

"In the Shadow of the Cross"

A Mural by James Bennett



This mural is a pictorial overview of the Bible and its central theme: Christ was coming, He came and gave us salvation, and He will come again.

The mural is located at Upton Lake Christian School in Clinton Corners, NY. It was begun in 2001 and finished in 2002. It took seven months to complete. Several of the school's high school students assisted in laying out the design and doing some of the painting.



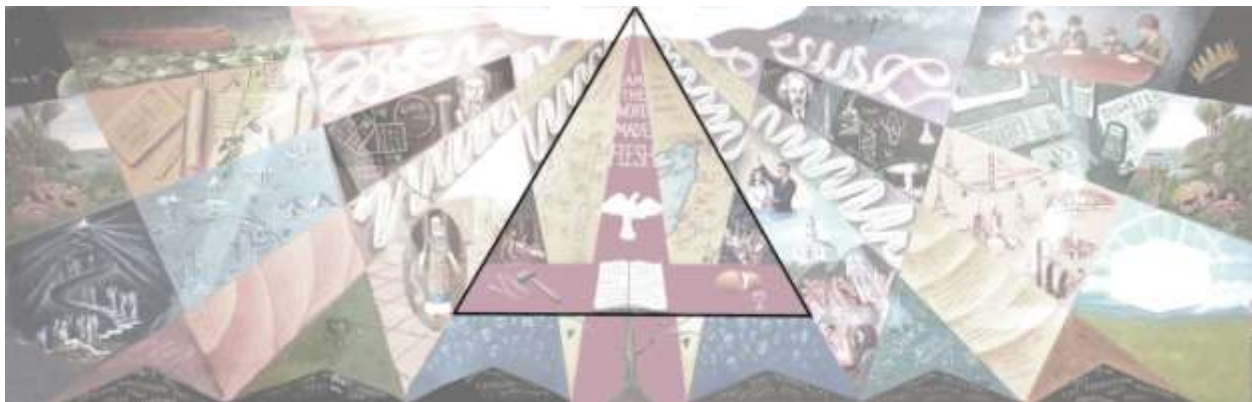
The wall was first prepared with a deep red ground. Following a scale drawing I had prepared, we then measured and laid out the design on the wall. The process was a lesson in the mathematics of scale, proportion, and geometry for the students.



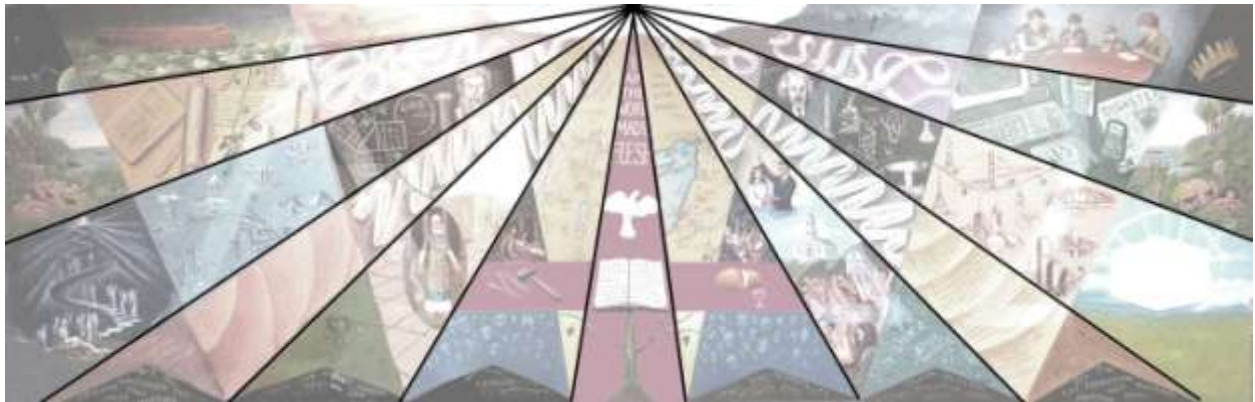
An overhead projector was used to transfer my drawings to the wall. Students also painted backgrounds. Below is a photograph of the mural in an early stage of its creation.



