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WOMAN'S™
BIBLE



NLT®

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WELCOME TO YOUR FILAMENT-ENABLED BIBLE!

This Bible works with the Filament Bible app, which uses your phone or tablet to enhance this Bible with even more powerful study and devotional content.

WHY USE THE FILAMENT BIBLE APP?

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.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH FILAMENT:

- 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!

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FILAMENT, GO TO
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CANONICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis.....3	2 Chronicles..... 515	Daniel.....1033
Exodus.....79	Ezra.....557	Hosea.....1057
Leviticus.....131	Nehemiah.....573	Joel.....1071
Numbers.....167	Esther.....593	Amos.....1079
Deuteronomy.....217	Job.....607	Obadiah.....1093
Joshua.....257	Psalms.....649	Jonah.....1097
Judges.....289	Proverbs.....753	Micah.....1105
Ruth.....323	Ecclesiastes.....793	Nahum.....1117
1 Samuel.....333	Song of Songs.....809	Habakkuk.....1125
2 Samuel.....371	Isaiah.....821	Zephaniah.....1131
1 Kings.....407	Jeremiah.....895	Haggai.....1139
2 Kings.....441	Lamentations.....961	Zechariah.....1145
1 Chronicles.....477	Ezekiel.....973	Malachi.....1161

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew.....1189	Ephesians.....1489	Hebrews.....1559
Mark.....1239	Philippians.....1501	James.....1579
Luke.....1271	Colossians.....1511	1 Peter.....1587
John.....1319	1 Thessalonians.....1519	2 Peter.....1597
Acts.....1357	2 Thessalonians.....1527	1 John.....1605
Romans.....1407	1 Timothy.....1533	2 John.....1615
1 Corinthians.....1435	2 Timothy.....1541	3 John.....1619
2 Corinthians.....1461	Titus.....1549	Jude.....1623
Galatians.....1479	Philemon.....1555	Revelation.....1627

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

Acts.....	1357	James	1579	Nehemiah	573
Amos.....	1079	Jeremiah.....	895	Numbers	167
1 Chronicles	477	Job.....	607	Obadiah	1093
2 Chronicles.....	515	Joel	1071	1 Peter.....	1587
Colossians	1511	John.....	1319	2 Peter	1597
1 Corinthians	1435	1 John	1605	Philemon	1555
2 Corinthians	1461	2 John	1615	Philippians	1501
Daniel	1033	3 John	1619	Proverbs.....	753
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Ezra.....	557	Lamentations.....	961	Song of Songs.....	809
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Genesis.....	3	Luke	1271	2 Thessalonians.....	1527
Habakkuk.....	1125	Malachi.....	1161	1 Timothy	1533
Haggai	1139	Mark.....	1239	2 Timothy.....	1541
Hebrews.....	1559	Matthew.....	1189	Titus	1549
Hosea	1057	Micah	1105	Zechariah.....	1145
Isaiah	821	Nahum	1117	Zephaniah	1131

WELCOME TO THE

Every Woman's Bible

Welcome. You belong here.

I am so glad you opened these pages to see what we have prepared for you, a Bible that invites every woman to explore her story through God's story. Here, in this Bible, I hope you can shed every expectation, role, and fear and hear God's deep, authentic call to extraordinary purpose.

You may be wondering, "How will this Bible live up to the name, *Every Woman's Bible*?" What you hold in your hands is an answer the Lord gave me in prayer: "By having as many women as possible tell their own stories and inviting you to tell your story too." In this Bible, you'll meet a global sisterhood of more than one hundred voices (see the contributors' map, page A19). Each woman tells her story alongside God's story, and these women reflect the diversity of God's creation in their cultures, faces, races, ages, gifts, and vocations. Each book benefits from globally respected women Bible scholars who wrote study notes adding women's perspectives.

When it comes to living our stories, some days we soar toward a great, life-giving mission. On other days we struggle to get off the ground, fighting against our burdens. Sometimes we struggle with our faith or just with ourselves, and other times we feel sure, confident. In many, many ways, each of us is "every woman." We are all these women, just on different days.

As we open this Bible, we might fear we'll meet women who are nothing like us. We fear feeling different, divided by political convictions, social issues, bank accounts, facial lines, or body sizes. But God's love letter for us, the Bible, speaks life to our social-media-airbrushed anxieties. God's love letter is for every woman. When we open this Bible, we hear God through his story and through others' stories.

I pray the Bible's story and these women's stories cheer you on to live abundantly and serve extravagantly. I pray they help you go deeper in God's story—available to all of us, new every day, no matter what our stories have been before.

Additionally, in the middle of this Bible (page 1170), you'll find a unique section that walks you through a proven journey to find your purpose in God's purpose, your story in God's story.

As you journey through these pages, we want to be right alongside so you come to say, "I'm living what God made me for, alongside other women who make me strong." We want you to feel guided toward action! We want you to feel rooted in God, strengthened in your relationships, and activated in God's calling, his world-renewing cause.

Sister, you have a story. A story that matters. I can't wait to hear your voice.

With my ordinary and God's extraordinary,
DR. NAOMI CRAMER OVERTON
GENERAL EDITOR

Every Woman's Bible

USER'S GUIDE

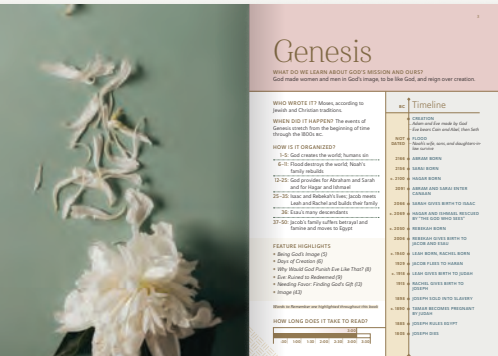
The *Every Woman's Bible* focuses on what hundreds of women say they desire from a Bible: great study notes and information from maps and charts, clarity on their calling, insights from others' stories, and help for their needs. This begins with the clear and trusted New Living Translation, which communicates the Bible's message in language that meets us where we are today.

Globally respected Bible scholars, who also happen to be women, provide the study notes and walk alongside you on your journey through God's story and your story. This Bible contains an array of illustrations and charts, including original ones written by women. This Bible also offers writings by women from many places, stages, and walks of life.

For a full list of each of these writings, see the indexes beginning on page 1669.

INTRODUCTION

Before each of the Bible's sixty-six books you will find:



BEAUTY To help you prepare visually for what you'll read, a full-page image draws on the themes and feel of each book.

MISSION To help you consider what each book has to say about God's purposes and your own, look for a key takeaway on *God's mission and ours*.

HISTORY *Who, When, and How* questions orient you to each book. Timelines give you further historical context, showing what events were happening at the time.

ESTIMATED READING TIMES To show you how much time to budget, these estimates are divided into thirty-minute segments.

FEATURE HIGHLIGHTS A sampling of articles on purpose and calling, identity, needs, and wonderings. They spotlight topics you've told us you care about, illuminating the Bible's story through the lens of women scholars and writers who make Scripture more relatable.

STUDY NOTES Each respected Bible scholar—all of whom are women—applied her research and cultural understanding of the ancient world to craft these notes. The scholars particularly focused the notes and additional commentary on portions of Scripture which address topics women might find relevant, fascinating, and helpful and zeroed in on aspects that women might silently struggle with but that are rarely addressed. These notes clarify the cultural, historical, and literary context we all need so we can read the Bible with greater understanding.

ultimate pe...
9:20-25 The sig...
fully cre. He may...
his mother (this type...
the original language...
father." Leviticus 20:11
his naked father and, r...
matter secret, dishon...
The curse likely fell o...
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WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT Work

We Work and Rest
 Following God's Rhythms

We Work for the Real Boss

Work with Joy

Work willingly at whatever you do...

She is energetic and strong

Get Stuffed

Our First "Job Description"

Work Hard

A Prayer for Our Work

May the Lord Use Our Skills

How We Work Matters More Than Where We Work

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT...

Sometimes it helps to look at the big picture. This feature illuminates key themes throughout the Bible, especially themes of interest to women, by gathering key verses all in one place. Consider these pages to be a starting place for your study of each topic.

GENESIS 11

Insight

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Formed, Divided, Empty

1:1-9
10:1-10

1:1-2
10:1-10

1:1-2
10:1-10

1:1-2
10:1-10

1:1-2
10:1-10

1:1-2
10:1-10

GENESIS 14

Insight

ISAAC AND ADAM'S TRAILS

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Esau

14:1-12

14:1-12

14:1-12

14:1-12

INSIGHT

These charts, maps, graphs, and illustrations help us understand the Bible beyond what words alone may offer. You'll find these where an illustration, more information, or a cultural insight can help you see beyond the pages themselves to the real world of the Bible.

"A girl who has survived [her] childhood has enough information about life to last... the rest of [her] days."

PLANNING FOR CHILDSHIP

SHE SAYS

Throughout the Bible, you'll find powerful quotes that capture the voices of Christian women across history. These quotes show us how they lived out their faith across many cultures and places. We gain inspiration from their words as we hear from leaders of movements and church denominations, singers and writers and artists, and missionaries and theologians. We find strength from the variety of voices, reminding us that women throughout history and from many walks of life have much to say about how God is with us today, where we are.

SCRIPTURE PAUSE

Throughout this Bible, you'll find full-page script lettering of Bible verses that inspire us. We hope these pages give you space to take a breath, spend a moment reflecting on a brief Bible verse, and experience the peace God's Word gives.

WORDS TO REMEMBER

You will find highlighted portions of Scripture throughout the Bible. We've spotlighted these frequently cited passages so you can see what verses draw the most interest from other readers. And you may want to take some of these with you into your days by committing them to memory.

The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm.

27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God male and female.

1:26 "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, over the livestock, and over all the earth."

1:27 "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crawls on the earth.'"



DIGGING DEEPER INTO IMAGE

LIVING GOD’S MISSION THROUGH OUR FOUR CORE RELATIONSHIPS

We are made for relationships—with God, our family and friends, our communities, and our own place of unique influence. Our relationships form us at least as much as we shape them! Understanding these relationships, and how we can invest in their health and purpose, allows us to thrive and live out our God-given callings. Through these relationships, we see how those around us and we ourselves are made in the image of God and how to share that with the world.

THEOS MY STORY WITH GOD

The Greek word *Theos* means “God,” and in this sphere we can discover our extraordinary purpose in the God whose faithful love defines each of us. This place of relationship is just for you and God. One central way we get to know God is through his Word, the Bible—and he invites us to join his mission.

OIKOS MY STORY WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS

The Greek word *Oikos* means “home” or “household.” But this sphere, so dear to many of us, can consume us, bringing us comfort and life or struggle and grief (often both). The Bible shows us complicated family and friend dynamics, where God can reveal how he wants us to relate to each other in ways that yield life.

KOINONIA MY STORY WITH COMMUNITY, WORKPLACE & CHURCH

The Greek word *Koinonia* means “fellowship,” and this sphere comes naturally to some. It’s a place we can find fulfillment. And yet, these relationships can also develop places of deep hurt, burnout, and avoidance. God can show us how to develop this sphere intentionally so that our neighborhoods, workplaces or schools, and churches thrive. And we thrive, too.

SHALOM MY STORY OF MY UNIQUE INFLUENCE

The Hebrew word *Shalom*, at its simplest, means “peace.” However, this word carries an even greater depth of meaning beyond our language. This sphere relates to our contentment, completeness, wholeness, well-being, and harmony, which come from expressing our unique calling in God’s mission.

HOW TO EXPLORE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When I (Naomi) was a little girl, I wanted to know God. So I grabbed the little Bible someone at church had handed me, and at night, I'd open it up and read it all alone. One time, I remember praying one enormously powerful prayer in my dark room: "God, if you're real, I am desperate to know you. Will you help me?" He did by showing me in the Bible how I didn't live up to the good ways God asked me to live, particularly that part about loving others as myself.

