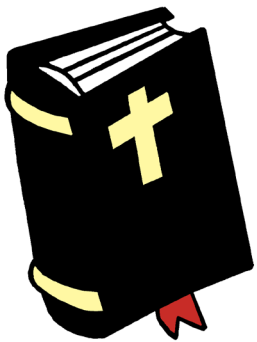
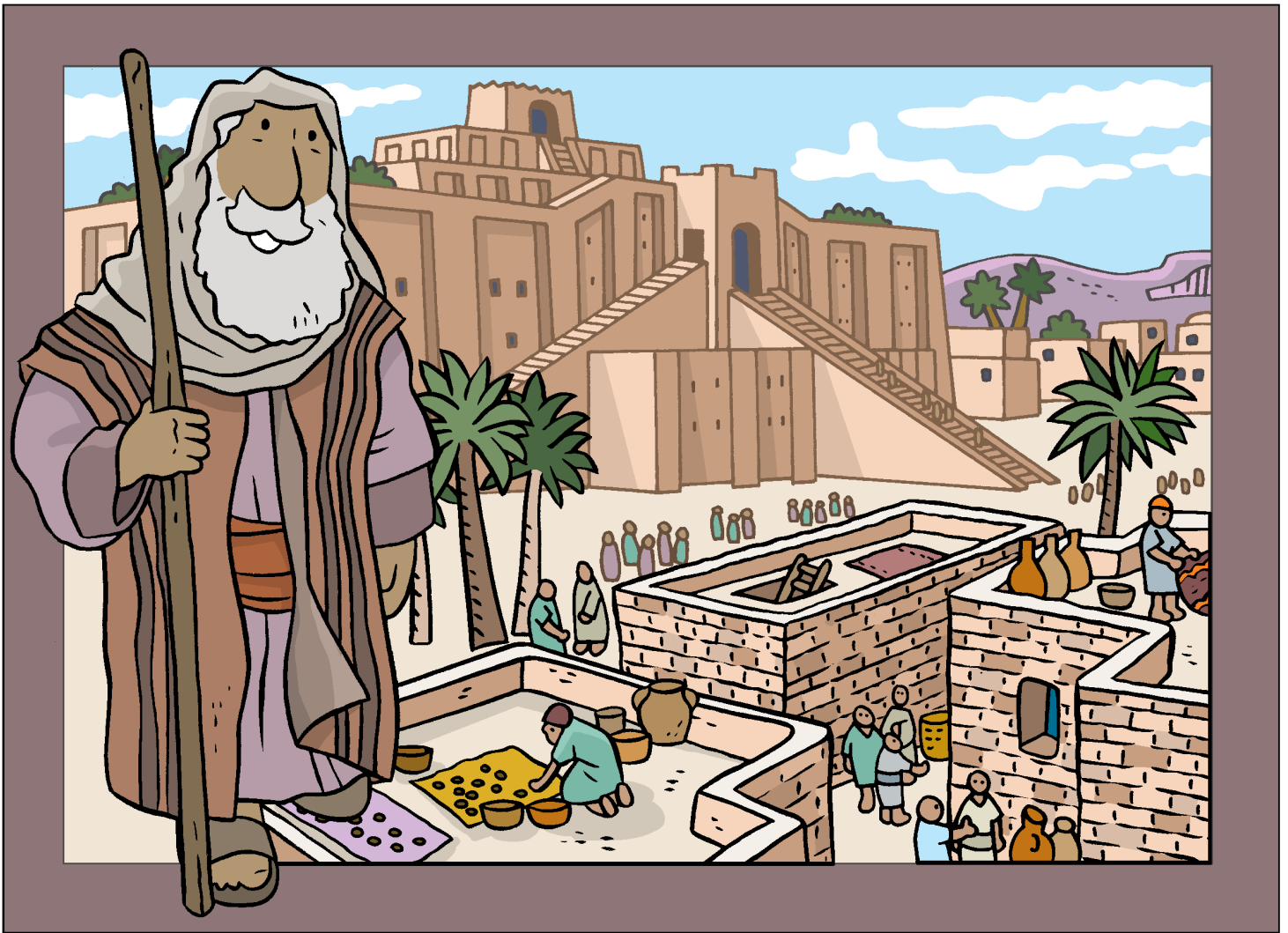




# Cities in the Bible



## The City of Ur

Ur, a city mentioned in the book of Genesis, was located on the mouth of the Euphrates River in ancient Mesopotamia, in what is present-day Iraq. The ruins of the Ziggurat<sup>1</sup> of Ur are still visible to this day.

