

THE **AFRICAN** **AMERICAN** 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



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THE NATIONAL
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Welcome!

We are pleased and honored to present to the Catholic faithful of the African American community *The African American Catholic Youth Bible*®, which is the culmination of several years' collaboration between Saint Mary's Press and The National Black Catholic Congress, Inc. The Congress is itself a collaborative entity, bringing together African American Catholic leadership organizations of clergy, religious, and laity.

Many print Bibles serve a variety of audiences, but until now none has been published especially for African American youth. The editors envisioned a Bible with language, expressions, and illustrations that address the particular concerns and experiences of this age and racial group. By making the Word of God more accessible and attractive to our youth, we hope to foster a deeper appreciation of the Word in their faith journeys and everyday lives.

This Bible has the approved biblical text and footnotes of the *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, which is used in Catholic worship and everyday settings across this country. The art, articles, and notes dispersed throughout *The African American Catholic Youth Bible*® speak to the life and experiences of black youth, which makes this Bible unique.

Throughout the experience of African Americans, the stories, events, miracles, signs, and wonders of the Bible—to say nothing of its wisdom and teaching—have provided solace and comfort, refuge and peace, strength and hope to an oppressed and suffering people. Snatched from their homelands in Africa, enduring the dreadful Middle Passage, and forced into slavery, African Americans were able to survive to a large degree through the words of inspiration and consolation they found in the Bible.

Black spirituals, such as “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” and “Go Down, Moses,” tell the stories of the Bible with an expressiveness that touches the soul and the heart. The spirituals were written for the very same reason as the Bible stories—to inspire the hearer to righteous action and the pursuit of justice. In a similar way, we hope *The African American Catholic Youth Bible*® will be a source of inspiration for our youth (and adults as well) as they strive for justice and equality as American citizens.

Creating this volume involved the cooperation of Black Catholic leaders throughout the United States, who helped form an editorial team consisting of American and African biblical scholars, youth ministers, and others involved with young people. They wrote, edited, and critiqued the introductions and articles found throughout the Old and New Testaments of this Bible. These contributors' names and affiliations are listed on pages 10–11. We are most grateful for their expertise and commitment, particularly the editorial leadership of Rev. James Chukwuma Okoye, CSSp, DPhil.

After more than five years of careful effort, we are confident that our youth, as well as their parents, will find immense value in this instrument. As readers probe it ever more deeply, we pray that the Word affect their lives and their relationships with God and neighbor.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Rev. John H. Ricard, SSJ, Bishop Emeritus of Pensacola–Tallahassee

Most Rev. Joseph N. Perry, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago

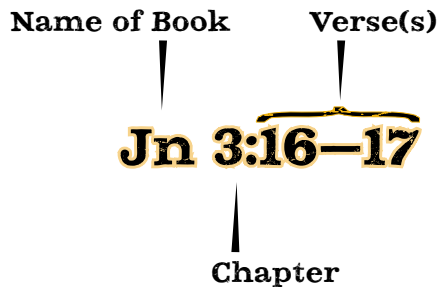
Most Rev. Martin D. Holley, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington

Navigating

The African American Catholic Youth Bible®

The *African American Catholic Youth Bible*® has several aids to help you locate references to Bible books and the Bible's special features. The contents on pages 2–3 will be your main guide in locating the different books and features. However, the last page in the color section (facing the back cover) lists all the Bible books alphabetically and gives their abbreviations and beginning page numbers. You will find this a useful and easy-to-locate guide. Also, the “Where Do I Find It?” section offers several types of indexes to help you locate specific passages and articles.

Many references to specific Bible passages appear throughout *The African American Catholic Youth Bible*®. These references are given in a shorthand form, such as Jn 3:16–17. The initial letters are the abbreviation for (or, in a few cases, the full name of) the Bible book. The number before the colon stands for the chapter, and the number(s) after the colon stands for the verse(s). Jn 3:16–17 refers to the Gospel According to John, chapter 3, verses 16 through 17.



Each article begins with a citation identifying the Bible passage the article is based on. It will help to read the passage before reading the article.

In addition to the Bible text, you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. Every time you see an asterisk (*) 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 you with added information about words and phrases mentioned in the Scripture, and direct you to similar Scripture passages. Every time you see a superscript letter (^a, ^b, ^c) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference at the bottom of the page. These cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.

Special Features

The *African American Catholic Youth Bible*® offers many special features to help you read and understand the Bible. Here is a list of some of those features and where to find them.

Section Introductions

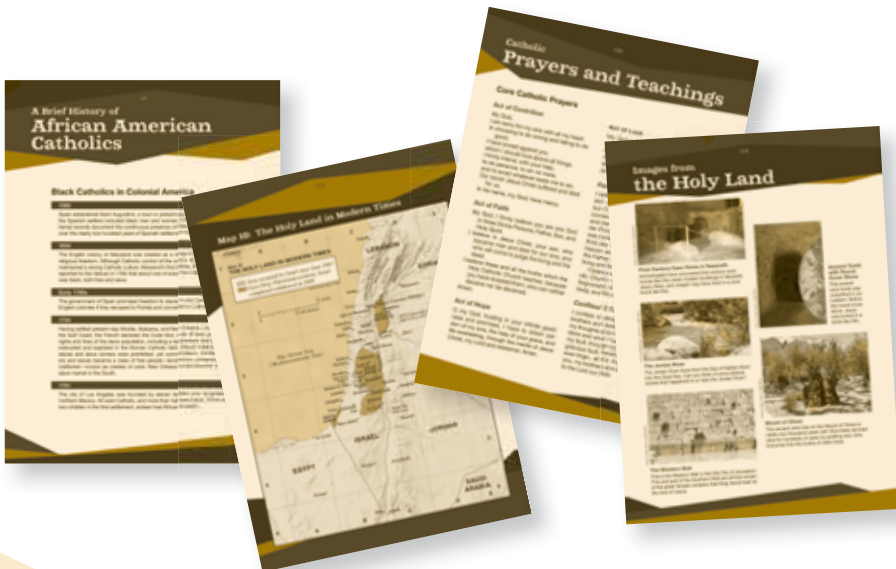
Each major section of the Bible (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the biblical novels, the wisdom and poetry books, the prophetic books, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters and Revelation) begins with background on the books in that section.

Book Introductions

Introductions at the beginning of most books give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents, including quick facts, the period in history covered, the inspired author, and central themes.

Color Insert

The special color insert provides a brief history of African American Catholics; beautifully illustrated biblical maps, including a map of the slave trade from Africa to the Americas; photographic theme pages, including people and places of significance in the Old and New Testaments, the life of Jesus, and the Holy Land; Catholic prayers and teachings; and a time line of biblical history.





Know Your Faith

“Know Your Faith” articles show the biblical, liturgical, and doctrinal basis for many Christian beliefs and practices.



Black, Catholic, and Faithful

“Black, Catholic, and Faithful” articles present information on African American culture and on the lives of some Africans and African Americans who lived out aspects of God’s Revelation in the Bible.



Check This Out

“Check This Out” articles provide background to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times, or the Church’s interpretation of certain passages.



Be About It!

“Be About It!” articles apply the Bible’s messages to situations you may be facing now or will face in the future.



Take It to God

“Take It to God” articles suggest ways of using the Bible for personal prayer.



Our Friends in Faith

“Our Friends in Faith” articles give a quick introduction to the lives of important biblical people.

Where Do I Find It?

Several indexes are located at the back of the Bible. The first index helps you locate Bible passages about events, people, and teachings of Jesus. The second index helps you find Bible passages related to life and faith issues. The third index leads you to articles on specific topics.

Study Aids

A calendar of the Church year, Sunday readings, a glossary of Scripture-related terms, a page for notes, color maps, pictures, Catholic prayers and teachings, a time line, and a list of biblical books are found at the back of the Bible. The time line and maps will help you locate when and where different biblical events occurred.

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Introduction to the Pentateuch

Have you ever been late to a movie? You probably spent a few minutes trying to figure out what you missed and hoped it wasn't too important to the plot. Like the first crucial minutes of a movie, the five books of the Pentateuch set the stage for much of what happens in the rest of the Bible. If you don't know the people involved and their wonderful stories, when you read later books, you might find yourself asking: What's going on? Why is he doing this? What does she mean by that?

In Depth

The name *Pentateuch* literally means “five-part writing.” Thus, the Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are special to Jewish and Christian believers because they are God's Word, they reveal who God is, and they tell of the origins of God's people and their unique relationship with God—sometimes called salvation history. They are the blueprint needed for properly understanding the rest of the Bible. The Pentateuch introduces the idea of a single God who is responsible for all creation. It also tells that this God is active in the world and in the lives of its people, and that the Israelites have been called into a special relationship with this God.

One of the central elements of the special relationship between God and the Israelites described in the Pentateuch is the Sinai Covenant. A covenant establishes a new relationship between two parties and is marked by a

solemn promise, where both parties agree to fulfill certain obligations. The Sinai Covenant is the most famous one between God and Israel, with Moses as the mediator, which you will read about in Exodus. In Genesis, you will read about the covenants God makes with Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, which lead to the Sinai Covenant.

Reading the Pentateuch is like appreciating a fine tapestry. When you view a tapestry from the front, all the threads combine to make a beautiful, coherent image. In the same way, an overall look at the covenants, stories, and laws in the Pentateuch combines them to form a picture of the love relationship between God and the people of Israel. A close look at the back of a tapestry shows a more chaotic mix of colors and yarn. So, too, a closer look at the writings in the Pentateuch reveals not one story but many.

Biblical scholars speak of four primary sources for the stories and traditions in the Pentateuch. The sources reflect four different schools of thought about Israel's relationship with God. For convenience, each source is referred to as an individual author.

- **The Yahwist** used Yahweh as God's name. This source is also referred to as J, taken from the German spelling of the divine name. This writer focused on the southern kingdom of Judah, used lots of stories, emphasized God's closeness to humanity, and portrayed God acting as a human person.
- **The Elohist (E)** referred to God as Elohim or Lord. The Elohist wrote about the northern kingdom of Israel and was concerned about idolatry and morality. The writings of the Elohist present God's presence as mediated, such as through a burning bush.
- After the fall of the northern kingdom, E and J combined to form the **Priestly writing (P)**. The Priestly writer emphasized religious rituals and the role of the priesthood. This writer portrayed God as more distant and used a more formal style. This source was written after the Babylonian Exile.
- Finally, **the Deuteronomist (D)** emphasized the Law as the foundation of the kingdom of Judah. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Pentateuch and the first book in the Deuteronomistic history.

Knowing that these four sources contributed to the final form of the Pentateuch can help us understand that the Pentateuch books are not simply records of events as they occurred but rather faith accounts about the Israelites' growing relationship with God, inspired by God and told from different perspectives.

In the Pentateuch, God reveals how much God loves the human race collectively and how much God loves us personally. God

wishes to be in a relationship with us today just as much as God did back then. The Pentateuch reminds us that we are all children of God and are waiting for the full realization of God's Reign.

Other Background

- Some of the most familiar stories and people of the Old Testament are found in Genesis and Exodus. Genesis includes the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and his brothers. Exodus contains the stories of Moses and the burning bush, Pharaoh and the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the Exodus out of Egypt, and the Ten Commandments.
- The Jewish people also refer to the five books of the Pentateuch as the Torah, meaning "teaching" or "instruction."
- An ancient tradition named Moses as the original writer of the Pentateuch. This was no doubt due to Moses' importance in the Pentateuch itself. But evidence suggests that most of the Pentateuch was written hundreds of years after Moses' death.
- Different types of writing are used in the Pentateuch. Genesis is all inspired narrative, Leviticus and Deuteronomy are mostly law, and Exodus and Numbers are approximately half narrative and half law. Deuteronomy is unique in that it uses preaching rather than narrative.

The Book of Genesis proclaims the unity and sovereignty of God over his creation and tells of God's loving intentions for his world. This book played an important role in African American religious experience. People interpreted the so-called "curse of Ham" (Genesis 9:25) as approving the enslavement of blacks. But our forefathers and mothers showed from Genesis that, on the contrary, slavery was a radical evil against the mind of God. In Genesis, chapter 1, God created all human beings in his own image and likeness, a testament to the inalienable and royal dignity of all men and women. The first independent black churches in the early eighteenth century had as their banner "the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of all human beings."

In Depth

Genesis uses ancient forms of storytelling, folk history, and the scientific knowledge of the time to convey Israel's faith perspective on God and the universe and to teach important religious truths. God created the world for love and harmony. When human sin introduced disharmony, God set to work to reconcile the world and form a people for himself. Genesis has a preamble and two main sections. In the preamble and section I (1:1–11:26), God relates to all people as a God of love and justice. Chapters 1–2 give two accounts of Creation that portray the beauty and wonder of

the natural world and emphasize the goodness and harmony that God intended in creation. Creation culminates in human beings who live in a wonderful garden in harmony with God, creation, and each other. But in chapter 3, sin enters the world, and as a result Adam and Eve experience separation, suffering, and ultimately death. And the first sin spreads, first to the family (Cain and Abel in chapter 4), and then to all society (Noah and the Flood in chapters 6–9). Even after the Flood and God's covenant with Noah, the story of the tower of Babel (chapter 10) demonstrates how disobedience to God ruptures the unity of humanity and pits people against people. Section II of Genesis (11:27–50:26) tells the story of God's choice of, and covenant with, Abraham and his progeny for the mission of blessing all families of the earth. It shows God faithful to and guiding the four patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The book ends with Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, cleverly saving Egypt and Israel from famine. This section plots the outworking of the covenant that God made with Abraham and the Israelite people; it reminds the reader that God's plans will overcome human sin and weakness.

