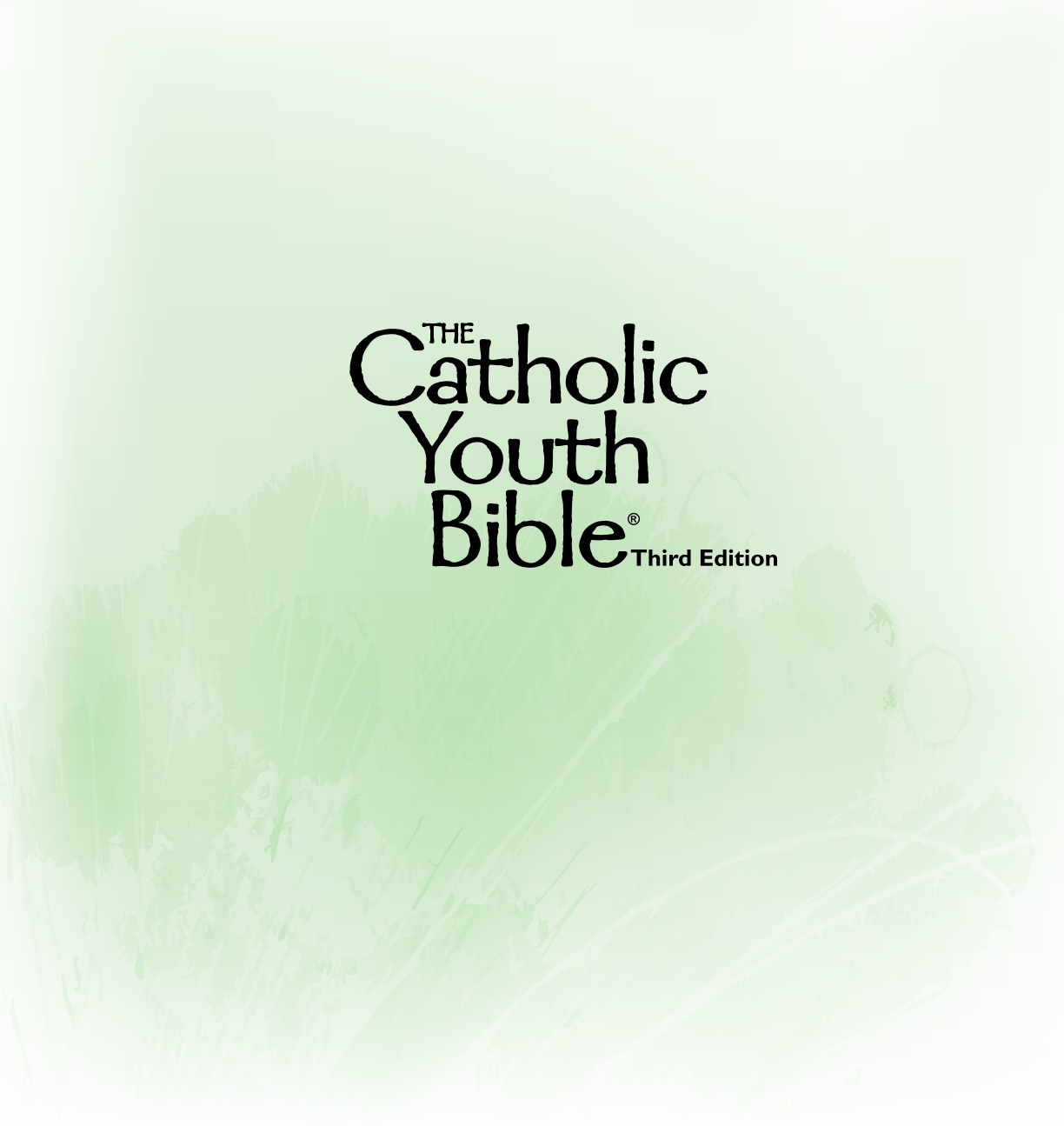


New American Bible  
Revised Edition

saint mary's press

# THE Catholic Youth Bible®

PRAY IT  
STUDY IT  
LIVE IT®



THE  
Catholic  
Youth  
Bible®  
Third Edition

Pray It! Study It! Live It!®  
resources offer a holistic approach  
to learning, living, and passing on the  
Catholic faith.

For the text of the articles and introductions

Nihil Obstat: Rev. William M. Becker, STD  
Censor Librorum  
June 14, 2011

Imprimatur: † Most Rev. John M. Quinn  
Bishop of Winona  
June 14, 2011

For the text of the *New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE)*

RESCRIPT

In accord with canon 825 §1 of the Code of Canon Law, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops hereby approves for publication *The New American Bible, Revised Old Testament*, a translation of the Sacred Scriptures authorized by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc.

The translation was approved by the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2008 and September 2010. It is permitted by the undersigned for private use and study.

Given in the city of Washington, the District of Columbia, on the Feast of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church, the 30th day of September, in the year of our Lord 2010.

† Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Chicago  
President, USCCB

The Revised New Testament

Nihil Obstat: Stephen J. Hartdegen, O.F.M., S.S.L.  
Censor Deputatus

Imprimatur: † James A. Hickey, S.T.D., J.C.D.  
Archbishop of Washington  
August 27, 1986

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# THE Catholic Youth Bible® **Third Edition**

NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, REVISED EDITION

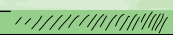
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES  
WITH CRITICAL USE OF ALL THE ANCIENT SOURCES

AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE  
CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE  
AND APPROVED BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



saint mary's press

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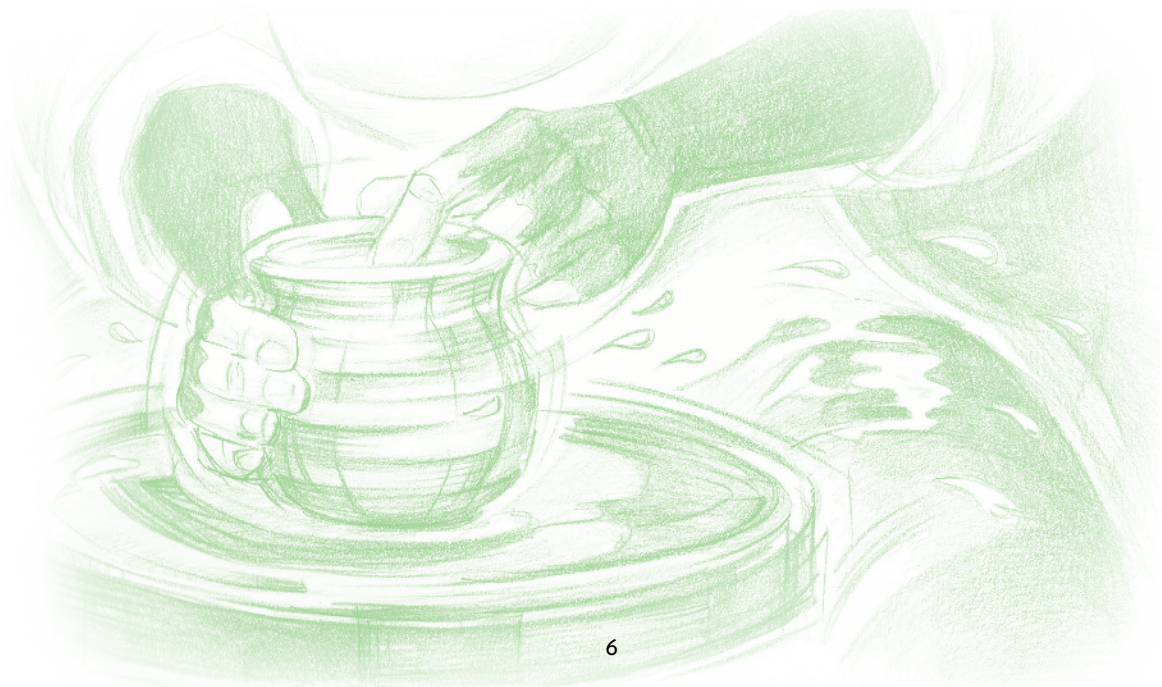
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# Welcome!

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## This Unique Bible Is for YOU!

