

THE WRITINGS

# THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

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# THE DRAMA OF THE BIBLE IN SIX ACTS

The Bible is a collection of letters, poems, stories, visions, prophetic oracles, wisdom and other kinds of writing. The first step to good Bible reading and understanding is to engage these collected works as the different kinds of writing that they are, and to read them as whole books. We encourage you to read big, to not merely take in little fragments of the Bible. The introductions at the start of each book will help you to do this.

But it is also important not to view the Bible as a gathering of unrelated writings. Overall, the Bible is a narrative. These books come together to tell God's true story and his plan to set the world right again. This story of the Bible falls naturally into six key major acts, which are briefly summarized below.

“I had always  
felt life first as a story:  
and if there is a story,  
there is a story-teller.”

G. K. Chesterton

But even more precisely, we can say the story of the Bible is a drama. The key to a drama is that it has to be acted out, performed, lived. It can't remain as only words on a page. A drama is an activated story. The Bible was written so we could enter into its story. It is meant to be lived.

All of us, without exception, live our lives as a drama. We are on stage every single day. What will we say? What will we do? According to which story will we live? If we are not answering these

questions with the biblical script, we will follow another. We can't avoid living by someone's stage instructions, even if merely our own.

This is why another key to engaging the Bible well is to recognize that its story has not ended. God's saving action continues. We are all invited to take up our own roles in this ongoing story of redemption and new creation. So, welcome to the drama of the Bible. Welcome to the story of how God intends to renew your life, and the life of the world. God himself is calling you to engage with his word.

## ACT 1: GOD'S INTENTION



The drama begins (in the first pages of the book of Genesis) with God already on the stage creating a world. He makes a man and a woman, Adam and Eve, and places them in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. The earth is created to be their home. God's intention is for humanity to

be in close, trusting relationship with him and in harmony with the rest of creation that surrounds them.

In a startling passage, the Bible tells us that human beings are God's image-bearers, created to share in the task of bringing God's wise and beneficial rule to the rest of the world. Male and female together, we are significant, decision-making, world-shaping beings. This is our vocation, our purpose as defined in the biblical story.

An equally remarkable part of Act 1 is the description of God as coming into the garden to be with the first human beings. Not only is the earth the God-intended place for humanity, God himself comes to make the beautiful new creation his home as well.

God then gives his own assessment of the whole creation: *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good*. Act 1 reveals God's original desire for the world. It shows us that life itself is a gift from the Creator. It tells us what we were made for and provides the setting for all the action that follows.

## ACT 2: EXILE



Tension and conflict are introduced to the story when Adam and Eve decide to go their own way and seek their own wisdom. They listen to the deceptive voice of God's enemy, Satan, and doubt God's trustworthiness. They decide to live apart from the word that God himself has given them. They decide to be a law to themselves.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve—the introduction of sin into our world—is presented in the Bible as having devastating consequences. Humans were created for healthy, life-giving relationship: with God, with each other, and with the rest of creation. But now humanity must live with the fracturing of all these relations and with the resulting shame, brokenness, pain, loneliness—and death.

Heaven and earth—God's realm and our realm—were intended to be united. God's desire from the beginning was clearly to live with us in the world he made. But now God is hidden. Now it is possible to be in our world and not know him, not experience his presence, not follow his ways, not live in gratitude.

As a result of this rebellion, the first exile in the story takes place. The humans are driven away from God's presence. Their offspring throughout history will seek to find their way back to the source of life. They will devise any number of philosophies and religions, trying to make sense of a fallen, yet haunting world. But death now stalks them, and they will find that they cannot escape it. Having attempted to live apart from God and his good word, humans will find they have neither God nor life.

New questions arise in the drama: Can the curse on creation be overcome and the relationship between God and humanity restored? Can heaven and earth be reunited? Or did God's enemy effectively end the plan and subvert the story?

## ACT 3: CALLING ISRAEL TO A MISSION



We see the direction of God's redemptive plan when he calls Abraham, promising to make him into a great nation. God narrows his focus and concentrates on one group of people. But the ultimate goal remains the same: to bless all the peoples on earth and remove the curse from creation.

When Abraham's descendants are enslaved in Egypt, a central pattern in the story is set: God hears their cries for help and comes to set them free. God makes a covenant with this new nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai. Israel is called by God to be a light to the nations, showing the world what it means to follow God's ways for living. If they will do this, he will bless them in their new land and will come to live with them.

However, God also warns them that if they are not faithful to the covenant, he will send them away, just as he did with Adam and Eve. In spite of God's repeated warnings through his prophets, Israel seems determined to break the covenant. So God abandons the holy temple—the sign of his presence with his people—and it is smashed by pagan invaders. Israel's capital city Jerusalem is sacked and burned.

Abraham's descendants, chosen to reverse the failure of Adam, have now apparently also failed. The problem this poses in the biblical story is profound. Israel, sent as the divine answer to Adam's fall, cannot escape Adam's sin. God, however, remains committed to his people and his plan, so he sows the seed of a different outcome. He promises to send a new king, a descendant of Israel's great King David, who will lead the nation back to its destiny. The very prophets who warned Israel of the dire consequences of its wrongdoing also pledge that the good news of God's victory will be heard in Israel once again.

Act 3 ends tragically, with God apparently absent and the pagan nations ruling over Israel. But the hope of a promise remains. There is one true God. He has chosen Israel. He will return to his people to live with them again. He will bring justice, peace and healing to Israel, and then to the world. He will do this in a final and climactic way. God will send his anointed one—the Messiah. He has given his word on this.

## ACT 4: THE SURPRISING VICTORY OF JESUS



"He is the god made manifest . . . the universal savior of human life." These words, referring to Caesar Augustus (found in a Roman inscription from 4 BC in Ephesus), proclaim the gospel of the Roman Empire. This version of the good news announces that Caesar is the lord who brings peace and prosperity to the world.

Into this empire a son of David is born, and he announces the gospel of God's kingdom. Jesus of Nazareth brings the good news of the coming of God's reign. He begins to show what God's new creation looks like. He announces the end of Israel's exile and the forgiveness of sins. He heals the sick and raises the dead. He overcomes the dark spiritual powers. He

welcomes sinners and those considered unclean. Jesus renews the nation, rebuilding the twelve tribes of Israel around himself in a symbolic way.

But the established religious leaders are threatened by Jesus and his kingdom, so they have him brought before the Roman governor. During the very week that the Jews were remembering and celebrating Passover—God’s ancient rescue of his people from slavery in Egypt—the Romans nail Jesus to a cross and kill him as a false king.

But the Bible claims that this defeat is actually God’s greatest victory. How? Jesus willingly gives up his life as a sacrifice on behalf of the nation, on behalf of the world. Jesus takes onto himself the full force of evil and empties it of its power. In this surprising way, Jesus fights and wins Israel’s ultimate battle. The real enemy was never Rome, but the spiritual powers that lie behind Rome and every other kingdom whose weapon is death. Through his blood Jesus pays the price and reconciles everything in heaven and on earth to God.

God then publicly declares this victory by reversing Jesus’ death sentence and raising him back to life. The resurrection of Israel’s king shows that the great enemies of God’s creation—sin and death—really have been defeated. The resurrection is the great sign that the new creation has begun.

Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel’s story and a new start for the entire human race. Death came through the first man, Adam. The resurrection of the dead comes through the new man, Jesus. God’s original intention is being reclaimed.

## ACT 5: THE RENEWED PEOPLE OF GOD



If the key victory has already been secured, why is there an Act 5? The answer is that God wants the victory of Jesus to spread to all the nations of the world. The risen Jesus says to his disciples, *“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”* So this new act in the drama tells the story of how the earliest followers of Jesus began to spread the good news of God’s reign.

According to the New Testament, all those who belong to Israel’s Messiah are children of Abraham, heirs of both the ancient promises and the ancient mission. The task of bringing blessing to the peoples of the world has been given again to Abraham’s family. Their mission is to live out the liberating message of the good news of God’s kingdom.

God is gathering people from all around the world and forming them into assemblies of Jesus-followers—his church. Together they are God’s new temple, the place where his Spirit lives. They are the community of those who have pledged their allegiance to Jesus as the true Lord of the world. They have crossed from death into new life, through the power of God’s Spirit. They demonstrate God’s love across the usual boundaries of race, class, tribe and nation.

Forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God can now be announced to all. Following in the steps of Jesus, his followers proclaim this gospel in both word and deed. The power of this new, God-given life breaking into the world is meant to be shown by the real-world actions of the Christian community. But the message also has a warning. When the Messiah returns, he will come as the rightful judge of the world.

The Bible is the story of the central struggle weaving its way through the history of the world. And now the story arrives at our own time, enveloping us in its drama.

So the challenge of a decision confronts us. What will we do? How will we

fit into this story? What role will we play? God is inviting us to be a part of his mission of re-creation—of bringing restoration, justice and forgiveness. We are to join in the task of making things new, to be a living sign of what is to come when the drama is complete.

## ACT 6: GOD COMES HOME



God's future has come into our world through the work of Jesus the Messiah. But for now, the present evil age also continues. Brokenness, wrongdoing, sickness and even death remain. We live in the time of the overlap of the ages, the time of in-between. The final Act is coming, but it has not yet arrived.

We live in the time of invitation, when the call of the gospel goes out to every creature. Of course, many still live as though God doesn't exist. They do not acknowledge the rule of the Messiah. But the day is coming when Jesus will return to earth and the reign of God will become an uncontested reality throughout the world.

God's presence will be fully and openly with us once again, as it was at the beginning of the drama. God's plan of redemption will reach its goal. The creation will experience its own Exodus, finding freedom from its bondage to decay. Pain and tears, regret and shame, suffering and death will be no more.

When the day of resurrection arrives God's people will find that their hope has been realized. The dynamic force of an indestructible life will course through their bodies. Empowered by the Spirit, and unhindered by sin and death, we will pursue our original vocation as a renewed humanity. We will be culture makers, under God but over the world. Having been remade in the image of Christ, we will share in bringing his wise, caring rule to the earth.

At the center of it all will be God himself. He will return and make his home with us, this time in a new heavens and a new earth. We, along with the rest of creation, will worship him perfectly and fulfill our true calling. God will be all in all, and the whole world will be full of his glory.

## WHAT NOW?

The preceding overview of the drama of the Bible is meant to give you a framework so you can begin to read the books that make up the story. The summary we've provided is merely an invitation for you to engage the sacred books themselves.

Many people today follow the practice of reading only small, fragmentary snippets of the Bible—verses—and often in isolation from the books of which they are a part. This does not lead to good Bible understanding. We encourage you instead to take in whole books, the way their authors wrote them. This is really the only way to gain deep insight to the Scriptures.

Go deep  
and read big.

The more you immerse yourself in the script of this drama, the better you will be able to find your own place in the story. The following page, called *Living the Script*, will help you with practical next steps for taking up your role in the Bible's drama of renewal.

# LIVING THE SCRIPT

From the beginning God made it clear that he intends for us to be significant players in his drama. No doubt, it is first and foremost God's story. But we can't passively sit back and just watch what happens. At every stage he invites humans to participate with him.

