

Holy Bible

English Version for the Deaf



*This translation carefully avoids
relative pronouns, idioms,
figurative language,
and faulty syntax
that can confuse those
who communicate primarily
through sign language.*

Holy Bible

English Version
for the Deaf

*Translated from the
original languages*

*World Bible Translation Center, Inc.
Fort Worth, Texas*

Holy Bible: English Version for the Deaf

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All Scripture is given by God. And all Scripture is useful for teaching and for showing people the things that are wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right.

2 Timothy 3:16

Preface

This version of the Bible has been prepared especially for people who are deaf. It is important that everyone have the Bible in a language they understand. But existing English versions do not meet the special needs of most deaf people, because the deaf have not had the advantage of constant exposure to the spoken language in developing their knowledge and usage of English.

The English Version for the Deaf is not a revision of any English version designed for the hearing. It is an original translation based on the Hebrew and Greek Biblical texts. The wording will often strike the reader as different from other English translations, but it accurately expresses the full meaning of the original text in a style that is clear and easy to understand.

The writers of Scripture, especially those who produced the New Testament writings, showed by the common language style they used that they were interested in good communication. The translators of this English version considered their example to be an important one to follow. So they worked to express the meaning of the Biblical text in a form that would be simple and natural. They used language that would not be a hindrance to understanding, but would provide a key to unlock the truths of Scripture for people whose experience with English has been limited.

Although the full meaning of the original text is expressed in the translation, the sense of the original has been restructured into the closest natural equivalents in English for the deaf community. For example, pronouns such as "he," "she," and "they" are usually replaced with proper names, as is the practice in sign language. Many common idioms used in spoken English are avoided, such as, "They got mad," which might be expressed instead as "They became angry." The result is an English translation that communicates more effectively to the deaf.

The use of English was, of course, a practical necessity. But great care was taken to speak primarily to the deaf and not to the hearing. With the help of consultants familiar with deaf communication patterns, the translators attempted to match those patterns in English as closely as possible. They also benefited from testing done in different regions of the United States to determine a vocabulary familiar to most deaf readers.

The result might appear to be just a simple English version of the Bible, but

is much more than that. It is a carefully constructed translation, designed to communicate to those who are deaf. Although the language used will not be familiar to those accustomed to standard English versions, it does convey to the deaf the meaning that was originally intended.

It is the purpose of this translation to provide the deaf with their own Bible for personal reading and study and to aid the vital ministry of those who teach the deaf, giving them relief from the need to "translate" existing English versions as they teach.

The translation is based directly on the original languages of Scripture. In the case of the Old Testament, the translators followed the Hebrew Masoretic Text as it is found in the latest printed edition of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1984), while referring occasionally to some earlier readings in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In some cases, they also followed the *Septuagint* (LXX), the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where it has readings that are actually earlier than any known Hebrew manuscript. For the New Testament, the source text was that which is found in both the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* (third edition, 1975 and fourth revised edition, 1993) and the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (twenty-seventh edition, 1993). The occasional variation from these printed editions was guided by reference to the findings of more recent scholarship.

Several special features are used to aid understanding. Brief explanations or synonyms (italicized within parentheses) sometimes follow difficult or ambiguous words in the text. Words or phrases that need fuller explanation are followed by an asterisk (*) and explained in footnotes at the bottom of the page. In addition, footnotes often identify Scripture quotations or give alternate readings when significant differences occur in the ancient manuscripts.

As in all translations, words that are implied by the context are often supplied in the text to make the meaning clear. For example, the phrase that in Greek is simply "David of Jesse" is always translated into English as "David the son of Jesse." If such explanatory words or phrases are extensive or unusual, they may be marked by half brackets. For example, in the translation, "The Lord gave this command to Moses [for the people]," the phrase in half brackets is added to avoid any misunderstanding that the Lord's command was intended only for Moses and not for all the people.

Finally, in the Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament, the section headings are often followed by cross references. These identify where the same or similar material is found in one or more of the other Gospels.

Introduction

The word Bible comes from a Greek word meaning “books.” The Bible is actually two collections of books, often referred to as the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament.” The word translated “testament” was used to mean a covenant or agreement. It refers to God’s promise to bless his people. The Old Testament is the collection of writings that relate to the agreement that God made with the descendants of Jacob (Israel) in the time of Moses. The New Testament is the collection of writings that relate to the agreement God made with all people who believe in Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament writings tell about the great things God did for the people of Israel and his plan for using them to bring his blessings to the whole world. These writings look forward to the coming of a savior or “Messiah” (see “Christ” in the Word List). The New Testament writings continue the Old Testament story. They describe the coming of that savior (Jesus Christ) and the meaning of his coming for all people. The Old Testament is important for understanding the New Testament, since it provides the necessary background. And the New Testament completes the story of salvation that began in the Old Testament.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament writings are a collection of thirty-nine different books produced by many different authors. They were written mainly in Hebrew, the language of ancient Israel. There are a few sections in Aramaic, an international language in Bible times. Portions of the Old Testament were written over 3500 years ago, and more than 1000 years passed between the writing of the first book and the last. In this collection there are books of law, history, prose, songs, poetry, and wise sayings.

The Old Testament is often divided into three main sections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Holy Writings. The Law contains five books called “The Five Books of Moses.” The first book is Genesis. It tells about the beginning of the world as we know it, the first man and woman, and their first sin against God. It tells about the Great Flood and the family God saved through that flood, and it tells about the beginnings of the nation of Israel, the people God chose to use for a special purpose.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

God made an agreement with Abraham, a great man of faith. In that agreement God promised to make Abraham the father of a great nation and to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. Abraham was circumcised to show that he had accepted the agreement, and circumcision became the proof of the agreement between God and his people. Abraham did not know how God would do what he had promised but trusted him to make it happen. This pleased God very much.

God told Abraham to leave his home in Mesopotamia and led him to Canaan (later called the land of Israel, which was approximately the same geographical area known today as Palestine). In his old age Abraham had a son named Isaac, who had a son named Jacob. Jacob (also called Israel) had twelve sons and a daughter. This family became the nation of Israel, but it never forgot its tribal origin. It continued to refer to itself as the twelve tribes of Israel—descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. The three main ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel)—are known as the “fathers” or “patriarchs” of Israel.

Abraham was also a “father” of another kind. Many times in ancient Israel, God called certain people to speak for him. These special people, or prophets, were God’s representatives to the rest of his people. Through the prophets God gave the people of Israel promises, warnings, laws, teachings, lessons drawn from past experiences, and lessons based on future events. Abraham “the Hebrew” is the first prophet mentioned in the Scriptures.

ISRAEL SET FREE FROM SLAVERY

The family of Jacob (Israel) grew to include about 70 of his direct descendants. One of his sons, Joseph, became a high official in Egypt. Times were hard, so Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, where there was plenty of food and life was easier. This tribe of Hebrews grew to be a small nation, and the Pharaoh (the title or name of the king of Egypt) made them serve as slaves. The book of Exodus tells about how finally, after 400 years, God used the prophet Moses to free the people of Israel from slavery and lead them eventually to settle again in Palestine. The price for freedom was high, but the Egyptians were the ones who had to pay. God punished them with a series of ten plagues, demanding with each one that his chosen people be set free. But following each disaster, the king stubbornly refused to free them. The final plague, however, brought about the death of the firstborn sons of all the families of Egypt, including the Pharaoh’s son. This caused the king finally to agree to let the Israelites go free.

The people of Israel had been given special preparations to make for their trip to freedom. Dressed and ready for the escape, each family killed and roasted a lamb. They put the blood from the lamb on their doorposts as a special sign to God. They hurriedly baked bread without yeast and ate their meal. That night the Angel of the Lord went through the land. If the blood of the lamb was not on the doorposts, the firstborn of that family died. This is why the firstborn sons of the Egyptians were put to death, while the Angel “passed over” the homes of God’s people. This night and the events surrounding it were later remembered in many ways in the worship and sacrifices of the people of Israel.

After the Israelite slaves were set free and were leaving Egypt, the Pharaoh changed his mind again. He sent his army to catch them and bring them back, but God saved his people. He divided the Red Sea, making a path through it to lead them to freedom on the other side. Then he released the waters to destroy the army of Egyptians that was following them. After Moses led the people in a song of praise to God for his protection and kindness, he led them on a long and difficult journey. Finally, they came to a mountain in the desert of Sinai on the Arabian Peninsula, where God made a special agreement with his people.

