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December 1: Creation – Genesis 1

The earth

The Story of Creation.*

1 In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth^a—

2 and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—^b

3 Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light.^c

4 God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.^e

6 Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other.

7 God made the dome,^f and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened.^d

8 God called the dome “sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

9 Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared.^a

10 God called the dry land “earth,” and the basin of water he called “sea.” God saw that it was good.

11^f Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened:

12 the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good.

13 Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

14 Then God said: Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years,^g

15 and serve as lights in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth. And so it happened:

16 God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night, and the stars.^h

17 God set them in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth,

18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good.

19 Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

20ⁱ Then God said: Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.

21 God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of crawling living creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw that it was good,

22 and God blessed them, saying: Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth.^j

23 Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

24^k Then God said: Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: tame animals, crawling things, and every kind of wild animal. And so it happened:

25 God made every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, and every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. God saw that it was good.

26^l Then God said: Let us make^{*} human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

27 God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female^{*} he created them.

28 God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.^{*} Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.^m

29^{*} ⁿ God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;

30 and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened.

31 God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.^o

December 2: Adam & Eve/Garden of Eden – Genesis 2-3

A fruit tree or an apple

Chapter 2

1 Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.^a

2 ^a On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. ^b

3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation. ^c

I. THE STORY OF THE NATIONS

The Garden of Eden.

4 This is the story ^a of the heavens and the earth at their creation. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—

5 there was no field shrub on earth and no grass of the field had sprouted, for the LORD God had sent no rain upon the earth and there was no man ^a to till the ground,

6 but a stream ^a was welling up out of the earth and watering all the surface of the ground—

7 then the LORD God formed the man ^a out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. ^d

8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, ^a and placed there the man whom he had formed. ^e

9 ^a Out of the ground the LORD God made grow every tree that was delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ^f

10 A river rises in Eden ^a to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches.

11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it is the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12 The gold of that land is good; bdellium and lapis lazuli are also there.

13 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it is the one that winds all through the land of Cush. ^g

14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it is the one that flows east of Asshur. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it. ^h

16 The LORD God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden ⁱ

17 except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die. ^{a j}

18 The LORD God said: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him. ^{a k}

19 So the LORD God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each living creature was then its name.

20 The man gave names to all the tame animals, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be a helper suited to the man.

21 So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.¹

22 The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man,

23 the man said: “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of man this one has been taken.”²

24^m That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.³

25 The man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame.⁴

Chapter 3

Expulsion from Eden.

1 Now the snake was the most cunning⁵ of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden’?”

2 The woman answered the snake: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden;

3^a it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.’”

4 But the snake said to the woman: “You certainly will not die!^b

5 God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know⁶ good and evil.”

6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.^c

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

8 When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day,⁷ the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.^d

9 The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you?

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid.”

11 Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat?

12 The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it."

13 The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, "The snake tricked me, so I ate it."^e

14 Then the LORD God said to the snake: Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals, tame or wild; On your belly you shall crawl, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.^{*, f}

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.^{*, g}

16 To the woman he said: I will intensify your toil in childbearing; in pain^{*} you shall bring forth children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

17 To the man he said: Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, You shall not eat from it, Cursed is the ground^{*} because of you! In toil you shall eat its yield all the days of your life.^h

18 Thorns and thistles it shall bear for you, and you shall eat the grass of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, Until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.ⁱ

20 The man gave his wife the name "Eve," because she was the mother of all the living.^{*, j}

21 The LORD God made for the man and his wife garments of skin, with which he clothed them.

22 Then the LORD God said: See! The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil! Now, what if he also reaches out his hand to take fruit from the tree of life, and eats of it and lives forever?^l

23 The LORD God therefore banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken.

24 He expelled the man, stationing the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life.

December 3: Noah & the Flood – Genesis 6-9

A rainbow or ark

Chapter 6

Origin of the Nephilim.*

1 When human beings began to grow numerous on the earth and daughters were born to them,

2 the sons of God* saw how beautiful the daughters of human beings were, and so they took for their wives whomever they pleased.^a

3 Then the LORD said: My spirit shall not remain in human beings forever, because they are only flesh. Their days shall comprise one hundred and twenty years.

4 The Nephilim appeared on earth in those days, as well as later,* after the sons of God had intercourse with the daughters of human beings, who bore them sons. They were the heroes of old, the men of renown.^b

Warning of the Flood.

5* When the LORD saw how great the wickedness of human beings was on earth, and how every desire that their heart conceived was always nothing but evil,^c

6 the LORD regretted making human beings on the earth, and his heart was grieved.*

7 So the LORD said: I will wipe out from the earth the human beings I have created, and not only the human beings, but also the animals and the crawling things and the birds of the air, for I regret that I made them.*

8 But Noah found favor with the LORD.

9 These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man and blameless in his generation;^d Noah walked with God.

10 Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 But the earth was corrupt* in the view of God and full of lawlessness.^e

12 When God saw how corrupt the earth had become, since all mortals had corrupted their ways on earth,^f

13 God said to Noah: I see that the end of all mortals has come, for the earth is full of lawlessness because of them. So I am going to destroy them with the earth.^g

Preparation for the Flood.

14 Make yourself an ark of gopherwood,* equip the ark with various compartments, and cover it inside and out with pitch.

15 This is how you shall build it: the length of the ark will be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.^z

16 Make an opening for daylight^{*} and finish the ark a cubit above it. Put the ark's entrance on its side; you will make it with bottom, second and third decks.

17 I, on my part, am about to bring the flood waters on the earth, to destroy all creatures under the sky in which there is the breath of life; everything on earth shall perish.^b

18 I will establish my covenant with you. You shall go into the ark, you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives with you.ⁱ

19 Of all living creatures you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, one male and one female,^z to keep them alive along with you.

20 Of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal, and of every kind of thing that crawls on the ground, two of each will come to you, that you may keep them alive.

21 Moreover, you are to provide yourself with all the food that is to be eaten, and store it away, that it may serve as provisions for you and for them.

22 Noah complied; he did just as God had commanded him.^{*}

Chapter 7

1 Then the LORD said to Noah: Go into the ark, you and all your household, for you alone in this generation have I found to be righteous before me.^a

2 Of every clean animal, take with you seven pairs, a male and its mate; and of the unclean animals, one pair, a male and its mate;

3 likewise, of every bird of the air, seven pairs, a male and a female, to keep their progeny alive over all the earth.

4 For seven days from now I will bring rain down on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and so I will wipe out from the face of the earth every being that I have made.^b

5 Noah complied, just as the LORD had commanded.

The Great Flood.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth.

