



THE BIGGEST STORY

Christmas Devotional with Printable Ornaments

The Biggest Story Advent Reading Plan

Journey through key Bible passages and select stories from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook* as a way to prepare your family for the birth of Jesus the Savior! These stories highlight significant events and people in redemptive history that lead us to the one who would come, once and for all, to crush the snake and defeat sin and death by dying on a cross and rising again on the third day.

Each daily devotion for the month of December includes:

- A suggested Bible reading incorporating passages from both the Old and New Testaments
- The relevant chapter from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*
- A short “Gospel Connection” section connecting the story to Jesus
- A fun ornament children can cut out, color, and hang on the Christmas tree
- A QR code linking to a free animated video for the story

Instructions for Printable Ornaments

Cut out and color each of the 25 ornaments from *The Biggest Story Coloring Book* from December 1st through the 25th and hang them on your Christmas tree each day or hang them into the shape of a tree on a wall or ceiling. There are many options for what you can do with your ornaments—you can keep it very simple or get wildly creative!

December 1



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1

STORY

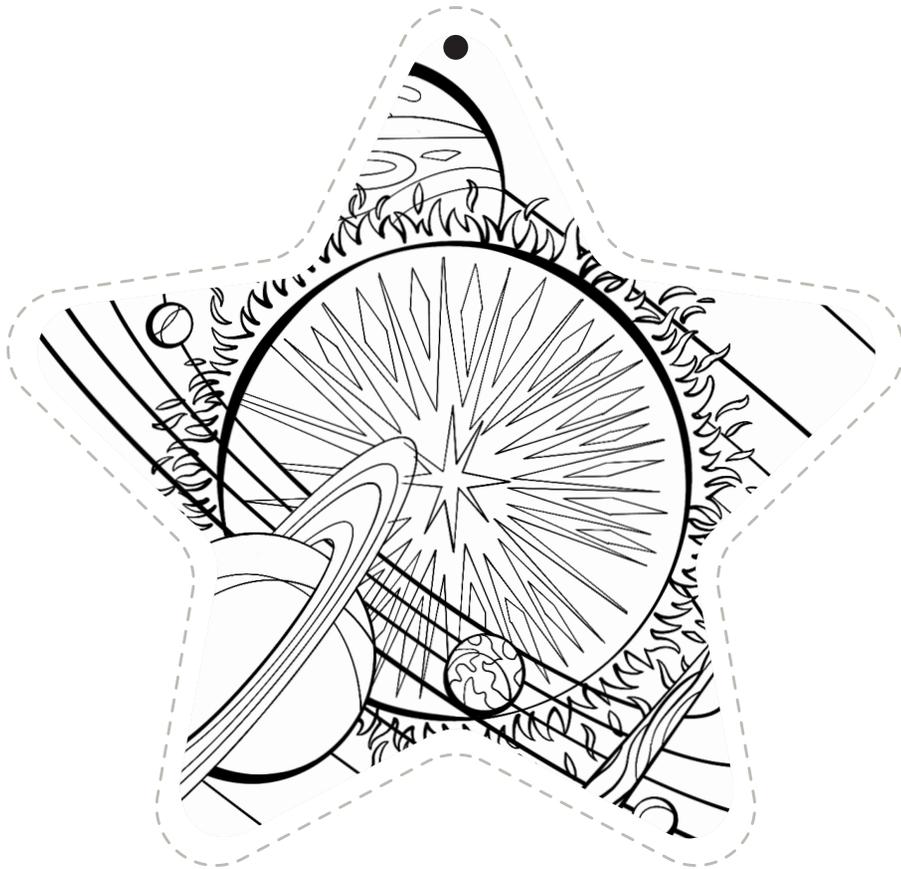
“And So It Begins” (Chapter 1)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The story of creation is just the first story of the Biggest Story. In Genesis we will learn that, because of sin, people aren't very good mirrors. We don't reflect God very well. But Jesus “the Word” (John 1:1) came as “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). He perfectly showed what God is like, and he made a way for our broken mirrors to be repaired so that we could again do the job God created us to do.

But the Word isn't just our Savior. He, with the Father and the Spirit, created everything. This is why, when John begins his Gospel, he uses words like the ones in Genesis 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1). Jesus also came to be the “Light of the World” so that whoever follows him “will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

WATCH THE VIDEO



December 2



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 3:15

STORY

“A Very Bad Day” (Chapter 2)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

It was a very bad day. God cursed the snake, the man, and the woman. He promised that hardship and death would come to every human. (And it has!) But he also promised a new start. A fresh start. Adam and Eve would die, but not right away. Eve would have children. More than that (much more than that!), one of her offspring—a child that would come from her children’s children’s children’s children—would deal with the snake. Let’s call him the Snake Crusher. We know him as Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the mysterious promise God made in Gen. 3:15.

Satan would hurt Eve’s offspring. He “bruised” Jesus. Jesus died. And yet, the Bible tells us that when Jesus died, he destroyed Satan. He crushed the snake! And God kept his amazing promise to Adam and Eve. Yes, Jesus’s worst day was our best day.

