

The
MACARTHUR
Study Bible

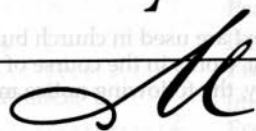
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The MACARTHUR Study Bible



John MacArthur

AUTHOR AND GENERAL EDITOR



NEW KING JAMES
VERSION

WORD
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THE MACARTHUR STUDY BIBLE

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Table of CONTENTS

Index of Charts and Maps	v	Introduction to Ezra	638
Introduction to the Bible	vii	Ezra	641
Personal Notes	xi	Introduction to Nehemiah	656
How We Got the Bible	xiii	Nehemiah	659
How to Study the Bible	xix	Introduction to Esther	681
Preface to the New King James Version	xxiii	Esther	684
The Center Reference Column	xxvii	Introduction to Job	693
Table of Abbreviations	xxix	Job	697
Books of the Bible Abbreviations	xxx	Introduction to Psalms	741
The Progress of Revelation	xxxix	Psalms	743
The Old Testament and Notes		Introduction to Proverbs	874
Introduction to the Pentateuch	1	Proverbs	877
Chronology of Old Testament Patriarchs and Judges	2	Introduction to Ecclesiastes	924
A Harmony of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles	5	Ecclesiastes	927
Introduction to the Prophets	9	Introduction to Song of Solomon	940
Chronology of Old Testament Kings and Prophets	10	Song of Solomon	942
Introduction to Genesis	13	Introduction to Isaiah	952
Genesis	16	Isaiah	955
Introduction to Exodus	91	Introduction to Jeremiah	1059
Exodus	94	Jeremiah	1062
Introduction to Leviticus	153	Introduction to Lamentations	1139
Leviticus	156	Lamentations	1141
Introduction to Numbers	195	Introduction to Ezekiel	1150
Numbers	197	Ezekiel	1153
Introduction to Deuteronomy	247	Introduction to Daniel	1225
Deuteronomy	250	Daniel	1227
Introduction to Joshua	303	Introduction to Hosea	1251
Joshua	305	Hosea	1253
Introduction to Judges	334	Introduction to Joel	1267
Judges	336	Joel	1269
Introduction to Ruth	366	Introduction to Amos	1275
Ruth	368	Amos	1277
Introduction to 1, 2 Samuel	374	Introduction to Obadiah	1288
1 Samuel	377	Obadiah	1290
Outline of 2 Samuel	425	Introduction to Jonah	1292
2 Samuel	426	Jonah	1294
Introduction to 1, 2 Kings	467	Introduction to Micah	1298
1 Kings	471	Micah	1300
2 Kings	516	Introduction to Nahum	1309
Introduction to 1, 2 Chronicles	563	Nahum	1311
1 Chronicles	565	Introduction to Habakkuk	1316
2 Chronicles	598	Habakkuk	1318
		Introduction to Zephaniah	1324
		Zephaniah	1326

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to Haggai	1331	Introduction to Colossians	1830
Haggai	1333	Colossians	1832
Introduction to Zechariah	1337	Introduction to 1 Thessalonians	1841
Zechariah	1339	1 Thessalonians	1843
Introduction to Malachi	1359	Introduction to 2 Thessalonians	1851
Malachi	1361	2 Thessalonians	1853
 The Intertestamental Period		Introduction to 1 Timothy	1857
Introduction to the Intertestamental Period . .	1369	1 Timothy	1860
Chronology of the Intertestamental Period . .	1370	Introduction to 2 Timothy	1873
 The New Testament and Notes		2 Timothy	1875
Introduction to the Gospels	1375	Introduction to Titus	1883
Chronology of the New Testament	1376	Titus	1885
A Harmony of the Gospels	1378	Introduction to Philemon	1890
A Brief Overview of Christ's Life	1385	Philemon	1892
A Brief Overview of Christ's Ministry	1386	Introduction to Hebrews	1894
The Passovers of Christ's Ministry	1387	Hebrews	1897
Christ's Passion Week	1387	Introduction to James	1924
Introduction to Matthew	1389	James	1926
Matthew	1393	Introduction to 1 Peter	1936
Introduction to Mark	1452	1 Peter	1939
Mark	1456	Introduction to 2 Peter	1950
Introduction to Luke	1504	2 Peter	1952
Luke	1509	Introduction to 1 John	1961
Introduction to John	1569	1 John	1964
John	1573	Introduction to 2 John	1975
Introduction to Acts	1630	2 John	1977
Acts	1632	Introduction to 3 John	1979
Introduction to Romans	1688	3 John	1981
Romans	1691	Introduction to Jude	1983
Introduction to 1 Corinthians	1726	Jude	1985
1 Corinthians	1729	Introduction to Revelation	1989
Introduction to 2 Corinthians	1760	Revelation	1992
2 Corinthians	1763	 Topical Index 2029	
Introduction to Galatians	1786	Read Through the Bible In a Year	2189
Galatians	1788	The Character of Genuine Saving Faith	2191
Introduction to Ephesians	1801	Overview of Theology	2192
Ephesians	1803	Monies, Weights, and Measures	2199
Introduction to Philippians	1817	Color Maps	2203
Philippians	1820		