7 Together with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, Noah went into the ark because of the waters of the flood.^c

8 Of the clean animals and the unclean, of the birds, and of everything that crawls on the ground,

9 two by two, male and female came to Noah into the ark, just as God had commanded him.^d

10 When the seven days were over, the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month: on that day All the fountains of the great abyss^{*} burst forth, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.

12 For forty days and forty nights heavy rain poured down on the earth.

13 On the very same day, Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of Noah's sons had entered the ark,

14 together with every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, every kind of crawling thing that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird.

15 Pairs of all creatures in which there was the breath of life came to Noah into the ark.

16 Those that entered were male and female; of all creatures they came, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

17 The flood continued upon the earth for forty days. As the waters increased, they lifted the ark, so that it rose above the earth.

18 The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth, but the ark floated on the surface of the waters.

19 Higher and higher on the earth the waters swelled, until all the highest mountains under the heavens were submerged.

20 The waters swelled fifteen cubits higher than the submerged mountains.

21 All creatures that moved on earth perished: birds, tame animals, wild animals, and all that teemed on the earth, as well as all humankind.[Ⓐ]

22 Everything on dry land with the breath of life in its nostrils died.

23 The LORD wiped out every being on earth: human beings and animals, the crawling things and the birds of the air; all were wiped out from the earth. Only Noah and those with him in the ark were left.

24 And when the waters had swelled on the earth for one hundred and fifty days,

Chapter 8

1 God remembered Noah and all the animals, wild and tame, that were with him in the ark. So God made a wind sweep over the earth, and the waters began to subside.

2 The fountains of the abyss and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the downpour from the sky was held back.

3 Gradually the waters receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred and fifty days, the waters had so diminished

4 that, in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.^{*}

5 The waters continued to diminish until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains appeared.

6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the hatch of the ark that he had made,

7^{*} and he released a raven. It flew back and forth until the waters dried off from the earth.

8 Then he released a dove, to see if the waters had lessened on the earth.

9 But the dove could find no place to perch, and it returned to him in the ark, for there was water over all the earth. Putting out his hand, he caught the dove and drew it back to him inside the ark.

10 He waited yet seven days more and again released the dove from the ark.

11 In the evening the dove came back to him, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! So Noah knew that the waters had diminished on the earth.

12 He waited yet another seven days and then released the dove; but this time it did not come back.

13^{*} In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water began to dry up on the earth. Noah then removed the covering of the ark and saw that the surface of the ground had dried.

14 In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

15 Then God said to Noah:

16 Go out of the ark, together with your wife and your sons and your sons' wives.

17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you—all creatures, be they birds or animals or crawling things that crawl on the earth—and let them abound on the earth, and be fertile and multiply on it.^a

18 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives;

19 and all the animals, all the birds, and all the crawling creatures that crawl on the earth went out of the ark by families.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and choosing from every clean animal and every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 When the LORD smelled the sweet odor, the LORD said to himself: Never again will I curse the ground because of human beings, since the desires of the human heart are evil from youth; nor will I ever again strike down every living being, as I have done.^b

22 All the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, Summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.^c

Chapter 9

Covenant with Noah.

1* God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fertile and multiply and fill the earth.^a

2* Fear and dread of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered.

3^b Any living creature that moves about shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants.

4^c Only meat with its lifeblood still in it you shall not eat.*

5 Indeed for your own lifeblood I will demand an accounting: from every animal I will demand it, and from a human being, each one for the blood of another, I will demand an accounting for human life.^d

6* Anyone who sheds the blood of a human being, by a human being shall that one's blood be shed; For in the image of God have human beings been made.^e

7 Be fertile, then, and multiply; abound on earth and subdue it.^f

8* God said to Noah and to his sons with him:

9 See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you^g

10 and with every living creature that was with you: the birds, the tame animals, and all the wild animals that were with you—all that came out of the ark.

11 I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth.^h

12 God said: This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come:

13ⁱ I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

14 When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds,

15 I will remember my covenant between me and you and every living creature—every mortal being—so that the waters will never again become a flood to destroy every mortal being.^j

16 When the bow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature—every mortal being that is on earth.

17 God told Noah: This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and every mortal being that is on earth.

Noah and His Sons.

18* The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan.^k

19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from them the whole earth was populated.

20 Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard.

21 He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and lay naked inside his tent.^l

22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness, and he told his two brothers outside.

23 Shem and Japheth, however, took a robe, and holding it on their shoulders, they walked backward and covered their father's nakedness; since their faces were turned the other way, they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 When Noah woke up from his wine and learned what his youngest son had done to him,

25 he said: "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers."^m

26 He also said: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! Let Canaan be his slave.

27 May God expand Japheth,^z and may he dwell among the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave."

28 Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood.

29 The whole lifetime of Noah was nine hundred and fifty years; then he died.

December 4: God's Promise to Abraham – Genesis 12:1-7 & Genesis 15:1-6

A tent or stars

Chapter 1 2:1 -7

1 The LORD said to Abram: Go forth^{*} from your land, your relatives, and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.^a

2 ^{*}I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.^b

3 ^cI will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will find blessing in you.^z

4 ^dAbram went as the LORD directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

5^{*} Abram took his wife Sarai, his brother's son Lot, all the possessions that they had accumulated, and the persons they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan,

6^{*} Abram passed through the land as far as the sacred place at Shechem, by the oak of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.

7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said: To your descendants I will give this land. So Abram built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.^a

Chapter 15:1 -6

The Covenant with Abram.*

1 Some time afterward, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: Do not fear, Abram! I am your shield; I will make your reward very great.

2 But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what can you give me, if I die childless and have only a servant of my household, Eliezer of Damascus?”

3 Abram continued, “Look, you have given me no offspring, so a servant of my household will be my heir.”

4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: No, that one will not be your heir; your own offspring will be your heir.^a

5 He took him outside and said: Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so, he added, will your descendants be.^b

6^c Abram put his faith in the LORD, who attributed it to him as an act of righteousness.*

December 5: Isaac – Genesis 22:1 -18

A ram

Chapter 22:1 -18

The Testing of Abraham.*

1 Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test and said to him: Abraham! “Here I am!” he replied.^a

2 Then God said: Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There offer him up as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.^b

3 Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey, took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac, and after cutting the wood for the burnt offering, set out for the place of which God had told him.

