

saint mary's press

The
**Catholic
Youth
Bible®**

NEW AMERICAN BIBLE
REVISED EDITION

PRAY IT!
STUDY IT!
LIVE IT!®



See
God in
everything

TRUST ^{IN}
GOD
Always

STAND UP
FOR the
poor and vulnerable



Share

the

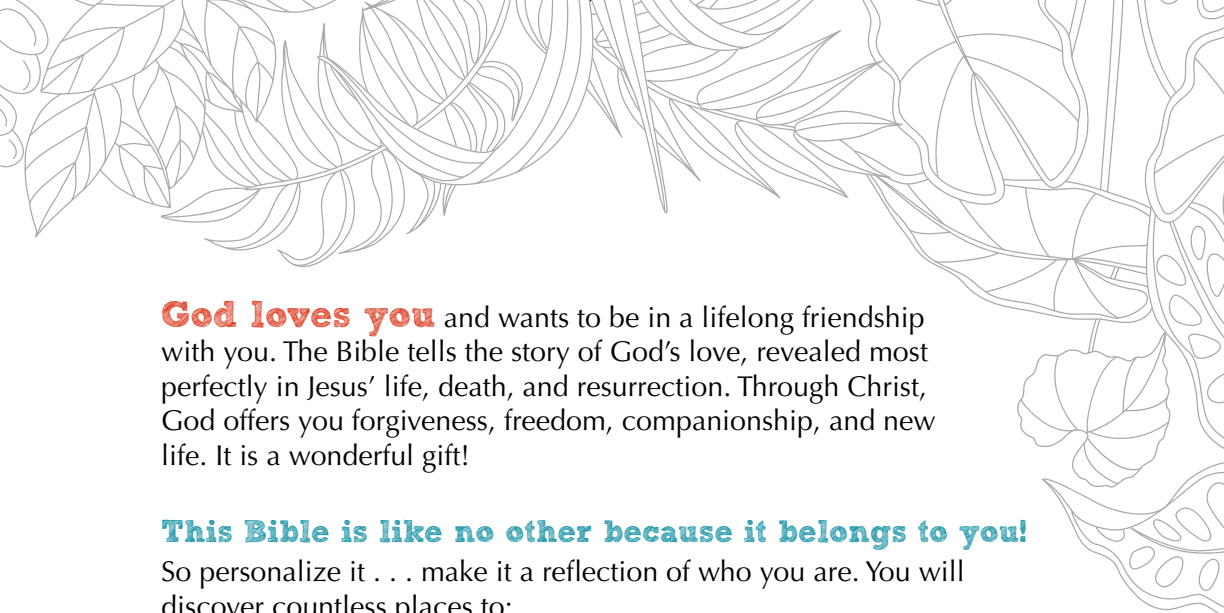
Faith

Be
Courageous

Serve
HUMBLY



This
Bible
can
change
your
life!



God loves you and wants to be in a lifelong friendship with you. The Bible tells the story of God's love, revealed most perfectly in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Through Christ, God offers you forgiveness, freedom, companionship, and new life. It is a wonderful gift!

This Bible is like no other because it belongs to you!

So personalize it . . . make it a reflection of who you are. You will discover countless places to:

- ✿ Write
- ✿ Color
- ✿ Draw
- ✿ Highlight
- ✿ Journal

This Bible brings God's word to life for you!

It is an exciting, meaningful, and relevant faith companion, and can guide you as you seek answers to life's important questions and discover new questions along the way.

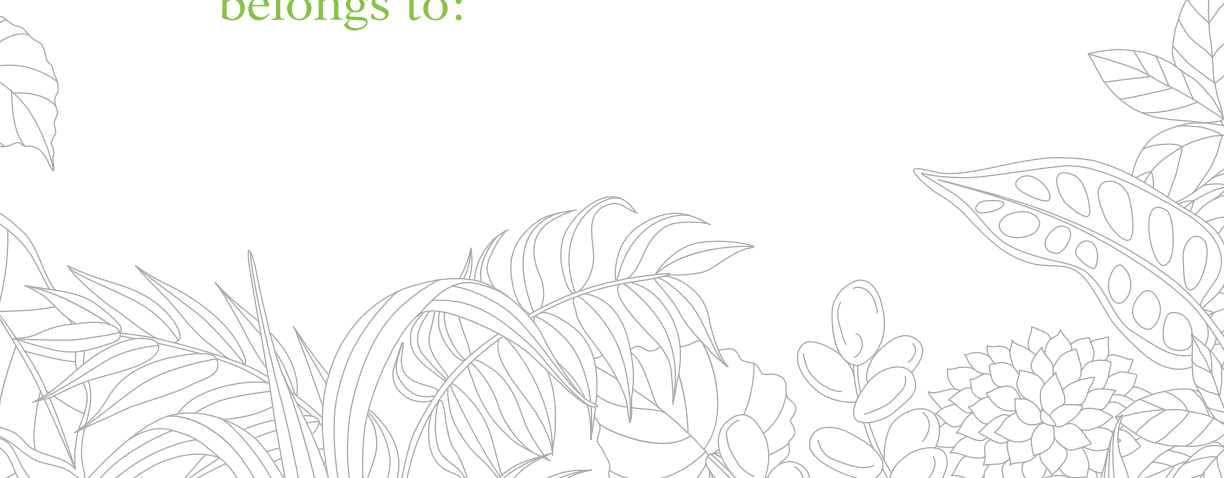
This Bible will help you connect with your faith!

It will engage you, challenge you to put your faith into action, and help you see yourself as an important and crucial part of the amazing Christian mission!

How will you respond?

This *Bible*
belongs to:

My **FAVORITE** verses:





For the text of the features and introductions:

Nihil Obstat: Dr. Catherine Cory
Censor Librorum
May 2, 2017

Nihil Obstat: Dr. John W. Martens
Censor Librorum
May 3, 2017

Imprimatur: † Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
May 8, 2017

*For the text of the New American Bible,
Revised Edition (NABRE):*

RESCRIPT

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

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

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

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

The Revised New Testament:

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

Imprimatur: † James A. Hickey, S.T.D., J.C.D.
Archbishop of Washington
August 27, 1986

Printed in Italy

(PO5837)

4153 ISBN 978-1-59982-925-8, paper

4154 ISBN 978-1-59982-922-7, hardcover

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Cover design by Dan Pitts Design. Illustrations by Vicki Shuck. Produced with the assistance of Livingstone, the Publishing Services Division of Barton-Veerman Company (www.LivingstoneCorp.com) and Peachtree Editorial Services.

The credits and acknowledgments continue on page 1710.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Title: The Catholic Youth Bible : New American Bible, revised edition / translated from the original languages with critical use of all the ancient sources ; authorized by the Board of Trustees of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and approved by the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Other titles: Bible. English. New American. 2018.

Description: 4th edition. | Winona : Saint Mary's Press, 2018.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017027937 (print) | LCCN 2017045050 (ebook) | ISBN 9781599829210 (ebook) | ISBN 9781599829258 (pbk.) | ISBN 9781599829227 (hardcover)

Classification: LCC BS192.3.A1 2018 (ebook) |

LCC BS192.3.A1 2018 W56 2018 (print) |

DDC 220.5/2054—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017027937>



The Catholic Youth Bible®

New American Bible, Revised Edition

Translated from the Original Languages with
Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources

Authorized by the Board of Trustees of the
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Approved by the Administrative
Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Pray It! Study It! Live It!® resources offer a holistic approach to
learning, living, and passing on the Catholic faith.



