

Children’s Beautiful Bible Treasures

--By CQ

God Creates the Earth

Would you like to know how the world began? God wanted to make a planet—Earth—and place on it some very special creations. You, and other people too!

But it needed to be made just right, so you and others could live on it and enjoy all the amazing things He wanted to fill it with.

God is an amazing guy—and He’s got a lot of love too, more than you can even imagine!

Everything He does comes from His heart of love—for a loving reason.

When He decides to make something, all it takes is for Him to give the word, and things happen.

God said, “Let there be light”, and there was light!

Next He made air and the sky—because we’d need that on our planet to survive.

He divided the water, and put some down below on the Earth and some high up above too.

He then decorated the whole Earth with beautiful and useful plants and trees, grass, flowers, and all sorts of things that grow, and things that you can eat.

Each plant had seeds too, so more and more would grow, and the Earth would be filled with beauty and all that was needed.

God Creates the Universe

Have you ever tried to do a project, but then found out that you had forgotten something important?

You realised there was lots more to it than just gathering a few items and getting to work on your project.

Well, God put lots of thought and care into creating the world. He didn’t forget anything.

He spent the fourth day making some other things that, though not exactly part of Earth, did help to add what was needed in order for it to work properly.

God made the Sun to give light, to give warmth, and to help plants grow. The sun also helps with the water cycle that is so important to all things living on Earth.

He made the Moon to shine and give a gentle light at night, and to help us know such things as how long a week or month is, by looking at its size and shape in the sky.

Stars and planets were also made and placed in the space surrounding Earth, in all the right places.

The stars make a beautiful, sparkly sky at night, and there is a reason why each planet orbiting the Sun has been made and placed just where it is.

Maybe one day you’ll find out more about them. People are always fascinated about what is going on in space. It is an interesting study.

We only know a small amount, compared to all that there is to know about our universe, but we do know that it’s enormous!

Animals Are Made

The world became a lively place, as creatures of all kinds, types, sizes and shapes were created.

God loves life—things that live, move, breathe, explore, enjoy and do what He made them for. He loves creating all sorts of things.

God is the greatest inventor there ever was or ever will be, and His ideas of new things to make are endless.

God had great fun on the fifth and sixth days of His big creation project. At last, after all the preparation of creating a planet where humans and animals could survive, He was finally able to add the creatures to it.

First, God made the sea creatures and fish, as well as the birds of all types.

The next day land creatures were created and began to fill the Earth.

He made many types of all kinds of animals, birds, fish, and insects.

God gave them all their first instruction—to multiply, to have babies and to fill the Earth with as many creatures as possible!

God loved to watch the lively creatures and all their funny ways. Each one was unique and different, and clever in its own way.

God put those clever ideas and instincts within them so they'd know how to live on Earth.

It was now an active, lively, and noisy world, with fun and interesting sights and sounds. Each creature had its own way of communicating and living.

The First Man on Earth

People often wonder what God looks like. We may not have seen Him in all His wonderful splendour and awesome, light-filled glory, but He did make something on Earth to look a lot like Him. You! God made mankind “in His image”, to resemble Him.

As soon as planet Earth was inhabitable, and had all that it needed to support life, God made a man.

So far, the only thing God did to create the different things on Earth was to speak the words and things just came into being. He doesn't need a factory to create things.

This time, however, God did something different. He formed a man out of the dirt, the mud, the clay of the Earth that He had just made.

After man was shaped just right, God breathed life into him.

What a moment of wonder that was, to see the first person alive, thinking, exploring and moving on the planet God had made for him, and many more people were to follow.

Then God gave him a name—Adam—and He gave him a fun job to do, too. Adam was to choose what each animal and creature on Earth was to be called.

One by one they came before him and were given a name. Adam must have had a great time getting to see each and every creature, from huge elephants to the tiniest bugs, and giving each one a name suited to it.

No matter how many fun animals and interesting creatures there were, Adam saw that he was the only person, the only one made just like him, and the only one that resembled God, his only Father.

Adam was lonely and longed for a friend, a companion, someone to talk with, who would understand what it was like to be a person on Earth. He wanted someone to love and who would love him too.

The First Woman on Earth

Everyone needs to know that they are special to someone. Even Adam needed to feel this. He wanted someone to share life's joys with. He wanted someone who would understand his feelings, and who knew what it was like to live on Earth, and who could help him. He needed and wanted a companion.

God has so much love, and He made us to need and want it too. Love is to us like the sunshine and the moisture is to the flowers—it helps them to grow and blossom into beautiful parts of nature.

Love can help to bring beautiful and wonderful things into your life and others' lives. We need it just as much as we need other things in life.

God knew that Adam needed someone to love and to be loved by, in order to make his life complete.

Adam already had a great place to live, and all the food and water he needed. There was no sickness or danger, all creatures were just as God had made them to be—friendly and gentle, and helping the world in their own ways. However, Adam didn't feel complete. God knew just what he needed.

After putting Adam into a very deep sleep, God created that special somebody that Adam was missing.

When Adam woke up, he saw standing beside him a beautiful woman. He was delighted!

Adam named her "Eve", and they became close friends and companions, and could help each other. Now he had someone to love and live with, and be loved by.

God Rests

Do you like playing? Is it fun to have a good run outside, breathing fresh air, exploring a beautiful place? Do you sometimes like just resting and doing nothing at all? Do you like having a chat with a friend?

Have you learned to have quiet time, where it's just you and Jesus talking together, getting to know Him, and learning to love Him? Are there some things that are just real fun for you that you can't do all the time, but every week or so it works out to get to do them?

That's what God wanted people to do. He set us an example. Did you know that God even rested, after all His work on creating the marvellous Earth, the sky, and all that fills it?

He took a day to step back and to enjoy the things He had made. He didn't work on that seventh day, after creating the world.

People need time to do the same—to rest, to do something recreational, fun, refreshing, relaxing and enjoyable.

There's a time for work and a time to relax, and God made people to need both. He set us the first example of taking time to be refreshed after working.

To stay healthy and happy, people need more than just fun things. They need time to be refreshed in all kinds of ways. People need time to exercise, to keep themselves fit and healthy. They need time to sleep and rest, so they don't get weak and sick.

They need time to rest their eyes, and not overuse them on TV and computers. They need time to talk with Jesus and read His Word and hear what He wants to say, for their heart to be inspired and strengthened. They need time with friends and family, to feel loved and cared for.

There are many things that you can do to stay healthy and happy, but the most important is to take time to love and talk with Jesus—and that can be done no matter what else you are doing for fun and relaxation.

You can talk with Him any time of day or night. This is what will renew, strengthen, and empower you the most, as you carry on in your life and do your work—whatever you are meant to do.

God’s Garden, and His Gardener

Have you ever gone on a fun picnic, but then there were some things that made it not as nice as you would have liked?

Perhaps there were bothersome flies or mosquitoes that would not leave you alone, or it began to rain just when you were starting to eat. Or perhaps there was broken glass and trash carelessly left around the area, and thorn bushes that made things less than ideal.

None of these things were a problem for Adam and Eve, who had the privilege of living and working in God’s special garden, called “The Garden of Eden”.

The world’s first people were placed there to care for it, and to enjoy it as well.

All was perfect. All was beautiful. They could walk without shoes and nothing hurt their feet. There were no thorns or pests, no biting bugs, or sickness.

Adam and Eve ran happily through this garden, picking fruit and berries when they got hungry, or drinking from crystal-clear refreshing waters.

God enjoyed watching these first two people that He’d made having fun in such a beautiful place.

They had lots to learn and explore, made discoveries, and had a great time there in this special garden, created and planted by God Himself.

How lovely it was. Wouldn’t you have loved to walk in it too? Maybe one day God will re-create it, so we can see just how marvellous it was.

Trees and Choices

Is it hard for you to always make the right decision—especially when you’ve been told not to do something that actually looks like fun or as if it wouldn’t make much of a difference if you did it?

Adam and Eve were given everything they needed, and more. God said they could eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden that they wanted to, as well as a special tree called the “Tree of Life”.

It was a special place to be. There were no “do not enter” construction signs, or roadblocks, or books of rules with many complicated instructions to figure out, but there was one important instruction that God gave them that they had to obey.

There was a tree whose fruit would introduce them to knowing not just the good, but the bad as well. They were never to eat from it or things would get awfully difficult for them.

If they wanted things to stay pleasant and good and beautiful, they needed to do things God's way.

One sad day they disobeyed and ate the fruit from that tree. It made everyone sad—Adam, Eve, and especially God. Because of their disobedience, God had to take away many of the blessings and extra special things that they had enjoyed on Earth, and they were given new jobs and work to do.

God still loved them very much, and was near them, but for Adam and Eve, things were going to change. The world was to have more troubles, and work would be hard; this would keep people busy and would teach them that doing things God's way is always best.

Enoch and Methuselah

There was a man called Enoch who lived long ago. He had a most unusual experience—he never died!

Now that doesn't mean that he's still on Earth today, but he was around for more than 300 years, until one day God simply took him up to live with Him. He vanished from one moment to the next. Amazing! And it was just because he loved taking time with God more than doing anything else.

The world in his day had become quite a bad place. It was so sad. It wasn't just Adam and Eve who made one wrong choice in the Garden, eating the forbidden fruit.

Everyone then on Earth kept choosing things that weren't according to God's way. There was a lot of sorrow and hurting and bad and sad things going on.

Enoch loved to take time away from it all, just to hear God talking. Then one day, God took Enoch to be with Him all the time.

Now it might seem like 300 years is a long time to live anyway, but back then people lived much longer than that! Several people lived to be over 900 years old!

Enoch's own son, Methuselah, lived for 969 years! Pretty amazing! Things have changed now, and because of people's choices to do wrong, God has changed it so that people now live a much shorter time on Earth.

Whether you live a long time or only for a short while, the most important thing to remember is to do as Enoch did—choose God's way, take time to listen to Him, and teach others God's way too. Then one day when it's your time to live with God, you'll be so glad you did your best to live as He wanted you to.

A Good Man for a Great Job

Have you ever been very sad because something you liked broke, or you couldn't have what you were hoping for?

Well, God felt so very sad because the nice world He made got ruined and turned ugly and unpleasant.

God found one man who was following His way—Noah. He listened to God! So God told him what was going to happen to the world.

God would bring a great flood, the biggest one there ever was, that would cover the entire planet!

God told Noah to build a very large boat; an ark. In the ark he and his family—his wife, three sons and their wives—would be safe during the flood.

God told Noah to also bring into the ark two of every type of animal and creature that lived on the land.

It wasn't easy, and it took a lot of perseverance and hard work for many years. People didn't encourage him, but made things difficult for Noah and his family through their unkind and ungodly words and actions.

This didn't stop Noah, though. He just kept on for over one hundred years. That's a long time to do a job and not give up!

Finally, it was all built and they and the chosen animals went safely inside, with all they would need for the journey. God then shut the ark's door tightly, and the watery journey was soon to begin.

Rain and a Rainbow

After obeying all that God had said to do, Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, and a whole lot of animals and creatures of all types were safely in the ark.

They waited for the water God said would come—more water than they'd ever seen before. After seven days of waiting in the ark, the rain and flood began.

It was quite a wild ride, being in a boat while water was pouring down from above and gushing up from holes in the ground.

They were safe and dry, however, because they had obeyed, even down to the smallest details, all that God had told them to do. They were glad then that they had been diligent and faithful, and had done a good job of what God had told them to do.

Aren't rainbows beautiful? It's always special and fun to see one. Noah and his family were the first people ever to see a rainbow.

After that long and difficult time when the flood washed over the world, things started at last to get dry enough on Earth that Noah's team and the animals could leave the ark and walk once again on the ground.

They thanked God for keeping them safely through it all, and for permitting them to live in a fresh, new world. They celebrated with a special time of praise and prayer.

Then, as a sign of promise that God would never flood the whole world like that again, God put a beautiful rainbow in the sky. Noah and his family had never seen one before. It looked marvellous, magnificent!

They had faith that God would continue to keep them and help them as they started the big job of setting up and rebuilding on the cleaned-up world.

The Tower of Babel

Isn't it fun to watch and hear young children as they are learning to talk? Some of the words they use for things can sound so funny!

Did you know that there are thousands of languages around the world—and babies have the ability to learn whatever language their parents speak, just from hearing it around them? It's truly incredible!

Did you know there was a time when only one language was spoken in the whole world? It was easy to understand things then. It was also easy for everyone to think and say and all do the same things.

One day a big important man got an idea that everyone should work together to build the world's largest tower. He thought they could prove how very powerful and smart they all were.

They thought if they made it high enough, it would reach up to heaven and they would be as great as God.

God had other plans for people on Earth, however. He didn't want them to lift themselves up with their silly, proud ideas.

He wanted them to travel, to explore, to do new things—not to all do the same thing and stay in the same place. So He did something very amazing.

Unexpectedly, each family on Earth began to speak a new language—so new that no one else had ever heard it, and no one but their family could understand it.

That was the end of their proud plans. And it was the beginning of travel, cultures, countries, and new places and things discovered!

A Man on the Move

Abraham was a man who took action and did whatever God told him to do. He had faith that everything would work out well.

His life wasn't easy as he travelled in the hot desert, and stayed in the country of Egypt for a while, and had to deal with troublesome people at times.

But he spent time with God, praying and listening to what He had to say, and this gave him peace and assurance in his heart.

Abraham believed what God said, and it gave him faith and courage through all the difficulties.

First God told him to move from where he was living and to go to a new place.

Then God promised him a child of his own, which he and his wife Sarah did not yet have. They were looking forward to having a child for a very long time.

God promised that not only would they have a son, but that eventually there would be so many great-great grandchildren, that they would be as uncountable as the stars!

Abraham and Sarah had to wait though, until it was the right time, and keep having faith.

Living Peacefully

Abraham wanted to have a peaceful time while living and travelling with his very big team.

Abraham's nephew and his team were also travelling with him.

One time when there wasn't enough grass around for all the animals, it made things quarrelsome between all the herdsmen.

Abraham suggested to Lot, his nephew, that he choose whatever part of the land he would like to go to, and Abraham and his team would then go to another place.

He kindly gave Lot the first choice.

So Lot looked around and took the best place that he could see and moved there with his own team of helpers and animals.

It was a place with plenty of water, grass and trees. Everything they needed was there.

It was good that they stopped quarrelling over the little area of dry land, and looked for other ideas and solutions.

Things were at peace again, and Abraham's journey continued.

Three Special Visitors

Abraham continued to travel, going where God led him to go. It was often hot during the day and cold at night.

Water was a challenge to find, and wells were hard work to dig.

Abraham faithfully and cheerfully did as God told him to do, and went where God led him.

One hot day, when sitting in the doorway of his tent, he was delighted to see a team of visitors approaching.

They looked more like angels than men.

Abraham knew how tired and thirsty travelling people felt.

He wanted to let them rest and be refreshed.

He ran to the three approaching men, and invited them to stay for a while, to eat and to rest.

The angelic visitors agreed to stop for awhile, and Sarah, Abraham's wife, quickly cooked and served a good meal for them.

While Sarah was in the tent she heard one of them say something that brought a smile to her face, and made her laugh a little!

The angelic visiting messenger said that she and Abraham were soon finally going to have a child!

They'd waited and waited for a child to be theirs, as God had promised, and hadn't given up hope.

How happy they were to hear that it was nearly time for it to happen.

Isaac

With great joy at last Abraham and Sarah held their precious baby! God had given them the promised child.

They named him Isaac, and he sure made them smile, laugh and feel very loved.

Abraham and Sarah knew that when God says something, it happens. Waiting for so long taught them patience, and that's a good thing to have.

Having patience, and having faith that God would care for them and do just what He promised, were great things that would help them to be very good parents to their new little boy.

They taught Isaac all they could—about God, and about the world around them, about the animals and the skills they'd learned, and how to live and survive.

They had fun together, they laughed, and they climbed mountains, explored the surrounding areas, looked at the stars, and did so many other things.

Abraham told Isaac many stories, many that you have just read about in this book.

He told stories about how the world was made, about Noah, and about the big tall tower of Babel.

Abraham told his son Isaac what God had told him, and about God's promises and instructions.

He told his son Isaac, that if he also kept following and obeying what God had said, then God's words and promises would come true for him too.

Would Isaac choose to do things God's way, the way that his father Abraham taught him?

I'm glad to say that he did! This made his parents and God very happy! —And Isaac too!

Patience, Faith and Rebekah

Isaac had to learn patience, faith, and trust in God. Faith helps you know that things will work out for the best, because you know God won't fail to keep His word and promises to you. You know that He's in control and is working all things out for the best.

Patience is waiting, no matter how long it takes, with a calm and trusting attitude. You know that eventually you'll get what is good for you, and what God wants you to have.

Patience can be shown by not getting upset easily when things don't turn out as you had hoped, or when people don't act as nicely as they should.

One wish that Isaac had to wait a long time for was to get married and have a family. Abraham wanted to make sure that just the right kind of woman was found.

Isaac would need someone who loved God and would obey Him, and who would love and care for Isaac and make a good team together with him.

Eleazar, Abraham's helper, was sent on a mission. He and a group of men travelled by camel to a certain place in the country to see if there was a woman who would like to come and live with them, and marry Isaac.

Eleazar prayed for the right one to come by, as they rested beside the well, needing water.

A kind woman called Rebekah came just then, and offered water to them and to their camels. It happened just like Eleazar had prayed.

That night while the travelling men were eating dinner with Rebekah and her family, Eleazar asked her if she would like to come home with them the very next day! —To live in a new place and to become Isaac's wife. Rebekah agreed, and travelled with them.

As soon as the team arrived, and Isaac saw her, and Rebekah saw him, they loved each other right from the start, and got married. Later on they had two children—twins—Jacob and Esau.

Isaac and the Wells

Isaac was Abraham's special son, and he learned from his father the best way to live—showing love and kindness, listening to God and obeying Him, and having patience to sometimes wait a long time for the best things to come.

One time he was very patient, and showed others the best way to be.

A deep hole needed to be dug to make a well to get water out of the ground.

There were no other streams or rivers or lakes in that area. Isaac's team needed water for their families and animals.

Then some grabby, unkind men decided they wanted to be the only ones using Isaac's well.

Oh dear! That must have been very difficult for Isaac and his family and everyone they travelled with.

They'd worked so hard to dig it, and they really needed the water.

Isaac decided to be patient and gentle. He let the other men have the well, and he and his team moved on and dug another one, and God provided plenty of water for them.

Because Isaac made the right choices, and did what God wanted him to do, God blessed him with much more than those selfish people had.

Soon the king of that country was sorry that they hadn't been nice to Isaac.

He apologised and promised to be friends. He could tell that God was helping Isaac, and he wanted to be on the right side, too—on the side of those that followed God's way and were blessed as a result.

Dream of Angels

Jacob, Isaac's son, wasn't always an honest and trustworthy man. He had to learn the hard way that being dishonest in order to get what you want doesn't bring you the best things.

Jacob wanted things to be easy, and he wanted to get all the best things too.

He not only wanted what was his, but he wasn't happy that it seemed his brother Esau would possibly get more things than he would—since Esau was born first.

Jacob did some unkind and selfish things. He convinced Esau to give him some things that were to be for the oldest boy.

At first Esau didn't seem to mind, but then Jacob kept taking even more away from him.

One day Jacob even got their father to unknowingly give the blessing and promise telling of all the good things that would come his way to Jacob, instead of to Esau.

This was too much for Esau to handle, and that's when things started to get tough for Jacob.

He had to leave home and move to another place, and live with his uncle.

On his way, when he was feeling very sad about his mistakes and didn't know what would happen next, God gave him a wonderful dream of angels, going up and down a heavenly staircase, with God at the top of it.

Jacob was very encouraged, and promised to follow and obey God's way, even in the new and difficult situation that he was now in.

God promised that many wonderful things would happen to him and to his children, and their children as a result. God took care of Jacob as he obeyed, and he had all that he needed and even extra!

Hard Work and a Family of His Own

Finally after his long trip, Jacob found where his uncle Laban was living. He met Rachel who was bringing the sheep to the well to give them water.

Jacob helped to lift the heavy stone away so water could be drawn out.

Laban was glad to have him come and stay with them.

Jacob helped him and his daughters Rachel and Leah with the hard work of caring for the flocks of animals.

Jacob was a willing and diligent worker, and Laban was glad to let him marry both of his grown-up daughters.

Together they had 13 children in their family—12 sons and one daughter.

In return for his work with the animals, Jacob was given some of the animals for his own. God helped Jacob's sheep and cattle to be strong and plentiful.

Even though things weren't easy, and Laban wasn't an honest and trustworthy man, still God took care of Jacob, and gave him so much.

After many years God told him it was time for him and his big family and all their animals to move back to the place where he lived before. God had blessed and cared for Jacob all the time he had been away in a new place.

Being Friends Again

While Jacob travelled back to his home land, he was worried.

"What if Esau doesn't forgive me? I want to be friends again!"

Jacob did a lot of praying on that trip back home with his big team—his family, all their helpers, and all the animals.

He prayed and prayed some more, and got some good ideas from God on what to do, what would help Esau to feel better and to realise that Jacob was sorry for acting the way he did, many years before.

God sent angels to encourage Jacob as he neared the place where Esau was living, telling him it was going to be all right.

Jacob sent some of the people as well as his family on up ahead to meet Esau first, and to give him a very big gift—many goats, sheep, camels, cows and donkeys!

To Jacob's great relief, Esau was forgiving and glad to see his brother again!

They hugged and became friends again.

Jacob had learned many lessons over the years since being apart, which helped to make him into the kind of man he needed to be, for the job of being a good father to his sons, who would then have many, many children as well.

He needed to set a good example of doing things God's way—listening to God, praying, obeying Him, and being trustworthy, kind and generous.

Comparing and Coats

Joseph was a special boy—special to Jacob, because he was one of Rachel's two sons. He also had a special job to do for God. But when he was young, his older brothers had a problem.

Have you ever been sad because it seemed as if your brother, or sister, or friend, or even someone you just happened to see one day, were getting much better things than you?

It will always seem like others have things you don't. But you know, you also have things they don't.

Why? Because each one on Earth has different things happening to them at different times.

Each one learns different lessons and has different jobs to do in this world.

But for those that love God and follow His way, in spite of difficult times, He'll make sure to bring the best things their way.

Maybe not all the time, or just when they want something great, but when the time is right.

Joseph's father gave him a fancy, colourful new coat—just him. But his brothers didn't like that, or anything else that they thought Joseph was getting that seemed better than what they had.

They thought it would make things easier for them if Joseph lived in another place, so he was sent to live and work hard in Egypt.

But that only made their father very sad, and the brothers regretted it.

God had a plan for Joseph and would bring some good things his way again.

Even when things were hard for Joseph, God took good care of him and helped him to learn many new things.

Joseph in Egypt

Joseph chose to be a good, hard worker, trustworthy, and he listened to God no matter where he was.

God was pleased with this and made things go well for him as he worked as a servant.

Wherever he was, in whatever he was doing, he did his very best to work cheerfully and well, even though Joseph missed his father and family.

People trusted him and could tell that God was helping him. Joseph was kind and thoughtful, and took time to talk with people.

One time some men had interesting dreams, and Joseph prayed and God told him the meaning of the dreams.

Then when Pharaoh had an important dream, Joseph was called to tell Pharaoh the meaning of it too.

No one knew what it meant, but God knew, and told Joseph.

The dream was about seven years of good harvests, with plenty of food and crops growing, followed by seven years of difficult times and not enough food.

Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of collecting extra food and storing it up, so that later when the crops didn't grow, there would still be the food that was saved.

Pharaoh gave Joseph his golden ring, a necklace, fancy clothes, a chariot, a new name—Zaphnathpaaneah—and a wife!

He told all the people to obey whatever Joseph said to do.

Food in Egypt

Joseph was diligent and worked hard to store up the grain during Egypt's plentiful years. After seven years, just like God had said and told Pharaoh in a dream, there came a time of the crops not growing. But the people in Egypt had food they could buy, from the stored up grain. Good thing they had all obeyed and did what God told them to do.

It would have been easy to be lazy in the time when things were growing well and there was lots of extra food. But later on, when things were difficult, they would have regretted it.

It wasn't just in Egypt that crops hardly grew during the seven years of famine. Other places sorely lacked what they needed in the way of food too. Joseph's family—his father and brothers and their families—all started to run out of food as well. When news spread that there was food in Egypt, ten of the brothers went to buy food there.

Joseph noticed that his brothers had come, but they didn't recognize him. He looked very Egyptian in the way he dressed, and he even spoke the Egyptian language.

The brothers left to go back home without knowing that the man they bought the grain from was actually Joseph!

While on their way home, they noticed that the money they'd used to buy the food was tucked away in their bags. Joseph had done that secretly. So they got their food for free!

The next time his brothers returned to Egypt to buy food again they also brought along Benjamin, and that made Joseph very happy! Finally Joseph told his brothers who he really was. They were shocked! They thought Joseph would be upset with them, but instead he forgave them!

Joseph and Pharaoh then invited them and their families and their father to come and live in Egypt, where there was enough food.

Pharaoh sent wagons back with them to make their travel easier. At long last, when they returned, old father Jacob got to see his son Joseph again, and Joseph his father. They were so glad!

Joseph saw how all things had worked out well—even better for them all, than if he hadn't been in Egypt. It was difficult missing his family all those years, but now they were together again, and had all the food they needed. Good things came their way in the end.

Joseph was glad he chose to keep following God's way, to listen to Him, and to be an honest, diligent worker.

A Palace, a Prince, and Preparation

Many years had passed since Jacob and his 12 sons and their families had moved to Egypt, and things weren't so easy any more. A new Pharaoh had become the ruler, and he disliked all these people, who weren't Egyptians, living in his country.

He could have told them to move, but he had a different idea. He decided to make them his workers, to build and build many things in his country for him.

The people had to work so very hard, and were not treated well at all. They prayed for God to help them—and He did—but it took some time until it all happened.

God needed to prepare someone to be just the one that would be able to do the very big job of helping the Israelites to leave Egypt and find a new country to live in.

