

# GOD SIGHTINGS™

## The ONE YEAR® B I B L E

*Learning to Experience God Every Day™*

**Group**  
Loveland, Colorado



New Living  
Translation®  
SECOND EDITION



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
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## ABOUT

# GOD SIGHTINGS

### ***Once you've seen God at work there's no turning back.***

Not to a ho-hum, lukewarm faith.

Not to yet another half-hearted commitment to “do better.”

You're about to be transformed, to see the world through new eyes. To see God working in his creation—and in your own life.

Nothing will ever be the same again.

### ***Welcome to GOD SIGHTINGS . . .***

You'll develop an ear for God's voice, an eye for seeing him move in the world. And as you explore Scripture, each word will spring to life—because it helps you know God even better.

Whether you've been a Christian for decades or just since yesterday, *God Sightings* will deepen your faith. That's because, in addition to the truth you'll find in this easy-to-understand New Living Translation of God's Word, you'll build your faith on rock-solid experience.

And if you don't happen to be a Christian, no problem—you're invited along for the journey too.

God will meet you where you are.

Guaranteed.

### ***Don't worry about missing a day***

If you've read through the Bible in a year, you know the drill: you miss a day here or there and soon you're discouraged. So you cram a week's reading in a single setting.

Or you give up altogether.

With *God Sightings*, you'll read at your own pace. Want to finish in a year? Fine. Two years? Okay.

Remember: the goal isn't to complete a homework assignment. It's to let the living God of the universe reveal himself to you . . . and there's no stopwatch running.

## GETTING STARTED WITH

# GOD SIGHTINGS

### ***Pick a page***

Begin your adventure on Day 1. Or start on the current date. It's your choice.

You'll find daily readings for each day of the year. Every day there's an excerpt from the Old Testament, the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs.

### ***Pause***

Use *God Sightings: The One Year Companion Guide* during or after your reading to capture your feelings—and to reflect on the questions you'll find in the *Companion Guide*. Consider how God was active in your life that day.

### ***Get and stay connected***

To get the most out of *God Sightings: The One Year Bible*, connect with others. Invite a friend along on the experience. Form a face-to-face small group. Or join an online discussion at [MyGodSightings.com](http://MyGodSightings.com). Or do them all. Again—it's your choice.

### ***Share your God Sightings***

Here's the thing: as you grow deeper in your faith, you can encourage others. Your accounts of God at work feed others who are hungry for encouragement . . . who are thirsty for inspiration . . . who are on the same journey you're on.

A journey further into God's love.

So be willing to share. To add your own God Sightings to the thousands reported in Scripture and the thousands more reported by current-day Christ-followers.

### ***Begin your adventure—now***

This Bible is an account of God's interactions with his people. People just like you. God's looking for a relationship with you—one that grows and deepens as you read his Word . . . experience his love . . . and join him in his ongoing work.

There's no greater adventure, no more satisfying life.



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*The One Year Bible* has been prepared especially for regular Bible readers who wish to read through the entire Bible in one year. Instead of following a Bible reading chart and experiencing the delay of turning from place to place, you will find the text here in sequence, ready for your quiet reading and meditation. This fulfills our goal at Tyndale to make the Bible as accessible as possible for people no matter what their background or walk of life.

This edition of *The One Year Bible* contains the entire text of the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation, Second Edition*. The New Living Translation was first published in 1996, and it quickly became one of the most popular Bible translations in the English-speaking world. While the NLT's influence was rapidly growing, the Bible Translation Committee determined that an additional investment in scholarly review and text refinement could make it even better. So shortly after its initial publication, the committee began an eight-year process with the purpose of increasing the level of the NLT's precision without sacrificing its easy-to-understand quality. This second-generation text was completed in 2004 and is reflected in this edition of *The One Year Bible*. An additional update with minor changes was subsequently introduced in 2007.

The goal of any Bible translation is to convey the meaning and content of the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts as accurately as possible to contemporary readers. The challenge for our translators was to create a text that would communicate as clearly and powerfully to today's readers as the original texts did to readers and listeners in the ancient biblical world. The resulting translation is easy to read and understand, while also accurately communicating the meaning and content of the original biblical texts. The NLT is a general-purpose text especially good for study, devotional reading, and reading aloud in worship services.

We believe that the New Living Translation—which combines the latest biblical scholarship with a clear, dynamic writing style—will communicate God's word powerfully to all who read it. We publish it with the prayer that God will use it to speak his timeless truth to the church and the world in a fresh, new way. May this year and every year be enriched as you enjoy daily portions from God's word.

## *Introduction to the* NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

*Translation Philosophy and Methodology.* English Bible translations tend to be governed by one of two general translation theories. The first theory has been called “formal-equivalence,” “literal,” or “word-for-word” translation. According to this theory, the translator attempts to render each word of the original language into English and seeks to preserve the original syntax and sentence structure as much as possible in translation. The second theory has been called “dynamic-equivalence,” “functional-equivalence,” or “thought-for-thought” translation. The goal of this translation theory is to produce in English the closest natural equivalent of the message expressed by the original-language text, both in meaning and in style.

Both of these translation theories have their strengths. A formal-equivalence translation preserves aspects of the original text—including ancient idioms, term consistency, and original-language syntax—that are valuable for scholars and professional study. It allows a reader to trace formal elements of the original-language text through the English translation. A dynamic-equivalence translation, on the other hand, focuses on translating the message of the original-language text. It ensures that the meaning of the text is readily apparent to the contemporary reader. This allows the message to come through with immediacy, without requiring the reader to struggle with foreign idioms and awkward syntax. It also facilitates serious study of the text’s message and clarity in both devotional and public reading.

The pure application of either of these translation philosophies would create translations at opposite ends of the translation spectrum. But in reality, all translations contain a mixture of these two philosophies. A purely formal-equivalence translation would be unintelligible in English, and a purely dynamic-equivalence translation would risk being unfaithful to the original. That is why translations shaped by dynamic-equivalence theory are usually quite literal when the original text is relatively clear, and the translations shaped by formal-equivalence theory are sometimes quite dynamic when the original text is obscure.

The translators of the New Living Translation set out to render the message of the original texts of Scripture into clear, contemporary English. As they did so, they kept the concerns of both formal-equivalence and dynamic-equivalence in mind. On the one hand, they translated as simply and literally as possible when that approach yielded an accurate, clear, and natural English text. Many words and phrases were rendered literally and consistently into English, preserving essential literary and rhetorical devices, ancient metaphors, and word choices that give structure to the text and provide echoes of meaning from one passage to the next.

On the other hand, the translators rendered the message more dynamically when the literal rendering was hard to understand, was misleading, or yielded archaic or foreign wording. They clarified difficult metaphors and terms to aid in the reader’s understanding. The translators first struggled with the meaning of the words and phrases in the ancient context; then they rendered the message into clear, natural English. Their goal was to be both faithful to the ancient texts and eminently readable. The result is a translation that is both exegetically accurate and idiomatically powerful.

*Translation Process and Team.* To produce an accurate translation of the Bible into contemporary English, the translation team needed the skills necessary to enter into the thought patterns of the ancient authors and then to render their ideas, connotations, and effects into clear, contemporary English. To begin this process, qualified biblical scholars were needed to interpret the meaning of the original text and to check it against our base English translation. In order to guard

against personal and theological biases, the scholars needed to represent a diverse group of Evangelicals who would employ the best exegetical tools. Then to work alongside the scholars, skilled English stylists were needed to shape the text into clear, contemporary English.

With these concerns in mind, the Bible Translation Committee recruited teams of scholars that represented a broad spectrum of denominations, theological perspectives, and backgrounds within the worldwide Evangelical community. (These scholars are listed at the end of this introduction.) Each book of the Bible was assigned to three different scholars with proven expertise in the book or group of books to be reviewed. Each of these scholars made a thorough review of a base translation and submitted suggested revisions to the appropriate Senior Translator. The Senior Translator then reviewed and summarized these suggestions and proposed a first-draft revision of the base text. This draft served as the basis for several additional phases of exegetical and stylistic committee review. Then the Bible Translation Committee jointly reviewed and approved every verse of the final translation.

Throughout the translation and editing process, the Senior Translators and their scholar teams were given a chance to review the editing done by the team of stylists. This ensured that exegetical errors would not be introduced late in the process and that the entire Bible Translation Committee was happy with the final result. By choosing a team of qualified scholars and skilled stylists and by setting up a process that allowed their interaction throughout the process, the New Living Translation has been refined to preserve the essential formal elements of the original biblical texts, while also creating a clear, understandable English text.

The New Living Translation was first published in 1996. Shortly after its initial publication, the Bible Translation Committee began a process of further committee review and translation refinement. The purpose of this continued revision was to increase the level of precision without sacrificing the text's easy-to-understand quality. This second-edition text was completed in 2004, and an additional update with minor changes was subsequently introduced in 2007. This printing of the New Living Translation reflects the updated 2007 text.

*Written to Be Read Aloud.* It is evident in Scripture that the biblical documents were written to be read aloud, often in public worship (see Nehemiah 8; Luke 4:16-20; 1 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 1:3). It is still the case today that more people will hear the Bible read aloud in church than are likely to read it for themselves. Therefore, a new translation must communicate with clarity and power when it is read publicly. Clarity was a primary goal for the NLT translators, not only to facilitate private reading and understanding, but also to ensure that it would be excellent for public reading and make an immediate and powerful impact on any listener.

*The Texts behind the New Living Translation.* The Old Testament translators used the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible as represented in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977), with its extensive system of textual notes; this is an update of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart, 1937). The translators also further compared the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and other Greek manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and any other versions or manuscripts that shed light on the meaning of difficult passages.

The New Testament translators used the two standard editions of the Greek New Testament: the *Greek New Testament*, published by the United Bible Societies (UBS, fourth revised edition, 1993), and *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Nestle and Aland (NA, twenty-seventh edition, 1993). These two editions, which have the same text but differ in punctuation and textual notes, represent, for the most part, the best in modern textual scholarship. However, in cases where strong textual or other scholarly evidence supported the decision, the translators sometimes chose to differ from the UBS and NA Greek texts and followed variant readings found in other ancient witnesses. Significant textual variants of this sort are always noted in the textual notes of the New Living Translation.

*Translation Issues.* The translators have made a conscious effort to provide a text that can be easily understood by the typical reader of modern English. To this end, we sought to use only vocabulary and language structures in common use today. We avoided using language likely to become quickly dated or that reflects only a narrow subdialect of English, with the goal of making the New Living Translation as broadly useful and timeless as possible.

