

The POSTER for 'The Seven Streams of Grace'

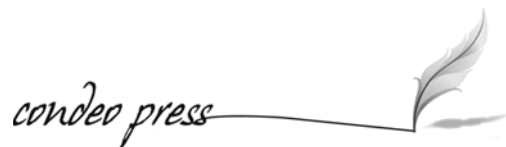
The Seven Streams of Grace

*THE WHOLE BIBLE STORY
AS SEVEN INTERWOVEN STORIES
MAPPED IN A TABLE OF ARTWORKS*

by

Andrew J. Olsen




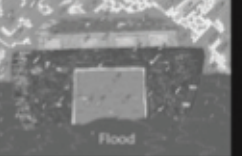








*This is the Workbook for
the SSoG poster at
www.SevenStreamsOfGrace.com*



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Printed by Snowfall Press, Monument, Colorado

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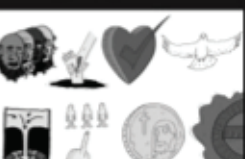






<p>CREATION</p> <p>Seven streams of Yahweh-God's generosity</p> <p>Genesis 1:2—Yahweh God created the universe & creatures in a poetic explosion of order & beauty, rich in variety, moving with life. He blessed and gifted His image-bearing humans to rule, provided a beautiful garden world, then Eve out of & for Adam, equal and without shame.</p>	<p>FALL</p> <p>We trust Serpent, betray Yahweh & Streams</p> <p>Genesis 3:6—The devious serpent Satan deceived Yahweh's children into believing Yahweh their father is Satan, holding out commitment more with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil rather than the Tree of Life. Human guilt, shame, hiding, blaming, and murder were all born, ending all creation with evil & death.</p>	<p>PROMISE</p> <p>Yahweh starts his Redemption-Rescue</p> <p>Genesis 3:15—Yahweh declares war between Himself (in the seed) off-spring of Eve's faith child, baby, and the seed of the serpent through Cain (the). He promises that even though the serpent will take the head of the seed (and baby) after Satan's lie and especially the Marys, baby's seed (especially the Hebrews) will ultimately crush the seed. Yahweh kills an animal for Adam to cover his children's sin against shame, foreshadowing many more substitution sacrifices to come...</p>	<p>FLOOD</p> <p>Evil mankind all punished, 'Yahweh weeps'</p> <p>Genesis 6:11—Amen generations of mankind populate the earth, until every intention of the thoughts of the imagination is heart evil, every man evil in the way. Noah's heart was clean with God, not in the same manner, so the righteous Noah saves (descendant with the Green Flood). But the world's heart and his family, the earth for both seed. So Noah's the earth. Then Noah's the earth, but the seed he is saved.</p>	<p>P</p> <p>Gen 11:32—Noah, to Noah and through Isaac, then to Jacob & their sons to who became</p>
<p>Yahweh God created and gifted us with rich Streams of Grace. These we forfeited when Satan deceived our monarchs Adam & Eve into rejecting our</p>				
				
<p>Life</p>	<p>At the Creation-Adam & Eve had the very LIFE of YAHWEH breathed into them. Even further, they were given a Garden in which the Tree of LIFE was not only central, but also fully open for them to eat and have infinite LIFE forever!</p>	<p>Sin brought Death to Man, Woman, Relationships, Planet, Cosmos...</p>	<p>But the promise of disobedience was that "You Shall Surely Die", and with their Theft and Rebellion, LIFE was forfeit. The reign of DEATH began, and they could do nothing to restore themselves to LIFE! Could YAHWEH, and Would He, reach even beyond Death to resurrect LIFE?</p>	
<p>Rest</p>	<p>At the Creation Adam & Eve had the very REST of the LORD granted to them. YAHWEH declared and celebrated His own SABBATH REST after all His work of Creation, embracing Adam, Eve and all Creation into it with Him!</p>	<p>All is stained, torn, ill, spoiled, deformed, infected, broken, lost...</p>	<p>But their Restless Rebellion ensured that Adam and Eve, and all we heirs of Disobedience are condemned to seek but never find REST. Their striving could do nothing to restore themselves to REST! Could YAHWEH, and Would He, make even the Restless able to find true REST?</p>	
<p>Rule</p>	<p>At the Creation, Adam & Eve were personally appointed into the very RULE of YAHWEH. He granted them Dominion over all Creation, commanding them to subdue and master it, and blessing them with the Power to Name every Creature!</p>	<p>Curse effected... Satan smiled... Story doomed...</p>	<p>But Rebelling against the true RULER broke their RULES. A Serpent guides a Man's! Their own Dominion now swallows them in the dust from which they came! They could do nothing to restore themselves to RULE! Could YAHWEH, and Would He, overturn their Defeat to restore them to RULE?</p>	
<p>Blessing</p>	<p>At the Creation Adam & Eve had the very BLESSING of the LORD pronounced upon them. Even further, BLESSING was bestowed upon every Day of the Creation and expressed in the outrageous abundance of the Garden!</p>	<p>except no-one yet knew of the deepest glory of Yahweh...</p>	<p>But the BLESSING was forfeit when the Giver was Renounced. CURSES and PUNISHMENTS followed. They could do nothing to regain their Original BLESSING! Could YAHWEH, and Would He, reach past Curse and Punishment to bring them back into BLESSING?</p>	
<p>Purity</p>	<p>At the Creation Adam & Eve had the very PURITY of the LORD bestowed upon them. They were made in the very Image of YAHWEH, and their Freedom from Sin was so complete that they enjoyed nakedness without Shame.</p>	<p>who now begins... the History of Salvation; the Covenant of Grace;</p>	<p>But the first casualty of Sin was the overwhelming fire of Shame as PURITY became indelibly Stained. They hid from Yahweh and one another in Fear & Shame. They could do nothing to un-stain themselves back into PURITY! Could YAHWEH, and Would He, cleanse the Stain and re-ordain their PURITY?</p>	
<p>Friendship</p>	<p>At the Creation Adam & Eve enjoyed the very FRIENDSHIP of YAHWEH himself. He spoke with them, Shared his Work with them, and Walked with them in His Pleasure Garden in the Cool of the Day.</p>	<p>the Promise & the Deliverance; the Sacred Romance;</p>	<p>But their Declaration of War against Yahweh betrayed and forfeited their access to His FRIENDSHIP. The flaming sword of the Cherubim blocked their return home. They could do nothing to un-betray their forfeited FRIENDSHIP! Could YAHWEH, and Would He, Forgive Betrayal and offer FRIENDSHIP?</p>	
<p>?</p>	<p>At the Creation Adam & Eve had every good, beautiful and true that the LORD could possibly grant to them. Yet there was something even more good, beautiful and true about the heart of YAHWEH that they could not possibly know in their created relationship with Him. What in Heaven and Earth could that be?</p>	<p>the beauties & mysteries of his incarnations and revelations of Himself as...</p>	<p>Savior</p>	

Now it came to pass, in the time of the Patriarchs, that Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:











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<h2>KINGS</h2> <p>A Whole Nation tastes the Streams</p> <p>1 Samuel 8-2 Chronicles 9—the 3 great Kings: Saul, David (7 years after God's own heart), Solomon (Peace). These conquer all enemies, build a capital, nation, Temple/house for Yahweh, enjoy international trade, peace & wisdom, until even Gentiles come to marvel.</p>	<h2>IDOLATRY</h2> <p>The Nation looks for other gods: 500yrs</p> <p>1 Kings 11:1 + 2 Chronicles 10:2 King 25:2 Ch. 36—idolatry & immorality lead to political & religious "free market" deregulation, causing the kingdom to lose power, great droughts, etc. Of 20 northern King, 0 good, 12 south, 4 good. The Messiah line chain: death repeatedly, Islamic degradation, the next sign for evolution.</p>	<h2>WISDOM</h2> <p>The Wise who Trust taste the Streams</p> <p>Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs—The Invention of praise, lament, prayer, science and wisdom literature. The timeless issues of human existence are articulated and explained in artistic poetry. The sacred lyrics are collected and developed for endless generation.</p>	<h2>FOLLY</h2> <p>The Fool trusts himself and dies</p> <p>Lady Folly in Proverbs represents the satanic wisdom of sin: self-gratification and self-reliance; the history of sin unfolding and cascading to Hell. The desire of human immortality is demolished in Job, the emptiness of self-achievement ("I said rather than 'Yahweh said') is exposed in Ecclesiastes.</p>
 <p>Kings</p>	 <p>Idolatry</p>	 <p>Wisdom</p>	 <p>Folly</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>22 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 23 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 24 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 25 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 26 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest...</p>		<p>27 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 28 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 29 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 30 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>31 An. Description: Map of Middle East in the time of David & Solomon... 32 An. Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a three step... 33 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 34 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown...</p>		<p>35 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 36 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 37 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 38 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>39 An. Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a three step... 40 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 41 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 42 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown...</p>		<p>43 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 44 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 45 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 46 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>47 An. Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a three step... 48 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 49 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 50 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown...</p>		<p>51 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 52 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 53 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 54 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>55 An. Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a three step... 56 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 57 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 58 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown...</p>		<p>59 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 60 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 61 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 62 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>63 An. Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a three step... 64 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 65 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 66 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown...</p>		<p>67 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 68 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 69 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 70 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>			
	<p>71 An. Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a three step... 72 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 73 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown... 74 An. Description: King David identified by sword and crown...</p>		<p>75 An. Description: A sign of death with sword and dagger... 76 An. Description: Man growing at river while released... 77 An. Description: The people of God now lived in a land at rest... 78 An. Description: Man growing at river while released...</p>

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<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h2>JESUS</h2> <p>The God-Man who is All-Stream!</p> <p>Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—The divine Messiah line was born, worshipped by Magi, baptized by John, anointed by God, tempted by Satan as the Second Adam. He chose disciples, preached the hidden depths of the Scriptures, compassionately healed people as illustrations of His identity, drove out Satan's demons, transacted everything about fallen man.</p>	<h2>CROSS</h2> <p>Serpent kills the God-Man & Stream!</p> <p>Jesus was betrayed by a friend, abandoned by disciples, unjustly tried by authorities, rejected by His people, crucified, died, buried. The punishment due to Adam, to all mankind, to us, fell upon Him.</p>	<h2>RESURRECTION</h2> <p>The God-Man Conquers Sin & Death!</p> <p>Jesus and prophets had told people of His death-resurrection for us all. His faithfulness to Yahweh even unto death merited His vindication in resurrection. His indomitable life broke forever the link between Sin and Death, our slavery to the fear of Death.</p>	<h2>THE CHURCH</h2> <p>Streams flow between & in Humans who trust!</p> <p>Act-Revolution—Jesus and His Father sent the Holy Spirit into those who trusted in His substitute-salvation, creating in them a new nature. Filling them with the capacity to obey and embrace God, saving them to share the good news whenever they want.</p>	<p>Doomed Act 1: End He can, but how can I without Christ and His grace?</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>					
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>The Cross & Resurrection of Jesus Christ is...</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>the hub of history, the loosing of Sin from Death,</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>the triumph of Love, the 'Yes!' of God's every promise;</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>Yahweh's master stroke, ambush, trump card,</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>key, coup, trap, piece de resistance, true colors,</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>exhibition, moment of glory, portrait, fingerprint,</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>
<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>	<h3>autobiography, self-revelation, true heart,</h3>		<p>...and so that is how Yahweh opened each Stream of Grace as follows:</p>

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<p>ARCH</p> <p>...and so that is how Yahweh God made each Stream come true for us in the time of the Church!</p>	<p>LAST DAYS</p> <p>Downed serpent hunts & lies to those who trust</p> <p>Arch 1: End of Time-Satan still lies and murders whomsoever, but brings all manner of trouble upon those who follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and King. All the powers of the world will be brought to bear against Christ at our return and Jesus, purifying them and leaving nothing to Jesus' faithfuls, suffering and joyous.</p>	<p>GOSPEL TO NATIONS</p> <p>Streams flow into every land & people</p> <p>The Holy Spirit came the word and people of Jesus into every land and language, community and culture. The diversity and harmony of this emerging family display His barrier-breaking love and wisdom before men and angels.</p>	<p>JUDGEMENT</p> <p>Serpent & untrusting rebels punished</p> <p>Finally, every Justice, every law, every ordinance, every betrayal, every craft, every accident, every shame, every sin, crime and evil that was ever perpetrated on anyone (not the beginning of time, but to justice to be) shall be laid to rest every and who has intended to reward Yahweh's forgiveness.</p>	<p>NEW CREATION!</p> <p>Yahweh-Truists Union-Joy is Unweilded!</p> <p>The trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, Christ shall come in His Father's glory with holy angels to bring reward and glory to all who trusted Him, bringing us to Himself as a bride on the Wedding Banquet, where we shall arrive and be seated by Him as He, once again, begins to make all things new!</p>
	<p>Last Days</p> 	<p>Gospel to the Nations</p> 	<p>Judgement</p> 	<p>New Creation!</p> 
<p>Our stories are here...</p>	<p>Now it is coming to pass that Christ opens all God's Streams in every nation through His Spirit...</p>			<p>...and so that is how Yahweh God shall make each Stream come true for us in the time of the New Creation!</p>
	<p>His themes are ours...</p>	<p>Our stories are here...</p>	<p>Judgement</p> <p>124 Art Description: Huge city wall in dramatic perspective, buildings and towers reaching into the sky, walls of gold, foundations of gems below along bottom edge are 5 symbols, each with a black 'X' through them showing that they are crossed out, that they won't be there, walls (all) said with blood on it, tear dripping from eyes man collapsing holding up 3 signs, pillars. 124 Art Description: Trumpet top left blowing toward center, line of opened graves fan out with healthy pink tree disappearing at the top of the frame (people raised to life into the air), lower left black silhouette of Cain's serpent falls inverted into flames. ("Death is swallowed up forever") lower right shows the large "Book of Life" with fan of names. Bible Basis: Isaiah 25:8; 1 Cor 15:21, 26, 55; 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 20:13, 14. Theme Bible: When the trumpet sounds, all who trusted Jesus will be resurrected into life. Death itself will be swallowed up by life. Our bodies will be raised in "glory," no power, or "spiritual," immortality. We shall have the likeness of His heavenly body. Resurrection Life will be divine, eternal, immortal, eternal. "In His was Life," as "When Christ, who is your Life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory!"</p>	
	<p>He writes us...</p>	<p>He writes us...</p>	<p>Judgement</p> <p>124 Art Description: A smiling crowd of men and women on a throne, holding the crown, arms outstretched in embrace, standing behind them, righting 'trumpets with trumpets'. Bible Basis: Daniel 7:14, 17, 27; Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 22:5. Theme Bible: Yahweh trusts you to a day when God's people will rule with Him, have His own authority over the nations, co-creating God's throne, being a kingdom of King-Princes. These traits will be conserved within the same as Resurrection 22 comes true - we will reign with Him in that dominion that is originally conferred to Adam and Eve, that He restores, fulfills and expands in Christ. In the Second Adam we shall share Dominion over His New Creation, His time without sin, forever.</p>	
	<p>...into His stories...</p>	<p>...into His stories...</p>	<p>Judgement</p> <p>124 Art Description: A man and a woman standing together, holding hands, looking up at a bright light. Bible Basis: 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Peter 2:1; 2 Peter 3:11; 2 Peter 3:14; 2 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 3:16; 2 Peter 3:17; 2 Peter 3:18; 2 Peter 3:19; 2 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:21; 2 Peter 3:22; 2 Peter 3:23; 2 Peter 3:24; 2 Peter 3:25; 2 Peter 3:26; 2 Peter 3:27; 2 Peter 3:28; 2 Peter 3:29; 2 Peter 3:30; 2 Peter 3:31; 2 Peter 3:32; 2 Peter 3:33; 2 Peter 3:34; 2 Peter 3:35; 2 Peter 3:36; 2 Peter 3:37; 2 Peter 3:38; 2 Peter 3:39; 2 Peter 3:40; 2 Peter 3:41; 2 Peter 3:42; 2 Peter 3:43; 2 Peter 3:44; 2 Peter 3:45; 2 Peter 3:46; 2 Peter 3:47; 2 Peter 3:48; 2 Peter 3:49; 2 Peter 3:50; 2 Peter 3:51; 2 Peter 3:52; 2 Peter 3:53; 2 Peter 3:54; 2 Peter 3:55; 2 Peter 3:56; 2 Peter 3:57; 2 Peter 3:58; 2 Peter 3:59; 2 Peter 3:60; 2 Peter 3:61; 2 Peter 3:62; 2 Peter 3:63; 2 Peter 3:64; 2 Peter 3:65; 2 Peter 3:66; 2 Peter 3:67; 2 Peter 3:68; 2 Peter 3:69; 2 Peter 3:70; 2 Peter 3:71; 2 Peter 3:72; 2 Peter 3:73; 2 Peter 3:74; 2 Peter 3:75; 2 Peter 3:76; 2 Peter 3:77; 2 Peter 3:78; 2 Peter 3:79; 2 Peter 3:80; 2 Peter 3:81; 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ISBN pending

Cartoon Art by Corey Biscoe Marwick

Poster Graphics by Joshua Walker

Book Layout by Jen Curry

Cover Art by Phillip Barrera

Sales & Marketing by Condeo Press

Printed in Monument, Colorado by Snowfall Press

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*With extra thanks
to cartoon artist
Corey Biscoe-Marwick
and graphic artist
Joshua Walker
for untold volunteer hours
given of their arts;
to Erin B, Jen C & Phil B
for still more hours and talent;
to those God-seeing friends who have
translated, traveled and taught it all,
to child-championing Kathleen Bonds and family,
and to the faithful God-lovers
who supported our family
in this and other ministries.
We trust God more because of you.*

Welcome to ‘The Seven Streams of Grace’!

The Seven Streams of Grace (SSoG) starts as an enormous color poster made up of nearly one hundred artworks in eight cartoon strips. It presents the bible as a beautifully woven historical masterpiece revealing Yahweh God himself. The bible can be very confusing, but each artwork in the SSoG shows how each piece of the bible fits into the one master jigsaw puzzle. The bible is truly one vast, connected story, and every page does make sense within the greater whole.

This poster is shown in segments on pages ii–vii of this book. It can be seen, ‘zoomed’ and even printed at any size, for free, from here: www.SevenStreamsOfGrace.com. The SSoG is also a seminar, a web-based video, a home-school curriculum, a Sunday School/ home group series, and a devotional journal. Everything you need is in this book.

This book explains the whole adventure and includes all the directions and handouts for study, teaching, seminars, devotions and so on. It is *designed to get you into your bible, not to read it for you*, nor as a daily reading text *instead* of the bible. This book is a map with clues and study notes for your journey, not the land you need to visit. The bible readings themselves explain these super-condensed SSoG notes!

Biblical Theology in Picture Form

What would happen if the average person randomly opened a book containing all of Shakespeare’s writings and tried to make sense of just one line or speech? They would come up with pretty silly perspectives. What happens when we read the bible without having a coherent chronology – a rich view of the whole story? We do exactly the same. Without the overview, we try to extract ‘moral lessons’ and ‘principles for life’ for our lives. What would Shakespeare feel about such a foolish approach to interpreting his plays? How must God feel when we do this to his beautiful master-story? ‘Lessons’ miss it all.

The Seven Streams of Grace (SSoG) shows how hundreds of bible stories work as scenes within seven great theme-stories that flow throughout the whole bible. You will see how *all the stories fit beautifully together*. It teaches theology the way the bible teaches it: not via the (excellent) categories of Systematic Theology, but through networks of stories unfolding, one to the next, Patriarchs to the

Exodus, Moses to David, Psalmists to Prophets, Exile to Remnant, until all unite in Jesus, then flow to his Church, and finally on home!

The theology is entirely orthodox, historical, biblical and consistent with all the ancient creeds and catechisms. Therefore, almost every SSoG participant finds the perspective to be a surprise and a delight. How so? Like those ancient works, *it focuses on Yahweh God himself*. Modern Christianity hardly ever does this. We are culturally obsessed with the power of science and the fantasy of control, so we come to the bible to 'distill principles' and 'extract practical applications' for our daily lives. Salvation and sanctification become our personal narratives and quests rather than Yahweh's cosmic dramas. We make the bible 'helpful' and 'useful', but curiously boring. We make ourselves the center and have *subjected (objectified)* the bible to our own service. By contrast, the bible, rightly read and taught should, like the Grand Canyon, stir the cry "Beautiful!," not merely "Relevant!" *The bible authors want their readers to forget themselves as they find and know God himself in the reading*. The SSoG opens the bible as an epic story about God and his people, not as a method book for how to keep God happy, nor as an instruction manual for making our lives work (which it doesn't! - see 1 Cor 15:19!).

Therefore, the SSoG *explicitly traces the presence and workings of Yahweh God himself* in every bible text. As people gradually discover that the bible is a masterful historical novel of God, by God, they start smiling. In SSoG workshops, I watch people's faces change as they see all the stories gradually come weaving together... and so see Him. They discover that:

- We are late-arriving, stage 'extras' and bit-players in a glorious, cosmic romance... who suddenly inherit the whole estate!
- God is great, active, all and only good; he is the loving, potent, bleeding genius above, below, behind, and around it all.
- The bible is an epic more like *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Narnia Chronicles* than it is a religious book like the Qur'an.
- Salvation, sanctification, the message, the story is not about me, and does not come down to me at all. The King is come!

