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THE Catholic Youth Bible® Third Edition

# Leader Guide

For Use with NABRE and NRSV Translations

**PRAY IT  
STUDY IT  
LIVE IT®**



**Leader Guide for**

***The Catholic Youth Bible***<sup>®</sup>





**Leader Guide for**  
***The Catholic Youth Bible***<sup>®</sup>  
**Third Edition**

**Christine Schmertz Navarro**  
**and contributing authors**



saint mary's press

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*Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him. (Deut 30:19–20, NRSV)*

### **About the Author**

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# Introduction

Welcome to a new adventure in teaching the Bible to teenagers. We have designed this guide with the adventuresome teacher in mind—someone who has perhaps taught Scripture courses to high school students before. We assume that that someone is you.

You may have used conventional materials to teach the Scriptures, such as textbooks on the Bible, the Old Testament, or the New Testament. Maybe those were fine for a while, but now you are looking for something more—an approach that will take the Bible to a more personal level with students. You want your students to be more actively engaged in seeing how the Bible relates to their lives. You want them to be as excited as you are about discovering what God is saying to you and them through the Scriptures. And most of all, you want them to *read* the Bible, not just read *about* the Bible.

Okay. We have figured out that you are adventuresome, you love the Bible, and you love the kids you teach. What a great combination! Now we add to that mix *The Catholic Youth Bible*®, the complete Bible for teenagers that intersperses the biblical text with over 700 lively, youth-friendly articles—pieces that draw teens into the biblical text itself to see how it speaks to them. Chances are you may already be familiar with *THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE*, or the *CYB*, as it is called in shorthand, or you would not have picked up this guide. But in case you have not seen it or are not familiar with all the new additions to the third edition of the *CYB*, we will fill you in on some of its features.

The articles in the *CYB* are tagged, for example, “Live It!” “Pray It!” “Did You Know?” “Introducing . . .” (focusing on important biblical people), and “Cultural Connections” (articles written from the perspective of different cultures). In the third edition, the articles tagged “Catholic Connections” have been rewritten into forty full-page articles that trace the biblical roots of many Catholic beliefs and practices. Another addition is a new article category called “Catholic Social Teaching.” These twenty-eight articles address seven significant themes in the Church’s teaching on social justice.

The *CYB* also contains engaging section and book introductions, ten full-color maps, five special indexes, one full-color timeline of biblical events, and the Sunday readings for the three-year liturgical cycle. Other new features include a dictionary of Scripture-related terms and forty-eight full-color inserts containing additional information to help young people live, study, and pray with the Scriptures; photos, charts, and art on biblical people, places, and events; and Catholic prayers and practices that are scripturally based.

This guide serves the teacher who wants to use *THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE* as the primary text for a Scripture course. It contains the following items:

- learning activities for every book of the Bible, some applying to several books and many incorporating and extending the articles in the *CYB*
- twenty puzzle activities that help students review the content of specific books of the Bible
- twenty-two student handouts
- lists of resources for teacher background and for ministry with teens (appendix A)
- ten prayer services (appendix C)
- an index of activities listed by biblical book (appendix D)
- an index of activities listed by topic (appendix E)

For the teacher who wants to use *THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE* to provide scriptural connections to specific topics in other course material, this guide offers:

- twenty activities that address issues related to Catholic social teaching (appendix B)
- an index of activities that address topics related to Confirmation preparation (appendix F)

For those who want to “move outside the box”—go beyond the conventional textbook approach to teaching the Scriptures—the *CYB*, together with this guide, can provide just what is needed.

## What Does This Leader Guide Offer?

This guide is a resource for you to use in teaching a course on the Bible or to connect other course material to the Scriptures. It is more like a cookbook of learning activities than a plan for structuring a course from *A* to *Z*. In other words, you can rely on your own creativity in laying out a course that addresses the needs and preferences of you and your students.