THE LAW OF MOSES

God's rescue of the people of Israel and his agreement with them at Mount Sinai set this nation apart from all others. This agreement contained promises and laws for the people of Israel. A part of this agreement, known as the Ten Commandments, was written by God on two stone tablets and given to the people. These commands contain the basic principles for the kind of life God wanted the people of Israel to live, including their duty to God, family, and others.

The Ten Commandments and the rest of the rules and teachings given at Mount Sinai became known as "the Law of Moses" or simply "the law." Many times these terms are used to refer to the first five books of the Scriptures and often to the entire Old Testament.

Besides the Ten Commandments and other rules of conduct, the Law of Moses contains rules about priests, sacrifices, worship, and holy days. These rules are found in the book of Leviticus. According to the Law of Moses, all priests and their helpers came from the tribe of Levi. These helpers were called "Levites." The most important priest was called the high priest.

The Law of Moses included instructions for building the Holy Tent ("Tabernacle"), or Meeting Tent, the place where the people of Israel went to worship God. It also has instructions for making all the things to be used in their worship. This prepared the Israelites for the building of the Temple, the holy building in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, where the people would later go to worship God. The rules about sacrifices and worship forced the people to see that they sinned against each other and against God. But they also gave the people a way to be forgiven and to be reunited with one another and with God. These sacrifices prepared the way for a better understanding of the sacrifice God was preparing to give for all the people of the world.

The Law of Moses also contained instructions for celebrating a number of holy days or festivals. Each festival had its own special meaning. Some festivals were happy occasions to celebrate special times of the year, especially harvest times. These included the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Shelters in the fall. (See these terms in the Word List.)

Other festivals were for remembering the wonderful things God had done for his people. Passover was this kind of holy day. Each family relived the escape from Egypt, gathering in their homes to remember this part of Israel's history and to sing songs of praise to God. A lamb was slaughtered and the meal prepared. Each cup of wine and piece of food reminded the people of the things God had done to save them from a life of pain and sadness.

One holy day, in particular, was very serious. Every year, on the Day of Atonement, the people had to remember the many wrong things they had done to others and to God. This was a day of sadness, and the people did not eat. But on that day the high priest offered special sacrifices to "cover over" or atone for their sins.

The agreement between God and Israel was very important to the writers of the Old Testament. Almost all of the books of the Prophets and Holy Writings are based on the fact that the nation of Israel, and every citizen of Israel, had made a very special agreement with their God. They called it the "agreement of the LORD" or simply

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“the agreement.” Their books of history interpret events in light of the agreement: If the individual or nation was faithful to God and the agreement, then God rewarded them. If the people abandoned the agreement, then God punished them. God sent his prophets to remind the people of their agreement with him. The poets of Israel sang of the wonderful things God did for his obedient people, and they mourned the pain and punishments that came to those who disobeyed. These writers based their concepts of right and wrong on the teaching of the agreement. And when innocent people suffered, the poets struggled to understand why.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The story of ancient Israel is the story of people who were always leaving God, God rescuing the people, the people turning back to God and eventually leaving him again. This cycle began almost as soon as the people had accepted God’s agreement, and it was repeated again and again. At Mount Sinai the people of Israel agreed to follow God, and then they rebelled and were forced to wander 70 years in the desert. Finally, Moses’ helper, Joshua, led the people into the promised land. Then came the battles to gain control of the different areas and settle the first parts of what later came to be known as the land of Israel. For the first few centuries after this settlement, the people were governed by local leaders called judges.

Eventually, the people wanted a king. The first king God appointed for them was Saul. But Saul did not obey God, so God chose a shepherd boy named David to be the new king. The prophet Samuel came and poured oil on his head, anointing him king of Israel. God promised David that the future kings of Israel would be his descendants from the tribe of Judah. David conquered the city of Jerusalem and made it his capital and the future site of the Temple. He organized the priests, prophets, song writers, musicians, and singers for the Temple worship. David even wrote many of the songs (or psalms) himself, but God did not let him build the Temple.

When David was old and about to die, with God’s blessing he made his son Solomon king of Israel. David warned his son to always follow God and obey the agreement. As king, Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem that David had planned, and he expanded Israel’s borders. At this time Israel was at the high point of its power. Solomon became famous, and Israel became strong.

JUDAH AND ISRAEL—THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

At Solomon’s death there was disagreement and a struggle among the people, and the nation was divided. The northern ten tribes called themselves Israel. The southern tribes called themselves Judah. (The modern term “Jew” comes from this name.) Judah remained loyal to the agreement, and David’s dynasty (family of kings) continued ruling in Jerusalem for several hundred years.

In the northern kingdom (Israel) numerous kings and dynasties came and went, because the people did not follow the agreement. The kings of Israel had several capital cities at various times, the last of which was Samaria. In order to strengthen their hold on the people, the kings of Israel changed the way to worship God. They chose new priests and built two new temples—one at Dan (on the northern border of Israel) and the other at Bethel (along Israel’s border with Judah). There were many wars between Israel and Judah.

During this time of civil war and troubles, God sent many prophets to Judah and Israel. Some of the prophets were priests; others were farmers. Some were advisors to kings; others lived a much simpler life. Some of the prophets wrote their teachings or prophecies; many others did not. But all the prophets spoke for justice, fairness, and the need to depend on God for help.

Many prophets warned that the people would be defeated and scattered if they did not turn back to God. Some prophets saw visions of future glories as well as future punishments. Many of them looked forward to the time when a new king would come to rule the kingdom. Some saw this king as a descendant of David who would lead the people of God into a new Golden Age. Some spoke of this king as ruling forever over an eternal kingdom. Others saw him as a servant who would suffer many things in order to bring his people back to God. But all of them saw him as the Messiah, the one anointed (chosen) by God to bring in a new age.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The people of Israel did not listen to God's warnings. So in 722/721 B.C. Samaria fell to the invading Assyrians. The people of Israel were taken from their homes and scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire, lost forever to their brothers and sisters in Judah. Then the Assyrians brought in foreigners to resettle the land of Israel. These people were taught about the religion of Judah and Israel, and many of them tried to follow the agreement. These people came to be known as the Samaritans. The Assyrians tried to invade Judah. Many cities fell to the invaders, but God saved Jerusalem. The defeated king of Assyria returned to his homeland, and there he was murdered by two of his sons. So Judah was saved.

For a while the people of Judah changed. They began to obey God, but only for a short time. They, too, were finally defeated and scattered. The nation of Babylon rose to power and invaded Judah. At first they took only a few important people away as captives. But a few years later, in 587/586 B.C., they returned to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. Some of the people escaped to Egypt, but most of them were taken as slaves to Babylon. Again God sent prophets to the people, and they began to listen. It seems that the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon brought about a real change in the people. The prophets spoke more and more about the new king and his kingdom. One of the prophets, Jeremiah, even spoke of a new agreement—an agreement that would not be written on tablets of stone, but would be in the hearts of God's people.

THE RETURN TO PALESTINE

Meanwhile, Cyrus came to power over the Persian Empire and conquered Babylon. Cyrus allowed people to return to their homelands. So after 70 years of exile, many of the people of Judah went back home. The people tried to rebuild their nation, but Judah remained small and weak. The people rebuilt the Temple, although it was not as beautiful as the one Solomon had built. Many of the people truly turned to God and began studying the Law, the writings of the prophets, and the other holy writings. Many men became scribes (special scholars), who made copies of the Scriptures. Eventually, these men organized schools for studying the Scriptures. The people began meeting together on the Sabbath (Saturday) to study, pray, and worship God together. In their synagogues (meetings) they studied the Scriptures, and many people began looking for the Messiah to come.

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In the West, Alexander the Great gained control of Greece and soon conquered the world. He spread the Greek language as well as the customs and culture of Greece to many parts of the world. When he died, his kingdom was divided. Soon another empire grew and gained control of a large part of the known world, including Palestine, where the people of Judah lived.

