

1. Genesis 3:1-24

Adam and Eve disobey God and are banished from the Garden

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

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

¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

²¹ The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” ²³ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Hymn #32: “When Sinners See Their Lost Condition”

2. Isaiah 40:1-11

God comforts his people and urges them to prepare for their redemption

Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:

“In the desert prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the
Lord has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry out.”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

“All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God stands forever.”

⁹ You who bring good tidings to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,

“Here is your God!”

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power,
and his arm rules for him.

See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

Hymn# 11: “Comfort, Comfort All My People”

3. Jeremiah 23:5-6

God will raise up for David a righteous Branch

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

⁶ In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name by which he will be called:
The Lord Our Righteousness.

Hymn #47: “Behold, a Branch Is Growing”

4. Isaiah 35:1-10

God will prepare a way in the wilderness for his people

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus,² it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the Lord,
the splendor of our God.

³ Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you.”

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸ And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean will not journey on it;
it will be for those who walk in that Way;
wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹ No lion will be there,
nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
they will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there,

¹⁰ and the ransomed of the Lord will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Hymn #13: “There’s a Voice in the Wilderness Crying”

5. Isaiah 7:10-15

The Lord promises that a Son will be conceived and his name will be Emmanuel

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ “Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.”

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.

Hymn #23: “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”

6. Micah 5:2-4

The One who will be Ruler over Israel will be born in Bethlehem

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³ Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴ He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵ And he will be their peace.

Hymn #3: “Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates”

7. Zechariah 9:9-12

The King comes, gentle and riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!

Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,
righteous and having salvation,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the war-horses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

¹² Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope;
even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

Hymn #1: “The Advent Of Our King”

8. Luke 1:5-25

An angel announces the birth of John, the forerunner of the Messiah

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

⁸ Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid,

Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. ¹⁶ Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

Hymn #16: “On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

9. Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel announces that Jesus will be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid,

Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

Hymn #24: “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”