

It was  
very good  
indeed

# genesis



*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed.* **1:31**

**ON THE TIMELINE** Authorship of the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) has consistently been attributed to Moses, an influential Israelite leader from the fifteenth century BC. Though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments recognize Moses as the Torah's author. Genesis was likely written during the forty years when the Israelites wandered in the desert (1446 BC–1406 BC). The events in Genesis begin at creation and conclude about 1800 BC with the circumstances leading up to the Israelites' time in the land of Egypt.

**A LITTLE BACKGROUND** The Torah (also a Hebrew term for "law") was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Some time before Christ was born it was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch. Genesis can be divided into two sections: the "primeval history," or the general history found in chapters 1–11, and the "patriarchal history," or the history focusing on God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants, found in chapters 12–50.

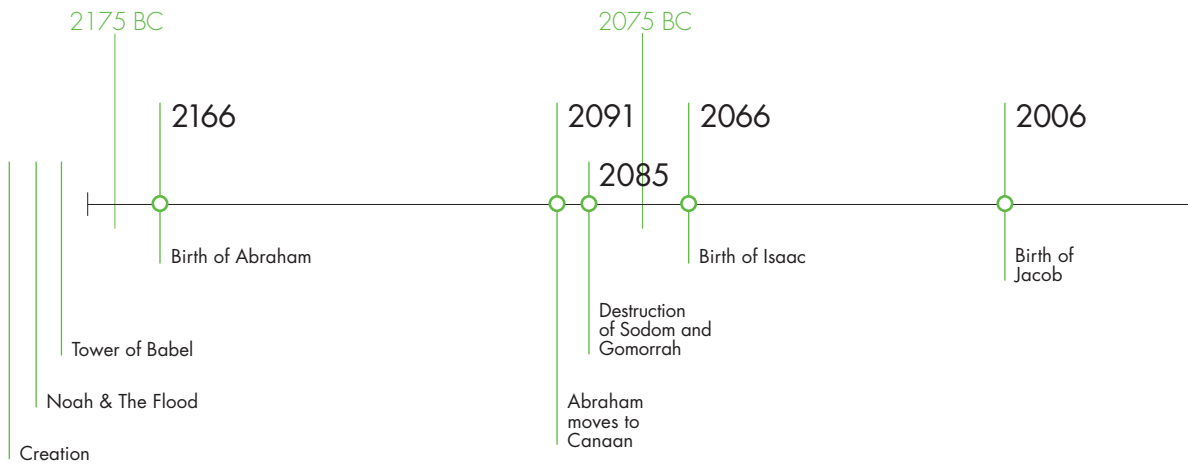
**MESSAGE & PURPOSE** Genesis is a book of new beginnings. It reveals the beginning of the heavens and the earth, of humanity and marriage, of sin and nations and languages, and the beginning of our need for a Savior. In Genesis we see that all God's creation was, in the beginning, thoroughly good; and in Genesis we see mankind's first sin and the consequences of that sin. All of our brokenness begins here, in the first book of the Bible, as does God's covenant to redeem His people.