As folks recognize the centrality, genius and beauty of God, they do the work of applying the text to their lives out of delight and a desire to participate in the dance of His Triune love. Indeed, we are transformed not by our own disciplines or commitment, but as we gaze upon Jesus, so seeing the Father's heart and history (2 Cor 3:18).

How does a SSoG seminar, class or daily devotion work?

Read the poster from left to right, one row at a time, the way you read a book. Think of it as eight epic cartoon stories, each running the full width, each row following a different theme, each thousands of years long, yet each with exactly the same characters, settings and time periods down the columns!

- The top row tells the whole story of the bible in 24 big chunks. This gives people time-hooks on which to hang all of the stories, poems, letters and teachings that happen on each bible page.
- Each of the other rows tell the story of one theme-stream that Yahweh God wove throughout the whole story tapestry to make it come true, over and over, better and better.

The SSoG can be done in an ~8 hour day seminar, or over 8-10 weeks (~one row per week), or over ~100 days or weeks if you unpack each artwork deeply rather than skim across them all. For home-school or daily devotions you could do a page a day from this book (though the top row is better done all at once and a few times over). Each artwork is sized to make one good 'meal' of ~10-20 minutes. The blank spaces are for your reflections, prep notes and prayers.

People learn fastest and deepest by having to teach. At seminars the facilitator allocates the 24 top-line artworks (p.7-30) among all those attending, asking each person/ pair/ team to study their page for five minutes and then present it to everyone. (In smaller groups or in pairs, do subsets of the 24.) Then the facilitator presents the 'LIFE' stream (p.31-41) over ~40 minutes to show how each stream is done. The people are allocated *all* the rest (p.44+), one stream at a time, each time allowing 10 minutes preparation and then ~5 minute presentations per artwork. Seminars need 8-16 people to work well (for the 8 artworks per row) and in larger groups it is wonderful to be able to tackle each artwork/ page in pairs or teams. (More complex ones can be split as indicated on the relevant pages). Each row is done as a single storyline with the facilitator 'stitching' it together.

During the seminars the facilitator introduces each artwork by saying, "Now it came to pass, in the time of the [*milestone above the relevant artwork*] that Yahweh made the theme-stream of [*theme to left on poster*] come true in the following way(s)..." The participant-presenter(s) tell the artwork stories, read some of the relevant scriptures, and explain Yahweh's work in that particular stream. The

facilitator finishes by saying, "...and so that is just one of/ some of the ways in which Yahweh made the theme-stream of [*theme*] in the time of the [*era milestone*] come true."

At seminars, tell people not to worry when they drown of information overload. More goes in than we know. Also, ask folks not to preach but to just present their particular page. Each page contains color and meaning and beauty enough to preach by itself. Many preachers and moralists struggle terribly with this, but the adding so often subtracts.

The SSoG facilitator's job is to get the participants to present the whole program and make the "AHA!" connections by themselves. However, the facilitator should be able to summarize each picture so that they can help any confused participants prepare, prompt people if they get lost or tongue-tied, finish inadequate presentations and fix errors or heresies! Also, if people or minutes are running short the facilitator can teach pictures or rows at higher speed. Reserve at least twenty minutes at the end for the Final Reflection questions (p.109).

The SSoG Matrix - How does it all fit together?

You can see from the poster that it is a huge rectangular grid. The rows represent the 'streams', and the columns represent the 'eras'. The eras are milestones in Biblical history, and the seven streams are great story themes that run throughout the entire biblical narrative. (So *time* runs across the top and seven bible *themes* run down the left side.) The artwork at each intersection shows how the individual theme (row) is developed and fulfilled in each biblical era (column). If you think of 'K6', you would be saying something like, "At Time K in history, how did God make theme 6 come true?"

The end result is a visual journey through Biblical history to find that on *every single page of the bible* the Creator, Yahweh God, is gradually restoring a set of rich blessings that were lost in Eden and transforming them into something much greater than anything Adam and Eve could have ever imagined.

The Theme-Streams vs. The Time Eras

Each of the first six theme-rows represent a gift that was present before the Fall, that was lost at the Fall, but that began, by God's grace from Genesis 3:15, to be gradually restored through the history of salvation. The seventh theme was not known in Eden – even to the angels – and could only be revealed after the Fall... more later!

The seven streams are listed in the left-most column on the poster and here below, and the 24 eras are listed on page 6 in CAPS. Page 6 shows and summarizes the weaving pattern that runs across each row from left to right. It is a high level summary for presenting the Milestones along the whole top row (M1-M24) described on pages 7-30. *It is clever to read page 6 before, during and after pages 7-30!*

Here are 'The **Seven Streams** of Grace':

- Stream 1 **Life:** Adam and Eve were breathed into and became living beings in the image of Yahweh.
- Stream 2 **Rest:** Along with the good work they were given to do, there was peace and rest in the Garden, with Adam and Eve walking at leisure in Yahweh's pleasure garden in the cool of the day.
- Stream 3 **Adam** and Eve were given dominion over all Creation as God's Vice-Regents to name, employ, enjoy and rule.
- Stream 4 **Blessings:** Adam and Eve enjoyed the richest of blessings. The Hebrew text emphasizes the lavish nature of God's proclamations and invitations for them.
- Stream 5 **Purity:** There was no sin, but only cleanliness and naked innocence in the Garden before the Serpent's attack.
- Stream 6 **Friendship:** Adam and Eve enjoyed intimate fellowship with their father Yahweh in his pleasure garden.
- Stream 7 **?:** An inexplicably gracious Gift of Yahweh God (...wait...!)

Here are 'The **Eras** or **Milestone Events** of the bible:

CREATION, FALL, PROMISE, FLOOD, PATRIARCHS, SLAVERY, EXODUS & CONQUEST, ANARCHY, KINGS, IDOLATRY, WISDOM, FOLLY, PROPHETS, EXILE, REMNANT, SILENCE, JESUS, CROSS, RESURRECTION, CHURCH, LAST DAYS, GOSPEL TO NATIONS, JUDGMENT, NEW CREATION.

The eras are shown in this UP-and-DOWN pair pattern to highlight the constantly switching fortunes of the chosen people. This is the dramatic rhythm of the whole bible story. Yahweh God, the intimately involved author (see the CAPITALS milestones), out-writes each apparently victorious attack of Satan (*ITALICS*). This regular rhythm is only broken where CHURCH immediately follows RESURRECTION without an intervening 'downer'. This shows that Satan's capacity to come back against every good thing God does is fundamentally broken by the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Satan never catches up again!

Bible 101: The Streams flow UP & DOWN through the Eras

The CREATION is Yahweh God's opening symphony, rich in variety, order, complexity, dynamism and beauty. He gives it all to his children!

But Adam and Eve FALL by trusting Satan, betraying Yahweh, and so forfeit all Yahweh's streams of blessings for us all. For reasons hidden entirely within Himself, Yahweh determines to restore that which was lost, to heal that which was broken, and to make come true all which was dreamed of in Heaven... so he makes the first PROMISE of grace!

But sin breeds greater sin until the FLOOD cleanses the earth. Yet Yahweh makes more spectacular and beautiful promises to Noah, Abraham and Jacob. He then delivers each theme-stream to just one man, Abraham, and then to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the PATRIARCHS (in the book of Genesis).

But these gift-streams are all lost in their SLAVERY under Pharaoh until Yahweh makes each one come true for a whole people in the EXODUS & CONQUEST under Moses and Joshua (Exodus to Joshua).

But the stream blessings are lost again during the time of ANARCHY alongside the Judges until Yahweh makes every stream come true in earthly terms under the great KINGS of Israel (Judges – Samuel – 1 Kings 10 and 1 Chronicles – 2 Chronicles 9).

But the streams are lost to Israel's IDOLATRY (1 Kings 11+/ 2 Chronicles 10+) even though Yahweh revealed each stream in the WISDOM literature (Psalms, Proverbs, etc.).

But they are then lost to Israel's FOLLY until Yahweh paints and sings every stream for Israel through the PROPHETS (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.).

But these are all lost in the doom of the EXILE to Babylon until Yahweh brings each stream back to the REMNANT community (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, etc.).

But they all dissolve in the 400 years of SILENCE until Yahweh makes them all come true, embodied, pure and contagious in JESUS the God-Man (Matthew - John)!

But Satan and Man kill the Seven Streams of Grace Man, Jesus, on the CROSS. But Yahweh vindicates Jesus the Christ in his RESURRECTION and, in his triumph over every 'But' from Satan, Yahweh pours every stream into the hearts of his people the CHURCH by His Holy Spirit (Acts+).

But Satan still attacks the streams in his LAST DAYS until Yahweh opens every stream to all the NATIONS.

But JUDGMENT will finally fall upon all God's enemies... until every stream will be consummated by Yahweh God in His whole NEW CREATION!

M1 Creation



Seven days of Yahweh God's genius and generosity

Genesis 1 & 2:

Yahweh God created the universe in a poetic explosion of order and beauty. It was rich in variety and teeming with life. He blessed and gifted his image-bearing humans to rule. He gave them all

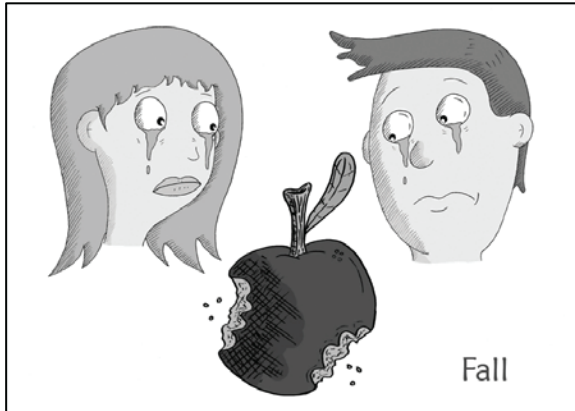
of his beautiful garden world. He drew Eve out of and for Adam as his 'face-to-face' equal, and both were without shame.

Be sure to see:

Yahweh did not create out of need for company or worshippers. He is already infinitely happy and un-lonely in the Trinity – even before the creation of angels, let alone humanity. The creation is all and only generosity. These are his children (Gen. 1:26ff; Gen. 5:1-2!; Luke 3:38); he is giving them the whole estate. His motives are to have a family, to give them all imaginable joys, to see them thrive, and to one day form a bride for his Son. As sinners we cannot comprehend this lavish, 'no strings attached' abundance of heart.

↙ Notes ↘

M2 Fall



*We trust the Serpent,
betraying Yahweh and the
Streams of blessing*

Genesis 3+:

The demon serpent, Satan, deceived Yahweh's children into believing Yahweh their father is Satanic, is holding out, and is concerned more with the Tree of

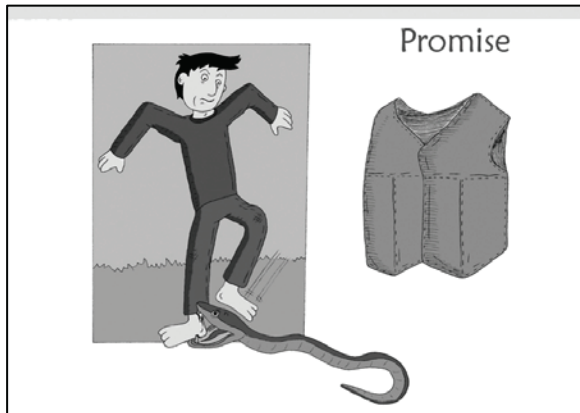
the Knowledge of Good and Evil rather than with the Tree of Life. Human guilt, shame, hiding, blaming, and murder were all born, seeding all creation with evil and death.

Be sure to see:

As we signed up with 'Reptilia', drank serpent-venom, and injected sin virus, human nature fertilized its own disintegration. We became less-than-human, a mutant species, craving and insane, terrified and cruel, retarded and corrupt. Our reason, judgment, longings, and assumptions are all infected, distorted, cancerous, and darkened. Having installed the serpent's doubt-whisper, we can no longer think of God without imagining some Satanic qualities in him. We now always think sin gives life and trusting God means we will miss out forever (Gen. 3:5). We now imagine his central interest is good and evil rather than family love and life (where is Gen 2:9 in Eve's 3:3?!). We trust the snake and ourselves, and so find we just cannot trust Yahweh - our very father! Satan, the child molester, has seduced and slimed God's most precious treasures, poisoning their capacity to perceive his love, breaking all his heart.

↳ Notes ↓

M3 Promise



Yahweh starts his Redemption Rescue

Genesis 3+:

Yahweh declares war between himself (in the offspring of Eve's faith-seed child, Seth), and the seeds of the Serpent (through Cain's line). He promises that even though the Serpent will bite the heel of the seed (meaning

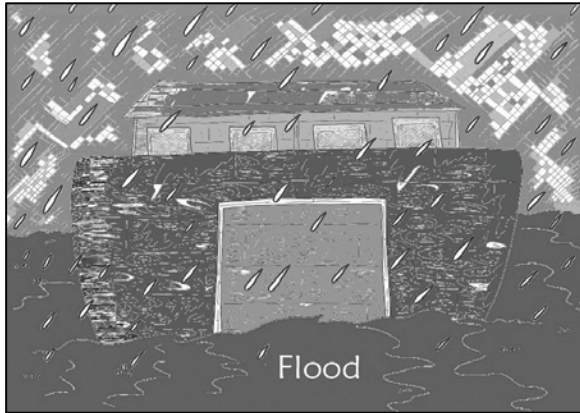
endlessly attacking Seth's line), Seth's seed (the Hebrews, especially their kings, and most especially the promised seed, the Messiah) will ultimately crush Satan's skull. Yahweh kills an animal for skins to cover his children's sin-awakened shame, foreshadowing many more sin-covering substitution sacrifices to come.

Be sure to see:

Yahweh is devastated (Gen. 3:8-15). Yet despite "the day that you eat of it you will surely die," Yahweh greatly delays their deaths, limits their discipline, and swears vengeance against Satan through the very children he has abused (v.15). In an unfinished sentence of fearsome realization (Gen. 3:22), he rushes to protect them from eating from the Tree of Life lest they be forever sealed in their hellish state. He gives both the faithful and faithless endless children. God even goes out in the fallen world to meet and protect his murderous grandson (Gen. 4:6-7, 9-16; 5:1-2).

↳ Notes ↓

M4 Flood



*Evil mankind is punished;
Yahweh weeps*

Genesis 3 to 11:

Seven generations of murderers populate the earth, until "every inclination of the thoughts of his (mankind's) heart was only evil all the time". Yahweh's "heart was filled with pain" over man's incurable darkness, so he wiped

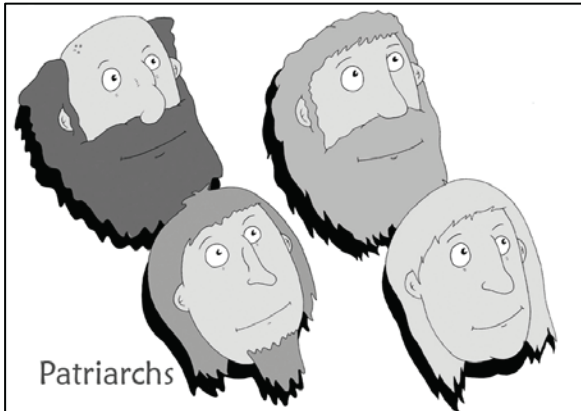
out their Satanic civilization with the Great Flood. But he saved Noah and his family, the faithful Seth-seed, to 're-Genesis' the earth. They repopulate the earth, but the seed line becomes barren (Gen. 11:30).

Be sure to see:

With eyes twisted by sin, we always think of the Flood as God's rage. No doubt he was righteously angry, but the text says three times that it came from a father's heartbreak (Gen. 6:6-7). But comparing Genesis 6:5 against Genesis 8:21, why bother? He bothers because that altar fragrance is for him a promise of his son's offering on the cross that will fulfill the promise he made in Genesis 3:15, so he blesses us with a new creation (Gen. 9:1-17) and sets up the bloodline of the promised seed through Shem (Gen. 10:21ff; 11:10ff) up to Abram... where it seems doomed to stop dead.

← Notes ↓

M5 Patriarchs



One family tastes the Streams

Genesis 11-50:

Yahweh chose one Seth-seed, Abraham, to belong to him. God gave him life, rest, rule, blessing, purity, and friendship. Through Abraham the Messiah-seed, the Savior, would come. His son Isaac, then Jacob, and then

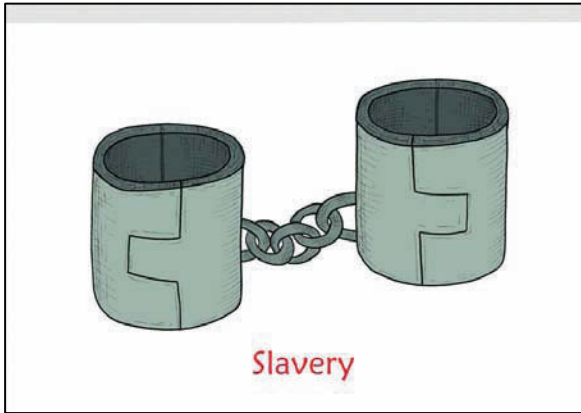
Joseph and Judah, followed as inheritors of this trust. Their lives foreshadow their nation's future, culminating in Joseph who became ruler of Egypt and then the savior of the nations.

Be sure to see:

God works all things for good throughout this dysfunctional family story. He makes extravagant, unilateral promises to their descendents and gives them mini-tastes of fulfillments. As Yahweh gradually disappears from sight (Abraham gets live conversation and visits; Joseph only gets obscure visions), he nevertheless orchestrates all things – even the salvation of nations – through Joseph, who lives by faith, not sight. Is maturation like this for us too? Joseph trusts God's promises and so insists that he must not be buried, but that his bones will return to God's promised land with all his people one day. Although he is like Jesus in a 100 ways, the Messiah's bloodline is in Judah (Gen. 49:8).

← Notes ↓

M6 Slavery



Evil assaults the Savior-bearing family – 400 years

c. 1800-1400 B.C.:

Abraham's generations flourished in Egypt until a Satanic King of Egypt arose against them, firstly subjecting them to chattel slavery, then trying to kill all the males in the Seth-Messiah bloodline. Facing increasing

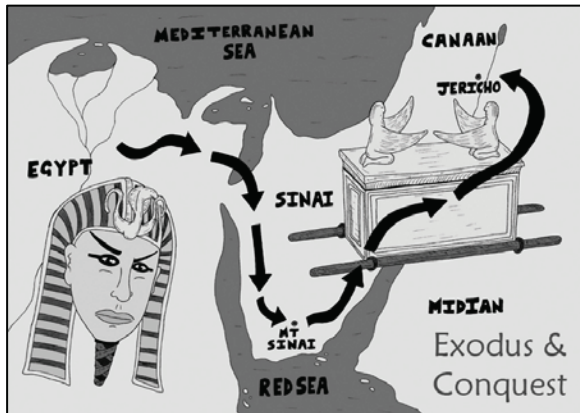
cruelty and mass infanticide, the Israelites cry out to Yahweh for deliverance.

Be sure to see:

Israel comes into slavery and then genocide under a Pharaoh king who wears a serpent-crown headdress. This is exactly humanity's helpless situation under Satan and sin. With mocking ironies Yahweh uses five powerless women (Shiphrah, Puah, Moses' mother Jochebed, his sister Miriam, and even the evil Pharaoh's very own daughter) to prepare both salvation for all his children and destruction for all his enemies. Moses' young life has similarities to the early days of Jesus'; both prefigure the salvation of all the people.

↙ Notes ↘

M7 Exodus & Conquest



A Whole People taste the Streams

Exodus – Joshua:

With ten plagues, Yahweh defeated nine Satanic gods and the first-born priesthood of Egypt, rescuing Israel out from Pharaoh's dominion. For 40 desert years, by Moses' hand, Yahweh himself 'temple-tented'

with Israel, providing food, Scripture, and substitute purification. He brought them, by Joshua's hand, into the wealthy land of Canaan. Yahweh defeated their evil enemies and gave them ready-made houses, towns, farms, and security.

Be sure to see:

The in-Egypt stories are about Yahweh defeating other gods; the desert stories are about Yahweh's 'battle' with human nature! Supernatural symbolism: He leads them backward (Ex. 14:1-10) to trap them between, (a) the serpent-crested Pharaoh, (b) two temples to a male vs. female deity, and (c) the Rahab-Satan-dwelling sea.

Then He saves them through split waters and drowns all their enemies (just like the Cross)! Yahweh then takes this slave rabble and creates a just, governed, and militarized nation in record time.

Through laws and rituals he creates the ultimate Sunday School (no – 'Sabbath School'!) educational system to dramatize the problem of sin and the solution of His atoning holiness worked out into everyday life.