The learning activities in this guide are organized according to the sequence of the books of the Bible. But that organization need not be the structure of your course. You may not want to start at the beginning of this guide and do activities from every section, following the Bible book by book. You may prefer to select activities from this guide, including ones that extend the *CYB* articles, according to another course organization. Here are some possibilities:

- Concentrate first on one biblical book or section of a book, not necessarily from the beginning of the Bible—for instance, one of the Gospels (Mark is the shortest) or Exodus, chapters 1–15 (the familiar story of Moses and the Israelites up through the escape from Egypt). This has the advantage of starting off the students with somewhat known material, and it also enables them to see one book or part of a book in total. Generally, Catholic students have been exposed to biblical passages in a mostly piecemeal fashion, as they are presented by the *Lectionary* at Mass. Reading a whole book, or a significant portion of one, can shed new light on the old familiar passages. Then you might proceed to other selected books of the Bible as your semester’s or year’s schedule permits.
- Follow the sequence used in the Saint Mary’s Press textbook *Written on Our Hearts: The Old Testament Story of God’s Love*, by Mary Reed Newland (see appendix A), which follows the order of salvation history, beginning with the “prehistory” in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.
- Use appendix D, “Index of Activities by Biblical Book,” to choose activities from each book that meet the specific learning styles of the teens with whom you are working. Each activity is listed, and next to many of them is a label such as “current events,” “art,” or “reflection,” to help you plan a curriculum that varies the type of learning that is happening in the classroom.
- Use appendix E, “Index of Activities by Topic,” to shape a course that fits the knowledge of the Scriptures that your students already possess and that answers the types of questions they are posing about life and about the Bible.
  - People of the Bible
  - Teen Life Issues

- Important Themes and Topics in the Scriptures
- Exegesis
- Use appendix F, “Index of Activities for Confirmation Preparation,” to enhance content covered in preparation for Confirmation so the students will understand the sacrament’s biblical roots.
- Use the prayer services in appendix C and the activities on issues related to Catholic social teaching in appendix B of this guide at appropriate points in your course, and draw from the lists of print resources in appendix A to structure a course that fits the needs of your students.

Regardless of what approach you take to structuring your course, we believe this strongly: **It is crucial for students at the outset to get a broad picture of the whole story of salvation history**, or at least a rough chronology of events. Later in this introduction, in the section “The First Step: A Sprint Through Salvation History,” we offer a way to give them that overview.

## What Do You Need in Addition to This Guide?

### Background

As a cookbook, this guide offers you a smorgasbord of creative, engaging activities. It does not provide the in-depth background on the Bible that anyone teaching the Scriptures should have. You may already be a storehouse of such background knowledge from years of experience studying and teaching the Scriptures. If not, other excellent materials give that essential background, and full bibliographic information on a selection of those materials is included in appendix A.

We highly recommend having at hand an all-purpose study guide to the Bible. A scholarly work such as *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, edited by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, would be helpful. But a less technical, more user-friendly guide will be a better aid for translating scholarly insights into lay, and especially teenage, terms.

For that purpose we recommend the *Saint Mary’s Press® College Study Bible*, edited by Virginia Halbur, or *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition*, edited by Jean Marie Hiesberger. Besides the full text of the New American Bible, with its usual book introductions and footnotes, both of these editions contain excellent, easy-to-understand background on all the books of the Bible, insightful articles, charts, and other study materials to aid student understanding of how to read and interpret the Scriptures.

Numerous other good resources on the Bible are available. The *Saint Mary’s Press® Essential Bible Concordance*, in either the NABRE or NRSV translation, is an index to locate key words in the Bible and is used in Scripture study to find Bible passages or to explore how a particular word or theme is used. A few activities, however, may require the use of a larger concordance (see appendix A). You will also need a good Bible dictionary: John L. McKenzie’s *Dictionary of the Bible* is a classic that has held up extremely well; another excellent choice is *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, edited by Paul J. Achtemeier. For students, the *Saint Mary’s Press® Essential Bible Dictionary*, by Sheila O’Connell-Roussell, is designed to help deepen young people’s understanding of the words and themes found in the Scriptures.

For other background that offers or can be translated into useful insights for the students, we recommend the highly readable *I’m Glad You Asked: 60 Common Questions Catholics Have About the Bible*, by Fr. Mark R. Pierce, and

*101 Questions and Answers on the Bible*, by Raymond E. Brown. Two other highly accessible books that can help you translate scholarly information into teen-friendly insights are “*And God Said What?*” *An Introduction to Biblical Literary Forms for Bible Lovers* and *A Walk Through the New Testament: An Introduction for Catholics*, both by Margaret Nutting Ralph. *Saint Mary’s Press® Essential Guide to Biblical Life and Times*, by Martin C. Albl, helps students to understand the cultural and social context of the human authors of the Bible.

