

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

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷So 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. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then 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. ¹²The 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. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,

¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And 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!”

²⁰ 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.” ²¹So 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. ²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ 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. ²⁵God 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.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind^c 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,^d and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

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

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

²⁸God 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.” ²⁹God 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.” ³⁰And 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. ³¹God 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. ²And 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. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

4 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^a God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when 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; ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the

LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,^b and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹Out 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.

10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹The 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 of creation. Read about it in 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.

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

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but 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.”

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.

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

^b 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." ¹⁹So 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. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man^a there was not found a helper as his partner. ²¹So 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. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

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

this one shall be called Woman,^b

for out of Man^c this one was taken."

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵And 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?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but 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.'" ⁴But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when

you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,^d knowing good and evil." ⁶So 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. ⁷Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

⁸ 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. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree,

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.

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

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.

^a Or for Adam ^b Heb ishshah ^c Heb ish ^d 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: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, ³Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, ⁴Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵The total number of people born to Jacob was seventy. Joseph was already in Egypt. ⁶Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and that whole generation. ⁷But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

THE ISRAELITES ARE OPPRESSED

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰Come, 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.” ¹¹Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. ¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, ¹⁴and 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.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶“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.” ¹⁷But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. ¹⁸So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” ¹⁹The 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.” ²⁰So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. ²¹And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²²Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews^a 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. ²The 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. ³When 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. ⁴His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5 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. ⁶When she opened it, she saw the

^a 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. ⁷Then 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?” ⁸Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. ⁹Pharaoh’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. ¹⁰When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses,^a “because,” she said, “I drew him out^b of the water.”

MOSES FLEES TO MIDIAN

¹¹ 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. ¹²He looked this way and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³When 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?” ¹⁴He 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.” ¹⁵When 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. ¹⁶The priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. ¹⁷But some shepherds came and drove them away.

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

²³ 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. ²⁴God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁵God 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. ²There 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. ³Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” ⁴When 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.” ⁵Then 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.

^a Heb *Mosheh* ^b Heb *mashah* ^c Heb *ger*

EXODUS 18:12

the people from the Egyptians,^a when they dealt arrogantly with them.” ¹²And 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. ¹⁴When 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?” ¹⁵Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶When 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.” ¹⁷Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸You 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. ¹⁹Now 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; ²⁰teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. ²¹You 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. ²²Let 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. ²³If 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. ²⁵Moses chose able men from all Israel and appointed them as heads over the people, as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²⁶And

they judged the people at all times; hard cases they brought to Moses, but any minor case they decided themselves. ²⁷Then 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. ²They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³Then 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: ⁴You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now 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, ⁶but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.”

⁷ So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸The people all answered as one: “Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do.” Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. ⁹Then 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, ¹⁰the LORD said to Moses: “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes ¹¹and prepare for the third day, because on the third day the LORD will come

^a 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,^a 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. ⁶Come 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.”

⁷ 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. ⁸He 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. ⁹God came to Balaam and said, “Who are these men with you?” ¹⁰Balaam said to God, “King Balak son of Zippor of Moab, has sent me this message: ¹¹‘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.’” ¹²God said to Balaam, “You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.” ¹³So 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.” ¹⁴So the officials of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, “Balaam refuses to come with us.”

¹⁵ Once again Balak sent officials, more numerous and more distinguished than these. ¹⁶They came to Balaam and said to him, “Thus says Balak son of Zippor: ‘Do not let anything hinder you from coming to me; ¹⁷for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do; come, curse this people for me.’” ¹⁸But 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. ¹⁹You remain here, as the others did, so that I may learn what more the LORD may say to me.”

²⁰That 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.” ²¹So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the officials of Moab.

BALAAM, THE DONKEY, AND THE ANGEL

²² 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. ²³The 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. ²⁴Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on either side. ²⁵When 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. ²⁶Then 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. ²⁷When 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. ²⁸Then 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?” ²⁹Balaam 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!” ³⁰But 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.

^a 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. ³²The 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^a before me. ³³The 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." ³⁴Then 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." ³⁵The 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. ³⁷Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to summon you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" ³⁸Balaam 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." ³⁹Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. ⁴⁰Balak 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.^b ¹Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

23

²Balak did as Balaam had said; and Balak and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar. ³Then 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." ⁵The LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and this is what you must say." ⁶So he returned to Balak,^c who was standing beside his burnt offerings with all the officials of Moab. ⁷Then Balaam^d 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!'

