The background of the cover is a soft, green-tinted photograph of a young girl with glasses, seen from the side, reading a book. The image is slightly faded and serves as a backdrop for the text.

THE Catholic Youth Bible[®] Third Edition

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

For the text of the articles and introductions

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Censor Librorum
September 22, 2009

Imprimatur: †Most Rev. John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona
September 22, 2009

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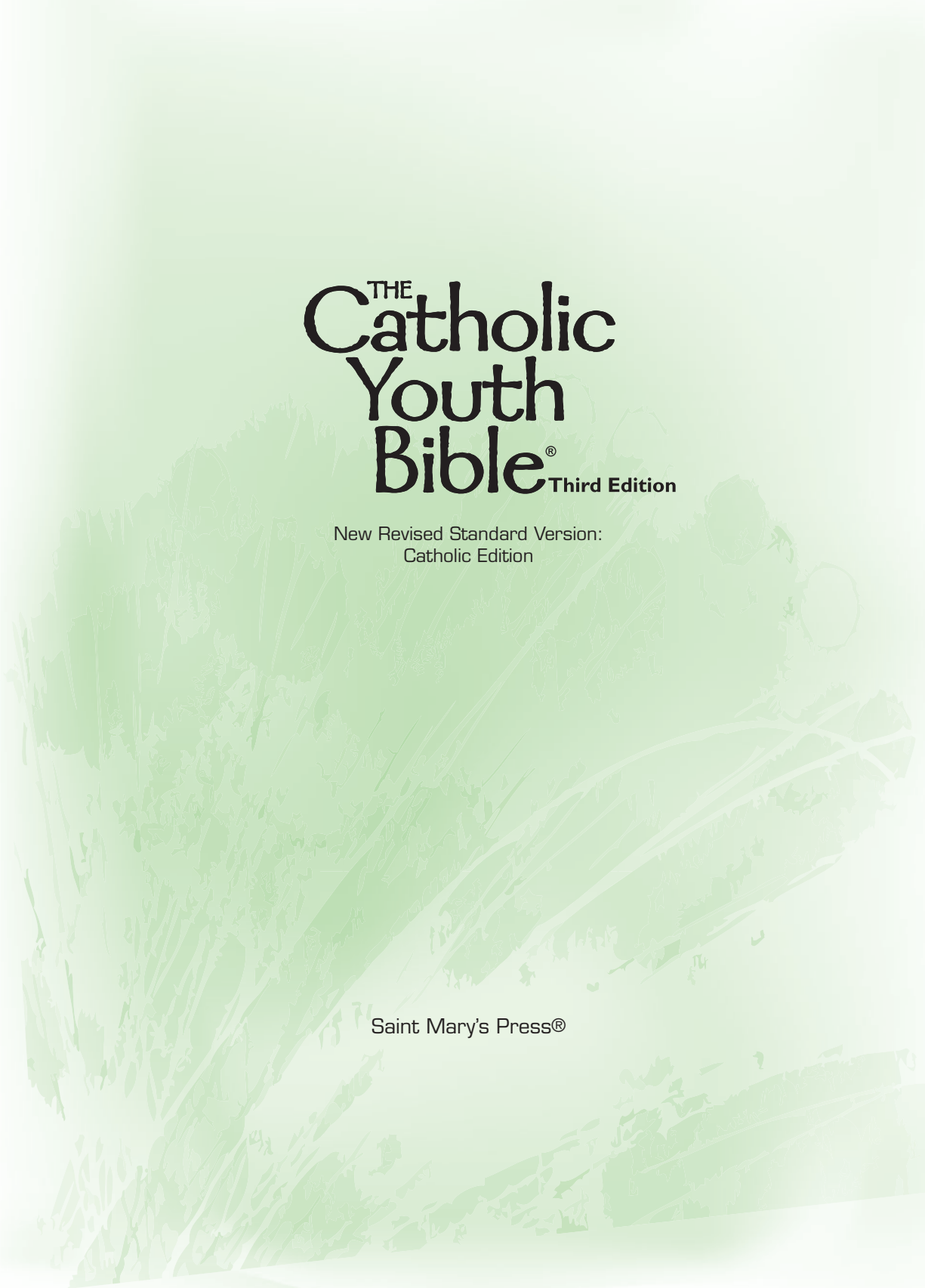
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THE Catholic Youth Bible® Third Edition

New Revised Standard Version:
Catholic Edition

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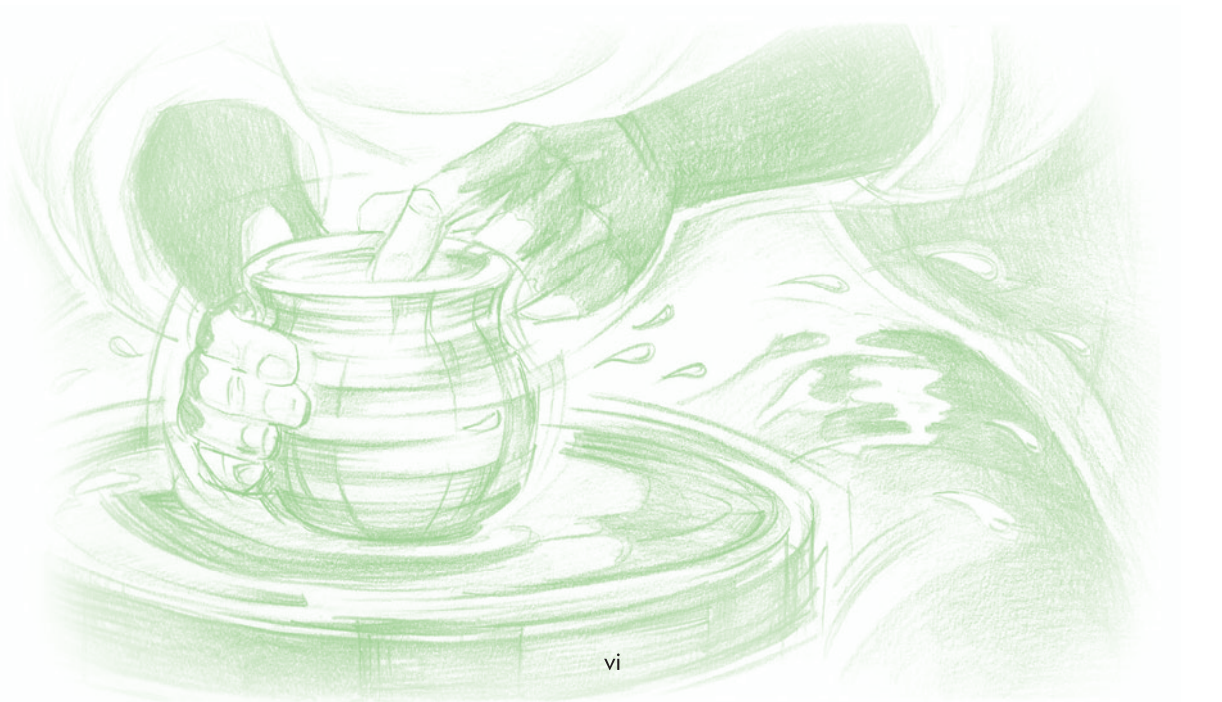
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Welcome!

This Unique Bible Is for YOU!

The *Catholic Youth Bible*® (*CYB*) is filled with things that will make it easier for you to understand the Bible's message. The authors, editors, designers, and artists involved in creating its special features were focused on you — a young person seeking answers to life's important questions. The *CYB* can be a true companion, helping you find the answers you seek and perhaps raising new questions along the way. It will help you see yourself in God's image and likeness...
a vital part of God's saving work in the world.



What Makes this Youth Bible CATHOLIC?

For starters, its introductions and articles reflect Catholic interpretation of the Bible and make connections to Catholic beliefs and traditions. In addition, this Bible contains all seventy-three books and letters that form a complete Catholic Bible, seven more than most other Bibles (see “The Case of the Missing Books,” near Tob 1:16). Does this mean that other Christians cannot use ***The Catholic Youth Bible***? Not at all. When it comes to the Scriptures, Christians from all cultures and denominations have more in common than they have differences.

As You Use this Bible, keep in mind two important points. The first is that the Bible is for everyone. Wherever you are in your relationship with God, ***the Bible can speak to you***. The articles in the **CYB** invite you to consider what the church teaches about God’s message in the Bible, whether you are a committed Christian or a searcher with lots of questions.

The second point is that all the special features in ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** are designed to encourage you ***to read the Bible itself***. It is the Bible’s stories, poems, prophecies, and letters that carry this central message: ***God desires a loving relationship with us***. The special features of this Bible can help you understand God’s message. **But it is God’s word in the Bible that can CHANGE YOUR LIFE!**

Special Features

The Catholic Youth Bible is loaded with special features to help make it easier for you to 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 wisdom 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 (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents.

COLOR INSERTS

The five sections of color inserts cover how to read and study the Bible; how to pray with the Scriptures; how to apply biblical principles to daily life and six saints who illustrate the principles, including a list of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching; photos and charts highlighting biblical people, places, and events; and an overview of Catholic practices and prayers.



Live It!

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

Pray It!

