

Easter Vigil

Scripture Selections from the Evangelical Heritage Version®
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Creation

Genesis 1:1–2:3

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was undeveloped and empty. Darkness covered the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

³God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was evening and there was morning—the first day.

⁶God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, and let it separate the water from the water.” ⁷God made the expanse, and he separated the water that was below the expanse from the water that was above the expanse, and it was so. ⁸God called the expanse “sky.” There was evening and there was morning—the second day.

⁹God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear,” and it was so. The waters under the sky gathered to their own places, and the dry land appeared. ¹⁰God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathering places of the waters he called “seas.” God saw that it was good. ¹¹God said, “Let the earth produce plants—vegetation that produces seed, and trees that bear fruit with its seed in it—each according to its own kind on the earth,” and it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth plants, vegetation that produces seed according to its own kind, and trees that bear fruit with its seed in it, each according to its own kind, and God saw that it was good. ¹³There was evening and there was morning—the third day.

¹⁴God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night, and let them serve as markers to indicate seasons, days, and years. ¹⁵Let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth,” and it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set these lights in place in the expanse of the sky to provide light for the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹There was evening and there was morning—the fourth day.

²⁰God said, “Let the waters swarm with living creatures, and let birds and other winged creatures fly above the earth in the open expanse of the sky.” ²¹God created the large sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their own kind, and every winged bird according to its own kind. God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them when he said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³There was evening and there was morning—the fifth day.

²⁴God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their own kind, livestock, creeping things, and wild animals according to their own kind,” and it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals according to their own kind, and the livestock according to their own kind, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its own kind. God saw that it was good.

²⁶God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crawls on the earth.”

²⁷God created the man in his own image.

In the image of God he created him.

Male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹God said, “Look, I have given you every plant that produces seed on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that bears fruit that produces seed. It will be your food. ³⁰To every animal of the earth, and to every bird of the sky, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. There was evening and there was morning—the sixth day.

^{2:1}The heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. ²On the seventh day God had finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had been doing. ³God blessed the seventh day and set it apart as holy, because on it he rested from all his work of creation that he had done.

The Flood

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

The LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and your entire household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. ²From every clean animal take with you seven pairs, a male and his female. From the animals that are not clean, take two, a male and his female. ³Also from the clean birds of the sky take seven and seven, male and female, and of all the unclean birds, one pair, a male and a female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of the whole earth. ⁴In seven days I will cause it to rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights. Every living thing that I have made, I will wipe off the face of the earth.”

⁵Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that very day, all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. ¹²The rain came down on the earth for forty days and forty nights.

¹³On that same day Noah, Noah’s sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons along with them, entered the ark. ¹⁴They went in with every animal according to its kind, all the livestock according to their kinds, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and everything that flies according to its kind, flying birds of every sort. ¹⁵Pairs of all the animals that have the breath of life in them went to Noah in the ark. ¹⁶A male and female of each animal that breathes went in, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut Noah in.

¹⁷The flood kept coming on the earth for forty days. The waters became deeper and lifted up the ark until it floated high above the earth. ¹⁸The water kept increasing and overwhelmed the earth, and the ark was carried along on the surface of the water.

^{8:6}Then at the end of forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark. He sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth, until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if the waters had receded from the surface of the ground, ⁹but the dove found no place to rest its foot, and it returned to him in the ark, because there was water on the surface of the whole earth. Noah reached out his hand, took the dove, and brought it back to him in the ark. ¹⁰He waited another seven days. Then he sent the dove out of the ark again. ¹¹The dove came back to him at evening, and there in its mouth was an olive leaf it had just plucked. So Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. ¹²He waited another seven days and sent the dove out again. This time it did not return to him anymore.

¹³And so in the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth. Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked out. He saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

¹⁵God spoke to Noah. He said, ¹⁶“Go out of the ark—you, your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing of every sort that is with you, all flesh, including birds, livestock, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may swarm over the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”

¹⁸Noah went out with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives along with him.

^{9:8}God said to Noah and to his sons, who were with him, ⁹“Listen, I will now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰and with everything with you that has the breath of life: with the birds, with the livestock, and with every wild animal that is on the earth with you, with everything that went out of the ark, even with every wild animal on the earth. ¹¹I will establish my covenant with you: Never again will all living creatures be cut off by the waters of a flood. Neither will there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹²God also said, “This is the sign of the covenant between me and you and every living creature with you that I am giving for all generations to come. ¹³I have set my rainbow in the cloud, and it will be the sign of a covenant between me and the earth.”