But our concern for readability goes beyond the concerns of vocabulary and sentence structure. We are also concerned about historical and cultural barriers to understanding the Bible, and we have sought to translate terms shrouded in history and culture in ways that can be immediately understood. To this end:

- We have converted ancient weights and measures (for example, “ephah” [a unit of dry volume] or “cubit” [a unit of length]) to modern English (American) equivalents, since the ancient measures are not generally meaningful to today’s readers. Then in the textual footnotes we offer the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek measures, along with modern metric equivalents.
- Instead of translating ancient currency values literally, we have expressed them in common terms that communicate the message. For example, in the Old Testament, “ten shekels of silver” becomes “ten pieces of silver” to convey the intended message. In the New Testament, we have often translated the “denarius” as “the normal daily wage” to facilitate understanding. Then a footnote offers: “Greek *a denarius*, the payment for a full day’s wage.” In general, we give a clear English rendering and then state the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek in a textual footnote.
- Since the names of Hebrew months are unknown to most contemporary readers, and since the Hebrew lunar calendar fluctuates from year to year in relation to the solar calendar used today, we have looked for clear ways to communicate the time of year the Hebrew months (such as Abib) refer to. When an expanded or interpretive rendering is given in the text, a textual note gives the literal rendering. Where it is possible to define a specific ancient date in terms of our modern calendar, we use modern dates in the text. A textual footnote then gives the literal Hebrew date and states the rationale for our rendering. For example, Ezra 6:15 pinpoints the date when the postexilic Temple was completed in Jerusalem: “the third day of the month Adar.” This was during the sixth year of King Darius’s reign (that is, 515 B.C.). We have translated that date as March 12, with a footnote giving the Hebrew and identifying the year as 515 B.C.
- Since ancient references to the time of day differ from our modern methods of denoting time, we have used renderings that are instantly understandable to the modern reader. Accordingly, we have rendered specific times of day by using approximate equivalents in terms of our common “o’clock” system. On occasion, translations such as “at dawn the next morning” or “as the sun was setting” have been used when the biblical reference is more general.
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the message of the text, its meaning is often illuminated with a textual footnote. For example, in Exodus 2:10 the text reads: “The princess named him Moses, for she explained, ‘I lifted him out of the water.’” The accompanying footnote reads: “*Moses* sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to lift out.’”

Sometimes, when the actual meaning of a name is clear, that meaning is included in parentheses within the text itself. For example, the text at Genesis 16:11 reads: “You are to name him Ishmael (*which means ‘God hears’*), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress.” Since the original hearers and readers would have instantly understood the meaning of the name “Ishmael,” we have provided modern readers with the same information so they can experience the text in a similar way.

- Many words and phrases carry a great deal of cultural meaning that was obvious to the original readers but needs explanation in our own culture. For example, the phrase “they beat their breasts” (Luke 23:48) in ancient times meant that people were very upset, often in mourning. In our translation we chose to translate this phrase dynamically for clarity: “They went home *in deep sorrow*.” Then we included a footnote with the literal Greek, which reads: “Greek *went home beating their breasts*.” In other similar cases, however, we have sometimes chosen to illuminate the existing literal expression to make it immediately understandable. For example, here we might have expanded the literal Greek phrase to read: “They went home beating their breasts *in sorrow*.” If we had done this, we would not have included a textual footnote, since the literal Greek clearly appears in translation.

- Metaphorical language is sometimes difficult for contemporary readers to understand, so at times we have chosen to translate or illuminate the meaning of a metaphor. For example, the ancient poet writes, “Your neck is *like* the tower of David” (Song of Songs 4:4). We have rendered it “Your neck is *as beautiful as* the tower of David” to clarify the intended positive meaning of the simile. Another example comes in Ecclesiastes 12:3, which can be literally rendered: “Remember him . . . when the grinding women cease because they are few, and the women who look through the windows see dimly.” We have rendered it: “Remember him before your teeth—your few remaining servants—stop grinding; and before your eyes—the women looking through the windows—see dimly.” We clarified such metaphors only when we believed a typical reader might be confused by the literal text.
- When the content of the original language text is poetic in character, we have rendered it in English poetic form. We sought to break lines in ways that clarify and highlight the relationships between phrases of the text. Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism, a literary form where a second phrase (or in some instances a third or fourth) echoes the initial phrase in some way. In Hebrew parallelism, the subsequent parallel phrases continue, while also furthering and sharpening, the thought expressed in the initial line or phrase. Whenever possible, we sought to represent these parallel phrases in natural poetic English.
- The Greek term *hoi Ioudaioi* is literally translated “the Jews” in many English translations. In the Gospel of John, however, this term doesn’t always refer to the Jewish people generally. In some contexts, it refers more particularly to the Jewish religious leaders. We have attempted to capture the meaning in these different contexts by using terms such as “the people” (with a footnote: Greek *the Jewish people*) or “the religious leaders,” where appropriate.
- One challenge we faced was how to translate accurately the ancient biblical text that was originally written in a context where male-oriented terms were used to refer to humanity generally. We needed to respect the nature of the ancient context while also trying to make the translation clear to a modern audience that tends to read male-oriented language as applying only to males. Often the original text, though using masculine nouns and pronouns, clearly intends that the message be applied to both men and women. A typical example is found in the New Testament letters, where the believers are called “brothers” (*adelphoi*). Yet it is clear from the content of these letters that they were addressed to all the believers—male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word as “brothers and sisters” in order to represent the historical situation more accurately.

We have also been sensitive to passages where the text applies generally to human beings or to the human condition. In some instances we have used plural pronouns (they, them) in place of the masculine singular (he, him). For example, a traditional rendering of Proverbs 22:6 is: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” We have rendered it: “Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.” At times, we have also replaced third person pronouns with the second person to ensure clarity. A traditional rendering of Proverbs 26:27 is: “He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.” We have rendered it: “If you set a trap for others, you will get caught in it yourself. If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush you instead.”

We should emphasize, however, that all masculine nouns and pronouns used to represent God (for example, “Father”) have been maintained without exception. All decisions of this kind have been driven by the concern to reflect accurately the intended meaning of the original texts of Scripture.

*Lexical Consistency in Terminology.* For the sake of clarity, we have translated certain original-language terms consistently, especially within synoptic passages and for commonly repeated rhetorical phrases, and within certain word categories such as divine names and non-theological technical terminology (e.g., liturgical, legal, cultural, zoological, and botanical terms). For theological terms, we have allowed a greater semantic range of acceptable English words or phrases

for a single Hebrew or Greek word. We have avoided some theological terms that are not readily understood by many modern readers. For example, we avoided using words such as “justification” and “sanctification,” which are carryovers from Latin translations. In place of these words, we have provided renderings such as “made right with God” and “made holy.”

*The Spelling of Proper Names.* Many individuals in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, are known by more than one name (e.g., Uzziah/Azariah). For the sake of clarity, we have tried to use a single spelling for any one individual, footnoting the literal spelling whenever we differ from it. This is especially helpful in delineating the kings of Israel and Judah. King Joash/Jehoash of Israel has been consistently called Jehoash, while King Joash/Jehoash of Judah is called Joash. A similar distinction has been used to distinguish between Joram/Jehoram of Israel and Joram/Jehoram of Judah. All such decisions were made with the goal of clarifying the text for the reader. When the ancient biblical writers clearly had a theological purpose in their choice of a variant name (e.g., Esh-baal/Ishbosheth), the different names have been maintained with an explanatory footnote.

For the names Jacob and Israel, which are used interchangeably for both the individual patriarch and the nation, we generally render it “Israel” when it refers to the nation and “Jacob” when it refers to the individual. When our rendering of the name differs from the underlying Hebrew text, we provide a textual footnote, which includes this explanation: “The names ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’ are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.”

*The Rendering of Divine Names.* All appearances of *’el*, *’elohim*, or *’eloah* have been translated “God,” except where the context demands the translation “god(s).” We have generally rendered the tetragrammaton (YHWH) consistently as “the LORD,” utilizing a form with small capitals that is common among English translations. This will distinguish it from the name *’adonai*, which we render “Lord.” When *’adonai* and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it “Sovereign LORD.” This also distinguishes *’adonai* YHWH from cases where YHWH appears with *’elohim*, which is rendered “LORD God.” When YH (the short form of YHWH) and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it “LORD GOD.” When YHWH appears with the term *tseba’oth*, we have rendered it “LORD of Heaven’s Armies” to translate the meaning of the name. In a few cases, we have utilized the transliteration, *Yahweh*, when the personal character of the name is being invoked in contrast to another divine name or the name of some other god (for example, see Exodus 3:15; 6:2-3).

In the New Testament, the Greek word *christos* has been translated as “Messiah” when the context assumes a Jewish audience. When a Gentile audience can be assumed, *christos* has been translated as “Christ.” The Greek word *kurios* is consistently translated “Lord,” except that it is translated “LORD” wherever the New Testament text explicitly quotes from the Old Testament, and the text there has it in small capitals.

*Textual Footnotes.* The New Living Translation provides several kinds of textual footnotes, all designated in the text with an asterisk:

- When for the sake of clarity the NLT renders a difficult or potentially confusing phrase dynamically, we generally give the literal rendering in a textual footnote. This allows the reader to see the literal source of our dynamic rendering and how our translation relates to other more literal translations. These notes are prefaced with “Hebrew,” “Aramaic,” or “Greek,” identifying the language of the underlying source text. For example, in Acts 2:42 we translated the literal “breaking of bread” (from the Greek) as “the Lord’s Supper” to clarify that this verse refers to the ceremonial practice of the church rather than just an ordinary meal. Then we attached a footnote to “the Lord’s Supper,” which reads: “Greek *the breaking of bread.*”
- Textual footnotes are also used to show alternative renderings, prefaced with the word “Or.” These normally occur for passages where an aspect of the meaning is debated. On occasion, we also provide notes on words or phrases that represent a departure from long-standing tradition. These notes are prefaced with “Traditionally rendered.” For example, the footnote to the translation “serious skin disease” at Leviticus 13:2 says:

“Traditionally rendered *leprosy*. The Hebrew word used throughout this passage is used to describe various skin diseases.”

- When our translators follow a textual variant that differs significantly from our standard Hebrew or Greek texts (listed earlier), we document that difference with a footnote. We also footnote cases when the NLT excludes a passage that is included in the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* (and familiar to readers through its translation in the King James Version). In such cases, we offer a translation of the excluded text in a footnote, even though it is generally recognized as a later addition to the Greek text and not part of the original Greek New Testament.
- All Old Testament passages that are quoted in the New Testament are identified by a textual footnote at the New Testament location. When the New Testament clearly quotes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and when it differs significantly in wording from the Hebrew text, we also place a textual footnote at the Old Testament location. This note includes a rendering of the Greek version, along with a cross-reference to the New Testament passage(s) where it is cited (for example, see notes on Proverbs 3:12; Psalms 8:2; 53:3).
- Some textual footnotes provide cultural and historical information on places, things, and people in the Bible that are probably obscure to modern readers. Such notes should aid the reader in understanding the message of the text. For example, in Acts 12:1, “King Herod” is named in this translation as “King Herod Agrippa” and is identified in a footnote as being “the nephew of Herod Antipas and a grandson of Herod the Great.”
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the meaning of the text, it is either illuminated with a textual footnote or included within parentheses in the text itself. For example, the footnote concerning the name “Eve” at Genesis 3:20 reads: “*Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means ‘to give life.’” This wordplay in the Hebrew illuminates the meaning of the text, which goes on to say that Eve “would be the mother of all who live.”

AS WE SUBMIT this translation for publication, we recognize that any translation of the Scriptures is subject to limitations and imperfections. Anyone who has attempted to communicate the richness of God’s Word into another language will realize it is impossible to make a perfect translation. Recognizing these limitations, we sought God’s guidance and wisdom throughout this project. Now we pray that he will accept our efforts and use this translation for the benefit of the church and of all people.

