

The Woman

FROM EDEN TO THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Within the plan of God, the Woman is an instrument of revelation. Through her, God makes known a desire he has reserved for himself: to dwell with a people who freely receive and return his love.

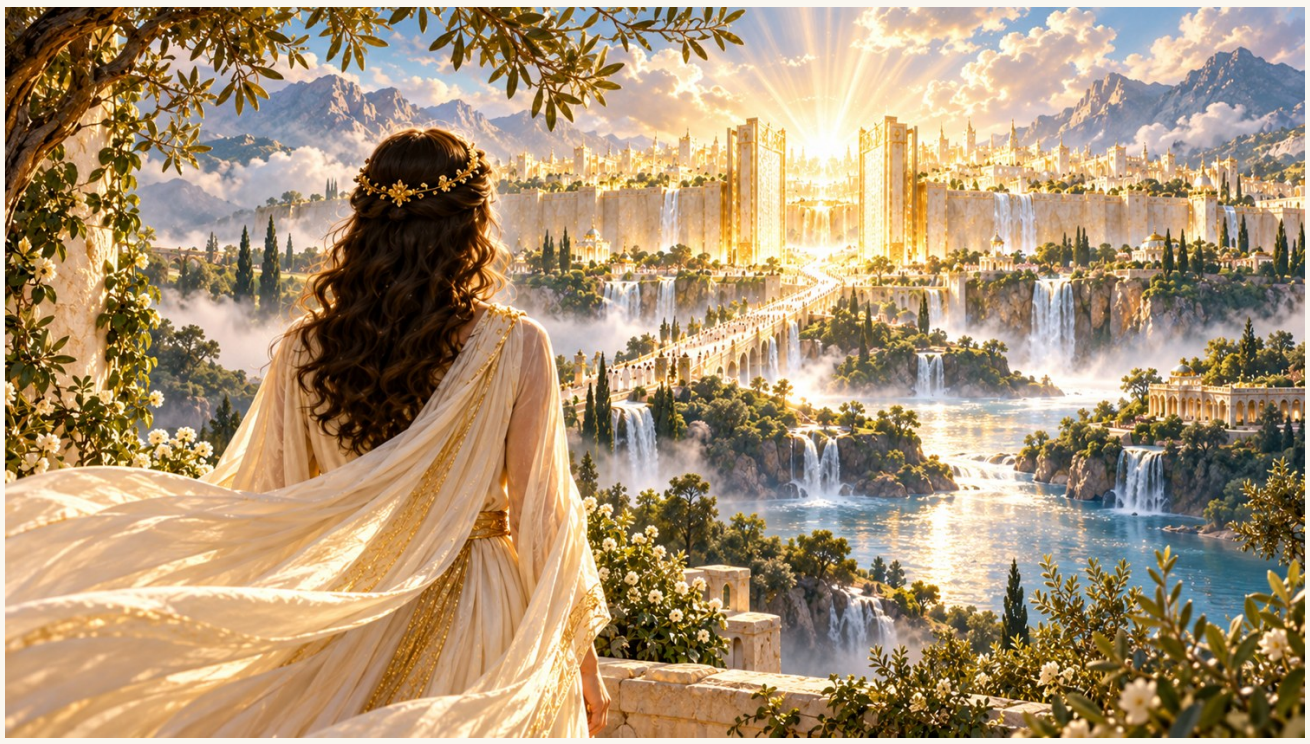
Her story begins with Eve and follows the promise through Israel and Mary to the Church, the Bride of Christ. In the nature God desires in his Bride, we learn who he is. Her faithfulness reflects his fidelity. Her holiness answers his holiness. Her love responds to the love he first showed her in Jesus Christ.

The Bride’s character reveals the heart of the Bridegroom. From the garden to the holy city, the story shows what God desires, what Christ gives to bring it about, and what it means for his people to become his dwelling.

GENESIS 2:21–24 · EPHESIANS 5:25–32 · REVELATION 21:2–3

Phillip Taylor

The Bride, from Eden to the holy city



NARRATIVE

The Bible begins with a garden and ends with a wedding. In the garden, God brings the woman to the man. At the end, an angel says, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And what John sees is a city coming down out of heaven, where God will dwell with his people.

Between that garden and that city lies the story of what God has done to make a people his own.

In Eden, the woman is formed from Adam’s own flesh. He recognizes in her someone with whom he can share his life. Then the serpent enters their story. The woman is deceived, the man eats, and the two hide from the God who made them. Yet there, amid the ruin, God speaks of the woman’s offspring. The serpent will strike his heel. He will strike the serpent’s head. Before the woman leaves the garden, there is already a promise that the serpent’s victory will cost him his own defeat.

The promise takes its course through human lives. Eve receives Seth after Abel’s death. Sarah bears Isaac in her old age. Generations later, Matthew remembers Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Then Mary receives the promise in her own flesh. When she sings, she remembers the mercy God promised to Abraham and his offspring. The child she carries is Jesus.

And through those same centuries, the prophets tell the story of a woman who is a whole people. God remembers Israel’s devotion as a bride in the wilderness. He speaks through Hosea of her betrayal and promises to betroth her to himself forever. Isaiah hears Zion say that God has forgotten her. Then he shows her lifting her eyes to see her children coming home. The God who judges her unfaithfulness is the God who calls her back and rejoices over her.

What will it cost to bring her home?

Jesus Christ answers with his life. Paul reaches back to Eden, to the words about two becoming one flesh, and says the mystery concerns Christ and the Church. Christ loves her and gives himself for her. He cleanses her and prepares her to stand before him in holiness. The Bride’s faithfulness has its beginning in his.

On the night before he dies, Jesus prays that his people may be one in him and in the Father. And at the end of Revelation, when John sees the Bride, he hears what that union means for the people within her gates. God himself will dwell with them. He will wipe away their tears. Death will be gone.

This is why we follow the Woman through Scripture. In Eve, we see shared life and the first promise of victory. In Israel, we hear the love of the God who remembers his covenant. In Mary, we see the promised Son enter the world. In the Bride, we see what Jesus Christ gave himself to bring about.

God’s purpose reaches all the way from the garden to his dwelling with his people. The Bride belongs to the Lamb. And through the Lamb, God brings her home to himself.

Scripture anchors / Genesis 2:21–24; 3:15; 4:25; Matthew 1:1–16; Luke 1:46–55; Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 2:19–20; Isaiah 49:14–22; Ephesians 5:25–32; John 17:20–24; Revelation 21:2–4, 9–10.

Select a row to open its illustration and narrative.

PAGE

01 The Heart Revealed 9

The heavenly rebellion begins with a desire to take for oneself the glory that belongs to God. Against that desire, Jesus reveals the Father’s heart by humbling himself and taking the form of a servant. The Woman is still concealed, but the chapter shows what kind of Bridegroom will bring her into view. He gives himself for the people he loves. (Philippians 2:5–11, John 1:14–18, Ephesians 5:25)



Glory beheld 10
Before rebellion became an act, it was an ambition hidden in the heart.



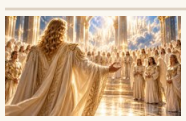
Lucifer beholds 11
Beauty stood before the source of beauty.



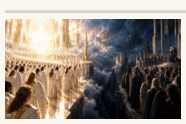
Inward ambition 12
I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.



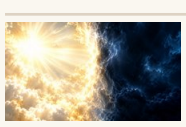
The heart exposed 13
Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.



Turning to the host 14
Nothing was concealed from God.



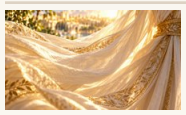
Divided allegiance 15
Rebellion could not extinguish the source of light.



Light and darkness 16
God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.



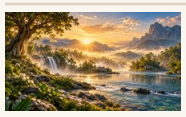
The hidden threshold 17
It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.



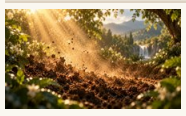
Luminous linen 18
A life, a promise, a fulfillment still concealed.

02 Created for Shared Life 19

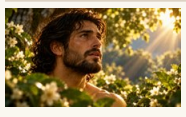
Eve is formed from Adam’s side, and he recognizes her as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Their union gives the story its first image of shared life. When disobedience brings shame and separation, God speaks of the Woman’s offspring and the defeat of the serpent. The chapter carries both threads toward Jesus Christ, who gives himself to restore communion and unite the Church to himself. (Genesis 2:21–24, Genesis 3:8–15, Ephesians 5:25–32, Hebrews 2:14–15)



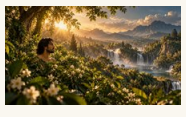
Garden revealed 20
Before the garden, the deep lies beneath darkness.



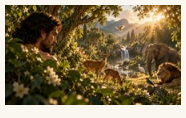
Earth and breath 21
Dust and breath establish the human beginning before the Woman enters the story.



Adam awakened 22
Adam stands alive as the first man.

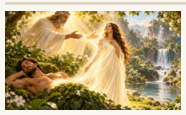
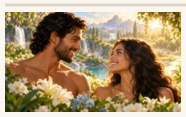
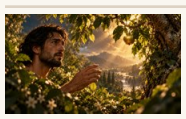
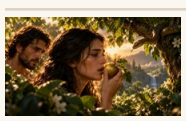
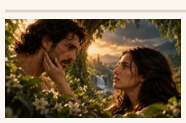
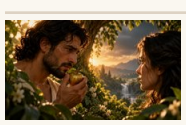


One human presence 23
Among the surrounding creatures, Adam’s humanity is singular.



Naming the creatures 24
God brings the creatures before Adam.

Select a row to open its illustration and narrative.

		PAGE
	**None corresponding** Among the creatures Adam names, none corresponds to him.	25
	**The empty space** The vacant place beside Adam makes his solitude visible and prepares the audience for recognition.	26
	**Deep sleep** Adam cannot bring forth the companion he desires by his own power.	27
	**The woman revealed** The woman emerges from Adam’s side as someone who shares his humanity.	28
	**Recognition** Adam recognizes his own flesh in the Woman.	29
	**The warning** Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.	30
	**Eve deceived** The serpent challenges the warning and presents disobedience as a path to gain.	31
	**The offered fruit** She gives the fruit to her husband beside her.	32
	**The knowing choice** In this telling, Adam faces the prospect of separation from the one brought from his own flesh.	33
	**Shared awakening** Their eyes open.	34
	**The seed of the woman** In the garden God speaks to the serpent.	35
	**Eve receives another seed** Eve, called the mother of all living, knew the grief of losing Abel.	36

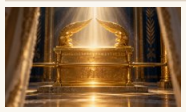
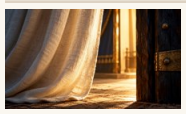
03 The Promise Carried

37

From Eve receiving Seth to the women named or remembered in Matthew’s genealogy, the promise passes through particular lives and generations. Abraham’s family, David’s house, and Israel’s worship give the promise a history. The sanctuary also asks how God can dwell among his people. Jesus comes as the promised Son and opens the way into God’s presence, where the Bride will find her home. (Genesis 4:25, Genesis 22:17–18, Matthew 1:1–16, Galatians 3:16, Hebrews 10:19–22)

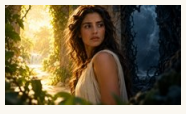
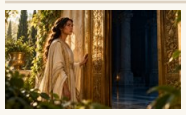
	**Abraham beneath the stars** Beneath a sky filled with stars, God calls Abraham to consider descendants beyond his power to count.	38
	**Sarah and Hagar** Sarah bore Isaac in her old age, as God had promised.	39
	**Mothers of Israel** Rebekah left her home to join Isaac.	40
	**Sanctuary courtyard** Israel receives the law, worship, and sacrifices.	41

Select a row to open its illustration and narrative.