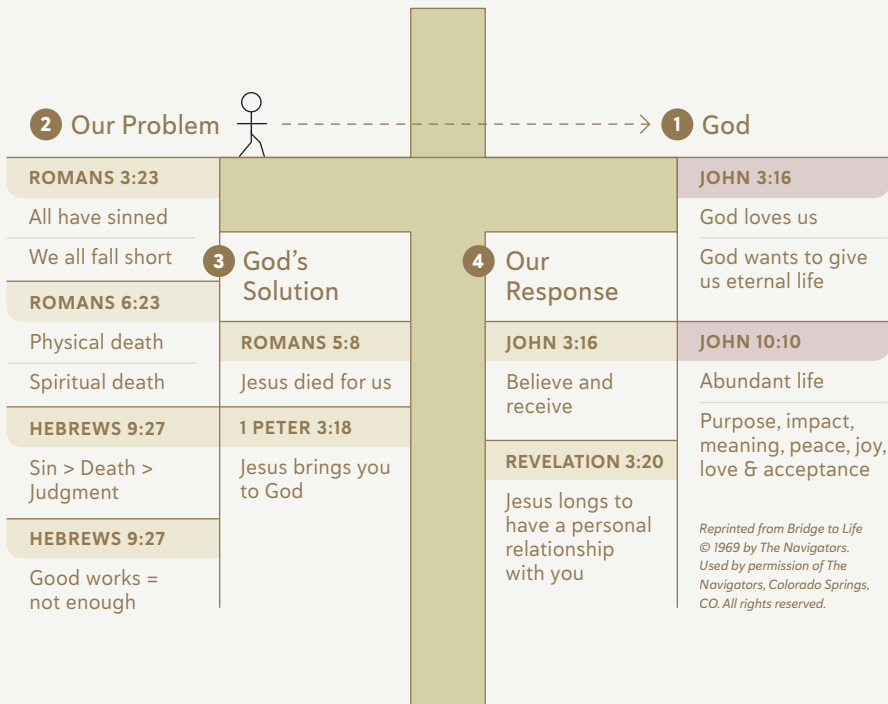
Thankfully, in college, my friend Beth invited me to a group where I heard about how to know God in a way I never had before. I told Beth, "I'm a Christian, but I don't understand why so many people always talk about Jesus." Beth explained that the gap between how I wanted to live and the way I really did live was a gap Jesus came to fill.

The diagram below shows how Jesus and his death on the cross bridges the gap between our problem with sin and being with God. God's greatest act of drawing close to us is in his Son, Jesus. Sin, or falling short of living and loving perfectly, separates us from God (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12), but Jesus came to earth and lived a perfectly loving and just life so he could draw us to God.

Jesus paid for our wrongdoing by dying in our place on the cross, but he did not stay dead! He returned to life forever and now offers us forgiveness for our sins and new life, too. Jesus is alive today and wants to give us a new life:

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



Do you ever feel like I felt, like you long to be close to God but don't know how that can happen? What will you do with the God who pursues you, covers your wrongs, heals your heart, and invites you to new life now and forever? How do we begin this new life he offers? By trusting Jesus. If you're ready to believe in God's good purpose for you and your story, you can begin by telling him so in prayer. Here's a simple and memorable way to pray:

CONFESS: We confess that we have fallen short of living a perfectly loving and just life. We tell God that we cannot earn his forgiveness, cannot be good enough on our own, and are ready to stop trying. We accept the free gift of our new life and ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to lead our life. **ROMANS 10:9-13, PAGE 1422**

BELIEVE: We believe that God loves us so much that he gave what he loved most—his Son, Jesus—to pay the life sentence for our sin. **JOHN 3:16, PAGE 1324** We agree that he saves us not because of good things we have done but because of his undeserved kindness. Because of God's kindness and love, we have confidence that God makes us new from the inside out in this life and gives us everlasting life with him after we die. **TITUS 3:4-7, PAGE 1552**

ACCEPT: We accept that God forgave us and brought us close when we confessed and believed. We accept that we can't take credit for it. We accept that we are God's masterpiece, now living with new life thanks to Jesus. And we embrace the good things God has planned for us to do. **EPHESIANS 2:8-10, PAGE 1490**

When we believe in and trust Jesus, he pens new stories for us. God retitled mine from “She Is Striving and Stuck” to “She Is Accepted and Free.” Do you want to begin this new story, this new life? You might pray something like this:

Father, I confess I fall short of being perfectly loving and just, as you are. I believe you sent your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and pay entirely for all my sin. I call on Jesus as Lord and accept your gift of life now, with your Spirit living in me, and life with you forever in your Kingdom. I pray this in your Son's name, Jesus. Amen (an affirmation that means “So be it!”).

So, sister, I don't want you to do what I did—read this book alone in the dark. Don't wait to feel close to the Author of the story and the Creator of you. You can know God now by asking him to forgive you and give you new life. If you've done so, then you are a child of God (1 John 3:1) and you have become a new person. You are never alone because God is always with you.

Turn to page A16 for more help getting started reading your Bible!

WHERE TO START READING THE BIBLE

Opening the Bible can be intimidating or confusing. It's hard to know exactly where to start! And not every way of reading the Bible works for everyone in every life season. It's good to try different ways, and it's okay to try a new one if you get stuck. Below are some ideas for how to get started.

START WITH A SIMPLE READING PLAN

We've provided a daily Bible reading plan that helps you read the whole Bible in one year (see page 1655). Each day offers portions from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs. If you'd like to follow along, the readings might take you about ten to twenty minutes a day.

START WITH JESUS

Each of the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—tells the story of the life of Jesus from a different perspective. These books are a good place to start because they show us who Jesus is and what his plans are for the world. Choose any one and get started: Matthew begins on page 1189; Mark begins on page 1239; Luke begins on page 1271; and John begins on page 1319.

START WITH WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

Turn to “What Is My Purpose?” on page 1170. This is a guide to help you know where you are right now in your story with God and discover where you want to go next. This guide focuses especially on your four core relationships (see page A13): your relationship with God, your relationship with family and friends, your relationship with community, workplace, and church, and your unique influence.



START WITH CORE RELATIONSHIPS AND WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

If you want to see how the Bible can guide your relationships, check out the Image articles and use the Scripture passages they cover and their devotionals as a place to begin reading. You can explore the topics within each sphere by turning to page 1672.



START WITH A BIBLE WOMAN YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT

The Identity articles help you learn from others' stories. Each Identity article pairs with the Bible references where that woman is mentioned or her story is told. See page 1675 for a full list of these women and where you can find their features.



START WITH HOW YOU ARE FEELING RIGHT NOW

The Come Close articles tend to your heart. Those times we feel uncomfortable can offer us good opportunities for God to make us stronger. Turn to page 1678 and look for a topic or theme that speaks to you.



START WITH YOUR TOUGH QUESTIONS

God is not afraid of your most challenging questions, and the Perspective articles show how the Bible can answer them too. Go to page 1680 for a list of these questions and the Bible verses they cover, and take on some of the big ones you wonder about. We didn't shy away from hard passages. We purposely asked knowledgeable scholars and writers to dive into every bit that could put a woman off from reading the Bible.

BASIC BIBLE HELPS

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Old Testament and the New Testament are separated by time, and each focuses on different eras in God's story. See page A7 for a list of which books are in each group.

The Old Testament takes place between Creation and 445 BC. It includes historical narratives like the creation account, the Flood account, the origin of the Israelites (God's chosen people group), chronologies of Israel's rulers and records of political changes. It also includes poetry and wise sayings in books like Psalms and Proverbs. God's encouragements and warnings to his people from his prophets also appear in the Old Testament.

Between the Old Testament and New Testament, there is a gap in the Biblical record of about four hundred years.

The New Testament takes place between approximately 7 BC and AD 100. It includes books about the life of Jesus, the historical account of the beginning of the Christian church, letters to early churches about their new life in Jesus Christ, and the apocalyptic book of Revelation, describing John's vision about Jesus' final return.

HOW TO LOOK UP A VERSE



Bible verse references are a human-made system for navigating the Bible. The first part is the Bible book name (either from the Old Testament or the New Testament). The second part is the chapter number (the number before the colon). And the third part is the verse number or span (the number[s] after the colon).

JOHN 3:16

BOOK JOHN	New Testament book, found toward the back of the Bible
CHAPTER 3	The third chapter of the Gospel of John
VERSE 16	The verse labeled 16 within that chapter

See page A7 for a list of the Bible books in the order they appear and the page numbers they start on.

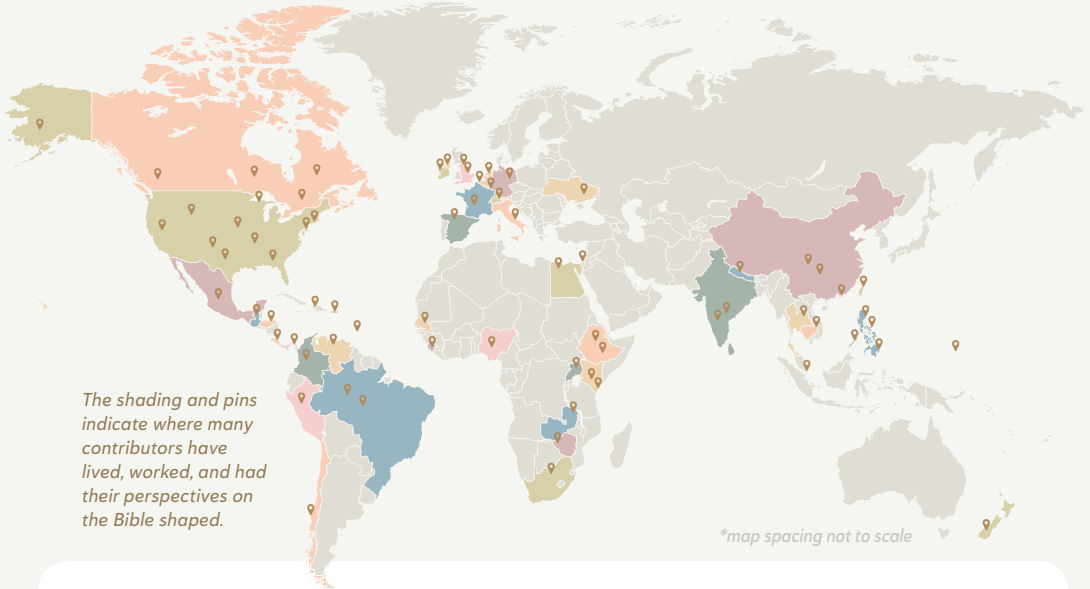
See page A8 for an alphabetical list of the Bible books and the page numbers they start on. Once you've found the book, then turn to the chapter, and finally the verse.

BIBLE READING WORKSHEET

Taking notes while reading the Bible can help us remember what we've learned, come back to it later, and see how we are growing in knowing—and living from—God's story. Here is an example page you can use to take notes. You can also find a downloadable version of this on our website EveryWomansBible.com that you can use time and again.

DATE	
BIBLE PASSAGE	
WHO IS THIS ABOUT?	
WHEN & WHERE IS THIS HAPPENING?	
WHAT DO I UNDERSTAND?	WHAT DO I <u>NOT</u> UNDERSTAND?
Is there a study note or article that helps me? <i>See indexes on page 1669.</i>	
WHAT CAN I ACT ON TODAY?	

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



I (Naomi) am most excited about inviting you to discover God’s story and your story alongside others who help you know you’re not alone. Let’s begin by meeting the scholars who wrote the study notes and some of the other articles (especially Perspective articles, see page 1680 for a full list) to help answer our difficult questions.



CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, YouTuber, and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California. ♦ **GENESIS, EXODUS**



JENNIFER BROWN JONES, PhD, is an author, speaker, and instructor of Old Testament for Liberty University’s PhD of Bible Exposition program. She loves helping others see how God speaks to them through the Bible today. ♦ **LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY, JOB, PSALMS, PROVERBS**

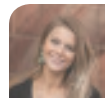


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HAVILAH DHARAMRAJ, PhD, serves at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, India. Her research interests include biblical narrative and comparative literature.

