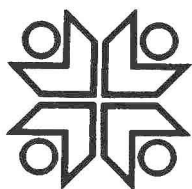


Good News Bible

Today's English Version



UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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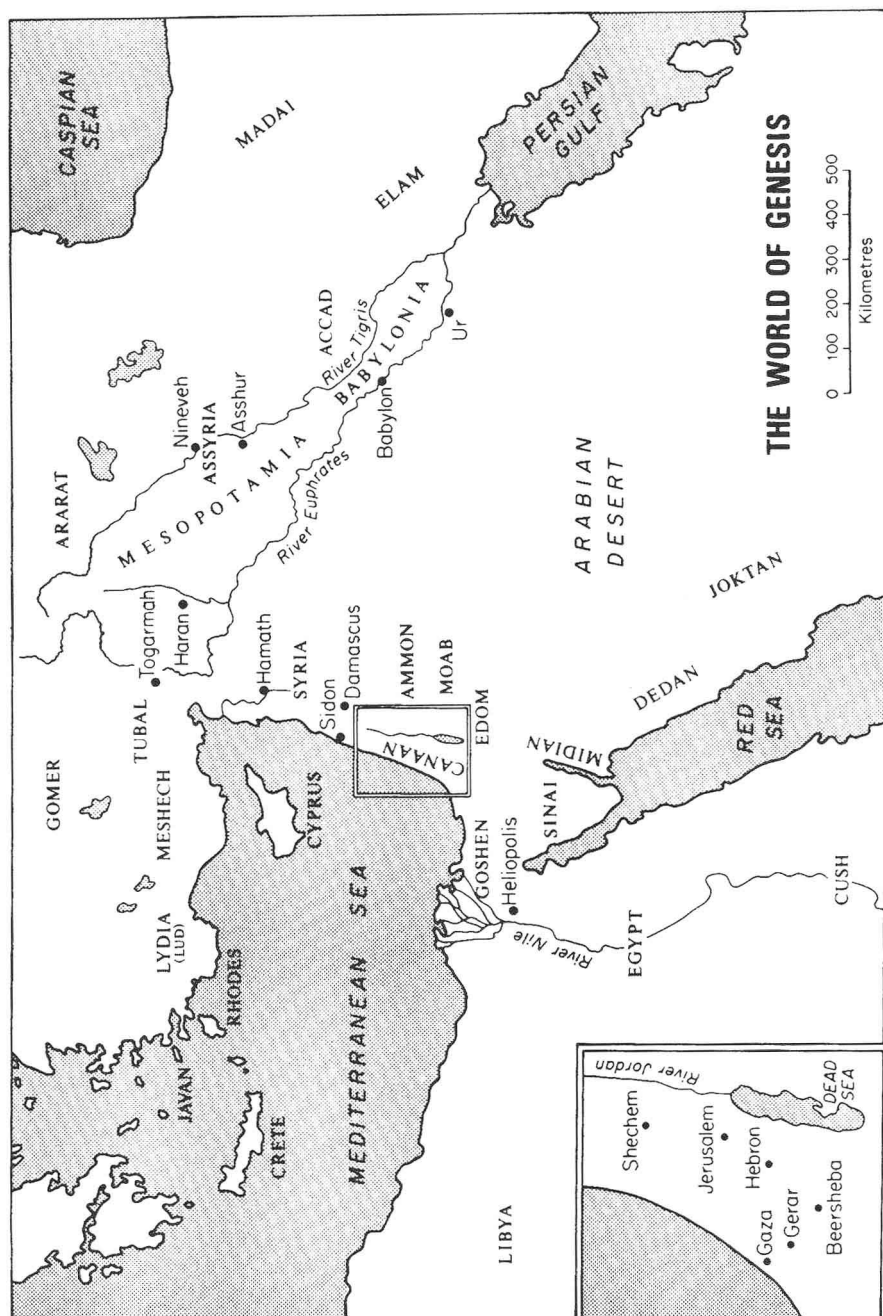
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The *United Bible Societies* is a worldwide fellowship of National Bible Societies working in more than 150 countries. Their aim is to reach every person with the Bible or some part of it in a language he can understand and at a price he can afford. Between them they distribute more than 450 million Scriptures every year.