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 4 gospels give the record of His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Each of the 4 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, 5 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 5 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 5 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 4 of them don't involve a fallen world: the first 2 and the last 2—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 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 5 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 5 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 the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked 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 over the last 28 years I have studied and expositively 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.

Finally, I offer great appreciation to David Moberg, my publisher at Word Publishing, 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 ministry, for the edifying 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

My deepest gratitude belongs to my friend and ministry partner, Dr. Richard Mayhew, Senior Vice President and Dean of The Master's Seminary. He has worked next to me through the whole project, pouring 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 his own remarkable theological and writing skill, have made for a most effective partner. 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. Leaving the foundation of that original research and material, I worked and re-worked the study notes into their final form. Thank you to Dr. Trevor Collier, Prof. Dave Deuel, Prof. Keith Essex, Dr. Richard Mayhew, Dr. Larry Pettigrew, Dr. Jim Rossignol, Prof. Jim Sittler, Dr. Bob Thomas, and Dr. George Zemek. Because over the last 28 years 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 collating the salient features from my research into study notes from that first draft. I worked to bring the material to its final form. Thank you to Dr. Bill Barker, Dave Douglas, Dave Enns, Dr. David Farrell, Phil Johnson, Gary Krausman, Dr. Richard Mayhew, Tom Pennington, Dr. Larry Pettigrew, 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 initial effort at a tedious task. My thanks to Dennis Swanson and Bob White at The Master's Seminary, to Dave Enns and Allan Morrison at Grace to You, and to Jane Gunden and her team of readers at Peabody 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. Mayhew's secretary Cindy Gehman (OT Coordinator) and my personal secretary Pat Roarky (NT Coordinator) who labored with Amy Bandenstein, Rhonda Connor, Louise Essex, Marilyn Foster, Marcia Galtius, Carl Smith, Diane Haschak, Pam Leopold, Willa Lovelace, Darrah Luna, Willa Miller, Joyce Mahan, Susan Rogers, Tatti Schott, and Teri White.

How We Got 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 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 (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 (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.

Scriptures' 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 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" (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. Is. 55:11; 2 Pet. 1:3,4).

God's Word declares that it is *inerrant* (Pss. 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 the Scriptures are 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.

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

Deut. 8:3

I have not departed from the commandment 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 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* given by inspiration of God. . ." (2 Tim. 3:16) makes the claim. Peter explains the process, ". . . knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved 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 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 Genesis 1,2, written by Moses about 1405 B.C., and extends to the eternity future account of Revelation 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 is 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 Lamentations were considered as one, as were Judges and Ruth. Here is how the 24 book format was divided.

The Hebrew Old Testament		
Law	Prophets	Writings
1. Genesis	A. Former Prophets	A. Poetical Books
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. Five Rolls (Megilloth)
	B. Latter Prophets	17. Song of Solomon
	10. Isaiah	18. Ruth
	11. Jeremiah	19. Lamentations
	12. Ezekiel	20. Ecclesiastes
	13. The Twelve (minor prophets)	21. Esther
		C. Historical Books
		22. Daniel
		23. Ezra-Nehemiah
		24. Chronicles (1 & 2)

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 (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 Isaiah 40:8, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands 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 (Is.