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December 3



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 6:5-7

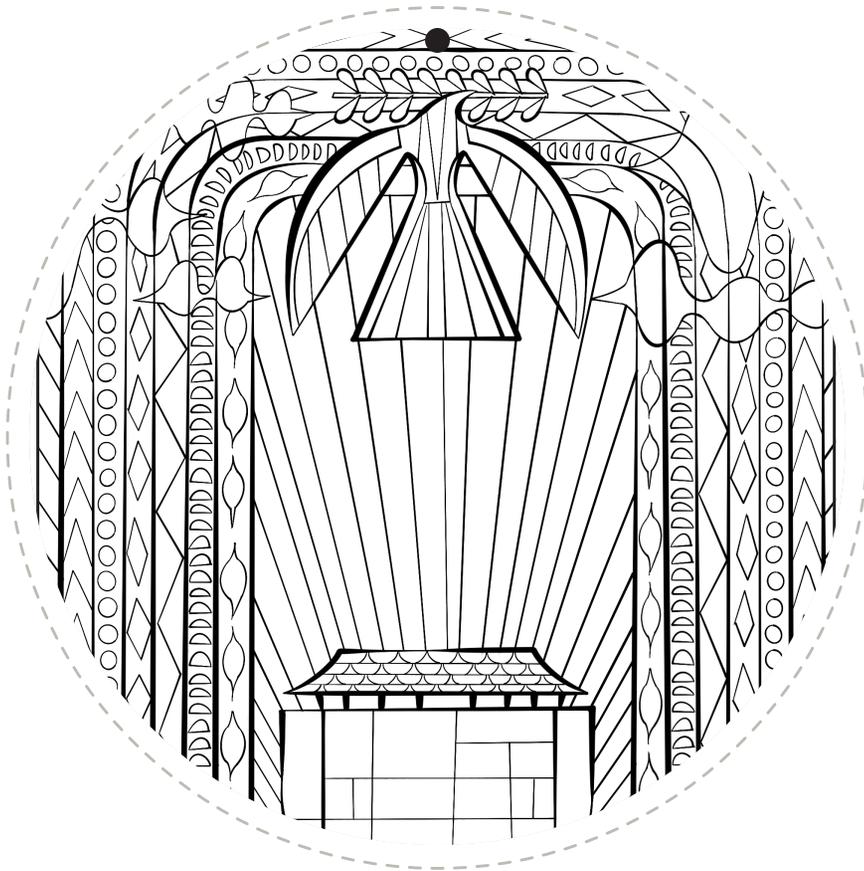
STORY

“Rain, Rain, Go Away” (Chapter 4)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The New Testament teaches us about Jesus, who was raised from the dead and whom God sent to save us from the punishment to come. Today is not so different than Noah’s day. Some people ignore God. Other people hate God. And lots of people hate one another. God does not like this, and he has promised to judge all sin. But here is the good news. Jesus came into the world to offer his life so that we might be saved from the coming judgment. Just like Noah was saved! And we too will have a new beginning.

WATCH THE VIDEO



December 4



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 10:32–11:1; 11:9 and Matthew 1:1–17

STORY

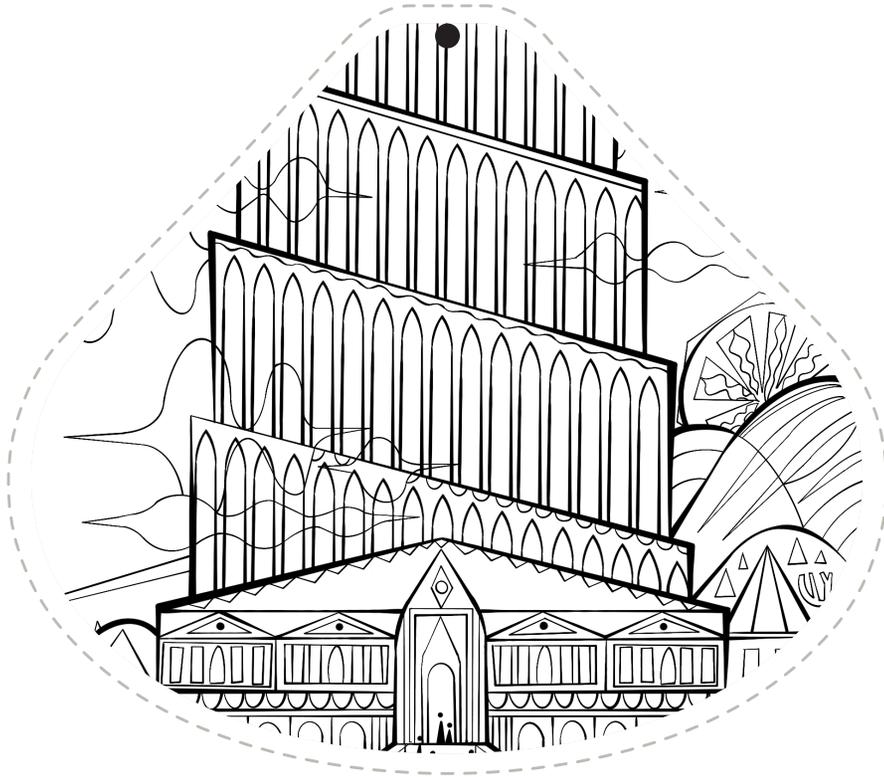
“A Table and a Tower” (Chapter 5)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Imagine building the Tower of Babel. One day you say, “Hey, Joe, can you get me more bricks?” And he does. But the next day, after God confused the language, Joe can’t understand a word you say and you can’t understand a word he says. How can you possibly finish building a tower? You can’t, and they didn’t. The people back then were so frustrated that each tribe (the ones who spoke the same language) decided to spread over the earth and find a new place to live.

When Jesus came, he didn’t just save his own tribe (the Jews), but people from every language and tribe and nation (the Gentiles). That is what happened. First, people from Jerusalem believed in him. Then, people from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Then, people from the Americas and Asia. From the North Pole to the South! And it’s still happening today. Someday, in heaven, God will be praised by people from every nation in languages that all God’s people will understand. And, then and there, we will finally work together to show just how amazing God is.

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December 5



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 12:1–3

STORY

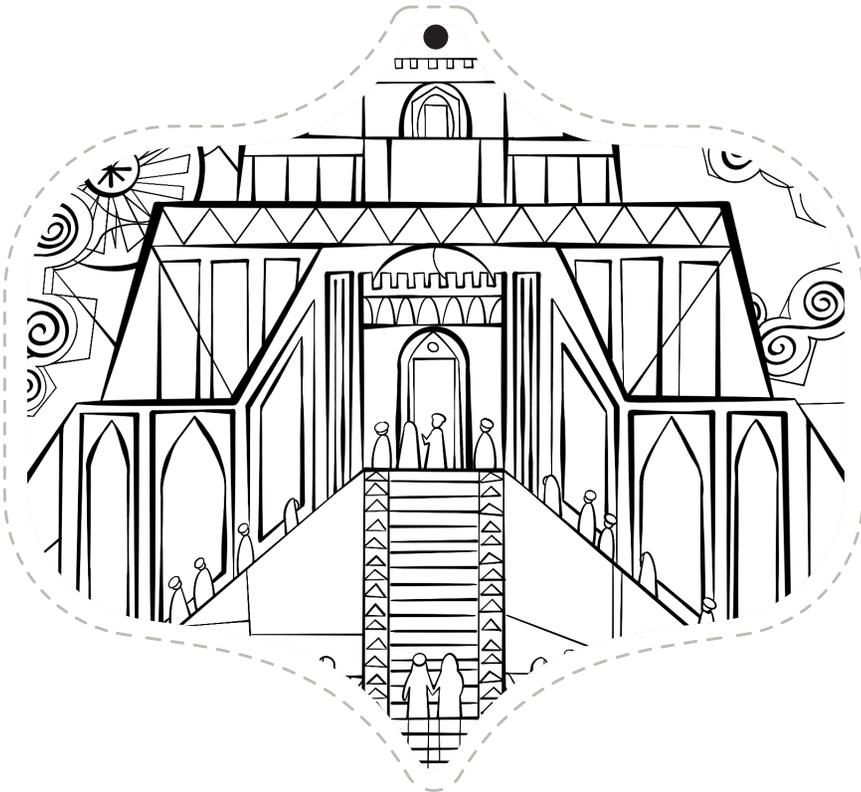
“The Father of Nations” (Chapter 6)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God made some amazing promises to Abraham. Abraham believed, and then he obeyed. Of course, at that time he had no idea how God would keep these promises. But the rest of the Bible tells us how. First, God gave Abraham a son, Isaac. Then Isaac had a son who had lots of sons. Soon, Abraham’s children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren were a great nation called the people of Israel. God led Israel to the promised land and gave it to them, just as he said he would. But there’s even more to the story. God kept adding people to the family. Here’s how.