		PAGE
	**The veil** Within the sanctuary, a veil marks the holy place of approach.	42
	**Covenant presence** At the ark, covenant and mercy meet within Israel’s worship.	43
	**Dwelling promised** The movement from covenant sanctuary to David’s house prepares for the promised Son, whose reign and presence are joined in Jesus.	44
	**The women Matthew remembers** Matthew names Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth, and remembers Solomon’s mother as the wife of Uriah.	45

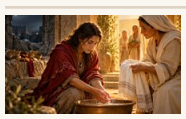
04 The Woman’s Heart 46

Wisdom and Folly both call for an answer. The faithful woman of Proverbs shows what a wise answer looks like in daily life. She provides for her household, opens her hand to the poor, and speaks with kindness. The chapter lets us see the character Christ is forming in his Bride through choices that reveal whose voice she trusts. (Proverbs 9:1–18, Proverbs 31:10–31, 1 Corinthians 1:24, Revelation 19:7–8)

	**The listening heart** The listening figure turns the earlier contrast between Wisdom and Folly into a personal question of whose voice to follow.	47
	**Wisdom invites** Wisdom prepares a table and calls the simple to understanding.	48
	**Folly invites** Folly also has a doorway and an invitation.	49
	**Virtue made visible** The virtuous woman makes faithfulness visible through action.	50
	**The royal bride and the beloved** A royal bride approaches in embroidered garments.	51

05 Grace Deeper Still 52

The prophets speak of the Woman as a whole people. Israel’s early devotion gives way to covenant betrayal, and Daughter Zion mourns as Jerusalem falls. Yet God remembers his covenant and promises to bring her children home. Paul calls the Jerusalem above our mother, giving the promise of home a new reach. The Bride’s hope rests on the faithful love of Christ, who gives himself to cleanse and restore her. (Jeremiah 2:2, Hosea 2:19–20, Isaiah 49:14–22, Galatians 4:26–28, Ephesians 5:25–27)

	**The devotion of her youth** God remembers Jerusalem’s early devotion, like the love of a bride who followed him into the wilderness.	53
	**Samaria and Jerusalem** Ezekiel sets two sisters before us.	54
	**Daughter Zion mourns** Jerusalem sits lonely after the siege.	55
	**Mother Zion welcomes her children** Zion says she has been forgotten.	56
	**Covenant and restoration** The covenant woman turns toward restoration.	57

Select a row to open its illustration and narrative.

PAGE



Jerusalem above, our mother 58
Paul returns to Sarah and Hagar and reads their story as an allegory of two covenants.

06 The Promise Made Flesh 59

Mary bears the promised Son, and her song remembers the mercy God spoke to Abraham and his offspring. From Cana to Calvary, the pages follow Jesus as he draws near, gives his life, and rises from the dead. His pierced side recalls Adam’s side and gives the story a way to picture the cost of shared life. The Bride belongs to the risen Christ because he first loved her and gave himself for her. (Matthew 1:22–23, Luke 1:46–55, John 2:1–11, John 19:25–37, John 20:11–18, Ephesians 5:25)



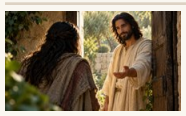
The sign of Immanuel 60
In the days of Ahaz, Isaiah gives the house of David a sign involving a child called Immanuel.



Mary bears the promise 61
By the Holy Spirit she conceives the Son of God.



Mary and Elizabeth 62
Elizabeth welcomes Mary with blessing, and Mary answers with praise.



The Word among us 63
The eternal Word dwells among us.



A shared table 64
He receives those burdened by sin and shame.



Daughter Zion receives her King 65
The prophet calls Daughter Zion to rejoice because her king is coming.



Willing self-giving 66
Jesus gives his life willingly.



The cross 67
While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.



Woman, at Cana and the cross 68
At Cana, Jesus addresses his mother as Woman, and she tells the servants to do whatever he says.



The side and the cost 69
From Adam’s side, the woman came into shared human life.



Mary Magdalene hears her name 70
Mary weeps outside the tomb.

07 A People Formed in Christ 71

Revelation shows the Woman threatened by the dragon and her children holding to the testimony of Jesus. Babylon offers another allegiance, and Christ’s warning to Thyatira brings that choice close to the life of the Church. Through the conflict, Christ cleanses and reconciles his people. The Bride begins to take visible shape as distinct lives are joined into one body and built together as a dwelling for God. (Revelation 2:18–29, Revelation 12:1–17, Revelation 17–18, Ephesians 2:19–22)

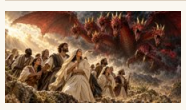
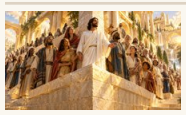
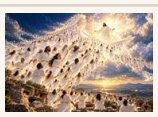


The woman clothed with the sun 72
The Woman appears in labor, clothed with the sun.



The child caught up 73
The dragon waits to devour the child.

Select a row to open its illustration and narrative.

		PAGE
	**Carried into the wilderness** The woman is given refuge in the wilderness.	74
	**The earth swallows the flood** The dragon sends a flood after the woman, but the earth swallows it.	75
	**War against her offspring** The dragon turns against her offspring, those who keep God’s commandments and hold the testimony of Jesus.	76
	**Cities that trusted their splendor** The prophets give proud cities the faces and voices of women.	77
	**The warning to Thyatira** The risen Christ sees Thyatira’s love, faith, and service.	78
	**The woman upon the scarlet beast** Another woman appears upon a scarlet beast.	79
	**Wickedness carried to Shinar** Zechariah sees a woman in a measuring basket.	80
	**Babylon falls** The kings and merchants stand far off as Babylon falls.	81
	**Cleansing** Against that corruption stands the work of restoring grace.	82
	**Reconciliation** We love him because he first loved us.	83
	**Betrothed to Christ** Paul speaks of the congregation as a bride promised to Christ.	84
	**Living persons** Distinct people remain visible within the community being formed in Christ.	85
	**One body, one foundation** Christ holds the assembly together as its cornerstone.	86
	**Living dwelling** The assembly becomes a living dwelling.	87
	**The Bride prepared** The Bride is shown in preparation.	88
	**The Bride rises to meet Jesus** The gathered people rise to meet Jesus.	89

Select a row to open its illustration and narrative.

PAGE

08 The Woman Fulfilled — 90

The gathered people come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the Woman is revealed as the Bride. When the angel promises to show John the Lamb’s wife, John sees the holy city coming down from God. The city has no separate temple because God and the Lamb are its temple. What began in Eden as a picture of shared life opens here into a city full of people living in God’s presence. (Revelation 19:6–9, Revelation 21:2–3, 9–10, 22–23)



The Bride revealed — 91
The dead in Christ rise, and the living are gathered with them to meet the Lord.



The wedding feast of the Lamb — 92
The marriage of the Lamb is come.



The city of light — 93
The angel reveals the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, as the holy city.



Living water — 94
Living water flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

09 One in Him, Forever — 95

Before his death, Jesus prayed that his people might be one in him and in the Father. The final pages return to that prayer. The Bride shares Christ’s inheritance, serves in God’s presence, and joins the Spirit in inviting the thirsty to come. The stars recall the promise to Abraham, while the river of life carries the story’s last invitation. The communion the Bride receives becomes a welcome she can offer. (John 17:20–24, Romans 8:16–23, Revelation 22:1–5, 17)



The space remembered — 96
The empty place beside Adam returns as a visual memory before the story turns to eternal communion.



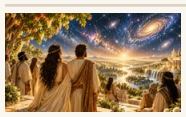
Inheritance and communion — 97
As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.



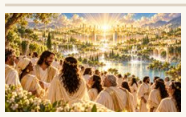
A face among the people — 98
Each face remains known and loved within the gathered people.



Royal priests — 99
They are a royal priesthood, made a kingdom and priests to God.



The stars and the open horizon — 100
The renewed creation opens onto the stars, recalling Abraham’s promise and the story’s proposed horizon of eternal fruitfulness.



His dwelling forever — 101
The final dwelling answers Eden’s rupture.



The Bride says Come — 102
At the end of the vision the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.



CHAPTER 01

The Heart Revealed

The heavenly rebellion begins with a desire to take for oneself the glory that belongs to God. Against that desire, Jesus reveals the Father’s heart by humbling himself and taking the form of a servant. The Woman is still concealed, but the chapter shows what kind of Bridegroom will bring her into view. He gives himself for the people he loves.

Philippians 2:5–11, John 1:14–18, Ephesians 5:25

Glory beheld



STORY PURPOSE

Before rebellion became an act, it was an ambition hidden in the heart. Around the source of glory, a heavenly company received the life and radiance it could never give itself. The question was what each heart would love.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The heart of God becomes known in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth.

Scripture • Isaiah 14:4–15; Ezekiel 28:12–19; Revelation 12:4,7–9; Isaiah 42:8; 1 John 1:5; Proverbs 25:2 | Christ • John 1:14, 18

NARRATIVE

Let your eye travel from the light at the center to the figures gathered around it. Each figure is distinct, and all are lit by the same source. That is the first relationship this image asks us to notice. The beauty of the company is a beauty received.

Here, the rebellion has yet to take outward form. The assembly gives us a picture of what can be lost before anyone sees a rupture. A heart can begin to turn while its place in the company appears the same.

Later, John says that the glory of the Word was seen when he became flesh. In Jesus, that glory could be seen at a table, in the company of people others avoided, and in his willingness to give himself for them. Hold that image in mind as we draw nearer to one figure in this heavenly company. He has received glory, and the question is what he will do with it.

