

# SPARK BIBLE

New Revised Standard Version

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Welcome to the Spark Bible! This booklet contains the content from the Spark Bible that you can use during your Spark Preview Week. The contents are listed in the order that books are found in the Bible, with maps at the end. Take a look at the back cover for more about how to use the Spark Bible Stickers.

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## GENESIS 1:1

**SIX DAYS OF CREATION AND THE SABBATH**

**1** In the beginning when God created<sup>a</sup> the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God<sup>b</sup> swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” <sup>7</sup>So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,

<sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

**Genesis 1:31**

**KNOW IT!** What did God make on each day of creation?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Everything God makes is good. How does this change what you think about mosquitoes?

**TRY IT!** Go outside. Watch a bug for two minutes. Finish your time with your buggy friend by saying, “And it was good!”

<sup>20</sup> And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” <sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. <sup>25</sup>God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make human-kind<sup>c</sup> in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,<sup>d</sup> and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind<sup>c</sup> in his image, in the image of God he created them;<sup>e</sup> male and female he created them.

<sup>a</sup> Or when God began to create or In the beginning God created <sup>b</sup> Or while the spirit of God or while a mighty wind  
<sup>c</sup> Heb adam <sup>d</sup> Syr: Heb and over all the earth <sup>e</sup> Heb him

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” <sup>29</sup>God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. <sup>31</sup>God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

<sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

### ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION

In the day that the LORD<sup>a</sup> God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; <sup>6</sup>but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— <sup>7</sup>then the

LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,<sup>b</sup> and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

#### Genesis 2:7

**KNOW IT!** How did God make the first human?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** What good does dirt do in your life?

**TRY IT!** Grab a handful of dirt. Get it wet and let it ooze between your fingers.

<sup>12</sup>and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Genesis 2:10

**EDEN:** The beautiful garden where Adam and Eve lived.

The garden will come back for a final encore. God will renew all of creation. Read about it in Revelation 21:9—22:7.

#### DID YOU KNOW? SCIENCE AND CREATION

People in Bible times were curious about how the world worked, so the Bible writers used thoughtful stories to explain creation. The six days God used to create the world could be literal. Or they could be a poetic way the writer of Genesis symbolized great spans of time.

God is delighted when you learn about the world. Creation praises God too! Check out Psalm 148.

<sup>a</sup> Heb YHWH, as in other places where “LORD” is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3.14-15 with notes).

<sup>b</sup> Or *formed a man* (Heb *adam*) *of dust from the ground* (Heb *adamah*)

## GENESIS 2:18

Genesis 3:6  
**SIN:** How we separate ourselves from God. We can't help it and sin in what we think, say, and do. Jesus brings us back from sin so we can live in God's love.

Sin is powerful. Read Romans 5:12-14. But God is more powerful. Read Romans 5:15-21.

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." <sup>19</sup>So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man<sup>a</sup> there was not found a helper as his partner. <sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;

this one shall be called Woman,<sup>b</sup>

for out of Man<sup>c</sup> this one was taken."

<sup>24</sup>Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup>And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

### THE FIRST SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT

**3** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3</sup>but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; <sup>5</sup>for God knows that when

you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,<sup>d</sup> knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup>So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

<sup>8</sup> They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup>He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup>He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree,

and I ate." <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent,

### Genesis 3:1

**KNOW IT!** How did the sneaky serpent change the words God spoke to Adam and Eve in chapter 2?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Why would you trust what a talking snake said?

**TRY IT!** Call a friend you really trust and say thanks.

### DID YOU KNOW? THE FIRST ENVIRONMENTALIST

Guess what was the first job God gave to human beings? God told Adam to take care of creation. Adam was the earth's first caretaker.

Going green is nothing new. The Bible teaches us that God's creation often needs attention—and that even land needs rest sometimes. Read about it in Leviticus 25:3-5.

<sup>a</sup> Or for Adam <sup>b</sup> Heb *ishshah* <sup>c</sup> Heb *ish* <sup>d</sup> Or *gods*

## EXODUS 1:1

Exodus 2:3  
**PAPYRUS:** A durable fabric that comes from a plant growing along the Nile River in Egypt. Papyrus was used to make boats, baskets, paper, and rope.

**1** These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: <sup>2</sup>Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, <sup>3</sup>Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, <sup>4</sup>Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>5</sup>The total number of people born to Jacob was seventy. Joseph was already in Egypt. <sup>6</sup>Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and that whole generation. <sup>7</sup>But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

### THE ISRAELITES ARE OPPRESSED

<sup>8</sup> Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup>He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. <sup>10</sup>Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” <sup>11</sup>Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. <sup>12</sup>But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. <sup>13</sup>The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, <sup>14</sup>and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

<sup>15</sup> The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, <sup>16</sup>“When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them

on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” <sup>17</sup>But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. <sup>18</sup>So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” <sup>19</sup>The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” <sup>20</sup>So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. <sup>21</sup>And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. <sup>22</sup>Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews<sup>a</sup> you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

### BIRTH AND YOUTH OF MOSES

**2** Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. <sup>2</sup>The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him

#### Exodus 2:3

**KNOW IT!** What did Moses' mom do to protect him?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Have you ever been responsible for taking care of someone or something really important? What did you do?

**TRY IT!** Find out who took care of you when you were a baby.

#### Exodus 1:17

**KNOW IT!** How did the Hebrew midwives save the male Hebrew children?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** When might it be okay for you to lie?

**TRY IT!** People in the French village Le Chambon hid several thousand Jews from the Nazis during the Holocaust. Learn more online or at the library.

three months. <sup>3</sup>When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. <sup>4</sup>His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup> The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. <sup>6</sup>When she opened it, she saw the

<sup>a</sup> Sam Gk Tg: Heb lacks *to the Hebrews*

child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. <sup>7</sup>Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” <sup>8</sup>Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. <sup>9</sup>Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. <sup>10</sup>When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses,<sup>a</sup> “because,” she said, “I drew him out<sup>b</sup> of the water.”

