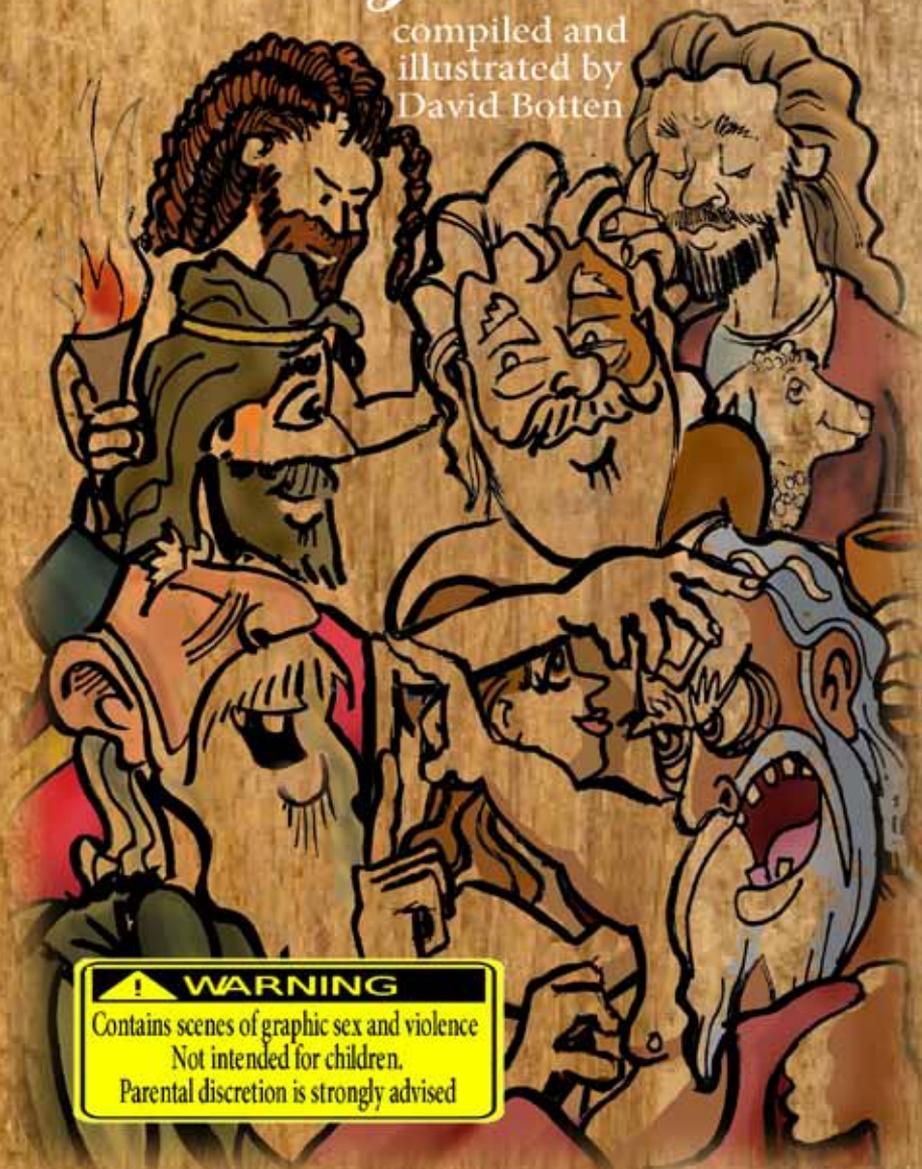


NOT Children's Bible Stories

Wrongs of the Righteous

compiled and
illustrated by
David Botten



! WARNING

Contains scenes of graphic sex and violence
Not intended for children.
Parental discretion is strongly advised

Wrongs of the Righteous

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an agoodeye production
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I remember being told bible stories for children that introduced great biblical heroes. Noah saving the animals, David killing Goliath, it all seemed so wonderful (as long as you didn't think about all the animals and people drowned in the flood or have a soft spot for Philistine giants).

What I didn't know until I read the bible for myself were the very disturbing stories about those same "heroes", the stories NOT for children, the ones preachers don't talk about much, maybe because they raise so many awkward questions. These questions are not just about the propriety of the actions of these "men of God" but larger issues as well.

