

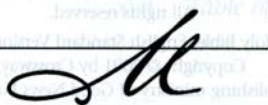


The
MACARTHUR
Study Bible



ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

The
MACARTHUR
Study Bible
ESV
ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION



John MacArthur

AUTHOR AND GENERAL EDITOR

CROSSWAY

WHEATON, ILLINOIS

WWW.ESVBIBLE.ORG

MACARTHUR
Study Bible
ESV

The MacArthur Study Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)

Copyright © 2010 by Crossway
All rights reserved.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)

Copyright © 2001 by Crossway,
a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.
All rights reserved.

ESV Text Edition: 2007

Study helps from *The MacArthur Study Bible*, copyright © 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Permission requests: The ESV text may be quoted (in written, visual, or electronic form) up to and inclusive of one thousand (1,000) verses without express written permission of the publisher, provided that the verses quoted do not amount to a complete book of the Bible nor do the verses quoted account for 50 percent or more of the total text of the work in which they are quoted. The ESV text may be quoted for audio use (audio cassettes, CDs, audio television) up to two hundred fifty (250) verses without express written permission of the publisher provided that the verses quoted do not amount to a complete book of the Bible nor do the verses quoted account for 50 percent or more of the total text of the work in which they are quoted.

Notice of copyright must appear as follows on the title page or copyright page of printed works quoting from the ESV, or in a corresponding location when the ESV is quoted in other media:

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

When more than one translation is quoted in printed works or other media, the foregoing notice of copyright should begin as follows:

"Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from . . . [etc.];" or, "Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from . . . [etc]."

The "ESV" and "English Standard Version" are registered trademarks of Crossway. Use of either trademark requires the permission of Crossway.

When quotations from the ESV text are used in non-saleable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, posters, transparencies, or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initials (ESV) must appear at the end of the quotation. Publication of any commentary or other Bible reference work produced for commercial sale that uses the English Standard Version (ESV) must include written permission for use of the ESV text. Permission requests that exceed the above guidelines must be directed to Crossway, Attn: Bible Rights, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, IL 60187, USA. Permission requests for use within the UK and EU that exceed the above guidelines must be directed to: HarperCollins Religious, 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8JB, England.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) is adapted from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. All rights reserved.

All italics in quotations of Scripture have been added by the authors.

Supplemental Material: The ESV Concordance copyright © 2001 by Crossway. Color Maps copyright ©2008 by Crossway. Cross-reference system (as adapted) copyright © 2001 Crossway. The ESV Cross-Reference System is adapted from the original English Revised Version cross-reference system.

Printed in the United States of America

Published by Crossway

Wheaton, Illinois 60187, U.S.A.

www.crossway.org

Crossway is a not-for-profit publishing ministry that exists solely for the purpose of publishing the Good News of the Gospel and the Truth of God's Word, the Bible. A portion of the purchase price of every ESV Bible is donated to help support Bible distribution ministry around the world through ESV Bible Ministry International.

Table of

CONTENTS

FORWARDS AND INDECIES

<i>Index of Charts and Maps</i>	v	<i>The Progress of Revelation</i>	xxiv
<i>Alphabetical Subject List of Charts and Maps</i>	vii	<i>How to Study the Bible</i>	xxvii
<i>Introduction to the Bible</i>	xi	<i>Preface to the English Standard Version</i>	xxxiii
<i>Personal Notes</i>	xvi	<i>Features Included in This Edition</i>	xxxvii
<i>How We Got the Bible</i>	xvii	<i>Table of Abbreviations</i>	xl

OLD TESTAMENT

<i>Introduction to the Pentateuch</i>	1	<i>Esther</i>	672
<i>Chronology of Old Testament Patriarchs and Judges</i>	2	<i>Job</i>	685
<i>A Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles</i>	5	<i>Psalms</i>	733
<i>Introduction to the Prophets</i>	9	<i>Proverbs</i>	863
<i>Chronology of Old Testament Kings and Prophets</i>	10	<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	909
<i>Genesis</i>	13	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	923
<i>Exodus</i>	91	<i>Isaiah</i>	934
<i>Leviticus</i>	151	<i>Jeremiah</i>	1034
<i>Numbers</i>	193	<i>Lamentations</i>	1110
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	245	<i>Ezekiel</i>	1122
<i>Joshua</i>	301	<i>Daniel</i>	1194
<i>Judges</i>	332	<i>Hosea</i>	1220
<i>Ruth</i>	363	<i>Joel</i>	1235
<i>1 Samuel</i>	372	<i>Amos</i>	1244
<i>2 Samuel</i>	422	<i>Obadiah</i>	1257
<i>1 Kings</i>	463	<i>Jonah</i>	1262
<i>2 Kings</i>	511	<i>Micah</i>	1268
<i>1 Chronicles</i>	557	<i>Nahum</i>	1279
<i>2 Chronicles</i>	591	<i>Habakkuk</i>	1285
<i>Ezra</i>	632	<i>Zephaniah</i>	1293
<i>Nehemiah</i>	649	<i>Haggai</i>	1300
		<i>Zechariah</i>	1306
		<i>Malachi</i>	1326

THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

<i>Introduction to the Intertestamental Period</i>	1335	<i>Chronology of the Intertestamental Period</i>	1336
--	------	--	------

NEW TESTAMENT

<i>Introduction to the Gospels</i>	1341	Philippians	1770
<i>New Testament Chronology</i>	1342	Colossians	1782
<i>A Harmony of the Gospels</i>	1344	1 Thessalonians	1793
<i>A Brief Overview of Christ's Life</i>	1351	2 Thessalonians	1803
<i>A Brief Overview of Christ's Ministry</i>	1352	1 Timothy	1809
<i>The Passovers of Christ's Ministry</i>		2 Timothy	1825
<i>Christ's Passion Week</i>	1353	Titus	1835
Matthew	1355	Philemon	1841
Mark	1416	Hebrews	1845
Luke	1466	James	1874
John	1529	1 Peter	1885
Acts	1587	2 Peter	1899
Romans	1644	1 John	1910
1 Corinthians	1681	2 John	1924
2 Corinthians	1713	3 John	1928
Galatians	1738	Jude	1932
Ephesians	1754	Revelation	1938

APPENDICES

<i>The Character of Genuine Saving Faith</i>	1977	<i>Index to Key Bible Doctrines</i>	1989
<i>Read Through the Bible In a Year</i>	1978	<i>Monies, Weights, and Measures</i>	2022
<i>Overview of Theology</i>	1981	<i>Concordance</i>	2025

Genesis	17	Exodus	91
Leviticus	151	Numbers	193
Deuteronomy	245	Joshua	301
Judges	332	Ruth	363
1 Samuel	375	1 Samuel	423
2 Samuel	463	2 Samuel	511
1 Kings	557	1 Kings	601
2 Kings	672	2 Kings	679
1 Chronicles		1 Chronicles	
2 Chronicles		2 Chronicles	
Ezra		Ezra	
Nehemiah		Nehemiah	

The 21 epistles were written to churches and individuals to explain the significance of the birth of the church; through the early years of gospel preaching by the apostles and their associates. Acts records the establishment of the church in Judea, Samaria, and into the Roman Empire.

Introduction to

THE BIBLE

The Bible is a collection of 66 documents inspired by God. These documents are gathered into two testaments, the Old (39) and the New (27). Prophets, priests, kings, and leaders from the nation of Israel wrote the OT books in Hebrew (with two passages in Aramaic). The apostles and their associates wrote the NT books in Greek.

The OT record starts with the creation of the universe and closes about 400 years before the first coming of Jesus Christ.

The flow of history through the OT moves along the following lines:

- Creation of the universe
- Fall of man
- Judgment flood over the earth
- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel)—fathers of the chosen nation
- The history of Israel
 - › Exile in Egypt—430 years
 - › Exodus and wilderness wanderings—40 years
 - › Conquest of Canaan—7 years
 - › Era of Judges—350 years
 - › United Kingdom—Saul, David, Solomon—110 years
 - › Divided Kingdom—Judah/Israel—350 years
 - › Exile in Babylon—70 years
 - › Return and rebuilding the land—140 years

The details of this history are explained in the 39 books divided into five categories:

- The Law—5 (Genesis—Deuteronomy)
- History—12 (Joshua—Esther)
- Wisdom—5 (Job—Song of Solomon)
- Major Prophets—5 (Isaiah—Daniel)
- Minor Prophets—12 (Hosea—Malachi)

After the completion of the OT, there were 400 years of silence, during which God did not speak or inspire any Scripture. That silence was broken by the arrival of John the Baptist announcing that the promised Lord Savior had come. The NT records the rest of the story from the birth of Christ to the culmination of all history and the final eternal state; so the two testaments go from creation to consummation, eternity past to eternity future.