The **“Pray It!”** articles can help you use the Bible for personal prayer. They show the biblical basis for the prayer and sacramental life of the Catholic Church.

Did You Know?

The **“Did You Know?”** articles provide background from biblical scholars to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times, or the Church’s interpretation of certain passages.



Introducing...

The “**Introducing . . .**” articles give a quick introduction to the lives of important biblical people.

Catholic Connection

The “**Catholic Connection**” articles are full-page articles that show the biblical basis for many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices.

Cultural Connection

The “**Cultural Connection**” articles explain how people in different cultures have understood and lived out God’s revelation in the Bible. The articles represent many of the diverse cultures that have found their home in the United States.

Catholic Social Teaching

These articles focus on the seven principles of Catholic social teaching and help the reader to understand their biblical basis.



WHERE DO I FIND IT?

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

STUDY AIDS

A calendar of the Church year and Sunday readings, a glossary of Scripture-related terms, color maps, pictures, and a timeline are found at the back of the Bible. The timeline and maps will help you locate where and when different biblical events occurred.



The Bible Is Multicultural

The Bible developed in the midst of great cultural diversity. In fact, the Bible was originally written in at least two languages, Hebrew and Greek. The people of the Old Testament were influenced by Arabic, Egyptian, and other Middle Eastern cultures that surrounded them. Later, they and the early Christian church were influenced by the Greek and Roman cultures. In the Bible, God is revealed as the God of all nations and all cultures.

As the Word of God, the Bible's core message of God's love for human beings speaks to people of any culture. That is one reason the Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Christians also believe that God is at work in the lives of people of every culture, whether or not they have been formally introduced to the Christian message. Listening to other cultures' experience of God can deepen Christian people's appreciation of God's message present in the Bible.

We also live in a multicultural world. ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** responds to this reality in two main ways. First, all the articles attempt to speak in a way that people of all cultures can appreciate and understand. Second, some articles have been specially written to represent distinct cultural perspectives. Most of these articles represent African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Latino, and Native American perspectives. The revised edition of ***The Catholic Youth Bible, Third Edition***, also includes additional articles representing cultural perspectives from around the world.

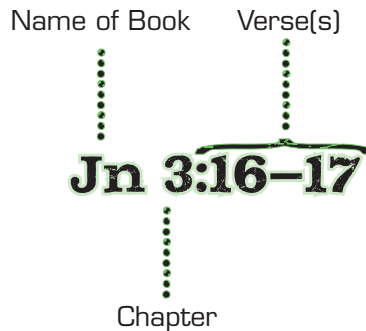
All the articles share cultural experiences and traditions, religious symbols, prayers, and poetry, and they connect all these elements to the Bible. "Cultural Connections," an entry in the subject index at the back of the Bible, lists the locations of all these articles. If you would like to read articles from one of the four major cultural perspectives mentioned above, the subject index still contains entries for those.

The cultural perspectives represented in ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** are a small sampling of the many unique cultures in the world. Because of space restrictions, articles on many cultures could not be included. Despite these limitations, the multicultural articles can deepen your appreciation of the Bible's message and of the rich ways different cultures live that message.

Navigating The Catholic Youth Bible

The Catholic Youth Bible has several aids to help you locate references to Bible books and the Bible's special features. The contents on pages iv–v 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 section “Where Do I Find It?” offers several types of indexes to help you locate specific passages and articles.

Throughout **The Catholic Youth Bible**, there are many references to specific Bible passages. These references are given in 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). So Jn 3:16–17 refers to the Gospel According to John, chapter 3, verses 16 to 17.



Most of the articles end with a citation identifying the Bible passage the article is based on. It is important to read the passage before reading the article.

Preface

to the NRSV: Catholic Edition


This Catholic edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible has been authorized by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the U.S.A. and by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. It has received the ecclesiastical approval of the Catholic Bishops of both the United States and Canada. The undersigned, who prepared this edition, is a member of the Revised Standard Version Bible Translation Committee as well as an active member and past president of the Catholic Biblical Association of America.

Roman Catholics are already familiar with the accuracy and elegance of the New Revised Standard Version, first published in 1990. It has previously appeared in two major types of edition: an edition of the Old and New Testaments alone, the Bible of most Protestants; and an edition of the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books placed between the two Testaments. The text of the latter edition received the *Imprimatur* (official approbation) of the United States and Canadian Catholic Bishops. The New Revised Standard Version is truly an ecumenical translation, for it was produced by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, and Jewish scholars. Because of this Catholic presence no change in the translation was requested for this edition. The only exceptions are the Book of Esther, which exists in two different forms that are explained below, and the Book of Daniel, which includes the deuterocanonical portions that are listed below.

Regarding the number of the books of the Old Testament canon and their arrangement, however, Protestants and Jews on the one hand, and Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians on the other, hold different beliefs. From the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Protestants have adopted the Jewish canon of the Old Testament, which was established by the rabbis at the end of the first century of the Common Era. This canon includes only those books that were written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

In addition to these books, however, Roman Catholics, following the ancient tradition of the Christian church, also hold the Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament to be sacred and inspired, and therefore canonical. Protestants and Jews call these books *Apocrypha*, a word that means "hidden or concealed," an inappropriate title for works that were part of the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) from pre-Christian times. The Roman Catholic canon, which was fixed by the time of the Council of Hippo in 393 and reaffirmed by the two Councils of Carthage in 397 and 419, was formally defined by the Council of Trent in 1546. This canon contains seven Deuterocanonical Books: Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (the Wisdom of Ben Sira, also known as Ecclesiasticus), Baruch including the Letter of Jeremiah as chapter 6, and 1 and 2 Maccabees; and extra portions of two other books: the Additions to Esther; and the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews inserted between verses 23 and 24 of Daniel 3, Susanna as Daniel 13, and Bel and the Dragon as Daniel 14. Over and above these books and extra portions, the Bible of Greek and Slavonic Orthodox Christians includes 1 Esdras, the Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151, and 3 Maccabees. The Slavonic Bible also contains 2 Esdras, and an appendix to the Greek Bible includes 4 Maccabees.

Several of the Deuterocanonical Books were written originally in Hebrew or Aramaic, the rest in Greek. More than two-thirds of the Book of Sirach is now extant in Hebrew, and four fragments of the Book of Tobit in Hebrew and Aramaic were recovered from Qumran Cave IV. It seems certain that Judith and the additions to Daniel were also written originally in Hebrew. Hebrew is the original language of the prose parts of Baruch; the poetic parts were composed in Greek. The Wisdom of Solomon was written completely in Greek. The original language of 1 Maccabees was Hebrew while 2 Maccabees was composed in Greek.



The Book of Esther has two different forms: the short Hebrew original; and the longer Greek version that contains one hundred and seven additional verses comprising six distinct portions, A through F. It is the translation of the entire Greek version that appears in the Deuterocanonical section of the New Revised Standard Version. In this Catholic edition, however, the translation of the Greek portions has been inserted at the appropriate places of the translation of the Hebrew form of the book. Some of the Greek portions apparently had a Hebrew origin; the others were written in Greek.

What is distinctive about this Catholic edition—as well as every other edition published by Roman Catholics—is that the Deuterocanonical Books and portions are placed in their proper order among the other books of the Old Testament. Thus, Tobit, Judith, the long form of Esther, and 1 and 2 Maccabees are found among the so-called historical books directly

after Nehemiah. The Wisdom of Solomon and the Book of Sirach follow after the Song of Solomon among the wisdom books. Because Baruch, the well-known secretary of Jeremiah, is said to be the author of the work that bears his name, the book is placed after Jeremiah and Lamentations. This order of books comes from the Latin Vulgate translated by St. Jerome in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. It is essentially the same order as that found in the fourth-century Codex Vaticanus, one of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Septuagint.

Roman Catholics will welcome this edition of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible for personal reading and study as well as liturgical usage. Based on the latest manuscript discoveries and critical editions, it offers the fruits of the best biblical scholarship in the idiom of today while being sensitive to the contemporary concern for inclusive language when referring to human beings.

ALEXANDER A. DI LELLA, O.F.M.

Andrews-Kelly-Ryan Distinguished Professor of Biblical Studies
The Catholic University of America

September 30, 1992
Feast of St. Jerome

To the Reader



This preface is addressed to you by the Committee of translators, who wish to explain, as briefly as possible, the origin and character of our work. The publication of our revision is yet another step in the long, continual process of making the Bible available in the form of the English language that is most widely current in our day. To summarize in a single sentence: the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, which was a revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which, in turn, embodied earlier revisions of the King James Version, published in 1611.

In the course of time, the King James Version came to be regarded as "the Authorized Version." With good reason it has been termed "the noblest monument of English prose," and it has entered, as no other book has, into the making of the personal character and the public institutions of the English-speaking peoples. We owe to it an incalculable debt.

Yet the King James Version has serious defects. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of biblical studies and the discovery of many biblical manuscripts more ancient than those on which the King James Version was based made it apparent that these defects were so many as to call for revision. The task was begun, by authority of the Church of England, in 1870. The (British) Revised Version of the Bible was published in 1881–1885; and the American Standard Version, its variant embodying the preferences of the American scholars associated with the work, was published, as was mentioned above, in 1901. In 1928 the copyright of the latter was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education and thus passed into the ownership of the churches of the United States and Canada that were associated in this Council through their boards of education and publication.