At a Glance

Preamble. The Creation of the World (1:1–2:3)

- I. The Story of the Nations (2:4–11:26)
- II. The Story of the Ancestors of Israel (11:27–50:26)

Quick Facts

Period Covered: The first eleven chapters are the preamble and the story of the nations. Genesis 11:27–50:26 covers the period of the ancestors, or patriarchs and matriarchs (from about 2000 to 1500 BC).

Inspired Author: Stories were gathered from the oral tradition of tribal peoples in the period around 1225 to 700 BC.

Themes: God's sovereignty over his creation, the goodness of creation, human responsibility, the effects of sin, covenant, God's bringing good out of evil

Genesis

PREAMBLE. THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

The Story of Creation*

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

³Then God said: Let there be light, and

there was light.^c 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.*

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.^d ⁸God called the dome “sky.”

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 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.

a **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.

b **1:2** Jer 4:23.

c **1:3** 2 Cor 4:6.

d **1:7** Prv 8:27–28; 2 Pt 3:5.


CHECK THIS OUT
Attention to the Type of Literature in the Bible

Genesis, chapter 1

In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to man in a human way. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words.¹

In order to discover *the sacred authors' intention*, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking, and narrating then current. 'For . . . truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression'² (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 110).

The sacred writers were people of a differ-

¹ Cf. *Dei Verbum* 12 § 1.

² *Dei Verbum* 12 § 2.

ent time, and the way they communicated God's message reflects their understanding of God and the world. For example, the sun is presented as rotating around the earth, not the other way round. People ask whether the modern theory of evolution is against the Bible. Faith and science do not conflict as long as each keeps within its own area of competence and follows its own laws of evidence. Faith tells us that God created everything and that no creature came to exist of itself or developed into higher forms without God's prior design. It also tells us that life did not emerge by itself or from that which does not have life, and that the human soul was created directly by God. These truths are sufficient criteria for judging theories of how things came to be.

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.^e ¹⁰God called the dry land "earth," and the basin of water he called "sea." God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said: Let the earth bring forth 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,⁸ 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.^h 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.

²⁰ⁱThen 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.^j ²³Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

^e **1:9** Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22.

^f **1:11** Ps 104:14.

^g **1:14** Jb 26:10; Ps 19:2–3; Bar 3:33.

^h **1:16** Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7–9; Wis 13:2–4; Jer 31:35.

ⁱ **1:20** Jb 12:7–10.

^j **1:22** Gn 8:17.



KNOW YOUR FAITH

“Then God Said”

Genesis 1:1—2:4

This first Creation account teaches a number of truths. One truth is that there is only one God and Creator who is the final end of all he created. In contrast to the stories of Israel's neighbors, this story says nothing about the birth of God or gods. A second truth is that God created the entire universe by his Word alone. The universe did not come to be by itself, but is subject to God and the laws God made for it. God controls the universe and all human history. Third, this Creation account presents human beings as the apex of God's creation. God bestows great dignity upon them, cares for them with great personal interest, and takes them into partnership for the care of his universe. As gardeners of God's garden, they are to care for the earth and preserve it. God gave human beings dominion over all other creatures, but not over fellow human beings. We all have equal dignity in the eyes of God.

^{24k}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. ^{26l}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.^m ^{29*n}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; 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.^o

2¹Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.^a ^{2*}On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from

all the work he had undertaken.^b ³God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.^c

* **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 then 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 (vv. 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

k 1:24 Sir 16:27–28.

l 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.

m 1:28 Gn 8:17; 9:1; Ps 8:6–9; 115:16; Wis 9:2.

n 1:29–30 Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14–15.

o 1:31 1 Tm 4:4.

a 2:1 Is 45:12; Jn 1:3.

b 2:2 Ex 20:9–11; 31:17; Heb 4:4, 10.

c 2:3 Ex 20:11; Dt 5:14; Neh 9:14.

The Psalms are Israel's hymns and songs used in Temple worship. They have given voice to countless generations of worshipers who longed for God and lived in his presence through good times and bad. The Psalms have been particularly influential in nurturing the African American spirit and culture. They accompanied our ancestors in the fields and at home, offering them solace in suffering and giving voice to their joy. They even spawned an African American equivalent: spirituals. Psalm 68:31, which reads “princes shall come out of Egypt” in the translation used at that time, played an important role in African American religious history in the last half of the nineteenth century (see article at 68:31).

In Depth

The Psalms are a distillation of the religious heart and soul of Israel, reflecting different times and experiences throughout Israel's existence. They have continued so in the Christian church, being used in various parts of the Christian liturgy and in the Church's official prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours. The English word *Psalms* comes from the Greek term *Psalmoi*, which means “religious songs set to the lyre” (a musical instrument). The Hebrew version is titled *Tehillim* (Praises), because its hymns praise God and even its laments are a profession of faith in God. The 150 Psalms can be grouped into one or more of five general categories:

At a Glance

Psalms is divided into five books without any particular organizing theme:

- I. First Book (Psalms 1—41)
- II. Second Book (Psalms 42—72)
- III. Third Book (Psalms 73—89)
- IV. Fourth Book (Psalms 90—106)
- V. Fifth Book (Psalms 107—150)

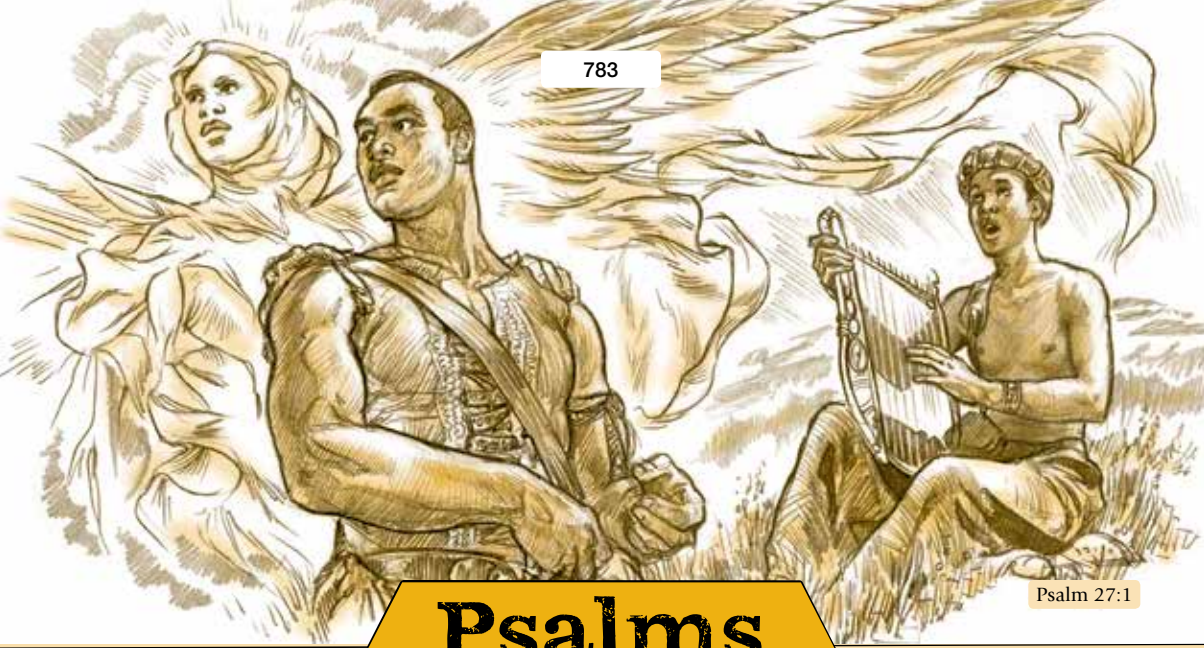
Quick Facts

Inspired Authors: Many unknown authors, sometimes called psalmists

Themes: A variety. See the five categories above.

- Hymns of praise and thanksgiving sing of God's majesty, power, love, and compassion, or thank him for benefits to the nation or individuals (for example, Psalms 8, 24, 47, 93, 95–99, 113–118, 136, and 150).
- Psalms of lament or petition are individual or communal cries to God for help in some need or emergency (for example, Psalms 38, 51, 55, 58, 59, 74, 78, 105, and 106).
- Wisdom and Torah (instruction) psalms instruct how to live according to God's Law and what brings true happiness (for example, Psalms 1, 34, 37, 49, 73, 112, and 128).
- Entrance liturgies are used during worship services at the Temple (for example, Psalms 15, 24, and 134).
- Historical psalms sing of the great wonders God has worked throughout the history of Israel (for example, Psalms 78, 105, 106, 135, and 136).

Because of King David's reputation for writing and performing music, he is named as the author of many of the Psalms. Actually, many of them were written long after his death.



Psalm 27:1

Psalms

First Book—Psalms 1–41

PSALM 1*

True Happiness in God's Law

I

- 1 Blessed is the man who does not walk
in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the way* of sinners,
nor sit in company with scoffers.^a
- 2 Rather, the law of the LORD* is his joy;
and on his law he meditates day and
night.^b
- 3 He is like a tree^c
planted near streams of water,
that yields its fruit in season;
Its leaves never wither;
whatever he does prospers.

* **Psalm 1** A preface to the whole Book of Psalms, contrasting with striking similes the destiny of the good and the wicked. The Psalm views life as activity, as choosing either the good or the bad. Each "way" brings its inevitable consequences. The wise through their good actions will experience rootedness and life, and the wicked, rootlessness and death.

1:1 *The way*: a common biblical term for manner of living or moral conduct (Ps 32:8; 101:2, 6; Prv 2:20; 1 Kgs 8:36).

1:2 *The law of the LORD*: either the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, or, more probably, divine teaching or instruction.

1:4 *The wicked*: those who by their actions distance themselves from God's life-giving presence.

Psalm 2 A royal Psalm. To rebellious kings (Ps 2:1–3) God responds vigorously (Ps 2:4–6). A speaker proclaims the divine decree (in the legal adoption language of the day), making the Israelite king the earthly representative of God (Ps 2:7–9) and

II

- 4 But not so are the wicked,* not so!
They are like chaff driven by the wind.^d
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not arise at the
judgment,
nor will sinners in the assembly of the
just.
- 6 Because the LORD knows the way of the just,^e
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

PSALM 2*

A Psalm for a Royal Coronation

- 1 Why do the nations protest
and the peoples conspire in vain?^a
- 2 Kings on earth rise up
and princes plot together
against the LORD and against his anointed
one.*^b

warning kings to obey (Ps 2:10–11). The Psalm has a messianic meaning for the Church; the New Testament understands it of Christ (Acts 4:25–27; 13:33; Heb 1:5).

2:2 *Anointed*: in Hebrew *mashiah*, "anointed"; in Greek *christos*, whence English Messiah and Christ. In Israel kings (Jgs 9:8; 1 Sm 9:16; 16:12–13) and high priests (Lv 8:12; Nm 3:3) received the power of their office through anointing.

a **1:1** Ps 26:4–5; 40:5.

b **1:2** Jos 1:8; Ps 119; Sir 39:1.

c **1:3** Ps 52:10; 92:13–15; Jer 17:8.

d **1:4** Ps 35:5; 83:14–16; Jb 21:18.

e **1:6** Ps 37:18.

a **2:1** Rev 11:18.

b **2:2** Ps 83:6.



TAKE IT TO GOD

The Two Ways

Psalm 1

Psalm 1 opens the Psalter with the image of a tree portraying the two ways of human beings and their ends. One way leads to life, the other to death. Neither end can be reversed. Those who follow God's Way are like a tree by streams of water. Such a tree digs its roots deep into the earth and is never shaken no matter how strong the wind. Its leaves are evergreen, its fruits abundant and in season. This speaks of a fruitful and fulfilled life, life under the eyes and protection of God. The wicked are like chaff blown about by the wind. They have no standing, no roots, no direction in life. They follow the fads. They bear no fruit for God or for humanity. Their end is ruin. They gain no admittance to the assembly of the end time. They will have lived in vain.

You have embarked on the journey of life. Your actions will decide whether your life will blossom or shrivel up. Pause a moment to ask God to be with you and grant you a fulfilled and blessed life.

- 3 "Let us break their shackles
and cast off their chains from us!"^c
- 4 The one enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord derides them,^d
- 5 Then he speaks to them in his anger,
in his wrath he terrifies them:
- 6 "I myself have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."^e
- 7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD,
he said to me, "You are my son;
today I have begotten you."^e

Psalm 3 An individual lament complaining of enemies who deny that God will come to the rescue (Ps 3:2–3). Despite such taunts the psalmist hopes for God's protection even in sleep (Ps 3:4–7). The Psalm prays for an end to the enemies' power to speak maliciously (Ps 3:8) and closes peacefully with an expression of trust (Ps 3:9).

3:1 The superscription, added later, relates the Psalm to an incident in the life of David.

3:3, 3:5, 3:9 *Selah*: the term is generally considered a direction to the cantor or musicians but its exact meaning is not known. It occurs seventy-one times in thirty-nine Psalms.