4 On the third day Abraham caught sight of the place from a distance.

5 Abraham said to his servants: “Stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over there. We will worship and then come back to you.”

6 So Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two walked on together,

7 Isaac spoke to his father Abraham. “Father!” he said. “Here I am,” he replied. Isaac continued, “Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?”

8 “My son,” Abraham answered, “God will provide the sheep for the burnt offering.” Then the two walked on together.

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. Next he bound^e his son Isaac, and put him on top of the wood on the altar.^c

10 Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.^d

11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham!” “Here I am,” he answered.

12 “Do not lay your hand on the boy,” said the angel. “Do not do the least thing to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you did not withhold from me your son, your only one.”^a

13 Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught by its horns in the thicket. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.^{*}

14 Abraham named that place Yahweh-yireh;^{*} hence people today say, “On the mountain the LORD will provide.”

15^{*} A second time the angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven

16^f and said: “I swear by my very self—oracle of the LORD—that because you acted as you did in not withholding from me your son, your only one,

17 I will bless you and make your descendants as countless as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore; your descendants will take possession of the gates of their enemies,^g

18 and in your descendants all the nations of the earth will find blessing, because you obeyed my command.”^h

December 6: Jacob's Ladder – Genesis 28:10-19

A ladder

Chapter 28:10-19

Jacob’s Dream at Bethel.^{*}

10 Jacob departed from Beer-sheba and proceeded toward Haran.

11 When he came upon a certain place,^{*} he stopped there for the night, since the sun had already set. Taking one of the stones at the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place.

12 Then he had a dream: a stairway^{*} rested on the ground, with its top reaching to the heavens; and God’s angels were going up and down on it.ⁱ

13 And there was the LORD standing beside him and saying: I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I will give to you and your descendants.^g

14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and through them you will spread to the west and the east, to the north and the south. In you and your descendants all the families of the earth will find blessing.^h

15 I am with you and will protect you wherever you go, and bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until I have done what I promised you.ⁱ

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, “Truly, the LORD is in this place and I did not know it!”

17 He was afraid and said: “How awesome this place is! This is nothing else but the house of God, the gateway to heaven!”

18 Early the next morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head, set it up as a sacred pillar,^{*} and poured oil on top of it.^j

19 He named that place Bethel,^{*} whereas the former name of the town had been Luz.^k

December 7: Joseph's Coat – Genesis 37 & Genesis 50

A multicolored coat or robe

Chapter 37

Joseph Sold into Egypt.

1 Jacob settled in the land where his father had sojourned, the land of Canaan.^{*}

2 This is the story of the family of Jacob.[†] When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was tending the flocks with his brothers; he was an assistant to the sons of his father’s wives Bilhah and Zilpah, and Joseph brought their father bad reports about them.

3 Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made him a long ornamented tunic.[‡]

4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him best of all his brothers, they hated him so much that they could not say a kind word to him.

5^{*} Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers, they hated him even more.^a

6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had.

7 There we were, binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf rose to an upright position, and your sheaves formed a ring around my sheaf and bowed down to it.”

8 His brothers said to him, “Are you really going to make yourself king over us? Will you rule over us?” So they hated him all the more because of his dreams and his reports.^b

9 Then he had another dream, and told it to his brothers. "Look, I had another dream," he said; "this time, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told it to his father and his brothers, his father reproved him and asked, "What is the meaning of this dream of yours? Can it be that I and your mother and your brothers are to come and bow to the ground before you?"

11 So his brothers were furious at him but his father kept the matter in mind.

12 One day, when his brothers had gone to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem,

13 Israel said to Joseph, "Are your brothers not tending our flocks at Shechem? Come and I will send you to them." "I am ready," Joseph answered.

14 "Go then," he replied; "see if all is well with your brothers and the flocks, and bring back word." So he sent him off from the valley of Hebron. When Joseph reached Shechem,

15 a man came upon him as he was wandering about in the fields. "What are you looking for?" the man asked him.

16 "I am looking for my brothers," he answered. "Please tell me where they are tending the flocks."

17 The man told him, "They have moved on from here; in fact, I heard them say, 'Let us go on to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

18 They saw him from a distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 They said to one another: "Here comes that dreamer!

20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns here; we could say that a wild beast devoured him. We will see then what comes of his dreams."^c

21 ^a But when Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from their hands, saying: "We must not take his life."

22 Then Reuben said, "Do not shed blood! Throw him into this cistern in the wilderness; but do not lay a hand on him." His purpose was to save him from their hands and restore him to his father.^d

23 So when Joseph came up to his brothers, they stripped him of his tunic, the long ornamented tunic he had on;

24 then they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat. Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels laden with gum, balm, and resin to be taken down to Egypt.^e

26 Judah said to his brothers: "What is to be gained by killing our brother and concealing his blood?"^f

27 Come, let us sell him to these Ishmaelites, instead of doing away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh." His brothers agreed.

28 Midianite traders passed by, and they pulled Joseph up out of the cistern. They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver^g to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.^g

29 When Reuben went back to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not in it, he tore his garments,^h

30 and returning to his brothers, he exclaimed: “The boy is gone! And I—where can I turn?”

31 They took Joseph’s tunic, and after slaughtering a goat, dipped the tunic in its blood.

32 Then they sent someone to bring the long ornamented tunic to their father, with the message: “We found this. See whether it is your son’s tunic or not.”

33 He recognized it and exclaimed: “My son’s tunic! A wild beast has devoured him! Joseph has been torn to pieces!”^h

34 Then Jacob tore his garments, put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned his son many days.

35 Though his sons and daughters tried to console him, he refused all consolation, saying, “No, I will go down mourning to my son in Sheol.”^h Thus did his father weep for him.ⁱ

36 The Midianites, meanwhile, sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh and his chief steward.ⁱ

Chapter 50

Jacob’s Funeral.

1 Joseph flung himself upon his father and wept over him as he kissed him.

2 Then Joseph ordered the physicians in his service to embalm his father. When the physicians embalmed Israel,

3 they spent forty days at it, for that is the full period of embalming; and the Egyptians mourned him for seventy days.

4 When the period of mourning was over, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh’s household. “If you please, appeal to Pharaoh, saying:

5 My father made me swear: ‘I am dying. Bury me in my grave that I have prepared for myself in the land of Canaan.’ So now let me go up to bury my father. Then I will come back.”^a

6 Pharaoh replied, “Go and bury your father, as he made you promise on oath.”

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went all of Pharaoh’s officials who were senior members of his household and all the other elders of the land of Egypt,

8 as well as Joseph’s whole household, his brothers, and his father’s household; only their children and their flocks and herds were left in the region of Goshen.

