

Jesse Tree Booklet



References:

Scripture references found at www.catholicculture.org

Bible Translation: The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)



December 1: *Creation*

Symbols: sun, moon, stars, animals, earth



Gen. 1:1-31; 2:1-4

¹ In the beginning God created heaven and earth.

² Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, with a divine wind sweeping over the waters. ³ God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. ⁴ God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. ⁵ God called light 'day', and darkness he called 'night'. Evening came and morning came: the first day.

⁶ God said, 'Let there be a vault through the middle of the waters to divide the waters in two.' And so it was. ⁷ God made the vault, and it divided the waters under the vault from the waters above the vault. ⁸ God called the vault 'heaven'. Evening came and morning came: the second day.

⁹ God said, 'Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear.' And so it was. ¹⁰ God called the dry land 'earth' and the mass of waters 'seas', and God saw that it was good. ¹¹ God said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees on earth, bearing fruit with their seed inside, each corresponding to its own species.' And so it was. ¹² The earth produced vegetation: the various kinds of seed-bearing plants and the fruit trees with seed inside, each corresponding to its own species. God saw that it was good. ¹³ Evening came and morning came: the third day. ¹

⁴ God said, 'Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day

December 24: *Jesus is Light of the World*

Symbols: candle, flame, sun



John 1:1-14

¹In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God.² He was with God in the beginning.³ Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him.⁴ What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light of men;⁵ and light shines in darkness, and darkness could not overpower it.⁶ A man came, sent by God. His name was John.⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light, so that everyone might believe through him.⁸ He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light.⁹ The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world.¹⁰ He was in the world that had come into being through him, and the world did not recognise him.¹¹ He came to his own and his own people did not accept him.¹² But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name¹³ who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself.¹⁴ The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

December 23 *Jesus is Emmanuel*

Symbols: tablets of stone, chalice and host, baby in manger



Isaiah 7:14; 33:22

¹⁴ The Lord will give you a sign in any case: It is this: the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.



²² (For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king and our Saviour.)

from night, and let them indicate festivals, days and years.

¹⁵ Let them be lights in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth.' And so it was. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the stars.

¹⁷ God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth,

¹⁸ to govern the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ Evening came and morning came: the fourth day.

²⁰ God said, 'Let the waters be alive with a swarm of living creatures, and let birds wing their way above the earth across the vault of heaven.' And so it was. ²¹ God created great sea-monsters and all the creatures that glide and teem in the waters in their own species, and winged birds in their own species. God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply on land.'

²³ Evening came and morning came: the fifth day. ²⁴ God said, 'Let the earth produce every kind of living creature in its own species: cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds.' And so it was. ²⁵ God made wild animals in their own species, and cattle in theirs, and every creature that crawls along the earth in its own species. God saw that it was good.

²⁶ God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.'

²⁷ Evening came and morning came: the sixth day. ²⁸ God said, 'Let the earth produce every kind of living creature in its own species: cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds.' And so it was. ²⁹ God made wild animals in their own species, and cattle in theirs, and every creature that crawls along the earth in its own species. God saw that it was good.

³⁰ God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.'

³¹ God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.'

²⁷ God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that move on earth.'

²⁹ God also said, 'Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the surface of the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food.'

³⁰ And to all the wild animals, all the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that creep along the ground, I give all the foliage of the plants as their food.' And so it was.

³¹ God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good. Evening came and morning came: the sixth day...



¹ Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array.

² On the seventh day God had completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing.

³ God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested after all his work of creating.

⁴ Such was the story of heaven and earth as they were created. At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven

December 22: *Jesus is King of the Gentiles*

Symbols: crown, scepter



Psalm 2:7-8; Ephesians 2:14-20

⁷ I will proclaim the decree of Yahweh: He said to me, 'You are my son, today have I fathered you.'⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give you the nations as your birthright, the whole wide world as your possession.



¹⁴For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one entity and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, by destroying in his own person the hostility,¹⁵ that is, the Law of commandments with its decrees. His purpose in this was, by restoring peace, to create a single New Man out of the two of them,¹⁶ and through the cross, to reconcile them both to God in one Body; in his own person he killed the hostility.¹⁷ He came to bring the good news of peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ Through him, then, we both in the one Spirit have free access to the Father.¹⁹ So you are no longer aliens or foreign visitors; you are fellow-citizens with the holy people of God and part of God's household.²⁰ You are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.