- 8 Ask it of me,
and I will give you the nations as your
inheritance,
and, as your possession, the ends of the
earth.
- 9 With an iron rod you will shepherd them,
like a potter's vessel you will shatter
them."^f
- 10 And now, kings, give heed;
take warning, judges on earth.
- 11 Serve the LORD with fear;
exult with trembling,
Accept correction
lest he become angry and you perish
along the way
when his anger suddenly blazes up.^g
Blessed are all who take refuge in him!

PSALM 3*

Threatened but Trusting

¹A psalm of David, when he fled
from his son Absalom.*^a

- I
- 2 How many are my foes, LORD!
How many rise against me!
- 3* How many say of me,
"There is no salvation for him in God."^b
Selah
- 4 But you, LORD, are a shield around me;
my glory, you keep my head high.^c
- II
- 5 With my own voice I will call out to the LORD,
and he will answer me from his holy
mountain. *Selah*
- 6 I lie down and I fall asleep,
[and] I will wake up, for the LORD sustains
me.^d
- 7 I do not fear, then, thousands of people
arrayed against me on every side.
- III
- 8 Arise, LORD! Save me, my God!
For you strike the cheekbone of all my
foes;
you break the teeth of the wicked.^e

c 2:3 Ps 149:8.

d 2:4 Ps 37:13; 59:9; Wis 4:18.

e 2:7 Ps 89:27; 110:2–3; Is 49:1.

f 2:9 Rev 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.

g 2:11 Ps 34:9; 146:5; Prv 16:20.

a 3:1 2 Sm 15:13ff.

b 3:3 Ps 71:11.

c 3:4 Ps 7:11; 18:3; 62:7–8; Dt 33:29; Is 60:19.

d 3:6 Ps 4:9; Prv 3:24.

e 3:8 Ps 58:7.

- 9 Salvation is from the LORD!
 May your blessing be upon your people!^f
Selah

PSALM 4*

Trust in God

- ¹For the leader; * with stringed instruments.
 A psalm of David.

I

- 2 Answer me when I call, my saving God.
 When troubles hem me in, set me free;
 take pity on me, hear my prayer.^a

II

- 3 How long, O people, will you be hard of heart?
 Why do you love what is worthless, chase
 after lies?^{*b} *Selah*

- 4 Know that the LORD works wonders for his
 faithful one;
 the LORD hears when I call out to him.

- 5 Tremble* and sin no more;
 weep bitterly* within your hearts,
 wail upon your beds,^c

- 6 Offer fitting sacrifices
 and trust in the LORD.^d

III

- 7 Many say, "May we see better times!
 LORD, show us the light of your face!"^e

Selah

- 8 But you have given my heart more joy
 than they have when grain and wine abound.

- ^{9f*} In peace I will lie down and fall asleep,
 for you alone, LORD, make me secure.

PSALM 5*

Prayer for Divine Help

- ¹For the leader; with wind instruments.
 A psalm of David.

* **Psalm 4** An individual lament emphasizing trust in God. The petition is based upon the psalmist's vivid experience of God as savior (Ps 4:2). That experience of God is the basis for the warning to the wicked: revere God who intervenes on the side of the faithful (Ps 4:3–6). The faithful psalmist exemplifies the blessings given to the just (Ps 4:7–8).

4:1 *For the leader*: many Psalm headings contain this rubric. Its exact meaning is unknown but may signify that such Psalms once stood together in a collection of "the choirmaster," cf. 1 Chr 15:21.

4:3 *Love what is worthless...lies*: these expressions probably refer to false gods worshiped by those the psalmist is addressing.

4:5 *Tremble*: be moved deeply with fear for failing to worship the true God. The Greek translation understood the emotion to be anger, and it is so cited in Eph 4:26. *Weep bitterly...wail*: weeping within one's heart and wailing upon one's bed denote sincere repentance because these actions are not done in public or with the community but in the privacy of one's heart and one's home. The same idiom is found in Hos 7:14.

CHECK THIS OUT

The Lord and His Anointed

Psalm 2

Psalm 2 speaks of how God's anointed king will put down all rebellion against God and will rule to the ends of the earth. The word for *anointed* in Hebrew is *mashiach*. So this psalm is one of the messianic psalms. Israel sang this psalm even when she no longer had kings. She applied it to the promised future king of the line of David, that is, the Messiah. The early Church applied this psalm to Christ. The phrase "You are my son; today I have begotten you" (Psalm 2:7) appears in various forms in the New Testament, for example, as God's words to or about Jesus in his baptism and Transfiguration (Mark 1:11; 9:7). Christ is the king who shattered the rebellion of the peoples and brought them to obedience to God, not through war but through his obedient death and Resurrection.

I

- 2 Give ear to my words, O LORD;
 understand my sighing.^a
 3 Attend to the sound of my cry,
 my king and my God!
 For to you I will pray, LORD;
 4 in the morning you will hear my voice;
 in the morning I will plead before you
 and wait.^b

4:9 *In peace I will...fall asleep*: the last verse repeats two themes in the Psalm. One is the security of one who trusts in the true God; the other is the interior peace of those who sincerely repent ("on [their] beds"), whose sleep is not disturbed by a guilty conscience.

Psalm 5 A lament contrasting the security of the house of God (Ps 5:8–9, 12–13) with the danger of the company of evildoers (Ps 5:5–7, 10–11). The psalmist therefore prays that God will hear (Ps 5:2–4) and grant the protection and joy of the Temple.

f 3:9 Ps 28:9; Jon 2:10.

a 4:2 Ps 118:5.

b 4:3 Ps 62:4.

c 4:5 Eph 4:26.

d 4:6 Ps 51:19.

e 4:7 Ps 31:17; 44:4; 67:1; 80:4; Jb 13:24; Nm 6:25; Dn 9:17.

f 4:9 Ps 3:6.

a 5:2 Ps 86:6; 130:1–2.

b 5:4 Wis 16:28.

Introduction to the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles

If you have ever written a research paper for a class project, you know how important it is to have good sources. You want sources that have the most insight into your chosen topic, sources that provide inspiration. The books of the New Testament are those sources for the Christian faith. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John lay the foundation for understanding the message and the mission of Jesus, the center of the Christian faith. The Acts of the Apostles continues with an inspiring account of how the earliest Christians continued Jesus' mission despite conflicts and persecution. The Good News in these books invites a response from us: to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and to become active in his Church.

In Depth

The books of the New Testament complete the Old Testament's Revelation of God's saving work in the world. Their focus is on Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, the Savior. Jesus Christ is revealed as God's Son, being both fully human and fully divine. In Jesus, God's promises to Abraham, Moses, and David are fulfilled. In Jesus, God's covenant is expanded beyond Judaism to include all peoples. In Jesus lie the forgiveness of sins and a new life of love and freedom for anyone who believes. The New Testament tells of this Good News through four different types of books: (1) four similar but unique views of Jesus' life and teaching in books called Gospels, (2) stories on how the Apostles spread the Good News of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles, (3) letters from early Christian leaders to the first

Christians and Christian communities, and (4) apocalyptic writings in the Book of Revelation. This introduction covers the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; another introduction will discuss the letters and the Book of Revelation.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of Jesus from four different perspectives. They are not historical biographies or documentaries of the kind you might read today. "The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explicating some things in view of the situation of their churches, and preserving the form of proclamation, but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus" (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, 19). Inspired by God, the authors of the Gospels arranged the stories about Jesus to bring out a particular understanding of him

that had great importance in their Christian communities.

The Gospels are not only inspired as the rest of the Bible but also have a special pre-eminence as the principal witness of the life and teaching of Christ. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are similar in their style and share much of the same content. They are called Synoptic Gospels (*synoptic* from a Greek word that means “seeing the whole together”). It is likely that Mark was written first, and the authors of Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source in creating their own Gospels. The Gospel of John is quite different in style and content from the Synoptic Gospels. It was written later and is more symbolic in its expression of who Jesus is. The original Greek word for *gospel* is *euangelion*, which means “good news.” The authors of the Gospels wanted to share with others the important news of Jesus Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of Luke’s Gospel (Acts 1:1) but it is not itself a Gospel. It picks up where the Gospel of Luke ends. Following a plot laid out in Acts 1:8, it tells the story of the origins of Christianity from the death and Resurrection of Jesus, about AD 30 to AD 64, describing how the Christian faith spread from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Beginning as an offshoot of the Jewish faith, Christianity gradually spread beyond Judaism into the Gentile, or non-Jewish, world. Although Acts gives us a good deal of information about early Church leaders like Peter and Paul, its purpose is not to tell us their biographies. Rather, it gives us an interpretation of the events of the beginnings of Christianity that emphasizes God’s saving purpose and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When you read these powerful stories of faith, let God use them to inspire and

strengthen your faith in Jesus and your participation in his holy Church.

Other Background

- The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes Jesus as the Messiah, who was promised to the Jewish people and who has mandated the Church to preach to all nations in his name. Jesus is portrayed as the New Moses, teaching the New Law and calling people to be faithful to God.
- The Gospel of Mark was probably the first of the four Gospels to be written. It portrays Jesus as proclaiming the Reign of God through healings, miracles, and the casting out of demons. In the end, Jesus suffers an ignoble death as the cost of obedience to God’s will.
- The Gospel of Luke is a clear, orderly presentation of Jesus’ mission to all people, Jews and Gentiles. This Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ mercy, compassion, and concern for those who are poor.
- The Gospel of John was the last Gospel written. It seeks to show Jesus as the unique Son of God, the one whom the Father sent into the world. This Gospel clearly presents Jesus as divine, in control of his own destiny, yet giving himself up out of love for God and humanity.
- The Acts of the Apostles was written by the author of the Gospel of Luke. It shows the Spirit of Jesus at work in the growth of the early Christian communities, particularly through the efforts of Peter and Paul.

Matthew is the Gospel that stresses the particular manner in which the Son of God became human: he became a pious Jew. Matthew highlights the Jewishness of Jesus. Jesus spoke the language of his people, read their holy books, and worshiped God according to their tradition. God promised David that a son of his would sit forever on his throne and would receive the homage of all peoples (2 Samuel, chapter 7). Jesus is this Jewish Messiah. God had been preparing the Jewish people for his coming, and behold, he is here. Matthew's Jesus is grounded in a community and a tradition—he is Jewish and faithful, as we today are grounded in our community and tradition—black, Catholic, and faithful.

In Depth

Just before the Romano-Jewish war (AD 66–70), the Christian community of Jerusalem fled to Pella (presently in Jordan). It already knew and professed Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah. The author of Matthew is a Jewish Christian who wrote for Jewish Christians. He held on to the Jewish concept of righteousness (doing what God wills) according to the Law, but for Matthew, that meant the Law as perfected by Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–7:29), Jesus gives a deeper interpretation of the Jewish Law.

Matthew collected the sayings of Jesus in five blocks, each of which ends with “when Jesus finished these words” or an equivalent expression (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, and 26:1, see *At a Glance*). He shared accounts of Jesus’ deeds and relationships. Matthew presents Jesus in continual conflict with Jewish leaders on issues such as Sabbath observance, on which Matthew’s Christian audience also clashed with Jewish leaders. He presented Jesus’ mission as focused on his Jewish brothers and sisters (10:6, 15:24), but the Risen Christ proclaims a mission to all nations (28:18–20).

Matthew frequently uses the “fulfillment formula” (generally something like “this happened so as to fulfill what was written in . . .”) to show how Jesus fulfills God’s promises to God’s people. Matthew thus shows how the Jewish sacred Scriptures illuminate the words and ministry of Jesus. He also stresses the continuing presence of the Risen Christ with us. His name is Emmanuel, God-with-us (1:23). Leaving this earth, he promised, “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (28:20). He has also left the “keys” to Peter, promising to build his Church on Peter as on a rock (16:16–19). For us Catholics, this text establishes the authority of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ.