They rebel ten times (matching the ten plague-salvations), and God finally visits their own accusations upon them. Yahweh is king, parent, judge, father... and so exasperated by his utterly dreadful kids! ↵ Notes ↵

M8 Anarchy



The People follow themselves – ~300 years

Judges – 1 Samuel 7:

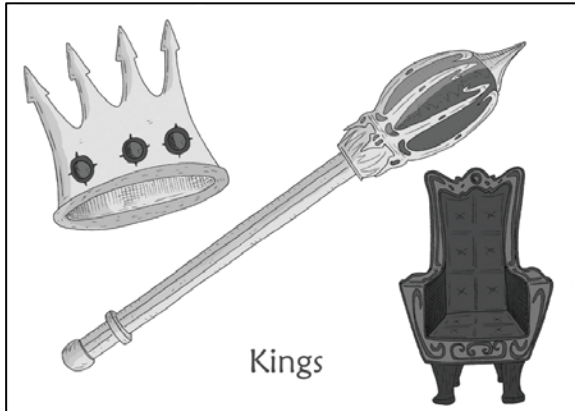
Rebellion against Yahweh as “every man did what is right in his own eyes”. This created cycles of: idolatry, immorality, de-civilization, intertribal wars, oppression by anti-Seed foreigners, and desperate cries to

Yahweh who then sends a Judge-Hero to rescue them. Repeat this cycle seven major times, and a few more (12 Judges in total) in a downward spiral of apostasy, anarchy and civil wars between the family tribes.

Be sure to see:

This is horrific stuff – like a violent video game. Almost every Judge (military savior-leader) is deeply flawed; the cruelty and degradation is extreme; the spiritual insight is zero; the repentance is only regret and never remorse. This is post-modern civilization unplugged. Humanity will not be led, remembers nothing of its own history, and always trusts its own judgment, so leading itself to depravity and ruin. Where is the Messiah-King-Savior? “We need a king from God!” *← Notes ↓*

M9 Kings



A Whole Nation tastes the Streams

1 Samuel 8 - 2 Chronicles 9:

The three great Kings: Saul, David ("a man after God's own heart"), and Solomon ('Peace') conquer all their enemies, build a capital, then build a nation, construct a Temple-home for Yahweh, enjoy international rule

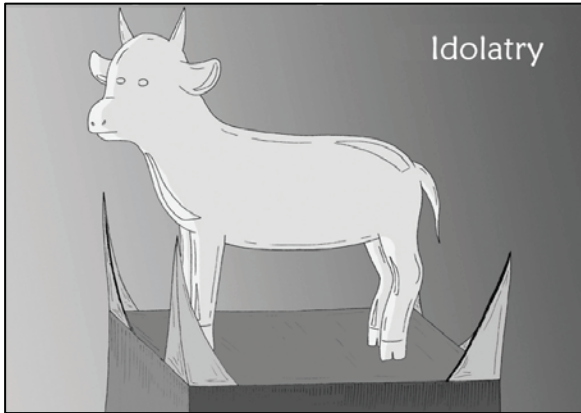
and trade, impose taxes, maintain peace, and speak with wisdom until even Gentiles come to marvel.

Be sure to see:

This is more high drama, but now 'the powerful' characters have detailed personalities. A woman (Hannah) once again starts the salvation story. Samuel has deep integrity, but is a lousy parent. Saul has paranoid personality disorder. David has deep faith and normal flaws. Solomon is wise, wealthy, brilliant and given to spiritually fatal syncretism through lust. David's life prefigures Jesus' life in many ways. God makes every promise to Abraham come true under Solomon – but only in terms of this world. They are not to be fulfilled either cosmically or in the human heart for another thousand years.

↳ Notes ↓

M10 Idolatry



The Nation lusts for other gods – 400 years

**1 Kings 11 to 2 Kings 25;
= 2 Chronicles 10 to 36:**

Idolatry and immorality lead to political and religious free market disintegration, splitting the kingdom with wars and demon-worship. Of twenty northern kings, zero are good; of twelve

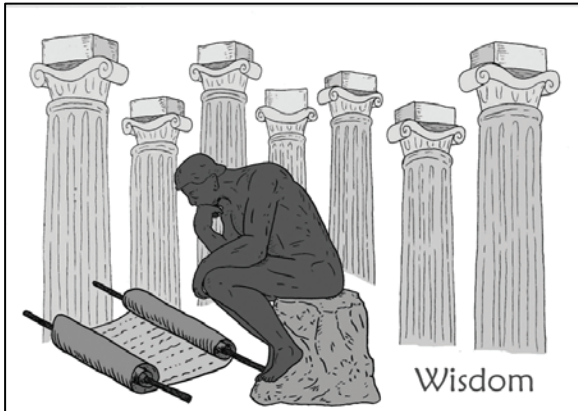
southern kings, four are 'good-ish'. The Messiah line cheats death repeatedly; Satanic degradation makes the race ripe for annihilation.

Be sure to see:

Idolatry always precedes immorality. The ascending history of Israel since Abraham crashes in 1 Kings 11 and 12, and it descends for the next thousand years. The ten northern tribes still worship Yahweh on their own terms, alongside any other god they like. The last two tribes watch their northern brothers get annihilated for it, yet do even worse. The satanic Queen Athalia (2 Kings 11) slaughters the Messiah's bloodline down to a sole surviving toddler... but this is Yahweh's story. So much blood of prophets and innocents is spilled through politics, corruption, and pagan rites (child sacrifice), yet the continuing miracle of God's patience lasts for centuries.

← Notes ↓

M11 Wisdom



The Wise who Trust taste the Streams

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs:

The literature of praise, lament, prayers, science, and wisdom blossoms. The timeless issues regarding the human experience are articulated and explored in artful poetry. The sacred hymns

are collected and developed for endless generations.

Be sure to see:

Rather than the best place for developing theological systems, these are storehouses of the poetry and the color of living by faith in a chaotic world. Song of Songs celebrates an adoring and erotic marriage blessed by Yahweh. Ecclesiastes is almost black humor: every other biblical book says, "Thus says Yahweh" from heaven's perspective, but this is human-centered "I said" theology done "under the sun" by a wise-fool that only recognizes futility and judgment. Job is an ancient nuclear weapon under human religion, exploding our tame and moralistic images of God. Proverbs is a set of truths to be held as a balanced set. Psalms is every possible thing that could go in a church musician's file or a parishioner's prayers.

← Notes ↓

M12 Folly



The Fool trusts himself and dies

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

In Proverbs, Lady Folly represents the satanic wisdom of instant gratification and self-exultation. Psalms records the unfolding history and consequences of human sin. Job demolishes the deceit of

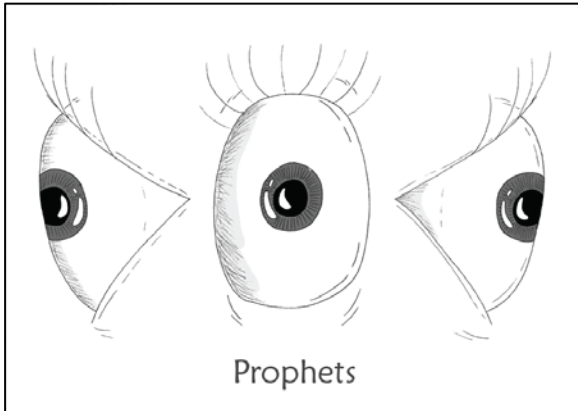
mankind's own answers. Ecclesiastes exposes the emptiness of self-authoring ("I said," rather than "Yahweh said,").

Be sure to see:

Every good instruction is provided in the Torah and in the wisdom literature. Psalms and Proverbs have endless advice for the development of discretion and wisdom. The only problem is, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil; and madness is in their heart while they live" (Ecc. 9:3). We love wisdom, and want to train our children well, but we find that they, just like their parents, love self more. We find we cannot seem to do anything to keep ourselves from craving and folly.

← Notes ↓

M13 Prophets



*Streams in past, present,
and future poetry*

**Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah,
Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Minor
Prophets:**

These men arise as witnesses against Israel's evil kings, priests, and people, here pleading, there scourging, now

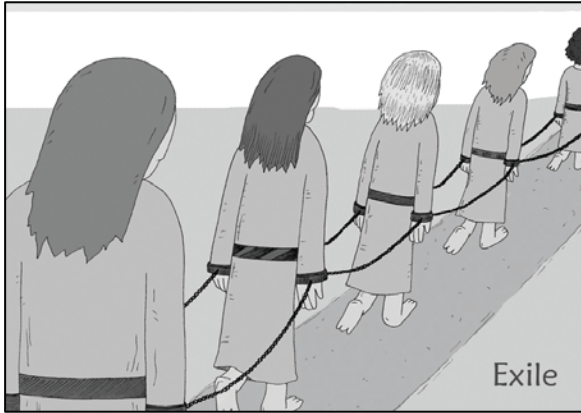
wooing them with words. The prophets point at Israel's current crime, then back to Yahweh's love-covenant, and then forward to a transcendent new covenant/ kingdom/king. Idolatry and immorality devolve into sex-religion, demon worship, and child sacrifice. After centuries of sin, the long-promised punishment is centuries overdue.

Be sure to see:

The prophets have such frustration and pain that only God's frustration and pain is greater. They are given eyes and a pen, and they have to watch Hell play out on earth. They use glorious literature of every genre to warn against, and chronicle the certainty of judgment against the wicked who multiply so fruitfully around them. Their only consolation is that Yahweh is real to them, and he gives them distant glimpses of the gospel to come. They learn that all the promises to Abraham will come true in the Messiah, then in the human heart, and then in all of heaven and earth.

↳ Notes ↓

M14 Exile



The Stone-hearted Nation is finally punished

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations:

As warned and then promised after the earlier destruction by Assyria of the sin-doomed, northern kingdom, Israel, the even more rebellious Judah has her capital Jerusalem besieged,

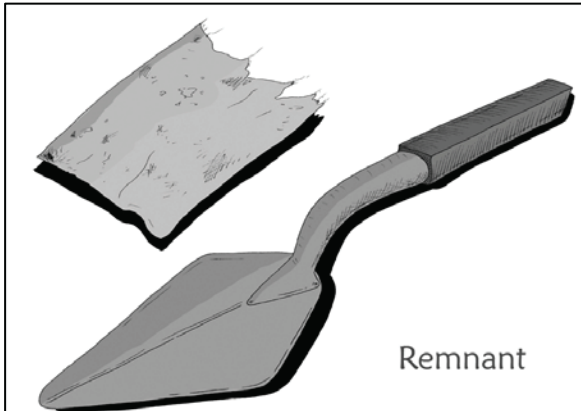
pillaged, and burned by the Babylonians. Only a tiny percentage of the seed line remains alive. Most are exiled 1,000 miles away in Babylon.

Be sure to see:

Nebuchadnezzar is Yahweh's appointed punisher. Jeremiah is Yahweh's appointed doomsayer and war correspondent for the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel. He witnesses the total corruption and bloodshed of Israel against herself and then by her enemy. He survives murder plots and much harm toward himself. He writes the funeral account (Lamentations). Over decades he has zero listeners, all his writings are burned page by page, and finally he is kidnapped and sawn in two. Meanwhile, Ezekiel and Daniel are exiled to Babylon and see visions about Jerusalem and Israel's future in the Messiah.

↳ Notes ↓

M15 Remnant



The Survivors re-taste small streams

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi:

Zerubbabel brought many Israelites back to inhabit and rebuild Jerusalem, including a smaller temple. Later Yahweh used Esther and Mordecai to save every Jew (that is, the seed line)

on earth from genocide (that is, from having no Messiah!). Ezra brought back many priests and restored their ministries to Israel. Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the city walls and other purifying acts.

Be sure to see:

In his vision, Ezekiel saw the plans for a more perfect temple than Solomon's, but when they finally rebuilt the temple, the elderly folks wept because it was nothing like the size or beauty of either Solomon's edifice nor Ezekiel's vision. Nor was it supernaturally endorsed with divine fire like the first because it was only a shadow of the vision. Jesus himself would one day be Ezekiel's temple.

← Notes ↓

M16 Silence



The Survivors wait in darkness – 400 years

c. 400s to ~ NT:

After Alexander the Great conquers the world, great political upheavals churn Israel's world until their total occupation by the imperial might of Rome. The Pharisees arose as a defense against Israel's own past,

creating ever stricter and more detailed customs to insure against slipping into slipping.

Be sure to see:

After Nehemiah, the Pharisee sect was created as an attempt to never return to the sins of the past. Israel did not return to idolatry, but did manufacture mountains of human rules that crushed the people beneath a man-made spiritual hierarchy. Meanwhile empires took turns crushing Israel; one murderous emperor even sacrificed a pig in the temple and left its head on the altar to desecrate it. Will the Messiah ever come?

↙ Notes ↘

M17 Jesus!



The God-Man who is All-Streams

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John:

The divine Messiah, Jesus, was born, worshipped by Magi, baptized by John, anointed by God, and tempted by Satan as the Second Adam. He chose disciples, preached the hidden depths of the Scriptures,

compassionately healed people as illustrations of his identity, drove out Satan's demons, and transcended everything about fallen man.

Be sure to see:

Jesus is the Jewish Messiah-King who fulfills all prophecies (Matthew's gospel, see 27:37). Jesus is the active suffering servant ransomed for sin (Mark's gospel, see 10:45). Jesus is the perfect God-Man savior of men (Luke's gospel, see 19:10). Jesus is the God-Man descended, enfleshed, intimate, spiritual savior (John's gospel, see 3:16). Who he is precedes all of what he says and does. He is of Eve, but not Adam; he is a new species/humanity. He does not only have all virtue (light, love, truth, beauty), but he is these things. He is more than the exact 3D movie of God: he is God truly here. This is no metaphor. Deity took up/ on/ in humanity – hair and skin and passions - without shedding anything of divinity. When we see Jesus, we don't just see a picture or replica; nor a 'human side' and a 'divine side'; we see the whole fullness of God in bodily form (Col 2:9). This is the author truly climbing down into his own play to take the characters up into his real and greater world! ↵ Notes ↵

M18 Cross



Serpent kills the God-Man and Streams

Jesus was betrayed by a friend, abandoned by his disciples, unjustly tried by authorities, rejected by his people, cruelly tortured, traded for a guilty man, crucified, died, and was buried. The punishment due to Adam –

to all mankind, to us – fell upon him.

Be sure to see:

As with the first son of Adam and Eve, the first son born of deity and humanity is murdered by man. God has finally let us see him, and we have finally done to him what we always wanted to do. The cross is the exact photograph of God's real nature (infinite self-giving) and ours (evil with madness). Satan's ultimate fantasy has come true: the Messiah himself is killed. No story has ever trumped the murder of the Author himself.

← Notes ↓

M19 Resurrection



The God-Man Conquers Sin and Death

Jesus and the prophets had told people of his death-mission for us all. His faithfulness to Yahweh, even unto death, merited his vindication in resurrection. His indestructible life forever broke the link

between Sin and Death and our slavery to the fear of Death.

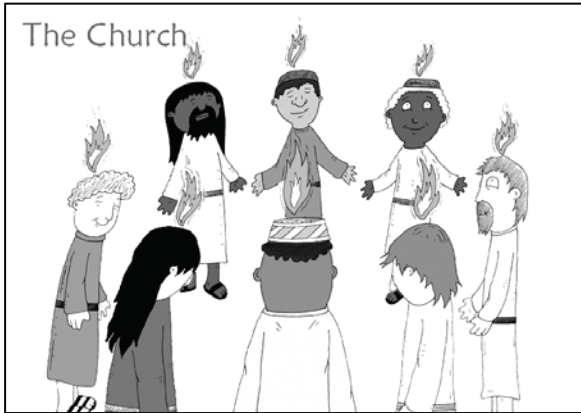
Be sure to see:

All bets are off; all stories are now possible! The ultimate bogeyman is trumped. The new humanity, beyond Sin and Death, is born. One of us is finally free. Anything is possible. The cross was a Trojan Horse, a spectacle of conquest (1 Cor 1:17-2:5; Col 2:15). Dying is now the Life-door - even daily so. Guilt is forever forgiven and impotent. In Jesus' ascension, one of us - one with skin and hair, in whom we are hidden (Col. 3:3ff) - has got up inside the Trinity, forever! The Great Dance has broken the bars of Hell itself and can never again be thwarted. The Second Adam (Rom. 5) has transcended all things - for us!

↙ Notes ↘

*The Cross & Resurrection
of Jesus Christ is
the hub of history,
the loosing of Sin from Death,
the triumph of Holy Love,
the 'Yes!' of God's every promise;
Yahweh's master stroke, ambush,
trump card, key, coup, trap,
pièce de résistance, true colors,
exhibition, moment of glory,
portrait, fingerprint,
autobiography,
self-revelation,
true heart.*

M20 The Church



*Streams flow in and
between Humans who Trust*

Acts – Revelation:

Jesus and his Father send the Holy Spirit to carry Jesus' substitute-salvation into human hearts, creating in them a new nature that is able to trust, obey, embody and delight in God, and stirring them to share the good

news wherever they go.

Be sure to see:

Despite her sins and insanities, this million-colored and billion-faced earthly church is God's own house, Christ's own body and bride, the Holy Spirit's temple. We are priests, kings, ambassadors, servants, fellow workers, children, family, friends. Since we are engaged to be wed, church is our relationships' dance class. We are his because God made himself ours. We preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and exercise ministries for him and as him. To God, the Church is the number one drama of world history!

↳ Notes ↓

M21 Last Days



Doomed Serpent hurts and lies to those who Trust

Acts 1 – End of Time:

Satan still lies and murders wherever he can, bringing all manner of trouble upon those who follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and King. All the powers of this world order are brought to bear against Christians at various

times and places, purifying them, and bearing witness to Jesus' faithfulness, suffering, and power.

Be sure to see:

The Last Days began at Pentecost, and Jesus warned us not to speculate about their end date, but instead to be ready for him. Unlike the OT kingdom, Jesus' kingdom on earth enjoys no material edge or expression, but wields good news and conquers hearts without wealth or war. We shall have trouble, shall live by faith rather than sight, and need not give way to fear because Jesus overcomes the world. "Every child of God defeats this evil world by trusting Christ to give the victory" (1 John 5:4).

← Notes ↓

M22 Gospel to Nations



Streams flow into every land and people

Acts 1 – End of Time:

The Holy Spirit carries the word and people of Jesus into every land, language, community, and culture. The diversity and harmony of this emerging family displays His barrier-breaking love, power and wisdom before

men and angels.

Be sure to see:

The gospel is not dependent upon any culture and so judges, blesses, transforms and transcends all cultures. It delights God to dwell in every kind of person and place. Forgiveness wins hearts in all worlds. The Spirit cannot be stopped. He writes us into his book and even inhabits us as vessels of his own person. Although we remain retarded and contaminated by our decaying sinful nature, it pleases God to dwell with man in man.

↳ Notes ↓

We are in the bible!

Our stories are here...

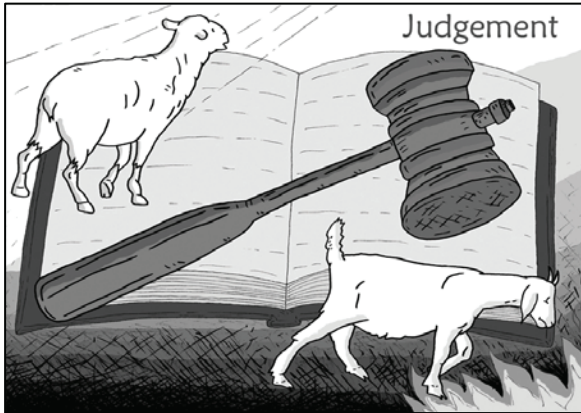
His themes are ours...

He writes us into His stories...

We read His stories into ours...

The Author lives with and in and through His story's characters...
*not merely metaphorically, but actually! -
 not merely 'channeling' through them, but as them!*

M23 Judgment



Serpent and untrusting rebels punished

Finally, every injustice, unkindness, betrayal, cruelty, accident, shame, sin, crime, and evil that was ever perpetrated on anyone since the beginning of time will, in justice most sweet and fierce, be returned upon

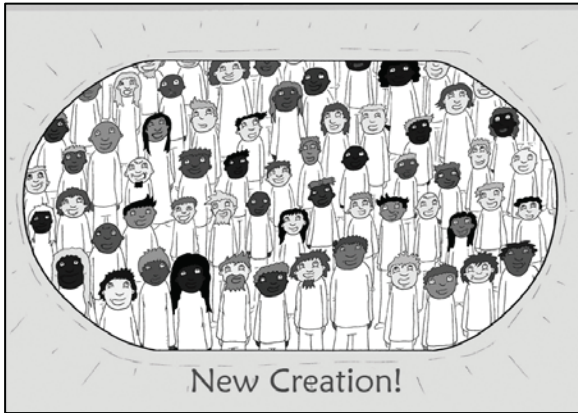
every soul who has loved hatred and refused to receive Yahweh's forgiveness.

Be sure to see:

Far from a doctrine to be embarrassed about, the truth of Judgment is glorious, terrible, and beautiful. It always was. Judgment is essential to true love. It is the protective fire of the purest marriage and of the very best parent. Yahweh is ferocious against Satan and everyone who ever smeared his infectious slime upon a bride, a child, a woman, a victim, an ignorant, an innocent, a house, a people, a land. Every cry against unjust suffering, betrayal, deceit, and malice will be vindicated and avenged. True evil will be truly and finally destroyed.