9 Chariots, too, and horsemen went up with him; it was a very imposing retinue.

10 When they arrived at Goren-ha-atad,^a which is beyond the Jordan, they held there a very great and solemn memorial service; and Joseph observed seven days of mourning for his father.

11 When the Canaanites who inhabited the land saw the mourning at Goren-ha-atad, they said, “This is a solemn funeral on the part of the Egyptians!” That is why the place was named Abel-mizraim. It is beyond the Jordan.

12 Thus Jacob’s sons did for him as he had instructed them.

13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, facing on Mamre, the field that Abraham had bought for a burial ground from Ephron the Hittite.^b

14 After Joseph had buried his father he returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all who had gone up with him for the burial of his father.

Plea for Forgiveness.

15^{*} Now that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers became fearful and thought, “Suppose Joseph has been nursing a grudge against us and now most certainly will pay us back in full for all the wrong we did him!”

16 So they sent to Joseph and said: “Before your father died, he gave us these instructions:

17 ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: Please forgive the criminal wrongdoing of your brothers, who treated you harmfully.’ So now please forgive the crime that we, the servants of the God of your father, committed.” When they said this to him, Joseph broke into tears.

18 Then his brothers also proceeded to fling themselves down before him and said, “We are your slaves!”

19 But Joseph replied to them: “Do not fear. Can I take the place of God?

20 Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good, to achieve this present end, the survival of many people.^c

21 So now, do not fear. I will provide for you and for your children.” By thus speaking kindly to them, he reassured them.^d

22 Joseph remained in Egypt, together with his father’s household. He lived a hundred and ten years.

23 He saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation, and the children of Manasseh’s son Machir were also born on Joseph’s knees.^e

Death of Joseph.

24 Joseph said to his brothers: “I am about to die. God will surely take care of you and lead you up from this land to the land that he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”^f

25 Then, putting the sons of Israel under oath, he continued, “When God thus takes care of you, you must bring my bones up from this place.”^g

26 Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. He was embalmed and laid to rest in a coffin in Egypt.^b

December 8: Moses – Exodus 2-4

A burning bush

Exodus Chapter 2

Birth and Adoption of Moses.

1 Now a man^a of the house of Levi married a Levite woman,^a

2 and the woman conceived and bore a son. Seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months.^b

3 But when she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket,^a daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and putting the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the bank of the Nile.

4 His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, while her attendants walked along the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it.

6 On opening it, she looked, and there was a baby boy crying! She was moved with pity for him and said, "It is one of the Hebrews' children."

7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and summon a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?"

8 Pharaoh's daughter answered her, "Go." So the young woman went and called the child's own mother.

9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages."^c So the woman took the child and nursed him.

10 When the child grew,^a she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son.^c She named him Moses; for she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Moses' Flight to Midian.

11^d On one occasion, after Moses had grown up,^a when he had gone out to his kinsmen and witnessed their forced labor, he saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his own kinsmen.

12 Looking about and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

13 The next day he went out again, and now two Hebrews were fighting! So he asked the culprit, "Why are you striking your companion?"

14 But he replied, “Who has appointed you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses became afraid and thought, “The affair must certainly be known.”

15 When Pharaoh heard of the affair, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to the land of Midian.^{* e} There he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father’s flock.

17 But shepherds came and drove them away. So Moses rose up in their defense and watered their flock.

18 When they returned to their father Reuel,^{*} he said to them, “How is it you have returned so soon today?”

19 They answered, “An Egyptian^{*} delivered us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock!”

20 “Where is he?” he asked his daughters. “Why did you leave the man there? Invite him to have something to eat.”

21 Moses agreed to stay with him, and the man gave Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage.

22 She conceived and bore a son, whom he named Gershom;^{*} for he said, “I am a stranger residing in a foreign land.”^f

II. THE CALL AND COMMISSION OF MOSES

The Burning Bush.

23 A long time passed, during which the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their bondage and cried out, and from their bondage their cry for help went up to God.^g

24 God heard their moaning and God was mindful of his covenant^h with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

25 God saw the Israelites, and God knew....^{*}

Chapter 3

1 ^{*} Meanwhile Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. Leading the flock beyond the wilderness, he came to the mountain of God, Horeb.^{*}

2 There the angel of the LORD^{*} appeared to him as fire flaming out of a bush.^a When he looked, although the bush was on fire, it was not being consumed.

3 So Moses decided, “I must turn aside to look at this remarkable sight. Why does the bush not burn up?”

4 When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to look, God called out to him from the bush: Moses! Moses! He answered, “Here I am.”

5 God said: Do not come near! Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.^b

6 I am the God of your father,^a he continued, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.^c Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

The Call and Commission of Moses.

7 But the LORD said: I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry against their taskmasters, so I know well what they are suffering.

8 Therefore I have come down^{*} to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them up from that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.^d

9 Now indeed the outcry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them.

10 Now, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I^e that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12 God answered: I will be with you; and this will be your sign^{*} that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God at this mountain.

13 “But,” said Moses to God, “if I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what do I tell them?”

14 God replied to Moses: I am who I am.^{*} Then he added: This is what you will tell the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.

15 God spoke further to Moses: This is what you will say to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever;^g this is my title for all generations.

16 Go and gather the elders of the Israelites, and tell them, The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I have observed you and what is being done to you in Egypt;

17 so I have decided to lead you up out of your affliction in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

18 They will listen to you. Then you and the elders of Israel will go to the king of Egypt and say to him:^f The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has come to meet us. So now, let us go a three days’ journey in the wilderness to offer sacrifice to the LORD, our God.

19 Yet I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go unless his hand is forced.

20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wondrous deeds I will do in its midst. After that he will let you go.

21^g I will even make the Egyptians so well-disposed toward this people that, when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

22 Every woman will ask her neighbor and the resident alien in her house for silver and gold articles* and for clothing, and you will put them on your sons and daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians.

Chapter 4

1 “But,” objected Moses, “suppose they do not believe me or listen to me? For they may say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’”

2 The LORD said to him: What is in your hand? “A staff,” he answered.

3 God said: Throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground and it became a snake,^a and Moses backed away from it.

4 Then the LORD said to Moses: Now stretch out your hand and take hold of its tail. So he stretched out his hand and took hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand.

5 That is so they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, did appear to you.

6 Again the LORD said to him: Put your hand into the fold of your garment. So he put his hand into the fold of his garment, and when he drew it out, there was his hand covered with scales, like snowflakes.

