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PREAMBLE. THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER 1

The Story of Creation.* ¹ In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth ^a—²* and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—^b

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

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

⁹ Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. ^e

¹⁰ God called the dry land “earth,” and the basin of water he called “sea.” God saw that it was good. ^f ¹¹ Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit

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

¹⁴ Then God said: Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years, ^g ¹⁵ and serve as lights in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth. And so it happened: ¹⁶ God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night, and the stars. ^h ¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

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

²⁴ ^k Then God said: Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: tame ani-

a. [1:1] Gn 2:1, 4; 2 Mc 7:28; Ps 8:4; 33:6; 89:12; 90:2; Wis 11:17; Sir 16:24; Jer 10:12; Acts 14:15; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2–3; 3:4; 11:3; Rev 4:11. —b. [1:2] Jer 4:23. —c. [1:3] 2 Cor 4:6. —d. [1:7] Prv 8:27–28; 2 Pt 3:5. —e. [1:9] Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22. —f. [1:11] Ps 104:14. —g. [1:14] Jb 26:10; Ps 19:2–3; Bar 3:33. —h. [1:16] Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7–9; Wis 13:2–4; Jer 31:35. —i. [1:20] Jb 12:7–10. —j. [1:22] Gn 8:17. —k. [1:24] Sir 16:27–28.

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

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

The seventh day, on which God rests, the climax of the account, falls outside the six-day structure. Until modern times the first line was always translated, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Several comparable ancient cosmogonies, discovered in recent times, have a “when . . . then” construction, confirming the translation “when . . . then” here as well. “When” introduces the

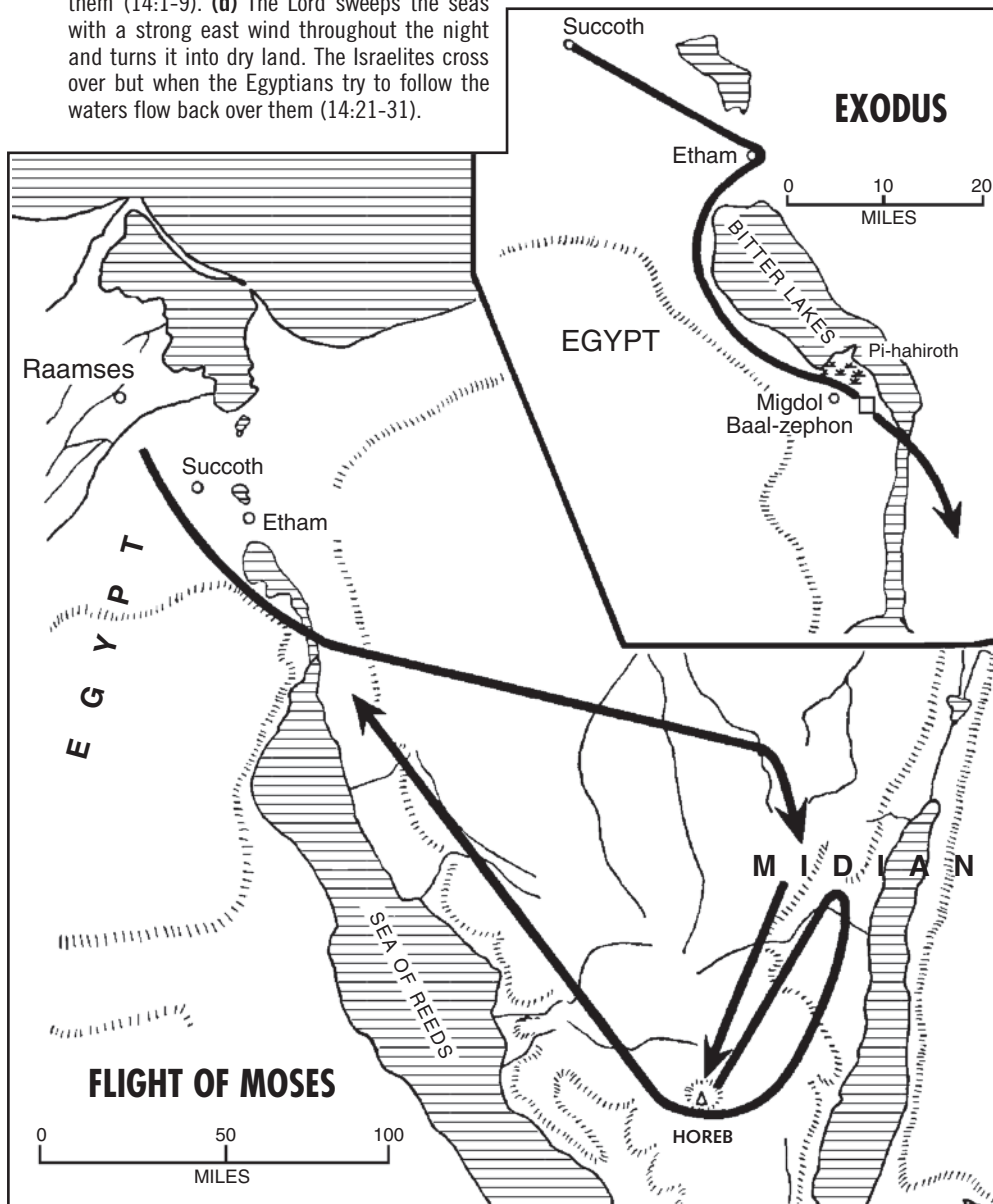
pre-creation state and “then” introduces the creative act affecting that state. The traditional translation, “In the beginning,” does not reflect the Hebrew syntax of the clause.

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

1:5 In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset.

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

THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT (c 1320: Ex 12:37—15:21) — (a) The Israelites set out from **Rameses** for **Succoth** with their livestock (12:37). (b) God does not lead them by way of the Philistines' land, but by the desert near the **Red Sea**. They set out from **Succoth** and encamp at **Etham** on the edge of the desert (13:17-20). (c) Following God's command, the people encamp before **Pi-hahiroth**, between **Migdol** and the sea, in front of **Baal-zephon**. There the Egyptians overtake them (14:1-9). (d) The Lord sweeps the seas with a strong east wind throughout the night and turns it into dry land. The Israelites cross over but when the Egyptians try to follow the waters flow back over them (14:21-31).