Here are three key steps to finding your place in the drama:

## 1. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE BIBLE

If we are unfamiliar with the text of the drama itself, there's no chance of living our parts well. Only when we read both deeply and widely in the Bible, marinating in it and letting it soak into our lives, will we be prepared to effectively take up our roles. The more we read the Bible, the better readers we will become. Rather than skimming the surface, we will become skilled at interpreting and practicing what we read.

## 2. COMMIT TO FOLLOW JESUS

We've all taken part in the brokenness and wrongdoing that came into the story in Act 2. The victory of Jesus in Act 4 now offers us the opportunity to have our lives turned around. Our sins can be forgiven. We can become part of God's story of new creation.

Turn away from your wrongdoing. God has acted through the death and resurrection of the Messiah to deal decisively with evil—in your life and in the life of the world. His death was a sacrifice, and his resurrection a new beginning. Acknowledge that Jesus is the rightful ruler of the world, and commit to follow him and join with God's people.

## 3. LIVE YOUR PART

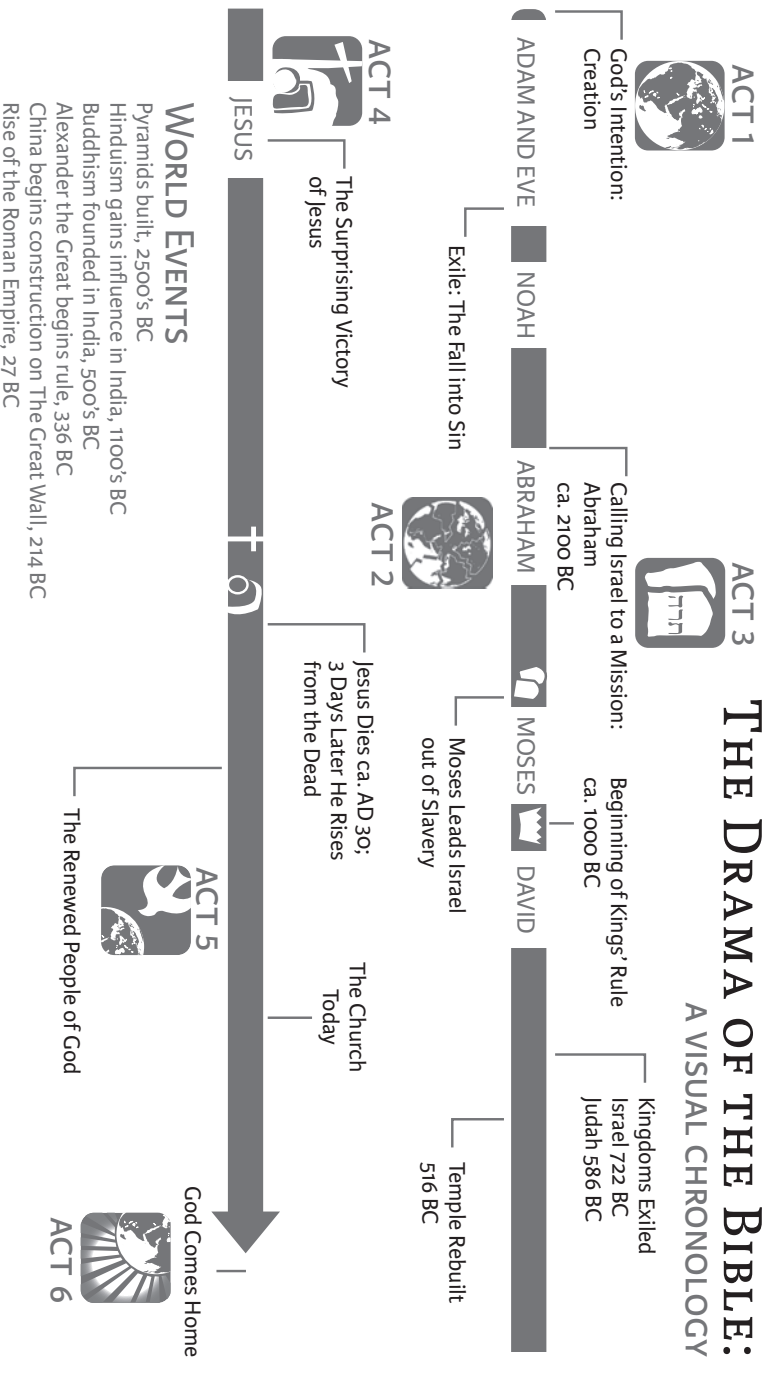
Followers of Jesus are gospel players in local communities living out the biblical drama together. But we do not have an exact script for our lines and actions in the drama today. Our history has not yet been written. And we can't just repeat lines from earlier acts in the drama. So what do we do?

We read the Bible to understand what God has already done, especially through Jesus the Messiah, and to know how we carry this story forward. The Bible helps us answer the key question about everything we say and do: Is this an appropriate and fitting way to live out the story of Jesus today? This is how we put the Scriptures into action. Life's choices can be messy, but God has given us his word and promised us his Spirit to guide us on the way. You are God's artwork, created to do good works. May your life be a gift of beauty back to him.



# THE DRAMA OF THE BIBLE:

## A VISUAL CHRONOLOGY



A GUIDE TO

# THE BOOKS OF OF THE WRITINGS

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## PREFACE TO THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible isn't a single book. It's a collection of many books that were written, preserved and gathered together so that they could be shared with new generations of readers. Reading, of course, is not an end in itself. Especially in the case of the Bible, reading is a means of entering into the story. Overall, the Bible is an invitation to the reader first to view the world in a new way, and then to become an agent of the world's renewal. Reading is a step in this journey. *The Books of the Bible* is intended to help readers have a more meaningful encounter with the sacred writings and to read with more understanding, so they can take their places more readily within this story of new creation.

Just as the Bible is not a single book, the Bible is more than bare words. Those who wrote its books chose to put them in particular forms, using the literary conventions appropriate to those forms. Many different kinds of writing are found in the Bible: poetry, narrative, wisdom collections, letters, law codes, apocalyptic visions and more. All of these forms must be read as the literature they really are, or else misunderstanding and distortion of meaning are bound to follow. In order to engage the text on its own terms, good readers will honor the agreement between themselves and the biblical writers implied by the choices of particular forms. Good readers will respect the conventions of these forms. In other words, they'll read poetry as poetry, songs as songs, stories as stories, and so forth.

Unfortunately, for some time now the Bible has been printed in a format that hides its literary forms under a mask of numbers. These break the text into bits and sections that the authors never intended. And so *The Books of the Bible* seeks instead to present the books in their distinctive literary forms and structures. It draws on the key insight that visual presentation can be a crucial aid to right reading, good understanding and a better engagement with the Bible.

Specifically, this edition of the Bible differs from the most common current format in several significant ways:

- : chapter and verse numbers have been removed from the text;
- : the books are presented instead according to the internal divisions that we believe their authors have indicated;
- : a single-column setting is used to present the text more clearly and naturally, and to avoid disrupting the intended line breaks in poetry;
- : footnotes, section headings and any other additional materials have been removed from the pages of the sacred text;

- : individual books that later tradition divided into two or more parts are put back together again; and
- : the books have been placed in an order that we hope will help readers understand them better.

Why have we made these changes? First of all, the chapters and verses in the Bible weren't put there by the original authors. The present system of chapter divisions was devised in the thirteenth century, and our present verse divisions weren't added until the sixteenth. Chapters and verses have imposed a foreign structure on the Bible and made it more difficult to read with understanding. Chapter divisions typically don't correspond with the actual divisions of thought. They require readers to make sense of only part of a longer discussion as if it were complete in itself, or else to try to combine two separate discussions into one coherent whole. Moreover, because the Bible's chapters are all roughly the same length, they can at best only indicate sections of a certain size. This hides the existence of both larger and smaller units of thought within biblical books.

When verses are treated as intentional units (as their numbering suggests they should be), they encourage the Bible to be read as a giant reference book, perhaps as a collection of rules or as a series of propositions. Also, when "Bible verses" are treated as independent and free-standing statements, they can be taken selectively out of context and arranged in such a way as to suggest that the Bible supports beliefs and positions that it really doesn't.

It is true that chapter and verse numbers allow ease of reference. But finding passages at this speed may be a dubious benefit since this can encourage ignoring the text *around* the sought out citation. In order to encourage greater understanding and more responsible use of the Bible, we've removed chapter and verse numberings from the text entirely. (A chapter-and-verse range is included at the bottom of each page.)

Because the biblical books were handwritten, read out loud and then hand-copied long before standardized printing, their authors and compilers needed a way to indicate divisions within the text itself. They often did this by repeating a phrase or expression each time they made a transition from one section to another. We can confirm that particular phrases are significant in this way by observing how their placement reinforces a structure that can already be recognized implicitly from other characteristics of a book, such as changes in topic, movement in place or time, or shifts from one kind of writing to another. Through line spacing, we've marked off sections of varying sizes. The smallest are indicated by one blank line, the next largest by two lines, and so on, up to four-line breaks in the largest books. We've also indicated key divisions with a large initial capital letter of new sections. Our goal is to encourage meaningful units to be read in their entirety and so with greater appreciation and understanding.

Footnotes, section headings and other supplemental materials have been removed from the page in order to give readers a more direct and immediate experience of the word of God. At the beginning of each biblical book we've included an invitation to that particular writing with background information on why it was written and how we understand it to be put together. Beyond this, we encourage readers to study the Bible in community. We believe that

if they do, they and their teachers, leaders and peers will provide one another with much more information and many more insights than could ever be included in notes added by publishers.

The books of the Bible were written or recorded individually. When they were gathered together, they were placed into a variety of orders. Unfortunately, the order in which today's readers typically encounter these books is yet another factor that hinders their understanding. Paul's letters, for example, have been put in order of length. They are badly out of historical order, and this makes it difficult to read them with an appreciation for where they fit in the course of his life or how they express the development of his thought. The traditional order of the biblical books can also encourage misunderstandings of what kind of writing a particular work is. For example, the book of James has strong affinities with other biblical books in the wisdom tradition. But it's typically placed within a group of letters, suggesting that it, too, should be read as a letter. To help readers overcome such difficulties, we've sought to order the books so that their literary types, their circumstances of composition and the theological traditions they reflect will be evident. Our introductions to each of the different parts of the Bible will explain how we have ordered the books in these sections, and why.

Just as the work of Bible translation is never finished, the work of formatting the Bible on the principles described here will never be completed. Advances in the literary interpretation of the biblical books will undoubtedly enable the work we've begun here to be extended and improved in the years ahead. Yet the need to help readers overcome the many obstacles inherent in the Bible's current format is urgent, so we humbly offer the results of our work to those seeking an improved visual presentation of its sacred books.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of many lay people, clergy, scholars and people engaged in active Scripture outreach who've reviewed our work. They've shared their considerable knowledge and expertise with us and continue to provide valuable insights and guidance. However, final responsibility for all of the decisions in this format rests with us. We trust that readers will gain a deeper appreciation for, and a greater understanding of, these sacred texts. Our hope and prayer is that their engagement with *The Books of the Bible* will enable them to take up their own roles in God's great drama of redemption.

