

Break Through!

The Bible for Young Catholics

Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young,
but be an example for the believers in your speech,
your conduct, your love, faith, and purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

This Bible belongs to:

Given by: _____

Date: _____

Occasion: _____



saint mary's press

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New Testament

1393

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GOD BREAKS THROUGH: SALVATION HISTORY TIME LINE

BIBLE BOOK

Genesis, chapters 1–11



BIBLE PEOPLE

- Adam & Eve • Cain & Abel • Noah

BIBLE BOOK

Genesis, chapters 12–50



BIBLE PEOPLE

- Abraham • Sarah • Isaac & Rebecca
• Jacob, Leah, & Rachel • Esau • Joseph

PRIMEVAL HISTORY

PATRIARCHS

CREATION

2000 BC 2000 BC

1700 BC

The Bible begins with imaginative stories about how God created everything that exists. These are sometimes called “primeval” stories, meaning they are stories of things that happened before recorded history. The stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, and the tower of Babylon teach us that God created everything and that human beings have a special place in creation. They teach us that sin destroys our relationships with God and each other. They teach us that sin spreads and that without God’s help, sin leads to death and destruction.

In this period of salvation history, God begins to form a special relationship with a chosen race of people. He makes a special promise, called a Covenant, with a man named Abraham and his wife, Sarah. God promises that their descendants will be numerous and that they will inherit a Promised Land. This is followed by the stories of Abraham and Sarah’s son, Isaac; their grandsons, Jacob and Esau; and their great-grandchildren, Joseph and his brothers and sister. These stories show us that even though Abraham and Sarah’s descendants had many problems, God was faithful to his Covenant with them. Jacob’s sons become the patriarchs—that is, founding fathers—of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

The Bible tells the story of how God breaks through to save human beings from sin and bring us to eternal life. History told from the perspective of God's breaking through is called salvation history. This time line shows the major periods of salvation history as told in the Bible's stories. Each period lists some Bible books that tell the stories from that period, lists some important people of that period, and briefly describes what God is doing.

BIBLE BOOK

Exodus



BIBLE PEOPLE

• Moses • Aaron & Miriam • Pharaoh

BIBLE BOOKS

Joshua, Judges, Ruth



BIBLE PEOPLE

• Joshua • Deborah • Gideon
• Samson • Ruth

EGYPT AND THE EXODUS

1700 BC

1250 BC

1250 BC

SETTLING THE PROMISED LAND

1050 BC

At the beginning of the Book of Exodus, we discover that the descendants of Jacob's children—now called Israelites—are in slavery in Egypt. God hears their cries and calls Moses to lead the people out of slavery. But Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader, has a hard heart. God has to send terrible plagues to make him let the Israelites go. The Israelites' escape from Egypt and journey to the Holy Land is called the Exodus.

On the way to the Promised Land, the Israelites stop at Mount Sinai. There God extends the Covenant he made with Abraham to all the Israelites. He gives Moses the Ten Commandments, which the people must obey as part of the Covenant.

Moses dies before the Israelites enter the Promised Land. God calls a new leader, Joshua, to lead the people into the land. Much of the land is inhabited by other people. The Israelites must fight to gain control of the land. When they trust God, they are successful in their battles; when they do not trust God, they fail. Eventually they gain control of the land, and each of the twelve tribes is given their own section of the land.

New invaders, the Philistines, try to capture the land. At this time the Israelites have no king, because God is their ruler. But God calls special prophets and warriors, called judges, to help deliver justice and defend the land against the Philistine invasion.

Time Line (continued)

BIBLE BOOKS

1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings,
2 Kings, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah

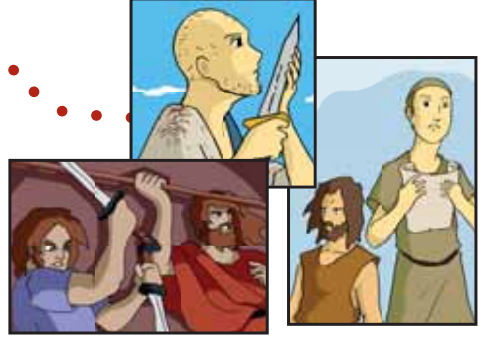


BIBLE PEOPLE

- Samuel • King Solomon
- Elijah & Elisha • King Saul
- King David • King Hezekiah
- King Josiah • Amos • Hosea
- Isaiah • Jeremiah

BIBLE BOOKS

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Isaiah,
2 Maccabees, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah



BIBLE PEOPLE

- Ezekiel • Ezra & Nehemiah
- the Maccabees • Judith • Esther

KINGDOMS OF JUDAH & ISRAEL

1050 BC

587 BC

587 BC

AD 1

At the end of the period of the judges, the Israelites want their own king. God has Samuel—the last of the judges—anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. David follows Saul as the next king. David is a mighty warrior and unites all the Twelve Tribes into one kingdom. David's son, Solomon, builds a Temple at Jerusalem, the capital city.

After Solomon's death there is disagreement between the tribes, and the kingdom splits in two. Israel is the name of the northern kingdom and Judah is the name of the southern kingdom. Many of the kings of Israel and Judah worshiped foreign gods and allowed injustice in the kingdom. Prophets like Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah called the people to stop worshiping idols, to practice justice, and to care for people in need.

EXILE AND RETURN

Despite the prophets' warnings, the people of Israel and Judah continued to turn away from God's Covenant with them. So God let their kingdoms be conquered. Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 721 BC. Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BC. Many of the people were taken into captivity, so this time was called the Exile. Prophets like Ezekiel comforted the Israelites with the promise that God was still with them. Fifty years passed in exile. Then a new king allowed the people—now called Judeans or Jews—to return to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. The people saw God's hand at work. During this troubled time, the people were hoping for a messiah, or savior, to make them great again.

BIBLE BOOKS

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John



BIBLE PEOPLE

- Mary of Nazareth • John the Baptist
 - Jesus Christ
- Peter • Mary Magdalene
 - The Twelve Apostles
- Mary & Martha of Bethany

BIBLE BOOKS

Acts of the Apostles, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, James, Philippians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1,2,3 John, Revelation



BIBLE PEOPLE

- Peter • Paul • Barnabas • Timothy
 - Priscilla & Aquila

LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

AD 1

AD 33

AD 33

AD 100

When the time was right, God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. When Jesus was born, the Romans ruled Israel. Some of the Jews were hoping for a mighty warrior and king like David, who would drive the Romans out. Instead, Jesus showed a different way. He preached love, justice, and forgiveness. He healed and worked miracles as signs of God's power.

