

THE
MACARTHUR
STUDY BIBLE



NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE
UPDATED EDITION

The
MACARTHUR
Study Bible

MacArthur

John MacArthur

Author and General Editor

New American Standard Bible

Updated Edition



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

NASHVILLE DALLAS MEXICO CITY RIO DE JANEIRO BEIJING

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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 5 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 Ac 8:30,31:

*Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet,
and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"*

And he said, "Well, how could 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 Scripture. 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 so 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 most 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.

Thank you to Dr. Irv Busenitz, Dr. Trevor Craigen, Prof. Dave Deuel, Prof. Keith Essex, Dr. Richard Mayhue, Dr. Larry Pettegrew, Dr. Jim Rosscup, Prof. Jim Stitzinger, Dr. Bob Thomas, and Dr. George Zemek.

Because I have studied and expositionally preached through nearly all the New Testament, my own original research was available to be summarized into the NT study notes. A team composed of The Master's Seminary faculty and editors at Grace to You, who work regularly editing my books, accepted the task of spending long hours culling the salient features from my research into study note form. Likewise, from that first draft, I worked to bring the material to its final form.

Thank you to Dr. Bill Barrick, Dave Douglass, Dave Enos, Dr. David Farnell, Phil Johnson, Garry Knussman, Dr. Richard Mayhue, Tom Pennington, Dr. Larry Pettegrew, and Mike Taylor.

It was also essential to have readers who carefully scrutinized all the material for accuracy and checked all Scripture references. My gratitude goes to them for their faithful effort at a tedious task. My thanks to Dennis Swanson and Bob White at The Master's Seminary; to Dave Enos and Allacin Morimizu at Grace to You; and to June Gunden and her team of readers at Peachtree Editorial and Proofreading Service.

The nearly 2,400 pages of single-spaced notes had to be entered into computers and repeatedly edited and corrected after each of the six occasions when everything was reworked. A

team of loyal and diligent secretaries from The Master's Seminary, Grace Community Church, and Grace to You worked on that formidable task inside a confining schedule to meet endless deadlines in the process. Since I write in longhand, most of the material was a combination of print and longhand that called for difficult deciphering of my marginally legible writing. Along with their other duties, they graciously took on this task, as did all the rest of the team.

My thanks to Dr. Mayhue's secretary, Cindy Gehman (OT Coordinator) and my personal secretary, Pat Rotisky (NT Coordinator) who labored with Amy Brandenstein, Rhonda Connor, Louise Essex, Marilyn Foster, Marcia Griffiths, Carol Smith, Diane Haschak, Pam Leopold, Willa Loveless, Dareth Luna, Wilma Miller, Joyce Modert, Susan Rogers, Patti Schott, and Teri White.

All the above mentioned friends made this effort a joyous marathon for me to run. I pray God's blessing on them all in response to their devotion to the Word of God.

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

Finally, I offer great appreciation to David Moberg, now at Thomas Nelson Publishers, who exhibited vision, confidence, patience, and expertise through the relentless complexities of the project. He proved to be both a friend and guide.

Never have I been so challenged and blessed at the same time as during the two intense years of 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 Scripture 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.

Most especially, 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 "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12).

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

HOW WE GOT

THE BIBLE

Ever since Eve encountered Satan's barrage of doubt and denial (Ge 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 (Ge 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 774,746 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 (Ac 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 (ca. 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 (Ge 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 (Mk 7:13). It is what Jesus preached (Lk 5:1). It was the message the apostles taught (Ac 4:31; 6:2). It was the Word the Samaritans received (Ac 8:14) as given by the apostles (Ac 8:25). It was the message the Gentiles received as preached by Peter (Ac 11:1). It was the word Paul preached on his first missionary journey (Ac 13:5,7,44,48,49; 15:35,36). It was the message preached on Paul's second missionary journey (Ac 16:32; 17:13; 18:11). It was the message Paul preached on his third missionary journey (Ac 19:10). It was the focus of Luke in the book of Acts in that it spread rapidly and widely (Ac 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 (2Co 2:17; 4:2). Paul acknowledged that it was the source of his preaching (Col 1:25; 1Th 2:13).

Psalms 19 and 119, plus Proverbs 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" (2Ti 3:15) and "holy" (Ro 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 (2Ti 3:16,17). Scripture asserts its spiritual sufficiency, so much so that it claims exclusivity for its teaching (cf. Is 55:11; 2Pe 1:3,4).