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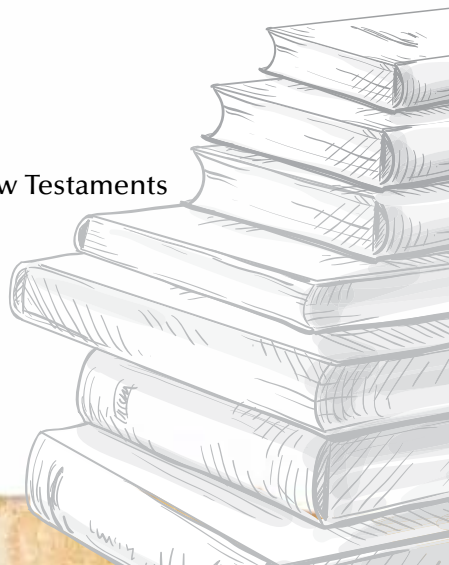
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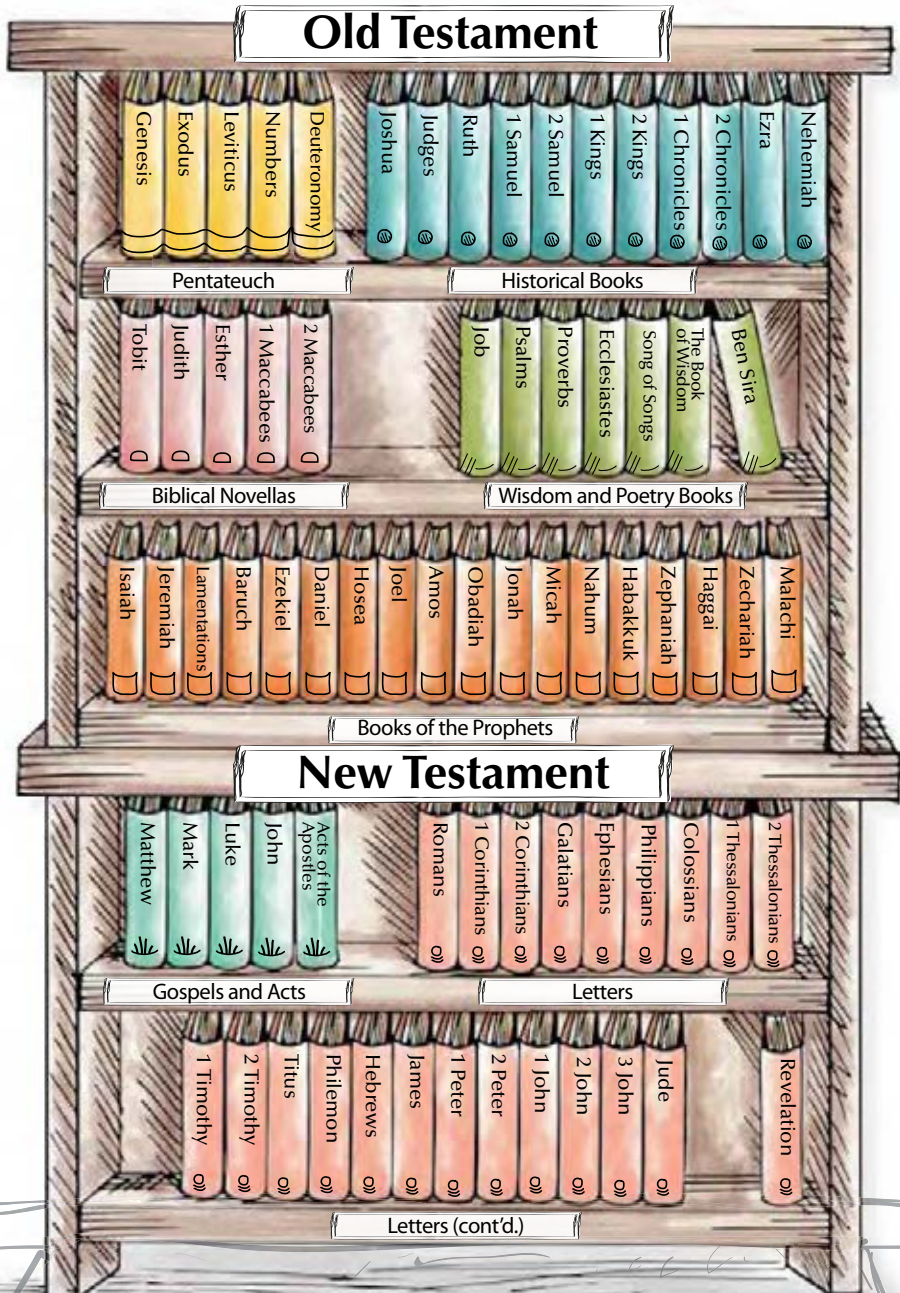


Bible Book Abbreviations

(Listed Alphabetically)

Tab	Book Name	Abbreviation	Page	Tab	Book Name	Abbreviation	Page
●	Acts	Acts	1437	●	1 Kings	1 Kgs	380
●	Amos	Am	1156	●	2 Kings	2 Kgs	412
●	Baruch	Bar	1054	●	Lamentations	Lam	1045
●	Ben Sira	Sir	854	●	Leviticus	Lv	140
●	1 Chronicles	1 Chr	442	●	Luke	Lk	1335
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●	Galatians	Gal	1555	●	Philemon	Phlm	1620
●	Genesis	Gn	20	●	Philippians	Phil	1575
●	Habakkuk	Hb	1189	●	Proverbs	Prv	768
●	Haggai	Hg	1199	●	Psalms	Ps	665
●	Hebrews	Heb	1623	●	Revelation	Rev	1682
●	Hosea	Hos	1137	●	Romans	Rom	1486
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●	3 John	3 Jn	1677	●	2 Timothy	2 Tim	1611
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●	Jonah	Jon	1171	●	Tobit	Tb	532
●	Joshua	Jos	259	●	Wisdom	Wis	829
●	Jude	Jude	1679	●	Zechariah	Zec	1203
●	Judges	Jgs	285	●	Zephaniah	Zep	1194
●	Judith	Jdt	548				

How the Bible is ORGANIZED



Special FEATURES

Section INTRODUCTIONS

Learn background information on the book of each major section of the Bible.

BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Uncover each book's central message while reading an overview of its contents.

GROWING IN FAITH

Consider how the Bible's messages apply to relevant questions and situations you may be facing now or will face in the future.

SEARCHING for GOD

Discover who God is, what God's message is for you, and what your relationship to God can be.

WHO ^{is} my NEIGHBOR?

Explore your connection and responsibility to others.

Did ^{you} Know ^{no}? [!]

Read background from biblical scholars to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times or the Church's interpretation of certain passages.

Catholic Connection

Examine the relationship between the Bible and many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices, including the seven principles of Catholic social teaching.

CHALLENGE

Incorporate core themes of the Bible into your daily life by stepping out of your comfort zone and putting faith into action.

SCRIPTURE highlights

Reflect on key Scripture verses and discover their connection to your life. You may even want to add color for your own personal touch.

Being Catholic

Gain insight into how faith shapes the way Catholics read the Bible, understand the world, and put faith into action (pages 1716–1733).

EXPLORE THE Bible

Make your way through the Bible by following engaging reading plans that are focused on fun and interesting themes (pages 1766–1769).

When I'M Feeling...

Connect Scripture verses that correspond to specific feelings and experiences you face in your daily life (pages 1770–1775).

TAKE THE

CHALLENGE

Pentateuch

Genesis

- 36** | Break Down Walls (11:7)
38 | Be a Blessing (12:2)

Exodus

- 91** | Support Life (2:9)
94 | Name Your "Aaron" (4:16)
111 | Help People out of the Desert (16:4)
123 | Make It Sacred (25:10–21)
130 | Look Around (32:9)

Leviticus

- 167** | Make It Holy (23:3)

Deuteronomy

- 234** | Give Generously (15:10)
249 | Choose Life (30:19)

Historical Books

1 Samuel

- 338** | Be a Friend (18:1)

2 Samuel

- 363** | Recognize Your Prophets (12:1)

1 Kings

- 385** | Ask for a Listening Heart (3:9)

2 Kings

- 420** | Assist the Refugee (8:1)

Ezra

- 511** | Sacrifice with a Purpose (8:23)

Biblical Novellas

Judith

- 556** | Let Your Clothing Speak (8:4–5)

Wisdom Books

Psalms

- 680** | Be Honest with God (22:2)
689 | Help Prevent Suicide (34:19)
698 | Expand Your World (47:8–9)
736 | Change the World (104:5)
757 | Find Unity in Diversity (133:1)
761 | Advocate for Life (139:13)

Proverbs

- 770** | Embrace Proverbs (1:2)
795 | Feed the Hungry (22:9)

Wisdom

- 835** | Seek Wisdom (6:12)

Ben Sira

- 858** | Practice Humility (3:17–18)

Prophets

Isaiah

- 920** | Finding Christ in Christmas (9:5)
945 | Stand against Homelessness (32:18)
973 | Make Lent Matter (58:5)

Jeremiah

- 986** | Be a Prophet (1:5)
1027 | Help the Imprisoned (37:16)

Ezekiel

- 1099** | Find a New Heart (36:26)

Jonah

- 1173** | Own Up to the Storm (1:12)

Gospels and Acts of the Apostles

Matthew

- 1234** | Claim Your Spiritual Family (1:1)
1246 | Recognize and Share Your Treasure (6:21)
1248 | Build Your House on Rock (7:24)
1270 | Forgive (18:21–22)
1272 | Care for the Children (19:14)
1295 | Reach Out (27:46)
1296 | Share Your Faith (28:19)

Mark

- 1300** | Renew Your Baptism (1:10)
1306 | Trust During a Storm (4:39)
1311 | Find a Restful Place (6:31)
1315 | See Clearly (8:25)
1321 | Have Faith (10:52)
1325 | Give What You've Got (12:44)
1329 | Celebrate the Eucharist (14:22)
1331 | Confront the Death Penalty (15:15)

Luke

- 1338** | Ask for Mary's Help (1:42)
1344 | Clothe the Naked (3:11)
1351 | Love Your Enemies (6:27–28)
1357 | Give Your Life for Others (9:24)
1363 | Own It! (11:2–4)
1376 | Increase Your Faith (17:5–6)
1390 | Bury the Dead (23:52)

John

- 1395** | Share Christian Joy (1:14)
1407 | Share Bread (6:35)
1415 | Be a Shepherd (10:14)
1418 | Comfort Those Who Suffer (11:35)
1432 | Take a Stand on Capital Punishment (19:7)
1436 | Tend the Sheep (21:16)

Acts of the Apostles

- 1442** | Live with the Spirit (2:4)
1448 | Shelter the Homeless (4:34–35)
1452 | Speak Up! (7:54)
1472 | Share Your Blessings (20:35)

Letters and Revelation

Romans

- 1489** | See God in Everything (1:20)
1504 | Give of Yourself for Others (12:1)

1 Corinthians

- 1519** | Care for Your Temple (6:19–20)
1528 | See the Gifts (12:4–6)

