

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED

GENESIS

THE BOOK OF GENESIS is the great book of beginnings in the Bible. True to the meanings of its Hebrew and Greek names (Hb *bereshith*, “In Beginning” [based on 1:1]; Gk *Geneseos*, “Of Birth” [based on 2:4]), Genesis permits us to view the beginning of a multitude of realities that shape our daily existence: the creation of the universe and the planet earth; the origins of plant and animal life; and the origins of human beings, marriage, families, nations, industry, artistic expression, religious ritual, prophecy, sin, law, crime, conflict, punishment, and death.



In southern Israel, the northern Negev Desert (the south country) where it meets the central plains. The Judean hills rise in the background. Abraham lived for a time in Gerar and Beer-sheba in the Negev.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

Author: Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah—the five books that include the book of Genesis—has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah’s author (Josh. 8:35; 23:6; 1 Kings 2:3; 8:9; 2 Kings 14:6; 23:25; 2 Chron. 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 34:14; 35:12; Ezra 3:2; 6:18; Neh. 8:1; 9:14; Dan. 9:11,13; Mal. 4:4; Mark 12:19,26; Luke 2:22; 20:28; 24:44; John 1:17,45; 7:19; Acts 13:39; 15:21; 28:23; Rom. 10:5; 1 Cor. 9:9; Heb. 10:28).

Background: The Torah (a Hebrew term for law or instruction) was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (literally, five vessels). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the “primeval history,” showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the “patriarchal history,” focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s 12 sons. Genesis unfolds God’s plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham’s descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

MESSAGE AND PURPOSE

Creation: God is the sovereign Lord and Creator of all things. God created everything out of nothing. There was no pre-existent material. He is the Creator, not a craftsman. This indicates that He has infinite power and perfect control over everything. He is separate from the created order, and no part of creation is to be considered an extension of God. All that God created is good, because He is a good and majestic God. God is Lord, maintaining sovereignty and involvement with His creation. God’s control over human history is so complete that even the

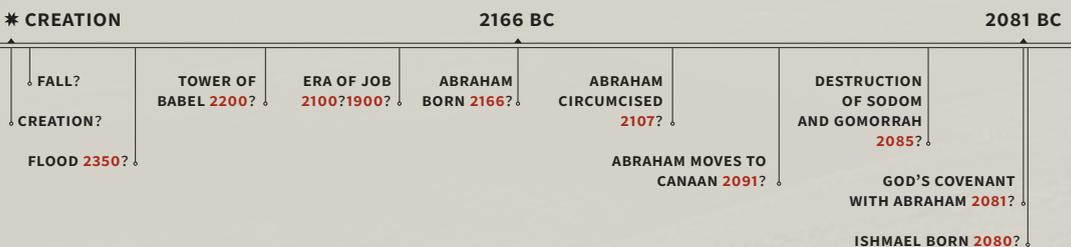
worst of human deeds can be turned to serve His benevolent purposes (50:20).

Human life: Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, unique from the rest of creation, to have fellowship with Him. Humans are a paradox. On the one hand, people are the capstone of all God’s creation, created in God’s image (1:26–27) and possessing Godlike authority over all the created order within their realm (1:28–29; 9:13). On the other hand, they are sinners, using their God-given resources and abilities in ways that violate God’s laws (2:17; 3:6) and hurt other people (3:8–11; 6:5,11–12). Even so, during their lifetime God expects people to follow His laws (4:7), and He blesses those who live according to His ways (6:89; 39:2,21). God wants to work through individuals to bring a blessing to every human life (18:18; 22:18; 26:4). Nevertheless, Genesis teaches that because of sin all human beings must die (2:17; 3:19; 5:5,8,11). Since all human life is created in the image of God, there is no person or class of humans superior to others. Humanity was created to live in community. The most fundamental unit of community is the family: a husband and wife (male and female) with children.

Sin: Evil and sin did not originate with God. Adam and Eve were created innocent and with the capacity to make choices. Sin entered the world at a specific place and time in history. Adam and Eve chose freely to disobey God, fell from innocence, and lost their freedom. Their sinful nature has passed to all other human beings. Sin resulted in death, both physical and spiritual. Sin has led to a world of pain and struggle.

Covenant: Genesis is a narrative of relationships, and certainly relationships grounded in covenants with God. These covenants provide a unifying principle for understanding the whole of Scripture and define the relationship between God and man. The heart of that relationship is found in the phrase, “They shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Jer. 32:38; cp. Gen. 17:7–8; Exod. 6:6–7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 4:20; Jer. 11:4; Ezek. 11:20). God’s covenant with Abraham is a major event both in Genesis and throughout the Bible. God called Abraham out of

TIMELINE OF GENESIS



Ur to go to Canaan, promising to make him a great nation which in turn would bless all nations (Gen. 12:1–3). God repeats His oath in Genesis 22:18, adding further that it would be through Abraham’s seed that all nations would someday be blessed. Paul applies the singular noun “seed” as a reference to Christ (Gal. 3:16). It is through Christ, Abraham’s prophesied descendant, that the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant would come to every nation.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got into our fallen state, and the beginnings of God’s gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God’s original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God’s covenant with Israel that was established with the giving of the law. For the Israelite

community, the accounts of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the law.

STRUCTURE

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing Him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book and is mentioned more frequently than any other person. The content of the first 11 chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase “these are the generations,” in which generations means “family records.” This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

OUTLINE

I. CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH (1:1–2:3)

- A. Creator and creation (1:1–2)
- B. Six days of creation (1:3–31)
- C. Seventh day—day of consecration (2:1–3)

II. THE HUMAN FAMILY IN AND OUTSIDE THE GARDEN (2:4–4:26)

- A. The man and woman in the garden (2:4–25)
- B. The man and woman expelled from the garden (3:1–24)
- C. Adam and Eve’s family outside the garden (4:1–26)

III. ADAM’S FAMILY LINE (5:1–6:8)

- A. Introduction: Creation and blessing (5:1–2)
- B. “Image of God” from Adam to Noah (5:3–32)
- C. Conclusion: Procreation and perversion (6:1–7)

IV. NOAH AND HIS FAMILY (6:9–9:29)

- A. Righteous Noah and the corrupt world (6:9–12)

- B. Coming judgment but the ark of promise (6:13–7:10)

- C. Worldwide flood of judgment (7:11–24)
- D. God’s remembrance and rescue of Noah (8:1–14)

- E. Exiting the ark (8:15–19)

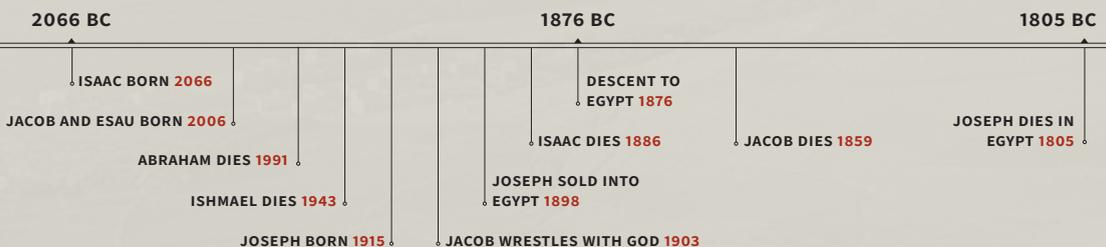
- F. Worship and the word of promise (8:20–22)
- G. God’s covenant with the new world (9:1–17)
- H. Noah’s sons and future blessing (9:18–29)

V. THE NATIONS AND THE TOWER OF BABEL (10:1–11:26)

- A. Table of nations (10:1–32)
- B. Tower of Babel (11:1–9)
- C. Family line of Abram (11:10–26)

VI. FATHER ABRAHAM (11:27–25:11)

- A. Abram’s beginnings (11:27–32)
- B. The promissory call and Abram’s obedience (12:1–9)
- C. Abram and Sarai in Egypt: Blessing begins (12:10–13:1)



- D. Abram and Lot part: Promises recalled (13:2–18)
- E. Abram rescues Lot: Abram's faithfulness (14:1–24)
- F. Covenant promises confirmed (15:1–21)
- G. Abram's firstborn son, Ishmael (16:1–16)
- H. Covenant sign of circumcision (17:1–27)
- I. Divine judgment and mercy (18:1–19:38)
- J. Abraham and Sarah in Gerar: Promises preserved (20:1–18)
- K. Abraham's promised son: The birth of Isaac (21:1–21)
- L. Treaty with Abimelech (21:22–34)
- M. Abraham's test (22:1–19)
- N. Family line of Rebekah (22:20–24)
- O. Sarah's burial site (23:1–20)
- P. A wife for Isaac (24:1–67)
- Q. Abraham's death and burial (25:1–11)

VII. ISHMAEL'S FAMILY LINE (25:12–18)

VIII. ISAAC'S FAMILY: JACOB AND ESAU (25:19–35:29)

- A. Struggle at birth and birthright (25:19–34)
- B. Isaac's deception and strife with the Philistines (26:1–35)
- C. Stolen blessing and flight to Padan-aram (27:1–28:9)
- D. Promise of blessing at Beth-el (28:10–22)
- E. Laban deceives Jacob (29:1–30)

- F. Birth of Jacob's children (29:31–30:24)
- G. Birth of Jacob's herds (30:25–43)
- H. Jacob deceives Laban (31:1–55)
- I. Struggle for blessing at Peniel (32:1–32)
- J. Restored gift and return to Shechem (33:1–20)
- K. Dinah, deception, and strife with the Hivites (34:1–31)
- L. Blessing and struggle at birth (35:1–29)

IX. ESAU'S FAMILY (36:1–8)

X. ESAU, FATHER OF THE EDMITES (36:9–37:1)

XI. JACOB'S FAMILY: JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS (37:2–50:26)

- A. The early days of Joseph (37:2–36)
- B. Judah and Tamar (38:1–30)
- C. Joseph in Egypt (39:1–23)
- D. Joseph, saviour of Egypt (40:1–41:57)
- E. The brothers' journeys to Egypt (42:1–43:34)
- F. Joseph tests the brothers (44:1–34)
- G. Joseph reveals his identity (45:1–28)
- H. Jacob's migration to Egypt (46:1–27)
- I. Joseph, saviour of the family (46:28–47:12)
- J. Joseph's administration in Egypt (47:13–31)
- K. Jacob's blessings (48:1–49:28)
- L. The death and burial of Jacob (49:29–50:14)
- M. The final days of Joseph (50:15–26)

THE CREATION

1 In the ^obeginning ^bGod created the heaven and the earth.

²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. ^cAnd the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

THE FIRST DAY

^{3d}And God said, ^eLet there be light: and there was light.

⁴And God saw the light, that *it was good*: and God divided the light from the darkness.

⁵And God called the light ^fDay, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

THE SECOND DAY

6And God said, ^gLet there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

⁷And God made the firmament, ^hand divided the waters which *were* under the

firmament from the waters which *were* [']above the firmament: and it was so.

⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

THE THIRD DAY

9And God said, ^jLet the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.

¹⁰And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was good*.

¹¹And God said, Let the earth ^kbring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the ^lfruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

¹²And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was good*.

¹³And the evening and the morning were the third day.

^o1:1 John 1:1-2; Heb. 1:10
^bPs. 8:3; 33:6; 89:11-12; 102:25; 136:5; 146:6; Isa. 44:24; Jer. 10:12; 51:15; Zech. 12:1; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11; 10:6
^c1:2 Ps. 33:6; Isa. 40:13-14
^d1:3 Ps. 33:9
^e2 Cor. 4:6
^f1:5 Ps. 74:16; 104:20
^g1:6 Job 37:18; Ps. 136:5; Jer. 10:12; 51:15
^h1:7 Prov. 8:28
ⁱPs. 148:4
^j1:9 Job 26:10; 38:8; Ps. 33:7; 95:5; 104:9; 136:6; Prov. 8:29; Jer. 5:22; 2 Pet. 3:5
^k1:11 Heb. 6:7
^lLuke 6:44

1:1 This opening verse of the Bible, seven words in the Hebrew, establishes seven key truths upon which the rest of the Bible is based.

First, God exists. The essential first step in pleasing God is recognizing His existence (Heb. 11:6). Second, God existed before there was a universe and will exist after the universe perishes (Heb. 1:10-12). Third, God is the main character in the Bible. He is the subject of the first verb in the Bible (in fact, He is the subject of more verbs than any other character) and performs a wider variety of activities than any other being in the Bible. Fourth, as Creator, God has done what no human being could ever do; in its active form the Hebrew verb *bara*, meaning “to create,” never has a human subject. Thus *bara* signifies a work that is uniquely God’s. Fifth, God is mysterious; though the Hebrew word for God is plural, the verb form of which “God” is the subject is singular. This is perhaps an allusion to God’s Trinitarian nature: He is three divine persons in one divine essence. Sixth, God is the Creator of heaven and earth. He doesn’t just modify pre-existing matter but calls matter into being out of nothing (Ps. 33:6,9; Heb. 11:3). Seventh, God is not dependent on the universe, but the universe is totally dependent on God (Heb. 1:3).

1:2 Bible translations since the time of the Septuagint, the translation of the OT into Greek (ca 175 BC), have rendered the first Hebrew verb in this verse as *was*. However, in an effort to explain the origins of evil and/or find biblical evidence for an old earth, some Bible scholars have suggested that this verb should be translated as “became.” Citing evidence in Isa. 14:12-21 and Ezek. 28:12-19, they believe a time gap, possibly a vast one, exists between the first two verses of the Bible, during which Satan led a rebellion in heaven against God. This allows interpreters to suggest that the early earth was **without form, and void** because Satan’s

rebellion marred God’s good creation. However, the construction of this sentence in the original Hebrew favors the traditional translation (“was” rather than “became”).

The sense of verse 2 is that God created the earth “without form, and void” as an unfinished and unfilled state. Working through an orderly process over a period of six days, God formed (days 1-3) and filled (days 4-6) His created handiwork. The “forming” was accomplished by means of three acts of separating or sorting various elements of creation from one another. The “filling” was carried out through five acts of populating the newly created domains. The **deep**, a single word in Hebrew, suggests an original state of creation that was shapeless as liquid water. The Hebrew verb translated **moved**, translated “fluttereth” in Deut. 32:11, suggests that the Spirit of God was watching over His creation just as a bird watches over its young.

1:3 A foundational teaching of the Bible is that God speaks and does so with universe-changing authority. The command in this verse is just two words in Hebrew.