When Jesus came, he made a way so that all the families of the earth could be part of God’s family, even people who weren’t Israelites. They became known as Christians. And Jesus promised he was going to prepare a place for them—a new and better promised land. Abraham was God’s man to carry out God’s plan to bless all nations through him. And that was just what God did!

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December 6



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 15:5–6

STORY

“Let’s Make a Deal” (Chapter 7)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

“[Abraham] believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” What! Sinners like Abraham could be counted righteous? People under the curse that Adam and the snake unleashed could be made right with God? (This is what righteous means.) How could this be? The Bible is telling us that it is on the basis of belief. When Abraham believed God’s promise, he was counted as righteous. He wasn’t counted righteous because he was such a good person. He wasn’t counted righteous because he was so religious. He was counted righteous because he believed God. To put it differently, he was saved by faith.

We are sinners, too. We need to be made right with God, too. And like Abraham, the only way we can be perfectly holy in God’s sight is to believe his promises, to receive his gift of salvation by faith.

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December 7



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 22:16–18

STORY

“It’s a Boy” (Chapter 9)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The story of Abraham’s (almost) sacrifice of his son, Isaac, is an amazing story. An even more amazing story is the story of God the Father’s (actual) sacrifice of his son, Jesus. Isaac’s life was spared because God provided a ram (a male lamb) to be sacrificed in his place. But for Jesus, there would be no ram. Jesus was the sacrifice. Jesus was the Lamb. Just as God provided a ram so that Isaac wouldn’t die, God provided Jesus so that we don’t have to die. The promised child of Eve—the Snake Crusher—was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world and rescued us from death! Our Savior would die for a people who didn’t seem to love God or trust him at all. Through Jesus’s death on a cross, we can receive forgiveness for our sins.

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December 8



BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 28:13–17; 32:30

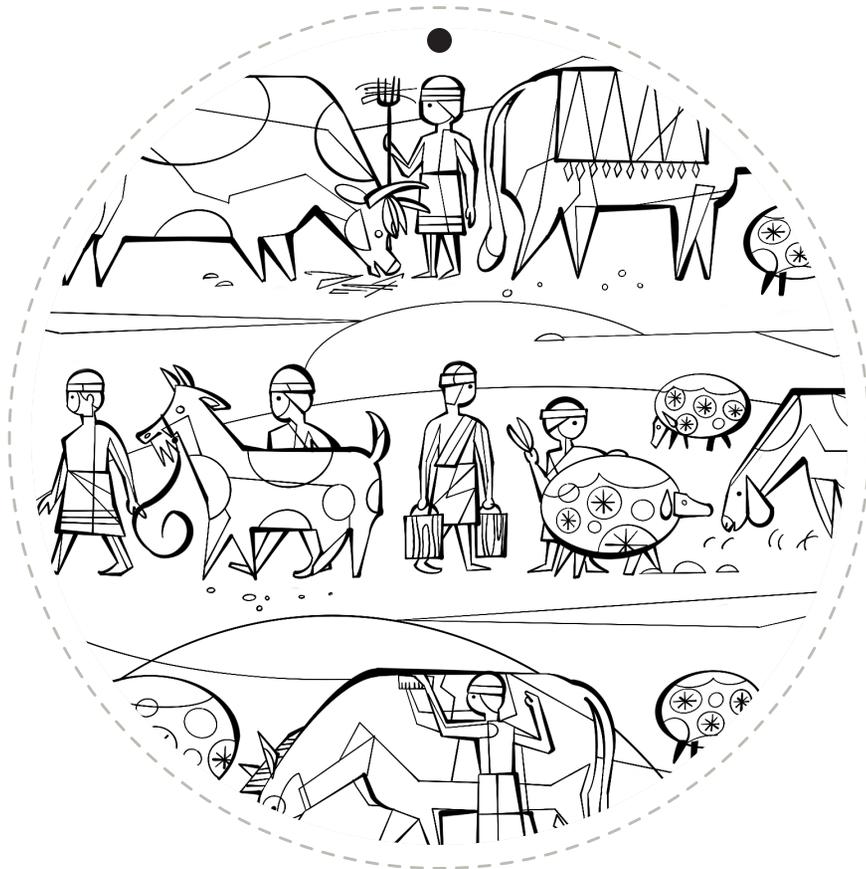
STORY

“Blessings in the Night” (Chapter 11)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God’s mercy knows no end! God blessed Jacob with lots of animals and a big family. And from that big family would come Jesus, who would bring blessing to all families. Because God always keeps his promises. Did trickster Jacob deserve God’s blessings? Of course not. Do we deserve the blessings that we have in Jesus—forgiveness of sins, a new heart, the Holy Spirit within, a big family (the church)? Of course not. What good news that in Jesus, God makes his home with us. We learned Jesus’s name means “Savior” because he saves. He is also called Immanuel, which means “God with us.” Jesus did not use a ladder to travel from heaven to earth, but he did travel from heaven to earth. Why? To be Savior and Immanuel. Isn’t it wonderful that God saves and is always with us?

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December 9



BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 3:13–17

STORY

“God Raises Up a Deliverer” (Chapter 13)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

When our Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, came to earth, he sometimes called himself “I AM”—the same words God used when he was talking to Moses! Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12) and “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Just in case we were missing the point, he told the Pharisees, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). Jesus existed before Abraham because he has always existed, and he will exist forever. And he exists forever to deliver his people. Just as God called Moses to deliver Israel from their slavery in Egypt, God sent Jesus to deliver sinners from their sins. In Jesus, we are rescued from sin so we can live for him—the great “I AM.”