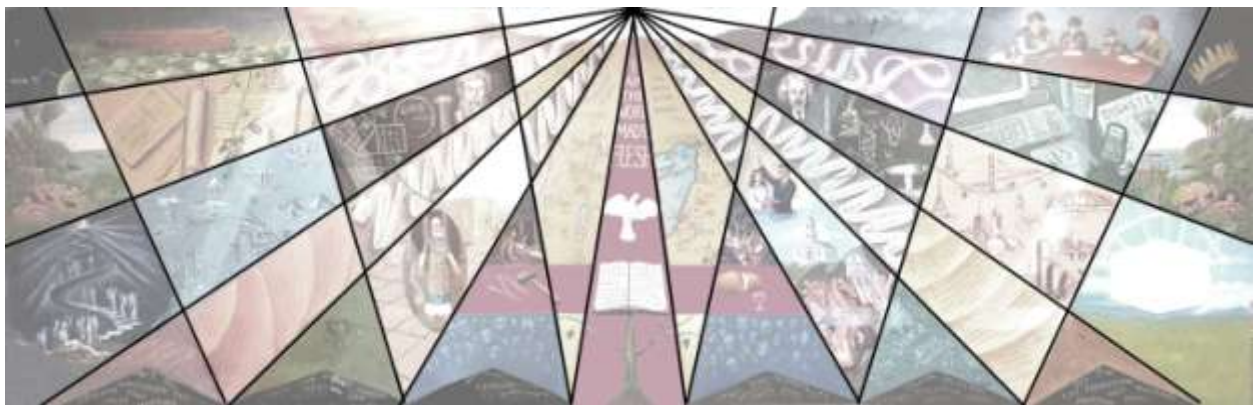
The composition is anchored in the center with a triangle.



Another major element in the composition is rays extending downward from the cross. These help direct the viewers' eyes up toward the cross.



From the points where the rays meet the bottom edge, the lines take a sharp upward turn and appear to bounce outward into the room.



The first thing that commands your attention when you view the mural is the shadow of the cross in the center.



The words, "I AM THE WORD MADE FLESH," are taken from **John 1:14** -- *The Word became flesh* and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

A dove is in the center and indicates that the mural features the work of the Holy Spirit.

A hammer and nails are depicted on the left. The Last Supper bread and wine are on the right.

The Bible in the center is open to **Isaiah 53:2-4** -- *He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered* him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

There are two other sections of the mural which have prophetic scriptures quoted.



The scriptures (underlined) are as follows: (on the left, Old Testament side)

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Malachi 3:1

"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.

Isaiah 11:1-2a

1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey

Isaiah 59:20

"The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the Lord.

(on the right, New Testament side)

Daniel 7:13

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.
(Referenced in Matthew 24:30)

"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

Mark 14:62

"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Revelation 19:13-15a

¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

¹⁵ Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

Revelation 19:16

On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords

The two end sections of the mural



Top left is a depiction of the start of creation as described in Genesis. Next is the Garden of Eden. Third is an illustration of Jacob's dream in which he saw angel descending and ascending. Top right is a crown which symbolizes heaven. Next is the Peaceable Kingdom. Third is a picture of New Jerusalem as described in Genesis.