THE FLIGHT OF MOSES (Ex 1:1—12:36) — (a) Oppression of Israel in Egypt; the people build the store-cities of **Pithom** and **Rameses**; birth of Moses and his flight into **Midian** (1:1—2:25). (b) On the mountain of God, **Horeb**, the Lord appears to Moses, reveals the Divine Name ("I am who am") to him, and gives him the mission of delivering Israel (3:1—4:17). (c) Moses returns from **Midian**, and at God's command sets out for **Egypt**; at the **mountain of God**, he meets his brother Aaron and both return to **Egypt** (4:18-31). (d) Moses before Pharaoh: the ten plagues; permission to leave Egypt (5:1—12:36).

donkey you will ransom with a sheep. If you do not ransom it, you will break its neck. Every human firstborn of your sons you must ransom.¹⁴ And when your son asks you later on, 'What does this mean?' you will tell him, 'With a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of a house of slavery.'¹⁵ When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, the firstborn of human being and beast alike. That is why I sacrifice to the LORD every male that opens the womb, and why I ransom every firstborn of my sons.'¹⁶ It will be like a sign on your hand and a band on your forehead that with a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."^e

IV. THE DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITES FROM PHARAOH AND VICTORY AT THE SEA

Toward the Red Sea.¹⁷ Now, when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the Philistines' land,* though this was the nearest; for God said: If the people see that they have to fight, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.¹⁸ Instead, God rerouted them toward the Red Sea by way of the wilderness road, and the Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt arrayed for battle.¹⁹ Moses also took Joseph's bones^f with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites take a solemn oath, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you must bring my bones up with you from here."

²⁰ Setting out from Succoth, they camped at Etham^g near the edge of the wilderness.

²¹^h The LORD preceded them, in the daytime by means of a column of cloud to show them the way, and at night by means of a column of fire* to give them light. Thus they could travel both day and night.²² Neither the column of cloud by day nor the column of fire by night ever left its place in front of the people.

CHAPTER 14

¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses: ² Speak to the Israelites: Let them turn about and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea.^a Camp in front of Baal-zephon,* just opposite, by the sea.³ Pharaoh will then say, "The Israelites are wandering about aimlessly in the land. The wilderness has closed in on them."⁴ I will so harden Pharaoh's heart that he will pursue them. Thus I will receive glory through Pharaoh

and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.

This the Israelites did.⁵^b When it was reported to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart about the people. "What in the world have we done!" they said. "We have released Israel from our service!"⁶ So Pharaoh harnessed his chariots and took his army with him.⁷ He took six hundred select chariots and all the chariots of Egypt, with officers* on all of them.⁸ The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites while they were going out in triumph.⁹ The Egyptians pursued them—all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, his horsemen,* and his army—and caught up with them as they lay encamped by the sea, at Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

Crossing the Red Sea.¹⁰ Now Pharaoh was near when the Israelites looked up and saw that the Egyptians had set out after them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the LORD.¹¹ To Moses they said, "Were there no burial places in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?"¹² Did we not tell you this in Egypt, when we said, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? Far better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."¹³ But Moses answered the people, "Do not fear! Stand your ground and see the victory the LORD will win for you today. For

e. [13:16] Ex 13:9.—f. [13:19] Gn 50:25; Jos 24:32.—g. [13:20] Nm 33:6.—h. [13:21–22] Ex 40:38; Nm 9:15–22; Dt 1:33; Neh 9:19; Ps 78:14; 105:39; Wis 10:17.—a. [14:2] Nm 33:7–8.—b. [14:5–8] Wis 19:3; 1 Mc 4:9.

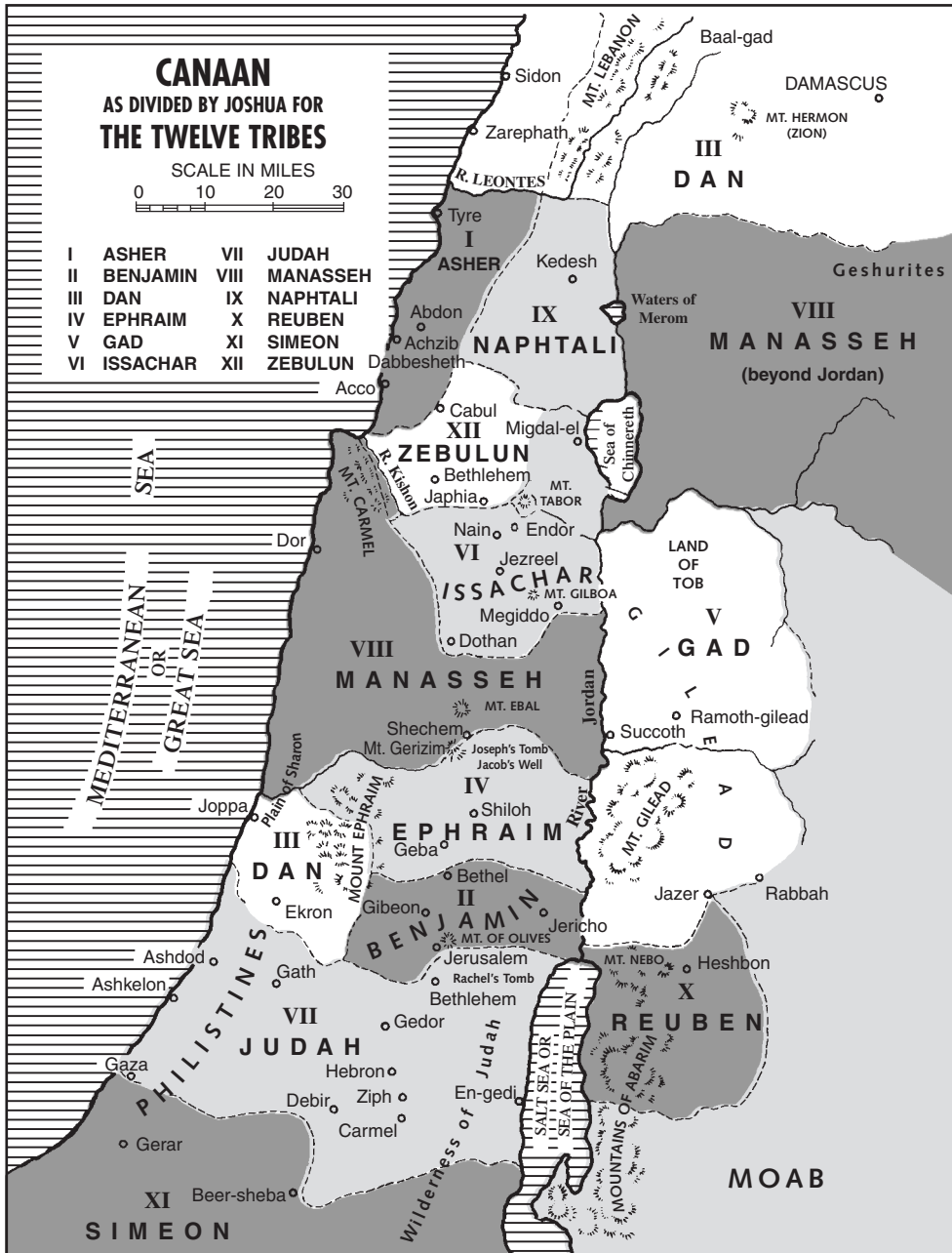
13:17 *By way of the Philistines' land*: the most direct route from Egypt to Palestine, along the shore of the Mediterranean.