Jesus' followers, called disciples, came to see that he was the Messiah, the Savior. Jesus showed that salvation comes through faith and a change of heart, not through violence and political power. When Jesus was killed by the Romans—with the approval of the Jewish leaders—his followers thought that all was lost. Instead, after three days God raised Jesus from the dead!

EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

After his Resurrection, Jesus instructed his closest followers, the Apostles, to go and spread the Good News of salvation to all people. The Holy Spirit gave them the courage to tell others about Jesus Christ. They started by first preaching to other Jews. Sometimes they were persecuted by Jewish leaders who did not believe in Jesus.

One of those persecutors—whose name was Paul—had a vision of Jesus and became a Christian. God revealed to Paul that Christ came for all people. Paul began preaching to non-Jews, who were called Gentiles. Wherever he traveled he started new Christian communities. He was helped by many other believers, women and men. Soon Christianity spread throughout the whole Roman Empire—even to Rome.

BIBLE PEOPLE INTERVIEWS

Adam and Eve	c1
Abraham	c2
Sarah	c3
Isaac	c4
Jacob	c5
Leah and Rachel	c6
Joseph	c7
Moses	c8
Aaron and Miriam	c9
Joshua	c10
Deborah	c11
Gideon	c12
Samson	c13
Ruth	c14
Samuel	c15
Saul	c16
David	c17
Solomon	c18
Hezekiah	c19
Josiah	c20

Elijah and Elisha	c21
Amos	c22
Hosea	c23
Isaiah	c24
Jeremiah	c25
Ezekiel	c26
Ezra and Nehemiah	c27
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John the Baptist	c34
Peter	c35
Mary Magdalene	c36
Paul	c37
Barnabas	c38
Timothy	c39
Priscilla and Aquila	c40

ABOUT THIS BIBLE

Welcome to *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*. Growing out of childhood and into your teens is an exciting time of life. It can also be difficult at times. The good news is that no matter what you are feeling or what situation you are in, God never stops trying to **break through** and let you know that he loves you. That is why the title of this special Bible for young people is *Breakthrough!*

Through the words of the Bible, God speaks to all people. The Bible is the story of God's love relationship with the human race. This story is told through many different kinds of writing because the Bible is not one book—it is a collection of books. There are seventy-three books in Catholic Bibles: forty-six books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament.

Scripture and Tradition

God wants us to know him. So throughout history God has revealed himself to human beings. We call this "revelation." God's most complete revelation was through the person of his son, Jesus Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles handed on to others what they had learned from their experience of Jesus. They passed on everything that our loving God revealed to save us from sin and death. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the bishops of the Church continue to pass on this revelation without error for all ages.

This revelation is handed on in a special way through the Bible—in both the Old and New Testaments. It is also handed on through something called Tradition, a word which actually means "handing on." Tradition includes some teachings and practices that may not be found explicitly in the Scriptures (another word for the Bible). In fact, some of God's revelation is known chiefly through Tradition rather than through the Bible. That is why the Bible alone is not enough to learn about all of God's revelation. Both the Bible and Tradition are needed to learn the fullness of God's revelation.

Catholic Connections articles explain how Catholic beliefs are part of God's revelation and are taught through the Bible. They discuss things like our belief in the sacraments, our devotion to Mary, and the special role of the Pope and bishops. If you read all the Catholic Connections articles, it will be like getting a mini-introduction to the main beliefs of the Catholic Church!

**Catholic
Connections**

Breakthrough! was created to help young people read and understand the books of the Bible. We started by using the Good News Translation, a version of the Bible that is easier for young people to read. Then we added short articles to help you understand what you read. There are four different types of articles in this Bible: Study It!, Pray It!, Live It!, and Catholic Connections. Samples of these four types of articles are on these pages so you can see what they look like.

Reading Helps in *Breakthrough!*

Everyone needs help reading the Bible. It is not an easy book for beginners to pick up and understand. Along with the articles that we added to the Bible books, *Breakthrough!* has the following additional reading helps to assist you in understanding what God reveals through the words of the Bible.

Salvation History Time Line

God has had a plan for saving human beings from sin and death since the sin of our original parents, Adam and Eve. We call the story of God's saving plan "salvation history." The books of the Bible teach us about the people and

Study It!

Background for Understanding

The Bible was written a long time ago. So it is not surprising that we might need some help understanding the full meaning of the stories and teachings. This is true for adults as well as youth!

The Study It! articles give you information to help you better understand the Bible story you are reading. Some of the Study It! articles focus on the symbols the author used in the stories. Some help you understand the history behind the story. Some help you understand the story by explaining how people lived back then. The main purpose of the Study It! articles is to help you understand what the original author of the story was trying to get across.

Pray It!

Talking with God

Think of reading the Bible as sort of like having a conversation with God. Whenever you read the Bible, start by asking God for help in understanding what you read. After you read a section, listen for what God is telling you in the story. Then you will want to respond to God. This is one way of praying—by talking to God and listening for God's voice in what you read.

The Pray It! articles will help you do that. They contain prayers or ideas for how you might pray. Sometimes they make connections with the way we pray together at church. You may want to keep a journal to write down your thoughts—and to make up your own prayers—as you read the Bible.

events that are part of salvation history. In order to fully understand the meaning of these stories, it is helpful to know how they fit into the big picture of God's saving plan. To help you with this, a Bible time line, called "God Breaks Through: Salvation History Time Line," is provided in the next section. Read this section before you start reading the rest of *Breakthrough!*

Bible People Interviews

The stories in the Bible tell us how God broke through to certain people as part of salvation history. You will meet some of those people through imaginative interviews contained in the color sections inserted throughout *Breakthrough!* The interviews will help you understand the role these people had in God's great plan of salvation. Let them inspire you to answer God's call in your life!

Reading Plan

It is good to have a plan for reading the Bible. But don't start by trying to read through the whole Bible from beginning to end! In fact, for young Christians we don't even suggest you try to read all seventy-three books. We have picked forty books for you to focus on. Reading these books will give you a very good overview of salvation history. The section "Reading Plan" gives you a chart for keeping track of your progress in reading these books.

Study and Prayer Helps

You will find some important study and prayer helps in the back of *Breakthrough!* Included is an index to help you find the stories of important Bible events and Jesus' miracles, parables, and teachings. Another index contains all of the subjects covered in the Pray It!, Study It!, Live It!, and Catholic Connections articles. A glossary will help you understand unfamiliar Bible words, and other sections will help you find important Catholic prayers and teachings. "Bible Passages for Special Occasions" suggests

Bible passages for you to read at important moments in your life. Finally, nine maps show the location of important events in the Bible. The more you use these helps, the better you will be able to understand the Bible and to pray with it.