The new rulers, the Romans, were often cruel and harsh, and the Jewish people were proud and defiant. In these troubled times there were many Jews who were looking for the Messiah to come in their own lifetime. They wanted to be ruled only by God and the Messiah who God had promised to send them. They did not understand that God planned to save the world through the Messiah. They thought that God's plan was to save the Jews from the world! Some were content to wait for God to send his Messiah. Others thought that they should "help" God establish his new kingdom by making sure that the Law of Moses was observed and that the Temple, the land, and the Jewish people were kept pure. In order to make this happen, they were willing to suffer, to die, or to kill anyone, foreigners or other Jews, who threatened these goals. Such Jews eventually came to be known as "Zealots."

THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS GROUPS

By the first century B.C., the Law of Moses had become extremely important to the Jews. They had studied and argued over it for centuries. The people understood the law in different ways, but many Jews were ready to die for that law. There were three major religious groups among the Jews, and there were scribes (scholars or experts in the law) in each group.

The Sadducees

One of the groups was called the Sadducees. This name probably comes from the name Zadok, the high priest in King David's time. Many of the priests and the people in authority were Sadducees. These men accepted only the law (the five books of Moses) as their authority in religious matters. The Law of Moses taught many things about the priests and sacrifices, but it did not teach about life after death. So the Sadducees did not believe that people would ever be raised from death.

The Pharisees

Another group was called the Pharisees. This name comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to interpret (explain)" or "to separate." These men tried to teach or interpret the Law of Moses to the common people. The Pharisees believed that there was an oral tradition going back to Moses' time. They believed that people of each generation could interpret the law in a way that would allow it to meet the needs of that generation. This meant that the Pharisees could accept not only the Law of Moses as their authority, but also the Prophets, the Holy Writings, and even their own traditions. These men tried very hard to follow the law and their traditions. So they were very careful about what they ate and what they touched. They were careful about washing their hands and bathing. They also believed that people would be raised from death, because they understood many of the prophets to say that would happen.

The Essenes

The third major group was the Essenes. Many of the priests in Jerusalem did not live the way God wanted them to. Also, the Romans had appointed many of the high priests, and some of these men were not qualified according to the Law of

Moses. Because of this, the Essenes did not think that the worship and sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple were being done properly. So they moved out into the Judean desert to live. They formed their own community, where only other Essenes could come and live. They fasted, prayed, and waited for God to send the Messiah to purify the temple and the priesthood. Many scholars believe that the Essenes were connected in some way with the Qumran Community and the many ancient writings (including the Dead Sea Scrolls) found at Qumran and other places in that area of the Judean desert.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

God had begun his plan. He had chosen a special nation. He had made an agreement with those people that would prepare them to understand his justice and his goodness. Through prophets and poets he had revealed his plan to bless the world by establishing a perfect spiritual “kingdom” based on a new and better agreement. This plan would begin with the coming of the promised Messiah. The prophets had spoken of his coming in great detail. They had told where the Messiah would be born, the kind of person he would be, and the work he would have to do. It was now time for the Messiah to come and begin the new agreement.

The part of the Bible that is now called the New Testament (which means “new agreement”) describes how God’s new agreement was revealed and put into effect by Jesus, who was the Christ (meaning “the Anointed One,” the Messiah). This collection of writings teaches that this agreement was to be for all people. And it tells how people in the first century responded to God’s kind offer of love and became a part of the new agreement. The New Testament writings explain how many things that were part of the first agreement are given new meaning under the new agreement, especially ideas related to Israelite worship, such as temple, priesthood, and sacrifice. These writings give instructions to God’s people about how to live in this world. They also describe the blessings that God promises his people for a full and meaningful life here and for life with him after death.

The New Testament writings include twenty-seven different “books” by at least eight different writers. All of them wrote in Greek, which was widely spoken in the first-century world. More than half of the total writing was done by four “apostles,” men chosen by Jesus to be his special representatives or helpers. Three of these, Matthew, John, and Peter, were among the twelve closest followers of Jesus during his life on earth. The fourth, Paul, was chosen as an apostle later by Jesus through a miraculous appearance.

The first four books, called “Gospels,” are separate accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Generally, these books emphasize Jesus’ teaching, the purpose of his appearance on earth, and the special significance of his death, rather than just the historical facts of his life. This is especially true of the fourth book, the Gospel of John. The first three Gospels are very similar in content. In fact, much of the material in one is found in one or both of the others. There are differing points of emphasis in each one, however, and each writer seems to have been addressing a different audience, with perhaps a different goal or goals in view.

The four Gospels are followed by Acts, a history of the events following the death of Jesus. It describes how God’s offer of love to all people was announced throughout the world by Jesus’ followers. It tells how the proclaiming of this

“gospel” or “Good News” resulted in the conversion of thousands of people throughout Palestine and the Roman world to faith in Jesus Christ. The book of Acts was written by a medical doctor named Luke, an eyewitness of much that he recorded. Luke was also the author of the third Gospel. His two books make a logical unit with Acts being the natural sequel to his account of the life of Jesus.

Following Acts, there is a collection of letters written to individuals or groups of believers in Christ. These letters were sent from leaders in the faith, such as Paul and Peter, two of Jesus’ apostles. These letters were written to help the people of that time deal with problems they were facing. They serve to inform, correct, teach, and encourage not only those people but all who become followers of Jesus in regard to their faith, their life together, and their life in the world.

The final book of the New Testament, Revelation, is very different from all the others, although its purpose is similar to that of other letters to churches. It begins with words of criticism, encouragement, and instruction addressed to groups of believers in seven different cities of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). But it continues with a picture of spiritual warfare that is of interest to all followers of Christ. It uses highly figurative language and tells of visions seen by the author, the apostle John. Many of the figures and images are from the Old Testament and can best be understood by comparing them to the Old Testament writings. This last book of the New Testament assures believers of ultimate victory over the forces of evil through the power of God and Jesus Christ, their leader and helper.

THE BIBLE AND TODAY’S READER

Today’s reader of the Bible should keep in mind that these books were written thousands of years ago for people who lived in cultures very different from ours today. Many of the historical accounts, illustrations, and references they contain can only be understood with some knowledge of the time and culture in which the writers lived. Generally, however, the writings focus on principles that are universally true. For example, Jesus told a story about a man sowing grain in a field that had different types of soil conditions. Those exact conditions may be unfamiliar to a person today, but the lesson Jesus draws from the example is appropriate for people in any time or place.

The modern reader may find the world of the Bible somewhat strange. The customs, the attitudes, and the way people talk may be quite unfamiliar. It is only reasonable to judge these things by their experience and ideals, not by today’s standards. It is also important to note that the Bible was not written as a book of science. It was written mainly to describe historical events and present the significance of those events in ways that relate to all people. Its teachings present universal truths that are beyond the realm of science. It remains relevant even in our own time, because it deals with people’s basic spiritual needs, which never change.

If you read the Bible with an open mind, you can expect to receive many benefits. You will gain knowledge about the history and culture of the ancient world. You will learn about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and what it means to be his follower. You will gain basic spiritual insights and learn practical lessons for living a dynamic and joy-filled life. You will find answers to life’s most difficult questions. There are, therefore, many good reasons for reading this book, and if you read it with a sincere and receptive spirit, you may well discover God’s purpose for your life.

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Genesis

THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

The First Day—Light

1 God made the sky and earth. At first, ²the earth was completely empty; nothing was on the earth. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit moved over* the water. ³Then God said, "Let there be light!"* And light began to shine. ⁴God saw the light, and he knew it was good. Then God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God named the light "day," and he named the darkness "night."

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the first day.

The Second Day—Sky

⁶Then God said, "Let there be air* to separate the water into two parts!" ⁷So God made the air and separated the water. Some of the water was above the air, and some of the water was below the air. ⁸God named the air "sky." There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

The Third Day—Dry Land and Plants

⁹Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together so the dry land will appear." And it happened. ¹⁰God named the

moved over The Hebrew word means "to fly over" or "to swoop down," like a bird flying over its nest to protect its babies.

