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# BIBLE STORIES

*Every Adult Should Know*

Volume 2: New Testament

MATTHEW LOCKHART

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# CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION	8
01 MARY AND THE ANGEL GABRIEL: How Can This Be?	10
02 THE BIRTH OF JESUS: Away in a Manger	16
03 JESUS PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE: In My Father's House	22
04 BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION: From Touted to Tested	26
05 CALLING THE FIRST DISCIPLES: Dinner with Sinners	32
06 THE WOMAN AT THE WELL: Living Water	38
07 JESUS TEACHES AND HEALS: Homecoming	44
08 JESUS CREATES A STIR ON THE SABBATH: The Healing Pool	50
09 SERMON ON THE MOUNT: A Firm Foundation	54
10 JESUS ANOINTED: Tears and Jeers	58
11 THE RICH FOOL: Eat, Drink, and <i>Be Wary</i>	62
12 LORD OF THE HARVEST: Wheat and Weeds	66
13 JESUS STILLS THE TEMPEST: Superstorm	70
14 JESUS AND A DEMONIAK: Legion of Darkness	74
15 JESUS FEEDS OVER FIVE THOUSAND: Bread and Water	78
16 JESUS ILLUMINATED: Starstruck	84

17	THE GOOD SAMARITAN: Roadside Rescue	88
18	JESUS ON PRAYER: Let Us Pray	92
19	JESUS AND A MAN BORN BLIND: Mud in Your Eye	96
20	THE GOOD SHEPHERD: Door #1	102
21	MARY, MARTHA, AND LAZARUS: Raising the Dead	106
22	THE PRODIGAL SON: Lost and Found	112
23	THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS: Reversal of Fortune	116
24	JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILDREN: Childlike Faith	120
25	THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD: Amazing Grace	124
26	JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS: Seeing and Believing	128
27	THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY: A Grand Entrance	132
28	THE WICKED TENANTS: A Cornerstone and Stumbling Block	136
29	JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET: Leading by Example	140
30	THE LORD'S SUPPER: Do This in Remembrance	144
31	IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE: Agony and Betrayal	148
32	JESUS AND PETER QUESTIONED: Tried and Denied	152
33	JESUS BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE: Kangaroo Court and Mob Rule	156
34	THE CRUCIFIXION: The Horrible, Beautiful Cross	162
35	THE RESURRECTION: Risen!	168
36	JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES: Revealed	172

37	JESUS AND PETER REUNITED: Restored	176
38	JESUS' PARTING WORDS: Returned to Sender	182
39	THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH: Tongues of Fire	186
40	THE DEATHS OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA: Putting on Airs	192
41	THE STONING OF STEPHEN: The Courage of Conviction	196
42	PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL: Roadside Service	200
43	SAUL'S JESUS ENCOUNTER: Blinded by the Light	204
44	BARNABAS BEFRIENDS PAUL: A Dynamic Duo	210
45	PETER AND THE CENTURION: An Officer and a Gentleman	216
46	PETER'S ESCAPE AND HEROD'S DEATH: Touched by an Angel	222
47	BONFIRE AND RIOT IN EPHESUS: Fahrenheit 451	228
48	PAUL SETS SAIL FOR ROME: Shipwrecked	234
49	PAUL ON MALTA AND IN ROME: Shake It Off	240
50	JOHN'S VISION ON PATMOS: Coming Attractions	244
	SCRIPTURE INDEX	250
	ABOUT THE ART	254
	ABOUT THE AUTHOR	255



# JESUS PRESENTED AT THE TEMPLE

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## SETTING THE SCENE

*Though little is recorded in the Gospels about Jesus between his birth and the beginning of his public ministry at age thirty, there are two accounts of visits to the temple in Jerusalem. The first, as a newborn, and a return trip at the age of twelve.*

*Falling in between these temple trips, Joseph twice receives instructions from an angel in a dream. He's first told to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt (some ninety miles southwest of Bethlehem) to escape the wicked plot of King Herod. The king desired to kill all boys ages two and under everywhere near where he had been told a new king of the Jews was to be born. Upon Herod's death a short time later, Joseph is informed the threat is past. He and the family then return and settle in Nazareth.*

## In My Father's House FROM LUKE 2

The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be

dedicated to the Lord.” They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s promised Messiah. Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

“Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,  
and you may let your servant go in peace.  
With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:  
A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles  
and bring glory to your people Israel.”

I was glad when  
they said unto me,  
Let us go into the  
house of the LORD.

PSALM 122:1 (KJV)

The child’s father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, “This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart.”

When Joseph and Mary had finished doing all that was required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown of Nazareth in Galilee. The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God’s blessings were upon him.

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. When the festival was over, they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this; they thought that he was with the group, so they traveled a whole day and then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. They did not find him, so they went back to Jerusalem looking for him. On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers. His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his

mother said to him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you.”

He answered them, “Why did you have to look for me? Didn’t you know that I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand his answer.

So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart (GNT).

## TRUTH FOR TODAY

No matter if you're a true believer or seasoned skeptic, there's something undeniably unique about the person of Jesus. Long before wowing crowds with his wisdom and displaying miraculous power over nature, death, and disease, young Jesus surprised the elders with insights beyond his years.

Mary and Joseph, back in the place where twelve years prior they had marveled at the prophetic words Simeon had spoken over Jesus, were again in a state of amazement. The relief of finding Jesus gave way to the astonishment of seeing their child holding court with the temple teachers. Likewise, the religious leaders themselves were awed by the young boy's understanding of God.

An honest examination of the life of Jesus begs the question: What child is this?

Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.

LUKE 2:52

*To explore Jesus, read the Gospels, attend church, and ask questions.*

### FYI

Though not exclusive to Jewish culture, the rite of male circumcision was prescribed in the Old Testament as a command given to Abraham (Genesis 17:10) and served as a physical sign of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants.

According to the Law of Moses, offering two pigeons at the temple as part of the purification ritual following childbirth was an acceptable substitute for those who could not afford to bring a lamb and a bird (Leviticus 12:1–8).