

THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE

Revised Edition

Translated from the Original Languages
with Critical Use of All the Ancient Sources

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



World Catholic Press
A Division of
Catholic Book Publishing Corp.

16 Three times a year,^j then, all your males shall appear before the LORD, your God, in the place which he will choose: at the feast of Unleavened Bread, at the feast of Weeks, and at the feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed, 17 but each with his own gift, in proportion to the blessing which the LORD, your God, has given to you.

Justice. 18^k In all the communities which the LORD, your God, is giving you, you shall appoint judges and officials throughout your tribes to administer true justice for the people. 19 You must not distort justice: you shall not show partiality;^l you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes even of the wise and twists the words even of the just. 20 Justice, justice alone shall you pursue, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD, your God, is giving you.

Illicit Worship. 21^m You shall not plant an asherah* of any kind of wood next to the altar of the LORD, your God, which you will build;ⁿ 22 nor shall you erect a sacred pillar, such as the LORD, your God, hates.

CHAPTER 17

1 You shall not sacrifice to the LORD, your God, an ox or a sheep with any serious defect;^a that would be an abomination to the LORD, your God.

2^b If there is found in your midst, in any one of the communities which the LORD, your God, gives you, a man or a woman who does evil in the sight of the LORD, your God, and transgresses his covenant,^c 3 by going to serve other gods, by bowing down to them, to the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, contrary to my command;^d 4 and if you are told or hear of it, you must investigate it thoroughly. If the truth of the matter is established that this abomination has been committed in Israel, 5 you shall bring the man or the woman who has done this evil deed out to your gates* and stone the man or the woman to death. 6 Only on the testimony of two or three witnesses shall a person be put to death;^e no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. 7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first raised to put the person to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.^f Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst.

Judges. 8^g If there is a case for judgment which proves too baffling for you to decide, in a matter of bloodshed or of law or of injury, matters of dispute within your gates, you shall then go up to the place which the LORD, your God, will choose, 9 to the levitical priests or to the judge who is in office at that time. They shall investigate the case and then announce to you the decision.^h 10 You shall act according to the decision they announce to you in the place which the LORD

will choose, carefully observing everything as they instruct you. 11 You shall carry out the instruction they give you and the judgment they pronounce, without turning aside either to the right or left from the decision they announce to you. 12 Anyone who acts presumptuously and does not obey the priest* who officiates there in the ministry of the LORD, your God, or the judge, shall die. Thus shall you purge the evil from Israel. 13 And all the people, on hearing of it, shall fear, and will never again act presumptuously.ⁱ

The King. 14^j When you have come into the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you, and have taken possession of it and settled in it, should you then decide, "I will set a king over me, like all the surrounding nations,"^k 15 you may indeed set over you a king whom the LORD, your God, will choose.^l Someone from among your own kindred you may set over you as king; you may not set over you a foreigner, who is no kin of yours. 16^m But he shall not have a great number of horses; nor shall he make his people go back again to Egypt to acquire many horses, for the LORD said to you, Do not go back that way again.ⁿ 17 Neither shall he have a great number of wives, lest his heart turn away,^o nor shall he accumulate a vast amount of silver and gold. 18 When he is sitting upon his royal throne, he shall write a copy of this law* upon a scroll from the

