

= Simpsons Bible Stories =

" Simpsons Bible Stories " is the eighteenth episode of The Simpsons ' tenth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on Easter Sunday , April 4 , 1999 . It is the first of The Simpsons ' now annual trilogy episodes , and consists of four self @-@ contained segments . In the episode , the Simpson family fall asleep during a sermon in church . Marge dreams that she and Homer are Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden , Lisa dreams that she and her fellow Springfield Elementary School students are Hebrew slaves in Ancient Egypt and guides Moses to lead them to freedom , Homer dreams that he is King Solomon called to resolve a dispute between Lenny and Carl over the ownership of a pie , and Bart dreams he is King David , who has to fight Goliath 's son , Goliath II .

" Simpsons Bible Stories " was written by Matt Selman , Larry Doyle and Tim Long , and was the first episode Nancy Kruse directed for The Simpsons . While executive producer and former showrunner Mike Scully stated that the idea for the episode came after Fox requested an Easter @-@ themed episode , co @-@ writer Selman argued that it was conceived by former staff writers Dan Greaney and Donick Cary while they were pitching ideas for the tenth season . Because the episode mostly takes place outside Springfield , the animators had to design completely new sets . While the episode mostly features references to the Old Testament and Christianity , it also parodies children 's television programs , American politicians and action films by Jerry Bruckheimer .

In its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 12 @.@ 2 million viewers , a drop from the previous episode which garnered 15 @.@ 5 million viewers . Following its broadcast , the episode received mixed reviews from critics , but won an Annie award in the category of Best Animated Television Production . In 2007 , the episode was released as part of The Simpsons - The Complete Tenth Season DVD box set , and a promotional poster for the episode was included in an exhibition in Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art in Tulsa , Oklahoma . The episode 's ending scene is one of series creator Matt Groening 's favorite moments on The Simpsons . The episode has been credited with fostering a critical literacy towards religion and the Bible among its viewers .

= = Plot = =

It is an unseasonably hot Easter at church , and no one is interested in Reverend Lovejoy 's sermons . When the collection plate is passed round , Homer puts in a chocolate Easter bunny that he found in the dumpster , enraging Reverend Lovejoy , calling it a wicked idol , and provoking him to read the Bible from the beginning . The Simpsons all fall asleep .

= = = Marge 's Dream = = =

Marge dreams that she and Homer are Adam and Eve . They peacefully live in the Garden of Eden until a snake (Snake Jailbird) tempts Adam into eating dozens of apples from the forbidden tree . He persuades Eve to try one when God (Ned Flanders) witnesses his sin . Even though Adam ate many apples , God only caught Eve eating an apple , and she is therefore banished from the Garden of Eden . Adam is unwilling to come clean , but misses Eve and thinks of a way of getting her back in by digging a tunnel with the help of some of the animals . God 's unicorn , named Gary , becomes exhausted from the digging and dies just before God catches Adam trying to smuggle Eve back into the Garden . The death of the unicorn enrages him further , and he expels them both from the Garden of Eden .

= = = Lisa 's Dream = = =

Lisa imagines she and all the other Springfield Elementary students are Hebrews in ancient Egypt , with the Pharaoh (Principal Skinner) making them build a pyramid . Only Moses (Milhouse) can liberate the Hebrews . When Bart defaces the Pharaoh 's sarcophagus , supposedly incited by the burning bush , he gets the other students punished . Lisa helps Milhouse produce plagues to scare

the Pharaoh into freeing the Israelites ; they fail . This in turn gets Lisa and Milhouse thrown in a Pyramid prison . When they escape , Milhouse gathers all the students and they attempt to leave . When they reach the sea , Lisa has an idea to get across : They simultaneously flush all the Egyptians ' toilets to drain the sea . As they cross , the Pharaoh and his guards follow , but the water fills the sea back up and swallows them . They enjoy splashing each other , and then return to the shore . Pleased that they have escaped , Milhouse asks Lisa what the future holds for the Israelites , but Lisa disappoints Milhouse when she says that they have to wander the desert for forty years . Milhouse then asks if it is going to be smooth sailing for the Jews after that . Rather than disappoint Milhouse again with news of the ongoing anti @-@ Semitism that will plague the Jews for many centuries , she distracts the crowd by sending them to search for manna .