***The Catholic Youth Bible***<sup>®</sup> (***CYB***) is filled with things that will make it easier for you to understand the Bible's message. The authors, editors, designers, and artists involved in creating its special features were focused on you — a young person seeking answers to life's important questions. The *CYB* can be a true companion, helping you find the answers you seek and perhaps raising new questions along the way. It will help you see yourself in God's image and likeness...  
**a vital part of God's saving work in the world.**



## **What Makes this Youth Bible CATHOLIC?**

For starters, its introductions and articles reflect Catholic interpretation of the Bible and make connections to Catholic beliefs and traditions. In addition, this Bible contains all seventy-three books and letters that form a complete Catholic Bible, seven more than most other Bibles (see “The Case of the Missing Books,” near Tb 1:16). Does this mean that other Christians cannot use ***The Catholic Youth Bible***? Not at all. When it comes to the Scriptures, Christians from all cultures and denominations have more in common than they have differences.

**As You Use this Bible**, keep in mind two important points. The first is that the Bible is for everyone. Wherever you are in your relationship with God, ***the Bible can speak to you***. The articles in the ***CYB*** invite you to consider what the church teaches about God’s message in the Bible, whether you are a committed Christian or a searcher with lots of questions.

The second point is that all the special features in ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** are designed to encourage you ***to read the Bible itself***. It is the Bible’s stories, poems, prophecies, and letters that carry this central message: ***God desires a loving relationship with us***. The special features of this Bible can help you understand God’s message. **But it is God’s word in the Bible that can CHANGE YOUR LIFE!**



# Special Features

**The Catholic Youth Bible** is loaded with special features to help make it easier for you to read and understand the Bible. Here is a list of some of those features and where to find them.

## SECTION INTRODUCTIONS

Each major section of the Bible (the Pentateuch, the historical books, the biblical novellas, the wisdom books, the prophetic books, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and the Letters and Revelation) begins with background on the books in that section.

## BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions at the beginning of most books (sometimes two or three books share a single introduction) give insight into each book's central message and an overview of its contents.

## COLOR INSERTS

The five sections of color inserts cover how to read and study the Bible; how to pray with the Scriptures; how to apply biblical principles to daily life and six saints who illustrate the principles, including a list of the seven principles of Catholic social teaching; photos and charts highlighting biblical people, places, and events; and an overview of Catholic practices and prayers.

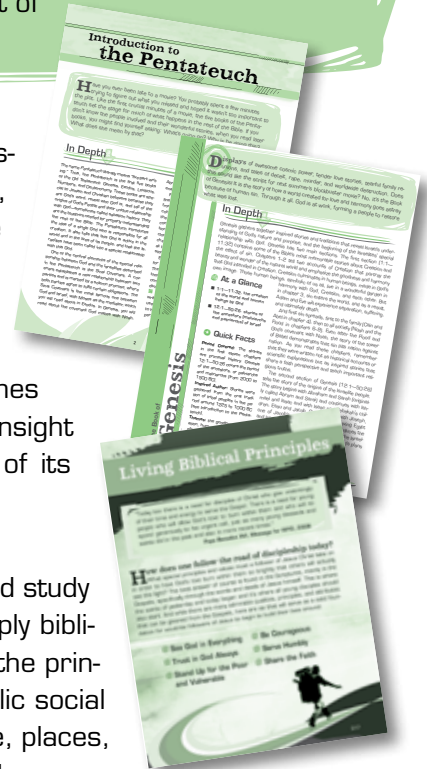
The **“Live It!”** articles apply the Bible's messages to situations you may be facing now or will face in the future.



The **“Pray It!”** articles can help you use the Bible for personal prayer. They show the biblical basis for the prayer and sacramental life of the Catholic Church.



The **“Did You Know?”** articles provide background from biblical scholars to help you understand the culture and traditions of biblical times, or the Church's interpretation of certain passages.





### **Introducing...**

The “**Introducing . . .**” articles give a quick introduction to the lives of important biblical people.

### **Catholic Connection**

The “**Catholic Connection**” articles are full-page articles that show the biblical basis for many Catholic Christian beliefs and practices.

### **Cultural Connection**

The “**Cultural Connection**” articles explain how people in different cultures have understood and lived out God’s revelation in the Bible. The articles represent many of the diverse cultures that have found their home in the United States.

### **Catholic Social Teaching**

These articles focus on the seven principles of Catholic social teaching and help the reader to understand their biblical basis.



## **WHERE DO I FIND IT?**

Several indexes are located at the back of the Bible. The first index helps you locate Bible passages on events, people, and teachings of Jesus. The second index helps you find Bible passages related to Catholic teaching. The third index helps you find Bible passages related to each sacrament. The fourth index helps you find articles on the seven themes of Catholic social teaching. The fifth index helps you find Bible passages related to life and faith issues. The sixth index leads you to articles on specific topics.

## **STUDY AIDS**

A calendar of the Church year and Sunday readings, a glossary of Scripture-related terms, color maps, pictures, and a timeline are found at the back of the Bible. The timeline and maps will help you locate where and when different biblical events occurred.



# The Bible Is Multicultural

**The Bible** developed in the midst of great cultural diversity. In fact, the Bible was originally written in at least two languages, Hebrew and Greek. The people of the Old Testament were influenced by Arabic, Egyptian, and other Middle Eastern cultures that surrounded them. Later, they and the early Christian church were influenced by the Greek and Roman cultures. In the Bible, God is revealed as the God of all nations and all cultures.

As the word of God, the Bible's core message of God's love for human beings speaks to people of any culture. That is one reason the Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Christians also believe that God is at work in the lives of people of every culture, whether or not they have been formally introduced to the Christian message. Listening to other cultures' experience of God can deepen Christian people's appreciation of God's message present in the Bible.

We also live in a multicultural world. ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** responds to this reality in two main ways. First, all the articles attempt to speak in a way that people of all cultures can appreciate and understand. Second, some articles have been specially written to represent distinct cultural perspectives. Most of these articles represent African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Latino, and Native American perspectives. The revised edition of ***The Catholic Youth Bible, Third Edition*** also includes additional articles representing cultural perspectives from around the world.

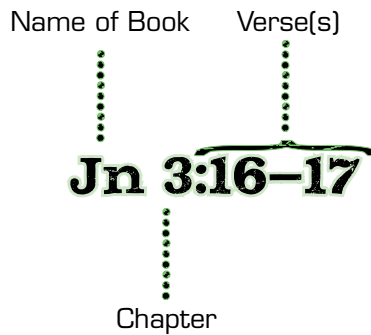
All the articles share cultural experiences and traditions, religious symbols, prayers, and poetry, and they connect all these elements to the Bible. If you would like to read articles from one of the four major cultural perspectives mentioned above, the subject index contains entries for those.

The cultural perspectives represented in ***The Catholic Youth Bible*** are a small sampling of the many unique cultures in the world. Because of space restrictions, articles on many cultures could not be included. Despite these limitations, the multicultural articles can deepen your appreciation of the Bible's message and of the rich ways different cultures live that message.

# Navigating The Catholic Youth Bible

**The Catholic Youth Bible** has several aids to help you locate references to Bible books and the Bible's special features. The contents on pages iv–v will be your main guide in locating the different books and features. However, the last page in the color section (facing the back cover) lists all the Bible books alphabetically and gives their abbreviations and beginning page numbers. You will find this a useful and easy-to-locate guide. Also, the section “Where Do I Find It?” offers several types of indexes to help you locate specific passages and articles.

Throughout **The Catholic Youth Bible**, there are many references to specific Bible passages. These references are given in shorthand form, such as Jn 3:16–17. The initial letters are the abbreviation for (or, in a few cases, the full name of) the Bible book. The number before the colon stands for the chapter, and the number(s) after the colon stands for the verse(s). So Jn 3:16–17 refers to the Gospel According to John, chapter 3, verses 16 to 17.



Most of the articles end with a citation identifying the Bible passage the article is based on. It is important to read the passage before reading the article.

In addition to the Bible text, you will find footnotes and Scripture cross-references printed along the bottom of each page. Every time you see an obelisk (†) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding footnote labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The footnotes provide you with added information about words and phrases mentioned in the Bible. Every time you see an asterisk (\*) in the Bible text, you will find a corresponding cross-reference labeled with the same chapter and verse numbers at the bottom of the page. The cross-references direct you to similar Scripture passages.

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# Preface to the New American Bible

## The Old Testament

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On September 30, 1943, His Holiness Pope Pius XII issued his now famous encyclical on scripture studies, *Divino afflante Spiritu*. He wrote: "We ought to explain the original text which was written by the inspired author himself and has more authority and greater weight than any, even the very best, translation whether ancient or modern. This can be done all the more easily and fruitfully if to the knowledge of languages be joined a real skill in literary criticism of the same text."

Early in 1944, in conformity with the spirit of the encyclical, and with the encouragement of Archbishop Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, the Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine requested members of The Catholic Biblical Association of America to translate the sacred scriptures from the original languages or from the oldest extant form of the text, and to present the sense of the biblical text in as correct a form as possible.