j. Dt 12:7; 16:11, 14; Ex 23:14-15, 17; 34:23-24; 2 Chr 8:13.—k. 18-20: Dt 1:13-17; 17:8-13; 19:17; 21:5; Ex 18:13-26; 2 Chr 19:5-11.—l. Dt 1:16-17; 10:17-18; Ex 23:2-3, 6-8; Lv 19:15; Prv 17:23; 18:5; 24:23; Is 1:23; Mi 7:3; Jn 7:24; Jas 2:9.—m. 16:21-17:7; Dt 5:7-10; 6:4-5; 12:29-14:2.—n. 21-22: Dt 7:5; Ex 34:13; 1 Kgs 14:15; 2 Kgs 23:6, 15; 2 Chr 33:3.—a. Lv 22:20.—b. 2-7: Dt 13:2-19.—c. Jos 7:11, 15; 23:16; Jgs 2:20; 2 Kgs 18:12; Jer 34:18; Hos 6:7; 8:1.—d. Dt 4:19; 2 Kgs 17:16; 21:3; 23:5; Jer 8:2; Ez 8:16.—e. Dt 19:15; Nm 35:30; Jn 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1.—f. Dt 13:6, 10.—g. 8-9: Ex 18:13-26.—h. Dt 21:5; 2 Chr 19:8; Ezr 7:25.—i. Dt 13:12.—j. 14-20: 1 Sm 10:25.—k. Dt 26:1; 1 Sm 8:5, 19-20.—l. 1 Sm 9:16; 10:24; 16:1-13; 1 Kgs 19:15-16; 2 Kgs 9:1-13.—m. Dt 28:68; 1 Sm 8:10-12; 1 Kgs 10:26-29; Is 2:7.—n. 1 Kgs 10:10-25; 11:1-8; Neh 13:26; Is 2:7.

*

16:21-22 *Asherah* . . . sacred pillar: see note on 7:5; Ex 34:13.

17:5 *Out to your gates*: outside the gates, so as not to defile the city; cf. Lv 24:14; Nm 15:36; Acts 7:58; Heb 13:12.

17:12 *The priest*: the high priest; *the judge*: a layman. The court system here, involving lay and priestly officials, resembles the one whose establishment is attributed to King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chr 19:8-11 (cf. Ex 18:17-23 and Dt 1:17).

17:16-17 This restriction on royal acquisitions may have in mind the excesses of Solomon's reign mentioned in 1 Kgs 10:1-11:6. *Horses*: chariotry for war. Egypt engaged in horse trading, and the danger envisioned here is that some king might make Israel a vassal of Egypt for military aid.

17:18 *A copy of this law*: the source of the name Deuteronomy, which in Hebrew is literally "double" or "copy"; in the Septuagint translated as *deuteronomion*, literally "a second law." In Jerome's Latin Vulgate as *deuteranium*.

one that is in the custody of the levitical priests.^o **19**^{*p} It shall remain with him and he shall read it as long as he lives, so that he may learn to fear the LORD, his God, and to observe carefully all the words of this law and these statutes, **20** so that he does not exalt himself over his kindred or turn aside from this commandment to the right or to the left, and so that he and his descendants may reign long in Israel.

CHAPTER 18

Priests. **1** The levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no hereditary portion with Israel; they shall eat the fire offerings of the LORD and the portions due to him.^a **2** They shall have no heritage among their kindred; the LORD himself is their heritage, as he has told them.^b **3** This shall be the due of the priests from the people: those who are offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep, shall give the priest the shoulder, the jowls and the stomach. **4** The first fruits of your grain, your wine, and your oil,^c as well as the first shearing of your flock, you shall also give him. **5** For the LORD, your God, has chosen him out of all your tribes to be in attendance to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his descendants for all time.^d

6 When a Levite goes from one of your communities anywhere in Israel in which he has been residing, to visit, as his heart may desire, the place which the LORD will choose, **7** and ministers there in the name of the LORD, his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand before the LORD there, **8** he shall receive the same portions to eat, along with his stipends and patrimony.^e

Prophets. **9** When you come into the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the abominations of the nations there.^f **10** Let there not be found among you anyone who causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire,^g or practices divination, or is a soothsayer, augur, or sorcerer, **11** or who casts spells, consults ghosts and spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead. **12** Anyone who does such things is an abomination to the LORD, and because of such abominations the LORD, your God, is dispossessing them before you.^h **13** You must be altogether sincere with the LORD, your God. **14** Although these nations whom you are about to dispossess listen to their soothsayers and diviners, the LORD, your God, will not permit you to do so.

15 A prophet like meⁱ will the LORD, your God, raise up for you from among your own kindred; that is the one to whom you shall listen.^j **16** This is exactly what you requested of the LORD, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, "Let me not again hear the voice of the LORD, my God, nor see this great fire any more, or I will die."^k **17** And the LORD said to me, What they have said is good. **18** I will raise up for

them a prophet like you from among their kindred, and will put my words into the mouth of the prophet; the prophet shall tell them all that I command.^l **19** Anyone who will not listen to my words which the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will hold accountable for it.^m **20** But if a prophet presumes to speak a word in my nameⁿ that I have not commanded, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.