Galatians

- 1564** | Do Good for the Family of Faith (6:10)

Ephesians

- 1572** | Give Thanks (5:20)

1 Thessalonians

- 1595** | Find the Gift in Challenges (5:18)

Hebrews

- 1637** | Stay Focused (12:1–2)
1640 | Learn from Leaders (13:7)

James

- 1646** | Seek Wisdom (3:13)
1650 | Care for the Sick (5:14–15)

1 Peter

- 1657** | Serve the Church (4:10)

1 John

- 1669** | Acknowledge Your Sin (1:9)
1670 | Love in Deed (3:17–18)

Revelation

- 1706** | Give Drink to the Thirsty (21:6)

How To Navigate The Catholic Youth Bible

Understanding the Bible Structure

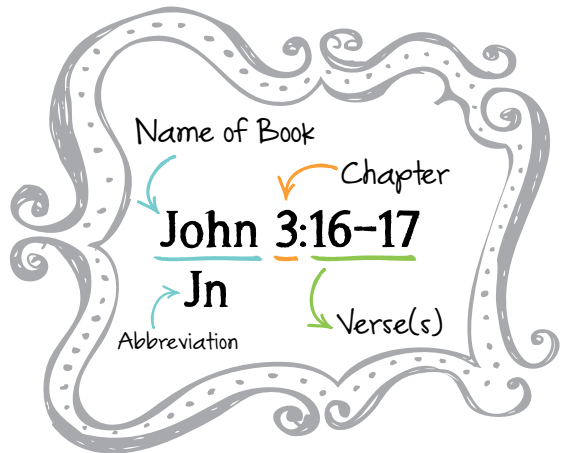
This Bible contains all seventy-three books and letters that form a complete Catholic Bible, seven more books than most other Bibles (for an understanding of the difference, see “The ‘Hidden’ Books,” in Tobit, chapter 1). The table of contents on pages 6–7 of this Bible will remind you where each book is found and what section of books it belongs to. Additionally, page 9 provides an image that will help you see how the collection of books is organized. These resources will help you move around the Bible with ease!

Finding a Bible Passage and Other References

Throughout *The Catholic Youth Bible*[®], there are many references to specific Bible passages that include book, chapter number, and verse(s).

In addition, you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. Scripture references are given in shorthand form, such as Jn 3:16–17. Abbreviations used are identified on page 8.

When you see an **obelisk (†)** in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding footnote labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The footnotes provide added information about words and phrases mentioned in the Bible. When you see an **asterisk (*)** in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.



† 27:26 He has supplanted me. In Hebrew, wayyaqobeni, a wordplay on the name Jacob, ya'aqob; see Jer 9:3 and Gn 25:26. There is also a play between the Hebrew words bekorah ("right of the firstborn") and berakah ("blessing").

***** 28:1-9 A glimpse of Rebekah's shrewdness is provided by 27:42-28:2. She is aware of Esau's murderous plot against Jacob (27:42-45) but realizes the episode of the stolen blessing is still painful to Isaac; she therefore uses another motive to persuade Isaac to send Jacob away—he must

marry within the family (endogamy), unlike Esau. Esau, unreflective as usual, realizes too late he also should marry within the family but, significantly, chooses from Abraham's rejected line. At this point in the story, Jacob (and

27:27 Gn 22:17-18; Heb 11:20. 27:29 Gn 25:23; 49:8; Nm 24:9. 27:36 Gn 25:26, 29-34; Hos 12:4. 27:38 Heb 12:17. 27:39 Heb 11:20. 27:40 2 Kgs 8:20, 22; 2 Chr 21:8. 27:41 Wis 10:10; Ob 10. 27:46 Gn 25:34-35. 28:1 Gn 24:3-4; 28:35.

Preface to the

NEW AMERICAN BIBLE REVISED OLD TESTAMENT

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

The completed books of the Old Testament were initially published, as they became available, in four volumes: Genesis–Ruth (1952), Job–Sirach (1955), Isaiah–Malachi (1961), and Samuel–Maccabees (1969). Some fifty scholars collaborated on this project; these were mainly Catholics, but, in accord with the suggestion of Vatican II that "with the approval of the church authority, these translations be produced in cooperation with separated brothers" so that "all Christians may be able to use them" (*Dei Verbum*, No. 22), non-Catholics also participated in the work. To this point the translation had been known under the name of the "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" or CCD for short, but when these parts of the Old Testament were combined with the New Testament in a single volume, it was given the name "New American Bible," in part to reflect its ecumenical character. In producing the new volume certain changes were made from the original four volumes: a retranslation of the Book of Genesis, cross-references, new and expanded exegetical notes.

New translations and revision of existing translations are required from time to time for various reasons. For example, it is important to keep pace with the discovery and publication of new and better ancient manuscripts (e.g., the Dead Sea scrolls) so that the best possible textual tradition will be followed, as required by *Divino afflante spiritu*. There are advances in linguistics of the biblical languages which make possible a better understanding and more accurate translation of the original languages. And there are changes and developments in vocabulary and the cultural background of the receptor language. An obvious example of this is the abandonment in English of the second person

singular (use of “thee,” “thou,” “sayest,” “hearest”), which had a major impact on Bible translations. Other changes are less obvious but are nevertheless present. There have been changes in vocabulary; for example, the term “holocaust” is now normally reserved for the sacrilegious attempt to destroy the Jewish people by the Third Reich. Concerns such as these are reflected in what Pope John Paul II spoke of as the “three pillars” of good biblical translation: “A good translation is based on three pillars that must contemporaneously support the entire work. First, there must be a deep knowledge of the language and the cultural world at the point of origin. Next, there must be a good familiarity with the language and cultural context at the point where the work will arrive. Lastly, to crown the work with success, there must be an adequate mastery of the contents and meaning of what one is translating”—and he praised the translation that “utilizes the vocabulary and idioms of everyday speech” (“le parole e le formedella lingua di tuttiigiorni”). (From an address to the United Bible Societies, November 26, 2001.)

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

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

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

The Book of GENESIS

Quick Summary

Have you ever flipped through a family photo album with your older relatives to hear stories about relatives from the past? The Book of Genesis is kind of like that. As you read it, you hear stories about relatives from long ago—our faith ancestors.

Genesis is divided into two main sections. The first section, 1:1–11:26, opens with two accounts of creation that reveal God’s power to create a harmonious universe and humankind’s special place in it. Unfortunately, by chapter 3, sin enters and the first humans, Adam and Eve, begin to experience discord, suffering, and death. The section continues with sin spreading to all of society with the accounts of Cain and Abel, Noah’s Ark, and the tower of Babel. Note that these chapters are not strict historical accounts, but inspired stories that share a faith perspective and teach important religious truths.

The second section, 11:27–50:26, tells how God began to develop a covenant relationship with one nation, Israel. This starts with God promising countless descendants to a childless old couple named Abraham and Sarah. We follow Abraham and Sarah and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren’s journey of faith through stories of love, courage, betrayal, and redemption. We learn that God is faithful, even when humanity is not.

How Is This Relevant to My Life Today?

- God has the power to bring order out of chaos.
- When we fail, God still cares for us.
- Remaining faithful even when things seem impossible can lead to unexpected blessings.

Headline Highlights

- The Source of Human Dignity (1:26–27)
- God Hits the Reset Button (6:1–9:17)
- Confusion Reigns at Tower (11:1–9)
- Pregnant at Age 90! (21:1–8)
- Close Call on Mountain (22:1–19)
- Favorite Son Disappears, Brothers Cover Up (37:1–35)
- A Powerful Reconciliation (chapters 42–45)



Preamble. The Creation of the World

The Story of Creation.†

I ¹In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth*—²†and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—*

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

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

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

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

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

1:2 This verse is parenthetical, describing in three phases the pre-creation

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

⁹Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared.* ¹⁰God called the dry land “earth,” and the basin of water he called “sea.” God saw that it was good. ¹¹*Then God said: Let the earth bring forth

state symbolized by the chaos out of which God brings order: “earth,” hidden beneath the encompassing cosmic waters, could not be seen, and thus had no “form”; there was only darkness; turbulent wind swept over the waters. Commencing with the last-named elements (darkness and water), vv. 3–10 describe the rearrangement of this chaos: light is made (first day) and the water is divided into water above and water below the earth so that the earth appears and is no longer “without outline.” *The abyss*: the primordial ocean according to the ancient Semitic cosmogony. After God’s creative activity, part of this vast body forms the salt-water seas (vv. 9–10); part of it is the fresh water under the earth (Ps 33:7; Ez 31:4), which wells forth on the earth as springs and fountains (Gn 7:11; 8:2; Prv 3:20). Part of it, “the upper water” (Ps 148:4; Dn 3:60), is held up by the dome of the sky (vv. 6–7), from which rain descends on the earth (Gn 7:11; 2 Kgs 7:2; 19; Ps 104:13). *A mighty wind*: literally, “spirit or breath [ruah] of God”; cf. Gn 8:1. **1:5** In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset.

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

1:1 Gn 2:1, 4; 2 Mc 7:28; Ps 8:4; 33:6; 89:12; 90:2; Wis 11:17; Sir 16:24; Jer 10:12; Acts 14:15; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2–3; 3:4; 11:3; Rev 4:11. **1:2** Jer 4:23. **1:3** 2 Cor 4:6. **1:7** Prv 8:27–28; 2 Pt 3:5. **1:9** Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22. **1:11** Ps 104:14.

