

# The Letters of the Word

**I**t is the year 150 AD at the height of the Roman Empire. The Word of God, penned in the Letters by the apostles and their disciples, is being whispered in secret assemblies under the shadow of Roman persecution. These Letters are being read from worn parchments carried from house to house, and because they are growing fragile, they are in desperate need of preservation.

The scribes, called to a sacred duty of ensuring that the holy scriptures endure through trial and tribulation, have risen as teachers and shepherds of the church since the fall of Jerusalem. They are continuing to proclaim the Gospel contained in the Letters as dangers surround them. One night, in the dim light of a bishop's humble dwelling, a map was laid before them—a map forged through years of secret missions marking the locations of the treasured Letters. Given the task of gathering and faithfully copying them, the scribes are preparing to embark on a journey across the empire. Their provisions are meager—a small satchel with parchment, ink, and enough bread and fish to sustain them—yet their faith burns brightly.

This is where your story begins. As one of these scribes, you must move from city to city planning your journey carefully. Your small satchel will get you started but will not last long. You will need to visit and work in markets, like the Apostle Paul, to replenish what you need to continue. When you become weary from trials and persecution by Roman soldiers who seek to extinguish the underground church, remember to draw strength from the Lord by prayer and fasting before pressing onward. It's important to ensure you have enough bread and fish to sustain you while copying the larger Letters. This journey will test your skills and endurance refining you through trials along the way. While you are in the hidden chambers of safe houses, you will need to labor diligently while copying the sacred Letters with reverence. Your work will gather the scattered writings together uniting them into a single volume—a witness to the truth of Christ. Though your name may fade from history, your labor will stand as a testament to the enduring power of the Word of God.



# WHAT'S IN THE BOX

Game Map

Manna Cards

Prayer & Fasting Cards

Blessing Cards

Checklist Pad

6 Scribe Tokens

Die

Player Supplies: 25 Ink, 25 Parchment, 25 Fish, 50 Bread

## SETUP

Place the game map in the center of the playing area with enough space for the card decks as shown below. Shuffle Manna Cards and Prayer & Fasting Cards and place each deck face down. Separate the five Blessing Cards into their own piles and place face up.





# STARTING THE GAME

Select one of the four starting locations on the map. Multiple players can choose the same starting point. Roll the die to determine the first player with turns proceeding clockwise. Each player begins with a scribe token and 10 supplies of their choice; this is known as a small satchel. Be sure to provide each player with a checklist to track the Letters they have copied during their journey.

## GAME PLAY

A player's turn consists of traveling, copying a Letter, Prayer & Fasting and/or visiting a Market.



**TRAVELING:** A scribe can travel up to 10 spaces in any direction, including ship routes. All Markets, Letters, Robbers, and Lions count as spaces during travel.



**MARKET:** When a scribe reaches a Market, they can collect supplies. Each Market is marked with a black circle and a number, which indicates how many supplies can be obtained per turn. Scribes may remain at markets for multiple turns but cannot exceed their satchel limit. Additionally, supplies may be traded with the Market during your turn, either before or after collecting.



**LETTERS:** When stopping on a Letter location you may copy it by giving the supplies listed on the checklist. Check off the Letter and draw a Manna Card. You may collect supplies left at this location anytime during your turn, and these may exceed your satchel limit.



**MANNA CARDS:** Manna Cards can either assist or challenge players. Their effects are applied immediately, except for move cards, which can be used at the player's discretion and may be combined. Move cards cannot be used to start a turn, but can be added to existing movement. Move cards may not be used once you perform any action at a Market, Letter, Robber or Lion.

Supplies gained from Manna Cards may exceed the player's satchel limit. If a Manna Card requires a player to lose an item they do not possess, no action is necessary. Players must track their discarded Manna Cards, as these can resolve disputes over unchecked letters. Failing to draw a Manna Card before another player results in the loss of one turn.





**GOSPEL LETTERS:** There are four Gospel Letters: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. When stopping on a Gospel Letter location, you can copy a Letter by giving the supplies listed on the checklist. Check off the Letter on your Team Play checklist; draw a Manna Card; AND choose a Blessing Card of your choice.

**BLESSING CARDS:** Each player may receive each Blessing card once:



**SWORD:** The Sword will give you safe passage while passing Robbers and Lions. Players bearing the Sword will not have to stop at the space or roll the die.



**RIDING HORSE:** The Riding Horse will help you travel. Players who have the Riding Horse can choose to move 10 spaces, OR you may travel any number of spaces until stopped by a Market, Prayer & Fasting, or Letter location. This card does not exempt you from Robbers and Lions.



**MARKET REFILL:** The Market Refill is one time use. Players can use this Blessing Card at a Market to top off all your supplies according to your satchel. Small satchel can hold 10 supplies; large satchel can hold 20 supplies.