At a Glance

- I. The Infancy Narrative (1:1–2:23)
- II. The Proclamation of the Kingdom (3:1–7:29)
- III. Ministry and Mission in Galilee (8:1–11:1)
- IV. Opposition from Israel (11:2–13:53)
- V. Jesus, the Kingdom, and the Church (13:54–18:35)
- VI. Ministry in Judea and Jerusalem (19:1–25:46)
- VII. The Passion and Resurrection (26:1–28:20)

Quick Facts

Inspired Author: Unknown; traditionally identified as the Apostle Matthew

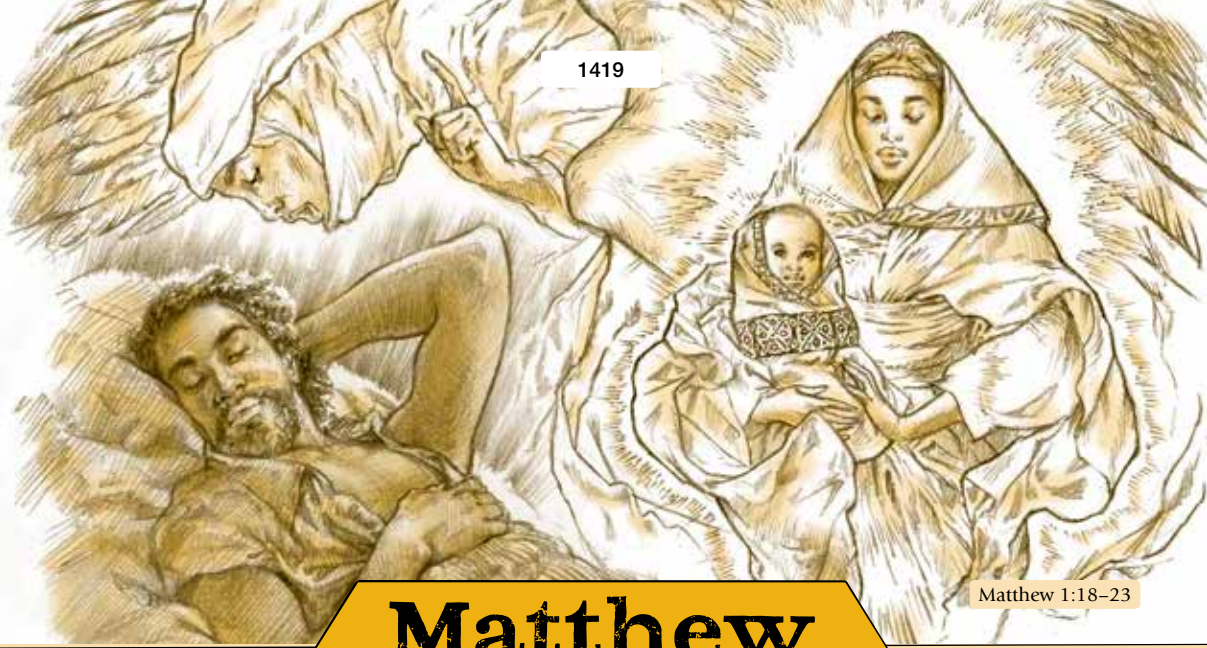
Date Written: Approximately AD 85

Audience: Jewish Christians

Image of Jesus: Davidic Messiah, New Moses who perfects the Law

The Gospel According to

Matthew



Matthew 1:18–23

Matthew

I. THE INFANCY NARRATIVE

The Genealogy of Jesus*

1^a The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

^{2b} Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.^c ³Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar.^d Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram,^{4e} Ram the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father

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 proclaims who Jesus is, the savior of his people

of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon,^{5f} 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,^{6g} Jesse the father of David the king.

David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah.^{7*h} 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

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.

a **1:1** Gn 5:1; 1 Chr 17:11; Gn 22:18.

b **1:2–17** Lk 3:23–38.

c **1:2** Gn 21:3; 25:26; 29:35; 1 Chr 2:1.

d **1:3** Gn 38:29–30; Ru 4:18; 1 Chr 2:4–9.

e **1:4** Ru 4:19–20; 1 Chr 2:10–11.

f **1:5** Ru 4:21–22; 1 Chr 2:11–12.

g **1:6** 2 Sm 12:4; 1 Chr 2:15; 3:5.

h **1:7–11** 2 Kgs 25:1–21; 1 Chr 3:10–15.

CHECK THIS OUT

The Line of a King

Matthew 1:1–17

In *Roots*, the 1977 hit television mini-series based on Alex Haley's autobiography, there is a scene in which Kunta Kinte's father holds the newborn baby up to the midnight sky and declares, "Behold the only one greater than yourself." Thus begins the journey of this young West African warrior. This dramatic gesture emphasizes his human dignity.

Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy (birth record) of Jesus, presenting him as the truly Divine Son of God and fully human son of Abraham. Of the line of David, he inherits the promises God made to David: "I will raise up your offspring after you, sprung from your loins, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Samuel 7:12). He is thus the promised Messiah, son of David. Like every human family tree, Jesus' includes many interesting people from all social classes, ethnic backgrounds, rich and poor, male and female, holy and sinful. Born into the struggles of our humanity, Jesus is a sinless savior who took on human nature for our salvation. What an affirmation of our dignity as children of God.

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.

¹²ⁱ 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 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.

¹⁷ Thus 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.*

The Birth of Jesus*

¹⁸ Now 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.¹⁹ Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,* yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.^{20j} Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord* appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be

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

¹¹⁻¹⁷ 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.

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

¹¹⁻¹⁸ *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.

¹⁹⁻²¹ *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.

²⁰⁻²¹ *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).

ⁱ 1:12–16 1 Chr 3:16–19.

^j 1:20 2:13, 19; Lk 1:35.



KNOW YOUR FAITH

Follow Me: Vocations to the Priesthood and the Consecrated Life

Matthew 4:18–22

Today the call of Jesus still rings out, and good men and women from a wide range of backgrounds, ages, and experiences are choosing the priesthood and the consecrated life. They are not perfect people from perfect homes. Yet they are faithful and creative people who feel inspired to serve the People of God in a unique way. The Church needs priests and consecrated persons—that is, people who dedicate their lives to God and the service of humanity, happy and healthy people who have a desire to make a difference in the Church and the world, people who have leadership skills and work well with others. It is vital for young men and women who truly love God and want to be available to serve others to accept God’s call to the priesthood and the consecrated life. No one is born a sister, brother, consecrated virgin, or priest. Vocations are God-inspired and “homemade.”

Story: Vincent was reared in a Catholic, African American household and like many Catholic young men gave some thought to being a priest one day. However, he was also aware of gifts and talents that would be useful in other careers. Vincent wanted to choose between being a lawyer, a public relations executive, or a priest. He spoke to his pastor about his difficulties discerning his vocation and the priest said, “You can become all of them.” Vincent asked, “How?” The pastor replied: “As a priest, every time you preach you are defending the truth of the Gospel, and every time you demonstrate compassion to people in need you are introducing them to Jesus. In many ways, the priesthood embodies being a lawyer, a public relations executive, and many other professions.” Inspired by that conversation Vincent went on to serve the Church as a priest.

Matthew

on those dwelling in a land overshadowed
by death
light has arisen.”^j

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

The Call of the First Disciples*

¹⁸^l 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,

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.

“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, ²²and 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

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.

^j **4:16** Lk 1:79.

^k **4:17** 3:2.

^l **4:18–22** Mk 1:16–20; Lk 5:1–11.

Mark is the Gospel that most presents the human drama of the Divine Son of God, a pious wonder-worker who nevertheless suffered persecution and was killed for his unflinching loyalty to God. Jesus was misunderstood and abandoned by those closest to him. This Gospel was written for Christians experiencing persecution and the threat of death for their faith in Christ. The author exhorts them—and us—never to flinch in our loyalty to Christ, come what may.

In Depth

The Gospel of Mark was written first and set the model for the other Gospels; it is also the shortest of the Gospels. Try reading it in one sitting and you will be struck by the human tragedy of Jesus. In the first part, the crowds cannot have enough of him; in the last part they are shouting, “Crucify him!” The disciples ran away, and even God seemed to have abandoned him. This Gospel answers two fundamental questions: Who is this Jesus? and What does it mean to be his disciple and follow him on the Way? These questions were a matter of life and death for the first hearers of this Gospel, who were persecuted for believing in Jesus.

At a Glance

- I. The Preparation for the Public Ministry of Jesus (1:1–13)
- II. The Mystery of Jesus (1:14–8:26)
- III. The Mystery Begins to Be Revealed (8:27–9:32)
- IV. The Full Revelation of the Mystery (9:33–16:8)
The Longer Ending (16:9–20)
The Shorter Ending
The Freer Logion (in the note on 16:9–20)

Quick Facts

Inspired Author: A Gentile Christian, traditionally a disciple of Peter named John Mark

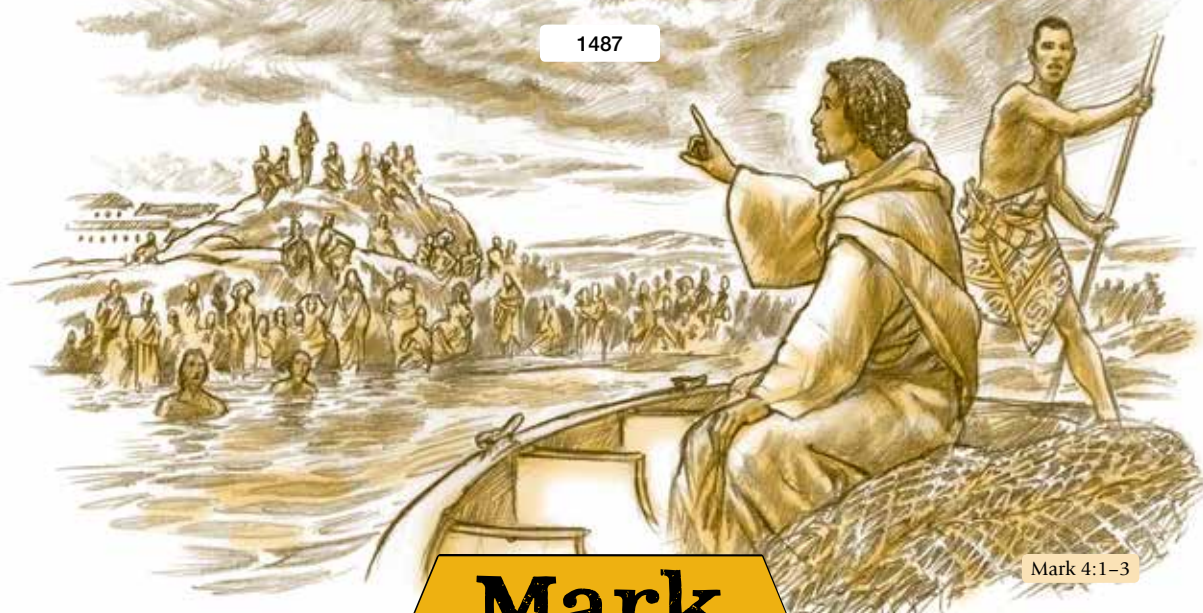
Date Written: Between approximately AD 65 and 75

Audience: Non-Jewish Christians (in Rome? Syria?) persecuted for their faith in Christ

Image of Jesus: Healer, wonder-worker, and exorcist, Son of Man who accepts suffering and death for following God’s will

To answer the first question, the Gospel of Mark tells stories about how Jesus devoted himself to proclaiming the Reign of God. He cast out demons, thus putting an end to the dominion of Satan. Mark presents the human emotions of Jesus, his compassion that led him to heal, teach, and feed the crowds. Though many flocked to him, no one seemed to understand his true identity, which the Father announced at his baptism (Mark 1:9–11). Mark concludes this first section in Jesus’ question, “But who do you say that I am?” (8:29). Peter answered for the disciples, “You are the Messiah.”

The second part of Mark tells what it means to follow Jesus. He is the Son of Man who gives his life in ransom for many. In this part, Jesus withdraws from the crowds and begins to form the disciples, teaching them that being the Messiah involves suffering and dying to save people, “for the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Discipleship means following a rejected and crucified master, being ready to suffer the same fate should this be the will of God: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (8:34). James Smith (see article at Revelation 11:1–13) is an example of self denial in the following of Jesus.



Mark 4:1–3

Mark

I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS*

1¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God].*

The Preaching of John the Baptist

^{2a} As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:^{*b}

“Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way.

^{3c} A voice of one crying out in the desert:

“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.”

⁴John [the] Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the

forgiveness of sins. ⁵People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. ⁶John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist.* He fed on locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. ^{8*d} I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit.”

The Baptism of Jesus

^{9e} It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. ¹⁰On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon

* **1:1–13** The prologue of the Gospel according to Mark begins with the title (Mk 1:1) followed by three events preparatory to Jesus’ preaching: (1) the appearance in the Judean wilderness of John, baptizer, preacher of repentance, and precursor of Jesus (Mk 1:2–8); (2) the baptism of Jesus, at which a voice from heaven acknowledges Jesus to be God’s Son, and the holy Spirit descends on him (Mk 1:9–11); (3) the temptation of Jesus by Satan (Mk 1:12–13).

1:1 *The gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God]:* the “good news” of salvation in and through Jesus, crucified and risen, acknowledged by the Christian community as Messiah (Mk 8:29; 14:61–62) and Son of God (Mk 1:11; 9:7; 15:39), although some important manuscripts here omit *the Son of God*.

1:2–3 Although Mark attributes the prophecy to Isaiah, the text is a combination of Mal 3:1; Is 40:3; Ex 23:20; cf. Mt 11:10; Lk 7:27. John’s ministry is seen as God’s prelude to the saving mission of his Son. *The way of the Lord:* this prophecy

of Deutero-Isaiah concerning the end of the Babylonian exile is here applied to the coming of Jesus; John the Baptist is to prepare the way for him.

1:6 *Clothed in camel’s hair...waist:* the Baptist’s garb recalls that of Elijah in 2 Kgs 1:8. Jesus speaks of the Baptist as Elijah who has already come (Mk 9:11–13; Mt 17:10–12; cf. Mal 3:23–24; Lk 1:17).

1:8–9 Through the life-giving baptism with the holy Spirit (Mk 1:8), Jesus will create a new people of God. But first he identifies himself with the people of Israel in submitting to John’s baptism of repentance and in bearing on their behalf the burden of God’s decisive judgment (Mk 1:9; cf. Mk 1:4). As in the desert of Sinai,

a **1:2–8** Mt 3:1–11; Lk 3:2–16.

b **1:2** Mal 3:1.

c **1:3** Is 40:3; Jn 1:23.

d **1:8** Jn 1:27; Acts 1:5; 11:16.

e **1:9–11** Mt 3:13–17; Lk 3:21–23; Jn 1:32–33.



TAKE IT TO GOD

Speak, Lord; I Shall Listen

Mark 1:12–13

“**A**nd he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan.”

