



THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE

The Sacred Scriptures contain
the Word of God
and, since they are inspired,
really are the Word of God. . . .

This sacred Synod urges all the Christian faithful
to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures
the “excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ.”
“For ignorance of the Scriptures
is ignorance of Christ.”

Therefore, they should gladly put themselves
in touch with the sacred text itself. . . .

And let them remember that prayer should accompany
the reading of Sacred Scripture,
so that God and man may talk together;
for “we speak to him when we pray;
we hear him when we read the divine saying.”

Second Vatican Council: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.

diminish until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the hatch he had made in the ark,⁷ and he sent out a raven, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. It flew back and forth until the waters dried off from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth. ⁹But the dove could find no place to alight and perch, and it returned to him in the ark, for there was water all over the earth. Putting out his hand, he caught the dove and drew it back to him inside the ark. ¹⁰He waited seven days more and again sent the dove out from the ark. ¹¹In the evening the dove came back to him, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! So Noah knew that the waters had lessened on the earth. ¹²He waited still another seven days and then released the dove once more; and this time it did not come back.

¹³In the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water began to dry up on the earth. Noah then removed the covering of the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was drying up. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah: ¹⁶"Go out of the ark, together with your wife and your sons and your sons' wives. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you—all bodily creatures, be they birds or animals or creeping things of the earth—and let them abound on the earth,

¹ Gn 1, 22, 28.—ⁿ Sir 44, 18; Is 54, 9; Rom 7, 18.—^e Jer 33, 20, 25.—^o Gn 1, 22, 28; 8, 17; Jas 3, 7.—^p Gn 1, 29f; Dt 12, 15.—^q Lv 7, 26f; 17, 4; Dt 12, 16, 23; 1 Sm 14, 33; Acts 15, 20.—^r Gn 4, 10f; Ex 21, 12.—^s Gn 1, 26f; Lv 24, 17; Nm 35, 33; Jas 3, 9.—^t Gn 1, 28; 8, 17; 9, 2.—^u Gn 6, 18.

^{6, 8}: In the original Yahwist source, from which this verse is taken, the forty days refer to the full period of the flood itself (cf Gn 7, 4, 17); in the present context, however, they seem to refer to a period following the date just given in v 5 from the Priestly source.

^{8, 21}: From the start: literally "from his youth." It is uncertain whether this means from the beginning of the human race or from the early years of the individual.

^{9, 3}: Archaic creatures, including man, are depicted as vegetarians (Gn 1, 29f), becoming carnivores only after the flood.

^{9, 4}: Because a living being dies when it loses most of its blood, the ancients regarded blood as the seat of life, and therefore as sacred. Although in itself the prohibition against eating meat with blood in it is comparable to the ritual laws of the Mosaic code, the Jews considered it binding on all men, because it was given by God to Noah, the new ancestor of all mankind; therefore the early Christian Church retained it for a time (Acts 15, 20, 29).

breeding and multiplying on it."¹⁸ So Noah came out, together with his wife and his sons and his sons' wives;¹⁹ and all the animals, wild and tame, all the birds, and all the creeping creatures of the earth left the ark, one kind after another.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and choosing from every clean animal and every clean bird, he offered holocausts on the altar. ²¹When the LORD smelled the sweet odor, he said to himself: "Never again will I doom the earth because of man, since the desires of man's heart are evil from the start;²² nor will I ever again strike down all living beings, as I have done."²³

²² As long as the earth lasts,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
Summer and winter,
and day and night
shall not cease.²³

CHAPTER 9

Covenant with Noah. ¹God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: "Be fertile and multiply and fill the earth."² Dread fear of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered. ³ Every creature that is alive shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants.⁴ Only flesh with its lifeblood still in it you shall not eat.⁵ For your own lifeblood, too, I will demand an accounting: from every animal I will demand it, and from man in regard to his fellow man I will demand an accounting for human life.⁶

⁶ If anyone sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed;
For in the image of God
has man been made.⁷

