



# JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE

See Jesus from Genesis to Revelation



SAMPLE INSIDE



# Introducing the Jesus-Centered Bible

Where you'll discover Jesus—  
from cover to cover



*The Jesus-Centered Bible gives hope and reassurance that Jesus was, is, and always will be with you.*

Throughout the Old Testament, every passage pointing to Jesus is highlighted with blue lettering. In the New Testament, red letters highlight the words Jesus spoke, as well as every time his name appears outside of the Gospels.

For the first time, you'll see how Jesus is in every book—giving you unprecedented insight into the person and power of Jesus.

Scripture has never been more accessible or relevant thanks to fresh, new insights shared by dozens of contributing experts and pastors. Discussion and reflection questions pulling you toward Jesus are sprinkled throughout, as are Jesus' answers to **Life's Biggest Questions** everyone *must* answer.



#### Choose from:

- Pink Faux Leather
- Dark Brown Faux Leather
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- Softcover
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To order your Jesus-Centered Bible, visit [jesuscenteredlife.com](http://jesuscenteredlife.com) or your favorite Christian retailer TODAY!

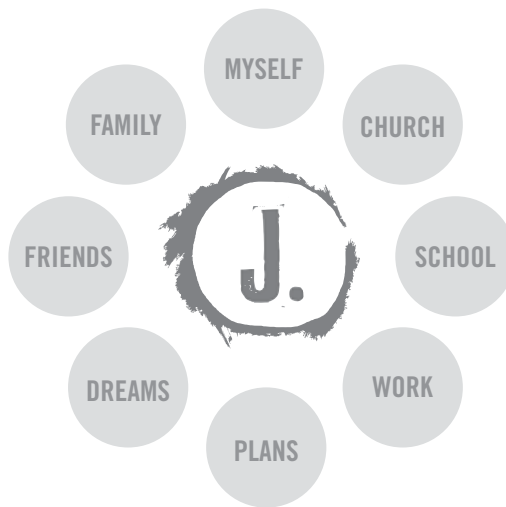


Group

“...*keeping our eyes on Jesus,*  
*the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.*”

*Hebrews 12:2a*

Every book of the **JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE** opens your eyes to fresh ways of seeing the Savior. And the closer you get to Jesus, the more you discover your true identity and purpose in life. **You'll finally see how every part of your life can revolve around Jesus himself.**



You'll get to know Jesus like never before. You'll be surprised by his intimate connections to your daily life. And you'll find yourself in awe of the remarkable ways Jesus works all around you. **With the *JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE*, Christ's life becomes your life.**

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE WITH **FRESH EYES**

The **JESUS-CENTERED BIBLE** gives you a brand-new Scripture experience that draws you to Jesus in unexpected ways.

You'll dive into Jesus' story from extraordinary perspectives. You'll hear surprising voices. And you'll see just how much Jesus saturates page after page of the Bible, from beginning to end.

You'll never look at Scripture the same way again.

The **Old Testament** sparks to life as you unfold the hundreds of ways it spotlights Jesus. And you'll marvel at all the different ways the **New Testament** reveals who Jesus really is.

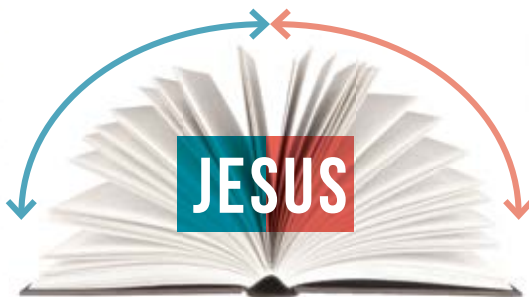


*This Bible will energize you. Challenge you.  
Change you. And, like the Savior himself,  
draw you back again and again and again.*



## YOU'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED A BIBLE LIKE THIS ONE!

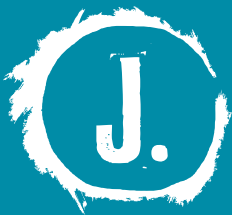
- J. BLUE LETTER TEXT** shows you hundreds and hundreds of Old Testament connections to Jesus in the easiest way possible, so you can see for yourself how much the Bible weaves Jesus into the entire narrative.
- J. BIBLE-BOOK INTRODUCTIONS** unveil the fascinating details of how Jesus links to the stories in each book of the Bible, making all of Scripture more relevant to your relationship with him.
- J. REFRAMING JESUS SIDEBARS** take you far beyond the Sunday school Jesus into the meaningful backstories of the real people who looked for, pointed to, and interacted with the Savior.
- J. JESUS ANSWERS LIFE'S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS.** Through Jesus' own words, you'll tackle your uncertainties head-on, making sense of your personal struggles, doubts, and fears.
- J. IN PURSUIT OF JESUS.** You'll find yourself growing closer to Jesus and others with these provocative yet enriching discussion starters about Christ.



# BLUE LETTER TEXT

## LET JESUS SPEAK TO YOU OUT OF THE BLUE.

**Red letters** highlight Jesus' words in the New Testament. The ***Jesus-Centered Bible*** gives you **blue letters** to point out references to Jesus in the Old Testament.



From Genesis to Malachi, you'll be amazed at how much Jesus weaves into every thread of the Old Testament. **The blue text and explanations jump off the page, so you get an unforgettable picture of the breadth and depth of Jesus in Scripture.**

*As you see God's plans for Jesus unfold throughout the Bible, you get a clearer understanding of God's plans for your life, too. The closer you become to Jesus, the more obvious God's purpose for you becomes.*

These blue letters truly set the *Jesus-Centered Bible* apart from all other Bibles...