1:4 Another basic truth of the Bible is that **God saw**; this means He is fully aware of His creation. Later writers directly declared that God is aware of events occurring throughout the earth (2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 4:10). The term **good**, used here for the first of seven times in this chapter to evaluate God’s creative work, can be used to express both high quality and moral excellence. The physical universe is a good place because God made it. God found satisfaction in His labor. This first instance where **God divided** created the twin realms of light and darkness, day and night. God’s activity in the material world parallels the role He also performs in the moral universe, that of the righteous Judge distinguishing between those who live in moral light and those who do not (1 Thess. 5:5).

1:5 In ancient Israel, the act of naming an object, place, or person indicated that you

held control over it (35:10; 41:45; Num. 32:42; Deut. 3:14; Josh. 19:47; 2 Kings 23:34; 24:17). When God named the **light** and the **darkness**, He asserted His lordship and control over all of time. In ancient Israelite and modern Jewish tradition, **evening** is the transition point from one day to the next.

1:6 Based on a verb that can refer to covering something with a thin sheet of metal (Num. 16:39; Isa. 40:19), the noun **firmament** always refers to the vast spread of the open sky.

1:7 God’s second act of separation was to divide atmospheric water from terrestrial water. Thus He began the process of giving form to the material world. The clause **it was so**, found six times in this chapter, emphasizes God’s absolute power over creation.

1:8 **Heaven** can refer to the earth’s atmospheric envelope (v. 20), outer space (v. 15), or the spiritual realm where God lives (Ps. 11:4).

1:9 God’s third and final act of separation created oceans and continents.

1:10 In His third and final act of naming, God demonstrated His authority over all of the **Earth** and the **Seas**. This contrasts with what Israel’s polytheistic neighbors believed about the range of divine powers. Their gods were not all-powerful, but instead exercised authority over a limited territory. The God of Genesis 1 holds dominion over everything at all times and in all places.

1:11-12 In preparation for the rise of animal and human life, God provided an abundant supply of food. The consistent biblical teaching is that “like begets like” (Luke 6:44; James 3:12); Gen. 1:11-12 establish that principle for plant life. While five of the six days contain at least one act of creation evaluated as **good**, only the third and sixth days have this statement more than once.

^o1:14 Deut. 4:19; Ps. 74:16; 136:7
^bPs. 74:17; 104:19
^c1:16 Ps. 136:7-9; 148:3,5
^dPs. 8:3
^eJob 38:7
^f1:18 Jer. 31:35
^g1:21 Gen. 6:20; 7:14; 8:19; Ps. 104:26
^h1:22 Gen. 8:17
ⁱ1:26 Gen. 5:1; 9:6; Ps. 100:3; Eccl. 7:29; Acts 17:20,28-29; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; James 3:9
^jGen. 9:2; Ps. 87:6
^k1:27 1 Cor. 11:7
^lGen. 5:2; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:16
^m1:28 Gen. 9:1-7; Lev. 26:9; Ps. 127:3; 128:3-4

THE FOURTH DAY

14 And God said, Let there be ^olights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and ^bfor seasons, and for days, and years:

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God ^cmade two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and ^dthe lesser light to rule the night: *he made^e the stars also.*

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to ^frule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good.*

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

THE FIFTH DAY

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*

21 And ^gGod created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was good.*

22 And God blessed them, saying, ^hBe fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

THE SIXTH DAY

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was good.*

THE CREATION OF MAN

26 And God said, ⁱLet us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his *own* image, ^kin the image of God created he him; ^lmale and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, ^mBe fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

THE GIVING OF FOOD

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the

1:14-15 The events of day four complement those of day one, filling the day and night with finished forms of light. The various lights, or “light-giving objects,” were worshipped as gods in the cultures that surrounded ancient Israel. In Genesis, however, the sun, moon, and stars are portrayed as servants of God that would fulfill three roles: separating the newly created realms of day and night; marking seasons so that those who worshipped the Creator could keep their appointed festivals (cp. Lev. 23:4,44); and providing light upon the earth.

1:20 The fifth day’s events complement those of day two, filling the newly formed heavenly domains above and the watery regions below.

1:21 The great whales are literally “sea monsters.” This Hebrew word (*tanninim*) is also translated “serpent” (Exod. 7:9) and “dragon” (Deut. 32:33; Ps. 74:13; Isa. 27:1; 51:9). In this context, the word designates all the large mammals and fish of the sea. The reuse of the verb created (Hb *bara’*; cp. v. 1) emphasizes God’s authority over the large sea-creatures. This point was especially significant to the ancient Israelites, whose neighbors worshipped Rahab, a mythical sea monster (Isa. 51:9).

1:22 The first of three blessings God pronounced in the creation narrative occurred when God blessed the water animals and birds. This blessing is similar to the one for persons, but lacks the commands to “subdue” and “have dominion” (v. 28).

1:26 God’s use of plural pronouns (us . . . our . . . our) to refer to Himself has raised many questions (3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8). At least five different suggestions have been put forward to explain them: they may be references to (1) the Trinity, (2) God and His angels, (3) God and creation, (4) God’s majesty as expressed by a literary device known as the “plural of majesty,” or (5) a polytheistic view of God. Since the Bible teaches elsewhere that there is only one God (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:4), the fifth option is not tenable.

The two Hebrew words translated as image and likeness are often understood as having the same meaning. But some interpreters suggest that “image” refers to the ability to reason, with “likeness” referring to the spiritual dimension. What exactly is the “image” of God? Since the Bible teaches that God is a Spirit (John 4:24), many commentators believe it refers to the non-material aspects of a person—our moral sensibilities, intellectual abilities, will, and emotions. Based on God’s commands in Gen. 1:28, others have suggested that it consists of the role humans are to play on earth—their rulership over the planet and its resources, and secondarily the physical, mental, and spiritual abilities that enable them to fulfill that role. The NT teaches that Christians will someday bear the image of Christ (1 Cor. 15:49; 1 John 3:2).

1:27 The creation of humanity is the crowning event of chapter 1, as shown by the fact

that created is repeated three times. The verb “created” (Hb *bara’*) is the same one used in 1:1, referring to a kind of creative activity that only God can do. The term “man” (Hb *adam*) is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to refer to humanity in general, not just males (7:21); all people, both male and female, are created in the image of God (cp. James 3:9). People are the only beings that are created in the image of God (Gen. 9:3-6). The Bible never lumps people into the category of animals. Instead, it separates the creation of people from all other beings and attributes the most privileged roles in creation to humans alone.

1:28 In this the longest of the five blessings found in the account of creation, God gave humanity five different commands. Implicit in the first three commands is God’s blessing on the institutions of marriage and the family. The word replenish does not mean to do something that has been done before, but to fill the earth for the first time. The final two commands, to subdue the earth and have dominion over the animal kingdom, express God’s blessing on the use of the planet’s renewable and nonrenewable natural resources. Of course, only the wise use of these resources permits people to fulfill God’s command to fill the earth. A similar command to the survivors of the flood is shorter, having only the first three verbs in it (9:1).

1:29 Here the word meat means food. After the flood in Noah’s day, God issued

face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; ^ato you it shall be for meat.

³⁰And to ^bevery beast of the earth, and to every ^cfowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so.

³¹And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good*. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

THE SEVENTH DAY

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and ^aall the host of them.

²And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

³And God ^gblessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

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

⁵And every ⁱplant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not

^jcaused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man ^kto till the ground.

⁶But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

⁷And the LORD God formed man of ^lthe dust of the ground, and ^mbreathed into his ⁿnostrils the breath of life; and ^oman became a living soul.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

⁸And the LORD God planted ^pa garden ^qeastward in ^rEden; and there ^she put the man whom he had formed.

⁹And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow ^tevery tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; ^uthe tree of life also in the midst of the garden, ^vand the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

¹¹The name of the first *is* Pison: that *is* it which compasseth ^wthe whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold;

¹²And the gold of that land *is* good: ^xthere *is* bellium and the onyx stone.

¹³And the name of the second river *is* Gihon: the same *is* it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

¹⁴And the name of the third river *is* ^yHiddekel: that *is* it which goeth toward

^a1:29 Gen. 9:3; Job 36:31; Ps. 104:14-15; 136:25; 146:7; Acts 14:17
^b1:30 Ps. 145:15-16; 147:9
^cJob 38:41
^d1:31 Ps. 104:24; 1 Tim. 4:4
^e2:1 Ps. 33:6
^f2:2 Exod. 20:11; 31:17; Deut. 5:14; Heb. 4:4
^g2:3 Neh. 9:14; Isa. 58:13
^h2:4 Gen. 1:1; Ps. 90:1-2
ⁱ2:5 Gen. 1:12; Ps. 104:14
^jJob 38:26-28
^kGen. 3:23
^l2:7 Gen. 3:19,23; Ps. 103:14; Eccl. 12:7; Isa. 64:8; 1 Cor. 15:47
^mJob 33:4; Acts 17:25
ⁿGen. 7:22; Isa. 2:22
^o1 Cor. 15:45
^p2:8 Gen. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; Joel 2:3
^qGen. 3:24
^rGen. 4:16; 2 Kings 19:12; Ezek. 27:23
^sV. 15
^t2:9 Ezek. 31:8
^uGen. 3:22; Prov. 3:18; 11:30; Rev. 2:7; 22:2,14
^vV. 17
^w2:11 Gen. 25:18
^x2:12 Num. 11:7
^y2:14 Dan. 10:4

additional dietary guidelines that expanded humanity's permitted food sources beyond herbs (plants) and trees to include meats, that is, "flesh" (9:3–4).

1:30 Here again the word **meat** simply means food. The Bible does not address the issue of diet for carnivorous and insect-eating animals.

1:31 This is the seventh, final, and most elaborate use of the word **good** in the account of the seven days of creation.

2:1 This verse serves as a complement to 1:1. Together, the two set the first six days of creation apart from the sacred seventh day.

2:2 This is the first use of the number seven in the Bible, a number that will play an especially significant role in the religious and social life of ancient Israel (4:15; 7:2–4,10; 21:28–31; 29:18–20). On the seventh day God **rested**, thus setting an example for people—who are made in His image—to follow (Exod. 20:8–11; Deut. 5:12–14). Though God rested from all his work which he had made, this is not to say that God has abandoned the universe. In the NT Jesus affirmed that God is still at work in the world, even on the Sabbath (John 5:16–17).

2:3 This is the only instance during the creation process when God **blessed** a unit of time. The term **sanctified** is applied in the Bible to something set aside for service to God.

2:4 The Hebrew word *toledoth*, translated here as **generations**, is used 11 times in the book of Genesis to introduce new units of material (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). Here it introduces a detailed

elaboration of some key aspects of the creation account that opens the book of Genesis (1:1–2:3). Special emphasis is placed on the events of day six. Here the phrase in the **day** is a Hebrew idiom for "when" (Exod. 5:13). Verse 4 includes the first use of God's personal name, rendered in English as **the LORD**, the most commonly used noun in the OT. The Hebrew spelling is transliterated as "YHWH," a word Jews considered so sacred that they would not permit themselves to pronounce it. Its accurate pronunciation is thus unknown, though common suggestions include "Jehovah" and "Yahweh."

2:5 A **plant** or **herb of the field** was one which required cultivation.

2:6 This source of water, a bountiful blessing that provided moisture for **the whole face of the ground** in the time of human innocence, later became a source of judgment on humanity's sin (7:11).

2:7 The Hebrew verb translated here as **formed** is used elsewhere in the Bible to describe the potter's profession (Jer. 18:4; Zech. 11:13); God acts here as the divine potter, skillfully fashioning **man of the dust of the ground**. But people are more than just material beings. It was only when God **breathed** into the man's **nostrils the breath of life** that Adam became alive. God is Spirit (John 4:24); thus, when God breathed into him, Adam and all later human beings became a unique mix of the physical and the spiritual. The Hebrew phrase translated as **living soul** is used elsewhere in Genesis to describe other creatures (1:20,24,30; 9:12,15–16). Nevertheless, humans are in

a class by themselves since they alone are made in God's image.

2:8 The location of **Eden** is unknown; suggestions include Armenia, Iraq, Africa, and Arabia. Changes in geography caused by the flood in Noah's day (7:11) make it unlikely that Eden will ever be discovered. The Hebrew word "Eden" literally means "pleasantness."

2:9 God's concern for beauty is seen in the fact that the trees He caused to grow were **pleasant to the sight**. The Lord's love of beauty will later be extended to Israel's religion, which will make use of furnishings fashioned by expert craftsmen using expensive materials (Exod. 25–40). Of course, God's beautiful created works were also practical, being **good for food**.

2:10 The abundance of the waters supplied in the garden of Eden is indicated by the fact that it served as the headwaters for four rivers.

2:11 The location of the **Pison** river is unknown. A land known as **Havilah** existed in the region of the Arabian peninsula at a later point in time (1 Sam. 15:7), but the pre-flood land may have represented a different locale.

2:13 The pre-flood locations of the **Gihon** river and **Ethiopia** are unknown. Later, biblical Ethiopia was located in the region of modern Ethiopia and Sudan (Esther 1:1; Ps. 68:31; Acts 8:27).

2:14 The **Hiddekel** (Tigris; Dan. 10:4) and **Euphrates** rivers, as well as **Assyria**, probably correspond to geographical features associated with modern Iraq.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GENESIS CREATION STORY

KENNETH A. MATHEWS

While there are many similarities between parts of Genesis and ancient Near Eastern (ANE) myths, there are also fundamental differences. These are seen especially in the significantly different views of the Creator and creation. Five features in particular distinguish the biblical creation account and perspective. So distinctive theologically is the biblical teaching from that of Israel's neighbors that it is best explained as the result of divine revelation, not the imagination or "religious genius" of the biblical author.

* THE IDENTITY OF GOD

The basic identity of God as revealed in Genesis is distinct from all other ANE conceptions. The Lord God did not have an origin and did not have a female counterpart. In fact, Genesis does not present any kind of theogony (origin of the gods). God simply always existed. The concept of fertility was a common explanation among the ancients for how the world was created. It was believed that gods and goddesses joined in sexual union and thus produced the world, just as man and woman can come together to create a child. Israel's God, however, was revealed to be asexual, neither male nor female. According to other ANE religions the world (or parts of it, like the sun) was a divine "Thou," whereas in Genesis the world was revealed to be an "it," a non-supernatural reality brought into existence by a supernatural God.

* NO RIVAL GODS

While polytheistic views dominated the ANE, Genesis revealed that God has no divine rivals. A common explanation for creation among the ancients was that an epic battle had raged between creator gods and anti-creation deities. Ultimately, the creator god overcame the anti-creation forces/gods, in some cases using the slain bodies of their enemies to make the stuff of the world. In Genesis there is no rival opposing the Creator. All creation obeyed the voice of God, as expressed in the recurring phrase, "and it was so" (1:7).