I have wondered why some of these episodes would be included in a "holy" book but in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we read:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

So, there must be something to be learned from them.

I present them, for your enjoyment and edification, some lesser known stories from the bible along with some questions they provoked in me and, as an added bonus, some interesting facts.

with love from David

*Although this book is titled "Wrongs of the Righteous" I should clarify (lest any nitpicking bible readers get on my case). Samson and Jacob are not actually called righteous in the bible (as the other characters portrayed in this book are). However, Paul included Samson in a list of faithful men commended by God, amongst such men as Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Samuel and the prophets (Heb. 11:32) and Jacob was personally blessed by God (Gen 32:29) so I feel justified including their stories under this title. Mostly I just like the wordplay.

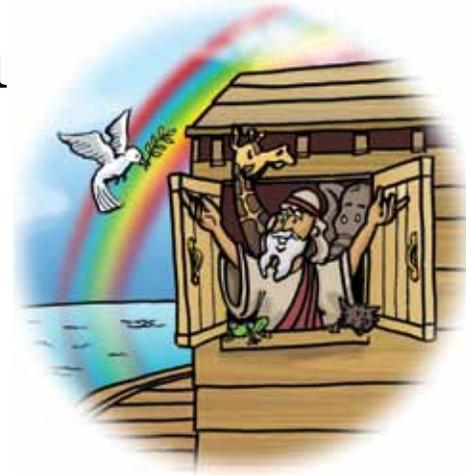
Any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be true.

Thomas Paine

He got drunk then invented slavery

Noah

from Genesis 9



You remember Noah, he famously built an ark under God's instruction on which he, his family and two of every animal kind in the world (seven each of the "clean" animals and birds*) safely rode out a worldwide flood while every other living creature was killed.

But do you know what happened next?

After the waters subsided and the ark landed on dry land the first thing Noah is reported to do was build an altar to God on which he slaughtered and burnt some of the clean animals and birds he'd just saved. God found the aroma of burnt flesh pleasing.

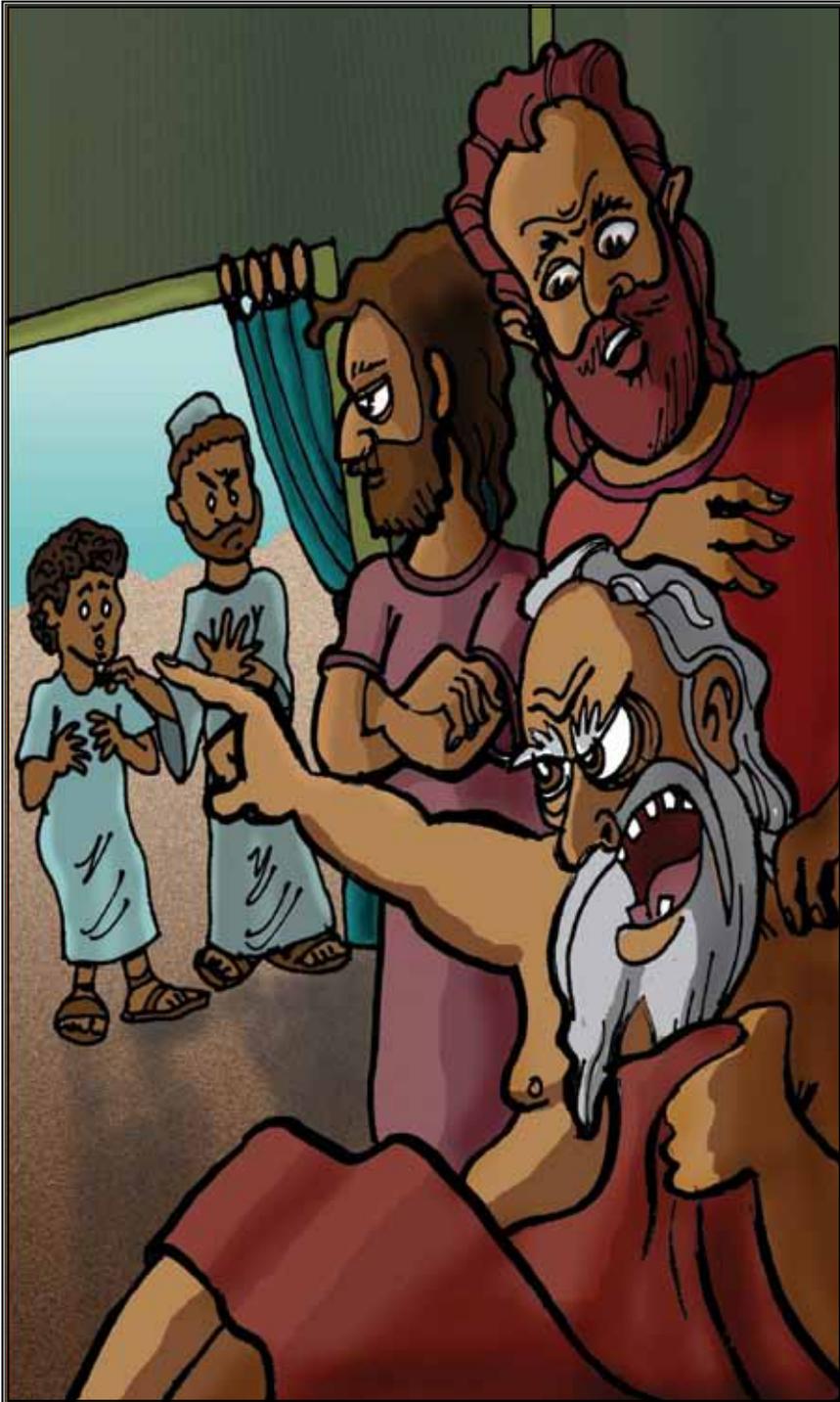
Then, being "a man of the soil" Noah proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank of the wine he produced from his vineyard's fruit he became drunk and passed out naked in his tent.

