

# **Sacred Keys to Secular Literature**

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Don't feel stupid  
because you don't know  
important things.

Feel confident in your  
ability to understand  
art and literature.

A friend of mine from high school suggested we backpack through Europe one summer before professional responsibilities took over our adult lives. We visited beautiful castles and cathedrals, while meeting friendly people along the way. We used our student passes to get into famous museums in France and Italy.

I was an **art major**, so it was cool to see famous paintings and sculptures by artists we had studied in college. Nothing felt better than enjoying great art with a friend. He was an atheist, yet he knew so much about the biblical stories found in most of the artwork, from paintings in the Sistine Chapel to the sculpture of David. He had a good cultural education from his parents and teachers.

Several decades have passed since that summer, and my career is nearly done. Throughout my life, I have created art and written dozens of **short stories**. Many of my stories mention people and events discussed in the Bible, which has been a shared point of reference between me and my readers for decades.

Recently, it has become evident that my **readers** are the opposite of my high-school friend. They are really smart and well-educated, but have no background knowledge of **biblical stories** that form the foundation of western art and literature, from Camus to Dostoevsky.

My readers enjoy the short stories, but they often miss the point I am trying to make, because the point was made by comparing my story with a narrative told by one of the ancient biblical writers.

My current book ***Sacred Keys*** hopes to fill that hole of knowledge for people who want to better understand **art** and appreciate **literature**. If that sounds like you, then I hope you buy this book today and begin your journey of learning about key characters and stories from the Bible that can make books and paintings come alive.

This PDF gives an example character **description** of Jesus and one of his **stories** about the Good Samaritan. This story is one of the most quoted and painted in the last two thousand years. The table of contents below gives a short list of the more than fifty characters and stories you will learn about in ***Sacred Keys to Secular Literature***.

**Characters**

*Old & New Testaments*

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*... and many **more** characters!*

**Stories**

*Old & New Testaments*

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*... and many **more** stories!*

The life of **Jesus** Christ, the central figure of Christianity, is recorded in the four Gospels: *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*. Born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph, Jesus' birth was miraculous, as He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies of a Messiah. His birth, celebrated at Christmas, marked the beginning of God's plan of salvation for humanity.

Jesus grew up in Nazareth and, at the age of about thirty, began His public ministry after being baptized by John the Baptist. He was led into the wilderness for forty days of fasting and temptation, where He resisted Satan's offers, affirming His mission to do God's will. Jesus' ministry focused on preaching the Kingdom of God, repentance, and love. He performed numerous **miracles**, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead, and even calming storms. His teachings, such as the Sermon on the Mount and parables like the Good Samaritan, emphasized love for God and neighbor, forgiveness, and humility.

Jesus gathered **twelve disciples**, including Peter, James, and John, and revealed Himself as the Son of God and the promised Messiah. His growing popularity also drew opposition from religious leaders, who saw Him as a threat to their authority and traditional teachings.

The climax of Jesus' life occurred during the Passover festival in Jerusalem. Betrayed by Judas, one of His disciples, He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to death by **crucifixion** under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Jesus' crucifixion, a sacrifice for the sins of humanity, is central to Christian belief, as He died to offer forgiveness and eternal life to all who believe in Him.

Three days after His death, Jesus rose from the dead, an event known as the **Resurrection**, proving His victory over sin and death. He appeared to His disciples and many others before ascending to heaven, promising the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' life and teachings continue to inspire billions, and Christians believe He will return one day to establish His eternal Kingdom.

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” Jesus replied.

The man answered, “**‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’**; and, **‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But the man wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “**And who is my neighbor?**”

In reply Jesus said:

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A **priest** happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a **Levite**, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a **Samaritan**, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Jesus asked. The expert in the law replied, “The one who had **mercy** on him.” Jesus told him, “**Go and do likewise.**”

The story of the **Good Samaritan** shows us how we *ought* to live, yet it makes us examine our heart to see if that is how we *actually* live.

If you want to begin your journey to understanding deep themes in art and literature **scan the QR code** and buy the book today.



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