We pray that the New Living Translation will overcome some of the barriers of history, culture, and language that have kept people from reading and understanding God’s Word. We hope that readers unfamiliar with the Bible will find the words clear and easy to understand and that readers well versed in the Scriptures will gain a fresh perspective. We pray that readers will gain insight and wisdom for living, but most of all that they will meet the God of the Bible and be forever changed by knowing him.

*The Bible Translation Committee  
October 2007*



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## GOD SIGHTINGS

## January 1

GENESIS 1:1–2:25

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.\* <sup>2</sup>The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

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

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

<sup>6</sup>Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” <sup>7</sup>And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. <sup>8</sup>God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

<sup>9</sup>Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened.

<sup>10</sup>God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. <sup>12</sup>The land

produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>13</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

<sup>14</sup>Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. <sup>15</sup>Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. <sup>16</sup>God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, <sup>18</sup>to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>19</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup>Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” <sup>21</sup>So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>22</sup>Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

<sup>23</sup>And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup>Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—live-stock, small animals that scurry

along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. <sup>25</sup>God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make human beings\* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

**<sup>27</sup> So God created human beings\* in his own image.  
In the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.**

<sup>28</sup>Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

<sup>29</sup>Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. <sup>30</sup>And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

<sup>31</sup>Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

<sup>2:1</sup>So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. <sup>2</sup>On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested\* from all his work. <sup>3</sup>And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

<sup>4</sup>This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. <sup>6</sup>Instead, springs\* came up from the ground and watered all the land. <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

<sup>8</sup>Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. <sup>9</sup>The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. <sup>11</sup>The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. <sup>12</sup>The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. <sup>13</sup>The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. <sup>14</sup>The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. <sup>16</sup>But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—<sup>17</sup>except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man\* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for

each one. <sup>20</sup>He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs\* and closed up the opening.

<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup>"At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,  
and flesh from my flesh!  
She will be called 'woman,'  
because she was taken from  
'man.'"

<sup>24</sup>This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

<sup>25</sup>Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

1:1 Or In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, . . . Or When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . . 1:26 Or man; Hebrew reads adam. 1:27 Or the man; Hebrew reads ha-adam. 2:2 Or ceased; also in 2:3. 2:6 Or mist. 2:19 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter. 2:21 Or took a part of the man's side.

### MATTHEW 1:1–2:12

**T**his is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David\* and of Abraham:

- 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac.  
Isaac was the father of Jacob.  
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.
- 3 Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar).  
Perez was the father of Hezron.  
Hezron was the father of Ram.\*
- 4 Ram was the father of Amminadab.  
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.  
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
- 5 Salmon was the father of Boaz  
(whose mother was Rahab).  
Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).  
Obed was the father of Jesse.
- 6 Jesse was the father of King David.  
David was the father of Solomon

(whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

- 7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.  
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.  
Abijah was the father of Asa.\*
- 8 Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.  
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.\*  
Jehoram was the father\* of Uzziah.
- 9 Uzziah was the father of Jotham.  
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.  
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.
- 10 Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.  
Manasseh was the father of Amon.\*  
Amon was the father of Josiah.
- 11 Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin\* and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).
- 12 After the Babylonian exile:  
Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.  
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.
- 13 Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.  
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.  
Eliakim was the father of Azor.
- 14 Azor was the father of Zadok.  
Zadok was the father of Akim.  
Akim was the father of Eliud.
- 15 Eliud was the father of Eleazar.  
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.  
Matthan was the father of Jacob.
- 16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.  
Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.
- 17 All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.
- 18 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not

want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement\* quietly.

<sup>20</sup>As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus,\* for he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup>All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Look! The virgin will conceive a child!  
She will give birth to a son,  
and they will call him Immanuel,\*  
which means 'God is with us.'"

<sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

<sup>2:1</sup>Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men\* from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, <sup>2</sup>"Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose,\* and we have come to worship him."

<sup>3</sup>King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

<sup>5</sup>"In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote:

<sup>6</sup> And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,  
are not least among the ruling cities\* of Judah,  
for a ruler will come from you  
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel. '\*"

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he

learned from them the time when the star first appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

<sup>9</sup>After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! <sup>11</sup>They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup>When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

1:1 Greek *Jesus the Messiah, son of David*. 1:3 Greek *Aram*, a variant spelling of Ram; also in 1:4. See 1 Chr 2:9-10. 1:7 Greek *Asaph*, a variant spelling of Asa; also in 1:8. See 1 Chr 3:10. 1:8a Greek *Joram*, a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 1:8b. See 1 Kgs 22:50 and note at 1 Chr 3:11. 1:8b Or *ancestor*; also in 1:11. 1:10 Greek *Amos*, a variant spelling of Amon; also in 1:10b. See 1 Chr 3:14. 1:11 Greek *Jeconiah*, a variant spelling of Jehoiachin; also in 1:12. See 2 Kgs 24:6 and note at 1 Chr 3:16. 1:19 Greek *to divorce her*. 1:21 *Jesus* means "The Lord saves." 1:23 Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 (Greek version). 2:1 Or *royal astrologers*; Greek reads *magi*; also in 2:7, 16. 2:2 Or *star in the east*. 2:6a Greek *the rulers*. 2:6b Mic 5:2; 2 Sam 5:2.

PSALM 1:1-6

- 1 ● Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.
- 2 But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.
- 3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.
- 4 But not the wicked! They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.
- 5 They will be condemned at the time of judgment.

Sinners will have no place among the godly.

- <sup>6</sup> For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

#### PROVERBS 1:1-6

These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. □ Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair. These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young. □ Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Let those with understanding receive guidance by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the words of the wise and their riddles.

□ DAY 2

## GOD SIGHTINGS

### January 2

#### GENESIS 3:1-4:26

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

<sup>2</sup>"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. <sup>3</sup>"It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

<sup>4</sup>"You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup>"God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

<sup>6</sup>The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the

wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. <sup>7</sup>At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

<sup>8</sup>When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man\* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup>He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

<sup>11</sup>"Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

<sup>12</sup>The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

<sup>14</sup>Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live.

- <sup>15</sup> And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike\* your head, and you will strike his heel."

- <sup>16</sup>Then he said to the woman,

"I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth.

And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.\*"



<sup>17</sup>And to the man he said,

“Since you listened to your wife and  
ate from the tree  
whose fruit I commanded you  
not to eat,  
the ground is cursed because of you.  
All your life you will struggle to  
scratch a living from it.

<sup>18</sup>It will grow thorns and thistles  
for you,

though you will eat of its grains.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow  
will you have food to eat  
until you return to the ground  
from which you were made.

For you were made from dust,  
and to dust you will return.”

<sup>20</sup>Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.\* <sup>21</sup>And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

<sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings\* have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” <sup>23</sup>So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. <sup>24</sup>After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

<sup>4:1</sup>Now Adam\* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced\* a man!” <sup>2</sup>Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. <sup>3</sup>When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, <sup>5</sup>but he did not accept Cain

and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

<sup>6</sup>“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? <sup>7</sup>You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

<sup>8</sup>One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.”\* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

<sup>9</sup>Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

<sup>10</sup>But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! <sup>11</sup>Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. <sup>12</sup>No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.”

<sup>13</sup>Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment\* is too great for me to bear! <sup>14</sup>You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!”

<sup>15</sup>The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. <sup>16</sup>So Cain left the LORD’s presence and settled in the land of Nod,\* east of Eden.

<sup>17</sup>Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named Enoch, after his son. <sup>18</sup>Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of\* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

<sup>19</sup>Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. <sup>20</sup>Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. <sup>21</sup>His brother’s

name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. <sup>22</sup>Lamech's other wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister named Naamah. <sup>23</sup>One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
listen to me, you wives of Lamech.  
I have killed a man who attacked me,  
a young man who wounded me.

<sup>24</sup> If someone who kills Cain is  
punished seven times,  
then the one who kills me will be  
punished seventy-seven times!"

<sup>25</sup> Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth,\* for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed."  
<sup>26</sup> When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

3:8 Or Adam, and so throughout the chapter. 3:15 Or bruise; also in 3:15b. 3:16 Or And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you. 3:20 Eve sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to give life."

3:22 Or the man; Hebrew reads ha-adam. 4:1a Or the man; also in 4:25. 4:1b Or I have acquired. Cain sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "produce" or "acquire." 4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks "Let's go out into the fields." 4:13 Or My sin. 4:16 Nod means "wandering." 4:18 Or the ancestor of, and so throughout the verse. 4:25 Seth probably means "granted"; the name may also mean "appointed."

### MATTHEW 2:13–3:6

**A**fter the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother," the angel said. "Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

<sup>14</sup> That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, <sup>15</sup> and they stayed there until Herod's death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: "I called my Son out of Egypt."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two

years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance. <sup>17</sup> Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> "A cry was heard in Ramah—  
weeping and great mourning.  
Rachel weeps for her children,  
refusing to be comforted,  
for they are dead."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. <sup>20</sup> "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

<sup>21</sup> So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. <sup>22</sup> But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: "He will be called a Nazarene."

**3:1 In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, <sup>2</sup> "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."<sup>\*</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

"He is a voice shouting in the  
wilderness,  
'Prepare the way for the LORD's  
coming!  
Clear the road for him!'"<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. <sup>6</sup> And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

2:15 Hos 11:1. 2:18 Jer 31:15. 3:2 Or has come, or is coming soon. 3:3 Isa 40:3 (Greek version).



PSALM 2:1-12

- 1 **W**hy are the nations so angry?  
Why do they waste their time with  
futile plans?
- 2 The kings of the earth prepare  
for battle;  
the rulers plot together  
against the LORD  
and against his anointed one.
- 3 "Let us break their chains," they cry,  
"and free ourselves from slavery  
to God."
- 4 But the one who rules in heaven  
laughs.  
The Lord scoffs at them.
- 5 Then in anger he rebukes them,  
terrifying them with his fierce  
fury.
- 6 For the Lord declares, "I have placed  
my chosen king on the throne  
in Jerusalem,\* on my holy  
mountain."
- 7 The king proclaims the LORD's  
decree:  
"The LORD said to me, 'You are  
my son.\*  
Today I have become your Father.\*"
- 8 Only ask, and I will give you the  
nations as your inheritance,  
the whole earth as your  
possession.
- 9 You will break\* them with an  
iron rod  
and smash them like clay pots.'"
- 10 Now then, you kings, act wisely!  
Be warned, you rulers of the earth!
- 11 Serve the LORD with reverent fear,  
and rejoice with trembling.
- 12 Submit to God's royal son,\* or he will  
become angry,  
and you will be destroyed in the  
midst of all your activities—  
for his anger flares up in an instant.  
But what joy for all who take  
refuge in him!

2:6 Hebrew on Zion. 2:7a Or Son; also in 2:12. 2:7b Or Today I reveal you as my son. 2:9 Greek version reads rule. Compare Rev 2:27. 2:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PROVERBS 1:7-9

**F**ear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. □ My child,\* listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck.

1:8 Hebrew My son; also in 1:10, 15.

