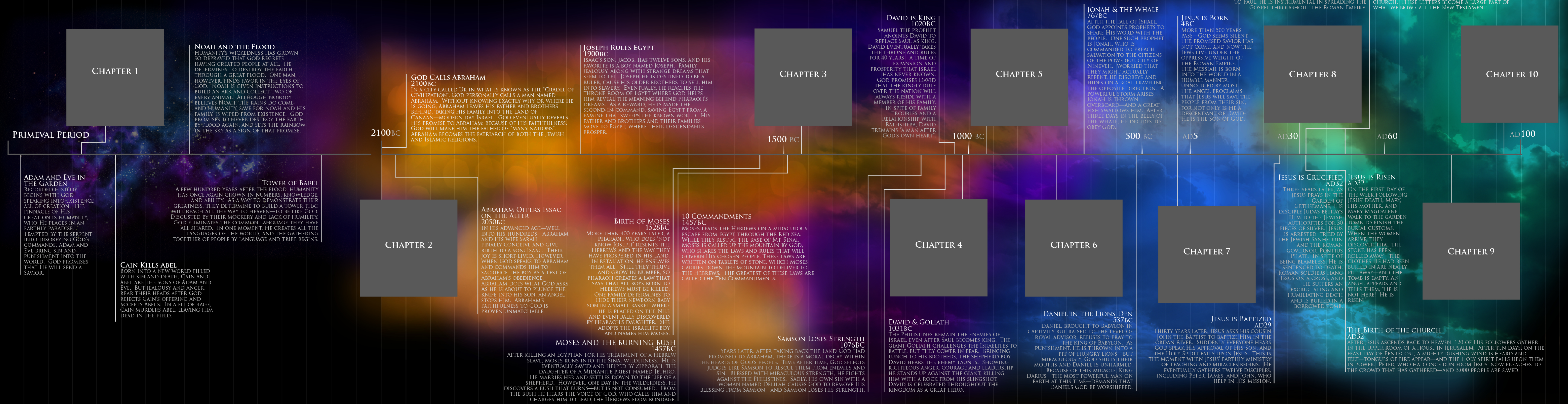


THE JESUS STORY



CHAPTER 1

NOAH AND THE FLOOD
HUMANITY'S WICKEDNESS HAS GROWN SO DEPRAVED THAT GOD REGRETS HAVING CREATED PEOPLE AT ALL. HE DETERMINES TO DESTROY THE EARTH THROUGH A GREAT FLOOD. ONE MAN, HOWEVER, FINDS FAVOR IN THE EYES OF GOD. NOAH IS GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO BUILD AN ARK AND COLLECT TWO OF EVERY ANIMAL. ALTHOUGH NOBODY BELIEVES NOAH, THE RAINS DO COME—AND HUMANITY, SAVE FOR NOAH AND HIS FAMILY, IS WIPED FROM EXISTENCE. GOD PROMISES TO NEVER DESTROY THE EARTH BY FLOOD AGAIN, AND SETS THE RAINBOW IN THE SKY AS A SIGN OF THAT PROMISE.

PRIMEVAL PERIOD

ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN
RECORDED HISTORY BEGINS WITH GOD SPEAKING INTO EXISTENCE ALL OF CREATION. THE PINNACLE OF HIS CREATION IS HUMANITY, WHO HE PLACES IN AN EARTHLY PARADISE. TEMPTED BY THE SERPENT INTO DISOBEYING GOD'S COMMANDS, ADAM AND EVE BRING SIN AND PUNISHMENT INTO THE WORLD. GOD PROMISES THAT HE WILL SEND A SAVIOR.

CAIN KILLS ABEL
BORN INTO A NEW WORLD FILLED WITH SIN AND DEATH, CAIN AND ABEL ARE THE SONS OF ADAM AND EVE. BUT JEALOUSY AND ANGER REAR THEIR HEADS AFTER GOD REJECTS CAIN'S OFFERING AND ACCEPTS ABEL'S. IN A FIT OF RAGE, CAIN MURDERS ABEL, LEAVING HIM DEAD IN THE FIELD.