Books that offer a kind of spirituality lens on the Bible can help you make your Scripture course much more nourishing for students’ lives. Two by Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos offer a particularly accessible orientation to the spirituality of the Bible: *The Great Themes of Scripture: New Testament* and *The Great Themes of Scripture: Old Testament*. Another book, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality: Touching a Finger to the Flame*, by Barbara E. Bowe, illustrates the biblical foundation of spirituality and how the Bible can be a spiritual companion on our journey of faith today.

You may decide to supplement your course with textbooks like the third edition of Mary Reed Newland’s *Written on Our Hearts* (on the Old Testament) and Thomas Zanzig’s *Jesus of History, Christ of Faith* (on the New Testament), even just to see how they present certain passages or deal with certain issues with a teenage audience.

See appendix A for full bibliographical citations for all these resources and for other resources that can support your ministry with teens.

You may weave into your classes the insights you gain into the history, context, theological intent, and so on, of a given book of the Bible. In the spirit of the learning processes advocated in this guide, those background insights and information should not be delivered as extensive lecture pieces (see the section “The Pedagogical Approach of This Guide” below). You may integrate your insights gained from background knowledge judiciously as they fit, simply in the course of introducing activities or commenting on the insights that students gain as they do the activities.

## Art and Music Materials

Many of the activities in this guide tap into the artistic and musical creativity of the students. It will be beneficial to keep an ample supply of the following items in your classroom. The students can help provide these.

- construction paper
- poster board
- scissors
- glue
- markers, crayons, and colored pencils
- magazines and catalogs
- glitter, yarn, buttons, feathers, and other craft materials
- small percussion instruments

## The Pedagogical Approach of This Guide

The pairing of *THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE* with this guide of learning activities supposes that you, the teacher, will shape a unique vision for the course, selecting what books of the Bible to cover, in what sequence, and in what depth. As discussed in the preceding section, you will need to draw on your own background in the Scriptures and supplement that with whatever study guides or references are most useful to you.



To help the students understand the meaning of the Bible passages, encourage them to form the habit of writing down any questions they have or any terms or concepts with which they are unfamiliar, as they are reading. Discussions around their questions can precede or be integrated into the steps of the activities. In addition, there are certain activities, labeled “Exegetical Tools,” that focus on different types of biblical criticism and introduce the use of various resources for exploring the Bible.

However, the approach of most of the activities in this guide is not primarily academic but invites the students to engage in a personal dialogue with the text of the Bible. Having an academic background will help you guide them in that engagement, but the students’ focus will be less scholarly.

Let’s return to the analogy of a cookbook we have been using for this guide. For the most part, in our cooking, we alternate between old favorites and new recipes to spice up our lives. In the same way, a veteran teacher can incorporate the new activities found in this guide with lesson plans from years past, tailoring the curriculum to meet the specific needs of the current students.

This is not a cookbook for total beginners; it does not take you step-by-step through the activities and tell you how to “cook.” This book presumes that you have the background, the experience, and the knowledge of your students needed to use and adapt the activities as necessary.

## **The Power of the Scriptures in the Student-Teacher Relationship**

This course rests on several important presuppositions about the Scriptures and the relationship between students and teachers. The first is that the Scriptures can speak powerfully to teenagers and their teachers about God and God’s desires for their lives and world. The second is that God’s word can speak to the needs, questions, and issues that are important to the students now. The third is that the teacher can not only discover ways in which God speaks through the Scriptures but also help the students discern, through careful listening, how God is communicating with them.

*THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE* and this manual of learning are based on the belief that God reaches out in love to teens through the Scriptures. During the tumultuous years of adolescence, God longs to offer peace, forgiveness, and affirmation. Jesus’ model of living and teaching can speak powerfully in their lives.

Scriptural exegesis is a dialogue between the person who reads the Bible and the scriptural text. Each individual or group brings personal questions and concerns to the reading of the Scriptures, and this allows for many rich interpretations of the same passages. Marvelously, God works through this interchange to inspire, challenge, and express love for us. Although human teachers may share scholarly interpretations of a passage with the students, the main teacher of this course is God. God speaks to the students, and the teacher facilitates that process and encourages reflection on its mystery. This leader guide is invitational in nature rather than simply instructive.

