



*Children's
Beautiful
Bible
Treasures*



Children's Beautiful Bible Treasures

--By CQ

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Psalms and Supply

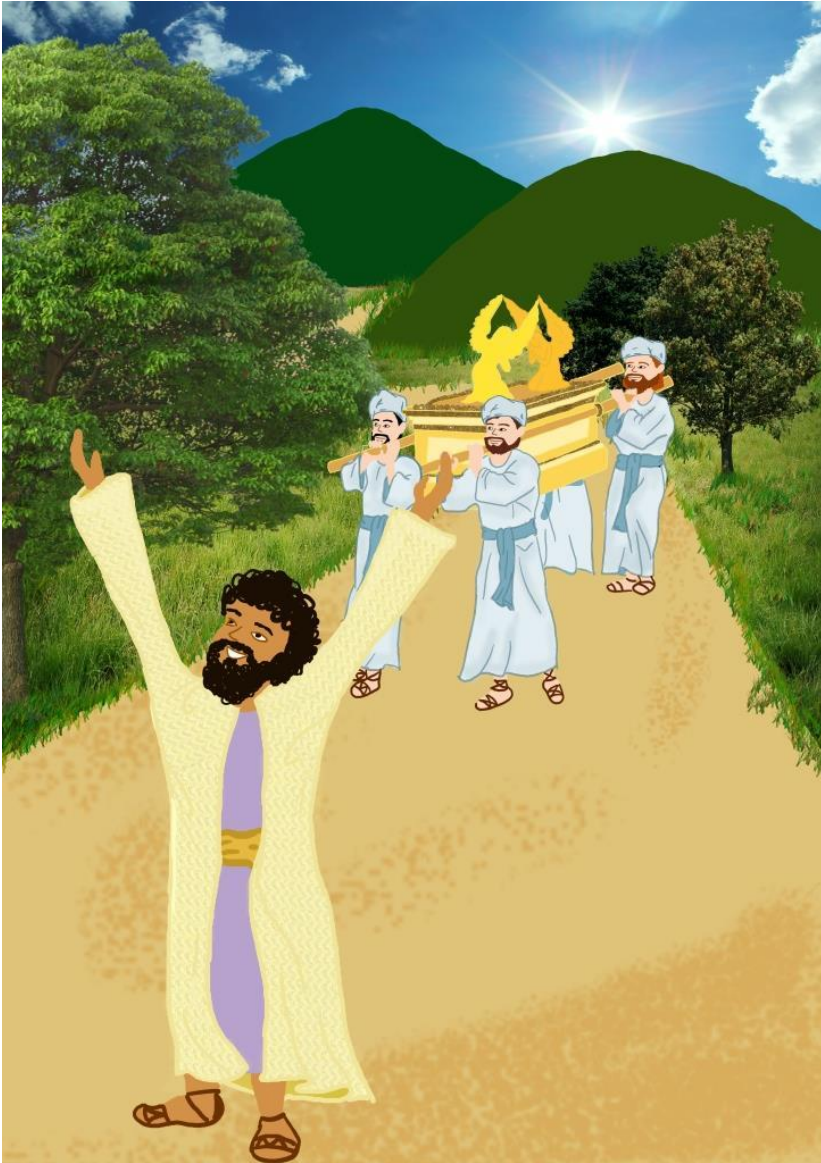
David had many difficulties and hard times. He learned to trust in God through his problems. He wrote songs and psalms that told others—and reminded himself—of the great things God did. The Book of Psalms has many beautiful words in it; words of praise and faith, words that tell of

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 worshiping 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

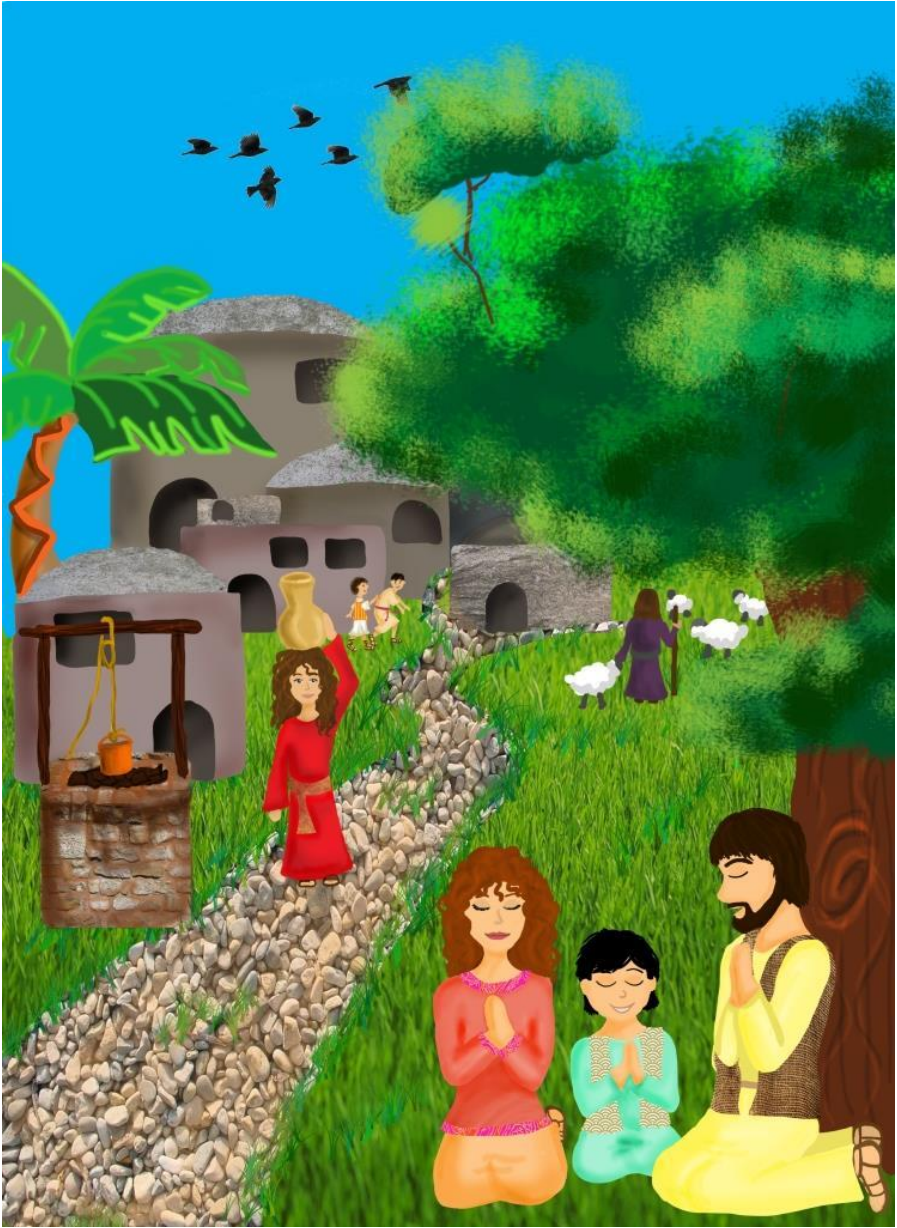
One night, after King Solomon had offered a special prayer, God talked with him in a dream. It seemed like a dream, but it was a real and important message from God. To be the king was a very big and new job, and Solomon was humble and knew that he needed God's help. In the dream God asked Solomon, "What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



