

The
HOLY BIBLE



The
HOLY BIBLE

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

Containing the Old and New Testaments



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PREFACE

The Bible

The Bible is God’s personal Word to us. In the Bible, God tells us how he made the world and why we are here. He tells us that his eternal Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, and that, because of this, we can live forever in heaven with him. Because God is always good and truthful, his written Word, the Bible, is worthy of our complete confidence and trust.

English Translations of the Bible

God’s message to us was recorded in the Bible between 2,000 and 3,500 years ago. The Bible was not originally written in English, but in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Since most of us today do not know these languages, God has enabled people around the world to translate his written Word into thousands of different languages. In 1526, William Tyndale became the first person to translate the New Testament from the original Greek into English. The most famous English translation of the Bible, the King James Version, was published in England in 1611. For many years, it was the Bible that most English-speaking people read. Millions of people still read it today.

But as time has passed, the English language has changed. Various words and phrases in the King James Version have become harder to understand. So through the years several new translations have been made. These include the English Revised Version (1885), the American Standard Version (1901), and the Revised Standard Version (1952; 1971). The English Standard Version (ESV) Bible is a part of this historic tradition of Bible translation.

Translating from one language to another is never easy. Bible translators must know Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. They need good English writing skills. They must be able to choose words that people of all ages will understand. They must be humble enough to let other translators correct their work. No one is able to do this work perfectly. Translators can only try their best to be faithful to God’s Word and helpful to readers. There are two main ways most of them do this.

Some Bible translators use a “thought-for-thought” method of translation. They read the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek and decide how to put the basic thoughts into English words. They are generally not concerned with keeping the original order of the sentence. They also may leave out words they don’t think are needed for understanding a thought. Sometimes they try to make long sentences easier to understand by dividing them into several shorter sentences.

Other translators use a “word-for-word” translation method. They translate the Bible in a way that reflects every single word in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts as transparently as possible. They also translate sentences in a way that pays greater attention to the order in which they were originally written. Until recent times, this was the way most English Bible translations were done. The ESV is this kind of translation—a “word-for-word” translation—which we believe is the best way to show *what* the Bible says and *how* it says it.

Sometimes this may mean you will read words that you’ll see only in the Bible or hear in church—words like “justification” and “sanctification.” Or you will read words that

mean something different in the Bible than in current English. The word “unclean” is an example of this. Although such words may be unfamiliar, they are important words that are worth learning.

Bible translators also want readers to come to know and love the Bible as much as they do, so while trying to be as accurate as possible in their work, they also try to use English words that are as interesting and beautiful as the Bible’s original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words.

There are a couple of words, in particular, that you should know about as a Bible reader. You will often find the Old and New Testament authors using the word “Behold!” This is a helpful word because it means something like “Pay careful attention to the words that come next!” It helps us read more carefully.

Another word you should know about is one of the Bible’s names for God. The Old Testament authors used three different Hebrew words to describe God. These are translated as “God,” “Lord” (spelled the way we usually spell it), or “LORD” (spelled with small capital letters). The last one translates God’s personal name. He revealed this name to Moses in Exodus 3:14.

Special Notes in the ESV Bible

As you read the ESV Bible, you will often see a number following a word, which will call your attention to a note at the bottom of the page. For instance, at Genesis 1:26, when you read, “Let us make man¹ . . .”, the number 1 invites you to read note 1 at the bottom of the page. These notes will help you in various ways.

For example, some things you read may make you think that the Bible doesn’t say very much about women. You will read that God made “man” in his image (Gen. 1:26). In Psalm 1:1, you will read about God making promises to “the man” who serves him. In the New Testament you will often read about someone addressing a group of people as

“brothers” without saying anything about “sisters.” Or you will read about promises to “sons” (Rom. 8:14). The notes on these verses will help you see that the Bible is not ignoring girls or women. The note on Genesis 1:26 will tell you that the Hebrew word translated “man” includes both men and women. Notes in the New Testament will show you where the Greek word translated “brothers” includes both “brothers and sisters.” The note on Romans 8:14 shows you that “sons” also includes “daughters.”

Second, you may be troubled when you see words like “slave,” “servant,” and “bond-servant.” You will likely wonder if the Bible approves of the sort of slavery that existed in the United States and other nations in past times and that still exists in some nations today. The Bible condemns such slavery many times, and it often explains how people in these situations should be treated.