⁷Be fertile, then, and multiply; abound on earth and subdue it."⁸

⁹God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹"See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you: all the birds, and the various tame and wild animals that were with

you and came out of the ark. ¹¹I will establish my covenant with you, again shall all bodily creatures stroyed by the waters of a flood; not be another flood to devastate earth."¹² God added: "This is the sign of the covenant that I am giving for all ages to come between me and you living creature with you: ¹³ I will set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth; I will bring clouds over the earth, and rain will appear in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will establish my covenant I have made between you and all living beings, so that you shall never again become a flood to destroy all mortal beings.¹⁶ As for the bow in the clouds, I will see it and recall my everlasting covenant that I have established between me and all living beings: I will not again destroy all creatures that are on earth."¹⁷ Noah: "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all creatures that are on earth."

Noah and His Sons. ¹⁸ * The three sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah, and from them the whole world was populated.

²⁰ Now Noah, a man of the soil, was first to plant a vineyard. ²¹ When he had drunk some of the wine, he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. ²² Ham, the youngest son of Noah, saw his father's nakedness, and he told his two brothers about it. ²³ Shem and Japheth took a robe, and holding it on their backs they walked backward and covered their father's nakedness; since they turned the other way, they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah woke up from his drunkenness, he learned what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said:

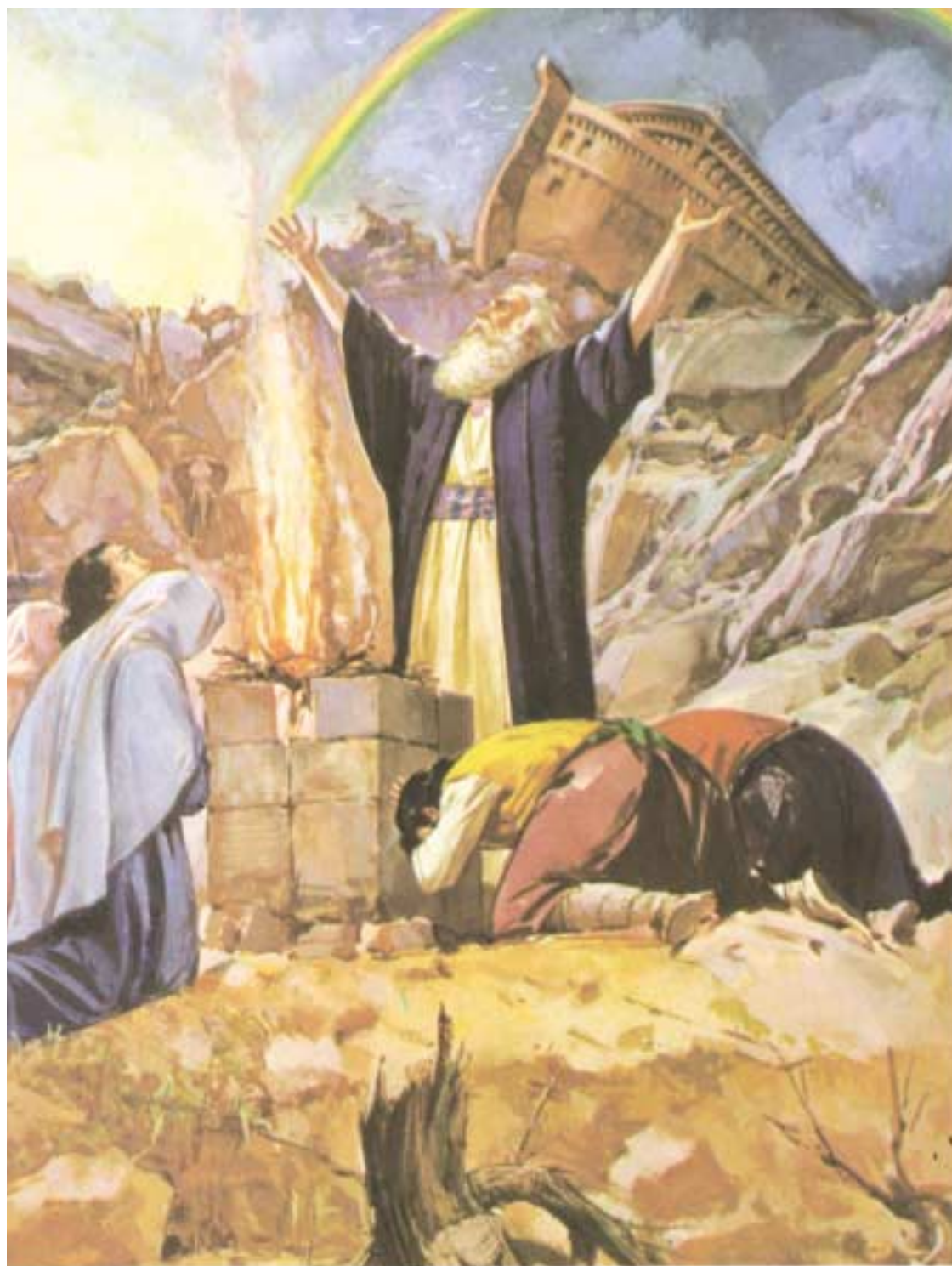
"Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
shall he be to his brother

