

Advent Jesse Tree

Scripture quotes from the Revised Standard Version

The Jesse Tree represents Jesus' family tree.

It takes us through that first long Advent, which lasted from the Fall to the Incarnation with a collection of Scripture meditations to prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas.

1. In the Beginning (Symbol: planet Earth)

Genesis 1:1-3, 27, 31

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

John 1:1-5, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made

that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

2. The Fall (Symbol: apple)

Genesis 3:3-6, 9-11

But God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.”

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5:12, 14-15

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned. ... Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

3. Mother of All Living (Symbol: Mary)

Genesis 3:14a, 15, 20

The Lord God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Luke 1:26, 28, 31, 38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. ... And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you! ... And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."

... And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

John 19:26-27

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Revelation 12:1-2, 17a

And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.

Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.

4. Noah and the Ark (Symbol: ark and rainbow)

Genesis 6:5-8; 7:15-18; 9:8, 15-16

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am

sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

[The creatures] went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And they that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in. The flood continued forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "... I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will look upon it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

Matthew 24:36-39, 42

[Jesus said,] "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of man. ... Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

I Peter 3:20b-21a

In the days of Noah, during the building of the ark ... a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you.

5. The Blessing to Abraham (Symbol: camel)

Genesis 12:1-3; 17:5

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves."

"No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations."

Hebrews 11:8, 12

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

Matthew 1:1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

6. Sacrifice of the Son (Symbol: lamb)

Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13

After these things God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ... When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. Then Abraham put forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Colossians 1:15

[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that
whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.

7. Joseph in Egypt (Symbol: colorful coat)

Genesis 37:3-5, 8a, 18-19, 23, 28

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children,
because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long
robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father
loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could
not speak peaceably to him.

Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they
only hated him the more. ... His brothers said to him, "Are you
indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to have dominion over
us?"

[One day] they saw him afar off, and before he came near to them
they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another,
"Here comes this dreamer." ... So when Joseph came to his
brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves
that he wore. ... Then Midianite traders passed by; and [the
brothers] drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold
him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver; and [the
Ishmaelites] took Joseph to Egypt.

Genesis 41:41; 42:6; 45:4-5

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ... Now Joseph was governor over the land; he it was who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. ... So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life."

Matthew 2:13-15

Now when [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.'

8. Passover (Symbol: doorway with blood)

Exodus 12: 3, 5a, 6b-8, 11-13

Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ... Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. ... The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts

and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ... In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

John:1:29; 6:4, 52-54

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ... The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

1 Corinthians 5:7b

Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.

9. The Ten Commandments (Symbol: tablet with 10 numbers)

Exodus 20:1-4a, 7a, 8, 12-17

And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image. ... You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. ... Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ... Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Matthew 5:3-10

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

9a. The Promised Land: Canaan (Symbol: cluster of grapes)

Genesis 17:7-8

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Numbers 13:1-2a, 17-18a, 20, 23,27

The Lord said to Moses, “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel.” ... Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up into the Negeb yonder, and go up into the hill country, and see what the land is ... and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there is wood in it or not. Be of good courage, and bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

And they came to the Valley of Eshcol, and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they brought also some pomegranates and figs. ... And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.”

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the

dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them."

9b. Bronze Serpent (Symbol: stick with bronze serpent)

Numbers 21:6-9

Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

John 3:13-15

No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

9c. Jonah (Symbol: whale)

Jonah: 1:15-17, 2:1-3, 7-10, 3:2-3a, 5

So they took up Jonah and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice. For thou didst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood was round about me; all thy waves and thy billows passed over me. ... When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to thee, into thy holy Temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their true loyalty. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to thee; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!" And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. ... And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

Matthew 12:38-41

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the

earth. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

10. Ruth and Boaz (Symbol: sheaf of wheat)

Ruth 1:16; 2:2, 8, 10-12; 4:13-14

But Ruth said [to Naomi], "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." ... Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my maidens."