**14** *For the choir director: A psalm of David.*

- <sup>1</sup> Only fools say in their hearts,  
"There is no God."  
They are corrupt, and their actions are evil;  
not one of them does good!
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven  
on the entire human race;  
he looks to see if anyone is truly wise,  
if anyone seeks God.
- <sup>3</sup> But no, all have turned away;  
all have become corrupt.\*  
No one does good,  
not a single one!
- <sup>4</sup> Will those who do evil never learn?  
They eat up my people like bread  
and wouldn't think of praying to the  
LORD.
- <sup>5</sup> Terror will grip them,  
for God is with those who obey him.
- <sup>6</sup> The wicked frustrate the plans of the  
oppressed,  
but the LORD will protect his people.
- <sup>7</sup> Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue  
Israel?  
When the LORD restores his people,  
Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will  
rejoice.

**15** *A psalm of David.*

- <sup>1</sup> Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD?  
Who may enter your presence on your  
holy hill?
- <sup>2</sup> Those who lead blameless lives and do what  
is right,  
speaking the truth from sincere hearts.
- <sup>3</sup> Those who refuse to gossip  
or harm their neighbors  
or speak evil of their friends.
- <sup>4</sup> Those who despise flagrant sinners,  
and honor the faithful followers of the  
LORD,  
and keep their promises even when  
it hurts.
- <sup>5</sup> Those who lend money without charging  
interest,

and who cannot  
be called  
innocent.  
Such people will stand

**16** *A psalm\* of David.*

- <sup>1</sup> Keep me safe, O God,  
for I have come to you for refuge.
- <sup>2</sup> I said to the LORD, "You are my Master!  
Every good thing I have comes from you."
- <sup>3</sup> The godly people in the land  
are my true heroes!  
I take pleasure in them!
- <sup>4</sup> Troubles multiply for those who chase after  
other gods.  
I will not take part in their sacrifices of  
blood  
or even speak the names of their gods.
- <sup>5</sup> LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup  
of blessing.  
You guard all that is mine.
- <sup>6</sup> The land you have given me is a pleasant  
land.  
What a wonderful inheritance!
- <sup>7</sup> I will bless the LORD who guides me;  
even at night my heart instructs me.
- <sup>8</sup> I know the LORD is always with me.  
I will not be shaken, for he is right beside  
me.
- <sup>9</sup> No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.\*  
My body rests in safety.
- <sup>10</sup> For you will not leave my soul among the  
dead\*

**J** PSALM 14:7—David longs for salvation to come from Zion. Paul, in his letter to the followers of Jesus in Rome, references Jesus when he says: "The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem, and he will turn Israel away from ungodliness" (Romans 11:26).

**J** PSALM 16:8-11—In his speech at Pentecost, Peter directly quotes this passage, telling the crowds that David was referencing the future Messiah and that "death could not keep him [Jesus] in its grip" (Acts 2:22-31).

14:3 Greek version reads *have become useless*. Compare Rom 3:12. 16:10 Hebrew *miktom*. This may be a literary or musical term.  
16:9 Greek version reads *and my tongue shouts his praises*. Compare Acts 2:26. 16:10a Hebrew in Sheol.

# BIBLE-BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

## RE-INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE BIBLE.

Whether you're a lifelong scholar or biblical rookie, these introductions give you personal insights into how each book of the Bible connects to Jesus. It's your intimate, behind-the-scenes view of the Bible through Jesus' eyes, deepening your attachment to Jesus.

### JESUS *in* OBADIAH

Have you heard of “Napoleon Syndrome”? It's a shorthand way of describing the way undersized people (like the famously “petite” French emperor) cover up their insecurities by acting bigger than they are—in an obvious and even ridiculous way. For example, when we take Chloe (our tiny Bichon Frise dog) on a walk in the neighborhood, she loves to “intimidate” dogs that are 10 times her size as we pass by—she'll yap and lunge and threaten, and we have to drag her away. Her arrogance is so complete that she's lost touch with reality—she thinks she's a conqueror, when she's actually an appetizer.

And she has a lot in common with the people of Edom, who are descendants of Isaac's disgraced son Esau (the rough-skinned older brother who sold his “birthright” to the conniving Jacob in Genesis 25 for some stew). Here in this shortest of all Old Testament books, the prophet Obadiah is simply relaying a message God has given him for the Edomites—a tiny race of people who've holed-up in a remote enclave they've carved out of a rocky canyon and who think VERY highly of their reputation for courage and wisdom. Even though the Edomites have every surface reason to act humbly, because of the size of their community and their relatively “low” social standing, they yap and lunge and threaten instead. They're trying to intimidate the people around them by making themselves seem bigger than they are. And they've made the Israelites—God's people—the primary focal point for their bullying behavior.

God's message to the Edomites, through Obadiah, is simple: *Your arrogance is an affront to me, and I'm going to expose you.*

The prophet leads off with a shot across their bow. “You have been deceived by your own pride.... I will bring you crashing down” (Obadiah 1:3-4). This is God warning the little Napoleons who are shaking their fist at him and spitting on his people that they're headed for destruction. Sin and betrayal and arrogance have transformed the Edomites into God's enemies. And the enemies of God are marching double-time onto the “down escalator” of life. That would be true of us, too, if God had not decided to do something to save us from ourselves—to offer us a path out of arrogance and into humble intimacy with him. The name of that decision is Jesus—the destruction we deserve was, instead, heaped upon him at the cross. And because of his obedient sacrifice, we can grab his outstretched hand and swing off the down escalator, joining him on the way up to the heart of God.

Obadiah is a raw, brutal snapshot of where our lives would be headed, if not for the promise of rescue offered to us by Jesus. Sure, we still yap and lunge and threaten because, truthfully, we're all so insecure in ourselves—but Jesus transforms our “ugly” into something beautiful.

—Rick Lawrence

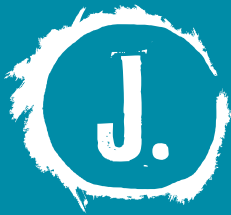
J.



# REFRAMING JESUS SIDEBARS

## RE-INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO JESUS.

When was the last time Jesus took you by surprise? Sometimes you need a new perspective to re-energize your relationship with Jesus.



The *Jesus-Centered Bible* gives you 150 sidebars that provide context, backstories, and theological insight into the meaning of Scripture. When you understand how Jesus fits into each story, you'll see him in a brighter, clearer light.

and received the same answer. <sup>33</sup>Then David's question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

### *David Kills Goliath*

<sup>32</sup>"Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul. "I'll go fight him!"

