

## CHRIST OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

Salvador Dali

Surrealism is a 20th century art form, and Salvador Dali (1904 – 1989) from Catalonia in Spain, was one of its leading exponents. It went beyond traditional art by trying to explore the depths of the human mind and spirit, taking much of its material from the subconscious, dreams and instincts. Dali showed his respect for traditional art whilst conveying with intense feeling the significance of Christ crucified. He said, "My principal preoccupation was that my Christ would be as beautiful as the God that He is."

Dali painted Jesus as if being looked at from Heaven by His Father. Because Jesus has died so that our sin could be forgiven, Jesus is depicted as the bridge between God and us. Jesus is the Head of all things, looking over His creation. He is the meaning of everything, and the way back to God from our dark paths of sin.

The Bible says: *'For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.'* (Romans 14:9)



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## THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

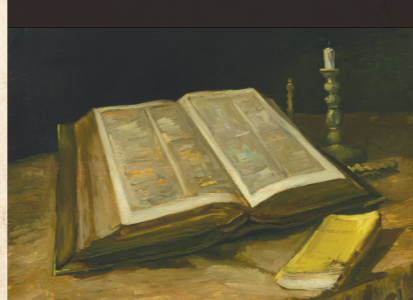
Peter Paul Rubens

To depict Jesus bursting in resurrection power from the tomb where He had been laid after His death on the cross, is difficult, but Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) captures the drama of it. He said, "My passion comes from the heavens, not from earthly musings." He was a prolific artist working mostly in Antwerp.

Of course, no one knows what Jesus looked like. But we do know His character and power, His love and grace. The prophets before His birth, and Jesus Himself, had repeatedly said that He would die and then rise again on the third day. In doing so, He defeated sin and death and all the powers of hell. Jesus is indeed, alive!



The Bible says: *'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and ... He was buried, and ... He rose again the third day.'* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)



## STILL LIFE WITH BIBLE Vincent Van Gogh

Van Gogh (1853 – 1890) knew the story of Jesus and the Gospels very well. He enjoyed hearing the Bible preached, and even trained to be an evangelist. Sadly, he made some wrong choices in his life, was badly influenced by Paul Gauguin, and tormented by his accusing conscience. He depicted this five years before his death. The Bible is open at Isaiah 53, where the prophet Isaiah graphically predicts and describes Jesus' suffering and death on our behalf. But the light has gone out on the Bible, the words are a blur, and in its place is a well-thumbed, banned erotic novel, 'La Joie de Vivre'. Van Gogh painted it in one day, but it revealed the long inward battle he knew between trusting in Christ as his Lord and Saviour, and following his own passions.

The Bible says: *'If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.'* (Joshua 24:15)

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Holman Hunt

Famously displayed in St. Paul's Cathedral, this is one of the world's most popular paintings. Holman Hunt (1827-1910) has linked Jesus' famous words to the church in Laodicea to His words in John's Gospel that He is the light of the world. Art critic John Ruskin explained the picture: "The door is that of the human soul. It has never been opened. Christ approaches it in the night, dressed in robes which represent Him as a prophet (the white robe), priest (the breastplate) and king (the crown interwoven with thorns)." Notice there is no door handle on the outside; that remains on the inside, for only we can open the door and let Jesus into our lives.

Still today, Jesus, the perfect gentleman, patiently waits to be invited into our lives, to forgive us, bring us to know God and be the light of life to us.

Jesus said: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."* (Revelation 3:20)



If you would like to know more about being a Christian or would like a copy of one of the Gospels, please contact:

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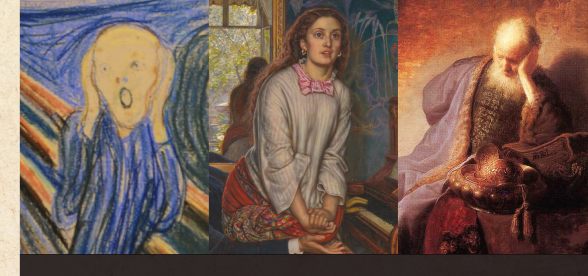
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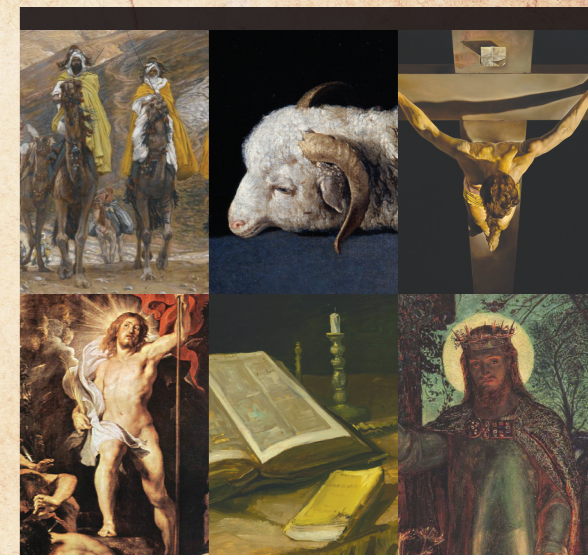
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# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

BY ROGER CARSWELL



Over 42 million people visit art galleries in the U.K. each year. That is more than attend football matches. There are 2,500 museums in Britain. The creator of Wallace and Gromit, Nick Park, says he has "always felt Britain was a world leader in Arts, Music, Literature, Graphics and Design."