The students can hear God speaking to them only when they come to God honestly from the reality of their own lives. This guide provides opportunities for them to reflect on the mysteries of the Scriptures in age-appropriate ways. And in the meantime, they will be educating *you* about who they are and what is important to them.

The guide asks you, as the teacher, to create opportunities for the scriptural text to speak to the students on a personal level, and then to invite the students to reflect on and share what each of them finds there. You must take a discerning role with the students. After they have engaged with the text,



listen to their insights, and ask further questions to help them reflect on their own images of God and their own sense of God's invitation, message, and call to each one of them and to the Christian community now. Share your professional knowledge and teaching skills with the students, and then join them in being open to God's word, facilitating this exploration process for them.

## The Value of Active Learning in Teaching the Scriptures

Traditionally, the Scriptures have been taught in the linguistic style that has characterized instruction in most disciplines. Reading the Bible, hearing lectures about its meaning, discussing questions related to the material, and writing reflections about its significance have been important ways that students have learned about the word of God. This guide's goal is to complement that style with an active learning approach to exploring the Scriptures. The activities share some of the following characteristics:

**Each student must engage in the learning process.** The activities in this guide invite *every* student to interact with the scriptural text personally. In addition, the variety of learning styles addressed by the activities can appeal to all students to varying degrees. Dramatic, artistic, and musical students can shine, as well as those whose skills are verbal. The extrovert and the introvert can find activities that interest them. And the process of active learning invites all students to expand their gifts in those different areas and their understanding of how various media can enhance learning in all of life.

**The activities in this guide approach the Scriptures from the context of the students' lives.** The activities attempt to answer the students' silent question, "Why should I bother reading the Bible or paying attention in class today?" The use of contemporary music, television, and other media as sources for reflection on the Bible helps the Scriptures' "credibility" with teens. The connection of the Scriptures to issues of emotional development, friendship, family, society and world, and personal future helps the students relate a piece of writing from two thousand years ago with what happens to them every day. You can help by narrowing and adapting the context of the activities as much as necessary to address the specific questions of your own students.

**An active learning approach invites the students to examine the Scriptures and be open to their message at a deeper level.** For instance, the students can explore biblical passages through art projects, role-plays, ethical scenarios, journal entries, musical themes, and other forms of expression. This invites the students to see both familiar and unfamiliar passages in a new light and to explore concepts in a new way. We, and our students, cannot simply look at a passage or issue from a one-dimensional perspective, but must delve more deeply into it and make new connections. An active learning approach encourages the students to explore the complexity and mystery of God's revelation in our world now.

## The First Step: A Sprint Through Salvation History

Earlier, we said that students need to have an overview of salvation history, or at least a rough chronology of biblical events, so that they can appreciate certain passages or books of the Bible in the context of “the big Story.” We recommended that before tackling specific books or passages, you lead an activity that will give them this crucial chronological, contextual background. Without that background, they may miss much of the fruit that this course holds out. We recommend facilitating a “sprint” through salvation history at the beginning of the course, even if you choose to structure the whole course according to the Story itself. That will help the young people to see the whole picture before examining the details.

If you want to do a simple version of a biblical journey with your students, we recommend an approach like the one in the next section.

### A Sample Sprint



Handout **Intro-A**

1. Give your students a copy of handout Intro-A, “A Sprint Through Salvation History.” It divides the Story of salvation into eight sections or stages:

1. The founders and the Promise (Abraham and Sarah, and their descendants)
2. Moses, the Exodus, and the Sinai Covenant
3. The invasion of Canaan and the period of the Judges
4. The nation and the Temple (Saul, David, and Solomon)
5. The divided nation (Israel and Judah, and the kings and the prophets)
6. The Exile, the return to Judah, and the dispersion of the Jews
7. More domination by foreign powers (Greek and Roman)
8. Jesus as the Messiah of Israel (his life, death, and Resurrection) and the growth of the early Church after Pentecost

Direct the students all to read the *entire* handout as homework or in class. As they read, they should follow along with the timeline of biblical history in the study aids near the back of the *CYB*. They should also consult the maps in the study aids.

2. Divide the class into eight groups, and assign each group one of the stages of the journey. Instruct the groups each to develop an artistic expression or symbol of their assigned stage, which they will present to the rest of the class at the next class period. Encourage the students to use their creativity. They may come up with a popular song that reminds them of what went on in that stage of salvation history. Or they may do a pantomime of, for instance, the escape from Egypt during the Exodus. They may create a visual—such as a painting, a drawing, or a collage. They may form a “human sculpture” to express a feeling or a theme from their assigned stage.