* CREATION OUT OF NOTHING

In Genesis the Creator by inherent authority as Sovereign Lord spoke creation into a functional, well-ordered existence. There was no eternal pre-created matter, such as was believed in the ancient myths. Genesis says God spoke all things into origination. This does not mean He uttered words that possessed inherent magical powers. Rather, the irrevocable power of God's creation words was grounded in the authority of God Himself. Unlike the nature deities whose existence was limited to the world system, God existed before creation and above creation. Also, creation was not the emanation of divine person or power. It was separate from Him, a new reality subject to His will.

* THE VALUE OF HUMANITY

In Genesis the Creator bestowed special value on humanity. Human beings in the ANE view were not indispensable to the operation of the world, whereas in Genesis they were essential as its chief caretakers. The Lord blessed humanity, assigning man and woman the responsibility to propagate and to rule over the earth (1:26–28). ANE myths explained the purpose of humanity as servants who met the servile interests of the gods. The Bible elevates the person and role of humans who were "crowned . . . with glory and honour" (Ps. 8:5), made in the divine image. God prepared the resplendent Garden of Eden for humanity, giving humanity meaningful work and purpose (Gen. 2:8–18). Also, Genesis presents the first humanity as individuals who were the progenitors of the human race.

* THE SABBATH

In Genesis the Creator provided the seventh day as a holy day of rest and celebration (2:1–3), which was later memorialized in Israel's Sabbath (Exod. 20:8–11). The Sabbath was unique to Israel, not tied to the movement of the stars, such as in the ancient preoccupation with astrology. The Lord was revealed as Master of the material universe *and* of time. All creation was invited to join in the knowledge of God and in the worship of Him as Creator and Sustainer of all things.

the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

MAN TO CARE FOR THE GARDEN

¹⁵And the LORD God took the man, and ^aput him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

¹⁷^bBut of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, ^cthou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof ^dthou shalt surely die.

18 And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; e* I will make him an help meet for him.

ADAM NAMES LIVING CREATURES

¹⁹^fAnd out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and ^gbrought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.

²⁰And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

2:15 The Hebrew word translated as **put** literally means, “caused to rest”; this pre-sin state of rest anticipates the “rest” (“comfort”; 5:29) that would again come to humanity because of righteous Noah, as well as the rest that God would again give Israel following its episode of calf worship (Exod. 32:1–21; 33:14). As a being created in God’s image, Adam, like God, was to be a worker. Without the taint of sin, work was an undiluted blessing. The verb translated here as **dress** literally means “serve.” Adam’s second task in the garden was to **keep it**. The verb is used elsewhere to refer to the action of God toward His people (Ps. 121:3–4) or the work of a military guard (SS. 5:7).

2:16 The seriousness of God’s order is reflected in the fact that it is introduced by a two-verb phrase in Hebrew: **commanded . . . saying**. This formula was used frequently to express royal decrees (1 Sam. 18:22; 2 Sam. 18:5). God gave Adam both freedom and limits, the freedoms vastly outnumbering the limitations. After all, Adam could eat **freely from every tree of the garden** except one.

2:17 The only limit God placed on Adam was eating of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, which apparently imparted divine wisdom (3:22). Eating the forbidden fruit represented Adam’s rejection of God as the source of divine wisdom and his choice to pursue wisdom apart from God. God’s penalty for disobedience was stated especially forcefully in the original language, with a two-verb construction, “dying you shall die” (**thou shalt surely die**). Death would certainly come to Adam

and all humanity after him; but the death that God warned about would be more than physical (3:19). Besides severing the cord of life, sin would shatter the harmonious relationship that existed between Adam and his environment (3:17–18), his wife (3:16), and God.

2:18 The theme of God providing for Adam’s needs (see note at v. 8) is picked up again here, as God declared that Adam’s solitude is **not good**. God created the man with a need to relate to one who was **meet**, or “complimentary,” for him, and now God will fill that need.

2:19 As He did with man, God **formed** animals **out of the ground**, but they did not receive the breath of life from God (v. 7) nor the image of God.

2:20 By giving **names** to the animals, Adam showed that he ruled the animals and that he perceived the nature of each animal (see note at 1:5). Adam’s understanding of their nature only highlighted the differences that existed between him and the rest of God’s creatures: no helper was found as his complement (see note at v. 18).

2:21 At what must have been a moment of loneliness in Adam’s life, God stepped in to create one who would perfectly meet Adam’s need. Because God **took one of his ribs** to use as His raw material, the woman would correspond perfectly—though not identically—to Adam. Like Adam, the woman possessed God’s image. The fact that she was not taken either from the man’s head or his foot may suggest that the woman was not to rule over the man (1 Cor. 11:3), nor the man to oppress the woman (1 Pet. 3:7).

THE CREATION OF WOMAN

²¹And the LORD God caused a ^hdeep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and ⁱbrought her unto the man.

²³And Adam said, *This is now j*bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was ^ktaken out of Man.

THE FIRST MARRIAGE

²⁴^lTherefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

²⁵^mAnd they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ⁿashamed.

THE TEMPTATION

3 Now the ^oserpent was ^pmore subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

²And the woman said unto the serpent, *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

^a2:15 v. 8

^b2:17 v. 9

^cGen. 3:1,3,11,17

^dGen. 3:3,19; Rom.

6:23; 1 Cor. 15:56;

James 1:15; 1 John

5:16

^e2:18 Gen. 3:12; 1 Cor.

11:9; 1 Tim. 2:13

^f2:19 Gen. 1:20,24

^gPs. 8:6; cp. Gen.

6:20

^h2:21 Gen. 15:12;

1 Sam. 26:12

ⁱ2:22 Prov. 18:22;

Heb. 13:4

^j2:23 Gen. 29:14;

Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1;

19:13; Eph. 5:30

^k1 Cor. 11:8

^l2:24 Gen. 31:15; Ps.

45:10; Matt. 19:5;

Mark 10:7; 1 Cor. 6:16;

Eph. 5:31

^m2:25 Gen. 3:7,10-11

ⁿExod. 32:25; Isa.

47:3

^o3:1 Rev. 12:9; 20:2

^pMatt. 10:16; 2 Cor.

11:3

2:23 Adam’s first recorded words express his delight with God’s handiwork and his recognition of the unique suitability of God’s last recorded creation in the creation accounts. As with no other piece of divine craftsmanship, this one was singularly suited for the man, being **bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh**. Adam expresses dominion by choosing a name for God’s final created being, yet the divine order calls for a reciprocity exhibited in male servant leadership and female submission, both of which are modeled in Jesus Himself. The Hebrew term *ishshah*, **Woman**, identifies her as the feminine complement to *ish*, the man.

2:24 God’s timeless design for marriage is declared here. The **one flesh** relationship certainly involves sexual union, but also includes a husband and wife coming together in spiritual, mental, and emotional harmony.

2:25 Because the devastating effects of sin had not yet ravaged nature or humanity, there was no need for clothing. Even without barriers to shield them from their environment and each other, Adam and Eve could live without shame. Later, in the time of the patriarchs and kings, clothing was associated with dignity. Accordingly, prisoners of war were not permitted to wear any clothing, slaves wore very little clothing, and the highest social classes wore the most clothing.

3:1 The Hebrew word for **subtil** means crafty or shrewd in a negative sense (Job 5:12), or prudent in a positive sense (Prov. 14:8).

^a3:3 Gen. 2:17
^b3:4 V. 13; 2 Cor. 11:3;
 1 Tim. 2:14
^c3:5 V. 7; Acts 26:18
^d3:6 1 Tim. 2:14
^eVv. 12, 17
^f3:7 V. 5
^gGen. 2:25
^h3:8 Job 38:1
ⁱJob 31:33; Jer. 23:24;
 Amos 9:3
^j3:10 Gen. 2:25; Exod.
 3:6; 1 John 3:20
^k3:12 Gen. 2:18; Job
 31:33; Prov. 28:13
^l3:13 V. 4; 2 Cor. 11:3;
 1 Tim. 2:14
^m3:14 Exod. 21:29,32
ⁿIsa. 65:25; Mic. 7:17
^o3:15 Matt. 3:7; 13:38;
 23:33; John 8:44;
 Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8
^pPs. 132:11; Isa.
 7:14; Mic. 5:3;
 Matt. 1:23-25; Luke
 1:31,34-35; Gal. 4:4
^qRom. 16:20; Col.
 2:15; Heb. 2:14;
 1 John 5:5; Rev.
 12:17
^r3:16 Ps. 48:6; Isa.
 13:8; 21:3; John 16:21;
 1 Tim. 2:15

^{3a}But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

^{4b}And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

⁵For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then ^cyour eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

THE FALL OF MAN

⁶And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, ^dand did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; ^eand he did eat.

⁷And ^fthe eyes of them both were opened, ^gand they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

⁸And they heard ^hthe voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife ⁱhid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, ^jand I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

¹¹And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

¹²And the man said, ^kThe woman whom thou gavest to *be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, ^lThe serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

THE CURSE

¹⁴And the LORD God said ^munto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and ⁿdust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

¹⁵And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between ^othy seed and ^pher seed; ^qit shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

¹⁶Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; ^rin sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;

3:3 The woman's claim that God said, *neither shall ye touch* the tree, *lest ye die*, goes beyond anything recorded in God's instructions to Adam. Therefore either Adam had given his wife an additional command, or else Eve exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive. If Adam added to God's command, he almost certainly had a good motive—after all, if Eve never touched the tree, she certainly wouldn't eat its fruit. However, the sad truth is that when people add to the word of God, they create confusion and trouble.

3:4–5 The serpent, recognizing the woman's confusion, found a point of attack. Knowing that the woman would *not surely die* by merely touching the fruit, he boldly contradicted what she had reported to be God's command. He then skillfully lied (John 8:44) by distorting God's word (Matt. 4:6), implying that God had prohibited people from eating the fruit only to keep them from becoming as knowledgeable as He. The woman was now fully deceived (1 Tim. 2:14).

3:6 Since the woman did not die when she touched the fruit—in contradiction to what she had thought God said (v. 3.)—she *did* eat. Though Adam was *with her* at the time, he did nothing to stop her. Perhaps he wanted to eat of it as much as the woman did, but fearing the consequences, used his wife as a “guinea pig” to make sure it would not cause instant death.

3:7 As the serpent had indicated, *the eyes of them both were opened*, and *they knew*, but instead of producing godlike power, the knowledge brought only

a sense of human inadequacy, fear, and shame.

3:9 God took the initiative in reaching out to sinful humanity. This pattern—humanity sinning, then God seeking out sinners—becomes the primary theme of the rest of the Bible. Its ultimate expression is found in Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save people alienated from God because of their sin (Luke 19:10); in Him God once again walked on the earth in search of sinners. The all-knowing God asked Adam, *Where art thou?* for Adam's benefit, to encourage Adam to face his sin.

3:10 Rather than walking with God as righteous men of later generations would do (Enoch, 5:22; Noah, 6:9), Adam *hid* from Him.

3:11 Through the use of two direct questions God brought Adam to accountability for his sin. God does not overlook sin, but He can be gently firm in confronting it.

3:12 Adam answered neither of God's questions. Instead he sought to shift the blame first to *the woman* and then to God.

3:13 The woman passed the blame to *the serpent* and admitted that prior to eating, she was *beguiled* (1 Tim. 2:14).

3:14 Though accountability began with God's confrontation of Adam, judgment began with the *serpent*. Because of the serpent's key role (being used of Satan) in bringing sin into the human experience, it would be permanently consigned to the position of ultimate shame. Just as conquered kings were made to lie on the ground under the foot of their conquerors (Josh. 10:24), so now the serpent would live under the feet of humanity.

3:15 This verse is known in Christendom as the *protoevangelium*, or “first good news,” because it is the first foretelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God announced here that a descendant would someday deal the serpent (meaning Satan) a fatal blow on the *head* (Rev. 20:2,7–10). The NT writers understood Jesus Christ to have fulfilled this prophecy (Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8). The NT also indicates that God would work through the church—those indwelt by the Spirit of Christ—to destroy the works of the devil (Rom. 16:20). The assertion that the snake would only strike his opponent's *heel* foreshadows that Christ's wounding on the cross would not be permanently fatal.

3:16 Even though the woman had been deceived into eating the forbidden fruit, she was still held accountable for her act. Notably, however, the word “*cursed*” is not contained in God's words to her (vv. 14,16). Two penalties were imposed; both struck at the heart of a woman's roles in life. More than would have been the case had sin not entered creation, bearing children would add to the sum of *sorrow* in the universe (God said he would *multiply*, not originate, woman's labor pains). Marriage would also be marred; though the woman's *desire* would be for her *husband*, sin would mar God's plan for marriage and create tormenting inequality and subjugation. The latter is a description of the ravaging effect of sin on a husband-wife relationship, not a prescription for abusing one's wife. The NT teaches that marriage should reflect the relationship of Christ with the church (Eph. 5:24–25) and be characterized by a husband's understanding of and respect for his wife (1 Pet. 3:7).

^aand thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall ^brule over thee.

¹⁷And unto Adam he said, ^cBecause thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, ^dand hast eaten of the tree, ^eof which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: ^fcurst *is* the ground for thy sake; ^gin sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

¹⁸^hThorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and ⁱthou shalt eat the herb of the field;

¹⁹In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: ^jfor dust thou *art*, and ^kunto dust shalt thou return.

²⁰And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

²¹Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

MAN SENT FROM THE GARDEN

²²And the LORD God said, ^mBehold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and ⁿtake also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

²³Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, ^oto till the ground from whence he was taken.

²⁴So he drove out the man; and he placed ^pat the east of the garden of Eden ^qCherubims, and a flaming sword which

turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

CAIN AND ABEL

4 And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

²And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was ^ra tiller of the ground.

³And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought ^sof the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴And Abel, he also brought of ^tthe firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had ^urespect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, ^vand his countenance fell.

⁶And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

ABEL MURDERED

⁸And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and ^wslew him.

^{3:16} Gen. 4:7

^{b1} 1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34;

Eph. 5:22-24; 1 Tim.

2:11-12; Titus 2:5;

1 Pet. 3:1,5-6

^{c3:17} 1 Sam. 15:23

^dV. 6

^eGen. 2:17

^fEccl. 1:2-3; Isa.

24:5-6; Rom. 8:20

^g Job 5:7; Eccl. 2:23

^{h3:18} Job 31:40

ⁱPs. 104:14

^{j3:19} Eccl. 1:13;

2 Thess. 3:10

^kGen. 2:7

^l Job 21:26; 34:15; Ps.

104:29; Eccl. 3:20;

12:7; Rom. 5:12; Heb.

9:27

^{m3:22} V. 5; cp. Isa.

19:12; 47:12-13; Jer.