The Council appointed a committee of scholars to have charge of the text of the American Standard Version and to undertake inquiry concerning the need for further revision. After studying the questions whether or not revision should be undertaken, and if so, what its nature and extent should be, in 1937 the Council authorized a revision. The scholars who served as members of the Committee worked in two sections, one dealing with the Old Testament and one with the New Testament. In 1946 the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament was published. The publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, took place on September 30, 1952. A translation of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament followed in 1957. In 1977 this collection was issued in an expanded edition, containing three additional texts received by Eastern Orthodox

communions (3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151). Thereafter the Revised Standard Version gained the distinction of being officially authorized for use by all major Christian churches: Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox.

The Revised Standard Version Bible Committee is a continuing body, comprising about thirty members, both men and women. Ecumenical in representation, it includes scholars affiliated with various Protestant denominations, as well as several Roman Catholic members, an Eastern Orthodox member, and a Jewish member who serves in the Old Testament section. For a period of time the Committee included several members from Canada and from England.

Because no translation of the Bible is perfect or is acceptable to all groups of readers, and because discoveries of older manuscripts and further investigation of linguistic features of the text continue to become available, renderings of the Bible have proliferated. During the years following the publication of the Revised Standard Version, twenty-six other English translations and revisions of the Bible were produced by committees and by individual scholars—not to mention twenty-five other translations and revisions of the New Testament alone. One of the latter was the second edition of the RSV New Testament, issued in 1971, twenty-five years after its initial publication.

Following the publication of the RSV Old Testament in 1952, significant advances were made in the discovery and interpretation of documents in Semitic languages related to Hebrew. In addition to the information that had become available in the late 1940s from the Dead Sea texts of Isaiah and Habakkuk, subsequent acquisitions from the same area brought to light many other early copies of all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures (except Esther), though most of these copies are fragmentary. During the same period early Greek manuscript copies of books of the New Testament also became available.

In order to take these discoveries into account, along with recent studies of documents in Semitic languages related to Hebrew, in 1974 the Policies Committee of the Revised Standard Version, which is a standing committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., authorized the preparation of a revision of the entire RSV Bible.

For the Old Testament the Committee has made use of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977; ed. sec. emendata, 1983). This is an edition of the Hebrew and Aramaic text as current early in the Christian era and fixed by Jewish scholars (the "Masoretes") of the sixth to the ninth centuries. The vowel signs, which were added by the Masoretes, are accepted in the main, but where a more probable and convincing reading can be obtained by assuming different

vowels this has been done. No notes are given in such cases, because the vowel points are less ancient and reliable than the consonants. When an alternative reading given by the Masoretes is translated in a footnote, this is identified by the words "Another reading is."

Departures from the consonantal text of the best manuscripts have been made only where it seems clear that errors in copying had been made before the text was standardized. Most of the corrections adopted are based on the ancient versions (translations into Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin), which were made prior to the time of the work of the Masoretes and which therefore may reflect earlier forms of the Hebrew text. In such instances a footnote specifies the version or versions from which the correction has been derived and also gives a translation of the Masoretic Text. Where it was deemed appropriate to do so, information is supplied in footnotes from subsidiary Jewish traditions concerning other textual readings (the *Tiqqune Sopherim*, "emendations of the scribes"). These are identified in the footnotes as "Ancient Heb tradition."

Occasionally it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission and that none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text. Such reconstructions are indicated in footnotes by the abbreviation Cn ("Correction"), and a translation of the Masoretic Text is added.

For the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament the Committee has made use of a number of texts. For most of these books the basic Greek text from which the present translation was made is the edition of the Septuagint prepared by Alfred Rahlfs and published by the Württemberg Bible Society (Stuttgart, 1935). For several of the books the more recently published individual volumes of the Göttingen Septuagint project were utilized. For the Book of Tobit it was decided to follow the form of the Greek text found in codex Sinaiticus (supported as it is by evidence from Qumran); where this text is defective, it was supplemented and corrected by other Greek manuscripts. For the three Additions to Daniel (namely, Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews, and Bel and the Dragon) the Committee continued to use the Greek version attributed to Theodotion (the so-called "Theodotion-Daniel"). In translating Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), while constant reference was made to the Hebrew fragments of a large portion of this book (those discovered at Qumran and Masada as well as those recovered from the Cairo Geniza), the Committee generally followed the Greek text (including verse numbers) published by Joseph Ziegler in the Göttingen Septuagint (1965). But in many places the Committee has translated the Hebrew text when this provides a reading that is clearly superior to the Greek; the Syriac and Latin versions were also consulted throughout and occasionally adopted.

Finally, in the Book of Esther we have placed the deuterocanonical portions, translated from Robert Hanhart's Göttingen edition of the Greek (1983), in their original context within the translation of the Hebrew text.

For the New Testament the Committee has based its work on the most recent edition of *The Greek New Testament*, prepared by an interconfessional and international committee and published by the United Bible Societies (1966, 3rd ed. corrected, 1983; information concerning changes to be introduced into the critical apparatus of the forthcoming 4th edition was available to the Committee). As in that edition, double brackets are used to enclose a few passages that are generally regarded to be later additions to the text, but which we have retained because of their evident antiquity and their importance in the textual tradition. Only in very rare instances have we replaced the text or the punctuation of the Bible Societies' edition by an alternative that seemed to us to be superior. Here and there in the footnotes the phrase, "Other ancient authorities read," identifies alternative readings preserved by Greek manuscripts and early versions. In both Testaments, alternative renderings of the text are indicated by the word "Or."

As for the style of English adopted for the present revision, among the mandates given to the Committee in 1980 by the Division of Education and Ministry of the National Council of the Churches of Christ (which now holds the copyright of the RSV Bible) was the directive to continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony, and current English usage. Within the constraints set by the original texts and by the mandates of the Division, the Committee has followed the maxim, "As literal as possible, as free as necessary." As a consequence, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) remains essentially a literal translation. Paraphrastic renderings have been adopted only sparingly, and then chiefly to compensate for a deficiency in the English language—the lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun.

During the almost half a century since the publication of the RSV, many in the churches have become sensitive to the danger of linguistic sexism arising from the inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender, a bias that in the case of the Bible has often restricted or obscured the meaning of the original text. The mandates from the Division specified that, in references to men and women, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture. As can be appreciated, more than once the Committee found that the several mandates stood in tension and even in conflict. The various concerns had to be balanced case by case in order to provide a faithful and acceptable rendering without using contrived English. Only very occasionally has

the pronoun "he" or "him" been retained in passages where the reference may have been to a woman as well as to a man; for example, in several legal texts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In such instances of formal, legal language, the options of either putting the passage in the plural or of introducing additional nouns to avoid masculine pronouns in English seemed to the Committee to obscure the historic structure and literary character of the original. In the vast majority of cases, however, inclusiveness has been attained by simple rephrasing or by introducing plural forms when this does not distort the meaning of the passage. Of course, in narrative and in parable no attempt was made to generalize the sex of individual persons.

Another aspect of style will be detected by readers who compare the more stately English rendering of the Old Testament with the less formal rendering adopted for the New Testament. For example, the traditional distinction between *shall* and *will* in English has been retained in the Old Testament as appropriate in rendering a document that embodies what may be termed the classic form of Hebrew, while in the New Testament the abandonment of such distinctions in the usage of the future tense in English reflects the more colloquial nature of the koine Greek used by most New Testament authors except when they are quoting the Old Testament.

Careful readers will notice that here and there in the Old Testament the word LORD (or in certain cases GOD) is printed in capital letters. This represents the traditional manner in English versions of rendering the Divine Name, the "Tetragrammaton" (see the notes on Exodus 3:14, 15), following the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the long established practice in the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue. While it is almost if not quite certain that the Name was originally pronounced "Yahweh," this pronunciation was not indicated when the Masoretes added vowel sounds to the consonantal Hebrew text. To the four consonants YHWH of the Name, which had come to be regarded as too sacred to be pronounced, they attached vowel signs indicating that in its place should be read the Hebrew word *Adonai* meaning "Lord" (or *Elohim* meaning "God"). Ancient Greek translators employed the word *Kyrios* ("Lord") for the Name. The Vulgate likewise used the Latin word *Dominus* ("Lord"). The form "Jehovah" is of late medieval origin; it is a combination of the consonants of the Divine Name and the vowels attached to it by the Masoretes but belonging to an entirely different word. Although the American Standard Version (1901) had used "Jehovah" to render the Tetragrammaton (the sound of Y being represented by J and the sound of W by V, as in Latin), for two reasons the Committees that produced the RSV and the NRSV returned to the more familiar usage of the King James Version. (1) The word "Jehovah" does not accurately represent any form of the Name ever used in Hebrew. (2) The use of any proper name for the one and only God, as though there were other gods from

whom the true God had to be distinguished, began to be discontinued in Judaism before the Christian era and is inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.