The first English Catholic version of the Bible, the Douay-Rheims (1582-1609/10), and its revision by Bishop Challoner (1750) were based on the Latin Vulgate. In view of the relative certainties more recently attained by textual and higher criticism, it has become increasingly desirable that contemporary translations of the sacred books into English be prepared in which due reverence for the text and strict observance of the rules of criticism would be combined.

*The New American Bible* has accomplished this in response to the need of the church in America today. It is the achievement of some fifty biblical scholars, the greater number of whom, though not all, are Catholics. In particular, the editors-in-chief have devoted twenty-five years to this work. The collaboration of scholars who are not Catholic fulfills the directive of the Second Vatican Council, not only that "correct translations be made into different languages especially from the original texts

of the sacred books," but that, "with the approval of the church authority, these translations be produced in cooperation with separated brothers" so that "all Christians may be able to use them."

The text of the books contained in *The New American Bible* is a completely new translation throughout. From the original and the oldest available texts of the sacred books, it aims to convey as directly as possible the thought and individual style of the inspired writers. The better understanding of Hebrew and Greek, and the steady development of the science of textual criticism, the fruit of patient study since the time of St. Jerome, have allowed the translators and editors in their use of all available materials to approach more closely than ever before the sense of what the sacred authors actually wrote.

Where the translation supposes the received text—Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, as the case may be—ordinarily contained in the best-known editions, as the original or the oldest extant form, no additional remarks are necessary. But for those who are happily able to study the original text of the scriptures at firsthand, a supplementary series of textual notes pertaining to the Old Testament was added originally in an appendix to the typical edition. (It is now obtainable in a separate booklet from The Catholic Biblical Association of America, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC 20064.) These notes furnish a guide in those cases in which the editorial board judges that the manuscripts in the original languages, or the evidence of the ancient versions, or some similar source, furnish the correct reading of a passage, or at least a reading more true to the original than that customarily printed in the available editions.

The Massoretic text of 1 and 2 Samuel has in numerous instances been corrected by the more ancient manuscripts Samuel a, b, and c from Cave 4 of Qumran, with the aid of important evidence

## Preface to the New American Bible: The Old Testament

from the Septuagint in both its oldest form and its Lucianic recension. Fragments of the lost Book of Tobit in Aramaic and in Hebrew, recovered from Cave 4 of Qumran, are in substantial agreement with the Sinaitic Greek recension used for the translation of this book. The lost original Hebrew text of 1 Maccabees is replaced by its oldest extant form in Greek. Judith, 2 Maccabees, and parts of Esther are also translated from the Greek.

The basic text for the Psalms is not the Massoretic but one which the editors considered closer to the original inspired form, namely the Hebrew text underlying the new Latin Psalter of the Church, the *Liber Psalmorum* (1944<sup>1</sup>, 1945<sup>2</sup>). Nevertheless they retained full liberty to establish the reading of the original text on sound critical principles.

The translation of Sirach, based on the original Hebrew as far as it is preserved and corrected from the ancient versions, is often interpreted in the light of the traditional Greek text. In the Book of Baruch the basic text is the Greek of the Septuagint, with some readings derived from an underlying Hebrew form no longer extant. In the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel (3:24–91, chapter 13 and chapter 14 [these are Azariah, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon respectively in WORDsearch]), the basic text is the Greek text of Theodotion, occasionally revised according to the Greek text of the Septuagint.

In some instances in the Book of Job, in Proverbs, Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zechariah there is good reason to believe that the original order of lines was accidentally disturbed in the transmission of the text. The verse numbers given in such cases are always those of the current Hebrew text, though the arrangement differs. In these instances the textual notes advise the reader of the difficulty. Cases of exceptional dislocation are called to the reader's attention by footnotes.

The Books of *Genesis to Ruth* were first published in 1952; the Wisdom Books, *Job to Sirach*, in 1955; the Prophetic Books, *Isaiah to Malachi*, in 1961; and the Historical Books, *Samuel to Maccabees*, in 1969. In the present edition of *Genesis to Ruth* there are certain new features: a general introduction to the Pentateuch, a retranslation of the text of Genesis with an introduction, cross-references, and revised textual notes, besides new and expanded exegetical notes which

take into consideration the various sources or literary traditions.

The revision of *Job to Sirach* includes changes in strophe division in Job and Proverbs and in titles of principal parts and sections of Wisdom and Ecclesiastes. Corrections in the text of Sirach are made in Sir 39:27–44:17 on the basis of the Masada text, and in 51:13–30 on the basis of the occurrence of this canticle in the Psalms scroll from Qumran Cave 11. In this typical edition, new corrections are reflected in the textual notes of Job, Proverbs, Wisdom, and Sirach. In the Psalms, the enumeration found in the Hebrew text is followed instead of the double enumeration, according to both the Hebrew and the Latin Vulgate texts, contained in the previous edition of this book.

In the Prophetic Books *Isaiah to Malachi*, only minor revisions have been made in the structure and wording of the texts, and in the textual notes.

The spelling of proper names in *The New American Bible* follows the customary forms found in most English Bibles since the Authorized Version.

The work of translating the Bible has been characterized as "the sacred and apostolic work of interpreting the word of God and of presenting it to the laity in translations as clear as the difficulty of the matter and the limitations of human knowledge permit" (A. G. Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 6, [1944], 389–90). In the appraisal of the present work, it is hoped that the words of the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* will serve as a guide: "Let all the sons of the church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice but also with the greatest charity; all moreover should abhor that intemperate zeal which imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed or suspected."

Conscious of their personal limitations for the task thus defined, those who have prepared this text cannot expect that it will be considered perfect; but they can hope that it may deepen in its readers "the right understanding of the divinely given Scriptures," and awaken in them "that piety by which it behooves us to be grateful to the God of all providence, who from the throne of his majesty has sent these books as so many personal letters to his own children" (*Divino afflante Spiritu*).

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# Preface to the New American Bible Revised Old Testament

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The first step in the genesis of *The New American Bible* was taken in 1936 when His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edwin V. O'Hara, D.D., chairman of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, invited a group of Catholic Scripture scholars to plan for a revised edition of the Challoner-Rheims New Testament, primarily on the basis of the Vulgate; the plans soon expanded to include the revision of the Old Testament. Archbishop O'Hara's initiative resulted in the formation of the Catholic Biblical Association, whose principal activity in its early years was this work of revision and translation. (For information on the work done on the New Testament, see the "Preface to *The New American Bible: First Edition of the New Testament*" and "Preface to the Revised Edition.") In 1943 His Holiness Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu*, which encouraged Scripture scholars to translate the Scriptures from the original languages. He wrote: "We ought to explain the original text which was written by the inspired author himself and has more authority and greater weight than any, even the very best, translation whether ancient or modern. This can be done all the more easily and fruitfully if to the knowledge of languages be joined a real skill in literary criticism of the same text." Although at this point work on almost twenty of the Old Testament books was completed or near completion, that work was abandoned and the new project of translating from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic was undertaken.

The completed books of the Old Testament were initially published, as they became available, in four volumes: Genesis–Ruth (1952), Job–Sirach (1955), Isaiah–Malachi (1961), and Samuel–Maccabees (1969). Some fifty scholars collaborated on this project; these were mainly Catholics, but, in accord with the suggestion of Vatican II that "with the approval of the church authority, these translations be produced in cooperation with sepa-

rated brothers" so that "all Christians may be able to use them" (*Dei Verbum*, No. 22), non-Catholics also participated in the work. To this point the translation had been known under the name of the "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" or CCD for short, but when these parts of the Old Testament were combined with the New Testament in a single volume, it was given the name "New American Bible," in part to reflect its ecumenical character. In producing the new volume certain changes were made from the original four volumes: a retranslation of the Book of Genesis, cross-references, new and expanded exegetical notes.

