


AFRICA
STUDY
BIBLE



PRESENTED TO:

BY

ON THE OCCASION OF

DATE





THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT IS THIS
LISTEN · O · ISRAEL

THE LORD OUR GOD IS
THE ONE AND ONLY LORD
AND YOU MUST

*Love the Lord your God
with all your heart
all your soul, all your mind
and all your strength*

THE SECOND IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT

*Love your neighbour
as yourself*

NO OTHER COMMANDMENT IS GREATER THAN THESE

from MARK 12:29-31

DEDICATION



The Africa Study Bible is dedicated to the Lord's faithful who, over many centuries, founded the churches that now grow in every part of Africa. Their resilience, fortitude, and faithfulness has handed us a faith that is authentically Christian and authentically African.

To the many saints in Africa and the African diaspora—champions of faith who face trials, war, persecution, famine, disease, and the temptations of the world—we pray that the words of the Lord and the words of his servants in this book will be a source of strength to live in joy, motivate loving and godly service, encourage your worship of our great God, and establish your hope and trust in Jesus Christ, who initiates and perfects your faith.

As you read, may you hear the Lord's voice in your own stories and proverbs. May the power of the Holy Spirit help you understand, preach, teach, and live the Bible better.

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

(Philippians 1:6)

DR. JOHN JUSU, Supervising Editor

GOD SAVED YOU
by his grace
when you believed
and you can't take credit for this



FOR WE ARE
GOD'S MASTERPIECE
He has created us anew
IN CHRIST JESUS
so we can do the good things
HE PLANNED FOR US LONG AGO

from EPHESIANS 2:8-10



FAMILY
& COMMUNITY

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).



The Holy Spirit

PRODUCES
THIS KIND OF FRUIT
IN OUR LIVES

Love Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
AND SELF-CONTROL

GALATIANS 5:22-23

MAY
GOOD

be merciful

MAY HIS FACE SMILE

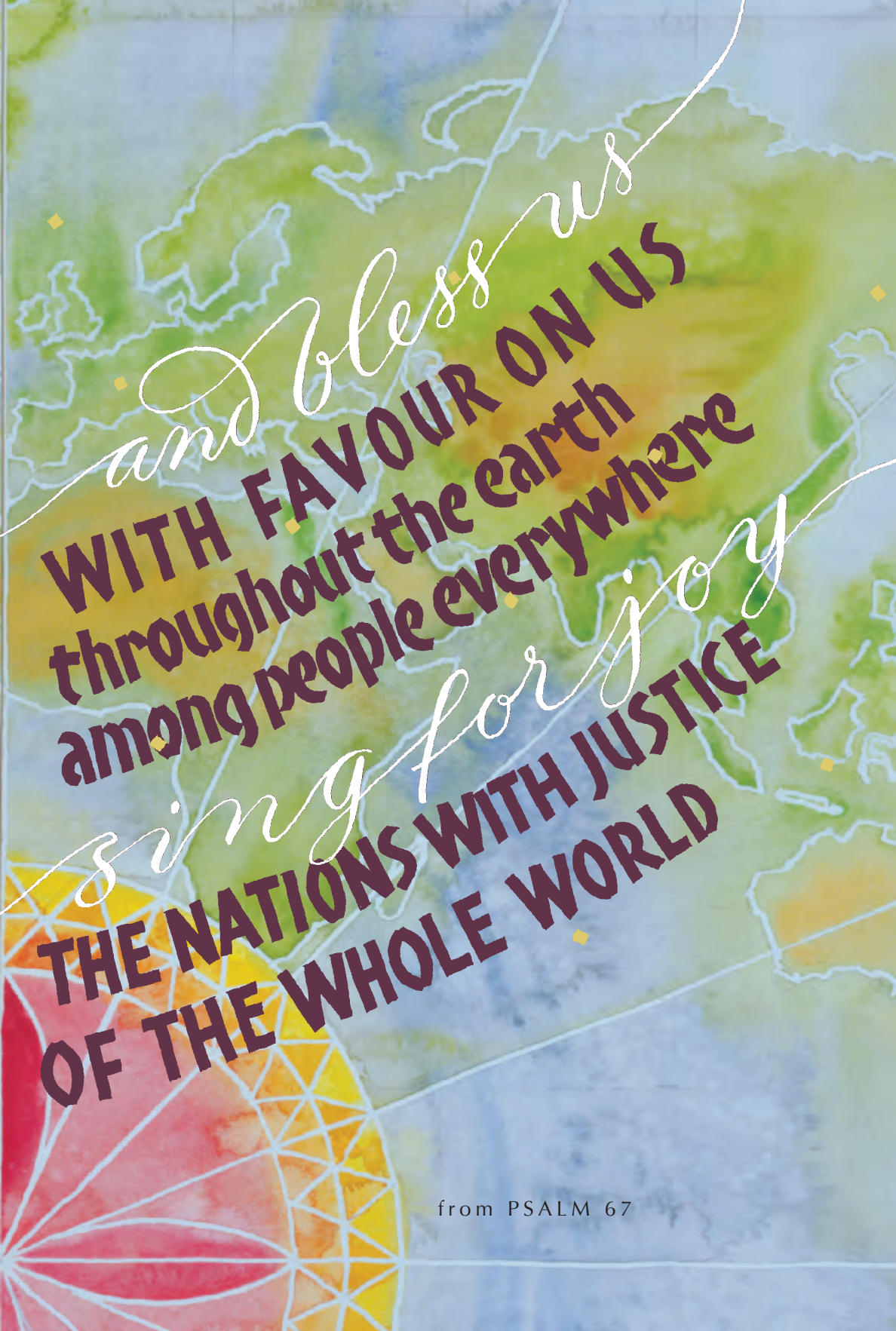
May Your ways be known

Your saving power

let the whole world

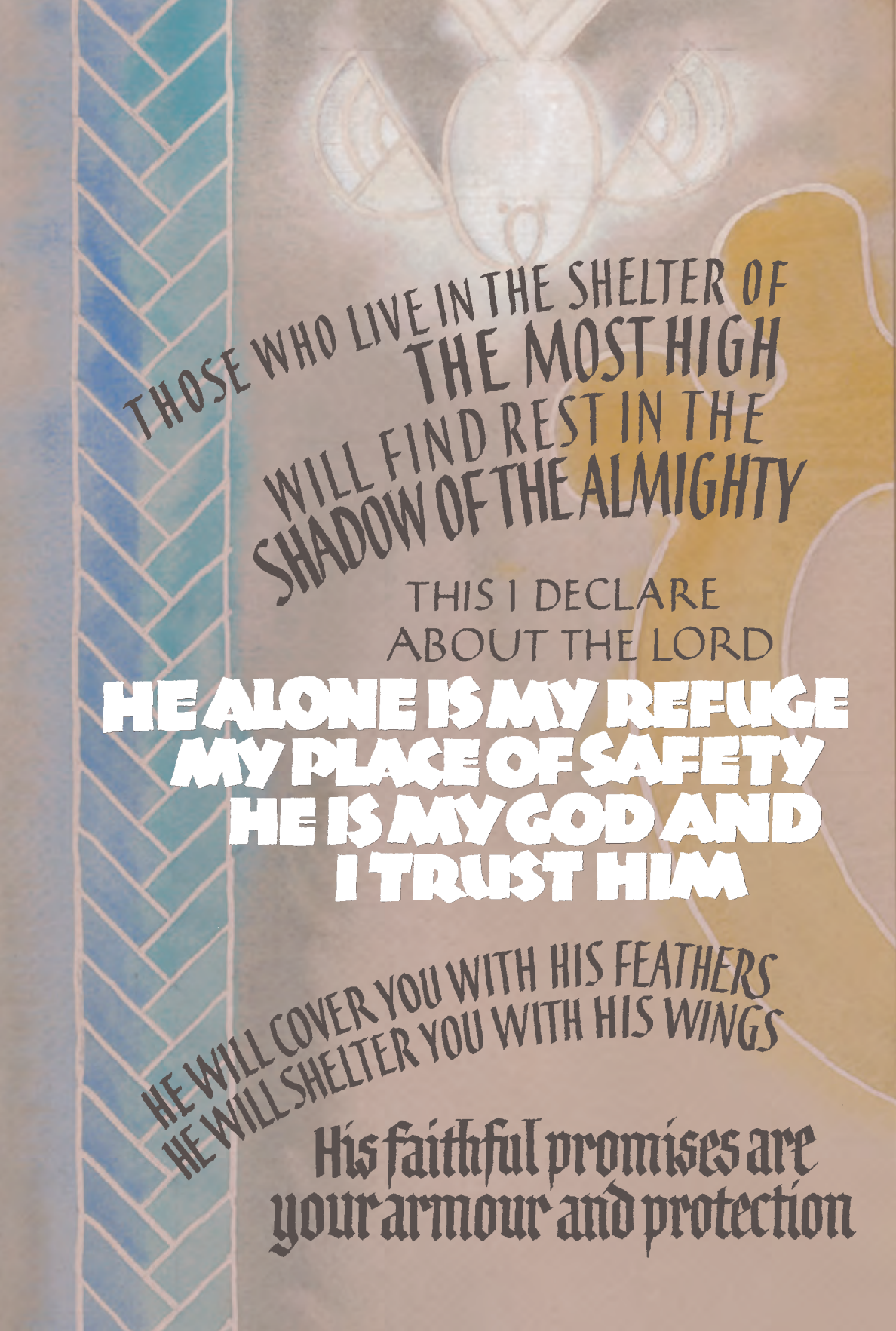
BECAUSE YOU GOVERN

AND GUIDE THE PEOPLE



and bless us
WITH FAVOUR ON US
throughout the earth
among people everywhere
sing for joy
THE NATIONS WITH JUSTICE
OF THE WHOLE WORLD

from PSALM 67



THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE SHELTER OF
THE MOST HIGH
WILL FIND REST IN THE
SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY

THIS I DECLARE
ABOUT THE LORD

**HE ALONE IS MY REFUGE
MY PLACE OF SAFETY
HE IS MY GOD AND
I TRUST HIM**

HE WILL COVER YOU WITH HIS FEATHERS
HE WILL SHELTER YOU WITH HIS WINGS

His faithful promises are
your armour and protection

THE LORD SAYS

*I will rescue those
who love Me
I will protect those
who trust in My Name*

WHEN THEY CALL ON ME

**I WILL ANSWER
I WILL BE WITH THEM
IN TROUBLE**

*I will rescue and
honour them*

**I WILL REWARD THEM
WITH A LONG LIFE**

*and give them
My salvation*

FOR I PASS ON TO YOU WHAT I RECEIVED
FROM THE LORD HIMSELF
ON THE NIGHT WHEN HE WAS BETRAYED

The Lord Jesus

**TOOK SOME BREAD
AND GAVE THANKS
TO GOD FOR IT**

**THEN HE BROKE IT IN PIECES
AND SAID**

**THIS IS MY BODY
WHICH IS GIVEN
FOR YOU**

**DO THIS
IN REMEMBRANCE
OF ME**

IN THE SAME WAY
*he took the cup of wine
after supper*

SAYING
*This cup is the
new covenant
between God and
his people - an
agreement confirmed
with my blood.*

DO THIS
IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME
AS OFTEN AS YOU DRINK IT

FOR EVERY TIME YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND
DRINK THIS CUP YOU ARE ANNOUNCING THE
LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES AGAIN

I have learned
the secret of living
in every situation
WHETHER IT IS
with a full stomach
OR empty
with plenty
OR LITTLE

FOR
**I CAN DO
EVERYTHING
THROUGH
CHRIST
WHO GIVES ME
STRENGTH**

from PHILIPPIANS 4:12-13

**I AM
CONVINCED**

**THAT
NOTHING
CAN EVER
SEPARATE US
FROM**

God's love

**NEITHER DEATH
NOR LIFE
NOR ANGELS
NOR DEMONS
NEITHER OUR
FEARS FOR TODAY
NOR OUR WORRIES
ABOUT TOMORROW
NOT EVEN THE
POWERS OF HELL**

from ROMANS 8:38



Preach
The Word
of God

Be prepared
whether the time is favourable or not

PATIENTLY
CORRECT

REBUKE

AND

encourage
your people

WITH

GOOD
TEACHING

AFRICA
STUDY
BIBLE™





GOD'S WORD THROUGH AFRICAN EYES

The *Africa Study Bible* is a pacesetter in using the African experience for understanding the Bible. I recommend it highly to those who have sought to understand life and the world from an African perspective.

Dr. Mvume Dandala, *former presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and former head of the All Africa Conference of Churches*

The *Africa Study Bible* is a welcome blessing to the body of Christ in Africa, which is becoming a centerpiece for divine visitation. The most difficult concepts, names, periods, and situations that African readers grapple with have been greatly simplified by making them relevant to our understanding and context. These were further made easier by including various explanatory notes, relevant articles, African proverbs, idioms, and pithy sayings. All of these make both the reading and study of the Bible much easier and friendly to Africans.

This study Bible demonstrates two important things about our church in Africa. First, we are coming of age. We no longer have to get most of our Bible study resources from outside Africa. The Spirit of Jesus anointed well over 300 African writers, who contributed to this highly useful study Bible, the first of its kind on the African continent. Second, we are coming together. We Christians have far more that unites us than divides us. Therefore, the traditional missionary churches, the Pentecostals, the indigenous African churches, and others laid aside our minor differences to write the notes for this study Bible that can teach and bless all of us. This is the Holy Spirit in action. Jesus' prayer on his last night on this earth—that "we may be one"—is being answered in this study Bible. I offer my most sincere congratulations and thanks to all our brothers and sisters who have contributed to this study Bible through coordinating, writing, editing, and funding. I, therefore, endorse and recommend it very highly to all Christians, churches, and students of the Bible.

Pastor E. A. Adeboye, *General Overseer, Redeemed Christian Church of God*

The *Africa Study Bible* is a clear indication that the African Church has come of age. In this publication, different African Christian leaders interact with Scripture using African lenses yet remain faithful to the evangelical doctrine. I commend it to all readers, African or otherwise.

Rev. Canon Peter Karanja, *General Secretary, National Council of Churches of Kenya*

Here is a fresh study Bible of significant value written by African scholars from an African perspective. This is indeed a much-awaited contribution to our appreciation and deeper understanding of the biblical narratives in a context that is much closer to the African culture and worldview. It is hoped that not only Africans but also people from other cultures would find this study most beneficial for personal devotion and spiritual development.

Dr. Opoku Onyinah, *Chairman, The Church of Pentecost*

The emergence of the *Africa Study Bible* is, no doubt, divinely providential as the church in Africa is clearly fast becoming the global missionary hub of the twenty-first century and the center of world Christianity. Oasis International is being used by God to bring us this gift that is an amazing tool to grow the church in Africa in understanding doctrine, values, and the Bible. It is contextual, culturally relevant, and truly indigenous as God's Word through African eyes. The ASB is highly recommended for every professing Christian in Africa.

Dr. Dachollom C. Datiri, *President, Church of Christ in Nations*

I welcome this collaboration and fruits of the *Africa Study Bible* and commend it to readers throughout the world. Of course the Bible is universal, but it is always given life by the lived experiences of the people of God.

Dr. Thabo Makgoba, *Archbishop, Church of South Africa, Anglican Community*

The arrival of the *Africa Study Bible* will certainly reduce considerably the long hours and the amount of money spent by pastors and teachers of the Bible, especially at the grassroots level, to find the right kind of materials for more effective teaching and a better application of the Bible. I am confident that this study Bible will be an invaluable daily companion to every pastor, teacher, and seminarian in Africa.

Rev. Daniel Okoh, *General Superintendent, Christ Holy Church International and International Chairman, the Organization of African Instituted Churches*

What you would expect when pastors and Christian scholars from across Africa who affirm the Bible as the inspired Word of God compile a study Bible for their own people is precisely what you have here. This is a project whose time has come, and it has been well executed. Africa will be richer for it. What a timeless gift this will be!

Dr. Conrad Mbewe, *Chancellor, African Christian University*

The *Africa Study Bible* is original, rich, profound, and inspiring. Thanks to its notes, African Touch Points, and illuminating insights drawn from African context and experience, it will encourage Africans in particular, as well as others, to read the Word with a new freshness, to better understand and to put the Scriptures into practice. This Bible fills an enormous void. It is superb and unique. Pick it up and read it!

Dr. Daniel Bourdagné, *General Secretary, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students*

The *Africa Study Bible* is a precious resource that reflects the reality of the shift in Christianity's center of gravity to the southern hemisphere and to Africa in particular. It enables and equips Christians in Africa to study the Bible for themselves by using their heartfelt thought and language categories. The uniqueness of its African perspective, its accomplished authors, and the wealth of the topics covered, make the *Africa Study Bible* the new and reliable companion of all who wish to explore the Bible through African eyes.

Dr. Michel Kenmogne, *Executive Director, SIL International*

The *Africa Study Bible* has come at a time when frustration with the pulpit is driving many Christians in Africa back to discarded roots. This *Africa Study Bible* is a ready-made prescription that is going to drive any willing African back to God because the instructions are now easily unpacked.

Dr. G. O. Olutola, JP, *President, The Apostolic Church Nigeria and President, Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria*

The rich and culturally sensitive *Africa Study Bible* will benefit every pastor, Bible teacher, and individual believer. The African perspective will be invaluable to those living on the African continent and to Africans living elsewhere in the world. The amaZioni of southern Africa are excited and encouraged by the release of the ASB that will enable them to better understand and apply the truths of the Word of God.

Rev. Robert K Tunywashe, *President, Zion Evangelical Fellowship of Africa*

The *Africa Study Bible* fills a long-felt need among Protestants in French-speaking Africa, a need that has remained unfulfilled up until now. While keeping African cultural elements in mind and without betraying the Holy Scriptures, the *Africa Study Bible* allows the African reader to see God without being encumbered with foreign ideas. John, in the book of Revelation of our Lord God, promises blessing for all who obey what is written in the Book. I encourage all pastors and Christian laymen to use the *Africa Study Bible* to understand and incorporate God's Word into their lives.

Dr. José Matumueni Kiendi, *Protestant Theological Seminary of Brazzaville*

Here is Africa boldly raising her own voice in the rich arena of Christian theological voices.

Dr. Peter Yuh Kimeng, *Academic Dean, Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary*

The *Africa Study Bible* couldn't have come at a better time. Africa is a continent that is experiencing exponential growth not just in terms of its population census, but more importantly the ecclesiastical census. The *Africa Study Bible* comes at a time when many of us are keen to identify with the wealth of our heritage, tracing our footprints in the Bible; when we are seeking to portray the richness of God's endowment to us; when Africa is being exposed to different world views and philosophies, which can be in conflict with biblical beliefs and practices. The *Africa Study Bible* is a Bible for "such a time as this."

Rev. Connie Kivuti, *General Secretary, Evangelical Alliance of Kenya*

Christianity in Africa has flourished in the last century. It is now time for Africa to lead the global church in fulfilling the Great Commission. I commend the *Africa Study Bible* for giving African scholars a platform to enrich the global church through its unique African lenses. It adds to the few resources with a biblical world view that engages the unique challenges of the continent.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Mairori, *International Coordinator, International Christian Ministries*

Like Philip explaining the Scriptures to the Ethiopian official (Acts 8:31), so will the *Africa Study Bible* be to thousands and thousands of Christians in Africa today. With the *Africa Study Bible*, the Scriptures come to life.

Dr. Issiaka Coulibaly, *Dean, Faculté de Théologie Évangélique de l'Alliance Chrétienne*

Biblical principles communicated in African stories and images to create better understanding of Christ and His Word by Africans to Africans and the global community fascinates me. It makes my heart rejoice. While we seek to share God's Word in diverse ways for positive life impact, I trust the *Africa Study Bible* will be a readily available resource in the formation of believers into true Christian disciples.

Dr. Mensa Otabil, *General Overseer of International Central Gospel Church*

The *Africa Study Bible* is a striking example of Africans applying the Scriptures to life for themselves and by so doing, benefitting the global church. African ways of thinking and communicating, as well as the riches of Africa's cultures and traditions, are incorporated in this inspiring and colossal work. The church will lose much if it ignores the contribution of Africa's interaction with the Holy Scriptures.

Rev. Sylvain Allaboé, *Director, West African Baptist, Advanced School of Theology*

The *Africa Study Bible*: What a privilege and honor to be a part of this treasure for the church in Africa that contains over 2,600 notes that deal with African issues in the light of God's Word.

Joanna Ilboudo, *Founder, Action Chrétienne Tous pour la Solidarité*

The *Africa Study Bible* study comes out as a response to the evangelist Philip's question, "Do you understand what you are reading?" as well as to the Egyptian eunuch's reply, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, hundreds of Christians in Africa have skillfully used proverbs, stories, and notes to make the message of the Scripture come out clearly so all can understand and apply sound Christian principles to their lives in contemporary Africa. This is a timely study Bible needed for the growth of the church in Africa, and it will be a blessing to the body of Christ worldwide.

Dr. Abel Ndjerareou, *Director, Transafrican Education Network
Former Dean, Bangui Evangelical School of Theology*

The *Africa Study Bible* is spiritual wealth and a rich resource for the church in Africa and the world.

Dr. Isaiah Majok Dau, *Sudan Pentecostal Church*

A writer said, "The African church, while fully leaning on the Holy Scriptures, needs to make its convictions known in order to respond to the pressing needs of the African community." For us, this work, the *Africa Study Bible*, is nothing other than tangible proof of the African church's voice.

Dr. Charles Kouami Amedjikpo, *Director, Baptist Bible Institute of Togo*

Speaking about God with words that clearly communicate the truth of the gospel to the different African societies so rich with cultural diversity is a considerable challenge. The *Africa Study Bible* has ventured out into this territory in order to provide a contextualized tool to help the church reach this goal. Every African reader will find in the pages of the *Africa Study Bible* the riches that will enable him to feed and affirm his faith within his own context. The *Africa Study Bible* is the pride of African Christians and yet another step forward for the church in Africa.

Dr. Abel Ngarsouledé, *President, Shalom Evangelical School of Theology*

I strongly recommend the *Africa Study Bible*, first of its kind for African people by her own pastors, theologians, and practicing Christians. The ASB will meet the needs of Christians in Africa as well as of those undecided faith seekers who are seeking knowledge and understanding of both Scripture and its application. While there are many study Bibles, the ASB will be particularly useful in helping provide insights on how to handle unique situations that are rampant concerns within the continent—such as refugees, people group reconciliation, polygamy, among others. This is a manual that presents the Word of God and its application, plus the culture and history of the African person with precision. Thus, it's a three-in-one study tool that every Christian in Africa—male, female, young, and old—ought to urgently get hold of and dig into with consistency.

Rev. Canon Rosemary Mbogo, *Provincial Secretary, Anglican Church of Kenya*

With the *Africa Study Bible*, the African church sets its mind to writing. Because of our unique approach, the resulting work will be raised up as a standard. The *Africa Study Bible* is one of the first collaborative works to be written by our diverse community. It has accomplished something that has never been done before.

Augustin Ahoga, *Regional Secretary, Francophone Africa
International Fellowship of Evangelical Students*

God's Word in our own African idiom! This is Immanuel, God with us, indeed! Christ comes to us, dwells with us, and speaks to us in our own languages! May the written Word become the Living Word that takes root and flourishes within and among us.

Rev. Kuzipa Nalwamba, *Communications Manager, Council for World Mission*

From the time when the African nations gained their independence, theologians in Africa have debated the need for a theology of enculturation in Africa so that God's message could be analyzed, explained, and understood in the African context. With the notes and articles written by theologians, pastors, and writers from across Africa, the *Africa Study Bible* has given a marvelous opportunity in the beginning of this 21st century for all Africans to understand the Bible in their own cultures.

Prof. Robert N'Kwim Bibi-Bikan, *Professor, Missiology and Religious Studies
Université Protestante au Congo*

The production of the *Africa Study Bible* is one of the major responses to the quest of the church in Africa to develop resources that are appropriate for preaching the gospel from the realities of Africa. This is a tool that will enable Christians in Africa to find the resources in their cultures that are relevant to the Kingdom of God and also enable the church to engage with some of the issues in our cultures that have been a barrier to the gospel and abundance of life. The *Africa Study Bible* will also enable the church beyond Africa to share in the insights that are coming from the continent where the church is growing fastest.

Rev. Nicta Lubaale, *General Secretary, Organization of African Instituted Churches*

The world of the Bible is often far removed from us. The *Africa Study Bible* has bridged this temporal and cultural gap in a unique way for modern readers in the African context. The sights and sounds of Africa, so familiar to the reader, form the bridge that helps uncover the meaning of the biblical text, but even more significantly, allows for much needed accurate and relevant application.

Dr. Elizabeth Mburu, *Associate Professor, New Testament and Greek
International Leadership University*

AFRICA STUDY BIBLE™



New Living
Translation.



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Africa Study Bible

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CONTENTS

Articles and Learn Notes Index	A11
Partners, Contributors, and Editors	A14
You Can Trust the Notes in This Bible	A23
Using the <i>Africa Study Bible</i>	A25
History and Vision of the <i>Africa Study Bible</i>	A28
Introduction to the New Living Translation	A31
A Note of Thanks	A41
The Story of the Bible	A42
Understanding and Applying the Old Testament Today	A45

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis (Gen)	3	Ecclesiastes (Eccl)	951
Exodus (Exod)	77	Song of Songs (Song)	967
Leviticus (Lev)	146	Isaiah (Isa)	980
Numbers (Num)	192	Jeremiah (Jer)	1068
Deuteronomy (Deut)	248	Lamentations (Lam)	1143
Joshua (Josh)	296	Ezekiel (Ezek)	1153
Judges (Judg)	334	Daniel (Dan)	1217
Ruth (Ruth)	370	Hosea (Hos)	1249
1 Samuel (1 Sam)	380	Joel (Joel)	1270
2 Samuel (2 Sam)	427	Amos (Amos)	1279
1 Kings (1 Kgs)	471	Obadiah (Obad)	1295
2 Kings (2 Kgs)	520	Jonah (Jon)	1300
1 Chronicles (1 Chr)	564	Micah (Mic)	1309
2 Chronicles (2 Chr)	611	Nahum (Nah)	1321
Ezra (Ezra)	666	Habakkuk (Hab)	1327
Nehemiah (Neh)	687	Zephaniah (Zeph)	1333
Esther (Esth)	716	Haggai (Hag)	1339
Job (Job)	731	Zechariah (Zech)	1344
Psalms (Ps)	777	Malachi (Mal)	1360
Proverbs (Prov)	903		

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew (Matt)	1375	1 Timothy (1 Tim)	1778
Mark (Mark)	1430	2 Timothy (2 Tim)	1792
Luke (Luke)	1469	Titus (Titus)	1803
John (John)	1528	Philemon (Phlm)	1810
Acts (Acts)	1577	Hebrews (Heb)	1817
Romans (Rom)	1632	James (Jas)	1841
1 Corinthians (1 Cor)	1659	1 Peter (1 Pet)	1853
2 Corinthians (2 Cor)	1687	2 Peter (2 Pet)	1865
Galatians (Gal)	1705	1 John (1 Jn)	1873
Ephesians (Eph)	1720	2 John (2 Jn)	1885
Philippians (Phil)	1735	3 John (3 Jn)	1890
Colossians (Col)	1747	Jude (Jude)	1897
1 Thessalonians (1 Thes)	1759	Revelation (Rev)	1903
2 Thessalonians (2 Thes)	1769		

The History of Christianity in Africa	1934
A Narrative Timeline of God’s Work in Africa	1937
Index of Charts, Maps, Timelines, and Graphics	1966
Topical Index and Concordance	1970
Bible Overview Reading Plan	2093



BOOKS OF THE BIBLE ALPHABETICALLY

Acts (Acts)	1577	Judges (Judg)	334
Amos (Amos)	1279	1 Kings (1 Kgs)	471
1 Chronicles (1 Chr)	564	2 Kings (2 Kgs)	520
2 Chronicles (2 Chr)	611	Lamentations (Lam).	1143
Colossians (Col)	1741	Leviticus (Lev)	146
1 Corinthians (1 Cor)	1659	Luke (Luke)	1469
2 Corinthians (2 Cor)	1687	Malachi (Mal)	1360
Daniel (Dan)	1217	Mark (Mark)	1430
Deuteronomy (Deut)	248	Matthew (Matt)	1375
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Exodus (Exod)	77	Numbers (Num)	192
Ezekiel (Ezek)	1153	Obadiah (Obad)	1295
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Galatians (Gal)	1675	2 Peter (2 Pet)	1865
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3 John (3 Jn)	1890	2 Timothy (2 Tim)	1792
Jonah (Jon)	1300	Titus (Titus)	1803
Joshua (Josh)	296	Zechariah (Zech)	1344
Jude (Jude)	1897	Zephaniah (Zeph)	1333



ARTICLES AND LEARN NOTES

The *Africa Study Bible* includes more than 130 Articles and Learn Notes. The Articles will help us live out the truths of the Bible in our daily lives or help us appreciate our African Christian heritage. The Learn Notes teach us significant theological truths. As you read these you will learn the important doctrines and values of our faith. Look through the following list, then read an Article or Learn Note to get started.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
The Story of the Bible (<i>article</i>)	Before Genesis	A42
Understanding and Applying the Old Testament Today (<i>article</i>)	Before Genesis	A45
Creation	Genesis 1	6
The Fall	Genesis 3	9
Caring for God’s Creation (<i>article</i>)	Genesis 50	74
God’s Name	Exodus 3	86
Old Testament Festivals—The Passover	Exodus 12	99
The Ten Commandments	Exodus 20	111
Money and Possessions—God’s Wealth in Our Hands (<i>article</i>)	Exodus 40	143
Atonement	Leviticus 6	154
Circumcision in the Bible	Leviticus 13	163
Old Testament Festivals—The Day of Atonement	Leviticus 16	169
Old Testament Festivals—The Festival of Shelters	Leviticus 24	182
Tribes and Tribalism (<i>article</i>)	Leviticus 27	189
Genealogies	Numbers 26	230
Old Testament Festivals—Rosh Hashanah	Numbers 29	235
Land, Labour, and Inheritance (<i>article</i>)	Numbers 36	246
The Trinity	Deuteronomy 6	258
Worship	Deuteronomy 11	264
Old Testament Festivals—The Festival of Harvest	Deuteronomy 16	269
The Pentateuch	Deuteronomy 32	289
Refugees—God’s People in Transition (<i>article</i>)	Deuteronomy 34	294
The Historical Books	Joshua 1	300
African Traditional Beliefs and the Bible (<i>article</i>)	Joshua 24	331
Political Corruption	Judges 2	339
Care for Widows and Orphans (<i>article</i>)	Judges 21	367
Childlessness (<i>article</i>)	Ruth 4	378
Deliverance and Exorcism	1 Samuel 16	403
Literary Genres in the Bible (<i>article</i>)	1 Samuel 31	424
Repentance	2 Samuel 12	447
Reconciliation and Forgiveness (<i>article</i>)	2 Samuel 24	468
Polygamy	1 Kings 11	494
Youth and African Society (<i>article</i>)	1 Kings 22	516
The LORD, Who Brought You Out of Egypt	2 Kings 17	547
The Sovereignty of God and Colonialism	2 Kings 23	559
Ancestors	1 Chronicles 10	579
Christians in Business (<i>article</i>)	1 Chronicles 29	608
Animal Sacrifice	2 Chronicles 30	652
Witches and Diviners (<i>article</i>)	2 Chronicles 36	662
Places of Worship	Ezra 6	677
Leadership in Africa (<i>article</i>)	Ezra 10	685

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
Serving God in Government (<i>article</i>)	Nehemiah 13	712
Women in the Bible (<i>article</i>)	Esther 10	728
Satan, the Accuser	Job 2	735
Books of Wisdom and Poetry	Job 5	738
Suffering—God’s Goodness and God’s Power (<i>article</i>)	Job 42	774
Good Works	Psalms 1	780
Sin	Psalms 51	819
Our Time with God	Psalms 119	876
The Many Forms of Woship (<i>article</i>)	Psalms 150	900
Proverbs in the Bible and in Africa	Proverbs 6	912
Godly Parenting (<i>article</i>)	Proverbs 31	947
Time Management (<i>article</i>)	Ecclesiastes 12	965
Sexuality and Purity (<i>article</i>)	Song of Songs 8	976
Prophets and Prophecy	Isaiah 2	986
Angels and Demons	Isaiah 6	992
Fetishes and Charms	Isaiah 44	1036
The Holy Spirit	Isaiah 61	1058
Justice—A Foundation for Biblical Peace (<i>article</i>)	Isaiah 66	1066
Sabbath	Jeremiah 17	1097
Interpreting the Bible (<i>article</i>)	Ezekiel 48	1214
Power Structures in Society	Daniel 4	1229
The Omniscience and Providence of God as Seen Through Daniel's Visions	Daniel 7	1234
The African Diaspora (<i>article</i>)	Daniel 12	1246
Love	Hosea 3	1253
Marriage (<i>article</i>)	Hosea 14	1266
Dreams and Visions	Joel 2	1274
Honour and Respect	Amos 3	1283
Injustices (<i>article</i>)	Amos 9	1292
Health and Wellness (<i>article</i>)	Jonah 4	1306
Tithes and Offerings	Micah 6	1317
The Elderly in Africa (<i>article</i>)	Zechariah 14	1358
Divorce	Malachi 2	1364
Between Malachi and Matthew	Malachi 4	1366
Similarities between the Cultures of the Bible and Africa (<i>article</i>)	Malachi 4	1368
Baptism	Matthew 3	1382
The Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 6	1388
Heaven and Hell	Matthew 25	1419
The Great Commission	Matthew 28	1427
The Kingdom of God (<i>article</i>)	Matthew 28	1428
The Synoptic Gospels	Mark 1	1433
The Second Coming of Christ	Mark 13	1457
Jesus and the Women Who Made His Ministry Possible	Mark 15	1462
Christianity’s African Roots (<i>article</i>)	Mark 16	1466
Mary and the Virgin Birth of Jesus	Luke 2	1475
Prayer	Luke 11	1495
Stewardship	Luke 19	1510
The Sacraments	Luke 22	1517
Discipleship (<i>article</i>)	Luke 24	1524
Salvation	John 3	1535
Is Jesus Both God and Man?	John 19	1563
Jesus Compared to Founders of Other Religions (<i>article</i>)	John 21	1569

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
Baptism of the Holy Spirit	Acts 8	1594
Our Identity in Christ	Acts 11	1601
Miracles (<i>article</i>)	Acts 28	1630
The Letters of Paul	Romans 1	1635
The Good News of Jesus Christ	Romans 3	1639
Missions (<i>article</i>)	Romans 16	1655
Unity and Diversity	1 Corinthians 1	1662
The Lord's Supper	1 Corinthians 11	1675
Resurrection	1 Corinthians 15	1681
Singleness (<i>article</i>)	1 Corinthians 16	1684
Community	2 Corinthians 5	1693
Care and Counselling in the Church (<i>article</i>)	2 Corinthians 13	1703
Man and Woman	Galatians 4	1711
Heresy (<i>article</i>)	Galatians 6	1717
Eternal Life	Ephesians 2	1724
Apostles and Prophets	Ephesians 4	1727
Deliverance from Spiritual Powers (<i>article</i>)	Ephesians 6	1732
Modern Technology and Media (<i>article</i>)	Philippians 4	1744
Curses and Blessings	Colossians 3	1753
Cults (<i>article</i>)	Colossians 4	1756
Sanctification	1 Thessalonians 4	1763
Bereavement (<i>article</i>)	1 Thessalonians 5	1766
Work (<i>article</i>)	2 Thessalonians 3	1775
Mediation	1 Timothy 2	1781
Reading and Obeying the Bible (<i>article</i>)	1 Timothy 6	1789
The Bible—Writing, History, Reliability (<i>article</i>)	2 Timothy 4	1800
What Makes a Healthy Church? (<i>article</i>)	Titus 3	1808
Made in the Image of God	Philemon 1	1813
Slavery (<i>article</i>)	Philemon 1	1815
Grace	Hebrews 4	1823
Faith	Hebrews 12	1833
A Biblical View of Sex	Hebrews 13	1835
Rites of Passage (<i>article</i>)	Hebrews 13	1838
Healing	James 5	1849
Children at Risk (<i>article</i>)	James 5	1851
The Church	1 Peter 2	1857
Christian Ethics in Africa (<i>article</i>)	1 Peter 5	1862
Living Holy Lives (<i>article</i>)	2 Peter 3	1870
The Writings of John	1 John 1	1875
Loving Your Neighbour (<i>article</i>)	1 John 5	1882
The Christian Family (<i>article</i>)	2 John 1	1888
Ubuntu (<i>article</i>)	3 John 1	1894
Teaching and Preaching in the Digital Era (<i>article</i>)	Jude 1	1901
Revelation and Apocalyptic Writing	Revelation 4	1912
The Nations	Revelation 7	1915
Regeneration	Revelation 21	1930
The History of Christianity in Africa (<i>article</i>)	After Revelation	1934



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YOU CAN TRUST THE NOTES IN THIS BIBLE

You can trust the text (see “Introduction to the New Living Translation”) and notes of the *Africa Study Bible* (ASB). The ASB has undergone one of the most thorough and rigorous quality reviews of any study Bible or Bible reference book in the world. The message, theology, and format have been checked and double checked to assure that the ASB speaks with a unified voice; adheres to the highest editorial standard; and is clear, readable, and biblically accurate.

