

new testament



THE

NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

for kids

READ THE STORY OF JESUS, HIS CHURCH, AND HIS RETURN

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introduction to the New Testament

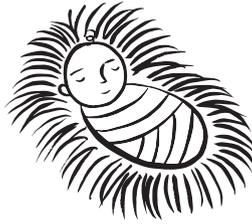
The New Testament is a collection of books written many years ago. Together, they tell the story of Jesus and the very first people who followed him. The New Testament is also part of a much bigger collection known as “the Bible.”

Long ago, the Bible tells us, God created the world. Everything he made was good. But creation turned its back on God. Suddenly, the whole world was held captive by sin and death.

So God set out to rescue us—to save us from sin and death and make things right. The story came to a climax two thousand years ago, when Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, came to earth.

As you read these stories and letters from the New Testament, you’ll hear about how Jesus came to rescue us. You’ll hear how his very first followers lived—and sometimes died—for him.

But don’t just read these stories. You’re invited to become part of the story. Because it’s not over. God is still at work. And you have a part to play.



DAY 1 LUKE-ACTS, PART I

introduction to Luke-Acts, part I

The story you're about to read was written by a doctor named Luke. Luke wanted his friend Theophilus to know about Jesus, so he wrote a book. Two books, actually: the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

In the first book, God keeps a promise he made to the people of Israel (who were called Jews) by sending Jesus, their long-awaited King.

But Jesus also invites non-Jewish people called Gentiles to follow him, because Jesus loves everyone. This was very good news, especially for Theophilus, who might have been a Gentile himself.

Luke worked hard to make sure he got his facts right. He wanted Theophilus to know he could bet his life on this story. So Luke used many reliable sources. Can you guess what some of them might've been?

Well, there were letters and speeches; songs and travel journals; notes from when people went to court; testimonies from eyewitnesses who knew Jesus; and more.

As you read, remember: this is not just any story. This is the true story of Jesus.



Many people have attempted to write about the things that have taken place among us. Reports of these things were handed down to us. There were people who saw these things for themselves from the beginning. They saw them and then passed the word on. With this in mind, I myself have carefully looked into everything from the beginning. So I also decided to write down an orderly

report of exactly what happened. I am doing this for you, most excellent Theophilus. I want you to know that the things you have been taught are true.



In the sixth month after Elizabeth had become pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He was sent to a virgin. The girl was engaged to a man named Joseph. He came from the family line of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel greeted her and said, "The Lord has blessed you in a special way. He is with you."

Mary was very upset because of his words. She wondered what kind of greeting this could be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king like his father David of long ago. The Son of the Most High God will rule forever over his people. They are from the family line of Jacob. That kingdom will never end."

"How can this happen?" Mary asked the angel. "I am a virgin."

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth will have a child even though she is old. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. That's because what God says will always come true."

"I serve the Lord," Mary answered. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." Then the angel left her.



In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to their own town to be listed.

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was.

Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That's because there was no guest room where they could stay.

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

"May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

When the child was eight days old, he was circumcised. At the same time he was named Jesus. This was the name the angel had given him before his mother became pregnant.

Joseph and Mary did everything the Law of the Lord required.

Then they returned to Galilee. They went to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong. He was very wise. He was blessed by God's grace.



Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When Jesus was 12 years old, they went up to the feast as usual. After the feast was over, his parents left to go back home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But they were not aware of it. They thought he was somewhere in their group. So they traveled on for a day. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much he understood. They also were amazed at his answers. When his parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been worried about you. We have been looking for you everywhere."

"Why were you looking for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he meant by that.

Then he went back to Nazareth with them, and he obeyed them. But his mother kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. Jesus became wiser and stronger. He also became more and more pleasing to God and to people.



Tiberius Caesar had been ruling for 15 years. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. Herod was the ruler of Galilee. His brother Philip was the ruler of Iturea and Traconitis. Lysanias was ruler of Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. At that time God's word came to John, son of Zechariah, in the desert. He went into all the countryside around the Jordan River. There he preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins.

Then God would forgive them. Here is what is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet. It says,

“A messenger is calling out in the desert,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight paths for him.

Every valley will be filled in.

Every mountain and hill will be made level.

The crooked roads will become straight.

The rough ways will become smooth.

And all people will see God’s salvation.’”

John spoke to the crowds coming to be baptized by him. He said, “You are like a nest of poisonous snakes! Who warned you to escape the coming of God’s anger? Live in a way that shows you have turned away from your sins. And don’t start saying to yourselves, ‘Abraham is our father.’ I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham even from these stones. The ax is already lying at the roots of the trees. All the trees that don’t produce good fruit will be cut down. They will be thrown into the fire.”

“Then what should we do?” the crowd asked.

