

# The Glory & Decline of the Kingdom



**PRIMARY NOTES — 5 to 8 Years**

**STAGE THREE OF FIVE STAGES**

CHRISTADELPHIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
P.O. BOX 121, ST. AGNES 5097, SOUTH AUSTRALIA



# FOREWORD

Having concluded stage two with the promises made to David, we take up the history from here and consider first the grandeur and glory of the Kingdom and then trace its sad decline. The waywardness and outright disobedience of both kings and people become a too familiar pattern. No wonder God grew weary and would spare His people no longer. So He sent them to Babylon for their own good ultimately and that they might know that He was Yahweh. But the story is not entirely gloomy. Such wonderful characters as Hezekiah, Daniel, Esther and other faithful servants inspire us to serve the true and living God too. Even children (like Samuel and Josiah,) gave their lives over to serving God and children today should be encouraged by such wonderful examples. It is this that we must look for whenever we read the Bible — incidents and characters who show us by the example of their own faith and obedience what we must do to please God.

We learn too, of course, that only one — that child, whose life story we begin to follow at the end of our lessons — was obedient in all things and far surpassed in his simple faith all those great men of old. This does not make us give up hope of pleasing God but rather makes us thankful that God should set before us a perfect example to follow. Let us, then, teach children in our care to honour Him in the days of their youth.

THE COMMITTEE

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# 1. DAVID'S KINDNESS TO JONATHAN'S SON

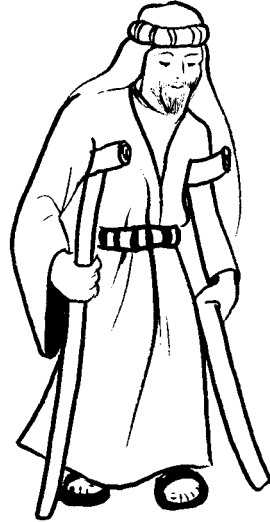
## Aim

To show that even although David was a great King, he kept his promise to Saul and Jonathan. We too should not make promises we are not prepared to keep.

## Synopsis

King David kept his promise to Saul and Jonathan by showing kindness to Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 4:4; 9



## DAVID THE GREAT KING

God had made David a great and famous king. He had led the armies of Israel against their enemies and destroyed them all. He was a wise ruler too, who looked after God's people just as a loving shepherd looks after his sheep. God was pleased and made some wonderful promises to David. We read of these in 2 Samuel 7. We know that God will certainly keep those promises to David.

## DAVID REMEMBERS HIS PROMISE

Now David had made a promise too — to king Saul and his son Jonathan. Just as he knew that God would keep His promise, so king David did not forget the promise he had made. He had said that he would look after the children of Saul and Jonathan, when they died. They had both been killed in battle. So David asked his servants, "Is there anyone that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness, for Jonathan's sake?"

## MEPHIBOSHETH IS BROUGHT TO DAVID

Ziba, one of Saul's old servants knew that Jonathan had a son called Mephi-bo-sheth. Mephibosheth had been only five years old when Jonathan, his father, was slain. When his nurse heard the news of Jonathan's death, she became frightened. She picked the little boy

up in her arms and ran away with him. But in her hurry she dropped him. Both his feet were badly hurt. He could hardly walk at all.

Now king David knew that he could help Mephibosheth. So he sent for him. Mephibosheth bowed before the king. “Don’t be afraid, Mephibosheth,” said David, “for I will show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake. I will give back to you all the lands of Saul your grandfather. You shall eat with me at my table always.” Mephibosheth was very grateful to David. “What is your servant,” he said, “that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?” He knew that he would be of no use to the king and yet the king still wanted to help him. David’s kindness was more than he could understand.

## **DAVID CARES FOR MEPHIBOSHETH**

David kept his word. He gave Mephibosheth all the land that belonged to Saul and Jonathan. He also told Ziba, who had 15 sons and 20 servants, that he must look after this land for Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth himself would sit at David’s table and eat with the King as if he was one of the King’s own sons.

So Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan, lived in Jerusalem and ate with David at the King’s own table. He was given honour before all Israel. In this way, David kept his promise to Saul and Jonathan. He showed “the kindness of God” to a man who could not repay him.

## **LESSON FOR US**

God is like that to us. He shows us great kindness in giving us food, clothing and shelter and we cannot pay God back! All we can do is say, “Thank you, Heavenly Father.”

We must be kind to people whenever we can, especially to those who are God’s chosen people. We should not just be busy about our own lives, but have thought for others. For this brings happiness to others as well as ourselves.

We should also make sure that we keep our promises. If we say we will do a thing, we should be careful to do it and not forget. God is pleased if we are like David and show His kindness to others in need.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Even although David was a great King he kept his promise.
- \* The cause of Mephibosheth’s lameness.
- \* Mephibosheth brought before the King.
- \* He comes to live at the palace and is cared for by the king.

**Questions 5 to 8 years:**

1. What was the promise that David made to Saul and Jonathan?
2. What was the name of Jonathan's son?
3. What happened to the boy when his nurse fled with him?
4. What did David do for Mephibosheth?

**Additional Questions 7 to 8 years**

5. Why did David show kindness to Mephibosheth?
6. David's kindness to Mephibosheth is like God's kindness to us. Can you think of some of the kind things that God has done for us?

## 2. THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON



### **Aim**

*To show how Solomon chose wisdom and knowledge to help him rule Israel and God was pleased.*

### **Synopsis**

*Solomon became king over Israel after David died. God gave him wisdom because he chose it above everything else in life.*

*1 Kings 1:32-35; 3:4-28; 4:30-34*

### **SOLOMON IS MADE KING**

King David had ruled over God's people, Israel for 40 years. He was now an old and sick man. It was known in the palace that the young man, Solomon, had been chosen out of all David's sons to be the next king of Israel. "Make Solomon, my son, ride upon my own mule," said David. "Anoint him king over Israel, and let him sit on my throne; for he shall be king instead of me." All the people shouted, "God save king Solomon!" Then just before he died, David reminded his son that he must be sure to obey God's laws all his life.

### **GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON BY NIGHT**

Young king Solomon remembered his father's words and tried hard to please God. He first called together all the captains and princes of his kingdom to come to Gibeon. That is where the Tabernacle was set up. Before all the people, Solomon offered up 1,000 sacrifices to God. That night as the young king slept, God appeared to him in a dream. "Ask what I shall give you," God said. Solomon answered, "You have made me a king in place of David my father, and I am like a little child. I do not know the best way to rule Thy great people. Give me then wisdom and knowledge, so that I can judge Thy people and know the difference between good and evil."



## **GOD IS PLEASED WITH SOLOMON**

God was very pleased with Solomon's answer. There were many things that he could have chosen. He could have asked for long life, or for riches, or for the destruction of his enemies. But he knew that he would need God's help to rule over Israel wisely. He wanted this help more than anything else. So God promised that He would certainly give Solomon a wise and understanding heart. Added to this, He would give him greater riches and honour than any other king ever had. If Solomon obeyed God all his life, then God would give him long life too.

When this dream was ended Solomon woke up. His heart was full of thankfulness when he returned to Jerusalem.

## **SOLOMON SHOWS HIS WISDOM**

Not long after, two women came before him as he sat on his throne. They both lived in the same house and had both given birth to a baby son. During the night, one of the babies died. Each of the women said that the living baby was her own. They argued before the king. "The baby is mine!" said one woman to the king, "she stole it from me while I was asleep and put her dead baby next to me!" The other woman answered angrily, "No, the living baby is mine and the dead baby is yours!" How could the king know who was the *true* mother? Thoughtfully he answered, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword to the king. "Divide the living baby into two," said Solomon. "Give half to one woman and half to the other woman." The true mother, longing for her baby was greatly upset "Oh no, do not kill the baby. Keep him alive and let the other woman have him." But the other woman did not really care. "Let the baby be divided," she answered.

By this simple test, the king knew now who was the true mother. True mothers really care for their babies. "Give the baby to the woman who wanted the baby to live. Do not kill him — she is his mother," he commanded.

We can be sure that Solomon certainly did not mean to kill that little baby — but because he was wise, he knew how to find the baby's real mother.

## **SOLOMON BECOMES FAMOUS**

All Israel heard of this. They could tell that God had given

Solomon wisdom to judge wisely and so they feared the young king. Solomon became wiser than any other man and he wrote many proverbs and songs. Many of these are in the Bible today.

## **LESSON FOR US**

There are many things we would like to have, aren't there? Solomon teaches us that the greatest thing we can ever have is God's wisdom. This wisdom is found in God's Word, the Bible. We should want to learn about God and obey Him more than anything else. If we seek this wisdom, God will bless us in other ways as well, just as He blessed Solomon.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Solomon was only a young man when he was made king over Israel.
- \* He wanted to please and obey God.
- \* His dream at Gibeon and his choice.
- \* God's gifts to Solomon.

### **Questions 5 to 8 years**

1. Who became the next king while David was still alive?
2. Who spoke to Solomon in a dream at Gibeon?
3. What did Solomon ask God to give him?
4. What did God give to Solomon as well as wisdom?
5. How did Solomon find out who was the true mother of the little baby?

