

From Abraham to the Exodus

What are the main events in the life of Abraham?

	Genesis reference	New Testament comment
Abram is born	11:26	
Called by God	12:1-3	Hebrews 11:8
Enters into Canaan	12:4-9	Acts 7:2-8
Abram and Lot separate	13:1-18	
Abram rescues Lot	14:1-17	
Abram is blessed by Melchizedek	14:18-24	Hebrews 7:1-10
God's covenant with Abram: his faith is credited to him as righteousness	15:1-21	Romans 4:1-17 Galatians 3:6-25 Hebrews 6:13-20
Abram fathers Ishmael by Hagar	16:1-16	
His name is changed to Abraham; he is circumcised and promised a son by Sarah	17:1-27	Romans 4:18-25 Hebrews 11:11, 12
Abraham pleads for Sodom	18:20-33	
Sodom destroyed, Lot saved	19:1-38	
Isaac is born	21:1-7	
Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away	21:8-21	Galatians 4:21-31
Abraham is challenged to sacrifice Isaac	22:1-19	Hebrews 11:17-19 James 2:20-24
Sarah dies and is buried at Hebron	23:1-20	
Abraham sends for bride for Isaac – Rebekah	24:1-67	
Abraham dies	25:1-11	

What were the ten plagues of Egypt?

Exodus 7–12

Moses warned Pharaoh of ten plagues on the land of Egypt. Since the Egyptian gods were thought to be bound up with the forces of nature, each disaster was an attack on their power.

1. Water to blood *Exodus 7:14-24*
The Nile turned to blood. Possibly red dirt or algae clogged the Nile and killed the fish, making the river the Egyptians regarded as the source of life smell of death. The first six plagues all seem to emerge from the Nile and demonstrate God's power over it.

2. Frogs *Exodus 8:1-15*
Frogs overran the land and, when they died, polluted Egypt.

3. Gnats *Exodus 8:16-19*
A small stinging insect, such as the sand flea, is probably

meant. Egypt's magicians could not repeat this miracle and told Pharaoh it was the work of God.

4. Flies *Exodus 8:20-32*
Swarms, possibly of biting flies, infested Egypt. The diseases they bore may have been the source of the fifth and sixth plagues.

5. Death of cattle *Exodus 9:1-7*
Many believe that the plague that struck the cattle of Egypt was anthrax. The Israelite cattle were immune, showing that God distinguished between His people and their oppressors.

6. Boils *Exodus 9:8-12*
Probably skin anthrax, carried by the bites of the flies, which fed on the rotting frogs.

7. Hail *Exodus 9:13-35*
The storm ruined the barley and flax, but it spared the land of Goshen, occupied by the Israelites.

8. Locusts *Exodus 10:1-20*
Locusts stripped the land of any remaining crops. Following the other plagues that devastated the economy of Egypt, this plague was disastrous.

9. Darkness *Exodus 10:21-29*
The sun, representing the Egyptian god Ka, was darkened for three days. Some suggest this was due to a khamsin, a fierce wind that fills the air with dirt.

10. Death of the firstborn *Exodus 11:1-12:36*
This final plague took the firstborn of every Egyptian household but left the Israelites untouched. This caused such terror that Pharaoh finally urged Moses to lead Israel out of his land to freedom.

God's Anointed

SAUL, DAVID & SOLOMON

King Saul

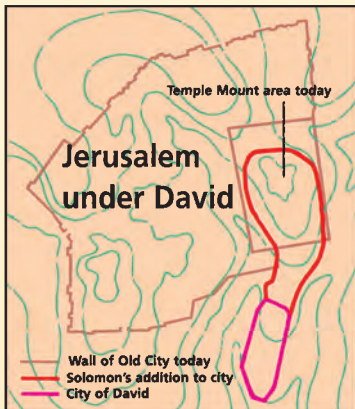
Although God had given His people a land of their own, they turned their backs on God and tried to become like the surrounding nations. The Israelites thought that if, instead of relying on God's rule, they had a king they could see, they would conquer their enemies. King Saul was anointed by Samuel to be the first king of Israel. But he openly disobeyed God and died at the battle of Gilboa (1 Sam 9:1—31:13).

King David

Samuel also anointed David, Jesse's youngest son. God promised that a descendant of David would be a king who reigned forever. David failed many times, but he always loved God and returned to Him (1 Sam 16:1—30:31; 2 Sam 1:1—24:25).

