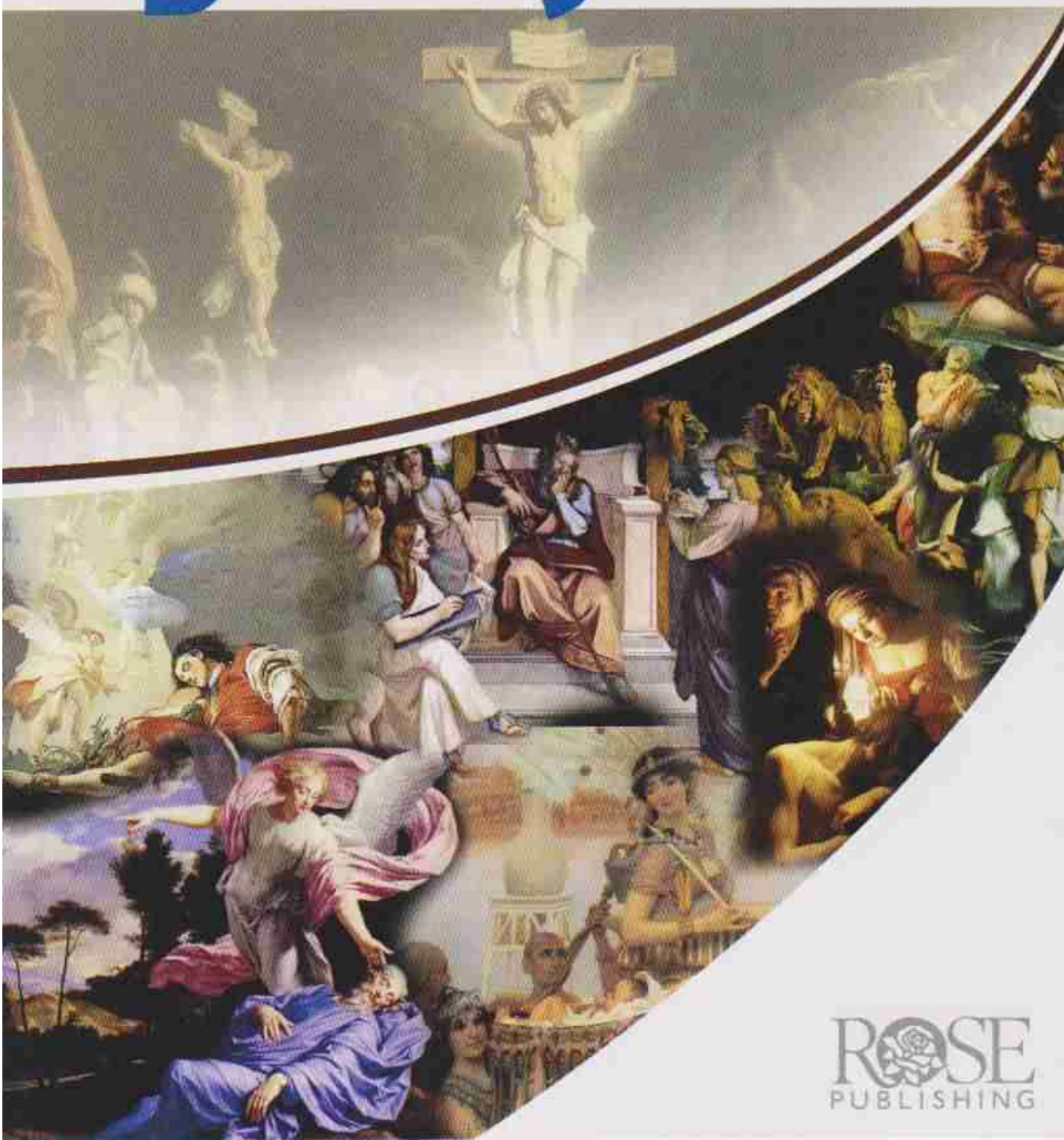


Summary, Main Points, and Related Scriptures

52 KEY BIBLE STORIES



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The Storyteller

The Bible contains many stories—but it is not a random collection; each individual story is part of one large story: the record of God’s dealings with humanity. The following pages summarize some of the most well-known stories in the Bible. There are many more wonderful stories to be discovered; this selected list provides a bird’s-eye view of the large biblical story.

The Characters

The main characters in that grand story are God and his people and the rest of humanity. A good grasp of the stories in the Bible opens a window into how God works in the life of his people today. Those stories help us understand where we came from and give us the wisdom to know where we are heading. The church is not based on individual experience alone; rather, it is also based on who we are as God’s people. We are a people bought at a high price. We are God’s special possession. We are a people created for good works. We understand this identity both from our life with God’s people today and from the many stories in the Bible.

The Story

The story the Bible tells has a clear beginning and ending. It begins at the very moment of creation: God is the creator and owner of all that exists. His creation is corrupted by sin, so God begins a history of salvation: God wants to redeem his whole creation and save humanity from sin, death and condemnation. Jesus is the answer to the problem of sin and evil. He is the savior of humanity and the redeemer of creation. The ending of the story is also clear: Jesus will come back as a victorious King to judge all peoples. He will create new heavens and earth with no place for death and evil.

1 Creation (Genesis 1:1–2:3)

Summary: God creates and blesses the heavens and the earth, the creatures, the plant life, the people. God is the owner and true King of the universe.

