How to Find a Scriptural Reference

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Read the following information and follow the instructions:

The Bible is composed of books.

Each book is composed of chapters.

Each chapter is composed of verses.

A scriptural reference provides all the information you need to find a particular passage. Take, for example, the reference **Genesis 1:31.**

The name of the book comes first. Here the name is Genesis (often abbreviated Gen.).

The chapter number appears directly after the name of the book. The example gives the number 1, meaning chapter 1.

The last number, separated from the chapter number by a colon, indicates the verse. The example refers to verse 31. (In some versions of the Bible, a comma, rather than a colon, separates the verse number from the chapter number.)

Look up **Gen. 1:31.** What does it say? Write it down on a separate piece of paper.

Scriptural references generally contain more detailed information than just one chapter and one verse. Here are some examples:

**Gen. 1:1–8** means Genesis, chapter 1, verses 1 through 8.

**Gen. 1:3,6,9** means Genesis, chapter 1, verses 3, 6, and 9. (Notice the comma between separate verses from the same chapter.)

**Gen. 2:8–10,18–25** means Genesis, chapter 2, verses 8 through 10 and verses 18 through 25.

**Gen. 1–3** means Genesis, chapters 1 through 3.

**Gen. 1:31—2:3** means Genesis, chapter 1, verse 31, through chapter 2, verse 3.

Distinct references to different chapters are separated by a semicolon. **Gen. 1; 3** means Genesis, chapters 1 and 3 (but not chapter 2). Similarly, **Gen. 2:4–7,14; 3:1–3,8** means Genesis, chapter 2, verses 4 through 7 and verse 14, then chapter 3, verses 1 through 3 and verse 8.

A long verse may be broken up into parts. To designate the first part of a verse, the letter *a* is used; for the second part of the verse, *b* is used. **Gen. 1:9a** means Genesis, chapter 1, the first part of verse 9.

Some books of the Bible share the same name. For instance, *1 Samuel* and *2 Samuel* mean “the First Book of Samuel” and “the Second Book of Samuel.” (Sometimes these are written I Samuel and II Samuel.) Notice that the number of the book comes before the name of the book. **2 Sam. 1:11–12** means the Second Book of Samuel, chapter 1, verses 11 through 12.

Look up **Exod. 5:22—6:1,11; 7:6.** What does it say? Write it down on a separate piece of paper.

Matching

In your Bible look up each scriptural reference from the left-hand column. Then match the reference with its summary on the right, writing the letter of the summary in the blank next to the reference.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Ruth 1:16–18

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Dan. 3:13–24

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Josh. 3:14–17

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Prov. 28:15

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Gen. 12:1–3

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Ps. 51:3–4

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Exod. 11:4–7

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 8. 1 Sam. 9:26b—10:1a

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Deut. 30:15,19b

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 10. Eccles. 3:1–8

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 11. Gen. 6:14–16

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 12. Ps. 63:2–4

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 13. Exod. 20:1–17

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 14. Jer. 52:12–14

a. Jerusalem’s destruction

b. a pledge to stay with Naomi

c. the anointing of Saul, Israel’s first king

d. choosing life

e. instructions for building an ark

f. the Ten Commandments

g. the fate of Egypt’s firstborn

h. a wicked ruler

i. the prayer of a guilty person

j. crossing the Jordan River

k. thirst for God

l. a time for everything

m. Abram’s call to a new land

n. faithfulness in a fiery furnace

(This handout is adapted from *Teaching Manual for Written on Our Hearts: The Old Testament Story of God’s Love,* Third Edition, by Mary Reed Newland [Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2009], pages 43–44. Copyright © 2009 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)