Lucifer beholds



STORY PURPOSE

Beauty stood before the source of beauty. Yet admiration turned toward self. A creature began to desire as his possession the glory that belonged to God. In our telling, the conflict begins here, within the heart.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ reveals the opposite movement. He takes the form of a servant and humbles himself.

Scripture • Isaiah 14:4–15; Ezekiel 28:12–19; Revelation 12:4,7–9; Isaiah 42:8; 1 John 1:5; Proverbs 25:2 | Christ • Philippians 2:5–8

NARRATIVE

In the wider picture, the company shared one light. Here we come close enough to watch one face. There is no army in motion and no throne being seized. The image holds the moment when the sight of glory becomes the desire to possess it.

Isaiah speaks to the king of Babylon in words that let us hear the pride behind his fall. Here, those words echo the heavenly rebellion. The figure stands near the light and begins to imagine what it would be to have others turn toward him as he has turned toward it.

Now think of Jesus kneeling before his disciples with a basin and a towel. He knows he has come from the Father and is returning to the Father. With that knowledge, he takes their feet in his hands and washes them. This is what Jesus does with the authority he knows is his. The next image lets us hear what the creature in this scene is beginning to desire.

Inward ambition



STORY PURPOSE

I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Where the voice reaches upward for a throne, Jesus Christ humbles himself, and God exalts him.

Scripture • Isaiah 14:13–14, selected KJV excerpts | Christ • Philippians 2:8–11

NARRATIVE

Listen to the words Isaiah gives the proud king. I will ascend. I will exalt my throne. I will be like the Most High. Each step takes the speaker higher in his own imagination. The stars, the assembly, and the throne all become places in which he pictures himself at the center.

We hear these words as the figure’s inner voice. They give speech to a desire the surrounding figures cannot yet see. The rebellion has a voice before it has followers.

Paul gives us another movement in Jesus Christ. He takes the form of a servant and humbles himself all the way to death on a cross. Then God exalts him. When we reach the Bride, remember who her bridegroom is. She belongs to the one who went down into death to give her life, and whose exaltation came from the Father. Here, the hidden voice is still reaching up. In the next image, that desire comes under judgment.

The heart exposed



STORY PURPOSE

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus says that as he is lifted up in death, the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Scripture • Isaiah 14:15, KJV | Christ • John 12:31–33

NARRATIVE

We have heard the voice that says, I will ascend. Now the voice of judgment answers, Thou shalt be brought down. The image holds that reversal. What the creature imagined as a climb toward the throne becomes a fall.

In Isaiah, those words bring down the pretensions of Babylon’s king. Here, the same words give form to heavenly rebellion. God’s judgment exposes the ambition that the figure had kept within himself.

When Jesus speaks of judgment in John’s Gospel, he says that the ruler of this world will be cast out, and then he speaks of being lifted up. John tells us that Jesus is speaking about the way he will die. The cross will look like the triumph of the powers that put him there. Jesus sees in that same hour their judgment and the beginning of his drawing people to himself. As we return to the heavenly company, the question is how those who hear the call of rebellion will answer.

Turning to the host



STORY PURPOSE

Nothing was concealed from God. What the creature claimed within his heart, he now sought among the host: allegiance turned toward himself, and the glory that belonged to his Creator. Inward ambition became outward division.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus shares our flesh and blood and through death breaks the power of the one who holds the power of death.

Scripture • Isaiah 14:4–15; Ezekiel 28:12–19; Revelation 12:4,7–9; Isaiah 42:8; 1 John 1:5; Proverbs 25:2 | Christ • Hebrews 2:14

NARRATIVE

Ambition was hidden while it belonged to one heart. Now it turns toward the host and seeks an answer from other hearts. This is how a private desire becomes a common cause. Jesus also calls people to follow him, and he tells them what following will cost. The one who gathers them takes up the cross first. Here the host must decide whom to follow.

Divided allegiance



STORY PURPOSE

Rebellion could not extinguish the source of light. It revealed the darkness of the heart that turned away. The story sees here an echo of creation’s division: light distinguished from darkness, allegiance brought into view.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

God delivers us from the dominion of darkness and brings us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

Scripture • Isaiah 14:4–15; Ezekiel 28:12–19; Revelation 12:4,7–9; Isaiah 42:8; 1 John 1:5; Proverbs 25:2 | Christ • Colossians 1:13–14

NARRATIVE

The company that once shared one light is divided by allegiance. The division shows how far a thought can travel once others make it their own. Revelation pictures a dragon and angels joining in battle. Later, the Lamb gathers people whose loyalty is expressed in their testimony. From this point on, the story asks what it takes to hold to the truth when allegiance has a cost.

Light and darkness



STORY PURPOSE

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

In Jesus Christ is the life that lights humanity, and the darkness has not overcome that light.

Scripture • 1 John 1:5, KJV excerpt | Christ • John 1:4–5

NARRATIVE

Light makes the division visible. In the beginning God separates light from darkness. John uses the same words when he speaks of the life that was in the Word. The light shines in darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. The conflict we have seen is real, yet its outcome does not hang on whether darkness can extinguish the life that comes from God.

The hidden threshold



STORY PURPOSE

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. What does the God who knows every heart reveal of his own?

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The purpose long hidden in God comes into view in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Scripture • Proverbs 25:2, KJV, followed by original question | Christ • Ephesians 3:8–11

NARRATIVE

The threshold opens onto a world we can enter only a little at a time. Proverbs speaks of God concealing a matter and kings searching it out. The mystery ahead concerns the people Christ will gather to himself. Its first clue is something familiar enough to miss. A man will meet a woman and recognize someone with whom he can share his life.

Luminous linen



STORY PURPOSE

A life, a promise, a fulfillment still concealed. Who is the Woman? To understand what she will become, we return to the beginning. The story will ask what makes love faithful, and what faithful love is willing to give.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The woman glimpsed here points forward to the Bride, the wife of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

Scripture • Genesis 2; Ephesians 5:25–32 | Christ • Revelation 21:9–10

NARRATIVE

For now we see only linen. Revelation later gives that fabric a meaning. The Bride’s fine linen is associated with the righteous deeds of the saints, and the garment is granted to her. Gift and response belong together. Christ makes his people ready, and what he gives becomes visible in the way they live. To see why a garment is needed at all, we return to the garden.



CHAPTER 02

Created for Shared Life

Eve is formed from Adam’s side, and he recognizes her as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Their union gives the story its first image of shared life. When disobedience brings shame and separation, God speaks of the Woman’s offspring and the defeat of the serpent. The chapter carries both threads toward Jesus Christ, who gives himself to restore communion and unite the Church to himself.

Genesis 2:21–24, Genesis 3:8–15, Ephesians 5:25–32, Hebrews 2:14–15

Garden revealed



STORY PURPOSE

Before the garden, the deep lies beneath darkness. God speaks, and the world takes order. The creation that follows prepares a home for human life, and a setting in which the Creator’s image will become visible.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Paul calls Adam a figure of the one to come. The shared life that begins in Adam will find a new beginning in Jesus Christ.

Scripture • Genesis 1:1–3 | Christ • Romans 5:14–19

NARRATIVE

The garden gives us a place where life can begin in God’s presence. Its abundance matters because everything the first people need is already there before they lift a hand. John will tell of another garden, where Mary Magdalene hears the risen Jesus speak her name. Between those gardens, we will watch what happens when human beings lose communion and God comes to restore it.

Earth and breath



STORY PURPOSE

Dust and breath establish the human beginning before the Woman enters the story.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Adam received life. Paul calls Jesus Christ the last Adam, the one who gives life.

Scripture • Genesis 1:26, KJV excerpt; Genesis 2:7 | Christ • 1 Corinthians 15:45–49

NARRATIVE

God stoops, as it were, to the dust. He forms a body from the ground and breathes into it. The closeness of that gesture tells us something about the dignity of embodied life. When the Word becomes flesh, he enters the life that began here. In Jesus, the breath and frailty of human existence become part of the story of how God comes near.

Adam awakened



STORY PURPOSE

Adam stands alive as the first man. His awakening introduces the contrast between life received and life given.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Adam received life. Paul calls Jesus Christ the last Adam, the one who gives life.

Scripture • Genesis 1:26, KJV excerpt; Genesis 2:7 | Christ • 1 Corinthians 15:45–49

NARRATIVE

Adam awakens to a life already given. His first breath is something he can receive but cannot produce for himself. Paul calls Adam a living being and speaks of the last Adam as life-giving. The distinction matters because the rest of the story will bring the first man’s children face to face with death. In Christ, life will be given again.

One human presence



STORY PURPOSE

Among the surrounding creatures, Adam’s humanity is singular. He can name them and care for the garden. Yet his calling also reaches toward relationship. God himself names what is missing: it is not good that the man should be alone.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Through one man death reigned. Through Jesus Christ those who receive grace will reign in life.

Scripture • Genesis 2:15,18–20 | Christ • Romans 5:17

NARRATIVE

Abundance surrounds Adam, yet God says that it is not good for the man to be alone. The garden has room for fellowship that Adam has yet to know. Jesus later prays that those who belong to him may share the love of the Father and the Son. Adam’s solitude opens a small window onto the larger mystery of what it means to share life.

Naming the creatures



STORY PURPOSE

God brings the creatures before Adam. He encounters their variety and names them. Each belongs within creation’s order, yet none shares his humanity. The experience makes the distinction plain: abundance alone does not fulfill the desire for a corresponding companion.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The dominion entrusted to humanity reaches its fulfillment in Jesus, whom Hebrews sees crowned with glory after suffering death.

Scripture • Genesis 2:19–20 | Christ • Hebrews 2:6–9

NARRATIVE

As the creatures pass before Adam, he learns to recognize what is distinct about each one. Giving them names brings the world into focus. The search also brings his own condition into focus. John later describes Jesus as a shepherd who knows his sheep and calls them by name. To be recognized in that way is the beginning of a relationship.

None corresponding



STORY PURPOSE

Among the creatures Adam names, none corresponds to him. The search prepares the revelation of the Woman.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The story uses the empty place beside Adam to anticipate the people Christ will gather and make holy.

Scripture • Genesis 2:20; Psalm 113:5 | Christ • Ephesians 5:25–27

NARRATIVE

Adam can name the creatures, yet none can answer him as someone of his own kind. The absence is felt more clearly because the garden is so full. When Christ comes among us, Hebrews says he shares in flesh and blood and calls those he sanctifies his brothers and sisters. The one who comes to help us truly enters the life he comes to redeem.

The empty space



STORY PURPOSE

The vacant place beside Adam makes his solitude visible and prepares the audience for recognition.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The story uses the empty place beside Adam to anticipate the people Christ will gather and make holy.

