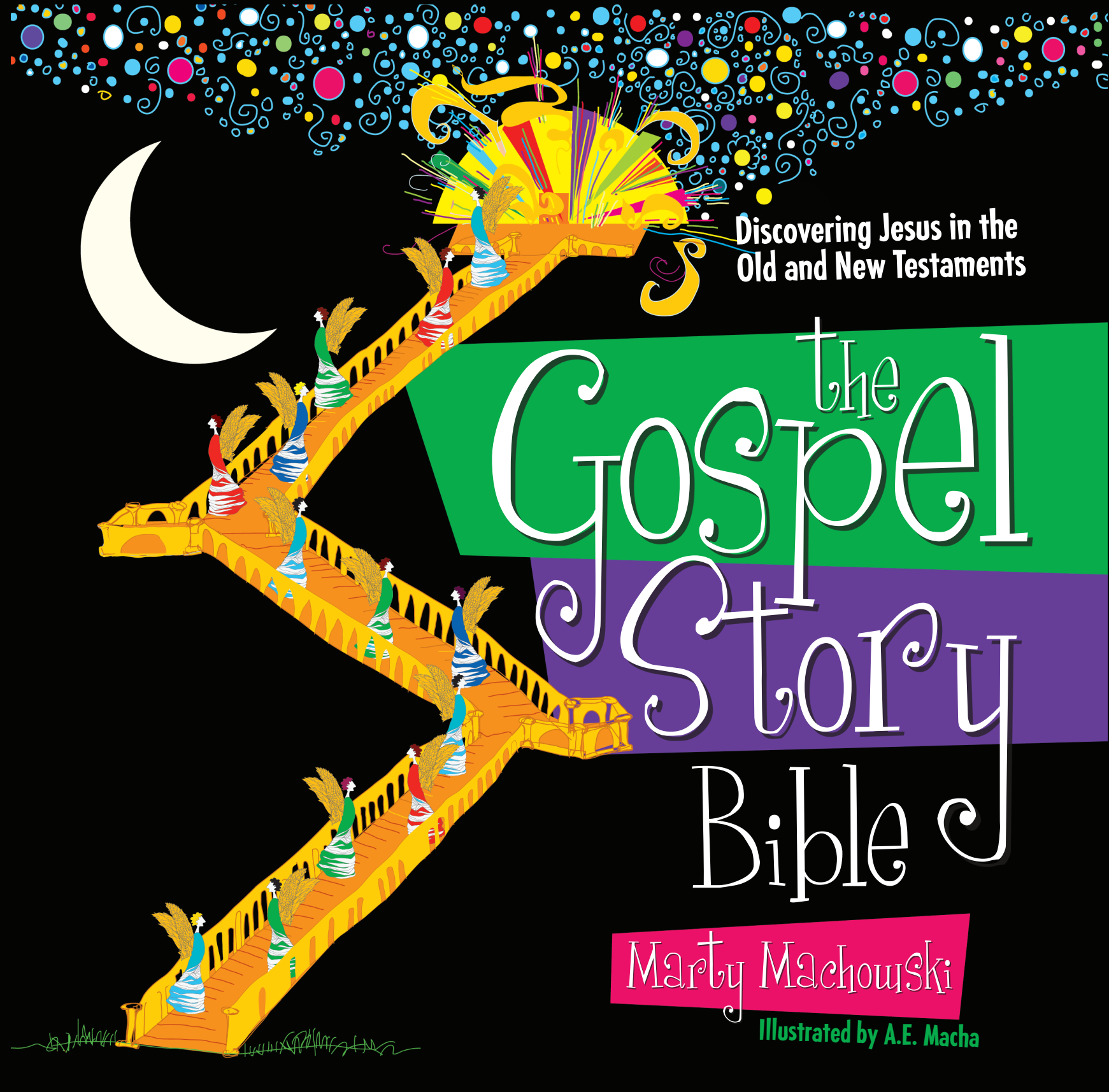




Discovering Jesus in the
Old and New Testaments

The Gospel Story Bible

Marty Machowski

Illustrated by A.E. Macha



Presented to

by

on

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 New
Growth
Press

New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC 27404
www.newgrowthpress.com
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Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations without a specific Bible reference are the author’s paraphrase.