God's Word declares that it is *inerrant* (Pss 12:6; 119:140; Pr 30:5a; Jn 10:35) and *infallible* (2Ti 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 (2Ti 3:16; 2Pe 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.

*He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with
manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know,
that He might make you understand that man
does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything
that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.*

DEUTERONOMY 8:3

*I have not departed from the command of His lips;
I have treasured the words of His
mouth more than my necessary 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 var-

ied; 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 (1Co 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 inspired by God. . ." (2Ti 3:16) makes the claim. Peter explains the process, ". . . know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a *matter* of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2Pe 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. Dt 18:18; Mt 1:22). A section of Zec 7:12 describes it most clearly, ". . . the law and the words which 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 Ge 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, 3 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

☪ THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT ☪		
Law	Prophets	Writings
1. Genesis	A. <i>Former Prophets</i>	A. <i>Poetical Books</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	21. Esther
	(minor prophets)	C. <i>Historical Books</i>
		22. Daniel
		23. Ezra-Nehemiah
		24. Chronicles (1 & 2)

(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. Lk 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 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 3 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 ca. 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 (Ge 3:4). Satan later attempted to distort the Scripture in his wilderness encounter with Christ (Mt 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 Is 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (cf. 1Pe 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 (Is 59:21). Thus the purposes of God, as published in the sacred writings, will never be thwarted, even in the least detail (cf. Mt 5:18; 24:25; Mk 13:31; Lk 16:17).

*So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
it will not return to Me empty, without
accomplishing what I desire,
and without succeeding in the matter 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 ca. 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 dramati-

cally 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 ca. 200–150 B.C.; the oldest existing manuscripts date to ca. 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 ca. 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 (ca. 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, ca. 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) New American Standard Bible (NASB); 2) English Standard Version (ESV); 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 (Dt 4:2; 12:32; Pr 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 testify to everyone who hears the words of
the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them,
God will add to him the plagues which are written
in this book; and if anyone takes away from the
words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away
his part from the tree of life and from the holy city,
which are written 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 (Ge 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 handed down to the saints," is never to be added to, but to be earnestly contended for (Jude 3).

4. Of the 4 exhortations not to tamper with Scripture, only the one in Rev 22:18,19 contains warnings of severe Divine judgement for disobedience. Further, Revelation is the only book of the New Testament to end with this kind of admonition and was written over 20 years after any other New Testament book. 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.

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

Table with 2 columns: Book Name and Page Number. Includes entries for 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, and others.

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	ca. 1043 B.C.	Samuel
10. Ruth	ca. 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	ca. 760 B.C.	Jonah
19. Amos	ca. 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	ca. 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	ca. 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. 44-49	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

The Creation

1 ^aIn the beginning ^bGod ^ccreated the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was ^{1a}formless and void, and ^bdarkness was over the ²surface of the deep, and ^cthe Spirit of God ^dwas ³moving over the ²surface of the waters. **3** Then ^aGod said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was ^agood; and God ^bseparated the light from the darkness. **5** ^aGod called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And ^bthere was evening and there was morning, one day.

6 Then God said, "Let there be ^{1a}an ^aexpanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

7 God made the ¹expanse, and separated ^athe waters which were below the ¹expanse from the waters ^bwhich were above the ¹expanse; and it was so. **8** God called the ¹expanse heaven. And there was

CHAPTER 1

1 ^aPs 102:25; Is 40:21; Jn 1:1, 2; Heb 1:10
^bPs 89:11; 90:2; Ac 17:24; Ro 1:20; Heb 11:3 c Job 38:4; Is 42:5; 45:18; Rev 4:11
2 ¹Or a waste and emptiness ²Lit face of ³Or hovering ^aJer 4:23 ^bJob 38:9 ^cPs 104:30; Is 40:13, 14 ^dDt 32:11; Is 31:5
3 ^aPs 33:6, 9; 2Co 4:6
4 ^aPs 145:9, 10 ^bIs 45:7
5 ^aPs 74:16 ^bPs 65:8
6 ¹Or a firmament ^aIs 40:22; Jer 10:12; 2Pe 3:5
7 ¹Or firmament ^aJob 38:8-11 ^bPs 148:4
8 ¹Or firmament
9 ^aPs 104:6, 9; Jer 5:22; 2Pe 3:5 ^bPs 24:1, 2; 95:5
10 ^aPs 33:7; 95:5; 146:6
11 ¹Or grass ²Or herbs

evening and there was morning, a second day.