□ DAY 3



# January 3

GENESIS 5:1-7:24

**T**his is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,\* he made them to be like himself. <sup>2</sup>He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

- <sup>3</sup>When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. <sup>4</sup>After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup>Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.
- <sup>6</sup>When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of\* Enosh. <sup>7</sup>After the birth of\* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup>Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.
- <sup>9</sup>When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. <sup>10</sup>After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup>Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.
- <sup>12</sup>When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup>After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

- <sup>14</sup>Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.
- <sup>15</sup>When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. <sup>16</sup>After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup>Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.
- <sup>18</sup>When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. <sup>19</sup>After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup>Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.
- <sup>21</sup>When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah. <sup>22</sup>After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup>Enoch lived 365 years, <sup>24</sup>walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.
- <sup>25</sup>When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. <sup>26</sup>After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>27</sup>Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.
- <sup>28</sup>When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. <sup>29</sup>Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief\* from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." <sup>30</sup>After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup>Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.
- <sup>32</sup>By the time Noah was 500 years old, he was the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
- <sup>61</sup>THEN the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. <sup>2</sup>The sons of God saw the beautiful women\* and took any they wanted as their wives. <sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not put up with\* humans for

such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years."

<sup>4</sup>In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. <sup>6</sup>So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." <sup>8</sup>But Noah found favor with the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. <sup>10</sup>Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup>Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. <sup>13</sup>So God said to Noah, "I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!

<sup>14</sup>"Build a large boat\* from cypress wood\* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. <sup>15</sup>Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.\* <sup>16</sup>Leave an 18-inch opening\* below the roof all the way around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

<sup>17</sup>"Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth

will die. <sup>18</sup>But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. <sup>19</sup>Bring a pair of every kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to keep them alive during the flood. <sup>20</sup>Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup>And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals.”

<sup>22</sup>So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

<sup>7:1</sup>WHEN everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous. <sup>2</sup>Take with you seven pairs—male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and for sacrifice,\* and take one pair of each of the others. <sup>3</sup>Also take seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. <sup>4</sup>Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created.”

<sup>5</sup>So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. <sup>7</sup>He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. <sup>8</sup>With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. <sup>9</sup>They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup>After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

<sup>11</sup>When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. <sup>12</sup>The

rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

<sup>13</sup>That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. <sup>14</sup>With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. <sup>15</sup>Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. <sup>16</sup>A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

<sup>17</sup>For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. <sup>18</sup>As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. <sup>19</sup>Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, <sup>20</sup>rising more than twenty-two feet\* above the highest peaks. <sup>21</sup>All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. <sup>22</sup>Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. <sup>23</sup>God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. <sup>24</sup>And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

5:1 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*; similarly in 5:2. 5:6 Or *the ancestor of*; also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25. 5:7 Or *the birth of this ancestor of*; also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26. 5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.” 6:2 Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. 6:3 Greek version reads *will not remain in*. 6:14a Traditionally rendered *an ark*. 6:14b Or *gopher wood*. 6:15 Hebrew *300 cubits* [138 meters] *long, 50 cubits* [23 meters] *wide, and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *high*. 6:16 Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit* [46 centimeters]. 7:2 Hebrew *of each clean animal*; similarly in 7:8. 7:20 Hebrew *15 cubits* [6.9 meters].

MATTHEW 3:7–4:11

**B**ut when he [John] saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize,\* he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee God’s coming wrath? <sup>8</sup>Prove by the way you live that you have

repented of your sins and turned to God. <sup>9</sup>Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. <sup>10</sup>Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup>"I baptize with\* water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.\* <sup>12</sup>He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup>But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

<sup>15</sup>But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.\*" So John agreed to baptize him.

<sup>16</sup>After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened\* and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. <sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

<sup>4:1</sup>THEN Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. <sup>2</sup>For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

<sup>3</sup>During that time the devil\* came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

<sup>4</sup>But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say,

'People do not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes  
from the mouth of God.\*'"

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, <sup>6</sup>and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,

'He will order his angels to protect  
you.  
And they will hold you up with their  
hands  
so you won't even hurt your foot  
on a stone.\*'"

<sup>7</sup>Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.\*'"

<sup>8</sup>Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup>"I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

<sup>10</sup>"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say,

'You must worship the LORD  
your God  
and serve only him.\*'"

<sup>11</sup>Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

3:7 Or coming to be baptized. 3:11a Or in. 3:11b Or in the Holy Spirit and in fire. 3:15 Or for we must fulfill all righteousness. 3:16 Some manuscripts read opened to him. 4:3 Greek the tempter. 4:4 Deut 8:3. 4:6 Ps 91:11-12. 4:7 Deut 6:16. 4:10 Deut 6:13.

### PSALM 3:1-8

*A psalm of David, regarding the time David fled from his son Absalom.*

- <sup>1</sup> ● LORD, I have so many enemies;  
so many are against me.  
<sup>2</sup> So many are saying,  
"God will never rescue him!"

*Interlude\**

- <sup>3</sup> But you, O LORD, are a shield  
around me;  
you are my glory, the one who  
holds my head high.

<sup>4</sup> I cried out to the LORD,  
and he answered me from his holy  
mountain. *Interlude*

<sup>5</sup> I lay down and slept,  
yet I woke up in safety,  
for the LORD was watching  
over me.

<sup>6</sup> I am not afraid of ten thousand  
enemies  
who surround me on every side.

<sup>7</sup> Arise, O LORD!  
Rescue me, my God!  
Slap all my enemies in the face!  
Shatter the teeth of the  
wicked!

<sup>8</sup> Victory comes from you,  
O LORD.  
May you bless your people.

*Interlude*

3:2 Hebrew *Selah*. The meaning of this word is uncertain, though it is probably a musical or literary term. It is rendered *Interlude* throughout the Psalms.

PROVERBS 1:10-19

**M**y child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them! They may say, "Come and join us. Let's hide and kill someone! Just for fun, let's ambush the innocent! Let's swallow them alive, like the grave\*<sup>1</sup>; let's swallow them whole, like those who go down to the pit of death. Think of the great things we'll get! We'll fill our houses with all the stuff we take. Come, throw in your lot with us; we'll all share the loot." □ My child, don't go along with them! Stay far away from their paths. They rush to commit evil deeds. They hurry to commit murder. If a bird sees a trap being set, it knows to stay away. But these people set an ambush for themselves; they are trying to get themselves killed. Such is the fate of all who are greedy for money; it robs them of life.

1:12 Hebrew like *Sheol*.

□ DAY 4

GOD SIGHTINGS

January 4

GENESIS 8:1-10:32

**B**ut God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. <sup>2</sup>The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. <sup>3</sup>So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, <sup>4</sup>exactly five months from the time the flood began,\* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>Two and a half months later,\* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

<sup>6</sup>After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat <sup>7</sup>and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. <sup>8</sup>He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. <sup>9</sup>But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. <sup>10</sup>After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. <sup>11</sup>This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. <sup>12</sup>He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

<sup>13</sup>Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,\* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. <sup>14</sup>Two more months went by,\* and at last the earth was dry!

<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Noah, <sup>16</sup>"Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. <sup>17</sup>Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock,

and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

<sup>18</sup>So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. <sup>19</sup>And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

<sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.\* <sup>21</sup>And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. <sup>22</sup>As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

<sup>9:1</sup>THEN God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. <sup>2</sup>All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. <sup>3</sup>I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. <sup>4</sup>But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

<sup>5</sup>“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who murders a fellow human must die. <sup>6</sup>If anyone takes a human life, that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings\* in his own image. <sup>7</sup>Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

<sup>8</sup>Then God told Noah and his sons, <sup>9</sup>“I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, <sup>10</sup>and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. <sup>11</sup>Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all

living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

<sup>12</sup>Then God said, “I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. <sup>13</sup>I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. <sup>16</sup>When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth.” <sup>17</sup>Then God said to Noah, “Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth.”

<sup>18</sup>The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) <sup>19</sup>From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

<sup>20</sup>After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. <sup>21</sup>One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. <sup>22</sup>Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. <sup>23</sup>Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

<sup>24</sup>When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. <sup>25</sup>Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

“May Canaan be cursed!

May he be the lowest of servants  
to his relatives.”

<sup>26</sup>Then Noah said,

“May the LORD, the God of Shem,  
be blessed,  
and may Canaan be his servant!

<sup>27</sup> May God expand the territory  
of Japheth!



May Japheth share the prosperity  
of Shem,\*  
and may Canaan be his servant.”

<sup>28</sup>Noah lived another 350 years after  
the great flood. <sup>29</sup>He lived 950 years,  
and then he died.

<sup>10:1</sup>THIS is the account of the families of  
Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three sons  
of Noah. Many children were born to  
them after the great flood.

<sup>2</sup>The descendants of Japheth were  
Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal,  
Meshech, and Tiras.

<sup>3</sup>The descendants of Gomer were  
Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

<sup>4</sup>The descendants of Javan were  
Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and  
Rodanim.\* <sup>5</sup>Their descendants  
became the seafaring peoples that  
spread out to various lands, each  
identified by its own language, clan,  
and national identity.

<sup>6</sup>The descendants of Ham were Cush,  
Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

<sup>7</sup>The descendants of Cush were Seba,  
Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and  
Sabteca. The descendants of  
Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

<sup>8</sup>Cush was also the ancestor of  
Nimrod, who was the first heroic  
warrior on earth. <sup>9</sup>Since he was the  
greatest hunter in the world,\* his  
name became proverbial. People  
would say, “This man is like Nimrod,  
the greatest hunter in the world.”

<sup>10</sup>He built his kingdom in the land of  
Babylonia,\* with the cities of  
Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh.

<sup>11</sup>From there he expanded his  
territory to Assyria,\* building the  
cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir,  
Calah, <sup>12</sup>and Resen (the great city  
located between Nineveh and  
Calah).

<sup>13</sup>Mizraim was the ancestor of the  
Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites,  
Naphtuhites, <sup>14</sup>Pathrusites,  
Casluhites, and the Caphtorites,  
from whom the Philistines came.\*

<sup>15</sup>Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the  
ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan  
was also the ancestor of the Hittites,\*

<sup>16</sup>Jebusites, Amorites, Gargashites,

<sup>17</sup>Hivites, Arkites, Sinites,

<sup>18</sup>Arvadites, Zemarites, and

Hamathites. The Canaanite clans

eventually spread out, <sup>19</sup>and the  
territory of Canaan extended from  
Sidon in the north to Gerar and Gaza  
in the south, and east as far as  
Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and  
Zeboiim, near Lasha.

<sup>20</sup>These were the descendants of Ham,  
identified by clan, language, territory,  
and national identity.

<sup>21</sup>Sons were also born to Shem, the  
older brother of Japheth.\* Shem  
was the ancestor of all the  
descendants of Eber.

<sup>22</sup>The descendants of Shem were  
Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and  
Aram.

<sup>23</sup>The descendants of Aram were Uz,  
Hul, Gether, and Mash.

<sup>24</sup>Arphaxad was the father of  
Shelah,\* and Shelah was the father  
of Eber.

<sup>25</sup>Eber had two sons. The first was  
named Peleg (which means  
“division”), for during his lifetime  
the people of the world were divided  
into different language groups. His  
brother’s name was Joktan.