It will be seen that in the Psalms and in other prayers addressed to God the archaic second person singular pronouns (*thee, thou, thine*) and verb forms (*art, hast, hadst*) are no longer used. Although some readers may regret this change, it should be pointed out that in the original languages neither the Old Testament nor the New makes any linguistic distinction between addressing a human being and addressing the Deity. Furthermore, in the tradition of the King James Version one will not expect to find the use of capital letters for pronouns that refer to the Deity—such capitalization is an unnecessary innovation that has only recently been introduced into a few English translations of the Bible. Finally, we have left to the discretion of the licensed publishers such matters as section headings, cross-references, and clues to the pronunciation of proper names.

This new version seeks to preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the years. It is intended for use in public reading and congregational worship, as well as in private study, instruction, and meditation. We have resisted the temptation to introduce terms and phrases that merely reflect current moods, and have tried to put the message of the Scriptures in simple, enduring words and expressions that are worthy to stand in the great tradition of the King James Bible and its predecessors.

In traditional Judaism and Christianity, the Bible has been more than a historical document to be preserved or a classic of literature to be cherished and admired; it is recognized as the unique record of God's dealings with people over the ages. The Old Testament sets forth the call of a special people to enter into covenant relation with the God of justice and steadfast love and to bring God's law to the nations. The New Testament records the life and work of Jesus Christ, the one in whom "the Word became flesh," as well as describes the rise and spread of the early Christian Church. The Bible carries its full message, not to those who regard it simply as a noble literary heritage of the past or who wish to use it to enhance political purposes and advance otherwise desirable goals, but to all persons and communities who read it so that they may discern and understand what God is saying to them. That message must not be disguised in phrases that are no longer clear, or hidden under words that have changed or lost their meaning; it must be presented in language that is direct and plain and meaningful to people today. It is the hope and prayer of the translators that this version of the Bible may continue to hold a large place in congregational life and to speak to all readers, young and old alike, helping them to understand and believe and respond to its message.

For the Committee,
BRUCE M. METZGER

Guide to . . .

Pronunciation of Proper Names

This edition of the New Revised Standard Version includes a simplified self-pronunciation system for proper names. The system is designed to provide assistance to the reader without filling the text with a complicated variety of symbols, many of which provide unneeded pronunciation clues.

Well-known proper names such as Moses, Nazareth, and Timothy are printed without pronunciation marks of any kind. Such names are a familiar part of our cultural heritage, and they are instantly recognizable to most readers.

More difficult proper names (as well as certain transliterated non-English words) are shown in the text with simplified pronunciation markings. (Two notes of caution: The anglicized pronunciation of a name differs at times from that of the ancient language. Also, there are differences of opinion among speakers of English concerning the most desirable pronunciation of certain names.)

Three kinds of marks are used:

- ˊ The acute accent mark: shows which syllable of a name is to be stressed. A compound name—with parts separated by a hyphen—has an accent mark in each part having more than one syllable.
- ˙ The centered dot: shows where an unaccented syllable ends and another syllable begins.
- ˉ The macron: printed over a vowel that has a “long” sound. The macron is shown over the following vowels when they are sounded as indicated:
 - a* as in *gate*
 - e* as in *key*
 - i* as in *ice*
 - o* as in *hope*
 - u* as in *use* or *rule*
 - y* as in *type*

The macron also indicates the pronunciation of certain diphthongs, or vowel combinations:
over the *a* in *ai* as in *pail*
over the *i* in *ai* as in *aisle*

A vowel that does not have a “long” sound is printed with no pronunciation mark. In most cases the sound of such a vowel can be determined closely enough by observing how the name is spelled, divided into syllables, and accented.

Abbreviations Used in the Notes

In the notes to the books of the Old Testament the following abbreviations are used:

<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
Aram	Aramaic
Ch, chs	Chapter, chapters
Cn	Correction; made where the text has suffered in transmission and the versions provide no satisfactory restoration but where the Standard Bible Committee agrees with the judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text
Gk	Septuagint, Greek version of the Old Testament
Heb	Hebrew of the consonantal Masoretic Text of the Old Testament
Josephus	Flavius Josephus (Jewish historian, about A.D. 37 to about 95)
Macc.	The book(s) of the Maccabees
Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
MT	The Hebrew of the pointed Masoretic Text of the Old Testament
OL	Old Latin
Q Ms(s)	Manuscript(s) found at Qumran by the Dead Sea
Sam	Samaritan Hebrew text of the Old Testament
Syr	Syriac Version of the Old Testament
Syr H	Syriac Version of Origen’s Hexapla
Tg	Targum
Vg	Vulgate, Latin Version of the Old Testament



The Old Testament



In the
Beginning

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, reveal who God is, and 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.

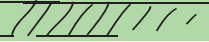
One of the central elements of the special relationship between God and the Israelites described in the Pentateuch is the Sinai Covenant. A covenant establishes a new relationship between two parties and is marked by a solemn promise, where both parties agree to fulfill certain obligations. The Sinai 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 covenant 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 covenant, 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 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 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.

■ The Deuteronomist emphasized the Law as the foundation of the kingdom of Judah. The Deuteronomist emerged toward the end of the monarchy (the time of the Israelite kings), when the Covenant Law seemed to have been forgotten.

■ Finally, 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.

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.

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.
- ▶ The two types of writing in the Pentateuch are narratives and laws. Genesis is all inspired narratives, Leviticus and Deuteronomy are mostly laws, and Exodus and Numbers are approximately half stories and half laws.

Displays of awesome cosmic power, tender love stories, tearful family reunions, and tales of deceit, rape, murder, and worldwide destruction. Does this sound like the script for next summer's blockbuster movie? No, it's the Book of Genesis! It is the story of how a world created for love and harmony goes astray because of human sin. Through it all, God is at work, forming a people to restore what was lost.

In Depth

Genesis gathers together inspired stories and traditions that reveal Israel's understanding of God's nature and purpose, and the beginning of the Israelites' special relationship with God. Genesis has two main sections. The first section (1:1—11:32) contains some of the Bible's most memorable stories about Creation and the effect of sin. Chapters 1–2 tell 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, made in God's own image. Those human beings, symbolic of us all, live in a wonderful garden in

At a Glance

- 1:1—11:32. the creation of the world and human beings by God
- 12:1—50:26. stories of the ancestors (matriarchs and patriarchs) of Israel

Quick Facts

Period Covered: The stories in the first eleven chapters are primeval history. Genesis 12:1—50:26 covers the period of the ancestors, or patriarchs and matriarchs (from 2000 to 1500 BC).

Inspired Author: Stories were gathered from the oral tradition of tribal peoples in the period around 1225 to 1000 BC (see Introduction to the Pentateuch).

Themes: the goodness of Creation, human responsibility, the effects of sin, covenant, God's bringing good out of evil

harmony with God, Creation, and each other. But in chapter 3, sin enters the world, and as a result, Adam and Eve will experience separation, suffering, and ultimately death.

And first sin spreads, first to the family (Cain and Abel in chapter 4), 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 demonstrates that sin pits nation against nation. As you read these chapters, remember that they were written not as historical accounts or scientific explanations but as inspired stories that share a faith perspective and teach important religious truths.

The second section of Genesis (12:1—50:26) tells the story of the origins of the Israelite people. The story begins with Abraham and Sarah (originally called Abram and Sarai) and continues with Ishmael and Isaac and with Isaac and Rebekah's children, Esau and Jacob. Genesis ends with Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, cleverly saving Egypt and Israel from famine. This section introduces the covenant God makes with Abraham and the Israelite people and reminds the reader that God's plans will overcome human sin and weakness.



Genesis

1:1—2:4

Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

1 In the beginning when God created^a the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God^b swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the

dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

a Or when God began to create or In the beginning God created

b Or while the spirit of God or while a mighty wind

26 Then God said, “Let us make humankind^a in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,^b and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

27 So God created humankind^a in his image, in the image of God he created them;^c male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” 29 God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every

tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. 2 And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

a Heb *adam* b Syr: Heb *and over all the earth* c Heb *him*

In the Beginning

“**I**n the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth . . .” (Gen 1:1).

This simple verse is one of the foundational beliefs of Christianity. We are not a random collection of atoms. The world is not a lucky combination of cosmic circumstances. The universe did not just accidentally happen.

The beginning of wisdom is acknowledging that a higher power is at work in our lives, that the universe has purpose, and that everything was created by God. The ancient writers and editors of Genesis expressed these ideas in the Creation stories. The Church affirms these beliefs. They are expressed in a prayer called the Apostles’ Creed, which begins, “I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”

Genesis expresses another foundational belief: God created everything good! Read the story in chapter 1, and see how this belief is constantly repeated: And humankind is “very good,” created in God’s own image. This is God’s message to you in the first chapter of the Bible: You carry God’s image within you. You are very good! Don’t let anyone ever try to convince you otherwise.

▶ Gen 1:1—2:4



Did You Know?

Literary Genres

Some Christians believe that God actually created the world in seven twenty-four-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written not as a science article but as a series of symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that convey great moral and spiritual truths. We should not try to come to any scientific conclusions about the creation of the world from reading these stories.

Mythic stories are one literary type, or genre. You just have to look in a newspaper to see examples of different literary genres: news stories, advice columns, editorials, and comics. Each genre has different rules for interpreting its meaning. The Bible also contains many types of literary genres, including hero stories, poetry, laws, legends, fictional satire, debates, and letters. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre—otherwise, you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn’t intend.