9 Then God said, "^aLet the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let ^bthe dry land appear"; and it was so.

10 God called the dry land earth, and the ^agathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, "Let the earth sprout ^{1a}vegetation, ²plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after ³their kind ⁴with seed in them"; and it was so. **12** The earth brought forth ¹vegetation, ²plants yielding seed after ³their kind, and trees bearing fruit ⁴with seed in them, after ³their kind; and God saw that it was good. **13** There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

14 Then God said, "Let there be ^{1a}lights in the ^{2b}expanse of the heavens to separate

³ Lit its ⁴ Lit in which is its seed ^a Ps 65:9-13; 104:14; Heb 6:7 **12** ¹ Or grass ² Or herbs ³ Lit its ⁴ Lit in which is its seed **14** ¹ Or luminaries, light-bearers ² Or firmament ^a Ps 74:16; 136:7 ^b Ps 19:1; 150:1

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 6 consecutive 24 hour periods called "days" and further distinguished as such by this phrase, "the evening and the 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 (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. Is 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 which already existed (Is 65:18). Context demands in no uncertain terms that this was a creation without preexisting material (as does other Scripture: cf. Is 40:28; 45:8,12,18; 48:13; Jer 10:16; Ac 17:24). **the heavens and the earth.** All of God's creation is incorporated into this summary statement which includes all 6, consecutive days of creation.

1:2 formless and void. This means "not finished in its shape and as yet uninhabited by creatures" (cf. Is 45:18,19; Jer 4:23). God would quickly (in 6 days) decorate His initial creation (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 (Jon 2:5). **Spirit of God.** Not only did God the Holy Spirit participate in creation, but so did God the Son (cf. Jn 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 v. 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 (2Co 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. 1:31).

1:4,5 separated ... called. After the initial creation, God contin-

ued 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 one day. God established the pattern of creation in 7 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 (vv. 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 (v. 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 below the expanse. Refers to subterranean reservoirs (cf. 7:11). **above the expanse.** This could possibly have been a canopy of water vapor which 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 after their 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 (vv. 21,24,25), and indicates that evolution, which proposes reproduction across species lines, is a false explanation of origins.

1:11 with seed in them. The principle of reproduction that marks all life (cf. vv. 22,24,28).

1:14 lights. Cf. v. 16. For 3 days there had been light (v. 4) in the day as though there were a sun, and lesser light at night as though

the day from the night, and let them be for ^csigns and for ^dseasons and for days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for ¹lights in the ²expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two ¹great lights, the ^agreater ²light ³to govern the day, and the lesser ²light ³to govern the night; He made ^bthe stars also. ¹⁷ ^aGod placed them in the ¹expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ and ¹to ^agovern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the waters ¹teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth ²in the open ³expanse of the heavens." ²¹ God created ^athe great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴ ^aThen God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after ¹their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after ¹their kind"; and it was so. ²⁵ God made the ^abeasts of the earth after

¹⁴ ^c Jer 10:2 ^d Ps 104:19

¹⁵ ¹ Or luminaries, light-bearers ² Or firmament

¹⁶ ¹ Or luminaries, light-bearers ² Or luminary, light-bearer

³ Lit for the dominion of ^a Ps 136:8, 9 ^b Job 38:7; Ps 8:3; Is 40:26

¹⁷ ¹ Or firmament ^a Jer 33:20, 25

¹⁸ ¹ Lit for the dominion of ^a Jer 31:35

²⁰ ¹ Or swarm ² Lit on the face of ³ Or firmament

²¹ ^a Ps 104:25-28

²⁴ ¹ Lit its ^a Ge 2:19; 6:20; 7:14; 8:19

²⁵ ^a Ge 7:21, 22; Jer 27:5

¹ Lit its

²⁶ ¹ Lit heavens ^a Ge 3:22; 11:7 ^b Ge 5:1; 9:6; 1Co 11:7; Eph 4:24; Jas 3:9 ^c Ps 8:6-8

²⁷ ^a Ge 5:1f; 1Co 11:7; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10

^b Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6

²⁸ ¹ Lit heavens ² Or creeps ^a Ge 9:1, 7; Lv 26:9; Ps 127:3, 5

²⁹ ¹ Lit face of ² Lit in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed ^a Ps 104:14; 136:25