Scripture • Genesis 2:20; Psalm 113:5 | Christ • Ephesians 5:25–27

NARRATIVE

The empty place beside Adam carries a question. Who can stand there and share his life? The answer will come while Adam sleeps and can do nothing to provide it for himself. Keep that stillness in mind. Much later the Bride will stand before Christ because he has loved her and given himself for her. Her place beside him is also a gift.

THE WOMAN

Deep sleep



STORY PURPOSE

Adam cannot bring forth the companion he desires by his own power. God causes him to sleep. From his side, God forms the woman, giving their union a shared beginning within one human life.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The story lets Adam’s opened side anticipate the pierced side of Jesus Christ, who gives himself for the Church.

Scripture • Genesis 2:21–22 | Christ • Genesis 2:21–22; John 19:34; Ephesians 5:25–32

NARRATIVE

Adam sleeps while God opens his side. Genesis locates the woman’s beginning in the very flesh of the man who will recognize her. John later draws our attention to the side of Jesus opened after his death. Seen together, the two images invite us to consider the cost of kinship. The people Christ calls his own are gathered through the life he gives.

The woman revealed



STORY PURPOSE

The woman emerges from Adam’s side as someone who shares his humanity.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Adam recognizes his own flesh. Paul draws on that kinship when he speaks of the Church as members of Christ’s body.

Scripture • Genesis 2:23–24; 1:27 | Christ • Ephesians 5:29–30

NARRATIVE

The woman appears after God has taken from Adam’s side. Her arrival answers the search that all the creatures of the garden could never satisfy. Paul returns to the marriage that begins here when he speaks of Christ and the Church. The person we see before Adam gives the later image of the Bride its first human vocabulary.

Recognition



STORY PURPOSE

Adam recognizes his own flesh in the Woman. The recognition prepares the language of one flesh.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Paul reads the union of husband and wife alongside the union of Christ and the Church.

Scripture • Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31–32 | Christ • Ephesians 5:31–32

NARRATIVE

Recognition comes before the two begin their life together. Adam sees someone he can call bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. Those words make room for intimacy without erasing either person. When Paul says that believers are members of Christ’s body, that same language of belonging helps us hear the tenderness of his claim.

The warning



STORY PURPOSE

Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Death is the wage of sin. Eternal life is God’s gift in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Scripture • Genesis 2:16–17, KJV | Christ • Romans 6:23

NARRATIVE

The garden is full of permission. One tree bears a warning, and the warning reveals that fellowship involves trust. The man and woman can receive the boundary as the word of someone who gives life. In the wilderness Jesus will also hear a suggestion to reach for what is offered. His answer shows what it means to trust the Father when obedience is tested.

Eve deceived



STORY PURPOSE

The serpent challenges the warning and presents disobedience as a path to gain. Eve listens, desires, and eats. Trust in the Creator gives way to another voice. The promise conceals the cost of what it offers.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The serpent’s twisting of God’s words anticipates the temptation Jesus meets and answers with Scripture.

Scripture • Genesis 3:1–6; 1 Timothy 2:14 | Christ • Matthew 4:1–11; 2 Corinthians 11:3

NARRATIVE

The serpent begins by asking a question about what God said. By the end, the woman is invited to see God’s warning as a reason to doubt his goodness. The fruit has become a test of whom she will believe. The same question echoes when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness. He answers each invitation by returning to the Father’s word.

The offered fruit



STORY PURPOSE

She gives the fruit to her husband beside her. Scripture distinguishes their condition: Eve was deceived; Adam was not deceived. Before him stands the woman who shares his life. He knows the warning that has been broken.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Adam’s choice draws us toward the contrast Paul makes with the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Scripture • Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 2:14 | Christ • Romans 5:19

NARRATIVE

The fruit passes between two people who already share a life. The gesture brings the serpent’s words into their relationship. Eve offers what she has taken, and Adam now faces a choice of his own. Later, at another table, Jesus takes bread and offers it to those he loves. What passes from hand to hand there is a sign of the life he gives for them.

The knowing choice



STORY PURPOSE

In this telling, Adam faces the prospect of separation from the one brought from his own flesh. He takes the fruit knowing its consequence. He chooses to share her fate. His decision enters death; it cannot redeem her.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

In this telling Adam accepts death alongside Eve. Jesus Christ freely lays down his life to redeem those he loves.

Scripture • Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12–19 | Christ • Romans 5:18–19; John 10:17–18

NARRATIVE

Adam knows the warning and takes the fruit. In the reading offered here, his choice can be heard as a willingness to enter the fate of the woman beside him. Paul sets Adam’s disobedience beside Christ’s obedience. Jesus enters death freely, and because he remains faithful to the Father, the one who shares our mortality can bring us through it.

Shared awakening



STORY PURPOSE

Their eyes open. Shame replaces unguarded trust, and they hide. Shared disobedience has fractured their relationship with God. Death enters their story. Yet God’s purpose does not end among the trees where they conceal themselves.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The breach opened in Eden is answered by reconciliation with God through the death and life of Jesus Christ.

Scripture • Genesis 3:7–24; Romans 5:12 | Christ • Romans 5:1–2, 10

NARRATIVE

The two who had recognized each other without shame now look for something to cover themselves. They hide from the presence they once knew. The distance glimpsed in the opening picture begins here. God’s question to Adam, asking where he is, makes that distance audible. Jesus will describe his own coming as a search for people who are lost.

The seed of the woman



STORY PURPOSE

In the garden God speaks to the serpent. Enmity will stand between it and the woman, between its offspring and hers. The serpent will strike his heel, and her offspring will strike its head. The promise is spoken where the wound began.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The story sees the promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who suffers death and destroys the works of the devil.

Scripture • Genesis 3:14–15. | Christ • Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8

NARRATIVE

Look first at the heel, then at the serpent’s head. Both receive a blow, yet the wounds carry different weight. The promise begins while the first people are still facing judgment. Hebrews later says that through death Jesus breaks the power of the one who holds the power of death. What looks like the serpent’s victory becomes the place where Christ defeats him.

Eve receives another seed



STORY PURPOSE

Eve, called the mother of all living, knew the grief of losing Abel. When Seth was born, she named the gift in the language of seed. God had appointed another offspring in Abel’s place. The family would continue beyond the grave of her son.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Luke traces the genealogy of Jesus Christ back through Seth to Adam, carrying Eve’s family into the Gospel story.

Scripture • Genesis 3:20; 4:1–2, 25–26. | Christ • Luke 3:23, 38

NARRATIVE

Eve names Seth in the shadow of Abel’s death. She speaks of another offspring appointed to her, and the language of seed returns after the first grave. The loss remains part of the family’s memory, even as God gives it a future. Luke traces the ancestry of Jesus through Seth to Adam, carrying this fragile beginning into the story of Christ.



CHAPTER 03

The Promise Carried

From Eve receiving Seth to the women named or remembered in Matthew’s genealogy, the promise passes through particular lives and generations. Abraham’s family, David’s house, and Israel’s worship give the promise a history. The sanctuary also asks how God can dwell among his people. Jesus comes as the promised Son and opens the way into God’s presence, where the Bride will find her home.

Genesis 4:25, Genesis 22:17–18, Matthew 1:1–16, Galatians 3:16, Hebrews 10:19–22

Abraham beneath the stars



STORY PURPOSE

Beneath a sky filled with stars, God calls Abraham to consider descendants beyond his power to count. Through his seed, blessing will reach the nations. The promise begins with a particular call and opens toward an immense family.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Paul says the blessing promised to Abraham reaches the nations in Christ Jesus.

Scripture • Genesis 12:1–3; 15:5; 22:17–18 | Christ • Galatians 3:8, 14

NARRATIVE

Abraham stands beneath a sky whose lights he cannot count. He has heard a promise that exceeds what he can see in his household. The stars give that promise a scale he can look at even while he waits. Paul brings the promise to its focus in Christ, through whom the blessing of Abraham reaches people beyond Abraham’s own family.

Sarah and Hagar



STORY PURPOSE

Sarah bore Isaac in her old age, as God had promised. In the wilderness Hagar heard God’s provision for Ishmael. The two sons had distinct futures, and the God who kept his covenant with Isaac also heard the cry of the child in the wilderness.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Isaac’s promised birth gives Paul language for those who belong to Jesus Christ and inherit the promise.

Scripture • Genesis 16:7–13; 17:15–21; 21:1–21. | Christ • Galatians 3:14, 29; 4:28

NARRATIVE

Sarah and Hagar stand within one household, yet their children inherit very different stories. God hears Hagar in the wilderness, and he keeps the promise he made concerning Sarah’s child. Paul later uses these two mothers to speak about the freedom of the children of promise. Their old family history gives him language for what believers receive through Christ.

Mothers of Israel



STORY PURPOSE

Rebekah left her home to join Isaac. Leah and Rachel bore children in a household divided by rivalry and longing. Israel’s family grew through their lives, and generations later the elders remembered Rachel and Leah as women who built the house of Israel.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Matthew traces the ancestry of Jesus Christ through Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, Leah’s son.

Scripture • Genesis 24; 25:19–26; 29:31–30:24; Ruth 4:11. | Christ • Matthew 1:2–3

NARRATIVE

Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel bear the promise through years of waiting, rivalry, and grief. The family grows through these lives, with all the complications Scripture allows us to see. Matthew will name Judah, Leah’s son, in the line that leads to Jesus. The promised line takes shape through particular mothers and children, one generation at a time.

Sanctuary courtyard



STORY PURPOSE

Israel receives the law, worship, and sacrifices. These shape covenant life, expose sin, and teach the seriousness of approaching the Holy One. They prepare expectation for a redemption their repeated offerings cannot themselves bring to completion.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Hebrews sees the sacrifices as a shadow of the good to come and the offering of Jesus Christ as the act that sanctifies.

Scripture • Romans 9:4–5; Galatians 3:19–24; Hebrews 10:1–14 | Christ • Hebrews 10:1–14

NARRATIVE

The courtyard gives approach to God a visible shape. A person enters, draws near, and encounters sacrifice. Each step makes the question of access harder to ignore. Hebrews speaks of Christ offering himself once, opening a way into God’s presence. The courtyard prepares us to see why his gift reaches beyond the forgiveness of a single act.

The veil



STORY PURPOSE

Within the sanctuary, a veil marks the holy place of approach. God purposes to dwell among his people, yet access is ordered and guarded. Presence is promised; the need for cleansing remains before them.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Through the blood of Jesus we have confidence to enter the sanctuary, with access through the way he opens.

