

REAL

Real Educated Abundant Living

Bible Study

You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood,
and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation
that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired by God
and is useful to teach us what is true
and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives.

It corrects us when we are wrong
and teaches us to do what is right.
God uses it to prepare and equip his people
to do every good work.

Second Timothy 3:15-17

This
REAL
Bible Study
is
Presented to

By

On

How to use

REAL Bible Study

This was designed to help **YOU** read and learn the Bible.

The composition notebook is a

Scripture Journal

Before you do your homework everyday...

1. Pick a scripture.
2. Find it in **YOUR Bible**.
3. Write the date.
4. Write the scripture from **YOUR Bible**.
5. Check it off.

Yup ... it's that easy!!

Bible Stories

It is important that we know how to read the Bible.

The Bible is a really big book,
but it's really one big story with lots of little stories.

We need to know how to read the little stories
so we can figure out the big story.

But you should know that the big story is about
GOD and YOU!

Here is a way to help you read the little stories.

Highlight the... "who", "what", "when", "where", "why" and "how".

Don't forget the most important part... the **GOD** part!!

You may want to get someone to help you until you get the hang of it.

There are no perfect answers in highlighting...
so just have fun learning the stories!!

God - Yellow

Any reference to God

Who - Orange

Main character(s) Who is the story about?

What - Pink

What are they doing? What happened?

When - Blue

When did it take place?

Where - Green

Where are they? Where did they go? Where did it take place?

Why - Red Underline

Why did it happen?

How - Purple

How did it happen?

Scripture Journal Tips

You can pick any scripture and go in any order.

Don't forget to check it off after you have written it down.

Very Important!

Write down only what is in your Bible.

Only trust what is written in the Bible.

Here are the most common versions:
ICB, KJV, NKJV, NIV, NLT, NASB

To help you find the scripture in your Bible here is an example:

Proverbs 17:25

A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.

“Proverbs” is the book of the Bible
“17” is the chapter in the book
“25” is the verse in the chapter

So first you have to find the *book*, then the *chapter*, then the *verse*.

Old Testament

Law

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

History

6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Ruth
9. 1 Samuel
10. 2 Samuel
11. 1 Kings
12. 2 Kings
13. 1 Chronicles
14. 2 Chronicles
15. Ezra
16. Nehemiah
17. Esther

Poetry/Wisdom

18. Job
19. Psalms
20. Proverbs
21. Ecclesiastes
22. Song of Songs

Major Prophets

23. Isaiah
24. Jeremiah
25. Lamentations
26. Ezekiel
27. Daniel

Minor Prophets

28. Hosea
29. Joel
30. Amos
31. Obadiah
32. Jonah
33. Micah
34. Nahum
35. Habakkuk
36. Zephaniah
37. Haggai
38. Zechariah
39. Malachi

New Testament

Gospels

40. Matthew
41. Mark
42. Luke
43. John

History

44. Acts

Paul's Letters to Churches

45. Romans
46. 1 Corinthians
47. 2 Corinthians
48. Galatians
49. Ephesians
50. Philippians
51. Colossians
52. 1 Thessalonians
53. 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Letters to Friends

54. 1 Timothy
55. 2 Timothy
56. Titus
57. Philemon

General Letters

58. Hebrews
59. James
60. 1 Peter
61. 2 Peter
62. 1 John
63. 2 John
64. 3 John
65. Jude
66. Revelation

Scripture Journal

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Inspirational Bible Verses For And About Children

Exodus 20:12

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, 18

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up....Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers,

Deuteronomy 12:28

Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 27:16

Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother.

Leviticus 19:3

Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God..

Psalms 103:17

But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD'S love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children--

Psalms 127:3-5

Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

Proverbs 1:8,10

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.

Proverbs 4:1

Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.

Proverbs 6:20

My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

Proverbs 8:32-33

Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it.

Proverbs 10:1

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.

Proverbs 13:1

A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 15:5

A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.

Proverbs 15:20

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother.

Proverbs 17:25

A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.

Proverbs 20:11

Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.

Proverbs 25:22

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

Proverbs 23:15-16

My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

Proverbs 23:24-26

The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice! My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways,

Proverbs 28:7

He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.

Isaiah 44:3

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Isaiah 54:13

All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace.

Matthew 18:5

And Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Matthew 19:14

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:14-16

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Acts 2:38-39

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Colossians 3:20

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

1 Timothy 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

Bible Quotes Promising God's Protection In Times Of Danger

Job 5:20-21

In famine he will ransom you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes.

2 Samuel 22:2-4

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn [a] of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior from violent men you save me. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies."

Psalm 9:9

The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Psalm 12:5

"Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them."

Psalm 18:1-3

I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

Psalm 27:1-6

The LORD is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid? When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident. One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock. Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.

Psalm 32:10

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Psalm 34:7

The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Psalm 37:27-28

Turn from evil and do good; then you will dwell in the land forever. For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever

Psalm 41:1-3

Blessed is he who has regard for the weak; the LORD delivers him in times of trouble. The LORD will protect him and preserve his life; he will bless him in the land and not surrender him to the desire of his foes. The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Psalm 91

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you make the Most High your dwelling even the LORD, who is my refuge-then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Psalm 116:5-7

The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD protects the simple hearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.

Psalm 121:5-8

The LORD watches over you the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Psalm 125:2

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore.

Psalm 138:7

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

Psalm 144:2

He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

Proverbs 3:6 (KJV)

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path

Proverbs 2:7-21

He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fairevery good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. [a] For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life. Thus you will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it.

Proverbs 14:26

He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.

Isaiah 25:4

You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall

Isaiah 43:1-2

But now, this is what the LORD says he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Isaiah 58:11

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Nahum 1:7

The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him

John 17:10-12

All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name the name you gave me so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

3 The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

God's Guidance and His Promises to Bless Those Who Seek His Face

1 Chronicles 16:11

Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face continually.

Psalm 25:9

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Psalm 25:12

Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.

Psalm 31:3

Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

Psalm 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

Psalm 37:4,7

Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass ... Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him

Psalm 37:23

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

Psalm 48:14

For this is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death.

Psalm 73:24

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path

Proverbs 1:33

But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.

Proverbs 2:6-9

For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course.

Proverbs 3:5

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:6

in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 6:22

When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you.

Proverbs 11:3

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

Proverbs 11:14

Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory.

Proverbs 12:26

A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 15:22

Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.

Proverbs 16:9

A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

Proverbs 24:6

For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.

Isaiah 30:21

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left'

Isaiah 50:4

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning he awakens, he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.

Isaiah 48:17

Thus says the Lord, Your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go

Isaiah 58:11

The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Jeremiah 10:23

O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Matthew 6:33

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Luke 11:9-10

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 14:26

The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 16:13

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Romans 14:5

One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

1 Corinthians. 10:13

...God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Philippians 2:13

It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach.

Bible Quotations To Challenge You To Remain Honest and Full of Integrity.

Genesis 18:19

For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.

Exodus 18:21

But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—

Exodus. 20:16

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Exodus 23:1

Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness.

Exodus 23:7

Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.

Deuteronomy 16:19-20

Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 25:15-16

You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.

Leviticus 19:11

Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.

Leviticus 19:35

Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity.

Leviticus 25:14

If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other.

Job 27:4

My lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit.

Psalms 15

LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

Psalms 24:3-5

Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior.

Psalms 51:6

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Proverbs 4:23-27

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Proverbs 10:9

The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.

Proverbs 6:12-15

A scoundrel and villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart — he always stirs up dissension. Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.

Proverbs 6:16-20

There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

Proverbs 11:1,3

The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight. The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

Proverbs 12:17

A truthful witness gives honest testimony, but a false witness tells lies.

Proverbs 12:22

The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.

Proverbs 13:5

The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace.

Proverbs 14:5

A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.

Proverbs 16:8

Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.

Proverbs 19:1

Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.

Proverbs 19:5

A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.

Proverbs 21:3

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Proverbs 21:15

When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

Proverbs 25:18

Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor.

Isaiah 33:15-16

He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil—this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.

Isaiah 56:1

This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed."

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Zechariah 7:9

This is what the LORD Almighty says: Luke "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another."

Luke 3:12-13

Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"

"Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.

Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

Bible Quotations To Challenge You To Remain Honest and Full of Integrity.(continued)

Luke 16:10

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

Acts 24:16

I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

Romans 9:1

I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit

Romans 12:17

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

1 Corinthians 13:6

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 8:21

For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

2 Corinthians 7:2

Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one.

Ephesians 4:14-16

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Phillipians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

Colossians 3:9-10

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.

1 Timothy 3:8-9

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

Titus 1:7

Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Hebrews 13:17-18

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

2 Peter 2:1-3

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

1 Peter 3:10-12

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

1 Peter 3:16

Keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

1 John 1:8-10

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2:20-21

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth.

Revelation 21:23-27

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The Problems of Pride and The Freedom and Rewards of Humility

Job 40:12

Look at every proud man and humble him, crush the wicked where they stand.

Psalms 37:11

But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace

Psalms 119:21

You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed and who stray from your commands.

Psalms 131:1

My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.

Psalms 138:6

Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.

Psalms 147:6

The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.

Psalms 149:4

For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

Proverbs 3:34

He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.

Proverbs 8:13

To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

Proverbs 10:8

The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

Proverbs 11:2

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

Proverbs 15:31;33

He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 16:18-19

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.

Proverbs 18:12

Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 21:4

Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin!

Proverbs 22:4

Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.

Proverbs 25:9

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Proverbs 26:12

Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him..

Proverbs 27:2

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.

☐ Proverbs 28:25-26

A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper. He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

☐ Proverbs 29:23

A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

☐ Proverbs 30:32

If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth!

☐ Isaiah 5:21

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

☐ Isaiah 57:15

For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

☐ Isaiah 66:2

Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

☐ Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

☐ Matthew 18:3-4

And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

☐ Matthew 23:12

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

☐ Luke 1:52

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

☐ Luke 14:7-11

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

☐ Luke 16:15

He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

☐ Luke 18:9-14

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about[a] himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'" I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

☐ Luke 22:24-27

Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

☐ Mark 9:35

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

☐ John 5:44

How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God

☐ Romans 12:3

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

☐ Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

☐ 1 Corinthians 1:28

He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are

☐ 1 Corinthians 3:18

Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise.

☐ 1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

☐ 2 Corinthians 10:17-18

Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

☐ 2 Corinthians 11:30

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

☐ 2 Corinthians 12:6-10

Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

☐ Galatians 5:25-26

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

☐ Galatians 6:14

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

☐ Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

☐ Phillipians 2:1-11

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

☐ Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

☐ James 4:6

But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

☐ 1 Peter 5:2-6

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

What Jesus Accomplished on the Cross And Why He Had to Die For Us

Isaiah 53 1-12

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 men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Matthew 16:21

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Matthew 20:28

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Romans 1:4-5

And Jesus Christ our Lord was shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit. Through Christ, God has given us the privilege and authority to tell Gentiles everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

Romans 3:25-28

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus

Romans 5:6-10

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Romans 6:3-11

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. . Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:3

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

1 Corinthians 15:3

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

☐ 2 Corinthians 5:14,21

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.... God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

☐ Galatians 1:3-4

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

☐ Galatians 3:10-14

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

☐ Ephesians 5:1-2

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

☐ Ephesians 2:13-16

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

☐ 1 Thessalonians 5:10

He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

☐ Philippians 3:10-12

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

☐ Hebrews 2:9

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

☐ Hebrews 2:14-15

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

☐ Colossians 1:20-22

And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

☐ 1 Peter 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

☐ 1 Peter 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

☐ 1 Peter 3:18

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

☐ 1 John 2:2

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

☐ 1 John 3:8

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

☐ 1 John 4:9-10

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

The Promise of Hope and The Importance of Finding Hope In Christ

Psalms 9:18

But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.

Psalms 31:24

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

Psalms 33:18

But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

Psalms 39:7

"But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

Psalms 43:5

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalms 71:5

For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.

Psalms 119:74

May those who fear you rejoice when they see me, for I have put my hope in your word.

Psalms 119:130:7

O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

Proverbs 10:28

The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

Proverbs 13:12

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 14:32

When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge.

Proverbs 23:18

There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

Proverbs 24:14

Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

Jeremiah 17:7

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.

Acts 23:6

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead."

Romans 4:18

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[a]have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 15:4

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

2 Corinthians 3:10-12

For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

Ephesians 1:18

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

Ephesians 4:1-5

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism

Colossians 1:3-5

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel

Colossians 1:26-27

the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Titus 3:3-7

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Hebrews 3:6

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Hebrews 6:10-11

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

1 Peter 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:21

Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 John 3:3

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, [a]we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Courage - In times of Stress or Crisis

Commands to be Courageous

Deuteronomy 20:1-4

When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. 2 When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. 3 He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. 4 For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Deuteronomy 31:23

The LORD gave this command to Joshua son of Nun: "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you."

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 10:25

Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight."

1 Chronicles 22:13

Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

1 Chronicles 28:20

David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished.

Psalm 27:14

Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

Isaiah 43:1

But now, this is what the LORD says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

1 Peter 3:14

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear ; do not be frightened."

Take Courage - Ask for it! Take it!

☐ 2 Chronicles 15:8

When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded the prophet, he took courage. He removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of the LORD's temple.

☐ Ezra 7:28

and who has extended his good favour to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

☐ Ezra 10:4

Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it.

☐ Mark 6:51

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,

The Effects Your Courage Will Have On Others

☐ Acts 4:13

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

The Rewards of Having Courage

☐ Hebrews 3:6

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

☐ Isaiah 35:4

... say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."

☐ Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Bible Stories

God - Yellow

Any reference to God

Who - Orange

Main character(s) Who is the story about?

What - Pink

What are they doing? What happened?

When - Blue

When did it take place?

Where - Green

Where are they? Where did they go? Where did it take place?

Why - Red Underline

Why did it happen?

How - Purple

How did it happen?

Bible Story Tips

It may be helpful to read the whole story first.

Stick to the main points of the story.

If there are lots of things going on in the story...
then start with the most important.

You can also use the Table of Contents
at the front of your Bible.

If you have questions about the story...
ask someone to help you look up the answer in your Bible.

Old Testament

Law

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

History

6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Ruth
9. 1 Samuel
10. 2 Samuel
11. 1 Kings
12. 2 Kings
13. 1 Chronicles
14. 2 Chronicles
15. Ezra
16. Nehemiah
17. Esther

Poetry/Wisdom

18. Job
19. Psalms
20. Proverbs
21. Ecclesiastes
22. Song of Songs

Major Prophets

23. Isaiah
24. Jeremiah
25. Lamentations
26. Ezekiel
27. Daniel

Minor Prophets

28. Hosea
29. Joel
30. Amos
31. Obadiah
32. Jonah
33. Micah
34. Nahum
35. Habakkuk
36. Zephaniah
37. Haggai
38. Zechariah
39. Malachi

New Testament

Gospels

40. Matthew
41. Mark
42. Luke
43. John

History

44. Acts

Paul's Letters to Churches

45. Romans
46. 1 Corinthians
47. 2 Corinthians
48. Galatians
49. Ephesians
50. Philippians
51. Colossians
52. 1 Thessalonians
53. 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Letters to Friends

54. 1 Timothy
55. 2 Timothy
56. Titus
57. Philemon

General Letters

58. Hebrews
59. James
60. 1 Peter
61. 2 Peter
62. 1 John
63. 2 John
64. 3 John
65. Jude
66. Revelation

The Creation

Long ago, before the earth and all things in it, there was only God.

On day one, God said, "Let there be light." God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.

On day two, God made the sky.

On day three, God separated the land from the waters and created flowers, trees, and grass..

On day four, God made the sun, moon, and stars.

On day five, the birds and fish were created.

On day six, God made animals and then He made people to be like Him. He named the man Adam, and Adam named his wife, Eve.

God rested on the seventh day. He saw everything He had made and said that it was good.

God made a garden home for the man and woman. It was called the Garden of Eden. He told them they could eat fruit from all the trees in the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The serpent lied to Eve and she ate of the fruit. She gave some to Adam and he also ate of it. They had not been obedient and they had to leave their beautiful home. After that, they had to work hard and had many troubles.

It is always best to listen to God and do as He says.

The story of the Creation can be found in Genesis, chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Hebrews 11:3

Noah

Noah was a good man who obeyed God. Everyone else in the world had become bad.

God told Noah that He was going to send a flood to destroy all living things.

He told Noah to build a big boat (known as Noah's ark).

God sent two of each kind of bird and animal to Noah to load in the ark. He sent more than two of some of the animals. Noah also loaded his three sons, their wives, and his own wife. It began to rain. God closed the door.

It rained for 40 days and 40 nights. Everything on earth was under water. Everyone on earth died, but Noah and his family were safe and dry.

When the rain stopped and the land dried, God sent a rainbow as a sign of the promise that He would never again destroy the earth with water.

The story about Noah and the flood can be found in the Bible in Genesis chapters 6,7,and 8, and chapter 9, verses 1-17.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:8-9

Abraham

One day God told Abram to move to a new land. He took his wife Sarai and also his nephew Lot and went to the land of Canaan.

Abram and Lot were both rich and had many animals. They decided to separate their cattle because the men who were caring for them were fighting. Abram let Lot have first choice, and Lot chose the best land. Abram took whatever was left.

God changed Abram's name to Abraham and his wife's name to Sarah. God promised to bless Abraham and give him a big family.

One day three men came to see Abraham and promised him that he and Sarah would soon have a son, even though he was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old.

Isaac was born just as they had promised. One day God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. God did not want Isaac to die, but he was testing Abraham. An angel saved the life of Isaac.

The story of Abraham can be found in the Bible in Genesis, chapters 13, 18, 21 and 22

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;
I will make your name great and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Genesis 12: 2-3

Jacob

Jacob and Esau were twins, but Esau was born first. As the first to be born, he would get a bigger share of their father's wealth. Jacob worked near the family tents, but Esau was a hunter. Jacob had smooth skin, but Esau had a lot of hair on his body.

One day Jacob tricked Esau into giving him the birthright, or the right to Isaac's wealth. Esau was very hungry and Jacob would not give him any of the stew he was cooking until he agreed to sell the birthright to him.

Isaac wanted to give Esau a blessing and asked Esau to go hunting and prepare some food for him. The boys' mother heard the plan and prepared the food for Jacob to take to his father Isaac. She put hairy goat skins on /Jacob's hands and neck and had him to dress in some of Esau's clothes in order to trick their father. It worked. Jacob lied to his father and got the blessing that was intended for Esau.

Esau was very angry when he got back from hunting and Jacob had to run away, or be killed. When night came, he took a stone and used it for a pillow.

Jacob had a dream. He saw a ladder with angels going up and down the ladder.

God was standing at the top of the ladder. He promised to protect Jacob, give him a huge family, and give his family all the land where Jacob was resting. When Jacob woke up, he worshiped God. He promised if God would be with him, he would give God one-tenth.

Later Jacob married and had twelve sons. His name was changed to Israel, and his family became known as the twelve tribes of Israel.

*The story of Jacob and Esau can be found in the Bible
in Genesis chapters 25 and 27.*

And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

Genesis 35:10

Joseph

Jacob had 12 sons and Joseph was his favorite. Jacob gave Joseph a very special coat to show how much he loved him. This made Joseph's brothers jealous.