THE OLD TESTAMENT



emendation was adopted, the note reads *Probable text* (e.g. Genesis 10.14). In the New Testament there are textual notes indicating some of the places where there are significant differences among the Greek manuscripts. These differences may consist of additions to the text (e.g. Matthew 21.43), deletions (e.g. Matthew 24.36), or substitutions (e.g. Mark 1.41). (3) *Alternative Renderings*. In many places the precise meaning of the original text is in dispute, and there are two or more different ways in which the text may be understood. In some of the more important of such instances an alternative rendering is given (e.g. Genesis 2.9; Matthew 6.11). (4) *References to Other Passages*. In addition to the notes there are references, by book, chapter, and verse, to other places in the Bible where identical or similar matters or ideas are dealt with.

There are several appendices at the end of the volume. A Word List identifies many objects or cultural features whose meaning may not be known to all readers. A Chronological Chart gives the approximate dates of the major events recorded in the Bible. An *Index* locates some of the more important subjects, persons, places, and events in the Bible. A List of Passages from the ancient Greek translation (the Septuagint) of the Old Testament, which are quoted or paraphrased in the New Testament and which differ significantly in meaning from the Hebrew Masoretic Text, will help the reader to understand some otherwise puzzling differences in quotations. The maps are designed to help the reader to visualize the geographical setting of countries and localities mentioned in the Bible.

The numbering of chapters and verses in this translation follows the traditional system of major English translations of the Bible. In some instances, however, where the order of thought or events in two or more verses is more clearly represented by a rearrangement of the material, two or more verse numbers are joined (e.g., Exodus 2.15-16; Acts 1.21-22).

No one knows better than the translators how difficult has been their task. But they have performed it gladly, conscious always of the presence of the Holy Spirit and of the tremendous debt which they owe to the dedication and scholarship of those who have preceded them. The Bible is not simply great literature to be admired and revered; it is Good News for all people everywhere—a message both to be understood and to be applied in daily life. It is with the prayer that the Lord of the Scriptures will be pleased to use this translation for his sovereign purpose that the United Bible Societies now publish *The Bible in Today's English*. And to Christ be the glory for ever and ever!

Preface

In September 1966 the American Bible Society published *The New Testament in Today's English Version*, a translation intended for people everywhere for whom English is either their mother tongue or a language they learn. Shortly afterwards the United Bible Societies requested the American Bible Society to undertake on its behalf a translation of the Old Testament following the same principles. Accordingly the American Bible Society appointed a group of translators to prepare the translation. In 1971 this group added a British consultant representing the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland. The translation of the Old Testament now appears together with the fourth edition of the New Testament.

The basic text for the Old Testament is the Masoretic Text printed in *Biblia Hebraica* (3rd edition, 1937), edited by Rudolf Kittel. In some instances the words of the printed consonantal text have been divided differently or have been read with a different set of vowels; at times a variant reading (*qere*) in the margin of the Hebrew text has been followed instead of the reading in the text (*kethiv*); and in other instances a variant reading supported by one or more Hebrew manuscripts has been adopted. Where no Hebrew source yields a satisfactory meaning in the context, the translation has either followed one or more of the ancient versions (e.g. Greek, Syriac, Latin) or has adopted a reconstructed text (technically referred to as a conjectural emendation) based on scholarly agreement; such departures from the Hebrew are indicated in footnotes.

The basic text for the New Testament is *The Greek New Testament* published by the United Bible Societies (3rd edition, 1975), but in a few instances the translation is based on a variant reading supported by one or more Greek manuscripts.