Some Important Questions

Who wrote the Bible?

Many of the Bible's stories were first told by storytellers around campfires and in religious gatherings. Or they were messages given in public places by prophets and evangelists. Eventually these stories and messages were written down. Other people added to them, combined them, and rewrote them. The Bible was written so long ago that we have no idea who most of the original writers and editors were. What we do know is that

Live It!

Following God in Everyday Life

Reading the Bible will change your life, especially if you are open to hearing God's call in the Bible. Even though the stories and teachings of the Bible were written long ago, they still apply today. God's Word is eternal—which is a way of saying that it applies to everyone, all through history.

The Live It! articles will help you understand how these ancient stories apply to your life today. They show how the Bible is a guide to building good relationships—with your friends, your family, and other people in your school and community. Live It! articles also show how God wants us to serve others who are in need and bring justice and peace to the world.

the Holy Spirit was at work through the whole process, inspiring these authors to communicate God's truth.

Why do we say the Bible is the Word of God?

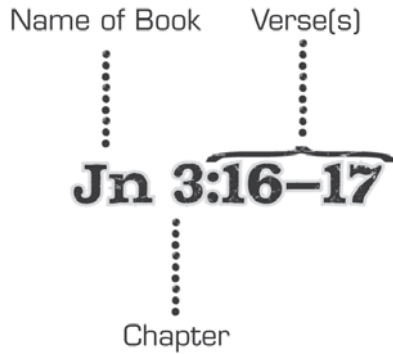
We know that the Bible is the Word of God because the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors who wrote it. This means that God helped the human authors communicate what he wanted us to know and that he is the ultimate author of the Bible. It means that the Bible is God's Word. He wants to communicate his truth and love to us. By inspiring the human authors, God made sure they communicated the things we need to know about him and how he saves us without any errors.

Inspiration does not mean that the Holy Spirit took over the minds of the human authors who wrote the books of the Bible. The human authors wrote as human beings, using the knowledge and language they had available. Being inspired did not change their human limitations. Despite these limitations, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, they communicated the truth we need to know about God and his plan for us.

How do I find Bible passages?

The Bible is organized in a way that helps you locate specific Bible passages. Each book in the Bible is divided into chapters (except for some very short books). The chapter numbers are the larger ones on the page. Each chapter is divided into verses. A verse is usually about a sentence long. The verse numbers are the smaller numbers in each chapter and start with verse 1 in each new chapter.

A Bible citation has a book name, a chapter number, and verse numbers. Here is an example: John 3:16–21. In this example, the book is John, meaning the Gospel of John. The chapter number is 3, and the verse numbers are 16 through 21. Go ahead, try and find John 3:16–21. If you need help finding where the book is in the Bible, use the handy chart in the back of *Breakthrough!*



What is a good way to study the Bible?

It is not a good idea to start at the beginning of the Bible and try to read it all the way through to the end, like you would a novel. Instead, start with a book you find interesting and read a chapter or two every day until you finish it. Then pick another book and read through it.

It is also a good idea to have a little ritual each time you read. This will help you to be more focused on what God wants to say to you as you read the Bible. Here are some simple steps you might try:

1. Start with a short prayer asking for God's help in understanding what you read. There is a prayer in the front of *Breakthrough!* that you can use.
2. Read carefully through the chapter or passage. Don't rush. Try to hear every word and let its meaning sink in.
3. Think about what you just read. Try to imagine yourself in the story. How would you feel? What do you think God is saying to you through the words you read?
4. Read the Study It!, Pray It!, Live It!, or Catholic Connections article if there is one connected to the passage you read.
5. Finish by thinking about how the reading might apply to your life. Is God comforting you about a hard situation? Is God calling you to make a change or try something new? Talk with God about whatever you are thinking or feeling.

READING PLAN

As a young person, you will want to get familiar with the people and stories in the Bible. A good way to do this is by reading complete books of the Bible. However, we do not recommend that you start at the beginning of the Bible and try to read it straight through. Because the Bible is a collection of many different kinds of books, it was not meant to be read like that. A better approach is to go back and forth between books in the Old and New Testaments. That way you can see the connections between both testaments.

The following chart lists the forty books that we have filled with extra articles. We chose these books because reading them will help you see the big picture of God's revelation. You don't have to read the books in this order though; read them in whatever order you wish. We have listed all the chapters in each book so you can check them off as you read them. There are 943 chapters all together. To read them all in one year, you would have to read about two or three chapters a day; to read them over three years, you would have to read about one chapter a day. There is no need to rush, the important thing is to open yourself up to what God wishes to say to you.

MARK

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16

GENESIS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47
 48 49 50

EXODUS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40

JOSHUA

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24

LUKE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24

ACTS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

JUDGES

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21

RUTH

1 2 3 4

1 SAMUEL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31

1 TIMOTHY

1 2 3 4 5 6

2 TIMOTHY

1 2 3 4

1 CORINTHIANS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16

2 SAMUEL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24

1 KINGS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22

2 KINGS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25

ISAIAH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47
 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56
 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65
 66

MATTHEW

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

PSALMS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47
 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56
 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65
 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74
 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83
 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92
 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101
 102 103 104 105 106 107 108
 109 110 111 112 113 114 115
 116 117 118 119 120 121 122
 123 124 125 126 127 128 129
 130 131 132 133 134 135 136
 137 138 139 140 141 142 143
 144 145 146 147 148 149 150

PHILIPPIANS

1 2 3 4

AMOS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

MICAH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

JEREMIAH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47
 48 49 50 51 52

JAMES

1 2 3 4 5

GALATIANS

1 2 3 4 5 6

ESTHER

A 1 2 3 B 4 C D 5 6 7
 8 E 9 10 F

DANIEL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14

JOB

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40 41 42

I PETER

1 2 3 4 5

EZEKIEL

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47
 48

JONAH

1 2 3 4

EZRA

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NEHEMIAH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13

HEBREWS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13

ROMANS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16

PROVERBS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29
 30 31

SONG OF SONGS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

2 MACCABEES

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15

JOHN

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21

I JOHN

1 2 3 4 5

REVELATION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
 21 22

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FOREWORD TO THE CATHOLIC EDITION OF THE GOOD NEWS TRANSLATION

In the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum)*, promulgated in 1965, the Second Vatican Council urged that “easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful,” and encouraged the preparation of new translations of the Scriptures “since the word of God should be accessible at all times” (*Dei Verbum* 22). Just one year later, the American Bible Society published *Good News for Modern Man: The New Testament in Today’s English Version*, and it immediately became an international best-seller. This success encouraged the American Bible Society to undertake the translation of the Old Testament and to publish the first edition of the *Good News Bible* in 1976. Even as the Old Testament was being translated from Hebrew, discussions between the ABS and Roman Catholic officials began concerning the possibility of translating the Old Testament books that Roman Catholic Bibles always include but which are not based on Hebrew texts. These books are sometimes called “deuterocanonical” to suggest that they were added to the list (canon) of books that Catholics consider to be sacred Scripture and a worthy basis for doctrine at a somewhat later date than those books that were translated from Hebrew. The deuterocanonical books exist in Greek and Latin sources and have always been included in English Bibles translated from the Latin Vulgate.