### **Additional Questions 7 to 8 years**

6. Tell all you know about Solomon's dream.
7. How did Solomon use the wisdom that God had given him?

### 3. THE GLORY OF SOLOMON

#### **Aim**

*To show the glory of Solomon's reign and the way in which God blessed him.*

#### **Synopsis**

*God made Solomon a very great king. He became famous in other lands, because of his wisdom and the wealth and greatness of his kingdom.*

*1 Kings 5; 10:1-3*



#### **SOLOMON BUILDS GOD'S TEMPLE**

God had made Solomon king of Israel and had given him peace in all the land. The time had now come for Solomon to build God's Temple in Jerusalem. For many years his father, king David, had taught him how to do this great work. The plans for the temple had come from God himself. Gold and silver, brass and iron, timber and stone had all been stored up by David (1 Chron. 22:2-5). Even the workmen had been prepared. Now Solomon must begin the work of building this glorious temple.

Hiram, king of Tyre, was willing to help. Skilled workmen cut cedar wood from the forests of Lebanon and brought it to Jerusalem. Hard white building stone and beautiful marble were also brought. Men worked carefully to shape these materials, because every part had to fit perfectly. Not only the building itself, but all the furniture for the Temple was made by very clever men. They were filled with wisdom to do this special work.

After seven years the Temple was finally finished. The people gathered together to see it. They were very happy and excited to see the ark and the things that were in the tabernacle brought into the new Temple. God was pleased with Solomon's work. The cloud of His glory filled the Temple. King Solomon knelt and prayed to God before all the people to thank Him and they sang hymns to praise

Him. Sacrifices were offered and a great feast was held. Then Solomon sent everyone home, full of gladness for all God's goodness.

### **SOLOMON'S RICHES — 2 Kings 4:20-25; 10:18-21**

God blessed Solomon with riches as He had promised. So Israel became a strong and rich nation. Solomon ruled over all the land from the River Euphrates to the land of Egypt. In Israel the king built many cities. He built a grand palace for himself too and placed his throne there. It was very beautiful, made of ivory covered with gold. Golden lions stood on each side of the six steps which led up to the throne. Even the king's cups and plates were made of gold too. Many servants waited upon him. They served him and his family and all the guests at his table with plenty of fine, tasty food everyday. The ordinary people, too, lived happily and in peace. They had no enemy to fear. God had truly shown His goodness to David's son.

### **THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS SOLOMON — 1 Kings 10:1-10**

One day a strange visitor arrived in Jerusalem. She was accompanied by many servants. Her camels brought spices, gold and precious stones as presents for King Solomon. It was the Queen of Sheba! Far away in the south, she had heard of the wisdom and glory, which the God of Israel had given to him. Now she came to test Solomon with hard questions. She wanted to see how wise he really was. Coming before Solomon, she asked him everything she wanted to know. Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing which he could not tell her! When the Queen of Sheba heard his wisdom and saw the Temple and all the glory of his Kingdom, she said to the King, "What I heard in my own country about your wisdom and your deeds was true. But I could not believe it, until I had seen it for myself. So I came, and behold, half was not told me! Happy are the men and happy are the servants who stand continually before you and who listen to your wisdom. Blessed be Yahweh your God, who delights in you and has made you ruler over Israel. Yahweh loved Israel for ever and this is why you have been made King, to do judgment and justice." They gave one another precious gifts. Then the Queen returned to her own country.

During the reign of King Solomon, many people from other countries learned about the God of Israel and the wisdom and glory which He only can give.

## **LESSON FOR US**

God made Solomon a very great King, because he asked for God's wisdom. In the same way, God will make Jesus Christ become the greatest King the world has ever seen. Jesus will build God's Temple. People from all the countries of the world will come to learn the wisdom which God has given him. If we want to be with Jesus Christ in His Kingdom, we must ask God for wisdom now. This wisdom will come as we learn from God's Word, the Bible.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* There was peace (no wars) during the reign of Solomon.
- \* Solomon built the glorious temple for God which David his father had instructed him to do.
- \* God blessed Solomon and gave him great wisdom and riches.
- \* The Queen of Sheba came to see for herself the truth about King Solomon's wisdom and wealth.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Was Solomon's kingdom peaceful?
2. What did Solomon built for God?
3. Who gave Solomon his great riches?
4. Who came to visit King Solomon?
5. Why did she come to Israel?

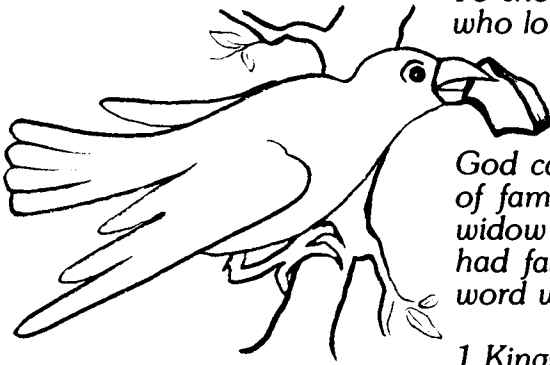
### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. Tell what you know about the Temple which Solomon built and the riches which God gave him.
7. What did the Queen of Sheba say, after she had spoken to Solomon and seen his riches?

## 4. GOD FEEDS ELIJAH

### Aim

To show how God cared for those who loved and obeyed Him.



### Synopsis

God cared for Elijah during a time of famine in Israel. He also fed a widow and her son, because she had faith and believed that God's word was true.

1 Kings 17:1-16

## THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

After the death of King Solomon, many troubles came upon the people of Israel. Ten of the tribes set up a king of their own in the northern part of the land. They were called *Israel*. The other two tribes stayed in the south around Jerusalem. They were called the Kingdom of *Judah*. So God's people were divided into two nations. This lesson is about the people in the northern part of the Kingdom of Israel.

## GOD SENDS A DROUGHT

Ahab was a wicked man. He became king in Israel. He was the most wicked king who ever ruled over the land of Israel. His wife, Queen Jezebel, had come from a strange land. She worshipped the god Baal. She tried to make the people of Israel forget Yahweh their God, and serve Baal too. She was as bad as her husband.

Before long the people began to follow their King and Queen in the worship of Baal. God was very angry. He sent His prophet Elijah to the king's palace. Elijah came to bring the king a message from God because of their wickedness in worshipping Baal. "As Yahweh God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there will not be dew or rain for years, unless I say the word," he sternly told the king. Wickedness will always be punished by God.

## **RAVENS FEED ELIJAH**

The prophet left the palace. He had to hide now from the king and queen who wanted to kill him. God told him to go to the Brook Cherith. There, in that lonely place, God would care for him. Each morning and evening ravens came to him. These big black birds brought him bread and meat to eat. He drank water from the brook, but there was no rain in all the land and after a while the brook dried up.

## **ELIJAH MEETS THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH**

However, God had not forgotten Elijah. “Get up and go to Zarephath,” God told him, “and live there. I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” When Elijah came to the gate of the city, he saw the widow gathering sticks. He came near and asked her for a drink of water and then for a piece of bread. The poor woman answered him, “As Yahweh your God lives, I have not a cake. I have only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a jar. See, I am gathering two sticks that I may go in and prepare it for me and my son. We will eat it and die.” But Elijah answered her kindly, “Fear not. Go and do as you have said, but make *me* a little cake of it *first*, and bring it to me. Afterwards, make one for yourself and for your son. For Yahweh, God of Israel, has said: The barrel of meal shall not be empty, nor the jar of oil run dry, until the day when Yahweh sends rain upon the earth!”

## **THE WIDOW'S FAITH**

The woman had only enough for *two* cakes and she must feed Elijah *first*, before herself and her son. What a great test of faith this was. God wanted to know if she really believed Him. And she did. She showed her faith in God by doing just as Elijah had told her. She found that God keeps His Word. The barrel of meal was not empty and the jar did not run dry during the time of drought. What a wonderful miracle! Elijah, the widow and her household, all had enough to eat.

## **LESSON FOR US:**

The widow believed the words which God had spoken through Elijah. Then she looked after the prophet of God *first*, before she looked after herself. If we believe God's Word and serve Him first, God will care for us as He did for the widow.

**Remember these points:—**

- \* The Kingdom of Israel became divided into Israel and Judah.
- \* God sent a drought (famine) on Israel for their sin in worshipping idols.
- \* God provided Elijah with food at the Brook Cherith.
- \* The widow of Zarephath made Elijah a cake from her last handful of meal.
- \* Because of her faith God gave her oil and meal until the drought ended.

**QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Who was the prophet, who told King Ahab that there would be no rain?
2. Why did God send this drought?
3. How did God feed Elijah at the Brook Cherith?
4. What did God tell Elijah to do, when the brook ran dry?
5. What did the widow of Zarephath give Elijah to eat?
6. What happened to the widow's flour and oil when she fed Elijah?

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

7. What happened at the Brook Cherith?
8. How did the widow of Zarephath show that she had faith in God, and how was she blessed?



## 5. ELIJAH RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON



### **Aim**

*To show how God has the power to restore life.*

### **Synopsis**

*The widow's son died. But God brought him back to life and made her very happy, for she now knew that God cared for those who loved Him.*

*1 Kings 17:17-24.*

### **FOOD AT ZAREPHATH**

The famine that God sent continued over the whole land. The earth became dry and hard. All the springs and rivers dried up. Food was very hard to get. But in the widow's house at Zarephath, God provided food. There, far away from the wicked king and queen of Israel, Elijah lived in safety with the widow and her son.