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 13:3; Luke 16:17).

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Is. 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 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 ca. 200–150 B.C.; the oldest existing manuscripts dates 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. Myles 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 King James Version (NKJV); 2) New International Version (NIV); and 3) New American Standard Bible (NASB).

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.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Rev. 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 there was a parallel silence after John delivered Revelation. This also leads to the conclusion that the New Testament canon was then closed.
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 and 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 4 exhortations not to tamper with Scripture, only the one in Revelation 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 thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1 Thess. 2:13

The History of Creation

In the ^abeginning ^bGod created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was ^cwithout form, and void; and darkness ¹was on the face of the deep. ^dAnd the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³Then God said, ^f“Let there be ^glight”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that *it was good*; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the ^hdarkness He called Night. ²So the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶Then God said, ⁱ“Let there be a ³firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” ⁷Thus God made the firmament, ^jand divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* ^kabove the firmament; and it was so. ⁸And God called

CHAPTER 1

- 1 ^a Ps. 102:25; Is. 40:21; [John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:10] ^b Gen. 2:4; [Ps. 8:3; 89:11; 90:2]; Is. 44:24; Acts 17:24; Rom. 1:20; [Heb. 1:2; 11:3]; Rev. 4:11
- 2 ^c Jer. 4:23 ^d [Gen. 6:3]; Job 26:13; Ps. 33:6; 104:30; Is. 40:13, 14 ^e Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Hebrew or Aramaic.
- 3 ^e Ps. 33:6, 9 ^f 2 Cor. 4:6 ^g [Heb. 11:3]
- 5 ^h Job 37:18; Ps. 19:2; 33:6; 74:16; 104:20; 136:5; Jer. 10:12
- 2 ⁱ Lit. *And evening was, and morning was, a day, one.*
- 6 ^j Job 37:18; Jer. 10:12; 2 Pet. 3:5
- 3 ^k *expansive*
- 7 ^k Job 38:8-11; Prov. 8:27-29 ^l Ps. 148:4

the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹Then God said, ^l“Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and ^mlet the dry *land* appear”; and it was so. ¹⁰And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was good*.

¹¹Then God said, ⁿ“Let the earth ⁿbring forth grass, the herb *that yields seed*, and the ^ofruit tree *that yields fruit* according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. ¹²And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that yields seed* according to its kind, and the tree *that yields fruit*, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*. ¹³So the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, ^p“Let there be ^plights in

- 9 ^l Job 26:10; Ps. 104:6-9; Prov. 8:29; Jer. 5:22; 2 Pet. 3:5 ^m Ps. 24:1, 2; 33:7; 95:5 ⁿ Ps. 65:9-13; 104:14; Heb. 6:7 ^o 2 Sam. 16:1; Luke 6:44
- 14 ^p Deut. 4:19; Ps. 74:16; 136:5-9

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 pre-existing material (as does other Scripture: cf. Is. 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 which includes all 6, consecutive days of creation.

1:2 without form, 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. 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 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 (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. 1:31).

1:4,5 divided...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 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 firmament. 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 firmament. Refers to subterranean reservoirs (cf. 7:11). **above the firmament.** 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 whose seed is in itself. The principle of reproduction that marks all life (cf. vv. 22, 24, 28).

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 (vv. 21, 24, 25), and indicates that evolution, which proposes reproduction across species lines, is a false explanation of origins.