While the 39 OT books major on the history of Israel and the promise of the coming Savior, the 27 NT books major on the person of Christ and the establishment of the church. The four Gospels give the record of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Each of the four writers views the greatest and most important event of history, the coming of the God-man, Jesus Christ, from a different perspective. Matthew looks at him through the perspective of his kingdom; Mark through the perspective of his servanthood; Luke through the perspective of his humanness; and John through the perspective of his deity.

The book of Acts tells the story of the impact of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord Savior—from his ascension, the consequent coming of the Holy Spirit, and the

birth of the church, through the early years of gospel preaching by the apostles and their associates. Acts records the establishment of the church in Judea, Samaria, and into the Roman Empire.

The 21 epistles were written to churches and individuals to explain the significance of the person and work of Jesus Christ, with its implications for life and witness until he returns.

The NT closes with Revelation, which starts by picturing the current church age, and culminates with Christ's return to establish his earthly kingdom, bringing judgment on the ungodly and glory and blessing for believers. Following the millennial reign of the Lord Savior will be the last judgment, leading to the eternal state. All believers of all history enter the ultimate eternal glory prepared for them, and all the ungodly are consigned to hell to be punished forever.

To understand the Bible, it is essential to grasp the sweep of that history from creation to consummation. It is also crucial to keep in focus the unifying theme of Scripture. The one constant theme unfolding throughout the whole Bible is this: God for his own glory has chosen to create and gather to himself a group of people to be the subjects of his eternal kingdom, to praise, honor, and serve him forever and through whom he will display his wisdom, power, mercy, grace, and glory. To gather his chosen ones, God must redeem them from sin. The Bible reveals God's plan for this redemption from its inception in eternity past to its completion in eternity future. Covenants, promises, and epochs are all secondary to the one continuous plan of redemption.

There is one God. The Bible has one Creator. It is one book. It has one plan of grace, recorded from initiation, through execution, to consummation. From predestination to glorification, the Bible is the story of God redeeming his chosen people for the praise of his glory.

As God's redemptive purposes and plan unfold in Scripture, five recurring motifs are constantly emphasized:

- the character of God
- the judgment for sin and disobedience
- the blessing for faith and obedience
- the Lord Savior and sacrifice for sin
- the coming kingdom and glory

Everything revealed on the pages of both the OT and NT is associated with those five categories. Scripture is always teaching or illustrating: 1) the character and attributes of God; 2) the tragedy of sin and disobedience to God's holy standard; 3) the blessedness of faith and obedience to God's standard; 4) the need for a Savior by whose righteousness and substitution sinners can be forgiven, declared just, and transformed to obey God's standard; and 5) the coming glorious end of redemptive history in the Lord Savior's earthly kingdom and the subsequent eternal reign and glory of God and Christ. It is essential as one studies Scripture to grasp these recurring categories like great hooks on which to hang the passages. While reading through the Bible, one should be able to relate each portion of Scripture to these dominant topics, recognizing that what is introduced in the OT is also made more clear in the NT.

Looking at these five categories separately gives an overview of the Bible.

1. THE REVELATION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Above all else, Scripture is God's self-revelation. He reveals himself as the sovereign God of the universe who has chosen to make man and to make himself known to man. In that self-revelation is established his standard of absolute holiness. From Adam and Eve through Cain and Abel and to everyone before and after the law of Moses, the standard of righteousness was established and is sustained to the last page of the NT. Violation of it produces judgment, temporal and eternal.

In the OT, it is recorded that God revealed himself by the following means:

- creation—primarily through man—who was made in his image
- angels
- signs, wonders, and miracles
- visions
- spoken words by prophets and others
- written Scripture (OT)

In the NT, it is recorded that God revealed himself again by the same means, but more clearly and fully:

- creation—the God-man, Jesus Christ, who was the very image of God
- angels
- signs, wonders, and miracles
- visions
- spoken words by apostles and prophets
- written Scripture (NT)

2. THE REVELATION OF DIVINE JUDGMENT FOR SIN AND DISOBEDIENCE

Scripture repeatedly deals with the matter of man's sin, which leads to divine judgment. Account after account in Scripture demonstrates the deadly effects in time and eternity of violating God's standard. There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible. Only four of them don't involve a fallen world: the first two and the last two—before the fall and after the creation of the new heaven and new earth. The rest is the chronicle of the tragedy of sin.

In the OT, God showed the disaster of sin—starting with Adam and Eve, to Cain and Abel, the patriarchs, Moses and Israel, the kings, priests, some prophets, and Gentile nations. Throughout the OT is the relentless record of continual devastation produced by sin and disobedience to God's law.

In the NT, the tragedy of sin becomes more clear. The preaching and teaching of Jesus and the apostles begin and end with a call to repentance. King Herod, the Jewish leaders, and the nation of Israel—along with Pilate, Rome, and the rest of the world—all reject the Lord Savior, spurn the truth of God, and thus condemn themselves. The chronicle of sin continues unabated to the end of the age and the return of Christ in judgment. In the NT, disobedience is even more flagrant than OT disobedience because it involves the rejection of the Lord Savior Jesus Christ in the brighter light of NT truth.

3. THE REVELATION OF DIVINE BLESSING FOR FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Scripture repeatedly promises wonderful rewards in time and eternity that come to people who trust God and seek to obey him. In the OT, God showed the blessedness of repentance from sin, faith in himself, and obedience to his word—from Abel, through the patriarchs, to the remnant in Israel—and even Gentiles who believed (such as the people of Nineveh).

God's standard for man, his will, and his moral law were always made known. To those who faced their inability to keep God's standard, recognized their sin, confessed their impotence to please God by their own effort and works, and asked him for forgiveness and grace—there came merciful redemption and blessing for time and eternity.

In the NT, God again showed the full blessedness of redemption from sin for repentant people. There were those who responded to the preaching of repentance by John the Baptist. Others repented at the preaching of Jesus. Still others from Israel obeyed the gospel through the apostles' preaching. And finally, there were Gentiles all over the Roman Empire who believed the gospel. To all those and to all who will believe through all of history, there is blessing promised in this world and the world to come.

4. THE REVELATION OF THE LORD SAVIOR AND SACRIFICE FOR SIN

This is the heart of both the OT, which Jesus said spoke of him in type and prophecy, and the NT, which gives the biblical record of his coming. The promise of blessing is dependent on grace and mercy given to the sinner. Grace means that sin is not held against the sinner. Such forgiveness is dependent on a payment of sin's penalty to satisfy holy justice. That requires a substitute—one to die in the sinner's place. God's chosen substitute—the only one who qualified—was Jesus. Salvation is always by the same gracious means, whether during OT or NT times. When any sinner comes to God, repentant and convinced he has no power to save himself from the deserved judgment of divine wrath, and pleads for mercy, God's promise of forgiveness is granted. God then declares him righteous because the sacrifice and obedience of Christ is put to his account. In the OT, God justified sinners that same way, in anticipation of Christ's atoning work. There is, therefore, a continuity of grace and salvation through all of redemptive history. Various covenants, promises, and epochs do not alter that fundamental continuity, nor does the discontinuity between the OT witness nation, Israel, and the NT witness people, the church. A fundamental continuity is centered in the cross, which was no interruption in the plan of God, but is the very thing to which all else points.

Throughout the OT, the Savior and sacrifice are promised. In Genesis, he is the seed of the woman who will destroy Satan. In Zechariah, he is the pierced one to whom Israel turns and by whom God opens the fountain of forgiveness to all who mourn over their sin. He is the very One symbolized in the sacrificial system of the Mosaic law. He is the suffering substitute spoken of by the prophets. Throughout the OT, he is the Messiah who would die for the transgressions of his people; from beginning to end in the OT, the theme of the Lord Savior as a sacrifice for sin is presented. It is solely because of his perfect sacrifice for sin that God graciously forgives repentant believers.

In the NT, the Lord Savior came and actually provided the promised sacrifice for sin on the cross. Having fulfilled all righteousness by his perfect life, he fulfilled justice by his death. Thus God himself atoned for sin, at a cost too great for the human mind to fathom. Now he graciously supplies on their behalf all the merit necessary for his people to be the objects of his favor. That is what Scripture means when it speaks of salvation by grace.

5. THE REVELATION OF THE KINGDOM AND GLORY OF THE LORD SAVIOR

This crucial component of Scripture brings the whole story to its God-ordained consummation. Redemptive history is controlled by God, so as to culminate in his eternal glory. Redemptive history will end with the same precision and exactness with which it began. The truths of eschatology are neither vague nor unclear—nor are they unimportant. As in any book, how the story ends is the most crucial and compelling part—so with the Bible. Scripture notes several very specific features of the end planned by God.

In the OT, there is repeated mention of an earthly kingdom ruled by the Messiah, Lord Savior, who will come to reign. Associated with that kingdom will be the salvation of Israel, the salvation of Gentiles, the renewal of the earth from the effects of the curse, and the bodily resurrection of God's people who have died. Finally, the OT predicts that there will be the "uncreation" or dissolution of the universe, and the creation of a new heaven and new earth—which will be the eternal state of the godly—and a final hell for the ungodly.