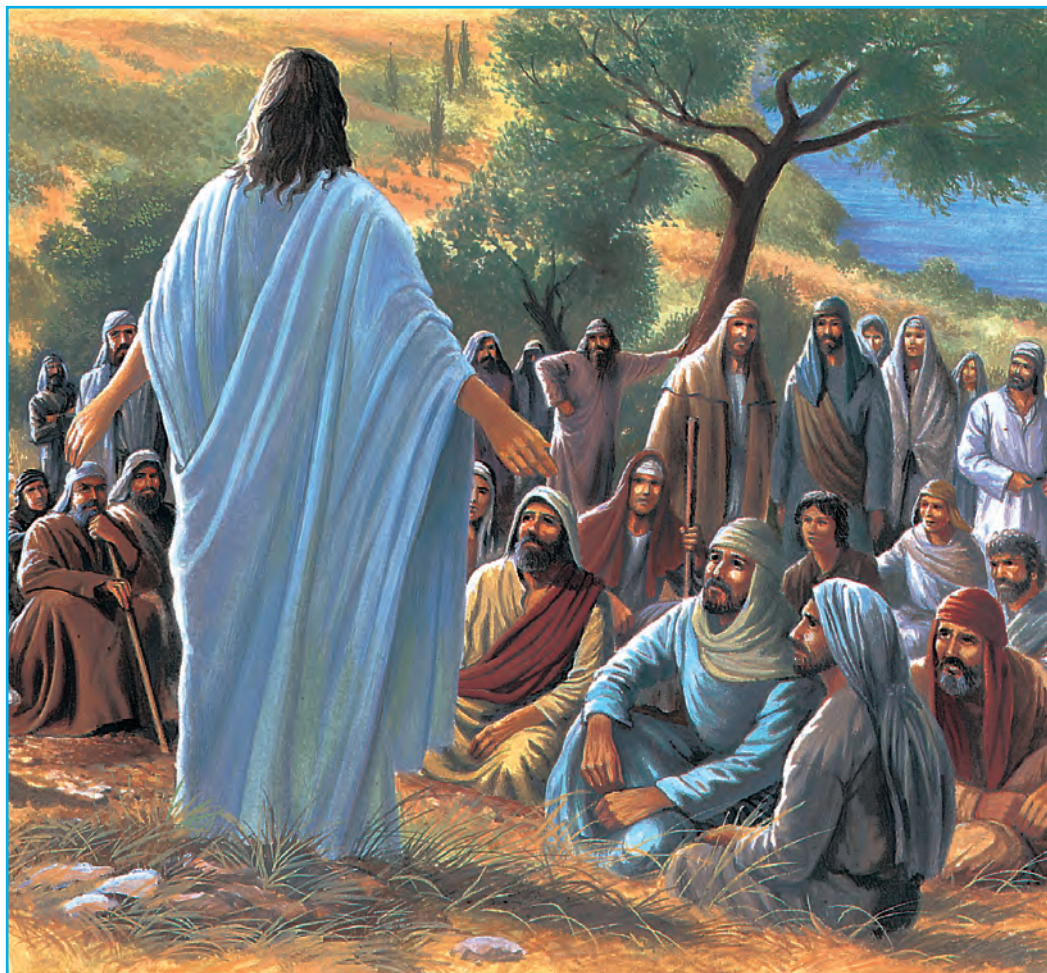
King Solomon

Under David's son Solomon, the kingdom prospered. Solomon became renowned for his wisdom, and during his reign the great Temple was finally built in Jerusalem. Yet Solomon, too, turned away from God and built temples to foreign gods (1 Ki 1:1—11:43).



Israel during the United Kingdom





THE BEATITUDES

Jesus teaches His followers on a hillside (the Mount of Beatitudes) near the Sea of Galilee. This famous teaching is called the Sermon on the Mount (**Mt 5:1-12**).

EPHESUS

Remains of the Basilica of St. John in Ephesus. John likely left Jerusalem and spent his last years in the city of Ephesus (**1 Jn 3:1-3**).



Discovering Your Bible

Some fascinating Bible statistics

	Old Testament	New Testament
Number of books	46	27
Number of chapters	1,074	260
Number of verses	28,098	7,959
Longest book	Psalms	Luke
Shortest book	Obadiah	3 John
Longest chapter	Psalms 119	Matthew 26
Shortest chapter	Psalms 117	Revelation 15

Total number of verses in both Testaments:
36,057

Most mentioned character: David (1,118 times)

Longest word: Mahershalahashbaz (Isaiah 8:1)

N.B. These figures are based on English Bibles and may vary according to the translation.

Bible translation facts

- More than 6,500 languages are spoken in the world.
- Of these, 2,167 languages have some or all of the Bible (approx. 355 complete Bibles, approx. 850 New Testaments).
- About 4,333 languages are still without any part of the Bible.

A Bible reading plan

If you would like to read the Bible systematically and carefully, the following reading order will be helpful. Although this plan does not include every book of the Bible, it will give you a good overview of Scripture if followed regularly.

New Testament

1. Mark
2. John
3. Luke–Acts
4. 1 Thessalonians
5. 1 Corinthians
6. Romans
7. Philemon
8. Philippians
9. Ephesians
10. 2 Timothy
11. 1 Peter
12. 1 John
13. Revelation
(chs. 1–5 and 19:6–22:21)

Old Testament

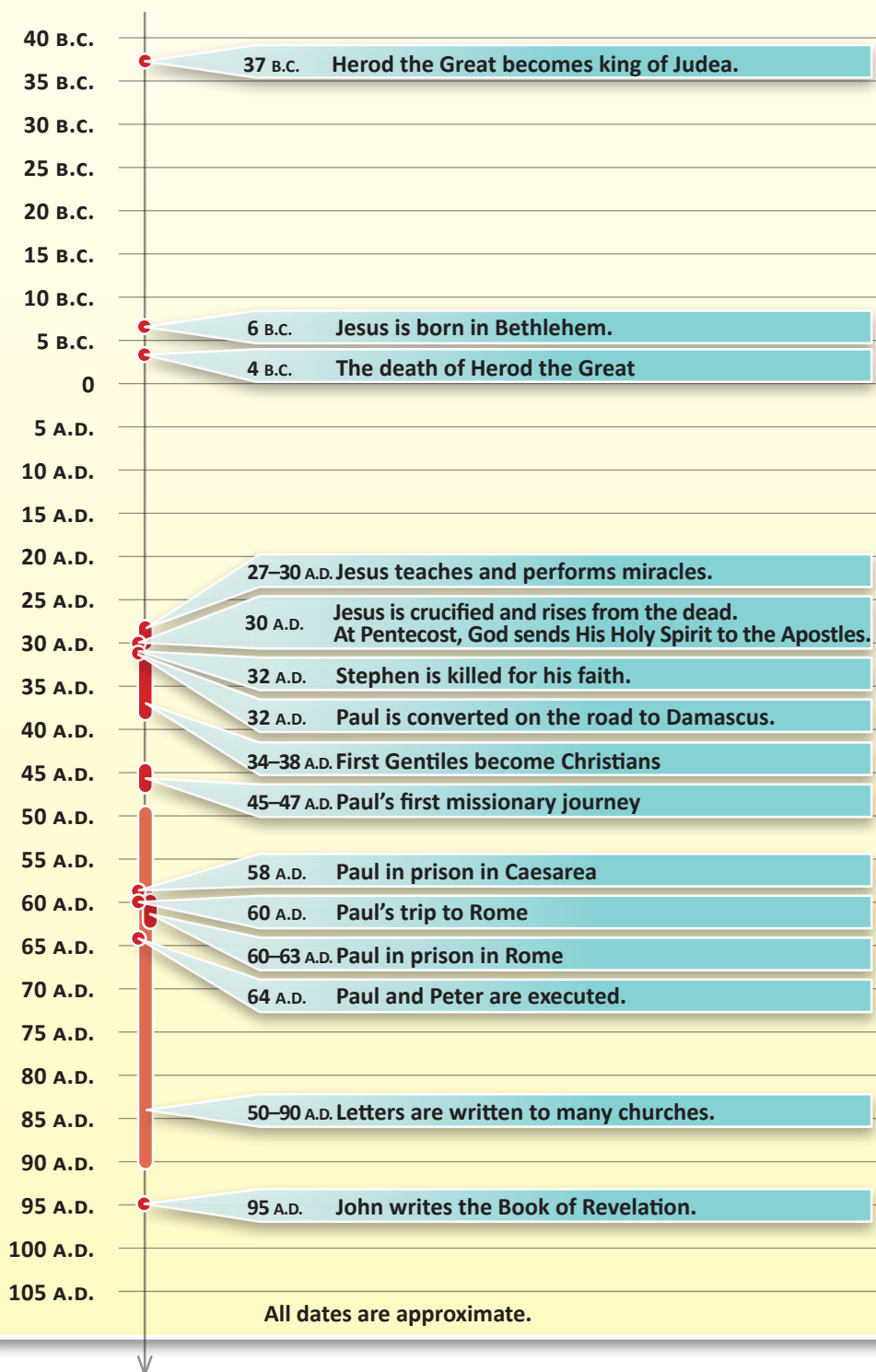
14. Genesis
15. Exodus (chs. 1–24)
16. Numbers (10:11–21:35)
17. Deuteronomy (chs. 1–11)
18. Joshua (chs. 1–12 and 22–24)
19. Judges (sample)
20. 1 and 2 Samuel (sample)
21. 1 and 2 Kings (sample)
22. Nehemiah
23. 1 Maccabees
24. 2 Maccabees
25. Amos
26. Isaiah (chs. 1–12)
27. Jeremiah (chs. 1–25, 30–33)
28. Isaiah (chs. 40–55)
29. Ruth
30. Jonah
31. Tobit
32. Psalms (some examples of the major types)
33. Job (1–14 and 38–42)
34. Proverbs (chs. 1–9)
35. Sirach
36. Wisdom
37. Daniel (chs. 1–6; sample chs. 7–12)