The city is linked to the biblical patriarch Abraham (Abram), who left Ur with plans to settle in the land of Canaan.<sup>2</sup> (Abraham was the ancestor of the Hebrew people.)

“Terah was the father of Abram<sup>3</sup>, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. Haran died before his father, Terah, in their homeland, Ur of the Chaldees.

“Abram married Sarai<sup>4</sup>, who had no child for many years.

“Terah, along with his son, Abram, his daughter-in-law, Sarai, and his grandson, Lot, left Ur of the Chaldees with plans to travel to the land of Canaan. However, on their way, they arrived at Haran<sup>5</sup> and stayed there.”<sup>6</sup>

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> A ziggurat is a rectangular stepped tower.

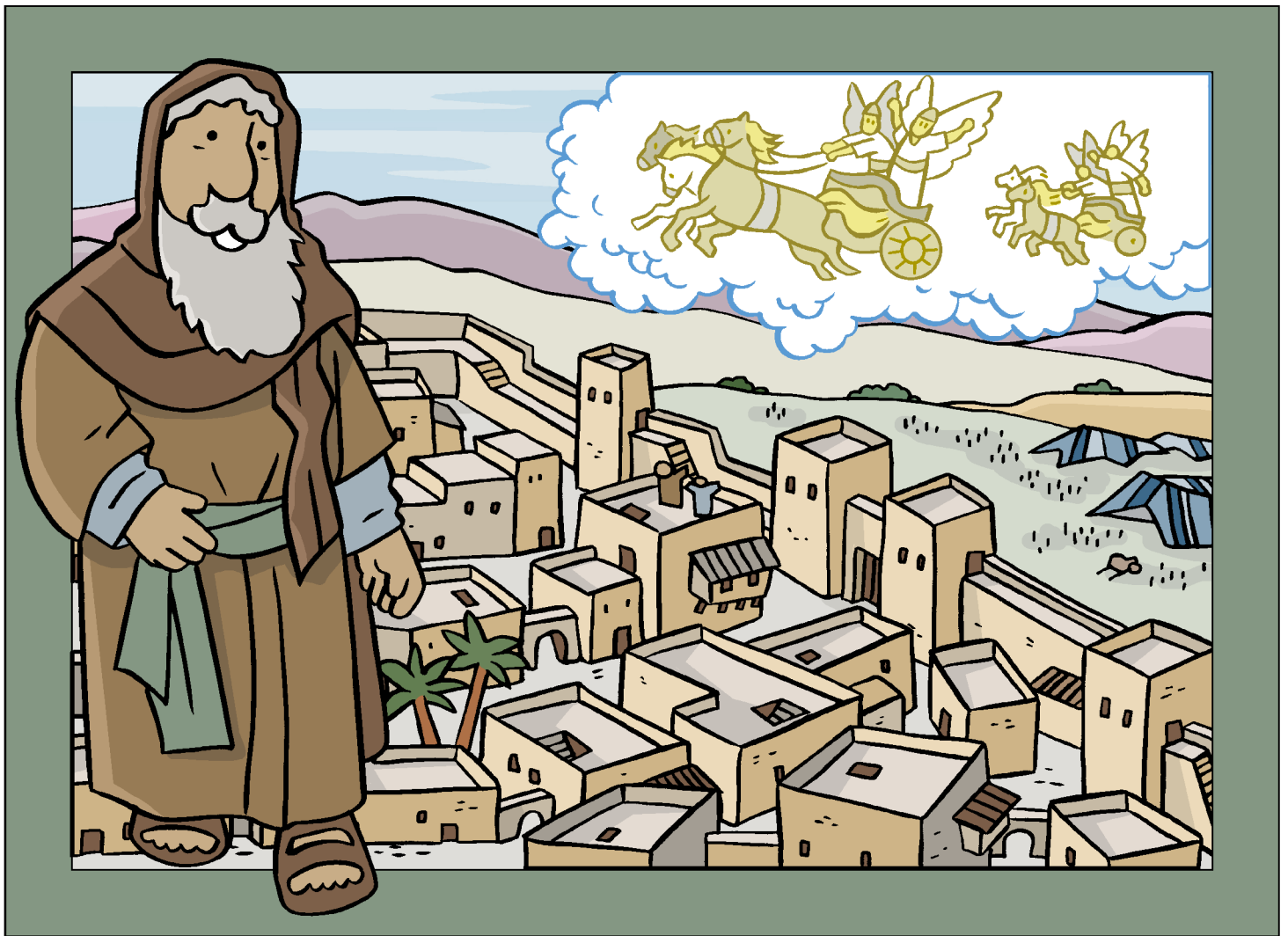
<sup>2</sup> The biblical land of Canaan comprises what today are the countries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel.