God sent a baby to a good couple, who loved and obeyed Him, and they took good care of their little baby.

Then God had the Princess find him one day, as he slept in a little basket on the river, made like a small boat. His sister Miriam was watching over him.

When the Princess found him, she loved him so much, and wished he could live with her. She gave him to his mother to care for, and said that after he grew a bit older that he could come and live in the palace with her.

Moses grew up as a prince in the palace of Pharaoh, learning many things. He didn't know yet that God was preparing him for a very important job in the future.

It would take a lot of time and training and patience until Moses was ready to do the job of helping the Israelites in the way God knew was best.

The Burning Bush

Moses got to live in the palace of Pharaoh where he had all that he needed. There was something that upset him, however, and that was to see the unkind way that Pharaoh and the Egyptians were treating the Israelites—Jacob's many descendants.

Moses wanted to stop them from acting that way, but it made Pharaoh not want to have him around there. So Moses went to live far away in a place called Midian.

Moses became a shepherd while living with a man called Jethro, and his family. He helped with the flocks as a patient shepherd, and married Jethro's grown-up daughter, Zipporah.

God was preparing Moses day-by-day for a big job later on.

Moses was a shepherd for 40 years, learning patience and learning to talk to God and hear from Him.

One day while out with the sheep, Moses was very curious as he saw something he'd never seen or heard of before. There was a bush all brightly lit up! It looked like it was on fire, but for some amazing reason it wasn't burning up into ashes. It just kept on glowing!

As Moses approached it he heard God speaking to him. Moses then talked with God for a long time, as it was then time for Moses to do the special job that God had been getting him ready for.

God told Moses to go back to Egypt and talk with Pharaoh, telling him to let the people leave Egypt now. God promised to do miracles to show His power to Pharaoh.

Moses knew it would be a very big and difficult job, and would take time, effort, and many miracles too! Moses' brother Aaron was also called by God to come out and meet with Moses and to help with this job.

Together they'd make a great team, and would do whatever God told them to. God gave Aaron and Moses the courage to obey and return to Egypt to do what God had asked them to do.

Brave Brothers

Moses and his brother Aaron walked to Egypt, bravely doing what God asked them to. They had the job of helping all the Israelites to leave their difficult life behind, and head out on a very long camping trip!

Moses and Aaron talked with the Israelites about God's plan for them, and showed them the signs of God's power. The people believed what the brothers were saying, and were happy to hear that God would help them to leave soon. But did Pharaoh, who wanted them to work for him, like that idea? Not at all!

Moses and Aaron showed signs of God's power to Pharaoh also—like God turning the staff into a snake, and back into a staff again!

They told Pharaoh what God wanted him to do—to allow the people to leave Egypt. Just hearing about it made Pharaoh worried and upset. He didn't want all his big building plans for a great, elaborate-looking Egypt to come to a halt. If the people left, what would become of Egypt? So Pharaoh made the wrong choice and said, "No!"

Pharaoh made things even tougher for the people and told them to work even harder. He was acting very unkind, and had lots of ugly pride and selfishness in his heart.

It's not a good thing to keep going your own way, when God tells you to do something else. Things were not going to go very well for Pharaoh, as he kept going his own bad way. It was a hard job for Moses and Aaron too. Not only was Pharaoh making things difficult for them, but the people were losing courage and didn't know if it would be possible to leave Egypt.

Some things just take time, and this was something that would take awhile, and there needed to be people with faith and prayer to make it happen. Moses just kept praying and asking God what to do. He and his brother Aaron didn't give up and say the job was too hard. They had God helping them and with God nothing is too hard!

Moses gained hope and faith from his time spent with God, that eventually it would all work out. It was God's plan and idea, and God was going to make it all happen, even if it took longer than they all hoped it would.

Woeful and Wonderful

When Pharaoh refused to let the people leave, Moses prayed and asked God what to do next. God said that Pharaoh would have some tough times.

Going your own way instead of God's way doesn't bring good things into your life, as that ruler and all his country found out.

There was one trouble after the other for Pharaoh and all of Egypt too, as a result of his wrong choices. First there was no fresh water to drink or wash with, as God changed the river water and made it unpleasant and stinky. When Pharaoh asked Moses to ask God to make the river nice again, he promised to let the people go.

Pharaoh didn't keep his word, however, and as soon as things were the way he liked them, and the trouble was taken away, he once again said, "No!", and refused to let the people leave Egypt.

There were many other difficult things that came—there was something hard each time Pharaoh would not say "yes" to God's plan.

Bothersome flies, sickness, crops not growing well, strong storms and all kinds of bad things came to the land. If Pharaoh had agreed and done what God had said right at the start, he and his country would not have had all that trouble. Finally he'd had enough, and agreed to let the people leave.

The Israelites were quick to get moving as soon as they heard it was time to go. They gathered up all they could, as fast as possible, loaded it on their carts and wagons, led their animals and got going on their trip out of Egypt right away.

Hurray! At last the moment they'd been hoping for had happened! They were free to follow as God led them.

A Path to Praise About!

Have you ever been stuck somewhere and didn't know what to do or how to get out of the situation? Maybe your family was travelling and the car broke down, and you were somewhere where it was difficult to get help. Or maybe you were working on a project and you were missing one of the most important things you needed to complete it?

There are lots of different problems and difficulties that come our way, and people can cause us trouble too, but no matter how tough things seem, nothing is too hard for God. He can give the help and solutions needed to anyone, anywhere, if they pray and believe that He can.

After the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh decided that he wanted the people to come back to work for him again—and not go off taking a trip!

He sent many of his people to get them to return. This seemed to be a problem for the travelling team, because in front of them was the big Red Sea.

They were stuck and couldn't go any further. God had a plan, and told Moses to stretch out his hands and rod over the water.

The amazing miraculous solution began. A strong wind blew and blew, and everyone was in for a surprise.

Can you imagine camping beside a large lake, and after a time of strong wind there is then a pathway right through it, and you can walk, or bike, or drive over to the other side? That's the surprise they all got! God had made a pathway straight across the Red Sea with the water standing up on either side of it. The Israelites walked to the other side on the dry sea bed!

God got them safely across the Red Sea, and then closed up the water again. It was so amazing! It was time to praise God with songs and instruments! They were so happy to see the power of God helping them. They were then able to continue their journey, with a God who could do anything to lead and care for them.

Wilderness, Water and Wells

When you are hungry, tired or thirsty it's hard to be cheerful. It was just the same for the team of travelling Israelites. They were taking a journey through a difficult place.

In some ways it was easier than travelling through areas where there were cities and people living, that wouldn't want this huge band of people passing through.

God knew that at the beginning of their trip it would be better and easier for them to travel through places that weren't developed and made into cities. They could stop and camp wherever God led them, and no one was going to bother them.

The only trouble was that there wasn't enough water or food to eat in some places, until God made these things available by miracles. The Israelites were on the move, so they couldn't make a big farm to plant crops, nor was there always enough water around to do so.

When there was a problem—like not enough water or food—the people got upset, rather than praying and having faith that God could give them all they needed. It was something new they had to learn—to have faith in God. Moses would talk to God about their need for food and water, and God always had a solution.

One time, towards the beginning of their travels, they finally found some water but it tasted very bad. God told Moses to throw a certain tree into the water. After he obeyed and did that, the water tasted good and was fit to drink.

Moses then told the people the message and lesson from God. If they wanted to be healthy and happy, they needed to learn to listen to God and to do whatever He told them to do.

The next place they travelled to had 12 wells of water, and lots of nice trees for shade. It felt great! There was one more thing though: They needed food too. The food they'd brought from Egypt had run out. Where could that come from? Moses once again prayed, and God said He would send food from heaven for them in the morning.

Amazing Food

God sent the Israelites food, just as He said He would! The food from Heaven was called "manna" by those who noticed it in the morning. They'd never seen anything like it!

Every day this amazing food was all over the ground, and families could collect what they needed for the day. God gave one instruction to them, and that was to not worry about food for the next day.

God wanted them to have faith that He would send more again, and He wanted them to learn to obey what He said to do. They were not to save any for the next day.

Some people didn't obey the instructions God gave them, and found out the next day why they shouldn't have disobeyed.

The delicious manna that smelled good and tasted like honey when they collected it, the next day after being saved, had a very bad smell to it and was filled with bugs. Oh dear!

It would have been better to trust that God would send more food for them each new morning.

God wanted them to have a day to rest each week, a day where they didn't have to work. To make this day relaxing for them God gave them permission to gather extra manna the day before, and to save it for the next day.

They wouldn't have to work even to gather food for one day each week. For some amazing reason, that is the only day that it didn't go bad when it was saved overnight.

When the Israelites followed God's instructions, things worked out well and they had all they needed. God even told Moses to save some of that amazing manna in a special box, and to keep it for years to come. It didn't go bad for so very long!

This little saved sample of the manna reminded them of the miracles that God did for them, and how He cared for them and provided food for them during the many years they were travelling.

Water Out of a Rock

God liked to show His love and care for the travelling Israelites. When they needed fresh drinking water all they needed to do was to ask Him for it. It was hard for the people to be thirsty and to not have water for drinking, cooking and washing, as well as water for their animals to drink.

They often forgot to just pray and ask God in faith for what they needed, as they were just starting to learn about God's amazing power to do anything to help them. They often asked Moses in grumbling ways for what they needed. Moses was patient and humble, and had faith in God's care. Moses knew the best thing to do was to pray and ask God for help.

One time when there was no water anywhere, Moses prayed and God told him to hit a rock with the rod, and water would come out of it. Moses did as God said, and water came pouring out, and everyone had the water they needed.

Another time God wanted to give water out of a rock, but in a new way. He wanted Moses to speak to the rock and the water would come flowing out.

The people were acting very unkind and complaining. That time Moses had a hard time staying patient with the people's unkind words, and lack of faith in God. He got upset and spoke angrily to the people, and hit the rock this time as well, instead of only speaking to it.

God wasn't glad that Moses got angry and had disobeyed what He said to do. God still sent the water, but it was a lesson to everyone that patience, obedience, and knowing God's love and care were important.

There were many lessons of faith and prayer along the way as they journeyed. There was another time when the people needed water again, and they made the right decision to have faith and obey God's instructions. God said for some of the important men, the princes, to use their sticks and to dig in the dirt, and He would make water spring up out of the ground.

As the people watched they sang a song, and God sent the water they needed. That was a great way to react. Singing songs of praise and prayer when in a difficult situation, or when there are things that you need, helps bring faith to your heart. It brings the answers from the Lord too!

A Blazing Mountain, a Blasting Trumpet, and Tablets of Stone

God wanted to show those that He had chosen to follow Him just how real and powerful He was. God loved them and wanted each one to love Him, and obey Him too! One day He decided to show the Israelites, who were travelling with Moses, something special. It would be like God coming for a visit, in an amazing way.

All the people were to prepare for the event by washing up and putting on clean clothes. It was going to be a very special day.

When the time was right God filled the mountain near them with all sorts of sounds and sights! There were flashes of lightning and booming sounds of thunder. A thick cloud was also on the mountain. Then there was a very loud sound of a trumpet announcing God's visit. It was so loud that everyone in the area could hear it blasting!

The mountain looked like it was on fire and smoke was billowing up. The ground also shook like it would in an earthquake. It was a very powerful show God put on for them.

The people knew that God was real, and that He was very close to them. God called Moses to come up on the mountain—but said that everyone else, including the animals, shouldn't come up on the mountain. It was just too powerful!

God talked with Moses. When Moses came down from the mountain he told the people the things God had said—important instructions and rules for them to follow.

On another trip up the mountain to talk with God, when the mountain had the bright fiery cloud of God's presence on it, Moses received something very special from Him. He was with God for 40 days and nights, and it was then that God wrote with His finger onto tablets of stone.

Ten of the most important rules for the people to learn and remember and obey were written in stone. It was hearing God's words and obeying what He said that would make them prosper and do well.

We can also listen to the Lord's words and do what He wants us to do today! We need to believe and obey what Jesus says to do. He said the most important rules for us to follow today are to love God and to love others. These are the most important things to remember. When we do these two things, we will please God and live happily.

The Mercy and Light of God

Moses had been on the mountain for a long time with the Lord, but when he came down it upset him to see the disobedience of those in the camp. He was surprised and saddened to find that the people, who he had given God's instructions to, had not followed them.

Moses didn't react in the right way, so rather than first praying and asking God what to do, he felt it was no use trying to teach the people the right way. He angrily threw the tablets of stone down and they broke. Moses was sorry that he acted in anger. It was a mistake that he regretted.

No matter how difficult things seem, or how wrong people are acting, stopping to pray first instead of acting roughly will bring better results.

God was also sad that the people had so quickly forgotten His words, just because Moses had been on the mountain. Everyone had lessons to learn.

God said that everyone needed to choose whose side they were on. Did they want to be a part of God's team or not?

The people who were sorry for doing wrong and who chose to follow God's words were forgiven. God was merciful and forgiving and gave those people another chance.

The mountain was all ablaze with a fiery cloud of God's presence, and He called Moses to come again up on the mountain, bringing new slabs of stone.

Moses talked with God and stayed on the mountain with Him for another 40 days, receiving the instructions again, having them written on the tablets of stone. Moses got to be very close to God and speak to Him as a friend. God even gave Moses a little peek at what He looked like. It was very special!

When Moses came down from the mountain that time, he saw that the people had behaved well. The new stone Ten Commandments were shown to all, and well cared for. God had told Moses to prepare a special wooden box for them, so they could be safely kept for many years.

Everyone who looked at Moses after he had come down from the mountain knew that he had been with God, as Moses' face was so very bright. Moses didn't realise it, but he was shining! His time alone with God, listening and talking with Him, had filled Moses with God's beautiful light!

The Cloud of the Lord

The way God chose to show the Israelites where to go, and when to move, was by a special cloud in the shape of a pillar which He created as a sign of His presence being there with the people. It was easy for everyone to see and to follow it.

When God wanted the people to move on and travel to a new place, this cloud would begin to move. It was a reminder to all the people that God was with them, and He was the one in charge, and would help them. At night this cloud was as a pillar of fire, giving light, and everyone could see it.

Whether it was day or night the travellers could tell what they were supposed to do—whether to camp or to move on. God knew what was best, and He knew what was going on in all the surrounding lands. He led them to the best places for them at the time.

God had a special project for Moses and others to work on. He wanted to keep reminding the people how He was real and near to them, and they could trust in His care.

God gave Moses instructions on how to have some faithful workers build and put up a beautiful, large tent—a tabernacle. It was to be a special place of worship and prayer.

They were to also make a special box too, nicely decorated and shaped. This box was called, the "Ark of the Covenant". It would be kept safely, and would hold things like a sampling of the manna, Aaron's rod when God said to place it there, the tablets of stone, and other things that were added later on.

When the people finally made it to their new land, Joshua, Caleb and others were sent to check it out. Joshua and Caleb saw it was a good place, and were eager to move there. The others that had also explored the place weren't sure it was safe. They said that some very tall people were living there already, and it seemed impossible for them to move there. They said things that discouraged everyone from entering it.

Because the people didn't have the faith to go into the new land that God had promised them, they weren't ready to live there, and had to keep travelling for many more years.

Forty years passed, and many lessons were learned. At last they were allowed another chance to enter and live in their new land. This time they had faith and courage, and were ready and eager to obediently do what God told them to in order to move in to the new country.

Aaron's Almonds and Moses' Song

God likes to surprise people with little signs of His power. One time God did something very different, as a sign to the people that He was the one who had picked Moses and Aaron to be the leaders.

He told Moses to tell the 12 princes—the heads of each of the 12 tribes—to bring their rods, their walking sticks, and for each one to write their name on their own rod. Aaron's rod would be the one for the tribe of Levi. They obeyed what God said, and put their rods in the special tabernacle, just for one night.

God said that whoever's rod began to grow leaves and blossom, would be the leader He'd chosen to do that important job of leading the people.

The next morning when Moses went into the tabernacle to look at the rods, he saw something very amazing. Aaron's rod, the one that Moses and Aaron had used to obey God and perform so many miracles and was very old, had buds on it!

The buds blossomed into flowers, and then almonds grew—right from that old walking stick! Can you imagine that? It was a clear sign to everyone that God had chosen Moses and Aaron to be the leaders to point them in God's way.

When the time was right for Moses and Aaron to receive their reward for a job well done and to live with God in Heaven, He called them to Him. Peacefully and instantly each of them went to be with God in the place He told them to be, and at just the right time—first Aaron, and then some time later, Moses.

Before Moses left, God asked him to write a song for the children of Israel to learn and sing. It was to remind them of what God wanted them to remember.

God wanted to make things as easy as He could to help the Israelites follow in His ways. A song is a great way to remember things. Moses wrote down the words to the song in one day and taught it to the people.

God called Moses to go up to a certain mountain to get a look at the land that the Israelites were going to move to soon—the place they had been preparing to go to for so long. Joshua was called by God to be the new man in charge, helping to lead the people into the new land.

He was a man who wanted to listen to God's words and do whatever He said to do. He had also helped Moses faithfully for many years. Joshua had lots of faith in God, and this made him just right for the job.

Joshua, Jordan and Jericho

Joshua had helped Moses for many years, and was a man full of faith. He was quick to obey and follow whatever God said to do. When it was time for Moses to return to God and live with Him, God gave Joshua the job of being the new leader of the Israelites. He was to lead them into the new land that God had promised would be theirs.

It was a very big job and an important responsibility. Joshua knew that the only way to succeed, and to have things go well, was to pray and ask God what to do.

One day when Joshua was praying, before entering the new country, a man was sent from God to talk with him. He was a powerful Captain in charge of God's angels. God sent him to help and encourage Joshua.

God told Joshua the plan, and gave the instructions on what to do next. It didn't look possible, or easy, to just walk into their new land and to start building their houses, and to live there peacefully.

First of all, there was the Jordan River that would need to be crossed. Also, the city of Jericho was inhabited by ungodly people, and surrounded by a very big, strong and high wall.

It would take many miracles to even be able to enter their new country at last, but that is what God is good at doing. These things that seemed impossible, or very difficult, were not a problem to Him.

Everyone obeyed the new and amazing instructions given to them by the Lord. The priests carried the special Ark of the Covenant box to the river's edge, and as soon as their feet touched the water, it began to part!

There was a big pathway right through the Jordan River to the other side, and everyone could easily cross it.

After crossing the river, a team of people and some priests were chosen to walk around the outside of the walled city of Jericho—one time every day, for six days. Then on the seventh day, they walked around it seven times.

They blew their trumpets and shouted at just the right time, when God said they should. Then a miracle happened!

Those big strong walls fell down flat, after the people did as God said. The Israelites were able to move into their new country at last.

Gideon and the Angel

Things were pretty tough for the Israelites, as many of them had stopped following God's instructions and rules for them. Things in their country weren't going well, and troublesome people were making things hard for them.

People had to hide their food, so that the unkind folks wouldn't come and take it. God couldn't do great and mighty miracles for them and make things all nice, until they chose to obey Him and do what He asked them to do.

Gideon was a man that loved God and respected Him. He wished people would start following and obeying God again, and he wished things would get better in their country, but it seemed impossible.

One day as he was threshing wheat in a secluded place so that the Midianites, as they were called, wouldn't come and take his family's food, something very surprising happened to him.

An angel of God appeared to Gideon and told him that he was a strong and good man, and that God wanted to use him to be the one to make their country nice and safe again.

Gideon was amazed to see an angel, and he wanted to know for sure that it was God who was calling him to do that very big job. Gideon brought some food to the angel and set it on a rock.

When the angel touched it with the top of his staff, all of a sudden, fire came out of the rock and burned up the food and the broth that Gideon had poured on it. It was amazing!

Gideon knew then that what the angel had said was true, and he chose to obey God and do what he was called to do.

Gideon prayed and wanted a sign from God to prove that he was the one that God was calling to do this job. Gideon placed some thick wool on the ground outside.

He asked God to make the wool wet in the morning with dew, and to have the ground around the wool still be dry. And that's just what happened! The wool was very wet—wet enough to fill a bowl with water—and the ground surrounding the wool was totally dry.

Then Gideon prayed for the opposite to happen, and it did! God made the ground wet, but the wool that was on top of the wet ground was completely dry.

Normally, that would have been impossible. Only God could have done it! It showed Gideon that God was near to him and would do miracles for him, if Gideon would obey whatever God asked him to do.

A Pitcher, a Torch and a Trumpet

Gideon had prayed and proven God's words of instructions to him to be true. He was ready to go and do whatever job God had for him. There were many people interested in helping him.

A whole lot of people came to be on Gideon's team—many thousands! However, God wanted to surprise everyone with what He could do, with just a small band of men. He wanted to show His special miracle-working power.

Gideon had faith and acted in obedience when God told him that his team of helpers were too many, and to send many of them home.

God said that if there was anyone who was lacking courage or confidence in His help and strength, that they should be the first to leave—so, many returned to their homes.

Then God told Gideon to observe the men drinking at the river, and told him who to choose and who to send back home.

Finally, only 300 men were left on Gideon's team.

However, a few faith-filled and obedient people who are following God are enough for Him to do a great job.

A clay pitcher, a torch, and a trumpet, were what each of the 300 men on Gideon's team were told to get. How would those interesting items do the job of chasing away multitudes of people? Well, God's plan worked! He did the part that they couldn't do.

At night, while all the Midianites were asleep in their tents, Gideon and his men crept quietly into the camp.

Then, at just the right time, in the middle of the quiet night, they made BIG, sudden, loud noises!

The sound of the clay pots smashing, the blowing of the trumpets, and each one yelling out so loudly was enough to shock those trouble makers!

They ran out of their tents and made a dash for it. They were so startled, surprised and shocked about what was going on, that they ran away as fast as they could!

God's interesting and new idea worked.

A Strong Man

A man named Manoah and his wife had no children. One day an angel of the Lord appeared to the woman, and told her some wonderful news. God was going to give them a child—a very special son. He was to belong to the Lord, to do His will, and was whom God was sending to help the Israelites.

God needed a strong man who loved Him, and would live his life as God's helper for the people.

The woman went and told her husband all that the angel had said, and he wanted to meet the angel too, as he had more questions to ask.

The parents were very eager to obey all that God wanted them to do, and wanted to find out more instructions so they could do the best job possible in raising and training their soon-to-come child. He would need the right childhood preparation and care in order to do his job—the job he was sent to Earth to do.

The Manoah and his wife prayed for another chance to talk with the angel, and God sent him again to them. The angel appeared again to the woman while she was out in the field, and then called her husband to come quickly. They both talked to him and listened carefully to his words.

Then it happened! They had a son, just as God said they would.

They were wise parents and trained him well. They obeyed all that God had wanted them to do.

His name was Samson. He kept long hair, as God had told his parents he needed to. When he was grown and ready to begin his work for the Lord, he began to feel the Lord's spirit leading him in what to do.

Samson loved God, and prayed, and did whatever God told him to do.

It was a very difficult time for the Israelites, as there were some hurtful and unkind people causing them trouble—because they hadn't been following God's instructions and rules. God wanted to help change things for the better, and so had sent Samson.

God gave Samson great and unusual strength. It was a miracle and a gift of God. There was nothing anyone could do to stop him.

With God helping him, he was stronger than anyone else—as long as he obeyed God's instructions, prayed for God's help, and knew it was God who gave him that special gift.

God made Samson the judge of Israel, and he did that job faithfully for 20 years!

Kind Ruth

Naomi was a woman who loved the Lord and trusted Him through all the difficulties in her life. As she was getting older it seemed she wouldn't have anyone left to take care of her. There was a kind woman called Ruth, who was like a daughter to her.

Ruth said she would stay with Naomi always. Together they travelled to Bethlehem, as they heard there was food there, and it was the time of the harvest.

Ruth went out to a field to pick up any grain that the harvesters dropped, so that she and Naomi would have food to eat.

When the man who owned the field found out who Ruth was—that she was the kind lady who was taking care of Naomi, he let her stay in his field and continue to pick up the fallen grain pieces.

Boaz was his name, and he was a relative of Naomi. He wanted to make sure those ladies had enough, and even told the reapers to drop extra handfuls of barley for her to collect.

Boaz let Ruth eat lunch with him and the harvesters and drink their water too, as she worked hard in the hot sun gathering all the barley that she could.

By the end of the day she had plenty to bring back for her and Naomi to eat.

God was taking good care of them, as they followed Him and loved Him.

Ruth was a kind and loving woman and Boaz chose to marry her. Together they had a dear little baby whom they called Obed.

Grandmother Naomi was happy to help care for her new grandson. They were a happy family, and all things had worked out for the best in the end.

Hannah's Prayer and Promise

Hannah was a woman who loved God very much and took time to talk with Him in prayer. She knew God answered prayer even if some prayers took a long time to be answered.

As soon as you pray, God hears what you ask for, but it's not always the best time or way for your request to be answered right then and there. Sometimes you have to wait for awhile, and then it works out for the best in the end.

Hannah had wished for a child for a long time and often talked to God about it. However, it wasn't the right time for her special prayed-for boy to be given. —Until one day, when she and her husband and other relatives were visiting a place called Shiloh.

They took a trip there each year to pray and to praise and worship God. They would enjoy a feast and talk with friends and relatives who were there too.

At the feast Hannah was feeling very sad as she saw others with their families and their children, but she had none. It made her cry and pray with her whole heart for God to give her a son.

She promised then, at that feast, that if God would let her have a child she would let him serve God all his life. Priest Eli saw Hannah praying, and asked her about it.

She then explained to Eli how she was feeling, and he encouraged her and said that he knew God would answer her prayer.

Hannah felt happy inside! She had faith that her prayer would be answered soon.

Hannah then did have a child! --A special little baby boy.

She named him Samuel, and she loved him very much.

He was a special boy who would have a special job when he grew up.

Little Boy Samuel

How would you like to live in a place that only certain special people got to be? Samuel was brought to live with Priest Eli so that he could start to serve the Lord right away and get to hear His words. Samuel didn't have to wait until he was old.

Samuel was the only child that had that privilege of serving God and learning of His ways while living in the tabernacle. He had the rare and special opportunity to get to hear and learn about what was written on the old scrolls—God's words of instruction to everyone.