The editorial leaders, following the mandate of the Founding Committee of the *Africa Study Bible*, were deeply aware that there is a blessed and full diversity within the body of Christ. In fact, the editorial team itself was carefully chosen to accurately reflect the diversity of the church in Africa. Great effort was made to assure that correct and accepted Christian beliefs are reflected and encouraged, while allowing for differences in opinion on non-essential issues.

It is best to let the editorial process speak for itself:

First, denominational or ministry leaders who are scholars, pastors, or elders recommended potential writers. Writers were given assignments based on specifications established by the Founding Committee of the *Africa Study Bible*, including language, gender, and geographic diversity. Writing coordinators worked to match each contributor’s expertise with a topic or passage to encourage quality submissions.

The contributors represented people whose heart languages range from Yoruba in western Africa to Swahili in the east, and from Zulu in the south to Amharic in the north. Besides English, many wrote in French and some in Portuguese, Arabic, or Swahili. A team translated their contributions into the English that you will read here.

We are thrilled that the ASB met these goals for country, language and gender diversity:

- Writers from fifty countries.
- One hundred ninety-four writers from Anglophone countries.
- One hundred writers from Francophone countries.
- Eleven from Portuguese-speaking countries.
- Eleven from Arabic-speaking countries.
- Sixty-nine female writers.

Second, supervising editor Dr. John Jusu reviewed, commented on, and approved every submission—often sending material back to a writer for revision when needed.

Third, a team of editors worked to standardize submissions so the *Africa Study Bible* speaks with a unified voice.

Fourth, edited articles and notes by book batches were sent to a group of ten African theological scholars to review and make suggestions for improvement.

After which, an experienced Bible editorial team revised the material according to the African scholars’ suggestions and edited the articles and notes for clarity.

Next, two senior Ph.D.-level theological editors reviewed the revised articles and notes book by book.

Finally, the articles and notes were copyedited and checked for reading level and accessibility by the target audience.

Once typeset into the current format, the entire biblical text, articles, notes, and supplemental study materials were proofread to assure accuracy and editorial excellence.

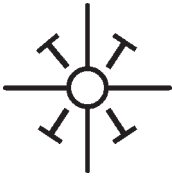
Fourteen to twenty individuals reviewed, edited, and proofread each note and article. This rigorous and exhaustive process assures us that the *Africa Study Bible* speaks with the highest quality as a trusted resource for the church.



SYMBOLS OF THE AFRICA STUDY BIBLE



This **Ornate Cross** serves as the primary symbol of the *Africa Study Bible*. The four points of the cross represent the four corners of Africa: North, South, East, and West. The points are comprised of spears, as the holy Word of God serves as our primary weapon in the battle for his kingdom. The concentric rings represent the unity the Gospel can bring to people of every country, race, and denomination. Finally, the four shields represent God's all-encompassing protection of those he has called to faith, such that they need fear only him.



The **Coptic Cross** highlights "Learn" features in the *Africa Study Bible*, which provide key historical doctrinal understandings of God's Word and the Church. It represents the North African region, reminding readers of Africa as ancient seat of Christianity, home of Augustine and Athanasius.



The "**Mate Masie**" highlights the "Proverbs and Stories" features, revealing the connection between uniquely African sayings and the wisdom of Scripture. It is an Adinkra symbol, representing West Africa, and stands for wisdom and for God's omniscience.



The Nguni symbol for "**Made Peace**" serves to highlight the "African Touch Points" features, where Scripture and the African way of life are considered and reconciled. Representing Southern Africa, this symbol serves to represent our peace with God and one another.



The **Masai Shield and Spear** highlight "Application Notes," which equip the reader with the tools they need to act righteously and fight for God's glory. Representing East Africa, these symbols remind readers of the safeguard of faith and of the great power of God's Word to defeat Satan.



USING THE AFRICA STUDY BIBLE

Each feature of the *Africa Study Bible* was planned by African leaders who teach and lead God's people. Their goal was to help us grow strong in Jesus Christ and to give insight about God's Word to the continent and to the world as *God's Word Through African Eyes*.

Each note is written to inform us about an important topic or to help us understand a verse or passage. This is not information to memorize but instruction on how to live a good and righteous life. Each is based on God's wisdom and truth. What are the special concerns and issues that we face in Africa? How does God want us to live as we face each challenge? Even as we ask those questions, the *Africa Study Bible* is much more. It will teach us how to apply the Word of God to our lives. Each day, we must open the Bible and let it be God's bread for us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The notes in the *Africa Study Bible* can show us, by example, how to apply God's truth. Sometimes our thinking or our culture really fits the truth in God's Word, and this Bible shows us how to celebrate and encourage that. Sometimes we need correction from God's Word, and we need to learn to think and live differently. Perhaps we need to find a new path or even repentance. The *Africa Study Bible* shows us how to do that, too. And sometimes, the *Africa Study Bible* will help us grow deep and mature in our faith or encourage us in the tough times.

It is our prayer that we will not only be reading and learning what others have to say about the Bible, but we will be learning by example to take what we are reading and apply it in a way that honours God and builds his Kingdom for ourselves. The *Africa Study Bible* is written by leaders across our continent who have worked their entire lives to learn how to apply the truth found in the Bible. They wish to be faithful in applying God's Word to our lives in Africa and the world. As we read and listen to their wisdom, we can learn this skill as well. The Bible has many more applications than we will find in this Bible, but by observing how to apply the Bible correctly, we can learn to apply the Bible to our own situation. If you would like to learn

more, we have developed tools that teach how to apply the Bible. Visit africastudybible.com for more information.

As Paul reminds us in 2 Timothy 2:15: "Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth."

African Touch Points draw attention to Scripture passages with a special connection to Africa. There are three kinds of Touch Points. In some Touch Points, we explore a passage where the Bible talks about Africa or a person from Africa. Other Touch Points have an important quotation from one of the greatest early African Christian leaders, whose writings and teachings helped shape all of Christianity. Listen carefully to the voices of thinkers such as Augustine, Athanasius, Cyril, and Origen. Finally, many of the Touch Points feature an example of how African culture sheds light on the meaning of a passage. Often, African cultures are much closer to the culture of the Bible than the cultures of North America and Europe. This is a key area where the African church can speak about the significance and impact of Scripture to the worldwide church.

Introductions to each book of the Bible help us understand its history and biblical cultures. They have a special focus on issues close to the African heart. Sometimes a book of the Bible does not tell us who wrote it, but most often we have evidence that may point to a particular person. Sometimes scholars who study the Bible disagree about who wrote a book of the Bible. Some stories were passed on orally for a long time before they were written down, just as is common in our culture. A priest or a prophet may have written stories down or edited a book years after it was first written to help it speak correctly to his own time. But we have historical evidence showing us that there was a very accurate transmission of the stories written in the Bible. We can trust that God inspired this process, and Jesus affirms the Old Testament as the Word of God. In the *Africa Study Bible*, when we do not know who was the original author, we may say some-

thing like “According to Jewish tradition, Moses wrote Genesis.” We affirm with our whole hearts the words of 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”

Beyond listing general facts, the introductions will connect you to the original purpose and audience. Many books of the Bible were originally read aloud to a group of people or even sung. They are written records of stories, poems, and instructions that people often heard rather than read. Like musicians, often the authors used repeating patterns to communicate their message. They also focused on characters and plot to make a point, like great storytellers. They had a message for the listener to learn. The book introduction highlights the story and the rhythm of each Bible book and what the book can teach us, just like the traditional African storyteller.

Application Notes are used to inspire readers to apply what the Bible teaches to our lives. They will help us reflect on issues in light of the truths in Scripture. These notes can show us how the Bible’s message should change the way we live. They also help us understand how to apply truth from Scripture to our daily lives. The goal of our writers is to teach us to think about all issues in light of what the Bible says. We can use these notes to learn how to apply the Bible to our lives. First we work to understand the meaning of the text in the Bible, *then* we apply that truth to our current situation.

Proverbs and Stories illuminate and complement the biblical text. The African peoples have a wealth of wise sayings, fables, and stories that the *Africa Study Bible* explores. These have been referred to as the treasures of Africa or the wisdom of the elders. This feature will help the Bible come alive by highlighting passages that have parallels with a specific African proverb or story. The proverb or story is used as a starting place to illuminate the original meaning of the Bible. Proverbs may either be in agreement or in conflict with the text. We can follow this example to learn how the Bible relates to our cultures either positively or negatively. In all things, the truth of the Bible is to be our authority even when it does not agree with traditional wisdom. Often specific regions or tribes are identified, with the prov-

erb quoted in the original language. These sayings are the work of the original author and no attempt has been made to check for accuracy.

Articles are about living the Christian life and critical concerns that face the African church and its people. The committee chose article topics and gave writers main points and issues to address. Each Article was written with the following three questions: (1) What is the biblical basis for the perspective being presented? (2) What are the specific African issues for this topic? (3) How may the truth be applied to everyday life? The Articles appear between books of the Bible so they do not interrupt the flow of the text. Read through the index to find a topic of interest to you. Articles will help us understand how to apply the Bible to a specific area of life where God’s wisdom is needed.

Learn Notes expand our thinking in theology, doctrine, and biblical values. The committee chose important topics to be explored, things that “every Christian should know.” Each Learn Note explains the topic, giving a basic understanding that the majority of Christians agree on. At least one special point of interest or application for Africa is considered for every topic. Learn Notes are placed near Scripture about the topic. Learn Notes show us how to discern the great doctrines of our faith by listening to the whole Bible speak with a unified voice.

Resources for Learning and Teaching are included throughout and at the back of the Bible. The **Topical Index and Concordance** lists all the Articles, Application Notes, Stories and Proverbs, African Touch Points, and Bible references that give insight into a particular topic. This Topical Index and Concordance also includes two other special features. Words that have special meaning for the church are explained—like *propitiation* or *sanctification*. Also, this feature defines English words from the text of the Bible that may be unclear or are seldom used in Africa. A brief biography of each Early African Church Father who is quoted in African Touch Points is included. This one feature, will equip us to learn or teach about almost any topic found in the Bible.

You will also find a special feature presenting the history of God’s people in Africa—A **Narrative Timeline of God’s Work in Africa**. This unique graphical timeline will help you

understand God's work in Africa from Abraham through the year 2010—it is an insightful overview of all God has done in our continent over almost 4,000 years.

In addition, **maps and other graphical timelines and features** are spread throughout the Bible to help us understand the locations, people, time, and structure of the Bible. One of the features, **Harmony of the Gospels**, located at the end of the Gospel of John, gives us a wonderful overview of how the four Gospels tell a unified story and also how they tell the life of Jesus from different viewpoints.

Bible Overview Reading Plan was created specifically for the *Africa Study Bible*. Here is a plan to give you an overview of the whole Bible in one year by reading the length of a chapter six days a week. If you commit to this, you will receive a wonderful understanding of the story of God reaching out to us.

All of these features help us understand the wonder and diversity of the Bible, the rich Christian heritage of Africa, and the part that Africa played in the events of the Bible.

Colorful original art in the front of the *Africa Study Bible* was created to show the beauty and power of God's Word. Verses were chosen that highlight the project's goals and beloved verses give encouragement and power as they are memorized, shared, and hidden in our hearts. The art is built from many of the scripts, symbols, colors, and patterns of Africa. Here is a brief explanation of each piece:

—*Mark 12:29-31*. The two greatest commandments are illustrated. The spiraling circle at the top represents the eternal God and the row of people at the bottom represents our neighbors. The two tablets, also in the background, remind us of the Ten Commandments which can be summarized in these two commands given to us by Jesus.

—*Ephesians 2:8-10*. A special robe celebrates the great honour God has given us to be a part of his family when we trust Christ. The lettering for "God's Masterpiece" is designed to express the uniqueness of each one of us working together to bless the world.

—*Galatians 5:22-23*. In these verses, we can imagine various fruits on the same tree. This illustrates the supernatural nature of these character traits. The roots of the tree are included at the bottom to remind us that God's Spirit makes us strong and enables us to live abundantly.

—*Psalm 67*. A compass pattern was chosen to represent God's rule and guidance over all the world's peoples. The words follow the arc of the globe, stretching from one end of the earth to the other. The gold dots radiate from God's name to illustrate that he is the source of all blessing.

—*Psalm 91*. The large background symbol represents the confidence that we should fear no one except God. The psalmist expresses that trust in the Most High through the gentle metaphor of a bird's wings. This reminds us that God's Spirit also revealed himself in the form of a dove when Jesus was baptised.

—*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*. Jesus uses two pictures of the great sacrifice he made for us to be forgiven and accepted by a holy God. The first, his body broken for us, is illustrated here in a cross made from staffs of grain which sprout new life. The second diagonal image is of Christ's blood poured out freely as represented in the wine shared with his disciples.

—*Philippians 4:12-13*. A symbol for strength and humility is shown very large in the background to illustrate the power of Christ to help us do what we can't accomplish in our own strength. The cross, centrally located in the design, reminds us of the great cost by which we have access to His strength.

—*Romans 8:38*. In lettering art, the artist attempts to make words look like what they mean. So these words are designed to show great confidence strong and close together. In contrast, "God's Love" is written in a gentle, comforting style. The background shield represents the assurance that this eternal love protects us.

—*2 Timothy 4:2*. God's Word, the Holy Bible, represented here by a sword and fiery flames, has the power to change us as we listen and obey. The different styles of lettering help to express the meaning of each word or phrase.



HISTORY AND VISION OF THE AFRICA STUDY BIBLE

History

The concept of a study Bible specifically created for the needs of African Christians was birthed in talks among African leaders, Oasis International, and Tyndale House Publishers. A survey and statistical analysis to evaluate the understanding of the Bible by Christians in Jos, Nigeria, was undertaken to evaluate the potential impact of having the Bible in clear, modern language using African vocabulary and expressions. The research clearly showed that meanings of words and expressions in modern English from the United States or the United Kingdom were not always clear for English-speaking Africans.

Over the following years, the project moved forward through conversations with leaders throughout Africa, Bible experts at Tyndale, and the Oasis International Board. These conversations included Dr. Tite Tiénou from Burkina Faso, a member of the team that formed the vision for the *Africa Bible Commentary*. He would soon be joined by several other contributors to the *Africa Bible Commentary*.

It was decided that the project, if attempted, would focus on discipleship and life transformation by providing tools and helps to grow Christians deep in their faith.

During an extensive period of evaluating the need for the project, leaders from the continent were asked to give input. Seminary presidents, denominational leaders, and academics spoke with unity: It was essential that we create a study Bible to reflect the knowledge, culture, and wisdom of Africa, with the purpose of growing African Christians and bringing insight to global Christianity.

Brought together by Oasis International, the project soon had a number of strong development partners, each bringing their unique skills to the project. Special honour is due Tyndale House Publishers and Tyndale House Foundation, who provided expertise and seed funding. In addition, Livingstone, the creators of the best-selling *Life Application Study Bible*, began their role as consultant and editorial manager. After extensive preparation, the Founding Committee of the *Africa Study Bible* met in Accra, Ghana. Leaders from every region of Africa, representing

English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic speaking areas and eleven countries formed the final mandate for the project, making all major editorial decisions. Special thanks goes to Mark Taylor, Bruce Barton, Jeff Wright, and Matthew Elliott—publishing experts who joined the meetings in Accra to advise the committee in study Bible creation.

The committee came together in a spirit of unity; the cornerstone of the meetings was a belief in the power and authority of God's Word and a pastor's heart for growing the African church. In simplest terms, the committee had one mind in making each decision, shared one heart in their desire to foster spiritual growth, and spoke with one voice. The *Africa Study Bible* will for ever reflect the work of the Spirit in the Accra meetings and is for ever indebted to this special group of people—each bringing a unique set of qualifications and knowledge.

Vision

Formed by the committee, the vision for the *Africa Study Bible* reads:

The *Africa Study Bible* is a Bible with study tools written by African pastors and scholars. Our goal is to increase the understanding of the Bible using African insights and experiences to meet the needs of the church in Africa and around the world.

The expression of the governing committee is that the *Africa Study Bible* is to feed God's people as we all need constant feeding from the source of life—God and his holy Word. We Africans should see ourselves and our cultural context in the study notes. Our goal is that the notes will challenge and encourage the readers to live as God's people in Africa. The *Africa Study Bible* is to concentrate on knowledge and application, teaching people how to apply truth to their specific situation. It should empower Jesus' mandate to make disciples. The *Africa Study Bible* will help people make a link between biblical truth and life transformation. "African" writers are defined as those who are African in knowledge, heart, and voice. "Pastors and

scholars” will include ministry and lay leaders who function as pastors and church leaders.

Following from this mandate, the committee decided that the notes would, whenever possible, be paired with modern, easily understood translations. The English edition is being launched using the clear, accurate, and accessible language of the New Living Translation, with other languages added over time. First among these languages will be French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

Following through on the diverse make-up of the committee, targets were set for diversity of the writers by language groups, geographic location, denomination, age, and gender.

Key points and goals for the project include:

- To treat the Bible text as the final authority.
- To give practical and wise teaching in a non-confrontational approach.

- To focus on prescriptive advice, application, and life-transformation.
- To attempt to answer questions that are likely to be in the reader’s mind.
- To create a valuable resource for pastors and teachers as they apply the Word of God for their listeners.
- To create a study Bible that is culturally relevant and readable for the average reader.
- To bring African insights and experiences to the text in a way that makes the Bible come alive for all readers.
- To avoid rehashing specifically Western theological issues and application.

Today, with the prayers and support of partners and donors across the world, the *Africa Study Bible* is bringing the promise of a readable and affordable Bible to Africans and the world.



A NOTE TO READERS OF THE AFRICA STUDY BIBLE

Oasis International and Tyndale House have partnered in creating the *Africa Study Bible*. One of the things we are most excited about is to see readers understand the Bible in a new and fresh way with the text of the New Living Translation (NLT). You might wonder why this Bible does not use the traditional and beautiful King James Version or another modern translation. We have crafted this introduction to help people understand how the NLT can help us know God and his Holy Word. To answer our questions, it is good to understand how we have a Bible in English from the original words written in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.

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.

The *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, was first published in 1996. 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, with minor changes subsequently introduced in 2007, 2013, and 2015. The *Africa Study Bible* uses the Anglicized version, with British spelling.

We understand that many readers are familiar with the King James Version and may have questions about how the NLT differs from this older version. Some of the differences can be explained easily by differences in translation philosophy and methodology, which are explored below in the first section of the "Introduction to the New Living Translation." Other differences are related to the NLT's more contemporary English style. The NLT uses the English spoken today, whereas the King James Version was translated into the English of the 1600s. However, readers familiar with the KJV may notice still other variations related to differences between the texts behind the translations. For more on this, see the discussion in the "Introduction to the New Living Translation" under the section header "Textual Differences between the NLT and the King James Version."

A special feature of the *Africa Study Bible* is that you can look up some well-loved terms from the KJV, such as "propitiation" in the concordance to find their meaning and how the NLT translates these important ideas.

Each of the translators of the NLT believes in the power and ultimate authority of God's Word. 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.

—The Publishers



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 King James Version, New American Standard Bible, and English Standard Version fall generally into this category.) 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. (The New Living Translation and New International Version lean more towards this category.)

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, with minor changes subsequently introduced in 2007, 2013, and 2015.

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.

Textual Differences between the NLT and the King James Version

Many readers are familiar with the King James Version (KJV) and may have questions about how the NLT differs from the KJV. Some of the differences can easily be explained by differences in translation philosophy; this has already been explored above. Other differences are related to the NLT's more contemporary English style. The NLT uses the English spoken today, whereas the KJV was translated

into the English in common use during the 1600s. However, readers familiar with the KJV may notice additional variations related to differences between the texts behind the translations. There are places where the KJV includes verses that do not appear in the NLT and other modern translations.

This is not a simple issue to explain, since the explanation must include information about the process of Bible translation and how the Scriptures were passed down to us from ancient times. The following paragraphs have been written to give some background on the issues involved. You can be certain that the NLT translators have not excluded verses from the Bible out of carelessness or disrespect for God's word. On the contrary, we have sought to translate the NLT from the Hebrew and Greek texts that are as close as possible to the original inspired texts of Scripture.

The NLT is a modern-language translation of the ancient Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible. The original manuscripts of the Scriptures no longer exist, but there are many ancient copies of those manuscripts available to scholars today. For the most part, the wording of the texts is identical between all the ancient manuscripts. But since these manuscripts were all copied by hand before the invention of the printing press, there are many small differences between them. Over time, differences were introduced by scribes in the copying process. Some were clearly simple mistakes; others were intentional explanatory additions. This adds an additional challenge for translators. They not only need to translate the text from an ancient language; they also must select the Hebrew and Greek texts from which the translation will be made. (The textual issues that concern most readers are in the New Testament, so the following comments will focus on the Greek New Testament texts.)

Most modern English translations differ from the KJV because they use a different and older underlying base text. The KJV translators used a Greek text of the New Testament known as the *Textus Receptus* (which means "Received Text"), commonly abbreviated as TR. This text came primarily from a compilation created by Erasmus, a noted Catholic textual scholar, who was a contemporary of Martin Luther. The Greek New Testament compiled by Erasmus was the first to be produced on the printing press,

thus creating a new standard with multiple copies. (The printing press had only recently been invented.) When Erasmus compiled this text in the early 1500s, he used five or six Greek manuscripts that had been hand copied between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries AD. Most scholars believe that these manuscripts are inferior to hundreds of other much earlier manuscripts that have been discovered by archaeologists during the past two hundred years.

Some of the most significant newly discovered manuscripts of the New Testament are *Codex Sinaiticus*, *Codex Vaticanus*, the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (nearly fifty manuscripts), the *Beatty Papyri*, and the *Bodmer Papyri*. These manuscripts, all created before AD 350 (and many dated in the second and third centuries), preserve a text that is closer to the original writings than the later manuscripts used by Erasmus to compile what became the *Textus Receptus*. One of the primary differences is that the later manuscripts contain scribal expansions—that is, through the course of time, scribes added theological explanations, inserted liturgical information, or added phrases or verses to one Gospel by borrowing from parallel passages in the other Gospels. Some of these changes were originally written in the margin of the manuscript but were then incorporated into the text by later scribes. None of these additions were heretical in content, but neither were they part of the original text.

In the past 150 years, scholars have produced editions of the Greek New Testament based on the evidence of the earlier manuscripts. In these editions, most of the scribal expansions that appear in the *Textus Receptus* have been eliminated. Thus, modern translations based on these Greek editions differ from the KJV (and New King James Version), especially in the Gospels, where most of the scribal additions occurred. So modern translators have not removed anything from the Scriptures. Rather, they have simply translated a Greek text that is closer to the original Greek New Testament. If the translators of the KJV were alive today, they would have done the same. In their day, they used the best Greek text available to them.

As already noted in the previous section, the translators of the NLT primarily used the two standard editions of the Greek New Testament: the *Greek New Testament*, published

by the United Bible Societies (fourth revised edition, 1993, often referred to as the UBS4 edition), and *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Nestle and Aland (twenty-seventh edition, 1993, often referred to as the NA27 edition). These two editions, which have the same text but differ in punctuation and textual notes, represent the best in recent textual scholarship. The scholars who compiled and edited them have painstakingly studied the early manuscripts to reconstruct a New Testament Greek text as close to the original as possible. (As mentioned above, the NLT translators sometimes differed from the UBS and NA Greek texts, but only very rarely.)

The most significant and commonly noted extra or expanded verses in the KJV are as follows: Matthew 6:13b; 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; 27:35b; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 9:55b-56a; 17:36; 23:17; John 5:3b-4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:6b-8a; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7b. Since these verses or verse portions were included in the KJV, the NLT translators felt that readers familiar with the KJV would find it helpful to have the extra verses and verse portions included in the NLT footnotes. So at each of the places listed above, the NLT has a footnote that provides the expanded text of the *Textus Receptus*.

Bible Translation Issues

The translators of the NLT 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 metric 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 English (American) 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 labor.” 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 BC). We have translated that date as March 12, with a footnote giving the Hebrew and identifying the year as 515 BC.

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 Jewish 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

In the Old Testament, 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.” When *’elohim* and *YHWH* appear together, we have rendered it “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 3:15-16; 6:2-3).

In the Gospels and Acts, the Greek word *christos* has normally been translated as “Messiah” when the context assumes a Jewish audience. When a Gentile audience can be assumed (which is consistently the case in the Epistles and Revelation), *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. As was explained in greater detail above, 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 recognised 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 Psalms 8:2; 53:3; Proverbs 3:12).

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.”

Cross-References

A number of different cross-referencing tools appear in New Living Translation Bibles, and each offers a different level of help. All straight-text Bibles have the standard set of textual footnotes that include cross-references connecting New Testament texts to their related Old Testament sources. (See more on this above.)

This Bible also includes a full-column cross-reference system, which allows space for a more comprehensive listing of cross-references. In this larger system, symbols differentiate between various kinds of cross-references. The parallel marker (//) designates a cross-referenced passage that is parallel in nature to the passage at hand. The asterisk (*) designates a cross-reference whose connection involves a direct quote from the other testament. Standard cross-references in this system appear unmarked.

As we submit this translation for publication, we recognise 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 realise it is impossible to make a perfect translation. Recognising 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 for ever changed by knowing him.

—*The Bible Translation Committee*

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A NOTE OF THANKS

Working on the *Africa Study Bible* (ASB) for the last seven years has been one of the most exciting things I have ever done. In twenty years of working for Africa, I have never witnessed the work of God up close quite like this. Most days, we have felt God's special presence and provision. Often, needs were met before we even knew that they were needs. God brought people with special skills to work with us just when the project needed them the most. He brought people to pray and give at just the right time as well.

As you read these pages, remember that the *Africa Study Bible* is a gift from God's people around the world to you, the readers, and to Africa. We are thankful that they were listening to God's voice and for their strong commitment and generosity! The ASB is a beautiful demonstration of God's family around the world working together, each bringing their unique skills and gifts.

We would like to especially commend and bless Tyndale House Publishers, Tyndale House Foundation, and the Tyndale Foundation network for the skills and resources they made available to the ASB project. They went far beyond what we could have ever imagined. It was in Dr. Kenneth Taylor's office that some of the roots of this project began to grow. Dr. Taylor was one of the few people who would call us up unexpectedly and ask, "How can I pray for you? How is the ministry in Africa going?" His humble spirit and generous heart continue today in his son Mark, Mary Kleine at the Tyndale Foundation, and in all that Tyndale does. We honour Tyndale for all they have done and pray that this effort will be worthy of their trust in us.

To all the others whom God brought to us, your names should really be mentioned every time I talk about what God has done with the *Africa Study Bible*. Thank you to Bruce, Tite, Janice, Hannah, Greg, Larry, Ming, Kimberly, and Natalie—there is a much longer list of people to thank, but you all deserve special mention. Jeremy, you brought the needed skills to deliver printed copies of the ASB to the people of God in Africa! We thank Tim for his art that inspires us to read and meditate on God's Word. Among David's warriors were thirty Mighty Men, and then there were "the Three" deserving special honour (2 Samuel 23). There are also three men, without whom, the ASB may never have been

completed. Danny, you helped birth this Bible and have stood by us and worked with us ever since. Paul, we were in great need and you listened to God's call, responded, and have laboured almost every day since. John, from our very first conversation in 2011, it was obvious that God had gifted you for the job. Thank you for your sacrifice, faithfulness, and example of godliness.

And thanks to my mom and dad (Ed and Virginia Elliott) for all your prayers, support, and encouragement since you founded Oasis in 1978. Thanks also to our board who impressed upon us the need to prioritize this project above all else. Thanks to all who have gone before—Jim, Brian and Elaine, Craig and Beth, Shehu and ODL, and Tom. The ASB is your legacy, too.

Developing a Bible with notes produced by more than 350 contributors, from 51 countries, written in five languages, is a landmark accomplishment. It is truly worthy of all God is doing in Africa. As the global centre of Christianity shifts south, I am reminded that great works of the Spirit have followed after God gave a special anointing to the Bible. It was not a coincidence that the printing press, invented just a few years earlier, paved the way for the development of Bible literacy when Martin Luther and William Tyndale prepared their translations of the Scriptures. Less than one hundred years later, the translators of the King James Version followed Tyndale's translation in style and wording. The Reformation that came about partially through the printed word could not be stopped.

The church has grown in modern Africa as Bible translations became available in the heart languages of the people: the first Zulu translation appeared in 1883, Yoruba in 1884, and Swahili in 1890. In the last hundred years, the church in Africa has exploded beyond the imaginations of any of the translators. And now we gratefully present the *Africa Study Bible*, which uses the easy-to-understand NLT text.

Our prayer is that the *Africa Study Bible* will be used by God in the decades to come in what he has planned for the African church. May God's people in Africa grow in grace and truth as they step out and become leaders in all that God is doing around the world.

—Matthew Elliott, Ph.D., Publisher
on behalf of the ASB Editorial Staff

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

The story of the Bible is the story of God, his people, and his world.

God spoke. The world sprang into life. Everything there is—the huge and the tiny, mountains and oceans, little ants and bugs so small you can only see them with a microscope—God made it all.

Then he made us. He made the very first people and gave us a job: “You be in charge here, for me. You are to take care of everything. I have made you to be like me; show the world what I am like.”

He gave our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, a garden to live in, with flowing rivers and flourishing trees. “Start here,” he said. “I will meet with you here.”

When Adam first saw his wife Eve, he said, “Eyaa! This is the one!” Adam and Eve had everything—God, each other, and good work to do.

But There Was an Enemy

But there was an enemy. He was jealous. He wanted to wreck what he could not have. He was also clever. He asked Eve, “Why cannot you be the boss? Why not run things your own way? Why not do what you feel like doing? Why let God keep you back?”

Soon, our ancestors disobeyed. They did exactly what God said they should not do and set the pattern that lasts to this day. Everything began to fall apart. The world is still full of wonderful things, of beauty that makes you tremble. We are still smart and still able to do amazing things. But our thinking and our feelings are twisted and often broken. When we are all trying to be the boss, we cut ourselves off from God. We hurt one another. And the whole world feels the effect. In fact, the brokenness is inside us and we hurt ourselves, too. Our brokenness even damages creation.

God saw the messed-up world and the messed-up people he had put in charge of it. God could have gone away. Many of the old African stories say that is what he did. The stories say that we made God angry, and he went a long way off. But that is not the story of the Bible. Yes, God can seem far away. Yes, we can choose to build a wall between us and God. But God is not going to be defeated. He is going to get rid of the bad. He is going to take broken people and make them over again. And he is going to take the broken world and make it over again. He is going to do this through his own Son, who came to live in this broken world.

God Starts with Abraham

He started small, with Abraham. “Leave your family. Leave your people. Follow me. I will be family for you. And I will make you into a nation with your very own land to rule. Through you, my blessing will reach the whole world.”

Abraham followed God. Abraham stumbled, but he still trusted God, and God kept his promise. Abraham and Sarah were given a son, Isaac. From Isaac came a son named Jacob, also given the name Israel. From that son came a nation, also called Israel.

In time, there were thousands of Israelites, but they were not that impressive. They lived as forced labourers in Egypt and the government was trying to destroy them. God called Moses to lead them and told the people, “I will rescue you. Come to me. Meet with me in the desert. Walk with me. Be my people. Live my way. I will give you your own rich land, your own garden. And through you, my blessing will reach the whole world.”