### MOSES FLEES TO MIDIAN

<sup>11</sup> One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsfolk. <sup>12</sup>He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup>When he went out the next day, he saw two Hebrews fighting; and he said to the one who was in the wrong, “Why do you strike your fellow Hebrew?” <sup>14</sup>He answered, “Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” <sup>15</sup>When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses.

But Moses fled from Pharaoh. He settled in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well. <sup>16</sup>The priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. <sup>17</sup>But some shepherds came and drove them away.

Moses got up and came to their defense and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup>When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come back so soon today?” <sup>19</sup>They said, “An Egyptian helped us against the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock.” <sup>20</sup>He said to his daughters, “Where is he? Why did you leave the man? Invite him to break bread.” <sup>21</sup>Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage. <sup>22</sup>She bore a son, and he named him Gershom; for he said, “I have been an alien<sup>c</sup> residing in a foreign land.”

<sup>23</sup> After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. <sup>24</sup>God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>25</sup>God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.

### MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH

**3** Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” <sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup>Then he

#### DID YOU KNOW? WHAT’S IN A NAME?

In Hebrew, the name Moses means, “I drew him out of water.” Water is an important symbol in Moses’ life story. As an infant, Moses was rescued from the Nile River. As an adult, Moses led his people across the Red Sea.

The name Jesus means “God is salvation” in Hebrew. It is related to the name Joshua. For more about Jesus’ name, read Matthew 1:23-25 and Luke 1:31-33.

<sup>a</sup> Heb *Mosheh*   <sup>b</sup> Heb *mashah*   <sup>c</sup> Heb *ger*

## EXODUS 18:12

the people from the Egyptians,<sup>a</sup> when they dealt arrogantly with them.”<sup>12</sup> And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God.

13 The next day Moses sat as judge for the people, while the people stood around him from morning until evening.<sup>14</sup> When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, while all the people stand around you from morning until evening?”<sup>15</sup> Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God.<sup>16</sup> When they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make known to them the statutes and instructions of God.”<sup>17</sup> Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good.<sup>18</sup> You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.<sup>19</sup> Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases before God;<sup>20</sup> teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do.<sup>21</sup> You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set such men over them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.<sup>22</sup> Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you, but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.<sup>23</sup> If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their home in peace.”

24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.<sup>25</sup> Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.<sup>26</sup> And

they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves.<sup>27</sup> Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country.

### THE ISRAELITES REACH MOUNT SINAI

**19** On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai.<sup>2</sup> They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain.<sup>3</sup> Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: <sup>4</sup>You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine,<sup>6</sup> but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.”

<sup>7</sup> So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him.<sup>8</sup> The people all answered as one: “Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do.” Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after.”

### THE PEOPLE CONSECRATED

When Moses had told the words of the people to the LORD,<sup>10</sup> the LORD said to Moses: “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes<sup>11</sup> and prepare for the third day, because on the third day the LORD will come

<sup>a</sup> The clause *because . . . Egyptians* has been transposed from verse 10

Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is on the Euphrates, in the land of Amaw,<sup>a</sup> to summon him, saying, “A people has come out of Egypt; they have spread over the face of the earth, and they have settled next to me.

<sup>6</sup>Come now, curse this people for me, since they are stronger than I; perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land; for I know that whomever you bless is blessed, and whomever you curse is cursed.”

<sup>7</sup> So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam, and gave him Balak’s message. <sup>8</sup>He said to them, “Stay here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, just as the LORD speaks to me”; so the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam. <sup>9</sup>God came to Balaam and said, “Who are these men with you?” <sup>10</sup>Balaam said to God, “King Balak son of Zippor of Moab, has sent me this message: <sup>11</sup>‘A people has come out of Egypt and has spread over the face of the earth; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to fight against them and drive them out.’” <sup>12</sup>God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.” <sup>13</sup>So Balaam rose in the morning, and said to the officials of Balak, “Go to your own land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you.” <sup>14</sup>So the officials of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, “Balaam refuses to come with us.”

<sup>15</sup> Once again Balak sent officials, more numerous and more distinguished than these. <sup>16</sup>They came to Balaam and said to him, “Thus says Balak son of Zippor: ‘Do not let anything hinder you from coming to me; <sup>17</sup>for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do; come, curse this people for me.’” <sup>18</sup>But Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, “Although Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the LORD my God, to do less or more. <sup>19</sup>You remain here, as the others did, so that I may learn what more the LORD may say to me.” <sup>20</sup>That night God came to Balaam and said

to him, “If the men have come to summon you, get up and go with them; but do only what I tell you to do.” <sup>21</sup>So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the officials of Moab.

### BALAAM, THE DONKEY, AND THE ANGEL

<sup>22</sup> God’s anger was kindled because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the road as his adversary. Now he was riding on the donkey, and his two servants were with him. <sup>23</sup>The donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with a drawn sword in his hand; so the donkey turned off the road, and went into the field; and Balaam struck the donkey, to turn it back onto the road. <sup>24</sup>Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. <sup>25</sup>When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it scraped against the wall, and scraped Balaam’s foot against the wall; so he struck it again. <sup>26</sup>Then the angel of the LORD went ahead, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right or to the left. <sup>27</sup>When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, it lay down under Balaam; and Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he struck the donkey with his staff. <sup>28</sup>Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, “What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?” <sup>29</sup>Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have made a fool of me! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!” <sup>30</sup>But the donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey, which you

#### Numbers 22:30

**KNOW IT!** What did Balaam’s donkey do better than any other donkey?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** What reminds you of God’s love?

**TRY IT!** Put a cross next to your bed to remind you of God’s love each morning when you wake up.

<sup>a</sup> Or land of his kinsfolk

## NUMBERS 22:31

Numbers  
23:7  
**ORACLE:** A  
message  
from God.  
An oracle is  
given to one  
person who  
then delivers  
the message  
to everyone  
else.

have ridden all your life to this day? Have I been in the habit of treating you this way?" And he said, "No."

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed down, falling on his face.<sup>32</sup> The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary, because your way is perverse<sup>a</sup> before me.<sup>33</sup> The donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let it live."<sup>34</sup> Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home."<sup>35</sup> The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men; but speak only what I tell you to speak." So Balaam went on with the officials of Balak.

