

# GET TO KNOW



THE  
SAINT  
JOHN'S  
BIBLE



# WHAT IS *THE SAINT* *JOHN'S BIBLE?*

*The Saint John's Bible* is the first handwritten Bible to be commissioned by a Benedictine monastery in over 500 years. Saint John's University commissioned renowned calligrapher Donald Jackson to produce this work of sacred art in 1998. The project was completed in 2011. This singular achievement features the complete text of the Bible (in the NRSV English translation), written on calfskin vellum using traditional tools and inks.

*The Saint John's Bible* unites an ancient Benedictine monastic tradition of manuscript writing with the technology and vision of today: illuminating the Word of God for a new millennium.

We invite you into a peaceful space to ignite your spiritual imagination. As you gaze upon these illuminations, spiritual meditations on a text, consider these questions:

**WHAT DO YOU SEE?  
HOW DO YOU FEEL?  
HOW IS THE TEXT SPEAKING TO YOU IN NEW  
WAYS TODAY?**



## START EXPLORING THE VOLUMES

Use this guide to reflect and dig deeper into the pages of *The Saint John's Bible*.



# PENTATEUCH

Genesis  
Exodus  
Numbers  
Leviticus  
Deuteronomy



# WHAT DO YOU SEE?

AS YOU TURN THROUGH THE PAGES OF THIS  
VOLUME: NOTICE, REFLECT, PAUSE, AND PRAY.



**Reflect:** Set your gaze upon the *Creation Frontispiece*. As the days of your life progress, how do you notice God's activity in the ongoing act of creation?

Find reference to the serpent, the Garden of Eden, the Ten Commandments and Noah's Ark. Why do you think the artist chose to represent these well-known stories in this way?

Which patterns do you notice repeating throughout this volume?

**Just for fun:** How many mistakes do you notice throughout this volume? (hint: there is one on the very first page)

How many insects (bugs and butterflies) can you find?



# HISTORICAL BOOKS

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel / 2 Samuel

1 Kings / 2 Kings

1 Chronicles / 2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Tobit

Judith

Esther

1 Macabees / 2 Macabees



# TURN INWARD.

LISTEN WITH THE EAR OF YOUR HEART. WHAT DO YOU HEAR?



**Reflect:** Where do you notice elements of Egyptian culture? Depictions from modern day? Why do you think the artists mixed them together?

What strikes you as you turn between the various books?

Sit with an illumination or piece of scripture that moves you. What do you see? How do you feel? How is the text speaking to you in a new way today?

**Just for fun:** Find the remnants of the Ten Commandments.

How many mistakes and insects do you notice in this volume?