Did You Know?

Six Days? Really?

Genesis 1:1–2:4

Some Christians believe that God actually created the world in six 24-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written as a series of symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that conveys great moral and spiritual truths.

Mythic stories are just one literary type, or genre, that is used in the Bible. Each genre has different rules for interpreting meaning. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre; otherwise you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn't intend.

vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: ¹²the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good. ¹³Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

¹⁴Then God said: Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years,* ¹⁵and

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

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

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

²⁷ God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female† he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.† Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.* ²⁹†*God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;

1:26 Let us make: in the ancient Near East, and sometimes in the Bible, God was imagined as presiding over an assembly of heavenly beings who deliberated and decided about matters on earth (1 Kgs 22:19–22; Is 6:8; Ps 29:1–2; 82; 89:6–7; Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). This scene accounts for the plural form here and in Gn 11:7 (“Let us go down . . .”). Israel’s God was always considered “Most High” over the heavenly beings. *Human beings*: Hebrew *‘ādām* is here the generic term for humankind; in the first five chapters of Genesis it is the proper name Adam only at 4:25 and 5:1–5. *In our image, after our likeness*: “image” and “likeness” (virtually synonyms) express the worth of human beings who have value in themselves (human blood may not be shed in 9:6 because of this image of God) and in their task, dominion (1:28), which promotes the rule of God over the universe.

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

1:28 Fill the earth and subdue it: the object of the verb “subdue” may be not the earth as such but earth as the territory each nation must take for itself (chaps. 10–11), just as Israel will later do (see Nm 32:22, 29; Jos 18:1). The two divine commands define the basic tasks of the human race—to continue in existence through generation and to take possession of one’s

God-given territory. The dual command would have had special meaning when Israel was in exile and deeply anxious about whether they would continue as a nation and return to their ancient territory. *Have dominion*: the whole human race is made in the “image” and “likeness” of God and has “dominion.” Comparable literature of the time used these words of kings rather than of human beings in general; human beings were invariably thought of as slaves of the gods created to provide menial service for the divine world. The royal language here does not, however, give human beings unlimited power, for kings in the Bible had limited dominion and were subject to prophetic critique.

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

1:14 Jb 26:10; Ps 19:2–3; Bar 3:33. **1:16** Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7–9; Jer 31:35. **1:20** Jb 12:7–10. **1:22** Gn 8:17. **1:24** Sir 16:27–28. **1:26–27** Gn 5:1, 3; 9:6; Ps 8:5–6; Wis 2:23; 10:2; Sir 17:1, 3–4; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6; Jas 3:7; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10. **1:28** Gn 8:17; 9:1; Ps 8:6–9; 115:16; Wis 9:2. **1:29–30** Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14–15.

³⁰and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened. ³¹God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.*

2 ¹Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.* ²On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.* ³God blessed the seventh day and

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

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

made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.*

I. The Story of the Nations

The Garden of Eden.

⁴This is the story† of the heavens and the earth at their creation. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens— ⁵there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man† to till the ground, ⁶but a stream†

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

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

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

1:31 1 Tm 4:4. **2:1** Is 45:12; Jn 1:3. **2:2** Ex 20:9–11; 31:17; Heb 4:4, 10. **2:3** Ex 20:11; Dt 5:14; Neh 9:14.

GROWING IN FAITH

Being Real

Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage or to change their physical appearance in order to conform to the latest fad or fit the dominant cultural image of beauty. But we must remember that we are all unique and all made in God’s image.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. Even though this can be challenging in a world that often emphasizes outer “beauty” and comparison to others, we are called to fully embrace ourselves as created, loved, and blessed by God. Write an affirmation of acceptance for yourself somewhere on this page, and commit to claiming each day this week that you are a beautiful person loved by God.

Genesis 1:26-27



Catholic Connection

Genesis, chapters 1-2

Partners with God

In the opening chapters of Genesis, we read the wonderful story of God's creation of the universe. With each new day, God creates light and darkness, earth and sea, plants and animals, and ultimately man and woman. Then God commands the man and woman to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). In other words, human beings are to partner with God in the completion of and care for creation.

Catholic social teaching tells us that as partners with God in sustaining the world, we have a responsibility to protect the dignity of the human person as well as the planet. God has given us the amazing gift of intellectual inquiry, which leads to wonderful advancements for our world. Our faith calls us to evaluate whether these advancements are in keeping with God's plan for creation. We must always consider how we can promote ethical research so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of creation and thrive in the universe. What is one thing you can do today to use your intellectual gifts to sustain and care for God's creation?

Catholic Social Teaching:
Care for God's Creation

was welling up out of the earth and watering all the surface of the ground— ⁷then the LORD God formed the man† out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

2:10–14 *A river rises in Eden*: the stream of water mentioned in v. 6, the source of all water upon earth, comes to the surface in the garden of God and from there flows out over the entire earth. In comparable religious literature, the dwelling of god is the source of fertilizing waters. The four rivers represent universality, as in the phrase "the four quarters of the earth." In Ez 47:1–12; Zec 14:8; Rev 22:1–2, the waters that irrigate the earth arise in the temple or city of God. The place names in vv. 11–14 are mainly from southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), where Mesopotamian literature placed the original garden of God. The Tigris and the Euphrates, the two great rivers in that part of the world, both emptied into the Persian Gulf. Gihon is the modest stream issuing from Jerusalem (2 Sm 5:8; 1 Kgs 1:9–10; 2 Chr 32:4), but is here regarded as

2:7 Gn 3:19; 18:27; Tb 8:6; Jb 34:15; Ps 103:14; 104:29; Ecl 3:20; 12:7; Wis 7:1; Sir 33:10; 1 Cor 15:45. **2:8** Is 51:3; Ez 31:9. **2:9** Gn 3:22; Prv 3:18; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14. **2:13** Sir 24:25.

Catholic Connection

Genesis, chapter 3

That Lying Snake!

Before the Fall, Adam and Eve had freedom and a close friendship with God. They lived in perfect harmony with each other and all of creation. Tension and strife entered Adam and Eve's relationship with God when they believed the serpent's lie. Sin and death became a reality. Though this account in chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis uses figurative language, it points to the reality that all of humanity has been affected by the sin of Eve and Adam.

This original sin and its consequences have been handed down to every generation throughout all of history, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary. Although we are not personally responsible for it, this sin has wounded our nature also. We are inclined to sin and subject to death. Fortunately, sin has been overcome by the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the grace of the sacrament of Baptism, we are freed from original sin and turned back toward God.

Catechism, numbers 369–421

¹⁵The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.*

¹⁶The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden* ¹⁷except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die.†*

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

²¹So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.* ²²The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man, ²³the man said:

“This one, at last, is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
This one shall be called ‘woman,’
for out of man this one has been taken.”†

²⁴*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.†

²⁵The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.†

Expulsion from Eden.

3 ¹Now the snake was the most cunning† of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You shall

one of the four great world rivers and linked to Mesopotamia, for Cush here seems to be the territory of the Kassites (a people of Mesopotamia) as in Gn 10:8. The word Pishon is otherwise unknown but is probably formed in imitation of Gihon. Havilah seems, according to Gn 10:7 and 1 Chr 1:9, to be in Cush in southern Mesopotamia though other locations have been suggested.

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

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

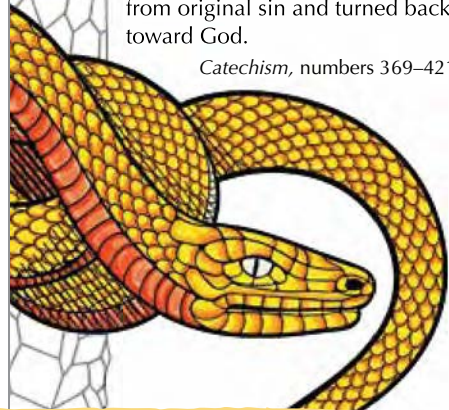
2:23 The man recognizes an affinity with the woman God has brought him. Unlike the animals who were made from the ground, she is made from his very self. There is a play on the similar-sounding Hebrew words ‘ishsha (“woman,” “wife”) and ‘ish (“man,” “husband”).

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

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

3:1 *Cunning*: there is a play on the words for “naked” (2:25) and “cunning/

2:15 Sir 7:15. **2:16** Ps 104:14–15. **2:17** Gn 3:2–3; Rom 6:23. **2:18** Tb 8:6; Sir 36:24; 1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tm 2:13. **2:21** Sir 17:1; 1 Cor 11:8–9; 1 Tm 2:13. **2:24** Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7; 1 Cor 7:10–11; Eph 5:31.



not eat from any of the trees in the garden?"² The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden;^{3*} it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'⁴ But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die!⁵ God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know† good and evil."⁶ The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

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

¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the snake:

Because you have done this,
cursed are you
among all the animals, tame or wild;
On your belly you shall crawl,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.†*

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;
They will strike at your head,
while you strike at their heel.†*

¹⁶To the woman he said:

I will intensify your toil in childbearing;
in pain† you shall bring forth children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.

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

Cursed is the ground† because of you!
In toil you shall eat its yield
all the days of your life.*

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

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

²⁰The man gave his wife the name "Eve," because she was the mother of all the living.†

²¹The LORD God made for the man and his wife garments of skin, with which he clothed them.