<sup>33</sup>"Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, <sup>34</sup>I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. <sup>35</sup>I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! <sup>36</sup>The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the LORD be with you!"

## J REFRAMING JESUS

1 SAMUEL 17:40-51

### JESUS LOOKS BEYOND HUMAN LABELS

If there's one thing we learn in the pages of 1 Samuel, it is this: God frequently messes up all the "rules" we set up for how life should work. Young shepherds, for example, shouldn't defeat giants. And when Jesus comes on the scene, he lives out God's values. He has a habit of breaking the "rules," and it drives the religious leaders crazy. During Jesus' time, there are strict labels about who is "in" and who is "out"—people deemed acceptable by the religious establishment and those who are rejected and labeled as "sinners" by the religious elite. But Jesus rips up those labels and throws them away. Knowing that even society's outcasts are people made in the image of God, Jesus dines with them, speaks to them, touches them, and befriends them. Jesus' life beyond labels reveals the dignity of each human being.

# JESUS ANSWERS LIFE'S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

## NO QUESTION IS TOO BIG, AND NO ANSWER IS TOO SMALL.

At some point in time, every person grapples with life's most profound mysteries. The *Jesus-Centered Bible* tackles humanity's nine biggest questions, with the kind of answers that only Jesus can provide:

What's my purpose in life?

Is God real?

Why do bad things happen?

What is the meaning of life?

Is this all there is?

Will everything be OK?

What is truth?

What is love?

What is right and wrong?



Not only will you discover Jesus' wise responses to each of these questions, you'll also find a wealth of Scripture that gives you the answers you crave. And along the way, you'll gain more confidence in the only One who can guide you through life's toughest challenges.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

#### Teaching about the Law

<sup>17</sup>“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. <sup>18</sup>I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. <sup>19</sup>So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

<sup>20</sup>“But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

#### Teaching about Anger

<sup>21</sup>“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’<sup>22</sup> But I say, if you are even angry with someone,\* you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,\* you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,\* you are in danger of the fires of hell.\*

<sup>23</sup>“So if you are presenting a sacrifice\* at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

<sup>25</sup>“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.\*

#### Teaching about Adultery

<sup>27</sup>“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>So if your eye—even your good eye\*—

5:21 Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17. 5:22a Some manuscripts add without cause. 5:22b Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: if you say to your brother, ‘Waco.’ 5:22c Greek if you say, ‘You fool.’ 5:22d Greek Gehenna; also in 5:29, 30. 5:23 Greek gift; also in 5:24. 5:26 Greek the last kodrantes [i.e., quadrans]. 5:27 Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18. 5:29 Greek your right eye.

## JESUS ANSWERS LIFE'S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### MATTHEW 5:17-20—ESSENTIAL QUESTION: WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG?

The Pharisees have super-charged the quest for “what is right and wrong” and made it into a kind of extreme competition. They have taken the basics of the “law” that God delivered to them—ways of relating to him and to each other—and exploded that simple outline into hundreds and hundreds of tiny rules and regulations designed to guarantee “righteousness.” And here Jesus says that “unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!” And then, through the rest of Matthew 5, he drives home his point by comparing common standards for what’s right and wrong to the standard he’s set. He’s saying it’s essentially impossible to live a “righteous” life by working harder at it—our solitary hope for living righteously is to allow the only Righteous Presence in the universe to live in us, to live through us. We will know right and wrong not when we try harder to meet God’s standards of righteousness, but when we yield ourselves to Jesus, who will help us to live righteously from the inside-out.

# IN PURSUIT OF JESUS

## NOW WE'RE TALKING.

You'll find more than 100 irresistible questions throughout the New Testament in the *Jesus-Centered Bible*.



Each question gets you and your friends really thinking about who Jesus is, what he does, and what he means to your lives today.

### HERE ARE A FEW MORE SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

It's often said that the most powerful teacher is failure—if Jesus never failed, then how did he learn?

Good friendships are based on mutual giving—what do we have to offer Jesus that he doesn't already have? (Romans 16:1-16)

What's the one thing you'd want Jesus to know about you if you sat down to dinner with him? (1 Corinthians 11:20-26)

How are other people's expectations of you and Jesus' expectations of you similar—and different? (2 Corinthians 3:1-6)

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### The Promise of the Holy Spirit

**1** In my first book\* I told you, Theophilus, about everything **Jesus** began to do and teach <sup>2</sup>until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the Holy Spirit. <sup>3</sup>During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup>Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, **“Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”**

### The Ascension of Jesus

<sup>6</sup>So when the apostles were with **Jesus**, they kept asking him, **“Lord, is the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”**

<sup>7</sup>He replied, **“The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

<sup>9</sup>After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. <sup>10</sup>As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. <sup>11</sup>“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? **Jesus** has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

### Matthias Replaces Judas

<sup>12</sup>Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile.\*

<sup>13</sup>When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying.

Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the zealot), and Judas (son of James). <sup>14</sup>They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with **Mary** the mother of **Jesus**, several other women, and the brothers of **Jesus**.

<sup>15</sup>During this time, when about 120 believers\* were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them.

<sup>16</sup>“Brothers,” he said, “the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested **Jesus**. This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit, speaking through King David. <sup>17</sup>Judas was one of us and shared in the ministry with us.”

<sup>18</sup>(Judas had bought a field with the money he received for his treachery. Falling headfirst there, his body split open, spilling out all his intestines. <sup>19</sup>The news of his death spread to all the people of Jerusalem, and they gave the place the Aramaic name *Akeldama*, which means “Field of Blood.”)

<sup>20</sup>Peter continued, “This was written in the book of Psalms, where it says, ‘Let his home become desolate, with no one living in it.’ It also says, ‘Let someone else take his position.’”

<sup>21</sup>“So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the **Lord Jesus**—<sup>22</sup>from the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us.