All • THE PEOPLE • DID WHAT • WAS RIGHT • IN THEIR OWN EYES

# WISDOM

Job

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

The Song of Solomon

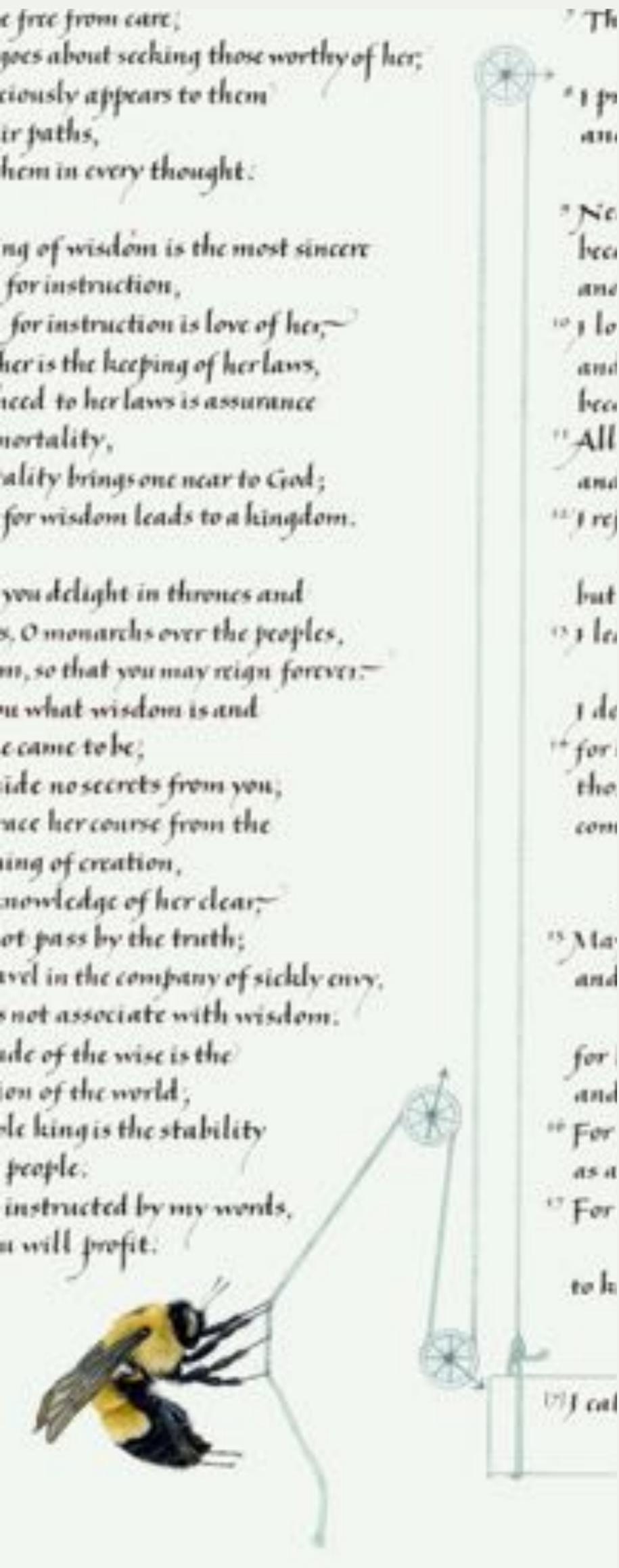
The Wisdom of Solomon

Sirach



# PAUSE.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING THE DIVINE PRESENCE?



**Reflect:** What motifs (repeated images) from other volumes do you notice? Find reference to creation and Noah's Ark. What else do you see repeating?



Hubble Telescope imagery is featured in many illuminations

in this volume. Where do you notice images from space? Why do you think the artists chose to include them?

The divine presence is shown through the use of gold in the illuminations. Where do you see gold and rainbow depicted? Are there any places that surprise you?

**Just for fun:** This bumblebee is putting a text mistake back. There is one more mistake - in an illumination - in this volume. Can you find it?

# WHAT DOES WISDOM LOOK LIKE?





# PRAY.

CALL OUT TO GOD BOLDLY AND WITHOUT FEAR.

Beginning on the left and running horizontally across to the right are a series of thin, golden, graph-like lines. These threads are an oscillograph of the monks' voices at Saint John's Abbey chanting their daily prayer; the lines run through every page until the end of the volume.

A careful look will also show vertical lines of the same type intersecting with the horizontal ones. These verticals are also oscillographs of singing but of the Jewish Shema, the Muslim call to prayer, a Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu chant, as well as a Greek Anthem and a Native American song. God is Lord of creation, and all creation reflects this truth and goodness. The church always rejoices in truth wherever it may be found.

**Reflect:** As you turn through the pages of this volume, what strikes you?



# PROPHETS

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Baruch  
Ezekiel  
Daniel  
Hosea  
Joel - Amos  
Obediah - Haggai  
Zechariah - Malachi



# CONTEMPLATE AND GAZE UPON THE IMAGES.

WHO ARE THE PROPHETIC VOICES IN OUR MIDST?



**Reflect:** What motifs (repeated images) do you notice repeating from other volumes? Find reference to deadly bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Why do you think the artist chose to include these microscopic images in these illuminations?

Where do you see gold and rainbow depicted? Are there any places you are surprised to find it hidden amidst the illuminated page?

**Just for fun:** How many mistakes and insects do you notice in this volume?



Where else can you find this image of The Son of Man throughout this and other volumes?