← Notes ↓

M24 New Creation



Yahweh-Trusters' Union-Joy is unveiled

The trumpet shall sound. The dead shall be raised incorruptible and utterly alive. Christ shall come in his Father's glory with holy angels to bring reward and glory to all who trusted him. He will bring us to himself as a Bride

at the Wedding Banquet, where we shall serve and be served by him. "Behold, I make all things new!"

Be sure to see:

Everything we have ever known, thought, felt or done is sleep and shadow compared to the waking and light of heaven (1 Cor. 15). Everything we have ever lost or suffered is a mere weightless passing second compared to just the first second 'of the liberty of the glory' in heaven (Rom 8). Everything that we have ever dreamed of and longed for will come true in its purest, perfected fullness (Rev. 21-22). Compared to the New Creation, everything of all our lives in this world has only been the dress rehearsal, the pencil sketch, the opening chord, the clip, the scent, the promise. The New Creation will make "Let there be light" seem like just a warm-up! Everything that was ever meant at the first Creation and every desire that Yahweh ever designed into every creature will come true in the fullness of the love of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (John 17:24-26; Eph 1:20-23).

↳ Notes ↓

Reflections:

At the end of each row of the SSoG you will find a blank page on which you can jot your reactions to what you have just seen and heard.

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 24 big eras of the bible?

Do you have any thoughts about the God you have just been following through this quick bible overview?

WARNING! SO FAR WE'VE SEEN THE TIME-SPINE CHRONOLOGY...
THE NEXT PAGE BEGINS THE FIRST OF THE SEVEN STREAMS!

Theme 1: LIFE

At the Creation, Adam & Eve had the very LIFE of YAHWEH breathed into them (Gen 2:7). Even further, they were given a Garden in which the Tree of LIFE was not only central (v9), but also fully open for them to eat (v16) and receive infinite LIFE forever!

But the promise of disobedience was that "You Shall Surely Die", and with their Theft and Rebellion, LIFE was forfeited.

The reign of DEATH began, and they could do nothing to restore themselves to LIFE!

Could YAHWEH, and would He, reach even beyond Death to restore lost LIFE?



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: Patriarchs

L5 Art Description: Abraham poised to slay his son Isaac on Mt. Moriah, interrupted by the divine voice (represented as a flash of light above and behind him). To the left of Abraham, his son is tied atop a pile of firewood, and to the right of Abraham, a ram is shown caught in a thicket.

Bible Texts: Genesis 22; Hebrews 11:17-19

Theme Ideas: In Genesis 22:3, 22:8, and in Hebrews 11:17-19, Abraham reasons and trusts that God has the power of *Life* greater than the power of *Death*. He could save *Life* even if it meant raising the dead. God shows here how he will one day bring *Life* to the human race. This *Life* is greater than *Death* and deals with the curse of *Death* in Genesis 2:17 and 3:24. On Mt. Moriah we see a tiny picture – just with one man and his son – of Yahweh God beginning to show how he will restore the *Life* that we forfeited when we sinned and inherited un-lives of slow toil, pain, and *Death* at the Fall. He reveals a new suffix to his Name, Yahweh-Jireh, which means, 'I-am-your-Provider'. He is promising He will provide a Substitute Son to accomplish our Rescue and Resurrection.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
**Era: Exodus and
Conquest**

L7 Art Description: To the left is the door of an ancient house with blood splattered around the doorframes. To the right, Moses leads a crowd through a parted sea.

Bible Texts: Exodus 11:1-15:21

Theme Ideas: Through the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, the sentence of the Angel of Death is averted from the chosen people; the *Life/Death* of the lamb brings *Life* to the firstborn sons, the religious heads of the households (the firstborn son of an Egyptian household was deemed to be the family priest). God shows how he will in Days to Come bring *Life* to all mankind. The promise-coming-true, *Life-Saving, Substitute-Death* seen in the Moriah story is now expanded from one individual's *Life* (Isaac) to a whole nation's *Life*. Similarly, the parting waters deliver *Life-rescue* when Israel is trapped between the Death force of Pharaoh's army, the shrines of a pagan god and a pagan goddess, and the watery deep. In ancient religions, ocean waters of chaos symbolize the forces of *Death* and destruction and of the serpent deity (e.g., Rahab). Here God's people are given *Life* by his hand over all physical and cosmic powers of *Death*. We see God showing in a larger way (than with Isaac) how he will restore the *Life* that we forfeited when we sinned and inherited un-lives of slow toil and pain unto *Death* at the Fall.

↙ Notes ↘



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: Kings

L9 Art Description: The Angel of Death has its sword outstretched toward the city walls of Jerusalem. A hand signals to 'stop' between the angel's sword and the city. Beneath the sword is King David (crowned), kneeling beside a bowl of blood, having offered a bull in flames.

Bible Texts: 2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1 (Gen 22:2, 14; Deut 12:1-28; 2 Chronicles 3:1 in closing)

Theme Ideas: Here David intercedes for the life of Jerusalem by offering an atoning sacrifice in place of himself, whom he had offered to God. Again God transfers the *Death* from the human (Isaac, Israel, David, Jerusalem) to a beast, thus rescuing doomed people into *Life*. Yet David is neither protagonist nor hero; Yahweh himself saves him and all the people, utterly directing this play, stirring David, Gad, Arunah, and even Satan, to present this Shakespearean drama! He even chooses the location to weave this story back to Abraham (Gen 22:2, 14) and forward to the Temple (Deut 12:1-28; 2 Chron 3:1)! The 'place' is where God meets man and gives him *Life* as man's sin is dealt with by the blood of a Substitute. Here on a national scale God restores the *Life* that we forfeited when we sinned and inherited un-lives of slow toil, pain and *Death* at the Fall. Later here, our Moriah, provided ram, chosen place, sacrificial lamb, threshing floor, atoning bull, atonement cover, Jerusalem and Temple will converge in Calvary as a person...

← Notes ↓



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: Wisdom

L11 Art Description: An arm reaches down from amidst cloud, lightning, fire, and wings, rescuing a weak hand drowning in sea and tentacles rising from bottom. Four double-images take the corners: a man dying of desert thirst and then him running into a house; a man jailed and then him free of chains; a ship helpless in huge waves is paired with a ship tied to port; a sickly spotted man lies helpless before the figure of Death in cloak and sickle, paired with the same man rejoicing at a smiling doctor's sign of health.

Bible Texts: Psalm 18; Psalm 107 (can split study/group)

Theme Ideas: These two psalms report with awesome drama and tension the rescues that Yahweh visits upon people who cry out to Him in their helpless distress. The center images are from the spectacular Psalm 18 description of Yahweh's cosmic power to rescue us from *Death* to *Life*, showing how the Lord of the Universe not only hears, but also moves heaven and earth to come to our cry. The side images are from Psalm 107 where Yahweh is shown to orchestrate all manner of dire and hopeless situations so that *Life* is snatched back from certain *Death*. These variations reinforce to the reader, singer, and hearer that this *Life-from-Death* pattern is at the very heart of Yahweh's nature. We can therefore surely trust him for *Life*.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: Prophet

L13 Art Description: On the left is a mountaintop covered with rich foods, above which hovers a shroud that at its right-hand end is disappearing as it is swallowed by a mouth. On the right, is a valley full of skeleton parts in which a mighty warrior is standing with sword and shield held high.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 25:6-8; Ezekiel 37:1-14 (can split study/group)

Theme Ideas: The Isaiah passage speaks of a great day to come when *Death* (called 'the great swallower' of *Life* in ancient cultures) itself is swallowed up by *Life*. God will do something cosmic about *death* on this mountain (Zion, Jerusalem), providing a *Life*-feast for people of every nation, not just for the Jews. This mysterious mountain is at the center of Yahweh's mediatory and *Life*-bringing work (Moriah, Araunah's threshing floor, Jerusalem, Temple, Calvary). Similarly, the meaning of the dry bones story is that no one is so *dead* – even if buried and entirely decayed away – that God cannot bring them back to the fullness of *Life*. So here we see Yahweh showing in prophetic imagery an even more fantastic and existentially profound *Life* than was seen with Isaac, the Passover, the sea parting, and Araunah's threshing floor. He will restore the essence of *Life* that we forfeited when we sinned and inherited un-lives of slow toil, pain and *Death* at the Fall. The prophets speak of a quality of divine *Life* greater than what we think is *Life* itself.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: Remnant

L15 Art Description: A large crowned King comes through a small doorway and explodes in rage upon seeing Haman kneeling with his hands on the knees of the seated, crowned, and alarmed Queen Esther.

Bible Texts: Book of Esther (the artwork is of 7:8)

Theme Ideas: God is unmentioned in this book about the attempted *genocide* of the Jews and therefore of the Messianic *Life*-line. Yet the prior, powerful, and permanent *Life*-sustaining work of Yahweh in bringing *Life* in the place of *Death* to his people sings out from every line. Mordecai knows it (4:14). Especially in 2:8-9, 17, 22; 3:1, 7; 6:1-13; 7:8 and 9:1 we see how various divine coincidences are orchestrated to determine the blessed rescue of God's people from the jaws of *Death*. Here even the mortal enemies of Israel recognize (6:13) the irresistible *Life*-preserving power of the God of the Jews. But it is *much* bigger than this: follow the *Life*-hand of Yahweh through these verses for a *big* surprise! Ex 17:8-16; Num 24:20; Deut 25:17-19; 1 Sam 10:21 (tribe?); 1 Sam 15; Esther 3:13; 8:2, 9-9:16; then 2:5 (tribe?!)... Haman is an 'Agagite' – which sounds like and is the Persian translation of...?!

← Notes ↓



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

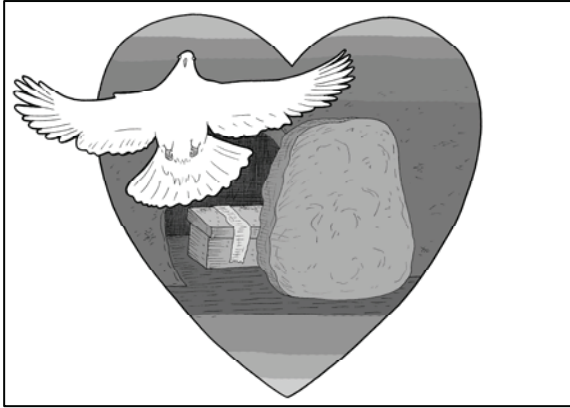
Theme: Life
Era: Jesus

L17 Art Description: Jesus with hands raised, facing tomb door with wrapped body emerging.

Bible Texts: John 1:4; 5:24-26; 6:51, 57; 11:1-57

Theme Ideas: Jesus is not merely the one who brings or saves *Life*, but is *Life* itself. He is *Life* personified. He has *Life* in himself and does not merely rescue people from imminent *death* (as with scenes so far through the OT), but has enough *Life* to be able to rescue people who have passed even beyond *Death*. The stories of Jairius' daughter and the widow of Nain's son show glimpses of his *Life*-Power. This story about Lazarus and his sisters is crafted to emphasize that the bodily resurrection of Lazarus is merely an evidence for a much greater fact: this man Jesus is *himself* "the *Resurrection* and the *Life*" who shall bring the same *Death*-transcending *Life* to all who trust in him.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: The Church

L20 Art Description: A dove flying out of the door of the empty tomb, which is set in the side of heart (rather than the side of the mountain).

Bible Texts: Romans 5:5; 8:10-11; Ephesians 1:19-2:6; 3:16, 19; Colossians 3:1-4, 7; Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:17-19; (can split study/group here) 1Cor 15:1-58; 2 Corinthians 4:7-6:10; John 3:5-6; 4:14; 14:23; 17:26; Hebrews 2:14-15

Theme Ideas: Divine Resurrection *Life* now lives inside human hearts. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit in each one of us mediates His *Life* to us in a world of *Death*. This *Life* addresses Humanity's darkest fears: Judgment, Condemnation, *Death*, Abandonment, and Damnation. Even as *Death* works its power over our bodies and works in this world, Heaven's *Life* rises triumphant in us, in those with whom we share it, and in His church on earth. We groan, but our troubles will prove light and momentary as our last enemy, *Death*, is swallowed up in victory. ↙ Notes ↘



**Theme 1: Life restored,
salvation from Death**

Theme: Life
Era: New Creation

L24 Art Description: A trumpet blares. A line of opened graves fan out with healthy pink feet disappearing off the top of the frame (people raised to life into the air). A black silhouette of the Grim Reaper falls inverted into flames ("Death is swallowed up forever"). The large Book of Life with lists of names.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 26, 55; 2 Timothy 1:10; Revelation 20:12, 14

Theme Ideas: When the trumpet sounds, all who trusted Jesus will be resurrected into *Life Eternal*. *Death* itself will die, swallowed up by *Life*. Our bodies will be raised "in glory", "in power", as "spiritual", and "imperishable". We shall "bear the likeness of the Heavenly Man". Resurrection *Life* will be divine, external, internal, and eternal. "In Him was *Life*," and so we trust (Col 3:3-4) saying: ↳ Notes ↓

"For you died,
- and your *Life*
--- is hid
----- with Christ
----- in God.
----- When Christ
--- appears,
- who is our *Life*,
then you also will appear with Him in glory".

Reflections on the Stream of 'LIFE vs. Death'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'LIFE' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

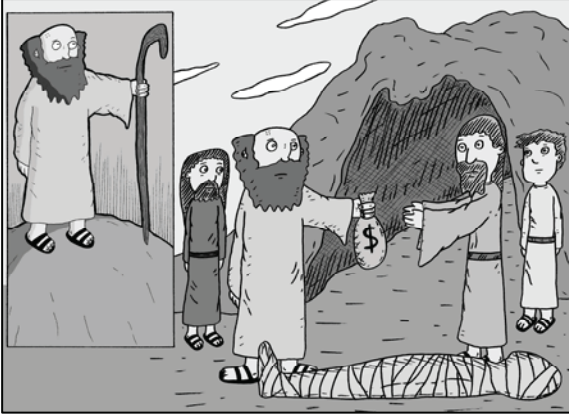
What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

Theme 2: REST

At the Creation, Adam & Eve had the very REST of the LORD granted to them. YAHWEH declared and celebrated His own SABBATH REST after all his work of Creation (Gen 2:1-3), embracing Adam, Eve and all Creation into it with Him!

But their Restless Rebellion ensured that Adam and Eve, and all we Heirs of Disobedience are condemned to seek but never find REST. Their strivings could do nothing to restore themselves to REST!

Could YAHWEH, and would He, make even the RESTLESS able to find His true REST?



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

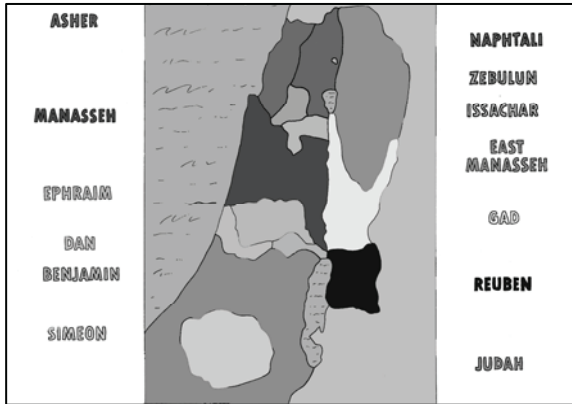
Theme: Rest
Era: Patriarchs

R5 Art Description: A combined image of (a) a figure (Abraham) holding a shepherd's staff standing on mountaintop looking afar and, (b) in the side of mountain is a cave with a wrapped corpse (Sarah) lying before it, with two men (Abraham and Ephron) exchanging a money bag while watched by witnesses.

Bible Texts: Genesis 12:1; 13 (especially vv. 14-15); 23 (can split 23 to 2nd study/group)

Theme Ideas: Having much earlier promised Abram "a land I will show you" for his eternal *Rest* that he had never seen, here in Gen 13 Yahweh gives him a 360^o view of the real thing and expands the promise with greater generosity. While Abram only lives in a tent, he trusts Yahweh. When the time is ripe he buys a burial plot to *Rest* the family bones. This is radical trust because in these cultures bones not laid to *Rest* in one's homeland with one's father's bones were believed to curse the spirit of the deceased to an existence of eternal wandering – *Restlessness* forever! Every reader knew Abraham should *Rest* the bones of Sarah and himself with their ancestors' bones in Ur or in Haran. Instead, Abraham invests big money in buying *Rest* in the Promised Land, knowing that *this* shall be his Family's Eternal Home.

← Notes ↓



Theme 2: Rest restored, salvation from Distress

Theme: Rest
Era: Exodus and Conquest

R7 Art Description: A map of Canaan with original tribal divisions that is color-coded and labeled.

Bible Texts: Exodus 3:8; Deuteronomy 6:10-11; 8:7-10; Joshua 10-21, especially 21:43ff

Theme Ideas: God fulfilled his promises to Abraham, Jacob-Israel, and the Israelites by giving their descendants *Rest* in the Promised Land. In these ancient times of warlords and marauding tribes, a secure city, water, arable land, and property in a permanent family-line inheritance were of inestimable value. Yahweh delivers the entire people into a beautiful homeland, spacious and fertile (it only became barren since the Middle Ages), abundant in fruits and vines, rich with minerals, "flowing with milk and honey", complete with ready-made walled cities, cisterns, food stores, fields of crops, and vineyards. This is the *Rest* of all their dreams and of his promises.

← Notes

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**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

Theme: Rest
Era: Kings

R9 Art Description: A man grins at the viewer while relaxed on a reclining chair beneath a vine and a fig tree with a wine glass in his hand.

Bible Texts: 1 Kings 4:25 and surrounding chapters

Theme Ideas: The people of God now lived in a land at *Rest*. David had conquered all of Israel's enemies so effectively that they were all trading with and paying tribute to Solomon at this time. Israel thrived under a king (Solomon) whose very name means *Peace*. To have one's own property with vines and fig trees is a sign of a secure food and drink supply for the future. Fig trees were good to rest under because of their shade, and they were also places of private prayer. Apparently Nathaniel prayed privately under one such canopy (John 1:48). So we have here a Hebrew formula-picture of wonderful earthly *Rest* and security. The modern equivalent to '*one's own vine and fig tree*' would be "*Every man was wealthy and secure enough to retire to a lakeside golf estate as a millionaire!*" It is the concrete fulfillment of God's promises of *Rest* for an entire nation.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

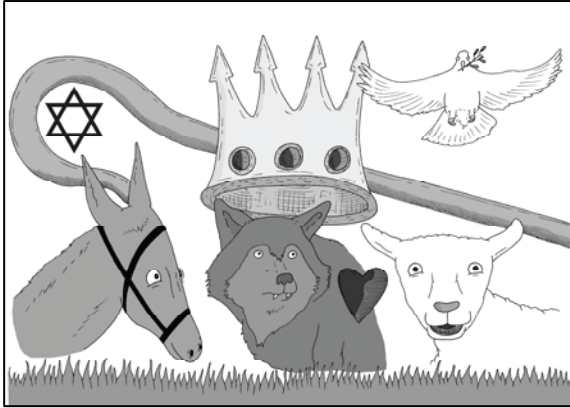
Theme: Rest
Era: Wisdom

R11 Art Description: A shepherd tenderly holds a lamb. Surrounding this anti-clockwise are Ps 23 images of grass, a stream, a path, a rod and a staff, a feast-filled table, anointing oil, a goblet, and the Temple.

Bible Texts: Psalm 23 (can split study/group v1-4 vs. v5-6):

Theme Ideas: Psalm 23 is the most well known of all the Psalms because it offers us an unmatched picture-promise of divine *Rest* and security. The Good Shepherd's heart is displayed in his care for the various aspects of the life of the sheep. He ensures that their needs are met and that their *Rest* is assured. David and Israel understood this to be an earthly parable of Yahweh's relationship with them, both as individuals and as his people-flock. The prayer-poem switches imagery between the sheep and the worshippers, between the grass and the temple, and between water and righteousness. Yahweh assures all who trust in him a *Rest* that gives comfort and peace, a *Rest* deep enough to face the threat of enemies and the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

Theme: Rest
Era: Prophets

R13 Art Description: A crown sits over a shepherd's crook that encircles a Star of David. A dove is carrying an olive leaf (peace symbol). Below is grass and the heads of a donkey, a wolf, and a lamb, with a love-heart symbol between latter two.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:6-10; (can split study/group here)
Ezekiel 34:22-31; 37:23-31; Zechariah 9:9-11; Micah 5:2-5

Theme Ideas: Key words to look for here are Peace, Prince, Promise, and Proclaim. The Ezekiel passages have post-Davidic prophecies of a figure that would be a combination of David-King-Shepherd-Peace-Blessing-Covenant of *Peace*. The Zechariah passage speaks of a king riding on a donkey's colt (instead of a warhorse) who will be associated with the breaking of the battle bow and the proclaiming of *peace* (instead of the declaring of war) to the Nations. The Isaiah passages speak of a coming Prince of *Peace* and his Place of *Rest*, through whom the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the goat, the calf and lion, and the infant and cobra will all be at *Peace*. Micah reveals that this glorious, ruling, powerful, shepherd-king from Bethlehem will not only bring, but also *be* their *Peace!* ← Notes ↓



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

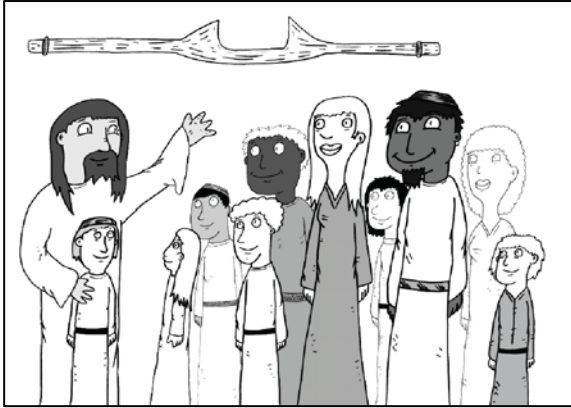
Theme: Rest
Era: Remnant

R15 Art Description: Priest-musicians celebrate and sing with musical instruments and carry palm branches while marching single file along the top of the city wall. In the background, the same scene is silhouetted.