Drafts of the translation in its early stages were sent for comments and suggestions to a Review Panel consisting of prominent theologians and Biblical scholars appointed by the American Bible Society Board of Managers in its capacity as trustee for this text. In addition, drafts were sent to major English-speaking Bible Societies. Final approval of the text on behalf of the United Bible Societies was given by the American Bible Society's Board of Managers upon the recommendation of its Translations Department Committee.

The primary concern of the translators has been to provide a faithful translation of the meaning of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. Their first task was to understand correctly the meaning of the original. At times the original meaning cannot be precisely known, not only because the meaning of some words and phrases cannot be determined with a great degree of assurance but also because the underlying cultural and historical context is sometimes beyond recovery. All aids available were used in this task, including the ancient versions and the modern translations in English and other

languages. After ascertaining as accurately as possible the meaning of the original, the translators' next task was to express that meaning in a manner and form easily understood by the readers. Since this translation is intended for all who use English as a means of communication, the translators have tried to avoid words and forms not in current or widespread use; but no artificial limit has been set to the range of the vocabulary employed. Every effort has been made to use language that is natural, clear, simple, and unambiguous. Consequently there has been no attempt to reproduce in English the parts of speech, sentence-structure, word-order, and grammatical devices of the original languages. Faithfulness in translation also includes a faithful representation of the cultural and historical features of the original, without any attempt to modernize the text. Certain features, however, such as the hours of the day and the measures of weight, capacity, distance, and area, are given their modern equivalents, since the information contained in those terms is of greater importance to the reader than the biblical form of those terms. The metric system of weights and measures has been adopted in the British edition.

In cases where a person or place is called by two or more different names in the original, this translation has normally used only the more familiar name in all places; e.g., King Jehoiachin of Judah (Jeremiah 52.31), also called Jeconiah (Jeremiah 24.1) and Coniah (Jeremiah 37.1). Where a proper name is spelt in two or more different ways in the original text, this translation has used only one spelling; e.g., Nebuchadnezzar, also spelt Nebuchadrezzar (compare Jeremiah 29.3 and 29.21), and Priscilla, also spelt Prisca (compare Acts 18.26 and Romans 16.3).

In view of the differences in vocabulary and form which exist between the American and the British use of the English language, this British edition is being published, incorporating such changes as are in keeping with British usage. Final approval of this text was given by the General Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Following an ancient tradition, begun by the first translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint) and followed by the vast majority of English translations, the distinctive Hebrew name for God (usually transliterated *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*) is in this translation represented by "The LORD." When the Hebrew word *Adonai*, normally translated "Lord," is followed by *Yahweh*, the combination is rendered by the phrase "Sovereign LORD."

In order to make the text easier to understand, various kinds of readers' helps are supplied. The text itself has been divided into sections, and headings are provided which indicate clearly the contents of the section. Where there are parallel accounts elsewhere in the Bible, a reference to such a passage appears in brackets below the heading. There are, in addition, several kinds of notes which appear at the bottom of the page. (1) *Cultural or Historical Notes*. These provide information required to enable the reader to understand the meaning of the text in terms of its original setting (e.g. the explanation of *Rahab* in Psalm 89.10; the explanation of *Day of Atonement* in Acts 27.9). (2) *Textual Notes*. In the Old Testament these indicate primarily those places where the translators were compelled for a variety of reasons to base the translation on some text other than the Hebrew. Where one or more of the ancient versions were followed, the note indicates this by *One ancient translation* (e.g. Genesis 1.26) or *Some ancient translations* (e.g. Genesis 4.8); where a conjectural

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THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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The above abbreviations are used for the books of the Bible in the reference system. In addition OT = Old Testament, NT = New Testament.

Foreword

The Bible in Today's English Version is a new translation which seeks to state clearly and accurately the meaning of the original texts in words and forms that are widely accepted by people who use English as a means of communication. This translation does not follow the traditional vocabulary and style found in the historic English Bible versions. Instead it attempts to present the Biblical content and message in standard, everyday, natural English.