Testing of Abraham

Genesis 22:1–18

Some time later God tested Abraham. He called to him, “Abraham!”

Abraham answered, “I am here.”

²God said, “Now take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there, the one to which I direct you.”

³Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, along with Isaac his son. Abraham split the wood for the burnt offering. Then he set out to go to the place that God had told him about. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.

⁵Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go on over there. We will worship, and then we will come back to you.” ⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt

offering and loaded it on Isaac his son. He took the firepot and the knife in his hand. The two of them went on together.

⁷Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father?”

He said, “I am here, my son.”

He said, “Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

⁸Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them went on together. ⁹They came to the place that God had told him about. Abraham built the altar there. He arranged the wood, tied up Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

¹⁰Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.

¹¹The Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, “Abraham, Abraham!”

Abraham said, “I am here.”

¹²He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

¹³Abraham looked around and saw that behind him there was a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

¹⁴Abraham called the name of that place “The LORD Will Provide.” So it is said to this day, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

¹⁵The Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven ¹⁶and said, “I have sworn by myself, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will bless you greatly, and I will multiply your descendants greatly, like the stars of the sky and like the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the city gates of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Israel’s Deliverance at the Red Sea

Exodus 14:10–15:1

¹⁰As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians marching after them. The Israelites were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Wasn’t this what we said to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone. Let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

¹³Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm, and see the salvation from the LORD, which he will perform for you today. For the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again.

¹⁴The LORD will fight for you. You must wait quietly.”

¹⁵The LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to set out. ¹⁶As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide the sea so that the Israelites can go through the middle of the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷I myself will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go into the sea after them, and I will gain glory through Pharaoh and his entire army, through his chariots and his charioteers. ¹⁸The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his charioteers.”

¹⁹Then the Angel of God, who was going in front of the Israelite forces, moved and went behind them. The pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and stood behind them. ²⁰It went between the Egyptian forces and the Israelite forces. The cloud was dark on one side, but it lit up the night on the other. Neither group approached the other all night long.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all night long the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned the sea into dry land. The waters were divided. ²²The Israelites went into the middle of the sea on dry ground. The waters were like a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued them, and all of Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his charioteers went after them into the middle of the sea. ²⁴During the last watch of the night, the LORD looked down on the Egyptian forces from the pillar of fire and cloud. Then he confused the Egyptian forces. ²⁵He jammed their chariot wheels, and they had difficulty driving them. The Egyptians said, "We must flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt!"

²⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, and the waters will come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their charioteers." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal place. While the Egyptians were fleeing from it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the middle of the sea. ²⁸The waters came back and covered the chariots and the charioteers, the entire army of Pharaoh that went into the sea after the Israelites. Not even one of them survived.

²⁹But the Israelites went through the middle of the sea on dry land, and the waters were like a wall for them on their right and on their left. ³⁰On that day the LORD saved Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹Israel saw the mighty hand which the LORD put into action against the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in Moses, his servant.

^{15:1}Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said:

I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted.

The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.

Salvation Offered Freely to All

Isaiah 55:1-11

Hey, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters,
even everyone who has no money!

Come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

²Why do you spend money on what is not bread,
and waste your labor on something that does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good.

Satisfy your appetite with rich food.

³Incline your ear, and come to me.

Listen well so that you may come to life.

Yes, I surely will make an everlasting covenant with you,
the faithful mercies promised to David.

⁴Look, I appointed him as a witness for peoples,

a leader and commander of peoples.

⁵Look, you will call out to a nation you do not know,
and a nation that does not know you will run to you
on account of the LORD your God,
and the Holy One of Israel,
because he glorified you.

⁶Seek the LORD while he allows himself to be found!
Call on him while he is near!

⁷Let the wicked abandon his way.
Let an evil man abandon his thoughts,
and let him turn to the LORD, and he will show him mercy,
and let him turn to our God, because he will abundantly forgive.

⁸Certainly my plans are not your plans,
and your ways are not my ways, declares the LORD.

⁹Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so my ways are higher than your ways
and my plans are higher than your plans.