<sup>3</sup> Abraham was originally known as Abram.

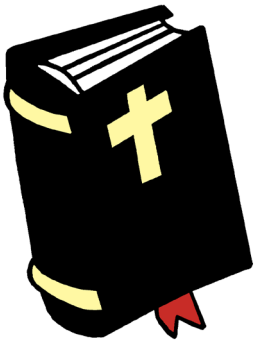
<sup>4</sup> Sarah was originally known as Sarai.

<sup>5</sup> The ruins of Haran are found in present-day Turkey.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 11:27–31, *paraphrased*



## The City of Dothan



Dothan, a city north of Jerusalem, was first mentioned in the Bible in connection with the story of Joseph as the area where Jacob's sons had moved their flocks.

Joseph's older brothers were jealous of how their father, Jacob, doted on Joseph far more than them. As a young teen, Joseph was sent by his father to visit his brothers and see how they were doing while they watched over the sheep. Joseph's jealous brothers took advantage of the opportunity to sell Joseph as a slave to some Ishmaelite slave traders who were passing by on their way to Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

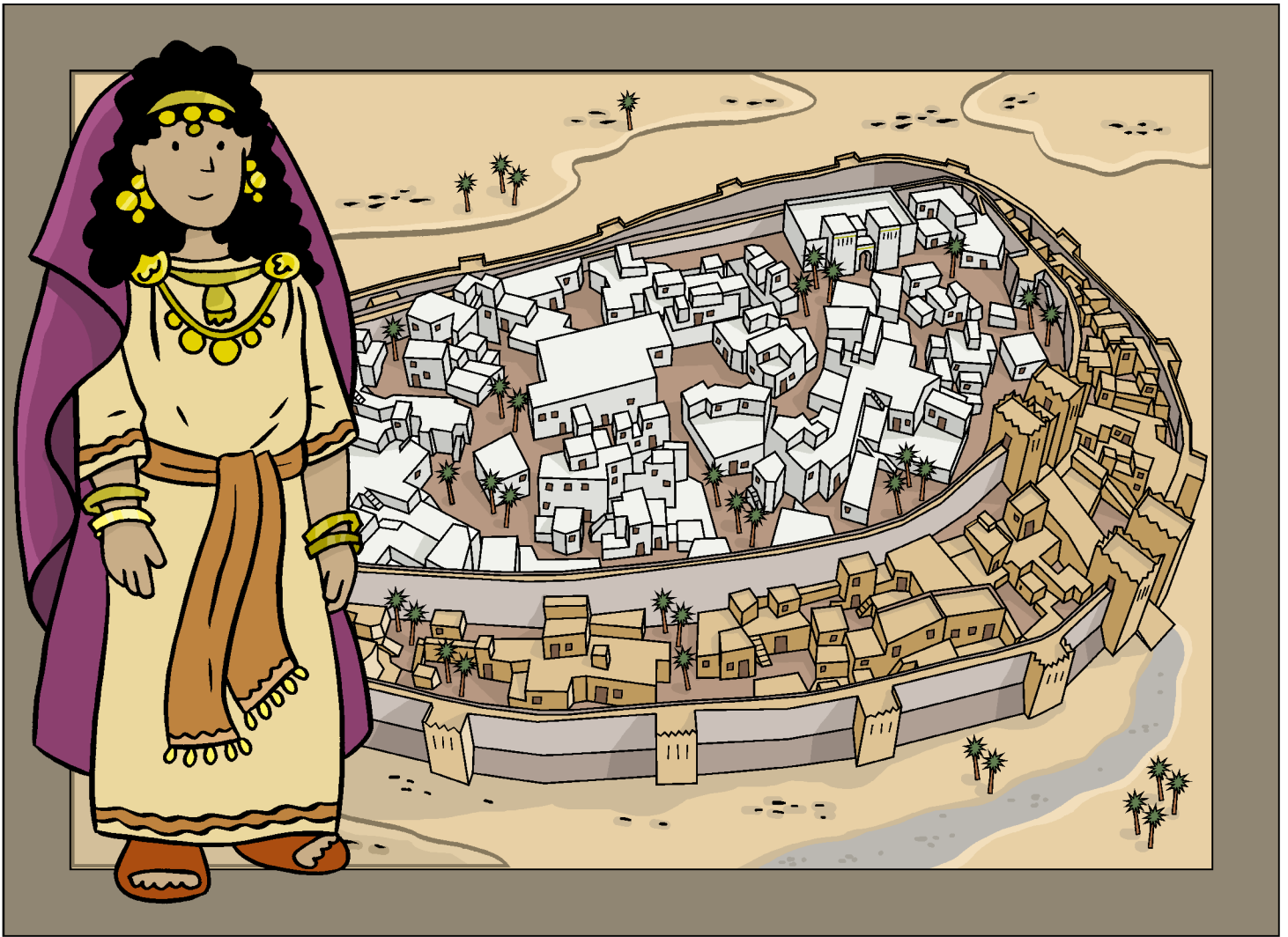
Dothan is later mentioned in the book of 2 Kings in connection with the prophet Elisha as the place where he and his servant observed a vision of chariots and horses of fire protecting them from the enemies surrounding the city.<sup>2</sup>

The mound known as Tell Dothan in current times has been identified as the site of the biblical Dothan.

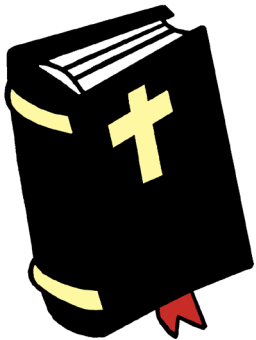
### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 37:3–4, 12–36

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 6:8–23



## The City of Jericho



When the children of Israel were first settling in the land of Canaan, Joshua sent spies to the city of Jericho. Later, the Israelites marched around the walls once every day for six days with the priests and the Ark of the Covenant leading the way. On the seventh day, they marched seven times around the walls, then the priests blew their horns, the Israelites all shouted, and the walls of the city fell.<sup>1</sup>

The city was later rebuilt during the reign of King Ahab.<sup>2</sup> It was in Jericho that Jesus met Zacchaeus many centuries later.<sup>3</sup>

The city's first biblical character link is Rahab, a woman of Jericho who hid the two spies sent by Joshua. Because of her action, God protected her household during the fall of Jericho. Rahab is honored in the book of Hebrews (in the New Testament) for her belief.<sup>4</sup> She is also listed as an ancestor of Jesus, because she was the mother of Boaz, the great grandfather of King David.<sup>5</sup>

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Joshua 2 and 6:1–5

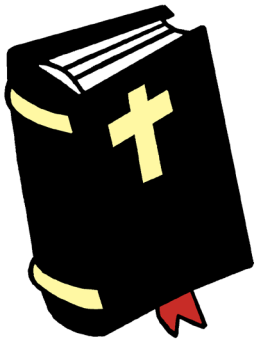
<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 16:34