¹ their kind, and the cattle after ¹their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let ^aUs make ^bman in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them ^crule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the ¹sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ God created man ^ain His own image, in the image of God He created him; ^bmale and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "^aBe fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the ¹sky and over every living thing that ²moves on the earth." ²⁹ Then God said, "Behold, ^aI have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the ¹surface of all the earth, and every tree ²which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; ³⁰ and ^ato every beast of the earth and to every bird of the ¹sky and to every thing that ²moves on the earth ³which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. ³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very ^agood. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

³⁰ ¹ Lit heavens ² Or creeps ³ Lit in which is a living soul ^a Ps 145:15, 16; 147:9 ³¹ ^a Ps 104:24, 28; 119:68; 1Ti 4:4

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 (Mt 16:2,3); 2) testimony to God (Ps 8,19; Ro 1:14-20; 3) divine judgment (Joel 2:30,31; Mt 24:29); and 4) navigation (Mt 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 worshiped, and more recently from Egypt, where the sun was worshiped as a primary deity. God was revealing to them that the very stars, moons, and planets which Israel's neighbors had worshiped were the products of His creation. Later, they became worshipers of the "host of heaven" (see note on 2Ki 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 cattle . . . beasts. This probably represents all kinds of large, four-legged animals.

1:24 beasts of the earth. Different from and larger than the class 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; Ro 8:29; Col 3:10; Jas 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 rule 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. Mt 19:4; Mk 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 multiply, i.e., neither one could reproduce offspring without the other.

1:28 blessed. This second blessing (cf. 1:22) involved reproduction and dominion. **Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.** God, having just created the universe, created His representative (rule 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.

1:29,30 food for you . . . 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.

The Creation of Man and Woman

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all ^atheir hosts. **2** By ^athe seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and ^bHe rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. **3** Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created ¹and made.

4 ^{1a}This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in ^bthe day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. **5** ^aNow no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, ^bfor the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to ¹cultivate the ground. **6** But a ¹mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole ²surface of the ground. **7** Then the LORD God formed man of ^adust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and ^bman became a living ¹being. **8** The LORD God planted a ^agarden

CHAPTER 2

- 1** ^a Dt 4:19; 17:3
- 2** ^a Ex 20:8-11; 31:17
- ^b Heb 4:4, 10
- 3** ¹ Lit to make
- 4** ¹ Lit These are the generations ^a Job 38:4-11 ^b Ge 1:3-31
- 5** ¹ Lit work; serve ^a Ge 1:11 ^b Ps 65:9, 10; Jer 10:12, 13
- 6** ¹ Or flow ² Lit face of
- 7** ¹ Lit soul ^a Ge 3:19
- ^b 1Co 15:45
- 8** ^a Ge 13:10; Is 51:3; Eze 28:13
- 9** ^a Eze 47:12 ^b Ge 3:22; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14
- 10** ¹ Lit was going out
- ² Lit heads ^a Ps 46:4
- 11** ¹ Lit surrounds ^a Ge 25:18
- 13** ¹ Lit is the one surrounding
- 14** ¹ Heb Hiddekel ² Lit is the one going
- ³ Heb Perath ^a Da 10:4 ^b Ge 15:18
- 16** ^a Ge 3:2, 3

toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. **9** Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow ^aevery tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; ^bthe tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 Now a ^ariver ¹flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four ²rivers. **11** The name of the first is Pishon; it ¹flows around the whole land of ^aHavilah, where there is gold. **12** The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. **13** The name of the second river is Gihon; it ¹flows around the whole land of Cush. **14** The name of the third river is ^{1a}Tigris; it ²flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the ^{3b}Euphrates.

15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. **16** The LORD God ^acommanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

2:1-3 These words affirm that God had completed His work. Four times it is said that He finished His work, and 3 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 completed . . . 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" (Mk 2:27) and Ge 2:3 stated that God "sanctified" 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 (Ac 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 (Ro 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 . . . rise from the earth. "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 (1Co 15:45). This adds detail to the statement of fact in 1:27 (cf. 1Ti 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 which 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 "toward 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. 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.

2:11 Pishon . . . Havilah. Locations are uncertain. This represents pre-Flood geography, now dramatically altered.

2:12 bdellium. A gum resin. This refers more to appearance than color, i.e., it had the appearance of a pale resin.

2:13 Gihon . . . Cush. The river location is uncertain. Cush could be modern-day Ethiopia.