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Colorado Springs, Colorado  
March 2011

## INVITATION TO THE WRITINGS

The Writings are the third major division of the First Testament. They represent a much looser grouping than those in the first and second divisions. They've been drawn together from a wider range of traditions, genres (types of literature), and time periods. They're presented here grouped by genre, so that each work can be read meaningfully alongside other examples of the same kind of literature.

: Three of the books in the Writings are collections of song lyrics. These songs were composed over the course of many centuries. Psalms contains nearly 150 worship songs that were written for individual or community use over a period of some 700 years, from the time of Moses up to the time when the Jerusalem temple was rebuilt. Lamentations is a small collection of five songs that all mourn the destruction of Jerusalem. Song of Songs contains half a dozen wedding songs that could have been used for years in marriage celebrations before being gathered together.

: The Writings also contain several books from the “wisdom” tradition. This was a school of thought that flourished in Israel and in other countries of the ancient Near East. In Israel this tradition claimed that wisdom ultimately came from the Lord. Even when human ability and skill were involved, these were really means of discerning the order God himself had placed in the creation. Wisdom came from finding the right way to live in God's world. So for Israel's writers, the acknowledgment of God was the first step of the truly wise. The wisdom teachers loved to formulate and collect “proverbs”—pithy sayings that expressed vital truths about life in a compact and striking way. King Solomon was one of the most outstanding of these teachers. Two collections of his sayings, one likely recorded in his lifetime and the other a couple of centuries later, constitute the bulk of the book of Proverbs. Solomon may also be the author of Ecclesiastes, a book that weaves short reflections together with autobiographical musings to provide a perspective on life that complements the one in Proverbs. Wisdom teachers also cast their reflections in the form of dialogues between people who take turns making poetic speeches. The book of Job provides an example of this type of wisdom literature.

: The two historical books among the Writings were created, like the Psalms, within the worship experience of the community. Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah is a sprawling history that runs all the way from the beginning of the human race to the Judeans’ return from exile. Its central concern, however, is with how God chose Jerusalem as the place where he’d be worshiped. It describes how a temple was built there, how it was destroyed, and how it was rebuilt as a place where people of all nations could come to seek the true God. The book of Esther is much shorter and more narrowly focused. It explains why a new worship festival, Purim, was added to the ones Moses commanded the people to observe. But in the process, this book offers profound insights into the workings of God’s invisible hand in history and into the calling that each individual has to be part of God’s work.

: The remaining book in the Writings, Daniel, is a combination of two different kinds of literature. It’s half history and half apocalypse. It first tells six stories of how God preserved and protected Daniel and his friends in exile because they remained exclusively devoted to him. The second half of the book describes how, on four occasions, Daniel spoke with angels after praying or seeing a vision. These angels explained God’s purposes for his people in the years to come.

In terms of the overall movement of the Bible, the Writings add depth, texture and color to the drama. While for the most part they are not in narrative form themselves, they reveal that the story is rooted in all the complexities of real life. This group of books thus completes the First Testament by drawing a diverse collection of books into its pages. They review the history of the covenant people and they display the theological and literary riches they possessed since, as one of the psalmists wrote, *God has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel.*

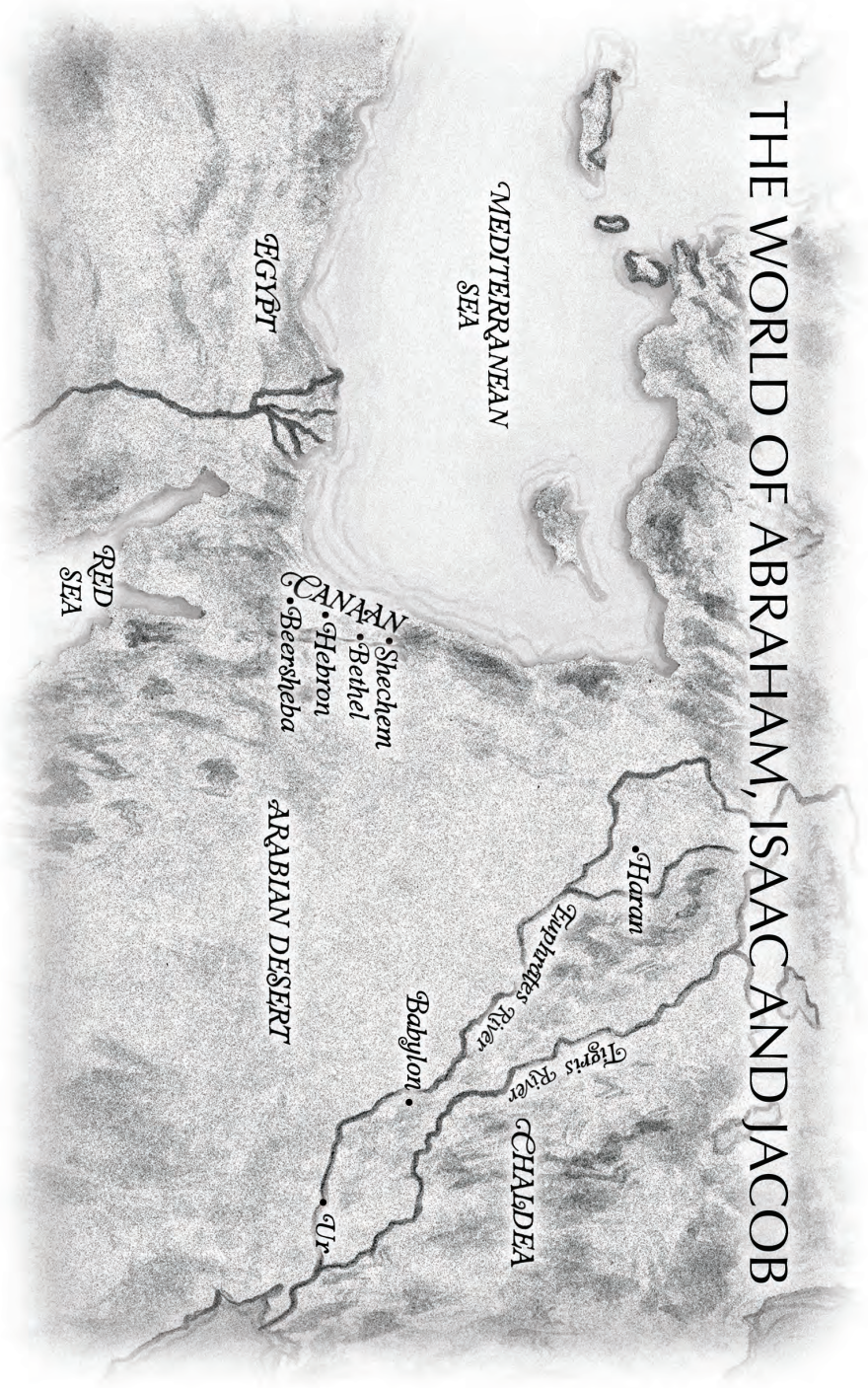




Israel's ancient songs of  
**PRAISE, LAMENT AND WONDER,**  
wise words to craft  
**A GOOD LIFE**  
and ponder  
**LIFE'S DEEPEST CHALLENGES,**  
stories of Israel's  
**TEMPLE AND WORSHIP,**  
the birth of a  
**FESTIVAL,**  
and visions of  
**GOD'S COMING RULE**  
**OVER THE WORLD,**