Bible Texts: Nehemiah 12:27-43 (read story from 2:11 through to chapter 12)

Theme Ideas: Despite many threats and hardships, the people of the Remnant were able to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem because of Yahweh's provision and protection. The walls of an ancient city were the essential means of having *Rest* from threats. Recall that even Nebuchadnezzar's army – the greatest military power on earth – had taken two full years to break through Jerusalem's walls. The Remnant of Israel celebrated the completion of their *Rest-Wall* with a great, sacred celebration before Yahweh.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

Theme: Rest
Era: Jesus

R17 Art Description: Jesus faces a small crowd, smiling and teaching a group of people of mixed ages and genders. Jesus has one hand upon a child. An oxen's yoke hovers above the scene.

Bible Texts: Matthew 11:25-29 (Jesus quotes Exodus 33:14); contrast Matthew 23:4; see also 1 John 5:3; Ephesians 2:14-18; Colossians 1:20-22

Theme Ideas: So far, we have seen *Rest* as a promise being fulfilled in physical space and time for a few Patriarchs, then a People, then a Nation, then for the Remnant. The Wisdom and Prophets spoke of rest in poetic, symbolic and supernatural terms. Now Jesus is all these things together in one person. He tells of a *Rest* that will not be merely material and geographical, but will be "*rest for your souls.*" This is internal, spiritual, relational, eternal, and transcending any *UnRest* we may know in space and time, even persecution and Death. Best of all, this *Rest* is his own Divine *Rest*. Our *Rest* is a Person!

← Notes ↓



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

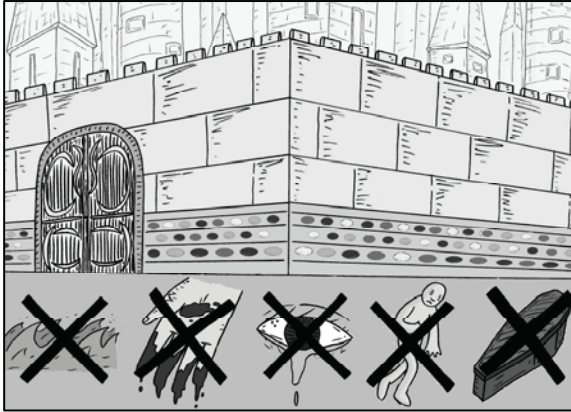
Theme: Rest
Era: The Church

R20 Art Description: The Temple Curtain hangs down. A person at the left of the curtain, who cannot see through it, is tied around the waist with a rope that goes straight through the curtain where it is tied to a large anchor held tightly to his own chest by a smiling, crowned Jesus.

Bible Texts: Hebrews 6:18-20; 10:20 (can see also 3:5-4:11; 11:10, 16; these can also be caught up into Cell R24)

Theme Ideas: As an anchor gives a ship *Rest* and security in the storm, so God's Word and Promises are for us our hope and an anchor for the soul. This anchor rope ties us through the temple curtain into the inner sanctuary, a place more secure than any place in this cosmos. Jesus has already gone before and for us as our Great High Priest, and by his own righteousness and divine nature has atoned for our sin, securing our righteousness, new nature, and eternal destination. In Christ our *Rest* is now unshakeable and irrevocable.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 2: Rest restored,
salvation from Distress**

Theme: Rest
Era: New Creation

R24 Art Description: A huge city wall, buildings, and towers reach into the sky. Walls of gold with foundations of gems form the outer city. Along the bottom edge are five symbols, each with a black 'X' through them showing that they are crossed out, that they won't be there: waves (of sea), a hand with blood on it, a tear dripping from an eye, a man collapsing holding his stomach in pain, and a coffin.

Bible Texts: Revelation 21:1, 4, 8, 10-27; Hebrews 3:5-4:11; 11:10, 16; John 14:2-3

Theme Ideas: The 'City with Foundations', with its utter security, is the place of *Rest* we have always sought. It is free from the perpetual *unrest*-chaos of the sea (and thus of Rahab-SeaMonster-Satan), free of sin and suffering, free of pain, loss and sorrow. We are finally at Home with Jesus and the Father. Ah, such *Rest!* ← Notes ↓

Reflections on the Stream of 'REST vs. Restlessness'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'REST' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

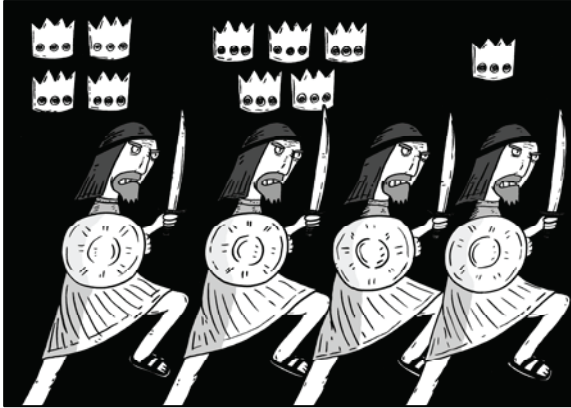
What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

Theme 3: **RULE**

At the Creation, Adam & Eve were personally appointed into the very **RULE** of YAHWEH. He granted them Dominion over all Creation (Gen 1:26-30, commanding them to subdue and master it, and honoring them with the Power to Name every Creature!

But Rebelling against the true **RULER** broke their **RULE**! A Serpent guides a Man?! Their own Dominion now swallows them in the dust from which they came! They could do nothing to restore themselves to **RULE**!

Could YAHWEH, and would He, overturn their **DEFEAT** to restore them to **RULE**?



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

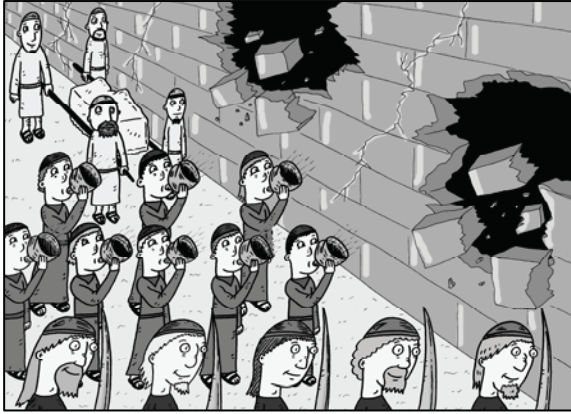
Theme: Rule
Era: Patriarchs

U5 Art Description: A cluster of four crowns, then another of five crowns (representing the 4 vs. 5 kings), then one solo crown (Abraham's) run across the top. The foreground shows four armed men running.

Bible Texts: Genesis 14:1-16; 17; 22:17

Theme Ideas: Adam and Eve were given dominion over the world in every way, but this was fractured and degraded at the Fall. In the early chapters of Genesis we see *Dominion* corrupted and then unraveled at Babel. We also see kings and empires come and go. Soon after this, the Chosen One, Abraham (still as Abram), reaches the Promised Land, there is another oppressive development in the fallen *Rule* of Men: unjust war has broken out to the southeast of Abraham's tent between a group of five kings and another group of four kings. The invaders capture Abraham's nephew Lot. Abraham and his three colleagues pursue the winning army with only 318 men, and yet they conquer. Abraham acknowledged God as the source of his victory and refused to *Rule* from the wealth offered to him by men (the released kings). Then God promises Abraham the *Rule* of Kings from his line in Genesis 17. In life he tasted just an aspect and a moment of *Rule* – a brief dominion – and was given the promise of more to come - one day.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

Theme: Rule
**Era: Exodus and
Conquest**

U7 Art Description: Jericho's walls collapse. The Israelites march beside the wall. Warriors are followed by a group of priests blowing rams' horns. Priests follow them carrying the Ark of the Covenant on poles as it is hidden beneath a cloth covering. Stones in the wall are disintegrating and holes are opening.

Bible Texts: Joshua 2; 5:13-6:27

Theme Ideas: By God's dominion (under the 'Commander of Yahweh's Armies' in 5:13), Joshua conquers Jericho and begins to establish *Dominion-Rule* for God's people over their enemies in Canaan. In this case, Yahweh demonstrates his utter *Rule* by bringing Israel victory without them even fighting. He grants Joshua victory after victory to the degree that the Israelites trust Yahweh. No one can withstand their *Rule*.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

Theme: Rule
Era: Kings

U9 Art Description: A map of the Middle East during the time of David and Solomon. It shows a glowing circle from Jerusalem. Glow-lines shoot out from Jerusalem to a large crown. A branch of hyssop and some creatures from the 'Creation' artwork are shown in the central area of the map.

Bible Texts: 2 Samuel 5, 8, 12:29-31; 1 Kings 4:20-34; 2 Chronicles 9, especially verses 13, 19, 22-28

Theme Ideas: The name Solomon means 'Peace'. God gave rest and *Rule* over vast domains. His people had *Dominion* over all the traditional enemies (symbolizing all the enemies of the domain/kingdom of Yahweh). What God had done in a minor way for Abraham he did in a major way for Joshua. Now he is doing it on an international scale for David and Solomon. How does First Kings 4:33 help us see all these grand images in light of Genesis 1:28ff?! ← Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

Theme: Rule

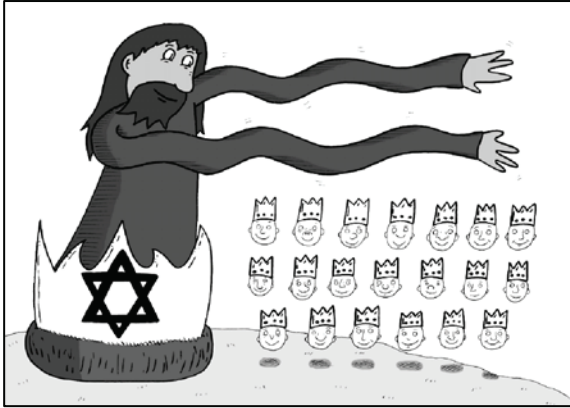
Era: Wisdom

U11 Art Description: A great king, crowned and enthroned, has his arms outstretched in power and blessing. With his scepter in one hand, and while gesturing blessing with the other, he reaches over different peoples, creatures, the curve of the earth, and deep space.

Bible Texts: Psalms 8; 45; 72

Theme Ideas: In Psalm 8 we are reminded that Yahweh's assignment of Adam and Eve to *Rule* over the earth still stands as evidence of the incredible God-like honor that Yahweh bestows upon all their descendents. God's image, though corrupted, still stands in his *Ruling* place. Psalm 45 is a commemorative poem marking the glorious coronation of King Solomon over Israel. Here he stands as Yahweh's King, a warrior of righteousness, *Ruling* in splendor and in the character of Yahweh. His throne and God's are one. Yet is he almost superhuman? In Psalm 72, we read of coronation blessings upon a coming King who is *infinitely* full of righteousness and redemption, rescuing the many, and even *ruling* from sea to sea - eternally! Wisdom reveals that Man's earthly *Rule*, and Yahweh's beautiful *Rule*, will one day be completed and fulfilled far beyond Adam's loss and imagination.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

Theme: Rule
Era: Prophets

U13 Art Description: The torso and head of a large figure stretches his arms out over an array of numerous crown-bearing heads. His unnaturally long arms have waves as if they were banners flapping in breeze. A large crown bearing the Star of David covers what would be his waist.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 11:10-16; Daniel 4:13-14; 7:21-27

Theme Ideas: The prophets make associations about a Messianic figure who will be a banner (Isa. 11:10,12 signify flags/ standards of war/ *Rule*) to the people, who will be a king, who shall defeat all enemies, who shall have global dominion and whose *Rule* will make the people of Yahweh kings themselves! What God had done in literal history, he now foreshadows as trans-literal/spiritual/internal aspects of the *Dominion* he is restoring for and in his fallen creation through his promises to Abraham.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 3: Rule restored, salvation from Subjugation

Theme: **Rule**
Era: **Remnant**

U15 Art Description: A stone tablet bearing part of the Ten Commandments is overlapped by a scroll bearing text from Artaxerxes' letter to Ezra. Across both of these is a block and gavel. (An ancient scepter would be a less recognizable, but more appropriate symbol of royal decree and authority).

Bible Texts: 2 Chronicles 26; Isaiah 44-45; (can split study/group here)
Ezra 1; 6; 7:11; Nehemiah 2:1-9

Theme Ideas: Yahweh the Divine *Ruler* stirred the *foreign* conquering powers and military authorities to establish civil power and authority for the people of Yahweh, under Yahweh, and over their enemies, back in their own land! These enemy emperors even paid extravagant amounts for many thousands of Jews to return and set up God's *Rule* in his Theocratic Kingdom! Isaiah prophesied about the pagan emperor Cyrus *by name* ~140 years before the exile. The Jewish historian Josephus recorded that when Cyrus read these prophecies, "an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written"! The Book of Esther also provides rich examples of this, with Mordecai's power being an example of supernaturally provided *Dominion* through the grace of God.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

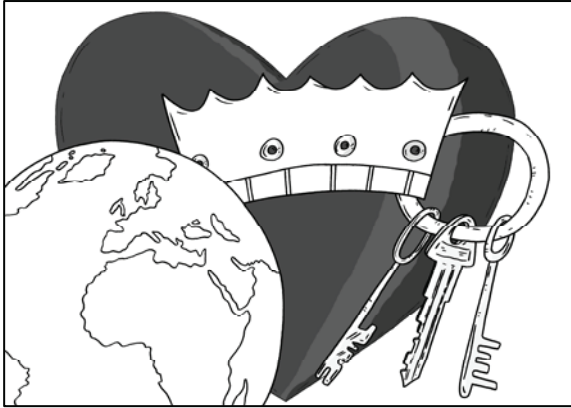
Theme: Rule

Era: Jesus

U17 Art Description: The picture shows two palm branches, Jesus riding a donkey, a basin of water with a hand washing a foot, and Jesus on the cross.

Bible Texts: Matthew 20:17-19, 29-34; 21:1-11 (in context of Zechariah 9:9-11); John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:5-10; Colossians 2:13-15

Theme Ideas: In King Jesus we find a radical re-conception of what *Rule* and *Dominion* really mean. We see a King riding in victory on a colt instead of a warrior's stallion. We see a King who does the work of the lowest slave by washing filthy feet. We see a King who gives his own Life for his people. We see a King who is not of this world. This King will use his own suffering and defeat to overthrow all the evils of the world and Hell, overwhelming all empires with the *Dominion* of the love of Yahweh (see Phil 2 and Col 2 references). ↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

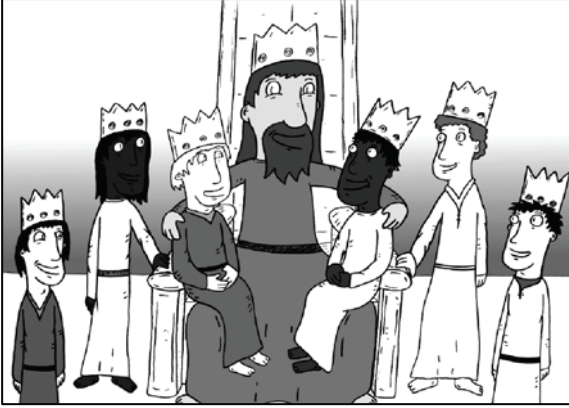
Theme: Rule
Era: The Church

U20 Art Description: A giant heart in the background is covered by a crown, keys on a key-ring, and an image of planet earth.

Bible Texts: Regarding reign in church and world, see: Matthew 16:16-19; 28:16-20; Colossians 1:18. Regarding his reigning inside (can split study/group here), see: Romans 5:17, 21; 6:12; 8:37; Ephesians 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:15

Theme Ideas: The new kingdom is no longer geographical, but is spiritual and human. In Matthew 16, Jesus speaks of the new *Rule* in the Church in terms of Keys, a Rock and the Gates of Hell. In Chapter 28, as *Ruler-King*, Jesus gives the Great Commission of the Lord of the Harvest. From this time on the *dominion* of his kingdom spreads out over to the Gentiles, becoming international, pan-ethnic, trans-political, and spreading through the centuries. Yet the *Rule* restored is within human hearts rather than merely over human behaviors or boundaries. His people reign in life and find power over their gravest enemies – Sin, Death and Satan – because of what Jesus does to *Rule* their eternal destinies.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 3: Rule restored,
salvation from Subjugation**

Theme: Rule
Era: New Creation

U24 Art Description: A smiling, crowned Jesus is seated on his throne. His arms are stretched out to embrace a number of crowned people sitting on his lap, on the arms of throne, and standing beside him. This signifies reigning with him.

Bible Texts: Daniel 7:14, 17-18, 27; Revelation 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 22:5

Theme Ideas: Various texts point to a day when God's people will *Rule* with Him, having His own authority over the nations. They will co-habit God's throne and be a kingdom of King-Priests. These texts will be consummated when the scene of Revelation 22 comes true. We will reign with Him in that *dominion* that he originally conferred to Adam and Eve, and that He restored, fulfilled, and expanded in Christ. In the Second Adam we shall share *Dominion* over His New Creation – this time without Sin – forever.

↳ Notes ↓

Reflections on the Stream of 'RULE vs. Defeated'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'RULE' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

Theme 4: BLESSING

At the Creation, Adam & Eve had the very BLESSING of the LORD pronounced upon them (Gen 1:28). They lived in the Sabbath BLESSING with Yahweh (2:3) and enjoyed the gift of all things and the outrageous BLESSINGS of His Royal Garden!

But the BLESSING was forfeited when the Giver was Renounced. CURSES and PUNISHMENTS followed. They could do nothing to regain their Original BLESSING!

Could YAHWEH, and would He, reach past CURSE and PUNISHMENT to bring them back into BLESSING?



**Theme 4: Blessing restored,
salvation from Curse**

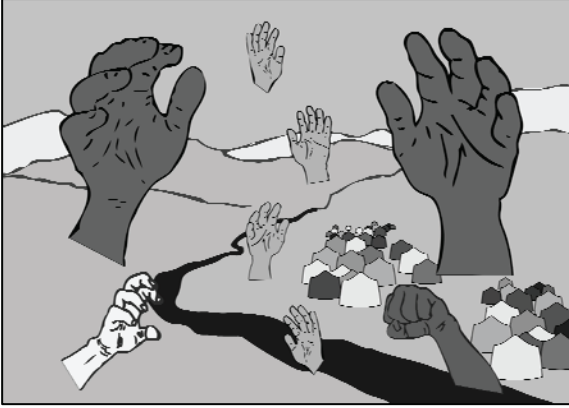
Theme: Blessing
Era: Patriarchs

B5 Art Description: Tracks in the sand are comprised of a central line of human footprints (Abraham's), lines representing cartwheels of a cart laden with wealth, then camel prints to the left and horseshoe prints (means 'donkeys') to the right. Next are cattle prints to the left and sheep/goat prints to the right. Finally come human footprints on the outside signifying servants and slaves.

Bible Texts: Genesis 12:10-17; 20; 26:1-14

Theme Ideas: The relationships between Abraham's line and the nations of idolaters who are their enemies (especially the Egyptians and Philistines) are typified by *Blessings* flowing *from* the enemies *to* Abraham/Israel. These strange stories in Gen 12, 20 and 26 have either zero or negative moral merit but stand instead as a witness to the immutability of God's promises to '*bless* those who *bless* you' and '*curse* those who *curse* you,' regardless of Abraham's virtue or lack thereof. The few scenes mentioned here are the first of many similar racial exchanges in the Old Testament history of God's people.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 4: Blessing restored, salvation from Curse

Theme: Blessing
Era: Exodus and Conquest

B7 Art Description: Two violent hands coming up from below threaten four blessing hands running down the center. The two huge blessing hands of Yahweh overshadow all the others. Behind all these is an image of the tents of Israel beside the Jordan River and the Promised Land.

Bible Texts: Numbers 22-24

Theme Ideas: The two aggressive hands stand for the evil king Balak and the evil sorcerer Balaam, the key human actors in this story. The four *Blessing* hands stand for the four benevolent *Blessings* that Balaam unwittingly pronounced over Israel. The vast background hands are the *Blessing* hands of God upon his people that overrule Balak and Balaam and cause the four *Blessings* pronounced by Balaam. God's promise to *Bless* Abraham and his families has now expanded to *Bless* over a million of Abraham's descendants with supernatural benevolence. The *Curses* of Balak, Balaam, and their master, Satan are impotent beneath Yahweh's *Blessing*. ↙ Notes ↘



**Theme 4: Blessing restored,
salvation from Curse**

Theme: Blessing
Era: Kings

B9 Art Description: The Queen of Sheba sits in a litter atop an adorned camel as part of a caravan traveling to Jerusalem to visit Solomon, King of Israel.