Main Points:

- The Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—participate in the creation.
- The six days of creation, followed by a seventh day of rest.
- God creates humans in his own image and gives them rule over all the earth (1:26–28).

See also Psalm 90:2 and Hebrews 1:2.

2 Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:7–8, 15–25)

Summary: God creates the first man, animal life, and the first woman. Humans are stewards of the creation.

Main Points:

- God creates Adam from the dust of the ground, and places him in the Garden of Eden (2:7–8).
- God forbids him to eat from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (2:15–17).
- God creates Eve from one of Adam’s ribs; Eve is a suitable helper for Adam (2:18–25).

See also Genesis 1:27 and Ephesians 5:22–29.

3 Human Rebellion (Genesis 3–11)

Summary: Not satisfied with their role in creation, humans fall into the temptation of wanting to be like gods. Their rebellion has cosmic consequences: Sin and death enter the world. A history of curse opposes God’s blessing on his creation.

Main Points:

- The serpent tempts Eve by questioning God’s word, love, and provision (3:1–5).
- Eve eats the fruit, as does Adam (3:6).
- God expels them from the garden and curses the serpent and the ground (3:18–19).
- Sin creates brokenness between humans and God, humans and nature, and humans with each other.
- The following stories, Cain and Abel, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel illustrate the consequences of sin in creation (4:1–11:9).

See also Romans 5:12–21 and Hebrews 3:15.

4 The Call of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-9)



Abraham's Journey to Canaan by Pieter Lastman

Summary: God begins a new history of blessing by calling Abram out of his country and family. God promises a new people and new possibilities.

Main Points:

- God calls Abram out of Ur to go to another land (12:1).
- God promises Abram to make of him a great nation and to bless him (12:2).
- God makes a covenant with Abram to give him a son and a land (15:1-21)
- God reaffirms his covenant with Abraham. Circumcision is the sign of the covenant (17:1-27).

See also Deuteronomy 26:5 and Romans 4.

5 Abraham's Faith (Genesis 22:1-18)

Summary: After keeping his promise of blessing Abraham and Sarah with a son in their old age, God tests Abraham.

Main Points:

- God instructs Abraham to offer Isaac, his only son, as a sacrifice (22:2); Abraham acts in obedience (22:6).
- When Isaac sees no animal sacrifice, he asks his father about it (22:7).
- Abraham tells Isaac that God will provide the sacrifice (22:8).
- As Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac, the angel of the Lord stops him (22:11-12).
- The Lord provides a ram to be the sacrifice and confirms his covenant with Abraham (22:13-18).

See also Hebrews 11:17-19 and Romans 8:32.

6 Joseph in Canaan (Genesis 37-47)



Peter Joseph Interpreting Pharaoh's Dream by Peter van Cornelius

Summary: The story of Joseph illustrates the promise God made to Abraham. Through Joseph, and in spite of the suffering and troubles, God blesses all the nations of the earth.

Main Points:

- Joseph was the favorite son of Israel (Jacob) (37:3).
- Joseph shares two prophetic dreams with his family in which he rules over them (37:5-11).
- Joseph's brothers conspire to kill him, but settle for selling him into slavery (37:12-28).
- While in slavery in Egypt, God blesses Joseph even in the midst of suffering and injustice (39-40).
- Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams; he becomes the second in command in Egypt (41).
- Joseph confronts his brothers. His brothers, especially Judah, experience a transformation (42-45).
- Jacob, Joseph's father, goes to Egypt with all of his family (46).
- God reaffirms his promises to Jacob as he had done with Abraham (46:3-4).

See also Genesis 41:39-43 and Genesis 45:8.

7 The Call of Moses (Exodus 1-6)

Summary: God calls Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Israel spent over 400 years in Egypt. Moses is to lead God's people through the wilderness into the Promised Land.

Main Points:

- After Joseph's death, a new Pharaoh enslaved Israel's children (1:1-22).



Moses Before the Burning Bush by Domenico Feti

- God speaks to Moses from a bush that burns but does not burn up (3:3–4).
- God identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (3:6).
- God tells Moses that he has selected him to tell Pharaoh to release the people (3:9–10).
- God tells Moses that his name is “I AM” (3:13–14).
- God tells Moses that Pharaoh will not comply and God will have to strike Egypt (3:19–20).

See also Psalm 90 and Hebrews 3:1–6.

8 The Plagues on Egypt and the Passover (Exodus 7:15–12:51)

Summary: Pharaoh refuses to release the people of Israel. God shows that he is the only God by sending ten plagues. God provides a way for the plague of the death of the firstborn to “pass over” the people of Israel.

Main Points:

- God strikes Egypt with ten plagues.
- God instructs the people to:
 - Sacrifice a lamb (12:3–6) and place its blood on the sides and tops of their doorframes (12:7).
 - Eat the lamb that night with bitter herbs and bread without yeast (12:8).
 - Eat it quickly, while fully clothed (12:11), and burn away any that remained by morning (12:10).
 - Continue this activity annually as a memorial (12:14).

See also Amos 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 5:7–8.

9 Crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 13:17–14:31)

Summary: God shows his power over creation and power to save. He opens the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to escape from the Egyptian army. People are safe in God’s hands.



Crossing the Red Sea by Bacchiacca

Main Points:

- God’s presence is with Israel as a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night (13:21–22).
- Pharaoh regrets letting the Jews go; he pursues them with his army (14:5–7).
- The pillar of cloud moves between the Egyptians and the Israelites (14:19–20).
- The Israelites move safely through the parted waters, but the Egyptian army is destroyed (14:21–29).