She encourages her students to retrieve traditional storytelling methods for ministry. ♦ **JUDGES, OBADIAH, JONAH, ZEPHANIAH, HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI**



ALEXIANA FRY, MDiv, PhD, is a devoted academic in the Hebrew Bible. She is a professor, wife, and pug mom who is working on her first book post-dissertation. ♦ **RUTH, 1 SAMUEL 2 SAMUEL**



JENNIFER M. MATHENY, PhD, is associate professor of Old Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Missouri, and director of the Wynkoop Center for Women in Leadership. She enjoys speaking engagements and research. ♦ **1 KINGS, 2 KINGS, 1 CHRONICLES, 2 CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SONGS, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH**



CATHERINE L. McDOWELL, PhD, is associate professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. She has authored several books and articles on Bible backgrounds, Genesis, Isaiah, and Biblical Hebrew. ♦ **LAMENTATIONS, HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, NAHUM, HABAKKUK, MALACHI**



CHRISTINE WALKER, MDiv, is a spiritual director who facilitates spiritual formation sessions for people desiring to grow their relationship with Christ. She loves ancient languages and teaches Biblical Hebrew and Koine Greek. ♦ **EZEKIEL, DANIEL, MICAH**



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LYNN H. COHICK, PhD, is Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Director of Houston Theological Seminary, where she leads the Doctor of Ministry program. She writes, speaks, and teaches internationally. ♦ **ACTS, ROMANS, 1 CORINTHIANS, 2 CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS, EPHESIANS**



SARAH HARRIS, PhD, lectures in New Testament at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand. She is a scholar who specializes in the Gospel of Luke. She loves to teach, preach, and encourage women in their callings. ♦ **PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, 1 THESSALONIANS, 2 THESSALONIANS, 1 TIMOTHY, 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS, PHILEMON, HEBREWS, JAMES, 1 JOHN, 2 JOHN, 3 JOHN**



CHEE-CHIEW LEE, PhD, is associate professor in New Testament at Singapore Bible College, and her passion is studying the Word of God and sharing its life-transforming message with people. ♦ **1 PETER, 2 PETER, JUDE, REVELATION**



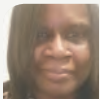
For a time in my life, after some painful diagnoses came to our family and the death of one of our children, I felt too sad to read the Bible by myself. When I'd open the pages, I just wanted a friend to take me by the hand and say, "Here, read this. I've felt pain like yours too. And God's Word has something that you need today, Naomi. Here it is." Below are women who can point you to God's story and how it connects with your story. While several of the scholars listed above also share their stories with you, here are the additional writers, listed by first-name alphabetical order. If you'd like to find a particular contributor's writings, see the Contributors Index on page 1689.



ADELAIDE MANYARA MUCHETU shares true life experiences with many women and believes in relational evangelism. Discipleship is her mantra with exhortation being her greatest strength.



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ANDREA GIBSON is a certified coach and trainer. She and her husband spent seventeen years church planting. Her deepest desire now is to mentor and train women in the art of wise, godly leadership.



ANGELA TKACHENKO is an evangelist, worshiper, and leader of Steiger Ukraine mission. She is passionate to see this generation love the Bible.



NO PHOTO

AVA JAMES is an editor who advocates for living with compassion and respect.



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DEBORA DA SILVA is from Brazil and found release from poverty through Compassion International. She works with Facebook in Colombia and lives to serve as she tries to be a channel—not only a recipient—of God’s goodness.



DELANEY OVERTON develops programs and business strategies for impact-oriented organizations in education, food access, environmentalism, and other sectors. She experiences God’s love and glory through creation, especially the seemingly unending ocean.



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IRENE PACE trusts the Lord Jesus Christ and believes his life-changing message of salvation. She writes about God’s lessons learned through adversity; she speaks with gratitude and joy.



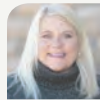
JANICE MAYO MATHERS is author of multiple books and Bible studies, including *Every Season: Embracing a Forever Kind of Purpose* (Stonecroft) and *Mothers-in-Law vs. Daughters-in-Law: Let There Be Peace*. She helps women see adverse circumstances as godly challenges.



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KAT ARMSTRONG, MA, is a Bible teacher, preacher, coach, and ministry leader. She cofounded the Polished Network and authored *No More Holding Back, The In-Between Place*, and the Storyline Bible Studies series.



KATHERINE LEARY ALSDORF founded and directed Redeemer Church's Center for Faith & Work. She co-authored *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* with Timothy Keller.



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KATRIEL OVERTON is a Christian with autism who experiences and believes all people can feel and know God's love if they choose. She sees God helping her love people, including herself.



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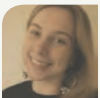
RACHEL LINDSAY McCANTS is an author, speaker, and founder of R. Lindsay Unlimited, which encourages, inspires, and challenges ladies to raise their self-worth and standards and to walk in God's will, in Jesus' name.



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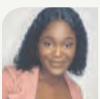
SARA HALL is a professional marathon runner and cofounder of the Hall Steps Foundation. She has been competing professionally for seventeen years in various distances and using her platform to bring aid to orphaned children in Ethiopia.



SARAH OVERTON, MA, is a researcher specializing in refugee and asylum policy. She has worked in the UK Parliament, public-policy think tanks, and at Lambeth Palace.



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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 complete list of the translators can be found at tyndale.com/nlt/scholars.

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION: OUR CHOICE FOR YOU

I (Naomi) love the New Living Translation because the brilliant people who translated it used simple, understandable words that we use in our everyday lives. Have you ever found that writing a simple sentence is harder than a long, complicated one? I love this translation because it serves *you*—the woman we most want to help find her story in God’s story. I want the language to be an invitation—not a barrier—for you. It’s easy to read, and the language draws us in.

Here is one of my favorites:

Don't be afraid, for I am with you.

Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you.

I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10

I prayed this verse while in labor with my twins, one of whom I knew I would deliver stillborn. The other, I wasn't sure how she would be when I finally saw her after such a stressful, high-risk pregnancy. I held these simple words on a 3x5 index card and sensed God's victorious right hand strengthening me to breathe, bear the pain, and set aside my fear of the future.

Isaiah is a big book with lofty ideas. It's also full of gems like this one that feel like God is speaking straight to us amid our everyday lives, full of stresses and anxieties. And the New Living Translation reads in a way our hearts can hear.

We believe you will experience this, too, as you move through the Bible with the help of our sisterhood of contributors. We all experience times when we read the Bible and need a little help understanding, but the more straightforward the language, the more our hearts and minds can absorb the words.

For more about this translation, see the Introduction to the New Living Translation on the following page.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

The pure application of either of these translation philosophies would create translations at opposite ends of the translation spectrum. But in reality, all translations contain a mixture of these two philosophies. A purely formal-equivalence translation would be unintelligible in English, and a

purely dynamic-equivalence translation would risk being unfaithful to the original. That is why translations shaped by dynamic-equivalence theory are usually quite literal when the original text is relatively clear, and the translations shaped by formal-equivalence theory are sometimes quite dynamic when the original text is obscure.

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

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

TRANSLATION PROCESS AND TEAM

To produce an accurate translation of the Bible into contemporary English, the translation team needed the skills necessary to enter into the thought patterns of the ancient

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

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

Throughout the translation and editing process, the Senior Translators and their scholar teams were given a chance to review the editing done by the team of stylists. This ensured that exegetical errors would not be introduced late in the process and that the entire Bible Translation Committee

was happy with the final result. By choosing a team of qualified scholars and skilled stylists and by setting up a process that allowed their interaction throughout the process, the New Living Translation has been refined to preserve the essential formal elements of the original biblical texts, while also creating a clear, understandable English text.

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

WRITTEN TO BE READ ALOUD

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

THE TEXTS BEHIND THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

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

The New Testament translators used the two standard editions of

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

TRANSLATION ISSUES

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

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

- We have converted ancient weights and measures (for example, “ephah” [a unit of dry volume] or “cubit” [a unit of length]) to modern English (American) equivalents, since the ancient measures are not generally meaningful to today's readers. Then in the textual footnotes we offer the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek measures, along with modern metric equivalents.
- Instead of translating ancient currency values literally, we have expressed them in common terms that communicate the message. For example, in the Old Testament,

“ten shekels of silver” becomes “ten pieces of silver” to convey the intended message.

- Since the names of Hebrew months are unknown to most contemporary readers, and since the Hebrew lunar calendar fluctuates from year to year in relation to the solar calendar used today, we have looked for clear ways to communicate the time of year the Hebrew months (such as Abib) refer to. Where it is possible to define a specific ancient date in terms of our modern calendar, we use modern dates in the text. A textual footnote then gives the literal Hebrew date and states the rationale for our rendering.
- Since ancient references to the time of day differ from our modern methods of denoting time, we have used renderings that are instantly understandable to the modern reader. Accordingly, we have rendered specific times of day by using approximate equivalents in terms of our common “o'clock” system.
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the message of the text, its meaning is often illuminated with a textual footnote. For example, in Exodus 2:10 the text reads: “The princess named him Moses, for she explained, ‘I lifted him out of the water.’”
Sometimes, when the actual meaning of a name is clear, that meaning is included in parentheses within the text itself. For example, the text at Genesis 16:11 reads: “You are to name him Ishmael (*which means ‘God hears’*), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress.” Since the original hearers and readers would have instantly understood the meaning of the name “Ishmael,” we have provided modern readers with the same information so they can experience the text in a similar way.
- Many words and phrases carry a great deal of cultural meaning that was obvious to the original readers but needs explanation in our own culture. For example, the phrase “they beat their breasts” (Luke 23:48) in ancient times meant

that people were very upset, often in mourning. In our translation we chose to translate this phrase dynamically for clarity: “They went home in deep sorrow.”

- Metaphorical language is sometimes difficult for contemporary readers to understand, so at times we have chosen to translate or illuminate the meaning of a metaphor. For example, the ancient poet writes, “Your neck is like the tower of David” (Song of Songs 4:4). We have rendered it “Your neck is as beautiful as the tower of David” to clarify the intended positive meaning of the simile.
- When the content of the original language text is poetic in character, we have rendered it in English poetic form. Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism, a literary form where a second phrase (or in some instances a third or fourth) echoes the initial phrase in some way. Whenever possible, we sought to represent these parallel phrases in natural poetic English.
- The Greek term *hai Ioudaioi* is literally translated “the Jews” in many English translations. In the Gospel of John, however, this term doesn’t always refer to the Jewish people generally. In some contexts, it refers more particularly to the Jewish religious leaders. We have attempted to capture the meaning in these different contexts by using terms such as “the people” (with a footnote: Greek *the Jewish people*) or “the Jewish leaders,” where appropriate.
- One challenge we faced was how to translate accurately the ancient biblical text that was originally written in a context where male-oriented terms were used to refer to humanity generally. We needed to respect the nature of the ancient context while also trying to make the translation clear to a modern audience that tends to read male-oriented language as applying only to males. Often the original text, though using masculine nouns and pronouns, clearly intends that the message be applied to both men and women. A typical example is found in the New Testament letters, where the believers are called “brothers” (*adelphoi*). Yet it is clear

from the content of these letters that they were addressed to all the believers—male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word as “brothers and sisters” in order to represent the historical situation more accurately.

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

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

LEXICAL CONSISTENCY IN TERMINOLOGY

For the sake of clarity, we have translated certain original-language terms consistently, especially within synoptic passages and for commonly repeated rhetorical phrases, and within certain word categories such as divine names and non-theological technical terminology (e.g., liturgical, legal, cultural, zoological, and botanical terms). For theological terms, we have allowed a greater semantic range of acceptable English words or phrases for a single Hebrew or Greek word. We have avoided some theological terms that are not readily understood by many

modern readers. For example, we avoided using words such as “justification” and “sanctification,” which are carryovers from Latin translations. In place of these words, we have provided renderings such as “made right with God” and “made holy.”