= = = Homer 's Dream = = =

Homer pictures himself as King Solomon . Lenny and Carl fight over ownership of a pie . King Solomon cuts it in half , sentences Lenny and Carl to death , and then eats the pie . King Solomon then presides over a civil case between Jesus and Checker Chariot .

= = = Bart 's Dream = = =

Bart sees himself as King David , who kills Goliath , but has not won the war yet : Nelson is Goliath II , Goliath 's son . Goliath II has killed Methuselah (Grampa) , David 's oldest friend . In retaliation , David challenges Goliath II , but having no stones to sling at him , David loses and is catapulted from the city . David then meets Ralph , a shepherd , who claims he can kill Goliath II . Ralph dies , which enrages David even more . He then trains to try to slay Goliath . Having to climb up the enormous Tower of Babel beforehand , David manages to kill Goliath by throwing a lit lantern down his throat . Goliath is surprisingly still alive , but is quickly killed by Ralph 's gravestone , hurled by Ralph himself , who also had not died . Much to his shock , David is sent to jail as the townspeople claim that Goliath was the best King they ever had , building roads , libraries and hospitals . The dream ends with a title card that reads " A Bart Simpson Dream " .

= = = Ending sequence = = =

As the family wakes up , they find themselves alone in the church . Upon exiting they realize that the Apocalypse has come ; fire rains from a red sky , and the Four Horsemen ride past . The Flanders ascend into Heaven , but The Simpsons do not ; Lisa begins to ascend , but Homer grabs her ankle and pulls her back down . Instead , the Simpsons descend via a staircase into Hell , where Homer follows the delicious scent of barbecue . The episode ends with Homer screaming in agony (because there are no hot dogs , there is pineapple in the coleslaw , and German potato salad) as " Highway to Hell " by AC / DC plays over the credits .

= = Production = =

" Simpsons Bible Stories " was co @-@ written by Matt Selmán , Larry Doyle and Tim Long , and was the first episode Nancy Kruse directed for The Simpsons . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on April 4 , 1999 , the day Easter took place that year . According to executive producer and former showrunner Mike Scully , the idea for the episode was conceived when Fox requested an Easter @-@ themed Simpsons episode that would air on the holiday . Normally , Fox would not broadcast any new Simpsons episodes on Easter , as it is considered a " low @-@ ratings night " , but " Simpsons Bible Stories " was an exception . However , according to co @-@ writer Selmán , the idea for the episode came about when he and former staff writer Dan Greaney were pitching episode ideas for the tenth season with former staff writer Donick Cary . Cary and Greaney suggested a " bible @-@ trilogy " story , which then became " Simpsons Bible Stories " . " Simpsons Bible Stories " is the first of the trilogy episodes which , since the season 12 episode "

Simpsons Tall Tales " , The Simpsons produces once every season .

The first segment was written by Long . According to former staff writer Tom Martin , Long wanted the pig in the garden of Eden to have a " Tony British " accent . The pig was voiced by regular cast member Hank Azaria , who portrays Moe Szyslak among other characters in the series . The unicorn that digs a hole from the garden of Eden was portrayed by Tress MacNeille . The second segment was written by Doyle . The episode 's third segment was written by Selman . When writing segments for trilogy episodes , the writing staff usually follow the stories they are based on , while putting The Simpsons characters in the original characters ' place . With " Simpsons Bible Stories " ' third segment , Selman stated that he wanted to go a " fresh new way " by instead writing a sequel to the story of David and Goliath . According to Scully , Selman had a very clear vision of how he wanted the segment to be , and Selman said that he wanted to make a " dog 's breakfast " of movie clichés at the time .