In the NT, these features are clarified and expanded. The King was rejected and executed, but he promised to come back in glory, bringing judgment, resurrection, and his kingdom for all who believe. Innumerable Gentiles from every nation will be included among the redeemed. Israel will be saved and grafted back into the root of blessing from which she has been temporarily excised.

Israel's promised kingdom will be enjoyed, with the Lord Savior reigning on the throne, in the renewed earth, exercising power over the whole world, having taken back his rightful authority, and receiving due honor and worship. Following that kingdom will come the dissolution of the renewed, but still sin-stained creation, and the subsequent creation of a new heaven and new earth—which will be the eternal state, separate forever from the ungodly in hell.

Those are the five topics that fill up the Bible. To understand them at the start is to know the answer to the question that continually arises—Why does the Bible tell us this? Everything fits into this glorious pattern. As you read, hang the truth on these five hooks and the Bible will unfold, not as 66 separate documents, or even two separate testaments—but one book, by one divine Author, who wrote it all with one overarching theme.

My prayer is that the magnificent and overwhelming theme of the redemption of sinners for the glory of God will carry every reader with captivating interest from beginning to end of the story. Christian—this is your story. It is from God for you—about you. It tells what he planned for you, why he made you, what you were, what you have become in Christ, and what he has prepared for you in eternal glory.

John MacArthur

PERSONAL NOTES

Why write a study Bible? The answer to that question comes in a conversation between Philip and an Ethiopian recorded in Acts 8:30–31:

So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked,

"Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said,

"How can I, unless someone guides me?"

And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

As Philip did with the eunuch, I want to sit with you and explain the Scriptures. This Study Bible allows me that intimate opportunity.

Although I personally bear full responsibility for all the notes in The MacArthur Study Bible because they all have come from me and through me, a work of this magnitude with the responsibility to be accurate could only have been done with a team of supportive co-workers who committed themselves to assist me by arduous labor with loving devotion and commitment to excellence. Many friends have participated in the team—all of whom deserve to be commended and thanked.

My highest gratitude belongs to my friend and ministry partner, Dr. Richard Mayhue, Senior Vice President and Dean of The Master's Seminary. He has worked next to me through the whole project, laboring beyond anyone while serving as project manager, OT and NT researcher, editor, and counselor. His exceptional gift for management, along with his vast knowledge of Scripture and doctrine, coupled with our one-mindedness theologically, plus his writing skill, have made for a more effective partnership.

Gratitude in abundance must be given to the faculty of The Master's Seminary for their assistance in original research and carefully prepared first draft material for the study notes on the Old Testament. Using the foundation of that original research and material, I worked and re-worked the study notes into their final form.

Never have I been so challenged and blessed at the same time as during the two intense years of finalizing this work. Studying alone in my private place, perusing every word of Scripture, plus being challenged to understand each phrase and verse has yielded richness to my life and ministry like nothing I have undertaken before.

I have always been committed to the Scriptures as inspired, inerrant, infallible, sufficient and eternal. I have always preached the Bible expositionally, verse by verse, book by book. After this enterprise, I feel even more strongly about the necessity of preaching every pure word of Scripture (Ps. 12:6). I have been profoundly enriched in my own life, as never before, because of the sheer force of so much divine truth pouring through me daily. For many months I spent eight or more hours every day working in the word, not so much because I had to, but because I could not leave the text—its riches held me captive.

My thanks to you, the reader, for loving Scripture enough to be a serious student. This work is an additional way of fulfilling my calling as a pastor-teacher mandated "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).

A special word of thanks is certainly in order for my beloved wife, Patricia, who supported me with her prayers and encouragement, and endured my times of isolation with understanding.

With gratitude most of all to our glorious God who gave us his precious word, do I pray that he will be honored by this effort to explain what his word means by what it says.

John MacArthur

THE BIBLE

Ever since Eve encountered Satan's barrage of doubt and denial (Gen. 3:1–7), mankind has continued to question God's word. Unfortunately, Eve had little or no help in sorting through her intellectual obstacles to full faith in God's self-disclosure (Gen. 2:16–17).

Now the scripture certainly has more than enough content to be interrogated, considering that it's comprised of 66 books, 1,189 chapters, 31,173 verses, and 757,444 words. When you open your english translation to read or study, you might have asked in the past or are currently asking, "how can I be sure this is the pure and true word of God?"

A question of this kind is not altogether bad, especially when one seeks to learn with a teachable mind (Acts 17:11). The scripture invites the kinds of queries that a sincere student asks. A whole host of questions can flood the mind, such as:

- Where did the Bible come from?
- Whose thinking does it reflect?
- Did any books of the Bible get lost in time past?
- What does the Scripture claim for itself?
- Does it live up to its claims?
- Who wrote the Bible—God or man?
- Has Scripture been protected from human tampering over the centuries?
- How close to the original manuscripts are today's translations?
- How did the Bible get to our time and in our language?
- Is there more Scripture to come, beyond the current 66 books?
- Who determined, and on what basis, that the Bible would be composed of the traditional list of 66 books?
- If the Scriptures were written over a period of 1,500 years (c. 1405 B.C. to A.D. 95), passed down since then for almost 2,000 years, and translated into several thousand languages, what prevented the Bible from being changed by the carelessness or ill motives of men?
- Does today's Bible really deserve the title "The Word of God"?

Undoubtedly, these questions have bombarded the minds of many. A study of the scriptures alone settles all questions to the extent that there is no need to be bothered by them again. Scripture gives this assurance.

SCRIPTURE'S SELF-CLAIMS

Take the Bible and let it speak for itself. Does it claim to be God's word? Yes! Over 2,000 times in the Old Testament alone, the Bible asserts that God spoke what is written within its pages. From the beginning (Gen. 1:3) to the end (Mal. 4:3) and continually throughout, this is what Scripture claims.

The phrase "the word of God" occurs over 40 times in the New Testament. It is equated with the Old Testament (Mark 7:13). It is what Jesus preached (Luke 5:1). It was the message the apostles taught (Acts 4:31; 6:2). It was the word the Samaritans received (Acts 8:14) as given by the apostles (Acts 8:25). It was the message the Gentiles received as preached by Peter (Acts 11:1). It was the word Paul preached on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:5, 7, 44, 48–49; 15:35–36). It was the message preached on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:32; 17:13; 18:11). It was the message Paul preached on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:10). It was

the focus of Luke in the book of Acts in that it spread rapidly and widely (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20). Paul was careful to tell the Corinthians that he spoke the word as it was given from God, that it had not been adulterated, and that it was a manifestation of truth (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2). Paul acknowledged that it was the source of his preaching (Col. 1:25; 1 Thess. 2:13).

Psalms 19 and 119, plus Prov. 30:5–6, make powerful statements about God's word which set it apart from any other religious instruction ever known in the history of mankind. These passages make the case for the Bible being called "sacred" (2 Tim. 3:15) and "holy" (Rom. 1:2).

The Bible claims ultimate spiritual authority in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness because it represents the inspired word of Almighty God (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Scripture asserts its spiritual sufficiency, so much so that it claims exclusivity for its teaching (cf. Isa. 55:11; 2 Pet. 1:3–4).

God's word declares that it is inerrant (Ps. 12:6; 119:140; Prov. 30:5a; John 10:35) and infallible (2 Tim. 3:16–17). In other words, it is true and therefore trustworthy. All of these qualities are dependent on the fact that Scripture is God-given (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21), which guarantees its quality at the Source and at its original writing.

In Scripture, the person of God and the word of God are everywhere interrelated, so much so that whatever is true about the character of God is true about the nature of God's word. God is true, impeccable, and reliable; therefore, so is his word. What a person thinks about God's word, in reality, reflects what a person thinks about God.

Thus, the Scripture can make these demands on its readers.

*And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna,
which you did not know, nor did your fathers know,
that he might make you know that man
does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every
word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

DEUTERONOMY 8:3

*I have not departed from the commandment of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth
more than my portion of food.*

JOB 23:12

THE PUBLISHING PROCESS

The Bible does not expect its reader to speculate on how these divine qualities were transferred from God to his word, but rather anticipates the questions with convincing answers. Every generation of skeptics has assailed the self-claims of the Bible, but its own explanations and answers have been more than equal to the challenge. The Bible has gone through God's publishing process in being given to and distributed among the human race. Its several features are discussed below.

REVELATION

God took the initiative to disclose or reveal himself to mankind (Heb. 1:1). The vehicles varied; sometimes it was through the created order, at other times through visions/dreams or speaking prophets. However, the most complete and understandable self-disclosures were through the propositions of Scripture (1 Cor. 2:6–16). The revealed and written word of God is unique in that it is the only revelation of God that is complete and that so clearly declares man's sinfulness and God's provision of the Savior.

