

HOLY BIBLE

NEW TESTAMENT
AND PSALMS

Evangelical Heritage Version

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Preface

What Is the *Evangelical Heritage Version*?

This preliminary edition of *The Holy Bible: Evangelical Heritage Version* (EHV), which consists of the New Testament and Psalms, is intended to acquaint readers with a new translation of the Bible produced by the Wartburg Project.

Our translation is called *Evangelical* because its highest goal is to proclaim the good news of the gospel of salvation through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son. Though there are many topics in the Bible, all of them are there to serve the gospel of Christ. All of our work in producing and distributing this translation is directed to the glory of God and to the eternal salvation of people's souls.

Our translation is called *Heritage* because this word looks to the past, the present, and the future.

Heritage expresses our respect for the generations of Christians and for the faithful translators who have passed the Bible down to us. We are aware that we in the present are building on the foundation which they have laid. As the old saying goes: We can see so far because we are standing on the shoulders of giants.

The term *Heritage* also looks to the future. The gospel is a precious inheritance that is to be passed from generation to generation until Christ returns. It is our prayer that this translation will have a part in that great mission which the Lord has left for his church. Our goal and motto is expressed in the hymn verse:

God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever.
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way.
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teaching pure
Throughout all generations.

To this end, the goal of our project is to produce a *balanced* translation, suitable for all-purpose use in the church.

We seek a balance between *the old* and *the new*. We debated whether our translation should be called *new* or *revised*. Neither term tells the whole story. Our translation can be called *revised* or *traditional* insofar as it builds on the tradition of Bible translation that goes back to the King James Version, to Martin Luther, and beyond. It is *new* in that it is not based on any one template, and it introduces new terms in those places where the traditional terms no longer communicate clearly.

We seek a balance between the poles of so-called *literal* and *dynamic equivalent* theories of translation. A translator should not adhere too closely to any one theory of translation because literalistic, word-for-word translations sometimes convey the wrong meaning, or they do not communicate clearly in the receiving

language. Overly free translations deprive the reader of some of the expressions, imagery, and style of the original.

We seek a balance between *formality* and *informality*. The Bible contains many types of literature and different levels of language, from the very simple to the very difficult. For this reason, the translator should not be too committed to producing one level of language but should try to reproduce the tone or “flavor” of the original.

The *Evangelical Heritage Version* is designed for *learning* and *teaching*. Our translators assume that their readers have the ability and the desire to learn new biblical words and to deepen their understanding of important biblical terms and concepts. Translators should not be condescending or patronizing toward their readers but should be dedicated to helping them grow. The Bible was written for ordinary people, but it is a literary work with many figures of speech and many rare words. The Bible is a book to be read, but it is also a book to be studied. Our footnotes are designed to assist in the process of learning and teaching. Our translation is in that sense a textbook.

The *Evangelical Heritage Version* is *not an interpretative translation*. On one level, every act of translation involves interpretation, but when we say that the *Evangelical Heritage Version* strives to avoid importing interpretation into the translation, we mean that our duty and goal is to understand and to reproduce as closely as possible what the original text says and to say no more and no less than what the text says.

We welcome you to test this translation and to give us your feedback. God willing, the whole Bible will be published in the not too distant future.

The following introduction provides a more detailed, expanded version of this preface.

Introduction

The *Evangelical Heritage Version*: A Balanced Translation

Old Versus New

The *Evangelical Heritage Version* seeks a balance between *the old* and *the new*. We debated whether our translation should be called *new* or *revised*. Neither term tells the whole story. Our translation can be called *revised* or *traditional* insofar as it builds on the tradition of Bible translation that goes back to the King James Version, to Martin Luther, and beyond. It is *new* in that it does not follow any one template, and it introduces new terms in those places where the traditional terms are unclear.