²⁶ He also said:

"Blessed be the LORD, God of Shem!"

Let Canaan be his slave.

²⁷ May God expand Japheth,²⁸ so that he dwells among the nations;
Shem;
and let Canaan be his slave



GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

After the Flood, Noah offered a pleasing sacrifice, and God promised (with the rainbow as a sign) never again to destroy the earth by a flood.—Gn 8—9.

MATTHEW, 5

ness among the people.²⁴ His to all of Syria,^{*} and they brought who were sick with various (racked with pain, those who possessed, lunatics, and paralyzed) cured them.²⁵ And great crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,^{*} Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.⁷

CHAPTER 5

The Sermon on the Mount.¹ When Jesus saw the crowds,^{*} he went up on the mountain, and after he had sat down, the disciples came to him.² He began to say:

The Beatitudes^{*}

- ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- ⁴ Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the meek,^{*} for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,^{*} for they will be satisfied.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

^{*} Mt 9, 35; Mk 1, 39; Lk 4, 15.44.—e Mk 19, —e 3-12; Lk 6, 20-23.—e Is 61, 2-3; Rv 21 Ps 37, 11.—v Mt 18, 33; Jas 2, 13.—w Ps 11 Pt 2, 20; 3, 14; 4, 14.—y Mt 10, 22; Acts 5 16; Heb 11, 32-38; Jas 5, 10.—a Mk 9, 50; Lk 8, 12.—c Mk 4, 21; Lk 8, 16; 11, 33.—d Jn

4, 24: Syria: the Roman province to which Jesus belonged.

4, 25: The Decapolis: a federation of Greek cities, originally ten in number, all but one east of the Jordan.

5, 1—7, 28: The first of the five discourses of this gospel. It is the longest and contains sayings of Jesus (Mt 5, 1—7, 28) from M. The Lucan parallel is in that gospel (Lk 6, 20-49), although some of the sayings in the "Sermon on the Mount" have their parallel in Luke. The careful topical arrangement of the discourse is due not only to Matthew's editing; he seems to have drawn the discourse of Jesus as one of his sources may have been as follows: four beatitudes (Mt 5, 1-12), a section on the new righteousness (Mt 5, 17-24.27-28.33-48), a section on prayer (Mt 6, 1-18), and three warnings (Mt 7, 1-2.15-18).

5, 1-2: Unlike Luke's sermon, this is addressed to the disciples (see Mt 7, 28).

5, 3-12: The form *Blessed are (the)* occurs in the Old Testament in the Wisdom literature and though modified by Matthew, the first, second, and third beatitudes have Lucan parallels (Mt 5, 3 // Lk 6, 21b; Mt 5, 6 // Lk 6, 21a; Mt 5, 11-12 // Lk 6, 22-23). The fourth beatitude was added by the evangelist and is a composition. A few manuscripts, Western and Eastern, give the beatitudes in inverted order.

Teaching about the Law.¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place."¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven.²⁰ I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Teaching about Anger.²¹ "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors,² 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.'³ ²² But I say to you, whoever is angry⁴ with his brother will be liable to judgment,⁵ and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,'⁶ will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna.⁷ ²³ Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you,⁸ ²⁴ leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled

with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him.⁹ Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.

