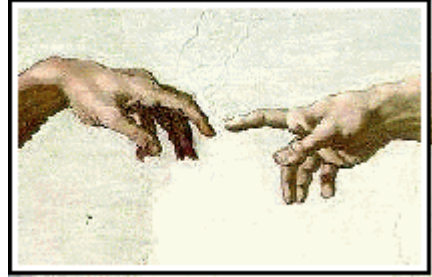


# The Sistine Chapel and Michelangelo

adapted from [www.michelangelo.com](http://www.michelangelo.com)



In April of 1508, Michelangelo was summoned to Rome by Julius II in order to paint biblical pictures in the Sistine Chapel. The task given to Michelangelo Buonarroti was to paint twelve figures of apostles and some other decorations on the *ceiling* of the chapel. At this time Michelangelo was a sculptor and he would now have to learn the art of the fresco\*.

Because of the difficulty of the task and the fact that Michelangelo was not a painter, he tried to turn down the commission, but was forced to do it anyway. However, after he started the project, he became very enthusiastic about the new art he was doing. He became so carried away with the painting that he actually created over 400 figures rather than just the 12 he was commissioned to do.

In May 1508, Michelangelo began to make the preparatory designs for the Sistine ceiling, but did not begin the paintings until the fall. He initially had several assistants helping him, but he was not pleased with their work. By the end of the year, he let them go and finished the project on his own. The project lasted four years and the paintings that were completed have come to be regarded as the finest art in the world. The paintings were original for the time and made a great impression on other artists.



The work was physically and emotionally difficult for Michelangelo—he worked hanging from scaffolding high above the chapel's floor. He was forced to work long hours since the pope wanted the project done quickly and had to contend with paint dripping in his face while trying to finish this master work.



His paintings include nine scenes from the book of Genesis, including the Creation of Adam and Eve, the Great Flood, and many other biblical themes. He made many figures studies and cartoons which enabled to depict life-size scenes.

The completion of the Sistine Chapel marked an awesome event in the history of art of the West and showed Michelangelo's incredible mastery of the human figure

\* The art of painting on fresh, moist plaster.