THE SPELLING OF PROPER NAMES

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

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

THE RENDERING OF DIVINE NAMES

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

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

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

TEXTUAL FOOTNOTES

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

- When for the sake of clarity the NLT renders a difficult or potentially confusing phrase dynamically, we generally give the literal rendering in a textual footnote. This allows the reader to see the literal source of our dynamic rendering and how our translation relates to other more literal translations. These notes are prefaced with “Hebrew,” “Aramaic,” or “Greek,” identifying the language of the underlying source text. For example, in Acts 2:42 we translated the literal “breaking of bread” (from the Greek) as “the Lord’s Supper” to clarify that this verse refers to the ceremonial practice of the church rather than just an ordinary meal. Then we attached a footnote to “the Lord’s Supper,” which reads: “Greek the breaking of bread.”
- Textual footnotes are also used to show alternative renderings,

prefaced with the word “Or.” These normally occur for passages where an aspect of the meaning is debated. On occasion, we also provide notes on words or phrases that represent a departure from long-standing tradition. These notes are prefaced with “Traditionally rendered.”

For example, the footnote to the translation “serious skin disease” at Leviticus 13:2 says: “Traditionally rendered *leprosy*. The Hebrew word used throughout this passage is used to describe various skin diseases.”

- When our translators follow a textual variant that differs significantly from our standard Hebrew or Greek texts (listed earlier), we document that difference with a footnote. We also footnote cases when the NLT excludes a passage that is included in the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* (and familiar to readers through its translation in the King James Version). In such cases, we offer a translation of the excluded text in a footnote, even though it is generally recognized as a later addition to the Greek text and not part of the original Greek New Testament.
- All Old Testament passages that are quoted in the New Testament are identified by a textual footnote at the New Testament location. When the New Testament clearly quotes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and when it differs significantly in wording from the Hebrew text, we also place a textual footnote at the Old Testament location. This note includes a rendering of the Greek version, along with a cross-reference to the New Testament passage(s) where it is cited (for example, see notes on Psalms 8:2; 53:3; Proverbs 3:12).
- Some textual footnotes provide cultural and historical information on places, things, and people in the Bible that are probably obscure to modern readers. Such notes should aid the reader in understanding the message of the text. For example, in Acts 12:1, “King Herod” is named in this translation as “King Herod Agrippa” and is identified in a footnote as being “the nephew of Herod Antipas and a grandson of Herod the Great.”

- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the meaning of the text, it is either illuminated with a textual footnote or included within parentheses in the text itself. For example, the footnote concerning the name “Eve” at Genesis 3:20 reads: “Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to give life.’” This wordplay in the Hebrew illuminates the meaning of the text, which goes on to say that Eve “would be the mother of all who live.”

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

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

THE BIBLE TRANSLATION COMMITTEE



**OLD
TESTAMENT**



Genesis

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD'S MISSION AND OURS?

God made women and men in God's image, to be like God, and reign over creation.

WHO WROTE IT? Moses, according to Jewish and Christian traditions.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN? The events of Genesis stretch from the beginning of time through the 1800s BC.

HOW IS IT ORGANIZED?

1–5: God creates the world; humans sin

6–11: Flood destroys the world; Noah's family rebuilds

12–25: God provides for Abraham and Sarah and for Hagar and Ishmael

25–35: Isaac and Rebekah's lives; Jacob meets Leah and Rachel and builds their family

36: Esau's many descendants

37–50: Jacob's family suffers betrayal and famine and moves to Egypt

FEATURE HIGHLIGHTS

- + *Being God's Image* (5)
- + *Days of Creation* (6)
- + *Why Would God Punish Eve Like That?* (8)
- + *Eve: Ruined to Redeemed* (9)
- + *Needing Favor: Finding God's Gift* (13)
- + *Image* (43)

Words to Remember are highlighted throughout this book

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO READ?



BC

Timeline

- **CREATION**
— Adam and Eve made by God
— Eve bears Cain and Abel, then Seth
- NOT DATED** ● **FLOOD**
— Noah's wife, sons, and daughters-in-law survive
- 2166 ● **ABRAM BORN**
- 2156 ● **SARAI BORN**
- c. 2100 ● **HAGAR BORN**
- 2091 ● **ABRAM AND SARAI ENTER CANAAN**
- 2066 ● **SARAH GIVES BIRTH TO ISAAC**
- c. 2069 ● **HAGAR AND ISHMAEL RESCUED BY "THE GOD WHO SEES"**
- c. 2050 ● **REBEKAH BORN**
- 2006 ● **REBEKAH GIVES BIRTH TO JACOB AND ESAU**
- c. 1940 ● **LEAH BORN, RACHEL BORN**
- 1929 ● **JACOB FLEES TO HARAN**
- c. 1918 ● **LEAH GIVES BIRTH TO JUDAH**
- 1915 ● **RACHEL GIVES BIRTH TO JOSEPH**
- 1898 ● **JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY**
- c. 1890 ● **TAMAR BECOMES PREGNANT BY JUDAH**
- 1885 ● **JOSEPH RULES EGYPT**
- 1805 ● **JOSEPH DIES**

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.

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.”

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

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

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, . . .*

1:26a Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. 1:27 Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.

1:1 Some Christians read Genesis as a description of how God made the world. Other Christians see it as a poetic celebration of creation that unveils God’s intentions without revealing his methods. Whatever you conclude about the way God made the world, Genesis leaves no room to see our world as an accident. Other biblical accounts of creation agree (for example, Job 38; Psalm 104).

1:11-12 The focus of the creation week is fertility. God told the residents of creation to “be fruitful and multiply” and to “fill the earth” (1:22, 28). He repeatedly emphasized the fruitfulness of plants (1:11-12, 29-30) and made each living thing “able to produce offspring of the same kind” (1:11-12, 21, 25). Like animals, people are residents of the world God made, but unlike animals, people were made in God’s likeness, according to his image.

1:22 In the context of his creative work, God blessed a few specific things: fish and birds (1:21-22), animals and humans (1:25-28), and the seventh day (2:3)—later called the Sabbath. This trilogy of blessings highlights the Creator’s plan: God made humankind in his image to exercise stewardship over the creatures of the earth and to participate in God’s Sabbath rest.

1:26-27 Humans are not divine, but we share kinship with our creator as the only creature made in his image. “Image of God” is our human identity, expressed through the loving rule of creation on God’s behalf (see Psalm 8:5-8). Men and women share this role. Together we participate in the human task of creating culture, maintaining order, and ensuring the flourishing of the natural world. Male and female sexuality is central to what it means to be human because the perpetuation of the human race depends on it.

Theos

IMAGE

MY STORY
WITH GODBeing God's Image—
Finding Our Human Identity and Vocation

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 1:1-31

When I was twenty, I had my first chance to teach in a college classroom under the supervision of my professor. I was hooked. I knew instantly that this is what I was born to do.

You and I are different people. We each possess unique talents and interests and participate in a unique sphere of relationships. The fact that humans have been created as God's image-bearers means that every life is precious—yours, mine, our neighbors, even our enemies (see 9:6). And because we reflect God's image, each of us is needed for the world to be what God intended.

Genesis 1 is a beautifully structured account of God's creative work. At the beginning of the chapter, the earth was "formless and empty" (1:2). Step by step, God created the framework in which life could flourish. On days one to three, God formed three domains, preparing each for inhabitants—light and darkness, water and sky, and dry land. On days four to six, God populated those domains with residents—heavenly lights, fish and birds, and animals and humans. By the end of creation week, the earth was no longer "formless and empty," but organized and filled with life.

The Bible imagines creation as a cosmic temple in which all creatures worship God. Unlike other ancient temples, the Israelite temple lacked a statue or idol of God as a symbol of divine presence in the central sanctuary. God prohibited such images because, as we see in the creation account, humans fill the role of representing him. This mission to represent him, which arises from this crucial chapter, requires every one of us—in a wide variety of ways, in every corner of the globe. Both men and women are essential workers in this task.

Genesis 1:28-30 hints at one particular task envisioned by God. We represent the Creator by being responsible stewards of the world he made. Edible plants are to be food for both humans and animals. This human stewardship does not imply unlimited resources for people or free and unlimited enterprise. Part of our job is to ensure equitable access to the world's resources for both humans and animals. If we pollute the natural world and endanger animal or human habitats, then we are not fulfilling our God-given roles. If each of us leans into our roles as God's image-bearers, his glory will be evident over the whole earth.

Our mission is
to represent
God on earth.

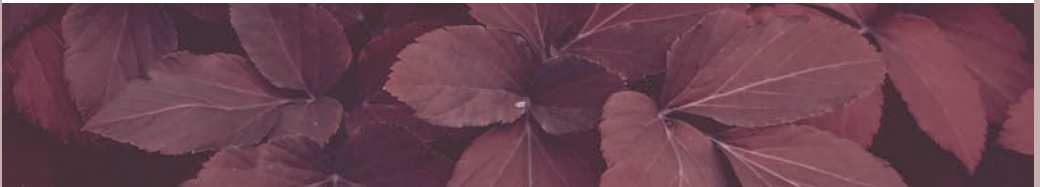
IMAGINE

How does it feel to know you are God's appointed representative?

In what ways might God be calling you to care for some part of the earth?

"My mom and I have very different gifts. While I teach in a college classroom, my mom works in her sewing room, using her skills to make feminine hygiene products to ensure that teenage girls in Africa can stay in school."

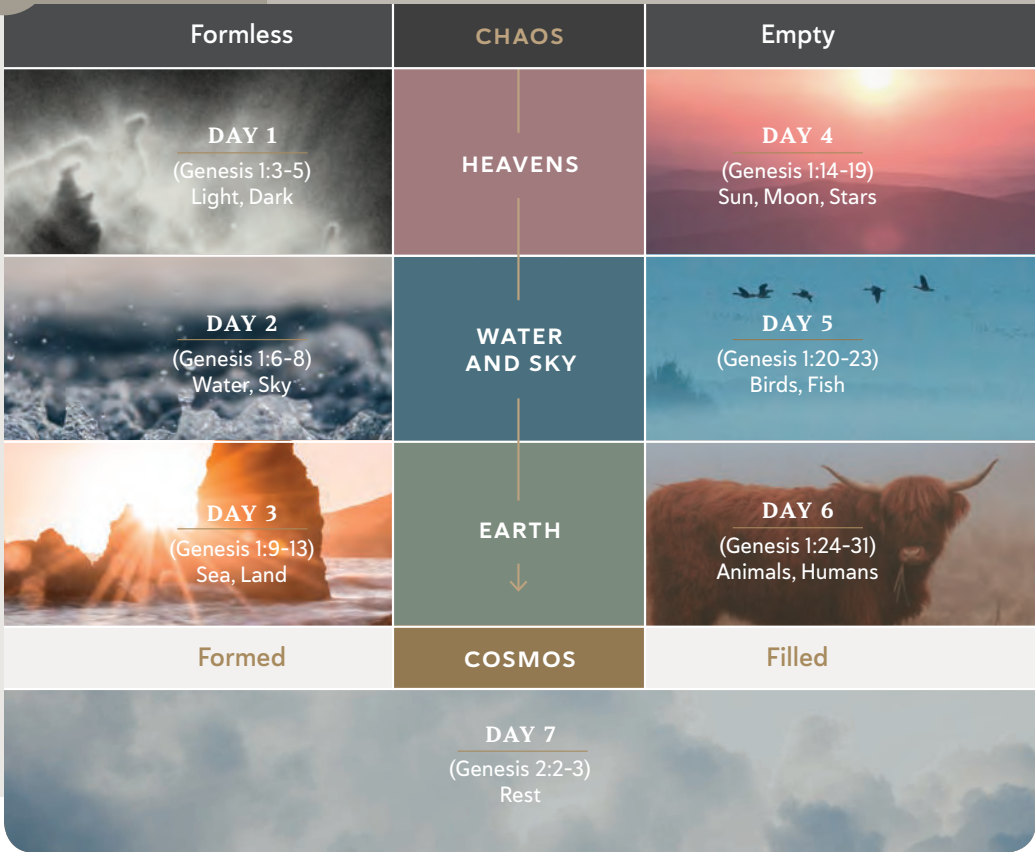
CARMEN JOY IMES, PhD, is an author, speaker, blogger, YouTuber, and serves as associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University in California.