Noah's son Ham came into the tent, saw his father naked and went and told his brothers Shem and Japheth. His brothers took a garment and entered their father's tent walking backwards. They covered their father but kept their eyes averted so they wouldn't see his nakedness.

When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan! (the son of Ham) The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." **

*This is the first mention of "clean" animals in the bible. Since God didn't allow humans to eat meat until after the flood, "clean" must have meant acceptable to slaughter and burn for God's pleasure.

** This is the first mention of slavery in the Bible.



Interesting Facts

It was immediately after the flood, when animal populations were at a critically low point that God inexplicably decided to tell the remaining humanity that, “every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you”.

It would seem that this story’s original objective was to justify the subjection of the Canaanites to the Israelites, but in later centuries, the tale was interpreted by some Jews, Christians and Muslims as an explanation for black skin and justification for the use of blacks as slaves.

Until 1978 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (The Mormons) taught that African-Americans were under the curse of Ham and as a result of this curse negroes were banned from the Mormon Priesthood.

Questions for discussion

What did Ham “do” to his father? Did he just see him naked or was there something more to it than that? Over the centuries commentators have suggested that Ham may have castrated his unconscious father or raped him or even that he raped his own mother. Discuss.

Whatever happened in the tent between Ham and his father, why was Ham’s son Canaan the one to be punished?

This is one of many examples in the Bible in which guilt for sin and the resultant punishment is transferred from the guilty party to one or more innocent people. Do we still consider this just?

Given that slavery is endorsed throughout the bible by God and his righteous followers why do we condemn it today?

He loved his daughters, lots

Lot

from Genesis 19



Lot survived the destruction of Sodom, most of us have heard that, but there's so much more to the story...

One evening as Lot sat by the city gates, two strangers arrived (they were angels sent from God to destroy the town). Lot insisted the strangers spend the night in his home. All the men from Sodom came and surrounded the house. They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

Lot went outside to meet them. He said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man.* Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under my protection."

The crowd would have none of it and moved to break into Lot's house but the angels pulled Lot inside. Then they struck the men who were outside of the house with blindness so that they could not find the door.

The angels told Lot that Sodom was to be destroyed and that he should take his family and flee. Lot tried to tell his sons-in-law (who were married to his daughters**) what was going to happen but they thought he was joking. So, leaving them behind, Lot took his daughters and wife away from the doomed city and travelled to the city of Zoar.