NOW THE WORLD  
OF THE LORD GIVE  
TO ME SAYING

1/23/38

1/26/38

HE SAID A HEARD  
SOMEHOW I COULD  
SAY I AM ONLY A BOY  
BUT THE LORD SAID TO ME

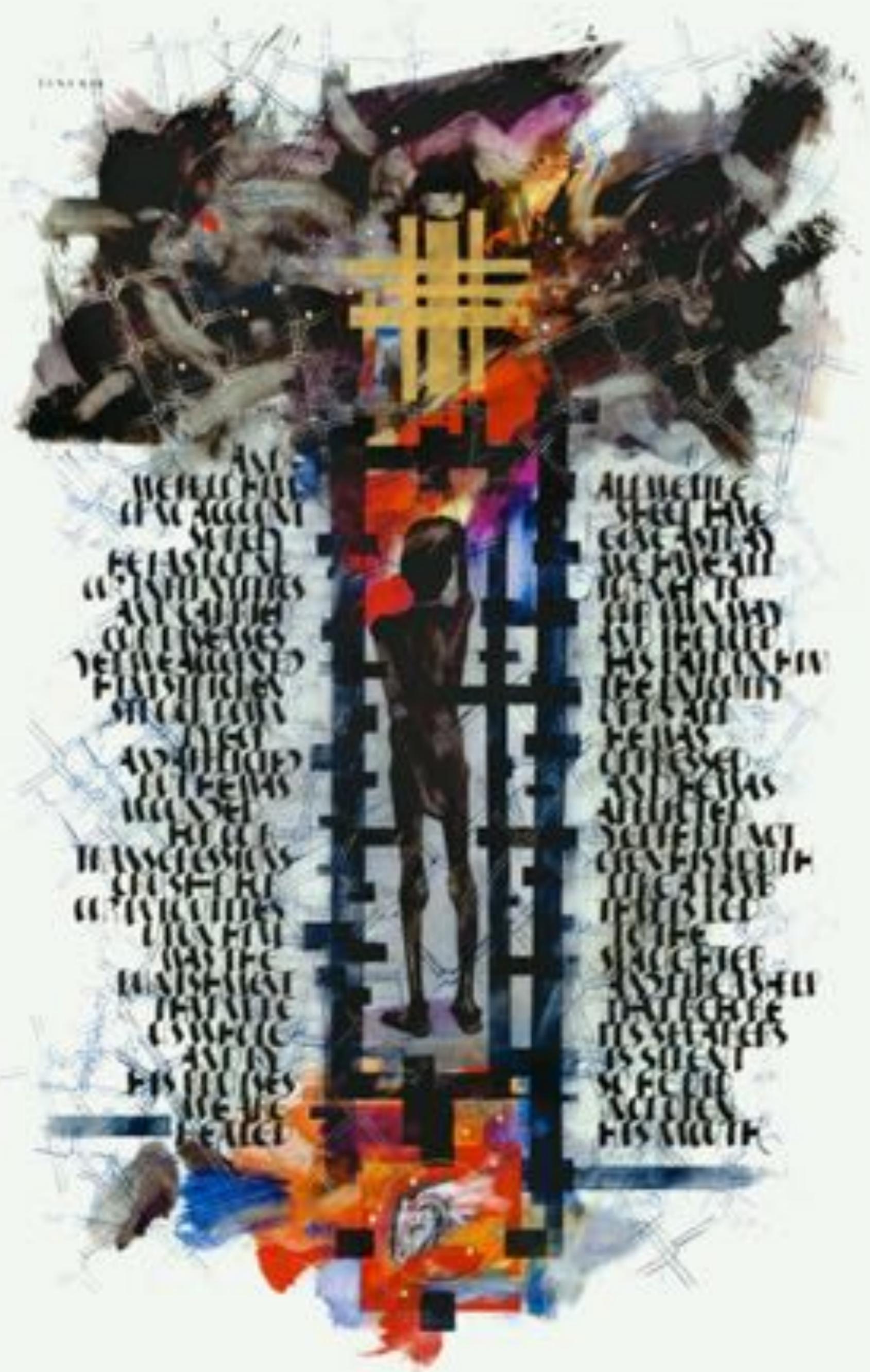


1/28/38

HE SAID HE PUT  
HIS HAND AND TOUGH  
MY YOUTH AND THE  
LORD SAID TO ME

1/30/38

1/31/38



AND  
 WE'LL BE  
 OF AN ACCOUNT  
 SUCH  
 BE FASTEN  
 CO. IN THE STATES  
 AND GATHER  
 OUR LIVES  
 YET WE RECEIVED  
 FIVE MILLION  
 MILLION  
 JUST  
 AND OFFICED  
 BUT HE WAS  
 ACCUSED  
 HE WAS  
 TRANSGRESSIONS  
 CRUSHED  
 COMMUNITIES  
 LIVES  
 WAS THE  
 RUMOR  
 TRAVEL  
 CYCLE  
 AND BY  
 HIS LIVES  
 WE ARE  
 BEAT

ALL WE'LL  
 SHOULD HAVE  
 GOVERNMENT  
 WE HAVE ALL  
 TO GO TO  
 OF OWNERS  
 AND THE  
 HIS PART IN  
 THE INDUSTRY  
 LETS ALL  
 HE WAS  
 OFFICED  
 AND HE WAS  
 ACCUSED  
 YOU'LL ACT  
 GOVERNMENT  
 THE STATE  
 THE STATE  
 TO THE  
 SUCCEED  
 AND THE  
 THAT FOR  
 HIS STATE  
 IS SILENT  
 SUFFICIENT  
 INDUSTRY  
 HIS MOUTH

# GOSPELS & ACTS

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts of the Apostles



# TURN THE PAGES.

WHAT STRIKES YOU?



**Reflect:** Gospels and Acts is the most heavily illuminated of the seven volumes. Simply turn the pages and gaze upon them: what stands out to you? Why? What do you wonder about the illuminations? What do these illuminations teach you?



This volume was completed in 2002; look for the depiction of the World Trade Twin Towers.

Why do you think Donald Jackson chose to include this in the illumination?