Insight

DAYS OF CREATION



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.

2:2 Or *ceased*; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or *mist*.

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

2:2 God did not rest because he was tired. He rested because his creative work was finished. He rested the way a king rests on his throne when his dominion is at peace. The creation week is a

model for us to emulate. None of us can work nonstop. We need regular periods of rest. Genesis 1:1–2:3 invites us to pattern our work week after God’s.

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 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

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

sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

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

²³"At last!" the man exclaimed.

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

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

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

The 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

2:7 God personally formed the first human (*adam* in Hebrew) from the dust of the ground (*adamah* in Hebrew) and brought him to life with divine breath. This description emphasizes God's personal attention, and it reinforces the representative role of humans as God's image. In ancient Mesopotamia, artisans would craft an idol (or "image") and wash the statue's mouth in a garden ritual, preparing it to be inhabited by the divine presence. Similarly, God placed the first human in a garden and breathed life into him so that he could carry out his role as God's representative (2:15), a fitting role for someone made in God's image (1:27).

2:18-20 For the first time, something in creation was "not good," namely, the lack of a partner for the human. The man could not carry out all his work alone. He needed "a helper . . . just right for him." The Hebrew word *ezer*, translated "helper" here, is not a term of subservience, as though the man needed a servant. In fact, the term *ezer* most often describes God as Israel's helper (see Genesis 49:25; Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7; Psalm 146:5). The human needed a true partner who would be just like him.

2:21-22 While the first human came from the ground, the second human came from the first. This origin emphasizes their essential unity. They are "of the same kind." The word "rib"

may be misleading. The Hebrew term (*tsela*) denotes the "side" of something or a "supporting beam" (see Exodus 25:12). The verbal form of the word (*tsala*) means "to limp" (Genesis 32:31). One might even imagine that God divided the first human in half, making each half into a whole.

2:23-25 Woman (*ishah* in Hebrew) was from man (*ish*) just like human (*adam*) was from the ground (*adamah*). The word-plays in Hebrew underscore the connectedness of humans to the earth and to each other. Unity in marriage is possible because man and woman share the essential characteristics of humanity, including the status as God's image-bearer and representative (1:27). Their relationship began in mutual trust and honor.

3:1-7 Did the serpent ask the woman because she would be more easily deceived? She was not present when God instructed Adam. This may explain Paul's instruction in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 that women be allowed to learn so that they will not be easily deceived. But even though the woman is the first to appear in this scene, the man was clearly present and culpable as well. Neither resisted the temptation to define good and evil for themselves. Every temptation begins with casting doubt on the goodness of God. Cultivating trust in him is the surest defense against temptation.



Perspective

Why would God punish Eve like that?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 3:1-19

Why would God impose such consequences for Eve's one wayward choice? After all, when she decided to take and eat, she did not yet know good and evil. Though adult in form, Eve was young in creation and unwise to the serpent's shrewdness.

When a toddler plays with fire, will the parent discipline for spite? Or to protect? Banning Adam and Eve was God's rescue. In their fallen state, eating of the tree of life would tragically seal them in sin's aftermath.

Eve bore some of God's own torment. Her pain in bringing forth life would compel her toward the Creator, and she would begin to understand how a loving parent chooses pain to give life. Eve's love for Adam would also bear pain, requiring a lifetime of learning what it means to partner in the mystery of marriage.

Our pain compels our outreach for God, and therein lies the gift.

Eve's consequences led to another sacred tree, the Cross, from which we now partake. This time, the body and blood of Christ and the pain he bore delivers us into life everlasting, restoring our perfect communion with God. As Paul says,

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. (Romans 5:18)

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *Perhaps unaware of what her choice would mean, how was Eve's perspective limited? How did Eve's understanding grow?*

MINE: *"We do not get to choose results, only our actions. We can practice choosing wisely and entrusting results to God."*

YOURS: *Even in pain, how might we trust God as a loving parent?*

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

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.⁹ Then 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.*"

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*.

3:11-13 Rather than confessing, the man blamed the woman for giving him the fruit and God for giving him the woman. The woman followed suit, accusing the serpent. The serpent played a role and would be punished (3:14), but that did not release the woman or the man from their guilt.

3:16-19 The consequences of human rebellion complicated human vocation. Pain in childbirth would make it more difficult to fill the earth. The partnership God intended between man and woman would become antagonistic, so that rather than ruling the earth, they would seek to dominate each other. Fruitful cultivation of the land would prove difficult. Although humans do far more than have babies and plant crops, these activities bear the brunt of the consequences of sin because they are essential to the fulfillment of the creation blessing (1:26-28).

Eve

IDENTITY

Ruined to Redeemed

Eve remembers . . .

The fruit looked so good. It was so beautiful I could almost taste it before I bit into it. The serpent promised that good things would come from it: I would be wise and know everything. That first bite was so sweet . . .

And then everything changed, dramatically.

If I had only known. I didn't really understand the consequences. Adam was right there, and he didn't stop me either. In fact, he later blamed me. Wasn't he to blame too? Oh, God, now what?

The consequences: pain in childbirth, desire to control my husband. What does that even mean?

A promise: A descendant of mine will one day crush the head of the serpent? When? How?

Life became painful. We were driven out of the Garden, never to reenter. God gave us clothes, but we had to learn how to survive. We lost two sons—Cain killed Abel, then Cain was banished from our presence. Oh, the pain of loss!

Yet in the pain, God provided. He gave us Seth, a son to carry on life. We learned to trust that God is still in charge.

EVE'S STORY IS TOLD IN GENESIS 2:19–4:26.

God is bigger than our missteps and our pain. He is always ready to restore and provide.

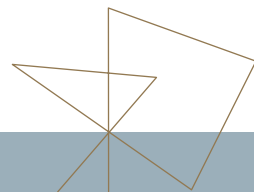
IDENTIFY

What life-changing events have you experienced?

Where do you find God in them?

"I miscarried my second child, propelling me into early menopause. Then, God opened doors to counsel grieving women and to a new career in academia, which I may not have pursued if I had a small child at home."

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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. 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? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Descendants of Cain

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

3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.” **3:22** *Or the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. **4:1a** *Or the man*; also in 4:25. **4:1b** *Or I have acquired*. *Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “produce” or “acquire.” **4:8** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks “*Let’s go out into the fields*.” **4:13** *Or My sin*. **4:16** *Nod* means “wandering.” **4:18** *Or the ancestor of*, and so throughout the verse.

3:20-24 God graciously clothed Adam and Eve since they had become ashamed of their nakedness. In his mercy, God prevented them from eating of the tree of life, so that they would not live forever in their state of alienation from God and each other.

4:1 Eve recognized God’s blessing in the gift of children. The birth of a son ensured the continuation of the family line. However, the tragic consequences of sin threatened her family’s survival. Cain did not offer God his best, and his jealousy toward Abel drove him to kill his own brother.

4:17 Where did Cain find a wife? If Adam and Eve were the only people, then he would have to have married his sister. However, Genesis does not specifically claim that Adam and Eve were the only humans created. It’s possible that their story is an archetype of the human experience. The existence of other humans seems to be implied in Cain’s fear that others would kill him if he wandered alone (4:14-15). In 1 Corinthians 15:22, the apostle Paul speaks of Adam’s representative role for humanity. Some believe Adam’s role requires him to be the genetic parent of all humans, while others do not.

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!"

4:19 Lamech was the first polygamist mentioned in the Bible. Marrying two women is contrary to God's pattern for marriage (2:24) and might have been a manifestation of the rebellion of Cain's descendants. Lamech later boasted to his wives about

his vengeful spirit, revealing his violent nature. Genesis certainly does not present him as a role model. For other negative examples related to polygamy, see 28:6-9; 29:14–30:24.

Dikos

IMAGE

MY STORY WITH
FAMILY & FRIENDS

Seeing Our Families Shine

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 4:1-12

Have you ever had a rock hit your windshield while driving? The sound may startle you, and at first you might not see any damage. Then a few days later, you notice a tiny chip. Then the chip becomes a crack, and soon there's a line across the windshield you can no longer ignore.

Isn't that how brokenness works in our families? Cain's sin starts so small—unjustified anger—and only he knows about it. In the end, his selfishness and jealousy break the entire family.

Abel loses life.

Cain loses community.

Eve and Adam lose two sons.

Has your family experienced loss because sin caused a fracture? Divorce was ours. As we meet families in the Bible and consider our own families, we see that every family member has flaws. And our failures hurt us and others.

But that's not the end of the story.

Family is God's idea. He longs to see whole, healthy, joy-filled homes that display his love. Just as an intact windshield helps us see and protects those in the car, asking God to show us what's broken can make us a blessing to our families—and make our families a blessing to others.

Through divorce, I lost much. But God restored. He redeemed. He also stretched my previously limited view of family. When we come to the end of denial and invite God's intervention, he responds. For every crack, his love restores.

God's love brings
blessings, sparkling
through our family's
shattered places.

IMAGINE

Consider your best and highest dream for your family. How has God positioned you to help lead them there?

What conversations or actions of love need to happen?

"I pray God helps me see my own faults and be courageous enough to address them before they splinter and grow."

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Perspective

Does God okay the “forcible taking” of women?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 6:1-8

What “sons of God” would forcibly take any women they wanted to be their wives? This doesn’t sound very godly at all.

Many scholars resolve this by concluding that the “sons of God” phrasing refers to spiritual or angelic beings who had rebelled against God. Others suggest that it refers to human rulers who married commoners. Still others argue that it refers to descendants of Seth who married the female descendants of Cain.

Regardless, we recognize that the sexual arena has been a favorite playground for the enemy from the time man and woman first knew their nakedness (3:7). At the birth of their shame, they covered their sexual bodies with fig leaves.

This passage from Genesis 6 conceals whether the human women were consenting to these unions or were taken against their will. But one thing is clear: This sexual deviancy wreaked havoc.

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *What does the phrase “took any they wanted” suggest about how these “sons of God” esteemed women and interacted with them?*

MINE: *“I am not a fan of the word victim—at least with respect to many of my own experiences. While I acknowledge its appropriate use when I have been deceived, used, or harmed, I don’t want to downplay any part of choice I may have had in a matter: how I show up, how I respond, what resources I turn to, whether an incident defines or grows me, whether I reach for God or reject him. I am not responsible for others’ choices, and sometimes I may not have a choice, but when I do, I can ask, What choices will I make today?”*

YOURS: *How might you guard against sexual trouble and champion sexual responsibility today?*

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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, 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

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.*

5:1-3 This second biblical mention of the image of God helps to define it. God made humans to be like him. Similarly, Adam fathered a son who was just like him—in his very image. Our identity as God’s image implies kinship. We are related to God in a way analogous to a human family. This passage also affirms that the human status as God’s image was not lost when Adam and Eve sinned.

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.

5:29 *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” **6:2** Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. **6:3** Greek version reads *will not remain in*.

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

A World Gone Wrong

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

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

6:1-4 Obviously the birth of daughters was nothing new, but in this passage, the daughters take center stage. Their stunning beauty attracted some unlikely suitors. Scholars have suggested three possibilities for the identity of the “sons of God” in this passage: angelic beings who left their stations to cohabit with

women, royalty who intermarried with commoners, or members of Seth’s family who married women from Cain’s family. Language reminiscent of 3:6 (“saw . . . took”) shows the rebellious nature of this act. The result of these unions was a warrior race known for its wickedness.