3. For the class period in which the journey takes place, if possible, set up eight stations in a large space such as a gym so that the students can actually move from place to place to get the feel of journeying. You might be able to use parts of the whole school, making for a pilgrimage-type procession from one place to another.

Gather the students and then lead them through the space you have arranged, stopping at each station in the journey to read the section of the handout about that stage of salvation history. At each station, tie the material from the handout in with the timeline and maps in the *CYB* to reinforce the chronology. Then invite the assigned group to present its work.

4. When you have completed the journey, gather back in the classroom. Go over the experience, clarify any questions about the sequence and events (referring again to the timeline), and discuss which symbols or artistic expressions were particularly helpful in getting across what was happening during the stages of salvation history.

## Ready to Go!

Once you have taken the students through the basic events of salvation history, they will be ready to study the Bible with at least some sense of context. As you explore different books and passages of the Bible throughout the course, refer back to the basic narrative, with the accompanying timeline from the *CYB*, to situate the scriptural stories, prayers, prophecies, and so on, in their historical contexts. Resources such as the *Saint Mary's® Press College Study Bible*, edited by Virginia Halbur, or *The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition*, edited by Jean Marie Hiesberger, can provide invaluable guidance to you as you help the students explore the scriptural books and passages.

## “Teach Me Your Paths”

Teaching is always an adventure. When you are drawing out students to encounter God’s word in their own lives, teaching may very well be the adventure of a lifetime. This course will be a growing, stretching experience for your students, and perhaps even more for you. After all, you cannot help others meet the living God without yourself meeting God in some pretty unexpected ways!

As you help the students explore the Bible through this course, let these words from Psalm 25 speak deeply in your heart as well as in your students’ lives:

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
 O my God, in you I trust;  
     do not let me be put to shame;  
     do not let my enemies exult over me.

. . . . .

Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
     teach me your paths.  
 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
     for you are the God of my salvation;  
     for you I wait all day long.

(Verses 1–5, NRSV)

# A Sprint Through Salvation History

The God revealed in the Old Testament is not aloof or distant from human affairs; this God acts within human history. The Story of God's actions and the people's responses over many centuries is called **salvation history**.

It will help to keep the big picture of that history in mind as we set out to discover the meaning of the Old Testament because the history and the Scriptures of ancient Israel were intertwined. . . . Do not be concerned about memorizing names and events at this point; they will come up again many times in this course. Instead, simply try to recognize the broad pattern of history.

First, referring to the biblical timeline in the study aids near the back of the *CYB*, note the time period in which the biblical events happened. As you can see, humankind existed for many thousands of years before the biblical era; most of that time is called prehistory because no historical records of those ancient peoples exist. (The time period of the Creation and the earliest stories of humankind appearing in the Old Testament fall into the category of prehistory.) About 3000 BC, history as we know it began, with the development of early forms of writing. The biblical period—from the beginnings of Israel as a people through the time of Jesus and the earliest years of the church—went from about 1850 BC until about AD 100. It lasted almost two thousand years. And that is about the same amount of time as has elapsed from the time of Jesus until today.

What follows is a brief overview of the events of the biblical period. You may also refer to the maps in the study aids.

## The Founders and the Promise

The history and the religion of the Israelites began with Abraham. Abraham was a wandering herdsman, or nomad, who lived in the region now called Iraq, around 1850 BC. According to the Book of Genesis, God made an agreement with Abraham. God promised to make Abraham's descendants a blessing to the world and to give them the land of Canaan, later known as Palestine. The Promise, as this is called, was that Abraham's descendants would reveal the one God to the world. Christians believe that this Promise reached its fulfillment in the coming of Christ.

Abraham's descendants and their families inherited the Promise. Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob would be called the patriarchs, or founders, of the Jewish faith. Their wives—Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel—would be called the matriarchs.

## **The Exodus of the Israelites and the Covenant**

At the close of the Book of Genesis, the descendants of Abraham are living in Egypt, having traveled there from Canaan in order to survive a famine. Yet as the Book of Exodus opens, we find them enslaved by the Egyptians. Practically nothing is known about the Israelites in Egypt from about 1700 to 1290 BC.