▶ Gen 1:1—2:4



Catholic Social Teaching

Coworkers with God

GEN

In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, we read the wonderful story of God's creation of the universe. With each new day, God creates the light and darkness, the earth and sea, the plants and animals, and ultimately humankind. On the seventh day, God observes the amazing creation and we read, "God saw everything, . . . and it was very good" (Gen 1:31).

After God creates the man and woman, he commands them to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28). In other words, human beings are to cooperate with God in the completion and care of creation. With God's grace, we participate in laying the foundation for God's reign on earth.

Catholic social teaching tells

us that as coworkers with God in caring for and sustaining the world, we have a responsibility to protect both the dignity of the human person as well as the planet. Amazing breakthroughs are happening in our world all the time, and yet, as Christians, we are asked to consider whether such developments are in keeping with the teachings of our Church. For example, we now have the ability to clone animals and genetically alter agricultural products, but will these practices sustain our world or ultimately destroy it? Do these practices really revere and value human life and the created order?

God has given us the amazing gift of intellectual inquiry, which can lead to wonderful advance-

ments for our world, but we must always ask ourselves how we might help promote ethical approaches to research so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of creation and thrive in the universe.

- As a coworker with God, how do I sustain and care for God's creation?
- How might I use my gifts of knowledge and education to really improve the world and help bring about God's reign on earth?

▶ Genesis, chapters 1–2 *Caring for God's Creation*



Another Account of the Creation

In the day that the LORD^a God made the earth and the heavens,⁵ when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground;⁶ but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,^b and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; ¹² and the gold of

that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." ¹⁹ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature,

^a Heb YHWH, as in other places where "LORD" is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3:14–15 with notes). ^b Or formed a man (Heb *adam*) of dust from the ground (Heb *adamah*)



Cultural Connection

God Is Our Creator

According to Genesis, chapters 1–2, God created the universe and is the source of order in all creation. Creation is good, and its goodness is reflected in the harmony, peace, and love between the Creator and his creatures, and among the creatures themselves. In Hispanic theological traditions, this ideal relationship—symbolized by the way God and Adam and Eve relate in the Garden of Eden—is considered the foundation in which salvation history is rooted.

- How are your relationships with God, your friends, your family, and nature characterized by harmony, peace, and love?
- Reflect on how you can improve

some of your strained relationships, and ask God's help to do it.

Human beings are created in God's image and likeness and share God's attributes: freedom, love, knowledge, and the ability to create. With these gifts comes the responsibility of caring for all creation.

- Give thanks and praise to God for creation, especially for your own life and the lives of the people around you.
- Think of how you, your family, and your community can take better care of all creation. Pray that you fully develop your capacity to love, to know the truth, and to use your freedom wisely.

God established a covenant with us at the moment of our creation, and we keep this covenant by freely placing ourselves in God's hands and being responsive to God's invitation to live in communion with God and people.

- How do you use your freedom to respond to God's invitation?
- Think about the aspects of your life for which you most need God's wisdom to live in harmony and love. Put yourself in God's hands, and let God help and direct you.

► **Genesis, chapters 1–2**



that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man^a there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman,^b for out of Man^c this one was taken.”

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

The First Sin and Its Punishment

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said,

‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^d knowing good and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said,

a Or for Adam b Heb ishshah c Heb ish d Or gods

"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent,
 "Because you have done this,
 cursed are you among all animals
 and among all wild creatures;
 upon your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and hers;
 he will strike your head,
 and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶To the woman he said,
 "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
 in pain you shall bring forth children,
 yet your desire shall be for your husband,
 and he shall rule over you."

¹⁷And to the man^a he said,
 "Because you have listened to the voice of your
 wife,
 and have eaten of the tree
 about which I commanded you,
 'You shall not eat of it,'

cursed is the ground because of you;
 in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your
 life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
 and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face
 you shall eat bread
 until you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 you are dust,
 and to dust you shall return."

²⁰ The man named his wife Eve,^b because she
 was the mother of all living. ²¹And the LORD God
 made garments of skins for the man^c and for his
 wife, and clothed them.

²² Then the LORD God said, "See, the man has
 become like one of us, knowing good and evil;

^a Or to Adam ^b In Heb Eve resembles the word for living

^c Or for Adam

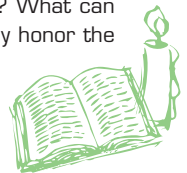
Pray It!

The Sabbath

Even God needed to take a rest. The writer of Genesis makes this point to remind readers to set aside a day for rest and prayer, which Jewish people call the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is an act of trust in God. It means we believe that the world will not fall apart if we stop our activity. The world is in God's hands. We can hear this truth echoed in Jesus' words:

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you. (Lk 12:27–28)

Traditionally, Christians rest and pray on Sunday because it is the day on which Jesus was resurrected. In our culture today, it seems that many people are losing this practice. What could we gain if we recommitted ourselves to a day of rest, celebration, and prayer? What can you do personally to more fully honor the concept of Sabbath rest?



► Gen 2:1–3

Live It!

In God's Image

God does not make mistakes; people do. Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage, even to change their physical appearance in order to conform to the latest fad or fit the dominant cultural image of beauty. We must remember that physical features are not accidents. God planned for them—we are all made in God's image, inside and out.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. This includes a love for dark skin or light skin, straight hair or curly hair, wide nose or pug nose, and all the variations in between. Whatever our appearance, we are all blessed by God.

► Gen 1:26–27





Original Sin

Before the Fall, Adam and Eve had it all. God gave them freedom and established a close friendship with them. They could simply walk about the garden tending to it alongside of God. They lived in perfect harmony with each other and all of creation without fear, suffering, or death. Yet, Adam and Eve wanted more. By believing the serpent's lie, Adam and Eve sought to make themselves equal to God. They distrusted God's goodness, directly disobeyed God, and abused the freedom God had given them. The results were tragic. Adam and Eve's friendship with God turned into fear as they hid in the garden. After being expelled from the garden, tension and strife entered Adam and Eve's once harmonious relationship. The creation they once helped tend with God became hazardous and difficult to manage. Ultimately, through their sin, death became a reality for Adam and Eve. Though this account in chapter three of Genesis uses figurative language, it points to the reality that all of humanity has been affected by the sin our first parents freely chose to commit.

This original sin and its consequences have been handed down to every generation throughout all of history, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary. Although we are not personally responsible for it, our nature also has been wounded by this sin. As a result, we do not have the original holiness and justice God intended for us, but are inclined to sin and subject to death. Fortunately, Jesus Christ, unlike Adam and Eve, came in total obedience to the will of God. As a result, the sin brought into the world by Adam and Eve has been overcome by the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Read Romans 5:12–21 to learn more about the relationship between Adam and Jesus.) Through the grace of the sacrament of Baptism, we are freed from original sin and turned back toward God. And the graces we receive through Christ will surpass those that Adam and Eve ever knew before the Fall!

► Gen 3:1–24

Catechism, nos. 369–421





Praying with the Bible


“My dear young friends, I urge you to become familiar with the Bible, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow.”

(Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the Youth of the World on the Occasion of the 21st World Youth Day)

The Bible is one of the greatest sources of inspiration we can tap into.

When we pray with the Bible, God can deeply touch and change our lives. The more we are willing to pray with the Scriptures, the more we can enter into the profound mystery of God’s relationship with all of humanity. God’s word is the compass that leads us more deeply into the immense heart of God. This is why the Church proclaims the Scriptures every time we worship together and why all are encouraged to use the Bible in our private prayer.

The pages of this insert teach specific techniques for praying with the Bible. Look these over and think about which suggestions might work for you.



By praying with the Scriptures, we discover that God’s story is our story. God’s life is intimately connected with our lives. The unfinished part of the story is our response to God’s love for us. Each of us has a part in the great story of God’s salvation of all humanity.

Tips for Praying with the Bible

For our spiritual journey, our earthly pilgrimage, God has provided us with a guide who knows of the human experience from the inside out. God the Father has given us Jesus the Son as the Way, the way to the New Jerusalem—one of the biblical descriptions of heaven.

Jesus shows us the importance of prayer for our journey. Through prayer Jesus clearly understood the will of his Father. Through prayer Jesus gained and maintained his burning desire to do the will of God. We know from the Gospels that the Hebrew Scriptures were an important part of Jesus' prayer life. The Bible was a compass that helped point Jesus to his Father. God wishes the Bible to be the same for us. So here are some tips for using the Bible in your prayer:

Tip 1: Be Creative in Making Time for Prayer

Your life is busy. Sometimes finding even fifteen minutes for prayer seems impossible, but it can be done. Allow your daily routine to call you to prayer. Mark a favorite psalm in your Bible and pray it when you get up in the morning. When you head off for school, say a short verse like "Prosper the work of our hands" (Ps 90:17, see "Memorizing Bible Passages" section). Before going to bed, spend a few minutes using lectio divina (see next section) to listen to God before going to sleep.