Teaching about Adultery.²⁷ "You have heard that it was said,¹⁰ 'You shall not commit adultery.'¹¹ ²⁸ But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ ¹² If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away.¹³ It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

Teaching about Divorce.³¹ "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.'¹⁴ ³² But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit

¹⁷ "antitheses." Three of them accept the Mosaic law but extend or deepen it (21-22; 27-28; 43-44); three reject it as a standard of conduct for the disciples (31-32; 33-37; 38-39).

5, 21: Cf Ex 20, 13; Dt 5, 17. The second part of the verse is not an exact quotation from the Old Testament, but cf Ex 21, 12.

5, 22: Anger is the motive behind murder, as the insulting epithets are steps that may lead to it. They, as well as the deeds, are all forbidden. *Raqa*: an Aramaic word *reḡdā* or *reḡdā* probably meaning "imbecile," "blockhead," a term of abuse. The ascending order of punishment, judgment (by a local council?), trial before the Sanhedrin, condemnation to Gehenna, points to a higher degree of seriousness in each of the offenses. *Sanhedrin*: the highest judicial body of Judaea. *Gehenna*: in Hebrew *gē-hinnôm*, "Valley of Hinnom," or *gē ben-hinnôm*, "Valley of the son of Hinnom," southwest of Jerusalem, the center of an idolatrous cult during the monarchy in which children were offered in sacrifice (see 2 Kgs 23, 10; Jer 7, 31). In Jos 18, 16 (Septuagint, Codex Vaticanus) the Hebrew is transliterated into Greek as *geinnos*, which appears in the New Testament as *geenna*. The concept of punishment of sinners by fire either after death or after the final judgment is found in Jewish apocalyptic literature (e.g., Enoch 90, 26) but the name *geenna* is first given to the place of punishment in the New Testament.

5, 22-26: Reconciliation with an offended brother is urged in the admonition of vs 23-24 and the parable of vs 25-26 (cf Lk 12, 58-59). The severity of the judge in the parable is a warning of the fate of unrepentant sinners in the coming judgment by God.

5, 27: See Ex 20, 14; Dt 5, 18.

5, 29-30: No sacrifice is too great to avoid total destruction in *Gehenna*.

² Lk 16, 17.—³ Ex 20, 13; Dt 5, 17.—⁴ Jas 1, 19-20.—⁵ Mt 11, 25.—⁶ 1-25-26: Mt 18, 34-35; Lk 12, 58-59.—⁷ Ex 20, 14; Dt 5, 18.—⁸ 29-30: Mt 18, 8-9; Mk 9, 43-47.—⁹ Mt 19, 3-9; Dt 24, 1.

5, 17-20: This statement of Jesus' position concerning the Mosaic law is composed of traditional material from Matthew's sermon documentation (see the note on Mt 5, 1-7, 29), other Q material (cf Mt 16 and Lk 16, 17), and the evangelist's own editorial touches. To fulfill the law appears at first to mean a literal enforcement of the law in the least detail: until heaven and earth pass away nothing of the law will pass (18). Yet the "passing away" of heaven and earth is not necessarily the end of the world understood, as in much apocalyptic literature, as the dissolution of the existing universe. The "turning of the ages" comes with the apocalyptic event of Jesus' death and resurrection, and those to whom this gospel is addressed are living in the new and final age, prophesied by Isaiah as the time of "new heavens and a new earth" (Is 65, 17; 66, 22). Meanwhile, during Jesus' ministry when the kingdom is already breaking in, his mission remains within the framework of the law, though with significant anticipation of the age to come, as the following antitheses (vv 21-48) show.

5, 19: Probably these commandments means those of the Mosaic law. But this is an interim ethic "until heaven and earth pass away."

5, 21-48: Six examples of the conduct demanded of the Christian disciple. Each deals with a commandment of the law, introduced by *You have heard that it was said to your ancestors* or an equivalent formula, followed by Jesus' teaching in respect to that commandment, *But I say to you*; thus their designation as



THE SE

"When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he began to teach them, saying