TOWER OF BABEL
A FEW HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE FLOOD, HUMANITY HAS ONCE AGAIN GROWN IN NUMBERS, KNOWLEDGE, AND ABILITY. AS A WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR GREATNESS, THEY DETERMINE TO BUILD A TOWER THAT WILL REACH ALL THE WAY TO HEAVEN—TO BE LIKE GOD. DISGUSTED BY THEIR MOCKERY AND LACK OF HUMILITY, GOD ELIMINATES THE COMMON LANGUAGE THEY HAVE ALL SHARED. IN ONE MOMENT, HE CREATES ALL THE LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD, AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF PEOPLE BY LANGUAGE AND TRIBE BEGINS.

CHAPTER 2

2100 BC

GOD CALLS ABRAHAM
2100 BC
IN A CITY CALLED UR IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE "CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION", GOD PERSONALLY CALLS A MAN NAMED ABRAHAM. WITHOUT KNOWING EXACTLY WHY OR WHERE HE IS GOING, ABRAHAM LEAVES HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS BEHIND, TAKING HIS FAMILY INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN—MODERN DAY ISRAEL. GOD EVENTUALLY REVEALS HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM: BECAUSE OF HIS FAITHFULNESS, GOD WILL MAKE HIM THE FATHER OF "MANY NATIONS". ABRAHAM BECOMES THE PATRIARCH OF BOTH THE JEWISH AND ISLAMIC RELIGIONS.

ABRAHAM OFFERS ISSAC ON THE ALTAR
2050 BC
IN HIS ADVANCED AGE—WELL INTO HIS HUNDREDS—ABRAHAM AND HIS WIFE SARAH FINALLY CONCEIVE AND GIVE BIRTH TO A SON: ISAAC. THEIR JOY IS SHORT-LIVED, HOWEVER, WHEN GOD SPEAKS TO ABRAHAM AND COMMANDS HIM TO SACRIFICE THE BOY AS A TEST OF ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE. ABRAHAM DOES WHAT GOD ASKS. AS HE IS ABOUT TO PLUNGE THE KNIFE INTO HIS SON, AN ANGEL STOPS HIM. ABRAHAM'S FAITHFULNESS TO GOD IS PROVEN UNMATCHABLE.

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH
1457 BC
AFTER KILLING AN EGYPTIAN FOR HIS TREATMENT OF A HEBREW SLAVE, MOSES RUNS INTO THE SINAI WILDERNESS. HE IS EVENTUALLY SAVED AND HELPED BY ZIPPORAH, THE DAUGHTER OF A MIDIANITE PRIEST NAMED JETHRO. HE MARRIES HER AND SETTLES DOWN TO THE LIFE OF A SHEPHERD. HOWEVER, ONE DAY IN THE WILDERNESS, HE DISCOVERS A BUSH THAT BURNS—BUT IS NOT CONSUMED. FROM THE BUSH HE HEARS THE VOICE OF GOD, WHO CALLS HIM AND CHARGES HIM TO LEAD THE HEBREWS FROM BONDAGE.

JOSEPH RULES EGYPT
1900 BC
ISAAC'S SON, JACOB, HAS TWELVE SONS, AND HIS FAVORITE IS A BOY NAMED JOSEPH. FAMILY JEALOUSY, ALONG WITH STRANGE DREAMS THAT SEEM TO TELL JOSEPH HE IS DESTINED TO BE A RULER, CAUSE HIS OLDER BROTHERS TO SELL HIM INTO SLAVERY. EVENTUALLY, HE REACHES THE THRONE ROOM OF EGYPT WHERE GOD HELPS HIM REVEAL THE MEANING BEHIND PHARAOH'S DREAMS. AS A REWARD, HE IS MADE THE SECOND-IN-COMMAND, SAVING EGYPT FROM A FAMINE THAT SWEEPS THE KNOWN WORLD. HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES MOVE TO EGYPT, WHERE THEIR DESCENDANTS PROSPER.

CHAPTER 3

1500 BC

10 COMMANDMENTS
1457 BC
MOSES LEADS THE HEBREWS ON A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM EGYPT THROUGH THE RED SEA. WHILE THEY REST AT THE BASE OF MT. SINAI, MOSES IS CALLED UP THE MOUNTAIN BY GOD, WHO SHARES THE LAWS AND RULES THAT WILL GOVERN HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE. THESE LAWS ARE WRITTEN ON TABLETS OF STONE, WHICH MOSES CARRIES DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO DELIVER TO THE HEBREWS. THE GREATEST OF THESE LAWS ARE CALLED THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