God rescued them by opening up the sea. The towering cloud and fire of his presence marched with them. But the people still had Adam’s sinful nature. Before long, they forgot the blessings. They complained. They disobeyed. They said, “Let’s go back to Egypt.” They said, “Let us make our own gods and worship them our own way.”

So God punished them, but he did not leave them. In spite of what they did wrong, he took them through the desert and gave them their own land. They marched in, led by Joshua. They watched city walls fall down and conquered the communities. They renewed their promises: “We will live as God’s people. We will show what he is like to the world.”

But it did not last long. “Let us be like everybody else” was the easier way to live. But they belonged to God, and he did not leave them. They were his. He punished them, and he sent leaders to rescue them. Then they would turn from God and things would get worse again. This pattern repeated for many years.

Next Come David and the Kings

God gave King David to the people of Israel. David made no room for false gods. Enemies all around were defeated. The people lived in peace. In the time of David’s son Solomon, Jerusalem, the capital, was made God’s city. God’s presence was focused in his Temple—a beautiful building that Solomon built to worship and sacrifice to God. The people gathered there to worship God

in glorious praise. Wisdom for godly living flowed out from there, touching other peoples in other lands with blessing.

But David and Solomon and Israel were like Adam. They all failed. The hints and tastes of goodness faded. Other kings came and went, some better, most worse, none good enough.

God sent his prophets, his messengers, to tell the nation, "You are God's chosen people, sworn to him with marriage vows! Turn to him from disobedience. Turn to him from the false prophets, the idols, the substitutes, the liars, and the cheats. Care for the needy among you. Find blessing. Watch him rescue you. Watch God's blessing reach the end of the earth. Or do not, and lose what you have, even the land you have been given."

In the end, they lost the land. They were hauled off to Babylon. But God did not leave them. His messengers promised that they would come back. And beyond that came richer promises. The people and the world would be made new with God's blessing and with Adam's mess undone.

Some did return to Jerusalem. A small Temple was built again in God's city. Prophets encouraged the people. But failure and compromise were everywhere.

Questions remained unanswered: "Has God failed? His people have failed again and again! The glory of his blessing for the whole world has not gone anywhere. From Adam to Israel, the ones who belong to God mess up. Rescuers come, rescuers go. The gap between promise and reality is huge. What is God doing? Will there ever be an Adam who does what Adam should have done? Will there ever be an Israel that lives according to God's good law? Will there ever be a David who rules in true peace? Will God's Temple presence ever come close to stay?"

For four hundred years, things went very quiet.

Finally, Jesus

But then a surprise. God did exactly what he said he would do. And he did it in a way that no one expected.

There was a harsh colonial government and a baby was born in a poor family. He was called Jesus, which means Joshua—Saviour. Born in David's village from David's family, he would be called God's Christ, Messiah, Lord, Immanuel (which means God with us), King. He would call himself Son of Man, son of Adam, Son of God. He would talk to God as his Father. He would command wind and waves, rebuke disease, and

banish cringing demons. He would forgive sins, putting people right with God. He would give wisdom greater than Solomon's. He would command more than Moses. He was God with his people when the Temple could not be. He would be the one faithful Israelite when all Israel had failed. He would bless the nations.

He marched to Jerusalem and then rode into the city as King of peace, surrounded by followers praising God. But the rulers did not see it that way. The government did not see it that way. The enemy from back in Eden did not see it that way. Jesus was a threat. His Kingdom would break the kingdoms of the earth. The rulers determined to break him. Arrested and falsely accused, Jesus was executed on a cross in cruelty and shame, then sealed in a rock tomb.

Little did they know. Jesus did not run or hide. At that moment, and every moment, he gave himself over to God's will and purpose. He knew God had a plan. He did the opposite of Adam. Having nothing and losing his life, he gave himself to God, to stand in the place of all those who followed Adam. He stood in our place, took on our failure, our brokenness, our rebellion. He said to God, "Father, I am utterly alone. Yet I give myself to you. You will put things right. You will bring victory from total defeat."

And God did.

On the third day, God reversed death. He launched the age of new creation. He started to make all the brokenness fresh and new. He raised Jesus from that tomb. He declared him for ever innocent, for ever right. He confirmed every title—Saviour, Messiah, King, Lord. And he lifted Jesus to glory.

He also did something else. He gave Jesus a people, a Kingdom. The faithful people of God were few. Now God said, "Repent. Trust Jesus. Give yourself to him. Abandon your old self. In Jesus, you share in his blessings. You, too, will be right with God. In him, your wrecked life will be remade. God's very own Spirit will be present within you. You were nobodies, but now, you are his dear family."

He Is Alive

Jesus' followers spread out. They could not stop telling people what they had seen: "He is alive!" The first time they said this, people from many nations heard them. And three thousand believed. Soon his followers were beaten, they were imprisoned, they were killed. But they declared, "He has won!" They were despised and they were mocked,

but they declared, "Every honour belongs to him, for he is God!"

Those who believed the good news, those who turned to Jesus, lived as his family, his people, his Kingdom, showing and telling what he is like to the world. Eagerly they waited for the completion of God's victory in Jesus. They wanted everyone to know him.

The good things started were a long way from complete. God's people in Jesus failed. They did not understand who they really were. And they did not live like who they really were. Lots of times, they would get confused.

But Jesus had sent his apostles, empowered by his Spirit, to declare his message and teach his people. Jesus' people belong to him so tightly; they are his body. They are hands and feet for him in this world. Just like Adam, they are here to show his world what he is like, show every people what he is like. They are also here to suffer as Jesus suffered. Time and again, they would be attacked and hurt, just because they were his.

The apostles said, "Look back. Look at Jesus

and all he has done for you. Look ahead. Look to Jesus and all he will do. You are his people, being formed from every language, tribe, and nation. That same enemy from the beginning, those same rulers and powers who raged at Jesus, they want to hurt us all that they can. But their time is short. Jesus will defeat them once and for all. Soon, in God's time, they will be stripped of all strength and doomed to the punishment they deserve. Even the evil that still lurks inside us will be rooted out. Jesus is coming back with all God's power and authority in full view."

The story began in a garden. It ends in a beautiful city. A city full of people but still rich in flowing water and flourishing trees. A city of beauty, praise, and joy. A city without tears or hurt or wrong. A city with God and Jesus right there, for ever, with us.

The story of the Bible is the story of God, his people, and his world. It is the story of Jesus, who is God, of his new people, of his Kingdom, and his new world.

And it is our story. We are still living it.

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING THE OLD TESTAMENT TODAY

Paul wrote, “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16). The “Scripture” he mentioned was what we call the Old Testament. We no longer offer sacrifices on an altar in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 7:1-10). We no longer worry about sowing two different kinds of seed in one field (Leviticus 19:19). Most Christians no longer observe the Sabbath regulations of the Bible (sundown Friday to sundown Saturday). How do Christians explain our departure from these practices, and how do we apply the Old Testament to our lives today?

The Relationship between the Testaments

The Old and New Testaments form one story of God revealing himself. In the Old Testament, God revealed himself to the Jews, the descendants of Jacob (also called Israel), son of Isaac, son of Abraham. The Jews (children of Israel) were a nation that worshipped the Lord. God gave them laws that covered the three major parts of life. These were eternal moral laws that explained how people of all times should live, ceremonial laws that explained how the Jews were to worship God, and civil laws that told the Jews how to govern their nation and practise justice. In the New Testament, God revealed himself through his Son Jesus Christ to all people for all time. But the overall message of the Bible did not change. That message is that God made us, he loves us in spite of our often rebellious attitude towards him, and he wants to reconcile us to himself.

The Old Testament writers spoke about issues that were important to a nation that had a special relationship with God and was under judges or a king. By the end of the Old Testament, that nation was weak politically and made up of only two of the original twelve tribes. When Jesus Christ began his ministry, some of his followers expected him to restore the political glory of the Old Testament Jewish nation. But the Kingdom Jesus introduced was a spiritual one, not a physical one. It was the Kingdom of God. Thus, it needed different kinds of laws to govern its citizens.

This is similar to what has happened to most African nations. Most were under a colonial power that had laws. However, at independence, a new government came to power and made different political laws. There were eternal laws—against murder, for example—that were the same under

both governments. Other laws—such as the laws of inheritance—were based upon the culture and history of the indigenous people. To understand the modern laws in Africa, one has to have a good understanding of the colonial laws, traditional ethnic laws, and the transition period that led to the new laws of each nation.

Though it does not apply to us in the same way it did to a Jewish nation, the Old Testament is important for us today. We can learn about the character, power, and majesty of God from the Old Testament. The experiences of the Israelites in the Old Testament “happened to them as examples for us” (1 Corinthians 10:11). God preserved these people because the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be born of “the royal line of David” (John 7:42). The sacrifices described in the Old Testament are pictures or illustrations of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Once Christ came, those sacrifices were not necessary (Hebrews 10:1-18). The ceremonial laws and the civil laws of the Old Testament are helpful to understand but are no longer necessary for believers to follow.

Jesus and the apostles testified to the authority of the Old Testament. Jesus said, “I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose” (Matthew 5:17). Jesus did not abolish God’s eternal principles; he applied them in a new context. Six times in Matthew 5 Jesus quoted an Old Testament law or tradition and then said, “You have heard . . . but I say . . .” Each time Jesus took a law that was given to the Jewish kingdom in the Old Testament and told us how that law should be understood in the Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

Difficulties in Understanding the Old Testament in Africa

Because many practices and customs in Africa are similar to those in the Old Testament, we Africans often identify more easily with the Old Testament than Westerners do. However, this can lead to misunderstanding, especially if we do not distinguish among:

Laws that are based on God’s holy nature (moral)—for instance, “Honour your father and mother” or “You must not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:12, 14).

Laws about ceremony, for instance, “On the eighth day each person being purified must bring two male lambs and a one-year-old female lamb, all with no defects, along with a grain offering of six litres of choice flour moistened with olive oil, and a cup of olive oil” (Leviticus 14:10).

Laws that told the Jews how to govern their nation and dealt with issues of land, economics, and justice (civil)—for instance, “Suppose someone digs or uncovers a pit and fails to cover it, and then an ox or a donkey falls into it. The owner of the pit must pay full compensation to the owner of the animal, but then he gets to keep the dead animal” (Exodus 21:33-34).

The Jews did not distinguish between these various kinds of laws or consider one kind more important. In addition, there is often overlap between such laws. Nevertheless, noting these differences is a helpful way of knowing how to apply the Old Testament today. Laws about morality are based on God’s holy nature and valid for all people everywhere. The laws that governed ceremony and worship by the Jews before the coming of Christ have been replaced by church worship. The specific ceremonies, dress, and forms of worship do not need to be practised by Christians. The civil laws that told the Jews how to govern a nation that no longer exists as it did in the Old Testament can help guide us in governing with wisdom but are not followed today since each nation has its own laws. But not all laws are easily distinguished. Is the commandment to observe the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11), for instance, still in effect today?

Questions to Help Apply the Old Testament in Africa Today

We should not say, “Old Testament people practised polygamy; some Africans today practise polygamy; there is no difference.” Instead, we should ask what God was telling the Old Testament people by a particular law, ask how the teaching of Jesus and the New Testament gave a fuller understanding of that truth, and then apply it to our time. We can do this by asking the following four questions:

- What did the law mean to the people in the Old Testament?
- What are the differences between those people and believers today?
- What was the principle or truth that God revealed in the Old Testament by this law?

- How does the New Testament teaching give a fuller understanding of God’s principle or truth in this law?

How should Christians apply to their lives the Old Testament truth in light of New Testament teachings?

How does this work out in real life? Let us use the example of circumcision. In Genesis 17:9-14 God told Abraham, “This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep. . . . Every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.”

What did this law mean to the people of the Old Testament? Circumcision was an outward sign that a person had a covenant relationship with God. God said to Abraham, “I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you” (Genesis 17:7).

What are the differences between those people and believers today? Circumcision was a sign of God’s relationship with the Israelites, a group of people who were unified ethnically (along with foreigners who served God and followed the law) and politically. Today, however, God is the God of “Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female” (Galatians 3:26-29). He welcomes all, no matter what their ethnic or political identity.

What was the principle or truth that God revealed by this law? Those who belong to God are aware of their relationship with God and are set apart—are different and should live differently—from those who do not belong to God.

What does the New Testament say about this principle or truth? The New Testament is clear that what is important is not physical circumcision. What is important is a pure heart and a clean life that is set apart for God (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:2-4).

How should Christians apply these things to their lives? We do this by seeking to have a pure heart and living in such a way that identifies us as belonging to a holy God—just as circumcision identified Jews as belonging to God. Today children of Christian parents do not need to be circumcised for spiritual reasons, although Christian parents may want to circumcise their sons because circumcision can provide health benefits or to honour their tradition of dedication or Christianity’s Old Testament roots. It is a matter of personal choice.

Examples of Marriage, Law, and Grace

Here are two examples of understanding and applying the Old Testament in Africa.

Marriage. God instituted marriage as a permanent union between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:23). Since the Fall, marriage has been violated by practices such as adultery, polygamy, divorce, and homosexuality.

Polygamy was not God's plan for humanity. The fact that God made concessions to the polygamous practices of Abraham, Jacob, and David does not mean that he approved their sexual choices. Abraham and Jacob were still influenced by their cultures as they were learning God's principles for family. David used polygamy to form alliances. Unfortunately, some Christians in Africa have used the example of Abraham to justify polygamy. God honoured Abraham's faith; he nowhere condoned Abraham's polygamy.

The New Testament confirms God's plan for marriage between one man and one woman (Mark 10:5-10). The similarities between polygamy in Old Testament cultures and in African societies should not be interpreted as divine approval. Certain laws and customs were allowed in the colonial days of Africa that were rejected after independence. The fact that they were allowed or encouraged by "democratic" governments in that era does not mean that they are good in our modern African democracies.

Law and Grace. The children of Israel in the Old Testament atoned for their sins by offering sacrifices to God. For instance, if a person was called to testify and refused to do it, when he became aware of his guilt, he would confess his sin and then offer a sacrifice (Leviticus 5:1-6). In the Old Testament, the restoration of our relationship to God after we sinned came from a sacrifice. The

Old Testament says that going through the act of a sacrifice without obeying God is not pleasing to him (1 Samuel 15:22), but the Israelites' responsibility was still to do what the law told them to do.

Over the years, Jewish religious leaders wrote many detailed laws to explain how to obey the Old Testament laws. They had started to do this by the time of Jesus and continue on through today. For instance, Exodus 20:8 says on the Sabbath "no one in your household may do any work." Some sects of Jews today decided "work" includes pushing elevator buttons. And so today in Jerusalem, elevators are programmed to stop automatically at every floor on the Sabbath so that a Jew can go up an elevator without working on the Sabbath. In this way, the Jews guard the original law of the Pentateuch from being broken.

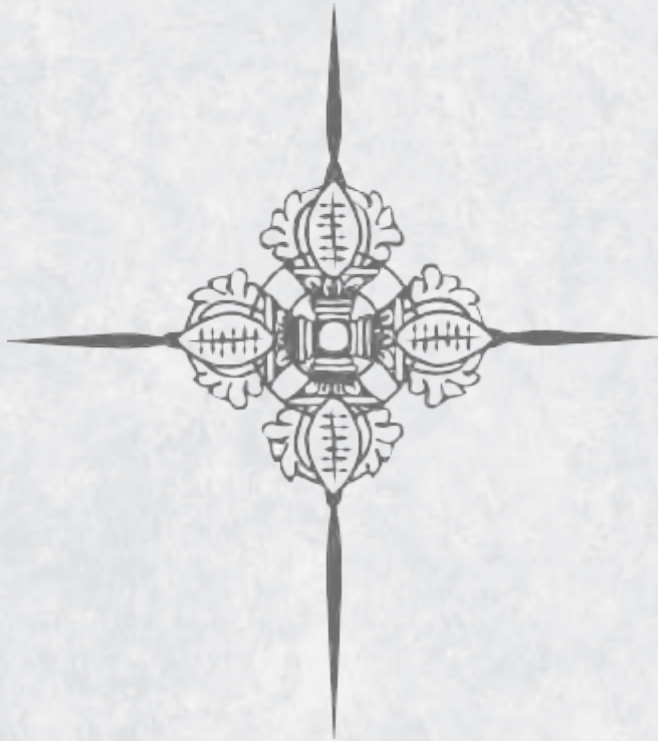
The New Testament, however, teaches that we become righteous by grace through faith—not by following the laws of the Old Testament. Not pushing an elevator button on the Sabbath does not make a person holy. Instead, "we are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:21-25).

Outward expressions of faithfulness to God such as circumcision, observing the Sabbath, and offering sacrifices changed in the New Testament. Similarly, new worship forms influenced by our cultural practices may be developed and practised in Africa. But these practices must reflect the unchanging principles of God's Word. The Bible has not changed. "All Scripture [including the Old Testament] is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Points to Remember

- The Old and New Testaments form one story of God revealing himself, step by step. The God of both Testaments is the same.
- The Old Testament shows many principles both in its history and teaching that equip us to be effective Christians. The writers of the New Testament saw it as holy Scripture and quoted it often.
- Not all the laws of the Old Testament have direct application to us today. We must carefully discern what eternal laws to follow and what laws can give us wisdom but do not need to be practised.
- God wants believers to have a pure heart and live in a way that identifies us as belonging to a pure and holy God.

THE
OLD TESTAMENT





THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Author: According to Jewish tradition, Moses wrote the book of Genesis.

Date: Many sections were probably recorded directly by Moses during the Exodus. Some scholars date the Exodus around 1445 BC; other scholars date it in the 1200s BC.

Purpose: The purpose of Genesis is to assert that God, whose existence the author assumed and did not try to prove, created the entire universe and everything in it. God created the universe not as an extension of himself, but by his powerful and creative word. When the man and woman fell into sin in chapter 3, Satan intended to harm humanity for ever. But God had a good plan for all of humanity—the plan that led to the birth and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. God revealed his plan through the promise he made to Abraham (12:2-3).

Overview and Story: “If you do not know where you came from, you will not know where you are going,” says an African proverb. Family and tribal history are an essential part of African life. The first book of the Bible gives us a foundational understanding of the past, beginning with creation, to help us understand the Bible and the redemption story.

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It is fundamental to our understanding of the human story. It tells us that we are not products of some cosmic accident or conflict in the spiritual realm. Rather, a very thoughtful and powerful God created everything and made it beautiful. He then created humans and filled us with his breath to reflect him and live in fellowship with him and with one another. Many African traditions teach that the heavens and the earth, once close to each other, were separated because of a breach caused by humans. Genesis explains that this breach is sin—the wilful disobedience of the first humans that resulted in a broken relationship with God and fellow humans, and being driven from the Garden of Eden.

Genesis shows the progressive and destructive nature of sin, which had now become a part of the human reality. Sin led to the first murder and the corruption of the entire human race. When “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” (6:5), he sent the Flood. The human plot to build the Tower of Babel shows that people’s attempt to connect with God failed because they wished to exalt their own reputation and place. God rejected this attempt, and Genesis tells us that God responded by giving humans different languages. God had a different way to rebuild the relationship, his choice of the family of Abraham.

God called Abraham to leave his land and his people in Ur (in modern Iraq) and go to a place he did not know. God promised him blessings, land, and descendants. Abraham was not perfect, but he obeyed God. His faith and obedience to the faithful God eventually led to the founding of the nation of Israel through his descendants well after the end of Genesis. The stories of Abraham’s son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, and their families are very much like stories of many families today. Their stories are filled with internal conflicts, marital problems, jealousy, envy, and lies. Yet, each time they got to the edge, God preserved the family in fulfillment of his promises. Genesis ends with the story

of Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brothers. God used their evil plan to save the entire family through Joseph who gained favour and prominence in Egypt.

What Genesis Teaches Us:

- Genesis answers many of the profound questions people ask, such as: Where did I come from? (God created us; 1:1) and What is my purpose? (to have a relationship with God; 15:6)
- The impact of the Fall is deep and far reaching. We are unable to resolve the problem of sin by ourselves. All creation and human society fell into disorder when the relationship with God was fractured. No amount of war and conquest, power and privilege, riches and fame, or any other human accomplishment can resolve this problem. The solution is to restore relationship with God as the giver of life and order.
- No human being is perfect. If we sin and ask for forgiveness, God will surely reconcile with and redeem us. God is not waiting for perfect people to do his work, but people who are willing to trust and obey him at all times. Adam failed. Noah failed. If you and I were to start again, we would fail.
- We can trust God who created the universe and every living being to handle the concerns of our lives. Over and over again we see God intervening in a hopeless situation—childlessness, famine, war, imprisonment—and transforming those situations. We just need to trust and obey him. Only God writes the final story.
- The genealogies in Genesis remind us of the value God places on families in his divine plan. Families are under attack. As part of God's family, we must take seriously the task of building godly families through which God works for his own glory.

OUTLINE AND RHYTHM (*Blessing-Sin-Punishment-Blessing...*)

Primeval History (1:1–11:29)

God intervenes in a chaotic situation (1:1–4:16)

Man is created—blessing (1:1–2:15)

Human depravity—the Fall and sin through disobedience to God's Word (3:1-7)

God deals with human depravity—punishment by banishment (3:8–4:16)

Transition: genealogy and family of Adam (4:17–5:32)

God intervenes in a chaotic situation (6:1–9:28)

Man becomes fruitful—blessing (6:1-4)

Human depravity—consistently and totally evil (6:5-8)

God deals with human depravity—punishment by flooding (6:9–9:17)

Transition: genealogy and family of Noah (9:18–10:32)

God intervenes in a chaotic situation (11:1-9)

Man becomes prosperous—blessing (11:1-2)

Human depravity—sin by claiming equality with God (11:3-4)

God deals with human depravity—punishment by scattering (11:5-9)

Transition: genealogy and family of Shem (11:10-29)

Patriarchal and Matriarchal History (12:1–50:26)

God blesses the patriarchs (12:1–50:26)

Life and times of Abraham (12:1–25:11)

Transition: genealogy and family of Ishmael (25:12-18)

Life and times of Jacob (25:19–35:29)

Transition: genealogy and family of Esau (36:1-42)

Life and times of Joseph (37:1–50:26)

The Account of Creation

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

³Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

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

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

⁹Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then 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. ¹²The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds

1:1
Pss 89:11;
102:25
Isa 42:5; 48:13
John 1:1-2

1:2
Ps 104:30
Isa 45:18

1:3
Pss 33:9; 104:2
Isa 45:7
2 Cor 4:6

1:4
Ps 74:16

1:6
Job 26:10
Ps 136:5-6
Isa 40:22
Jer 10:12

1:7
Job 38:8-11
Ps 148:4
Prov 8:28

1:8
Gen 1:5
Job 26:7

1:9
Ps 95:5
Prov 8:29
Jer 5:22
2 Pet 3:5

1:10
Pss 33:7; 95:5

1:11
Gen 2:9
Ps 104:14
Matt 6:30

1:14
Pss 74:16;
104:19

1:15
Gen 1:5

1:16
Pss 8:3; 19:1-6;
136:8-9
1 Cor 15:41

1:18
Jer 33:20, 25

1:20
Gen 2:19
Ps 146:6



WHEN DAY BEGINS

In Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, when you are invited to a wedding on Friday evening, they call it “the evening of Saturday.” Days begin at sunset, just as we read in Genesis 1:5 that evening and morning were the first day. Even though a day officially begins at midnight, ordinary people in North Africa, especially in the countryside, still consider their days to begin with the evening before nightfall.

God gave the great lights in the sky as signs and for seasons to help his people live in harmony with their environment. Farmers and fishermen still use the movements of the sun, moon, and stars to organize their daily activities. They divide their days and seasons in a way similar to the Hebrew culture of the Old Testament.

produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

¹⁴Then 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. ¹⁵Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. ¹⁶God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be

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, . . .



APPLICATION

WE WORSHIP THE GOD OF CREATION • Genesis 1

Many religions and people groups have dramatic stories about creation. Parents tell these stories over and over again to their offspring. Many of these creation stories have similarities with God’s account of creation in Genesis. But quite unlike most other stories, the Bible gives reasons for the creation—so that the universe may worship and praise God (Psalm 148).

We are to worship the God of creation not the creation itself. The Bible says we can know the purpose for which we were created. We are not accidents. God created the universe and humans as a very deliberate act. That gives us honour, worth, and purpose that we should cherish always.



PROVERBS & STORIES

ONLY THE BEST WILL DO

The Tsanguis of the Republic of the Congo say, *Makinu ma mbuli, uba luata milimbala matsotsove*, meaning, “An authentic dance is done wearing raffia, not weeds.” Leaves from the raffia palm are the longest in the plant kingdom and are woven into beautiful dancer suits. Only the best will do!

Genesis says that the heavens and the earth and all that is in them were created by God. And at every stage of creation,

God, seeing what he had done, was pleased with it. At the end of six days of intense work, he “looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!” (Genesis 1:31). God’s work of creation was the best of the best.

As his children, we are called to imitate him in our lives, giving the very best of who we are and what we have to God and to his service.

filled with birds of every kind.”²¹ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.²² Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

1:21
Ps 104:25-28
1:24
Gen 2:19

²³ And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that move along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened.²⁵ God made all sorts



LEARN

CREATION

Africa's many different stories about creation are surprisingly similar. The Bushmen in southern Africa believe that Käng, the Great Master and Lord of all, created everything with life in it, even the rain, sun, and plants. He created animals and people to live together peacefully. The Boshongo of Central Africa believe the universe emerged from the belly of Bumba, the great god. Among the Efik of Nigeria, Abassi is thought to have originally created men and women to live with him in heaven so they could have fellowship. Later his wife persuaded him to allow them to come to earth.

These stories of a creator god who existed before the world began point to an innate understanding among Africa's people groups that there is a supreme being responsible for all existence—the very source of life. As the apostle Paul pointed out, “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God” (Romans 1:20).

Many of our creation stories tell of God's power as he singlehandedly created everything (Jeremiah 10:12). They show his wisdom in establishing the universe and setting all things in appropriate order (Proverbs 3:19). The Bible says that the entire universe was formed at God's command (Hebrews 11:3). It also says that it is his Spirit that gives life to humans. The Garden of Eden shows that God is a God of beauty and order, of peace and perfection. It shows that these are the ideal conditions for a sinless humanity.

But while we can see the greatness of God through his creation, the Bible alone says that human beings are created in the image of God and bear his likeness. The Bible alone raises men and women to a status above all other created works (Genesis 1:26-27). Only humans are given authority and responsibility for one another, the animals, and the environment. Being made in God's image means the Creator has given each of us the creative potential to innovate and impact our environment. Everyone has something special to offer the world!

The story of creation in the first few chapters of Genesis is a foundation for the rest of the Bible. It hints at the relationship within the Trinity. It introduces the relationship between God and humans as one in which God loves us, pursues us, and dies for us. Like the Efik's Abassi, the God of the Bible created us to enjoy him. We were created male and female to live in community and close families. This reflects the nature of God as a triune being—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is why God said, “Let us make human beings . . .” (emphasis added). After the original harmonious relationship between God and human beings broke, all creation felt the effects. The relationship between people and the world God created was broken, and a broken creation was now in need of a saviour to restore justice and order. That is why the book of Revelation

talks about making a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13).

The importance of creation in the story of the Bible may be why it is surrounded by controversy. Did God really create the earth? What about evolution? Was the earth created in six 24-hour days or over a longer period of time?

Until about 250 years ago, most people took what the Bible said about creation as a literal story. Many leading scientists believed that it took God six actual days to create the world. But then some geologists began suggesting that the earth was billions of years old, and biologists began using Darwin's theory of evolution to say that humans evolved from a lower form of animals. These ideas were used to argue against the truth of the Bible's story of creation and even against the existence of God.

However, the Bible and science, when carefully studied without prejudice, are not in conflict. Science shows us amazing evidence for God's specific design of the world and creation. Those who argue that the earth came into being without God and that humans evolved without God often denied God as Creator before they started their studies.

The Bible clearly says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” And it is “by faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen” (Hebrews 11:3). Most Christians who are not scientists believe by faith that God created the heavens and the earth. Others, such as Andy McIntosh, professor of thermodynamics and combustion theory at the University of Leeds in England, have the scientific background to say, “My career in mathematics and science has led me very much to the view that the world and the universe show powerful evidence of design.”

The traditional African understanding is remarkably similar to Genesis in that it was most concerned with order rather than method and the material world. In the ancient world, they were much more inclined to think of creation, not in terms of making the physical world, but of establishing order and its functioning with a particular purpose in mind. Gods were the source of order, and creation was the establishment of this order. The focus of the six days of creation may be less about how the world was created and more about establishing the order of the world where God desired to live with his people. Our modern desire to think of the six days of creation in terms of the scientific method that God used to create the world may be the source of some of our confusion about the six days of creation.

Science gives us insight about creation and the world God created, but we are still searching for many answers. God created the world in his own time and in his own way. It's up to us, his creation that he made with creative potential, to discover what that time and way are. And as we learn more about God's amazing creation, we learn more about our amazing Creator.

of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then 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 move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created human beings* in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them.

²⁸Then 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 move along the ground.”

²⁹Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. ³⁰And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that move along the

1:26
Gen 5:1; 9:6
Ps 8:6-8
Acts 17:28-29

1:27
*Matt 19:4
*Mark 10:6

1:29
Gen 9:3
Pss 104:13;
136:25

1:30
Pss 104:14;
145:15

1:31
Ps 104:24



AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

THE PERSONHOOD OF THE AFRICAN WOMAN

African women have often been suppressed and oppressed by cultures and traditions that exploit and abuse them. This treatment is seen in widowhood practices and in the customs of patriarchal societies. African women are treated this way because, according to the Yorubas of Western Nigeria, “Men have nine pair of ribs, and women seven. And so women are inferior.”

The biblical account of creation, however, reveals that God made the man and the woman different physically, but both were made in his image (Genesis 1:26-27). He endowed the woman with qualities of personality similar to the man. She fulfilled God’s creation and joined man in the divine mandate to produce children, care for creation, and participate in God’s plan of redemption. Seeing women the way God created them will inspire the church to love, respect, and accept women as people who are equal in their standing before God.

ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

³¹Then 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.

1:26a Or *man*; Hebrew reads *adam*. **1:26b** As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth*. **1:27** Or *the man*; Hebrew reads *ha-adam*.



APPLICATION

GLORIFYING AND IMITATING GOD • Genesis 1:31

How many times have you praised God at the sight of a beautiful flower or a herd of wild animals living peacefully in nature? We see the Creator’s wisdom when a beautiful valley stretches out before us and we breathe the fresh air of the countryside. The ocean’s waves, both the gentle ones and the powerful ones, speak to us of God’s intelligence. We hear the loud cry of an animal in the night, the birdsong that wakes us in the morning, the flutter of wings flying quietly over our heads. All these remind us that we are not alone in this universe that God

created just for us. Beautiful mountains, plains, and valleys invite us to meditate and to worship the Creator. Thinking about his own work, God “saw that it was very good!”

Because we were created in the image and the likeness of God, we can imitate the Creator in our creative words and actions. God entrusted us with the sacred task of caring for his creation. So let us respect our environment by preserving it in a state of cleanliness, beauty, and “goodness”—a place where we can experience his perfect harmony.

Formless	CHAOS	Empty
DAY 1 (Genesis 1:3-5) Light, Dark	HEAVENS	DAY 4 (Genesis 1:14-19) Sun, Moon, Stars
DAY 2 (Genesis 1:6-8) Water, Sky	WATER & SKY	DAY 5 (Genesis 1:20-23) Birds, Fish
DAY 3 (Genesis 1:9-13) Sea, Land	EARTH	DAY 6 (Genesis 1:24-31) Animals, Humans
Formed	COSMOS	Filled

DAY 7
(Genesis 2:2-3)
Rest

The Creation Account (Genesis 1:1–2:3).

In the creation account, God transformed chaos into the present cosmos. In the first three days, he transformed the formless void into the structured universe—the heavens (outer space), the water and sky, and the earth (Exodus 20:11; Psalm 135:6). In the second three days, he populated each empty realm. The seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3) stands apart: As God’s day of rest, it provides the weekly pattern for human activity (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17) and speaks of the rest that God promised to those who live by faith in him (see Hebrews 3:7–4:11).

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

4 This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Man and Woman in Eden

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, **5** 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. **6** Instead, springs* came up from the ground and watered all the land. **7** 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.

8 Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. **9** 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.

10 A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. **11** The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. **12** The gold of that land is exceptionally pure;

2:1
Deut 4:19; 17:3
Ps 104:2
Isa 45:12

2:2
Exod 20:11;
31:17
*Heb 4:4

2:3
Isa 58:13

2:4
Gen 1:3-31
Job 38:4-11

2:5
Gen 1:11

2:7
Gen 3:19
Job 33:4
Ps 103:14
Ezek 37:5
Zech 12:1
John 20:22
*1 Cor 15:45

2:8
Gen 3:23; 13:10
Isa 51:3
Ezek 28:13
Joel 2:3

2:9
Gen 3:22
Prov 3:18; 11:30
Ezek 47:12
Rev 2:7;
22:2, 14

2:10
Rev 22:1, 17

2:11
Gen 25:18

2:14
Gen 15:18
Deut 1:7
Dan 10:4

2:15
Gen 2:8

2:16
Gen 3:1-3

2:17
Gen 3:1, 16-17
Deut 30:15,
19-20
Rom 6:23
Jas 1:15

2:18
Gen 3:12
Prov 18:22

aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. **13** The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. **14** The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

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

18 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." **19** 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. **20** 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.

21 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. **22** Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

23 "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.'"

2:19 Gen 1:20-25 **2:22** 1 Cor 11:8-9 1 Tim 2:13 **2:23** Gen 29:14
Eph 5:28-30

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.



APPLICATION

BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS • Genesis 2-3

When God created Adam and Eve, he created a community characterized by holy relationships between God and two people, between the man and the woman, and between the two people and the environment. Such relationships were maintained by a simple rule of order and obedience. However, when the law is broken, relationships are broken. At the heart of every dispute, war, and accusation is a perceived broken relationship. In such a case, the transgressor is not only punished, but reconciliation and restoration should be pursued aggressively.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they broke the relationship between themselves, their relationship with God, and their relationship with the environment. God punished them, but he also offered a process of reconciliation and restoration. It is through the death of Jesus Christ that God is reconciling the world to himself. To have genuine reconciliation with God, others, and the environment, we need to repent and daily cultivate our relationship with God.