New translations and revision of existing translations are required from time to time for various reasons. For example, it is important to keep pace with the discovery and publication of new and better ancient manuscripts (e.g., the Dead Sea scrolls) so that the best possible textual tradition will be followed, as required by *Divino afflante spiritu*. There are advances in linguistics of the biblical languages which make possible a better understanding and more accurate translation of the original languages. And there are changes and developments in vocabulary and the cultural background of the receptor language. An obvious example of this is the abandonment in English of the second person singular (use of "thee," "thou," "sayest," "hearest"), which had a major impact on Bible translations. Other changes are less obvious but are nevertheless present. There have been changes in vocabulary; for example, the term "holocaust" is now normally reserved for the sacrilegious attempt to destroy the Jewish people by the Third Reich. Concerns such as these are reflected in what Pope John Paul II spoke of as the "three pillars" of good biblical translation: "A good translation is based on three pillars that must contemporaneously support the entire work. First, there must be a deep knowledge of the language and the cultural world

## Preface to the New American Bible: Revised Old Testament

at the point of origin. Next, there must be a good familiarity with the language and cultural context at the point where the work will arrive. Lastly, to crown the work with success, there must be an adequate mastery of the contents and meaning of what one is translating"—and he praised the translation that "utilizes the vocabulary and idioms of everyday speech" ("le parole e le forme della lingua di tutti i giorni"). (From an address to the United Bible Societies, November 26, 2001.)

This new edition is a thorough revision of the already excellent *New American Bible* Old Testament of 1970. Work on most books of the Old Testament, begun in 1994 and completed in 2001, was done by forty revisers and a board of eight editors. The 1991 revision of the Psalter, the work of thirty revisers and six editors, was further revised by seven revisers and two editors between 2009 and 2010. As suggested in the comments above, the revision aimed at making use of the best manuscript traditions available (see below), translating as accurately as possible, and rendering the result in good contemporary English. In many ways it is a more literal translation than the original NAB and has attempted to be more consistent in rendering Hebrew (or Greek) words and idioms, especially in technical contexts, such as regulations for sacrifices. In translating the Psalter special effort was made to provide a smooth, rhythmic translation for easy singing or recitation, and to retain the concrete imagery of the Hebrew.

Where the Old Testament translation supposes the received text—Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, as the case may be—ordinarily contained in the best-known editions, as the original or the oldest

extant form, no additional remarks are necessary. Where the translators have departed from those received texts, e.g., by following the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic text, accepting a reading of what is judged to be a better textual tradition, as from a Qumran manuscript, or by emending a reading apparently corrupted in transmission, such changes are recorded in the revised edition of the *Textual Notes on The New American Bible*. Additional information on the textual tradition for some books may be found in the introduction to the book in the same *Textual Notes*.

In particular, important manuscripts from Cave 4 of Qumran, as well as the most useful recensions of the Septuagint, have been consulted in the preparation of 1 and 2 Samuel. Fragments of the lost Book of Tobit in Aramaic and in Hebrew, recovered from Cave 4 of Qumran, are in substantial agreement with the Sinaiticus Greek recension used for the translation of this book. The lost original Hebrew text of 1 Maccabees is replaced by its oldest extant form in Greek. Judith, 2 Maccabees, and parts of Esther are also translated from the Greek. The translation of The Wisdom of Ben Sira is based on the original Hebrew as far as it is preserved, with corrections from the ancient versions; otherwise, the Greek of the Septuagint is followed. In the Book of Baruch the basic text is the Greek of the Septuagint, with some readings derived from an underlying Hebrew form no longer extant. In the deuterocanonical sections of Daniel (3:24–90; 13:1–14:42), the basic text is the Greek text of so-called Theodotion, occasionally revised according to the Greek text of the Septuagint.





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The  
**Old Testament**

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In the  
Beginning

# Introduction to the Pentateuch

**H**ave you ever been late to a movie? You probably spent a few minutes trying to figure out what you missed and hoped it wasn't too important to the plot. Like the first crucial minutes of a movie, the five books of the Pentateuch set the stage for much of what happens in the rest of the Bible. If you don't know the people involved and their wonderful stories, when you read later books, you might find yourself asking: What's going on? Why is he doing this? What does she mean by that?

## In Depth

The name *Pentateuch* literally means “five-part writing.” Thus, the Pentateuch is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books are special to Jewish and Christian believers because they are God's word, reveal who God is, and tell of the origins of God's People and their unique relationship with God—sometimes called salvation history. They are the blueprint needed for properly understanding the rest of the Bible. The Pentateuch introduces the idea of a single God who is responsible for all creation. It also tells that this God is active in the world and in the lives of its people, and that the Israelites have been called into a special relationship with this God.

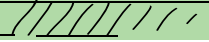
One of the central elements of the special relationship between God and the Israelites described in the Pentateuch is the Sinai Covenant. A covenant establishes a new relationship between two parties and is marked by a solemn promise, where both parties agree to fulfill certain obligations. The Sinai Covenant is the most famous one between God and Israel, with Moses as the mediator, which you will read about in Exodus. In Genesis, you will read about the covenant God makes with Noah,

Abraham, and Jacob, which lead to the Sinai Covenant.

Reading the Pentateuch is like appreciating a fine tapestry. When you view a tapestry from the front, all the threads combine to make a beautiful, coherent image. In the same way, an overall look at the covenant, stories, and laws in the Pentateuch combines them to form a picture of the love relationship between God and the people of Israel. A close look at the back of a tapestry shows a more chaotic mix of colors and yarn. So too a closer look at the writings in the Pentateuch reveals not one story but many.

Biblical scholars speak of four primary sources for the stories and traditions in the Pentateuch. The sources reflect four different schools of thought about Israel's relationship with God. For convenience, each source is referred to as an individual author.

■ The Yahwist used Yahweh as God's name. This source is also referred to as J, taken from the German spelling of the divine name. This writer focused on the southern kingdom of Judah, used lots of stories, emphasized God's closeness to humanity, and portrayed God acting as a human person.



■ The Elohist (E) referred to God as Elohim or Lord. The Elohist wrote about the northern kingdom of Israel and was concerned about idolatry and morality. The writings of the Elohist present God's presence as mediated, such as through a burning bush.

■ After the fall of the Northern Kingdom, E and J combined to form the Priestly writing (P). The Priestly writer emphasized religious rituals and the role of the priesthood. This writer portrayed God as more distant and used a more formal style. This source was written after the Babylonian Exile.

■ Finally, the Deuteronomist (D) emphasized the Law as the foundation of the kingdom of Judah. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Pentateuch and the first book in the Deuteronomistic history.

Knowing that these four sources contributed to the final form of the Pentateuch can help us understand that the Pentateuch books are not simply records of events as they occurred but rather faith accounts about the Israelites' growing relationship with God, inspired by God and told from different perspectives.

In the Pentateuch, God reveals how much God loves the human race collectively and how much God loves us personally. God wishes to be in a relationship with us today just as much as God did back then. The Pentateuch reminds us that we are all children of God and are waiting for the full realization of God's reign.

## Other Background

- ▶ Some of the most familiar stories and people of the Old Testament are found in Genesis and Exodus. Genesis includes the stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and his brothers. Exodus contains the stories of Moses and the burning bush, Pharaoh and the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the Exodus out of Egypt, and the Ten Commandments.
- ▶ The Jewish people also refer to the five books of the Pentateuch as the Torah, meaning "teaching" or "instruction."
- ▶ An ancient tradition named Moses as the original writer of the Pentateuch. This was no doubt due to Moses' importance in the Pentateuch itself. But evidence suggests that most of the Pentateuch was written hundreds of years after Moses' death.
- ▶ There are different types of writing in the Pentateuch. Genesis is all inspired narrative, Leviticus and Deuteronomy are mostly laws, and Exodus and Numbers are approximately half narratives and half laws. Deuteronomy is unique in that it uses preaching rather than narrative.

**D**isplays of awesome cosmic power, tender love stories, tearful family reunions, and tales of deceit, rape, murder, and worldwide destruction. Does this sound like the script for next summer's blockbuster movie? No, it's the Book of Genesis! It is the story of how a world created for love and harmony goes astray because of human sin. Through it all, God is at work, forming a people to restore what was lost.

## In Depth

Genesis gathers together inspired stories and traditions that reveal Israel's understanding of God's nature and purpose, and the beginning of the Israelites' special relationship with God. Genesis has two main sections. The first section (1:1—11:26) contains

### At a Glance

- Preamble. The Creation of the World (1:1—2:3).**
- I. **The Story of the Nations (2:4—11:26).**
    - A. **The Creation of the Man and the Woman, Their Offspring, and the Spread of Civilization (2:4—4:26).**
    - B. **The Pre-flood Generations (5:1—6:8).**
    - C. **The Flood and the Renewed Blessing (6:9—9:29).**
    - D. **The Populating of the World and the Proudful City (10:1—11:9).**
    - E. **The Genealogy from Shem to Terah (11:10—26).**
  - II. **The Story of the Ancestors of Israel (11:27—50:26).**
    - A. **The Story of Abraham and Sarah (11:27—25:18).**
    - B. **The Story of Isaac and Jacob (25:19—36:43).**
    - C. **The Story of Joseph (37:1—50:26).**

### Quick Facts

**Period Covered:** The stories in the first eleven chapters are primeval history. Genesis 11:27—50:26 covers the period of the ancestors or patriarchs.