John answered, “Anyone who has extra clothes should share with the one who has none. And anyone who has extra food should do the same.”

Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” John told them.

Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

John replied, “Don’t force people to give you money. Don’t bring false charges against people. Be happy with your pay.”

The people were waiting. They were expecting something. They were all wondering in their hearts if John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I am will come. I’m not good enough to untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His pitchfork is in his hand to toss the straw away from his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn. But he

will burn up the husks with fire that can't be put out." John said many other things to warn the people. He also announced the good news to them.

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened. The Holy Spirit came to rest on him in the form of a dove. A voice came from heaven. It said, "You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

Jesus was about 30 years old when he began his special work for God and others. It was thought that he was the son of Joseph.



Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River. The Spirit led him into the desert. There the devil tempted him for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing during that time. At the end of the 40 days, he was hungry.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man must not live only on bread.'"

Then the devil led Jesus up to a high place. In an instant, he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. He said to Jesus, "I will give you all their authority and glory. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours."

Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.'"

Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem. He had Jesus stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. It is written,

"The Lord will command his angels to take good care of you. They will lift you up in their hands.

Then you won't trip over a stone.'"

Jesus answered, "Scripture says, 'Do not test the Lord your God.'"

When the devil finished all this tempting, he left Jesus until a better time.

remember what you read

1. What is something you noticed for the first time?

2. What questions did you have?

3. Was there anything that bothered you?

4. What did you learn about loving God?

5. What did you learn about loving others?

A Word About The New International Reader's Version

Have You Ever Heard of the New International Version?

We call it the NIV. Many people read the NIV. In fact, more people read the NIV than any other English Bible. They like it because it's easy to read and understand.

And now we are happy to give you another Bible that's easy to read and understand. It's the New International Reader's Version. We call it the NIrV.

Who Will Enjoy Reading the New International Reader's Version?

People who are just starting to read will understand and enjoy the NIrV. Children will be able to read it and understand it. So will older people who are learning how to read. People who are reading the Bible for the first time will be able to enjoy reading the NIrV. So will people who have a hard time understanding what they read. And so will people who use English as their second language. We hope this Bible will be just right for you.

How Is the NIrV Different From the NIV?

The NIrV is based on the NIV. The NIV Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) didn't produce the NIrV. But a few of us who worked on the NIrV are members of CBT. We worked hard to make the NIrV possible. We used the words of the NIV when we could. When the words of the NIV were too long, we used shorter words. We tried to use words that are easy to understand. We also made the sentences of the NIV much shorter.

Why did we do all these things? Because we wanted to make the NIrV very easy to read and understand.

What Other Helps Does the NIrV Have?

We decided to give you a lot of other help too. For example, sometimes a verse is quoted from another place in the Bible. When it is, we tell you the Bible book, chapter and verse it comes from. We put that information right after the verse that quotes from another place.

We separated each chapter into shorter sections. We gave a title to almost every chapter. Sometimes we even gave a title to a section. We

did these things to help you understand what the chapter or section is all about.

Another example of a helpful change has to do with the word “Selah” in the Psalms. What this Hebrew word means is still not clear. So, for now, this word is not helpful for readers. The NIV has moved the word to the bottom of the page. We have followed the NIV and removed this Hebrew word from the NIrV. Perhaps one day we will learn what this word means. But until then, the Psalms are easier to read and understand without it.

Sometimes the writers of the Bible used more than one name for the same person or place. For example, in the New Testament the Sea of Galilee is also called the Sea of Gennesaret. Sometimes it is also called the Sea of Tiberias. But in the NIrV we decided to call it the Sea of Galilee everywhere it appears. We called it that because that is its most familiar name.

We also wanted to help you learn the names of people and places in the Bible. So sometimes we provided names even in verses where those names don’t actually appear. For example, sometimes the Bible says “the River” where it means “the Euphrates River.” In those places, we used the full name “the Euphrates River.” Sometimes the word “Pharaoh” in the Bible means “Pharaoh Hophra.” In those places, we used his full name “Pharaoh Hophra.” We did all these things in order to make the NIrV as clear as possible.

Does the NIrV Say What the First Writers of the Bible Said?

We wanted the NIrV to say just what the first writers of the Bible said. So we kept checking the Greek New Testament as we did our work. That’s because the New Testament’s first writers used Greek. We also kept checking the Hebrew Old Testament as we did our work. That’s because the Old Testament’s first writers used Hebrew.

We used the best copies of the Greek New Testament. We also used the best copies of the Hebrew Old Testament. Older English Bibles couldn’t use those copies because they had not yet been found. The oldest copies are best because they are closer in time to the ones the first Bible writers wrote. That’s why we kept checking the older copies instead of the newer ones.