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December 10



BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 12:12-13

STORY

“Free at Last” (Chapter 14)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Have you noticed a pattern in how God works? Trouble before triumph. Suffering before salvation. Danger before deliverance. The story of our rescue in Jesus is no different. He is rejected by his people. He is arrested, sentenced to die, mocked, spit on, slapped, and finally crucified on a cross. Trouble. Suffering. Danger. But the story isn't over. Next comes triumph, salvation, and deliverance! Jesus rises from the dead. He triumphs over the grave. Jesus saves everyone who believes in him. And he will return to deliver us from trouble, suffering, and danger.

And do you remember that peculiar way God saved the Israelites? Death passed over those who put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts. He did that to give us all a clue about how he would save the whole world later on. Through the blood of a more perfect Lamb, God passes over our sin. Everyone who accepts the blood of Jesus, our sinless Passover Lamb, will be saved. If you believe in Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for your sin, God will pass over you on judgment day. You too can be free at last!

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December 12



BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 32:30–35

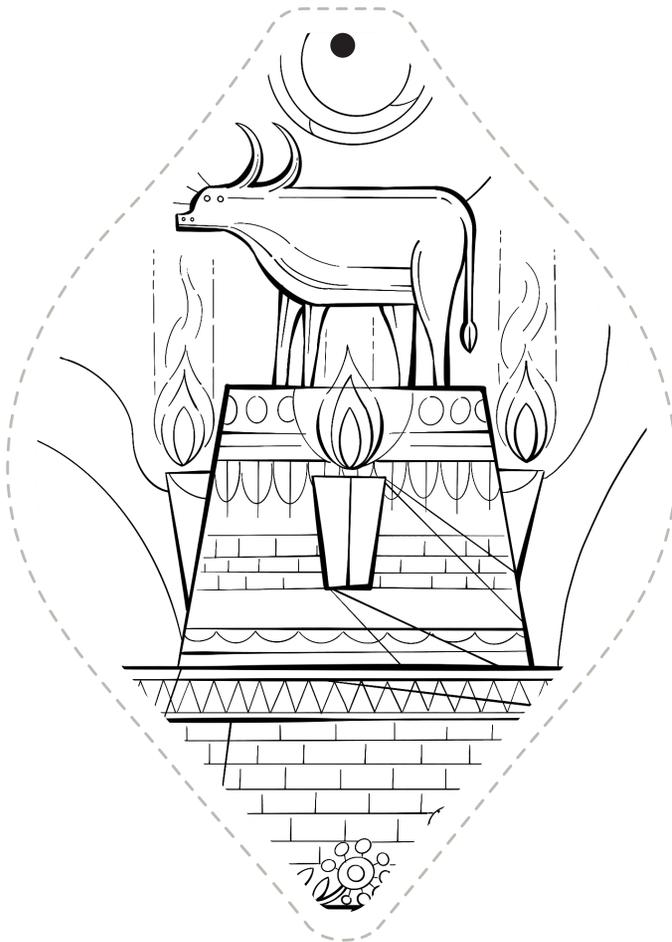
STORY

“A Fancy Tent and a Foolish Cow” (Chapter 16)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Earlier in Exodus, Israel had been saved from the big, bad Egyptians. But now Israel came face-to-face with another enemy: the sin within them. Salvation comes when God defeats his enemies, but salvation also comes when God is gracious and merciful with us in our sin. But why was God able to forgive Israel? Was it simply because Moses was such a good mediator? No. There had to be something more. And that more would come in Jesus, when he paid the penalty for our sin. Do you know we have the same enemy as the Israelites? No, not the Egyptians. Our own sin. So we need the same rescuer—Jesus!

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December 13



BIBLE PASSAGE

Leviticus 16:1–3, 11, 17, 30 and Hebrews 10:10

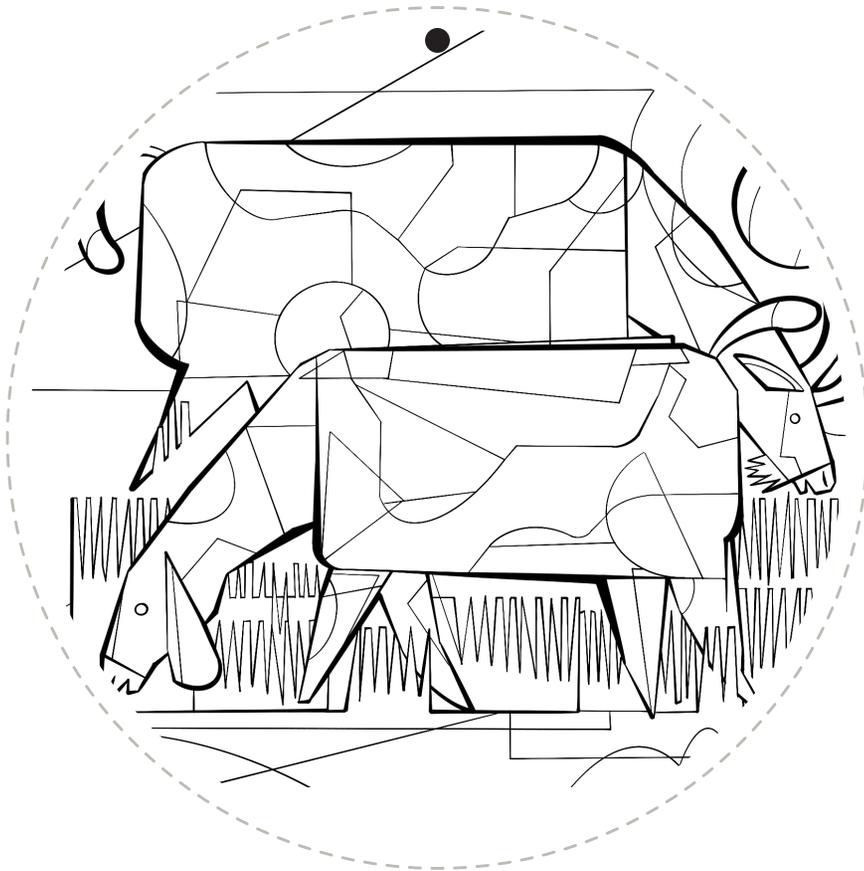
STORY

“A Tale of Two Goats” (Chapter 17)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The Israelites were almost ruined by a cow (remember last lesson?), but once a year they were rescued by two goats. Remember Forgive and Forget? How could we forget them? But of course, we’re not actually rescued by goats. The animals were just symbols or signs. Like a street sign that tells you, “This way to New York,” these two signs pointed to the perfect, final sacrifice that would be offered for our sins: Jesus Christ. Our Savior. Our sin substitute! “For our sake [God] made [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). Like the first goat, Jesus would die for our sins. Like the second goat, Jesus’s death would cause our sins to be forgotten. Because of Jesus—the only perfectly holy man, our high priest—God says, “I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more” (Heb. 8:12). That should make us so happy! Our holy God loves us so much that through Jesus he made a way to be in a relationship with us. What good news!