One day Jacob sent Joseph to the field to check on his brothers. They were still angry about his beautiful coat, so they threw Joseph into an empty well. Then they dipped his special coat in goat's blood and took it to their father, Jacob. He thought Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. His sons did not tell him they had sold Joseph to some traders going to Egypt.

When Joseph was in Egypt, the king (called Pharaoh) had two dreams. First he dreamed about seven fat cows and seven skinny cows that came up out of the river. The skinny cows ate the fat cows, but they were no bigger than before.

Then he dreamed about seven full heads of grain on one stalk and seven thin, scrawny heads of grain. The thin heads ate the full heads. No one could explain the king's dream, but God helped Joseph to understand the meaning of the dreams.

Joseph told the king, "There will be seven years of good crops. Then there will be seven years of bad crops and hunger." Joseph told Pharaoh that he should choose a wise person to oversee the people and save food for the years of famine, or bad years when there would be no rain.

Pharaoh chose the wisest man he knew. He gave the job to Joseph!

*The story of Joseph can be found in the
book of Genesis, chapters 37, 39, 40 and 41.*

The Lord was with Joseph and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

Genesis 39:23

Joseph and His Brothers

Joseph became a ruler in Egypt. Pharaoh was the only person in the land who had more power. Joseph was given a wife and they had two sons.

There were good crops for 7 years and Joseph had the people to store the grain. Then it quit raining and no crops would grow. The famine was all over the earth, and Egypt was the only country with food.

Jacob sent 10 of his sons to Egypt to buy grain for food. The brothers bowed down before Joseph. He knew who *they* were, but they didn't recognize *him*. He gave them food, kept one of the brothers in prison, and told them that when they came again, they would have to bring their youngest brother. (Benjamin was Joseph's own brother.)

Jacob was afraid to send Benjamin, but Benjamin went with the brothers when they returned to Egypt to buy grain a second time. This time Joseph told them who he really was. They were afraid because of the way they had treated him, but Joseph was forgiving. He told them to go and get their father and move him and their families to Egypt because the famine would not be over for a long time.

Jacob was so happy when they told him about Joseph. Jacob and all the family moved to Egypt and he was able to see his son again.

The famine lasted for 7 years. The Egyptians spent all their money for grain. Then they traded their livestock for food, and finally their land. They all became servants to Pharaoh, but Joseph's family lived in the land of Goshen and had plenty of food.

The story of Joseph and his brothers can be found in the book of Genesis chapters 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47.

Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32

Moses

After Joseph died, an evil king ruled Egypt. He was afraid of Joseph's huge family. He made slaves of the people and made them work very hard building cities and working in the fields.

He was afraid the boys would become soldiers and fight against him. He ordered that all the boy babies be killed.

When Moses was born, his mother hid him for 3 months. Then she made a basket of grasses and tar to make a small boat and put him in the Nile River. Pharaoh's daughter found him. His sister ran to get their mother to be a nurse for the child. The daughter of Pharaoh adopted him.

When he was grown, he had to leave Egypt and went to the land of Midian. One day while caring for sheep, he saw a strange sight. A bush was on fire, but it didn't burn up. God spoke to him from the burning bush and told him to go to Egypt and free the people of Israel from slavery. Moses was afraid and didn't want to go, but he went. His brother Aaron went with him.

Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh. They told him that God wanted the children of Israel to leave Egypt, but Pharaoh said he didn't know the Lord and would not let the people leave.

God had given Moses and Aaron the power to work miracles. Aaron threw his rod down and it became a snake. Pharaoh's magicians threw their rods down and *they* became snakes, but Aaron's snake ate their snakes. God was showing his power.

Ten plagues came upon the Egyptians because Pharaoh would not let the people leave. A plague is something really bad that happens and causes a lot of suffering and death. Finally after the tenth plague, when his son died, Pharaoh let them go.

*The story of Moses can be found in the
Old Testament in the book of Exodus chapters 2 -12.*

God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM.."

Exodus 3:14

The Trip - Moses Leads the Israelites Out of Egypt

As God directed Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, He guided them by a cloud during the day and by a pillar of fire at night.

The pharaoh changed his mind about letting his slaves go, so he sent an army to capture the Israelites. He caught up with them at the Red Sea shore. But God pushed back the waters and made a path on dry land. The Israelites passed through the walls of water to the other side, but when the Egyptians tried to come through, God caused the walls of sea water to fall on them. The Egyptians drowned, but God's people were saved.

As the Israelites traveled through the desert, they began to complain about their food. So God sent food from heaven. In the morning he sent sweet flakes of bread called "manna". Each day the people gathered only enough food for that one day. God sent new food every day. When they asked for meat, quail covered their camp and they were able to catch the birds for food.

The Israelites once camped at a place where there was no water. They complained to Moses. The people and the cattle were very thirsty. Moses asked God what to do, and God told him to take his walking stick and hit the rock. When Moses did this, lots of cool water poured from the rock! The people had all they wanted.

The story of the Israelites leaving Egypt can be found in the Old Testament in the book of Exodus, chapters 14-16.

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world..

Philippians 2:14

Moses and Ten Commandments

God gave Moses the Ten Laws (or Commandments) on Mt. Sinai.

While Moses was gone to the mountain, Aaron gathered the people's gold and made an idol shaped like a calf. When Moses saw what they had done, he crushed the golden calf into powder and poured it into the water. Moses made the people drink the water.

Exodus 20: 1-17

The Ten Commandments (New International Version)

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourselves an idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.

*The account of the giving of the Ten Commandments
can be found in the book of Exodus, chapters 19 and 20.*

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Matthew 22:37-39

The Twelve Spies

God told Moses to send men to spy out the land of Canaan. He told him to send a man from each tribe. Twelve men were sent. They were to find out about the land and the people in the land. Moses said to find out if the people were strong or weak. Did they live in cities or in camps?

He wanted to know what the fruit of the land was like, and if they had forests or not. He asked them to bring back some of the fruit that was ripe.

The men went into the land and found that it really was a good land. The grapes were so big that it took two men to carry a cluster of them on a pole between them. But the people there were very big and tall, and the spies were afraid of them. They were gone for 40 days.

When they returned to their own camp, they showed Moses the good fruit they had found in the land. Ten of the men began to tell about the giants and how fearful they were of them.

They told of large cities with high walls around them. "We cannot go into this land," they said. "We were just like grasshoppers in our own sight, and also in the sight of the people there."

Two men; Caleb and Joshua said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are able to overcome it."

The Israelites didn't want to go and take Canaan as God had wanted. God punished them by making them wander in the desert for 40 years. They had to wander around one year for every day the spies had been gone.

Of the twelve men, only Joshua and Caleb got to go into Canaan.

This story of the Twelve Spies can be found in the Bible in the book of Numbers, chapters 13 and 14.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

Jericho

Joshua sent two men to spy on Jericho. They stayed at Rahab's house. The king found out about the spies and sent soldiers to find them. Rahab hid the spies on her roof and helped them to escape by hanging a scarlet (red) rope from her window. They climbed down the rope and returned to Joshua. They promised her that she and her family would be safe when the city was attacked.

The country to which the Israelites had come was called Canaan. It was also called the Promised Land because God had promised it years before to their fathers and grandfathers.

After they entered the land of Canaan, they began to eat the fruit and grain that was growing there. The manna from heaven stopped coming because now there was food to eat from the land. They were camped near the city of Jericho. Jericho had a great wall around it and big, heavy gates. The people of Jericho had heard about the Israelites and were very afraid of them.

God gave Joshua a plan for the capture of the city. On six days the soldiers were to March around the city one time each day. Some priests were to march with them, and seven priests were to blow on trumpets made of rams' horns. No one was to speak a word. They followed the plan as God had told them.

On the seventh day at God's command, they marched around the city seven times. The priests blew on the trumpets and the people gave a great shout. The walls fell down flat and they were able to capture the city.

They found the red rope that Rahab had hung from her window, and they saved Rahab and her family. Later Rahab married a man of Israel. They had a son and in later generations, a child was born who would become a king of Israel. His name was David and he was the great-great-grandson of Rahab. Many years after that, another child was born in the same family. His name was ... Jesus.

The story of the fall of Jericho can be found in the Bible in the book of Joshua 5:13-15 and chapter 6.

When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.

Joshua 6:20

The Judges

The children of Israel had settled in the land of Canaan. They began to worship idols that the people of Canaan served. Because of their disobedience, God allowed the Midianites to treat them badly. God sent an angel to a man named Gideon. The angel told Gideon that God had chosen him to deliver the Israelites. Gideon was not sure this was so, and asked God for signs or miracles to prove that God was really with him.

Gideon started out with an army of 32,000 men. God said to tell all who were afraid to go home. 22,000 left! The next test was to have these men get a drink of water. Some of them got down on their knees and put their faces in the water. These were rejected. Some took water in their hands and lapped it out of their hands as a dog laps water. These were chosen. There were 300 of them. What a small army! God did not want them to think they had won the battle all by themselves. Gideon and his small army surrounded the Midianite army which was down in a valley. Each man had a trumpet in his right hand and a pitcher with a lighted torch in his left hand. When Gideon gave the signal, each man blew on the trumpet, broke the pitcher to let the torch shine, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

The Midianites thought they were surrounded by a huge army and became so confused that they killed one another. Gideon, with God's help, had won the battle with 300 men. Years later, the Israelites again needed to be delivered from their enemies. An angel of God appeared to the wife of a good man named Manoah and told her that she would have a son. The son was to never drink any wine, nor was he to have his hair cut. This was called the Nazarite vow. So Samson observed the vow and the Spirit of God came upon him. He was very strong. He was so strong that once he fought a battle with only the jawbone of a donkey.

He killed a lion with his bare hands, and on one occasion, he carried the big heavy gates of a city to the top of a hill. But Samson loved a woman named Delilah. His enemies used Delilah to defeat him. They told her if she could find out the reason for his strength, they would give her a lot of silver. He told her three things which were not true. He first told her that he would be weak if they tied him up with new bowstrings, but he broke them. Then he said he would be weak if they tied him with new ropes. But this was not true either. Then he told her to weave his long hair in the loom where they wove fabric, but this did not make him weak.

Finally, he told her that the secret of his strength was because of his vow and his long hair. She made him go to sleep and the Philistines came and shaved off the seven locks of his long hair. He was so weak when he awoke, he could not defend himself. They took him prisoner, blinded him, and caused him to work like a slave. Later when his hair had grown back, he prayed to God for strength again, and was able to push down the building where the Philistines had brought him in to make fun of him. He died with the Philistines when the building collapsed.

These stories of the Judges of Israel can be found in the book of Judges, chapters 6 and 7, and also in chapters 13-16.

The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him.

Judges 13:24

Ruth

During the time when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. A man named Elimelech took his wife Naomi and his two sons to the country of Moab because there was no food in that land.

Elimelech died, and Naomi was left as a widow with two sons. The sons married. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other married Ruth. After about ten years, the two sons died also. Naomi decided to go back to her home country, to the town of Bethlehem.

Both of her daughters-in-law wanted to go with her, but she told them that they should stay in the land of Moab. Ruth insisted on going with her mother-in-law. The two of them went to Bethlehem. Naomi's friends were so glad to see her again!

In those days, according to God's command, when a farmer harvested his field, he had to leave the grain that fell for the poor people to pick up. This gathering of the left-over grain was called "gleaning". Ruth went to "glean" in the field of a man named Boaz. He was a relative of Naomi's family. Ruth worked hard gathering grain to feed herself and Naomi. Boaz noticed how hard she was working and told her to stay in his field to glean. He invited her to eat with him and he said he would protect her from harm.

Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, but there was another relative who had first choice of taking care of Ruth. The two men had a meeting. The other man decided that he couldn't take care of Ruth, so he took off his sandal, as the custom was, to seal an agreement. He told Boaz to buy the land and marry Ruth.

They were married and later had a son named Obed. Obed, when he was grown, had a son named Jesse. Jesse's son was David. The great-grandson of Ruth became king of Israel, King David!

*This story about Ruth and Naomi can be found
in the book of Ruth chapters 1-4.*

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you, or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God.

Ruth 1:16

David and Goliath

Goliath was a nine-foot-tall soldier from Gath. He bragged that he could beat any Israelite soldier who would fight him. But all the Israelite soldiers were afraid to fight him.

David was a young shepherd boy who believed in God. He said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." David took his sling and five smooth stones from the brook. Then he went to fight Goliath.

King Saul wanted to put his heavy armor and helmet on David. He also tried to give David a big sword, but David said he could not wear them. He knew that his strength and protection came from God.

Goliath cursed the boy coming out to fight with him. David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied." David threw a stone with his sling at Goliath. It hit Goliath in the forehead and the giant fell face down. Then he took the giant's own sword and killed him. David believed in God, and God helped him win over the giant.

*The story of David and Goliath can be found
in the book of First Samuel chapter 17.*

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."

First Samuel 17:45

David and Jonathan

Jonathan, the King's son, was kind. He was a good friend to David. They make a promise to each other that whatever happened, they would always be friends.

David wanted to leave the palace. He was afraid King Saul would kill him. But Jonathan did not want him to go. "My father will not hurt you," he said. "He always tells me what he wants to do."

But David was still afraid. He knew that he was in real danger. King Saul began to hate David. He told Jonathan to kill him. But Jonathan loved David and so he made a plan.

"In a field not far from here, there is a great stone," said Jonathan. "Go and hide behind it. In three days, I will come with my servant and shoot three arrows by its side. If I say to my servant, 'Go and find the arrows, they are on this side of you, bring them here,' then you will know that it is safe and there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, 'Look the arrows are *beyond* you,' then you must run away for there is great danger."

So David hid in the field. Jonathan went to King Saul. He begged him not to kill David. King Saul did not listen. He became very angry. He threw his sword at Jonathan, but it missed him. Jonathan ran from the palace, calling his servant. He went to the field near the great stone. Soon his arrows flew through the air.

"Find the arrows," called Jonathan. "They are beyond you!"

David heard and he was very sad. The servant found the arrows. Jonathan sent him home. Then David came out of his hiding place. He put his arms around Jonathan.

Jonathan told David of his father's plans to kill him and urged him to go far away where he would be safe. He asked David to remember that they would always be friends. David ran away. He found a cave near the desert, where he lived for a long time.

*The story of the friendship of David and Jonathan
can be found in First Samuel chapter 20.*

Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord."

First Samuel 20:42

Solomon

After King David died, his son Solomon became king over Israel. God appeared to Solomon in a dream one night and said, "Ask! What would you like for me to give you?"

Now Solomon could have asked for riches, long life, or victory over his enemies, but he did not ask for any of these things. He said, "Give me an understanding heart to rule Your people, that I may know the difference between good and evil. Help me to judge these great people of Yours."

God did give him the wisdom he asked for, and gave him the other things also: riches, long life, and victory over his enemies.

Solomon knew about many, things! He could talk about trees and animals, birds and fish. He knew things that other people didn't know, and people came from all over the world to hear him speak. Once a queen came from Sheba to hear him. She was amazed at what she saw and heard.

One day two women brought a baby to Solomon. Each woman said the baby was her child. Solomon said, "Cut the baby in half and give half of the baby to each woman." (Of course, he didn't really intend to kill the baby. It was just a test.) "NO!" screamed the real mother, "Give her the baby. Do not kill him." Then Solomon knew who the real mother was because of the way she loved the baby. He gave the baby to its real mother.

God allowed Solomon to build a beautiful temple in which people could worship God. Solomon made a big mistake in marrying women from the countries around him. These wives worshiped idols and Solomon also began to worship the false gods. He was not loyal to God as his father David had been.

The story of Solomon can be found in the Bible in First Kings chapters 3 and 4.

I will do what you have asked, I will give you a wise and discerning heart... Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for - both riches and honor.

First Kings 3: 12-13

Elijah

Ahab was a bad king of Israel. Elijah was one of God's prophets.

One day Elijah went to see King Ahab. Elijah told King Ahab that the Lord God of Israel had said that no rain or dew would fall the next few years unless Elijah commanded it. God knew that Ahab would be mad at Elijah, so God hid Elijah near the Jordan River. He sent ravens with food to feed Elijah every day.

Just as Elijah had said, it didn't rain in Israel for three years.

Finally God told Elijah, "Go and meet King Ahab. I will soon send rain." So Elijah told Ahab to bring the 450 prophets of the false god Baal to Mount Carmel for a contest. The prophets of Baal built an altar and put a dead bull on it. They called on Baal to set the offering on fire. But nothing happened.

Then Elijah built an altar and put an offering of a dead bull on it. He poured 12 huge jars of water on his sacrifice. Elijah asked God to set it on fire. God sent fire from heaven to burn up the bull, the altar, and even the stones! Then all the people worshiped God.

*The story of Elijah can be found
in First Kings chapters 17 and 18.*

Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

First Kings 17:24

Naaman

Naaman was a great soldier, but he had a skin disease called leprosy.

A young girl from Israel who was a slave, served Naaman's wife. She told about a prophet who could cure his leprosy.

Naaman's king sent a letter to the king of Israel asking *him* to cure Naaman. The king of Israel was upset because he knew he had no such power.

Elisha, a man of God, asked to see Naaman. He told Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman was angry because he did not expect to be cured this way. He thought Elisha would wave his hand over him and cure him. He also thought the rivers in his country would be better than the Jordan River. However, when he obeyed what had been told him, his leprosy was gone.

He was so happy! He said, "Now I know the God of Israel is the only God."

*The story of Naaman can be found
in the Old Testament in Second Kings chapter 5.*

So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Second Kings 5:14

Three Brave Boys

King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge gold idol. It was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. The king told the people, "When you hear the music play, everyone must bow down to the idol. If you don't bow down, you will be thrown into a blazing furnace."

The people of Israel had been taken captive and some of them were now living in the land of Babylon. Among them were three young men who had become leaders in the land of Babylon. They were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These three young men believed in and worshiped the true God, and they would not bow down to an idol. They said, "Our God will deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and even if He doesn't deliver us, O king, we will not serve your gods, nor will we worship the golden image which you have set up." What bravery!

The king had the furnace heated 7 times hotter than usual. He had the men tied up and thrown into the furnace. The fire was so hot, it killed the men who threw them in. When the king looked into the fire, he was amazed. The men were untied, walking around, and there was a fourth person in the fire with them? He said, "Didn't we throw three men in the fire? I see four men loose, walking around, and they are not hurt." The fourth person looked like a heavenly being . He called their names and ordered them to come out of the fire. When they came out, they were not hurt at all. Their hair had not been burned, and they didn't even smell like smoke.

The king made a law that everyone should honor the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego because no other God could deliver like he could.

*This story of the Three Hebrew Boys can be found
in the book of Daniel chapter 3.*

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. "

Daniel 3:28

Daniel

King Belshazzar made a great feast for 1,000 people. He commanded that some special cups be brought in for them to drink from. These cups had been stolen from the temple of God in Jerusalem by the king's father. It was not right for them to be drinking from them and praising idols while they drank. God was very displeased with him.

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand began to write on the wall. The king became very frightened and his legs began to shake. He called for his wise men to tell him the meaning of the words, but they could not. The queen told him that there was a man in the kingdom who had the Spirit of the Holy God. This man would be able to tell him the meaning of the words. That man's name was Daniel.

Daniel *did* tell him what the words meant. He said, "God is not pleased with you because you have not been humble. You have drunk out of the vessels of the temple, and you have praised idols. You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom will be divided and you will be killed." Daniel's words came true that very night.