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 there

the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and ⁴seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. ¹⁶ Then God made two great ⁴lights: the ⁷greater light to rule the day, and the ⁸lesser light to rule the night. He made ¹the stars also. ¹⁷ God set them in the firmament of the ⁴heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ and to ⁹rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was good*. ¹⁹ So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living ⁵creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the ⁶firmament of the heavens." ²¹ So ¹⁰God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*. ²² And God blessed them, saying, ³"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of

¹⁴ ⁴Ps. 104:19
¹⁶ ¹Ps. 136:8 ¹Deut. 17:3; Ps. 8:3 ¹Deut. 4:19; Job 38:7; Is. 40:26 ⁴luminaries
¹⁷ ⁴Gen. 15:5; Jer. 33:20, 25
¹⁸ ¹Jer. 31:35
²⁰ ⁵souls ⁶expanse
²¹ ¹⁰Ps. 104:25-28
²² ⁴Gen. 8:17

²⁶ ⁷Gen. 9:6; Ps. 100:3; Eccl. 7:29; [Eph. 4:24]; James 3:9 ²Gen. 9:2; Ps. 8:6-8 ⁷Syr. all the wild animals of
²⁷ ⁹Gen. 5:2; 1 Cor. 11:7 ¹⁰Matt. 19:4; [Mark 10:6-8]
²⁸ ¹Gen. 9:1, 7; Lev. 26:9 ¹1 Cor. 9:27
⁸moves about on
²⁹ ¹Gen. 9:3; Ps. 104:14, 15
³⁰ ¹Ps. 145:15 ⁹Job 38:41 ⁹a living soul
³¹ ¹[Ps. 104:24; 1 Tim. 4:4]

the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*.

²⁶ Then God said, ⁹"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; ²let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over ⁷all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man ¹⁰in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; ¹¹male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ¹²"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and ¹³subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that ¹⁴moves on the earth."

²⁹ And God said, "See, I have given you every herb ¹⁵that yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; ¹⁶to you it shall be for food. ³⁰ Also, to ¹⁷every beast of the earth, to every ¹⁸bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which ¹⁹there *is* ²⁰life, *I have given* every green herb ²¹for food"; and it was so. ³¹ Then ²²God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

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 (Pss. 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.

1:15-19 two great lights...to divide 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 worshippers of the "host of heaven" (see note on 2 Kin. 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 40:15-41:34).

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...beast. This probably represents all kinds of large, four-legged animals.

1:24 beast 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 triunity 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 have dominion...subdue. 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; 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 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; fill the earth and subdue it..."** God, having just created the universe, created His representative (dominion) 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 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 Thus the heavens and the earth, and ^aall the host of them, were finished. ² ^bAnd on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God ^cblessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

⁴ ^dThis is the ^ehistory of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ before any ^fplant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not ^gcaused it to rain on the earth, and ^hthere was no man ⁱto till the ground; ⁶ but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the ^jdust of the ground, and ^kbreathed into his ^lnostrils the breath of life; and ^mman became a living being.

Life in God's Garden

⁸ The LORD God planted ⁿa garden ^oeast-

CHAPTER 2

- 1 ^a Ps. 33:6
- 2 ^b Ex. 20:9-11; 31:17; Heb. 4:4, 10
- 3 ^c [Is. 58:13]
- 4 ^d Gen. 1:1; Ps. 90:1, 2
¹ Heb. *toledoth*, lit. *generations*
- 5 ^e Gen. 1:11, 12
^f Gen. 7:4; Job 5:10; 38:26-28 ^g Gen. 3:23
- 7 ^h Gen. 3:19, 23; Ps. 103:14; Job 33:4
ⁱ Gen. 7:22 ^k 1 Cor. 15:45
- 8 ^l Is. 51:3 ^m Gen. 3:23, 24

- ⁿ Gen. 4:16
- 9 ^o Ezek. 31:8 ^p [Gen. 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14] ^q [Deut. 1:39]
- 11 ^r Gen. 25:18
- 12 ^s Num. 11:7
- 14 ^t Dan. 10:4 ^u Or *Tigris* ^v Heb. *Ashshur*
- 15 ^w Or *Adam*
^x cultivate

ward in ⁿEden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made ^oevery tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. ^pThe tree of life ^qwas also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and ^revil.