*Probably a lie. It's unlikely his daughters were actually virgins as they were married.

**Told you.

Then The Lord rained upon the city of Sodom and upon the city of Gomorrah brimstone and fire from out of heaven. God destroyed those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities. Unfortunately Lot's wife looked back at the city she'd called home, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Lot was afraid to stay in Zoar so he left the city and took his daughters into the mountains to live in a cave.

Lot's eldest daughter said to her sister, "There is no man around here to give us children, let's get our father drunk so we can have sex with him and preserve our family line."

So they made their father drink wine and when he was drunk the eldest went in and raped him. Lot was reportedly completely unaware of this happening.

The next night the women got him drunk again and this time his younger daughter raped him. Again, Lot reportedly didn't notice. Thus the women both became pregnant by their father. The older daughter had a son, Moab, who became the father of the Moabites. The younger daughter also had a son, Ben-Ammi who became the father of the Ammonites.

Interesting Facts

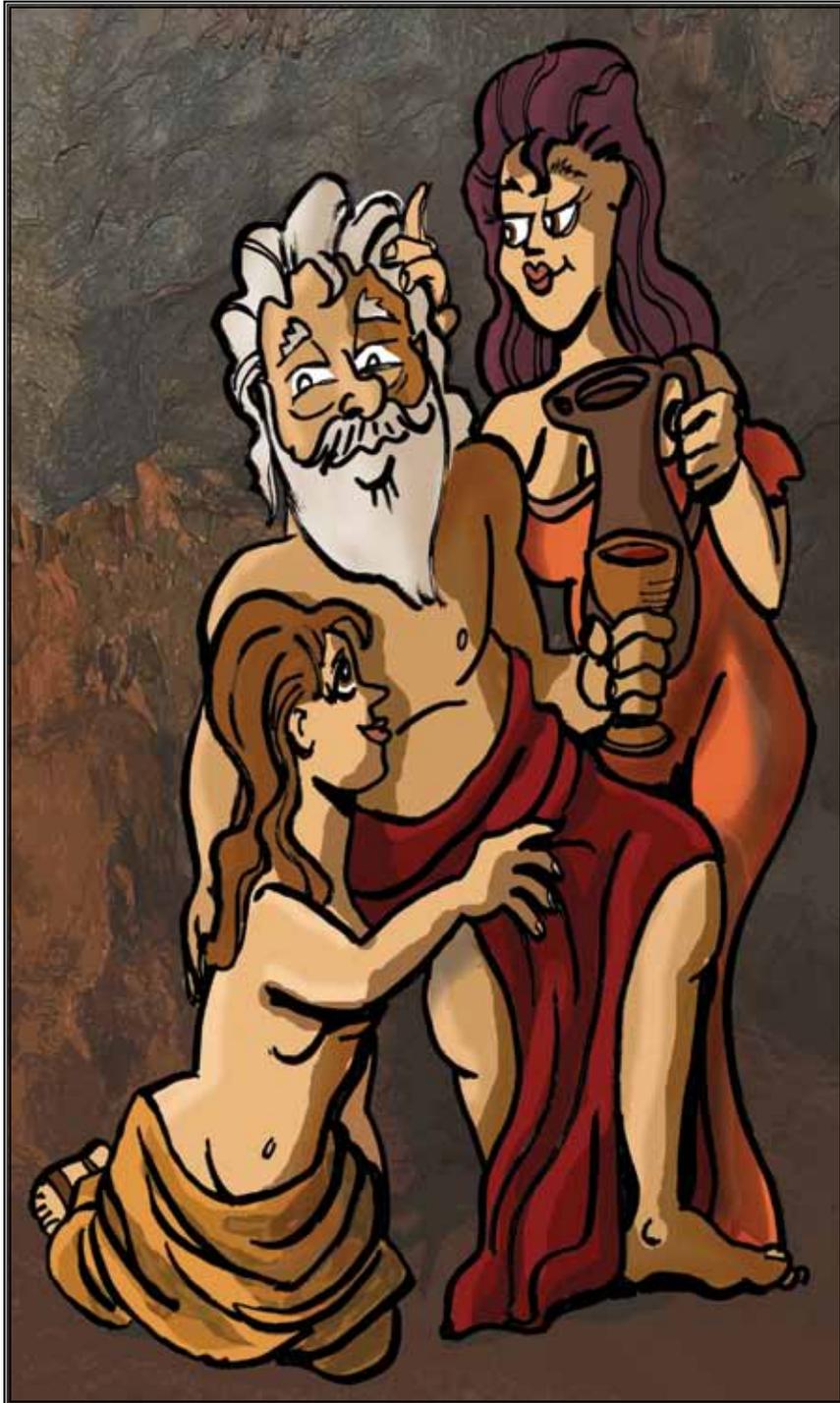
This story may be in part an attempt to slander Israel's enemies by associating their origins with dubious sexual unions.