See also Joshua 3:14–17, 2 Kings 2:8–14 and 1 Corinthians 10:1–2.

10 The Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:3–9; 20:1–26)

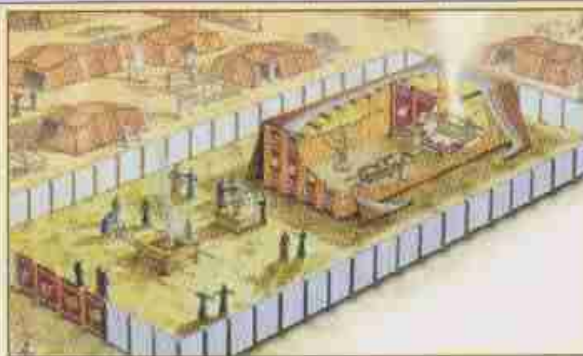
Summary: God provides the commandments as the way for people to live in a covenant relationship with him. The commandments make it possible for a sinful people to live with a holy, powerful God in their midst.

Main Points:

- Moses brings the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel.
- The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God.
- The last six deal with our relationships with each other.

See also Galatians 3:24 and Luke 24:44.

11 The Tabernacle (Exodus 40)



The Tabernacle Cutaway ©Rose Publishing, Inc.

Summary: God’s relationship with his people has two parts: the Ten Commandments and God’s own presence. The tabernacle, a movable tent, represents God’s desire to dwell among his people.

Main Points:

- God wants to dwell with his people (Ex. 29:44–46).
- The tabernacle has three sections: the

courtyard (40:6–8), the Holy Place (40:4–5), and the Most Holy Place (40:3).

- Aaron and his sons are anointed as priests to serve in the tabernacle (40:13–15).
- God is pleased with the tabernacle and his glory fills it (40:34).

See also *Exodus 28:4–42 and Hebrews 2:17*.

12 The Battle of Jericho (Joshua 6)

Summary: God brings the children of Israel to the land he had promised to Abraham. God instructs the people of Israel how to defeat the walled city of Jericho. God is faithful to his promise.

Main Points:

- Before sharing his plan, God assures Joshua of victory (6:2).
- Seven priests with trumpets and carrying the Ark of the Covenant lead the Israelites to march around the city once a day for six days (6:3, 12–14).
- On the seventh day, they circle the city seven times ending with the sounding of the trumpets and a shout from the people (6:4–5, 15–20).
- The walls fall on the seventh day, and the city is defeated (6:21–22).
- Joshua ensures the safety of Rahab and her family, as was promised to her earlier for protecting the Israelites (23–35).
- The book of Joshua tells how the children of Israel enter the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

See also *Matthew 1:5 and 1 Kings 16:34*.

13 Samson and Delilah (Judges 16)

Summary: The story of Samson illustrates how the tribes of Israel fail to be faithful to God. This story shows God's great patience and grace toward his people.

Main Points:

- The period of the Judges shows the tribes of Israel following a pattern consisting of



Samson and Delilah
by Gerrit van Honthorst

disobedience, oppression, crying out to God, and deliverance.

- God grants Samson great strength; Samson must consecrate himself to God. The sign or mark of the agreement is Samson's long hair.
- The Philistines want to kill Samson (16:2–3). Delilah discovers Samson's secret; she then cuts Samson's hair. The Philistines capture him, blind him, and put him in chains (16:19–21).
- While Samson is in bonds, he cries out to God. As an act of grace and compassion, God grants his strength back. Samson destroys a Philistine temple and all the people within it (16:22–30).

See also *Numbers 6:3 and Hebrews 11:32*.

14 The Anointing of King Saul (1 Samuel 8:1–22; 9:1–2, 15–21; 10:24)

Summary: Israel rejects God's rule by requesting a king like all the nations around them. God grants them their request. He also gives them prophetic warning against relying on kings instead of God.

Main Points:

- The prophet Samuel and his sons are the judges of Israel, but his sons are evil (8:1–3).
- Samuel warns the people of the hardships that come with a king, but they insist (8:5–22).
- Saul has the physical characteristics one would look for in a king (9:1–2).
- God leads Samuel to Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin (9:15–21).
- Samuel anoints Saul as the first (earthly) king of Israel (10:24).

See also *Deut. 17:14–20 and 1 Samuel 15:10–11*.

15 The Anointing of King David (1 Samuel 16)

Summary: When Saul dishonors God, the Lord rejects Saul as the first king of Israel. God chooses David to be king.

Main Points:

- God sends Samuel to anoint the next king, one of the sons of Jesse in Bethlehem (16:1–3).
- Samuel sees seven of Jesse's sons but God does not choose any of them (16:5–10).
- God chooses people not by their appearance or size but by their heart (16:67).
- The Lord tells Samuel to anoint Jesse's youngest son, David, as king (16:11–12).

- David respects Saul and does not immediately take power. David plays the harp to comfort Saul (16:14–23).

See also *Matthew 1:6* and *2 Samuel 5:3*.

16 David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

Summary: The men of Israel fear Goliath, a giant of the Philistines. Young David confronts and defeats him.



David and Goliath by Caravaggio

David shows that victory is not achieved with swords and skill; rather, God makes his people victorious.

