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BARNABAS

A MAN WHO WAS AN ENCOURAGER

YOU DON'T HAVE to read far in the Scriptures before you meet people like Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, and Peter—people whose names were changed for special reasons. But perhaps the most dramatic example was when the apostles changed Joseph's name to Barnabas (Ac 4:36).

A FAITH EXPERIENCE

The church in Jerusalem was exploding with new converts to Jesus Christ. And when Peter preached a message of faith and repentance following the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, must have been among the thousands who responded to the gospel.

Joseph immediately joined the ranks of those who “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer” (2:42). However, we quickly learn that the apostles had changed his name to Barnabas, which means “Son of Encouragement.” But why?

UNUSUAL GENEROSITY

Barnabas was a well-to-do businessman from Cyprus who had invested wisely in real estate in Jerusalem and the surrounding area. But seeing the need to help the apostles meet the physical needs of new Christians, he voluntarily sold a field he owned and gave the entire proceeds to the apostles to distribute as needed (4:36–37).

Why did the Holy Spirit inspire Luke to record this event? First, the Lord wants us to be exposed to Barnabas's example of generosity. Second, the Lord wants all of us to know that generous people are real encouragers.

Believers who generously support Christian ministry financially remove a burden from the shoulders of spiritual leaders, which is a great source of encouragement. Unfortunately, many Christians don't understand this reality. If they did, they would be far more generous.

DEVOTION TO PEOPLE

Barnabas was also an encourager because of his devotion to people. When Paul returned to Jerusalem—approximately three years following his conversion (Gl 1:18)—he was considered suspect by the other Christians. “He tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, since they did not believe he was a disciple” (Ac 9:26). Understandably, they

thought Paul was feigning his conversion in order to get inside the system and then strike out in persecution at the right moment.

Though several years had gone by, the believers in Jerusalem had not forgotten how this man had contributed to Stephen's death and continued to attack the church (8:1–3). However, Barnabas had taken time to get to know Paul. He knew this former persecutor was for real. Consequently, Barnabas went directly to the apostles and intervened on behalf of this murderer turned missionary (9:27).

SELFLESS EFFORT

Anytime we trust someone, we're taking a risk. Barnabas was willing to take that risk—but not on blind faith. He had taken time to get the facts about Paul—to discover the truth:

- First, he told the apostles that Paul had seen the Lord.
- Second, he was convinced that the Lord had spoken directly to Paul.
- Third, he had heard him preach boldly in the name of Jesus while in Damascus (9:27).
- Fourth, Barnabas also knew that Paul had fled for his own life because of his bold stand for the gospel (9:23–25).

ARE YOU AN ENCOURAGER?

Consider the following questions:

- Are you a generous Christian? What percentage of your income do you give to the Lord's work on a regular basis? Do you consider this generous?
- Are you a trusting Christian? Do you believe in people, seeing the best in them? Do you take time to really get to know people?

If you're having difficulty responding positively to these questions, personalize for yourself Paul's prayer from his letter to the Ephesians:

I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power in your inner being through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph 3:16–19)



AQUILA AND PRISCILLA

TEAMWORK IN MINISTRY

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA were well-to-do Jews who had been living in Italy when the Roman emperor Claudius ordered all the Jews to leave Rome (Ac 18:2). Consequently, they moved to the Greek city of Corinth and set up their tent-making business.

Shortly after their arrival, Paul came to Corinth to preach the gospel. Because Paul needed to provide for his own physical needs while doing his missionary work, he linked up with Aquila and Priscilla in the tent-making trade (18:3–4).

We're not told when Aquila and Priscilla responded to the gospel and became Christians. It may have happened while Paul toiled alongside them, making tents. He certainly would have described his dramatic experience on the road to Damascus—his own conversion to Christ (9:1–19).

More likely, they believed in Jesus as their Messiah while listening to Paul expound the Old Testament Scriptures as “he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks” (18:4). But one thing is certain: At some point, they became convinced that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world (Jn 3:16).

SERVING TOGETHER

While ministering in Corinth, Paul planted a church. He stayed there a year and a half before moving on to Ephesus (Ac 18:11). By that time, Aquila and Priscilla had developed such a deep relationship with Paul that they decided to join him on his journey into Asia.

When they arrived in Ephesus, Paul stayed awhile, once again entering the synagogue each Sabbath to discuss the gospel with the Jews (18:19). The response of the Ephesian Jews was positive, but the Holy Spirit led Paul to leave that city, while Aquila and Priscilla remained to continue the work Paul had begun.