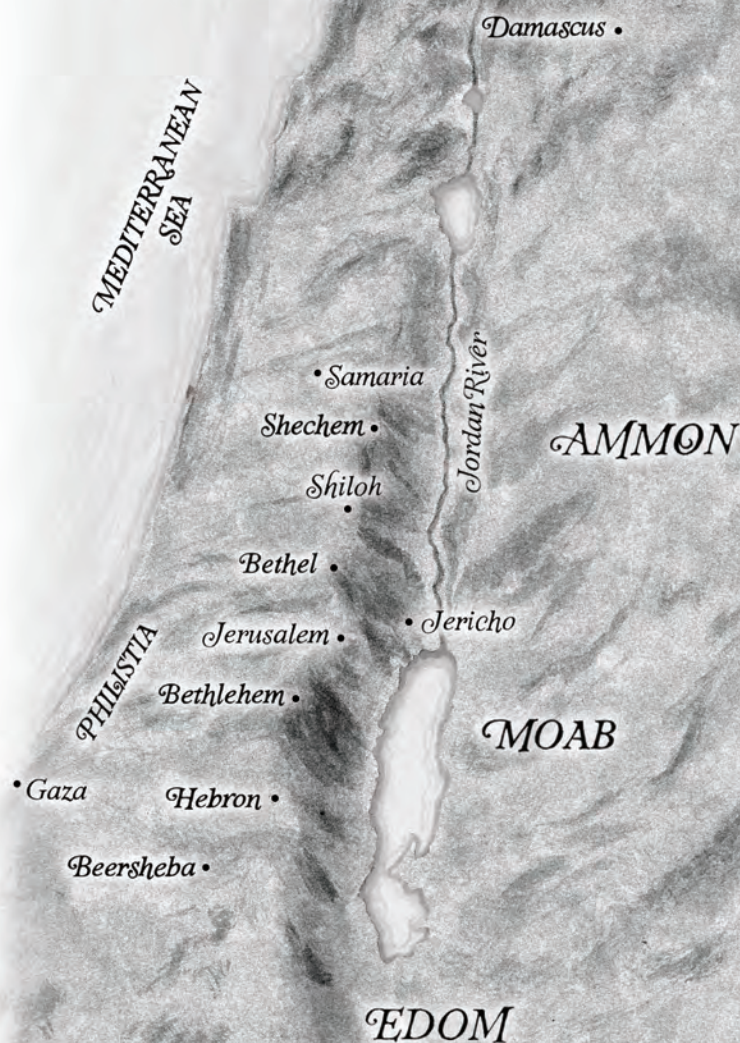
# THE WRITINGS

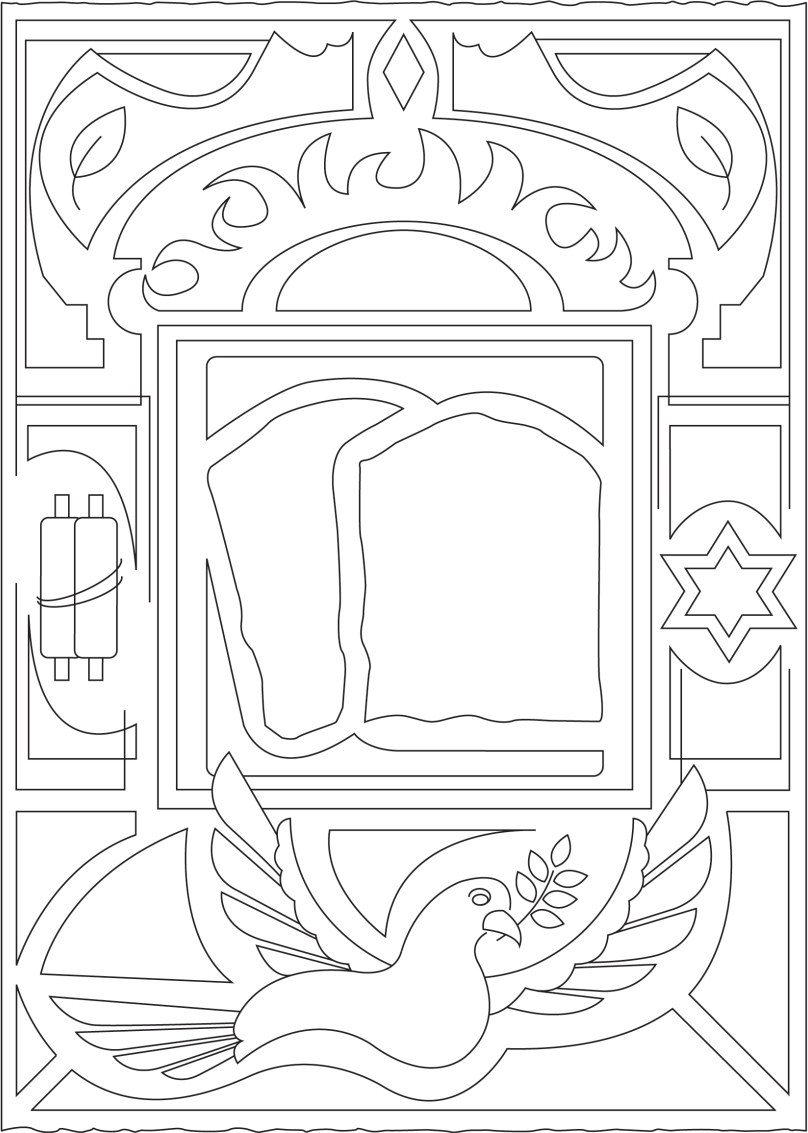
# THE WORLD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB





# THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL and Surrounding Nations





## INVITATION TO PSALMS

The book of Psalms is a collection of poems that were originally set to music. In other words, the psalms are song lyrics. Many of them contain musical notations. Their introductions sometimes include musical instructions and the names of their tunes. Like the songs we know today, they were originally written in response to specific occasions in the lives of the songwriters. (Some of their introductions indicate what these occasions were.) But they were then used in worship at various times by the whole community of believers. After the people of Israel returned from exile in Babylon and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem, many of the songs that had been written and sung over the centuries were collected and used in worship in this second temple. That collection forms the basis of the book of Psalms as we know it today.

This book contains the words to 147 different songs. (They've traditionally been numbered from 1 to 150, but two of them have been split in half, 9–10 and 42–43, while another has been included twice and numbered both 14 and 53.) Because each of the songs is an independent composition, they're all meaningful when read individually. The different psalms describe the broad range of experiences the people of Israel had in their covenant journey with God. They provide a way for us to enter into the story, by reading or singing them, as we live the script of the biblical drama today.

At the same time, the book as a whole has been deliberately structured. This adds a further level of meaning. The collection is divided into five parts by four variations on the formula, *Praise be to the LORD . . . Amen and Amen!* This creates five “books” within the collection. This seems intended to remind the reader of the five “books” that the law of Moses was divided into. The implication is that even though these poems were originally sung in worship, they can also be read and studied for instruction in God's ways. The psalm that comes first in the collection (#1) emphasizes the value of reading them this way. It appears to have been placed there deliberately to make this point. This theme is also stressed at the beginning of book three (in #73) and near the end of the whole collection (in #145).

These five “books,” in their general outlines, also tell a three-part

story. They trace Israel's history in its successive stages: monarchy, exile and return:

: The first two books consist mostly of psalms by David, whom God established as king over Israel and as the head of its royal line. Taken together, these two books begin and end with psalms about God establishing the king on the throne (#2 and #72).

: But the third book then begins with the question of why the wicked prosper (#73) and with a lament over the destruction of Jerusalem (#74). This book ends with a similar complaint that God has abandoned David's line (#89). In other words, book three recalls the situation of exile.

: The fourth book then opens with a reminder that God is the true dwelling place of the people of Israel (#90). The psalms in this section state repeatedly that *the LORD reigns* (#93, 97, 99)—in other words, Israel's true king is still on the throne. This fourth book nevertheless ends with a plea for God to bring the exiled people home (#106).

: The fifth book begins with a declaration that God has indeed brought the exiles back (#107). It includes many "songs of ascents" (#120–134), psalms that were sung by travelers going up to the temple in Jerusalem. This suggests a context in which the people have returned to the land. Therefore, appropriately, this fifth book (and the whole collection) ends with a call to praise God (at the end of #145), followed by five songs of praise (#146–150).

In other words, the very form in which Israel's worship songs have been collected illustrates one foundational reason for its worship: God has been faithful to the nation, judging it by means of exile but then bringing it back home again. And so two principles largely account for the structure and meaning of the book of Psalms when it's read as a whole collection: the call to meditate on these psalms in the same way as on the law of Moses, and the call to remember God's continuing faithfulness in history and then respond with our own continuing praise.

# PSALMS

## BOOK I

*Psalms 1–41*

### Psalm 1

Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that sinners take  
or sit in the company of mockers,  
but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on his law day and night.  
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yields its fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not wither —  
whatever they do prospers.

Not so the wicked!  
They are like chaff  
that the wind blows away.  
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

### Psalm 2

Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,

“Let us break their chains  
and throw off their shackles.”

The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.

He rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

“I have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

I will proclaim the LORD's decree:

He said to me, “You are my son;  
today I have become your father.

Ask me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.

You will break them with a rod of iron;  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear  
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

Kiss his son, or he will be angry  
and your way will lead to your destruction,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

### Psalm 3

*A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.*

LORD, how many are my foes!  
How many rise up against me!

Many are saying of me,  
“God will not deliver him.”

But you, LORD, are a shield around me,  
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

I call out to the LORD,  
and he answers me from his holy mountain.



I lie down and sleep;  
 I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.  
 I will not fear though tens of thousands  
 assail me on every side.

Arise, LORD!  
 Deliver me, my God!  
 Strike all my enemies on the jaw;  
 break the teeth of the wicked.

From the LORD comes deliverance.  
 May your blessing be on your people.

#### Psalm 4

*For the director of music. With stringed instruments.  
 A psalm of David.*

Answer me when I call to you,  
 my righteous God.  
 Give me relief from my distress;  
 have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

How long will you people turn my glory into shame?  
 How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?  
 Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for  
 himself;  
 the LORD hears when I call to him.

Tremble and do not sin;  
 when you are on your beds,  
 search your hearts and be silent.  
 Offer the sacrifices of the righteous  
 and trust in the LORD.

Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?"  
 Let the light of your face shine on us.  
 Fill my heart with joy  
 when their grain and new wine abound.

In peace I will lie down and sleep,  
 for you alone, LORD,  
 make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 5

*For the director of music. For pipes. A psalm of David.*

Listen to my words, LORD,  
consider my lament.

Hear my cry for help,  
my King and my God,  
for to you I pray.

In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;  
in the morning I lay my requests before you  
and wait expectantly.

For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness;  
with you, evil people are not welcome.

The arrogant cannot stand  
in your presence.

You hate all who do wrong;  
you destroy those who tell lies.

The bloodthirsty and deceitful  
you, LORD, detest.

But I, by your great love,  
can come into your house;  
in reverence I bow down  
toward your holy temple.

Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness  
because of my enemies —  
make your way straight before me.

Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;  
their heart is filled with malice.

Their throat is an open grave;  
with their tongues they tell lies.

Declare them guilty, O God!  
Let their intrigues be their downfall.

Banish them for their many sins,  
for they have rebelled against you.

But let all who take refuge in you be glad;  
let them ever sing for joy.

Spread your protection over them,  
that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous;  
you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

### Psalm 6

*For the director of music. With stringed instruments.  
According to sheminith. A psalm of David.*

LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger  
or discipline me in your wrath.  
Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint;  
heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.  
My soul is in deep anguish.  
How long, LORD, how long?

Turn, LORD, and deliver me;  
save me because of your unfailing love.  
Among the dead no one proclaims your name.  
Who praises you from the grave?

I am worn out from my groaning.

All night long I flood my bed with weeping  
and drench my couch with tears.  
My eyes grow weak with sorrow;  
they fail because of all my foes.

Away from me, all you who do evil,  
for the LORD has heard my weeping.  
The LORD has heard my cry for mercy;  
the LORD accepts my prayer.  
All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and  
anguish;  
they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.

### Psalm 7

*A shiggaion of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush,  
a Benjamite.*

LORD my God, I take refuge in you;  
save and deliver me from all who pursue me,  
or they will tear me apart like a lion  
and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

LORD my God, if I have done this  
and there is guilt on my hands —  
if I have repaid my ally with evil  
or without cause have robbed my foe —  
then let my enemy pursue and overtake me;  
let him trample my life to the ground  
and make me sleep in the dust.

Arise, LORD, in your anger;  
rise up against the rage of my enemies.  
Awake, my God; decree justice.

Let the assembled peoples gather around you,  
while you sit enthroned over them on high.  
Let the LORD judge the peoples.

Vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness,  
according to my integrity, O Most High.

Bring to an end the violence of the wicked  
and make the righteous secure —  
you, the righteous God  
who probes minds and hearts.

My shield is God Most High,  
who saves the upright in heart.

God is a righteous judge,  
a God who displays his wrath every day.

If he does not relent,  
he will sharpen his sword;  
he will bend and string his bow.

He has prepared his deadly weapons;  
he makes ready his flaming arrows.

Whoever is pregnant with evil  
conceives trouble and gives birth to disillusionment.

Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out  
falls into the pit they have made.

The trouble they cause recoils on them;  
their violence comes down on their own heads.

I will give thanks to the LORD because of his  
righteousness;  
I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High.

## Psalm 8

*For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David.*

LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory  
in the heavens.

Through the praise of children and infants  
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.

When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the angels  
and crowned them with glory and honor.  
You made them rulers over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under their feet:  
all flocks and herds,  
and the animals of the wild,  
the birds in the sky,  
and the fish in the sea,  
all that swim the paths of the seas.

LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## Psalm 9–10

*For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son."  
A psalm of David.*

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;  
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.  
I will be glad and rejoice in you;  
I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

My enemies turn back;  
they stumble and perish before you.

For you have upheld my right and my cause,  
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.  
You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;  
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.  
Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,  
you have uprooted their cities;  
even the memory of them has perished.

The LORD reigns forever;  
he has established his throne for judgment.  
He rules the world in righteousness  
and judges the peoples with equity.  
The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,  
a stronghold in times of trouble.  
Those who know your name trust in you,  
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion;  
proclaim among the nations what he has done.  
For he who avenges blood remembers;  
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!  
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,  
that I may declare your praises  
in the gates of Daughter Zion,  
and there rejoice in your salvation.

The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;  
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.  
The LORD is known by his acts of justice;  
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.  
The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,  
all the nations that forget God.  
But God will never forget the needy;  
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.

Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;  
let the nations be judged in your presence.  
Strike them with terror, LORD;  
let the nations know they are only mortal.