Art Direction: Matt Nowicki
Cover Design: Tandem Creative, Tom Temple, tandemcreative.net

ISBN 13: 978-1-936768-12-7
ISBN 10: 1-936768-12-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Machowski, Martin, 1963-
The Gospel story Bible : discovering Jesus in the Old and New Testaments / Martin Machowski ; [illustrations by A.E. Macha]
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-1-936768-12-7 (alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 1-936768-12-7 (alk. paper)
1. Bible stories, English. I. Macha, A. E. (Anne E.), 1979- II. Title.
BS551.3.M245 2011
220.9’505--dc23

2011028987

Printed in United States of America
18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 1 2 3 4 5

Dedication

This book would not be possible without
the love and support of my wife Lois.

Together we would like to dedicate this book to our
six children—the most wonderful kids in the world.

To: Emma, Nathan, Martha, Noah, Anna, and Amelia.

May the gospel story, rich in these pages, transform your lives
and then be passed on to the next generation through you.

Acknowledgments

Producing this book would simply not have been possible without the influence and hard work of many. I would like to thank Dave Harvey for his support and encouragement to develop and publish this material, as well as the pastors of Covenant Fellowship Church for their example, which taught me how to live out the gospel in ministry and life. I am grateful to C. J. Mahaney for his anointed preaching on keeping the gospel central in all we do. His challenge to always “keep the main thing the main thing” was the inspiration behind the creation of this children’s story Bible.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife Lois and to Jared Mellinger, who read through each story and offered their critique, and to my editor, Sue Lutz, for the careful, patient, transforming effort she put into this project.

As is the case with any children’s book, the illustrations form a critical component. I would like to thank Anne Macha for the wonderful illustrations she created.

I love Anne’s use of line work to create textures and patterns that are showcased in the stars over Abraham, the steam flowing from Jacob’s pot of stew, and the sky spiraling around the crucifixion. A huge thank you to our veteran art director, Matt Nowicki, who helped Anne on this project, transforming the look of this book with his creative infusion of color.

I am also indebted to the New Growth Press team: Karen Jacklin Teeares for her artistic eye and commitment to excellence and Barbara Miller Juliani for her valuable management of this project. The retelling of these wonderful Bible stories just would not be possible without these folks.

Introduction

Welcome to *The Gospel Story Bible*. We hope this book opens up the stories of the Bible in a way that captures your children’s attention and fosters a love for God’s Word that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. This Bible storybook focuses on the same Scripture passages used in the *Gospel Story* children’s ministry curriculum. Thus it serves as a storybook Bible for parents at home and a book of Bible stories in the classroom as well.

Most Bible stories unfold over multiple chapters. The ten plagues of Egypt, for instance, are described in the course of five chapters of Exodus. That’s too long to read to a younger child in one sitting. Other stories are told in more than one book of the Bible. Each one tells the story from a different perspective and often includes unique details. Read about the birth of Jesus only from the book of Luke and you will miss the wise men; read it only from Matthew and your children won’t hear about the shepherds in the fields. Combining these details into one story gives you the complete picture.

It is possible to simplify Bible stories so much that you edit out important gospel connections to God’s larger plan of salvation. In *The Gospel Story Bible*, we’ve set out to preserve this theological detail by ending each story

with a short commentary, designed to connect events in the story to God’s larger redemptive plan. Old Testament stories point forward to Jesus. New Testament stories point to the cross. The goal is to thread each of the 156 Bible stories like beads on the silk thread of the gospel, creating one picture with them all.

To fill out this larger picture of God’s redemption, Bible stories were included from the New Testament Epistles. By combining events as described in the book of Acts with the teaching from the New Testament letters, the history of the early church comes alive.

As is true in any Bible storybook, we had to skip over “good” portions of a Bible story to get to the “best” parts, so reading the Bible itself with your children is still very important. If you read a Bible story from this book first, it will help your child understand the story more easily. Then, if you wish, you can follow up another day and read a portion of the same story directly from Scripture. To help you, we’ve included the Bible references within the stories and each one lists the larger passages of Scripture on which the story is based.

We hope that this storybook introduces the Bible to your children in a way that creates a hunger and thirst for God’s eternal Word.

Using The Gospel Story Bible

A resource like *The Gospel Story Bible* can be used in many ways for a wide variety of audiences. Here are a few suggestions.