HOW IS A  
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS  
AFFECTED BY THE FACT THAT  
WE CAN'T SEE, TOUCH, OR  
AUDIBLY HEAR HIM?  
(ACTS 1:9)

1:1 The reference is to the Gospel of Luke. 1:5 Or in; also in 1:5b. 1:12 Greek e Sabbath day's journey. 1:15 Greek brothers. 1:20 Psa 69:25; 109:8.

## JESUS *in* GENESIS

I'm often fascinated by beginnings.

For instance, I spent a number of years as an entertainment journalist, interviewing minor celebrities and writing features about them. I remember talking with a TV actor who'd been very public about his Christianity. I'm the curious type, so I said to him, "How did your faith begin?"

He recalled riding in the family car as a preschooler and staring at the beautiful sky outside his window. A question popped into his mind. "Mom," he asked, "who's God?" His sweet mother explained to him the gospel—that God our Creator had become the man Jesus to save us from our sins. Right there in a car seat, childlike faith was born.

I just love beginnings like this, don't you?

Maybe that's why I'm fascinated by Genesis—aptly named because it is indeed a book of beginnings. In 50 chapters, this sprawling story lays the foundations of prehistory, known history, and of the people of Israel revealed onto the world stage. Most important, Genesis 1:1 tells us:

"In the beginning God created..."

Everything else we know of God flows from these five words. Because God created, we can exist. Because we exist, God cares. Because God cares, he redeems and guides and showers us with blessings from all creation.

"In the beginning God created."

And here—even in the earliest moments of Genesis—I see glimpses of Jesus. "Let us," God says in 1:26, "make human beings in our image, to be like us." Theologians recognize this pluralized pronoun as a reference to God the Son, Jesus Christ, because Colossians 1:16 reveals:

"For through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see... Everything was created through him and for him."

How cool is that?

However, not every beginning that's recorded in Genesis is a good thing. In fact, what happens next makes me cringe. Sin enters God's creation for the first time; devastation follows.

And then...

Only moments after sin comes to life, God again does something new. He creates his first promise for you and me—a prophecy that Jesus will one day come to crush the power of Satan in our lives (Genesis 3:15). Later, God doubles down, promising Abraham that "Through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). This hopeful promise came true in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, giving you and me the possibility of new beginnings to call our own—new, eternal life in him.

—Mike Nappa

J.

# GENESIS

## The Account of Creation

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>2</sup> The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

<sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day" and the darkness "night."

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth."<sup>7</sup> And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. <sup>8</sup> God called the space "sky."

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

<sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened.

<sup>12</sup> The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>13</sup> And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

<sup>14</sup> Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.

<sup>15</sup> Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth." And that is what happened.

<sup>16</sup> God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars.

<sup>17</sup> God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>19</sup> And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind."<sup>21</sup> So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>22</sup> Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

<sup>23</sup> And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened.

<sup>25</sup> God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

**J** GENESIS 1:1—Jesus is the co-creator of all things, and he was there at the beginning of all things (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-16).

1:1 Or In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .

## GENESIS 2 //

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make human beings\* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,\* and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

<sup>27</sup> So God created human beings\* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

<sup>29</sup> Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food.

<sup>30</sup> And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." And that is what happened.

<sup>31</sup> Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

**2** So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. <sup>2</sup> On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested\* from all his work. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

**J** GENESIS 1:26-27—We were created to be like God, which is why Jesus told us that we would do the things he did, and even greater things than he did (John 14:12).

**J** GENESIS 2:15—This describes the "rule" of the first Adam, called a "representation" of Jesus, who would come later to "rule" our hearts (Romans 5:12-19).

<sup>4</sup> This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

*The Man and Woman in Eden*

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup> neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. <sup>6</sup> Instead, springs\* came up from the ground and watered all the land. <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. <sup>9</sup> The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. <sup>11</sup> The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. <sup>12</sup> The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. <sup>13</sup> The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. <sup>16</sup> But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—<sup>17</sup> except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die."

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." <sup>19</sup> So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man\* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. <sup>20</sup> He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall

1:26a Or man; Hebrew reads *adam*. 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. 1:27 Or the man; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 2:2 Or ceased; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or mist. 2:19 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter.



## // GENESIS 3

into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs\* and closed up the opening. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> "At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,  
and flesh from my flesh!  
She will be called 'woman,'  
because she was taken from 'man.'"

<sup>24</sup> This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

<sup>25</sup> Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

*The Man and Woman Sin*

**3** The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

<sup>2</sup> "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. <sup>3</sup> "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

<sup>4</sup> "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup> "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

<sup>6</sup> The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. <sup>7</sup> At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

<sup>8</sup> When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man\* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup> He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

<sup>11</sup> "Who told you that you were naked?" the

LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

<sup>12</sup> The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

<sup>15</sup> And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

**J** REFRAMING JESUS**GENESIS 3:15—JESUS WILL FIGHT FOR HUMANITY**

After the serpent leads Adam and Eve into sin, humankind is trapped in a cosmic hostage crisis. But God responds by launching a full-scale covert operation to fight for humanity. His strategy is to squash the serpent through a descendant of Eve—a Rescuer who will give his all to the struggle. And though he would be wounded, this Son of Man would ultimately be victorious in combat. God's scheme pivots on embedding Jesus behind "enemy lines," where he can battle Satan head-on and triumph against sin and death. Reporting on Jesus' assault on the serpent, the apostle Paul describes God's war plans: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" (Romans 16:20).

**L** GENESIS 2:24—When the conniving Pharisees try to set a theological trap for Jesus by posing a hypothetical question about divorce, Jesus quotes this passage back to them (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8).

**J** GENESIS 3:1—Satan (the "serpent") is a liar, even "the father of lies," according to Jesus (John 8:44).

2:21 Or took a part of the man's side. 3:8 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter.

## GENESIS 4 //

He will strike\* your head,  
and you will strike his heel."

<sup>16</sup> Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,  
and in pain you will give birth.  
And you will desire to control your husband,  
but he will rule over you.\*"

<sup>17</sup> And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from  
the tree  
whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,  
the ground is cursed because of you.  
All your life you will struggle to scratch a  
living from it.