The aim of this Bible is to give today's readers maximum understanding of the content of the original texts. The Preface explains the nature of special aids for readers which are included in the volume. It also sets out the basic principles which the translators followed in their work.

The Bible in Today's English Version has been translated and published by the United Bible Societies for use throughout the world. The Bible Societies trust that people everywhere will not only find increased understanding through the reading and study of this translation, but will also find a saving hope through faith in God who made possible this message of Good News for all people.

GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

The name *Genesis* means 'origin.' The book tells about the creation of the universe, the origin of mankind, the beginning of sin and suffering in the world, and about God's way of dealing with mankind. Genesis can be divided into two main parts:

1. *Chapters 1-11* The creation of the world and the early history of the human race. Here are the accounts of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, and the Tower of Babylon.

2. *Chapters 12-50* The history of the early ancestors of the Israelites. The first is Abraham, who was notable for his faith and his obedience to God. Then follow the stories of his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob (also called Israel), and of Jacob's twelve sons, who were the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. Special attention is given to one of the sons, Joseph, and the events that brought Jacob and his other sons with their families to live in Egypt.

While this book tells stories about people, it is first and foremost an account of what God has done. It begins with the affirmation that God created the universe, and it ends with a promise that God will continue to show his concern for his people. Throughout the book the main character is God, who judges and punishes those who do wrong, leads and helps his people, and shapes their history. This ancient book was written to record the story of a people's faith and to help keep that faith alive.

Outline of Contents

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From Adam to Noah 4.1—5.32

Noah and the flood 6.1—10.32

The tower of Babylon 11.1-9

From Shem to Abram 11.10-32

The patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob 12.1—35.29

The descendants of Esau 36.1-43

Joseph and his brothers 37.1—45.28

The Israelites in Egypt 46.1—50.26

The Story of Creation

1 In the beginning, when God created the universe,^a ²the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the power of God^b was moving over the water. ³Then God commanded, "Let there be light"—and light appeared. ⁴God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness, ⁵and he named the light "Day" and the darkness "Night". Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day.

6-7 Then God commanded, "Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places"—and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it. ⁸He named the dome "Sky." Evening passed and morning came—that was the second day.

⁹ Then God commanded, "Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear"—and it was done. ¹⁰He named the land "Earth," and the water which had come together he named "Sea." And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹¹Then he commanded, "Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit"—and it was done. ¹²So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw. ¹³Evening passed and morning came—that was the third day.

¹⁴ Then God commanded, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when days, years, and religious festivals^c begin; ¹⁵they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth"—and it was done. ¹⁶So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars.

¹⁷He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹⁹Evening passed and morning came—that was the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God commanded, "Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings, and let the air be filled with birds."

²¹ So God created the great sea-monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw. ²²He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce, and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number. ²³Evening passed and morning came—that was the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God commanded, "Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small"—and it was done. ²⁵So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

²⁶ Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild,^d large and small." ²⁷ So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, ²⁸blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. ²⁹I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; ³⁰but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food"—and it was done. ³¹God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.

^aIn the beginning...the universe; or In the beginning God created the universe; or When God began to create the universe.

^bthe power of God; or the spirit of God; or a wind from God; or an awesome wind.

^creligious festivals; or seasons.

^dOne ancient translation animals, domestic and wild; Hebrew domestic animals and all the earth. 1.3: 2 Cor 4.6 1.6-8: 2 Pet 3.5 1.26: 1 Cor 11.7 1.27: Mt 19.4; Mk 10.6 1.27-28: Gen 5.1-2

2 And so the whole universe was completed. ²By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working. ³He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation^e and stopped working. ⁴And that is how the universe was created.

