

Turtles In The Bible With 5 Free Printables

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â??What? Turtles in the bible? Are you serious that the bible talks about turtles?â?• That was our response when we were told that there were turtles in the bible. Turtles are fascinating and according to Britannica online, there are about 356 species of turtles. So, where can we find turtles in the bible and what do they symbolize and how to make it a fun learning activity for kids? Read on and lets explore this together.

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# Appearances Of Turtles In The Bible

God made all living things. A turtle is a land and aquatic creature that has been around since the creation of the world. Afterall, God created the sea creatures on the fifth day and the land animals on the sixth day we find the record in Genesis 1:21-25.

Genesis 1: 21-25

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

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And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

For a full detail of the creation story and activities for kids, see our post 4 ways to make the creation story for kids exciting.

However, are there any appearances of turtles in scripture by name? Based on our research, we found that turtles appear in several places in the Old testament however we did not find any mention in the New Testaments.

The first in Leviticus where we are told that we should not eat the tortoise because it is an unclean animal and thus not fit to put into the temple of God as food. According to the Britannica encyclopedia, all tortoises are turtles as they belong to the order Testudines or Chelonia, reptiles having bodies encased in a bony shell. So we can infer that this verse in Leviticus though it says tortoise is talking about a turtle.

Leviticus 11:29-30

These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind,

And the ferret, and the chameleon, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole.




The second talks about the voice of the turtle being heard in the land. According to the All Turtles website, while turtles donâ??t have vocal cords, they do make a wide range of noises and sounds by expelling air out of their lungs. Humans can hear some of these sounds they produce but most arenâ??t in the range for human hearing. These sounds turtles produce, such as clucking, hissing or high pitched whining, help them to communicate things such as their emotions with each other.

Song of Solomon 2:12

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

There is another appearance of turtles however depending on the bible translations chosen the meaning can be different. The KJV translators of Numbers 6:10 mentions the word turtles however the NKJV makes mention of turtle doves instead of turtles.

Numbers 6:10, KJV

And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation

Numbers 6: 10, NKJV

Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting

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This King James Bible mention of turtles in the bible is better explained by the New King James version. Numbers chapter 6 stated several offerings such as burnt offering, sin offering and peace offering. In these offerings the key element was the shedding of the blood as â??paymentâ?•.

Turtles in the bible is therefore not the ideal choice of words instead turtle dove is a better choice as the offering of turtledoves was a common sin offering in bible times. Exodus 38 mentions how various parts of the tabernacle were made including the outer court where the burnt sacrifice was made and was separated from the Holy Place by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Further details on the sacrificial system can be found in Leviticus 1-10.

Another mention of turtles in the bible is Jeremiah 8:7.

Jeremiah 8:7

Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

The turtle in the bible mentioned here is not a literal turtle as it is also translated in other bible versions as turtledove, which can be seen as a better translation as this verse is filled with a list of animals and specifically birds of the heavens that know when to do certain things such as when to migrate. Modern versions such as the ICB translates it this way:

Jeremiah 8:7

Even the birds in the sky
    know the right times to do things.
The storks, doves, swifts and thrushes
    know when it is time to migrate.
But my people donâ??t know

what the Lord wants them to do!

## Biblical Meaning Of Turtle

Is there any biblical interpretation which we can make from the mention of turtles in the bible? What is the biblical meaning of a turtle?

The first thing most persons notice about a turtle is that they have a hard shell. What does the turtleâ??s shell do? It plays an important role. The first thing that comes to mind is protection. The shell of the turtles helps it to be kept safe from harmful predators.

As Christians, we have a harmful predator that is trying to hurt us. In 1 Peter 5:8 we find out who he is.

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1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

If the devil is trying to destroy those of us who are Godâ??s children, what is our shell? What is our protection? Ephesians 6: 11-18 tells us the different ways we can be protected form the evil one.

Ephesians 6: 11-18

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

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As we visualize the turtleâ??s protective shell, let us remember Godâ??s protection when we encounter difficult situations on this spiritual journey to heavenly Canaan.

The same way the turtle can hide itself and its vital organs in a shell we can hide and be kept safe in God. Psalm 91 reminds us of our Heavenly father who is keeping us safe. His divine nature is one of love and care for his children.