Noah's boat

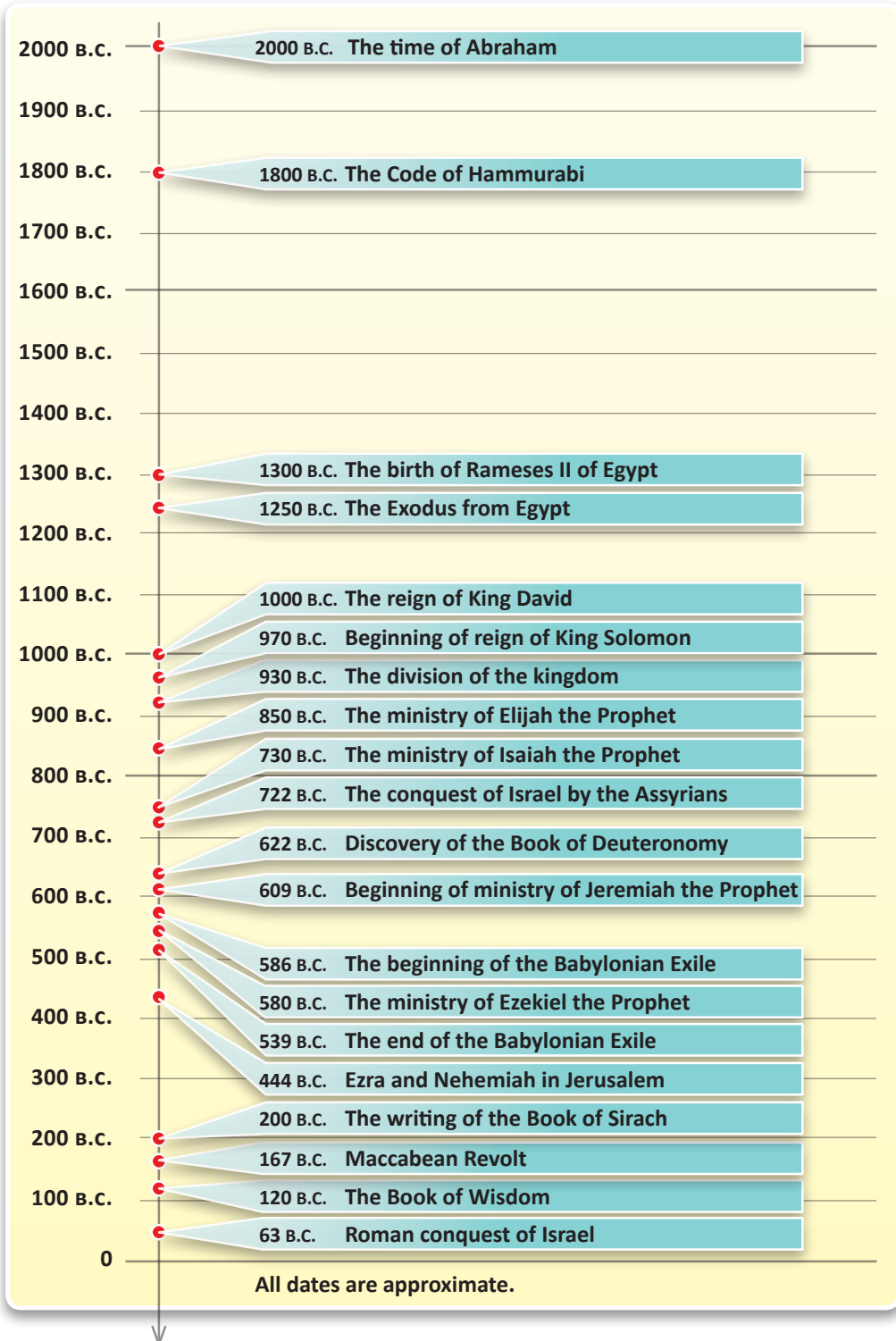
The boat God told Noah to build (145.5 yards x 24.25 yards x 14.65 yards) was big enough to hold 432 double-decker buses.

There was plenty of room for the 35,000 or so animals that were saved from the flood with Noah and his family.

New Testament Timeline



Old Testament Timeline



THE HOLY ROSARY

The Five Glorious Mysteries

*Said on Wednesdays [except during Lent],
and the Sundays from Easter to Advent.*

1. The Resurrection—*Mk 16:6.*
2. The Ascension—*Mk 16:9.*
3. Descent of the Holy Spirit—*Acts 2:4.*
4. Assumption of the B.V.M.—*Gn 3:15.*
5. Crowning of the B.V.M.—*Rv 12:1.*



3. DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
For love of God.



1. THE RESURRECTION
For the virtue of faith.



4. ASSUMPTION OF THE B.V.M.
For devotion to Mary.



2. THE ASCENSION
For the virtue of hope.



5. CROWNING OF THE B.V.M.
For eternal happiness.

The Stations of the Cross

THE Stations of the Cross is a devotion to the Sacred Passion, in which we accompany, in spirit, our Blessed Lord in His sorrowful journey from the house of Pilate to Calvary, and meditate on His sufferings and death.