The Garden of Eden^f

When the LORD God made the universe, ⁵there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted^g because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; ⁶but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

⁷Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground^f and formed a man^f out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

⁸Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.^g

¹⁰A stream flowed in Eden and watered the garden; beyond Eden it divided into four rivers. ¹¹The first river is the Pishon; it flows round the country of Havilah. ¹²(Pure gold is found there and also rare perfume and precious stones.) ¹³The second river is the Gihon; it flows round the country of Cush.^h ¹⁴The third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria, and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵Then the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. ¹⁶He said to him, "You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, ¹⁷except

the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad.^g You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day."

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him." ¹⁹So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. ²⁰So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

²¹Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. ²²He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. ²³Then the man said,

"At last, here is one of my own kind—
Bone taken from my bone, and flesh
from my flesh.

'Woman' is her name because she was
taken out of man."ⁱ

²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

²⁵The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.

The Disobedience of Man

3 Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, "Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?"

²"We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden," the woman answered, ³"except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die."

⁴The snake replied, "That's not true;

^eby that day he had completed his creation; or on that day he completed his creation.

^fGROUND...MAN: The Hebrew words for "man" and "ground" have similar sounds.

^gknowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything.

^hCush (of Mesopotamia); or Sudan.

ⁱWOMAN...MAN: The Hebrew words for "woman" and "man" have rather similar sounds.

2.2: Heb 4.4, 10 2.2-3: Ex 20.11 2.7: 1 Cor 15.45 2.9: Rev 2.7, 22.2, 14

2.24: Mt 19.5; Mk 10.7-8; 1 Cor 6.16; Eph 5.31 3.1: Rev 12.9, 20.2

you will not die. ⁵God said that, because he knows that when you eat it you will be like God^j and know what is good and what is bad.”^k

6 The woman saw how beautiful the tree was and how good its fruit would be to eat, and she thought how wonderful it would be to become wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, and he also ate it. ⁷As soon as they had eaten it, they were given understanding and realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves.

8 That evening they heard the LORD God walking in the garden, and they hid from him among the trees. ⁹But the LORD God called out to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden; I was afraid and hid from you, because I was naked.”

11 “Who told you that you were naked?” God asked. “Did you eat the fruit that I told you not to eat?”

12 The man answered, “The woman you put here with me gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

13 The LORD God asked the woman, “Why did you do this?”

She replied, “The snake tricked me into eating it.”

God Pronounces Judgement

14 Then the LORD God said to the snake, “You will be punished for this; you alone of all the animals must bear this curse: From now on you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dust as long as you live. ¹⁵I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite their heel.”

16 And he said to the woman, “I will

increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him.”

17 And he said to the man, “You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, the ground will be under a curse. You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you. ¹⁸It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants. ¹⁹You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything, until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again.”

20 Adam^l named his wife Eve,^m because she was the mother of all human beings. ²¹And the LORD God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them.

Adam and Eve Are Sent Out of the Garden

22 Then the LORD God said, “Now the man has become like one of us and has knowledge of what is good and what is bad.” He must not be allowed to eat fruit from the tree of life, and live for ever.”

²³So the LORD God sent him out of the Garden of Eden and made him cultivate the soil from which he had been formed. ²⁴Then at the east side of the garden he put living creaturesⁿ and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep anyone from coming near the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 Then Adam had intercourse with his wife, and she became pregnant. She bore a son and said, “By the LORD’s help I have acquired a son.” So she named him Cain.^p ²Later she gave birth to

^jGod; or the gods. ^kknow what is good and what is bad; or know everything.

^lADAM: This name in Hebrew means “mankind.”

^mEVE: This name sounds similar to the Hebrew word for “life,” which is rendered in this context as “human beings.”

ⁿknowledge of what is good and what is bad; or knowledge of everything.

^pLIVING CREATURES: See Word List.

^qCAIN: This name sounds like the Hebrew for “acquired.”

3.13: 2 Cor 11.3; 1 Tim 2.14 3.15: Rev 12.17 3.17-18: Heb 6.8 3.22: Rev 22.14