Come Close

NEEDING FAVOR: FINDING GOD’S GIFT

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 6:5-9

Favor. It’s something we pray for often. Favor in our jobs. Favor in our relationships. Favor in our personal endeavors. We read about the lives of women and men in the Bible such as Abel, Abraham, Noah, Hannah, and Jesus’ mother, Mary, who all experienced the favor of God in one way or another. Whether it was for a season or a lifetime, the blessing of God’s favor truly changed the lives of these individuals. God’s favor still has the power to do so for us today.

There are quite a few mentions of God’s favor (or “grace,” depending on the translation) in the Bible. In a famous proverb, quoted multiple times in the New Testament, favor is attached to the character trait of humility (Proverbs 3:34; see James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Could it be that our humility moves God to grant us favor? When we think of others who lost God’s favor, such as Cain or King Saul, could a lack of humility have contributed?

Favor is a gift; we can’t work ourselves into it. We accept and receive it by faith through our relationship with God. As we learn to love the Giver more than the gift, we will begin to see strands of his favor weaving throughout our lives.

REFLECT “For you bless the godly, O LORD; you surround them with your shield of love.” PSALM 5:12

Lord, thank you for the gift of your gracious favor. May I walk humbly before you all the days of my life. Amen.

CONSIDER “Humility is the gateway into the grace and the favor of God.” HAROLD WARNER

God’s favor is a gift;
greater still is knowing
the gift-Giver.

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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

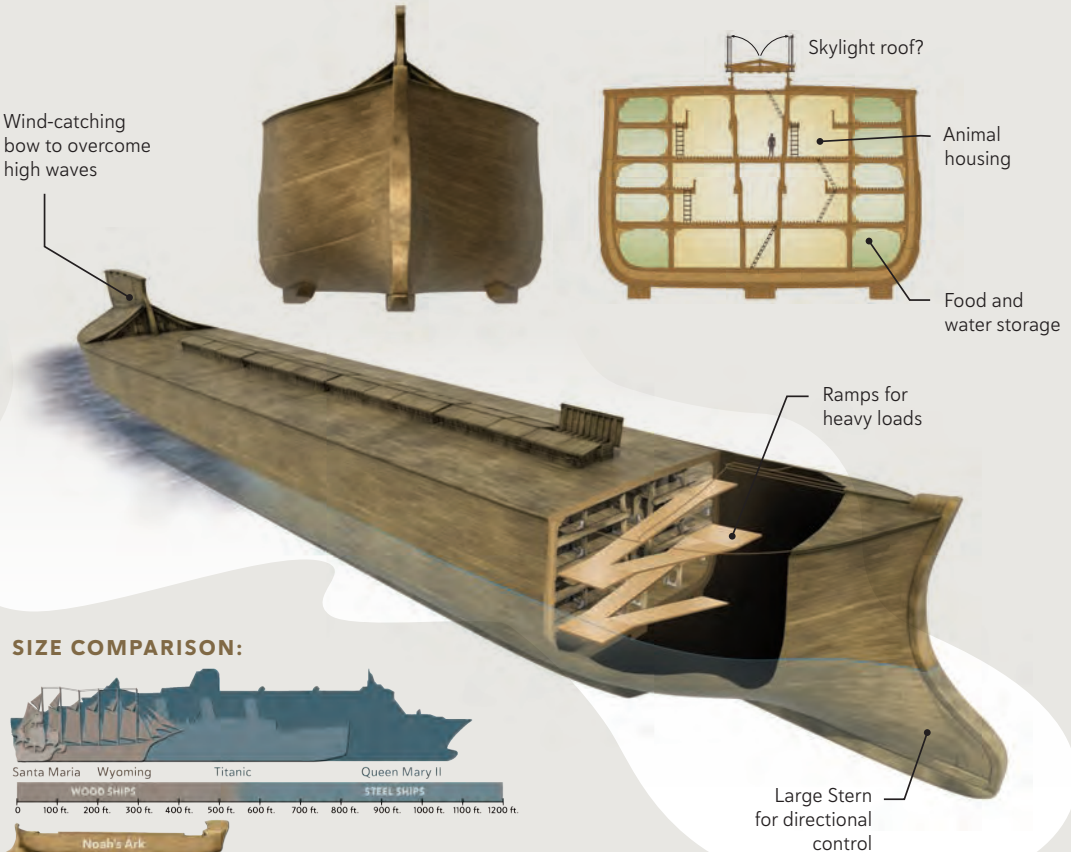
6:14a Traditionally rendered *an ark*. **6:14b** Or *gopher wood*. **6:15** Hebrew *300 cubits* [138 meters] long, *50 cubits* [23 meters] wide, and *30 cubits* [13.8 meters] high. **6:16** Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit* [46 centimeters].



Insight

NOAH'S ARK

These illustrations depict what the ark might have looked like based on the descriptions we read in 6:14-16. Noah and his wife, and their sons and daughters-in-law, and all the creatures they brought on board survived the Flood in a boat like this.



around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

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

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

The Flood Covers the Earth

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

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**.

6:11–7:24 Human wickedness had reached the point that God decided to start over with Noah, the only godly person alive. The Flood would return the world to its pre-created state—formless and empty, with water covering everything. Therefore, Noah and his family needed to preserve a pair of every animal to repopulate the earth after the Flood (see **8:17**).

8:1 This verse is the center of a massive chiasm (or literary

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

sandwich). What precedes this verse is a description of the building and boarding of the ark and the rising of the waters for 150 days. What follows is a description of the receding of the waters for 150 days and the disembarking of the animals. God’s *remembering* Noah does not suggest that he forgot about him but marks the moment in which God took action to keep his promise.

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.¹² He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

¹³Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying.¹⁴ Two 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.¹⁹ And 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.*²¹ And 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.²² As 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.² All 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.³ I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables.⁴ But 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.⁶ If 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.⁷ Now 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,¹⁰ and 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.¹¹ Yes, 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.¹³ I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth.¹⁴ When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds,¹⁵ and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life.¹⁶ When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.”¹⁷ Then 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.)¹⁹ From 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.²¹ One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent.²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers.²³ Then 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*.

9:1-3 The blessing first given to Adam (1:28) was reissued to Noah, the “Adam” of the newly cleansed world in need of repopulation and cultural expansion. God introduced two modifications to the created order: Now animals would live in terror of humans, and humans were allowed to eat meat along with seed-bearing plants (see 1:29)—a change in diet related to the animals’ terror.

9:5-6 Violence, including murder, was a major factor in bringing about God’s judgment in the form of the Flood (4:8; 6:11, 13). At this new beginning for humans, God affirmed the sanctity of human life and established a system of retributive justice for the taking of human life. Being created in God’s image gives humans

a unique status and authority within creation. Since murder destroys a person made in God’s image, a murderer incurred the ultimate penalty.

9:20-25 The significance of Ham’s shameful behavior is not fully clear. He may have engaged sexually with his father or with his mother (this type of act is elsewhere referred to literally in the original language as “uncovering the nakedness of one’s father,” Leviticus 20:11). It is possible that he merely gazed upon his naked father and, rather than covering him and keeping the matter secret, dishonored him by mocking him to his brothers. The curse likely fell on Ham’s son Canaan to emphasize the shameful father-son dynamic of Ham’s sin.

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

“May Canaan be cursed!
May he be the lowest of servants to his
relatives.”

²⁶Then Noah said,

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

²⁷ May God expand the territory of Japheth!
May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,*
and may Canaan be his servant.”

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

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

Descendants of Japheth

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

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

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

Descendants of Ham

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

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

⁸Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth. ⁹Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, “This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” ¹⁰He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech,

9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem.* **10:4** As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. **10:9** Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b. **10:10** Hebrew *Shinar*.

10:1-32 The birth of many children after the Flood began to fulfill God’s purposes for the renewed creation (9:1; see 1:26-28). This chapter, often called the Table of Nations, lists seventy nations descending from Noah’s sons. The total of seventy names indicates completeness and symbolizes the totality of the world, which would later be blessed by the descendants of Abraham (12:3; 18:18). Women are not named because male heirs were the basis for genealogical records.



Perspective

Where are the women?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 10:1-32

Genesis 10 ranks among the most boring parts of the Bible. So many hard-to-pronounce names!

Are you bothered by how few women appear in these lists?

The ancient Israelites usually recorded only male heirs in their genealogies. A genealogy traced the transfer of wealth from one generation to another and identified tribal membership through fathers and sons. Without a complex chart, marriage alliances between clans were much more difficult to trace. Women were remembered through stories and songs, rather than through genealogies. And they took pride in the social standing of their fathers, husbands, and sons.

God revealed himself in ways that made sense to ancient cultures, and he engages with us in ways that make sense today. Our task is to read the Bible well in its ancient context, discern how it reveals God’s character, and then ask how we can live out its principles in our contexts today.

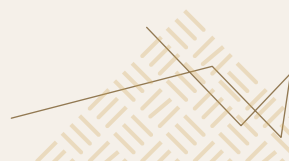
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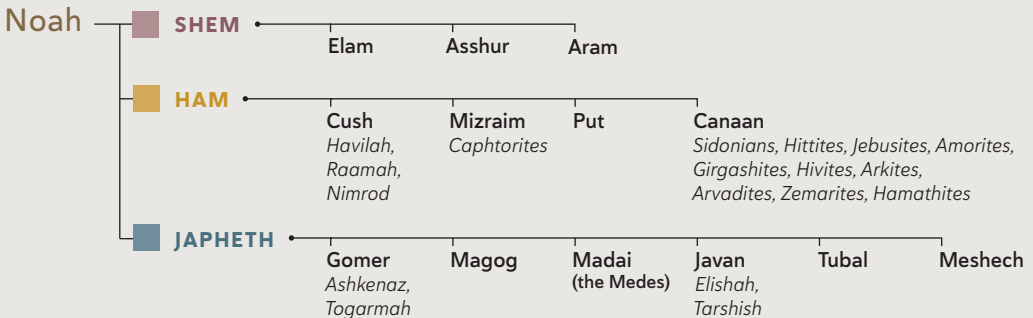
HERS: *How would an ancient Israelite woman have felt hearing her husband’s name read aloud in a list such as this?*

MINE: *“I love finding women’s names in Bible genealogies. It is rare, so when one does appear, it means she is notable in some way. I love to be a detective and find out why!”*

YOURS: *Can you imagine life as an ancient Israelite woman? Would you have been glad to stay in the shadows? Or would you have longed to play a bigger role in public life?*

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Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

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

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,* ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and the territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, near Lasha.

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

Descendants of Shem

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

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

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

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

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

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan.

³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

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

10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out.* **10:14** Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites.*

Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. **10:15** Hebrew *ancestor of Heth.* **10:21** Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth.* **10:24** Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah.* Compare Luke 3:36. **11:2** Hebrew *Shinar.* **11:9** Or *Babylon.* *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." **11:10** Or *the ancestor of;* also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. **11:11** Or *the birth of this ancestor of;* also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. **11:12-13** Greek version reads ¹²*When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan.* ¹³*After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died.* Compare Luke 3:35-36.

11:1-9 After the Flood, human civilization spread far and wide in fulfillment of God's purposes (9:1). Babel represented a vain attempt to avoid scattering. The tower was likely a zig-gurat, a massive stepped tower built to support a staircase near a temple garden, likely intended to facilitate the descent

Conclusion

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

The Tower of Babel

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

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

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

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

The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem's family.

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

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

of the gods to earth. Without divine instruction to build, the project represented a human attempt to dictate the terms of acceptable worship. The people's desire for fame and security apart from God prompted the Lord's response to confuse their building efforts.

¹⁴When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.
¹⁶When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.
¹⁸When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. ²¹After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.
²²When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. ²³After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.
²⁴When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

Shalom

IMAGE

MY STORY OF MY
 UNIQUE INFLUENCE

God’s Call and Mine

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 12:2-3

“What is my purpose?” I pleaded, scrambling down New Mexico’s tallest mountain. A lightning storm above me, with no trees to protect me, I hurtled down the boulder field. For months, I’d asked God for my calling. Now, intensified by visions of a life cut short, I yelled it. Maybe you cry out for purpose too. As with Abram, God’s calling comes:

- before we bless—Abram didn’t earn God’s blessing;
- to bless others—God empowered Abram to do good;
- to bless near and far—Abram gave life to family, nation, and ultimately, God’s redemption plan.