<sup>18</sup> It will grow thorns and thistles for you,  
though you will eat of its grains.

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow  
will you have food to eat  
until you return to the ground  
from which you were made.  
For you were made from dust,  
and to dust you will return."

**Paradise Lost: God's Judgment**

<sup>20</sup> Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve,  
because she would be the mother of all who  
live.\* <sup>21</sup> And the LORD God made clothing from  
animal skins for Adam and his wife.

<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human  
beings\* have become like us, knowing both  
good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit  
from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will  
live forever!" <sup>23</sup> So the LORD God banished them  
from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out  
to cultivate the ground from which he had been  
made. <sup>24</sup> After sending them out, the LORD God  
stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the  
Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword  
that flashed back and forth to guard the way to  
the tree of life.

**Cain and Abel**

**4** Now Adam\* had sexual relations with his  
wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When  
she gave birth to Cain, she said, "With the  
LORD's help, I have produced\* a man!" <sup>2</sup> Later

she gave birth to his brother and named him  
Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd,  
while Cain cultivated the ground. <sup>3</sup> When it was  
time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his  
crops as a gift to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought  
a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs  
from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and  
his gift, <sup>5</sup> but he did not accept Cain and his  
gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked  
dejected.

<sup>6</sup> "Why are you so angry?" the LORD asked  
Cain. "Why do you look so dejected? <sup>7</sup> You will  
be accepted if you do what is right. But if you  
refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is  
crouching at the door, eager to control you. But  
you must subdue it and be its master."

<sup>8</sup> One day Cain suggested to his brother, "Let's  
go out into the fields."\* And while they were in  
the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and  
killed him.

<sup>9</sup> Afterward the LORD asked Cain, "Where is  
your brother? Where is Abel?"

"I don't know," Cain responded. "Am I my  
brother's guardian?"

<sup>10</sup> But the LORD said, "What have you done?  
Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from  
the ground! <sup>11</sup> Now you are cursed and banished  
from the ground, which has swallowed your  
brother's blood. <sup>12</sup> No longer will the ground  
yield good crops for you, no matter how hard  
you work! From now on you will be a homeless  
wanderer on the earth."

<sup>13</sup> Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment\*  
is too great for me to bear! <sup>14</sup> You have banished  
me from the land and from your presence; you  
have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone  
who finds me will kill me!"

<sup>15</sup> The LORD replied, "No, for I will give a  
sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills  
you." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to  
warn anyone who might try to kill him. <sup>16</sup> So  
Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the  
land of Nod,\* east of Eden.

**The Descendants of Cain**

<sup>17</sup> Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she  
became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then

**3:15** Or bruise; also in 3:15b. **3:16** Or And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you. **3:20** Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life." **3:22** Or the man; Hebrew reads ha-adam. **4:1a** Or the man; also in 4:25. **4:1b** Or / have acquired. Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "produce" or "acquire." **4:8** As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields." **4:13** Or My sin. **4:16** Nod means "wandering."

Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. <sup>18</sup> Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of\* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

<sup>19</sup> Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. <sup>20</sup> Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. <sup>21</sup> His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. <sup>22</sup> Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. <sup>23</sup> One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.  
I have killed a man who attacked me,  
a young man who wounded me.

<sup>24</sup> If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,  
then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

#### *The Birth of Seth*

<sup>25</sup> Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,\* for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed."

<sup>26</sup> When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

#### *The Descendants of Adam*

**5** This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,\* he made them to be like himself. <sup>2</sup> He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

<sup>3</sup> When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth.

<sup>4</sup> After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

<sup>6</sup> When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of\* Enosh. <sup>7</sup> After the birth of\*

Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup> Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

<sup>9</sup> When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. <sup>10</sup> After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup> Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

<sup>12</sup> When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup> After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup> Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

<sup>15</sup> When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. <sup>16</sup> After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup> Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

<sup>18</sup> When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. <sup>19</sup> After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup> Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

<sup>21</sup> When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

<sup>23</sup> Enoch lived 365 years, <sup>24</sup> walking in close

**J** GENESIS 4:26b—This marks the beginning of the worship of the Lord; later, in the book of Revelation, John the disciple says Jesus will be worshiped for eternity (Revelation 4:8b).

**J** GENESIS 5:2—The Pharisees try to trap Jesus by asking him what looks like an innocent question about divorce, and Jesus responds by quoting this verse (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6).

**J** GENESIS 5:21-24—God delights in us "walking in close fellowship" with him, and Jesus has invited us to "walk in close fellowship" by knowing his heart and mind (Luke 24:35).

<sup>4:18</sup> Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. <sup>4:25</sup> Seth probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed." <sup>5:1</sup> Or man; Hebrew reads adam; similarly in 5:2. <sup>5:6</sup> Or the ancestor of; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. <sup>5:7</sup> Or the birth of this ancestor of; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

## GENESIS 6 //

fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

<sup>25</sup>When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. <sup>26</sup>After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>27</sup>Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

<sup>28</sup>When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. <sup>29</sup>Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief\* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed."

<sup>30</sup>After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup>Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

<sup>32</sup>After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

**A World Gone Wrong**

**6** Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them.

<sup>2</sup>The sons of God saw the beautiful women\* and took any they wanted as their wives. <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with\* humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years."

<sup>4</sup>In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. <sup>6</sup>So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the

small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.

**The Story of Noah**

<sup>9</sup>This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. <sup>10</sup>Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. <sup>13</sup>So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!"

<sup>14</sup>"Build a large boat\* from cypress wood\* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. <sup>15</sup>Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.\* <sup>16</sup>Leave an 18-inch opening\* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

<sup>17</sup>"Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. <sup>18</sup>But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. <sup>19</sup>Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. <sup>20</sup>Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup>And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals."

<sup>22</sup>So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

**The Flood Covers the Earth**

**7** When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,\* and

**J** GENESIS 6:11-13—Jesus compares the condition of the world and the surprise of God's judgment upon it with the circumstances that will surround the time when he returns to earth (Matthew 24:37-39).