Main Points:

- Goliath stands nearly ten feet tall and is well armed and clothed (17:4–7).
- Goliath mocks and challenges the men of Israel for forty days (17:8–16).
- David hears Goliath's challenge and accepts (16:17–32).
- Saul tries to dissuade David because of his youth, but David explains that God will allow him to defeat the giant (16:33–37).
- David drops Goliath with a sling and a stone and beheads him with the giant's own sword (17:40–51).

See also *Ephesians 6:10–17* and *Zechariah 4:6*.

17 David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)

Summary: David commits a series of terrible sins: coveting, adultery, abuse of authority, and murder. Once the prophet Nathan confronts him, David recognizes and repents of his sins. God forgives King David. However, God also punishes him for his sins.

Main Points:

- Instead of being with his army, David remains at Jerusalem (11:1).
- David sees Bathsheba bathing and desires her. He finds out that she is married to one of his soldiers, Uriah (11:2–3).
- David commits adultery with her and she conceives (11:4–5).
- David calls Uriah back to Jerusalem hoping that he will believe the child is his. But

Uriah refuses pleasure while his comrades are at war (11:6–13).

- David arranges for Uriah to be put in an area of battle where he is killed (11:14–26); after a period of mourning, David marries Bathsheba (11:27).
- The prophet Nathan confronts David with a clever story. David recognizes and repents of his sins (12:1–12).

See also *2 Samuel 12:1–23* and *Psalms 51*.

18 The Contest on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:17–40)

Summary: Worshiping false gods is rampant in Israel. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal, one of the false gods, to a contest to prove the true God. Once again, God gives victory to his servant.

Main Points:

- Elijah confronts King Ahab for forsaking the ways of God. The prophet proposes a challenge (18:17–19).
- At Mount Carmel, Elijah proposes that both groups prepare a bull to be sacrificed. Each one will pray for fire from heaven (18:25).
- The prophets of Baal try for hours to get their god to respond, but nothing happens (18:26–29).
- God is able to consume the bull and the entire altar with fire from heaven, causing the people to turn back to the Lord (18:30–39).
- The 400 prophets of Baal are killed (18:40).
- The people recognize that “The LORD—he is God!” (18:39).

See also *1 Kings 21:27–29* and *1 Kings 22*.

19 Elisha Heals Naaman's Leprosy (2 Kings 5:1–14)

Summary:

God heals Naaman, a foreign general of a rival kingdom. After much doubt, Naaman obeys God and finds healing. Naaman recognizes and confesses that the LORD is the true God.



Elisha Refusing Gifts from Naaman by Pieter de Grebber

Main Points:

- Naaman, a military leader in Syria and an honorable man, suffers with leprosy (5:1).
- A servant girl suggests that God's prophet Elisha can heal Naaman (5:2–4).
- Elisha tells Naaman, through a messenger, to wash himself in the Jordan River seven times to be healed (5:8–10).
- Naaman is upset that Elisha does not come see him personally. His servants convince him to follow the prophet's instructions.
- God heals him (5:11–14).
- Naaman confesses: "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel" (5:15).

See also 2 Kings 5:15–27 and Luke 4:27.

20 Israel Sent to Captivity (2 Kings 17:7–23; 2 Kings 25:1–30)

Summary: After years of Israel's rebellion and unfaithfulness, God punishes the people by sending them into exile. First, the Northern Kingdom (Israel) is conquered, then the Southern Kingdom (Judah). God, however, saves a faithful group of people for himself.

Main Points:

- Because of Israel's rebellion, God allows the powerful kings of Assyria to defeat and take the Northern Kingdom, Israel, into exile (2 Kings 17:7–23).
- The Southern Kingdom, Judah, survives for another few generations. Eventually, Judah's rebellion causes its fall.
- God allows the powerful king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, to conquer Judah, destroy Jerusalem and the temple, and send Judah into exile (2 Kings 25:1–30).
- However, God preserves a remnant of his people and promises to save and gather them (Isaiah 11:11; Jeremiah 23:3).

See also Deuteronomy 28:49–68; 32:1–47.

21 Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:1–2:10)

Summary: God graciously allows many of his people in exile to return to Jerusalem. Nehemiah, a high-ranking Jewish official in Persia, oversees the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

Main Points:

- Nehemiah learns that the walls protecting Jerusalem are broken down (1:1–3). He prays to God with repentance for his people and for the chance to oversee the rebuilding of the wall (1:4–11).
- The king inquires about Nehemiah's obvious sadness (2:1–2). Nehemiah explains his desire to rebuild the walls and asks for the king's blessings (2:3–7).
- The king sends Nehemiah with orders to support his work, but the people of the area opposed Nehemiah (2:8–10).
- Despite the problems, Nehemiah and the people finish and dedicate the walls of Jerusalem (12:27–47).

See also Nehemiah 4:1–6:14 and Nehemiah 6:15–13:31.

22 The Suffering Servant Prophecy (Isaiah 53)

Summary: Isaiah prophesies about the suffering Servant who would suffer on behalf of God's people. The prophecy anticipates the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, who comes to save the world.

Main Points:

- Because of Christ's humility, many people will not believe he is the Messiah (53:1–2).
- Christ will endure much sorrow and rejection (53:3–4).
- Christ willingly pays the penalty for our sins to provide a way of reconciliation (53:5–8).
- God is pleased to send his Son to allow humanity a way of salvation (53:9–12).

See also Luke 13:34 and Acts 8:26–32.