22:23

ⁿGen. 2:9

^{o3:23} Gen. 4:2; 9:20

^{p3:24} Gen. 2:8

^qPs. 104:4; Heb. 1:7

^{r4:2} Gen. 3:23; 9:20

^{s4:3} Num. 18:12

^{t4:4} Num. 18:17;

Prov. 3:9

^uHeb. 11:4

^{v4:5} Gen. 31:2

^{w4:8} Matt. 23:35;

1 John 3:12; Jude 11

3:17 Because Adam listened to his wife's voice in preference to what God commanded (2:17), a curse would strike at the heart of a fundamental relationship in his life as well. Adam's relationship with the ground would now be forever damaged by sin. All the days of his life he would experience sorrow (cp. the woman's labor pains, v. 16) as he worked to bring forth the fruit of the earth.

3:18 Prior to the first couple's sins God is only recorded as having put trees in the garden (2:8-9); now there would also be thorns and thistles. Prior to sin, humanity had only to reach up to get food; now they would have to bend their backs to gather plants of the field.

3:19 The simple plucking of fruit in order to eat food (lit "bread") would now be replaced by backbreaking labor and the sweat of man's face. Working daily in the soil, Adam would be continually reminded that he was dust and that he would return to dust.

3:20 The new name Adam gave his wife (cp. 2:23) emphasizes the woman's life-giving role that counteracts the curse of sin, which is death.

3:21 The LORD God graciously provided for humanity's need for clothing in a way superior to what Adam and Eve had done with fig leaves. The use of animal skins anticipates the OT system of animal sacrifices (Lev. 1:3-7; Num. 15:1-31). In the NT, the apostle Paul spoke of a day when God

would clothe His people with immortality (1 Cor. 15:53-54; 2 Cor. 5:4), thus providing the complete undoing of the curse of humanity's sin.

3:22-23 Because of sin, people now knew good and evil experientially. Since the gift of life was directly tied to obedience, man's sin meant that the penalty of death must be enforced. Ironically, the LORD God sent Adam forth from the garden so that Adam would not reach (lit "send forth his hand") for the garden's fruit.

3:24 Following their sin, the first couple went east, a direction associated with departure from God in numerous biblical examples. Other instances of eastward movement in Genesis include Cain's journeys after judgment (4:16), humanity's migration toward Babel (11:2), and the migration of Keturah's sons (25:6). Cherubims are used as an artistic motif in the tabernacle (Exod. 25:18-22; 26:1) and are also mentioned in Ezekiel 10 and 11. The ironies continue as the man who was once commanded to "keep" the garden (Gen. 2:15) is now kept from the garden.

4:1 Adam and Eve now begin to fulfill God's original command to them, to "be fruitful" and "multiply" (1:28). Eve, whose name means "Life," now becomes the life-giver. Eve knew that the child was more than the result of her and her husband's love; it came into being from the LORD. A wordplay in the Hebrew suggests that the name Cain (*qayin*) came from the verb "have gotten"

(*qaniti*) in Eve's comment, I have gotten a man.

4:2 The name Abel means "Breath"; the term is used elsewhere in the OT to refer to that which passes away quickly and is unsubstantial (Ps. 62:9; Eccl. 1:2).

4:3 Cain's sacrifice marks the first mention of an offering unto the LORD in the Bible. The Hebrew term used here suggests a free-will gift given to an authority (Judg. 13:19).

4:5 Ironically, the first recorded offering given to God was also the first one rejected by Him. Since cereal offerings were authorized in the law of Moses, the fact that Cain's offering was of vegetation rather than an animal is not why God had not respect for it. Cain's wroth reaction suggests that the offering was rejected because of sin in his heart, not the nature of his offering. See note at verse 7.

4:7 The Bible makes it clear that God had rejected Cain's offering because of Cain's wicked lifestyle (1 John 3:12). The animal-like description of sin as lying is used in 49:9 to describe a lion couching. The parallel use of desire in this verse and 3:16 suggests that sin wishes to be as intimate with humanity as a woman is with her husband. The only way to avoid this is to be its master, not its companion.

4:8 In a move that demonstrates premeditation, Cain waited until they were in the field and slew Abel where there were no human witnesses. This was the first death of a human being, realizing the curse of

^a4:9 Ps. 9:12
^bJohn 8:44
^c4:10 Heb. 12:24;
 Rev. 6:10
^d4:14 Job 15:20-24
^ePs. 51:11
^fGen. 9:6; Num.
 35:19, 21, 27
^g4:15 Ps. 79:12
^hEzek. 9:4, 6
ⁱ4:16 2 Kings 13:23;
 24:20; Jer. 23:39; 52:3
^j4:17 Ps. 49:11
^k4:21 Rom. 4:11, 12

9 And the LORD said unto Cain, ^aWhere is Abel thy brother? And he said, ^bI know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?

¹⁰ And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood ^ccrieth unto me from the ground.

THE CURSE OF CAIN

¹¹ And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

¹² When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

¹³ And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

¹⁴ Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and ^efrom thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, ^fthat every one that findeth me shall slay me.

¹⁵ And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him ^gsevenfold. And the LORD ^hset a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

CAIN DWELLS IN THE LAND OF NOD

¹⁶ And Cain ⁱwent out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

¹⁷ And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, ^jand called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

¹⁸ And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

LAMECH'S DESCENDANTS

¹⁹ And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

²⁰ And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and *of such as have* cattle.

²¹ And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the ^kfather of all such as handle the harp and organ.

²² And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

²³ And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives

human death pronounced against Adam (2:17; 3:19).

4:9 God's use of questions with guilty sinners continues here (v. 6; cp. 3:9-13). By claiming he did not know where his brother was, Cain added lying to his sin of murder. God once made Adam a keeper (Hb *shamar*) of the garden (2:15). Cain now asked if he was to be his **brother's keeper** (Hb *shamar*). The Bible's answer to Cain's question is yes (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Gal. 5:14).

4:10 Unlike his father Adam (3:12), Cain never confessed his guilt, even though God directly confronted him. Though Abel never spoke in the preceding narrative, his **blood** now cried out **from the ground**.

4:11 God's judgment began with a curse whose wording in the Hebrew parallels the curse placed on the snake (3:14). This is particularly fitting since both were liars and murderers (John 8:44). It is possible to translate God's statement here as "You are more cursed than the ground." The curse against a murderer is repeated in the law of Moses (Deut. 27:24).

4:12 Cain's punishment destroyed his livelihood as a farmer and turned him into a **vagabond**.

4:13 Cain's response has several possible English renderings. The Septuagint and Martin Luther translated it as, "My sin is too great to be forgiven," while early rabbis took it as a question: "Is my sin too great to forgive?" In view of Cain's previous and later actions, the KJV translation (**My punishment is greater than I can bear**) seems best. He expresses anguish, but no remorse.

4:14 Just as his father Adam had been driven out (Hb *garash*) of the garden, Cain noted that God was driving him out (Hb

garash) from the surface of the soil. Since he would be **hid** from God's protective **face** (presence), he feared that other descendants of Adam and Eve (5:4) would **slay** him to avenge Abel's murder.

4:15 True to His compassionate and forgiving nature (Exod. 34:6-7), God made provisions to protect Cain despite his sin.

4:16 Cain's departure from the **presence of the LORD** was both physical and spiritual (Jon. 1:3,10). "Nod" means "Wandering." The **land of Nod** is never again mentioned in the Bible. Perhaps the phrase simply referred to any area where Cain wandered. The notation that Cain departed to live **east of Eden** identifies him with other sinners who also moved east (see note at 3:24).

4:17 The parallel tracks of Adam's and Cain's lives—sin, judgment by God, banishment, and eastward movement—continue with the notation that after these things **Cain knew his wife** (cp. v. 1). In spite of his grave sin, Cain still fulfilled the divine command to be fruitful and multiply (1:28). On the other hand, Cain's efforts to build a city were one more expression of disobedience to God, for God had ordained Cain to be a wanderer (v. 12). The city of **Enoch** is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, and its location is unknown.

Cain's genealogy in verses 17-24 has similarities with Seth's genealogy (5:3-32). Two of the names in both lines are identical (Enoch, Lamech) and others are similar (Cain/Kenan; Methusael/Methuselah). In addition, the seventh member of both genealogies (Cain's Lamech, Seth's Enoch) are given special emphasis, and both conclude with a person who has three named sons. Notable differences exist as well: Seth's

genealogy is longer and contains lifespans details, but it omits any mention of occupations or wives' names.

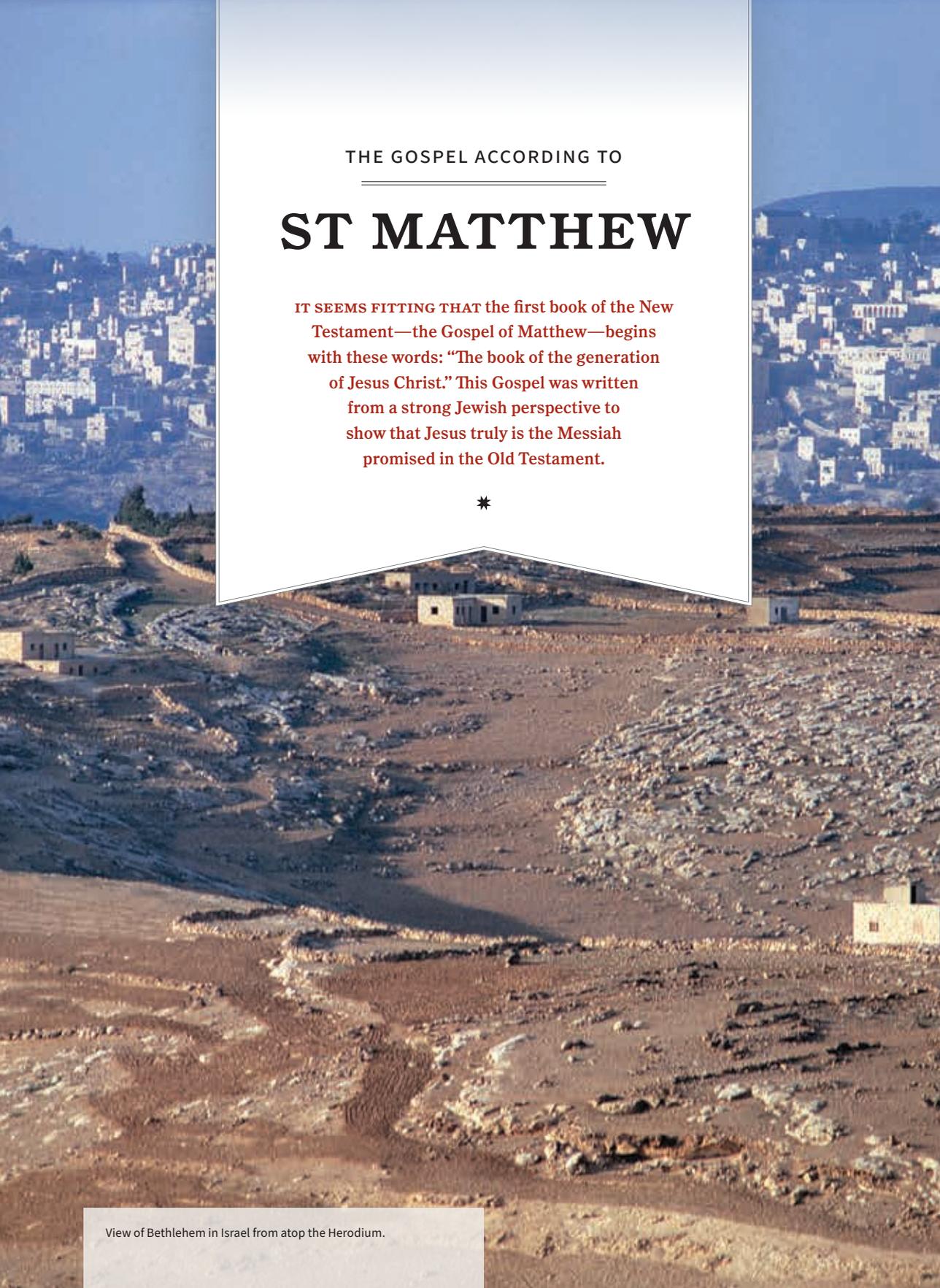
4:19 More details are provided in this genealogical section for **Lamech**, the seventh member of Adam's line through Cain, than for any other. His three named sons made crucial contributions to human culture. However, the description of Lamech's life paints a troubling picture of an individual who lacked respect for marriage or human life. By taking **two wives** Lamech became the first polygamist, a violation of God's intentions for marriage (2:22; Mark 10:6-8).

4:20 **Jabal** brought about key advances in the profession of the nomadic herdsman—those who cared for sheep, goats, and **cattle** (Hb *miqneh*). This represents an advance beyond what Abel had done since he is only known to have tended sheep and goats (v. 2; Hb *ts'o'n*).

4:21 **Jubal** advanced civilization in the area of the musical arts, playing a key role in developing two of the most important musical instruments of the ancient world, **the harp and organ**. This "organ" may have been a type of flute or reed pipe.

4:22 **Tubal-cain's** metallurgical advances in working **brass** (or bronze) and smelting **iron** would prove crucial for crafting tools and weapons.

4:23 Lamech's speech, the longest by a human being to this point in the Bible, represents the dark climax of the Cainite genealogy. His level of retaliation against a man for **wounding** him and a **young man** who merely **hurt** him goes far beyond the biblical limits (Exod. 21:23-25), and his boast of killing for vengeance foreshadows the "violence" that led to the flood in Noah's day (Gen. 6:11).



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST MATTHEW

IT SEEMS FITTING THAT the first book of the New Testament—the Gospel of Matthew—begins with these words: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.” This Gospel was written from a strong Jewish perspective to show that Jesus truly is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.



CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

Author: The author did not identify himself in the text. However, the title that ascribes this Gospel to Matthew appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Titles became necessary to distinguish one Gospel from another when the four Gospels began to circulate as a single collection. Many early church fathers (Papias, Irenaeus, Pantaenus, and Origen) acknowledged Matthew as the author. Papias also contended that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew, implying that this Gospel was later translated into Greek.

Many modern scholars dispute these traditional claims. For instance, against Papias they argue that this Gospel was not originally written in Hebrew since the Greek of Matthew does not appear to be translation Greek. They further argue that if the early church, following Papias's opinion, was wrong about the original language, they were likely incorrect about the author as well. However, the excellent Greek of Matthew could have been produced by a skilled translator of an original Hebrew text. Furthermore, there are many hints of Hebraic influence in this Gospel (see notes at 1:17, 1:21, and 2:22–23). Finally, since Hebrew quickly ceased to be the dominant language of early Christians as the church expanded into Gentile territories, requiring the Gospel to circulate in a Greek translation, the absence of ancient Hebrew texts of Matthew is not surprising. Even if Papias was wrong about the original language of the Gospel of Matthew, this does not imply that he and other early church leaders were wrong to identify Matthew as the author of this Gospel. In fact the early church unanimously affirmed that the Gospel of Matthew was authored by the apostle Matthew. It would require impressive evidence to overturn this early consensus.