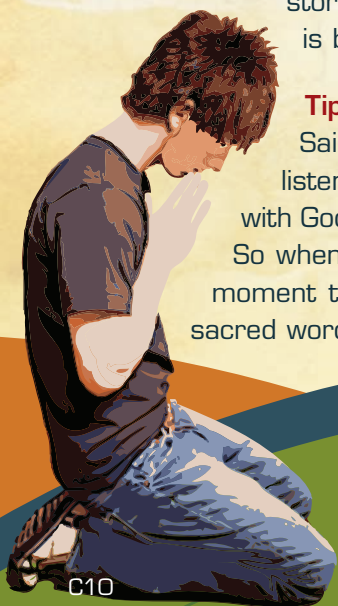
Tip 2: Engage Your Imagination

When praying with the Bible, use your imagination to let the Bible stories come alive in a personal way. Put yourself in the Bible story, and ask, "What do I see? What do I smell? What do I hear?" Pretend you are one of the people in the story, and ask, "How do I feel about what is happening or what is being said?"

Tip 3: Listen

Saint Ambrose once said, "We speak to [God] when we pray; we listen to him when we read the [Scriptures]." Prayer is a dialogue with God, and Scripture is one of the primary ways God speaks to us. So when you read the Bible, it is always a good idea to take a quiet moment to "listen." What might God be saying to you through these sacred words?

“What might God
be saying to YOU
through these sacred words?”



Lectio Divina

Lectio divina is a very ancient art for praying with the Bible. It is a prayer technique for reading the Bible slowly and contemplatively, allowing God's word to shed insights on your life. It cultivates the ability to listen deeply, to hear the word of God with the ear of your heart. Lectio divina was practiced in the early Christian monasteries of the third and fourth centuries. In the sixth century, it was written into the Rule of Saint Benedict as a requirement for the spiritual life of monks.

The Movements of Lectio Divina

In traditional lectio divina, there are five movements. These movements lead you from hearing the word of God to applying God's word to your everyday life.

Step 1: Lectio (lex-ee-oh). This step is the reading of and listening to the word of God. This is a reverential listening, listening in a spirit of silence and awe because it is the sacred word of God. In this step, listen for a word or phrase from the Scripture passage that is God's word for you today.

Step 2: Meditatio (med-it-tots-ee-oh). This step is meditation on the Scripture passage. Allow the word of God to interact with your thoughts, your hopes, your memories, and your desires. Allow the Scriptures to touch you and affect you at your deepest level of being.

Step 3: Oratio (or-ot-see-oh). This step is responding to God with conscious prayer. It is both a dialogue with God and an offering of a part of yourself to God. In this prayer, open your real self to be touched and changed by the word of God.

Step 4: Contemplatio (con-tem-plot-see-oh). This step is contemplation. In silence, rest in the unconditional love of God.

Step 5: Actio (ax-ee-oh) (also known as operatio). In this step, ask yourself:

- What does the word of God invite me to do?
- What does this passage of Scripture call me to do or undo, or to be?

How to Pray Using Lectio Divina

The following steps are a guide to praying with the Bible using lectio divina. You can use this method with any passage of Scripture, but it works best when the passage isn't too long. For example, you can use lectio divina with the next Sunday's Gospel reading.

Step 1: Lectio

Read the Scripture passage. Try reading it out loud. Try reading it several times. Let the words sink in deeply. Open your mind and heart to the meaning of the words.

Step 2: Meditatio

Reflect on the Scripture passage. Ask yourself questions such as the following:

- What does this passage say to me?
- Who am I in this passage?
- What do I see? What do I hear?
- What do I think?
- Which character do I most relate to?
- What do I most need to learn from this?

Try taking notes on your answers to the questions. Try journaling about the insights you gain through reflection.

Step 3: Oratio

Pray with the passage of Scripture you are reflecting on. What does the word invite you to pray about? Let the following questions guide you:

- What do I want to communicate to God?
- What am I longing for in my relationship with God?
- What do I desire in my prayer life?
- What secrets of my heart are ready to be expressed? Is there joy? grief? fear? gratitude?

Express your inner thoughts to God in prayer.

Step 4: Contemplatio

Simply let yourself rest in the presence of God. Let go of all distracting thoughts. Settle into the tenderness of God's love.

Step 5: Actio

Answer the following questions with utter honesty:

- How is God challenging me?
- Is there a good thing God is calling me to do?
- Is there a harmful thing God wants me to stop doing?
- What is the next step I need to take?

Decide on a course of action (large or small). Commit to following through with your plan.

Memorizing Bible Passages

Saint Augustine provides us with an image for short, effective prayers that are based on Scripture. He describes the prayers of monks in Egyptian monasteries of the third century AD. The monks' prayers were short and to the point, and the monks continuously repeated them, as if trying to bombard God with prayer. We too can pray this way by memorizing short passages of Scripture and repeating them regularly.

To do this, find short passages of Scripture that you can memorize and pray when situations in your life call them forth. In other words, let your daily life trigger your prayer. Here are some examples of this kind of prayer:

- **"My Lord and my God"** (Jn 20:28) could be a prayer whenever you walk by a cross or crucifix.
- **"Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, / and prosper for us the work of our hands"** (Ps 90:17) could be a prayer before a test.
- **"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"** (Lk 23:46) could be a prayer before you go to sleep.
- **"How great are your works, O LORD!"** (Ps 92:5) could be a prayer whenever you are outdoors with God's creation.
- **"Create in me a clean heart, O God"** (Ps 51:10) could be a morning prayer as you set out on a new day.

You can create your own daily Scripture prayers. As you read and reflect on the Scriptures, write down short phrases that appeal to you. Then ask yourself, "What things in my everyday life do these phrases connect with?" Then when you experience these things, they will trigger your memory and you can pray the Scripture phrase.

A rich source for such prayers is the Book of Psalms. Each week at Mass, a psalm is used as a response between the first and second readings. Listen carefully to the refrain and create a short prayer out of it. Think of how this prayer connects to ordinary tasks in your life. Then each time one of these tasks occurs, say your psalm prayer.

**” Create in me
a clean heart, O God ”**

— Ps 51:10

Praying with the Psalms

The Psalms are Israel's religious poetry and song. They express the people's very real and concrete experiences of God. The Psalms are filled with the same wide range of feelings and moods that we experience in our lives today. The people who wrote the Psalms poured out their hearts to God in words of joy and sorrow, regret and celebration, earnest pleading and praise. These are the prayers of people who struggled to live righteous lives.

There are many different kinds of psalms. There are psalms of lament, which express the anguish and sorrow experienced in illness, death, and personal loss. There are psalms of thanksgiving and rejoicing, which recognize God's hand when the people are rescued from evil or wickedness. There are psalms of praise to a majestic God, witnessed in all of creation.

The Book of Psalms serves as a common book of prayer for Jews and Christians. As Catholics we use psalms at Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours, and many other times when we gather for prayer. Because they address feelings and experiences common to all, they speak to us today just as strongly as they did to the people who first used them thousands of years ago.

Saint Athanasius advised us to hear the Psalms as being addressed to us, as believers in the present. So read Psalms slowly and reverently, savoring each word as if God is saying it for the first time. You will gain deeper insights if you read the Psalms in this way.

When you read the Psalms, look for their rhythm and repetition. Just as modern music and poetry use rhythm and repetition to emphasize certain things, so the Psalms use rhythm and repetition to emphasize their authors' keen insights into our relationship with God. Perhaps you will share the experience of Saint Ambrose, who once said, "When I am reading divine Scripture God walks again in the earthly Paradise."



“ When I am reading
divine Scripture God walks
again in the earthly Paradise. ”

Psalm Theme Index

The Psalms are a wonderful place to turn when you are seeking ways to express your feelings in prayer. This index covers a range of emotions and moods to help you pray the Psalms in all of life's situations.

Ambiguity: Psalm 97:7–12

Anger: Psalms 9:1–6, 25:19–22, 35:1–10, 37:8–17

Anxiety: Psalms 69:1–8, 88:1–7, 94:16–23, 102:3–11

Betrayal: Psalms 41:4–13, 55:12–23, 16–23, 109:1–5

Bullying: Psalm 70

Compassion of God: Psalms 102:12–17, 113, 145:13–21, 146:5–10

Confession of sin: Psalms 38:12–22, 51:3–6, 119:65–72, 143:1–6

Death: Psalms 6:1–10; 18:1–6; 39:1–6; 49:10–20; 88:13–18; 102:23–28; 116:1–4, 12–19; 118:10–17

Despair: Psalms 6:1–5; 22:1–5, 14–21; 38:1–11; 40:11–17; 55:1–11; 119:25–32; 130:1–4

Envy: Psalm 73:1–3

Face of God: Psalms 27:7–14, 80:1–7, 119:129–136

Faith: Psalms 25:1–5, 116:1–10, 146:1–7

Fear of God: Psalm 76:7–12

Folly: Psalms 14, 53:1–3, 94:11

Forgiveness: Psalms 25:1–18, 32:1–5, 51:7–9, 85:1–3, 103:6–13

Generosity: Psalm 112:6–10

Gossip: Psalms 7:6–17, 50:16–23, 141:1–4

Guilt: Psalms 4:1–3, 25:11–18, 51:1–2, 79:8–10

Holiness: Psalm 77:11–15; 93; 99:1–5, 6–9

Hope: Psalms 9:13–20, 33:14–22, 39:7–8, 43:1–5, 62:1–8, 65:1–8, 71:3–14, 91:1–12, 119:41–45, 146:1–7