¹⁰ Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts ^rthe whole land of Havilah, where ^sthere is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good. ^tBdellium and the onyx stone ^uare there. ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is ^vHiddekel; ^wit is the one which goes toward the east of ^xAssyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took ^ythe man and put him in the garden of Eden to ^ztend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

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 ended...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 2:2) and Gen. 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 notes on Ex. 20:8-11). 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 the history of. Genesis 2:4-25 fills in details, especially of the sixth day, which were not included in 1:1-2:3. 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).

2:4, 5 before any plant. Verse 4 gives a summary of days one and two, before the vegetation of day 3.

2:6 mist went up. A very heavy mist or vapor which characterized the earth at the end of day two (cf. 1:6-8). The change in temperature between day and night was sufficient to cause daily evaporation from the bodies of water and condensation into dew and fog. This was in place on days two and three, before the plants were created.

2:7-25 This account details day 6 (cf. 1:24-31).

2:7 formed. Many of the words used in this account of the cre-

ation 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 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 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 "eastward" 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 notes on Rev. 22:2, 14). **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 Hiddekel...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 tend 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

Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chr. 1:34, 2:1-15; Luke 3:31-34

1 The book of the ^agenealogy¹ of Jesus Christ, ^bthe Son of David, ^cthe Son of Abraham:

² Abraham begot Isaac, ^eIsaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot ^fJudah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, ^hPerez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot ⁱBoaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and ^jJesse begot David the king.

^kDavid the king begot Solomon by her ²who had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷ Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot ^mAbijah, and Abijah begot ³Asa. ⁸ Asa begot ⁿJehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot ^oUzziah. ⁹ Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot ^pAhaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. ¹⁰ Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot ⁴Amon, and Amon begot ^rJosiah. ¹¹ Josiah begot ⁵Jecooniah and his brothers about the time they were ^lcarried away to Babylon.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 ^a Luke 3:23 ^b 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Is. 9:6; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; [Matt. 1:18; Luke 3:23, 31]; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; [Rom. 1:3]; Rev. 22:16 ^c Gen. 12:3; 22:18; [Gal. 3:16]
¹ Lit. generation
 2 ^d Gen. 21:2, 12
^e Gen. 25:26; 28:14
^f Gen. 29:35
^g Gen. 38:27; 49:10
^h Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chr. 2:1-15; Matt. 1:3-6
ⁱ Ruth 2:1; 4:1-13
 6 ^j 1 Sam. 16:1; Is. 11:1, 10 ^k 2 Sam. 7:12; 12:24; Is. 9:7
² Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Greek.
 7 ^l 1 Kin. 11:43; 1 Chr. 3:10 ^m 2 Chr. 11:20
³ NU *Asaph*
 8 ⁿ 1 Chr. 3:10 ^o 2 Kin. 15:13
 9 ^p 2 Kin. 15:38
 10 ^q 2 Kin. 20:21
^r 1 Kin. 13:2 ⁴ NU *Amos*
 11 ^s 1 Chr. 3:15, 16
^t 2 Kin. 24:14-16; Jer.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, ^uJecooniah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot ^vZerubbabel. ¹³ Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. ¹⁴ Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. ¹⁵ Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. ¹⁶ And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of ^wMary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

Birth of Christ

¹⁸ Now the ^xbirth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child ^yof the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being ⁶a just man, and not wanting ^zto make her

27:20; Matt. 1:17 ³ Or *Coniah* or *Jehoiachin* ¹² ^u 1 Chr. 3:17 ^v Ezra 3:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:1 ¹⁶ ^w Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3 ¹⁸ ^x Matt. 12:46; Luke 1:27 ^y Is. 7:14; 49:5; Luke 1:35 ¹⁹ ^z Deut. 24:1; John 8:4, 5 ⁶ an upright