**5:29** Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort." **6:2** Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in **6:4**. **6:3** Greek version reads *will not remain in*. **6:14a** Traditionally rendered an ark. **6:14b** Or gopher wood. **6:15** Hebrew 300 cubits [138 meters] long, 50 cubits [23 meters] wide, and 30 cubits [13.8 meters] high. **6:16** Hebrew an opening of 1 cubit [46 centimeters]. **7:2** Hebrew of each clean animal; similarly in **7:8**.

take one pair of each of the others. <sup>3</sup>Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. <sup>4</sup>Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created."

<sup>5</sup>So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. <sup>7</sup>He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. <sup>8</sup>With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. <sup>9</sup>They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup>After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

<sup>11</sup>When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. <sup>12</sup>The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

<sup>13</sup>That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. <sup>14</sup>With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. <sup>15</sup>Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. <sup>16</sup>A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

<sup>17</sup>For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. <sup>18</sup>As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. <sup>19</sup>Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, <sup>20</sup>rising more than twenty-two feet\* above the highest peaks. <sup>21</sup>All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. <sup>22</sup>Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. <sup>23</sup>God wiped out every living

thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. <sup>24</sup>And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

#### The Flood Recedes

**8** But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. <sup>2</sup>The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. <sup>3</sup>So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, <sup>4</sup>exactly five months from the time the flood began,\* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>Two and a half months later,\* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

<sup>6</sup>After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat <sup>7</sup>and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. <sup>8</sup>He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. <sup>9</sup>But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. <sup>10</sup>After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. <sup>11</sup>This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. <sup>12</sup>He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

<sup>13</sup>Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,\* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. <sup>14</sup>Two more months went by,\* and at last the earth was dry!

<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah, <sup>16</sup>"Leave the boat,

**J** GENESIS 7:23b-24—Jesus is, metaphorically, our "ark"—those who are "in" him will be saved from God's judgment (John 3:16-17).

7:20 Hebrew 15 cubits [6.9 meters]. 8:4 Hebrew on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew On the first day of the tenth month; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew On the first day of the first month; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived; see note on 8:13.

## JESUS *in* MATTHEW

The Bible tells a big, sprawling story of sin and redemption, of death and resurrection. It takes us from Creation to New Creation—from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem. Along the way, the plot sometimes feels lost and the story seems . . . stalled. But when we turn the page from Malachi to Matthew, the twisting plot of the Story God is telling is about to come into sharp focus. We're about to meet the central character of the Story—his name is Jesus!

A few years ago I read the Bible straight through like you would any other book. I was trying to read it as if I'd never heard the Story. There were moments of elation, but also times when I felt the pain of the Hebrew prophets as they nearly despaired. Would the promises God had made to Abraham and his seed ever come true? Would the longed-for reign of the Messiah ever arrive? The wintery day I ended my reading of Malachi and turned the page to begin Matthew was during the season of Advent. I was sitting by a woodstove with a warm fire. Music played quietly in the background. As I read the first words of Matthew 1:18, "This is how Jesus the Messiah was born," the radio began to play the familiar carol "What Child Is This?" Tears filled my eyes. The Story was back on track, and God was keeping his promise!

Matthew opens his Gospel (his telling of God's redemptive Story) not with the birth of Jesus, but with a long genealogy tracing Jesus' lineage all the way back to Abraham. Matthew wants us to understand that even though God is doing a new thing with Jesus, that new thing is in continuity with what we have read in the Hebrew Scriptures. When we go from the Old to the New Testament, it's not that God has abandoned what he was doing with Israel from Genesis to Malachi—rather, God is bringing into fulfillment the promises he made to David and Abraham. So Matthew opens the New Testament with these words: "This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). God had promised David that a son of his would sit upon an eternal throne. God had promised Abraham that his seed would bless the nations. These promises are fulfilled in Jesus.

In writing his Gospel, Matthew is careful to remind us that this Jesus we call Lord is the Jewish Messiah spoken of by the prophets. The New Testament is not God's "Plan B"—it's the revelation of his "Plan A." From the wise men who seek the king of the Jews, to Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount, to the post-resurrection appearance when Jesus says, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18), Matthew is joyfully announcing the good news—King Jesus has come, and he has brought with him the reign of God!

—Brian Zahnd

# MATTHEW

## *The Ancestors of Jesus the Messiah*

**1** This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham\*:

- <sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac.  
Isaac was the father of Jacob.  
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.
- <sup>3</sup> Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).  
Perez was the father of Hezron.  
Hezron was the father of Ram.\*
- <sup>4</sup> Ram was the father of Amminadab.  
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.  
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
- <sup>5</sup> Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).  
Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).  
Obed was the father of Jesse.
- <sup>6</sup> Jesse was the father of King David.  
David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).
- <sup>7</sup> Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.  
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.  
Abijah was the father of Asa.\*
- <sup>8</sup> Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.  
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.\*  
Jehoram was the father\* of Uzziah.
- <sup>9</sup> Uzziah was the father of Jotham.  
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.  
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.
- <sup>10</sup> Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.  
Manasseh was the father of Amon.\*  
Amon was the father of Josiah.

HOW WOULD JESUS  
INTERACT WITH SOCIAL  
MEDIA IF HE HAD BEEN BORN  
INTO OUR TIME?

<sup>11</sup> Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin\* and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).

<sup>12</sup> After the Babylonian exile:  
Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.  
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

<sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.  
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

<sup>14</sup> Eliakim was the father of Azor.  
Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Akim.  
Akim was the father of Eliud.

<sup>15</sup> Eliud was the father of Eleazar.  
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

<sup>16</sup> Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.  
Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

<sup>17</sup> All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.

## *The Birth of Jesus the Messiah*

<sup>18</sup> This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement\* quietly.