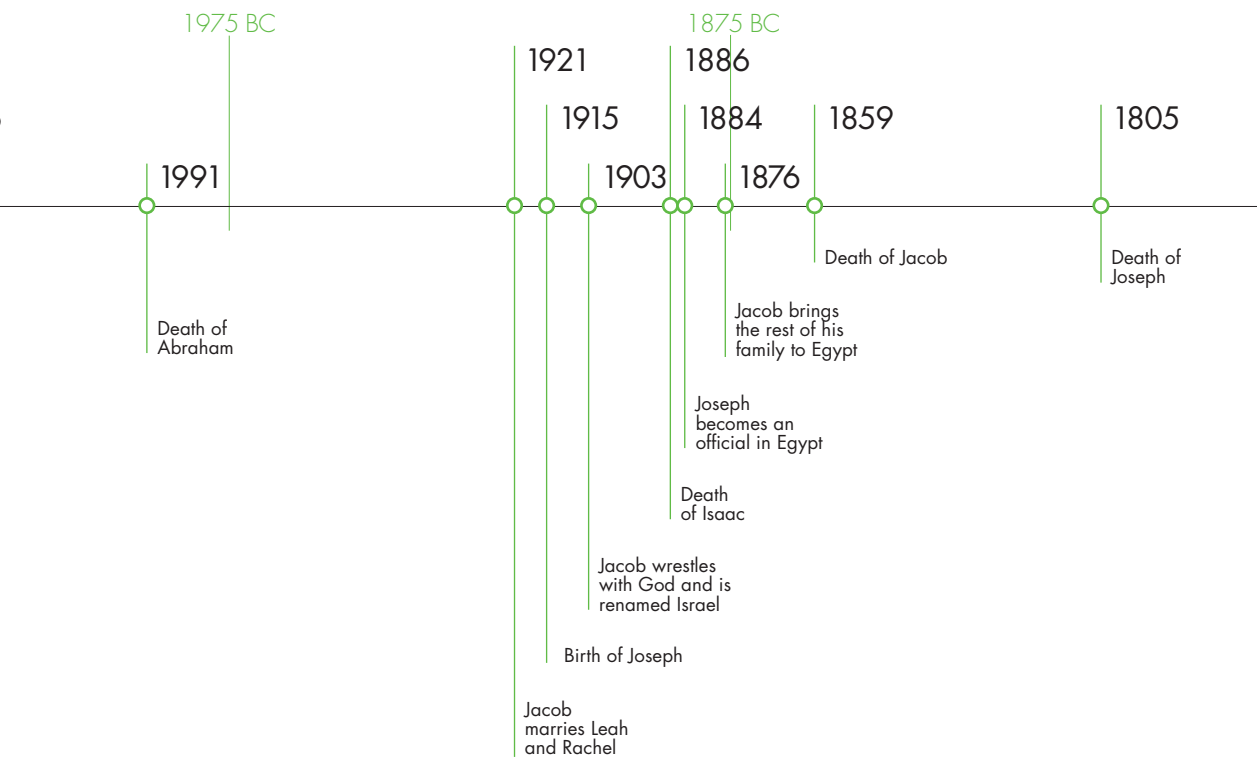
Genesis provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. It unfolds God's plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham's descendants, remaining faithful to His people despite their unfaithfulness to Him.

## **GIVE THANKS FOR THE BOOK OF GENESIS:**

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we fell, and the beginning of God's gracious work on our behalf. Genesis establishes our foundational understanding of God's covenant with Israel through the giving of the Law. Without an understanding of the Law, we are unable to see our desperate need for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

# THE BOOK OF GENESIS IN HISTORY





# READ AND UNDERSTAND GENESIS

The Bible is a complete work in which many stories combine to tell one story. As you read the book of Genesis, consider reading the additional passages to discover how the whole of Scripture works together.

Week 1	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 1-3</b>	John 1:1-5; Romans 16:20
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 4-5	Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 12:24
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 6-8	Psalm 144:13-14; Romans 3:10-25
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 9-10</b>	Luke 1:68-75; Revelation 10:1
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 11	Psalm 2; Luke 1:51

Week 2	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 12:1-13:4</b>	Matthew 1:1-2; Galatians 3:10-14
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 13:5-16:16	Galatians 3:15-4:7; Hebrews 7:11-22
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 17-18	Mark 10:23-31; Hebrews 9:15
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 19-20	Psalm 136:23; 2 Peter 2:7-9
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 21-22</b>	Isaiah 54:1; Hebrews 11:8-12

Week 3	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 23:1-25:18	Ecclesiastes 12:7; Romans 9:9-23
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 25:19-26:35</b>	1 Samuel 14:47; Hebrews 6:13-18
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 27-28	Psalm 121:5-8; Matthew 20:1-16
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 29-30</b>	Psalm 25:18; Song of Songs 1:1-7
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 31-32	Psalm 34:7; Ephesians 3:7-12