Clues from the Gospel itself support its ascription to Matthew. First, both Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27 identify the tax collector whom Jesus called to be His disciple as “Levi.” This Gospel, however, identifies Levi as “Matthew.” Some believe Jesus gave the name “Matthew” (Hebrew for “Gift of God”) to Levi when He summoned him to be a disciple, but it was not uncommon for Jews at the time to have two

names (like Saul and Paul). The use of “Matthew” in this Gospel may be Matthew's personal touch, a self-reference that gives us a clue about authorship.

Background: Determining the date of composition of Matthew's Gospel depends largely on the relationship of the Gospels to one another. Most scholars believe that Matthew utilized Mark's Gospel in writing his own gospel. If this is correct, Matthew's Gospel must postdate Mark's. However, the date of Mark's Gospel is also shrouded in mystery. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) seems to claim that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter's death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only 20 years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive. Given the ambiguity of the historical evidence, a decision must be based on other factors.

The date of composition for Mark is best inferred from the date of Luke and Acts. The abrupt ending of Acts which left Paul under house arrest in Rome implies that Acts was written before Paul's release. Since one of the major themes of Acts is the legality of Christianity in the Roman Empire, one would have expected Luke to mention Paul's release by the emperor if it had already occurred. This evidence dates Acts to the early 60s. Luke and Acts were two volumes of a single work, as the prologues to these books demonstrate. Luke was written before Acts. Given the amount of research that Luke invested in the book and the travel that eyewitness interviews probably required, a date in the late 50s is reasonable. If Luke used Mark in writing his own Gospel, as seems likely, by implication Mark was written some time before the late 50s, perhaps the early to mid-50s. Thus, despite Matthew's dependence on Mark, Matthew may have been written any time beginning in the mid-50s once Mark was completed. The earliest historical evidence is consistent with this opinion, since Irenaeus (ca AD 180) claimed that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome (early 60s).

MESSAGE AND PURPOSE

Matthew probably wrote his Gospel in order to preserve written eyewitness testimony about the ministry of Jesus. Matthew's Gospel emphasizes

TIMELINE OF MATTHEW

2200 BC	1526 BC	1100 BC
ABRAHAM BORN 2166	MOSES BORN 1526	SAUL REIGNS 1050
ISAAC BORN 2066	JOSHUA BORN 1490?	DAVID REIGNS 1010
JACOB BORN 2006	EXODUS FROM EGYPT 1446	SOLOMON REIGNS 970
JOSEPH BORN 1915	GIDEON BORN 1250?	DIVIDED KINGDOM 931
	SAMUEL BORN 1105?	

certain theological truths. First, Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited King of God's people. Second, Jesus is the new Abraham, the founder of a new spiritual Israel comprising all people who choose to follow Him. This new Israel will consist of both Jews and Gentiles. Third, Jesus is the new Moses, the deliverer and instructor of God's people. Fourth, Jesus is the Immanuel, the virgin-born Son of God who fulfills the promises of the OT.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

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 has the strongest connections to the OT. Matthew gave us God's entire plan from Genesis to Revelation. Matthew looked back and referred to Hebrew prophecies about 60 times ("was fulfilled"

and "that it might be fulfilled"). He also looked forward by dealing not only with Messiah's coming and His ministry, but also His future plan for His church and kingdom.

STRUCTURE

Matthew divided his Gospel into three major sections. He introduced new major sections with the words "from that time" (4:17; 16:21). These transitional statements divide the Gospel into the introduction (1:1–4:16), body (4:17–16:20), and conclusion (16:21–28:20). Matthew also divided his Gospel into five major blocks of teaching, each of which concludes with a summary statement (8:1; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Some scholars believe these five major discourses were meant to correspond to the five books of Moses and to confirm Jesus' identity as the new Moses.

OUTLINE

I. BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS (1:1–2:23)

- A. Genealogy (1:1–17)
- B. Birth narratives (1:18–2:18)
- C. Settlement in Nazareth (2:19–23)

II. BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE (3:1–4:25)

- A. Ministry of John the Baptist (3:1–12)
- B. Baptism of Jesus (3:13–17)
- C. Temptation of Jesus (4:1–11)
- D. Summary of Galilean ministry (4:12–25)

III. DISCOURSE ONE: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (5:1–7:29)

- A. The Beatitudes (5:1–16)
- B. Character of kingdom righteousness (5:17–48)
- C. Practice of kingdom righteousness (6:1–7:12)
- D. Choice of the kingdom (7:13–27)
- E. Manner of Jesus' teaching (7:28–29)

IV. JESUS' FIRST MIRACLES (8:1–9:38)

- A. A series of miracles (8:1–9:8)
- B. The kingdom and the old order (9:9–17)
- C. More miracles (9:18–38)

V. DISCOURSE TWO: MINISTRY OF JESUS' DISCIPLES (10:1–42)

- A. The preachers and their mission (10:1–15)
- B. The response to be expected (10:16–42)

VI. RESPONSES TO JESUS' MINISTRY (11:1–12:50)

- A. The kingdom and John the Baptist (11:1–15)
- B. Challenge to the present generation (11:16–30)
- C. Opposition to the kingdom (12:1–45)
- D. Fellowship in the kingdom (12:46–50)

VII. DISCOURSE THREE: PARABLES ABOUT THE KINGDOM (13:1–58)

- A. Parable of the sower (13:1–9)
- B. The parable method explained (13:10–23)
- C. Other parables (13:24–52)
- D. Response to Jesus' parables (13:53–58)

722 BC

FALL OF ISRAEL 722

586 BC

FALL OF JUDAH
586
SECOND TEMPLE
DEDICATED 516

MINISTRY OF
MALACHI 460?

5 BC–AD 33

JESUS BORN 5 BC
JESUS CRUCIFIED AND
RISEN AD 33

VIII. CLOSE OF JESUS' MINISTRY IN

GALILEE (14:1–17:27)

- A. Crisis of opposition (14:1–15:20)
- B. Withdrawal to the north (15:21–39)
- C. Further conflict (16:1–12)
- D. Crisis of faith (16:13–20)
- E. Preparation of Jesus' disciples for His death (16:21–17:27)

IX. DISCOURSE FOUR: CHARACTER OF JESUS' DISCIPLES (18:1–35)

- A. Humility (18:1–20)
- B. Forgiveness (18:21–35)

X. JESUS' MINISTRY ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM (19:1–20:34)

- A. Teachings on the way to Jerusalem (19:1–20:28)
- B. Healing at Jericho (20:29–34)

XI. JESUS' MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM (21:1–23:39)

- A. Events in Jerusalem (21:1–22)
- B. Controversies with the Jews (21:23–22:46)

- C. Denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (23:1–39)

XII. DISCOURSE FIVE: OLIVET DISCOURSE (24:1–25:46)

- A. Prophecy of the coming of the kingdom (24:1–36)
- B. Exhortations to readiness (24:37–25:30)
- C. Judgment of the nations (25:31–46)

XIII. BETRAYAL, CRUCIFIXION, AND BURIAL (26:1–27:66)

- A. The plot to betray Jesus (26:1–16)
- B. The Last Supper (26:17–30)
- C. Events in Gethsemane (26:31–56)
- D. The trials (26:57–27:26)
- E. Crucifixion and burial (27:27–66)

XIV. RESURRECTION AND COMMISSION (28:1–20)

- A. Women and the angel at the tomb (28:1–10)
- B. False witness of the guards (28:11–15)
- C. Jesus' Great Commission (28:16–20)

THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST

1 The book of the ^ageneration of Jesus Christ, ^bthe son of David, ^cthe son of Abraham.

^{2d}Abraham begat Isaac; and ^eIsaac begat Jacob; and ^fJacob begat Judas and his brethren;

³And ^gJudas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and ^hPhares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

⁴And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; ⁵And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

⁶And ⁱJesse begat David the king; and ^jDavid the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

⁷And ^kSolomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

^a1:1 Luke 3:23
^bMatt. 22:42; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; 13:23; Rom. 1:3
^cGen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal 3:16
^d1:2 Gen. 21:2–3
^eGen. 25:26
^fGen. 25:26
^g1:3 Gen. 38:27
^hRuth 4:18; 1 Chron. 2:5, 9
ⁱ1:6 1 Sam. 16:1; 17:12
^j2 Sam. 12:24
^k1:7 1 Chron. 3:10

1:1 The title of this genealogy introduces several important themes in Matthew. Jesus is identified as the **Christ**, the Messiah, the King anointed by God to rule over His people. This is reiterated by identifying Jesus as **son of David** (v. 20; 2:2; 9:27; 12:3, 23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:9, 15). OT prophecies like 2 Sam. 7:16 and Isa. 9:2–7 foretold that the Messiah (the “anointed one”) would be a descendant of King David. Jesus’ Davidic lineage shows that He meets this qualification. Though the genealogy is otherwise arranged in chronological order, Matthew shifted “son of David” ahead of **son of Abraham** to lay emphasis on the royal title.

The title “son of Abraham” implies that just as Abraham was the father of national Israel, Jesus will be the founder of a new spiritual Israel. The phrase the **book of the generation of Jesus** is unusual. OT genealogies are consistently named after the earliest ancestor in the lineage because the Jews considered that person to be most significant since everyone else derived from them. That Matthew names his genealogy after Jesus, the final descendant in the lineage, implies that Jesus is more important than anyone who preceded Him.

1:2–6 Some of the names are spelled differently here than they are in the OT, such as **Judas** (Judah). This is because the NT has the Greek form of the Hebrew names. Matthew mentioned four women in his genealogy besides Mary, all of them Gentiles. **Thamar** was a Canaanite. **Rachab** was from Jericho. **Ruth** was a Moabitess. **The wife of Urias**, Bath-sheba, was probably a Hittite. The mention of these women signals God’s intention to include Gentiles and women in His redemptive plan. Several kings are named also, but only David is explicitly given the title **king**. This highlights that the Son of David (Jesus) will likewise be a kingly figure.

1:7–16 Matthew’s genealogy agrees with the genealogies of 1 Chron. 1–3 and Luke 3:23–38 from the generation of Abraham down to David. After David, Matthew’s genealogy agrees with that of 1 Chronicles except for a few intentional gaps, but departs significantly from Luke’s. From this, some interpreters argue that one or both of the NT genealogies is inaccurate. However, Jews in David’s line carefully preserved their genealogies because they knew from the OT prophecies that one of their descendants would be the Messiah.

David’s descendants also had the privilege of providing firewood for the altar in Jerusalem (*m. Ta’an.* 4:5). Naturally, they kept careful records to demonstrate their Davidic descent and preserve their privileges. Evidence in Josephus (*Life* 1) and rabbinic texts suggests that genealogical archives were kept in public registers.

There are several ways in which the genealogies of Matthew and Luke may be harmonized. First, one may preserve the genealogy of Jesus through Mary and the other through Joseph. Second, the custom of levirate marriage resulted in a child having different biological and legal fathers. Perhaps one genealogy follows the biological line while the other follows the legal. Third, one genealogy may trace David’s legal descendants who would have reigned if the Davidic kingdom had continued while the other lists descendants in Joseph’s specific line. A combination of these approaches is also possible.

In Greek, the pronoun **whom** is feminine. Thus, although the rest of the genealogy focuses on fathers and only rarely mentions mothers, Matthew identified a human mother but not a human father of Jesus, thus affirming Jesus’ virginal conception.

⁸And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

⁹And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

¹⁰And ^oEzekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

¹¹And ^bJosias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were ^ccarried away to Babylon:

¹²And after they were brought to Babylon, ^dJechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat ^eZorobabel;

¹³And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

¹⁴And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

¹⁵And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

¹⁶And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

18 Now the ^hbirth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child ^gof the Holy Ghost.

¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing ⁿto make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

²⁰ But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: ⁱfor that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for ^khe shall save his people from their sins.

²² Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

²⁴ Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

²⁵ And knew her not till she had brought forth ^mher firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

THE MAGIS' VISIT

2 Now when ⁿJesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men ^ofrom the east to Jerusalem,

² Saying, ^pWhere is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen ^qhis star in the east, and are come to worship him.

^o1:10 2 Kings 20:21; 1 Chron. 3:13
^b1:11 Cp. 1 Chron. 3:15–16
^c2 Kings 24:14–16; 25:11; 2 Chron. 36:10,20; Jer. 27:20; 39:9; 52:11,15,28–30; Dan. 1:2
^d1:12 1 Chron. 3:17,19
^eEzra 3:2; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:1
^f1:18 Luke 1:27
^gLuke 1:35
^h1:19 Deut. 24:1
ⁱ1:20 Luke 1:35
^j1:21 Luke 1:31
^kActs 4:12; 5:31; 13:23,38
^l1:23 Isa. 7:14
^m1:25 Exod. 13:2; Luke 2:7,21
ⁿ2:1 Luke 2:4,6–7
^oGen. 10:30; 25:6; 1 Kings 4:30
^p2:2 Luke 2:11
^qNum. 24:17; Isa. 60:3

1:17 Matthew's arrangement of Jesus' genealogy into three sets of **fourteen generations** is probably an example of gematria, a system that assigns numerical value to letters of the alphabet (e.g. A = 1, B = 2, etc.) in order to communicate a subtle message. In Hebrew, the numerical value of the letters composing the name "David" is 14.

1:18 The words of **Jesus Christ** are in an emphatic position in the Greek text, implying that the circumstances of Jesus' birth differed from those of everyone else in the genealogy. Although several of those people were conceived by miracles, they all had a human father. Only Jesus was born of a virgin. **Before they came together** means that Joseph and Mary had not yet had intercourse. Joseph thus assumed that Mary had been unfaithful. **With child of the Holy Ghost** means that Mary's pregnancy was a miracle performed by the Spirit, not that God assumed material form and physically impregnated her. This makes Jesus' conception dramatically different from Greek myths that speak of children born to gods who lay with women.

1:19 Joseph did not want to humiliate Mary publicly because he was a **just man**. True righteousness is characterized by compassion and mercy, an important theme for Matthew (5:6–7,21–26,38–48).

1:20 God spoke to Joseph through dreams, just as He did to his OT namesake (Gen.

37:1–11). The title **son of David** reminded Joseph of his royal lineage and prepared him for the announcement of the Messiah's birth. **On conceived . . . of the Holy Ghost**, see note at verse 18.