7 Then God said: Put your hand back into the fold of your garment. So he put his hand back into the fold of his garment, and when he drew it out, there it was again like his own flesh.

8 If they do not believe you or pay attention to the message of the first sign, they should believe the message of the second sign.

9 And if they do not believe even these two signs and do not listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry land. The water you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry land.^b

Aaron’s Office as Assistant.

10 Moses, however, said to the LORD, “If you please, my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue.”^c

11 The LORD said to him: Who gives one person speech? Who makes another mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?

12 Now go, I will assist you in speaking* and teach you what you are to say.

13 But he said, “If you please, my Lord, send someone else!”^d

14 Then the LORD became angry with Moses and said: I know there is your brother, Aaron the Levite, who is a good speaker; even now he is on his way to meet you. When he sees you, he will truly be glad.

15 You will speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will assist both you and him in speaking and teach you both what you are to do.

16 He will speak to the people for you: he will be your spokesman,^{*} and you will be as God to him.^d

17 Take this staff^{*} in your hand; with it you are to perform the signs.

Moses' Return to Egypt.

18 After this Moses returned to Jethro^{*} his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me return to my kindred in Egypt, to see whether they are still living." Jethro replied to Moses, "Go in peace."

19 Then the LORD said to Moses in Midian: Return to Egypt, for all those who sought your life are dead.

20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, mounted them on the donkey, and started back to the land of Egypt. Moses took the staff of God with him.

21 The LORD said to Moses: On your return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart^{*} and he will not let the people go.

22^a So you will say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD: Israel is my son, my firstborn.

23 I said to you: Let my son go, that he may serve me. Since you refused to let him go, I will kill your son, your firstborn.^f

24^{*} On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, the LORD came upon Moses and sought to put him to death.

25^g But Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son's foreskin and, touching his feet,^{*} she said, "Surely you are a spouse of blood to me."

26 So God let Moses alone. At that time she said, "A spouse of blood," in regard to the circumcision.

27 The LORD said to Aaron: Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. So he went; when meeting him at the mountain of God, he kissed him.

28 Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and all the signs he had commanded him to do.

29 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the Israelites.

30 Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses, and he performed the signs before the people.

31 The people believed, and when they heard that the LORD had observed the Israelites and had seen their affliction,^a they knelt and bowed down.

December 9: Israelites and the Passover – Exodus 12:1-42

A lamb

Chapter 12:1-42

The Passover Ritual Prescribed.^{*}

1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

2 ^{*} This month will stand at the head of your calendar; you will reckon it the first month of the year.^a

3 Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth of this month every family must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household.

4 If a household is too small for a lamb, it along with its nearest neighbor will procure one, and apportion the lamb's cost^{*} in proportion to the number of persons, according to what each household consumes.

5 Your lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats.

6 You will keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the whole community of Israel assembled, it will be slaughtered during the evening twilight.

7 They will take some of its blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

8 They will consume its meat that same night, eating it roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

9 Do not eat any of it raw or even boiled in water, but roasted, with its head and shanks and inner organs.

10 You must not keep any of it beyond the morning; whatever is left over in the morning must be burned up.

11 This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, you will eat it in a hurry. It is the LORD's Passover.

12 For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every firstborn in the land, human being and beast alike, and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt—I, the LORD!^b

13 But for you the blood will mark the houses where you are. Seeing the blood, I will pass over you; thereby, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you.^c

14 This day will be a day of remembrance for you, which your future generations will celebrate with pilgrimage to the LORD; you will celebrate it as a statute forever.

15 For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. From the very first day you will have your houses clear of all leaven. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh will be cut off^e from Israel.

16 On the first day you will hold a sacred assembly, and likewise on the seventh. On these days no sort of work shall be done, except to prepare the food that everyone needs.

17 Keep, then, the custom of the unleavened bread,^d since it was on this very day that I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. You must observe this day throughout your generations as a statute forever.

18 From the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of this month you will eat unleavened bread.

19 For seven days no leaven may be found in your houses; for anyone, a resident alien or a native, who eats leavened food will be cut off from the community of Israel.

20 You shall eat nothing leavened; wherever you dwell you may eat only unleavened bread.

Promulgation of the Passover.

21 Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and procure lambs for your families, and slaughter the Passover victims.

22^e Then take a bunch of hyssop,^{*} and dipping it in the blood that is in the basin, apply some of this blood to the lintel and the two doorposts. And none of you shall go outdoors until morning.

23 For when the LORD goes by to strike down the Egyptians, seeing the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over that door and not let the destroyer come into your houses to strike you down.

24 "You will keep this practice forever as a statute for yourselves and your descendants.

25 Thus, when you have entered the land which the LORD will give you as he promised, you must observe this rite.

26^f When your children ask you, 'What does this rite of yours mean?'

27 you will reply, 'It is the Passover sacrifice for the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt; when he struck down the Egyptians, he delivered our houses.'" Then the people knelt and bowed down,

28 and the Israelites went and did exactly as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

Death of the Firstborn.

29^g And so at midnight the LORD struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner in the dungeon, as well as all the firstborn of the animals.

30 Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was loud wailing throughout Egypt, for there was not a house without its dead.

Permission to Depart.

31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Leave my people at once, you and the Israelites! Go and serve the LORD as you said.

32 Take your flocks, too, and your herds, as you said, and go; and bless me, too!”^z

33 The Egyptians, in a hurry to send them away from the land, urged the people on, for they said, “All of us will die!”

34 The people, therefore, took their dough before it was leavened, in their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks on their shoulders.

35^h And the Israelites did as Moses had commanded: they asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing.

36 Indeed the LORD had made the Egyptians so well-disposed toward the people that they let them have whatever they asked for. And so they despoiled the Egyptians.

Departure from Egypt.

37 The Israelites set out from Ramesesⁱ for Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting the children.

38 A crowd of mixed ancestry^z also went up with them, with livestock in great abundance, both flocks and herds.

39 The dough they had brought out of Egypt they baked into unleavened loaves. It was not leavened, because they had been driven out of Egypt and could not wait. They did not even prepare food for the journey.

40 The time the Israelites had stayed in Egypt^z was four hundred and thirty years.^j

41 At the end of four hundred and thirty years, on this very date, all the armies of the LORD left the land of Egypt.

42 This was a night of vigil for the LORD, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt; so on this night all Israelites must keep a vigil for the LORD throughout their generations.