<sup>3</sup> Luke 19:1–10

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews 11:30–31

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 1:5–6





## The City of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is a very old city located on a plateau in the Judean Mountains between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

For millennia, Jerusalem has been an important city. The first biblical reference to Jerusalem (it was originally called Salem<sup>1</sup>) is found in the story about Abraham being blessed by the high priest and king of Salem, Melchizedek.<sup>2</sup>

Another name given to Jerusalem was Jebus.<sup>3</sup> King David marched on Jebus and captured “the fort of Zion,” and called it the city of David.<sup>4</sup>

The actual name “Jerusalem” first occurs in the Bible in Joshua.<sup>5</sup>

Jerusalem is where Solomon built the temple and his palace.<sup>6</sup> A few centuries later, the Babylonians destroyed the city and took its inhabitants as captives. Jerusalem was eventually rebuilt by Nehemiah.<sup>7</sup>

Today, Jerusalem is in the country known as the state of Israel.

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 76:1–2

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 14:18, and Hebrews 7:1–2

<sup>3</sup> Judges 19:10

<sup>4</sup> 2 Samuel 5:6–7, 9

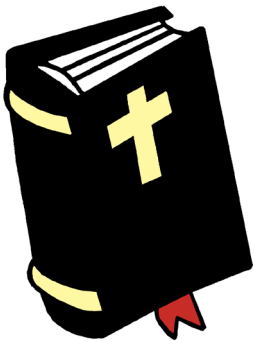
<sup>5</sup> Joshua 10:1

<sup>6</sup> 2 Chronicles 3:1

<sup>7</sup> Nehemiah 2:1–6



## The City of Nineveh



The first mention of Nineveh in the Bible is in the book of Genesis.<sup>1</sup> There we read about the city being built--the beginning of one of the oldest cities of the ancient world. Later, as the capital city of the Assyrian Empire, during the rule of the Assyrian king Sennacherib, Nineveh is mentioned in 2 Kings<sup>2</sup> and Isaiah<sup>3</sup> when the Assyrian army suffers defeat through the actions of one of God's angels.

The most well-known Bible story about Nineveh is the story of the prophet Jonah.<sup>4</sup> God sends His prophet Jonah to warn the people of Nineveh to change their ways. Instead of continuing in their wicked ways as the people of Nineveh had done in times past, the inhabitants of Nineveh repented, turning their lives around to live in more godly ways.

The people of Nineveh are later honored for their repentance in a comment Jesus made in answer to the people requesting a sign before they would respect and follow His teachings.<sup>5</sup>

Ancient Nineveh, as an Assyrian city, was located in Upper Mesopotamia. In recent times, remnants of the ancient city of Nineveh are to be found on the outskirts of the Iraqi city of Mosul.

### Footnotes:

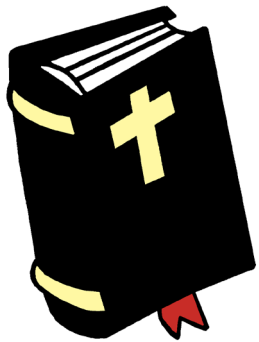
<sup>1</sup> Genesis 10:11

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 19:34–36

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 37:33–37

<sup>4</sup> Jonah 1–4

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 12:38–41; Luke 11:29–32



## The City of Babylon

The city of Babylon is referred to multiple times in the Bible, and a search brings up the name “Babylon” more than 250 times. Major references to the city are found in the books of Daniel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, as well as others. The city is also related to the story of the Tower of Babel.<sup>1</sup>

Well-known biblical links to the city of Babylon have to do with the prophet Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.<sup>2</sup> As noble Jewish teenagers in the city of Jerusalem, they and many others were taken as captives to the city of Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar’s government after Jerusalem had been conquered by the Babylonian Empire.<sup>3</sup>

Daniel lived the majority of his life in Babylon, diligently serving King Nebuchadnezzar and his successors in respected positions while remaining true to the God of Israel and being a positive influence for God.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Another famous site was the Ishtar Gate, built during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the eighth gate to the inner city of Babylon.<sup>4</sup>