Week 4	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 33-34	Psalm 44:11; Hebrews 11:20-22
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 35-36	Psalm 116:1-2; Isaiah 43:2
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 37-38	Psalm 77:2; Matthew 27:27-31
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 39	Psalm 1; Matthew 5:16
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 40-41	Psalm 25:14; 2 Corinthians 3:5

Week 5	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 42-43	Romans 8:28; 1 Timothy 1:16
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 44:1-45:15	Galatians 3:14; 1 Peter 1:10-12
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Genesis 45:16-46:34</b>	Psalm 90:10-17; Isaiah 41:8-10
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 47:1-49:28	Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 7:23-25
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 49:29-33; 50	Acts 2:22-24; Romans 12:19

## THE CREATION

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>A</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, 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> God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

<sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky."<sup>B</sup> Evening came and then morning: the second day.

<sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land "earth," and the gathering of the water he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

<sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> Evening came and then morning: the third day.

<sup>14</sup> Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons<sup>C</sup> and for days and years. <sup>15</sup> They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. <sup>17</sup> God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> Then God said, "Let the water swarm with<sup>D</sup> living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the large sea-creatures<sup>E</sup> and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man<sup>F</sup> in<sup>G</sup> our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth,<sup>H</sup> and the creatures that crawl<sup>I</sup> on the earth."

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<sup>A</sup>1:1 Or *created the universe*   <sup>B</sup>1:8 Or "heavens."   <sup>C</sup>1:14 Or *for the appointed times*   <sup>D</sup>1:20 Lit *with swarms of*   <sup>E</sup>1:21 Or *created sea monsters*   <sup>F</sup>1:26 Or *human beings*; Hb 'adam, also in v. 27   <sup>G</sup>1:26 Or *as*   <sup>H</sup>1:26 Syr reads *sky, and over every animal of the land*   <sup>I</sup>1:26 Or *scurry*

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image;  
 he created him in<sup>A</sup> the image of God;  
 he created them male and female.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls<sup>B</sup> on the earth."<sup>29</sup> God also said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you,<sup>30</sup> for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given<sup>C</sup> every green plant for food." And it was so.<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

**2** So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed.  
<sup>2</sup> On the seventh<sup>D</sup> day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested<sup>E</sup> on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.<sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.<sup>F</sup>

#### MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN

<sup>4</sup> These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time<sup>G</sup> that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,<sup>5</sup> no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land,<sup>H</sup> and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.<sup>6</sup> But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground.<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed.<sup>9</sup> The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river went<sup>I</sup> out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.<sup>J</sup> <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,<sup>K</sup> where there is gold.<sup>12</sup> Gold from that land is pure;<sup>L</sup> bdellium<sup>M</sup> and onyx<sup>N</sup> are also there.<sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush.<sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Tigris, which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,<sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be

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<sup>A</sup> 1:27 Or *man as his own image; he created him as* <sup>B</sup> 1:28 Or *and all scurrying animals* <sup>C</sup> 1:30 *I have given* added for clarity <sup>D</sup> 2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read *sixth*  
<sup>E</sup> 2:2 Or *ceased*, also in v. 3 <sup>F</sup> 2:3 Lit *work that God created to make* <sup>G</sup> 2:4 Lit *creation on the day* <sup>H</sup> 2:5 Or *earth* <sup>I</sup> 2:10 Or *goes* <sup>J</sup> 2:10 Lit *became four heads*  
<sup>K</sup> 2:11 Or *of the Havilah* <sup>L</sup> 2:12 Lit *good* <sup>M</sup> 2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin <sup>N</sup> 2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain

# CLOSING THE DOOR ON SHAME

GENESIS 1-3; JOHN 1:1-5; ROMANS 16:20

When I read the chapters at the beginning of the Bible, where the world and all its inhabitants were as they were meant to be, a piece of me wants to pretend the story stops there.