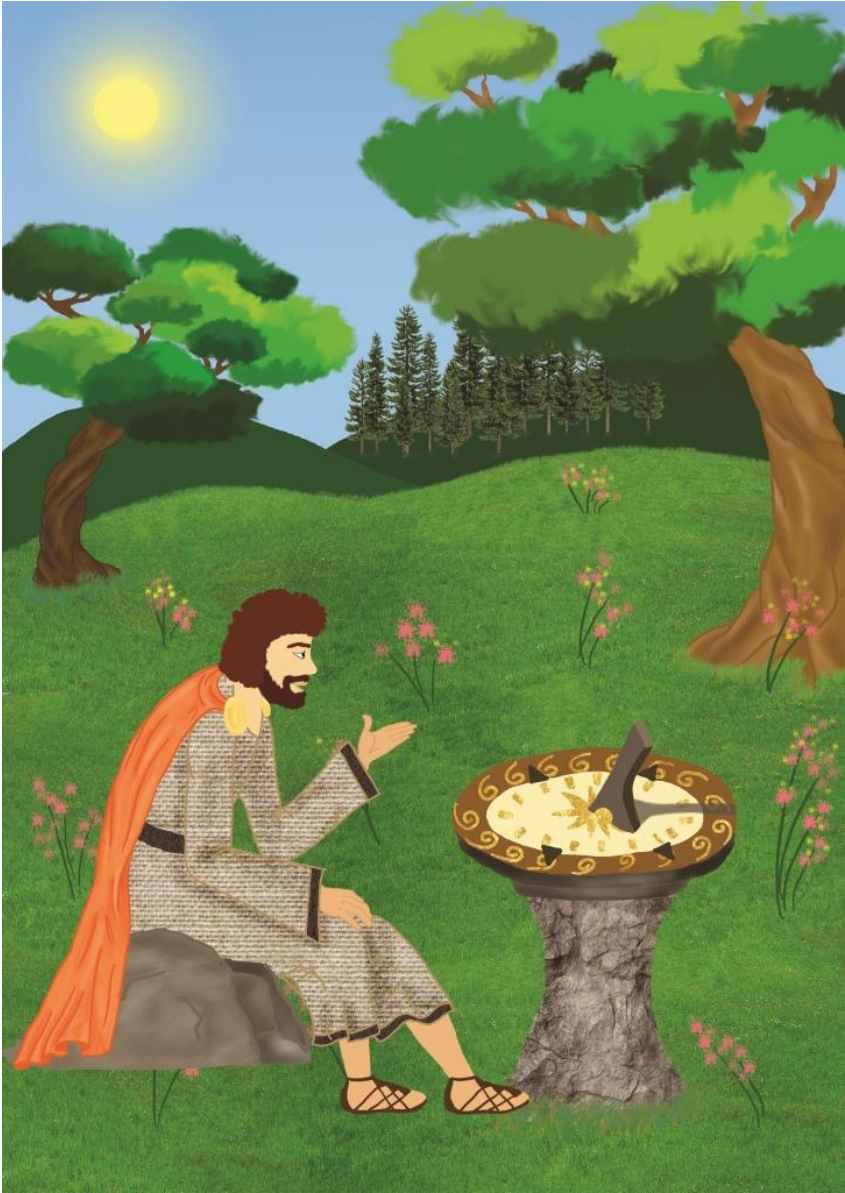
The Boys Who Were Kings

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.

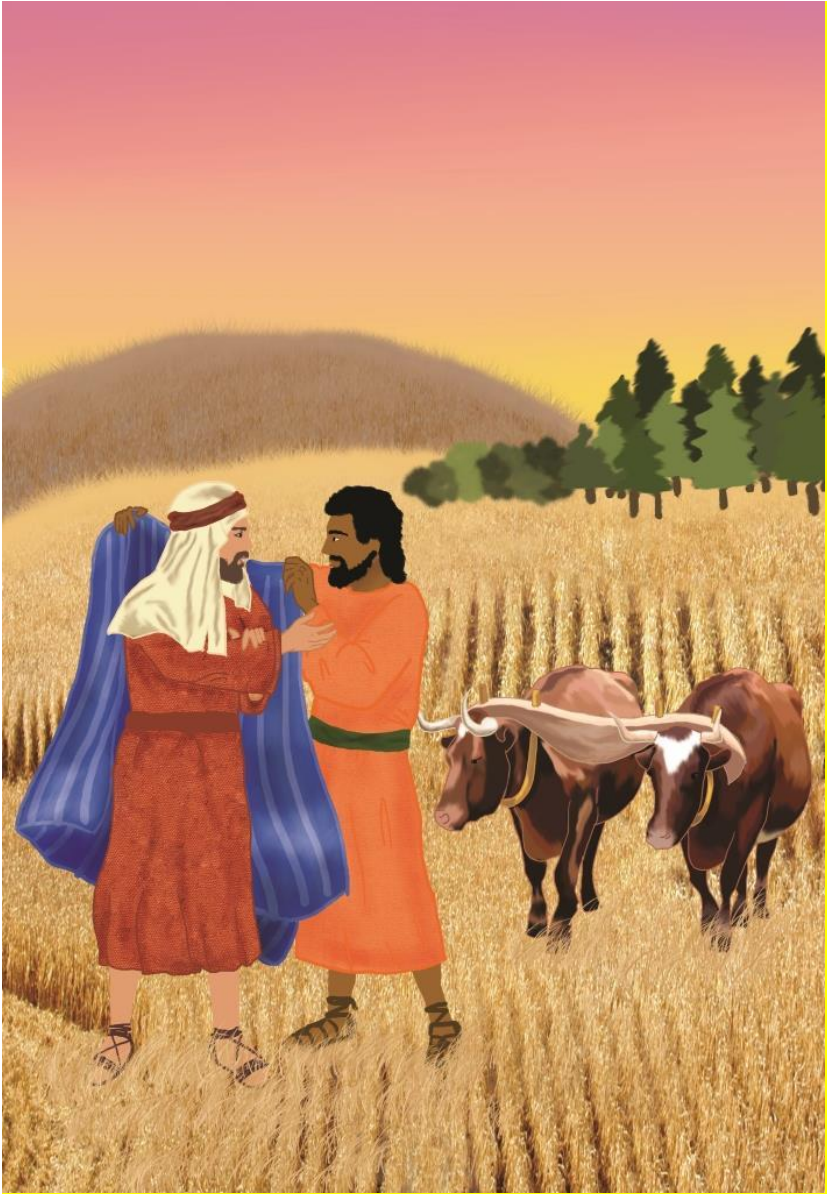


Hezekiah's Healing

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

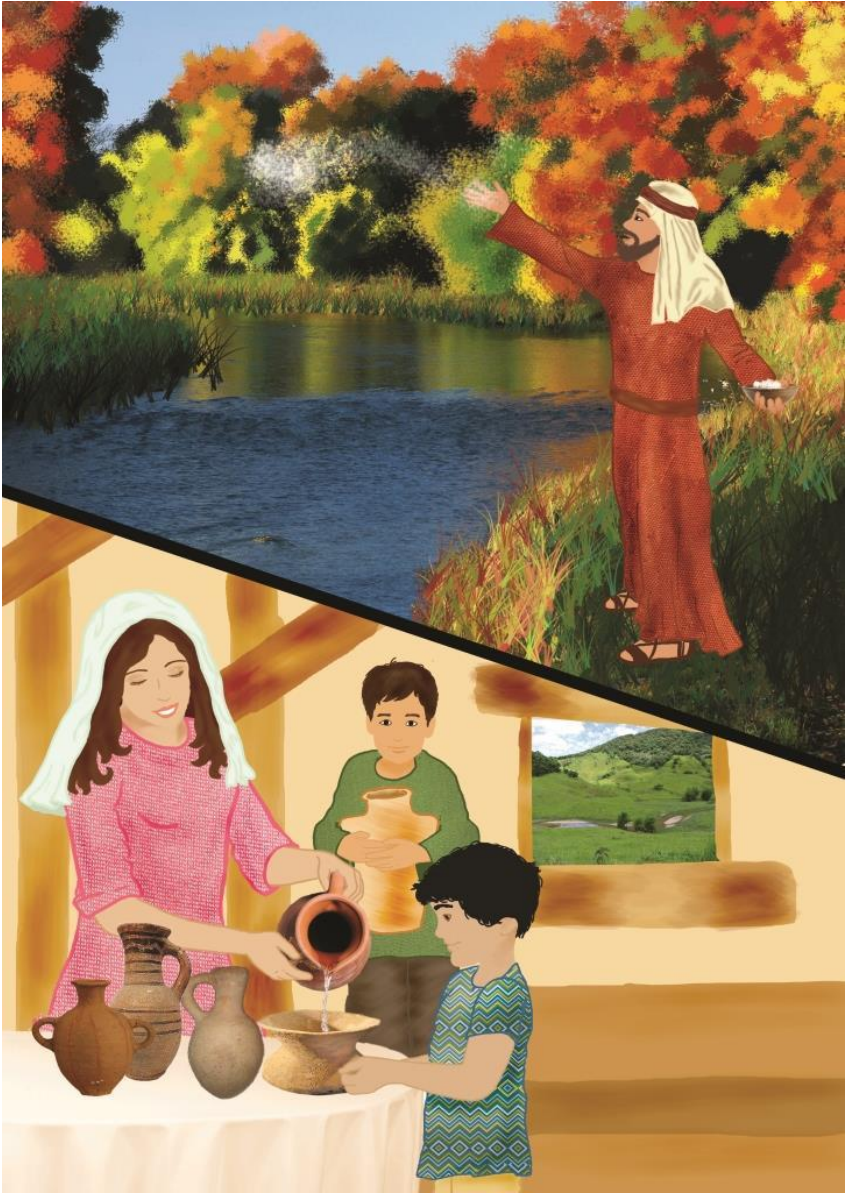
Elijah had been a faithful messenger, telling God's Words to everyone. Finally, it was time for him to go to Heaven. Elisha would be the new prophet, continuing the job of leading people in God's ways, listening to God's Words and passing those messages on to the people. It was hard for Elisha and the 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.