Abram’s calling fit within God’s mission to reconcile his creation to himself, a mission God actively pursues throughout the Bible. God’s purpose begins with God himself, not us; is empowered by him, not us; and comes through those he chooses, not by our choice alone.

As with Abram, God made his call clear for me, too. As I scuttled down, avoiding the lightning strikes, I sensed it. It came as though a whisper from God, “I am your purpose.” “Ow,” I yelled, as I caught a tree and hugged it, glad even for its rough bark that stopped my descent. Like the tree, this answer protected me from exposure to any lesser calling. My calling begins with, is empowered by, and is guided by God; no other source will do.

Knowing my calling comes from God, not me, gives me confidence to press on.

IMAGINE

How might seeing God as your chief purpose guide you?

“In seminary, I learned to see the entire Bible reflecting God’s mission to restore. Knowing my calling comes from God, not me, gives me confidence to live on purpose for a lifetime.”

NAOMI CRAMER OVERTON, MBA, DIS, lives to realize beauty-filled visions that lift us to flourishing, with our families and beyond. Naomi has been CEO for Stonecroft and MOPS, director with Compassion International and World Vision, and General Editor for this Bible.



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

The Family of Terah

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

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

The Call of Abram

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

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

⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants.*" And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who

11:32 Some ancient versions read *145 years*; compare 11:26 and 12:4. **12:7** Hebrew *seed*.

11:30 Sarai, Rebekah, and Rachel all experienced infertility (25:21; 29:31). Sarai's infertility introduced a paradox between her experience and God's promise of many descendants (12:2). Frequently in the Old Testament, God demonstrated his sovereignty by miraculously giving children to women who had previously been unable to have children (Judges 13:3; 1 Samuel 1:2; 2:5; see also Psalm 113:9; Isaiah 54:1).

12:1-3 Before Abram could experience God's blessing, he had to step out in obedience by setting out on a journey of unknown length and destination. The exclusivity of God's covenant with Abram may seem troubling at first, but God blessed his family so that they could bless all the other families on earth. Abram's blessing was God's solution for

had appeared to him. ⁸After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

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

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

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

Abram and Lot Separate

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

the brokenness and violence of the post-Flood world (see Psalm 67).

12:10-20 Abram deceived Pharaoh regarding his wife's identity rather than trusting God's protection, putting both her and Pharaoh's household at risk (see 20:1-18; 26:1-11). Sarai was in fact his half sister (20:12), but Abram's deception resulted in their expulsion from Egypt.

13:1-18 God had asked Abram to leave his father's family (12:1), but he took his nephew Lot with him. Lot's company became problematic when the two households grew so large that the land could not support them both. Abram gave Lot first choice of land because he believed in God's promise. After they parted ways, God reaffirmed his plan to bless Abram (13:14-17).



Abram, Sarai, their extended family, and their servants walked from Ur to Haran (600 miles), on to Canaan (400 miles), then down to Egypt (325 miles), and back to Canaan again. How many steps do you walk a day? Women worldwide walk 5,000 steps daily. If Sarai had done that, it would have taken her 660 days to complete this route.

5,000
steps
per day



Abram had built the altar, and there he worshiped the LORD again.

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

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

¹⁰Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. ¹²So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. ¹³But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

¹⁴After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. ¹⁵I am giving all this land, as

far as you can see, to you and your descendants* as a permanent possession. ¹⁶And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."

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

Abram Rescues Lot

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

³This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). ⁴For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

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

⁸Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea. ⁹They fought

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9. 14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea*. 14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10.

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

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

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

Melchizedek Blesses Abram

¹⁷After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

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

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

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

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

²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give back my

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

14:11-16 Lot's unfortunate choice to live near Sodom resulted in trouble for himself and for Abram. Lot had chosen land that looked fruitful, but the violent and corrupt residents would ruin him (19:1-38).

14:18-20 The story of Melchizedek portrays the initial fulfillment of 12:1-3, where God declared that nations who blessed Abram would be blessed. Abram shared with Melchizedek the spoils of his victory. Melchizedek was a non-Israelite priest who feared God, pointing to the future expansion of the Kingdom of God among non-Israelites. The author of Hebrews saw justification for Christ's priesthood here. Like Melchizedek, Jesus was not from Israel's priestly line (see Hebrews 7).



Perspective

God's ideal or our real?

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: GENESIS 14:11-16

Is ancient Hebrew culture an ideal to emulate? Or is it incidental to the message?

In some cases, God gives instructions about how to live based on universal truths. For example, every human being is made in the image of God, so every human life is precious and worth protecting (9:6). But other times the Bible describes practices that do not easily transfer to our context today.

Abraham and Sarah lived as semi-nomadic tent dwellers who kept herds of animals. And in that day, the men would often fight battles and take women as plunder. But God is not asking us to move into tents, keep sheep, and carry swords. Does that mean these stories have nothing to teach us?

Ancient Hebrew culture does not provide a template for us to replicate. We are not called to re-create culture-specific elements in our own lives, and many times the characters are not models for emulation. But we can still learn a great deal about God through these stories, including the ways he shows himself to be faithful, even to flawed people—just like us.

VIEWPOINTS

HERS: *Sarah might shudder to think women would read her stories and think of her as a role model. She had her fair share of failures and likely felt she was often just muddling through.*

MINE: *"Seeing how God communicated to ancient cultures inspires me. God works in and through flawed people in less-than-ideal societies. That means he can work through me, too, even though I have a long way to go!"*

YOURS: *Can you think of aspects of our culture that are less than ideal? And can you see ways that God works in and through us anyway?*

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John

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD'S MISSION AND OURS?

Jesus gives life's true and best story.

WHO WROTE IT? John, the disciple Jesus loved.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN? Tradition says John wrote later than the other three Gospel writers, after AD 85, describing events that occurred in the first three decades of the first century AD.

HOW IS IT ORGANIZED?

1: God takes on human form as Jesus and begins ministry

2–6: Jesus performs miracles and speaks with women and men who are insiders and outsiders

7–10: Jesus teaches at Jewish festivals in Jerusalem

11–12: Jesus raises his friend Lazarus from the dead, then goes to Jerusalem and announces his own death

13–17: Jesus instructs his disciples at their last meal together

18–19: Jesus is tried and executed

20–21: Jesus rises from the dead and appears to his disciples

Words to Remember are highlighted throughout this book

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO READ?



BC Timeline

- 37 ● HEROD THE GREAT BEGINS TO RULE AS KING OVER PALESTINE
- 7/6 ● ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH CONCEIVE JOHN THE BAPTIST; MARY CONCEIVES JESUS BY GOD'S SPIRIT
- 6/5 ● JESUS, MARY'S CHILD AND THE SON OF GOD, IS BORN
- 5/4 ● MARY, JOSEPH, AND JESUS ESCAPE TO EGYPT
- 4 ● HEROD THE GREAT DIES
- 4/3 ● JESUS' FAMILY RETURNS TO NAZARETH

AD

- 6 ● JUDEA BECOMES A ROMAN PROVINCE
- 6/7 ● YOUNG JESUS VISITS THE TEMPLE
- 14 ● TIBERIUS CAESAR BECOMES EMPEROR OF ROME
- 26 ● PONTIUS PILATE APPOINTED GOVERNOR IN JUDEA; JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MINISTRY BEGINS
- 27 ● JESUS BEGINS HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY; JESUS MEETS WITH NICODEMUS
- 28 ● JOHN BAPTIZES JESUS; JESUS CHOOSES TWELVE DISCIPLES
- 29 ● JESUS FEEDS 5,000+ INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN
- 30 ● JESUS IS CRUCIFIED, RISES FROM THE DEAD, AND ASCENDS TO HEAVEN

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.*

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

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

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵John 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.'"

¹⁶From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another.* ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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.

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?"

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.* **1:6** 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.* **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.***

1:12-14 The book of John speaks of God as Father more than any other New Testament book. God's fatherhood in both testaments emphasizes God's authority and goodness, as well as his *relational* attribute. But, seeing God as Father is not the only way to understand our relationship with him. John also uses birth

"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.*"

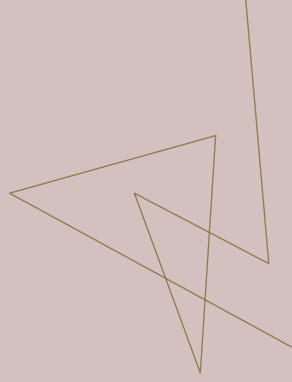
The First Disciples

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?"

as the metaphor for how God brings us into his family (see also 3:3-8). Therefore, we can also connect with God as a mother who purposefully conceives us and gives birth to us. For women who have abusive or absent fathers, John invites us to believe that Jesus provides a way to join a new family, God's family (see 14:18).



“This is how
God loved
the world:
He gave
his one and
only Son.”

JOHN
3:16



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?”

“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.”

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*. 1:51 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]. 2:17 Or “Concern for God’s house will be my undoing.” Ps 69:9.

2:3 An ancient Jewish wedding banquet was a week-long celebration, and if “the wine supply ran out,” the host family would be embarrassed for not planning properly. Perhaps Jesus arrived unexpectedly (see also Matthew 25:1-13), accompanied by his disciples, which might explain why his mother brought the problem to him. This event also symbolized joy for the Messiah’s arrival.

2:4 The NLT softens the original language’s abruptness (literally “what [is it] to you and me, woman”). Though not rude, Jesus

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 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

bluntly distanced himself from his mother and her request. One way we can understand this verse in context is through Jesus’ earthly purpose: He came to fulfill his Father’s will (5:30). Hence, even Jesus’ mother couldn’t dictate his schedule. From a human perspective, losing the prerogatives of motherhood could be challenging, but Mary submitted to Jesus’ leadership. In fact, Jesus’ submission to his Father’s will was mirrored by Mary’s own submission to God as Jesus’ mother (Luke 1:38).

in three days?”²¹ But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body.²² After 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

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

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 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.² 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.”

³ Jesus 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?”

⁵ Jesus replied, “**I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.*** ⁶ **Humans can reproduce only human life,**

3:1-21 In Nicodemus’s encounter with Jesus, Jesus used the new birth metaphor (literally “born from above [or again]”; see text note on 3:3) to talk about entering God’s Kingdom. Nicodemus could only understand Jesus’ metaphor in relation

to physical birth. But Jesus explained that becoming part of God’s Kingdom must be the Holy Spirit’s work. Although it’s not entirely clear how spiritual birth happens, it is evident when it happens (3:8).

8

Come Close

FREE TO FLOURISH

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: JOHN 3:26-36

I’ve been reading and rereading about John the Baptist, the part about how his disciples came to him all frazzled by the fact that Jesus was *also* baptizing people and that those people were “flocking to Him,” heaven forbid (John 3:26 AMPIC1). And isn’t this how it is? When people start encroaching on our territory, gaining traction, we deploy our defenses because, well, do you see how many people are over there *flocking*?

For a while I was puzzled by John the Baptist’s response to his followers [in John 3:27]. . . . I pondered that phrase, wondering what in the world he meant by this. But then I realized he was merely setting his disciples free to flourish in the gifts and calling they’d been given. They no longer had to be threatened by what everyone else was doing, what kind of followers another person had. They didn’t have to compete or circle the wagons to protect what was “theirs.” Whatever God had given them to do, this would be their bread and oil, and it would never cease sufficing. It would forever flow from the great joy of accompanying the Savior. In other words, when Jesus is your portion, the author and finisher of your faith, comparisons gloriously melt into frivolousness.

REFLECT “No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven.”

JOHN 3:27

Lord Jesus, when I feel threatened by others, please help me to be content with the gifts and calling you’ve given me. Amen.