- We seek to preserve heritage terms like “sanctify,” “justify,” “angels,” and “saints,” but not to the exclusion of more explanatory translations like “make holy” and “declare righteous.” We make an effort to retain familiar, treasured terms that are well established in the liturgy, hymns, creeds, and catechisms of the church.
- We prefer to preserve familiar expressions in well-known passages, but if the traditional reading or term is not very precise, providing a translation that more clearly reflects the original meaning takes priority over preserving traditional language.
- We try to preserve some common biblical idioms such as “the flesh,” “walk with God,” “in God’s eyes,” and “set one’s face against.” Our goal is not to preserve Hebrew or Greek grammatical idioms. Rather, it is to preserve important biblical expressions and imagery and, when possible, the wordplay in the biblical text.
- We usually keep traditional names such as the Ark, the Ark of the Covenant, and the manger. There may be specific exceptions when the traditional terms are not very clear, such as substituting “Bread of the Presence” for *showbread* or “the Dwelling” for *the Tabernacle*.
- When we are adopting a new term for an important biblical concept or object, we cite the traditional term in a footnote at the new term’s first occurrence in a given context, for example,

Bread of the Presence^a

Note ^a Traditionally *showbread*

Dwelling^b

Note ^b Traditionally *Tabernacle*

Literal Versus Dynamic

We seek a balance between the two poles called *literal* and *dynamic equivalent* translation. The translator should not adhere too closely to any one theory of translation.

- Literalistic, word-for-word translations sometimes convey the wrong meaning or they do not communicate clearly in the receiving language.

- There is a lot of confusion about the concept of “literal translation.” A literal translation attempts to follow the words of the original language closely. It is impossible for a translation to follow another language exactly word-for-word unless the translation is an academic exercise, which is not intended for reading with understanding and enjoyment. A so-called “literal translation” does not follow the original text word-for-word but thought-for-thought, because it does not look only at single words but also at the clusters in which they occur. Nevertheless, a word-for-word translation is often possible and should be followed when there is no reason to depart from a word-for-word translation.
- We would be happy with a translation that is both dynamic and equivalent, but too often translations labeled “dynamic equivalent” are not really equivalent to the original. They import too much interpretation into the translation.
- The translator has to weigh on a case-by-case basis whether a more literal approach or a freer approach better conveys the divinely intended meaning.
- Translators must strive both to preserve the original meaning and to produce English that sounds natural, but the preservation of the original meaning takes priority over style. When a choice must be made, accuracy in conveying the divinely intended meaning of the text takes priority over literary beauty or rendering the text into common, contemporary English.

The Wartburg Project website has several articles and FAQs devoted to these points.

Formal Versus Informal

We seek a balance between *formality* and *informality*. The Bible contains many types of literature and many levels of language, from the very simple to the very difficult.

- Our basic translation does not specify one level of language to be used uniformly throughout the Bible because the level of language in the Bible itself varies greatly from book to book and from passage to passage. The level of difficulty and the literary style of this translation aim to be similar to the level of difficulty and the literary style of the original. In many Bible passages the original language was neither “common” nor “contemporary.”
- The translator should not drain the color and liveliness from passages by removing the imagery. If Scripture uses five different words for a concept such as sin, the translation should reflect that diversity. If the text uses a figure of speech, the translator should use a figure of speech, the same one if possible.
- When a freer translation is necessary to communicate clearly, a more literal rendering may be preserved in a footnote.

- Translators should remember they are translators, not editors of the biblical text. They have no call to “improve” the style chosen by the Holy Spirit.

Freedom Versus Rules

We seek a balance between *following guidelines* and *exercising good judgment*. It is necessary for a translation to provide translators and editors with a set of rules (general principles of translation) and rubrics (guidelines for translating specific words and expressions), but the relationship between two languages is so complex that it is hard to imagine a rule or rubric which can be applied without exception. Translators and editors should consider exceptions from the rule or rubric on a case-by-case basis.

- Although the rule “Use one English word to translate one Hebrew or Greek word” is not a viable standard for a translator to apply consistently, the translator should strive to be consistent rather than casual in his renderings of specific Hebrew and Greek words and word groups, especially technical terms that refer to specific objects.

