facts about the book and key things to look for while reading. It can be helpful to read this before diving into a particular book, and you can also bookmark it as a reference, so that if you encounter a verse or passage that's particularly confusing, you can go back and remember the big picture.

The book introductions are divided into several parts:

Number. The big number in the top left identifies each book in order. There are 66 books in the Bible, so these numbers run from 1 through 66.

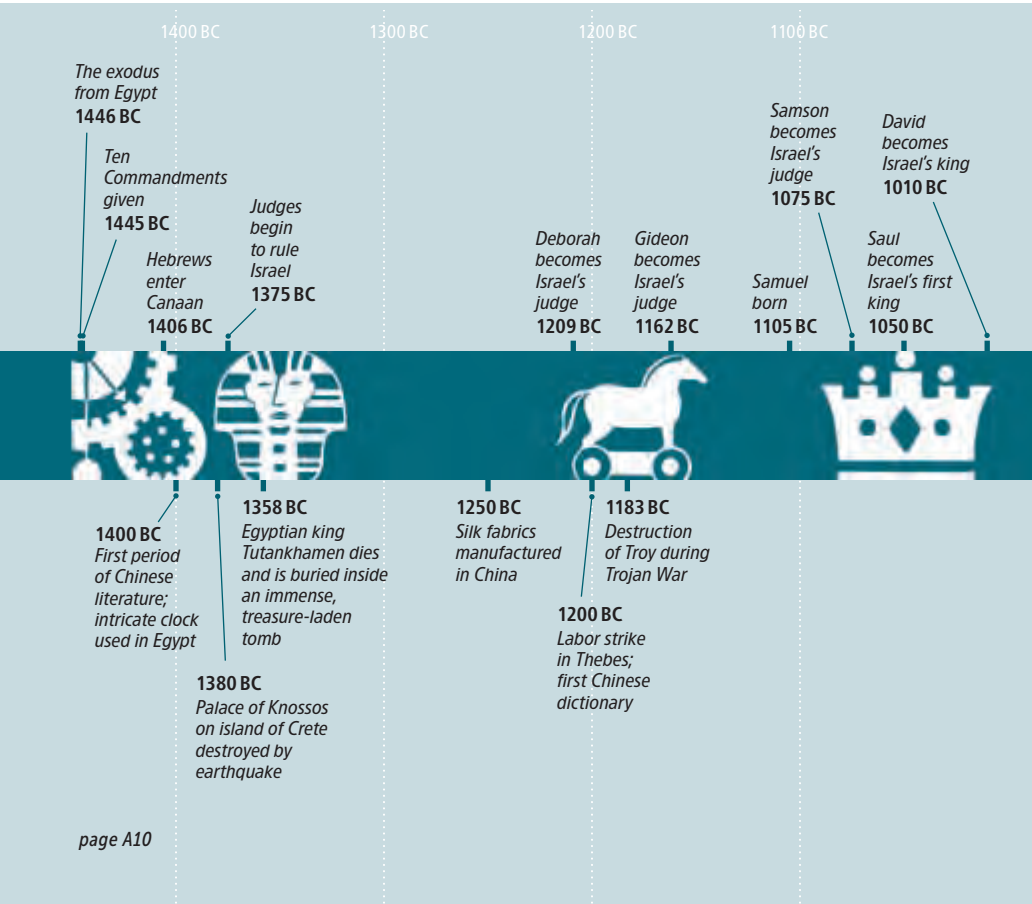
Overview. This is a summary of the book, showing how it fits into the story of the Bible as a whole and highlighting some key topics that come up in the book. At the end of this section are some questions to think about while reading to help you dive deeper into the book.



Category. On the left-hand side of the overview paragraphs, there are several colored dots and a category name identifying the section of the Bible that the book is part of. The dots show how many books are in that particular category, and the darker dots show where each book fits into the category. For example, the book of Genesis is the first of the Books of Moses, so only one out of five dots is darkened.

Different colors are used in the design of each category, so you can quickly tell when a category changes. For example, orange is the main color for the books of Israel's History (Joshua through Esther), and green is the main color for the books of Poetry & Wisdom (Job through Song of Songs).

Timeline. Across the bottom of most of the book introductions, a timeline shows the major events related to that book and the dates they occurred. It also places each book in the context of other biblical events happening around the same time. You can refer back to the general timeline below ("A Chronology of Bible Events and World Events") to see the big picture of how all these pieces fit together. Some of the dates on these timelines are estimates based on the best research we have available, and they are meant to be more of a general guide than a firm position on historical debates. Certain books don't have a timeline because they're not really based on or closely connected to historical events (Proverbs, for example).

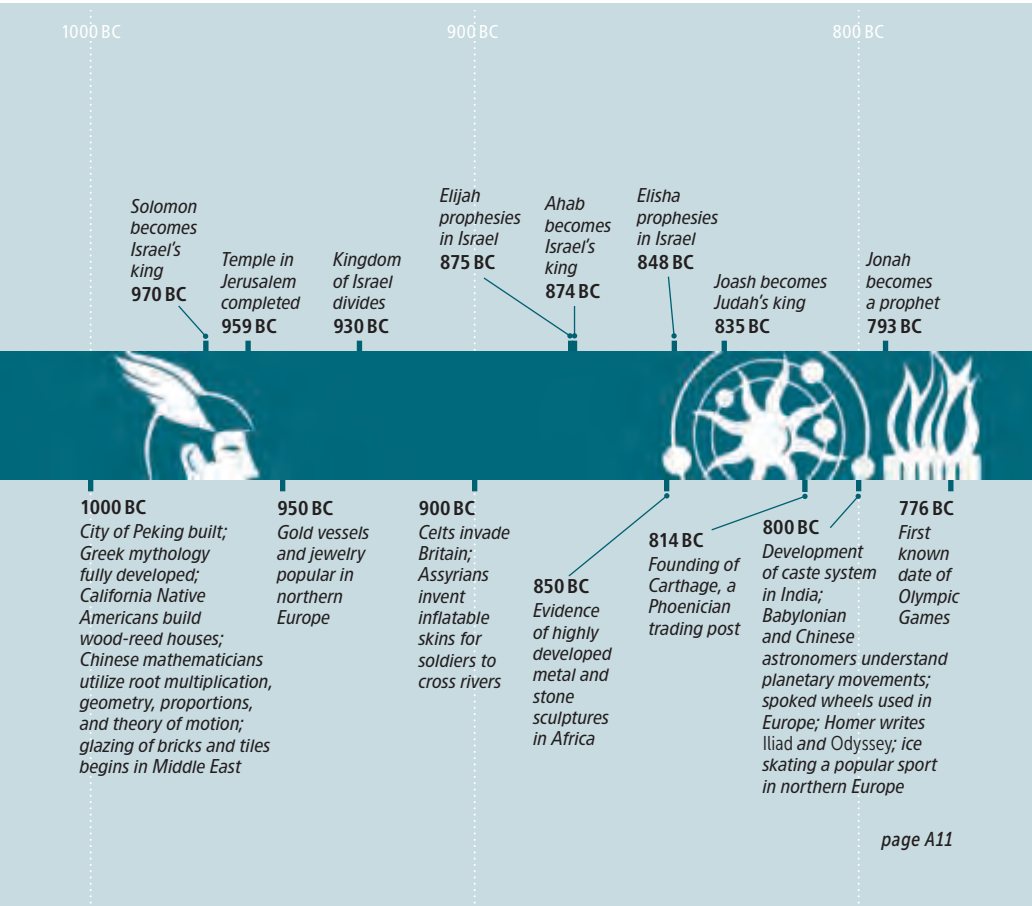


Stats. This is a list of basic facts about the book so you can quickly see the information you need to know.

At a Glance. This provides a general outline of the book that shows its overall structure and how its parts fit together. A brief summary describes what each section is about.

Key Points. This section gives the main themes of the book and explains their significance both within the book and for us today.

Map. Most books have a map identifying the key places found in the book and clarifying the book's setting within a geographical framework. Some books don't have one of these maps because the geographical setting isn't mentioned or isn't important for our understanding of the book (Ecclesiastes, for example).

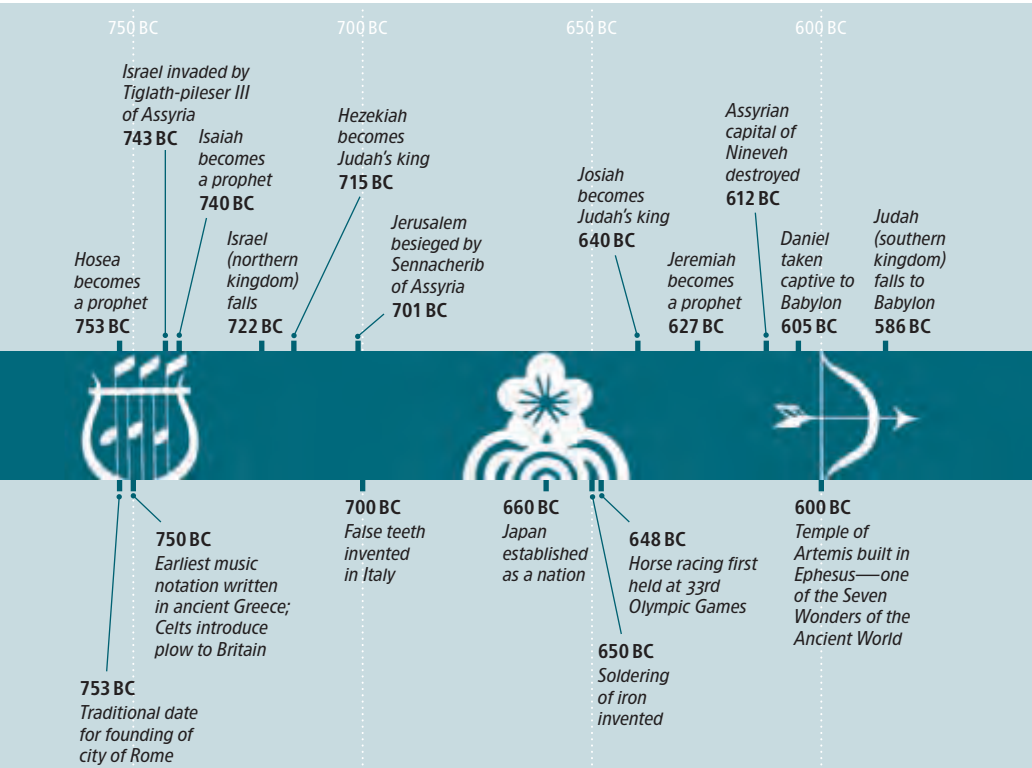


NOTES

Below the Bible text, a colored section runs across the bottom of most pages. The notes in this section relate to particular verses or passages of the Bible text on that page or nearby. These notes are designed to help you understand the culture, history, and background of the Bible as well as why the verse or passage is important for us today. You can check out the notes alongside your reading of the Bible or look for notes on a particular topic by searching in the Master Index (starting on page 1601).