The song that plays during Bart 's training montage is " Winner Takes It All " by American rock singer Sammy Hagar . Selman decided to include the song after hearing it in the 1987 action drama film Over the Top . According to Doyle , the scene was originally much longer , almost seven minutes in length . The song that plays during the episode 's end credits is " Highway to Hell " by Australian hard rock band AC / DC . According to Scully , the staff could not use the song on The Simpsons at first , since AC / DC 's record company refused to sell it . However , when Scully called the band 's manager directly , it turned out he had not been told about the request . Scully said that when they asked if they could use " Highway to Hell " , the band 's manager " signed on right away " and gave the Simpsons staff a " huge discount . "

Because most of the episode takes place in ancient history , the animators had to create completely new sets and designs for the episode . In the DVD commentary for the episode , Kruse stated that she and staff animator Alex Ruiz had to re @-@ draw a majority of the episode , as the faulty scenes were drawn by six trainees . In order to receive an animator credit on The Simpsons , an animator has to draw ten scenes in an episode . Because the trainees did not draw ten scenes each , none of them were credited for their work on the episode . All the trainees were later hired to The Simpsons animation staff . Kruse stated that , while animating the episode , she was worried that the animation department would be offended by the episode 's content , as many of the crew members were " very religious " . However , as animation ensued , she found that most of the animators were not uncomfortable with the episode , as it mostly parodies the Old Testament . The only complaint she received was from an animator who refused to animate Jesus in the court room scene in Homer 's dream .

In the DVD commentary for the episode , Scully stated that he regretted not submitting " Simpsons Bible Stories " for the Primetime Emmy Award in the category of animated programming less than one hour in 1999 . At the time , Scully reasoned that , because the original stories were not conceived by the writing staff , the episode would not hold up . However , he noted that the episode 's animation was " outstanding " , and that he later found out that the Emmy awards " put a lot of importance on " the animation in submitted episodes . Instead of submitting " Simpsons Bible Stories " for the Emmy awards in 1999 , Scully submitted " Viva Ned Flanders " , which ultimately lost to the King of the Hill episode " And They Call It Bobby Love " .

= = Cultural references = =

" Simpsons Bible Stories " contains several references to the Christian prophets , holy book and the religion as a whole , as well as films based on the Bible . Each segment is based on a biblical story , mostly from the Old Testament . The first segment is based on the story of Adam and Eve , who , according to the Book of Genesis were the first man and woman created by God . Ned Flanders has the role of God , while the serpent that lures Marge into eating an apple from the forbidden tree resembles Snake Jailbird . The Garden of Eden was the place where Adam and Eve lived after they were created by God , according to the Book of Genesis .

The second segment parodies Moses who , according to the Book of Exodus , freed the Israelites from the Egyptian Pharaoh . Milhouse has the role of Moses while Skinner has the role of the

Pharaoh . When the Pharaoh asked who vandalized his sarcophagus , the burning bush tells him that Bart did it . When Bart is seized by the Pharaoh 's guards , he exclaims " No , the bush set me up ! " Bart 's line refers to the 1990 arrest of Marion Barry who , while being arrested by the FBI for smoking crack cocaine , exclaimed " No , the bitch set me up ! " In a scene in the segment , Milhouse and Lisa can be seen pouring frogs into Skinner 's tent . The scene refers to the second of ten Biblical plagues that were imposed on Egypt by Yahweh , in chapters 7 @-@ 12 of the Book of Exodus . While they are inside the torture chamber , Milhouse and Lisa walk past an orb . The orb is called " Orb of Isis " and played a big part in the season 9 episode " Lost Our Lisa " . In another scene , Milhouse parts the Red Sea so that his fellow slaves can escape . The execution of the scene is based on the one seen in the 1956 American epic film The Ten Commandments , in which Moses parts the Red Sea . The shot in which Pharaoh and his guards are drowning is also taken from the movie .

In Homer 's dream , Homer has the role of King Solomon who , according to the Books of Kings and Book of Chronicles was a King of Israel , as well as one of the 48 prophets according to the Talmud . Bart 's dream shows Bart as King David and , rather than telling the story of David and Goliath , Bart 's dream is a " sequel " to the story . The segment is inspired by and contains references to several films by Jerry Bruckheimer , including Die Hard and Lethal Weapon , and borrows elements from other action films . At one point in the segment , Bart 's dog Santa 's Little Helper starts talking to him . The dog 's voice is similar to that of Goliath in the Christian stop @-@ motion animated television series Davey and Goliath . Inside the whale skeleton in the episode , Bart finds the remains of Jonah . Jonah was a prophet of the northern kingdom of Israel , according to the Hebrew Bible . Nelson lives in the Tower of Babel which , according to the Book of Genesis , was an enormous tower that the humans built in order to reach heaven . After being defeated by Bart , Nelson reappears while a variation of Modest Mussorgsky 's composition St. John 's Night on the Bare Mountain plays in the background . At the end of the segment , Bart is arrested and Chief Wiggum says " Where 's your messiah now ? " Wiggum 's line was also taken from The Ten Commandments , from a character played by Edward G. Robinson , on whom Wiggum 's voice is based . King David 's (Bart) training montage of arm @-@ wrestling with his sheep is a reference to the film Over the Top , complete with Sammy Hagar 's " Winner Takes It All " from the film .