One of this couple's most significant accomplishments in Ephesus was to help a dynamic fellow Jew named Apollos understand more fully the gospel of God's grace. Sensing that Apollos was theologically confused (he was still preaching the baptism of John), they invited him to their home, not only to demonstrate hospitality, but also to share the same good news they had heard from their friend Paul. Apollos responded and became a great preacher and defender of the gospel message (18:24–28).

BACK IN ROME

We're not told how long Aquila and Priscilla stayed in Ephesus. However, when Paul wrote his letter to

the Roman Christians, he again greeted the two of them warmly, along with the church that was meeting at their home (Rm 16:3–5). They were back in Rome, no doubt occupying the home they had left years earlier.

Then Paul let us in on an important character quality possessed by Aquila and Priscilla. They were incredibly loyal to Paul and, more important, to Jesus Christ. Not only had they helped Paul preach the gospel and disciple new believers, but they had also “risked their own necks” for Paul and for the cause of the gospel (16:4).

That may have happened when Paul returned to Ephesus, where his teaching precipitated a sharp decline in business for those who crafted and sold the silver shrines of the goddess Artemis (Ac 19:23–24). The ensuing riot almost cost Paul his own life (19:1–20:1). Aquila and Priscilla would have endured persecution along with Paul, since they certainly would not have stood idly by while their friend, brother, and mentor in Christ stood under fire.

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA TEAMS

Today as then, God is looking for couples who have a heart to minister and who can effectively work together in presenting the gospel and building his church. There is so much you and your wife could do in your local church if you would make your time and energy available to your pastor and other church leaders. Prayerfully consider the options, and then discuss how God might want to use the two of you as a ministry team.

When I was a full-time pastor, I issued a challenge to all of the men serving on my elder board—using Aquila and Priscilla as an example. Most of them were successful businessmen with a number of years ahead of them. Consequently, I urged them to begin at that moment to plan their retirement, thinking in terms of how they and their wives could independently serve the Lord, perhaps even traveling to foreign mission fields to help carry out the Great Commission.

I'm thankful I issued this challenge. Several years later, most of these men—with their wives—took my words seriously. Though each couple had different resources available, most were able to care for themselves adequately in retirement and at the same time serve together in unique ways as husband-and-wife teams.

earth, even less will we if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven.^a ²⁶ His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, **Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.**^{a,b}

²⁷ This expression, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of what can be shaken^c — that is, created things — so that what is not shaken might remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe,^d ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.^e

FINAL EXHORTATIONS

13 Let brotherly love^f continue. ² Don’t neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it.^g ³ Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated,^h as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.^c ⁴ Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and

adulterers.^h ⁵ Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, **I will never leave you or abandon you.**^{d,i} ⁶ Therefore, we may boldly say,

**The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.**

What can man do to me?^{e,j}

⁷ Remember your leaders who have spoken God’s word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith.^k ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.^l ⁹ Don’t be led astray by various kinds of strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be established by grace and not by food regulations, since those who observe them have not benefited.^m ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who worship at the tabernacle do not have a right to eat.ⁿ ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high priest^o as a sin offering are burned outside the camp.^p ¹² Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the gate,^q so that he might

^a 12:25 Heb 2:2–4; 8:5; 11:7
^b 12:26 Ex 19:18; Hg 2:6
^c 12:27 1Co 7:31; 2Pt 3:10
^d 12:28 Dn 2:44; Heb 13:15
^e 12:29 Dt 4:24; 2Th 1:8
^f 13:1 Rm 12:10; 1Pt 1:22
^g 13:2 Gn 18:3; Mt 25:35

◇
^h 13:3–4 Mt 25:36; 1Co 6:9
ⁱ 13:5 Dt 31:6,8; Jos 1:5; Php 4:11
^j 13:6 Ps 27:1; 56:4,11; 118:6; Rm 8:31
^k 13:7 Heb 6:12; 13:17,24
^l 13:8 Jn 8:58; Heb 1:12
^m 13:9 Eph 4:14; Col 2:16
ⁿ 13:10 1Co 9:13; 10:18
^o 13:11 1Co 9:13; 10:18
^p Ex 29:14; Lv 16:27
^q 13:12 Jn 19:17; Ac 7:58

^a 12:26 Hg 2:6 ^b 13:3 Or tortured ^c 13:3 Or mistreated, since you are also in a body ^d 13:5 Dt 31:6 ^e 13:6 Ps 118:6

SELF-CONTROLLED

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

AS PAUL CONCLUDED a list of characteristics that describe the mature man, he used the word self-controlled (Ti 1:8). The Greek word he used could also be translated as “self-disciplined.” Any one of us who has been involved in athletic contests can identify with this concept. It takes discipline to be prepared to compete and endure.