December 10: The 10 Commandments – Exodus 19-20

Two stone tablets

Chapter 19

Arrival at Sinai.

1 ^a In the third month after the Israelites' departure from the land of Egypt, on the first day, they came to the wilderness of Sinai.

2 After they made the journey from Rephidim and entered the wilderness of Sinai, they then pitched camp in the wilderness.⁺ While Israel was encamped there in front of the mountain,

3 Moses went up to the mountain of God. Then the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying: This is what you will say to the house of Jacob; tell the Israelites:

4 You have seen how I treated the Egyptians and how I bore you up on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.^b

5 Now, if you obey me completely and keep my covenant,⁺ you will be my treasured possession among all peoples,^c though all the earth is mine.

6 You will be to me a kingdom of priests,⁺ a holy nation.^d That is what you must tell the Israelites.

7 So Moses went and summoned the elders of the people. When he set before them all that the LORD had ordered him to tell them,

8 all the people answered together, "Everything the LORD has said, we will do." Then Moses brought back to the LORD the response of the people.

9 The LORD said to Moses: I am coming to you now in a dense cloud,^e so that when the people hear me speaking with you, they will also remain faithful to you. When Moses, then, had reported the response of the people to the LORD,

10 the LORD said to Moses: Go to the people and have them sanctify themselves today and tomorrow. Have them wash their garments

11 and be ready for the third day; for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

12 Set limits for the people all around,^f saying: Take care not to go up the mountain, or even to touch its edge. All who touch the mountain must be put to death.

13 No hand shall touch them, but they must be stoned to death or killed with arrows. Whether human being or beast, they must not be allowed to live. Only when the ram's horn sounds may they go up on the mountain.⁺

14 Then Moses came down from the mountain to the people and had them sanctify themselves, and they washed their garments.

15 He said to the people, "Be ready for the third day. Do not approach a woman."

The Great Theophany.

16^g On the morning of the third day there were peals of thunder and lightning, and a heavy cloud over the mountain, and a very loud blast of the shofar,⁺ so that all the people in the camp trembled.

17 But Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stationed themselves at the foot of the mountain.

18 Now Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke, because the LORD had come down upon it in fire. The smoke rose from it as though from a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently.

19 The blast of the shofar grew louder and louder, while Moses was speaking and God was answering him with thunder.

20* When the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

21 Then the LORD told Moses: Go down and warn the people not to break through to the LORD in order to see him; otherwise many of them will be struck down.

22 For their part, the priests, who approach the LORD must sanctify themselves; else the LORD will break out in anger against them.

23 But Moses said to the LORD, “The people cannot go up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying: Set limits around the mountain to make it sacred.”

24 So the LORD said to him: Go down and come up along with Aaron. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD; else he will break out against them.”

25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

Chapter 20

The Ten Commandments.*

1 Then God spoke all these words:

2 ^a I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ^b out of the house of slavery.

3 You shall not have other gods beside me.*

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol^c or a likeness of anything[±] in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth;

5 you shall not bow down before them or serve them.^d For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation*;

6 but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain.* ^e For the LORD will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy.*

9 Six days you may labor and do all your work,

10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God.^f You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your work animal, or the resident alien within your gates.

11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested.^g That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.^{*}

12^{*} ^h Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.ⁱ

13 You shall not kill.^{*} ^j

14 You shall not commit adultery.^k

15 You shall not steal.^l

16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.^m

17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.ⁿ

Moses Accepted as Mediator.

18 Now as all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blast of the shofar and the mountain smoking, they became afraid and trembled.^o So they took up a position farther away

19 and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we shall die."

20 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid, for God has come only to test you and put the fear of him upon you so you do not sin."

21 So the people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.

The Covenant Code.

22^{*} The LORD said to Moses: This is what you will say to the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven.

23 You shall not make alongside of me gods of silver, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold.^p

24 An altar of earth make for me, and sacrifice upon it your burnt offerings and communion sacrifices, your sheep and your oxen.^q In every place where I cause my name to be invoked^{*} I will come to you and bless you.

25 But if you make an altar of stone for me,^r do not build it of cut stone, for by putting a chisel to it you profane it.

26 You shall not ascend to my altar by steps, lest your nakedness be exposed.

December 11: Joshua / Fall of Jericho – Joshua 6:1-20

A ram's horn trumpet or wall

Joshua 6:1-20

1 Now Jericho was in a state of siege because of the presence of the Israelites. No one left or entered.

2 And to Joshua the LORD said: I have delivered Jericho, its king, and its warriors into your power.

3 ^a Have all the soldiers circle the city, marching once around it. Do this for six days,

4 with seven priests carrying ram's horns ahead of the ark. On the seventh day march around the city seven times, and have the priests blow the horns.

5 When they give a long blast on the ram's horns and you hear the sound of the horn, all the people shall shout aloud. The wall of the city will collapse, and the people shall attack straight ahead.

6 Summoning the priests, Joshua, son of Nun, said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant with seven of the priests carrying ram's horns in front of the ark of the LORD."

7 And he ordered the people, "Proceed and surround the city, with the picked troops marching ahead of the ark of the LORD."

8 When Joshua spoke to the people, the seven priests who carried the ram's horns before the LORD marched and blew their horns, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

9 In front of the priests with the horns marched the picked troops; the rear guard followed the ark, and the blowing of horns was kept up continually as they marched.

10 But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not shout or make any noise or outcry until I tell you, 'Shout!' Then you must shout."

11 So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going once around it, after which they returned to camp for the night.

12 Early the next morning, Joshua had the priests take up the ark of the LORD.

13 The seven priests bearing the ram's horns marched in front of the ark of the LORD, blowing their horns. Ahead of these marched the picked troops, while the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, and the blowing of horns was kept up continually.

14 On this second day they again marched around the city once before returning to camp; and for six days in all they did the same.

15 On the seventh day, beginning at daybreak, they marched around the city seven times in the same manner; on that day only did they march around the city seven times.

16 The seventh time around, the priests blew the horns and Joshua said to the people, “Now shout, for the LORD has given you the city.

17^b The city and everything in it is under the ban. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are in the house with her are to live, because she hid the messengers we sent.

18^c But be careful not to covet or take anything that is under the ban;[±] otherwise you will bring upon the camp of Israel this ban and the misery of it.

19 All silver and gold, and the articles of bronze or iron, are holy to the LORD. They shall be put in the treasury of the LORD.”

The Fall of Jericho.