Bible Texts: 1 Kings 4:20-34; 9:10-28; 10; 2 Chronicles 9

Theme Ideas: God had fully *Blessed* his chosen people with every conceivable earthly *blessing*, including wealth, wisdom, peace, rule, safety, tribute, science, knowledge, fame, art, etc. The astounded Queen of Sheba recognizes that these unparalleled *Blessings* come from Yahweh. All of the *Blessings* promised to Abraham are now fulfilled in concrete terms except the last one of Genesis 12:3. This one will not come until God has shown his people that no measure of earthly *Blessing* will be enough to save them from their soul-disease of sin. This requires a fundamental *Blessing* that will come with the Messiah.

↳ Notes ↓



**Theme 4: Blessing restored,
salvation from Curse**

**Theme: Blessing
Era: Wisdom**

B11 Art Description: The top line shows a boy with a '7', a girl with a '3', a sheep, a camel, an ox, a donkey, and a set of people. The bottom row shows the same symbols in this order: sheep, camel, ox, donkey, boy '7', girl '3', and a set of people (descending in size this time). Center left shows a healthy tree beside a smooth stream with a happy man reading a scroll sitting in the top branches. Right center shows the same waterline turned rough as ocean waves from which a tower rises; a happy man prays in the top of the tower.

Bible Texts: Job 1:1-5; 42:10ff; Psalms 1; 32; see also (not in artwork) Psalms 21; 67; 112; 115; 128. (Can split study/group: Job & Ps. 32; Ps. 1, 112, 128; Ps. 21, 67, 115).

Theme Ideas: Psalm 1 celebrates the *Blessing* of Yahweh upon the one who keeps away from sin and trusts in Yahweh's word alone. Psalm 32 celebrates how Yahweh can extend the *Blessing* of forgiveness even to the one who has rebelled against him. Both Psalms mention water but with opposite meanings. Job's period of horrific suffering was preceded (top line of images) and followed (bottom line of images) by vast material *Blessings*. With such book-endings, as well as Job's final prayers, wisdom asks us whether even his sufferings might be part of Yahweh's *Blessings*...

↳ Notes ↵



Theme 4: Blessing restored, salvation from Curse

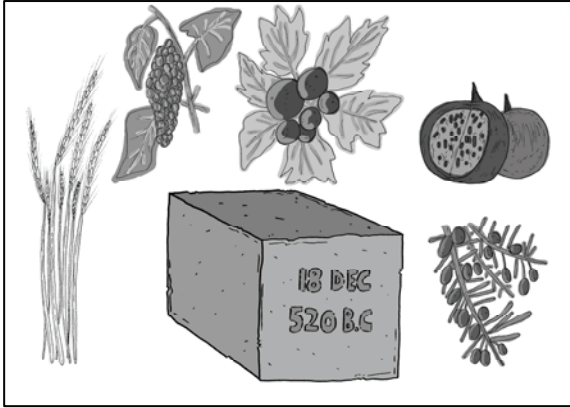
Theme: Blessing
Era: Prophets

B13 Art Description: Three men each dressed in their culture's garments represent the Egyptians, the Israelites, and the Assyrians. Behind these people runs a highway from Egypt through Israel to Assyria. The giant blessing hands of God are also behind them.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 19:1-17 contrasted to verses 18-25, especially the last two verses. See also Isaiah 11:11, 15-16.

Theme Ideas: Assyria has conquered and dispersed the northern ten tribes into other nations, leaving only two Israelite tribes in the south. For centuries the faithful in Israel cry out that Yahweh's *Blessings* seem to be withdrawn because of their idolatry and apostasy. Yet the prophets hold out hope in the visions God gives them as promises. In these prophecies, we see that the *Blessings* of God will not only defeat Israel's traditional enemies, but will then include them in the *Blessings* of the chosen people. They announce that a day will come when the *Blessing* of Yahweh is going to 'escape' from the chosen ones and embrace even the most lost of her enemy nations!

← Notes ↓



Theme 4: Blessing restored, salvation from Curse

Theme: Blessing
Era: Remnant

B15 Art Description: The Temple foundation corner stone is displayed with the front face bearing the date 18 Dec 520 B.C. Images of wheat stalks, a grapevine, a fig tree, a pomegranate tree and an olive tree sit in the background.

Bible Texts: Haggai, especially 2:18-19

Theme Ideas: The Israelites who returned as the Remnant of Yahweh's people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, but gave up on their responsibility to rebuild the Temple. Many troubles, followed by the prophet Haggai and the priest-prophet Zechariah, were sent by God to chastise and stir up the people. Haggai explained that their economic suffering was God's specific punishment for their sins of materialism. They cared more for establishing their houses on earth than for the House of God on Earth. They repented and quickly got back to work. On a winter day, after their poor crops and before even the planting of their fields, they re-set the foundation stone of the Temple. God immediately decreed that their crops and livelihoods would thrive, promising that, "from this day onward I will *Bless* you!" ← Notes ↓



**Theme 4: Blessing restored,
salvation from Curse**

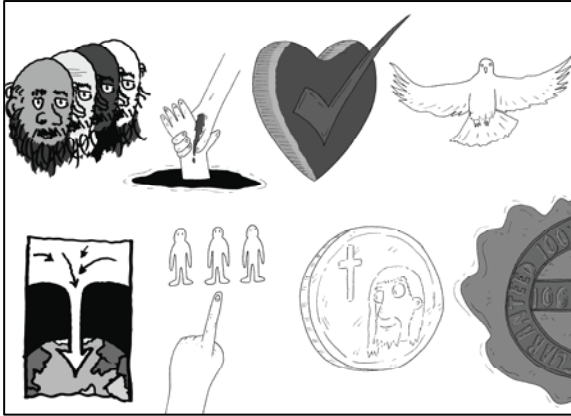
Theme: Blessing
Era: Jesus

B17 Art Description: Jesus holds high two decorated jugs (the wrapped present and Bible scroll stand for 'grace' and 'truth' respectively) and pours them onto the viewer as the Father's hands do the same from above into Jesus' head.

Bible Texts: Matthew 5:1-12; 13:16-17; John 1:14-16; Acts 13:34; Romans 15:29

Theme Ideas: In the Beatitudes – 'the *Blessings*' – Jesus expresses and confers *Blessing* upon *Blessing* of God to his people in fresh and inner ways. Against the background of the *Curse* of the Fall and the *Blessings-and-Curses* of the Sinai Covenant, here Jesus pronounces *Blessings* upon all those children of Adam and Abraham who are being joined into His *blessedness*. These Beatitudes are *not* moral instructions but are straightforward declarations and promises from God – i.e., *Blessings*! There is no end of the *Blessing* bought for us by Jesus. "From the fullness of his grace we have all received *Blessing* upon *Blessing*." John contrasts this above the Law and describes it as "grace and truth".

← Notes ↓



Theme 4: Blessing restored, salvation from Curse

Theme: **Blessing** Era: **The Church**

B20 Art Description: Four symbols comprise the top row: the bearded faces of some prophets (e.g. Moses, Isaiah, Samuel, Jeremiah, Daniel); a nail-scarred hand reaching down to rescue an upraised hand from a black hole; a red heart with a tick of health across it; and a white dove. Similarly on the bottom row there is: a picture of heaven's glory spearing down to earth; an arm reaching up with finger choosing the second of three people; a coin showing the head of Christ and the cross; and a seal certifying "Guaranteed" and "100%" impressed upon red wax.

Bible Texts: Acts 3:18-25 (image 1); Acts 3:26 (image 2); Galatians 3:6-14 (image 3); Galatians 3:14b (image 4); (can split study/group here) Ephesians 1:3 (image 5); Ephesians 1:4-6 (image 6); Ephesians 1:7-12 (image 7); Ephesians 1:13-14 (image 8)

Theme Ideas: In Acts 3, Peter tells of how the new Christians had become heirs of all the *Blessings* promised through each of the prophets of old because Jesus was the 'Seed' promised to Abraham "through whom all peoples of the earth will be *Blessed*". Acts 3:26 says that the *Blessing* is first delivered when Jesus saves us from our sin. Galatians 3 explains how the 'Seed' *blessing* is that we are justified and made righteous by trust rather than by the Law. Verse 14b complements this by describing it as the receiving of the Spirit by trust. Like the Acts reference above, Ephesians 1:3 describes every heavenly *Blessing* that God gives us through Jesus. The next three verses describe the *Blessing* of being chosen, the following six describe the *Blessing* of being redeemed by his blood, and the final two describe the *Blessing* of being sealed securely by his Spirit for heaven, all "to the glory of God".

← Notes ↓



Theme 4: Blessing restored, salvation from Curse

Theme: Blessing
Era: New Creation

B24 Art Description: The Tree of Life sits beside the River of Life, with the torn Temple curtains down both sides.

Bible Texts: Genesis 2:8; 3:8, 24; 4:22-24; Exodus 26:31-35; Luke 23:43-45; Matthew 27:51-53; Revelation 2:7; 22:1-3, 14

Theme Ideas: The word 'Paradise', occurring three times in the Bible, refers to the private pleasure garden of a King that he shares with family and favored guests. Yahweh planted the paradise Garden of Eden and walked there "in the cool of the day" (Gen. 2:8; 3:8). It contained the very Tree of Life itself. However, in Genesis 3, our state of *Blessing* was broken by our sin and the *Curses* of the Fall (v.16+) and our access to this place was blocked by flame-wielding Cherubim (v.24). Yet we see in Exodus 26 that Yahweh shows Moses how to make a model of this Cherubim-guarded barrier between God and Man. In Leviticus (especially chapter 16), God shows exactly how this curtain barrier can only be overcome by pure, substitutionary, sacrificial blood. In Luke 23 we hear Jesus promise this re-opened paradise to the thief. Then God himself, at the exact moment of the death of Christ, tears open that Cherubim-adorned veil that symbolized Adam and Eve's expulsion! Matthew 27:51-53 foreshadows Revelation 2 and 22 where we read of 'The Day' where we will taste physically that which has been secured for us spiritually. The *Curse* will be gone, the barrier removed, the Paradise opened, and we shall see his face, taste Life, and be healed of Death itself. He calls us His '*Blessed*' forever!

↳ Notes ↓

Reflections on the Stream of 'BLESSING vs. Curses'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'BLESSINGS' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

Theme 5: PURITY

At the Creation, Adam & Eve had the very PURITY of the LORD bestowed upon them. They were made in the very Image of YAHWEH (Gen 1:26-27), and their Freedom from Sin was so complete that they enjoyed naked innocence without Shame (2:25).

But the first casualty of Sin was the burning sting of Shame as PURITY became indelibly Stained. They Hid from Yahweh and one another in Fear & Shame.

They could do nothing to unstain themselves back into PURITY!

Could YAHWEH, and would He,
cleanse the STAIN
and re-create their PURITY?



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

Theme: Purity

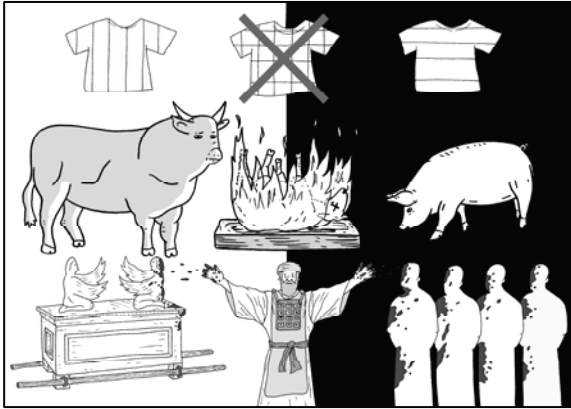
Era: Patriarchs

P5 Art Description: A black background with stars across the top refers to Genesis 15:5-6. One hand holds two knives representing the obedience of circumcision and of slaying Isaac in Genesis 17 and 22 respectively. The other hand holds a burning coal in a rag (Gen. 22:6). A wedding ring is at base of the image.

Bible Texts: Genesis 15:5-6; 17; 18:19; 22; 26:5; Leviticus 20:26

Theme Ideas: A wedding ring in marriage signifies being *cut off* from family and other suitors, a change of name, vows of faithfulness and kinship, new family bonds, new ownership and allegiance, and new identity. Circumcision is an ancient '*cut off*' rite symbolizing the same kind of separation for a particular relationship. It meant *Separation* from *Sin* and *belonging* to Yahweh. The new ownership was to then be expressed in new behaviors: "right and just" in Genesis 18:19, and "(keeping) my requirements, commands, decrees, laws" in 26:5. Along with God's election-adoption comes a heart of submission, obedience, trust, and faith (e.g., "Abraham believed God..." and gave immediate obedience in chapters 17 and 22, even to the uttermost of life and death in 22). So *Holiness* and '*set-apart-ness*'/'*cut-off-ness*' are neither negative nor moralistic. They are marital, as it is explained in Exodus 19:1-2, 5-6 and Leviticus 20:26. Holiness, unlike its opposite, moralism, is an ownership and relationship concept. Legalists love moralism; lovers love *Holiness*. *Holiness* is what Yahweh is to us, and what we are to be toward him: *set apart for beautiful intimacy*.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

Theme: Purity
Era: Exodus and Conquest

P7 Art Description: Across a divided black and white background, three rows of images run across the page. Top row: a T-shirt shaded green, then a T-shirt with green and yellow checks covered by a red 'X' signifying 'not allowed', and a yellow colored T-shirt. Center row: a bull, a burning sheep, and a pig. Bottom row: the Ark of the Covenant, four people as white silhouettes, and the high priest with ephod and turban in the middle center sprinkling blood spots onto the Ark with one hand and onto the people with other.

Bible Texts: Leviticus 19:19 for top images; Leviticus 11 for center images; Exodus 24:3-8; Leviticus 16 (esp. v.15-17) Leviticus 4; 5:6-7; 8:30; 9 for lower row. Exodus 19:1-2, 5-6; Leviticus 20:26; and especially Ezekiel 44:23 interpret them all. (Can split study/group by row, or top two rows vs. bottom row, but all need Ezek 44:23)

Theme Ideas: Top row: Cross-breeding/-planting/-weaving were banned in Israel. These acts were not bad in themselves but were symbolic dramas – daily object lessons to remind God's people never to confuse or mix the *holy* and the unclean in their religion or in their hearts. Center row: Animals were either '*clean*' (some even for sacrifices) and '*unclean*'. Many unclean animals had hygiene dangers (e.g., parasite carriers), but nearly all had associations with Death (scavenging, ugliness, dirtiness, carrion-eating). Diseases, deformities, menstruation, and mildew also functioned as convenient '*yucky*' symbols of *Sin's* contaminating corruption of the heart and land. Bottom row: The priesthood functioned as the mediators between *Sinful* humanity and the God of *Holiness*, bringing sacrificial blood to acknowledge and atone for the former's *Sin*. Ezekiel 44:23 beautifully interprets the meaning of the whole Levitical system: God is teaching the notion of *Holiness* – separation for relationship devotion – to the newly born nation of Israel, his bride.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

Theme: Purity

Era: Kings

P9 Art Description: King David stands behind a cart carrying the Ark gesturing in distress as he looks at the dead body of Uzzah below.

Bible Texts: 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13, 15-16; Joshua 7; Acts 5

Theme Ideas: After God gives great victories to David and Israel, the Israelites determine to bring the *Holy* Ark of their God into Jerusalem on a wave of triumphant nationalism and human wisdom. They have quickly re-interpreted God's powerful victories for Israel as evidences for human pride. But God's concern for *Purity* in relationships is always far greater than his interests in human power or success. In this great moment of salvation-history – the symbolic arrival of the conquering God-King (not David!) into the new national capital – Yahweh shows again that his agenda is *Holiness* rather than people-pleasing. Uzzah plays the symbolic role of the self-important Israelite who takes God for granted. Like Achan before him (Joshua 7), and Ananias and Sapphira long after (Acts 5), he pays the terrible price of arrogance. Three months later the Israelites complete the ceremony on Yahweh's *Holy* terms rather than on their own humanistic understanding, and great joy is the result.

← Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

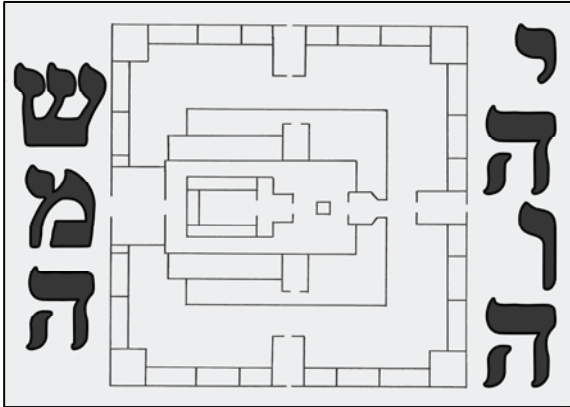
Theme: Purity

Era: Wisdom

P11 Art Description: Yahweh's Temple on Zion Hill and a branch of hyssop sprinkling water to one side and blood to the other are surrounded by the entire Hebrew alphabet (which runs right to left).

Bible Texts: Psalms 15; 51; 119

Theme Ideas: Left image: Psalm 15 asks the question, "Who can possibly ascend Yahweh's *Holy* Temple Hill into his presence?" The answer: the person who understands Yahweh's *Holiness* and conforms their life to Yahweh's goodness and *Purity* can come there. Right image: Psalm 51 tells of the way in which Yahweh himself provides the *Holiness* needed by those who come to him *stained* and disqualified by *Sin*. He provides a blood sacrifice that washes *Clean* the *Guilty* one who comes to him for mercy. (How do you think 15 fits with 51?). Alphabet: Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem, with each stanza beginning with one letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It reflects the loving servant's wholehearted A-to-Z affection for Yahweh's written words. Jesus, who survived Satan's strongest temptations by relying solely upon the trustworthiness of Yahweh's word, would no doubt have used this Psalm to express his *Holiness*=belonging=delight=devotion=trust for Yahweh alone. (Try reading it through Jesus' eyes?!) ↳ Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

Theme: Purity

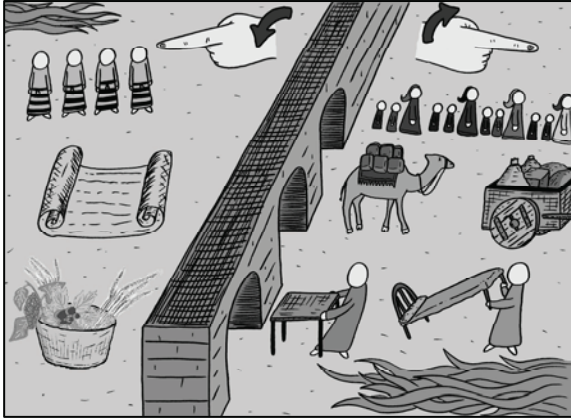
Era: Prophets

P13 Art Description: This is a blueprint of Ezekiel's Temple vision. The vertical lettering down the right hand side is Hebrew for 'Yahweh', and down the left hand side is Hebrew for 'Shammah.' (Hebrew reads from right to left.)

Bible Texts: Isaiah 1:4; 15-18; Joel 3:17-21; Ezekiel 7:23; 26-28; 36:16-29a; all of chapters 40-48, and especially 43:1-12; 47; 48:35; Zechariah 14:20

Theme Ideas: Against the context of a "Sinful nation...loaded with Guilt...a brood of evildoers...given to corruption," the Prophets began to speak of a day when Israel's *Holiness* would come from God's own *Holy* presence among them. This would not only occur in the New Temple, on Zion in Jerusalem, but would also occur in the formation of a New Heart within his people. These passages that speak of God's Presence (either on the hill or in the heart) all speak of his *Holiness* and its effect. This is symbolized by the last paragraphs of both Ezekiel and Zechariah that speak of even the horses' bells and the cooking pots of Jerusalem being *Holy* because – hear the Hebrew word play – Jerusalem ("Yerushayelim") is "Yahweh-Shammah" ('Yahweh-is-There'). What is the nature and effect of God's *Holiness*? Ezekiel 43 and 47 are poetically paired. In chapter 43, Yahweh's presence arrives from the east; in chapter 47, his living river pours out to the east. When the *Holy* God fills his *Holy* Temple, a miraculous spring brings Genesis 1 Life-trees and a re-creation even to deserts and seas of salty death. *Is this your concept of Holiness?*

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

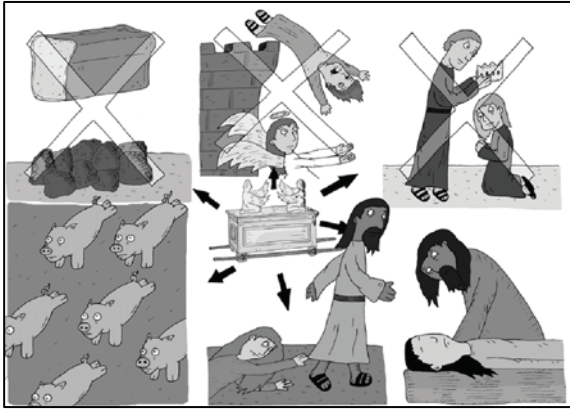
Theme: Purity
Era: Remnant

P15 Art Description: A city wall has three arched gates. Walking away from the back gate toward the right are women each with two children following them. By the same gate on the left are four priests with Rabbi's robes. Exiting the center gate to the right is a laden camel following a laden cart. To the opposite side is an open Bible scroll. Exiting the front gate to the right are two figures dragging furniture. Opposite them on the left is a basket containing agricultural tithes. Above all these are two giant pointing hands as headers: one pointing to the left and labeled with an 'in' arrow, and the other to the right, labeled with an 'out' arrow. In the top left corner is a tuft of hair. In the bottom right corner are more tufts of scribbled hair.