### **THE WIDOW'S SON DIES**

One day, however, great sadness came to the house at Zarephath. The widow's son became sick and died. The poor widow was very sad. Why had her son died? In her sorrow, she turned to the prophet Elijah. She could not understand why this had happened. Gently Elijah said to her, "Give me your son."

### **THE WIDOW'S SON LIVES AGAIN**

Elijah lifted the child out of his mother's arms and carried him carefully to the upper room where he lived. He laid him upon his own bed. He too, was full of sorrow and cried out unto God, "O Yahweh my God, have you brought evil upon the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?"

Then he stretched himself upon the child three times. Again he turned to God in prayer. "O Yahweh my God, I pray thee, let this

child live again.” God listened to Elijah’s voice. The child began to breathe again. He came to life! With his heart now full of joy, Elijah brought the child down to his mother, “See, your son lives!” he cried.

## **THE WIDOW’S JOY**

Imagine how happy that widow was now! “Now I know that you are a man of God,” she said. “The word of Yahweh which you speak is true.” In her happiness, the widow remembered that God had done this miracle and she gave praise and thanks to Him.

## **LESSON FOR US:**

God has the power to bring the dead back to life again. When Jesus returns, he will give *eternal* life to those who have loved and obeyed him, even though they may have died. Elijah himself will be raised from the dead and live again.

## **Remember these points:—**

- \* The famine still continued because of the people’s wickedness.
- \* The widow’s son became ill and died.
- \* Elijah prays to God to help. God answered Elijah’s prayer.
- \* The widow thanks God for His goodness.

## **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Where did Elijah live during the drought?
2. What happened to the widow’s son?
3. What did Elijah do?
4. How did God answer Elijah’s prayer?
5. What did the widow say when her son was made alive again?

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. Elijah lived at Zarephath with a widow. Tell how the widow’s son was brought back to life again.
7. When Jesus returns, what will he do for all those who have loved and obeyed Him.

## 6. THE CONTEST ON MT. CARMEL



### **Aim**

*To show that God is the one and only God.*

### **Synopsis**

*Elijah proved before all the people of Israel that Yahweh is the only true God. Then God in His mercy sent rain to end the famine.*

*1 Kings 18:1, 17-46*

### **ELIJAH RETURNS TO ISRAEL**

For three and a half years, the drought was over the land. Then God commanded Elijah, "Go and show yourself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth." Elijah must now leave the shelter of the widow's house at Zarephath and come back to the land of Israel. Straight away, Elijah obeyed. King Ahab and the prophet of God at last met face to face. "You are here, you, who troubles Israel," Ahab said to Elijah. Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house. You have left following Yahweh and have followed Baal." Elijah then told the king to gather the children of Israel and the prophets of Baal to Mount Carmel.

### **ON MOUNT CARMEL**

High on Mount Carmel, near the Great Sea, the people of Israel gathered together. The 450 prophets of Baal stood before them. Elijah stood alone as the prophet of Yahweh and spoke to the people. They must decide who was the true God. "If Yahweh is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him." Elijah said that the prophets of Baal should choose a bullock, cut it in pieces and lay it upon the wood of their altar. Elijah would do the same on Yahweh's altar. The prophets of Baal would call to their god, and Elijah would call to his God. The God who sent fire to burn the sacrifice on the altar would be the true God. All the people agreed to this test.

## **BAAL DOES NOT ANSWER**

The prophets of Baal prepared their sacrifice first. All was ready. They called out to their god, "O Baal hear us!" But, of course there was no answer. They cried out louder. They leapt around their altar. Still there was no answer! At noon, Elijah began to mock them, "Cry louder: he is a god! Perhaps he is talking, or he is hunting, or he is on a journey: or perhaps he is asleep and you have to wake him up." Now the prophets became anxious. They shouted! They danced! They cut themselves! But all was in vain. Their god gave no reply. Baal was a dumb idol. He could not do a thing.

## **YAHWEH ANSWERS BY FIRE (Read 1 Kings 18:30-39 Aloud in class)**

Evening had come. And now Elijah the prophet prepared to call upon Yahweh, the true and living God. Using twelve stones, he built an altar. First, the wood was placed on it. Then the bullock was laid out in pieces. A deep trench was dug around the altar. Elijah ordered 12 barrels of water to be poured over the sacrifice. The bullock, wood and stones were all very wet and the trench was filled with water.

The lone prophet prayed. "Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known today that You are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Hear me, O Yahweh, hear me, that these people may know that You are God and that You have turned their heart back again." Straight away fire came down from heaven. The sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust and the water were all burnt up. The people, seeing this, shouted, "Yahweh He is God." So God answered the prayer of His faithful servant, Elijah.

## **BAAL'S PROPHETS ARE KILLED**

But the contest was not over yet on Mount Carmel. These prophets of Baal had been leading the people away from God. They must be stopped. "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape," Elijah ordered the people. The prophets of Baal were taken to the brook Kishon where they were all put to death. This taught Israel that God must be worshipped only in the *right* way.

## **GOD SENDS RAIN**

God had shown the children of Israel that He was the only true God. He had shown them His great power and His anger. Now He

was to show His mercy. Seven times Elijah prayed to God for rain. After the seventh time, a little cloud came up over the sea. It looked no larger than a man's hand. But soon the heaven grew black with clouds. Then came the rain. The famine had ended. God had once more answered the prayer of Elijah.

**Remember these points:—**

- \* After 3½ years famine God was going to send rain.
- \* Elijah took all Israel to Mt. Carmel to prove who was the true God.
- \* Baal was seen as a dumb idol, but Elijah was answered by God.
- \* The evil prophets of Baal were destroyed.
- \* God sent rain because of Elijah's prayer.

**QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Why did Elijah leave the widow's house at Zarephath?
2. Where did Elijah take the people to prove who was the true God?
3. What happened when the prophets of Baal cried to him?
4. Evening had come, Baal had not answered! What did Elijah do?
5. How did God answer Elijah's prayer?
6. What did Elijah do to the prophets of Baal?

**Additional Questions 7 to 8 years**

7. Tell what happened on Mount Carmel.
8. Why didn't Baal answer when the 450 prophets called him?

## 7. ELIJAH AND THE STILL SMALL VOICE

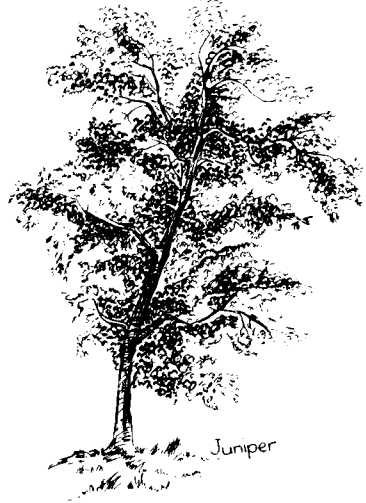
### **Aim**

*To show God is kind, and a loving Heavenly Father who understands the weaknesses of His servants. But even when the way is difficult God's work must be done.*

### **Synopsis**

*God taught Elijah that his work for Him in Israel must continue, even in times of evil. He was not the only one in Israel who loved God and wanted to obey Him.*

1 Kings 19



### **JEZEBEL IS ANGRY**

On Mount Carmel, Elijah had proved to all Israel that Yahweh was the true God. He had killed all the prophets of Baal with the sword. King Ahab brought back the news to Queen Jezebel. She was very angry. Baal was her god and she wanted all Israel to worship him. She sent a terrible message to Elijah. "May the gods kill me and worse, if by this time tomorrow, I do not take your life as you have taken theirs." So Elijah fled into the desert away from the wicked queen.

### **GOD PROVIDES FOR ELIJAH**

Tired, sad and lonely, he sat down under a juniper tree and prayed that he might die. Then he went to sleep under the shade of the tree. But God cared for Elijah. He did not want him to die. An angel of God woke him and gave him a cake to eat and water to drink. Elijah ate and drank and fell asleep again. Once more the angel woke him to give him more food. "Arise and eat", he said "for the journey is too great for thee." When Elijah ate this, he felt strong enough to go without food again for 40 days and 40 nights.

### **ELIJAH GOES TO MOUNT HOREB**

Elijah travelled through the desert until he came to Mount

Horeb. There he found a cave to shelter in. Suddenly a voice from God asked him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah answered, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God. For the children of Israel have left your covenant, thrown down your altars and slain your prophets with the sword; and I, I only, am left; and now they want to kill me."

## **GOD IS IN THE STILL SMALL VOICE**

God told Elijah to stand upon the mountain. He saw an angel pass before him. Then suddenly a great wind blew upon the mountain, smashing the rocks; but God was not in the wind.

Then came an earthquake; but God was not in the earthquake.

Then came a fire; but God was not in the fire.

Then came a still small voice, a gentle whisper. Elijah heard the quiet voice and wrapped his face in his cloak for he knew that God was there. Then Elijah went and stood in the entrance of the cave. Again God said, "What are you doing here Elijah?" Elijah replied as before, "I am the only one left." But God told Elijah that he was to go back and finish his work in Israel. He *was not the only person* left who loved God. God told him, "There are still 7,000 men in Israel who serve God faithfully." One of these faithful men was Elisha. He was to be the next prophet of Israel when Elijah had gone. So Elijah must go and anoint Elisha.