BIRTH OF MOSES
1528 BC
MORE THAN 400 YEARS LATER, A PHARAOH WHO DOES "NOT KNOW JOSEPH" RESENTS THE HEBREWS AND THE WAY THEY HAVE PROSPERED IN HIS LAND. IN RETALIATION, HE ENSLAVES THEM ALL. STILL THEY THRIVE AND GROW IN NUMBER, SO PHARAOH CREATES A LAW THAT SAYS THAT ALL BOYS BORN TO HEBREWS MUST BE KILLED. ONE FAMILY DETERMINES TO HIDE THEIR NEWBORN BABY SON IN A SMALL BASKET WHERE HE IS PLACED ON THE NILE AND EVENTUALLY DISCOVERED BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. SHE ADOPTS THE ISRAELITE BOY AND NAMES HIM MOSES.

SAMSON LOSES STRENGTH
1076 BC
YEARS LATER, AFTER TAKING BACK THE LAND GOD HAD PROMISED TO ABRAHAM, THERE IS A MORAL DECAY WITHIN THE HEARTS OF GOD'S PEOPLE. TIME AFTER TIME, GOD SELECTS JUDGES LIKE SAMSON TO RESCUE THEM FROM ENEMIES AND SIN. BLESSED WITH MIRACULOUS STRENGTH, HE FIGHTS AGAINST THE PHILISTINES. SADLY, HIS OWN SIN WITH A WOMAN NAMED DELILAH CAUSES GOD TO REMOVE HIS BLESSING FROM SAMSON—AND SAMSON LOSES HIS STRENGTH.

DAVID IS KING
1020 BC
SAMUEL THE PROPHET ANOINTS DAVID TO REPLACE SAUL AS KING. DAVID EVENTUALLY TAKES THE THRONE AND RULES FOR 40 YEARS—A TIME OF EXPANSION AND PROSPERITY THAT ISRAEL HAS NEVER KNOWN. GOD PROMISES DAVID THAT THE KINGLY RULE OVER THE NATION WILL ALWAYS RESIDE WITH A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY. IN SPITE OF FAMILY TROUBLES AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH BATHSHEBA, DAVID REMAINS "A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART".

CHAPTER 5

1000 BC

CHAPTER 4

DAVID & GOLIATH
1031 BC
THE PHILISTINES REMAIN THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL, EVEN AFTER SAUL BECOMES KING. THE GIANT GOLIATH CHALLENGES THE ISRAELITES TO BATTLE, BUT THEY COWER IN FEAR. BRINGING LUNCH TO HIS BROTHERS, THE SHEPHERD BOY DAVID HEARS THE ENEMY TAUNTS. SHOWING RIGHTEOUS ANGER, COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP, HE STANDS UP AGAINST THE GIANT, KILLING HIM WITH A ROCK FROM HIS SLINGSHOT. DAVID IS CELEBRATED THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM AS A GREAT HERO.

DANIEL IN THE LIONS DEN
537 BC
DANIEL, BROUGHT TO BABYLON IN CAPTIVITY BUT RAISED TO THE LEVEL OF ROYAL ADVISOR, REFUSES TO PRAY TO THE KING OF BABYLON. AS PUNISHMENT, HE IS THROWN INTO A PIT OF HUNGRY LIONS—BUT MIRACULOUSLY GOD SHUTS THEIR MOUTHS AND DANIEL IS UNHARMED. BECAUSE OF THIS MIRACLE, KING DARIUS—THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH AT THIS TIME—DEMANDS THAT DANIEL'S GOD BE WORSHIPPED.

CHAPTER 6

JONAH & THE WHALE
767 BC
AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL, GOD APPOINTS PROPHETS TO SHARE HIS WORD WITH THE PEOPLE. ONE SUCH PROPHET IS JONAH, WHO IS COMMANDED TO PREACH SALVATION TO THE CITIZENS OF THE POWERFUL CITY OF NINEVEH. WORRIED THAT THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY REPENT, HE DISOBEYS AND HIDES ON A BOAT TRAVELING THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. A POWERFUL STORM ARISES—JONAH IS THROWN OVERBOARD—AND A GREAT FISH SWALLOWS HIM. AFTER THREE DAYS IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE, HE DECIDES TO OBEY GOD.