<sup>20</sup> As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was

<sup>1:1</sup> Greek *Jesus the Messiah, Son of David and son of Abraham*. <sup>1:3</sup> Greek *Aram*, a variant spelling of Ram; also in 1:4. See 1 Chr 2:9-10.  
<sup>1:7</sup> Greek *Asaph*, a variant spelling of Asa; also in 1:8. See 1 Chr 3:10. <sup>1:8a</sup> Greek *Joram*, a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 1:8b. See 1 Kgs 22:50 and note at 1 Chr 3:11. <sup>1:8b</sup> Or *ancestor*; also in 1:11. <sup>1:10</sup> Greek *Amos*, a variant spelling of Amon; also in 1:10b. See 1 Chr 3:14.  
<sup>1:11</sup> Greek *Jecoloth*, a variant spelling of Jehoiachin; also in 1:12. See 2 Kgs 24:6 and note at 1 Chr 3:16. <sup>1:19</sup> Greek *to divorce her*.

## MATTHEW 2 //

conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus,\* for he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup>All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

<sup>23</sup>"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel,\* which means 'God is with us.'"

<sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

*Visitors from the East*

**2** Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men\* from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, <sup>2</sup>"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose,\* and we have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup>King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup>He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

<sup>5</sup>"In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote:

<sup>6</sup>'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities\* of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.\*\*"

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

<sup>9</sup>After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! <sup>11</sup>They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup>When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

*The Escape to Egypt*

<sup>13</sup>After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

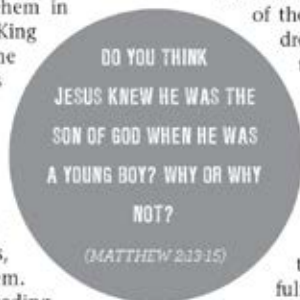
<sup>14</sup>That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, <sup>15</sup>and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt.\*\*"

<sup>16</sup>Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance. <sup>17</sup>Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup>"A cry was heard in Ramah— weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead.\*\*"

*The Return to Nazareth*

<sup>19</sup>When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. <sup>20</sup>"Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his



1:21 Jesus means "The Lord saves." 1:23 Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 (Greek version). 2:1 Or royal astrologers; Greek reads magi; also in 2:7, 16. 2:2 Or star in the east. 2:6a Greek the rulers. 2:6b Mic 5:2; 2 Sam 5:2. 2:15 Hos 11:1. 2:18 Jer 31:15.



mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

<sup>21</sup>So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. <sup>22</sup>But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup>So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

#### *John the Baptist Prepares the Way*

**3** In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, <sup>2</sup>“Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” <sup>3</sup>The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming!  
Clear the road for him!’”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. <sup>6</sup>And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

<sup>7</sup>But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize,<sup>\*</sup> he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup>Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. <sup>9</sup>Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. <sup>10</sup>Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup>“I baptize with<sup>\*</sup> water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with

the Holy Spirit and with fire.” <sup>12</sup>He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”

#### *The Baptism of Jesus*

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup>But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

<sup>15</sup>But Jesus said, “**It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.**”<sup>\*</sup> So John agreed to baptize him.

<sup>16</sup>After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened<sup>\*</sup> and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. <sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

#### *The Temptation of Jesus*

**4** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. <sup>2</sup>For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

<sup>3</sup>During that time the devil<sup>\*</sup> came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”

<sup>4</sup>But Jesus told him, “**No! The Scriptures say,**

‘**People do not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the  
mouth of God.**’<sup>4a</sup>”

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, <sup>6</sup>and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

‘**He will order his angels to protect you.  
And they will hold you up with their hands  
so you won’t even hurt your foot on a  
stone.**’<sup>5b</sup>”

<sup>7</sup>Jesus responded, “**The Scriptures also say,  
‘You must not test the LORD your God.’**”<sup>5c</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup>“I will give

<sup>3:2</sup> Or has come, or is coming soon. <sup>3:3</sup> Isa 40:3 (Greek version). <sup>3:7</sup> Or coming to be baptized. <sup>3:11a</sup> Or in. <sup>3:11b</sup> Or in the Holy Spirit and in fire. <sup>3:15</sup> Or for we must fulfill all righteousness. <sup>3:16</sup> Some manuscripts read opened to him. <sup>4:3</sup> Greek the tempter. <sup>4:4</sup> Deut 8:3. <sup>4:6</sup> Ps 91:11-12. <sup>4:7</sup> Deut 6:16.

## MATTHEW 5 //

it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

<sup>10</sup> "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say,

*'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'*<sup>10\*</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

*The Ministry of Jesus Begins*

<sup>12</sup> When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. <sup>14</sup> This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>15</sup> "In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,

<sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.

And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined."<sup>16\*</sup>

<sup>17</sup> From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."<sup>17\*</sup>

*The First Disciples*

<sup>18</sup> One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. <sup>19</sup> Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" <sup>20</sup> And they left their nets at once and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. <sup>22</sup> They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

*Crowds Follow Jesus*

<sup>23</sup> Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And

he healed every kind of disease and illness. <sup>24</sup> News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. <sup>25</sup> Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from Galilee, the Ten Towns,\* Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

*The Sermon on the Mount*

**5** One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.

*The Beatitudes*

<sup>3</sup> "God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,\*

for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup> God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup> God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,\* for they will be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

<sup>10</sup> God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

<sup>11</sup> "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. <sup>12</sup> Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

*Teaching about Salt and Light*

<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

<sup>4:10</sup> Deut. 6:13. <sup>4:15-16</sup> Isa. 9:1-2 (Greek version). <sup>4:17</sup> Or has come, or is coming soon. <sup>4:25</sup> Greek Decapolis. <sup>5:3</sup> Greek: poor in spirit. <sup>5:6</sup> Or for righteousness.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

#### Teaching about the Law

<sup>17</sup>“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. <sup>18</sup>I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. <sup>19</sup>So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

<sup>20</sup>“But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

#### Teaching about Anger

<sup>21</sup>“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’” <sup>22</sup>But I say, if you are even angry with someone,\* you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,\* you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,\* you are in danger of the fires of hell.\*

<sup>23</sup>“So if you are presenting a sacrifice\* at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

<sup>25</sup>“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.\*”

#### Teaching about Adultery

<sup>27</sup>“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’” <sup>28</sup>But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>So if your eye—even your good eye\*—

5:21 Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17. 5:22a Some manuscripts add without cause. 5:22b Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: if you say to your brother, “Roca.” 5:22c Greek if you say, “You fool.” 5:22d Greek Gehenna; also in 5:29, 30. 5:23 Greek gift; also in 5:24. 5:26 Greek the last kodrantes [i.e., quadrans]. 5:27 Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18. 5:29 Greek your right eye.