2:14 Tigris . . . Assyria. The post-Flood Tigris River runs NW to SE east of the city of Babylon through the Mesopotamian Valley. **Euphrates.** A river that runs parallel (NW to SE) to the Tigris and empties into the Persian Gulf after joining the Tigris.

2:15 cultivate it and keep it. Work was an important and dignified part of representing the image of God and serving Him, even before the Fall. Cf. Rev 22:3.

Genealogy of Christ

Ru 4:18-22; 1Ch 1:34, 2:1-15; Lk 3:31-34

1 The ¹record of the genealogy of ²Jesus ³the Messiah, ^athe son of David, ^bthe son of Abraham:

²Abraham ¹was the father of Isaac, ²Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of ³Judah and his brothers. ³Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, ^aPerez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of ¹Ram. ⁴Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. ⁵Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. ⁶Jesse was the father of David the king.

David ^awas the father of Solomon by ¹Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon ^awas the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of ¹Asa. ⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of ¹Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah was the father of ¹Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of ¹Amon, and Amon the ^afather of Josiah. ¹¹Josiah became the father of

CHAPTER 1

1 ¹Lit book ²Heb Yeshua (Joshua), meaning *The Lord saves* ³Gr *Christos* (Christ), Gr for *Messiah*, which means *Anointed One* ^a2Sa 7:12-16; Ps 89:3f; 132:11; Is 9:6f; 11:1; Mt 9:27; Lk 1:32, 69; Jn 7:42; Ac 13:23; Ro 1:3; Rev 22:16 ^bMt 1:1-6; Lk 3:32-34; Ge 22:18; Gal 3:16

2 ¹Lit *fathered*, and throughout the genealogy ²Lit *and...*, and throughout the genealogy ³Gr *Judas*; names of people in the Old Testament are given in their Old Testament form

3 ¹Gr *Aram* ^aRu 4:18-22; 1Ch 2:1-15; Mt 1:3-6

6 ¹Lit *her of Uriah* ^a2Sa 11:27; 12:24

7 ¹Gr *Asaph* ^a1Ch 3:10ff

8 ¹Also Gr for *Jehoram* in 2Ki 8:16; cf 1Ch 3:11

9 ¹Gr *Joatham*

10 ¹Gr *Am* ^a1Ch 3:14

11 ¹Jehoiachin in 2Ki 24:15 ^a2Ki 24:14f; Jer 27:20; Mt 1:17

12 ¹Gr *Salathiel* ^a2Ki

¹Jecooniah and his brothers, at the time of the ^adeportation to Babylon.

¹² After the ^adeportation to Babylon: Jecooniah became the father of ¹Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.

¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of ¹Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. ¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.

¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, ^awho is called ¹the Messiah.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the ^adeportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the ^adeportation to Babylon to ¹the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Birth of Christ

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus ¹Christ was as follows: when His ^amother Mary had been ² betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was ^b found to be with child by

24:14f; Jer 27:20; Mt 1:17 **13** ¹Gr *Abioud*, usually spelled *Abiud* **16** ¹Gr *Christos* (Christ) ^aMt 27:17, 22; Lk 2:11; Jn 4:25 **17** ¹Gr *Christos* (Christ) ^a2Ki 24:14f; Jer 27:20; Mt 1:11, 12 **18** ¹I.e. The Messiah ²The first stage of marriage in Jewish culture, usually lasting for a year before the wedding night, more legal than an engagement ^aMt 12:46; Lk 1:27 ^bLk 1:35

1:1 record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. This phrase is viewed by some as Matthew's title for the entire gospel. The Gr. phrase translated "book of the genealogy" is exactly the same phrase used in Ge 5:1 in the LXX. **Jesus.** The Hebrew *Yeshua* means "the Lord is Salvation." **son of David.** A messianic title used as such in only the synoptic gospels (see notes on 22:42,45). **son of Abraham.** Takes His royal lineage all the way back to the nation's inception in the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 12:1-3).

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

1:3 Tamar. It is unusual for women to be named in genealogies. Matthew names 5: "Tamar" was a Canaanite woman who posed as a prostitute to seduce Judah (Ge 38:13-30). "Rahab" (v. 5) was a Gentile and a prostitute (Jos 2:1). "Ruth" (v. 5) was a Moabite woman (Ru 1:3) and a worshiper of idols. "Bathsheba" ("wife of Uriah," v. 6) committed adultery with David (2Sa 11). And "Mary" (v. 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 was the father of Boaz by Rahab . . . Jesse was 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 4 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. 1Ch 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 3-fold division in v. 17.