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December 14



BIBLE PASSAGE

Ruth 4:14 and Matthew 1:5

STORY

“The Girl Who Wouldn’t Go Away” (Chapter 24)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Do you want to know something cool? Boaz’s mother was Rahab. The same Rahab that was saved from the walls of Jericho and brought into God’s family. So when Ruth married Boaz, she and her mother-in-law Rahab were both women who had once been outside God’s family. And both women had been brought into God’s family because they had put their trust in him. They must have loved to share their stories with each other! And now Ruth and Boaz’s son would lead to the greatest blessing of all—Jesus. Their son’s name was Obed. Obed had a son (Jesse) who had a son (David). Do you know who David was? He was the king Israel was waiting for—a king after God’s own heart. Not the perfect king. Only Jesus is the perfect King. But a king that helped God’s people do what is right in God’s eyes. And from King David comes King Jesus, our Redeemer! The one who saves us from our sins and brings us new life. The Gospel of Matthew starts with a list of names, Jesus’s family tree. And do you know whose names are on that list? Rahab and Ruth! God’s plans are so much better than we can ever imagine.

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December 15



BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Samuel 1:11, 20; 3:9 and Hebrews 1:1–2

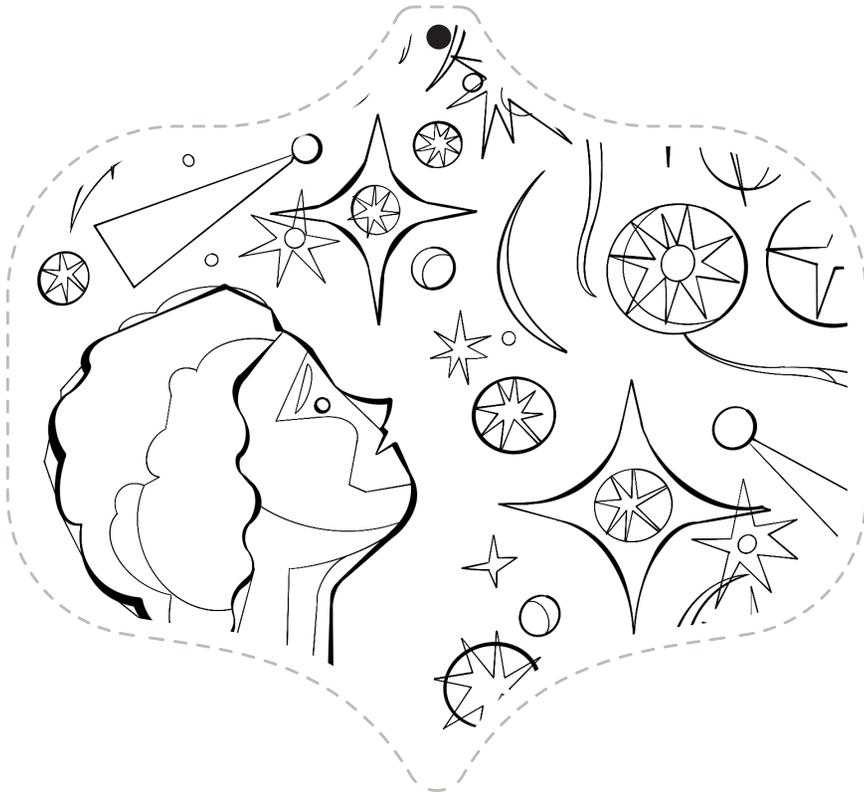
STORY

“The Lord’s Word and Samuel” (Chapter 25)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The book of Hebrews begins this way, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1–2). Over a thousand years before Jesus, God revealed himself to Samuel and other judges, priests, and prophets like him through visions and dreams—or with actual words like our story today. But now, God reveals himself to us through Jesus. We know what God is like, what he has done for us, and how we are to respond to him by looking at Jesus—the way he lived, taught, healed, suffered, died, and rose again. And the surest way we know about Jesus is by the word of God in the Bible. We read the Bible. We learn about Jesus. And we share the good news about Jesus with our friends and family. It is so important to listen to whatever the word of God tells us to be and to do—and then to share it with others.