Hypocrisy: Psalm 36:1–6

Joy: Psalms 16:1–11, 35:27–28, 43:1–5, 67:1–7, 71:20–24, 98:1–9, 126:1–6, 149:1–5

Judgment: Psalms 50:1–6, 73:1–20, 111:6–10

Justice: Psalms 9:7–10, 18:31–42, 33:1–5, 37:18–28

Law: Psalms 19:7–10, 37:28–34, 119:89–96

Light: Psalms 36:7–12, 43, 119:105

Love: Psalms 17:6–9, 18:1–3, 25:6–10, 26:1–3, 36:5–10, 63:1–4, 98:1–6, 108:1–6, 136:1–26

Nationalism and religion: Psalms 72:1–11, 132:11–18

Poverty: Psalms 9:11–20, 22:21–26, 34:1–10, 72:12–14, 107:39–43, 146:5–10, 147:1–6

(Psalm Theme Index continued)

Pride: Psalms 20:6–9; 52; 94:1–11;
119:97–104, 161–168

Resurrection: Psalms 16:9–11, 27:13–
14, 88:8–12

Righteousness: Psalms 5:8–12, 7:6–17,
11:1–5, 15, 31:1–8, 119:137–144

Self-pity: Psalms 69:22–29, 119:25–32

Sickness: Psalms 6:6–10, 38:1–11,
39:7–10, 107:17–22

Sin: Psalms 32:1–5, 38:12–22, 51:1–6,
85:1–3, 130:1–8

Steadfast love of God: Psalms 17:1–7,
86:14–17, 103:14–22, 117, 136:23–26

Success: Psalm 18:43–50

Thanksgiving: Psalms 30:4–12, 75:1–3,
92:1–9, 100:1–5, 107:1–9, 118:19–29,
147:1–11

Truth: Psalms 43, 86:8–13

Values: Psalms 85:10–13, 101

Waiting: Psalms 13, 37:28–34, 39:7–10,
119:122–128, 130:5–8

Wisdom of God: Psalms 51:6, 104:24



“ God’s word is the compass
that leads us more deeply into
the immense heart of God. ”

In your history classes in school, you probably studied stories about the heroic men and women who helped create the United States: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, and Harry S. Truman to name a few. The stories about these famous people are an important part of our national identity. The Acts of the Apostles is a book containing stories like these. It continues the account of salvation history by telling about the beginnings of the Christian movement, primarily through stories about two of its most important missionaries, Peter and Paul.

At a Glance

- **1:1—6:7.** the new Pentecost, the mission in Jerusalem
- **6:8—9:43.** the martyrdom of Stephen, the spread of the mission outside Jerusalem, Paul's conversion
- **10:1—15:35.** continuing the spread of the mission to the Gentiles, the Council of Jerusalem
- **15:36—28:31.** Paul's mission to the ends of the earth

Quick Facts

Inspired Author: often identified as Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke

Date Written: approximately AD 80

Audience: Gentile (Greek) Christians represented by Theophilus (Acts 1:1)

In Depth

The Acts of the Apostles—sometimes simply called Acts—was written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke. So Acts is really the second volume of a two-volume history. Like the Gospels, it is not a history in the sense of an eyewitness account of the beginnings of Christianity; rather, it is an interpretation of this history, explaining how Christianity spread outside of Judaism to the Gentile world under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Lots of great stories are in the Acts of the Apostles. We read about the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (see 2:1–41), Paul's conversion to the Christian way (see 9:1–19), and some miraculous escapes from prisons and riots (see 12:6–11, 16:16–40). We learn about the first church council in Jerusalem, where a decision was made to accept Gentiles (non-Jews) as Christians without requiring that they also become practicing Jews (see 15:1–35). Acts continuously emphasizes how faith in Christ is shared and supported through Christian community.

The Acts of the Apostles gives us information about how Christians lived in the years after Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension. We learn how the believers celebrated the Eucharist together and shared their belongings (see 2:42–47). We learn how the Gospel message was preached, first to Jews in the synagogues and later to Gentiles. We learn how traveling missionaries like Paul went on long journeys and suffered many hardships to form new groups of believers across the Roman Empire. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church miraculously went from a small group of disciples in Jerusalem to a movement spreading across the entire Roman Empire, even to Rome itself.

Acts

2:3

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying^a with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with^b the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The Ascension of Jesus

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into

heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of^c James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers^d (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, ¹⁶"Friends,^e the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— ¹⁷for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong,^f he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰"For it is written in the book of Psalms,

a Or eating b Or by c Or the brother of d Gk brothers
e Gk Men, brothers f Or swelling up

'Let his homestead become desolate,
and let there be no one to live in it';
and

'Let another take his position of overseer.'
21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." 23 So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place^a in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

Peter Addresses the Crowd

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine

Pray It!

Send Us Your Spirit

After Jesus was taken up to heaven, the Apostles, Mary, and other women and men gathered to pray together. They knew they needed the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, to begin the difficult task of giving witness to the Reign of God. Today, we continue to pray:

Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our strengths and weaknesses. Transform us into messengers of your Gospel for those who yearn for you.

Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our history, with its beautiful and painful experiences. Help us to be untiring promoters of a society based on love, justice, and peace.

Jesus, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. You know our longing for love and community. Make us instruments of unity and service, especially for those who are weak and those who are lonely. Amen.



▶ Acts 1:1–11

o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

- 17 'In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall
prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.
19 And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
20 The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and
glorious day.
21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the
Lord shall be saved.'

^a Other ancient authorities read *the share*



Confirmation

After Jesus' Ascension, the Apostles eagerly awaited the promised arrival of the Holy Spirit. What an arrival it was! The loud noise and tongues of fire were only the beginning of the amazing work the Holy Spirit initiated that day. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles suddenly had abilities and courage they never had before. The Holy Spirit began to guide and empower each of them, leading the Apostles to proclaim Christ's Resurrection to all who had ears to hear.

Following Pentecost, the Apostles began to baptize and lay hands on each new convert so that they too could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands and the prayer for the Holy Spirit was a part of one's initiation into the Church and continues to be celebrated in the sacrament of Confirmation today. The Church teaches that through the sacrament of Confirmation, one is given a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and is thereby given special strength (see "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit," near Isa 11:1-2) to spread the Gospel.

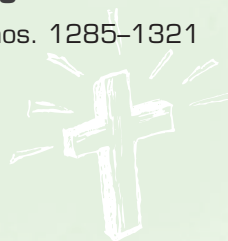
Confirmation is ordinarily administered by a bishop as a sign of the

connection between the Apostles' experience of receiving the Holy Spirit and the recipient's initiation into the Church. During the rite, the bishop extends his hands over the candidates and prays for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then each candidate is presented to the bishop by her or his sponsor, who is a representative from the Catholic community. The bishop uses chrism (sacred oil) and traces the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead with the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The candidate responds "Amen" (*Rite of Confirmation*, no. 27). Then the bishop and candidate exchange an offering of Christ's peace to each other. The rite ends with a final blessing, asking God to keep the Spirit active in the hearts of all believers so they will never be ashamed to proclaim Christ to the world.

Together the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are a person's initiation into the Church.

▶ Acts 2:1-13

Catechism, nos. 1285-1321



22 “You that are Israelites,^a listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth,^b a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—²³this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from death,^c because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵For David says concerning him,

‘I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;

²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

moreover my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹ “Fellow Israelites,^d I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Foreseeing this, David^e spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah,^f saying,

‘He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption.’

³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. ³³Being therefore exalted at^g the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,

³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.”’

³⁶Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah,^h this Jesus whom you crucified.”

The First Converts

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers,^d what should we do?” ³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Life among the Believers

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceedsⁱ to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home^j and ate their food with glad and generous^k hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o’clock in the afternoon. ²And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. ³When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. ⁴Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, “Look at us.” ⁵And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶But Peter said, “I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,^b stand up and walk.” ⁷And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹All the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks in Solomon’s Portico

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called

a Gk Men, Israelites b Gk the Nazorean c Gk the pains of death d Gk Men, brothers e Gk he f Or the Christ g Or by h Or Christ i Gk them j Or from house to house k Or sincere



Pentecost

Another promise kept. On Pentecost, fifty days after his Resurrection, Jesus fulfilled his promise to his disciples by sending the Holy Spirit, or the Advocate (see Jn 14:26). Before returning to his father, Jesus told his followers that the Holy Spirit would guide them in truth and give them power from heaven. The dramatic descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost brought about more than the disciples could have ever imagined. The Spirit enabled them to speak in languages that everyone could understand and transformed their fears so they were able to proclaim God's salvation in Jesus Christ with courage, confidence, and zeal. And that was just on day one!

The descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost also brought about several interesting events in the history of the world. First, Pentecost marks the day the Trinity was made fully known. Second, it marks the day the Reign of God was first made available to all who believed in Jesus Christ. And finally, in a sense, the world entered into what is called the time of the Church or final days when God's Reign is, in part, here on earth.