By the lesson of the still small voice, God taught Elijah that he was not alone and he still had work to do. He must go back and gently and quietly help those in Israel who still loved God.

## **ELISHA IS CHOSEN**

So Elijah left the desert and went to find Elisha. Elisha was ploughing in the field with 12 yoke of oxen. As Elijah passed by, he placed his mantle (or cloak) on Elisha. Leaving the oxen, Elisha ran after Elijah and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow you." Elisha then killed some of his oxen and made a fire by burning the plough which he had been using. When the oxen had been cooked, he called the people together to eat. In this way, he showed the people that his work as a farmer was finished. Now he had been chosen to work for God. So Elisha followed Elijah and became his servant. The work of God in Israel went on.

## **LESSON FOR US:**

When we are in trouble we must always remember that God will care for us. We must always do His will even when the way seems difficult. Our work is often a humble one, like listening to God's still small voice in the Bible.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah.
- \* Elijah fled to the wilderness — God cared for His servant.
- \* At Mt. Horeb God showed Himself not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire but in the still small voice.
- \* Elijah was told to go back to the people of Israel, and gently and quietly help those who still loved and worshipped God.
- \* Elisha was chosen to work for God.

## **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

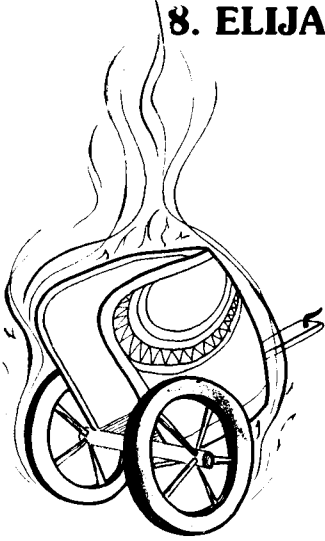
1. What did Jezebel say when she knew that Elijah had killed the prophets of Baal?
2. What happened when Elijah was asleep under the Juniper tree in the desert? What happened on Mt. Horeb?
3. How did God show Himself to Elijah? Was it in the wind, in the earthquake, in the fire, or in the still small voice?
4. Who was to be the next prophet when Elijah had gone?
5. What was Elisha doing when Elijah found him?

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. Why did Elijah run away to the desert and to Mount Horeb?
7. Elijah left Mount Horeb to find Elisha . . . Go on and tell the story.



## 8. ELIJAH AND THE FIERY CHARIOT



### **Aim**

*To show that God was with the prophet Elisha, as he had been with Elijah.*

### **Synopsis**

*God never leaves His people without a teacher. He chose Elisha to be His prophet when Elijah was taken into heaven.*

*2 Kings 2:1-15.*

### **ELISHA WILL NOT LEAVE ELIJAH**

God had chosen Elisha to help Elijah the prophet, so that when Elijah had gone, Elisha could carry on his work of teaching the people about God.

One day Elisha was walking with Elijah out of the town of Gilgal. Elijah told Elisha to stay at Gilgal, for God had sent him on to Bethel. But Elisha loved Elijah. He knew that God would soon take Elijah away. Elisha answered, "I will not leave thee," for he wanted to stay with him as long as he could. So they walked on to Bethel together.

At Bethel, some men called "the sons of the Prophets" came to meet Elisha. They said, "Do you know that God will take away your master, Elijah, today?" "Yes," answered Elisha, "I know, be quiet."

Then Elijah again told Elisha to stay there because God had sent him to Jericho. Elisha replied, "I will not leave thee." So they both walked down to Jericho. The sons of the Prophets who lived at Jericho also came out to meet Elisha "Do you know that God will take away your master today," they asked Elisha. Elisha said the same as he had said before — "Yes, I know; be quiet."

Yet once again, Elijah told Elisha to stay there, for God had sent him to Jordan. Elisha still would not part from Elijah and answered as before, "I will not leave thee." Then 50 men of the sons of the Prophets came out. They stood some distance away to watch what would happen when Elijah and Elisha came to the River Jordan.

They saw Elijah take his mantle (or cloak) from his shoulders. He rolled it up and hit the water with it. The water divided, and the two men were able to cross over on a path of dry ground!

### **ELISHA ASKS A HARD THING**

When they had gone over Jordan, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken away from thee.” Now Elisha wanted to do his best as the prophet of God in the place of Elijah. So he said, “Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.” Elisha had asked a hard thing but Elijah told him that God would give him what he had asked for, if he saw Elijah taken away.

### **GOD TAKES ELIJAH AWAY**

As they walked on, talking together, a chariot and horses of fire came between them, and Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind into the sky out of sight. Elisha never saw him again. But Elisha had seen Elijah taken away by God’s power. So he knew that he would be given what he had asked for, a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

### **GOD GIVES ELIJAH’S SPIRIT-POWER TO ELISHA**

Elijah’s cloak had fallen on the ground. Elisha picked it up and went back to the River Jordan. He struck the water with the cloak and cried out to the God of Elijah. The waters parted, just as they had done for Elijah. So Elisha walked across. When the sons of the prophets, who had been watching, saw this, they said, “The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.” So they came and bowed down before him. They knew that Elisha was their new teacher.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

Just as God never left His people without a prophet to teach them, so today He provides us with a teacher — His Word, the Bible.

#### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Elisha loved Elijah and knew God would soon take Elijah away, so he refused to leave him.
- \* Elijah parted the water of the River Jordan by the power of God.
- \* Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (power).
- \* A chariot and horses of fire part Elijah and Elisha.

- \* Elijah is taken up by a whirlwind.
- \* Elisha saw Elijah taken away, therefore he knew he would receive the “double portion” of his spirit.
- \* Elisha took Elijah’s mantle as his own and parted the Jordan in the same way as Elijah had done showing the spirit of Elijah rested with him.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Elisha did not want to leave Elijah. What did he say each time Elijah told him to stay behind?
2. How did Elijah and Elisha cross the River Jordan?
3. What did Elisha ask Elijah to give him?
4. How would Elisha be sure of getting this gift?
5. When Elisha picked up Elijah’s cloak, what did he do with it?
6. When the sons of the prophets saw what Elisha did with Elijah’s cloak, what did they say?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

7. Tell what happened after Elijah and Elisha reached the River Jordan.

## 9. THE KIND WOMAN OF SHUNEM

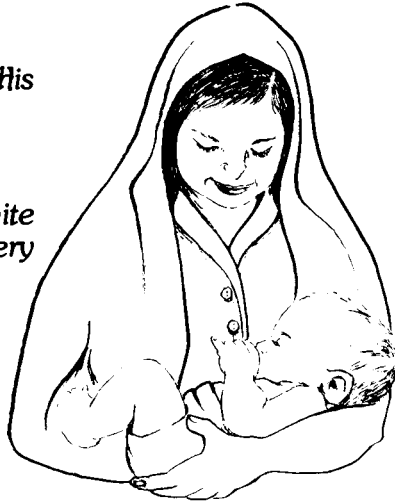
### **Aim**

*God will bless those who help His servants.*

### **Synopsis**

*God rewarded the Shunammite woman because she had been very kind to His prophet Elisha.*

*2 Kings 4:8-17*



### **ELISHA MEETS THE KIND WOMAN**

After Elijah had left him, Elisha carried on his work. He went from place to place teaching the people about God.

One day, Elisha came to the town of Shunem. A kind lady there asked him to come and have a meal at her house. Then every time after that, when he passed through Shunem, he would go and visit the lady. He would have a meal with her and her husband, and rest there a while. (Because the lady lived in Shunem, she is called a Shunammite).

### **THE LADY MAKES A BEDROOM FOR ELISHA**

One day the Shunammite woman thought it would be nice if Elisha had his own room because he passed by so often. So she said to her husband, "This man is doing God's work. So let us build a room for him." They built a special little room. They put in it a bed, a table, a stool and a lampstand. Every time Elisha came to Shunem, he would have his own little room to go to.

### **ELISHA REWARDS THE WOMAN'S KINDNESS**

One day, Elisha and his servant Gehazi, came to Shunem and found the room all ready. So Elisha was able to lie down and rest on his own bed. As he rested he thought how very kind the lady was. He told Gehazi to go and call her to him. When the lady came, Elisha

said, “You have been so careful to look after us; is there anything I can do for you? Would you like me to speak to the King or to the captain of the army for you?” But she did not want any special favours. She lived among her own people and was quite content.

For a moment Elisha did not know what he could do, and so he asked Gehazi, “What then is to be done for her?” Gehazi said that the kind lady did not have any children. So he called her in again and Elisha told her that she and her husband would have a little baby boy to love and cuddle. The lady was very surprised. She could hardly believe it; but, sure enough, a baby boy was born to them and how pleased they all were! What a lovely present for the kind lady! God had rewarded her for her kindness.

## **LESSON FOR US**

The lady of Shunem knew that Elisha was doing the work of God. So she wanted to help him as much as she could. Like the lady of Shunem, we should always be kind and thoughtful towards others, especially to those who are doing the work of God. God will reward such actions.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Elisha stayed with the kind woman of Shunem.
- \* They built him a special room.
- \* Because the woman of Shunem had shown kindness to Elisha God rewarded her with a son.