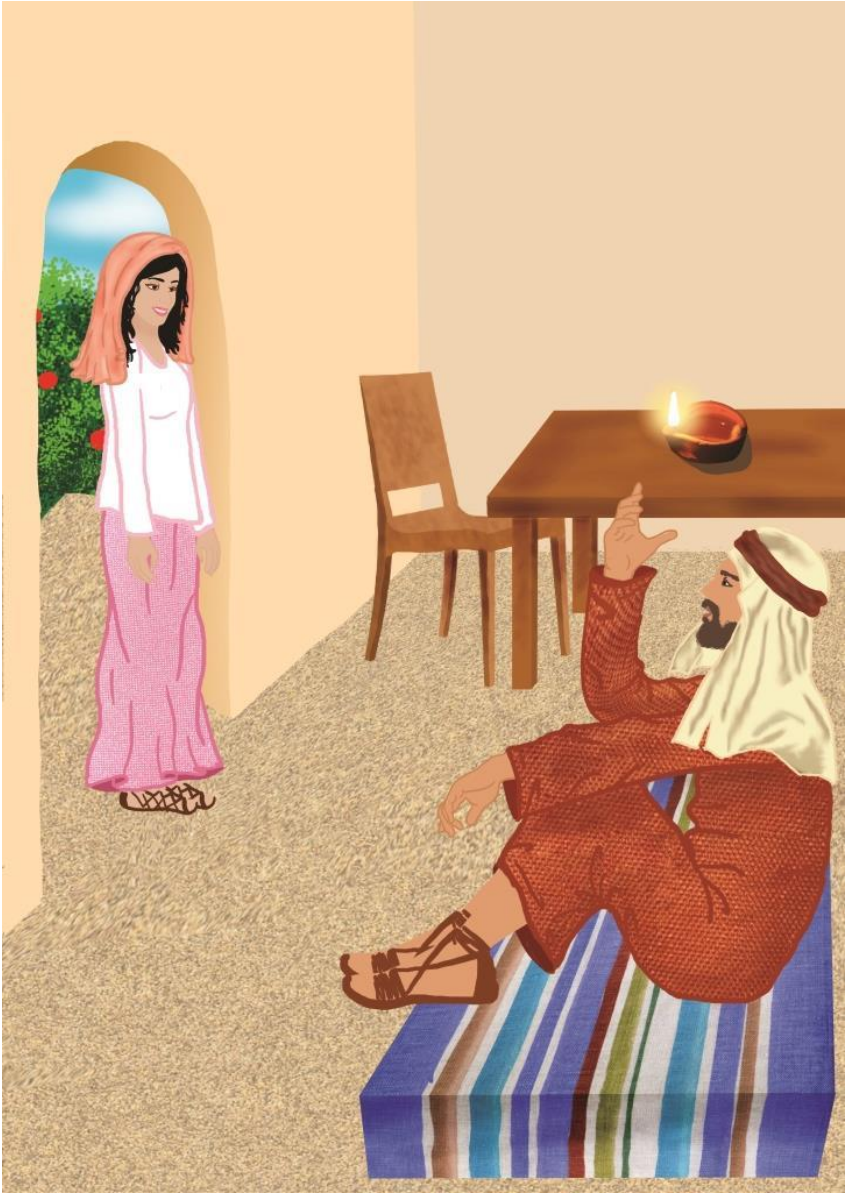
One time the water that was in the city of Jericho wasn't clean and pure, and it was causing a big problem for those living there. The people asked prophet Elisha what to do about it. When he prayed, God told him to do something interesting. Good things always happened when he obeyed God's instructions.

"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!



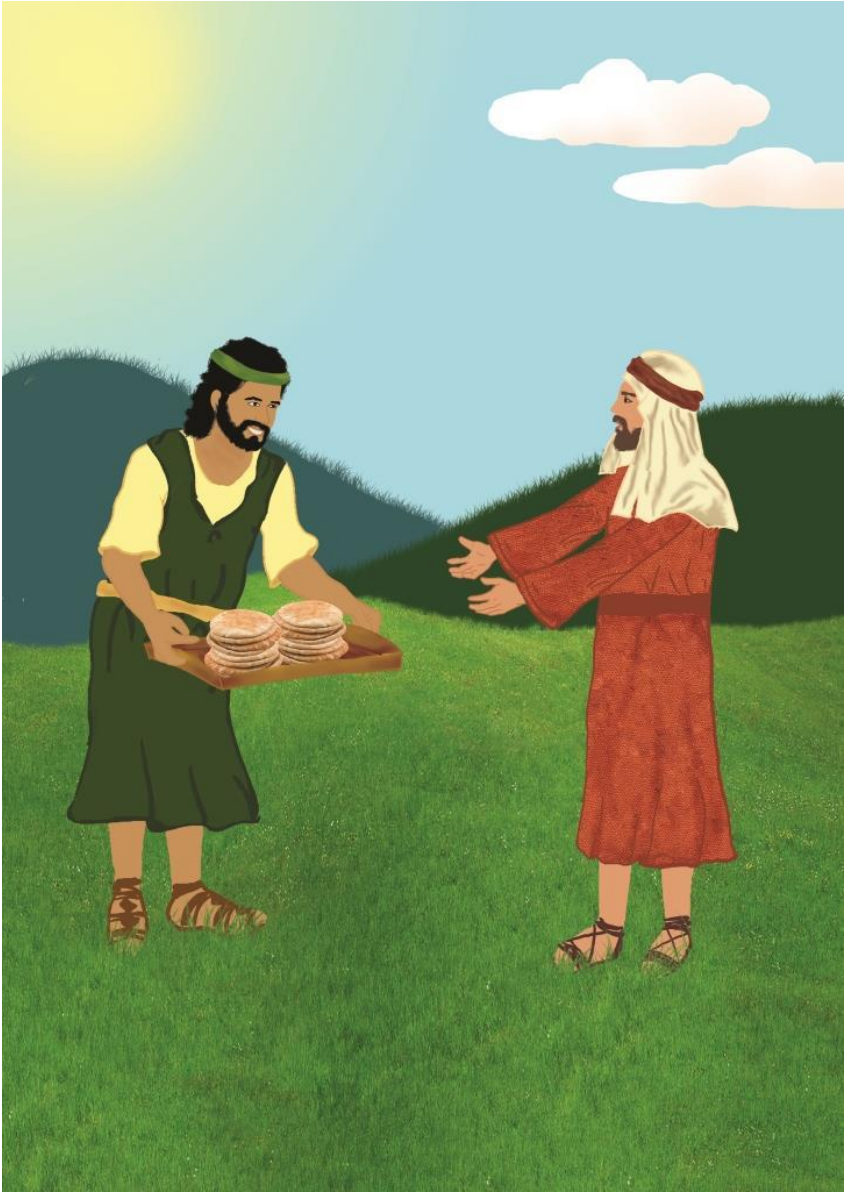
Elisha's Room, and a Special Child

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.

