

The Child's Story Bible



The Child's Story Bible

Catherine F. Vos



THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

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© The Banner of Truth Trust 2021
Originally published in three volumes
Vol. 1 (Old Testament) 1934
Vol. 2 (Old Testament) 1935
Vol. 3 (New Testament) 1936
First Banner of Truth Trust edition 1969
This revised one-volume edition 2021

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ISBN

Print: 978 1 84871 942 2

Epub: 978 1 84871 943 9

Kindle: 978 1 84871 944 6

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Typeset in 11/15 Galliard BT
at The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh

Printed in the USA by
Versa Press Inc.,
East Peoria, IL.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from
THE HOLY BIBLE, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION,
published by HarperCollins Publishers © 2001 by Crossway Bibles,
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Illustrated by Neil McArdle.

To my dear Mother in Heaven,
Who told me these stories
when I was a little child,
in much the same way
in which I have written them
in this book.



Foreword

Retelling Bible stories is both a painstaking and a rewarding task. By the use of simple and dignified language the author, Mrs Catherine F. Vos, has in her book preserved the beauty of the biblical narratives and at the same time skilfully brought out the meaning of the scriptural account. Her picturesque, imaginative, and poetic style is in harmony with the dignity of the message.

For such reasons the *Child's Story Bible* is one of the most widely known and used Bible story books. The National Union of Christian Schools is happy to have had a hand in the preparation of this book, which was originally intended for use in the Christian schools. Teachers use it for Bible instruction in primary and intermediate grades.

Parents find that the material is adapted also for home use: for reading to the children and also for placing in their hands for personal reading. Although it is intended primarily for children from seven to twelve years of age, it is eminently suitable for reading to those of a much younger age and it is valued by adults as a Bible history.

The publishers spared no expense to make this volume beautiful and to make it appealing to the child. Large, readable type and full-colour art work, help to make it an attractive book.

THE CHILD'S STORY BIBLE

Telling the story of salvation to those who come after us is a glorious task. Christian faith has its roots in historical events. We trust that the *Child's Story Bible* may be a guide to the authoritative narration of these events, the Book of books, and to Him who said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'

JOHN A. VANDER ARK, *Director*
National Union of Christian Schools

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THE OLD TESTAMENT



CHAPTER 1

In the Beginning God

PART I – GOD IS AND WAS

Long, long ago – nobody knows how long ago – this world on which we live, this big ball that we call earth, was not here. The earth did not exist. There was nothing but emptiness, wide empty space. That was before the beginning of the first things, before the beginning of time.

Yet there was something in that long, long ago. God was there.

When did God begin? And who made God?

No one made God. And God did not begin. God has always been. Forever and ever and ever, God has lived. God never had a beginning, and his life will never end.

If you were to take a cup and dip water out of the big wide and deep ocean, you could dip and dip and dip, but you could never dip the ocean dry. Your mind is like a little cup, and God's life is like the big deep ocean. You cannot dip the ocean dry with a cup. And we cannot understand God's life, that never began, and will never, never end.

Some day the sun and moon and stars, and the earth on which we live, will all grow old, just as your clothes grow

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old and worn out. But God will be the same as he was, today and yesterday and long, long ago. His life will go on and on, forever.

God is eternal.

God is also wonderful and very great. He can do many things which men cannot do.

We can be in only one place at a time. If we want to be in some other place, we have to go there. But God is in heaven, and at the same time he is everywhere upon earth.

If we go into the deepest dark mines, God is there. If we fly up into the clouds of the sky, God is there.

God sees us always, and everywhere. He knows everything that we do, hears every word that we speak, and even knows the thoughts that we have in our minds.

We cannot hide from God. If we do wrong, God knows it, even if we have not told anyone. He knows, too, when we have tried to be good and to please him, even if no one else knows.

Long ago someone said: *You are the God of seeing* (Genesis 16:13). That is a good line to remember.

God is even more wonderful. He knows everything that is going to happen in the world. We do not know what will happen tomorrow. But God knows everything. He knows what is going to happen tomorrow, and next week, and next year, and always, till the very end of the world. God also knows what will happen after the world has passed away.

And God is good. He is perfectly good, so that he cannot do anything wrong. Everything that God does is right.

Then, too, God is love. He loves you more than anyone in the world loves you. He loves you more than even your father and your mother love you. It was God who gave you a father and mother to love you and take care of you.

Your father and mother, as much as they love you, cannot take care of you all the time. Sometimes they must be absent. At night they must sleep.

But God is always near you, and he is always taking care of you. God never sleeps. All night long, when you are sleeping, God is watching over you and caring for you. God takes care of you all of the daytime too.

It is God who made you. He made you because he wanted to love a child just like you. God wants you to love him too.

Heaven is God's home. Heaven is more beautiful than any place you have ever seen. It is more beautiful than anything you can imagine.

There is a wonderful river in heaven called the River of the Water of Life, with water clear as crystal.

There is no sickness nor sadness in heaven, but all is joy and happiness. There are no tears. There is no crying. There is no death.