God made ... light Or, "In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth. While ²the earth had no special shape, and darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit hovered over the water, ³God said, 'Let there be light!'" Or, "When God began to create the sky and the earth, ²while the earth was completely empty, and darkness covered the ocean, and a powerful wind blew over the water, ³God said, 'Let there be light.'"

air The Hebrew word means "bowl," or "dome."

dry land "earth." And God named the water that was gathered together "seas." God saw this was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth grow grass, plants that make grain, and fruit trees. The fruit trees will make fruit with seeds in it. And each plant will make its own kind of seed. Let these plants grow on the earth." And it happened. ¹²The earth grew grass and plants that made grain. And it grew trees that made fruit with seeds in it. Every plant made its own kind of seeds. And God saw this was good.

¹³There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the third day.

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon, and Stars

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will separate the days from the nights. These lights will be used for special signs and to show when special meetings* begin. And they will be used to show the days and years. ¹⁵These lights will be in the sky to shine light on the earth." And it happened.

¹⁶So God made the two large lights. God made the larger light to rule during the day. He made the smaller light to rule during the night. God also made the stars. ¹⁷God put these lights in the sky to shine on the earth. ¹⁸God put these lights in the sky to rule over the day and over the night. These lights separated the light from the darkness. And God saw this was good.

¹⁹There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fourth day.

special meetings The Israelites used the sun and moon to decide when the months and years began. And many Jewish holidays and special meetings began at the time of the new moon or full moon.

The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

²⁰Then God said, “Let the water be filled with many living things. And let there be birds to fly in the air over the earth.” ²¹So God made the large sea animals.* God made every living thing that moves in the sea. There are many different kinds of sea animals—and God made them all! God also made every kind of bird that flies in the sky. And God saw this was good.

²²God blessed these animals. God told them to have many babies and fill the seas. And God told the birds on land to make many more birds.

²³There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fifth day.

The Sixth Day—Land Animals and People

²⁴Then God said, “Let the earth make many kinds of living things. Let there be many different kinds of animals. Let there be large animals and small crawling animals of every kind. And let all these animals make more animals.” And all these things happened.

²⁵So God made every kind of animal. God made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling things. And God saw this was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Now let’s make man.* We will make people as a copy of ourselves. People will be like us. They will rule over all the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. They will rule over all the large animals and all the little things that crawl on the earth.”

²⁷So God made people in his own image. God made people as a copy of himself.* God made them male and female. ²⁸God blessed them and said to them, “Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹God said, “I am giving you all the grain bearing plants and all the fruit trees. Those trees make fruit with seeds in it. This grain and fruit will be your food. ³⁰And I am giving all the green plants to the animals. Those

green plants will be their food. Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, and all the little things that crawl on the earth will eat that food.” And all these things happened.

³¹God looked at everything he had made. And God saw that everything was very good.

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the sixth day.

The Seventh Day—Rest

2 So the earth, the sky, and everything in them were finished. ²God finished the work he was doing. So on the seventh day God rested from his work. ³God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. God made that day special because on that day he rested from all the work he did while making the world.

THE BEGINNING OF HUMANITY

⁴This is the history of the sky and the earth. This is the story about the things that happened at the time God made the earth and the sky. ⁵This was before there were plants on the earth. Nothing was growing in the fields. This was because the Lord had not yet made it rain on the earth. And there was no person to care for the plants. ⁶Water* came up from the earth and spread over the ground.

⁷Then the Lord God took dust from the ground and made a man.* The Lord breathed the breath of life into the man’s nose, and the man became a living thing. ⁸Then the Lord God planted a garden in the East,* in a place named Eden. The Lord God put the man he made in that garden. ⁹The Lord God made every beautiful tree and every tree that was good for food to grow in the garden. In the middle of the garden, the Lord God put the tree of life and also the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed from Eden and watered the garden. That river then separated and became four smaller rivers. ¹¹The name of the first river was Pishon. This river flowed around the

large sea animals Or, “sea monsters.”

man The Hebrew word means “man,” “people,” or the name “Adam.” It is like the word meaning “earth,” or “red clay.”

God made people ... himself Compare Gen. 5:1,3.

Water Or, “A mist.”

East This usually means the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers as far east as the Persian Gulf.

entire country of Havilah.* ¹²(There is gold in that country, and that gold is good. There are also Bdelium* and Onyx* in that country.) ¹³The name of the second river was Gihon. This river flowed around the entire country of Ethiopia.* ¹⁴The name of the third river was Tigris.* This river flowed east of Assyria. The fourth river was the Euphrates.*

¹⁵The Lord God put the man in the garden of Eden to work the soil and take care of the garden. ¹⁶The Lord God gave the man this command. The Lord God said, “You may eat from any tree in the garden. ¹⁷But you must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. If you eat fruit from that tree you will die!”

The First Woman

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, “I see that it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a person like him to help him.”

¹⁹The Lord God used dust from the ground and made every animal in the fields and every bird in the air. The Lord God brought all these animals to the man, and the man gave everything a name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the tame animals, to all the birds in the air, and to all the wild animals of the forest. The man saw many, many animals and birds, but the man could not find a helper that was right for him. ²¹So the Lord God caused the man to sleep very deeply. While the man was asleep, the Lord God took one of the ribs from the man’s body. Then the Lord God closed the man’s skin at the place where he took the rib. ²²The Lord God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then the Lord God brought the woman to the man. ²³And the man said,

“Finally! A person like me.
Her bones are from my bones.
Her body is from my body.
She was taken out of man,
so I will call her woman.”

Havilah The land along the west coast of the Arabian peninsula and, possibly, the part of Africa south of Ethiopia.

Bdelium An expensive, sweet-smelling gum.

Onyx A precious stone with many layers of blue or gray.

Ethiopia Or, “Cush,” a country in Africa by the Red Sea.

Tigris, Euphrates The two largest rivers flowing through the countries of Babylonia and Assyria.

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. This way, two people become one.

²⁵The man and his wife were naked, but they were not ashamed.

The Beginning of Sin

3 The snake was the most clever of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. [The snake wanted to trick the woman.] The snake spoke to the woman and said, “Woman, did God really tell you that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?”

²The woman answered the snake, “[No! God did not say that!] We can eat fruit from the trees in the garden. ³But there is one tree we must not eat from. God told us, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch that tree or you will die.’”

⁴But the snake said to the woman, “You will not die. ⁵God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree you will learn about good and evil. And then you will be the same as God!”

⁶The woman saw the tree was beautiful. She saw the fruit was good to eat. And it was exciting that the tree would make her wise. So the woman took fruit from the tree and ate it. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some of the fruit to him and he ate it.

⁷Then [both the man and the woman changed. It was like] their eyes opened, [and they saw things differently]. They saw that they had no clothes on—they were naked. So they got some fig leaves and sewed them together and wore the fig leaves for clothes.

⁸During the cool part of the day, the Lord God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden. ⁹The Lord God called to the man and said, “Where are you?”

¹⁰The man said, “I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid.”

¹¹The Lord God said to the man, “Who told you that you were naked? [What caused you to be ashamed?] Did you eat fruit from that special tree? I told you not to eat from that tree!”

¹²The man said, “The woman you made for me gave me fruit from that tree. So I ate it.”

GENESIS 3:13–4:4

4

¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman,
“What have you done?”

The woman said, “The snake tricked me.
He fooled me and I ate the fruit.”

¹⁴So the Lord God said to the snake,

“You did this very bad thing,
so bad things will happen to you.
It will be worse for you
than for any other animal.
You must crawl on your belly
and eat dust all the days
of your life.

¹⁵ I will make you and the woman
enemies to each other.
Your children and her children
will be enemies.
You will bite her child’s foot,
but he will crush your head.”

¹⁶Then the Lord God said to the woman,

“I will cause you to have much trouble
when you are pregnant.
And when you give birth to children,
you will have much pain.
You will want your husband very much,
but he will rule over you.”*

¹⁷Then the Lord God said to the man,

“I commanded you
not to eat from that tree.
But you listened to your wife,
and you ate from that tree.
So I will curse* the ground
because of you.
You will have to work very hard
all the days of your life
for the food the ground gives.

¹⁸ The ground will grow thorns and weeds
for you.

And you will have to eat the plants
that grow wild in the fields.*

¹⁹ You will work hard for your food,
until your face is covered with sweat.
You will work hard until the day you die.
And then you will become dust again.