A POWERFUL METAPHOR

The author of Hebrews used the Greek athletic games to illustrate the discipline we need to live the Christian life.

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, *let us lay aside every hindrance* and the sin that so easily ensnares us. *Let us run with endurance the race* that lies before us, *keeping our eyes on Jesus*, the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:1–2, emphasis added)

To compete effectively in these games, an athlete had to “lay aside every hindrance.” This can certainly refer to excessive body weight that restricts quickness, speed, and endurance.

SINFUL PRACTICES

The author of Hebrews identifies this “hindrance” as “the sin that so easily ensnares us.” Paul referred to this as “the works of the flesh,” which includes “sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar” (Gl 5:19–21).

BAD HABITS

We may not indulge in these sinful practices described by Paul, but have we developed habits that keep us from being on the cutting edge spiritually? Do you waste time on unprofitable activities? Do we neglect prayer, church involvement, and Bible reading? Have we developed habits of laziness? Do we simply lack *self-discipline*?

PROPER FOCUS

“Keeping our eyes on Jesus” is perhaps the most important lesson in this athletic metaphor. Any runner in the Greek games who took his eyes off the goal would lose valuable time and concentration. The same is true in the Christian life. When we take our focus off the Lord Jesus, we are in danger of getting spiritually sidetracked.



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more numerous than those of the woman who has a husband.^{a,d}

²⁸ Now you too, brothers and sisters, like Isaac,^b are children of promise.^c ²⁹ But just as then the child born as a result of the flesh persecuted the one born as a result of the Spirit,^d so also now.^e ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? **“Drive out the slave and her son, for the son of the slave will never be a coheir with the son of the free woman.”**^{b,f}

³¹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of a slave but of the free woman.^g

FREEDOM OF THE CHRISTIAN

5 For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm,^h then, and don’t submit again to a yoke of slavery.ⁱ ² Take note! I, Paul, am telling you that if you get yourselves circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all.

³ Again I testify to every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated to do the entire law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace.^j ⁵ For we eagerly await^k through the Spirit, by faith, the hope^l of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith^m working through love.ⁿ

⁷ You were running well. Who prevented you from being persuaded regarding the truth?^{c,o} ⁸ This persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.^p ⁹ A little leaven^q leavens the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰ I myself am persuaded in the Lord you will not accept any other view. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty.^q

¹¹ Now brothers and sisters, if I still preach

^a 4:27 Is 54:1
^b 4:28 Ps 105:9; Jms 2:21
^c Gn 12:7; Rm 9:8; Gl 3:29
^d 4:29 Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33;
 Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl
 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22
^e Gn 21:9
^f 4:30 Gn 21:10
^g 4:31 1Pt 3:6
^h 5:1 Rm 14:4; Php 1:27
ⁱ 4:21–5:1 Gl 4:22

◇
^j 5:4 2Pt 3:18
^k 5:5 Jd 21
^l Rm 8:23–25; 1Th 1:3
^m 5:6 1Th 1:3
ⁿ 1Co 13:1; Jms 2:18–22
^o 5:7 Jn 8:14; 1Jn 5:20
^p 5:8 Col 3:15; 1Pt 1:15
^q 5:10 Mk 12:40

^a 4:27 Is 54:1 ^b 4:30 Gn 21:10 ^c 5:7 Or obeying the truth ^p 5:9 Or yeast

HOLINESS—BECOMING LIKE CHRIST THE MEASURE OF A MAN

AS WE STUDY the concept of Christian conversion and growth, it’s clear from Scripture that there are three basic perspectives on holiness.

POSITIONAL HOLINESS

This concept of holiness is based on how God the Father sees us the moment we sincerely put our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God sees us as perfectly holy because of the perfect holiness of his Son.

This, of course, does not mean we are actually living holy lives as we should and can be. However, we should begin to live the way God planned once we are saved by grace through faith since “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Eph 2:10).

For example, the Corinthian Christians were called “saints” by Paul even though they were still living sinful and carnal lives. This Greek word actually means “holy ones.” In spite of their sinful lifestyles, the Corinthians were set apart as God’s holy people the moment they became believers.

PROGRESSIVE HOLINESS

Because of their previous lifestyles, it took time for the Corinthians to begin to live holy lives on a consistent basis. To become holy and Christlike is a process that should continue until we are with Jesus in heaven.