There is no dark night in heaven, but always bright beautiful day. They do not need the light of the sun there, for the glory of God makes heaven brighter than the sun.

God lives in heaven. And with him there are the beautiful angels, thousands and thousands of them.

With him too are all the people who loved him, who have died.

And there is a place there for us, if we love God and our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake.

PART 2 – THE ANGELS, GOOD AND BAD

God made the beautiful angels to live with him in heaven.

The angels are bright like the light. They are much stronger than men, and can do things that men cannot do. They go

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where God sends them. They can fly down from heaven to this earth.

These angels love God and are happy. They spend all their time loving and praising God, and doing whatever he wants them to do.

There are very many angels, so many that we cannot count them – ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

Some are called archangels, because they are greater than the rest. God has let us know the names of a few. There is the great archangel Gabriel, who stands in God's holy presence. God has sent him down to earth several times, with messages from God to man. It was the archangel Gabriel who told Mary that God was going to send the baby Jesus to her.

Sometimes God sends angels down to earth to help people who are in trouble. An angel once opened the prison door to let God's servant Peter out. The Bible tells us more than twenty times that God sent angels down to earth with messages to men.

But, long ago, there were some angels in heaven who turned away from being good. Instead of loving God, they began to hate him. They became wicked.

The name of the leader of these wicked angels is Satan. Many other angels listened to Satan and were wicked like him.

There can be nothing wicked in God's beautiful heaven. So God cast out the wicked angels. Now they are no longer called angels. They are called demons.

The demons hate everything that is good. Most of all they hate God. And they do not want us to love him, or to be good, and go to live with him in heaven after we die. They try in every possible way to make us wicked like themselves. They want us to lie and steal, to be disobedient and cross and cruel.

But they are afraid of God. God is much stronger than Satan and all his demons. They fear and tremble before him.

So we need not to be afraid of them, though they are very strong.

But we should serve God, as the good angels do, and try in every way to please him. Let us pray to God always. He will take care of us. He will help us and make us strong to do good.

CHAPTER 2

How the World Began

Genesis 1

'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.'

If we did not have the Bible to tell us that long ago, in the beginning, God created the earth, we would have no way of knowing who made it.

Created means made out of nothing.

When a man makes a house, he must first have some wood of which to build it, and some nails, and some glass for windows. If he does not have something of which to make it, he cannot build a house.

But God made the world out of nothing at all.

God made the world in a most wonderful way. When God began to make the world, he did not have to work hard and long, as a man has to work when he makes a house. All God had to do was simply to speak and the world began.

But God did not make the world all at once as we see it now.

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At first, land and water, air and sky, were all mixed up, without any shape. Over it all was darkness – deep, deep darkness – without a ray of light.

‘And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.’

‘And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.’

That was the very first day.

It is God who still makes the daylight come every morning, so that we can get up out of our beds to work and play. It is God, too, who sends the darkness every night, so that we can sleep quietly, and rest our tired bodies.

We need never be afraid of the darkness, because it is God's darkness. He made it and he will not let anything hurt us.

God made the air and the blue sky with the soft white clouds floating in it, on the second day.

The earth and the water were still mixed up. After God made the air and the blue sky, God said: *‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.’*

The waters obeyed God. They separated themselves from the earth and ran down the hills into the valleys and out into the sea.

So the deep places of the earth were filled with water, and the big oceans began to appear. The land – the hills and the mountains – stood up high and dry above the oceans.

‘God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.’

Now there was light, and the beautiful blue sky. There were hills, valleys, plains, brooks, rivers, and oceans. The world was ready for something to grow on it.

Then God commanded the earth to bring forth grass and vegetables and fruit trees.

As soon as God had said it, the bare earth began to grow green with beautiful grass. Bright coloured flowers began to spring up everywhere. All kinds of vegetables began to grow.

Peaches, apples, oranges, and cherries, all these delicious fruits were created by God at this time.

This was when God made the first roses and lilies, and all the other flowers which make the world very beautiful.

‘And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.’

Next, God made the great and glorious sun to flood the earth with beautiful sunshine and make the earth warm, so that all the flowers, fruits, and plants could grow.

God also made the silver moon to shine in the dark night when the sun has gone away.

God also made the thousands and thousands of bright twinkling stars that shine in the sky at night.

The sun, the moon, and the stars God made on the fourth day.

‘And God saw that it was good.’

Now that the beautiful earth was clothed with grass and flowers and trees, and the warm sun was pouring down upon it, it was ready for some animals to live on it.

The first living creatures that God made were fishes and birds.

God filled the brooks and rivers and the mighty ocean with all kinds of fishes – great whales and little minnows, and every kind of fish that swims.

God made all the beautiful, sweet-singing birds at this time also.

The earth, which had only heard such sounds as the humming of the winds and the dashing of ocean waves, now was full of sweet songs from the birds. It was full of beauty, as the bright-coloured birds, like lovely jewels, flitted to and fro through the branches of the trees.

At last we come to the sixth day. On that day God made the animals of every kind and all creeping things.