AS A STORYBOOK FOR YOUR PRESCHOOLER

Read the story, and then ask simple questions as you point to the illustrations. For example, point to a character and ask, “Who is this?” When your children guess correctly, celebrate their answer and follow up to see if they remember what the character did.

AS A DEVOTIONAL FOR YOUR YOUNG GRADE SCHOOL STUDENT

Start on Monday by reading the next story in *The Gospel Story Bible* to your children. Then, on each following day, Tuesday through Friday, read your children a portion of the story from the Bible itself. In the case of a New Testament letter, you might read portions of the letter each day.

IN THE CLASSROOM

The *Gospel Story* children’s ministry curriculum indi-

cates when to read the appropriate story from *The Gospel Story Bible*. Sit down on a chair and invite the children to gather around you so they can see the illustrations as you read. When you finish the story, go over the listed questions with your children and invite their comments on the illustrations by asking them who they see or what is happening in the picture.

By combining these tips with your own creativity, you’ll foster a love for the gospel story in your family or classroom. No matter how you use *The Gospel Story Bible*, we hope it will draw you and your children more closely to God and his Word.

USING THE ILLUSTRATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Each illustration is designed to bring the story to life, and the questions, in the “Let’s Talk About It” section, are there to help you interact with your child about the gospel. The human figures are intentionally left without color, so that all children can imagine themselves in the story. In the last illustration, a picture of people from every tribe and nation worshiping around God’s throne, the human figures are filled in with different colors to illustrate the diversity of God’s family.

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The Stories
of the
Old and New
Testament



Let's Talk About It!

What was the first thing God made?

What did God make the world out of?

What is your favorite part of God's creation?

STORY 1

God Creates The World

GENESIS 1:1 – 25

God's gospel story starts at the very beginning, when there was nothing at all. Nothing at all is hard for us to understand because we have to start with something when we create. But God didn't start with light, or the clay of the earth, or even invisible air. God started with absolutely nothing at all. God spoke into the nothingness and created the heavens and the earth. Then he spoke out and commanded, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good" (Genesis 1:3–4). God made the daytime and God made the nighttime on that first day.

On the second day God created the sky and the heavens above. When God spoke, it happened, just as he wanted. One second it wasn't there, and the next second it was!

On the third day God created the dry land. That was the day God made the ground we walk on. He commanded the earth to sprout all kinds of green plants. That was the day all the grass, bushes, and trees were created by God. God looked at the water, the earth, the sky, and all the green plants, and he saw that it was good.

On the fourth day God said, "Let there be stars in the heavens," and the stars appeared. God designed them to sparkle in the night sky and mark the different days and seasons and years. God made the two great lights: the moon to light up the night, and the sun to light up the day. God looked at the water, the earth with its plants, the sky, the

planets, the stars, the moon and the sun and saw that it all was good.

On the fifth day God filled the waters and the sky with life. He made all the living creatures of the sea, from the smallest fish to the largest whale. He created all the birds, like sparrows and eagles and ostriches and doves. God made each one special and he saw that all of it was good. God blessed the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and commanded them to have lots of little babies so that they could fill all the oceans and the whole sky.

On the sixth day God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds" (Genesis 1:24). God made the creeping things, like spiders and bugs, and all the animals that walk on the ground, from the smallest mouse to the greatest beast of the earth. And God saw that it was good.

Later in God's gospel story, we learn one special thing from the apostle Paul. Paul wrote that God the Son, who became Jesus, created all that we see. "All things were created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:16). That means that God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son were all involved in the creation of the earth—and they made it out of absolutely nothing! The next time you go for a walk on a beach or through a forest, look closely at something God made and you will see just how wonderful it is.

STORY 2

God Creates Man & Woman

GENESIS 1:26–2:25

On the sixth day of creation God said, “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26). This is special because out of all of God’s creation only human beings were made in the image of God. God formed the first human being—a man—out of the dust of the ground. Then God breathed on him and the man came alive! God called the man Adam. He planted a very special garden for Adam to live in, a place called Eden. The garden was beautiful, with rivers and trees. One special tree was called the Tree of Life, and another tree was called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God told Adam to take care of the garden, and he spent time with him there. God told Adam he could eat from every tree that grew in the garden but one. If Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he would die.