## JESUS ANSWERS LIFE’S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### MATTHEW 5:17-20—ESSENTIAL QUESTION: WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG?

The Pharisees have super-charged the quest for “what is right and wrong” and made it into a kind of extreme competition. They have taken the basics of the “law” that God delivered to them—ways of relating to him and to each other—and exploded that simple outline into hundreds and hundreds of tiny rules and regulations designed to guarantee “righteousness.” And here Jesus says that “unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!” And then, through the rest of Matthew 5, he drives home his point by comparing common standards for what’s right and wrong to the standard he’s set. He’s saying it’s essentially impossible to live a “righteous” life by working harder at it—our solitary hope for living righteously is to allow the only Righteous Presence in the universe to live in us, to live through us. We will know right and wrong not when we try harder to meet God’s standards of righteousness, but when we yield ourselves to Jesus, who will help us to live righteously from the inside-out.

## MATTHEW 6 //

causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.<sup>30</sup> And if your hand—even your stronger hand\*—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

**Teaching about Divorce**

<sup>31</sup>“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’<sup>32</sup> But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

**Teaching about Vows**

<sup>33</sup>“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’<sup>34</sup> But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne.<sup>35</sup> And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King.<sup>36</sup> Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black.<sup>37</sup> Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

**Teaching about Revenge**

<sup>38</sup>“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’<sup>39</sup> But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.<sup>40</sup> If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.<sup>41</sup> If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile,\* carry it two miles.<sup>42</sup> Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

**Teaching about Love for Enemies**

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’\* and hate your enemy.<sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies!\* Pray for those who persecute you!<sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.<sup>46</sup> If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much.<sup>47</sup> If you are kind only to your friends,\* how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.<sup>48</sup> But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

**Teaching about Giving to the Needy**

**6** “Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.<sup>2</sup> When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the

5:30 Greek your right hand. 5:31 Deut 24:1. 5:33 Num 30:2. 5:38 Greek the law that says: ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21. 5:41 Greek million [4,854 feet or 1,478 meters]. 5:43 Lev 19:18. 5:44 Some manuscripts add Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you. Compare Luke 6:27-28. 5:47 Greek your brothers.

## J. JESUS ANSWERS LIFE'S ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

### MATTHEW 6:1-6—ESSENTIAL QUESTION: IS GOD REAL?

Here Jesus urges his listeners to do “good deeds” in secret, without drawing attention to ourselves. He’s urging us to not grab attention or reward or recognition for the intrinsically good things we do, because we don’t need to—God is real and can see all the secret things we do, and God is eager to “reward” us for those things. When we do good things in order to be rewarded by those around us, we’re essentially saying that the only real reward we’ll get is from the people we can see—it’s an act of disbelief in God’s real-ness. And Jesus is here simply reminding us: *Hey, God is real—you don’t have to scrape and hordie and guarantee your reward for doing good, because God can see what you do in secret. So do things in secret so the only source of your reward can come from God. When you do that, you proclaim the truth—that God is real.*

synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. <sup>4</sup>Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

#### Teaching about Prayer and Fasting

<sup>5</sup>“When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

<sup>7</sup>“When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. <sup>8</sup>Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! <sup>9</sup>Pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,  
may your name be kept holy.

<sup>10</sup> May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today the food we need,\*

<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin  
against us.

<sup>13</sup> And don't let us yield to temptation,\*  
but rescue us from the evil one.\*

<sup>14</sup>“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

<sup>16</sup>“And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, comb your hair\* and wash your face. <sup>18</sup>Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

#### Teaching about Money and Possessions

<sup>19</sup>“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

<sup>22</sup>“Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. <sup>23</sup>But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

<sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

<sup>25</sup>“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? <sup>27</sup>Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

<sup>28</sup>“And why worry about your clothing? Look

## J REFRAMING JESUS

### MATTHEW 6:5-16

#### JESUS TEACHES LIFE-CHANGING TRUTHS

Who's been your favorite teacher? Was it your third-grade teacher who always told great jokes? Or was it a history teacher who brought boring dates and facts to life? Here in Matthew's Gospel, we encounter many moments when Jesus powerfully teaches the people around him. Crowds mob around him to hear him speak; his words and stories are unusual, amazing, and challenging. They're the kind of things you'd never forget. As you read through this specific passage—and others throughout this Gospel—imagine you're there, in the crowd, listening to Jesus' life-changing words. What is he teaching you? How will you respond?

<sup>6:11</sup> Or Give us today our food for the day; or Give us today our food for tomorrow. <sup>6:13a</sup> Or And keep us from being tested. <sup>6:13b</sup> Or from evil. Some manuscripts add For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. <sup>6:17</sup> Greek anoint your head.

MY TO-DO LISTS ARE  
REPLACED WITH REST

MY INNER MEAN GIRL  
IS SILENCED

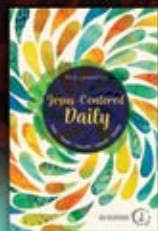
MY WORRIES ARE  
REPLACED WITH PEACE

WHEN I PAY RIDICULOUS  
ATTENTION TO

MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS  
ARE RELIEVED

*Jesus*

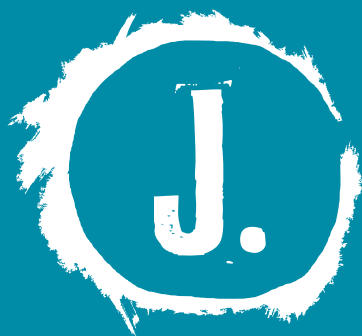
MY PURPOSE IS REVEALED



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