<sup>26</sup>Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad,  
Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

<sup>27</sup>Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, <sup>28</sup>Obal,

Abimael, Sheba, <sup>29</sup>Ophir, Havilah,

and Jobab. All these were

descendants of Joktan. <sup>30</sup>The

territory they occupied extended  
from Mesha all the way to Sephar in  
the eastern mountains.

<sup>31</sup>These were the descendants of Shem,  
identified by clan, language, territory,  
and national identity.

<sup>32</sup>These are the clans that descended  
from Noah’s sons, arranged by nation  
according to their lines of descent. All

the nations of the earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

8:4 Hebrew *on the seventeenth day of the seventh month*; see 7:11. 8:5 Hebrew *On the first day of the tenth month*; see 7:11 and note on 8:4. 8:13 Hebrew *On the first day of the first month*; see 7:11. 8:14 Hebrew *The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived*; see note on 8:13. 8:20 Hebrew *every clean animal and every clean bird*. 9:6 Or *man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*. 9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem*. 10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim*. 10:9 Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD*; also in 10:9b. 10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*. 10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out*. 10:14 Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites*. Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7. 10:15 Hebrew *ancestor of Heth*. 10:21 Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth*. 10:24 Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah*. Compare Luke 3:36.

### MATTHEW 4:12-25

**W**hen Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. <sup>13</sup>He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. <sup>14</sup>This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:

- <sup>15</sup> “In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live, <sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined.”\*

<sup>17</sup>From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”\*

<sup>18</sup>One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. <sup>19</sup>Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” <sup>20</sup>And they left their nets at once and followed him.

<sup>21</sup>A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them

to come, too. <sup>22</sup>They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

<sup>23</sup>Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. <sup>24</sup>News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. <sup>25</sup>Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from Galilee, the Ten Towns,\* Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

4:15-16 Isa 9:1-2 (Greek version). 4:17 Or *has come, or is coming soon*. 4:25 Greek *Decapolis*.

### PSALM 4:1-8

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.*

- <sup>1</sup> **A**nswer me when I call to you,  
O God who declares me innocent.  
Free me from my troubles.  
Have mercy on me and hear  
my prayer.
- <sup>2</sup> How long will you people ruin my  
reputation?  
How long will you make  
groundless accusations?  
How long will you continue your  
lies? *Interlude*
- <sup>3</sup> You can be sure of this:  
The LORD set apart the godly  
for himself.  
The LORD will answer when I call  
to him.
- <sup>4</sup> Don't sin by letting anger control  
you.  
Think about it overnight and  
remain silent. *Interlude*
- <sup>5</sup> Offer sacrifices in the right spirit,  
and trust the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup> Many people say, “Who will show us  
better times?”  
Let your face smile on us, LORD.
- <sup>7</sup> You have given me greater joy



than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine.

<sup>8</sup> In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

PROVERBS 1:20-23

**W**isdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square. She calls to the crowds along the main street, to those gathered in front of the city gate: "How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded? How long will you mockers relish your mocking? How long will you fools hate knowledge? Come and listen to my counsel. I'll share my heart with you and make you wise."

□ DAY 5



# January 5

GENESIS 11:1-13:4

**A**t one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. <sup>2</sup>As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia\* and settled there.

<sup>3</sup>They began saying to each other, "Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.) <sup>4</sup>Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."

<sup>5</sup>But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. <sup>6</sup>"Look!" he said. "The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them! <sup>7</sup>Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

<sup>8</sup>In that way, the LORD scattered them

all over the world, and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup>That is why the city was called Babel,\* because that is where the LORD confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

<sup>10</sup>This is the account of Shem's family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of\* Arphaxad. <sup>11</sup>After the birth of\* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>12</sup>When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah. <sup>13</sup>After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.\*

<sup>14</sup>When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber. <sup>15</sup>After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>16</sup>When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg. <sup>17</sup>After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>18</sup>When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. <sup>19</sup>After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>20</sup>When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug. <sup>21</sup>After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>22</sup>When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor. <sup>23</sup>After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>24</sup>When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah. <sup>25</sup>After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

<sup>26</sup>After Terah was 70 years old, he

became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

<sup>27</sup>This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. <sup>28</sup>But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. <sup>29</sup>Mean-while, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) <sup>30</sup>But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

<sup>31</sup>One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. <sup>32</sup>Terah lived for 205 years\* and died while still in Haran.

<sup>12:1</sup>THE LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

<sup>4</sup>So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. <sup>5</sup>He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan, <sup>6</sup>Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your descendants.\*" And Abram built an altar

there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup>After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. <sup>9</sup>Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

<sup>10</sup>At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. <sup>11</sup>As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, you are a very beautiful woman. <sup>12</sup>When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!' <sup>13</sup>So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."

<sup>14</sup>And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai's beauty. <sup>15</sup>When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. <sup>16</sup>Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

<sup>17</sup>But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram's wife. <sup>18</sup>So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. "What have you done to me?" he demanded. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? <sup>19</sup>Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!" <sup>20</sup>Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

<sup>13:1</sup>So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. <sup>2</sup>(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) <sup>3</sup>From the Negev, they continued traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel

and Ai, where they had camped before.  
 4This was the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he worshipped the LORD again.

11:2 Hebrew *Shinar*. 11:9 Or *Babylon*. *Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion." 11:10 Or the ancestor of; also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24. 11:11 Or the birth of this ancestor of; also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25. 11:12-13 Greek version reads <sup>1</sup>When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan. <sup>2</sup>After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. Compare Luke 3:35-36. 11:32 Some ancient versions read 145 years; compare 11:26 and 12:4. 12:7 Hebrew *seed*.

MATTHEW 5:1-26

● One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, <sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them.

- 3 "God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,\* for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
- 4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- 5 God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.
- 6 God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,\* for they will be satisfied.
- 7 God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- 8 God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.
- 9 God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.
- 10 God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

11"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you\* and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. <sup>12</sup>Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven.

And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

<sup>13</sup>"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

<sup>14</sup>"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.

<sup>15</sup>No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>**In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.**

<sup>17</sup>"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.

<sup>18</sup>I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. <sup>19</sup>So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

<sup>20</sup>"But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

<sup>21</sup>"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.'<sup>\*</sup> <sup>22</sup>But I say, if you are even angry with someone,\* you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,\* you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,\* you are in danger of the fires of hell.\*

<sup>23</sup>"So if you are presenting a sacrifice\* at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

<sup>25</sup>"When you are on the way to court

with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. <sup>26</sup>And if that happens, you surely won't be free again until you have paid the last penny.\*<sup>27</sup>

5:3 Greek *poor in spirit*. 5:6 Or *for righteousness*.

5:11 Some manuscripts do not include *and lie about you*.  
5:21 Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17. 5:22a Some manuscripts add *without cause*. 5:22b Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: *If you say to your brother, 'Raca.'* 5:22c Greek *if you say, 'You fool.'* 5:22d Greek *Gehenna*; also in 5:29, 30. 5:23 Greek *gift*; also in 5:24. 5:26 Greek *the last kodrantes* [i.e., quadrans].

### PSALM 5:1-12

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by the flute.*

- 1 **○** LORD, hear me as I pray;  
pay attention to my groaning.
- 2 Listen to my cry for help, my King  
and my God,  
for I pray to no one but you.
- 3 Listen to my voice in the morning,  
LORD.  
Each morning I bring my requests  
to you and wait expectantly.
- 4 O God, you take no pleasure in  
wickedness;  
you cannot tolerate the sins  
of the wicked.
- 5 Therefore, the proud may not stand  
in your presence,  
for you hate all who do evil.
- 6 You will destroy those who tell lies.  
The LORD detests murderers and  
deceivers.
- 7 Because of your unfailing love, I can  
enter your house;  
I will worship at your Temple with  
deepest awe.
- 8 Lead me in the right path, O LORD,  
or my enemies will conquer me.  
Make your way plain for me to follow.
- 9 My enemies cannot speak a truthful  
word.  
Their deepest desire is to destroy  
others.  
Their talk is foul, like the stench  
from an open grave.

Their tongues are filled with  
flattery.\*

- 10 O God, declare them guilty.  
Let them be caught in their  
own traps.  
Drive them away because of their  
many sins,  
for they have rebelled against you.

- 11 But let all who take refuge in you  
rejoice;  
let them sing joyful praises  
forever.  
Spread your protection over them,  
that all who love your name may  
be filled with joy.
- 12 For you bless the godly, O LORD;  
you surround them with your  
shield of love.

5:9 Greek version reads *with lies*. Compare Rom 3:13.

### PROVERBS 1:24-28

“**¶** [Wisdom] called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention. You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered. So I will laugh when you are in trouble! I will mock you when disaster overtakes you—when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone, and anguish and distress overwhelm you. **□** “When they cry for help, I will not answer. Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me.”

**□** DAY 6

## GOD SIGHTINGS

### January 6

GENESIS 13:5-15:21

**¶**Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. <sup>6</sup>But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. <sup>7</sup>So disputes broke out between the

herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

<sup>8</sup>Finally Abram said to Lot, "Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives!<sup>9</sup> The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left."

<sup>10</sup>Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)<sup>11</sup> Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram.<sup>12</sup> So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain.<sup>13</sup> But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

<sup>14</sup>After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west.<sup>15</sup> I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants\* as a permanent possession.<sup>16</sup> And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted!<sup>17</sup> Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."

<sup>18</sup>So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

<sup>14:1</sup> ABOUT this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,\* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim<sup>2</sup> fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab

of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

<sup>3</sup>This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea\*).<sup>4</sup> For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

<sup>5</sup>One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim,<sup>6</sup> and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness.<sup>7</sup> Then they turned back and came to Enmishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

<sup>8</sup>Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.\*<sup>9</sup> They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five.<sup>10</sup> As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains.<sup>11</sup> The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies.<sup>12</sup> They also captured Lot— Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

<sup>13</sup>But one of Lot's men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

<sup>14</sup>When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan.<sup>15</sup> There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram

chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup>Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

<sup>17</sup>After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

<sup>18</sup>And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,\* brought Abram some bread and wine.

<sup>19</sup>Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

<sup>20</sup>And blessed be God Most High,  
who has defeated your enemies  
for you."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

<sup>21</sup>The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered."

<sup>22</sup>Abram replied to the king of Sodom, "I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup>that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, 'I am the one who made Abram rich.' <sup>24</sup>I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

<sup>15:1</sup>SOME time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

<sup>2</sup>But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. <sup>3</sup>You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

<sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." <sup>5</sup>Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

<sup>6</sup>And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession."

<sup>8</sup>But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?"

<sup>9</sup>The LORD told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." <sup>10</sup>So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. <sup>11</sup>Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

<sup>12</sup>As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. <sup>14</sup>But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. <sup>15</sup>(As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) <sup>16</sup>After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

<sup>17</sup>After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. <sup>18</sup>So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and said, "I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt\* to the great Euphrates River—<sup>19</sup>the land now occupied by the



Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup>Hit-tites, Perizzites, Rephaites, <sup>21</sup>Amorites, Canaanites, Gargashites, and Jebusites.”