Scripture • Exodus 25:8; 26:33–34; Hebrews 9:6–14 | Christ • Hebrews 10:19–22

NARRATIVE

The veil shows how close a worshiper can come while something still stands between. It also tells us there is a presence worth approaching on the other side. Hebrews uses the language of the curtain for the living way Jesus opens through his flesh. The distance marked here is the distance he crosses on behalf of those who draw near through him.

Covenant presence



STORY PURPOSE

At the ark, covenant and mercy meet within Israel’s worship. God is never contained by the work of human hands. He makes his presence known and carries forward his purpose to dwell among the people he has called.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

God’s presence among his people comes near in Jesus Christ, and John identifies Jesus’ body as the temple he spoke of.

Scripture • Exodus 25:22; 1 Kings 8:27 | Christ • John 1:14; 2:19–22

NARRATIVE

God gives Israel a place where his covenant presence is known among them. The sanctuary stands in the middle of ordinary life, making the promise of nearness visible. John will say that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. In Jesus, God’s presence comes close enough to be heard in a human voice and seen in a human face.

Dwelling promised



STORY PURPOSE

The movement from covenant sanctuary to David’s house prepares for the promised Son, whose reign and presence are joined in Jesus.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus receives David’s throne in Gabriel’s announcement, and Paul identifies him as David’s descendant according to the flesh.

Scripture • 2 Samuel 7:12–16; Romans 1:3; Luke 1:31–33 | Christ • Luke 1:31–33; Romans 1:3–4

NARRATIVE

The promise of a dwelling and the promise of a son come together in the words spoken to David. David wants to build a house for God, and God promises to build a house for David. The Gospel announces Jesus as David’s son. His reign will carry the promise of God’s dwelling toward its fulfillment among a people.

The women Matthew remembers



STORY PURPOSE

Matthew names Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth, and remembers Solomon’s mother as the wife of Uriah. Their stories carry danger, courage, loyalty, and wrongs that Scripture remembers. Through this human history the genealogy reaches Mary, from whom Jesus is born.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Matthew includes these women within the genealogy he opens by naming Jesus Christ, son of David and son of Abraham.

Scripture • Matthew 1:3–6, 16; Genesis 38; Joshua 2; Ruth 4; 2 Samuel 11–12. | Christ • Matthew 1:1–6, 16

NARRATIVE

Matthew makes us pause over names a royal genealogy could easily pass by. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah bring complicated histories into the line of the Messiah. Their presence teaches us how to read the names that follow. Jesus enters a family with a real past, and the mercy he brings reaches people with real pasts of their own.



CHAPTER 04

The Woman’s Heart

Wisdom and Folly both call for an answer. The faithful woman of Proverbs shows what a wise answer looks like in daily life. She provides for her household, opens her hand to the poor, and speaks with kindness. The chapter lets us see the character Christ is forming in his Bride through choices that reveal whose voice she trusts.

Proverbs 9:1–18, Proverbs 31:10–31, 1 Corinthians 1:24, Revelation 19:7–8

The listening heart



STORY PURPOSE

The listening figure turns the earlier contrast between Wisdom and Folly into a personal question of whose voice to follow.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The character of the Woman comes to fruition in the people who abide in Jesus Christ and bear fruit in him.

Scripture • Proverbs 8–9; 31:10–31 | Christ • John 15:4–5

NARRATIVE

The listening heart stands where a path is about to be chosen. What matters now is whose voice can be trusted. The garden has already shown how a voice can make a false promise sound like wisdom. Jesus describes his people as sheep who know his voice. Over time, that recognition becomes visible in the way they follow.

Wisdom invites



STORY PURPOSE

Wisdom prepares a table and calls the simple to understanding. Her invitation opens toward life. To receive her is to learn discernment, accept correction, and turn the heart toward the fear of the Lord.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The invitation of Wisdom leads the story toward Jesus Christ, whom Paul calls the wisdom of God.

Scripture • Proverbs 8; 9:1–12 | Christ • 1 Corinthians 1:23–24

NARRATIVE

Wisdom speaks openly and invites people to her table. She offers understanding as something to receive and live by. The invitation reaches us before the path has been settled. Paul calls Christ the wisdom of God, even as he preaches him crucified. To hear Wisdom’s invitation fully, we have to learn to recognize wisdom where the world sees weakness.

Folly invites



STORY PURPOSE

Folly also has a doorway and an invitation. Stolen waters are sweet, she says, while concealing the destination of her guests. An appealing promise can hide a destructive end. The answering heart must learn to discern.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus places wisdom and folly before his hearers in the two builders. The wise hear his words and act on them.

Scripture • Proverbs 9:13–18 | Christ • Matthew 7:24–27

NARRATIVE

Folly also calls from a doorway. Her invitation borrows the shape of hospitality while concealing where the path ends. The danger lies partly in how familiar the invitation sounds. Jesus speaks of knowing a tree by its fruit. What the two invitations produce will tell us more about their voices than the promises we hear at the door.

Virtue made visible



STORY PURPOSE

The virtuous woman makes faithfulness visible through action. She is trusted. Her hands work and provide; they also open to the poor. Strength and dignity clothe her. Wisdom and kindness govern her speech.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The generosity we see here anticipates the people Jesus Christ redeems and makes eager to do good.

Scripture • Proverbs 31:10–31 | Christ • Titus 2:14

NARRATIVE

The virtue described in Proverbs becomes visible in work, generosity, and care for the household. Strength here is something other people can depend upon. When Revelation pictures the Bride clothed in fine linen, it connects that garment with the righteous deeds of the saints. What Christ gives his people becomes visible in acts as ordinary and concrete as these.

The royal bride and the beloved



STORY PURPOSE

A royal bride approaches in embroidered garments. In the Song, the beloved hears a voice calling her into the spring. These poems give marriage and longing their own language. In this telling, their joy also gives us language for the feast still to come.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Hebrews applies the royal psalm’s throne language to the Son. The story lets its wedding imagery and the Song echo the marriage of Christ the Lamb.

Scripture • Psalm 45:9–15; Song of Songs 2:8–17; 8:6–7. | Christ • Hebrews 1:8–9; Revelation 19:7–9

NARRATIVE

A royal bride approaches in splendor, and the beloved in the Song longs to hear the voice of the one she loves. These poems give joy and desire a language. Read alongside the wedding of the Lamb, they help us hear what a promise of communion can mean. Christ’s welcome is the welcome of a bridegroom who delights in the people he has made ready.



CHAPTER 05

Grace Deeper Still

The prophets speak of the Woman as a whole people. Israel’s early devotion gives way to covenant betrayal, and Daughter Zion mourns as Jerusalem falls. Yet God remembers his covenant and promises to bring her children home. Paul calls the Jerusalem above our mother, giving the promise of home a new reach. The Bride’s hope rests on the faithful love of Christ, who gives himself to cleanse and restore her.

Jeremiah 2:2, Hosea 2:19–20, Isaiah 49:14–22, Galatians 4:26–28, Ephesians 5:25–27

The devotion of her youth



STORY PURPOSE

God remembers Jerusalem’s early devotion, like the love of a bride who followed him into the wilderness. The memory gives weight to what follows. The One who remembers her first love also sees the distance she has traveled from it.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The remembered devotion of the bride echoes in Christ’s call to Ephesus to return to the love it had at first.

Scripture • Jeremiah 2:2, 20, 32. | Christ • Revelation 2:4–5

NARRATIVE

The wilderness lies behind the bride as a place of early devotion. God remembers Israel following him through a land without the things on which a traveler usually depends. The memory makes later estrangement painful. When Jesus calls a church back to its first love, the invitation has the same tenderness and urgency. He remembers the love from which they have fallen.

Samaria and Jerusalem



STORY PURPOSE

Ezekiel sets two sisters before us. One is Samaria, the other Jerusalem. Their pursuit of foreign powers exposes what those alliances had become. Jerusalem saw the ruin of her sister and followed the same road. The prophet calls both cities to account.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Centuries later Jesus meets a Samaritan woman, speaks of true worship, and is welcomed in her town as Savior of the world.

Scripture • Ezekiel 23:1–11, 22–35. | Christ • John 4:21–26, 39–42

NARRATIVE

The prophets give Samaria and Jerusalem the faces of two sisters. Their likeness makes their repeated choices harder to evade. Both seek safety and splendor among powers that cannot keep the promises they make. Jesus laments over Jerusalem as one who longs to gather her children. His lament lets us hear the grief within the judgment these sisters bring upon themselves.

Daughter Zion mourns



STORY PURPOSE

Jerusalem sits lonely after the siege. Lamentations hears Daughter Zion weep for her children. Micah pictures her in labor as she goes into exile, and speaks of rescue there. The city has a voice for the grief that precedes her return.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus himself weeps over Jerusalem, giving the Gospel its own scene of grief for the city.

Scripture • Lamentations 1:1–6; 2:13, 18–19; Micah 4:8–10. | Christ • Luke 19:41–44

NARRATIVE

Daughter Zion mourns over an emptied city. The streets and gates once held the sound of ordinary life, and now their silence is part of her grief. Jesus himself weeps over Jerusalem. Those tears help us hear judgment without losing sight of the people who bear it. The one who speaks of what is coming loves the city he sees before him.

Mother Zion welcomes her children



STORY PURPOSE

Zion says she has been forgotten. God answers with the tenderness of a mother who remembers her child. Then Zion herself sees her children return. The forsaken woman becomes a bride over whom God rejoices, and the city that mourned becomes a place of comfort.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus longs to gather Jerusalem’s children, and Paul later uses Isaiah’s promise of children to speak of the Jerusalem above.

Scripture • Isaiah 49:14–23; 54:1–10; 62:4–5; 66:7–14. | Christ • Matthew 23:37; Galatians 4:26–27

NARRATIVE

Mother Zion lifts her eyes and discovers children coming home. Isaiah lets the returning people answer the city’s fear that God has forgotten her. Her grief had made the future seem empty. Now she must make room. This abundance prepares us to hear the welcome of Christ, who gathers people from beyond the boundaries within which they first learned to hope.

Covenant and restoration



STORY PURPOSE

The covenant woman turns toward restoration. The image moves from the exposure of betrayal to God’s promise of cleansing and renewed life.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ mediates the new covenant and cleanses the conscience, making it possible to serve the living God.

Scripture • Romans 5:6–8,20–21; 2 Timothy 2:11–13; Ephesians 2:4–10 | Christ • Hebrews 9:14–15

NARRATIVE

Restoration begins when God addresses the estranged woman again. Hosea gives that new beginning the language of betrothal and promises righteousness, mercy, and faithfulness. The future depends on the character of the one making the promise. In Jesus, that character becomes visible through the giving of himself for a people who could never undo their own estrangement.