December 21: *Jesus is the Radiant Dawn*

Symbols: sun rising or high in sky



Psalm 19:6-7 (in older

Bibles this will be Psalm 18)

⁶ Rising on the one horizon he runs his circuit to the other, and nothing can escape his heat.⁷ The Law of Yahweh is perfect, refreshment to the soul; the decree of Yahweh is trustworthy, wisdom for the simple.

December 2: *Adam and Eve*

Symbols: tree, man, woman



Gen: 2:7-9, 18-24

⁷ Yahweh God shaped man from the soil of the ground and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being.⁸ Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden, which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned.⁹ From the soil, Yahweh God caused to grow every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...¹⁸ Yahweh God said, 'It is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper.'¹⁹ So from the soil Yahweh God fashioned all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it.²⁰ The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild animals. But no helper suitable for the man was found for him.²¹ Then, Yahweh God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And, while he was asleep, he took one of his ribs and closed the flesh up again forthwith.²² Yahweh God fashioned the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man.²³ And the man said: This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! She is to be called Woman, because she was taken from Man.²⁴ This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and they become one flesh.

December 3: *Fall of Man*

Symbols: tree, serpent, apple with bite



Gen: 3:1-7 and 23-24

¹ Now, the snake was the most subtle of all the wild animals that Yahweh God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?'² The woman answered the snake, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden.³ But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death."⁴ Then the snake said to the woman, 'No! You will not die!⁵ God knows in fact that the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil.⁶ The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was enticing for the wisdom that it could give. So she took some of its fruit 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 realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths...

²³ So Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he had been taken.²⁴ He banished the man, and in front of the garden of Eden he posted the great winged creatures and the fiery flashing sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

December 20: *Jesus is Key of David*

Symbols: key, broken chains



Isaiah 22:22

²² I shall place the key of David's palace on his shoulder; when he opens, no one will close, when he closes, no one will open.

December 19: *Jesus is the Flower of Jesse*

Symbols: flower, plant with flower



Isaiah 11:1-3

¹ A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse, a new shoot will grow from his roots.² On him will rest the spirit of Yahweh, the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and fear of Yahweh:³ his inspiration will lie in fearing Yahweh. His judgment will not be by appearances. His verdict not given on hearsay.

December 4: *Noah*

Symbols: ark, animals, dove, rainbow



Gen. 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:17, 23, 24; 8:1, 6-22

⁵ Yahweh saw that human wickedness was great on earth and that human hearts contrived nothing but wicked schemes all day long.⁶ Yahweh regretted having made human beings on earth and was grieved at heart.⁷ And Yahweh said, I shall rid the surface of the earth of the human beings whom I created -- human and animal, the creeping things and the birds of heaven -- for I regret having made them.⁸ But Noah won Yahweh's favour..

¹³ God said to Noah, I have decided that the end has come for all living things, for the earth is full of lawlessness because of human beings. So I am now about to destroy them and the earth.¹⁴ Make yourself an ark out of resinous wood. Make it of reeds and caulk it with pitch inside and out.¹⁵ This is how to make it: the length of the ark is to be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.¹⁶ Make a roof to the ark, building it up to a cubit higher. Put the entrance in the side of the ark, which is to be made with lower, second and third decks.¹⁷ For my part I am going to send the flood, the waters, on earth, to destroy all living things having the breath of life under heaven; everything on earth is to perish.¹⁸ But with you I shall establish my covenant and you will go aboard the ark, yourself, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives along with you.¹⁹ From all living creatures, from all living things, you must take two of each kind aboard the ark, to save their lives with yours; they must be a male and

a female.²⁰ Of every species of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that creeps along the ground, two must go with you so that their lives may be saved.²¹ For your part, provide yourself with eatables of all kinds, and lay in a store of them, to serve as food for yourself and them.²² Noah did this; exactly as God commanded him, he did.



⁷ The flood lasted forty days on earth. The waters swelled, lifting the ark until it floated off the ground.²³ Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out, people, animals, creeping things and birds; they were wiped off the earth and only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.²⁴ The waters maintained their level on earth for a hundred and fifty days.