According to the bible, Jesus is descended from this incestuous affair through David's great-grandmother Ruth, who is descended from Lot's son Moab.

Questions for discussion

How could Lot's daughters say that "there is no man around here to give us children" when they'd just come from the city of Zoar where there must have been plenty of men?

Do you think Lot's daughters felt any resentment about being offered up to a lascivious mob? Could this have played a part in their choosing to rape their father? Discuss.



A liar, a cheat and a patriarch of Israel

Jacob

from Genesis 25 - 27



Jacob is celebrated as a patriarch of the Israelite people. He wrestled God (or perhaps an angel) who renamed him Israel and he was promised that his twelve sons would beget a great nation. He was also a devious liar and cheat as this next story shows.

Isaac (Jacob's father) prayed to God because his wife was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant with twins. The babies jostled inside her so Rebekah asked God what was happening.

The Lord replied, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, it is written; God loved Jacob, but hated Esau.

Esau, the first born became a skillful hunter and was the favourite of his father who enjoyed the wild game he brought home. Jacob was a mama's boy, content to stay at home among the tents.

Rebekah preferred Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that stew I'm famished!"

Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright.*"

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

But Jacob said, "Swear to me first."

So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

* In biblical times the birthright granted leadership of the family upon the father's death as well as inheritance of a double portion of the father's property.

Years later, when Isaac was old and blind he called for Esau. Isaac said, “Go hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

Rebekah heard this and she said to Jacob, “Go out to the flock and bring me two young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father. Then you will take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

Jacob said, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.”

Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau and put them on Jacob. She covered his hands and his neck with the goatskins. Then she handed Jacob the food and the bread she had made.

He went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who is it?”

Jacob said, “I am Esau your firstborn. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The Lord your God gave me success,” he replied.

Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.”

Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.”