Darius was the next king, and he liked Daniel very much. There were some bad men in the kingdom who did not like Daniel. They looked for a way to destroy him. They tricked the king into making a law. The law said no one could pray to anyone but Darius for 30 days. Anyone who prayed to God would be thrown into the lions' den. But Daniel still prayed to God. The bad men told the king. So, the king had to put Daniel in the lions' den.

God protected Daniel. The next morning the king found Daniel alive. God had closed the mouths of the lions! Then the happy king and all his people believed in God.

The story of Daniel can be found in the book of Daniel chapter 6.

My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me.

Daniel 6:22

Esther

Esther was a Jewish girl who had been taken captive. After her parents died, she was adopted by a family member, Mordecai who raised her as his own daughter.

King Xerxes was looking for a new queen. Many young women were considered, but after a year of beauty treatments, Esther was chosen to be the new queen.

Haman was the most powerful man in the kingdom besides the king. He was an evil man who hated the Jewish people and plotted to have them killed.

Mordecai persuaded Esther to go to the king and plead for the lives of the Jewish people. She could be killed for going before him when she hadn't been called. But she was brave and went to see the king. She invited him and the evil man, Haman, to a banquet. During the meal, she revealed the plot against the Jews and accused Haman. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, and the Jews were allowed to defend themselves. Mordecai was honored.

Since that time Jews have remembered Esther and celebrated the Feast of Purim.

*You can read this very interesting story of
Esther in the book of Esther chapters 1-10.*

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Proverbs 31:30

Jonah

God told Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh to preach, but Jonah didn't want to go. He tried to run away from God by going in the opposite direction.

He got on a ship. God caused a storm to come. It nearly sank the ship. When the men on the ship discovered that it was Jonah's fault, they threw him overboard into the sea, and the sea became calm.

God had provided a large fish that swallowed Jonah. Jonah prayed to God from inside the fish and God heard him. He was in the fish for three days and three nights. The fish spit him out onto dry land.

God again told him to go and preach to the people of Nineveh, and this time he obeyed. It was a very large city. Jonah told the people that they must repent or they would be destroyed. The people listened and believed. They were sorry for their sins and God forgave them.

Jonah was angry. He didn't really care about the people of the city, but God loved them.

When Jesus was on earth, he talked about Jonah in Matthew 12: 39. We compares Jonah's experience to his being in the grave for three days and three nights.

You can read the story of Jonah in the book of Jonah chapters 1-4.

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God, He said, "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me."

Jonah 2:1-2

The Child Jesus

Mary, who was a young woman gentle and good, lived in the town of Nazareth. She was soon to marry a carpenter named Joseph. She was visited one day by an angel named Gabriel who told her that she would have a son and that she should name him Jesus. He said the Holy Spirit would be with her and the child would be the Son of God.

Mary and Joseph were married. Then one day they had to travel to Bethlehem to pay their taxes. It was a long journey. When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no place for them at the inn. They spent the night in the stable. That night the baby was born. They named him Jesus, just as the angel had said.

An angel appeared to shepherds who were in the nearby fields. A great light shone down on them, and the angel told them, "Do not be afraid. A Savior who is Christ the Lord is born tonight." The shepherds left in search of this child. They found him in the stable.

Wise men from the east followed a star to Jerusalem in search of Jesus. King Herod tried to trick the men, so he could find out where this child was that they were calling "King of the Jews." (He was afraid the child would one day take his throne from him.) The wise men found Jesus in Bethlehem in a house. They worshiped him and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense (incense) and myrrh.

When Jesus was twelve years old, Mary and Joseph took him with them to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. On the way home there was such a crowd, they did not know Jesus wasn't with them. When they went back they found him in the Temple talking to the teachers and the doctors of the law. He told them, "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" He went back to Nazareth and was obedient to them. Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and men.

*These stories of Jesus as a child can be found
in Matthew chapters 1 and 2 and in the book of Luke chapter 2.*

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:10-12

The Miracles of Jesus

Water into Wine *John 2:1-11*

The first miracle that Jesus did was at a wedding feast in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother, Mary, told Jesus that the wedding host was out of wine. Jesus told the servants to fill the water pots with water and then when they dipped it out, there was wine in the jars. Jesus had turned the water into wine.

Calming the Storm *Matthew 8: 23-27*

Jesus and his disciples were out on the lake when a storm suddenly came up. Jesus was asleep in the boat and his friends were afraid. They woke him. He got up and told the storm to stop and it was completely calm; the wind stopped blowing and the water was still. His disciples were amazed! "Even the winds and the waves obey Him," they said.

Healings

Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law who had a dangerous fever. She got up and served them. *Matthew 8:14-15*

There was a man in Jerusalem who had been blind from birth. Jesus put clay on the blind man's eyes and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. When he washed the clay off, he could see. *John 9: 1-41*

Once in Jerusalem, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus asked Jesus for mercy and healing. Jesus told him that his faith had cured him and the man praised God for his sight. *Mark 10: 46-52*

There was a paralyzed man in Capernaum. He couldn't walk, so his friends took him to see Jesus. There was such a crowd that they could not get him into the house where Jesus was. They made a hole in the roof and let their friend down through the roof. Jesus told him that his sins were forgiven and to rise, take up his bed and go home. Some of the people doubted Jesus at first, but they were then amazed as the man stood up straight and tall. *Luke 5:17-26*

Ten men who had leprosy asked Jesus to help them. Jesus was not afraid of the disease. He told them to go and show themselves to the priests, and as they were going, they were completely cured! Only one of the ten lepers ran back to Jesus and fell down on his knees and thanked him. *Luke 17: 11-19*

And he arose, and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still." And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Mark 4:39

Parables of Jesus

The Parable of the Sower *Matthew 13:1-23*

In this story, Jesus told about the word of God being like seed that a sower (farmer) threw out. It fell on many kinds of soil.

Wayside, along the path - birds came down and ate the seed (the person who hears the message, but does not understand it. The evil one takes it away.)

Rocky ground - quickly dried up (the person who receives the word, but falls away when trouble comes)

Thorny ground - thorn bushes choked the seed (the person who is worried about life and wealth)

Good ground - grew into healthy plants (the person who hears the word and understands it)

"The good soil," said Jesus, " is like people who are honest. When they hear God's word, they remember it, and do what God says."

The Good Samaritan *Luke 10:25-37*

This is a story that Jesus told when a man asked what he must do to have everlasting life. "What is written in the commandments?" Jesus asked. The man answered: "You must 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 you must love your neighbor as yourself.." Then the man wanted to know, "But who is my neighbor?" Jesus then told about the man who was on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho and was robbed and beaten and left half dead by the roadside. First a priest came by, and when he saw the wounded man, he passed by on the other side. Next a Levite came and he, too, looked at the hopeless man and passed by on the other side of the road. Then a Samaritan came along. He took care of the hurt man and then put him on his donkey and took him to an inn to stay. The Samaritan paid for everything. When Jesus finished the parable, he asked, "Which of the three men was a neighbor?" The man answered, "The man who took pity on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

The Lost Son *Luke 15:11-31*

Jesus told the story of the lost son. A rich man had two sons, whom he loved very much. The younger son asked for his inheritance and then left home. The older brother stayed home and helped his father. Before long, the younger son had spent all his money, and his so-called friends left him because he was no longer rich. Then a famine came upon the land. The young son was alone, and he even took a job looking after pigs. Finally, he decided that the servants in his father's house were better off than he was, so he started the long journey back home. His father forgave him and welcomed him home. They had a grand feast and celebration. The father gave him a robe, a ring, and shoes. The older brother was angry, but his father told him to forgive his brother and to rejoice that he had come home. God loves us just as this father loved his son.

It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost and is found.

Luke 15:32

The Teachings of Jesus

Crowds of people came to Jesus to hear him teach. Sometimes he performed miracles and they knew he came from God. He taught them many things.

Jesus' Teachings *Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7.*

Once he taught on a mountainside near the Sea of Galilee. He told people how they should live so that they would be happy and pleasing to God.

He told them to be peacemakers; they would be called the children of God.

He told them to love their enemies, and to do good to people who hated them. They were to pray for people who mistreated them.

He said they were to be like salt, like a city on a hill and like a light that would light the way for others. His followers were to be a good influence on others and try to get other people to do the right thing.

He wanted people to share with others out of love for them.

"Do not judge others", he told them. "And don't worry about things. God will take care of you."

The Importance of Children *Mark 10:13-16*

Jesus loved children. No matter how tired he was, he liked to have the children at his side. One day a group of mothers brought their children to Jesus, to be blessed by him. His disciples thought Jesus was too busy to be bothered by the children, so they were sending the children away. Jesus stopped them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." And he put his hands on them and blessed them.

Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God.

Mark 10:14

Friends of Jesus

The Apostles John 1:35-49 and Acts 1:12-26

Jesus needed some special disciples to help him. They were called apostles. The first called were *Simon Peter* and *Andrew* his brother, who were fishermen. He also called two more brothers who were fishermen. They were *James* and *John*, the sons of a man named *Zebedee*.

Later he called others to follow him; *Philip*, *Bartholomew* (*Nathanael*), and *Matthew* (*Levi*), who was a tax collector. There were also five more chosen.

We learn a song to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me" to help us remember them.

Jesus called them one by one, Peter, Andrew, James and John, Next came Philip, Thomas, too, Matthew and Bartholomew. James, the one they call the Less, Simon, also Thaddaeus, The last apostle Judas made. Jesus was by him betrayed.

After Jesus died, rose again, and went back to the Father, *Matthias* was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Jesus.

Later *Paul* was chosen to be an apostle. He wrote most of the letters in the New Testament.

Mary, Martha and Lazarus Luke 10:38-42

Jesus had some very close friends; two sisters and their brother. Once when he was in their home, Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to his teachings. Martha, her sister, was busy getting the meal ready, and she became upset because she was having to do all the work by herself. She wanted Jesus to tell Mary to help her. Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Luke 10:42

Going to Jerusalem

Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. Jesus told two of his disciples to go into the village on the way and there they would find a young donkey that had never been ridden. They were to bring it to Jesus. If anyone questioned them, they were to say "The Lord needs it and will send it back soon."

Years before the prophet had said, "See your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt".

They brought the donkey to Jesus and put their cloaks (coats) over it and he sat on it. As they rode along, people began to throw their cloaks in the path ahead of them. Some cut branches and placed them in the path. They were making a way for the entrance of their king.

They shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

The next day, he entered the temple in Jerusalem. When he entered the temple area, he saw people buying and selling cattle, sheep and doves for sacrifices. He became very angry and made a whip of cords and made them leave. He turned over the tables of money and drove the animals out of the area.

He said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

The children were again shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David". The temple leaders asked him if he heard what the children were saying. "Yes," he said, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise." Jesus loves to hear the praise of children.

*The story of Jesus going to Jerusalem
can be found in the book of Mark, chapter 11 verses 1-19.*

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

Matthew 21:9

Jesus Teaches About Giving

The Widow's Gift *Mark 12:41-43*

The temple was big and beautiful. Many people came there to worship God. Inside the temple were some big money boxes. People put money in them. The money was for the temple and all that was used in worship to God.

One day Jesus sat down across from the money boxes. He saw many rich people put in lots of money. Then one poor woman, a widow, walked up to the boxes. She put in two small copper coins worth less than a penny.

Jesus looked at his friends. "This poor woman put in more than the rich people did," he said. "Here's why: the rich people still have much money left. But this woman only had two coins. She did not have any more money. The rich people only gave part of what they had. She gave *all* of what she had."

The Sheep and the Goats *Matthew 25:31-46*

Jesus on another occasion told a story about sheep and goats. He said that when he returns, he will separate people as a man would separate his sheep from his goats.

Those pleasing to God are compared to sheep. They are pleasing because they were willing to give to those who were in need. Jesus said they had given food to him when he was hungry, a drink when he was thirsty, and clothing to him when he needed it. They had visited him when he was sick and in prison.

The people didn't remember doing these things for Jesus, but he replied, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Mark 12:43-44

Jesus' Last Days

The Last Supper *Matthew 26:17-30 ; Mark 14: 12-26*

The disciples asked Jesus, "Where do you want us to get ready to eat the Passover meal?" Jesus answered them in a strange way. He said, "Go into the city and you will find a certain man there. Tell him that the Master says that his time is at hand. Tell him that the Master wants to keep the Passover with his disciples at his house. The man will understand."

Peter and John went into the city. As they walked along the street, they saw a man carrying a jar of water. (This was how Jesus said Peter and John would know the man.)

Peter and John followed the man to a house. Then they talked to the owner of the house about a room for the supper. They said that the Master wanted to eat the Passover there. He showed them a large upper room. The room was furnished and they began to get everything ready for the Passover Feast. Then Peter and John waited for Jesus and the other disciples.

As they ate the meal, Jesus told about the things that were about to happen. He blessed the bread and broke it. Then he gave it to them. He said, "Take, eat, this is my body." He gave thanks for the drink in the cup. He said, "This is my blood which is shed for you."

Praying in the Garden *Matthew 26:36-45 ; Luke 22:39-52*

Not long after Jesus and his disciples ate the Passover supper together, one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, betrayed Jesus to the priests and rulers of the Temple. These men had been looking for a chance to arrest him. Jesus knew this would happen. In fact, he had told the disciples that he would be betrayed by one of them.

Jesus had told the disciples that he would leave them, that he would be put to death, and that he was going back to live with the Father. He also had told them the Father would send another helper to them, the Holy Spirit. But the disciples did not fully understand what he was saying.

After Jesus and the disciples left the room where they had eaten the Passover supper, they went to the Mount of Olives and into the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus asked the disciples to wait, and he went farther into the garden to pray. Judas had left earlier by himself. After some time, Jesus came back to the disciples who had gone to sleep. He was very sad and he went to pray three times, but the disciples were too tired to stay awake.

He woke them up, and as they were talking, Judas came up to them. He was with some of the rulers from the Temple. Judas, when he saw Jesus, ran ahead and kissed him. This was the signal to the soldiers to identify Jesus. The soldiers who were there, came to take Jesus. Peter at first wanted to fight, but Jesus told him, "No." Jesus agreed to go with the men.

Jesus' Last Days (cont)

The Trial *Matthew 26: 47-67; Matthew 27:11-26*

The soldiers took Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest. There he had a trial. The priests and rulers agreed that he was guilty of claiming to be God's son. They did not believe that he was. They agreed that he should be put to death.

Under the Roman law, however, the Jewish leaders could not condemn a person to death. So the Jewish rulers took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate could find no reason for putting Jesus to death, but after a long time, he told the Jewish rulers to do what they wanted to do with Jesus.

The soldiers made fun of Jesus. They called him a king, but they didn't believe that he was. They put a crown of thorns on his head and a staff in his hand. They put a scarlet (red) robe on him and spit on him. And they whipped him.

Jesus Dies *Matthew 27:32-65; John 19:1-37*

The soldiers took Jesus away to a hill called Golgotha or Calvary. There they crucified him and put him to death on a wooden cross. But even while he was on the cross, he forgave those who were crucifying him. He said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."

Even while Jesus was on the cross, people came to know he was the Son of God. One of these was a thief who was being crucified on a cross next to Jesus. Another who believed was a Roman soldier who was watching. There was a great earthquake. When the soldier heard the earthquake and saw the things that were happening, he became afraid and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

When Jesus died, the thick curtain in the Temple was torn apart. It ripped from the top to the bottom. This curtain had separated two rooms. In one room only the high priest could go, and in the other room, others could go. When Jesus died, he made it possible for all people to go to God and worship him without anyone else in between. Jesus is now our high priest.

When they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Luke 23:33-34

Alive Again!

A man named Joseph from Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Joseph, a rich man, was a disciple of Jesus. He took the body of Jesus down from the cross. He wrapped it in a linen cloth and put it in his own new tomb, or burying place.

Pilate, the ruler, put guards at the tomb because some men were afraid Jesus' disciples would steal his body from the grave and then say that he had been raised from the dead.

Early Sunday morning some women went to the tomb. They brought some spices that they had prepared to put on the body of Jesus. There was a great earthquake, and an angel came and rolled back the stone from in front of the tomb. Then the angel sat on the big stone. The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid, Jesus is not here. He has risen, as he said he would. Come and see where he lay."

The angel told them to tell this to the disciples. As they were leaving, Jesus met them. He said, "Tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me." They *did* see him and he ate with them.

Two men were going to the village of Emmaus. Jesus started walking along with them and talking to them. Later when they were ready to eat, Jesus gave thanks and broke the bread. Instantly they recognized him. They went to find the Eleven to tell them what had happened.

How happy they were! Jesus was alive again!

The story of the Resurrection can be found in each of the gospels. We looked in the book of Luke, chapter 24.

But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed." "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him."

Mark 16:6

Jesus Leaves Earth

During the 40 days after Jesus' resurrection, (being raised from the dead), he appeared to his disciples from time to time. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God.

Once he told them to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the gift he would send them. That gift would be the Holy Spirit. He would live in them and guide them. He would be a Comforter to them. Jesus wanted them to tell everyone on earth that he had died for them. He told them to teach and to baptize those who believed.

After Jesus said this, he was taken up to heaven right in front of their eyes. A cloud hid him from their sight and two angels, who looked like men dressed in white, came and stood beside them.

The angels said, "Why are you looking up in the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up into heaven will come back some day in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

We also believe that he will come again.

*The story of the Ascension can be found
in Luke 24:50-53, and also in Acts 1:1-11.*

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Mark 16:15-16, and 19

Peter

In the early days of the church, the apostles had wonderful powers given to them by God. They were able to make sick people well again, so families would bring their sick relatives to the disciples for healing.

One afternoon at about three o'clock, Peter and John went up to the temple. It was time for the evening service. They got to the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate. There they found a beggar sitting. He was lame and had never been able to walk. He had never taken a step!

As Peter and John came by, he asked for a gift to help him. He could not work, so he begged for a living. Peter and John stopped and looked at him. Peter said to him, "Look at us."

The man thought that they were going to give him some money. But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk."

Then he took the man by the right hand, and lifted him up. The man's feet and ankle bones were strong at that very moment. The man jumped up, and he walked with Peter and John into the temple. He praised God for healing him.

All the people there saw him. They were amazed, because they knew this was the man who had been sitting and begging at the temple gate. They knew he could not walk. They crowded around to see. Then Peter began to tell the people about Jesus.

*This story about Peter and John
can be found in the Bible in Acts 3:1-12*

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Matthew 4:18-19

Paul

Saul was an angry man who persecuted Christians. Persecute means to treat in a cruel and mean manner.

Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest any Christians that were in the synagogues. A synagogue is a building used by Jews for worship and teaching. Then an amazing thing happened. Saul was thinking about how he could hurt the Christians as he traveled. As he came near Damascus, a bright light suddenly shone down from heaven.

Saul fell to the ground, and a voice said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul answered, "Who are you, Lord?" The voice then said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to fight against me. Go now into Damascus and you will be told what you must do."

When Saul got up from the ground, he was blind. Others had to lead him by the hand into the city. For three days Saul was blind and did not eat or drink anything.

God told a man named Ananias in a dream that he should go see Saul. He found Saul and laid his hands on him, and Saul was able to see again. The preacher told him to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins.