BIG STORY NOTES

From time to time, you'll come across a note with a different colored background in the section at the bottom of the page. These notes ask questions to help you connect with the Bible personally and put the lessons of the Bible into practice. Each one has a small icon to the left, beside the note reference, and corresponds to a small circle behind a verse number somewhere on that page. Each of the icons belongs to one of the 30 turning points in The Bible's Big Story (for more on this feature, see page 1653), and the end of the note directs you to the next passage connected to that turning point. You can either follow these notes from one passage to the next or turn to the map of all the icons in the back of the Bible to see how, together, these turning points tell the Bible's Big Story.

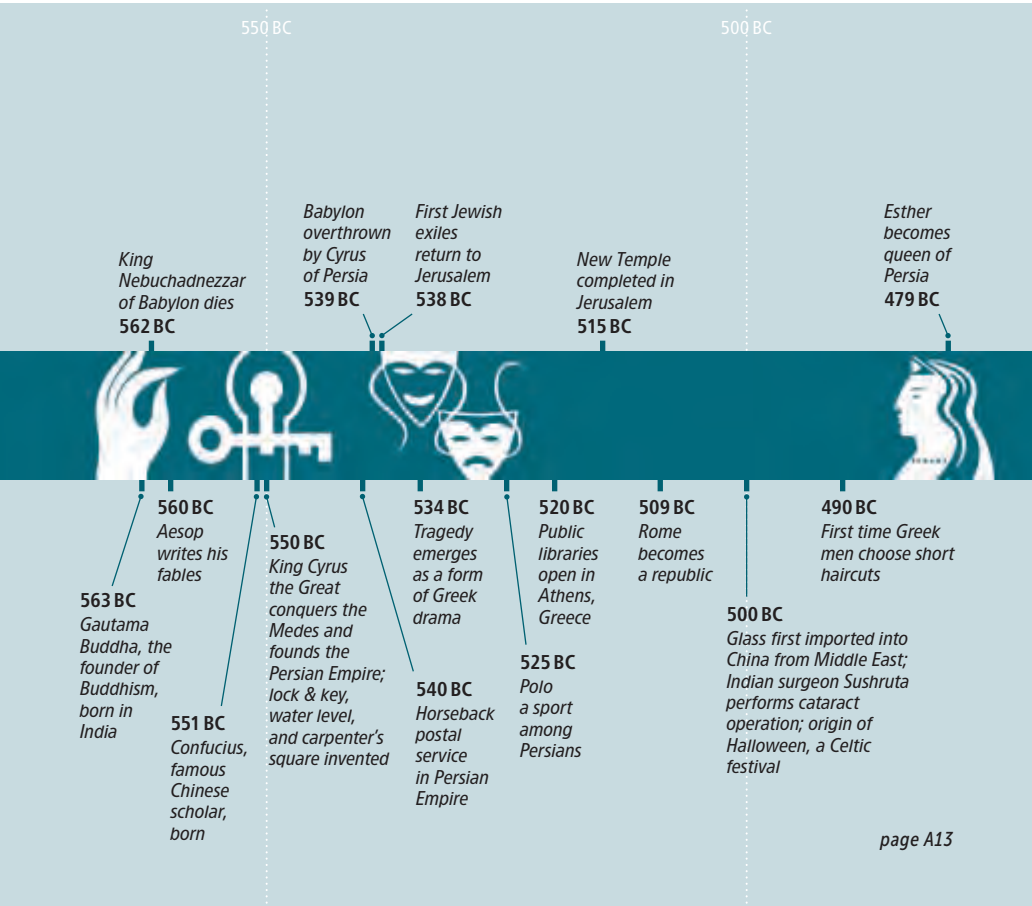


VISUAL NOTES

Some notes come with pictures or illustrations to help visualize what a passage is talking about. A complete list of the visual notes is on page 1651.

BIG QUESTIONS

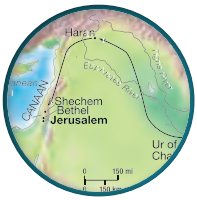
Scattered throughout this Bible are features in a column on the side of the page that highlight important questions related to Christian beliefs and what it means to live as a Christian. These are located near passages that either inspire these kinds of questions or are key to answering them. A complete list of the Big Questions is on page 1643.



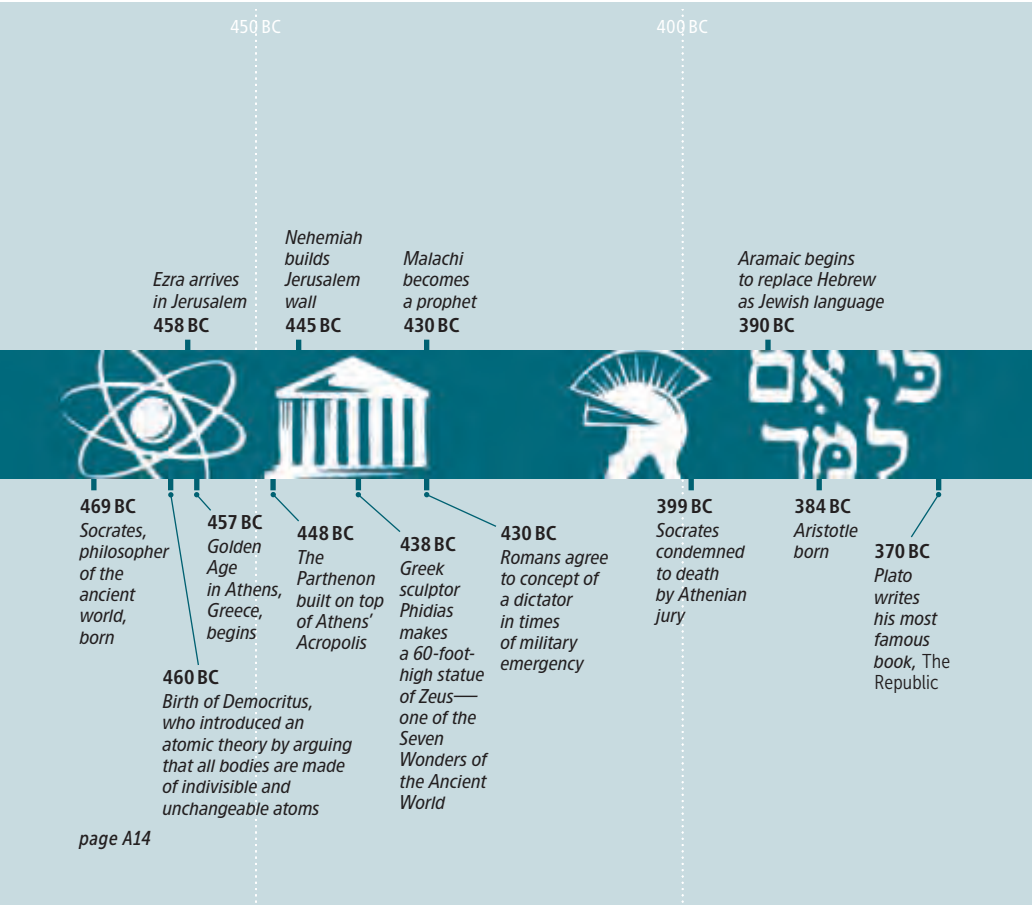
PERSONALITY PROFILES

This Bible includes profiles of many biblical figures, helping you get to know the people whose names come up a lot. Each profile is written in the form of an interview, highlighting key parts of a person's story and imagining what they would say if they could speak to us directly. The profiles also offer some basic facts about the person, showing at a glance what we most need to know, a key verse or two about their life, and a few other biblical passages that tell their story. Sometimes people show up in the Bible to give us a positive example, and sometimes they help us see what *not* to do, but mostly these people show us what God is like and how he reaches out to humans like us. A complete list of the personality profiles is on page 1649.

MAPS



There are lots of maps located throughout this Bible to represent the places Scripture talks about. Many individual books of the Bible have a map at the beginning, right after the introduction, to give geographical context for that book as a whole. There are also maps embedded in the notes section to show connections between events or clarify what a particular passage is talking about. A complete list of the maps is on page 1647.

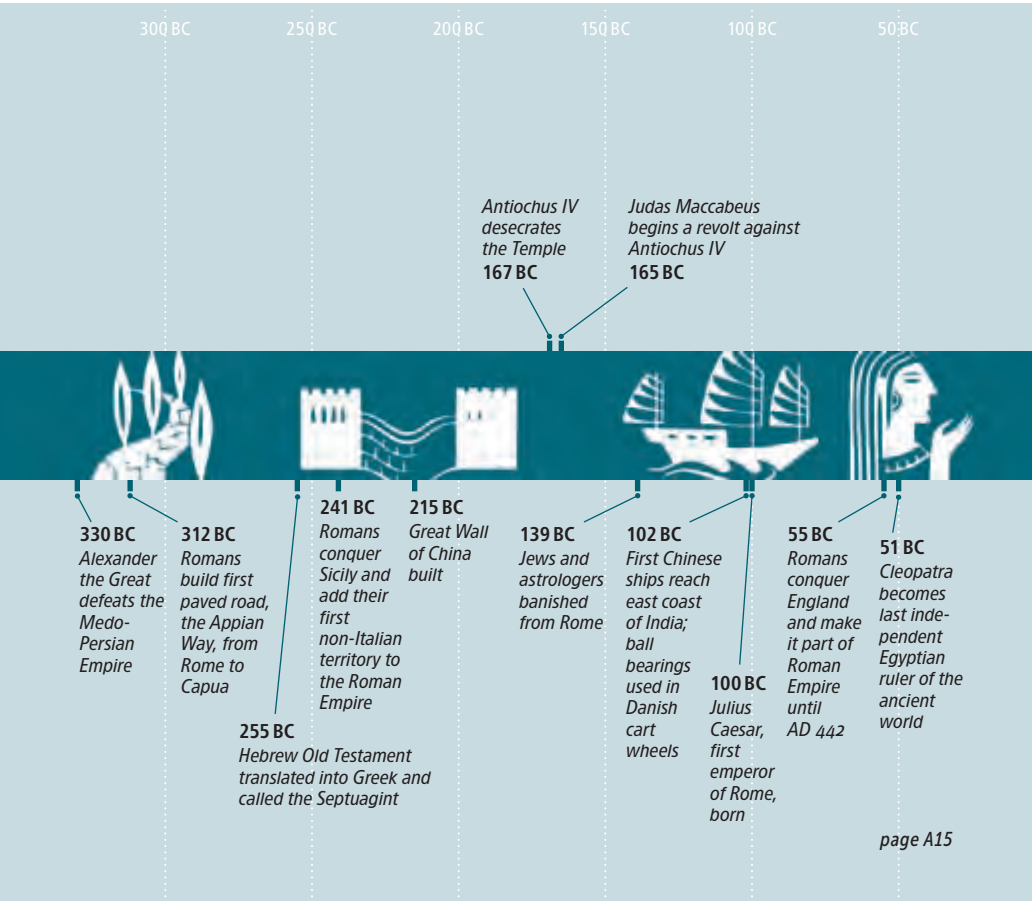


CHARTS AND INFOGRAPHICS

This Bible also includes lots of charts, diagrams, and infographics. Each of these provides a visual summary of a topic that spans a passage or the whole Bible. These can help break down an idea or show how important a certain theme is. They can also help explain the connection between verses or clarify something that might otherwise be overlooked, like the relationships between people on a family tree, for example. A complete list of the charts and infographics is on page 1645.

