

# CONTENTS

## PART I: THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Creation .....	9	The Reign of David .....	41
The Earthly Paradise .....	10	The Reign of Solomon .....	45
Cain and Abel .....	10	The Division of the Tribes .....	47
The Deluge .....	11	The Kingdom of Israel .....	48
Abraham .....	12	The Kingdom of Judah .....	52
Isaac .....	13	The Babylonian Captivity .....	57
Esau and Jacob .....	14	The Return and Restoration .....	59
Joseph .....	15	The Prophets .....	61
Moses and the Deliverance .....	17	The Four Empires .....	64
The Israelites in the Desert .....	20	The Maccabees .....	65
Joshua .....	28	Jewish Sects and Parties .....	66
The Judges .....	31	Herod .....	67
The Reign of Saul .....	36	Fullness of Time .....	67

## PART II: THE LIFE OF JESUS

### I. Birth and Early Life

St. John the Baptist .....	69	The Presentation .....	75
The Annunciation .....	70	Adoration of the Magi .....	76
The Visitation .....	71	The Holy Innocents .....	77
Dream of St. Joseph .....	71	The Flight into Egypt .....	77
Birth of Our Lord .....	73	Loss of Jesus .....	78
Adoration of the Shepherds .....	74	The Hidden Life .....	78
The Circumcision .....	74		

### II. Public Ministry

Baptism of Jesus .....	79	The Storm on the Lake .....	92
In the Desert .....	80	Legion of Devils .....	93
The First Disciples .....	81	The Daughter of Jairus .....	94
Marriage at Cana .....	82	Mission of the Seventy-Two .....	95
The Cleansing of the Temple .....	83	The Widow's Son .....	96
Nicodemus .....	84	The Penitent Woman .....	96
Samaria .....	84	The Women Who Served .....	97
The Ruler's Son .....	86	Christ's Testimony to St. John the Baptist .....	97
Miraculous Draught of Fish .....	87	The Beheading of St. John .....	98
Sabbath at Capernaum .....	87	Five Thousand Fed Miraculously .....	98
The Paralytic .....	88	Jesus Walks on the Water .....	99
Cure on a Sabbath Feast .....	89	The Bread of Life .....	100
Choosing the Apostles .....	90	The Canaanite Woman .....	101
Sermon on the Mount .....	91		

The Deaf and Dumb Man . . . . .	102	The Ten Lepers . . . . .	108
Four Thousand Fed Miraculously . . . . .	102	Jesus Blesses the Little Children . . . . .	108
Peter's Confession of Faith . . . . .	103	Zacchaeus . . . . .	109
The Transfiguration . . . . .	104	The Man Born Blind . . . . .	109
A Possessed Boy . . . . .	105	The Question of Divorce . . . . .	110
Paying the Temple Tax . . . . .	106	Lazarus Raised to Life . . . . .	111
Feast of Booths . . . . .	106	Jesus Anointed . . . . .	112
The Adulteress . . . . .	107		

### III. Passion, Death, and Resurrection

Entry into Jerusalem . . . . .	113	Before Herod . . . . .	124
The Barren Fig Tree . . . . .	114	The End of Judas . . . . .	125
The Authority of Jesus . . . . .	115	Before Pilate a Second Time . . . . .	125
The Widow's Mite . . . . .	116	Before Pilate a Third Time . . . . .	126
Christ's Second Coming . . . . .	116	The Crucifixion . . . . .	127
The Betrayal . . . . .	117	The Burial of Jesus . . . . .	131
Institution of the Holy Eucharist . . . . .	117	Holy Saturday . . . . .	132
Garden of Gethsemane . . . . .	120	Easter Morning . . . . .	133
Arrest of Jesus . . . . .	121	Appearance to the Women . . . . .	135
Before Annas . . . . .	122	The Disciples at Emmaus . . . . .	136
Peter's Denial . . . . .	122	Appearance to the Disciples . . . . .	137
Before Caiaphas and the Council . . . . .	122	Christ's Charge to St. Peter . . . . .	139
Before Pilate . . . . .	123	The Ascension . . . . .	140

### PART III: THE EARLY CHURCH

Election of Matthias . . . . .	143	Aeneas and Tabitha . . . . .	150
Descent of the Holy Spirit . . . . .	143	Cornelius . . . . .	150
The Lame Man . . . . .	144	Peter's Deliverance . . . . .	151
State of the Christians . . . . .	144	Herod's Death . . . . .	152
Ananias and Sapphira . . . . .	145	Paul's First Journey . . . . .	152
Healing the Sick . . . . .	145	Council of Jerusalem . . . . .	154
The Apostles Imprisoned . . . . .	145	Paul's Second Journey . . . . .	154
Gamaliel . . . . .	145	Paul's Third Journey . . . . .	156
The Deacons . . . . .	146	Paul's Journey to Rome . . . . .	157
Stephen . . . . .	146	Second Roman Captivity and Death . . . . .	157
Philip . . . . .	148	The Church in Adversity . . . . .	158
Conversion of Saul . . . . .	149		

### MAPS

Map of Old Testament . . . . .	159	Map of New Testament . . . . .	160
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property was left to Isaac. Two sons were born to Isaac when he was about sixty years old. The older boy he called Esau because he was covered with red hair. The younger son was called Jacob. Isaac loved Esau, while Jacob was his mother's favorite.