## **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. There was a kind lady who helped Elisha. What was the name of the town where she lived?
2. What did the kind lady and her husband do for Elisha?
3. What did Elisha say the lady would be given because of her kindness?
4. Did Elisha’s words come true?

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTION 7 to 8 years**

5. Elisha travelled about as he did God’s work. He often stayed at Shunem. Tell about the Shunammite woman’s kindness to Elisha, and how God rewarded her.

## 10. ELISHA HELPS THE WOMAN OF SHUNEM

### Aim

*God is the giver of Life and will answer the prayers of the faithful.*

### Synopsis

*God is the Giver of life. He gave back life to the son of the Shunamite woman, because she had faith in Him.*

*2 Kings 4:18-37*



### THE BOY DIES

God had given the Shunammite woman and her husband the wonderful gift of a baby son. Now he had grown into a little boy. One day, the boy went out into the fields to his father, who was with the reapers. The sun must have been very hot on that summer day, for it made the boy feel ill. He went to his father and said, "My head! My head!" His father saw that he was very ill and told a servant to carry him quickly home to his mother. She nursed him on her lap until midday, trying to make him feel better, but he became worse and died.

### THE LADY GOES TO ELISHA

Now, the Shunammite woman knew that God had given her this son, for God is the Giver of life. She knew that the only one who could help her now was Elisha, the man of God. She took her son up to Elisha's room and laid him on the bed. Then she shut the door and came out and called her husband. She asked him for one of the servants, and an ass to ride on. She wanted to go very quickly to the man of God, Elisha. "Why do you want to go today? It's not a special feast day or sabbath," her husband said. She did not tell him that their little boy had died. She just said, "It shall be well." Then she saddled the ass and set off for Mount Carmel. "Go as fast as you can and don't slow down unless I tell you," she told her servant. After

hurrying like this for a long way, at last they came near to Mount Carmel. Elisha was there with his servant, Gehazi, and he saw her in the distance. He told Gehazi to run and meet her and ask her if everything was well with her family. "All is well," was all she said, as she hurried past him.

When she came up to Elisha on the hill, she fell down before him and caught hold of his feet. Gehazi was going to push her away, but Elisha said, "Leave her alone, for she is very worried about something, and God has not told me what it is." Then the woman spoke to Elisha and said, "Did I ask you to give me a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?"

### **GEHAZI GOES TO THE CHILD**

Elisha knew at once that there was something wrong with her son. He told Gehazi, "Take my staff, go very quickly to the house and lay the staff upon the face of the child." But the Shunammite woman only wanted Elisha, for he was the man of God. So she said to him, "I will not leave thee," and Elisha went with her. As they travelled they met Gehazi on his way back. He said that he had laid Elisha's staff upon the child, but he had not woken up or stirred.

### **ELISHA GOES TO THE CHILD**

Elisha came to the house and found the child lying on his bed. He was dead. So he shut the door and prayed to God to make the boy live again. Then Elisha lay on the child. He put his mouth on the boy's mouth, his eyes on the boy's eyes, and his hands on the boy's hands. The boy's cold little body began to grow warm. Then Elisha got up and walked once through the house. When he came back, he stretched himself out on the boy again. Suddenly, the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. The little boy was alive again! God had answered Elisha's prayer.

Elisha sent Gehazi to call the Shunammite woman. "Take up thy son," he said when she came in. Imagine how thankful she was now for his help! She fell down at Elisha's feet and bowed herself to the ground to thank God. Then she took up her son and went out. How happy and thankful she must have been to have her boy alive again! And what a wonderful thing God had done — to make someone who had died, alive and well.

## LESSON FOR US

The woman believed that Elisha could help her, for she knew that God was with him. God answered the prayer of His servant Elisha, and will answer the prayers of all those who believe and obey Him. Nothing is too hard for God. He can even raise the dead. Jesus will do this work for God when he returns to the earth.

### Remember these points:—

- \* The son of the Shunammite woman became ill and died.
- \* The woman had great faith and trust in Elisha for she knew God was with him.
- \* Gehazi was unable to bring the boy to life.
- \* Elisha through prayer to God restores the boy to life again.
- \* The Shunammite woman praised and thanked God.

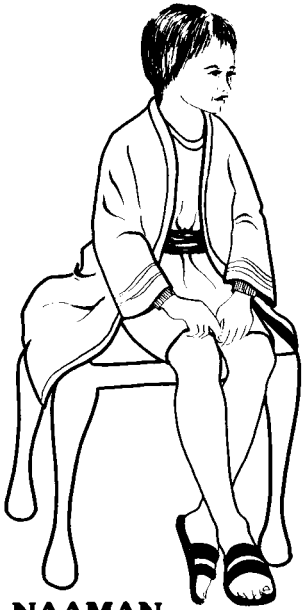
### QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years

1. What happened to the son of the Shunammite woman?
2. What did the lady do with her son when he died?
3. Where did the Shunammite lady go when her son died?
4. (a) What did Elisha tell Gehazi to do?  
(b) Did the boy come alive again when Gehazi went to him?
5. (a) What did Elisha do when he reached the Shunammite's house?  
(b) Who made the boy come alive again?  
(c) What did the Shunammite lady do then?

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years

6. Why did the Shunammite woman go to Elisha when her son died?
7. What did Elisha do to make the boy come alive again?





**NAAMAN**

## 11. NAAMAN THE LEPER

### **Aim**

*To show the importance of obeying God.*

### **Synopsis**

*Naaman was healed because he humbled himself to obey God's prophet, Elisha.*

*2 Kings 5:1-16*

Far away, in the land of Syria, lived a man called Naaman. He was the captain of the army of the King of Syria and the King loved him. He was well known in the land of Syria because he was very brave. But Naaman had leprosy, a terrible disease which covered his body with nasty sores. No one would go near a person with leprosy.

### **A LITTLE GIRL HELPS NAAMAN**

In the house of Naaman lived a little servant girl. She had been taken captive by the Syrians out of the land of Israel, now she waited upon Naaman's wife. She did not forget her own people in Israel or the great prophet of God, Elisha, who lived there. One day she said to Naaman's wife, "I wish my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria. He would cure him of his leprosy." The little girl believed that Elisha could heal Naaman.

When the King of Syria was told what the little girl had said, he decided to send a letter to the King of Israel. Naaman set out with the letter, and also took with him a very costly present of gold, silver and clothing.

### **NAAMAN COMES TO THE KING OF ISRAEL**

The King of Israel opened the letter from the King of Syria. It read, "With this letter I have sent Naaman, my servant, to you, that

you may heal him of his leprosy.” The King was amazed. Only God could cure a man of leprosy! He thought that the King of Syria was looking for an excuse to make war on Israel. He was angry. He had forgotten that he could ask help from Elisha, the prophet of God. He did not even think of praying to God either.

Now Elisha heard about the letter. He sent a message to the King of Israel, “Send Naaman to me and he will find out that there is a prophet in Israel.”

### **NAAMAN COMES TO ELISHA**

So Naaman came in his chariot to see Elisha. The great captain stood at the prophet’s door. But Elisha did not come out to meet him. Instead, he sent a servant with the simple command, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be healed again and you will be clean!

When Naaman heard these words, he became angry. He went away and said, “I thought, he will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of his God and heal me. Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Jordan?” So he turned around and angrily went away. Then his servants wisely said to him, “If the prophet had ordered you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much better to obey when he simply says to you, ‘wash and be clean?’ ”

### **NAAMAN OBEYS AND IS HEALED**

Naaman listened to the sensible words of his servants. He decided to forget how important he was. He would humble himself and obey the words of the prophet. So Naaman went down to the River Jordan. He dipped himself seven times in the River, just as Elisha had said. To his great joy his skin became clean again, soft and smooth like the skin of a little child. He was healed!

### **NAAMAN BELIEVES IN THE GOD OF ISRAEL**

Thankfully, Naaman went back to Elisha’s house. Together with his men and his chariot he again stood before the prophet. But this time he humbly said to Elisha, “Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.” Naaman had now come to believe in the God of Israel. He had obeyed God’s prophet and God had healed him.

To show his thanks, Naaman wanted to give Elisha the presents

which he had brought with him. But Elisha would take nothing. It was not *he* who had cured Naaman, but *God!*

So, Naaman returned to the land of Syria. He had humbled himself to do what God had commanded. Because of this, he had been cured of his terrible disease.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

From this lesson we learn how important it is to obey. Naaman had to obey *God* and not just do what he thought would be right. So children must obey those who tell them what God wants them to do. We must grow up to obey God. He will then heal us from sin and at last, from death.