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December 16



BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Samuel 17:47

STORY

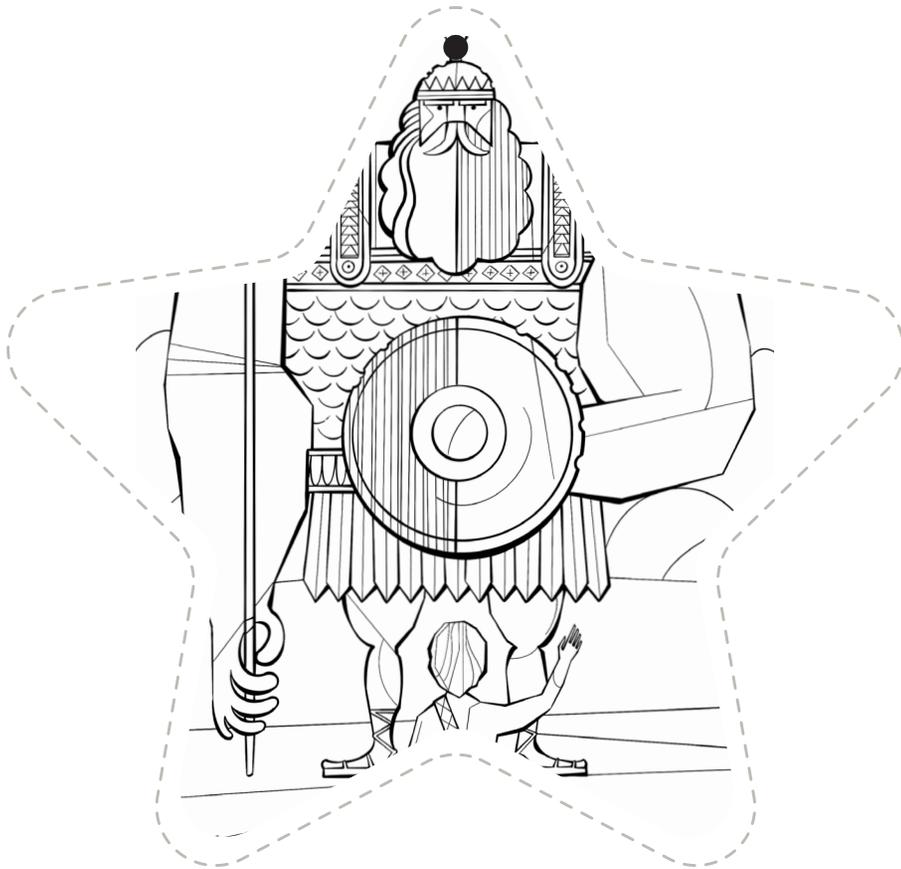
“David Stands Tall” (Chapter 27)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The story of David’s defeat of Goliath is a story that shows us what God values and how he works in the world. King Saul was tall, handsome, strong, and popular. But God doesn’t look on the outside; he looks on the inside. What’s in our hearts is what matters most. Saul’s heart did not follow after God’s heart. So he was not the king God wanted, which meant he wasn’t the king God used to defeat Israel’s big enemy. But David’s heart beat after God’s heart. Even though he was just a humble shepherd boy, he completely trusted that God could defeat Israel’s biggest enemy through him.

David’s humility points forward to Jesus’s humility. David’s trust in God was great—it led him through a scary battle. But Jesus’s trust in God was greater—it led him through death itself! And so Jesus accomplished the greatest victory because he had the greatest humility.

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December 17



BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Kings 12:1–5, 12–16, and Matthew 2:6

STORY

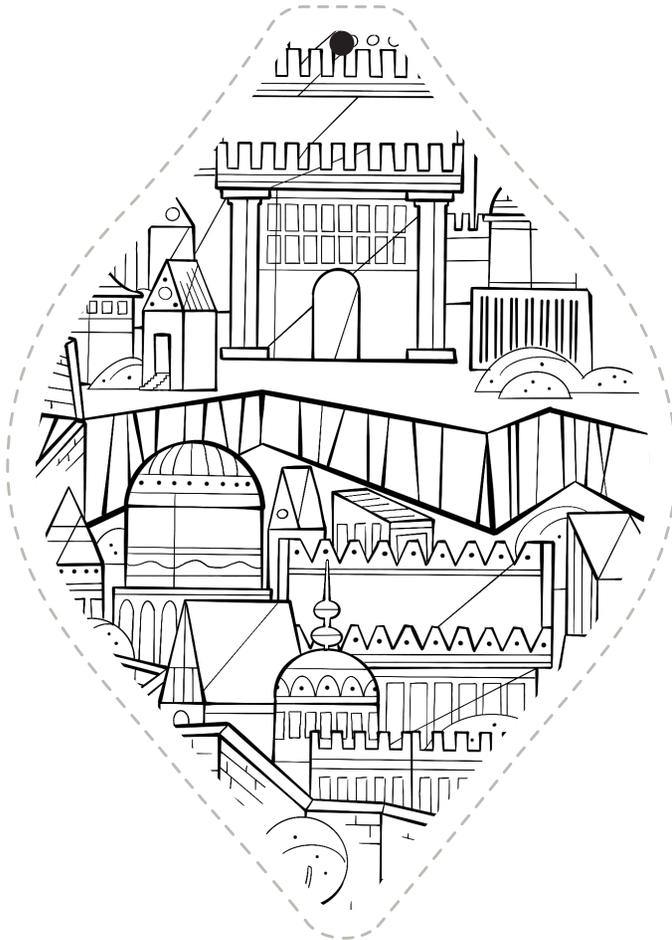
“The Kingdom Cracks” (Chapter 30)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God told Jeroboam that he would divide God’s people in two. He also promised him that if he led wisely and walked in God’s ways, then God would bless his kingdom. But did Jeroboam do this? No. He worshiped false gods. How about Rehoboam? No. He listened to the bad advice of his young friends. And now God’s people were divided.

Would Israel and Judah ever come back together again? Would God’s people ever find a good and wise king to lead them? They would. Jesus is the wise and good King for all God’s people. Unlike Rehoboam, he would not take evil advice. When Satan told him that he would give him power over all the world if he just worshiped him, Jesus refused to give in to that temptation. When Peter told him to forget the cross and just rule as king without dying, Jesus refused. “Not my will,” he prayed to his heavenly Father, “but your will be done.” He listened to God’s voice. He walked where the Holy Spirit led him, even to death on a cross. But through his death, he showed God’s mercy to God’s people and brought God’s divided people back into one body, his church. A good king is hard to find. In Jesus, we have the best King ever!

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December 18



BIBLE PASSAGE

Psalm 23

STORY

“The Lord Is My Shepherd” (Chapter 39)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

King David knew God’s goodness and mercy all the days of his life, and someday he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. But while David was living on earth, he never met the greatest shepherd, who came from his family tree. He never met Jesus. When Jesus came to earth, he taught that he was a shepherd and that those who heard his voice would follow him like sheep (John 10:3, 4). He also said, “I am the good shepherd . . .[who] lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Jesus is not only the good shepherd. He is a sheep too. Do you remember the Passover lamb? When Jesus arrived, his cousin John said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus is our Passover Lamb, which means he’s the Lamb who takes away our sins. Jesus leads us and protects us and feeds us. But most importantly, through his death, he takes away our sins so we can be forgiven. And because we are forgiven, we can dwell in the presence of God forever. Jesus is the perfect sheep to save us from our sins and the perfect shepherd to bring us safely home.

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December 19



BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 6:3, 7:14

STORY

“What Isaiah Saw” (Chapter 41)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

How could Isaiah's sins be forgiven? What was the vision of the burning coal supposed to represent?

The rest of Isaiah fills in the picture. It speaks of a servant who would suffer so that our sins could be forgiven (Isaiah 53). It tells us that the sign of his coming would be a virgin (Mary!) conceiving and bearing a son who would be known as “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” And it says that this deliverer would sit on David's throne and rule over a never-ending kingdom of peace (Isa. 9:7). Any guess who this could be?