RETURN TO THE LAND • Genesis 2:15

When God created the earth, he gave all living things the ability to reproduce and replenish the earth. God then gave humans the special duty to watch over the land. This duty is vital to sustaining all life. If human beings are good stewards of the land, it will continue to sustain all life and provide a means of livelihood. Through work, we are able to take care of our needs and the needs of our families and communities. In this sense, work is divine and not evil. When we neglect this duty, the land will not only fail to produce food but also become unfit for all living things.

land and own it without caring for it. We have spoiled the land, contaminated the air we breathe, and polluted the water we drink. The plastic bags and containers we carelessly throw away are major problems. Our industries put harmful chemicals into the air and water that destroy plant and animal life. The results of such abuse are very big—including flooding, drought, disease, and pestilence. Cutting down our forests either to expand our cities or for firewood contributes to significant changes in the environment. In spite of enormous good farm land across Africa, few of our countries provide enough food for their populations.

There are many ways by which we have neglected our responsibility and abused the land. Sometimes people grab

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

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

The Man and Woman Sin

3 The serpent was the most crafty 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?”

²“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. ³“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of

2:24
*Matt 19:5
*1 Cor 6:16
Eph 5:31

2:25
Gen 3:7, 10-11

3:1
2 Cor 11:3
Rev 12:9; 20:2

3:2
Gen 2:16

3:3
Gen 2:17
Exod 19:12

3:4
John 8:44
2 Cor 11:3

3:5
Gen 2:17; 3:22
Isa 14:14
Ezek 28:2

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.’”

⁴“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵“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.”

⁶The 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. ⁷At that moment their eyes were opened, and they

3:6 2 Cor 11:3 1 Tim 2:14 Jas 1:14-15 1 Jn 2:16



PROVERBS & STORIES

OBEY AND LIVE

Some temptations are appealing and attractive, but they become ugly and undesirable after we experience the consequences of indulging in them. The Batswanas of Southern Africa say, *Se bone tholwana borethe teng ga yona go a baba*, meaning, “Be not deceived by the looks of a berry. The taste is bitter and poisonous.”

Our first parents were deceived by the fruit from the tree that was appealing, but the taste was death. Our enemy appeals to our senses, tempting us to disobey God. May we be vigilant to follow God and live rather than to follow our eyes and bad advice which can lead to death.



LEARN

THE FALL

Remember in your childhood or adolescence when you pointedly violated the clear instructions of your father in his absence? How did you feel when you approached him after he had learned about your disobedience? Most parents would punish their disobedient children. The Bangolan people in Cameroon say a parent should punish a rebellious child with a rebuking left hand and draw him or her closer with a loving right hand. That is exactly what God did to humans in and after the Fall.

The Fall is a term that expresses the rebellion against God by the first humans and the painful consequences that followed (Genesis 3:1-24). God told Adam and Eve they could eat the fruits of every tree in the Garden of Eden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But under the lure and deceit of the serpent, they rebelled against God and disobeyed. Since then, every human being is born in bondage to the sin of Adam and Eve (Romans 5:12). We all have a tendency to be sinful.

The Fall has many devastating consequences. Humans went from perfect communion and fellowship with God to alienation from God. They went from original goodness to total depravity. Death became an unavoidable reality (Romans 5:12; 6:23). When humans related to each other, the Fall ushered in conflict and hostility. Deadly and prolonged civil wars in some countries are the by-products of the Fall. Our marriages and families are broken, each with conflict and disagreements. Few if any relationships are free from selfish motives.

Further, humankind went from responsible dominion as God’s stewards over creation (Genesis 1:25-31) to irresponsible domination and abuse of God’s world. All of God’s beautiful creation has been broken and damaged. The Fall resulted in broken relationships between God and people, people and one another, and people and the environment. Outright rejection of God’s commands, wars and interethnic clashes, and natural disaster—including hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods—are all a result of the three-way broken relationships between God, people, and the environment.

Satan’s original tactic with Adam and Eve—twisting the truth—is still at work. God is the God of truth (Psalm 31:5). His Word is truth (John 14:6; 17:17). With the Fall, our perception of the truth and our telling of the truth were broken. Now, lies, half truths, and deception are common.

The broken creation, wars, terrible acts of humans towards one another, and even fractured relationships between God’s people bear witness that we can never prevail over the effects of the Fall. Sometimes, we think living totally committed to God can free us from suffering. This is false. Until God remakes his broken world, we cannot be free from pain, physical suffering, and death. But the curse of the Fall also came with the first promise of God’s Messiah. “And I will cause hostility between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Jesus came to destroy the work of the serpent and to reverse the curse. God graciously responded to the Fall by moving all history towards the world’s redemption. With the gift of our Saviour-Redeemer, Jesus Christ, our communion and fellowship with God was restored. In Christ, we are made righteous and sinless, just as Adam and Eve had been before the Fall (2 Corinthians 5:21). And through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome sin and live for Christ (Galatians 5:22-23). But Jesus also came to restore the entire broken and damaged world.

All Christians are waiting for the day when Jesus returns to remake the world and restore everything. While we wait, we should also be in the ministry of reconciliation, reconciling people to God, people to each other, and people to the environment. We should not only be concerned with spiritual reconciliation but also very sensitive about the use of the environment and promote its good use. We should stand against all ethnic, tribal, and other issues that promote wars and conflict. We should make our world liveable.



AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

LIKE A SERPENT

The serpent was described as the "shrewdest of all the wild animals." Expressions used in the Bible have greatly influenced modern languages. In North Africa, people use a form of the word for *serpent* to describe an evil woman or an evil action by saying "this lady is a serpent." They are comparing the evil person or act to the original crafty serpent.

Today the original serpent desires to deceive us and destroy our most important relationship—the one between our Creator and ourselves. This broken relationship then spoils all our other relationships.

The negative symbolism of the serpent in the everyday speech of North Africans has its roots in the memory of this biblical story. We see how God's decrees affect culture and language from the very beginning. We can look to God's trustworthy Word as our guide for life, faith, and godliness.

3:8
Lev 26:12
Deut 23:14
Job 31:33
3:9
Gen 4:9; 18:9
3:10
Deut 5:5
3:12
Prov 28:13
3:13
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:14
3:14
Deut 28:15
Isa 65:25
3:15
John 8:44
Rom 16:20
Heb 2:14
3:16
1 Cor 11:3
Eph 5:22
1 Tim 2:15

garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked."

11 "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?"

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

13 Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

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

14 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, grovelling in the dust as long as you live.

15 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."

16 Then he said to the woman,

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

suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

8 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. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

10 He replied, "I heard you walking in the

3:8 Or *Adam*, and so throughout the chapter. 3:15 Or *bruise*; also in 3:15b.



PROVERBS & STORIES

GOD NEVER DISOWNS HIS CHILDREN

An African proverb says, "It is the wayward child who goes to sleep on an empty stomach." The child who disobeys the instructions of parents and elders will most likely fall out of favour with those who feed him. So it was with Adam and Eve. They disobeyed their Maker—the one who sustained them—and they were driven out of the garden into a harsh environment.

But even in their disobedience and subsequent punishment,

God did not abandon them. He provided clothing, gave them children, and gave them the ability to cultivate the land. Although some parents have been known to disown their children, God never disowns his children (Ephesians 1:13-14). You may be disobedient or in rebellion against God as Adam and Eve were, but God still waits anxiously for you to return. His grace and protection are still over you (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).



APPLICATION

DECLARATION OF WAR • Genesis 3:15

God said he would cause hostility between the serpent that deceived Eve and Eve's children. From then on, it was clear that Satan would try to prevent us from finding salvation in Christ, and disturb us in many other ways as we serve Jesus. This was a declaration of war. The apostle Paul told Christians to prepare for war. As we are told in Ephesians 6:12, we are fighting not against flesh and blood enemies but against Satan himself.

Jesus already fought this war on the cross so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 3:10-11). We can fight this war by having a consistent prayer life, reading the Word of God, and sharing our faith with others.

VALUING OUR RELATIONSHIPS • Genesis 3:20

Eve had the honour of being the mother of all people everywhere. Through Eve, God provided the means to create the community in which humans can live and thrive. Positive relationships were at the heart of creation. God is a relational being, and so he created people to be in relationship with him and with others. Before Eve, Adam did not experience such a relationship with other humans because there were none. All animals had companions, but Adam did not. We value the

relationships that we have with people, and we care for one another. From time to time when a need arises in one family, the other families will share in that need. Unity and companionship with one another attracted many people to their community.

We need to value our relationships with others by respecting, loving, and valuing them as fellow members of the human family. When we do, our lives will attract other people to join us in that togetherness as members of God's family.

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

17 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.

18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains.

19 By the sweat of your face you will 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.”

Paradise Lost: God’s Judgement

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

22 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 for ever!” 23 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. 24 After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flam-

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.*”

3:17
Job 5:7
Ecc 1:3
Rom 8:20-22

3:18
Job 31:40
Heb 6:8

3:19
Gen 2:7
Pss 90:3;
104:29
Ecc 12:7
1 Cor 15:47

3:20
2 Cor 11:3
1 Tim 2:13

3:21
2 Cor 5:2-3

3:22
Gen 1:26

3:24
Ezek 10:1
Rev 2:7;
22:2, 14

4:2
Luke 11:50-51

4:3
Lev 2:1-2
Num 18:12

4:4
Exod 13:12
Heb 11:4

4:6
Jon 4:4

4:7
Rom 6:12, 16
Jas 1:15

4:8
Matt 23:35
1 Jn 3:12

4:9
Gen 3:9

4:10
Num 35:33
Deut 21:1
Heb 12:24

4:11
Deut 27:15-26

ing sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 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!” 2 Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. 3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the first-born lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, 5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

6 “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 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.”

8 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.

9 Afterwards the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

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

10 But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 Now you are cursed and banished from the ground,



PROVERBS & STORIES

BUILD UP, NOT TEAR DOWN

A Sierra Leonean proverb says, “If a person is taller than you, do not chop off his legs so that you will be equal. Rather, grow up.” There are many people who like to pull others down when they cannot catch up with them in life. Abel’s sacrifice

was accepted and Cain’s was rejected. Cain chose to kill his brother rather than doing his best to catch up. Do not put out somebody’s lamp so that yours will shine. If you do, God may punish you as gravely as he did Cain.



APPLICATION

HUMILITY IN THE FACE OF FAILURE • Genesis 4:1-16

Cain’s attempt at pleasing God failed. He compounded the problem by becoming bitter and rejecting any correction. Cain blamed his brother for his failure and then murdered him out of envy and anger.

The Christian life is difficult. Our tendency to do wrong is real, and the desire to sin can consume us. But God tells us to rule over sin and gives us the power to resist it. Our failure to humble ourselves and listen to God’s correction keeps us from ruling over sin. We become bitter and angry.

We do not want to listen, repent, or respond to what God is telling us.

God speaks to us through the Bible, his Holy Spirit, and other Christians. Our hearts must be open and prepared to hear God speak. What God has to say may be painful to hear. It may even insult our sense of respect and honour. But a humble heart listens to correction. Hear what God says, and then look carefully at your heart, attitude, and behaviour. Bow before God with repentance and be transformed.

which has swallowed your brother's blood. 12 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."

13 Cain replied to the LORD, "My punishment* is too great for me to bear! 14 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!"

15 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. 16 So Cain left the LORD's presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

The Descendants of Cain

17 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. 18 Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael. Methushael became the father of Lamech.

19 Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the second was Zillah. 20 Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of those who raise livestock and live in tents. 21 His brother's name was Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. 22 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. 23 One day Lamech said to his wives,

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." 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.

4:12 Deut 28:15-24
4:14 Gen 9:6 Job 15:22
4:17 Ps 49:11
4:23 Lev 19:18 Deut 32:35
4:25 Gen 4:8; 5:3 1 Chr 1:1 Luke 3:38
4:26 Gen 12:8 1 Kgs 18:24 Joel 2:32 Zeph 3:9 Acts 2:21
5:1 Gen 1:26; 6:9 1 Chr 1:1
5:2 Gen 1:27 *Matt 19:4 *Mark 10:6
5:3 Gen 1:26; 4:25 1 Cor 15:49
5:4 1 Chr 1:1
5:5 Gen 2:17 Heb 9:27
5:6 1 Chr 1:1 Luke 3:38

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

The Birth of Seth

25 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." 26 When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name.

The Descendants of Adam

5 This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* he made them to be like himself. 2 He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them "human."

3 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. 4 After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 5 Adam lived 930 years, and then he died. 6 When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. 7 After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and



APPLICATION

GOD BRINGS HOPE • Genesis 4:17-26

God gave Adam and Eve two children: Cain and Abel. After Cain killed his brother, he rejected God and did not help his descendants to know God. As a result, Cain's descendants were famous for their abilities but not for knowing God. And Lamech became famous for his sin.

In those difficult times, God gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth, in place of Abel. He was a sign of hope for Adam and Eve. Moreover, God was still working in people's hearts, and they began to worship God by name.

TWO REALITIES • Genesis 5

The account of Adam's lineage awakens us to two realities. First, God carried out his plan of redemption by choosing a family line that would produce Noah who would save humankind. Second, we live in a broken world.

After every name but one we see the ominous reality: "Then he died." Death is a result of sin. And it affects us all. The only exception was Enoch, who lived in such close fellowship with God that God took him (Genesis 5:23). Many people put so

much attention on death that they forget the first reality—life. Because of Noah, the world was saved from the coming flood. Sometimes we focus so much on the end of our lives—who will honour and bury us—that we forget our fellowship with God. Will we walk with him like Enoch, setting the stage for those who come after us to save many from destruction like Noah? Let us put more emphasis on living today in light of God's work through the generations.

It is important to remember God is at work even in the darkest moments. He brings hope to the hopeless. He counsels those whose hearts are broken by life's circumstances. Is God at work even when our loved ones die? Yes! Even in painful times, our lives are being transformed, and people are coming to know God. He is bringing hope in many ways to many people. Let us trust what God is doing and look forward to a time of restoration even when it seems that our lives are falling apart.

he had other sons and daughters. ⁸Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

⁹When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. ¹⁰After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

¹¹Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

¹²When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. ¹³After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared. ¹⁶After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

¹⁸When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch. ¹⁹After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

²¹When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of Methuselah.

²²After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²³Enoch lived 365 years, ²⁴walking in close fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God took him.

²⁵When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁶After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived

5:9
1 Chr 1:2
Luke 3:37

5:12
1 Chr 1:2
Luke 3:37

5:15
1 Chr 1:2
Luke 3:37

5:18
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:37
Jude 1:14

5:21
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:37

5:22
Gen 6:9; 48:15

5:24
2 Kgs 2:1, 11
Ps 73:24
Heb 11:5

5:25
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:36

5:29
Gen 3:17
1 Chr 1:3
Luke 3:36
Rom 8:20

5:32
Gen 7:6; 9:18

6:1
Gen 1:28

6:3
Ps 78:39
1 Pet 3:20

6:4
Num 13:33

6:5
Ps 14:1-3

6:6
Exod 32:14
Num 23:19
1 Sam 15:11, 35
2 Sam 24:16

another 782 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, "May he bring us relief* from our work and the painful labour of farming this ground that the LORD has cursed." ³⁰After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another 595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. ³¹Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

A World Gone Wrong

6 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them. ²The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and took any they wanted as their wives. ³Then 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."

⁴In 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.

⁵The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. ⁶So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put

5:29 Noah sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean "relief" or "comfort." version reads *will not remain in*.

6:2 Hebrew *daughters of men*; also in 6:4. **6:3** Greek



APPLICATION

STAND FIRM WITH GOD • Genesis 6:1-8

Wondering who these "sons of God" were has led to various debates. Were they fallen angels, a special tribe of giants, or the sons of Abel (Genesis 6:4)? What we know is that humans had become completely wicked, and God was sorry he made them (Genesis 6:6). The fact that God was so unhappy shows that God hates our sins.

These verses silence someone who says, "God is so very big that he does not care what we do." God does care. He is brokenhearted over our evil choices. We should be careful

WHAT GRIEVES GOD? • Genesis 6:1-7

Parents sometimes disown a child when the child brings shame and disgrace to the family name or when the child chooses to live a lifestyle that dishonours God. In the Bible, God talks about rejecting people when their actions brought shame and disgrace to his holy name. God sometimes rejects people in the Old Testament when they indulge in sexual immorality, corruption, or oppression of the weak.

Are these vices strange in our societies today? Not in the least. Sexual immorality, corruption, and oppression of the

about our desires and the choices that we make every day.

At the same time, one man found favour with God even in the midst of wickedness. Only Noah was listening to and cooperating with God, showing us it is possible to stand firm with God even with sin all around us. Christians may think, *Things have always been this way. Who am I to bring change?* So they give in to sinful systems and fail to make a difference in the world. Yet it is possible with God's help to stand firm against a godless society.

weak are indicators of how wicked human beings are. These activities and lifestyles grieved God in the past, and they still grieve him today.

God does not have double standards. He will judge sin today as he did in the days of Noah. Ultimate judgment waits for eternity. God spared Noah, who was a righteous person. If we avoid sexual impurity, shun corruption, and help the poor and weak in society, God will show us favour. But God hates sin and deals with it drastically.

them on the earth. It broke his heart. 7 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 move along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." 8 But Noah found favour with the LORD.

The Story of Noah

9 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. 10 Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. 12 God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. 13 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!

14 "Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its interior. 15 Make the boat 150 metres long, 25 metres wide, and 15 metres high.* 16 Leave a 50-centimetre 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.

17 "Look! I am about to cover the earth

6:7 Deut 29:20
6:8 Exod 33:17
6:9 Job 1:1
Ezek 14:14
6:11 Deut 31:29
Judg 2:19
Ezek 8:17
6:12 Ps 14:1-3
6:13 Isa 34:1-4
Ezek 7:2-3
6:14 Exod 2:3
1 Pet 3:20
6:17 Ps 29:10
2 Pet 2:5
6:18 Gen 9:9-16;
17:7; 19:12
6:20 Gen 7:3
6:21 Gen 1:29
6:22 Gen 7:5
Exod 40:16
7:1 Gen 6:18
Matt 24:38
Luke 17:26-27
Heb 11:7
1 Pet 3:20
7:2 Lev 11:4-7
Deut 14:3-20
Ezek 44:23
7:4 Gen 6:7, 13

with a flood that will destroy every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. 18 But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your wife and your sons and their wives. 19 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. 20 Pairs of every kind of bird, and every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that moves along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. 21 And be sure to take on board enough food for your family and for all the animals."

22 So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

The Flood Covers the Earth

7 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. 2 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. 3 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. 4 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."

6:14a Traditionally rendered an ark. 6:14b Or gopher wood. 6:15 Hebrew 300 cubits [450 feet] long, 50 cubits [75 feet] wide, and 30 cubits [45 feet] high. 6:16 Hebrew an opening of 1 cubit [18 inches]. 7:2 Hebrew of each clean animal; similarly in 7:8.



APPLICATION

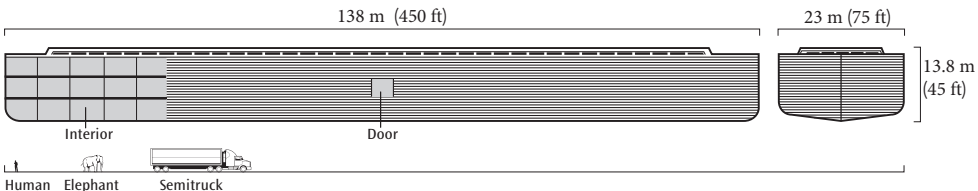
GOD'S FAVOUR • Genesis 6:8-22

How often have you failed to do the right thing because it was embarrassing to do so or it was uncomfortable or it might have seemed foolish to other people? Noah did the most foolish thing in his time by building an ark on dry land—when no one expected rain. People probably said, "This man is crazy!" Sometimes obeying God may mean doing the most absurd things in the eyes of other people. It may mean a sacrifice of

your prestige, fame, and resources. But when, through faith, we obey God—even when it seems foolish to others—we will find favour with God. Obedience through faith takes us above human wisdom into a special relationship with God and in his favour.

Has the Lord asked you to do something that seems to be contrary to what is "normal" by your family and friends? Are you willing to obey? By obeying you gain favour from the Lord.

Noah's Ark (Genesis 6:14-16). An ark built to the dimensions specified in Genesis would have been immense. Its ratio of length to width (6 to 1) is the most stable known and is used for the design of modern tankers and freight-hauling ships. The ark was able to carry 20,000 tons of cargo; the required number of young adult land animals would have occupied less than half of the available space. The design given was perfect for the ark's function.



⁵ So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

⁶ Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. ⁷ He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. ⁸ 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 move along the ground. ⁹ They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

¹¹ 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. ¹² The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

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

¹⁷ For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. ¹⁸ As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. ¹⁹ Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, ²⁰ rising nearly seven metres* above the highest peaks. ²¹ All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic animals, wild animals, small animals that move along the ground, and all the people. ²² Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. ²³ God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that move along the ground, and

7:20 Hebrew *15 cubits* [22.5 feet]. **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.

7:6

Gen 5:32

7:7

Gen 6:18

7:9

Gen 6:22

7:11

Ps 78:23

Ezek 26:19

Mal 3:10

7:13

1 Pet 3:20

2 Pet 2:5

7:15

Gen 6:19; 7:9

7:19

Ps 104:6

7:20

2 Pet 3:6

7:23

Matt 24:38-39

Luke 17:26-27

1 Pet 3:20

2 Pet 2:5

7:24

Gen 8:3

8:1

Gen 19:29;

30:22;

Exod 2:24;

14:21

Job 12:15

Isa 44:27

8:2

Gen 7:4, 12

8:4

Gen 7:20

8:7

Lev 11:15

Deut 14:14

1 Kgs 17:4

Luke 12:24

8:8

Isa 60:8

Hos 11:11

Matt 10:16

8:13

Gen 5:32

8:16

Gen 7:13

8:17

Gen 1:22

the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. ²⁴ And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Recedes

8 But 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. ² The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. ³ So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, ⁴ exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

⁶ After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat ⁷ and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. ⁸ He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. ¹¹ 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. ¹² He waited another seven days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ “Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷ Release all the



APPLICATION

GOD REMEMBERS • Genesis 8:1-22

God chose to destroy the inhabitants of the world with a flood because of their wickedness (Genesis 6:5-7). Yet he chose to save Noah and his family by putting them on an ark. He gave Noah directions on how to build it. God also had Noah take every kind of animal. Every living being on the land outside the ark was destroyed when the water rose.

Noah and his family drifted alone in the ark for months. “But God remembered Noah” (Genesis 8:1). Finally, the waters subsided, and the ark found dry land.

There is always hope no matter the crisis. God remembers us even before we call, but he is pleased when we turn to him in our troubles. He hears us and has the power to make the waters of our problems recede. Our trust in the all-powerful God gives us peace and enables us to face any problem. God always remembers us. Sometimes he causes our problems to resolve; other times he does not. But in every crisis he gives us the grace and strength to endure.

animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that move along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

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

20 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.* 21 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 towards evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. 22 As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”

God Confirms His Covenant

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. 2 All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that move 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. 3 I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. 4 But you must never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

5 “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. 6 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. 7 Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth.”

8 Then God told Noah and his sons, 9 “I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your descendants, 10 and with all the animals that were on the boat with you—the birds,

8:20 Gen 4:4; 12:7; 13:18; 22:2

8:21 Gen 3:17 Exod 29:18, 25 Lev 1:9, 13 Isa 54:9

8:22 Ps 74:17

9:1 Gen 1:22

9:2 Gen 1:26-29 Ps 8:6-8

9:3 Ps 104:14

9:4 Lev 3:17; 7:26; 17:10

Deut 12:16 Acts 15:20, 29

9:5 Exod 21:28-32

9:6 Exod 20:13; 21:12 Num 35:33

9:11 Isa 24:5

9:12 Gen 17:11

9:13 Ezek 1:28

9:15 Deut 7:9

9:21 Gen 19:35

9:22 Hab 2:15

9:25 Deut 27:16

the livestock, and all the wild animals—every living creature on earth. 11 Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

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

Noah’s Sons

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

20 After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. 21 One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. 23 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.

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

“May Canaan be cursed!
May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

8:20 Hebrew every clean animal and every clean bird. 9:6 Or man; Hebrew reads ha-adam.



APPLICATION

COVERING FOR RESPECT • Genesis 9:18-28

Actions have consequences. The consequences of drunkenness are undesirable and include broken families, gruesome accidents, poverty, and ill health. The Bible at times relates drunkenness to nakedness (Habakkuk 2:15; Lamentations 4:21).

Noah prepared a vineyard, made some wine, drank it, and became drunk. Ham saw his nakedness and passed the news on to his brothers. The primary lesson we can learn from this incident is about the effect of drinking on the people around us. Noah, like all people who get drunk, created a situation where his children might sin. Ham, for

whatever reason, could not resist the temptation of seeing his father’s nakedness, and thus he sinned. In doing so, he brought judgement upon himself and his family. We must be good models for our children and teach our children very early in life how to handle sin in others.

God tells his people not to get drunk “because that will ruin your life” (Ephesians 5:18). In addition, fathers are models to their children, which is one reason fathers must always maintain self-control. Older children should also teach their younger siblings respect and good morals.

26 Then Noah said,

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

27 May God expand the territory of Japheth!

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

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

10 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.

Descendants of Japheth

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

3 The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

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

Descendants of Ham

6 The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

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

8 Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth. 9 Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,* his name became proverbial. People would say, “This

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.

9:26

Gen 14:20

9:27

Gen 10:2-5

Isa 66:19

9:29

Gen 2:17

10:1

Gen 9:18

1 Chr 1:4

10:2

1 Chr 1:5-7

Isa 66:19

Ezek 27:13;

38:2-3, 6

10:3

Jer 51:27

Ezek 27:14

10:4

1 Chr 1:6-7

10:6

1 Chr 1:8-10

10:7

Isa 43:3

Ezek 27:15;

20, 22

10:10

Gen 11:9



AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

SONS OF HAM

After the Flood, Noah's family was given the same command that Adam and Eve had been given: “Multiply, and repopulate the earth” (Genesis 9:7). Genesis 10 describes how Noah's sons obeyed that command and tells us where the nations of the world came from. The first three sons of Ham are traditionally seen as the ancestors of African peoples. Cush's descendants settled in the upper Nile region, including southern Egypt and the northern part of Sudan. The tribe of Mizraim settled in Egypt. The tribe of Put settled in either Libya or Somalia.

When Ham looked at his naked father, his son Canaan was cursed to be the servant of Shem and Japheth. Because Ham was the father of the African people, some Christians, Jews, and Muslims have misused this passage to justify enslaving Africans. But the passage only says that Canaan is cursed. Even though the rest of Ham's sons settled in Africa, Canaan did not. Much later, God told Israel (descendants of Noah's son Shem) to conquer the land of Canaan, and Canaan's descendants became servants, just as Noah had said.

“I understand that there are Christians among you who try to justify segregation on the basis of the Bible,” said Martin Luther King, Jr., who was of African descent. “They argue that the Negro is inferior by nature because of Noah's curse upon the children of Ham. Oh my friends, this is blasphemy. This is against everything that the Christian religion stands for. I must say to you as I have said to so many Christians before, that in Christ ‘there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus.’”

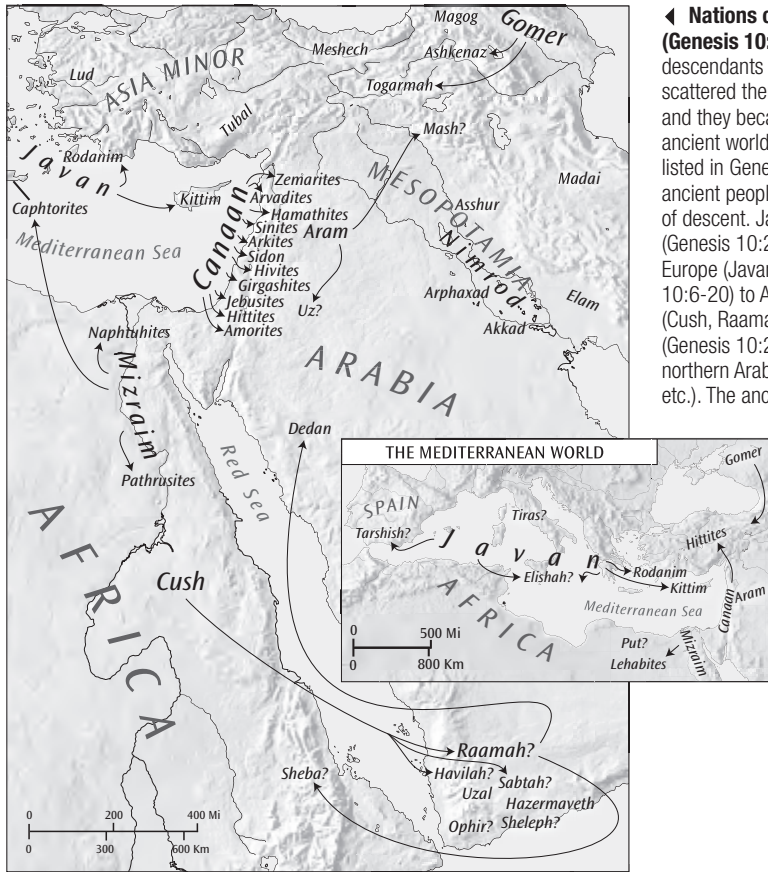
As Africans, we are not descendants of Canaan, but of Ham's other sons—Cush (Egypt and Sudan), Mizraim (Egypt) and Put (Libya or Somalia). This chapter is part of our history, and the Bible is the story of our people—both as Africans and Christians.

man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” 10 He built his kingdom



The Ancient Near East, about 2100 BC (Genesis 10:1–11:26).

After the Flood, humanity spread out from the mountains of Urartu (Ararat) and populated the early centers of civilization, including Babylonia and Egypt. By the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), many of the cities in this region were already ancient.



◀ Nations of the Ancient World

(Genesis 10:1–11:9). Noah's descendants spread out after "the Lord scattered them" (Genesis 11:1-9), and they became the nations of the ancient world. Over half of the names listed in Genesis 10 are identifiable ancient peoples. Arrows indicate lines of descent. Japheth's descendants (Genesis 10:2-5) went to Asia Minor and Europe (Javan, etc.), Ham's (Genesis 10:6-20) to Africa and southern Arabia (Cush, Raamah, etc.), and Shem's (Genesis 10:21-31) to Mesopotamia and northern Arabia (Asshur, Elam, Aram, etc.). The ancients knew a large area of civilization, from Spain to Media (Madai), and from the Caucasus Mountains (east of the Black Sea) to southern Arabia.

Noah's Descendants		
Japheth Genesis 9:27	Ham Genesis 10:6; 14:5; 1 Chronicles 4:38-41; Psalm 105:27	Shem Genesis 10:31
Gomer Ezekiel 38:6 <i>Ashkenaz</i> Jeremiah 51:27 <i>Togarmah</i> Ezekiel 27:14; 38:6	Cush Genesis 2:13; Numbers 12:1; 1 Chronicles 1:10 <i>Havilah</i> Genesis 25:18; 1 Samuel 15:7 <i>Raamah</i> Ezekiel 27:22 <i>Sheba</i> 1 Kings 10:1-13; Isaiah 60:6; Ezekiel 27:22-23; Matthew 12:42 <i>Dedan</i> Genesis 25:3; Jeremiah 25:23; Ezekiel 25:13; 27:15 <i>Nimrod</i> 1 Chronicles 1:10; Micah 5:6	Elam Genesis 14:1-9; Ezra 4:9; Isaiah 22:6; Jeremiah 49:34-39; Ezekiel 32:24; Daniel 8:2; Acts 2:9
Magog Ezekiel 38:2; 39:6; Revelation 20:8	Mizraim Genesis 50:11 Caphtorites Deuteronomy 2:23	Asshur Genesis 2:14; 25:3; 25:18; Ezekiel 27:23
Madai [Medes] 2 Kings 17:6; Esther 1:19; Acts 2:9	Put Nahum 3:9	Aram Genesis 24:10; 25:20; 28:5–31:21; Numbers 23:7; Judges 3:8; 2 Samuel 8:5-6
Javan <i>Elishah</i> Ezekiel 27:7 <i>Tarshish</i> Psalm 72:10; Isaiah 23:1; 60:9; 66:19; Jeremiah 10:9; Jonah 1:3	Canaan Genesis 11:31; 12:5-10 <i>Sidon</i> Joshua 13:4-6; 1 Kings 5:6; 11:33; 16:31; Ezekiel 28:21-24; Matthew 11:21-22; Luke 6:17; Acts 27:3 <i>Hittites</i> Genesis 23:1-20; Numbers 13:29; Joshua 1:4 <i>Jebusites</i> Joshua 15:63; Judges 19:10-11; 2 Samuel 5:6-8; Zech. 9:7 <i>Amorites</i> Genesis 14:7, 13; Numbers 21:21-35; Joshua 5:1; 10:1-13 <i>Girgashites</i> Genesis 15:21; Deuteronomy 7:1; Joshua 3:10; 24:11; 1 Chronicles 1:14; Nehemiah 9:8 <i>Hivites</i> Genesis 34:1-2; 36:2; Deuteronomy 20:17; Joshua 9:3-7; 11:3 <i>Arkites</i> Joshua 16:2; 2 Samuel 15:32 <i>Arvadites</i> Ezekiel 27:8, 11 <i>Zemarites</i> 2 Chronicles 13:4 <i>Hamathites</i> 2 Samuel 8:9-10; 2 Kings 14:28; 23:33	
Tubal Isaiah 66:19; Ezekiel 27:13; 38:2		
Meshech Psalm 120:5; Ezekiel 32:26; 39:1		

in the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. ¹¹From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,* building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, ¹²and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

¹³Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphortites, from whom the Philistines came.*

¹⁵Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,* ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, ¹⁹and 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.

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

Descendants of Shem

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

²²The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

²³The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

²⁵Eber 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.

10:11
Mic 5:6
10:14
1 Chr 1:12

10:15
Gen 15:20; 23:3
1 Chr 1:13
Jer 47:4

10:16
Gen 15:18-21

10:19
Gen 14:2

10:23
Job 1:1

10:24
Luke 3:35

10:32
Gen 9:19; 10:1

11:2
Gen 10:10; 14:1
Isa 11:11

11:3
Gen 14:10

11:4
2 Sam 8:13

11:5
Gen 18:21
Exod 19:11

11:6
Gen 9:19; 11:1

11:7
Gen 1:26

11:8
Gen 9:19

²⁶Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Joban. All these were descendants of Joktan. ³⁰The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

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

Conclusion

³²These 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.