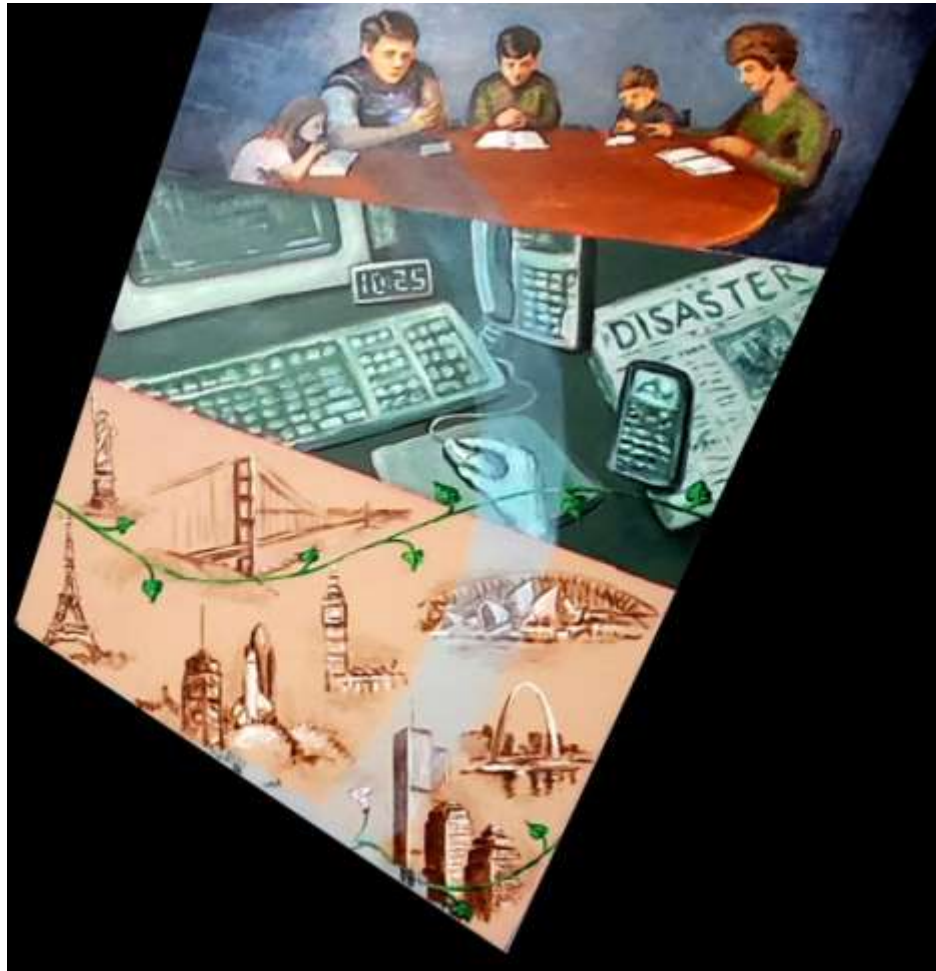
The sections next to the ends.



Depicted in the left section, we see Noah's ark, tools for writing and calculating, and the seven wonders of the ancient world.



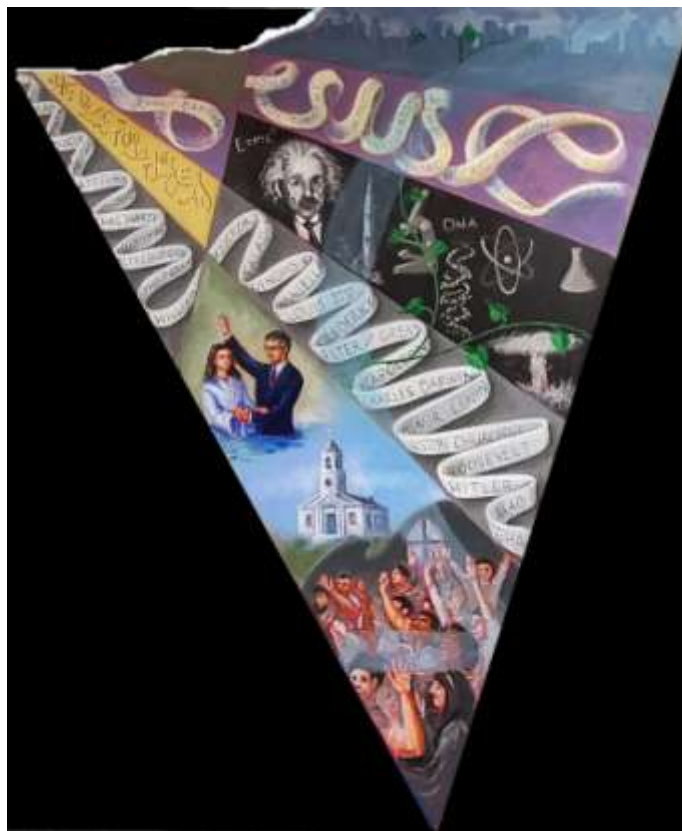
In the corresponding section on the right side, we see a family praying and reading their Bibles, modern day implements for writing and calculating, and seven wonders of the modern world.