1:21 Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which means "Jehovah saves." Jesus' name revealed His purpose: He would rescue sinners from the punishment they deserve. This salvation would be experienced by **his people**—those who follow Jesus.

1:22 The Lord was the ultimate author of the messages spoken and written by the prophets. The grammar that Matthew uses to introduce the quote suggests that the angel quoted this verse to Joseph during his announcement. Some interpreters argue that Matthew mishandled Isaiah 7:14, but he seems to have handled it just as the angel did, which means his usage is backed by angelic authority.

1:23 The name **Emmanuel (God with us)** implies Jesus' deity. Mary's virgin-born Son would be God Himself living among His people. The "Immanuel" of Isa. 7:14 is to be identified with the person described in Isa. 9:2–7 and 11:1–9.

1:24–25 These verses emphasize Joseph's absolute obedience to the angel's instructions, a prevalent theme in these early chapters (2:13–15,19–21). Joseph is a

model of the obedience that should characterize Jesus' disciples (5:19–20). **Knew her not** confirms again that Jesus was the product of a virginal conception.

2:1 The **wise men** were magi. Eastern magi mixed Zoroastrianism with astrology and black magic. They are described in Dan. 2:2,4–5,10, where they are associated with diviner-priests, mediums, and sorcerers. The term "magus" (sg of "magi") appears only once in the NT. It describes Elymas, whom Paul portrayed as "full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness" (Acts 13:6–10). The magus of whom Paul spoke would have held beliefs that were similar to those of the wise men. Thus, the summons of the magi to visit Jesus demonstrates God's intention to save Gentiles from their futile religions. As an adult, Jesus cast out demons and broke Satan's grip on beleaguered people. Here we see that even in His infancy, Christ plundered Satan's kingdom and set captives free. The **east** may refer to Babylonia or Persia.

2:2 The question posed by the wise men was an unintentional challenge to Herod's reign. Jesus was **born King** in the sense that He was from David's line and thus King by birthright. Herod, however, was neither a full Jew nor a descendant of David and thus was not genuinely qualified to reign as

^o2:4 2 Chron. 36:14

^b2 Chron. 34:13

^cMal. 2:7

^d2:6 Mic. 5:2; John

7:42

^eRev. 2:27

^f2:11 Ps. 72:10; Isa.

60:6

^g2:12 Matt. 1:20

^h2:15 Hos. 11:1

³When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁴And when he had gathered all ^athe chief priests and ^bscribes of the people together, ^che demanded of them where Christ should be born.

⁵And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, ⁶^dAnd thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, ^ethat shall rule my people Israel.

⁷Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

⁹When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

¹¹And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary

his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, ^fthey presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²And being warned of God ^gin a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

¹³And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

¹⁴When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

¹⁵And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ^hOut of Egypt have I called my son.

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and

king. The word translated **star** can indicate many different astronomical phenomena, including comets, meteors, or planetary conjunctions. Matthew later (2:9) described the star as moving through the sky in order to point the magi to Jesus' precise location. This indicates that it was no ordinary star. In the east probably means "at its rising," indicating that the star mysteriously appeared in the eastern sky to signal the Messiah's birth. The interest of the magi in astrology, a practice condemned in the Bible (Isa. 47:13–15), probably first directed their attention to the Messiah's star. In another profound display of grace, God condescended to use the magi's pagan superstitions to draw them to Jesus.

2:3 Herod was troubled by reports of the birth of a legitimate claimant to his throne. The people of Jerusalem were equally disturbed because they feared Herod's paranoid and delusional rages. In the past he had killed even his favorite wife and sons in order to protect his rule.

2:4 Herod summoned experts to learn where the OT said the Messiah would be born. To this point the star had guided the wise men near to Jesus, but now the witness of the Scriptures was necessary before God caused the star to reappear and pinpoint the Messiah's exact location. Thus the value of biblical revelation was upheld even as new revelations unfolded.

2:5–6 The chief priests and scribes (v. 3) knew Scripture well enough to identify Bethlehem as the Messiah's birthplace (Mic. 5:2; John 7:42); nevertheless, they later opposed His teachings. Knowledge of Scripture does not guarantee that your heart is right with God. The priestly

opposition to Jesus is foreshadowed here by the fact that they made no effort to go visit Him even as the magi undertook the last leg of a long journey to do so. Micah 5:2 foretold that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of a king who would rule . . . Israel. Matthew's translation says that the Messiah will literally "shepherd" Israel. Matthew likely chose this word to reflect Micah's use of "feed" in 5:4 and thus show that the entirety of Mic. 5 applies to Jesus. This indicates that Jesus is eternal since Micah says His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah also said He will "be great unto the ends of the earth."

2:7–8 Herod questioned the magi about the exact time of the star's appearance under the assumption that the star first appeared at the time of the child's birth. On the basis of this date, he ordered the execution of all male children in Bethlehem two years of age and under (2:16). This implies that the magi's journey was lengthy and involved great sacrifice. Herod's pretended desire to worship the Messiah highlights his deceitfulness.

2:11 In contrast to the stable in which Jesus was born (Luke 2), Jesus' family now lived in a house. This shows that the magi visited Jesus after the visit of the shepherds described by Luke. The magi worshipped Jesus openly, as did many other people during His lifetime (8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17). Jesus' reception of worship reinforces His identity as Immanuel, "God with us" (1:23).

2:13–14 The angel called Jesus the child rather than "your child" when speaking to Joseph because Joseph was not Jesus' biological father. Similarly, he described

Mary as his mother rather than "your wife" because he wished to identify her in relation to the greater (Jesus) rather than the lesser (Joseph). Joseph promptly obeyed (see note at 1:24–25).

2:15 That what was spoken had to be fulfilled indicates that the Bible is inspired by God and authoritative over history. In its original context, the calling of the son out of Egypt in Hos. 11 is a reference to Israel's exodus from Egypt, not the young Messiah's trip back home. Matthew understood this, but under the Spirit's direction he recognized Jesus as the new Moses who will lead a new and climactic exodus. Just as Moses delivered his people from slavery to Pharaoh, Jesus will deliver people from slavery to Satan. Thus Matthew rightly regarded Hos. 11:1 and other portions of the OT as foreshadows of Jesus and events in His life.

2:16–17 Skeptics deny that Herod ever slaughtered the boys of Bethlehem since no extrabiblical source documents this horrific event. However, the murders are consistent with his documented dealings, such as his murdering his own family. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that Herod arranged for many Jewish nobles to be murdered upon his death in order to ensure that the land mourned his passing (Ant. 17:167–69). Herod's behavior is reminiscent of Pharaoh's around the time of Moses' birth (Exod. 1:15–22). This and other striking similarities to Moses' birth narrative strengthen Matthew's presentation of Jesus as the new Moses whom God promised in Deut. 18:15–19. Ancient Jews thought of Moses as a deliverer (Acts 7:25,35). By highlighting parallels between Moses and Jesus, Matthew shows that

under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

¹⁷Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by ^aJeremy the prophet, saying,

¹⁸In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

¹⁹But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

²⁰Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

²¹And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

²²But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside ^binto the parts of Galilee:

Jesus was the promised Deliverer who would save His people from their sins (see notes at Matt. 1:7-16 and 2:20-21). Herod killed all boys **two years old and under** because the star had appeared to the magi two years previously, presumably at the moment of Jesus' birth.

2:17-18 Once again Matthew introduces a quotation in a way that implies that the OT author (Jeremiah in this case) was used by God to proclaim His message. Matthew quotes Jer. 31:15 which originally expressed the lament of mothers who grieved over sons who were sent into exile. Matthew's application here implies that Israel was again in exile, estranged from God, and in need of redemption. Since Jer. 31 includes the weeping and then climaxes with the joyous promise that God would establish a new covenant with His people, one in which He would forgive their sins and write His law on their hearts, Matthew likely intends to call this to mind and apply it to the Bethlehem massacre and the coming of Jesus. Just as the weeping of mothers preceded the promise of the new covenant in Jer. 31, so now the **weeping** of mothers preceded the establishment of the new covenant through Jesus (see note at 26:28).

2:19 Since Herod died in 4 BC, and since Jesus was born roughly two years before Herod ordered the massacre of the Bethlehem boys, it seems that Jesus was born in 5 or 6 BC. It also seems likely that the shameless Bethlehem massacre was one of Herod's final acts—a fitting close to a life of infamous violence.

2:20 The angel's words are almost identical to the words Jehovah spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Exod. 4:19, LXX). This allusion to the Moses narrative again identifies Jesus as the new Moses (see notes at 2:15 and 2:16-17).

²³And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled ^awhich was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MINISTRY

3 In those days came ^eJohn the Baptist, ^fpreaching ^gin the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, Repent ye: for ^gthe kingdom of heaven is at hand.

³For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, ^hThe voice of one crying in the wilderness, ⁱPrepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

⁴And ^jthe same John ^khad his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and ^mwild honey.

⁵Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

⁶And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, ^pO generation of vipers, who

^a2:17 Jer. 31:15

^b2:22 Matt. 3:13;

Luke 2:39

^c2:23 John 1:45

^dJudg. 13:5; 1 Sam.

1:11

^e3:1 Mark 1:4,15; Luke

3:2-3; John 1:28

^fJosh. 14:10

^g3:2 Matt. 4:17; 10:7;

Dan. 2:44

^h3:3 Isa. 40:3; Mark

1:3; Luke 3:4; John

1:23

ⁱLuke 1:76

^j3:4 Mark 1:6

^k2 Kings 1:8; Zech.

13:4

^lLev. 11:22

^m1 Sam. 14:25-26

ⁿ3:5 Mark 1:5;

Luke 3:7

^o3:6 Acts 19:4,18

^p3:7 Matt. 12:34;

23:33; Luke 3:7-9

2:22-23 Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, inherited his father's violent traits. His rule over Judaea signaled that the holy family should settle elsewhere, and so Joseph led his family to resettle in the obscure Galilean village of **Nazareth**, where Joseph and Mary had previously lived (Luke 1:26). Matthew states that the decision was a fulfillment of an OT prophecy that the Messiah **shall be called a Nazarene**. Rather than a specific OT text, Matthew was probably referring to an OT theme, the prophecies that describe the Messiah as a "branch." The term used for "branch" in Is 11:1 (*netser*) may be transliterated with the first three consonants (*nzt*) that compose the nouns "Nazareth" and "Nazarene." This messianic prophecy is closely connected to others (Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15) that told of a righteous descendant of David whose wise and just rule would be empowered by the Spirit and who would bring salvation to Judah. Matthew thus saw Jesus' hometown as a subtle clue to His identity as the Messiah.

3:1 In those days means "during the time of Jesus' residence in Nazareth" rather than "during the reign of Archelaus." After all, Archelaus reigned from 4 BC to AD 6, too early for **John the Baptist** to have begun his ministry since he would have been under age 12. In OT usage, "in those days" often referred to a time of prophetic fulfillment (Isa. 10:20; Amos 9:11; Zeph. 1:15; Zech. 12:3-4). Matthew probably used the phrase in conjunction with his references to fulfilled prophecy to emphasize that God's promises were being fulfilled through Jesus and John the Baptist, herald and predecessor of the Messiah. The location of John's ministry is reminiscent of the ministry of the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:3; 19:3-18; 2 Kings 2:1-12), who many Jews believed would appear again to prepare the way for the Messiah (Matt. 17:10-13).

3:2 John's message focused on repentance and the coming **kingdom of heaven**. Jesus emphasized the same thing from the outset of His ministry (see note at 4:17). The kingdom is defined as the rule that God exercises through the person, work, and teachings of Jesus. The call to **repent** means we must abandon sinful lifestyles and express sorrow for sins.

3:3 Matthew's application of Isa. 40:3 to John the Baptist tells us as much about Jesus as it does about John. After all, in its original context the prophecy spoke of one who prepared the way for the coming of Jehovah, God Himself. By using a text about the coming of Jehovah to describe the coming of Jesus, Matthew proclaimed that Jesus is divine.

3:4 John's **raiment** was similar to Elijah's (2 Kings 1:8), and his ministry and lifestyle paralleled Elijah's also, including his residence in the Judaeen wilderness, his austere diet, his call for Israel to repent, and his confrontation with an evil king and his wife. Jesus explained the significance of these parallels in Matt. 11:14; 17:12-13.

3:6 Although Jews required Gentiles to immerse themselves in water in order to convert from paganism to Judaism, John demanded that repentant Jews be **baptized** as well. This bold move implied that Jews did not belong to God merely by virtue of their descent from Abraham (see note at vv. 7-9). Like anyone else, ethnic Jews needed to repent in order to enter the coming kingdom. Unlike the repetitive ritual washings of other religious groups, John's baptism appears to have been a one-time event associated with a permanent repentance and a transformed life.

3:7-9 In Matt. 2:4 the chief priests and scribes identified the place of the Messiah's birth but made no effort to visit Him. Their attention was on worldly power instead.

^a3:7 Rom. 5:9;

1 Thess. 1:10

^b3:9 John 8:33,39;

Acts 13:26; Rom.

4:1,11,16

^c3:10 Matt. 7:19; Luke

13:7,9; John 15:6

^d3:11 Mark 1:8; Luke

3:16; John 1:15,26,33;

Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:4

^eIsa. 4:4; 44:3; Mal.

3:2; Acts 2:3-4;

1 Cor. 12:13

^f3:12 Mal. 3:3

^gMatt. 13:30; Mal. 4:1

^h3:13 Mark 1:9;

Luke 3:21

ⁱMatt. 2:22

^j3:16 Mark 1:10

^kIsa. 11:2; 42:1; Luke

3:22; John 1:32-33

^l3:17 John 12:28

^mMatt. 12:18; 17:5; Ps.

2:7; Isa. 42:1; Mark 1:11;

Luke 9:35; Eph. 1:6;

Col. 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:17

ⁿ4:1 Mark 1:12;

Luke 4:1

^oCp. 1 Kings 18:12;

Ezek. 3:14; 8:3; 11:1,24;

40:2; 43:5; Acts 8:39

hath warned you to flee from ^athe wrath to come?

⁸Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

⁹And think not to say within yourselves, ^bWe have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

¹⁰And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: ^ctherefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

¹¹^dI indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: ^ehe shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

¹²^fWhose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will ^gburn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

That negative portrayal is now followed by John's charge that the leading priests of the Jews were *vipers* (see 12:34; 23:33) fleeing from God's *wrath*. The coming kingdom would be accompanied by blessing for God's people and by punishment for the unrepentant. The *Pharisees and Sadducees* had no intention of confessing their sins because they presumed that descent from Abraham guaranteed that they would escape God's wrath. This belief was reflected in the Mishnah, which stated, "All Israel will have a share in the world to come." John's statement about raising up *children unto Abraham* from *these stones* involves a wordplay in Hebrew. The word child (*ben*) sounds similar to the word stone (*eben*). A stone has no intrinsic value, yet Almighty God can transform worthless rock into a person and include him in His covenant people if He so chooses (Isa. 51:1-2). Consequently, descent from Abraham gave the Jews no grounds for boasting. John's warning foreshadows the incorporation of believing Gentiles into the people of God, an important theme in Matthew's Gospel.