WHERE TO FIND IT

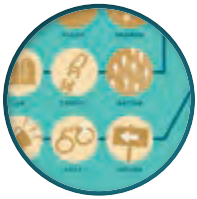
In case you want to read a particular story or passage in the Bible but can't remember where it is, the feature starting on page 1597 lists some of the Bible passages that have become popular stories or are frequently mentioned in sermons.



page A15

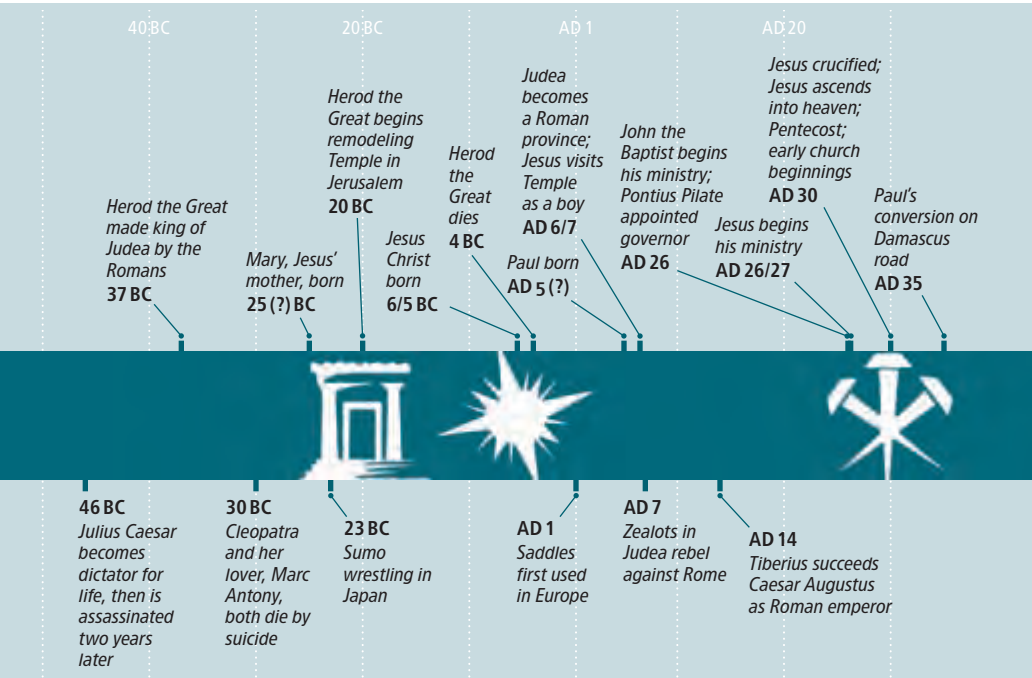
MASTER INDEX

To find help related to a particular topic, you can look in the Master Index (page 1601). This index is organized around words or phrases that might come up in conversations with friends or while reading the Bible. It's designed to quickly connect you to notes, charts, maps, profiles, or Big Question articles that can shed light on these topics. The topics are arranged alphabetically to help you find them easily.



THE BIBLE'S BIG STORY

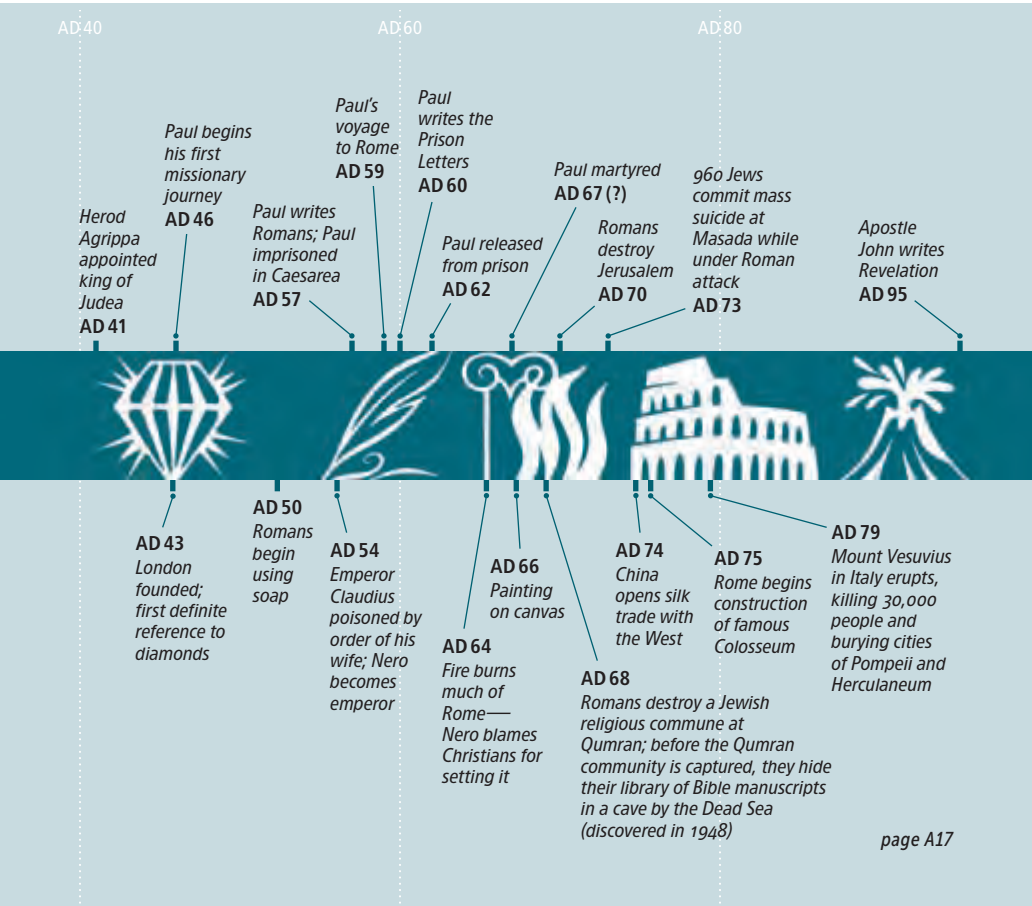
This feature shows the big picture of the Bible. You can use it to discover how the parts of the Bible fit together to tell one complete story—the story of God's relationship with people. It can also help you understand what this amazing story means for your life.



The Bible's Big Story is organized around 30 *turning points*—key moments in the story of God and people—each represented by a different icon (see the feature starting on page 1653). You can explore the 30 turning points by looking up the verses listed or by hunting for the icons that show up next to the Big Story notes spread throughout the Bible.

There are also questions associated with the turning points that are designed to help you think through the significance of each of these pieces of God's story. These are great questions to discuss with a friend or a small group or to journal about. The final question for each turning point offers an invitation to respond in some way, either through a creative project or by doing something practical.

If you don't know where to start reading the Bible, this feature can give you a road map. Otherwise, just turn the page and dive in!



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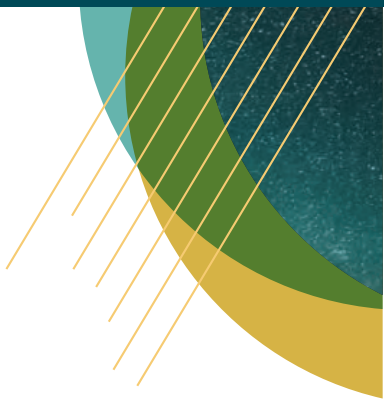
The word of God
is alive and powerful. It is sharper
than the sharpest two-edged sword,
cutting between soul and spirit,
between joint and marrow.
It exposes our innermost
thoughts and desires.
Hebrews 4:12

OLD TESTAMENT

01



Genesis

BOOKS OF MOSES

THE BIBLE TELLS the story of the world. It's an epic narrative with everything we want in a good story: memorable characters, terrible disasters, dramatic rescues, unexpected heroes, surprising twists, and a satisfying ending. The Bible also includes beautiful songs, wise sayings, and promises of things to come. Through all this, it shows us God—the all-powerful Creator and King over everything—who wants to be in relationship with us, his creation, and is willing to pay the ultimate price to fix what's broken.

When you hear a story, it's best to hear it from the very beginning. The same principle applies to reading the Bible. Genesis is the book of beginnings. In it we see the creation of the universe, the way the world became broken, the beginning of God's rescue plan, and the birth of the people of Israel.

In Genesis we also see God start to introduce himself. Unlike everything else, God didn't have a beginning. He has always existed. Genesis 1 and 2 showcase his creativity and power, while Genesis 3 reveals his perfect goodness and his response when things go wrong. Through the up-and-down saga of the first humans and their descendants, the rest of the book shows us God's incredible love for his people even when they do what's wrong.

As you read Genesis, what other beginnings do you see? How do they enlarge your view of God?