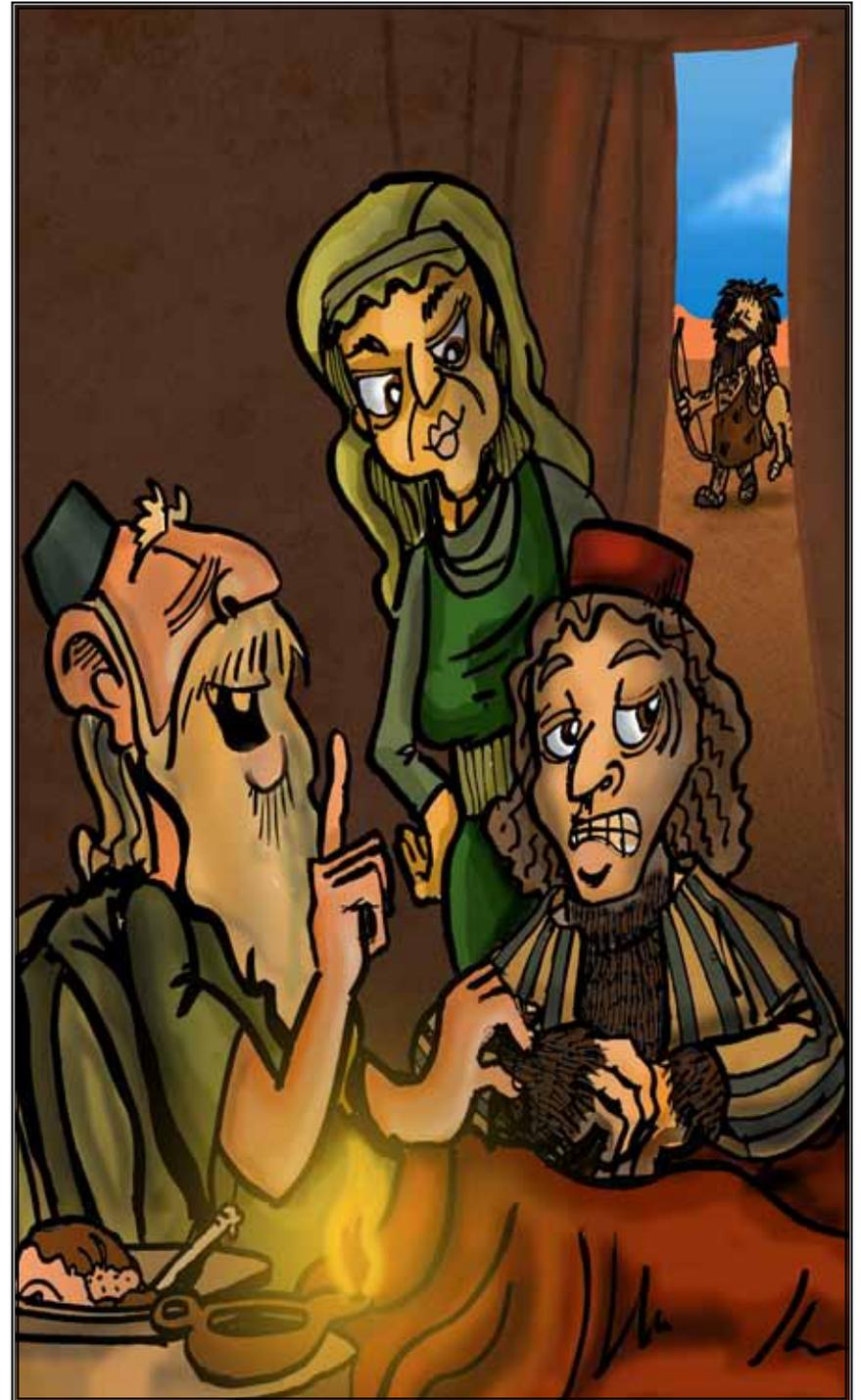
He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau.

“Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“I am,” he replied.

Then he said, “My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.”

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. Then Isaac blessed him and said, “May God give you heaven’s dew and earth’s richness—an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.”



After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He said to him, "My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing."

Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

"I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau."

Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!"

When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out, "Do you have only one blessing? Bless me too, my father!"

Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

Esau was naturally rather peeved about all this. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill* my brother Jacob."

*He didn't.

Interesting Fact

The name Jacob means "He who supplants".

To supplant means to usurp the place of, especially through intrigue or underhanded tactics.

Questions for discussion

God loved Jacob and hated Esau before they were even born. Does this imply anything about predestination?

Is it right for parents to show favouritism? How about deities?

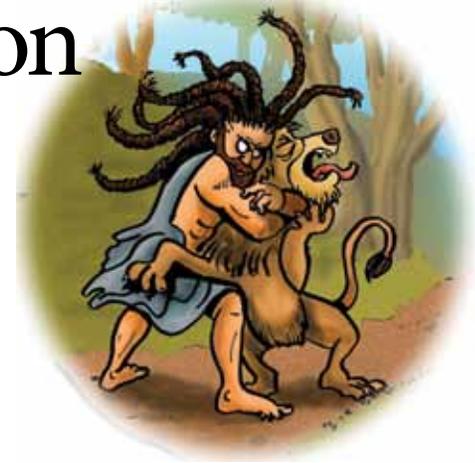
Why, when he realized he'd been tricked, could Isaac not take back the blessing he'd given Jacob?

Why does the "blessing" Isaac eventually gave his favourite son sound more like a curse?

Hot-headed, murdering vandal

Samson

from Judges 14-15



Samson is well known for his long hair and incredible strength. What's less well known is that he was a hot head, a sore loser, a murderer and mean to animals as we shall see.

Samson went to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his mother and father, "Get her for me as my wife."

His father and mother replied, "Can't you find a nice Jewish girl? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?"

But Samson said, "She's the one for me."