Dear God, at times I feel as though I am in a desert. I am young, yet the obstacles before me seem sometimes like they should belong to an adult. Sometimes I feel like too much is being expected of me. Lord, I am in that period of life when I am making big decisions. I can best get through them with your help and guidance. So, Lord, I look to your Word for direction. Help me to see that the obstacles I face give way once I fix my eyes on the goal of getting closer to you. Speak, Lord, and help me to say to the devil and his temptations, “I know someone greater than you!”

Mark

him.* ^{11f} And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

* so here in the wilderness of Judea, Israel’s sonship with God is to be renewed.

1:10–11 *He saw the heavens...and the Spirit...upon him:* indicating divine intervention in fulfillment of promise. Here the descent of the Spirit on Jesus is meant, anointing him for his ministry; cf. Is 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; 63:9. *A voice...with you I am well pleased:* God’s acknowledgment of Jesus as his unique Son, the object of his love. His approval of Jesus is the assurance that Jesus will fulfill his messianic mission of salvation.

1:12–13 The same Spirit who descended on Jesus in his baptism now drives him into the desert for forty days. The result is radical confrontation and temptation by Satan who attempts to frustrate the work of God. The presence of wild beasts may indicate the horror and danger of the desert regarded as the abode of demons or may reflect the paradise motif of harmony among all creatures; cf. Is 11:6–9. The presence of ministering angels to sustain Jesus recalls the angel who guided the Israelites in the desert in the first Exodus (Ex 14:19; 23:20) and the angel who supplied nourishment to Elijah in the wilderness (1 Kgs 19:5–7). The combined forces of good and evil were present to Jesus in the desert. His sustained obedience brings forth the new Israel of God there where Israel’s rebellion had brought death and alienation.

1:14–15 *After John had been arrested:* in the plan of God, Jesus was not to proclaim the good news of salvation prior to the termination of the Baptist’s active mission. *Galilee:* in the Marcan

The Temptation of Jesus*

¹²At once the Spirit drove him out into the desert,⁸ ¹³and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.

II. THE MYSTERY OF JESUS

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

^{14h} After John had been arrested,* Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: ¹⁵ⁱ “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

The Call of the First Disciples*

^{16j} As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” ¹⁸ Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. ²⁰ Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

The Cure of a Demoniac

^{21*k} Then they came to Capernaum, and on the sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. ^{22l} The people were astonished at his

account, scene of the major part of Jesus’ public ministry before his arrest and condemnation. *The gospel of God:* not only the good news from God but about God at work in Jesus Christ. *This is the time of fulfillment:* i.e., of God’s promises. *The kingdom of God...Repent:* see note on Mt 3:2.

1:16–20 These verses narrate the call of the first Disciples. See notes on Mt 4:18–22 and Mt 4:20.

1:21–45 The account of a single day’s ministry of Jesus on a sabbath in and outside the synagogue of Capernaum (Mk 1:21–31) combines teaching and miracles of exorcism and healing. Mention is not made of the content of the teaching but of the effect of astonishment and alarm on the people. Jesus’ teaching with authority, making an absolute claim on the hearer, was in the best tradition of the ancient prophets, not of the scribes. The narrative continues with events that evening (Mk 1:32–34; see notes on Mt 8:14–17) and the next day (Mk 1:35–39). The cleansing in Mk 1:40–45 stands as an isolated story.

f 1:11 Ps 2:7.

g 1:12–13 Mt 4:1–11; Lk 4:1–13.

h 1:14–15 Mt 4:12–17; Lk 4:14–15.

i 1:15 Mt 3:2.

j 1:16–20 Mt 4:18–22; Lk 5:2–11.

k 1:21–28 Lk 4:31–37.

l 1:22 Mt 7:28–29.

teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. ²³*In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; ²⁴*he cried out, "What have you to do with us,* Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" ²⁵ Jesus rebuked him and said, "Quiet! Come out of him!" ²⁶The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. ²⁷All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." ²⁸His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

The Cure of Simon's Mother-in-Law

²⁹*m* On leaving the synagogue he entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. ³¹He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

Other Healings

³²When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. ³³The whole town was gathered at the door. ³⁴He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.

Jesus Leaves Capernaum

³⁵*n* Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and those who were with him pursued him ³⁷and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." ³⁹So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

* **1:23** *An unclean spirit*: so called because of the spirit's resistance to the holiness of God. The spirit knows and fears the power of Jesus to destroy his influence; cf. Mk 1:32, 34; 3:11; 6:13.

1:24–25 *The Holy One of God*: not a confession but an attempt to ward off Jesus' power, reflecting the notion that use of the precise name of an opposing spirit would guarantee mastery over him. Jesus silenced the cry of the unclean spirit and drove him out of the man.

1:24 *What have you to do with us?*: see note on Jn 2:4.

1:40 *A leper*: for the various forms of skin disease, see Lv 13:1–50 and the note on Lv 13:2–4. There are only two instances



KNOW YOUR FAITH

Cures and Other Healings

Mark 1:21–45

Many miracles performed by Jesus were spiritual or physical healings. God is in the healing business. Through the touch of Jesus, Simon's mother-in-law was restored to health, demons were expelled from people, paralytics stood up on their own two feet, and a leper was cured. People called out to Jesus for deliverance and he healed them. These miracles show Jesus' power to give fullness of life and to protect us from the forces of evil.

The Catholic Church continues Christ's healing ministry throughout the world. It does so through the Sacraments, particularly those of Baptism, Penance and Reconciliation, the Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick. The Church also provides healing through Catholic hospitals and other ministries for physical and spiritual healing, including exorcisms.

Mark

The Cleansing of a Leper

⁴⁰*o* A leper* came to him [and kneeling down] begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." ⁴¹Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." ^p ⁴²The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. ^q ⁴³Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once. ⁴⁴Then he said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." ^r ⁴⁵The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He

in the Old Testament in which God is shown to have cured a leper (Nm 12:10–15; 2 Kgs 5:1–14). The law of Moses provided for the ritual purification of a leper. In curing the leper, Jesus assumes that the priests will reinstate the cured man into the religious community. See also note on Lk 5:14.

m **1:29–34** Mt 8:14–16; Lk 4:38–41.

n **1:35–39** Lk 4:42–44.

o **1:40–44** Mt 8:2–4; Lk 5:12–14.

p **1:41** 5:30.

q **1:42** Lk 17:14.

r **1:44** Lv 14:2–32.

Where Do I Find It?

Events, People, and Teachings	1924
Life and Faith Issues	1927
Article Subject Index	1928
Acknowledgments	1937
African American Bishops by Order of Appointment	1940

Events, People, and Teachings

Old Testament Stories

These stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.

Creation, *Gn, chs 1–2*
 Original Sin and its punishment, *Gn, ch 3*
 Cain and Abel, *Gn 4:1–16*
 Noah and the Great Flood, *Gn, chs 6–9*
 God's covenant with Abraham, *Gn 17:1–18:15*
 God's command to sacrifice Isaac, *Gn 22:1–19*
 Isaac's blessing of Jacob, *Gn 27:1–29*
 Jacob's dream, *Gn 28:10–22*
 Joseph and his brothers, *Gn, chs 37–46*
 birth and youth of Moses, *Ex 2:1–10*
 Moses at the burning bush, *Ex 3:1–12*
 plagues on Egypt, *Ex, chs 7–12*
 Passover and the Exodus, *Ex, chs 12–14*
 Ten Commandments, *Ex 20:1–17*
 destruction of Jericho, *Jos 5:13–6:27*
 Gideon and the sign of the fleece, *Jgs 6:36–40*
 Samson, *Jgs, chs 13–16*
 Samuel's birth and calling, *1 Sm, chs 1–3*
 David and Goliath, *1 Sm, ch 17*
 David and Bathsheba, *2 Sm, ch 11*
 Solomon's wisdom, *1 Kgs, ch 3*
 Elijah's triumph over the priests of Baal,
1 Kgs 18:20–40
 miracles of Elisha, *2 Kgs 4:1–6:23*
 end of the Babylonian captivity, *Ezra, ch 1*
 battles of Judas Maccabeus, *1 Mc, chs 3–5*
 Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones, *Ez 37:1–14*
 Daniel, *Dn, chs 1–6*
 Jonah and the Ninevites, *Jon, chs 1–3*

New Testament Stories

These stories are listed in the order in which they first appear in the Bible.

birth of Jesus, *Mt 1:18–2:12, Lk, chs 1–2*
 baptism of Jesus, *Mt 3:13–17, Mk 1:9–11, Lk 3:21–22*
 temptation of Jesus, *Mt 4:1–11, Mk 1:12–13, Lk 4:1–13*
 Peter's declaration about Jesus, *Mt 16:13–20, Mk 8:27–30, Lk 9:18–20*
 Transfiguration of Jesus, *Mt 17:1–13, Mk 9:2–13, Lk 9:28–36*
 Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, *Mt 21:1–11, Mk 11:1–11, Lk 19:28–40, Jn 12:12–19*
 Jesus in the Temple, *Mt 21:12–17, Mk 11:15–19, Lk 19:45–48, Jn 2:13–16*
 Judas's betrayal of Jesus, *Mt 26:14–16, 47–56, Mk 14:10–11, 43–52, Lk 22:1–53, Jn 13:21–30, 18:1–5*
 Last Supper, *Mt 26:17–30, Mk 14:12–25, Lk 22:7–38, 1 Cor 11:23–26*
 Jesus at Gethsemane, *Mt 26:36–56, Mk 14:32–52, Lk 22:39–53*
 Peter's denial of Christ, *Mt 26:69–75, Mk 14:66–72, Lk 22:54–62, Jn 18:15–18, 25–27*
 Crucifixion, *Mt 27:32–56, Mk 15:21–41, Lk 23:26–49, Jn 19:16–37*
 Resurrection and appearances, *Mt, ch 28, Mk, ch 16, Lk, ch 24, Jn, chs 20–21, Acts 1:1–11*
 Jesus' washing his disciples' feet, *Jn 13:1–17*
 Holy Spirit at Pentecost, *Acts 2:1–42*
 stoning of Stephen, *Acts, chs 6–7*
 conversion of Saul, *Acts 9:1–31*
 Peter's escape from prison, *Acts 12:1–19*
 Paul and Silas's escape from prison,
Acts 16:16–40
 Paul's journey to Rome for his trial,
Acts, chs 27–28

Life and Faith Issues

Here are some passages that can give you comfort or direction. There are many other passages in the Bible that also address these and other topics.

Anger

Mt 5:21–24
Jn 2:13–17
Eph 4:25–27,31–32
Jas 1:19–21

Call

Gn 12:1–9
1 Sm, chs 1–3
Is 6:1–8
Jer 1:4–10
Mt 4:18–22, 28:16–20
Mk 1:16–20
Lk 5:1–11

Commitment

Nm 30:2–4
Dt 6:1–9, 11:8–9
Jos 24:14–15
Mk 8:34–38

Courage

Jos 1:9
1 Sm, ch 17
Ps 31

Discipleship

Mk 8:34–38
Lk 9:1–6
Jn 4:1–42

Family

Gn 4:9, 12:10–20
Sir 3:1–16
Eph 5:21–6:4

Fear

Ps 27, 91
Zep 3:14–20
Mt 14:22–33
Mk 4:35–41
Lk 22:54–62

Forgiveness

Gn 33:1–17
Ps 51
Mt 18:21–35
Lk 6:27–36, 23:34
Jn 8:2–11

Friendship

Ruth 1:1–19
1 Sm, ch 20
Sir 6:5–17
Jn 15:12–17

Friendship with God

Gn 28:10–22
Mi 6:8
Jn 15:12–17

Giving

2 Chr 31:2–10
Ezr 1:6–11
Mk 12:41–44
Lk 21:1–4

Happiness

Sir 25:1–11
Lk 12:22–34
Phil 4:4–9

Honesty with God

Gn 18:22–33
Jer 12:1–16
Mk 14:32–42

Hope

Ecc 3:1–8
Lam 3:22–26
Rom 8:18–30

Hypocrisy

Mt 6:1–6, 23:1–36
Lk 18:9–14
Jas 1:22–2:4

Images of God

Gn 1:26–27, 32:22–32
Ps 23
Jer 18:1–11

Judgment of Others

Mt 7:1–5
Rom 14:1–12
Gal 3:26–28

Loneliness and Abandonment

Ps 22:1–12
Mk 15:33–34
2 Tm 4:9–18

Love

Song 8:6–7
Mt 5:43–48
Mk 12:28–34
1 Cor, ch 13

Peace

Is 11:1–9
Mi 4:1–5
Jn 14:25–31

Persistence

Lk 11:5–8, 18:1–8

Popularity

Mk 9:33–37
1 Cor 3:1–9
Phil 2:1–11

Presence of God

Gn 15:7
Ex 3:1–6, 33:17–23
Mt 18:20

Promises of God

Ex 6:1–9
Jer 29:11
Lk 4:14–30

Repentance

1 Chr 21:1–17
Jl 2:12–18
Lk 15:11–32

Responsibility

Sir 15:11–20
Ez, ch 18

Service

Is 42:1–6
Mt 20:20–28, 25:31–46
Mk 10:35–45
Jn 13:1–17

Sexuality

Gn 1:26–31
Tb 8:4–9
Song of Songs
Eph 5:1–14
1 Thes 4:3–8

Suffering

Jb 1:13–21
Ps 22
Mt 5:1–12
1 Pt 3:13–18

Temptation

Gn, ch 3
Mt 4:1–11
Mk 1:12–13, 7:14–23
Lk 4:1–13

Trust in God

Ps 62
Is 43:1–5
Mt 11:28–30
Mk 10:46–52

Vocation (see call, discipleship)