21 Should you say to yourselves, "How can we recognize that a word is one the LORD has not spoken?", **22** if a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD but the word does not come true, it is a word the LORD did not speak. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not fear him.

CHAPTER 19

Cities of Refuge. **1** When the LORD, your God, cuts down the nations whose land the LORD, your God, is giving you, and you have dispossessed them and settled in their cities and houses,^a **2** you shall set apart three cities^b in the land the LORD, your God, is giving you to possess. **3** You shall measure the distances and divide into three regions the land of which the LORD, your God, is giving you possession, so that every homicide will be able to find a refuge.

^a Dt 31:9, 24–26; Jos 8:32.—^b p. 19–20: Dt 5:32–6:3; 2 Sm 7:12–16; 1 Kgs 2:4; Ps 132:11–18.—^c a. Nm 18:8–9, 20–24; Jos 13:14; 18:7; 2 Chr 31:2–19; 1 Cor 9:13.—^b Nm 18:20; Jos 13:33.—^c Dt 26:1–11; Nm 18:12; 2 Chr 31:5; Neh 13:10–13.—^d Dt 10:8; Jer 33:18.—^e Dt 12:29–31; Lv 18:24–30.—^f 10–11: Dt 12:31; Ex 22:18; Lv 18:21; 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1 Sm 28:7–19; 2 Kgs 17:17; 21:6; 23:10, 24; Is 8:19–20; Ez 21:21.—^g Dt 9:4.—^h Mt 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35; Jn 1:45; 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22; 7:37.—ⁱ Ex 20:19.—^j Ex 4:10–16; Jer 1:9; 15:19; Ez 3:1–4.—^k Jer 11:21–23; Am 7:10–17; Acts 3:23.—^l 20, 22: Dt 13:2–6; 1 Kgs 22:1–40; Jer 14:13–16; 23:9–40; 28:1–17; Ez 13:1–23.—^a 1–13: Dt 4:41–43; Ex 21:12–14; Nm 35:9–34; Jos 20:1–9.—^b Dt 6:10–11; 12:29.

*

17:19 The only positive requirement imposed upon the king is strict adherence to the Mosaic or Deuteronomic law. In that respect, the king's primary task was to be a model Israelite.

18:8 *His stipends and patrimony*: meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

18:10–11 *Causes their son or daughter to pass through the fire*: to Molech. See note on Lv 18:21. Such human sacrifices are classed here with various occult and magical practices because they were believed to possess powers for averting a calamity; cf. 2 Kgs 3:27. Three other categories of magic are listed here: divination of the future (by a soothsayer or augur); black magic (by a sorcerer or one who casts spells); and necromancy (by one who consults ghosts and spirits, or seeks oracles from the dead to divine the future).

18:15 *A prophet like me*: from the context (opposition to the practices described in vv. 10–11) it seems that Moses is referring in general to all the true prophets who were to succeed him. This passage came to be understood in a quasi-Messianic sense in the New Testament (Mt 17:5; Jn 6:14; 7:40; Acts 3:22; 7:37).

19:2 *Set apart three cities*: the Israelites were to have at least six cities of refuge, three in the land east of the Jordan and three in the land of Canaan west of the Jordan (Nm 35:9–34); but since the three cities east of the Jordan had now been appointed (Dt 4:41–43), reference is made here only to the three west of the Jordan. The execution of this command is narrated in Jos 20.