¹ But God had Noah in mind, and all the wild animals and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. God sent a wind across the earth and the waters began to subside.⁶ At the end of forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark⁷ and released a raven, which flew back and forth as it waited for the waters to dry up on earth.⁸ He then released a dove, to see whether the waters were receding from the surface of the earth.⁹ But the dove, finding nowhere to perch, returned to him in the ark, for there was water over the whole surface of the earth; putting out his hand he took hold of it and brought it back into the ark with him.¹⁰ After waiting seven more days, he again released the dove from the ark.¹¹ In the evening, the dove

December 18: *Jesus is Lord*

Symbols: burning bush, stone tablets



Ex. 3:2; 20:1

² The angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame blazing from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing, but the bush was not being burnt up.



¹ Then God spoke all these words

December 17: *Jesus is Wisdom*

Symbols: oil lamp, open book



Sirach /Ecclesiasticus 24:2;

Wisdom 8:1

² She opens her mouth in the assembly of the Most High, she glories in herself in the presence of the Mighty One:



¹ Strongly she reaches from one end of the world to the other and she governs the whole world for its good.

came back to him and there in its beak was a freshly-picked olive leaf! So Noah realised that the waters were receding from the earth.¹² After waiting seven more days, he released the dove, and now it returned to him no more.¹³ It was in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, in the first month and on the first of the month, that the waters began drying out on earth. Noah lifted back the hatch of the ark and looked out. The surface of the ground was dry!¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.¹⁵ Then God said to Noah,¹⁶ 'Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you.¹⁷ Bring out all the animals with you, all living things, the birds, the cattle and all the creeping things that creep along the ground, for them to swarm on earth, for them to breed and multiply on earth.'¹⁸ So Noah came out with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives.¹⁹ And all the wild animals, all the cattle, all the birds and all the creeping things that creep along the ground, came out of the ark, one species after another.²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh and, choosing from all the clean animals and all the clean birds he presented burnt offerings on the altar.²¹ Yahweh smelt the pleasing smell and said to himself, 'Never again will I curse the earth because of human beings, because their heart contrives evil from their infancy. Never again will I strike down every living thing as I have done.'²² As long as earth endures: seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.'

December 5: Abraham

Symbols: torch, sword, mountain



Gen. 12:1-3

¹ Yahweh said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for a country which I shall show you;² and I shall make you a great nation, I shall bless you and make your name famous; you are to be a blessing!³ I shall bless those who bless you, and shall curse those who curse you, and all clans on earth will bless themselves by you.'

December 16: John the Baptist

Symbols: shell with water, river



Mark 1:1-8

¹ The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.² It is written in the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger in front of you to prepare your way before you.³ A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.⁴ John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.⁵ All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.⁶ John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey.⁷ In the course of his preaching he said, 'After me is coming someone who is more powerful than me, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals.⁸ I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

December 15: Mary

Symbols: lily, crown of stars, pierced heart



Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in 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.²⁸ He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you.'²⁹ She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean,³⁰ but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour.'³¹ Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David;³³ he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?'³⁵ The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.'³⁶ And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month,³⁷ for nothing is impossible to God.'³⁸ Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.

December 6: Isaac

Symbols: bundle of wood, altar, ram in bush



Gen: 22:1-14

¹ It happened some time later that God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, Abraham!' he called. 'Here I am,' he replied.² God said, 'Take your son, your only son, your beloved Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, where you are to offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I shall point out to you.'³ Early next morning Abraham saddled his donkey and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He chopped wood for the burnt offering and started on his journey to the place which God had indicated to him.⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.⁵ Then Abraham said to his servants, 'Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I are going over there; we shall worship and then come back to you.'⁶ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, loaded it on Isaac, and carried in his own hands the fire and the knife. Then the two of them set out together.⁷ Isaac spoke to his father Abraham. 'Father?' he said. 'Yes, my son,' he replied. 'Look,' he said, 'here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?'⁸ Abraham replied, 'My son, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering.' And the two of them went on together.⁹ When they arrived at the place which God had indicated to him, Abraham built an altar there,

and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son and put him on the altar on top of the wood.¹⁰ Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.¹¹ But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven. 'Abraham, Abraham!' he said. 'Here I am,' he replied.¹² 'Do not raise your hand against the boy,' the angel said. 'Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your own beloved son.'¹³ Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son.¹⁴ Abraham called this place 'Yahweh provides', and hence the saying today: 'On the mountain Yahweh provides.'

December 14: Joseph

Symbols: hammer, saw, chisel, angle



Mark. 1:18-25

¹⁸ This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally.²⁰ He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit.'²¹ She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.²² Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: ²³ 'Look! the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.²⁴ When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home; ²⁵ he had not had intercourse with her when she gave birth to a son; and he named him Jesus.