36 When Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at Ir-moab, on the boundary formed by the Arnon, at the farthest point of the boundary.<sup>37</sup> Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?"<sup>38</sup> Balaam said to Balak, "I have come to you now, but do I have power to say just anything? The word God puts in my mouth, that is what I must say."<sup>39</sup> Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth.<sup>40</sup> Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent them to Balaam and to the officials who were with him.

**BALAAM'S FIRST ORACLE**

41 On the next day Balak took Balaam and brought him up to Bamoth-baal; and from there he could see part of the people of Israel.<sup>b</sup> **23** <sup>1</sup>Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

<sup>2</sup>Balak did as Balaam had said; and Balak and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar.<sup>3</sup> Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your burnt offerings while I go aside. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet me. Whatever he shows me I will tell you." And he went to a bare height.

4 Then God met Balaam; and Balaam said to him, "I have arranged the seven altars, and have offered a bull and a ram on each altar."<sup>5</sup> The LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and this is what you must say."<sup>6</sup> So he returned to Balak,<sup>c</sup> who was standing beside his burnt offerings with all the officials of Moab.<sup>7</sup> Then Balaam<sup>d</sup> uttered his oracle, saying:

"Balak has brought me from Aram,  
the king of Moab from the eastern  
mountains:

'Come, curse Jacob for me;  
Come, denounce Israel!'

<sup>8</sup> How can I curse whom God has not  
cursed?

How can I denounce those whom the  
LORD has not denounced?

<sup>9</sup> For from the top of the crags I see him,  
from the hills I behold him.

Here is a people living alone,  
and not reckoning itself among the  
nations!

<sup>10</sup> Who can count the dust of Jacob,  
or number the dust-cloud<sup>e</sup> of Israel?

Let me die the death of the upright,  
and let my end be like his!"

11 Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but now you have done nothing but bless them."<sup>12</sup> He answered, "Must I not take care to say what the LORD puts into my mouth?"

**BALAAM'S SECOND ORACLE**

13 So Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place from which you may see them; you shall see only part of them, and shall not see them all; then curse them for me from there."<sup>14</sup> So he took him to the field

<sup>a</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain <sup>b</sup> Heb lacks of Israel <sup>c</sup> Heb him <sup>d</sup> Heb he <sup>e</sup> Or fourth part

## 1 SAMUEL 3:20

age. <sup>32</sup>Then in distress you will look with greedy eye<sup>a</sup> on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed upon Israel; and no one in your family shall ever live to old age. <sup>33</sup>The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep out his<sup>b</sup> eyes and grieve his<sup>c</sup> heart; all the members of your household shall die by the sword.<sup>d</sup> <sup>34</sup>The fate of your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you—both of them shall die on the same day. <sup>35</sup>I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed one forever. <sup>36</sup>Everyone who is left in your family shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread, and shall say, Please put me in one of the priest's places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.”

## 1 Samuel 3:1-20

**KNOW IT!** Whose voice does Samuel hear in the night? What does Samuel say?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** How do you respond when you are asked to do difficult things?

**TRY IT!** Call someone who would like to hear your voice.

## SAMUEL'S CALLING AND PROPHECIC ACTIVITY

**3** Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

**2** At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup>the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD called, “Samuel! Samuel!”<sup>e</sup> and he said, “Here I am!”<sup>5</sup> and ran to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did

not call; lie down again.” So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>The LORD called again, “Samuel!” Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup>The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

**10** Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” <sup>11</sup>Then the LORD said to Samuel, “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. <sup>12</sup>On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup>For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,<sup>f</sup> and he did not restrain them. <sup>14</sup>Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.”

**15** Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. <sup>16</sup>But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” He said, “Here I am.” <sup>17</sup>Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” <sup>18</sup>So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him.”

**19** As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup>And all Israel from Dan to

1 Samuel 3:9

**LISTEN:** To hear and understand what God says to do. Samuel listened to and obeyed God all his life.

In Matthew 13, Jesus called people to listen, which meant more than just to hear.

<sup>a</sup> Q Ms Gk: MT will kick <sup>b</sup> Q Ms Gk: MT your <sup>c</sup> Q Ms Gk: Heb your <sup>d</sup> Q Ms Gk: MT die like mortals

<sup>e</sup> Q Ms Gk See 3:10: MT the LORD called Samuel <sup>f</sup> Another reading is for themselves

I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.<sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.”<sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, “Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together.”<sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years.<sup>a</sup><sup>13</sup> The three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle; the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.<sup>14</sup> David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul,<sup>15</sup> but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.<sup>16</sup> For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

17 Jesse said to his son David, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; <sup>18</sup>also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See how your brothers fare, and bring some token from them.”

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.<sup>20</sup> David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, took the provisions, and went as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the encampment as the army was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry.<sup>21</sup> Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army.<sup>22</sup> David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the ranks, and went and greeted his brothers.<sup>23</sup> As he talked with them, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke

the same words as before. And David heard him.

24 All the Israelites, when they saw the man, fled from him and were very much afraid.<sup>25</sup> The Israelites said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. The king will greatly enrich the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his family free in Israel.”<sup>26</sup> David said to the men who stood by him, “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”<sup>27</sup> The people answered him in the same way, “So shall it be done for the man who kills him.”

28 His eldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the men; and Eliab’s anger was kindled against David. He said, “Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle.”<sup>29</sup> David said, “What have I done now? It was only a question.”<sup>30</sup> He turned away from him toward another and spoke in the same way; and the people answered him again as before.