God hung the stars, separated the waters, and created things so incredible and intricately beautiful our eyes can hardly make sense of them. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed" (Gn 1:31). The end.

I want to stay in that story—the story of untainted perfection, the story where God made Adam and Eve, and they "felt no shame" (Gn 2:25). Can you imagine?

Eve wasn't afraid to sing for fear someone might hear her. She wasn't ashamed of her teeth, her accent, or the shape of her toes. She could've been a size 2 or 22, with green eyes and curly hair, or brown eyes and straight hair. However Eve looked, she certainly wasn't ashamed of it! She walked around Eden with Adam, unashamed and at peace with her Maker.

Then along comes Genesis 3, and all the trombones in my head collectively "womp womp." In disobedience, Adam and Eve sought to become like God. They made the decision that who they were wasn't enough—they wanted more. With their sin came shame.

Genesis 3:7 says, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked,"

so they made coverings to hide their nakedness. But all the fig leaves in Eden wouldn't hide the sin in their souls. Adam and Eve were ashamed to be seen by God—they were ashamed of their sin.

Shame is a powerful force. Like Satan himself, it tells us all kinds of lies. But isn't it interesting: Satan has a way of making us feel less ashamed of our sin (the thing that separates us from God), and more ashamed of ourselves (the thing that links us to Him).

When facing the world, we're ashamed of our image, God-given though it is. When facing God, we're ashamed of our sin. Shame is a double-headed monster from which there seems to be no escape. No wonder Eve wanted to hide!

But God has such good news for us today: there is a cure for shame of all kinds and for all time! "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Rm 8:1). We can call off the impossible search for a fig leaf large enough to hide our sin and shame from God. Adam and Eve let shame in the door, but Jesus bore the shame of the whole world on the cross, taking it to the grave with Him. He defeated sin and shame, and death itself, so we can be presented blameless and unashamed to the Father.

**Jesus closed the door on shame and opened the door to repentance and freedom.** Let us live in that freedom today.



Repent  
BECAUSE THE  
KINGDOM  
of  
HEAVEN  
HAS COME NEAR

# matthew



*From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near.”* **4:17**

**ON THE TIMELINE** Matthew was written in the first century, around AD 60, before the fall of the temple in Jerusalem (AD 70). The events of Matthew took place during the life of Christ, between roughly 5 BC and AD 33.

**A LITTLE BACKGROUND** Though he did not identify himself in the text, the early church unanimously affirmed that the apostle Matthew authored the Gospel of Matthew. Most scholars believe that Matthew used Mark’s Gospel in writing his own. If this is correct, Matthew’s Gospel was written after Mark’s, though the date of Mark’s Gospel is also a bit of a mystery. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter’s death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only twenty years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive.