13:21 *A column of cloud . . . a column of fire*: probably one and the same extraordinary phenomenon, a central nucleus of fire surrounded by smoke; only at night was its luminous nature visible; cf. 40:38.

14:2 *Pi-hahiroth . . . Migdol . . . Baal-zephon*: these places have not been definitively identified. Even the relative position of Pi-hahiroth and Baal-zephon is not clear; perhaps the former was on the west shore of the sea, where the Israelites were, and the latter on the opposite shore.

14:7 *Officers*: cf. 1 Kgs 9:22; Ez 23:15. The Hebrew word *shalish*, rendered in 1 Kgs 9:22 as "adjutant," has yet to have its meaning convincingly established. Given the very possible etymological connection with the number "three," others suggest the translation "three-man crew" or, less likely, the "third man in the chariot" although Egyptian chariots carried two-man crews. The author of the text may have been describing the chariots of his experience without direct historical knowledge of Egyptian ways.

14:9 *Horsemen*: the usage here may be anachronistic, since horsemen, or cavalry, play a part in warfare only at the end of the second millennium B.C.



CANAAN AS DIVIDED BY JOSHUA FOR THE TWELVE TRIBES (Jos 13—19) — (a) Judah consists of about eighty towns in the south (15:1–12). (b) Southward of it in the Negeb is Simeon with seventeen towns (19:1–19). (c) North of Judah lies Benjamin with twenty-six towns (18:11–28). (d) Dan is at first north of Judah and west of Benjamin but later part of the tribe migrates northward and settles near Leshem, henceforth called Dan (19:40–48; Jgs 18). (e) Ephraim occupies the center of the country (16:5–9). (f) Half of Manasseh lies north of Ephraim (17:1–13) and the other half in the northern part of the country east of the Jordan (13:29–31). (g) Around the plain of Esdraelon lies Issachar (19:17–23). (h) West of the Lake of Tiberias belongs to Zebulun (19:10–16). (i) Asher lies along the maritime plain of Galilee (19:24–31). (j) Naphtali occupies the northernmost part of the country (19:32–39). (k) South of the district east of Jordan dwells Reuben (13:15–23). (l) North of Reuben lies Gad (13:24–28).

11 Upon you I was thrust from the womb;
since my mother bore me you are my
God. ^h

12 Do not stay far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is no one to help. ⁱ

II

13 Many bulls* surround me;
fierce bulls of Bashan* encircle me.

14 They open their mouths against me,
lions that rend and roar. ^j

15 Like water my life drains away;
all my bones are disjointed.
My heart has become like wax,
it melts away within me.

16 As dry as a potsherd is my throat;
my tongue cleaves to my palate;
you lay me in the dust of death.*

17 Dogs surround me;
a pack of evildoers closes in on me.
They have pierced my hands and my feet
18 I can count all my bones. ^k

They stare at me and gloat;
19 they divide my garments among them;
for my clothing they cast lots. ^l

20 But you, LORD, do not stay far off;
my strength, come quickly to help me.

21 Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the grip of the dog.

22 Save me from the lion's mouth,
my poor life from the horns of wild
bulls. ^m

III

23 Then I will proclaim your name to my
brethren;

in the assembly I will praise you:* ⁿ

24 "You who fear the LORD, give praise!
All descendants of Jacob, give honor;
show reverence, all descendants of
Israel!

h. [22:11] Ps 71:6; Is 44:2; 46:3.—i. [22:12] Ps 35:22; 38:22; 71:12.—j. [22:14] Ps 17:12; Jb 4:10; 1 Pt 5:8.—k. [22:18] Ps 109:24.—l. [22:19] Mt 27:35; Mk 15:24; Lk 23:34; Jn 19:24.—m. [22:22] Ps 7:2-3; 17:12; 35:17; 57:5; 58:7; 2 Tm 4:17.—n. [22:23] Ps 26:12; 35:18; 40:10; 109:30; 149:1; 2 Sm 22:50; Heb 2:12.—o. [22:27] Ps 23:5; 69:33.—p. [22:28] Ps 86:9; Th 13:11; Is 45:22; 52:10; Zec 14:16.—q. [22:29] Ps 103:19; Ob 21; Zec 14:9.—r. [22:32] Ps 48:14-15; 71:18; 78:6; 102:19; Is 53:10.—a. [23:1] Ps 80:2; 95:7; 100:3; Dt 2:7.—b. [23:3] Prv 4:11.

22:13-14 Bulls: the enemies of the psalmist are also portrayed in less-than-human form, as wild animals (cf. Ps 22:17, 21-22). *Bashan*: a grazing land northeast of the Sea of Galilee, famed for its cattle, cf. Dt 32:14; Ez 39:18; Am 4:1.

22:16 The dust of death: the netherworld, the domain of the dead.

22:23 In the assembly I will praise you: the person who offered a thanksgiving sacrifice in the Temple recounted to the

25 For he has not spurned or disdained
the misery of this poor wretch,
Did not turn away* from me,
but heard me when I cried out.

26 I will offer praise in the great assembly;
my vows I will fulfill before those who
fear him.

27 The poor* will eat their fill;
those who seek the LORD will offer
praise.
May your hearts enjoy life forever!" ^o

IV

28 All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD;
All the families of nations
will bow low before him. ^p

29 For kingship belongs to the LORD,
the ruler over the nations. ^q

30* All who sleep in the earth
will bow low before God;
All who have gone down into the dust
will kneel in homage.

31 And I will live for the LORD;
my descendants will serve you.

32 The generation to come will be told of the
LORD,
that they may proclaim to a people yet
unborn
the deliverance you have brought. ^r

PSALM 23*

The Lord, Shepherd and Host

¹ A psalm of David.