**Just for fun:** Throughout each of the volumes, there is reference to Saint John's Abbey and University and Saint Benedict's Monastery. Find the Benedictine monk.

How many insects can you find in these pages? Mistakes?



THE  
SOWER  
SOWS  
THE  
WORD

LET  
ANYONE  
WITH  
EARS  
TO HEAR  
LISTEN



DO NOT  
HOLD ON TO ME  
BECAUSE I HAVE NOT  
YET ASCENDED  
TO THE FATHER

דבאל

אברהם

אברהם



# LETTERS & REVELATION

Romans  
1 Corinthians / 2 Corinthians  
Galatians  
Ephesians  
Philippians  
Colossians  
1 Thessalonians / 2 Thessalonians  
1 Timothy / 2 Timothy  
Titus  
Philemon  
Hebrews  
James  
1 Peter / 2 Peter  
1 John / 2 John / 3 John  
Jude  
Revelation



# GO FORTH.

HOW ARE YOU TRANSFORMED?



Sit with an illumination from Paul's Letters or Revelation. What do you see? What strikes you? How is the text speaking to you in new ways?

There are many modern day depictions hidden throughout the illuminations, including deadly microscopic bacteria, fungi, and viruses, battle tanks, and a pirate ship. Why do you think these are included in the images from Revelation?

**Just for fun:** What repeated images can you find from the other volumes? See if you can notice the serpent from the Garden of Eden, the fabric worn by Mary Magdalene, fish stamps, and the Son of Man.

How many insects can you find in this volume? Mistakes?



These are Saint John's Crosses. Find them tucked in the bottom of an illumination.





THE ONE  
WHO  
TESTIFIES  
TO  
THESE  
THINGS  
SAYS  
SURELY  
I AM  
COMING  
SOON,  
AMEN.  
COME,  
LORD  
JESUS!  
THE  
GRACE  
OF THE  
LORD  
JESUS  
BE WITH  
ALL THE  
SAINTS.  
AMEN.

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