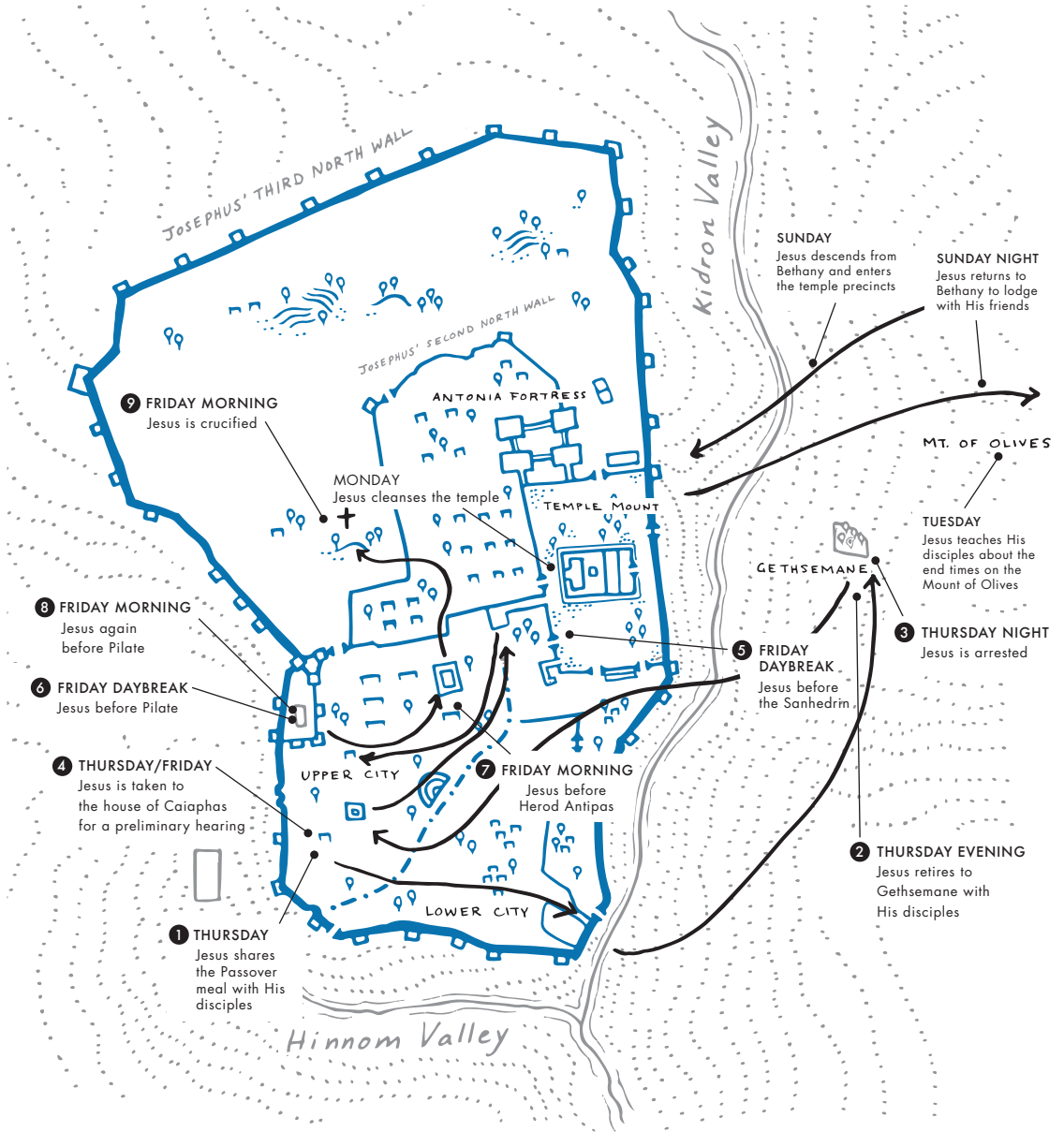
**MESSAGE & PURPOSE** It seems fitting that the first book of the New Testament begins with the words: “An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.” This Gospel was written from a strong Jewish perspective to show that Jesus truly is the Messiah and coming King promised in the Old Testament.

Matthew presents an eyewitness testimony of the ministry of Jesus and emphasizes certain theological truths:

1. Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited King of God’s people.
2. Jesus is the new Abraham, the founder of a new spiritual Israel consisting of all people (both Jews and Gentiles) who choose to follow Him.
3. Jesus is the new Moses, the deliverer, instructor, and mediator of God’s people.
4. Jesus is the Immanuel, the virgin-born Son of God who fulfills the promises of the OT.

## **GIVE THANKS FOR THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

As the first book in the NT, the Gospel of Matthew serves as a gateway between the two testaments. Of the NT books, and certainly of the four Gospels, Matthew makes the most direct connections to the OT. Matthew gave us God’s entire plan from Genesis to Revelation, and he referred to Hebrew prophecies about sixty times. He also looked forward by discussing not only the Messiah’s coming and His ministry, but also His future plan for His Church and kingdom.