INSPIRATION

The revelation of God was captured in the writings of Scripture by means of “inspiration.” This has more to do with the process by which God revealed himself than the fact of his self-revelation. “All Scripture is breathed out by God . . .” (2 Tim. 3:16) makes the claim. Peter explains the process, “. . . knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20–21). By this means, the word of God was protected from human error in its original record by the ministry of the Holy Spirit (cf. Deut. 18:18; Matt. 1:22). A section of Zech. 7:12 describes it most clearly, “. . . the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets.” This ministry of the Spirit extended to both the part (the words) and to the whole in the original writings.

CANONICITY

We must understand that the Bible is actually one book with one Divine Author, though it was written over a period of 1,500 years through the pens of almost 40 human writers. The Bible began with the creation account of Gen. 1–2, written by Moses about 1405 B.C., and extends to the eternity future account of Rev. 21–22, written by the apostle John about A.D. 95. During this time, God progressively revealed himself and his purposes in the inspired Scriptures. But this raises a significant question: “How do we know what supposed sacred writings were to be included in the canon of Scripture and which ones were to be excluded?”

Over the centuries, three widely recognized principles were used to validate those writings which came as a result of divine revelation and inspiration. First, the writing had to have a recognized prophet or apostle as its author (or one associated with them, as in the case of Mark, Luke, Hebrews, James, and Jude). Second, the writing could not disagree with or contradict previous Scripture. Third, the writing had to have general consensus by the church as an inspired book. Thus, when various councils met in church history to consider the canon, they did not vote for the canonicity of a book but rather recognized, after the fact, what God had already written.

With regard to the Old Testament, by the time of Christ all of the Old Testament had been written and accepted in the Jewish community. The last book, Malachi, had been completed about 430 B.C. Not only does the Old Testament canon of Christ’s day conform to the Old Testament which has since been used throughout the centuries, but it does not contain the uninspired and spurious Apocrypha, that group of 14 rogue writings which were written after Malachi and attached to the Old Testament about 200–150 B.C. in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament called the Septuagint (LXX), appearing to this very day in some versions of the Bible. However, not one passage from the Apocrypha is cited by any New Testament writer, nor did Jesus affirm any of it as he recognized the Old Testament canon of his era (cf. Luke 24:27, 44).

By Christ’s time, the Old Testament canon had been divided up into two lists of 22 or 24 books respectively, each of which contained all the same material as the 39 books of our modern versions. In the 22 book canon, Jeremiah and

THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT

Law	Prophets	Writings
1. Genesis	A. <i>Former Prophets</i>	A. <i>Poetical Writings</i>
2. Exodus	6. Joshua	14. Psalms
3. Leviticus	7. Judges	15. Proverbs
4. Numbers	8. Samuel (1&2)	16. Job
5. Deuteronomy	9. Kings (1&2)	B. <i>Five Rolls (Megilloth)</i>
	B. <i>Latter Prophets</i>	17. Song of Solomon
	10. Isaiah	18. Ruth
	11. Jeremiah	19. Lamentations
	12. Ezekiel	20. Ecclesiastes
	13. The Twelve (minor prophets)	21. Esther
		C. <i>Historical Books</i>
		22. Daniel
		23. Ezra-Nehemiah
		24. Chronicles (1&2)

Lamentations were considered as one, as were Judges and Ruth. The table on page xix shows how the 24 book format was divided.

The same three key tests of canonicity that applied to the Old Testament also applied to the New Testament. In the case of Mark and Luke/Acts, the authors were considered to be, in effect, the penmen for Peter and Paul respectively. James and Jude were written by Christ's half brothers. While Hebrews is the only New Testament book whose authorship is unknown for certain, its content is so in line with both the Old Testament and New Testament, that the early church concluded it must have been written by an apostolic associate. The 27 books of the New Testament have been universally accepted since c. A.D. 350–400 as inspired by God.

PRESERVATION

How can one be sure that the revealed and inspired, written word of God, which was recognized as canonical by the early church, has been handed down to this day without any loss of material? Furthermore, since one of the devil's prime concerns is to undermine the Bible, have the Scriptures survived this destructive onslaught? In the beginning, he denied God's word to Eve (Gen. 3:4). Satan later attempted to distort the Scripture in his wilderness encounter with Christ (Matt. 4:6–7). Through King Jehoiakim, he even attempted to literally destroy the word (Jer. 36:23). The battle for the Bible rages, but Scripture has and will continue to outlast its enemies.

God anticipated man's and Satan's malice towards the Scripture with divine promises to preserve his word. The very continued existence of Scripture is guaranteed in Isa. 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever" (cf. 1 Pet. 1:25). This even means that no inspired Scripture has been lost in the past and still awaits rediscovery.

The actual content of Scripture will be perpetuated, both in heaven (Ps. 119:89) and on earth (Isa. 59:21). Thus the purposes of God, as published in the sacred writings, will never be thwarted, even in the least detail (cf. Matt. 5:18; 24:25; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17).

*... so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

ISAIAH 55:11

TRANSMISSION

Since the Bible has frequently been translated into multiple languages and distributed throughout the world, how can we be sure that error has not crept in, even if it was unintentional? As Christianity spread, it is certainly true that people desired to have the Bible in their own language which required translations from the original Hebrew and Aramaic languages of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. Not only did the work of translators provide an opportunity for error, but publication, which was done by hand copying until the printing press arrived c. A.D. 1450, also afforded continual possibilities of error.

Through the centuries, the practitioners of textual criticism, a precise science, have discovered, preserved, catalogued, evaluated, and published an amazing array of biblical manuscripts from both the Old and New Testaments. In fact, the number of existing biblical manuscripts dramatically outdistances the existing fragments of any other ancient literature. By comparing text with text, the textual critic can confidently determine what the original prophetic/apostolic, inspired writing contained.

Although existing copies of the main, ancient Hebrew text (Masoretic) date back only to the tenth century A.D., two other important lines of textual evidence bolster the confidence of

textual critics that they have reclaimed the originals. First, the tenth century A.D. Hebrew Old Testament can be compared to the Greek translation called the Septuagint or LXX (written c. 200–150 B.C.; the oldest existing manuscripts date to c. A.D. 325). There is amazing consistency between the two, which speaks of the accuracy in copying the Hebrew text for centuries. Second, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947–1956 (manuscripts that are dated c. 200–100 B.C.) proved to be monumentally important. After comparing the earlier Hebrew texts with the later ones, only a few slight variants were discovered, none of which changed the meaning of any passage. Although the Old Testament had been translated and copied for centuries, the latest version was essentially the same as the earlier ones.

The New Testament findings are even more decisive because a much larger amount of material is available for study; there are over 5,000 Greek New Testament manuscripts that range from the whole testament to scraps of papyri which contain as little as part of one verse. A few existing fragments date back to within 25–50 years of the original writing. New Testament textual scholars have generally concluded that 1) 99.99 percent of the original writings have been reclaimed, and 2) of the remaining one hundredth of one percent, there are no variants substantially affecting any Christian doctrine.

With this wealth of biblical manuscripts in the original languages and with the disciplined activity of textual critics to establish with almost perfect accuracy the content of the autographs, any errors which have been introduced and/or perpetuated by the thousands of translations over the centuries can be identified and corrected by comparing the translation or copy with the reassembled original. By this providential means, God has made good his promise to preserve the Scriptures. We can rest assured that there are translations available today which indeed are worthy of the title, *The Word of God*.

The history of a full, English translation Bible essentially began with John Wycliffe (c. A.D. 1330–1384), who made the first English translation of the whole Bible. Later, William Tyndale was associated with the first complete, printed New Testament in English, c. A.D. 1526. Miles Coverdale followed in A.D. 1535, by delivering the first complete Bible printed in English. By A.D. 1611, the King James Version (KJV) had been completed. Since then, hundreds of translations have been made—some better, some worse. Today, the better English translations of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures include: 1) English Standard Version (ESV); 2) New American Standard Bible (NASB); and 3) New King James Version (NKJV).

SUMMING IT UP

God intended his word to abide forever (preservation). Therefore his written, propositional, self disclosure (revelation) was protected from error in its original writing (inspiration) and collected in 66 books of the Old and New Testaments (canonicity).

Through the centuries, tens of thousands of copies and thousands of translations have been made (transmission) which did introduce some error. Because there is an abundance of existing ancient Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts, however, the exacting science of textual criticism has been able to reclaim the content of the original writings (revelation and inspiration) to the extreme degree of 99.99 percent, with the remaining one hundredth of one percent having no effect on its content (preservation).

The sacred book which we read, study, obey, and preach deserves to unreservedly be called *The Bible* or “*The Book without peer*,” since its author is God and it bears the qualities of total truth and complete trustworthiness, as also characterizes its divine source.

IS THERE MORE TO COME?

How do we know that God will not amend our current Bible with a 67th inspired book? Or, in other words, “Is the canon forever closed?”

Scripture texts warn that no one should delete from or add to Scripture (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6). Realizing that additional canonical books actually came after these words of warning, we can only conclude that while no deletions whatsoever were permitted, in fact, authorized, inspired writings were permitted to be added in order to complete the canon protected by those passages.