8 How can I curse whom God has not
cursed?

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

9 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!

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob,
or number the dust-cloud^e 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." ¹²He 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." ¹⁴So he took him to the field

^a Meaning of Heb uncertain ^b Heb lacks of Israel ^c Heb him ^d Heb he ^e Or fourth part

1 SAMUEL 3:20

age. ³²Then in distress you will look with greedy eye^a on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed upon Israel; and no one in your family shall ever live to old age. ³³The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep out his^b eyes and grieve his^c heart; all the members of your household shall die by the sword.^d ³⁴The fate of your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you—both of them shall die on the same day. ³⁵I 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. ³⁶Everyone 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; ³the 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. ⁴Then the LORD called, “Samuel! Samuel!”^e and he said, “Here I am!”⁵ 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. ⁶The 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.” ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The 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. ⁹Therefore 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.” ¹¹Then 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. ¹²On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³For 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,^f and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴Therefore 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. ¹⁶But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” He said, “Here I am.” ¹⁷Eli 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.” ¹⁸So 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. ²⁰And 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.

^a Q Ms Gk: MT will kick ^b Q Ms Gk: MT your ^c Q Ms Gk: Heb your ^d Q Ms Gk: MT die like mortals

^e Q Ms Gk See 3.10: MT the LORD called Samuel ^f 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. ⁹If 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.” ¹⁰And the Philistine said, “Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together.” ¹¹When 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.^a ¹³The 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. ¹⁴David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul, ¹⁵but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶For 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; ¹⁸also 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. ²⁰David 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. ²¹Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. ²²David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the ranks, and went and greeted his brothers. ²³As 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. ²⁵The 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.” ²⁶David 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?” ²⁷The 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.” ²⁹David said, “What have I done now? It was only a question.” ³⁰He 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. ³²David said to Saul, “Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” ³³Saul 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.” ³⁴But 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, ³⁵I 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. ³⁶Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied

^a Gk Syr: Heb *among men*

1 KINGS 19:4

up and fled for his life, and came to Beersheba, 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." ⁵Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." ⁶He 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. ⁷The 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." ⁸He 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. ⁹At 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?" ¹⁰He 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; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When 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?" ¹⁴He 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." ¹⁵Then 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. ¹⁶Also 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. ¹⁷Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. ¹⁸Yet 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. ²⁰He left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." Then Elijah^a said to him, "Go back again; for what have I done to you?" ²¹He 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.

^a 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 danger-
 ous! David
 had to fight
 bears and li-
 ons 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^a 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;^b
- 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^c 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^d me.

- 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers
 and sisters;^e

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,^f
 but heard when I^g 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^h 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.ⁱ
- 28 For dominion belongs to the LORD,
 and he rules over the nations.
- 29 To him,^j indeed, shall all who sleep in^k
 the earth bow down;
 before him shall bow all who go down
 to the dust,
 and I shall live for him.^l
- 30 Posterity will serve him;
 future generations will be told about
 the Lord,
- 31 and^m proclaim his deliverance to a people
 yet unborn,
 saying that he has done it.

PSALM 23**The Divine Shepherd**

A Psalm of David.

- ¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not
 want.

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

PSALM 25:6

Psalms 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;^a
3 he restores my soul.^b
He leads me in right paths^c
for his name's sake.

- 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^d
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^e goodness and mercy^f shall
follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.^g

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.^h *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.

Psalms 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.

^a Heb waters of rest ^b Or life ^c Or paths of righteousness ^d Or the valley of the shadow of death ^e Or Only ^f Or kindness ^g Heb for length of days ^h 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.

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

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

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

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

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.^e

When you make his life an offering for sin,^f

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

¹¹ Out of his anguish he shall see light;^g
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one,^h my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² 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.

² 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.

³ 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.

^a Or a man of sorrows ^b Or as one who hides his face from us ^c QMs: MT and in his death ^d Cn: Heb with a rich person ^e Or by disease; meaning of Heb uncertain ^f Meaning of Heb uncertain ^g QMs: MT lacks light

^h Or and he shall find satisfaction. Through his knowledge, the righteous one

ZECHARIAH 12:3

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.
¹² 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!
² 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!
³ 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

⁴ Thus said the LORD my God: Be a shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.