Samuel helped with the jobs that needed to get done and learned how to pray. Samuel got to wear a special outfit that was made just his size—just like a Priest wears. He had his own matching set, to be the same as Priest Eli, who was caring for him and teaching him.

Hannah and Elkanah praised God for how wonderful He is and for the great things He can do and that He did do! God had answered Hannah's prayer and had given them a son, and now was preparing Samuel for his special future ministry.

Samuel helped with the humble jobs; he respected God's Words, and was obedient too. He grew in faith and wisdom. He was right in the place that was best for him.

It was different than what other children needed to do, but it was just right for him.

Each year Samuel's mother would bring him a new coat to wear for the next year.

Elkanah and Hannah had more children too! God had blessed them and they were a happy family with three more boys and two girls.

They would go up to the feast each year as usual and get to see Samuel, their big brother, there.

Even when he was young he was a good example of believing God's words and following what He said to do.

Listening to God Speak

Samuel stayed with Priest Eli and helped him do the special jobs they did to serve the Lord. Samuel learned about God and learned to pray.

One night he learned to also listen to God's Words that would be spoken to him personally. He was sleeping soundly in his bed that was near the Ark of the Covenant—a place very few were allowed to be.

Eli was getting old and couldn't see very well, so it was a great help to have Samuel around.

One of Samuel's jobs then was to make sure the special lamp that was near the Ark of the Covenant was always lit, and to add more oil to it when it was needed. He kept checking on it during the day and if he woke at night too.

One night as young Samuel slept something woke him up—a voice calling his name.

He was accustomed to helping Eli and was quick to obey when he was called. Samuel ran quickly to Eli's side ready to help and to listen, but Eli said he hadn't called! Who was it?

Samuel went back to bed to try and sleep again, but he was called again and went right away again to Priest Eli.

When this happened a few times Eli realised that it was the Lord calling Samuel; so he instructed him what to do and say.

When Samuel went back to bed for the third time he heard the Lord calling him clearly.

Samuel then sat still and said, "Speak Lord, for Your servant is listening."

Samuel heard God's words and remembered them and told them to Eli the next morning.

God had called and chosen Samuel to be a prophet and continued to speak to him as he grew older.

He was a judge as well, and told the people God's Words—for God's Words were what he loved most of all.

Praying for the people was also one job he did very faithfully.

A Faithful Judge and Prophet

Samuel loved God so much, and was very respectful and obedient when God talked with Him. Everyone began to respect and appreciate Samuel too.

He was helping things in the country change for the better, by praying and hearing from God and helping to teach everyone what God wanted them to do.

When people were going their own foolish and disobedient ways, then troubles came. But when they listened to and obeyed God's words, and did what Samuel the prophet and judge told them from the Lord, then their situation improved.

One time when things weren't going well at all, and troublesome people were giving the Israelites a hard time, the Israelites decided to do something they shouldn't have done.

Instead of praying and being sorry for not following God's ways, and changing, they tried to do something else to protect themselves.

The special Ark of the Covenant that Priest Eli kept safely was taken away by some of the people.

This Ark of the Covenant reminded people that God was near and would care for them just as He had when the Israelites travelled in the wilderness.

The people thought that if they had that special Ark with them, rather than leaving it in the tabernacle, it would protect them and chase away the trouble makers. However, that didn't work.

Samuel reminded them what needed to be done. If they began to obey God and follow His words then He would do the miracles and make the country a nice place to be again.

Everyone wanted to change and to do things God's way. This was a good decision and brought wonderful results.

Then Samuel prayed for them and God answered their prayers and made things pleasant again.

The Ark of the Covenant was put in a safe place, and for many years the people chose to listen to God's words that were spoken through Samuel, and to love and obey God.

Samuel and Saul

Samuel had done his best to lead and teach the people of Israel God's ways. However, after many years they wanted to have a king to be their ruler, instead of a prophet leading them to follow God as their Heavenly King.

When Samuel prayed and asked God what He wanted to do about it, God said that they could have an earthly king, but it wouldn't always be easy for them.

Hearing God's Words through His prophet and obeying God would be much easier than having a ruler telling them what to do. If the king wasn't following God's ways then it would make things very difficult for them.

Even when Samuel explained what God said, the people still wanted to have a king as a ruler. God knew this would happen, and many years before had been preparing someone to do the job.

One day when Samuel was praying, God told him that a man would visit him the next day, and that he was the right man to be the king. Samuel got prepared, as God had said, and told the cook to make sure to set aside a good portion of the food that was to be served the next day, for a special guest that was coming.

A man called Saul, along with a servant, was looking for his father's missing donkeys. They decided to find the prophet Samuel and ask for his help. They knew that if Samuel prayed, God could tell them where the donkeys were.

When Samuel saw Saul coming, God told him that he was the one that was to be the king. Samuel told Saul some surprising things. He invited him to a special dinner that day and also said not to worry about the donkeys, because they had already been found.

Then Samuel told Saul that he was an important man and he was just the person that the people were wanting.

Saul didn't understand that. He didn't think of himself as being anyone extra special. Even though he was tall and strong and could do lots of things, he was humble and thought of others as better than himself. But a humble man who prays and knows that he needs God's help is the best kind of man for the job of being a king.

Samuel poured some special oil on Saul's head, as a demonstration of God's spirit and power helping him to do the job of soon becoming the king of the country. Saul went home then to help his father until it was the time to be crowned as king later on.

King Saul

The prophet Samuel talked with Saul, after he had poured oil on his head to show that he was to be the king of the land of Israel. The Lord told Samuel just what was going to happen next on Saul's journey back home to his father.

Each of the events happened, just as Samuel said they would! Saul was amazed. It was a sign to him that God was leading him to do that new and special job.

On his way home Saul met a group of prophets who were making music and were prophesying. The Lord's Spirit was on Saul and he began to prophesy as well. People who knew him from before were surprised!

Saul was like a new man, with new thoughts and feelings and reactions. God had changed his heart and given him the ability to do the job of being the future king.

Prophet Samuel called all the people together to let them know who was to be their king.

People from all the tribes of Israel were there. This was a very important event for them.

First, God let them know what tribe the king would come from, and then He revealed what family the king was to be from. And last of all God showed who from that family was to be the king.

It was clear to all, after finding out step-by-step who God wanted it to be, that Saul was the one that God had chosen to be the king.

Saul was feeling nervous and shy about being a king when he saw all those people together, so he hid.

But God told Samuel where Saul was—he was hiding by all the stuff that was in a pile.

When Saul stood up he was a very tall man and everyone shouted, "God save the King!"

A Thundery Demonstration

It was very important that King Saul and all the people follow God's Words and instructions and not choose to go their own wrong way.

Samuel told everyone the Lord's Words and reminded them that God was in charge and the wise thing to do would be to listen to Him and obey Him.

Everyone had pushed to have their own way—to have a king as a ruler—even though God had told them that it wouldn't make things easier.

In fact it could make things very difficult for them, if the king wasn't behaving in ways that pleased the Lord, and was instead full of his own ideas, and was selfish, and disobedient to God's ways.

Yet, everyone said they still wanted a king—since most of the other countries around had one.

However, when God granted their request, somehow they felt sad in heart, because they knew it wasn't the best choice—but it was too late to change.

They were sorry for not listening to God better and not choosing to have things His way, even though it was different than what other countries had.

But then Samuel encouraged them with God's Words, that even if they had demanded to be given something that was not God's best choice for them, it was still possible to have things go well in the country if they all—including the king—were faithful to follow in God's ways.

Then Samuel prayed and God showed everyone a sign to let them know that He was right there.

Even though it was a sunny day, Samuel prayed and God sent thunder and rain right then!

God was so powerful and near to them all and He knew everything that was going on.

Everyone realised that following and respecting God was the best thing to do.

A Good Heart

It was a big job for Saul to be the king, and one thing you really need if you are the king is faith. However, instead of having the faith to obey the Lord's instructions, Saul chose rather to do the things that others thought were best.

He disobeyed what God, through Samuel the prophet, said for him to do. If he'd had more faith and trust in God's plan and care, then he would have been more obedient to God's words.

Because Saul did what others said to do, out of fear or worry, rather than what God asked him to, it displeased God and showed a lack of faith in Him. Samuel needed to find someone else to be the king; someone who would do what God asked them to do.

God told Samuel that one of Jesse's sons in Bethlehem was to eventually be the new king. Samuel invited Jesse and all his grown sons to a feast.

One-by-one the men stood in front of Samuel to see which one was to be chosen. God said that being tall and strong and good-looking wasn't going to make them a good king.

God looks on the heart and what people are feeling and thinking and what they are motivated to do.

None of Jesse's seven sons that stood there for Samuel to choose from received God's approval for being the king.

Samuel asked if Jesse had any more sons, and he said "Yes". His youngest, David, was watching over the sheep.

When he came and stood before Samuel, God said that he, this young man David, was to be the next king after Saul.

Samuel poured the special oil on David's head, and God's Spirit came on him.

It would be years before David was the king, but with God's Spirit he could make wise decisions while preparing to be the king, and learning just what he needed to know before it was time to rule the country.

David's Harp

Do you like to play music? David did, and he could play so beautifully. People all around where he lived, knew he could play songs to God on his harp very skillfully. He had lots of time to practice while watching over the sheep. He used his time well, singing and talking with the Lord.

One time, when King Saul was feeling very grumpy, some people suggested that songs and music might cheer him up. "Who could we bring to sing and play music for the king?" they wondered. God had them think of David the shepherd, who they had heard was good at playing the harp.

Now David's times of practice came in handy, as he was able to play music and sing songs to the king, and it made King Saul feel so much better. Music can really have an effect on you. If you are listening and playing nice songs, songs that fill your heart and mind with good thoughts and feelings, then music can be a good thing. It's a wonderful way to praise and pray and cheer people up.

David was invited to live and work with the king. David loved God and had God's spirit helping him. He was wise and acted humbly, and he obeyed what the king asked him to do. He prayed for God to help him do what was good and right and what would be a help to others. Jonathan, King Saul's son, was a good friend to David. They talked together and encouraged each other through difficult times.

After Saul had been the king for quite awhile, sadly he stopped doing things in God's way; and he no longer was empowered with God's spirit. King Saul was often upset and making unwise decisions, and saying things that weren't good. David was very patient and calm even when King Saul said unkind things about him. David had faith that God would work things out. He trusted in God and was able to do a good job because he prayed and took time talking with the Lord.

Psalms and Supply

David had many difficulties and hard times. He learned to trust in God through his problems. He wrote songs and psalms that told others—and reminded himself—of the great things God did. The Book of Psalms has many beautiful words in it; words of praise and faith, words that tell of David's love for God and for His Word. There are many prayers written down too. It's a wonderful book to read when you are sick, or sad, or people are causing you difficulties. There are many good verses to read for times of prayer and praise. The words in the Book of Psalms can encourage and strengthen you, just like David's times of prayer and praise and talking with the Lord helped him.

Saul wasn't a happy king anymore and was often angry and making things difficult for David. This made David very sad, and caused him have to move away from King Saul and away from his best friend, Jonathan. David and a team of men that wanted to help him, lived outdoors often, or in caves. When King Saul was acting unkindly and in anger, David was patient and wise and gentle. Sometimes King Saul then apologized to David for acting wrongly. Kindness was the solution to the troubles. God kept David safe and gave him strength for his job of helping to make the country a safe place—and the job of learning what he needed to, before it was his turn to be the king.

One time, a kind lady named Abigail heard that David and his men were hungry and needed food. She and her family were rich and had plenty to spare. Others were being selfish and didn't want to give anything to David's team, even though they had plenty. However, Abigail quickly brought all the food she could and gave it to David and his men. She shared things like raisins, bread, fig cakes, meat, and corn. It made them happy and brought peace. Later on David invited her to live with him, and she became his wife. She wanted to be around someone who loved and followed God.

David learned to have faith, as things weren't easy for him. But whenever he prayed and trusted God, he saw things get better. David knew God was so very close to him and would always take good care of him.

King David and Dancing

David was at last crowned the new king, and he was a man who loved and followed the Lord. His heart was filled with God's word, and he was often praying and praising the Lord. This helped him through the many difficult times that he had. Sometimes he was sad, other times he was sick, and sometimes he had very hard jobs to do while helping to rule and protect the Israelites. When King David prayed and trusted in God, he was given the strength and faith to keep going and to not give up.

God blessed, protected, and healed King David when he prayed. He cared most of all about making God happy, and did what he knew God wanted him to do. King David was a good king because he tried to set a good example to others of loving God and His word. He would often ask the prophets to hear from God and tell him what God wanted him to do, and whatever God told him, he would do.

King David tried to do what was best, but he didn't always do everything perfectly. However, when he made mistakes or he did something that wasn't right, he talked with God about it and was sorry, and chose to change and do things better. God loved David and forgave him. He blessed King David and kept him safe.

David discovered that when he would pray and praise the Lord, this gave him the strength and courage to do what he needed to do. One time he had a very big and joyous celebration! –It was when he could at last bring the Ark of the Covenant to where he was living. He felt that God was blessing him and was near. Just thinking about God's love and power and how close He was, made King David overflow with praise and songs, and he danced with all his might! It was like a musical parade as the Ark of the Covenant was being brought to King David's place. David loved to dance and used it as his way to praise God and express his joy and gratitude and love for God. He

wanted to praise God more than just within his heart, nor only with his voice in song, or his hands raised in praise, but with his whole body in a lively dance before the Lord. He felt happier than words could tell, and this was his way to show he was overflowing with joy!

This made God happy! David wanted to show his love by praising God as often as he could, and he especially liked to sing songs and play instruments while praising the Lord. Songs helped to cheer him up and made the Lord glad! Do you like to sing and dance and use instruments to praise God too?

Instructions and Supplies for Solomon

King David had a special son named Solomon. God loved him and said that he would be the new king after King David. God said he would be as a father to Solomon and take care of him. King David taught his son about God and told him that the most important thing to do is to respect and obey God's Words. Solomon loved God and listened to what his father told him, and wanted to follow in God's ways.

When King David was old he told everyone that Solomon was to be the new king, and he let Solomon ride on his mule and sit on his throne. Solomon was anointed with special oil to show that God was giving him a new and important job and would give Solomon His Spirit to help him do the job. Everyone was very joyous and sang and cheered and played on musical instruments.

Solomon was given a very big and special job by his father, David. Solomon was to build a big and fancy temple. The Ark of the Covenant would be placed there, and the people who loved and served God could offer prayers and praise there, too. Of course they could pray and praise God anytime and anywhere! But it was just a place to remind them that God was really there with them, and they would do well if they gave Him their respect and love. A building that could remind them that God should have a special place in their lives—just like the fancy temple for prayer had a special place in their country.

King David prayed and asked God to show him just what the temple should look like, and David drew the plans and wrote down the Lord's instructions to tell his son Solomon and others how to build it. He also began to collect wood and marble, metals and gold, and precious stones to make the temple like a beautiful palace for God, their powerful and loving King!

The people were very glad when King David told them about it, and they promised to help King Solomon build it. Old King David was very pleased to see how happy everyone was, and was thankful that his son Solomon loved and followed in God's ways and so could now be the new king.

The Temple is Built

Jesus lives with us and is near us no matter where we are. We don't need to have a building to pray in, to be close to Him. However, that is what the Israelites needed when Solomon was the king, to help remind them that God was the most important King of all, and they needed to listen to Him and obey His words.

King Solomon followed through on his father David's plans and instructions for the temple that he was given the responsibility to have built. Finally, after years of hard work by thousands of workmen, at last the special temple was built. The wood had been given to King Solomon by King Hiram, who loved and respected King David and wanted to then help and be a friend to David's son Solomon, when he was the new king.

Many good quality supplies were used to build the temple. Cedar and fir trees from Lebanon; gold and silver; brass and iron; precious stones and marble; large stones that were cut to just the right size; beautiful coloured cloth, and many other things. It took seven years to complete the work. They persevered until it was

finished. Many people gathered to celebrate and to see the newly built temple for prayer and worshipping the Lord. It was a big time of prayer and praise, rejoicing and singing with musical instruments.

The Lord loves good music, happy songs, songs that tell others the wonderful things He has done. This gives everyone joy and faith, and it brings God's Spirit near to those who are praising Him. King David previously had many musical instruments made—thousands! These were to be used for praising the Lord with songs. The large families of Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were all very clever in playing music and singing songs, and they would serve the Lord in this way in the newly set up temple. King David previously had appointed and provided for them to do so.

Inside the new temple was a special room prepared to house the Ark of the Covenant. Two very large cherubim angels were made and set up in this room. The cherubims had two huge wings that reached from the wall on one side of the room to the wall on the other. They faced each other, and were all covered over in gold. Between them is where the Ark of the Covenant was placed.

King Solomon offered a prayer of dedication and asking for the Lord's blessings and forgiveness for all the people. Then God showed everyone a sign of His power and demonstrated that He was right there with them. He sent fire from heaven down onto the altar where King Solomon was praying! The temple was also filled with God's special, thick, bright cloud—just like the cloud that had been sent to the travelling Israelites many years before. Everyone was amazed and wanted to obey and follow in God's ways.

A Wise King

One night, after King Solomon had offered a special prayer, God talked with him in a dream. It seemed like a dream, but it was a real and important message from God. To be the king was a very big and new job, and Solomon was humble and knew that he needed God's help. In the dream God asked Solomon, "What would you like Me to give you?"

King Solomon responded that he needed help. He was the king, but to be a good king he needed to be wise and to have an understanding heart. He wanted to recognise what was good and what was bad, so he could make the right choices, and help all the people do so, too. King Solomon wanted to know what was the best thing to do, in any situation. It was a good choice to ask God for wisdom and the knowledge that he needed to be a good king.

Everyone saw how wise King Solomon was after God had granted his request. He spoke thousands of proverbs and wise sayings, he wrote many songs, and many things he said are written down in the Bible. He also knew lots of facts and interesting things about plants and trees, fish and birds and other animals. The Lord instructed him in these things, and he remembered them and told these things to others.

From a far away land the Queen of Sheba came to talk with him. She had heard that he was a very wise king, and had many questions to ask him. She brought abundant gifts of gold and spices and precious stones. The queen was able to talk with King Solomon and asked him all her hardest questions. God gave King Solomon the wisdom to know what to say to her. The queen was amazed to hear all that King Solomon wisely told her. Receiving the answers to her questions made her heart feel happy.

Do you like getting answers to your questions? It feels nice, doesn't it? Not always do people know the answers to other's questions, but God always does. He knows everything, and He knows what you need to understand. No matter who you are, or where you are, you can pray and ask God for wisdom, and He will give it to you.

A King's Proclamation

After Solomon was the king, there were other kings who ruled. Some followed in God's ways, and some didn't. King Asa was a good king who wanted to follow God's Word, and knew that it would make their country nicer and more peaceful if they did. God would bless them for obeying him. He proclaimed that everyone in the country, all people of all ages—old and young—and even those who were from other lands who were living with them, should do things God's way. It was the best decision the king could make, as it would help the country the most.

The people listened to what King Asa said, and everyone promised with all their hearts to follow and serve God. They blew trumpets and shouted loudly saying that they would do what God's Word said. God blessed the country and made things peaceful for everyone. They were then able to work on building their cities strong, and things went well for them.

King Asa listened to the laws and instructions that were written down by Moses for them all, and he also wanted to hear what God had to say to him right then as well. He called prophets to pray and hear God's Words and tell him what God had to say to him. He wanted to be fully obedient.

In messages given to him by prophets, God encouraged King Asa that he was doing a good job and making wise decisions—choosing to follow in God's ways. As long as he kept doing that, things would go well. God also said that it was good to pray and ask for His help, and not to just trust in people to protect and help them. The prophet said that God is eager to do things that seem impossible and to work miracles to save, protect and help those that love and respect Him.

God Cares for Elijah

The Lord can do some amazing things to take care of those who love Him. One time there was a famine in the country and no rain fell, as a result of the king and queen's ungodly ways. The people in the land weren't obeying God's Words either. It was a difficult consequence of their bad behaviour. Prophet Elijah told the king that the rain wouldn't fall to water the crops until God knew it was the right time and people were ready to change and do the right thing. It was to be three and a half years until it rained again.

Prophet Elijah had food and water and all that needed during that time of famine, because he obeyed the Lord. The Lord told him to go and live beside the brook Cherith for awhile, where he had water to drink. The Lord then told some ravens to fly and bring him meat and bread twice each day. When at last the water of the brook dried up, Elijah was told where to go and what to do next.

Elijah obeyed and went to a place called Zarephath, as the Lord wanted a woman there to feed and care for him. Prophet Elijah asked her for food and water and she gave him all that she could. The food she shared with him was to be her last bit of bread, but because she gave it to God's prophet, God did a miracle for her. The woman's barrel of flour and her jar of oil never ran empty—for years!

Every day she baked bread for her son and herself and for prophet Elijah, and there was always enough in the containers for them to use. It was a miracle! She had to obey and have faith at first to share the only food she had, but because God asked her to, she did it. And not just on that first day, but she shared her miracle food with Elijah every day, for three years; and because she did, she and her son never lacked the food they needed.

One day the woman's child got very sick. It seemed like his life had ended. The mother took her son to Prophet Elijah to pray for him. After the prophet prayed desperately for the boy's healing, the boy opened his eyes and was alive and well. Everyone was so happy!

Fire and Water

The crops hadn't grown for years, and the people didn't have enough food, since it hadn't rained. Finally, it was time for God to send the rain. There was something that needed to happen first, however. People needed to start doing things God's way, and needed to love, respect, and believe in Him.

Prophet Elijah did as God instructed and called the king and the people of the country to meet together on Mount Carmel. There they would get to see God's power. When everyone was ready, Elijah set up an altar of prayer and had lots and lots of water poured on it. God wanted to demonstrate to all the people there how close and real He was. He wanted to send down fire to light the wood on the altar, even if it was real wet, without Elijah doing anything but praying. That would take a miracle!

There were others on the mountain that didn't know and love God and who just did their own thing. The king and queen were not godly and instead of praying to the Lord and telling the people to do the same, they let ungodly and bad people just keep doing whatever they wanted to do. None of them worshiped God and obeyed His word. They believed in things that weren't true or good, and it made God very unhappy.

These ungodly people yelled and called for fire to come down onto their own type of altar, but nothing happened, as they weren't praying to the true God. Elijah laughed as it was very silly to try to make something amazing happen without God's help. Then Elijah prayed, and right away God sent a powerful fire from Heaven, and it burned up everything on his altar in a flash! –The wood, stones, dirt and water too! Everyone was amazed and knew that God was real and powerful and that they better stay close to Him and obey His Word!

Prophet Elijah then prayed earnestly for the rain to finally come. He prayed seven times! Then the clouds began to form and soon it was pouring down rain. The crops could grow again and everyone knew that God was going to take care of them, as they chose to love and respect Him.

Heavenly Food and Encouragement

When Elijah was tired and feeling down. He needed a quiet place to rest. Under a juniper tree he took a nap. He didn't have any food and didn't know where to go next. Prophet Elijah had done a good job and obeyed what God said to do, and God wanted to encourage him and give Elijah what he needed.

Elijah felt someone waking him up. He looked and saw it was an angel! This angel gave him water to drink and had baked him some fresh bread right there, over a little fire of coals. Elijah felt so much better after eating the food from heaven that the angel brought, and drinking the water. He then went back to sleep for a while. The angel woke him one more time and gave him more Heavenly bread and water, because Elijah was about to go on a long trip and he'd need to have the strength to make it all the way.

Something amazing happened! Elijah travelled for 40 days and didn't even need any food during that trip. God's special miracle bread from heaven had given him all the nourishment that he needed for that journey.

When Elijah arrived at Mount Horeb, he found a cave to stay in for awhile. He talked with God and heard His Words. God encouraged him that he was doing a good job, and that there were new things for him to do. Elijah felt renewed faith and courage to continue on with telling people God's Words and helping them to follow in His ways.

The Boys Who Were Kings

There were many kings who ruled over the Israelites, but many of them did not obey God's Words and this made things sad and difficult.

Some of the few good kings were actually crowned as kings when they were still children. Isn't that amazing? One seven-year-old child was made king, and his name was Joash. A good priest called Jehoiada loved and obeyed God

and helped to teach Joash God's Word when he was real young. When young Joash was the king, priest Jehoiada help to give him good advice and instruct him.

King Joash wanted to fix up the temple that was in need of repairs, and thought of a plan to collect money for the project. A wooden chest was brought and put at the door of the temple, and a hole was made in it. People that wanted to help came and dropped coins in it. Soon there was enough money to do the job.

Another boy was eight years old, and he became the king many years later. His name was Josiah. He also wanted the temple to be fixed up and have repairs made on it. One day a man found a book with important instructions from God written by Moses in it. The book was read to King Josiah. As soon as he heard it, he wanted to obey everything that God had said in that book. He told everyone to follow God and serve Him too, and stopped those who were doing the wrong things. Josiah was wholehearted and eager to do whatever God said to do.

Hezekiah's Healing

King Hezekiah called the people of his country together for a time of prayer and praise. Everyone who gathered for this special time felt glad when they remembered God's love and care. They were sorry for their wrong doing. They prayed for forgiveness and for God to help them.

King Hezekiah talked with them and told them what God's Word said to do. He instructed them in God's ways. People sang songs and psalms and praises to the Lord with instruments and had a very happy time together. When it was time to go home, everyone wanted to stay there for several more days. So they did, and they continued meeting together and worshipping the Lord.

When they finally did leave, they were so filled with God's Spirit that they wanted to change the way things were in the whole country! The people travelled all over the place telling everyone about God's Words and ways and getting others to follow and obey Him too. Then they returned to their homes. Things went well in the country while people made the right choices and respected God and loved Him.

One time, King Hezekiah got sick and was told he was going to die soon, and he had a sore that seemed would not heal. King Hezekiah prayed with all his heart to God for healing and for his life to continue. God told the prophet Isaiah to tell the king that He had heard his prayer and seen his tears and would heal him. God also showed Isaiah what natural remedy to give to the king to help his sore get healed: a lump of figs placed on it. And it worked!