That's right! Jesus! The sacrifice on the altar that allows our sins to be forgiven isn't ultimately a piece of coal. It's Jesus, who gave himself up so that we could be forgiven.

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December 20



BIBLE PASSAGE

Ezekiel 37:14 and Ephesians 2:5

STORY

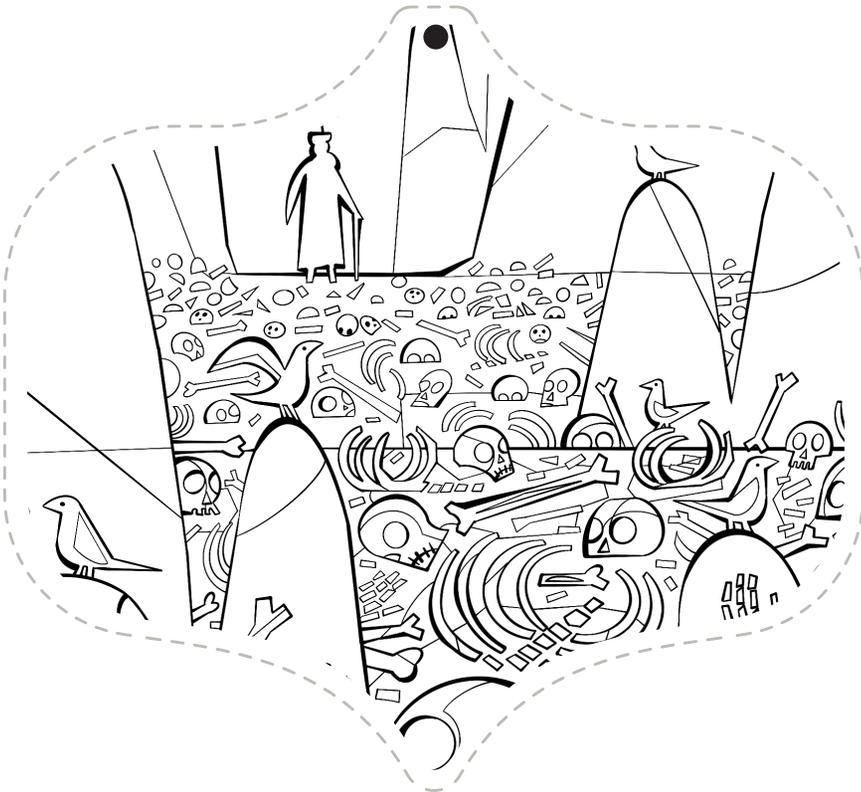
“The Valley of Dry Bones” (Chapter 43)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Why did God give Ezekiel this strange vision? It wasn't to give him an idea for a scary skeleton costume to wear to a haunted house. But it was to give him a message for the house of Israel. The dry bones represented Israel, driven from the land because of their sin. But just as the dead bones came back to life, God was letting his people know that he would keep his promise. God promised, “I will give you a new heart. I will put my Spirit within you so you will obey my rules. I will take you home to the place I promised Abraham. I will make you one nation with one king—a king like David. I will save and cleanse you from your sins, and make with you a covenant that lasts forever. You will always be my people, and I will always be your God” (see Ezekiel 36:26–28; 37:21–26). As sure as the dead bones came to life, God would keep these promises.

The vision also shows us how Jesus, the promised king like David, saves you and me. Like those dry bones, we are spiritually dead. But when God speaks his powerful word and sends his Holy Spirit, he breathes new life in us—just like he did for the bones! We were dead in our sins; God has made us alive with Christ. Through faith in Jesus, we are raised from death to life!

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December 21



BIBLE PASSAGE

Daniel 6 and Luke 1:32

STORY

“The Miraculous Catnap” (Chapter 46)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Daniel had such courageous faith. He prayed to the Lord even though he knew he would be tossed into the lions’ den. And like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he had no guarantee from God that he would survive. He chose to worship God no matter what. He chose to worship God because he loved and trusted God with his life.

In the book of Hebrews, some people with great faith are listed. “Through faith,” we are told, these heroes of faith “stopped the mouths of lions” and “quenched the power of fire” (Heb. 11:33–34). The author is writing about Daniel and his friends! Later in Hebrews, we are told that others, because of their faith, were mistreated, mocked, tortured, imprisoned, and killed. We also read that Jesus, who is called “the founder and perfecter of our faith, . . . endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2). If we are to keep the faith like Daniel, we need to follow Jesus, who trusted God even though it led to death. And just like God delivered Jesus by raising him from the dead, he will deliver us if we keep trusting him.

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December 22



BIBLE PASSAGE

Jonah 2:9 and Matthew 12:39–40

STORY

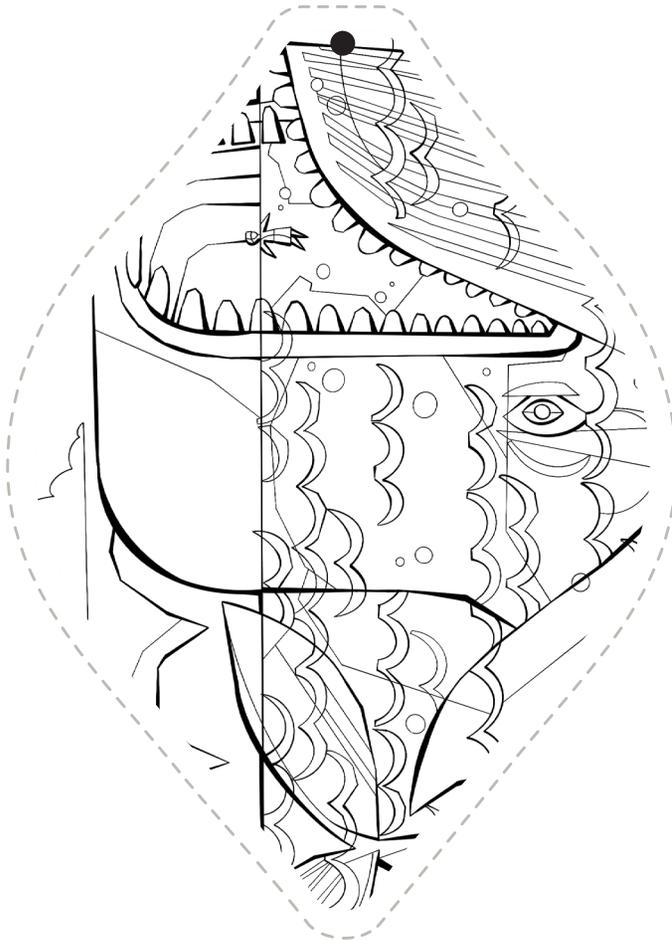
“Big Fish, Bigger Mercy” (Chapter 50)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Even though Jonah was the pouting prophet, Jesus used his story to point to his own death and resurrection. The scribes and Pharisees shouted at Jesus. “Show us a sign that you are the Messiah!” Jesus had already shown lots of signs. He had cleansed a leper, healed a paralyzed man, and given sight to the blind. He had even raised the dead to life! What kind of sign were they looking for? They wanted a supernatural sign—like water turning to blood. Jesus replied to them, “Only people with no faith want a special sign like that. I will only give you one sure sign that I am the Messiah. Just as Jonah was three days in the belly of the great fish, so will I be three days in a tomb”. What do you think he is talking about? Yes, he’s talking about his death—and resurrection. On Friday he died. That night (day one) and the whole day after (day two) his body was buried. Then, on day three, he rose from the grave!