This lesson reminds us of baptism, for Naaman was saved by washing as Elisha, God's prophet, had commanded. Those who want to be saved from death must be baptised in water as God has commanded.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Naaman had leprosy; he was captain of the army of the King of Assyria.
- \* A faithful little Jewish maid helps.
- \* Elisha's message to Naaman.
- \* Naaman cured, praises and worships the God of Israel.
- \* If we want to be saved from death, we must obey God's command and be baptised.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Who was the captain of the army of the King of Syria who had leprosy?
2. Who knew where he could go to be cured?
3. Where did Naaman go when the King of Israel could not help him?
4. What did Elisha tell Naaman to do?
5. Why did Naaman not obey Elisha at first?
6. What happened when Naaman did obey Elisha?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

7. Tell how Naaman was cured of his leprosy.
8. Why did Elisha refuse to take the presents from Naaman?

## 12. JONAH THE PROPHET

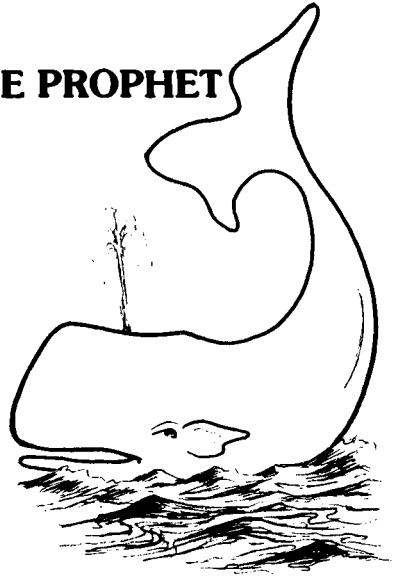
### Aim

*To show that God can always see us; we cannot hide from Him as Jonah tried to do.*

### Synopsis

*God sent Jonah to Nineveh, but he did not want to go. So he ran away. He soon learned that no one can hide from God.*

*Jonah 1,  
(Under Eight Instructor 10)*



## GOD SPEAKS TO JONAH

Long ago, there was a man named Jonah, who lived in the land of Israel. He was a prophet. God spoke to him and said, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and warn the people that I will punish them, for they are very wicked!"

## JONAH RUNS AWAY

Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. They were the enemies of Israel, and he did not want God to save them. He wanted God to destroy them instead. So he decided to run away from God. Then he would not have to do what God had told him. He went to Joppa, a town on the sea coast. There he found a ship ready to sail to Tarshish, far away across the Great Sea. He paid his fare, got on the ship and then lay down for a long sleep. The ship soon sailed away. But Jonah was not hidden from God. God saw what he was doing. He sent a great storm and a terrible wind. The ship was tossed about so much by the storm, that it was in danger of being broken up. All the sailors became frightened. So they cried out to their gods for help. They threw all the ship's heavy load into the sea, so that the ship would be lighter and ride the waves better. But the storm only grew worse!

## **JONAH IS FOUND OUT**

While the storm raged, the captain of the ship found Jonah still fast asleep in the ship. He woke Jonah and said to him, "Why are you asleep, while we are all in trouble? Get up and call upon your God, to see if He will help us!" The sailors decided to cast lots to see who was bringing all this trouble upon them. The lot fell upon Jonah. So the sailors asked him, "Tell us, what country are you from? Who are your people? Why are you bringing all this trouble upon us?"

## **JONAH EXPLAINS**

Jonah told them, "I am a Hebrew, from the land of Israel. I worship Yahweh, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." Jonah told the sailors that he had tried to run away from God. When they heard that, they became more afraid than ever. "Tell us," they said, "what we can do with you so that the sea will become calm." Jonah told them what to do. "Throw me into the sea," he said, "then it will be calm. I know that God has sent this storm because of me."

## **GOD SAVES JONAH**

The sailors did not want to throw Jonah into the sea. They tried all the harder to bring the ship to the shore. But they could not, for the storm raged strongly. At last they decided to pray to Jonah's God for mercy, and to throw Jonah into the sea as he had said. As soon as they had picked him up and thrown him into the water, the storm immediately stopped. All was quiet and calm again. They then knew that Jonah's God was the true God. Now God did not really want Jonah to die. He had a great fish come and swallow him. Jonah went down into the deep darkness of the fish's belly. And God left him in there for three whole days and three whole nights!

## **JONAH REPENTS**

While Jonah was in the big fish's belly, he thought about how strong God was in the storm, and how kind God was to save him from being drowned. He prayed earnestly to God. He promised God that he would always do what He commanded. He would never try to run away from God again. He would love and serve Yahweh as his Saviour. God heard his earnest prayer and told the fish to spit Jonah up upon the seashore. Then a second time, God spoke to Jonah

saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and warn them to turn from their evil ways.” This time Jonah was quick to obey. He went to Nineveh and warned them that God would overthrow the city in forty days. The people of Nineveh believed God’s words which Jonah, his prophet spoke. From the king down to the common people they became very sorry for their sins. They changed their ways to live better lives. When God saw this, He did not destroy them.

So both Jonah and the people of Nineveh learned of the power and the mercy of God, who wants all people to be saved.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

We cannot hide from God. We should always remember that wherever we are God sees us. He even knows our thoughts. So we must be careful to obey Him. He always knows what is right and if we obey Him, He will bless us.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Jonah was told to go to Nineveh to tell the people to change their wicked ways.
- \* He tried to run away from God.
- \* The Storm — Jonah is thrown into the Sea.
- \* He was inside the belly of a great fish 3 days and 3 nights.
- \* Jonah obeys God and tells the people of Nineveh to change their ways.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Why did God want Jonah to go to Nineveh?
2. What did Jonah do instead of obeying God?
3. What happened after the ship set out on its journey?
4. What did Jonah tell the sailors when they woke him up during the storm?
5. What happened to Jonah when he was thrown into the sea?
6. What did Jonah do when God told him to go to Nineveh the second time?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

7. Tell the story of Jonah.
8. What did Jonah learn about God from all that happened to him?

## 13. HEZEKIAH — JUDAH'S GREATEST KING

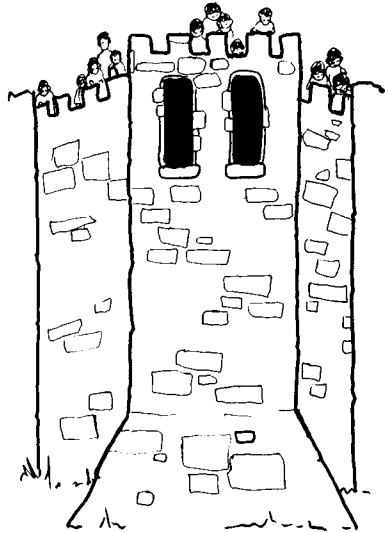
### Aim

God will help all those who put their trust in Him.

### Synopsis

Hezekiah wanted to please God. As soon as he became king he had the Temple cleaned and taught the people to serve Yahweh again.

2 Chron. 29, 30, 32:1-22



### EARLY LIFE OF HEZEKIAH

Hezekiah was born prince over the Kingdom of Judah. His father King Ahaz, had been a most wicked king. He had worshipped idols and taught God's people to do things which God hated. He had shut the doors of the Temple, so that no one worshipped there, and had cut in pieces the holy vessels. God was so angry with this evil man that He sent Isaiah His prophet to him with a warning. But the king would not take any notice of Isaiah. So God punished King Ahaz and the people by sending enemies into the land. All this made the people very unhappy.

As Hezekiah grew to a young man, he could see what wicked things were being done. Unlike his father, he listened carefully to Isaiah's words. He made up his mind to obey God. He loved God and wanted to please Him.

### HEZEKIAH BECOMES KING

When his father died, Hezekiah became king over Judah in Jerusalem. He was 25 years old. Now he could begin his plans to lead the people back to God.

On the very first day of his reign he opened the doors of God's Temple again. He called the priests and the Levites and told them to make themselves and the Temple ready. Hezekiah wanted everyone to be able to worship God again and to learn of Him. So the Levites

cleaned out the Temple. There was dust and dirt everywhere. It took eight days of hard work to get the Temple and everything in it ready.

At last the work was finished. Hezekiah called all the people together. They gladly promised to serve God properly. This made the king very happy.

## **THE GREAT PASSOVER FEAST**

Then Hezekiah decided to keep God's Passover Feast. It was such a long time since it had been held properly. Messengers were sent to all Israel asking them to come to Jerusalem for the Passover. Most of the people from the northern kingdom of Israel just laughed at the messengers. They would rather stay home and serve their idols. But some of them did humble their hearts and came to worship Yahweh the true God. So it was that in the second month of Hezekiah's reign a great crowd gathered in Jerusalem to keep the feast of Passover.

First of all, the idols that were found in the city were destroyed. Then the Passover lambs were killed and they kept the feast for seven days. The people were happy before God, as the Levites taught them God's Word. But at the end of seven days the people did not want to go home! It was a long time since they had heard God's Law. They had only heard of altars and other evil things before Hezekiah became king. So now they wanted to keep the feast for another seven days and learn more of what the Levites had to teach them. They all promised to serve God faithfully from now on. There had not been such a happy time in Jerusalem since the days of David and Solomon.

## **HEZEKIAH IS TESTED BY GOD**

For fourteen years Hezekiah reigned in Jerusalem both wisely and well. He worked with all his heart to do what was right and true. But God was about to test Hezekiah and his people. The hated Assyrians marched into the land of Judah. Everyone was very afraid. Many nations had fallen before them. How could the little kingdom of Judah escape? Many people fled behind the high walls of Jerusalem for safety, as one city after another fell to the Assyrians.

Inside Jerusalem, Hezekiah trusted in God. But at the same time, he made the city ready. He also told his captains, "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid of the king of Assyria and his great army. We have a greater One with us, than he has with him. He has only an



army of men, but we have Yahweh our God to help us.” The people were helped very much by these words.