The Tower of Babel

11 At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words. ²As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

³They 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.) ⁴Then 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."

⁵But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶"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! ⁷Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."

⁸In that way, the LORD scattered them all

10:10 Hebrew *Shinar*. **10:11** Or *From that land Assyria went out*. **10:14** Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphortites*. 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. **11:2** Hebrew *Shinar*.



APPLICATION

NOT BEING LIKE GOD • Genesis 11

In the Garden of Eden, Satan deceived Adam and Eve. He told them that by eating the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, they would be like God, "knowing both good and evil." They ate the fruit and God punished them for disobeying his command (Genesis 3:1-19).

Later at Babel, humans made another attempt to be like God by building a city and tower to make them famous and to reach the sky. Thus they would be "like God" and keep themselves from scattering over the earth. This also disobeyed God's command to fill the earth (Genesis 9:1, 7). God punished them by confusing their speech. Their intended, united community project was abandoned, and they were scattered across the earth.

God punishes any person who attempts to be like God

rather than exalt God. Herod in the New Testament became sick and died because, by accepting people's worship, he made himself like God (Acts 12:20-24). We have seen empires, global business leaders, and great celebrities rise and fall; but the name of God remains.

Although Africa is among the most diverse continents in terms of ethnicity and language, this confusion of languages should not be considered a curse. It was God's tool to achieve his purpose of filling all parts of the earth with people. As such, language differences should be celebrated. Our thousands of languages in Africa are a testimony to the filling of the earth. They should enrich our worship and should display the beauty of our sovereign God.

over the world, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That 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.

The Line of Descent from Shem to Abram

¹⁰This 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. ¹¹After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

11:9
Gen 10:10
11:10
Gen 10:22-25
Luke 3:36
11:12
Luke 3:36
11:13
1 Chr 1:17
11:14
Luke 3:35
11:16
Luke 3:35
11:18
Luke 3:35
11:20
Luke 3:35
11:22
Luke 3:34
11:24
Josh 24:2
Luke 3:34
11:26
Gen 22:20
1 Chr 1:26-27
Luke 3:34
11:29
Gen 17:15;
20:11-12;
22:20
11:30
Gen 16:1;
18:11; 25:21
1 Sam 1:5
Luke 1:7
11:31
Gen 27:43
Josh 24:2
Acts 7:4

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

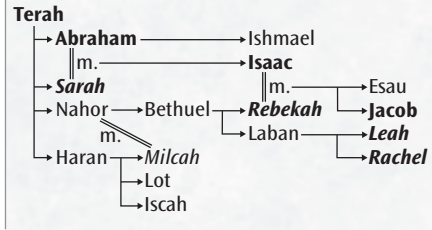
²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

The Family of Terah

²⁷This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸But Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his father, Terah, was still living. ²⁹Meanwhile, 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.) ³⁰But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

³¹One 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. ³²Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

Abraham's Family (Genesis 11:27-30).



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 ¹²*When Arphaxad was 135 years old, he became the father of Cainan.* ¹³*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.



PROVERBS & STORIES

A PROMISE THAT NEVER CHANGES

God called Abram and promised to be with him as he stepped into the unknown. "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. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others'" (Genesis 12:1-2).

Learning to trust in God is much more than just having an intellectual agreement with his promises. Trust in God is a heart attitude of full confidence that God's promises are completely trustworthy. We must have faith that God does not lie, that he remembers his promises, and that he keeps them. It is this type of faith that will make us obedient like Abram.

Leaving one's comfort zone and travelling across the ridges

and rivers in the countryside or to the far village requires risk-taking, courage, and a clear mission. A Swahili proverb says, *Mwamini Mungu si mtovu*, meaning, "He who trusts God will lack nothing." Trusting God gives the traveller the assurance that all shall come to pass. Like Abram, we have to keep our eyes on the One who made the promise and have unwavering faith in him.

Whenever our own faith weakens, we should renew our trust in him, as Abram did. God's promise to always be with us never wavers even if we are inconsistent (Matthew 28:20). The book of Hebrews gives testimony to Abraham's lifelong faith. Abraham "died still believing what God had promised him" (Hebrews 11:13). He had learned to trust God.

The Call of Abram

12 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. ²I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

⁴So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. ⁵He 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, ⁶Abram travelled 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.

⁷Then 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. ⁸After that, Abram travelled 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 worshipped the LORD. ⁹Then Abram continued travelling south by stages towards the Negev.

Abram and Sarai in Egypt

¹⁰At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down **12:7 Hebrew seed.**

12:1
Gen 15:7
*Acts 7:3
Heb 11:8
12:2
Gen 13:16;
15:5; 17:4;
18:18; 22:17
Zech 8:13
12:3
Gen 22:18; 26:4
Exod 23:22
Acts 3:25
*Gal 3:8
12:4
Gen 11:26, 31
12:6
Gen 33:18; 35:4
Deut 11:30
12:7
Gen 13:15
*Gal 3:16
12:8
Gen 4:26; 8:20;
22:9
12:9
Gen 13:1; 20:1
12:10
Gen 26:1; 42:5
12:11
Gen 29:17
12:12
Gen 20:11



AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

TO EVERY TRIBE

God moved Abram from his home in Haran, in modern-day Iraq, to the place where the nation of Israel is today (Genesis 12:1). Israel is called the “land bridge” because it is the piece of land between Africa, Europe, and Asia. When people from Africa travelled to Europe they had to go through Israel, the “land bridge.” And people of Asia and Europe often travelled across that “land bridge” as they went from one continent to another.

God sent the family of Abram to the “land bridge.” Why? So they could be in place to become recognised and respected by all people, which would eventually help them to spread God’s Kingdom to “all the families” in Africa, Europe, and Asia (Genesis 12:3). In heaven we will sing to Jesus. Our song will be, “Your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

Faith in God must spread to all nations and tribes. God made that promise to Abraham nearly four thousand years ago. But today, faith in God still has not reached people of certain tribes and languages. God laid the foundation for missions long ago by placing his people on the land bridge between all the great nations in the ancient world. Jesus said the workers are few, so we must ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers (Matthew 9:37-38), and our churches must send missionaries (Acts 13:2-39).

to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. ¹¹As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, “Look, you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his



APPLICATION

TREATING YOUR NEPHEW AS YOUR OWN SON • Genesis 12:1-5

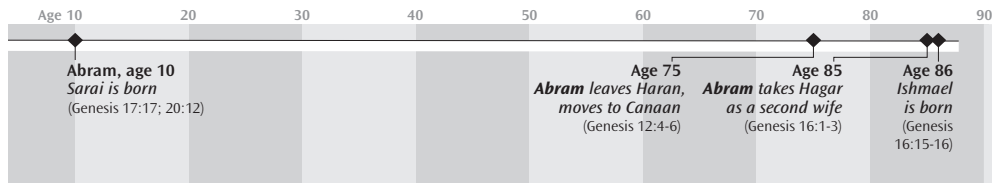
Following God’s instructions, Abram left his country and took Lot, his nephew and the son of his deceased brother Haran, with him. Abram took care of his orphaned nephew as if Lot were his own son, even when Lot got himself into trouble.

This story pictures an extended family in which Abram saw his brother’s son as his own son, not just as a nephew. In such circumstances, orphans are cared for and the deceased brother’s memory is honoured. However, the popularity of individualism has started to weaken the bonds of the extended family in Africa. Traditionally African children did not belong only to their

immediate family—their upbringing was the entire community’s responsibility. The whole group—extended family, other relatives, and people the same age as the parents—took part in a child’s development. A neighbour could correct a child because everyone in the community was concerned with the child’s success, as well as with the blessing such success would bring.

Abram’s selfless attitude towards Lot (Genesis 13; 14; 18:20-33) should make us think about how we treat the children from our extended families. Abram’s care for his nephew teaches us a lesson of unconditional love and gives us a compelling example to follow.

Abraham’s Life (Genesis 11:27–25:11). *Continued on next page.*





AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

NO ORPHANS

In many parts of Africa, when a child is born into a specific family, it requires the whole village to raise the child. Therefore, there are technically no orphans because there is always a family member who will step in as substitute parent if the natural parents of the child die.

It is also a common practice in parts of Africa for a barren couple to take a child from a brother and treat the child as their own, even though the child may keep the real father's name. This practice is common in the Bible as well. Lot was raised by his uncle, and so was Esther. In our own time, such practices will ensure that there are no street children and that every child's needs are provided, even when the parents are not alive.

wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!' ¹³ So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."

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

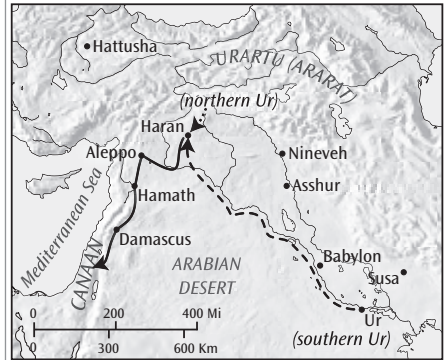
¹⁷ But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram's wife. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. "What have you done to me?" he demanded. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,'

12:16
Gen 20:14;
24:35
12:17
1 Chr 16:21
Ps 105:14
12:18
Gen 20:9-10
12:19
Gen 20:5; 26:9
13:1
Gen 12:9
13:2
Gen 12:5
13:3
Gen 12:8-9

and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!" ²⁰ 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.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram left Egypt and travelled north into the Negev, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. ² (Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.) ³ From the Negev, they continued travelling by stages towards Bethel, and they pitched their tents between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. ⁴ This was the same place where Abram had built the



Abraham's Journey to Canaan (Genesis 12:1-9).

"Ur of the Chaldeans" (Genesis 11:28, 31; 15:7) has traditionally been identified with Ur in Mesopotamia (southern Ur), a chief city of ancient Sumer. Some scholars have proposed a northern Ur to the north of Haran, where Abram's extended family settled (see Genesis 27:43; 28:10; 29:4; Acts 7:2-4).



PROVERBS & STORIES

FOOLISH FEAR

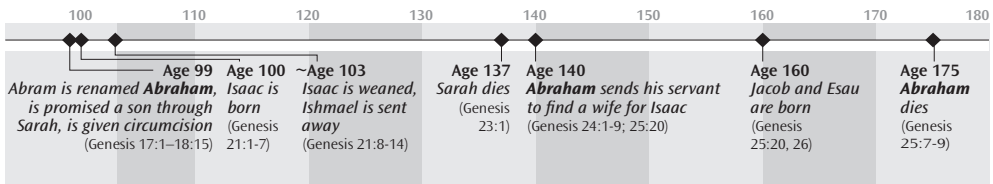
Sometimes we are so afraid of what will happen if we tell the truth that we lie instead. We can be so afraid of those in power over us that our fear causes us to try and trick them. How foolish! Lies are soon exposed (Proverbs 12:19).

Abram was afraid (Genesis 12:10-20). As Egypt's supreme ruler, Pharaoh could do anything he wished to insignificant foreigners, including killing a man for his wife. But Pharaoh did not tolerate being made to look foolish.

The Bashi people say, *Omurhebwa arhaba mwenge*,

meaning, "The one who is deceived is never clever." However, Abram attempted to outsmart Pharaoh by saying that his wife, Sarai, was his sister. It was a sinful deception that had disastrous results. God sent terrible plagues to Pharaoh and his household because of the lie. When Pharaoh learned the truth, he threw Abram and Sarai out of the country. Pharaoh was deceived, but Abraham was foolish to let his fear cause him to lie. Jesus said, "Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Abraham's Life (Genesis 11:27-25:11). *Continued from last page.*



altar, and there he worshipped the LORD again.

⁵ Lot, who was travelling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. ⁶ But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. ⁷ So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

⁸ Finally Abram said to Lot, "Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! ⁹ 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."

¹⁰ 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.) ¹¹ 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. ¹² So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and

13:15 Hebrew *seed*; also in 13:16. **14:1** Hebrew *Shinar*; also in 14:9. **14:3** Hebrew *Salt Sea*.

13:5
Gen 12:5
13:6
Gen 12:5; 36:7
13:7
Gen 12:6; 26:20
13:8
Prov 15:18; 20:3
13:9
Gen 20:15
13:10
Gen 2:8-10
13:13
Gen 18:20
Num 32:23
Isa 1:10; 3:9
2 Pet 2:8
13:14
Gen 28:14
Deut 3:27;
34:1-4
13:15
Gen 12:2, 7;
15:18; 17:7-8
*Gal 3:16
13:16
Num 23:10
13:17
Num 13:17-25
13:18
Gen 14:13; 18:1
14:1
Gen 10:10; 11:2
14:2
Gen 10:19;
13:10
Deut 29:23
14:3
Num 34:3, 12
Deut 3:17
Josh 3:16

Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. ¹³ But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants* as a permanent possession. ¹⁶ And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷ Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."

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

Abram Rescues Lot

14 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 ² 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).

³ This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). ⁴ For twelve years they had



PROVERBS & STORIES

A NECESSARY SEPARATION

Material blessings turned out to cause a problem between Abram and Lot. They were both wealthy and had more sheep, goats, and cattle than the land could support. This development brought strife between the two relatives and their shepherds. "Abram said to Lot, "Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives!" (Genesis 13:8).

To remedy the situation and maintain peace, Abram and Lot had to go separate ways. A Swahili proverb says, *Usipoziba ufa utajenga ukuta*, meaning, "If you do not fill up the cracks, you will build a wall." Relational cracks left unchecked can develop into chasms.

We must ask for God's wisdom sometimes in making painful

decisions and also in striving for peace. Quarrelling is quite common in our churches and families because some people do not want to face burning issues head on. Dealing with life issues is a necessary undertaking for healing to take place and for peace to be found.

Africa is rich in livestock and many wars have been fought by herdsmen and tribesmen over grazing land, but God gives both cattle and land. God's people should not use his blessings as a stage for conflict. Believers should share the blessings God has given them instead of greedily keeping things for themselves. Wealth should draw relatives, friends, and neighbours closer together rather than tear them apart.



APPLICATION

A HEART THAT FORGIVES • Genesis 14

In ancient times, powerful monarchs proved their might in aggressive battles against neighbouring and faraway settlements. Many of those wars were fought without any just cause. Weaker leaders survived only by making agreements with more powerful ones, pledging loyalty to them. Genesis 14 tells of one of those wars in which Abram's nephew, Lot, was taken captive along with many others.

Lot had separated from his uncle after a scuffle of their herdsmen over sharing grazing ground for their large flocks. Lot chose the best part of the land and was living in Sodom.

When Abram learned of his capture, he did a noble thing. Abram wasted no time but went out with his own trained fighters and rescued Lot. Such an action could only come from a heart that knew true forgiveness. Although Abram and Lot were living in different places, their separation had not cut their relationship. Abram is a great example of forgiveness and not letting a dispute damage a relationship.

In traditional Africa, as in Bible times, the return of a hero was met with great celebration. All the defeated kings whose people Abram had rescued welcomed him when he returned.

been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

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

⁸Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.* ⁹They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰As 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. ¹¹The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. ¹²They also captured Lot—Abram’s nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

¹³But 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.

¹⁴When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilised 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. ¹⁵There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer’s army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Abram 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.


Melchizedek Blesses Abram

¹⁷After 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).

¹⁸And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,* brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

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

14:5
Gen 15:20
Deut 2:10, 20:3:11
Josh 13:19
14:7
Gen 16:14; 20:1
Num 13:26
Deut 1:4
2 Chr 20:2
14:12
Gen 11:27
14:13
Gen 10:16;
13:18; 39:14
14:14
Gen 12:5
Deut 34:1
14:15
Gen 15:2
14:17
2 Sam 18:18
14:18
Pss 76:2; 110:4
Heb 5:6, 10; 7:1
14:19
Gen 27:25; 48:9
Mark 10:16
14:20
Gen 9:26; 24:27
*Heb 7:1-2
14:22
Gen 1:1
14:23
2 Kgs 5:16
14:24
Gen 14:13
15:1
Gen 21:17;
26:24
Num 12:6
Deut 33:29
Ps 3:3



AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

“ME FIRST!”

When Abram heard that an army had plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and captured Lot, Abram chased the army, took Lot back, and recovered everything the army had taken. The king of Sodom urged Abram to keep the recovered goods, but Abram refused.

Pursuing selfish gain at the cost of integrity has been the downfall of many leaders. “He who taps wine is the first to taste it” is a commonly accepted saying with many Africans. It means that the one who labours should be the first to benefit from the labour. This mindset often sets personal interest ahead of integrity. However, Abram defied this attitude and made integrity more important than seeking money or treasure. After all, would he not have been justified in taking the first share of the spoils he had worked so hard to regain? Abram did not seek personal advantage for his service.

Though urged by the king of Sodom to take a share, Abram preferred to honour God with his integrity rather than live under the clout of the king of Sodom. Abram said to the king, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High . . . 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!’”

Let us beware of those who offer financial gifts. They may contain a trap. Make God’s honour your top priority. Give him the credit for your blessings. Then the treasure will not seem important.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.”

²² Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, ²³that 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.’ ²⁴I 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.”

The LORD’s Covenant Promise to Abram

15 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.”

²But Abram replied, “O Sovereign LORD,

14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10. 14:18 Hebrew *El-Elyon*; also in 14:19, 20, 22.

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. ³You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

⁴Then 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." ⁵Then 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!"

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

⁷Then 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."

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

⁹The LORD told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰So 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. ¹¹Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

¹²As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. ¹³Then 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. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. ¹⁵(As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) ¹⁶After four generations your descendants will return here to this land, for

15:18 Hebrew *the river of Egypt*, referring either to an eastern branch of the River Nile or to the Brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5).

15:4
*Gal 4:28
15:5
Gen 12:2;
22:17; 32:12
*Rom 4:18
15:6
Ps 106:31
*Rom 4:3, 9, 22
*Gal 3:6
15:7
Gen 12:1; 13:17
Acts 7:2-4
15:8
Luke 1:18
15:9
Lev 1:14
15:10
Lev 1:17
15:12
Gen 2:21; 28:11
15:13
Exod 12:40
*Acts 7:6
Gal 3:17
15:14
Exod 6:5
15:15
Gen 25:8
15:16
Exod 12:40
15:17
Jer 34:18-19
15:18
Num 34:1-15
Deut 1:7-8
15:19
Num 24:21
15:21
Gen 10:15-16



HAGAR'S TROUBLE

Hagar was Sarai's Egyptian servant. She probably started working for Abram and Sarai when they were in Egypt, and they took her with them when they left. Hagar was taken from her homeland. When Sarai did not believe that God would provide a son for Abram through her, she offered Hagar to Abram to sleep with him. When Hagar got pregnant, the rivalry between the two women became unbearable for both. Hagar ran away into the desert even though she was pregnant.

God saw Hagar's pain. He told her to return to Abram and Sarai. But God also said that through Hagar's son he would give her "more descendants than you can count" (Genesis 16:10). The angel of the Lord told Hagar to name her son Ishmael, a name that means "God hears." This African woman then gave God a name. She called him "the God who sees me." She felt valued and cherished.

Many African women today are servants, maids, and house workers. Some women are separated from their homeland or abused by their employers. Hagar's story shows us how polygamy can lead to jealousy and conflict. If you are a woman who is abused, forgotten, or of low status, you can call God by the same name Hagar gave him: "the God who sees me." Remember, God loves you. Take heart, for the God of Hagar hears you, sees you, and will provide for you.

the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction."

¹⁷After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the carcasses. ¹⁸So 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 River Euphrates—¹⁹the land now occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."



APPLICATION

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES • Genesis 15

God had called Abram to leave his family and homeland. He obeyed and travelled to the land God showed him. But Abram thought he might die without a son. The desire for a son has led many African men to marry several wives and to allow their wives to have many children in order to have that one male child. God made two significant promises when Abram expressed his concern that he was still childless: God promised that Abram would father a son through whom his descendants would become a great nation, and God promised Abram that his descendants would possess the land. God established these promises as a covenant between himself and Abram by telling Abram to offer a sacrifice of specific animals and birds. Abram cut each animal in half and laid the halves on the ground. The covenant was sealed when Abram

saw a smoking firepot and flaming torch pass between the halves of the animals.

Many traditional African societies slaughter animals to bind the different parties to an agreement. It could be a peace agreement over disputed boundaries, an ethnic or religious conflict, or a marriage agreement. It is believed that the blood of the slain animal would stand as a witness against any of the sides who fail to honour the agreement.

Abram believed God and God honoured him for his unwavering faith. The sacrifice of the animals was not to serve as a witness between them but was a sign of God's commitment to fulfil his promises. As Christians, we can rely on the faithfulness of God and, like Abram, believe that God will fulfil his promises to us.

The Birth of Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. 2 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

16:1 Gen 11:30 Gal 4:24-25
16:2 Gen 30:3
16:3 Gen 12:4-5
16:4 Gen 16:15

agreed with Sarai's proposal. 3 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.)

4 So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began



APPLICATION

WAIT UPON THE LORD • Genesis 16

Getting married is a time of great happiness for a couple and their relatives, but often there is an expectation of children. When children don't arrive, it can turn the happiness into anxiety and desperation. When God called Abram, he promised to make him fruitful. While God prospered him and Sarai materially, they had no children. Their expectation of needing children made them anxious. In desperation, they took matters into their own hands. God seemed to be too slow in giving them the child he promised. So they tried to help God. Although the way they went about it was acceptable in their culture, it was not God's plan for them.

When we do not wait on God but decide to help him out

through socially acceptable means, we often make the situation worse with results that may have catastrophic consequences. God has promised us many good things, but we often rush ahead to help God fulfil those promises in ways that sin against him. It is not okay to commit adultery to get children. It is not okay to steal to get rich. It is not okay to kill for power. God will always punish sin. The entire world is still suffering from the consequences of that blunder of Abram and Sarai. God did bless Hagar and Ishmael, but today the Arabs, who are the descendants of Ishmael, and the Jews, who are the descendants of Isaac, are still fighting.

Abraham in Canaan

(Genesis 12:6–25:11). Canaan was central to the route between Mesopotamia and Africa. Abraham probably entered Canaan by following the King's Highway—an ancient and well travelled route that ran just east of Canaan. Philistines had already begun settling in Philistia along the coast (Genesis 10:14; 21:32–34; 26:1–18), whereas some Canaanite settlements (Jericho, Megiddo, Hazazon-tama, En-gedi) were very old by this time. Within Canaan, Abraham travelled southward along the central ridge of the hill country, building altars at the Oak of Moreh (Shechem, Genesis 12:6–7), Bethel (Genesis 12:8; 13:3), Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1–19), Oaks of Mamre (Hebron, Genesis 13:18), and Beersheba (Genesis 21:22–34). Lot unwisely chose his portion in Sodom (Genesis 13:10–13).



to treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. ⁵ 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!"

⁶ 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.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. ⁸ 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.

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

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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."

¹³ Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, "You are the God who sees me."*

16:13 Hebrew *El-roi*.

16:5

Gen 31:53

16:7

Gen 21:17;

22:11, 15

16:8

Gen 3:9; 4:9

16:9

Gen 21:12

Eph 6:5

Titus 2:9

16:10

Gen 17:20

16:11

Gen 16:15

Exod 3:7-8

16:12

Job 39:5-8

16:13

Gen 32:30



INITIATION RITES

In many African societies, there were special rites that adolescent boys and girls went through to make them fully accepted members of their communities. Circumcision might have been one of them. Many of these rites of passage were also an assurance of belonging to the community. This belonging comes with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of membership. Such rites were often done through secret societies, which served as the keepers of the community's traditions and culture. The people receiving the rites were considered to have been the true sons and daughters of the soil and were accorded certain privileges that were denied to those not receiving the rites.

God appeared to Abram, changed his name to Abraham, and made a promise that he would have a special relationship with Abraham and his descendants. God instituted the rite of circumcision as the sign of the covenant relationship that existed between them. It was a rite that gave Abraham the certainty that God would keep his promise to make his descendants enjoy the full rights and privileges of the community of God's special people. They would become the channel through which all the other peoples of the earth would receive God's blessings and favour.

Since New Testament times, the rite of inclusion into God's special family is the new birth. Baptism serves as an outward sign of true repentance. It shows that the person being baptised has been ushered into a living relationship with Christ as a member of his body, the church.



IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN

If Sarai had only known that her aged body would give birth to Isaac through God's miraculous intervention, she would not have told Abram to sleep with her Egyptian servant, Hagar (Genesis 16:2). Abram's relationship with Hagar caused great pain and hardship, not only for Abram and Sarai, but also for generations to come.

It is possible Sarai did not believe God's promise that Abram would have a son of his own (Genesis 15:4). It is more likely she lost confidence in God's power while waiting for God to honour his promise. She wrongly believed she needed to "help" God out.

The Bushi proverb *Ncimenyaga azinda c'arharhanga* means "The words, 'if I had only known,' always come after the fact." This proverb rings true in the relationship between Sarai, Hagar,

and Abram. Sarai sought to use Hagar to bring a child into the family, but Hagar looked down on Sarai after she became pregnant because Sarai was unable to have her own child. In return, Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she ran away. And in the centre of the two unhappy women was Abram awaiting the birth of a son who was not the child of promise.

Nothing is too hard for the Lord (Genesis 18:13). He knows all, but we do not. He is faithful to his promises, and all his promises come true (Psalms 18:30; 71:22; 145:13). God asks us to trust in him first, and then he will show us what path to take (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Have you lost confidence in God? If so, renew your faith in his power and love for you. Instead of saying, "If I had only known," say, "No matter what, I will obey and only trust God."

THE GOD WHO SEES ME

A seven-year-old girl in a remote village in eastern Kenya loved her parents and spoke about them to other children in the playground and at school. She was an only child and her parents treasured her very much. It so happened that both her parents got sick and died. The little girl went to live with her grandmother. The death of both her parents left the little girl devastated. She thought God was going to kill her, too. Her grandmother, who was a believer in God, encouraged her not

to be afraid of God and taught her that God was going to take care of her in the absence of her parents.

Like this kind grandmother, God showed his loving care for Hagar in her distress. Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, in her trying moments in Genesis 16:13 gave this name to God: "the God who sees me." She said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?" (Genesis 16:13). The good news is that God keeps an eye on those who feel abandoned, discouraged, fearful, and hopeless.

She also said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?" ¹⁴So 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.

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

Abram Is Named Abraham

17 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. ²I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants."

³At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, ⁴"This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! ⁵What's

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.

16:14
Gen 14:7
16:15
Gen 21:9; 25:12
16:16
Gen 12:4; 16:3
17:1
Gen 12:7; 28:3; 35:11; 48:3
Deut 18:13
Matt 5:48
17:2
Gen 12:2; 15:18
17:3
Gen 17:17; 18:2
17:5
Neh 9:7
*Rom 4:17
17:6
Gen 35:11
17:7
Gen 15:18
Lev 11:45; 26:12
Ps 105:6-11
*Gal 3:16
17:9
Exod 19:5
17:10
John 7:22
Acts 7:8

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. ⁶I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!

⁷"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. ⁸And 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 for ever, and I will be their God."

The Mark of the Covenant

⁹Then God said to Abraham, "Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. ¹⁰This is the covenant



PROVERBS & STORIES

WAITING DOES NOT DISAPPOINT

When God called Abram, God told him that he was going to make him a great nation. But this required waiting for a long time. Many years later, "Abraham and Sarah were both very old and Sarah was long past the age of having children" (Genesis 18:11). God had still not fulfilled his promise. A Swahili proverb says, *Subira huvuta heri*, meaning, "Patience pulls (that is, attracts) success." Patience is a fruit of the Spirit, and God works

in his people to fulfil his Word in his own timing. He brings life out of barrenness and is not limited by circumstances or time.

God has not abandoned us believers, and waiting on him pays great dividends. He will never disappoint. Even if we ourselves are not able to see the fulfilment of a promise, in God's time it will be fulfilled. Abraham saw his son, Isaac, but he did not see the nation of Israel, of which he was the father.

God's Covenants (Genesis 12:1-9). A covenant is a binding commitment and relationship between two parties that includes obligations and promises. God initiates and sets very favourable terms for all of his covenants.

Recipient	Reference	Description
Creation	Genesis 9:1-17	After the Flood, God promised never to judge the world with a flood again, but to maintain the created order.
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-21; 17:1-14	God promised Abraham a great nation with abundant blessing, descendants, and land; and to bless all nations through him. The covenant required Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised and live a life of integrity.
Isaac	Genesis 26:2-6	God confirmed with Isaac his covenant with Abraham.
Jacob	Genesis 28:13-15; 35:11-13	God confirmed with Jacob his covenant with Abraham and Isaac.
The Nation of Israel	Exodus 19–24; Deuteronomy 1–34; Joshua 24	God promised to be Israel's God and bless the nations, provided they kept his law.
David	2 Samuel 7:5-16	God promised that a descendant of David would always be the king of Israel.
Israel (and the Nations)	Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 26:26-29; 2 Corinthians 3:4-18; Hebrews 8:6-13	God made a "new covenant" with Israel, which he fulfilled through Jesus Christ, enabling all people to come to him and be his people by faith in Jesus.

that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. ¹¹You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²From 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. ¹³All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.”

Sarai Is Named Sarah

¹⁵Then God said to Abraham, “Regarding Sarai, your wife—her name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah.*

¹⁶And 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.”

¹⁷Then 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?” ¹⁸So Abraham said to God, “May Ishmael live under your special blessing!”

¹⁹But 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. ²⁰As 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. ²¹But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.” ²²When God had finished speaking, he left Abraham.

²³On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his house—

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 3 seahs, about 22 litres or half a bushel.

17:11
Exod 12:48
Josh 5:2
17:12
Gen 21:4
Lev 12:3
Luke 1:59; 2:21
17:14
Exod 30:33
Lev 7:20
17:15
Gen 17:5
17:16
Gen 18:10
17:17
Gen 17:3;
18:11-13
17:19
Gen 21:2;
26:2-5
17:20
Gen 25:12-16

17:21
Gen 18:10, 14
17:22
Gen 18:33;
35:13
17:23
Gen 14:14
17:24
Rom 4:11
17:25
Gen 16:16

18:1
Gen 12:7; 13:18
18:2
Gen 32:24
Josh 5:13
Judg 13:6-11

18:4
Gen 19:2; 24:32
18:5
Judg 6:18-19;
13:15-16

18:10
*Rom 9:9

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

A Son Is Promised to Sarah

18 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. ²He 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.

³“My lord,” he said, “if it pleases you, stop here for a while. ⁴Rest in the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. ⁵And since you’ve honoured 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.” ⁶So 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.” ⁷Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it. ⁸When 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.

⁹“Where is Sarah, your wife?” the visitors asked.

“She’s inside the tent,” Abraham replied.

¹⁰Then 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



APPLICATION

GOOD AND BAD NEWS • Genesis 18

The three visitors who received such warm hospitality from Abraham were on a mission to announce that God’s promise of an heir to Abraham would be fulfilled. The birth of the son would begin the building of a holy nation. They were also to verify the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. This wickedness would seal the fate of the unholy cities. The wrath of God and his vengeance hang over every unrepentant sinful person and nation.

Abraham had the privilege of knowing the mind of God on both issues, for he was declared to be righteous because of his faith in God. Abraham walked with God in obedience, and

for this he was called “the friend of God” (Romans 4:3; James 2:22-23). Many people want to know God’s will but then, if God shows them, they fail to follow it. God most often entrusts his plans to faithful people who have moral integrity. Abraham’s spontaneous intercession for God’s mercy reveals his deep knowledge of the character of a holy and righteous God who will always be just. It also shows Abraham’s understanding of God’s forgiveness and mercy.

Abraham’s unwavering faith in God earned him the privilege of knowing God’s will and plans. There lies the secret for everyone who desires to know the mind of God.

from the tent. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. ¹² 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?"

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

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

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

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

¹⁶ Then the men got up from their meal and looked out towards Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on their way.

¹⁷ "Should I hide my plan from Abraham?" the LORD asked. ¹⁸ "For Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. ¹⁹ 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."

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

²² The other men turned and headed towards Sodom, but the LORD remained with Abraham. ²³ Abraham approached him and said, "Will you sweep away both the righteous and the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? ²⁵ 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?"

²⁶ And the LORD replied, "If I find fifty righteous people in Sodom, I will spare the entire city for their sake."

²⁷ Then Abraham spoke again. "Since

18:11
Gen 17:17
18:12
1 Pet 3:6
18:14
Gen 18:10
Jer 32:17, 27
*Rom 9:9
18:16
Gen 18:22; 19:1
18:17
Gen 19:24
18:18
Gen 12:2-3
*Gal 3:18
18:19
Neh 9:7
18:20
Gen 19:13
18:21
Gen 11:5
Exod 3:8
18:22
Gen 18:16; 19:1
18:23
Exod 23:7
18:25
Deut 1:16-17;
32:4
Ps 58:11
18:27
Gen 2:7
Job 30:19; 42:6
18:30
Exod 32:32
18:33
Gen 17:22;
35:13
19:1
Gen 18:2
19:2
Gen 18:4
19:3
Gen 18:6-8
19:4
Gen 13:13;
18:20
19:5
Lev 18:22
Judg 19:22

I have begun, let me speak further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ 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."

²⁹ 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."

³⁰ "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."

³¹ 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."

³² 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."

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

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

19 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. ² "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."

³ 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. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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!"



APPLICATION

GOD JUDGES SIN • Genesis 19

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah has parallels in the legends of many cultures in Africa. Such stories are used by older people to warn younger people to avoid sexual immorality lest the gods send a rain of fire from heaven. God, in his love and mercy, always gives us chances to repent from our sins, but often we still rebel against his word.

While sin, especially sexual sin, can bring terrible consequences, God does not often send literal fire from heaven. We do reap what we sow, however (Galatians 6:7-8). Our responsibility is twofold: First, we must take God's warning in his Word and avoid every kind of sin. Second, we need to be intercessors and stand in the gap before God, asking for his mercy on behalf of our nation and people.

⁶So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. ⁷“Please, my brothers,” he begged, “don’t do such a wicked thing. ⁸Look, 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.”

⁹“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 towards Lot to break down the door.

¹⁰But the two angels* reached out, pulled Lot into the house, and bolted the door.

¹¹Then they blinded all the men, young and old, who were at the door of the house, so they gave up trying to get inside.