Jerusalem above, our mother



STORY PURPOSE

Paul returns to Sarah and Hagar and reads their story as an allegory of two covenants. He calls the Jerusalem above our mother and quotes Isaiah’s call for the barren woman to rejoice. The children of promise belong to the free woman.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Through Jesus Christ, the Son sent to redeem, believers receive adoption and become heirs of the promise.

Scripture • Galatians 4:21–31; Isaiah 54:1. | Christ • Galatians 3:26–29; 4:4–7, 26–28

NARRATIVE

Paul calls the Jerusalem above our mother. The image gives people who belong to Christ a family larger than the household into which they were born. It also changes how they understand inheritance. They are children of promise, welcomed into a freedom Christ has given. The city we saw at the opening now begins to look like a home.



CHAPTER 06

The Promise Made Flesh

Mary bears the promised Son, and her song remembers the mercy God spoke to Abraham and his offspring. From Cana to Calvary, the pages follow Jesus as he draws near, gives his life, and rises from the dead. His pierced side recalls Adam’s side and gives the story a way to picture the cost of shared life. The Bride belongs to the risen Christ because he first loved her and gave himself for her.

Matthew 1:22–23, Luke 1:46–55, John 2:1–11, John 19:25–37, John 20:11–18, Ephesians 5:25

The sign of Immanuel



STORY PURPOSE

In the days of Ahaz, Isaiah gives the house of David a sign involving a child called Immanuel. Matthew returns to that sign as he tells of Jesus’ birth. The name gives voice to what the Gospel sees in this child. God is with us.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Matthew puts the sign beside the name Jesus, the one who will save his people from their sins.

Scripture • Isaiah 7:10–17; Matthew 1:18–25. | Christ • Matthew 1:21–23

NARRATIVE

Immanuel is a name that speaks of presence. Isaiah gives it in a time of fear, when the future of David’s house is in question. Matthew returns to the name when he tells of Jesus’ birth. The answer takes a form no fortress could provide. God comes among the people who need him, and the sign becomes a child.

Mary bears the promise



STORY PURPOSE

By the Holy Spirit she conceives the Son of God. In our reading, Mary gives the Woman a historical embodiment. The miraculous conception is real human life from its beginning. The Word becomes flesh through her motherhood.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The son Mary bears is Jesus, called holy, the Son of God, and heir to David’s throne.

Scripture • Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Romans 1:3 | Christ • Luke 1:31–35

NARRATIVE

The long promise reaches Mary as a word she can answer. Her consent is spoken before she can see where the road will lead. What had passed from one generation to another now takes flesh within her. The child she bears is the one in whom God comes near enough to be held, and vulnerable enough to be refused.

Mary and Elizabeth



STORY PURPOSE

Elizabeth welcomes Mary with blessing, and Mary answers with praise. She remembers the God who lifts the lowly, fills the hungry, and keeps mercy with Israel. In her song the child she carries belongs to the promise spoken to Abraham and his seed.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Elizabeth calls Mary the mother of her Lord. Mary’s song places the coming of Jesus within God’s mercy to Abraham and his seed.

Scripture • Luke 1:39–56. | Christ • Luke 1:43, 54–55

NARRATIVE

When Mary greets Elizabeth, the promise is recognized within an ordinary act of welcome. Mary then gives voice to the mercy of God, recalling Abraham and his offspring. Her song makes clear that what happens in her belongs to a history older than she is. It also announces the reversals Jesus will make visible among the hungry, the lowly, and the forgotten.

The Word among us



STORY PURPOSE

The eternal Word dwells among us. The life toward which law, sacrifice, and promise pointed has entered our world. In Jesus, people encounter the mercy, holiness, and self-giving love of the God who desires to be known.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

In Jesus Christ, God’s dwelling comes near enough to be seen in a human life.

Scripture • John 1:1–18; Hebrews 1:1–3 | Christ • John 1:14; 14:9

NARRATIVE

The Word enters the world he made, and people can now stand beside him. They hear his voice, watch him touch the sick, and see where he chooses to sit. The promise of God dwelling with us takes the shape of a human life. The closeness of that life prepares us for a table where welcome will become impossible to overlook.

A shared table



STORY PURPOSE

He receives those burdened by sin and shame. He shares their table, calls them to repentance, and offers forgiveness. His love approaches people in their need. Their restoration begins in the mercy he brings to them.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus shares the table with people called sinners because he has come to call them to repentance.

Scripture • Luke 5:29–32; 7:36–50; Romans 5:8 | Christ • Luke 5:29–32

NARRATIVE

At the table, Jesus makes room for people whose company can cost him his reputation. The meal gives his mercy a visible shape. There is a place to sit, bread to share, and a host who knows whom he has invited. Later, when we come to the Lamb’s wedding supper, remember that this is the one who presides over it.

Daughter Zion receives her King



STORY PURPOSE

The prophet calls Daughter Zion to rejoice because her king is coming. Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, and the crowd lays branches and garments on the road. The promised king comes to his city in humility.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Matthew names this arrival as the fulfillment of the prophet’s words to Daughter Zion. Her humble king is Jesus.

Scripture • Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:4–9; John 12:12–16. | Christ • Matthew 21:4–9

NARRATIVE

The city receives its king with branches and voices raised in hope. Jesus rides a donkey, carrying the humility Zechariah associated with Zion’s king. The crowd can see his approach, but the shape of his victory has yet to become clear. His road leads toward a cross, where the welcome of the city will give way to a deeper test of allegiance.

Willing self-giving



STORY PURPOSE

Jesus gives his life willingly. The garden’s anguish returns in our memory: Adam knowingly entered death alongside the woman who shared his life. Christ enters death to redeem those he loves. His obedience will answer human disobedience.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ lays down his life of his own accord, in obedience to the Father.

Scripture • John 10:17–18; Romans 5:12–21; Ephesians 5:25 | Christ • John 10:17–18

NARRATIVE

Jesus approaches the hour of his death knowing what it will ask of him. John records his words about laying down his life freely. That freedom gives the sacrifice its character. The one with authority chooses to spend it on those he loves. Here the question first raised by the heavenly company receives its clearest answer.

The cross



STORY PURPOSE

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Here the story’s deepest claim becomes visible: God knew the cost, and his love bore it. The faithful One undertakes the redemption of the unfaithful.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ bears our sins in his body and shows God’s love by dying for us while we are still sinners.

Scripture • Romans 5:6–8; 1 Peter 1:18–20 | Christ • Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24

NARRATIVE

The cross gives the story of love a cost that can be seen. Jesus bears death in the flesh he shares with us. John also hears in his lifting up the judgment of the ruler of this world. The wound promised in the garden now has a place in history, and the serpent’s blow becomes the place where its power is broken.

Woman, at Cana and the cross



STORY PURPOSE

At Cana, Jesus addresses his mother as Woman, and she tells the servants to do whatever he says. At the cross he addresses her again and entrusts her to the beloved disciple. In the hour of loss he gives them to one another as family.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The first sign reveals Jesus’ glory. At the cross his care for his mother shows that glory taking the form of love even in suffering.

Scripture • John 2:1–11; 19:25–27. | Christ • John 2:4–11; 19:25–27

NARRATIVE

At Cana, Jesus addresses his mother as woman while the wedding feast is running short. From the cross, he addresses her as woman again and gives her into the care of the beloved disciple. Between those two moments, John lets us see the reach of his hour. A feast is supplied, and at the place of death a new household begins.

The side and the cost



STORY PURPOSE

From Adam’s side, the woman came into shared human life. At Christ’s pierced side, our story recalls that beginning. His self-giving opens the way for a redeemed people to share the life he gives.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

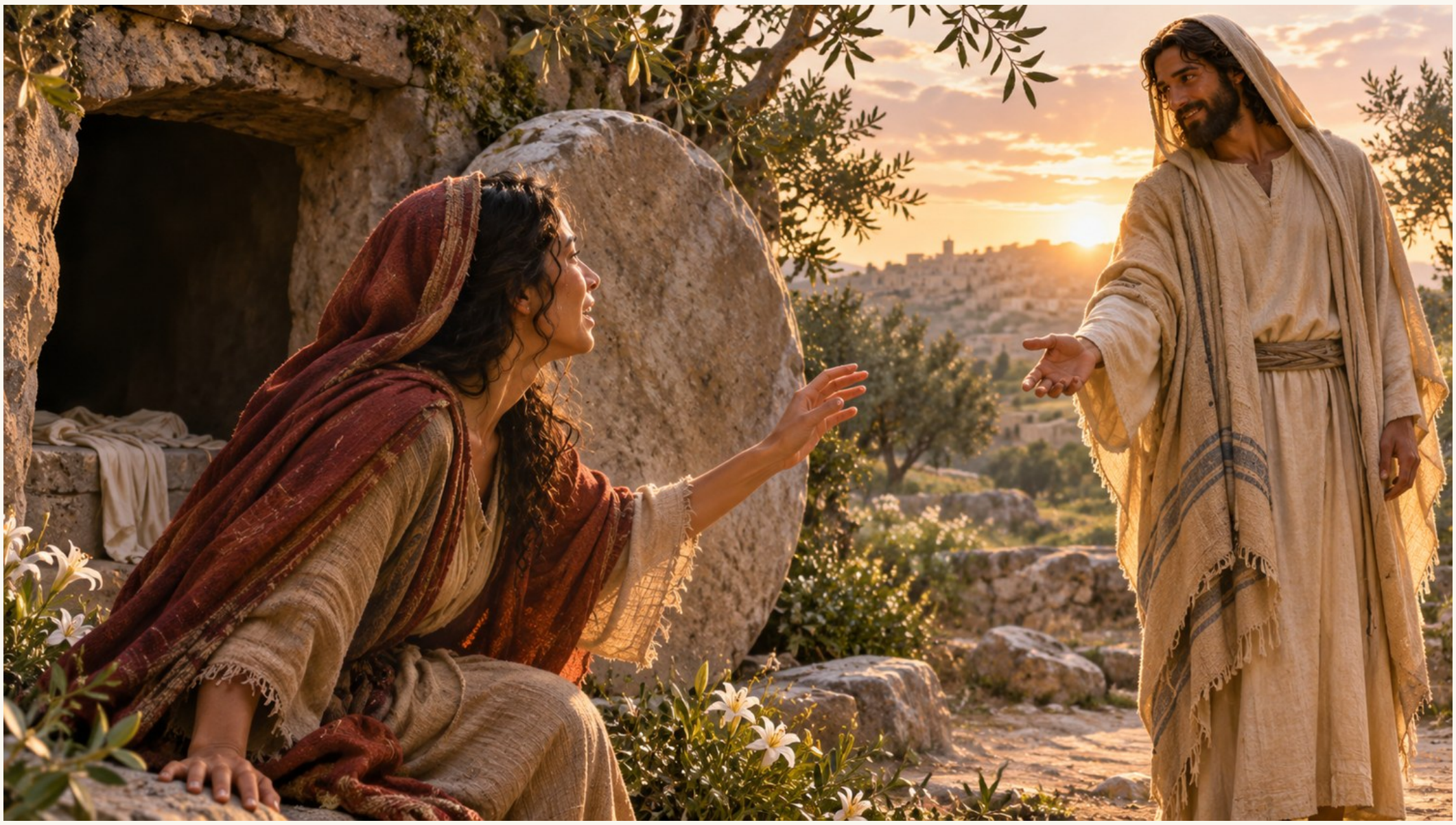
The story connects Jesus’ pierced side with the love by which Christ gives himself to sanctify the Church.

