

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֲנִי מַמְטִיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם
מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘I will
rain down bread from heaven for
you.’”

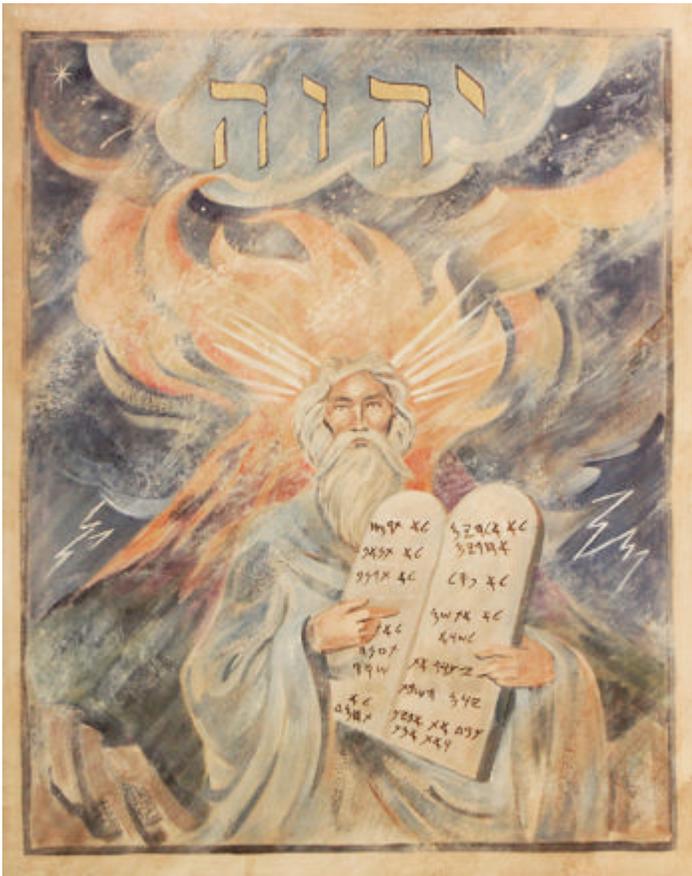
(Exodus 16:4)



וְהַכִּיתָ בַּצֹּר וַיֵּצֵאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מַיִם וְשָׁתָה הָעָם

“Strike the rock and water will
come out of it for the people to
drink.”

(Exodus 17:6)



וְאֶתְנֶנָּה לָךְ אֶת־לַחַת הַקָּאֵבֹן וְהַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת אֲשֶׁר
 כָּתַבְתִּי לְהוֹרֹתָם

“And I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.”

(Exodus 24:12)

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשֹׁכְנֹתִי בְתוֹכְכֶם

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

(Exodus 25:8)





וְעַתָּה קוּם עֲבֹר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן הַזֶּה אַתָּה וְכָל־הָעָם
הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָהֶם לְבְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל

“Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.”
(Joshua 1:2)



וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלֶּךָ וּבְאֲשֶׁר
תֵּלִינִי אֵלָיון עִמָּךְ עַמִּי וְאֱלֹהֵיךָ אֱלֹהֵי:

“But Ruth replied, ‘... Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.’”
(Ruth 1:16)



יהוה רֹעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר: לֹא־אֵיֶרָא רָע כִּי־אֲתָה עִמָּדִי

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing... I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

(Psalm 23:1, 4)

בַּשָּׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית לְמֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה עָלִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבֶן הַבַּיִת לַיהוָה

“In the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, ... , he began to build the temple of the Lord.”

(I Kings 6:1)





וְהִנֵּה רֶכֶב־אֵשׁ וְסוּסֵי אֵשׁ וַיַּעַל אֵלֵיהֶוּ בְּסַעֲרָה
הַשָּׁמַיִם:

“Suddenly a chariot of fire... and
Elijah went up to heaven in a
whirlwind.”