### ESAU AND JACOB

Esau was a skillful hunter, but Jacob loved to tend his flocks. When Isaac was about to give his blessing, he sent Esau out to bring him some venison. Isaac was nearly blind, and while Esau was out, Rebekah obtained the blessing for Jacob by dressing him in his brother's clothes and preparing a dish of venison for him to take to his father. Esau had already sold his birthright to Jacob for a portion of food when he was hungry.

#### Jacob's Flight

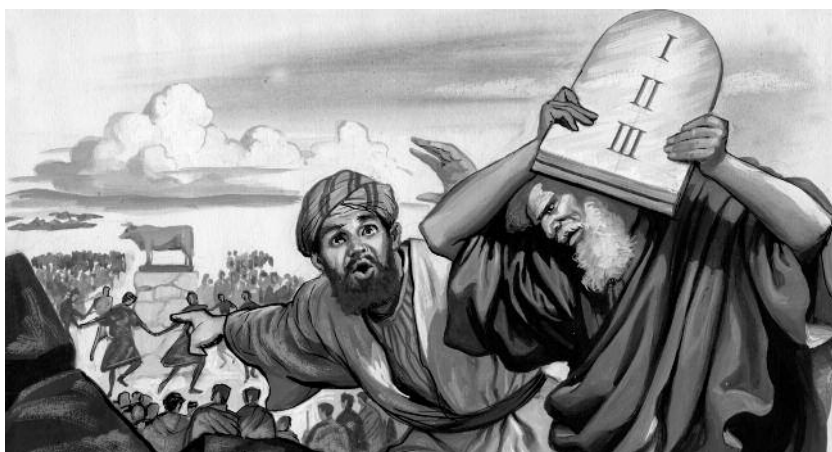
When Esau found out that Jacob had received their father's blessing intended for himself, he became very angry and Jacob had to flee to Mesopotamia. During his journey Jacob had a vision in which God promised him the land on which he was lying, and that from him the Messiah would come.



*Jacob dreams of a ladder between heaven and earth.*

### Mount Sinai

After fifty days, the Israelites came to Mount Sinai. Here on the mountain God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, written on two tablets of stone. Moses stayed another forty days on the mountain. In the meantime, the people had persuaded Aaron to make a gold calf for them to worship. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw the people adoring the idol, he became so angry at their wickedness that he broke the two stone tablets.



*Moses breaks the tablets of the Law.*

Then Moses destroyed the gold calf and commanded that all those who continued in idolatry were to be put to death. About 3,000 people perished at the hands of the Levites, who gathered round Moses. The people repented and Moses implored God to forgive their sins. The Lord in His mercy pardoned them. Then God told Moses to lead the people to the land which He had promised to Abraham, and sent His angel before them.

### The Tabernacle

God ordered a Tabernacle to be made, in which He would dwell constantly in the midst of His people. This Tabernacle, or Tent, was divided into two parts: (1) the **Holy of Holies**,

Meantime, the people waiting outside wondered why Zechariah was so long in the Temple. When he came out he was unable to speak and they understood that he had seen a vision. The son born to Zechariah and Elizabeth was St. John the Baptist.

### THE ANNUNCIATION

After six months, the Angel Gabriel was again sent by God to a humble virgin at Nazareth, in the province of Galilee. The virgin's name was Mary and she was betrothed to a man named Joseph of the house of David. The angel greeted her in the words of the "Hail Mary." He announced to the holy virgin that she was chosen to be the mother of God and that she would have this Child by the power of the Holy Spirit. He also told her of the son soon to be born to her cousin Elizabeth.



*The Angel Gabriel greets the Virgin Mary.*

Mary replied to the angel in words that are recalled by the prayer called the "Angelus": "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word."



*Mary visits Elizabeth and Zechariah.*

### THE VISITATION

Then Mary set out at once to visit her cousin in the hill country of Judah. When she entered Zechariah's house she greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Crying out with a loud voice, she said to Mary: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. But who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Then the Blessed Virgin Mary replied to her in a beautiful canticle, praising God and proclaiming His greatness. This canticle is known as the **Magnificat**. Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and returned to her home.

### DREAM OF ST. JOSEPH

Meanwhile, St. Joseph did not know the mystery surrounding the Child that our Blessed Lady was bearing. He did not want to expose her publicly to the Law and thought of divorcing her quietly. But an angel appeared to him in sleep

Pilate was more than eager to release Jesus. But the people shouted to him: "If you release this Man, you are no Friend of Caesar." Then they said to him: "We have no king but Caesar." So Pilate, washing his hands, said to them: "I am innocent of this Man's blood. It is your responsibility." It was for fear of losing his position in the State that Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. No amount of washing could rid Pilate of that terrible act. Christ is truly King of all. His Kingdom is an eternal one. In this world He rules from the cross, and all those who would follow Him must also carry a cross.

### THE CRUCIFIXION

Then they led Jesus away to be crucified. Taking up His cross, He began the long and painful journey to the Mount of Calvary (or, Skull Place). Weakened by the loss of blood and the ordeal of His trials, He fell several times under the weight of the cross. On the way they met a Cyrenian named Simon and pressed him into service to carry the cross behind our Lord. A great crowd of people followed Him, including women who mourned for Him. Jesus turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me. Weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore children and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

When they came to the place called the Skull, they stripped Him of His garments and fastened Him to the cross with nails. He was crucified between two malefactors, one on His right and the other on His left. Over His head Pilate had an inscription placed, which read, JESUS THE NAZOREAN THE KING OF THE JEWS. This was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, so that all could read it. The chief priests objected to this, but Pilate refused to change it.