Becoming holy is a great emphasis in the New Testament letters. Again and again, we’re instructed to become like Christ. When writing to the Corinthians, for example, Paul addressed their sins directly and then urged them to pursue holy lives that reflect Christ’s love.

PERFECT HOLINESS

Living a holy life that reflects the character of Jesus Christ is a lifetime process for all believers. However, when Jesus appears a second time, he’ll transform all true believers into his perfect image. We will be like him (1Co 15:51–55)!

AN ACT OF THE WILL

After our conversion to Christ, all Christians have a choice: Either we can walk by the Spirit and do what he desires, or we can keep in step with our sinful natures to do what we desire. Either we choose to offer the parts of our bodies “to sin as weapons for unrighteousness,” or we choose to offer ourselves to God “as those who are alive from the dead” and yield our bodies “as weapons for righteousness” (Rm 6:13).

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

A Christian who walks by the Spirit will reflect “the fruit of the Spirit” (Gl 5:22) rather than “the works of the flesh” (5:19). Paul outlines this “fruit” in Galatians 5:22–23 and provides examples of the works of the flesh in 5:19–21. When we “walk worthy” of our calling (Eph 4:1), we will reflect the fruit of the Spirit in our relationships.

The primary resource that enables us to walk by the Spirit is the Holy Spirit himself working through the Word of God. Because the Holy Spirit is the divine author of Scripture, and because he indwells every believer, he enables us to live out these truths in our lives—if we yield our lives to him (3:20–21).



thinks he stands must be careful not to fall.^a
¹³No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful;^b he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out^c so that you may be able to bear it.

WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY

¹⁴So then, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.
¹⁵I am speaking as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I am saying. ¹⁶The cup^d of blessing^e that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread^f that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one^g body, since all of us share the one bread. ¹⁸Consider the people of Israel.^h Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?^h ¹⁹What am I saying then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, but I do say that what they^b sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons! ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot share in the Lord's table and the table of demons. ²²Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?ⁱ

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

²³"Everything is permissible,"^c but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible,"^c but not everything builds up. ²⁴No one is to seek his own good, but the good of the other person.^j

²⁵Eat everything that is sold in the meat market, without raising questions for the sake of conscience, ²⁶since **the earth is the Lord's,^k and all that is in it.**^{o, l} ²⁷If any of the unbelievers invites you over and you want to go, eat everything that is set before you, without raising questions for the sake of conscience. ²⁸But if someone says to you, "This is food from a sacrifice," do not eat it,^m out of consideration for the one who told you, and for the sake of conscience.^e ²⁹I do not mean your own conscience, but the other person's. For why is my freedom judgedⁿ by another person's conscience? ³⁰If I partake with thanksgiving,^o why am I criticized because of something for which I give thanks?

³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of

VERSE TO REMEMBER

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31-33

See *A Faithful Witness* on page 938

God.^p ³²Give no offense^q to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, ³³just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many,^r so that they may be saved. ¹Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.^s

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HEAD COVERINGS

²Now I praise you^t because you remember me in everything and hold fast to the traditions^t just as I delivered^u them to you. ³But I want you to know that Christ is the head^v of every man, and the man is the head of the woman,^{g, w} and God is the head of Christ.^x ⁴Every man who prays or prophesies with something on his head dishonors^y his head. ⁵Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since that is one and the same as having her head shaved.^z ⁶For if a woman doesn't cover her head, she should have her hair cut off. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her head be covered.

⁷A man should not cover his head, because he is the image^{aa} and glory of God.^{ab} So too, woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man did not come from woman, but woman came from man.^{ac} ⁹Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. ¹⁰This is why a woman should have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, and man is not independent of woman. ¹²For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman, and all things come from God.^{ad}

¹³Judge^{ae} for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴Does not even nature itself teach^{af}

^a10:12 Pr 24:16; Heb 6:8

^b10:13 Nm 12:7

^c2Pt 2:9

^d10:16 Mt 26:27;

Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17,20;

1Co 11:25-26

^eMk 6:41; Gl 3:14

^fMt 26:26; Mk 14:22;

Lk 22:19; Ac 2:42,46; 20:7

^g10:17 Jn 11:52; Eph 4:4

^h10:18 Gn 8:20; Lv 1:5;

Nm 3:26; Dt 12:27;

1Sm 2:28; 1Ch 6:49;

Ps 26:6; Ezk 8:15;

Heb 7:13

ⁱ10:22 Ec 6:10

^j10:24 Mk 10:45; Php 2:4

^k10:26 Mk 13:19

^lPs 24:1

^m10:28 Lk 10:8

ⁿ10:29 Lk 6:37

^o10:30 Mk 8:6; Rm 1:8

◇

^p10:31 Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32;