I

The LORD is my shepherd;*
there is nothing I lack. ^a

² In green pastures he makes me lie down;
to still waters he leads me;

^{3 b} he restores my soul.

other worshippers the favor received from God and invited them to share in the sacrificial banquet. The final section (Ps 22:24-32) may be a summary or a citation of the psalmist's poem of praise.

22:25 Turn away: lit., "hides his face from me," an important metaphor for God withdrawing from someone, e.g., Mi 3:4; Is 8:17; Ps 27:9; 69:18; 88:15.

22:27 The poor: originally the poor, who were dependent on God; the term (*'anawim*) came to include the religious sense of "humble, pious, devout."

22:30 Hebrew unclear. The translation assumes that all on earth (Ps 22:27-28) and under the earth (Ps 22:29) will worship God.

Psalm 23 God's loving care for the psalmist is portrayed under the figures of a shepherd for the flock (Ps 23:1-4) and a host's generosity toward a guest (Ps 23:5-6). The imagery of both sections is drawn from traditions of the exodus (Is 40:11; 49:10; Jer 31:10).

23:1 My shepherd: God as good shepherd is common in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Ez 34:11-16; Jn 10:11-18).

- 19 None who enter there come back,
or gain the paths of life.
- 20 Thus you may walk in the way of the
good,
and keep to the paths of the just.
- 21* For the upright will dwell in the land,^d
people of integrity will remain in it;
- 22 But the wicked will be cut off from the
land,
the faithless will be rooted out of it.

CHAPTER 3

Confidence in God Leads to Prosperity*

- 1 My son, do not forget* my teaching,
take to heart my commands;
- 2 For many days, and years of life,^a
and peace, will they bring you.
- 3 Do not let love and fidelity forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- 4 Then will you win favor and esteem
before God and human beings.
- 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
on your own intelligence do not rely;
- 6 In all your ways be mindful of him,
and he will make straight your paths.
- 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes,^b
fear the LORD and turn away from evil;
- 8 This will mean health for your flesh
and vigor for your bones.

d. [2:21] Prv 10:7, 30; Jb 18:17; Ps 21:9-13; 37:22, 28.—
a. [3:2] Prv 4:10; 9:11; 10:27.—b. [3:7] Rom 11:25; 12:16.—
c. [3:9] Ex 34:26; Lv 27:30; Dt 26:2; Sir 7:31; 35:7.—d. [3:11]
Heb 12:5-6.—e. [3:12] Jdt 8:27; Rev 3:19.—f. [3:13] Prv
8:34-35.—g. [3:15] Prv 8:11, 19; Wis 7:8-11.—h. [3:18] Prv
4:13; 8:35; 11:30; Gn 2:9; 3:22.

2:21-22 Verses 21-22 echo the ending of Wisdom's speech in 1:32-33, in which refusing Wisdom's invitation meant death and obedience to her meant life. The same set of ideas is found in Ps 37 (especially vv. 3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34, and 38): to live on (or inherit) the land and to be uprooted from the land are expressions of divine recompense.

3:1-12 The instruction consists of a series of six four-line exhortations in which the second line of each exhortation mentions a reward or benefit. In the first five exhortations, the teacher promises a reward: long life, a good name, divine protection, health, abundant crops. The last exhortation, vv. 11-12, departs from the command-reward scheme, implying that being a disciple of the Lord does not guarantee unalloyed bliss: one must allow God freedom to "reprove" or educate. The process of education is like that described in chap. 2: the father first invites his son (or disciple) to memorize his teaching (v. 1), then to enter upon a relationship of trust with him (v. 3), and finally to place his trust in God, who takes up the parental task of education (v. 5). Education begun by the parent is brought to full completion by God.

3:1 *Do not forget*: this word and several others in the section such as "teaching," "commands," "years of life," and the custom of affixing written teaching to one's body, occur also in Deuteronomy. This vocabulary suggests that Proverbs and Deuteronomy had a common origin in the scribal class of Jerusalem. This section (and vv. 21-34) subtly elaborates Dt 6:5-9, "You shall love the LORD with all your heart (v. 5) . . . Take to heart these words (v. 1) . . . Recite them when you are at home

- 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth,
with first fruits of all your produce;^c
- 10 Then will your barns be filled with
plenty,
with new wine your vats will overflow.
- 11 The discipline of the LORD, my son, do
not spurn;^d
do not disdain his reproof;
- 12* For whom the LORD loves he reproves,
as a father, the son he favors.^e

The Benefits of Finding Wisdom*

- 13 Happy the one who finds wisdom,
the one who gains understanding!^f
- 14 Her profit is better than profit in silver,
and better than gold is her revenue;
- 15 She is more precious than corals,
and no treasure of yours can compare
with her.^g
- 16 Long life is in her right hand,
in her left are riches and honor;
- 17 Her ways are pleasant ways,
and all her paths are peace;
- 18 She is a tree of life* to those who grasp
her,
and those who hold her fast are happy.^h
- 19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth,
established the heavens by under-
standing;
- 20 By his knowledge the depths* are split,
and the clouds drop down dew.

and when you are away (v. 23) . . . when you lie down (v. 24) . . . Bind them (v. 3) on your arm as a sign and let them be a pendant on your forehead" (v. 21).

3:12 One might be tempted to judge the quality of one's relationship to God by one's prosperity. It is an inadequate criterion, for God as a teacher might go counter to student expectations. The discipline of God can involve suffering.

3:13-20 An encomium of Wisdom through the listing of her benefits to the human race and the depiction of her role in creation. Wisdom, or understanding, is more valuable than silver and gold. Its fruit is long life, riches, honor and happiness (vv. 13-18). Even the creation of the universe and its adornment (Gn 1) were not done without wisdom (vv. 19-20). The praise of Wisdom foreshadows the praise of a noble wife in the final poem (31:10-31), even to the singling out of the hands extended in a helpful way toward human beings.

3:18 *A tree of life*: in the Old Testament this phrase occurs only in Proverbs (11:30; 13:12; 15:4) and Genesis (2:9; 3:22, 24). The origins of the concept are obscure; there is no explicit mention of it in ancient Near Eastern literature, though on ancient seals trees are sometimes identified as trees of life. When the man and the woman were expelled from the garden, the tree of life was put off limits to them, lest they "eat of it and live forever" (Gn 3:22). The quest for wisdom gives access to the previously sequestered tree of life. The tree of life is mentioned also in the apocryphal work 1 Enoch 25:4-5. Rev 2 and 22 mention the tree of life as a source of eternal life.