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9. 14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea*. 14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10. 14:18 Hebrew *El-Elyon*; also in 14:19, 20, 22. 15:18 Hebrew *the river of Egypt*, referring either to an eastern branch of the Nile River or to the Brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5).

**MATTHEW 5:27-48**

“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’\* <sup>28</sup>But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>So if your eye—even your good eye\*—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your hand—even your stronger hand\*—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

<sup>31</sup>“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’\* <sup>32</sup>But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup>“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’\* <sup>34</sup>But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. <sup>35</sup>And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

<sup>38</sup>“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’\* <sup>39</sup>But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the

right cheek, offer the other cheek also. <sup>40</sup>If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. <sup>41</sup>If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile,\* carry it two miles. <sup>42</sup>Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’\* and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup>But I say, love your enemies!\* Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup>In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. <sup>46</sup>If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. <sup>47</sup>If you are kind only to your friends,\* how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. <sup>48</sup>But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

5:27 Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18. 5:29 Greek *your right eye*. 5:30 Greek *your right hand*. 5:31 Deut 24:1. 5:33 Num 30:2. 5:38 Greek *the law that says: ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’* Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21. 5:41 Greek *million* [4,854 feet or 1,478 meters]. 5:43 Lev 19:18. 5:44 Some manuscripts add *Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you.* Compare Luke 6:27-28. 5:47 Greek *your brothers*.

**PSALM 6:1-10**

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by an eight-stringed instrument.\**

- 1 ● LORD, don’t rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your rage.
- 2 Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak. Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
- 3 I am sick at heart. How long, O LORD, until you restore me?
- 4 Return, O LORD, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love.
- 5 For the dead do not remember you. Who can praise you from the grave?\*

- <sup>6</sup> I am worn out from sobbing.  
 All night I flood my bed with weeping,  
 drenching it with my tears.
- <sup>7</sup> My vision is blurred by grief;  
 my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.
- <sup>8</sup> Go away, all you who do evil,  
 for the LORD has heard my weeping.
- <sup>9</sup> The LORD has heard my plea;  
 the LORD will answer my prayer.
- <sup>10</sup> May all my enemies be disgraced and terrified.  
 May they suddenly turn back in shame.

6: TITLE Hebrew with stringed instruments; according to the *sheminith*. 6:5 Hebrew from *Sheol*?

#### PROVERBS 1:29-33

**F**or they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, choking on their own schemes. For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency. But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.”

#### □ DAY 7

## GOD SIGHTINGS

### January 7

#### GENESIS 16:1-18:15

**N**ow Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. <sup>2</sup>So Sarai said to Abram, “The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. <sup>3</sup>So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife.

(This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land of Canaan.)

<sup>4</sup>So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. <sup>5</sup>Then Sarai said to Abram, “This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will show who's wrong—you or me!”

<sup>6</sup>Abram replied, “Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you see fit.” Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran away.

<sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. <sup>8</sup>The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai's servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

<sup>9</sup>The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” <sup>10</sup>Then he added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.”

<sup>11</sup>And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress. <sup>12</sup>This son of yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him. Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.”

<sup>13</sup>Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.”\* She also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” <sup>14</sup>So that well was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

<sup>15</sup>So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael. <sup>16</sup>Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.



<sup>17</sup>17:1 WHEN Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai—'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. <sup>2</sup>I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants."

<sup>3</sup>At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, <sup>4</sup>"This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! <sup>5</sup>What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham,\* for you will be the father of many nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

<sup>7</sup>"I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants\* after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. <sup>8</sup>And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God."

<sup>9</sup>Then God said to Abraham, "Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. <sup>10</sup>This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. <sup>11</sup>You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup>From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. <sup>13</sup>All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup>Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant."

<sup>15</sup>Then God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on

her name will be Sarah.\* <sup>16</sup>And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants."

<sup>17</sup>Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. "How could I become a father at the age of 100?" he thought. "And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?" <sup>18</sup>So Abraham said to God, "May Ishmael live under your special blessing!"

<sup>19</sup>But God replied, "No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac,\* and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. <sup>20</sup>As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup>But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year." <sup>22</sup>When God had finished speaking, he left Abraham.

<sup>23</sup>On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him. <sup>24</sup>Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, <sup>25</sup>and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen. <sup>26</sup>Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day, <sup>27</sup>along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

<sup>18:1</sup>THE LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to meet

them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground.

<sup>3</sup>"My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while. <sup>4</sup>Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. <sup>5</sup>And since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey."

"All right," they said. "Do as you have said."

<sup>6</sup>So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get three large measures\* of your best flour, knead it into dough, and bake some bread."

<sup>7</sup>Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it. <sup>8</sup>When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate, Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

<sup>9</sup>"Where is Sarah, your wife?" the visitors asked.

"She's inside the tent," Abraham replied.

<sup>10</sup>Then one of them said, "I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!"

Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. <sup>11</sup>Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. <sup>12</sup>So she laughed silently to herself and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?"

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?'"

<sup>14</sup>Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

<sup>15</sup>Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, "I didn't laugh."

But the LORD said, "No, you did laugh."

16:13 Hebrew *El-roi*. 17:5 *Abram* means "exalted father"; *Abraham* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "father of many." 17:7 Hebrew *seed*; also in 17:7b, 8, 9, 10, 19. 17:15 *Sarai* and *Sarah* both mean "princess"; the change in spelling may reflect the difference in dialect between Ur and Canaan. 17:19 *Isaac* means "he laughs."  
18:6 Hebrew *3seahs*, about 15 quarts or 18 liters.

MATTHEW 6:1-24

**W**atch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. <sup>2</sup>When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. <sup>3</sup>But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. <sup>4</sup>Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

<sup>7</sup>When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. <sup>8</sup>Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! <sup>9</sup>**Pray like this:**

**Our Father in heaven,  
may your name be kept holy.**

<sup>10</sup> **May your Kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.**

<sup>11</sup> **Give us today the food we need,\***

<sup>12</sup> **and forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who  
sin against us.**

<sup>13</sup> **And don't let us yield to  
temptation,\*  
but rescue us from the evil one.\***

<sup>14</sup>"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>15</sup>But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

<sup>16</sup>"And when you fast, don't make it

obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. <sup>17</sup>But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. <sup>18</sup>Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

<sup>19</sup>“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

<sup>22</sup>“Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. <sup>23</sup>But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

<sup>24</sup>“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

6:11 Or Give us today our food for the day; or Give us today our food for tomorrow. 6:13a Or And keep us from being tested. 6:13b Or from evil. Some manuscripts add For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

PSALM 7:1-17

*A psalm of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush of the tribe of Benjamin.*

- 1 **I** come to you for protection, O LORD my God.  
Save me from my persecutors—  
rescue me!
- 2 If you don’t, they will maul me like a lion,  
tearing me to pieces with no one to rescue me.
- 3 O LORD my God, if I have done wrong  
or am guilty of injustice,  
4 if I have betrayed a friend

- or plundered my enemy without cause,
- 5 then let my enemies capture me.  
Let them trample me into the ground  
and drag my honor in the dust.

*Interlude*

- 6 Arise, O LORD, in anger!  
Stand up against the fury of my enemies!  
Wake up, my God, and bring justice!
- 7 Gather the nations before you.  
Rule over them from on high.
- 8 The LORD judges the nations.  
Declare me righteous, O LORD,  
for I am innocent, O Most High!
- 9 End the evil of those who are wicked,  
and defend the righteous.  
For you look deep within the mind  
and heart,  
O righteous God.
- 10 God is my shield,  
saving those whose hearts are true  
and right.
- 11 God is an honest judge.  
He is angry with the wicked every day.
- 12 If a person does not repent,  
God\* will sharpen his sword;  
he will bend and string his bow.
- 13 He will prepare his deadly weapons  
and shoot his flaming arrows.
- 14 The wicked conceive evil;  
they are pregnant with trouble  
and give birth to lies.
- 15 They dig a deep pit to trap others,  
then fall into it themselves.
- 16 The trouble they make for others  
backfires on them.  
The violence they plan falls on  
their own heads.
- 17 I will thank the LORD because  
he is just;  
I will sing praise to the name of  
the LORD Most High.

7:12 Hebrew *he*.

## PROVERBS 2:1-5

**M**y child,\* listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God.

2:1 Hebrew *My son*.

□ DAY 8



## January 8

### GENESIS 18:16–19:38

**T**hen the men got up from their meal and looked out toward Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

<sup>17</sup>“Should I hide my plan from Abraham?” the LORD asked. <sup>18</sup>“For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. <sup>19</sup>I have singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.”

<sup>20</sup>So the LORD told Abraham, “I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. <sup>21</sup>I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know.”

<sup>22</sup>The other men turned and headed toward Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham. <sup>23</sup>Abraham approached him and said, “Will you sweep away both the righteous and the wicked? <sup>24</sup>Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? <sup>25</sup>Surely you wouldn’t do such a thing, destroying the righteous along

with the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn’t do that! Should not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?”

<sup>26</sup>And the LORD replied, “If I find fifty righteous people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake.”

<sup>27</sup>Then Abraham spoke again. “Since I have begun, let me speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. <sup>28</sup>Suppose there are only forty-five righteous people rather than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?”

And the LORD said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five righteous people there.”

<sup>29</sup>Then Abraham pressed his request further. “Suppose there are only forty?”

And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it for the sake of the forty.”

<sup>30</sup>“Please don’t be angry, my Lord,” Abraham pleaded. “Let me speak—suppose only thirty righteous people are found?”

And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it if I find thirty.”

<sup>31</sup>Then Abraham said, “Since I have dared to speak to the Lord, let me continue—suppose there are only twenty?”

And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty.”

<sup>32</sup>Finally, Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me if I speak one more time. Suppose only ten are found there?”

And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.”

<sup>33</sup>When the LORD had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent.

<sup>19:1</sup>THAT evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground. <sup>2</sup>“My lords,” he said, “come to my home to wash your feet, and be my guests for the night. You may

then get up early in the morning and be on your way again.”

“Oh no,” they replied. “We’ll just spend the night out here in the city square.”

<sup>3</sup>But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him. Lot prepared a feast for them, complete with fresh bread made without yeast, and they ate. <sup>4</sup>But before they retired for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup>They shouted to Lot, “Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!”

<sup>6</sup>So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. <sup>7</sup>“Please, my brothers,” he begged, “don’t do such a wicked thing. <sup>8</sup>Look, I have two virgin daughters. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do with them as you wish. But please, leave these men alone, for they are my guests and are under my protection.”

<sup>9</sup>“Stand back!” they shouted. “This fellow came to town as an outsider, and now he’s acting like our judge! We’ll treat you far worse than those other men!” And they lunged toward Lot to break down the door.

<sup>10</sup>But the two angels\* reached out, pulled Lot into the house, and bolted the door. <sup>11</sup>Then they blinded all the men, young and old, who were at the door of the house, so they gave up trying to get inside.

<sup>12</sup>Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. “Do you have any other relatives here in the city?” they asked. “Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. <sup>13</sup>For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the LORD, and he has sent us to destroy it.”

<sup>14</sup>So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters’ fiancés, “Quick, get out of the city! The LORD is about to destroy it.” But the young men thought he was only joking.