Jn 17:24; 2Co

3:18; 2Pt 3:18

^q10:32 Ac 24:16; Php 1:10

^r10:33 Mk 10:45

^s11:1 Php 2:5; 1Pt 2:21

^t11:2 2Th 2:15; 3:6

^uJd 3

^v11:3 Eph 1:22; 4:15;

Col 1:18; 2:10,19

^wGn 3:16; Eph 5:23

^x1Co 3:23

^y11:4 1Pt 3:16

^z11:5 Dt 21:11-12

^{aa}11:7 Gn 1:27

^{ab}Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32;

Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18;

2Pt 3:18

^{ac}11:8 Gn 2:21-23;

1Tm 2:13

^{ad}11:12 Ps 104:24; Rv 3:14

^{ae}11:13 Jn 5:22-30

^{af}11:14 Mt 28:20;

Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11

^a10:18 Lit Look at Israel according to the flesh ^b10:20 Other mss read Gentiles ^c10:23 Other mss add for me ^d10:26 Ps 24:1

^e10:28 Other mss add "For the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it." ^f11:2 Other mss add brothers, ^g11:3 Or the husband is the head of the wife

glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

¹² Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you.^a ¹³ Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ,^b so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed.^c ¹⁴ If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ,^d you are blessed, because the Spirit^e of glory and of God^a rests on you.¹⁵ Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler.^b ¹⁶ But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name.^c ¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment^f to begin with God's household,^g and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

¹⁸ **And if a righteous person is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?**^{h,i}

¹⁹ So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves^j to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

VERSE TO REMEMBER

Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 PETER 5:2-3

See *Embracing Servant Leadership* on page 1092

ABOUT THE ELDERS

5 I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness^j to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed.^k ² Shepherd God's flock among you,^l not overseeing^e out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you;^f not out of greed for money but eagerly,³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.⁴ And when the chief Shepherd^m appears, you will receive the unfading crownⁿ of glory.⁵ In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with^c humility toward one another, because **God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.**^{h,i,o}

^a 4:12 1Pt 1:6-7
^b 4:13 Gl 5:24; Php 3:10
^c 1Co 1:7; Eph 1:17; 2Th 1:7; 1Pt 1:7,13
^d 4:14 Ps 89:50-51; Ac 5:41; 1Pt 2:20
^e Ac 4:33; Rv 3:22
^f 4:17 Mk 12:40; Jn 5:22; Heb 10:27; 13:4
^g Gl 6:10; Eph 2:19; 1Tm 3:15; Heb 3:2
^h 4:18 Pr 11:31
ⁱ 4:19 Ps 10:14; 2Co 1:9
^j 5:1 Ac 4:20
^k Rm 8:18; Col 3:4
^l 5:2 Jr 3:15; 23:1; Jn 21:16; Ac 20:28
^m 5:4 Jn 10:11,14; 21:15-17; Heb 13:20; 1Pt 2:25
ⁿ 1Co 9:25; Rv 12:1
^o 5:5 Pr 3:34; Jms 4:6

^a 4:14 Or God's glorious Spirit ^b 4:15 Or as one who defrauds others ^c 4:16 Other mss read in that case ^d 4:18 Pr 11:31 LXX

^e 5:2 Other mss omit overseeing ^f 5:2 Other mss omit as God would have you ^g 5:5 Or you tie around yourselves

^{h,i} 5:5 Pr 3:34 LXX

HOSPITALITY—A BIBLICAL MANDATE THE MEASURE OF A MAN

TO THE CHRISTIANS in Rome, Paul wrote, "Share with the saints in their needs; pursue hospitality" (Rm 12:13). To another group of believers, Peter wrote, "Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since 'love covers a multitude of sins.' Be hospitable to one another without complaining" (1Pt 4:8-9).

AN AMAZING EXAMPLE

When Peter preached about Jesus on the day of Pentecost, thousands of Jews—both from Judea and from throughout the Hellenistic world—were converted to Jesus Christ. They had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. However, once the church was born, many of the Hellenistic Jews stayed in Jerusalem to see what would happen.

We then see an amazing demonstration of hospitality: "For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold

them, brought the proceeds of what was sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need" (Ac 4:34-35).

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unusual demonstration of love and care illustrates what it means to be hospitable. Unusual circumstances will always create special needs among God's people. When a famine hit the believers in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch came to the rescue (11:27-30). When Paul faced special needs because of his imprisonment in Rome, the Philippian church rose to the occasion (Php 4:10-20).