## THE PASSION WEEK IN JERUSALEM

Week 1	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Matthew 1-2</b>	Isaiah 9:2-7; 11:1-9; Jeremiah 31:1-5
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 3-4	Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 4:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 5:1-16	Psalms 37:11; 2 Corinthians 7:10
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 5:17-48	2 Timothy 3:15-16; James 4:1-2
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Matthew 6-7</b>	1 Chronicles 29:11-13; 1 John 2:28-29

Week 2	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 8	2 Samuel 22:1-6; Isaiah 53:4-5
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 9	Numbers 19:11-21; Hosea 2:19-20
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 10	Acts 1:13; James 2:1-7
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 11	Isaiah 29:18-19; 1 John 5:3
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 12	Leviticus 19:9-10; Isaiah 42:1-4

Week 3	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13:1-52	Exodus 34:35; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 13:53-14:36	Deuteronomy 8:3; Isaiah 43:10-13
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 15-16	Zechariah 12:10; 2 Peter 1:16-18
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Matthew 17-18</b>	1 Kings 8:10-13; Jeremiah 23:1-4
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 19-20	Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Peter 3:10-13

Week 4	GOING DEEPER
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Matthew 21-22</b>	Ezekiel 16:10-13; Zechariah 9:9
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 23-24	Exodus 10:21-23; Romans 8:22-23
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 25	Isaiah 54:4-6; Daniel 7:13-14
<input type="checkbox"/> Matthew 26	Leviticus 23:5-6; Isaiah 53:7; Jeremiah 31:31
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Matthew 27-28</b>	Psalms 22:7-8; 1 Corinthians 15:6; 2 Corinthians 3:18

## READ AND UNDERSTAND MATTHEW

The Bible is a complete work in which many stories combine to tell one story. As you read the Gospel of Matthew, consider reading the additional passages to discover how the whole of Scripture works together.

## THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

**1** An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

## FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

- <sup>2</sup> Abraham fathered<sup>^</sup> Isaac,  
Isaac fathered Jacob,  
Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers,  
<sup>3</sup> Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar,  
Perez fathered Hezron,  
Hezron fathered Aram,  
<sup>4</sup> Aram fathered Amminadab,  
Amminadab fathered Nahshon,  
Nahshon fathered Salmon,  
<sup>5</sup> Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,  
Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth,  
Obed fathered Jesse,  
<sup>6</sup> and Jesse fathered King David.

## FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

- David fathered Solomon<sup>^</sup> by Uriah's wife,  
<sup>7</sup> Solomon fathered Rehoboam,  
Rehoboam fathered Abijah,  
Abijah fathered Asa,<sup>^</sup>  
<sup>8</sup> Asa<sup>^</sup> fathered Jehoshaphat,  
Jehoshaphat fathered Joram,<sup>^</sup>  
Joram fathered Uzziah,  
<sup>9</sup> Uzziah fathered Jotham,  
Jotham fathered Ahaz,  
Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,  
<sup>10</sup> Hezekiah fathered Manasseh,  
Manasseh fathered Amon,<sup>^</sup>  
Amon fathered Josiah,  
<sup>11</sup> and Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers  
at the time of the exile to Babylon.

## FROM THE EXILE TO THE CHRIST

- <sup>12</sup> After the exile to Babylon  
Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel,  
Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,  
<sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel fathered Abiud,  
Abiud fathered Eliakim,  
Eliakim fathered Azor,  
<sup>14</sup> Azor fathered Zadok,  
Zadok fathered Achim,  
Achim fathered Eliud,

<sup>^</sup>1:2 In vv. 2-16 either a son, as here, or a later descendant, as in v. 8

<sup>^</sup>1:6 Other mss add *King* <sup>^</sup>1:7,8 Other mss read *Asaph* <sup>^</sup>1:8 = Jehoram

<sup>^</sup>1:10 Other mss read *Amos*

- <sup>15</sup> Eliud fathered Eleazar,  
 Eleazar fathered Matthan,  
 Matthan fathered Jacob,  
<sup>16</sup> and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary,  
 who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Christ.

<sup>17</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations.