²²Then the LORD God said: See! The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil! Now, what if he also reaches out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life, and eats of it and lives forever?*

²³The LORD God therefore banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴He expelled the man, stationing the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.

† (Heb. 'arum). The couple seek to be "wise" but end up knowing that they are "naked."

3:5 Like gods, who know: or "like God who knows."

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

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

3:15 They will strike . . . at their heel: the antecedent for "they" and "their" is the collective noun "offspring," i.e., all the descendants of the woman. Christian tradition has seen in this passage, however, more than unending hostility between snakes and human beings. The snake was identified with the devil (Wis 2:24; Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9; 20:2), whose eventual defeat seemed implied in the verse. Because "the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8), the passage was understood as the first promise of a redeemer for fallen humankind, the protoevangelium. Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. A.D. 130–200), in his *Against Heresies* 5.2.11, followed by several other Fathers of the Church, interpreted the verse as referring to Christ, and cited Gal 3:19 and 4:4 to support the reference. Another

interpretive translation is *ipsa*, "she," and is reflected in Jerome's Vulgate. "She" was thought to refer to Mary, the mother of the messiah. In Christian art Mary is sometimes depicted with her foot on the head of the serpent.

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

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

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

3:3 Gn 2:17; Rom 6:23. **3:4–5** Wis 2:24; Sir 25:14; Is 14:14; Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 11:3. **3:6** Gn 3:22; 1 Tm 2:14. **3:8** Jer 23:24. **3:13** 2 Cor 11:3. **3:14** Is 65:25; Mi 7:17; Rev 12:9. **3:15** Rom 16:20; 1 Jn 3:8; Rev 12:17. **3:17** Gn 5:29; Rom 5:12; 8:20; Heb 6:8. **3:19** Gn 2:7; Jb 10:9; 34:15; Ps 90:3; 103:14; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Wis 15:8; Sir 10:9; 17:2; Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 9:27. **3:22** Gn 2:9; Rev 22:2, 14.

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Brothers and Sisters Genesis 4:7

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” With that famous question, Cain pretends he does not know where his brother is. God does not answer Cain’s question directly, but we all know the response.

We are all brothers and sisters; therefore, we are responsible for one another: family, friends, and strangers. Let’s renew our commitment to take seriously the obligation to watch out and care for one another.

Cain and Abel.

4 ¹The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, saying, “I have produced a male child with the help of the LORD.”† ²Next she gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel became a herder of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the ground.† ³In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground, ⁴while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion† of the firstlings of his flock.* The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. ⁶Then the LORD said to Cain: Why are you angry? Why are you dejected?

⁷If you act rightly, you will be accepted;† but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.*

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out in the field.”† When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.* ⁹Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” ¹⁰God then said: What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!† ¹¹Now you are banned from the ground† that opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.* ¹²If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall

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

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

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

4:7 *You will be accepted*: the text is extraordinarily condensed and unclear. “You will be accepted” is a paraphrase of one Hebrew word, “lifting.” God gives a friendly warning to Cain that his right conduct will

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

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

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

4:4 Ex 34:19; Heb 11:4. **4:7** Sir 7:1; Jude 11. **4:8** Wis 10:3; Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; 1 Jn 3:12; Jude 11. **4:11** Dt 27:24.

Catholic Connection

Genesis 4:15

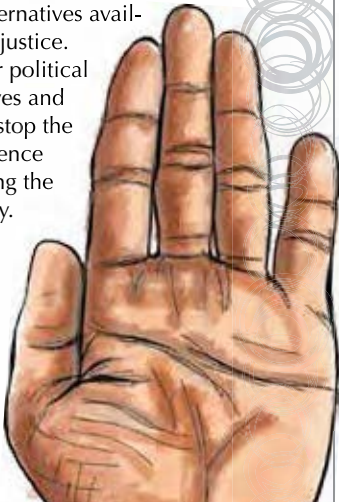
Stop the Cycle

Cain was a murderer, and some might say that he deserved the death penalty. But in Genesis 4:15, God marks Cain to protect him from being killed and to stop the cycle of violence. Why kill someone to show that it is wrong to kill someone?

Catholic social teaching asserts that all life—even that of a violent criminal—has God-given dignity that we must protect at all times. We can sometimes find this teaching difficult. It's easy to see why we should protect the dignity of the poor, the dying, and the unborn—but why should we respect the life of someone whose own actions have shown no concern for life?

Scripture teaches us that we cannot achieve justice through vengeance and that forgiveness, reconciliation, and conversion are always possible, even for the greatest sinner. Capital punishment has proven to be ineffective and unnecessary today, especially given the alternatives available to seek justice. Contact your political representatives and ask them to stop the cycle of violence by eliminating the death penalty.

Catholic Social Teaching:
Life and Dignity of the Human Person



become a constant wanderer on the earth. ¹³Cain said to the LORD: “My punishment is too great to bear. ¹⁴Look, you have now banished me from the ground. I must avoid you and be a constant wanderer on the earth. Anyone may kill me at sight.” ¹⁵Not so! the LORD said to him. If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged seven times. So the LORD put a mark† on Cain, so that no one would kill him at sight. ¹⁶Cain then left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,† east of Eden.

Descendants of Cain and Seth.

¹⁷†Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. Cain also became the founder of a city, which he named after his son Enoch. ¹⁸To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael; Mehujael became the father of Methusael, and Methusael became the father of Lamech. ¹⁹Lamech took two wives; the name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who became the ancestor of those who dwell in tents and keep livestock. ²¹His brother’s name was Jubal, who became the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the reed pipe. ²²Zillah, on her part, gave birth to Tubalcain, the ancestor of all who forge instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. ²³†Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
wives of Lamech, listen to my utterance:
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for bruising me.

²⁴ If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

²⁵†Adam again had intercourse with his wife, and she gave birth to a son whom she called Seth. “God has granted me another offspring in place of Abel,”

† **4:15** A mark: probably a tattoo to mark Cain as protected by God. The use of tattooing for tribal marks has always been common among the Bedouin of the Near Eastern deserts.

† **4:16** The land of Nod: a symbolic name (derived from the verb *nûd*, to wander) rather than a definite geographic region.

† **4:17–24** Cain is the first in a seven-member linear genealogy ending in three individuals who initiate action (Jabal, Jubal, and Tubalcain). Other Genesis genealogies also end in three individuals initiating action (5:32 and 11:26). The purpose of this genealogy is to explain the origin of culture and crafts among human beings. The names in this genealogy are the same (some with different spellings) as those in the ten-member genealogy (ending with Noah), which has a slightly different function. See note on 5:1–32.

† **4:23–24** Lamech’s boast shows that the violence of Cain continues with his son and has actually increased. The question is posed to the reader: how will God’s creation be renewed?

† **4:25–26** The third and climactic birth story in the chapter, showing that this birth, unlike the other two, will have good results. The name Seth (from the Hebrew verb *shat*, “to place, replace”) shows that God has replaced Abel with a worthy successor. From this favored line Enosh (“human being/humankind”), a synonym of Adam, authentic religion began with the worship of Yhwh; this divine name is rendered as “the LORD” in this translation. The Yahwist source employs the name Yhwh long before the

she said, “because Cain killed him.”²⁶ To Seth, in turn, a son was born, and he named him Enosh.

At that time people began to invoke the LORD by name.*

Generations: Adam to Noah.†

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

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

⁶When Seth was one hundred and five years old, he begot Enosh.⁷ Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he begot Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters.⁸ The whole lifetime of Seth was nine hundred and twelve years; then he died.

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

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

¹⁵When Mahalalel was sixty-five years old, he begot Jared.¹⁶ Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he begot Jared, and he had other sons and daughters.¹⁷ The whole lifetime of

Mahalalel was eight hundred and ninety-five years; then he died.

¹⁸When Jared was one hundred and sixty-two years old, he begot Enoch.¹⁹ Jared lived eight hundred years after he begot Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters.²⁰ The whole lifetime of Jared was nine hundred and sixty-two years; then he died.

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

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

²⁸When Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two years old, he begot a son^{29*} and named him Noah, saying, “This one shall bring us relief from our work and the toil of our hands, out of the very ground that the LORD has put under a curse.”†³⁰ Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he begot Noah, and he had other sons and daughters.³¹ The whole lifetime of Lamech was seven hundred and seventy-seven years; then he died.

³²When Noah was five hundred years old, he begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.†*

Origin of the Nephilim.†

6¹When human beings began to grow numerous on the earth and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God† saw how beautiful the daughters of human beings were, and so they took for their

time of Moses. Another ancient source, the Elohist (from its use of the term *Elohim*, “God,” instead of *Yhwh*, “LORD,” for the pre-Mosaic period), makes Moses the first to use *Yhwh* as the proper name of Israel’s God, previously known by other names as well; cf. Ex 3:13–15.