Wisdom

2 Chr 1:7–13
Prv 8:1–21
Wis, ch 7

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African American Bishops

by Order of Appointment

Most Rev. James Augustine Healy, DD (1830–1900)

- Born: April 6, 1830, Clinton, Georgia
- Educated: College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, BA, 1849; Sulpician Seminary, Montreal, Canada, MA, 1851; Sulpician Seminary, France, attended, 1852–1854
- Ordained priest in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, France, June 10, 1854, for service in the Archdiocese of Boston
- Appointed second bishop of Portland, Maine, 1875
- Participated in the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore
- Died: 1900

Most Rev. Harold R. Perry, SVD (1916–1991)

- Born: October 9, 1916, Lake Charles, Louisiana
- Educated: In 1930, began his studies for the priesthood at Saint Augustine Seminary, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi
- Ordained priest for the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), January 6, 1944
- Appointed auxiliary bishop of New Orleans and titular bishop of Mons in Mauretania, October 2, 1965
- Consecrated bishop, January 6, 1966
- Died: July 17, 1991

Most Rev. Joseph Lawson Howze (1923–)

- Born: August 30, 1923, Daphne, Alabama; Converted to Catholicism 1948
- Educated: Alabama State University, 1944–1948; Buffalo, New York, Minor Seminary, 1953–1954; St. Bonaventure University, New York, 1954–1959
- Ordained priest for the Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, May 7, 1959
- Appointed titular bishop of Massita and auxiliary bishop of Natchez-Jackson, Mississippi, November 8, 1972
- Consecrated bishop, January 28, 1973
- Appointed first bishop of Biloxi, Mississippi, March 8, 1977
- Retired: May 15, 2001

Most Rev. Eugene A. Marino, SSJ (1934–2000)

- Born: May 29, 1934, Biloxi, Mississippi
- Educated: Saint Augustine Seminary, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi
- Ordained priest for the Society of Saint Joseph (SSJ), 1962
- Appointed titular bishop of Walla Walla, Washington, and auxiliary bishop of Washington, D.C., July 11, 1974

- Consecrated bishop, September 12, 1974
- Appointed archbishop of Atlanta, Georgia, March 10, 1988; first African American to be archbishop
- Resigned the archbishopric, July 10, 1990
- Died: November 12, 2000

Most Rev. Joseph Abel Francis, SVD (1923–1997)

- Born: September 30, 1923, Lafayette, Louisiana
- Educated: Saint Mary's Seminary, Techy, Illinois, BA, 1946; Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., MA, 1956
- Ordained priest for the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), October 7, 1950
- Appointed titular bishop of Valliposita and auxiliary bishop of Newark, New Jersey, May 3, 1976
- Consecrated bishop, July 25, 1976
- Died: September 1, 1997

Most Rev. Raymond Rodly Caesar, SVD (1932–1987)

- Born: February 14, 1932, Eunice, Louisiana
- Educated: Entered Society for Divine Word (SVD) seminary in 1947 in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi
- First religious profession as SVD in 1953
- Final religious profession in 1959
- Ordained priest for the SVD June 4, 1961 at Divine Word Seminary in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi
- Appointed co-adjutor-bishop of Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, Papua, New Guinea, July 13, 1978
- Died: June 18, 1987

Most Rev. James P. Lyke, OFM (1939–1992)

- Born: February 18, 1939, Chicago, Illinois
- Educated: Joined the Franciscan order in 1959, studying at Saint Francis Novitiate in Teutopolis, Illinois. Obtained BA degree in philosophy at Our Lady of Angels House of Philosophy through Quincy College in Illinois. Held an MD from Saint Joseph Theological Seminary in Teutopolis and received a PhD in theology in 1981 from the Union Graduate School in Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Ordained priest for the Franciscan Friars (OFM), June 24, 1966
- Appointed titular bishop of Furnos Maior and auxiliary bishop of Cleveland, Ohio, June 30, 1979
- Consecrated bishop, August 1, 1979
- Appointed archbishop of Atlanta, Georgia, April 30, 1991
- Died: December 27, 1992

Most Rev. Emerson J. Moore (1938–1995)

- Born: May 16, 1938, Harlem, New York
- Educated: Studied for the priesthood at Cathedral College in Brooklyn and at Saint Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers; earned a master of social work degree from Columbia University; earned a master of public administration degree from New York University
- Ordained priest for the Archdiocese of New York, New York, May 30, 1964
- Appointed titular bishop of Curubi and auxiliary bishop of New York, July 3, 1982
- Consecrated bishop, September 8, 1982
- Died: September 14, 1995

Most Rev. Moses Anderson, SSE (1928–2013)

- Born: September 9, 1928, Selma, Alabama
- Educated: Saint Michael's College, Winooski, Vermont; Saint Edmund Seminary, Burlington, Vermont; University of Legon, Ghana, West Africa
- Ordained priest for the Society of Saint Edmund (SSE), May 30, 1958
- Appointed titular bishop of Vatarba and auxiliary bishop of Detroit, December 3, 1982
- Consecrated bishop, January 27, 1983
- Retired: October 24, 2003
- Died: January 1, 2013

Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory (1947–)

- Born: December 7, 1947, Chicago, Illinois
- Educated: Quigley Preparatory Seminary, Chicago, Illinois; Niles College Seminary of Loyola University, Chicago; Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois; Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Sant'Anselmo, Rome, Italy
- Ordained priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago, Illinois, May 9, 1973
- Appointed titular bishop of Oliva and auxiliary bishop of Chicago, Illinois, October 31, 1983
- Consecrated bishop, December 13, 1983
- Appointed bishop of Belleville, Illinois, December 29, 1993; installed February 10, 1994
- Elected and served as president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 13, 2001–2004
- Appointed archbishop of Atlanta, Georgia, December 9, 2004; installed January 17, 2005

Most Rev. J. Terry Steib, SVD (1940–)

- Born: May 17, 1940, Vacherie, Louisiana
- Educated: Divine Word Seminary, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi; Divine Word Seminary, Conesus, New York; Divine Word Seminary, Techny, Illinois; Xavier University, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Ordained priest for the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), January 6, 1967
- Appointed titular bishop of Fallaba and auxiliary bishop of Saint Louis, December 6, 1983
- Consecrated bishop, February 10, 1984
- Appointed bishop of Memphis, March 23, 1993

Most Rev. John H. Ricard, SSJ (1940–)

- Born: February 29, 1940, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

- Educated: Saint Joseph Seminary, Washington D.C.; Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Ordained priest for the Society of Saint Joseph (SSJ), May 25, 1968
- Appointed titular bishop of Rucuma and auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, May 28, 1984
- Consecrated bishop, July 2, 1984
- Appointed bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida, January 21, 1997
- Retired: February 2011

Most Rev. Carl A. Fisher, SSJ (1945–1993)

- Born: November 24, 1945, Pascagoula, Mississippi
- Educated: Epiphany Apostolic College High School, Newburgh, New York; Saint Joseph's Seminary College, Washington, D.C.; undergraduate degree in philosophy Oblate College, Washington, D.C.; MS in theological studies from American University, Washington, D.C.
- Ordained priest for the Society of Saint Joseph (SSJ), June 2, 1973
- Appointed titular bishop of Tlos and auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, California, December 23, 1986
- Consecrated bishop, February 23, 1987
- Died: September 2, 1993

Most Rev. Curtis J. Guillory, SVD (1943–)

- Born: September 1, 1943, Mallet, Louisiana
- Educated: Divine Word College, Epworth, Iowa; Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois; Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska
- Ordained priest for the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), December 16, 1972
- Appointed titular bishop of Stagno and auxiliary bishop of Galveston-Houston, Texas, December 21, 1987
- Consecrated bishop February 19, 1988.
- Appointed bishop of Beaumont, Texas, June 2, 2000

Most Rev. Leonard Olivier, SVD (1923–)

- Born: October 12, 1923, Lake Charles, Louisiana
- Educated: Saint Augustine Major Seminary, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi; Catholic University of America, Washington D.C.; Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Ordained priest for the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), June 29, 1951
- Appointed titular bishop of Leges in Numidia and auxiliary bishop of Washington, D.C., November 10, 1988
- Consecrated bishop, December 20, 1988
- Retired: May 18, 2004

Most Rev. Dominic Carmon, SVD (1930–)

- Born: December 13, 1930, Opelousas, Louisiana
- Educated: Saint Augustine Minor Seminary, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, 1946–1950; Saint Mary's Seminary, Techny, Illinois, 1950–1952 (novitiate); Saint Paul Seminary, Epworth, Iowa, 1952–1954 (junior college); Saint Augustine Seminary, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, 1954–1960 (philosophy/theology); DePaul University,

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The Church Year

The feast days and holy days celebrated by Catholics and other Christians follow a yearly pattern. This pattern is called the Liturgical Year; it is different from the calendar year. Here is a description of the major seasons in the Liturgical Year. It might help you if you also take a look at the circular diagram of the Liturgical Year, found on the following page.

Advent begins the Liturgical Year four Sundays before Christmas. It is a time of preparation for the coming of Christ. The Advent season can be found on the Liturgical Year wheel in November and December. It is represented by the small graphic of an Advent wreath.

The **Christmas** season lasts twelve days, beginning with Christmas Day and concluding with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This season is found at the top part of the Liturgical Year wheel. The cross reminds us that the wood of the manger becomes the wood of the cross.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts forty days. It is a solemn time of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving in preparation for Easter. The small picture of the palms and cross in the Liturgical Year wheel symbolizes all of Lent as a journey toward Palm Sunday, when the same crowd that waves palms and yells “Hosanna!” ends up waving angry fists and shouting “Crucify him!”

The **Easter Triduum** is the celebration of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. At this one, continuous, three-day liturgy, Christians remember the Lord’s Supper, Christ’s Passion and death, and his Resurrection. These feasts are at the heart of the Liturgical Year. They are represented by the picture of the Easter candle, which makes its appearance in the darkness of the Easter Vigil. The vestments and altar cloths seen are red on Good Friday and white on the other two days.

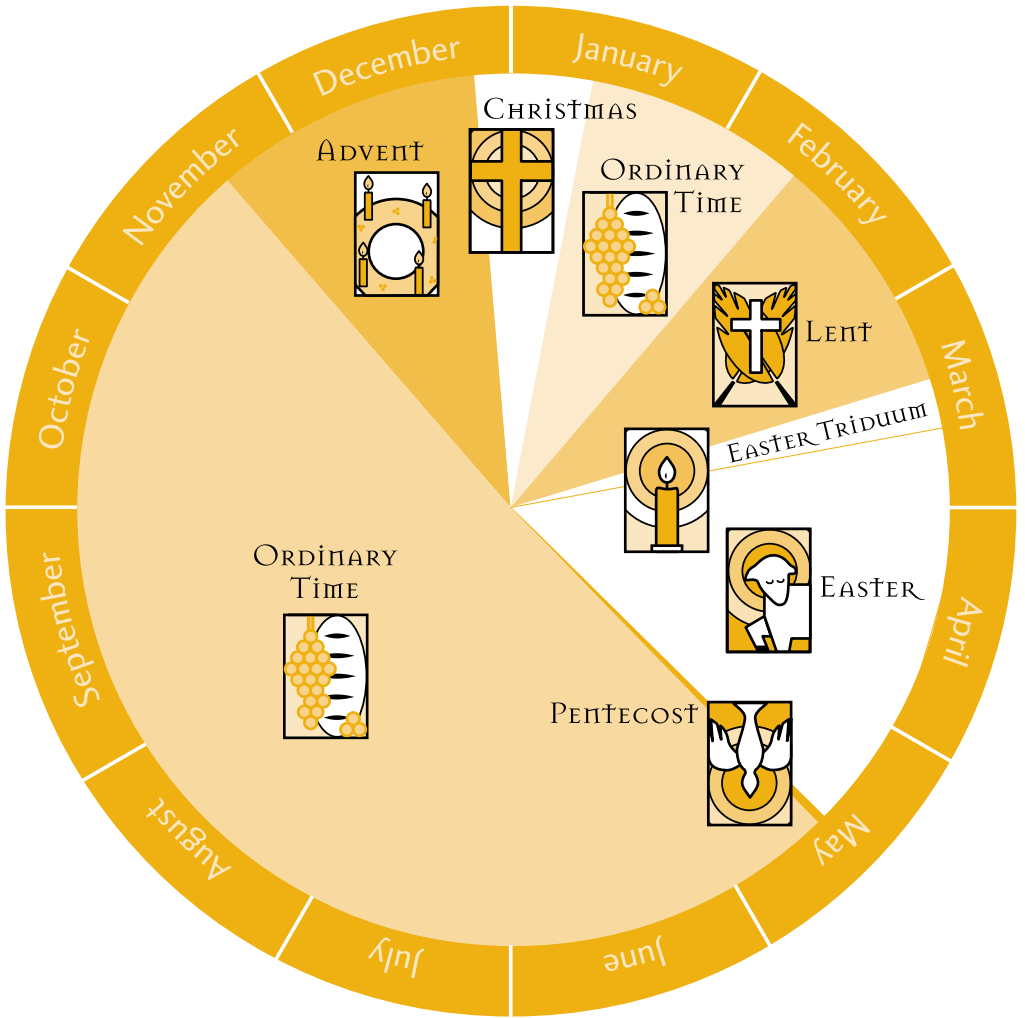
The **Easter** Season lasts fifty days, beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the Feast of Pentecost. The symbol of the lamb represents Jesus, the innocent sacrificial lamb of God. The symbol of the Holy Spirit reminds us that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, in the rush of wind and tongues of fire. The altar cloths and vestments are white throughout the Easter season, and then red on Pentecost. Red is the color of the Holy Spirit (as in Confirmation Mass) and of the celebration of feast days associated with martyrs, people killed for their faith (such as the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul).