Saul was sorry for the things he had been doing. He began doing the things that Jesus wanted him to do. After his conversion, Saul's name was changed to Paul, and he spent the rest of his life serving Jesus and teaching people about him. He became a missionary to people all over the world. A missionary is a person who is sent by a church to teach about Christ.

Paul, the apostle, suffered many persecutions. Instead of being the person who hurt other Christians, he became persecuted himself for Christ's sake.

*The conversion of Saul can be found
in the book of Acts, chapter 9 verses 1-19.*

Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

Acts 9:4-5

Heaven

John in the book of Revelation said, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth. I saw the Holy City, The New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

The angel told John the words of God , "Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring rewards with me. I will repay each person for what he has done. I am the beginning of all things. And I am the end of all things. People who have obeyed me will be blessed. They will get to eat the fruit from the tree of life. They can go through the gates into the heavenly city.

This last book in the Bible tells us about that beautiful city. It is described as a very, very large city made of pure gold. Its twelve foundations are decorated with every kind of precious jewel. It has a high wall with twelve gates and each gate is made of a huge pearl. The names of the twelve apostles are written on the gates and the gates are open all the time; they never close. The street is also made of gold that is clear like glass. There is no sun and there is no moon there. The glory of God and Jesus provide the light. Nighttime never comes.

Everything there is good because nothing evil will be able to enter in. There will be no more sadness and no more crying. What a beautiful place!

Jesus said, "I have sent my angel to tell you these things. I am the bright, Morning Star. Yes, I am coming soon."

Come Lord Jesus!

This description of heaven can be found in chapters 21 and 22 of the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

John the Baptist

Luke chapter 3

Mary, the mother of Jesus was a relative of Elizabeth, the mother of John. After the angel appeared to Mary telling her of the coming of Jesus, she went to see Elizabeth and learned that she, too, was expecting a child. Now Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah were advanced in years and their child was a very special child. He had been chosen by God for a special mission. That mission was to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming Messiah.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of John as "the voice of one calling in the desert" telling the people to get ready for the coming of Jesus. John told them that Jesus would be greater and mightier than he, and that he was not worthy to even carry the sandals of the Lord.

He was dressed in clothes made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. He lived in the desert and ate locusts and wild honey. He went through all the country around the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Crowds of people came confessing their sins and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

He told them that they must live right. They asked him what they should do. He said that if they had two coats they should share with a person who did not have a coat, and if they had food, they should share with those who did not.

The tax collectors asked what they should do and he told them to be honest in their collection of taxes and to not collect more than they were required to do.

The soldiers asked what they should do, and he told them to not take money from people illegally, to always tell the truth and not falsely accuse people. They were to be content with their pay and not grumble about it.

John always spoke the truth, even when people didn't want to hear the truth. He fearlessly confronted King Herod with the evil things he had done. Eventually this stand for the truth would cost John his life.

Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:11

The Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3:13-17

John had been baptizing in the Jordan River. One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and asked John to baptize *him*. John protested because he felt that Jesus was the one who should be baptizing him. But Jesus told him that they needed to do this to fulfill all righteousness. So John baptized him in the river.

Immediately after he was baptized, as he was praying, the heavens were opened and a dove came down and rested on Jesus. It was the Spirit of God in the form of a bird that had come down to show who Jesus was. Jesus saw it and John also saw the dove.

Suddenly there was a voice from heaven saying, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". The dove and the voice of God were a sign to John that Jesus *was* the Messiah that had been promised.

After this, John was again assembled with a group of people, and Jesus approached the group. John told them what had happened. He said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" He told them that he had seen the Spirit of God coming down on Jesus in the form of a dove. He said this had been a sign to him because God had revealed to him that the person on whom he saw a dove descending would be the Son of God. This is how John would know for sure.

Now John and Jesus were relatives and had grown up together. John's mother, Elizabeth, had known from the beginning, even before Jesus was born, that her kinswoman Mary was going to be the mother of the Son of God. Jesus was God in human form who had come to earth. It seems that John was not aware of Jesus' true identity until this event at Jesus' baptism.

But John had a mission to prepare the people for the coming of Christ, and he was fulfilling his mission. Now the Christ was revealed.

Some people came to John and told him that now the crowds were going to Jesus instead of John. They thought he would be upset, but his didn't bother John at all. He said that he had told them that he himself was not the Christ. It was as if Christ were the bridegroom and John was just the best man, or friend of the bridegroom. He was rejoicing that people were turning to Christ. John said that Jesus must become greater and he, John, must become less important.

Suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:17

The Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:1-13

After Jesus was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Jesus fasted during those forty days. That means he didn't eat anything during that time, and of course, at the end of the time he was very hungry.

Satan saw this as an opportunity to tempt him again. He said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Jesus answered, quoting from the book of Deuteronomy; "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'".

You will remember that when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they became hungry and God fed them with manna from heaven. He showed them that they were dependent upon him for all their needs.

Next the devil took Jesus up on a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in just a moment. Then he told him that he had been given the authority to give those kingdoms to anyone he wished. Had he really been given that authority?

Remember, the devil is a liar. God rules in the kingdoms of men and it is He who gives power to the people He wants to have that power. Satan told Jesus that if he would worship him, he would give him all those kingdoms.

Jesus replied, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'" Again Jesus is quoting from the writings of Moses in Deuteronomy.

Satan tries a third time. He brought Jesus to Jerusalem and took him up to the highest part of the temple and told him to jump off. He said that angels would come and lift him up so that he wouldn't be hurt.

The devil even starts quoting scripture now. He quoted from Psalm 91, "For He shall give His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." (Satan left out the part about 'to keep you in all your ways'.)

Jesus answered him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'."

Satan gave up and left him, but he would return later when he thought he had an opportunity to get Jesus to sin. Of course, we know that he never succeeded.

After Satan left, angels came and helped Jesus. There were also other times in his life that angels came to help him. Once when Jesus was talking about who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he called a little child to him and told the people that they must become as little children. He said, "I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven."

We are told by the writer of the book of Hebrews that there are 'ministering angels' who are sent to help those who are saved. What a comforting thought!

It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Matthew 4:4

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Matthew 21:12-17

Jesus had been teaching, healing, and doing many wonderful works. It was time for the Passover feast, an annual feast of the Jews. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The people put their coats on the ground and cut branches from the trees and waved them as they cried out, "Hosanna in the highest!" It was a joyful triumphant occasion.

Jesus went into the temple and looked around at everything that was going on, but it was late and he didn't stay. He and his twelve disciples went back to Bethany and spent the night.

Under the law of Moses people were required to offer animal sacrifices. If you had to travel a long way to get to the temple in Jerusalem, you would probably not take your animal with you. You would take some money and buy an animal for your offering after you got to Jerusalem.

The next day they went back to Jerusalem and again Jesus went to the temple, but this time he took action. Men were selling the animals for sacrifices right there in the area of the temple! He knew this was not right and he did something about it. He made a whip out of cords, or small ropes and he drove the money changers out along with the sheep, oxen, and doves. He turned the tables over and poured out the money on the floor of the temple.

He said, "Take these things away! My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

The Jewish religious leaders were very upset by all this and they began looking for a way to destroy Jesus. However, they were afraid of him because all the people were amazed at his teaching.

Then blind and lame people came to him in the temple and he healed them. The children were crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" When the religious leaders heard this, they said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?" Of course, Jesus did hear and he accepted their praise. He told the leaders that this was "perfect praise" coming from the lips of the children.

It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Matthew 21:13

Nicodemus

John 3:1-21

Nicodemus (nik uh DEE mus) was a ruler of the Jews of the group called the Pharisees (FAIR uh seez). He had seen the miracles that Jesus had performed and had heard him teach. He believed that Jesus was truly a teacher sent from God. He wanted to go and talk to him, but he waited until it was nighttime to go.

The Bible doesn't say why he went at night, but we do know that the Jewish leaders were angry with Jesus and were looking for a way to destroy him. Maybe Nicodemus was afraid to go to him in public during the day.

He told Jesus that surely God was with him, or he would not have been able to do all the wonderful things that Jesus had been doing. Then Jesus began to teach him. He told Nicodemus that if a person wanted to see the kingdom of God, he must be born again. Born again! Nicodemus could just visualize himself becoming a baby again. How could this be? It seemed like an impossible thing for a grown man to be born again!

But Jesus was not talking about a physical birth. He was speaking of a spiritual birth. He said that one must be born of water and the Spirit. Just as you can't see the wind that blows, you cannot see the new birth. The person may look the same, but he or she is a changed person inside.

You will remember that when the snakes were killing the children of Israel in the wilderness, God told Moses to make a snake of brass and lift it up on a pole. Everyone who looked at that snake on the pole was healed by God. Jesus said that He also must be lifted up, and that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Then Jesus told Nicodemus the beautiful words, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus came to save the people of the world, not to condemn them.

We read more about Nicodemus after the death of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea (air uh muh THEA uh) was a rich man and a member of the Jewish council. He was a good and just man and a disciple of Christ. He had been waiting for the kingdom of God and he believed that Jesus was the One who had been promised.

He took courage, but came secretly and asked Pilate for the body of Jesus so that he could bury him. The man who came with him was Nicodemus.

The Jewish custom was to rub spices on the body of the person who had died in preparation for burial. They brought about 100 pounds of spices; a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and prepared the body. They wrapped Jesus' body in strips of linen.

Near the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden, and Joseph had a new tomb there, one that had never been used. The burial place had been cut out of a large rock. They placed the body there, rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and left. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat down opposite the tomb.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

John 5:1-18

Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe a feast of the Jews. He was at a pool by the Sheep Gate. The Hebrew name for the pool was Bethesda and there were five porches around the pool.

Some writings say that at certain times an angel would come down and stir up the water. Then the first person to get into the pool after the water was stirred, would be healed of whatever disease or infirmity the person had.

So people would wait there by the pool for the stirring of the water. Some were blind, some were lame, and some were paralyzed, not able to move. One of the people at the pool that day was a man who had not been able to walk for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him there and knew of his condition.

He asked the man if he wanted to be made well. Of course, the man wanted to be well, but he said that he didn't have anyone to help him into the pool. When the water was stirred, someone would get down into the pool before he had a chance to get there.

Jesus told him to get up, take up his bed that he was lying on, and to walk. Immediately the man was made well and did as Jesus had commanded him. He picked up his bed and he walked! Jesus walked away into the crowd of people before the man had a chance to even thank him.

You would think that everyone would be happy that the man was able to walk after being lame for thirty-eight years. However, there were some Jewish rulers there who saw what had happened, and the only thing they could think about was the fact that he was carrying his bed, and the Jewish law said that you should not be doing any work on the Sabbath day. They didn't care about the man at all!

They said, "It's the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your bed!" He told them that the man who had healed him told him to carry his bed.

The rulers asked him who had healed him, but the man didn't know because Jesus had gone away into the crowd before he could talk to him.

Later Jesus saw him in the temple and told him that now he was well and that he should stop sinning or something worse would come upon him.

The man went to the Jewish leaders and told them that it was Jesus who had healed him. The leaders were more determined than ever to kill him because he had done this on the Sabbath.

Jesus told them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." This really upset the leaders, because not only had he healed the man on the Sabbath, but they said he was making himself equal with God by calling him his Father.

The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath, Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark 2:27-28

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12

A lot of people had come to see Jesus. He went up on the mountainside and called his disciples to him and He began to teach them saying,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." These are people who are humble and who do not think of themselves more highly than they ought. Jesus once said that whoever humbles himself as a little child would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In the book of Proverbs we read that a man's pride will bring him down, but a lowly spirit will bring him honor.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Many things happen to us in life that bring us grief, but God will comfort us when we turn to Him. A person must also mourn, or be sad when he/she does things that make God sad because of disobedience.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is also about humility. Moses was described as a meek person. He knew that whatever he accomplished was not by his own power, but by the power which God gave him.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." A hungry baby will cry for milk. We also should be hungry to learn what God wants us to do. The Bible tells us of the things that please God, and that is where we get our spiritual "food".

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." The person who is merciful is kind and forgiving. This person is not hateful toward others, but looks for the good qualities in people.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" We can be pure in heart if we fill our minds with good thoughts. If we listen to the evil things of the world, our hearts and minds will become defiled and dirty. We need to be careful of the things we watch, read, and hear.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God" Do you encourage people to get along and to be friends? If so, you are a peacemaker. Where peace is concerned, you can be part of the problem, or part of the solution. Be a peacemaker.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We must stand up for what is right even if it means making someone angry or upset with us. Sometimes this is a hard thing to do, but it is pleasing to God.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matthew 5:8

Jesus Feeds the Multitude

John 6:1-15

Great crowds of people followed Jesus because they saw the miracles that he did, and they wanted healing for themselves and their families. Jesus and his disciples were so busy they didn't even have time to eat. He decided that they needed to get away and just be by themselves for a while. This was a particularly hard time because Jesus had just learned of the death of John the Baptist.

He and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat, but people saw where they were going and came out of the surrounding cities and were waiting for them on the other side of the sea. When Jesus saw the people, he felt sorry for them. They were like a flock of sheep without a shepherd to lead them. Jesus spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing.

It was getting late in the day and the disciples came to him and suggested that he send the crowd away so they could go into the neighboring countryside and villages to find a place to eat and spend the night. Jesus said, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." The disciples knew they didn't have enough money to buy food for all those people. There were about 5,000 men plus all the women and children!

He asked Philip where they could buy bread. Now Jesus was just testing him. He already knew how he was going to feed them. Philip said that it would cost 200 denarii (dih NAIR ih eye) to buy enough bread for each person to have just a little. A denarius (dih NAIR ih us) was the wage for a day's work. So 200 denarii would be the amount of money a man could earn by working 200 days, nearly seven months.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, told Jesus that there was a boy in the crowd who had brought a lunch. The lad, or someone who cared for him, had planned ahead and he had five barley loaves of bread and two small fish. Even though he had brought the lunch for himself, he was willing to let Jesus use it.

There was a lot of grass in that place and Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups of 50 and 100. Then He took the loaves and gave thanks and started breaking them and passing the bread out to his disciples. The bread began to multiply and make more bread. They broke the bread again and again.

He did the same with the two fish. They kept passing out the food until everyone had eaten until they were full. Then Jesus told the disciples to pick up the remaining food so nothing would be wasted. Do you know how much was left? There were twelve baskets full of leftover bread and fish!

When the men saw how he had fed all the people, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Jesus saw that the people were ready to take him by force and make him a king, so he left and went off into a place alone.

I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 6:35

Peter Confesses Jesus

Matthew 16:13-29

Jesus was teaching in the region of Caesarea Philippi (ses uh REE uh, fih LIP eye). On this particular day, as he frequently did, he had gone off by himself to pray. His disciples found him and he asked them, "Who do men say that I am?"

There were many different ideas about Jesus. Some people thought that John the Baptist or Elijah had come back from the dead in the person of Jesus. Some thought that maybe Jeremiah or another one of the prophets had come back to earth.

But Jesus wanted his disciples to say what they thought about him. Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." How could Peter be so sure about this? Jesus gives us the answer. He called Peter's name, Simon Bar-Jonah, or Simon son of Jonah. Jesus said the fact that Peter knew who he was had come as a divine revelation. God Himself had told Peter.

Jesus told Peter that He was going to build His church, and no force of Satan would ever be able to overcome it. His people would be triumphant and win over evil. Peter was going to have the "keys" of the kingdom. He would tell people the things that pleased God and the things that were displeasing to God. He was going to be God's spokesman and people would have to obey the teachings of God that Peter preached. Jesus told Peter, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Then Jesus told them that they must keep his true identity a secret for a while longer. He would have to suffer and die and be raised again. Peter didn't want to even think about Jesus dying, and one day he said to him, "Lord, this shall not happen to You!" But Jesus knew that Satan was trying to harm Him through the words of Peter, and He said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan."

About a week later Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a high mountain. He was transformed (transfigured) or changed in front of their eyes. He was shining as bright as the sun. This was further proof to them that Jesus really was the Son of God!

Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:16

Pharisees and Sadducees

Matthew 23:1-36

When Jesus was on earth, He was generally kind and loving toward people. But there were some people who were not recipients of his kindness, but of his anger. These people pretended to be religious, but they were very unloving and unmerciful to other people. He spoke harsh words to the Jewish religious leaders known as the Pharisees (FAIR uh seez). These men were very careful to tithe, or give one-tenth of all their income as an offering to God, but sometimes they would call attention to themselves so that people could watch them put their money in the collection . They were very proud of the fact that they were observing the law of Moses, but they were uncaring and even cruel to their neighbors and even their families.

Jesus compared them to tombs that had been painted with whitewash and looked very beautiful on the outside, but in reality they were like graves full of dead men's bones, not beautiful at all. These men would even kill the prophets that God had sent, if they didn't want to hear the message they brought. When John the Baptist came preaching and telling them to repent, they did not listen to him and they refused to be baptized.

The Scribes were a part of the Pharisee group. They copied the law by hand, and they were regarded as important because they interpreted it and told people the meaning of the Jewish law. They were very proud of themselves and wore long robes with broad borders, or fringes on them to show their importance. They wanted to get the best seats in the synagogues, the places of worship. They loved for people to call them "Rabbi", or teacher, and they would pray long prayers out in public just for people to see them. The common people looked up to the Pharisees and regarded them as very religious.

Now it was not a bad thing to be a Pharisee. It was a good thing. Jesus was condemning these Pharisees because of their "hypocrisy" (hih POK ruh sih). They preached the truth, but in their lives, they just pretended to obey God's law. They really did not respect or care about others. We call such people "hypocrites" (HIP uh krits).

The Sadducees (SAJ uh seez) were Jewish religious leaders who were from the wealthy families. This group did not believe that people would be resurrected, or raised from the dead. They also did not believe that angels existed. Memory Peg: To not believe in the resurrection or in angels could make them "sad, you see" (Sadducee).

There was a Jewish ruling council called the Sanhedrin (san HE drin). It was composed of a group of 71 men who were Pharisees and Sadducees. Not all the religious leaders were proud and conceited. You may be familiar with three good Pharisees who were prominent in Bible times; Paul the apostle, Nicodemus, and Gamaliel (guh MAY lee uhl), a wise man on the council.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say and do not do.

Matthew 23:3

The Blind Man

Luke 18:35-43 and Mark 10:45-47

Large crowds followed Jesus wherever he went, bringing their sick friends and relatives to be healed. On this day as he was leaving Jerusalem, he was again accompanied by a crowd of people.

As he drew near to Jericho they saw a blind beggar sitting by the roadside. His name was Bartimaeus (bar tu MAY us).

He began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Jesus was called Son of David because he was a descendant of King David who had ruled Israel for 40 years many years before.)

The blind man's friends told him to be quiet, but he called out even louder to Jesus.

Jesus stopped and told his disciples to call Bartimaeus over to him. They said to him, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." He threw off his coat and came to Jesus. Jesus asked him what he wanted, and he said, "Rabbi, (meaning 'teacher') I want to see."

Jesus said, "Go, your faith has healed you." Immediately, he was able to see, and he followed Jesus.

What a happy day in the life of this blind man who had believed in the healing power of the Son of God!

If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.

Mark 9:23

Ten Lepers

Luke 17:11-19

Leprosy was a terrible skin disease. It was infectious. This means it could spread from a person to others, and they also would have the disease. There were strict rules which a leper had to observe. The person had to live outside the camp away from other people so the disease would not spread. If the sores went away, the leper had to go to the priest to be examined. If the priest said that the man was no longer contagious, he could go back and live with his family.