Some newer copies of the Greek New Testament added several verses that the older ones don’t have. Sometimes it’s several verses in a row. This occurs at Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53—8:11. We have included these verses in the NIrV. Sometimes the newer copies added only a

single verse. An example is Mark 9:44. That verse is not in the oldest Greek New Testaments. So we put the verse number 43/44 right before Mark 9:43. You can look on the list below for Mark 9:44 and locate the verse that was added.

Verses That Were Not Found in Oldest Greek New Testaments

- Matthew 17:21 But that kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.
- Matthew 18:11 The Son of Man came to save what was lost.
- Matthew 23:14 How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You pretenders! You take over the houses of widows. You say long prayers to show off. So God will punish you much more.
- Mark 7:16 Everyone who has ears to hear should listen.
- Mark 9:44 In hell, / “ ‘the worms don’t die, / and the fire doesn’t go out.’
- Mark 9:46 In hell, / “ ‘the worms don’t die, / and the fire doesn’t go out.’
- Mark 11:26 But if you do not forgive, your Father who is in heaven will not forgive your sins either.
- Mark 15:28 Scripture came true. It says, “And he was counted among those who disobey the law.”
- Luke 17:36 Two men will be in the field. One will be taken and the other left.
- Luke 23:17 It was Pilate’s duty to let one prisoner go free for them at the Feast.
- John 5:4 From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down. The angel would stir up the waters. The first disabled person to go into the pool after it was stirred would be healed.
- Acts 8:37 Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you can.” The official answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- Acts 15:34 But Silas decided to remain there.
- Acts 24:7 But Lysias, the commander, came. By using a lot of force, he took Paul from our hands.
- Acts 28:29 After he said that, the Jews left. They were arguing strongly among themselves.
- Romans 16:24 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.

What Is Our Prayer for You?

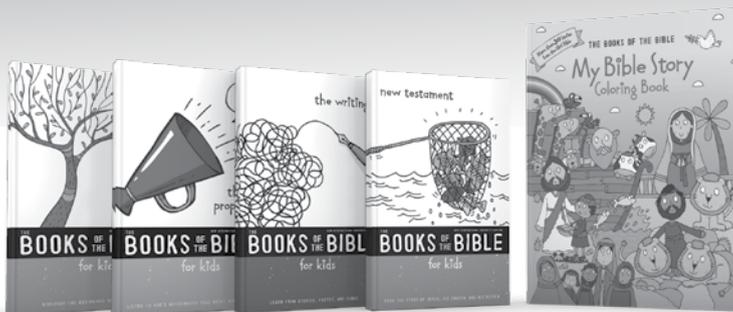
The Lord has blessed the New International Version in a wonderful way. He has used it to help millions of Bible readers. Many people have put their faith in Jesus after reading it. Many others have become stronger believers because they have read it.

We hope and pray that the New International Reader's Version will help you in the same way. If that happens, we will give God all the glory.

A Word About This Edition

This edition of the New International Reader's Version has been revised to include the changes of the New International Version. Over the years, many helpful changes have been made to the New International Version. Those changes were made because our understanding of the original writings is better. Those changes also include changes that have taken place in the English language. We wanted the New International Reader's Version to include those helpful changes as well. We wanted the New International Reader's Version to be as clear and correct as possible.

We want to thank the people who helped us prepare this new edition. They are Jeannine Brown from Bethel Seminary St. Paul, Yvonne Van Ee from Calvin College, Michael Williams from Calvin Theological Seminary, and Ron Youngblood from Bethel Seminary San Diego. We also want to thank the people at Biblica who encouraged and supported this work.



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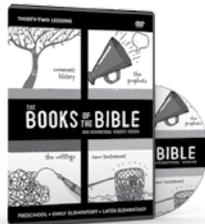
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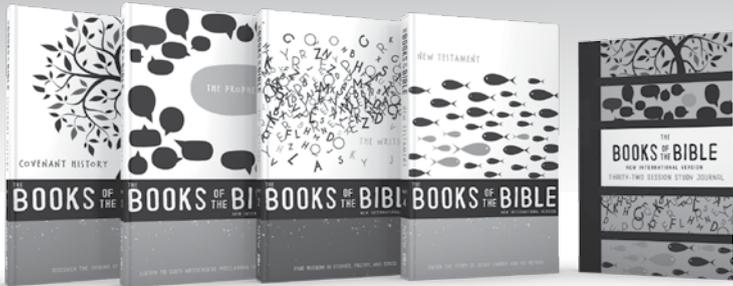
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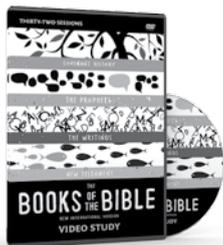
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