King Hezekiah wanted a sign from the Lord to encourage him and prove to him that he would get completely healed and continue living for a long time. God did something amazing and impossible to show His love and to demonstrate that this indeed would happen. God made the shadow on the sundial go backwards by 10 degrees—it moved to the place it had already been at earlier in the day. It was like he'd gone back in time a bit. That was a very big miracle that only our God who is in charge of the Earth and sun, the universe and time, can do. King Hezekiah was glad for this sign of encouragement. God's promise came true and he lived for another 15 years.

Elisha is Called

Elijah was on Mount Horeb, talking with the Lord about his next mission. God spoke to him in a gentle and quiet voice. Elijah listened real well to God's voice. He said to go to a man named Elisha, and to call him to come and work together with him, as preparation for him to be the new prophet later on. Elijah began travelling right away to do what God asked him to do.

When Elijah made it to the place where Elisha was, he found him outside working on his farm. He had 12 yokes of oxen working to plough the field. Elijah came up to him and threw his coat over Elisha as a sign that he was being

called and given a new job to do—to live with Elijah and help him. Elisha was to learn from Elijah about hearing from the Lord and being a prophet.

Elisha didn't wait around, he stopped what he was doing and ran over to Elijah telling him he'd follow him and do what God was calling him to do. Elisha first cooked a meal for everyone there, and then said good-bye. He didn't delay, but went right away to obey what God and His prophet asked him to do. He was happy to learn all he could about listening to God and being one of His special messengers.

A Heavenly Ride on a Fiery Chariot

Elijah had been a faithful messenger, telling God's Words to everyone. Finally, it was time for him to go to Heaven. Elisha would be the new prophet, continuing the job of leading people in God's ways, listening to God's Words and passing those messages on to the people. It was hard for Elisha and the others who knew and loved Elijah, to think of him leaving them. God told Elijah the day he was going to leave, and so he told good-bye to those who knew him and were learning to be prophets too.

Elijah and Elisha were walking along and talking, as they travelled to the last places that God told Elijah he needed to visit before he left this Earth. Elisha knew this was Elijah's last day with him, so he wanted to stay closely with him and go with him wherever he went on that day. The two men needed to cross over the Jordan river, and they needed a miracle. Prophet Elijah took his coat and hit the waters with it, and amazingly the water parted and there was dry path going straight across it, for them to walk on. It closed up as soon as they were across.

Elijah asked Elisha if there was anything that he wanted to have given to him. Elisha wanted to have twice as much of the power of God's Spirit as Elijah had! He knew it would be a big job for him to help people walk in God's ways, and he knew it would take lots of Heavenly help to do it.

As they kept walking and talking, all of a sudden a chariot with horses sent from heaven, appearing all bright and fiery, came galloping to where they were walking. With a whoosh of wind Elijah was lifted up into this chariot to catch his ride to heaven! It was very amazing!

Elisha would now be the new prophet that others looked up to and would listen to, as he passed on God's Words to them. Elijah's coat fell down and Elisha picked it up. He carried it as he went to cross back over the Jordan river. Elisha took the coat and prayed for a miracle—that God would be now with him too, and help him. As he hit the water with Elijah's coat, it again parted and he walked across on a dry path. Everyone who saw Elisha knew that God's Spirit was now with him.

Amazing Water and Oil

Prophet Elisha was often called on to help people in difficult situations. He loved the Lord and prayed for miracles, and then would obey whatever God said to do.

One time the water that was in the city of Jericho wasn't clean and pure, and it was causing a big problem for those living there. The people asked prophet Elisha what to do about it. When he prayed, God told him to do something interesting. Good things always happened when he obeyed God's instructions.

"Bring me a new jar with salt in it!" he said.

Elisha took the jar with salt and poured it into the water, and told the people God's promise that the water was now clean and fine and good. Everyone was so glad! It was good that they went to the Lord and to His prophet to find out what to do. Fresh water would make the plants grow well, and the people and animals healthy too.

Another time a miracle was needed was for a woman and her two children. They owed a lot of money to someone, and he was demanding to have it paid back. She was very poor and didn't have anything to give. The only thing she had left was a little bit of oil in a jar. She made the wise choice and wanted to find out what God wanted her to do. She told Prophet Elisha about her problem.

The woman had faith and obeyed whatever Prophet Elisha told her to do—which was God's instructions to her. She was to collect lots of jars and pots and bring them to her house. Then she was to pour her little bit of oil into them, and to just keep pouring until all the jars and pots were filled. The woman did that and she and her children were happily surprised to see the oil from the little jar never ran out, until all the big jars and pots were filled! Now they could sell the oil and have all the money they needed—both to pay the debt as well as for their family's needs. Asking for God's ideas for a solution to a problem, and then doing what He says to do, with an attitude of faith, brings wonderful blessings your way!

Elisha's Room, and a Special Child

As Prophet Elisha walked to different parts of the country talking with and helping people, he needed food and water and places to rest. There was a man and woman that would often invite him to stay and have a meal with them when he passed by their house on his journeys. She realised that he was a man of God and wanted to take good care of him. One time she got an idea of something else they could do.

The woman suggested to her husband that they built an extra room, for Elisha to stay in when he was travelling that way, if he was tired and needed to rest. So they built the room on top of their own house's flat roof, and put a bed, a table and stool, and a candle stick in the room for him.

The next time the prophet came that way he was so happy to see the great gift they made for him—a room to rest in, whenever he wanted to! He wanted to thank them for their kindness and prayed for the Lord to give them a child. This was what the woman had always wished for. The next year, the woman and her husband had a baby boy, and it made them so glad!

One time when prophet Elisha was on Mount Carmel he looked up and saw the woman riding on a donkey towards where he was. He went to find out what she needed. Her son had suddenly gotten very ill and was lying on the prophet's bed at their house. Prophet Elisha went home with her and prayed for the boy to recover, as he had already passed away. The boy then sneezed seven times, and was healed and alive! The mother was so grateful! She held him and was very happy! Her kindness to God's prophet had brought many joys back to her in return.

Food for Hungry Men

Prophet Elisha and his team of young men who were learning to hear from God too, needed food to eat. They had travelled to a place where there hadn't been much rain so crops in the farms weren't growing well. They put on a big pot to boil and make soup. Some people went to look in the fields all around to find any types of vegetables they could find growing wild; something that they could pick and add to the soup.

However, some gourds were picked from a vine that was poisonous, because they didn't know that it wasn't edible. It made the whole soup bad to eat. Everyone was hungry and had nothing else to eat. Prophet Elisha prayed, and God said to throw a handful of flour into the pot, and then it would be changed by a miracle into good food. God would change it and make it fine to eat. And that's what happened! Everyone was able to have a nice bowl of good, healthful, warm vegetable soup. They were grateful for the Lord's loving care for them.

Another time when Prophet Elisha and his team were in need of food, a kind man brought a special gift. The food from his first harvest was brought to them. He gave them 20 barley loaves and some corn. Instead of eating it all himself with his own household, this man wanted to share it with God and His Prophet and the team of men with him.

Prophet Elisha had one hundred men who were in need of a meal, but the food the man brought wouldn't be enough for everyone to have some. When Prophet Elisha asked God what to do, He spoke and said to go ahead and serve the bread and corn to everyone and that there would be enough—and even some left over. They did that, and the hungry men ate until they had plenty. After they felt full and left the meal, there still was extra food left over for later! God made even more than enough for everyone to get what they needed. As they listened to God and obeyed by faith, God supplied all that they needed.

Humility and Healing

There was an important man in the land of Syria named Naaman, but he had a big problem. He was very sick. It was a sickness that made his skin filled with sores, and there was no cure. He and his wife were very sad. One day his wife's maid gave them some hope.

"If only Naaman were with the Prophet Elisha, he could get healed!" the maid said. She had lived in the land of Israel before, so she knew about the prophet. This was the first time someone had given Naaman hope that he could be healed. He was eager to go and find the prophet.

Naaman and his team went to the king of Israel to ask about getting healed. The king couldn't heal him, of course, but Elisha told the king to send Naaman to his house. When Naaman arrived, Prophet Elisha's servant went out to greet him and tell him the instructions from God that Prophet Elisha had said to tell him.

"Go wash in the Jordan river seven times and you will be healed!" Elisha's servant told the message to Naaman.

Naaman wasn't very happy to go and wash in muddy river, but finally he agreed. When he humbly obeyed what God asked him to do first, and washed seven times, his body became totally healed. He looked and felt great!

Naaman went back to say 'thank you' to Prophet Elisha and to give him gifts, but Elisha told him that it was God who healed him, not himself. He took none of the gifts, as he wanted Naaman to realise it was God alone who healed him. Naaman believed in God when he saw how wonderful and powerful He was, able to do such a great miracle—healing him from his otherwise incurable illness. He would respect and pray to God from then on!

The Axe that Floated

Prophet Elisha helped to teach a team of men how to hear from the Lord, and instructed them in God's ways. Sometimes they travelled around, and other times they stayed in a house with Prophet Elisha. One time, they needed a bigger place to live, so they got an idea to make a bigger place out of logs. Elisha agreed and said they could get to work building. First they would need to go and find some trees to cut down, to use for making the new house.

"Please come with us to the river's edge while we cut down the trees," the men asked Prophet Elisha. So he went together with them as they started on this project. An axe had to be borrowed for this job, and the man who borrowed it was trying to take real good care of it.

After awhile, as the man was working hard chopping down trees the metal head of the axe flew off the handle and splashed right into the water of the Jordan River. Oh dear! It sunk immediately to the bottom of the river. It would be impossible to find it.

“My Father, my Father!” he cried out to Prophet Elisha, for that is what he called him. “The axe head fell into the water. It was the one I was borrowing! What am I going to do?”

Prophet Elisha prayed, and God showed him to do something rather unusual. Elisha obeyed right away. He cut a stick off a tree, one that could float, and threw it on the water in the place the axe head had fallen in. To the relief and joy and surprise of the young man and everyone else watching, the iron axe head also began to float. The man reached and grabbed it out of the water. They thanked God for helping them. The team was working hard doing the part they could do to build a house, and God did the miracles they needed, to make it possible.

The Fruit

The kind and generous woman who helped Elisha by inviting him for meals, as well as having a room built for him to rest in, needed to move to a new place for awhile. Elisha came to tell her that there wouldn't be sufficient food in the country for several years; there would be a famine in the land. It wouldn't be easy for her if she stayed where she lived. Elisha suggested that she, and all who lived with her, move for the seven years that it would take, until the famine was over.

The woman believed God's Words and obeyed Prophet Elisha. She and all who lived with her packed up what they could and travelled to another country, to stay there until things were better again in her own country. After seven years the famine was over and it was time for her to move back to her house with a nice farm and many fruit trees. However, when she arrived she saw that other people had been using her property. She didn't know what to do, so she went to talk with the king about it.

The king was in the middle of hearing about some of the miracles of Prophet Elisha, and how when he prayed for a lifeless little boy, he was healed and alive again. When the woman walked in right then, the king was happy to find out that this was the mother of the boy he'd just heard was brought back to life. When she confirmed to the king that this is indeed what happened, he wanted to help this woman all he could. The king was glad to hear about the good things that were going on, and that this was a woman who had faith in God.

The king sent someone to work out the situation and help this woman's house and property and all her fruit be given back to her and her team again. Because this woman had faith and obeyed what God and His prophet had told her to do, then everything worked out well in the end. Even the things that were difficult at the time, ended up bringing blessings into her life, because she loved God and wanted to do things that pleased Him.

Abundance and Obedience

King Jehoshaphat wanted to do what God said, and he wanted others in his country to hear what God's Word said, too. He selected some good men who read and obeyed God's instructions, and gave them the job of teaching it to others. Those men travelled around the country and read the books of God's Word to people. They taught everyone what God said to do.

Because King Jehoshaphat chose to love and obey God, God let their country have peace and plenty. Many riches and presents were given to him by lots of people all over. He was a good king and did his best to make the country nice for everyone.

One time a team of three kings and their helpers were meeting in an area where they found out there wasn't any water to drink. There were many people and animals that had travelled a long way to get there. They all needed water, so they called Prophet Elisha to pray and find out from God what they should do.

Prophet Elisha asked a musician to play nice music for him while he prayed. Then God talked with him and told him what to tell the kings. "Dig ditches in the valley down there, and without rain coming, water will be there for you." Prophet Elisha told them what God said to do.

The people obeyed, and were so glad to see the miracle that happened the next morning. There was water that was rushing along the ground and came and filled up all the ditches, turning them into little pools of water. Everyone had refreshing water to drink. It was good they had faith to do the hard work of digging the ditches. God blessed it and supplied for them what they needed.

Amos, Joel, and Hosea

During the time when the kings ruled over the lands of Israel and Judah, there were prophets sent from God to speak His Words and instructions to the people. One man was Prophet Hosea. He wrote down the messages God gave him and they are recorded in the Book of Hosea.

God wanted him to let the people know that God loved them, even when they were naughty. He wanted them to love Him too, and to say they were sorry, and God would forgive them.

The prophet Joel told of how God can give His Spirit and His Words to anyone now, at this time. If someone loves the Lord and prays, they can receive God's Spirit. They will be able to hear what God wants to tell them, and will have the strength and power to do what He needs them to do. With God's thoughts and ideas, visions and dreams leading His people, they can do a wonderful job for Him.

There was a man called Amos, and he was a herdsman that cared for the flocks and cattle on the hill sides. He also had the job of picking fruit. One day God called him to instead be a prophet and tell God's words to the people. Amos listened to God and told others what God wanted to say to them. He was a faithful and obedient messenger.

Jonah's Trip

Jonah was a prophet of God, and he was given an important message to pass on to the people in the city of Nineveh. The people there weren't doing the things that were right and good and kind, and it was making God very sad. He wanted everyone to feel loved and to know that He cared about them. The wrong doers needed to be told to stop. God sent Jonah to tell them that there would be trouble and difficulty coming their way real soon.

However, when Jonah thought about it, he didn't want to go and do that hard job. He didn't want to have to go to that bad city. Jonah was afraid and chose to not obey what God asked him to do, and instead took a trip to somewhere else. He got on a ship that was sailing to Tarshish, but the journey wasn't an easy one as there was a very big and troubling storm. The sailors didn't know if they would make it to land safely. They tried rowing hard, but the stormy waves and the wind prevented them from reaching shore.

The sailors wondered if the storm happened because someone on their boat had done something wrong and it was a punishment perhaps. When they talked with Jonah about it, Jonah said that the storm happened as a lesson because of his disobedience to what God had asked him to do. He was sorry that he disobeyed, and the other sailors realised the importance of listening to and obeying God's instructions. They all prayed and asked God to help them.

God's solution was something very different. God said that Jonah needed to get out of the ship and swim. And when he did, the storm stopped and was calm again. The sailors believed in God's power when they saw that happen. They turned their hearts to the Lord and learned to respect Him. Jonah was kept safe in the water by God's loving care, and God sent him a new way to travel to the land, so he could go where he was meant to go. A very big fish came and took Jonah for a ride, right inside of his huge belly for three days, and took him to the land. Isn't that amazing?

Jonah prayed desperately while inside the fish. He trusted in God to help me. After three days the fish spit him out on to land. When Jonah was safe and fine on the land again, God asked him once more to go and give the important message to the people of Nineveh. Jonah quickly obeyed and did what God told him to do. This made God happy, as He loved the people there and wanted them to change and start making better and more loving choices in their lives.

Warnings and Forgiveness

Prophet Jonah arrived in Nineveh at last. What an eventful and challenging journey it had been. It wasn't a fun job, but it was a lot better than finding out the difficulties that come when someone chooses to go the wrong way. He knew what it was like to make the wrong choices and to disobey God.

The people of Nineveh were also making the wrong choices and weren't doing things that pleased the Lord. Instead of just stopping them with a big punishment and making things hard for them, God chose to give them a chance to change on their own. That is why He wanted Jonah to go there, to give them a warning—to be like a warning sign that says "wrong way—danger".

Jonah told everyone that soon there would be hard times and unpleasant consequences for them for all their wrong and hurtful ways of living. He told them God's message, that their city would be ruined in 40 days, because of all the bad that was going on in that city. Thankfully, everyone listened and decided that they wanted to change. The king announced that everyone needed to stop doing their wrong and unkind deeds, and for all the people of the country to have some days of prayer and desperation. They fasted and prayed and showed they were sorry, asking God to forgive them.

When God saw that they were sorry and wanted to change, He chose to give them another chance. He didn't give them the trouble that He would have given them if they hadn't chose to pray and decide to do things God's way.

Jonah didn't understand why the trouble that he announced was to come to Nineveh in 40 days, didn't come, so God helped explain it in a special way. One night God made a gourd plant grow very fast and big right over the stick shelter that Jonah was resting under. This helped to provide more shade for Jonah in the hot day. He was glad. But then in the night a hungry worm nibbled on the stem and it made the gourd plant and its leaves wither. Jonah was sad. Then God explained that He felt the same way about the people of Nineveh; He would rather they change from their wrong ways, rather than having their city get ruined. Just like Jonah didn't want the plant to get ruined, God didn't want Nineveh to, either. Jonah learned to understand why God chose to give them another chance, since they were sorry and wanted God to help them.

Obadiah and Micah

Obadiah was a prophet who lived long ago, and he listened to God's messages and words to him. One time the Lord told him that those who were very proud of themselves, and didn't act in humility and love, were going to have troubles. These people lived in strong houses carved out of the rocky mountains, and they thought they were better than everyone else. They were not humbly showing God that they needed Him and wanted to do the

right things that make Him happy. Instead, they proudly thought that their nation would last forever and they could do whatever they wanted, even if it was hurting others.

Just having a nice house and being strong and smart isn't going to bring you great things for the rest of your life. It's best to do things God's way and to obey His Words. This is what will bring God's blessings into your life. This nation did not last forever; the people eventually passed away, but the Words of God telling us the lesson on humility, still remain. Many people know the name of the humble and obedient prophet Obadiah, because he listened to and passed on God's Words; but no one today knows the names of those in the proud nation living in strong rocky houses.

The prophet Micah was told by God where Jesus was to be born, when it was time later for God's Son to be born on Earth—in Bethlehem. Many years later, the Wisemen, those kings from the East, were asking where Baby Jesus was born. This prophecy was looked up and read and it helped give them guidance.

Prophet Micah also wrote about the wonderful world of the future, when Jesus comes to rule the Earth and all people know about Him and learn to do things His way. One day, the world and everyone living here will be at peace, and it will be a great place to live, with many of the difficulties taken away, that are in the world now. One day Jesus, will come back and be the King of everyone, and then things will be nice again on Earth. That's something you can look forward to!

Nahum and Habakkuk

Nahum was another prophet who listened to God's Words and did the things He said to do. He wrote down God's messages and was faithful to pass them on to others. Nahum spoke of how wonderful it is to go around telling people the good news—just like many missionaries do, giving the message of Jesus' love to people all over the world.

The Lord also showed him a vision or picture in his mind about what modern transportation would be like today. We can use the fast ways of travelling nowadays to go and reach people in faraway places all over the world with the message of God's love, and truth, and Jesus' gift of salvation!

That's like what the prophet Habakkuk wrote about in his book. He wrote down that one day people everywhere would know about Jesus! Isn't that a wonderful thought? When people know that Jesus loves them, and they learn from His Word how to live in love and peace, the world will be a happy and nice place to be.

Habakkuk also reminds us to praise God no matter what is happening—even if things are difficult and we don't have all that we want. Did you know that as you speak words of faith and praise to Jesus, that it makes wonderful things come your way? Jesus blesses those that trust in His care, rather than complaining about what they don't have. With Jesus helping you, He can make everything work out well for you. Jesus will answers your prayers and provide for you. He loves you!

Ezekiel the Prophet

Ezekiel was a faithful prophet and priest. God often told him to do some unusual and difficult things in order to get people to listen and remember what God wanted them to know. Do you ever play dress-up or act things out, or make models of miniature towns? Ezekiel's job was not just to tell people God's words, but to also act things out and show the message from the Lord using props and displays and skits.

It was Ezekiel's job, as a prophet, to tell the people what God need them to know, and to instruct them to do things God's way. He warned people of the trouble that would come to those who kept on in their disobedience and lack of love and respect for the Lord.

Ezekiel's job was to give people God's words, even if they didn't listen or choose to change and to follow and love the Lord. It's the job of anyone today, as well, who wants to serve and help Jesus—to pass on the message of Jesus and His Word. Not everyone will listen and do what they should, but Jesus will be pleased that those who love Him do their best to help others come to know Him, no matter what others say or do.

God told and showed Ezekiel so many things that people then needed to know back then, and God told him about the future as well. There are some things written about in the book Ezekiel that have not yet happened, but they will happen in the future. Isn't that interesting?

Wings and Wheels

Some of God's prophets got to see and experience some wild stuff when they took time to hear from God. One time the prophet Ezekiel had a vision of what looked like the Lord's throne, above in the heavens. It was glowing and shining. He saw also a heavenly vehicle with amazing wheels. Everything was very bright and beautiful, like the best and most precious shining jewels. Ezekiel tried his best to describe what he saw, but it was hard to put it into words we today would easily be able to understand and picture in our mind. It was truly unearthly. He'd never seen anything like it on Earth before.

There were angels called cherubims on this flying vehicle. These were very big and powerful angels. They could see well in all directions, and were very bright and shining with big wings that made a wonderful sound—it sounded like God speaking! Between the cherubims and the wheels of the heavenly vehicle there was a type of heavenly fire. This vehicle was for special transportation. Maybe when you get to Heaven, Jesus will let you see some of the amazing vehicles there are. Would you like that?

When the Lord called the prophet Isaiah to be His messenger, it was a memorable event! He saw a vision in the spirit of powerful angels around Jesus on a throne in Heaven. These angels were called seraphims, and they looked amazing. When they spoke words of praise to God even the door posts shook, and the house was filled with God's heavenly cloud.

Isaiah didn't know if he was good enough to do the special job of speaking God's Words to others, but God cleansed his mouth and spirit, and empowered him to do the job. He heard the Lord speak and say, "Who can we send?" and Isaiah answered, "Here I am! Send me!" He was willing to be the one to pass on God's Words to people—not just for those who lived back then, but he wrote it all down so people nowadays can read those messages too.

Isaiah the Prophet

There are wonderful prophecies in the Book of Isaiah that talk about the way Jesus is going to make the world one day—peaceful and pleasant. The thorns will be taken away, and the wild animals will be nice and gentle, eating grass just like the cattle do now. Jesus will be the King, and it will be a beautiful and enjoyable world in the future. Won't that be terrific? Just think, all the unpleasant and difficult and hurtful things that are now on Earth will be taken away. Food will grow well and easily, and people will live together in peace.

Some of the messages that came from God to prophet Isaiah told of when Jesus would come to Earth and live humbly and give His life willingly for the salvation of others. He wrote telling that when Jesus came to Earth, that He wasn't going to look all fancy, like the best-looking man around, arrayed like the King He really is. His appearance was humble and common. Isaiah wrote about how Jesus would have sad times and things would be difficult for Him, and He would be able to understand what it was like to live on Earth. This way Jesus could help us better and comfort us.

Isaiah also wrote that God's Word is like refreshing rain and how wonderful it is when people go around telling others God's Words of love and peace, joy and truth; and passing on the good news of Jesus' gift of salvation. Another message in the Book of Isaiah said that those who help and give to others, and are kind and caring, will receive wonderful things from Jesus—supply of their own needs, healing, and many good things.

Isaiah was a faithful and obedient prophet who said and did whatever God told him to. Those who follow this example today and pass on Jesus' Words and message of love to others make Jesus happy!

Jeremiah the Prophet

Jeremiah was a prophet who God called to speak His Words. He wasn't an older man, and he felt like he was quite young still—too young to do what God was asking Him too. But God knew He was the right young man for the job. God told Jeremiah, that even before he was born God knew all about him and he was sent to Earth to be a prophet.

Jeremiah obeyed God and chose to speak God's Words to others. A man called Baruch was a great help to him, and wrote down the words of prophecy for Jeremiah on scrolls, and read to others the words that God was passing on to them. The King wasn't happy to hear the warning messages that were read to him from the first scroll that was written, and even though people begged him not to, he went ahead and burned it. However, God told Jeremiah to make a new one, and told him what to say, while Baruch the scribe wrote it down again—and this new scroll had even more messages and words added to it from the Lord than the first one.

What God said would happen, did happen—just as Jeremiah warned. There were many difficult things that happened in the country where Jeremiah was, as people hadn't been listening to and obeying what God told them to do, in order to make things go well. Most of the people had to leave their country and live in faraway places. They had to work for other kings—like the king of Babylon—who took control of their country and caused a lot of disruption and damage. Life was very hard for them all then, and they wished they had listened to what God had been telling them through His prophets for many years.

God blessed and protected Jeremiah because he was a faithful and strong messenger, telling people God's Words. When others had to leave their home country, Jeremiah was given the freedom to still live there. He spent much time praying and listening to the Lord. He was able to talk to others who were still there in the ruined country, and encourage them. Jeremiah knew what it felt like to have sad and difficult things happen, and he learned to hold on to God's promises of eternal love and care, through the hard times. Things will always get better for those that trust in Him. God will hear and answers the prayers of all who ask Him for help.

Tough Times

Jeremiah was very sad to see the people having a hard time and seeing all the troubles that came their way. He prayed and knew that Jesus was close to them anyway, even in the sad and difficult times.

Jeremiah reminded people that God would love them forever. Eventually they would get a chance to return to their country again, and Jesus would help them and care for them all no matter where they were—if they chose to love and obey Him and pray for His help.

Once God told Jeremiah to go and watch a potter working on making a clay jar on his potter's wheel. The man saw that something wasn't right with it and he so started again to make it better. He was then was able to make something good out of the clay.

A message from God came to Jeremiah about it. God is like a potter, and those who love Him are in His hands, like the clay in the hands of a potter. If we let God change us into something better and teach us new things, then we will be useful and beautiful.