Scripture • Genesis 2:21–24; John 19:34; Ephesians 5:25–32 | Christ • John 19:34–37; Ephesians 5:25–27

NARRATIVE

John tells us that blood and water come from the opened side of Jesus. The sight recalls Adam’s side, from which the woman came. The two moments belong to different events, yet their resemblance gives the story a way to speak about kinship. The Bride owes her life to the man who has given his own life for her.

Mary Magdalene hears her name



STORY PURPOSE

Mary weeps outside the tomb. Jesus asks her why she is weeping, and she recognizes him when he speaks her name. He sends her to his brothers. She goes to the disciples bearing the news that she has seen the Lord.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The risen Jesus sends Mary Magdalene to announce his return to his Father and their Father, his God and their God.

Scripture • John 20:11–18. | Christ • John 20:16–18

NARRATIVE

Mary stands near the tomb and does not know the man who speaks to her. Then Jesus says her name. Recognition returns in a single word, and grief becomes testimony. The risen Christ sends her to tell his brothers what she has seen. The one who was lost to death is alive and already drawing a family together.



CHAPTER 07

A People Formed in Christ

Revelation shows the Woman threatened by the dragon and her children holding to the testimony of Jesus. Babylon offers another allegiance, and Christ’s warning to Thyatira brings that choice close to the life of the Church. Through the conflict, Christ cleanses and reconciles his people. The Bride begins to take visible shape as distinct lives are joined into one body and built together as a dwelling for God.

Revelation 2:18–29, Revelation 12:1–17, Revelation 17–18, Ephesians 2:19–22

The woman clothed with the sun



STORY PURPOSE

The Woman appears in labor, clothed with the sun. Her child and the dragon bring the conflict over the promised offspring into view.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ brings those who were far away near and makes them one household in God.

Scripture • Revelation 12:1–5 | Christ • Ephesians 2:13–22

NARRATIVE

Revelation brings the Woman into view clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of stars. Her splendor and her labor belong to the same image. She bears a child under threat. We have heard this conflict before in the garden, where the promise of offspring came with the warning that the serpent would strike.

The child caught up



STORY PURPOSE

The dragon waits to devour the child. Yet the child is caught up to God and his throne. Opposition cannot overthrow the authority given to the Son. The vision declares the preservation and exaltation of the promised ruler.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The story identifies the woman’s royal child with Jesus Christ, whose rule Revelation also describes with the rod of iron.

Scripture • Revelation 12:3–5 | Christ • Revelation 12:5; 19:15

NARRATIVE

The dragon waits to devour the child, yet the child is caught up to God and to his throne. The image compresses the conflict between the threatened life and the promised reign. The language of ruling the nations points toward Christ. The dragon can threaten his coming, but it cannot take possession of the throne to which he is received.

Carried into the wilderness



STORY PURPOSE

The woman is given refuge in the wilderness. The vision speaks of the wings of a great eagle and a place prepared for her. Vulnerability and divine provision stand together amid the conflict.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The woman’s preservation unfolds under the reign Revelation announces as the authority of God’s Christ.

Scripture • Revelation 12:6,13–14 | Christ • Revelation 12:6, 10, 14

NARRATIVE

The Woman is given wings to reach a place prepared for her in the wilderness. That place recalls the old journey in which God bore Israel on eagles’ wings. Here, nourishment comes while danger is still near. The people who belong to Christ can be kept even in a place that offers little evidence of safety of its own.

The earth swallows the flood



STORY PURPOSE

The dragon sends a flood after the woman, but the earth swallows it. The imagery gives visible form to violent opposition and unexpected deliverance. God’s purpose continues through a world in which hostility has not yet ceased.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

As the woman is rescued from the flood, the vision locates victory over the accuser in the blood of the Lamb.

Scripture • Revelation 12:15–16 | Christ • Revelation 12:11, 15–16

NARRATIVE

The serpent sends a flood after the Woman, and the earth opens to swallow it. The image gives the pursuit a force that could sweep everything away. It also gives creation a role in her deliverance. Christ’s people can receive help from a place they had no reason to expect, while the threat that seemed overwhelming loses its hold.

War against her offspring



STORY PURPOSE

The dragon turns against her offspring, those who keep God’s commandments and hold the testimony of Jesus. Their allegiance becomes visible under pressure. Faithfulness is lived within conflict, sustained by the One to whom they belong.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The dragon’s war reaches those who hold the testimony of Jesus and overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

Scripture • Revelation 12:17 | Christ • Revelation 12:11, 17

NARRATIVE

Unable to carry away the Woman, the dragon turns toward her offspring. Revelation identifies them by what they keep and whose testimony they bear. The struggle comes close to ordinary decisions about truth and faithfulness. Their victory is bound to the blood of the Lamb. The children stand because Christ has already given his life for them.

Cities that trusted their splendor



STORY PURPOSE

The prophets give proud cities the faces and voices of women. Tyre sings again for trade. Nineveh’s violence and seductions are exposed. Daughter Babylon loses her throne. Their stories give depth to the image of a city that trades in human allegiance.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The proud cities give the story a prophetic backdrop for the conflict in which Jesus Christ the Lamb overcomes the powers gathered against him.

Scripture • Isaiah 23:15–18; 47:1–15; Nahum 3:4–7. | Christ • Revelation 17:14

NARRATIVE

Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre display the kinds of splendor that make a city seem permanent. Each has its own history, and the prophets show how violence, pride, and commerce can serve a common hunger. The kingdom of Jesus approaches with a different kind of authority. Its king rides humbly and gives himself for the people who will inherit it.

The warning to Thyatira



STORY PURPOSE

The risen Christ sees Thyatira’s love, faith, and service. He also names the influence of a teacher he calls Jezebel. His words bring the question of allegiance inside the church, where he calls for repentance and tells those who remain faithful to hold fast.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ speaks as the Son of God who searches hearts and calls his own people to hold fast.

Scripture • Revelation 2:18–29. | Christ • Revelation 2:18–29

NARRATIVE

Christ praises what is alive in Thyatira before naming what the congregation tolerates. That order lets us hear the warning as the speech of someone who knows the people he addresses. The name Jezebel brings an older history of seduction and divided loyalty into the present. The Bride must learn to hear even the hard words of the one who loves her.

The woman upon the scarlet beast



STORY PURPOSE

Another woman appears upon a scarlet beast. Babylon’s luxury conceals corruption and violence against the saints. The adulteress’s theme reaches a terrible corporate expression: power and desire joined against God. Her downfall exposes the end of that allegiance.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Babylon is drunk with the blood of Jesus’ witnesses, yet the Lamb conquers the powers aligned against him.

Scripture • Revelation 17:1–6,18; 18 | Christ • Revelation 17:6, 14

NARRATIVE

The woman on the beast is clothed in costly fabric and holds a golden cup. Revelation lets us see what her beauty conceals by naming what fills the cup. Her splendor stands beside the blood of the saints. The contrast with Christ’s Bride grows sharper here. One city spends other people’s lives for glory, while the Lamb gives his own life for his people.

Wickedness carried to Shinar



STORY PURPOSE

Zechariah sees a woman in a measuring basket. The messenger names her Wickedness, shuts her in, and two winged women carry the basket to Shinar. The vision gives visible form to wickedness and sends it toward the land associated with Babylon.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The basket gives wickedness a visible form. The story sets that vision beside Jesus Christ giving himself to redeem a people from lawlessness.

Scripture • Zechariah 5:5–11. | Christ • Zechariah 5:5–11; Titus 2:14

NARRATIVE

In Zechariah’s vision, wickedness is given a figure and shut inside a measure. The winged women carry it away to Shinar, the land associated with Babylon. What seemed free to spread is contained and moved to an appointed place. The image prepares us for a city that will discover that its power has limits under the judgment of God.

Babylon falls



STORY PURPOSE

The kings and merchants stand far off as Babylon falls. They mourn the loss of wealth and trade, a trade that counted human lives among its cargo. A voice calls God’s people out of her. The city’s splendor passes, and the story turns toward the Lamb’s feast.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Babylon’s fall leads into praise and the marriage supper of Jesus Christ, the Lamb.

Scripture • Revelation 18:1–24. | Christ • Revelation 18:20–24; 19:1–9

NARRATIVE

The smoke rises while merchants stand at a distance. Their sorrow reveals what bound them to the city. They mourn the loss of trade and wealth, and the list of goods reaches all the way to human lives. The Lamb has gathered people by giving his life for them. Babylon falls under the weight of what it was willing to sell.

Cleansing



STORY PURPOSE

Against that corruption stands the work of restoring grace. Christ gives himself to cleanse and sanctify his people. He gives the new heart they cannot supply. Their faithful character grows from the mercy by which they were received.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The Bride’s cleansing begins with Jesus Christ giving himself for her.

Scripture • Ephesians 5:25–27; Titus 3:3–7; Ezekiel 36:25–27 | Christ • Ephesians 5:25–27

NARRATIVE

After Babylon’s fall, cleansing gives us a closer view of what it takes to prepare the Bride. Paul says Christ sanctifies the Church and washes her with the word. The one who knows her history makes it possible for her to stand before him. Purity here is the work of a love willing to come near enough to cleanse.

Reconciliation



STORY PURPOSE

We love him because he first loved us. Forgiveness bears fruit in confession, reconciliation, and renewed conduct. The hands once closed can open in generosity. The life once governed by deception can learn truth.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ gives his own love as the pattern for how his disciples are to love one another.

Scripture • 1 John 4:19; Ephesians 2:4–10; 4:25–32 | Christ • John 13:34–35

NARRATIVE

Reconciliation restores the possibility of being together. A person who once hid can be seen, known, and welcomed. The garden showed shame driving two people into cover. In Christ, the welcome reaches people who have learned to expect distance. His first act toward them makes possible the love they will give in answer.