Bible Texts: Ezra 9:3; Nehemiah chapters 8-10 and 13

Theme Ideas: The wall shows the separation Ezra and Nehemiah enacted between the *Holy* and the *Unholy*. Foreign wives and children were driven away. Priests were brought back from exile into ministry. The Word was restored (Neh. 8), and the Sabbath Traders were expelled (Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22). The tithes were collected again (Neh. 10:32; 13:10-13), and profane men such as Tobiah and Jehoiada's sons were driven out (Neh. 13:1-9, 28). Ezra demonstrated a concern for *Holiness* when he pulled out his own beard in grief. Nehemiah followed suit when he tore out the beards of other lawbreakers in rage. While some of these stories seem legalistic and cruel to us, in the context, they are acts of remarkable grace. Ezra and Nehemiah recognized (Neh. 9) that the pseudo-virtue of 'tolerance' was a terrifying replay of the immoral *un-holiness* that had so recently led to the almost-annihilation of Israel in the Exile.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

Theme: Purity

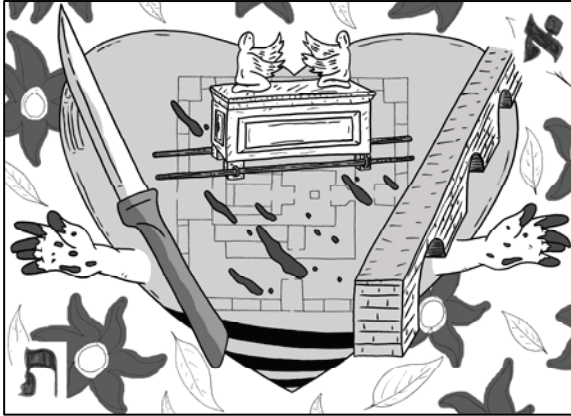
Era: Jesus

P17 Art Description: Across the top: (a) a loaf of bread hovering above a pile of stones, (b) a man falling off a castle wall with an angel waiting to catch him below, and (c) a standing man about to crown a kneeling man. Each image has a translucent 'X' across it signaling that the image is banned. Across the bottom: (a) several running pigs, legs outstretched, fleeing, (b) a woman touching the hem of Jesus' robe, and (c) Jesus leaning over a girl lying in bed. Central to all is the Temple Ark (for 'Holiness') surrounded by arrows pointing to the six images.

Bible Texts: Matthew 4; Mark 1:24; 5; Luke 4:1-13; Hebrews 2:10-18; 4:15-5:9. The Hebrews passages relate to Jesus' temptations in the wilderness (Lk. 4:13) and Gethsemane. (can split Mark refs to 2nd study/group)

Theme Ideas: In the desert and in Gethsemane we see Jesus as the *Holy* One who resists all three aspects (body, soul, and spirit) of the temptation that felled Adam and Eve. He relied solely upon the *Holy* word of God to defend his soul. He proves himself *Holy* (i.e., faithfully trusting God), a *Sinless* Priest to redeem sinners, a true Prophet who rejects Satan's lies, and a King of Kings above Satan's false rule. Immediately afterward a demon says to Jesus, "I know who you are – the *Holy* One of God!" 2,000 pigs then flee into the sea showing that Jesus' *Holiness* has power over a herd of uncleanness symbols plus the 6,000 unclean spirits within them. Immediately after this, a bleeding woman breaks the Levitical law (Lev. 15:19-33) and makes Jesus '*unclean*' by touching him – a Rabbi! Yet his *Holiness* is more powerful: instead of being contaminated, his *Holiness* contaminates her uncleanness and makes her whole again! Later, this 'reverse contamination' overwhelms the Old Testament pattern (Lev. 21) again when Jesus touches a dead body. Instead of his *Holiness* being decommissioned by contact with the dead, the *Holiness* of the true *Holy* One breaks the grip of Death itself!

← Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

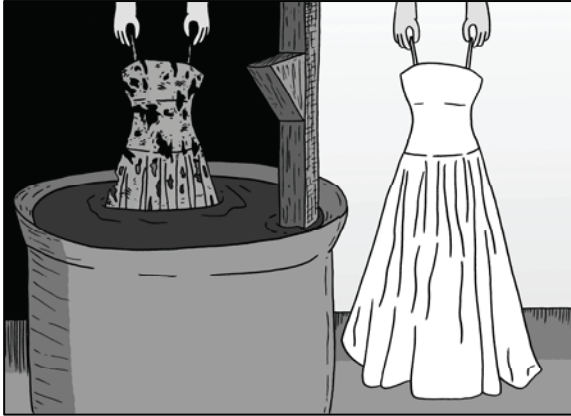
Theme: Purity
Era: The Church

P20 Art Description: Plants fill the background. A giant heart (with hands growing out the sides) contains a blueprint of Ezekiel's Temple. Superimposed upon the heart are images of the Ark, the Hebrew letters A and Z, a city wall, and a knife. The tip of the heart has black and white stripes signifying the rabbi's/priest's robes. Red drops of sprinkled blood are on the hands, the top of the heart, and across the blueprint. All these images are from previous 'Purity' pictures.

Bible Texts: Jeremiah 24:7; 31:31-34; 33:22; Ezekiel 36:25-29a; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 3:3, 16-18; Galatians 5:16-26; Titus 2:12; Hebrews 9:19-22; 10:19-22; James 1:19-21; 1 Peter 1:2, 13-16; 2:5, 9; 1 John 3:2-3 (can split study/group Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 John vs. 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal & 1 Peter, but both need Jeremiah & Ezekiel)

Theme Ideas: As God's word, Son and Spirit are planted (James) within each believer's heart, the *Holiness* that was once represented by the concrete objects of Israel's sacred rites begin to live in and out from our hearts. We begin to experience sorrow and revulsion toward *Sin*. A love of *Purity* and obedience begins to arise from within, and we discover that we want to be near Jesus and be like him. We hear that we are his priests for we approach and serve God directly, and that we are his Temple for he lives in our flesh. Though we struggle with *Sin* and pray, "Lord, help my unbelief!" his grace continues teaching us to say 'No' to ungodliness and 'Yes' to the fruits of the Spirit. The astounding prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel about a total *Holy*-heart transplant have finally begun to come true – in us! "Everyone who has this hope *Purifies* himself, just as He is *Pure*," because "when he appears we shall be like him."

← Notes ↓



Theme 5: Holiness restored, salvation from Sin and Guilt

Theme: Purity
Era: New Creation

P24 Art Description: The left and right halves each have hands holding a dress for display. The left half has a black background and the right half has a bright one. The left dress is filthy, torn, and disheveled; the right dress is a glorious wedding garment. The left dress is half-submerged in a vat of red blood; the right dress hangs free. The blood vat crosses the center line and contains the foot of Christ's cross, shown only up to the block where His feet were nailed.

Bible Texts: Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:6-9; 21:2, 8-27; 22:14-15, 19

Theme Ideas: Paul explains that Christ's love and self-sacrifice for the church would wash her, cleanse her, and make her *Holy* for final presentation to Himself as a radiant, stainless, wrinkle-less, blemish-less and blameless Bride. John presents this finale in Revelation where the saints are a *Pure* virgin bride being prepared by and for the divine groom. John then mingles this metaphor to include the *Holy City*, which happens to be the shape of the ancient *Holy of Holies* in Yahweh's Tabernacle and Temple. "Nothing *impure* will ever enter it," and those who have "washed their robes" and "been given fresh linen, bright and clean," will be 'Blessed' in having the right to the Tree of Life and to the gates of the City. Only the first two chapters of Genesis and the last two of Revelation describe a world *Pure* and entirely free from *Sin*. We have never known such a world, but on that Day we shall be there, finally clean, beautiful, shining, and ready.

↳ Notes ↓

Reflections on the Stream of 'PURITY vs. Sin+Guilt'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'PURITY' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

Theme 6: **FRIENDSHIP**

At the Creation, Adam & Eve enjoyed the very FRIENDSHIP of YAHWEH himself. He Spoke with them (Gen 2:15-18), Shared his Work with them (2:8, 15), and Walked with them in His Pleasure Garden in the Cool of the Day (3:8).

But their Declaration of War against Yahweh betrayed and forfeited the very fabric of their FRIENDSHIP. Their treacherous hearts and the gracious Flaming Sword of the Cherubim estranged them from God. They could do nothing to un-betray their forfeited FRIENDSHIP!

Could YAHWEH, and would He,
Forgive BETRAYAL
and reconcile their FRIENDSHIP?



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

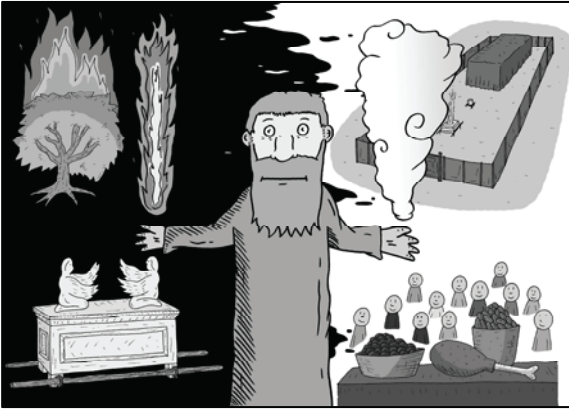
Theme: Friendship
Era: Patriarchs

F5 Art Description: The left image is of Abraham and Sarah catering for the three visitors. The right image is of Abraham negotiating with Yahweh as they look over Sodom.

Bible Texts: Genesis 18

Theme Ideas: In the first part of this chapter we see Abraham being the *personal host* of Yahweh himself. In this act Yahweh submits to the *hospitality* of Abraham, showing that the *presence* and *service* of Abraham is a blessing he receives with pleasure. Further, Yahweh engages in *personal conversations* with both Abraham *and* Sarah. More staggering still, in verses 17-21 Yahweh takes Abraham into his confidence concerning *Yahweh's own interests, concerns, and intentions*. He treats Abraham as a *confidante*. Finally, beyond all comprehension, Yahweh submits to pressure and preaching from Abraham! Yahweh, who will do this again with Moses (e.g., Exodus 32, Numbers 14), is here restoring and participating in *Friendship* and *Fellowship* with his fallen children in profound and personal ways.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

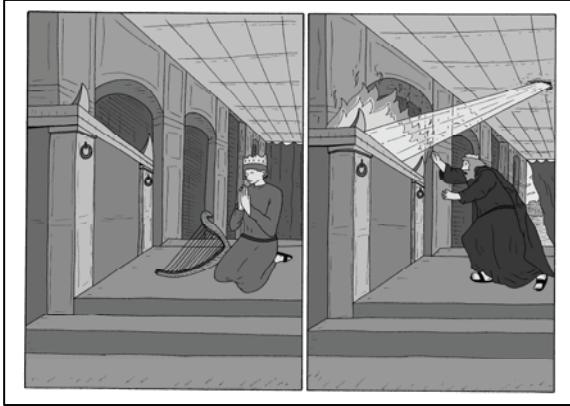
Theme: Friendship
Era: Exodus and Conquest

F7 Art Description: The background changes from black to white and the four corners show images of the burning bush, the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle, and crowds at the Feasts. Moses is in the center with a glowing face. Above his right and left hands are a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud.

Bible Texts: Exodus 3:12-17; 6:1-8; 32-34; Numbers 14; Hosea 11

Theme Ideas: Yahweh comes to share *Friendship* and *Fellowship* with his people. He revealed his *personal* name to Moses and then demonstrated the *familial* nature of his ties by saving 'his firstborn *son*', the Israelites. He gave them his protective *presence* 'above' the Ark in the Tabernacle and also as pillar of cloud (shade by day) and fire (light at night). He led his people 'by the hand' wherever they went. He established the priesthood and sacrificial system to reconcile people into *fellowship* with him. He inaugurated great feasts that symbolized and celebrated the close relationship of Yahweh to his people. In his special mediatory role, Moses had many vigorous conversations with Yahweh. They had such intimate *Fellowship* that Yahweh declared Moses his 'face-to-face' *Friend*.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

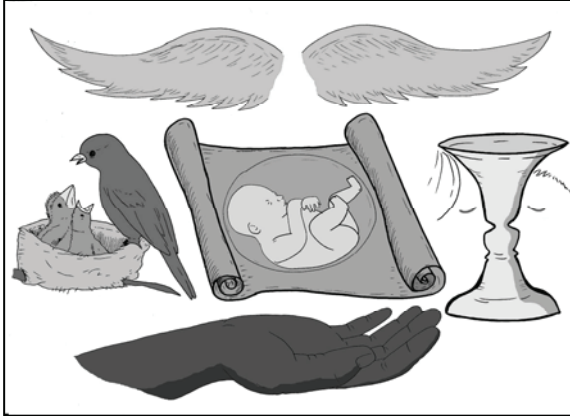
Theme: Friendship
Era: Kings

F9 Art Description: Here are two temple scenes. One image is of David kneeling in prayer with a harp; the other is of Solomon beholding a fireball and smoke entering and filling the Temple. (Note poetic license: these men were not Levites and so were never actually inside the heart of the Temple.)

Bible Texts: 1 Kings 8-9 (especially 8:10-11); 2 Chronicles 7; Psalms 3; 7; 18; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 60; 142

Theme Ideas: Each Psalm listed here was composed to record aspects of specific events that occurred in David's dramatic life. Each reflects the intimacy of *Friendship* shared between David and Yahweh; David completely trusted that Yahweh was personally interested and concerned with every aspect of his life. The Kings/Chronicles chapters preceding the arrival of God's fiery presence descending into Solomon's Temple emphasize the grandness of this event. For hundreds of years, Yahweh had 'tabernacled' with his people. He tented and traveled with them to and in the Promised Land, even as they fought their battles. Now that the conquest is complete and peace is established, we see that his presence is not just nomadic, nor temporary. Yahweh settles permanently to have perpetual *Fellowship* with his people.

← Notes ↓



**Theme 6: Fellowship
restored, salvation from
Alienation**

**Theme: Friendship
Era: Wisdom**

F11 Art Description: A baby in the womb is on a scroll at the center of the page. Above it are wings; below it, a hand to carry the scroll. On the left is a sparrow in a nest with chicks. On the right is a goblet shaped against the profile of two lovers kissing.

Bible Texts: Psalms 23; 63; 73:23-28; 84; 139; Song of Songs

Theme Ideas: The collection of prayers, hymns, complaints, laments, and praises called the Psalms, as well as the Wisdom Books, express in both corporate and personal ways the rich *Friendship* and *Fellowship* of God with his creatures. They provide God's *personal* care and wise *guidance* for individuals and the community. Psalm 139 tells of the extraordinarily intimate knowledge and presence of Yahweh God in our lives, even from the womb, even in our thoughts, even across the whole earth. Psalm 63 speaks of the aching and satisfaction experienced as the psalmist thinks of his *Fellowship* with Yahweh. He sees himself as singing in the care-shadow of Yahweh's wings as he is upheld by Yahweh's right arm. Psalm 84 tells of the longing for intimacy with Yahweh that is fulfilled in the Temple. The sparrow that makes a nest in the Temple is a picture of the psalmist's own delight that a place is made there with Yahweh, by Him, for us. Song of Songs 8:6-7 is most profound. In light of Genesis 1:26-28 and Malachi 2:15, it interprets the whole Song and all marital love as metaphors and embodiments of the Trinity! It is a form of worship, true to Yahweh's *Friendship* relationship with Israel and Jesus' relationship with the church.

↙ Notes ↘



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

Theme: Friendship
Era: Prophets

F13 Art Description: A King is courting a woman, but she is less enthralled by him than he is with her.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 49:15-18; 51; 54; 62:4-5; (can split study/group here, though both can tap marriage metaphors) Ezekiel 16; 43:1-7; marriage metaphors in Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, Zephaniah

Theme Ideas: Having previously been designated as Yahweh's people, flock, children, subjects, etc., we now find the Prophets begin to reveal Yahweh's *Friendship* relationship with his people in the most intimate *Fellowship* metaphor available: He calls them his Bride. Yahweh courts Israel, marries her, speaks the tender words of a kind husband, feels the feelings of a betrayed husband, gives the gifts and acts the part of a besotted husband. Israel is in turn fickle, self-centered, rebellious, adulterous, and ultimately utterly disgusting. Returning to the Temple metaphor, the prophets tell us that Yahweh will, in a Coming Day, move house from Heaven to Earth to live in *Friendship* and *Fellowship* forever as the ever forgiving husband among those who's spiritual 'prostitution' has been removed.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

Theme: Friendship
Era: Remnant

F15 Art Description: A city horizon with tent shelters atop the buildings provides a background for an outdoor banquet. In the foreground a priest reads from a scroll.

Bible Texts: Nehemiah 8, especially verses 10-12 and 17-18

Theme Ideas: Ezra the priest and the Levites rediscovered and then shared the personal writings of Yahweh their God with all the people for eight days. God's word freshly exposed the sin in which they had been living, cutting them to the heart. But Ezra, Nehemiah, and the other Levites recognized that this painful, tearful conviction was, in fact, evidence of the *Presence*, deep favor, and *Friendship* of Yahweh. Instead of chastising the people toward grief, they told the people to celebrate their *Fellowship* with Yahweh by sharing many gifts and enacting the Festival of Tents. Knowing that "The Joy of Yahweh is your Strength," the joy of the people over their renewed fellowship with Him "was very great" that day.

← Notes ↓



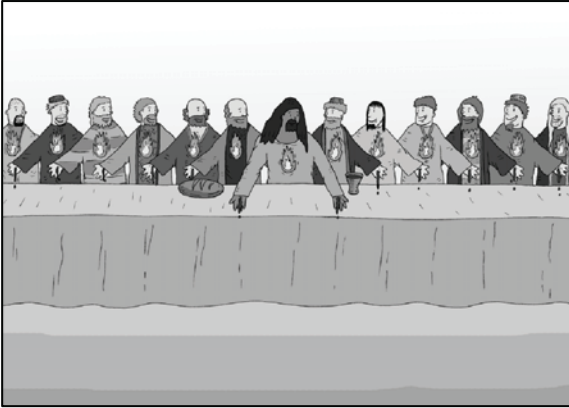
Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

Theme: Friendship
Era: Jesus

F17 Art Description: At top left is a baby in a manger with a star above it. Top center is Zacchaeus up a tree. Top right shows children in Jesus' arms. Across the base is an image of the Last Supper, with Jesus' arms around the two closest disciples. There is bread and a cup on the table.

Bible Texts: *Baby:* Matthew 1:23; John 1:12-14; 3:16. *Zacchaeus:* Luke 5:30; 15:1-2; 19:1-10. (can split study/group here) *Children:* Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16. *Supper:* Luke 12:4; John 15:13-15; 16:27; 17:23-26

Theme Ideas: God so *befriended* the world that he gave his only son, 'Immanuel,' meaning "God with us". He 'tabernacled' with us. In Jesus, He extends toward us the *Fellowship* of becoming God's very own children. Embodying the *Friendship* of God, Jesus both attracted and sought out the 'wrong crowd,' being called a "*Friend of Sinners*". This title launched him into the stories of the Lost Sheep/ Coin/ Sons. The accusation of "eating with them" was especially meaningful because table *Fellowship* in the Near Eastern cultures expressed the cancellation of all debts! This explains Zacchaeus' radical reaction. Jesus' affectionate *Friendship* (Phil 1:8) was displayed in his command to "let the little children come to me" and in taking them in his arms and blessing them. Jesus displayed the extent of his *Fellowship* by calling his disciples his "*Friends*" rather than "servants," by explaining how such close affection "gives up one's life for a *Friend*," and by sharing his secrets with them. He reminds them that the Father himself loves them directly (John 16:27), and he prays that he can become 'Immanuel' *within* his people (17:23-26), not just *with* them. ↙ Notes ↓



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

Theme: Friendship
Era: The Church

F20 Art Description: The previous Lord's Supper scene is repeated here, but with flames inside the torsos of participants whose hands all bear nail-marks.

Bible Texts: Matthew 26:31-46; John 13-17; Acts 9:4; (can split study/group here) Romans 8:15-16, 23; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:13; 3:10; Colossians 3:4; 1 John 1:3

Theme Ideas: In the Old Testament, God was with his people, but in the Upper Room before his death, Jesus takes God's *Friendship* intimacy with his people to new depths. He says, "I will come to you. I will never leave you. I will be in you". This was so that the love the Father has for Jesus "may be *in* them, and that I myself may be *in* them". In the Sheep and Goats parable, Jesus so identifies himself with us that he experiences generosity or miserliness toward Christians as if it were delivered to himself. At Saul's conversion, Jesus describes the persecutions of Christians as his own suffering. Paul later reflects the inverse truth of this as he celebrates "the *fellowship* of sharing in *His* sufferings". God's *Fellowship* with us is shown in how His Spirit testifies directly to our Spirit in our cry, "Abba, Father". The Spirit works *within* us "to will and to do his good pleasure," and he intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. Indeed, since the revelation of the mystery, "Christ *in* you, the hope of glory," we "no longer live, but Christ lives" *in* us, and "*is* our Life". John concludes the matter: "Our *Fellowship* is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ".