5:1–32 The second of the five Priestly formulas in Part I (“This is the record of the descendants . . .”; see 2:4a; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10) introduces the second of the three linear genealogies in Gn 1–11 (4:17–24 and 11:10–26). In each, a list of individuals (six in 4:17–24, ten in 5:1–32, or nine in 11:10–26) ends in three people who initiate action. Linear genealogies (father to son) in ancient societies had a communicative function, grounding the authority or claim of the last-named individual in the first-named. Here, the genealogy has a literary function as well, advancing the story by showing the expansion of the human race after Adam, as well as the transmission to his descendant Noah of the divine image given to Adam. Correcting the impression one might get from the genealogy in 4:17–24, this genealogy traces the line through Seth rather than through Cain. Most of the names in the series are the same as the names in Cain’s line in 4:17–19 (Enosh, Enoch, Lamech) or spelled with variant spellings (Mahalalel, Jared, Methuselah). The genealogy itself and its placement before the flood shows the influence of ancient Mesopotamian literature, which contains lists of cities and kings before and after the flood. Before the flood, the ages of the kings ranged from 18,600 to 36,000 years, but after it were reduced to between 140 and 1,200 years. The biblical numbers are much smaller. There are some differences in the numbers in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.

5:24 Enoch is in the important seventh position in the ten-member genealogy. In place of the usual formula “then he died,” the change to “Enoch walked with God” implies that he did not die, but like Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11–12) was taken alive to God’s abode. This mysterious narrative spurred much speculation and writing (beginning as early as the third century B.C.) about Enoch the sage who knew the secrets of heaven and who could communicate them to human beings (see Sir 44:16; 49:14; Heb 11:5; Jude 14–15 and the apocryphal work 1 Enoch).

5:29 The sound of the Hebrew word *noah*, “Noah,” is echoed in the word *yanahmenu*, “he will bring us relief”; the latter refers both to the curse put on the soil because of human disobedience (3:17–19) and to Noah’s success in agriculture, especially in raising grapes for wine (9:20–21).

5:32 *Shem, Ham, and Japheth*: like the genealogies in 4:17–24 and 11:10–26, the genealogy ends in three individuals who engage in important activity. Their descendants will be detailed in chap. 10, where it will be seen that the lineage is political-geographical as well as “ethnic.”

6:1–4 These enigmatic verses are a transition between the expansion of the human race illustrated in the genealogy of chap. 5 and the flood depicted in chaps. 6–9. The text, apparently alluding to an old legend, shares a common ancient view that the heavenly world was populated by

4:26 1 Chr 1:1; Lk 3:38. **5:1** Gn 1:27; Wis 2:23; Sir 17:1; Jas 3:9. **5:3–32** 1 Chr 1:1–4; Lk 3:36–38. **5:3** Gn 4:25. **5:24** Wis 4:10–11; Sir 44:16; 49:14; Heb 11:5. **5:29** Gn 3:17–19. **5:32** Gn 6:10; 10:1.

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Wash Away Sin! → Genesis 6:1-9:17

At the beginning of the Noah story, sin has continued to spread so that it has become an accepted part of society. The great flood, which wipes out a whole civilization, symbolizes the consequences of widespread sin.

When sin becomes part of our social systems and our institutions, it is called social sin. Examples of social sin are the unequal distribution of the world's wealth, the exploitation of workers by corporations, and discrimination. What are the effects of social sin in your community? in your country? in the world? What can you do today with your church or community to stand against social sin?

wives whomever they pleased.* ³Then the LORD said: My spirit shall not remain in human beings forever, because they are only flesh. Their days shall comprise one hundred and twenty years.

⁴The Nephilim appeared on earth in those days, as well as later,† after the sons of God had intercourse with the daughters of human beings, who bore them sons. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.*

Warning of the Flood.

⁵†When the LORD saw how great the wickedness of human beings was on earth, and how every desire

a multitude of beings, some of whom were wicked and rebellious. It is incorporated here, not only in order to account for the prehistoric giants, whom the Israelites called the Nephilim, but also to introduce the story of the flood with a moral orientation—the constantly increasing wickedness of humanity. This increasing wickedness leads God to reduce the human life span imposed on the first couple. As the ages in the preceding genealogy show, life spans had been exceptionally long in the early period, but God further reduces them to something near the ordinary life span.

6:2 *The sons of God:* other heavenly beings. See note on 1:26.

6:4 *As well as later:* the belief was common that human beings of gigantic stature once lived on earth. In some cultures, such heroes could make positive contributions, but the Bible generally regards them in a negative light (cf. Nm 13:33; Ez 32:27). The point here is that even these heroes, filled with vitality from their semi-divine origin, come under God's decree in v. 3.

6:5-8:22 The story of the great flood is commonly regarded as a composite narrative based on separate sources woven together. To the Yahwist source, with some later editorial additions, are usually assigned 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 7-10, 12, 16b, 17b, 22-23; 8:2b-3a, 6-12, 13b, 20-22. The other sections are usually attributed to the Priestly writer. There are differences between the two sources: the Priestly source has two pairs of every animal, whereas the Yahwist source has seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean;

that their heart conceived was always nothing but evil,* ⁶the LORD regretted making human beings on the earth, and his heart was grieved.†

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

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

the floodwater in the Priestly source is the waters under and over the earth that burst forth, whereas in the Yahwist source the floodwater is the rain lasting forty days and nights. In spite of many obvious discrepancies in these two sources, one should read the story as a coherent narrative. The biblical story ultimately draws upon an ancient Mesopotamian tradition of a great flood, preserved in the Sumerian flood story, the eleventh tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic, and (embedded in a longer creation story) the Atrahasis Epic.

6:6 *His heart was grieved:* the expression can be misleading in English, for "heart" in Hebrew is the seat of memory and judgment rather than emotion. The phrase is actually parallel to the first half of the sentence ("the LORD regretted . . .").

6:7 Human beings are an essential part of their environment, which includes all living things. In the new beginning after the flood, God makes a covenant with human beings and every living creature (9:9-10). The same close link between human beings and nature is found elsewhere in the Bible; e.g., in Is 35, God's healing transforms human beings along with their physical environment, and in Rom 8:19-23, all creation, not merely human beings, groans in labor pains awaiting the salvation of God.

6:2 Mt 24:38; Lk 17:26-27. **6:4** Wis 14:6; Bar 3:26. **6:5** Ps 14:2-3. **6:9** Wis 10:4; Sir 44:17.

The Gospel According to

MATTHEW

Quick Summary

Have you ever watched a really good movie with a plot twist at the end that makes you rethink the whole movie? Well, if the Old Testament was the first part of such a movie, the Gospel of Matthew would be the plot twist at the end. The twist? All the events in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Christian Old Testament) were a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ!

To show how Jesus was the fulfillment of the hopes and prophecies contained in the Old Testament, Matthew draws parallels between the life and teaching of Jesus and the people and events of the Old Testament. We read about Jesus in situations that recall Old Testament heroes like Moses and the prophets. Jesus takes Old Testament teachings and gives them renewed meaning in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection are the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

The Gospel of Matthew concludes with Jesus commissioning his followers to bring his good news to the whole world. He calls us to participate in that mission too.

How Is This Relevant to My Life Today?

- ✱ Matthew shows us that true love requires commitment and sacrifice.
- ✱ Jesus shows us how to stay faithful when the right thing is difficult to do.
- ✱ Our actions toward one another have consequences, *eternal* consequences! We find Jesus in the people we meet, especially those who are needy.

Headline Highlights

- ✱ Magi Investigate New Star (2:1–12)
- ✱ Getting God's Attention (5:1–12)
- ✱ Cure for Anxiousness (6:25–34)
- ✱ Thousands Fed with Miracle Lunch! (14:13–21)
- ✱ Jesus' True Identity Revealed (16:13–20)
- ✱ Rich Man Leaves Troubled (19:16–30)
- ✱ Christ's Disguises (25:31–46)
- ✱ Betrayed! Betrayed! (26:36–56)
- ✱ Officials Plot Empty Tomb Cover-Up (28:1–15)



I. The Infancy Narrative

The Genealogy of Jesus.†

I ^{1*}The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.†

^{2*}Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.* ^{3*}Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar.* Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ^{4*}Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ^{5*}Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, ^{6*}Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose

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

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

mother had been the wife of Uriah. ^{7†*}Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. ^{8*}Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. ^{9*}Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. ^{10*}Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos,† Amos the father of Josiah. ^{11*}Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile.

^{12*}After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ^{13*}Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ^{14*}Azor the father of Zadok. Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of

proclaims who Jesus is, the savior of his people from their sins (Mt 1:21), Emmanuel in whom "God is with us" (Mt 1:23), and the Son of God (Mt 2:15).

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

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

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

1:1 Gn 5:1; 1 Chr 17:11; Gn 22:18. **1:2–17** Lk 3:23–38. **1:2** Gn 21:3; 25:26; 29:35; 1 Chr 2:1. **1:3** Gn 38:29–30; Ru 4:18; 1 Chr 2:4–9. **1:4** Ru 4:19–20; 1 Chr 2:10–11. **1:5** Ru 4:21–22; 1 Chr 2:11–12. **1:6** 2 Sm 12:24; 1 Chr 2:15; 3:5. **1:7–11** 2 Kgs 25:1–21; 1 Chr 3:10–15. **1:12–16** 1 Chr 3:16–19.

CHALLENGE

Matthew 1:1

CLAIM YOUR
SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Like Jesus, we also have a genealogy. Often our faith and values are learned or passed down from these people, and from others who have had a major influence in our lives, directly or indirectly.

TAKE ACTION!

- 1 Create a chart with your name as well as the names of three to five people who have had a spiritual or faith influence in your life.
- 2 Write a word next to each person's name that represents the value they have passed on to you.
- 3 Reach out to each person on your chart, and tell them how grateful you are for what you have learned or inherited from them. Ask them how they learned what they passed on to you.
- 4 Continue to think of others who have passed on important things to you. Fill out your chart with more names as people come to mind. Place your chart between these pages.