Balance Across the Board

We aim for *balance across the board*. For example:

- In texts that deal with sexual issues, we try to be euphemistic where the original is euphemistic and blunt or coarse where the language of the original text is blunt.
- In using so-called “gender-accurate language,” our translation strives to be inclusive where the original is inclusive and exclusive where the original is exclusive.

The *Evangelical Heritage Version* is a translation designed for *learning* and *teaching*. Our translators assume that their readers have the ability and the desire to learn new biblical words and to deepen their understanding of important biblical terms and concepts. Translators should not be condescending or patronizing toward their readers but should be dedicated to helping them grow. Translations should not be “dumbed down.” The Bible was written for ordinary people, but it is a literary work with many figures of speech and many rare words. The Bible is a book to be read, but it is also a book to be studied. Our footnotes are designed to assist in the process of learning and teaching. Our translation is in that sense a textbook for students who want to grow in their knowledge of biblical language.

The *Evangelical Heritage Version* is *not an interpretative translation*. On one level, every act of translation involves interpretation, but when we say that the *Evangelical Heritage Version* strives to avoid importing interpretation into the translation, we mean that our duty and goal is to understand and to reproduce as closely as possible what the original text says and to say no more and no less than what the original text says.

- Translators should not introduce into the translation the kind of interpretation and explanation that is permissible and even expected in a study Bible or commentary.

- Translators should not introduce into the translation denominational interpretations that go beyond the simple, natural meaning of what the original text says.
- Wherever possible, when the text, on the basis of Scripture, is open to two equally valid understandings, the translator should attempt to preserve both options. When this is not possible, one of the options can be preserved in a footnote. (For example, does a passage refer to “the Spirit” or to “our spirit”?)

The duty of a translator is to convey all the meaning (or the openness to more than one meaning), all the beauty (or the ugliness), all the style (high or low), and all the emotional impact of the original text into the translation. Anyone who has ever tried translating realizes that it is impossible to meet this goal fully, but translators must strive to come as close as they can to achieving these goals.

Though translation involves some academic skills, biblical translation is above all an exercise of faith and spiritual gifts. Although any skilled linguist who is fluent in the source language and the receiving language can do an acceptable job of rendering the literal sense of the words of Scripture, the most important qualities for a Bible translator to possess are a thorough knowledge of the whole message of Scripture, the aptitude to let Scripture interpret Scripture, and a humble willingness to submit to everything that Scripture says. It was this aptitude, more than the depth of his knowledge of the original languages, that made Luther such a great translator.

A translator must adhere to the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture. This is especially true in communicating the doctrines of Scripture.

- Since Scripture was delivered to the human authors by one divine author, one passage of Scripture cannot be set against another. There are no conflicting theologies in the Bible.
- New Testament interpretations of the meaning of Old Testament prophecies must be accepted. The translator will recognize and preserve direct prophecy where the immediate context or other testimony of Scripture indicates direct prophecy. To obtain a clear understanding of Scripture, translators and readers need to recognize the presence of Christ in both testaments.

What Is the Wartburg Project?

The Wartburg Project is an association of Lutheran professors, pastors, teachers, and lay people who are working together to produce a new translation of the Bible.

For each book of the Bible, a lead translator produces a draft translation, using the best sources available to produce a translation that aims to preserve the heritage of English Bible translation and also to offer fresh insights.

Each book is then reviewed by several technical reviewers on the basis of the Greek or Hebrew text. These reviewers work independently of one another, and their reactions and preferences are collated by the testament editor. Based on discussions between the editor and translator and reviewers, a second-stage draft of the translation is then prepared.

Next the translation goes through popular review by pastors, teachers, and laypeople for clarity and readability. After this input is collated, the final draft is prepared for publication.

Our website contains more detailed descriptions of our procedure.

The Wartburg Project is *collaborative*. No book will be produced by or identified with the name of one individual.

The project is *grassroots*. The *Evangelical Heritage Version* is not the official product of any church body or publishing business (though it is being published and distributed by Northwestern Publishing House). The project has been blessed with a heavy involvement of parish pastors who work with the Word in the daily life of the church. Laypeople and congregations were involved in testing and giving feedback on the translation. For example, many congregations have had the opportunity to test the translation of the gospels through their use of the Lenten Passion History, which is available at our website or from Northwestern Publishing House, and by using our sample lectionaries.