The most compelling text on the closed canon is the Scripture to which nothing has been added for 1,900 years.

*I warn everyone who hears the words of
the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them,
God will add to him the plagues described in this book,
and if anyone takes away from the words
of the book of this prophecy, God will take away
his share in the tree of life and in the holy city,
which are described in this book.*

REVELATION 22:18–19

Several significant observations, when taken together, have convinced the church over the centuries that the canon of Scripture is actually closed, never to be reopened.

1. The book of Revelation is unique to the Scripture in that it describes with unparalleled detail the end-time events which precede eternity future. As Genesis began Scripture by bridging the gap from eternity past into our time/space existence with the only detailed creation account (Gen. 1–2), so Revelation transitions out of time/space back into eternity future (Rev. 20–22). Genesis and Revelation, by their contents, are the perfectly matched bookends of Scripture.

2. Just as there was prophetic silence after Malachi completed the Old Testament canon, so there was a parallel silence after John delivered Revelation. This leads to the conclusion that the New Testament canon was then closed also.

3. Since there have not been, nor now are, any authorized prophets or apostles in either the Old Testament or New Testament sense, there are not any potential authors of future inspired, canonical writings. God's word, "once for all delivered to the saints," is never to be added to, but to be earnestly contended for (Jude 3).

4. Of the four exhortations not to tamper with Scripture, only the one in Rev. 22:18–19 contains warnings of severe Divine judgment for disobedience. Further, Revelation is the only book of the New Testament to end with this kind of admonition and was the last New Testament book to be written. Therefore, these facts strongly suggest that Revelation was the last book of the canon and that the Bible is complete; to either add or delete would bring God's severe displeasure.

5. Finally, the early church, those closest in time to the apostles, believed that Revelation concluded God's inspired writings, the Scriptures.

So we can conclude, based on solid Biblical reasoning, that the canon is and will remain closed. There will be no future 67th book of the Bible.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

In April, 1521, Martin Luther appeared before his ecclesiastical accusers at the Diet of Worms. They had given him the ultimatum to repudiate his unwavering faith in the sufficiency and perspicuity of the Scriptures. Luther is said to have responded, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the word of God. . . . God help me! Here I stand."

Like Martin Luther, may we rise above the doubts within and confront the threats without when God's word is assailed. God help us to be loyal contenders of the faith. Let us stand with God and the Scripture alone.

THE BIBLE

This book contains: the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.

Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here heaven is open, and the gates of hell are disclosed.

Christ is the grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its contents.

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

18	John	183-190 A.D.	18	John
19	James	47-50 A.D.	19	James
20	Peter	64-68 A.D.	20	Peter
21	Mark	65-70 A.D.	21	Mark
22	Luke	80-90 A.D.	22	Luke
23	Paul	30-70 A.D.	23	Paul
24	Ephraim	700-720 B.C.	24	Ephraim
25	Isaiah	700-680 B.C.	25	Isaiah
26	Ezekiel	600-570 B.C.	26	Ezekiel
27	Leviticus	1500 B.C.	27	Leviticus
28	Jeremiah	620-540 B.C.	28	Jeremiah
29	1 Kings	925-850 B.C.	29	1 Kings
30	2 Kings	850-580 B.C.	30	2 Kings
31	Daniel	605-562 B.C.	31	Daniel
32	Haggai	520 B.C.	32	Haggai
33	Zechariah	480-470 B.C.	33	Zechariah
34	Ezra	457-444 B.C.	34	Ezra
35	1 Chronicles	430-430 B.C.	35	1 Chronicles
36	2 Chronicles	430-430 B.C.	36	2 Chronicles
37	Ester	450-331 B.C.	37	Ester
38	Melchizedek	1900-1800 B.C.	38	Melchizedek
39	Ezer	1500-1400 B.C.	39	Ezer

THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION: OLD TESTAMENT

Book	Approximate Writing Date	Author
1. Job	Unknown	Anonymous
2. Genesis	1445–1405 B.C.	Moses
3. Exodus	1445–1405 B.C.	Moses
4. Leviticus	1445–1405 B.C.	Moses
5. Numbers	1445–1405 B.C.	Moses
6. Deuteronomy	1445–1405 B.C.	Moses
7. Psalms	1410–450 B.C.	Multiple Authors
8. Joshua	1405–1385 B.C.	Joshua
9. Judges	c. 1043 B.C.	Samuel
10. Ruth	c. 1030–1010 B.C.	Samuel (?)
11. Song of Solomon	971–965 B.C.	Solomon
12. Proverbs	971–686 B.C.	Solomon primarily
13. Ecclesiastes	940–931 B.C.	Solomon
14. 1 Samuel	931–722 B.C.	Anonymous
15. 2 Samuel	931–722 B.C.	Anonymous
16. Obadiah	850–840 B.C.	Obadiah
17. Joel	835–796 B.C.	Joel
18. Jonah	c. 760 B.C.	Jonah
19. Amos	c. 755 B.C.	Amos
20. Hosea	755–710 B.C.	Hosea
21. Micah	735–710 B.C.	Micah
22. Isaiah	700–681 B.C.	Isaiah
23. Nahum	c. 650 B.C.	Nahum
24. Zephaniah	635–625 B.C.	Zephaniah
25. Habakkuk	615–605 B.C.	Habakkuk
26. Ezekiel	590–570 B.C.	Ezekiel
27. Lamentations	586 B.C.	Jeremiah
28. Jeremiah	586–570 B.C.	Jeremiah
29. 1 Kings	561–538 B.C.	Anonymous
30. 2 Kings	561–538 B.C.	Anonymous
31. Daniel	536–530 B.C.	Daniel
32. Haggai	c. 520 B.C.	Haggai
33. Zechariah	480–470 B.C.	Zechariah
34. Ezra	457–444 B.C.	Ezra
35. 1 Chronicles	450–430 B.C.	Ezra (?)
36. 2 Chronicles	450–430 B.C.	Ezra (?)
37. Esther	450–331 B.C.	Anonymous
38. Malachi	433–424 B.C.	Malachi
39. Nehemiah	424–400 B.C.	Ezra

**THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION:
NEW TESTAMENT**

Book	Approximate Writing Date	Author
1. James	A.D. 45–49	James
2. Galatians	A.D. 49–50	Paul
3. Matthew	A.D. 50–60	Matthew
4. Mark	A.D. 50–60	Mark
5. 1 Thessalonians	A.D. 51	Paul
6. 2 Thessalonians	A.D. 51–52	Paul
7. 1 Corinthians	A.D. 55	Paul
8. 2. Corinthians	A.D. 55–56	Paul
9. Romans	A.D. 56	Paul
10. Luke	A.D. 60–61	Luke
11. Ephesians	A.D. 60–62	Paul
12. Philippians	A.D. 60–62	Paul
13. Colossians	A.D. 60–62	Paul
14. Philemon	A.D. 60–62	Paul
15. Acts	A.D. 62	Luke
16. 1 Timothy	A.D. 62–64	Paul
17. Titus	A.D. 62–64	Paul
18. 1 Peter	A.D. 64–65	Peter
19. 2 Timothy	A.D. 66–67	Paul
20. 2 Peter	A.D. 67–68	Peter
21. Hebrews	A.D. 67–69	Unknown
22. Jude	A.D. 68–70	Jude
23. John	A.D. 80–90	John
24. 1 John	A.D. 90–95	John
25. 2 John	A.D. 90–95	John
26. 3 John	A.D. 90–95	John
27. Revelation	A.D. 94–96	John

Millions of pages of material are printed every week. Thousands of new books are published each month. This would not be surprising to Solomon who said, "... beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end" (Eccles. 12:12).

Even with today's wealth of books and computer helps, the Bible remains the only source of divine revelation and power that can sustain Christians in their "daily walk with God." Note these significant promises in the Scripture:

1. The Bible is the source of truth: "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17).

2. The Bible is the source of God's blessing when obeyed: "But he said, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it'" (Luke 11:28).

3. The Bible is the source of victory: "... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).

4. The Bible is the source of growth: "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up" (1. Pet. 2:2).

GENESIS

The Creation of the World

1 In the ^abeginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was ^bwithout form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, ^c“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, ^d“Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate

Chapter 1

¹Job 38:4-7; Ps. 33:6; 136:5; Isa. 42:5; 45:18; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:10; 11:3; Rev. 4:11
²Jer. 4:23
³2 Cor. 4:6
⁶Job 37:18; Ps. 136:5; Jer. 10:12; 51:15

⁷Prov. 8:27-29^f; Ps. 148:4
⁹Job 38:8-11; Ps. 33:7; 136:6; Jer. 5:22; 2 Pet. 3:5
¹¹Ps. 104:14

the waters from the waters.” ⁷And God made² the expanse and ^eseparated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were ^fabove the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven.³ And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, ^g“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth,⁴ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹And God said, ^h“Let the earth sprout

¹Or a canopy; also verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20. ²Or fashioned; also verse 16. ³Or Sky; also verses 9, 14, 15, 17, 20, 26, 28, 30; 2:1. ⁴Or Land; also verses 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30; 2:1.