(II Kings 2:11)

וַיִּטְבֹּל בַּיַּרְדֵּן שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים כְּדַבַּר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים

“And he [Naaman] dipped himself in
the Jordan seven times, as the man of
God had told him.”

(II Kings 5:14)





וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יוֹנָה: קוּם לךְ אֶל־נִינְוָה
וַיִּקַּם יוֹנָה לָבוֹא לְבָרֶחַת תַּרְשִׁישָׁה

“The word of the Lord came to
Jonah... ‘Go to Nineveh...’ but he got
up to run away to Tarshish.”

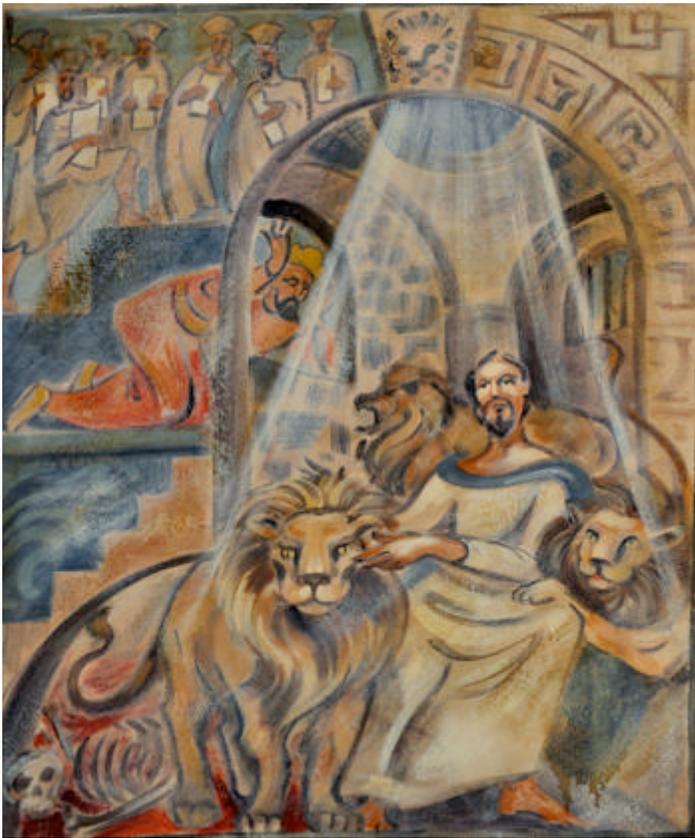
(Jonah 1:1-3)

וַאֲרָאָה אֶת־אֲדֹנָי יוֹשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא רָם וְנֹשֵׂא

“I saw the Lord seated on a throne,
high and exalted.”

(Isaiah 6:1)





בְּאֵינִן מַלְכָּא אָמַר וְהֵיטִיּוּ לְדַנְיָאֵל וּרְמוּ
לְגַבְא דִּי אַרְיֹתָא

“So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den.”

(Daniel 6:16)

הִיטָה עָלַי יְדֵי־יְהוָה וַיְנִיחֵנִי בְּתוֹךְ הַבְּקָעָה
וְהִיא מְלֵאָה עַצְמוֹת:

“The hand of the Lord was upon me...
and he set me in the middle of a
valley; it was full of bones.”

(Ezekiel 37:1)





וְהוּא מְחַלֵּל מִפְּשָׁעֵינוּ מִדָּבָר מַעֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו וּבְחֻבָּתוֹ נִרְפָּא לָנוּ³⁰

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

(Isaiah 53:5)

NEW TESTAMENT PAINTINGS

These paintings of scenes from the New Testament are in the two shorter wings (the “arms” of the cross). The four main features of the panels are the birth of Christ, the baptism of Christ, the crucifixion, and the ascension. Each panel has the same format, a central frame of the featured event in the life of Christ and several people holding items that reflect their encounters with Jesus. On the drapes of each panel are multiple paintings of episodes portrayed in the gospels, including most of the major stories. The fourth panel also depicts a few events from the book of Acts.