Before each Station genuflect and say: "We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You; because by Your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world." Then meditate upon the scene before you for a few moments. The short prayers for each station may be helpful.



1. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

O JESUS, You desired to die for me that I may receive the supernatural life, sanctifying grace, and become a child of God. How precious must be that life. Teach me to appreciate it more and help me never to lose it by sin.



2. JESUS BEARS HIS CROSS

O JESUS, You have chosen to die the disgraceful death on the Cross. You have paid a high price for my redemption and the life of grace that was bestowed upon me. May I love You always and bear my crosses for Your sake.



Family Record



The Relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament

How does the Old Testament and the Old Covenant relate to the New Testament and the New Covenant? Some early Christians argued that the Old Testament was obsolete and that its influences upon the New Testament should be discarded. But the mainline Church has argued that the Old Testament was a preparation for the coming of Jesus and the New Testament. The New Covenant does not replace the Old Covenant, it fulfills it. Many texts in the New Testament, in fact, either quote or allude to passages taken from the Old Testament to show how Jesus' mission and especially his suffering, death, and resurrection were foretold by the Old Testament.

At the same time, one must remember that while the revelation of the Old Testament was inspired by the Holy Spirit, it was nevertheless filtered through the cultural expectations of an ancient people. This is why we needed Jesus to come into the world: to reveal clearly who God is and what God wants of us.

Translating the Bible

Throughout the centuries, the Bible has continuously been translated into the vernacular. The Greek Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) and the Vulgate (St. Jerome's translation of the Bible into Latin) are early examples of this effort. Some vernacular translations used these two early translations, the Septuagint and the Vulgate, as their base texts, producing translations of translations. Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, emphasized the importance of translating from the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). Recent archaeological discoveries (e.g., at Ugarit and Ebla) have aided scholars in their effort to understand better ancient texts that are sometimes a bit obscure.

Scripture and Tradition

Sacred Scripture was produced by a believing community. The Holy Spirit acted through Israel and the early Church community to produce authors who wrote down the books we call Sacred Scripture. Yet, the Holy Spirit also works through the Church to reveal God's truth through her interpretation of Sacred Scriptures (a responsibility given to her by the Holy Spirit) and through tradition (another form of God's revelation). This is why we should read Scripture in the context of our Catholic community (lest our individual interpretation not be evaluated in light of the Holy Spirit's guidance through the magisterium of the Church) and why we should not discount beliefs because they are "only tradition" (for God also works through tradition).

Reading Sacred Scripture Today

Given this rich and profound history, how does one begin to read Sacred Scripture today?

First of all, it is always best for a Catholic to read from an approved Catholic translation. While translations produced by other Christian traditions have the same basic text, there are sometimes particular translations of certain phrases which could imply other theological positions. Furthermore, many other Christian translations do not contain all of the books of the Old Testament that we, Catholics, consider to be canonical (i.e., the Greek books).



“Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding in his hand a burning coal. . . . He touched my mouth with it and said: . . . ‘your guilt has been removed’ ” (Isa 6:6-7).

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Faith and Events

Born into the Jerusalem nobility, Isaiah received God's call in the very temple of the Lord, at the end of the reign of Uzziah, that is, around 740 B.C.

His Book has preserved for us a moving account of this call (ch. 6). The prophet then immediately proclaims his message with its strikingly fresh and incisive tone, its noble poetic expression, and its brilliant images.

Isaiah exercised his prophetic ministry for about fifty years. A sad period! He saw the growing threat from the Assyrians, as well as the fall of Samaria and the northern kingdom in 721 B.C. He would go down in history as the man who kept up the hopes of the people during the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. These were the difficult years in which Judah lost its temporary prosperity, and the independence of the nation was diminished day by day.

Amid all these events Isaiah proclaimed what was, for him, a dazzling certainty: the greatness and holiness of God. Even while involved in the feverish labors of human beings, he returned continually to his practical conviction that God alone matters. That is faith! It, and it alone, suffices. Strengthened by this assurance, Isaiah confronted the mighty, since they were primarily responsible for the political and religious disintegration.

This man of faith saw only too clearly that Judah could not find its salvation in alliances that were made and canceled at the whim of circumstance. It was in themselves and in their faith and fidelity that the people had to find the moral strength to face the impending dangers; nothing could be counted on except the Covenant of the Lord when put into practice.

As an ardent patriot, Isaiah believed in the perpetuity of Jerusalem and in the dynastic line established by David. Whatever might happen, the posterity of David and the people could not perish for good. The Covenant remained, and a “remnant” would survive to carry the promise



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

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The Origins of the World and of the People of God

The Book of Genesis is made up of contributions from three sources, the Yahwist, the Elohist, and the Priestly, these contributions being intermingled even within one and the same episode. Despite this, the book has a unity, because the Priestly tradition has given it an organic structure. The story of the origins (chs. 1–11) and the story of the Patriarchs (chs. 12–50) are clearly distinguished.

The work first of all gives an imaginative account of creation and the first sin. Here, elements from ancient tradition are used in sketching a broad picture of the origins; various sections explain how evil, suffering, and death entered the world through the sin of the first man; the promise of salvation makes clear from the outset what the meaning of the entire biblical story will be. The priest who seems to have compiled these pages makes use of increasingly more focused genealogies in order to show the continuity of the creation of Adam and the obscure beginnings of the human race with the beginnings of Israel. Creation thus appears as the first act in the history of the salvation of humankind.

Contemporary advances in the study of the history, laws, and ways of life of the ancient East assure us that the popular stories about the Patriarchs are based on truthful living memories that were transmitted with the intention of being faithful. The sacred writers thus hark back to the distant past in order to show that the Creator has established special bonds with Israel. In the persons of their ancestors this people has enjoyed the preferential favor of God, who has chosen them for a special mission on behalf of the entire human race and has also promised them a land to live in.

