

saint mary's press

The Catholic Youth Bible[®]

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION
CATHOLIC EDITION

PRAY IT!
STUDY IT!
LIVE IT![®]



See
God in
everything

TRUST ^{IN}
GOD
Always

STAND UP
FOR the
poor and vulnerable



Share

the

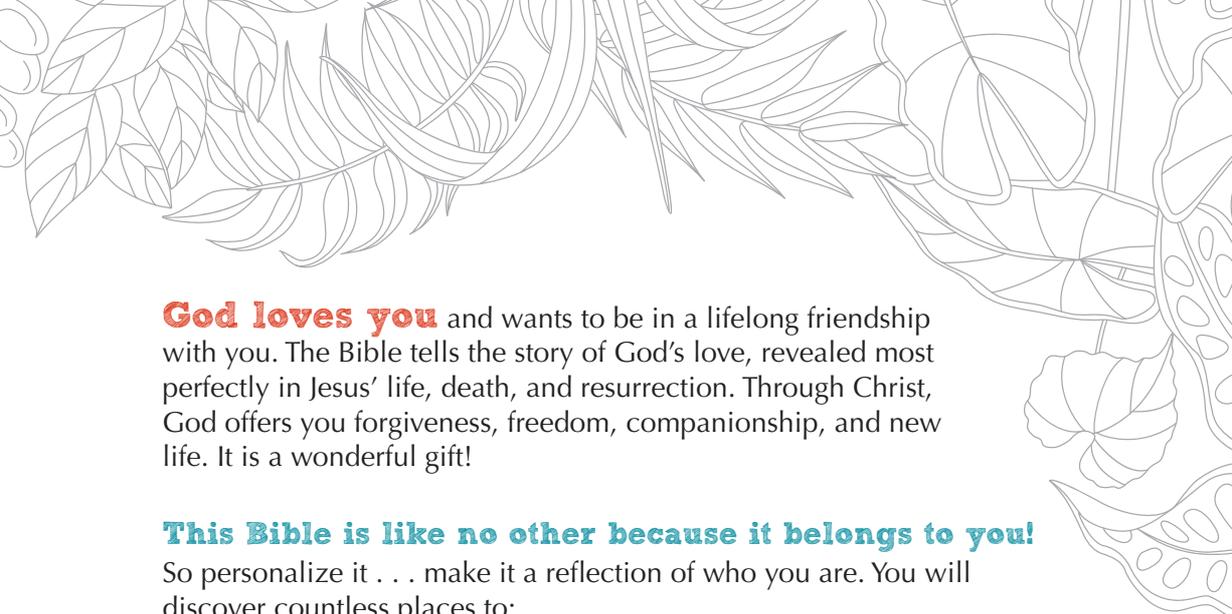
Faith

Be
Courageous

Serve
HUMBLY



This
Bible
can
change
your
life!



God loves you and wants to be in a lifelong friendship with you. The Bible tells the story of God's love, revealed most perfectly in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Through Christ, God offers you forgiveness, freedom, companionship, and new life. It is a wonderful gift!

This Bible is like no other because it belongs to you!

So personalize it . . . make it a reflection of who you are. You will discover countless places to:

✿ Write ✿ Color ✿ Draw ✿ Highlight ✿ Journal

This Bible brings God's word to life for you!

It is an exciting, meaningful, and relevant faith companion, and can guide you as you seek answers to life's important questions and discover new questions along the way.

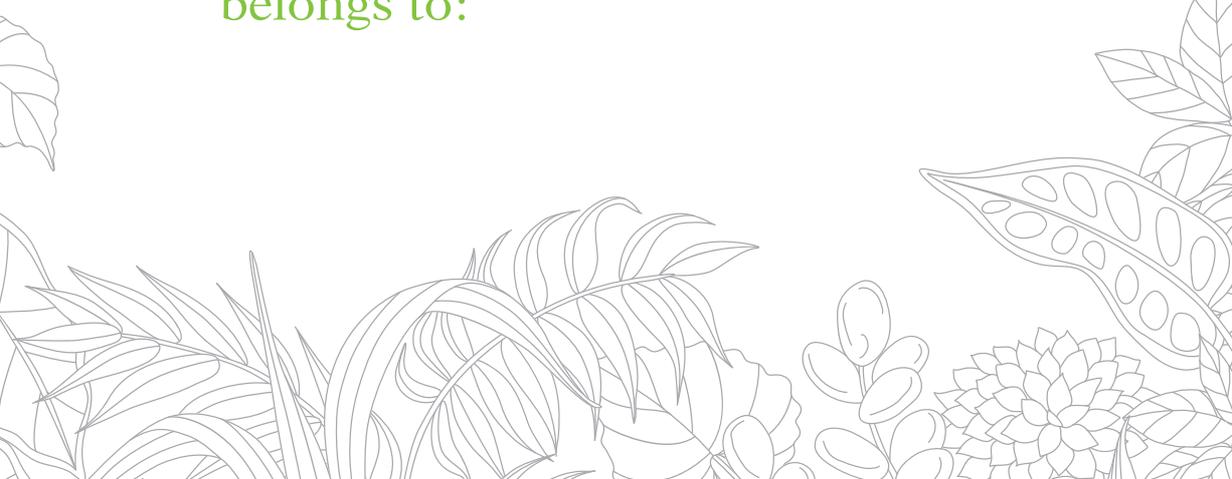
This Bible will help you connect with your faith!

It will engage you, challenge you to put your faith into action, and help you see yourself as an important and crucial part of the amazing Christian mission!

How will you respond?

This *Bible*
belongs to:

My **FAVORITE** verses:





For the text of the features and the introductions:

Nihil Obstat: Dr. Catherine Cory
Censor Librorum
May 2, 2017

Nihil Obstat: Dr. John W. Martens
Censor Librorum
May 3, 2017

Imprimatur: † Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
May 8, 2017

The nihil obstat and imprimatur are official declaration that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the nihil obstat or imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed, nor do they assume any legal responsibility associated with publication.

The content in this resource was acquired, developed, and reviewed by the content engagement team at Saint Mary's Press. Content design and manufacturing were coordinated by the passionate team of creatives at Saint Mary's Press.

Cover design by Dan Pitts Design. Illustrations by Vicki Shuck. Produced with the assistance of Livingstone, the Publishing Services Division of Barton-Veerman Company (www.LivingstoneCorp.com) and Peachtree Editorial Services.

Printed in Italy

(PO 5838)
4155 ISBN 1-59982-923-4, paper
4156 ISBN 1-59982-924-1, hardcover

The credits and acknowledgments continue on page 1494.

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition, copyright © 1989, 1993 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Up to five hundred (500) verses of the NRSV Bible may be quoted or reprinted without the express written permission of the Licensor and the NCC, provided that the verses quoted neither amount to a complete book of the Bible nor account for 25% or more of the written text of the total work in which they are quoted.

Quotations or reprints in excess of five hundred (500) verses (as well as all other permissions requests) must be approved in writing by the NRSV Permissions Office. For more information regarding licensing and permissions, please visit the website "www.nrsvbibles.org."

Copyright © 2018 by Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1320, www.smp.org. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Title: The Catholic Youth Bible : New Revised Standard Version.

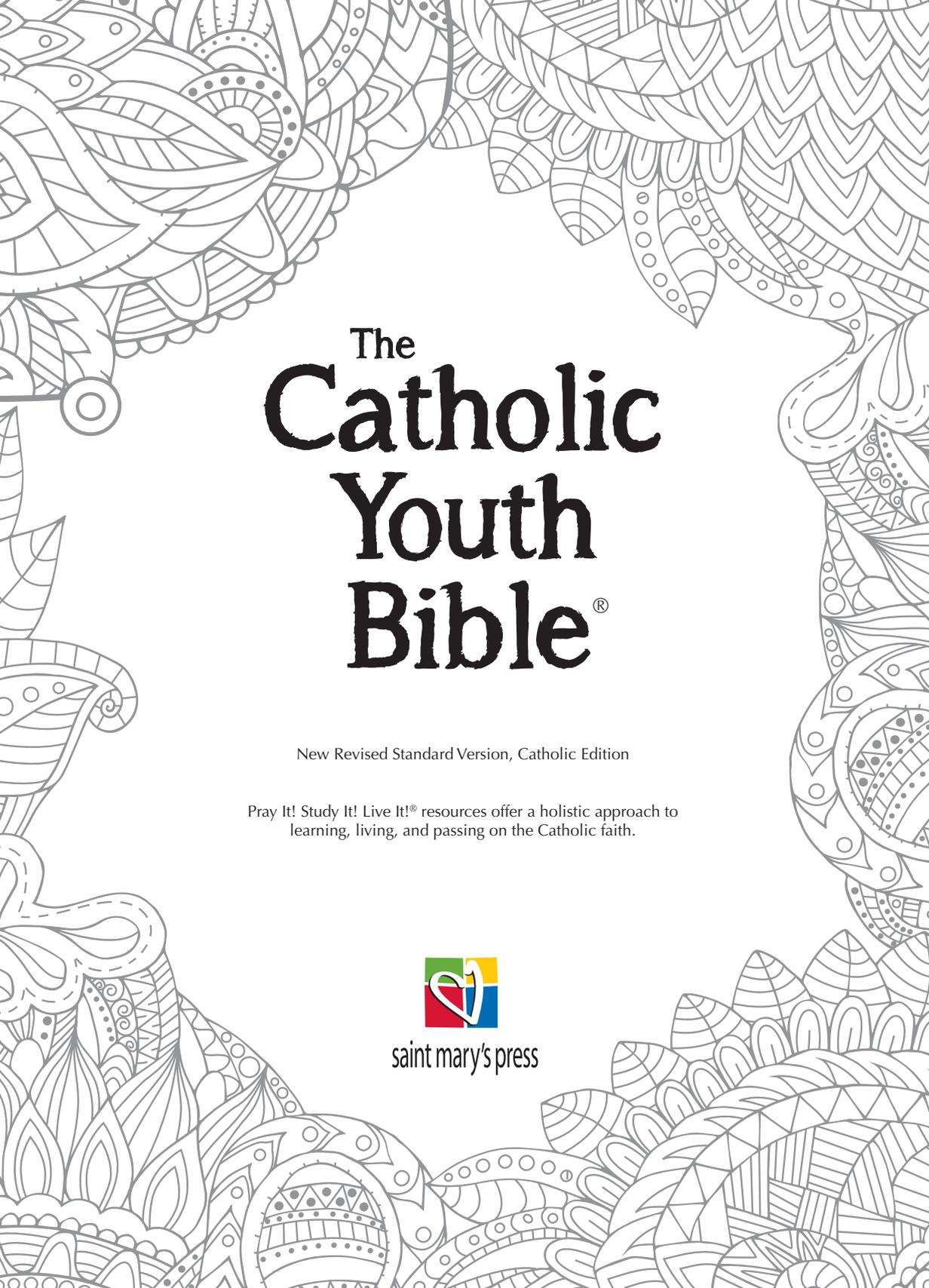
Other titles: Bible. English. New Revised Standard. 2017. Description: Catholic edition. | 4th edition. | Winona, MN : Saint Mary's Press, [2017] | Audience: Age: 15–19. | Audience: Grade 9 to 12.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017033156 (print) | LCCN 2017044847 (ebook) | ISBN 9781599829203 (Ebook) | ISBN 9781599829234 (soft cover) | ISBN 9781599829241 (hard bound)

Classification: LCC BS191.5.A1 2017 (ebook) | LCC BS191.5.A1 2017 W56 2017 (print) | DDC 220.5/20434—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017033156>



The background of the entire page is a complex, intricate mandala design. It features a variety of geometric and organic shapes, including circles, triangles, and leaf-like patterns, all rendered in a fine-line, black-and-white style. The design is dense and fills the entire frame, creating a rich, textured backdrop for the text.

The Catholic Youth Bible[®]

New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition

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



saint mary's press

Contents

- 8 | Bible Book Abbreviations
- 9 | How the Bible Is Organized
- 10 | Special Features
- 12 | List of Challenges
- 14 | How to Navigate *The Catholic Youth Bible*®
- 15 | Pronunciation of Proper Names
- 16 | Abbreviations Used in the Notes

The Old Testament

18 Introduction to the Pentateuch

20 Genesis	120 Leviticus	185 Deuteronomy
74 Exodus	148 Numbers	

220 Introduction to the Historical Books

223 Joshua	365 2 Kings	487 Judith
247 Judges	392 1 Chronicles	502 Esther
271 Ruth	417 2 Chronicles	514 1 Maccabees
277 1 Samuel	448 Ezra	542 2 Maccabees
308 2 Samuel	459 Nehemiah	
336 1 Kings	472 Tobit	

564 Introduction to the Wisdom and Poetry Books

566 Job	721 Ecclesiastes	762 Sirach
598 Psalms	731 Song of Solomon	
690 Proverbs	739 Wisdom of Solomon	

814 Introduction to the Prophets

816 Isaiah	1025 Hosea	1066 Nahum
881 Jeiah	1036 Joel	1070 Habakkuk
941 Lamentations	1042 Amos	1075 Zephaniah
949 Baruch	1051 Obadiah	1079 Haggai
957 Ezekiel	1054 Jonah	1082 Zechariah
1003 Daniel	1058 Micah	1092 Malachi

The New Testament

1098 Introduction to the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles

1104	Matthew	1183	Luke	1268	Acts of the Apostles
1151	Mark	1231	John		

1308 Introduction to the Letters and Revelation

1310	Romans	1397	2 Thessalonians	1451	2 Peter
1330	1 Corinthians	1401	1 Timothy	1456	1 John
1350	2 Corinthians	1409	2 Timothy	1464	2 John
1362	Galatians	1414	Titus	1466	3 John
1370	Ephesians	1417	Philemon	1468	Jude
1378	Philippians	1420	Hebrews	1471	Revelation
1385	Colossians	1434	James		
1391	1 Thessalonians	1444	1 Peter		

1494 | Credits and Acknowledgments

Additional Resources

Maps

75	The Exodus from Egypt
222	The Kingdom Years
1103	The Ministry of Jesus
1269	Paul's First and Second Journeys
1269	Paul's Third and Fourth Journeys

Where Do I Find It?

1536	Feature Index by Topic
1550	Explore the Bible
1554	When I'm Feeling . . .

Study Aids

599	Praying with the Psalms
1100	The Relationship between the Old and New Testaments
1102	Gospel Comparisons
1498	Being Catholic
1516	The Church Year
1518	Sunday Readings
1523	Glossary
1542	Overview of Salvation History
1546	Biblical History Time Line

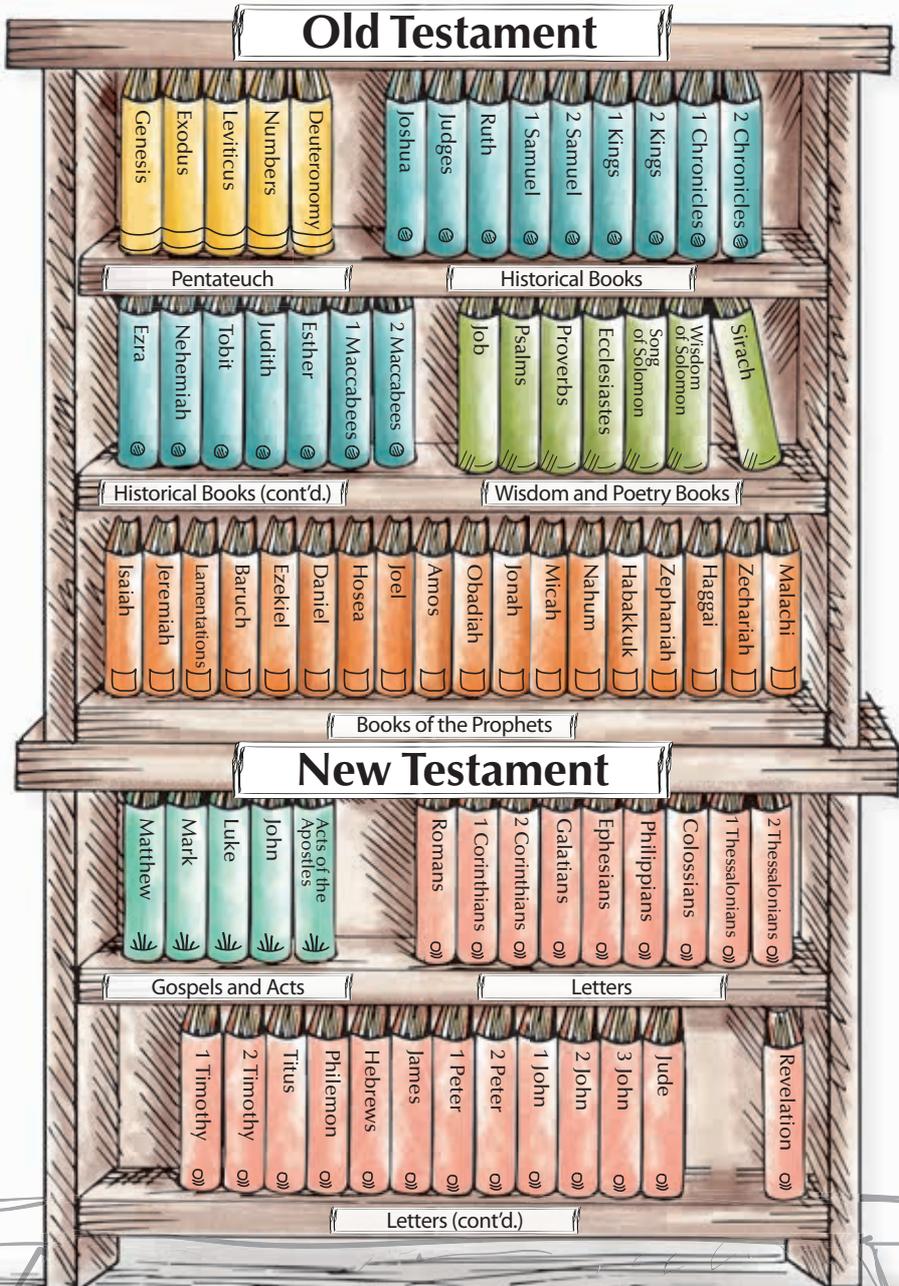


Bible Book Abbreviations

(Listed Alphabetically)

Tab	Book Name	Abbreviation	Page	Tab	Book Name	Abbreviation	Page
●	Acts	Acts	1268	●	1 Kings	1 Kings	336
●	Amos	Am	1042	●	2 Kings	2 Kings	365
●	Baruch	Bar	949	●	Lamentations	Lam	941
●	1 Chronicles	1 Chr	392	●	Leviticus	Lev	120
●	2 Chronicles	2 Chr	417	●	Luke	Lk	1183
●	Colossians	Col	1385	●	1 Maccabees	1 Macc	514
●	1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1330	●	2 Maccabees	2 Macc	542
●	2 Corinthians	2 Cor	1350	●	Malachi	Mal	1092
●	Daniel	Dan	1003	●	Mark	Mk	1151
●	Deuteronomy	Deut	185	●	Matthew	Mt	1104
●	Ecclesiastes	Eccl	721	●	Micah	Mic	1058
●	Ephesians	Eph	1370	●	Nahum	Nah	1066
●	Esther	Esth	502	●	Nehemiah	Neh	459
●	Exodus	Ex	74	●	Numbers	Num	148
●	Ezekiel	Ezek	957	●	Obadiah	Ob	1051
●	Ezra	Ezra	448	●	1 Peter	1 Pet	1444
●	Galatians	Gal	1362	●	2 Peter	2 Pet	1451
●	Genesis	Gen	20	●	Philemon	Philem	1417
●	Habakkuk	Hab	1070	●	Philippians	Phil	1378
●	Haggai	Hag	1079	●	Proverbs	Prov	690
●	Hebrews	Heb	1420	●	Psalms	Ps	598
●	Hosea	Hos	1025	●	Revelation	Rev	1471
●	Isaiah	Isa	816	●	Romans	Rom	1310
●	James	Jas	1434	●	Ruth	Ruth	271
●	Jeremiah	Jer	881	●	1 Samuel	1 Sam	277
●	Job	Job	566	●	2 Samuel	2 Sam	308
●	Joel	Joel	1036	●	Sirach	Sir	762
●	1 John	1 Jn	1456	●	Song of Solomon	Song	731
●	2 John	2 Jn	1464	●	1 Thessalonians	1 Thess	1391
●	3 John	3 Jn	1466	●	2 Thessalonians	2 Thess	1397
●	John	Jn	1231	●	1 Timothy	1 Tim	1401
●	Jonah	Jon	1054	●	2 Timothy	2 Tim	1409
●	Joshua	Josh	223	●	Titus	Titus	1414
●	Jude	Jude	1468	●	Tobit	Tob	472
●	Judges	Judg	247	●	Wisdom of Solomon	Wis	739
●	Judith	Jdt	487	●	Zechariah	Zech	1082
				●	Zephaniah	Zeph	1075

How the Bible is ORGANIZED



Catholic Connection

Examine the relationship between the Bible and many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices, including the seven principles of Catholic social teaching.

CHALLENGE

Incorporate core themes of the Bible into your daily life by stepping out of your comfort zone and putting faith into action.

SCRIPTURE highlights

Reflect on key Scripture verses and discover their connection to your life. You may even want to add color for your own personal touch.

Being Catholic

Gain insight into how faith shapes the way Catholics read the Bible, understand the world, and put faith into action (pages 1498-1515).

EXPLORE THE Bible

Make your way through the Bible by following engaging reading plans that are focused on fun and interesting themes (pages 1550-1553).

When I'M Feeling...

Connect Scripture verses that correspond to specific feelings and experiences you face in your daily life (pages 1554-1559).