By ushering in the time of the Church, Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Christian Church. The Catholic Church traditionally celebrates the feast of Pentecost on the second Sun-

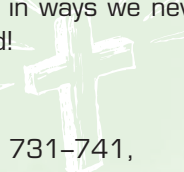
day after Ascension Thursday, which is approximately fifty days after Easter (the term *pente* means "fifty"). It continues to be an important feast to celebrate the unity of all Christians.

Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been guiding the Church in carrying out its mission to lead people to salvation through Jesus Christ for over two thousand years. At Mass it is the Holy Spirit who prepares those gathered to receive Christ, transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and transforms the community in the process. It is through the prompting of the Holy Spirit that the Church and its members are formed in a life of prayer. The Holy Spirit also guides the Church so that it can teach about faith and morals without error.

The Holy Spirit that worked wonders through the disciples and continues to guide the Church today can also work wonders through each of us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we too can find the courage, confidence, and zeal to boldly share our faith and follow God's will. All we need to do is ask, knowing that Jesus always keeps his promises, often in ways we never could have dreamed!

► **Acts 2:1–13**

Catechism, nos. 731–741,
1108–1112





Catholic Social Teaching

Christian Community

In the famous passage of Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47, the ideal Christian community is portrayed as open to the Holy Spirit. The people shared everything in common, including prayer, meals, and possessions. No one went in need. Sound impossible?

One of the principles of Catholic social teaching, *Call to Family, Community, and Participation*, invites us to be mindful of the fact that families are at the heart of the community. Programs and policies of our society should demonstrate support and respect for the family. The U.S. bishops call us to be concerned for those who are at risk and vulnerable, not

only in our own country but also in the global community. They speak about the importance of supporting policies that address the needs of families, specifically the rights of children, who often are the most vulnerable, to adequate food, shelter, healthcare, quality education, and a safe environment in which to flourish.

Our faith teaches us to respect the dignity of the human person. This passage from Acts of the Apostles reminds us that the early Christian community tried very hard to live as a community that cared for one another and made sure that everyone felt respected and had their basic needs met.

We are also called to be participants in helping to promote this reality in the world today. It is not always easy, but we can find ways to do what we can to share in that vision.

- What do you think society would be like today if everyone lived as the early Christian community tried to live?

▶ Acts 2:42–47

Call to Family, Community, and Participation



Solomon's Portico, utterly astonished. ¹²When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites,^a why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant^b Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus^c has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

¹⁷ "And now, friends,^d I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah^e would suffer. ¹⁹Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, ²⁰so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah^f appointed for you, that is, Jesus, ²¹who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets.

²²Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people^d a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. ²³And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people."²⁴And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days. ²⁵You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, "And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed."²⁶When God raised up his servant,^b he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Peter and John before the Council

4 While Peter and John^s were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, ²much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead. ³So they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴But many of those who heard

a Gk Men, Israelites b Or child c Gk him d Gk brothers
e Or his Christ f Or the Christ g Gk While they

the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand.

5 The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John,^a and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷When they had made the prisoners^b stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,^c whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹This Jesus^d is

'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.'^e

¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

Live It!

Share Christ

As is true in our own cities today, it was not uncommon to encounter beggars on the streets in Jerusalem during the first century. And probably, like today, some people averted their eyes and walked by while others stopped to offer a few coins.

When Peter and John encounter a beggar in Acts of the Apostles 3:3, they don't have a whole lot of money to share with him, but they stop just the same. Looking him in the eye, Peter offers the lame man the one thing of value he does have: the powerful gift of healing found in the name of Jesus Christ.

You may not have the gift of healing or lots of extra money to give to those in need. But Peter and John remind us that knowing Jesus is the greatest treasure one can acquire in life, and that this treasure has been given to us freely. Don't forget to share it with others!

▶ Acts 3:1-10



13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. ¹⁴When they saw the man who had been cured standing

a Other ancient authorities read *Jonathan* b *Gk them* c *Gk the Nazorean* d *Gk This* e *Or keystone*

Pray It!

I Believe! The Apostles' Creed

In Acts of the Apostles 4:5-12, Peter stands up before the Jewish rulers and elders of the Temple and boldly proclaims his faith in Jesus as healer and Messiah. Every Sunday at Mass, Catholic Christians also profess their faith when they pray the Nicene Creed. (A creed is a type of prayer that expresses faith beliefs.) Did you know there is also a shorter creed called the Apostles' Creed? The Apostles' Creed is based on the teachings and beliefs of the earliest Christians.

Take a moment to pray the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under 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 catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Then reflect or journal on the following questions:

- Which statements of the creed do you have questions about?
- How hard would it be for you to express your faith beliefs to people who don't believe in Jesus?
- To what actions does a faith like this call us?



▶ Acts 4:5-12

beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. ¹⁶They said, "What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." ¹⁸So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; ²⁰for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." ²¹After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened. ²²For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

The Believers Pray for Boldness

²³ After they were released, they went to their friends^a and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, ²⁵it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant:^b

Why did the Gentiles rage,

and the peoples imagine vain things?

²⁶ The kings of the earth took their stand,

and the rulers have gathered together

against the Lord and against his Messiah.^c

²⁷For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant^b Jesus, whom you anointed, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants^d to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant^b Jesus."

³¹When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³With



Did You Know?

Stewardship

Acts of the Apostles 4:32–37 describes the value of stewardship. Stewardship involves sharing the gifts of time, talents, and treasure that God has placed in your care (see "Stewardship: Making a Contribution," near Lk 21:1–4). It is key to the life of any Christian community.

Sharing our treasure and giving money are the most obvious ways of sharing. Consider the disciple named in the passage, Joseph Barnabas. How did he share? Can you think of things you spend money on—a CD, new jeans, a movie—and make a commitment to give some of that money to a charitable organization?

But giving money isn't the only way to share with others. Think about your own gifts. What are you good at that you could share with your parish, school, or community? Do not discount even the simplest ability. For example, maybe you are persistent; this talent can help with the success of any project. Or perhaps you love children and can baby-sit for overwhelmed parents.

How are you a good steward of your time, talents, and treasure? Think about it!

▶ Acts 4:32–37

great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). ³⁷He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; ²with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid

a Gk their own b Or child c Or his Christ d Gk slaves

it at the apostles' feet. ³"Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us^a but to God!" ⁵Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. ⁶The young men came and wrapped up his body,^b then carried him out and buried him.

⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her

beside her husband. ¹¹And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.

The Apostles Heal Many

¹² Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, ¹⁵so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. ¹⁶A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

The Apostles Are Persecuted

¹⁷ Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, ¹⁸arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. ¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, ²⁰"Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life." ²¹When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching.

When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²²But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, ²³"We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside." ²⁴Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. ²⁵Then someone arrived and announced, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" ²⁶Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

²⁷ When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, ²⁸saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,^c yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and

Live It!

Pop Quiz

The scene. The disciples, who are spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, are taken before the Jewish council to explain their motives and reasons for this work.

The test. Gamaliel, a wise Jewish leader, talks the rest of the council out of killing the disciples, whose profession of faith in Jesus was considered blasphemy, by using the following reasoning: If the disciples' mission is from God, it will succeed despite anything the council does. But if it is not of God's design, it will fail and Jesus' followers will eventually disappear anyway.

The question. If you were brought before a similar council, would your life's mission pass or fail this test? Would your words and actions in the past week reflect Jesus' attitudes, actions, and mission?

▶ Acts 5:27-39



^a Gk to men ^b Meaning of Gk uncertain ^c Other ancient authorities read Did we not give you strict orders not to teach in this name?

Where Do I Find It?

- ▶ **Events, People,
and Teachings** 1502
- ▶ **Catholic Connections** 1505
- ▶ **Sacrament
Connections** 1506
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Events, People, and Teachings

Old Testament Stories

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

Creation, *Gen, chs 1–2*
original sin and its punishment, *Gen, ch 3*
Cain and Abel, *Gen 4:1–16*
Noah and the Great Flood, *Gen, chs 6–9*
God’s covenant with Abraham, *Gen 17:1–18:15*
God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, *Gen 22:1–19*
Isaac’s blessing of Jacob, *Gen 27:1–29*
Jacob’s dream, *Gen 28:10–22*
Joseph and his brothers, *Gen, 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, *Josh 5:13–6:27*
Gideon and the sign of the fleece, *Judg 6:36–40*
Samson, *Judg, chs 13–16*
Samuel’s birth and calling, *1 Sam, chs 1–3*
David and Goliath, *1 Sam, ch 17*
David and Bathsheba, *2 Sam, ch 11*
Solomon’s wisdom, *1 Kings, ch 3*
Elijah’s triumph over the priests of Baal, *1 Kings 18:20–40*
miracles of Elisha, *2 Kings 4:1–6:23*
end of the Babylonian captivity, *Ezra, ch 1*
battles of Judas Maccabeus, *1 Macc, chs 3–5*
Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones, *Ezek 37:1–14*
Daniel, *Dan, 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 14:32–51; 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 19:16–30*
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*

Study Aids

- ▶ **The Church Year and Sunday Readings** 1522
- ▶ **Glossary** 1529
- ▶ **Maps** 1543
- ▶ **Old and New Testament Figures and Events and Encounters with Jesus** 1551
- ▶ **Biblical History Timeline** 1554
- ▶ **Alphabetical List of Bible Books and Abbreviations** 1558

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 next 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 1524, 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.