This love-inspired plan is accepted by Abraham with a faith that stands up to every test, but the Lord is also able to entrust his promise even to a sinner like Jacob in order to show that his predilection is unmerited. He is thus able to turn to his own purposes a reprehensible crime like that of Joseph's brothers. In short, the second part of the book corresponds with the first: in order to save guilty humankind God enters history and links himself, for a specific period, to a particular

CHAPTER 20

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard.*

¹ “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ^w ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius* a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ Going out about nine o’clock,* he saw some others standing idle in the marketplace. ⁴ He said to them, ‘You also go into my vineyard and I will give you what is just.’ ⁵ When he went out again around noon and at three in the afternoon,* he did the same. ⁶ Then, about five o’clock,* he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’

⁸ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the workers and give them their pay, beginning with those who came last and ending with the first.’ ^x ⁹ When those who had started to labor at five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Therefore, those who had come first thought that they would receive more, but they were paid a denarius, the same as the others. ¹¹ And when they

w Mt 21:28, 33.—x Lev 19:13; Deut 24:15.—y Jon 4:1.—z Lk 12:55.—a Deut 15:9; Rom 9:19-21.—b Mt 19:30; Lk 13:30.—c 17-19: Mt 16:21; 17:22-23; Mk 10:32-34; Lk 18:31-33.—d Acts 10:40.—e 20-28: Mk 10:35-45.—f Mt 19:28.—g Mt 26:39; Jn 18:11.—h Rom 8:17; Phil 3:10.—i 24-27: Mk 10:41-45; Lk 22:25-27.—j Mk 9:35.—k Mt 8:20; 26:28; Isa 53:10; Rom 5:6; 2 Cor 4:5; Phil 2:7; 1 Tim 2:6.

20:1-16 The parable of the workers in the vineyard teaches that the promised kingdom is a gift of grace and not a wage. For salvation is not the fruit of a commercial contract but consists in a communion of love, a filial response on the part of humans to the initiative of God, who offers them his friendship. Christians who do good cannot boast of rights before God. They should merely do all they can to correspond with God’s call and render themselves ever less unworthy of his friendship.

20:2 *Denarius*: a Roman coin that was the normal daily wage at the time—what a Roman soldier also received.

20:3 *Nine o’clock*: literally, “the third hour.”

20:5 *Noon . . . three in the afternoon*: literally, “the sixth hour . . . the ninth hour.”

20:6 *Five o’clock*: literally, “the eleventh hour.”

20:17-19 At the moment when he starts out for Jerusalem, Jesus clearly confronts the drama of his sacrifice. This third prediction of the Passion is much more detailed than the first two.

20:20-28 The apostles were still dreaming of an earthly Messianic kingdom and seeking an important role in it. However, their recompense would be a gift from the heavenly Father, not a right of their own. Jesus’ mission in the world was to save human beings and not to assign them their prize.

20:22 *Drink the cup*: in the idiom of the Bible, this meant to meet suffering (see Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; Ps 75:9).

20:28 As the suffering Servant (Isa 53), Jesus has come to expiate the sins of all, offering the Father his own life as the price of the ransom, i.e., as the supreme expression of love.

received it, they began to grumble against the landowner,^y ¹² saying, ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour, and yet you have rewarded them on the same level with us who have borne the greatest portion of the work and the heat of the day.’ ^z

¹³ “The owner replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am not treating you unfairly. Did you not agree with me to work for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take your pay and leave. I have chosen to pay the latecomers the same as I pay you. ¹⁵ Am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ^a ¹⁶ Thus, the last will be first and the first will be last.” ^b

Jesus Predicts His Passion a Third Time.*

¹⁷ ^c As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves and said to them, ¹⁸ “Behold, we are now going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death. ¹⁹ Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and on the third day he will be raised to life.” ^d

The Son of Man Has Come To Serve.* ²⁰ ^e Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons and made a request of him after kneeling before him. ²¹ “What do you wish?” he asked her. She said to him, “Promise that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and the other at your left, in your kingdom.” ^f ²² Jesus said in reply, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup* I am going to drink?” They said to him, “We can.” ^g

²³ He then said to them, “You shall indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not in my power to grant. Those places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” ^h

²⁴ ⁱ When the other ten disciples heard this, they were indignant at the two brothers.

²⁵ But Jesus called them over and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. ²⁶ This must not be so with you. Instead, whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your servant. ^j ²⁸ In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served but rather to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” ^{* k}

³⁵ Yet wisdom is proved right by all her children.”

Jesus Pardons a Sinful Woman.* ³⁶ One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to dine with him. When he arrived at the Pharisee’s house, he took his place at table. ³⁷ ^m A woman of that town, who was leading a sinful life, learned that Jesus was a dinner guest in the Pharisee’s house. Carrying with her an alabaster jar of ointment, ⁿ ^{*} ³⁸ she stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were really a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.” ⁴⁰ Jesus then said to the Pharisee, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” He replied, “What is it, Teacher?”

⁴¹ “There were two men who were in debt to a certain creditor. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other owed fifty.

⁴² When they were unable to repay him, he canceled both debts. Now which one of them will love him more?” ⁴³ Simon answered, “I would imagine that it would be the one who was forgiven the larger amount.” Jesus replied, “You have judged rightly.”

⁴⁴ Then, turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your home, and you provided no water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair.” ^o ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss, but she has not ceased to kiss my feet from the time I came in. ^p ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ^q ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you: her many sins have been forgiven her because she has shown great love. But the one who has been forgiven little has little love.”

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” ^r ⁴⁹ Those who were at table began to say to themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?” ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” ^s

CHAPTER 8

C: Hearing the Word

The Women Who Minister to Jesus. ¹ After that, Jesus journeyed through towns and vil-

lages preaching and proclaiming the kingdom of God. Traveling with him were the Twelve, ^t ² ^{*} as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; ^u ³ Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza; Susanna; and many others. These women provided for them out of their own resources.

The Parable of the Sower.* ⁴ When a large crowd gathered together as people from every town flocked to him, he said in a parable: ⁵ “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some of the seed fell along the path and was trampled upon, and the birds of the sky ate it up. ⁶ Some fell on rock, and when it came up, it withered for lack of moisture. ⁷ Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it.” ⁸ And some fell onto good soil, and when it grew it produced a crop of a hundred-fold.”