TAKE THE

CHALLENGE

Pentateuch

Genesis

33 | Break Down Walls (11:7)**34** | Be a Blessing (12:2)

Exodus

78 | Support Life (2:9)**81** | Name Your "Aaron" (4:16)**94** | Help People out of the Desert (16:4)**104** | Make It Sacred (25:10–22)**111** | Look Around (32:9)

Leviticus

142 | Make It Holy (23:3)

Deuteronomy

200 | Give Generously (15:10)**214** | Choose Life (30:19)

Historical Books

1 Samuel

296 | Be a Friend (18:1)

2 Samuel

320 | Recognize Your Prophets (12:1)

1 Kings

341 | Ask for a Listening Heart (3:9)

2 Kings

373 | Assist the Refugee (8:1)

Ezra

456 | Sacrifice with a Purpose (8:23)

Judith

493 | Let Your Clothing Speak (8:4–5)

Wisdom Books

Psalms

612 | Be Honest with God (22:2)**620** | Help Prevent Suicide (34:19)**629** | Expand Your World (47:7–8)**661** | Change the World (104:5)**680** | Find Unity in Diversity (133:1)**683** | Advocate for Life (139:13)

Proverbs

692 | Embrace Proverbs (1:2)**711** | Feed the Hungry (22:9)

Wisdom of Solomon

745 | Seek Wisdom (6:12)

Sirach

766 | Practice Humility (3:17–18)

Prophets

Isaiah

826 | Finding Christ in Christmas (9:5)**847** | Stand against Homelessness (32:18)**873** | Make Lent Matter (58:5)

Jeremiah

884 | Be a Prophet (1:5)**923** | Help the Imprisoned (37:16)

Ezekiel

990 | Find a New Heart (36:26)

Jonah

1056 | Own Up to the Storm (1:12)

Gospels and Acts of the Apostles

Matthew

- 1106** | Claim Your Spiritual Family (1:1)
1117 | Recognize and Share Your Treasure (6:21)
1118 | Build Your House on Rock (7:24)
1131 | Forgive (18:21–22)
1133 | Care for the Children (19:14)
1149 | Reach Out (27:46)
1150 | Share Your Faith (28:19)

Mark

- 1153** | Renew Your Baptism (1:10)
1158 | Trust During a Storm (4:39)
1162 | Find a Restful Place (6:31)
1166 | See Clearly (8:25)
1171 | Have Faith (10:52)
1174 | Give What You've Got (12:44)
1177 | Celebrate the Eucharist (14:22)
1180 | Confront the Death Penalty (15:15)

Luke

- 1185** | Ask for Mary's Help (1:42)
1189 | Clothe the Naked (3:11)
1195 | Love Your Enemies (6:27–28)
1201 | Give Your Life for Others (9:24)
1205 | Own It! (11:2–4)
1216 | Increase Your Faith (17:5–6)
1228 | Bury the Dead (23:52)

John

- 1233** | Share Christian Joy (1:14)
1243 | Share Bread (6:35)
1249 | Be a Shepherd (10:14)
1251 | Comfort Those Who Suffer (11:35)
1263 | Take a Stand on Capital Punishment (19:7)
1267 | Tend the Sheep (21:16)

Acts of the Apostles

- 1272** | Live with the Spirit (2:4)
1279 | Shelter the Homeless (4:34–35)
1282 | Speak Up! (7:54)
1298 | Share Your Blessings (20:35)

Letters and Revelation

Romans

- 1313** | See God in Everything (1:20)
1324 | Give of Yourself for Others (12:1)

1 Corinthians

- 1336** | Care for Your Temple (6:19–20)
1343 | See the Gifts (12:4–6)

Galatians

- 1368** | Do Good for the Family of Faith (6:10)

Ephesians

- 1376** | Give Thanks (5:20)

1 Thessalonians

- 1396** | Find the Gift in Challenges (5:18)

Hebrews

- 1430** | Stay Focused (12:1–2)
1432 | Learn from Leaders (13:7)

James

- 1438** | Seek Wisdom (3:13)
1440 | Care for the Sick (5:14–15)

1 Peter

- 1449** | Serve the Church (4:10)

1 John

- 1459** | Acknowledge Your Sin (1:9)
1460 | Love in Deed (3:17–18)

Revelation

- 1490** | Give Drink to the Thirsty (21:6)

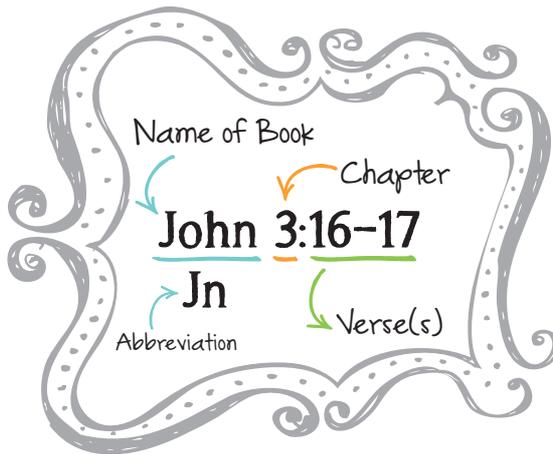
How to Navigate The Catholic Youth Bible

Understanding the Bible Structure

This Bible contains all seventy-three books and letters that form a complete Catholic Bible, seven more books than most other Bibles (for an understanding of the difference, see “The ‘Hidden’ Books,” in Tobit, chapter 1). The table of contents on pages 6–7 of this Bible will remind you where each book is found and what section of books it belongs to. Additionally, page 9 provides an image that will help you see how the collection of books is organized. These resources will help you move around the Bible with ease!

Finding a Bible Passage and Other References

Throughout *The Catholic Youth Bible*®, there are many references to specific Bible passages that include book, chapter number, and verse(s).



In addition, you will find notes printed along the bottom of many pages. A **letter** in the Bible text will correspond to a specific note at the bottom of the page. Abbreviations used are identified on page 8.

a Heb adam; **h** Syr: Heb and over all the earth; **h** Heb him; **h** Heb YHWH, as in other places where "Loxo" is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3.14–15 with notes); **h** Or formed a man (Heb adam) of dust from the ground (Heb adamah)

Pronunciation of Proper Names

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

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

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

Three kinds of marks are used:

- ✓ The acute accent mark: shows which syllable of a name is to be stressed. A compound name—with parts separated by a hyphen—has an accent mark in each part having more than one syllable.
- The centered dot: shows where an unaccented syllable ends and another syllable begins.
- ˉ The macron: printed over a vowel that has a “long” sound. The macron is shown over the following vowels when they are sounded as indicated:

a as in gate	o as in hope
e as in key	u as in use or rule
i as in ice	y as in type

The macron also indicates the pronunciation of certain diphthongs, or vowel combinations:

over the a in *ai* as in *pail*
over the i in *ai* as in *aisle*

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

Abbreviations Used in the Notes

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

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



the
**Old
Testament**

Introduction to the **PENTATEUCH**

If you've ever been late to a movie, you've probably spent a few minutes trying to figure out what you missed. Like the crucial first minutes of a movie, the five books of the Pentateuch set the stage for much of what happens in the rest of the Bible, as they describe the development of a relationship between God and humankind.

Here is a quick rundown in case you arrived late. Genesis tells of the world's beginnings with a special emphasis on the role of human beings. We learn of a God who is responsible for all creation and about humankind's unique relationship with God. We also learn of human beings' tendency toward sin. Finally, we learn how God sought a relationship with a man named Abraham and his descendants as part of his plan to restore his fractured relationship with humankind.

In Exodus we discover the great lengths that God will go to in order to keep his covenant with his chosen people. Through a man named Moses, God miraculously frees the Israelites from slavery and establishes a special covenant with them.

Leviticus shows that a relationship with God comes with responsibilities, described in the covenant laws.

Numbers shows the Israelites' learning to place their trust in God as they take a 38-year-long road trip to the promised land.

Finally, in Deuteronomy, the stage is set for the Israelites to enter the promised land as God's very own people.

In the Pentateuch, we learn how much God loves the human race, wishes to be in relationship with us, and that we are all children of God.

Other Background

- ❁ Some of the most familiar stories and people of the Old Testament are found in Genesis and Exodus.
- ❁ Genesis includes the accounts of:
 - ✦ Creation
 - ✦ Adam and Eve
 - ✦ Noah and the flood
 - ✦ Abraham and Sarah
 - ✦ Joseph and his brothers
- ❁ Exodus contains the accounts of:
 - ✦ Moses and the burning bush
 - ✦ Pharaoh and the ten plagues
 - ✦ The parting of the Red Sea
 - ✦ The Exodus out of Egypt
 - ✦ The Ten Commandments
- ❁ The Greek word *Pentateuch* means “five books.” People of the Jewish faith refer to the first five books as the Torah, a Hebrew word meaning “teaching” or “instruction.”
- ❁ A covenant establishes a new relationship between two parties and is marked by a solemn promise, wherein both parties agree to fulfill certain obligations.



The Book of GENESIS

Quick Summary

Have you ever flipped through a family photo album with your older relatives to hear stories about relatives from the past? The Book of Genesis is kind of like that. As you read it, you hear stories about relatives from long ago—our faith ancestors.

Genesis is divided into two main sections. The first section, 1:1–11:26, opens with two accounts of Creation revealing God's power to create a harmonious universe and humankind's special place in it. Unfortunately, by chapter 3, sin enters and the first humans, Adam and Eve, begin to experience discord, suffering, and death. The section continues with sin spreading to all of society with the accounts of Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, and the tower of Babel. Note that these chapters are not strict historical accounts, but inspired stories that share a faith perspective and teach important religious truths.

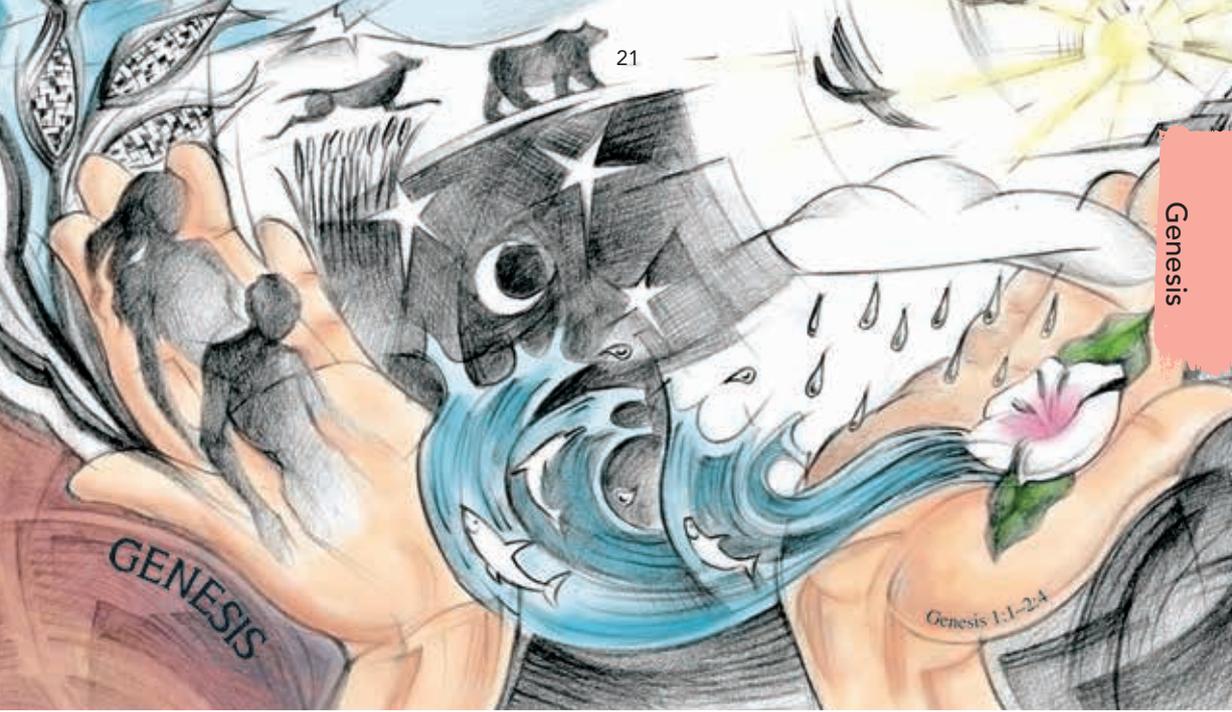
The second section, 11:27–50:26, tells how God began to develop a covenant relationship with one nation, Israel. This starts with God promising countless descendants to a childless old couple named Abraham and Sarah. We follow Abraham and Sarah and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren's journey of faith through stories of love, courage, betrayal, and redemption. We learn that God is faithful, even when humanity is not.

How Is This Relevant to My Life Today?

- God has the power to bring order out of chaos.
- When we fail, God still cares for us.
- Remaining faithful even when things seem impossible can lead to unexpected blessings.

Headline Highlights

- The Source of Human Dignity (1:26–27)
- God Hits the Reset Button (6:1–9:17)
- Confusion Reigns at Tower (11:1–9)
- Pregnant at Age 90! (21:1–8)
- Close Call on Mountain (22:1–19)
- Favorite Son Disappears, Brothers Cover Up (37:1–35)
- A Powerful Reconciliation (chapters 42–45)



Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

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

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

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

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and

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

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

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

a Or when God began to create or In the beginning God created b Or while the spirit of God or while a mighty wind

Did You Know?

Six Days? Really?

Genesis 1:1–2:4

Some Christians believe that God actually created the world in six 24-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written as a series of symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that conveys great moral and spiritual truths.

Mythic stories are just one literary type, or genre, that is used in the Bible. Each genre has different rules for interpreting meaning. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre; otherwise you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn't intend.

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

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

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."²⁹God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

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

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

Another Account of the Creation

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

¹⁰A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;¹²and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.¹³The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush.¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air,

^a Heb adam ^b Syr: Heb and over all the earth ^c Heb him ^d Heb YHWH, as in other places where "LORD" is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3.14–15 with notes). ^e Or formed a man (Heb adam) of dust from the ground (Heb adamah)

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

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

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

The First Sin and Its Punishment

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^d knowing good

and evil.” ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” ¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.” ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures;

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

GROWING IN FAITH

Genesis 1:26-27

Being Real

Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage or to change their physical appearance in order to conform to the latest fad or fit the dominant cultural image of beauty. But we must remember that we are all unique and all made in God's image.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. Even though this can be challenging in a world that often emphasizes outer “beauty” and comparison to others, we are called to fully embrace ourselves as created, loved, and blessed by God. Write an affirmation of acceptance for yourself somewhere on this page, and commit to claiming each day this week that you are a beautiful person loved by God.



Catholic Connection

Genesis, chapters 1-2

Partners with God

In the opening chapters of Genesis, we read the wonderful story of God's creation of the universe. With each new day, God creates light and darkness, earth and sea, plants and animals, and ultimately man and woman. Then God commands the man and woman to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). In other words, human beings are to partner with God in the completion of and care for creation.

Catholic social teaching tells us that as partners with God in sustaining the world, we have a responsibility to protect the dignity of the human person as well as the planet. God has given us the amazing gift of intellectual inquiry, which leads to wonderful advancements for our world. Our faith calls us to evaluate whether these advancements are in keeping with God's plan for creation. We must always consider how we can promote ethical research so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of creation and thrive in the universe. What is one thing you can do today to use your intellectual gifts to sustain and care for God's creation?

Catholic Social Teaching:
Care for God's Creation

upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

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

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

¹⁷ And to the man^a he said,
"Because you have listened to the voice of
your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of
your life;

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

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

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

²² Then the LORD God said, "See, the man has
become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and
now, he might reach out his hand and take also from
the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—²³there-
fore the LORD God sent him forth from the gar-
den of Eden, to till the ground from which he was
taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man; and at the east of
the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and
a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to
the tree of life.

Cain Murders Abel

4 Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she con-
ceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced^d
a man with the help of the LORD." ² Next she bore
his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep,
and Cain a tiller of the ground. ³ In the course of
time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the
fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel for his part brought

^a Or to Adam ^b In Heb Eve resembles the word for living ^c Or for Adam
^d The verb in Heb resembles the word for Cain

Catholic Connection

Genesis, chapter 3

That Lying Snake!

Before the Fall, Adam and Eve had freedom and a close friendship with God. They lived in perfect harmony with each other and all of creation. Tension and strife entered Adam and Eve's relationship with God when they believed the serpent's lie. Sin and death became a reality. Though this account in chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis uses figurative language, it points to the reality that all of humanity has been affected by the sin of Eve and Adam.

This original sin and its consequences have been handed down to every generation throughout all of history, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary. Although we are not personally responsible for it, this sin has wounded our nature also. We are inclined to sin and subject to death. Fortunately, sin has been overcome by the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the grace of the sacrament of baptism, we are freed from original sin and turned back toward God.

Catechism, numbers 369–421

of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.⁶ The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field."^a And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"¹⁰ And the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.¹² When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!¹⁴ Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me."¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, "Not so!¹⁶ Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod,^c east of Eden.

Beginnings of Civilization

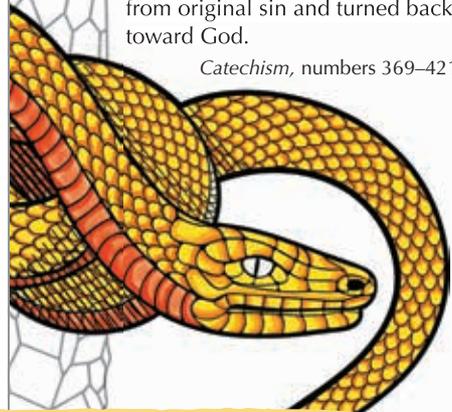
¹⁷Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and named it Enoch after his son Enoch.¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael the father of Methushael, and Methushael the father of Lamech.¹⁹ Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the ancestor of those who live in tents and have livestock.²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe.²² Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

^a Sam Gk Syr Compare Vg: MT lacks Let us go out to the field ^b Gk Syr Vg: Heb Therefore ^c That is Wandering



WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Brothers and Sisters Genesis 4:7

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” With that famous question, Cain pretends he does not know where his brother is. God does not answer Cain’s question directly, but we all know the response.

We are all brothers and sisters; therefore, we are responsible for one another: family, friends, and strangers. Let’s renew our commitment to take seriously the obligation to watch out and care for one another.

²⁵Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, for she said, “God has appointed^a for me another child instead of Abel, because Cain killed him.” ²⁶To Seth also a son was born, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to invoke the name of the LORD.

Adam’s Descendants to Noah and His Sons

5 This is the list of the descendants of Adam. When God created humankind,^b he made them^c in the likeness of God. ²Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them “Humankind”^b when they were created.

³When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. ⁴The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred thirty years; and he died.

⁶When Seth had lived one hundred five years, he became the father of Enosh. ⁷Seth lived after the birth of Enosh eight hundred seven years, and had other sons and daughters. ⁸Thus all the days of Seth were nine hundred twelve years; and he died.

⁹When Enosh had lived ninety years, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰Enosh lived after the birth of

Kenan eight hundred fifteen years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Thus all the days of Enosh were nine hundred five years; and he died.

¹²When Kenan had lived seventy years, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³Kenan lived after the birth of Mahalalel eight hundred and forty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Thus all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶Mahalalel lived after the birth of Jared eight hundred thirty years, and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Thus all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred ninety-five years; and he died.

¹⁸When Jared had lived one hundred sixty-two years he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹Jared lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Thus all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty-two years; and he died.

²¹When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. ²²Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²³Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred

^a The verb in Heb resembles the word for Seth ^b Heb adam ^c Heb him

sixty-five years. ²⁴Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah had lived one hundred eighty-seven years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶Methuselah lived after the birth of Lamech seven hundred eighty-two years, and had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Thus all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty-nine years; and he died.

²⁸When Lamech had lived one hundred eighty-two years, he became the father of a son; ²⁹he named him Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.” ³⁰Lamech lived after the birth of Noah five hundred ninety-five years, and had other sons and daughters. ³¹Thus all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy-seven years; and he died.

³²After Noah was five hundred years old, Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The Wickedness of Humankind

6 When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ³Then the LORD said, “My spirit shall not abide” in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.” ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.

⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. ⁶And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.

Noah Pleases God

⁹These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all

^a eaning of Heb uncertain

Catholic Connection

Genesis 4:15

Genesis

Stop the Cycle

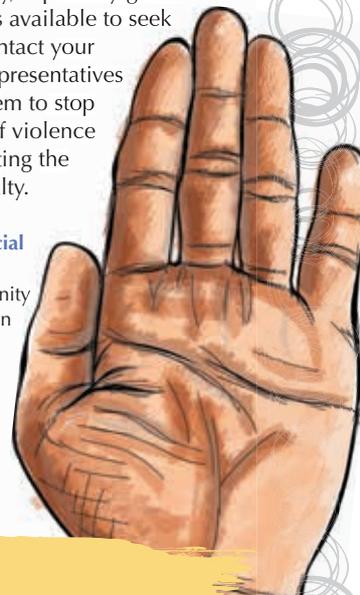
Cain was a murderer, and some might say that he deserved the death penalty. But in Genesis 4:15, God marks Cain to protect him from being killed and to stop the cycle of violence. Why kill someone to show that it is wrong to kill someone?

Catholic social teaching asserts that all life—even that of a violent criminal—has God-given dignity that we must protect at all times. We can sometimes find this teaching difficult. It’s easy to see why we should protect the dignity of the poor, the dying, and the unborn—but why should we respect the life of someone whose own actions have shown no concern for life?

Scripture teaches us that we cannot achieve justice through vengeance and that forgiveness, reconciliation, and conversion are always possible, even for the greatest sinner. Capital punishment has proven to be ineffective and unnecessary today, especially given the alternatives available to seek justice. Contact your political representatives and ask them to stop the cycle of violence by eliminating the death penalty.

Catholic Social Teaching:

Life and Dignity of the Human Person



WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Wash Away Sin! → Genesis 6:1-9:17

At the beginning of the Noah story, sin has continued to spread so that it has become an accepted part of society. The great flood, which wipes out a whole civilization, symbolizes the consequences of widespread sin.

When sin becomes part of our social systems and our institutions, it is called social sin. Examples of social sin are the unequal distribution of the world's wealth, the exploitation of workers by corporations, and discrimination. What are the effects of social sin in your community? in your country? in the world? What can you do today with your church or community to stand against social sin?

flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of cypress^a wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof^b for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." ²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

The Great Flood

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; ³and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth. ⁷And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,

^a Meaning of Heb uncertain ^b Or window

on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons entered the ark, ¹⁴and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; ²⁰the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings; ²²everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. ²⁴And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred fifty days.

The Flood Subsides

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; ²the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated; ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the

Did You Know?

Out of Control

Genesis 6:1–9:17

The sin of Adam and Eve in the garden starts a disastrous trend in which each generation adds to sin in the world. This sin leads to the corruption of the world and the destruction of human beings. The great flood illustrates the ancient belief that God washed the world clean of this sinfulness and gave another chance to those who were faithful to God. In this flood story, God takes great care to save Noah and his family because they are faithful. After the flood, God makes a covenant with Noah, promising never to destroy the earth by flood again.

waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; ¹¹and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

¹³In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” ¹⁸So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. ¹⁹And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.

SEARCHING for GOD

Genesis 7:8-17 ←

True Colors

What do you see when you see a rainbow? Do you see a multicolored arc caused by the refraction of sunlight through droplets of water? Or do you see a wonder of nature that causes you to stop and stare in awe? Something as remarkable as a rainbow is more than just science. It's no wonder that the writer of Genesis used it as a symbol of God's covenant promise—a sign of God's true colors of faithfulness and love. When we are faithful as God is faithful, we too let our true colors shine.



God's Promise to Noah

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing odor, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.

²² As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, day and night,
shall not cease."

The Covenant with Noah

9 God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. ²The fear and dread of you shall rest on every animal of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on everything that creeps on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. ⁴Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it and from human beings, each one for the blood of another, I will require a reckoning for human life.

⁶ Whoever sheds the blood of a human,
by a human shall that person's blood be
shed;

for in his own image

God made humankind.

⁷And you, be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it."

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark." ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹²God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of

^a Gk: Heb adds every animal of the earth

all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Noah and His Sons

¹⁸The sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was peopled.

²⁰Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. ²¹He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in his tent. ²²And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. ²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said,

“Cursed be Canaan;
lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers.”

²⁶He also said,
“Blessed by the LORD my God be Shem;
and let Canaan be his slave.

²⁷ May God make space for^a Japheth,
and let him live in the tents of Shem;
and let Canaan be his slave.”

²⁸After the flood Noah lived three hundred fifty years. ²⁹All the days of Noah were nine hundred fifty years; and he died.

Nations Descended from Noah

10 These are the descendants of Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; children were born to them after the flood.

²The descendants of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ³The descendants of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. ⁴The descendants of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.^b ⁵From these the coastland peoples spread. These are the descendants of Japheth^c in their lands, with their own language, by their families, in their nations.

⁶The descendants of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁷The descendants of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ⁸Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first on earth to become a mighty warrior. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod

a mighty hunter before the LORD.” ¹⁰The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar. ¹¹From that land he went into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and ¹²Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. ¹³Egypt became the father of Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹⁴Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim, from which the Philistines come.^d

¹⁵Canaan became the father of Sidon his first-born, and Heth, ¹⁶and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁷the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁸the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. ¹⁹And the territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. ²⁰These are the descendants of Ham, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

²¹To Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the elder brother of Japheth, children were born. ²²The descendants of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram. ²³The descendants of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. ²⁴Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber. ²⁵To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg,^e for in his days the earth was divided, and his brother’s name was Joktan. ²⁶Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the descendants of Joktan. ³⁰The territory in which they lived extended from Mesha in the direction of Sephar, the hill country of the east. ³¹These are the descendants of Shem, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

³²These are the families of Noah’s sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ²And as they migrated from the east,^f they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

^a Heb yaphth, a play on Japheth ^b Heb Mss Sam Gk See 1 Chr 1.7: MT Dodanim ^c Compare verses 20, 31. Heb lacks These are the descendants of Japheth ^d Cn: Heb Casluhim, from which the Philistines come, and Caphtorim ^e That is Division ^f Or migrated eastward

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Unity in Diversity → Genesis 11:1-9

The story of the tower of Babel is an ancient explanation of why the separation between people, symbolized by different languages, occurs. The people gather in one place to try to build a tower reaching to heaven, an act that is a sin of pride and arrogance. But God confuses their language and foils their plan.

In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, we see language serving as a bridge. The Holy Spirit enables people from many different lands to hear the apostles speaking in their own languages. The message is that when we live by the Spirit, we can rise above the differences of language and culture and embrace the unity we share.