CHAPTER 7

JESUS IS BAPTIZED
AD 29
THIRTY YEARS LATER, JESUS ASKS HIS COUSIN JOHN THE BAPTIST TO BAPTIZE HIM IN THE JORDAN RIVER. SUDDENLY EVERYONE HEARS GOD SPEAK HIS APPROVAL OF HIS SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS UPON JESUS. THIS IS THE MOMENT WHEN JESUS' EARTHLY MINISTRY OF TEACHING AND MIRACLES BEGINS. HE EVENTUALLY GATHERS TWELVE DISCIPLES, INCLUDING PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN, WHO HELP IN HIS MISSION.

JESUS IS BORN
4 BC
MORE THAN 500 YEARS PASS—GOD SEEMS SILENT. THE PROMISED SAVIOR HAS NOT COME, AND NOW THE JEWS LIVE UNDER THE OPPRESSIVE WEIGHT OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. THE MESSIAH IS BORN INTO THE WORLD IN A HUMBLE MANNER, UNNOTICED BY MOST. THE ANGEL PROCLAIMS THAT JESUS WILL SAVE THE PEOPLE FROM THEIR SIN, FOR NOT ONLY IS HE A DESCENDANT OF DAVID—HE IS THE SON OF GOD.

CHAPTER 8

AD 30

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED
AD 32
THREE YEARS LATER, AS JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, HIS DISCIPLE JUDAS BETRAYS HIM TO THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER. JESUS IS ARRESTED, TRIED BY THE JEWISH SANHEDRIN AND THE ROMAN GOVERNOR, PONTIUS PILATE. IN SPITE OF BEING BLAMELESS, HE IS SENTENCED TO DEATH. ROMAN SOLDIERS HANG JESUS ON A CROSS, AND HE SUFFERS AN EXCRUCIATING AND HUMILIATING DEATH AND IS BURIED IN A BORROWED TOMB.

JESUS IS RISEN
AD 32
ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK FOLLOWING JESUS' DEATH, MARY, HIS MOTHER, AND MARY MAGDALENE WALK TO THE GARDEN TOMB TO FINISH THE BURIAL CUSTOMS. WHEN THE WOMEN ARRIVE, THEY DISCOVER THAT THE STONE HAS BEEN ROLLED AWAY—THE CLOTHES HE HAD BEEN BURIED IN ARE NEATLY PUT AWAY—AND THE TOMB IS EMPTY. AN ANGEL APPEARS AND TELLS THEM, "HE IS NOT HERE! HE IS RISEN!"

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH
AD 32
AFTER JESUS ASCENDS BACK TO HEAVEN, 120 OF HIS FOLLOWERS GATHER IN THE UPPER ROOM OF A HOUSE IN JERUSALEM. AFTER TEN DAYS, ON THE FEAST DAY OF PENTECOST, A MIGHTY RUSHING WIND IS HEARD AND FELT—TONGUES OF FIRE APPEAR—AND THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS UPON THEM IN POWER. PETER, WHO HAD ONCE RUN FROM JESUS, NOW PREACHES TO THE CROWD THAT HAS GATHERED—AND 3,000 PEOPLE ARE SAVED.

CHAPTER 10

AD 100

PAUL IS CONVERTED
AD 32
SHORTLY AFTER, SAUL OF TARSUS—A PHARISEE COMMITTED TO THE ARREST AND EVEN EXECUTION OF THE NEW CHRISTIANS—BEGINS HIS ATTACKS ON THE CHURCH. WHILE GOING TO DAMASCUS TO ARREST MORE OF JESUS' FOLLOWERS, A BRIGHT LIGHT BLINDS HIM AND JESUS HIMSELF SPEAKS TO HIM. HE IS SAVED AND HIS LIFE IS TRANSFORMED. CHANGING HIS NAME TO PAUL, HE IS INSTRUMENTAL IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

PAUL WRITES MOST OF HIS LETTERS
AD 40-AD 64
THE CHANGED PAUL DOES MORE THAN SHARE HIS FAITH—HE ALSO WRITES 13 LETTERS OVER SEVERAL DECADES TO THE FIRST GENERATION CHURCH. SOME ARE PERSONAL LETTERS TO FRIENDS WHILE OTHERS ARE WRITTEN TO AN ENTIRE CONGREGATION. HE DISCUSSES CRUCIAL TOPICS REGARDING BOTH THEOLOGY AND LIFE IN THE CHURCH. THESE LETTERS BECOME A LARGE PART OF WHAT WE NOW CALL THE NEW TESTAMENT.