¹⁶Later two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. ¹⁷If it please you, my lord,' one of the women said, 'this woman and I live in the same house, and while she was in the house I gave birth to a child. ¹⁸Now it happened on the third day after my delivery that this woman also gave birth to a child. We were alone together; there was no one else in the house with us; just the two of us in the house. ¹⁹Now one night this woman's son died; she overlaid him. ²⁰And in the middle of the night she got up and took my son from beside me while your servant was asleep; she took him in her arms and put her own dead son in mine. ²¹When I got up to suckle my child, there he was, dead. But in the morning I looked at him carefully, and he was not the child I had borne at all.' ²²Then the other woman spoke. 'That is not true! My son is the live one, yours is the dead one'; and the first retorted, 'That is not true! Your son is the dead one, mine is the live one.' And so they wrangled before the king. ²³'This one says,' the king observed, 'My son is the one who is alive; your son is dead,' while the other says, 'That is not true! Your son is the dead one, mine is the live one.' ²⁴'Bring me a sword,' said the king; and a sword was brought into the king's presence. ²⁵'Cut the living child in two,' the king said, 'and give half to one, half to the other.' ²⁶At this the woman who was the mother of the living child addressed the king, for she felt acutely for her son. 'I beg you, my lord,' she said, 'let them give her the live child; on no account let them kill him!' But the other said, 'He shall belong to neither of us. Cut him in half!' ²⁷Then the king gave his decision. 'Give the live child to the first woman,' he said, 'and do not kill him. She is his mother.' ²⁸All Israel came to hear of the judgement which the king had pronounced and held the king in awe, recognising that he possessed divine wisdom for dispensing justice.

December 7: Jacob

Symbols: kettle, ladder



Gen. 25:1-34; 28:10-15

¹Abraham married another wife whose name was Keturah;² and she bore him Zimram, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan, and the descendants of Dedan were the Asshurites, the Letushim and the Leummim.⁴ The descendants of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and Eldaah. All these were sons of Keturah.⁵ Abraham left all his possessions to Isaac.⁶ To the sons of his concubines Abraham made grants during his lifetime, sending them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the Land of the East.⁷ The number of years Abraham lived was a hundred and seventy-five.⁸ When Abraham had breathed his last, dying at a happy ripe age, old and full of years, he was gathered to his people.⁹ His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah facing Mamre, in the field of Ephron the Hittite son of Zohar.¹⁰ This was the field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites, and Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there.¹¹ After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac. Isaac settled near the well of Lahai Roi.¹² These are the descendants of Ishmael son of Abraham by Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian slave-girl.¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael by name and line: Ishmael's first-born was Nebaioth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa,¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah.

¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, according to their settlements and encampments, twelve chiefs of as many tribes.¹⁷ The number of years Ishmael lived was one hundred and thirty-seven. When he breathed his last and died, he was gathered to his people.¹⁸ He lived in the territory stretching from Havilah-by-Shur just outside Egypt on the way to Assyria, and he held his own against all his kinsmen.¹⁹ This is the story of Isaac son of Abraham. Abraham fathered Isaac.²⁰ Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel the Aramaean of Paddan-Aram, and sister of Laban the Aramaean.²¹ Isaac prayed to Yahweh on behalf of his wife, for she was barren. Yahweh heard his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived.²² But the children inside her struggled so much that she said, 'If this is the way of it, why go on living?' So she went to consult Yahweh,²³ and Yahweh said to her: There are two nations in your womb, your issue will be two rival peoples. One nation will have the mastery of the other, and the elder will serve the younger.²⁴ When the time came for her confinement, there were indeed twins in her womb.²⁵ The first to be born was red, altogether like a hairy cloak; so they named him Esau.²⁶ Then his brother was born, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old at the time of their birth.²⁷ When the boys grew up Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the open country. Jacob on the other hand was a quiet man, staying at home among the tents.²⁸ Isaac preferred Esau, for he had a taste for wild game; but Rebekah preferred Jacob.²⁹ Once, when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau returned from the countryside exhausted.³⁰ Esau said to Jacob, 'Give me a mouthful of that red stuff there; I am exhausted'