**Themes:** the goodness of Creation, human responsibility, the effects of sin, covenant, God's bringing good out of evil

some of the Bible's most memorable stories about Creation and the effect of sin. Chapters 1–2 tell two accounts of Creation that portray the beauty and wonder of the natural world and emphasize the goodness and harmony that God intended in Creation. Creation culminates in human beings, made in God's own image. Those human beings, symbolic of us all, live in a wonderful garden in harmony with God, Creation, and each other. But in chapter 3, sin enters the world, and as a result, Adam and Eve will experience separation, suffering, and ultimately death.

And the first sin spreads, first to the family (Cain and Abel in chapter 4), then to all society (Noah and the Flood in chapters 6–9). Even after the Flood and God's covenant with Noah, the story of the tower of Babel demonstrates that sin pits nation against nation. As you read these chapters, remember that they were written not as historical accounts or scientific explanations but as inspired stories that share a faith perspective and teach important religious truths.

The second section of Genesis (11:27—50:26) tells the story of the origins of the Israelite people. The story begins with Abraham and Sarah (originally called Abram and Sarai) and continues with Ishmael and Isaac and with Isaac and Rebekah's children, Esau and Jacob. Genesis ends with Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, cleverly saving Egypt and Israel from famine. These sections introduce the covenant God makes with Abraham and the Israelite people and remind the reader that God's plans will overcome human sin and weakness.



# Genesis

## Preamble. The Creation of the World

### The Story of Creation†

**1**<sup>1</sup>In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth\*— <sup>2</sup>† and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—\*

<sup>3</sup>Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light.\* <sup>4</sup>God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called

“night.” Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.†

<sup>6</sup>Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other. <sup>7</sup>God made the dome,† and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened.\*

<sup>8</sup>God called the dome “sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

<sup>9</sup>Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared.\* <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land

† **1:1–2:3** This section, from the Priestly source, functions as an introduction, as ancient stories of the origin of the world (cosmogonies) often did. It introduces the primordial story (2:4–11:26), the stories of the ancestors (11:27–50:26), and indeed the whole Pentateuch. The chapter highlights the goodness of creation and the divine desire that human beings share in that goodness. God brings an orderly universe out of primordial chaos merely by uttering a word. In the literary structure of six days, the creation events in the first three days are related to those in the second three.

- |                                 |   |                              |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1. light (day)/darkness (night) | = | 4. sun/moon                  |
| 2. arrangement of water         | = | 5. fish + birds from waters  |
| 3. a) dry land                  | = | 6. a) animals                |
| b) vegetation                   | = | b) human beings: male/female |

The seventh day, on which God rests, the climax of the account, falls outside the six-day structure.

Until modern times the first line was always translated, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Several comparable ancient cosmogonies, discovered in recent times, have a “when . . . then” construction, confirming the translation “when . . . then” here as well. “When” introduces the pre-creation state and “then” introduces the creative act affecting that state. The traditional translation, “In the beginning,” does not reflect the Hebrew syntax of the clause.

**1:2** This verse is parenthetical, describing in three phases the pre-creation state symbolized by the chaos out of which God brings order: “earth,” hidden beneath the encompassing cosmic waters, could not

be seen, and thus had no “form”; there was only darkness; turbulent wind swept over the waters. Commencing with the last-named elements (darkness and water), vv. 3–10 describe the rearrangement of this chaos: light is made (first day) and the water is divided into water above and water below the earth so that the earth appears and is no longer “without outline.” *The abyss*: the primordial ocean according to the ancient Semitic cosmogony. After God’s creative activity, part of this vast body forms the salt-water seas (vv. 9–10); part of it is the fresh water under the earth (Ps 33:7; Ez 31:4), which wells forth on the earth as springs and fountains (Gn 7:11; 8:2; Prv 3:20). Part of it, “the upper water” (Ps 148:4; Dn 3:60), is held up by the dome of the sky (vv. 6–7), from which rain descends on the earth (Gn 7:11; 2 Kgs 7:2, 19; Ps 104:13). *A mighty wind*: literally, “spirit or breath [*ruah*] of God”; cf. Gn 8:1.

**1:5** In ancient Israel a day was considered to begin at sunset.  
**1:7** *The dome*: the Hebrew word suggests a gigantic metal dome. It was inserted into the middle of the single body of water to form dry space within which the earth could emerge. The Latin Vulgate translation *firmamentum*, “means of support (for the upper waters); firmament,” provided the traditional English rendering.

**1:1** Gn 2:1, 4; 2 Mc 7:28; Ps 8:4; 33:6; 89:12; 90:2; Wis 11:17; Sir 16:24; Jer 10:12; Acts 14:15; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2–3; 3:4; 11:3; Rev 4:11.  
**1:2** Jer 4:23.  
**1:3** 2 Cor 4:6.  
**1:7** Prv 8:27–28; 2 Pt 3:5.  
**1:9** Jb 38:8; Ps 33:7; Jer 5:22.

“earth,” and the basin of water he called “sea.” God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>\* Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: <sup>12</sup>the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

<sup>14</sup>Then God said: Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years.\* <sup>15</sup>and serve as lights in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth. And so it happened: <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights, the greater one

to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night, and the stars.\* <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>\* Then God said: Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky. <sup>21</sup>God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of crawling living creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw that it was good, <sup>22</sup>and God blessed them, saying: Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth.\*

1:11 Ps 104:14.  
1:14 Jb 26:10; Ps 19:2–3; Bar 3:33.

1:16 Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7–9;  
Wis 13:2–4; Jer 31:35.  
1:20 Jb 12:7–10.  
1:22 Gn 8:17.

## In The Beginning

“**I**n the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth . . .” (Gn 1:1).

This simple verse is one of the foundational beliefs of Christianity. We are not a random collection of atoms. The world is not a lucky combination of cosmic circumstances. The universe did not just accidentally happen.

The beginning of wisdom is acknowledging that a higher power is at work in our lives, that the universe has purpose, and that everything was created by God. The ancient writers and editors of Genesis expressed these ideas in the Creation stories. The Church affirms these beliefs. They are expressed in a prayer called the Apostles’ Creed, which begins, “I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.”

Genesis expresses another foundational belief: God created everything good! Read the story in chapter 1, and see how this belief is constantly repeated: And humankind is “very good,” created in God’s own image. This is God’s message to you in the first chapter of the Bible: You carry God’s image within you. You are very good! Don’t let anyone try to convince you otherwise.

► Gn 1:1–2:4



## Did You Know?

### Literary Genres

**S**ome Christians believe that God actually created the world in seven twenty-four-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written not as a science article but as a series of symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that convey great moral and spiritual truths. We should not try to come to any scientific conclusions about the creation of the world from reading these stories.

Mythic stories are one literary type, or genre. You just have to look in a newspaper to see examples of different literary genres: news stories, advice columns, editorials, and comics. Each genre has different rules for interpreting its meaning. The Bible also contains many types of literary genres, including hero stories, poetry, laws, legends, fictional satire, debates, and letters. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre—otherwise, you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn’t intend.

► Gn 1:1–2:4



## Catholic Social Teaching

### Coworkers with God

GN

In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, we read the wonderful story of God's creation of the universe. With each new day, God creates the light and darkness, the earth and sea, the plants and animals, and ultimately humankind. On the seventh day, God observes the amazing creation and we read, "God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good" (Gn 1:31).

After God creates the man and woman, he commands them to "fill the earth and subdue it" (Gn 1:28). In other words, human beings are to cooperate with God in the completion and care of creation. With God's grace, we participate in laying the foundation for God's reign on earth.

Catholic social teaching tells

us that as coworkers with God in caring for and sustaining the world, we have a responsibility to protect both the dignity of the human person as well as the planet. Amazing breakthroughs are happening in our world all the time, and yet, as Christians, we are asked to consider whether such developments are in keeping with the teachings of our Church. For example, we now have the ability to clone animals and genetically alter agricultural products, but will these practices sustain our world or ultimately destroy it? Do these practices really revere and value human life and the created order?

God has given us the amazing gift of intellectual inquiry, which can lead to wonderful advance-

ments for our world, but we must always ask ourselves how we might help promote ethical approaches to research so that future generations may continue to enjoy the beauty of creation and thrive in the universe.

- As a coworker with God, how do I sustain and care for God's creation?
- How might I use my gifts of knowledge and education to really improve the world and help bring about God's reign on earth?