### Footnotes:

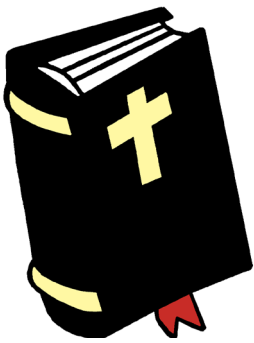
<sup>1</sup> Genesis 11:1–9

<sup>2</sup> Names given to them in Babylon were Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

<sup>3</sup> See Daniel 2, 3, and 6 for three

miraculous stories of these four in Babylon.

<sup>4</sup> A reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate can be seen in the Pergamon museum in Berlin, Germany.



## The City of Bethlehem

Bethlehem had a long history even before it became known as the place where Jesus was born.

Bethlehem, known also as Ephrath, is mentioned first in Genesis as the burial place of Rachel, the wife of the patriarch Jacob.<sup>1</sup> Later, we're told that Bethlehem was the home of Jesse, the father of King David.<sup>2</sup>

The prophet Micah mentioned Bethlehem in his prophecy,<sup>3</sup> which was then quoted to King Herod during the visit of the magi who were traveling to Bethlehem in search of baby Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

In their Gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus, Matthew and Luke tell us how Joseph (a descendant of King David) and Mary traveled to Bethlehem at the time Jesus was born to pay the Roman taxes.<sup>5</sup>

Bethlehem still exists today, situated approximately 10 kilometers (6 miles) south of the city of Jerusalem.

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 35:19 and 48:7

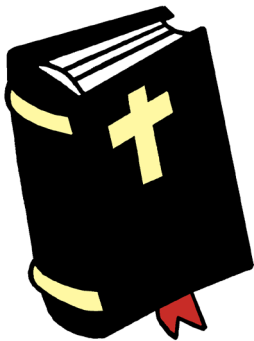
<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 17:12

<sup>3</sup> Micah 5:2

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 2:1–6

<sup>5</sup> Luke 2:1–4 and Matthew 2:1





## The Town of Nazareth

Nazareth was only a small town in Jesus' day. Philip, who was to become one of Jesus' disciples, told Nathanael, "We have found the man Moses and the prophets wrote about, Jesus of Nazareth."

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"<sup>1</sup> Nathanael replied. The tiny farming village, far from the main trade routes, was not the type of place anyone would look for the Messiah.

Nazareth was also where Joseph and Mary were living when the angel Gabriel appeared first to Mary and later to Joseph to tell them that Mary was to become pregnant with baby Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Joseph, Mary, and young Jesus also later lived in Nazareth after returning from their flight to Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

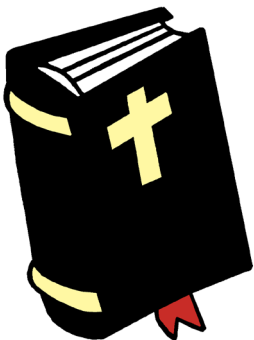
Jesus spent most of his childhood and early adult years in Nazareth, living there until His early ministry days.

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> John 1:45–46

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:26–35, Matthew 1:18–25

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 2:13–23



## The Town of Capernaum

Capernaum was located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

In his Gospel, Matthew refers to Capernaum as being Jesus' own city, even though Jesus wasn't born there nor were his parents from there. "And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city."<sup>1</sup> However, Jesus performed many miracles in Capernaum. He often preached in the synagogue there, a synagogue that had been built by a Roman centurion.<sup>2</sup>

Capernaum, a fishing village, was where Peter's home was. On one occasion, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law shortly after He had spoken at the synagogue of Capernaum.