Why, LORD, do you stand far off?  
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,  
who are caught in the schemes he devises.

He boasts about the cravings of his heart;  
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.

In his pride the wicked man does not seek him;  
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

His ways are always prosperous;  
your laws are rejected by him;  
he sneers at all his enemies.

He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me."  
He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."

His mouth is full of lies and threats;  
trouble and evil are under his tongue.

He lies in wait near the villages;  
from ambush he murders the innocent.

His eyes watch in secret for his victims;  
like a lion in cover he lies in wait.

He lies in wait to catch the helpless;  
he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.

His victims are crushed, they collapse;  
they fall under his strength.

He says to himself, "God will never notice;  
he covers his face and never sees."

Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God.  
Do not forget the helpless.

Why does the wicked man revile God?  
Why does he say to himself,  
"He won't call me to account"?

But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;  
you consider their grief and take it in hand.

The victims commit themselves to you;  
you are the helper of the fatherless.

Break the arm of the wicked man;  
call the evildoer to account for his wickedness  
that would not otherwise be found out.

The LORD is King for ever and ever;  
the nations will perish from his land.  
You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted;  
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,  
defending the fatherless and the oppressed,  
so that mere earthly mortals  
will never again strike terror.

## Psalm 11

*For the director of music. Of David.*

In the LORD I take refuge.  
How then can you say to me:  
“Flee like a bird to your mountain.  
For look, the wicked bend their bows;  
they set their arrows against the strings  
to shoot from the shadows  
at the upright in heart.  
When the foundations are being destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?”

The LORD is in his holy temple;  
the LORD is on his heavenly throne.  
He observes everyone on earth;  
his eyes examine them.  
The LORD examines the righteous,  
but the wicked, those who love violence,  
he hates with a passion.  
On the wicked he will rain  
fiery coals and burning sulfur;  
a scorching wind will be their lot.

For the LORD is righteous,  
he loves justice;  
the upright will see his face.

## Psalm 12

*For the director of music. According to sheminith.  
A psalm of David.*

Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;  
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.



Everyone lies to their neighbor;  
they flatter with their lips  
but harbor deception in their hearts.

May the LORD silence all flattering lips  
and every boastful tongue —  
those who say,  
“By our tongues we will prevail;  
our own lips will defend us — who is lord over us?”

“Because the poor are plundered and  
the needy groan,  
I will now arise,” says the LORD.  
“I will protect them from those who  
malign them.”

And the words of the LORD are flawless,  
like silver purified in a crucible,  
like gold refined seven times.

You, LORD, will keep the needy safe  
and will protect us forever from the wicked,  
who freely strut about  
when what is vile is honored by the human race.

### Psalm 13

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?  
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Look on me and answer, LORD my God.  
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,  
and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

But I trust in your unfailing love;  
my heart rejoices in your salvation.  
I will sing the LORD's praise,  
for he has been good to me.

Psalm 14

*For the director of music. Of David.*

The fool says in his heart,  
“There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;  
there is no one who does good.

The LORD looks down from heaven  
on all mankind  
to see if there are any who understand,  
any who seek God.

All have turned away, all have become corrupt;  
there is no one who does good,  
not even one.

Do all these evildoers know nothing?

They devour my people as though eating bread;  
they never call on the LORD.

But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,  
for God is present in the company of the righteous.

You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,  
but the LORD is their refuge.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!  
When the LORD restores his people,  
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

Psalm 15

*A psalm of David.*

LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?  
Who may live on your holy mountain?

The one whose walk is blameless,  
who does what is righteous,  
who speaks the truth from their heart;  
whose tongue utters no slander,  
who does no wrong to a neighbor,  
and casts no slur on others;  
who despises a vile person  
but honors those who fear the LORD;

who keeps an oath even when it hurts,  
and does not change their mind;  
who lends money to the poor without interest;  
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things  
will never be shaken.

### Psalm 16

*A miktam of David.*

Keep me safe, my God,  
for in you I take refuge.

I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;  
apart from you I have no good thing."

I say of the holy people who are in the land,  
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

Those who run after other gods will suffer more  
and more.

I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods  
or take up their names on my lips.

LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
you make my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in  
pleasant places;  
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;  
even at night my heart instructs me.

I keep my eyes always on the LORD.  
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue  
rejoices;  
my body also will rest secure,  
because you will not abandon me to the realm  
of the dead,  
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.  
You make known to me the path of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

## Psalm 17

*A prayer of David.*

Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;  
listen to my cry.

Hear my prayer —  
it does not rise from deceitful lips.

Let my vindication come from you;  
may your eyes see what is right.

Though you probe my heart,  
though you examine me at night and test me,  
you will find that I have planned no evil;  
my mouth has not transgressed.

Though people tried to bribe me,  
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent  
through what your lips have commanded.

My steps have held to your paths;  
my feet have not stumbled.

I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;  
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.

Show me the wonders of your great love,  
you who save by your right hand  
those who take refuge in you from their foes.

Keep me as the apple of your eye;  
hide me in the shadow of your wings  
from the wicked who are out to destroy me,  
from my mortal enemies who surround me.

They close up their callous hearts,  
and their mouths speak with arrogance.

They have tracked me down, they now surround me,  
with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.

They are like a lion hungry for prey,  
like a fierce lion crouching in cover.

Rise up, LORD, confront them, bring them down;  
with your sword rescue me from the wicked.

By your hand save me from such people, LORD,  
from those of this world whose reward is in this life.

May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies;  
may their children gorge themselves on it,  
and may there be leftovers for their little ones.

As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face;  
when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

### Psalm 18

*For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:*

I love you, LORD, my strength.

The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;  
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,  
and I have been saved from my enemies.

The cords of death entangled me;  
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

The cords of the grave coiled around me;  
the snares of death confronted me.

In my distress I called to the LORD;  
I cried to my God for help.

From his temple he heard my voice;  
my cry came before him, into his ears.

The earth trembled and quaked,  
and the foundations of the mountains shook;  
they trembled because he was angry.

Smoke rose from his nostrils;  
consuming fire came from his mouth,  
burning coals blazed out of it.

He parted the heavens and came down;  
dark clouds were under his feet.

He mounted the cherubim and flew;  
he soared on the wings of the wind.

He made darkness his covering, his canopy  
around him —  
the dark rain clouds of the sky.

Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced,  
with hailstones and bolts of lightning.

The LORD thundered from heaven;  
the voice of the Most High resounded.

He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,  
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.

The valleys of the sea were exposed  
and the foundations of the earth laid bare  
at your rebuke, LORD,  
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

He reached down from on high and took hold of me;  
he drew me out of deep waters.

He rescued me from my powerful enemy,  
from my foes, who were too strong for me.

They confronted me in the day of my disaster,  
but the LORD was my support.

He brought me out into a spacious place;  
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

The LORD has dealt with me according to my  
righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded  
me.

For I have kept the ways of the LORD;  
I am not guilty of turning from my God.

All his laws are before me;  
I have not turned away from his decrees.

I have been blameless before him  
and have kept myself from sin.

The LORD has rewarded me according to my  
righteousness,  
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

To the faithful you show yourself faithful,  
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,  
to the pure you show yourself pure,  
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.

You save the humble  
but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.  
You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;  
my God turns my darkness into light.  
With your help I can advance against a troop;  
with my God I can scale a wall.

As for God, his way is perfect:  
The LORD's word is flawless;  
he shields all who take refuge in him.

For who is God besides the LORD?  
And who is the Rock except our God?

It is God who arms me with strength  
and keeps my way secure.

He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;  
he causes me to stand on the heights.

He trains my hands for battle;  
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

You make your saving help my shield,  
and your right hand sustains me;  
your help has made me great.

You provide a broad path for my feet,  
so that my ankles do not give way.

I pursued my enemies and overtook them;  
I did not turn back till they were destroyed.

I crushed them so that they could not rise;  
they fell beneath my feet.

You armed me with strength for battle;  
you humbled my adversaries before me.

You made my enemies turn their backs in flight,  
and I destroyed my foes.

They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—  
to the LORD, but he did not answer.

I beat them as fine as windblown dust;  
I trampled them like mud in the streets.

You have delivered me from the attacks of the people;  
you have made me the head of nations.

People I did not know now serve me,  
foreigners cower before me;  
as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.

They all lose heart;  
they come trembling from their strongholds.

The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!  
Exalted be God my Savior!

He is the God who avenges me,  
who subdues nations under me,  
who saves me from my enemies.

You exalted me above my foes;  
from a violent man you rescued me.

Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;  
I will sing the praises of your name.

He gives his king great victories;  
he shows unfailing love to his anointed,  
to David and to his descendants forever.

### Psalm 19

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.

They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.  
It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

It rises at one end of the heavens  
and makes its circuit to the other;  
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right,  
giving joy to the heart.



The commands of the LORD are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;

they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.

By them your servant is warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can discern their own errors?  
Forgive my hidden faults.

Keep your servant also from willful sins;  
may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless,  
innocent of great transgression.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my  
heart  
be pleasing in your sight,  
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

### Psalm 20

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

May the LORD answer you when you are in distress;  
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

May he send you help from the sanctuary  
and grant you support from Zion.

May he remember all your sacrifices  
and accept your burnt offerings.

May he give you the desire of your heart  
and make all your plans succeed.

May we shout for joy over your victory  
and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the LORD grant all your requests.

Now this I know:  
The LORD gives victory to his anointed.

He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary  
with the victorious power of his right hand.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses,  
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

They are brought to their knees and fall,  
but we rise up and stand firm.

LORD, give victory to the king!  
Answer us when we call!

### Psalm 21

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

The king rejoices in your strength, LORD.  
How great is his joy in the victories you give!

You have granted him his heart's desire  
and have not withheld the request of his lips.

You came to greet him with rich blessings  
and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.

He asked you for life, and you gave it to him —  
length of days, for ever and ever.

Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;  
you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.

Surely you have granted him unending blessings  
and made him glad with the joy of your presence.

For the king trusts in the LORD;  
through the unfailing love of the Most High  
he will not be shaken.

Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies;  
your right hand will seize your foes.

When you appear for battle,  
you will burn them up as in a blazing furnace.

The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,  
and his fire will consume them.

You will destroy their descendants from the earth,  
their posterity from mankind.

Though they plot evil against you  
and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed.

You will make them turn their backs  
when you aim at them with drawn bow.

Be exalted in your strength, LORD;  
we will sing and praise your might.

Psalm 22

*For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning."  
A psalm of David.*

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?  
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.  
In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.  
All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
"He trusts in the LORD," they say,  
"let the LORD rescue him."  
Let him deliver him,  
since he delights in him."

Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.  
From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother's womb you have been my God.

Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.  
Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.

I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.

My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs surround me,  
a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.

All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.

They divide my clothes among them  
and cast lots for my garment.

But you, LORD, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.

Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.

Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly I will praise you.

You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!  
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.

From you comes the theme of my praise in the great  
assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.

The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the LORD will praise him —  
may your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the LORD,

and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,  
for dominion belongs to the LORD  
and he rules over the nations.

All the rich of the earth will feast and  
worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel  
before him —  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.  
Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.  
They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!