Lions and tigers began to live in the deep woods where there had been no animals at all before. Great herds of cows and sheep fed in the wide meadows of the earth.

Goats and deer climbed the high mountains. Rabbits ran about in the grass and made their homes in the ground.

White bears tramped over the snow of the cold north. Hosts of chattering monkeys swung from the branches of the trees in hot countries. Soft purring kittens chased their tails and tumbled over each other in the grass.

Huge elephants and tall giraffes, big animals and small ones – God made all of them at this time.

'And God saw that it was good.'

CHAPTER 3

The First Man, Adam

Genesis 1, 2

There were now many animals, but there was not a man in all the wide world.

Last of all, God made a man.

God made the first man entirely grown up. It was a great deal better to make him grown up, because he was all alone in the world. If he had first been a little baby, he would not have been able to take care of himself.

God called this man ‘Adam.’

God made man a body. He gave him eyes to see with, ears to hear with, a mouth to eat with, and feet to walk with.

But God made him different from an animal by giving this man a wonderful gift, which animals did not receive.

Inside of man’s body God put a living soul.

When you love your mother, is it her hands or feet that you love? No, it is something inside of your mother that you love, something that you cannot exactly see or touch. It is her soul that you love.

And it is your soul in you that loves your mother’s soul. Your body cannot love or think.

You cannot see your soul, but it is there just the same, inside of your body.

Your body is the house of your soul.

Suppose that in an accident you should lose your arm. Would you be gone when your arm is gone? No, you would still be here. Suppose you were to lose your sight and become blind. Would you be gone if your sight were gone? No, though your sight would be gone, you would still be here.

Your arms and your eyes are parts of your body. They are not your soul. It is your soul that is *you*.

When God made man he gave him a wonderful soul which can love God and think about him. An animal cannot think about God or love him, because an animal has no soul. God created man in his own image. The Bible says, *‘the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and*

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breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature,' or 'a living soul.'

This is the greatest gift that God could give to man, because the soul that God gave to man will never die.

When an animal dies, its body is dead, and that is the end of that animal. Its life is over, because it has only a body.

God did not give the angels bodies like ours. Angels are pure spirits, without bodies.

God also is a spirit without a body.

When the Bible says that God made man of the dust from the ground, it does not mean that God picked up a handful of earth and made a man of it. It means that man's body is made of the same materials which we find in soil and rocks. When a man's body lies in the earth for a long time, it turns back to dust because it is made of dust.

But his soul does not die. When a man dies, his soul returns to God who gave it to him.

God made both animals and man on that sixth day. And then he was finished with the making of earth and the heavens and all that is in them. *'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.'*

On the seventh day God rested. He blessed the seventh day and made it holy, and rested from all the work that he had done. And he made that day a day of rest for man, too. On Sundays we rest from our daily work. Sunday is a day set apart for special worship of God with his people, a day to sing his praise together in church, to pray together, and to hear his word.

CHAPTER 4

The First Woman, Eve

Genesis 2

Do you think you would like to be Adam – all alone in the world?

Adam was the only human being in the world. Yet he was not alone. God came to him and talked to him in the cool of the day.

But there was no other man, nor woman, nor child, to whom Adam could talk.

At night he lay down on the cool grass to sleep. He had no house to live in, but he was not afraid, for none of the animals would hurt him. They were neither wild nor fierce.

God took care of Adam. God planted a most beautiful garden, and he filled it with beautiful trees and plants whose fruit was delicious to eat. He let Adam live in the garden and take care of it.

That beautiful garden was called the Garden of Eden, or Paradise.

Every plant was pleasant to look at, and every fruit was good to eat in Paradise.

In the middle of the garden was a very wonderful tree called the Tree of Life. Whoever ate of that tree would live forever.

There was another wonderful tree that grew in the middle of the garden called the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

God said that Adam might not eat of the fruit of that tree, or he would die.

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God had made Adam good. Adam was never naughty or wicked. He knew only about goodness; he did not know anything about badness. God did not want him to know anything about being wicked.

God warned him very plainly about the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil when he commanded him not to eat of it.

Adam was very happy in the Garden of Eden. Once in a while he was lonely, because there were no other people in the world. He had neither wife, nor children, nor friends to talk to. But he loved the flowers and trees.

God brought all the animals to Adam so that he could name them and see if he could make a friend or companion of any of them. Adam gave names to all the animals. Each animal kept the name Adam gave it. But they could not understand his speech or talk to him.

Adam was still very lonely, and God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.*

God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. When he was asleep, God took out one of his ribs, and closed up the place from which he had taken it. God made that rib into a beautiful, sweet woman.

When Adam awoke, God brought the lovely woman to him.

How surprised and pleased Adam was! Now he was not alone any longer. Now he had someone to talk to and to love. Adam called her name Eve, and she was his wife. They could wander through the beautiful garden hand in hand, picking the good fruits to eat, taking care of God's garden together.

They did not have to wear clothes. They did not know anything about clothes. They went naked and were not ashamed, because they were innocent, as little babies. They did not yet know shame and sin. Their souls were white as snow.