1:1–2:3 This description of God creating heaven and earth is understood to be: 1) recent, i.e., thousands not millions of years ago; 2) *ex nihilo*, i.e., out of nothing; and 3) special, i.e., in six consecutive 24-hour periods called “days” and further distinguished as such by this phrase, “there was evening and there was morning.” Scripture does not support a creation date earlier than about 10,000 years ago. **In the beginning.** While God exists eternally (Ps. 90:2), this marked the beginning of the universe in time and space. In explaining Israel’s identity and purpose to her on the plains of Moab, God wanted his people to know about the origin of the world in which they found themselves. **God.** Elohim is a general term for deity and a name for the True God, though used also at times for pagan gods (Gen. 31:30), angels (Ps. 8:5), men (Ps. 82:6), and judges (Ex. 21:6). Moses made no attempt to defend the existence of God, which is assumed, or explain what he was like in person and works, which is treated elsewhere (cf. Isa. 43:10, 13). Both are to be believed by faith (cf. Heb. 11:3, 6). **created.** This word is used here of God’s creative activity alone, although it occasionally is used elsewhere of matter that already existed (Isa. 65:18). Context demands in no uncertain terms that this was a creation without preexisting material (as does other Scripture: cf. Isa. 40:28; 45:8, 12, 18; 48:13; Jer. 10:16; Acts 17:24). **the heavens and the earth.** All of God’s creation is incorporated into this summary statement that includes all six, consecutive days of creation.

1:2 without form and void. This means “not finished in its shape and as yet uninhabited by creatures” (cf. Isa. 45:18, 19; Jer. 4:23). God would quickly (in six days) decorate his initial creation (Gen. 1:2–2:3). **deep.** Sometimes referred to as primordial waters, this is the term used to describe the earth’s water-covered surface before the dry land emerged (1:9–10). Jonah used this word to describe the watery abyss in which he found himself submerged (Jonah 2:5). **Spirit of God.** Not only did God the Holy Spirit participate in creation, but so did God the Son (cf. John 1:1–3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).

1:3 God said. God effortlessly spoke light into existence (cf. Ps. 33:6; 148:5). This dispelled the darkness of Gen. 1:2. **light.** The greater and lesser lights (the sun and moon) were created later (1:14–19) on the fourth day. Here, God was the provider of light (2 Cor. 4:6) and will in eternity future be the source of light (cf. Rev. 21:23).

1:4 good. Good for the purposes it was intended to serve (cf. v. 31).

1:4–5 separated . . . called. After the initial creation, God continued to complete his universe. Once God separated certain things, he then named them. Separating and naming were acts of dominion and served as a pattern for man, who would also name a portion of God’s creation over which God gave him dominion (2:19–20).

1:5 first day. God established the pattern of creation in seven days, which constituted a complete week. “Day” can refer to: 1) the light portion of a 24-hour period (1:5, 14); 2) an extended period of time (2:4); or 3) the 24-hour period which basically refers to a full rotation of the earth on its axis, called evening and morning. This cannot mean an age, but only a day, reckoned by the Jews from sunset to sunset (1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31). “Day” with numerical adjectives in Hebrew always refers to a 24-hour period. Comparing the order of the week in Ex. 20:8–11 with the creation week confirms this understanding of the time element. Such a cycle of light and dark means that the earth was rotating on its axis, so that there was a source of light on one side of the earth, though the sun was not yet created (Gen. 1:16).

1:6 expanse. The portion of God’s creation named “heavens,” that which man saw when he looked up, i.e., the atmospheric and stellar heaven.

1:7 under the expanse. Refers to subterranean reservoirs (cf. 7:11). **above the expanse.** This could possibly have been a canopy of water vapor that acted to make the earth like a hothouse, provided uniform temperature, inhibited mass air movements, caused mist to fall, and filtered out ultraviolet rays, thus extending life.

1:9–10 dry land. This was caused by a tremendous, cataclysmic upheaval of the earth’s surface, and the rising and sinking of the land, which caused the waters to plunge into the low places, forming the seas, the continents and islands, the rivers and lakes (cf. Job 38:4–11; Ps. 104:6–9).

1:11–12 according to its kind. God set in motion a providential process whereby the vegetable kingdom could reproduce through seeds which would maintain each one’s unique characteristics. The same phrase is used to describe the perpetuating reproduction of animals within their created species (v. 21, 24, 25), and indicates that evolution, which proposes reproduction across species lines, is a false explanation of origins.

1:11 yielding seed. The principle of reproduction that marks all life (cf. v. 22, 24, 28).

vegetation, plants¹ yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. 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 expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for ¹signs and for ²seasons,² and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶And God ⁴made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to ¹rule 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 swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds³ fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So ^mGod created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves,

¹⁴Jer. 10:2; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:30, 31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:25/Ps. 104:19
¹⁶Deut. 4:19; Ps. 136:7-9
¹⁸Jer. 31:35
²¹Ps. 104:25, 26

²²ch. 8:17; 9:1
²⁶ch. 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8
^pch. 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9
^qch. 9:2; Ps. 8:6-8; James 3:7
²⁷ch. 2:18, 21-23; 5:2; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6
²⁸ch. 9:1, 7

with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God 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 according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, ^o“Let us make man⁴ in our image, ^pafter our likeness. And ^qlet them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; ¹male and female he created them.

²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, ^s“Be fruitful and multiply and fill

¹Or small plants; also verses 12, 29 ²Or appointed times ³Or flying things; see Leviticus 11:19-20 ⁴The Hebrew word for man (*adam*) is the generic term for mankind and becomes the proper name *Adam*

1:14 lights. Cf. v. 16. For three days there had been light (v. 4) in the day as though there were a sun, and lesser light at night as though there were the moon and stars. God could have left it that way, but did not. He created the “lights, sun, moon, and stars,” not for light, but to serve as markers for signs, seasons, days, and years. **signs.** Certainly to include: 1) weather (Matt. 16:2-3); 2) testimony to God (Ps. 8; 19; Rom. 1:14-20; 3) divine judgment (Joel 2:30-31; Matt. 24:29); and 4) navigation (Matt. 2:1-2). **seasons.** It is the earth’s movement in relation to the sun and moon that determines the seasons and the calendar.

1:15-18 two great lights . . . to separate the light from the darkness. It was God (not some other deity) who created the lights. Israel had originally come from Mesopotamia, where the celestial bodies were worshipped, and more recently from Egypt, where the sun was worshipped as a primary deity. God was revealing to them that the very stars, moons, and planets that Israel’s neighbors had worshipped were the products of his creation. Later, they became worshippers of the “host of heaven” (see note on 2 Kings 17:16), which led to their being taken captive out of the Promised Land.

1:20 living creatures. These creatures, including the extraordinarily large ones, included all sorts of fish and mammals, even dinosaurs (see notes on Job 40:15-41:1).

1:22 blessed. This is the first occurrence of the word “bless” in Scripture. God’s admonition to “be fruitful and multiply” was the substance of the blessing.

1:24-25 livestock . . . beasts. This probably represents all kinds of large, four-legged animals.

1:24 beasts of the earth. Different from and larger than the clan of cattle, this would include dinosaurs like Behemoth (Job 40:15ff).

1:26 us . . . our. The first clear indication of the trinity of God (cf. 3:22; 11:7). The very name of God, *Elohim* (1:1), is a plural form of *El*. **man.** The crowning point of creation, a living human, was made in God’s image to rule creation. **our image.** This defined man’s unique relation to God. Man is a living being capable of embodying God’s communicable attributes (cf. 9:6; Rom. 8:29; Col. 3:10; James 3:9). In his rational life, he was like God in that he could reason and had intellect, will, and emotion. In the moral sense, he was like God because he was good and sinless.

1:26-28 dominion over. This defined man’s unique relation to creation. Man was God’s representative in ruling over the creation. The command to rule separated him from the rest of living creation and defined his relationship as above the rest of creation (cf. Ps. 8:6-8).

1:27 male and female. Cf. Matt. 19:4 and Mark 10:6. While these two persons equally shared God’s image and together exercised dominion over creation, they were by divine design physically diverse in order to accomplish God’s mandate to procreate, i.e., neither one could reproduce offspring without the other.