Betrothed to Christ



STORY PURPOSE

Paul speaks of the congregation as a bride promised to Christ. Then he remembers the serpent and Eve. His fear is that another voice will draw them away from devotion to Christ. The garden’s question returns in the life of the Church.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The Bride’s fidelity has a particular object. Paul has promised the congregation to Christ and urges them to remain devoted to the Jesus they received.

Scripture • 2 Corinthians 11:2–4. | Christ • 2 Corinthians 11:2–4

NARRATIVE

Paul speaks of a congregation as promised to one husband. He remembers the serpent’s craft because the danger to the Bride is a turning of the heart, just as it was in the garden. Betrothal gives faithfulness a face and a name. The one to whom the people belong is Christ, who has already given himself for them.

Living persons



STORY PURPOSE

Distinct people remain visible within the community being formed in Christ.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone through whom the whole dwelling is joined together.

Scripture • Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 2:19–22 | Christ • Ephesians 2:20–22

NARRATIVE

Look at the faces before looking at the whole assembly. A people can belong together without losing the particular lives that make them a people. Jesus knows his own and calls them by name. The Bride’s unity begins in that personal knowledge, and the next image asks us to see what holds all these lives together.

One body, one foundation



STORY PURPOSE

Christ holds the assembly together as its cornerstone.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone through whom the whole dwelling is joined together.

Scripture • Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 2:19–22 | Christ • Ephesians 2:20–22

NARRATIVE

A cornerstone gives adjoining stones their relation to each other. Paul gives that place to Jesus Christ. The assembly takes its shape from him, so its unity depends on a common foundation deeper than likeness of language or history. This is how people who would once have stood apart can become a dwelling for God together.

Living dwelling



STORY PURPOSE

The assembly becomes a living dwelling. This image carries the sanctuary theme into the life of the Church.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone through whom the whole dwelling is joined together.

Scripture • Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 2:19–22 | Christ • Ephesians 2:20–22

NARRATIVE

What began as an assembly now has the shape of a dwelling. Peter calls believers living stones, and Paul describes the whole structure growing into a holy temple in the Lord. The sanctuary once marked a place where God would meet his people. In Christ, the people themselves become the place in which his presence is at home.

THE WOMAN

The Bride prepared



STORY PURPOSE

The Bride is shown in preparation. Her readiness grows from Christ’s cleansing love.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The gathering finds its center in Jesus Christ himself. His people rise to meet him and will be with him forever.

Scripture • 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:25–27 | Christ • 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

NARRATIVE

The Bride’s preparation becomes visible in her bearing and in the garment she has been given. Her readiness carries the history of cleansing, forgiveness, and faithful response. Christ has loved her through that history. The time has come for the one who was prepared in waiting to meet the one who has prepared her.

The Bride rises to meet Jesus



STORY PURPOSE

The gathered people rise to meet Jesus. The bridal assembly gives a visible form to their shared hope.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The gathering finds its center in Jesus Christ himself. His people rise to meet him and will be with him forever.

Scripture • 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:25–27 | Christ • 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

NARRATIVE

The gathered people rise toward the one they have long awaited. Paul gives the meeting its enduring promise when he says they will always be with the Lord. The direction of their movement matters because it makes the desire of Jesus' prayer visible. He asked that those given to him might be with him where he is.



CHAPTER 08

The Woman Fulfilled

The gathered people come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the Woman is revealed as the Bride. When the angel promises to show John the Lamb’s wife, John sees the holy city coming down from God. The city has no separate temple because God and the Lamb are its temple. What began in Eden as a picture of shared life opens here into a city full of people living in God’s presence.

Revelation 19:6–9, Revelation 21:2–3, 9–10, 22–23

The Bride revealed



STORY PURPOSE

The dead in Christ rise, and the living are gathered with them to meet the Lord. From every people and nation comes a redeemed multitude. The story reaches the fulfillment toward which promise and preparation have been moving.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The Woman’s bridal identity is revealed in relation to Jesus Christ, the Lamb whose wife the angel shows John.

Scripture • 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:51–54; Revelation 7:9–14 | Christ • Revelation 19:7; 21:9–10

NARRATIVE

The Bride can now be seen openly. At the beginning, we saw linen and a distant city. Here the two images come together. Revelation calls the Bride the wife of the Lamb, and then shows a city. The marriage includes a people and a place where the life they share with Christ can be lived.

The wedding feast of the Lamb



STORY PURPOSE

The marriage of the Lamb is come. Here the Woman is openly revealed as the Bride made ready. The faithful character now seen in her bears the fruit of Christ’s cleansing love. The celebration reveals what his grace has accomplished.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The feast celebrates the marriage of Jesus Christ the Lamb and the people prepared for him.

Scripture • Revelation 19:7–9; Ephesians 5:25–27 | Christ • Revelation 19:7–9

NARRATIVE

The supper is the celebration of a promise kept. The one who welcomes the guests is the Lamb who gave himself for them. All the earlier tables come into view here, from Wisdom’s invitation to Jesus eating with people who were kept at a distance. The joy of this table is that those he welcomed have come home.

The city of light



STORY PURPOSE

The angel reveals the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, as the holy city. God dwells with his people. The sanctuary’s promise has reached its fulfillment: God Almighty and the Lamb are her temple, and divine glory is her light.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The city is shown as the wife of the Lamb, and Jesus Christ the Lamb is its lamp.

Scripture • Revelation 21:2–3,9–10,22–23 | Christ • Revelation 21:9–10, 22–23

NARRATIVE

The city is luminous because God is present and the Lamb is its lamp. John sees no separate temple within it. The earlier sanctuary taught us how precious access was by giving it a veil and a boundary. Here the whole city lives in the presence that once seemed so far away. Its light makes the answer visible.

Living water



STORY PURPOSE

Living water flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The curse is gone. What was fractured in the garden opens into healed creation and unbroken access to God. Their union begins an everlasting life of belonging and purpose.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus invites the thirsty to come to him, and Revelation shows the river of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Scripture • Revelation 22:1–5; Genesis 3:22–24 | Christ • John 7:37–39; Revelation 22:1

NARRATIVE

The river flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. What the throne gives the city is life, and the river carries that life through its midst. Jesus once spoke of living water to a woman beside a well. At the end, the promise has become a place where anyone who thirsts may come and receive.



CHAPTER 09

One in Him, Forever

Before his death, Jesus prayed that his people might be one in him and in the Father. The final pages return to that prayer. The Bride shares Christ’s inheritance, serves in God’s presence, and joins the Spirit in inviting the thirsty to come. The stars recall the promise to Abraham, while the river of life carries the story’s last invitation. The communion the Bride receives becomes a welcome she can offer.

John 17:20–24, Romans 8:16–23, Revelation 22:1–5, 17

The space remembered



STORY PURPOSE

The empty place beside Adam returns as a visual memory before the story turns to eternal communion.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ prays for his people to share the unity he has with the Father and to be with him where he is.

Scripture • Hebrews 1:2; Romans 8:17–23; John 17:21–23 | Christ • John 17:22–24

NARRATIVE

The empty place beside Adam returns to memory now that we have seen the gathered Bride. In the garden it asked who could share the man’s life. The answer given there helps us hear Paul’s larger mystery. Christ and his people belong together, and the fellowship he gives them is what the empty place had taught us to desire.

Inheritance and communion



STORY PURPOSE

As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

It is Jesus Christ who asks that his people may be one in the Father and the Son.

Scripture • John 17:21, KJV excerpt | Christ • John 17:21–23

NARRATIVE

The people gathered around Christ receive the inheritance of children. Paul calls them joint heirs with him, and Jesus prays that they may share the love with which the Father has loved him. Communion is what gives inheritance its deepest meaning. What they receive includes being with the one whose life has made them a family.

A face among the people



STORY PURPOSE

Each face remains known and loved within the gathered people. Their communion preserves their personhood and brings them into a shared life received by grace. Nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus makes the Father’s name known so that the Father’s love may be in his people and Jesus himself may be in them.

Scripture • Romans 8:38–39; John 17:21–23 | Christ • John 17:26

NARRATIVE

One face comes into focus among the people. The city’s greatness can make the individual seem small until we remember that Jesus called Mary by name outside the tomb. The same Lord who gathers a people knows each one personally. That knowledge is part of what makes a multitude into a home.

Royal priests



STORY PURPOSE

They are a royal priesthood, made a kingdom and priests to God. Their calling includes worship, service, and participation in his reign. The future is purposeful life in his presence, with authority received and exercised in holy love.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ the Lamb purchases a people for God and makes them a kingdom and priests.

Scripture • 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:9–10; 22:3–5 | Christ • Revelation 5:9–10

NARRATIVE

Those gathered to God are called a kingdom and priests. Their life has work and purpose in the presence of the one they serve. Jesus shares his reign with people he first loved and redeemed. The service of the Bride gives lasting form to her response. She can give herself freely because she has received life from him.

The stars and the open horizon



STORY PURPOSE

The renewed creation opens onto the stars, recalling Abraham’s promise and the story’s proposed horizon of eternal fruitfulness.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

The open heavens return us to Jesus Christ, through whom creation came and through whose cross God purposes to reconcile all things.

Scripture • 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 21–22 | Christ • Colossians 1:16–20

NARRATIVE

The stars return us to Abraham, who was asked to look up before he could see how the promise would be kept. Here the renewed world opens toward an immense horizon. The image invites us to wonder what fruitful service may mean across that horizon. The promise we can name is that God’s children inherit with Christ and that creation will share their freedom.

His dwelling forever



STORY PURPOSE

The final dwelling answers Eden’s rupture. God lives with his people, and their communion endures.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Nothing in all creation can separate the redeemed from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Scripture • Revelation 21:3–4; 22:3–5; Romans 8:38–39 | Christ • Romans 8:38–39

NARRATIVE

At last the distance between God’s dwelling and human life is gone. The city is full of the presence for which the garden, the sanctuary, and the long journey had prepared us. God wipes away tears, and death passes away. The life the Bride shares with Christ is the life she will never again have to leave.

The Bride says Come



STORY PURPOSE

At the end of the vision the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Those who hear may join the invitation. The thirsty may come and take the water of life freely. The Bride who has received life now gives voice to the invitation.

CONNECTION TO JESUS CHRIST

Jesus identifies himself as David’s root and offspring just before the Spirit and the Bride give their invitation to come.

Scripture • Revelation 22:16–17. | Christ • Revelation 22:16–17

NARRATIVE

The final word from the Bride is an invitation. She joins the Spirit in saying, Come. Everything she has received becomes part of the welcome she now gives. The river is still flowing, and its water is offered freely to the thirsty. The story ends with a voice at the gate and with room for the one who hears it.