Sometimes people got the disease because they had disobeyed God. Miriam, the sister of Moses, got leprosy because she and Aaron, her brother, said that God should be speaking through them as He did through their brother Moses.

Once a king got leprosy because he rebelled against God. His name was Uzziah (uh ZIE uh) and he was a king of Judah. At the beginning of his reign, he was a good king, but later he began to disobey. He decided to go into the temple to burn incense to God. Only the priests were allowed to do this, and he was not a priest. He had leprosy the rest of his life and had to live in a separate house.

The story about the ten lepers occurred when Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. The men met him, but stayed a distance away. (The law said a leper must not come near and must call out "Unclean!" so people would know he had leprosy.)

These men called out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" They knew he had healed others.

Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests, and as they were going, a wonderful thing happened. Their skin became clean and free from leprosy! We can just imagine the joy they felt.

Nine of the men continued on to go see the priest, but one man turned back and came to Jesus. He was praising God with a loud voice, and he fell at Jesus' feet and thanked him. This man was a Samaritan, a man from the region of Samaria. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews.

Jesus asked where the other nine men were. Ten were healed, but only one came back to say "Thank you", and he was a foreigner.

Jesus told the man, "Rise and go. Your faith has made you well."

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 136:1

Down Through the Roof

Mark 2:1-12

Jesus was in a house in the town of Capernaum (kuh PER nih um). There were so many people in the house that on one else could even get in the door!

Some men brought their friend to Jesus. The man was a paralytic (pair uh LIT ik). He was paralyzed and could not move. His friends believed that Jesus could make him well, but they couldn't even get in the door.

They had an idea. They would find another way into the house. If they could get up on the roof, they could remove a part of the roof and make a hole above the crowd. That is just what they did. Then they attached ropes to the bed on which their friend was lying and slowly lowered him down into the room, right in front of Jesus!

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Some Jewish leaders were sitting there and they were thinking, "Only God can forgive sins. How can this man tell him that his sins are forgiven."

Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "Which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven', or 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Of course the easier thing would be to say, 'Your sins are forgiven'. Jesus was God and really could forgive sins, but there would be no way to prove if this had really happened.

So to prove to them that he could forgive sins, He did the harder thing. He said, "Take up your bed and walk." And the man who had been unable to move, stood up and walked. Everyone could see what had happened as a result of Jesus' words.

The people could hardly believe their eyes. They had never seen such power!

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

Psalm 103:2-3

Raising of Lazarus

John 11:1-46

Jesus had some close friends; Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. He often visited in their home. One day Martha sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick, but He didn't go to them right away. He waited and during that time Lazarus died.

When Jesus finally decided to go to Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. Martha heard that Jesus was coming and she ran out of the house to meet him. He was at the edge of the town, but had not entered it yet. She said that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died.

Jesus said, "Your brother will rise again." Martha thought he was speaking of the resurrection at the end of time. She didn't seem to understand that Jesus was talking about a time very soon.

Jesus talked to her about the resurrection and asked her if she believed. She said, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into the world."

Martha went to get her sister, Mary, who came and fell at Jesus' feet. She said the same thing Martha had said, "If you had been here he would not have died." When Jesus saw them crying, he also cried with them.

They went to the place where Lazarus had been buried. It was a cave with a stone over the opening. Jesus told them to take away the stone. Then he prayed to God and said, "Lazarus, come out!", and from the cave Lazarus came walking out. He was wrapped up with strips of linen and had a cloth around his face.

Jesus said, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." Mary and Martha and their friends were so happy. Lazarus was alive and back with them again! After this, many of the Jews believed on Jesus.

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

John 11:25

The Rich Young Ruler

Luke 18:18-30

One day a young ruler came to Jesus and fell on his knees before him. He said, "Good teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?"

Jesus told him to keep the commandments. "Which ones?" the man asked. Jesus started quoting some of the 10 commandments; "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother."

Then he mentions a commandment, not one of the 10 commandments, but one from the book of Leviticus, "Love your neighbor as yourself." In Leviticus 19:18 the people were told to not seek revenge, or to bear a grudge against one of their people, but instead they were to love their neighbor as they loved themselves.

The young man said he had kept all these commands from the time he was a boy. He had lived a good life. The Bible says that Jesus looked at him and loved him, but Jesus looked into the man's heart and saw something that was keeping him from becoming a follower.

Jesus told him that he still lacked one thing, he must sell the things he owned and give the money to the poor. Then he would have treasure in heaven, and he could follow Jesus.

The young man's face fell and he sadly went away because he had great riches that he would not part with.

After the young man left, Jesus talked to his disciples about how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. "It is easier", he said, "for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, but with God all things are possible."

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Matthew 6:24

Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. In fact, he was chief tax collector and a wealthy man. Tax collectors were hated because they sometimes cheated people by collecting more than they should. They gave part of the money to the government and kept the rest for themselves.

When the tax collectors asked John the Baptist what they should do, he told them to not collect more than they were required to.

Many times in the Bible they are grouped with sinners, pagans, and immoral people. However, Jesus portrayed many of them as teachable and ready to repent. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector shows the contrast in their attitude. The Pharisee was proud of his goodness, but the tax collector was humble and asked for forgiveness. You can read this parable in Luke 18:10-14.

Zacchaeus was such a man. He wanted to see Jesus, but he was not very tall. All his life he had trouble seeing over the heads and shoulders of people in crowds. He had an idea. He would run ahead of the crowd and climb up in the sycamore fig tree that was beside the path where Jesus would walk.

His short legs carried him to the spot, and he climbed the tree. What an excellent place! We could say he had a "front row seat".

When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up at Zacchaeus. He told him to come down, immediately. He wanted to go to Zacchaeus' house! Zacchaeus was so excited. He climbed down and welcomed Jesus.

People began to criticize Jesus because he was going to the house of a "sinner", but Zacchaeus was a repentant sinner. He was sorry for the bad things he had done. He told the Lord that he would give half of his possessions to the poor, and if he had cheated anybody out of anything, he would give back four times that amount.

Jesus was pleased with this little man's excellent attitude of heart. He said, "Today salvation has come to this house."

The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost.

Luke 19:10

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30

Jesus often told a story to teach a lesson. Hear the story of the talents.

One day a man was going on a long trip. He needed his servants to take care of his property while he was gone, so he called them to him.

To the first servant he gave five talents of money. (A talent was not a coin, but a weight of a precious metal such as silver, and one talent was worth more than \$1,000. So this servant received money worth more than \$5,000.)

This man went to work at once using his money until he had doubled it. He now had ten talents instead of five.

The master gave the second man two talents. He probably thought the man was capable of managing that amount of money. The second man was successful also, and doubled his money. He began with more than \$2,000 and now he had twice as much.

The third man was not as capable as the other two, but the master gave him one talent with the expectation that he would manage it well. He, too, could have increased his money, but he dug a hole and hid it in the ground.

After a long time the master returned. (Some think the master's trip is a picture of Jesus returning to heaven, and the return from the trip is the judgment of mankind.) He was ready for a report from the servants.

The man who had received five talents brought his money and showed the master that he had doubled it. He was happy to show his master the results.

The master was well pleased. He said, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

The man that had been given two talents showed the master that he had also doubled his money. He received the same words of praise as the first man who had received ten talents.

The man who had received one talent dug up the talent he had buried and brought it to the master. He accused the master of being a hard man to work for, said he had been afraid, so he just buried his talent. He gave it back to the master saying, "See, here is what belongs to you."

The master was very angry with him and called him a wicked, lazy servant. He said the man should have at least put the money with bankers and received some interest. (Now the Jews could not charge nor receive interest from a fellow Jew, but they could get interest from a person who was not a Jew.)

The master took his one talent away from him and gave it to the man who had ten talents, and the one talent man was punished because he had not properly used the talent he had been given.

What can we learn from this story? We need to use whatever "talent" God has given us. It might be money, ability, or opportunity. If we use it wisely, He will increase it so that our lives will glorify Him.

For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

Matthew 25:29

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

One day Jesus told a story about a wedding feast. Let's learn something about Jewish traditions before we hear the story.

The Jewish marriage took place in three stages over a long period of time. When the couple was still very young, an Engagement was arranged by the parents, sometimes with the help of a "matchmaker".

Second, there was a Betrothal ceremony held at the bride's house. The couple exchanged vows and the groom gave the bride presents. This period lasted for a year or two, but the bride continued to live with her parents. During this time the bride was said to be "betrothed" or "espoused" to the young man.

The Marriage Supper came next. It usually happened at night. The groom and his friends came to the bride's house. She would be wearing a thick veil. She and her friends would accompany the groom and his friends to his father's house or maybe a larger hall where the festivities would take place. A contract was signed. The bride and groom would spend time together, then the bride would remain by herself for seven days. At the end of the week, the bride would return to the group, remove her veil so that everyone could see her. If the young woman had never been married, the feast would last for seven days. If she were a widow remarrying, it would last for three days.

In the story Jesus told, the ten virgins were waiting for the bridegroom to come. Possibly they were already at the hall where the bridegroom was bringing his bride. It was nighttime and they all had lamps with oil in them, and the lamps were burning brightly.

They waited and waited. Still the wedding party had not arrived. As it got later, they began to get drowsy, and one by one they fell asleep.

Then they heard someone calling, "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." They began to get up, but some of the lamps began going out.

Five of the girls were prepared for just such an event. They had planned ahead and anticipated the delay. They had extra oil to add to their lamps. They were wise to make this preparation.

The five foolish girls had no extra oil. They wanted to borrow some from the wise girls, but they refused. They said there might not be enough for all of them. They urged the girls to go and buy some oil from someone who had it for sale. The girls left to go find a merchant who would sell them oil.

While they were gone, the bridegroom arrived and the five wise girls and the rest of the wedding party went inside. The door was shut.

The five foolish girls came back. They shouted for someone to open the door for them, but sadly there was no way for them to enter. The bridegroom replied, "I tell you the truth. I don't know you."

There are many ideas about the meaning of this parable. But one idea seems to be very clear; we need to live our lives in such a way that we are always ready for the Lord's return or for the end of our lives.

You also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Luke 12:40

Tongues of Fire

Acts 2:1-40

The Jewish people were commanded by God to observe several feasts during the year. They celebrated the Feast of the Passover to remember the time in Egypt they had been "passed over" when the firstborn of the Egyptians had died in the plagues.

Fifty days after Passover, they celebrated the Feast of Pentecost. It was also called the Feast of Weeks, which came on a Sunday and lasted one day. It came at the end of the wheat harvest.

The events in this story took place on the Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus. Many devout Jews were in the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. They had come from many provinces and spoke many different languages.

Suddenly a loud sound filled the house where they were meeting. It sounded like a great wind blowing.

Then something that looked like tongues of fire appeared, then separated and sat on each of them. They each began speaking in other languages. The Holy Spirit was causing them to talk to the others in languages which they had never learned! Can you imagine being able to carry on a conversation with a foreigner in his own native tongue, even though you had never spoken that language?

The wind sound was so loud that people ran to see what was happening, and when they heard the men speaking in their own languages, they were amazed. "Aren't these men all Galileans (gal uh LEE unz), or men from Galilee? How is it that each of us hears in our own native language?"

Some thought the men were drunk, but that was unlikely because it was only 9:00 in the morning. Most people who get drunk, don't get drunk that early in the day.

Peter stood up with the eleven apostles and began to preach to the crowd. He said that the prophet Joel had spoken of these events many years before. He told them how that Jesus of Nazareth had come, and how that God had shown his approval of Jesus by the signs and miracles that he had performed while he was on earth.

Peter accused the crowd of handing Jesus over to wicked men to be crucified. We remember that Pilate wanted to free Jesus, but the Jews had cried out, "Crucify him!". The Romans nailed him to the cross and killed him, but God raised him from the dead, and he was seen alive by many people.

When the people in the crowd realized what they had done, they were so sorry, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter told them to repent; to be truly sorry for what they had done, and for every one of them to be baptized in the name of Jesus so that their sins might be forgiven. He said if they would do that, they would receive God's gift to them, the Holy Spirit, to live within them. Those who heard his words and accepted them were baptized, and about 3,000 people did just that. This wonderful day was the beginning of the Church.

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38

Stephen, the First Christian Martyr

Acts chapters 6 and 7

Stephen was one of the great men of faith in the early church. Though he was not an apostle, he holds a special place in scripture because he was chosen to minister to the widows who were being cared for in Jerusalem. It seems that some of the widows were being overlooked and neglected, so Stephen and six other men who were "full of faith and the Holy Spirit", were chosen to take care of them. He also was the first Christian martyr (MAR ter). A martyr is a person who holds to a belief so strongly that he/she is willing to die for it. Such was the faith that Stephen had in Jesus Christ.

Stephen was able to work miracles among the people. He began to preach and some of the Jews would argue with him about his beliefs. These evil men persuaded some men to say that Stephen was speaking against Moses and even against God. This wasn't true, but many people got upset about it because they believed it was true.

They took hold of Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish rulers. In the picture you can see him appearing before the group. Directly in front of him is the high priest with the beautiful breastplate on the front of his garment. It contained gold and twelve different precious gems. On each stone was written the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

These were powerful men who were able to make life and death decisions about people. But Stephen was not afraid to speak the truth. As he stood before them, they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

He began to speak to them. He told about the whole history of the Jewish people beginning with Abraham. Then he accused the men, and their fathers before them, of hurting and killing the prophets, and even of killing the Righteous One, Jesus.

The rulers became very angry with him, but Stephen looking up to heaven, saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He told the men what he was seeing. They put their hands over their ears because they didn't want to listen to him. They yelled at the top of their voices. They rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him to death.

While they were throwing stones at him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and "Lord do not hold this sin against them." Then he "fell asleep" (died). He had the same forgiving spirit that Jesus had when he had said the same words when he was on the cross. The young man who was consenting to Stephen's death was Saul of Tarsus.

But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

First Thessalonians 5:8

Philip the Evangelist

Acts 8:26-40

After the stoning of Stephen, there was a great persecution (per suh KYEW shun) of the Christians in Jerusalem. Saul went from house to house and dragged men and women off to prison if they were followers of Jesus.

The Christians ran away from Jerusalem so they wouldn't be arrested and killed. For some reason, the apostles were protected and were able to remain in Jerusalem without being arrested.

Philip, in our story, was not the apostle Philip, but he was one of the seven men who had been chosen to help take care of the widows in Jerusalem. He too, left Jerusalem and went to the district of Samaria.

One day an angel told Philip to go south on a certain road that went from Jerusalem to Gaza, which was near the coast of the Mediterranean (med it ter ANE ee un) Sea. As he went, he met a man from the country of Ethiopia (ee thea OH pea uh). The man was riding in a chariot. He was an important person in the government of his country. Candace (can DAY see), the queen had put him in charge of the country's treasury; all their gold, silver, and wealth.

He was a believer in God and had been to Jerusalem to worship. He was probably not a Jew, but a proselyte (PROS uh lite), a person who had accepted the Jewish religion by going through certain acts such as baptism. When a person became a proselyte, he/she was taught about the Jewish laws and given a Jewish name.

Philip went near to the chariot. The man was reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

"Do you understand what you're reading?" he asked the man.

The man said he needed someone to explain it to him, and he invited Philip to sit in the chariot with him. Then they continued on the journey.

The scripture he had been reading had been written more than 500 years before, and was a prophecy in the book of Isaiah about a man who was going to be unfairly tried and judged, but that man wouldn't try to defend himself.

The Ethiopian asked, "Is the prophet writing about himself or someone else?"

Philip started at that very scripture and told him the good news about Jesus; how he had come to earth, been killed and how that God had raised him from the dead. And evidently, he also had talked about baptism because when they came to a body of water, the Ethiopian said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" He ordered the chariot driver to stop.

Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

The man said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Both Philip and the Ethiopian went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. The word "baptized" here means immersed. It was like a burial; as if the person has died and then is alive again, literally a new man. (See Romans 6:3-14)

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away. We don't know if he was suddenly transported to another place, or if he was just instructed to go to the next place. Anyway, the Ethiopian never saw him again.

As for the man in the chariot, he was so happy! He went on his way rejoicing, knowing that now he had this wonderful relationship with Jesus and God, the Father.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:7 (NIV)

Peter and Dorcas

Acts 9:36-43

Dorcas, a word which means "gazelle", was sometimes called Tabitha. She was a very kind person who spent her time caring for the widows of Joppa.

God has always been mindful of the widows and people who are poor. In Bible times, when a woman's husband died, she had no way to make a living. (This condition even still exists in some parts of the world today.)

The law in those times stated that if a widow's husband had owned land, it went to the oldest son, and if the son didn't take care of his mother, she had nowhere to turn for help. If there was no son, she still lost her property and could only get it back if a relative of her husband married her. You will remember the story of Ruth and Boaz.

God had instructed the Jews to care for the poor. They could not harvest the edges of their fields, but had to leave the grain for the poor people to "glean" or pick up. Neither could the owner go over the field a second time to pick up grain that had fallen. It was to be left for the poor.

Every third year the tithes, or one tenth of the crop, was given to the poor, and every seventh year all debts were canceled so that people could get a fresh start and begin again free of the debt of owing money.

In the New Testament, James writes that one of the marks of pure religion is that a person will take care of the widows and orphans. Those who care for the poor receive God's approval, and those who do not are displeasing to him.

Dorcas lived in Joppa, a seaport town. (See picture below.) She was a loving person who showed kindness to others and especially to the poor. She made coats for the widows so they would have something to keep them warm in the winter.

One day she became ill and died. Her friends were so sad and upset. Their dear friend was gone.

They had heard that Peter had been performing miracles of healing sick people. At this time no apostle had raised anyone from the dead, but Dorcas' friends believed that Peter could do even that, so they sent two men to Lydda, a nearby town where Peter was staying.

Peter went back to Joppa with the men, and when he got there, he was led to an upper room where her friends had laid Dorcas. The room was filled with widows who were crying and showing one another the coats and other clothing which Dorcas had made for them while she was alive. Each stitch showed her faithfulness and the love she had for them.

Peter told them all to leave the room, then he got down on his knees and prayed, asking God to bring life back into her still body. He said to her, "Tabitha, get up."

She opened her eyes and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and she stood up.

He called for the people to come back into the room, and there they saw their friend, alive again. What joy they felt!

The news spread quickly through the town of Joppa. Dorcas is alive again! Because of the miracle many people believed in the Lord.

He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.

Proverbs 19:17

Peter's Vision

Acts 10:1-23

Cornelius (cor KNEE lee us) was a Roman soldier in the city of Caesarea (ses uh REE uh). He was an officer in charge of 100 soldiers; a centurion (sin TOOR ee un). He and all his family feared God, helped the poor, and prayed to God regularly.

One day about 3:00 in the afternoon he had a vision. Sometimes God communicated with people in this way. Cornelius saw an angel who called him by name. "Cornelius!" the angel said. Cornelius was frightened and recognized that the vision was from God. "What is it , Lord?" he asked.

The angel said that God knew about the kind things Cornelius had done for the poor and that his prayers had been heard. He was told to send men to the city of Joppa and bring back a man named Peter who was staying with Simon the tanner in Simon's house by the sea.