The area of Capernaum is where Jesus chose several of his disciples: Peter and his brother Andrew, John and James,<sup>3</sup> and Matthew.<sup>4</sup>

Even though the people of Capernaum had witnessed many miracles done by Jesus, the majority of the people there didn't believe and rejected Him.<sup>5</sup>

### Footnotes:

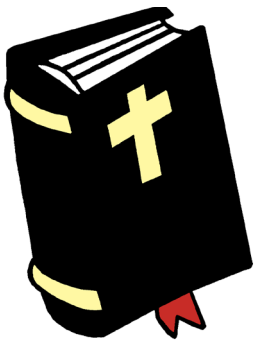
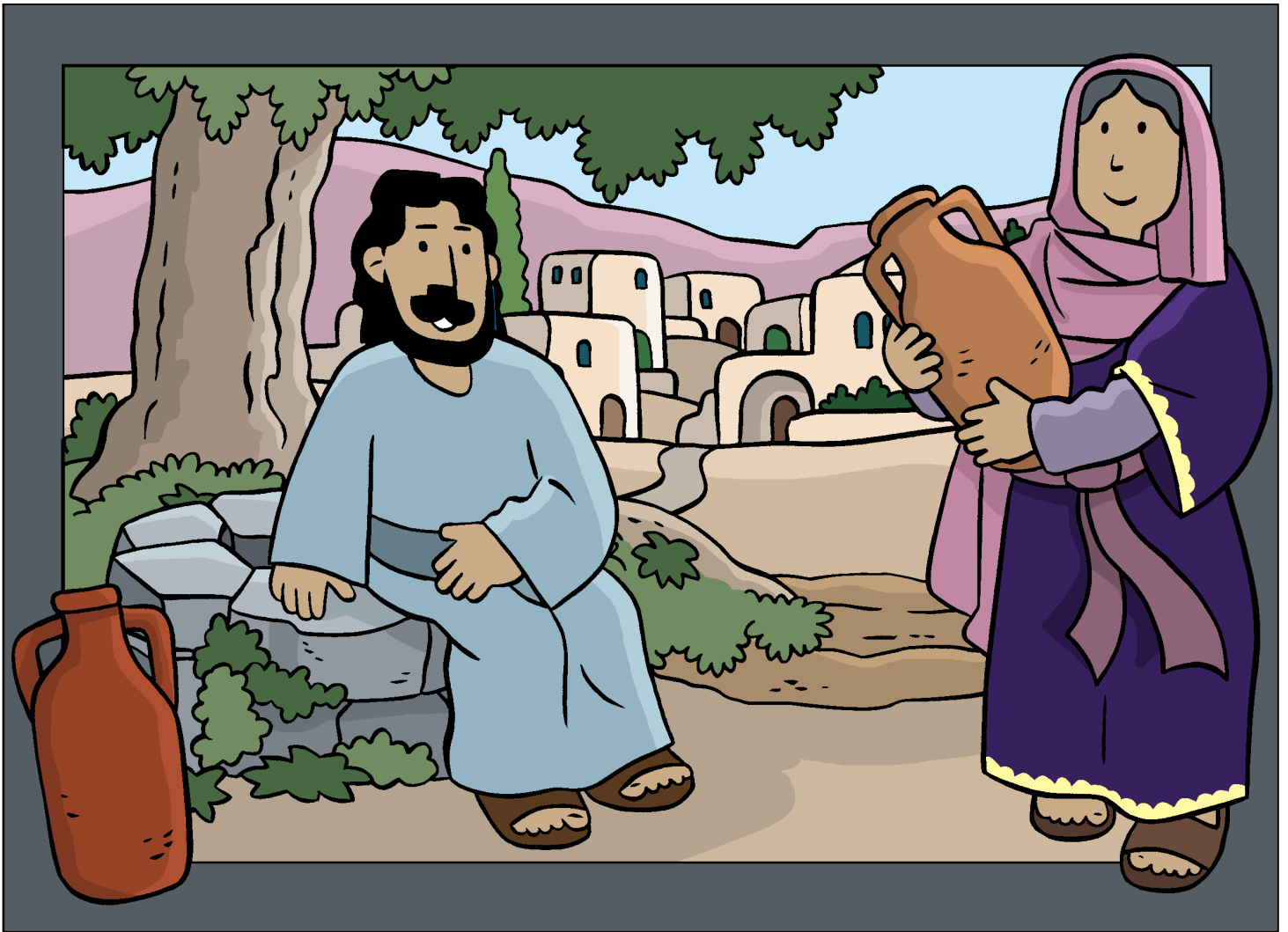
<sup>1</sup> Matthew 9:1

