

(Depending how swiftly it's performed, this may need to be retitled 'The Bible in Nine Minutes' - but that's still quite an arresting premise!) Can be performed by four people - two men, two ladies - or more if preferred. Simple props to include a large wooden tree with hooks on, so that various items (such as stars) can be hung on it. A model boat. A glove puppet dove. A sign saying "And so it came to pass" which can be held up from time to time, so that the audience joins in with the actor saying it. A piece of white cloth is draped over the tree. A couple of 'scrolls' or sheets of paper.

FIRST MAN

(moves to stand by the tree)

We present - the Bible in Seven Minutes!

SECOND MAN

(crosses to join him)

Impossible! The Bible in Seven Minutes - what, all sixty-six books, old testament, proverbs, psalms...

FIRST LADY

(joining them, checking watch)

That's eight seconds gone already.

SECOND MAN

And where do you begin?

FIRST MAN

We begin at the beginning.

SECOND LADY

(apparently from audience)

The beginning? Do you mean Genesis?

FIRST MAN

No, long before Genesis. We begin with the Gospel of John.

SECOND LADY

But surely Genesis comes before John...

FIRST MAN

Nothing comes before John.

SECOND LADY

(now joining them, with scroll)

Genesis says, In the beginning, when God began to create the heavens and the earth...

FIRST MAN

(opening scroll)

But John says, In the beginning was the word...

FIRST LADY

And the word was with God, and the word was God -
all things were made through him.

FIRST MAN

First things first - the word. Logos. (Holds up sign)
And so it came to pass... (To audience) Will you
help me with this? 'And so it came to pass...'

FIRST LADY

(hanging letters on the tree)
The beginning and the end - Alpha and Omega.

SECOND MAN

So now it was creation...

SECOND LADY

Darkness, then light, then day, then night, then sky,
then waters, then land, then trees...

FIRST LADY

(indicates the tree)
Tada! The first tree, the tree of life.

SECOND LADY

Then the sun, moon and stars - will you look at
those stars!

SHE HANGS A STAR ON THE TREE

SECOND MAN

And creatures in the waters, and birds in the
heavens...

FIRST MAN

And all kinds of animals on the earth. The Lion and
the Lamb. And then in the garden - the man and the
woman.

FIRST LADY

(holds up sign)
And so it came to pass...

SECOND MAN AND SECOND LADY POSE AS ADAM AND EVE

FIRST MAN

And he saw that they were good.

SECOND LADY

And that's when the fun really started. (As Eve, to Adam) See this tree, sweetie? Ever heard the phrase, Golden Delicious?

FIRST MAN

(As God) Whatcha gonna do? Obey me or disobey? What's it to be, hey? Deal or no deal? Walk with me in the garden, won't you?

SECOND LADY

(As Eve) Crunch! Mm, such a scrumptious apple - but, darling, why is it so cold all of a sudden?

SECOND MAN

(As Adam) Search me.

FIRST LADY

(pulls the cloth off the tree) And all the leaves fell off the tree.

SECOND MAN

(As Adam, taking cloth and wrapping it around himself) Come on, Eve, let's get out of this place.

FIRST MAN

Well, of course, that led on to all kinds of bad stuff. But then came a new start with the great big floating menagerie...

HE 'LAUNCHES' THE ARK BY WAVING THE BOAT UP AND DOWN

FIRST LADY

(dove puppet)

And the dove. Remember the dove...

SECOND MAN

And still the Lord kept on calling his people to walk with him.

FIRST MAN

Shema! Hear ye, Israel. The Lord your God is one.

SECOND MAN

He told them his name. It was so holy and sacred that it couldn't be written down.

FIRST LADY

Only in code - Y-H-W-H. Or as we'd say, Jahweh.

SECOND MAN

And he gave them a special gift - his law.

FIRST MAN

(sings)

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

SECOND MAN

On two tablets of stone.

FIRST MAN

Remember, folks, keep taking the tablets.

SECOND LADY

(Sign) And so it came to pass. The Lord's people would follow him for a while, but then they'd become distracted and turn away.

FIRST LADY

The Lord even gave them bread from heaven.

FIRST MAN

(Sings) 'Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven...'

FIRST LADY

(Sings) 'Manna, manna, manna...'

SECOND MAN

So the Lord went back to the tree, and there he grafted on the stump of Jesse.

FIRST LADY

(Sign) And so it came to pass...

SECOND LADY

The Jesse Tree! And what a family tree that turned out to be - Jesse begat David, and David was to be God's anointed King.

SECOND MAN

Shepherd boy, Giant-killer, King and songwriter.

FIRST MAN

(sings)

(Sings 'Crimond') 'The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want...'