⁷ So, on behalf of the sheep merchants, I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. I took two staffs; one I named Favor, the other I named Unity, and I tended the sheep. ⁸ In one month I disposed of the three shepherds, for I had become impatient with them, and they also detested me. ⁹ 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!" ¹⁰ I took my staff Favor and broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples. ¹¹ So it was annulled on that day, and the sheep merchants, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. ¹² 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. ¹³ Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it into the treasury"^a—this lordly price at which I was valued by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them into the treasury^a in the house of the LORD. ¹⁴ Then I broke my second staff Unity, annulling the family ties between Judah and Israel.

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

¹⁷ 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

12 An Oracle.
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: ² 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. ³ 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

^a Syr: Heb *it to the potter* ^b Syr Compare Gk Vg: Heb *the youth* ^c 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. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her first-born 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. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^a the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^b praising God and saying,

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

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.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The 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 ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and 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;^d this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.^e ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon^f 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.

^a Or the Christ ^b Gk army ^c Other ancient authorities read *peace, goodwill among people* ^d Gk Symeon ^e Or the Lord’s Christ ^f 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?”^a 36 He answered, “And who is he, sir?”^b Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” 37 Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” 38 He said, “Lord,^b I believe.” And he worshiped him. 39 Jesus 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.” 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” 41 Jesus 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. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” 6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

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

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

12 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. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 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. 17 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. 18 No one takes^c 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.”

19 Again the Jews were divided because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?” 21 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

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

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

amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great. ¹⁰All of them, from the least to the greatest, listened to him eagerly, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” ¹¹And they listened eagerly to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. ¹²But 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. ¹³Even 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.

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

²⁵ Now after Peter and John^d 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

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south^e to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So 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 worship²⁸ 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. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now 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.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied
him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the
earth.”

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

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

^a Gk fallen ^b Gk they ^c The Greek word for you and the verb pray are plural ^d Gk after they ^e 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?”^a

³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip^b baptized him. ³⁹When 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. ⁴⁰But 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 ²and 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. ³Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” ⁵He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸Saul 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. ⁹For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹The 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, ¹²and he has seen in a vision^c a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³But Ananias

answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” ¹⁵But 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; ¹⁶I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul^d 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.” ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

SAUL PREACHES IN DAMASCUS

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” ²¹All 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?” ²²Saul became increasingly more powerful and concounfounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus^e was the Messiah.^f

SAUL ESCAPES FROM THE JEWS

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

SAUL IN JERUSALEM

²⁶ When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they

^a 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.”* ^b Gk he ^c Other ancient authorities lack in a vision ^d Gk him ^e Gk that this ^f Or the Christ ^g 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,^a that I am accused by Jews! ⁸Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

⁹ “Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth.^b ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹By 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

¹² “With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³when at midday along the road, your Excellency,^a I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. ¹⁴When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew^c language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The Lord answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But 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^d and to those in which I will appear to you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸to 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

¹⁹ “After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰but 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. ²¹For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²To 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: ²³that the Messiah^e 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

²⁴ While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, “You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!” ²⁵But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. ²⁶Indeed 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. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” ²⁸Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?” ²⁹Paul 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.

^a Gk *O king* ^b Gk *the Nazorean* ^c That is, Aramaic ^d Other ancient authorities read *the things that you have seen*
^e Or *the Christ* ^f 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^a what must soon take place; he made^b it known by sending his angel to his servant^c John, ²who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

³ 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.

⁴ 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, ⁵and 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^d us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and made^e us to be a kingdom, priests serving^f his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

⁷ 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 wall.

So it is to be. Amen.

⁸ “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

⁹ 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.^g ¹⁰I was in the spirit^h on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹saying, “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.”

¹² Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and 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. ¹⁴His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶In 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.

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.

¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸and 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.