- 18 You are their majestic strength;
by your favor our horn* is exalted. ⁱ
19 Truly the LORD is our shield,
the Holy One of Israel, our king! ^j

III

- 20 Then you spoke in vision; ^k
to your faithful ones you said:
"I have set a leader over the warriors;
I have raised up a chosen one from the
people.
21 I have chosen David, my servant;
with my holy oil I have anointed him.
22 My hand will be with him; ^l
my arm will make him strong.
23 No enemy shall outwit him,
nor shall the wicked defeat him.
24 I will crush his foes before him,
strike down those who hate him.
25 My faithfulness and mercy will be with
him;
through my name his horn will be exalt-
ed.
26* I will set his hand upon the sea,
his right hand upon the rivers.
27 He shall cry to me, "You are my father, ^m
my God, the Rock of my salvation!"
28 I myself make him the firstborn,
Most High* over the kings of the earth.
29 Forever I will maintain my mercy for
him; ⁿ
my covenant with him stands firm.
30 I will establish his dynasty forever,
his throne as the days of the heavens.
31 If his descendants forsake my teaching, ^o
do not follow my decrees,
32 If they fail to observe my statutes,
do not keep my commandments,
33 I will punish their crime with a rod
and their guilt with blows.
34 But I will not take my mercy from him,
nor will I betray my bond of faithful-
ness. ^p
35 I will not violate my covenant;
the promise of my lips I will not alter. ^q
36 By my holiness I swore once for all: ^r
I will never be false to David.
37* His dynasty will continue forever, ^s
his throne, like the sun before me.
38 Like the moon it will stand eternal,
forever firm like the sky!" *Selah*

B

IV

- 39 But now you have rejected and spurned, ^t
been enraged at your anointed.
40 You renounced the covenant with your ser-
vant,
defiled his crown in the dust.
41 You broke down all city walls, ^u
left his strongholds in ruins.
42 All who pass through seize plunder;
his neighbors deride him.
43 You have exalted the right hand of his foes,
have gladdened all his enemies. ^v

- 44 You turned back his sharp sword,
did not support him in battle.
45 You brought to an end his splendor,
hurled his throne to the ground.
46 You cut short the days of his youth,
covered him with shame. *Selah*

V

- 47 How long, LORD? Will you hide forever?
Must your wrath smolder like fire? ^w
48 Remember how brief life is,
how frail the sons of man you have cre-
ated! ^x
49 What is man, that he should live and not
see death?
Who can deliver his soul from the
power of Sheol? ^y *Selah*

VI

- 50 Where are your former mercies, Lord,
that you swore to David in your faithful-
ness?
51 Remember, Lord, the insults to your ser-
vants,
how I have borne in my bosom the slan-
der of the nations. ^z
52 Your enemies, LORD, insult;
they insult each step of your anointed.
53* Blessed be the LORD forever! Amen and
amen! ^a

Fourth Book—Psalms 90–106

PSALM 90*

God's Eternity and Human Frailty

- 1 A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

I

Lord, you have been our refuge
through all generations.

i. Ps 112:9; 148:14.—j. Ps 47:9; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; Is 6:3.—k. 20–21: Ps 78:70; 132:11–12; 2 Sm 7:4, 8–16; 1 Chr 17:3, 7–14; Is 42:1; Acts 13:22.—l. 22–25: 1 Sm 2:9–10.—m. 27–28: Ps 2:7; 110:2–3; 2 Sm 7:9, 14; Col 1:15, 18; Rev 1:5.—n. 29–30: Ps 18:51; 61:8; 144:10; 2 Sm 7:11; Is 55:3.—o. 31–33: Lv 26:14–33.—p. Ps 40:12; Sir 47:22.—q. Jer 33:20–21.—r. Am 4:2.—s. 37–38: Ps 61:8; 72:5; Sir 43:6.—t. 39–47: Ps 44:10–25.—u. 41–42: Ps 80:13–14.—v. Lam 1:5.—w. Ps 13:2; 44:25; 74:10; 79:5; Dt 4:24.—x. Ps 39:5–6; 62:10; 90:9–10; 144:4; Jb 7:6, 16; 14:1, 5; Eccl 6:12; Wis 2:5.—y. Ps 90:3.—z. Ps 79:12.—a. Ps 41:14; 72:18; 106:48.

*

89:18, 25 *Horn*: a concrete noun for an abstract quality; horn is a symbol of strength.

89:26 *The sea . . . the rivers*: geographically the limits of the Davidic empire (the Mediterranean and the Euphrates); mythologically, the traditional forces of chaos. See note on Ps 89:11.

89:28 *Most High*: a divine title, which is here extended to David as God's own king, cf. Ps 2:7–9; Is 9:5. As God rules over the members of the heavenly council (Ps 89:6–9), so David, God's surrogate, rules over earthly kings.