This message encouraged Jeremiah and the people, that even if things were very difficult at that time, because of their continued wrong choices for many years, that God still had His hand of care on them, and was going to use this time to change them and the country for the better. Things would be better later on, as they yielded to His hand working in their lives, and let Him change them.

Wise Young Men

Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had a life-changing adventure during the time when many of the Israelites had to leave their land. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon wanted some wise and good helpers to talk with, who could give him good ideas and counsel him. He needed those who were in good health, who had learned a lot, and who could apply themselves to study and learn many new things and learn how to speak a new language as well. Young men were chosen from the land of Judah, sons and descendants from the king and the princes of the land and brought to Babylon.

When these men were being trained and taught many things, the king wanted them to have good food to eat. He wanted his new helpers to be fit and healthy. However, the food that the king was telling his servants to give to four of these young men—Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—wasn't the best and would not make them healthy and strong. They had learned from their parents what was good to eat, and what would make them weak, or wasn't what God wanted them to eat.

Daniel asked Melzar, the man in charge of their care, to please only serve good, natural, healthy food to him and his friends. He asked for pulse, food made from vegetables and good plants, as well as only to be given water to drink. The other young men would continue to eat of the king's food. Melzar agreed to Daniel's idea to try it out for ten days and see if eating the healthful good food made them healthier than the others.

After ten days had past, Melzar took a good look at Daniel's team of four, and compared them to the other young men who had eaten unhealthy food and drinks. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were indeed the most healthy and strong and good-looking, as they had chosen to eat what God wanted to. Good food made them able to also focus better on their studies and learn all that they needed to learn. Their obedience to God brought His blessings on them.

When the young men were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, he asked them questions and talked with them. He saw that Daniel and his friends who loved God and prayed and listened to Him, were the wisest and cleverest of everyone around. The king said they were ten times wiser than then his other counsellors. Obeying Jesus, listening to what He wants to say, and making the right choices will make you wise too!

Job's Lessons

Job was a good man who loved God and did what was right. He was often praying and asking for God's forgiveness for others, so God could bless them. God sent lots of angels to protect and keep him safe. He was blessed with many things, lots of animals, and was known by many for how wealthy he was. However, he had a big test come into his life: Would he still love and trust in God's wisdom and care, even if things were going bad for him? Even if he was no longer rich and lost all that he had, and was sick and in pain?

One day these very difficult things happened to him: Everything he had was taken away from him or ruined; and soon afterwards he got sick and had sores all over his body. He was a poor and sick man all of a sudden. When his

troubles first started, he took it patiently and trusted that God would work it out. But then when things got worse and he was in pain from his illness and sores, he began to despair. He wasn't acting and speaking humbly anymore, but was angry.

His friends talked with him, trying to help him figure what was wrong, and why this all had happened—but they didn't know. But then God came to talk with Job and explained some things to him.

Job had been getting too proud and was speaking unwisely, thinking that it wasn't good that he have troubles, when he was always trying to do the right thing. But God reminded him that compared to God, Job and everyone on Earth knows so little.

God made the world and keeps everything going well. He keeps the oceans in place, He creates and directs the stars, He makes sure all the different types of animals have food to eat, and many more things He does each day that people can't. So when we get sick or we get hurt, or something goes wrong, we don't need to feel upset, but we should be humble and trust that God will make everything turn out for good in the end. He is in control and will hear our prayers and come to help us. We can also remember that when things are going well for us, it is not because of our goodness, for only God can make it so. We should remember to praise Him for all that He allows us to be blessed with each day.

Job learned to be humble, and was sorry for his proud ways of talking. He realised that God was perfect and knew what was the right thing to do. God forgave Job for his wrong attitudes and healed him, after he prayed. And guess what? To reward Job after that hard time of lesson learning, the wise, caring and loving God made things better for Job than they had ever been before! Afterwards, God gave Job back twice as much as he had lost. Things were better for him in the end than they had been before the troubles came to him. And most of all, Job's heart was wiser, humbler and closer to the Lord than before. This gave him greater happiness.

When we love and trust Jesus—even through the sad and sick times—then He can make our hearts wiser and stronger, and will bless us with wonderful things afterward, too! We don't have to understand everything, we just need to remember how wise and loving God is. He knows about everyone on Earth—and even cares for the animals too! He will care for you and bring good things your way as you love and trust in Him.

Queen Esther

King Ahasuerus was the ruler over a large area of land. Many of the Israelites who had been told to leave their home country were living all over his kingdom. One man was named Mordecai, and he had a younger cousin called Esther, who he had cared for like she was his own daughter. She was an orphan and no longer had her parents with her, so this kind and Godly man took good care of her. They were both descendants of the Israelites.

One day there was a big and fancy feast held for the people living in Shushan the palace--the place where the king lived. The feast was for seven days! Everything was set up real deluxe. Golden cups were used for drinks, costly decorations were hung around, and the floor was made of various coloured marble.

Queen Vashti was also holding a special party in a royal house that belonged to the king. On one of the days while they were partying, the king asked for the queen to come, as he wanted to show everyone what a nice pretty wife he had. However, she said she didn't want to come and obey what he asked. That wasn't the right thing for her to do, as it set a bad example to everyone of the land of disobedience to the king. So it was decided that she could no longer be the queen nor be allowed to visit his palace.

The king was sad and missed the queen, and wished she had been wiser and a better example to the people. His advisors suggested he choose a new queen, and he agreed. So, many nice ladies were brought from all over the land, to the palace for the king to choose from. Esther was one of the ladies brought to the palace. Esther was also very pretty, and she had a loving and wise heart. She and her older cousin Mordecai loved and respected God, and they were some of the Israelites that were no longer in their home country.

When it was Esther's turn to be presented to King Ahasuerus, to see if he wanted her to be the new queen, the king liked her the best and loved her a lot. He put the crown on her head and made her the queen. A big feast was held to celebrate! Esther was the new queen! God had made her be queen for a special reason. Why?

Well, later on someone who often helped the king, tried to trick him into agreeing for others to cause a lot of difficulty and harm to the Israelites—or Jews as they were called then—that were still living in the land that King Ahasuerus ruled over. When Esther's heard about it, she prayed desperately for the Lord to help her and her people. God answered her prayer, and when she went to talk with the king, he listened and believed her when she told him that he had been tricked. The king then made Mordecai have the job of being his close helper instead of the other proud man. Mordecai wrote and sent letters all over the country, in all the different languages that were spoken, with a message from the King. The king wanted them all to be allowed to live safely in his land, and no harm to come to them. Esther was a good and brave queen that her people loved, because she loved and obeyed God.

King Cyrus and King Darius

It hadn't been easy for the Israelites to be away from their homes and country, and they had learned a lot during those many years. At last the time was right to return and be given another chance to follow God again. God put the idea in King Cyrus' heart to allow them to go back to their home country. He ordered that the gold and silver pots and bowls and special things that were for their temple be returned to them—as King Nebuchadnezzar had taken them away many years before. Cyrus was now the king of that land, and gave the permission for those things to be returned.

King Cyrus gave the order to the Israelites that they were to rebuild their temple. He wanted them to start doing again what God had asked them to do. After many had returned to their homeland and were getting set up again, then work on the temple began.

Things didn't go so smoothly, however, as there were people now living in their land that weren't too happy about the temple being built. When a new King was in charge, and no longer King Cyrus, the troublemakers told the new King about the work on the temple, and said that it should be stopped. And so he did—and a degree was made that they could no longer build it. Haggai and Zechariah were prophets and received words of encouragement from the Lord for the people during that time.

At last another king, named Darius, was in charge, so Zerubbabel and Jeshua started working again on the temple. The troublemakers tried to get King Darius also to say that the work on the temple should stop. However, those working on building the temple wrote to the king and explained what they had learned—how important it was to listen to God and obey Him, and that this temple was what God asked them to build. They also told King Darius that King Cyrus had told them to rebuild it. King Darius found in the written records that it was true that King Cyrus had told them to build it. He then gave his permission for the temple building work to continue, and said that no one should hinder them or stop them. He gave a message to everyone living around there to help the Israelities, and give to them all they'd need for their project, so that it would be built more quickly.

Ezra

Ezra had a job that he loved very much. In fact, it was one of the best jobs around. His job was to write and make new copies of the words that Moses and the prophets had written down. New scrolls needed to be made, so they could be read easily, and so that people would be able to know what God said and wanted them to do. Ezra was a scribe. He was someone who could read and write. He was faithful at his job and knew God's Word very well as a result.

The people had been able to move back into their home country and the temple had at last been built. But they needed more than just their nice homes and a place to pray and worship the Lord. What was the most important thing for them to have, in order for things to go well in their country? –A knowledge of God’s Word!

There was a good king that loved God and noticed that Ezra knew God’s Word well. He saw how faithful and diligent Ezra was. He wasn’t a famous person, or the richest or most good looking, but he was faithful to do his important job of reading and writing God’s Words. This was just the kind of person that the king wanted to give a special mission to.

The king commissioned Ezra to go to Jerusalem to be a teacher of God’s Word. He was to read God’s instructions to the people, and help to teach and explain to them what they were to do, what God wanted them to do at that time in history.

It was a big job, and difficult too, but Ezra gained the strength and help and all that he needed through using the power of prayer! He really knew how to pray, and God always helped him. The king also said that Ezra could have whatever he needed to help him lead the people in God’s ways. Whatever money, animals, goods and food were needed would be given to him to use. It was very easy now for the people to do things in God’s way. They had His Word. They had someone to teach and instruct them. They had the support and help of a king. And most of all they had a God of love that answered their prayers.

Nehemiah

Nehemiah was from the land of Israel, but was far from home, serving in the courts of King Artaxerxes. His job was to be the cupbearer and bring the king his wine. One time, one of his brethren visited and told him some sad news. The walls that used to be around the city of Jerusalem were broken and in great need of rebuilding. The city was unsafe and incomplete in this state. It was discouraging to those living there. There were many other things in need of fixing up and getting reorganised as well. The Israelites had been allowed to return to their home country, but there was a lot of work to do to make things nice again. However, there wasn’t anyone who was doing the important job of rebuilding the walls.

Nehemiah felt God’s call in his heart, that he was to be the one to go and do this job. He prayed a lot about it and waited to see how the Lord would work it out for him to leave and get the help he’d need to do it. Soon afterwards, as he was serving wine to the king, the king noticed that Nehemiah was sad about something. Nehemiah prayed in his heart about what to say. He then explained the problem to the king.

The Lord answered Nehemiah’s prayers by making the king want to allow Nehemiah to go and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, as well as want to give him whatever he needed to do it. Nehemiah asked the king for wood from his forest, and for letters of permission to travel to the areas he was to go to, as well as some of the king’s men to travel on horseback with him for safety. To all of this the king agreed.

When Nehemiah first arrived in Jerusalem, he secretly checked things out, at night. He knew there were some people who would try to stop his efforts to rebuild the walls. The next day he told the people what he was there to do, and they were very encouraged. Many strong and willing men banded together to help build the walls. It was a huge project, and took the fulltime focus of all who were working on it.

There were those who tried to stop them by speaking unkind and untrue words about and to Nehemiah and his team, but this didn’t make them stop at all. Because of the perseverance of the good team of workers and their supportive families, and through the prayers of everyone, the big stone walls were completed in an amazing short amount of time. People all around were surprised that such a huge and difficult task had been finished so quickly. They knew God was the one helping them.

Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The prophet Zephaniah spoke God's messages to the people, when the Israelites were still in their country, and king Nebuchadnezzar hadn't made them leave yet. It told of the troubles that would come, as they hadn't been following the Lord or listening well to His prophets. Yet, it also tells that the people would be allowed to return again one day to their country.

In one of the messages in the Book of Zephaniah it says how the Lord loves it when people meekly and humbly come before Him and pray. If you are humble and admit your mistakes and ask Jesus for forgiveness, then He can help you to change and will forgive you.

When at last the people did return to their land and began to set up Jerusalem again. They needed to rebuild the temple and walls of the city. This time they were much more eager and ready to listen to the prophets that God sent them at that time.

Two prophets that were sent to encourage the Israelites at that time were Haggai and Zechariah. Through prophet Haggai, God spoke to Zerubbabel and Jeshua instructing them and encouraging them in their work of rebuilding the temple and setting things up again.

Prophet Zechariah gave promises and instructions from God. God told the people that didn't need to be the strongest and most powerful nation around. All they needed to do was obey God and listen to His Word and He would help them do what they were meant to do.

The Prophet Malachi passed on God's wonderful promise of tremendous supply and God's care to those who gave to God, through giving gifts to those who were serving God fulltime. At that time it was the Levites, but today there are so many others who are doing the Lord's work that we can choose to give to. When we choose to share a portion of what we have with others, out of love for Jesus, to help others come to know Him, He will give back to us in wonderful ways.

The Life of Jesus I

Intro:

For thousands of years it had been promised that God would send a redeemer, a Saviour, someone who would bring us God's love and forgiveness. Those who remembered or read the prophecies had been eagerly waiting for this important event.

Ever since people began disobeying God and doing wrong, starting with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden until now, people have needed a way to be forgiven. God doesn't like sin and evil and wrong doings. He is love, and He is just and right, and He wants to make things in the world nice again. God also loves each one that He made—each person on Earth, and wishes they could all love Him too, and love His way of righteousness and peace and joy. God wishes that everyone would be able to live a happy life forever together with Him, making Him and others happy, and enjoying the happiness that comes from living in His loving ways.

However, with sin in the hearts of all humans, God couldn't allow us to live with Him. The promised punishment of sin or doing the things that God knows is bad and will make things sad, was to not be able to live forever with Him. The punishment that He told Adam and Eve, if they let the knowledge of evil into their life, would be death—not just death of the body, which happens normally to everybody, but eventually death of their spirit too. But God loved the people He made and didn't want them to be separate from Him forever, so He chose to send His own Son, Jesus Christ, to come to Earth and take the punishment for us—for all of us. He is God's Son; He was big enough to take on all the sins of the whole world, and everything anyone had done wrong, and take the punishment for it all. Because He chose to do that, we can all be forgiven and live forever, if we choose to believe and receive this gift. We have to ask Him for it. We have to believe in our hearts that Jesus came to Earth and

died and lived again, and took away our punishment for us. It's so easy now. His love made an easy way for us to go to Heaven and live forever! Now, all that we, and anyone on Earth, has to do to live forever happily with God is to tell Jesus that we are so thankful for what He did for us, and that we want to be forgiven for our sins—the wrong thoughts in our hearts, and our unloving actions and words. We must tell Him that we accept Him as our Saviour, the only one who can save us from forever death, and give us life forever instead. Then Jesus will forgive us and we will be allowed to live forever. Our love for God and our great thankfulness and acceptance of His amazing gift of love for us—forgiveness—is our ticket to Heaven.

Let's now learn about the life of Jesus, when He came to Earth to show us God's love. Those who knew Him, lived with Him, listened to Him speak, and saw the miracles that He did, wrote these stories and memories down for all the world to know. These are written in the New Testament of the Bible. I'll tell here some of the stories and main events for you.

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Mary and the Angel

In a town called Nazareth, lived a young lady named Mary. She had been brought up to know God and His loving ways. She was a humble woman who loved God, and was obedient to Him. Mary was engaged to be married to a good man, who also loved God. His name was Joseph. They knew God's Word and knew of the promised coming Saviour or "Messiah", and hoped He would be sent to the world soon.

One surprising day, the archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary with an amazing message: She was to be the mother of God's Son, who was to be born on Earth!

Mary was very surprised to see this angel, and even more amazed to hear that she had been chosen by God to have Baby Jesus. At first she wondered how this was going to happen. Was there something that she was supposed to do? She wasn't yet married to Joseph. Normally it would be impossible for a lady to have a baby just like that.

The archangel Gabriel answered her question and said, "With God nothing is impossible", and told Mary that it would be a miracle of God's Spirit giving her this special baby. He said that God's Spirit would come on her and fill her and create a new little life inside of her—baby Jesus.

Mary had to choose. Would she accept this new commission from God, to be the mother of His Son while He was on Earth? It took faith and courage to do what God wanted, as it would be a big and important job. It wouldn't be easy for her when others didn't understand how she all of a sudden had a baby, before she was even married. It wouldn't be easy for her to say goodbye to Jesus when He was grown and it was time for Him to leave this world and return to His Heavenly Father. If she said, "Yes", her heart would need to be brave.

Of all the ladies on the Earth just then, God had prepared and chosen Mary to do it, so God would help her to be the best mother she could be for His Son. Mary believed all that the angel said, and chose to say "yes" to God's request and mission for her. Mary said she would do whatever God wanted her to.

Then the sensation of God's amazing loving spirit filled her being from head to toe and all around her. She felt like she'd never felt before. And right when God did that miracle of His Spirit, she became the mother of Jesus, and the new life—Baby Jesus—was growing inside of her.

Baby John

Mary's cousin Elizabeth had something likewise very unusual happen to her. Elizabeth was called by God to be the mother of a very important prophet—John the Baptist. He would help prepare people for the coming of Jesus.

Elizabeth's husband Zacharias was a priest, and had been in the temple praying special prayers when all of a sudden the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him with some shocking news! At last he and his wife were going to have a son—a special son, who was to be named “John”, and he would have an important job to do. He was to be a messenger of God, announcing to the world that Jesus was soon to come.

When the angel told him the news, Zacharias was very shocked and he just couldn't believe it, since he and his wife were too old to have children! The angel told Zacharias that even if he didn't really believe it could happen, God would do the miracle anyway. Then to teach an important lesson, that it's very important to believe what God says—even if it seems impossible—Zacharias would be unable to speak or use his voice from the time the angel spoke with him until a week after his new little baby boy was born. He would see that what God said, would indeed happen. He'd have faith then and would be given back his gift of speech.

A few months after the angel had appeared to Zacharias and given him the news, then the angel visited Mary. The archangel Gabriel had told Mary also about Elizabeth's miraculous pregnancy. Soon after the angel's visit to Mary, she travelled to where her elderly cousin lived.

When Mary arrived and said hello, her pregnant cousin Elizabeth let out an “Oh!” as the baby, little John, had wiggled and kicked around so enthusiastically just at the sound of Mary's voice. Tiny Baby John was excited that the mother of God's Son had just arrived. Elizabeth and Mary both were filled with the words of God and spoke wonderful messages and praises to God!

A few months later baby John was born! It was a wonderful time of rejoicing and celebrating. What happy parents he had. Then came the promised miracle to daddy Zacharias, and he was suddenly able to speak! God gave him a message, a wonderful prophecy which he told all those listening. They knew baby John was sent to Earth with a special mission.

A Dream and a Trip

When Mary returned to her home, after visiting her cousin Elizabeth, she talked with Joseph about the special miracle babies. It was hard for him to understand how Mary could suddenly be with child. Then, while Joseph slept he had the most vivid and powerful dream. An angel explained the whole thing to him as well. When he woke he amazed, happy and willing to do whatever it took to care for this special baby boy—Jesus!

While Mary and Joseph began to prepare to have a baby much sooner than they had expected, in a King's palace far away other plans were being made that would affect them. The decree came to all, and everyone needed to go to the place where they were born and pay taxes. Joseph and Mary had to go as well, no matter how hard it seemed. But there was something that gave them hope—the prophecy! It had been predicted many years before that God's Son was to be born in Bethlehem, and that is where they had to go.

After a long and tiring trip they arrived at Bethlehem, but after searching and asking and knocking and looking, there wasn't a proper place to stay in. There was no room at the inn! The only place available was a stable—where the animals were kept.

It seemed odd that there wasn't a fancy place being prepared for them to rest in, since it was God's Son that was about to be born. But God had a better plan, one that would help the people much more—the people He was sending Jesus, His only Son, to help. People would love and accept Him more readily when they saw that He came from a humble, poor family that had difficulty times too—just like them.

Jesus is Born

There in a stable in Bethlehem Joseph and Mary, who was about to have a baby, rested. They hadn't been staying in that town for too long before it was time for their special baby to be born.

Little Baby Jesus, God Son was born right there in the stable. He was given to them straight from God. Joseph and Mary would give Him the best care they could. The first thing they did was make him the snuggest bed they could—in a manger. It was a kind of open box with fresh hay in it, for feeding the animals. Since the animals didn't need it then at night, newborn Jesus could sleep there, soft and cosy.

Though they might not have seen it right then, there was a major celebration going on in Heaven. God was a pleased Father as He saw His little boy resting peacefully in the hay of the manger that Joseph had prepared for Him. How gentle and wonderful He looked. God wanted to tell the whole world about the gift that He had just given to them.

Although God, Jesus' Heavenly Father missed having Him in the Kingdom of Heaven for a time, He was real glad that Jesus could at last come to Earth to give us God's love. So on the night that Jesus was born, in a tucked away stable where few knew this family was resting, the angels had a concert and a lively show planned to announce this marvellous moment.

Shepherds and Angels

Faithful shepherds were out at night on a hillside. They were grateful for their warm coats while they were drowsily guarding over their sheep. They weren't anything fancy or thought of as great important men, but they were chosen to be the audience for Heaven's musical performance! God knew that the show needed a big sky to fit all the angels that wanted to be a part of the song and show. And who was out under the night sky but the hard working shepherds?

At first one angel appeared to give the announcement, telling the shepherds that Baby Jesus, the Saviour of the world, had just been born! That was big news. At first the shepherds felt real scared, not knowing what was going on! But then they relaxed as the angel put them at ease. He told them that the baby, at that moment was sleeping in manger in a stable. That was to be the sign, so they could find him.

Then, as the shepherds they continued to look up into the sky they saw a show so outstanding they never forgot it! There was a multitude of angels and a Heavenly host appearing in the dark night, shining and bright, singing and praising God. It was the most spectacular thing they'd ever seen in their lives!

When it was over, they said "Let's go right now and see what the angels were talking and singing about! Come on!"

Down the hill through the streets and right to the stable they went. And sure enough, just as the angel had explained, there was a baby sleeping in a manger! The shepherds knew this was the Son of God, and they loved and worshiped Him right there and then! Their hearts were bursting with joy. This was the moment the world had been waiting for, for thousands of years! It wasn't something to be kept a secret. These shepherds then went all around telling everyone in the town the good news, of the Baby from Heaven finally arriving. They were so enthusiastic! With great they zest spread the news to all they could.

A Star and Gifts

Many, many miles away in another country there were others who were feeling called by God to pay a visit to His Son on Earth. God placed a special star in the sky to tell some wise kings that a new king, a very important king, had been born.

A team of wise kings decided to travel to see this baby King Jesus—bringing the most precious gifts they could. Onward they searched never giving up, though the days and months passed. At last when Jesus was two years old, these wise kings they were very close to reaching their destination—to kneel at Jesus’ feet and offer Him the special gifts they had brought.

The wise kings reached Jerusalem and asked about where this new king was born. Ancient prophecies were looked up and read. The scrolls told that the coming One from God would be born in Bethlehem. To their great joy, as they entered Bethlehem, that special star, appeared clearly for them in the sky. And not just in the sky, but it travelled to shine right above the very house that Jesus was in! Oh how they rejoiced!

As they entered the house these important and humble men, came and knelt down to worship God’s Son, the King of Kings. The wise kings then presented their gifts—gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were costly and precious gifts. God blessed them not only for their gifts, but for the gift of their long journey and their faith to believe that the Messiah and Saviour, the very Son of God was now there on Earth.

Simeon and Anna

Mary and Joseph went to the temple with baby Jesus to offer prayers and praises to God, acknowledging that this child belonged to God. They were dedicating Him to God and asking for His blessing. This was what all good parents did at that time, when they had their first son.

At the temple there was a very old man whose name was Simeon. He had been told by God that within his lifetime he would get to see the Saviour that God was going send to Earth. When Mary and Joseph came to the temple with Baby Jesus, God told Simeon that the baby they held was His Son, the one Simeon had been waiting for many years to see.

Simeon proclaimed to Mary and Joseph that he knew who their baby was, and that he was so glad for this wonderful moment that he had been waiting for—and not just him, but all those who knew the prophecies that foretold of Jesus’ coming had waited for this event, too. Simeon was a faithful and dedicated servant of God for many years, and this was a special gift to him from God, to get to see and hold Baby Jesus.

In the temple, there was an elderly lady called Anna, who fervently loved God and eagerly awaited the arrival His Son on Earth. Anna was also told by God who this special baby in Mary’s arms was. She was so very glad to get to see that Jesus, the Messiah, the Redeemer, had at last come on Earth. It cheered her so much.

All these wonderful signs were an encouragement to Mary and Joseph. They always remembered these unusual events and special messages from all sorts of people. They knew that this baby was God’s Son, and they did the very best to care for young Jesus, giving Him their love and time and faithful care.

Travel and Temple Talk

When Jesus was twelve years old, His family travelled to Jerusalem for a trip to celebrate one of the festivals. He was given the time to go look around the temple, to talk with friends, and to learn all He could from those in the temple. When it was time to go home and people were all travelling back, His parents Mary and Joseph, for some reason couldn’t find Jesus.

They had started the journey back with their family and assumed that Jesus was travelling back with other relatives and friends. However, when they found out that He wasn’t, they returned to the temple to look for Him. It took them three sad and worried days trying to find Jesus.

At last Jesus was found! Yet, He was surprised that his parents didn't know that, of course, He would be right there in the temple. When they saw Jesus, He was sitting there talking with the teachers of the law in the temple. They were amazed at all that Jesus was saying, and the wise answers and insightful questions He could ask them. These were things He'd learned from His communication with His Father in Heaven.

Mary and Joseph asked Jesus why He was still there, and told Him how worried they had been, thinking that He was lost. Jesus said, "Didn't you know I would be about My Father's business?" He knew He had a job to do on Earth for His Heavenly Father, and this was another sign to Jesus' Earthly parents that He was God's Son and had come with a mission.

Later, when Jesus was older He would begin in earnest the work of telling others about God and His plan of salvation. He would return to the temple and speak to the people there many years later, when the time was right to begin His ministry.

After Jesus' parents found him it was time to go back home. He lived with His family, just like any responsible eldest son did. He continued on patiently day by day, year by year, helping His family and learning about people and life on Earth, the country, and the needs of humankind, until it was time for Him to go and teach and preach about the Kingdom of God when He was much older.