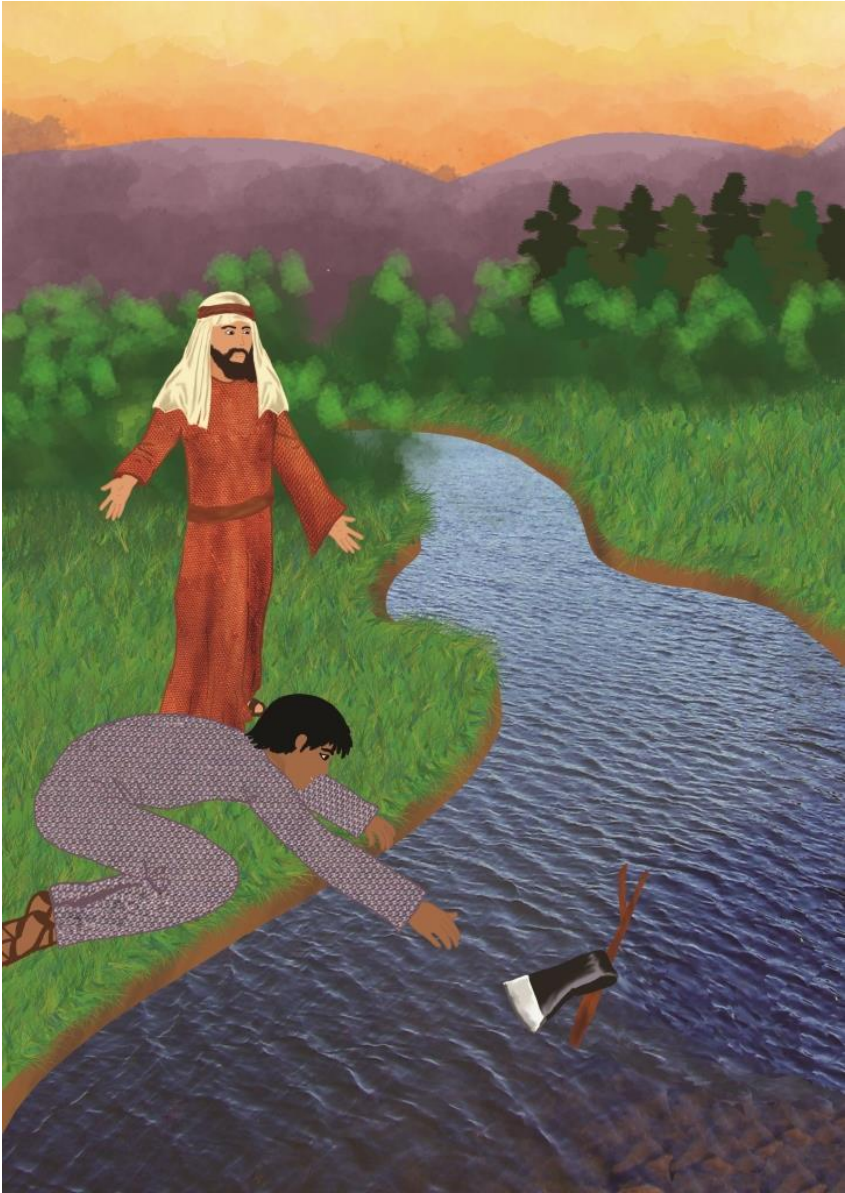
"If only Naaman were with the Prophet Elisha, he could get healed!" the maid said. She had lived in the land of Israel before, so she knew about the prophet. This was the first time someone had given Naaman hope that he could be healed. He was eager to go and find the prophet.

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.



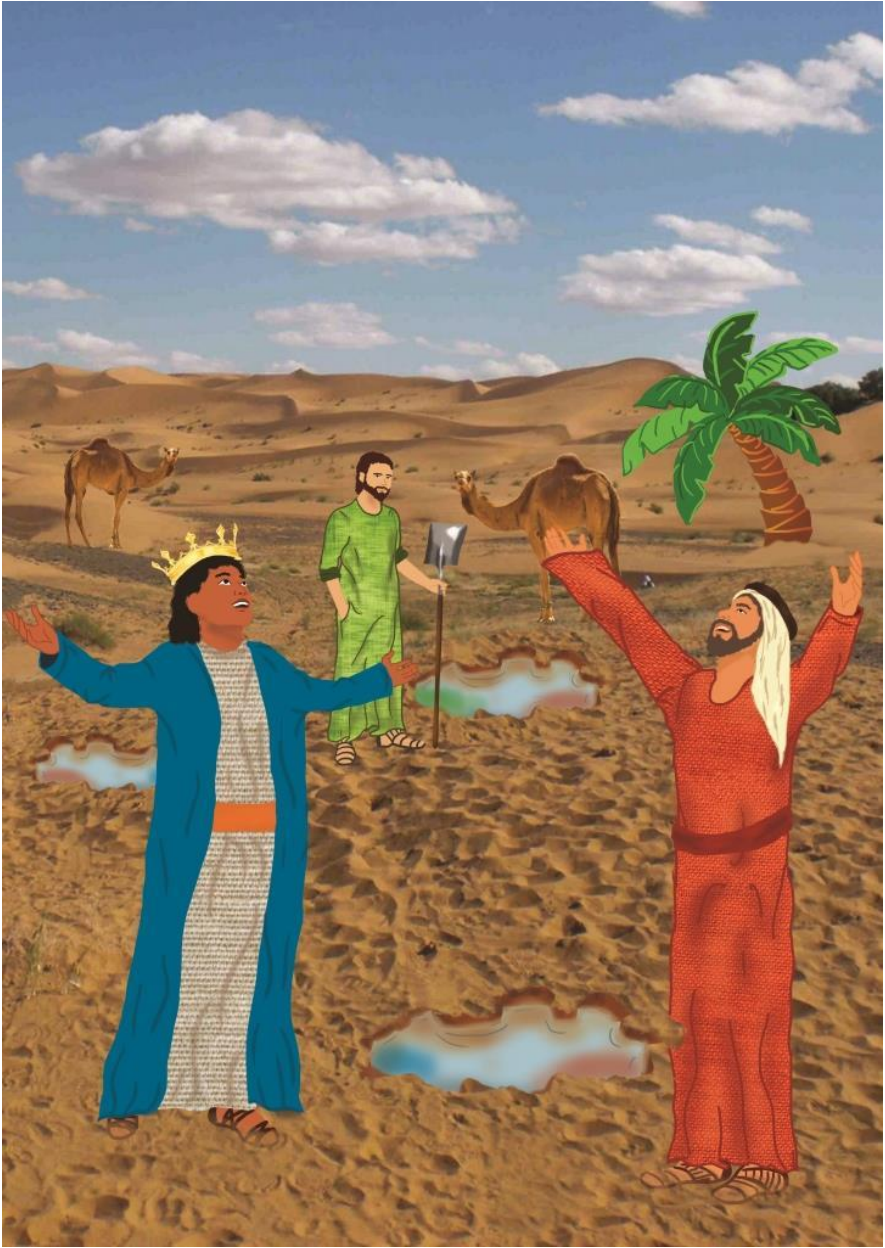
The Fruit

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

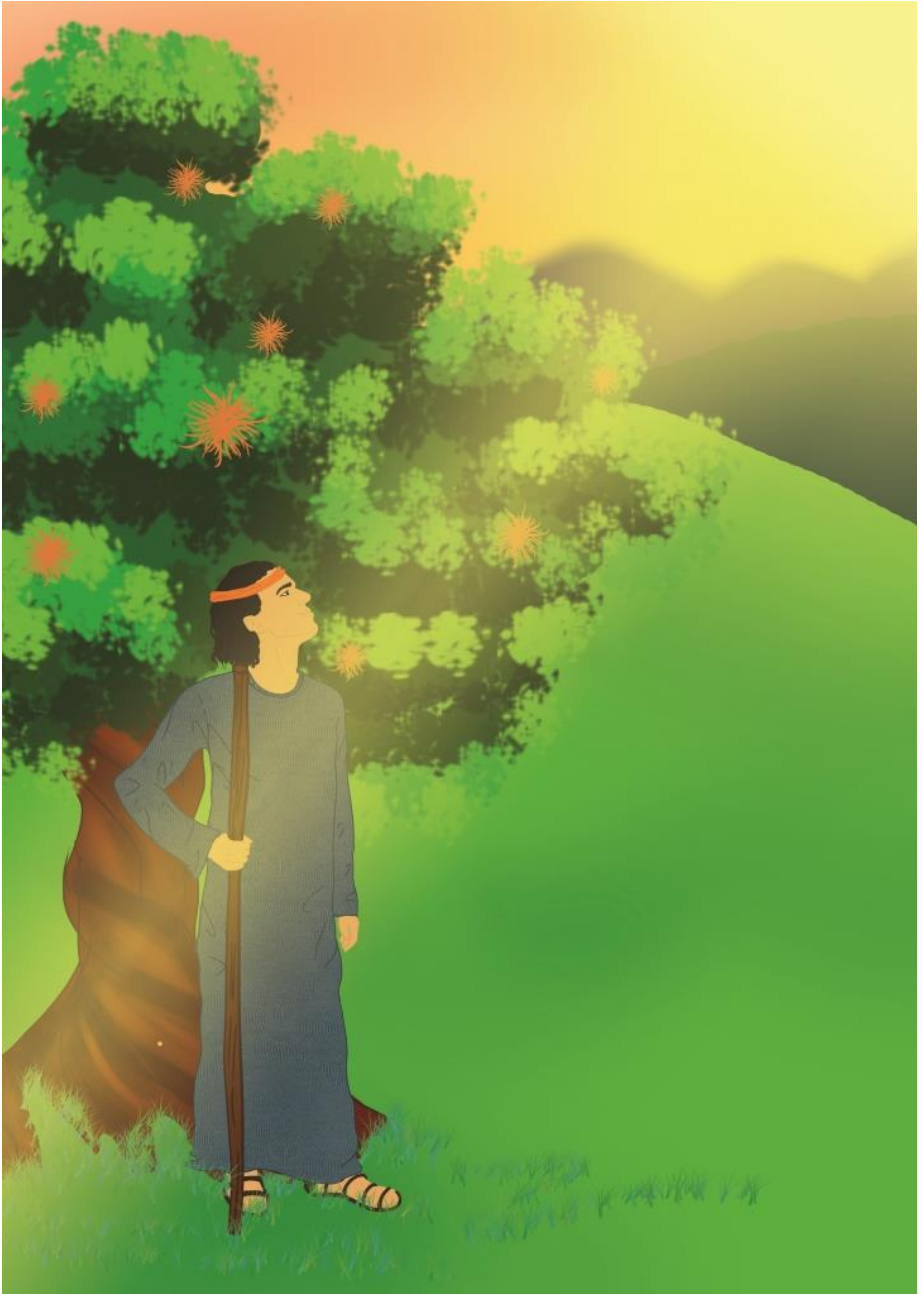
King Jehoshaphat wanted to do what God said, and he wanted others in his country to hear what God's Word said, too. He selected some good men who read and obeyed God's instructions, and gave them the job of teaching it to others. Those men travelled around the country and read the books of God's Word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