Timeline

(undated)
Creation

(undated)
Noah

2166 BC
Abram is born

2091 BC
Abram moves to Canaan

2066 BC
Isaac is born

At a Glance

A.	**THE STORY OF CREATION** (1:1–2:4)	God created light and separated day from night. He created the sky, seas, and land. He created the plants, animals, fish, and birds. And he created human beings in his own image.
B.	**THE STORY OF ADAM** (2:4–5:32)	When Adam and Eve were created by God, they were without sin. But they became sinful when they disobeyed God. Through Adam and Eve we learn about how sin entered the world.
C.	**THE STORY OF NOAH** (6:1–11:32)	The Flood wiped out the wickedness on earth, but Noah was spared because he obeyed God by building a large boat. God promised to spare life on earth, no matter how bad things get.
D.	**THE STORY OF ABRAHAM** (12:1–25:18)	God called Abraham to leave his home and move to a new place. God promised that he would save the world by building a great nation from Abraham's descendants, even though Abraham didn't yet have any sons. Abraham's faith made him the father of the family of God's people on earth.
E.	**THE STORY OF ISAAC** (25:19–28:9)	Abraham's family grew through his son Isaac, who had two sons of his own: Jacob and Esau.
F.	**THE STORY OF JACOB** (28:10–36:43)	Despite the fact that Jacob's life was filled with trickery and struggle, God was faithful to his promise and grew Abraham's family through Jacob and his twelve sons.
G.	**THE STORY OF JOSEPH** (37:1–50:26)	Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and unjustly thrown into prison by his master. Later, Joseph saved his family, and all of Abraham's descendants moved to Egypt to escape a famine.

Stats

PURPOSE
To give an account of God's creation of the world and his desire to restore this creation after people messed it up

AUTHOR
Moses

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE
The people of Israel

DATE WRITTEN
1450–1410 BC

SETTING
The region currently known as the Middle East

KEY PEOPLE
Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph

Key Points

THEME	EXPLANATION
Beginnings	Genesis introduces God as the creator of all that exists, from planets to plants to people. All people were created in God's own image and were meant to live in his presence.
Disobedience	When people choose to go their own way instead of obeying God, that is called *sin*, and it separates them from God. Adam and Eve learned this the hard way. Only God can restore what is broken when we sin.
Covenants	God has promised to protect and provide for his people. Throughout the Bible, he makes specific promises known as *covenants,* which are binding agreements that form permanent relationships between two sides. God has made covenants with his people as guarantees of what they can expect from him and what he expects from them in return.

2006 BC
Jacob & Esau are born

1929 BC
Jacob flees to Haran

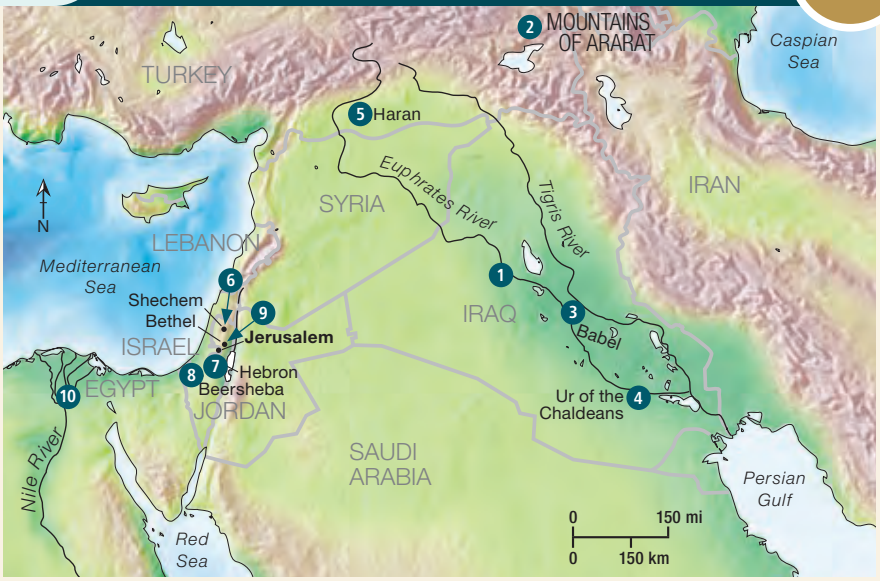
1915 BC
Joseph is born

1898 BC
Joseph is sold into slavery

1885 BC
Joseph begins ruling Egypt

1805 BC
Joseph dies

KEY PLACES IN GENESIS



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.

1 GARDEN OF EDEN • When God created Adam and Eve, he placed them in the Garden of Eden. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly where Eden was located, except for a few clues that are hard to decipher in Genesis 2:10-14.

2 MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT • Noah's boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:4), located in modern-day Turkey. From here his sons and their descendants spread out to build new nations.

3 BABEL • The tower of Babel was built in the fertile area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, located in modern-day Iraq (Genesis 11:8-9).

4 UR OF THE CHALDEANS • Abram, a descendant of Shem and the father of the Hebrew nation, was born in this great city (Genesis 11:27-28).

5 HARAN • Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot left Ur and, following the Fertile Crescent, the area around the Euphrates River, headed toward the land of Canaan. Along the way, they settled in the village of Haran for a while (Genesis 11:31).

6 SHECHEM • God urged Abram to leave Haran and go to a place where he would become the father of a great nation (Genesis 12:1-2). So Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled to the land of Canaan and settled near a city called Shechem (Genesis 12:5-6).

7 HEBRON • Abram moved on to Hebron, where he put down his deepest roots (Genesis 13:18). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived and were buried here.

8 BEERSHEBA • The well at Beersheba was a source of conflict between Abraham and King Abimelech and later became a sign of the oath that they swore here (Genesis 21:31). Years later, as Isaac was moving from place to place, God appeared to him here and passed on to him the covenant he had made with his father, Abraham (Genesis 26:23-25).

9 BETHEL • After deceiving his brother, Jacob left Beersheba and fled to Haran. Along the way, God revealed himself to Jacob in a dream at Bethel and passed on to him the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 28:10-22). Jacob lived in Haran, worked for Laban, and married Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29:1-30). After a tense meeting with his brother, Esau, Jacob returned to Bethel (Genesis 35:1-3).

10 EGYPT • Jacob had twelve sons, including Joseph, who was his favorite. Joseph's ten older brothers grew jealous, until one day they sold him to Ishmaelite traders going to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph rose from being an Egyptian slave to being Pharaoh's right-hand man and saving Egypt from famine. His entire family moved from Canaan to Egypt and settled here (Genesis 46:3-7).

The Account of Creation

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

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

1:1–2:4 How does your view of the world around you change when you think about how God personally made everything? *See Leviticus 25:1-7 for the next passage about Creation.*
See page 1653 for The Bible's Big Story.

1:1-31 Creator God The Creation story teaches us that God made everything there is. It shows us that God is creative and that, as the Creator, he is distinct from his creation. He is eternal and in control of the world. The Bible doesn't explain

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

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

9Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky
flow together into one place, so dry ground
may appear." And that is what happened.
10God called the dry ground "land" and the
waters "seas." And God saw that it was good.
11Then God said, "Let the land sprout with
vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing
plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing
fruit. These seeds will then produce the
kinds of plants and trees from which they
came." And that is what happened. 12The
land produced vegetation—all sorts of
seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-
bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants
and trees of the same kind. And God saw
that it was good.
13And evening passed and morning came,
marking the third day.

14Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to
separate the day from the night. Let them be
signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.
15Let these lights in the sky shine down
on the earth." And that is what happened.
16God made two great lights—the larger
one to govern the day, and the smaller one
to govern the night. He also made the stars.
17God set these lights in the sky to light the
earth, 18to govern the day and night, and to
separate the light from the darkness. And
God saw that it was good.
19And evening passed and morning came,
marking the fourth day.

20Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with
fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with
birds of every kind." 21So God created great
sea creatures and every living thing that
scurries and swarms in the water, and every
sort of bird—each producing offspring
of the same kind. And God saw that it was
good. 22Then God blessed them, saying, "Be
fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas,
and let the birds multiply on the earth."
23And evening passed and morning came,
marking the fifth day.

24Then God said, "Let the earth produce every
sort of animal, each producing offspring of
the same kind—livestock, small animals
that scurry along the ground, and wild
animals." And that is what happened. 25God
made all sorts of wild animals, livestock,
and small animals, each able to produce
offspring of the same kind. And God saw
that it was good.
26Then God said, "Let us make human
beings* in our image, to be like us. They will
reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in
the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the
earth,* and the small animals that scurry
along the ground."

1:26a Or *man;* Hebrew reads *adam.* **1:26b** As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth.*

exactly how God made the world, but it does show us one supreme, powerful God creating the earth out of his great love and giving people a special place in it.

1:2 The Order of Creation The statement "the earth was formless and empty" provides the setting for the Creation narrative that follows. During the second and third days of Creation, God gave *form* to the universe; during the next three days, he *filled* the earth with living things. The image of the Spirit of God hovering over the surface of the waters brings to mind a mother bird caring for and protecting her young (see Deuteronomy 32:11-12; Isaiah 31:5). God's Spirit was actively involved in the creation of the world, and God's care and protection for the world are still active through the Holy Spirit today.

1:26-27 How can you recognize the image of God in the people around you today? *See 1 Samuel 16:7 for the next passage about Humans. See page 1653 for The Bible's Big Story.*

1:26 God in Plural Form Why does God use the plural form—"Let *us* make human beings in *our* image"? One view is that this is a reference to the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit, all of whom are one and indivisible. Another view is that the plural wording is used to denote majesty, since kings and queens have traditionally used the plural form when referring to themselves. Either way, it's God who created humans in his image, and God has clearly revealed himself to us as the Trinity throughout the whole of Scripture. From Job 33:4, we know that God's Spirit is active when God creates. From Colossians 1:16, we know that Christ, God's Son, was at work in Creation. (For more on the Trinity, see page 1123.)

1:26 The Image of God What does it mean that God chose to make people in his image? It's not that we look like God in a physical sense, because God is spirit (John 4:24). Instead, we are reflections of God's authority over creation. He gave us the job of caring for and ruling over creation as his representatives, and we show his character to the world when we practice love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness toward others. This is what God has created us to do.

Human worth isn't defined by possessions, achievements,

DAYS OF CREATION

DAY 1: LIGHT is created and separated from darkness

DAY 2: SKY AND WATER separated

DAY 3: LAND AND SEA distinguished; VEGETATION

DAY 4: SUN, MOON, AND STARS preside over the day and the night; to mark off seasons, days, and years

DAY 5: FISH AND BIRDS fill the waters and the sky

DAY 6: ANIMALS fill the earth; MAN AND WOMAN care for the earth and commune with God

DAY 7: GOD RESTED and blessed the seventh day

27 So God created human beings* in his own
image.
In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

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

29Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." And that is what happened.