BIRTH OF CHRIST

The first of four panels is on the west side of the north wing, featuring the birth of Christ. On either side of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus are scenes from before and after the birth. Look closely to find the betrothal, angelic announcements to various individuals and the shepherds, the magi following the star, the escape to Egypt and even Jesus in the temple at age 12.



BAPTISM OF CHRIST

On the east side of the north wing is the panel featuring the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist. Blended together on this panel are various scenes from the life and teachings of Jesus. Below the baptismal scene Nathanael holds a frame showing his encounter with Christ, when he was likely thinking of Jacob as Jesus called him (John 1:45-51). Look also for the temptation of Jesus, the Samaritan woman and a storm on the Sea of Galilee.



THE CRUCIFIXION

On the east side of the south wing is a panel which features the crucifixion of Christ. Various scenes from the gospels surround the three crosses at Golgotha. With a careful eye, you may see Simon from Cyrene who was compelled to help Jesus carry the cross, the centurion in charge of this execution, even Pilate washing his hands. Notice the women whose frame shows the empty tomb and whose Greek scroll reads, “He is risen; he is not here.”

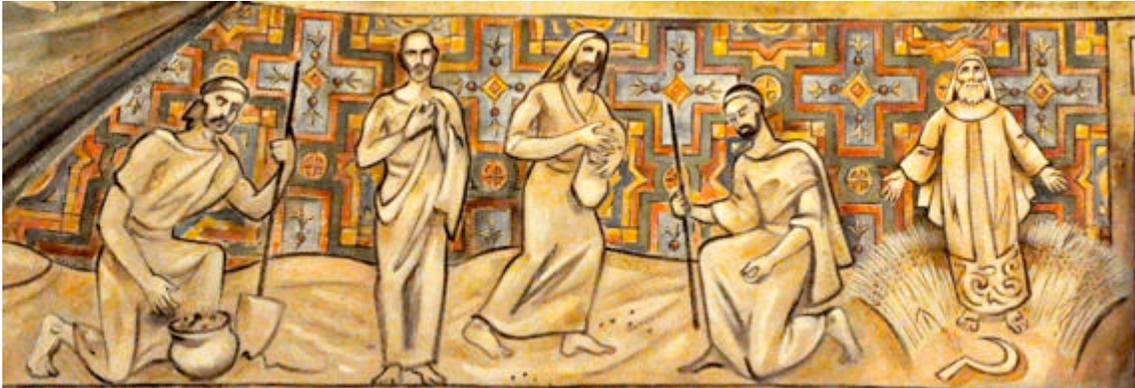


THE ASCENSION

On the west side of the south wing is the panel with the ascension of Christ in the center. Above it the sky declares the glory of God. Around it are scenes from the resurrection appearances, as well as a few of the stories in the book of Acts. Study this panel and you will see Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Philip baptizing the Ethiopian, apostles preaching at Pentecost and several episodes from Paul's ministry. These show Paul escaping from prison in Philippi, preaching in Athens, being shipwrecked and under Roman guard, but still teaching others about Christ.

THE PARABLES

The parables of Jesus are featured in narrow bands of paintings on both the north and south ends of the wings. Characters are shown as Jesus described them, e.g., the father embracing the prodigal son with the elder brother in the background (below, bottom right). Look for others you recognize, such as the rich fool and the sower.





THE APSE

The apse, at the front of the chapel, displays a set of scenes typical in medieval churches. The scenes portray the promised return of Christ and the end of the ages. In medieval churches these scenes were placed at the apse so that those gathered for worship might remember and focus on the fact that this life is temporary, but eternity is in the future. The scenes were chosen both to give hope and to offer a sober reminder that people can choose their own destiny – good or bad.

The apse of the chapel continues the Byzantine symbolism in the painting of Christ. His right hand points up to the golden road and the gates of heaven, where those entering wear white robes. The left hand points down to the gates of perdition, where misery and flames issue forth. The crumbling world at the end of days shows the vanity of temporary things.