= = Release and reception = =

In its original American broadcast on April 4 , 1999 , " Simpsons Bible Stories " received a 7 @. @ 4 Nielsen rating , translating to approximately 7 @. @ 4 million viewers . The rating is based on the number of household televisions that were tuned into the show , but Nielsen Media Research estimated that 12 @. @ 2 million viewers watched the episode , a considerable drop from the previous episode , which was seen by an estimated 15 @. @ 5 million viewers . David Bianculli of New York Daily News attributed the loss in viewership to the fact that the episode aired on a religious holiday . Nevertheless , it was the week 's second most watched program on the network . Later that year , the episode received an Annie award in the category of Best Animated Television Production , the second year in a row that The Simpsons won the award . On August 7 , 2007 , " Simpsons Bible Stories " was released as part of The Simpsons - The Complete Tenth Season DVD box set . Matt Groening , Mike Scully , George Meyer , Tom Martin , Larry Doyle , Matt Selman and Nancy Kruse participated in the DVD 's audio commentary of the episode .

Following its broadcast , " Simpsons Bible Stories " received mixed reviews from critics . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood of I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide wrote that the episode is " A fantastic twist of the Treehouse of Horror style of storytelling , " and added that each segment is a " classic on its own " . They wrote that Wiggum telling Moses and Lisa to give his regards to the British Museum as he seals them inside a tomb and Marge asking Bart if he is wearing clean underwear as they face the apocalypse were some of the episode 's " best moments " , and concluded by writing that the episode is " The Simpsons at its very best : inventive , irreverent and very , very funny . " While DVD Town 's James Plath wrote that the episode 's premise was " risky " , he still enjoyed the episode . Alan Sepinwall and Matt Zoller Seitz

of The Star @-@ Ledger described the episode as " hilarious " , however they noted that the episode 's " suggestion that Moses parted the Red Sea by having all the Israelites flush their toilets at once " could result in a backlash from the " religious right " .

On the other hand , giving the episode a negative review , DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson wrote that " Simpsons Bible Stories " " proves less successful [than most Treehouse of Horror episodes] " . He added that he " just think the brevity required by the inclusion of three separate tales better suits the world of horror spoofs than it does these Bible pieces , " as they " try to pack an awful lot into very little time . " He concluded by writing that , while the episode has " some good moments " , he did not find a lot of entertainment in it . Jake MacNeill of Digital Entertainment News was also critical , and wrote that the episode " fails to be funny " because it " strays too far from the source material " . He added " have you read the bible ? That stuff ? s funny enough in and of itself . " Aaron Roxby of Collider described " Simpsons Bible Stories " as his least @-@ favorite trilogy episode , and wrote " Considering that , in earlier seasons , the show had some of the most thoughtfully edgy religious humor on television , this one feels surprisingly toothless . " However , he gave praise to the talking pig in the Garden of Eden .

At the end of the episode , the Simpsons walk out of the church and notice that the Apocalypse has begun . While the other family members are left on earth , Lisa at first starts ascending into Heaven , but Homer stops her by grabbing her leg and says " Where do you think you 're going , missy ? " The gag was written by staff writer George Meyer , and is series creator Matt Groening 's favorite joke of the series . While the episode 's ending is one of Groening 's favorites , fans were uneasy with it . Selman stated that the ending " drives them [the fans] crazy " , since they do not know whether or not the episode is canonical . In 2007 , Homer 's line " Oh , I smell barbeque ! " was included in Bobby Bryant of The State 's list " 20 Essential Things I 've Learned From Homer Simpson " . The same year , the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art in Tulsa , Oklahoma , unveiled a new exhibit which galleried Biblical images in art and pop culture , including a promotional poster for " Simpsons Bible Stories " .