31 When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him.<sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, “Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”<sup>33</sup> Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth.”<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock,<sup>35</sup> I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it.<sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied

<sup>a</sup> Gk Syr: Heb *among men*

## 1 KINGS 19:4

up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."<sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat."<sup>6</sup> He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again.<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you."<sup>8</sup> He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.<sup>9</sup> At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

### ELIJAH MEETS GOD AT HOREB

11 He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before

the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;<sup>12</sup> and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.<sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"<sup>14</sup> He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.<sup>16</sup> Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.<sup>17</sup> Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill.<sup>18</sup> Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

### ELISHA BECOMES ELIJAH'S DISCIPLE

19 So he set out from there, and found Elisha son of Shaphat, who was plowing. There were twelve yoke of oxen ahead of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle over him.<sup>20</sup> He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah<sup>a</sup> said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?"<sup>21</sup> He returned from following him, took the yoke of oxen, and slaughtered them; using the equipment from the oxen, he boiled their flesh, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

#### 1 Kings 19:12-13

**KNOW IT!** How did God come to Elijah?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** When have you felt like you knew God was with you?

**TRY IT!** Set a timer and try to sit in silence for 2 minutes. Listen for what's inside your head.

<sup>a</sup> Heb *he*

## PSALM 22:9

Psalms 23:1  
**SHEPHERD:**  
 Someone who cares for sheep. Children and adults worked as shepherds. In the Bible, God is called a shepherd because God cares about us. A shepherd's work could be dangerous! David had to fight bears and lions to protect his flock. See 1 Samuel 17:34-35 for details.

- let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"
- 9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb;  
 you kept me safe on my mother's breast.
- 10 On you I was cast from my birth,  
 and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,  
 for trouble is near  
 and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls encircle me,  
 strong bulls of Bashan surround me;  
 13 they open wide their mouths at me,  
 like a ravening and roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water,  
 and all my bones are out of joint;  
 my heart is like wax;  
 it is melted within my breast;  
 15 my mouth<sup>a</sup> is dried up like a potsherd,  
 and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
 you lay me in the dust of death.
- 16 For dogs are all around me;  
 a company of evildoers encircles me.  
 My hands and feet have shriveled;<sup>b</sup>
- 17 I can count all my bones.  
 They stare and gloat over me;  
 18 they divide my clothes among themselves,  
 and for my clothing they cast lots.
- 19 But you, O LORD, do not be far away!  
 O my help, come quickly to my aid!
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,  
 my life<sup>c</sup> from the power of the dog!
- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!
- From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued<sup>d</sup> me.
- 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers  
 and sisters;<sup>e</sup>

- in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
- 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
 All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
 stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
- 24 For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted;  
 he did not hide his face from me,<sup>f</sup>  
 but heard when I<sup>g</sup> cried to him.
- 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
 my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
- 26 The poor<sup>h</sup> shall eat and be satisfied;  
 those who seek him shall praise the LORD.  
 May your hearts live forever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
 and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.<sup>i</sup>
- 28 For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
 and he rules over the nations.
- 29 To him,<sup>j</sup> indeed, shall all who sleep in<sup>k</sup> the earth bow down;  
 before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
 and I shall live for him.<sup>l</sup>
- 30 Posterity will serve him;  
 future generations will be told about the Lord,  
 31 and<sup>m</sup> proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
 saying that he has done it.

## PSALM 23

## The Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David.

- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

<sup>a</sup> Cn: Heb *strength* <sup>b</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain <sup>c</sup> Heb *my only one* <sup>d</sup> Heb *answered* <sup>e</sup> Or *kindred* <sup>f</sup> Heb *him* <sup>g</sup> Heb *he* <sup>h</sup> Or *afflicted* <sup>i</sup> Gk Syr Jerome: Heb *you* <sup>j</sup> Cn: Heb *They have eaten and* <sup>k</sup> Cn: Heb *all the fat ones* <sup>l</sup> Compare Gk Syr Vg: Heb *and he who cannot keep himself alive* <sup>m</sup> Compare Gk: Heb *it will be told about the Lord to the generation, <sup>31</sup>they will come and*

## PSALM 25:6

**Psalm 23:1**

**KNOW IT!** What kind of worker is God compared to?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** What do you do when you're afraid?

**TRY IT!** Touch every door in your home and say, "God protect everyone in this room."

- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;<sup>a</sup>
- 3 he restores my soul.<sup>b</sup>  
He leads me in right paths<sup>c</sup>  
for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,<sup>d</sup>  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff—  
they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely<sup>e</sup> goodness and mercy<sup>f</sup> shall  
follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.<sup>g</sup>

**PSALM 24****Entrance into the Temple**

Of David. A Psalm.

- 1 The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it;
- 2 for he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the rivers.
- 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?
- 4 Those who have clean hands and pure  
hearts,

- who do not lift up their souls to what  
is false,  
and do not swear deceitfully.
- 5 They will receive blessing from the  
LORD,  
and vindication from the God of their  
salvation.
- 6 Such is the company of those who seek  
him,  
who seek the face of the God of  
Jacob.<sup>h</sup> *Selah*
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in.
- 8 Who is the King of glory?  
The LORD, strong and mighty,  
the LORD, mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in.
- 10 Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD of hosts,  
he is the King of glory. *Selah*

**PSALM 25****Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance**

Of David.

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.
- 3 Do not let those who wait for you be put  
to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are  
wantonly treacherous.
- 4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.
- 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.
- 6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and  
of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.

Psalm 24:6  
**SELAH:** A part of a psalm-song that was a musical break. The musicians played by themselves while the singers rested and thought about the prayer they were singing.

Jesus used quiet to tame unclean spirits. See Mark 1:24-26 to find out how.

<sup>a</sup> Heb waters of rest <sup>b</sup> Or life <sup>c</sup> Or paths of righteousness <sup>d</sup> Or the valley of the shadow of death <sup>e</sup> Or Only <sup>f</sup> Or kindness <sup>g</sup> Heb for length of days <sup>h</sup> Gk Syr: Heb your face, O Jacob

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by others;  
a man of suffering<sup>a</sup> and acquainted with infirmity;  
and as one from whom others hide their faces<sup>b</sup>  
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole,  
and by his bruises we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way,  
and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

<sup>8</sup> By a perversion of justice he was taken away.  
Who could have imagined his future?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people.