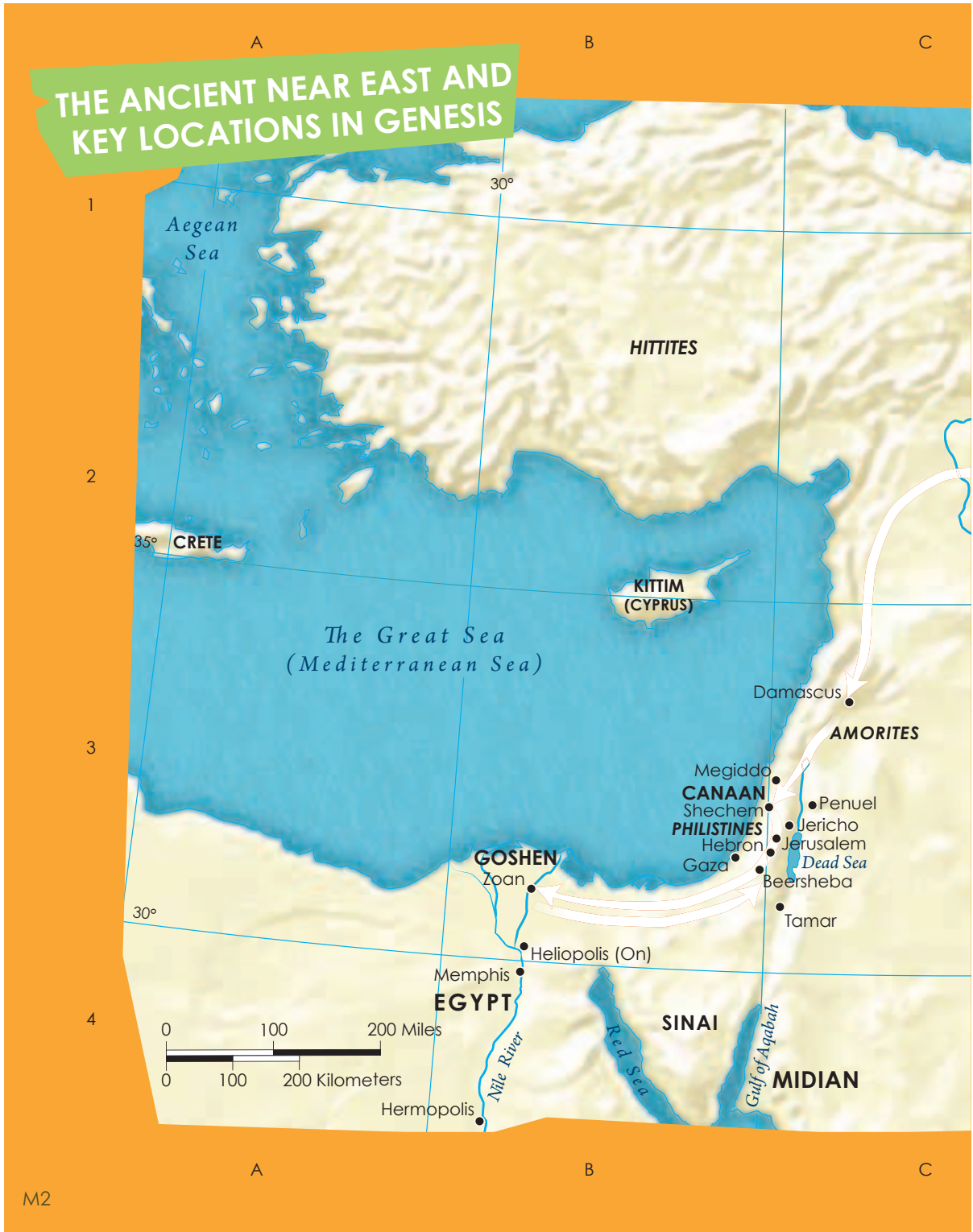
Read Genesis 1 to see how the Bible depicts the beginning of Earth.

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.