### Psalm 23

*A psalm of David.*

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely your goodness and love will  
follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
forever.

Psalm 24

*Of David. A psalm.*

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;  
for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.

Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?  
Who may stand in his holy place?  
The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.

They will receive blessing from the LORD  
and vindication from God their Savior.  
Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
the LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is he, this King of glory?  
The LORD Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.

Psalm 25

*Of David.*

In you, LORD my God,  
I put my trust.

I trust in you;  
do not let me be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.

No one who hopes in you  
will ever be put to shame,

but shame will come on those  
who are treacherous without cause.

Show me your ways, LORD,  
teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long.

Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,  
for they are from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth  
and my rebellious ways;  
according to your love remember me,  
for you, LORD, are good.

Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

He guides the humble in what is right  
and teaches them his way.

All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful  
toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

For the sake of your name, LORD,  
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

Who, then, are those who fear the LORD?  
He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.

They will spend their days in prosperity,  
and their descendants will inherit the land.

The LORD confides in those who fear him;  
he makes his covenant known to them.

My eyes are ever on the LORD,  
for only he will release my feet from the snare.

Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.

Relieve the troubles of my heart  
and free me from my anguish.

Look on my affliction and my distress  
and take away all my sins.

See how numerous are my enemies  
and how fiercely they hate me!

Guard my life and rescue me;  
do not let me be put to shame,  
for I take refuge in you.

May integrity and uprightness protect me,  
because my hope, LORD, is in you.

Deliver Israel, O God,  
from all their troubles!

#### Psalm 26

*Of David.*

Vindicate me, LORD,  
for I have led a blameless life;

I have trusted in the LORD  
and have not faltered.

Test me, LORD, and try me,  
examine my heart and my mind;  
for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love  
and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.

I do not sit with the deceitful,  
nor do I associate with hypocrites.

I abhor the assembly of evildoers  
and refuse to sit with the wicked.

I wash my hands in innocence,  
and go about your altar, LORD,  
proclaiming aloud your praise  
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.

LORD, I love the house where you live,  
the place where your glory dwells.

Do not take away my soul along with sinners,  
my life with those who are bloodthirsty,  
in whose hands are wicked schemes,  
whose right hands are full of bribes.

I lead a blameless life;  
deliver me and be merciful to me.

My feet stand on level ground;  
in the great congregation I will praise the LORD.



## Psalm 27

*Of David.*

The LORD is my light and my salvation —  
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life —  
of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked advance against me  
to devour me,

it is my enemies and my foes  
who will stumble and fall.

Though an army besiege me,  
my heart will not fear;

though war break out against me,  
even then I will be confident.

One thing I ask from the LORD,  
this only do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,

to gaze on the beauty of the LORD  
and to seek him in his temple.

For in the day of trouble  
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;

he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent  
and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted  
above the enemies who surround me;  
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

Hear my voice when I call, LORD;  
be merciful to me and answer me.

My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"  
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

Do not hide your face from me,  
do not turn your servant away in anger;  
you have been my helper.

Do not reject me or forsake me,  
God my Savior.

Though my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will receive me.

Teach me your way, LORD;  
lead me in a straight path  
because of my oppressors.

Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,  
for false witnesses rise up against me,  
spouting malicious accusations.

I remain confident of this:  
I will see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD;  
be strong and take heart  
and wait for the LORD.

#### Psalm 28

*Of David.*

To you, LORD, I call;  
you are my Rock,  
do not turn a deaf ear to me.

For if you remain silent,  
I will be like those who go down to the pit.

Hear my cry for mercy  
as I call to you for help,  
as I lift up my hands  
toward your Most Holy Place.

Do not drag me away with the wicked,  
with those who do evil,  
who speak cordially with their neighbors  
but harbor malice in their hearts.

Repay them for their deeds  
and for their evil work;  
repay them for what their hands have done  
and bring back on them what they deserve.

Because they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD  
and what his hands have done,  
he will tear them down  
and never build them up again.

Praise be to the LORD,  
 for he has heard my cry for mercy.  
 The LORD is my strength and my shield;  
 my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.  
 My heart leaps for joy,  
 and with my song I praise him.

The LORD is the strength of his people,  
 a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.  
 Save your people and bless your inheritance;  
 be their shepherd and carry them forever.

### Psalm 29

*A psalm of David.*

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,  
 ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.  
 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
 worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters;  
 the God of glory thunders,  
 the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

The voice of the LORD is powerful;  
 the voice of the LORD is majestic.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;  
 the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,  
 Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD strikes  
 with flashes of lightning.

The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;  
 the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

The voice of the LORD twists the oaks  
 and strips the forests bare.

And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;  
 the LORD is enthroned as King forever.

The LORD gives strength to his people;  
 the LORD blesses his people with peace.

## Psalm 30

*A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.*

I will exalt you, LORD,  
for you lifted me out of the depths  
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.

LORD my God, I called to you for help,  
and you healed me.

You, LORD, brought me up from the realm  
of the dead;  
you spared me from going down to the pit.

Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful  
people;  
praise his holy name.

For his anger lasts only a moment,  
but his favor lasts a lifetime;  
weeping may stay for the night,  
but rejoicing comes in the morning.

When I felt secure, I said,  
“I will never be shaken.”

LORD, when you favored me,  
you made my royal mountain stand firm;  
but when you hid your face,  
I was dismayed.

To you, LORD, I called;  
to the Lord I cried for mercy:  
“What is gained if I am silenced,  
if I go down to the pit?

Will the dust praise you?  
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?  
Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me;  
LORD, be my help.”

You turned my wailing into dancing;  
you removed my sackcloth and clothed  
me with joy,  
that my heart may sing your praises and  
not be silent.  
LORD my God, I will praise you forever.

## Psalm 31

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in your righteousness.

Turn your ear to me,  
come quickly to my rescue;

be my rock of refuge,  
a strong fortress to save me.

Since you are my rock and my fortress,  
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,  
for you are my refuge.

Into your hands I commit my spirit;  
deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.

I hate those who cling to worthless idols;  
as for me, I trust in the LORD.

I will be glad and rejoice in your love,  
for you saw my affliction  
and knew the anguish of my soul.

You have not given me into the hands  
of the enemy  
but have set my feet in a spacious place.

Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;  
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,  
my soul and body with grief.

My life is consumed by anguish  
and my years by groaning;  
my strength fails because of my affliction,  
and my bones grow weak.

Because of all my enemies,  
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors  
and an object of dread to my closest friends—  
those who see me on the street flee from me.

I am forgotten as though I were dead;  
I have become like broken pottery.

For I hear many whispering,  
“Terror on every side!”

They conspire against me  
and plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, LORD;  
I say, "You are my God."

My times are in your hands;  
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,  
from those who pursue me.

Let your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your unfailing love.

Let me not be put to shame, LORD,  
for I have cried out to you;  
but let the wicked be put to shame  
and be silent in the realm of the dead.

Let their lying lips be silenced,  
for with pride and contempt  
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.

How abundant are the good things  
that you have stored up for those who fear you,  
that you bestow in the sight of all,  
on those who take refuge in you.

In the shelter of your presence you hide them  
from all human intrigues;  
you keep them safe in your dwelling  
from accusing tongues.

Praise be to the LORD,  
for he showed me the wonders of his love  
when I was in a city under siege.

In my alarm I said,  
"I am cut off from your sight!"  
Yet you heard my cry for mercy  
when I called to you for help.

Love the LORD, all his faithful people!  
The LORD preserves those who are  
true to him,  
but the proud he pays back in full.

Be strong and take heart,  
all you who hope in the LORD.

## Psalm 32

*Of David. A maskil.*

Blessed is the one  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one  
whose sin the LORD does not count against them  
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent,  
my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night  
your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the LORD."

And you forgave  
the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all the faithful pray to you  
while you may be found;  
surely the rising of the mighty waters  
will not reach them.

You are my hiding place;  
you will protect me from trouble  
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Do not be like the horse or the mule,  
which have no understanding  
but must be controlled by bit and bridle  
or they will not come to you.

Many are the woes of the wicked,  
but the LORD's unfailing love  
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;  
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Psalm 33

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;  
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.  
Praise the LORD with the harp;  
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.  
Sing to him a new song;  
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

For the word of the LORD is right and true;  
he is faithful in all he does.

The LORD loves righteousness and justice;  
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,  
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;  
he puts the deep into storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the LORD;  
let all the people of the world revere him.

For he spoke, and it came to be;  
he commanded, and it stood firm.

The LORD foils the plans of the nations;  
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,  
the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,  
the people he chose for his inheritance.

From heaven the LORD looks down  
and sees all mankind;

from his dwelling place he watches  
all who live on earth —

he who forms the hearts of all,  
who considers everything they do.

No king is saved by the size of his army;  
no warrior escapes by his great strength.



A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;  
 despite all its great strength it cannot save.  
 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,  
 on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,  
 to deliver them from death  
 and keep them alive in famine.

We wait in hope for the LORD;  
 he is our help and our shield.  
 In him our hearts rejoice,  
 for we trust in his holy name.  
 May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,  
 even as we put our hope in you.

#### Psalms 34

*Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek,  
 who drove him away, and he left.*

I will extol the LORD at all times;  
 his praise will always be on my lips.  
 I will glory in the LORD;  
 let the afflicted hear and rejoice.  
 Glorify the LORD with me;  
 let us exalt his name together.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me;  
 he delivered me from all my fears.  
 Those who look to him are radiant;  
 their faces are never covered with shame.  
 This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;  
 he saved him out of all his troubles.  
 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear  
 him,  
 and he delivers them.

Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
 blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.  
 Fear the LORD, you his holy people,  
 for those who fear him lack nothing.  
 The lions may grow weak and hungry,  
 but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Come, my children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Whoever of you loves life  
and desires to see many good days,  
keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from telling lies.

Turn from evil and do good;  
seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,  
and his ears are attentive to their cry;  
but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,  
to blot out their name from the earth.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous person may have many troubles,  
but the LORD delivers him from them all;  
he protects all his bones,  
not one of them will be broken.

Evil will slay the wicked;  
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

The LORD will rescue his servants;  
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

### Psalm 35

*Of David.*

Contend, LORD, with those who contend with me;  
fight against those who fight against me.

Take up shield and armor;  
arise and come to my aid.

Brandish spear and javelin  
against those who pursue me.

Say to me,  
“I am your salvation.”

May those who seek my life  
be disgraced and put to shame;

may those who plot my ruin  
be turned back in dismay.

May they be like chaff before the wind,  
with the angel of the LORD driving them away;  
may their path be dark and slippery,  
with the angel of the LORD pursuing them.

Since they hid their net for me without cause  
and without cause dug a pit for me,  
may ruin overtake them by surprise —  
may the net they hid entangle them,  
may they fall into the pit, to their ruin.

Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD  
and delight in his salvation.

My whole being will exclaim,  
“Who is like you, LORD?”

You rescue the poor from those too strong for them,  
the poor and needy from those who rob them.”

Ruthless witnesses come forward;  
they question me on things I know nothing about.

They repay me evil for good  
and leave me like one bereaved.

Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth  
and humbled myself with fasting.