<sup>9</sup> They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb<sup>c</sup> with the rich,<sup>d</sup>  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.<sup>e</sup>

When you make his life an offering for sin,<sup>f</sup>

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;  
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

<sup>11</sup> Out of his anguish he shall see light;<sup>g</sup>  
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one,<sup>h</sup> my servant, shall make many righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

because he poured out himself to death,  
and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors.

### THE ETERNAL COVENANT OF PEACE

**54** Sing, O barren one who did not bear;  
burst into song and shout,  
you who have not been in labor!

For the children of the desolate woman will be more  
than the children of her that is married, says the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Enlarge the site of your tent,  
and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;  
do not hold back; lengthen your cords  
and strengthen your stakes.

<sup>3</sup> For you will spread out to the right and to the left,  
and your descendants will possess the nations  
and will settle the desolate towns.

<sup>a</sup> Or a man of sorrows <sup>b</sup> Or as one who hides his face from us <sup>c</sup> QMs: MT and in his death <sup>d</sup> Cn: Heb with a rich person <sup>e</sup> Or by disease; meaning of Heb uncertain <sup>f</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain <sup>g</sup> QMs: MT lacks light <sup>h</sup> Or and he shall find satisfaction. Through his knowledge, the righteous one

and the waves of the sea shall be struck down,  
and all the depths of the Nile dried up.  
The pride of Assyria shall be laid low,  
and the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

<sup>12</sup> I will make them strong in the LORD,  
and they shall walk in his name,  
says the LORD.

**11** Open your doors,  
O Lebanon,  
so that fire may devour your  
cedars!

<sup>2</sup> Wail, O cypress, for the  
cedar has fallen,  
for the glorious trees are ruined!  
Wail, oaks of Bashan,  
for the thick forest has been felled!

<sup>3</sup> Listen, the wail of the shepherds,  
for their glory is despoiled!  
Listen, the roar of the lions,  
for the thickets of the Jordan are  
destroyed!

### TWO KINDS OF SHEPHERDS

<sup>4</sup> Thus said the LORD my God: Be a shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. <sup>5</sup> Those who buy them kill them and go unpunished; and those who sell them say, “Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich”; and their own shepherds have no pity on them. <sup>6</sup> For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD. I will cause them, every one, to fall each into the hand of a neighbor, and each into the hand of the king; and they shall devastate the earth, and I will deliver no one from their hand.

<sup>7</sup> So, on behalf of the sheep merchants, I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. I took two staves; one I named Favor, the other I named Unity, and I tended the sheep. <sup>8</sup> In one month I disposed of the three shepherds, for I had become impatient with them, and they also detested me. <sup>9</sup> So I said, “I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die; what is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed; and let those that are left de-

vour the flesh of one another!” <sup>10</sup> I took my staff Favor and broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples.

<sup>11</sup> So it was annulled on that day, and the sheep merchants, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. <sup>12</sup> I then said to them, “If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” So they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it into the treasury”<sup>a</sup>—this lordly price at which I was valued by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them into the treasury<sup>a</sup> in the house of the LORD. <sup>14</sup> Then I broke my second staff Unity, annulling the family ties between Judah and Israel.

<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD said to me: Take once more the implements of a worthless shepherd. <sup>16</sup> For I am now raising up in the land a shepherd who does not care for the perishing, or seek the wandering,<sup>b</sup> or heal the maimed, or nourish the healthy,<sup>c</sup> but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs.

<sup>17</sup> Oh, my worthless shepherd,  
who deserts the flock!  
May the sword strike his arm  
and his right eye!  
Let his arm be completely withered,  
his right eye utterly blinded!

### JERUSALEM'S VICTORY

An Oracle.

**12** The word of the LORD concerning Israel: Thus says the LORD, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the human spirit within: <sup>2</sup> See, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling for all the surrounding peoples; it will be against Judah also in the siege against Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it shall grievously hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth shall come together

<sup>a</sup> Syr: Heb *it to the potter*   <sup>b</sup> Syr Compare Gk Vg: Heb *the youth*   <sup>c</sup> Meaning of Heb uncertain

## LUKE 2:1

**THE BIRTH OF JESUS**

**2** In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS**

**8** In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>a</sup> the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,<sup>b</sup> praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those  
whom he favors!”<sup>c</sup>

**15** When the angels had left them and

gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**JESUS IS NAMED**

**21** After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

**JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE**

**22** When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

**25** Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon;<sup>d</sup> this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.<sup>e</sup> <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon<sup>f</sup> came into the temple; and when the parents

**DID YOU KNOW?****THE WORK OF BIRTH**

During Bible times, women usually gave birth in their homes. Other women, including trained midwives, helped each other through the birthing process.

Read a story about the origin of birth pangs in Genesis 3.

<sup>a</sup> Or the Christ <sup>b</sup> Gk army <sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities read *peace, goodwill among people* <sup>d</sup> Gk Symeon <sup>e</sup> Or the Lord’s Christ <sup>f</sup> Gk In the Spirit, he

**SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS**

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”<sup>a</sup> 36He answered, “And who is he, sir?”<sup>b</sup> Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” 37Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” 38He said, “Lord,<sup>b</sup> I believe.” And he worshiped him. 39Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” 40Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” 41Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

**JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

**10** “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup>The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup>All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

<sup>12</sup>The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it

**John 10:16**

**KNOW IT!** How many flocks will there be?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Why do you think there are so many different kinds of churches?

**TRY IT!** Visit a different church with a friend who is a member there.

up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes<sup>c</sup> it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

<sup>19</sup> Again the Jews were divided because of these words. <sup>20</sup>Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?” <sup>21</sup>Others were saying, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

**JESUS IS REJECTED BY THE JEWS**

<sup>22</sup> At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup>and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. <sup>24</sup>So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah,<sup>d</sup> tell us plainly.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify

<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities read *the Son of God* <sup>b</sup> *Sir* and *Lord* translate the same Greek word <sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities read *has taken* <sup>d</sup> *Or the Christ*

amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great. <sup>10</sup>All of them, from the least to the greatest, listened to him eagerly, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” <sup>11</sup>And they listened eagerly to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup>But when they believed Philip, who was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup>Even Simon himself believed. After being baptized, he stayed constantly with Philip and was amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place.