23 Valley of Dry Bones (Ezekiel 37:1–14)



The Vision of Ezekiel by Francisco Collantes

Summary: God uses a vision of dry bones brought back to life as a message of hope for Israel. God promises divine intervention to revive his people.

Main Points:

- God shows Ezekiel a vision of a valley full of dry bones (37:1–3).
- When Ezekiel tells the bones to hear the word of God, God restores life to them (37:4–6).
- The bones come back together; tendons, flesh and skin are added, but they still have no breath (37:7–8).
- God tells Ezekiel to tell the wind to breathe into the men and they come to life (37:9–10).
- God intends to deliver his people from captivity and restore them (37:11–14).

See also Genesis 1:7 and Acts 2:2.

24 The Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3)



The Three Young Men in the Blazing Furnace by Pieter Pieterse

Summary: Three young Jewish men in Babylon refuse to bow to the Babylonian king's golden image. They are condemned to die in a fiery furnace. God miraculously delivers them.

Main Points:

- King Nebuchadnezzar has a statue erected and demands that the people worship it (3:1–6).
- Three Jewish men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refuse to worship (3:7–12).
- Enraged, the king gives them one last chance to bow but they refuse, trusting God (3:13–18).
- Despite heating the furnace seven times hotter than normal, the king is astonished to see the men are unharmed and there is a fourth person walking in the fire (3:19–27).
- King Nebuchadnezzar confesses: "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego..." and promotes the men (3:24–30).

See also Daniel 1:1–7 and Daniel 4:34.

25 Jonah and the Great Fish (Jonah 1–3)

Summary: When Jonah refuses to follow God's instructions, God uses a great fish to convince Jonah to obey and preach repentance to Nineveh.

Main Points:

- God calls Jonah to preach in Nineveh, but Jonah refuses and flees by ship (1:1–3).
- The Lord sends a fierce storm and the terrified crew members throw Jonah overboard at his request (1:4–16).
- The Lord sends a great fish to swallow Jonah and he spends three days and nights in its belly (1:17).
- Jonah cries out to God and the fish expels him onto dry land (2:1–10).
- Jonah reluctantly preaches to Nineveh and the whole city repents (3:1–10).

See also Jonah 4 and Matthew 12:40.

26 Preparing the Way (Luke 1:1–25)

Summary: An angel announces the birth of John the Baptist. His birth is a sign that God is about to do wonderful things in history.

Main Points:

- Zechariah, a priest, and his wife Elizabeth are faithful followers of God's commandments (1:5–7).
- An angel promises to Zechariah the birth of his son, John (1:8–13).
- The Holy Spirit will lead the child to prepare the way for the Messiah (1:14–17).
- Because of Zechariah's unbelief, the angel makes him unable to speak until the child is born (1:18–20).
- John the Baptist is God's fulfillment of his 400-year-old promises (Malachi 3:1).

See also *Luke 7:28* and *Matthew 14:1–12*.



St. John the Baptist Preaching
by Paolo Veronese

27 The Annunciation (Luke 1:26–56)

Summary: An angel announces to Mary, a virgin engaged to Joseph, that God has chosen her to conceive Jesus miraculously.

Main Points:

- The angel Gabriel tells Mary that God has chosen her to carry the baby Jesus, God in human form (1:26–33).
- Mary is puzzled since she had never been with a man (1:34).
- Gabriel makes it clear that it is a divine miracle (1:35–38).
- Mary praises God for the great blessing, acknowledges her unworthiness, and recognizes the child as the Savior of the world (1:46–56).

See also *Luke 3:23–38* and *2 Samuel 7:16*.



The Annunciation
by Edward Burne Jones

28 The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1–20)

Summary: As promised in the Old Testament, God sends his Son, the Messiah, to be born. Jesus is the Messiah God promised. He has come to give life, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Main Points:

- Caesar Augustus requires all people under Roman rule to return to their home city for a census (2:1–3).
- Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, their native city (2:4).
- Mary gives birth to Jesus in humble surroundings (2:5–7).
- Angels appear to shepherds, announcing the birth of the Savior and praising God (2:8–14).
- The shepherds immediately go to the child. They spread the news of the wonderful things they have seen and heard (2:15–20).

See also *Micah 5:2* and *Daniel 9:25*.

29 The Child Jesus (Luke 2:21–52)

Summary: Even in Jesus' early years, those who love God recognize Jesus as the Savior.

Main Points:

- Mary and Joseph obey the angel and name the child Jesus. In obedience, they circumcise Jesus (2:21–24).
- Simeon and Anna give testimony that Jesus is the promised Messiah (2:25–38).
- Mary, Joseph, and Jesus return to Jerusalem for the Passover feast when Jesus is twelve years old. Jesus astonishes the Jewish leaders with his understanding (2:41–50).
- Jesus is obedient to Mary and Joseph (2:51–52).

See also *Leviticus 12:6–8* and *Philippians 2:5–8*.

30 Jesus' Baptism and Beginning of His Ministry (Luke 3:21–4:15)

Summary: At about thirty years of age, Jesus is baptized and begins his ministry.

Main Points:

- After John baptizes Jesus, the heavens open, which means that God is about to do something special (see *Isaiah 64:1* and *Ezekiel 1:1*).
- The Father and the Holy Spirit are present

at Jesus' baptism. They reveal that Jesus is God's Son (3:22).