This preliminary edition of the New Testament and Psalms serves the same purpose. It gives congregations and individuals the opportunity to test the translation and to offer suggestions for improvements for the full Bible.

The *Evangelical Heritage Version* is a translation *addressed to the church*. Though the Bible is intended for the whole world, for the most part the original books of the Bible were addressed to the church, to the body of believers. Some of the books were first addressed to specific congregations or individuals. Although the *Evangelical Heritage Version* is designed to be useful for the evangelism efforts of the church, like the original books of the Bible it is addressed to the preaching, teaching, worship life, and devotional use of the church. This first edition aims to be an all-purpose Bible for the church. (God willing, a study Bible will follow, and perhaps specialized products, such as a simplified Bible, a children's Bible, and various levels of commentaries.)

Working on this project has been a great blessing to all the participants. We pray that it will also be a blessing to all its users.

We have tried to keep this introduction as short as possible because more detailed explanations and examples of our translation principles and practices are available on our Wartburg Project website.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See our website, wartburgproject.org,
and our communications on Facebook.

General Editor: Dr. John F. Brug

New Testament Editor: Pastor Brian R. Keller

Principles, Rules, and Rubrics: Our website offers a copy of the principles, rules, and rubrics for our translation. This document has been growing throughout the translation project, and at this time it consists of more than 40 pages of examples.

FAQs: A collection of responses to frequently asked questions is posted on our website. It is designed to address questions and concerns that our readers

Introduction

have about general principles of Bible translation and about specific translation decisions for the *Evangelical Heritage Version*. Two especially important ones are FAQ 8, “Is the *Evangelical Heritage Version* a sectarian translation?” and FAQ 11, “Is the *Evangelical Heritage Version* a literal translation?”

Papers: The library section on our website includes a number of studies on translation principles and on specific translation issues.

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Appendices

Here we address only two of the most asked (and perhaps most emotional) questions:

Appendix 1: Capitalization of References to God

Why don't you capitalize the pronouns that refer to God? That would be very helpful to readers, and it seems to give more honor to God.

The capitalization of nouns and pronouns that refer to God is a comparatively recent convention of English usage. It seems to have become popular only in the 20th century. Such capitalization was not the practice of early English translations, including the original King James Version, nor of Luther's German Bible.

Capitalization of nouns and pronouns that refer to God is not a feature of the original text. Therefore, it falls into the category of interpretation rather than translation. Interpretation is a task that belongs more to a study Bible than to a base translation, so it is better not to adopt capitalization of pronouns as a translation principle.

English style, however, does require that proper names and titles be capitalized, so our translation capitalizes all names and titles of God, including Messianic titles and the proper names of the Messiah that occur in prophecies.

It is important to note that capitalization does not distinguish deity from non-deity. Capitalization distinguishes a title or a proper name from a common noun or an adjective, for example: the Antichrist or an antichrist (1 John 2:18); the Evil One or an evil one, the Church or the church, the Devil or a demon. The capitalization of such words as *Satan*, *Baal*, *Asherah*, *Santa Claus*, the *Easter Bunny*, the *Great Pumpkin*, and *I* demonstrates that capitalization is not intended to indicate deity or reverence.

Our practice therefore is that God's titles are capitalized, but God's attributes or modifiers are not capitalized. God is a rock, but God, our Rock, protects us. God is high, but God Most High (the Hebrew word *elyon*) is the LORD. God's attribute is wisdom, but personified or personal Wisdom in Proverbs is capitalized, including Lady Wisdom.

Capitalization or non-capitalization may also be used to express differences of emphasis. A writer may choose to use the temple or the Temple to indicate whether he is thinking primarily of the type of building that this structure is or he is emphasizing that this is the unique Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem.

But all of these distinctions are not indicated in the original biblical text. They are conventions of the English language.

In short, references to the Messiah or to God are capitalized if they are titles. Otherwise, they are not.