John and Jesus

John the Baptist told people the important news that God's gift to the world, Jesus, was coming soon, and that they should prepare for it. John lived in the wilderness and spent lots of time listening to God. He did not have fancy food and clothes, or a soft warm bed, but what made him happy was hearing God's Words and doing the job he came to Earth to do.

Just thinking about Jesus, the Saviour's arrival on Earth made him glad. John loved the people and wanted things in the world to get better. He was excited to tell everyone to get ready for this big event. Large crowds of people came to hear John as he preached loudly and boldly by Jordan River, telling people to prepare and to change from their wrong doings. Then people would choose to enter the river and be baptised by John. They would get all wet, like taking a rinse off. This was a demonstration that they wanted their sins washed away and forgiven; they wanted their heart to be clean and ready for God's Spirit to live in them.

One day, he looked up and saw that the very person he was talking about coming, was standing right there! He was so happy to see Jesus! However, Jesus surprised John when he asked to be baptised by him. John didn't expect that the Son of God would come to be baptised! But God wanted it to happen in this way; it was part of His plan.

Jesus didn't have sins to be forgiven, but this was a time to mark the beginning of His active service and mission on Earth. When Jesus was baptised, all of a sudden some amazing things happened! He was filled with the power and Spirit of God to start His time of ministering. God's Spirit gave Him Heavenly strength, inspiration, faith and power.

Jesus and John then got to see something marvellous: a view of Heaven was shown to them. Next, as a sign that God's Holy Spirit had come, God sent His Spirit in the form of a beautiful dove to descend on Jesus. Then God spoke aloud, saying in His booming voice, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus then went out of the water and went into the wilderness. He needed time alone to pray, to listen to His Father in Heaven, and He resisted the lies and temptations of the enemy trying to stop Him from doing His job on Earth. He quoted God's Word and told the enemy to leave. Jesus didn't eat for 40 days during this special time of preparation and temptation. He listened to the Words of His Father and chose to do what was right. God then sent angels to encourage Jesus, and bring Him food, and care for Him. He was ready then to begin His important job.

First Followers

One day, as John the Baptist saw Jesus near where he was preaching, he pointed Jesus out and called him the “lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.” Then John encouraged some of his followers, Andrew and John, to go follow Jesus. So they went and caught up with Jesus, walked and talked with Him and spent the day together. It was wonderful news to hear from John that this man was the very one that he had been telling people would come.

When John and Andrew talked with Jesus, they could see for themselves that He was, indeed, the promised Saviour. Andrew went excitedly to tell his brother Simon, this wonderful news. “I found the Messiah! The one we have been waiting for! The one that John the Baptist has been speaking about!”

Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus. When Jesus met Simon, He gave him a new name: Peter. It meant “rock”. He was often then called, “Simon Peter”. New names were often taken by people at the start of a new big change in their life. He and his brother and many others were about to start a new life and a new job—following Jesus, learning from Him, and then telling as many people as they could about Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven.

A man named Philip was also very happy to meet Jesus, and he ran to tell his friend Nathaniel about him. “We found the man that Moses and the prophets foretold—and it’s Jesus of Nazareth!” Philip excitedly told his friend, then urged him, to “come and see.”

When I talked with Nathaniel, he was surprised that Jesus knew so much about him and this convinced him that Jesus was the Messiah, God’s Son. Jesus told Nathaniel that he’d get to see things far more amazing than that if he followed Him! One day he’d even get to see angels and Heaven!

These were some of Jesus’ first followers. They believed in Him and learned all that they could about Him. Telling the whole world about God’s gift of salvation, and teaching others about the Kingdom of God, is big job. Jesus needed helpers—and needs us today—to help Him spread the good news to others.

The Wedding Surprise

There was to be a wedding in a place called Cana. Jesus and his disciples were looking forward to it, as they had all been invited, along with His mother Mary.

The party was to be a great time of celebration, and wasn’t complete without good wine for the adults to drink. However, part-way through the festivities the supplies of drinks for the guests began to run low. There wasn’t sufficient wine for everyone to have enough; it wouldn’t last for the whole party. Then it happened—the last cup was poured and there wasn’t any left.

Mary was concerned. It was a problem. Thirsty people would be asking soon for another cup of the special wedding wine, and there was nothing left to give them. Those hosting the party couldn’t just go out to a shop to buy more wine. The wine that was used had taken a long time to make, and they needed quite a bit more for all the people attending.

Mary approached Jesus with the dilemma. She knew that when the time was right, He would be able to do miracles, as He was sent from God to help people on Earth. It was a new idea to use the power of Heaven to make there be enough wine, but the time was right for Jesus to do His first miracle. Mary had faith that it would all work out and had told the servants to be ready to do whatever Jesus said to do.

Jesus told the servants to fill up the six large stone water pots with water, and they obeyed right away. Then Jesus said to fill a cup from one of those water pots and serve the drink to the man in charge of the wedding. When this man tasted it, it was no longer water but wine! In fact, it was the best wine He'd ever tasted! Everyone was grateful that God showed His love to them through Jesus in this way, by performing a special miracle.

Fishermen

Jesus would need some faithful followers who would like to do something very new, and very important. He needed those who would help Him to begin changing the world for the better; changing it with God's message of love and salvation.

One day, as Jesus was walking along the seashore He saw some fishermen working—there was Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, John and his brother James. They were mending their fishing nets. Jesus asked Simon Peter to take the boat out to catch some fish. Usually they fished at night, and the night before they hadn't caught even one fish. However, Simon Peter was willing to try, so he obeyed what Jesus said. He took the boat out where the water was deep and let down the net on the side of the boat that Jesus told him to.

Immediately the net filled with more fish than Simon Peter ever had at one time! It was a surprising and wonderful miracle! "Help us!" Simon Peter called out to his partners in another boat. He needed help to pull the net to the shore, it was so large a catch.

After they had pulled in all the fish then Jesus called out those fishermen to come, leave their nets, leave their jobs and follow Him—to come and be His disciples! Jesus said to them that rather than catching fish and bringing them to land, they could come and help Him bring people to God and to His Kingdom. These men were eager to follow Jesus. They dropped what they were doing, and left the fishing work to others.

As Jesus travelled along telling people the good news, along with His new followers, He walked past a man collecting the tax money from everyone. It was Matthew, and he was sitting there wishing he could have the joy in his heart that he saw in Jesus' smile. "Leave the money and your job of collecting it, and come follow Me!" Jesus asked him.

Matthew didn't want to miss this opportunity! He eagerly wanted to do something positive with his life, so he jumped up and from that moment on became a faithful follower and wonderful witness. He even later wrote a whole book about Jesus—the Book of Matthew, in the Bible. This has helped to teach many, many people about Jesus and told them many of the wonderful things Jesus said.

The Messenger and Miracles

Jesus came to Earth to spread love and healing, and tell people the Words of God. He and His disciples travelled around the country talking to people, and performing miracles to help many people. Those that received the miracle of healing were those that had faith in Jesus and knew He could heal them.

Some people tried to make it hard for Jesus and weren't nice to Him. They were the unbelievers who were just trying to find fault and hoping to stop Jesus from His mission. But Jesus and His followers just kept on teaching, preaching and showing love to all they could.

Jesus' Words were powerful. He spoke and told about the Kingdom of God and how to live good and happy lives. He told how to make others happy with God's love too. To those that were leading people astray through their proud words and actions He spoke firmly to, telling them the truth. The humble folks loved the Words of Jesus and found comfort in His love and forgiveness.

Jesus knew that one day you, would hear about Him, too. Thinking about His love for you kept Him doing His job on Earth well. He didn't give up and quit, matter what people said to Him. Jesus knew that one you would learn about Him too, and believe in Him and get to live forever with Him in Heaven.

Choosing the 12

Jesus spent a night in prayer on a mountain. He needed to choose 12 special men who would be His close team of co-workers, travel companions and all-the-way followers and disciples. Jesus asked His Father in Heaven to help Him make the right choices and to select the men that would be best for the job. There were many who wanted to follow where Jesus went, some of the time, but Jesus needed those who would be willing to follow Him fulltime. They would need to leave their homes and relatives, their jobs and all their possessions.

They would need to have their mission of learning from Jesus, and helping Him to tell others about God's Kingdom as their new job, and Jesus and their fellow disciples would be as their new family during this time. Who should be on the close team of stay-with-Jesus followers? Through His time of prayer that night, God His Father showed Him which of the many followers should be chosen to be on His special team of twelve.

When Jesus descended the mountain He selected His team:

Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Thomas, Matthew, James (the son of Alpheus), Thaddeus, Simon, Judas, Nathaniel (also called Bartholomew).

There was nothing extra special about these men in the physical. They all had sins, problems, and human weakness. They made all kinds of mistakes. Yet, Jesus loved and forgave them anyway, and gave them a chance at a new life with Him. These men made the right choice to follow Jesus and stick with Him, even when things were difficult or when others were making things hard for them.

They loved Jesus, and loved hearing His words most of all. Jesus' words filled them with faith and joy. Later on, some of these men and a few others, wrote down many of the things Jesus said, so we can all learn from His words as we read them in the Bible. We who love Jesus and want to follow Him too, can pray and take time to listen to Him, and He can speak His Words to our hearts.

These disciples got to see many wonderful miracles, and were involved in helping others with God's power, too. They knew that Jesus was the one God had sent to Earth to bring salvation. Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

New Life and Living Water

One night, a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to talk with Jesus. He had many questions that Jesus helped to answer. Jesus explained that receiving His gift of salvation is like starting a new life. Just like a baby is starting their life on Earth when they are born, so it is when people receive Jesus into their life and are forgiven and are filled with God's Holy Spirit—it's like the start of a new life. They are then God's child and start to learn new things.

Just like a baby learns to walk and talk, people who receive God's gift of love can then learn how to do things in new ways—new, Godly, loving ways. As they learn from God's Word what to do and how to be, it's like a child learning and studying things. And just as a child needs exercise, those who are the children of God can exercise their faith through prayer and trusting in His loving care.

Just like a child needs good food to grow, so do those who are born again into a new life as God's child need spiritual nourishment through reading God's Word, and listening to Jesus.

Jesus talked with many different types of people. One day He spoke to a woman who had gone to draw water from the village well. Jesus and His disciples had to travel through the land of Samaria and were hungry and thirsty. The disciples went to the village to buy food while Jesus sat and rested by the well. A woman then came to get water from the well, and Jesus asked her for some water.

At first she was surprised that He was talking with her, but it surprised her even more when she heard what Jesus had to say. Jesus told her about the “living water” of Heaven, that He could give her. He also knew things about her personal life that no one had told Him. How did He know? She realised from the things Jesus was saying, that He was the Messiah. She knew something was special and different about Him, and didn’t want to wait a second more to tell others about Him.

The woman ran so fast to the village —leaving her water pot beside the well, so she could go as fast as possible. She went to tell everyone that she met the Messiah, and He was right there that day!

People saw how enthusiastic she was, and came quickly to meet Jesus. They were so eager to hear what He had to say. The people of the village begged Jesus to stay with them for awhile. Jesus, with His disciples, stayed there for two days, talking with them and bringing them God’s message of love and His words of truth from Heaven.

Comforting and Restoring

There was a certain nobleman who’s son became very ill. Desperately he began travelling and looking all over to find Jesus. When the nobleman found Jesus he told Him about his son and asked Him to please heal his son.

Jesus agreed to, and then told the nobleman to go home because his son was now healed. Did this father believe that without Jesus actually visiting his house He could heal his son? Yes! He chose to believe, and begin his trip home again. It took about a day or two to make it home.

The next day in his travels the nobleman was met by some of his servants who joyfully told him the wonderful news, how the day before—the same time when this man was talking with Jesus—that at that very hour his son began to recover. Everyone was happily surprised at how fast the boy had been healed. It happened the second that the father had believed what Jesus said and started on his walk home.

Another time some rulers came to Jesus with a message. There was an important Roman man who had been kind to the people, and his servant was very sick. He wanted Jesus to heal his servant. The Roman Centurion believed that Jesus could do the miracle and just say it, and the servant would be healed. He knew Jesus’ healing power was strong to help and heal, no matter where He was. He knew Jesus didn’t need to be in his house or be right there beside his servant. Jesus could heal anybody, anywhere, anytime! He just needed to ask Jesus to help, and it would happen the moment Jesus said so.

This Centurion had a lot of faith, and Jesus was so glad to hear of someone with such great faith. Jesus told those around how pleased he was to hear of the faith of someone like that. Then Jesus gave the word, and the Centurion’s servant was healed.

Fever Cured Immediately

There was one woman that was so sick and was nearly going to miss something that she enjoyed—getting to talk with and serve Jesus when He visited her house. This woman was the mother-in-law of Simon Peter, and Jesus and His disciples came for a visit.

She was sick with a fever when they arrived at the house. She felt so hot and couldn't do anything but lie in bed feeling very unwell. When this woman saw us there in her house it was very difficult for her as she couldn't even get up. She would miss out on talking with them, and enjoying the visit.

When Jesus saw her sick with the fever and felt how hot her head was, he touched and healed her. Immediately she got up and felt so strong and energetic she was able to right away start preparing food for her guests. She wanted them to feel welcome and to enjoy their visit. Serving her guests was what she was happy doing.

Wherever Jesus was, news was spread around and many people would come to find Him. The needs of the people were many. By sunset that day many people who needed healing were brought right to the door of the house they were in to be healed by Jesus. He cared about them and had compassion on them. He touched and healed each one that came to Him that evening.

Four Men and a New Idea

There was a man who couldn't walk, who couldn't get up and do things with his friends, and he needed lots of help and care. He had to lie down on a bed or blanket all day.

One day, four of this man's friends heard that Jesus was in a certain house. They knew Jesus could heal their friend, if they could find a way to get him there. So they all held a corner of the bed blanket he was resting on, picked it up and carried their friend to the house.

However, when they arrived they found out that there were many people crammed into that small place, all wanting to talk with and listen to Jesus as well. It seemed there was no way they could get through with their friend, to bring him to Jesus. It seemed impossible.

Then they got a new idea. They weren't going to disappoint their friend or go away saying, "We just can't." Up the stairs to the house roof they went, and then began to break away some of the tiling of the roof! Those in the house were wondering what was going on, and it was a funny sight to then see something coming down through the roof! It was a blanket with a man on it, being lowered down.

They had faith and determination. They knew Jesus could heal their friend. Jesus was glad to see their faith in action, and He told the man who was sick of the palsy that his sins were forgiven and he could be healed and get up now. Jesus told the man to get up and take up his bed and walk home! And he did! How wonderful it felt to walk! Healing felt so very good, and his friends were overjoyed to see the miracle. They were glad they had done what they could to help, and had believed in Jesus' power to heal.

There was a man who was sick with leprosy—a painful disease. Everyone kept away from him, so they wouldn't catch it as well. He very much wanted to be heal. He had heard that Jesus was visiting the area, and he had faith that Jesus could do the miracle and heal him. He searched for Jesus and begged Him for healing.

Jesus had compassion and then did what no one else could do—Jesus touched him and healed him. The healing power of Heaven cleansed and healed his sickly body, and the love and kindness that Jesus showed, gave joy to this man's heart.

Helping and Healing

There was a man sick and unable to get around for 38 years. He was so desperate for healing that he was nearly always beside a special pool, it was called Bethesda and had five porches. It was a place where people sometimes

were immediately cured. God would bring people relief at times there through sending an angel of healing to them.

At a certain time, when the water was filled with God's healing power, whoever entered the water first was cured. So this man thought this was his only hope of healing. The problem was that he couldn't just jump up and be the first one, even if he wanted to, as he couldn't move around on his own.

One day, Jesus walked passed there and talked with this man. Being unable to move around and to be hurting and sick was a very difficult thing, and he'd endured it for so very long. It was time for healing and for the start of a new life.

Jesus then healed this man instantly, and he had the faith to try and stand up when Jesus said to. As the man obeyed he felt healing and strength come all over his body. It was the best feeling he'd ever had. Every part of his body changed from being sick and weak, hurting and disabled, to being invigorated and filled with life and renewal.

Another time Jesus healed a man that had a problem with his hand. This man hand couldn't use his hand as it was curled up and weak. Jesus told him to stretch out his hand, and he did. At that moment it was made completely normal, like his other hand. He was so amazed and thankful!

He could now do things like, pick up a child and swing them around playfully. He could build something out of wood much more easily. He could give a hug. He could hold the plough strongly to do farming. He could lift and help to carry big things. He could clap his hands!

Mountain Meetings

One day, after talking with and healing the many people who were gathered, Jesus and His disciples then climbed up a mountain. Not everyone followed them all the way up. It was a hearty climb for those who were able to keep up. Jesus sat down with His followers and shared some special words from Heaven.

It was in this place away from the thronging crowds and busy market places, the bustling streets and noisy towns, that Jesus was able to teach some wonderful concepts from His Heavenly Father. The words He said at that time were remembered and written down in the Bible, and have benefitted people ever since.

Jesus said that just as the birds and the flowers are provided for, so can you be as well. He knows where you are and what you need, and as you ask for help, He will give you just what He knows is right. We don't have to worry but can trust in our Heavenly Father's care and supply of our needs.

Jesus said that those who know Him are to be as lights that shine out to others the truth and beauty that He gives us. Jesus spoke of brotherhood, friendship and love. He said to behave with kindness and to show love and care-- not only to those who are nice to you, but even to those who don't treat you well. It would then demonstrate God's true love that can love anyone one, no matter who they are or what they have done. This would show that you are one of God's children.

Showing kindness to those who haven't treated you well is a difficult thing that only God can help you to do, but it can also help to change people, through your example of kindness, forgiveness and loving care towards them. Jesus said that love would be rewarded, and God would see all that you did and would hear what words you chose to say.

Stilling the Storm

One night, after helping people all day, Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the lake. Jesus was very tired and fell asleep as the boat sailed on in the night. Even though Jesus is the son of God, He still had a physical body while on Earth that needed rest.

However, as He was sleeping, those in the ship weren't having things so easy. There was a very boisterous storm that started up with strong wind and wild big waves. It was very unsafe for water travel. But Jesus knew they would all be fine, because His Heavenly Father was watching over them.

While He was resting, even in the midst of the storm, His disciples were having a rough time, not knowing what to do and what was going to happen next. They woke Jesus up pleading for help. Jesus knew this was just a test and problem that needed to be prayed away.

Jesus stood up and took action to rescue everyone from the danger. He rebuked the storm and prayed for peace, saying, "Peace be still!" Instantly a calm came over the water and the wind was gentle again. The storm had stopped—and very suddenly.

Jesus' disciples had never seen such an amazing thing! Jesus just talked to the wind and the waves, and the weather instantly changed and all was calm. It really amazed them and gave them proof that Jesus was God's son, and had the authority even over the waves and wind. Going through the storm and then seeing Jesus' power to save and help them, strengthened their faith.

Twelve Years

Jarius was a ruler, an important man in his city. He had only one child, a daughter that he loved very much. One day his girl became very sick. It seemed she would not live for too much longer. Jarius knew that Jesus was the only one who could help him. He was very desperate to find Jesus and for his daughter to receive healing. When Jarius at last found Jesus and squeezed his way through the thick crowd, he begged Jesus, down on his hand and knees, to please come and heal his daughter. Jesus agreed to go, even though many others were wanting His help and attention just then too.

While Jesus was walking to Jarius' house, there was a woman that had been sick and weak for twelve years. She believed that Jesus had the power to heal her, if only she could touch Him. Even though there were many people crowding all around Jesus as He walked, she squeezed her way through until at last she could reach Him. She touched the edge of Jesus' clothes, and because she had faith, she was instantly healed! How wonderful it felt to be strong and healthy. Jesus was glad that she had faith. He smiled and spoke kindly to her.

When Jesus and Jarius had nearly reached his house some messengers came to say that it was too late—that his daughter had already passed away. They thought that Jesus could only heal her, but couldn't restore her life. But Jesus said not to worry, that it was just as if the girl was sleeping.

When Jesus stood by the girl's bedside

Power to Preach

Jesus sent his faithful followers out into the places that He was going to visit. He wanted to make sure that the people in those towns and places knew that He was coming, so they could get ready. To do that job, they needed special permission or power from God. They were going to encounter all sorts of troubles that people were suffering, mostly illness and disturbance from evil spirits. They needed to tell the spiritual trouble makers to leave, and they needed strength and power to tell the truth and to pass on whatever God wanted them to say, wherever they went.

When Jesus' followers arrived in some town, some people chose to make a place for Jesus and His disciples to stay when they came, and others chose to help provide plenty of food for them. And most of all people chose if they wanted to hear the good news that Jesus had come to Earth to tell them.

Those places that chose not to receive Jesus and His disciples, and didn't wish to listen to the fresh words from Heaven that Jesus came to tell them, missed out on a very special event—the visit of the Son of God. They also missed receiving many miracles that could have happened there. But Jesus didn't come to punish those who didn't want Him and what His disciples came to give them, just to offer it.

Today everyone still needs choose whether or not they wish for Jesus, in His spiritual and invisible form to be with them. They have to choose to listen to Jesus whispering His Words to them. Those who receive Jesus in this way—through the Words from His speaks from Heaven, and through His faithful followers, will be ready for the coming of Jesus when He comes again to gather people to come to His Father's land.

When Jesus sent His followers out to prepare people for His coming He told them to travel light—to take nearly nothing but the Words they were to tell. They obeyed Jesus' travel instructions and left everything else behind, only taking the clothes they were wearing. When they got back from their special mission trip Jesus asked them if they had all that they needed. And they did! Whatever they needed as they told others about Jesus, was provided for them—or they simply didn't have a need for it. God had cared for them very well, and can do the same today for us as we also do whatever Jesus asks us to do. He will care for and provide for us, no matter where we are or what job He's asked us to do. All we have to do is obey, and God works out all the rest. It's a fun and exciting way to live, being a special messenger for Jesus.

Feeding Thousands

What a big and hungry team of people were sitting on the grass waiting. What were they waiting for? Some food. It had been days since most of them had anything to eat or even drink. What was so important to them that they had to leave the comforts of their homes and suffer hunger in order to get it? Healing—as most of the people had ailments of all sorts, and Jesus was the only one who had the power to give them the miraculous healing that they needed. But more than healing of body, they also were so very hungry to hear the fresh and loving words from God that Jesus was telling them. They would rather sit and listen to what Jesus came to tell them, than be in their house eating and resting and trying to make themselves comfortable, or tending to their many duties.

When the word was given that they were all to sit down on the grass, as some food was to be shared, they were very surprised, and very glad indeed. But where was the food coming from? That they didn't know. Of course there were no big delivery vans and food transporting vessels showing up. All that was available was a few loaves a fishes, and a prayer. But a prayer from Jesus to His Father is all that was needed to produce enough food for all to have more than enough.

This happened at least twice, when there were a whole lot of people—thousands! And each time, no matter how many hungry people needed a meal, Jesus supplied enough for them all. Just a bit of bread and fish shared and given to Jesus was all that was needed; plus a prayer to request a very special miracle of food multiplying, and a team that obeyed each of Jesus' instructions. So if you too are hungry for the gifts from Heaven, stay close to Jesus, listen to His Words and then do what He tells you to do in order to receive what your body also needs.

Walking on the Water

Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He didn't have wings to fly first to this place, and then to another. He had to use His body to get around, much in the same way that you do—getting around with His own two feet, but He didn't have the transportation methods and availability that you do.

If the only boat He had to go on over the sea was out in the middle of the water, Jesus had to get there somehow. He couldn't fly out to it like an angel. Well, of course angels could have picked Him up and plopped Him right on to the boat. But that wouldn't have shown as much faith as stepping out on the water and trusting His Heavenly Father to hold Him up above the wild waves, and walk upright through the fierce wind, and doing so in the darkness of the night, lighted by the angry flashes of lightning.

On the sea Jesus walked, being upheld miraculously. But that wasn't the only miracle that it took to get Him to the boat, the boat also had to be protected in the storm, and that was no easy feat. No human could keep that boat load of passengers safe, as it seemed even nature, wild nature, wanted to stop them and overturn that precious

load trying to make it courageously over the water. There was nothing they could do to control the weather and the waves. Rowing the boat wasn't working, as the wind was against their best efforts. They needed help, desperately.

Even if they were trying to do what Jesus had asked them to do, to "Go by ship to the otherside," it took much loving intervention and invisible angelic help to make it possible for them to do whatever they were asked. The enemy of truth, and faith, and love, was doing all in his power to stop these faithful followers of Jesus. But He defied the lie that said there was no one who could help them now, that they were stuck in a sea of tribulation and wouldn't make it to their destination.

God's representative walked over, bringing the Spirit of God with Him, to both get Him and His team across safely, if they had faith. And so into the boat Jesus went. And that is when something amazing and special did occur. The boat that these men had been so laboriously rowing, suddenly was at the other side of the water, right at the land's edge. Imagine if you had been rowing hard for hours in the night, not resting, and it seems you'll have to keep going for hours more, and then all of a sudden your boat is at the land and you can rest a bit before the day dawns?

When you do what you can or what you should, then special miracles can occur to bless you for your God-loving efforts.

Good Ground

When a sower went out to sow, some seeds fell on stony or hard ground, other seeds fell where weeds and thorns were growing, but these wouldn't grow right, because they didn't have the soil nutrients that they needed. Only those seeds that were on the good ground would flourish and bear fruit.

What is your heart like when it hears something new from Jesus? Do you push it away as if it's not true? Or perhaps you like what Jesus tells you, but only until someone else mocks it and tries to tell you it's not true, and perhaps even punishes you for believing such a doctrine. Or are you much too busy thinking about the things of the world and the things you wish to get, that there is little time to actually think about, and much less do anything about what Jesus told you?—So there was little good in even listening, as your life and heart are trying to please the world most of all.

Or is your heart more like a soft and well-kept garden, where fowls of doubt are chased off, rocks are removed from the upturned, and well-watered soil, weeds are pulled, and the sun and rain can help the seeds grow?

When Jesus speaks to you, do you listen, receive, remember and then do something to take action? This is good. Then your heart is ready for the really special messages and truths that He want to tell you, because they won't be lost, but cherished and will cause good to come into your heart. And when your heart is filled with the good fruits of God's loving Holy Spirit you can then nourish and help many others.