3:20 *Depths*: for the Hebrews, the depths enclosed the great subterranean waters; the rain and dew descended from the waters above the firmament; cf. Gn 1:6-10; Jb 26:8, 12; Ps 18:15; 24:2. The cosmogony provides the reason why Wisdom offers such benefits to human beings: the world was created in wisdom so that all who live in accord with wisdom live in tune with the universe.

¹⁰ Thereupon Hananiah the prophet took the yoke bar from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it. ¹¹ He said in the sight of all the people: "Thus says the LORD: Like this, within two years I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, from the neck of all the nations." At that, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

¹² After Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke bar off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ¹³ Go tell Hananiah this: Thus says the LORD: By breaking a wooden yoke bar, you make an iron yoke! ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: A yoke of iron I have placed on the necks of all these nations serving Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and they shall serve him; even the wild animals I have given him. ^b ¹⁵ And Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet: Listen to this, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, and you have led this people to rely on deception. ¹⁶ For this, says the LORD, I am sending you from the face of the earth; this very year you shall die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD. ^c ¹⁷ Hananiah the prophet died in that year, in the seventh month.

CHAPTER 29

Letter to the Exiles in Babylon. ¹ These are the words of the scroll which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the court officials, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans and smiths had left Jerusalem. ^a ³ Delivered in Babylon by Elash,* son of Shaphan, and by Gemariah, son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah, king of Judah, sent to the king of Babylon, the letter read:

⁴ Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I exiled from

Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their fruits. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters. Increase there; do not decrease. ⁷ Seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you; pray for it to the LORD, for upon its welfare your own depends. ^b ⁸ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not be deceived by the prophets and diviners who are among you; do not listen to those among you who dream dreams, ^c ⁹ for they prophesy lies to you in my name; I did not send them—oracle of the LORD. ^d

¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: Only after seventy years have elapsed for Babylon will I deal with you and fulfill for you my promise to bring you back to this place. ^e ¹¹ For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—oracle of the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope. ¹² When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. ^f ¹³ When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴ I will let you find me—oracle of the LORD—and I will change your lot; I will gather you together from all the nations and all the places to which I have banished you—oracle of the LORD—and bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you. ^g ¹⁵ As for your saying, "The LORD has raised up for us prophets here in Babylon"—

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD concerning the king sitting on David's throne and all the people living in this city, your kinsmen who did not go with you into exile; ¹⁷ thus says the LORD of hosts: I am sending against them sword, famine, and pestilence. I will make them like rotten figs, so spoiled that they cannot be eaten. ¹⁸ I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, a curse, a desolation, a hissing, and a reproach to all the nations among which I have banished them, ^h ¹⁹ because they did not listen to my words—oracle of the LORD—even though I kept sending them my servants the prophets, but they would not listen to them—oracle of the LORD. ⁱ

²⁰ As for you, listen to the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²¹ This is what the

b. [28:14] Jer 27:6-7; Dt 28:48.—c. [28:16] Dt 13:6.—a. [29:2] 2 Kgs 24:15.—b. [29:7] 1 Tm 2:1-2.—c. [29:8] Jer 27:9, 14.—d. [29:9] Jer 5:31.—e. [29:10] Jer 25:11; 2 Chr 36:21-22; Ezr 1:1; Dn 9:2; Zec 1:12; 7:5.—f. [29:12] Jer 33:3.—g. [29:14] Jer 23:3, 8.—h. [29:18] Jer 15:4; 24:9; 34:17-18.—i. [29:19] Jer 25:4.

29:3 *Elash*: probably the brother of Ahikam (cf. 26:24). *Gemariah*: probably the son of the high priest Hilkiah; cf. 2 Kgs 22:4. Zedekiah had dispatched these men to Nebuchadnezzar for some other purpose, possibly the payment of tribute, but Jeremiah took advantage of their mission to send his letter with them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

The position of the Gospel according to Matthew as the first of the four gospels in the New Testament reflects both the view that it was the first to be written, a view that goes back to the late second century A.D., and the esteem in which it was held by the church; no other was so frequently quoted in the noncanonical literature of earliest Christianity. Although the majority of scholars now reject the opinion about the time of its composition, the high estimation of this work remains. The reason for that becomes clear upon study of the way in which Matthew presents his story of Jesus, the demands of Christian discipleship, and the breaking-in of the new and final age through the ministry but particularly through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The gospel begins with a narrative prologue (1:1–2:23), the first part of which is a genealogy of Jesus starting with Abraham, the father of Israel (1:1–17). Yet at the beginning of that genealogy Jesus is designated as “the son of David, the son of Abraham” (1:1). The kingly ancestor who lived about a thousand years after Abraham is named first, for this is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the royal anointed one (1:16). In the first of the episodes of the infancy narrative that follow the genealogy, the mystery of Jesus’ person is declared. He is conceived of a virgin by the power of the Spirit of God (1:18–25). The first of the gospel’s fulfillment citations, whose purpose it is to show that he was the one to whom the prophecies of Israel were pointing, occurs here (1:23): he shall be named Emmanuel, for in him God is with us.

The announcement of the birth of this newborn king of the Jews greatly troubles not only King Herod but all Jerusalem (2:1–3), yet the Gentile magi are overjoyed to find him and offer him their homage and their gifts (2:10–11). Thus his ultimate rejection by the mass of his own people and his acceptance by the Gentile nations is foreshadowed. He must be taken to Egypt to escape the murderous plan of Herod. By his sojourn there and his subsequent return after the king’s death he relives the Exodus experience of Israel. The words of the Lord spoken through the prophet Hosea, “Out of Egypt I called my son,” are fulfilled in him (2:15); if Israel was God’s son, Jesus is so in a way far surpassing the dignity of that nation, as his marvelous birth and the unfolding of his story show (see 3:17; 4:1–11; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16; 27:54). Back in the land of Israel, he must be taken to Nazareth in Galilee because of the danger to his life in Judea, where Herod’s son Archelaus is now ruling (2:22–23). The sufferings of Jesus in the infancy narrative anticipate those of his passion, and if his life is spared in spite of the dangers, it is because his destiny is finally to give it on the cross as “a ransom for many” (20:28). Thus the word of the angel will be fulfilled, “. . . he will save his people from their sins” (1:21; cf. 26:28).

In 4:12 Matthew begins his account of the ministry of Jesus, introducing it by the preparatory preaching of John the Baptist (3:1–12), the baptism of Jesus that culminates in God’s proclaiming him his “beloved Son” (3:13–17), and the temptation in which he proves his true sonship by his victory over the devil’s attempt to deflect him from the way of obedience to the Father (4:1–11). The central message of Jesus’ preaching is the coming of the kingdom of heaven and the need for repentance, a complete change of heart and conduct, on the part of those who are to receive this great gift of God (4:17). Galilee is the setting for most of his ministry; he leaves there for Judea only in 19:1, and his ministry in Jerusalem, the goal of his journey, is limited to a few days (21:1–25:46).