1:11 Josiah became the father of Jecooniah. Again, Matthew

skips a generation between Josiah and Jecooniah (cf. 1Ch 3:14-16). Jecooniah is also called Jehoiachin (2Ki 24:6; 2Ch 36:8) and sometimes Coniah (Jer 22:24). Jecooniah'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 1Ch 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; Ezr 3:2; Ne 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, by whom Jesus was born. The pronoun "whom" is sing., 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. Note that Matthew counts Jecooniah in both the third and 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

the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned ^{1a} to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ^a“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for ¹ the Child who has been ²conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a Son; and ^ayou shall call His name Jesus, for ¹He ^bwill save His people from their sins.” ²² Now all this ¹took place to fulfill what was ^aspoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ ^a“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH ^bCHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME ¹IMMANUEL,” which translated means, ^c“GOD WITH US.” ²⁴ And Joseph ¹awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, ²⁵ ¹but kept her a virgin until she ^agave birth to a Son; and ^bhe called His name Jesus.

¹⁹ ¹ Or to divorce her
^a Dt 22:20-24; 24:1-4;
 Jn 8:4, 5
²⁰ ¹ Lit that which ² Lit
 begotten ^a Lk 2:4
²¹ ¹ Lit He Himself ^a Lk
 1:31; 2:21 ^b Lk 2:11;
 Jn 1:29; Ac 4:12;
 5:31; 13:23, 38, 39;
 Col 1:20-23
²² ¹ Lit has happened
^a Lk 24:44; Ro 1:2-4
²³ ¹ Or Emmanuel ^a Is
 7:14 ^b Is 9:6, 7 ^c Is
 8:10
²⁴ ¹ Lit got up
²⁵ ¹ Lit and was not
 knowing her ^a Lk 2:7
^b Mt 1:21; Lk 2:21

CHAPTER 2

¹ ¹ A caste of wise
 men specializing in
 astronomy,
 astrology, and
 natural science ^a Mic
 5:2; Lk 2:4-7 ^b Lk 1:5
² ^a Jer 23:5; 30:9; Zec
 9:9; Mt 27:11; Lk
 19:38; 23:38; Jn 1:49
^b Nu 24:17

Visit of Wise Men

2 Now after Jesus was ^aborn in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of ^bHerod the king, ¹magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ²“Where is He who has been born ^aKing of the Jews? For we saw ^bHis star in the east and have come to worship Him.” ³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the ¹Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They said to him, ^a“In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written ¹by the prophet:

⁶ ^aAND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL ^bSHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called the magi and

⁴ ¹ Gr *Christos* (*Christ*) ⁵ ¹ Or through ^a Jn 7:42 ⁶ ^a Mic 5:2; Jn 7:42
^b Nu 21:16

note on Lk 2:5. with child by the Holy Spirit. See vv. 20,23; Lk 1:26-35.

1:19 Joseph ... a righteous man ... planned to send her away secretly. Stoning was the legal prescription for this sort of adultery (Dt 22:23,24). Joseph’s righteousness meant he was also merciful; thus he did not intend to “disgrace” Mary. The phrase “a righteous 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 Ge 6:9). To “send her away” would be to obtain a legal divorce (19:8,9; Dt 24:1), which according to the Jewish custom was necessary in order to dissolve a betrothal (see note on v. 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; Ac 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 5 such revelatory dreams: v. 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; Lk 1:31. The name actually means “Savior” (see note on v. 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 Is 7:14 means “virgin” or “maiden.” Matthew is quoting here from the LXX which uses the unambiguous Gr. term for “virgin” (see note on Is 7:14). Thus Matthew, writing under the Spirit’s inspiration, ends all doubt about the meaning of the word in Is 7:14. **IMMANUEL.** Cf. Is 8:8,10.

1:24 took Mary as his wife. See note on Lk 2:5.