It doesn't mean that a good heart and good ground for God's seeds to grow in, the seeds of faith and life and joy, means that only good things will happen to you. But it means that you are doing good for God's Kingdom, and thus you will be blessed in numerous ways, receiving all the good things that Jesus wants to bestow to each of His dear followers who love Him and wish to please Him.

See, Hear, Talk

Many people wanted to follow Jesus, for they saw something was happening, something big was sweeping through. But not too many were willing to give up everything and be a fulltime follower. Sort of like just going to a restaurant for a one time meal and being satisfied, or being part of the work force that gets the food from the farmers and brings it to the place that will enable others to be fed, at any time of any day. It's the difference between just enjoying the gift, or labouring to share the gifts.

This is what Jesus' team of constant followers did. They were part of the gift giving team, not just being on the receiving end. But there were some followers who did receive a gift, a big gift, a gift that could enable them to live a normal life like the others, and make a living and have a family, yet they chose to also be givers instead.

A blindman, named Bartimaeus, who had the faith to receive sight, then put feet to his faith and followed after Jesus once he was healed. He cast off his old garment, and old the place he used to sit to be given to, and walked away from that the instant he was enabled to. He wanted Jesus, not just the gift to enable him to do whatever he thought up.

He made a big deal about calling, and continuing to call out to Jesus, until he was at last talking with Him. Then when he received his sight and was no longer blind, he showed by his action that it was Jesus who he wanted most, and followed after Him. He didn't just take the gift of sight and use it for selfish purposes.

People who make a big deal about something amazing that happened to them, rather than forsaking their old life and following Jesus, having given up everything in order to preach the gospel and help heal others too, sometimes can make a mess of things. It starts to be all about what people can get from God, rather than what they are now responsible to give to God—primarily their time and life to be a fulltime follower. People have to choose to either love and follow Jesus because they are thankful for His special gifts to them, even if people trouble them for it, or to just follow the ways of the world and gather more things for themselves. It's a choice that each one has to make.

A Coin in a Fish

When there is a need, and you pray for supply and funds, then you need to do whatever God shows you is best. Miracles usually require the steps of faith, prayer and action—according to what Jesus shows and tells you is best to do.

When Peter told Jesus about the tax collectors questioning him and asking for money, that was like his prayer. Then Jesus told him what to do.

“Go let down a fishing line and catch a fish,” Jesus told Simon Peter. “Take the first fish that you catch and open its mouth. There will be a coin in its mouth, that will be sufficient for paying both your tax and Mine.”

Simon Peter exercised his faith and did what Jesus said, and then the miracle happened. A coin was in the fish's mouth, and sufficient for the money that was needed.

So if you are in need of finances, why not do as Peter did, and ask the Lord what to do about it. He can show you just the way to get the help you need. Jesus can show you what job to do, or who to ask, or where to go, or He can just make it appear suddenly too! –Like it did in the fish's mouth after Peter did his part to obey what Jesus told him to do. Pray, trust, and obey, and you're sure to have what you need, when you need it.

Jesus will help provide what is needed. He loves taking good care of you. Sometimes you need to wait to get something, but don't worry, it'll all work out, as you keep praying. And in the most difficult or impossible situations, that's when He like to do the neatest miracles. Jesus is always looking for a chance to do a miracle in your life. Just pray, have faith, do what Jesus shows you, and then see the great way He can provide your every need and help you carry on.

Choosing What is Important

Zacchaeus turned to wealth to ease his sad heart. He had taken more money from people than he should have. He thought that the more riches he had the better he would feel, but that never happened. It only made things worse, and made people despise him and never want to be around him.

When Zacchaeus knew that Jesus was walking through the city that he lived in, Zacchaeus was very interested to see Him. The only problem was that he was too short to see over everyone else's heads to get a good view. And no one would be willing to move out of the way for him. There was only one thing to be done. He found the nearest tree and climbed up.

It looked rather funny to see this man who was the size of some children, dressed richly, peeking out from the branches of a tree to get a good look at Jesus. But Jesus didn't laugh, as He knew Zacchaeus was sad and lonely and in need of encouragement so he could be kinder and more caring.

"Zacchaeus," Jesus called out to him as He stood near the tree. "Come down! I'm going visit your house today!"

Zacchaeus hardly knew what to say. It was beyond what he could dream of happening! A very fast little man zipped down from the tree and was delighted to have Jesus as his host.

To his house Jesus and his disciples went, and it was the first friend Zacchaeus had in a long while. He could tell that Jesus was not interested in money, and only wanted to cheer him up and teach him some tips to a happier life.

By the time Jesus left, Zacchaeus was a changed man, and before too long the town around him was changing too. Zacchaeus decided to be a giver, rather than a taker. Zacchaeus chose to give away half of all that he owned to the poor people around. In addition to that, he promised that anyone he had been dishonest and greedy with, he give them back four times what he took. That was very kind and generous.

Rich Young Ruler

Once a very wealthy young ruler came to Jesus, as he had felt that sad and empty feeling in his heart. Why? He had everything he needed. He was a good man—or so he thought. He tried to do what was right. So why didn't he feel that joy in his heart? This important man came to ask Jesus how to have eternal life, how to go to Heaven and be part of God's kingdom. Jesus knew that it would be best for this man to live for the things of Heaven, to hear God's Words, and to use his life to help others. So Jesus invited him to come along and be a disciple too! Jesus told this man, "Go and sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me."

Oh! That was one of the hardest things this man could imagine doing! It was a sad choice that he regretted, that he made the selfish and worldly choice to hold on to those things that can be seen and counted and felt. He could not bring himself to give all that he owned away to the destitute people, and to become poor also and instead follow Jesus. He would have a rough life, and be persecuted also, but he would have joy in his heart and make God really happy.

Jesus told a story about a rich man who had a great harvest one year. In fact he had so much that his old barns couldn't hold all the food his farm had produced. So what was he to do? It would have been the perfect time to give some of it away to the many who lived nearby that didn't have sufficient. The Heavenly Father had made it grow so that the people of land would have enough food. However, if the one who received this gift of the extra food—wasn't filled with wise and loving actions, then those who God wanted it to be for would never benefit from it.

Well, this rich man had all that he needed and far more--on Earth, that is. But when it was time for him to leave this world, when he died suddenly, he found out that he was suddenly very poor. And when he faced God, he wasn't too proud of his selfish actions and deeds.

It's a foolish way to live while on Earth—to only stock up supplies for yourself. Your life could end in an instant, and you could be suddenly talking to Jesus face to face, and it's too late then to give away what Jesus told you to share, or to help tell others about Him. All your stuff on Earth is no longer yours, but goes to others on Earth. And people on Earth can't see or hear you speaking clearly to them, so you can't do all that much to lead them to Jesus.

Those who are rich in Heaven are those that lived lives filled with love for Jesus and others, and a life rich with faith in Jesus and demonstrated by praying and calling on Him for help. Those that you helped to tell about Jesus and are in Heaven as a result will be your friends forever! Your rewards for giving all you could to Him and to others on Earth will be so many more times over anything you gave in the first place. You'll be eternally glad for the gifts of love you gave to Jesus and others for Him.

Love and Forgiveness

One day Simon Peter asked Me how many times he was to keep forgiving his brother or friend, if they kept doing things that bothered him. Simon knew that I had been teaching them about giving forgiveness rather than getting angry and holding bad feelings inside, or doing things back to the person. He wondered however, how many times was it right to keep forgiving others.

“Should I forgive my brother seven times?” Simon Peter gave as a guess at an amount that would be very generous and kind. I surprised him and said that not just seven times, but rather seventy times seven! That's a lot of chances to give to a brother or friend or sister who keeps making mistakes, and is sorry for it and asks for forgiveness. Only God's love can help someone have that much love and kindness.

If you realise that those who have done wrong things will be taught their lessons by God, and you do your best to show love and kindness in your life, you'll have a much happier time and your heart will be filled with joy.

Jesus told us, His disciples that the main and most important rule for them to keep was to love one another. This would change the world for the better. This would be My presence on Earth. This would be the solution to so many of the world's problems. Love is the solution and what will help make Earth a bit more like Heaven. When people put loving others as their highest priority, then good things start happening, because God blesses it and makes both those who give love and those who receive kindness from others happier.

Showing love changes the world around you. Maybe not everything will change today or in an instant, but even if you can only do one deed of kindness or say one word of encouragement to someone who needs some cheer, things will be a bit better. This is how people know that Jesus is our leader and the one we are following, if we have love towards each other. If in your actions towards individuals you show and tell them that I love them and that you love them, and that God cares about them, then this is the proof to them that you are a child of God!

Faith and Freedom

There was a man who was born blind. He had never been able to see anything at all from the time his life started until the day I passed by him, when he was about 40 years old. At last the time was right for him to be healed. He had been sitting in a certain spot so often that many people knew him. Jesus

wanted to demonstrate to all the people who knew this man, that He, Jesus was God's son, and that God could do anything. Jesus made some clay with spit and the soil on the ground, and rubbed it on his eyes, to anoint them and bring cleansing. "God wash it off now", Jesus told him. When the blind man did what I told him to do, he could suddenly see, for the first time ever in his life! He was amazed, surprised, and so very happy! A little later on Jesus went to talk to him, so that the man could see Him, and have a chance to believe that He was the Saviour. This man was so grateful, and believed with all his heart.

One time Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and there was woman who couldn't stand up straight, but was all bend over. She had been in this condition for 18 years. It was very difficult for her. She couldn't stretch out comfortably in bed. She couldn't look up and see the sky easily. She had to use sticks to try to keep her balance as she walked around. She would have a hard time doing just about anything that required moving around.

Jesus I touched her and said she was loose from this ailment. Right then, for the first time in so many years she stood up straight and tall. She beamed a big smile and was filled with gladness, and tears of joy fell down her face. She felt so very good!

"It's good that I loosed her from being bound up with her body not able to move freely. The Enemy had her bound, and I set her free!" Jesus said, and people who loved seeing Jesus win victories, cheered! Jesus came to bring life and freedom and joy and healing. He wasn't coming to make tons of rules, but to teach people to love God and others. He wasn't coming to give out punishments but to give forgiveness to those who wanted to change and wanted to believe in His love and receive His gift of life and salvation. Jesus loves freedom, when it's the right kind and in the right way—freedom from the Enemy's ways, and setting everyone free to love and obey God and live a life of joy and peace.

Dinner Discussions

Jesus was invited to a meal, and knew that he was being watched carefully. As He sat down to eat He noticed right away a man who was in need of healing. If Jesus were to please His Heavenly Father and do what He came to Earth to do, He would show God's love to this man by healing Him. If Jesus was to try to please the proud people in the room who didn't like much of what Jesus did or said, then He would just ignore this suffering man, and pretend that he didn't need help, as it was the day of the week that some religious rulers said Jesus shouldn't do miracles on.

What would Jesus do? Everyone was watching to see. Jesus promptly healed the man and let him go happily on his way, then turned to the dinning onlookers and posed a question. "If your ox had fallen in a ditch on the Sabbath day, would you help him out?"

Their hearts all knew the answer. Of course they would rush to rescue their helpless animal. Animals were not only expensive but were very needed and the source of their survival and livelihood. How much better to help a person in need—no matter what time of day it is, or what day of the week it is.

During one meal, Jesus told a new idea about who to invite to dinner feasts. If the only people being invited to a nice meal are people who are rich, or their friends, or family members only, all the time, then that's not really the best. Because then they will feel they need to give back a nice meal at their house in return for the feast that was given to them. And what happens then? It's not really giving if it's just to people who will give back the same great things or even better things to you again, and you do it with that purpose in mind. Instead, they should choose a new set of guests to invite when they want to do something generous. They could give to those who can't give back to them at all—those who are poor and in need—and to let the Lord, be the one that gives back to them the reward for their sharing,

by the great meals He can invite them to in Heaven. Wouldn't that be more fun? Heavenly meals are a zillion times better than any fancy and deluxe meal on Earth. If you please Jesus by sharing what you have with others who are in need then you'll get God's paybacks which are the best!

The Father's Love

It's easy to think that because you are doing good things and seem to be making all the right decisions, that God must love you more than those who aren't quite as good or righteous as you think you are. But Jesus loves you and others with the same great love.

Jesus told a parable story of a woman that had a set of special and expensive coins. These she took good care of and never wanted any of them get lost. They were her wealth and treasures. However, one day she noticed that a coin went missing! She was very anxious to find it. It was worth a lot! She didn't say, "Oh, well, look at all the rest of my coins that I still have. I don't need to worry about that one missing coin."

Instead she searched and looked and cleaned and didn't stop until she found where it had fallen. When she found it at last she was so glad and told her friends! She could relax now. Her special set of treasures was complete.

You—each one of you—are like Jesus' treasures. You are greatly treasured and cherished and loved by Him. Just because He has many who love and will live with Him forever doesn't mean that it's enough. Jesus doesn't forget about the others who are still in need of His salvation. Those that are like the lost coin are a concern to Jesus. He thinks about them, prays for them, tries to send people to show them that Jesus loves them. When at last one of His lost treasures change from their waywardness and lets Jesus hold them—just like the lady held her special coin—I am very, very glad! God will only feel totally relaxed and happy when everyone has come to know His love and has turned and walked towards Jesus and is able to come home to Heaven.

Obedience and Gratefulness

As Jesus was walking along the road He heard a group of ten men calling out for Him to help and heal them. These men were sick with leprosy. It was a very difficult affliction to have, and made things not only hard for them, but very sad too. It was so contagious that those who had the skin disease of leprosy could no longer live around other people, or even stay in their house with their family. They had to move away and stay separate.

When these ten men heard about Jesus and His power to heal, and then they saw Him walking nearby, they were so glad for this bit of hope! With all their might and strength they yelled out for Jesus to help them.

Jesus heard them and wanted to heal them right away. Since they had faith in His power to heal, then He could give them healing. In order to be allowed to live in the town normally again, once someone had leprosy, the priest would need to see if they were healed and to declare that they were clean and fine. Jesus told them simply, "Go show yourselves to the priest."

When Jesus told them this, they weren't yet healed, but that was their step of faith and obedience that they needed to take in order for them to receive the miracle of healing. Without hesitation and in full faith these men started on the road to the town to meet the priest and to declare that they were

healed. And as they began walking that direction they were healed! What a great rejoicing was heard as they started running, laughing, yelling, and praising God!

One of them however, stopped walking, turned around and ran back to Jesus. Kneeling down he praised and thanked Jesus for giving him healing. Jesus was glad that the others were healed and happy and that they'd obeyed right away what they were told to do in order to be healed. That made Jesus happy. But when this man came all the way back, just to say, "Thank You," it showed Jesus that He was even more important to this man than his own health, or his family, or all the things he was hoping to get to do. He treasured Jesus' love and care and concern for him more than anything else.

A Good Shepherd

Jesus told a story about a shepherd that had one hundred sheep in his care. That may seem like a lot of sheep, and that perhaps if one is missing it might not even be noticed or make much of a difference. However, a good shepherd loves and cares for each one of his sheep and will do whatever it takes to see that they are well fed and healthy, and kept safe. When the shepherd was counting his sheep he found out that one was missing. He still had 99 sheep, but that wasn't enough for him. He wanted all his sheep to be safe and protected and well cared for. Each and every sheep mattered to him.

What was he to do? Well, there was only one thing on his mind—he must find that lost sheep and bring it back into the safety of the fold. He set off right away, leaving the others in the fold and began his search. The shepherd didn't say, "Oh, I'll just take a quick look around, and then come back if I don't see it right away. I'm tired and cold and want to rest."

A good shepherd realises that his sheep is also tired and cold and isn't able to properly take care of itself. He knows that a lost sheep needs a shepherd to rescue him. So the good shepherd just kept searching until at last he found his lost sheep. He wasn't going to give up until the sheep had been found. His fold and flock of sheep weren't complete until all, every last one of them, were there safely home with him again.

Jesus is like the shepherd, and we are like the sheep in this story. Jesus loves and cares for each one of us. He's so glad when we stay close to Him, because then He can take good care of us. But if we have wandered off and have gotten into the wrong things, please know that Jesus anxious and eager for us return. He will just love us and be so glad to see us again. He won't be mad at us when we return to Him, because forgiving and loving and caring for us is what Jesus does!

Stick with Jesus and He'll give you the best things. This life now is only a tiny part of what is ahead. In Heaven you'll get to enjoy so many new and wonderful things. Let Jesus be your guide, Heavenly caretaker, provider, eternal friend and good shepherd!

Lazarus

Have you ever had a friend, a true and good friend of yours die? I have. It's not something you ever wish to have happen. But it does make you appreciate the friends and people that you still do have around you, or who make life easier for you in some way.

When people go it can leave a great big gap in your heart or life, and that can be real tough, until you get that empty feeling filled up again with something new.

Imagine all the holes that are made by all the people in the whole world passing away, suddenly and wonderfully getting filled up again with new joys. That is what it will be like in the world and realm to come. Death will be

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swallowed up in victory, and no more will the voice of mourning be heard in the new land where all wrongs are made right.

It will be like watching a video that is being played backwards and making all the mess disappear, and everything be all nice again. That is what is going to happen one day. It's going to be one victory celebration after another, when all things begin to be put back together again, and all that is ugly is renewed and refreshed and made beautiful again. There will be so much to be thankful for. You'll be new and feel new too, and won't ever die.

When My friend Lazarus died it was a solum and sad occasion, but one that brought greater victory in the end. Why? Because it made so many hungry for the truth and wish for the glory of God to shine through the very awful moment. And it did! The people were ready to embrace a new reality, a new thing! Where the dead come back to life, and the tears of joy wash away the tears of mourning, and where faith springs up in full force where once there was dead hopes.

So just as the true story of the resurrection of My friend Lazarus shows, that God is the God of life and can restore it anytime, so can anything that is dead or dying in your life—be it believe or your physical body—also be upstarted again in full force.

How did you think Lazarus felt once he rose again by the power of the Holy Ghost? He felt he could run a race of a million miles. His heart was so glad to be reunited with his family, because it meant that I truly was the Messiah and the saviour of the world, and could do anything. And with that kind of power aiding and assisting him, so could he also be invincible, and do whatever he was empowered to do.

It won't be long now until full joy will be yours, forever, for you have trusted in My coming and will receive the joy of your salvation.

Heavenly Communication

What is prayer, do you know? It's quite likely that you don't, because it's so simple most people think it's something entirely different.

Let's say what prayer is not:

--It's not something that you do out of habit without really thinking about what you are saying or doing. But it takes focused concentration and letting your thoughts be led by something other than what is around you, or that you might naturally be led to think about.

--It's not just going through the motions or saying this or that in a perfectly scripted way, like memorised lines. But rather thinking about the one you cherish more than any, and trying to speak in a way that will uplift them, and teach those who might be listening in on your prayer, a bit of what this Being is actually like; that through your words others will get to know a bit more of what God is like, and He will be cherished by others as well.

--Prayer is loving Me to the point of giving Me your time and focus, so we can talk about things that really matter to you, and I can tell you things that really matter to you, even if they aren't anything that you were previously thinking about. We can have a two way conversation, and afterwards things will be different, for I can change and make things better for you and others.

--Prayer is a life line to Heaven, where you can receive what you need to keep living and giving life to others. And while you are on the line to Heaven, that is to say talking to the King of the Universe, you will receive spiritual inspiration, like a battery that gets charged. While you take time in prayer, you not only receive the needed items or gifts from Heaven, but you also get recharged and strengthened so you can keep going stronger and faster.

Jesus and the Children

Do you know that you are very special to Jesus? He loves you so very much. One time when the disciples and others around Him wanted to know who was going to be thought of as the greatest and most important in God's kingdom, Jesus answered them in a special way. There was a little child with his mother nearby. Jesus showed everyone this child and said that children were a good example of what God wants people to be like. "Be like a child," Jesus said, "and then you can go to Heaven, and you'll be an important person there."

How can adults be like children? What was it that they should do? To love God as their Father, to have faith that He will take care of them. To be humble and know that they needed God's help and forgiveness and care.

Just being thought of as an important person on Earth wouldn't make you the way that God thinks is great. He likes the love and joy and simplicity of the children. They make Him very happy.

When mothers brought their children to see Jesus He was so happy to see them. He loved the children so much! Jesus told everyone around to move aside and make it easy for the children to come and see Him. There were many people around, and those who thought they were probably a bit more important than young little ones.

Jesus told everyone that the most important thing to do right then was to let the children come to Him. He enjoyed seeing their smiles, he cared about them, and wanted them around. Jesus loved the children very much. He blessed them and showed them how important they really were.

You, too, are very special and loved by Jesus. Even though you can't see Him with your eyes now, just yet, still He is around you and says to you, "Come to Me." You can talk with Him in prayer and know that He will be near to you and take care of you.

Generous Gifts

Do you have anything that is real special to you? Perhaps it's a gift that someone you love gave to you, and you've kept it safe in a special place? There was a woman called Mary, who had something like that. It was a bottle of sweet smelling, fancy and very expensive perfume oil. She kept it safe, and made sure it never got broken. It was made of clay, and could break if it got dropped. It as special to her.

One time when Jesus was having a dinner with a man called Simon, who was a religious man, she came into the room to see Jesus, and bring a gift. Can you guess what it was? Yes, it was her very specially saved perfume. She knelt down at Jesus' feet. She didn't come in all proud and say, "I'm so great!" She had humility and wanted to know Jesus loved and forgave her for the wrongs she had done.

Mary was weeping and washing Jesus' feet with her tears, wiping them with her long pretty hair, and poured her special perfume on Jesus. That was the way she chose to show that she loved Him. She didn't worry about what all the proud people around would think of her. How Jesus felt and being near to Him, was the most

important thing to her. He was more important than her special things, and more important than all the others around.

Mary did the right thing sharing her special gift with Jesus, as soon He would be leaving the Earth to see His Father again. It was the last chance that she had to show Jesus her love in a special way. Jesus loved her and said He forgave her, and she was so happy. Mary felt more joy than she ever had in her life. Her heart felt light and joyful, and determined to follow what Jesus had said for people to do.

Another woman gave a gift to God—it was the last two coins that she had. Jesus saw it when she gave them, and was pleased to see her faith. She knew that if she gave to those serving God, as her gift to God, that He would give her in return all that she needed. When you give and share with others because you love God, then neat and special things happen to you, and you are happier than if you only always kept things for yourself. In the end you have more, as a result of giving.

Important Things

It's important to care for people and to show them kindness. There is something, however, even more important. Do you know what it is? It is taking time with Jesus—to talk to Him, to listen to Him, to be still and quiet, to pray, to read His words, to have time with Him as a friend.

There will always be people to help and plenty of jobs that need to be done. There will be no end of meals that need to be cooked and dishes that need to be washed. There will always be things that need to be fixed, and cleaned, and put away. To even have the joy and the strength to do what needs to be done, as well as to get God's blessings and the supply of your needs, you need time with Jesus.

Did you stop today for a few minutes to say "Hi" to Jesus, and to see if He had anything to tell you? It's the most important thing you can do in a day. And you will be able to give and share with others, help and care for people, do your jobs easier and with more joy, if you do.

One time Jesus was visiting with some friends of His—Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Mary just wanted to sit and to listen to whatever Jesus was saying. Martha felt alone trying to do all the work of serving the meal to Jesus and his disciples. She asked if Jesus could please tell Mary to come and help her. Rather than agreeing that this was important, Jesus told Martha that it was more important to Him to have people listening to His words, and spending time with Him. Helping was a good thing, but taking time with Jesus first of all was the best, and would make them the happiest.

What do you think Martha did after that? What would you have done? I bet it felt good to just relax and stop worrying about all that needed to be done, and to just spend time with Jesus, hearing His words.

Marvellous Moments on a Mountain

It was nearing the time when Jesus was soon going to leave the Earth, and be with us all in a new way—as the powerful Son of God who is usually invisible, and can be everywhere at the same time. While He was still on Earth He spent as much time as He could talking with His disciples. He needed to get them ready to be His witnesses, to go in to all the world to preach the Gospel to all they could reach with His message of salvation and love.

One time Jesus took three of His closest followers for some time away, to talk, to pray, and to see something very special. Up the mountain they climbed, until they found a resting place. When the disciples looked up they were shocked at what they saw. Jesus looked so very different. He was changed for a little while,

and instead of looking like a regular man, He was so very bright, and white with light all around Him and shining from Him. Then some Heavenly visitors—Moses and Elijah—appeared to talk with Him too.

The disciples got to have a peek at what the Son of God, Jesus, might look like, when He wasn't in human form. They really didn't know what to say. It was all quite amazing. Then their further surprise, something else happened. All of a sudden, above them in the sky there was a special cloud, and out of the cloud there sounded a booming voice—the very voice of God, and He said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

God was telling them that Jesus was His son, in a very clear way. God said the most important thing to do was to listen to whatever Jesus had to say. The disciples fell down, and put their faces to the ground, and really didn't know what was going to happen next. Jesus came over to let them know that everything was alright. He touched them and they looked up again and saw only Jesus there.

It was a special honour and privilege to get to see and hear what they did, and the disciples obeyed what God said to do—to always listen to Jesus, as He was God's son, and had important and wonderful things to tell them. Do you listen to Jesus' words too? It makes God happy when you do!

Hosanna

Jesus was going to be going to Jerusalem, and after news had spread about some of the amazing miracles He did, the people were very excited to have Jesus passing their way. Jesus told two disciples to please go and get him a young donkey, as He was going to ride it into the city. He told them where to find it, and told them to bring the donkey, and what to say to its owner if he wondered why they were taking it.

"The Lord needs it," they told the man who asked them why they were untying the donkeys. He was very happy to share it with Jesus. It was the first time that the young colt had given someone a ride. What a special person to get to carry! The disciples put some coats and clothing on the donkeys to make the ride softer, and be like a saddle.

As they walked along, the people gathered around and walked along side of them too, and were very happy and excited. People were praising God loudly, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!" And to make the pathway extra special people decorated it by cutting down big palm branches and placing them on the road. Others put cloth and coats on the pathway for the donkey and colt to walk on.