89:37–38 *Like the sun before me . . . like the sky*: as enduring as the heavenly lights, cf. Ps 89:2–5 and Ps 72:5, 17.

89:53 The doxology at the end of the third book of the Psalms; it is not part of Ps 89.

Psalm 90 A communal lament that describes only in general terms the cause of the community's distress. After confidently invoking God (Ps 90:1), the Psalm turns

- 2 Before the mountains were born,
the earth and the world brought forth,
from eternity to eternity you are God. ^a
- 3 You turn humanity back into dust,*
saying, "Return, you children of
Adam!" ^b
- 4 A thousand years in your eyes
are merely a day gone by, ^c
Before a watch passes in the night,
5* you wash them away; ^d
They sleep,
and in the morning they sprout again
like an herb.
- 6 In the morning it blooms only to pass away;
in the evening it is wilted and with-
ered. ^e

II

- 7 Truly we are consumed by your anger,
filled with terror by your wrath.
- 8 You have kept our faults before you,
our hidden sins in the light of your
face. ^f
- 9 Our life ebbs away under your wrath; ^g
our years end like a sigh.
- 10 Seventy is the sum of our years,
or eighty, if we are strong;
Most of them are toil and sorrow;
they pass quickly, and we are gone.
- 11 Who comprehends the strength of your
anger?
Your wrath matches the fear it inspires.
- 12 Teach us to count our days aright,
that we may gain wisdom of heart.

III

- 13 Relent, O LORD! How long?
Have pity on your servants!
- 14 Fill us at daybreak with your mercy, ^h
that all our days we may sing for joy.
- 15 Make us glad as many days as you hum-
bled us,
for as many years as we have seen trou-
ble. ⁱ
- 16 Show your deeds to your servants,
your glory to their children.
- 17 May the favor of the Lord our God be ours. ^j
Prosper the work of our hands!
Prosper the work of our hands!

PSALM 91***Security Under God's Protection****I**

- 1 You who dwell in the shelter of the Most
High,*
who abide in the shade of the Al-
mighty,*
- 2 Say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress,
my God in whom I trust." ^a
- 3 He will rescue you from the fowler's snare,
from the destroying plague,
- 4 He will shelter you with his pinions,
and under his wings you may take
refuge; ^b
his faithfulness is a protecting shield.

- 5 You shall not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day, ^c
 - 6 Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness,
nor the plague that ravages at noon. ^d
 - 7 Though a thousand fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
near you it shall not come.
 - 8 You need simply watch;
the punishment of the wicked you will
see. ^e
 - 9 Because you have the LORD for your refuge
and have made the Most High your
stronghold,
 - 10 No evil shall befall you,
no affliction come near your tent. ^f
 - 11* For he commands his angels with regard to
you, ^g
to guard you wherever you go. ^h
 - 12 With their hands they shall support you,
lest you strike your foot against a
stone. ⁱ
 - 13 You can tread upon the asp and the viper,
trample the lion and the dragon. ^j
- II**
- 14 Because he clings to me I will deliver him;
because he knows my name I will set
him on high. ^k
 - 15 He will call upon me and I will answer; ^l
I will be with him in distress; ^m
I will deliver him and give him honor.

a. Ps 48:15; 55:20; 93:2; 102:13; Heb 1:12.—b. Ps 103:14; 104:29; 146:4; Gn 3:19; 1 Mc 2:63; Jb 34:14–15; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Sir 40:11.—c. 2 Pt 3:8.—d. Ps 89:48.—e. Ps 37:2; 102:11; 103:15–16; Jb 14:1–2; Is 40:6–8.—f. Ps 109:14–15; Hos 7:2.—g. 9–10: Ps 39:5–7; 62:10; 102:24–25; 144:4; Gn 6:3; Jb 7:6, 16; 14:5; Prv 10:27; Eccl 6:12; Wis 2:5; Sir 18:8; Is 65:20.—h. Ps 17:15.—i. Nm 14:34; Jer 31:13.—j. Ps 33:22.—a. Ps 18:3; 31:3–4; 42:10; 142:6; 2 Sm 22:3.—b. Ps 17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 63:8; Dt 32:11; Ru 2:12; Mt 23:37.—c. Prv 3:25; Sg 3:8.—d. Dt 32:24.—e. Ps 92:12.—f. Prv 12:21; Dt 7:15.—g. 11–12: Mt 4:6; Lk 4:10f.—h. Heb 1:14.—i. Ps 121:3; Prv 3:23.—j. Is 11:8; Lk 10:19.—k. Ps 9:11; 119:132.—l. Jer 33:3; Zec 13:9.—m. Is 43:2.