When the angel was gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and one of his soldiers, whom he trusted, to go to Joppa and find Peter. The town was about thirty miles away from Caesarea.

Before we go any further with our story, we need to mention something about the Jews and the Gentiles (JEN tielz). If a person was not a Jew, he/she was a "Gentile", and the Jews hated the Gentiles because they were not a part of "God's chosen people". They would not associate with them and would have no dealings with them.

In our story, we have Cornelius, a Gentile, sending a message to Peter, a Jew, asking him to come to his house. What will be Peter's reaction? He is not supposed to have anything to do with this "unclean" person.

About noon the next day the three men approached the city of Joppa. Peter had become hungry, and while the meal was being prepared, he was up on the rooftop praying. The roofs in that area were flat roofs. In warm weather the family might sleep up on the roof. The law of Moses stated that when people built a house, they had to put a wall around the edge of the roof so they would not be responsible for an injury if someone fell off the roof. (Deuteronomy 22:8) The wall was usually about four feet high.

Peter fell into a trance, a dreamlike state, and he saw heaven opened and a huge sheet being let down by its four corners. In the sheet were all kinds of four-footed animals, birds, and reptiles.

A voice told him, "Get up Peter. Kill and eat." According to the law of Moses, certain animals were "clean"; suitable for eating, and certain animals were "unclean". The people of Israel were commanded not to eat these unclean animals. Possibly God was trying to protect them from some diseases carried by these animals. The classes of animals are described in detail in Leviticus chapter 11. The unclean animals included the camel, badger, rabbit, lizard and pig. They could eat no pork such as ham or bacon. Fish that had no scales nor fins, such as the catfish, were unclean. Certain birds, mainly scavengers and birds of prey, were unclean; the eagle, hawk, vulture, owl, gull, stork and the bat.

What was Peter to do? He could not eat an unclean animal, yet the voice had said, "Kill and eat." Peter answered, "Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything common (impure) or unclean". The voice spoke a second time and told him that God had made them clean, and Peter was not to call them unclean.

Three times the voice told him to "Kill and eat", then the sheet was suddenly taken back to heaven. While Peter was puzzling over what the vision could mean, the three men sent by Cornelius arrived, stopped at the gate, and asked if Simon Peter was staying there.

The stage is set and everything is ready. The Spirit of the Lord told Peter that three men were looking for him, and that he was to go downstairs and go with them. The Spirit said that He had sent the men to him. Peter went downstairs and told them he was the person for whom they were looking. "Why have you come?" he asked. They told how an angel had appeared to their master and told Cornelius to send to Joppa for Peter. He invited them into the house to be his guests.

Now Peter understood that no longer should he consider the Gentiles "unclean", because God had accepted them, and that he, Peter, would be the one to tell them the good news about Jesus.

Read the next story to find out what happened when Peter went to Caesarea with the men.

The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

Acts 10:15

Cornelius

Acts 10:23-48

The three men sent by Cornelius spent the night in Joppa, and the next day Peter started out with them to go to see Cornelius. What would his Jewish brothers think? The law of Moses taught that Jews could not marry Gentiles or participate in any of the heathen worship. And then Jewish tradition had restricted it further by teaching that a Jew could not even visit nor eat with a Gentile. Peter took six Jewish men with him to serve as witnesses to what was happening. His Jewish brethren would be very upset when they found out he had gone to the house of a Gentile.

In Caesarea, Cornelius had called together his family and his close friends, and they were all assembled in his house to wait for the arrival of Peter.

When Peter came into the house, Cornelius fell down at his feet to worship him, but Peter told him to get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." God did not want people to worship men or angels.

When they went inside, Peter saw that a large group of people had gathered. He told them it was against Jewish law for Jews to associate with Gentiles. According to the law, he Peter, should not even be visiting with them, but God had shown him that he should not call any man unclean. (Remember the vision on the roof.)

"Why did you send for me?" he asked. Cornelius told him about the vision he had seen while he was praying, and how the man in shining clothes had told him to send for Peter.

Cornelius said, "We are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." Their hearts were ready and open to receive the message. Peter began to tell them about Jesus, how he came and lived among them, was crucified, and how that God had raised him from the dead. Jesus had been seen by certain people after he was alive again.

Peter said that everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through his name. Then a remarkable thing happened! While Peter was still talking, the Holy Spirit came on those who were listening, and they began to speak in other languages (tongues) just as the apostles had done on the day of Pentecost.

The six men who had come with Peter were amazed. Here were Gentiles being blessed by God just as the Jews had been blessed! Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them a few days. No longer is Peter in the house of an "unclean" Gentile, but a Christian brother.

Sure enough, the Jews were very upset when they heard that Peter had visited in the house of a Gentile, but he told them the whole story, and he had the six Jewish brethren to vouch for him. The Jews were convinced that the Gentiles had indeed been accepted, and they praised God for it.

Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.

Acts 10:33

Paul in Damascus

Acts 9:20-25

Saul the persecutor of Christians met Jesus on the road to Damascus. After his conversion he was a different person. The man who had been killing Christians now became a follower of Jesus and joined the ranks of believers. The Christians in Damascus didn't know what to think of him. He began to preach in their city and became more and more powerful.

Some of the Jews decided he was dangerous to them and started looking for a way to kill him, but Paul learned of their plan. His enemies watched the city gate day and night, determined to grab him when he tried to leave the city.

Paul and his friends had other plans, and God wanted Paul to survive to preach in other cities. This was their plan: They got a large basket, big enough to hold a man. They tied ropes onto the basket to lower it to the ground. When it was dark, Paul got into the basket and his friends lowered him down through an opening in the wall. He didn't use the gates at all! His enemies' plan was foiled and Paul left the city in safety.

He went from Damascus to Jerusalem, but the Christians there feared him also. Barnabas, good Barnabas, stood up for him and told the Christians that Paul really was changed. He was accepted by them and preached, but it became dangerous there also when the Jews from Greece tried to kill him.

His friends took him to Caesarea (ses uh REE uh) and then sent him off to Tarsus, his hometown.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer.

Second Samuel 22:2 NIV

Barnabas

Acts 4:36-37; 11:19-30; 13:1-51;
14:8-20; 15:36-41, Numbers 35:1-5

There were many leaders in the early church, but few were as humble and influential as Barnabas. His name was Joseph, but the apostles gave him the name "Barnabas" (BAR nuh bus) which means Son of Encouragement. It was an appropriate name because he was an encouragement to all who knew him.

There were thousands of Jews in Jerusalem who were converted on the day of Pentecost and the days following. They had not come prepared for an extended stay in the city, and yet many of them stayed on to hear the apostles' preaching. Their money was used up, and they became poor and in need.

Some people who had property, sold it and gave the money to the apostles so they could feed the multitude of needy people. One of those who sold a field was Barnabas from the island of Cyprus.

He was a Levite. According to the distribution of land when the Israelites entered Canaan, the Levites were given cities and pastureland around the cities for their cattle. The pastures extended 3,000 feet (over half a mile) in all four directions from each Levite city. Barnabas sold a field he owned and brought the proceeds to the apostles.

Peter, since the Lord had given him the "keys" to the kingdom, was the one who first preached to the Gentiles. Yet it was Paul, whom the Lord chose to be his special preacher to the Gentile nation. When he was a new convert, Paul went to Jerusalem and tried to contact the believers there, but they were afraid of him.

What if he was just pretending to be a believer in Christ? What if he was really just trying to find them and arrest them?

Barnabas saw what was happening. He himself had the trust and respect of the believers, and he thought Paul was sincere. If he introduced Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem, the others would accept him. That's what he did. Barnabas told them how Paul had been converted and how he was now preaching about Jesus.

The church accepted him, and he was able to stay in Jerusalem. Then evil men began to try to kill Paul and the brothers sent him to Tarsus.

Later Barnabas would go to Tarsus looking for Paul again. He found him and brought him to the city of Antioch and the two of them preached in the city for a whole year.

The Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus to preach. There they met a false prophet named Bar-Jesus or Elymas (EE luh mus). He was an

attendant to the proconsul, the government official. He opposed their preaching, and Paul called him a child of the devil and told him that he was going to be blind for a while.

Immediately he became blind and started looking for someone to lead him around. The proconsul was amazed and believed the teachings of Paul and Barnabas.

The Holy Spirit directed the work of Paul and Barnabas , and they traveled to many cities preaching the good news about Jesus.

In the city of Lystra (LIS truh) Paul worked a miracle in which a lame man was able to walk again. The heathen people of that city thought they were gods and prepared to offer sacrifices to them, but Paul and Barnabas rushed out shouting that they too, were human and were trying to get them to worship the true God.

Barnabas was not one of the twelve apostles, but in this instance he is called an apostle, because he was sent by the Holy Spirit on a special mission.

John Mark, his cousin, traveled with Barnabas and Paul to some of the cities, but he deserted them in one city and failed to continue the journey with them. This incident would later cause a problem because Barnabas wanted to again take John Mark with them, but Paul refused to take him.

There was sharp disagreement over the matter. Paul was reluctant to take a chance on John Mark, but Barnabas, always ready to encourage, wanted to give his relative a second chance.

They settled it by parting ways. Barnabas took John Mark with him to the island of Cyprus, and Paul took another preacher, Silas (SIGH lus) with him through Syria. They agreed on this compromise and God's work continued.

There is an indication that Paul and Barnabas worked together again, and in his letter to the Colossians which was written from prison, Paul mentions the fact that John Mark is with him, and he tells them that if John Mark comes to the church, they are to welcome him. Barnabas was truly the Son of Encouragement who always looked for the best in people, and his faith in them was rewarded.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29

Peter's Escape From Prison

Acts 12:1-18

King Herod was a wicked ruler. He was persecuting the Christians and even had the apostle James, John's brother, put to death. When he saw that the Jews were pleased about it, he had Peter arrested and put in prison.

He wanted to make sure Peter didn't escape, so he put guards in the prison to guard him. There were four rotating shifts of four guards each. It would seem there would be no way for Peter to leave the prison. Surely he would be put on trial the next day. The church during this time was praying that God would take care of Peter. They wanted him to be back with them again.

Peter was asleep in the prison. There were chains on each of his wrists, and there was a guard on each side of him and more guards at the doorway.

However, nothing is too hard for God. Suddenly there was a bright light inside the prison, and an angel appeared. The angel struck Peter on the side to wake him and his chains fell off. "Quick, get up!" he said. Peter followed the angel's instructions when he told him to put on his clothes and sandals. Then he told him to wrap his coat around him and follow him. Peter obeyed though he didn't think it was really happening. He thought it was just a vision.

They passed by the first guard, then the second guard, and the guards didn't even see them. Were they asleep, or were they just blind to what was happening? There was still one more barrier to his freedom. The iron gate that led to the city was in front of them, and then without anyone pushing on it, the gate swung open by itself. They walked through the gate and went the length of one street. Then as suddenly as he had appeared, the angel left him.

Peter stood in the quiet stillness of the dark street. It dawned on him what had just happened. It wasn't a vision. It had really happened! God had delivered him from Herod and the terrible fate that the king had planned for him.

He must hurry to find his friends. He went to the home of Mary, John Mark's mother, where the church was gathered praying for him. He knocked at the outer entrance. A servant girl named Rhoda went to answer the door. Peter spoke and Rhoda recognized his voice. She was so excited she didn't even open the door. She ran back to the others and said, "Peter is at the door!"

They thought she was out of her mind. How could it be Peter? Peter was in prison. "It must be his angel," they said. The Jews believed that everyone had a guardian angel, and this angel must be speaking with Peter's voice. Peter kept on knocking. Finally they opened the door and they were so surprised to see Peter standing there. Did they not believe that God could answer their prayers for Peter's release?

Everyone started talking at one time. Peter held up his hand for them to be quiet, then he told them how God had sent an angel to deliver him.

He instructed them to tell James and the others about his release. This was probably James, the brother of Jesus since James, the apostle had already been killed by Herod. Peter left to go to another place.

What happened at the prison the next morning? They looked and looked for Peter and couldn't find him. The guards had been responsible for keeping him in prison, and if they failed in their duty, the penalty was death. Herod ordered that the four guards be executed.

As for Herod, not many days later Herod appeared on his throne and gave a speech. The people said, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Herod accepted their praise and did not give praise to God. Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:6

Lydia

Acts 16:1-15

Paul and Silas took a young preacher named Timothy with them on their travels. Timothy's mother was a Jewish woman who was a believer in Jesus, and his father was a Greek. As they traveled, the Holy Spirit would guide them and tell them where to go next. One night while they were in Troas (TRO az), Paul had a vision. A man from Macedonia (mass uh DOAN ee uh) was begging him to come over to Macedonia to help them. The Spirit was guiding them again.

Immediately they got ready and left. It was a long trip by ship from Troas to Macedonia. They arrived at Philippi, which was a Roman colony and one of the largest cities in Macedonia. They stayed several days. Then they heard that a group of people met by the river to worship on the Sabbath day, so they went outside the city gate to the meeting place. They sat down and began to speak to the women who were gathered there to pray. One of them was a woman named Lydia who was from the city of Thyatira (thigh uh TIRE uh), which was in a district east of Macedonia. She was a dealer who sold purple cloth.

Purple cloth was very expensive. The reason it was so costly was that it was difficult to make. The dye for the cloth came from a shellfish. The juice was white while it was in the veins of the fish, but when it was exposed to the sun, the liquid changed into bright purple and red colors. It took a lot of work to catch enough shellfish to dye even one garment.

The beautiful cloth was mainly used by members of the royal families and Roman senators who were required to have a purple band around the edge of their togas, or robes.

As Paul preached, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to receive the message about Jesus. She believed his words and responded to the teaching. She and the members of her household were baptized.

We don't know if she was married, or single, or a widow. She probably had people working for her in her business since she was a merchant.

She told the men if they considered her a believer in the Lord, she would like for them to come and stay at her house. Evidently she had plenty of room to accommodate the four of them; Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke was also with them. She continued to urge them and they accepted her invitation and stayed at her house.

Lydia's heart was like the good soil in the parable of the sower. When she heard the word of God, she received it with joy and obeyed the words of the apostle.

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:13

The Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:16-40

Paul again visited the place of worship by the riverside. This time he saw a slave girl whose body had been taken over by a demon, an evil spirit. She was able to tell people what was going to happen in the future. Her owners saw they could make some money by having her tell people what was going to happen to them. They were glad the poor girl was possessed by a demon.

As she followed Paul and the others around, the demon in her recognized who they were and shouted, "These men are servants of the Most High God who are telling you the way to be saved."

This went on day after day. Paul felt sorry for the girl and turned around, and in the name of Jesus commanded the spirit to come out of her. (Jesus had told them earlier, when he was teaching them, that they would be able to cast out devils.)

Immediately the evil spirit left her, and she was in her right mind, but she could no longer foretell the future. Her masters could not use her anymore to gain money for them. You can imagine their anger at Paul, who had ruined their fortune telling business.

They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities, accusing them of causing an uproar and teaching against their way of life. Then the crowd was stirred up and became angry, and the magistrates (MAJ ih strates), or judges ordered them to be stripped of their clothing and beaten.

They were unmercifully flogged and then, weak and bleeding, they were thrown into an inner cell of the prison and their feet were put in stocks. Their legs were spread wide apart and their feet put through holes in the wooden device which was used for torture as well as for securing the prisoners.

Then a jailer was commanded to guard them. If he failed to keep them in the prison, he would be killed. He had a great responsibility. Did Paul and Silas moan and complain about being beaten and put in prison? No, the Bible says that about midnight

they were praying and singing hymns to God. There were other prisoners in the cell listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, and the prison shook. The doors opened and the chains came off all the prisoners, but nobody tried to escape. However, when the jailer woke up and saw the doors opened, he started to take his own life because he knew he would be killed if his prisoners had escaped.

Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" The jailer was so frightened he was trembling. He called for some lights so he could look inside the cell. He fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas. He said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They told him to believe in Jesus, and they preached about the Lord to the jailer and the people of his household.

That same hour he took the two men and washed the wounds they had received in the beatings. He knew he had been wrong, and he wanted to do right. Immediately the jailer and his family were baptized. He brought Paul and Silas to his house and fed them. The whole family was so happy! They were now believers in God.

The next day officers were sent to the jail to tell them to release Paul and Silas. When the judges learned that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. It had been against the law for them to beat and imprison the men. They thought they could just quietly take care of it. But Paul thought differently. "No!" he said, "Let them come themselves and lead us from the prison."

The judges went to the prison and apologized. They led the men out and begged them to leave the city. Paul and Silas went back to Lydia's house and met with the believers there. Then they left to go preach elsewhere.

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

First Thessalonians 5:16-18

Paul's First Missionary Journey

Acts 13:1-52

Barnabas and Paul were teachers in the church at Antioch (ANT e ock). One day during a worship service the Holy Spirit revealed His special plans for the two men. The church fasted and prayed and sent them on their way.

They sailed to the island of Cyprus (SIE prus). They crossed over the island and came to the town of Paphos (PAY fus). An interesting thing happened in that town. There was a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was a sorcerer who practiced magic and tricked the people. His master, a government official named Sergius Paulus (SIR jee us PAUL us) wanted to learn from Paul and Barnabas. But Bar-Jesus, also known as Elymas (E luh mus), didn't want his master to hear their message. He started speaking against them.

Paul called Elymas the "son of the devil and the enemy of everything that was right". He told him that he was going to become blind and not be able to see the light of the sun. Immediately everything became dark to him. He couldn't see a thing! He started trying to find someone to lead him by the hand.

When the official saw what had happened, he believed the words of Paul and Barnabas. He was amazed at the story of Jesus.

The two preachers continued to travel. There were no cars, trains, or buses. They either walked or rode on animals. They traveled miles and miles, and many people believed their teaching and became followers of Jesus. They suffered countless hardships and persecutions, but they considered these things to be trivial compared to the joy and promised reward of obeying the Lord and following the directions of the Holy Spirit. They no longer lived for themselves, but for God.

For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Acts 17:1-15

Paul and Barnabas parted company because of a disagreement they had about John Mark. The young man had earlier left their company and returned to Jerusalem. Barnabas wanted to give John Mark, his nephew, another chance, but Paul preferred not to take him on the next trip. So Barnabas and John Mark went one way, and Paul chose Silas to accompany him on a trip in another direction.

Besides Paul and Silas there were two more preachers on the journey; a young Christian named Timothy and Luke, the physician. They arrived in Thessalonica (thes uh luh NIKE uh) which was a seaport town. Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue for three Sabbaths. Many Jews and Greeks believed his teaching, but his enemies, the Jews who didn't believe, began stirring up trouble again, and Paul and Silas had to leave the city at night under the cover of darkness.

They went to Berea (buh REE uh). The people there listened to Paul, but they also searched the scriptures to be sure what Paul was saying agreed with the scriptures they accepted as the word of God. Of course, the teachings were in perfect harmony because God, who had inspired the scriptures, was also guiding Paul's preaching. The Bible says the Bereans were more noble than the people in Thessalonica because they wanted to prove that Paul's words were true.

The Jews in Thessalonica came to Berea and started causing trouble for Paul, so the Christians sent him to Athens, but Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea intending to join Paul as soon as possible.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Second Timothy 2:15

Paul in Athens

Acts 17:16-33

Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. As he walked around the city he saw many beautiful buildings. He also saw numerous idols. Men would carve statues out of stone or wood, and they would call them their gods. They would bow down and worship these statues as if the stone or wood had some power.