¹²Meanwhile, 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. ¹³For 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.”

¹⁴So 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.

¹⁵At 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!”

¹⁶When 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. ¹⁷When 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!”

¹⁸“Oh no, my lord!” Lot begged. ¹⁹“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

19:10 Hebrew *men*; also in 19:12, 16.

19:8

Deut 23:17

19:9

Exod 2:14

19:10

Gen 19:1

19:11

Deut 28:28-29

2 Kgs 6:18

Acts 13:11

19:13

Gen 18:20

1 Chr 21:15

Jude 1:7

19:14

Exod 9:21

Jer 5:12; 43:1-2

19:17

Gen 13:10;

19:26

Jer 48:6

19:22

Gen 13:10

19:24

Luke 17:29

Jude 1:7

19:25

Deut 29:23

Isa 13:19

Lam 4:6

2 Pet 2:6

19:26

Gen 19:17

Luke 17:32

19:27

Gen 18:22

19:28

Rev 9:2

19:29

Deut 7:8; 9:5

2 Pet 2:7-8



THE MEANING OF LOT

To *have sex with them* shows homosexual tendencies in the city of Sodom. The term *homosexual* is a modern term in the English language for an ancient practice. Lot was required by principles of hospitality to protect his guests. Although he refused to meet the wicked demand of the men of Sodom, he offered his daughters to them instead. In a Semitic language used in North Africa today, the term *Lot* is used for a male homosexual person and *loti* and *leewat* means the act itself.

This account occurred prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law, yet Lot knew homosexuality was wicked because God writes his laws in our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 2:15). God wants us to obey the laws he put in our hearts and in his Word, not the opinions of people.

I would soon die. ²⁰See, 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.”

²¹“All right,” the angel said, “I will grant your request. I will not destroy the little village. ²²But 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.”)

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

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

²⁹But God had listened to Abraham’s request and kept Lot safe, removing him from



FLEE FOR YOUR LIFE

The twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their disobedience and wickedness. Before the cities were destroyed, the Lord spared Lot for the sake of Abraham, his uncle. An angel told Lot and his family, “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!” (Genesis 19:17).

Lot’s wife disobeyed the angel and, looking back to the city in flames, became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). A Swahili

proverb says, *Asiyesikia la mkuu huvunjika guu*, meaning, “He who does not listen to an elder’s advice will break his foot.” It saves one a great deal of trouble to pay attention to the wise counsel of others.

God is loving, but there are bad consequences to disobeying his commands. His Word is clear: “Observe the requirements of the LORD your God and follow all his ways . . . so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go” (1 Kings 2:3).

the disaster that engulfed the cities on the plain.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰ Afterwards 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. ³¹ 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.

³² 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."

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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."

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own father. ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ 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.

Abraham Deceives Abimelech

20 Abraham 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, ² Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by saying, "She is my sister." So King Abim-

19:37 Moab sounds like a Hebrew term that means "from father."

19:30
Gen 13:10
19:33
Gen 9:21
19:37
Gen 36:35
Exod 15:15
Num 21:29
Deut 2:9
Ruth 1:1
19:38
Num 21:24
Deut 2:19
20:1
Gen 14:7; 26:1
20:2
Gen 12:13
20:3
Gen 28:12;
31:24; 37:5
20:4
Gen 18:23-25
20:5
Gen 12:19
1 Kgs 9:4
Pss 7:8; 26:6



EXTRAMARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

King Abimelech already had a wife, but when Abraham and Sarah knowingly misled him to believe that they were siblings, he sent for and took Sarah to become his concubine.

Concubinage is a common practice within many ethnic groups in Africa. It involves a married person having an open or secret sexual relationship with another married or unmarried person of the opposite sex. Usually it is the husband who gets involved in an open concubinage while still living with his wife and children. Such extramarital relationships are consensual but not contractual and therefore not legally binding even under the customary laws. The Birom people of Plateau State in Central Nigeria have *Njem*, which is a form of concubinage where a man arranges to have sexual relationship and even live with a married woman, with or without the permission of the woman's husband. In some parts of Africa, men take mistresses. These are often recognised, unmarried sexual partners of top government officials who accompany them on official trips and often have offices set up for them in government ministries.

Although forms of concubinage may be culturally acceptable in Africa, Abimelech stood condemned before God when he tried to take Sarah. Even though he recognised the "great sin" (Genesis 20:9) of taking Sarah as his concubine and pleaded his innocence (Genesis 20:5), God was angry that he had taken another man's wife for himself. All such extramarital relationships are sinful in the eyes of our holy God.

elech of Gerar sent for Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.

³ 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!"

⁴ But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? ⁵ 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."

⁶ In the dream God responded, "Yes, I know you are innocent. That's why I kept

19:38 Ben-ammi means "son of my kinsman."



APPLICATION

LESSON FROM A KING • Genesis 20

King Abimelech thought Sarah was unmarried and he could have her as a wife. But through a dream, he learnt she was married to Abraham, and so the king took her back to her husband. He refrained from doing evil and repented. Abimelech did not want his people to suffer due to his actions (Genesis 20:7). How many nations are suffering because of the actions of their leaders? Abimelech repented and saved his people. For the sake of his people, he refused evil. Leaders should avoid evil to save their people.

Some of our leaders believe that they can do anything without facing any consequences. They feel they are not accountable to anyone. Even Christian leaders sometimes do things without the fear of God. When they do something wrong, they cover their deeds or give excuses and justify their actions. When we are in a position of power and influence, the needs of the people must come before our own.

you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you touch her. ⁷Now 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."

⁸Abimelech got up early the next morning and quickly called all his servants together. When he told them what had happened, his men were terrified. ⁹Then 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! ¹⁰Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?"

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

¹⁴Then 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. ¹⁵Then Abimelech said, "Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live." ¹⁶And 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."

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

20:16 Hebrew 1,000 [*shekels*] of silver, about 11.4 kilograms or 25 pounds in weight.



APPLICATION

GOD FIGHTS FOR US • Genesis 20

Abraham faced another challenge when he moved from one place to another. In Gerar, in what today is southern Israel, Abraham's marriage was tested when his life was in danger. In his own rather selfish way, he tried to escape from being killed by King Abimelech who wanted to marry Sarah, Abraham's beautiful wife.

Challenges like this are common. In every generation, people are faced with trials and their lives are often put in danger because of domestic matters such as marriage, relationships, or property ownership. Someone will try to take another's property by force, using power and influence.

When we perceive trouble or feel something is not happening quickly enough, we may devise our own plans to solve the problem. Abraham deceived to protect himself even though God had promised several times to protect him. When Abraham



AFRICAN TOUCH POINTS

WHEN IN TROUBLE, SEEK GOD

Although it is not a part of Christianity in Africa, it is a common and culturally acceptable practice in many of our communities for men to marry more than one wife, particularly if the first wife remains childless or never gave birth to a son. It is the husband's responsibility to care for all his wives and children, and every son has the right to inherit from his father. More often than not, such polygamous families are beset with conflicts between the wives and among their children. In some instances, the husbands abandon all or part of the family in order to avoid the trouble they created.

Getting into trouble is human, but getting out of it in a godly way is another matter. Abraham sinned by not waiting for God to fulfil his promise to give him a son by Sarah. By agreeing to Sarah's scheme to bear a son through Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, Abraham took matters into his own hands. The result was a serious relational problem for everyone. Though Ishmael was his first-born son and therefore a very special child, Abraham surrendered to the will of God and sent him and his mother away together (Genesis 21:14). This would have been culturally unacceptable, but in this case Abraham was obeying a clear command of God.

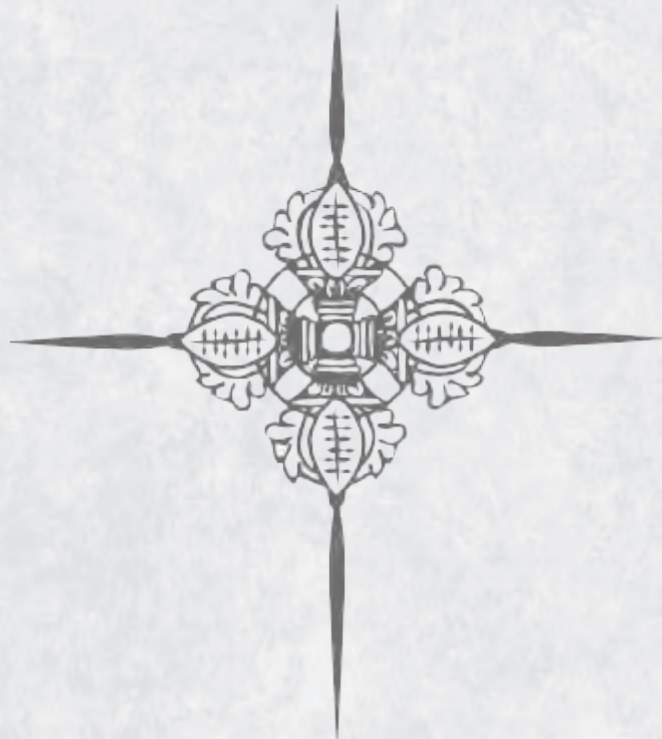
Many people end up committing a new sin in their attempt to get out of a difficult situation. Instead, when we sin, we must repent and do our best to obey God, even though it may not be easy or popular.

The Birth of Isaac

21 The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. ²She 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. ³And Abraham named their son Isaac. ⁴Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. ⁵Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

was confronted by Abimelech who asked, "Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?" Abraham started off by saying, "I thought" (Genesis 20:10-11). That is often where our troubles begin—"I thought." I thought I was not going to get food, so I stole; I thought I was not going to get married, so I lived in adultery; I thought I would die in poverty, so I became corrupt. The phrase "I thought" represents human reasoning apart from faith in God. We should trust in the Lord when faced with difficult situations instead of trying to solve them by our own sinful efforts and ways. We should let our God fight for us because we are not as strong as our enemies. We need to put our trust in the God we worship. We should not rely only on our own wisdom and understanding to solve problems. We must wait to see God's solutions.

RESOURCES
FOR
LEARNING
AND
TEACHING



THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

Africa is one of the most dynamic centres of Christianity in the world. Africa has a significant share of the world's 2.2 billion Christians. It has about 30 percent of the world's evangelicals, 20 percent of the world's Pentecostals and charismatics, and about 15 percent of the world's Roman Catholics. In addition, Africa has significant Orthodox groups such as the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Churches and the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria.

Christianity was well established in North Africa in the first few centuries after Christ. From a solid foundation in North Africa, Christianity moved deeper into the heart of the continent. The challenge by Islam and African traditional religions deepened the faith of believers. The fifteenth century was a turning point when Catholicism from Portugal circled the continent.

The modern missionary movement and indigenous Christian movements in Africa of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries built upon these earlier foundations. Contemporary Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity has brought a renewal to the church in Africa. And now the churches of Africa in the twenty-first century are missionary-sending churches that are spreading the gospel around the world. This story can be told in four overlapping waves.

Wave One: Early Christianity in North Africa and Ethiopia

Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem . . . and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). One of the first places that the story of Jesus went was to Sudan when "the treasurer of Ethiopia" (probably Meroe in modern Sudan) believed the good news that Philip told him, was baptised, and took the message to Africa.

The Coptic church of Egypt has long claimed that the apostle Thomas and the evangelist Mark played important roles in the formation of the Church in Alexandria, Egypt. But the key moment in early Christianity in North Africa was in the late third century when there was rapid growth, in part due to the conversion of many people in large Jewish communities. But perhaps the most surprising thing that helped Christianity grow was persecution. Persecution deepened the commitment of believers in Africa and gave them courage to witness to an increasingly sympathetic African audience.

Christian growth was also encouraged by Pantaenus, Origen, and Clement, all teachers at the catechetical school in Alexandria. They attempted to define Christianity in terms of Greek philosophy that well-educated people in North Africa could understand. However, this created a backlash, and sometimes violent debates erupted over the nature of Christ and the Trinity.

Constantine, emperor of Rome in the fourth century, had a dramatic conversion to Christianity, and that had a direct impact on the early Coptic (Egyptian) church, especially in urban Africa. At the council of Nicaea in 325, Constantine attempted to have church leaders agree on how to understand the deity of Christ. But his efforts were only partly successful. Theological orthodoxy became identified with political loyalty and caused splits that would mark the church for centuries.

Egyptian Christianity grew and spread. The Bible was translated into several variations of the Coptic language, and monasticism, which originated in Egypt, spread to the Latin-speaking church of western North Africa. Monasticism is a religious way of life in which priests renounce living in the world and instead live in monasteries—and sometimes by themselves as hermits. By the fourth century, monasticism became a powerful force in evangelism and discipleship, although at times it was disruptive. A part of the church around Carthage (in modern Tunisia) protested against the strong ties other parts of the church had with Rome. Movements such as Donatism in the fourth century considered imperial Christianity, which owed its allegiance to Rome, as exploitative and compromising. Such movements developed their own clergy and churches. However, great Africans who helped shape Roman Christianity included Bishop Cyprian of Carthage and Augustine, bishop of Hippo, both of whom were inspired by the second-century firebrand and theologian, Tertullian from Carthage.

While Christianity in North Africa and Egypt flourished and North African Christians strongly influenced the church in Rome, Christianity was also growing in the powerful kingdoms of Nubia (ancient Sudan) and Ethiopia. Nubia is one of the two countries that claims to be the world's oldest Christian nation (the other is Armenia). In both Nubia and Ethiopia, the king or emperor determined the religion of his people. Frumentius, a fourth-century Syrian missionary, tutored Ezana, the young prince of the kingdom of Axum, which

is in present-day Ethiopia, in the Christian faith. Ezana became one of the great Christian kings of Africa. Important popular Christian movements also flourished, motivated in Ethiopia by Syrian monastic missionaries, known to tradition as “the nine saints,” and in Nubia by Jewish converts.

Over the next thousand years, Christianity in Ethiopia grew stronger while in Nubia it declined. Between 1200–1500, the Zagwe dynasty in Ethiopia, a family of Christian kings, revived Christian art, literature, and church expansion. Lalibela, the greatest emperor of the Zagwe dynasty, built eleven famous stone churches carved out of solid rock to create a “new Jerusalem.” But not everyone was happy with the Zagwe kings, and by 1225 the *History of the Kings* appeared as a protest. This book purported to tell the story of Solomon and the queen of Sheba and their son Menelik, first king of Ethiopia. In 1270, a new “Solomonic” dynasty replaced the Zagwe dynasty. This new dynasty reached its peak in the fifteenth century during the reign of Zara Yaqob, who saw himself as an African Constantine. He convened church councils to address debates about Christ and Sabbath worship. Zara Yaqob also purged Ethiopia of African traditional religion. While Ethiopia reached its height as a Christian kingdom under Yaqob, Christianity was eliminated in Nubia. Nubian forces were defeated in battle by a sultan from Cairo, Babyars I, and came under the control of the Muslim Egyptians. By 1500, Christianity in Nubia all but disappeared.

Wave Two: Portuguese Catholicism

From 1420 until 1800, Portuguese politics and Christian missionaries from Portugal and Spain dominated much of coastal Africa. A controversial decree by the pope, called the *Padroado*, granted to the king of Portugal all rights to economic, military, and evangelistic activities in the areas he controlled. Slave traders and missionaries wrestled with one another for the souls of Africans. Portuguese missionary efforts were spread too thin, however, to make a significant, lasting impact. The result was only a thin veneer of Christianity in most places they influenced. Kongo and Soyo (kingdoms of Angola) and the Republic of the Congo were exceptions. There, Catholicism, indigenous popular Catholicism, and traditional religion clashed for centuries.

Wave Three: The Evangelical Era

As the glories of Catholicism faded in the late eighteenth century, a new force arose. Evangelical

Christianity was both a movement of spiritual revival as well as a force for justice. It combined a passion for personal religion with a crusade against slavery and changed the face of Africa forever. Evangelical Christianity has been described as a fourfold commitment to the Bible, the cross, conversion, and mission.

In the late eighteenth century, evangelical and other British leaders formed a movement that sought to abolish slavery. Great nineteenth-century British leaders such as William Wilberforce (member of the British parliament and champion of anti-slavery legislation), Thomas Clarkson (leader of the anti-slavery society in England), and Granville Sharp (English abolitionist) did much good. Evangelicals in Africa such as Ottobah Cugoano and Olaudah Equiano were just as crucial to the anti-slavery cause. They were two Nigerian former slaves who lived in England and published stories of their liberation and conversion to Christianity. Many African slaves who were freed during the American Revolution found their way to the Canadian maritime provinces where their faith was deepened by the fiery preaching of Henry Alline of Nova Scotia. Sierra Leone, a West African colony for freed slaves, was founded in 1787. From Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, the evangelisation of West Africa began through liberated slaves such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first Anglican bishop in Africa. Liberia, founded for free-born American blacks in 1822, played a similar role.

The evangelical revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the United States and England produced the modern missionary movement. Denominational missions and faith missions such as the Africa Inland Mission, Sudan Interior Mission, Sudan United Mission, and the South Africa General Mission (later the Africa Evangelical Fellowship) influenced African societies. Schools, hospitals, churches, and many social agencies in Africa were the result of missionary efforts in partnership with African Christians. The same partnerships translated the Bible or a portion into more than 640 African languages, an effort which has helped promote literacy as well as the knowledge of God. The commitment of the missionaries to Africa is illustrated by the many who took their coffins with them when they travelled from their homelands, knowing that their lifespan would probably be short. Many were martyred for their faith, including the American medical missionary Paul Carlson, who was killed by rebel insurgents in

1964 in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Wave Four: Indigenous Movements, Pentecostalism, and Post-Independence

The shape of missions changed in 1884–1885 with the Berlin Conference in Germany. At this meeting, European powers partitioned Africa for colonization and trade. France was given certain countries, and King Leopold II of Belgium was given the Congo, for instance. Europeans justified their imperialism as being a part of a civilizing mission to an Africa that they perceived as still in bondage to the dark past. Africa answered the challenge of colonialism through the voice of new prophets like William Wadé Harris of Liberia and members of the Organization of African Instituted Churches (African initiated churches—AICs) throughout the continent. These AICs took the names of Zionist in Southern Africa, Aladura in West Africa, and Roho movements in Kenya. When independence dawned in 1960, Christianity below the Sahara was no longer merely a European import. Christianity in Africa now included many churches with an African understanding of Christianity and African ways of worship.

Many of the newly elected presidents of independent African nations had graduated from missionary schools and were affiliated with specific Christian denominations. But in spite of these connections, many ruled in a way that promoted themselves as saviours of their countries. Many new nations took control of missionary schools, hospitals, and social agencies in the 1960s. Then in the 1970s and 1980s, they staggered under the weight of the obligations they had taken on. In many cases, African governments that were once critical of the church asked churches for help in education, medicine, and nation building. For instance, Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, a product of missionary

education, described his movement of political independence as an alternative to Christianity. He summarized his thinking by saying, "Seek first the political kingdom, and all things will be added unto you." But his regime disintegrated in a coup in 1966. Similar upheavals happened to a number of other African nations. Coup leaders eventually gave way to multiparty politics. By the early 1990s, new nations had a new desire to work with the church.

By the 1990s, charismatic Christianity had transformed the face of many Christian traditions in Africa. Some new Pentecostal churches began preaching a message of healing and power. This message captured not only the poor and disenfranchised but also the young, upwardly mobile urban professional class in Africa's growing cities. Today, most Christians in Africa have been touched in some way by Pentecostal methods and teaching.

Two significant trends in Christianity in Africa since independence are first, the emergence of a large African theological fraternity composed of both Catholics and Protestants and, second, a new missionary zeal on the part of the African church. This second trend has seen African Christians move around the world in migration and mission. In the early years of the twenty-first century, the largest church in England was led by a Nigerian missionary pastor. Similarly, in Kiev, Ukraine, Europe's largest church was shepherded by a Nigerian. Churches like Ghana's Church of Pentecost and Nigeria's Redeemed Christian Church of God have established centres all over the world in a trend sometimes described as reverse mission. This new era of African missions is still in its infancy, but it promises that the story of Christianity in Africa, begun in a quiet corner of Alexandria, Egypt in the first century, is now a global movement changing the world.

Points to Remember

- Christianity in Africa dates to the first generation of the church. Any attempt to label Christianity as a "white man's" or European religion should be rejected.
- Africans played a crucial role in establishing the doctrines and theology of the early church. We should stand on their shoulders in the way we seriously study the Bible.
- Praise God for his work across Africa. His Spirit has moved in many different ways: through African leaders, through foreign missionaries, and through various political movements. We should rejoice in our diversity and unite around the core doctrines of our shared faith.
- The powerful African church is coming to maturity in the twenty-first century. We should claim our Christian identity and mission with both boldness and humility—boldness in proclaiming our vibrant faith to the world, and humility in learning from others and working to build churches on biblical teaching and excellence and integrity in organization and leadership.



A NARRATIVE TIMELINE OF GOD'S WORK IN AFRICA

God's Work in Africa

God has been at work in Africa since the moment he created the continent. Records of God's work in Africa date back to some of the earliest recorded history. Biblical history focuses on God's people in Israel. Yet, Africa is mentioned often in the Bible because Israel's land connected Africa, Asia, and Europe. Some of the very first churches outside Jerusalem were established in Africa. And many of the most prominent voices that defended the faith as the church matured in organization and doctrine were African. Even when Africa's Christian history has been ignored or overlooked, God's eyes have always been on Africa. He watched as empires rose and fell, churches prospered and declined, and people struggled for freedom and justice. In the last two hundred years, God's Spirit has been moving powerfully in Africa to make it one of the global centres of Christianity.

There is not enough space here to describe all the important events in God's work in African history. We can only highlight some of the major events from Abram to the twenty-first century. This narrative will inspire you as you understand that God has always been at work in Africa and he will not stop! We are grateful for the expert church historians, biblical scholars, and *The Center for Early African Christianity* (CEAC) who contributed to this timeline.

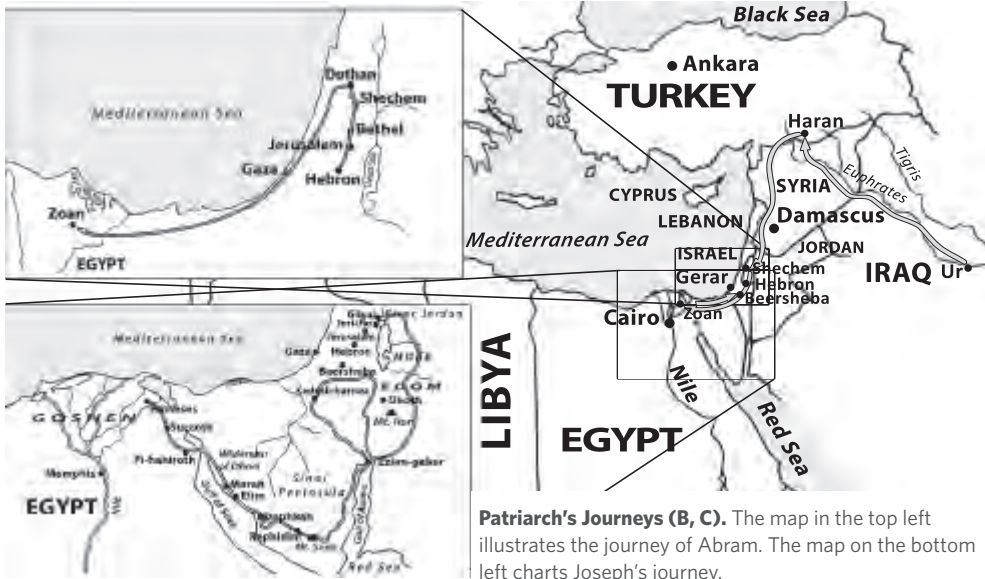
A Comment about Dates

Every effort has been made to ensure the dates in this timeline are accurate, but some events are very difficult to know with certainty. For instance, we know Solomon reigned from 970–931 BC, but we do not know when the Queen of Sheba visited him. Another problem is information for very old dates is incomplete. Because of this, we provide a range of dates in some cases.

One of the most difficult Old Testament dates to determine is the Exodus. Many scholars believe the Exodus occurred in 1446 BC based on 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26. However, based on archaeology and Egyptian records, other scholars believe the Exodus occurred around 1280 BC. This is important because the date of the Exodus affects other dates. For instance, the "History in Africa from the Patriarchs to the Promised Land" extends to when the Israel entered the Promised Land, which was 40 years after the Exodus. That date would be either 1406 BC or 1240 BC, depending on whether the Exodus was 1446 BC or 1280 BC. Because of this, we provide both dates. Additionally, some dates are approximated due to lack of clear records and are noted with an asterisk (*).

History in Africa from the Patriarchs to the Promised Land

3100 BC—1406 or 1240 BC



Patriarch's Journeys (B, C). The map in the top left illustrates the journey of Abram. The map on the bottom left charts Joseph's journey.

? Date unknown.

Genesis 10:13-14 mentions some of Noah's descendants who are considered to be African peoples including Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, Pathrusites, and Casluhites. These people groups settled in portions of Egypt and Libya.

A 3100 BC. First Egyptian Dynasty

B 2000 BC plus or minus 100 years.

Abram and his family are forced to go to Egypt to survive the famine in Canaan. Because of the Nile River, Egypt was fertile and the crops were not as dependent on rain.

C 1825 BC plus or minus 100 years.

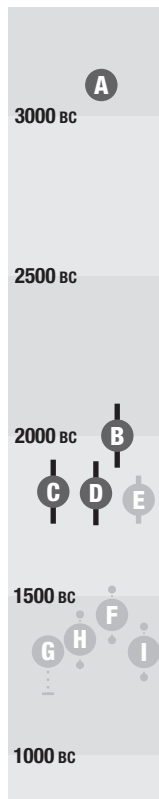
Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. He rises from slavery to become an unnamed pharaoh's advisor. Some scholars think this pharaoh may have been Senusret II, fourth ruler

of Egypt's Twelfth Dynasty who reigned from 1897–1878 BC. Other scholars think the pharaoh could have been one of the five Hyksos rulers in the Fifteenth Dynasty.



Joseph, Advisor to Pharaoh (C).

D 1820 BC plus or minus 100 years. Joseph marries Asenath, an Egyptian and the daughter of a priest from the city On. Their two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, eventually become tribes of Israel, making the founders of these two tribes half African.



E 1800 BC plus or minus 75 years.

Joseph's brothers go to Egypt during a famine in Canaan. The pharaoh lets them settle in part of a fertile land in north-east Egypt called Goshen, referred to as "the region of Rameses" in Egyptian texts.



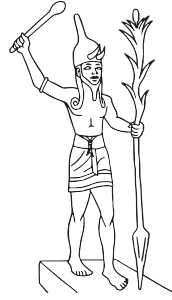
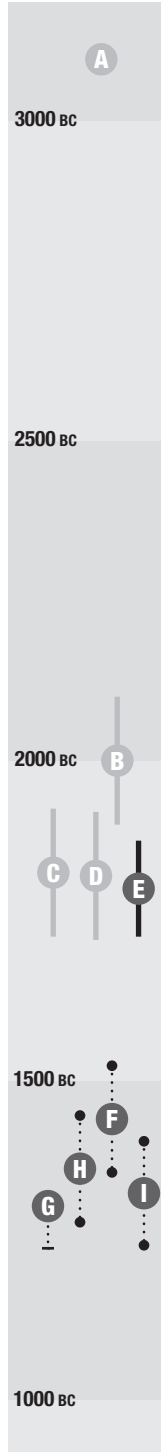
Moses, in the Reeds of the Nile (F).

F 1526–1525 or 1360–1350 BC.

By this time, the Israelites—descendants of Joseph and his brothers—become numerous. The reigning pharaoh fears their growing strength and orders all newborn boys killed. Pharaoh's daughter finds the infant Moses in the reeds by the Nile and raises him in the palace as her son. Moses spends 40 years in Egypt before he flees to Midian on the Sinai Peninsula where he lives for 40 years.

G 1304–1236 BC. The reign of Ramses II, often considered the greatest ruler in Egyptian history.

H 1446 or 1280 BC. God uses Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery. They cross the Red Sea and enter the Sinai Peninsula. While in the wilderness, Moses marries a Cushite woman, who was likely from the region known today as Sudan (Numbers 12:1).



Baal, a Phoenician Idol (I). Israel was punished for following after this false and foreign god.

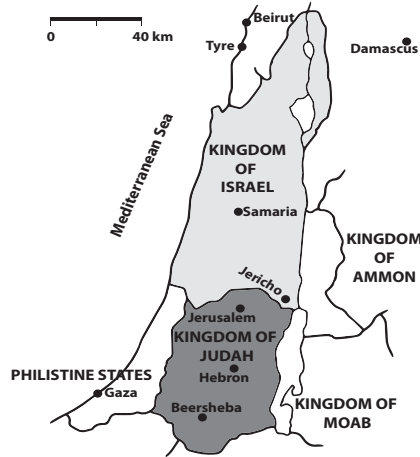
I 1407 or 1241 BC. The priest Phinehas, Aaron's grandson, stops a plague in Israel. God makes a covenant of peace with him and his descendants to honour his action (Numbers 25:10-13). Phineas' name means "the Cushite" or "the Nubian," suggesting he had dark skin. He may have had African blood from his mother's father, Putiel, whose name means either the "Libyan of God" or the "Somali of God."



Phinehas in Priestly Garments (I).

Time of the Kings to the New Testament

1050–30 BC



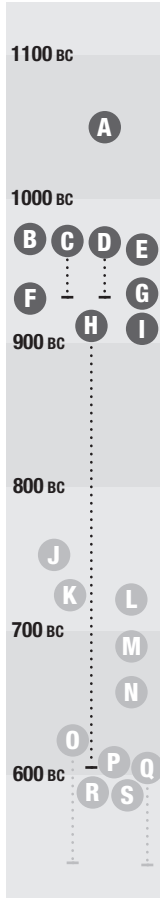
Israel, Before and After (A, F). The left map depicts the kingdom of Israel at its height. The map on the right shows Israel split into two kingdoms.

A 1050 BC. Israel becomes a kingdom.

B 972 BC. Joab sends a Cushite, who was likely from the region known today as Sudan (2 Samuel 18:21), to tell King David that his son Absalom died during battle.

C Between 971 and 931 BC. King Solomon builds merchant ships and creates trade routes, amassing wealth that “made gold and silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as stone” (2 Chronicles 1:15). Among other places, he establishes trading alliances in Africa with Ophir whose exact location is debated. Possible locations include ancient Zimbabwe, Mozambique, or along the African shore of the Red Sea.

D Between 970 and 931 BC. The Queen of Sheba visits King Solomon to test his famous wisdom. Ancient writers such as Josephus, Origen, and Jerome believe Sheba was located in eastern Africa in the region known today as Ethiopia.



E Between 970 and 960 BC. Solomon marries the daughter of an Egyptian pharaoh. He builds a new palace for her. Pharaoh gives the city of Gezer to his daughter as a dowry (1 Kings 9:16, 24).

F 931 BC. Israel splits into two kingdoms.

G 945–924 BC. A Libyan nobleman, Shoshenq I (called Shishak in the Bible), overthrows the ruling pharaoh and founds the Twenty-second Dynasty in Egypt. Shoshenq I becomes the first foreign ruler to pillage Jerusalem during King Rehoboam’s fifth year (925 BC).

H 912–609 BC. Assyrian Empire.

I About 910 BC. Asa’s armies defeat Zerah, a Cushite general who was likely from the region known today as Sudan (2 Chronicles 14:9-13). Zerah may have been sent by Osorkon I, the Libyan pharaoh who ruled Egypt from 922–887 BC and who was the son of Shoshenq I.

J 753 BC. Rome is founded.

K 725 BC. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, requests assistance from King So of Egypt, when he is forced to pay tribute to Assyria. Help does not come, and Hoshea is imprisoned for his treachery (2 Kings 17:4).

L 722 BC. Israel goes into captivity in Assyria.

M 701–698 BC. Tirhakah, co-regent of Egypt and later the pharaoh, is allied with Hezekiah, a righteous king of Judah. Tirhakah was the son of Piye, a Nubian king (modern-day Sudanese) who conquered Egypt.

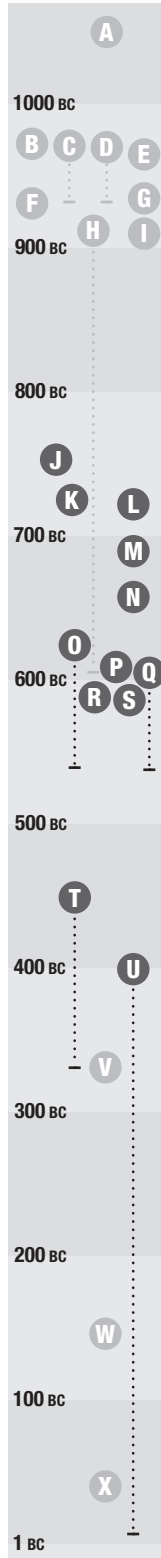
N 663–654 BC. The prophet Nahum contrasts earthly strength with God's power, mentioning Thebes, Ethiopia, Put, and Libya (Nahum 3:8-9). Put may have been the land of Punt, which is the coastal region of modern-day Somalia. These nations were known for their wealth and power, but none were a match for God.

O 626–539 BC. Babylonian Empire.

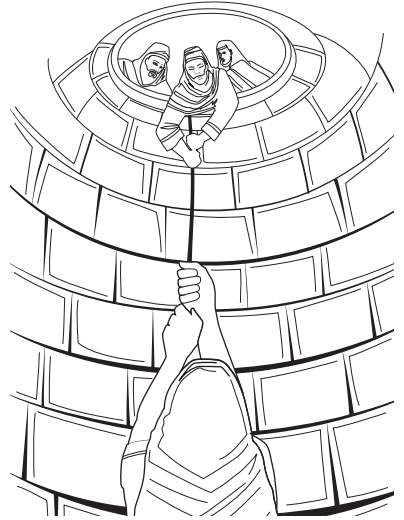


Pharaoh Neco II (P).

P 609 BC. Egyptian Pharaoh Neco II of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty kills King Josiah of Judah on the battlefield (2 Kings 23:29).



Q 605–538 BC. Several waves of Judah's citizens are exiled to Babylon and return 70 years later.



Ebed-Melech Saves the Prophet Jeremiah (R).