But God wasn’t finished creating yet. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2:18). Adam needed someone like him to be his best friend, his helper, and his partner. God brought all kinds of animals for Adam to name, but none of them were like Adam to be his helper. So God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. While Adam was sleeping, God took out one of his ribs and formed it into a woman. This means that the woman was made from Adam’s body. They couldn’t be closer, yet they were different from each other too.

When Adam woke up and saw the woman, he was very happy! Now he wasn’t alone any longer. Finally he had a helper and a friend! Adam called her Woman because she was made from his own body. Together they became the

very first married couple. God blessed them and told them to fill the whole earth with their children and to rule over all the rest of God’s creation. God gave them the green plants and the fruits of the trees for food. Then God looked at all that he created and saw that it was very good.

That is how the heavens and the earth, the water and sky, and everything that fills them were created. When God was finished, on the seventh day, he rested from his work.

Did you know that the creation is so amazing that just one look at it, in all its wonder, tells us that God is real and powerful? King David once said, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Psalm 19:1). The apostle Paul said that God’s creation is so amazing that no one can doubt that God is real. Ever since the very beginning of the world, we can see that God is powerful just by looking at the things he made (Romans 1:19–20). The high point—the best part—of God’s creation was when he made human beings. All of creation reflects God’s glory in its beauty, but human beings are actually created in God’s image. This means that people are the only creatures who can live and act like God. We can read God’s Word and speak God’s Word, and pray to our God. We can write poems, create pictures, and do countless other things that none of the animals can do. But the most important difference between us and the animals is that we can be in a relationship with God as one of his sons or daughters!



Let's Talk About It!

What name did God give to the man?

What animals do you see in the picture?

What makes man and woman different from the animals?



Let's Talk About It!

Why is Eve outside the garden?

Where is Adam?

What is Eve wearing and who gave it to her?

STORY 3

Adam & Eve Disobey God

GENESIS 3:1 – 24

The wonderful times that the man and the woman enjoyed, living with God in the Garden of Eden, didn't last very long at all. Satan came into the garden in the form of a serpent who wanted to trick them. He went to the woman and tempted her to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That was the only tree God said they should not eat from. If they did, they would die. But the serpent lied to the woman. He said, "You won't really die. What God said isn't true. What will really happen is that you will become like God." The woman believed Satan's lie. She disobeyed God, took some of the fruit, and ate it. She made a terrible decision when she disobeyed God. Then, to make it even worse, she gave some fruit to Adam, who was with her. He ate it and disobeyed God too.

As soon as they realized what they had done, Adam and his wife were ashamed. They took some leaves and tried to make clothes for themselves to cover their nakedness. Later on, when God came walking in the garden, they were afraid and tried to hide from him. But you can't hide from God and you can't hide your sin from God. God went after Adam and asked him why he disobeyed. Adam didn't have a very good answer. He blamed his wife. And when God asked the woman why she disobeyed, she blamed the serpent.

God cursed the serpent for what he had done. Then God told the woman that there would be bad consequences for disobeying him. Now it would be painful when she had babies. And instead of getting along happily with her husband, she would want to rule over him. It would be hard for them to get along. God put a curse on the ground and told Adam that from now on, farming would be hard work. The weeds would fight against him. God also said that one day they would return to the dust of the ground. That meant that Adam and his wife would die. That's what God had said would happen, right from the beginning. God was the one who had told them the truth, not the serpent.

This was a very sad day. God sent the first two people out of the garden he had made for them and placed an angel on guard to keep them out. But in the midst of the sadness, God gave them a great hope. When God was cursing the serpent, he said that someday the woman would have children and one of her children would crush the serpent's head! Satan would be defeated. When Adam heard that promise and understood that they would live to have children, he gave his wife the name Eve. This name meant that she would be the mother of everyone who would ever live.

Did you know that God gave Adam and Eve some clothes made of animal skins to cover their nakedness? There was a secret promise in those first clothes. To make them, God had to sacrifice an animal. That pointed to the day in the future when Jesus, God's only Son, would be born into the world. He would come as a son in the family of Adam—a far, far off great-grandchild of Adam and Eve. Jesus would die on the cross and be punished for the sin of Adam and those who would trust in him, so they could once again be in a relationship with God. And Jesus would be the one to defeat Satan, just as God said.