⁵The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. ⁶And the LORD said, “Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. ⁹Therefore it was called Babel, because there the LORD confused^a the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Descendants of Shem

¹⁰These are the descendants of Shem. When Shem was one hundred years old, he became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood; ¹¹and Shem lived after the birth of Arpachshad five hundred years, and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arpachshad had lived thirty-five years, he became the father of Shelah; ¹³and Arpachshad lived after the birth of Shelah four hundred three years, and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴When Shelah had lived thirty years, he became the father of Eber; ¹⁵and Shelah lived after the birth

of Eber four hundred three years, and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶When Eber had lived thirty-four years, he became the father of Peleg; ¹⁷and Eber lived after the birth of Peleg four hundred thirty years, and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg had lived thirty years, he became the father of Reu; ¹⁹and Peleg lived after the birth of Reu two hundred nine years, and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu had lived thirty-two years, he became the father of Serug; ²¹and Reu lived after the birth of Serug two hundred seven years, and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug had lived thirty years, he became the father of Nahor; ²³and Serug lived after the birth of Nahor two hundred years, and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor had lived twenty-nine years, he became the father of Terah; ²⁵and Nahor lived after the birth of Terah one hundred nineteen years, and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶When Terah had lived seventy years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

^a Heb *balal*, meaning to confuse

CHALLENGE

Genesis 11:7

BREAK
DOWN WALLS

Speaking different languages can be a barrier to communication, but diversity provides the opportunity to learn about people who are different than you.

Genesis

TAKE ACTION!

- **Make a New Friend:** Identify one classmate you do not know well and whose primary language or language at home is different than yours. Ask this person if you might join him or her at lunch for two days this week to get acquainted. Note three things you have in common with this person, as well as three things that surprised you.
- **Learn Something New:** Do some research to determine how many different languages are spoken or taught in your school or parish.
- **Discover a New Language:** Pick a favorite Bible verse and learn how to say and write it in a different language. Ask for help from someone who speaks that language. Write that verse in the new language next to where it appears in your Bible.

Descendants of Terah

²⁷Now these are the descendants of Terah. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. ²⁹Abram and Nahor took wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Now Sarai was barren; she had no child.

³¹Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there. ³²The days of Terah were two hundred five years; and Terah died in Haran.

The Call of Abram

12 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who

bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."^a

⁴So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak^b of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring^c I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD. ⁹And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

^a Or by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves ^b Or terebinth ^c Heb seed

CHALLENGE

Genesis 12:2

BE A BLESSING

Keeping a positive, upbeat attitude can be hard, but if we shift focus from our personal success and happiness to being a blessing to someone else, the impact can be amazing.

TAKE ACTION!

- Be Affirming:** When others are trash-talking someone behind their back, join in the conversation, but do so by pointing out all the good qualities of that person.
- Create a List:** Make a list of seven people and identify one thing you will do to be a blessing for each person this week.
- Find the Positive:** Identify one person outside your circle of friends and say something positive about that person every day this week.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land. ¹¹When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance; ¹²and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. ¹³Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account." ¹⁴When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. ¹⁵When the officials of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁶And for her sake he dealt well with Abram; and he had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸So Pharaoh called Abram, and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here

is your wife, take her, and be gone." ²⁰And Pharaoh gave his men orders concerning him; and they set him on the way, with his wife and all that he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb.

²Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. ³He journeyed on by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, ⁴to the place where he had made an altar at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. ⁵Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, ⁶so that the land could not support both of them living together; for their possessions were so great that they could not live together, ⁷and there was strife between the herders of Abram's livestock and the herders of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites lived in the land.

⁸Then Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and

my herders; for we are kindred. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.” ¹⁰Lot looked about him, and saw that the plain of the Jordan was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar; this was before the LORD had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. ¹¹So Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward; thus they separated from each other. ¹²Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the Plain and moved his tent as far as Sodom. ¹³Now the people of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the LORD.

¹⁴The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, “Raise your eyes now, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring^a forever. ¹⁶I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. ¹⁷Rise up, walk through the length and the breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.” ¹⁸So Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks^b of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the LORD.

Lot's Captivity and Rescue

14 In the days of King Amraphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim, ²these kings made war with King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³All these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea).^c ⁴Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and subdued the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶and the Horites in the hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the edge of the wilderness; ⁷then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and subdued all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar. ⁸Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹with King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar, four kings against five. ¹⁰Now the

^a Heb seed ^b Or terebinths ^c Heb Salt Sea

Catholic Connection

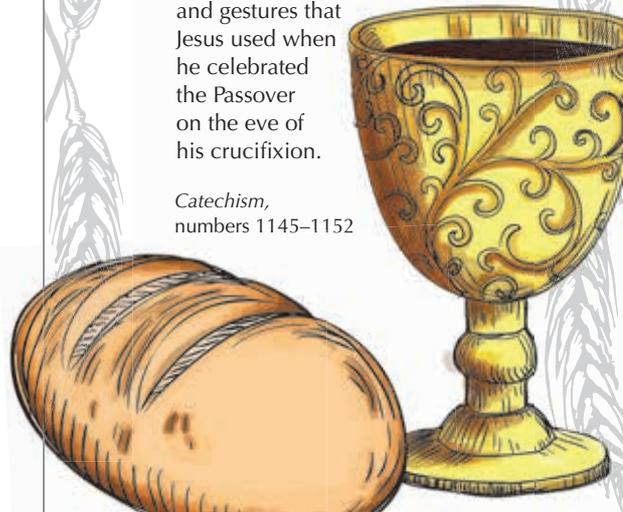
Genesis 14:17-20

Praise, Bless, and Express

Sometimes words are not enough. When Abram rescues his nephew Lot from foreign invaders, Melchizedek, a king and priest, uses the everyday objects of bread and wine to offer a blessing on Abram and give praise to God. Today we use symbols from three sources to express and deepen our relationship with God through the sacraments:

- ✿ Creation—Because God created the world, we naturally find meaning in symbols like fire and water, such as the lit candle and water of baptism.
- ✿ Everyday human life—Ordinary actions like applying lotion or hugging a friend become symbols in the anointing of the sick, as when the priest uses oil to bless the sick and places a hand upon them.
- ✿ The history of God's people, especially the Passover—We see this most clearly in the Eucharist, when the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, and the priest uses the words and gestures that Jesus used when he celebrated the Passover on the eve of his crucifixion.

Catechism,
numbers 1145–1152



Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹So the enemy took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way; ¹²they also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

¹³Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks^a of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner; these were allies of Abram. ¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his nephew Lot with his goods, and the women and the people.

Abram Blessed by Melchizedek

¹⁷After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High.^b ¹⁹He blessed him and said,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,^b
maker of heaven and earth;

²⁰ and blessed be God Most High,^b
who has delivered your enemies into your
hand!"

And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything. ²¹Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself." ²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD, God Most High,^b maker of heaven and earth, ²³that I would not take a thread or a sandal-thong or anything that is yours, so that you might not say, 'I have made Abram rich.' ²⁴I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their share."

God's Covenant with Abram

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ²But Abram said, "O LORD GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"^c ³And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." ⁴But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be

your heir." ⁵He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶And he believed the LORD; and the LORD^d reckoned it to him as righteousness.

⁷Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." ⁸But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. ¹³Then the LORD^d said to Abram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; ¹⁴but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶And they shall come back here in the fourth generation; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

The Birth of Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, ²and Sarai said to Abram, "You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. ³So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. ⁴He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "May the

^a Or terebinths ^b Heb El Elyon ^c Meaning of Heb uncertain ^d Heb heh

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Stop Abuse → Genesis, chapter 16

The relationship between Abram, Sarai, and Hagar is shocking by Christian moral standards, but it would not have been unusual in their time. It's not surprising that such relationships would have fostered jealousy and tension. The mistreatment Hagar suffered must have been great to cause her to leave the security of Abram's household.

When we encounter people who have been abused or harassed, we need to help them seek justice and set things right. Remember the larger message in Genesis—that every person is created in God's image and is to be treated with dignity and respect. Carrying out this message is our responsibility as brothers and sisters to one another.

wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!"⁶ But Abram said to Sarai, "Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please." Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.

⁷The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸And he said, "Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am running away from my mistress Sarai." ⁹The angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit to her." ¹⁰The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude." ¹¹And the angel of the LORD said to her, "Now you have conceived and shall bear a son; you shall call him Ishmael,^a for the LORD has given heed to your affliction.

¹² He shall be a wild ass of a man, with his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him; and he shall live at odds with all his kin."

¹³So she named the LORD who spoke to her, "You are El-roi";^b for she said, "Have I really seen God

and remained alive after seeing him?"^c ¹⁴Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi;^d it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him^e Ishmael.

The Sign of the Covenant

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty;^f walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram,^g but your name shall be Abraham;^h for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your

^a That is God hears ^b Perhaps God of seeing or God who sees ^c Meaning of Heb uncertain ^d That is the Well of the Living One who sees me ^e Heb Abram ^f Traditional rendering of Heb El Shaddai ^g That is exalted ancestor ^h Here taken to mean ancestor of a multitude

SEARCHING for GOD

Genesis 17:1-27 ←

What a Deal!

Covenant is a powerful word in the Bible, expressing the intimate relationship between God and God's people. A covenant is truly a "special deal." In the covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, God promises to do certain things, and the people promise to follow the laws God gives them.

We are part of these ancient promises. We too are believers in the one God and members of God's family. We too are heirs to a special, intimate relationship with the Holy One through Jesus. What a deal!



offspring^a after you. ⁸And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God."

⁹God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. ¹³Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

¹⁵God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live in your sight!" ¹⁹God said, "No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac.^b I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. ²⁰As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." ²²And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

²³Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised; ²⁷and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and

^a Heb seed ^b That is he laughs

those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham^a by the oaks^b of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ²He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures^c of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

⁹They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹²So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

Judgment Pronounced on Sodom

¹⁶Then the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to set them on their way. ¹⁷The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸seeing that Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?^d ¹⁹No, for I have chosen^e him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” ²⁰Then the LORD said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave

Did You Know?

A Covenant Symbol

Genesis 17:9–14

Circumcision was practiced by many peoples in the ancient world. In Israel circumcision was performed shortly after birth and symbolized that the person belonged to the people of God. It was required by the covenant that God made first with Abraham and then with Moses and all of Israel. Today most Jews continue circumcision as a religious practice, and other people may be circumcised for personal reasons.

In the early Church, circumcision became the center of controversy about whether Gentiles who wanted to become Christians had to first become Jews (see Acts, chapter 15, and Philippians 3:2–9).

their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.”

²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the LORD.^f ²³Then Abraham came near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” ²⁶And the LORD said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷Abraham answered, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” ²⁹Again he spoke to him, “Suppose

^a Heb him ^b Or terebinths ^c Heb seahs ^d Or and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him ^e Heb known ^f Another ancient tradition reads while the LORD remained standing before Abraham

forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.”³⁰ Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.”³¹ He said, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.”³² Then he said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.”³³ And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

The Depravity of Sodom

19 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground.² He said, “Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way.” They said, “No; we will spend the night in the square.”³ But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.⁴ But

before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house;⁵ and they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them.”⁶ Lot went out of the door to the men, shut the door after him,⁷ and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.⁸ Look, I have two daughters who have not known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please; only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.”⁹ But they replied, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came here as an alien, and he would play the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near the door to break it down.¹⁰ But the men inside reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.¹¹ And they struck with blindness the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

¹² Then the men said to Lot, “Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city—bring them out of the place.

GROWING IN FAITH

Genesis 18:22-23

Don't Hold Back

Abraham's bargaining for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah shows his faith, his care for others, and his closeness with God. He deals with God as a friend whom he is not afraid to be honest with.

We too must be honest with God in our prayer and share our real doubts, anger, grief, and frustrations. God is big enough to handle it all. Tell God what is on your mind right now, and don't hold back.



WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

More Kindness, Please Genesis 19:1-11

Can you imagine a world in which everyone welcomed outsiders with respect, kindness, and gracious hospitality? Like Abraham, Lot is a wonderful host, but hospitality is clearly the last thing on the mind of the people of Sodom. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah shows us the results of disrespect, inhospitality, and the attempted abuse of strangers. As children of God, we have a responsibility to extend our kindness to strangers and friends alike.



WELCOME

¹³For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.”

¹⁴So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, “Up, get out of this place; for the LORD is about to destroy the city.” But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

¹⁵When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be consumed in the punishment of the city.” ¹⁶But he lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and left him outside the city. ¹⁷When they had brought them outside, they^a said, “Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the Plain; flee to the hills, or else you will be consumed.” ¹⁸And Lot said to them, “Oh, no, my lords; ¹⁹your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life; but I cannot flee to the hills, for fear the disaster will overtake me and I die. ²⁰Look, that city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there—is it not a little one?—and my life will be saved!” ²¹He said to him, “Very well, I grant you this favor too, and will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. ²²Hurry, escape

there, for I can do nothing until you arrive there.” Therefore the city was called Zoar.^b ²³The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar.

²⁴Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven; ²⁵and he overthrew those cities, and all the Plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶But Lot’s wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD; ²⁸and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain and saw the smoke of the land going up like the smoke of a furnace.

²⁹So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the Plain, God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled.

The Shameful Origin of Moab and Ammon

³⁰Now Lot went up out of Zoar and settled in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; so he lived in a cave with his two daughters. ³¹And the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in

^a Gk Syr Vg: Heb he ^b That is Little

to us after the manner of all the world. ³²Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.” ³³So they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. ³⁴On the next day, the firstborn said to the younger, “Look, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.” ³⁵So they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger rose, and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. ³⁶Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. ³⁷The firstborn bore a son, and named him Moab; he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸The younger also bore a son and named him Ben-ammi; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites to this day.

Abraham and Sarah at Gerar

20 From there Abraham journeyed toward the region of the Negeb, and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While residing in Gerar as an alien, ²Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” And King Abimelech of Gerar sent and took Sarah. ³But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman whom you have taken; for she is a married woman.” ⁴Now Abimelech had not approached her; so he said, “Lord, will you destroy an innocent people? ⁵Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands.” ⁶Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; furthermore it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. ⁷Now then, return the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all that are yours.”

⁸So Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants and told them all these things; and the men were very much afraid. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said to him, “What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you, that you have brought such great guilt on me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that ought not to be done.” ¹⁰And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What were you thinking of, that you did this thing?” ¹¹Abraham said, “I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. ¹²Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not

the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³And when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, I said to her, ‘This is the kindness you must do me: at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother.’” ¹⁴Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him. ¹⁵Abimelech said, “My land is before you; settle where it pleases you.” ¹⁶To Sarah he said, “Look, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; it is your exoneration before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated.” ¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children. ¹⁸For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

The Birth of Isaac

21 The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. ²Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. ⁴And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. ⁶Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” ⁷And she said, “Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

⁸The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. ⁹But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. ¹⁰So she said to Abraham, “Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.” ¹¹The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. ¹²But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. ¹³As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.” ¹⁴So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

^aGk Vg: Heb lacks with her son Isaac

¹⁵When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. ¹⁶Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, “Do not let me look on the death of the child.” And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. ¹⁷And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.” ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. ²¹He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Abraham and Abimelech Make a Covenant

²²At that time Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do; ²³now therefore swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but as I have dealt loyally with you, you will deal with me and with the land where you have resided as an alien.” ²⁴And Abraham said, “I swear it.”

²⁵When Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech’s servants had seized, ²⁶Abimelech said, “I do not know who has done this; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today.” ²⁷So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a covenant. ²⁸Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs of the flock. ²⁹And Abimelech said to Abraham, “What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?” ³⁰He said, “These seven ewe lambs you shall accept from my hand, in order that you may be a witness for me that I dug this well.” ³¹Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba;^a because there both of them swore an oath. ³²When they had made a covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech, with Phicol the commander of his army, left and returned to the land of the Philistines. ³³Abraham^b planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.^c ³⁴And Abraham resided as an alien many days in the land of the Philistines.

SEARCHING
for GOD

Genesis 21:9-21 ←

Rescue Me!

The slave Hagar is the victim of Sarah’s jealousy. But this time God does not send her back. This time Hagar receives from God the ability to see the opportunity for life in front of her.

Hagar’s story reminds us that God wants to rescue us from oppression and injustice. But because human beings have free will, we cannot always be spared from the injustice of others. In your prayer, you can always ask God to be with you in difficult times and to give you the vision to see the healthy choices you can make to improve your situation. God’s grace can be found in all things, even during our darkest times.



^a That is Well of seven or Well of the oath ^b Heb He ^c Or the LORD, El Olam

The Command to Sacrifice Isaac

22 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”² He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.”³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away.⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.”⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”⁸ Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

⁹When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.¹⁰ Then

Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill^a his son.¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.¹⁴ So Abraham called that place “The LORD will provide”;^b as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”^c

¹⁵The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,¹⁶ and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son,¹⁷ I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies,¹⁸ and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”¹⁹ So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.

a Or to slaughter b Or will see; Heb traditionally transliterated Jehovah Jireh c Or he shall be seen

GROWING IN FAITH

Genesis 22:1-19

Trust God!

To us it seems horrible that God would ask Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. But this story is meant to be a sign of Abraham's complete trust in God. God prevented the sacrifice because God wanted Abraham's faith, not Isaac's death.

We probably won't ever be faced with the test of Abraham, but we will be faced with different tests of faith in our own lives. We can always reach out to God in prayer and ask to be strengthened in faith. And we just may begin to see how our life is enriched as a result of our trust in God in difficult situations.



The Children of Nahor

²⁰Now after these things it was told Abraham, “Milcah also has borne children, to your brother Nahor: ²¹Uz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, ²²Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” ²³Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. ²⁴Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah’s Death and Burial

23 Sarah lived one hundred twenty-seven years; this was the length of Sarah’s life. ²And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. ³Abraham rose up from beside his dead, and said to the Hittites, ⁴“I am a stranger and an alien residing among you; give me property among you for a burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” ⁵The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶“Hear us, my lord; you are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places; none of us will withhold from you any burial ground for burying your dead.” ⁷Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land. ⁸He said to them, “If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and entreat for me Ephron son of Zohar, ⁹so that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a possession for a burying place.” ¹⁰Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city, ¹¹“No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it; in the presence of my people I give it to you; bury your dead.” ¹²Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. ¹³He said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “If you only will listen to me! I will give the price of the field; accept it from me, so that I may bury my dead there.” ¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵“My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” ¹⁶Abraham agreed with Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

¹⁷So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, passed ¹⁸to Abraham as

a possession in the presence of the Hittites, in the presence of all who went in at the gate of his city. ¹⁹After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰The field and the cave that is in it passed from the Hittites into Abraham’s possession as a burying place.

The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah

24 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ²Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his house, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh ³and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, ⁴but will go to my country and to my kindred and get a wife for my son Isaac.” ⁵The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land; must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?” ⁶Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there. ⁷The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land;’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. ⁸But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.” ⁹So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

¹⁰Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all kinds of choice gifts from his master; and he set out and went to Aram-naharaim, to the city of Nahor. ¹¹He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water; it was toward evening, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹²And he said, “O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. ¹³I am standing here by the spring of water, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴Let the girl to whom I shall say, ‘Please offer your jar that I may drink;’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

¹⁵Before he had finished speaking, there was Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, coming out with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶The girl was very fair to look upon, a virgin, whom no man had

known. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up. ¹⁷Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me sip a little water from your jar." ¹⁸"Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. ¹⁹When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." ²⁰So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

²²When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold nose-ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, ²³and said, "Tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" ²⁴She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." ²⁵She added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder and a place to spend the night." ²⁶The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD ²⁷and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the way to the house of my master's kin."

²⁸Then the girl ran and told her mother's household about these things. ²⁹Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran out to the man, to the spring. ³⁰As soon as he had seen the nose-ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man; and there he was, standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹He said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD. Why do you stand outside when I have prepared the house and a place for the camels?" ³²So the man came into the house; and Laban unloaded the camels, and gave him straw and fodder for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³Then food was set before him to eat; but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." He said, "Speak on."

³⁴So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. ³⁶And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. ³⁷My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; ³⁸but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.' ³⁹I said to my

master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' ⁴⁰But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your way successful. You shall get a wife for my son from my kindred, from my father's house. ⁴¹Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my kindred; even if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

⁴²"I came today to the spring, and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! ⁴³I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," ⁴⁴and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also"—let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

⁴⁵"Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' ⁴⁶She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. ⁴⁷Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. ⁴⁹Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you anything bad or good. ⁵¹Look, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken."

⁵²When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD. ⁵³And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. ⁵⁴Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they rose in the morning, he said, "Send me back to my master." ⁵⁵Her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." ⁵⁶But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has made my journey successful; let me go that I may go to my master." ⁵⁷They said, "We will call the girl, and ask her." ⁵⁸And they called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will." ⁵⁹So

they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes."

⁶¹Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

⁶²Now Isaac had come from^a Beer-lahai-roi, and was settled in the Negeb. ⁶³Isaac went out in the evening to walk^b in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. ⁶⁴And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, ⁶⁵and said to the servant, "Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Abraham Marries Keturah

25 Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. ²She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. ⁴The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. ⁵Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. ⁶But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, while he was still living, and he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.

The Death of Abraham

⁷This is the length of Abraham's life, one hundred seventy-five years. ⁸Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. ⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, ¹⁰the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with his wife Sarah. ¹¹After the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.

Ishmael's Descendants

¹²These are the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave-girl, bore to Abraham. ¹³These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth:

Did You Know?

Abraham's Descendants

Genesis 25:12-18

God promised Hagar that her son Ishmael would be made "a great nation" (Genesis 21:18). The Old Testament lists twelve princely tribes that descended from Abraham's older son (see 25:13-16). A much later Islamic tradition identifies Muhammed and his descendants—the Muslims—as "children of Ishmael."

Abraham's younger son, Isaac, was the father of Jacob. The Jewish people trace their lineage to Jacob and his twelve sons. Because Jesus was a Jew, Christians ultimately trace their ancestry through Jacob to Abraham as well. Thus the three major world religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all see Abraham as their "father in faith."

Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Ad-beel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes. ¹⁷(This is the length of the life of Ishmael, one hundred thirty-seven years; he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.) ¹⁸They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria; he settled down^c alongside of^d all his people.

The Birth and Youth of Esau and Jacob

¹⁹These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, ²⁰and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. ²²The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do

^a Tg: Heb from coming to ^b Meaning of Heb word is uncertain ^c Heb he fell ^d Or down in opposition to

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Sibling Rivalry Genesis 25:17-34

It is common for siblings to have conflict, but with Jacob and Esau, introduced here, it becomes extreme (see Genesis, chapters 27–38, 33). Other stories of sibling rivalry include that of Joseph and his brothers (see Genesis 37:12–36) and the parable of the prodigal and his brother (see Luke 15:11–32).

How do you treat your siblings (or cousins, neighbors, or friends, if you don't have siblings)? Do you ever pray for them or tell them that you care about them—even if they drive you crazy at times? All relationships get better with prayer and care. Take a moment to offer a prayer for those key relationships in your life.



I live?"^a So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³And the LORD said to her,

“Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples born of you shall be
divided;

the one shall be stronger than the other,
the elder shall serve the younger.”

²⁴When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. ²⁶Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.^b Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

²⁷When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Esau Sells His Birthright

²⁹Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!” (Therefore he was called Edom.^c) ³¹Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” ³²Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” ³³Jacob said, “Swear to me first.”^d So he swore

to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Isaac and Abimelech

26 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines. ²The LORD appeared to Isaac^e and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you. ³Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you, and will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring all these lands; and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring, ⁵because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

⁶So Isaac settled in Gerar. ⁷When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, “She

^a Syr: Meaning of Heb uncertain ^b That is He takes by the heel or He supplants ^c That is Red ^d Heb today ^e Heb him

is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "My wife," thinking, "or else the men of the place might kill me for the sake of Rebekah, because she is attractive in appearance."⁸ When Isaac had been there a long time, King Abimelech of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw him fondling his wife Rebekah.⁹ So Abimelech called for Isaac, and said, "So she is your wife! Why then did you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought I might die because of her."¹⁰ Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."¹¹ So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death."

¹²Isaac sowed seed in that land, and in the same year reaped a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him,¹³ and the man became rich; he prospered more and more until he became very wealthy.¹⁴ He had possessions of flocks and herds, and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.¹⁵ (Now the Philistines had stopped up and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham.)¹⁶ And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us; you have become too powerful for us."