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. <sup>15</sup>The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit <sup>16</sup>(for as yet the Spirit had not come<sup>a</sup> upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). <sup>17</sup>Then Peter and John<sup>b</sup> laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, “Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” <sup>20</sup>But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God’s gift with money! <sup>21</sup>You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup>Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup>For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness.” <sup>24</sup>Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you<sup>c</sup> have said may happen to me.”

<sup>25</sup> Now after Peter and John<sup>d</sup> had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news to many villages of the Samaritans.

### PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

<sup>26</sup> Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south<sup>e</sup> to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) <sup>27</sup>So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship<sup>28</sup>and was returning home; seated in

#### Acts 8:26-27

**KNOW IT!** Where was Philip traveling when he met the eunuch?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?

**TRY IT!** Look up information on missionaries in other countries. Imagine life there.

his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,  
and like a lamb silent before its  
shearer,  
so he does not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation justice was denied  
him.

Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away from the  
earth.”

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

<sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What

<sup>a</sup> Gk fallen <sup>b</sup> Gk they <sup>c</sup> The Greek word for you and the verb pray are plural <sup>d</sup> Gk after they <sup>e</sup> Or go at noon

## ACTS 8:38

Acts 9:2

**THE WAY:**

The name given to describe the movement that was started by those who believed Jesus was the Messiah and followed his teachings.

John 14:1-4 shows why the believers chose that name.

is to prevent me from being baptized?”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip<sup>b</sup> baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

**THE CONVERSION OF SAUL**

**9** Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest <sup>2</sup>and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. <sup>4</sup>He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” <sup>5</sup>He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. <sup>6</sup>But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” <sup>7</sup>The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. <sup>8</sup>Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup>For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

<sup>10</sup> Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” <sup>11</sup>The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, <sup>12</sup>and he has seen in a vision<sup>c</sup> a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” <sup>13</sup>But Ananias

answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; <sup>14</sup>and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” <sup>15</sup>But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; <sup>16</sup>I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” <sup>17</sup>So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul<sup>d</sup> and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” <sup>18</sup>And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup>and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

**SAUL PREACHES IN DAMASCUS**

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, <sup>20</sup>and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” <sup>21</sup>All who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” <sup>22</sup>Saul became increasingly more powerful and co-founded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus<sup>e</sup> was the Messiah.<sup>f</sup>

**SAUL ESCAPES FROM THE JEWS**

<sup>23</sup> After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, <sup>24</sup>but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; <sup>25</sup>but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall,<sup>g</sup> lowering him in a basket.

**SAUL IN JERUSALEM**

<sup>26</sup> When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they

<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities add all or most of verse 37, *And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* <sup>b</sup> Gk he <sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities lack in a vision <sup>d</sup> Gk him <sup>e</sup> Gk that this <sup>f</sup> Or the Christ <sup>g</sup> Gk through the wall

## ACTS 26:8

twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency,<sup>a</sup> that I am accused by Jews! <sup>8</sup>Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

<sup>9</sup> “Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>b</sup> <sup>10</sup>And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. <sup>11</sup>By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

**PAUL TELLS OF HIS CONVERSION**

<sup>12</sup> “With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, <sup>13</sup>when at midday along the road, your Excellency,<sup>a</sup> I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. <sup>14</sup>When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew<sup>c</sup> language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ <sup>15</sup>I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup>But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me<sup>d</sup> and to those in which I will appear to you. <sup>17</sup>I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgive-

ness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

**PAUL TELLS OF HIS PREACHING**

<sup>19</sup> “After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup>but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. <sup>21</sup>For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. <sup>22</sup>To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: <sup>23</sup>that the Messiah<sup>e</sup> must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

**PAUL APPEALS TO AGRIPPA TO BELIEVE**

<sup>24</sup> While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, “You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!” <sup>25</sup>But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. <sup>26</sup>Indeed the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. <sup>27</sup>King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” <sup>28</sup>Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?” <sup>29</sup>Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am—except for these chains.”

**DID YOU KNOW?****CHANGE? YOU'RE CRAZY/OUT OF YOUR MIND/MAD.**

Leaders like Festus were afraid of change because they might lose power. Paul said that Jesus' death would bring light to everyone. This meant that Jesus might have more power than the priests and kings! Festus said that Paul was out of his mind for saying these things.

<sup>a</sup> Gk *O king*   <sup>b</sup> Gk *the Nazorean*   <sup>c</sup> That is, *Aramaic*   <sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read *the things that you have seen*  
<sup>e</sup> Or *the Christ*   <sup>f</sup> Or *Quickly you will persuade me to play the Christian*

## REVELATION 1:18

## INTRODUCTION AND SALUTATION

**1** The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants<sup>a</sup> what must soon take place; he made<sup>b</sup> it known by sending his angel to his servant<sup>c</sup> John, <sup>2</sup>who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.

<sup>4</sup> John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, <sup>5</sup>and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed<sup>d</sup> us from our sins by his blood, <sup>6</sup>and made<sup>e</sup> us to be a kingdom, priests serving<sup>f</sup> his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>7</sup> Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.

So it is to be. Amen.

<sup>8</sup> “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

## A VISION OF CHRIST

<sup>9</sup> I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom

and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.<sup>g</sup> <sup>10</sup>I was in the spirit<sup>h</sup> on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, “Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. <sup>14</sup>His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup>his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.

<sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup>and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.

Revelation 1:8

**ALPHA AND OMEGA:**

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, like A and Z in the English alphabet. John said God is the beginning and end of everything.

Read Genesis 1 to see how the Bible depicts the beginning of Earth.

## Revelation 1:11

**KNOW IT!** What seven churches did John write to?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** What would you say in a letter to someone in a church in another country?