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

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

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

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

The Man and Woman in Eden

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

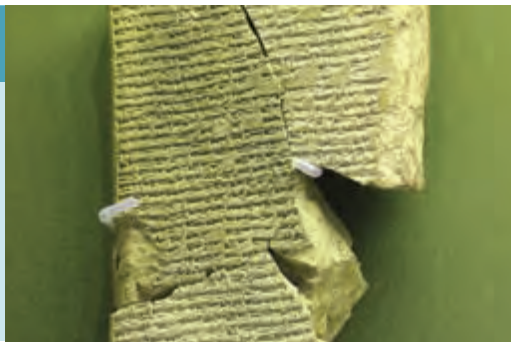
8Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. 9The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge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

10A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. 11The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. 12The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are

1:27 Or *the man;* Hebrew reads *ha-adam.* **2:2** Or *ceased;* also in 2:3. **2:6** Or *mist.*

Creation Stories

Several ancient civilizations wrote down their own accounts of how they thought the world was created. For example, this tablet from the 600s BC records the Enuma Elish, a Sumerian story that would have been well known when Genesis was written. In contrast to stories from the surrounding cultures, Israel's creation story shows that God is the one, all-powerful God, not one of many gods, and his creation of humanity was an act of love, not a matter of convenience. God created humans to rule his creation and have a relationship with him, not to do the hard work that he didn't want to do.



attractiveness, or popularity. Instead, it's based on knowing that God created us in his likeness. Mistreating ourselves or other people is mistreating what God has made. Because we are like God, we are called to treat all people with dignity and respect. Knowing that you're a representative of God can empower you to love others as God loves them.

1:27 Men and Women God made both men and women in his own image, neither more or less than the other. From the beginning, the Bible describes man and woman as the pinnacle of God's creation. Neither gender is exalted over the other, and neither is devalued.

2:2-3 Rest God demonstrated that rest is appropriate and right. Jesus practiced this principle when he regularly withdrew to the wilderness to pray (see Luke 5:16). Times of rest refresh us, help us focus on what's important, and remind us that the world doesn't run on our efforts.

also found there. 13The second branch, called the
Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush.
14The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east
of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called
the Euphrates.

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

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

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

23"At last!" the man exclaimed.

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

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

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

2:19 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. **2:21** Or *took a part of the man's side.*

2:15-17 Two Trees Why would God place a tree in the Garden and then forbid Adam to eat from it? God wanted Adam to obey him, but he gave Adam the freedom to choose whether or not he would. Without this freedom, Adam would have been like a puppet, and his obedience would have been hollow. The two trees provided an exercise in choice, with rewards for choosing to obey God and sad consequences for choosing to disobey him. Interestingly, the tree of life again appears in Revelation 22 in a prophecy about people enjoying eternal life with God after the consequences of sin have been dealt with.

2:18-24 Marriage God could have made woman from the dust of the ground, as he made man. Instead, however, he chose to make her from the man's flesh and bone. In so doing, he illustrated that in marriage man and woman are symbolically one flesh. Throughout the Bible, God treats this special partnership seriously. The goal in marriage should be more than friendship; it should be oneness. If you are planning to get married one day, are you willing to keep the commitment that makes the two of you one? What helpful habits can you begin to develop now that will help you honor that commitment?

How do science and the Bible relate?

- The purpose of the Bible is to reveal to people what God is like. Through the Bible, God explains his character and nature and shows us how we can relate to him. The purpose of science is to understand the world by analyzing what we can observe. Anything unobservable is outside of what science is trying to explain.
- **Science and the Bible can seem to come into conflict when we look for spiritual answers from science or scientific answers in the Bible.**
- What does this mean for how we understand where humans come from? As much as we'd like for the Bible to tell us every little detail about how things came to be, it doesn't—and that's because it has a different goal. What the Bible *does* tell us, first and foremost, is that human beings, like everything else in the universe, were created by God. Humans were made in God's image, with a specific purpose and intention. **Scientific investigation can help us understand what creation is like, but the Bible tells us who was behind it all.**
- Unfortunately, there are ways to approach science that make it seem like it could rule out the existence of God. For example, sometimes people say that something can't be real or true if it doesn't have a scientific explanation. That belief goes against Christianity, because it rejects God. But this isn't what science really is. There are many faithful Christians exploring the world through science who see no conflict with the belief that God created the world.
- The creation of the world is mysterious; it's okay that neither the Bible nor science can tell us everything there is to know about it. What's most important is that we continue to explore. God wants us to ask questions about this world that he created, seeking to understand how it works.
- God also wants us to keep trying to understand the Bible in the way he intends for us to read it—as his Word, telling us what we need to know in order to have faith in him.
- Never be afraid to ask tough questions about the Bible or the Christian faith. But also consider how you're asking your questions. Are they the kinds of questions the Bible is trying to answer? Meanwhile, do the same thing with science—ask the right kinds of questions.

The Man and Woman Sin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.
You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.
15 And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike* your head,
and you will strike his heel."

16Then he said to the woman,

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

17And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.
All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.
18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
though you will eat of its grains.
19 By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.

3:8 Or *Adam,* and so throughout the chapter. **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.*

3:1-24 What's something you've done that's hurt someone else? How do you think God felt about it? *See Romans 3:9-23 for the next passage about the Fall. See page 1653 for The Bible's Big Story.*

3:1-6 Temptation Becoming like God wasn't a completely wrong desire, but Adam and Eve went about it the wrong way, by ignoring what God had clearly told them. Satan made Eve forget all that God had given her and, instead, focus on what God had forbidden. He implied that God was strict, stingy, and selfish for not wanting Eve to share his knowledge of good and evil. Sometimes we have the illusion that freedom is being able to do anything we want, whenever and however we want to do it. But when God tells us to do things a certain way, it's to help us lead a richer, fuller life. Like Adam and Eve, we fall into trouble when we focus on what God forbids rather than on who he really is.

Being tempted isn't a sin—even Jesus was tempted! But he didn't sin (Hebrews 4:14-15). To resist temptation, like Jesus, we can pray for strength, remind ourselves of God's Word, and ask for help from God's people. Sometimes we need to run, even literally, from the things that tempt us. We can't always prevent temptation, but there is always a way to escape from giving in to it (1 Corinthians 10:13). Every time we resist temptation and choose to follow God, we become more like Jesus.

3:7 Sin Creates a Barrier After Adam and Eve sinned, their shame led them to hide from God. A guilty conscience is a warning signal God has placed inside us to let us know when we've done something wrong. We, like Adam and Eve, often hide and cover up things we don't want other people, or God, to know about. This can hurt our relationships with other people, and we move away from God when we aren't honest with him about what's really going on. Shutting off guilty feelings without dealing with what we've done would be like taking the batteries out of a fire alarm while ignoring the flames on the stove. Pay attention when you have guilty feelings: Ask for God's forgiveness and then change your way of acting. God, through Jesus Christ, has opened the way for us to renew our relationship with him. He actively offers us his unconditional love. Even when our natural response is to turn away in shame, understanding that he loves us regardless of what we've done can help remove the barrier.

3:15 Spoiler Alert The phrase *you will strike his heel* refers to Satan's repeated attempts to defeat Jesus during his life on earth. "He will strike your head" foreshadows Satan's defeat through Jesus' death and resurrection. A blow to the heel isn't

For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return."

Paradise Lost: God's Judgment

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

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

Cain and Abel

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

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. 3When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. 4Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, 5but 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? 7You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

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

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

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."*

Adam & Eve

SNAPSHOT:

- The first human male and female
- Lived in a perfect world and enjoyed a close relationship with God
- Broke their close relationship with God and messed up the perfect order of the world when they chose to ignore what God had told them
- Where: The Garden of Eden
- When: The beginning (date unknown)

What was life like before the Fall?

Imagine having no bad memories, no mistakes to be embarrassed about, no sadness or fear. That's what it used to be like. We had a perfect world. We never fought, and all our needs were taken care of. We had the meaningful and enjoyable work of caring for the garden and keeping track of the animals. We hung out with God regularly, and we didn't have any reason to be ashamed when we were with him.

Why did things change?

We chose to do the one thing God had told us not to do. There was just *one* tree that was off-limits, and we believed a lie instead of trusting God's goodness toward us and following his instructions. That was a moment of rebellion that changed everything—we shattered God's perfect creation and our close relationship with him. Everyone born since has had to live with the consequences of a world out of touch with its creator.

What did you learn about God through your experience?

The very day we messed up the world, God already had a plan in motion to overcome the effects of evil and death. The rest of the Bible shows how that plan unfolds, ultimately leading to God's coming to earth in the person of Jesus in order to restore creation and the relationship between him and us—everything that we broke through sin. God's plan for a perfect world couldn't be derailed: He's in the process of making everything right again.

KEY VERSE:

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." (Romans 5:12)

Adam and Eve's story is told in Genesis 1:26–5:5. They are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1; Luke 3:38; Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49; and 1 Timothy 2:13-14.

deadly, but a blow to the head is. The final victory is God's. Even in the story of how things went wrong in the world, God reveals his plan to defeat Satan and save the world through Jesus Christ.

4:3-7 A Missed Second Chance The Bible doesn't say why God didn't accept Cain's sacrifice, but maybe Cain's attitude wasn't right. God sees our motives whenever we offer him something (see Proverbs 21:27). After Cain's sacrifice was rejected, God gave him the chance to try again. God even encouraged him to change! But Cain refused, and the rest of his life is a startling example of what happens to those who refuse to admit their mistakes. How do you react when someone suggests you've done something wrong? Do you move to correct the mistake or deny that you need to correct it?

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

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

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

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

The Descendants of Cain

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

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

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.
I have killed a man who attacked me,
a young man who wounded me.
24 If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,
then the one who kills me will be
punished seventy-seven times!"

The Birth of Seth

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

The Descendants of Adam

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

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

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

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

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

15When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. 16After the birth of Jared,

4:13 Or *My sin.* **4:16** *Nod* means "wandering." **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.

4:14-17 Cain's Family We've heard about only four people so far—Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel. So we might have some questions: Why was Cain worried about being killed by others, and where did his wife come from?

Adam and Eve probably had a lot of other children (see 5:4); they'd been told to "fill the earth" (1:28). The wife Cain chose may have been one of his sisters or a niece. Cain's guilt and fear over killing his brother were heavy, and it makes sense that he'd be afraid of repercussions from his family. If he was capable of killing, so were they. Vengeance would have been the likely outcome. Instead, God protected Cain, even if he didn't deserve it.

4:19-26 Things Get Worse Unfortunately, when left to ourselves, we tend to get worse instead of better. Adam and Eve may have thought their disobedience (eating a "harmless" piece of fruit) wasn't so bad, but notice how sin quickly got worse over the generations. Disobedience blossomed into outright murder with Cain. Then another killing occurred, presumably in self-defense. Violence was on the rise. Two distinct groups were emerging: those who showed indifference to sin and evil, and those who worshiped the Lord.