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?" But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The Lord recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife ... and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next of kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel!"

Matthew 1:5b-6a

Boaz [was] the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

11. David and Goliath (Symbol: slingshot)

1 Samuel 16:1, 13a; 17:3-4, 8-9, 45, 47-49

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.

And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not

servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."

Then David said to [Goliath], "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ... All this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand." When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck [Goliath] on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

Revelation 22:16

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."

11a. God's Forgotten Scroll is Found (Symbol: scroll)

2 Kings 22:2, 23:1-3

[King Josiah] did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ... Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. And the king went up to the house of the Lord, and with him all the men of

Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book; and all the people joined in the covenant.

Psalm 119:33-35

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep thy law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of thy commandments, for I delight in it.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Revelation 5:9

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

12. Prophecy: A Shoot From the Stump of Jesse (Symbol: stump with leaf)

Isaiah 11:1-5, 10

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. ... In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

Acts 13:16, 22-23

So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel, and you that fear God, listen: When [God] had removed [Saul], he raised up David to be their king; of whom [God] testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised."

13. Prophecy: The New Creation (Symbol: lion and lamb together)

Isaiah 11:6-10

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and

a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

Revelation 21:4-5a

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away. And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

14. Prophecy: Prince of Peace (Symbol: dove and crown)

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

John 18:33, 36a, 37b

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” … Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not of this world. … You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice.”

15. Prophecy: Good Shepherd (Symbol: shepherd's staff)

Ezekiel 34:2b, 4-5, 10-12, 15a, 16a, 23-24

Thus says the Lord God: “Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? … The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought and with force and harshness you have ruled them.” So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the wild beasts.

Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am against the shepherds; … I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.” For thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd

seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ... I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. ... I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak. ... And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken."

Psalm 23:1

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Luke 7:21b

[Jesus] cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight.

John 10:11, 16, 27

[Jesus said,] "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. ... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

16. Prophecy: Suffering Servant (Symbol: cross)

Isaiah 53:4-7, 9, 12b

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

John 19:1, 15-18

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. ... They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

Jeremiah 31:31-33

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband," says the Lord. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says the Lord: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Hebrews 9:13-15

For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.

18. Bethlehem Prophecy (Symbol: Bethlehem)

Micah 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Luke 2:4-7

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

19. Exile and Persecution: The Fiery Furnace (Symbol: fiery furnace)

2 Kings 17:23

The Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had spoken by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

Daniel 3:19, 21, (Az 1,26,) 28

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. ... Then these men were bound in their mantles, their tunics, their hats and their other garments, and they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. ... And they walked about in the midst of the flames, singing hymns to God and blessing the Lord.

But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Azariah and his companions, and drove the fiery flame out of the furnace.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set at nought the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."

Matthew 5:11-12

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

19a. Return to Jerusalem (Symbol: brick wall)

Nehemiah 1:3; 2:18; 6:15-16

And they said to me, "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire."

And I told them of the hand of my God which had been upon me for good, and also of the words which the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations round about us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem; for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

Revelation 21:10-14

And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed; on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

20. Christmas Star (Symbol: star)

Numbers 24:17-19a

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh: A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be dispossessed, Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed, while Israel does valiantly. By Jacob shall dominion be exercised.

Matthew 2:1-6, 9-11

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

21. Light of the World (Symbol: candle or light)

Psalm 27:1-3

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me, uttering slanders against me, my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble and fall. Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

John 1:9, 8:12

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

22. Angels Proclaim the Miraculous Birth (Symbol: angel)

Genesis 18:1-4, 8b-10a

And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, “My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.”
... And he stood by them under the tree while they ate. They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.” The Lord said, “I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.”

Luke 2:8-14

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all

the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

23. The Birth of Jesus (Symbol: baby in manger)

Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (that is, God is with us)."

Luke 2:1, 4-12

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. ... And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”