<sup>15</sup>At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. “Hurry,” they said

to Lot. “Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out right now, or you will be swept away in the destruction of the city!”

<sup>16</sup>When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. <sup>17</sup>When they were safely out of the city, one of the angels ordered, “Run for your lives! And don’t look back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away!”

<sup>18</sup>“Oh no, my lord!” Lot begged. <sup>19</sup>“You have been so gracious to me and saved my life, and you have shown such great kindness. But I cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there, and I would soon die. <sup>20</sup>See, there is a small village nearby. Please let me go there instead; don’t you see how small it is? Then my life will be saved.”

<sup>21</sup>“All right,” the angel said, “I will grant your request. I will not destroy the little village. <sup>22</sup>But hurry! Escape to it, for I can do nothing until you arrive there.” (This explains why that village was known as Zoar, which means “little place.”)

<sup>23</sup>Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon. <sup>24</sup>Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>25</sup>He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people and every bit of vegetation. <sup>26</sup>But Lot’s wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt.

<sup>27</sup>Abraham got up early that morning and hurried out to the place where he had stood in the LORD’s presence. <sup>28</sup>He looked out across the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as columns of smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace.

<sup>29</sup>But God had listened to Abraham’s request and kept Lot safe, removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain.

<sup>30</sup>Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there, and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two daughters. <sup>31</sup>One day the older daughter said to her sister, "There are no men left anywhere in this entire area, so we can't get married like everyone else. And our father will soon be too old to have children. <sup>32</sup>Come, let's get him drunk with wine, and then we will have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father."

<sup>33</sup>So that night they got him drunk with wine, and the older daughter went in and had intercourse with her father. He was unaware of her lying down or getting up again.

<sup>34</sup>The next morning the older daughter said to her younger sister, "I had sex with our father last night. Let's get him drunk with wine again tonight, and you go in and have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line through our father." <sup>35</sup>So that night they got him drunk with wine again, and the younger daughter went in and had intercourse with him. As before, he was unaware of her lying down or getting up again.

<sup>36</sup>As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own father. <sup>37</sup>When the older daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Moab.\* He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Moabites. <sup>38</sup>When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she named him Ben-ammi.\* He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the Ammonites.

**19:10** Hebrew *men*; also in 19:12, 16. **19:37** *Moab* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "from father."  
**19:38** *Ben-ammi* means "son of my kinsman."

#### MATTHEW 6:25–7:14

"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? <sup>27</sup>Can all

your worries add a single moment to your life?

<sup>28</sup>"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, <sup>29</sup>yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. <sup>30</sup>And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

<sup>31</sup>"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' <sup>32</sup>These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. <sup>33</sup>Seek the Kingdom of God\* above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

<sup>34</sup>"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

<sup>7:1</sup>"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. <sup>2</sup>For you will be treated as you treat others.\* The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.\*

<sup>3</sup>"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye\* when you have a log in your own? <sup>4</sup>How can you think of saying to your friend,\* 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

<sup>6</sup>"Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy.\* Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

<sup>7</sup>"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>9</sup>"You parents—if your children ask



for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? <sup>10</sup>Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! <sup>11</sup>So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

<sup>12</sup>**“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.**

<sup>13</sup>“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell\* is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. <sup>14</sup>But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.”

6:33 Some manuscripts do not include *of God*. 7:2a Or *For God will judge you as you judge others*. 7:2b Or *The measure you give will be the measure you get back*. 7:3 Greek *your brother’s eye*; also in 7:5. 7:4 Greek *your brother*. 7:6 Greek *Don’t give the sacred to dogs*. 7:13 Greek *The road that leads to destruction*.

PSALM 8:1-9

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument.\**

- 1 **○** LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!  
Your glory is higher than the heavens.
- 2 You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength,\*  
silencing your enemies  
and all who oppose you.
- 3 When I look at the night sky and  
see the work of your fingers—  
the moon and the stars you  
set in place—
- 4 what are mere mortals that you  
should think about them,  
human beings that you should  
care for them?\*
- 5 Yet you made them only a little lower  
than God\*  
and crowned them\* with glory  
and honor.
- 6 You gave them charge of everything  
you made,

putting all things under their authority—

- 7 the flocks and the herds  
and all the wild animals,
- 8 the birds in the sky, the fish  
in the sea,  
and everything that swims the  
ocean currents.

9 O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

8: TITLE Hebrew according to the gittith. 8:2 Greek version reads *to give you praise*. Compare Matt 21:16. 8:4 Hebrew *what is man that you should think of him, / the son of man that you should care for him?* 8:5a Or *Yet you made them only a little lower than the angels*; Hebrew reads *Yet you made him* (i.e., man) *a little lower than Elohim*. 8:5b Hebrew *him* (i.e., man); similarly in 8:6.

PROVERBS 2:6-15

**F**or the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him. □ Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe. □ Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words are twisted. These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths. They take pleasure in doing wrong, and they enjoy the twisted ways of evil. Their actions are crooked, and their ways are wrong.

□ DAY 9



January 9

GENESIS 20:1-22:24

**A**braham moved south to the Negev and lived for a while between Kadesh and Shur, and then he moved on to



Gerar. While living there as a foreigner, <sup>2</sup>Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, "She is my sister." So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.

<sup>3</sup>But that night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him, "You are a dead man, for that woman you have taken is already married!"

<sup>4</sup>But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? <sup>5</sup>Didn't Abraham tell me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'Yes, he is my brother.' I acted in complete innocence! My hands are clean."

<sup>6</sup>In the dream God responded, "Yes, I know you are innocent. That's why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup>Now return the woman to her husband, and he will pray for you, for he is a prophet. Then you will live. But if you don't return her to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will die."

<sup>8</sup>Abimelech got up early the next morning and quickly called all his servants together. When he told them what had happened, his men were terrified. <sup>9</sup>Then Abimelech called for Abraham. "What have you done to us?" he demanded. "What crime have I committed that deserves treatment like this, making me and my kingdom guilty of this great sin? No one should ever do what you have done! <sup>10</sup>Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?"

<sup>11</sup>Abraham replied, "I thought, 'This is a godless place. They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.' <sup>12</sup>And she really is my sister, for we both have the same father, but different mothers. And I married her. <sup>13</sup>When God called me to leave my father's home and to travel from place to place, I told her, 'Do me a favor. Wherever we go, tell the people that I am your brother.'"

<sup>14</sup>Then Abimelech took some of his sheep and goats, cattle, and male and female servants, and he presented them to Abraham. He also returned his wife, Sarah, to him. <sup>15</sup>Then Abimelech said,

"Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live." <sup>16</sup>And he said to Sarah, "Look, I am giving your 'brother' 1,000 pieces of silver\* in the presence of all these witnesses. This is to compensate you for any wrong I may have done to you. This will settle any claim against me, and your reputation is cleared."

<sup>17</sup>Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, so they could have children. <sup>18</sup>For the LORD had caused all the women to be infertile because of what happened with Abraham's wife, Sarah.

<sup>21:1</sup>THE LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. <sup>2</sup>She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. <sup>3</sup>And Abraham named their son Isaac. <sup>4</sup>Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. <sup>5</sup>Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

<sup>6</sup>And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter.\* All who hear about this will laugh with me. <sup>7</sup>Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

<sup>8</sup>When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion. <sup>9</sup>But Sarah saw Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—making fun of her son, Isaac.\* <sup>10</sup>So she turned to Abraham and demanded, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won't have it!"

<sup>11</sup>This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. <sup>12</sup>But God told Abraham, "Do not be upset over the boy and your servant. Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted. <sup>13</sup>But I will also make a nation of the descendants of Hagar's son because he is your son, too."

<sup>14</sup>So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a container of water, and strapped them on Hagar's shoulders. Then he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the wilderness of Beersheba.

<sup>15</sup>When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush. <sup>16</sup>Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards\* away. "I don't want to watch the boy die," she said, as she burst into tears.

<sup>17</sup>But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, "Hagar, what's wrong? Do not be afraid! God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. <sup>18</sup>Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants."

<sup>19</sup>Then God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well full of water. She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink.

<sup>20</sup>And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He became a skillful archer, <sup>21</sup>and he settled in the wilderness of Paran. His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of Egypt.

<sup>22</sup>About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army commander, to visit Abraham. "God is obviously with you, helping you in everything you do," Abimelech said. <sup>23</sup>"Swear to me in God's name that you will never deceive me, my children, or any of my descendants. I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will be loyal to me and to this country where you are living as a foreigner."

<sup>24</sup>Abraham replied, "Yes, I swear to it!"

<sup>25</sup>Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants had taken by force from Abraham's servants.

<sup>26</sup>"This is the first I've heard of it," Abimelech answered. "I have no idea who is responsible. You have never complained about this before."

<sup>27</sup>Abraham then gave some of his sheep, goats, and cattle to Abimelech, and they made a treaty. <sup>28</sup>But Abraham

also took seven additional female lambs and set them off by themselves.

<sup>29</sup>Abimelech asked, "Why have you set these seven apart from the others?"

<sup>30</sup>Abraham replied, "Please accept these seven lambs to show your agreement that I dug this well." <sup>31</sup>Then he named the place Beersheba (which means "well of the oath"), because that was where they had sworn the oath.

<sup>32</sup>After making their covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech left with Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the land of the Philistines. <sup>33</sup>Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he worshiped the LORD, the Eternal God.\* <sup>34</sup>And Abraham lived as a foreigner in Philistine country for a long time.

<sup>22:1</sup>SOME time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called.

"Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

<sup>24</sup>Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

<sup>3</sup>The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about.

<sup>4</sup>On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. <sup>5</sup>"Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

<sup>6</sup>So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, <sup>7</sup>Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?"

<sup>8</sup>"God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

<sup>9</sup>When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

<sup>10</sup>And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. <sup>11</sup>At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!"

<sup>12</sup>"Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

<sup>13</sup>Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

<sup>14</sup>Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which means "the LORD will provide"). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

<sup>15</sup>Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. <sup>16</sup>"This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that <sup>17</sup>I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants\* beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. <sup>18</sup>And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me."

<sup>19</sup>Then they returned to the servants and traveled back to Beersheba, where Abraham continued to live.

<sup>20</sup>Soon after this, Abraham heard that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, had borne Nahor eight sons. <sup>21</sup>The oldest was named Uz, the next oldest was Buz, followed by Kemuel (the ancestor of the Arameans), <sup>22</sup>Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. <sup>23</sup>(Bethuel became

the father of Rebekah.) In addition to these eight sons from Milcah, <sup>24</sup>Nahor had four other children from his concubine Reumah. Their names were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

20:16 Hebrew 1,000 [shekels] of silver, about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight. 21:6 The name Isaac means "he laughs." 21:9 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks of her son, Isaac. 21:16 Hebrew a bowshot. 21:33 Hebrew El-Olam. 22:17 Hebrew seed; also in 22:17b, 18.

## MATTHEW 7:15-29

**B**eware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. <sup>16</sup>You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup>A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. <sup>18</sup>A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. <sup>19</sup>So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup>Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

<sup>21</sup>"Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. <sup>22</sup>On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' <sup>23</sup>But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

<sup>24</sup>"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. <sup>25</sup>Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. <sup>26</sup>But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. <sup>27</sup>When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."