### ▶ Genesis, chapters 1–2 Caring for God's Creation



<sup>23</sup> Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> \* Then God said: Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: tame animals, crawling things, and every kind of wild animal. And so it happened: <sup>25</sup> God made every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, and every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. God saw that it was good. <sup>26</sup> \* Then God said: Let us make† human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds

of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

<sup>27</sup> God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female† he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. † Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on

† **1:26** *Let us make:* in the ancient Near East, and sometimes in the Bible, God was imagined as presiding over an assembly of heavenly beings who deliberated and decided about matters on earth (1 Kgs 22:19–22; Is 6:8; Ps 29:1–2; 82; 89:6–7; Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). This scene accounts for the plural form here and in Gn 11:7 ("Let us then go down . . ."). Israel's God was always considered "Most High" over the heavenly beings. *Human beings:* Hebrew 'ādām is here the generic term for humankind; in the first five chapters of Genesis it is the proper name Adam only at 4:25 and 5:1–5. *In our image, after our likeness:* "image" and "likeness" (virtually synonyms) express the worth of human beings who have value in themselves (human blood may not be shed in 9:6 because of this image of God) and in their task, dominion (1:28), which promotes the rule of God over the universe.

**1:27** *Male and female:* as God provided the plants with seeds (vv. 11, 12) and commanded the animals to be fertile and multiply (v. 22), so God gives sexuality to human beings as their means to continue in existence.

**1:28** *Fill the earth and subdue it:* the object of the verb "subdue" may be not the earth as such but earth as the territory each nation

must take for itself (chaps. 10–11), just as Israel will later do (see Nm 32:22, 29; Jos 18:1). The two divine commands define the basic tasks of the human race—to continue in existence through generation and to take possession of one's God-given territory. The dual command would have had special meaning when Israel was in exile and deeply anxious about whether they would continue as a nation and return to their ancient territory. *Have dominion:* the whole human race is made in the "image" and "likeness" of God and has "dominion." Comparable literature of the time used these words of kings rather than of human beings in general; human beings were invariably thought of as slaves of the gods created to provide menial service for the divine world. The royal language here does not, however, give human beings unlimited power, for kings in the Bible had limited dominion and were subject to prophetic critique.

**1:24** Sir 16:27–28.

**1:26–27** Gn 5:1, 3; 9:6; Ps

8:5–6; Wis 2:23; 10:2;

Sir 17:1, 3–4; Mt 19:4;

Mk 10:6; Jas 3:7; Eph

4:24; Col 3:10

**1:28** Gn 8:17; 9:1; Ps 8:6–9;

115:16; Wis 9:2.





## Cultural Connection

## God Is Our Creator

**A**ccording to Genesis, chapters 1–2, God created the universe and is the source of order in all creation. Creation is good, and its goodness is reflected in the harmony, peace, and love between the Creator and his creatures, and among the creatures themselves. In Hispanic theological traditions, this ideal relationship—symbolized by the way God and Adam and Eve relate in the Garden of Eden—is considered the foundation in which salvation history is rooted.

- How are your relationships with God, your friends, your family, and nature characterized by harmony, peace, and love?
- Reflect on how you can improve some of your strained

relationships, and ask God's help to do it.

Human beings are created in God's image and likeness and share God's attributes: freedom, love, knowledge, and the ability to create. With these gifts comes the responsibility of caring for all creation.

- Give thanks and praise to God for creation, especially for your own life and the lives of the people around you.
- Think of how you, your family, and your community can take better care of all creation. Pray that you fully develop your capacity to love, to know the truth, and to use your freedom wisely.

God established a covenant with us at the moment of our creation, and we keep this covenant by freely placing ourselves in God's hands and being responsive to God's invitation to live in communion with God and people.

- How do you use your freedom to respond to God's invitation?
- Think about the aspects of your life for which you most need God's wisdom to live in harmony and love. Put yourself in God's hands, and let God help and direct you.

### ▶ Genesis, chapters 1–2



the earth.\* <sup>29</sup> † \* God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; <sup>30</sup> and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened. <sup>31</sup> God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.\*

**2** <sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.\* <sup>2</sup> † On the seventh

day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.\* <sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.\*

## I. The Story of the Nations

### The Garden of Eden

<sup>4</sup> This is the story† of the heavens and the earth at their creation. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens— <sup>5</sup> there was no field

older traditions, belonging to the tradition called Yahwist, and gives them a new setting. In the first part of Genesis, the formula “this is the story” (or a similar phrase) occurs five times (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10), which corresponds to the five occurrences of the formula in the second part of the book (11:27; 25:12, 19; 36:19; 37:2). Some interpret the formula here as retrospective (“Such is the story”), referring back to chap. 1, but all its other occurrences introduce rather than summarize. It is introductory here; the Priestly source would hardly use the formula to introduce its own material in chap. 1.

The cosmogony that begins in v. 4 is concerned with the nature of human beings, narrating the story of the essential institutions and limits of the human race through their first ancestors. This cosmogony, like 1:1–3 (see note there), uses the “when . . . then” construction

<sup>1:29</sup> According to the Priestly tradition, the human race was originally intended to live on plants and fruits as were the animals (see v. 30), an arrangement that God will later change (9:3) in view of the human inclination to violence.

<sup>2:2</sup> The mention of the seventh day, repeated in v. 3, is outside the series of six days and is thus the climax of the account. The focus of the account is God. The text does not actually institute the practice of keeping the Sabbath, for it would have been anachronistic to establish at this point a custom that was distinctively Israelite (Ex 31:13, 16, 17), but it lays the foundation for the later practice. Similarly, ancient creation accounts often ended with the construction of a temple where the newly created human race provided service to the gods who created them, but no temple is mentioned in this account. As was the case with the Sabbath, it would have been anachronistic to institute the temple at this point, for Israel did not yet exist. In Ex 25–31 and 35–40, Israel builds the tabernacle, which is the precursor of the Temple of Solomon.

<sup>2:4</sup> *This is the story*: the distinctive Priestly formula introduces

<sup>1:29–30</sup> Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14–15.  
<sup>1:31</sup> 1 Tm 4:4.  
<sup>2:1</sup> Is 45:12; Jn 1:3.

<sup>2:2</sup> Ex 20:9–11; 31:17; Heb 4:4, 10.  
<sup>2:3</sup> Ex 20:11; Dt 5:14; Neh 9:14.

shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man† to till the ground, <sup>6</sup>but a stream† was welling up out of the earth and watering all the surface of the ground— <sup>7</sup>then the LORD God formed the man†

† common in ancient cosmogonies. The account is generally attributed to the Yahwist, who prefers the divine name “Yhwh” (here rendered LORD) for God. God in this story is called “the LORD God” (except in 3:1–5); “LORD” is to be expected in a Yahwist account but the additional word “God” is puzzling.

**2:5** *Man*: the Hebrew word *‘adam* is a generic term meaning “human being.” In chaps. 2–3, however, the archetypal human being is understood to be male (Adam), so the word *‘adam* is translated “man” here.

**2:6** *Stream*: the water wells up from the vast flood below the earth. The account seems to presuppose that only the garden of God was irrigated at this point. From this one source of all the fertilizing water on the earth, water will be channeled through the garden of God over the entire earth. It is the source of the four rivers mentioned in vv. 10–14. Later, with rain and cultivation, the fertility of the garden of God will appear in all parts of the world.

**2:7** God is portrayed as a potter molding the human body out of earth. There is a play on words in Hebrew between *‘adam* (“human being,” “man”) and *‘adama* (“ground”). It is not enough to make the body from earth; God must also breathe into the man’s nostrils. A similar picture of divine breath imparted to human beings in order for them to live is found in Ez 37:5, 9–10; Jn 20:22. The Israelites did not think in the (Greek) categories of body and soul.

**2:8** *Eden, in the east*: the place names in vv. 8–14 are mostly derived from Mesopotamian geography (see note on vv. 10–14). Eden may be the name of a region in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), the term derived from the Sumerian word *eden*, “fertile plain.” A similar-sounding Hebrew word means “delight,” which may lie behind the Greek translation, “The Lord God planted a paradise [= pleasure park] in Eden.” It should be noted, however, that the

out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.\*

<sup>8</sup>The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,† and placed there the man whom he had formed.\* <sup>9</sup>† Out of the ground the LORD

garden was not intended as a paradise for the human race, but as a pleasure park for God; the man tended it for God. The story is not about “paradise lost.”

The garden in the precincts of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem seems to symbolize the garden of God (like gardens in other temples); it is apparently alluded to in Ps 1:3; 80:10; 92:14; Ez 47:7–12; Rev 22:1–2.