20 As the horns blew, the people began to shout. When they heard the sound of the horn, they raised a tremendous shout. The wall collapsed,[±] and the people attacked the city straight ahead and took it.^d

December 12: Ruth – Ruth 2:1-12

A sheaf of corn

Ruth 2:1-12

The Meeting.

1 * Naomi had a powerful relative named Boaz,^a through the clan of her husband Elimelech.

2 * Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “I would like to go and glean grain in the field of anyone who will allow me.” Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.”

3 So she went. The field she entered to glean after the harvesters happened to be the section belonging to Boaz, of the clan of Elimelech.

4 * Soon, along came Boaz from Bethlehem and said to the harvesters, “The LORD be with you,” and they replied, “The LORD bless you.”

5 Boaz asked the young man overseeing his harvesters, “Whose young woman is this?”

6 The young man overseeing the harvesters answered, “She is the young Moabite who came back with Naomi from the plateau of Moab.”^b

7 * She said, ‘I would like to gather the gleanings into sheaves after the harvesters.’ Ever since she came this morning she has remained here until now, with scarcely a moment’s rest.”

8 Boaz then spoke to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Do not go to glean in anyone else’s field; you are not to leave here. Stay here with my young women.

9 Watch to see which field is to be harvested, and follow them. Have I not commanded the young men to do you no harm? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the vessels the young people have filled.”

10 Casting herself prostrate upon the ground, she said to him, “Why should I, a foreigner, be favored with your attention?”

11^c Boaz answered her: “I have had a complete account of what you have done for your mother-in-law after your husband’s death; you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom previously you did not know.

12^d May the LORD reward what you have done! May you receive a full reward from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

December 13: King David – 1 Samuel 16:1-3

A sling or crown

1 Samuel 16:1-3

Samuel Is Sent to Bethlehem.

1 ^a The LORD said to Samuel: How long will you grieve for Saul, whom I have rejected as king of Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for from among his sons I have decided on a king.*

2 But Samuel replied: “How can I go? Saul will hear of it and kill me.” To this the LORD answered: Take a heifer along and say, “I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.”

3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I myself will tell you what to do; you are to anoint for me the one I point out to you.^b

December 14: Solomon's Temple – 1 Kings 6

The temple

1 Kings 6

Building of the Temple.*

1 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv (the second month), he began to build the house of the LORD.*

2 The house which King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty wide, and thirty high.

3 The porch in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits from side to side along the width of the house, and ten cubits deep in front of the house.

4 Windows with closed lattices were made for the house,

5 and adjoining the wall of the house he built a substructure around its walls that enclosed the nave and the inner sanctuary, and he made side chambers all around.

6 The lowest story was five cubits wide, the middle one six cubits wide, the third seven cubits wide, because he put recesses along the outside of the house to avoid fastening anything into the walls of the house.

7 The house was built of stone dressed at the quarry, so that no hammer or ax, no iron tool, was to be heard in the house during its construction.

8 The entrance to the middle story was on the south side of the house; stairs led up to the middle story and from the middle story to the third.

9 When he had finished building the house, it was roofed in with rafters and boards of cedar.

10 He built the substructure five cubits high all along the outside of the house, to which it was joined by cedar beams.

11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon:

12^a As to this house you are building—if you walk in my statutes, carry out my ordinances, and observe all my commands, walking in them, I will fulfill toward you my word which I spoke to David your father.

13 I will dwell in the midst of the Israelites and will not forsake my people Israel.

14 When Solomon finished building the house,

15 its inside walls were lined with cedar paneling: he covered the interior with wood from floor to ceiling, and he covered its floor with fir planking.

16 At the rear of the house a space of twenty cubits was set off by cedar panels from the floor to the ceiling, enclosing the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies.

17 The house was forty cubits long, that is, the nave, the part in front.

18 The cedar in the interior of the house was carved in the form of gourds and open flowers; all was of cedar, and no stone was to be seen.

19 In the innermost part of the house* he set up the inner sanctuary to house the ark of the LORD's covenant.

20 In front of the inner sanctuary (it was twenty cubits long, twenty wide, and twenty high, and he covered it with pure gold), he made an altar of cedar.

21 Solomon covered the interior of the house with pure gold, and he drew golden chains across in front of the inner sanctuary, and covered it with gold.

22 He covered the whole house with gold, until the whole house was done, and the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he covered with gold.

23 In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim, each ten cubits high, made of pine.

24 Each wing of a cherub was five cubits so that the span from wing tip to wing tip was ten cubits.

25 The second cherub was also ten cubits: the two cherubim were identical in size and shape;

26 the first cherub was ten cubits high, and so was the second.

27 He placed the cherubim in the inmost part of the house; the wings of the cherubim were spread wide, so that one wing of the first touched the side wall and the wing of the second touched the other wall; the wings pointing to the middle of the room touched each other.

28 He overlaid the cherubim with gold.

29 The walls of the house on all sides of both the inner and the outer rooms had carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers.

30 The floor of the house of both the inner and the outer rooms was overlaid with gold.

31 At the entrance of the inner sanctuary, doors of pine were made; the doorframes had five-sided posts.

32 The two doors were of pine, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The doors were overlaid with gold, and the cherubim and the palm trees were also covered with beaten gold.

33 He did the same at the entrance to the nave, where the doorposts were of pine and were four-sided.

34 The two doors were of fir wood, each door consisting of two panels hinged together;

35 and he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and plated them with gold.

36 He walled off the inner court with three courses of hewn stones and one course of cedar beams.

37 The foundations of the LORD's house were laid in the month of Ziv in the fourth year,

38 and it was finished, in all particulars, exactly according to plan, in the month of Bul, the eighth month, in the eleventh year. Thus Solomon built it in seven years.

December 15: Elijah and Baal's Priests – 1 Kings 18:16-39

A bonfire

1 Kings 18:16-39

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and informed him, and Ahab came to meet Elijah.

17 When Ahab saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is it you, you disturber of Israel?"

18 He answered, "It is not I who disturb Israel, but you and your father's house, by forsaking the commands of the LORD and you by following the Baals.

19 Now summon all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, as well as the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and had the prophets gather on Mount Carmel.

21 Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you straddle the issue? If the LORD is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him.

22 So Elijah said to the people, "I am the only remaining prophet of the LORD, and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

23 Give us two young bulls. Let them choose one, cut it into pieces, and place it on the wood, but start no fire. I shall prepare the other and place it on the wood, but shall start no fire.

24 You shall call upon the name of your gods, and I will call upon the name of the LORD. The God who answers with fire is God." All the people answered, "We agree!"