2:1 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; Jn 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 24:1). That project alone took several decades and was not completed until long after Herod’s death (cf. Jn 2:20). See note on v. 22. **magi from the east.** The number of wise men is not given. The traditional notion that there were 3 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. Da 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 Lk 10:25). They were professional scholars whose specialty was explaining the application of the law. They knew exactly where the Messiah was to be born (v. 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. The original prophecy, not quoted in full by Matthew, declared the deity of Israel’s Messiah: “From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” **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 (2Sa 5:2; 1Ch 11:2). The Gr. word for “ruler” evokes the image of strong, even stern, leadership. “Shepherd” emphasizes tender care. Christ’s rule involves both (cf. Rev 12:5).

determined from them ⁷ the exact time ^a the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship *him*." ⁹ After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ After coming into the house they saw the Child with ^a Mary His mother; and they ¹ fell to the ground and ^b worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been ^a warned by God ^b in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

Flight into Egypt

¹³ Now when they had gone, behold, an ^a angel of the Lord ^b appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and re-

⁷ ¹ Lit the time of the appearing star ^a Nu 24:17
¹¹ ¹ Lit prostrated; i.e. face down in a prone position to indicate worship ^a Mt 1:18; 12:46 ^b Mt 14:33
¹² ^a Mt 2:13, 19, 22; Lk 2:26; Ac 10:22; Heb 8:5; 11:7 ^b Job 33:15, 16; Mt 1:20
¹³ ^a Ac 5:19; 10:7; 12:7-11 ^b Mt 2:12, 19

¹⁴ ¹ Lit he
¹⁵ ¹ Lit was ^a Hos 11:1; Nu 24:8 ^b Ex 4:22f
¹⁶ ^a Mt 2:1 ^b Is 59:7
¹⁸ ^a Jer 31:15

main there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴ So ¹ Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He ¹ remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "^a OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED ^b MY SON."

Herod Kills the Children

¹⁶ Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by ^a the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and ^b slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "^a A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, WEEPING AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN; AND SHE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY WERE NO MORE."

2:8 that I too may come and worship Him. Herod actually wanted to kill the Child (vv. 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. Lk 2:7). **the Child with Mary His mother.** Whenever Matthew mentions Mary in connection with her Child, Christ is always given first place (cf. vv. 13,14,20,21). **gold, frankincense, and myrrh.** Gifts suitable for a king (cf. Is 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

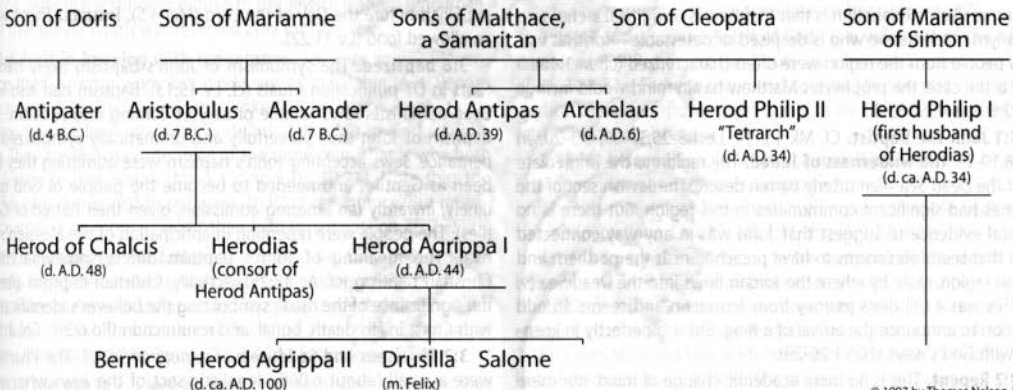
B.C. It is probable that the stay in Egypt was very brief—perhaps no more than a few weeks. **OUT OF EGYPT.** This quotation is from Hos 11:1 (see note there), which speaks of God's leading Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. Matthew suggests that Israel's sojourn in Egypt was a pictorial prophecy, rather than a specific verbal one such as v. 6; cf. 1:23. These are called "types" and all are always fulfilled in Christ, and identified clearly by the NT writers. Another example of a type is found in Jn 3:14. See note on v. 17.

2:16 slew all the male children. Herod's act is all the more heinous in light of his full knowledge that the Lord's Anointed One was the target of his murderous plot.

2:17 fulfilled. See note on v. 15. Again, this prophecy is in the

FAMILY TREE OF HEROD

Herod the Great
(d.4 B.C.)



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NA673 - Hardcover
NASB / STUDY / GENERAL
ISBN-10: 0-5291-2250-2
ISBN-13: 978-0-5291-2250-6



9 780529 122506 \$44.99
Printed in U.S.A. \$44.99 U.S.