After saying this, he cried out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Purpose of Parables.* ⁹ ^w Then his disciples asked him what the parable meant. ¹⁰ He said, “To you has been granted knowl-

¹ Lk 11:37; 14:1.—^m 37ff: Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-8.—ⁿ Mt 21:32.—^o Gen 18:4; 1 Tim 5:10.—^p Lk 22:47-48.—^q Ps 23:5; Eccl 9:8.—^r Mt 9:2.—^s Acts 15:33.—^t Lk 4:43; Mt 4:23; Mk 1:39.—^u Lk 24:10; Mt 27:55f; Mk 15:40f; 16:9; Jn 19:25.—^v Jer 4:3-4.—^w 9-15: Mt 13:10-23; Mk 4:10-20.

7:36-50 The other three evangelists place this incident just before the Passion. Luke, however, keeps it here to show that his primary concern is with the mercy and forgiveness of God. He is the only evangelist to hand down the memory of good relations between Jesus and the Pharisees who invite him to dine (see also Lk 11:37; 14:1): these men, too, are children of Israel and will be given the instruction that they really need.

7:37 The woman is certainly not Mary Magdalene (see Lk 8:2) nor Mary the sister of Lazarus (Lk 10:39; Jn 11:5). The immense popularity of Mary Magdalene was due to a confusion, which occurred as far back as Christian antiquity, between the sinful woman who is forgiven here and the real Mary Magdalene, who was one of the main figures on Calvary and at the tomb.

8:2-3 Some women belong to the group of disciples; this was an occurrence quite rare at that period. As for Mary of Magdala (Mary Magdalene), the expression “seven demons” suggests some violent illness with symptoms that were disconcerting for a woman.

8:4-8 Since the time of the Prophets, harvesting was a current image of the Judgment (Joel 4:13). Sowing evokes the activity of Jesus. Jesus knows from experience that preaching the Gospel converts only hearts that are well disposed. Nevertheless, he underlines with optimism the growth of the seed: despite all risks and obstacles, the Word of God will make progress among human beings.

8:9-10 At the moment, only the disciples are sensitive to the riches of the Gospel; the others do not yet have a free heart. See also note on Mt 13:11.

it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you.¹⁵ And as for you, Capernaum:

Will you be exalted to heaven?

You will be brought down to the netherworld.^{* o}

¹⁶ “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”^p

Joy of the Missionaries.^{* 17} The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and they said, “Lord, in your name even the demons are subject to us.”¹⁸ He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning.^q ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you the power to tread upon snakes and scorpions and all the forces of the enemy, and nothing will ever harm you.”^r ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in the knowledge that the spirits are subject to you. Rejoice rather that your names are inscribed in heaven.”^s

Joy of Jesus.^{21 * t} At that very hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and have revealed them to children. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

²² “All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”^u

The Privilege of Discipleship.^{23 v} Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.”²⁴ I tell you, many prophets and kings desired to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”^w

^o Isa 14:13ff.—^p Lk 9:48; Mt 10:40; Mk 9:37; Jn 13:20.—^q Isa 14:12; Rev 9:1.—^r Ps 91:13; Mk 16:18; Acts 28:5; Rev 12:9.—^s Rev 20:12.—^t 21f: Mt 11:25ff; 1 Cor 1:26-29.—^u Jn 1:18.—^v 23f: Mt 13:16f.—^w 1 Pet 1:10-12.—^x Lk 18:18; Mt 19:16.—^y Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5.—^z Lev 18:5; Prov 19:16; Rom 7:10.—^a Lk 16:15.—^b Lev 21:1-3.—^c 2 Chr 28:15.

10:15 *The netherworld:* the place of the dead, i.e., the underworld (as in Acts 2:27, 31).

10:17-20 In the joy of the disciples, Jesus sees the beginning of the defeat of the forces of evil inflamed against human beings, and of their leader Satan (see Lk 11:20). Jesus shares their joy; but he invites them to rejoice most of all that they are the elect of the Father, a happiness that radically surpasses all missionary success.

10:21-24 In this inspired prayer, Jesus lays bare the profound movement of his heart and the very mystery of his person. He is gripped by the revelation made to the poor (i.e., *children*); he lives, in an inexpressible fashion, in unity with the Father in the Spirit. The expectation of kings and prophets, i.e., of the Old Testament, is now accomplished, for Jesus is here and shares with human beings God's mysterious presence. The Church knows that

The Greatest Commandment.^{25 * And} behold, a lawyer came forward to test Jesus by asking, “Teacher, what must I do to gain eternal life?”^{x 26} Jesus said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”²⁷ He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”^{y 28} Jesus then said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”^z

The Parable of the Good Samaritan.²⁹ But because the man wished to justify himself, he asked, “And who is my neighbor?”^{a 30} Jesus replied, “A man was going down* from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him and beat him, and then went off leaving him half-dead.”³¹ A priest happened to be traveling along that same road, but when he saw him he passed by on the other side.^{b 32} A Levite* likewise came to that spot and saw him, but he too passed by on the other side.

³³ “But a Samaritan who was traveling along that road came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved with compassion.”³⁴ He went up to him and bandaged his wounds after having poured oil and wine on them. Then he brought him upon his own animal to an inn and looked after him.^c

³⁵ “The next day, he took out two denarii* and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Look after him, and when I return I will repay you for anything more you might spend.’

³⁶ “Which of those three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”³⁷ He answered, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”^{*}

by herself she is nothing in this world, but she is astounded to bring forth for all people this great revelation of God. This text constantly brings her back home to the heart of the Gospel.

10:25-37 Jesus gives pride of place in his teaching to the commandment of love, which sums up the entire Law (see Mt 22:40); but love of God and love of neighbor are henceforth joined inseparably.

10:30 *Going down:* Jericho lies in the deepest depression on earth, at 800 feet below sea level.

10:32 *Levite:* a minister of the temple.

10:35 *Denarii:* plural for *denarius*, a laborer's daily wage.

10:37 The scribe had asked who was his neighbor. Jesus responds with the example of the Samaritan who, without regard for national rancors and religious disputes, recognizes the neighbor in an unknown person who is in need of help. Hence, the person who loves will know immediately how to individualize who his neighbor is. It is not necessarily—as the Jews thought—a person of the same nation, race, or religion.

- and my descendants will serve him.
 32 Future generations will be told about the Lord
 so that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn^m
 the deliverance he has accomplished.