December 13: Solomon

Symbols: scales of justice, temple, two babies and sword



1 Kings 3:5-14, 16-28

⁵ At Gibeon Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream during the night. God said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' ⁶Solomon replied, 'You showed most faithful love to your servant David, my father, when he lived his life before you in faithfulness and uprightness and integrity of heart; you have continued this most faithful love to him by allowing a son of his to sit on his throne today. ⁷Now, Yahweh my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. ⁸And here is your servant, surrounded with your people whom you have chosen, a people so numerous that its number cannot be counted or reckoned. ⁹So give your servant a heart to understand how to govern your people, how to discern between good and evil, for how could one otherwise govern such a great people as yours?' ¹⁰It pleased Yahweh that Solomon should have asked for this. ¹¹'Since you have asked for this,' God said, 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, ¹²here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as no one has had before and no one will have after you. ¹³What you have not asked I shall give you too: such riches and glory as no other king can match. ¹⁴And I shall give you a long life, if you follow my ways, keeping my laws and commandments, as your father David followed them.'..

God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and this whole assembly know that Yahweh does not give victory by means of sword and spear -- for Yahweh is lord of the battle and he will deliver you into our power.' ⁴⁸ No sooner had the Philistine started forward to confront David than David darted out of the lines and ran to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹ Putting his hand in his bag, he took out a stone, slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead; the stone penetrated his forehead and he fell face downwards on the ground. ⁵⁰ Thus David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; he hit the Philistine and killed him, though he had no sword in his hand. ⁵¹ David ran and stood over the Philistine, seized his sword, pulled it from the scabbard, despatched him and cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

-- hence the name given to him, Edom. ³¹ Jacob said, 'First, give me your birthright in exchange.' ³² Esau said, 'Here I am, at death's door; what use is a birthright to me?' ³³ Then Jacob said, 'First give me your oath'; he gave him his oath and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave him some bread and lentil stew; he ate, drank, got up and went away. That was all Esau cared about his birthright..



¹⁰ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹ When he had reached a certain place, he stopped there for the night, since the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he made it his pillow and lay down where he was. ¹² He had a dream: there was a ladder, planted on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; and God's angels were going up and down on it. ¹³ And there was Yahweh, standing beside him and saying, 'I, Yahweh, am the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. The ground on which you are lying I shall give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Your descendants will be as plentiful as the dust on the ground; you will spread out to west and east, to north and south, and all clans on earth will bless themselves by you and your descendants. ¹⁵ Be sure, I am with you; I shall keep you safe wherever you go, and bring you back to this country, for I shall never desert you until I have done what I have promised you.'

December 8: Joseph

Symbols: bucket, well, silver coins, tunic



Gen: 37:23-28; 45:3-15

²³ So, when Joseph reached his brothers, they pulled off his tunic, the decorated tunic which he was wearing,²⁴ and catching hold of him, threw him into the well. The well was empty, with no water in it.²⁵ They then sat down to eat. Looking up, they saw a group of Ishmaelites who were coming from Gilead, their camels laden with gum tragacanth, balsam and resin, which they were taking to Egypt.²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, 'What do we gain by killing our brother and covering up his blood?'²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, then we shall not have laid hands on him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, and our own flesh.' His brothers agreed.²⁸ Now some Midianite merchants were passing, and they pulled Joseph out of the well. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver, and these men took Joseph to Egypt..



³ Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?' His brothers could not answer him, they were so dumbfounded at seeing him.⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' When they had come closer to

it by the beard and batter it to death.³⁶ Your servant has killed both lion and bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine will end up like one of them for having challenged the armies of the living God.'³⁷ 'Yahweh,' David went on, 'who delivered me from the claws of lion and bear, will deliver me from the clutches of this Philistine.' Then Saul said to David, 'Go, and Yahweh be with you!' ³⁸Saul dressed David in his own armour; he put a bronze helmet on his head, dressed him in a breastplate ³⁹and buckled his own sword over David's armour. David tried to walk but, not being used to them, said to Saul, 'I cannot walk in these; I am not used to them.' So they took them off again. ⁴⁰He took his stick in his hand, selected five smooth stones from the river bed and put them in his shepherd's bag, in his pouch; then, sling in hand, he walked towards the Philistine. ⁴¹The Philistine, preceded by his shield-bearer, came nearer and nearer to David. ⁴²When the Philistine looked David up and down, what he saw filled him with scorn, because David was only a lad, with ruddy cheeks and an attractive appearance. ⁴³The Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog for you to come after me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴The Philistine said to David, 'Come over here and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the wild beasts!' ⁴⁵David retorted to the Philistine, 'You come to me with sword, spear and scimitar, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh Sabaoth, God of the armies of Israel, whom you have challenged. ⁴⁶Today, Yahweh will deliver you into my hand; I shall kill you, I shall cut off your head; today, I shall give your corpse and the corpses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the wild beasts, so that the whole world may know that there is a