Appendix 2: The Biblical Text

I noticed that your translation sometimes has more words and occasionally even more verses than other recent translations of the New Testament. Why is that?

There are hundreds of handwritten manuscripts of the books of the Hebrew and Greek Bibles. There are many small differences of spelling and wording between these handwritten copies. Copyists are not inspired, and it is possible, maybe even likely, that our printed version will also contain some typos that escaped detection.

Most of the variants in the handwritten manuscripts fall into the same category as typos that do not affect the meaning of the text. But occasionally some manuscripts have copying errors that omit words or even verses. It is this type of variant that an apparatus must deal with.

Recent English translations fall into two general camps in their approach to the text of the New Testament. Some translations closely follow the so-called *Textus Receptus* (TR, Received Text) which was the basis of the King James Version. The so-called *Majority Text* (MT) is not identical to the *Textus Receptus*, but both reconstructions of the text rely heavily on late medieval manuscripts and are sometimes also called the Byzantine text type. Closely following this textual tradition results in a longer text of the New Testament. The King James, New King James, and some of its cousins are examples of translations in the *Textus Receptus* tradition.

The second major approach follows a critically reconstructed text which relies more heavily on older Greek manuscripts, with an emphasis on certain texts from Egypt, where a greater number of very old manuscripts have survived because of the dry climate. This text type is sometimes called the *Alexandrian Text*. A preference for this tradition is summarized in the critical editions of the New Testament known as the United Bible Society (UBS) and Nestle editions (Nestle/Aland, NA). Overall, it is this tradition that results in a shorter text of the New Testament. The NIV, ESV, and HCSB are translations that lean in the direction of the UBS/Nestle tradition.

Our approach to the text of the New Testament is balanced in that it avoids a bias toward any one textual tradition or group of manuscripts. An objective approach considers all the witnesses to the text without showing favoritism for one or the other, since each of these has its own strengths and weaknesses as a witness to the biblical text. In the New Testament, the textual evidence should be weighed on a case-by-case basis.

From a set of variants, our translation adopts the reading that best fits the criteria of having manuscript evidence that is early and that is distributed throughout more than one geographical area of the church. The other readings in a set of variants are dealt with in one of three ways:

- A reading that has very little early or widespread support in the witnesses is not cited in a footnote in order to avoid an overabundance of textual notes.
- A reading with significant early and/or widespread support but not as much early or widespread evidence as the reading included in our trans-

lation may be reflected in a footnote that says, “Some witnesses to the text read/omit: . . .”

- A reading that does not have early or widespread support, but that is familiar to Bible readers because it was present in the King James tradition (for example, the addition or omission of a whole verse) may be reflected in a footnote that says, “A few witnesses to the text read/omit: . . .” or a similar explanatory note.

In short, many readings and verses that are omitted from UBS/Nestle-based versions of the New Testament or that are marked as belonging to a second tier in these versions (such as the ending of Mark) are included in our translation if they have manuscript support that is early and widespread. If there are cases for which the evidence is not clear-cut, our “bias,” if it can be called that, is to include the reading in the text with a note that not all manuscripts have it. The result is that our New Testament is somewhat longer than many recent translations of the New Testament, since it includes readings that they relegate to the footnotes or omit. This is not adding to God’s Word. It is reflecting the textual evidence that has been preserved for us.

In the Old Testament we follow the BHS version of the Leningrad Codex of the *Masoretic Text* as our base text, but also consider variants from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), and other ancient versions. A fuller description of our treatment of the Old Testament text will accompany our full Bible when it is published, but since Psalms is included in this edition, we here provide a brief summary of the terminology in our Old Testament textual notes.

Hebrew: This term refers to the consonantal reading in the main text of the BHS Masoretic text (*the kethiv*).

Alternate Hebrew reading: This term includes the *qere*. The *qere* is also called *the Hebrew reading in the margin*. This term also includes readings that are found as the main body of the text (*the kethiv*) in only a few Hebrew manuscripts. It includes all other types of Hebrew variants, such as *tiq soph*, etc.