PSALM 23*

Prayer to the Good Shepherd

- 1 A psalm of David.
 The LORD is my shepherd;
 there is nothing I shall lack.ⁿ
 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;^{*}
 he leads me to tranquil streams.
 3 He restores my soul,^{*}
 guiding me in paths of righteousness
 so that his name may be glorified.^o
 4 Even though I wander
 through the valley of the shadow of death,^{*}
 I will fear no evil,
 for you are at my side,
 with your rod and your staff
 that comfort me.^p

m Ps 40:11; 48:14-15; 71:18; 78:6; 102:19; Isa 53:10; Lk 18:31; Eph 2:7.—n Ps 80:2; 95:7; 100:3; Gen 48:15; Deut 2:7; Ezek 34:2; Jn 10:11.—o Ps 115:1; Prov 4:11.—p Ps 107:14; Job 10:21; Isa 50:10.—q Ps 22:27; 63:6; 92:11.—r Ps 16:5; 116:13; Lk 7:46.—s Ps 27:4; 61:5; Neh 9:25.—t Ps 50:12; 89:12; Ex 9:29; Deut 10:14; Isa 66:1-2; 1 Cor 10:26.

Ps 23 This psalm is a profession of joyful trust in the Lord as the Good Shepherd-King that has become one of the world's greatest prayers. The image of God in shepherd's garb has parallels in the Prophets (see Isa 40:11; Ezek 34:11-16) and will be the best known of the allegories in which Jesus speaks of himself (see Jn 10:11-18), so much so that the New Testament writers love to give him this title (see Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; Rev 7:17). The water, oil, and cup of wine of which the text speaks made Christians think of the Sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. As a result, the psalm used to be sung during the Easter Vigil by the newly baptized, who were filled with the joy of God.

In praying this psalm, we can dwell on the fact that the heavenly Father's love embraces us from eternity, preparing for us in Christ all kinds of spiritual blessings: election, adoption, redemption, incorporation into Christ (see Eph 1:3-14). He watches over us solicitously (see Mt 6:25-34) and follows us through the Good Shepherd who seeks out the straying sheep until he finds it again (see Lk 15).

23:2 *Green pastures*: a symbol for everything that makes life flourish. *Tranquil streams*: literally, "waters of resting places," waters that bring refreshment and well-being (see Isa 49:10).

23:3 *Restores my soul*: the Lord revitalizes the psalmist's spirit (see Ps 19:8; Ru 4:15; Prov 25:13; Lam 1:16). *Paths of righteousness*: paths that conform to the will of the Lord, the "right way."

23:4 *Valley of the shadow of death*: another possible translation is: "through the darkest valley." It refers to any situation that is death-threatening.

- 5 * You spread a table for me
 in the presence of my enemies.^q
 You anoint my head with oil;^{*}
 my cup overflows.^r
 6 Only goodness and kindness * will follow me
 all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
 forever and ever.^s

PSALM 24*

The LORD's Solemn Entry into Jerusalem

- 1 * A psalm of David.
 The earth is the LORD's and everything in it,^t
 the world and all who live in it. *

23:5-6 What was only a comparison used by the psalmist to indicate the happiness of those who dwell in the house of the Lord has become a wonderful reality in the New Covenant. God sets the table for all who as members of his Church seek rest and protection in the house of God during their pilgrimage. He gives them the Bread of Heaven and the cup of his love and the riches of his grace—Christ's Precious Blood and the anointing of the Spirit with his sevenfold gifts.

23:5 In the ancient Near East, covenants were frequently made at a meal (see Ps 41:10; Gen 31:54; Ob 7). *Anoint my head with oil*: reception customarily accorded to an honored guest at a banquet (see Lk 7:46; see also 2 Sam 12:20; Eccl 9:8; Dan 10:3). *Cup*: the same image is found in Ps 16:5; 75:9; 116:13. This verse indicates that the Messianic Banquet (see Ps 22:27) is reserved for the righteous; the wicked are excluded from it (see Isa 65:13f).

23:6 *Goodness and kindness*: the terms often refer to blessings of God's covenant with Israel; here they are personified (see Ps 25:21; 43:3; 79:8; 89:14). *Days of my life*: see Ps 27:4; 128:5. *Forever*: this word could mean "throughout the years." However, since even the pagan people surrounding Israel believed that human life continued after death in some kind of shadowy existence in the netherworld (see notes on Ps 11:7; 16:9-11), the word "forever" legitimately can be taken in its true sense.

Ps 24 A procession wends its way toward the temple; perhaps it bears the Ark of the Covenant to the holy place. Chants are expressed. They acclaim the Creator and thus recall the conditions for a true participation in worship: "clean hands and a pure heart" (vv. 3-6). At the entrance to the sanctuary, the cortege comes to a halt as the participants take time to meditate wonderingly about the presence of God. They must needs celebrate God the Vanquisher who takes possession of his holy dwelling; the titles given him (vv. 8-10) evoke the time when, represented by the Ark, the Lord would take his place at the head of the armies of Israel and lead them to victory (Num 10:35; Jos 6).

This psalm is well adapted to celebrating feasts of the Lord and to calling for the coming of his kingdom. It is also a psalm that makes demands, since it tells us of the conditions required for receiving the kingdom of God. The Church has always used this psalm in celebrating Christ's Ascension into the heavenly Jerusalem and into the sanctuary on high.

24:1-2 The Lord is proclaimed as the Creator, Sustainer, and Owner of the entire world. Therefore, he is worthy of the title "King of glory" (vv. 7-10). See Ps 29; 33:6-11; 89:6-19; 95:3-5; 104).

24:1 See Ps 89:12; Deut 10:14. This text is cited in 1 Cor 10:26.

- ²² However, the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and those who are faithless will be uprooted from it.^z

CHAPTER 3

Blessed Is the Person Who Has Found Wisdom*

- ¹ My son, do not forget my teaching,
but cherish my commandments in your heart,^a
² for they will bring you length of days,
more years of life,^{*} and an abundance of prosperity.^b
³ Do not let kindness and fidelity leave you;
fasten them around your neck
and inscribe them on the tablet of your heart.^c
⁴ Then you will gain favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.^d
⁵ Trust wholeheartedly in the LORD
rather than relying on your own intelligence.
⁶ In everything you do, acknowledge him,
and he will see that your paths are straight.^e
⁷ Do not pride yourself on your own wisdom;
fear the LORD and turn your back on evil.^f
⁸ This will provide healing for your flesh
and restore strength to your body.^g
⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your crops.^{* h}

^z Prov 10:30; Deut 28:63; 29:28; Job 18:17.—a Prov 1:8.—b Prov 4:10; 9:10-11; 10:27; 1 Ki 3:13, 14.—c Prov 7:3; Deut 6:8; Ps 85:11; 2 Cor 3:3.—d 1 Sam 2:26; Lk 2:52.—e Prov 16:3; Jer 42:3.—f Prov 26:5, 12; Ex 20:20; Isa 5:21; Rom 11:25; 12:16.—g Prov 4:22; Job 21:24.—h Ex 22:29; Deut 26:2.—i Ps 144:13; Joel 2:24.—j Job 5:17; Heb 12:5f.—k Prov 13:24; Deut 8:5; Rev 3:19.—l Prov 8:34f.—m Prov 8:19; 16:16; Job 28:15.—n Prov 8:11; Job 28:17-19.—o 1 Ki 3:13-14.—p Mt 11:28-30.—q Prov 4:13; 11:30; Gen 2:9; Rev 2:7.