**DOUBLE PORTION:** Double Portion allows players to receive DOUBLE the amount indicated at the corresponding market. (Example: players holding the Double Portion card will receive 8 supplies per turn at the Market near James.) Remember you may not exceed your satchel limit.



**LARGE SACHEL:** The Large Satchel increases the amount of supplies a player can have to a total of 20.



**PRAYER & FASTING:** Though optional, Prayer & Fasting is a valuable tool for any scribe and well worth the three turns required to obtain Prayer & Fasting cards. Upon entering Prayer & Fasting, players spend one turn for each day. On Day 3 Receive, they collect three Prayer & Fasting cards and end their turn. \*Note: Some cards may be combined.



**ROBBER & LION:** Players without the Sword are affected by the Robber and Lion. These players must STOP and roll the die. Rolling a 3 or 6 results in losing supplies, while all other rolls are safe. After rolling, the turn ends. Robbers steal all ink and parchment, and Lions consume all fish and bread.



## WINNING THE GAME:

The first player to copy all the Letters on the checklist wins the game and has preserved “The Letters of the Word” for future generations!

## EXAMPLE OF GAME PLAY:

**Player 1:** The player moves up to 10 spaces, lands on a Letter, gives the necessary supplies by putting the items into the supply box, then checks off the Letter on their checklist.

**ROMANS**



2 bread, 1 fish,  
1 parchment, 1 ink

They draw a Manna Card, follow its instructions, place it in their discard pile, and end their turn.

**Player 2:** Lacking enough supplies to assemble a Letter, the player travels up to 10 spaces to a Market, collects the supplies they are able to and end their turn.

**Player 1:** This time the player attempts to move toward the next Letter but encounters a Robber along the way. They stop at the Robber. Rolling the die, it lands on a 3, resulting in the loss of all their ink and parchment, and end their turn.

**Player 2:** Still at Market marked with a “5” they decide to collect 3 more supplies to fill their small satchel limit and end their turn.

**QUICK PLAY:** Want to play the game in half the time? All players begin at Philippians and decide whether to copy Letters from either the western or eastern side of the map. Regardless of their path, every player must collect Philippians during the game.



# TEAM PLAY

Team play can be played with 4 or 6 players.

## SET UP:

Players are to sit in an alternating pattern spaced apart from their teammates.

## STARTING THE GAME:

Each teammate will have their own scribe token. As a team, they will decide together which Gospel they will start on. Each player will use their own scribe token and is given 10 supplies of their choice to fill their small satchel. Teammates may discuss together who will collect which Letter and share a checklist.

## GAME PLAY:

Each player collects and uses their own supplies. Game play is consistent with standard game play with a few notable changes. When a player copies a Letter, they collect a Manna Card and perform the action. However, move Manna Cards may be given to one's teammate at any point during the game. Players can give their teammates supplies when they occupy the same space. \*Satchel limits still apply.

## GOSPEL LETTERS:

Each time a player collects a Gospel Letter BOTH teammates pick a Blessing Card of their choice. Teammates do not have to select the same Blessing Card.

## PRAYER & FASTING CARDS:

When a player receives Prayer & Fasting cards they can use them themselves or give them to their teammate at any point during the game.

## TABLE TALK:

This is highly encouraged among teammates. You may discuss routes, strategies, supplies, etc.

## WINNING THE GAME:

The team to collect all the Letters first AND meet up with their teammate on any space on the board wins the game!



# GAME TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Large Group Play:** If you have 6 players, we highly recommend playing as a team. This game typically takes 15-20 minutes per player, but can take longer if you're new to it. For 5 players, plan for around 1.5 hours or more. If you're short on time or just learning, consider Quick Play as a great option.

**Planning Ahead:** Before starting, plan your journey carefully and think about the supplies you'll need. Beginners should consider starting with these supplies: 4 bread, 2 fish, 2 ink, and 2 parchment. This will cover 2 Letters regardless of your starting point.

**Markets:** Make sure before you leave a Market you collect as many supplies as you can. Carrying extra supplies is always a good idea—there's no harm—because it could save you if you draw a negative Manna Card.

**Prayer & Fasting:** Prayer & Fasting is always beneficial. Even if you're falling behind, the cards received can serve as a pivotal moment to reclaim the lead! Take time to review your cards early and utilize as many as possible to secure an edge. Remember that some may be combined for greater effect.

**Blessing Cards:** Try obtaining Blessing Cards in various order each game. Your starting location should heavily influence which cards you pick. The sooner you obtain Blessing Cards, the better.

**Robbers and Lions:** Failure to overcome Robbers and Lions can set you back significantly if you lose supplies. Therefore, strategically plan your route to minimize risks.





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