You ... you Or, “You will want [to rule] your husband, but he
will rule over you.” In Hebrew this is like Gen. 4:7.

curse To ask for bad things to happen to a thing or person.

The ground ... fields See Gen. 1:28–29.

I used dust to make you.

And when you die
you will become dust again.”

²⁰Adam* named his wife Eve.* Adam gave
her this name because Eve is the mother of
every person who ever lived.

²¹The Lord God used animal skins and
made some clothes for the man and his wife.
Then he put the clothes on them.

²²The Lord God said, “Look, the man has
become like us—he knows about good and
evil. And now the man might take the fruit
from the tree of life. If the man eats that fruit,
he will live forever.”

²³So the Lord God forced the man to leave
the garden of Eden. Adam* was forced to go
and work the ground he was made from.

²⁴The Lord God forced the man to leave the
garden. Then he put Cherub angels* at the
entrance to the garden to protect it. The Lord
God also put a sword of fire there. This sword
flashed around and around guarding the way
to the tree of life.

The First Family

4 Adam and his wife Eve had sexual
relations and Eve gave birth to a baby. The
baby was named Cain.* Eve said, “With the
Lord’s help, I have made a man!”

²After that, Eve gave birth to another baby.
This baby was Cain’s brother, Abel. Abel
became a shepherd. Cain became a farmer.

The First Murder

^{3–4}At harvest time,* Cain brought a gift to
the Lord. Cain brought some of the food that
he grew from the ground. But Abel brought
some animals from his flock. Abel brought
the best parts of his best sheep.*

Adam This name means, “man” or “people.” It is like the word
meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

Eve This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “life.”

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these
angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Cain This is like the Hebrew word meaning “make” or “get.”

At harvest time Literally, “at the end of days.”

Abel brought ... best sheep Literally, “Abel brought some of
his firstborn sheep, especially their fat.”

The Lord accepted Abel and his gift. ⁵But the Lord did not accept Cain and his offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became very angry. ⁶The Lord asked Cain, “Why are you angry? Why does your face look sad? ⁷If you do good things, you will be right with me. Then I will accept you. But if you do wrong things, then that sin is in your life. Your sin will want to control you, but you must control that sin.”*

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”⁹ So Cain and Abel went to the field. Then Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹Later, the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

Cain answered, “I don’t know. Is it my job to watch and care for my brother?”

¹⁰Then the Lord said, “What have you done? ¹¹You killed your brother!” His blood is like a voice shouting to me from the ground. ¹¹You killed your brother,¹² and the ground opened up to take his blood from your hands. So now, I will cause bad things to happen to that ground. ¹²In the past, you planted, and your plants grew well. But now, you will plant, and the ground will not help your plants grow. You will not have a home on the earth. You will wander from place to place.”

¹³Then Cain said, “This punishment is more than I can bear! ¹⁴Look, you are forcing me to leave my land. I won’t be able to see you or be near you! I won’t have a home! I will be forced to wander from place to place on the earth. And whoever finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵Then the Lord said to Cain, “I will not let that happen! If anyone kills you, Cain, then I will punish that person much, much more.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain. This mark showed that no person should kill him.

Cain’s Family

¹⁶Cain went away from the Lord. Cain lived in the land of Nod.*

But if you ... control that sin Or, “But if you don’t do right, then sin is crouching at your door. It wants you, but you must rule over it.”

Nod This name means “wandering.”

¹⁷Cain had sexual relations with his wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Enoch. Cain built a city and gave the city the same name as his son Enoch.

¹⁸Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad had a son named Mehujael. Mehujael had a son named Methushael. And Methushael had a son named Lamech.

¹⁹Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other wife was named Zillah. ²⁰Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father* of people who live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle. ²¹Adah also had another son Jubal. (Jubal was Jabal’s brother.) Jubal was the father of people who play the harp and flute. ²²Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain was the father of people who work with bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was named Naamah.

²³Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah,
hear my voice!
You wives of Lamech,
listen to me.
A man hurt me,
so I killed him.
A child hit me,
so I killed him.

²⁴ The punishment for killing Cain
was very great!
So the punishment for killing me
will be much, much greater!”

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

²⁵Adam again had sexual relations with Eve. And Eve gave birth to another son. They named him Seth.* Eve said, “God has given me another son. Cain killed Abel, but now I have Seth.” ²⁶Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time, the people began to pray to the Lord.*

father This probably means that this man invented these things, or was the first person to use them.

Seth This is like a Hebrew word meaning “to give.”

people ... the Lord Literally, “people began calling on the name YAHWEH.”

GENESIS 5:1–6:5

Adam's Family History

5 This is the book about the family of Adam.* God made people a copy of himself.* ²God made them male and female. And on the same day he made them, God blessed them and named them “people.”*

³After Adam was 130 years old, he had another son. This son looked just like Adam.* Adam named his son Seth. ⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years. During that time, Adam had other sons and daughters. ⁵So Adam lived a total of 930 years; then he died.

⁶After Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enosh. ⁷After Enosh was born, Seth lived 807 years. During that time, Seth had other sons and daughters. ⁸So Seth lived a total of 912 years; then he died.

⁹After Enosh was 90 years old, he had a son named Kenan. ¹⁰After Kenan was born, Enosh lived 815 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹So Enosh lived a total of 905 years; then he died.

¹²After Kenan was 70 years old, he had a son named Mahalalel. ¹³After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived 840 years. During that time, Kenan had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴So Kenan lived a total of 910 years; then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he had a son named Jared. ¹⁶After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived 830 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷So Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years; then he died.

¹⁸After Jared was 162 years old, he had a son named Enoch. ¹⁹After Enoch was born, Jared lived 800 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰So Jared lived a total of 962 years; then he died.

²¹After Enoch was 65 years old, he had a son named Methuselah. ²²After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked with God for 300 years more. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²³So Enoch lived a total of

Adam This name means “man” or “people.” It is like the word meaning “earth” or “red clay.”

God made people ... himself Literally, “He made him in the image of God.” See Gen. 1:27; 5:3.

people The Hebrew word means “Adam,” “man” or “people.”

he had ... like Adam Or, “he fathered a son in his image and likeness.” In Hebrew this is like Gen. 1:27; 5:1.

6

365 years. ²⁴One day Enoch was walking with God, and Enoch disappeared. God took him.*

²⁵After Methuselah was 187 years old, he had a son named Lamech. ²⁶After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived 782 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷So Methuselah lived a total of 969 years; then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he had a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah.* Lamech said, “We work very hard as farmers because God cursed the ground. But Noah will bring us rest.”

³⁰After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters. ³¹So Lamech lived a total of 777 years; then he died.

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

People Become Evil

6 The number of people on earth continued to increase. There were girls born to these people. ^{2–4}The sons of God saw that these girls were beautiful. So the sons of God married any of the girls they chose.

These women gave birth to children. During that time and later, the Nephilim* people lived in the land. They were famous people. They were heroes from ancient times.*

Then the Lord said, “People are only human; I will not let my Spirit be troubled by them forever. I will let them live 120 years.”*

⁵The Lord saw that the people on the earth were very evil. The Lord saw that people thought only about evil things all the time.

One day ... God took him Or, “Enoch pleased God. Enoch disappeared. God took him.”

Noah This name means “rest.”

Nephilim This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “People who have fallen.” Later, the Nephilim were a famous family of large fighting men. See Num. 13:32–33.

These women ... times Or, “The Nephilim lived in the land in those days and also later, when the sons of God married the daughters of men, and these women had given birth to children who were famous heroes from ancient times.”

People ... 120 years Or, “My Spirit will not live with people forever, because they are flesh. They will live only 120 years.” Or, “My Spirit will not judge people forever because they will all die in 120 years.”

⁶The Lord was sorry that he had made people on the earth. It made the Lord very sad in his heart. ⁷So the Lord said, “I will destroy all the people that I made on the earth. I will destroy every man and every animal and everything that crawls on the earth. And I will destroy all the birds in the air. Why? Because I am sorry that I have made all these things.”

⁸But there was one man on earth that pleased the Lord—Noah.*

Noah and the Great Flood

⁹This is the story about the family of Noah. Noah was a good man all his life. Noah always followed God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

^{11–12}God looked at the earth, and he saw that people had ruined it. Violence was everywhere—people had become evil and cruel, and had ruined their life on earth.