## **THE ASSYRIANS COME TO JERUSALEM**

Before long the Assyrians marched to the walls of Jerusalem. The people crowded on the walls to see the hated enemy. The captain of the Assyrians shouted at them, “Whom are you trusting in? Yahweh cannot save you from the king of Assyria. You will die from lack of food and water. Don’t listen to Hezekiah. None of the gods of the other nations have saved their people out of our hands. So do not think that your God will save you.”

But the people on the wall had been told not to answer. Their king, Hezekiah, and God’s prophet, Isaiah, were praying to God. The king prayed, “Save us out of the hand of the King of Assyria, that all kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou, Yahweh, art God alone.”

## **GOD DESTROYS THE ASSYRIANS**

God heard their prayers. That night, He sent an angel into the camp of Assyria. This angel killed 185,000 men during one night. So God *did* fight on the side of those who trusted in Him. The proud and wicked king of Assyria who had mocked at Yahweh, went back to his own land in shame. Soon after, when he was going to worship his idols, his own sons came in and killed him. So God punished him for his blasphemy — that is, for saying things about God that are not true and laughing at Him.

God had tested Hezekiah and the people of Judah and had found that they really did trust in Him.

## **LESSON FOR US**

Hezekiah made up his mind to obey God while he was only young. So if we learn about God now we will grow to love Him and want to please Him.

If we are in trouble, we know that we can always trust in God. He will answer our prayers in the way He thinks best and will guide us safely through life. He will care for us now when the world about us is so evil. And when Christ returns he will rid the earth of all those who mock the true and living God.

## **Remember these points:—**

- \* King Ahaz was a wicked man who worshipped idols.

- \* His son Hezekiah, desires to serve and obey Yahweh.
- \* He cleans the Temple.
- \* He invites all Israel to come to Jerusalem for the Passover feast.
- \* All Idols destroyed.
- \* God sends the Assyrian army to test Hezekiah's faith.
- \* Hezekiah encourages the people to put their faith in God.
- \* Isaiah and Hezekiah seek God's help.
- \* God answered Hezekiah and delivered Israel.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. What were some of the wicked things which Hezekiah's father, King Ahaz, did?
2. What did Hezekiah do as soon as he became King?
3. What was the feast that Hezekiah asked all Israel to come to?
4. Why did the people want the feast to go on for another seven days?
5. Who marched into the land of Judah and tried to capture Jerusalem?
6. What did Hezekiah do when the Assyrians came to the walls of Jerusalem?
7. How did God save Hezekiah and his people?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

8. What did Hezekiah say to his people that made them trust in God?
9. What did the captain of the Assyrians call out to the people on the walls of Jerusalem?
10. What lessons do we learn from this story to help us grow up to please God?

## 14. JOSIAH AND THE BOOK OF THE LAW

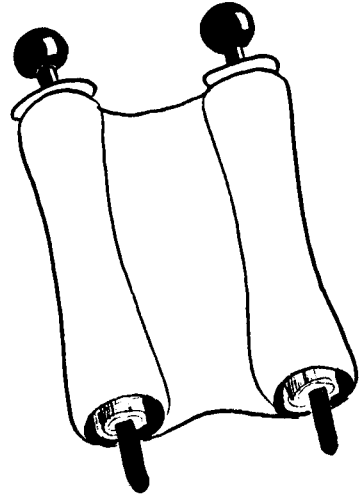
### Aim

*To show how a young king was able to rule wisely because he loved and obeyed God.*

### Synopsis

*God was kind to Josiah because he humbled himself when he heard His word. The people heard God's word too, but they did not really love God with all their heart.*

*2 Kings 22*



### THE BOY KING

Hezekiah died. His son reigned after him and then his grandson Amon. They taught the people to worship idols once more. The Temple of God was dirty and damaged. Josiah was the next king to reign in that southern Kingdom of Judah. His father, Amon, had been an evil king. But his mother, Jedidah, seems to have been a good woman, who carefully taught the little boy about the true God of Israel. He became King when he was only 8 years old.

When he was still only a young man, King Josiah decided to lead the people back to God. He gave orders that no idols were to be left in all the land. Setting out from Jerusalem, he made sure that the people obeyed him. The people busily set to work breaking up the idols, which they used to bow down to before. Evil priests were killed and their altars were destroyed. But the people did not *really* love God. They only destroyed the idols because they were afraid of the young King.

### THE BOOK OF THE LAW IS FOUND

When the work of destroying all the idols was finished, the next work was to repair the Temple of God. Josiah, now 26 years old, sent orders to all his people. Money was needed for the repairs to the Temple. Again, the people obeyed the King and gave money for the

work. The doors of the Temple were opened and workmen began to repair the ruins; carpenters, builders and stoneworkers all helped.

One day, the High Priest found a scroll in the Temple. It was the Book of the Law of the Lord. For many years, it had been forgotten and lost. The High Priest gave the scroll to Shaphan the scribe, and he read it. Shaphan came to the king to tell him how the work was going. Then he said, "The priest has found this book," and he showed the scroll to the king and read it to him.

## **THE KING HUMBLER HIMSELF BEFORE GOD**

The King listened carefully as Shaphan read the Book of the Law. He heard of the Laws which God had given to Moses and that the people had promised that they would always obey these Laws. He heard the warnings of what would happen if the people disobeyed God. Terrible curses would come upon them. Shaphan read the following words:—

"Yahweh shall bring you and your King which you shall set over you, unto a nation which you have not known. And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb and a byword, among all the peoples where Yahweh shall lead you away."

As curse after curse was read, the King became very worried. He knew that the people had not obeyed all these laws. So he knew that God would certainly send these terrible curses upon them! He tore his clothes as a sign to show how ashamed he was. He sent for the leaders of his people. He told them that they must find out what God was about to do because His people had not kept God's commandments.

## **GOD SHOWS KINDNESS TO THE KING**

The leaders of the people came to the prophetess Huldah who lived in Jerusalem. She told them that God would indeed punish the people! They had served idols and had *not* turned back to God *with their whole heart*. King Josiah, however truly loved God and had tried humbly to serve Him *with all his heart*. The prophetess told the leaders to tell the King, "Because your heart was tender and you did humble yourself before me, behold, you shall die in peace and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place."

So, God had looked upon the heart of His people. He saw that the young King truly loved God. To the King then, God would give mercy. The people *seemed* to be following God, but they had not

really changed. God saw that there was no real love for Him. Therefore God would punish the people, as He had said in His Word.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

The people around us seem to serve God, but they do not truly love and obey Him. But we can be like young Josiah. We can decide to serve God truly, to listen carefully to His Word and to obey it. Then, when God punishes others, He will show us mercy as He did to King Josiah. Or we can be like the people in Josiah's day and just make out to serve God, but we must always remember that God looks on our heart.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Josiah was only a young boy of 8 years old when he became king.
- \* He wanted to lead the people back to God and have all idols destroyed.
- \* He repaired the Temple.
- \* The Book of the Law found and read to Josiah.
- \* The prophetess tells how Israel would be punished because of their wickedness but to the King, God would show mercy.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. How old was Josiah when he became King?
2. Why did the people destroy their idols?
3. What did the High Priest find in the Temple?
4. What did Josiah do when he heard the words of the Book of the Law?
5. Why did God show mercy to Josiah?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. What did Josiah do to try to lead the people back to God?
7. Why did Josiah become very worried when he heard the words of the Book of the Law?

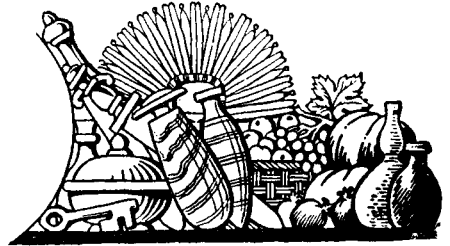
## 15. DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS IN BABYLON

### **Aim**

*To show God will care for those who put their faith and trust in Him.*

### **Synopsis**

*God blessed Daniel and his friends because they had the faith to obey His commandments, rather than the commandments of men.*



*Daniel 1*

### **DANIEL AND HIS THREE FRIENDS IN BABYLON**

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, had fought against Jerusalem and led away its people as captives. Among these captives was a young boy called Daniel, and his three close friends called Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Together with the other captives, these four boys were taken far away from Israel to live in the mighty city of Babylon.

### **DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS GO TO THE PALACE**

King Nebuchadnezzar wanted the best captives from Israel to live at his palace to learn the ways of Babylon. He ordered his servants to choose young men who had come from the royal family. They must be healthy and handsome, bright and quick at learning. They must be good enough to live in the King's palace. Daniel and his three friends were among those chosen for this great honour. When they arrived at the palace, they were given new names. Now they were to be called Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego. Their new names honoured the gods of Babylon. For three years they would learn the wisdom and the language of Babylon. They would eat the King's own food and drink his wine. At the end of three years they would be brought before the King. He thought that perhaps by that time they would have forgotten the God of Israel!

## **DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS REFUSE THE KING'S FOOD**

But Daniel and his three friends loved Yahweh. They knew that He had commanded them not to eat certain foods. To take of the King's food would be to disobey God. They decided that whatever happened to them, they would obey God.

