**The Bible**

**(A Slightly Abridged and Shorter Version)**

In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some angels.  The Bible says, 'The Lord thy God is one, but I think He must be a lot older than that.

Anyway, God said, 'Someone turn on a light!' and someone did. Then God made the world. He split the Adam and made Eve.  Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden. Not sure what they were driven in though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel.

Pretty soon all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham.  Noah built a large boat and put his family in it and turned it into a floating zoo. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

 After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.  Jacob was more famous than his brother Esau. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston.  Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people.  These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable.

God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti.  Then he gave them His Top Ten Commandments. These include: don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbor's stuff.

 Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humor thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies.  Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town.

After Joshua came David.  He got to be king by killing a giant with a slingshot.  He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines, but that doesn't sound very wise to me.

**After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets.**One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then barfed up on the shore.  There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament.  Jesus is the star of The New.  He was born in Bethlehem in a barn.  (I wish I had been born in a barn too, because my wife is always saying to me, 'Close the door! Were you born in a barn?' It would be nice to say just once, 'As a matter of fact, I was.')

Jesus also had twelve opossums. The worst one was Judas Asparagus.  Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man.  He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount.

**But all those guys put Jesus on trial before** Pontius **the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus.  He just washed his hands instead.**

Anyways, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum.  We celebrate that with chocolate rabbits and eggs. Go figure!

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Midway through his reign, troubles came to him to test him. The Assyrians were a formidable enemy. Judah had seen their sister nation, Israel, fall to them in the not too distant past. And now Sennecherib, was at their doorstep and had surrounded Jerusalem. They were under siege and their situation seemed hopeless. We get a glimpse into the heart of Hezekiah as he took the threat of invasion and laid it all out before the Lord in the temple. How much better would our world be if our politicians behaved accordingly! God listened, and so worked, that 185,000 of the Syrian army died that very night. They withdrew in defeat and humiliation. But Hezekiah had an even tougher enemy to face. He became sick during this time and was informed by God that he would die very soon, and that he should get his affairs in order. He cried out to God, who heard his prayers, and gave him fifteen more years of life. The accompanying supernatural sign, the shadow of the sun traveling in the wrong direction for a short period of time, was evident elsewhere in the world, for even Babylon traced the odd occurrence to Jerusalem and Hezekiah.

God allows His children options. It would seem that He has a perfect will, and a permissive will. The first is always the best choice. The second can also be a proper selection, but there are pitfalls and potholes along that route that must be recognized and negotiated safely. The extra fifteen years granted to Hezekiah were marred by three substantial failures. Manasseh, his son, was born during this time. After the death of Hezekiah, the Bible describes him as the most evil king of all those to disgrace the throne of Israel. It was he who offered his own sons as child sacrifices to idols. Blood flowed in Jerusalem because of his actions. Manasseh was despicable, and Hezekiah a failure as a father figure.

Because of the kindness of God upon his life, Hezekiah became proud. Pride is a dangerous commodity, and he owned much of it. In his arrogance, he made an additional, potentially fatal decision. Babylon, upon hearing of the tremendous sign God had given Hezekiah, sent emissaries to Jerusalem to congratulate him. Personally puffed up over the turn of events, He committed an act that ultimately came back to haunt him. The ambassadors from Babylon were given a tour of Jerusalem. They saw everything there, including the world’s largest cache of precious metals and gems. Babylon took note, and it was not long before they came back in force to take the gold back to their city nation. And in the process of collecting all of that wealth that Hezekiah had foolishly shown them, they destroyed the city of Jerusalem completely. The second greatest king of Israel started well, but finished so poorly.