Eliud,¹⁵ Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob,¹⁶ Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.†

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

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

The Birth of Jesus.†

¹⁸Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,† but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,† yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. ²⁰*Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord† appeared to him in

David. Matthew sees the virginal conception as the fulfillment of Is 7:14.

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

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

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

† 1:20 2:13, 19; Lk 1:35.

a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. ²¹She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,† because he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

^{23†*} “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son,
and they shall name him
Emmanuel,”

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

The Visit of the Magi.†

2 ¹When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,† behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star† at its rising and have come to do him homage.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.† ^{5*}They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

⁶ ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of
Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel!’”

⁷Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” ⁹After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they

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

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

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

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

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

Did You Know?

Jesus’ Family Tree

Matthew 1:1–17

The unique focus of the Gospel of Matthew is immediately revealed in the first two chapters. The author of Matthew starts by tracing Jesus’ family tree, making his case that Jesus was the Messiah who would restore the covenant promised to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. Next he traces Jesus’ ancestry back to David to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made to David. Things get even more fascinating with a closer look at all the people mentioned in the list: patriarchs and slaves, kings and peasants, men and women, Jews and non-Jews.

Essentially, this genealogy demonstrates that God has been present and at work from the call of Abraham, the “father” of Judaism, through the high point of their history (David), and even through their darkest times (the Babylonian exile). And “God is with us” still in Jesus (Matthew 1:23).

had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰They were overjoyed at seeing the star, ^{11†*}and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

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

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

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

^{1:23} Is 7:14 LXX. ^{1:25} Lk 2:7. ^{2:2} Nm 24:17. ^{2:5–6} Mi 5:1; 2 Sm 5:2. ^{2:11} Ps 72:10–11, 15; Is 60:6.

Did I Know?

Jesus, Emmanuel

Matthew 1:23

The author of Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and highlights Jesus' Jewish origins. The author does this to let Jewish-Christian readers know that believing in Jesus as the Messiah is not a break with their Jewish traditions.

One of the first examples is in the announcement of Jesus' birth. The author quotes Isaiah 7:14, in which Isaiah tells King Ahaz that his young wife will conceive a son and they will name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

This is the perfect description for Jesus, the Son of God, who fully shares our humanity. The gospel ends with the same promise, when the Risen Jesus tells his disciples, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

The Flight to Egypt.

¹³†When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, † and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." ¹⁴Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. ¹⁵†He stayed there until the death

of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet* might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

The Massacre of the Infants.

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

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

The Return from Egypt.

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

II. The Proclamation of the Kingdom

The Preaching of John the Baptist.†*

3 ¹In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea† ²[and] saying, "Repent,† for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3:2 *Repent:* the Baptist calls for a change of heart and conduct, a turning

2:15 Hos 11:1. **2:18** Jer 31:15. **2:20** Ex 4:19. **2:23** 13:54; Mk 1:9; Lk 2:39; 4:34; Jn 19:19. **3:1–12** Mk 1:2–8; Lk 3:2–17. **3:2** 4:17; 10:7.

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Jesus' Refugee Family Matthew 2:13

Following an angel's order and facing the massacre of all boys under age two, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod's threats. Like Mary and Joseph, millions of people in the world become refugees or immigrants every year, fleeing their countries because of poverty, persecution, or violence. Often they find themselves feeling like unwelcomed strangers, not able to communicate in the language of their new land and even mistreated by its inhabitants. As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger, especially those who suffer.

Today ask God to bless legislators with the love and wisdom to welcome refugees and immigrants, and to give your generation a courageous heart to seek justice and peace in the world.



³† It was of him that the prophet Isaiah* had spoken when he said:

“A voice of one crying out in the desert,
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.’”

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

⁷ When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees† coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You

brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰ Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ * I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.† ¹² * His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat

of one's life from rebellion to obedience towards God. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*: “heaven” (lit., “the heavens”) is a substitute for the name “God” that was avoided by devout Jews of the time out of reverence. The expression “the kingdom of heaven” occurs only in the gospel of Matthew. It means the effective rule of God over his people. In its fullness it includes not only human obedience to God's word, but the triumph of God over physical evils, supremely over death. In the expectation found in Jewish apocalyptic, the kingdom was to be ushered in by a judgment in which sinners would be condemned and perish, an expectation shared by the Baptist. This was modified in Christian understanding where the kingdom was seen as being established in stages, culminating with the parousia of Jesus.

3:3 See note on Jn 1:23.

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

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

3:7 *Pharisees and Sadducees*: the former were marked by devotion to

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

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

3:12 The discrimination between the good and the bad is compared to

3:3 Is 40:3. **3:4** 11:7–8; 2 Kgs 1:8; Zec 13:4. **3:7** 12:34; 23:33; Is 59:5. **3:9** Jn 8:33, 39; Rom 9:7–8; Gal 4:21–31. **3:11** 1 Jn 1:26–27, 33; Acts 1:5. **3:12** 13:30; Is 41:16; Jer 15:7.

Catholic Connection

Matthew 2:16-18

Choose Life!

The Gospel of Matthew (2:16–18) describes a terrible event called the Slaughter of the Innocents. Throughout history—even today—innocent people, including infants and young children, have been victims of war and other violence. Today abortion prematurely ends the lives of innocent children. To many people, abortion seems like a simple solution to an unwanted pregnancy. The Church teaches, however, that human life begins at the moment of conception, and that all life, no matter how small, is sacred and must always be protected. Abortion is wrong in all circumstances.

Catholic social teaching extends this teaching on the dignity of human life to numerous other life issues from “womb to tomb”—including capital punishment, war, and euthanasia. We, in turn, must reflect this consistent ethic of life in all that we believe, say, and do, working hard to uphold human dignity. How might we—as individuals and as communities—support pregnant women and mothers? What makes it difficult to have a consistent ethic of life in our world today?

Catholic Social Teaching:
Life and Dignity
of the Human Person

Matthew

into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus.†

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

The Temptation of Jesus.

4 ^{1†*}Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ^{2*}He fasted for forty days and forty nights,† and afterwards he was hungry. ³The tempter approached and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread.” ^{4†}He said in reply, “It is written:*

‘One does not live by bread alone,

† the procedure by which a farmer separates wheat and chaff. The *winnnowing fan* was a forklike shovel with which the threshed wheat was thrown into the air. The kernels fell to the ground; the light chaff, blown off by the wind, was gathered and burned up.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3:13–17 Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22; Jn 1:31–34. **3:16** Is 42:1. **3:17** 12:18; 17:5; Gn 22:2; Ps 2:7; Is 42:1. **4:1–11** Mk 1:12–13; Lk 4:1–13. **4:2** Ex 24:18; Dt 8:2. **4:4** Dt 8:3.

but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.”

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

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

⁷Jesus answered him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.’”⁸ Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, ⁹and he said to him, “All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.”¹⁰ At this, Jesus said to him, “Get away, Satan! It is written:

‘The Lord, your God, shall you worship
and him alone shall you serve.’”*

¹¹Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry.†

¹²* When he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴that what had been said through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun and land of
Naphtali,*
the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,
¹⁶ the people who sit in darkness
have seen a great light,
on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by
death
light has arisen.”*

¹⁷† From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say,* “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

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

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

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

Did You Know?

Pharisees, Sadducees,
and Scribes

Matthew 3:7

The Pharisees were devoted laymen who were scholars of the Law of Moses and experts at interpreting it. People looked up to them for guidance about how they should live as good Jews.

The Sadducees were associated with the temple and the ruling class and thought that the well-being of the Jewish people was dependent on proper operation and support of the temple.

Scribes were not a religious group within Judaism, but they would have been familiar with the Torah and other aspects of religious practice because they worked as secretaries for the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The negative reaction of John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees is typical in Matthew, but in general they were respected leaders during Jesus’ time.

The Call of the First Disciples.†

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

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

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

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

^{4:6} Ps 91:11–12. ^{4:7} Dt 6:16. ^{4:10} 16:23; Dt 6:13. ^{4:12–13} Mk 1:14–15; Lk 4:14, 31. ^{4:13} Jn 2:12. ^{4:15–16} Is 8:23 LXX; 9:1. ^{4:16} Lk 1:79. ^{4:17} 3:2. ^{4:18–22} Mk 1:16–20; Lk 5:1–11.

Catholic Connection

Matthew 3:13-17

Come to the Water

John the Baptist stands by the Jordan, calling people to be baptized in water as a sign of conversion from sin. Who steps forward? Jesus, the Son of God, who is without sin! God reveals Jesus' true identity: "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17).

Baptism, the first sacrament of initiation, established us as God's adopted children and members of the Church. Many Catholics are baptized as infants, but others, called catechumens, are baptized at each Easter Vigil. The catechumen is immersed in water or has water poured over his or her head three times with the words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, number 226). The catechumen dies to sin and rises as a new creation in Christ. The newly baptized is then anointed with sacred oil to strengthen him or her. Finally, the new Catholic puts on a white garment, signifying new life in Christ, and receives a candle, calling him or her to walk in the light of Christ.