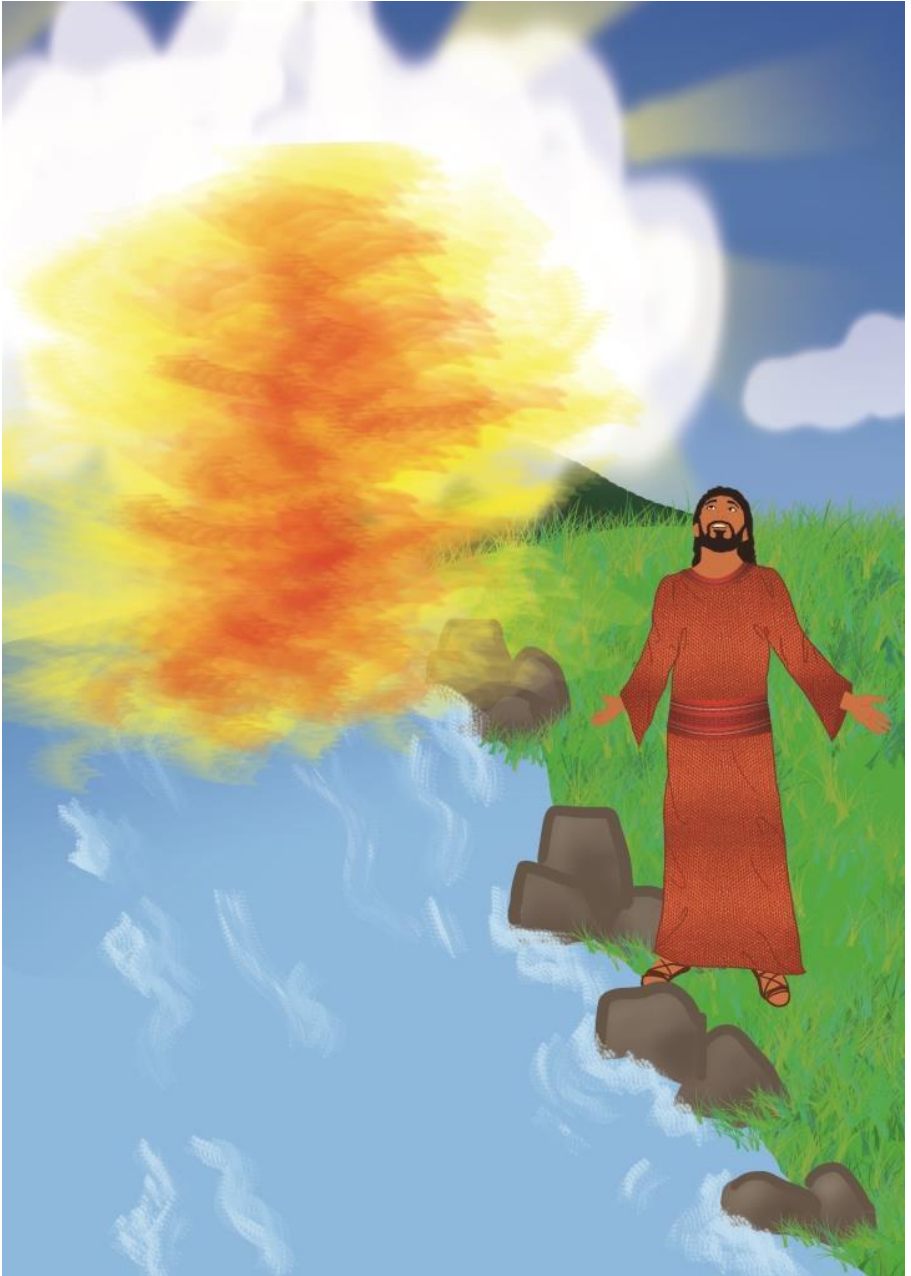
Nahum and Habakkuk

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 answer 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 needed 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?



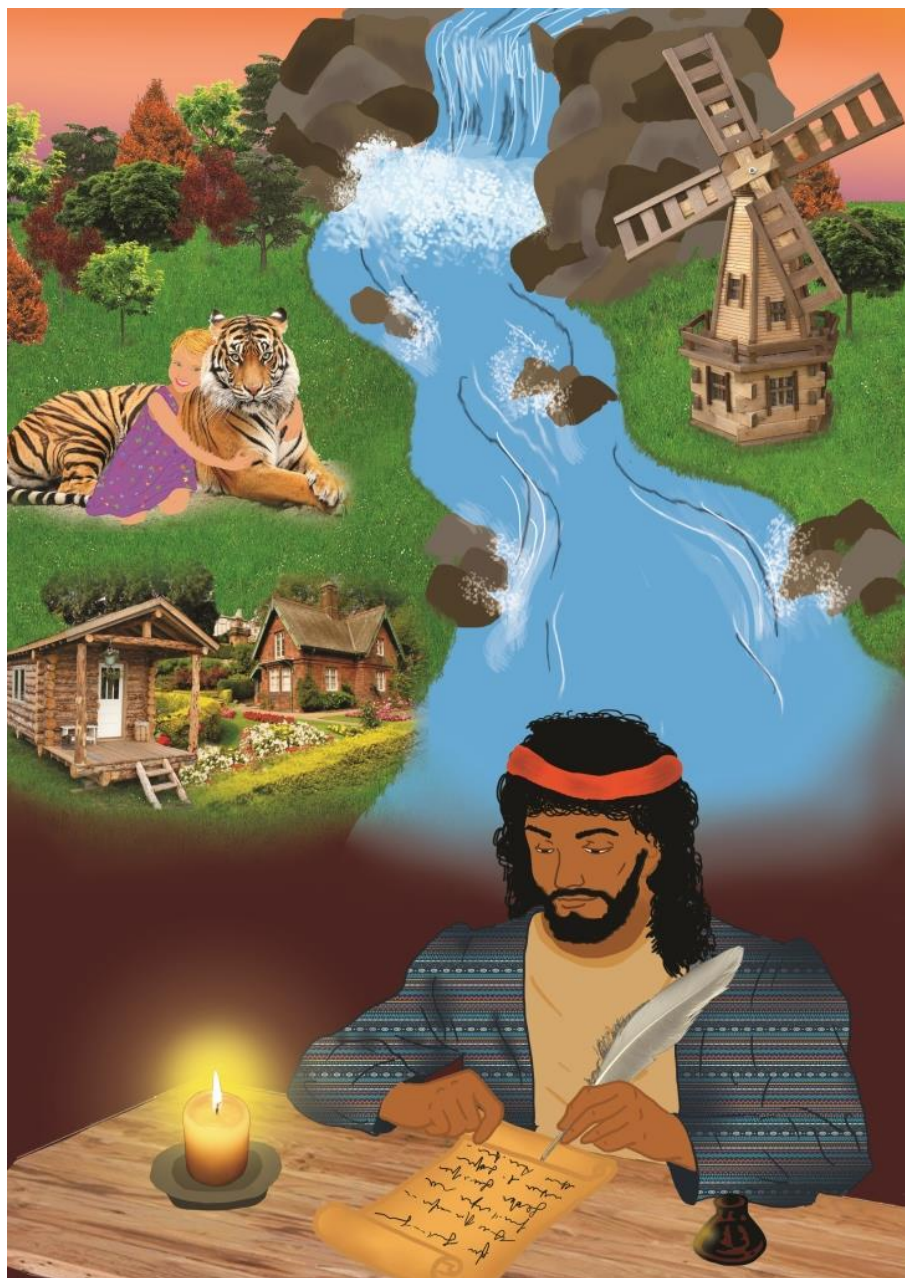
Wings and Wheels

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.