¹³So God said to Noah, “All people have filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth. ¹⁴Use cypress wood* and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat,* and cover the boat with tar.*

¹⁵“This is the size I want you to make the boat: 300 cubits* long, 50 cubits* wide, and 30 cubits* high. ¹⁶Make a window for the boat about 18 inches* below the roof.* Put a door in the side of the boat. Make three floors

Noah This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “to be sorry,” “to comfort,” or “to rest.”

cypress wood Literally, “gopher-wood.” We do not know exactly what kind of wood this is. It might be a kind of tree or squared timbers.

Make rooms in the boat Or, “Make caulking for the boat.” This could be small plants that were stuffed into the cracks and covered with tar.

tar Or, “pitch,” a thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

300 cubits 442' 10 15/16" (135m) if this was the short cubit or 516' 0" (157.5m) if it was the long cubit.

50 cubits 73' 9 3/16" (22.5m) if this was the short cubit or 86' 1 1/2" (26.25m) if it was the long cubit.

30 cubits 44' 3 7/16" (13.5m) if this was the short cubit or 51' 8 1/16" (15.75m) if it was the long cubit.

18 inches Or, “one cubit,” that is, 1' 5 11/16" (45cm) if this was the short cubit or 1' 8 5/8" (52.5cm) if it was the long cubit.

Make a window ... below the roof Or “Make an opening for the boat about 18 inches tall.”

in the boat; a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.

¹⁷“Understand what I am telling you. I will bring a great flood of water on the earth. I will destroy all living things that live under heaven. Everything on the earth will die. ¹⁸I will make a special agreement with you. And you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives will all go into the boat. ¹⁹Also, you must find two of every living thing on the earth. Find male and female and bring them on the boat. Keep them alive with you. ²⁰Find two of every kind of bird on the earth. And find two of every kind of animal on the earth. And find two of every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. Male and female of every kind of animal on the earth will be with you. Keep them alive on the boat. ²¹Also bring every kind of food on earth into the boat. The food will be for you and for the animals.”

²²Noah did all these things. Noah obeyed all the things that God commanded.

The Flood Begins

7 Then the Lord said to Noah, “I have seen that you are a good man, even among the evil people of this time. So gather your family and all of you go into the boat. ²Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of every kind of clean animal.* And get one pair (one male and one female) of every other animal on the earth. Lead all these animals into the boat with you. ³Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of all the birds. This will allow all these animals to continue living on the earth after the other animals are destroyed. ⁴Seven days from now I will send much rain on the earth. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights. And I will wipe everything off the face of the earth. I will destroy everything I made.” ⁵Noah did everything the Lord told him to do.

⁶Noah was 600 years old at the time the rains came. ⁷Noah and his family went into the boat to be saved from the flood. Noah's wife and his sons and their wives were on the boat

clean animal(s) Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

with him. ⁸All the clean animals,* all the other animals on the earth, the birds, and everything that crawls on the earth ⁹went into the boat with Noah. These animals went into the boat in groups of two, male and female, just like God commanded. ¹⁰Seven days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

^{11–13}On the 17th day of the second month, when Noah was 600 years old, all the springs under the ground split open, and water began flowing from the ground.¹ That same day the rains began falling hard on the earth. It was like windows in the sky were opened. The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. That very same day Noah and his wife, his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives went into the boat. ¹⁴Those people and every kind of animal on the earth were in the boat. Every kind of cattle, every kind of animal that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird were in the boat. ¹⁵All these animals went into the boat with Noah. They came in groups of two from every kind of animal that had the breath of life. ¹⁶All these animals went into the boat in groups of two, just like God had commanded Noah. Then the Lord closed the door behind him.

¹⁷Water flooded the earth for 40 days. The water began rising and lifted the boat off the ground. ¹⁸The water continued to rise, and the boat floated on the water high above the earth. ¹⁹The water rose so much that even the highest mountains were covered by the water. ²⁰The water continued to rise above the mountains. The water was more than 20 feet* above the highest mountain.

^{21–22}Every living thing on earth died—every man and woman, every bird, and every kind of animal on earth died. All the many kinds of animals and all the things that crawl on the ground died. Every living, breathing thing on dry land died. ²³In this way, God wiped the earth clean—God destroyed every living thing on the earth—every man, every animal, everything that crawls, and every bird.

clean animals Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

20 feet Literally, “15 cubits” which would be 22’ 1 11/16” (6.75m) if this was the short cubit or 25’ 10” (7.875m) if it was the long cubit.

All these things were destroyed from the earth. The only life that was left was Noah and those people and animals that were with him in the boat. ²⁴The water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Ends

8 But God did not forget about Noah. God remembered Noah and all the animals that were with him in the boat. God made a wind blow over the earth. And all the water began to disappear.

²Rain stopped falling from the sky. And water stopped flowing from under the earth. ^{3–4}The water that covered the earth began to go down and down. After 150 days, the water was low enough that the boat touched land again. The boat stopped on one of the mountains of Ararat.* This was the 17th day of the seventh month. ⁵The water continued to go down, and by the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains were above the water.

⁶Forty days later, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat. ⁷Then Noah sent out a raven.* The raven flew from place to place until the ground was dry and the water was gone. ⁸Noah also sent out a dove. Noah wanted the dove to find dry ground. He wanted to know if water still covered the earth.

⁹The dove could not find a place to rest because water still covered the earth, so the dove came back to the boat. Noah reached out his hand and caught the dove and brought it back into the boat.

¹⁰After seven days, Noah again sent out the dove. ¹¹And that afternoon the dove came back to Noah. The dove had a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. This was a sign to show Noah that there was dry ground on the earth. ¹²Seven days later, Noah sent the dove out again. But this time the dove never came back.

¹³After that, Noah opened the door* of the boat. Noah looked and saw that the ground was dry. This was the first day of the first month of the year. Noah was 601 years old.

Ararat Or, “Urartu,” an area in Eastern Turkey.

raven A kind of bird.

opened the door Literally, “removed the covering.”

Matthew

The Family History of Jesus

(Lk. 3:23b–38)

1 This is the family history of Jesus Christ. He came from the family of David* and Abraham.*

2 Abraham* was the father of Isaac.
Isaac was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah.
(Their mother was Tamar.)

Perez was the father of Hezron.
Hezron was the father of Ram.

4 Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

5 Salmon was the father of Boaz.
(Boaz' mother was Rahab.)
Boaz was the father of Obed.
(Obed's mother was Ruth.)
Obed was the father of Jesse.

6 Jesse was the father of King David.
David* was the father of Solomon.
(Solomon's mother had been Uriah's wife.)

7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asa.

8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.
Jehoram was the father of Uzziah.

9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.
Manasseh was the father of Amon.
Amon was the father of Josiah.

11 Josiah was the grandfather of Jehoiachin* and his brothers.
(This was during the time that the [Jewish] people were taken to Babylon [to be slaves].)

12 After they were taken to Babylon:
Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the grandfather of Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.
Eliakim was the father of Azor.

14 Azor was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Achim.
Achim was the father of Eliud.

15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob.

16 Jacob was the father of Joseph.
Joseph was the husband of Mary,
and Mary was the mother of Jesus.
Jesus is called the Christ.*

17 So there were fourteen generations from Abraham* to David.* And there were fourteen generations from David until the time when the people were taken to Babylon. And there were fourteen generations from the time when the people were taken to Babylon until Christ* was born.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

(Lk. 2:1–7)

18 The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. And this is how the birth of Jesus happened.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.
Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Jehoiachin Literally, "Jechoniah," another name for Jehoiachin.
Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, Joseph learned that she was expecting a baby. (Mary was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.)* ¹⁹Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to bring shame to Mary before the people. So he planned to divorce her secretly.

²⁰But after Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, son of David,* don't be afraid to accept Mary to be your wife. The baby that is in her is from the Holy Spirit.*"

²¹She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus.* Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this happened to make clear the full meaning of the things the Lord said through the prophet*: ²³"The virgin* will be pregnant and will give birth to a son. They will name him Immanuel."* (Immanuel means, "God with us.")

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did the thing that the Lord's angel told him to do. Joseph married Mary. ²⁵But Joseph had no sexual union with Mary until her son was born. And Joseph named the son Jesus.