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



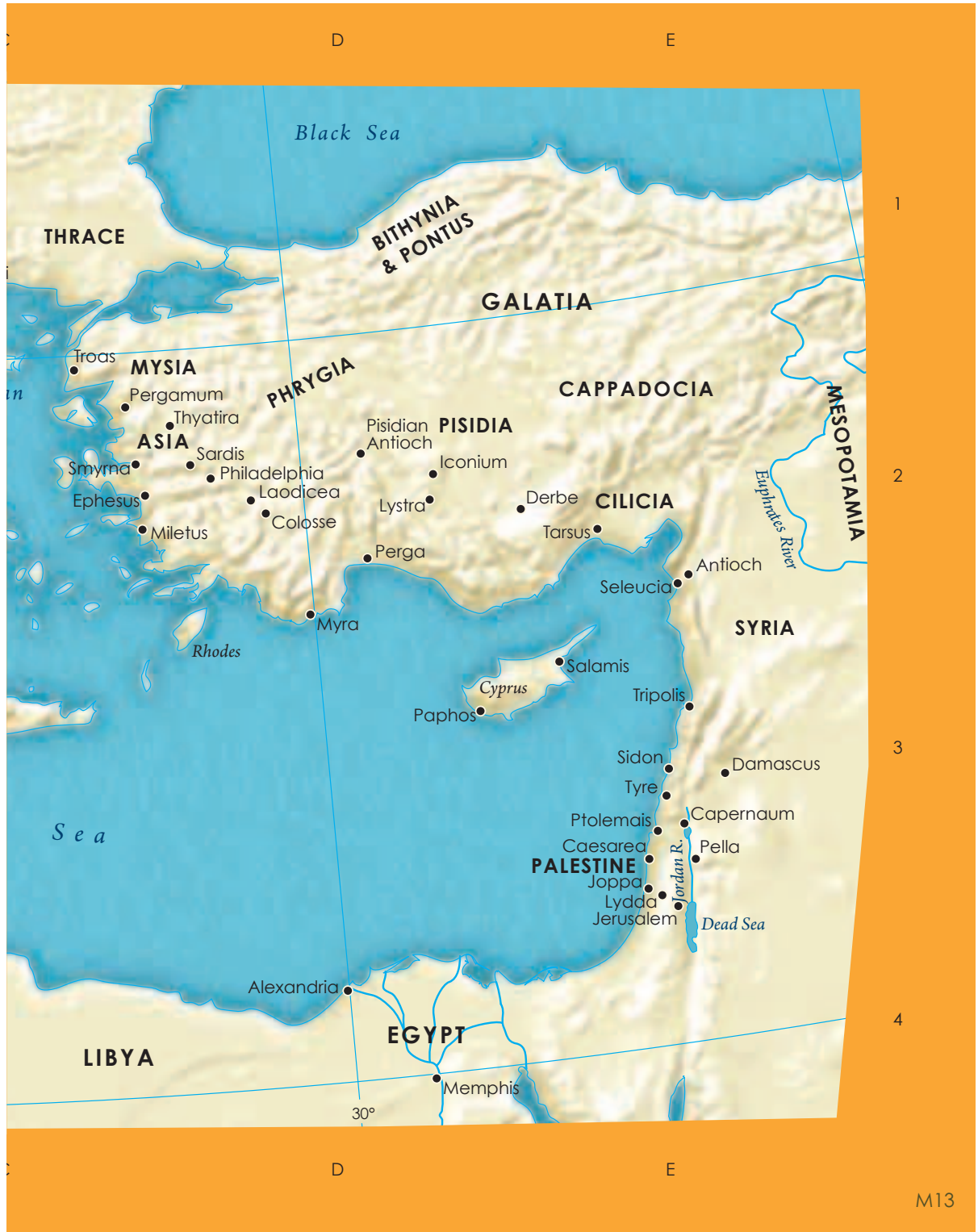


EXODUS AND SINAI WILDERNESS WANDERINGS











How To Use Your Spark Bible Stickers



I Memorized It

I can recite this verse from memory!



I Read It

I read this.



Makes Me Want To ...

Something about this text is calling me to DO something.



Something I Don't Like

This behavior / person / idea is not good.



Spark Spot

Hey! Look at this! Look again!

GENESIS 1:1

September 6



SIX DAYS OF CREATION AND THE SABBATH

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

⁶ And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷So 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. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then 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. ¹²The 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. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,

¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And 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!"

²⁰ 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." ²¹So 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. ²²God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ 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. ²⁵God 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.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make human-kind^c 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,^d and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created humankind^e in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.



Go outside and look at the stars!



I don't like creeping things!



I was created in God's image!

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

How To Use Your Spark Bible Stickers



Makes Me Feel ...

This story/passage really makes me feel a strong emotion.



Something I Like

This behavior / person / idea is cool.



Makes Me Wonder ...

I'm just going to think about this for a while.



Reminds Me Of ...

I remembered something when I read this.



I Looked It Up

I can find any verse.



I Don't Get It

I read this, but I'm not sure what it means.

GENESIS 2:17

²⁸God 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."²⁹God 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."³⁰And 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.³¹God 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.²And 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.³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

4 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^a God made the earth and the heavens,⁵when 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;⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—⁷then the

LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,^b and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.⁹Out 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.

¹⁰ A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.¹¹The 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 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.

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

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but 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.

^a Heb YHWH, as in other places where "LORD" is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3.14–15 with notes).

^b Or *formed a man* (Heb *adam*) of dust from the ground (Heb *adamah*)