CONSIDER “When you have the lover of your soul at your right hand and your lot is secure, you don’t have to ask the questions ‘What about him? Or her? Or the recognition? Or how come *she* made the cover?’ Because you’ve already drunk your fill.”

Jesus sets his disciples free to flourish in their gifts and calling.

KELLY MINTER • *Wherever the River Runs*
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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 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. ¹⁹And 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. ²⁰All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹But 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

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

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*. **3:21** 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*. **4:1** Some manuscripts read *The Lord*.

3:29-30 In the Gospels' wedding metaphor, the bride is often absent. So who is the bride? Prophets in the Old Testament described the people of Israel as the bride of the Lord, and John the Baptist's illustration echoes this (see Isaiah 62:4-5; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 2:16-20). Although marriage represents Christ's relationship with the future global church, this idea of the church as his bride wasn't fully developed in Jesus' teachings. In this instance, "the bride" likely referred to Jesus' disciples collectively—men and women. John the Baptist clearly understood his role as a friend of the groom, even pointing his own disciples to Jesus (John 1:35-36). As Christ's followers, we are part

²³At 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.) ²⁵A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew* over ceremonial cleansing. ²⁶So 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."

²⁷John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.'²⁹It 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. ³⁰He 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.* ³²He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! ³³Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. ³⁴For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. ³⁶And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

4 Jesus* knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John ²(though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). ³So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

⁴He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar,

of his bride, but individually, we are also Christ's friends who can rejoice in pointing others to him.

4:1-42 At the well Jacob may have dug while living in Shechem (Genesis 33:18-20), later Samaria, Jesus described himself to a Samaritan woman as living water. This interaction is typical of the way Jesus engaged and confronted people throughout his ministry, and they either followed or fell away. The Samaritan woman contrasted with Nicodemus at every turn: She was a woman, not a man; a Samaritan, not a Jew; and a religious outcast, not one of Israel's rabbis. While Nicodemus fell silent and didn't respond to Jesus' challenges (John 3:1-21), this unnamed woman acknowledged Jesus as Lord and was instrumental in her village's reception of him.

THE Samaritan Woman AT THE WELL



IDENTITY

Filled to Full

Why do we settle for empty when Jesus came to fill us to full?

On his way from Judea to Galilee, Jesus was tired and thirsty. The one who brought water into existence sat by a well and longed for a sip.

At the hour of noon, and all alone, a woman approached. Life had not treated this woman well—she may have experienced infertility, she had likely been sent away by more than one husband, and she wasn't married now.

When Jesus asked the woman for a drink, she reflexively pulled back. How bizarre! A Jewish man requesting a drink from a Samaritan woman? This violated a social taboo: Jewish teachers rarely spoke to women in public.

Jesus responded, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water" (4:10). Jesus spoke straight to her emptiness: "Those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life" (4:14). The sense here is not just a spring of water welling up but welling up and over.

Like the woman at the well, we can pull back from God's abundant filling, determining that we deserve only a sip. Looking at our past mistakes, current circumstances, or simply the disappointments of life, we conclude we're beyond God's love. When the unnamed woman in John 4 accepted Jesus' offer to the full, everything changed—for her and her whole town (4:39-42). Will you accept?

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN'S STORY IS TOLD IN JOHN 4:1-42.

IDENTIFY

How is God offering you "living water" to fill you to full? How might you reflexively refuse his filling?

What do you need to accept the risk of letting God fill you with his love?

"Perhaps the hardest step we can take in our life with God is to risk letting him fill us with his love. But what if when we let God fill us with his love, we are actually loving him back?"

Why settle for empty when God came to fill us to full?

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near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.⁶ Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.⁷ Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water; and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."⁸ He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

⁹The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.* She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

¹⁰Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

¹¹"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?"¹² And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

¹³Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again.¹⁴ But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

¹⁵"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

¹⁶"Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

¹⁷"I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

¹⁹"Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet.²⁰ So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim,* where our ancestors worshiped?"

²¹Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews.²³ But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"*

²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?"²⁸ The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone,²⁹ "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?"³⁰ So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

³¹Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something."

³²But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about."

³³"Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other.

³⁴Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.³⁵ You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe* for harvest.³⁶ The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!³⁷ You know the saying, 'One

4:9 Some manuscripts do not include this sentence. 4:20 Greek *on this mountain*. 4:26 Or "The 'I AM' is here"; or "I am the Lord"; Greek reads "I am, the one speaking to you." See Exod 3:14. 4:35 Greek *white*.

4:6-8 John sets the scene for the interaction between the Samaritan woman and Jesus. While John rarely portrays Jesus with weakness, here John makes a point of saying that it was midday ("about noontime") and that Jesus was "tired from the long walk." These details explain why Jesus would need to address the woman, who happened to come to the well for a divine appointment. Men were not usually responsible for drawing water, so Jesus wouldn't have had the tools necessary to get himself a drink. He needed the woman to help him. John also alerts the reader that Jesus' disciples had gone into the village, leaving Jesus alone. This also would have set up John's original audience to be surprised when Jesus addressed the woman.

4:9 When Jesus addressed her, "the woman was surprised" because social taboos prohibited a Jewish teacher like Jesus

from speaking to a woman. However, Jesus did not let social taboos constrain him from ministering to someone in need.

4:19 The woman inferred that Jesus was a prophet because he knew things about her that a stranger could not have. As her understanding of Jesus unfolded, the way she addressed him became increasingly well informed. Initially, she recognized him as "a Jew" and called him "sir," later wondering if he might be "the Messiah" (4:9, 11, 25). In the end, the people of her village recognized him as "Savior of the world" (4:42).

4:28-42 The woman, despite being a non-Jew and an unlikely recipient of a divine meeting, eventually caught the theological implication of Jesus' initial talk about "living water" (4:10). Having recognized Jesus' messianic identity, she ran back to share her tentative discovery with her fellow villagers and led them to meet Jesus. Despite her humble position, she found her salvation and mission. God can meet you and me where we are and use us regardless of how much we know.

plants and another harvests.' And it's true. ³⁸I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."

Many Samaritans Believe

³⁹Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" ⁴⁰When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, ⁴¹long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. ⁴²Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

⁴³At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee. ⁴⁴He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. ⁴⁵Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.

⁴⁶As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.

⁴⁸Jesus asked, "**Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?**"

⁴⁹The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies."

⁵⁰Then Jesus told him, "**Go back home. Your son will live!**" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

⁵¹While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. ⁵²He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!" ⁵³Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, "**Your son will live.**" And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. ⁵⁴This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.

Jesus Heals a Lame Man

5 Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ²Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda,* with five covered porches. ³Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches.* ⁵One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years.

5:2 Other manuscripts read *Beth-zatha*; still others read *Bethsaida*. 5:3 Some manuscripts add an expanded conclusion to verse 3 and all of verse 4: *waiting for a certain movement of the water, for an angel of the Lord came from time to time and stirred up the water. And the first person to step in after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had.* 5:16 Or *persecuting*.



"The secret to 'doing it all' is not necessarily doing it all, but rather discovering which part of the 'all' He has given us to do and doing all of THAT."

JILL BRISCOE

teacher, pastor, editor, and writer



⁶When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "**Would you like to get well?**"

⁷"I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me."

⁸Jesus told him, "**Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!**"

⁹Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, ¹⁰so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, "You can't work on the Sabbath! The law doesn't allow you to carry that sleeping mat!"

¹¹But he replied, "The man who healed me told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

¹²"Who said such a thing as that?" they demanded.

¹³The man didn't know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. ¹⁴But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, "**Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.**" ¹⁵Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Jesus Claims to Be the Son of God

¹⁶So the Jewish leaders began harassing* Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. ¹⁷But Jesus replied, "**My**

Theos

IMAGE

MY STORY
WITH GOD

God's Story Shows Us Our Own

SCRIPTURE CONNECTION: JOHN 5:31-47

The Bible is . . . a faithful declaration of the presence and holiness of God. We ask it to tell us about ourselves, and all the while it is telling us about "I AM." . . . We must read and study the Bible with our ears trained on hearing God's declaration of himself.

Does this mean that the Bible has nothing to say to us about who we are? Not at all . . . The Bible does tell us who we are and what we should do, but it does so through the lens of who God is . . .

If I read the Bible looking for myself in the text before I look for God there, I may indeed learn that I should not be selfish. I may even try harder not to be selfish. But until I see my selfishness through the lens of the utter unselfishness of God, I have not properly understood its sinfulness. The Bible is a book about God . . .

In the New Testament, we find Jesus addressing the same problem with the Jewish leaders . . . ([see] John 5:39-40). The Jewish leaders searched the Scriptures asking the wrong question, looking for the wrong image to be revealed . . .

If our reading of the Bible focuses our eyes on anyone other than God, we have gotten backwards the transformation process . . . We must turn around our habit of asking, "Who am I?" We must first ask, "What does this passage teach me about God?"

We answer "Who am I?" by learning "Whose am I?"

IMAGINE

How might we read the Bible to know God better first?

So many books promise self-help, but the Bible says God is our help. How can this lighten our load to live as though it is not up to us but up to God?

"A vision of God high and lifted up reveals to me my sin and increases my love for him. . . . And I begin to be conformed to the image of the One I behold."

JEN WILKEN • Taken from *Women of the Word: How to Study the Bible with Both Our Hearts and Our Minds* by Jen Wilkin, © 2014 pp. 26-27. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.



Father is always working, and so am I.”¹⁸So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

¹⁹So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.²¹For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.²²In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge,²³so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

²⁴“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

²⁵“And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.²⁶The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.²⁷And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man.*²⁸Don’t be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God’s Son,²⁹and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.³⁰I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

Witnesses to Jesus

³¹“If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid.³²But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true.³³In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true.³⁴Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved.³⁵John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message.³⁶But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me.³⁷And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen

him face to face,³⁸and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you.

³⁹“You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!⁴⁰Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

⁴¹“Your approval means nothing to me,⁴²because I know you don’t have God’s love within you.⁴³For I have come to you in my Father’s name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them.⁴⁴No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don’t care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.*

⁴⁵“Yet it isn’t I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes.⁴⁶If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.⁴⁷But since you don’t believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?”

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

6 After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias.²A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick.³Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him.⁴(It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.)⁵Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, “Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?”⁶He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

⁷Philip replied, “Even if we worked for months, we wouldn’t have enough money* to feed them!”

⁸Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up.⁹“There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?”

¹⁰“Tell everyone to sit down,” Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.)¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted.¹²After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, “Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.”¹³So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

¹⁴When the people saw him* do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, “Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!”¹⁵When Jesus saw that they

5:27 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself. 5:44 Some manuscripts read *from the only One*. 6:7 Greek *Two hundred denari would not be enough*. A denarius was equivalent to a laborer’s full day’s wage. 6:14a Some manuscripts read *Jesus*. 6:14b See Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5-6.

were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

Jesus Walks on Water

¹⁶That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. ¹⁷But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. ¹⁸Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. ¹⁹They had rowed three or four miles* when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, ²⁰but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" ²¹Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

Jesus, the Bread of Life

²²The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. ²³Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. ²⁴So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. ²⁵They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. ²⁷But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man* can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

²⁸They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

²⁹Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?"

³¹After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*

³²Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. ³³The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴"Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

³⁵Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. ³⁷However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. ³⁸For I have

come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. ³⁹And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."

⁴¹Then the people* began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴²They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven?'"

⁴³But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. ⁴⁴For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. ⁴⁵As it is written in the Scriptures, * 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶(Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

⁴⁷"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸Yes, I am the bread of life! ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. ⁵⁰Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

⁵²Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

⁵³So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. ⁵⁴But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

⁶⁰Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

⁶¹Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? ⁶³The Spirit alone gives eternal life.

6:19 Greek 25 or 30 stadia [4.6 or 5.5 kilometers]. 6:20 Or *The 'I AM' is here*; Greek reads *I am*. See Exod 3:14. 6:27 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself. 6:31 Exod 16:4; Ps 78:24. 6:41 Greek *Jewish people*; also in 6:52. 6:45 Greek *in the prophets*. Isa 54:13.