Consequently, the American Bible Society published the *Good News Bible with*

Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha in 1979. This “interconfessional” text included all the deuterocanonical books plus a number of additional books not usually found in Catholic Bibles, but which other Christian traditions revere and employ in worship. This was the first edition of the *Good News Bible* to receive an *Imprimatur* (which means “let it be printed”) from a Roman Catholic bishop, the Archbishop John Francis Whealon, the late archbishop of Hartford, Connecticut. While the *Imprimatur* does not constitute an endorsement, it assures the reader that the book does not contain anything contrary to the Catholic faith. When the *Good News Translation* was revised in 1992, it too received the *Imprimatur*, this time from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops under the signature of the then-Archbishop (now Cardinal) William H. Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore.

The Catholic edition of the *Good News Bible* you hold in your hands contains the 1992 revised text in the order and format most preferred by Roman Catholics. It contains only those books considered sacred Scripture by Catholics and presents them in the sequence that follows the one used in all Catholic Bibles in the Latin Vulgate tradition. If you are unfamiliar with the *Good News Translation*, or if you are looking for a translation that will help you better understand the Good News of Jesus Christ for you and the world today, I encourage you to read on.

Jean-Pierre Ruiz, STD
St. John’s University, New York
Epiphany 2003

OLD TESTAMENT

The Bible is divided into two major sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament in Catholic Bibles contains forty-six books. The Bibles that most Protestants use has thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. They do not include the books of Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and some parts of Esther and Daniel. That is the main difference between Catholic and Protestant Bibles.

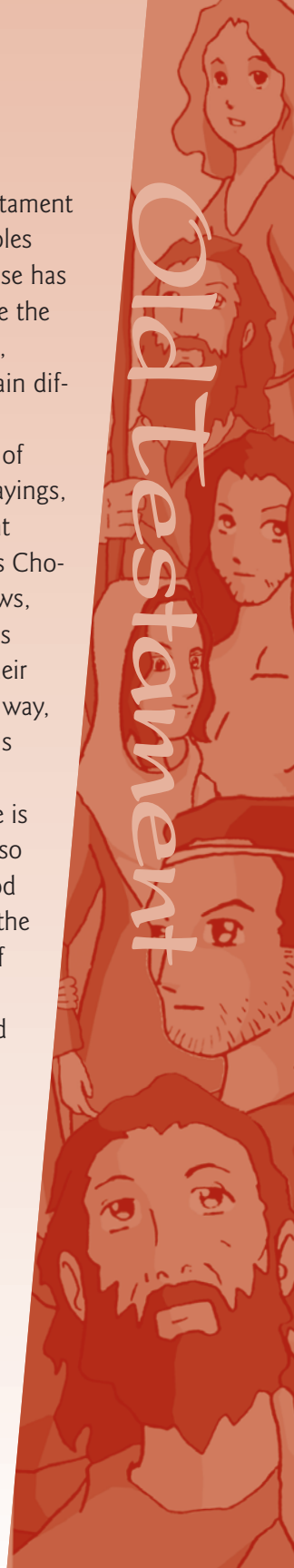
The Old Testament books include many different kinds of writings. You will find history, poetry, legends, laws, wise sayings, short stories, and the words of prophets. The Old Testament books are primarily about God's special relationship with his Chosen People. At different times these people are called Hebrews, Israelites, Judeans, and Jews. During their history God breaks through and calls the Chosen People to recognize him as their one and only God. God promises to bless them in a special way, and he asks the Chosen People to be faithful in following his commands.


This holy promise between God and the Chosen People is called a covenant. *Testament* is another word for *covenant*, so the Old Testament is the story of the Covenant between God and his special people—the Jews. Because of this, most of the books of the Old Testament are also the sacred Scriptures of the Jewish people. Since the books were written in Hebrew, they are sometimes called the Hebrew Scriptures. So the Old Testament isn't "old" because it is out of date. It is "old" because it is the story of how God first made his Covenant with his Chosen People.

The Old Testament in Christian Bibles is divided into four different sections. The table of contents shows the books that are in each section. Here is some information on each section:

The Pentateuch or Torah. These five books are the heart of the Old Testament. They contain the stories of Creation and stories about how sin entered the world. They tell how God broke through to first make his Covenant with Noah and Abraham. The Book of Exodus

Old Testament





tells how God led his people out of slavery through the leadership of Moses. At Mount Sinai, God extended the Covenant to all his Chosen People and gave them the Ten Commandments.

The Historical Books. These sixteen books are mostly religious history and some short novels. They tell how the Chosen People settled in the Promised Land. Eventually they became a kingdom led by kings like Saul, David, and Solomon. But the rulers and the people often worshiped false gods and ignored the poor. So God sent prophets like Elijah and Elisha to call the people to be faithful to the Covenant. The historical books have imaginative stories about heroes like Ruth, Tobit, Judith, and Esther.

The Wisdom Books. These seven books contain the collected wisdom of the Chosen People. They contain the songs they used in worship and prayer. They contain advice for living a good and holy life. The Song of Songs has poetry about the goodness of sexuality. The Book of Job is a debate about why good people suffer bad things.

The Books of the Prophets. These eighteen books contain the messages of important prophets. The prophets delivered God's message to the Chosen People. They warned the Chosen People against worshiping false gods. They challenged the Chosen People to act fairly and to care for the poor. The prophets also offered comfort and hope when the people thought God had abandoned them. And some of the prophets promised a future savior, the Messiah, who would bring God's love, justice, and peace to the world.