*

to a complaint contrasting God's eternity with the brevity of human life (Ps 90:2–6) and sees in human suffering the punishment for sin (Ps 90:7–12). The Psalm concludes with a plea for God's intervention (Ps 90:13–17).

90:3 *Dust*: one word of God is enough to return mortals to the dust from which they were created. Human beings were created from earth in Gn 2:7; 3:19.

90:5 *You wash them away*: the Hebrew of Ps 90:4–5 is unclear.

90:6 *It is wilted and withered*: the transitory nature of the grass under the scorching sun was proverbial, cf. Ps 129:6; Is 40:6–8.

Psalm 91 A prayer of someone who has taken refuge in the Lord, possibly within the Temple (Ps 91:1–2). The psalmist is confident that God's presence will protect the people in every dangerous situation (Ps 91:3–13). The final verses are an oracle of salvation promising salvation to those who trust in God (Ps 91:14–16).

91:1 *The shelter of the Most High*: basically "hiding place" but in the Psalms a designation for the protected Temple precincts, cf. Ps 27:5; 31:21; 61:5. *The shade of the Almighty*: lit., "the shadow of the wings of the Almighty"; cf. Ps 17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 63:8. Ps 91:4 makes clear that the shadow is an image of the safety afforded by the outstretched wings of the cherubim in the holy of holies.

91:11–12 The words are cited in Lk 4:10–11; Mt 4:6, as Satan tempts Jesus in the desert.

exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations.*

The Birth of Jesus.* 18 Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,* but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. 19 Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,* yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. 20^f Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord* appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. 21 She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,* because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

23^k "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means "God is with us." 24 When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. 25 He had no relations with her until she bore a son,* and he named him Jesus.^l

CHAPTER 2

The Visit of the Magi.* 1 When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,* behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star* at its rising and have come to do him homage."^a 3 When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.* 5^b They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

6 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

7 Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." 9 After their audience with the king

section of the genealogy (vv. 6b–11), three kings of Judah, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, have been omitted (see 1 Chr 3:11–12), so that there are fourteen generations in that section. Yet the third (vv. 12–16) apparently has only thirteen. Since Matthew here emphasizes that each section has fourteen, it is unlikely that the thirteen of the last was due to his oversight. Some scholars suggest that *Jesus who is called the Messiah* (v. 16b) doubles the final member of the chain: *Jesus*, born within the family of David, opens up the new age as *Messiah*, so that in fact there are fourteen generations in the third section. This is perhaps too subtle, and the hypothesis of a slip not on the part of Matthew but of a later scribe seems likely. On *Messiah*, see note on Lk 2:11.

1:18–25 This first story of the infancy narrative spells out what is summarily indicated in v. 16. The virginal conception of Jesus is the work of the Spirit of God. Joseph's decision to divorce Mary is overcome by the heavenly command that he take her into his home and accept the child as his own. The natural genealogical line is broken but the promises to David are fulfilled; through Joseph's adoption the child belongs to the family of David. Matthew sees the virginal conception as the fulfillment of Is 7:14.

1:18 *Betrothed to Joseph:* betrothal was the first part of the marriage, constituting a man and woman as husband and wife. Subsequent infidelity was considered adultery. The betrothal was followed some months later by the husband's taking his wife into his home, at which time normal married life began.

1:19 *A righteous man:* as a devout observer of the Mosaic law, Joseph wished to break his union with someone whom he suspected of gross violation of the law. It is commonly said that the law required him to do so, but the texts usually given in support of that view, e.g., Dt 22:20–21 do not clearly pertain to Joseph's situation. *Unwilling to expose her to shame:* the penalty for proved adultery was death by stoning; cf. Dt 22:21–23.