When my prayers returned to me unanswered,  
I went about mourning  
as though for my friend or brother.

I bowed my head in grief  
as though weeping for my mother.

But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;  
assailants gathered against me without my knowledge.  
They slandered me without ceasing.

Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked;  
they gnashed their teeth at me.

How long, Lord, will you look on?  
Rescue me from their ravages,  
my precious life from these lions.

I will give you thanks in the great assembly;  
among the throngs I will praise you.

Do not let those gloat over me  
who are my enemies without cause;  
do not let those who hate me without reason  
maliciously wink the eye.

They do not speak peaceably,  
but devise false accusations  
against those who live quietly in the land.

They sneer at me and say, "Aha! Aha!  
With our own eyes we have seen it."

LORD, you have seen this; do not be silent.  
Do not be far from me, Lord.

Awake, and rise to my defense!  
Contend for me, my God and Lord.

Vindicate me in your righteousness, LORD my God;  
do not let them gloat over me.

Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we wanted!"  
or say, "We have swallowed him up."

May all who gloat over my distress  
be put to shame and confusion;

may all who exalt themselves over me  
be clothed with shame and disgrace.

May those who delight in my vindication  
shout for joy and gladness;

may they always say, "The LORD be exalted,  
who delights in the well-being of his servant."

My tongue will proclaim your righteousness,  
your praises all day long.

### Psalm 36

*For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD.*

I have a message from God in my heart  
concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:

There is no fear of God  
before their eyes.

In their own eyes they flatter themselves  
too much to detect or hate their sin.

The words of their mouths are wicked and deceitful;  
they fail to act wisely or do good.

Even on their beds they plot evil;  
they commit themselves to a sinful course  
and do not reject what is wrong.

Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the skies.

Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,  
your justice like the great deep.

You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!  
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house;  
you give them drink from your river of delights.

For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light we see light.

Continue your love to those who know you,  
your righteousness to the upright in heart.

May the foot of the proud not come against me,  
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.

See how the evildoers lie fallen —  
thrown down, not able to rise!

### Psalm 37

*Of David.*

Do not fret because of those who are evil  
or be envious of those who do wrong;  
for like the grass they will soon wither,  
like green plants they will soon die away.

Trust in the LORD and do good;  
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Take delight in the LORD,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the LORD;  
trust in him and he will do this:

He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,  
your vindication like the noonday sun.

Be still before the LORD  
and wait patiently for him;  
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,  
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;  
do not fret — it leads only to evil.  
For those who are evil will be destroyed,  
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.

A little while, and the wicked will be no more;  
though you look for them, they will not be found.  
But the meek will inherit the land  
and enjoy peace and prosperity.

The wicked plot against the righteous  
and gnash their teeth at them;  
but the Lord laughs at the wicked,  
for he knows their day is coming.

The wicked draw the sword  
and bend the bow  
to bring down the poor and needy,  
to slay those whose ways are upright.  
But their swords will pierce their own hearts,  
and their bows will be broken.

Better the little that the righteous have  
than the wealth of many wicked;  
for the power of the wicked will be broken,  
but the LORD upholds the righteous.

The blameless spend their days under the LORD's care,  
and their inheritance will endure forever.  
In times of disaster they will not wither;  
in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

But the wicked will perish:  
Though the LORD's enemies are like the flowers of the  
field,  
they will be consumed, they will go up in smoke.

The wicked borrow and do not repay,  
but the righteous give generously;

those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,  
but those he curses will be destroyed.

The LORD makes firm the steps  
of the one who delights in him;  
though he may stumble, he will not fall,  
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

I was young and now I am old,  
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken  
or their children begging bread.

They are always generous and lend freely;  
their children will be a blessing.

Turn from evil and do good;  
then you will dwell in the land forever.

For the LORD loves the just  
and will not forsake his faithful ones.

Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed;  
the offspring of the wicked will perish.

The righteous will inherit the land  
and dwell in it forever.

The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,  
and their tongues speak what is just.

The law of their God is in their hearts;  
their feet do not slip.

The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,  
intent on putting them to death;  
but the LORD will not leave them in the power of the  
wicked  
or let them be condemned when brought to trial.

Hope in the LORD  
and keep his way.

He will exalt you to inherit the land;  
when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.

I have seen a wicked and ruthless man  
flourishing like a luxuriant native tree,  
but he soon passed away and was no more;  
though I looked for him, he could not be found.

Consider the blameless, observe the upright;  
a future awaits those who seek peace.  
But all sinners will be destroyed;  
there will be no future for the wicked.

The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD;  
he is their stronghold in time of trouble.  
The LORD helps them and delivers them;  
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,  
because they take refuge in him.

### Psalm 38

*A psalm of David. A petition.*

LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger  
or discipline me in your wrath.  
Your arrows have pierced me,  
and your hand has come down on me.  
Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;  
there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin.  
My guilt has overwhelmed me  
like a burden too heavy to bear.

My wounds fester and are loathsome  
because of my sinful folly.  
I am bowed down and brought very low;  
all day long I go about mourning.  
My back is filled with searing pain;  
there is no health in my body.  
I am feeble and utterly crushed;  
I groan in anguish of heart.

All my longings lie open before you, Lord;  
my sighing is not hidden from you.  
My heart pounds, my strength fails me;  
even the light has gone from my eyes.  
My friends and companions avoid me because of my  
wounds;  
my neighbors stay far away.  
Those who want to kill me set their traps,  
those who would harm me talk of my ruin;  
all day long they scheme and lie.



I am like the deaf, who cannot hear,  
like the mute, who cannot speak;  
I have become like one who does not hear,  
whose mouth can offer no reply.

LORD, I wait for you;  
you will answer, Lord my God.

For I said, "Do not let them gloat  
or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip."

For I am about to fall,  
and my pain is ever with me.

I confess my iniquity;  
I am troubled by my sin.

Many have become my enemies without cause;  
those who hate me without reason are numerous.

Those who repay my good with evil  
lodge accusations against me,  
though I seek only to do what is good.

LORD, do not forsake me;  
do not be far from me, my God.

Come quickly to help me,  
my Lord and my Savior.

### Psalm 39

*For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.*

I said, "I will watch my ways  
and keep my tongue from sin;  
I will put a muzzle on my mouth  
while in the presence of the wicked."

So I remained utterly silent,  
not even saying anything good.

But my anguish increased;  
my heart grew hot within me.

While I meditated, the fire burned;  
then I spoke with my tongue:

"Show me, LORD, my life's end  
and the number of my days;  
let me know how fleeting my life is.

You have made my days a mere handbreadth;  
the span of my years is as nothing before you.

Everyone is but a breath,  
even those who seem secure.

“Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;  
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth  
without knowing whose it will finally be.

“But now, Lord, what do I look for?  
My hope is in you.

Save me from all my transgressions;  
do not make me the scorn of fools.

I was silent; I would not open my mouth,  
for you are the one who has done this.

Remove your scourge from me;  
I am overcome by the blow of your hand.

When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin,  
you consume their wealth like a moth —  
surely everyone is but a breath.

“Hear my prayer, LORD,  
listen to my cry for help;  
do not be deaf to my weeping.

I dwell with you as a foreigner,  
a stranger, as all my ancestors were.

Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again  
before I depart and am no more.”

#### Psalm 40

*For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.*

I waited patiently for the LORD;  
he turned to me and heard my cry.

He lifted me out of the slimy pit,  
out of the mud and mire;

he set my feet on a rock  
and gave me a firm place to stand.

He put a new song in my mouth,  
a hymn of praise to our God.

Many will see and fear the LORD  
and put their trust in him.

Blessed is the one  
who trusts in the LORD,  
who does not look to the proud,  
to those who turn aside to false gods.

Many, LORD my God,  
are the wonders you have done,  
the things you planned for us.

None can compare with you;  
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,  
they would be too many to declare.

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire —  
but my ears you have opened —  
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

Then I said, "Here I am, I have come —  
it is written about me in the scroll.

I desire to do your will, my God;  
your law is within my heart."

I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;  
I do not seal my lips, LORD,  
as you know.

I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;  
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.

I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness  
from the great assembly.

Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD;  
may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

For troubles without number surround me;  
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.

They are more than the hairs of my head,  
and my heart fails within me.

Be pleased to save me, LORD;  
come quickly, LORD, to help me.

May all who want to take my life  
be put to shame and confusion;  
may all who desire my ruin  
be turned back in disgrace.

May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"  
be appalled at their own shame.

But may all who seek you  
rejoice and be glad in you;  
may those who long for your saving help always say,  
“The LORD is great!”

But as for me, I am poor and needy;  
may the Lord think of me.  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
you are my God, do not delay.

#### Psalm 41

*For the director of music. A psalm of David.*

Blessed are those who have regard for the weak;  
the LORD delivers them in times of trouble.  
The LORD protects and preserves them—  
they are counted among the blessed in the land—  
he does not give them over to the desire of their foes.  
The LORD sustains them on their sickbed  
and restores them from their bed of illness.

I said, “Have mercy on me, LORD;  
heal me, for I have sinned against you.”  
My enemies say of me in malice,  
“When will he die and his name perish?”  
When one of them comes to see me,  
he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander;  
then he goes out and spreads it around.

All my enemies whisper together against me;  
they imagine the worst for me, saying,  
“A vile disease has afflicted him;  
he will never get up from the place where he lies.”  
Even my close friend,  
someone I trusted,  
one who shared my bread,  
has turned against me.

But may you have mercy on me, LORD;  
raise me up, that I may repay them.  
I know that you are pleased with me,  
for my enemy does not triumph over me.

Because of my integrity you uphold me  
and set me in your presence forever.

Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.

Amen and Amen.

## BOOK II

*Psalms 42–72*

### Psalm 42–43

*For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah.*

As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?

My tears have been my food  
day and night,

while people say to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”

These things I remember  
as I pour out my soul:

how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise  
among the festive throng.

Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Savior and my God.

My soul is downcast within me;  
therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
the heights of Hermon — from Mount Mizar.



# A WORD ABOUT THE NIV

The goal of the New International Version (NIV) is to enable English-speaking people from around the world to read and hear God's eternal Word in their own language. Our work as translators is motivated by our conviction that the Bible is God's Word in written form. We believe that the Bible contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, sheds unique light on our path in a dark world and sets forth the way to our eternal well-being. Out of these deep convictions, we have sought to recreate as far as possible the experience of the original audience—blending transparency to the original text with accessibility for the millions of English speakers around the world. We have prioritized accuracy, clarity and literary quality with the goal of creating a translation suitable for public and private reading, evangelism, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use. We have also sought to preserve a measure of continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English.

The complete NIV Bible was first published in 1978. It was a completely new translation made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The translators came from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, giving the translation an international scope. They were from many denominations and churches—including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Covenant, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and others. This breadth of denominational and theological perspective helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias. For these reasons, and by the grace of God, the NIV has gained a wide readership in all parts of the English-speaking world.