3:10 God will punish those who fail to produce "fruits meet for repentance" (v. 8). In the teachings of John and Jesus, *fruit* represents good works that result from a miraculous inner transformation (7:15-20; 12:33; 13:23). Later, the cursing of the fig tree and the parable of the wicked tenants illustrated the penalty (21:18-22,33-43).

3:11 Removing the master's *shoes* was a task so menial that Hebrew slave owners could not require it of Hebrew slaves. John, however, saw himself as unworthy to perform for Jesus the very task that slaves were spared from performing. John expressed this deep humility because Jesus was *mightier* than he, and this greater power expressed itself through a new baptism that was vastly superior to John's. John's baptism was a public expression of *repentance*, but his baptism could not change a person's heart. Jesus, however, baptized the repentant *with the Holy Ghost*, making them holy through inner transformation. Matthew's quotation from Jer. 31:15 in

Matt. 2:18 was probably intended to remind his readers of the promise of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). The reference to baptism with the Spirit recalls the related promise in Ezek. 36:24-27 in which God declared, "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." This work of the Spirit was highlighted again at Jesus' baptism (3:16). Jesus would have the power to transform human character in a way that John could not. Jesus would also baptize people with *fire*, a reference to divine judgment against unrepentant sinners.

3:12 A winnowing *fan* was a pitchfork or scoop-shaped basket used to toss grain into the air. The wind would blow the useless *chaff* aside while the heavier grain kernels fell to the threshing floor. The chaff would then be gathered up and burned. John's parable thus described a coming divine judgment in which all people are sifted, with the result that the Messiah's followers will be preserved by God while the unrepentant are gathered for punishment. Though chaff is highly flammable and burns away quickly, John made clear that the fire will never go out. God's punishment against unrepentant sinners is eternal.

3:14 By his protest John recognized Jesus' superiority and further identified Jesus as the holy One who would come after him (v. 11). John knew that he needed Jesus' baptism, the baptism of the Spirit, and he also understood that sinless Jesus did not seek water baptism as an expression of repentance.

3:15 Jesus explained that baptism was essential to His perfection. Jesus wished to please His Father by obeying the commands of the prophets (John was the greatest of the prophets; 11:9-13) and by identifying with God's righteous cause among the people. If He had refused to participate in John's baptism, Jesus would have seemed like a rebel rather than One who came to *fulfill all righteousness*.

3:16 The opening of the *heavens* demonstrates that both the voice and the

THE BAPTISM OF THE BELOVED SON

¹³^hThen cometh Jesus ⁱfrom Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

¹⁴But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

¹⁵And Jesus answering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*. Then he suffered him.

¹⁶^jAnd Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw ^kthe Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

¹⁷^lAnd lo a voice from heaven, saying, ^mThis is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

4 Then was ⁿJesus led up of ^othe Spirit ^pinto the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

descending *Spirit* came from heaven and were divine. First-century Jews associated the *dove* with the Spirit since Gen. 1:2 describes the Spirit as hovering over the primeval waters. The Hebrew verb translated "moved" is the same word used to describe a bird fluttering its wings. The descent of the Spirit thus alludes to Gen. 1 and identifies Jesus as One who brings new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

3:17 The Father speaks directly only twice in Matthew—here at Jesus' baptism and later at the transfiguration. On both occasions He identified Jesus as *His Son* and expressed approval of Him (see 17:5). Here He alludes to two OT texts: Ps. 2:7 and Isa. 42:1. Psalm 2 was a song sung at the crowning of Israel's kings. The Father's application of this text to Jesus identified Him as a divinely appointed King who would rule with divine authority and whose kingdom would extend to the ends of the earth. The allusion to Isa. 42 identified Jesus as the Servant, the messianic figure who Isa. 53:5 promised would be "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." Matthew 12:18-21 explicitly applies Isa. 42 to Jesus, and Matt. 8:17 explicitly applies Isa. 53 to Jesus. The Father's words identify Jesus as King and Saviour.

4:1-2 The temptation of Christ highlights numerous parallels between Jesus and OT Israel. Deuteronomy 8:2-3 says that the Lord led Israel into the wilderness to be tested for 40 years. Similarly, Jesus was *led . . . into the wilderness* to be tested for *forty days*. The three temptations Jesus faced parallel the tests Israel faced in the wilderness, and every Scripture that Jesus quoted in response to His temptations were drawn from God's message to the Israelites about their wilderness test (Deut. 6-8). Israel failed its tests, but Jesus passed His and in doing so "fulfilled all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Thus He is qualified to create a new spiritual Israel. Later, when He chose 12 disciples to parallel Israel's 12 tribes, He identified His followers as the new Israel. The fact that Jesus hungered shows that He was truly human as well as divine.

²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

³And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

⁴But he answered and said, It is written, ^aMan shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

⁵Then the devil taketh him up ^binto the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, ^cHe shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

⁷Jesus said unto him, It is written again, ^dThou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, ^eThou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**

¹¹Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, ^fangels came and ministered unto him.

THE PREACHING MINISTRY OF JESUS

¹²Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

¹³And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

¹⁴That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

¹⁵^hThe land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

^a4:4 Deut. 8:3

^b4:5 Matt. 27:53;

Neh. 11:18; Isa. 48:2;

52:1; Rev. 11:2

^c4:6 Ps. 91:11–12

^d4:7 Deut. 6:16

^e4:10 Deut. 6:13;

10:20; Josh. 24:14;

1 Sam. 7:3

^f4:11 Heb. 1:14

^g4:12 Mark 1:14; Luke

3:20; 4:14,31; John

4:43

^h4:15 Isa. 9:1–2

4:3 The stones that littered the wilderness floor resembled small round loaves of bread in shape, size, and color. Interpreters disagree as to why it would have been wrong for Jesus to transform and eat the stones. Most suggest that He was tempted to exercise supernatural power rather than depend on God's provision. Clues in the text suggest that the Spirit, who led Jesus into the wilderness, commanded this fast. Thus, breaking the fast prematurely would have been an act of disobedience, preventing Jesus from fulfilling every act of righteousness (3:15). Jesus aimed to end His fast when the test was over and no sooner. God would signal the end by providing food. Matthew 4:11 shows that at fast's end, angels came and "ministered unto" Jesus. The verb "minister" means "to serve as a table-waiter" (Acts 6:2) and implies that the angels fed Jesus. During their wilderness wanderings, Israel failed to trust God to provide food and water. Jesus, the embodiment of the new Israel, had unwavering trust in God's care. On **Son of God**, see note at 3:17.

4:4 Jesus is quoting Deut. 8:3. God's words are not idle, but are to be received as commands. Deuteronomy 8:1,6 emphasize the need to obey God's commands, and Deut. 8:1 teaches that man lives by following God's commandments just as 8:3 says that man lives by what comes from God's mouth (Deut. 6:24). Thus the OT text Jesus quoted teaches that obeying God is more important than being well-fed. Israel struggled to learn this truth (Exod. 16:3; Num. 11:4–5). In contrast, Jesus hungered for righteousness more than bread and thirsted for obedience more than water. He urged His disciples to have the same priority (Matt. 5:6).

4:5–7 Satan quoted Ps. 91:11–12 out of context, trying to convince Jesus that the Father would supernaturally protect Him even if He gambled with His life. Jesus responded by quoting Deut. 6:16 which refers to the time when Israel, angry and thirsty, questioned God's presence until He miraculously produced a stream of water from a rock (Exod.

17:7). Had Jesus succumbed to Satan's temptation, it would indicate that His faith was frail and depended on God's miraculous action. Jumping from the **pinnacle of the temple** would test God by attempting to force Him to perform a miracle.

Satan implied that God is trustworthy only when He rescues us from suffering and danger. Jesus knew better. God is trustworthy even when He allows us or even causes us to suffer. True faith recognizes this and perseveres through hard times. When Jesus suffered on the cross (27:41–44), those who tormented Him used arguments similar to that of the devil. They even quoted Ps. 22:8 to argue that Jesus would be rescued if God really loved Him, much as Satan quoted Ps. 91:11–12 to argue that God would rescue Jesus from a deadly fall if He were really God's Son. Again, Jesus knew better. He trusted God even through a brutal scourging, even when nails were driven through His limbs, and even when God let Him suffer a horrible death.

4:8–9 Although Satan exercises some authority over the world (Luke 4:6; John 12:31), the **kingdoms of the world** belong to God, and He promised to give them to the Messiah (Ps. 2:8).

4:10–11 Jesus responded to Satan by quoting from Deut. 6:14 and 10:20. If Jesus had worshipped Satan in order to gain worldly power, it would have indicated that He valued creation more than the Creator and the kingdoms of the earth more than the kingdom of God. Jesus insisted that **only God** is worthy of **worship**. After citing Deut. 6:13, Jesus' reception of worship later in this Gospel (8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17) without rebuking the worshipper (cp. Acts 10:25–26; 14:11–15) strongly implies His deity. That the **angels came** to serve Jesus further implies His superior status.

4:12 John the Baptist had been imprisoned because he dared to say that Herod Antipas's marriage to his brother's wife was immoral. As tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea (Luke 3:1), Herod did not have jurisdiction over Judaea,

the locale of Jesus' baptism and wilderness temptation. Thus Jesus fearlessly marched into the heart of Herod's territory when He heard of John's arrest. In Luke 13:31–33, the Pharisees urged Jesus to leave Galilee in order to escape arrest by Herod. Jesus replied by calling Herod "that fox" and insisted that He would travel to Jerusalem only because it was necessary for Him to die there, not to flee Herod. Jesus caused kings to tremble (2:3; 14:1–2), but He Himself feared no man.

4:13 At this point Jesus made an important strategic move by shifting his headquarters from **Nazareth to Capernaum**. Nazareth was an obscure village, but Capernaum was a much larger fishing center on the shores of lake Galilee. It boasted a tax collection station and a Roman garrison of at least 100 soldiers. **Upon the sea** alludes to Isaiah's prophecies, which describe the area as "the way of the sea," an ancient trade route stretching from Damascus down to Caesarea Maritima on the coast of the Mediterranean sea. By the time of Christ, the Romans had built a stone road along the route, allowing caravans to travel from Syria and pass through Capernaum on the way to Caesarea. Capernaum also provided boat access to every other city along the Galilean coast. Thus Jesus was able to reach many Jews and Gentiles.

4:14–16 Matthew's quotation of Isa. 9:1–2 highlights the international focus of Jesus' ministry by describing the region as **Galilee of the Gentiles**. Second Kings 15:29 and 17:24–27 show that after the Jews were deported from the northern kingdom of Israel, foreigners flooded into Galilee. For instance, reports from the geographer Strabo and first-century Jewish historian Josephus show that Egyptians, Arabians, Phoenicians, and Greeks lived in Galilee. The Apocrypha (1 Maccabees 5) says Galilee's population was largely Gentile and heathen. Jesus' move to Galilee and the strategically located city of Capernaum shows His intention to save Gentiles as well as Jews. Matthew's application of Isa. 9 also shows that Jesus was the great King

^a4:16 Isa. 42:7; Luke 2:32
^b4:17 Mark 1:14-15
^cMatt. 3:2; 10:7
^d4:18 Mark 1:16-18; Luke 5:2
^eJohn 1:42
^f4:19 Luke 5:10-11
^g4:20 Mark 10:28; Luke 18:28
^h4:21 Mark 1:19-20; Luke 5:10
ⁱ4:23 Matt. 9:35; Mark 1:21,39; Luke 4:15,44
^jMatt. 24:14; Mark 1:14
^kMark 1:34
^l4:25 Mark 3:7
^m5:1 Mark 3:13,20
ⁿ5:3 Luke 6:20; cp. Ps. 51:17; Prov. 16:19; 29:23; Isa. 57:15; 66:2
^o5:4 Isa. 61:2-3; Luke 6:21; John 16:20; 2 Cor. 1:7; Rev. 21:4
^p5:5 Ps. 37:11
^qCp. Rom. 4:13

^{16a}The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

^{17b}From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

THE CALLING OF THE FIRST FOUR DISCIPLES

^{18d}And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon ^ecalled Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

¹⁹And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

^{20g}And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

^{21h}And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son of Zebedee*, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

²²And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS

²³And Jesus went about all Galilee, *teaching* in their synagogues, and preach-

ing *the* gospel of the kingdom, ^kand healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

²⁴And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

^{25l}And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judaea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

THE BEATITUDES

5 And seeing the multitudes, ^mhe went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

²And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

³ⁿ**Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

^{4o}**Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.**

^{5p}**Blessed are the meek: for ^qthey shall inherit the earth.**

called "Mighty God" who would reign from David's throne over a universal and eternal kingdom, liberate God's people from spiritual slavery, and bring peace and joy to the world (Isa. 9:3-7).

4:17 On the significance of the words **from that time**, see "Structure" in the Introduction. Jesus' message was identical to the message proclaimed by John the Baptist before his arrest. This identifies Jesus as the One who came after John (3:11) whom John had identified from Isa. 40:3 as the Lord God Himself (see note at Matt. 3:2).

4:18-22 Jesus' command, **Follow me**, urged the disciples not just to accompany Him on His travels but to follow His example and emulate His character. Following Jesus involved significant sacrifice for these men. They abandoned their careers as fishermen and placed commitment to Jesus above commitment to their own families (10:37; 19:29).

4:23 Jesus' ministry in the **synagogues** shows that He initially focused His ministry on the Jewish population of Galilee. The **gospel of the kingdom**, the primary topic of Jesus' preaching, was that the long-awaited Messiah, the human ruler through whom God would establish His reign on earth, had come at last. This was the message proclaimed by John the Baptist (3:2), preached by Jesus (4:17), and emphasized by Matthew through his mention of Jesus' Davidic lineage, the account of His miraculous birth, and his record of the visit of the magi. **All manner** means no type of ailment was beyond Jesus' power to heal.

4:24 **Syria** was located just north of Galilee. Not surprisingly, word of Jesus' healings quickly spread to that region, crossing geographical and language barriers. Soon Syrians began bringing their sick for Jesus to heal. By consenting to this, Jesus distinguished Himself from some later Jewish interpreters

who urged Jews to give no aid to a drowning Gentile or a Gentile woman giving birth (Maimonides). Matthew says Jesus healed **possessed** people, but some scholars argue that these people had natural diseases. However, this verse distinguishes natural diseases from demon possession, which proves that the ancients differentiated between the two.