The season of **Ordinary Time** is made up of the days between Christmas and Lent, and the days between Easter and Advent. The bread and wine show us that the main focus of Ordinary Time is the ministry of Jesus, represented by the grapes and bread of Communion. There are some special feast days during Ordinary Time that are not celebrated with green vestments and altar cloths, such as Trinity Sunday and the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, the first two Sundays after Pentecost, and the Feast of Christ the King, the last Sunday before Advent. You’ll see white on all three of those days. The particular dates and days these feasts fall upon vary from year to year.

Christmas is always December 25, so counting backwards four Sundays shows the four Sundays of Advent. Sometimes Advent includes Thanksgiving weekend, and sometimes it doesn’t, depending on which day of the week Christmas is.

Easter is always the first Sunday after the first full moon in the spring. Counting backwards six Sundays and then one Wednesday shows when Ash Wednesday and Lent begin. Sometimes Easter is in March, and sometimes it is in April.

On page 1946, you will find a Bible reading plan that corresponds to the readings of the Bible heard on Sundays throughout these seasons. That is an excellent way to get to know the Bible and the Liturgical Year at the same time.



Sunday Readings

Reading the Bible with the Church

This reading plan lists the Sunday readings for the Liturgical Year. The Scripture passages listed in the following table reflect those found in the official Catholic Lectionary for Mass, which uses the New American Bible translation.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Year A 2016, 2019, 2022	Year B 2014, 2017, 2020	Year C 2015, 2018, 2021
The First Sunday of Advent		
Is 2:1–5 Rom 13:11–14 Mt 24:37–44	Is 63:16–17, 64:1–8 1 Cor 1:3–9 Mk 13:33–37	Jer 33:14–16 1 Thes 3:12–4:2 Lk 21:25–28,34–36
The Second Sunday of Advent		
Is 11:1–10 Rom 15:4–9 Mt 3:1–12	Is 40:1–5,9–11 2 Pt 3:8–14 Mk 1:1–8	Bar 5:1–9 Phil 1:4–6,8–11 Lk 3:1–6
The Third Sunday of Advent		
Is 35:1–6,10 Jas 5:7–10 Mt 11:2–11	Is 61:1–2,10–11 1 Thes 5:16–24 Jn 1:6–8,19–28	Zep 3:14–18 Phil 4:4–7 Lk 3:10–18
The Fourth Sunday of Advent		
Is 7:10–14 Rom 1:1–7 Mt 1:18–24	2 Sm 7:1–5,8–11,14,16 Rom 16:25–27 Lk 1:26–38	Mi 5:2–4 Heb 10:5–10 Lk 1:39–45
Midnight Mass (December 25, every year, readings are the same for all cycles)		
Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14	Is 9:2–7 Ti 2:11–14 Lk 2:1–14
Feast of the Holy Family		
Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Mt 2:13–15,19–23	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Lk 2:22–40	Sir 3:2–7,12–14 Col 3:12–21 Lk 2:41–52
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1, every year, readings are the same for all cycles)		
Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21	Nm 6:22–27 Gal 4:4–7 Lk 2:16–21
Epiphany (readings are the same for all cycles)		
Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12	Is 60:1–6 Eph 3:2–3,5–6 Mt 2:1–12
Baptism of the Lord		
Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mt 3:13–17	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Mk 1:7–11	Is 42:1–4,6–7 Acts 10:34–38 Lk 3:15–16,21–22

LENT AND EASTER

Year A 2014, 2017, 2020	Year B 2015, 2018, 2021	Year C 2016, 2019, 2022
Ash Wednesday (readings are the same for all cycles)		
Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18	Jl 2:12–18 2 Cor 5:20–6:2 Mt 6:1–6,16–18

Glossary

A

abba

From Aramaic—a language spoken in Palestine at the time of Jesus—*abba*, meaning “father,” was used by children in addressing their fathers. Jesus used the word *abba* to express his relationship with God (see Mk 14:36) and taught his disciples to pray to God as a loving and loveable parent.

Adam

Related to the Hebrew *adamah*, meaning “ground,” this name signifies “one formed from the earth.” According to the Book of Genesis, Adam was the first man to be formed; he was the husband of Eve and the father of Cain and Abel. Christ is sometimes called the “new Adam” or the “second Adam,” as Christ initiated the new or second creation by restoring the divine friendship that had been lost by Original Sin.

allegory

This is a literary form in which something is said to be like something else. Allegories are often used to communicate a hidden or symbolic meaning commonly understood by the people it is addressed to. The Bible often uses allegories to explain spiritual reality. For example, Jesus is called the Lamb of God (see Jn 1:29), an allegory symbolizing that Jesus was the sacrifice for our sins.

alleluia

From the Hebrew meaning “praise to Yahweh” or “praise to God,” *alleluia* is an exclamation that is used in the Christian liturgy as a way of praising God, especially during the Easter season.

amen

This Hebrew word means “let it be so” or “let it be done.” As a conclusion to prayer, it represents the agreement by the person praying to what has been said in the prayer.

angel

This word is based on a word meaning “messenger,” a personal and immortal creature, with intelligence and free will, who constantly glorifies God and serves as a messenger of God to humans in order to carry out God’s saving plan.

anointing

This word (from the Latin *inungere*, meaning “to smear” or “rub on” oil or ointment for medicinal purposes) refers to an act of applying oil in a religious ceremony or as part of a blessing. In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets were anointed as a sign of their divine mission. Today anointing is part of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.

antichrist

This word from the Greek literally means “against Christ,” thus an adversary of Christ.

In the New Testament, the antichrist is a deceitful figure associated with the mystery of iniquity that is to precede the Second Coming of Christ. In modern usage, the term *antichrist* describes both those who falsely claim to speak in the name of Christ and those who are enemies of Christ.

apocalypse

This word (from the Greek *apocalypses*, meaning “revelation” or “unveiling” or “uncovering”), in a general sense, refers to the end of the world when God will destroy the forces of evil. In Scripture the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, which is the last book of the New Testament, describes the conflict between good and evil, the end of the world and heaven.

apocalyptic literature

Having roots in both Jewish and Christian tradition, this genre of literature appears in the Books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. It is associated with the end times or the last things and anticipates the time of Last Judgment when Jesus returns and the world as we know it disappears. Frequently referred to as “crisis literature,” it generally appears in the context of historical, political, or religious turmoil and is characterized by symbols and images used to communicate a message to the intended audience while preventing the enemies of faith from understanding its true meaning.

Apocryphal Books

In the first centuries of Christianity, a great number of books and letters written by Christians did not become part of the Bible. These writings were not included in the New Testament because they were not in complete agreement theologically with the Apostolic Tradition. They are called apocryphal writings, and they include such works as the gospels of Thomas, Peter, and Mary Magdalene, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Acts of John and Paul, and the Shepherd of Hermas.

Some of the images in apocryphal writings are quite beautiful, some are Gnostic (an early Christian heresy), and some are just strange. With the exception of Thomas, most were written in the second through the fourth centuries AD. Apocryphal writings provide a resource that helps scholars reconstruct and understand the diversity of the early Christian period, but they are not inspired Scripture, and they are theologically in error. See *canon of Scripture, deuterocanonical books*.

apostle

The general term *apostle* means “one who is sent” and can be used in reference to any missionary of the Church during the New Testament period. In reference to the twelve companions chosen by Jesus, also known as “the Twelve,” the term refers to those special witnesses of Jesus on whose ministry the early Church was built, and whose successors are the bishops.

Apostolic Tradition

See *Tradition*.

Aqedah (Binding of Isaac)

This is the story of the near sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis, chapter 22. Early Jewish tradition understood Isaac as a willing participant in his own (near) sacrifice. Fathers of the Church who were familiar with this tradition presented Isaac carrying the wood of the sacrifice as a type of Christ carrying the cross on which he would be crucified.

archaeology

This is a historical science that digs up and studies the remains of ancient civilizations in an attempt to learn about their history and culture. This can be helpful in reconstructing the conditions under which biblical events took place, though sometimes archaeology and the Bible challenge each other, calling for mutual reassessment.

Ark of the Covenant

In the Old Testament, this sacred chest housed the holy presence of God. The Book of Exodus contains the details of its construction (25:10–22, 37:1–9, 39:16–21). In the time of Moses, the Ark was carried during the desert wanderings (1250 BC) and kept in the Tent of Meeting. In the period of the kings (about 1000 BC), it was placed in the holy of holies in the Temple (see 1 Kgs 8:6–8). It held the tablets of the Law of Moses, manna from heaven, and the rod of Aaron. It was also called the Ark of God (1 Sm 3:3).

Ascension

The “going up” into heaven of the Risen Christ forty days after his Resurrection (see Mk 16:19, Lk 24:50–53).

B

Baal

This generic Semitic word means “master,” “owner,” “husband,” or “lord.” The word could be used to refer to Yahweh or to the master of a slave (Hos 2:16). However, in Scripture the word *Baal* most often refers to the practices of idolatry or the worship of gods other than Yahweh. Baal was both the name of a specific god and a generic title that could refer to any number of gods such as Baal Peor or Baal of Hermon. Often, the religion included the use of Temple prostitutes and even demanded human sacrifice, especially of infants. The worshipers of Baal were generally seen as the enemies of the Israelites (see 1 Kgs 18:20–40).

Babylonian captivity

Babylon pillaged Judah three times, eventually causing the demise of the Holy City, Jerusalem. In 587 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar murdered thousands of Israelites, destroyed the Temple, stole anything of value, burned Jerusalem to the ground, and enslaved a large portion of the population, sending them into exile in Babylon.

The captivity resulted in the deaths of multitudes, destruction of the land, devastation of the nation, loss of national identity, and infliction of hopelessness. The captivity lasted an entire generation (586–539 BC) until Cyrus the Persian, the king of Elam, conquered the Babylonians and let the Israelite people return home to Jerusalem (see Ezra, chapter 1). See *Diaspora, exile*.

A Brief History of African American Catholics

Black Catholics in Colonial America

1565

Spain established Saint Augustine, a town in present-day Florida. From the start, the Spanish settlers included black men and women, both free and slave. Baptismal records document the continuous presence of blacks and biracial children over the nearly two hundred years of Spanish settlement there.

1634

The English colony of Maryland was created as a refuge for Catholics seeking religious freedom. Although Catholic control of the colony did not last, Maryland maintained a strong Catholic culture. Maryland's first bishop, Bishop John Carroll, reported to the Vatican in 1785 that about one of every five Catholics in Maryland was black, both free and slave.

Early 1700s

The government of Spain promised freedom to slaves in the Carolinas and other English colonies if they escaped to Florida and converted to Catholicism.

1724

Having settled present-day Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans, Louisiana, along the Gulf Coast, the French declared the *Code Noir*, a set of laws governing the rights and lives of the slave population, including a requirement that all slaves be instructed and baptized in the Roman Catholic faith. Sexual relations between slaves and slave owners were prohibited, yet commonplace; children of owners and slaves became a class of free people—landowners, entrepreneurs, and craftsmen—known as creoles of color. New Orleans would become the largest slave market in the South.

1781

The city of Los Angeles was founded by eleven families who emigrated from northern Mexico. All were Catholic, and more than half were black. Of the twenty-two children in the first settlement, sixteen had African ancestry.

Slavery and Evangelization in America

1787



Pierre Toussaint (1778–1853) c.1825 (w/c on ivory). Meucci, Anthony (fl.1825) / © Collection of the New-York Historical Society, USA / Bridgeman Images

Venerable Pierre Toussaint was born a slave in Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti). He arrived in New York with his owner in 1787 and was granted his freedom in 1807. Toussaint was a charitable man, and he opened an orphanage and school for black children. He and his wife, Juliette, also organized a credit bureau, an employment agency, and a refuge for priests and destitute travelers. Because of Toussaint's courage, holiness, and many acts of charity, Pope Saint John Paul II pronounced him venerable—the second step in Toussaint's journey to sainthood.

1829

The Oblate Sisters of Providence were founded in Baltimore, Maryland, by four women of African descent, with the express mission of educating girls of color. Through the sisters' years of service, they have taught and cared for thousands of children in the United States, the Caribbean, and Central America.