Catechism,
numbers 1213-1284

Matthew

immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

Ministering to a Great Multitude.†

²³He went around all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,† proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness among the people.* ²⁴†His fame spread to all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick with various diseases and racked with pain, those who were possessed, lunatics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵* And great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,† Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

The Sermon on the Mount.

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

The Beatitudes†

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,†
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
⁴† Blessed are they who mourn,*
for they will be comforted.

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

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

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

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

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

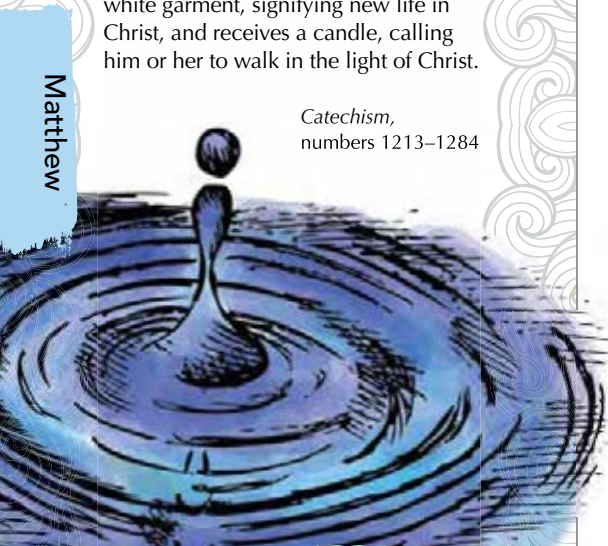
5:1-2 Unlike Luke's sermon, this is addressed not only to the disciples but to the crowds (see Mt 7:28).

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

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

5:4 Cf. Is 61:2, "(The Lord has sent me) . . . to comfort all who mourn."

4:23 9:35; Mk 1:39; Lk 4:15, 44. **4:25** Mk 3:7-8; Lk 6:17-19. **5:3-12** Lk 6:20-23. **5:4** Is 61:2-3; Rev 21:4.



- ⁵† Blessed are the meek,*
for they will inherit the land.
- ⁶ Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,†
for they will be satisfied.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*
- ⁸† Blessed are the clean of heart,*
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are they who are persecuted for the
sake of righteousness,†
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- ¹¹ Blessed are you when they insult you and perse-
cute you and utter every kind of evil against you
[falsely] because of me.* ¹²† Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven.* Thus they
persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Similes of Salt and Light.†

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

Teaching About the Law.

¹⁷†“Do not think that I have come to abolish the
law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish

†

They will be comforted: here the passive is a “theological passive” equiv-
alent to the active “God will comfort them”; so also in Mt 5:6, 7.

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

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

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

5:10 *Righteousness* here, as usually in Matthew, means conduct in con-
formity with God’s will.

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

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

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

5:17–20 This statement of Jesus’ position concerning the Mosaic law is

5:5 Gn 13:15; Ps 37:11. **5:7** 18:33; Jas 2:13. **5:8** Ps 24:4–5; 73:1. **5:10** 1 Pt
2:20; 3:14; 4:14. **5:11** 10:22; Acts 5:41. **5:12** 2 Chr 36:16; Heb 11:32–38; Jas
5:10. **5:13** Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34–35. **5:14** Jn 8:12. **5:15** Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16; 11:33.
5:16 Jn 3:21.

Catholic Connection

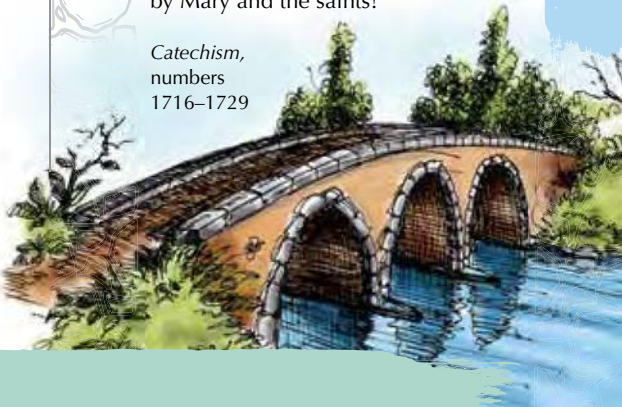
Matthew 5:1–12

Be Happy!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers a radical view of true happi-
ness in a list of attitudes called the
Beatitudes. Jesus calls us to turn
away from self-centered attitudes and
toward the truth of who we are before
God. In the Beatitudes, Jesus paints a
word picture of his true followers. We
are poor: Our true happiness does not
come from things. At times, we are
sad and we mourn: We look to God
and God’s people to comfort us. We
are meek: We accept compliments
graciously but know our value lies
in our dignity as God’s children. We
hunger and thirst for justice in our
world, and we show mercy to others.
We are clean of heart, avoiding temp-
tation in thought and action, and
we are peacemakers. If we endure
persecution, Jesus promises us a sure
reward.

Living the Beatitudes leads us to
a right relationship with God and
others. Eventually the Beatitudes
will lead us to the eternal life God
has prepared for us in heaven. In the
meantime, make the Beatitudes your
daily attitudes, and know that you
are not alone in the pursuit of true
happiness. You walk this journey with
your brothers and sisters in faith, led
by Mary and the saints!

Catechism,
numbers
1716–1729



Catholic Connection

Matthew, chapters 5-7

Upside-Down World

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turns his listeners' attitudes upside down. He says it is not enough simply to follow the letter of the Law and perform minimal acts of care for the poor, bury the dead, and give alms. Rather, people should do these things generously, compassionately, and humbly, with a hunger for justice, a pure heart, and a desire for peace.

God has a special love for the poor and oppressed. These are "the last" who are first in God's eyes. To be authentic Christians, we must show similar "upside-down" love for those most in need. Thankfully our world has been blessed with modern-day prophets who have shown us what it truly means to love and care for those who are poor. For example, Blessed Oscar Romero of El Salvador was martyred for speaking out against grave injustices being inflicted upon the poor in his country. Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker movement and devoted her life to promoting peace while serving the most destitute. With these faithful disciples and so many others as examples, we too must always opt to love and serve the poor in our midst.

Catholic Social Teaching:
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Matthew



but to fulfill. ¹⁸Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place.* ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.† ²⁰I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Teaching About Anger.†

²¹"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors,* 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.'† ²²But I say to you, whoever is angry† with his brother will be liable to judgment,* and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. ²³Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you,* ²⁴leave your

† composed of traditional material from Matthew's sermon documentation (see note on Mt 5:1-7:29), other Q material (cf. Mt 18; Lk 16:17), and the evangelist's own editorial touches. To fulfill the law appears at first to mean a literal enforcement of the law in the least detail: *until heaven and earth pass away* nothing of the law *will pass* (Mt 5:18). Yet the "passing away" of heaven and earth is not necessarily the end of the world understood, as in much apocalyptic literature, as the dissolution of the existing universe. The "turning of the ages" comes with the apocalyptic event of Jesus' death and resurrection, and those to whom this gospel is addressed are living in the new and final age, prophesied by Isaiah as the time of "new heavens and a new earth" (Is 65:17; 66:22). Meanwhile, during Jesus' ministry when the kingdom is already breaking in, his mission remains within the framework of the law, though with significant anticipation of the age to come, as the following antitheses (Mt 5:21-48) show.

5:19 Probably these *commandments* means those of the Mosaic law. But this is an interim ethic "until heaven and earth pass away."

5:21-48 Six examples of the conduct demanded of the Christian disciple. Each deals with a commandment of the law, introduced by *You have heard that it was said to your ancestors* or an equivalent formula, followed by Jesus' teaching in respect to that commandment, *But I say to you*; thus their designation as "antitheses." Three of them accept the Mosaic law but extend or deepen it (Mt 5:21-22; 27-28; 43-44); three reject it as a standard of conduct for the disciples (Mt 5:31-32; 33-37; 38-39).

5:21 Cf. Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17. The second part of the verse is not an exact quotation from the Old Testament, but cf. Ex 21:12.

5:22-26 Reconciliation with an offended brother is urged in the admonition of Mt 5:23-24 and the parable of Mt 5:25-26 (// Lk 12:58-59). The severity of the judge in the parable is a warning of the fate of unrepentant sinners in the coming judgment by God.

5:22 Anger is the motive behind murder, as the insulting epithets are steps that may lead to it. They, as well as the deed, are all forbidden. *Raqa*: an Aramaic word *rēqā* or *rēqā* probably meaning "imbecile," "blockhead," a term of abuse. The ascending order of punishment, *judgment* (by a local council?), trial before the *Sanhedrin*, condemnation to *Gehenna*, points to a higher degree of seriousness in each of the offenses. *Sanhedrin*: the highest judicial body of Judaism. *Gehenna*: in Hebrew *gē-hinnōm*, "Valley of Hinnom," or *gē ben-hinnōm*, "Valley of the son of Hinnom," southwest of Jerusalem, the center of an idolatrous cult during the monarchy in which children were offered in sacrifice (see 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 7:31). In Jos 18:16 (Septuagint, Codex Vaticanus) the Hebrew is transliterated into Greek as *gaienna*, which appears in the New Testament as *geenna*. The concept of punishment of sinners by fire either after death or after the final judgment is found in Jewish apocalyptic literature (e.g., Enoch 90:26) but the name *geenna* is first given to the place of punishment in the New Testament.



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speech,
conduct,
love,
faith,
AND
purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

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