To fully understand God's plan for the human race, we need both the Old and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God reveals the love he has for us. The stories teach us how sin keeps us from being in a completely loving relationship with God. The Old Testament shows how, through various people, God broke through to put his Chosen People on the right path. The stories prepare us to understand how Jesus Christ fulfills God's promise to save us from sin and death.

Jake's mom keeps photo albums and scrapbooks. Chantal's dad videotapes the major moments in her life—and the not-so-major ones. Frederick's grandparents tell stories about what life was like when they were young. Human beings need to keep track of their memories. They also need to understand where they came from and where they are going.

The Book of Genesis does these things for the family of God. It starts out with stories about how God created the world, how evil came to be, and what God did about it. Then it tells the history of God's people—people who are holy (sometimes), good (except when they're bad), and faithful to God (eventually). Most of all, the Book of Genesis is the beginning of a love story between God and us.



Headlines

- God Creates Stars, Seas, and Slimy Things (chapters 1–2)
- First Sin Leads to First Punishment (3:1–24)
- Flood Warning! Noah Evacuates (chapters 7–8)
- God Calls, Abram Listens (12:1–9)
- Treachery and Trickery: Twin Steals Inheritance (27:1–45)
- Jacob Tricked, Marries Wrong Sister! (29:15–30)
- Pharaoh Appoints Israelite Governor (41:37–57)

FACTOIDS

Who wrote this book? A tradition says Moses wrote Genesis, but that is unlikely.

It was probably written by one or more authors who collected stories that were passed from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Why was it written? Genesis was written to explain how God created the world, how sin became part of life, and how the Israelites came to be God's Chosen People.

How does it fit into the Bible? Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It is part of the Pentateuch, the five books of the Bible that Jews call the Torah.

How is it organized? The first eleven chapters tell the story of Creation, the Fall, and God's Covenant with Noah. The rest of the book starts the history of God's Chosen People, beginning with Abraham and Sarah.

Important themes

- Everything God created is good and holy.
- Sin and evil are real.
- God promises to care for those who are faithful.



GENESIS

The Story of Creation

1 ¹In the beginning, when God created the universe, ^a ²the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God^b was moving over the water. ³Then God commanded, “Let there be light”—and light appeared. ⁴God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness, ⁵and he named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day.

⁶⁻⁷Then God commanded, “Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places”—and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it. ⁸He named the dome “Sky.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the second day.

⁹Then God commanded, “Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear”—and it was done. ¹⁰He named the land “Earth,” and the water which had come together he named “Sea.” And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹¹Then he commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit”—and it was done. ¹²So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw. ¹³Evening passed and morning came—that was the third day.

¹⁴Then God commanded, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when days, years, and religious festivals^c begin; ¹⁵they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth”—and it was done. ¹⁶So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars. ¹⁷He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day

^a **1:1** In the beginning . . . the universe; *or* In the beginning God created the universe; *or* When God began to create the universe. ^b **1:2** the Spirit of God; *or* the power of God; *or* a wind from God; *or* an awesome wind.

^c **1:14** religious festivals; *or* seasons.

1:3 2 Macc 7:28; 2 Cor 4:6 **1:6-8** 2 Pet 3:5

Live It!

And God Was Pleased

The Bible says that every time God created something, God was pleased. God never made a mistake in creation, never started over, never even said “oops!” Poison ivy, grizzly bears, hurricanes, spiders, bacteria, vultures, and aardvarks were all worthy of God’s pride.

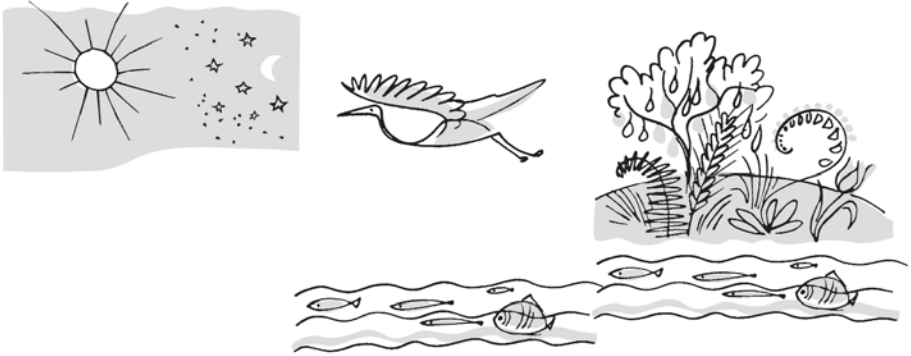
God was especially proud of the human beings he made on the sixth day (Genesis 1:31). No human being who lives on this planet was a mistake. You are here because God wanted YOU at this time in this place for a special reason. The same goes for the person at school whom you really don’t like and the person halfway across the world who lives in an “enemy” country.

The next time you’re down on yourself or someone else, remember that everyone has a bad day once in a while and try to imagine God saying, “I am very pleased! I do great work!”

— Genesis 1:1—2:4

and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹⁹Evening passed and morning came—that was the fourth day.

²⁰Then God commanded, “Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings,



So God made them all, and was pleased with what he saw. (1:25)

and let the air be filled with birds.”²¹ So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw.²² He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number.²³ Evening passed and morning came—that was the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small”—and it was done.²⁵ So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

²⁶ Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild,^d large and small.”²⁷ So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female,²⁸ blessed them, and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals.^e I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat;³⁰ but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided

grass and leafy plants for food”—and it was done.³¹ God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.

2 ¹ And so the whole universe was completed.² By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working.³ He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation^e and stopped working.⁴ And that is how the universe was created.



So God created human beings . . . and he was very pleased. (1:27–31)

^d 1:26 One ancient translation animals, domestic and wild; Hebrew domestic animals and all the earth. ^e 2:3 by that day he had completed his creation; or on that day he completed his creation.

1:26 Wis 2:23; Sir 17:3, 4; 1 Cor 11:7 1:27, 28 Gen 5:1, 2 1:27 Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6 2:2, 3 Ex 20:11 2:2 Heb 4:4, 10

The Garden of Eden

When the LORD^f God made the universe, ⁵there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; ⁶but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

⁷Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground^g and formed a man^g out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.^h

¹⁰A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers. ¹¹The first river is the Pishon; it flows around the country of Havilah. (¹²Pure gold is found there and also rare perfume and precious stones.) ¹³The second river is the Gihon; it flows around the country of Cush.ⁱ ¹⁴The third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. ¹⁶He told him, “You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, ¹⁷except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.^j You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.”

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.” ¹⁹So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all

Study It!