(His father and mother didn't know that this was part of The Lord's plan to strike against the Philistines.)

One day as Samson was heading to Timnah to see the girl a lion attacked him. The spirit of The Lord came upon him and gave him the power to rip the lion apart with his bare hands. He told no one what he'd done.

Some time later, when he went back to Timnah, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. He scooped out some honey and ate as he went along. He told no one about this either.

Samson held a wedding feast, as was customary, and the Philistines chose thirty men to be his companions.

"Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty sets of clothes. If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty sets of clothes."

"Tell us your riddle," they said, "bring it on."

He replied, “Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.”

For three days they could not give the answer.

On the fourth day, they said to Samson’s wife, “Coax your husband into explaining the riddle, or we will burn you and your father’s household to death. Did you invite us here to steal our property?”

Samson’s wife begged and pleaded him for the answer. She cried until he finally told her. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

On the seventh day the men of the town said to him, “What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?”

Samson said to them, “If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle.”

Then the Spirit of The Lord came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, murdered thirty men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle.

Burning with anger, he abandoned his wife and returned to his father’s home. Samson’s wife was given to one of his companions who had attended him at the feast.

Later on, Samson went to visit his wife but her father said, “I was so sure you hated her that I gave her to your companion. Isn’t her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead.”

In retaliation Samson went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the grain of the Philistines. He burned up their grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves... and the foxes.

When the Philistines asked who was responsible they were told, “Samson, the Timnite’s son-in-law, because his wife was given to his companion.”

So the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death.

Interesting Fact

The Firefox logo was, in part, inspired by an illustration of this tale that appeared in one of the designers’ childhood bible.

Questions for discussion

Since a riddle should contain enough information that it can be worked out with logic, was Samson’s challenge truly a fair riddle?

Why is Samson not condemned as a wanton murderer?



He had it all but he wanted her

David

from 2 Samuel 11-12



David became a hero at a young age when he defeated the giant Goliath with nothing more than his sling and a stone. Later he became the King of Israel. He had a palace, seven wives, concubines and the love of God and his people, but that wasn't enough for him. One evening while David walked around on the roof of the palace he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. He learned she was Bathsheba, and that she was married. David sent for her anyway. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home. Bathsheba conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." David concocted a plan to hide his wrongdoing. He sent for her husband, Uriah the Hittite who was away at war. David interviewed Uriah under the pretence that he wanted to learn how the battle was going then he told him to go home and relax. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace and did not go to his house. David was told this so he asked Uriah, "Why didn't you go home?" Uriah swore he would not enjoy himself at home with his wife while his fellow soldiers were camped out on war fields. David told Uriah to stay one more day in the city. He fed him and made Uriah drunk, hoping to break down his resolve but in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among David's servants; he did not go home. In the morning David sent Uriah back to the battle with a letter for his commander. The letter said "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." And that's just what happened.



When her mourning was past, David sent for Bathsheba and she became his wife, and gave birth to a son. But the thing that David had done displeased God.

God sent Nathan to David to tell him, "This is what The Lord says: "Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to your neighbour,* and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight."

David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against The Lord."

Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for The Lord, the son born to you will die."

God struck David's new child with illness. For seven days David pleaded for his son's life but to no avail. The child died.

Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon.

The Lord loved him.

*This turned out to be David's son Absalom who had sex with his father's concubines on a rooftop, apparently by God's design.

Interesting Fact

In David's time the punishment for sleeping with another man's wife was that both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death. (Leviticus 20:10)

Questions for discussion

How many of the ten commandments does David break in the course of this story?

Why is God so ready to forgive David his trespasses (when His own law demanded he be put to death) yet so willing to transfer punishment for the misdeeds onto innocents such as his baby and his concubines?

Why, of all the misdeeds recounted in this book, are David's actions the only ones about which God expresses His displeasure?

Jesus hates figs

Jesus

from Matthew 21
& Mark 11



Jesus was a great guy, son of God and all, but a tree hugger he was not. Early one morning, as Jesus was walking with his disciples, he came over all hungry-like. He saw a fig tree by the road, but when he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.

He said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!"

According to the Gospel of Matthew the tree immediately withered. When the disciples saw this, they were amazed.