Early Byzantine doctrine accepted the painting of Christ as God manifesting himself in man. But it was still considered wrong to paint God the Father, deemed to be a violation of the Ten-Commandment injunction against making an image of God. To illustrate that God the Father was behind Christ and the work on the cross, Byzantines frequently painted the shape of a cross in the halo around Christ. Within the cross shape were the Greek words that look much like the English letters “O-W-N.” In Greek, these letters form two words, pronounced in English as “ho on.” They mean “The One who is.” It is the Greek translation of God’s name revealed to Moses at the burning bush – “I AM.”

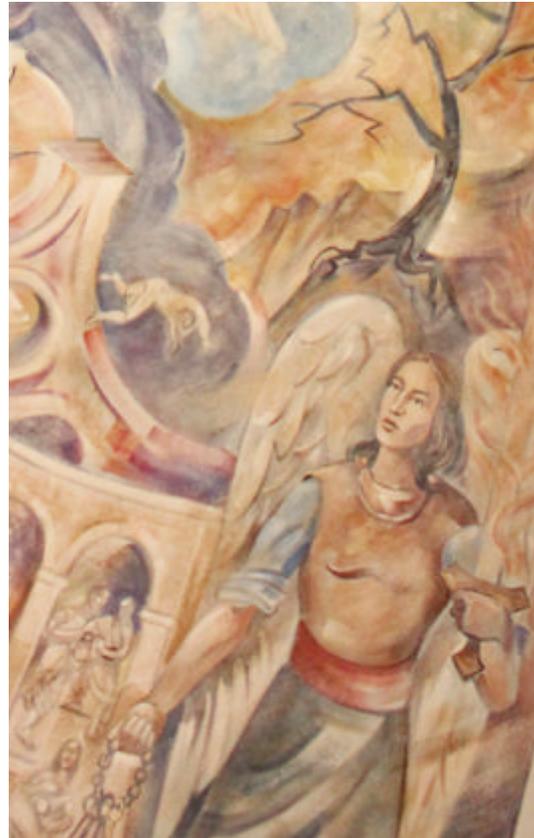


THE BYZANTINE CHRIST

On the arch at the front of the apse, the Greek word meaning “Holy,” pronounced “hagios,” appears three times. The triple repetition is found in the Old Testament scene of God’s throne described in Isaiah 6 and in the New Testament description found in Revelation. ”Day and night they never stop saying “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty’ who was and is and is to come.*” (Revelation 4:8 ESV).



One angel holds a crown and a Greek scroll that reads, “*Be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life.*” (Revelation 2:10 ESV). This angel stands beside a portrayal of the virtues: prayer, alms for the poor, aiding the sick and wounded, rearing children in the nurture and admonition of God, consoling the bereaved. The Greek below this series quotes Jesus’ words, “*In as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me*” (Matthew 25:40). These words of Jesus come from his parable of the sheep and goats, in which judgment is based on whether benevolent service was given to those in need, such as feeding the hungry.



The opposite side of the apse shows an angel of death holding prison keys. This counterpart vignette shows the vices: vanity, carousing, theft, murder, etc. Below these, the Greek again quotes Jesus, “*Go from me, those cursed, into the everlasting fire. For I was hungry and you did not give me to eat....*” (Matthew 25:41-42).



In the apse, under the large figure of Christ, is the Greek passage that brings the Christian Scriptures back to the beginning of time, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men! And he will dwell with them” (Revelation 21:3).

This passage affirms the understanding of the Christian faith expressed through the paintings of the chapel. God created man to be in relationships – not simply with creatures in nature and not simply with woman (“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”). God made man and woman to be in relationship with God himself. Sin brought death and despair, causing a long sojourn away from paradise. But the sacrificial work of God through Christ’s death on the cross provides atonement, bringing reconciliation of man to God and forgiveness to all who believe. As this world comes to an end, those found in relation to God through faith in Christ will continue life eternally, the original fellowship of the garden restored.

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