Psalm 91:1-4

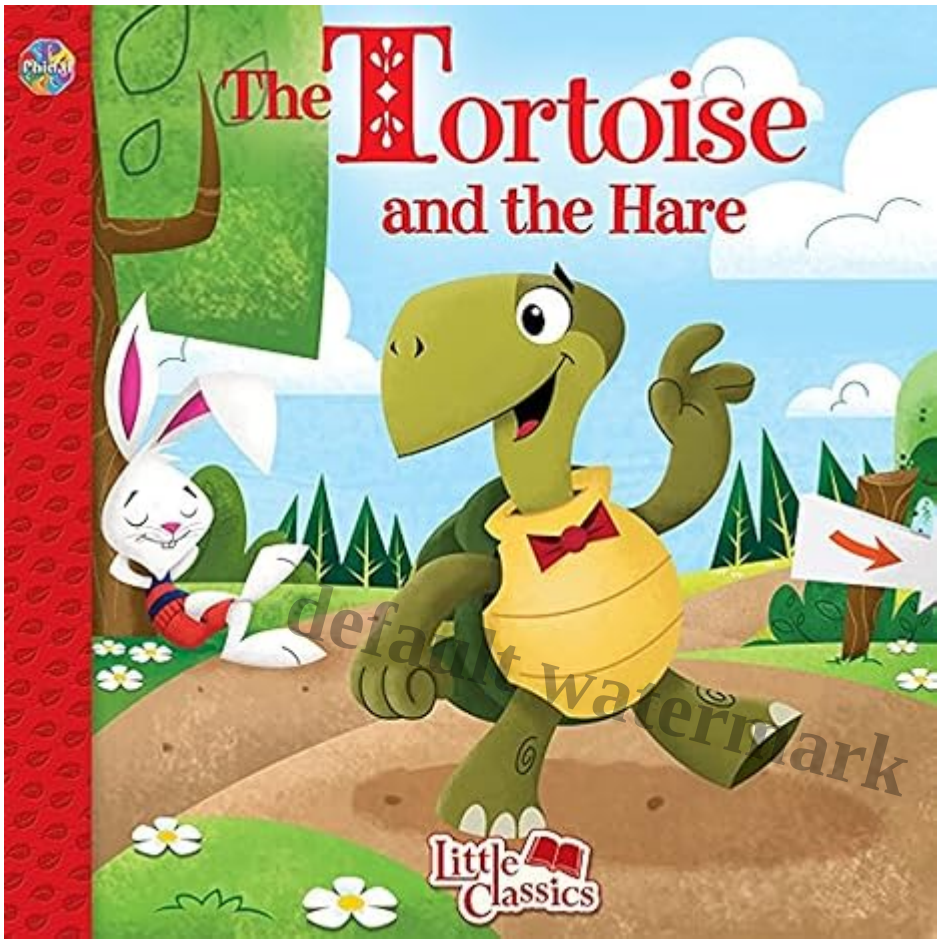
He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Another symbolism we have for turtles in the bible is about the turtleâ??s slow pace. Most kids would have read the tale of the tortoise and the hare.




From this story we learn that â??slow and steady wins the race.â?• Its the same for Christians. The bible says it in Ecclesiastes 9:11 that â??the race is not to the swiftâ?•.

There is a proper time for everything so let us be patient and remember that it is more important to be consistent and to endure to the end. You and your kids will enjoy the jigsaw puzzle in the next section which helps to reenforce this concept.

Did you know that baby turtles are born orphans? One meaning of turtles in the bible is that we were made orphans when sin separated us from our heavenly Father. The good news about us however is that Jesus came and restored our relationship so that we are now sons and daughters of God.

## Kid Activities For Turtles In The Bible

1. Draw a turtle by connecting the dots with Carrots are Orange.
2. Make a sensory bin. Visit Teaching Mama for the details of how to make this great sensory bin idea. You will need:

- water beads
- white sand

- ping pong balls
- rocks
- faux grass
- sea turtle toys

3. Do the hare and the turtle jig saw puzzle from the DLTK website to teach that turtles in the bible show that slow and steady wins the race.

4. Make a sea turtle craft. You can download the printable from Learn Create Love.

5. For an advanced craft you can use turtle shell patterns to crotchet the shell or the turtle. These intricate patterns look really gorgeous when done.

## Turtles In The Bible

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We can get biblical meanings from the references to turtles in the bible. Turtles in the bible teach us lessons about how we should be as Christian. Some persons associate turtles with ideas of loyalty, resiliency, protection and partnership. The shell of the turtle can symbolize the faithfulness of God as he protects his children as does a shell the turtle.

The turtleâ??s slow and steady pace also reminds us of the need to be patient, persistent and to stay the course. This reminds us of the story of Noah. Noah was patient, waited on Godâ??s timing and stayed the course even though others around him chose not to believe.

This all comes with spiritual growth. So let us continue studying the word of God so kids can grow in the Christian faith and have a long life built on the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. Until next time, feel free to share about your experience with our online community of faith in the comments below.

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1. Christian Printables

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