Greek or the Greek Old Testament: In the Old Testament apparatus, *Greek Old Testament* refers to readings of the Septuagint. If a reading occurs only in some versions of the Septuagint or in a Greek version like Aquila, we use the term *alternate Greek reading*. In most cases the existence of variants within the Septuagint is not noted.

Versions or ancient versions is used when more than one ancient version supports a reading (Greek, Latin Vulgate, Syriac, etc.)

Dead Sea Scrolls: The notes use the general term, not the names of specific manuscripts.

Samaritan Pentateuch refers to the Samaritan edition of the Hebrew Old Testament.

Targum refers to Jewish paraphrases of the Old Testament without identifying specific editions.

The translation does not mark all departures from the Masoretic punctuation.

We are not attempting to provide a full apparatus, but only to alert English readers to the existence of significant variants and to demonstrate that the existence of textual variants does not affect any doctrine of Scripture. For a serious study of variants, readers must turn to the apparatus of the Hebrew Bible and to commentaries.

Rather than undermining confidence in the message of Scripture, a proper use of textual criticism increases confidence in the message of Scripture because it demonstrates that there is no doctrine of Scripture that is challenged or changed by textual variants.

The Gospel According to

Matthew

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

(Luke 3:23-38)

1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

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

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah. Abijah was the father of Asa. ⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram. Joram was the father^a of Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah was the father of Jotham. Jotham was the father of Ahaz. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh. Manasseh was the father of Amon. Amon was the father of Josiah. ¹¹Josiah was the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the Babylonian exile.

¹²After the Babylonian exile, Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. Abiud was the father of Eliakim. Eliakim was the father of Azor. ¹⁴Azor was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Achim. Achim was the father of Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud was the father of Eleazar. Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom Jesus was born (who is called Christ).

¹⁷So altogether there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen generations from the Babylonian exile to Christ.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage^b to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. ²⁰But as he

The apostle Matthew was the inspired writer of the Gospel according to Matthew. See Matthew 9:9-13 and 10:3 to read about Matthew (who is also called Levi in Mark 2:14-15 and Luke 5:27-29). The approximate date of writing may have been 50 AD.

^a8 The Greek word for *father of* does not always mean immediate ancestor, but can also mean grandfather or male ancestor. In this genealogy, some generations are deliberately skipped to arrive at three groups of fourteen generations (verse 17). Three names are omitted after Joram: Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25; 2 Chronicles 22:1), Joash (2 Kings 11:21; 12:1 [Hebrew text]; 2 Chronicles 24:1), and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1; 2 Chronicles 25:1).

^b18 Or *betrothed*

was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^a because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³“Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel,”^b which means, “God with us.”

²⁴When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, ²⁵but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son.^c And he named him Jesus.

The Visit of the Wise Men

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, when Herod was king, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, ²“Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose^d and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this, he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴He gathered together all the people’s chief priests and experts in the law. He asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, because this was written through the prophet:

“You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not least among the rulers of Judah: because out of you will come a ruler, who will shepherd my people, Israel.”^e

⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the Wise Men and found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report to me, so that I may also go and worship him.”

⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. Then the star they had seen when it rose^f went ahead of them, until it stood still over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced with overwhelming joy. ¹¹After they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²Since they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

Flight to Egypt

¹³After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him.”

^a21 *Jesus means the LORD saves.*

^b23 *Isaiah 7:14*

^c25 Some witnesses to the text omit *her firstborn* and simply read *she gave birth to a son*. (“Witnesses to the text” mentioned in footnotes may include Greek manuscripts, lectionaries, translations, and quotations in the church fathers.)

^d2 *Or in the east*

^e6 *Micah 5:2*

^f9 *Or in the east*

¹⁴Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”^a

Herod Kills the Boys

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious. He issued orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under. This was in keeping with the exact time he had learned from the Wise Men. ¹⁷Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she refused to be comforted,
because they are no more.^b

Return to Nazareth

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. The angel said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to kill the child are dead.”