5:1-32 Why Genealogies? The Bible contains several lists of ancestors, called *genealogies*. They aren't intended to be exhaustive and may include only famous people or the heads of families. The Hebrew word translated "became the father of"

Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 17Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.
18When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. 19After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 20Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.
21When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. 22After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 23Enoch lived 365 years, 24walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.
25When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. 26After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 27Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.
28When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. 29Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." 30After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 31Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.
32After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5:29 *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort."

may refer to a parent-child relationship, but it could also signal a link to a more distant descendant. That's why the genealogies are sometimes different.

Why are genealogies included in the Bible? Writing was primitive or nonexistent for many years in many places, so the Hebrew people passed on their beliefs through spoken stories. Genealogies gave an outline to help people remember the stories. Genealogies also helped people understand how they were connected to the stories, since any Israelite would have been related to the people in the stories somehow. In the New Testament, genealogies were included to show the fulfillment of God's promise that the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be a descendant of Abraham. One other thing: Genealogies remind us that God works through real people, in real families. They may be just names to us, but God knew these people personally, just as he knows you.

5:21-24 Enoch Hebrews 11:5 explains what Genesis 5:24 means: Enoch was taken directly to heaven without seeing death. He lived by faith, and God rewarded him for it.

5:25-27 Extra Long Lives How did these people live so long? We don't really know. Some people think that the ages listed here were lengths of family dynasties rather than ages of individuals. Those who think these were actual ages have other ideas: Maybe humans were genetically purer in this early time period with less disease to shorten life spans, or maybe God gave people longer lives so they would have time to "fill the earth" (1:28).

Noah

SNAPSHOT:

- Built an ark for his family and pairs of every kind of animal
- Obeyed God despite being the only follower of God in his generation
- Showed a lot of faith by acting according to what God told him would happen
- Is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11
- Where: Somewhere outside the Garden of Eden
- When: The Flood (date unknown)

Why did you build a boat in the middle of dry land?

The short answer is that God told me to, so I did. The world had become overwhelmingly evil, and I was the only person left who remembered the Creator God, who is perfect, loving, and just. So God told me to build an advertisement of what he was going to do. There's nothing like a huge boat built on dry land to make a point! Everyone thought I was crazy. Friends and neighbors laughed at me instead of paying attention to the warning about the huge flood that was coming.

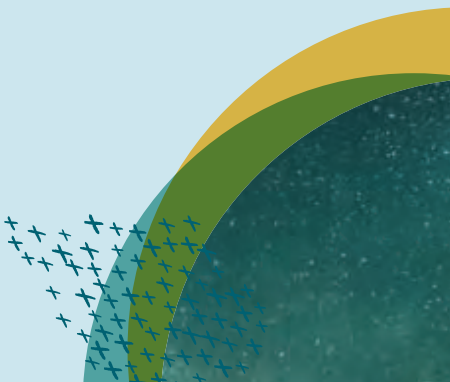
What did you learn about God through your experience?

God works through people who aren't perfect. I certainly wasn't (as you can see in Genesis 9:20-27, for example). Obedience to God is a long-term, courageous commitment. I had to choose to keep trusting and keep obeying him, day after day, for a long time. But I discovered that God is worth it. His promises show a kindness and goodness that go beyond anything I could have imagined.

KEY VERSE:

"So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him." (Genesis 6:22)

Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:29—10:32. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 3:36; 17:26-27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:19-21; and 2 Peter 2:5.



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

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].

Flood Stories

There are several flood stories from different ancient cultures that have strikingly similar details to Noah's story in Genesis. The most famous of these flood stories is part of the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, which tells of a boat coming to rest on a mountain and how the owner of the boat sent out a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The occupants of the boat disembarked when the raven didn't return. This ancient statue of Gilgamesh, the hero of the epic, comes from what is now northern Iraq.

The fact that lots of different cultures trace their lineage back to a hero who survived a great flood in a boat filled with animals—even with very similar details, like the hero sending birds out from the top of a mountain—is interesting confirmation of there being an ancient flood like the one described in Genesis 6–9.

6:1-4 "Sons of God"? Some people think that the "sons of God" were fallen angels. One problem with this is that angels don't marry or reproduce (Matthew 22:30). Others think this phrase refers to the descendants of Seth who intermarried with Cain's evil descendants. Either way, the good influence of the faithful was weakening, and moral depravity in the world was increasing, resulting in an explosion of evil.

6:5-22 What gave Noah the strength to choose to follow God when everyone around him was choosing evil? Is that strength available to you? *See Genesis 8:15–9:17 for the next passage about the Flood. See page 1653 for The Bible's Big Story.*

6:6-7 God's Sorrow Does this passage mean that God regretted creating humanity? Was he saying he made a mistake? No, God doesn't make mistakes or change his mind (1 Samuel 15:29). Instead, he was expressing sorrow for what the people had done to themselves, like a parent might be sad when one of their children makes a harmful choice. God was sorry that the people chose sin and death instead of a relationship with him. Our sins break God's heart as much as the sin of the people in Noah's day did.

6:9 Righteous and Blameless The fact that Noah was righteous and blameless means that he wholeheartedly loved and obeyed God. It doesn't mean that he never sinned: For example, the book of Genesis records one of his sins in 9:21. Instead, it means that for a lifetime he walked step by step in faith as a living example to his generation. Like Noah, we live in a world filled with evil. Are we influencing others or being influenced by them? Are our priorities being set by God and his people or by those who stand against him?

and their wives. 19Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. 20Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. 21And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals."

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

The Flood Covers the Earth

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

5So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

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

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

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

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

The Flood Recedes

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

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

7:2 Hebrew *of each clean animal;* similarly in 7:8. **7:20** Hebrew *15 cubits* [6.9 meters]. **8:4** Hebrew *on the seventeenth day of the seventh month;* see 7:11. **8:5** Hebrew *On the first day of the tenth month;* see 7:11 and note on 8:4.

6:22 Noah Had Faith Noah got right to work when God told him to build the huge boat. It was the length of one and a half football fields and as high as a four-story building, and Noah probably built it miles from any body of water. Other people were warned about the coming disaster, but apparently they didn't expect it to happen (see 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5). Those who don't believe in God will deny the consequences of sin and try to get us to deny God also. But God's faithfulness to Noah can inspire you to have courage as you follow God's call for your life.

the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. 14Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

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

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

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

God Confirms His Covenant

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

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.

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

8:15–9:17 What can we learn about who God is from his decision to save Noah and his family? *See Hebrews 11:7 for the next passage about the Flood. See page 1653 for The Bible's Big Story.*

8:21-22 God's Patience Countless times throughout the Bible, we see God showing his love and patience toward men and women in order to save them. He continues to reach out to us, despite all the ways we mess up. God hates evil, but he has promised to never again destroy all living things in order to wipe the slate clean. Now every change of season is a reminder of God's promise to be patient with us even when we do awful things.

9:8-17 God Makes Covenants with His People A covenant is a promise that creates an official relationship between two people or parties. This is a familiar theme in Scripture—God making covenants with his people. Here, God promises never again to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth by flood. How reassuring it is to know that God cares enough for us to make us promises. (For more on covenants, see page 23 and the notes on 12:1-3 and 15:7-21.)

9:20-27 Godly People Sin Too Noah, the great hero of faith, got drunk—a poor example of how a godly person should act. And Ham's mocking attitude showed a real lack of respect for his father and for God. Maybe this story is included to show us that the possibility of evil still existed in the hearts of Noah and his family. Wiping out all living things except for these "good" people didn't solve the problem of sin in the world. Even godly people sin. It took Jesus' death on the cross to deal once and for all with the problem of sin inside of us.

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John

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN starts a lot like the book of Genesis: "In the beginning . . ." But here we are introduced to someone who existed before the world, someone who was there with God at Creation. In response to everything that has since gone wrong with the world and inside humans, God the Son, Jesus, becomes a human and surrenders himself to death in order to save the world. Then he comes back to life in order to give life to everyone who believes in him.

John writes like he can't get over how amazing Jesus is. He recounts some of the incredible miracles Jesus does, like raising a man named Lazarus from the dead. He records Jesus' powerful teachings about who he is and about the eternal life he offers to everyone. He also gives examples of what it means to believe—often involving surprising characters, like an outcast woman and a blind man.

John, who identifies himself as "the one whom Jesus loved" (John 20:2), is writing a number of years after the other Gospels have already been circulating in the early church for a while. He provides his version of events in order to guide his readers into a deeper, fuller trust of Jesus, and he allows his book to be less matter-of-fact than the other Gospels. As John explains, his purpose in writing is so that people will believe in Jesus and receive eternal life (John 20:30-31). He wants others to join him in his wonder at the fact that God, who has introduced himself to the world as a human, wants us to know him personally.

As you read the Gospel of John, notice all the times Jesus begins a statement with "I am." What do these statements tell you about Jesus? How do other people in the story identify Jesus?

GOSPELS & ACTS

Timeline

37 BC
Herod the Great begins to rule

6/5 BC
Jesus is born

4/3 BC
Jesus' family returns to Nazareth

At a Glance

A.	**INTRODUCTION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD** (1:1–2:12)	John makes it clear that Jesus isn't just a man; he is the eternal Son of God. He is the Light of the World who offers the gift of eternal life to all who believe in him.
B.	**JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, CHANGES PEOPLE'S LIVES** (2:13–12:50)	Jesus met with individuals, performed miracles, preached to crowds, trained his disciples, and debated with the religious leaders. The message that he is the Son of God received a mixed reaction.
C.	**THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD** (13:1–21:25)	John's Gospel gives a detailed account of Jesus' last evening with his disciples. It then records the story of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, concluding with a few stories of the resurrected Jesus appearing to his followers.

Stats

PURPOSE
To show that Jesus is the Son of God and that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life

AUTHOR
John, the son of Zebedee

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE
Probably Jewish Christians

DATE WRITTEN
Around between AD 85 and 90

SETTING
Mostly Judea and Galilee

KEY PEOPLE
Jesus, John the Baptist, the disciples, the religious leaders

Key Points

THEME	EXPLANATION
Jesus Christ, Son of God	The Gospel of John shows that Jesus is God's Son, who has existed from the beginning and reveals the Father to the world. The book highlights the special relationship shared between God the Father and God the Son.
Eternal Life	The theme of eternal life comes up repeatedly in John. Through Jesus, God offers eternal life to everyone who believes in him.
Belief	John recorded how Jesus often encouraged people to believe in him. Jesus performed many miracles, and both John the Baptist and God himself affirmed Jesus as God's Son, the Savior of the world. John's hope was that those who heard the story of Jesus would believe.
The Holy Spirit	Jesus taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come after he returned to heaven. The same Spirit who was with Jesus in his ministry would live inside his followers to guide, teach, and comfort them.
Resurrection	On the third day after he died, Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death and proving that he had the ability to give life to others. The Resurrection was verified by his disciples and many other eyewitnesses. After the Resurrection, Jesus sent his followers on a mission to share the Good News.