<sup>28</sup>When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed

at his teaching,<sup>29</sup> for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

PSALM 9:1-12

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune "Death of the Son."*

- 1 I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;  
I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.
- 2 I will be filled with joy because of you.  
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.
- 3 My enemies retreated;  
they staggered and died when you appeared.
- 4 For you have judged in my favor;  
from your throne you have judged with fairness.
- 5 You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;  
you have erased their names forever.
- 6 The enemy is finished, in endless ruins;  
the cities you uprooted are now forgotten.
- 7 But the LORD reigns forever,  
executing judgment from his throne.
- 8 He will judge the world with justice  
and rule the nations with fairness.
- 9 **The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed,  
a refuge in times of trouble.**
- 10 **Those who know your name trust in you,  
for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.**
- 11 Sing praises to the LORD who reigns in Jerusalem.\*  
Tell the world about his unforgettable deeds.
- 12 For he who avenges murder cares for the helpless.  
He does not ignore the cries of those who suffer.

9:11 Hebrew *Zion*; also in 9:14.

PROVERBS 2:16-22

**W**isdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman. She has abandoned her husband and ignores the covenant she made before God. Entering her house leads to death; it is the road to the grave.\* The man who visits her is doomed. He will never reach the paths of life. □ Follow the steps of good men instead, and stay on the paths of the righteous. For only the godly will live in the land, and those with integrity will remain in it. But the wicked will be removed from the land, and the treacherous will be uprooted.

2:18 Hebrew *to the spirits of the dead*.

□ DAY 10

GOD SIGHTINGS

## January 10

GENESIS 23:1-24:51

**W**hen Sarah was 127 years old,<sup>2</sup> she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.

<sup>3</sup>Then, leaving her body, he said to the Hittite elders,<sup>4</sup> "Here I am, a stranger and a foreigner among you. Please sell me a piece of land so I can give my wife a proper burial."

<sup>5</sup>The Hittites replied to Abraham,<sup>6</sup> "Listen, my lord, you are an honored prince among us. Choose the finest of our tombs and bury her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way."

<sup>7</sup>Then Abraham bowed low before the Hittites<sup>8</sup> and said, "Since you are willing to help me in this way, be so kind as to ask Ephron son of Zohar<sup>9</sup> to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of his field. I will pay the full price in the presence of witnesses, so I will have a permanent burial place for my family."

<sup>10</sup>Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered Abraham as

the others listened, speaking publicly before all the Hittite elders of the town.

<sup>11</sup>"No, my lord," he said to Abraham, "please listen to me. I will give you the field and the cave. Here in the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead."

<sup>12</sup>Abraham again bowed low before the citizens of the land, <sup>13</sup>and he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. "No, listen to me. I will buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury my dead there."

<sup>14</sup>Ephron answered Abraham, <sup>15</sup>"My lord, please listen to me. The land is worth 400 pieces\* of silver, but what is that between friends? Go ahead and bury your dead."

<sup>16</sup>So Abraham agreed to Ephron's price and paid the amount he had suggested—400 pieces of silver, weighed according to the market standard. The Hittite elders witnessed the transaction.

<sup>17</sup>So Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field itself, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. <sup>18</sup>It was transferred to Abraham as his permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate. <sup>19</sup>Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre (also called Hebron). <sup>20</sup>So the field and the cave were transferred from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.

<sup>24:1</sup>ABRAHAM was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. <sup>2</sup>One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, "Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. <sup>3</sup>Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. <sup>4</sup>Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac."

<sup>5</sup>The servant asked, "But what if I can't find a young woman who is willing to travel so far from home? Should I

then take Isaac there to live among your relatives in the land you came from?"

<sup>6</sup>"No!" Abraham responded. "Be careful never to take my son there. <sup>7</sup>For the LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my descendants.\* He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son. <sup>8</sup>If she is unwilling to come back with you, then you are free from this oath of mine. But under no circumstances are you to take my son there."

<sup>9</sup>So the servant took an oath by putting his hand under the thigh of his master, Abraham. He swore to follow Abraham's instructions. <sup>10</sup>Then he loaded ten of Abraham's camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham's brother Nahor had settled. <sup>11</sup>He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water.

<sup>12</sup>"O LORD, God of my master, Abraham," he prayed. "Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham. <sup>13</sup>See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women of the town are coming out to draw water. <sup>14</sup>This is my request. I will ask one of them, 'Please give me a drink from your jug.' If she says, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!'—let her be the one you have selected as Isaac's wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master."

<sup>15</sup>Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. <sup>16</sup>Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. <sup>17</sup>Running over to her, the servant said,

"Please give me a little drink of water from your jug."

<sup>18</sup>"Yes, my lord," she answered, "have a drink." And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink.

<sup>19</sup>When she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink."

<sup>20</sup>So she quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw water for all his camels.

<sup>21</sup>The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the LORD had given him success in his mission.

<sup>22</sup>Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets\* for her wrists.

<sup>23</sup>"Whose daughter are you?" he asked. "And please tell me, would your father have any room to put us up for the night?"

<sup>24</sup>"I am the daughter of Bethuel," she replied. "My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah." <sup>25</sup>Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests."

<sup>26</sup>The man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. <sup>27</sup>"Praise the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham," he said. "The LORD has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives."

<sup>28</sup>The young woman ran home to tell her family everything that had happened. <sup>29</sup>Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, who ran out to meet the man at the spring. <sup>30</sup>He had seen the nose-ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man had said. So he rushed out to the spring, where the man was still standing beside his camels. <sup>31</sup>Laban said to him, "Come and stay with us, you who are blessed by the LORD! Why are you standing here outside the town when I have a room all ready for you and a place prepared for the camels?"

<sup>32</sup>So the man went home with Laban, and Laban unloaded the camels, gave him straw for their bedding, fed them, and provided water for the man and the

camel drivers to wash their feet. <sup>33</sup>Then food was served. But Abraham's servant said, "I don't want to eat until I have told you why I have come."

"All right," Laban said, "tell us."

<sup>34</sup>"I am Abraham's servant," he explained. <sup>35</sup>And the LORD has greatly blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The LORD has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and camels and donkeys.

<sup>36</sup>"When Sarah, my master's wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master's son, and my master has given him everything he owns. <sup>37</sup>And my master made me take an oath. He said, 'Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. <sup>38</sup>Go instead to my father's house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.'

<sup>39</sup>But I said to my master, 'What if I can't find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?' <sup>40</sup>He responded, 'The LORD, in whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family. <sup>41</sup>Then you will have fulfilled your obligation. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath.'

<sup>42</sup>So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: 'O LORD, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. <sup>43</sup>See, I am standing here beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, 'Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.' <sup>44</sup>If she says, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too,' let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master's son.'

<sup>45</sup>Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' <sup>46</sup>She quickly lowered her jug



from her shoulder and said, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!' So I drank, and then she watered the camels.

<sup>47</sup>"Then I asked, 'Whose daughter are you?' She replied, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.

<sup>48</sup>"Then I bowed low and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master's niece to be his son's wife. <sup>49</sup>So tell me—will you or won't you show unflinching love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I'll know what to do next."

<sup>50</sup>Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "The LORD has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. <sup>51</sup>Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

23:15 Hebrew 400 shekels, about 10 pounds or 4.6 kilograms in weight; also in 23:16. 24:7 Hebrew seed; also in 24:60. 24:22 Hebrew a gold nose-ring weighing a half shekel (0.2 ounces or 6 grams) and two gold bracelets weighing 10 shekels (4 ounces or 114 grams).

### MATTHEW 8:1-17

**L**arge crowds followed Jesus as he came down the mountainside. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before him. "Lord," the man said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean."

<sup>3</sup>Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy.\* This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer\* came and pleaded with him, <sup>6</sup>"Lord, my young servant\* lies in bed, paralyzed and in terrible pain."

<sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "I will come and heal him."

<sup>8</sup>But the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it."

<sup>10</sup>When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who were following him, he said, "I tell you the truth, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel! **<sup>11</sup>And I tell you this, that many Gentiles will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven.**

<sup>12</sup>But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, "Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened." And the young servant was healed that same hour.

<sup>14</sup>When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. <sup>15</sup>But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him.

<sup>16</sup>That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick. <sup>17</sup>This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said,

"He took our sicknesses  
and removed our diseases."\*

8:4 See Lev 14:2-32. 8:5 Greek a centurion; similarly in 8:8, 13. 8:6 Or child; also in 8:13. 8:17 Isa 53:4.

### PSALM 9:13-20

<sup>13</sup> **L**ORD, have mercy on me.  
See how my enemies torment me.  
Snatch me back from the jaws  
of death.



- 14 Save me so I can praise you publicly  
at Jerusalem's gates,  
so I can rejoice that you have  
rescued me.
- 15 The nations have fallen into the pit  
they dug for others.  
Their own feet have been caught  
in the trap they set.
- 16 The LORD is known for his justice.  
The wicked are trapped by their  
own deeds. *Quiet Interlude\**
- 17 The wicked will go down to the  
grave.\*  
This is the fate of all the nations  
who ignore God.
- 18 But the needy will not be ignored  
forever;  
the hopes of the poor will not  
always be crushed.
- 19 Arise, O LORD!  
Do not let mere mortals defy you!  
Judge the nations!
- 20 Make them tremble in fear, O LORD.  
Let the nations know they are  
merely human. *Interlude*

9:16 Hebrew *Higgaion Selah*. The meaning of this phrase is uncertain. 9:17 Hebrew to *Sheol*.

PROVERBS 3:1-6

**M**y child,\* never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. □ Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

3:1 Hebrew *My son*; also in 3:11, 21.

□ DAY 11

GOD SIGHTINGS

January 11

GENESIS 24:52-26:16

**W**hen Abraham's servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the ground and worshiped the LORD. <sup>53</sup>Then he brought out silver and gold jewelry and clothing and presented them to Rebekah. He also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother. <sup>54</sup>Then they ate their meal, and the servant and the men with him stayed there overnight.

But early the next morning, Abraham's servant said, "Send me back to my master."

<sup>55</sup>"But we want Rebekah to stay with us at least ten days," her brother and mother said. "Then she can go."

<sup>56</sup>But he said, "Don't delay me. The LORD has made my mission successful; now send me back so I can return to my master."

<sup>57</sup>"Well," they said, "we'll call Rebekah and ask her what she thinks." <sup>58</sup>So they called Rebekah. "Are you willing to go with this man?" they asked her.

And she replied, "Yes, I will go."

<sup>59</sup>So they said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with Abraham's servant and his men. The woman who had been Rebekah's childhood nurse went along with her. <sup>60</sup>They gave her this blessing as she parted:

"Our sister, may you become  
the mother of many millions!  
May your descendants be strong  
and conquer the cities of their  
enemies."

<sup>61</sup>Then Rebekah and her servant girls mounted the camels and followed the man. So Abraham's servant took Rebekah and went on his way.

<sup>62</sup>Meanwhile, Isaac, whose home was in the Negev, had returned from Beer-lahai-roi. <sup>63</sup>One evening as he was walking and meditating in the fields, he looked up and saw the camels coming.