¹⁷So Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar and settled there.¹⁸ Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham; for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the names that his father had given them.¹⁹ But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water,²⁰ the herders of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herders, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the well Esek,^a because they contended with him.²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also; so he called it Sitnah.^b ²²He moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he called it Rehoboth,^c saying, "Now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

²³From there he went up to Beer-sheba.²⁴ And that very night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant Abraham's sake."²⁵ So he built an altar there, called on the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

²⁶Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army.²⁷ Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me

away from you?"²⁸ They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you; so we say, let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you²⁹ so that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD."³⁰ So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.³¹ In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths; and Isaac set them on their way, and they departed from him in peace.³² That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water!"³³ He called it Shibah;^d therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba^e to this day.

Esau's Hittite Wives

³⁴When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite;³⁵ and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

Isaac Blesses Jacob

27 When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called his elder son Esau and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am."² He said, "See, I am old; I do not know the day of my death."³ Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me.⁴ Then prepare for me savory food, such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I die.⁷

⁵Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, ⁶Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father say to your brother Esau, ⁷'Bring me game, and prepare for me savory food to eat, that I may bless you before the LORD before I die.'⁸ Now therefore, my son, obey my word as I command you. ⁹Go to the flock, and get me two choice kids, so that I may prepare from them savory food for your father, such as he likes; ¹⁰and you shall take it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies."¹¹ But Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "Look, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a man of smooth skin. ¹²Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."¹³ His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my word, and go, get them for me."¹⁴ So he went and got them and brought them to his mother; and his mother prepared savory food,

^a That is Contention ^b That is Enmity ^c That is Broad places or Room ^d A word resembling the word for oath ^e That is Well of the oath or Well of seven

such as his father loved. ¹⁵Then Rebekah took the best garments of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob; ¹⁶and she put the skins of the kids on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷Then she handed the savory food, and the bread that she had prepared, to her son Jacob.

¹⁸So he went in to his father, and said, “My father”; and he said, “Here I am; who are you, my son?” ¹⁹Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, so that you may bless me.” ²⁰But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” He answered, “Because the LORD your God granted me success.” ²¹Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” ²²So Jacob went up to his father Isaac, who felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” ²³He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he blessed him. ²⁴He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” ²⁵Then he said, “Bring it to me, that I may eat of my son’s game and bless you.” So he brought it to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. ²⁶Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” ²⁷So he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him, and said,

“Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field that the LORD has
blessed.

²⁸ May God give you of the dew of heaven,
and of the fatness of the earth,
and plenty of grain and wine.

²⁹ Let peoples serve you,
and nations bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may your mother’s sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you,
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”

Esau’s Lost Blessing

³⁰As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of his father Isaac, his brother Esau came in from his hunting. ³¹He also prepared savory food, and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father sit up and eat of his son’s game, so that you may bless me.” ³²His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” He answered, “I am your firstborn son, Esau.” ³³Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, “Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all^a before you came, and I have

blessed him?—yes, and blessed he shall be!” ³⁴When Esau heard his father’s words, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, me also, father!” ³⁵But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” ³⁶Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob?^b For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright; and look, now he has taken away my blessing.” Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” ³⁷Isaac answered Esau, “I have already made him your lord, and I have given him all his brothers as servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” ³⁸Esau said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, father? Bless me, me also, father!” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

³⁹Then his father Isaac answered him:

“See, away from^c the fatness of the earth shall
your home be,
and away from^d the dew of heaven on high.

⁴⁰ By your sword you shall live,
and you shall serve your brother;
but when you break loose,^e
you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

Jacob Escapes Esau’s Fury

⁴¹Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” ⁴²But the words of her elder son Esau were told to Rebekah; so she sent and called her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is consoling himself by planning to kill you. ⁴³Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran, ⁴⁴and stay with him a while, until your brother’s fury turns away—⁴⁵until your brother’s anger against you turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and bring you back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?”

⁴⁶Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am weary of my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women such as these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

28 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, “You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. ²Go at once to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother. ³May God Almighty^f bless you and make you fruitful and numerous, that you

^a Cn: Heb of all ^b That is He supplants or He takes by the heel ^c Or See, of ^d Or and of ^e Meaning of Heb uncertain ^f Traditional rendering of Heb El Shaddai

may become a company of peoples. ⁴May he give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien—land that God gave to Abraham.” ⁵Thus Isaac sent Jacob away; and he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob’s and Esau’s mother.

Esau Marries Ishmael’s Daughter

⁶Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he charged him, “You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women,” ⁷and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. ⁸So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please his father Isaac, ⁹Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath daughter of Abraham’s son Ishmael, and sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Jacob’s Dream at Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹²And he dreamed that there was a ladder^a set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³And the LORD stood beside him^b and said, “I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed^c in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” ¹⁶Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!” ¹⁷And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

¹⁸So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹He called that place Bethel;^d but the name of the city was Luz at the first. ²⁰Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and will keep me

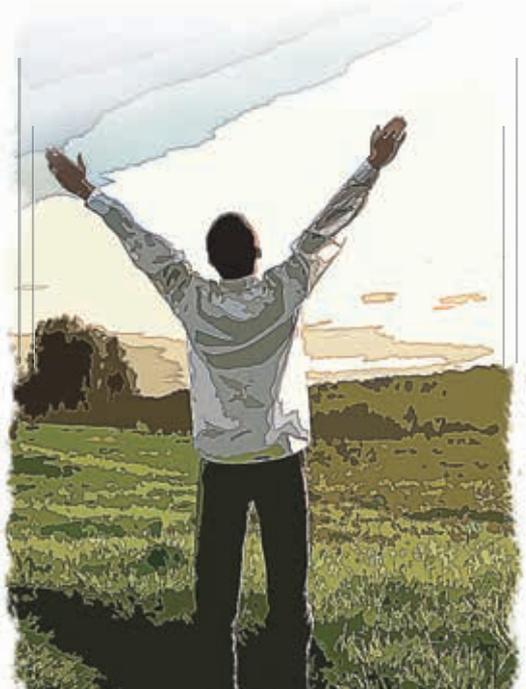
^a Or stairway or ramp ^b Or stood above it ^c Or shall bless themselves ^d That is House of God

SEARCHING for GOD

Genesis 28:10-22 ←

Friendship with God

God, I want to know your presence. Use my dreams and my waking thoughts; use my family, friends, and neighbors; use your holy word. Use them all to reach me. For I know your presence will sustain me on my most difficult journeys, as it did Jacob. Amen.



I am
with you
and will

KEEP

YOU.

Genesis 28:15

in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear,²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God,²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you."

Jacob Meets Rachel

29 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east.² As he looked, he saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying there beside it; for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large,³ and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.

⁴Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran."⁵ He said to them, "Do you know Laban son of Nahor?" They said, "We do."⁶ He said to them, "Is it well with him?" "Yes," they replied, "and here is his daughter Rachel, coming with the sheep."⁷ He said, "Look, it is still broad daylight; it is not time for the animals to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them."⁸ But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

⁹While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them.¹⁰ Now when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, and the sheep of his mother's brother Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of his mother's brother Laban.¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and wept aloud.¹² And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.

¹³When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him; he embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob^a told Laban all these things,¹⁴ and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.

Jacob Marries Laban's Daughters

¹⁵Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.¹⁷ Leah's eyes were lovely,^b and Rachel was graceful and beautiful.¹⁸ Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter

^a Heb He ^b Meaning of Heb uncertain

Rachel.”¹⁹ Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.”²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.”

²² So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast. ²³ But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. ²⁴ (Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.) ²⁵ When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?”

²⁶ Laban said, “This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the firstborn. ²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”

²⁸ Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife. ²⁹ (Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.) ³⁰ So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He served Laban^e for another seven years.

³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. ³² Leah

conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben;^b for she said, “Because the LORD has looked on my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.”³³ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Because the LORD has heard^c that I am hated, he has given me this son also”; and she named him Simeon. ³⁴ Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will be joined^d to me, because I have borne him three sons”; therefore he was named Levi. ³⁵ She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “This time I will praise^e the LORD”; therefore she named him Judah; then she ceased bearing.

30 When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister; and she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!”² Jacob became very angry with Rachel and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”³ Then she said, “Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear upon my knees and that I too may have children through her.”⁴ So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife; and Jacob went in to her. ⁵ And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son”; therefore she named him

a Heb him *b* That is See, a son *c* Heb shama *d* Heb lawah *e* Heb hodah

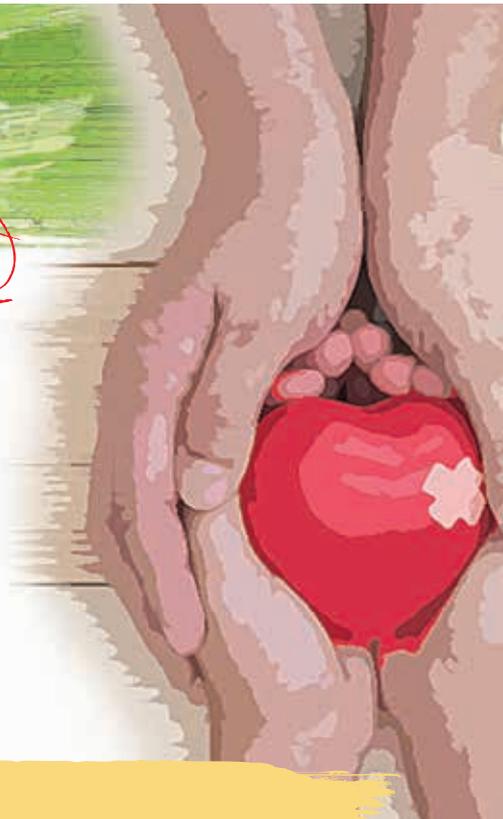
GROWING IN FAITH

Genesis 27:15-30

The Golden Rule

Jacob becomes upset when he finds out he has been deceived by Laban, yet Jacob fled his brother Esau, whom he had deceived several years earlier (see Genesis 27:1-40). Jacob's lies and deceit have come back around, and now he is the victim.

Just as good actions often come back to us, so it may be with bad actions. Think about all of your actions as possibly returning to you in some way. How might this help you to choose differently?



Dan.^a ⁷Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled^b with my sister, and have prevailed"; so she named him Naphtali.

⁹When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰Then Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹And Leah said, "Good fortune!" so she named him Gad.^c ¹²Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³And Leah said, "Happy am I! For the women will call me happy"; so she named him Asher.^d

¹⁴In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." ¹⁵But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." ¹⁶When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him, and said, "You must come in to me; for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. ¹⁷And God heeded Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸Leah said, "God has given me my hire^e because I gave my maid to my husband"; so she named him Issachar. ¹⁹And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good dowry; now my husband will honor^f me, because I have borne him six sons"; so she named him Zebulun. ²¹Afterwards she bore a daughter, and named her Dinah.

²²Then God remembered Rachel, and God heeded her and opened her womb. ²³She conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach"; ²⁴and she named him Joseph,^g saying, "May the LORD add to me another son!"

Jacob Prospers at Laban's Expense

²⁵When Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country. ²⁶Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know very well the service I have given you." ²⁷But Laban said to him, "If you will allow me to say so, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you; ²⁸name your wages, and I will give it." ²⁹Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your cattle have fared with me. ³⁰For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly; and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?" ³¹He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "You

shall not give me anything; if you will do this for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it: ³²let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. ³³So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." ³⁴Laban said, "Good! Let it be as you have said." ³⁵But that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in charge of his sons; ³⁶and he set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob was pasturing the rest of Laban's flock.

³⁷Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the rods. ³⁸He set the rods that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, ³⁹the flocks bred in front of the rods, and so the flocks produced young that were striped, speckled, and spotted. ⁴⁰Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and the completely black animals in the flock of Laban; and he put his own droves apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock. ⁴¹Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob laid the rods in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the rods, ⁴²but for the feeblers of the flock he did not lay them there; so the feeblers were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. ⁴³Thus the man grew exceedingly rich, and had large flocks, and male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys.

Jacob Flees with Family and Flocks

31 Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's; he has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father." ²And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him as favorably as he did before. ³Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your ancestors and to your kindred, and I will be with you." ⁴So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was, ⁵and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me as favorably as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. ⁶You know that I have served your father with all my strength; ⁷yet your

a That is He judged *b* Heb niphtal *c* That is Fortune *d* That is Happy
e Heb sakar *f* Heb zabal *g* That is He adds

father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not permit him to harm me. ⁸If he said, 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore speckled; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. ⁹Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father, and given them to me.

¹⁰"During the mating of the flock I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats that leaped upon the flock were striped, speckled, and mottled. ¹¹Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' ¹²And he said, 'Look up and see that all the goats that leap on the flock are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. ¹³I am the God of Bethel,^a where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and return to the land of your birth.'" ¹⁴Then Rachel and Leah answered him, "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? ¹⁵Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us. ¹⁶All the property that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you."

¹⁷So Jacob arose, and set his children and his wives on camels; ¹⁸and he drove away all his livestock, all the property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

¹⁹Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods. ²⁰And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. ²¹So he fled with all that he had; starting out he crossed the Euphrates,^b and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Overtakes Jacob

²²On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. ²³So he took his kinsfolk with him and pursued him for seven days until he caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night, and said to him, "Take heed that you say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad."

²⁵Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsfolk camped in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁶Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You have deceived me, and carried away my daughters like captives of the sword. ²⁷Why did you flee secretly and deceive me and not tell me? I would have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre. ²⁸And why did you not permit me to kiss

my sons and my daughters farewell? What you have done is foolish. ²⁹It is in my power to do you harm; but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Take heed that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' ³⁰Even though you had to go because you longed greatly for your father's house, why did you steal my gods?" ³¹Jacob answered Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³²But anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsfolk, point out what I have that is yours, and take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.^c

³³So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered Rachel's. ³⁴Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. Laban felt all about in the tent, but did not find them. ³⁵And she said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me." So he searched, but did not find the household gods.

³⁶Then Jacob became angry, and upbraided Laban. Jacob said to Laban, "What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? ³⁷Although you have felt about through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsfolk and your kinsfolk, so that they may decide between us two. ³⁸These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. ³⁹That which was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. ⁴⁰It was like this with me: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. ⁴²If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear^d of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

Laban and Jacob Make a Covenant

⁴³Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about their children whom

^a Cn: Meaning of Heb uncertain ^b Heb *the river* ^c Heb *them* ^d Meaning of Heb uncertain

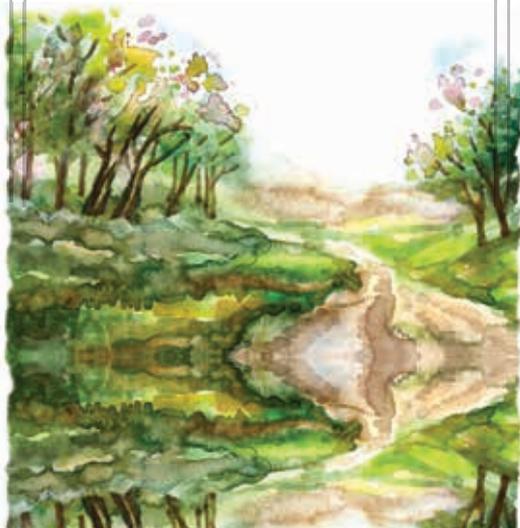
SEARCHING for GOD

Genesis 32:23-32 ←

Facing Challenges

Even after twenty years, Jacob is anxious about meeting Esau again. While on the way home, Jacob has an amazing religious experience. Many Scripture scholars believe the strange wrestling encounter is a symbol that Jacob has become a changed person.

Perhaps at times you have wrestled with yourself or with God. It is not so much that God is your opponent, but it is the wrestling that matters. When you face big challenges, you wrestle between the person you are now and the person God is calling you to be.



they have borne? ⁴⁴Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I; and let it be a witness between you and me.” ⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone, and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶And Jacob said to his kinsfolk, “Gather stones,” and they took stones, and made a heap; and they ate there by the heap. ⁴⁷Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha:^a but Jacob called it Galeed.^b ⁴⁸Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” Therefore he called it Galeed, ⁴⁹and the pillar^c Mizpah,^d for he said, “The LORD watch between you and me, when we are absent one from the other. ⁵⁰If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, remember that God is witness between you and me.”

⁵¹Then Laban said to Jacob, “See this heap and see the pillar, which I have set between you and me. ⁵²This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. ⁵³May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor—the God of their father—“judge between us.” So Jacob swore by the Fear^e of his father Isaac, ⁵⁴and Jacob offered a sacrifice on the height and called his kinsfolk to eat bread; and they ate bread and tarried all night in the hill country.

⁵⁵Early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he departed and returned home.

32 Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him; ²and when Jacob saw them he said, “This is God’s camp!” So he called that place Mahanaim.^f

Jacob Sends Presents to Appease Esau

³Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, ⁴instructing them, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, ‘I have lived with Laban as an alien, and stayed until now; ⁵and I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male and female slaves; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.’”

⁶The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.” ⁷Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies, ⁸thinking, “If Esau comes to the one company and

a In Aramaic *The heap of witness* *b* In Hebrew *The heap of witness*
c Compare Sam: MT lacks *the pillar* *d* That is *Watchpost* *e* Meaning of Heb uncertain *f* Ch 32.1 in Heb *g* Here taken to mean *Two camps*

destroys it, then the company that is left will escape.”

⁹And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,’¹⁰I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. ¹¹Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers with the children. ¹²Yet you have said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their number.’”

¹³So he spent that night there, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, ¹⁴two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶These he delivered into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass on ahead of me, and put a space between drove and drove.” ¹⁷He instructed the foremost, “When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these ahead of you?’ ¹⁸then you shall say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us.’” ¹⁹He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, “You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him, ²⁰and you shall say, ‘Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.’” For he thought, “I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me.” ²¹So the present passed on ahead of him; and he himself spent that night in the camp.

Jacob Wrestles at Peniel

²²The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. ²⁴Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶Then he said, “Let me go, for the day is breaking.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me.” ²⁷So he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” ²⁸Then the man^a said, “You shall no longer

be called Jacob, but Israel,^b for you have striven with God and with humans,^c and have prevailed.” ²⁹Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. ³⁰So Jacob called the place Peniel,^d saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.” ³¹The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. ³²Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob on the hip socket at the thigh muscle.

Jacob and Esau Meet

33 Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. ²He put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. ³He himself went on ahead of them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother.

⁴But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁵When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he said, “Who are these with you?” Jacob said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” ⁶Then the maids drew near, they and their children, and bowed down; ⁷Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down; and finally Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. ⁸Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company that I met?” Jacob answered, “To find favor with my lord.” ⁹But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” ¹⁰Jacob said, “No, please; if I find favor with you, then accept my present from my hand; for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have received me with such favor. ¹¹Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have everything I want.” So he urged him, and he took it.

¹²Then Esau said, “Let us journey on our way, and I will go alongside you.” ¹³But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds, which are nursing, are a care to me; and if they are overdriven for one day, all the flocks will die. ¹⁴Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.”

¹⁵So Esau said, “Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.” But he said, “Why

^a Heb he ^b That is *The one who strives with God or God strives* ^c Or with divine and human beings ^d That is *The face of God*

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Sorry! → Genesis 33:1-17

Jacob is understandably apprehensive as he approaches his long-estranged twin brother. But Esau runs to meet him and gives him a hug. All is forgiven, and the two are reconciled at last.

We have all wronged others, and we have all experienced forgiveness. Nothing is quite like the freedom that comes with genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness and reconciliation are powerful signs of the presence of God. What relationships in your life need forgiveness and reconciliation?



should my lord be so kind to me?" ¹⁶So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷But Jacob journeyed to Succoth,^a and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle; therefore the place is called Succoth.

Jacob Reaches Shechem

¹⁸Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram; and he camped before the city. ¹⁹And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for one hundred pieces of money^b the plot of land on which he had pitched his tent. ²⁰There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.^c

The Rape of Dinah

34 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the region. ²When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region, saw her, he seized her and lay with her by force. ³And his soul was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob; he loved the girl, and spoke tenderly to her. ⁴So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl to be my wife."

⁵Now Jacob heard that Shechem^d had defiled his daughter Dinah; but his sons were with his cattle in

the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. ⁶And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him, "just as the sons of Jacob came in from the field. When they heard of it, the men were indignant and very angry, because he had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done.

⁸But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The heart of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage. ⁹Make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰You shall live with us; and the land shall be open to you; live and trade in it, and get property in it." ¹¹Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find favor with you, and whatever you say to me I will give. ¹²Put the marriage present and gift as high as you like, and I will give whatever you ask me; only give me the girl to be my wife."

¹³The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah. ¹⁴They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. ¹⁵Only on this condition will we consent to you: that you

^a That is Booths ^b Heb one hundred qesitah ^c That is God, the God of Israel ^d Heb he

will become as we are and every male among you be circumcised. ¹⁶Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live among you and become one people. ¹⁷But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.”

¹⁸Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor’s son Shechem. ¹⁹And the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob’s daughter. Now he was the most honored of all his family. ²⁰So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, ²¹“These people are friendly with us; let them live in the land and trade in it, for the land is large enough for them; let us take their daughters in marriage, and let us give them our daughters. ²²Only on this condition will they agree to live among us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised. ²³Will not their livestock, their property, and all their animals be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will live among us.” ²⁴And all who went out of the city gate heeded Hamor and his son Shechem; and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

Dinah’s Brothers Avenge Their Sister

²⁵On the third day, when they were still in pain, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, took their swords and came against the city unawares, and killed all the males. ²⁶They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house, and went away. ²⁷And the other sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. ²⁸They took their flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. ²⁹All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and made their prey. ³⁰Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites; my numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household.” ³¹But they said, “Should our sister be treated like a whore?”

Jacob Returns to Bethel

35 God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and settle there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.” ²So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves,

and change your clothes; ³then come, let us go up to Bethel, that I may make an altar there to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.” ⁴So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak that was near Shechem.

⁵As they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities all around them, so that no one pursued them. ⁶Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him, ⁷and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel,^a because it was there that God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother. ⁸And Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried under an oak below Bethel. So it was called Allon-bacuth.^b

⁹God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and he blessed him. ¹⁰God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; no longer shall you be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.” So he was called Israel. ¹¹God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. ¹²The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” ¹³Then God went up from him at the place where he had spoken with him. ¹⁴Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it. ¹⁵So Jacob called the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

The Birth of Benjamin and the Death of Rachel

¹⁶Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel was in childbirth, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷When she was in her hard labor, the midwife said to her, “Do not be afraid; for now you will have another son.” ¹⁸As her soul was departing (for she died), she named him Ben-oni;^d but his father called him Benjamin.^e ¹⁹So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), ²⁰and Jacob set up a pillar at her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel’s tomb, which is there to this day. ²¹Israel journeyed on, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

²²While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine; and Israel heard of it.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. ²³The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob’s firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. ²⁴The sons of Rachel:

^a That is God of Bethel ^b That is Oak of weeping ^c Traditional rendering of Heb El Shaddai ^d That is Son of my sorrow ^e That is Son of the right hand or Son of the South

Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁵The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali. ²⁶The sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

The Death of Isaac

²⁷Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had resided as aliens. ²⁸Now the days of Isaac were one hundred eighty years. ²⁹And Isaac breathed his last; he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's Descendants

36 These are the descendants of Esau (that is, Edom). ²Esau took his wives from the Canaanites: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah daughter of Anah son^a of Zibeon the Hivite, ³and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebaioth. ⁴Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau; Basemath bore Reuel; ⁵and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

⁶Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his cattle, all his livestock, and all the property he had acquired in the land of Canaan; and he moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. ⁷For their possessions were too great for them to live together; the land where they were staying could not support them because of their livestock. ⁸So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom.