#### THE NATIVITY OF THE CHRIST

<sup>18</sup> The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged<sup>a</sup> to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

- <sup>23</sup> **See, the virgin will become pregnant  
 and give birth to a son,  
 and they will name him Immanuel,<sup>b</sup>**

which is translated "God is with us."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her <sup>25</sup> but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. <sup>c</sup> And he named him Jesus.

#### WISE MEN VISIT THE KING

**2** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him."<sup>d</sup>

<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born.

<sup>5</sup> "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet:

- <sup>6</sup> **And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
 are by no means least among the rulers of Judah:  
 Because out of you will come a ruler  
 who will shepherd my people Israel."**<sup>e</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup> He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and

<sup>a</sup>1:18 Or *betrothed* <sup>b</sup>1:23 Is 7:14 <sup>c</sup>1:25 Other mss read *to her firstborn son*

<sup>d</sup>2:2 Or *to pay him homage* <sup>e</sup>2:6 Mc 5:2

# AN EDICT OF DEATH

MATTHEW 1-2; ISAIAH 7:14; ISAIAH 9:2-7; ISAIAH 11:1-9; MICAH 5:2

I like it when things go according to plan. More specifically, my plan. But the world doesn't revolve around me, and sometimes plans have to change. When they do, I usually remain pretty open to those changes (meaning, I hyperventilate and break out in a cold sweat).

I wonder if that's what happened to Mary after the wise men left. In the middle of the night Joseph suddenly woke her, packed up their toddler, and took their family to Egypt. I'm sure this wasn't what she'd planned for them, especially when an angel of God told them both that said toddler was the Son of the Most High (Lk 1:32).

Mary's best-laid plans couldn't hold up under this somber truth: the Messiah sent to bring life was targeted by an edict of death. It may not have been Mary's plan to flee, but she could rest assured that what was happening to their family wasn't outside of God's plan—nothing ever is.

Matthew's Gospel tells us of God's unwavering plan to save His people. Despite the wickedness and darkness surrounding the birth of Christ, nothing could thwart the redemption God had been orchestrating since the beginning of time. It was finally time for the Messiah to come.

Referencing one Old Testament prophecy after another, Matthew proves how this child from

Bethlehem is the Messiah the Jews had been waiting for—the heir to David's throne, the rightful King of Israel, the One to save His people and to bring redemption to the world. He was the fulfillment of God's ultimate plan.

**Like Jesus, we come into this world under an edict of death. His was physical. Ours is spiritual.** Through Adam we all inherit sin, and the punishment we all deserve for that sin is death (Rm 6:23). Jesus, however, being conceived of the Holy Spirit, didn't inherit this same sin nature.

**Yet, Christ accepted death for us.** Jesus took on the punishment we deserve as sinners, surrendering Himself to death on the cross—a death He willingly received for the joy set before Him: the salvation of His people (Heb 12:2).

I've always wondered whether Mary and Joseph panicked or remained steadfast in their faith in the twists and turns surrounding Jesus' early years. After all, they were real people, with real hopes, dreams, and plans for their family. But they believed their God and followed where He led, even though it may have been outside of their plan.

I pray our faith, too, would hold fast under pressure, resting on God's plans and not our own. Amen.

search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him."<sup>A</sup>

<sup>9</sup> After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. <sup>B</sup> Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

#### THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

<sup>13</sup> After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him." <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt. <sup>15</sup> He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: **Out of Egypt I called my Son.**<sup>C</sup>

#### THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> **A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping,<sup>D</sup> and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
and she refused to be consoled,  
because they are no more.<sup>E</sup>**

#### THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

<sup>19</sup> After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead." <sup>21</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

#### THE HERALD OF THE CHRIST

**3** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea<sup>2</sup> and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!"<sup>3</sup> For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said:

<sup>A</sup>2:8 Or *and pay him homage*    <sup>B</sup>2:11 Or *they paid him homage*    <sup>C</sup>2:15 Hs 11:1

<sup>D</sup>2:18 Other mss read *Ramah, lamentation, and weeping,*    <sup>E</sup>2:18 Jr 31:15