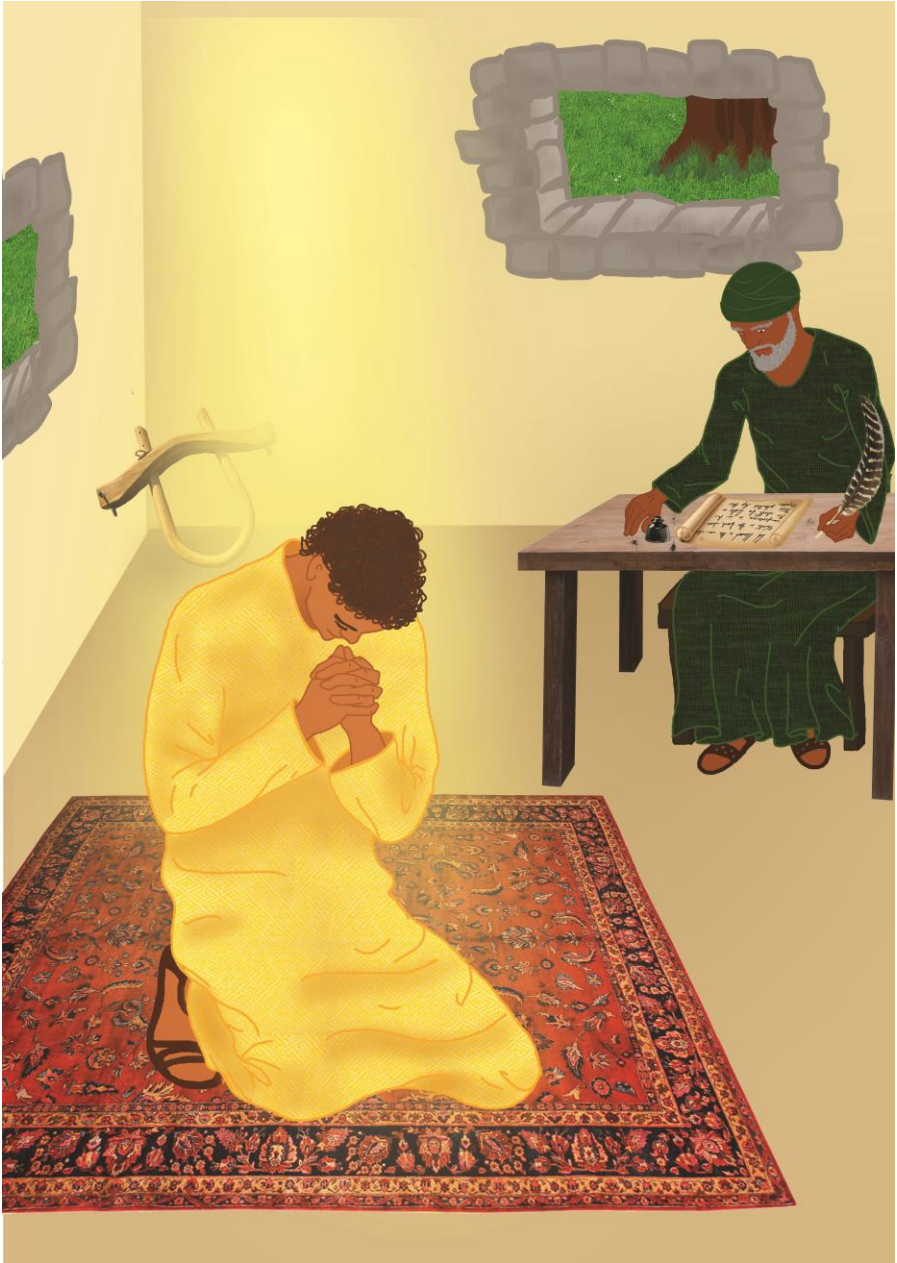
Isaiah the Prophet

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!