Uncovering the Truth

The first two chapters of Genesis tell two different stories of Creation. Some people believe that everything happened just as the Bible says it did. But Bible scholars tell us that neither of these stories gives us the scientific or historical facts about Creation. For example, God did not really create the world in six twenty-four-hour days. Neither God nor Adam named anything. And God did not take a rib from Adam to create Eve.

The stories in Genesis are symbolic stories. They may not contain scientific facts, but they tell us some important truths about God:

- God always was, even before the universe was created.
- God created everything.
- God loves all of Creation.
- God created humans in the image of God.
- God created us to be happy and live in perfect harmony with him, each other, and all creation.

There are many ways to communicate religious truth, and the Bible uses most of them. Believing the religious truth that the Bible teaches is the thing that really matters.

— Genesis 2:5–25

^f2:4 THE LORD: Where the Hebrew text has Yahweh, traditionally transliterated as Jehovah, this translation employs LORD with capital letters, following a usage which is widespread in English versions. ^g2:7 GROUND . . . MAN: The Hebrew words for “man” and “ground” have similar sounds. ^h2:9 knowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything. ⁱ2:13 CUSH: usually means Ethiopia, but here may refer to a place in Mesopotamia. ^j2:17 knowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything.

2:7 Wis 15:8, 11; 1 Cor 15:45 2:9 Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14

Genesis means “source” or “beginning.” It means that this book is about the beginning of things: the world, human beings, sin, the Covenant with God.

got their names.²⁰ So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

²¹ Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. ²² He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. ²³ Then the man said,

“At last, here is one of my own kind—
Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from
my flesh.

“Woman’ is her name because she was
taken out of man.”^k

²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

²⁵ The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.

Human Disobedience

3 ¹ Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”

² “We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,” the woman answered, ³ “except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die.”

⁴ The snake replied, “That’s not true; you will not die. ⁵ God said that because he knows that when you eat it, you will be like God^l and know what is good and what is bad.”^m

⁶ The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become



How wonderful it would be to become wise! (3:6)

wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it. ⁷ As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves.

⁸ That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees. ⁹ But the LORD God called out to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked.”

¹¹ “Who told you that you were naked?” God asked. “Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?”

¹² The man answered, “The woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³ The LORD God asked the woman, “Why did you do this?”

She replied, “The snake tricked me into eating it.”

God Pronounces Judgment

¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the snake, “You will be punished for this; you alone of all the animals must bear this curse: From now on you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dust as long as you live. ¹⁵ I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring’sⁿ heel.”

¹⁶ And he said to the woman, “I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him.”

¹⁷ And he said to the man, “You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you. ¹⁸ It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants. ¹⁹ You will have to work

^k 2:23 WOMAN . . . MAN: The Hebrew words for “woman” and “man” have rather similar sounds. ^l 3:5 God; or the gods. ^m 3:5 know what is good and what is bad; or know everything. ⁿ 3:15 her offspring’s; or their.

2:24 Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7, 8; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31 3:1 Wis 2:24; Rev 12:9; 20:2 3:13 2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14 3:15 Rev 12:17 3:17, 18 Heb 6:8

Catholic Connections

Original Sin

In Genesis, chapter 3, a serpent told Adam and Eve that they could be just like God if they ate fruit from a certain tree. The trouble was that God told them not to. They knew it was wrong, but they ate it anyway. As a consequence God told them to leave the garden and promised that they would now have a hard life. Their problems were passed to all future generations—including ours.

Just like the Creation stories, the story about the serpent is a symbolic story that teaches a great truth: human beings turned away from God. The Church calls this turning away from God original sin. Just as you got your brown eyes from your mom or your gift for music from your grandfather, you were born with original sin because of the sin of the first human beings—Adam and Eve.

Because of original sin, human beings are more likely to disobey God; there is evil in the world; our relationships are sometimes difficult. But through our Baptism, original sin is forgiven and we are born to a new life as sons and daughters of God.

— Genesis 3:1–24

hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again.”

²⁰Adam^a named his wife Eve,^p because she was the mother of all human beings.

²¹And the LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them.

Adam and Eve Are Sent Out of the Garden

²²Then the LORD God said, “Now these human beings have become like one of us and have knowledge of what is good and what is bad.^q They must not be allowed to take fruit from the tree that gives life, eat it, and live forever.” ²³So the LORD God sent them out of the Garden of Eden and made them cultivate the soil from which they had been formed. ²⁴Then at the east side of the

garden he put living creatures^r and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree that gives life.

Cain and Abel

4 ¹Then Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she became pregnant. She bore a son and said, “By the LORD’s help I have gotten a son.” So she named him Cain.^s ²Later she gave birth to another son, Abel. Abel became a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer. ³After some time Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD. ⁴Then Abel brought the first lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it, and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, ⁵but he rejected Cain and his offering. Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger. ⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why

^a 3:20 ADAM: This name in Hebrew means “all human beings.” ^p 3:20 EVE: This name sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “living,” which is rendered in this context as “human beings.” ^q 3:22 knowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything. ^r 3:24 LIVING CREATURES: See Word List. ^s 4:1 CAIN: This name sounds like the Hebrew for “gotten.”

Pray It!

Am I Like Cain?

Am I like Cain, God?

I know I sometimes don't do my best. I do just enough to barely get by. Then when someone tells me it's not good enough, I get angry.

Am I like Cain, God?

Sometimes I hurt those who do well at the things I'd like to be good at. I hurt them with my words, my attitudes, and my actions.

Am I like Cain, God?

When I'm punished for something I did wrong, I complain about the unfairness of it all. I don't take responsibility for what I did.

Am I like Cain, God?

If I am, I'm sorry. Please help me let go of the anger and jealousy that's in my heart. Replace it with kindness, fairness, and the ability to see myself as you see me.

Amen.

— Genesis 4:1–16

are you angry? Why that scowl on your face?
 7If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling;[†] but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it.”

8Then Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out in the fields.”[‡] When they were out in the fields, Cain turned on his brother and killed him.

9The LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

He answered, “I don’t know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?”

10Then the LORD said, “Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground, like a voice calling for revenge. 11You are placed under a curse and can no longer farm the soil. It has soaked up your brother’s blood as if it had opened its mouth to receive it when



“Why that scowl on your face?” (4:6)

[†] 4:7 you would be smiling; or I would have accepted your offering. [‡] 4:8 Some ancient translations Let’s go out in the fields; Hebrew does not have these words.

4:8 Wis 10:3; Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; 1 Jn 3:12 4:10 Heb 12:24

The Fall is the name given to the events that led to Adam and Eve’s being thrown out of the Garden of Eden.