the battle-line, went and asked his brothers how they were.²³ While he was talking to them, the champion (Goliath, the Philistine from Gath) came up from the Philistine ranks and made his usual speech, which David heard.²⁴ As soon as the Israelites saw this man, they all ran away from him and were terrified.²⁵ The Israelites said, 'You saw that man who just came up? He comes to challenge Israel. The king will lavish riches on the man who kills him, he will give him his daughter in marriage and exempt his father's family from all taxes in Israel.'²⁶ David asked the men who were standing near him, 'What would be the reward for killing this Philistine and saving Israel from disgrace? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, to challenge the armies of the living God?'²⁷ The people told him what they had been saying, 'That would be the reward for killing him,' they said.²⁸ His eldest brother Eliab heard David talking to the men and grew angry with him. 'Why have you come down here?' he said. 'Whom have you left in charge of those few sheep in the desert? I know how impudent and artful you are; you have come to watch the battle!'²⁹ David retorted, 'What have I done? May I not even speak?'³⁰ And he turned away from him to someone else and asked the same question, to which the people replied as before.³¹ David's words were noted, however, and reported to Saul, who sent for him.³² David said to Saul, 'Let no one be discouraged on his account; your servant will go and fight this Philistine.'³³ Saul said to David, 'You cannot go and fight the Philistine; you are only a boy and he has been a warrior since his youth.'³⁴ David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to look after the sheep for his father and whenever a lion or a bear came and took a sheep from the flock,³⁵ I used to follow it up, lay into it and snatch the sheep out of its jaws. If it turned on me, I would seize

him he said, 'I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt.'⁵ But now, do not grieve, do not reproach yourselves for having sold me here, since God sent me before you to preserve your lives.⁶ For this is the second year there has been famine in the country, and there are still five years to come without ploughing or harvest.⁷ God sent me before you to assure the survival of your race on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.⁸ So it was not you who sent me here but God, and he has set me up as a father to Pharaoh, as lord of all his household and governor of the whole of Egypt.⁹ 'Return quickly to your father and tell him, "Your son Joseph says this: 'God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me without delay.'¹⁰ You will live in the region of Goshen where you will be near me, you, your children and your grandchildren, your flocks, your cattle and all your possessions.'¹¹ There I shall provide for you -- for there are five years of famine still to come -- so that you, your household and all yours are not reduced to penury.' "

¹² You can see with your own eyes, and my brother Benjamin can see too, that I am who I say I am.¹³ Give my father a full report of all the honour I enjoy in Egypt, and of all you have seen; and quickly bring my father down here.'¹⁴ Then throwing his arms round the neck of his brother Benjamin he wept; and Benjamin wept on his shoulder.¹⁵ He kissed all his brothers, weeping on each one. Only then were his brothers able to talk to him.

December 9: Moses

Symbols: baby in basket, river and rushes



Ex. 2:1-10

¹ There was a man descended from Levi who had taken a woman of Levi as his wife. ² She conceived and gave birth to a son and, seeing what a fine child he was, she kept him hidden for three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him; coating it with bitumen and pitch, she put the child inside and laid it among the reeds at the River's edge. ⁴ His sister took up position some distance away to see what would happen to him. ⁵ Now Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe in the river, while her maids walked along the riverside. Among the reeds she noticed the basket, and she sent her maid to fetch it. ⁶ She opened it and saw the child: the baby was crying. Feeling sorry for it, she said, "This is one of the little Hebrews." ⁷ The child's sister then said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and find you a nurse among the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" ⁸ "Yes," said Pharaoh's daughter, and the girl went and called the child's own mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse it for me. I shall pay you myself for doing so." So the woman took the child away and nursed it. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter who treated him like a son; she named him Moses 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'