Wise Men Come to Visit Jesus

2 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea. He was born during the time when Herod* was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. ²The wise men asked people, "Where is the child that has been born to be the king of the Jews? We saw the star that shows he was born. We saw the star rise in the sky in the east. We came to worship him."

³King Herod* heard about this new king of the Jews. Herod was troubled about this. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. ⁴Herod called a meeting of all the leading

Jewish priests and teachers of the law. Herod asked them where the Christ* would be born.

⁵They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet* wrote about this in the Scriptures*:

⁶ 'Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among
the rulers of Judah.

Yes, a ruler will come from you,
and that ruler will lead Israel,
my people.'"

Micah 5:2

⁷Then Herod* had a private meeting with the wise men from the east. Herod learned from the wise men the exact time they first saw the star. ⁸Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. Herod said to the wise men, "Go and look carefully for the child. When you find the child, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too."

⁹The wise men heard the king, and then they left. The wise men saw the same star they had seen in the east. The wise men followed the star. The star went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰The wise men were happy to see the star. They were very excited. ¹¹The wise men came to the house where the child was. They saw him with his mother Mary. The wise men bowed down and worshiped him. The wise men opened the gifts they brought for the child. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* ¹²But God warned the wise men in a dream. God warned them not to go back to Herod.* So the wise men went home to their own country a different way.

Jesus' Parents Take Him to Egypt

¹³After the wise men left, an angel from the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child with his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod* will start looking for the child. Herod wants to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to come back."

¹⁴So Joseph got up and left for Egypt with the child and the mother. They left during the

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

son of David Person from the family of David, second king of Israel, about 1000 years before Christ.

Jesus The name Jesus means "salvation."

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

virgin A girl that is not married and has never had sexual relations.

"The virgin ... Immanuel" Quote from Isa. 7:14.

Herod Herod I (the Great), ruler of Judea, 40 B.C. to 4 B.C.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen one of God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

frankincense and myrrh Expensive perfumes.

night. ¹⁵Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod* died. This happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord said through the prophet.* The Lord said, “I called my son to come out of Egypt.”*

Herod Kills the Baby Boys in Bethlehem

¹⁶Herod* saw that the wise men had fooled him. Herod was very angry. So Herod gave an order to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and the whole area around Bethlehem. Herod had learned from the wise men the time _{the} baby was born₁. It was now two years from that time. So Herod said to kill all the boys that were two years old and younger. ¹⁷So the thing God said through the prophet* Jeremiah happened:

¹⁸ “A sound was heard in Ramah—
bitter crying and great sadness.
Rachel cries for her children;
and she cannot be comforted,
because her children are gone.”

Jeremiah 31:15

Joseph and Mary Return from Egypt

¹⁹After Herod* died, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. This happened while Joseph was in Egypt. ²⁰The angel said, “Get up! Take the child and his mother and go to Israel. The people that were trying to kill the child are now dead.”

²¹So Joseph took the child and the mother and went to Israel. ²²But Joseph heard that Archelaus was now king in Judea. Archelaus became king when his father Herod died. So Joseph was afraid to go there. Joseph was warned in a dream. So Joseph left there and went to the area of Galilee. ²³Joseph went to a town called Nazareth and lived there. And so the thing happened that God said through the prophets.* God said that _{the} Christ₁ would be called a Nazarene.*

Herod Herod I (the Great), ruler of Judea, 40 B.C. to 4 B.C.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

“I called ... Egypt” Quote from Hos. 11:1.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Nazarene A person from the city of Nazareth, a name probably meaning “branch.” See Isa. 11:1.

The Work of John the Baptizer

(Mk. 1:1–8; Lk. 3:1–9, 15–17; Jn. 1:19–28)

3 At that time John the Baptizer came and began telling people a message _{from} God₁. This was in the desert area of Judea. ²John said, “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon.” ³John the Baptizer is the one that Isaiah the prophet* was talking about. Isaiah said:

“There is a person shouting in the desert:
‘Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make his paths straight.’”

Isaiah 40:3

⁴John’s clothes were made from camel’s hair. John had a leather belt around his waist. For food, John ate locusts* and wild honey. ⁵People went to hear John. The people came from Jerusalem and all Judea and all the area around the Jordan River. ⁶People told the sins they had done, and John baptized* them in the Jordan River.

⁷Many Pharisees* and Sadducees* came to the place where John was baptizing people. When John saw them he said to them: “You are all snakes! Who warned you to run away from God’s anger that is coming? ⁸You must do the things that show that you have really changed your hearts and lives. ⁹And don’t think that you can boast and say to yourselves, ‘Abraham* is our father.’ I tell you that God could make children for Abraham from these rocks here. ¹⁰The ax is now ready to cut down the trees.* Every tree that does not make good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize* you with water to show that you changed your hearts and lives. But there is a person coming later that is greater than I am. I am not good enough to take off his shoes for

locusts Insects like grasshoppers. The law of Moses said that locusts could be eaten. See Lev. 11:21–22.

baptize(d) A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t live again after death.

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

trees The people that don’t obey God. They are like “trees” that will be cut down.

him. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit* and with fire. ¹²He will come ready to clean the grain.* He will separate the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. And he will burn the part that is not good. He will burn it with a fire that cannot be stopped.”

Jesus Is Baptized by John

(Mk. 1:9–11; Lk. 3:21–22)

¹³At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. Jesus came to John and wanted John to baptize* him. ¹⁴But John tried to say that he was not good enough to baptize Jesus. John said, “Why do you come to me to be baptized? I should be baptized by you!”

¹⁵Jesus answered, “Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are right.” So John agreed to baptize* Jesus.

¹⁶Jesus was baptized* and he came up out of the water. The sky opened, and he saw God’s Spirit coming down on him like a dove. ¹⁷And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, “This (*Jesus*) is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him.”

The Temptation of Jesus

(Mk. 1:12–13; Lk. 4:1–13)

4 Then the Spirit* led Jesus into the desert. Jesus was taken there to be tempted by the devil. ²Jesus ate nothing for 40 days and nights. After this, he was very hungry. ³The devil came to Jesus to tempt him. The devil said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread.”

⁴Jesus answered him, “It is written ⁱⁿ the Scriptures*,”

‘It is not just bread that keeps people alive.
People’s lives depend on what
God says.’”

Deuteronomy 8:3

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

clean the grain John means that Jesus will separate the good people from the bad people.

baptize(d) A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

⁵Then the devil led Jesus to the holy city (*Jerusalem*). The devil put Jesus on a very high place on the temple.* ⁶The devil said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off. Why? Because it is written ⁱⁿ the Scriptures*,”

‘God will command his angels to help you,
and their hands will catch you,
so that you will not hit your foot
on a rock.’” *Psalm 91:11–12*

⁷Jesus answered him, “It also says ⁱⁿ the Scriptures*,”

‘You must not test (*doubt*) the Lord
your God.’” *Deuteronomy 6:16*

⁸Then the devil led Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. The devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all the great things that are in those kingdoms. ⁹The devil said, “If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all these things.”

¹⁰Jesus said to the devil, “Get away from me, Satan! It is written ⁱⁿ the Scriptures*,”

‘You must worship the Lord your God.
Serve only him!’” *Deuteronomy 6:13*

¹¹So the devil left Jesus. Then some angels came to Jesus and helped him.

Jesus Begins His Work in Galilee

(Mk. 1:14–15; Lk. 4:14–15)

¹²Jesus heard that John was put in prison. So Jesus went back to Galilee. ¹³Jesus did not stay in Nazareth. He went and lived in Capernaum, a town near the lake (*Lake Galilee*). Capernaum is in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴Jesus did this to make happen what the prophet* Isaiah said:

¹⁵ “ⁱⁿ Look at the land of Zebulun
and the land of Naphtali,
the lands by the road that goes to the sea,
the area past the Jordan River—
Galilee, the land where non-Jewish
people live.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet A person that spoke for God. Sometimes a prophet told things that would happen in the future.

16 Those people live in darkness (*sin*),
but they have seen a great light;
the light has come for those people
that live in the land that is dark
like a grave.” *Isaiah 9:1–2*

17 From that time Jesus began to tell people
what God wanted. This is what he said:
“Change your hearts and lives, because the
kingdom of heaven is coming soon.”