1:28 blessed. This second blessing (cf. v. 22) involved reproduction and dominion. **Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.** God, having just created the universe, created his representative (dominion over) and representation (cf. image and likeness). Man would fill the earth and oversee its operation. “Subdue” does not suggest a wild and unruly condition for the creation because God himself pronounced it “good.” Rather, it speaks of a productive ordering of the earth and its inhabitants to yield its riches and accomplish God’s purposes.

the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.”³⁰ And “to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens 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.³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and “all the host of them.”² And “on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.”³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

¹ Or open country ² Or earth; also verse 6 ³ Or spring

²⁹ ch. 9:3; Ps. 104:14, 15; 145:15, 16
³⁰ Ps. 147:9
³¹ Eccl. 7:29; 1 Tim. 4:4
Chapter 2
¹ Deut. 4:19; Ps. 33:6
² Ex. 20:8-11; 31:17; Deut. 5:12-14; Heb. 4:4

The Creation of Man and Woman

4 “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

⁵ When no “bush of the field” was yet in the land² and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man³ to work the ground,⁶ and a mist³ was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of “dust from the ground and “breathed into his “nostrils the breath of life, and “the man became a living creature.”⁸ And the LORD God planted a “garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.”⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.⁸ The tree of life was in the midst of the garden,⁸ and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to the garden, and there it divided and became four

⁴ ch. 1:1
⁵ [ch. 1:11, 12] ch. 3:23
⁷ ch. 3:19, 23; 18:27; Ps. 103:14; Eccles. 12:7; 1 Cor. 15:47 ch. 7:22; Job 33:4; Isa. 2:22 Job 7:3 Cited
¹ Cor. 15:45
⁸ ver. 15; ch. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8; Joel 2:3
⁹ ch. 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14
¹⁰ ver. 17

1:29–30 for food . . . for food. Prior to the curse (3:14–19), both mankind and beasts were vegetarians.

1:31 very good. What had been pronounced good individually (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25) was now called “very good” collectively. The words anticipated God’s conclusion that it was “not good” for a man to be alone (2:18), which occurred on the sixth day.

2:1–3 These words affirm that God had completed his work. Four times it is said that he finished his work, and three times it is said that this included all his work. Present processes in the universe reflect God sustaining that completed creation, not more creation (cf. Heb. 1:3).

2:2 finished . . . rested. God certainly did not rest due to weariness; rather, establishing the pattern for man’s work cycle, he only modeled the need for rest. Later, the Sabbath ordinance of Moses found its basis in the creation week (cf. Ex. 20:8–11). The Sabbath was God’s sacred ordained day in the weekly cycle. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27) and Gen. 2:3 stated that God “made it holy” or set apart the Sabbath day because he rested in it. Later, it was set aside for a day of worship in the Mosaic law (see note on Ex. 20:8). Hebrews 4:4 distinguishes between physical rest and the redemptive rest to which it pointed. Colossians 2:16 makes it clear that the Mosaic “Sabbath” has no symbolic or ritual place in the New Covenant. The church began worshipping on the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of Christ (Acts 20:7).

2:4–4:26 The history of the heavens and the earth (v. 4).

2:4–25 This section fills in the details of man’s creation on day six. How did Moses obtain this account, so different from the absurd fictions of the pagans? Not from any human source, for man was not in existence to witness it. Not from the light of reason, for though intellect can know the eternal power of the Godhead (Rom. 1:18–20) and that God made all things, it cannot know how. None but the Creator himself could give this data and, therefore, it is through faith that one understands that the worlds were formed by the word of God (Heb. 11:3).

2:6 mist . . . going up from the land. “Mist” should be translated “flow.” It indicates that water came up from beneath the ground as springs and spread over the whole earth in an uninterrupted cycle of water. After the fall, rain became the primary means of watering the earth and allowed for floods and droughts that did not exist originally. Rains also allowed for God to judge through floods and droughts.

2:7 formed. Many of the words used in this account of the creation of man picture a master craftsman at work shaping a work of art to which he gives life (1 Cor. 15:45). This adds detail to the statement of fact in Gen. 1:27 (cf. 1 Tim. 2:13). Cf. Ps. 139:14. Made from dirt, a man’s value is not in the physical components that form his body, but in the quality of life that forms his soul (see Job 33:4).

2:8 garden . . . Eden. The Babylonians called the lush green land from which water flowed *edenu*; today, the term “oasis” describes such a place. This was a magnificent garden paradise, unlike any the world has seen since, where God fellowshiped with those he created in his image. The exact location of Eden is unknown; if “in the east” was used in relationship to where Moses was when he wrote, then it could have been in the area of Babylon, the Mesopotamian Valley.

2:9 tree of life. A real tree, with special properties to sustain eternal life. It was placed in the center of the garden, where it must have been observed by Adam, and its fruit perhaps eaten by him, thus sustaining his life (2:16). Such a tree, symbolic of eternal life, will be in the new heavens and new earth (see note on Rev. 22:2). **tree . . . knowledge.** Cf. Gen. 2:16; 3:1–6, 11, 22. It was perhaps given that title because it was a test of obedience by which our first parents were tried, whether they would be good or bad—obey God or disobey his command.

2:10 out of. That is to say “the source,” and likely refers to some great spring gushing up inside the garden from some subterranean reservoir. There was no rain at that time.

The Gospel According to

M A T T H E W

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

1^aThe book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, ^bthe son of David, ^cthe son of Abraham.

^{2d}Abraham was the father of Isaac, and ^eIsaac the father of Jacob, and ^fJacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³and ^gJudah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz by ^hRahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and ⁱJesse the father of David the king.

And ^jDavid was the father of Solomon by ^kthe wife of Uriah, ⁷and ^lSolomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, ⁸and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, ^mand Joram the father

Chapter 1

¹[Luke 3:23-38] ²5 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Luke 1:32, 69; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; 13:23; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16 ³Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16 ^{2d}Gen. 21:3 ⁴Gen. 25:26 ⁵Gen. 29:35 ^{3g}[Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chr. 2:1-15] ⁵Josh. 6:25 ⁶1 Sam. 16:1; 17:12 ²Sam. 12:24 ²Sam. 12:10 ⁷For ver. 7-10, see 1 Chr. 3:10-14 ⁸[2 Kgs. 15:1; 1 Chr. 3:11, 12]

¹¹1 Chr. 3:15, 16 ⁹Esth. 2:6; Jer. 24:1; 27:20 ¹²1 Chr. 3:17-19 ⁹Luke 3:27 ⁴Ezra 3:2 ¹⁶Luke 3:23

of Uzziah, ⁹and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, ³and Amos the father of Josiah, ¹¹and ⁹Josiah the father of ⁹Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹²And after the deportation to Babylon: ^pJechoniah was the father of ⁹Shealtiel, ¹and ⁹Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶and Jacob the father of ⁹Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from

¹ Greek *Aram*; also verse 4 ² *Asaph* is probably an alternate spelling for *Asa*; some manuscripts read *Asa*; also verse 8 ³ *Amos* is probably an alternate spelling for *Amos*; some manuscripts read *Amos*; twice in this verse ⁴ Greek *Salathiel*; twice in this verse

1:1 book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. This phrase is viewed by some as Matthew's title for the entire Gospel. The Greek phrase translated "book of the genealogy" is exactly the same phrase used in Gen. 5:1 in the LXX. **Jesus.** The Hebrew *Jeshua* means "the Lord is Salvation." **son of David.** A messianic title used as such in only the synoptic Gospels (see notes on Matt. 22:42-45). **son of Abraham.** Takes his royal lineage all the way back to the nation's inception in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3).

1:2 For a comparison of this genealogy and the one given by Luke, see note on Luke 3:23-38.

1:3 Tamar. It is unusual for women to be named in genealogies. Matthew names five: "Tamar" was a Canaanite woman who posed as a prostitute to seduce Judah (Gen. 38:13-30). "Rahab" (Matt. 1:5) was a Gentile and a prostitute (Josh. 2:1). "Ruth" (Matt. 1:5) was a Moabite woman (Ruth 1:3) and a worshiper of idols. "Bathsheba" ("wife of Uriah," Matt. 1:6) committed adultery with David (2 Sam. 11). And "Mary" (Matt. 1:16) bore the stigma of pregnancy outside of wedlock. Each of these women is an object lesson about the workings of divine grace.

1:5-6 Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab . . . Jesse the father of David the king. This is not an exhaustive genealogy. Several additional generations must have elapsed between Rahab (in Joshua's time) and David (v. 6)—nearly four centuries later. Matthew's genealogy (like most of the biblical ones) sometimes skips over several generations between well known characters in order to abbreviate the listing.

1:8 Joram the father of Uzziah. Cf. 1 Chron. 3:10-12. Matthew skips over Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, going directly from Joram to Uzziah (Azariah)—

using a kind of genealogical shorthand. He seems to do this intentionally in order to make a symmetrical threefold division in Matt. 1:17.

1:11 Josiah the father of Jechoniah. Again, Matthew skips a generation between Josiah and Jechoniah (cf. 1 Chron. 3:14-16). Jechoniah is also called Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:6; 2 Chron. 36:8) and sometimes Coniah (Jer. 22:24). Jechoniah's presence in this genealogy presents an interesting dilemma. A curse on him forbade any of his descendants from the throne of David forever (Jer. 22:30). Since Jesus was heir through Joseph to the royal line of descent, but not an actual son of Joseph and thus not a physical descendant through this line, the curse bypassed him.