²¹Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus, Herod’s son, had succeeded his father as ruler in Judea, he was afraid to go there. Since he had been warned in a dream, he went to the region of Galilee. ²³When he arrived there, he settled in a city called Nazareth. So what was spoken through the prophets was fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.”^c

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

(Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18; John 1:19-28)

3 In those days, John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, ²“Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!” ³Yes, this is he of whom this was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
“Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.”^d

⁴John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him. ⁶They were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore produce fruit in keeping with repentance! ⁹Do not think of saying to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for

^a15 Hosea 11:1

^b18 Jeremiah 31:15

^c23 The text does not indicate that this is a direct quotation of the Old Testament, and it does not seem to be an exact quotation of any passage in the Old Testament Scriptures.

^d3 Isaiah 40:3

Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰Already the ax is ready to strike^a the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹I baptize you with water for repentance. But the one who comes after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

John Baptizes Jesus

(Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; compare John 1:29-34)

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John at the Jordan. ¹⁴But John tried to stop him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?”

¹⁵But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, because it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John let him. ¹⁶After Jesus was baptized, he immediately went up out of the water. Suddenly, the heavens were opened for him! He saw the Spirit of God, descending like a dove and landing on him, ¹⁷and a voice out of the heavens said, “This is my Son, whom I love. I am well pleased with him.”

The Devil Tempts Jesus

(Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. ²After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The Tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.”

⁴But Jesus answered, “It is written:

Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.”^b

⁵Then the Devil took him into the holy city. He placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶and he said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written:

He will command his angels concerning you.
And they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”^c

⁷Jesus said to him, “Again, it is written:

You shall not test the Lord your God.”^d

⁸Again the Devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹He said to him, “I will give you all of these things, if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written:

Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”^e

¹¹Then the Devil left him, and just then angels came and served him.

^a10 Literally *is placed against*

^b4 Deuteronomy 8:3

^c6 Psalm 91:11-12

^d7 Deuteronomy 6:16

^e10 Deuteronomy 6:13

Jesus Begins to Preach

¹²When Jesus heard that John was put in prison, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴He did this to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
along the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles,

¹⁶the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light,
and on those dwelling in the region and the shadow of death a light
has dawned.^a

¹⁷From that time, Jesus began to preach: “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near.”

“Come, Follow Me”

(Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-51)

¹⁸As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. ¹⁹He said to them, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

²⁰They immediately left their nets and followed him. ²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

(Mark 1:35-39; Luke 4:42-44)

²³Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴News about him spread throughout all Syria. People brought to him all who were ill with various diseases and suffering severe pains, the demon-possessed, those who experienced seizures, and the paralyzed. Then he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

The Sermon on the Mount

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up onto a mountain. When he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and began to teach them. He said these things:

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn,
because they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the gentle,
because they will inherit the earth.

^a15-16 Isaiah 9:1-2

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
because they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful,
because they will receive mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart,
because they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
because they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. In fact, that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Salt and Light

(Mark 4:21-23; Luke 11:33)

¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its flavor, how will it become salty again? Then it is no good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled on by people. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. No, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶In the same way let your light shine in people’s presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus Fulfills the Old Testament

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸Amen^a I tell you: Until heaven and earth pass away, not even the smallest letter, or even part of a letter, will in any way pass away from the Law until everything is fulfilled. ¹⁹So whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰Indeed I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and experts in the law, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Sinful Anger

²¹“You have heard that it was said to people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,^b and whoever murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²²But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause^c will be subject to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, ‘*Raca*,^d’ will have to answer to the Sanhedrin. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of hell^e fire.

^a18 Usually, people say *Amen* at the end of a prayer. But Jesus used this Hebrew word at the beginning of a statement, which was unique. The inspired writer simply transliterated the Hebrew word that Jesus spoke, instead of using a Greek term. This translation does the same in English. The basic meaning is *I solemnly tell you the truth*.

^b21 Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17

^c22 Some witnesses to the text omit *without a cause*.

^d22 *Raca* was an insulting name in Aramaic which meant something like *numbskull* or *empty-head*.

^e22 *Gehenna*

²³“So if you are about to offer your gift at the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother. Then come and offer your gift.