1:1 book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. 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 Gen. 5:1 in the LXX. **Jesus Christ.** The Hebrew *Jeshua* means "the Lord is Salvation." *Christos* means "anointed one" and is the exact equivalent of the Heb. word for "Messiah" (Dan. 9:25). **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 (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 5: "Tamar" was a Canaanite woman who posed as a prostitute to seduce Judah (Gen. 38:13-30). "Rahab" (v. 5) was a Gentile and a prostitute (Josh. 2:1). "Ruth" (v. 5) was a Moabite woman (Ruth 1:3) and thus her offspring were forbidden to enter the assembly of the Lord for 10 generations (Deut. 23:3). "Bathsheba" ("Uriah's wife"; v. 6) committed adultery with David (2 Sam. 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 begot Boaz by Rahab...and Jesse begot 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 begot Uzziah. Cf. 1 Chr. 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 begot Jecooniah. Again, Matthew skips a generation between Josiah and Jecooniah (cf. 1 Chr. 3:14-16). Jecooniah is also called Jehoiachin (2 Kin. 24:6; 2 Chr. 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 begot Zerubbabel. See 1 Chr. 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 was born Jesus. This is the only entry in the entire genealogy where the word "begot" is not used—including those where whole generations were skipped. 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. 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 note on Luke 2:5. **with child of the Holy Spirit.** See vv. 20,23; Luke 1:26-35.

1:19 Joseph...being a just man...was minded to put her away secretly. 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 make Mary "a public example." The

a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, ^a for that which is ⁷conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ ^b And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name ⁸JESUS, ^c for He will save His people from their sins."

²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying; ²³ ^d "Behold, ⁹ the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and ¹did not know her till she had brought forth ^eher ²firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Visit of Wise Men

Now after ^aJesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, ¹wise men ^bfrom the East

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 "put her away" would be to obtain a legal divorce (19:9,9; Deut. 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; 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 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; Luke 1:31. The name actually means "Savior" (see note on v. 7).

1:22 that it might be fulfilled. 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 to him his wife. See note on Luke 2:5.

1:25 know her. A euphemism for sexual intercourse. See Gen. 4:1,17,25; 38:26; Judg. 11:39.

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; 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

²⁰ ^a Luke 1:35 ⁷ Lit. *begotten*
²¹ ^b [Is. 7:14; 9:6,7]; Luke 1:31; 2:21
^c Luke 2:11; John 1:29; [Acts 4:12; 5:31; 13:23,38; Rom. 5:18,19; Col. 1:20-23]
⁸ Lit. *Savior*
²³ ^d Is. 7:14 ⁹ Words in oblique type in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament.
²⁵ ^e Ex. 13:2; Luke 2:7,21 ¹ Kept her a virgin ² NU a Son

CHAPTER 2

¹ ^a Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:4-7 ^b Gen. 25:6; 1 Kin. 4:30 ¹ Gr. *magoi*

² ^c Luke 2:11 ^d [Num. 24:17; Is. 60:3]
⁴ ^e 2 Chr. 36:14
² Chr. 34:13 ³ Mal. 2:7
⁶ ^b Mic. 5:2; John 7:42
¹ Gen. 49:10; [Rev. 2:27]
⁷ / Num. 24:17 ² Gr. *magoi*

came to Jerusalem, ² saying, ^c "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen ^dHis 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 And when he had gathered all ^ethe chief priests and ^fscribes of the people together, ⁸he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

⁵ So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

⁶ *'But^h you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler i Who will shepherd My people Israel.'*"

⁷ Then Herod, when he had secretly called the ²wise men, determined from them what time the ¹star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back

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. John 2:20). See note on v. 22. **wise men 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. Dan. 5:11).

2:2 saying. This present participle conveys the idea of continuous action. It suggests they went around the city questioning everyone they met. **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 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: "Out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." **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 Saul when Israel's kingdom was originally established (2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chr. 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).

word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

⁹ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. ¹¹ And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, ¹² they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹² Then, being divinely warned ¹³ in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Flight into Egypt

¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for

¹¹ ^a Ps. 72:10; Is. 60:6

¹² ¹ [Job 33:15, 16];
Matt. 1:20

¹⁵ ^m Num. 24:8; Hos.

11:1

¹⁸ ⁿ Jer. 31:15

Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

¹⁴ When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵ and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ^m “*Out of Egypt I called My Son.*”

Herod Kills the Children

¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

¹⁸ “*Aⁿ voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great
mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,*

2:8 that I 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. Luke 2:7). **the young 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 John 3:14. See note on v. 17.

2:16 put to death 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 form

Family Tree of Herod