4:25 Jesus' earliest followers hailed from Jewish and Gentile regions. **Jerusalem** and **Judaea** were Jewish regions, **Galilee** had a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, and **Decapolis** was a group of predominantly Gentile cities. Jesus desired to serve, heal, teach, and save all the nations of the earth (28:18-20). He came as the world's Messiah.

5:1 Jesus deemed the mountain to be a good setting for teaching a large group. As the new Moses, His delivery of God's message from a mountaintop provides yet another parallel with the ancient Moses. The Greek words translated **he went up into a mountain** are used three times in the Greek OT (Exod. 19:3; 24:18; 34:4), and all three fall in the section describing Moses' ascent of mount Sinai.

5:3 Since Matthew introduces the Sermon on the Mount by highlighting the connection between Jesus and Moses, the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12) should probably be read against the backdrop of Moses' teachings. The only time the adjective "Blessed" (Gk *makarios*) was used by Moses was in his blessing on Israel (Deut. 33:29). Israel's blessing had both a historical and future focus. Historically, they were "saved" by being delivered out of Egypt. The remainder of the blessing assured the Israelites of future success in their conquest of the promised land. Against this backdrop, the blessings of the new Moses identify Jesus' disciples as the new Israel who will enjoy a new exodus and conquest. The new Moses is a spiritual deliverer rather than a political

one, and His promises must be understood in that light. Jesus pronounces spiritual salvation (exodus from slavery to sin) and promises spiritual victory (conquest and inheritance of a new promised land). This background is confirmed by the allusion to Israel's exodus and conquest in the promise that the meek will "inherit the earth" (5:5).

In the OT, the **poor** were those who cried out for God's help, depended entirely on Him for their needs, had a humble and contrite spirit, experienced His deliverance, and enjoyed His undeserved favor (Ps. 86:1-5). In light of this background, Jesus was describing His disciples as unworthy sinners who depend on God's grace for salvation. Although the promises in Matt. 5:4-9 are expressed in the future tense, the affirmation **theirs is the kingdom of heaven** is in the present tense (5:3,10). This suggests that the kingdom had already arrived through the coming of Jesus but that the fulfillment of many kingdom promises will occur only in the future. This future fulfillment awaits Christ's second coming. The statement "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" appears at the beginning and end of the main body of the Beatitudes (5:3,10). This bracketing device suggests that the Beatitudes constitute promises only to those who belong to the kingdom. Isaiah 61:1 promised that the Messiah would bring good news to the poor. This beatitude serves as a fulfillment of that prophecy (Luke 4:16-21).

5:4 This beatitude is also dependent on Isa. 61:1-3. The context of Isa. 61 portrays mourning as expressive of Israel's sorrow over the exile, which their sins had caused. In this light, Matt. 5:4 expresses the grief of those suffering the consequences of sin. **Theirs** is an attitude of repentance.

5:5 Like the preceding Beatitudes, this one parallels Isa. 61. Isaiah 61:7 (LXX) uses the

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: ^a for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: ^b for they shall obtain mercy.

8 ^c Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for ^d they shall see God.

9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 ^e Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 ^f Blessed *are* ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of ^g evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 ^h Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for *great is* your reward in heaven: for ⁱ so

persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: ^j but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 ^k Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men ^l light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, ^m that they may see your good works, and ⁿ glorify your Father which is in heaven.

^o 5:6 Isa. 55:1; 65:13
^p 5:7 Matt. 6:14; Ps. 41:1; Mark 11:25; 2 Tim. 1:16; Heb. 6:10; James 2:13
^q 5:8 Ps. 15:2; 24:4; Heb. 12:14
^r 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2-3
^s 5:10 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:14
^t 5:11 Luke 6:22
^u 1 Pet. 4:14
^v 5:12 Luke 6:23; Acts 5:41; Rom. 5:3; James 1:2; 1 Pet. 4:13
^w Matt. 23:34,37; 2 Chron. 36:16; Neh. 9:26; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess. 2:15
^x 5:13 Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35
^y 5:14 Prov. 4:18; Php. 2:15
^z 5:15 Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16; 11:33
^{aa} 5:16 1 Pet. 2:12
^{ab} John 15:8; 1 Cor. 14:25

words "they shall inherit the earth," an exact parallel to Matt. 5:5b. The first three Beatitudes thus confirm Jesus' identity as the Servant of Isa. 61. This identification is important for understanding the sacrificial nature of Jesus' death since Isa. 52:14-53:12 describes the Servant as suffering the punishment that sinners deserved (see Matt. 8:17 and 12:17-21 which appeal to Isa. 53:4 and 42:1-4). The beatitude also echoes Ps. 37:11 in the which the **meek** are those who stubbornly trust God and surrender to His authority even when they cannot make sense of their circumstances. **Inherit the earth** in the OT refers to inheriting the promised land of Canaan. Thus most of Jesus' hearers recognized that His disciples were a new Israel that would inherit the land promised to Abraham. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, "inheriting the earth" involves more than the promise of living in Israel. It refers to living in a recreated earth over which Christ rules eternally. Matthew 19:28 anticipates the renewal of earth and assures Jesus' disciples that they will enjoy great reward in the eternal kingdom.

5:6 **Hunger and thirst** are metaphors for a disciple's fervent desire for **righteousness**. The words **they shall be filled** are in the passive voice, indicating that righteousness is not something that disciples can achieve by their own efforts. The verb here, like those in the promises of Matt. 5:4,6-7 (and possibly 9), is a "divine passive" that describes an act of God. This is crucial to understanding the theology of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus required His disciples to keep the least of the commandments (5:19), surpass the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20), and to be "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (5:48). Such demands can be twisted into a false theology in which righteousness is achieved by works, but the righteousness Jesus demands of us is actually a divine gift.

5:7 The **merciful** are those who relate to others with a forgiving and compassionate spirit (6:2-4; 18:21-35). God will show **mercy** to the merciful.

5:8 The **pure in heart** are authentically righteous in their inner person. Righteousness can be faked, as was the case with the

Pharisees (23:25-28). Jesus said true purity is attained when God grants it to the person who hungers and thirsts for it. Complete fulfillment of this divine promise will occur at Jesus' return, but the identification of His disciples as those who are pure shows that dramatic transformation occurs even in this lifetime (John 15:13). The promise that Jesus' disciples **shall see God** is not to be interpreted figuratively as if it refers merely to special insight into God's nature or to a visionary experience. Rather, it looks forward to the time when they will literally behold God in all His glory. The new Moses promises His followers access to God that not even the ancient Moses was allowed to experience (Exod. 33:12-23).

5:9 The ministry of peacemaking involves resolving conflict by making prompt apologies and acts of restitution, refusing to seek revenge, and humbly serving and loving one's enemies (5:21-26,38-41,43-48). The promise probably means that Jesus' authentic disciples emulate God by undertaking the ministry of reconciliation. Thus at the final judgment they shall be accepted as **the children of God**.

5:10 The purest form of righteousness is pursued by disciples who know that their good deeds will demand great sacrifice and will result in pain rather than immediate reward. This is the epitome of the kingdom righteousness demanded by the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus pronounced that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who suffer for righteousness. In the Greek text, **theirs** is shifted from its normal position at the end of the clause to the beginning instead. This gives the pronoun a special emphasis indicating that the kingdom belongs to righteous sufferers and to them alone. Those who always endeavor to evade persecution are not true disciples and will not have a share in the kingdom because true disciples follow Jesus even at the cost of their lives (16:24-27). The **kingdom of heaven** is the reign of God in the person of Jesus the Messiah. Righteous sufferers are subjects of God's rule through their submission to Jesus' authority. Jesus inaugurated this kingdom during His ministry, but it will be consummated in the end times.

5:11-12 Jesus' words show that persecution is typically either verbal or violent. Verbal

forms include insult and slander. The word **persecute** includes acts of physical violence like the slap of Matt. 5:39. Jesus promised that the cost of discipleship will be offset by the enormity of the **reward** the disciple enjoys in **heaven**. Jewish leaders rejected and vehemently **persecuted** the OT **prophets**, and Jesus repeatedly denounced this persecution (21:34-36; 23:29-37). By treating Jesus' followers in the same way they had treated the prophets, Jewish persecutors unwittingly bestowed on them a prophet's honor.

5:13 Salt has many uses, but in the OT it is most often a purifying agent (Exod. 30:35; Lev. 2:13; 2 Kings 2:21; Ezek. 16:4). As **the salt of the earth**, Jesus' disciples are to purify a corrupt world through their example of righteous living and their proclamation of the gospel. However, contaminated salt does not promote purity. The verb translated **lost his savour** indicates foolish and immoral behavior. It refers to a professing disciple whose unrighteous lifestyle promotes destruction rather than purification. Such salt is only good for spreading over ground where you want to kill vegetation. Such is the fatal effect of an unrighteous disciple's lifestyle. Nothing grows where they go. The verb **cast out** describes the disposal of something worthless, and the verb **trodden** alludes to the treatment an immoral disciple receives from the world.

5:14-16 This is an allusion to Isa. 9:1-2; 42:6; 49:6—texts that describe the ministry of the Messiah, Servant of the Lord. It indicates that Jesus' disciples are to be extensions of His ministry, carrying salvation to the ends of the earth. Such ministry is intrinsic to true discipleship. A disciple should no more conceal his righteousness or the gospel message than a glowing city should douse its light at night. The reference to giving light **unto** all combines with the reference to **the world** to show that Christ's ministry is intended for all people. This anticipates the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20.

The disciple is not the ultimate author of his good works. If the disciple were the author of his good works, he would justly receive praise. However, Jesus taught that only the **Father in heaven** is to be praised for a disciple's good works, for He is the true source of such works (see note at v. 6). This

⁵17 Rom. 3:31; 10:4; Gal. 3:24
⁵18 Luke 16:17
⁵19 James 2:10
⁵20 Rom. 9:31; 10:3
⁵21 Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17
⁵22 1 John 3:15
⁵23 Matt. 8:4; 23:19
⁵24 Matt. 18:19; cp. Job 42:8; 1 Tim. 2:8; 1 Pet. 3:7
⁵25 Prov. 25:8; Luke 12:58–59
⁵26 Cp. Ps. 32:6; Isa. 55:6
⁵27 Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18
⁵28 Job 31:1; Prov. 6:25; cp. Gen. 34:2; 2 Sam. 11:2
⁵29 Matt. 18:8–9; Mark 9:43–47
⁵30 Cp. Matt. 19:12; Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 9:27; Col. 3:5
⁵31 Deut. 24:1; Jer. 3:1; cp. Matt. 19:3; Mark 10:2
⁵32 Matt. 19:9; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:10–11

17^a Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, ^bTill heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19^c Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed ^dthe righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

TEACHINGS ON MURDER AND ANGER

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ^eThou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That ^fwhosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, ^gRaca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore ^hif thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24ⁱ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25^j Agree with thine adversary quickly, ^kwhiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

TEACHINGS ON TEMPTATION

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ^lThou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever ^mlooketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29ⁿ And if thy right eye offend thee, ^opluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

TEACHINGS ON DIVORCE

31 It hath been said, ^pWhosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That ^qwhosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit

must not be overlooked. The righteousness demanded by the Sermon on the Mount is a divine gift that God imparts to Jesus' followers.

5:17–20 Jesus defended Himself against charges that He defied the law (9:3,11,14; 12:2,10; 15:1–2; 17:24; 19:3; 22:34–36) by insisting that He came to fulfil both the law and the prophets, which together amount to the entire OT. The word “fulfil” may refer to fulfillment of OT prophecies (1:22; 2:15,17,23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54,56; 27:9). This is suggested by the words **all be fulfilled**. However, it can also refer to obedience to God's commands (3:15). This additional meaning is implied by the reference to practicing these **commandments**. Consequently, Jesus' words imply that He would fulfill all of the OT promises and obey all its commandments. The **jot** is the Hebrew letter *jod*, which resembles an English apostrophe. The **tittle** is a slight pen stroke that distinguishes similar letters, like the tail that distinguishes ‘j’ from ‘i’ in English. Jesus' statement shows that He regarded the OT as accurate and reliable down to the smallest detail. In keeping with this conviction, Jesus taught that fidelity to the OT witness determines a disciple's stature in His kingdom. True fidelity to God's commands is made possible by God's miraculous work in a disciple's heart (see note at v. 6).

5:21–22 Matthew 5:21 begins a section of the Sermon on the Mount generally known as the “Six Antitheses.” The title may seem to imply that Jesus opposed the OT in some way, but in reality He always upheld its authority. Rather than contradicting or overturning OT teachings, Jesus opposed the misguided interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees. These men were concerned only with superficial matters, but Jesus went deeper. He argued that the law prohibits not just actual murder but murderous attitudes as well. Similarly, violent temperaments are condemned just as surely as violent deeds. **5:23–24** Disciples must attempt at their earliest opportunity to reconcile with a brother or sister who has something **against** them, even if doing so interrupts important business. Speaking to the context of His day, Jesus said disciples should seek reconciliation even if it meant halting in the middle of offering sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple. This interruption was significant since Jesus' original audience (located away from Jerusalem) would have to abandon their **gift at the altar**, travel for days to reach Galilee and seek reconciliation, and then return to Judaea to complete the sacrifice. Such is the priority of reconciliation. **5:25–26** A person can typically pay a smaller penalty for their offense by seeking an out-of-court settlement rather than waiting for the issue to be settled in court. This

illustrates that reconciliation is urgent because the longer it is postponed, the more severe the consequences.

5:27–28 Jesus said that gazing on a member of the opposite sex for the purpose of arousing illicit sexual desire is **adultery of the heart**. True righteousness therefore seeks to avoid not only adulterous acts but also adulterous thoughts.

5:29–30 Self-mutilation and amputation are not effective ways to overcome sin. After all, sin arises from a corrupt heart rather than flesh and bone (15:19). Jesus here uses hyperbole (intentional exaggeration for the sake of making a point) and allegory (in which the **eye** represents a lustful perspective and the **hand** represents an immoral deed) in order to convey a vital requirement of discipleship. Disciples should put a stop to thoughts and behaviors that contribute to immorality.

5:31–32 Jesus challenged a loose rabbinic paraphrase of Deut. 24:1 that distorted the original meaning of the text. In the hands of the rabbis, Deut. 24:1 greatly multiplied the number of offenses that could justify divorce, such as fading beauty or a tendency to burn food. Jesus kept true to Deut. 24:1 and insisted that **fornication** is the legitimate grounds for divorce. People who divorce for frivolous reasons and remarry are guilty of **adultery** since their original marriage covenant has not been genuinely dissolved.