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

(*Mk. 1:16–20; Lk. 5:1–11*)

18 Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He
saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and
Simon’s brother Andrew. The two brothers
were fishermen and they were fishing in the
lake with a net. 19 Jesus said, “Come follow
me. I will make you a different kind of
fishermen. You will work to gather people,
not fish.” 20 Simon and Andrew left their nets
and followed Jesus.

21 Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee.
He saw two other brothers, James and John,
the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with
their father Zebedee. They were preparing
their nets to catch fish. Jesus told the brothers
to come with him. 22 So the brothers left the
boat and their father, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus Teaches and Heals People

(*Lk. 6:17–19*)

23 Jesus went everywhere in the country of
Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues* and
told the Good News about the kingdom of
heaven. And Jesus healed all the people’s
diseases and sicknesses. 24 The news about
Jesus spread all over Syria. And people
brought all the sick people to Jesus. These sick
people were suffering from different kinds of
diseases and pain. Some people were suffering
with very bad pain, some people had demons*
inside them, some people were epileptics,* and
some people were paralyzed (*crippled*). Jesus
healed all these people. 25 Many, many people
followed Jesus. These people were from

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for
prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

epileptics People with a sickness that causes them sometimes to
lose control of their bodies.

Galilee, the Ten Towns,* Jerusalem, Judea,
and the area across the Jordan River.

Jesus Teaches the People

(*Lk. 6:20–23*)

5 Jesus saw the many people that were
there. So Jesus went up on a hill and sat
down. His followers came to him. 2 Jesus
taught the people. He said:

3 “What great blessings there are for the people
that know they have spiritual needs!
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

4 What great blessings there are for the
people that are sad now!
God will comfort them.

5 What great blessings there are for the
people that are humble!
They will have the land God promised.*

6 What great blessings there are for the
people that want to do right more than
anything else*!
God will fully satisfy them.

7 What great blessings there are for the
people that give mercy to other people!
Mercy will be given to them.

8 What great blessings there are for the
people that are pure in their thinking!
They will be with God.

9 What great blessings there are for the
people that work to bring peace!
God will call them his sons and daughters.

10 What great blessings there are for the people
that are treated badly for doing good!
The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

11 “People will say bad things against you
and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of
evil things against you because you follow me.
But when people do those things to you, know
that God will bless you. 12 Be happy and glad.
You have a great reward waiting for you in
heaven. People did those same bad things to
the prophets* that lived before you.

Ten Towns Greek, “Decapolis,” an area on the east side of Lake
Galilee. It once had ten main towns.

land God promised This is the meaning of these words in
Ps. 37:11. Here, they probably refer to a spiritual “promised
land,” but they can also mean, “The earth will belong to them.”

want ... more than anything else Literally, “hunger and thirst”

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books
that are part of the Old Testament.

You Are like Salt and You Are like Light*(Mk. 9:50; Lk. 14:34–35)*

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, then it cannot be made salty again. Salt is good for nothing, if it loses its salty taste. It must be thrown out and people walk on it.

¹⁴“You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵And people don’t hide a light under a bowl. No. People put the light on a lamp table. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that people will see the good things you do. Live so that people will praise your Father in heaven.

Jesus and the Old Testament Writings

¹⁷“Don’t think that I have come to destroy the law [of Moses] or the [teaching of the] prophets.* I have not come to destroy their teachings. I came to give full meaning to their teachings. ¹⁸I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. The law will not lose even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter until all has happened. ¹⁹A person should obey every command, even a command that does not seem important. If a person refuses to obey any command and teaches other people not to obey that command, then that person will be the least important in the kingdom of heaven. But the person that obeys the law and teaches other people to obey the law will be great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰I tell you that you must do better than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.* If you are not better people, then you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus Teaches About Anger

²¹“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘Don’t kill any person.* And any person that kills will be judged.’ ²²But I tell you, don’t be angry with another person. Every person is your brother. If you are angry

with other people, you will be judged. And if you say bad things to another person, you will be judged by the Jewish council. And if you call another person a fool, you will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³“So when you offer your gift to God, think about other people. If you are offering your gift before the altar,* and you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴then leave your gift there at the altar. Go and make peace with that person. Then come and offer your gift.

²⁵“If your enemy is taking you to court, then become friends with him quickly. You should do that before you go to court. If you don’t become his friend, then he might give you to the judge. And the judge might give you to a guard to put you in jail. ²⁶And I tell you that you will not leave that jail until you have paid everything you owe.

Jesus Teaches About Sexual Sin

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘Don’t do the sin of adultery.’* ²⁸But I tell you that if a person looks at a woman and wants to sin sexually with her, then that person has already done that sin with the woman in his mind. ²⁹If your right eye makes you sin, then take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand makes you sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Jesus Teaches About Divorce*(Mt. 19:9; Mk. 10:11–12; Lk. 16:18)*

³¹“It was also said, ‘Any person that divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’* ³²But I tell you that any man that divorces his wife is causing his wife to be guilty of the sin of adultery.* The only reason for a man to divorce his wife is if his wife had sexual relations with another man. And any

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

Pharisees The Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

‘Don’t ... person’ Quote from Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

‘Don’t ... adultery’ Quote from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.

‘Any person ... divorce’ Quote from Deut. 24:1.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

man that marries that divorced woman is guilty of the sin of adultery.

Jesus Teaches About Making Promises

³³“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘When you make a vow* (*promise*), don’t break that promise. Keep the vows (*promises*) that you make to the Lord.’”
³⁴But I tell you, never make a vow. Don’t make a vow using the name of heaven, because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵Don’t make a vow using the name of the earth, because the earth belongs to God.* Don’t make a vow using the name of Jerusalem, because that is the city of the great King (*God*). ³⁶And don’t even say that your own head is proof that you will keep your vow. You cannot make one hair on your head become white or black. ³⁷Say only ‘yes’ if you mean yes, and say only ‘no’ if you mean no. If you must say more than ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ it is from the Evil One (*the devil*).

Jesus Teaches About Fighting Back

(Lk. 6:29–30)

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’”^{*} ³⁹But I tell you, don’t stand against an evil person. If someone hits you on the right cheek, then turn and let him hit the other cheek too. ⁴⁰If a person wants to sue you in court and take your shirt, then let him have your coat too. ⁴¹If a soldier forces you to walk with him one mile, then go with him two miles. ⁴²If a person asks you for something, then give it to him. Don’t refuse to give to a person that wants to borrow from you.

Love All People

(Lk. 6:27–28, 32–36)

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor* and hate your enemy.’” ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those people that do bad things to you. ⁴⁵If you do this, then you will be true sons of your Father in heaven. Your Father lets the sun rise for the

good people and the bad people. Your Father sends rain to people that do good and to people that do wrong. ⁴⁶If you love only the people that love you, then you will get no reward. Even the tax collectors* do that. ⁴⁷And if you are nice only to your friends, then you are no better than other people. Even the people without God are nice to their friends. ⁴⁸So you must be perfect, the same as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Jesus Teaches About Giving

6“Be careful! When you do good things, don’t do those things in front of people. Don’t do those things for people to see you. If you do that, then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“When you give to poor people, don’t announce that you are giving. Don’t do like the hypocrites* do. They blow trumpets before they give so that people will see them. They do that in the synagogues* and on the streets. They want other people to give honor to them. I tell you the truth. Those hypocrites already have their full reward. ³So when you give to poor people, give very secretly. Don’t let any person know what you are doing. ⁴Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

(Lk. 11:2–4)

⁵“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites.* The hypocrites love to stand in the synagogues* and on the street corners and pray loudly. They want people to see them pray. I tell you the truth. They already have their full reward. ⁶When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door. Then pray to your Father. He is there in that secret place. Your Father can see the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

⁷“And when you pray, don’t be like those people that don’t know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing. Don’t pray

vow A very strong promise that a person makes, often using the name of something important.

‘When ... Lord’ See Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21.

the earth ... God Literally, “the earth is his footstool.”

‘An eye ... tooth’ Quote from Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20.

‘Love your neighbor’ Quote from Lev. 19:18.

tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the other Jews hated them.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered for prayer, study of the Scriptures, and other public meetings.