25 Elijah then said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one young bull and prepare it first, for there are more of you. Call upon your gods, but do not start the fire."

26 Taking the young bull that was turned over to them, they prepared it and called upon Baal from morning to noon, saying, "Baal, answer us!" But there was no sound, and no one answering. And they hopped around the altar they had prepared.

27 When it was noon, Elijah taunted them: "Call louder, for he is a god; he may be busy doing his business, or may be on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

28 They called out louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears according to their ritual until blood gushed over them.

29 Noon passed and they remained in a prophetic state until the time for offering sacrifice. But there was no sound, no one answering, no one listening.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." When they drew near to him, he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been destroyed.

31 He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the LORD had said: Israel shall be your name.

32 He built the stones into an altar to the name of the LORD, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two measures of grain.

33 When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood.

34 He said, “Fill four jars with water and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood.” “Do it again,” he said, and they did it again. “Do it a third time,” he said, and they did it a third time.

35 The water flowed around the altar; even the trench was filled with the water.

36 At the time for offering sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came forward and said, “LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command.

37^a Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that this people may know that you, LORD, are God and that you have turned their hearts back to you.”

38 The LORD’s fire came down and devoured the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust, and lapped up the water in the trench.

39 Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, “The LORD is God! The LORD is God!”

December 16: Isaiah's 'Jesse' Prophecy – Isaiah 11:1-11

A tree stump

Isaiah 11:1-11

*The Ideal Davidic King**

1 But a shoot shall sprout from the stump* of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom.^a

2 * The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:^b a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, A spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,

3 and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide,

4 But he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide fairly for the land’s afflicted.^c He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.^d

5 Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.^e

6* Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.^f

7 The cow and the bear shall graze, together their young shall lie down; the lion shall eat hay like the ox.^g

8 The baby shall play by the viper’s den, and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair.

9 They shall not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea.

*Restoration**

10 On that day, The root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the peoples— Him the nations will seek out; his dwelling shall be glorious.^h

11 On that day, The Lord shall again take it in hand to reclaim the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria and Egypt, Pathros, Ethiopia, and Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the isles of the sea.ⁱ

December 17: Jonah and the Whale – Jonah 3:1-5

A whale

Jonah 3:1-5

Jonah's Obedience and the Ninevites' Repentance.

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:

2 Set out for the great city of Nineveh, and announce to it the message that I will tell you.

3 So Jonah set out for Nineveh, in accord with the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an awesomely great city; it took three days to walk through it.

4 Jonah began his journey through the city, and when he had gone only a single day's walk announcing, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overthrown,"

5 the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast and all of them, great and small,^{*} put on sackcloth.^a

December 18: John the Baptist – Matthew 3:13-17

A scallop shell

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus.*

13ⁱ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14^{*} John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?"

15 Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him.

16^{*i} After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him.

17 And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son,^{*} with whom I am well pleased.”^k

December 19: Mary – Luke 1:26-38

A white lily

Luke 1:26-38

Announcement of the Birth of Jesus.^{*}

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary.^l

28 And coming to her, he said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.”^m

29 But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

31ⁿ Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.

32^o He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,^{*} and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,

33 and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”^p

34 But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?”^{*}

35 And the angel said to her in reply, “The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”^q

36 And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived^{*} a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;

37 for nothing will be impossible for God.”^r

38 Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

December 20: Elizabeth – Luke 1:39-56

A mother and child

Luke 1:39-56

Mary Visits Elizabeth.

39 During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah,

40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit,^s

42 cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."^t

43 And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord^{*} should come to me?

44 For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

45 Blessed are you who believed^{*} that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."^u

The Canticle of Mary.

46^v And Mary said:^z "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;^w

47 my spirit rejoices in God my savior.^x

48 For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.^y

49 The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.^z

50 His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.^a

51 He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.^b

52 He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.^c

53 The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.^d

54 He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy,^e

55 according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."^f

56 Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

December 21: Zechariah – Luke 1:57-80

A pencil and tablet

Luke 1:57-80

The Birth of John.^{*}

57 When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son.

58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her.^g

59^{*} When they came on the eighth day to circumcise^h the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father,

60 but his mother said in reply, “No. He will be called John.”ⁱ

61 But they answered her, “There is no one among your relatives who has this name.”

62 So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called.

63 He asked for a tablet and wrote, “John is his name,” and all were amazed.

64 Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God.^j

65 Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea.

66 All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, “What, then, will this child be?” For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.

The Canticle of Zechariah.

67 Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:

68^{*} “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

for he has visited and brought redemption to his people.^k

69^{*} He has raised up a horn for our salvation within the house of David his servant,^l

70 even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old:

71 salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,^m

72 to show mercy to our fathersⁿ and to be mindful of his holy covenant^o

73 and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,^p and to grant us that,

74 rescued from the hand of enemies, without fear we might worship him

75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.^q

76 And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord^r to prepare his ways,^t

77 to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

78 because of the tender mercy of our God^s by which the daybreak from on high^{*} will visit us^t

79 to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

80 The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.^u

December 22: Joseph – Matthew 1:19-25

A carpenter's hammer

Matthew 1:19-25

The Birth of Jesus.*

18 Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,^z but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit.

19 Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man,^z yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly.

20ⁱ Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord^{*} appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her.

21 She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus,^z because he will save his people from their sins.”

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

23^{* k} “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.”

24 When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

25 He had no relations with her until she bore a son,^{*} and he named him Jesus.^l

December 23: The Shepherds – Luke 2:8-20

A sheep

Luke 2:8-20

8* Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

9 The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear.^d

10 The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

11*^e For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.

12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

13 And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

14* “Glory to God in the highest^f and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

The Visit of the Shepherds.

15 When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

16 So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

17 When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child.

18 All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds.

19 And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

December 24: The Wisemen – Matthew 2:1-12

A gold star, three gifts

Matthew 2:1-12

The Visit of the Magi.*

1 When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod,* behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

2 saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star⁺ at its rising and have come to do him homage.”^a

3 When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.*

5^b They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet:

6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance.

8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.”

9 After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

10 They were overjoyed at seeing the star,

11*^c and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

December 25: Jesus – Luke 2:1-7

A baby in a manger

Luke 2:1-7

1* In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus* that the whole world should be enrolled.

2 This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

4 And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,^a

5 to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.^b

6 While they were there, the time came for her to have her child,

7 and she gave birth to her firstborn son.* She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.^c