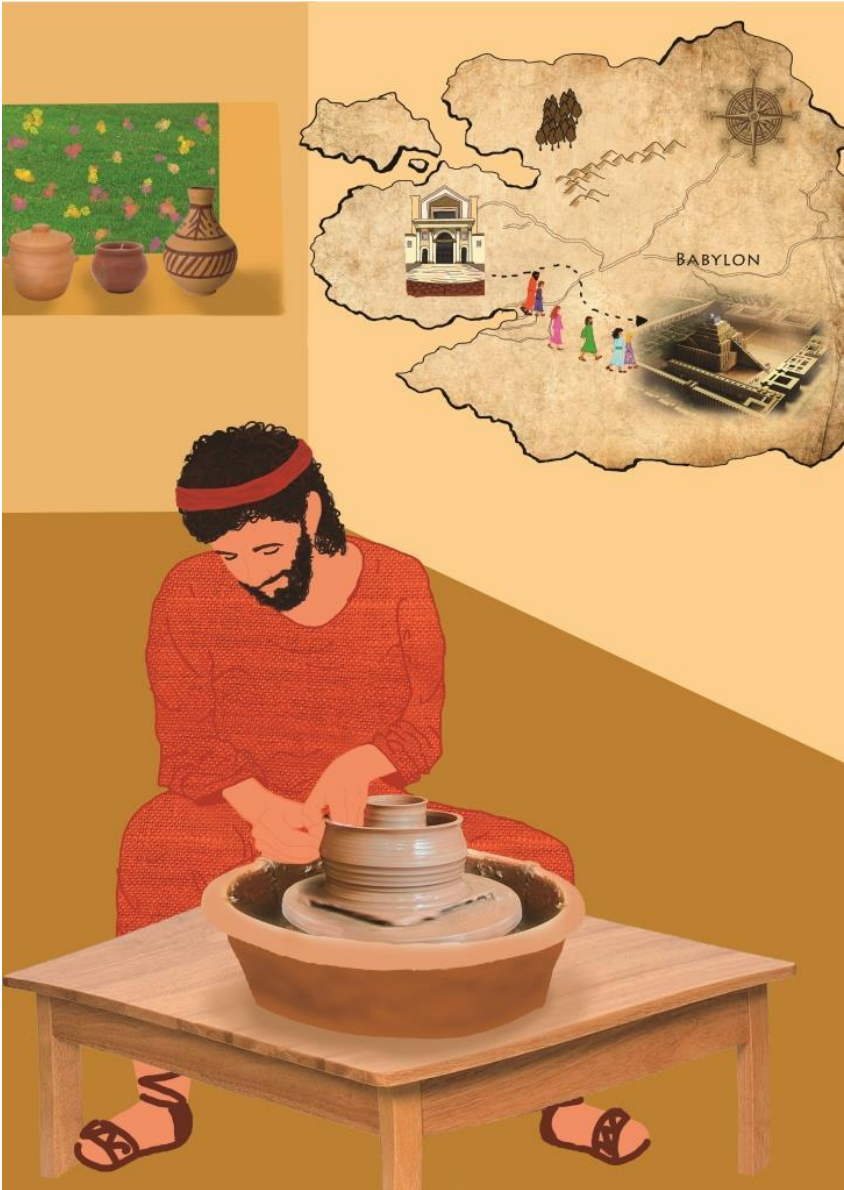
Jeremiah the Prophet

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

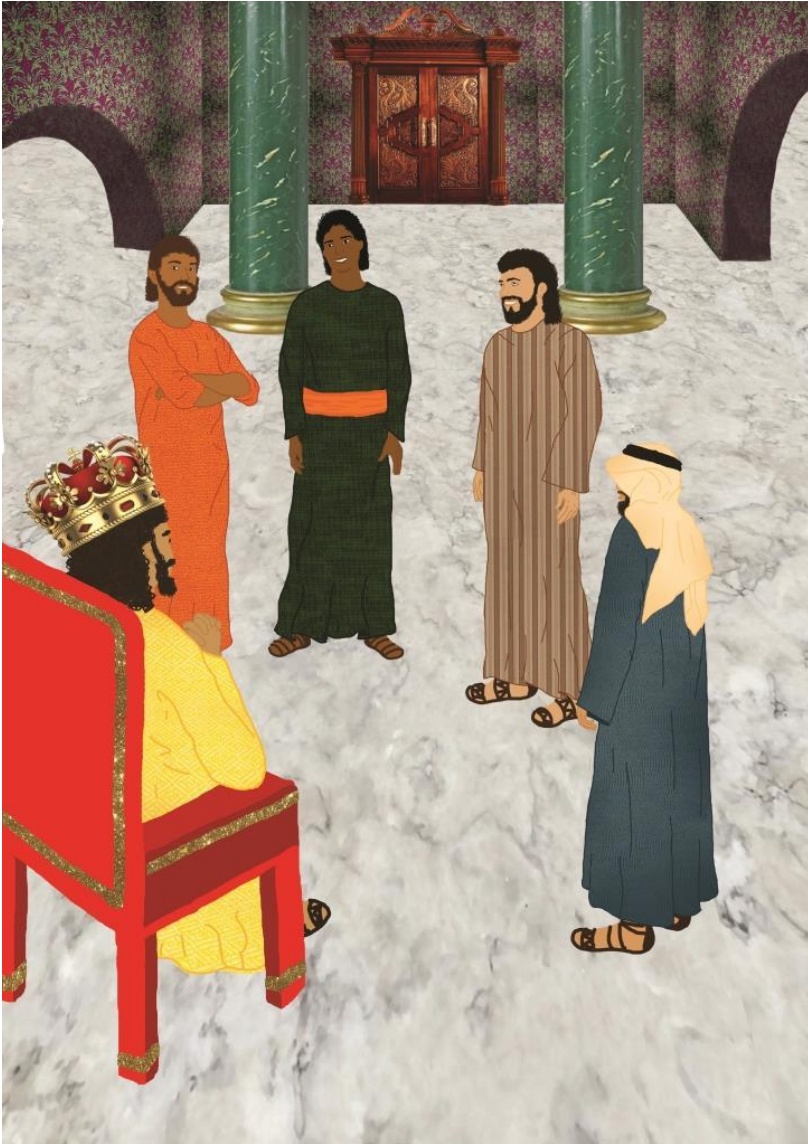
Jeremiah was very sad to see the people having a hard time and seeing all the troubles that came their way. He prayed and knew that Jesus was close to them anyway, even in the sad and difficult times.

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

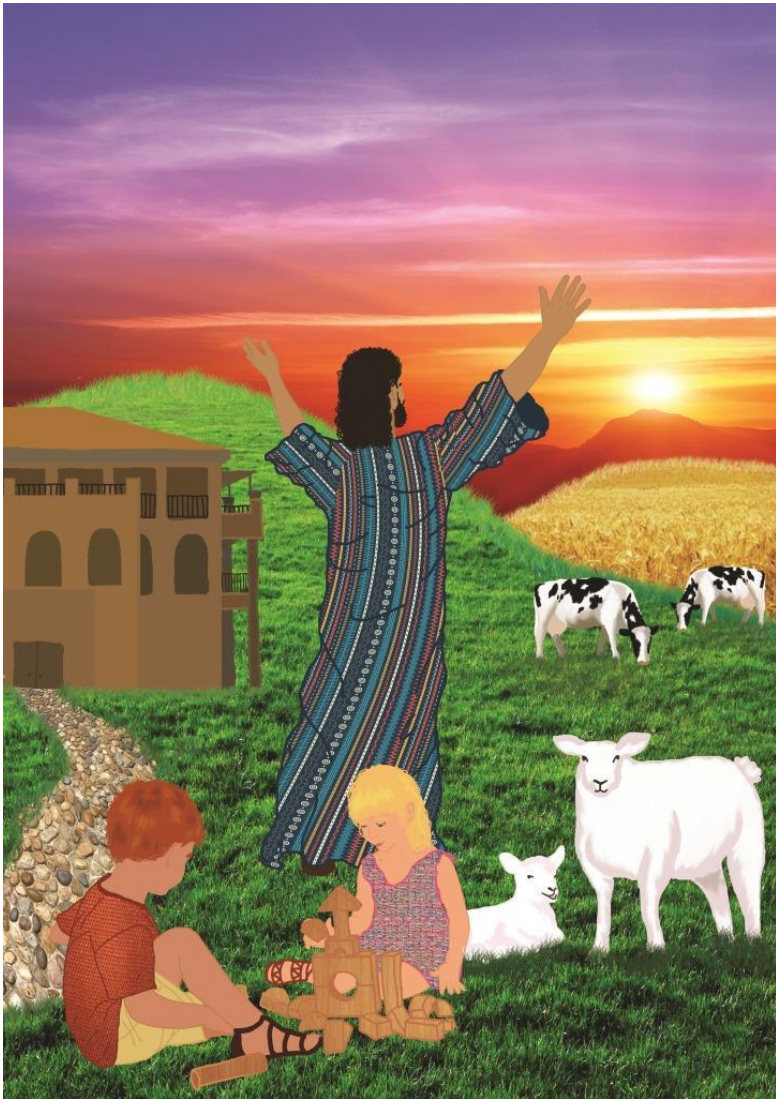
good helpers to talk with, who could give him good ideas and counsel him. He needed those who were in good health, who had learned a lot, and who could apply themselves to study and learn many new things and learn how to speak a new language as well. Young men were chosen from the land of Judah, sons 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 decree 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 Israelites, and give to them all they'd need for their project, so that it would be built more quickly.



Ezra

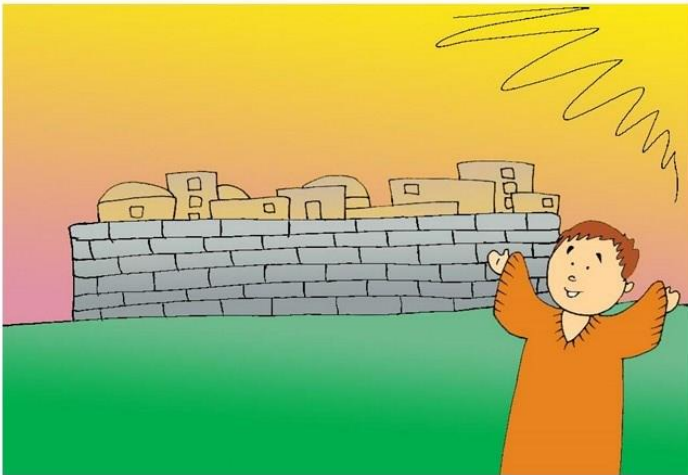
Ezra had a job that he loved very much. In fact, it was one of the best jobs around. His job was to write and make new copies of the words that Moses and the prophets had written down. New scrolls needed to be made, so they could be read easily, and so that people would be able to know what God said 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

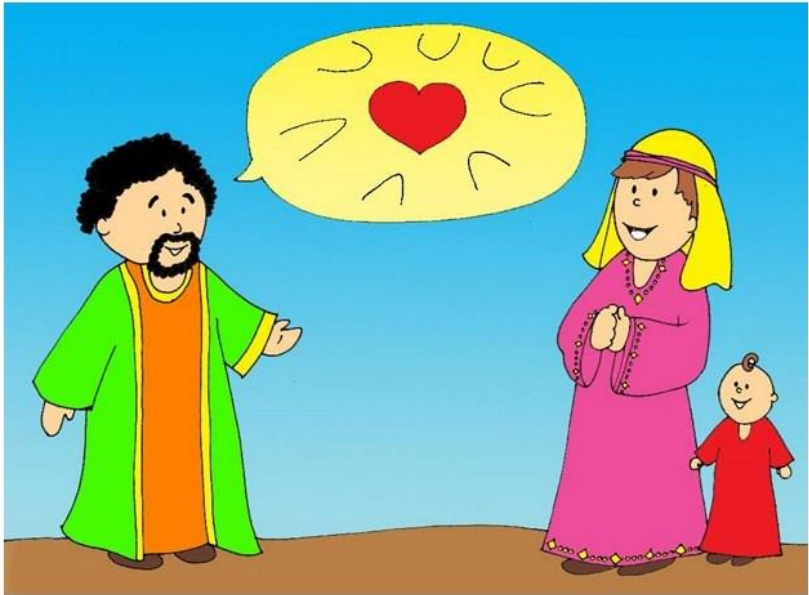
incomplete in this state. It was discouraging to those living there. There were many other things in need of fixing up and getting reorganised as well. The Israelites had been allowed to return to their home country, but there was a lot of work to do to make things nice again. However, there wasn't anyone 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

Introduction:

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.



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!