In this extensive material there are five great discourses of Jesus, each concluding with the formula “When Jesus finished these words” or one closely similar (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). These are an important structure of the gospel. In every case the discourse is preceded by a nar-

70 even as he promised through the mouth
of his holy prophets from of old:
71 salvation from our enemies and from
the hand of all who hate us,^m
72 to show mercy to our fathersⁿ
and to be mindful of his holy
covenant^o
73 and of the oath he swore to Abraham our
father,^p
and to grant us that,⁷⁴ rescued from
the hand of enemies,
without fear we might worship him⁷⁵ in
holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.^q
76 And you, child, will be called prophet of
the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord* to pre-
pare his ways,^r
77 to give his people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God^s
by which the daybreak from on high*
will visit us^t
79 to shine on those who sit in darkness and
death's shadow,
to guide our feet into the path of
peace.”

m. [1:71] Ps 106:10.—n. [1:72–73] Gn 17:7; Lv 26:42; Ps 105:8–9; Mi 7:20.—o. [1:72] Ps 106:45–46.—p. [1:73–74] Gn 22:16–17.—q. [1:75] Ti 2:12.—r. [1:76] Is 40:3; Mal 3:1; Mt 3:3; 11:10.—s. [1:78–79] Is 60:1–2.—t. [1:78] Mal 3:20.—u. [1:80] 2:40; Mt 3:1.—a. [2:4] Mi 5:2; Mt 2:6.—b. [2:5] 1:27; Mt 1:18.—c. [2:7] Mt 1:25.—d. [2:9] 1:11, 26.—e. [2:11] Mt 1:21; 16:16; Jn 4:42; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Phil 2:11.

1:76 *You will go before the Lord:* here the Lord is most likely a reference to Jesus (contrast vv. 15–17 where Yahweh is meant) and John is presented as the precursor of Jesus.

1:78 *The daybreak from on high:* three times in the LXX (Jer 23:5; Zec 3:8; 6:12), the Greek word used here for *daybreak* translates the Hebrew word for “scion, branch,” an Old Testament messianic title.

2:1–2 Although universal registrations of Roman citizens are attested in 28 B.C., 8 B.C., and A.D. 14 and enrollments in individual provinces of those who are not Roman citizens are also attested, such a universal census of the Roman world under Caesar Augustus is unknown outside the New Testament. Moreover, there are notorious historical problems connected with Luke’s dating the census *when Quirinius was governor of Syria*, and the various attempts to resolve the difficulties have proved unsuccessful. P. Sulpicius Quirinius became legate of the province of Syria in A.D. 6–7 when Judea was annexed to the province of Syria. At that time, a provincial census of Judea was taken up. If Quirinius had been legate of Syria previously, it would have to have been before 10 B.C. because the various legates of Syria from 10 B.C. to 4 B.C. (the death of Herod) are known, and such a dating for an earlier census under Quirinius would create additional problems for dating the beginning of Jesus’ ministry (3:1, 23). A previous legateship after 4 B.C. (and before A.D. 6) would not fit with the dating of Jesus’ birth in the days of Herod (Lk 1:5; Mt 2:1). Luke may simply be combining Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem with his vague recollection of a census under Quirinius (see also Acts 5:37) to underline the significance of this birth for the whole Roman world: through this child born in Bethlehem peace and salvation come to the empire.

⁸⁰ The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel. ^u

CHAPTER 2

The Birth of Jesus. ^{1*} In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus* that the whole world should be enrolled. ² This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ^{a 5} to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ^{b 6} While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn son.* She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ^c

^{8*} Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. ⁹ The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. ^{d 10} The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ^{11*} ^e For today in the

2:1 *Caesar Augustus:* the reign of the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus is usually dated from 27 B.C. to his death in A.D. 14. According to Greek inscriptions, Augustus was regarded in the Roman Empire as “savior” and “god,” and he was credited with establishing a time of peace, the *pax Augusta*, throughout the Roman world during his long reign. It is not by chance that Luke relates the birth of Jesus to the time of Caesar Augustus: the real savior (v. 11) and peace-bearer (v. 14; see also 19:38) is the child born in Bethlehem. The great emperor is simply God’s agent (like the Persian king Cyrus in Is 44:28–45:1) who provides the occasion for God’s purposes to be accomplished. *The whole world:* that is, the whole Roman world: Rome, Italy, and the Roman provinces.

2:7 *Firstborn son:* the description of Jesus as *firstborn* son does not necessarily mean that Mary had other sons. It is a legal description indicating that Jesus possessed the rights and privileges of the firstborn son (Gn 27; Ex 13:2; Nm 3:12–13; 18:15–16; Dt 21:15–17). See notes on Mt 1:25; Mk 6:3. *Wrapped him in swaddling clothes:* there may be an allusion here to the birth of another descendant of David, his son Solomon, who though a great king was wrapped in swaddling clothes like any other infant (Wis 7:4–6). *Laid him in a manger:* a feeding trough for animals. A possible allusion to Is 1:3 LXX.

2:8–20 The announcement of Jesus’ birth to the shepherds is in keeping with Luke’s theme that the lowly are singled out as the recipients of God’s favors and blessings (see also 1:48, 52).

2:11 The basic message of the infancy narrative is contained in the angel’s announcement: this child is *savior*, *Messiah*, and *Lord*. Luke is the only synoptic gospel writer to use the title *savior* for Jesus (Lk 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23; see also Lk 1:69; 19:9; Acts 4:12). As *savior*, Jesus is looked upon by Luke as the one

came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him."^b ³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born* from above."⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?"^c ⁵ Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."^d ⁶ What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit.^e ⁷ Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.'⁸ The wind* blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."^f ⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How can this happen?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "You are the teacher of Israel and you do not understand this? ¹¹ Amen, amen, I say to you, we speak of what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you people do not accept our testimony."^g ¹² If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?^h ¹³ No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.ⁱ ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up* the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,^j ¹⁵ *so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