The opening words of the Bible are, 'In the beginning God created...' And when He made us humans, He made us creative beings. He created the beauty of our world which has the Swiss Alps, the Scottish Highlands, the Yorkshire Dales, the Cornish coastline, the delicate snowdrop, the evening sunset and the intricacy of the human being. It is natural to appreciate beauty.

Art is more than just beauty. Shape, colour and symmetry combine with technique and emotion to convey a snapshot of truth. That truth teaches, calms, stirs or reminds us of how things are, helping us to reflect on what might be.

One of the great themes of artists is the person of Jesus, and humanity's relationship with God. We need words to really understand the gospel, but the imagination of artists has illustrated its themes.

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**THE SCREAM**  
Edvard Munch

This is the most expensive work of art ever sold at auction. Painted by Edvard Munch over a century ago, an anonymous buyer bought it for £73.9m, in 2012.

It depicts a person in a private moment of anguish, despair and anxiety, while his friends seem completely unaware of his desperate feelings.

Munch captured what the Bible teaches, that all of creation is groaning. Our rebellion against God's commands has left us cut off from Him, frustrated with a sense of meaninglessness.

The Bible says:

*'For the creation was subjected to frustration ... we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.'* (Romans 8:20-22)

## THE AWAKENING CONSCIENCE

Holman Hunt

William Holman Hunt depicts a mistress moving from the lap of her lover. She knows, even if he doesn't want to, that to do wrong is always wrong. On the frame of the original painting of 1853 are the words of Proverbs 25:20. 'Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day ... is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.'

Perhaps one reason the Bible is not liked by many people is that it dares to expose our sinfulness. It gives God's absolute standards of right and wrong. Whatever human desires or legislators' whims say differently, God has revealed His truth which is forever right. If we don't silence it, our consciences will judge against us, and point us away from acting sinfully.

The Bible says:  
*'The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the inner depths of his heart.'*

(Proverbs 20:27)



## JEREMIAH LAMENTING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Rembrandt van Rijn

Born in Leiden, Holland, in 1606, Rembrandt van Rijn, a great lover of the

Bible, depicted over 400 Biblical subjects (and over half of these were from the Book of Genesis). Though arguably the greatest of all artists, Rembrandt faced tragedy and difficulty throughout his life, but he wanted to convey, through art, moments when God intervenes in human lives to change attitudes and circumstances. He was a man of great compassion.

God's heart has always been towards men and women. He is love, but also holy and just. There is judgement for sin, and when the people of Israel were rebelling, God sent prophets to warn them to repent and believe. Jeremiah gave his life to pleading with people to turn from their ways, and return to God, but they would not listen. The result was judgement - the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians.

The Bible says: *'Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.'* (Lamentations 3:22-23)

## THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

James Tissot

Italian James Tissot was renowned for painting elegantly dressed women, but in the 1860s he produced a series of 365 illustrations showing the life of Christ, and later over 80 paintings of Old Testament scenes.

Wise men from the East (the Magi), as well as local shepherds came to worship the baby, the new born King. God had come into our world, clothing Himself in humanity. He was to be called Jesus, for He would save His people from their sin. This was God's great act of rescuing the men and women whom He had created and loved.

The Bible says: *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."* (Matthew 1:23)



## THE BOUND LAMB

Francisco de Zurbarán

The alternative title for this painting is Agnus Dei, or The Lamb of God. Painted by Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664), it symbolises Jesus, who gave Himself, to pay the penalty for our sin and guilt. The horns give a view of strength, but the lamb is gentle, submissive and innocent. Rather than struggling, the lamb surrenders without a fight. It is pure and unblemished.

Jesus lived a pure, perfect life. He went about doing good and proclaiming the word of God. But He was born to die. Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, called Jesus 'the Lamb of God', for He was nailed to the cross where He laid down His life, carrying on Himself the sin of the world. Through His sacrifice there is the offer of forgiveness and reconciliation with God. His body was broken, and blood poured out, because He loved us and gave Himself for us.

The Bible says, *'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'* (John 1:29)