R 588 BC. King Zedekiah's guards throw the prophet Jeremiah into a cistern. A Cushite man (modern-day Sudanese) named Ebed-Melech pulls Jeremiah out and saves him (Jeremiah 38:6-13). God blesses Ebed-Melech, promising to deliver him from the Babylonian siege.

S 586 BC. The people of Judah flee to Egypt to escape Babylon, even though Jeremiah prophesied that Babylon would also conquer Egypt, which was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt in 568–567 BC. The Judeans take Jeremiah with them to Africa.

T 549–331 BC. Persian Empire.

U 400–6 BC.* The period between the Old and New Testaments where the Bible is silent.

* *approximately*

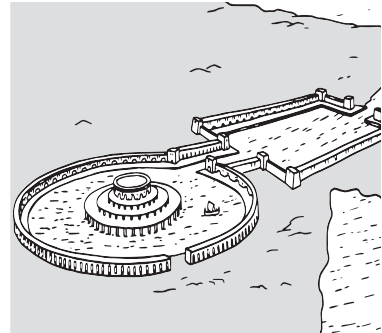


The Roman Empire, 146 BC (W).

V 331 BC. The Greek warrior-king Alexander the Great conquers Egypt and founds Alexandria, a city on the Egyptian coast. The Alexandrian Empire is divided after Alexander's death in 323 BC. His general, Ptolemy I Soter, establishes the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, including nearby Libyan and Arabian regions, which lasted nearly 300 hundred years.

W 146 BC. The Roman Empire reaches Africa. Rome conquers Carthage (a Phoenician settlement in what is now modern-day Tunisia), including its massive maritime fleet. Rome asserts itself as a world empire.

X 30 BC. Egypt becomes a province of the Roman Empire. All of North Africa is now fully under Roman control.



Harbour of Carthage (W).

The New Testament and Africa

6 BC–AD 75

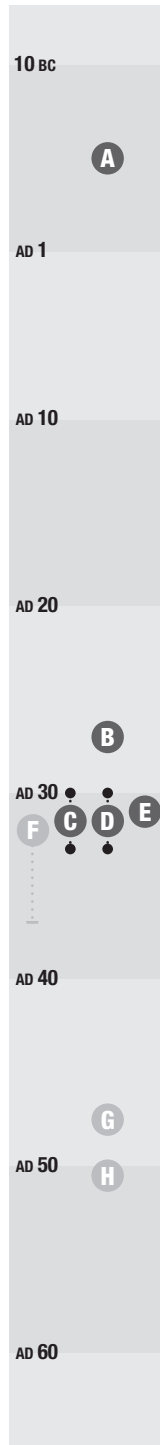
A 6–4 BC. Jesus is born in Bethlehem. Although the traditional date for Jesus' birth is 0 BC, scholars believe the date is earlier because he is born under Herod's rule (Matthew 2:1) and Herod died in 4 BC. Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt when Herod orders the killing of baby boys in Bethlehem. Jesus spends some of his early years in Africa until God tells Joseph in a dream to return to Israel (Matthew 2:13-21).

B AD 27. Jesus is baptised and begins his public ministry.



The Crucifixion (C).

C AD 30 or 33. At the Crucifixion, Simon from Cyrene (located in what is know as Libya today) helps Jesus carry his cross (Luke 23:26).



The Flame of the Holy Spirit (D).

D AD 30 or 33. All the disciples are meeting together on the day of Pentecost when they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Other people join them, including people from Egypt and areas of Libya (Acts 2:9). The Holy Spirit allows the disciples to speak the gospel in the native languages of their listeners.

E AD 31. Philip, a prominent Christian evangelist, meets a high official in the royal court of the Kandake (Acts 8:27) who was returning home after worshipping in Jerusalem. The Kandake was the queen of the Kingdom of Cush, which was most likely located in the region known today as Sudan. Philip leads the man to Christ, and the man is baptised.

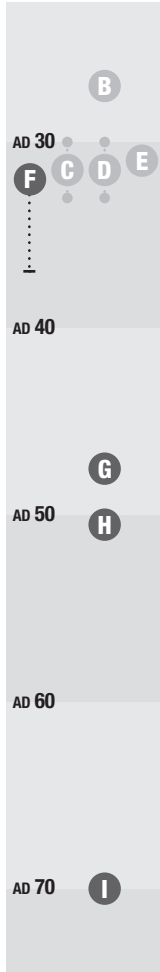


The Kandake, Queen of Cush (E).

F AD 32–37. Believers flee persecution in Jerusalem and preach to Jews in faraway cities. Some believers from Cyprus and Cyrene (located in what is known as Libya today) preach the gospel to Gentiles (Acts 11:19-20).



Home Cities of Church Leaders (G, H).

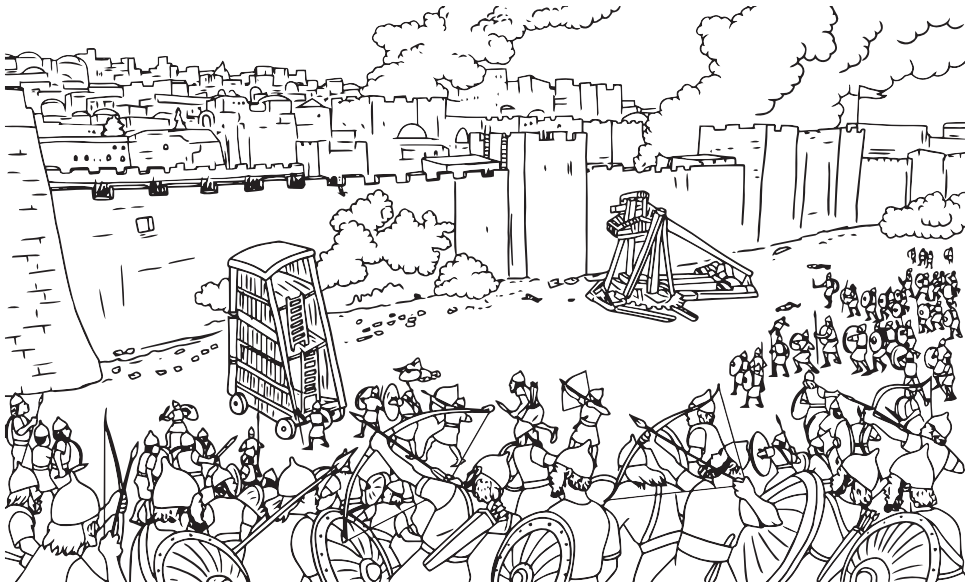


G AD 47–48. Two church leaders from Africa are part of the group who commission Barnabas and Saul as missionaries (Acts 13:1). These leaders are Lucius from Cyrene (located in what is known as Libya today) and Simeon (called “the black man”) who was likely from one of the regions known today as Tunisia or Algeria.

H AD 50–51. Priscilla and Aquila share the gospel with Apollos, a Greek-speaking Jew from Alexandria, Egypt (Acts 18:24). Apollos is an excellent speaker, and he spreads the gospel with enthusiasm.

I AD 70. The siege of Jerusalem. The Roman army destroys Jerusalem and the Temple.

The Siege of Jerusalem (I).



The Church in North Africa

AD 50–300

A AD 50. The Christian church is established in Alexandria, Egypt, possibly by Mark, author of the Gospel of Mark.



Gospel Writer Mark (A).

B AD 68. Mark, author of the Gospel of Mark, is martyred in Alexandria, Egypt.

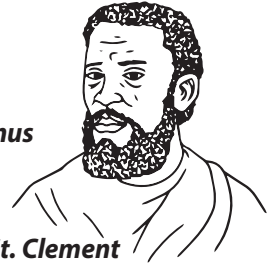
C AD 165.* Valentinus dies. He was an influential Gnostic leader and theologian, who was born in upper Egypt and trained in Alexandria. Gnosticism is the first



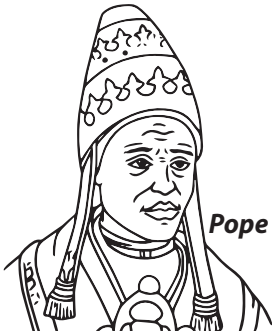
St. Valentinus



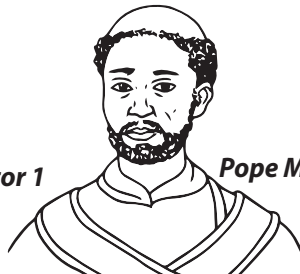
St. Pantanus



St. Clement
of Alexandria



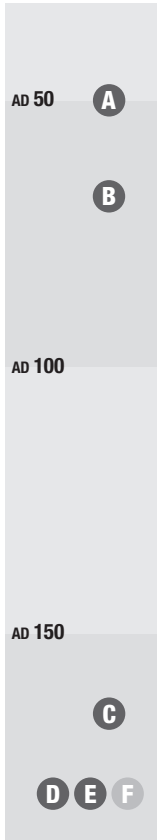
Pope Victor 1



Pope Miltiades



Prominent Church Fathers in Africa (C, E, F, G).



major movement to challenge the Christian church. It teaches that salvation comes through possession of secret knowledge. Gnostics reject the Crucifixion and that Jesus is God in the flesh.

D AD 180. Speratus and eleven other people—called the Scillitan martyrs—are killed outside Carthage in Tunisia for declaring that Jesus is “the emperor of kings and all nations,” not Caesar. This is early evidence of Christianity in Latin-speaking North Africa. The account of their death is one of the earliest documents of the church in Africa.

E AD 180. Pantanus becomes the head of the School of Alexandria, the first Christian institution of higher learning. He leads the school to become an influential centre for theology and biblical studies.

* *approximately*



INDEX OF CHARTS, MAPS, TIMELINES, AND GRAPHICS

The *Africa Study Bible* includes more than 160 maps, charts, timelines, and graphics. These were prepared to help us see how different events relate to each other, to understand the places that the Bible mentions, and to give us a visual image of important places such as Solomon's Temple, Herod's Temple, and the city of Jerusalem at different times. You can also use the charts to understand where to find important passages such as the parables of Jesus and how the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John fit together (see the Harmony of the Gospels).

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
The Creation Account (<i>chart</i>)	Genesis 1:1-2:3	7
Noah's Ark (<i>graphic</i>)	Genesis 6:14-16	14
The Ancient Near East, about 2100 BC (<i>map</i>)	Genesis 10:1-11:26	17
Nations of the Ancient World (<i>map</i>)	Genesis 10:1-11:9	18
Noah's descendants (<i>chart</i>)	Genesis 10:1-32	18
Abraham's Family (<i>chart</i>)	Genesis 11:27-30	20
Abraham's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Genesis 11:27-25:11	21
Abraham's Journey to Canaan (<i>map</i>)	Genesis 12:1-9	22
Abraham in Canaan (<i>map</i>)	Genesis 12:6-25:11	26
God's Covenants (<i>chart</i>)	Genesis 12:1-9	28
Jacob's Family (<i>chart</i>)	Genesis 27:1-35:29	42
Jacob's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Genesis 27:1-35:29	49
Jacob's Family in Canaan (<i>map</i>)	Genesis 32:1-38:30	50
Joseph's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Genesis 39:1-45:28	58
Egypt, about 1700 BC (<i>map</i>)	Genesis 39:1-50:26	66
Israel's Chronology, 2200-1200 BC (<i>timeline</i>)	Exodus 1	80
Moses' Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Exodus 2:1-22	82
Moses' Family (<i>chart</i>)	Exodus 6:20-25	90
Aaron's Family (<i>chart</i>)	Exodus 6:20-25	91
Israel's Ancient Calendar (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 12:2	98
The Exodus from Egypt (<i>map</i>)	Exodus 13:17-19:1	102
The Tabernacle (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 26:1-37	120
The Incense Altar (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 30:1-10; 37:25-29	120
The Ark of the Covenant (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9	120
The Golden Lampstand (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 25:31-39; 37:17-24	120
Table for the Bread of the Presence (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16	121
The Altar of Burnt Offering (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7	121
The High Priest's Clothing (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 28:1-43	121
The Bronze Washbasin (<i>graphic</i>)	Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8	121
Israel's Sacrifices (<i>chart</i>)	Leviticus 1:1-7:38	151
Israel's Festivals (<i>chart</i>)	Leviticus 23:1-44	179
Israel's Camp (<i>graphic</i>)	Numbers 2:1-34	196
Journey towards the Promised Land (<i>map</i>)	Numbers 20:22-22:1	222
The Exodus Journey (<i>map</i>)	Numbers 33:1-49	240
Boundaries of the Promised Land (<i>map</i>)	Numbers 34:1-15	243
Cities of Refuge (<i>map</i>)	Deuteronomy 19:1-13	273
Israel at the Time of Joshua (<i>map</i>)	Joshua 1	298
The Chronology of Joshua (<i>timeline</i>)	Joshua 1	298

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
Israel's Entry into Canaan (<i>map</i>)	Joshua 3:1-9:27	302
Israel's Conquest of Canaan (<i>map</i>)	Joshua 10:1-12:24	310
Allotment of the Land (<i>map</i>)	Joshua 13:1-21:45	315
Israel at the Time of the Judges, about 1200 BC (<i>map</i>)	Judges 1	336
The Chronology of Judges (<i>timeline</i>)	Judges 1	336
Years of Oppression and Peace in Judges (<i>chart</i>)	Judges 3:7-16:31	342
The Philistine Settlement of Canaan (<i>map</i>)	Judges 13:1-16:31	356
The Setting of Ruth (<i>map</i>)	Ruth 1	372
Ruth's Family (<i>chart</i>)	Ruth 4:13-22	376
Israel at the Time of Samuel and Saul, 1075-1011 BC (<i>map</i>)	1 Samuel 1	382
The Chronology of 1 Samuel (<i>timeline</i>)	1 Samuel 1	382
Jonathan's and Saul's Victory at Micmash (<i>map</i>)	1 Samuel 13:15-14:46	398
David's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	1 Samuel 16:1-17:58	404
David on the Run (<i>map</i>)	1 Samuel 19:11-27:12	409
David's Kingdom (<i>map</i>)	2 Samuel 1	429
The Chronology of 2 Samuel (<i>timeline</i>)	2 Samuel 1	430
David's Wives and Children (<i>chart</i>)	2 Samuel 3:2-5	432
Jerusalem at the Time of David (<i>graphic</i>)	2 Samuel 5:6-9	436
Israel during Solomon's Reign, 971-931 BC (<i>map</i>)	1 Kings 1	473
The Chronology of 1 Kings (<i>timeline</i>)	1 Kings 1	474
Solomon's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	1 Kings 1-11	478
Solomon's Administrative Districts, 971-931 BC (<i>map</i>)	1 Kings 4:7-19	481
The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 931-910 BC (<i>map</i>)	1 Kings 12:1-14:28	496
Elijah's Ministry (<i>timeline</i>)	1 Kings 17:1-19:21	504
Chronology of 2 Kings (<i>timeline</i>)	2 Kings 1	522
Chronology of Assyria (<i>timeline</i>)	2 Kings 15:19-20:37	544
The Assyrian Empire, 745-612 BC (<i>map</i>)	2 Kings 15:19-20:37	546
Jerusalem at the Time of Hezekiah (<i>map</i>)	2 Kings 18:17-25:21	550
The Babylonian Empire, 610-580 BC (<i>map</i>)	2 Kings 24:1-25:30	560
Chronology of Babylon (<i>timeline</i>)	2 Kings 24:1-25:30	560
David's Family Tree (<i>chart</i>)	1 Chronicles 2:13-17	568
Solomon's Temple (<i>graphic</i>)	1 Chronicles 22:1-19	596
Chronology of the Divided Kingdom (<i>timeline</i>)	2 Chronicles 1	614
Rehoboam's Reign in Judah, 931-913 BC (<i>map</i>)	2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16	626
Asa's Reign in Judah, 910-869 BC (<i>map</i>)	2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14	631
The Marriage Alliance of Jehoshaphat and Ahab (<i>chart</i>)	2 Chronicles 21:6; 22:2	640
Fortifications of Jerusalem, 767-643 BC (<i>map</i>)	2 Chronicles 26:9; 27:3	646
Ahaz's Reign in Judah, 732-716 BC (<i>map</i>)	2 Chronicles 28:1-27	648
The Reign of Cyrus II (<i>timeline</i>)	Ezra 1:1-11	668
Chronology of the Post-Exilic Period (<i>timeline</i>)	Ezra 1	668
The Persian Empire, 539-530 BC (<i>map</i>)	Ezra 1	670
Jerusalem at the Time of Zerubbabel, 520-515 BC (<i>map</i>)	Ezra 3:1-6:15	672
The Kings of Persia (<i>chart</i>)	Ezra 4:5-7	674
Judea at the Time of Nehemiah, 445-433 BC (<i>map</i>)	Nehemiah 1	689
Events in Nehemiah's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Nehemiah 1	690
The Rebuilding of Jerusalem (<i>graphic</i>)	Nehemiah 3:1-7:15	694
The Walls of Jerusalem (<i>map</i>)	Nehemiah 3:1-32	695
The Empire of Xerxes I, 486 BC (<i>map</i>)	Esther 1	718
The Setting of Job (<i>map</i>)	Job 1:1	733
Messiah in the Psalms (<i>chart</i>)	Psalms 2:2	781
Musical Notations in the Psalms (<i>chart</i>)	Psalms 5	783

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
Plants in Israel (<i>chart</i>)	Psalm 80	844
Places in the Psalms (<i>graphic</i>)	Psalm 92	853
Animals in Israel (<i>chart</i>)	Psalm 104	862
Musical Instruments in Israel (<i>chart</i>)	Psalm 150	898
Themes in Proverbs (<i>chart</i>)	Proverbs 10-31	916
Locations of the Prophets (<i>map</i>)	Isaiah 1	983
Chronology of the Prophets (<i>timeline</i>)	Isaiah 1	984
Judah's Crimes (<i>chart</i>)	Isaiah 5:18-24	990
Nations under Judgement in Isaiah (<i>map</i>)	Isaiah 13:1-23:18	1000
Assyria Invades Judah (<i>map</i>)	Isaiah 36:1-37:38	1024
Parallels between Lamentations and Jeremiah (<i>chart</i>)	Lamentations 1-5	1146
Egypt's Coming Destruction, 587-567 BC (<i>map</i>)	Ezekiel 29:1-32:32	1189
The Temple Envisioned by Ezekiel (<i>graphic</i>)	Ezekiel 40:1-43:27	1202
The Sacred Precinct Envisioned by Ezekiel (<i>graphic</i>)	Ezekiel 45:1-8; 48:8-22	1208
Israel's New Boundaries Envisioned by Ezekiel (<i>map</i>)	Ezekiel 47:1-48:35	1213
Chronology of the Exile (<i>timeline</i>)	Daniel 1	1220
The Babylonian Empire, 605-539 BC (<i>map</i>)	Daniel 1:1-5:31	1223
Four World Empires (<i>chart</i>)	Daniel 2:1-49; 7:1-28	1224
The Persian Empire, 539-331 BC (<i>map</i>)	Daniel 5:30-6:1; 8:3-4	1231
The Greek Empire, 331-323 BC (<i>map</i>)	Daniel 8:5-8	1237
The Ptolemies and the Seleucids, 323-198 BC (<i>map</i>)	Daniel 11:4-12	1242
The Ptolemies and the Seleucids (<i>chart</i>)	Daniel 11:5-39	1243
Jonah's Journeys, about 755 BC (<i>map</i>)	Jonah 1:1-3	1302
Whale Shark (<i>graphic</i>)	Jonah 1:17-2:10	1303
The Assyrian Invasion, 733-732 BC (<i>map</i>)	Micah 1:10-15	1312
Judah's Doomed Neighbours (<i>map</i>)	Zephaniah 2:4-11	1336
Jerusalem after the Exile (<i>map</i>)	Haggai 1:1	1341
The Lineage of Jesus (<i>chart</i>)	Matthew 1:1-17	1377
Chronology of Jesus' Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Matthew 1:18-25	1378
Territory of Herod the Great (<i>map</i>)	Matthew 2:1-18	1379
The Family of Herod (<i>chart</i>)	Matthew 2:1-20	1379
Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (<i>map</i>)	Matthew 4:12-15:20	1384
Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus (<i>chart</i>)	Matthew 12:15-21	1398
Peter's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Matthew 14:28-31	1403
Jesus' Ministry outside Israel (<i>map</i>)	Matthew 15:21-28	1405
Territory of Herod Antipas (<i>map</i>)	Mark 6:14-29	1443
Encounters with Jesus (<i>chart</i>)	Mark 10:17-22	1451
The Last Supper and Gethsemane (<i>map</i>)	Mark 14:12-52	1459
Jesus' Final Night (<i>chart</i>)	Mark 14:12-52	1460
Mary's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Luke 1:26-2:51	1473
Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem (<i>map</i>)	Luke 9:51-19:48	1492
Parables of Jesus (<i>chart</i>)	Luke 15:1-16:31	1504
First-Century Jerusalem (<i>graphic</i>)	Luke 21:20-24	1514
Jesus' Appearances after His Resurrection (<i>map</i>)	Luke 24:13-52	1521
Herod's Temple (<i>graphic</i>)	John 7:10-53	1542
Jesus' Ministry in Judea (<i>map</i>)	John 11:1-12:19	1550
Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion (<i>map</i>)	John 18:1-19:27	1560
First-Century Judean Tombs (<i>graphic</i>)	John 19:41	1565
Harmony of the Four Gospels (<i>chart</i>)	John 21	1571
Chronology of Acts (<i>timeline</i>)	Acts 1	1582
Nations at Pentecost (<i>map</i>)	Acts 2:9-11	1585

<i>Title</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Page</i>
Philip's Ministry (<i>map</i>)	Acts 8:4-40	1593
Paul's Life (<i>timeline</i>)	Acts 9:1-31	1596
Saul's Conversion and Early Travels (<i>map</i>)	Acts 9:1-31	1597
Peter's Early Ministry (<i>map</i>)	Acts 9:32-11:18	1598
Barnabas and Paul's First Missionary Journey (<i>map</i>)	Acts 13:4-14:28	1604
Paul's Second Missionary Journey (<i>map</i>)	Acts 15:36-18:22	1609
Paul's Third Missionary Journey (<i>map</i>)	Acts 18:23-21:17	1613
Paul's Journey to Rome (<i>map</i>)	Acts 27:1-28:16	1626
The Letters of Paul (<i>chart</i>)	Acts 28:30-31	1629
Chronology of Rome (<i>timeline</i>)	Romans 1	1634
Chronology of Corinth (<i>timeline</i>)	1 Corinthians 1	1662
Chronology of Ephesus (<i>timeline</i>)	Ephesians 1	1722
Chronology of Philippi (<i>timeline</i>)	Philippians 1	1737
The Seven Churches (<i>map</i>)	Revelation 2-3	1907
Symbolic Numbers (<i>chart</i>)	Revelation 4:4	1911
Emperors of Rome, 27 BC—AD 96 (<i>timeline</i>)	Revelation 17:9-11	1924
World of the Patriarchs (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section
Exodus from Egypt (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section
Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, Greek Empire (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section
Ministry of Jesus (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section
Paul's Missionary Journeys (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section
Roman Empire and the Spread of Christianity (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section
Israel and the Middle East Today (<i>map</i>)	Back of Bible.	colour map section



TOPICAL INDEX AND CONCORDANCE

The Topical Index and Concordance of the *Africa Study Bible* was created to aid in personal study and research for teaching and preaching. Most study Bibles have separate features for study, such as a table of contents listing features, an index of graphics, maps, and topics, and a concordance. The *Africa Study Bible* combines these into a single resource so you can look in one place to study and find answers. If you need to teach about marriage or being single, look under “marriage” or “single” to find key scriptures, notes and articles, and any special features on these topics all in one place.

In addition, this all-in-one tool includes terms and topics specifically about Africa. Three special features deserve attention: ancient church fathers quoted in African Touch Point features have a brief biography with their names; key terms are defined and illustrated to promote understanding; and many important doctrines and concepts traditionally referred to with language from the King James Version are included with their New Living Translation equivalent. These terms are identified in an entry by “(κ)ν),” then illustrated. For example, look up the word “sanctify” to understand its meaning is “be made holy” and see where this concept occurs within the Bible. For further understanding, look up “holy” to find “standing apart from sin and evil.” Also, most words include parts of speech in parentheses. For example, “abstain” is a verb, so it reads “abstain (v).” Nouns are (n), adjectives are (adj), adverbs are (adv), pronouns are (pro), and prepositions are (prep). The features of this Topical Index and Concordance make it an invaluable tool for people working to grow their faith or teaching on an important topic. An understanding of almost any doctrine, concept, or idea can be formed, deepened, and grown from this all-in-one resource, whether it be from baptism to business or from celebrations to charms.

A

Aaron

First high priest of Israel; elder brother and spokesman of Moses (Exod 4:14-31; 7:1-2); confronted Pharaoh with Moses (Exod 5-12); held up Moses' hands during battle (Exod 17:8-15); led Israel while Moses was absent (Exod 24:14); his ordination (Exod 29; Lev 8); his failure with the gold calf (Exod 32; Acts 7:40); spoke against Moses, then interceded on behalf of sister, Miriam (Num 12:1-16); helped stop the plague (Num 16:45-48); priesthood confirmed (Num 17; Heb 5:1-4); failed at Meribah and was denied entry to Promised Land (Num 20:1-13); died (Num 20:22-29; 33:38-39).

Exod 6:20 Aaron's Family

abandon, abandoned, abandons (v)

to desert or forsake

Josh 1:5 will not fail you or **a** you.
Neh 9:31 completely or **a** them for ever.
Ps 22:1 why have you **a-ed** me?
Ps 37:28 he will never **a** the godly.
Matt 27:46 why have you **a-ed** me?
John 16:1 you won't **a** your faith.
Rom 1:24 So God **a-ed** them to do
Rom 1:28 **a-ed** them to their foolish
2 Cor 4:9 down, but never **a-ed** by God.
Heb 13:5 I will never **a** you.

Ps 22 When God Hides Himself
Lam 1:12 No One to Comfort the City
Isa 54:1 Abandoned No More
Matt 27:46 "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"

Abel

Son of Adam and Eve, brother of Cain (Gen 4:1-2); his offering accepted (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4); murdered by Cain (Gen 4:8; Matt 23:35; Luke 11:51; Heb 12:24; 1 Jn 3:11-12; Jude 1:11); replaced by Seth (Gen 4:25).

abide(th), abiding (κν)

Luke 2:8 shepherds *staying* in the fields
John 15:4 be fruitful unless you *remain*

ability, abilities (n)

talent, aptitude, or skill

Exod 31:1 great wisdom, **a**, and expertise
Exod 36:1 wisdom and **a** to perform any
Dan 6:3 Because of Daniel's great **a**
Rom 12:8 given you leadership **a**,
Acts 2:4 Spirit gave them this **a**.
1 Cor 12:1 special **a-ies** the Spirit gives
1 Cor 14:12 special **a-ies** the Spirit gives,

Exod 31:1 *Wisdom from on High*
Exod 35:30 *Together Working, Learning Together*

able (adj)

marked by power, intelligence, competence, skill, giftedness

Dan 3:17 whom we serve is **a** to save
Rom 16:25 to God, who is **a** to
Eph 3:20 all glory to God, who is **a**,
2 Tim 1:12 that he is **a** to guard
Jude 1:24 to God, who is **a** to keep

abund(ed) (κν)

Matt 24:12 Sin will *be rampant everywhere*
Rom 5:15 *even greater* is God's wonderful
Rom 5:20 grace *became more abundant*

above (adv or prep)

in a higher position, superior

Ps 95:3 a great King **a** all gods.
Ps 99:2 exalted **a** all the nations.
Luke 12:31 Seek the Kingdom of God **a** all
Eph 1:21 far **a** any ruler or authority
Phil 2:9 the name **a** all other names,
1 Tim 3:2 a man whose life is **a** reproach.
Jas 3:17 wisdom from **a** is first of all pure.

Abraham, Abram

Father of the nation of Israel (Isa 51:2; John 8:37-59); friend of God (Isa 41:8); father of all people of faith (Gen 12-25; Rom 4; Heb 11); made covenant with the Lord (Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:12-21; 22:15-18; 50:24; Exod 2:24; 32:13; Lev 26:42; 2 Kgs 13:23; 1 Chr 16:16; Neh 9:8; Ps 105:9; Luke 1:73; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:17-20; Heb 6:13); descendant of Terah from Ur (Gen 11:27-31); husband of Sarah (Sarai) (Gen 11:29); called to leave home (Gen 12:1-9; Acts 7:2-4; Heb 11:8-10); went to Egypt and deceived the pharaoh (Gen 12:10-20); chose Canaan over the Jordan Plain (Gen 13); rescued Lot from enemies (Gen 14:11-16); blessed by Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-24; Heb 7:1); covenant restated by God (Gen 15); faith counted as righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6-9; Jas 2:21-23); given son (Ishmael) by Hagar (Gen 16); circumcision commanded (Gen 17; Rom 4:9-12); name changed to "Abraham" (Gen 17:5; Neh 9:7); son promised to Sarah (Gen 17:16; 18:10); welcomed heavenly visitor (Gen 18:1-15); bargained to save Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-33); deceived Abimelech (Gen 20); named as a prophet (Gen 20:7); given son (Isaac) by Sarah (Gen 21:1-7; Heb 11:11-12); sent Hagar and Ishmael away (Gen 21:9-14; Gal 4:21-31); offered Isaac as test (Gen 22:1-19; Heb 11:17-19; Jas 2:21); secured burial ground for Sarah (Gen 23); found a wife for Isaac (Gen 24); descendants through wife Keturah (Gen 25:1-6); died (Gen 25:7-11).

Gen 10:1 *Ancient Near East, about 2100 bc*
Gen 11:27 *Abraham's Family*
Gen 11:27 *Abraham's Life*
Gen 12:1 *Abraham's Journey to Canaan*
Gen 12:6 *Abraham in Canaan*

abstain (v)

to refrain from, forgo

Exod 19:15 **a** from having sexual intercourse.
Acts 15:20 **a** from eating food offered to idols,

abundance (n)

great quantity, affluence; more than ample

- Job 36:31 giving them food in **a**.
 Ps 66:12 a place of great **a**.
 Matt 13:12 have an **a** of knowledge.
 Matt 25:29 they will have an **a**.
 John 1:16 From his **a** we have all

abundant (adj)

marked by great plenty, abounding

- Ps 68:9 You sent **a** rain, O God
 Jer 31:12 good gifts—the **a** crops
 John 16:24 you will have **a** joy.
 2 Cor 8:2 are also filled with **a** joy,

abuse (n)

strong condemnation or disapproval

- Mark 15:29 shouted **a**, shaking their heads
 2 Chr 23 Pray, Then Act

abuse (v)

to injure or damage physically or verbally

- 1 Cor 4:12 patient with those who **a** us.

- Amos 3 Honour and Respect
 Hosea 14 Marriage
 Mal 2 Divorce
 2 Cor 13:14 Care and Counselling in the Church
 Jas 5 Children at Risk

abusive (adj)

using harsh, insulting language; characterized by wrong or improper use or action

- 1 Cor 5:11 worships idols, or is **a**,
 1 Cor 6:10 drunkards, or are **a**, or
 Eph 4:29 use foul or **a** language.

abyss (kuv)

- Luke 8:31 send them into the *bottomless pit*
 Rev 9:1 the shaft of the *bottomless pit*
 Rev 9:11 the angel from the *bottomless pit*

accept, accepted, accepts (v)

to receive willingly

- Gen 4:7 be **a-ed** if you do what is right.
 Lev 22:20 the Lord will not **a** it on your behalf.
 1 Sam 8:3 **a-ed** bribes and perverted
 Luke 4:24 no prophet is **a-ed** in his
 Luke 10:16 who **a-s** your message
 John 1:12 believed him and **a-ed** him,
 John 17:8 They **a-ed** it and know that
 Rom 11:12 when they finally **a** it.
 Col 2:6 just as you **a-ed** Christ Jesus
 1 Tim 1:15 everyone should **a** it:
 Jas 1:21 **a** the word God has planted

acceptable (adj)

capable or worthy of being accepted; welcome, pleasing, favourable

- Mark 7:19 every kind of food is **a**
 Rom 4:2 had made him **a** to God,
 Rom 12:1 the kind he will find **a**.
 Rom 14:20 all foods are **a**, but it is
 2 Cor 8:12 is **a** if you give it eagerly.
 1 Tim 4:5 made **a** by the word of God

accomplish, accomplishes (v)

perform, do to completion

- Isa 55:11 fruit. It will **a** all I want it to,
 Matt 5:17 No, I came to **a** their purpose.
 John 6:63 Human effort **a-es** nothing.
 Eph 3:20 within us, to **a** infinitely more
 2 Thes 1:11 power to **a** all the good things

account (n)

description of facts, conditions, or events; a report

- Rom 14:12 give a personal **a** to God.

Exod 38:21 Transparency in Accounts

accountable (adj)

subject to giving an account; answerable

- Heb 4:13 the one to whom we are **a**.
 Heb 13:17 and they are **a** to God.