They wanted to make sure they hadn't left out some "god" so they made an idol "To an unknown god". Paul said, "I want to tell you about this God", and he began to tell them about the true God who had created the world and everything in it. He told them about

Jesus and how he had come to earth, been killed and made alive again.

The people of Athens were very extremely interested. They loved to hear new ideas, and this was certainly something new to them. Some people believed the preaching of Paul and became followers.

If you visit Athens today you can climb the tall hill and view the Acropolis. You will see the ruins of the same buildings Paul viewed when he preached to the Athenians. During Paul's time the buildings were already over 400 years old. Today they are more than 2400 years old.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

John 4:24

Paul Visits Corinth

Acts 18:1-17

Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. Silas and Timothy finally arrived to join him there.

Paul was preaching to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ, but they did not believe him, and they began to abuse him and treat him badly. After a time he told them if they didn't want to accept his teaching, then he would go and teach the Gentiles. These were the non-Jewish people of Corinth. That's what he did. He preached the good news to the Gentiles and many of them believed and were baptized.

One night he had a vision, and the Lord spoke to him. He told him to stay in Corinth and continue preaching there. Paul would be able to convert a lot of people in the city. He stayed there for a year and a half.

Corinth was a very wicked city and the people were immoral, but those with receptive hearts turned from their wicked ways and became the kind of people God intended for them to be.

If you visit Corinth today you will see the ruins of some of the ancient buildings there. In the museum you can see pottery and statues that have been recovered.

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:18-chapter 19:22

Paul had met Aquila and his wife, Priscilla when he was in Corinth. They were tentmakers just as Paul was, so he stayed with them and they worked together.

When he left Corinth, the couple went with him. He went to Ephesus, then to Jerusalem, and next to the city of Antioch. After that he went back and revisited cities where people had been converted on a previous trip.

Several interesting events took place in Ephesus. Paul found twelve men who had been baptized by John, and he told them they needed to be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. This they did, and then Paul placed his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came on them. They began to speak in foreign languages just as the apostles had on the day of Pentecost.

Also in Ephesus miracles occurred when handkerchiefs that had been touched by Paul were taken to sick people. People were healed and evil spirits left them.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

The Riot in Ephesus

Acts 19:23-41

Paul had been preaching in Ephesus the message that there was only one true God and that idols were not gods at all. Many of the people in Ephesus worshiped the goddess Diana. Her Greek name was Artemis.

There was a silversmith named Demetrius (dih ME tree us) who made silver images of the goddess Diana and sold them to the people. He probably made a lot of money selling these statues. Paul was a threat to his business. Demetrius stirred up the people against Paul. They began shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians". Over and over they chanted until a great crowd started shouting. Some of them didn't even know why they were shouting. They just did it because everyone else was shouting.

Paul wanted to talk to the crowd, but his friends discouraged him for fear he would get hurt. The shouting continued for about two hours. It was turning into a riot. Finally the city clerk gained the attention of the people and got them quiet. He said they had no reason to be behaving in such a manner, and that if Demetrius had a problem, he needed to take it to the courts. The clerk dismissed the crowd and Paul was unharmed.

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

Acts 17:24-25 NIV

Paul Leaves Ephesus

Acts 20:1-38

In Troas (TRO az) he met with the disciples on Sunday. They were in an upstairs room and Paul was preaching. He kept on talking until midnight. There was a young man named Eutychus (YOO tih kus) sitting in a window. As the sermon went on and on, he became drowsy and went sound asleep. The window was open, and he fell out and hit the ground. When they picked him up, he was dead.

Paul went downstairs, put his arms around the boy, and he was brought back to life. The people were so happy to have him back again.

When Paul got to Miletus (mih LEE tus) he sent word for the elders of the church at Ephesus to meet him there. When they were gathered together, he talked to them. He told them how he had preached the truth to them. He knew that hardship and persecution awaited him in Jerusalem. He urged them to be good shepherds in caring for the members of the church.

He reminded them of the words of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". Paul knelt down with them and prayed. They all cried and hugged and kissed him. They were extremely sad because he had told them they would never see him again. Then they went to the ship and Paul departed.

We must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive".

Acts 20:35 NIV

Paul in Jerusalem

Acts 21:17-chapter 23:24

Paul went to Jerusalem. There some Jews accused him of teaching against Jewish law and of defiling the temple by bringing Gentiles into it. The whole city was in an uproar, and people came running to see what was happening. They were trying to kill Paul, but he was rescued by the Roman soldiers. The crowd was so violent they had to carry Paul to get him away from his enemies.

They stopped on the stairs to the castle and Paul asked to speak to the crowd. With soldiers around him, he began to defend himself. He told of his conversion. They listened for awhile until he said the Lord had sent him to the Gentiles. Then they became violently angry. The commander took him inside and ordered him to be beaten.

They didn't know Paul was a Roman citizen, and Roman citizens were not to be beaten. When he told them of his citizenship, they became fearful of how they had treated him. The commander ordered him to appear before the Jewish Sanhedrin. He caused a division between the Pharisees and the Sadducees by revealing he was a Pharisee and believed in the resurrection of the dead. There was another uproar, and the commander took him to the barracks. That night the Lord stood near Paul and told him to take courage. He was going to Rome to tell the people there about his faith.

There was a plot to kill Paul, but his nephew learned of it and told the authorities. The commander decided to send him to Governor Felix. To insure his safe arrival, he was accompanied by 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen. They left at 9:00 at night with Paul riding on horseback.

As for God his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

Second Samuel 22:31 NIV

Paul Before the Governors

Acts 23:25- chapter 26:32

Paul appeared before three governors.

The commander had sent a letter to Felix, the Roman governor, stating the charges against him. Five days later the Jewish leaders with their lawyer, Tertullus (TURTUL us), arrived. He presented the Jews' case and Paul responded to the charges. Felix kept Paul in prison for two years, sending for him frequently and talking to him.

Paul next appeared before Festus (who became the Roman governor after Felix). Again the charges were brought against him and Paul defended his innocence. He told Festus he wanted to appeal to Caesar to try the case and his request was granted.

Before the time came for him to be sent to Rome, King Agrippa arrived in Caesarea (ses uh REE uh) with his wife Bernice. Festus discussed the case with him and the king said he would like to hear Paul speak.

The next day Paul was brought before the king. He told the king of his conversion and how he had changed from being the persecutor of Christians to being a Christian himself. Festus accused him of talking like an insane person. Paul continued reasoning with the two rulers.

Finally the governors left the room. They said to one another that Paul had done nothing to deserve death or imprisonment. Agrippa said Paul could have been set free if he had not asked to be sent to Caesar for trial. We know, of course, that God had plans for Paul in Rome and it was necessary for him to go.

You can find a description of the full armor of God in Ephesians 6: 14-17.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:13

Shipwreck

Acts 27:1- chapter 28:16

Paul sailed for Italy under the guard of a centurion named Julius. At the first stop Julius was kind enough to Paul to let him get off the ship and go visit his friends. They provided for his needs.

They sailed again and at the next port they changed ships. The wind was blowing so hard it was difficult for them to stay on course. Paul told them the trip was becoming dangerous, but the centurion decided to continue.

Hurricane force winds began to blow. They dropped anchor and the waves started battering the ship. In order to lighten the load, they began to throw the cargo overboard. By the third day of the storm, they were throwing away the ship's sailing gear. The storm went on and on for days. Paul stood up and in effect said, "I told you this was going to happen". He encouraged them by telling them about an angel who had appeared to him in the night. The angel told him the lives of all the people on the ship would be saved.

They had endured the storm for two weeks and were now getting close to land. They measured the depth of the water again and again. It was obvious they were getting in shallow water closer to land. They dropped four anchors to prevent them from being dashed against the rocks at the shore.

Paul urged the men to eat to gain some strength. They hadn't eaten for fourteen days. He took some bread, gave thanks, and began to eat. The other men ate also. Then they threw the grain in the cargo overboard to further lighten the ship.

When dawn came, they saw land. They lifted the anchors and ran the ship to the shore. It stuck fast in a sandbar and the ship began to break into pieces. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping, but Julius, the centurion in charge of Paul, convinced them to spare everyone. He ordered them to jump overboard. Those who could swim swam to shore. Those who couldn't swim grabbed pieces of wood and floated in. Everyone was saved, just as Paul had predicted.

They were told the island was called Malta. The people there were kind to them. It was cold and raining. They started to gather wood for a fire. Paul picked up some wood and put it on the fire. A viper crawled out of the wood and fastened itself to his hand. The people, when they saw the snake, thought justice was being done. They figured Paul was a murderer and even though he had escaped the sea, he was going to die of a snakebite. (Or so they thought.) They kept watching him to see what would happen. Then when nothing happened, they decided he must be a god.

They were invited to stay at the home of Publius (pub LEEus) the official on the island.

The father of Publius was sick and Paul healed him. When the islanders heard of the miracle, they too brought their sick folk and all were healed. The people provided for all their needs and after three months they set sail again.

The Lord will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life. the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Psalm 121:7-8

Paul a Prisoner in Rome

Acts 28:17-31

When Paul got to Rome he was allowed to be put under "house arrest". He was permitted to live by himself with a soldier to guard him.

After three days he called together the Jewish leaders of the city and told them his story. They were glad for an opportunity to talk with him. They had heard people talking about this new religion, and they wanted to learn more about it.

They made arrangements to meet again, and even more people came to the house. Paul talked to them all day long, from morning to evening. He told them about Jesus.

He tried to show them that Jesus was the One about whom the prophets had written. Some of the people were convinced, but others would not believe his words.

Paul was able to preach for two whole years from his rented house. Secular history (not the Bible) tells us that Paul was beheaded around AD 67. If you visit Rome today you can see the remains of the Colosseum which was completed in 80 A.D. which would probably be after the death of Paul.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us; may your ways be known on the earth, your salvation among all nations.

Psalm 67:1-2 NIV

Women of the Bible

God - Yellow

Any reference to God

Who - Orange

Main character(s) Who is the story about?

What - Pink

What are they doing? What happened?

When - Blue

When did it take place?

Where - Green

Where are they? Where did they go? Where did it take place?

Why - Red Underline

Why did it happen?

How - Purple

How did it happen?

Eve, the First Woman

In six days God created the world and everything in it. His creation was perfect and the world was perfect. There were trees, flowers, grass and animals of every kind. He had also planted a garden called Eden and had created a man, Adam to care and tend the garden. He told Adam he could eat of any tree in the garden except the tree of *knowledge of good and evil*. Of that tree he was not to eat or he would die.

God let Adam remain alone for a time. He became lonely. There was no one for him to love, to communicate with. He was the only human in the world. God saw that it was not good for him to be by himself, so he made a helper for him. He did not make her as he had made the animals and Adam from the dust of the ground. Instead he had something very special in mind for Adam. He caused him to go to sleep and took a part of his side, a rib and formed Eve from that. When Adam woke up and saw her he was amazed. He said she is "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh". They were so happy together.

Now Eve knew about the tree in the middle of the garden and the fact that they were not to eat of it. Either God or Adam had told her the law about what they could and could not eat.

One day the tempter in the form of a serpent came to Eve. He asked her about what they were allowed to eat and she told him they could not eat of the tree in the middle of the garden. They were not allowed to eat it or even touch it. The penalty would be death. The serpent said to her, "You shall *not* surely die." He told her just the opposite of what God had said. He convinced her that God didn't want them to eat of that tree because if they ate of it they would be like God. Eve began to look at the fruit in a different way; it was so beautiful, looked so good to eat, and if she ate it she could be just like God. She was overcome by the temptation. She took the fruit and ate it. Adam was right there with her and she gave some to him and he also ate. Adam blamed Eve for their sin, and Eve blamed the serpent.

It was just a piece of fruit, but it was a forbidden fruit. God had tested them and they had failed the test. Never would things be the same again. Because of their sin, trouble came into the world. Adam's work would be hard now because thorns and thistles would grow in the garden and have to be removed. The woman would experience pain in her body when she had her children, and the serpent himself was cursed to crawl in the dust of the ground.

They had to leave the beautiful garden where life had been perfect. Eve began to have children. First Cain and Abel then many more sons and daughters. From these first two people came all the people who have ever lived on the earth. We don't know how long Eve lived, but Adam her husband was 930 years old when he died.

Hannah

Hannah was married to an Israelite man, a Levite named Elkanah. In those days God allowed men to have more than one wife and often there were bad feelings among the wives. This was the case in Elkanah's family. His other wife, Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. She was so sad and desperately wanted to have a child. She even refused to eat. Peninnah provoked and aggravated her all the time and made her life miserable.

Every year the family went to Shiloh to worship. Elkanah saw Hannah crying and refusing to eat and he spoke to her gently and tried to comfort her. Hannah got up and went to the tabernacle by herself to worship the Lord. She prayed and asked Him to give her a son. She said if He would give her this child she would make a vow to give him back to the Lord and no razor would ever cut his hair. This was called the Nazarite vow. Hannah was praying silently and her lips were moving, but no sound was coming from her mouth. Eli, the high priest and judge, when he saw her doing this, thought she had been drinking alcohol and was drunk. He confronted her about it and told her to put away the wine. She told him she was not drunk, but was sorrowful and pouring out her heart to the Lord. After she told him her story he understood what was happening. He told her to go in peace because the Lord was going to answer her prayer and give her a child.

Hannah believed the words of the priest Eli. She was a changed person. No longer was she sad. She was a happy, joyful person because she knew in her heart that she would have a son just as the priest had said. She began to eat her meals. If Peninnah taunted her or made fun of her it made no difference because she knew she also would soon be a mother.

The family returned to their home in Ramah and in time Hannah did have a baby boy. She named him Samuel, a word which means "heard by God". God had heard her prayer and answered it.

When it came time for the family to go to Shiloh the next year to worship, Hannah stayed home with her young son. She said, "Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the Lord and remain there forever." Later when Samuel was a little older his mother took him with her to worship. She also took sacrifices to offer. When she saw Eli she told him she was the woman who had prayed there earlier. She left Samuel at the tabernacle to be raised by Eli the priest. Samuel would be dedicated to the Lord all his life. She kept her promise to return him to Shiloh to serve the Lord.

While Samuel was in Shiloh ministering to the Lord Hannah did not forget about her child. Oh no, he was on her mind all the time, and every year as he grew taller and taller she came back and brought him a robe that would be just the right size for him. God also blessed her with MORE children. She and Elkanah had three more sons and two daughters.

Sarah

Abraham was a man of God. He talked to God and God talked to him. One night God told him to look at the stars and count them if he could. "So shall your descendants be," God said. Even so, Abram (as he was called then) and his wife, Sarai did not have a child at that time. They grew older and older and there was still no child.

Sarah decided that God didn't mean for her to have a child, so she let her Egyptian servant, Hagar, take her place to have a child in the family. A son, Ishmael, was born to Abraham.

Once during a severe famine Abraham moved his family to Egypt. Before they got to Egypt he asked Sarah to tell the people she was his sister. She was a beautiful woman and Abraham was afraid the Egyptians would kill him in order to have his wife. She was called to the attention of Pharaoh and he took her into his house, but terrible things began happening to him. God sent plagues upon Pharaoh's house. He found out they had lied to him and that Sarah was really Abraham's wife. He sent them away letting Abraham keep all the sheep, oxen, donkeys and camels he had given him.

Abraham told the same lie again to King Abimelech. The king was going to take Sarah as his wife because he had been told she was Abraham's sister. Actually she was his half-sister, but it was still a lie because she was also his wife. God appeared to Abimelech in a dream and told him he was a dead man if he married Sarah. The king confronted Abraham with the lie and released Sarah to her husband. He also gave Abraham animals, servants and a thousand pieces of silver.

When Abram was 99 years old God renewed His covenant (His promise) with him and changed his name to Abraham and Sarai was to be called Sarah.

One day three men came to Abraham's tent. He had food prepared for them and they began to talk to him. They told him Sarah was going to have a son. Sarah, who was listening inside the tent, laughed out loud because she was 90 years old and her husband was 100! That was very old for a couple to be having a child. The messenger from God said, "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

And so she did. A son was born to her when she was 90 years old and Abraham named him Isaac, a word which means "laughter".

Sarah when she died was 127 years old. Her son Isaac would have been 37. Abraham bought a field near Hebron in which there was a cave. The owner wanted to give it to him, but he insisted on paying for it. He buried Sarah in the cave of Machpelah.

We read of Sarah in the New Testament in 1 Peter 3:5-6 "And they followed the lead of their own husbands. Sarah was like that. She obeyed Abraham. She called him her master. Do you want to be like her? Then do what is right. And don't give in to fear. "

Hagar

Hagar was the servant to Sarai (Sarah) who was the wife of Abraham. God had promised Abraham a family, but as yet he and his wife had no child. Sarah had given up and told her husband to take her handmaiden as his second wife. After a time Hagar learned she was going to have a child. However, this was not an occasion for happiness in the family. Jealousy arose between the two women. Hagar began to despise Sarah and Sarah started to mistreat Hagar to the point that she ran away from home.

She fled into the wilderness and there the Lord found her by a spring of water. God talked to her. He asked her why she was there. When she told him she was running away from her mistress, the Lord told her to return to Sarah and be obedient to her. He told her to name her son Ishmael, and He also told her what sort of person Ishmael would grow up to be. "He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Hagar called the name of the Lord "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees" because God had seen her plight and taken pity on her. The water well she was near would be called the "Well of the One Who Lives and Sees Me".

She did as the Lord commanded and returned home. In due time gave birth to her son, Ishmael. Abraham was eighty-six years old at the time. The child grew up. During all those years Abraham thought Ishmael was going to be his heir, but God appeared to him again and told him that he and Sarah would have a son, Isaac, and Isaac would be the one through whom the blessings would come. Abraham pleaded for Ishmael. God told him Ishmael would indeed be a great man, but not the son of promise. Ishmael's family would become a great nation and he would have twelve sons, princes.

Conditions became worse after the birth of Isaac. One day Sarah saw Ishmael scoffing or making fun and she became angry and told Abraham to send Ishmael and his mother away. This made Abraham very sad because Ishmael was his son also. God told him to listen to his wife Sarah and do as she said. He sent Hagar and Ishmael away, giving them some bread and water for their journey. When the water was used up she put him under a shrub and sat down a short distance from him. She thought they were going to die of thirst.

God heard the voice of the child. An angel spoke to Hagar and reassured her things were going to be alright. Ishmael would grow up and become a great man. She looked again and saw a well of water. She got water for them and they survived.

Ishmael did grow up and his descendants become a great nation of people. He became an archer, a marksman with a bow and arrow. When he was older his mother chose a wife for him, a woman from her homeland, the land of Egypt.

We read again of his descendants in the story of Joseph. The traders who took Joseph into Egypt were Ishmaelites. "Behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry (it) down to Egypt" - (Genesis 37:25).

In the New Testament Paul uses the two women Sarah and Hagar to tell a story about God's dealings with people in different times. Galatians 4:21-31.

Noah's Wife

People on earth had become very wicked and God was displeased . One man, however, found favor with God and that man was Noah. Noah was a righteous man and did what was pleasing to God. God told Noah He was going to destroy the wickedness which was on the earth, but Noah and his family would be saved.