It was a like a royal parade and a big welcoming party, for Jesus the king. The children were having a great time too, praising God and getting to see Jesus. When they reached Jerusalem, some people were wondering what was going on, and what all the excitement was about! –Celebrating Jesus was the reason! When they got to the temple people came to be healed by Him. He answered many questions, and taught them about God's way. He told stories and parables to the people. It was a great victory celebration, celebrating that He'd come to Earth at last.

Love and Humility

Every year there was a meal and time of remembering God's care, called "The Passover." The disciples wondered where to have it. They often were travelling around, and didn't have a house to call their own, and appreciated people's offers to help. Jesus said to go into the city and they'd see a man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him to his house, and ask the owner about a room for Jesus and His disciples to use.

It happened just like Jesus said. When they went to the house that the man with the pitcher went to, the man in charge said there was a large upper room they could use. So the disciples started right away and got everything ready—the food, the drinks, the water to wash with, the seating and tables arranged, and did whatever was the custom to do for that special meal, cooking everything just right.

When they were eating, Jesus demonstrated to them what it meant to be a true disciple and truly important. –What they were to do, in order to be as Jesus wanted them to be. Jesus wasn't going to be with them for much longer—in fact this was His last meal together with them. He told them that they needed to take care of each other, and show that they were His disciples by giving love, and acting in humility. The people considered the greatest to Jesus would be those who acted in the most kind and helpful ways.

Jesus then took a bowl of water and a towel, and went around washing each of the disciples' feet. This was normally the job for a servant. Jesus said to be as servant to each other, rather than just thinking they were so important, and wanting others to serve them. Those who helped others in whatever way was needed, not acting in pride, but humble, were really the greatest, and behaving in the way that Jesus most wanted them to.

In Remembrance of Him

While Jesus was eating a special meal with His disciples He took some bread and prayed. He broke it and passed it to all His disciples, telling them to each get a piece, and to think about Him as they did. Just like the loaf of bread was one big piece, we are all one big team together with Jesus. He then took a cup of wine and prayed, and passed it around to the disciples, for all to take a sip. Jesus said to let the wine remind us of His gift of love to the World—forgiveness to all who ask, and life forever with Him in Heaven.

After the meal they went for an evening walk. It had been a big day, and they were all pretty tired. Not having a house or place to call their own, they did as they often did, and settled for the night in the garden, pulling their cloaks around them, and sleeping under the stars. Jesus wasn't going to go to sleep, however, He needed time to pray.

It was difficult to think about the hard time that people were soon going to give Him—treating Him roughly and speaking unkind and untrue words. Jesus prayed with all his heart, to do whatever His Father knew was best, and would bring forgiveness to all. Jesus wanted some of his disciples to stay awake with Him, and to pray also, as He was feeling so heavy hearted, but they were just too tired. Then God sent an angel to Jesus' side, who comforted Him, and He felt encouraged and strengthened.

Jesus knew that the joy He would receive, as we loved Him in return, and were His friends forever, was going to make Him so very glad. It would be worth it, for all eternity. The sad time would be short compared to the joy that He and we all would have. Jesus did the job, all the way. He fulfilled all that the prophecies said would happen. He did His Father's will, and He didn't give up, because He loved us all so much.

Jesus' Gift of Love and Life

When Adam and Eve made the wrong choice in the Garden of Eden to disobey and eat the fruit of the tree that was forbidden, that's when sin, and the punishment for sin came into the world. God said that those who disobeyed Him wouldn't be allowed to live forever anymore. It was very sad for God, because He loved each one that He'd created. So He did something only He could do. He sent His son Jesus, to come to Earth and to take the punishment for our sins away.

Jesus came to Earth to live and give His life and love. His main reason for coming to Earth was that He'd forgive each one in this world, if they would believe in Him as God's son. For many years people had been waiting for a special person from God to be sent, they knew that through Him, their sins would be forgiven, and they would be granted the privilege of living with God forever. Jesus was this special person, who'd come at last!

It wasn't an easy job that Jesus had, coming to Earth, and some people didn't even want Him around. Jesus loved everyone—even those folks! For awhile it looked like they had taken Jesus away, and put an end to His life on Earth. It was a sad and difficult day, but good was to come.

Jesus is God's Son and lives forever, and no one can ever stop Him. His disciples and friends missed Jesus for a couple of days, when it seemed He'd never be around again. Then He appeared again, alive and powerful, to show everyone that His mission was complete—that the gift He came to give each one on Earth was ready for anyone to have, that wanted it.

His going away for awhile, and giving his life was all part of the plan. Everything was actually happening just as it was meant to. Through it Jesus had amazingly, wonderfully taken our punishment for us, and could now give each one of us forgiveness of sins and the gift of life forever, if we'd believe and ask Him for it.

Of course we don't live on Earth forever, and we still have consequences and troubles for doing wrong things while here. However, since Jesus gave His life and brought God's gift of forgiveness to us all, those who believe it, and receive it through prayer, can live with God forever.

No one lives a life without mistakes, but if you believe that Jesus is God's son, and that He came to Earth to forgive you and give you God's love, then you can become God's child too, and be part of His big Heavenly family. Jesus is alive forever and He has the power to give you life forever too, even when your time of Earth is over. Heaven is bursting with joy and love, and all who pray and believe in Jesus' love and receive His gift of salvation, can look forward to a Heavenly life forever!

Jesus is Risen—He Lives Forever!

Knowing what God said in His Word is important. It helps you to not be too sad when things are hard—because you know He will help you. The disciples didn't remember what the scriptures had said—that after Jesus would be taken from them, and give His life all the way, for the forgiveness of all our sins, that He was going to rise again, and see them again. They missed Him so much for a few days, while he was gone from them, His body in a grave.

A few of the women had gone to the place where he was buried to bring sweet smelling oil and spices. They wondered how they would manage to roll away the large stone from the entrance. They were in for a surprise. Angels had rolled it away, and were sitting down ready to talk with the ladies. "Why are you looking for Jesus in this place? He's alive! You won't find Him in here! Go tell everyone that He is risen, and will see them all soon!"

Mary Magdalene saw a man that she thought was the gardener, and asked Him about where Jesus might be—but to her surprise, it was Jesus! How glad she was to see Him again! Jesus told her to tell the disciples that He was alive again! The women ran off to tell the others the exciting and joyful news. It was the happiest day of their life!

Peter and John came running to see what the ladies had been talking about. They found the stone grave empty too! It was very amazing. Could it be true, that Jesus had risen? They were soon to see Him themselves! How wonderful it all was!

Walking and Talking

With Jesus' new Heavenly body He could do some amazing things that we can't yet do while we are still on Earth. The day He rose, He chose to appear to two of His disciples who were walking along the road—but in disguise. He looked just like a different person.

The men were sadly talking about how they missed Jesus. Jesus came and walked with them—but they didn't know it was Him! He asked them why they were so sad, and they explained it all to Him. Then Jesus reminded them about the prophecies from many years before, that were written down in the Old Testament Bible scrolls—how it promised that Jesus would rise and be alive forever.

The two disciples went into a house to have a meal, and invited this man to come in with them. When they sat down to eat, Jesus took the bread and prayed and broke it and passed it to them. At that moment they all of a sudden realized it was Jesus!—And He vanished right then and there.

They were so happy to have seen Him and amazed that He was with them. The two men went quickly to tell the other disciples what had just happened. Then as they were with the others in the house, telling their amazing story of Jesus' surprise visit, all of a sudden, without the door opening, bing! Jesus appears in the house, for all there to see! "Peace be unto you!" He says, greeting His disciples.

At first they didn't know what to think, it was pretty amazing how He appeared suddenly. Jesus reassured them and said that it was really Him, and He ate some food there with them. They were so happy to see Him again, and hear what He had to say to them.

Breakfast on the Beach

Most of the disciples were there in the room when Jesus appeared to them. One man called Thomas wasn't there at the time, and only heard about it. It was hard for him to believe that Jesus really was alive and could just appear and vanish, visiting in new and special ways. About a week later, Jesus appears again to them all, and this time Thomas was there. Even though they couldn't see Jesus with their eyes some of the time, He knew just what was happening and what Thomas had said.

Jesus came and talked to Thomas, "See it really is Me!"

Thomas believed then, because he saw and recognized Jesus. Jesus said, "It's great when people can believe in Me even when they haven't seen Me with their own eyes."

Another time Jesus appeared to them was at a beach. He cooked them some fish and bread for breakfast—because they were hungry. Peter and some others chose to go fishing during the night, but had caught nothing. In the morning a man called from the shore asking if they had caught any fish. He then told them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. They did, and a multitude of fish were in the net. All of a sudden they knew it was Jesus on the beach telling them these things.

Peter and the others came quickly to the shore to see Jesus, and brought the fish. They all had breakfast by the warm fire with Jesus, while He talked with them. He told Peter, "Feed My sheep"—to tell others about Jesus, and to give them God's words and truth and love, to be like a care taker, for those who wanted to follow Jesus, the Chief shepherd.

Clouds

For 40 days after Jesus rose, He continued to appear to His disciples and talk with them, and give them instructions. Jesus' disciples were pretty surprised at some of the amazing things Jesus could do with His Heavenly body!

On the last day that He was with them, in a way that they could see Him, He walked with them up a mountain, and talked with them. Jesus told them what their important new job was—to tell everyone around the world about Him, and the way to salvation!

As they were talking, all of a sudden, Jesus started to rise from the ground, floating up higher and higher, till He reached the clouds, and then disappeared from their sight. Instead of seeing Him, there were angels there, telling the disciples that Jesus was going to come back again, for all eyes to see—and in the clouds too! He'd return one day, in the sky, and all would see Him! But before that could happen, they had a job to do, to tell people about Jesus, so they would be ready!

The disciples were so amazed and happy, when they saw Jesus rising to the clouds. They knew Jesus Christ, the Messiah, had been with them on Earth. Now they were saved, and they could tell the good news to all they met. It was the best news they could ever give someone.

Jesus went to His Father in Heaven, but He wasn't really gone from them—He just couldn't be seen. He told them, "I am with you always." So even if they couldn't see Him, He was right there, ready to help them, as they began their important mission and responsibility—to tell many others about Him.

The Power of the Spirit of God

Nothing can stop the power of God! And when the time was right, He gave a portion of His Spirit to those who were commissioned to go and tell the good news of the way to Heaven—through believing in Jesus. Jesus told His followers to wait in Jerusalem for this special gift of extra power. So they did.

One special day a sound of a big, rushing wind, was heard filling the house! It then appeared as if bits of fire were on each one there! They weren't on fire, but a bit of God's light was seen burning. It was as if they were like lamps, and were ready to light up the world now, telling everyone of Jesus, the light of the world.

He'd told them before to "Let your light shine", and now they had the powerful Spirit of God in them and around them and on them, to help them do it. They weren't shy anymore, or afraid like they had been before. Instead they boldly went out and talked to many people about Jesus. A miracle happened, as the wonderful Spirit of God was helping them, and each of them were able to speak new languages, without having learned them before.

There were people from all over the world at Jerusalem at that time, and they got to hear about Jesus by someone telling them about Him, in their own language. Thousands of people got to hear what they had to say, and believed! What a great day that was! Do you want some power from Heaven too, to help you do what God needs you to? Just ask!

Together

On that amazing day when the disciples of Jesus received the gift of God's wonderful spirit, and many chose to believe and receive Jesus' gift of love and salvation, wasn't the only time they told people about Him.

Every day more and more people heard the good news that Jesus' followers were beginning to spread to all around, and every day more people chose to believe and to join the team. Amazing things were happening every day too. People were getting healed and all kinds of miraculous events were talking place. It was very exciting!

God's powerful spirit was helping them to do what Jesus had told them to—to let everyone in the world know about Him!

To do a good job they'd need to work well together. They'd need to listen to one another and to the Lord too. They prayed together, sang hymns together, and lived in loving brotherhood together, just as Jesus had taught them to. Each one shared their things with others who had a need, and cared for one another.

The disciples were like a big new family, made up of God's sons and daughters—people who believed on Jesus, and accepted God as their Heavenly Father. They treated each other like brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, and cared for the children well too.

The Lame Man Walks

Can you imagine not being able to walk? Or perhaps you can't walk, so you can understand what it is like. There was a man who had been a cripple or lame his whole life, and everyone knew him. He always sat in the same place, right at the gate that led into the temple. Every day he saw people going in and out. I'm sure he often wished he could just walk in with everyone. He just had to sit there, asking people to be kind to him and to offer him some money. He couldn't work and get paid, and then be able to buy food, nor could he work on a farm. He depended on the gifts of others. It's all he could do.

One day as Peter and John were passing his way, he asked for a gift of money. They didn't just pass him by, though they had nothing at all to give him, because they had something far better than anything money could buy. Peter and John had the power of Jesus that could heal this man. "In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk" they offered him.

He had never, in his life, been able to walk. He could have laughed and thought they were just being funny, or he could have thought they were trying to make things difficult for him. But instead, he chose to believe. He had faith that Jesus' power could heal him, right then and there. He then made the effort to try to stand up. It was a wonderful feeling that surged through his bones and legs, and he felt the strength to stand and to walk. He was so glad he began leaping and jumping and was able to walk right in through the gate at last, together with Peter and John.

People noticed what was going on, and they recognized this man as the same one they'd just passed who was sitting, lame, beside the gate. How did this happen? They wondered. Peter and John told them it was through the power of Jesus that this man could now walk, and he told them that they too could be forgiven and believe on Jesus, receiving His gift of love and salvation.

Power, Protection & Perseverance

The miracle of the lame man getting healed caused so many people to want to hear and learn of Jesus, that the disciples were there in the temple area teaching and talking all day! There were thousands who wanted to listen to them and who believed.

Some of the priests at the temple who didn't know the truth thought it wasn't right and tried to tell the disciples to stop teaching others about Jesus. The disciples made the decision to obey God instead, and to keep doing what Jesus had told them to do.

They prayed together for God's Holy Spirit to come and give them even greater power to do the job, to help them speak boldly to everyone and to not give up. And it happened! As they were praying the building shook and God's spirit came to give them a renewal of power and strength. Nothing would stop them now! They spoke

with boldness to people about Jesus, and many more amazing miracles of people getting healed were happening each day. It was a very exciting time!

God even sent angels to help the disciples when some people were making things too hard for them, and unable to preach. The angels protected them, freed them, and told them to go back and talk to the people in the temple again. Every day they just kept on talking and telling others about Jesus, no matter what. They were so happy to be on Jesus' team and share the good news with all the people they could.

Seven Wise Helpers

With all the preaching and teaching that was going on, there were so many who had chosen to be a part of the disciples' team. They all wanted to help each other and ensure that each had what they needed. Some of the families needed extra help and care, and so a plan was made. Seven wise and faithful men who loved God very much were chosen to be in charge, to see that each one was getting well cared for.

The job of those following in Jesus' way wasn't only to tell others about Jesus and His love, but also to be an example of His love, and how to live in His ways—to do what Jesus had taught them. When they all were caring for each other it was easier to then do the job of preaching the message they were sent to preach, because they had what they needed—food, clothes, houses, water, and those with children got extra care and help.

Stephen was one of the men chosen. He was filled with faith and God's Spirit. He not only did a good job of helping care for the new team of followers, but he was a powerful witness, telling many about Jesus, and God did many wonderful miracles through him too.

When it was nearly time for him to go to Heaven and get his reward for doing such a great job, he was telling people the truth about Jesus and quoting God's Words. The words he spoke were a powerful witness, and many heard about Jesus on that day. Some said his face shone like an angel. Then he looked up and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus in Heaven. It was the happiest day Stephen ever had—giving his best for Jesus right until his last minutes on Earth, and then getting to see Jesus face to face and joining Him in Heaven.

Philip's Amazing Trip

After spreading the good news of Jesus' love and salvation to many in Jerusalem, it was time for the disciples to travel around to preach in other areas and cities. Philip travelled to a place called "Samaria", teaching and bringing God's miracles of healing to the people. Many people there believed in Jesus.

Philip's next mission was to walk towards a desert area. It might not have seemed like the best place to meet lots of people, but he did what God told him to anyway. Then he noticed an important Ethiopian man who worked for a queen, riding by in his chariot. "Go talk to him" God told him. As Philip obeyed and came near, he found out that the man was reading from the book of Isaiah. It happened to be a prophecy about Jesus, but the man didn't understand who it was talking about.

Philip offered to explain it, and with joy the man listened and learned about Jesus. He too wanted to receive forgiveness and salvation. When they came to some water he asked to be baptized, and he proclaimed that he believed Jesus was God's son.

To their surprise, as they walked out of the water, Philip completely disappeared—and found himself in another part of the country, with many cities around and people to talk with. That was a great way to travel! No time was lost walking anymore on a dusty long, desert road. That miracle made the Ethiopian man rejoice all the more at the power of God, and that he had a chance to learn about Jesus.

Saul is Stopped—Paul Preaches

Saul really didn't know the truth about Jesus, and he put all his time and effort into trying to stop the followers of Jesus. This made things very difficult, and made Jesus sad too. So Jesus decided to make a surprise appearance to Saul, and set him straight—and ask Him to join the right team, those that were following the way God was leading. To tell others about Jesus, instead of trying to stop them.

As Saul is going on a trip to Damascus, suddenly a bright light shines on him and he's so taken by surprise he falls to the ground. Then Jesus—a voice coming from the light—asks him why he's doing what he's doing. At first Saul doesn't know who's talking, but Jesus introduces himself, and tells him what to do next. Obediently Saul does just what Jesus said: to go in the city and he'd be told what to do.

Saul is led to the city, as a blind man, blinded from the bright light, and brought to a house to rest. At this time a man called Aeneas, a disciple of Jesus, received a clear instruction from God—to go to certain house where Saul was resting and blind, and pray for Saul's healing. God told Ananias that Saul was now called to also be a disciple of Jesus. It was a surprising message from God, and took some courage to do it—since he knew that Saul wasn't being nice to Jesus' disciples.

Ananias obeyed, found Saul and prayed for his healing. Immediately it was as if scabs fell off his eyes, and Saul could see again. He was then baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit too. He was now ready to go and do as Jesus said to do—to preach and teach as many as he could about Jesus, spreading the truth of God's word and message of salvation. He was a completely new man, and took on a new name: Paul!

Arise

Aeneas was sick in bed for eight years. That's a long time. Everyone around knew about him, and how his illness made him unable to get up out of bed. Peter was taking a trip to all sorts of areas, visiting the believers, teaching and praying for people. When he met Aeneas he told Him of Jesus' power to heal. "Arise, and make your bed" Peter said. Aeneas believed and was able to get up, right at that moment.

This miracle of Jesus' healing power so amazed those living in that city and in the nearby area. All who saw Aeneas healed and well, turned their hearts to God and believed in Jesus' love.

Nearby was a place called "Joppa", and there lived a wonderfully kind lady, who was a disciple, called Tabitha. She was always busy helping others. She used her time and strength and all that she had to help people, giving things to others, and doing kind deeds. She would make coats and clothes and give them to those who had a need. Everyone who knew her loved her and appreciated her.

She then became real sick, so sick it seemed she'd never recover. A team of disciples went to find Peter. They asked him to come right away and to pray for her. Peter traveled back with them and went into the room where Tabitha was. She was so very still, her eyes shut, and it seemed she wasn't alive anymore. Peter had faith that Jesus would heal her. He knelt down and prayed for her to be healed. Then he turned to her and said "Tabitha, arise!"

Tabitha immediately opened her eyes, and Peter took her hand and helped her to get up. Everyone was so very happy to see their friend again. News spread around that Tabitha was well again, and many believed on Jesus when they heard about it.

Cornelius

Peter was very hungry, but the meal was still being prepared, so he went upstairs and rested. God then talked with him and gave him a special message, telling him three times to do something that he normally wouldn't have chosen to do. God said there were three men coming to the house right then to meet him. He was to go with them. They weren't people he normally talked with, but God wanted Peter to tell them about Jesus. Everyone needed to hear about Jesus—everyone in the whole world—no matter what country they came from, or who their relatives were, or what they believed in at that time.

When Peter went down stairs it happened just as God had said. There were three men there wanting to talk with him. What they said was very amazing. There was a man called "Cornelius", and he loved God, and prayed, and tried to do his best to help others. One day while he was praying God sent an angel to him, who told him a very clear message. The angel told Cornelius about Peter, and also where he was living, and that he was to talk with Peter.

After hearing these men's story, and the reason for their visit, Peter agreed to go home with them. He talked to Cornelius and all that were in his house. They all eagerly listened, and believed all that Peter came to tell them about Jesus, and His gift of salvation. Then a wonderful thing happened! Cornelius and all that were there listening, also received God's Holy Spirit, just as the disciples had. They were baptized and became disciples also.

Peter was willing to go to visit some people that most others didn't go and talk with, and then God showed them that His gift of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit was for all people on Earth. As a result of Peter obeying what God told him to do, other disciples followed his example and many others heard the good news about Jesus.

Peter's Adventure

At the time of celebrating Easter, Peter had an amazing encounter with an angel of God, who came to help him. There was a king who was particularly concerned with being well thought of by others. Some people didn't like what the disciples were doing, and wanted them stopped. So to try and make them pleased, this king ordered that Peter not be allowed to preach freely. He put Peter in a place where he'd have to stay for a little while, and not be able to travel around. There were locked doors and many people in charge of guarding and keeping Peter there, until the king wanted him to come out again in a couple days.

All the disciples that heard of it knew that God could do the miracle, and make Peter free again to preach and teach. They prayed for him, and just didn't stop praying! In answer to prayer God sent an angel to Peter, who woke him up, told him to put on his shoes and coat and follow him. Peter obeyed and walked out of there with the angel. The big gate opened all by itself, and Peter and the angel walked on down the street. Then the angel disappeared and Peter realized it wasn't just a dream, but it had really happened!

He walked to the house where a group of disciples were staying and praying for him. After knocking on the door, a young lady named Rhoda came to see who it was. Rhoda was so happy and excited to see that it was someone who seemed to be Peter, she didn't even let him in at first, but told the others. They could hardly believe it!

Peter kept knocking, till at last he was let into the house and could share the exciting story with them, of just how their prayers were answered. Everyone was so happy! Their prayers had been answered. Peter then journeyed on to other places to continue telling people about Jesus.

In the morning, when the king wanted Peter to come and see him, he and everyone else were totally surprised to see that Peter had completely disappeared! It was impossible. No one could have just vanished like

that. But God can do things like that, especially when people are praying and doing their best to tell the good news of His love and Salvation to others.

Paul's Adventures

Paul took time to learn and study about useful things when he was younger—like languages, and about lands, and the Bible too. Knowing these things helped him in his job for the Lord of telling many people about Jesus and His love.

Paul was determined to not give up, no matter how difficult things got for him. It sure wasn't easy to be on the go most of the time, not always feeling warm and healthy, or having plenty to eat. He loved Jesus so much, that even when things were hard, he still did his best. Paul wanted to do all he could to tell as many as possible about Jesus' arrival to the world—and His gift of Salvation. He just wanted to get the job done—he wanted to be a winner for Jesus!

Many people all around were told about Jesus, because of Paul's faithfulness to spread the good news. People received healing through Paul's prayers, because they had faith that Jesus would help them. Paul didn't stay in one place for too long, but did a lot of traveling as well, so people in other places could have the opportunity to know about Jesus too. He also wrote as many of God's words down to give to the disciples and believers who lived in far away places.

Paul found out that a good way to find strength to keep going was to keep being thankful, all the time, to be content, to not think he had to have things just a certain way in order to be happy—but just be happy that Jesus loves us all. He kept his mind on the Heavenly reward that we can also look forward to one day, if we do our job on Earth for Jesus faithfully.

Heaven

Heaven is the most beautiful place that has ever been made. And guess who it was created for? Someone very special! —You! And all God's children who love and obey Him, and who believe in Jesus His son, and have received Him in their hearts and lives.

In Heaven there will be only joy, and happiness, good health, fun times, beautiful places, fancy places to live with golden streets and jewels and gorgeous building materials. You'll be able to fly and float. You won't get hurt. You'll be perfectly well then, able to see, hear, talk, walk, sing, move, and have more abilities than even the best athlete or Olympic champion ever did.

Maybe you wonder why can't we just go there right now, and not have to stay around on this world, with all the many troubles that exist. —The sadness, sickness, difficulties, pain, pollution and accidents. Well, God loves you and each one on earth so much, and He can hardly wait to make things all nice for you and for others. God wants as many people as possible to get to come to His wonderful, beautiful city that He's preparing. People need to know about Him, and need to hear about Jesus, and to become a part of His family.

God's going to wait just a while longer, in order for many people to hear about the good news of Salvation. Things in the world will look like they are getting worse for awhile, but those who know Jesus will be strong and have miracles happen in their lives. And then when the time is right, a wonderful event will take place. Jesus will come back and take us all—all who know and love Him—up to that wonderful place, that Heavenly land. You'll be so very happy there—especially if you have done your part now, to help spread the good news about Jesus to as many as you can, just like His disciples did. Will you make Jesus happy, and help to tell many about Him? Get ready for the fun and for the prizes and rewards, by doing your best now! You'll be so glad you did!

The Millennium

The time will come when the world will be changed to be nice, clean and safe again. Animals will all be gentle and friendly. Only good plants will grow. Everyone will have enough to live happily and comfortably. The world will look even more beautiful. Those who love and follow Jesus now will get to help Him later on. He has a special job for us to do later on—for one thousand years, in a time we can all “The Millennium”. We will help to teach the people on the Earth how to live in love and how to make good and wise choices. Jesus will be the King of the Earth then, and people will all learn to obey Him and do things in the right way that will keep the world and all the people on it living happily. And one day the beautiful Heavenly City will be where those on Earth can see it! Won’t that be amazing? Those who love Jesus now will be allowed to go into that great city whenever they like. They can fly to Earth to help the people living on Earth, and they can go have fun in Heaven too, with all its wonders. This is only the beginning of the great things that are to come. It won’t be long now! Jesus will make everything wonderful, when the time is right! He loves you and everyone so much!