Special needs emerge in the same way today. When they do, God's people should respond. This may require monetary gifts, or it may involve using one's home and other material resources to minister to others with love and friendship.



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^a5:6 Lk 14:11
^b1Kg 8:42; 2Ch 6:32;
 Dn 9:15
^c5:7 Ps 55:22
^d5:8 1Th 5:6,8;
 2Tm 4:5; 1Pt 1:13; 4:7
^eRv 16:15
^fMt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10
^g5:9 Eph 6:13–14; Jms 4:7
^h5:10 1Pt 5:1,4; 2Pt 3:18
 ◇
ⁱ5:12 Ac 15:22;
 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1
^j5:13 Rv 14:8; 16:19;
 17:5,18; 18:2,10,21
^k5:14 Rm 16:16; 1Co 16:20;
 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26
^lEph 6:23

CONCLUSION

⁶Humble^a yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand^b of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.^c
⁸Be sober-minded,^d be alert.^e Your adversary the devil^f is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. ⁹Resist him,^g firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

¹⁰The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory^h in Christ,^a will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while.^b ¹¹To him be dominion^c forever.^d Amen.

VERSE TO REMEMBER

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time. 1 PETER 5:6

See *A True Test of Maturity* on page 94

¹²Through Silvanus,^{e,j} a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! ¹³She who is in Babylon,^j chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. ¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love.^k Peace^l to all of you who are in Christ.^f

^a5:10 Other mss read *in Christ Jesus* ^b5:10 Or *to a small extent* ^c5:11 Some mss read *dominion and glory*; other mss read *glory and dominion* ^d5:11 Other mss read *forever and ever* ^e5:12 Or *Silas*; Ac 15:22–32; 16:19–40; 17:1–16 ^f5:14 Other mss read *Christ Jesus. Amen.*

GENESIS

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

Since pre-Christian times, authorship of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 2Ch 23:18; Neh 8:1; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; Rm 10:5; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Genesis suggests that minor editorial changes dating to ancient times have been inserted into the text. Examples include the mention of "Dan" (14:14), a city that was not named until the days of the judges (Jdg 18:29), and the use of a phrase that assumed the existence of Israelite kings (Gn 36:31).

The Torah (Hebrew for "law") was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC. Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (lit "five vessels"). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the "primeval history," showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the "patriarchal history," focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. Genesis unfolds God's plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham's descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God's original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God's covenant with Israel that was established with the giving of the Law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the Law.

STRUCTURE

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book and is mentioned more frequently than any other character in the Bible. The content of the first eleven chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase "these are the family records." The phrase is broader in meaning than simply "generation" and refers more to a narrative account. This was a common practice in ancient Near Eastern writings. This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

2200 BC

- Earliest pottery in South America **2200**
- **ABRAHAM 2166–1991**
- **JOB 2100?–1900?**
- Construction of Ziggurat at Ur in Sumer **2100**
- Abraham moves from Haran to Canaan. **2091**
- Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah **2085**
- God's covenant with Abraham **2081?**
- Ishmael born **2080?**
- **ISAAC 2066–1886**
- **JACOB 2006–1859**

2000 BC

- Contraceptives are developed in Egypt. **2000**
- Chinese create first zoo, Park of Intelligence. **2000**
- Babylonians and Egyptians divide days into hours, minutes, and seconds. **2000**
- Mesopotamians learn to solve quadratic equations. **2000**
- Code of medical ethics, Mesopotamia **2000**
- Courier systems of communication are developed in both China and Egypt. **2000**
- **JOSEPH 1915–1805**

11TH DYNASTY OF EGYPT 2134–1991

3RD DYNASTY OF UR 2113–2006

12TH DYNASTY OF EGYPT 1991–1786

OUTLINE

- I. CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH (1:1–2:3)
- II. THE HUMAN FAMILY IN AND OUTSIDE THE GARDEN (2:4–4:26)
- III. ADAM’S FAMILY LINE (5:1–6:8)
- IV. NOAH AND HIS FAMILY (6:9–9:29)
- V. THE NATIONS AND THE TOWER OF BABEL (10:1–11:26)
- VI. FATHER ABRAHAM (11:27–25:11)
- VII. ISHMAEL’S FAMILY LINE (25:12–18)
- VIII. ISAAC’S FAMILY: JACOB AND ESAU (25:19–35:29)
- IX. ESAU’S FAMILY (36:18)
- X. ESAU, FATHER OF THE EDOMITES (36:9–37:1)
- XI. JACOB’S FAMILY: JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS (37:2–50:26)