- As he did for Israel in the Old Testament, God leads Jesus to the wilderness. Israel was in the wilderness in preparation for entering the Promised Land; Jesus is in the wilderness as preparation for his ministry (4:1).
 - Satan repeatedly tempts Jesus (4:2).
 - Unlike Israel who sinned, Jesus defeats Satan's temptations remaining sinless (4:3–15).
- See also Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 9:1–2, and Matthew 3:13–4:11.*



The Baptism of Christ
by Carl Heinrich Bloch

- Nicodemus thinks Jesus is talking about a physical birth. However, Jesus explains that it is a spiritual birth (3:4–8).
 - Jesus explains that God the Father loves us so much that Jesus himself is willing to die in our place to offer salvation (3:9–15).
- See also Numbers 21:5–9 and 2 Cor 5:17.*

33 Jesus Calms the Storm (Mark 4:35–41)

Summary: Jesus demonstrates his power over nature when calming a storm at sea.

Main Points:

- Jesus and his disciples set out to cross a large lake (4:35–36).
- As Jesus sleeps, a great storm arises and the boat begins to fill with water (4:37).
- Jesus commands the wind and the sea to be still, and there is a great calm (4:39).
- Jesus questions his disciples' faith; the disciples wonder about his power over nature (4:40).

See also Mark 6:45–52 and John 2:1–12.

31 Jesus Turns Water into Wine (John 2:1–12)

Summary: Jesus performs his first public miracle, turning water into wine.

Main Points:

- Jesus, his disciples, and his mother Mary are at a wedding in Cana of Galilee (2:1–2).
- When the wedding party runs out of wine, Mary tells Jesus (2:3–5).
- Jesus has the servants fill six jars with water. The master of the banquet tastes the wine (2:6–8).
- The master of the banquet declares this is the best wine served at the wedding (2:9–10).
- This is the beginning of Jesus' public miracles (2:11–12).

See also Phil. 3:21 and Matt. 26:27–29.

32 Jesus Teaches Nicodemus (John 3:1–21)

Summary: Nicodemus, a Jewish leader, comes to speak with Jesus privately.

Main Points:

- Nicodemus, a respected and educated Jew, comes to see Jesus at night (3:1–2).
- Jesus explains the need for a person to be born again to see the kingdom of God (3:3).

34 Jesus Walks On the Water (Matthew 14:22–36)

Summary: While his disciples are caught on a ship in a storm, Jesus walks on the sea.

Main Points:

- Jesus sends his disciples across a large lake so that he can be alone in prayer (14:22–23).
- In the hours before dawn, high winds and waves toss the ship (14:24).
- Jesus walks on the lake and comforts the fearful disciples (14:24–27).
- Peter asks to walk on the lake, but becomes fearful and begins to sink (14:28–30).
- Jesus saves Peter and the wind ceases as the disciples declare that Jesus must be the Son of God (14:31–33).

See also Job 9:8 and Luke 5:1–11.



Walking on Water by Ivan Aivazovsky

35 The Transfiguration (Mark 9:1–13)

Summary: On a mountain, Jesus reveals a glimpse of his glory.

Main Points:

- Jesus goes to the mountain with Peter, James, and John (9:1–2).
- Jesus is transfigured (changed); Elijah and Moses appear and talk with Jesus (9:3–6).
- God the Father acknowledges his Son with a voice from heaven (9:7).
- Jesus instructs his disciples not to discuss this event until he is resurrected (9:8–13).

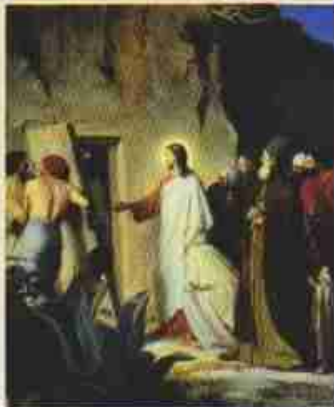
See also Luke 9:31 and Malachi 4:5–6.

36 Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11:1–46)

Summary: Four days after Lazarus' death, Jesus raises him.

Main Points:

- Jesus' dear followers Mary and Martha inform him that Lazarus is ill (11:1–3).
- Jesus explains to his disciples that Lazarus is dead. Jesus goes to raise Lazarus (11:11–16).
- The grief of Mary and Martha, and the hopelessness of the Jews, causes Jesus to weep (11:17–35).
- In front of a crowd, at Jesus' command, Lazarus comes out of his tomb (11:36–46).



The Raising of Lazarus by Carl Heinrich Bloch

See also Isaiah 53:3 and Isaiah 61:1–2.

37 The Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16–30)

Summary: Jesus teaches a rich young man about how to get eternal life and the cost of discipleship.

Main Points:

- A young man asks Jesus how to have eternal life; Jesus refers him to God's commandments (19:16–17).
- When the man affirms that he has kept all the commandments, Jesus tests his real commitment by asking him to sell all that he has and give it to the poor (19:20–21).

- The young man leaves unhappy and Jesus teaches his disciples that we must put God first to be truly his disciples (19:30–30).

See also Ephesians 2:8–9 and 2 Corinthians 8:1–3.

38 The Triumphant Entry (Luke 19:28–44)

Summary: On Jesus' last public visit to Jerusalem, the Jews welcome him as a king.

