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THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Genesis 1

God, a living Being, all-sufficient and happy in Himself, had no beginning. He always was. Nothing existed but God alone. And then according to His plan, God's goodness broke out in a creative act and at that moment time was born. As the Bible describes this moment it pictures an unformed mass of earth, waste and empty, and darkness hanging over the abyss. And above the waters moved the Spirit of God like a mighty wind.

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God separated the light from the darkness, calling the light Day and the darkness Night. And there was evening and morning, the first day.

Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters to divide the waters." And so it was. God made the firmament, dividing the waters that were below the firmament from those that were above it. God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and morning, the second day.

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear." And so it was. God called the land Earth and the assembled waters Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants and all kinds of fruit trees that bear fruits containing their seed." And so it was. The earth brought forth vegetation, every kind of seed-bearing plant and all kinds of trees that bear fruit containing their seed. God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate day from night; let them serve as signs and for the fixing of seasons, days and years; let them serve as lights in the firmament of the heavens to shed light upon the earth." So it was. God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the smaller one to rule the night, and He made



Forlaye

The Creation of the World



The Rescue of Moses

THE RESCUE OF MOSES

Exodus 1-2

After several centuries the Pharaohs were no longer kind to the Israelites. The Jewish population had increased so, that Pharaoh feared for the safety of Egypt.

First he tried to reduce their number by working them to death. That plan failed, so he tried another. He issued an order that all male children born to the Israelites were to be thrown into the Nile River.

The persecution had now reached its height. God had brought the Israelites to Egypt; now that they were being persecuted, He would provide for their delivery.

A son was born to an Israelite woman. She managed to hide him for three months but to do so longer was not possible. With some hope for the boy's safety she placed him in shallow water at the edge of the Nile River in a covered, watertight basket.

As was her custom the king's daughter came to the shore to bathe. Inquisitive about the strange basket resting so peacefully in the waters, she had her maid open it. A child, a baby boy! At once the princess loved it and wanted it. Miriam, the baby's sister, had been watching. She lost no time. She inquired if the princess cared to have a maid for the baby. Yes, a nurse was needed. Miriam called her anxious mother. All things worked out well for the baby boy. He was named Moses.

After he had grown up, Moses was brought to Pharaoh's palace and given an excellent education. And under the guidance of his mother, Moses was also well instructed in the religious traditions of his own people. At heart he was a true Israelite.

It did not seem long until Moses had grown into young manhood and understood the sufferings of his people. He was grieved at the cruel treatment they were receiving. One day, witnessing the lashes given by an overseer to one of his fellowmen, his anger was deeply aroused. Moses struck and killed the Egyptian.

Moses knew that Pharaoh would be enraged against him. He left Egypt at once. He joined a caravan on its way to Madian. Here he lived with Jethro and later married one of his daughters. Moses had become a humble shepherd.



David

1 Samuel 17-30

Although Saul had fallen from his high purpose, the great Lord of Israel did not forget His people. He had chosen the man they needed, one who was brave, tender of heart, and great of mind. Long before Saul's death, the Lord had inspired Samuel to go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint David the shepherd boy, the future king of Israel.

Events show that God was always David's strong support. In his youth, all unknowingly, David was being prepared for the great work God wished him to do. His life as shepherd made him gentle toward his flocks and strong against wild, marauding animals. Later as king he was both gentle and valiant. Gifted with musical talent and having the opportunity to play to his heart's content in God's open country, David became an expert harpist and a singer of psalms to God. Eventually his skill on the harp brought him to the royal house of Saul where he learned courtly manners and later secured posts of honor.

The Lord continued directing David's life toward His ends. The bravery David showed in his gallant and successful combat with Goliath never died in the hearts of Israel's warriors. He had saved them. He was their chivalrous hero. And now that there was no king, it was only natural that the elders looked to David. At Hebron he was publicly anointed king of Judah, and there, according to the Lord's counsel, he began his royal work.

Meanwhile, Abner, commander of Saul's army, brought Isboseth, Saul's remaining son, forward and set him up as king of the remaining tribes of Israel. For a long period there was a struggle between Saul's line and David's followers. The conflict went on for seven and a half years, but ever the fortunes and powers of David advanced while the cause of Saul's adherents became ever weaker.