← Notes ↓



Theme 6: Fellowship restored, salvation from Alienation

**Theme: Friendship
Era: New Creation**

F24 Art Description: A vast banquet table recedes to infinity. Two hands touch glasses in a toast.

Bible Texts: Luke 5:34; 22:15-18; John 3: 29; 14:2-3; 17:24-26; (can split study/group here) Ephesians 5:27-28; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 19:9

Theme Ideas: At the Last Supper, it appears that Jesus only shared three of the four cups that are shared in the traditional Passover. He said he would not share the (4th) cup again until it is "consummated in the Kingdom of God". In a Jewish wedding, the betrothal cup was shared and then stored while the groom went away for a year to accomplish two tasks: to prepare a house, and to pay the bride price. The house: Jesus, the Bridegroom, employs the repetitive grammar used by intimates to say, "I am going there to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also can be where I am," and, "I want those you have given me to be with me where I am," and, "in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them". The bride price: Jesus bought her not with silver or gold, but with his own precious blood. Of all the images of God's relationship toward us – clay, sheep, property, army, servants, children – none are so intimate and disturbingly, compellingly profound as "Beloved/Betrothed/Bride". (Aside: Will the Father redeem the church to become a sweet, subservient mail-order bride less glorious than his Son, or will he give his Son a gloriously adult, mature, equal woman capable of the fullest intimacy? Is this what the whole creation-salvation story is for, since it ends 'happily ever after' with the acquisition of a Bride for the very Son of God?) John the Baptist and John the disciple reveal to us that the Messianic Banquet – that great, ancient theme of the Prophets – will be consummated in nothing less than 'The Wedding Supper of the Lamb'.

← Notes ↓

Reflections on the Stream of 'FRIENDSHIP vs. Alienation'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'FRIENDSHIP' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

THEME 7: ?...

Each of the six Stream-Themes we have followed so far has involved Yahweh *restoring* things that were *lost* when Adam and Eve led our race into Sin and out of the presence of Yahweh.

Bible Stream-Theme 7 is a heart-breakingly beautiful revelation of Yahweh's heart and nature that was true from all eternity yet was never known or imagined even by the angels themselves.

Sin brought Death
to Man, Woman, Child,
Relationships, Creatures, Nature, Planet, Cosmos...

All is stained, torn, ill,
spoiled, deformed, infected,
broken, lost...

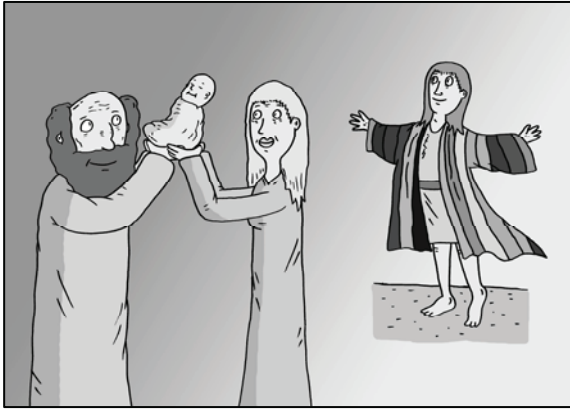
Curse effected...
Satan smiled...
Story doomed...

except no-one yet knew of
the deepest glory
of Yahweh...

who now begins...
the History of Salvation;
the Covenant of Grace;
the Promise & the Deliverance;
the Sacred Romance;

the beauties & mysteries
of his incarnations
and revelations
of Himself as...

SAVIOR



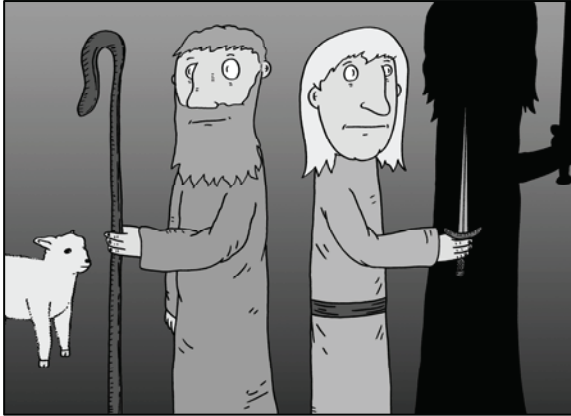
Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

Theme: Savior
Era: Patriarchs

S5 Art Description: Sarah faces Abraham, and together they hold up the infant Isaac. Joseph stands wearing his beautiful coat with arms outstretched.

Bible Texts: Genesis 3:15; 12:3; 13:16; 15:4-5; 17; 21:1-12; 45:4-11; 50:19-20; Acts 7:2-17, 51-53

Theme Ideas: Yahweh promised Adam and Eve a special 'Seed' (offspring) who would one day crush the *enemy* serpent's head, implying that the power of Satan and the curse would in the end be broken. Here, Yahweh's most mysterious and magnificent promise to Abraham and Sarah is they will be given a *Seed* through whom all nations would be blessed. This is initially pictured by the miraculous birth of Isaac to his sterile geriatric parents. His *Seed* bloodline is carefully traced through all Israel's history – especially in David's line of kings – right down to Jesus himself. The *Seed-Savior* is also foreshadowed in Yahweh's provision of Joseph. In the New Testament, the deacon Stephen presents Joseph as a picture of the One to come. Joseph and Jesus were beloved of their Fathers, betrayed by their own blood-kin, sold for silver, lied against, bound, dungeon-buried, vindicated from the grave, exalted to be prince and savior, surrendered to and worshipped by the nations, winners of a gentile bride, and givers of the bread of life to the world. ↙ Notes ↘



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

Theme: Savior
Era: Exodus and Conquest

S7 Art Description: Moses holds a staff; Joshua mirrors him on the right, but holds a sword. Behind Moses is a lamb. Behind Joshua is the giant shadow of Christ.

Bible Texts: Exodus 3:1-4:17; 12-14; 33-34; Leviticus 8-9; Deuteronomy 29:1; Numbers 12:3; 13:8; 14:13-38; 16:46; Joshua 5:13-15; 8:30-35; 10:7-15; 23; 24; Acts 7:23-37; Hebrews 11:23-29

Theme Ideas: Yahweh sent Moses from the desert to be the *Savior* of Israel. Moses faced their *enemy*. He bore the Israelites' rejection. He led the people out of bondage. He revealed the words and heart of Yahweh. Moses declared and renewed the covenant. He mediated between the people and God, and he brought them safely through the Wilderness to the Promised Land. Yet it was God himself that was truly the *Savior* 'behind' Moses, as the whole sacrificial system that Moses delivered and commissioned reminds us. Joshua saw, and faithfully followed, the will of God even as he bore the rejection of the people (Num 13-14). Joshua brought the people into their inheritance, and led them into battle against their foes. Yet it was 'Yahweh of Hosts' Himself that was truly the *Savior* 'behind' Joshua, as the Jericho road story (Josh 5:13+) reminds us. These things are only a few of many parallels between *Saviors* Moses, Joshua and Jesus.

← Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

Theme: Savior
Era: Kings

S9 Art Description: Five images of King David: with a shepherd's staff; with a sling and a stone against giant Goliath; wearing a crown; bearing a sword; and playing a harp.

Bible Texts: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 (especially verses 7, 12-13); 17 (especially verses 32-48); 2 Samuel 5:1-3; 7:8-11; 1 Chronicles 11:1-9

Theme Ideas: David was the Warrior-Savior-Prophet-Poet-King of Israel, even from his youth. In many texts we see how Yahweh specifically chose, prepared, gifted, and used him to be their *Savior*. God declares him to be "a man after God's own heart...he will do everything I want him to" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:14). How many connections can you find between David and Joseph before him? With Christ after him? Think about David the shepherd, the Goliath fighter, his years of flight from Saul, his refusal to save his own skin apart from Yahweh's will, his betrayal by his own people, his military exploits, his ascent to rule, his relationships with Saul, Jonathan, Mephibosheth and other allies and betrayers, his rejection from Jerusalem... Study David, not as an example to follow but as a display of the loving, providential genius of God!

← Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

Theme: Savior
Era: Wisdom

S11 Art Description: Attacking oxen, lions, dogs, and evil men surround a frightened man, with arrows through his hand and feet. Yet his extra long left arm reaches out beyond these attackers to hold up the globe.

Bible Texts: Psalms 21; 22; 69; 121 (can do Ps. 22 in 2nd study/group)

Theme Ideas: The trust that Yahweh Saves thoroughly permeates the Psalms. In Psalm 69, an author experiencing a range of dire threats and suffering cries out to Yahweh in confidence that salvation will come from Him sooner or later. In Psalm 121, the maker of "heaven and earth" will Save his people in every direction: beneath "sun and moon", in our "comings and goings" both "today and forevermore". *Salvation* both for the individual and for Israel are often tied together – an odd thought for modern man. The *Salvation* of the king – the 'Anointed' of God – from political conspiracies and international threats will mean the *Salvation* of the people (e.g., Ps. 21). So the anointed one *saved* by Yahweh is thereby also 'our' *Savior*. But more odd and infinitely profound is the picture (e.g., Psalm 22) of a *Savior* who is forsaken, scorned, mocked, rejected, betrayed, thirsty, encircled, and pierced, and who is then vindicated, resurrected, exalting Yahweh's name to his people, rescuing and supplying the afflicted, and *Saving* all families of nations because of his righteousness. Who is this paradox of Yahweh's *Salvation*, this mysterious anointed suffering-priest-victim-king? A thousand years later, Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 34, 35, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 91, 102, 109, 110 (seven times), and 118 (twelve times) will be explicitly quoted as applying to the final 'Anointed' One, the divine son of David who will be given the name, 'Yeshua', meaning, 'Yahweh Saves'.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

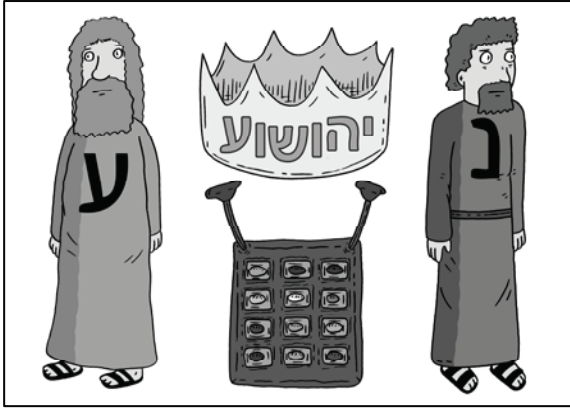
Theme: **Savior**
Era: **Prophets**

S13 Art Description: The head, torso and arms of a person take center stage. The base of the torso morphs into a branch of a tree trunk (showing that this is a 'person-branch'). The person has a crown and wears a priest's 12-jeweled breastplate. He carries scales of justice in his left hand and planet earth in his right. His face is turned toward the globe, sending a beam of light. A great, dark burden sits upon his shoulders, and his side is pierced and bleeding. In the upper right-hand corner, a prison door is opened to reveal an eye. The lock that once closed the door is open and broken.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 52:13-53:11; Zechariah 3:8-10; 6:11-13; 12:10

Theme Ideas: The Prophets speak of the Messiah as "the Servant/the Branch" who will both bring justice and justify many (Isaiah 42 and 53). He will open blind eyes and release captives. He will be a light for the Gentiles/nations/kings. He will be a king *and* priest, both at once. He will be a servant who submits to bear divine guilt for the people of God, being burdened with their sin and pierced for them to remove all sin in a single day. The *Savior* to come will be so much and will accomplish so much that a diverse and spectacular range of prophecies, images, and metaphors are needed to foreshadow him.

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

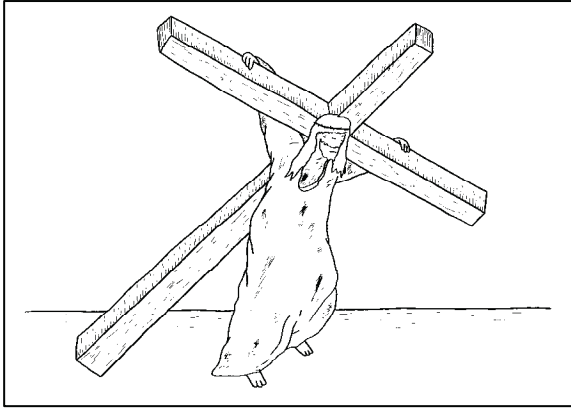
Theme: Savior
Era: Remnant

S15 Art Description: In the center is a large gold crown bearing the Hebrew name 'Yeshua'. Below it is the High Priest's jeweled breastplate with 12 gems. On the left is Ezra bearing the Hebrew letter 'E' on his robes. On the right is Nehemiah bearing the Hebrew letter 'N' on his robes.

Bible Texts: Genesis 14:18; Ezra; Nehemiah; Zechariah 3:1-10; 6:9-7:15

Theme Ideas: Ezra and Nehemiah were both *Saviors* of Israel in that they led the people in obedience to Yahweh, sometimes facing dire dangers without and within. Yeshua was the High Priest, a man declared to be, "symbolic of things to come...my Servant, the Branch" who will "remove all of the sin of the land in a single day". He wore the garments of both King and High Priest, showing that both types of *Saviors* would one day be embodied in the one man: Yeshua. Only once before, in Genesis 14:18, had one man been both King and Priest. We know nothing more of this historical Yeshua, but Zechariah says he is 'symbolic'. In Hebrew, 'Yeshua' means 'Yahweh saves', and translates into Greek as 'Jesus'...

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

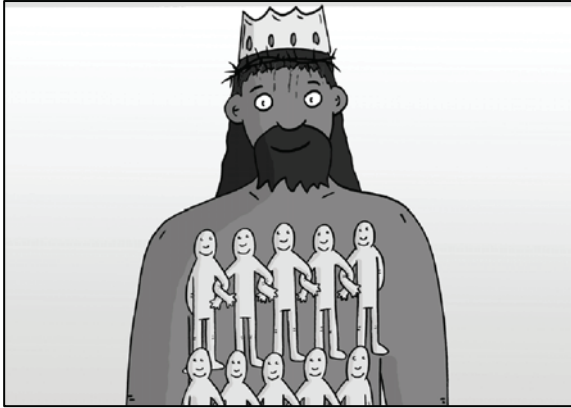
Theme: Savior
Era: Jesus

S17 Art Description: A black and white picture of Jesus carrying his Cross.

Bible Texts: Isaiah 53; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; Acts 2:21; 4:12; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 2:1-18; Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7; Hebrews 2:14-17; 7:25; 1 Peter 3:18a; 1 John 2:2; 4:7-14

Theme Ideas: The crucified Jesus is the ultimate *Savior*, the crux of all *Salvation*, the person behind every other *Savior* and *Salvation*. His being and words and works – especially in his suffering and death and resurrection – carry *Saving* powers and meanings and revelations that are wild and fathomless beyond all human imagination. This is the only black-and-white picture in 'The Seven Streams of Grace' to remind us that there are no limits to the colors that can be painted into this space. While these Scripture readings make a beginning of recognizing how Jesus is *Savior*, we will never make an end of these discoveries in all eternity.

← Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

Theme: **Savior**
Era: **The Church**

S20 Art Description: Jesus' head bears a crown of thorns and a crown of gold. His torso contains human figures joined by linking arms.

Bible Texts: Acts 2:21; 4:12; 16:31; Romans 5:9; 1 Corinthians 1:8; (can split study/group here) Ephesians 2:1-22; 5:23; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 7:24-5; Jude 24

Theme Ideas: God's *Salvation*, as foreshadowed at Pentecost, is found in "no other name" and is conveyed to "everyone who calls on The Name". It is spread out from Jerusalem across the globe. While we were dead, separated, excluded, foreigners, without hope, without God, and uncircumcised by nature, we were *Saved* from Sin, Death and Hell, and made eternally alive as a new kind of humanity, when he forgave us by grace and mercy. Now "Christ is the Head of his body, the Church, of which he is *The Savior*". Since Jesus "has a permanent priesthood," he is "able to *Save* completely and forever those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them". Since this *Savior* began his *Saving* work in us, he is "able to carry it on to completion," to "keep you strong to the end," to "keep you from falling and present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy," "blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ". Along with the Samaritans in John 4, "we now know that this man really is the *Savior* of the World!"

↳ Notes ↓



Theme 7: The Savior/Messiah saves from the Enemy

Theme: **Savior**
Era: **New Creation**

S24 Art Description: A white horse bears a crowned, sword-wielding, wrist-punctured rider wearing a white, bloodied robe bearing the Greek text "King of Kings and Lord of Lords". A lamb sits upon a throne wearing a crown and sash. Four heads representing different ethnic groups are superimposed on palm branches. One corner appears to be folding up, revealing several more layers beneath the image we see.

Bible Texts: Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 2:15; Revelation 5:5-14; 7:9; 19:1-2, 11-21; 21:22-27; 22:1-3

Theme Ideas: Our Glorious God and *Savior* Jesus Christ will one day ride with all Heaven's armies into battle to destroy every personality and power of sin that ever existed. The full justice of God, held back by God's forbearance since even before the Fall in the rebellion of Lucifer, shall finally be consummated. His Word will be his sword, and his lamb-like, servant-hearted meekness shall be his irresistible strength and triumph. Having been *Saved* from "every nation, tribe, people and language," our overwhelming surprise and thankfulness will likely involve the discovery of an infinite number of graces that God granted us without our awareness. We will, with all creation, fall before him in wonder, love, and praise, forgetting all our suffering, nonsense and sin. So the image of many layers shown on the lower right corner of this picture reminds us that 'The Seven Streams of Grace' is merely one person's meager construction sampled out of an infinite number of torrents of grace that God has written. Also, these seven themes are too simple: so many of God's stories carry a whole kaleidoscope of themes all at once. 'The Seven Streams of Grace' is merely a simplified, stylized, two dimensional construction intended to help show a few main ideas and a sense of development of ideas across the tapestry of history. One Day soon we shall see the front of the real tapestry instead of mere bits of the back, and even better, shall see the Author's face. Come, Lord Jesus.

Reflections on the Stream of 'SAVIOR vs. Enemy'

What are some things that caught your attention as you traveled at high speed through the 'SAVIOR' stream?

What is different, rhythmic, new, intriguing, surprising?

What are you sensing about Yahweh God?

REFLECTING on all of 'The Seven Streams of Grace'!

You might wish to write and then share some bird's-eye-view observations as you look back across the whole book/seminar/poster.

Q1. What are some ways in which *The Seven Streams of Grace* is different, unusual, or even peculiar compared to your 'normal' Bible reading?

Q2. What are some ways in which *The Seven Streams of Grace* is different, unusual, or even peculiar compared to 'normal' preaching and teaching?

Q3. What are some things *The Seven Streams of Grace* brings out about God himself?

Q4. Many people tend to think that 'the God of the Old Testament' is somehow different from 'the God of the New Testament'. How does this idea sound to you beside *The Seven Streams of Grace*?

Q5. What comes to your mind when you think about where you/ we stand today in *The Seven Streams of Grace* time-line? What does it mean for you that you are looking back at all that material in the previous columns and streams, and forward to the final 2 columns?

Q6. What do you think might happen to people if they keep on hearing the Bible through this 'Seven Streams of Grace' kind of lens?

Q7. In all these streams we have not really 'applied' a single scripture to our lives. Instead we have focused on who God is, what he is like, and what he has been doing all through the Bible. We've made God himself the point of reading scripture. Does this apparently impractical approach have any 'practical' use? ☺

Q8. What are the best two things you've been taken by in our SSoG adventure?

Q9. What are some ways you can let what you have learned and enjoyed slip away and decay? Seriously!

Q10. Through the lens of the SSoG, why are the NT writers so passionate about rigorous holiness and vigorous practical service and yet despise even the slightest scent of legalism or moralism?

Q11. Most people have no time for God, doubts about the Bible, and merely human thoughts about Jesus as a religious figure. Many think that God is some foggy combination of qualities like distant, nice, mean, loving, absent, helpless, and cruel. Others blur him with higher powers, all religions, nature, consciousness, the universe, the Force, and 'spirituality'. How does the God and the Jesus of *The Seven Streams of Grace* fit with all this?

Q12. All that God has ever required of us He has accomplished for us in His Son and delivers to us by His Spirit. He always has and ever will. What prayers is he stirring in you at this end of our SsoG journey? Go ahead and do so here and over the page:

Your Notes & Prayers

?

SSoG!

!

What a great gift idea!

:-)

Christmas presents for all my friends!

;-)

A birthday present,
or just a friendly gift
to ... which friends?

*

For my Home Group,
Sunday School Class, Family,
Pastor, Neighbor, Workmate,
Skeptic, Youth Leader, Relatives,
Home-Schooling Friends...

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