**2:9** The second tree, the tree of life, is mentioned here and at the end of the story (3:22, 24). It is identified with Wisdom in Prv 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4, where the pursuit of wisdom gives back to human beings the life that is made inaccessible to them in Gn 3:24. In

2:7 Gn 3:19; 18:27; Tb 8:6;  
Jb 34:15; Ps 103:14;  
104:29; Eccl 3:20; 12:7;

Wis 7:1; Sir 33:10;  
1 Cor 15:45.  
2:8 Is 51:3; Ez 31:9.

## Pray It!

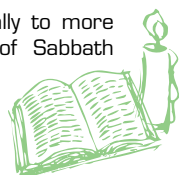
### The Sabbath

**E**ven God needed to take a rest. The writer of Genesis makes this point to remind readers to set aside a day for rest and prayer, which Jewish people call the Sabbath. Honoring the Sabbath is an act of trust in God. It means we believe that the world will not fall apart if we stop our activity. The world is in God’s hands. We can hear this truth echoed in Jesus’ words:

Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? (Lk 12:27–28)

Traditionally, Christians rest and pray on Sunday because it is the day on which Jesus was resurrected. In our culture today, it seems that many people are losing this practice.

- What could we gain if we recommitted ourselves to a day of rest, celebration, and prayer?
- What can you do personally to more fully honor the concept of Sabbath rest?



▶ Gn 2:1–3

## Live It!

### In God’s Image

**G**od does not make mistakes; people do. Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage, even to change their physical appearance in order to conform to the latest fad or fit the dominant cultural image of beauty. We must remember that physical features are not accidents. God planned for them—we are all made in God’s image, inside and out.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. This includes a love for dark skin or light skin, straight hair or curly hair, wide nose or pug nose, and all the variations in between. Whatever our appearance, we are all blessed by God.

▶ Gn 1:26–27





### Original Sin

**B**efore the Fall, Adam and Eve had it all. God gave them freedom and established a close friendship with them. They could simply walk about the garden tending to it alongside of God. They lived in perfect harmony with each other and all of creation without fear, suffering, or death. Yet, Adam and Eve wanted more. By believing the serpent's lie, Adam and Eve sought to make themselves equal to God. They distrusted God's goodness, directly disobeyed God, and abused the freedom God had given them. The results were tragic. Adam and Eve's friendship with God turned into fear as they hid in the garden. After being expelled from the garden, tension and strife entered Adam and Eve's once harmonious relationship. The creation they once helped tend with God became hazardous and difficult to manage. Ultimately, through their sin, death became a reality for Adam and Eve. Though this account in chapter three of Genesis uses figurative language, it points to the reality that all of humanity has been affected by the sin our first parents freely chose to commit.

This original sin and its consequences have been handed down to every generation throughout all of history, with the exception of Jesus and his mother, Mary. Although we are not personally responsible for it, our nature also has been wounded by this sin. As a result, we do not have the original holiness and justice God intended for us, but are inclined to sin and subject to death. Fortunately, Jesus Christ, unlike Adam and Eve, came in total obedience to the will of God. As a result, the sin brought into the world by Adam and Eve has been overcome by the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Read Romans 5:12–21 to learn more about the relationship between Adam and Jesus.) Through the grace of the sacrament of Baptism, we are freed from original sin and turned back toward God. And the graces we receive through Christ will surpass those that Adam and Eve ever knew before the Fall!

► **Gn 3:1–24**

*Catechism*, nos. 369–421



God made grow every tree that was delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.\*

<sup>10</sup>A river rises in Eden† to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup>The gold of that land is good; bdellium and lapis lazuli are also there. <sup>13</sup>The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush.\* <sup>14</sup>The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.\* <sup>16</sup>The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden\* <sup>17</sup>except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die.†\*

<sup>18</sup>The LORD God said: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him.†\* <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each living creature was then its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all the tame animals, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be a helper suited to the man.

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of

his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.\* <sup>22</sup>The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man, <sup>23</sup>the man said:

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

This one shall be called 'woman,'  
for out of man this one has been taken."†

<sup>24</sup>\* That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.†

<sup>25</sup>The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.†

### Expulsion from Eden

**3**<sup>1</sup>Now the snake was the most cunning† of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden?'" <sup>2</sup>The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; <sup>3</sup>\* it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'" <sup>4</sup>But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die!\* <sup>5</sup>God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know† good and evil." <sup>6</sup>The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was

† the new creation described in the Book of Revelation, the tree of life is once again made available to human beings (Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). *Knowledge of good and evil*: the meaning is disputed. According to some, it signifies moral autonomy, control over morality (symbolized by "good and evil"), which would be inappropriate for mere human beings; the phrase would thus mean refusal to accept the human condition and finite freedom that God gives them. According to others, it is more broadly the knowledge of what is helpful and harmful to humankind, suggesting that the attainment of adult experience and responsibility inevitably means the loss of a life of simple subordination to God.

**2:10-14** *A river rises in Eden*: the stream of water mentioned in v. 6, the source of all water upon earth, comes to the surface in the garden of God and from there flows out over the entire earth. In comparable religious literature, the dwelling of god is the source of fertilizing waters. The four rivers represent universality, as in the phrase "the four quarters of the earth." In Ez 47:1-12; Zec 14:8; Rev 22:1-2, the waters that irrigate the earth arise in the temple or city of God. The place names in vv. 11-14 are mainly from southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), where Mesopotamian literature placed the original garden of God. The Tigris and the Euphrates, the two great rivers in that part of the world, both emptied into the Persian Gulf. Gihon is the modest stream issuing from Jerusalem (2 Sm 5:8; 1 Kgs 1:9-10; 2 Chr 32:4), but is here regarded as one of the four great world rivers and linked to Mesopotamia, for Cush here seems to be the territory of the Kassites (a people of Mesopotamia) as in Gn 10:8. The word Pishon is otherwise unknown but is probably formed in imitation of Gihon. Havilah seems, according to Gn 10:7 and 1 Chr 1:9, to be in Cush in southern Mesopotamia though other locations have been suggested.

**2:17** *You shall die*: since they do not die as soon as they eat from the forbidden tree, the meaning seems to be that human beings have become mortal, destined to die by virtue of being human.

**2:18** *Helper suited to him*: lit., "a helper in accord with him." "Helper" need not imply subordination, for God is called a helper (Dt 33:7; Ps 46:2). The language suggests a profound affinity between the man and the woman and a relationship that is supportive and nurturing.

**2:23** The man recognizes an affinity with the woman God has brought him. Unlike the animals who were made from the ground, she is made from his very self. There is a play on the similar-sounding Hebrew words 'ishsha ("woman," "wife") and 'ish ("man," "husband").

**2:24** *One body*: lit., "one flesh." The covenant of marriage establishes kinship bonds of the first rank between the partners.

**2:25** *They felt no shame*: marks a new stage in the drama, for the reader knows that only young children know no shame. This draws the reader into the next episode, where the couple's disobedience results in their loss of innocence.

**3:1** *Cunning*: there is a play on the words for "naked" (2:25) and "cunning/wise" (Heb. 'arum). The couple seek to be "wise" but end up knowing that they are "naked."

**3:5** *Like gods, who know*: or "like God who knows."

**2:9** Gn 3:22; Prv 3:18; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14.

**2:13** Sir 24:25.

**2:15** Sir 7:15.

**2:16** Ps 104:14-15.

**2:17** Gn 3:2-3; Rom 6:23.

**2:18** Tb 8:6; Sir 36:24; 1 Cor 11:9; 1 Tm 2:13.

**2:21** Sir 17:1; 1 Cor 11:8-9; 1 Tm 2:13.

**2:24** Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7; 1 Cor 7:10-11; Eph 5:31.

**3:3** Gn 2:17; Rom 6:23.

**3:4-5** Wis 2:24; Sir 25:14; Is 14:14; Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 11:3.

with her, and he ate it.\* <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

<sup>8</sup>When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, † the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.\* <sup>9</sup>The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? <sup>10</sup>He answered, “I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid.” <sup>11</sup>Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat? <sup>12</sup>The man replied, “The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it.” <sup>13</sup>The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, “The snake tricked me, so I ate it.”\*

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD God said to the snake:

Because you have done this,  
cursed are you  
among all the animals, tame or wild;  
On your belly you shall crawl,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life. † \*

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
They will strike at your head,  
while you strike at their heel. † \*

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said:

I will intensify your toil in childbearing;  
in pain† you shall bring forth children.  
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,  
and he shall rule over you.