**TRY IT!** Make and send cards to seven people who could use encouragement.

## DID YOU KNOW?

## LETTER WRITING

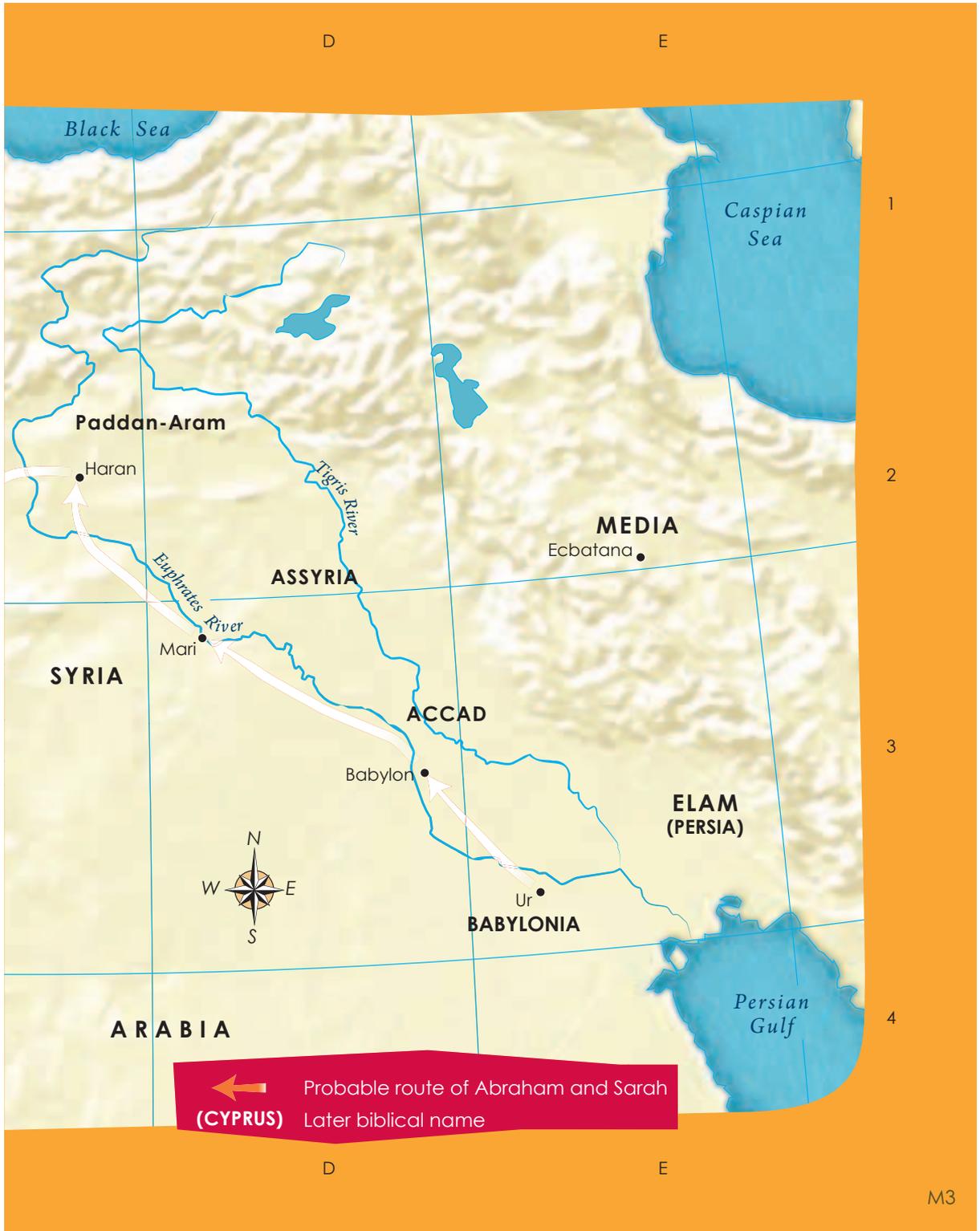
Before emails and cell phones, people wrote letters by hand. Revelation was actually a letter written by John to churches that needed support. He started and ended this letter like many other letters in the Bible. But its images of battle, monsters, and horses make it unique!

The apostle Paul wrote many letters to followers of Jesus, including Christians in Rome. Read his greeting in Romans 1:1-7.

<sup>a</sup> Gk slaves <sup>b</sup> Gk and he made <sup>c</sup> Gk slave <sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read washed <sup>e</sup> Gk and he made <sup>f</sup> Gk priests to <sup>g</sup> Or testimony to Jesus <sup>h</sup> Or in the Spirit

# THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND KEY LOCATIONS IN GENESIS





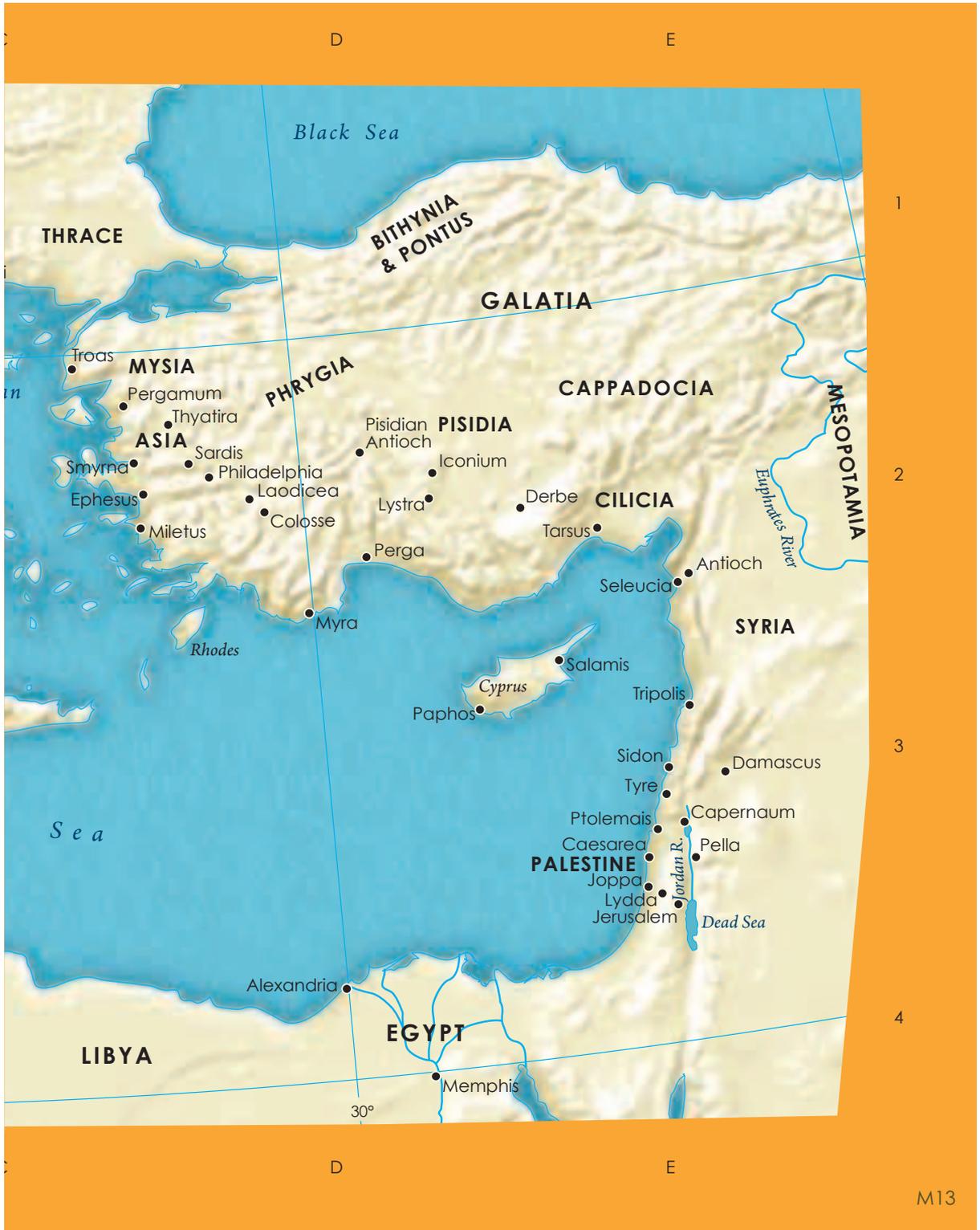
 Probable route of Abraham and Sarah  
(CYPRUS) Later biblical name

# EXODUS AND SINAI WILDERNESS WANDERINGS











# How To Use Your Spark Bible Stickers



**I Memorized It**  
I can recite this verse from memory!



**Makes Me Want To ...**  
Something about this text is calling me to DO something.



**Spark Spot**  
Hey! Look at this! Look again!



**I Read It**  
I read this.



**Something I Don't Like**  
This behavior / person / idea is not good.

GENESIS 1:1

September 6



## SIX DAYS OF CREATION AND THE SABBATH

**1** In the beginning when God created<sup>a</sup> the heavens and the earth,<sup>2</sup> the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God<sup>b</sup> swept over the face of the waters.<sup>3</sup> Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.<sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.<sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”<sup>7</sup> So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so.<sup>8</sup> God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.<sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.<sup>11</sup> Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so.<sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.<sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,<sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so.<sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.<sup>17</sup> God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,

<sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.<sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

### Genesis 1:31

**KNOW IT!** What did God make on each day of creation?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Everything God makes is good. How does this change what you think about mosquitoes?

**TRY IT!** Go outside. Watch a bug for two minutes. Finish your time with your buggy friend by saying, “And it was good!”

<sup>20</sup> And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.”<sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good.<sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”<sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so.<sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make human-kind<sup>c</sup> in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,<sup>d</sup> and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind<sup>e</sup> in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.



Go outside and look at the stars!



<sup>a</sup> Or when God began to create or In the beginning God created <sup>b</sup> Or while the spirit of God or while a mighty wind <sup>c</sup> Heb adam <sup>d</sup> Syr: Heb and over all the earth <sup>e</sup> Heb adam <sup>f</sup> Heb him

I don't like creeping things!



I was created in God's image!

# How To Use Your Spark Bible Stickers



**Makes Me Feel ...**  
This story/passage really makes me feel a strong emotion.



**Makes Me Wonder ...**  
I'm just going to think about this for a while.



**I Looked It Up**  
I can find any verse.



**Something I Like**  
This behavior / person / idea is cool.



**Reminds Me Of ...**  
I remembered something when I read this.



**I Don't Get It**  
I read this, but I'm not sure what it means.

## GENESIS 2:17

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."<sup>29</sup>God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."<sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.<sup>31</sup>God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

AMAZED!



It's All Good!



How God made everything in 7 days



**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.<sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.<sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

<sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

### ANOTHER ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION

In the day that the LORD<sup>a</sup> God made the earth and the heavens,<sup>5</sup>when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground;<sup>6</sup>but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—<sup>7</sup>then the

LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,<sup>b</sup> and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.<sup>8</sup>And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.<sup>9</sup>Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup> A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.<sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

Genesis 2:10

**EDEN:** The beautiful garden where Adam and Eve lived.

The garden will come back for a final encore. God will renew all my grandpa's garden of creation. Check out Revelation 21:9–22:7.



### Genesis 2:7

**KNOW IT!** How did God make the first human?

**THINK ABOUT IT!** What good does dirt do in your life?

**TRY IT!** Grab a handful of dirt. Get it wet and let it ooze between your fingers.

<sup>12</sup>and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.<sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush.<sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.<sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

What is the tree of knowledge of good and evil?



### DID YOU KNOW? SCIENCE AND CREATION

People in Bible times were curious about how the world worked, so the Bible writers used thoughtful stories to explain creation. The six days God used to create the world could be literal. Or they could be a poetic way the writer of Genesis symbolized great spans of time.

God is delighted when you learn about the world. Creation praises God too! Check out Psalm 148.

<sup>a</sup> Heb YHWH, as in other places where "LORD" is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3.14-15 with notes).

<sup>b</sup> Or *formed a man* (Heb *adam*) of dust from the ground (Heb *adamah*)