As the ESV notes will tell you, the Old Testament uses the Hebrew word *ebed* to describe all sorts of servants. A servant could be someone who agreed to work for someone else for pay, or to repay a debt. In some cases, he might have agreed to work for someone for the rest of his life. A servant could also be someone captured in war and made to serve someone else, or someone sold into slavery. Readers have to pay attention to each situation. In the Old Testament the ESV uses the word “slave” when people were owned by someone else and had little chance of freedom. Otherwise it normally uses the word “servant.”

The New Testament uses the Greek word *doulos* (or *sundoulos*) to describe people in the same types of situations. The ESV translates the word as “slave” when someone had little hope of becoming free. It translates the word as “bondservant” when someone could gain freedom by paying a set price or by serving for a set length of time. It translates the word “servant” when a person simply worked for someone else. As with “man” and “brothers and sisters,” the ESV includes notes to help

you know which kind of situation you are reading about.

Third, the Bible often uses names that have a special meaning. The names may be those of people or places. The ESV provides notes when the text cannot really be understood unless you know what the name means.

Fourth, the Bible describes several kinds of skin diseases with a word that the ESV translates as “leprosy.” The notes let you know that the word does not refer to Hansen’s Disease, the type of leprosy most familiar to modern readers.

Fifth, sometimes the ESV translators had to choose between two English words that mean nearly the same thing. Knowing both words may help you understand the verse better. These notes begin with the word “Or” and then give the second possible meaning.

Finally, you will find brackets and special notes at Psalm 145:13, Mark 16:8, and John 7:52. Translators use the oldest and best Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek copies avail-

able. Some of these manuscripts include the words in brackets in Psalm 145:13. Most of them leave out Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 or place them somewhere else.

The ESV translators made other decisions about the best manuscripts to use, to translate the Bible from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into English. You can read about these translation choices in the *ESV Study Bible* or in the more detailed preface to the standard edition of the ESV. This standard edition of the ESV also includes a fuller set of textual notes. It is available for free online access at esv.org.

The Purpose of the ESV Bible

Many people made the ESV Bible translation possible. We hope this Bible will help you know God by trusting in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14).

Soli Deo Gloria!—To God alone be the glory!
The Translation Oversight Committee

The
OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS

The Creation of the World

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day

from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man¹ in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock

¹The Hebrew word used here for *man* includes both men and women (see 1:27) and refers to the entire human race (see Preface)

and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The Seventh Day, God Rests

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Creation of Man and Woman

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD¹ God made the earth and the heavens.

5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not

caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” ¹⁹ Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God

¹ The word *LORD*, when spelled with small capital letters, translates the Hebrew word for God's personal name, *Yahweh* (see Preface)

caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”¹

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the LORD God

called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in
childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children.
Your desire shall be contrary to your
husband,
but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice
of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days
of your life;

¹The Hebrew words for *woman* (*ishshah*) and *man* (*ish*) sound alike

18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth
for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the
field.
19 By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”

20 The man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.¹
21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.
24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten² a man with the help of the LORD.”
2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.³ In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground,⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering,⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.⁶ The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen?⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”

8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?”¹⁰ And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.¹¹ And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.¹² When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.¹⁴ Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.¹⁶ Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod,³ east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.²¹ His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

23 Lamech said to his wives:

“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, listen to what I
say:

¹ Eve sounds like the Hebrew for *life-giver* ² Cain sounds like the Hebrew for *gotten* ³ Nod means *wandering*

I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.

²⁴ If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,
then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

²⁵ And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed¹ for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him."
²⁶ To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD.

Adam's Descendants to Noah

5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.⁴ The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters.⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh.⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters.⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan.¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters.¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

¹² When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel.¹³ Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters.¹⁴ Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died.

¹⁵ When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared.¹⁶ Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters.¹⁷ Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years, he fathered Enoch.¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters.²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah.²² Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters.²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

²⁵ When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he fathered Lamech.²⁶ Methuselah lived after he fathered Lamech 782 years and had other sons and daughters.²⁷ Thus all the days of Methuselah were 969 years, and he died.

²⁸ When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, "Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief² from our work and from the painful toil of our hands."³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters.³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died.

³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Increasing Corruption on Earth

6 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them,² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."⁴ The Nephilim³ were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

⁵ The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only

¹ Seth sounds like the Hebrew for he appointed ² Noah sounds like the Hebrew for relief ³ Or giants