God told him to build an ark for the saving of his family and the animals on the earth. He told Noah, " But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." He told Noah exactly how to build the ark.

We do not know the name of Noah's wife. The Bible doesn't tell us her name. Some have speculated she was the woman Naamah mentioned in Genesis 4:22, but we really don't know, so we will refer to her as Mrs. Noah.

She must have been a strong woman of faith just as Noah was a man who believed God. Their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born after Noah was 500 years old. Mrs. Noah was probably quite old also by that time. As the boys grew up she must have trained them in the way of the Lord. They helped Noah get ready for the flood which God said was coming. They evidently chose wisely in selecting wives who would be a help to them and not a hindrance.

She must have been a patient woman. It took a long time for Noah to build the ark, 100 years or more because we know Noah was 600 years old when the rain began to fall.

Noah's father Lamech and grandfather Methuselah both lived during the time of the building of the ark, but died shortly before the flood began, Lamech died five years before and Methuselah lived right up until the time of the flood before God took him. So Noah had some support from his extended family during those years. We don't know what happened to Noah's younger brothers and sisters.

Mrs. Noah probably had to endure the ridicule of friends and neighbors as they watched the construction of the huge boat Noah was building, but she never lost faith in God nor her husband.

When the time was right the family went into the ark and the rains came. It rained for 40 days and 40 nights. After the rain stopped it took a long time for the waters to go down and for the land to dry. The ark was their refuge for a year and ten days. Imagine being cooped up with those animals for such a long time.

After the flood was over and the land had dried up, Noah and his family left the ark. The first thing he did was to build an altar and sacrifice some of the clean animals to God. Someone may say, "But he only took two of every animal into the ark", but that is not quite right. We read in the Bible that God had commanded him to take seven each of every clean animal which was suitable for sacrifice, and two of every unclean animal.

When Noah, Mrs. Noah, and the sons and daughters-in-law looked up in the sky they saw a beautiful rainbow. It was the sign of God's promise He would never again destroy the earth with a flood.

Rebekah

One day when Abraham was very old he called his most trusted servant to him. He told him to go and find a wife for Isaac, the son born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. He didn't want Isaac to marry one of the women of Canaan, so he sent the servant back to his own country and family to find a suitable wife.

"What if she won't come with me?" said the servant. Abraham said if that happened then the servant would be released from his oath. The servant went on his way back to the city of Nahor. He had ten camels bearing gifts for the woman and her family. He came to a well and had his camels kneel down. Several young women were there drawing water.

How was he going to know which woman was the chosen one? He began to pray to God, "Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac."

Even while he was speaking a beautiful young woman came to him. He asked her for a drink and she let her pitcher down from her shoulder to her hand and gave him a drink. Then she offered to give his camels a drink also! It was just as the servant had prayed. He gave her a golden nose ring and two golden bracelets. He learned she was one of Abraham's relatives. He knew she was the one for Isaac. God had answered his prayer.

A camel can drink a lot of water, maybe as much as a large barrel would hold, and the servant had ten camels with him. This was no small task for Rebekah to carry enough water to water all his camels. Imagine how much water it would take to fill 10 big barrels! She was truly a remarkable woman to make such an offer.

After she watered the camels she ran home. Her brother Laban saw the gold ring and bracelets and went to the well and brought the man home with him. The servant was anxious to tell the reason for his coming. He retold the whole story and Rebekah's family believed the Lord's hand was in it. They consented to let Rebekah go back to Canaan with him.

He gave Rebekah more gold and silver jewelry and clothing. He gave rich gifts to her family. They wanted Rebekah to stay at home for another ten days before leaving, but the servant wanted for them to be on their way. They called Rebekah and asked her about it and she said she would go with him. They sent her nurse and her maids with her and they traveled far away to Isaac's home.

As they got nearer she saw a man walking in the field. She got down from her camel, covered her face with a veil and went to meet her husband. Isaac loved her very much.

At one time there was a famine in the land and Isaac moved and went to Abimelech the king of the Philistines to live in his land. Rebekah was very beautiful and Isaac was afraid someone would kill him to get his wife, so he said, "She is my sister". Does that sound familiar? Years before his father Abraham had told Abimelech the same lie about his wife Sarah. Abimelech was upset when he learned the truth, and told the people of the country that no one was to bother Rebekah.

Rebekah and Isaac had been married twenty years and they still had no children, then she was able to have a child. And not just one child, but two. She had twins. The first son born was covered with hair and they called him Esau which means "hairy". The second one born was named Jacob meaning "supplanter" or one who takes the place of another by scheming. Even though Esau was born first, Jacob would be the leader in the family.

Years later we will see Rebekah's role in getting Jacob named as the leader in the family. Jacob, with his mother's help, tricked his father Isaac into giving the blessing for the first born to him instead of Esau. Jacob was Rebekah's favorite son. She wanted him to get the best of everything and God *had* told her that the older son would serve the younger. As a result of the trickery and deceit Jacob had to leave home to escape his brother's wrath. Rebekah sent him away to her brother Laban and she never saw him again.

We do not know when Rebekah died, but we do know she was buried in the cave of Machpelah in the field Abraham had bought for a burial place for Sarah.

Rachel

Rachel was a shepherdess. She cared for the sheep of her father Laban. She brought the sheep to a well where the shepherds watered their sheep. On this particular day Jacob, her cousin, was also at the well. He was running away from his brother Esau, and his mother Rebekah had told him to go to the land of her people. The other shepherds at the well told him the young woman arriving was Laban's daughter.

There was a large stone over the top of the well. Jacob removed the stone and watered her sheep for her. Then he kissed Rachel and cried. He told her who he was. She ran and told her father who went out to meet Jacob and took him home with him.

He worked for Laban a month and then they talked about wages. By this time Jacob was in love with Rachel. She was the younger of Laban's daughters and very beautiful. She had an older sister Leah who was not as pretty. Jacob agreed to work for Laban seven years if he would give him Rachel to be his wife. The time flew by for Jacob because he loved her so.

When the seven years were up Jacob asked for his wife and a wedding was prepared. At last he would have his beloved Rachel. The bride was probably heavily veiled so Jacob had no way of knowing he was marrying Leah the older sister instead of Rachel. The next day when he saw his bride without her veil he realized he had been tricked! He had married Leah instead of Rachel. Her father told Jacob in their country it was customary for the older daughter to marry first.

Seven long years and he still didn't have Rachel for a wife. Laban said if he would work another seven years he could have Rachel also. So after a week there was another wedding and this time Rachel became his wife.

So now Jacob had two wives and they each had a handmaiden. They all began having sons, everyone except Rachel and she had no children. After ten sons and a daughter were born to Jacob, God remembered Rachel and she also was able to have a son. She called his name Joseph. He would become the favorite son of Jacob because of his great love for Rachel.

After twenty years had passed Jacob wanted to leave Laban. They agreed that Jacob could have all the sheep that were spotted and speckled and Laban would keep the unblemished sheep. When the lambs were born, all the strong ones were spotted and speckled so Jacob had a large flock of sheep. Jacob had to serve him another six years for the flocks, but Laban still didn't want him to leave with Leah and Rachel and all their children, so Jacob left secretly while Laban was away. Before they left, Rachel stole some household idols that belonged to her father. After three days Laban learned they were gone. It took him seven days to catch up with them. Before he got to them God spoke to him and told him not to harm Jacob. When he reached the place where the family was camped he accused Jacob of taking his idols. Jacob told him he could search for them. Rachel had put them in the camel's saddle and was sitting on them. She didn't get up from her seat and Laban never found the stolen goods.

Laban and Jacob talked and came to an agreement. Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren and went back to his home. Jacob and his family continued on to his homeland.

As they came near they were met by Esau, the brother he had tricked so many years before. Esau had 400 men with him. Surely he meant harm to them. Jacob separated out a large flock of animals as a peace offering to Esau. He put his family behind him, first the maid servants, then Leah and her children, and at the very back Rachel and Joseph. He wanted her in the most protected place.

Jacob was expecting an attack. He prayed to God for protection and that night he wrestled with Him. God blessed him there and changed his name to Israel. The next morning when he met Esau, his brother was forgiving and reluctantly accepted the gifts of cattle Jacob sent to him.

Rachel had one more son, but she died when he was born. As she was dying she named him Ben-Oni which means "son of my sorrow", but Jacob changed his name to Benjamin which means "son of the right hand". Jacob now had twelve sons. We call their descendants the twelve tribes of Israel.

Leah

Leah was the older daughter of Laban. She had a younger sister Rachel who had been promised to Jacob in marriage. It is said of the two girls, "Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance." When it came time for the wedding, her father Laban substituted brides and Jacob found he was married to Leah instead of Rachel, whom he loved. Their father said his reason for doing it was because in their country it was customary for the older daughter to marry first.

Jacob had already worked seven years for Laban in order to marry Rachel, so he agreed to work another seven years, and a week after the first wedding there was a second one in which he received Rachel as his bride.

Leah longed for her husband to love her as he loved her sister, but it never happened. She had her first son and named him Reuben which means "behold a son". She was sure her husband would love her when she gave him a son. Her second son she called Simeon, meaning "God hears". Her third son was Levi which means "companion". Surely her husband would be her companion now. The name of the fourth son Judah meant "let Him be praised". Then a fifth son Issachar, and a sixth Zebulun were born. She now had six sons and continued to love her husband, but he did not return her affection. At a later time she would have a baby girl, Dinah, who would be Jacob's only daughter. Rachel meanwhile had not been able to have any children.

When Jacob left his father-in-law's country he started back to his own country and was met by his brother Esau, whom he had tricked. Esau was coming to meet them with 400 men. Jacob feared for his family. He put the handmaidens in the front of the line, next Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph were at the back of the line in the most protected place. Leah again saw where she stood in the family. Jacob would not protect her as well as he would protect Rachel and her child. Fortunately when the brothers met, Esau's anger had cooled in the twenty years since they parted. He meant no harm to Jacob and his family.

Jacob's family continued to grow until he had twelve sons and one daughter. Rachel would have a son named Joseph, and later a son called Benjamin by his father.

God saw the suffering Leah endured and he blessed her above her more attractive sister. Leah held a special place because of the sons she had. Her son Levi became the father of the priestly tribe of Israel and his descendants include Moses, Aaron, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, Barnabas and Peter. From the descendants of Judah came King David and Jesus, the Son of God.

At the end of their lives Leah was the wife who was buried with her husband Jacob in the Cave of Machpelah.

Jochebed, Mother of Moses

Jacob, his sons, and their families had gone into Egypt to live because there was a severe famine in their land, and they were able to find food in Egypt. Joseph, Jacob's son, was a ruler in Egypt at that time and the children of Jacob (Israel) were treated kindly. Years passed. Jacob and his sons died as well as everyone of his generation.

The people of Israel had many children and had become a great nation. Pharaoh began to fear them. There were so many of them! If a war came, the Israelites might take sides with the enemy and fight against Pharaoh. He made slaves of the children of Israel. They had to work hard making bricks, building cities, and working in the fields.

Pharaoh told the midwives Shiphrah and Puah to kill the baby boys. These two women helped the mothers when the babies were born, but they knew it would be wrong to harm the children, so they made excuses and didn't obey the king. So the king commanded all his people, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

The Israelite women were so scared. They didn't want their baby boys to be killed. There was a man of the tribe of Levi named Amram. He and his wife Jochebed already had two children, a daughter Miriam and a son Aaron. Then during this terrible time another son was born. He was a beautiful child and they loved him very much. They hid him for three months.

Jochebed wanted him to be in a safe place. Their home was not a safe place for him. In those days people would gather bulrushes, marsh grasses with long stems, to make baskets. A basket made of grass would not keep the water out, so Jochebed used asphalt and pitch, sticky waterproof substances, to make the ark (basket) waterproof.

She put the baby in the basket and placed it in the water among the reeds growing by the edge of the river. Miriam watched him to see what would happen. The basket bobbed in the water and floated until it came to the place where Pharaoh's daughter was bathing. She saw the ark among the reeds and sent a servant to get it. It had a cover on it, and when she opened it the baby began to cry. She said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Her heart was tender and she didn't want the baby boy to be killed.

About that time his big sister Miriam came out of hiding. She offered to get a nurse for the child. You know, of course, who the nurse was going to be. The baby's own mother! Pharaoh's daughter named him "Moses", a word meaning "drawn out" because she had drawn him out of the water.

His mother raised him until he was big enough to go and live in the palace. During that time his family taught him about his people and told him the stories of the Israelite family. Then he went back to the princess, became her son and lived as a prince of Egypt in the palace until he was a grown man.

Jochebed was used by God to save her baby boy. God had a very important job for Moses to do when he grew up. He would be the one to save his people and lead them out of slavery in Egypt.

Pharaoh's Daughter

The parents of Moses were slaves in Egypt. The Israelites had been enslaved for hundreds of years. When you read the story of Jochebed, his mother, you learn that she hid him for three months after his birth. To escape the decree of the wicked Pharaoh of Egypt she put him in a waterproof basket in the Nile river. The Nile river was essential to life in Egypt and the Egyptians thought the river had special powers.

What if the basket turned over and the baby drowned? What if it floated down the river and the crocodiles found it? What if it were found by the soldiers? What would happen to their beautiful baby?

His older sister Miriam watched to see where the ark would float. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the river. We do not know her name. Perhaps Jochebed may have known this was the place where the princess regularly bathed and was hoping she would be kind-hearted and compassionate.

The princess saw the ark floating in the water among the reeds and sent her maid to get it. When she opened it the baby began to cry. Was it just coincidence the basket floated to the very spot where the princess was bathing? Did the baby just happen to cry and touch the heart of Pharaoh's daughter? No, God's hand was in all the events of that day so long ago. He had a special job for this baby boy when he grew up to be a man.

Pharaoh's daughter immediately recognized the child as one of the Hebrew babies. She knew her father's decree that all male babies of the Hebrews were to be killed. In order to keep the baby she would have to go against her father's wishes. The child would be subjected to prejudice because he was a Hebrew.

Miriam came from her hiding place and offered to get a nurse for the baby. She went to get her mother, of course. The princess said to Jochebed, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." Not only would Jochebed get to care for her child, she would be paid for doing it!

When he was old enough to leave his mother, the child was brought to the palace to live with the princess. She called his name "Moses" because as she said, "I drew him out of the water." He became her own son and she gave him the best education Egypt had to offer. We read in the book of Acts, "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." He probably learned about history, astronomy, plants, and animals. And without a doubt knew how to read Egyptian hieroglyphics. After all, he *was* the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Some scholars think he may have been in line to become the ruler of Egypt.

We know very little about the princess except for these few verses in the Bible, but we know she was a kind person with a tender heart. She was also brave in defying her father, the pharaoh. We wonder what she told the people in the palace about Moses. Did she tell them about finding him in the Nile river? Was he accepted by the other Egyptian children? We don't know any more about the years when he was growing up. The next time we hear of him, he is a grown man.

The brave women in this story helped Moses fulfill God's mission for him. The princess saved him from death and the early training he received from his birth mother prepared him to later leave the splendor of Egypt to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

Elizabeth, Mother of John

Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. She was married to a priest of Israel named Zacharias. It was said of them that they were both "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless". She and her husband were both getting quite old and they had never had children.

One day Zacharias was serving as priest in the temple and the angel Gabriel appeared to him. It frightened him, but the angel told him to not be afraid. God had a message for him. Elizabeth was going to have a son! After all these years their prayers were being answered. Zacharias was to name him John.

The angel said of the child that was to be born that he would be great in the sight of the Lord. He was not to drink wine nor strong drink, and he would be filled with the Holy Spirit. His mission would be to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

Zacharias didn't believe what the angel had spoken to him. Because of his unbelief he would not be able to speak until the child was born. He would be mute.

The people outside the temple wondered why he was staying so long in the temple. When he finally came out and was speechless, they knew he had seen a vision in the temple.

True to the words of the angel, Elizabeth did conceive a child. She hid herself for five months and didn't go anywhere. One day she had a visitor. It was her cousin Mary, who had also been visited by the angel Gabriel who told her she would be the mother of Jesus. But even before Mary could tell her the news, Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, already knew. She said to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? " Mary then began her beautiful song .

"My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, then she went home. By now it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born. When the baby arrived, her friends and relatives were so happy for her. They all supposed he would be named Zacharias after his father, but Elizabeth said, "No, he shall be called John."

John? None of their relatives were named John. Surely Elizabeth must be mistaken. They made signs to Zacharias asking him about the child's name. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." Then his silence was broken and he could talk again. He began praising God for the wonderful event which had taken place. People wondered, "What kind of child will this be?" And Zacharias prophesied of him, "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."

Elizabeth and her husband raised the child and he grew and became strong in spirit.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Mary was a Jewish girl who lived in the city of Nazareth. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. Mary didn't know it yet, but God had chosen her from among all the Jewish maidens to fulfill a very special purpose for Him.

God sent an angel to her with the message. The angel Gabriel said to her, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Mary was afraid, but the angel explained to her that she was going to have a son, and his name was to be Jesus.

Mary's baby was not to be born in the manner that other babies on earth had been born. He *would* have an earthly mother, Mary, but He would be fathered by the Holy Spirit of God. He would be the *Son of God* ! He would be Emmanuel, "God is with us". He would be a king and establish a kingdom which would never end.

Then Mary asked, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" Then the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

You can imagine Joseph's reaction when he found out Mary was pregnant. They had not finalized the marriage nor lived together as man and wife. She would be disgraced. As he was trying to figure out what to do, an angel appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

So Joseph and Mary were married as they had planned. Did people suspect she was already pregnant? The newlyweds knew the truth. They knew the Child she was carrying was from God.

Another person also knew the truth; Elizabeth, her cousin. She visited with Elizabeth, (who would become the mother of John the Baptist) and told her about the angel's visit and the events that had taken place.

As the time neared for the baby to be born, Mary and Joseph had to go to the town of Bethlehem to pay their taxes. When they arrived in the town all the inns were filled because many other people had also come into town for the same purpose. The only place for them to stay was in a stable, and it was there that Jesus, the Son of God, was born. Mary wrapped her baby in some cloths she had brought with her to Bethlehem.

The first announcement of the birth was to shepherds watching their sheep in the field. An angel appeared to them saying, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Then many angels appeared praising God for the event which had taken place. The shepherds hurried and found the Baby and immediately began to tell other people about what they had witnessed.

Mary and Joseph lovingly cared for the Child and were guided by the Spirit. Once, because of a warning by an angel, they had to flee to Egypt and stay for a long while because His life was in danger.

When Jesus, at the age of forty days, was presented in the temple before Simeon, the prophet said to Mary, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." And Mary's soul *was* pierced when thirty-three years later she saw her Son crucified on a cross.

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Go and read them in **YOUR** Bible!

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Remember...the big story is about God and You.

God created **You**.

You are worth **God's** attention.

God loves **You** and He wants **You**.

God never intended for **You** to go through pain in life.

God wants to help **You** not sin in anger.

God has already overcome the world and satan.

God sacrificed His son on the cross for **You**.

God is more than capable of filling your void.

God is the only one who can show **You** true love.

God wants to give **You** a taste of real joy on this earth.

God wants **You** to be safe in His arms.

God will give **You** real peace.

God wants **You** to be thankful for everything.

God wants to help **You** write your story with Him.

God wants to be with **You forever**.

You have hope in **God**.

Prayer

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (NLT)

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