Neh 5 Covenanting to Obey God

accusation, accusations (n)

a charge of wrongdoing, often false

- Ps 4:2 will you make groundless **a-s**?
 Luke 3:14 extort money or make false **a-s**.
 1 Tim 5:19 Do not listen to an **a**

Job 9 Responding to Accusation
 Zech 3:1 Cleansed by Christ

accuse, accused, accuses, accusing (v)

to charge with fault or offence; to blame

- Deut 22:17 has **a-ed** her of shameful conduct.
 Neh 6:13 would be able to **a** and discredit me.
 Rom 2:15 and thoughts either **a** them
 Rom 8:33 Who dares **a** us whom God
 Rev 12:10 who **a-s** them before our God

accuser, accusers (n)

one who charges another of wrongdoing

- Job 31:35 Let my **a** write out the
 Rev 12:10 the **a** of our brothers
 2 Chr 36:22 Witches and Diviners
 Job 2 Satan, the Accuser

acknowledge, acknowledges (v)

to express a gratitude of debt; to recognise as valid; to confess (wrongdoing)

- Deut 26:3 I **a** to the Lord your God
 2 Chr 6:24 **a** your name and pray to you here
 Matt 10:32 Everyone who **a-s** me
 Luke 12:8 Son of Man will also **a**
 1 Jn 2:23 anyone who **a-s** the Son
 1 Jn 4:3 and does not **a** the truth

acquit, acquitting (v)

to free from the penalty of a guilty action; (used theologically) to justify or make right with God

- 2 Chr 6:23 **A** the innocent because of
 Prov 17:15 **A-ing** the guilty and

act (v)

to behave; to take action or do something

- Ps 119:126 it is time for you to **a**,
 Ecc1 6:8 how to **a** in front of others?
 Exod 14:13 God Delivers, But We Must Also Act
 2 Chr 23 Pray, Then Act

action, actions (n)

a thing done, deed; an exercise of will

- Jer 4:18 Your own **a-s** have brought
 Philm 1:6 put into **a** the generosity
 1 Pet 1:13 So prepare your minds for **a**
 Rev 3:2 **a-s** do not meet the requirements
 Ezra 6:14 Putting Faith into Action
 Ezek 5 Showing the Word of God
 Ezek 31 No Separation
 Gal 5:19 Actions Speak Loud and Clear

Adam

First man (Gen 1:26–2:25; Rom 5:14; 1 Tim 2:13–14); son of God (Luke 3:38); sinned (Gen 3:1–19; Hos 6:7; Rom 5:12–21); descendants of (Gen 5); died (Gen 5:5; 1 Cor 15:22–49).

add, added (v)

to make or serve as an addition

- Deut 4:2 Do not **a** to or subtract from
 Deut 12:32 You must not **a** anything to
 Prov 30:6 Do not **a** to his words,
 Ecc1 3:14 Nothing can be **a-ed** to it
 Matt 6:27 worries **a** a single moment

- Luke 12:25 worries **a** a single moment
 Acts 2:47 each day the Lord **a-ed** to their
 Rev 22:18 God will **a** to that person

admit (v)

to acknowledge, confess

- Hos 5:15 until they **a** their guilt
 John 12:42 But they wouldn't **a** it

admonish(ed) (kuv)

- 2 Thes 3:15 warn them as you would
 Heb 8:5 God gave him this warning

admonition (kuv)

- 1 Cor 10:11 written down to warn us
 Eph 6:4 instruction that comes from the Lord
 Titus 3:10 a first and second warning

adopt, adopted (v)

to take another's child into one's own family

- Rom 8:15 when he **a-ed** you as his own
 Rom 8:23 rights as his **a-ed** children,
 Rom 9:4 to be God's **a-ed** children.
 Gal 4:5 so that he could **a** us as
 Eph 1:5 decided in advance to **a** us

Ruth Introduction to Ruth
 Ruth 4 Childlessness
 John 1:12 Adopted Children of God
 Judg 21:25 Care for Widows and Orphans
 Jas 5 Children at Risk

adulterer, adulterers (n)

one who commits adultery

- Job 24:15 The **a** waits for the twilight,
 Jas 4:4 You **a-s!** Don't you realise

2 Sam 11:1 A Downfall

adulterous (adj)

prone to adultery or idolatry

- Mark 8:38 in these **a** and sinful days,

adultery (n)

unlawful sexual relations between a married person and someone other than their spouse; symbolic of idolatry

see also SEXUAL SIN, DIVORCE

- Exod 20:14 You must not commit **a**.
 Lev 20:10 commits **a** with his neighbour's wife
 Deut 5:18 You must not commit **a**.

- Prov 6:32 who commits **a** is an utter fool,
 committing **a** by worshipping idols
 You must not commit **a**.
 Matt 5:27 someone else commits **a**
 Matt 19:9 marries someone else commits **a**
 caught in the act of **a**.
 John 8:4 **a**, or are male prostitutes,
 1 Cor 6:9

Gen 39:7 Say "No" to Adultery
 Lev 20:10 Shame of Adultery
 Jer 3 An Adulterous Nation
 Jer 5:7 First Place

advantage (n)

benefit; upper hand

- Exod 17:11 in his hand, the Israelites had the **a**.
 Lev 25:17 not taking **a** of each other.
 Rom 3:1 Then what's the **a** of being a Jew?
 Rom 7:11 Sin took **a** of those commands
 2 Cor 7:2 astray, nor taken **a** of anyone.

adversary, adversaries (n)

enemy, opponent

- 2 Sam 19:22 Why have you become my **a**
 Ps 89:23 beat down his **a-ies** before him
 Matt 5:25 on the way to court with your **a**,

Ps 17 Reflection on Psalm 17

adversity (n)

affliction, misfortune, woe

see also TRIAL

Job 36:15 gets their attention through **a**.
Isa 30:20 gave you **a** for food and suffering

Job 42:10 *Mourning into Joy*

advice (n)

recommendation regarding a decision or course of conduct; counsel

Exod 18:9 let me give you a word of **a**,
1 Kgs 12:8 rejected the **a** of the older men
Ezra 10:3 We will follow the **a** given by you
Prov 12:5 **a** of the wicked is
Prov 12:26 godly give good **a** to their
Prov 15:22 Plans go wrong for lack of **a**;
Rom 11:34 enough to give him **a**?

2 Sam 13:4 *Following Bad Advice*
1 Kgs 12:1 *Good Leaders Choose Good Advisors*

1 Kgs 12:6 *Keeping the Vultures Away*
2 Kgs 5:1 *Do Not Despise People*
2 Kgs 5:1 *The Power of Humility*
Job 11 *Questionable Advice*
Prov 3:5 *The Heart of Proverbs*
Prov 4:1 *Wisdom of Parental Advice*
Jer 29:20 *Refugees Are Accountable to God*
Acts 27:1 *Heeding Advice*
Phlm 1:14 *Free to Obey*

advise (v)

to give advice; to counsel

Ps 32:8 I will **a** you and watch over
1 Tim 5:14 I **a** these younger widows
Rev 3:18 I **a** you to buy gold from me—

advocate (n)

one who pleads the cause of another; defender

see also HOLY SPIRIT, COUNSELLOR

1 Sam 24:15 He is my **a**, and he will
Job 16:19 My **a** is there on high.
John 14:16 **A**, who will never leave you
John 14:26 the Father sends the **A**
John 15:26 the **A**—the Spirit of truth.
John 16:7 if I don't, the **A** won't come.
1 Jn 2:1 an **a** who pleads our case

Job 31 *Jesus Our Advocate*

affection (n)

tender attachment; a positive feeling

Rom 12:10 each other with genuine **a**,
2 Pet 1:7 godliness with brotherly **a**,

affirm (v)

to validate; to confirm

John 3:33 can **a** that God is true.
Rom 8:16 **a** that we are God's children.
Heb 10:23 hope we **a**, for God can

affliction (n)

a state of pain, distress, grief or misery

see also TRIALS

Ps 4 *Reflection on Psalm 4*
Ps 115 *Reflection on Psalm 115*
Ps 130 *Reflection on Psalm 130*

afraid (adj)

fearful or apprehensive about an unwanted or uncertain situation

Gen 3:10 I was **a** because I was naked.
Gen 26:24 Do not be **a**, for I am
Exod 3:6 he was **a** to look at God.
Deut 1:21 Don't be **a**!
Deut 20:1 your own, do not be **a**.
Ps 23:4 I will not be **a**, for you are
Isa 10:24 do not be **a** of the Assyrians

Isa 41:10 Don't be **a**, for I am
Isa 43:1 Do not be **a**, for I have
Matt 8:26 Why are you **a**?
Matt 10:31 So don't be **a**;
Mark 5:36 Don't be **a**.
John 14:27 don't be troubled or **a**.
2 Tim 4:5 Don't be **a** of suffering
1 Pet 3:14 don't worry or be **a**

Rev 1:17 *Do Not Be Afraid*

African traditional religions (n)

pre-Christian religious beliefs and practices

see also DIVINER, DEMON, IDOLATRY, SORCERER

Num 25 *Trusting in Idols Brings God's Anger*
Lev 18:1 *Fitting In*
Deut 4:35 *God Alone*
Josh 3 *The Supernatural*
Josh 24:15 *Chose Who You Serve*
Josh 24:15 *We Will Serve the Lord*
Josh 20 *Access to Justice*
Josh 24 *African Traditional Beliefs and the Bible*

Judg 21:25 *Care for Widows and Orphans*
1 Sam 16 *Deliverance and Exorcism*
2 Sam 24 *No More Sin Offerings*
1 Kgs 19:9 *Know What God Is Thinking*
1 Chr 10 *Ancestors*
2 Chr 30 *Animal Sacrifice*
2 Chr 36 *Witches and Diviners*
Esth 1 *Under Attack*
Ps 51 *Sin*
Isa 6 *Angels and Demons*
Isa 44 *Fetishes and Charms*
Ezek 4:1 *The Power of a Symbol*
Mal 4:6 *Similarities between the Cultures of the Bible and Africa*

John 21 *Jesus Compared to Founders of Other Religions*

Eph 6 *Deliverance from Spiritual Powers*
Col 3 *Curses and Blessings*
Col 4 *Cults*
Rev 2:12 *Pergamum: "You Tolerate Some among You"*

aged (adj)

showing the effects or characteristics of increasing age

see also ELDER

Job 12:12 Wisdom belongs to the **a**,
Prov 17:6 crowning glory of the **a**;
Zech 14 *The Elderly in Africa*

aggravate (v)

to cause anger by persistent goading; to produce inflammation in

Col 3:21 do not **a** your children,

agony (n)

extreme pain and suffering

Ps 6:2 Lord, for my bones are in **a**.
Luke 22:44 he was in such **a** of spirit that

agree, agreed, agreeing (v)

to admit, concede

Matt 18:19 If two of you **a** here on

AIDS (n)

a disease of the immune system transmitted chiefly through blood or blood products that enter the body's bloodstream, especially by sexual contact or contaminated hypodermic needles

Exod 14:13 *God Delivers, But We Must Also Act*
Lev 18 *Importance of Sexual Boundaries*
Deut 24 *God Cares*
Deut 21 *Care for Widows and Orphans*
Ruth 4:2 *A Woman Is the Middle Bone*
2 Chr 36 *Witches and Diviners*

Job 4 *Grieving Together*
Ps 5:11 *Places of Refuge*
Ps 20 *Answers from Heaven*
Prov 7:25 *Highway to the Grave*
Pr 31 *Godly Parenting*
Song 8 *Sexuality and Purity*
Is 3 *Abuse of God's Blessings*
Jon 4 *Health and Wellness*

Hos 14 *Marriage*
Matt 8:1 *A Greater Disease*
Jn 12 *Check Your Motives*
1 Cor 6:18 *Sexual Sins and the Body*
Jas 5 *Children at Risk*
Jude 1:22 *Teaching and Preaching in the Digital Age*
Rev 2 *Smyrna: Do Not Be Afraid of Suffering*

air (n)

empty space, nothingness; atmosphere

1 Thes 4:17 meet the Lord in the **a**.

alarm (n)

a signal that warns or alerts

Num 10:9 sound the **a** with the trumpets.
2 Cor 7:11 such indignation, such **a**,

alcohol (n)

drink (as wine or beer) containing ethanol

see also DRUNKENNESS

Prov 20:1 **a** leads to brawls.
Isa 5:22 boast about all the **a** they
Prov 20:1 *Being Drunk Is Unwise*

alert (adj)

quick to perceive and act

Mark 13:33 be on guard! Stay **a**!
1 Pet 5:8 Stay **a**! Watch out for
Mark 13 *Stay Alert*

alienated (kvj)

Eph 4:18 *wander far from* the life God
Col 1:21 were *once far away from God*

alive (adj)

animate, having life; active; aware

Luke 24:23 Jesus is **a**!
Acts 1:3 ways that he was actually **a**.
Rom 6:11 the power of sin and **a** to God
Rev 2:8 who was dead but is now **a**:

alleluia (kvj)

see also HALLELUJAH

Rev 19:1 shouting, *"Praise the Lord!*
Rev 19:3 rang out: *"Praise the Lord!*
Rev 19:4 *"Amen! Praise the Lord!"*
Rev 19:6 *"Praise the Lord! For the Lord*
Ps 146 *Reflection on Psalm 146*

allotment, allotments (n)

share, portion, provision

Num 18:21 Instead of an **a** of land, I will
Josh 13:32 These are the **a-s** Moses had
Jer 13:25 your **a**, the portion I have assigned
Josh 13:1 *Allotment of the Land*

allow, allowed (v)

to admit or concede; to permit

1 Cor 6:12 though "I am **a-ed** to
1 Cor 10:23 I am **a-ed** to do anything

allowance (n)

the act of admitting or conceding; permission

Eph 4:2 **a** for each other's faults

Almighty (n)

having absolute power over all; God

see also *GOD, LORD*

Gen 17:1 I am El-Shaddai—"God **A**"
 Exod 6:3 as El-Shaddai—"God **A**"—
 Num 24:16 sees a vision from the **A**,
 1 Kgs 19:10 zealously served the Lord God **A**.
 Ps 91:1 rest in the shadow of the **A**.
 Rev 4:8 the **A**—the one who always was,
 Rev 15:3 O Lord God, the **A**.
 Rev 19:6 our God, the **A**, reigns.

alpha (n)

first letter of Greek alphabet; figurative of beginning or first one

Rev 1:8 I am the **A** and the Omega—
 Rev 21:6 I am the **A** and the Omega—
 Rev 22:13 I am the **A** and the Omega,

altar, altars (n)

high places of worship on which sacrifices are offered or incense is burned

see also *SACRIFICE*

Gen 8:20 Noah built an **a** to the Lord,
 Gen 12:7 Abram built an **a** there
 Gen 22:9 Abraham built an **a** and
 Gen 26:25 Isaac built an **a** there
 Exod 30:1 make another **a** of acacia
 Exod 37:25 incense **a** of acacia wood.
 Josh 8:30 Joshua built an **a** to the Lord,
 Josh 22:10 a large and imposing **a**.
 1 Sam 7:17 Samuel built an **a** to the
 2 Chr 4:1 made a bronze **a** 30 feet long,
 2 Chr 32:12 only at the **a** at the Temple
 2 Chr 33:16 restored the **a** of the Lord
 Ezra 3:2 rebuilding the **a** of the God
 Matt 5:23 presenting a sacrifice at the **a**
 Acts 17:23 your **a-s** had this inscription
 Heb 13:10 an **a** from which the priests
 Rev 6:9 I saw under the **a** the souls

Exod 27:1 The Altar of Burnt Offering

Exod 30:1 The Incense Altar

Ezra 3:2 Priority—The Altar

altered (v)

to make change or become different; to modify

John 10:35 the Scriptures cannot be **a**.

always (adv)

at all times; for ever, perpetually

1 Kgs 2:4 will **a** sit on the throne
 Ps 16:8 the Lord is **a** with me.
 Ps 102:27 But you are **a** the same;
 Ps 106:3 and **a** do what is right.
 Matt 28:20 I am with you **a**, even to
 Mark 14:7 You will **a** have the poor
 John 12:8 you will not **a** have me.
 1 Pet 3:15 **a** be ready to explain it.

amazed (v)

to fill with wonder, astound

Mark 7:28 were **a** at his teaching
 Mark 7:37 They were completely **a** and
 Mark 10:24 This **a** them. But Jesus
 Luke 2:33 Jesus' parents were **a** at
 Acts 2:7 They were completely **a**.

amazing (adj)

causing amazement, great wonder, or surprise

1 Chr 16:24 about the **a** things he does.
 Ps 96:3 about the **a** things he does.
 Ps 126:2 What **a** things the Lord has

ambassador, ambassadors (n)

an authorized representative or messenger

2 Cor 5:20 So we are Christ's **a-s**;
 Eph 6:20 this message as God's **a**.

ambition (n)

aspiration to achieve a particular goal, good or bad

Prov 11:6 the **a** of treacherous people traps
 Rom 15:20 my **a** has always been to preach
 Gal 5:20 anger, selfish **a**, dissension,
 Phil 1:17 They preach with selfish **a**,
 Jas 3:14 there is selfish **a** in your heart,

ancestor, ancestors (n)

one from whom a person is descended; forefather

see also *AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS*

Exod 3:15 God of your **a-s**—the God of
 Isa 9:7 throne of his **a** David for all
 Isa 43:27 your first **a** sinned against me;
 Mark 11:10 Kingdom of our **a** David!
 Luke 1:32 the throne of his **a** David.
 Rom 9:5 Isaac, and Jacob are their **a-s**,
 Heb 1:1 to our **a-s** through the prophets.

Gen 25:7 Dying a Good Death

Gen 49 Honouring Last Wishes

Num 20:14 Lack of Forgiveness and Its Consequences

Num 26 Genealogies

1 Kgs 9:1 Obeying God

1 Chr 8 Remembering the Good and the Bad

1 Chr 10 Ancestors

Ezra 9 Remembering Ancestors

Ps 24:3 He Came Down from the Holy Mountain

Ecc 3:11 Eternity in Our Hearts

Ezek 14:3 Horns on a Totem

Heb 11 The Faith of Our Ancestors

After Rev The History of Christianity in Africa

anchor (n)

a reliable or principal support; mainstay

Heb 6:19 trustworthy **a** for our souls.

ancient (adj)

having the qualities of age or long existence; old

Dan 7:22 until the **A** One—the Most High—

Andrew

One of the 12 disciples; listed second (Matt 10:2; Luke 6:14) and fourth (Mark 3:18; 13:3; Acts 1:13); came from Bethsaida (John 1:44); brother of Simon Peter (Matt 4:18); former fisherman (Mark 1:16); follower of John the Baptist who introduced Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-44).

angel, angels (n)

human or superhuman agent or messenger of God

Gen 19:1 two **a-s** came to the entrance
 Exod 23:20 I am sending an **a**
 Neh 9:6 and the **a-s** of heaven worship you.
 Ps 91:11 will order his **a-s** to protect
 Dan 4:35 pleases among the **a-s** of heaven
 Matt 4:6 will order his **a-s** to protect
 Matt 28:2 an **a** of the Lord came down
 Luke 1:26 God sent the **a** Gabriel
 Luke 2:9 an **a** of the Lord appeared
 Acts 12:7 The **a** struck him on the side
 1 Cor 6:3 we will judge **a-s**?
 2 Cor 11:14 disguises himself as an **a**
 Gal 1:8 or even an **a** from heaven,
 Heb 1:6 all of God's **a-s** worship him.
 Heb 2:7 a little lower than the **a-s**
 Heb 13:2 entertained **a-s** without
 1 Pet 1:12 the **a-s** are eagerly watching
 2 Pet 2:4 even the **a-s** who sinned.
 Jude 1:6 I remind you of the **a-s**

Isa 6 Angels and Demons

Dan 12:1 God's Guarding Angels

angelic (adj)

having or displaying characteristics of an angel

2 Sam 22:11 on a mighty **a** being, he flew,

Ps 18:10

Ps 89:7

Ez 28:14

on a mighty **a** being, he flew,
 highest **a** powers stand in awe
 the mighty **a** guardian.

anger (n)

a strong feeling of displeasure

Exod 34:6 slow to **a** and filled with
 Num 14:18 furious **a** of the Lord,
 Deut 9:19 In great **a** and fury
 Deut 29:28 Lord's great **a** is burning
 2 Kgs 22:13 his **a** lasts only a moment,
 Ps 30:5 Many times he held back his **a**
 Ps 78:38 That is why the Lord's **a** burns
 Isa 5:25 fierce **a** of the Lord is still upon us.
 Jer 4:8 You have killed them in your **a**,
 Lam 2:21 God shows his **a** from heaven
 Rom 1:18 a day of **a** is coming,
 Rom 2:5 by letting **a** control you.
 Eph 4:26 pour out his **a** on us.
 1 Thes 5:9 Human **a** does not produce
 Jas 1:20 the wine of God's **a**.

Num 25 Trusting in Idols Brings God's Anger

2 Chr 25:1 Anger Turned to Destruction

Esth 1:15 Replacing Anger with Patience and Caution

Prov 29:22 Why Are You Angry?

Ezek 24:14 Redeemed from Lawlessness

Hos 13 Our Feeling God

angry (adj)

feeling or showing anger; wrathful

Neh 9:17 merciful, slow to become **a**,
 Ps 103:8 merciful, slow to get **a**
 Prov 22:24 Don't befriend **a** people
 Jon 4:2 slow to get **a** and filled
 Matt 5:22 if you are even **a** with
 Mark 10:14 he was **a** with his disciples.
 John 3:36 under God's **a** judgement.
 Jas 1:19 to speak, and slow to get **a**.

animal, animals (n)

any of a kingdom of living things that typically differ from plants

Gen 1:24 livestock, small **a-s** that scurry
 Gen 6:19 a pair of every kind of **a**—
 Gen 7:8 all the various kinds of **a-s**—
 Deut 14:4 These are the **a-s** you may eat:
 Job 12:7 ask the **a-s**, and they will teach
 Ps 73:22 like a senseless **a** to you.

Gen 1

Gen 50:22

2 Chr 30

Job 40

Ps 104

Creation

Caring for God's Creation

Animal Sacrifice

The Animals of Africa

Animals in Israel

announce, announced, announcing (v)

to proclaim; to tell news

Matt 9:35 and **a-ing** the Good News
 Mark 15:26 **a-ed** the charge against him.
 Acts 26:23 a God's light to Jews and
 Rev 10:7 as he **a-d** it to his servants the prophets.

anoint, anointed, anointing (v)

to smear or rub with oil; used for healing or consecration to sacred duty; used for grooming or burial; figurative for divine appointment

see also *ANOINTED ONE*

Exod 30:26 oil to a the Tabernacle,

Exod 30:30 A Aaron and his sons

Lev 8:12 a-ing him and making him holy

1 Sam 15:1 told me to a you as king

2 Sam 2:4 David and a-ed him king over

2 Sam 23:1 man a-ed by the God of Jacob,

Ps 23:5 honour me by a-ing my head

Isa 61:1 the Lord has a-ed me

Acts 10:38 you know that God **a-ed** Jesus
 Heb 1:9 your God has **a-ed** you,
 Jas 5:14 over you, **a-ing** you with oil
 1 Sam 10:17 *No Ordinary King*

anointed one (n)

one chosen by divine election
see also MESSIAH

1 Sam 2:10 the strength of his **a**."
 1 Sam 26:9 attacking the Lord's **a**?
 Ps 132:17 my **a** will be a light for
 Dan 9:25 a ruler—the **A**—comes.

answer, answered (v)

to reply to a question; to solve a problem
 Ps 6:9 the Lord will **a** my prayer.
 Ps 34:4 Lord, and he **a-ed** me.
 Jon 2:2 trouble, and he **a-ed** me.

1 Kgs 18:26 *No Need for Repetition*
 Ps 20:1 *Answers from Heaven*
 Ps 102 *Believing Without Seeing*

antichrist, antichrists (n)

opponent of Christ; the personification of evil

1 Jn 2:18 heard that the **A** is coming,
 1 Jn 2:18 many such **a-s** have appeared.
 1 Jn 4:3 has the spirit of the **A**,
 2 Jn 1:7 deceiver and an **a**.

ants (n)

any of a family of colonial hymenopterous insects
 Prov 6:6 from the **a**, you lazybones.

Prov 6:6 As Diligent as the Ant

anxiety, care(s) (KUV)

Ps 139:23 know my *anxious thoughts*
 Phil 4:6 Don't *worry* about anything
 1 Pet 5:7 your *worries and cares* to God,
 Ps 35:23 *Entrust Your Case to Safe Hands*
 Eph 1:9 *Freedom from Anxiety*

apocalyptic (adj)

predicting disaster and total destruction

Dan 7 *Who Are Those Beasts and Horns?*
 Rev *Introduction to Revelation*
 Rev 4 *Revelation and Apocalyptic Writing*

apostle, apostles (n)

messengers or "sent ones"; generally but not exclusively applied to the original twelve followers of Christ and to Paul

Mark 3:14 and called them his **a-s**.
 Acts 1:26 selected to become an **a**
 Acts 8:18 **a-s** laid their hands on the
 Rom 11:13 the **a** to the Gentiles.
 1 Cor 9:1 Am I not an **a**?
 1 Cor 9:2 I am the Lord's **a**.
 1 Cor 12:28 first are **a-s**, second are,
 2 Cor 12:12 I am an **a**.
 Eph 2:20 on the foundation of the **a-s**
 Eph 4:11 the **a-s**, the prophets,
 2 Tim 1:11 to be a preacher, an **a**,
 Rev 21:14 of the twelve **a-s** of the Lamb.

Eph 4 Apostles and Prophets

appear, appeared, appearing, appears (v)
 to come out of hiding and show up in public view; to make one's presence known

Num 14:10 presence of the Lord **a-ed**
 Deut 33:16 **a-ed** in the burning bush.
 Mal 3:2 and face him when he **a-s**?
 Matt 24:30 will **a** in the heavens,
 2 Thes 1:7 the Lord Jesus **a-s** from
 2 Tim 1:10 by the **a-ing** of Christ Jesus,
 Heb 9:26 **a-ed** at the end of the age
 1 Pet 5:4 when the Great Shepherd **a-s**,
 1 Jn 3:2 will be like when Christ **a-s**.

appearance (n)

external show; the outward or visible aspect

1 Sam 16:7 Don't judge by his **a** or height,
 Isa 53:2 or majestic about his **a**,
 2 Sam 17:1 *Judging by the Heart*
 2 Kgs 14 *Be Careful with Appearances*

appetite (n)

the desire to eat; an inherent craving

Phil 3:19 Their god is their **a**,

apply (v)

to bring into action; to put to use especially for some practical purpose

Prov 22:17 **a** your heart to my instruction.

appoint, appointed, appointing (v)

to ordain or designate; to name officially

Deut 1:15 **a-ed** them to serve as judges
 2 Sam 7:11 the time I **a-ed** judges to rule
 Prov 8:23 I was **a-ed** in ages past,
 John 15:16 I chose you. I **a-ed** you
 Rom 11:13 God has **a-ed** me as the
 1 Tim 5:22 about **a-ing** a church leader.
 Titus 1:5 work there and **a** elders

appointed (adj)

marked by being fixed or set officially

Exod 23:15 annually at the **a** time
 Lev 23:2 the Lord's **a** festivals,
 Matt 8:29 before God's **a** time?"
 Acts 3:20 Jesus, your **a** Messiah.

appreciation (n)

an expression of admiration, approval, or gratitude
see also THANKS

1 Cor 16:18 must show your **a** to all
 Rom 15:25 *Showing Appreciation*
 1 Cor 1:4 *Appreciation Is Good*

approach (v)

to draw closer to; to come very near to
 1 Tim 6:16 no human can **a** him.

appropriate (adj)

especially suitable or compatible; fitting

Deut 25:2 lashes **a** to the crime.
 1 Tim 2:9 wear decent and **a** clothing

approval (n)

an act or instance of approving

Ps 90:17 Lord our God show us his **a**
 John 6:27 the seal of his **a**.
 Rom 14:4 stand and receive his **a**.
 1 Cor 11:19 you who have God's **a**
 2 Tim 2:15 and receive his **a**.
 Heb 11:4 God showed his **a** of his gifts.
 Gal 1:10 *Whose Approval Are You Seeking?*

approve, approved, approves (v)

to have or express a favourable opinion of; to attest

Gen 7:2 animal I have **a-ed** for eating
 Prov 12:2 Lord **a-s** of those who
 Rom 14:18 and others will **a** of you,
 Rom 16:10 a good man whom Christ **a-s**.
 1 Thes 2:4 speak as messengers **a-ed**

Ararat (n)

a mountain on the far east border of modern Turkey;
 the mountain Noah's boat rested on after the Flood
 Gen 8:4 to rest on the mountains of **A**.

archangel, archangels (n)

a leader and chief angel; the Bible identifies Michael as one

Dan 10:13 one of the **a-s**, came to help
 Dan 12:1 At that time Michael, the **a**
 1 Thes 4:16 with the voice of the **a**,

argument, arguments (n)

statement, reason, or fact for or against a point
see also CONFLICT

2 Sam 19:9 much discussion and **a** going on
 1 Kgs 3:16 the king to have an **a** settled.

Job 15:1 Arguments Repeat

ark (n)

commonly, a portable wooden chest, box, or coffer; specifically, of Noah, a ship the size of a light cruiser; of the Covenant, a sacred housing for the Law of Moses; a boat

see also NOAH

Exod 25:21 inside the **A** the stone
 Deut 10:5 tablets in the **A** of the
 1 Kgs 8:9 Nothing was in the **A** except
 1 Chr 13:9 his hand to steady the **A**.
 Heb 9:4 chest called the **A** of the Covenant,
 Rev 11:19 the **A** of his covenant

Gen 6:14 Noah's Ark
Exod 25:10 The Ark of the Covenant
2 Sam 6:1 David and the Ark of God

arm, arms (n)

upper limb of the body; extension or projection of; lineage; figurative of power or might

Num 11:23 Has my **a** lost its power?
 Deut 4:34 a powerful **a**, and terrifying
 Deut 7:19 strong hand and powerful **a**
 Deut 33:27 everlasting **a-s** are under
 Ps 44:3 it was not their own strong **a**
 Ps 98:1 his holy **a** has shown
 Isa 40:11 carry the lambs in his **a-s**,
 Jer 27:5 powerful **a** I made the earth
 Mark 10:16 took the children in his **a-s**

Armageddon (n)

the gathering place for the final battle between God's forces and Satan's forces associated with Christ's second coming

Rev 16:16 with the Hebrew name **A**.

armor (n)

weapons of war or self-defence; figurative of spiritual resources

Ps 91:4 are your **a** and protection.
 Rom 13:12 put on the shining **a**
 Eph 6:11 Put on all of God's **a**
 Eph 6:13 put on every piece of God's **a**
 1 Thes 5:8 protected by the **a** of faith

army, armies (n)

large band of men organized and armed for war; any large multitude devoted to a cause

Exod 14:9 all the forces in Pharaoh's **a**—
 Exod 17:10 fought the **a** of Amalek
 Deut 20:1 horses and chariots and an **a**
 Josh 5:14 the commander of the Lord's **a**.
 Josh 10:20 the Israelite **a** continued
 Judg 11:32 Jephthah led his **a** against
 1 Sam 13:15 went with Saul to meet the **a**.
 2 Sam 6:2 of the Lord of Heaven's **A-ies**
 2 Sam 12:31 David and all the **a** returned to
 2 Kgs 14:11 two **a-ies** drew up their battle
 1 Chr 12:22 until he had a great **a**,
 2 Chr 20:12 mighty **a** that is about to attack
 Job 25:3 to count his heavenly **a**?
 Ps 27:3 Though a mighty **a** surrounds me,
 Ps 84:12 Lord of Heaven's **A-ies**,
 Isa 6:3 Lord of Heaven's **A-ies!**
 Isa 14:31 A powerful **a** comes like smoke
 Isa 51:15 the Lord of Heaven's **A-ies**.
 Jer 50:9 raising up an **a** of great nations
 great and mighty **a** appears.
 Joel 2:2 This is his mighty **a**,
 Hag 2:11 Lord of Heaven's **A-ies** says:



BIBLE OVERVIEW READING PLAN

Daily Bible reading is a joy and a blessing. God has given us his instructions in the Bible. The Bible is the story of how God loves us and worked in history to restore fellowship with us after sin entered the world. Through the Bible, God calls us to be his children and to live in fellowship with him. As we read the Bible, we hear from God and learn about his character and work. The words and stories are full of life, wisdom, and power.

The Bible is a very large book—or collection of books—and it can be very hard to know how to read it. Many of us start by reading Genesis with enthusiasm, struggle through the end of Exodus, and stop reading somewhere in Leviticus. If this describes you, here is a plan to give you an overview of the whole Bible in one year by reading the length of a chapter six days a week.

You can start any day of any week—it does not need to be January 1—and commit to reading about one chapter every day. Then you will also have extra time for a Bible study or devotional, and prayer. Find one part of your day—first thing in the morning, at lunch, or before you go to bed—where you can spend ten minutes listening to God through reading his Word. And you will receive a wonderful overview of the story of God reaching out to us. May God guide you and teach you as you read the Bible.

If you would like to read the entire Bible in one year, a number of different ways to accomplish this are listed here: africastudybible.com/readingplan.

WEEK 1

1. Genesis 1:1–2:3
2. Genesis 2:4–25
3. Genesis 3:1–24
4. Genesis 4:1–26
5. Genesis 6:1–22
6. Genesis 7:1–24

WEEK 2

7. Genesis 8:1–22
8. Genesis 9:1–28
9. Genesis 11:1–32
10. Genesis 12:1–20
11. Genesis 15:1–20
12. Genesis 16:1–17:14

WEEK 3

13. Genesis 17:15–18:15
14. Genesis 21:1–20
15. Genesis 22:1–24
16. Genesis 23:1–20
17. Genesis 24:1–28
18. Genesis 24:29–67

WEEK 4

19. Genesis 25:7–11, 19–34
20. Genesis 26:34–27:29
21. Genesis 27:30–28:22
22. Genesis 29:1–30
23. Genesis 29:31–30:24
24. Genesis 30:25–31:21

WEEK 5

25. Genesis 31:22–55
26. Genesis 32:1–32
27. Genesis 33:1–20
28. Genesis 34:1–31
29. Genesis 35:1–29
30. Genesis 37:1–36

WEEK 6

31. Genesis 38:1–30
32. Genesis 39:1–40:23
33. Genesis 41:1–57
34. Genesis 42:1–38
35. Genesis 43:1–34
36. Genesis 44:1–34

WEEK 7

37. Genesis 45:1–46:7
38. Genesis 46:26–47:31
39. Genesis 48:1–49:28
40. Genesis 49:29–50:26
41. Exodus 1:1–2:10
42. Exodus 2:11–3:22

WEEK 8

43. Exodus 4:1–31
44. Exodus 5:1–6:13
45. Exodus 7:1–25
46. Exodus 8:1–32
47. Exodus 9:1–35
48. Exodus 10:1–11:10

WEEK 9

49. Exodus 12:1–42
50. Exodus 14:5–31
51. Exodus 15:22–17:7
52. Exodus 18:1–27
53. Exodus 19:1–25
54. Exodus 20:1–21

WEEK 10

55. Exodus 21:1–36
56. Exodus 22:1–31
57. Exodus 23:1–24:18
58. Exodus 32:1–35
59. Exodus 33:1–23
60. Exodus 34:1–35

WEEK 11

61. Exodus 40:1–38
62. Numbers 11:1–35
63. Numbers 13:1–33
64. Numbers 14:1–45
65. Numbers 16:1–40
66. Numbers 16:41–17:13

WEEK 12

67. Numbers 20:1–21:3
68. Numbers 21:4–35
69. Numbers 22:1–41
70. Numbers 23:1–30
71. Numbers 24:1–25:18
72. Numbers 27:1–23

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