Main Points:

- Jesus sends two disciples ahead to retrieve a colt which he would ride into the city (19:28–34).
- The people prepare a path for Jesus; his many disciples praise God (19:35–38).
- The Pharisees are upset and ask Jesus to stop the crowd from praising him (19:39).
- Jesus tells the Pharisees that if the people do not praise him, the stones would cry out (19:40).
- Jesus weeps over the city as he foresees its spiritual blindness and future destruction (19:41–44).

See also Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 118:25–26.

39 Important Questions (Mark 12:18–40)

Summary: Many that oppose Jesus try to trap him with trick questions, but Jesus uses every attack as an opportunity to teach the truth.

Main Points:

- The Sadducees, who do not believe in the resurrection, raise a complicated question concerning husbands and wives in heaven (12:18–23).
- Jesus tells them that in heaven we are not given in marriage, but more importantly, that the resurrection is real (12:24–27).
- The scribes ask Jesus what is the most important commandment. Jesus replies to love God with your all heart (12:28–34).
- Jesus then points out errors in other teachings of the scribes (12:35–37).
- Jesus warns his followers to beware of false religious leaders (12:38–40).

See also John 5:28–29 and Isaiah 53:3.

40 The Last Supper (Luke 22:7–20)

Summary:

Jesus celebrates his final Passover with his disciples and teaches them more fully about his sacrificial death and its spiritual significance.

Main Points:

- Jesus sends two of his disciples into the city to prepare a room for the Passover meal (22:7–13).
- Jesus reveals it will be his last supper with them before his death (22:14–16).
- Jesus uses bread to symbolize how his body will be broken on our behalf (22:17–19).
- Jesus uses wine to symbolize how his blood will be shed on our behalf (22:20).

See also *Exodus 12:1–28* and *1 Corinthians 11:17–24*.



The Last Supper by Carl Heinrich Bloch

41 The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (Matthew 26:47–68)

Summary: Jesus is arrested and put on trial by the Jewish religious leaders.

Main Points:

- While Jesus is praying in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas arrives with the Jewish leaders (26:47).
- Judas greets Jesus with a kiss to signify he is the one to be arrested (26:48–50).
- One disciple attempts to fight back, but Jesus says that the Scriptures must be fulfilled (26:51–56).
- Jesus is tried before the high priest but no honest charge can be brought against him (26:57–61).
- When the high priest questions Jesus, Jesus declares that he himself is the Son of God. The Jewish leaders spit on him, strike him, and find him guilty of blasphemy (26:62–68).

See also *Psalms 41:9* and *Isaiah 50:6*.

42 Peter Denies Jesus (Luke 22:31–34, 54–65)

Summary:

Despite promises of loyalty, Peter denies knowing Jesus three times.

Main Points:

- Jesus warns Peter that Satan seeks to destroy him; but he is praying for Peter to remain faithful (22:31–32).
- Peter declares that he would go to prison and even die for Jesus (22:33).
- Jesus affirms that Peter will deny him three times before the rooster crows (22:34).
- After Jesus' arrest, Peter follows the crowd at a distance. When questioned by others, Peter denies knowing Jesus on three separate occasions (22:54–60).
- At the third denial, Jesus turns and looks at Peter, who leaves weeping bitterly as the guards continue to mock and strike Jesus (22:61–65).

See also *John 17:9* and *John 21:15–19*.



Peter's Betrayal by Carl Heinrich Bloch

43 The Trial of Jesus (Matthew 27:1–31)

Summary: Jesus is put on trial with the Roman leaders.

Main Points:

- The Jewish leaders decide that Jesus should die. They take him to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate (27:1–2).
- Judas Iscariot regrets betraying innocent Jesus, refuses the money he was paid, and hangs himself (27:3–10).
- Pilate questions Jesus and is astonished that he does not defend himself (27:11–14).
- Pilate allows the Jews to choose which prisoner he will set free; the Jews choose Barabbas and call for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate releases Barabbas (27:15–26).
- Pilate orders the crucifixion of Jesus (27:26).

See also *Isaiah 53:2–7*.

44 The Crucifixion (Luke 23:26–49)



The Crucifixion by Pieter Lastman

Summary: Jesus is put to death through the cruel Roman method of crucifixion.

Main Points:

- After a night of beatings, Jesus is weak; Simon from Cyrene is forced to help carry Jesus' cross (23:26).
- Jesus warns the people they will be subject to persecution (23:27–31).
- Two criminals are crucified along with Jesus, one on his left and another on his right (23:32–33).
- The soldiers gamble for Jesus' clothes and the people mock him. Jesus asks the Father to forgive the crowd (23:34–38).
- One of the criminals continues to mock Jesus but the other acknowledges that Jesus is innocent, unlike him and his friend. Jesus comforts the criminal with God's forgiveness (23:39–43).
- From noon to three o'clock, there is darkness over all the earth, the curtain of the temple tears, and Jesus dies (23:43–49).

See also *Matthew 27:32–56*, *Mark 15:21–47*, *John 19:17–37*, and *Isaiah 53:12*.

45 The Burial of Christ (Matthew 27:57–66)

Summary: After his death by crucifixion, Jesus' followers bury him in a borrowed tomb.

Main Points:

- Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and follower of Jesus, gets permission to take Jesus' body for burial (27:57–58).
- Joseph wraps Jesus' body in burial cloths and secures him in his own tomb with a large stone at the opening (27:59–60).
- Some of Jesus' women followers observe the burial from afar (27:61).
- The Jewish leaders ask Pilate to seal the tomb. Pilate seals the stone and guards the tomb (27:62–66).