READING PLAN

<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 1–3	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 12:1–13:4	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 23:1–25:18	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 33–34	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 42–43
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 4–5	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 13:5–16:16	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 25:19–26:35	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 35–36	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 44:1–45:15
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 6–8	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 17–18	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 27–28	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 37–38	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 45:16–46:34
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 9–10	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 19–20	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 29–30	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 39	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 47:1–49:28
<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 21–22	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 31–32	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 40–41	<input type="checkbox"/> Genesis 49:29–50:26

1900 BC

1800 BC



- Benjamin is born; Rachel dies. **1900**
 - Potter’s wheel is introduced to Crete. **1900**
 - Use of the sail in the Aegean **1900**
 - Egyptian town of El Lahun gives evidence of town planning with streets at right angles. **1900**
- Mesopotamian mathematicians discover what later came to be called the Pythagorean theorem. **1900**
 - Joseph sold into Egypt **1898**
 - Khnumhotep II, an architect of Pharaoh Amenemhet II, develops encryption. **1900**
- Musical theory, Mesopotamia **1800**
 - Multiplication tables, Mesopotamia **1800**
 - Babylonians develop catalog of stars and planets. **1800**
 - Book of the Dead, Egypt **1800**
- Horses are introduced in Egypt. **1800**
 - Wooden plows, Scandinavia **1800**

JOHN

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

A close reading of the Gospel of John suggests that the author was an apostle (1:14; cp. 2:11; 19:35), one of the Twelve (“the disciple Jesus loved”; 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20; cp. 21:24–25), and, still more specifically, John, the son of Zebedee. The church fathers, too, attested to this identification (e.g., Irenaeus). Because the apostolic office was foundational in the history of the church (Ac 2:42; Eph 2:20), the apostolic authorship of John’s Gospel invests it with special authority as a firsthand eyewitness (Jn 15:27; 1Jn 1:1–4).

The most plausible date of writing is the period between AD 70 (the date of the destruction of the temple) and 100 (the end of John’s lifetime), with a date in the 80s most likely. A date after 70 is suggested by the references to the Sea of Tiberias in 6:1 and 21:1 (a name widely used for the Sea of Galilee only toward the end of the first century); Thomas’s confession of Jesus as “my Lord and my God” in 20:28 (possibly a statement against emperor worship in the time of Domitian); the reference to Peter’s martyrdom, which occurred in 65 or 66 (21:19); the lack of reference to the Sadducees, who ceased to be a Jewish religious party after 70; and the comparative ease with which John equated Jesus with God (1:1,14,18; 10:30; 20:28).

The testimony of the early church also favors a date after AD 70. Clement of Alexandria stated, “Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain [in the other canonical Gospels] . . . composed a spiritual gospel” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7). The most likely place of writing is Ephesus (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.1.2; see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.1.1), one of the most important urban centers of the Roman Empire at the time, though the envisioned readership of John’s Gospel transcends any one historical setting.

John’s original audience was probably composed of people in the larger Greco-Roman world in Ephesus and beyond toward the close of the first century AD. Hence John frequently explained Jewish customs and Palestinian geography and translated Aramaic terms into Greek.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Of all the Gospels and any of the New Testament books, the Gospel of John most clearly teaches the deity and preexistence of Christ (1:1–2,18; 8:58; 17:5,24; 20:28). Together with the Gospel of Matthew, it provides the most striking proofs of Jesus’s messiahship. It does so by narrating seven messianic signs, by seven “I am” statements of Jesus, by specific fulfillment quotations, especially at Jesus’s passion, and by showing how Jesus fulfilled the symbolism inherent in a variety of Jewish festivals and institutions. Jesus’s messianic mission is shown to originate with God the Father, “the one who sent” Jesus (7:16,18,28,33; 8:26,29; 15:21), and to culminate in his commissioning of his new messianic community in the power of his Spirit (20:21–22). John’s Trinitarian teaching is among the most overt presentations of the tri-unity of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—in the entire New Testament and has provided much of the material for early Trinitarian and Christological formulations in the history of the church.