b. [3:2] 9:4, 16, 33; 10:21; 11:10; 13:30; Mt 22:16; Mk 12:14; Lk 20:21. —c. [3:4] 1:13. —d. [3:5] 1:32; 7:39; 19:30, 34–35; Is 32:15; 44:3; Ez 36:25–27; Jl 3:1–2. —e. [3:6] 6:63; 1 Cor 15:44–50. —f. [3:8] Eccl 11:4–5; Acts 2:2–4. —g. [3:11] 3:32, 34; 8:14; Mt 11:27. —h. [3:12] 6:62–65; Wis 9:16–17; 1 Cor 15:40; 2 Cor 5:1; Phil 2:10; 3:19–20. —i. [3:13] 1:18; 6:62; Dn 7:13; Rom 10:6; Eph 4:9. —j. [3:14] 8:28; 12:32, 34; Nm 21:4–9; Wis 16:5–7. —k. [3:16] 1 Jn 4:9. —l. [3:17] 5:22, 30; 8:15–18; 12:47. —m. [3:18] 5:24; Mk 16:16. —n. [3:19] 1:5, 9–11; 8:12; 9:5. —o. [3:20] Jb 24:13–17. —p. [3:21] Gn 47:29 LXX; Jos 2:14 LXX; 2 Sm 2:6 LXX; 15:20 LXX; Tb 4:6 LXX; 13:6; Is 26:10 LXX; Mt 5:14–16. —q. [3:22–23] 4:1–2. —r. [3:24] Mt 4:12; 14:3; Mk 1:14; 6:17; Lk 3:20. —s. [3:26] 1:26, 32–34, 36. —t. [3:27] 19:11; 1 Cor 4:7; 2 Cor 3:5; Heb 5:4.

3:3 *Born*: see note on 1:13. *From above*: the Greek adverb *anōthen* means both "from above" and "again." Jesus means "from above" (see v. 31) but Nicodemus misunderstands it as "again." This misunderstanding serves as a springboard for further instruction.

3:8 *Wind*: the Greek word *pneuma* (as well as the Hebrew *rūah*) means both "wind" and "spirit." In the play on the double meaning, "wind" is primary.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave* his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.^k ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn* the world, but that the world might be saved through him.^l ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.^m ¹⁹ *And this is the verdict,ⁿ that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed.^o ²¹ But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.^p

Final Witness of the Baptist. ²² * After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them baptizing.^q ²³ John was also baptizing in Aenon near Salim,* because there was an abundance of water there, and people came to be baptized,²⁴ *r for John had not yet been imprisoned. ²⁵ Now a dispute arose between the disciples of John and a Jew* about ceremonial washings. ²⁶ So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him."^s ²⁷ John answered and said, "No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven.^t ²⁸ You yourselves can testify that I said [that] I am

3:14 *Lifted up*: in Nm 21:9, Moses simply "mounted" a serpent upon a pole. John here substitutes a verb implying glorification. Jesus, exalted to glory at his cross and resurrection, represents healing for all.

3:15 *Eternal life*: used here for the first time in John, this term stresses quality of life rather than duration.

3:16 *Gave*: as a gift in the incarnation, and also "over to death" in the crucifixion; cf. Rom 8:32.

3:17–19 *Condemn*: the Greek root means both judgment and condemnation. Jesus' purpose is to save, but his coming provokes judgment; some condemn themselves by turning from the light.

3:19 Judgment is not only future but is partially realized here and now.

3:22–26 Jesus' ministry in Judea is only loosely connected with 2:13–3:21; cf. 1:19–36. Perhaps John the Baptist's further testimony was transposed here to give meaning to "water" in v. 5. Jesus is depicted as baptizing (v. 22); contrast 4:2.

3:23 *Aenon near Salim*: site uncertain, either in the upper Jordan valley or in Samaria.

3:24 A remark probably intended to avoid objections based on a chronology like that of the synoptics (Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14).

3:25 *A Jew*: some think Jesus is meant. Many manuscripts read "Jews."

Children of God Through Adoption.*

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.^j ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, “*Abba,** Father!”^k ¹⁶ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,^l ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.^m

Destiny of Glory.* ¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.ⁿ ¹⁹ For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; ²⁰ for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it,^o in hope ²¹ that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.^p ²² We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now;^q ²³ and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.^r ²⁴ For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees?^s ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself

intercedes with inexpressible groanings. ²⁷ And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.^t

God’s Indomitable Love in Christ. ²⁸ * We know that all things work for good for those who love God,* who are called according to his purpose.^u ²⁹ * For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.^v ³⁰ And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.^w

³¹ * What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?^x ³² He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him?^y ³³ Who will bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? It is God who acquits us.^z ³⁴ Who will condemn? It is Christ [Jesus] who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.^a ³⁵ What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?^b ³⁶ As it is written: ^b

“For your sake we are being slain all the day;
we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us.^c

j. [8:14] Gal 5:18.—k. [8:15] Mk 14:36; Gal 4:5–6; 2 Tm 1:7.—l. [8:16] Jn 1:12; Gal 3:26–29.—m. [8:17] Gal 4:7; 1 Pt 4:13; 5:1.—n. [8:18] 2 Cor 4:17.—o. [8:20] Gn 3:17–19.—p. [8:21] 2 Pt 3:12–13; Rev 21:1.—q. [8:22] 2 Cor 5:2–5.—r. [8:23] 2 Cor 1:22; Gal 5:5.—s. [8:24] 2 Cor 5:7; Heb 11:1.—t. [8:27] Ps 139:1; 1 Cor 4:5.—u. [8:28–29] Eph 1:4–14; 3:11.—v. [8:29] Eph 1:5; 1 Pt 1:2.—w. [8:30] Is 45:25; 2 Thes 2:13–14.—x. [8:31] Ps 118:6; Heb 13:6.—y. [8:32] Jn 3:16.—z. [8:33–34] Is 50:8.—a. [8:34] Ps 110:1; Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1.—b. [8:36] Ps 44:23; 1 Cor 4:9; 15:30; 2 Cor 4:11; 2 Tm 3:12.—c. [8:37] 1 Jn 5:4.

8:14–17 Christians, by reason of the Spirit’s presence within them, enjoy not only new life but also a new relationship to God, that of adopted children and heirs through Christ, whose sufferings and glory they share.

8:15 *Abba:* see note on Mk 14:36.

8:18–27 The glory that believers are destined to share with Christ far exceeds the sufferings of the present life. Paul considers the destiny of the created world to be linked with the future that belongs to the believers. As it shares in the penalty of corruption brought about by sin, so also will it share in the benefits of redemption and future glory that comprise the ultimate liberation of God’s people (vv. 19–22). After patient endurance in steadfast expectation, the full harvest of the Spirit’s presence will be realized. On earth believers enjoy the firstfruits, i.e., the Spirit, as a guarantee of the total liberation of their bodies from the influence of the rebellious old self (v. 23).