"How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

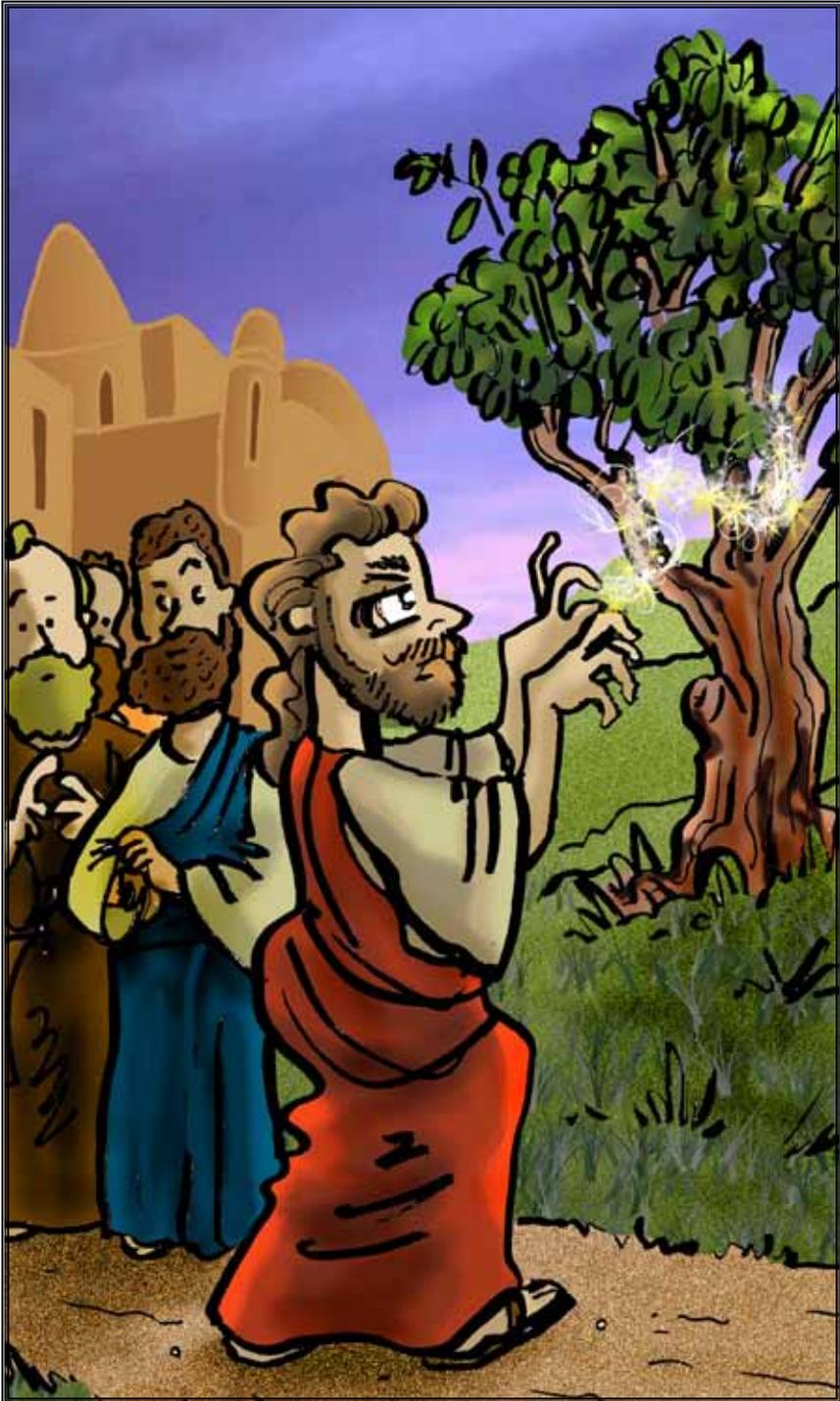
As the story is recounted in the Gospel of Mark it wasn't until the next day that the disciples saw that the tree had withered.

Questions for discussion

Does it seem right of Jesus to kill a tree just because it didn't bear fruit out of season?

Why when different gospels recount the same stories are there so often discrepancies in the details? Is the Bible truly without error?

Is it really true that if you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer? How could you verify this?



The end