FIRST LADY

Psalm 23. Great, that's the Psalms covered, okay? Now we've only got to zip through the rest of the Old Testament before we start on the New.

FIRST MAN

(singing)

And it's from the old I travel to the New, Keep Me
Travelling Along With -

SECOND LADY

Enough with the singing, already!

SECOND MAN

And the prophets foretold, in mystery, of another
King who would come, greater even than King David.

FIRST LADY

The Lord himself will give you a sign - a virgin will
give birth to a son, and will call him God With Us...

FIRST MAN

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

SECOND MAN

(Sign) And so it came to pass.

SECOND LADY

(moves one star higher up the tree)

A star danced in the heavens and the angels
rejoiced...

ALL FOUR (ANGELS)

Glory to God in the Highest!

FIRST MAN

(handing folded cloth bundle to second man) And a
boy was born. A son was given.

SECOND MAN

(taking it) Let now your servant depart in peace.

FIRST MAN

Do you come to me to be baptised? Rather I should
be baptised by you.

SECOND MAN KNEELS - DOVE PUPPET LANDS ON JESUS' HEAD

SECOND MAN

This is my beloved son.

FIRST LADY

Do whatever my son tells you.

SECOND LADY

If only I could touch the hem of his garment.

FIRST MAN

Only say the word, and he shall be healed...

FIRST LADY

I met him at the well of Jacob, and he told me everything I ever did.

SECOND MAN

All I know is this, I was born blind but now I can see.

FIRST MAN

Halleluyah!

ALL FOUR

(Singing to the tune of 'Praise Is Rising' or similar)
'Hosanna! Hosanna! You are the God who saves us,
worthy of all our praises...'

SECOND LADY

And then, on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took the Passover with his friends.

FIRST MAN

(mimes breaking bread, lifting cup)
This is my body. This is my blood. Given for you.

FIRST LADY

Afterwards, he went into the garden to pray by the tree. Then the soldiers came, led by one of his friends, who called out to him, Teacher!

FIRST MAN

Yes, I am He.

SECOND MAN

Right, then. You, preacher-man, are under arrest.

FIRST MAN STRETCHES OUT HIS ARMS FOR CAPTURE.

FIRST LADY

(Sign) And so it came to pass. Jesus was on trial for blasphemy.

FIRST MAN

Are you the Son of God?

SECOND MAN

Are you the King of the Jews?

FIRST MAN

Are you the Messiah?

SECOND MAN

(taking cloth)

I wash my hands of the whole affair.

SECOND LADY

And they led him away to be crucified.

FIRST MAN

(draping cloth on tree)

On a tree, between two criminals.

SECOND LADY

(hushed)

And so it came to pass.

SECOND MAN

It is finished.

FIRST LADY

(takes cloth, hands it to Second Lady)

And the faithful women, who had followed him, now prepared his body for burial...

SECOND LADY

(folds cloth, pauses, then unfolds it)

But when they came back again on the third day, the tomb was empty.

BOTH MEN

He is not here, he is risen from the dead.

FIRST LADY

And the leaves were green on the tree.

FIRST MAN

First, he appeared to Mary.

SECOND LADY

Rabboni! Teacher? You are alive!

SECOND MAN

Then he came to see the disciples.

FIRST MAN

We were out fishing on the lake, very early one morning.

HE LAUNCHES THE BOAT (THAT WAS THE ARK)

SECOND MAN

And we heard him calling us. He was cooking fish on the shore of the lake.

FIRST MAN

And we all had breakfast together.

SECOND MAN

Peace to you. If you love me, feed my flock, tend my lambs. As the Father sent me, so I send you.

FIRST LADY

He breathed on us and we set out on the long road.

SECOND LADY

We went everywhere, making disciples.

FIRST MAN

Until Saul came to stop us dead in our tracks.

SECOND MAN

But he met Jesus on the way.

FIRST LADY

(Sign) And so it came to pass - that now he was Paul. Going to the ends of the earth to spread Good News.

FIRST MAN

(launches boat again)
I Am Sailing, I Am Sailing...

SECOND LADY

Please - enough with the singing!

SECOND MAN

Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

FIRST LADY

The Good News of Jesus. The Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end.

SECOND LADY

When he comes back again, won't that be a day?

FIRST MAN

(Hanging cloth back on tree) The leaves on the tree will be for the healing of the nations.

SECOND LADY

Justice and peace have kissed together.

SECOND MAN

The Lion on the throne is the Lamb of God.

FIRST MAN

(Sign) And so it came to pass.

FIRST LADY

And all shall be well.

SECOND LADY

And all shall be well.

BOTH LADIES

And all manner of things shall be well.

FIRST MAN

Amen.

SECOND MAN

Even so, come Lord Jesus.

ALL FOUR

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.
Amen.