See also *Isaiah 53:9* and *Mark 15:43*.

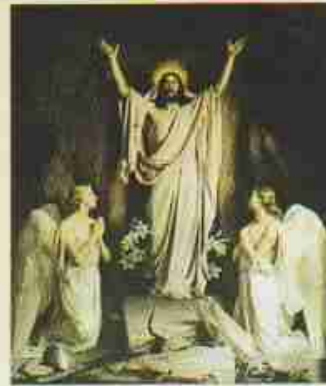
46 The Resurrection (John 20:1–18)

Summary: As he prophesied and promised, Jesus is raised back to life on the third day.

Main Points:

- Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb the day after Jesus' burial, finds it empty, and runs to tell the disciples (20:1–2).
- Peter and John run to the tomb, find it empty, and return home puzzled (20:3–10).
- Mary Magdalene sees two angels in the tomb and expresses her concern about Jesus' body (20:11–13).
- Jesus appears to her, but she does not realize it is the Lord until he speaks to her (20:14–16).
- At Jesus' command, she returns and tells the disciples all she has seen and heard (20:17–18).

See also *Psalms 49:15*, *Matthew 28:1–10*, *Mark 16:1–11*, and *Luke 24:1–12*.



The Resurrection by Carl Heinrich Bloch

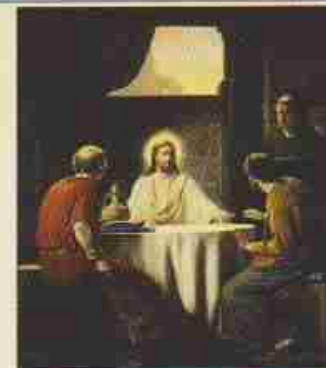
47 The Appearances of Christ (John 20:19–31)

Summary: After his resurrection, Jesus appears to a number of people on many occasions.

Main Points:

- Jesus appears to his disciples who are in a locked room (20:19).
- Jesus shows them his hands and side; the disciples believe and are glad (20:20).
- Jesus commissions the disciples to continue in the ministry (20:21–23).
- Thomas is not present and refuses to believe until he sees Jesus and his wounds (20:24–25).
- Jesus appears eight days later and Thomas believes; Jesus blesses him and those who have not seen but still believe (20:26–31).

See also *Mark 16:9–18*, *Luke 24:13–49*, and *Zechariah 12:10*.



Supper at Emmaus by Carl Heinrich Bloch

48 The Ascension (Luke 24:44-53)

Summary: After commissioning his disciples to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations, Jesus ascends to heaven.

Main Points:

- Jesus has fulfilled all the prophecies about him and his ministry (24:44).
- Jesus enables the disciples to understand the Scriptures (24:45).
- Jesus explains that his death and resurrection were necessary for the forgiveness of sin (24:46-48).
- Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to empower the disciples (24:49).
- Jesus physically ascends and the disciples are filled with joy (24:50-53).

See also *Psalm 68:18* and *Acts 1:11*.

49 Pentecost—Receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13)

Summary: After Jesus' ascension, the disciples receive the Holy Spirit and preach in every known language.

Main Points:

- The disciples are gathered to celebrate Pentecost and pray (2:1).
- The sound of a great rushing wind fills the house and the image of tongues of fire touches each disciple (2:2-3).
- In the power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples speak in different languages (2:3-4).
- Most of the people are amazed, but some mock the disciples (2:11-13).

See also *Exodus 3:2* and *Acts 10:45*.



Pentecost by Titian

50 Peter's Sermon after Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40)

Summary: After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter preaches boldly.

Main Points:

- The disciples are not drunk; it is the fulfillment of prophecy (2:14-21).

- Jesus is proven to be the Son of God; his death and resurrection were prophesied (2:22-28).
- The Jews understand they rejected the Messiah. They ask what they should do (2:36-37).
- Peter tells them to repent, accept Jesus as Christ, and be baptized (2:38-40).
- God adds about 3,000 people to the church that day (2:41).

See also *Joel 2:28-32* and *Psalm 16:8-11*.

51 Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-22)

Summary: Saul, a Pharisee and persecutor of Jesus' early disciples, believes after an encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Main Points:

- Saul is headed to persecute Christians in Damascus (9:1-2).
- On the way to Damascus, Jesus confronts Saul in a vision (9:3-5).
- Jesus tells Saul to wait in the city for a sign. Saul waits for three days while blinded (9:6-9).
- God has chosen Saul to preach salvation to the Gentiles; Saul believes, receives his sight and is baptized (9:10-18).
- Saul begins to preach Christ in the synagogues, and the people are amazed because he used to persecute them (9:19-22).

See also *Acts 13:9* and *Philippians 3:1-14*.

52 Revelation: The Climax of Prophecy

Summary: God reveals to John his plans for the world in the last days. The purpose of this revelation is to bring comfort, assurance, encouragement, and guidance to Christians.

Main Points:

- John receives this revelation while in exile on the island of Patmos (1:9).
- God sends a message to seven churches (1:9-3:22).
- God reveals his future plans for the world in a series of visions (4:1-22:5).
- Christ is coming back and will judge humanity (22:7).
- The powers of evil are doomed before Christ (20:7-15).
- God promises a wonderful future for all who believe in Jesus (21:1-22:6).

See also *Matthew 24* and *1 Thess. 4:13-18*.