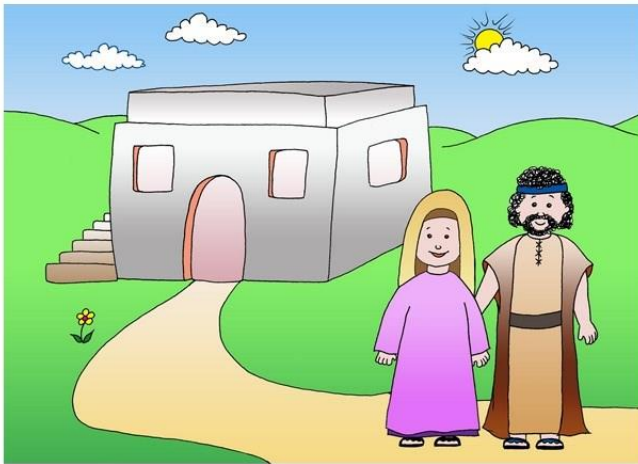
Mary was very surprised to see this angel, and even more amazed to hear that she had been chosen by God to have Baby Jesus. At first she wondered how this was going to happen. Was there something that she was supposed to do? She wasn’t yet married to Joseph. Normally it would be impossible for a lady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

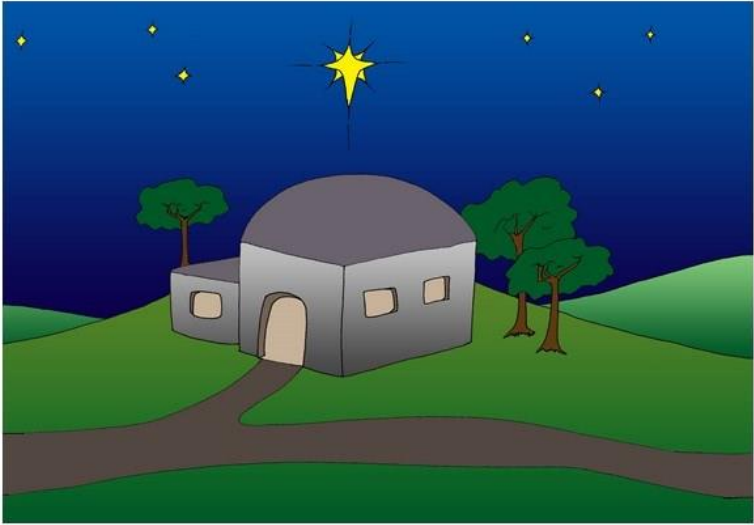
Faithful shepherds were out at night on a hillside. They were grateful for their warm coats while they were drowsily guarding over their sheep. They weren't anything fancy or thought of as great important men, but they were chosen to be the audience for Heaven's musical performance! God knew that the 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

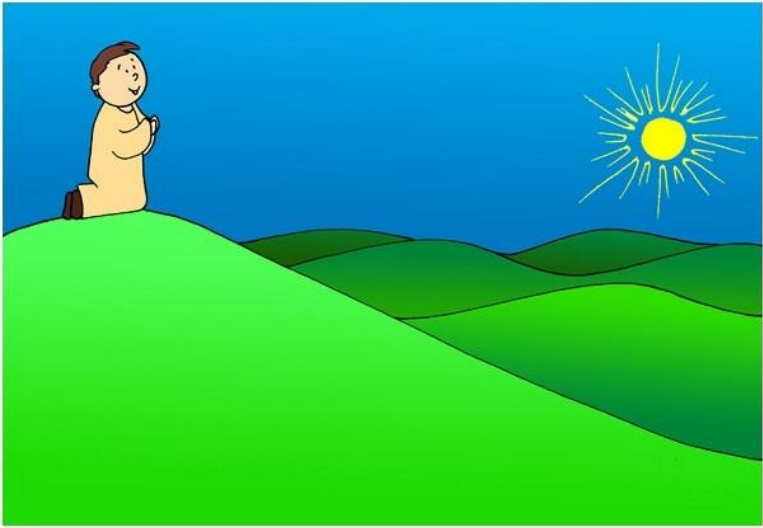
Mary and Joseph went to the temple with baby Jesus to offer prayers and praises to God, acknowledging that this child belonged to God. They were dedicating Him to God and asking for His blessing. This was what all good parents did at that time, when they had their first son.

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 to 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 of 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 preach 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 choose 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

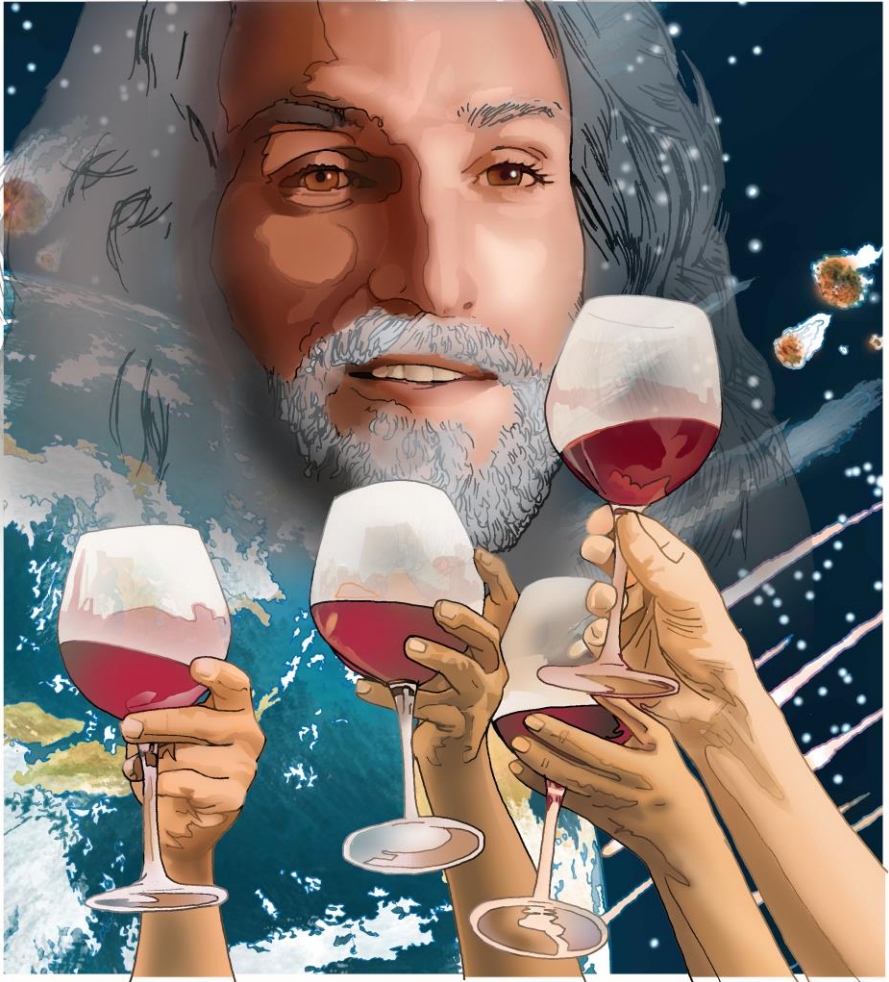
One day, as John the Baptist saw Jesus near where he was preaching, he pointed Jesus out and called him the “lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world.” Then John encouraged some of his followers, Andrew and John, to go follow Jesus. So they went and caught up with Jesus, walked and talked with 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

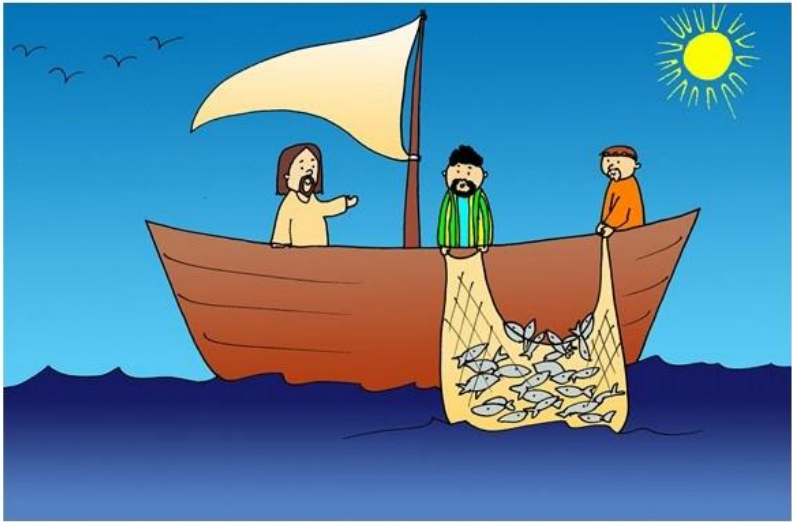
There was to be a wedding in a place called Cana. Jesus and his disciples were looking forward to it, as they had all been invited, along with His mother Mary.

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.