Abner, quietly and discreetly, sent word to David offering him the land and rule of Israel. At the same time he assembled the elders of the tribes and proposed a change. He said to them, "The outcome of this conflict



The Birth of Jesus

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2

Several months after the return of Mary to Nazareth, Joseph brought Mary, his promised wife, to live with him. Joseph knew from the message of an angel that Mary carried within her the Lord of heaven and earth Who in time would be born of her. Mary's heart and all the thoughts of her mind were fixed on God and the great blessings which had come to her. The months passed quietly and serenely in their modest home.

And then one day the peace of the town was disturbed. Cæsar Augustus, the great emperor of Rome, through his governor Cyrinus, announced that a census would be made. For it, each citizen was to go to the town of his birth and register there. It did not matter that traveling was inconvenient to Mary. God's will was expressed through the exact demand of the law. In obedience, then, to the imperial decree, Joseph and Mary gathered together a few necessities for the journey and set out. After weary traveling of four or five days, they reached Bethlehem. Joseph immediately sought for lodging, but there was none to be had. There was no room for them in the inns.

Night had already fallen when Mary and Joseph found shelter in a cave. Here in the midst of the silent night Mary brought forth the Babe Who was Christ the Lord. Mary knelt in deepest adoration before her Son Who was the great God of heaven and earth. Joseph joined Mary in silent prayer. God had come, a tiny Babe, to live among men. The Word, the Promise of God the Father, was made Flesh and dwelt among us.



Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes

Taking the dead child's hand, Jesus said, "Child, arise." She arose immediately. All were astounded at Christ's power and love. He commanded all present not to speak of what had taken place.

THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND THE FISHES

Mark 6:30-44

At Capharnaum Jesus awaited the return of the apostles who had been on their first missionary journey, preaching in neighboring towns and villages. After they had returned and related all things that they had done and taught, Jesus said, "Come apart to a desert place and rest awhile." Jesus had planned to take them across the lake to a desert land near Bethsaida.

The people about Capharnaum seeing whither the boat was heading, kept it in sight as they walked around the shore of the lake. The crowd grew larger and larger. When the boat stopped near Bethsaida, the crowd looked to Jesus for attention. He did not disappoint them; they looked like sheep without a shepherd. The apostles' well-deserved rest was forgotten; the day turned out to be a busy one.

Jesus spoke at great length to the multitude who were most attentive to His every word. The time for noon refreshments had long since passed and the apostles became uneasy. Finally they approached Jesus asking Him to send the crowd into the village to buy food. Jesus answered, "Give you them to eat."

The command astonished them. How could they? They knew that the money they had could not buy enough even to give each person a little. But Jesus knew what He would do and asked, "How many loaves have you?"

Andrew said there was a boy in the crowd that had five barley loaves and two fishes and added, "But what are these among so many?"

Jesus said, "Bring them to Me and make the people sit down."



Jesus Dies on the Cross

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

John 19:25-37

When the condemned men reached the top of the hill they were offered a cup of wine mixed with a substance called myrrh which acted as a drug and deadened the sense of pain, but Jesus refused it. The victims were then stripped. And now came the awful moment. Jesus was stretched upon the cross and the hands that had always blessed and the feet that walked the roads of Palestine to bring peace and joy, were nailed with heavy blows to the hard wood of the cross. A wooden tablet bearing the inscription "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" was fastened above His head. His cross and those of the two thieves were then raised upright and settled down with a jolt into the holes which had been made for them. Christ hung between heaven and earth with thieves to His right and left.

When at last the Scribes and the Pharisees and the leaders saw Jesus secure on the shameful gibbet and suffering His death-agony, they were satisfied. As the soldiers finished their work and moved to a distance, the leaders and rabble moved toward the cross and in boastful, discordant jeers cried out, "If you are the Christ, the Son of God, come down from the cross." "Destroy the temple and in three days build it up again." "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

Jesus, looking from the scoffing mob to the heavens, called to His Father in mercy, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."

The crucified thieves joined the mob in ridicule against their Fellow-Sufferer. But the thief to the right of Jesus was finally impressed with the patience and forgiveness of this so-called "King," and touched by grace, asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom. Jesus promised not only a remembrance but paradise itself that very day.

At noon a darkness began to spread over the earth. Little by little the scoffers became quiet and moved away. Some went, striking their breasts. A stillness settled on Calvary. The Blessed Mother and Saint John and the other women had been standing beyond, away from the