The Next Sections

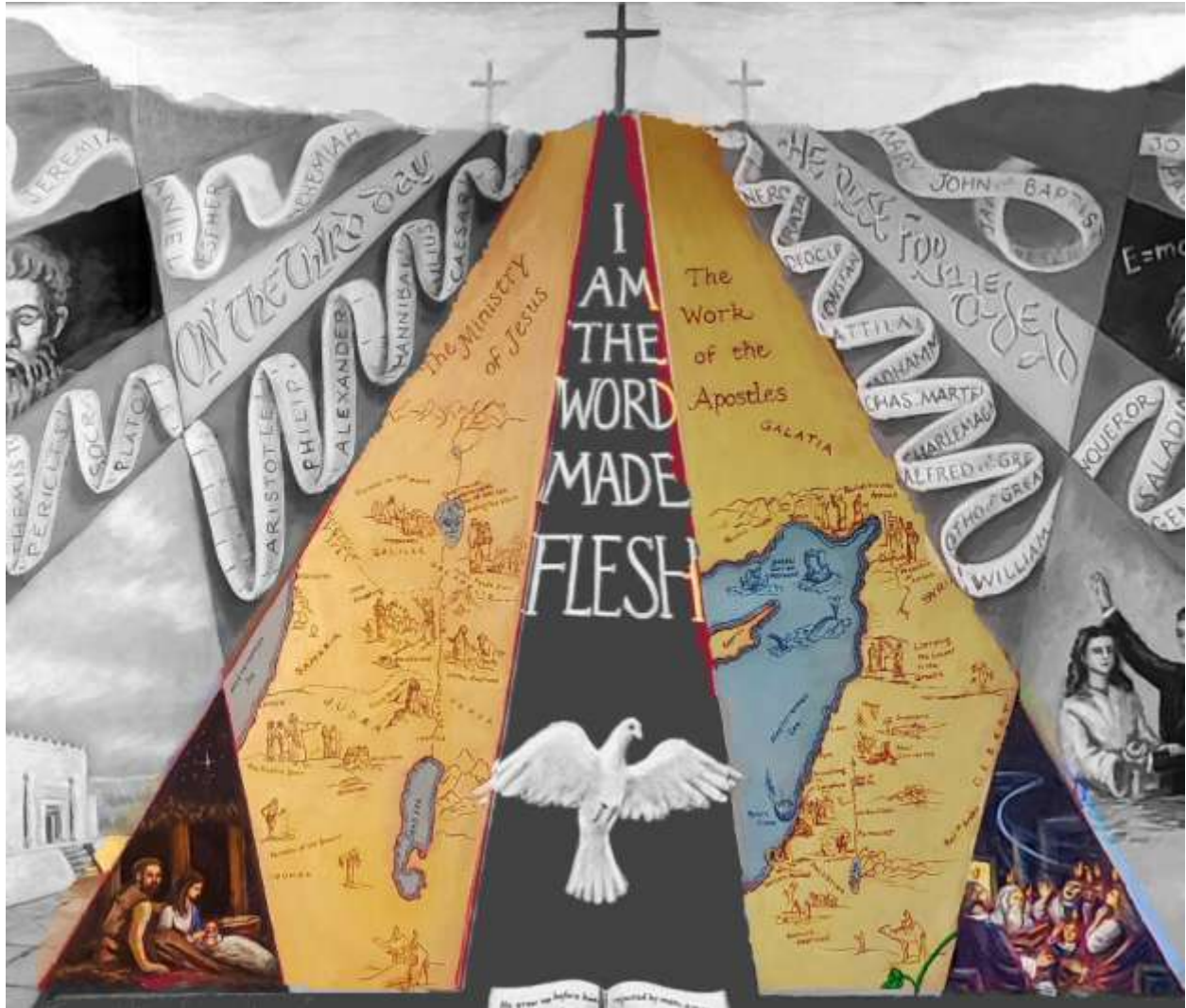
Moving closer to the center of the mural, the next sections show a landscape typical of the times, a ribbon on which the names of the righteous are inscribed, a depiction of the math and science of the times, a ribbon on which are written the names of famous secular leaders, and images of Godly worship during the Old Testament times contrasted with the forms of worship today.

In addition, there are two yellow sections between the ribbons which together say, “On the third day, He rose from the dead.”



Near the Center

Here we see two maps. One shows the Ministry of Jesus, and the other depicts the Work of the Apostles. Next to the maps are pictures of the nativity and Pentecost.



The two green sections near the bottom portray images of popular culture. The blue sections are lost souls crying out for help.



Along the bottom of the mural are six black triangles which list sinful acts.



Two elements in the design are difficult to see in reproduction. One is a vine whose branches wind throughout the composition. The other is a large alpha and omega. If you look hard, you might be able to find them.

The brown sections on either side are where the people who worked on the mural signed their names.

To see more of James Bennett's inspirational art based on the Bible, please visit

bennecelli.com and artistsbiblestudy.com