1:20 *The angel of the Lord:* in the Old Testament a common designation of God in communication with a human being. *In a dream:* see Mt 2:13, 19, 22. These dreams may be meant to recall the dreams of Joseph, son of Jacob the patriarch (Gn 37:5–11; 19). A closer parallel is the dream of Amram, father of Moses, related by Josephus (*Antiquities* 2:212, 215–16).

1:21 *Jesus:* in first-century Judaism the Hebrew name Joshua (Greek *Iêsous*) meaning "Yahweh helps" was interpreted as "Yahweh saves."

1:23 *God is with us:* God's promise of deliverance to Judah in Isaiah's time is seen by Matthew as fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, in whom God is with his people. The name Emmanuel is alluded to at the end of the gospel where the risen Jesus assures his disciples of his continued presence, "... I am with you always, until the end of the age" (28:20).

1:25 *Until she bore a son:* the evangelist is concerned to emphasize that Joseph was not responsible for the conception of Jesus. The Greek word translated "until" does not imply normal marital conduct after Jesus' birth, nor does it exclude it.

2:1–12 The future rejection of Jesus by Israel and his acceptance by the Gentiles are retrojected into this scene of the narrative.

2:1 *In the days of King Herod:* Herod reigned from 37 to 4 B.C. *Magi:* originally a designation of the Persian priestly caste, the word became used of those who were regarded as having more than human knowledge. Matthew's magi are astrologers.

2:2 *We saw his star:* it was a common ancient belief that a new star appeared at the time of a ruler's birth. Matthew also draws upon the Old Testament story of Balaam, who had prophesied that "A star shall advance from Jacob" (Nm 24:17), though there the star means not an astral phenomenon but the king himself.

2:4 Herod's consultation with the chief priests and scribes has some similarity to a Jewish legend about the child Moses in which the "sacred scribes" warn Pharaoh about the imminent birth of one who will deliver Israel from Egypt and the king makes plans to destroy him.

j. 2:13, 19; Lk 1:35.—k. Is 7:14 LXX.—l. Lk 2:7.—a. Nm 24:17.—b. 5–6: Mt 5:1; 2 Sm 5:2.

1:17 Matthew is concerned with fourteen generations, probably because fourteen is the numerical value of the Hebrew letters forming the name of David. In the second

they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. **10** They were overjoyed at seeing the star, **11** * and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. **12** And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

The Flight to Egypt. 13 * When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt,* and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." **14** Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. **15** * He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet ^d might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

The Massacre of the Infants. 16 When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi. **17** Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jeremiah the prophet:

18 * ^e "A voice was heard in Ramah,
sobbing and loud lamentation;
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she would not be consoled,
since they were no more."

The Return from Egypt. 19 When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt **20** and said, ^f "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." * **21** He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod,* he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. **23** * ^g He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazorean."

II. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM

CHAPTER 3

The Preaching of John the Baptist. * ^a **1** In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea* **2** [and] saying, "Repent,* for the kingdom of heaven

c. Ps 72:10–11, 15; Is 60:6.—d. Hos 11:1.—e. Jer 31:15.—f. Ex 4:19.—g. 13:54; Mk 1:9; Lk 2:39; 4:34; Jer 19:19.—a. 1–12: Mk 1:2–8; Lk 3:2–17.

*

2:11 Cf. Ps 72:10, 15; Is 60:6. These Old Testament texts led to the interpretation of the magi as kings.

2:13–23 Biblical and nonbiblical traditions about Moses are here applied to the child Jesus, though the dominant Old Testament type is not Moses but Israel (v. 15).

2:13 *Flee to Egypt*: Egypt was a traditional place of refuge for those fleeing from danger in Palestine (see 1 Kgs 11:40; Jer 26:21), but the main reason why the child is to be taken to Egypt is that he may relive the Exodus experience of Israel.