1:12 Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. See 1 Chron. 3:17-19, where Zerubbabel is said to be the offspring of Pedaiah, Shealtiel's brother. Elsewhere in the OT, Zerubbabel is always called the son of Shealtiel (e.g., Hag. 1:1; Ezra 3:2; Neh. 12:1). Possibly Shealtiel adopted his nephew (see note on Hag. 2:23). Zerubbabel is the last character in Matthew's list who appears in any of the OT genealogies.

1:16 Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born. The pronoun "whom" is singular, referring to Mary alone. The unusual way in which this final entry is phrased underscores the fact that Jesus was not Joseph's literal offspring. The genealogy nonetheless establishes his claim to the throne of David as Joseph's legal heir.

1:17 fourteen generations. The significance of the number 14 is not clear, but Matthew's attention to numbers—a distinctly Hebrew characteristic—is evident throughout the Gospel. The systematic ordering may be an aid for memorization. Notice that Matthew counts Jechoniah in both the third and

David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **19** And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

¹⁷ch. 2:4; 11:2; 16:16; 22:42; 23:10; Mark 8:29; Luke 3:15; John 1:41; 4:25]
¹⁸ver. 1; Mark 1:1; John 1:17; 17:3; [ver. 16] Luke 1:27
¹⁹Deut. 24:1]
²⁰ch. 2:13, 19; [ch. 2:12, 22]
²¹ver. 25; Luke 1:31; 2:21
²²ch. 2:11; Acts 4:12; 5:31; 13:23, 38; [Acts 3:26]
²³ch. 21:4; 26:56; John 19:36
²⁴ch. 2:15, 23; 4:14; Mark 14:49
²⁵Cited from Isa. 7:14
²⁶Isa. 8:8, 10

¹See ch. 28:20

²⁵ver. 21

Chapter 2

¹Luke 2:4-7; Luke 2:15; John 7:42; Luke 1:5-15 [Gen. 25:6; 1 Kgs. 4:30]
²ch. 27:11, 37; Jer. 23:5; 30:9; Zech. 9:9
³Num. 24:17; Rev. 22:16]
⁴See ch. 8:2
⁵See ch. 1:17
⁶Cited from Mic. 5:2

(which means, God with us). **24** When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

The Visit of the Wise Men

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

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

¹Some manuscripts of the Christ ²That is, legally pledged to be married ³Greek magi; also verses 7, 16 ⁴Or in the east; also verse 9

fourth groups, representing both the last generation before the Babylonian captivity and the first generation after.

1:18 betrothed. Jewish betrothal was as binding as modern marriage. A divorce was necessary to terminate the betrothal (v. 19) and the betrothed couple were regarded legally as husband and wife (v. 19)—although physical union had not yet taken place. See note on Luke 2:5. **with child from the Holy Spirit.** See Matt. 1:20, 23 and Luke 1:26–35.

1:19 Joseph . . . a just man . . . resolved to divorce her quietly. Stoning was the legal prescription for this sort of adultery (Deut. 22:23–24). Joseph's righteousness meant he was also merciful; thus he did not intend to "disgrace" Mary. The phrase "a just man" is a Hebraism suggesting that he was a true believer in God who had thereby been declared righteous, and who carefully obeyed the law (see Gen. 6:9). To "divorce her" would be to obtain a legal divorce (Matt. 19:8–9; Deut. 24:1), which according to the Jewish custom was necessary in order to dissolve a betrothal (see note on Matt. 1:18).

1:20 an angel of the Lord. This is one of only a few such angelic visitations in the NT, most of which are associated with Christ's birth. For others, see 28:2; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7–10; 27:23; Rev. 1:1. **in a dream.** As if to underscore the supernatural character of Christ's advent, Matthew's narrative of the event describes five such revelatory dreams: Matt. 1:20; 2:12, 13, 19, 22. Here the angel told Joseph he was to take Mary into his own home.

1:21 Jesus. See v. 25; Luke 1:31. The name actually means "Savior" (see note on Matt. 1:1).

1:22 to fulfill. Matthew points out fulfillments of OT prophecies no less than a dozen times (cf. 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54–56; 27:9, 35). He quotes from the OT more than 60 times, more frequently than any other NT writer except Paul in Romans.

1:23 virgin. Scholars sometimes dispute whether the Hebrew term in Isa. 7:14 means "virgin" or "maiden." Matthew is quoting here from the LXX, which uses the unambiguous Greek term for "virgin" (see note on Isa. 7:14). Thus Matthew, writing under the Spirit's inspiration, ends all doubt about the meaning of the word in Isa. 7:14. **Immanuel.** Cf. Isa. 8:8, 10.

1:24 took his wife. See note on Luke 2:5.

2:1–2 Bethlehem. A small village on the southern outskirts of Jerusalem. Hebrew scholars in Jesus' day clearly expected Bethlehem to be the birthplace of the Messiah (cf. Mic. 5:2; John 7:42). **in the days of Herod the king.** This refers to Herod the Great, the first of several important rulers from the Herodian dynasty who are named in Scripture. This Herod, founder of the famous line, ruled from 37–4 B.C. He is thought to have been Idumean, a descendant of the Edomites, offspring of Esau. Herod was ruthless and cunning. He loved opulence and grand building projects, and many of the most magnificent ruins that can be seen in modern Israel date back to the days of Herod the Great. His most famous project was the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem (see note on Matt. 24:1). That project alone took several decades and was not completed until long after Herod's death (cf. John 2:20). See note on Matt. 2:22. **wise men from the east.** The number of wise men is not given. The traditional notion that there were three stems from the number of gifts they brought. These were not kings, but Magi, magicians, or astrologers—possibly Zoroastrian wise men from Persia whose knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures could be traced back to the time of Daniel (cf. Dan. 5:11). **saying.** This present participle conveys the idea of continuous action. It suggests they went around the city questioning everyone they met.

2:2 star. This could not have been a supernova or a conjunction of planets, as some modern theories suggest, because of the way the star moved and settled over one place (cf. v. 9). It is more likely a supernatural reality similar to the Shekinah that guided the Israelites in the days of Moses (Ex. 13:21).

2:4 chief priests. These were the temple hierarchy. They were mostly Sadducees (see note on 3:7). **scribes.** Primarily Pharisees, i.e., authorities on Jewish law. Sometimes they are referred to as "lawyers" (see note on Luke 10:25). They were professional scholars whose speciality was explaining the application of the law. They knew exactly where the Messiah was to be born (Matt. 2:5), but lacked the faith to accompany the Magi to the place where he was.

2:6 This ancient prophecy from Mic. 5:2 was written in the eighth century B.C.

for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

⁶Ezek. 34:23; John 21:15-17; [2 Sam. 5:2; Rev. 7:17] ¹¹[1 Sam. 9:7; Ps. 72:10] ⁹Isa. 60:6; Rev. 18:13 "Ex. 30:23; Ps. 45:8; John 19:39 ¹²ver. 22; [ver. 13, 19] "ch. 27:19; Gen. 20:6; 31:11; Num. 12:6; Job 33:15]

The Flight to Egypt

¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. ¹⁶This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Herod Kills the Children

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹³ver. 19; ch. 1:20; [ver. 12, 22] ¹⁵See ch. 1:22 "Cited from Hos. 11:1 ¹⁷ch. 27:9; [ch. 1:22]

The original prophecy, not quoted in full by Matthew, declared the deity of Israel's Messiah: "from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. This portion of Matthew's quote actually seems to be a reference to God's words to David when Israel's kingdom was originally established (2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chron. 11:2). The Greek word for "ruler" evokes the image of strong, even stern, leadership. "Shepherd" emphasizes tender care. Christ's rule involves both (cf. Rev. 12:5).

2:8 that I too may come and worship him. Herod actually wanted to kill the child (w. 13-18), whom he saw as a potential threat to his throne.

2:11 into the house. By the time the wise men arrived, Mary and Joseph were situated in a house, not a stable (cf. Luke 2:7). **the child with Mary**

his mother. Whenever Matthew mentions Mary in connection with her child, Christ is always given first place (cf. Matt. 2:13-14, 20-21), **gold and frankincense and myrrh.** Gifts suitable for a king (cf. Isa. 60:6). The fact that Gentiles would offer such worship had prophetic significance as well (Ps. 72:10).

2:12-13 in a dream. See note on 1:20.

2:15 the death of Herod. Recent scholarship sets this date at 4 B.C. It is probable that the stay in Egypt was very brief—perhaps no more than a few weeks. **Out of Egypt.** This quotation is from Hos. 11:1 (see note there), which speaks of God's leading Israel out of Egypt in the exodus. Matthew suggests that Israel's sojourn in Egypt was a pictorial prophecy rather than a specific verbal one such as Matt. 2:6; cf. 1:23. These are called "types," and all are always