⁹These are the descendants of Esau, ancestor of the Edomites, in the hill country of Seir. ¹⁰These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz son of Adah the wife of Esau; Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹¹The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. ¹²(Timna was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son; she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.) These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. ¹³These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Esau's wife, Basemath. ¹⁴These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah son^b of Zibeon: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

Clans and Kings of Edom

¹⁵These are the clans^c of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: the clans^c Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶Korah, Gatam, and Amalek; these are the clans^c of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Adah. ¹⁷These are the sons of Esau's son Reuel: the clans^c Nahath, Zerah,

Shammah, and Mizzah; these are the clans^c of Reuel in the land of Edom; they are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁸These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: the clans^c Jeush, Jalam, and Korah; these are the clans^c born of Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. ¹⁹These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their clans.^c

²⁰These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the clans^c of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. ²²The sons of Lotan were Hori and Heman; and Lotan's sister was Timna. ²³These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. ²⁴These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah; he is the Anah who found the springs^d in the wilderness, as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. ²⁵These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah. ²⁶These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ²⁷These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. ²⁸These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. ²⁹These are the clans^c of the Horites: the clans^c Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the clans^c of the Horites, clan by clan^e in the land of Seir.

³¹These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites. ³²Bela son of Beor reigned in Edom, the name of his city being Dinhabah. ³³Bela died, and Jobab son of Zerah of Bozrah succeeded him as king. ³⁴Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king. ³⁵Husham died, and Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king, the name of his city being Avith. ³⁶Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah succeeded him as king. ³⁷Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates succeeded him as king. ³⁸Shaul died, and Baal-hanan son of Achbor succeeded him as king. ³⁹Baal-hanan son of Achbor died, and Hadar succeeded him as king, the name of his city being Pau; his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Me-zahab.

⁴⁰These are the names of the clans^c of Esau, according to their families and their localities by their names: the clans^c Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ⁴¹Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ⁴²Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ⁴³Magdiel, and Iram; these are the clans^c of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of Edom), according to their settlements in the land that they held.

^a Sam Gk Syr: Heb daughter ^b Gk Syr: Heb daughter ^c Or chiefs ^d Meaning of Heb uncertain ^e Or chief by chief

Joseph Dreams of Greatness

37 Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. ²This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

⁵Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed. ⁷There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.

⁹He had another dream, and told it to his brothers, saying, "Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?" ¹¹So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Is Sold by His Brothers

¹²Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." ¹⁴So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, ¹⁵and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" ¹⁶"I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." ¹⁷The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the

Did You Know?

Genesis 37:1-11,
40:1-41:36

Dreams Have Power

In the ancient world, belief in the reality and significance of dreams was widespread. The ancients believed that dreams and visions revealed messages, prophecies, and healing from their gods. Israel shared this view of the importance of dreams.

In the Old Testament, the prophets are often referred to as seers because the word of God so often comes to them through dreams and visions. The focus, however, is always on the word of God and its meaning, not on the dream itself. In fact, a character in the story who is inspired by God usually interprets the dream, which aims to lead the people to more faithful observance of the covenant.

pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." ²¹But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." ²²Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. ²³So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves^a that he wore; ²⁴and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?" ²⁷Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. ²⁸When some Midianite traders

^a Traditional rendering (compare Gk): a coat of many colors; meaning of Heb uncertain ^b See note on 37.3

passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. ³⁰He returned to his brothers, and said, “The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn?” ³¹Then they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. ³²They had the long robe with sleeves^a taken to their father, and they said, “This we have found; see now whether it is your son’s robe or not.” ³³He recognized it, and said, “It is my son’s robe! A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” ³⁴Then Jacob tore his garments, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵All his sons and all his daughters sought to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father bewailed him. ³⁶Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

Judah and Tamar

38 It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and settled near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. ²There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; he married her and went in to her. ³She conceived and bore a son; and he named him Er. ⁴Again she conceived and bore a son whom she named Onan. ⁵Yet again she bore a son, and she named him Shelah. She^b was in Chezib when she bore him. ⁶Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn; her name was Tamar. ⁷But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. ⁸Then Judah said to Onan, “Go in to your brother’s wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her; raise up offspring for your brother.” ⁹But since Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, he spilled his semen on the ground whenever he went in to his brother’s wife, so that he would not give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰What he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also. ¹¹Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Remain a widow in your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up”—for he feared that he too would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went to live in her father’s house.

¹²In course of time the wife of Judah, Shua’s daughter, died; when Judah’s time of mourning was over,^c he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³When Tamar was told, “Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep,” ¹⁴she put off her

widow’s garments, put on a veil, wrapped herself up, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. She saw that Shelah was grown up, yet she had not been given to him in marriage. ¹⁵When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶He went over to her at the roadside, and said, “Come, let me come in to you,” for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” ¹⁷He answered, “I will send you a kid from the flock.” And she said, “Only if you give me a pledge, until you send it.” ¹⁸He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” She replied, “Your signet and your cord, and the staff that is in your hand.” So he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹Then she got up and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰When Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to recover the pledge from the woman, he could not find her. ²¹He asked the townspeople, “Where is the temple prostitute who was at Enaim by the wayside?” But they said, “No prostitute has been here.” ²²So he returned to Judah, and said, “I have not found her; moreover the townspeople said, ‘No prostitute has been here.’” ²³Judah replied, “Let her keep the things as her own, otherwise we will be laughed at; you see, I sent this kid, and you could not find her.”

²⁴About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the whore; moreover she is pregnant as a result of whoredom.” And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned.” ²⁵As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, “It was the owner of these who made me pregnant.” And she said, “Take note, please, whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.” ²⁶Then Judah acknowledged them and said, “She is more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not lie with her again.

²⁷When the time of her delivery came, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸While she was in labor, one put out a hand; and the midwife took and bound on his hand a crimson thread, saying, “This one came out first.” ²⁹But just then he drew back his hand, and out came his brother; and she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” Therefore he was named Perez.^d ³⁰Afterward his brother came out with the crimson thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah.^e

^a See note on 37:3. ^b Gk: Heb *He*. ^c Heb *when Judah was comforted*. ^d That is *A breach*. ^e That is *Brightness*; perhaps alluding to the crimson thread.

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

39 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ²The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man; he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³His master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hands. ⁴So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him; he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and, with him there, he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking. ⁷And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, with me here, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" ¹⁰And although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not consent to lie beside her or to be with her. ¹¹One day, however, when he went into the house to do his work, and while no one else was in the house, ¹²she caught hold of his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. ¹³When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴she called out to the members of her household and said to them, "See, my husband^a has brought among us a Hebrew to insult us! He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; ¹⁵and when he heard me raise my voice and cry out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outside." ¹⁶Then she kept his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me; ¹⁸but as soon as I raised my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me, and fled outside."

¹⁹When his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, "This is the way your servant treated me," he became enraged. ²⁰And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; he remained there in prison. ²¹But the LORD was with

Joseph and showed him steadfast love; he gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. ²²The chief jailer committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison, and whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³The chief jailer paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

The Dreams of Two Prisoners

40 Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. ²Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he waited on them; and they continued for some time in custody. ⁵One night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own meaning. ⁶When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. ⁷So he asked Pharaoh's officers, who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?" ⁸They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."

⁹So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me, ¹⁰and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms came out and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand." ¹²Then Joseph said to him, "This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days; ¹³within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴But remember me when it is well with you; please do me the kindness to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this place. ¹⁵For in fact I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon."

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, ¹⁷and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head." ¹⁸And Joseph

^a Heb he

answered, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; ¹⁹within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a pole; and the birds will eat the flesh from you.”

²⁰On the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹He restored the chief cupbearer to his cupbearing, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand; ²²but the chief baker he hanged, just as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh’s Dream

41 After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, ²and there came up out of the Nile seven sleek and fat cows, and they grazed in the reed grass. ³Then seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴The ugly and thin cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. And Pharaoh awoke. ⁵Then he fell asleep and dreamed a second time; seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. ⁶Then seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them. ⁷The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Pharaoh awoke, and it was a dream. ⁸In the morning his spirit was troubled; so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

⁹Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “I remember my faults today. ¹⁰Once Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard. ¹¹We dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own meaning. ¹²A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each according to his dream. ¹³As he interpreted to us, so it turned out; I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged.”

¹⁴Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was hurriedly brought out of the dungeon. When he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. ¹⁵And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” ¹⁶Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not I; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” ¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the banks of the

Nile; ¹⁸and seven cows, fat and sleek, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. ¹⁹Then seven other cows came up after them, poor, very ugly, and thin. Never had I seen such ugly ones in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰The thin and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows, ²¹but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had done so, for they were still as ugly as before. Then I awoke. ²²I fell asleep a second time^a and I saw in my dream seven ears of grain, full and good, growing on one stalk, ²³and seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouting after them; ²⁴and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. But when I told it to the magicians, there was no one who could explain it to me.”

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one and the same; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, as are the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind. They are seven years of famine. ²⁸It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. ³⁰After them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land. ³¹The plenty will no longer be known in the land because of the famine that will follow, for it will be very grievous. ³²And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about. ³³Now therefore let Pharaoh select a man who is discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land, and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵Let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and lay up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to befall the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.”

Joseph’s Rise to Power

³⁷The proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God?” ³⁹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you

^a Gk Syr Vg: Heb lacks I fell asleep a second time

command; only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.”⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”⁴² Removing his signet ring from his hand, Pharaoh put it on Joseph’s hand; he arrayed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck.⁴³ He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command; and they cried out in front of him, “Bow the knee!”^a Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt.⁴⁴ Moreover Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.”⁴⁵ Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, as his wife. Thus Joseph gained authority over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went through all the land of Egypt.⁴⁷ During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly.⁴⁸ He gathered up all the food of the seven years when there was plenty^b in the land of Egypt, and stored up food in the cities; he stored up in every city the food from the fields around it.⁴⁹ So Joseph stored up grain in such abundance—like the sand of the sea—that he stopped measuring it; it was beyond measure.

⁵⁰Before the years of famine came, Joseph had two sons, whom Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him.⁵¹ Joseph named the first-born Manasseh,^c “For,” he said, “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house.”⁵² The second he named Ephraim,^d “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my misfortunes.”

⁵³The seven years of plenty that prevailed in the land of Egypt came to an end;⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in every country, but throughout the land of Egypt there was bread.⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do.”⁵⁶ And since the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses,^e and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.⁵⁷ Moreover, all the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine became severe throughout the world.

Joseph’s Brothers Go to Egypt

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you keep looking at one another? ²I have heard,” he said, “that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for

us there, that we may live and not die.”³ So ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.⁴ But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he feared that harm might come to him.⁵ Thus the sons of Israel were among the other people who came to buy grain, for the famine had reached the land of Canaan.

⁶Now Joseph was governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground.⁷ When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.”⁸ Although Joseph had recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.⁹ Joseph also remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about them. He said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land!”¹⁰ They said to him, “No, my lord; your servants have come to buy food.¹¹ We are all sons of one man; we are honest men; your servants have never been spies.”¹² But he said to them, “No, you have come to see the nakedness of the land!”¹³ They said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of a certain man in the land of Canaan; the youngest, however, is now with our father, and one is no more.”¹⁴ But Joseph said to them, “It is just as I have said to you; you are spies!¹⁵ Here is how you shall be tested: as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here!”¹⁶ Let one of you go and bring your brother, while the rest of you remain in prison, in order that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you; or else, as Pharaoh lives, surely you are spies.”¹⁷ And he put them all together in prison for three days.

¹⁸On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God:¹⁹ if you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here where you are imprisoned. The rest of you shall go and carry grain for the famine of your households,²⁰ and bring your youngest brother to me. Thus your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they agreed to do so.²¹ They said to one another, “Alas, we are paying the penalty for what we did to our brother; we saw his anguish when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this anguish has come upon us.”²² Then Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to wrong the boy? But you would not listen. So now there comes a reckoning

^a Abrek, apparently an Egyptian word similar in sound to the Hebrew word meaning to kneel. ^b Sam Gk: MT the seven years that were. ^c That is Making to forget. ^d From a Hebrew word meaning to be fruitful. ^e Gk Vg Compare Syr: Heb opened all that was in (or, among) them

for his blood.”²³ They did not know that Joseph understood them, since he spoke with them through an interpreter.²⁴ He turned away from them and wept; then he returned and spoke to them. And he picked out Simeon and had him bound before their eyes.²⁵ Joseph then gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to return every man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. This was done for them.

Joseph’s Brothers Return to Canaan

²⁶They loaded their donkeys with their grain, and departed.²⁷ When one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money at the top of the sack.²⁸ He said to his brothers, “My money has been put back; here it is in my sack!” At this they lost heart and turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

²⁹When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying,³⁰ “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us, and charged us with spying on the land.”³¹ But we said to him, “We are honest men, we are not spies.”³² We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan.”³³ Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, “By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way.”³⁴ Bring your youngest brother to me, and I shall know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will release your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.”

³⁵As they were emptying their sacks, there in each one’s sack was his bag of money. When they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed.³⁶ And their father Jacob said to them, “I am the one you have bereaved of children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has happened to me!”³⁷ Then Reuben said to his father, “You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.”³⁸ But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should come to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

The Brothers Come Again, Bringing Benjamin

43 Now the famine was severe in the land.² And when they had eaten up the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go again, buy us a little more food.”³ But Judah

said to him, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’⁴ If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food;⁵ but if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.’”⁶ Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?”⁷ They replied, “The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”⁸ Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me, and let us be on our way, so that we may live and not die—you and we and also our little ones.⁹ I myself will be surety for him; you can hold me accountable for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.”¹⁰ If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.”

¹¹Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry them down as a present to the man—a little balm and a little honey, gum, resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds.”¹² Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the top of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight.¹³ Take your brother also, and be on your way again to the man; ¹⁴may God Almighty^a grant you mercy before the man, so that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin. As for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”¹⁵ So the men took the present, and they took double the money with them, as well as Benjamin. Then they went on their way down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.

¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.”¹⁷ The man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph’s house.¹⁸ Now the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph’s house, and they said, “It is because of the money, replaced in our sacks the first time, that we have been brought in, so that he may have an opportunity to fall upon us, to make slaves of us and take our donkeys.”¹⁹ So they went up to the steward of Joseph’s house and spoke with him at the entrance to the house.²⁰ They said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food;²¹ and when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each one’s money in the top of his sack, our money in full weight. So

^a Traditional rendering of Heb *El Shaddai*

we have brought it back with us. ²²Moreover we have brought down with us additional money to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.” ²³He replied, “Rest assured, do not be afraid; your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your sacks for you; I received your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them. ²⁴When the steward^a had brought the men into Joseph’s house, and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, ²⁵they made the present ready for Joseph’s coming at noon, for they had heard that they would dine there.

²⁶When Joseph came home, they brought him the present that they had carried into the house, and bowed to the ground before him. ²⁷He inquired about their welfare, and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?” ²⁸They said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.” And they bowed their heads and did obeisance. ²⁹Then he looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, and said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!” ³⁰With that, Joseph hurried out, because he was overcome with affection for his brother, and he was about to weep. So he went into a private room and wept there. ³¹Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, “Serve the meal.” ³²They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians. ³³When they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, the men looked at one another in amazement. ³⁴Portions were taken to them from Joseph’s table, but Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Joseph Detains Benjamin

44 Then he commanded the steward of his house, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the top of his sack. ²Put my cup, the silver cup, in the top of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph told him. ³As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. ⁴When they had gone only a short distance from the city, Joseph said to his steward, “Go, follow after the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you returned evil for good? Why have you stolen my silver cup?’ ^b ⁵Is it not from this that my lord drinks? Does he not

indeed use it for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’”

⁶When he overtook them, he repeated these words to them. ⁷They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants that they should do such a thing! ⁸Look, the money that we found at the top of our sacks, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan; why then would we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? ⁹Should it be found with any one of your servants, let him die; moreover the rest of us will become my lord’s slaves.” ¹⁰He said, “Even so; in accordance with your words, let it be: he with whom it is found shall become my slave, but the rest of you shall go free.” ¹¹Then each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. ¹²He searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. ¹³At this they tore their clothes. Then each one loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

¹⁴Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house while he was still there; and they fell to the ground before him. ¹⁵Joseph said to them, “What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that one such as I can practice divination?” ¹⁶And Judah said, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? How can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; here we are then, my lord’s slaves, both we and also the one in whose possession the cup has been found.” ¹⁷But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the one in whose possession the cup was found shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

Judah Pleads for Benjamin’s Release

¹⁸Then Judah stepped up to him and said, “O my lord, let your servant please speak a word in my lord’s ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ ²⁰And we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead; he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’ ²¹Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, so that I may set my eyes on him.’ ²²We said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’ ²³Then you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’ ²⁴When we went back to

^a Heb the man ^b Gk Compare Vg; Heb lacks Why have you stolen my silver cup?

your servant my father we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' ²⁶we said, 'We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother goes with us, will we go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' ²⁷Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸one left me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces; and I have never seen him since. ²⁹If you take this one also from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to Sheol.' ³⁰Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, ³¹when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. ³²For your servant became surety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I will bear the blame in the sight of my father all my life.' ³³Now therefore, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord in place of the boy; and let the boy go back with his brothers. ³⁴For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the suffering that would come upon my father."

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You

GROWING IN FAITH

Genesis 45:5-8

Good from Bad?

Joseph realizes that good has come out of evil actions. He sees the events of his family's life as part of God's plan to preserve life and to make sure the covenant continues. Joseph's insight does not justify what his brothers did, but it does help us realize that good can come out of a tragic event.

We have all experienced, or will experience, good things coming from a bad situation. It is often hard to understand why something bad is happening, but as time passes, we often gain perspective and insight. These are the rewards of trust and faith.



shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty. ¹²And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. ¹³You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here. ¹⁴Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. ¹⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your animals and go back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Take your father and your households and come to me, so that I may give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you may enjoy the fat of the land.' ¹⁹You are further charged to say, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰Give no thought to your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

²¹The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons according to the instruction of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. ²²To each one of them he gave a set of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five sets of garments. ²³To his father he sent the following: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. ²⁴Then he sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Do not quarrel^a along the way."

²⁵So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. ²⁶And they told him, "Joseph is still alive! He is even ruler over all the land of Egypt." He was stunned; he could not believe them. ²⁷But when they told him all the words of Joseph that he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸Israel said, "Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go and see him before I die."

Jacob Brings His Whole Family to Egypt

46 When Israel set out on his journey with all that he had and came to Beer-sheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ²God spoke to Israel in visions of the night, and said,

"Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." ³Then he said, "I am God,^b the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. ⁴I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's own hand shall close your eyes."

⁵Then Jacob set out from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶They also took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, ⁷his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters; all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.

⁸Now these are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his offspring, who came to Egypt. Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, ⁹and the children of Reuben: Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰The children of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul,^c the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹The children of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹²The children of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the children of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. ¹³The children of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Jashub,^d and Shimron. ¹⁴The children of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel ¹⁵(these are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter Dinah; in all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three). ¹⁶The children of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. ¹⁷The children of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. The children of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel ¹⁸(these are the children of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and these she bore to Jacob—sixteen persons). ¹⁹The children of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰To Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him. ²¹The children of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppm, Huppm, and Ard ²²(these are the children of Rachel, who were born to Jacob—fourteen persons in all). ²³The children of Dan: Hashum.^e ²⁴The children of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem ²⁵(these are the children of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and these she bore to Jacob—seven persons in all). ²⁶All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own offspring, not including the wives of his sons, were sixty-six persons in all.

^a Or be agitated ^b Heb the God ^c Or Saul ^d Compare Sam Gk Num 26:24; 1 Chr 7.1: MT Job ^e Gk: Heb Hushim

²⁷The children of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy.

Jacob Settles in Goshen

²⁸Israel^a sent Judah ahead to Joseph to lead the way before him into Goshen. When they came to the land of Goshen, ²⁹Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. He presented himself to him, fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. ³⁰Israel said to Joseph, “I can die now, having seen for myself that you are still alive.” ³¹Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father’s household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³²The men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.’ ³³When Pharaoh calls you, and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ ³⁴you shall say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our ancestors’—in order that you may settle in the land of Goshen, because all shepherds are abhorrent to the Egyptians.”

47 So Joseph went and told Pharaoh, “My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; they are now in the land of Goshen.” ²From among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. ³Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, as our ancestors were.” ⁴They said to Pharaoh, “We have come to reside as aliens in the land; for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks because the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, we ask you, let your servants settle in the land of Goshen.” ⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land; let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know that there are capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.”

⁷Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob, and presented him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many are the years of your life?” ⁹Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my earthly sojourn are one hundred thirty; few and hard have been the years of my life. They do not compare with the years of the life of my ancestors during their long sojourn.” ¹⁰Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of

Pharaoh. ¹¹Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and granted them a holding in the land of Egypt, in the best part of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had instructed. ¹²And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

The Famine in Egypt

¹³Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. ¹⁴Joseph collected all the money to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house. ¹⁵When the money from the land of Egypt and from the land of Canaan was spent, all the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, “Give us food! Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone.” ¹⁶And Joseph answered, “Give me your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone.” ¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph; and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. That year he supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock. ¹⁸When that year was ended, they came to him the following year, and said to him, “We can not hide from my lord that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord’s. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. ¹⁹Shall we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food. We with our land will become slaves to Pharaoh; just give us seed, so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate.”

²⁰So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe upon them; and the land became Pharaoh’s. ²¹As for the people, he made slaves of them^b from one end of Egypt to the other. ²²Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh, and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land. ²³Then Joseph said to the people, “Now that I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh, here is seed for you; sow the land. ²⁴And at the harvests you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones.” ²⁵They said, “You have saved our lives; may it please my lord,

^a Heb He ^b Sam Gk Compare Vg; MT He removed them to the cities

we will be slaves to Pharaoh.”²⁶ So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth. The land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh’s.

The Last Days of Jacob

²⁷ Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen; and they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly. ²⁸ Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were one hundred forty-seven years.

²⁹ When the time of Israel’s death drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If I have found favor with you, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal loyally and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt. ³⁰ When I lie down with my ancestors, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” He answered, “I will do as you have said.” ³¹ And he said, “Swear to me”; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself on the head of his bed.

Jacob Blesses Joseph’s Sons

48 After this Joseph was told, “Your father is ill.” So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² When Jacob was told, “Your son Joseph has come to you,” he^a summoned his strength and sat up in bed. ³ And Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty^b appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me, ⁴ and said to me, ‘I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers; I will make of you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your offspring after you for a perpetual holding.’ ⁵ Therefore your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are now mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are. ⁶ As for the offspring born to you after them, they shall be yours. They shall be recorded under the names of their brothers with regard to their inheritance. ⁷ For when I came from Paddan, Rachel, alas, died in the land of Canaan on the way, while there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath” (that is, Bethlehem).

⁸ When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these?” ⁹ Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” And he said, “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.” ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, and he could not see well. So Joseph brought them near him; and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ Israel said to Joseph, “I did not expect to see your face; and here God has let me see your

children also.” ¹² Then Joseph removed them from his father’s knees,^c and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel’s left, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel’s right, and brought them near him. ¹⁴ But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands, for Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵ He blessed Joseph, and said,

“The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, ¹⁶ the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my ancestors Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude on the earth.”

¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took his father’s hand, to remove it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. ¹⁸ Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father! Since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.” ¹⁹ But his father refused, and said, “I know, my son, I know; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations.” ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying,

“By you^d Israel will invoke blessings, saying, ‘God make you^e like Ephraim and like Manasseh.’”

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. ²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your ancestors. ²² I now give to you one portion^f more than to your brothers, the portion^e that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow.”

Jacob’s Last Words to His Sons

49 Then Jacob called his sons, and said: “Gather around, that I may tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

² Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob; listen to Israel your father.

³ Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the first fruits of my vigor, excelling in rank and excelling in power.

^a Heb *Israel* ^b Traditional rendering of Heb *El Shaddai* ^c Heb from his knees ^d you here is singular in Heb ^e Or *mountain slope* (Heb *shekem*, a play on the name of the town and district of Shechem)

Did You Know?

Israel's Ancestry

Genesis, chapter 49

Although the Israelites descended from many different people, the Book of Genesis traces their origins back to a series of common ancestors, who served to unite them as a people. Genesis tells the stories of those great ancestors, men and women called patriarchs and matriarchs, who were the founders of what later became the people of Israel. The twelve tribes of Israel are understood to be descendants of Jacob's twelve sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, and Benjamin—who are mentioned in Jacob's last words.

- ⁴ Unstable as water, you shall no longer excel because you went up onto your father's bed; then you defiled it—you^a went up onto my couch!
- ⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords.
- ⁶ May I never come into their council; may I not be joined to their company—for in their anger they killed men, and at their whim they hamstringed oxen.
- ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.
- ⁸ Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you.
- ⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness—who dares rouse him up?

- ¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him;^b and the obedience of the peoples is his.
- ¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes;
- ¹² his eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.
- ¹³ Zebulun shall settle at the shore of the sea; he shall be a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon.
- ¹⁴ Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds;
- ¹⁵ he saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant; so he bowed his shoulder to the burden, and became a slave at forced labor.
- ¹⁶ Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.
- ¹⁷ Dan shall be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider falls backward.
- ¹⁸ I wait for your salvation, O LORD.
- ¹⁹ Gad shall be raided by raiders, but he shall raid at their heels.
- ²⁰ Asher's^c food shall be rich, and he shall provide royal delicacies.
- ²¹ Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears lovely fawns.^d
- ²² Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall.^e
- ²³ The archers fiercely attacked him; they shot at him and pressed him hard.
- ²⁴ Yet his bow remained taut, and his arms^f were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
- ²⁵ by the God of your father, who will help you, by the Almighty^g who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

^a Gk Syr Tg; Heb *he* ^b Or until Shiloh comes or until he comes to Shiloh or (with Syr) until he comes to whom it belongs ^c Gk Vg Syr; Heb From Asher ^d Or that gives beautiful words ^e Meaning of Heb uncertain ^f Heb the arms of his hands ^g Traditional rendering of Heb Shaddai

The Gospel According to

MATTHEW

Quick Summary

Have you ever watched a really good movie with a plot twist at the end that makes you rethink the whole movie? Well, if the Old Testament was the first part of such a movie, the Gospel of Matthew would be the plot twist at the end. The twist? All the events in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Christian Old Testament) were a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ!

To show how Jesus was the fulfillment of the hopes and prophecies contained in the Old Testament, Matthew draws parallels between the life and teaching of Jesus and the people and events of the Old Testament. We read about Jesus in situations that recall Old Testament heroes like Moses and the prophets. Jesus takes Old Testament teachings and gives them renewed meaning in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection are the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

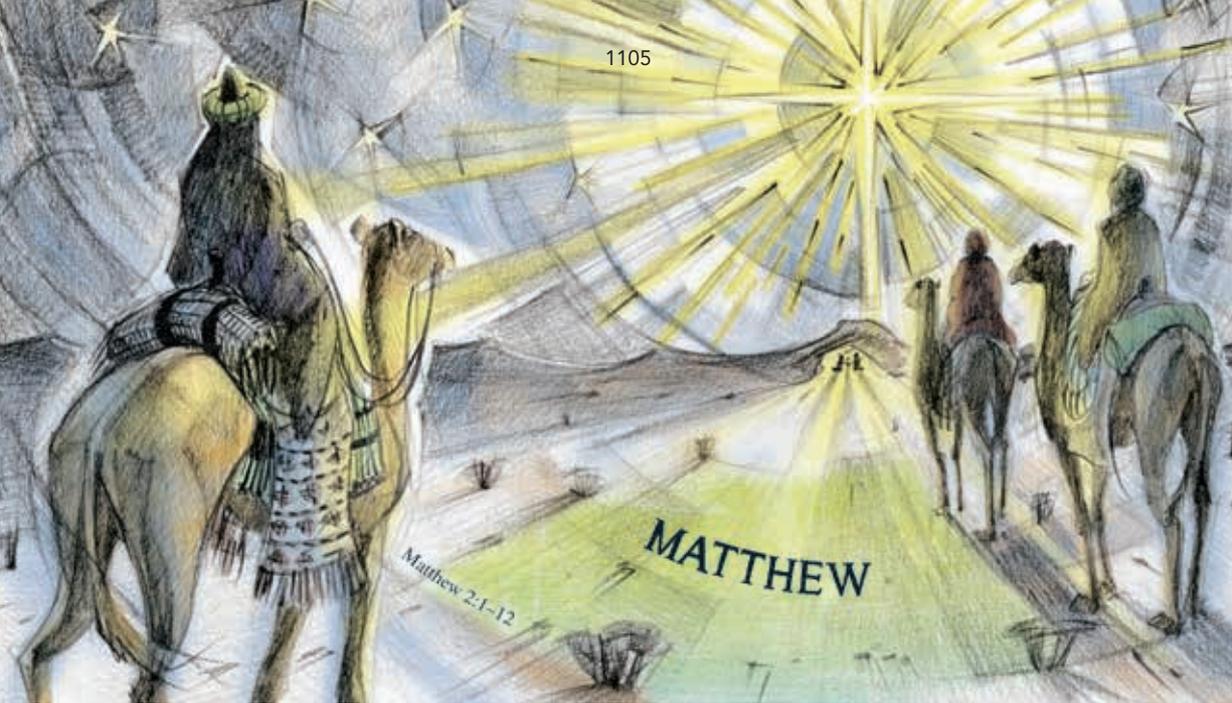
The Gospel of Matthew concludes with Jesus commissioning his followers to bring his good news to the whole world. He calls us to participate in that mission too.

How Is This Relevant to My Life Today?

- ✦ Matthew shows us that true love requires commitment and sacrifice.
- ✦ Jesus shows us how to stay faithful when the right thing is difficult to do.
- ✦ Our actions toward one another have consequences, *eternal* consequences. We find Jesus in the people we meet, especially those who are needy.

Headline Highlights

- ✦ Magi Investigate New Star (2:1–12)
- ✦ Getting God's Attention (5:1–12)
- ✦ Cure for Anxiousness (6:25–34)
- ✦ Thousands Fed with Miracle Lunch! (14:13–21)
- ✦ Jesus' True Identity Revealed (16:13–20)
- ✦ Rich Man Leaves Troubled (19:16–30)
- ✦ Christ's Disguises (25:31–46)
- ✦ Betrayed! Betrayed! (26:36–56)
- ✦ Officials Plot Empty Tomb Cover-Up (28:1–15)



The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

In an account of the genealogy^a of Jesus the Messiah,^b the son of David, the son of Abraham.

²Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram,⁴ and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon,⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,^c ⁸and Asaph^c the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah,⁹ and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,¹⁰ and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos,^d and Amos^d the father of Josiah,¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹²And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel,¹³ and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor,¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,¹⁵ and Eliud the father of Eleazar,

and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob,¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.^e

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah,^e fourteen generations.

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^b took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

a Or birth *b* Or Jesus Christ *c* Other ancient authorities read Asa
d Other ancient authorities read Amon *e* Or the Christ

CHALLENGE

CLAIM YOUR
SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Matthew 1:1

Like Jesus, we also have a genealogy. Often our faith and values are learned or passed down from these people, and from others who have had a major influence in our lives, directly or indirectly.

TAKE ACTION!

- 1 Create a chart with your name as well as the names of three to five people who have had a spiritual or faith influence in your life.
- 2 Write a word next to each person's name that represents the value they have passed on to you.
- 3 Reach out to each person on your chart, and tell them how grateful you are for what you have learned or inherited from them. Ask them how they learned what they passed on to you.
- 4 Continue to think of others who have passed on important things to you. Fill out your chart with more names as people come to mind. Place your chart between these pages.

which means, "God is with us."²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son;²⁶ and he named him Jesus.

The Visit of the Wise Men

2 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men^b from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,^c and have come to pay him homage."³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah^d was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd^e my people Israel.'

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men^b and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,^c until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped,^f they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and

a Other ancient authorities read *her firstborn son* *b* Or *astrologers*; Gk *magi* *c* Or *in the East* *d* Or *the Christ* *e* Or *rule* *f* Gk *saw the star*

remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”¹⁴ Then Joseph^a got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt,¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.”

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men,^b he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.^b ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are
no more.”

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹Then Joseph^a got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.”

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

3 In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”^c ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not

Did You Know?

Jesus’ Family Tree

Matthew 1:1–17

The unique focus of the Gospel of Matthew is immediately revealed in the first two chapters. The author of Matthew starts by tracing Jesus’ family tree, making his case that Jesus was the Messiah who would restore the covenant promised to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. Next he traces Jesus’ ancestry back to David to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made to David. Things get even more fascinating with a closer look at all the people mentioned in the list: patriarchs and slaves, kings and peasants, men and women, Jews and non-Jews.

Essentially, this genealogy demonstrates that God has been present and at work from the call of Abraham, the “father” of Judaism, through the high point of their history (David), and even through their darkest times (the Babylonian exile). And “God is with us” still in Jesus (Matthew 1:23).

presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with^d water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with^d the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵But Jesus answered

a Gk he b Or astrologers; Gk magi c Or is at hand d Or in

Did you Know?

Jesus, Emmanuel

Matthew 1:23

The author of Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and highlights Jesus' Jewish origins. The author does this to let Jewish-Christian readers know that believing in Jesus as the Messiah is not a break with their Jewish traditions.

One of the first examples is in the announcement of Jesus' birth. The author quotes Isaiah 7:14, in which Isaiah tells King Ahaz that his young wife will conceive a son and they will name him Immanuel, which means "God is with us."

This is the perfect description for Jesus, the Son of God, who fully shares our humanity. The gospel ends with the same promise, when the Risen Jesus tells his disciples, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved,^a with whom I am well pleased."

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God!'"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you, and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

⁷Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

¹²Now when Jesus^b heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and
shadow of death
light has dawned."

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."^c

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People

²³Jesus^d went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news^e of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴So his

a Or my beloved Son b Gk he c Or is at hand d Gk He e Gk gospel

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Jesus' Refugee Family Matthew 2:13

Following an angel's order and facing the massacre of all boys under age two, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod's threats. Like Mary and Joseph, millions of people in the world become refugees or immigrants every year, fleeing their countries because of poverty, persecution, or violence. Often they find themselves feeling like unwelcomed strangers, not able to communicate in the language of their new land and even mistreated by its inhabitants. As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger, especially those who suffer.

Today ask God to bless legislators with the love and wisdom to welcome refugees and immigrants, and to give your generation a courageous heart to seek justice and peace in the world.



fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus^a saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely^b on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but

a Gk he b Other ancient authorities lack falsely

Catholic Connection

Matthew 2:16-18

Choose Life!

The Gospel of Matthew (2:16–18) describes a terrible event called the Slaughter of the Innocents. Throughout history—even today—innocent people, including infants and young children, have been victims of war and other violence. Today abortion prematurely ends the lives of innocent children. To many people, abortion seems like a simple solution to an unwanted pregnancy. The Church teaches, however, that human life begins at the moment of conception, and that all life, no matter how small, is sacred and must always be protected. Abortion is wrong in all circumstances.

Catholic social teaching extends this teaching on the dignity of human life to numerous other life issues from “womb to tomb”—including capital punishment, war, and euthanasia. We, in turn, must reflect this consistent ethic of life in all that we believe, say, and do, working hard to uphold human dignity. How might we—as individuals and as communities—support pregnant women and mothers? What makes it difficult to have a consistent ethic of life in our world today?

Catholic Social Teaching:
Life and Dignity
of the Human Person

Matthew

to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,^a not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks^b one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Concerning Anger

²¹“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ ²²But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,^c you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult^d a brother or sister,^e you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell^f of fire. ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister^g has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,^g and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court^h with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Concerning Adultery

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.^f ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.^f

Concerning Divorce

³¹“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³²But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

^a Gk one iota ^b Or annuls ^c Gk a brother, other ancient authorities add without cause ^d Gk say Raca to (an obscure term of abuse) ^e Gk a brother ^f Gk Gehenna ^g Gk your brother ^h Gk lacks to court

Concerning Oaths

³³“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.^a

Concerning Retaliation

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,^b what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Concerning Almsgiving

6 “Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^c

Concerning Prayer

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the

Did you Know?

Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes

Matthew 3:7

The Pharisees were devoted laymen who were scholars of the law of Moses and experts at interpreting it. People looked up to them for guidance about how they should live as good Jews.

The Sadducees were associated with the temple and the ruling class and thought that the well-being of the Jewish people was dependent on proper operation and support of the temple.

Scribes were not a religious group within Judaism, but they would have been familiar with the Torah and other aspects of religious practice because they worked as secretaries for the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The negative reaction of John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees is typical in Matthew, but in general they were respected leaders during Jesus' time.

synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^c

⁷“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹“Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.^d

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

^a Or evil ^b Gk your brothers ^c Other ancient authorities add openly ^d Or our bread for tomorrow

Catholic Connection

Matthew 3:13-17

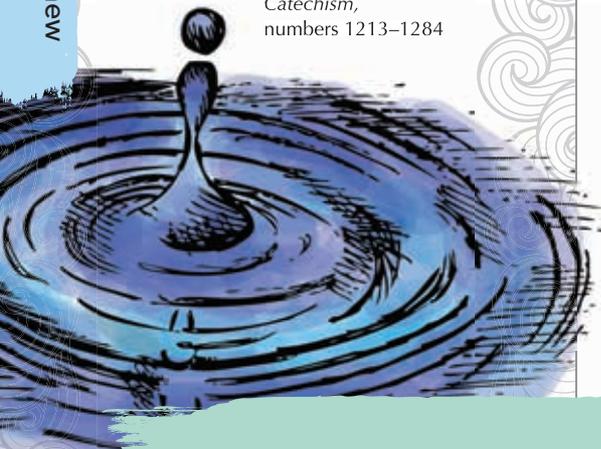
Come to the Water

John the Baptist stands by the Jordan, calling people to be baptized in water as a sign of conversion from sin. Who steps forward? Jesus, the Son of God, who is without sin! God reveals Jesus' true identity: "This is my Son, the Beloved" (Matthew 3:17).

Baptism, the first sacrament of initiation, established us as God's adopted children and members of the Church. Many Catholics are baptized as infants, but others, called catechumens, are baptized at each Easter Vigil. The catechumen is immersed in water or has water poured over his or her head three times with the words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, number 226). The catechumen dies to sin and rises as a new creation in Christ. The newly baptized is then anointed with sacred oil to strengthen him or her. Finally, the new Catholic puts on a white garment, signifying new life in Christ, and receives a candle, calling him or her to walk in the light of Christ.

Catechism,
numbers 1213-1284

Matthew



¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,^a but rescue us from the evil one.^b

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Concerning Fasting

¹⁶"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^c

Concerning Treasures

¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^d consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust^d consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Sound Eye

²²"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; ²³but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Serving Two Masters

²⁴"No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.^e

Do Not Worry

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink,^f or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?^g ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell

^a Or us into temptation ^b Or from evil. Other ancient authorities add, in some form, *For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever. Amen.* ^c Other ancient authorities add *openly* ^d Gk *eating* ^e Gk *mammon* ^f Other ancient authorities lack *or what you will drink* ^g Or *add one cubit to your height*

you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God^a and his^b righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴“So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Judging Others

7 “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ²For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s^c eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your neighbor,^d ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s^c eye.

Profaning the Holy

⁶“Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.

Ask, Search, Knock

⁷“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? ¹⁰Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

The Golden Rule

¹²“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

a Other ancient authorities lack of God *b* Or its *c* Gk brother’s *d* Gk brother

Catholic Connection

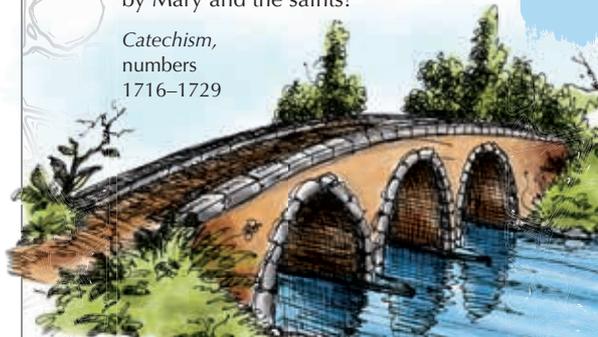
Matthew 5:1-12

Be Happy!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers a radical view of true happiness in a list of attitudes called the Beatitudes. Jesus calls us to turn away from self-centered attitudes and toward the truth of who we are before God. In the Beatitudes, Jesus paints a word picture of his true followers. We are poor: Our true happiness does not come from things. At times, we are sad and we mourn: We look to God and God’s people to comfort us. We are meek: We accept compliments graciously but know our value lies in our dignity as God’s children. We hunger and thirst for justice in our world, and we show mercy to others. We are clean of heart, avoiding temptation in thought and action, and we are peacemakers. If we endure persecution, Jesus promises us a sure reward.

Living the Beatitudes leads us to a right relationship with God and others. Eventually the Beatitudes will lead us to the eternal life God has prepared for us in heaven. In the meantime, make the Beatitudes your daily attitudes, and know that you are not alone in the pursuit of true happiness. You walk this journey with your brothers and sisters in faith, led by Mary and the saints!

Catechism,
numbers
1716–1729



Catholic Connection

Matthew, chapters 5-7

Upside-Down World

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turns his listeners' attitudes upside down. He says it is not enough simply to follow the letter of the Law and perform minimal acts to care for the poor, bury the dead, and give alms. Rather, people should do these things generously, compassionately, and humbly, with a hunger for justice, a pure heart, and a desire for peace.

God has a special love for the poor and oppressed. These are "the last" who are first in God's eyes. To be authentic Christians, we must show similar "upside-down" love for those most in need. Thankfully our world has been blessed with modern-day prophets who have shown us what it truly means to love and care for those who are poor. For example, Blessed Oscar Romero of El Salvador was martyred for speaking out against grave injustices being inflicted upon the poor in his country. Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker movement and devoted her life to promoting peace while serving the most destitute. With these faithful disciples and so many others as examples, we too must always opt to love and serve the poor in our midst.

Catholic Social Teaching:

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Matthew



The Narrow Gate

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy^a that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Concerning Self-Deception

²¹“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ ²³Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’

Hearers and Doers

²⁴“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

²⁸Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, ²⁹for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

8 When Jesus^b had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; ²and there was a leper^c who came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” ³He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!”

^a Other ancient authorities read for the road is wide and easy ^b Gk he ^c The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases

Immediately his leprosy^a was cleansed. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Jesus Heals a Centurion’s Servant

⁵When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him ⁶and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.” ⁷And he said to him, “I will come and cure him.” ⁸The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and the slave does it.” ¹⁰When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “Truly I tell you, in no one^b in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹²while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.” And the servant was healed in that hour.

Jesus Heals Many at Peter’s House

¹⁴When Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; ¹⁵he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. ¹⁶That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

Would-Be Followers of Jesus

¹⁸Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. ¹⁹A scribe then approached and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” ²⁰And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” ²¹Another of his disciples said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” ²²But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

^a The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases ^b Other ancient authorities read *Truly I tell you, not even*

Catholic Connection

Matthew 6:1-18

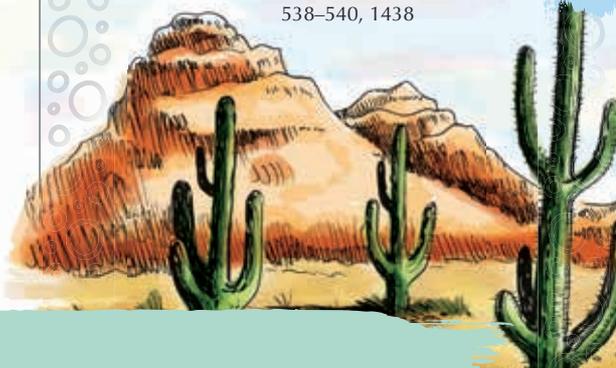
Forty Days in the Desert

We hear Matthew 6:1–18 on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Lent is a forty-day period of prayer, service, and fasting, a time when we look forward to Easter, when we will renew our baptismal commitment to Christ and celebrate his resurrection. The forty days recall the forty years that the people of Israel spent wandering in the wilderness before arriving at the promised land, as well as the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert after being baptized (see Matthew 4:1).

On Ash Wednesday, we receive ashes that remind us of our nature as created beings (see Genesis 3:19). This practice echoes the Old Testament tradition of wearing ashes as a sign of anguish and repentance (see Judith 4:11). As the ash cross is made on our foreheads, we hear words that echo John the Baptist’s call to conversion: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (*Roman Missal*, page 211). We respond with, “Amen,” meaning, “So be it.”

When Lent begins again, make a special commitment to prayer, service, and fasting, and ask God for the grace to grow from it.

Catechism, numbers
538–540, 1438



SEARCHING for GOD

Matthew 6:5-15 ←

Mean What You Pray

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus teaches his followers the Lord's Prayer as an alternative to hypocritical and empty prayer. If we pray this prayer without meaning, it can become "empty phrases" for us too (see Matthew 6:7). As you pray the Our Father, honor God's name, pray for God's kingdom of peace and love to come, resolve to do God's will even when it goes against your own, pray for daily bread for all, ask for forgiveness, give forgiveness, and pray to be delivered from all evil. Amen!

Matthew

ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS
DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Jesus Stills the Storm

²³And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" ²⁶And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. ²⁷They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs

²⁸When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes,^a two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" ³⁰Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹The demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." ³²And he said to them, "Go!" So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. ³³The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. ¹And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

²And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." ³Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." ⁴But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take your bed and go to your home." ⁷And he stood up and went to his home. ⁸When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

^a Other ancient authorities read *Gergesenes*; others, *Gerasenes*

CHALLENGE

RECOGNIZE
AND SHARE YOUR
TREASURE

Matthew 6:21

What we treasure says a lot about who we are and what we value. Because of this, it is good to be mindful where we place our time and attention and what we value as important.

TAKE ACTION!

- 1 Imagine you had to move to a deserted island and could only take five people and five items with you. Whom and what would you bring?
- 2 Reflect about why you chose the items you did for the deserted island. Do they represent your heart and values well?
- 3 Take time this week to tell the five people who are your treasure how important they are to you. Say a prayer of thanks every night this week for each of them.

The Call of Matthew

⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

¹⁰And as he sat at dinner^a in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting^b with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹²But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

The Question about Fasting

¹⁴Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often,^c but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵And Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is

made. ¹⁷Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

¹⁸While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue^d came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, ²¹for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." ²²Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. ²³When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. ²⁵But when

^a Gk reclined ^b Gk were reclining ^c Other ancient authorities lack often ^d Gk lacks of the synagogue

CHALLENGE

BUILD YOUR
HOUSE ON ROCK

Matthew 7:24

A strong foundation is crucial for the stability and endurance of any structure. We too must have a strong spiritual foundation in order to be the best and most faithful we can be.

TAKE ACTION!

Identify Your Foundation: Read Matthew 7:24–27 and highlight the two different foundations. Circle the one that best describes your foundation right now.

Describe a Solid Foundation: Think about what builds a strong foundation for you, and write these things down, such as “friends” or “love.”

Commit to Building: Name where your foundation might be the weakest, and commit to one thing you can do every day this month to make that part of your foundation more solid.



the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.²⁶ And the report of this spread throughout that district.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!”²⁸When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.”²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you.”³⁰And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, “See that no one knows of this.”³¹But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.

Jesus Heals One Who Was Mute

³²After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him.³³And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!”³⁴But the Pharisees said, “By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons.”^a

The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;³⁸ therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

The Twelve Apostles

10 Then Jesus^b summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;^c ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

^a Other ancient authorities lack this verse ^b Gk he ^c Other ancient authorities read Lebbeaus; or Lebbeaus called Thaddaeus

The Mission of the Twelve

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.”^a ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers,^b cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Coming Persecutions

¹⁶“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; ²⁰for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; ²²and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

Whom to Fear

²⁶“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;

Did I Know?

What Miracles Reveal

Matthew 8:1–9:34

People today tend to view reports of miracles with suspicion because our rational mind wants to believe that everything has a scientific explanation. But people in Jesus’ time were more concerned about what the miracle revealed than in the miracle itself or even the miracle worker. In fact, Jesus’ healing miracles were not taken as proof of his divinity, only that he worked by the power of God.

In curing people of their illnesses and driving out demons, Jesus was revealing that the Reign of God is a place where suffering and evil are banished and all are welcomed, especially outcasts.

Whether miracles are easily explained or beyond reasonable explanation does not matter; what matters is that they make us aware of God’s loving presence in our lives.

rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

³⁴“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶ and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

^a Or is at hand ^b The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases ^c Gk Gehenna

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Rewards

⁴⁰“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

11 Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.

Messengers from John the Baptist

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah^a was doing, he sent word by his^b disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we

to wait for another?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers^c are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone^d dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet?^e Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.”