<sup>2</sup> Luke 7:1–10

<sup>3</sup> Mark 1:16–34

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 9:1, 9

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 11:23



## The Town of Sychar

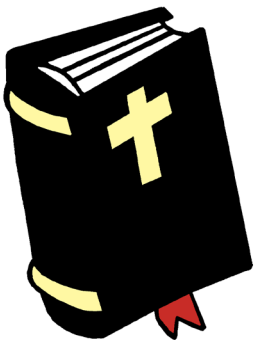
Mentioned only once in the New Testament, Sychar was a small Samaritan town located close to a place where the patriarch Jacob (Abraham's grandson) was said to have dug a well.

It was here at Jacob's Well where Jesus had an encounter with a Samaritan woman. While on the way to Galilee, Jesus passed through Samaria. Being tired from the journey, He stopped at a well by the small town of Sychar. While His disciples went into the town to buy food, Jesus stayed and rested by the well. A woman came to draw water and spoke with Jesus.

Jesus told her many things. He told her about water that gives eternal life and how God is Spirit. She was so happy and excited about what she learned from Jesus that she ran to tell everyone in the town, resulting in many people in Sychar believing in Jesus as Christ.<sup>1</sup>

**Footnote:**

<sup>1</sup> John 4:3–43



## The Village of Emmaus

Emmaus was a small town located approximately 11 kilometers west of Jerusalem.

The town's biblical link has to do with two of Jesus' disciples, who were very discouraged because they had heard of Jesus' death and that His body was missing. They had left Jerusalem and were walking to the village of Emmaus.

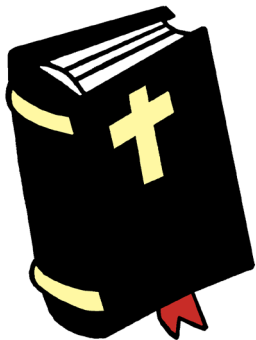
On the way, they encountered a stranger who explained what the Scriptures had said about Jesus. This man taught them from the books of Moses and the prophets. As they approached the village of Emmaus, it was late in the day, so they invited the man to stay with them.

Upon sitting down to eat, the stranger took the bread, blessed it, and broke it. At that instant, the disciples realized that the man was Jesus. Immediately, they went back to Jerusalem to tell the good news to the other disciples.<sup>1</sup>

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Luke 24:13–35





## The City of Tarsus

Tarsus was the city where Paul the Apostle (Saul) was born, a city located in south-central Turkey, 20 kilometers inland from the Mediterranean Sea. It still exists in Turkey today.

During the time of the New Testament, the great trade routes that led east and west passed through Tarsus. These routes, along with access to the Mediterranean, made Tarsus an important stop for many people.

As well as being a wealthy city, Tarsus was also known for its great schools.<sup>1</sup>

Because Paul was born there, he was at one time referred to as “Saul of Tarsus,”<sup>2</sup> even though he spent most of his youth in Jerusalem, where he was a student of Gamaliel.<sup>3</sup> Paul returned to Tarsus after his conversion.<sup>4</sup> Eight years later, Barnabas traveled to Tarsus to meet with Paul and they left together for Antioch.<sup>5</sup>

Paul was a Jew, but was also considered a Roman citizen due to how Roman emperors had granted citizenship to some of the citizens of Tarsus.<sup>6</sup>

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Acts 21:39

<sup>2</sup> Acts 9:11

<sup>3</sup> Acts 22:3

<sup>4</sup> Acts 9:30

<sup>5</sup> Acts 11:25–26

<sup>6</sup> Acts 22:24–29

Art by Didier Martin,  
[www.mylittlehouse.org](http://www.mylittlehouse.org)

Compiled from My Wonder Studio by  
[www.freekidstories.org](http://www.freekidstories.org)