December 12: David

Symbols: slingshot, 6-pointed star



1 Sam. 17:12-51

¹² David was the son of an Ephrathite from Bethlehem of Judah whose name was Jesse; Jesse had eight sons and, by Saul's time, he was old and well on in years. ¹³ Jesse's eldest three sons followed Saul to the war. The names of the three sons who went to the war were: the eldest Eliab, the second Abinadab and the third Shammah. ¹⁴ David was the youngest; the eldest three followed Saul. ¹⁵ David alternated between serving Saul and looking after his father's sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶ Morning and evening, the Philistine advanced, presenting himself thus for forty days. ¹⁷ Jesse said to his son David, "Take your brothers this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves, and hurry to the camp, to your brothers. ¹⁸ And take these ten cheeses to their commanding officer; find out how your brothers are and bring some token back from them; ¹⁹ they are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of the Terebinth, fighting the Philistines." ²⁰ David got up early in the morning and, leaving the sheep with someone to guard them, took up his load and went off as Jesse had ordered; he reached the encampment just as the troops were leaving to take up battle stations and shouting the war cry. ²¹ Israel and the Philistines drew up their lines facing one another. ²² David left his bundle in charge of the baggage guard and, running to

Shammah, but Samuel said, 'Yahweh has not chosen this one either.'¹⁰ Jesse thus presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'Yahweh has not chosen these.'¹¹ He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' Jesse replied, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is looking after the sheep.' Samuel then said to Jesse, 'Send for him, for we shall not sit down to eat until he arrives.'¹² Jesse had him sent for; he had ruddy cheeks, with fine eyes and an attractive appearance. Yahweh said, 'Get up and anoint him: he is the one!'¹³ At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him, surrounded by his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh seized on David from that day onwards. Samuel, for his part, set off and went to Ramah.

December 10: Samuel

Symbols: lamp, temple



1 Sam. 3:1-18

¹ Now, the boy Samuel was serving Yahweh in the presence of Eli; in those days it was rare for Yahweh to speak; visions were uncommon.² One day, it happened that Eli was lying down in his room. His eyes were beginning to grow dim; he could no longer see.³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying in Yahweh's sanctuary, where the ark of God was,⁴ when Yahweh called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am,'⁵ and, running to Eli, he said, 'Here I am, as you called me.' Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down.⁶ And again Yahweh called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, as you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call, my son; go back and lie down.'⁷ As yet, Samuel had no knowledge of Yahweh and the word of Yahweh had not yet been revealed to him.⁸ Again Yahweh called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, as you called me.' Eli then understood that Yahweh was calling the child,⁹ and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Yahweh; for your servant is listening."' ¹ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.¹⁰ Yahweh then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Yahweh; for your servant is listening.'¹¹ Yahweh then said

to Samuel, 'I am going to do something in Israel which will make the ears of all who hear of it ring.¹² I shall carry out that day against Eli everything that I have said about his family, from beginning to end.¹³ You are to tell him that I condemn his family for ever, since he is aware that his sons have been cursing God and yet has not corrected them.¹⁴ Therefore – I swear it to the family of Eli – no sacrifice or offering shall ever expiate the guilt of Eli's family.'¹⁵ Samuel lay where he was until morning and then opened the doors of Yahweh's temple. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision,¹⁶ but Eli called Samuel and said, 'Samuel, my son.' 'Here I am,' he replied.¹⁷ Eli asked, 'What message did he give you? Please do not hide it from me. May God bring unnameable ills on you and worse ones, too, if you hide from me anything of what he said to you.'¹⁸ Samuel then told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Eli said, 'He is Yahweh; let him do what he thinks good.'

December 11: Jesse

Symbols: crimson robe, shepherd's staff



1 Sam. 16:1-13

¹ Yahweh said to Samuel, 'How much longer do you mean to go on mourning over Saul, now that I myself have rejected him as ruler of Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have found myself a king from among his sons.'
² Samuel replied, 'How can I go? When Saul hears of it he will kill me.' Yahweh then said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, "I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I shall reveal to you what you must do; and you will anoint for me the one I indicate to you.' Samuel did what Yahweh ordered and went to Bethlehem. The elders of the town came trembling to meet him and asked, 'Seer, is your coming favourable for us?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' He purified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.⁶ When they arrived, he looked at Eliab and thought, 'This must be Yahweh's anointed now before him,'⁷ but Yahweh said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him; God does not see as human beings see; they look at appearances but Yahweh looks at the heart.'⁸ Jesse then called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel, who said, 'Yahweh has not chosen this one either.'⁹ Jesse then presented