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the

a Or the Christ b Other ancient authorities read two of his c The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases d Or Why then did you go out? To see someone e Other ancient authorities read Why then did you go out? To see a prophet?

GROWING IN FAITH

Matthew 10:34-39

Life as Disciples

The community that the author of Matthew lived in knew that living as Jesus’ disciples was not always simple or easy. This is why Jesus says such a curious thing as he prepares the twelve for their mission: “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). Jesus isn’t advocating violence, just simply predicting how people will likely react to the new values and way of life of his followers. He is speaking metaphorically to emphasize the extreme demands of discipleship. What are the challenges you face in being a disciple today, and how might you rely on other disciples to strengthen you for the important road ahead?

kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,^a and the violent take it by force. ¹³For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; ¹⁴and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵Let anyone with ears^b listen!

¹⁶“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”^c

Woes to Unrepentant Cities

²⁰Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum,

will you be exalted to heaven?

No, you will be brought down to Hades.

For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you.”

Jesus Thanks His Father

²⁵At that time Jesus said, “I thank^d you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.^e ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grain-fields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ²When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him,

“Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.” ³He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. ⁵Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? ⁶I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”

The Man with a Withered Hand

⁹He left that place and entered their synagogue; ¹⁰a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, “Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?” so that they might accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, “Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath.” ¹³Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

God’s Chosen Servant

¹⁵When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds^f followed him, and he cured all of them, ¹⁶and he ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸ “Here is my servant, whom I have chosen,
my beloved, with whom my soul is well
pleased.

I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

¹⁹ He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰ He will not break a bruised reed
or quench a smoldering wick
until he brings justice to victory.

²¹ And in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

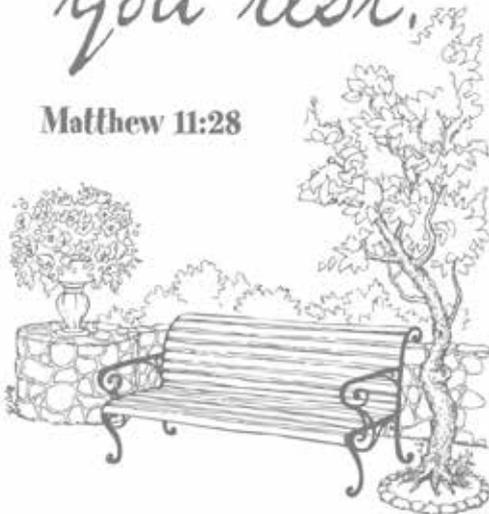
Jesus and Beelzebul

²²Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see. ²³All the crowds were amazed and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard it,

a Or has been coming violently *b* Other ancient authorities add to hear *c* Other ancient authorities read children *d* Or praise *e* Or for so it was well-pleasing in your sight *f* Other ancient authorities lack crowds

Come to
ME...
and I
WILL
give
you rest.

Matthew 11:28



they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons."

²⁵He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

²⁷If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists^a cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. ²⁹Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. ³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

³¹Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A Tree and Its Fruit

³³"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. ³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; ³⁷for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Sign of Jonah

³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." ³⁹But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! ⁴²The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

^a Gk sons

The Return of the Unclean Spirit

⁴³“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. ⁴⁴Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation.”

The True Kindred of Jesus

⁴⁶While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”^a ⁴⁸But to the one who had told him this, Jesus^b replied, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹And pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears^c listen!”

The Purpose of the Parables

¹⁰Then the disciples came and asked him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹He answered, “To you it has been given to know the secrets^d of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ¹³The reason I speak to them in parables is that ‘seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.’ ¹⁴With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

‘You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive.

Did you Know?

Parables

Matthew 13:10

The gospels frequently describe Jesus’ teaching in parables. A parable is a literary form that uses a fictional story to make a point.

Many of Jesus’ parables are like riddles. They have surprising endings designed to tease the people of his time into examining certain beliefs they took for granted. Unfortunately, the surprise of Jesus’ parables is hard for some of us to understand today because we may be unfamiliar with the examples he used: baking bread, planting crops, herding sheep, or fishing for supper.

Jesus also used parables to teach about God’s Reign. These were often in the form of analogies comparing God’s Reign to common things or events: “The kingdom of heaven is like” Using parables, Jesus challenged powerful and educated people, but he was also understood by common people.

¹⁵ For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them.”

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸“Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on

^a Other ancient authorities lack verse 47 ^b Gk he ^c Other ancient authorities add to hear ^d Or mysteries

SEARCHING for GOD

Matthew 13:10-53 ←

Ordinary and Extraordinary

In helping people to understand something as overwhelming—and extraordinary—as the kingdom of heaven, Jesus used ordinary objects, like seeds and light, salt, and yeast. He chose to talk about everyday actions like farming, fishing, and baking. Jesus is clear that the kingdom is not only a reality we hope to experience *later* but also an extraordinary reality of new life and love that we can help to create *now*. Think about this: What would our world look like if it truly reflected the kingdom of heaven? What object, action, or image best describes your understanding of this extraordinary reality?

Matthew

the path.²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;²¹ yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.^a ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.²³ But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

²⁴ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?’ ²⁸ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The slaves said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹ But he replied, ‘No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

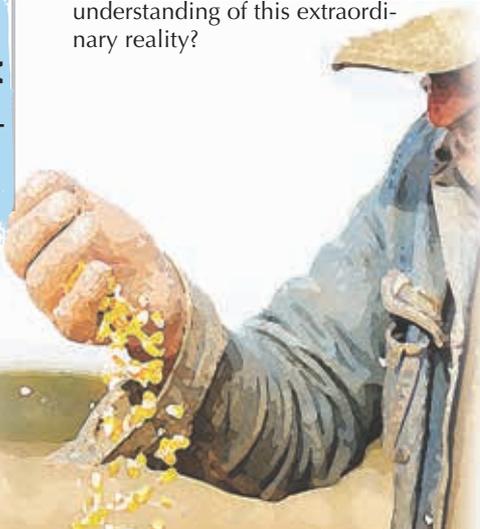
The Parable of the Yeast

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with^b three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

The Use of Parables

³⁴ Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. ³⁵ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:^c

a Gk stumbles *b* Gk hid in *c* Other ancient authorities read the prophet Isaiah



“I will open my mouth to speak in parables;
I will proclaim what has been hidden from
the foundation of the world.”^a

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears^b listen!

Three Parables

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Treasures New and Old

⁵¹“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.”⁵²And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

⁵⁴He came to his hometown and began to teach the people^c in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? ⁵⁵Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary?

And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?”⁵⁷And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house.”⁵⁸And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

The Death of John the Baptist

14 At that time Herod the ruler^d heard reports about Jesus; ²and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him.”³For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; ⁴because John had been telling him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”⁵Though Herod^d wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. ⁶But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod ⁷so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. ⁸Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.”⁹The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; ¹⁰he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. ¹²His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”¹⁶Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”¹⁷They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”¹⁸And he said, “Bring them here to me.”¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

^a Other ancient authorities lack of the world ^b Other ancient authorities add to hear ^c Gk them ^d Gk tetrarch ^e Other ancient authorities read his brother’s wife ^f Gk he

²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,^a for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind,^b he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught

him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God!"

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

³⁴When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him, ³⁶and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

The Tradition of the Elders

15 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands before they eat." ³He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said,^c 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' ⁵But you say that whoever tells father or mother,

a Other ancient authorities read *was out on the sea* *b* Other ancient authorities read *the wind* *c* Other ancient authorities read *commanded, saying*

GROWING IN FAITH

Matthew 14:22-33

Take the Risk

Of the four gospels, only Matthew includes the story of Peter's walking on the water. Peter is willing to take the risk, so why does he start to sink? When he is focused on Jesus, everything is fine, but as soon as he takes his eyes off Jesus, noticing the fierce wind, he begins to sink.

Jesus invites you to risk a relationship with him. You have to step out in faith, maybe leaving some old ways of life behind. Following him might get scary or difficult at times, but all great adventures involve some risk!



‘Whatever support you might have had from me is given to God;^a then that person need not honor the father.^b ⁶So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word^c of God. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said:

⁸ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’”

Things That Defile

¹⁰Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: ¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹²Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” ¹³He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.^d And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

The Canaanite Woman’s Faith

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” ²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Jesus Cures Many People

²⁹After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed,

the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, ³¹so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Feeding the Four Thousand

³²Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.” ³³The disciples said to him, “Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?” ³⁴Jesus asked them, “How many loaves have you?” They said, “Seven, and a few small fish.” ³⁵Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground, ³⁶he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ³⁷And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ³⁸Those who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children. ³⁹After sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.^e

The Demand for a Sign

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Jesus^f they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ ³And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.^g ⁴An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Then he left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

⁵When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, “Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ⁷They said to one another, “It is because we have brought no bread.” ⁸And becoming aware of it, Jesus said, “You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread? ⁹Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹How could you fail

a Or is an offering. *b* Other ancient authorities add or the mother. *c* Other ancient authorities read law; others, commandment. *d* Other ancient authorities lack of the blind. *e* Other ancient authorities read Magdala or Magdalan. *f* Gk him. *g* Other ancient authorities lack ³When it is . . . of the times

Catholic Connection

Matthew 16:13-20

Peter's Final Answer

Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). Peter replies that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus then tells Peter that he will build the Church upon Peter and give him the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

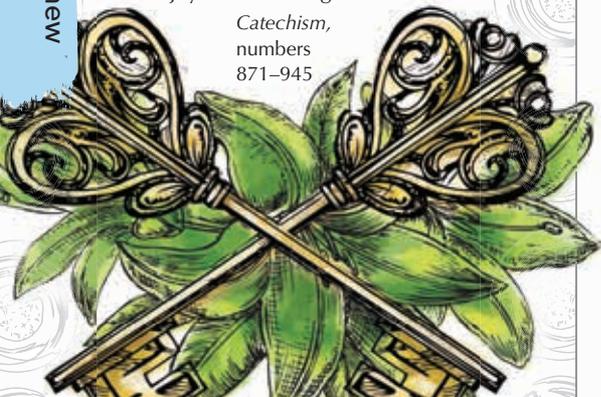
Two thousand years later, the Catholic Church recognizes Peter's authority through his successor, the Pope. Like Peter, the Pope has ultimate authority over and care for the Church as both pastor and teacher. Similarly, the bishops are the successors of the apostles. Under each bishop's authority and care are the priests and deacons who help care for the faithful.

The Catholic Church also includes men and women living a consecrated life. Those in consecrated life are not ordained but have taken vows to live a lifestyle dedicated to Christ and to his people.

Finally, the laity are the main body of the Church. As laypeople we are called to seek the Reign of God in our everyday lives, to proclaim the good news, and—by virtue of our Baptism—to bless the world by offering our lives to God in joyful and loving service to all.

Catechism,
numbers
871-945

Matthew



to perceive that I was not speaking about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"¹² Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah,^a the Son of the living God."¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter,^b and on this rock^c I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was^d the Messiah.^a

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you."²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

The Cross and Self-Denial

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷ "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

a Or the Christ *b* Gk Petros *c* Gk petra *d* Other ancient authorities add Jesus

The Transfiguration

17 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I^a will make three dwellings^b here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved;^c with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” ⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.” ¹⁰And the disciples asked him, “Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” ¹¹He replied, “Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; ¹²but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands.” ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

Jesus Cures a Boy with a Demon

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, ¹⁵and said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.” ¹⁷Jesus answered, “You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸And Jesus rebuked the demon,^d and it^e came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” ²⁰He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a^f mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”^g

a Other ancient authorities read *we* *b* Or *tents* *c* Or *my beloved Son* *d* Gk *it or him* *e* Gk *the demon* *f* Gk *faith as a grain of* *g* Other ancient authorities add verse 21, *But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting*

Catholic Connection

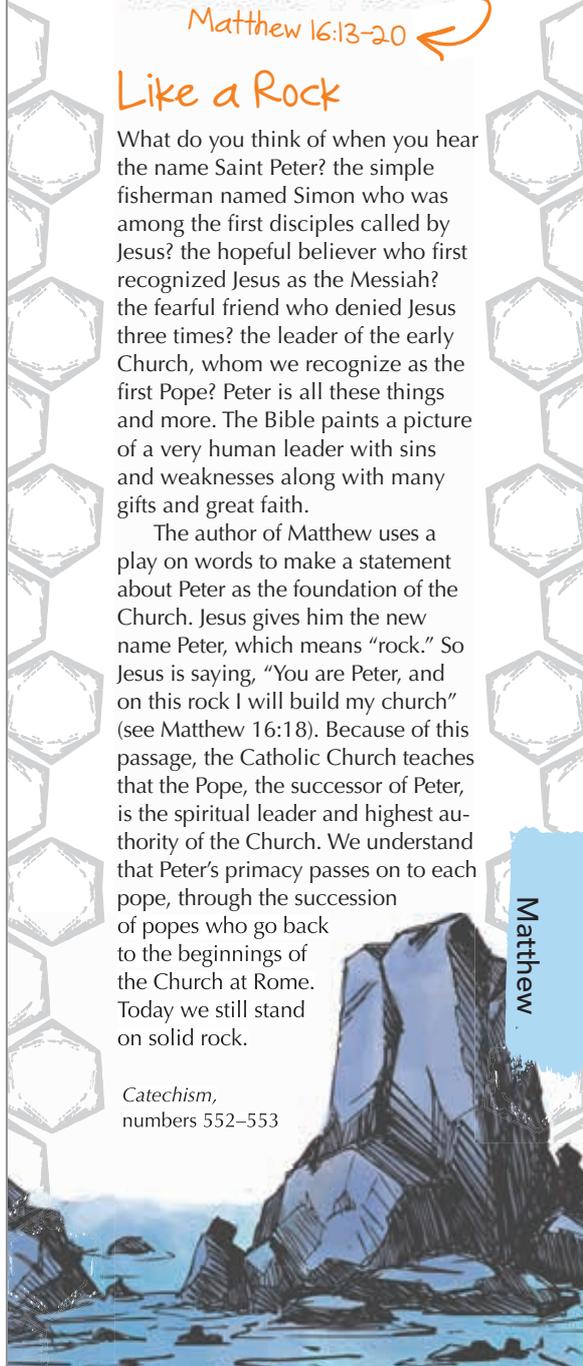
Matthew 16:13-20

Like a Rock

What do you think of when you hear the name Saint Peter? the simple fisherman named Simon who was among the first disciples called by Jesus? the hopeful believer who first recognized Jesus as the Messiah? the fearful friend who denied Jesus three times? the leader of the early Church, whom we recognize as the first Pope? Peter is all these things and more. The Bible paints a picture of a very human leader with sins and weaknesses along with many gifts and great faith.

The author of Matthew uses a play on words to make a statement about Peter as the foundation of the Church. Jesus gives him the new name Peter, which means “rock.” So Jesus is saying, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (see Matthew 16:18). Because of this passage, the Catholic Church teaches that the Pope, the successor of Peter, is the spiritual leader and highest authority of the Church. We understand that Peter’s primacy passes on to each pope, through the succession of popes who go back to the beginnings of the Church at Rome. Today we still stand on solid rock.

Catechism,
numbers 552–553



Catholic Connection

Matthew 17:1-13

Old and New

The story of the transfiguration in Matthew's Gospel is packed with Old Testament allusions. The transfiguration took place on a mountain, just as Moses met with God and established the covenant on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 24:12-18). Moses (representing the law) and Elijah (representing the prophets) appeared with Jesus during the transfiguration. Finally, God's command to the disciples to listen to Jesus fulfilled a prophecy in Deuteronomy (see 18:15-22).

Since apostolic times, the Catholic Church has affirmed the relevance and importance of the Old Testament. From creating the world to sending Jesus and the Holy Spirit, God gradually revealed himself and his saving plan. Because God's plan spans both Old and New Testaments, the Church accepts and honors their natural unity. The Old Testament lays the foundation and prophesies the coming of Christ. The New Testament fulfills the prophecies by recounting the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Paschal Mystery. We read both testaments in light of each other, studying both to fully understand God's plan for our salvation.

Catechism,
numbers 120-137

Matthew

Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²²As they were gathering^a in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, ²³and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." And they were greatly distressed.

Jesus and the Temple Tax

²⁴When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax^b came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?"^b ²⁵He said, "Yes, he does." And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" ²⁶When Peter^c said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free. ²⁷However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin;^d take that and give it to them for you and me."

True Greatness

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²He called a child, whom he put among them, ³and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Temptations to Sin

⁶"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!

⁸"If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell^e of fire.

a Other ancient authorities read *living* *b* Gk *didrachma* *c* Gk *he*
d Gk *stater*; the *stater* was worth two *didrachmas* *e* Gk *Gehenna*

CHALLENGE

Matthew 18:21-22

FORGIVE

Sometimes the people we love can hurt us the most. Forgiveness is never easy, but Jesus challenges us to forgive—over and over and over again. This does not mean to stand still and endure pain inflicted by others, but rather to cultivate a forgiving heart.

TAKE ACTION!

Write It: Handwrite a letter on paper to a person you need to forgive, explaining how you are feeling and why. Put the letter in your Bible. When you feel like you are able to forgive, tear up the letter.

Pray It: Spend time in prayer, asking God for the strength to forgive. Read Matthew 18:21-35 and highlight the verse in the parable that most strikes you.

Speak It: Take small steps toward forgiveness. When you feel ready, talk to the person who hurt you. Explain your feelings but focus on the many things you love about that person.



The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹⁰“Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.^a ¹²What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴So it is not the will of your^b Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Reproving Another Who Sins

¹⁵“If another member of the church^c sins against you,^d go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.^e ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I

tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Forgiveness

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church^f sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven^g times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents^h

^a Other ancient authorities add verse 11, *For the Son of Man came to save the lost*. ^b Other ancient authorities read *my*. ^c Gk *If your brother*. ^d Other ancient authorities lack *against you*. ^e Gk *the brother*. ^f Gk *if my brother*. ^g Or *seventy times seven*. ^h A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages of a laborer.

WHO ^{is} my NEIGHBOR?

Forgiveness Meditation Matthew 18:21-35

The parable of the unforgiving servant spells out clearly, and a bit harshly, what it means to ask God to “forgive us our debts, / as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12).

Bring to mind a person who has hurt you or recently made you angry, and hold this person in your thoughts. Now tell this person, in your thoughts, how she or he has hurt you. Finally, forgive this person so that you can let go of the burden of your hurt. When you are done, imagine Jesus in your prayer and share with him something you have done that has hurt another person. Let Jesus forgive you in the same way you just forgave.



was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;^a and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister^b from your heart.”

Teaching about Divorce

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

³Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” ⁴He answered, “Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ ⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” ⁷They said to him, “Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?” ⁸He said to them, “It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.”^c

¹⁰His disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

a The denarius was the usual day’s wage for a laborer *b* Gk brother
c Other ancient authorities read *except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; others add at the end of the verse and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery*

CHALLENGE

CARE FOR
THE CHILDREN

Matthew 19:14

Children are a gift from God, not just for their families but for all people. We are all called to care for God's children.

TAKE ACTION!

- 
Sponsor a Child: Identify an organization that offers sponsorship of a child in a developing country. Gather four or five of your friends who are willing to sponsor a child for a year and, if the organization invites it, be a pen pal, as well. At the end of the year, decide whether to recommit, or maybe invite others to sponsor your child.
- 
Support a Parent's Night Out: Coordinate with your friends and school or parish administration to offer a fun night for young children (without their parents). Share your favorite Bible story with the children.
- 
Collect Toys: Sponsor or get involved with a toy drive for underprivileged children around Christmas or Easter. Have your friends help you deliver the toys to a social service agency that serves children and families.



¹¹But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

¹³Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; ¹⁴but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." ¹⁵And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

¹⁸He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ²⁰The young man said to him, "I have kept all these;" what do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money^b to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²²When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁶But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

²⁷Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we

^a Other ancient authorities add from my youth ^b Gk lacks the money

Catholic Connection

Matthew 20:1-16

Working to Live

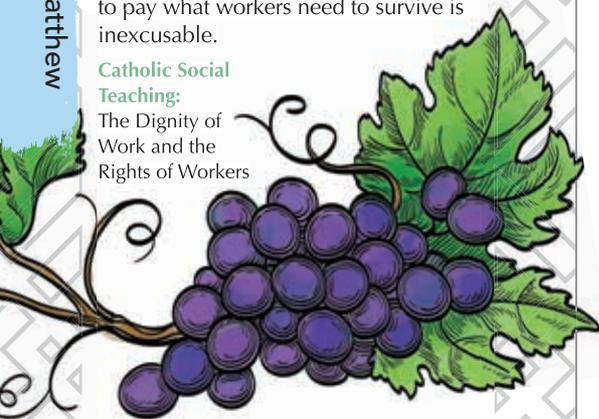
In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Jesus says a landowner paid the same daily wage no matter when his workers started—dawn, midday, or evening. Some workers found the wage unfair, even though they received the amount they agreed to when hired. What a difference between God's notions of fairness and justice and ours! To us, fairness means paying workers for hours worked. Justice, however, means providing all people with what they need to live. Such is the radical grace of God!

Worldwide, many workers toil long hours under brutal conditions for unjust wages. Even in developed countries, someone working forty hours a week might not earn enough for basic needs (food, shelter, transportation, medicine), especially if she or he supports a family. We must advocate that all workers receive a living wage—the minimum necessary to achieve a basic standard of living above the poverty line. Small business owners sometimes fear that a living wage will raise operating costs and put them out of business, yet failing to pay what workers need to survive is inexcusable.

Catholic Social Teaching:

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Matthew



have?"²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold,^a and will inherit eternal life.³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

The Laborers in the Vineyard

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage,^b he sent them into his vineyard.³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace;⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same.⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?'⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.'⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.^b¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.^b¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?'^b¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'^c¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."^d

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

¹⁷While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and

^a Other ancient authorities read manifold ^b Gk a denarius ^c Gk is your eye evil because I am good? ^d Other ancient authorities add for many are called but few are chosen

said to them on the way, ¹⁸“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; ¹⁹then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised.”

The Request of the Mother of James and John

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. ²¹And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” ²²But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?”^a They said to him, “We are able.” ²³He said to them, “You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

²⁴When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ²⁶It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, “Lord,^b have mercy on us, Son of David!” ³¹The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, “Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!” ³²Jesus stood still and called them, saying, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

21 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to

^a Other ancient authorities add *or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* ^b Other ancient authorities lack *Lord*

SEARCHING for GOD

Matthew 20:1-16 ←

That's
So Unfair!

If you were like the workers in the vineyard who worked a whole day, would you resent the latecomer who received the same pay as you did? Maybe you would. But if you were the latecomer, how would you feel? It may seem unfair, but that is how God's love works. God cannot give less than all his love to everybody—whenever they turn to him—even if that might seem “unfairly generous” to us. Pray this prayer: *God, thank you for being so unfairly generous to each one of your children, including me. Help me to imitate that generosity in my own life. Thank you for giving me all your love, all the time, and showing it once and for all in your Son, Jesus. Help me to follow him now and always. Amen.*



WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

True Greatness Matthew 20:20-28

What good parent does not want his or her children to find success in life? The mother of James and John is confused about the kingdom that Jesus has come to establish. She lobbies for her sons, hoping they might be made “senior vice presidents” of the new “firm.” Jesus reminds the disciples—and reminds us today—that true greatness is gained in serving others.

Whenever you are in a position of leadership, rather than seeing it as a chance to control others in order to gain power or social status, see it as an opportunity to serve others and help them obtain what they need to live full and healthy lives.



you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.”⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵ “Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd^b spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹²Then Jesus entered the temple^c and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and

he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³He said to them, “It is written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’;
but you are making it a den of robbers.”

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard^d the children crying out in the temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became angry ¹⁶and said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read,

‘Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise for yourself’?”

¹⁷He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

¹⁸In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it,

a Or ‘The Lord needs them and will send them back immediately.’ b Or Most of the crowd c Other ancient authorities add of God d Gk lacks heard

“May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once.²⁰ When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”²¹ Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done.²² Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.”²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went.³⁰ The father^a went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go.³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country.³⁴ When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce.³⁵ But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.³⁶ Again he sent

other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way.³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;^b
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes’?