But Jesus didn’t choose the story of Jonah just because the number of days matched. He chose the story because it was all about God’s mercy for sinners who repent. Jesus’s death and resurrection are the signs that prove he is the Son whom God sent to save us from our sins and the punishment of death. Anyone who trusts in Jesus—disobedient prophets or wicked enemies—can be saved.

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December 23



BIBLE PASSAGE

Zechariah 3:4

STORY

“A Change of Clothes” (Chapter 51)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Do any of you wonder why God told this story about changing the clothes of one of his priests? It's definitely a picture of how God forgives our sins, but it's even more than that. And the clue that there's something more is a strange bit about a “Branch” (Zech. 3:8). What, or who, is the Branch? The Branch was the better, perfectly holy high priest who was coming. The prophet said that Joshua in his new, clean garments looked like this Branch. That promised, future, perfect high priest is called the “Branch” because he will come from King David's family tree. He might look like just one branch on a tree with lots of branches, but he will do what no high priest has ever done before. He will “remove the sin of God's people in a single day” (see Zech. 3:9). Can you guess who the Branch might be? Yes, it is Jesus, the Snake Crusher! When he died as a punishment for sin on the cross, that very moment, on that one day in history, all our sins—past, present, and future—were paid for. Totally forgiven! This priest took our stinky, filthy clothes and gave us his clean, perfect clothes.

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December 24



BIBLE PASSAGE

Malachi 4:2

STORY

“The Great and Awesome Day of the Lord” (Chapter 52)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Through Malachi, God said, “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me” (Mal. 3:1). The messenger will prepare the way for the day of God’s returning and living with his people. The New Testament tells us that John the Baptist is this messenger who prepared the way for the Lord Jesus, Immanuel (God with us). Jesus is the good news God’s people have been promised since the very beginning! He is the Snake Crusher that was promised to Eve. He is Abraham’s offspring bringing a blessing to all nations. He is the Branch from David’s family tree, who rules as the forever King of the forever kingdom.

God’s people didn’t know exactly what to look for when God would return to live with his people. But if they paid attention to the Bible, they knew that their coming Savior would be a teacher greater than Moses, a priest purer than Aaron, and a king wiser than Solomon. They knew he would be born of a virgin, preach good news to the poor, heal the sick, and then suffer and die for his people’s sins. They also knew he would rise from the dead and someday return to judge and save. The Bible was full of pictures to show them what their coming Savior was like. And soon he would appear, not as a mighty king, but as a helpless baby.

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December 25



BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 1:21 and Luke 2

STORY

“A New Baby and a New Beginning” (Chapter 53)

GOSPEL CONNECTION

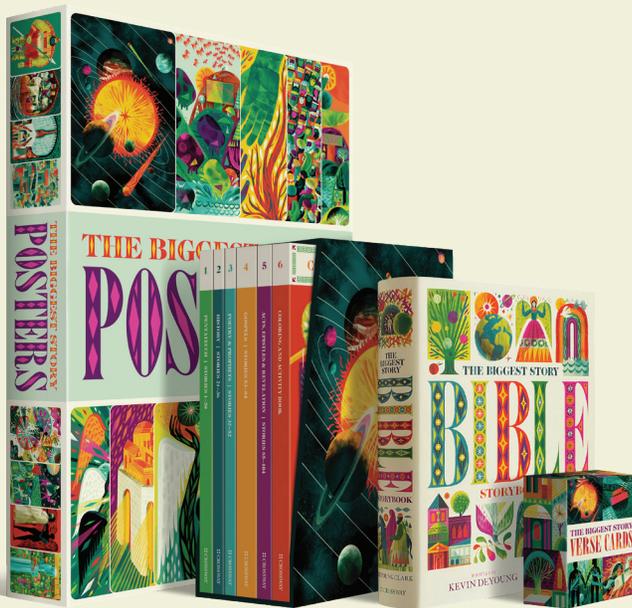
On Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus. You know that. But you may not know the strange way Matthew begins the story of Christmas. He starts with a long list of names, called a genealogy. Genealogy is just a fancy way of saying family tree. Why would he tell the story of Christmas with a genealogy? When we read the long list of names, we're reminded of how sinful people are. There are some big-time sinners on the list.

What does all this have to do with Jesus? Well, Jesus wasn't a big-time sinner. Instead, he was a big-time Savior from sin. Even though he was fully human, he was also fully God. And even though he came from a long line of sinners, he was born in a special way so he could do some special rescuing: he was from God. And since God is without sin, Jesus could be born free from the sin that marked his genealogy.

Now here's where the story gets really interesting. Mary was engaged to Joseph. He was shocked to find out Mary was pregnant! He decided the best course was to quietly break up with her. But God sent an angel to let him in on what God was doing. “Joseph,” the angel told him, “Marry Mary, for the baby in her has been conceived from the Holy Spirit” (see Matt. 1:20). Joseph listened. The angel continued, “The baby will be a boy. When he is born, your job is to name him Jesus.” Joseph must have wondered, “Why that name? It's not a family name.” The reason was that the name means “Yahweh saves.” The angel explained, “Call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (see v. 21). Joseph and Mary obeyed the angel's orders. They got married, she gave birth and Joseph called the baby Jesus.

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