The work of translating the Bible is never finished. As good as they are, English translations must be regularly updated so that they will continue to communicate accurately the meaning of God's Word. Updates are needed in order to reflect the latest developments in our understanding of the biblical world and its languages and to keep pace with changes in English usage. Recognizing, then, that the NIV would retain its ability to communicate God's Word accurately only if it were regularly updated, the original translators established the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT). The Committee is a self-perpetuating group of biblical scholars charged with keeping abreast of advances in biblical scholarship and changes in English and issuing periodic updates to the NIV. The CBT is an independent, self-governing body and has sole responsibility for the NIV text. The Committee mirrors the original group of translators in its diverse international and denominational makeup and in its unifying commitment to the Bible as God's inspired Word.

In obedience to its mandate, the Committee has issued periodic updates to the NIV. An initial revision was released in 1984. A more thorough revision process was completed in 2005, resulting in the separately published TNIV. The updated NIV you now have in your hands builds on both the original NIV and the TNIV and represents the latest effort of the Committee to articulate God's unchanging Word in the way the original authors might have said it had they been speaking in English to the global English-speaking audience today.

## Translation Philosophy

The Committee's translating work has been governed by three widely accepted principles about the way people use words and about the way we understand them.

First, the meaning of words is determined by the way that users of the language actually use them at any given time. For the biblical languages, therefore, the Committee utilizes the best and most recent scholarship on the way Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words were being used in biblical times. At the same time, the Committee carefully studies the state of modern English. Good translation is like good communication: one must know the target audience so that the appropriate choices can be made about which English words to use to represent the original words of Scripture. From its inception, the NIV has had as its target the general English-speaking population all over the world, the "International" in its title reflecting this concern. The aim of the Committee is to put the Scriptures into natural English that will communicate effectively with the broadest possible audience of English speakers.

Modern technology has enhanced the Committee's ability to choose the right English words to convey the meaning of the original text. The field of computational linguistics harnesses the power of computers to provide broadly applicable and current data about the state of the language. Translators can now access huge databases of modern English to better understand the current meaning and usage of key words. The Committee utilized this resource in preparing the 2011 edition of the NIV. An area of especially rapid and significant change in English is the way certain nouns and pronouns are used to refer to human beings. The Committee therefore requested experts in computational linguistics at Collins Dictionaries to pose some key questions about this usage to its database of English—the largest in the world, with over 4.4 billion words, gathered from several English-speaking countries and including both spoken and written English. (The Collins Study, called "The Development and Use of Gender Language in Contemporary English," can be accessed at <http://www.thenivbible.com/about-the-niv/about-the-2011-edition/>.) The study revealed that the most popular words to describe the human race in modern U.S. English were "humanity," "man" and "mankind." The Committee then used this data in the updated NIV, choosing from among these three words (and occasionally others also) depending on the context.

A related issue creates a larger problem for modern translations: the move away from using the third-person masculine singular pronouns—"he/him/his"—to refer to men and women equally. This usage does persist in some forms of English, and this revision therefore occasionally uses these pronouns in a generic sense. But the tendency, recognized in day-to-day usage and



confirmed by the Collins study, is away from the generic use of “he,” “him” and “his.” In recognition of this shift in language and in an effort to translate into the natural English that people are actually using, this revision of the NIV generally uses other constructions when the biblical text is plainly addressed to men and women equally. The reader will encounter especially frequently a “they,” “their” or “them” to express a generic singular idea. Thus, for instance, Mark 8:36 reads: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” This generic use of the “distributive” or “singular” “they/them/their” has been used for many centuries by respected writers of English and has now become established as standard English, spoken and written, all over the world.

A second linguistic principle that feeds into the Committee’s translation work is that meaning is found not in individual words, as vital as they are, but in larger clusters: phrases, clauses, sentences, discourses. Translation is not, as many people think, a matter of word substitution: English word *x* in place of Hebrew word *y*. Translators must first determine the meaning of the words of the biblical languages in the context of the passage and then select English words that accurately communicate that meaning to modern listeners and readers. This means that accurate translation will not always reflect the exact structure of the original language. To be sure, there is debate over the degree to which translators should try to preserve the “form” of the original text in English. From the beginning, the NIV has taken a mediating position on this issue. The manual produced when the translation that became the NIV was first being planned states: “If the Greek or Hebrew syntax has a good parallel in modern English, it should be used. But if there is no good parallel, the English syntax appropriate to the meaning of the original is to be chosen.” It is fine, in other words, to carry over the form of the biblical languages into English—but not at the expense of natural expression. The principle that meaning resides in larger clusters of words means that the Committee has not insisted on a “word-for-word” approach to translation. We certainly believe that every word of Scripture is inspired by God and therefore to be carefully studied to determine what God is saying to us. It is for this reason that the Committee labors over every single word of the original texts, working hard to determine how each of those words contributes to what the text is saying. Ultimately, however, it is how these individual words function in combination with other words that determines meaning.

A third linguistic principle guiding the Committee in its translation work is the recognition that words have a spectrum of meaning. It is popular to define a word by using another word, or “gloss,” to substitute for it. This substitute word is then sometimes called the “literal” meaning of a word. In fact, however, words have a range of possible meanings. Those meanings will vary depending on the context, and words in one language will usually not occupy the same semantic range as words in another language. The Committee therefore studies each original word of Scripture in its context to identify its meaning in a particular verse and then chooses an appropriate English word (or phrase) to represent it. It is impossible, then, to translate any given Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek word with the same English word all the time. The Committee does try to translate related occurrences of a word in the original languages with the same English word in order to preserve the

connection for the English reader. But the Committee generally privileges clear natural meaning over a concern with consistency in rendering particular words.

### Textual Basis

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, has been used throughout. The Masoretic Text tradition contains marginal notations that offer variant readings. These have sometimes been followed instead of the text itself. Because such instances involve variants within the Masoretic tradition, they have not been indicated in the textual notes. In a few cases, words in the basic consonantal text have been divided differently than in the Masoretic Text. Such cases are usually indicated in the textual footnotes. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain biblical texts that represent an earlier stage of the transmission of the Hebrew text. They have been consulted, as have been the Samaritan Pentateuch and the ancient scribal traditions concerning deliberate textual changes. The translators also consulted the more important early versions. Readings from these versions, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the scribal traditions were occasionally followed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading. In rare cases, the translators have emended the Hebrew text where it appears to have become corrupted at an even earlier stage of its transmission. These departures from the Masoretic Text are also indicated in the textual footnotes. Sometimes the vowel indicators (which are later additions to the basic consonantal text) found in the Masoretic Text did not, in the judgment of the translators, represent the correct vowels for the original text. Accordingly, some words have been read with a different set of vowels. These instances are usually not indicated in the footnotes.

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament has been an eclectic one, based on the latest editions of the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. The translators have made their choices among the variant readings in accordance with widely accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism. Footnotes call attention to places where uncertainty remains.

The New Testament authors, writing in Greek, often quote the Old Testament from its ancient Greek version, the Septuagint. This is one reason why some of the Old Testament quotations in the NIV New Testament are not identical to the corresponding passages in the NIV Old Testament. Such quotations in the New Testament are indicated with the footnote "(see Septuagint)."

### Footnotes and Formatting

Footnotes in this version are of several kinds, most of which need no explanation. Those giving alternative translations begin with "Or" and generally introduce the alternative with the last word preceding it in the text, except when it is a single-word alternative. When poetry is quoted in a footnote a slash mark indicates a line division.

It should be noted that references to diseases, minerals, flora and fauna,

architectural details, clothing, jewelry, musical instruments and other articles cannot always be identified with precision. Also, linear measurements and measures of capacity can only be approximated (see the Table of Weights and Measures). Although *Selah*, used mainly in the Psalms, is probably a musical term, its meaning is uncertain. Since it may interrupt reading and distract the reader, this word has not been kept in the English text, but every occurrence has been signaled by a footnote.

As an aid to the reader, sectional headings have been inserted. They are not to be regarded as part of the biblical text and are not intended for oral reading. It is the Committee's hope that these headings may prove more helpful to the reader than the traditional chapter divisions, which were introduced long after the Bible was written.

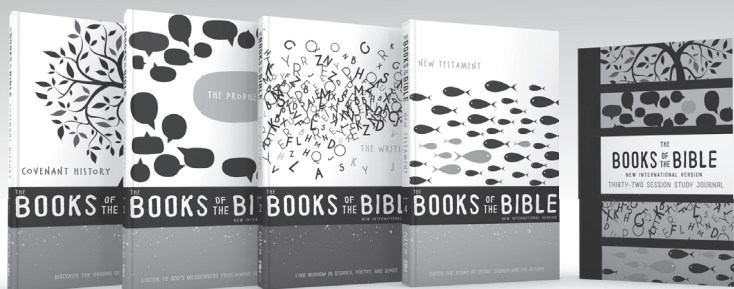
Sometimes the chapter and/or verse numbering in English translations of the Old Testament differs from that found in published Hebrew texts. This is particularly the case in the Psalms, where the traditional titles are included in the Hebrew verse numbering. Such differences are indicated in the footnotes at the bottom of the page. In the New Testament, verse numbers that marked off portions of the traditional English text not supported by the best Greek manuscripts now appear in brackets, with a footnote indicating the text that has been omitted (see, for example, Matthew 17:[21]).

Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11, although long accorded virtually equal status with the rest of the Gospels in which they stand, have a questionable standing in the textual history of the New Testament, as noted in the bracketed annotations with which they are set off. A different typeface has been chosen for these passages to indicate their uncertain status.

Basic formatting of the text, such as lining the poetry, paragraphing (both prose and poetry), setting up of (administrative-like) lists, indenting letters and lengthy prayers within narratives and the insertion of sectional headings, has been the work of the Committee. However, the choice between single-column and double-column formats has been left to the publishers. Also the issuing of “red-letter” editions is a publisher's choice—one that the Committee does not endorse.

The Committee has again been reminded that every human effort is flawed—including this revision of the NIV. We trust, however, that many will find in it an improved representation of the Word of God, through which they hear his call to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and to service in his kingdom. We offer this version of the Bible to him in whose name and for whose glory it has been made.

The Committee on Bible Translation



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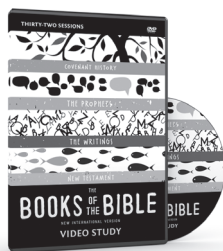
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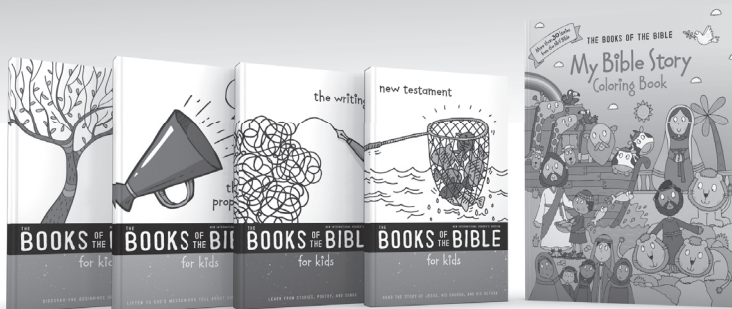
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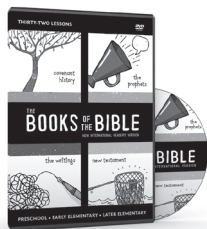
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