8:28–30 These verses outline the Christian vocation as it was designed by God: *to be conformed to the image of his Son*, who is *to be the firstborn among many brothers* (v. 29). God’s redemptive action on behalf of the believers has been in process before the beginning of the world. Those whom God chooses are *those he foreknew* (v. 29) or elected. Those who are *called* (v. 30) are *predestined* or predetermined. These expressions do not mean that God is arbitrary. Rather, Paul uses them to emphasize the thought and care that God has taken for the Christian’s salvation.

8:28 *We know that all things work for good for those who love God:* a few ancient authorities have God as the subject of the verb, and some translators render: “We know that God makes everything work for good for those who love God. . . .”

8:29 *Image:* while man and woman were originally created in God’s image (Gn 1:26–27), it is through baptism into Christ, the image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), that we are renewed according to the image of the Creator (Col 3:10).

8:31–39 The all-conquering power of God’s love has overcome every obstacle to Christians’ salvation and every threat to separate them from God. That power manifested itself fully when God’s own Son was delivered up to death for their salvation. Through him Christians can overcome all their afflictions and trials.

BIBLE DICTIONARY

Aaron. Member of the tribe of Levi, brother of Moses and his spokesman before Pharaoh. He was chosen by God as the first high priest of the Old Law and his descendants (Aaronites) were consecrated as an hereditary priesthood.

Abel. The religious and just son of Adam and Eve whose sacrifice pleased God, yet aroused the murderous envy of his brother Cain. He was a shepherd and offered the firstlings of his flock to the Lord.

Abraham. "Father of believers." At God's command he left his home in Ur of the Chaldees about 2000 B.C. and settled in Palestine. God made a covenant with him and promised him a great posterity. In his old age his wife Sarah bore him a son (Isaac) in fulfillment of God's promise.

Adam. The first man created by God out of dust of the ground. In Hebrew "man" is *adam* and "the ground" is *adamah*.

Alleluia. This liturgical acclamation is composed of two Hebrew words meaning "Praise God" It is found in many psalms (104-106), in the Passover service (Ps 135), in the angels' song (Rv 19:1) and in the earliest Christian prayers. It is an expression of triumphant joy.



Alpha and Omega. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The Israelites used these two letters to symbolize the fullness, the eternity of God. The Christians inherited this tradition and used alpha and omega to express their belief that in Jesus, the Son of God, is to be found all grace and truth,

Altar. A stone or pile of stones, or any structure or place on which sacrifices were burned or incense offered.

Amen. A Hebrew word meaning "firmly" or "surely," prefixed by Christ to statements of special solemnity.

Amos. One of the 12 Minor Prophets.

Anathema. Cursed, excluded from the kingdom of God.

Angels of God. Pure spirits created by God without bodies, completely independent of matter, who act as messengers or ambassadors of God. They have been divided into nine choirs (angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominations, thrones, cherubim and seraphim). **Angel of God** sometimes indicates God acting in the world.

Annas. Father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at the time of Christ.

Antichrist. Commonly understood as a personal opponent of Christ at the end of time.

Apollos. Friend and fellow-worker of St. Paul who eloquently evangelized Corinth after Paul had prepared the way.

Apostles. Twelve men chosen by Christ to enjoy special jurisdiction and to teach. They are Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the Less, Jude, Simon the Zealot, and Judas, who was replaced by Matthias. Paul and Barnabas are also called Apostles, which means literally "one who is sent."

Areopagus. The hill of Ares (Mars), in Athens where the council called the "Areopagus" held its meetings.

Ark of Noah. A rectangular vessel built by Noah, in which he, his family, his possessions, and some animals were preserved during the flood.

Ark of the Covenant. The chest of wood covered with gold which contained the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them.

Cycle C

2013 2019 2025 2031 2037
2016 2022 2028 2034 2040

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- 2- refers to Reading II
- 3- refers to Gospel

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1- Bar 5:1-9		1010
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3- Mt 1:1-25		11
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1- Is 9:1-6		873
2- Ti 2:11-14		334
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Other subjects will be found in the Bible Dictionary, pp. 412ff. The cross references to the passages cited below should also be consulted.

—A—

Absolution, the power promised and given to the pastors of the church, Mt 16:19; 18:18; Jn 20:22f.

Abstinence, from food: God forbids Adam to eat the fruit of a certain tree, Gn 2:17; 3:11;

—from flesh with its blood, forbidden, Gn 9:4; Dt 12:16; Acts 15:29;

—paschal lamb not to be eaten raw, or boiled, Ex 12:9;

—leaven forbidden, Ex 13:7;

—ox that has killed a man not to be eaten, Ex 21:28;

—observed by St. John the Baptist, Lk 1:15;

—even permitted food to be abstained from, so as not to scandalize others, 2 Mc 6:24; 7:1f; Rom 4:20f; 1 Cor 8:13.

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Affliction, lot of the children of God, Prv 3:11f; Wis 11:10; Is 1:26;

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—to be borne patiently, Sir 2:2;

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—no proportion between the affliction of this life and the glory to come, Rom 8:18.

Agriculture, practiced by Adam, Gn 3:23;

—practiced by Cain, Gn 4:2;

—practiced by Noah, Gn 9:20;

—practiced by the Egyptians, Gn 47:24;

—Mosaic laws as to, Ex 22:5; 23; Dt 14; 15; 16;

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—of rough stones after passage of Jordan, Dt 27:2;

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—Solomon's, 2 Chr 4;

—dedicated, 2 Chr 7;

—Asa restores, 2 Chr 15:8;

—Elijah erects, 1 Kgs 18:32;

—Ahaz profanes, 2 Kgs 16:14;

—restored by Zerubbabel, Ezr 3:2; 6:16;

—restored by Judas Maccabeus, 1 Mc 4:47, 53.

Angels, they have a charge over us, Mt 18:10; Heb 1:14. **See** also Ex 23:20f; Ps 91:11f.

—pray for us, Rv 8:4; Zec 1:12;

—communion with, Heb 12:22;

—fall of, Jb 4:18; Is 14:12; Lk 10:18; Jude 6; Rv 12:4; 20:9.

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Animals, created, Gn 1:24f;

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—seen in a vision by St. Peter, Acts 10:12;

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Apostles, chosen from the disciples, Lk 6:13;

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—sent to evangelize the whole world, Mt 18:19; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:46; Jn 15:16, 27; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 10:42.

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Ark of the Covenant, Ex 25:10-22;

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—in the middle of the Jordan, Jos 3:8;

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—B—

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—of the Apocalypse, Rv 17:3.

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