¹⁰Just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky
and do not return there unless they water the earth,
make it give birth, and cause it to sprout,
and it gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

¹¹so it will be with my Word that goes forth from my mouth.
It will not return to me empty.

Rather, it will accomplish whatever I please,
and it will succeed in the purpose for which I sent it.

A New Heart and a New Spirit

Ezekiel 36:24-28

²⁴I will take you from among the nations. I will gather you from all the lands, and I will bring you to your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your filthy idols.

²⁶Then I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put my Spirit within you and lead you so that you will walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to observe my judgments. ²⁸Then you will live in the land I gave your forefathers. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

Faith Strained but Victorious

Job 19:20-27

²⁰I am nothing but skin and bones.

I have escaped with the skin of my teeth.

²¹Have mercy on me.
Have mercy on me, you friends of mine,
because the hand of God has struck me.
²²Why do you pursue me the way God does?
Will you never get enough of my flesh?
²³Oh how I wish that my words were written down.
Oh how I wish that they were inscribed in bronze,
²⁴that they would be engraved in rock forever
with an iron tool and letters filled with lead.
²⁵As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the end of time he will stand over the dust.
²⁶Then, even after my skin has been destroyed,
nevertheless, in my own flesh I will see God.
²⁷I myself will see him.
My own eyes will see him, and not as a stranger.
My emotions are in turmoil within me.

The Gathering of God's People

Zephaniah 3:12-20

¹²But I will leave among you the humble and poor. They will seek refuge in the LORD. ¹³The Israelites who remain will not act deceitfully. They will not lie, and a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth. Indeed, they will graze peacefully like sheep and lie down. No one will terrify them.

¹⁴Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. ¹⁵The LORD has removed the judgment against you. He has turned back your enemy. Israel's king, the LORD, is in your midst! You no longer need to fear disaster. ¹⁶In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, "Do not be afraid, O Zion. Do not be despondent. ¹⁷The LORD your God is with you, a hero who will save you. He takes great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing."

¹⁸I will bring back those among you who grieve over the loss of the appointed feasts, those for whom the loss was a burden and a disgrace. ¹⁹Look, at that time I will deal with those who mistreated you. I will rescue the lame and gather together the scattered. I will give them praise and honor in every land where they were put to shame. ²⁰At that time I will bring you in. At that time will I gather you. I will give you a name and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, declares the LORD.

Gospel

Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ²Suddenly, there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and going to the tomb, he rolled away the stone and was sitting on it. ³His

appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴The guards were so terrified of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here. He has risen, just as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷Go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead! And look, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.’ See, I have told you!”

⁸They hurried away from the tomb, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!”

They approached, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go, tell my brothers that they should go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

or

Mark 16:1–8

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so they could go and anoint Jesus. ²Very early on the first day of the week, at sunrise, they went to the tomb. ³They were saying to each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb for us?” ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶He said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

⁸They went out and hurried away from the tomb, trembling and perplexed. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

or

Luke 24:1–12

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. ³When they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothing. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed down with their faces to the ground.

The men said to them, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but has been raised! Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee ⁷that the Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again?” ⁸Then they remembered his words.

⁹When they returned from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹Yet these words seemed to them like nonsense, and they did not

believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over to look in, he saw only the strips of linen cloth. He went home, amazed at what had happened.

or

John 20:1–18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²So she left and ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,” she told them, “and we don’t know where they put him!”

³So Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. ⁵Bending over, he saw the linen cloths lying there, yet he did not go in.

⁶Then Simon Peter, who was following him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there. ⁷The cloth that had been on Jesus’ head was not lying with the linen cloths, but was folded up in a separate place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who arrived at the tomb first, also entered. He saw and believed. ⁹(They still did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead.)

¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood outside facing the tomb, weeping. As she wept, she bent over, looking into the tomb. ¹²She saw two angels in white clothes sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³They asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She told them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don’t know where they have laid him.”

¹⁴After she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not know it was Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?”

Supposing he was the gardener, she replied, “Sir, if you carried him off, tell me where you laid him, and I will get him.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned and replied in Aramaic, “*Rabboni!*” (which means, “Teacher”).

¹⁷Jesus told her, “Do not continue to cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father—to my God and your God.’”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” She also told them the things he said to her.

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