Respecting Life

Cain tried to hide it at first. When God asked about Abel, he said, “I don’t know. Am I supposed to take care of my brother?” (Genesis 4:9) But God knew the truth: Cain killed his brother.

In many parts of the world (including the United States), if someone kills another person, he or she can be put to death for the crime. But God spared Cain from that fate. He even put a mark on Cain to warn others not to kill him. The rest of his life was miserable, but he lived.

The Catholic Church teaches that all of life is sacred—even the life of a person who takes someone else’s life. For that reason the death penalty must not be used if there are other ways to keep the murderer from hurting someone else. God calls us to have respect for all life.

**Catholic
Connections**

— Genesis 4:8–16

you killed him. ¹²If you try to grow crops, the soil will not produce anything; you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³And Cain said to the LORD, “This punishment is too hard for me to bear. ¹⁴You are driving me off the land and away from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵But the LORD answered, “No. If anyone kills you, seven lives will be taken in revenge.” So the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who met him not to kill him. ¹⁶And Cain went away from the LORD’s presence and lived in a land called “Wandering,” which is east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

¹⁷Cain and his wife had a son and named him Enoch. Then Cain built a city and named it after his son. ¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad, who was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael had a son named

Methushael, who was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech had two wives, Adah and Zillah.

²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the ancestor of those who raise livestock and live in tents. ²¹His brother was Jubal, the ancestor of all musicians who play the harp and the flute. ²²Zillah gave birth to Tubal Cain, who made all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron.^v The sister of Tubal Cain was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah, listen to me:

I have killed a young man because he struck me.

²⁴If seven lives are taken to pay for killing Cain,

Seventy-seven will be taken if anyone kills me.”

Seth and Enosh

²⁵Adam and his wife had another son. She said, “God has given me a son to replace Abel, whom Cain killed.” So she named him Seth.^w ²⁶Seth had a son whom he named

^v 4:22 who made all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron; *one ancient translation* who was the ancestor of all metalworkers. ^w 4:25 SETH: *This name sounds like the Hebrew for “has given.”*

Cain committed the sin of murder, but his story also contains other sins, such as jealous behavior and lying. Can you find more?

Enosh. It was then that people began using the LORD's holy name in worship.

The Descendants of Adam

(1 Chronicles 1:1–4)

5 ¹This is the list of the descendants of Adam. (When God created human beings, he made them like himself. ²He created them male and female, blessed them, and named them “Human Beings.”) ³When Adam was 130 years old, he had a son who was like him, and he named him Seth. ⁴After that, Adam lived another 800 years. He had other children ⁵and died at the age of 930.

⁶When Seth was 105, he had a son, Enosh, ⁷and then lived another 807 years. He had other children ⁸and died at the age of 912.

⁹When Enosh was 90, he had a son, Kenan, ¹⁰and then lived another 815 years. He had other children ¹¹and died at the age of 905.

¹²When Kenan was 70, he had a son, Mahalalel, ¹³and then lived another 840 years. He had other children ¹⁴and died at the age of 910.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65, he had a son, Jared, ¹⁶and then lived another 830 years. He had other children ¹⁷and died at the age of 895.

¹⁸When Jared was 162, he had a son, Enoch, ¹⁹and then lived another 800 years. He had other children ²⁰and died at the age of 962.

²¹When Enoch was 65, he had a son, Methuselah. ²²After that, Enoch lived in fellowship with God for 300 years and had other children. ²³He lived to be 365 years old. ²⁴He spent his life in fellowship with God, and then he disappeared, because God took him away.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187, he had a son, Lamech, ²⁶and then lived another 782 years. He had other children ²⁷and died at the age of 969.

²⁸When Lamech was 182, he had a son ²⁹and said, “From the very ground on which the LORD put a curse, this child will bring us

relief from all our hard work”; so he named him Noah. ^x ³⁰Lamech lived another 595 years. He had other children ³¹and died at the age of 777.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Human Wickedness

6 ¹When people had spread all over the world, and daughters were being born, ²some of the heavenly beings^y saw that these young women were beautiful, so they took the ones they liked. ³Then the LORD said, “I will not allow people to live forever; they are mortal. From now on they will live no



God's Bright Spot

God was fed up with human beings. Even though they were created in God's image, they insisted on disobeying God—*big time!* So God decided to destroy everyone and start from scratch. “I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am sorry that I made any of them” (Genesis 6:7).

But there was one bright spot: Noah and his family. They were good people who always made God number one in their life. They were the only ones in the world who lived as God wanted them to live. Because of them, God decided that the world was worth saving after all.

Does God always come first in your life? Are you God's bright spot?

— Genesis 6:1–12

^x **5:29** NOAH: *This name sounds like the Hebrew for “relief.”* ^y **6:2** heavenly beings; or sons of the gods; or sons of God.

5:1, 2 Gen 1:27, 28 **5:2** Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6 **5:24** Sir 44:16; 49:14; Heb 11:5; Jude 14 **6:1–4** Job 1:6; 2:1

longer than 120 years.”⁴In those days, and even later, there were giants on the earth who were descendants of human women and the heavenly beings. They were the great heroes and famous men of long ago.

⁵When the LORD saw how wicked everyone on earth was and how evil their thoughts were all the time, ⁶he was sorry that he had ever made them and put them on the earth. He was so filled with regret ⁷that he said, “I will wipe out these people I have created, and also the animals and the birds, because I am sorry that I made any of them.”⁸But the LORD was pleased with Noah.

Noah

⁹⁻¹⁰This is the story of Noah. He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Noah had no faults and was the only good man of his time. He lived in fellowship with God, ¹¹but everyone else was evil in God’s sight, and violence had spread everywhere. ¹²God looked at the world and saw that it was evil, for the people were all living evil lives.

¹³God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to all people. I will destroy them completely, because the world is full of their violent deeds. ¹⁴Build a boat for yourself out of good timber; make rooms in it and cover it with tar inside and out. ¹⁵Make it 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. ¹⁶Make a roof^z for the boat and leave a space of 18 inches between the roof^z and the sides. Build it with three decks and put a door in the side. ¹⁷I am going to send a flood on the earth to destroy every living being. Everything on the earth will die, ¹⁸but I will make a covenant with you. Go into the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. ¹⁹⁻²⁰Take into the boat with you a male and a female of every kind of animal and of every kind of bird, in order to keep them alive. ²¹Take along all kinds of food for you and for them.”²²Noah did everything that God commanded.