2:15 The fulfillment citation is taken from Hos 11:1. Israel, God's son, was called out of Egypt at the time of the Exodus; Jesus, the Son of God, will similarly be called out of that land in a new exodus. The father-son relationship between God and the nation is set in a higher key. Here the son is not a group adopted as "son of God," but the child who, as conceived by the holy Spirit, stands in unique relation to God. He is son of David and of Abraham, of Mary and of Joseph, but, above all, of God.

2:18 Jer 31:15 portrays Rachel, wife of the patriarch Jacob, weeping for her children taken into exile at the time of the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom (722–21 B.C.). Bethlehem was traditionally identified with Ephrath, the place near which Rachel was buried (see Gn 35:19; 48:7), and the mourning of Rachel is here applied to her lost children of a later age. *Ramah*: about six miles north of Jerusalem. The lamentation of Rachel is so great as to be heard at a far distance.

2:20 *For those who sought the child's life are dead*: Moses, who had fled from Egypt because the Pharaoh sought to kill him (see Ex 2:15), was told to return there, "for all the men who sought your life are dead" (Ex 4:19).

2:22 With the agreement of the emperor Augustus, Archelaus received half of his father's kingdom, including Judea, after Herod's death. He had the title "ethnarch" (i.e., "ruler of a nation") and reigned from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6.

2:23 *Nazareth . . . he shall be called a Nazorean*: the tradition of Jesus' residence in Nazareth was firmly established, and Matthew sees it as being in accordance with the foreannounced plan of God. The town of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and no such prophecy can be found there. The vague expression "through the prophets" may be due to Matthew's seeing a connection between Nazareth and certain texts in which there are words with a remote similarity to the name of that town. Some such Old Testament texts are Is 11:1 where the Davidic king of the future is called "a bud" (*nēser*) that shall blossom from the roots of Jesse, and Jgs 13:5, 7 where Samson, the future deliverer of Israel from the Philistines, is called one who shall be consecrated (a *nāzir*) to God.

3:1–12 Here Matthew takes up the order of Jesus' ministry found in the gospel of Mark, beginning with the preparatory preaching of John the Baptist.

3:1 Unlike Luke, Matthew says nothing of the Baptist's origins and does not make him a relative of Jesus. *The desert of Judea*: the barren region west of the Dead Sea extending up the Jordan valley.

3:2 *Repent*: the Baptist calls for a change of heart and conduct, a turning of one's life from rebellion to obedience towards God. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*: "heaven" (lit., "the heavens") is a substitute for the name "God" that was avoided by devout Jews of the time out of reverence. The expression "the kingdom of heaven" occurs only in the gospel of Matthew. It means the effective rule of God over his people. In its fullness it includes not only human obedience to God's word, but the triumph of God over physical evils, supremely over death. In the expectation found in Jewish apocalyptic, the kingdom was to be ushered in by a judgment in which sinners would be condemned and perish, an expectation shared by the Baptist. This was modified in Christian understanding where the kingdom was seen as being established in stages, culminating with the parousia of Jesus.

THE TWELVE TRIBES

- City of Refuge
- ▣ Levitical city
- Capital city
- Other city

A ? following the name indicates a place's location is uncertain.



1

MINISTRY OF JESUS

- A** — Certain or likely site
 - - - Possible site
 — International transportation route
 — Regional route

A ? following the name indicates a place's location is uncertain.

B

Jesus turns water to wine; heals Capernaum official's son.

Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, centurion's servant, and many others; raises Jairus's daughter; delivers Bread of Life discourse.

Jesus heals Syrophenician woman's daughter.

Peter's Great Confession

Sermon on the Mount

Jesus feeds the multitudes.

Jesus heals blind man.

Jesus casts out demons.

Jesus walks on water; quiets the storm.

Temptation in the wilderness

Jesus raises widow's son.

Jesus heals many.

Jesus meets woman at well of Samaria.

Crucifixion and resurrection

Jesus heals many; discourses with Nicodemus.

Last Supper

Ascension

Jesus heals Bartimaeus; converts Zacchaeus.

Baptism

Jesus raises Lazarus.

John the Baptist imprisoned

Birthplace

Jesus appears before two after resurrection.

E

D

C

B

A

1

2

3

0 10 20 30 Miles
 0 10 20 30 Kilometers

© 1990 World Bible Publishers, Inc.