STRUCTURE

John is divided into two main parts. In the first section (chaps. 2–11) the focus is on both Jesus’s ministry to “the world” and the signs he performed. Jesus performs seven signs that meet with varying responses. The second major section (chaps. 12–21) reveals Jesus’s teaching to his disciples and the triumphant “hour” of his passion. John’s record of the passion

AD 18–29

- Caiaphas is high priest. **18–36**
- Pontius Pilate is prefect of Judea. **26–36**
- John the Baptist’s ministry begins. **29**
- Jesus’s baptism **29**
- Jesus’s wilderness temptations **29**
- Jesus’s call of his first disciples **29**

AD 30–33

- Jesus cleanses the temple at Passover. **30**
- Jesus’s ministry in Galilee **AUTUMN 30 to SPRING 32**
- Jesus’s feeding of the 5,000 during Passover **32**
- Jesus’s teachings at the Festival of Shelters **AUTUMN 32**
- Growing opposition to Jesus at the Festival of Dedication **WINTER 32/33**

focuses on Jesus's control of the events. He had to instruct his adversaries on how to arrest him (18:4–8). Pilate struggled with his decision, but Jesus knew

what would happen. Jesus died as the Lamb and was sacrificed at the very time lambs were being sacrificed for Passover (19:14).

OUTLINE

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>I. PROLOGUE: CHRIST AS THE ETERNAL WORD (1:1–18)</p> <p>A. THE WORD (1:1)</p> <p>B. THE WORD AND CREATION (1:2–5)</p> <p>C. THE WORD AND THE WORLD (1:6–18)</p> | <p>C. THE TRUE VINE (15:1–27)</p> <p>D. THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT (16:1–33)</p> <p>E. JESUS'S HIGH-PRIESTLY PRAYER (17:1–26)</p> |
| <p>II. PRESENTATION OF CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD (1:19–12:50)</p> <p>A. BY JOHN THE BAPTIST (1:19–34)</p> <p>B. TO HIS DISCIPLES (1:35–51)</p> <p>C. THROUGH MIRACULOUS SIGNS (2:1–12:50)</p> | <p>IV. SUFFERING OF CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD (18:1–20:31)</p> <p>A. HIS ARREST, TRIAL, AND DEATH (18:1–19:42)</p> <p>B. HIS TRIUMPH OVER DEATH (20:1–31)</p> |
| <p>III. INSTRUCTION OF THE TWELVE BY THE SON OF GOD (13:1–17:26)</p> <p>A. THE LAST SUPPER (13:1–38)</p> <p>B. THE WAY TO THE FATHER (14:1–31)</p> | <p>V. EPILOGUE: THE CONTINUING WORK OF THE SON OF GOD (21:1–25)</p> <p>A. APPEARANCES TO HIS DISCIPLES (21:1–14)</p> <p>B. ASSIGNMENT TO HIS DISCIPLES (21:15–25)</p> |

READING PLAN

<input type="checkbox"/> John 1:1–34	<input type="checkbox"/> John 6:1–59	<input type="checkbox"/> John 10:1–42	<input type="checkbox"/> John 14:1–31	<input type="checkbox"/> John 18:28–19:16a
<input type="checkbox"/> John 1:35–2:25	<input type="checkbox"/> John 6:60–7:24	<input type="checkbox"/> John 11:1–44	<input type="checkbox"/> John 15:1–16:4	<input type="checkbox"/> John 19:16b–42
<input type="checkbox"/> John 3:1–36	<input type="checkbox"/> John 7:25–8:11	<input type="checkbox"/> John 11:45–12:19	<input type="checkbox"/> John 16:5–33	<input type="checkbox"/> John 20:1–31
<input type="checkbox"/> John 4:1–42	<input type="checkbox"/> John 8:12–59	<input type="checkbox"/> John 12:20–50	<input type="checkbox"/> John 17:1–26	<input type="checkbox"/> John 21:1–25
<input type="checkbox"/> John 4:43–5:47	<input type="checkbox"/> John 9:1–41	<input type="checkbox"/> John 13:1–38	<input type="checkbox"/> John 18:1–27	

AD 33

- Jesus raises Lazarus from death. **WINTER 33**
- Jesus's last journey to Jerusalem by way of Samaria and Galilee **LATE WINTER 33**
- Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem **SUNDAY, NISAN 9, 33**

- Jesus's second cleansing of the temple **MONDAY, NISAN 10, 33**
- Jesus teaches in the temple and prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. **TUESDAY, NISAN 11, 33**

- Judas bargains with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus. **TUESDAY EVENING, NISAN 11, 33**
- Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples. **THURSDAY EVENING, NISAN 13, 33**
- Jesus's trials and crucifixion **FRIDAY, NISAN 14, 33**

AD 33

- Jesus's resurrection **SUNDAY, NISAN 16, 33**
- Jesus's ascension; forty days after his resurrection **33**
- Day of Pentecost; seven weeks following Jesus's resurrection **MAY 24, 33**