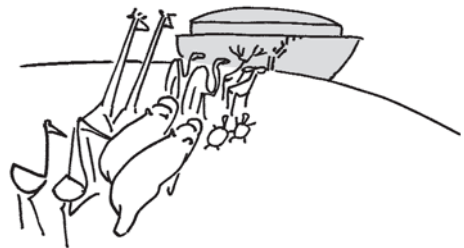
^z 6:16 roof; or window.

6:4 Num 13:33; Sir 16:7; Bar 3:26 6:5–8 Mt 24:37; Lk 17:26; 1 Pet 3:20 6:9 Sir 44:17, 18; 2 Pet 2:5
6:22 Heb 11:7 7:7 Mt 24:38, 39; Lk 17:27 7:11 2 Pet 3:6

The Flood

7¹The LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with your whole family; I have found that you are the only one in all the world who does what is right. ²Take with you seven pairs of each kind of ritually clean animal, but only one pair of each kind of unclean animal. ³Take also seven pairs of each kind of bird. Do this so that every kind of animal and bird will be kept alive to reproduce again on the earth. ⁴Seven days from now I am going to send rain that will fall for forty days and nights, in order to destroy all the living beings that I have made.”⁵And Noah did everything that the LORD commanded.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came on the earth. ⁷He and his wife, and his sons and their wives, went into the boat to escape the flood. ⁸A male and a female of every kind of animal and bird, whether ritually clean or unclean, ⁹went into the boat with Noah, as God had commanded. ¹⁰Seven days later the flood came.

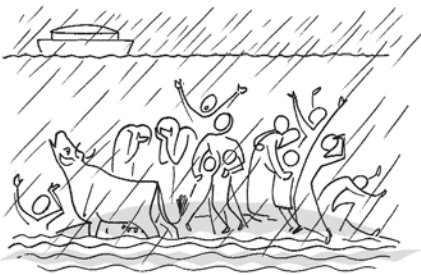


*Every kind of animal and bird . . .
went into the boat. (7:8, 9)*

¹¹When Noah was six hundred years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month all the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the flood-gates of the sky were opened, ¹²and rain fell on the earth for forty days and nights. ¹³On that same day Noah and his wife went into the boat with their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. ¹⁴With them went every kind of animal, domestic and wild, large and small, and every kind of bird. ¹⁵A male and a female of each kind of living

being went into the boat with Noah,¹⁶ as God had commanded. Then the LORD shut the door behind Noah.

¹⁷The flood continued for forty days, and the water became deep enough for the boat to float. ¹⁸The water became deeper, and the boat drifted on the surface. ¹⁹It became so deep that it covered the highest mountains; ²⁰it went on rising until it was about twenty-five feet above the tops of the mountains. ²¹Every living being on the earth died—every bird, every animal, and every person. ²²Everything on earth that breathed died. ²³The LORD destroyed all living beings on the earth—human beings, animals, and birds. The only ones left were Noah and those who were with him in the boat. ²⁴The water did not start going down for a hundred and fifty days.



Everything on earth that breathed died. (7:22)

The End of the Flood

8 ¹God had not forgotten Noah and all the animals with him in the boat; he caused a wind to blow, and the water started going down. ²The outlets of the water beneath the earth and the floodgates of the sky were closed. The rain stopped, ³and the water gradually went down for 150 days. ⁴On the seventeenth day of the seventh month the boat came to rest on a mountain in the Ararat range. ⁵The water kept going down, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared.

⁶After forty days Noah opened a window ⁷and sent out a raven. It did not come back, but kept flying around until the water was

completely gone. ⁸Meanwhile, Noah sent out a dove to see if the water had gone down, ⁹but since the water still covered all the land, the dove did not find a place to light. It flew back to the boat, and Noah reached out and took it in. ¹⁰He waited another seven days and sent out the dove again. ¹¹It returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water had gone down. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent out the dove once more; this time it did not come back.



The water had gone down. (8:11)

¹³When Noah was 601 years old, on the first day of the first month, the water was gone. Noah removed the covering of the boat, looked around, and saw that the ground was getting dry. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out of the boat with your wife, your sons, and their wives. ¹⁷Take all the birds and animals out with you, so that they may reproduce and spread over all the earth.” ¹⁸So Noah went out of the boat with his wife, his sons, and their wives. ¹⁹All the animals and birds went out of the boat in groups of their own kind.

Noah Offers a Sacrifice

²⁰Noah built an altar to the LORD; he took one of each kind of ritually clean animal and bird, and burned them whole as a sacrifice on the altar. ²¹The odor of the sacrifice pleased the LORD, and he said to himself,

Live It!

Got Gratitude?

When Noah and his family left the boat, the first thing Noah did was build an altar and offer prayers of thanksgiving to God. He was grateful to God for saving them and giving them a chance to start all over again. After receiving Noah's act of gratitude God decided never to destroy the world again.

If you never say thank you to the people in your life, they might feel like you take them for granted or don't appreciate them. Gratitude is also an important part of your relationship with God. Have you thanked God lately? For what are you grateful?

— Genesis 8:20–22

“Never again will I put the earth under a curse because of what people do; I know that from the time they are young their thoughts are evil. Never again will I destroy all living beings, as I have done this time. ²²As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

God's Covenant with Noah

9 ¹God blessed Noah and his sons and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth. ²All the animals, birds, and fish will live in fear of you. They are all placed under your power. ³Now you can eat them, as well as green

plants; I give them all to you for food. ⁴The one thing you must not eat is meat with blood still in it; I forbid this because the life is in the blood. ⁵If anyone takes human life, he will be punished. I will punish with death any animal that takes a human life. ⁶Human beings were made like God, so whoever murders one of them will be killed by someone else.

⁷“You must have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth.”

⁸God said to Noah and his sons, ⁹“I am now making my covenant with you and with your descendants, ¹⁰and with all living beings—all birds and all animals—everything that came out of the boat with you. ¹¹With these words I make my covenant with you: I promise that never again will all living beings be destroyed by a flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth. ¹²As a sign of this everlasting covenant which I am making with you and with all living beings, ¹³I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. ¹⁴Whenever I



The sign of my covenant with the world (9:13)

cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, ¹⁵I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings. ¹⁶When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth.

9:1 Gen 1:28 9:4 Lev 7:26, 27; 17:10–14; 19:26; Deut 12:16, 23; 15:23 9:6 Ex 20:13; Gen 1:26 9:7 Gen 1:28

Compare Genesis 1:29 and 9:2–3. What did God add to the human diet?