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.^c ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.^d

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come.⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business,⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy.’⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a

^a Gk He ^b Or keystone ^c Gk the fruits of it ^d Other ancient authorities lack verse 44

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

The Perfect Plan Matthew 22:34-40

Can you imagine a world where every person lives according to the two commandments Jesus gives in Matthew 22:34-40, where every word, thought, and action is motivated by a deep love for God and by a desire for the well-being of others? Jesus articulates the perfect plan for achieving the ideal human society in just a few short sentences.

The message of these two great commandments obviously remains real and relevant for us today. Following in the footsteps of the apostles who first heard Jesus' words, we are responsible to live out these commandments in our world—becoming living, breathing examples of what it means to love God, neighbor, and self.

wedding robe,¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless.¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen."

The Question about Paying Taxes

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said.¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality.¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius.²⁰ Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?"²¹ They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's."²² When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

The Question about the Resurrection

²³The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection;^a and they asked him a question, saying,²⁴ "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.'²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother.²⁶ The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh.²⁷ Last of all, the woman herself died.²⁸ In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her."

²⁹Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God.³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels^b in heaven.³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God,³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living."³³ And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

^a Other ancient authorities read *who say that there is no resurrection*
^b Other ancient authorities add *of God*

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

The Question about David’s Son

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴²“What do you think of the Messiah?^a Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit^b calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
‘Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet’?”

⁴⁵If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²⁴“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; ²⁵therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ²⁶They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,^c and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ²⁷They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ²⁸They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, ²⁹and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. ³⁰But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students.^d ³¹And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. ³²Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.^e ³³The greatest among you will be your servant. ³⁴All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

³⁵“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.^f ³⁶Woe to you,

scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell^g as yourselves.

³⁷“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.’ ³⁸You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? ³⁹And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.’ ⁴⁰How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ⁴¹So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; ⁴²and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; ⁴³and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it.

⁴⁴“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. ⁴⁵You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

⁴⁶“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ⁴⁷You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup,^h so that the outside also may become clean.

⁴⁸“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. ⁴⁹So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

⁵⁰“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, ⁵¹and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ ⁵²Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ⁵³Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. ⁵⁴You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape

a Or Christ *b* Gk in spirit *c* Other ancient authorities lack hard to bear *d* Gk brothers *e* Or the Christ *f* Other authorities add here (or after verse 12) verse 14, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance you make long prayers; therefore you will receive the greater condemnation *g* Gk Gehenna *h* Other ancient authorities add and of the plate

being sentenced to hell?^a ³⁴Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, ³⁵so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

The Lament over Jerusalem

³⁷“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” ³⁸See, your house is left to you, desolate.^b ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

24 As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ²Then he asked them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

Signs of the End of the Age

³When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah!’^c and they will lead many astray. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines^d and earthquakes in various places: ⁸all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Persecutions Foretold

⁹“Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. ¹⁰Then many will fall away,^e and they will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this good news^f of the

kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

The Desolating Sacrilege

¹⁵“So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; ¹⁷the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; ¹⁸the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. ¹⁹Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. ²¹For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²²And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look! Here is the Messiah!’^g or ‘There he is!’—do not believe it. ²⁴For false messiahs^h and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵Take note, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶So, if they say to you, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look! He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹“Immediately after the suffering of those days
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from heaven,
and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

³²“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves,

^a Gk Gehenna ^b Other ancient authorities lack *desolate* ^c Or *the Christ* ^d Other ancient authorities add *and pestilences* ^e Or *stumble* ^f Or *gospel* ^g Or *the Christ* ^h Or *Christ*

you know that summer is near. ³³So also, when you see all these things, you know that he^a is near, at the very gates. ³⁴Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³⁶“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son,^b but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day^c your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

The Faithful or the Unfaithful Slave

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves^d their allowance of food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. ⁴⁷Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that wicked slave says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ ⁴⁹and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. ⁵¹He will cut him in pieces^e and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids^f took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.^g ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with

^a Or it ^b Other ancient authorities lack *nor the Son* ^c Other ancient authorities read *at what hour* ^d Gk to give them ^e Or cut him off ^f Gk virgins ^g Other ancient authorities add *and the bride*

SEARCHING for GOD

Matthew 25:1-13 ←

When Are You Coming?

*I have accepted your invitation,
Lord,
But when are you coming?
I need to be ready, Lord,
But when are you coming?
I want to share your love with
others, Lord,
But when are you coming?
I will be prepared, Lord,
No matter when you are coming.
Amen.*



Catholic Connection

Matthew 25:31-46

Who Cares?

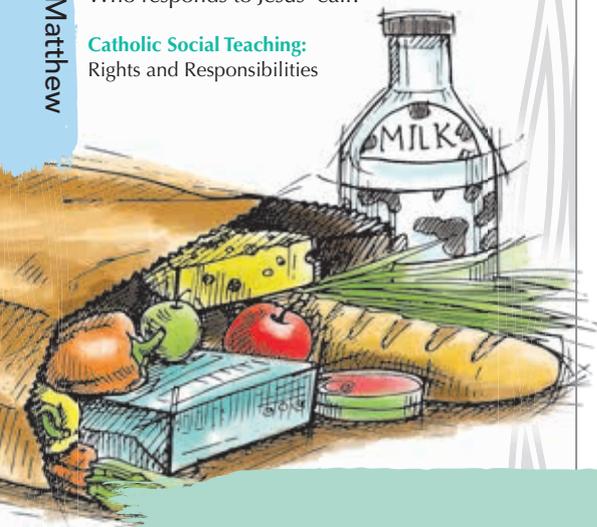
We often hear excuses to not help those in need: "He got what he deserved!" "She is not my problem!" But Jesus commands us to reach out to those who suffer. He declares that God will judge how we care for those who are disadvantaged, for in them we encounter and minister to Christ.

Catholic social teaching states that all human beings have basic rights we must always protect. The United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" lists thirty human rights, including rights to work, education, fair legal treatment, and ownership of property. With these rights come responsibilities, similar to what Jesus outlines for his disciples in Matthew 25:31-46: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, tending to the sick, and so on. These are the demands of our faith, if we want to call ourselves disciples.

In your community, can hungry people receive a free meal? Does your school or parish have food or clothing drives? How are homebound or terminally ill people cared for? Who visits or writes to prisoners? How are refugees welcomed? In other words, in your community, who cares? Who responds to Jesus' call?

Catholic Social Teaching:
Rights and Responsibilities

Matthew



them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those bridesmaids^a got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids^a came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.^b

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents,^c to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You

^a Gk virgins ^b Other ancient authorities add in which the Son of Man is coming ^c A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages of a laborer

knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,^a you did it to me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²⁴"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, ⁴and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

The Anointing at Bethany

⁶Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,^b ⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. ⁸But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste? ⁹For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor." ¹⁰But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. ¹¹For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. ¹³Truly I tell you, wherever this good news^c is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples

¹⁷On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve;^d ²¹and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²²And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl

^a Gk these my brothers ^b The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases ^c Or gospel ^d Other ancient authorities add disciples

Catholic Connection

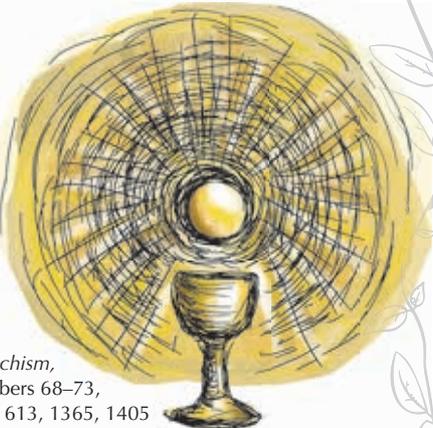
Matthew 26:26-29

A New People

The Bible is often called the Old and New Covenants—or Testaments, from the Latin word for *covenant*. The word *covenant* expresses the unique relationship between God and God's people. In the Old Testament, the Israelites' laws and worship were a sign of this covenant. Then Jesus Christ, the Word Made Flesh, initiated the New Covenant through his life offered in sacrifice for all.

Jesus taught that the true covenant is found in the commandments to love God totally and to love one another with the same unconditional love God shows us. During the Last Supper, Jesus catapulted humanity into a new dimension of the covenant with God when he shared the cup and said, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:27–28). When the disciples partook of the body and blood of Christ, they became the body of Christ, entering the deepest kind of communion with God.

This communion in the body of Christ also points to the communion of all believers—of every nationality, race, culture, social status. Our communion as Christians, the New Covenant people of God, transcends any and all human division.



Catechism, numbers 68–73, 610, 613, 1365, 1405

with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." ²⁵Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is my blood of the^a covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

³⁰When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Peter's Denial Foretold

³¹Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written,

'I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

³²But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." ³³Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you."

³⁴Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." ³⁵Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." ³⁹And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?" ⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;^b the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴²Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father,

^a Other ancient authorities add *new* ^b Or *into temptation*

WHO is my NEIGHBOR?

Imperfect Friends Matthew 26:36-45

Imagine that you are in the middle of a crisis and you ask your best friends to stay with you while you prepare to face the situation. They all promise to be there for you. But one friend after another fails to come through, and you are left to face the predicament alone.

Jesus' friends were no different. They were well intentioned and meant to stay awake with him, but in their tiredness, they let him down. Yet Jesus loved his disciples despite their failings and even when they were disloyal. Consider how you might follow the example of Jesus by loving your friends despite their failings.

if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”⁴³ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”⁴⁶ Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.”⁴⁹ At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.⁵¹ Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions

of angels?⁵⁴ But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?”

⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me.”⁵⁶ But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Jesus before the High Priest

⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered.⁵⁸ But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end.⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death,⁶⁰ but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward⁶¹ and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’”⁶² The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?”⁶³ But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under

Did You Know?

Judas' Suicide

Matthew 27:3-10

The Gospel of Matthew presents Judas' suicide as the fulfillment of some Old Testament prophecies, but it does not tell us why Judas killed himself. We don't know the historical circumstances around this event, nor do we know what was in Judas' mind, what motivated him to do this, or how this event would have been perceived at a different time and in a culture very different from our own.

Unfortunately, suicide ends not just the pain one is currently feeling but everything: future possibilities for healing, for growth, for new relationships, and for good times. Consider this: Both Judas and Peter betrayed Jesus. Judas ended his life, but Peter trusted in God's love and forgiveness and went on to become a significant figure in the life of the Church. Nothing you can do is so terrible that your only option is to take your own life. Nothing.

oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah,^a the Son of God." ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy to us, you Messiah!" Who is it that struck you?"

Peter's Denial of Jesus

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." ⁷¹When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."^b

⁷²Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." ⁷³After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." ⁷⁴Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. ⁷⁵Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus Brought before Pilate

27 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. ²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

The Suicide of Judas

³When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus^c was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent^d blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." ⁵Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. ⁶But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." ⁷After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. ⁸For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah,^e "And they took^f the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set,^g on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, ¹⁰and they gave^h them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Pilate Questions Jesus

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" ¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Barabbas or Jesus?

¹⁵Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd,

^a Or Christ ^b Gk the Nazorean ^c Gk he ^d Other ancient authorities read righteous ^e Other ancient authorities read Zechariah or Isaiah ^f Or I took ^g Or the price of the precious One ^h Other ancient authorities read I gave

anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus^a Barabbas. ¹⁷So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus^a Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”^b ¹⁸For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²²Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?”^b All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood;^c see

to it yourselves.” ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters,^d and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

³²As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³And when they came to a place

a Other ancient authorities lack Jesus b Or the Christ c Other ancient authorities read this righteous blood, or this righteous man’s blood d Gk the praetorium

GROWING IN FAITH

Matthew 27:27-44

Experiencing Suffering

Dear Jesus, everyone endures some suffering in life. Some people suffer in silence, some complain loudly, and others bitterly blame everyone around them. You suffered ridicule, betrayal, persecution, crucifixion, and death, and yet you endured. Strengthen me to withstand the suffering I must face in my life. Help me to confidently reach out for support from the people in my life who love me. When I feel that I have more than I can take, give me the courage and the patience to endure it, knowing that you are with me every step of the way. Amen.



Matthew

Did You Know?

Strange Things Happened

Matthew 27:45-54

According to the Gospel of Matthew, some strange things happened when Jesus died. Each event tells us something about Jesus. The darkness that covered the land (see Matthew 27:45) and the earthquake (see verse 51) show that all creation was aware that something significant had happened. The splitting of the sanctuary veil (see verse 51), which is the barrier that separated the holiest part of the temple (where God was thought to dwell) from the rest of the temple area, symbolizes that now God would be directly accessible to the people. And the dead saints who came out of their tombs to walk in the city symbolize God's triumph over death. With Jesus' death, a new age had dawned!

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵From noon on, darkness came over the whole land^d until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."^e ⁵⁰Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.^f ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"^g

⁵⁵Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶²The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than

called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;^a ³⁶then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

³⁸Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by derided^b him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴²"He saved others; he cannot save himself.^c He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" ⁴⁴The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

^a Other ancient authorities add in order that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." ^b Or blasphemed ^c Or is he unable to save himself? ^d Or earth ^e Other ancient authorities add And another took a spear and pierced his side, and out came water and blood. ^f Or gave up his spirit ^g Or a son of God

CHALLENGE

Matthew 27:46

REACH OUT

The good news is that even when we feel most alone, we are not. In our darkest hour and deepest pain, God is always with us.

TAKE ACTION!

Reach Out in Prayer: Set aside 5 minutes of intentional prayer time every day, even if you don't feel God's presence. Bring your pain, anger, and frustration to God. God can handle it.

Reach Out through Scripture: Spend time this week with the "Sometimes Life Stinks!" reading plan on page 1552 or the "When I'm Feeling . . . Alone or Abandoned" list of Scripture verses on page 1557. Turn to Joshua 1:9 and pray the verse.

Reach Out to Professionals: Find a spiritual director, counselor, priest, or mentor and ask for help, if necessary.

For more on feeling alone or abandoned, see the Challenge feature on page 612.

the first."⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard^a of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can."⁶⁶ So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

The Resurrection of Jesus

28 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.² And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.⁶ He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he^c lay.⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead,^d and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"

And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Report of the Guard

¹¹ While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened.¹² After the priests^e had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers,¹³ telling them, "You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'¹⁴ If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble."¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.

The Commissioning of the Disciples

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but

^a Or Take a guard ^b Gk you know how ^c Other ancient authorities read the Lord ^d Other ancient authorities lack from the dead ^e Gk they

CHALLENGE

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Matthew 28:19

Jesus calls us to reach out, share our faith, and make disciples of all nations. Jesus isn't sending us all overseas—he is calling us to share our faith and tell people about his universal love.

TAKE ACTION!

Share by Witness: Give a talk for a retreat or youth-group gathering, or have a conversation with someone who you think might be open to hearing about why your faith matters to you. Share your favorite Bible verse and explain why it is important to you.

Share by Invitation: Invite a friend or friends to church or youth group, and share with them your reason for going.

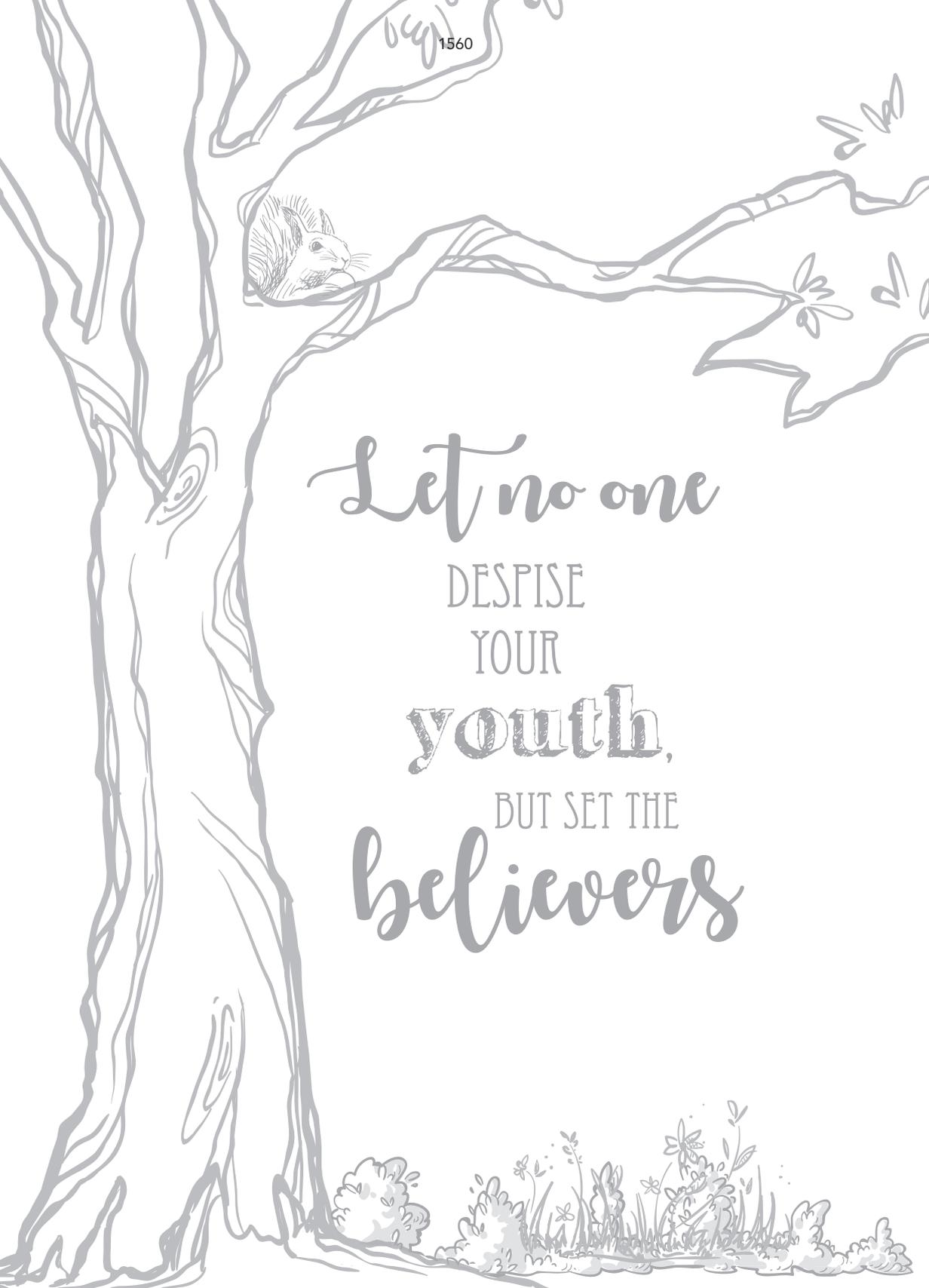
Share by Example: Share your faith by making choices that reflect your faith, especially in the way you treat others. You will not be perfect, but strive to let others see Christ through you.



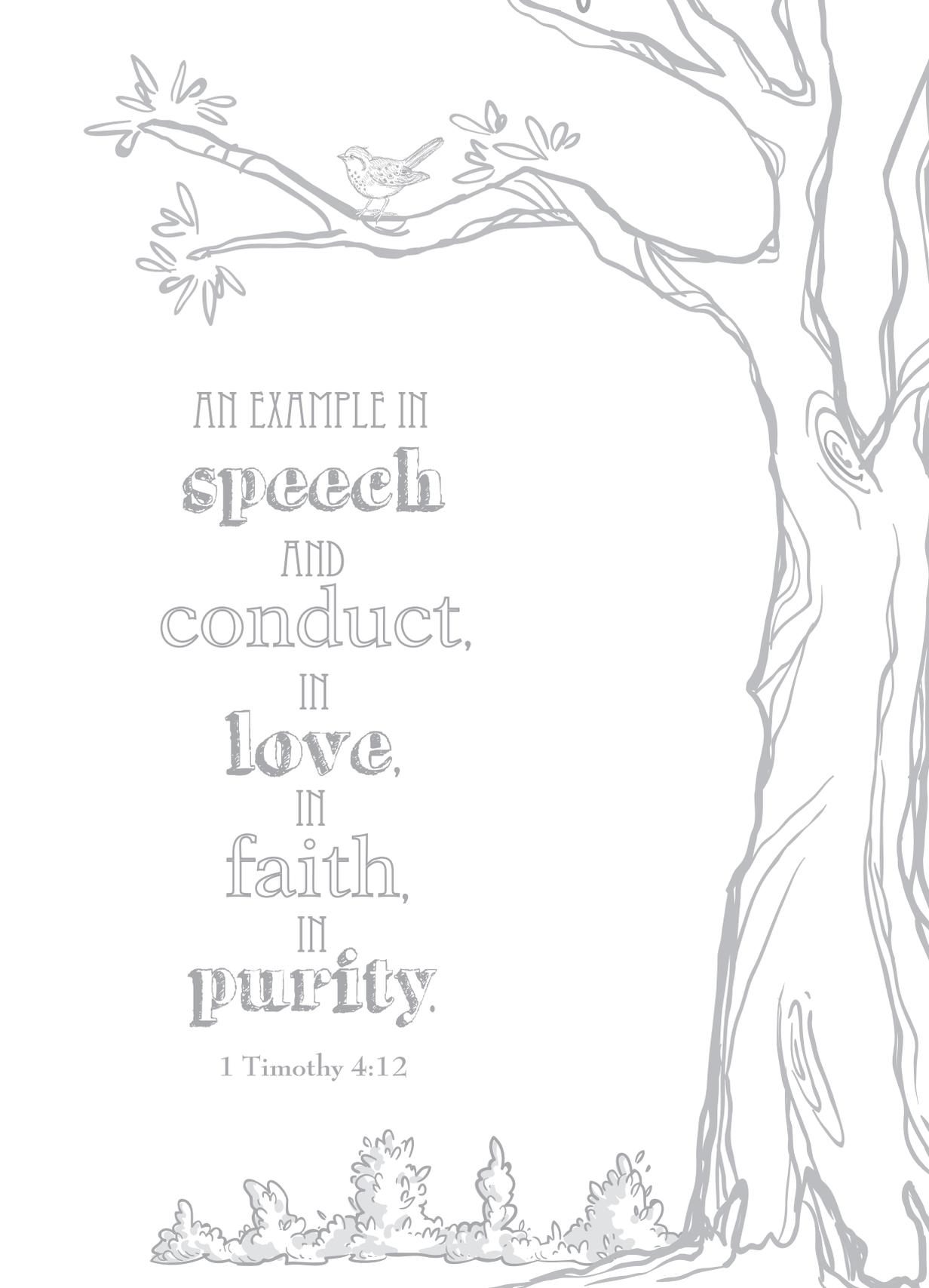
some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching

them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."^a

^a Other ancient authorities add Amen



Let no one
DESPISE
YOUR
youth,
BUT SET THE
believers



AN EXAMPLE IN
speech
AND
conduct,
IN
love,
IN
faith,
IN
purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

This Bible can change your **LIFE!**

Make your mark. Literally!

Do all the things you always wanted to do in a Bible. Personalize it. Make it a reflection of who you are! You will discover countless places to write, color, draw, highlight, and journal. There is no other Bible like this one, because you can make it truly your own!

- ★ *NEW!* Scripture Highlights to color
- ★ Space to journal and reflect

This Bible brings God's word to life for you.

The Catholic Youth Bible® is an exciting, meaningful, and relevant faith companion that can guide you as you seek answers to life's important questions. Engaging articles help you connect with your faith and put it into action. See yourself as an important and crucial part of the amazing Christian mission!

- ★ *NEW!* Who Is My Neighbor?
- ★ *NEW!* Challenges
- ★ *NEW!* Growing in Faith
- ★ Did You Know?
- ★ Searching for God
- ★ Being Catholic

This Bible makes reading Scripture fun and easy.

Scripture comes alive in stunning full color! Dive into vivid, engaging designs that encourage interaction on every page. Experience all-new easy navigation, like colored tabs and sections, to find books and verses quickly.

- ★ *NEW!* Full-color pages
- ★ *NEW!* Captivating design
- ★ *NEW!* Easy-to-use navigation

This Bible **YOU!**
was made for **YOU!**
Are **YOU**
ready?



saint mary's press

Winona, Minnesota
www.smp.org

ISBN 978-1-59982-923-4



9 781599 829234

4155 (PO5838)