²⁵“If someone accuses you, reach an agreement with him quickly, while you are with him on the way. Otherwise your accuser may bring you to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Amen I tell you: You will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Lust

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’^a ²⁸but I tell you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to fall into sin, pluck it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand causes you to fall into sin, cut it off and throw it away from you. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Divorce

³¹“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’^b ³²But I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, causes her to be regarded as an adulteress. And whoever marries the divorced woman is regarded as an adulterer.

Oaths

³³“Again you have heard that it was said to people long ago, ‘Do not break your oaths, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.’^c ³⁴But I tell you, do not swear at all: not by heaven, because it is God’s throne; ³⁵and not by earth, because it is his footstool; and not by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your own head, since you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Instead, let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes,’ or ‘No, no.’ Whatever goes beyond these is from the Evil One.

Love Your Enemies

(Luke 6:27-36)

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’^d ³⁹But I tell you, do not resist an evildoer. If someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰If anyone wants to sue you to take away your shirt, give him your coat too. ⁴¹Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor^e and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to

^a27 Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18

^b31 Deuteronomy 24:1

^c33 Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2

^e38 Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20

^d43 Leviticus 19:18

rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶Indeed if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even tax collectors do that, don't they? ⁴⁷If you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the unbelievers do that? ⁴⁸So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Do Not Be Hypocrites

6 "Be careful that you do not do your righteous works^a in front of people, so that they will notice. If you do, you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ²So whenever you perform acts of mercy, do not sound a trumpet for yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be praised by people. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. ³Instead, when you perform acts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴Then your acts of mercy will be in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.^b

⁵"Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by people. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your private room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what others cannot see, will reward you.^c

The Lord's Prayer

(Luke 11:2-4)

⁷"And when you pray, do not babble like the heathen, since they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸However do not be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Therefore pray like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us today our daily bread. ¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. ¹³Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.^d

¹⁴"Indeed if you forgive people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive people their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

¹⁶"Whenever you fast, do not make yourself look sad like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show everyone that they are fasting. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it is not apparent to people that you are fasting, but only to your Father who sees what is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

^{a1} Some witnesses to the text read *charitable giving*.

^{b4} Some witnesses to the text add *publicly*.

^{c6} Some witnesses to the text add *publicly*.

^{d13} Or *the Evil One*. Some witnesses to the text add *For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen*. See Daniel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11.

Treasures

¹⁹“Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. So then if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and *mammon*.^a

Do Not Worry

(Luke 12:22-34)

²⁵“For this reason I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

²⁷“Which of you can add a single moment to his lifespan by worrying? ²⁸Why do you worry about clothing? Consider how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin, ²⁹but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not clothe you even more, you of little faith?

³¹“So do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For the unbelievers^b chase after all these things. Certainly your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Consider the Beam in Your Own Eye

(Luke 6:37-42)

7 “Stop judging, so that you will not be judged. ²For with whatever standard you judge, you will be judged, and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you. ³Why do you focus on^c the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye? ⁴How will you tell your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye,’ when, in fact, you have a beam in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

^a24 *Mammon* is an Aramaic term for worldly wealth and property.

^b32 Or *Gentiles*

^c3 Or *look at, or notice*

Do Not Throw Your Pearls to Pigs

⁶“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.

Keep Praying

(Luke 11:5-13)

⁷“Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened for you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened. ⁹Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, would give him a stone? ¹⁰Or who, if his son asks for a fish, would give him a snake? ¹¹Then if you know how to give good gifts to your children, even though you are evil, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

The Golden Rule

(Luke 6:31)

¹²“So do for others whatever you want people to do for you, because this is the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow Gate

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it. ¹⁴How narrow is the gate, and how difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Watch Out for False Prophets

(Luke 6:43-46)

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. You do not gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles, do you? ¹⁷So then, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, by their fruit you will recognize them. ²¹Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and drive out demons in your name and perform many miracles in your name?’ ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.’

Wise and Foolish Builders

(Luke 6:47-49)

²⁴“Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on bedrock. ²⁵The rain came down, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house. But it did not fall, because it was founded on bedrock. ²⁶Everyone who hears these words of mine but does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came