1839

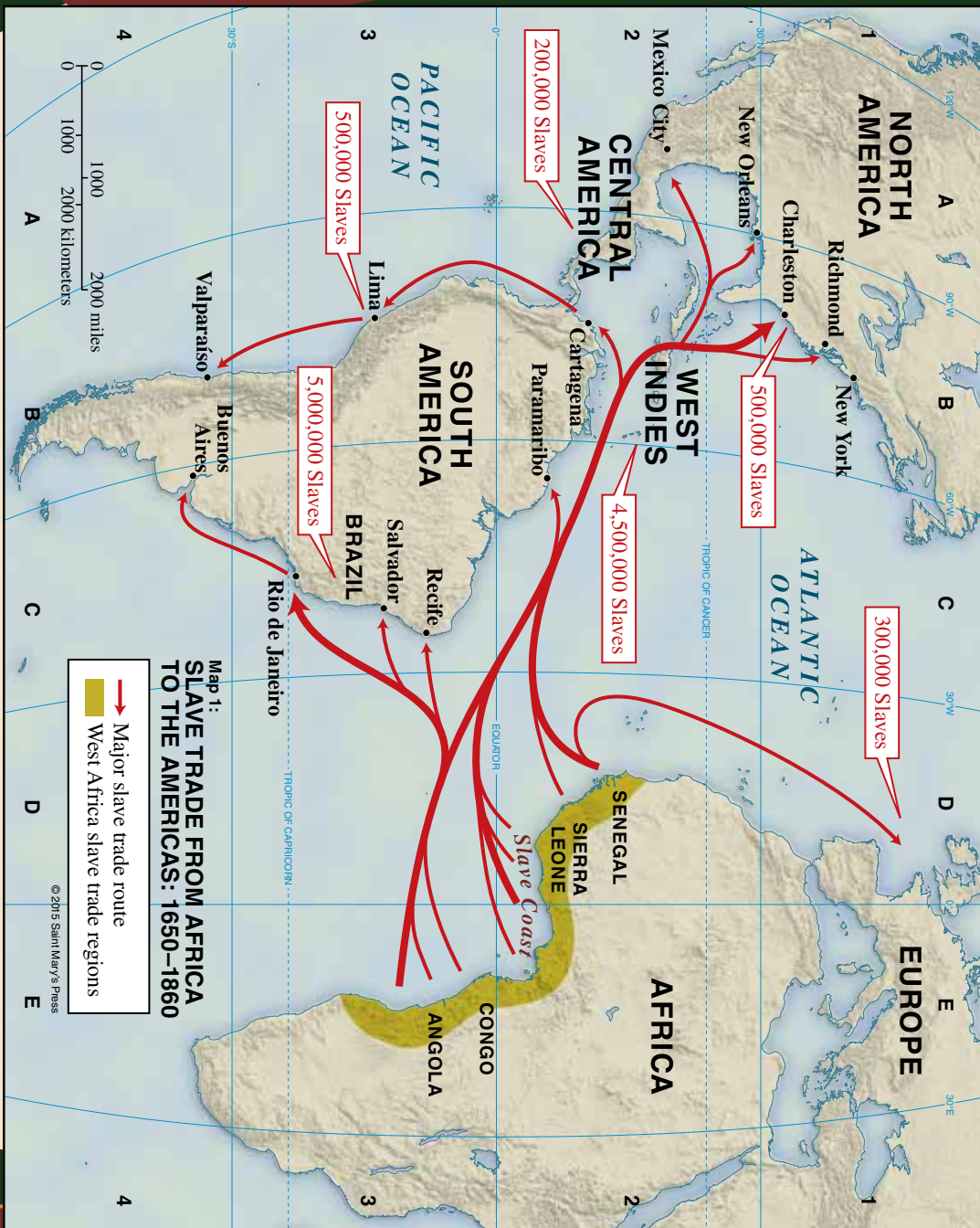
Pope Gregory XVI condemned the slave trade in the document *Supremo Apostolatus Fastigio* but did not condemn slavery as an institution. His statement had little impact on slavery in the United States.

1842

Rome set up the Apostolic Vicariate of the Two Guineas running from Senegal in West Africa to the Orange River in South Africa. Prompted by the bishops' Provincial Council of Baltimore, Mgr. Edward Barron, vicar general of the diocese of Philadelphia, volunteered for this mission. Consecrated bishop, he sought and received his first missionaries from the new Society of the Holy Heart of Mary (Spiritans) founded in Paris in 1841 by Father Libermann. The Spiritans became significant evangelizers of Africa.

Maps

Map 1: Slave Trade from Africa to the Americas: 1650-1860



Map 7: The Ministry of Jesus and the Acts of the Apostles



Old Testament

Biblical Images



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Hezekiah's Tunnel

In anticipation of the Assyrian assault on Jerusalem, King Hezekiah had a tunnel cut through solid rock to bring water into the city (2 Chronicles 32:30). This photo shows the entrance to Hezekiah's tunnel today.



Copyright © Pascal Deloche / Corbis

The Golden Calf

An artistic depiction of the Israelites' practicing idolatry by worshipping a golden calf (Exodus, chapter 32).



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High Place

This is an ancient stone altar used to honor Canaanite gods, also called a "high place." During the reforms of King Hezekiah and King Josiah, high places like this were destroyed (2 Kings 18:1-4, 23:4-8).



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Job Lying in a Heap of Refuse

The story of Job's suffering in the Old Testament shows the human struggle to understand why good people suffer.



Copyright © 2015 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Image from Tomb of Ramses III

These inlays were found in a royal Egyptian palace dating from the time of the Israelite slavery in Egypt. They depict Egypt's enemies and give evidence to the influence that African and Middle Eastern peoples had on each other.

New Testament

Biblical Images



Copyright © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY

Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch

The Acts of the Apostles tells us that one of the first converts to Christianity was a black man, an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40).



Copyright © Life of Jesus Malé / www.jesusmale.com

Pentecost

This image depicts the great joy that came with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13). When and where is your life filled with holy joy?



Copyright © Katherine Roundtree / www.kroundtree.com

Peter Walking on Water

Jesus calls Peter to step out in faith and walk on water (Matthew 14:22–23). How is Christ calling you to step out in faith?



Copyright © Allinat / Art Resource, NY

The Transfiguration

Can you identify the figures in this depiction of the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–13, Mk 9:2–13, Lk 9:2–36)?

Black Images of Mary and Christ



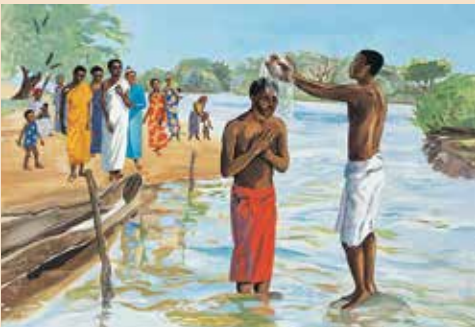
The Black Madonna of Jasna Góra (14th century) / Jasna Góra Monastery, Zakopane, Poland / Bridgeman Images

Black Madonna



Ed Dwight (1997). Photograph courtesy of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. Photographer: Robert Isaacson

Our Mother of Africa



Copyright © Life of Jesus Made / www.jesumade.com

Jesus' Baptism



Copyright © Patrushka / www.patrushkanet

Black Sacred Heart

Images from the Holy Land

Copyright © Saint Mary's Press



First-Century Cave Home in Nazareth

Archeologists have uncovered first-century cave homes like this under modern buildings in Nazareth. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph may have lived in a cave home like this.

Copyright © dhaveth / iStockphoto.com



The Jordan River

The Jordan River flows from the Sea of Galilee down into the Dead Sea. Can you think of some biblical stories that happened in or near the Jordan River?

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The Western Wall

This is the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem. This and part of the Southern Wall are all that remain of the great Temple complex that King Herod built at the time of Jesus.

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Ancient Tomb with Round Cover Stone

This ancient cave tomb was unearthed in Jerusalem. Notice the round cover stone. Jesus was buried in a tomb like this.

Copyright © Saint Mary's Press



Mount of Olives

This ancient olive tree on the Mount of Olives is nearly two thousand years old! Olive trees are kept alive for hundreds of years by grafting new olive branches into the trunks of older trees.

Catholic Prayers and Teachings

Core Catholic Prayers

Act of Contrition

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do
good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our savior Jesus Christ suffered and died
for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.

Act of Faith

My God, I firmly believe you are one God
in three Divine Persons, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit.
I believe in Jesus Christ, your son, who
became man and died for our sins, and
who will come to judge the living and the
dead.
I believe these and all the truths which the
Holy Catholic Church teaches, because
you have revealed them, who can neither
deceive nor be deceived.
Amen.

Act of Hope

O my God, trusting in your infinite good-
ness and promises, I hope to obtain par-
don of my sins, the help of your grace, and
life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus
Christ, my Lord and redeemer. Amen.

Act of Love

My God, I love you above all things, with
my whole heart and soul, because you are
all-good and worthy of all my love. I love my
neighbor as myself for love of you. I forgive
all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of
all whom I have injured. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, cre-
ator of heaven and earth. I believe in Je-
sus Christ, his only son, our Lord. He was
conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered un-
der Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and
was buried. He descended into hell. On the
third day he rose again. He ascended into
heaven and is seated at the right hand of
the Father. He will come again to judge the
living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy cath-
olic Church, the communion of saints, the
forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the
body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Confiteor (I Confess)

I confess to almighty God and to you, my
brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in
my thoughts and in my words, in what I have
done and what I have failed to do, through
my fault, through my fault, through my most
grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary,
ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and
you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me
to the Lord our God.

Catholic Teachings

Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17)

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Two Great Commandments (Mark 12:29–31; see also Matthew 22:37–40, Luke 10:27)

- You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.
- You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Theological Virtues (1 Corinthians 13:13)

- Faith
- Hope
- Love

Cardinal Virtues

- Prudence
- Justice
- Fortitude
- Temperance

Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–10)

- Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
- Blessed are they who mourn; they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek; they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness; they will be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful; they will be shown mercy.
- Blessed are the clean of heart; they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers; they will be called children of God.
- Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Corporal Works of Mercy (Matthew 25:35–36)

- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Clothe the naked.
- Care for the sick.
- Help the imprisoned.
- Bury the dead.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Share knowledge.
- Give advice to those who need it.
- Comfort those who suffer.
- Be patient with others.
- Forgive those who hurt you.
- Give correction to those who need it.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

Time Line of Biblical History

The history of the Israelite tribes begins in the Late Bronze Age with the settlement of the central highlands in the southern Levant. The Merneptah stele indicates that there was a socioethnic group called *Yasir'il* (Israel) in that region around 1230–1205 BC. Thus, a “historical time line” for Israel can begin with the thirteenth century BC. The first truly datable event in the history of Israel is the fall of Jerusalem in the sixth century. **Any dates assigned to figures or events prior to that time are approximate.**

PREHISTORY

2000 BC

1900 BC

1800 BC

1700 BC

FOUNDATION FIGURES

Adam and Eve
Cain and Abel
Noah

SPIRITUAL ANCESTORS OF THE MONOTHEISTIC FAITHS

Abraham and Sarah
Isaac and Rebekah
Jacob, Leah, and Rachel
Joseph and Asenath

Jacob's
descendants
settle in Egypt.
(1750)

Abraham and Sarah
arrive in Canaan.
(1850)

Prophets of Israel and Judah (All dates are BC)

Ahijah (10th cen.)	Shemaiah Jehu (10th cen.)	Eliezer (9th cen.)	Elijah (9th cen.)	Micaiah, son of Imlah (9th cen.)	Zedekiah (9th cen.)	Elisha (9th cen.)	Amos (8th cen.)	Jonah (8th cen.)
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Kings of Judah (All dates are BC)

Rehoboam (931–913)	Abijam (Abijah) (913–911)	Asa (911–870)	Jehoshaphat (870–848)	Jehoram (Joram) (848–841)	Ahaziah (841)
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Kings of Israel (All dates are BC)

Jeroboam I (931–910)	Nadab (910–909)	Baasha (909–886)	Elah (886–885)	Zimri (885)	Omri (885–874)	Ahab (875–854)
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A Few Key Dates in Human History

- c. 3800 BC—City-states and river-valley civilizations begin with Bronze Age.
- c. 3000 BC—First pharaohs rule Egypt. Hieroglyphic writing is invented.
- c. 2500 BC—Great pyramids are built.
- c. 1792 BC—Hammurabi develops code of law in Babylon.
- c. 1550 BC—Canaanites invent alphabet.
- c. 563 BC—Buddha is born in India.
- c. 551 BC—Confucius is born in China.
- 500 to 300 BC—Height of Golden Age of Greece.
- 43 BC—Roman Empire is established.
- 476 AD—Roman Empire falls.
- 622 AD—Muhammad founds Islam in Arabia.
- 1619 AD—First Africans brought to North American as slaves.
- 2008 AD—Election of the first black president in the United States.

1600 BC

1500 BC

1400 BC

1300 BC

1200 BC

1100 BC

Moses leads Exodus from Egypt. (1290)

Joshua invades Canaan. (1250)

Judges lead Israelite tribes in Canaan. (1200)

TIME IN EGYPT AND THE EXODUS

Important Biblical Figures:

Moses

Aaron

Miriam

TIME OF THE JUDGES

Important Biblical Figures:

Deborah

Gideon

Samson

Samuel

Hosea
(8th cen.)

Isaiah of
Jerusalem
(8th cen.)

Micah
(8th cen.)

Nahum
(7th cen.)

Zephaniah
(6th cen.)

Jeremiah
(7th–6th cen.)

Uriah
(7th cen.)

Hananiah
(6th cen.)

Ezekiel
(6th cen.)

Athaliah (queen)
(841–835)

Joash (Jehoash)
(835–796)

Amaziah
(796–767)

Azariah (Uzziah)
(767–740)

Jotham
(740–732)

Ahaz
(732–716)

Ahaziah
(853–852)

Jehoram (Joram)
(852–841)

Jehu
(841–814)

Jehoahaz
(814–798)

Jehoash (Joash)
(798–782)

Jeroboam II
(782–753)