KEY PLACES IN JOHN

The broken lines indicate modern boundaries.

1 JORDAN RIVER • John's Gospel begins by describing John the Baptist's ministry east of the Jordan (John 1:19-28). Here we also read about how Jesus began his ministry, talking to some of the men who would become his twelve disciples (John 1:29-51).

2 GALILEE • Jesus' public ministry in Galilee began as a guest at a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-11), and much of his ministry took place in this northern territory. He fed over 5,000 people near Bethsaida beside the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1-15), walked on the water to his frightened disciples during a storm (John 6:16-21), and preached throughout the region (John 7:1).

3 CAPERNAUM • Jesus had grown up in Nazareth, but Capernaum became his home base during his ministry in Galilee. Located on a major trade route, it was an important city in the region, with a Roman garrison and a customs station. In this city, a high-ranking government official asked Jesus to heal his son, who was about to die (John 4:46-53). It had at least one major synagogue where Jesus taught (John 6:59).

4 SAMARIA • This region had belonged to the northern kingdom of Israel until Assyria invaded in 722 BC. At that time, most of the Jews had been deported to other parts of the Assyrian Empire, but those who were left had intermarried with foreigners who had been brought in and started practicing a mixed religion (2 Kings 17:24-41). The descendants of these intermarriages were called Samaritans. There was long-standing prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans because of these intermarriages. The Samaritans had set up an alternate center for worship on Mount Gerizim (John 4:20) to parallel the Temple in Jerusalem, and they had opposed the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the Temple between 536 and 445 BC (Ezra 4; Nehemiah 4). Jesus, however, refused to let this prejudice get in the way of ministering to people who needed him (John 4:1-42).

5 BETHANY • Located only a few miles from Jerusalem, Bethany was the home of Jesus' good friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He often stayed with them when he visited Jerusalem. When Lazarus died, Jesus raised him from the dead (John 11:1-44). It was also in Bethany that Mary anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume shortly before his death (John 12:1-8).

6 JERUSALEM • Every year, Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem for the three religious festivals (John 2:13; 5:1; 7:1-10). There he met with Nicodemus, a religious leader (John 3:1-21) and healed a man who was paralyzed, as well as many other people (John 5:1-15). When it was time for him to die, he entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover with his disciples and give them key teachings about what was to come and how they should act (John 12:12–17:26). His last hours before his crucifixion were spent in the city (John 13), in a grove of olive trees next to it called the garden of Gethsemane (John 18:1-11), and finally in various buildings back in the city during his questioning and trial (John 18:12–19:16). He was crucified on a hill just outside Jerusalem and buried nearby (John 19:16-42), but he rose again as he had promised (John 20:1-29).

Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

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

1:3-4 Or *and nothing that was created was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything.* **1:5** Or *and the darkness has not understood it.*

1:1–21:25 Seeing the Big Picture John was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, so his narrative of Jesus' life is written with the details of an eyewitness account. John's Gospel has a focus that is different from that of the other Gospels. It's a thematic presentation of Jesus' life, focused on helping readers understand who Jesus is and the significance of what he said and did. John wrote his Gospel to believers everywhere, both Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles).

1:1 What Word? When John begins by talking about "the Word," he is using a term that was important to both Jewish

6 God sent a man, John the Baptist,* 7 to tell
about the light so that everyone might believe
because of his testimony. 8 John himself was not
the light; he was simply a witness to tell about
the light. 9 The one who is the true light, who
gives light to everyone, was coming into the
world.

10 He came into the very world he created, but
the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his
own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to
all who believed him and accepted him, he gave
the right to become children of God. 13 They are
reborn—not with a physical birth resulting
from human passion or plan, but a birth that
comes from God.

14 So the Word became human* and made his
home among us. He was full of unfailing love
and faithfulness.* And we have seen his glory,
the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

15 John testified about him when he shouted
to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking
about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me
who is far greater than I am, for he existed long
before me.'"

16 From his abundance we have all received
one gracious blessing after another.* 17 For the
law was given through Moses, but God's unfail-
ing love and faithfulness came through Jesus
Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. But the
unique One, who is himself God,* is near to the
Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

1:6 Greek *a man named John.* **1:14a** Greek *became flesh.* **1:14b** Or *grace and truth;* also in 1:17. **1:16** Or *received the grace of Christ rather than the grace of the law;* Greek reads *received grace upon grace.* **1:18** Some manuscripts read *But the one and only Son.*

and Greek thinkers. In Hebrew Scripture, *the Word* was the agent of creation (Psalm 33:6), the source of God's message to his people through the prophets (Hosea 4:1), and God's law—his standard of holiness (Psalm 119:11). So in Hebrew thought, *the Word* had to do with the creative and redemptive activity of the living God. In Greek philosophy, *the Word* was the principle of reason thought to govern the world. John is clearly applying these rich ideas to Jesus—a human being he knew and loved, but at the same time the creator of the universe, the ultimate revelation of God, the living picture of God's holiness, and the one who "holds all creation together" (Colossians 1:17).

1:12-13 Becoming Children of God Physical birth gives us life and places us in a particular family, which isn't something we choose or have control over. Being born of God is a spiritual life we *do* choose. Faith in Jesus makes us part of God's family, and it changes us from the inside out, rearranging our mindsets, desires, and motives.

1:18 God Revealed God communicated through various people in the Old Testament, usually prophets whom he told to give specific messages (Hebrews 1:1). In a few instances, God revealed his glory, but no one ever *saw* God. But Jesus is both God and the Father's unique, human Son. In him God revealed his nature and essence in a way that people could see and touch. In Jesus, God became a man who lived on earth. Jesus changed forever the way humans can know God.

Why is it such a big deal that Jesus is a human?

- The word *incarnation* refers to something being covered in flesh or becoming a physical reality. In Jesus' case, it refers to God being born as a human. **Jesus' incarnation was the major turning point in the history of the world.** If Jesus hadn't become a human and lived on earth with us, there would be no hope for freedom from sin and death, the righting of all wrongs, or eternal life with God.
- Christians believe that Jesus, the Son of God, is one of the three members of the Trinity (for more on this, see page 1123). He is both fully God and fully human. The Bible says that "in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body" (Colossians 2:9).
- Jesus' humanity is what enables him to identify with us and understand our struggles (Hebrews 4:15-16). **Jesus provides a direct connection between humanity and God.**
- Jesus was born as a human as described in the Gospels, but the human-divine Son of God has existed since before the beginning of time. In Daniel 7, we learn about a figure who is "like a son of man" ruling with God. This is a vision of Jesus in the Old Testament.
- John 1:1-18 paints an artful picture of Jesus' eternal existence with the Father, the fact that he came into the world being both fully human and fully God, and the way this event changed the way we relate to God. Paul also describes Jesus' incarnation in Philippians 2:6-11.
- In John 1:14, we learn that the preexistent Son of God "became human and made his home among us." John's wording—literally rendered, "he tabernacled among us"—connects Jesus' arrival with the Tabernacle, which used to be the focal point of God's presence with Israel (Exodus 25:8-9). Jesus took on that role as the presence of God in the world.
- Throughout history, some people have taught that our bodies are gross, worthless, or bad. But **Jesus has a body like ours. This shows us that God loves and values our bodies.** God brought about his plans for salvation through Jesus' human body. When we are tempted to hate our own bodies, we can think about Jesus' human body and learn to see our bodies the way God does.
- **Jesus' incarnation also shows that the specifics of human lives are a good thing.** Jesus was born at a particular moment in history with a particular ethnicity, skin color, gender, heritage, and hometown. These details are part of God's plan for our lives.
- **Finally, only as fully human could Jesus die to save the world from sin, evil, and death.** He couldn't have died in our place if he wasn't one of us (Hebrews 2:14-15). (For more on why Jesus had to die, see page 1257.)

The Testimony of John the Baptist

19This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants* from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" 20He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

21"Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?"

"No," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"*

"No."

22"Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"

23John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"I am a voice shouting in the wilderness,
'Clear the way for the LORD's coming!'"*

24Then the Pharisees who had been sent 25asked him, "If you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?"

26John told them, "I baptize with* water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. 27Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal."

28This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

Jesus, the Lamb of God

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' 31I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

32Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. 33I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.*"

The First Disciples

35The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

38Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them.

They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39"Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

40Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"*).

42Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"*).

43The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me." 44Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown.

45Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses* and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

46"Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

1:19 Greek *and Levites.* **1:21** Greek *Are you the Prophet?* See Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5-6. **1:23** Isa 40:3. **1:26** Or *in;* also in 1:31, 33. **1:34** Some manuscripts read *the Son of God.* **1:41** *Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean "anointed one." **1:42** The names *Cephas* (from Aramaic) and *Peter* (from Greek) both mean "rock." **1:45** Greek *Moses in the law.*

1:19-28 Who's in Charge Here? These leaders came to see John the Baptist for several reasons: (1) Their duty as guardians of the faith included investigating any new teaching or movement (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20-22). (2) They wanted to find out if John had the credentials of a true prophet. (3) John had quite a following, and it was growing. They were probably jealous and wanted to see why this man was so popular. (For more on the Pharisees, see the chart on page 1176.)

1:29 The Lamb of God Every morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple, symbolizing that the sins of the people were forgiven (Exodus 29:38-42). To pay the penalty for sin, blood had to be shed and a life had to be given. Through Jesus, God himself chose to provide the ultimate sacrifice. When Jesus died, the sins of the world were removed—through his sacrifice, the sins of everyone who believes in him are forgiven once and for all (1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 10:1-18).

1:31-34 Recognizing Jesus John the Baptist and Jesus were related (see Luke 1:36), but John still needed confirmation of Jesus' identity as the Messiah. At Jesus' baptism, God gave John a sign to show him that Jesus truly had been sent from God. John's faith stands in contrast to that of the many others who knew Jesus and refused to believe he was the Messiah (see, for example, Mark 6:1-3). (The story of Jesus' baptism is told in Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; and Luke 3:21-22.)

1:42 Rock Solid Jesus saw not only who Simon was but also who he would become. That is why he gave him a new name—Cephas in Aramaic or Peter in Greek, both of which mean "rock." Peter wasn't very solid throughout the Gospels, but he grew into this name later, as we can see in the book of Acts. (For more on Simon Peter, see his profile on page 1187.)

"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

47As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity."

48"How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."

49Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!"

50Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.*"

The Wedding at Cana

2 The next day* there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

4"Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

5But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.* 7Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

9When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10"A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

11This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

12After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

Jesus Clears the Temple

13It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. 14In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. 15Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them

1:51 Greek *going up and down on the Son of Man;* see Gen 28:10-17. "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself. **2:1** Greek *On the third day;* see 1:35, 43. **2:6** Greek *2 or 3 measures* [75 to 113 liters].

1:51 Connection to Heaven This is a reference to the dream Jacob had that is recorded in Genesis 28:10-15. As both God and human, Jesus was the stairway between heaven and earth. The disciples would receive spiritual insight into his true nature and purpose for coming and would understand this prediction better after Jesus' resurrection.

2:1-10 An Extraordinary Solution Weddings in Jesus' day were often weeklong festivals. Banquets would be prepared for many guests, and the next several days would be spent celebrating the new life of the married couple. Often the whole town would be invited, and everybody would come—it was considered an insult to refuse an invitation to a wedding. To accommodate this many people, careful planning was needed. To run out of wine was more than embarrassing; it would have meant that the hosts had failed to follow the strong, unwritten rules of hospitality.

Jesus responded to the hosts' need at this wedding using stone water jars that normally held water for ceremonial washing, the cleansing of any bad influences associated with whatever people had touched. In the midst of a desperate household problem, Jesus used ordinary elements to do something extraordinary—something he also does in our lives today.

2:11 A Miraculous Sign Jesus' disciples believed in him when they saw this miracle. The miracle showed Jesus' power over nature and revealed the way he would go about his ministry—helping others, speaking with authority, and being personally in touch with people. Miracles are superhuman events that demonstrate God's power. A lot of Jesus' miracles were a renewal of fallen creation—restoring sight, making people who were lame walk, even restoring life to the dead. Jesus' miracles were also an expression of God's care for people and an invitation into deeper relationship with him—as in the feeding of 5,000 people and the calming of a storm. (For a list of Jesus' miracles, see the chart on page 1281.)

2:13 An Annual Celebration The Passover celebration took place yearly at the Temple in Jerusalem. Every Jewish male was expected to travel to Jerusalem during this time (Deuteronomy 16:16). This was a weeklong festival—Passover was one day, and the Festival of Unleavened Bread lasted the rest of the week. The entire week commemorated the freeing of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12).

2:13-25 Merchants and Dealers The Temple area was always crowded during Passover with thousands of out-of-town visitors. The religious leaders crowded it even further by allowing money changers and merchants to set up booths in the Court of the Gentiles. (For an illustration of what the Temple may have looked like in Jesus' day, see pages 1152–1153.) The religious leaders rationalized this practice as being a convenience for the worshipers and a way to make money for the Temple's upkeep. But in reality, the money changers charged outrageous exchange rates, and the merchants were greedy and dishonest. The religious leaders didn't seem to care that the Court of the Gentiles was so full of merchants that it made worship difficult. Worship was the main purpose for visiting the Temple, but the religious leaders were making a mockery of God's house. John records this first clearing, or cleansing, of the Temple. It seems that a second clearing occurred at the end of Jesus' ministry, about three years later, and that event is recorded in Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; and Luke 19:45-46.

all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. 16Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

17Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."*

18But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

19"All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

20"What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" 21But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. 22After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

Jesus and Nicodemus

23Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. 24But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people. 25No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart.

3 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."

3Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,* you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

4"What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

5Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.* 6Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.* 7So don't be surprised when I say, 'You* must be born again.' 8The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

9"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

10Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? 11I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. 12But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man* has come down from heaven. 14And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

16"For this is how God loved the world: He gave* his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17God sent his Son into the world

2:17 Or *"Concern for God's house will be my undoing."* Ps 69:9. **3:3** Or *born from above;* also in 3:7. **3:5** Or *and spirit.* The Greek word for *Spirit* can also be translated *wind;* see 3:8. **3:6** Greek *what is born of the Spirit is spirit.* **3:7** The Greek word for *you* is plural; also in 3:12. **3:13** Some manuscripts add *who lives in heaven.* "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself. **3:15** Or *everyone who believes will have eternal life in him.* **3:16** Or *For God loved the world so much that he gave.*

3:1-21 A New Teaching Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the ruling council (called the Sanhedrin). Most Pharisees were intensely jealous of Jesus because he undermined their authority and challenged their views. But Nicodemus was searching, and he came to Jesus to be taught. This is a great way to come to Jesus—with an open mind and heart so he can teach us the truth about God.

Nicodemus knew from Scripture that the Kingdom ruled by God would be restored on earth and would incorporate God's people. But Jesus revealed that the Kingdom would come to the whole world, not just to the Jews, and that Nicodemus wouldn't be a part of it unless he was personally born again. This was a revolutionary concept: God's Kingdom isn't national or ethnic; instead, the entrance requirements are repentance and spiritual rebirth. Jesus later taught that God's Kingdom has *already begun* to arrive in the hearts of believers (Luke 17:21). It will be fully established when Jesus returns to judge the world and abolish evil forever (Revelation 21–22).

3:5-6 Water and the Spirit When we put our trust in Jesus, we are transformed by the Holy Spirit. "Being born of water" might refer to physical birth or to Christian baptism, which is a symbol of receiving new life through faith. This water may also represent the cleansing action of God's Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Nicodemus undoubtedly would have been familiar with God's promise to give his faithful people a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-27). Jesus was explaining the importance of a spiritual rebirth, saying that people enter God's Kingdom only by receiving a new life from him. (For more on the Holy Spirit, see page 1309.)

3:14-15 Saved by Faith The mention of the bronze snake alludes to an episode during the Israelites' time of wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 21:4-9). During a plague of poisonous snakes, people who had been bitten by the snakes could be healed by obeying God's command to look up at the elevated bronze snake replica Moses had made, believing that God would heal them. Similarly, we are saved from our sin when we look up to Jesus—who was "lifted up" on a wooden pole—believing that he will save us.

3:16 The Good News in Brief The message of the Good News comes to a focus in this verse. God's love reaches out and draws others in. When you love someone dearly, you are willing to give to them freely, to the point of self-sacrifice. With his own life, God the Son paid the highest price he could

not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.*"

John the Baptist Exalts Jesus

22 Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people.

23 At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. 24 (This was before John was thrown into prison.) 25 A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew* over ceremonial cleansing. 26 So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."

27 John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. 28 You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' 29 It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. 30 He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

31 "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.* 32 He

3:21 Or *can see God at work in what he is doing.* 3:25 Some manuscripts read *some Jews.* 3:31 Some manuscripts do not include *and is greater than anyone else.*

pay. Jesus took on our punishment, paying the debt for our sins, and now he offers us the new life he has bought for us. To believe in him is more than to intellectually agree that Jesus is God. It means to put our trust and confidence in him and the fact that he alone can save us. If we do this, the promise of everlasting life will be ours.

3:31-35 The Son of God The heartbeat of John's Gospel is the dynamic truth that Jesus Christ is God's Son, the Messiah and the Savior, who existed from the beginning and will continue to live forever. Your whole spiritual life depends on your answer to the question *Who is Jesus Christ?* If a person accepts Jesus as only a prophet or teacher, they have to reject what he actually taught, because he claimed to be God's Son—to be God himself. In his life on earth, Jesus was always filled with and empowered by God's Spirit and totally connected to the heart and mind of the Father. Now he has invited us to accept him and live with him eternally. When we truly understand who Jesus is, believe what he said, and turn away from our sin and toward him, we will be transformed by the Holy Spirit and demonstrate that truth by how we live.

Nicodemus

SNAPSHOT:

- A member of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish high council) who sought out Jesus' teachings
- Risked his reputation to bury Jesus after the Crucifixion
- Where: Jerusalem
- When: Interacted with Jesus during his ministry, from around AD 26 or 27 to AD 30

What prompted you to find Jesus and talk with him? What happened when you did?

As a trained Pharisee, I thought I knew everything about the Scriptures, but this man talked about God differently than anyone else did. My fellow Pharisees often confronted Jesus, trying to trip him up, but I wanted to hear what he had to say. So I came to him under the cover of night—and I got more than I expected! He showed me that I knew next to nothing about life with God. All my training was woefully insufficient; it could never give me the life God wanted for me.

Why didn't you tell people you were following Jesus?

You know how the more you've got to lose, the harder it is to put it on the line? I was a successful, respected member of the high council, and at first I didn't want to risk my reputation. But God was patient with me even though I was still an undercover believer. When the council started talking about eliminating Jesus, I spoke up for justice (although I was overruled). Later, I came forward in a public way by taking Jesus' body from the cross and giving him a proper burial.

What did you learn about God through your experience?

God is so much more than our interpretations of him, even those based on Scripture or sound theology. He's kind of like the wind: We can't physically see him right now, but we can see what he's doing and where he's going. Also, he gives us many chances to grow and develop—even if little by little—until we're ready to step forward and walk openly with him.

KEY VERSES:

"There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. 'Rabbi,' he said, 'we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.'" (John 3:1-2)

Nicodemus's story is told in John 3:1-21; 7:50-52; and 19:38-42.

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Abbreviations in the Master Index

Here is a list of the abbreviations of the books of the Bible used in the Master Index.

Genesis ..... Gn	Isaiah ..... Is	Romans ..... Rom
Exodus ..... Ex	Jeremiah ..... Jer	1 Corinthians ..... 1 Cor
Leviticus Lv	Lamentations ..... Lam	2 Corinthians ..... 2 Cor
Numbers ..... Nm	Ezekiel ..... Ez	Galatians ..... Gal
Deuteronomy ..... Dt	Daniel ..... Dn	Ephesians ..... Eph
Joshua ..... Jos	Hosea ..... Hos	Philippians ..... Phil
Judges ..... Jgs	Joel ..... Jl	Colossians ..... Col
Ruth ..... Ru	Amos ..... Am	1 Thessalonians ..... 1 Thes
1 Samuel ..... 1 Sm	Obadiah ..... Ob	2 Thessalonians ..... 2 Thes
2 Samuel ..... 2 Sm	Jonah ..... Jon	1 Timothy ..... 1 Tm
1 Kings ..... 1 Kgs	Micah ..... Mi	2 Timothy ..... 2 Tm
2 Kings ..... 2 Kgs	Nahum ..... Na	Titus ..... Ti
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Master Index

THIS IS AN INDEX TO THE notes, big questions, charts, maps, and personality profiles in the *Student Life Application Study Bible.* Every entry concerning a study note has a Bible reference and a page number; every entry concerning a big question, chart, map, personality profile, or visual note has a page number. In general, the entries follow a biblical/canonical order (i.e., from Genesis to Revelation). Following the Master Index are individual feature indexes to all the big questions, charts, maps, personality profiles, and visual notes.

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