† **3:8** *The breezy time of the day:* lit., “the wind of the day.” Probably shortly before sunset.

**3:14** Each of the three punishments (the snake, the woman, the man) has a double aspect, one affecting the individual and the other affecting a basic relationship. The snake previously stood upright, enjoyed a reputation for being shrewder than other creatures, and could converse with human beings as in vv. 1–5. It must now move on its belly, is more cursed than any creature, and inspires revulsion in human beings (v. 15).

**3:15** *They will strike . . . at their heel:* the antecedent for “they” and “their” is the collective noun “offspring,” i.e., all the descendants of the woman. Christian tradition has seen in this passage, however, more than unending hostility between snakes and human beings. The snake was identified with the devil (Wis 2:24; Jn 8:44; Rev 12:9; 20:2), whose eventual defeat seemed implied in the verse. Because “the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3:8), the passage was understood as the first promise of a redeemer for fallen humankind, the protoevangelium. Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. A.D. 130–200), in his *Against Heresies* 5.21.1, followed by several other Fathers of the Church, interpreted the verse as referring to Christ, and cited Gal 3:19 and 4:4 to support the reference. Another interpretive translation is *ipsa*, “she,” and is reflected in Jerome’s Vulgate. “She” was thought to refer to Mary, the mother of the messiah. In Christian art Mary is sometimes depicted with her foot on the head of the serpent.

<sup>17</sup>To the man he said: Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, You shall not eat from it,

Cursed is the ground† because of you!  
In toil you shall eat its yield  
all the days of your life.\*

<sup>18</sup> Thorns and thistles it shall bear for you,  
and you shall eat the grass of the  
field.

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow  
you shall eat bread,  
Until you return to the ground,  
from which you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.\*

<sup>20</sup>The man gave his wife the name “Eve,” because she was the mother of all the living. †

<sup>21</sup>The LORD God made for the man and his wife garments of skin, with which he clothed them. <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God said: See! The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil! Now, what if he also reaches out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life, and eats of it and lives forever? \* <sup>23</sup>The LORD God therefore banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken. <sup>24</sup>He expelled the man, stationing the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.

### Cain and Abel

**4**<sup>1</sup> The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, saying, “I have produced a male child with the help of the LORD.” † <sup>2</sup>Next she gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel became a herder of flocks,

**3:16** *Toil . . . pain:* the punishment affects the woman directly by increasing the toil and pain of having children. *He shall rule over you:* the punishment also affects the woman’s relationship with her husband. A tension is set up in which her urge (either sexual urge or, more generally, dependence for sustenance) is for her husband but he rules over her. But see Sg 7:11.

**3:17–19** *Cursed is the ground:* the punishment affects the man’s relationship to the ground (‘*adam* and ‘*adamah*). *You are dust:* the punishment also affects the man directly insofar as he is now mortal.

**3:20** The man gives his wife a more specific name than “woman” (2:23). The Hebrew name *hawwa* (“Eve”) is related to the Hebrew word *hay* (“living”); “mother of all the living” points forward to the next episode involving her sons Cain and Abel.

**4:1** The Hebrew name *qayin* (“Cain”) and the term *qaniti* (“I have produced”) present a wordplay that refers to metalworking; such wordplays are frequent in Genesis.

**3:6** Gn 3:22; 1 Tm 2:14.

**3:8** Jer 23:24.

**3:13** 2 Cor 11:3.

**3:14** Is 65:25; Mt 7:17; Rev

12:9.

**3:15** Rom 16:20; 1 Jn 3:8;

Rev 12:17.

**3:17** Gn 5:29; Rom 5:12;

8:20; Heb 6:8.

**3:19** Gn 2:7; Jb 10:9; 34:15;

Ps 90:3; 103:14; Eccl

3:20; 12:7; Wis 15:8;

Sir 10:9; 17:2; Rom

5:12; 1 Cor 15:21; Heb

9:27.

**3:22** Gn 2:9; Rev 22:2, 14.

and Cain a tiller of the ground.† <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup>while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion† of the firstlings of his flock.\* The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry and dejected. <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain: Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? <sup>7</sup>If you act rightly, you will be accepted;† but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.\*

<sup>8</sup>Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field."† When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.\* <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup>God then said: What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! <sup>11</sup>Now you are banned from the ground† that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.\* <sup>12</sup>If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a constant wanderer on the earth. <sup>13</sup>Cain said to the LORD: "My punishment is too great to bear. <sup>14</sup>Look, you have now banished me from the ground. I must avoid you and be a constant wanderer on the earth. Anyone may kill me at sight." <sup>15</sup>Not so! the LORD said to him. If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be avenged seven times. So the LORD put a mark† on Cain, so that no one would kill him at sight. <sup>16</sup>Cain then left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,† east of Eden.

### Descendants of Cain and Seth

<sup>17</sup>† Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. Cain also became

† **4:2** Some suggest the story reflects traditional strife between the farmer (Cain) and the nomad (Abel), with preference for the latter reflecting the alleged nomadic ideal of the Bible. But there is no disparagement of farming here, for Adam was created to till the soil. The story is about two brothers (the word "brother" occurs seven times) and God's unexplained preference for one, which provokes the first murder. The motif of the preferred younger brother will occur time and again in the Bible, e.g., Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and David (1 Sm 16:1–13).

**4:4** *Fatty portion*: it was standard practice to offer the fat portions of animals. Others render, less satisfactorily, "the choicest of the firstlings." The point is not that Abel gave a more valuable gift than Cain, but that God, for reasons not given in the text, accepts the offering of Abel and rejects that of Cain.

**4:7** *You will be accepted*: the text is extraordinarily condensed and unclear. "You will be accepted" is a paraphrase of one Hebrew word, "lifting." God gives a friendly warning to Cain that his right conduct will bring "lifting," which could refer to acceptance (*lifting*) of his future offerings or of himself (as in the Hebrew idiom "*lifting of the face*") or *lifting up* of his head in honor (cf. note on 40:13), whereas wicked conduct will make him vulnerable to sin, which is personified as a force ready to attack. In any case, Cain has the ability to do the right thing. *Lies in wait*: sin is personified as a power that "lies in wait" (Heb. *robes*) at a place. In Mesopotamian religion, a related word (*rabisu*) refers to a malevolent god who attacks human

## Live It!

### Brothers and Sisters

“**A**m I my brother's keeper?” (Gn 4:9). With that famous question, Cain pretends he does not know where his brother is. God does not answer Cain's question directly, but each of us knows the response. We are—each of us and all of us—responsible for one another: family, friends, and strangers. We are brothers and sisters because God has created us that way. We cannot avoid our obligation to watch out for one another.

- Are there people in your life who need you to be a brother or sister to them? How can you reach out to them?

▶ Gn 4:9



the founder of a city, which he named after his son Enoch. <sup>18</sup>To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad became the father of Mehujael; Mehujael became the father of Methusael, and Methusael became the father of Lamech. <sup>19</sup>Lamech took two wives; the name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second Zillah. <sup>20</sup>Adah gave birth to Jabal, who became the ancestor of those who dwell in tents and keep livestock. <sup>21</sup>His brother's name was Jubal, who became the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the reed pipe. <sup>22</sup>Zillah, on

beings in particular places like roofs or canals.

**4:8** *Let us go out in the field*: to avoid detection. The verse presumes a sizeable population which Genesis does not otherwise explain.

**4:11** *Banned from the ground*: lit., "cursed." The verse refers back to 3:17 where the ground was cursed so that it yields its produce only with great effort. Cain has polluted the soil with his brother's blood and it will no longer yield any of its produce to him.

**4:15** *A mark*: probably a tattoo to mark Cain as protected by God. The use of tattooing for tribal marks has always been common among the Bedouin of the Near Eastern deserts.

**4:16** *The land of Nod*: a symbolic name (derived from the verb *nûd*, to wander) rather than a definite geographic region.

**4:17–24** Cain is the first in a seven-member linear genealogy ending in three individuals who initiate action (Jabal, Jubal, and Tubalcaïn). Other Genesis genealogies also end in three individuals initiating action (5:32 and 11:26). The purpose of this genealogy is to explain the origin of culture and crafts among human beings. The names in this genealogy are the same (some with different spellings) as those in the ten-member genealogy (ending with Noah), which has a slightly different function. See note on 5:1–32.

**4:4** Ex 34:19; Heb 11:4.

**4:7** Sir 7:1; Jude 11.

**4:8** Wis 10:3; Mt 23:35; Lk

11:51; 1 Jn 3:12; Jude

11.

**4:11** Dt 27:24.