Moses, the main character in the story of the Exodus, was one of the greatest religious leaders in history. About 1290 BC, the understanding that one God was above all other gods came to Moses when God revealed God's name—Yahweh, meaning "I am the One who is always present." With God's power, the Israelites, led by Moses, made a daring escape from Pharaoh's army through the sea—the Exodus—and were thus freed from slavery.

After a dramatic encounter between Moses and God on Mount Sinai, a covenant, or agreement, between Yahweh and the Israelites was confirmed. The Israelites' part of the Covenant was to keep the Ten Commandments, which God had presented to Moses. God's part was to make the Israelites "the people of God" and to be with them as long as they kept the Covenant. Once again God promised that they would be given the land of Canaan. But before they entered Canaan, they wandered for forty years in the desert as they learned to trust God's care for them.

## **Taking Over the Promised Land**

After Moses' time the Israelites, led by Joshua, entered Canaan. Over the next centuries—from about 1250 to 1000 BC—they fought against the people who lived in that region. In these battles the Israelites were led by military leaders called judges. During this time the Israelites abandoned their nomadic ways for the more settled agricultural life that was native to the region.

## **The Nation and the Temple**

Around 1000 BC Israel became recognized as a nation, with David as its anointed king and Jerusalem as its capital city. God made a promise to David that his royal line would endure forever. (Later Jews put their hopes in a descendant of David to save them from oppression.)

David's son Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem, and it became the principal place of worship for the nation. As both a political and a religious capital, Jerusalem became a great and holy city.

## **The Kings and the Prophets**

After Solomon's death in 922 BC, the nation divided, with the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south.

Heavy taxes and forced service in both kingdoms created hardships for the people. In addition, the kings often practiced idolatry—the worship of idols (images of other gods).

Prophets spoke out against both kingdoms' injustices to the people and infidelity to God. They questioned the behavior of the kings and called them and their people back to the Covenant. Yet the kingdoms continued to oppress the poor and worship pagan gods until eventually both kingdoms were crushed by powerful conquerors. The Assyrians obliterated the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 BC and took its people into exile. In 587 BC the Babylonians destroyed Judah, including the city of Jerusalem, and took its people to Babylon as captives.

### **The Babylonian Exile and the Jewish Dispersion**

While the people were exiled in Babylon, still other prophets encouraged them to repent of their sins and turn back to God. During this time the prophet known as Second Isaiah proclaimed that God was the one and only God. Monotheism, the belief in one God, was now the revelation of this people to the world, their blessing to the nations.

After fifty years in Babylon, the exiles were released from captivity by the conquering Persians and allowed to return home. Judah, no longer a politically independent kingdom, had become a district within the Persian Empire, and the returned exiles became known as Jews, from the word *Judah*. They rebuilt the Temple, and under Ezra and Nehemiah, they re-established the Law and restored Jerusalem. That city became the religious capital for the Jews who had resettled all over the world—that is, the Jews of the Dispersion.

During the exile the Jewish leaders had begun collecting and reflecting on their ancestral writings, forming the core of what would later become their Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament.

### **More Oppressors**

The Persian Empire was conquered in 330 BC by the armies of Alexander the Great, leader of the Greek Empire. This made the Greeks overlords of the Jews for nearly three hundred years, with the exception of a brief period of independence after a revolt led by the Maccabees family. The Greeks were followed by the Romans, who captured Jerusalem in 63 BC. Although tolerant of other cultures and religions, the Roman Empire severely punished its subjects for revolts.

It was a dark time for the people of the Promise, who longed for release from oppression and for the day when all their hopes for a good and peaceful life would be fulfilled. Many Jews looked toward the coming of a messiah, one sent by God to save them; some expected this messiah to be from the family line of David.

## **A Sprint Through Salvation History, page 4**

It is at this point in the history of Israel that the Old Testament accounts end. . . .

### **Jesus, the Savior**

Into a situation of defeat and darkness for the people of Israel, Jesus was born, one of the house, or family line, of David. Christians see Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah—the fulfillment of all God’s promises to Israel and the Savior of the world. With his death and Resurrection, Jesus’ followers recognized that he was the Son of God. The community of believers began to grow, first among Jews but later among Gentiles, or non-Jews. The story of Jesus and the growth of the early church is told in the New Testament.

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# Pentateuch



