**A brisk telling of God’s grand story, by Brad Roth**

*(Brad Roth, pastor of the West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, KS, prepared this readers theater version of the Bible for Western District Annual Assembly 2014 held in Waxahachie, TX, July 4-6. Brad Roth, Judy Harder, and Rosie Jantz read it in the Friday night service.)*

For 3 readers

1: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2: the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, and the

Spirit of God hovered over the waters.

3: Then God said:

1 Let there be light

2 and there was light.

3 And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters

1 let there be gathered waters and dry land

2 let the earth put forth vegetation

3 let there be stars and planets and comets and asteroids and white dwarf stars

1 and there were.

2 And he hung the sun and the moon in the sky

3 and made the waters froth with finned and crusty and squirmy things

1 and the air flit-flittered with buzzing and flapping

2 and there were sea monsters!

3 God said, *Let the earth bring forth cattle*

1 and wild things

2 and then, when everything was all ready

3 he took some mud

1 and patted it and shaped it

2 and *breathed* into it

3 and made humankind in his image. And God said.

1 It is good

2 It is very good.

3 Everything is awesome!

1 There were generations and generations.

2 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your

father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you

all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

1 And Abram said,

2 OK.

3 God became the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

1 Jacob said to his sons, “there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there,

that we may live and not die."

2 Joseph gained authority over the land of Egypt.

3 But later, a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph, and the people had

to make bricks without straw.

1 But Moses was born

2 And he floated in a basket.

3 And he took off his sandals before the *I AM*.

1 And he tapped the water, and it became blood.

2 And there were frogs and lice and flies and diseases and boils

3 and storms of hail and fire

1 and locusts

2 and darkness

3 and then...the angel of death came

1 and the Israelites painted their doors with lamb’s blood so that his power might pass

over their firstborn.

2 but the Egyptians didn’t.

3 God rescued his people, and they passed through the Red Sea and wandered in the

desert until they got to Mt Sinai.

1 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went

up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

2 God gave them laws about how to live and worship. But the people grumbled.

3 Until Joshua, who was strong and courageous, led them into the Promised Land.

1 Then the LORD raised up judges, who delivered the Israelites out of the power of

those who plundered them.

2 One night the LORD said to Gideon, one of his judges, "Get up, attack the camp; for I

have given it into your hand.” So Gideon snuck into the camp of the Midionites

3 Gideon heard a man telling a dream to his friend; and he said, "I had a dream, and in it

a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian, and came to the tent, and struck it so that it fell; it turned upside down, and the tent collapsed." And his friend answered, "This is no other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, a man of Israel; into his hand God has given Midian and all the army."

1 The people thought a king would be better than judges.

2 Samuel didn’t like it.

3 But the Lord said, “they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being

king over them.”

1 So, when Saul lost his dad’s donkeys, Samuel anointed him king.

2 Then David was tending his dad’s sheep, and Samuel anointed him king too.

3 And the wise woman of Tekoa said to the king, “We must all die; we are like water

spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up. But God will not take away a life; he will devise plans so as not to keep an outcast banished forever from his presence.”

1 Solomon asked for wisdom from heaven.

2 Elijah asked for fire from heaven.

3 The Assyrians conquered Israel

1 The Babylonians conquered Judah.

2 The people were scattered.

3 They sat down by the waters of Babylon and cried:

1 How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?

2 But the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an

end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

3 God sent Ezra and Nehemiah and Zerubbabel and Haggai and Zechariah to

rebuild the people and the temple and the Law.

1 Esther was beautiful and brave.

2 Job asked hard questions, and God answered him with harder questions.

3 Isaiah heard, “holy, holy, holy. The Immanuel shall come.”

1 Jeremiah had a fire in his bones

2 Ezekiel saw dry bones dance.

3 Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,

Zechariah, Malachi said, “Thus saith the Lord.”

1 And the Maccabees drove out the Greeks. And Judith cut off Holofernes’ head. And

Tobit was righteous.

2 And then, when everything was all ready...

3 When the time was ripe...

1 the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as

of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

2 Jesus was born to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a

descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

3 Immanuel came. God is with us.

1 Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is

fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

2 He taught and healed and cast out demons. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was

crucified, died, and buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

3 Jesus spoke to Saul on the way to Damascus, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute

me?”

1 Paul took a new way. He told the Romans:

2 apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the

law and the prophets, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

3 And Paul told the Ephesians:

1 through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known

2 And James said, “be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.”

3 and Peter said: “Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once

you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 And John, when he was very old, peered deeply into the heart of God’s plan, and said

2 one more thing

3 The Lamb wins.

1-3 Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.