3:1-18 Wisdom is religious fidelity, attentiveness to God. Those who observe this are under the eye of the Lord like a child. The author has no doubt, that even in the present, the best of rewards are coming to him. In fact, true happiness is much more than our desires to possess things and to put on appearances, and the author already experiences it. In verses 14-18, he suggests something of this profound secret of life, which Christ will call the hidden treasure or pearl of great price (Mt 13:44-46). Wisdom is a tree of life, not the fruit prohibited to human beings that sprouted on the tree in paradise (see Gen 3).

- ¹⁰ Then your barns will be filled with plenty,^{*}
and your vats will overflow with new wine.ⁱ
¹¹ * My son, do not ignore the LORD's discipline
or refuse to accept his rebuke.^j
¹² For the LORD disciplines those whom he loves,
just as a father chastises a beloved son.^k
¹³ Blessed^{*} is the person who has found wisdom,
the one who has gained understanding.^l
¹⁴ For she is far more valuable than silver,
and her revenue is greater than that of gold.^m
¹⁵ She is more precious than pearls,^{*}
and nothing that you desire can compare with her.ⁿ
¹⁶ In her right hand is length of days;
in her left hand, riches and honor.^o
¹⁷ Her ways are pleasant to follow,
and all her paths lead to peace.^p
¹⁸ She is a tree of life to all who embrace her,
and blessed are all who hold her fast.^q

By His Wisdom the LORD Laid the Earth's Foundations*

- ¹⁹ By his wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations;

3:2 *Bring you length of days, more years of life:* the "fear of the LORD" brings health to the body (v. 8) and "prolongs life" (Prov 10:27; see also Prov 9:10-11). *Abundance of prosperity:* generally speaking, the righteous are prosperous and happy while the wicked are overwhelmed with misfortune and miserable (see Prov 12:21). However, sometimes the wicked prosper and lead a carefree life (see Ps 73:3, 12)—at least for a time (see Ps 73:17-19)—while the righteous suffer (see Job 1-2).

3:9 *Firstfruits of all your crops:* the people of God were commanded to give to the priests the first part of the crops of olive oil, wine, and grains well as other products they grew each year (see Lev 23:10; Num 18:12-13).

3:10 *Filled with plenty:* those who bring their offerings to God will receive still greater blessings from him (see Mal 3:10; see also Deut 28:8-12; 2 Cor 9:8).

3:11-12 As already seen (v. 2 and note), the righteous are not always prosperous. They suffer affliction as a way of learning how to live (see Prov 12:1; Job 5:17; 36:22; Ps 119:71). The author of Hebrews quotes these two verses (Heb 12:5-6) and then adds: "[God disciplines us] for our benefit" (Heb 12:10).

3:13 *Blessed:* see note on Prov 31:28.

3:15 [*Wisdom*] *is more precious than pearls:* similar to Job 28:18. A worthy wife is also "more precious than pearls" (Prov 31:10).

3:19-20 The author has a lofty idea of the knowledge of life proposed to humans. Is it not the reflection of the thought that presides in the very projects of God (see Prov 8:22-31) and about which Job (chs. 38-40) never ceased being astounded?

Parables of Jesus

EASY FINDER

What is a parable?

Parables make up about 35 percent of Jesus' recorded sayings, so it is important to understand them. Jesus repeatedly uses illustrations from daily life in His parables, but the parables are not merely illustrations in His preaching; they are the preaching. Though the illustrations are drawn from familiar objects and events, they often include exaggeration and unexpected behavior.

The Kingdom

The parables focus on God and His Kingdom, and in doing so reveal what kind of God He is, the way in which He works, and what He expects of human beings. Because many of the parables focus on the Kingdom, some also reveal aspects of Jesus' mission. The parables are also intended to challenge and call to a decision; they are told in order to bring the listener to concede a point that

he or she has not regarded as relevant to himself or herself.

Yet we also read in Mark 4:10-12 that Jesus taught in parables to conceal His message. Some are far from self-evident, and teaching in this way helped conceal Jesus' message from those hostile to Him. Teaching by parable also offered an aid to the memory and could serve to bypass resistance in Jesus' listeners.

The following are Jesus' parables about the Kingdom.

Parables of the Kingdom	Matthew	Mark	Luke
The sower	13:3-9, 18-23	4:3-9, 13-20	8:5-8, 11-15
Growing seed		4:26-29	
Weeds	13:24-30, 36-43		
Mustard seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
Yeast	13:33		13:20-21
The pearl	13:45-46		
The hidden treasure	13:44		
The fishing net	13:47-50		
The unwilling children	11:16-19		7:31-35
The unfruitful fig tree			13:6-9
The workers in the vineyard	20:1-16		
The two brothers	21:28-32		
The royal wedding feast	22:1-14		
The great dinner			14:16-24
The wicked workers	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19
Lost sheep	18:12-14		15:3-7
Lost coin			15:8-10
Lost son			15:11-32
The two creditors			7:41-47
The Pharisee and the tax collector			18:9-14
The rich man and Lazarus			16:19-31
The watchful servants			12:35-40
Ten girls at a wedding	25:1-13		
The unreliable servant	24:45-51		12:42-46
The five talents	25:14-30		
The ten gold coins			19:11-27
The rich fool			12:16-21
Good Samaritan			10:25-37
The unforgiving servant	18:23-35		
The troublesome friend			11:5-8
The dishonest manager			16:1-13
The unjust judge			18:1-8

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JESUS CHRIST — OUR LORD AND SAVIOR