So Daniel spoke to the master of the household. He asked him not to give them any of the King's food or wine. The master of the household loved Daniel, but he was worried. He said to Daniel, "The King has told me what you must eat and drink. I am afraid of what will happen to me if you look thinner and paler than the other young men of your group."

Then Daniel answered the master of the household, "Test your servant, please, for ten days. Give us pulse to eat and water to drink. Then look at our faces and at the faces of the young men who eat the King's food. Then you will know what to do with us." Daniel believed that God would help him and his friends. The master of the household agreed to this test.

## **GOD BLESSES DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS**

God was pleased with Daniel and his friends. They had chosen to obey His commandments rather than the commandments of the King. Therefore God answered their prayers and helped them.

For ten days, Daniel and his three friends were tested. They had only pulse to eat and water to drink. ("Pulse" is made of vegetables or fruit). After the ten days, their faces were fairer and plumper than those of the young men who had eaten the King's food. So the master of the household took away their meals of meat and the wine that they were supposed to drink. For three years they lived on pulse and water in the King's palace.

God blessed these four young men, for He gave them knowledge and understanding. Daniel was even able to understand visions and dreams, because God was with him and told him the meaning.

## **DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS ARE CHOSEN BY THE KING**

At the end of three years, all the young men were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar. When the King talked with them, he saw that Daniel and his friends were wiser and healthier than all the other young men. He chose them to stay with him and to help him rule his people. He found that they were ten times wiser than all the magicians and astrologers in his kingdom.

So Daniel and his three friends were blessed because they had the faith to obey God. They found that the wisdom which God gave them was far greater than the wisdom of the world.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

We must obey God rather than men. If we are brave, like Daniel and his friends, God will bless us. We will lose nothing by choosing to obey God, for His gifts are greater than those which man can give us. His wisdom, which is found in the Bible, is greater than the wisdom of the world.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Daniel and his 3 friends taken as captives to the palace of the King of Babylon.
- \* Their names changed to honour the gods of Babylon.
- \* They refuse to eat the King's food.
- \* After 10 days they were found fairer and fatter than those who ate the king's food.
- \* God blessed Daniel and his 3 friends because of their faith and obedience.
- \* Nebuchadnezzar found them 10 times wiser than all his wise men.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Why were Daniel and his friends taken to the King's palace?
2. Why would Daniel and his friends not eat the King's food?
3. How did Daniel and his friends look, after ten days of eating only pulse and drinking only water?
4. Why did God bless Daniel and his friends?
5. Why did the King choose Daniel and his friends to help him?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. Tell about Daniel and his three friends when they went to live in King Nebuchadnezzar's palace in Babylon.
7. Where can we find the wisdom of God which can make us wiser than the people of the world?



## 16. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

### Aim

To show that because of Daniel's trust in God he was able to tell the king the meaning of his dream.

### Synopsis

While Daniel and the captive Jews were in Babylon God made known His great power.

Daniel 2:1-45



### NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS DREAMS

King Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon, dreamed a dream. His dream disturbed him and woke him up. When the morning came he felt worried and unhappy. So he sent for all his wise men, hoping that they could help him.

### THE WISE MEN HAVE NO WISDOM

The wise men came before the king. They were used to telling the meaning of dreams. It was easy to make up clever stories about dreams people had. They pretended to know what was going to happen in the future. So they said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever: tell us the dream you have had and we will show you what it means." But the king wanted to make quite sure that they were not just pretending. This dream had really worried him and he wanted a true answer. So he said: "No! You tell me what I dreamed and then tell me what it means." If they could do that, he would give them gifts and rewards and great honour. But if they could not — he would put them to death.

The wise men felt cross as well as frightened. "There is no man on earth who can do what you ask," they said, "it is too difficult. Only the gods can tell you what you dreamed." King Nebuchadnezzar was furious. He sent out an order to put all the wise men to death.

## **DANIEL SAVES THE WISE MEN FROM DEATH**

Now among the wise men who lived at Babylon were Daniel and his friends. They did not know about the king's dream or what he had said to the wise men.

When he heard that they must all be put to death, Daniel hurried in to the king and said that *he* would tell the king his dream, if the king gave him time. The king agreed. So Daniel went back to his three friends and they prayed to God to give them *true wisdom* in this matter. God heard their prayer and told Daniel the dream and its meaning. For it was God Himself who had given Nebuchadnezzar the dream. Daniel thanked God and praised Him and then went in confidently before the king.

## **DANIEL TELLS THE DREAM**

"Can you make known to me the dream and its meaning?" the king asked Daniel. "None of your wise men are able to give you a true answer," Daniel said, "but there is a God in heaven that reveals secret things and He has told you in a dream what will happen in the latter days." Then Daniel told the king his dream.

He had seen a huge image or structure of a man. It was made of different metals.

Its HEAD was made of GOLD;  
Its BREASTS and ARMS were of SILVER;  
Its BELLY and THIGHS were of BRASS;  
Its LEGS were of IRON;  
Its FEET were of IRON and CLAY.

In his dream the king had also seen a little stone. The little stone had not been cut out by any man's hands. It came and hit the great image on its feet, so that it toppled over. The image crashed to the ground and broke into tiny pieces. The wind came and blew it all away. Then the little stone grew and grew into a big mountain. It filled the whole earth.

## **THE MEANING OF THE DREAM**

When King Nebuchadnezzar heard Daniel's words he was amazed. This was just what he had dreamed. So he knew that Daniel must be able to give a true meaning. And he did, for God had told him the meaning. "Thou art this head of gold," Daniel explained. Nebuchadnezzar had not realised before that God had given him his great kingdom and strength and glory. But his glory and his kingdom

would not last for ever. One day another kingdom not so great as Babylon, would be set up, then another and another, right down to the days we live in now.

It is now nearly the time for the little stone to come and strike that image on the feet. For the little stone is really the Lord Jesus Christ and His saints. The great image is really the nations of the world. When Jesus comes to set up God's kingdom, he will destroy all the nations of the world. Then his kingdom will fill the whole earth and will last *forever*. That is the time that we are all waiting for. We want him to come soon, because his Kingdom will be full of righteousness and goodness and peace.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

King Nebuchadnezzar had to learn a lesson that we must learn too — that there is a God in heaven who knows all things. He has told us in the Bible that He will send Jesus soon to set up His glorious kingdom. Those who love God pray everyday, "Thy kingdom come." The world will be a beautiful and wonderful place to live in then. God will only let us live in His kingdom if we try hard now to love and obey Him.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which his wise men could not interpret.
- \* Daniel saved the wise men from death by revealing the dream to Nebuchadnezzar through the power of God.
- \* He showed how the metals of the image represented nations with Babylon the head of gold.
- \* The little stone which hit the image on its feet and caused the image to break in pieces grew into a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
- \* This represented the power of the Lord Jesus Christ who will soon return to the earth to destroy those nations and set up God's Kingdom which will fill the whole earth.

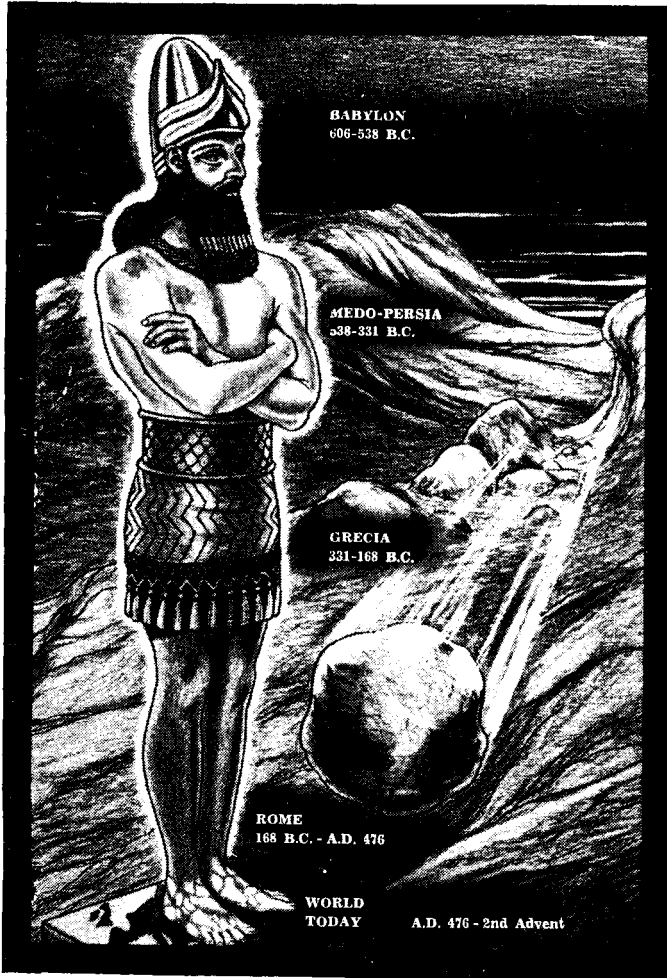
### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. What made King Nebuchadnezzar unhappy?
2. What did King Nebuchadnezzar want his wise men to do?
3. What did Daniel pray to God for?
4. Who did Daniel say could reveal secrets?

5. What did Nebuchadnezzar see in his dream?
6. What did the little stone do?

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years

7. What happened to the great image?
8. Tell what Nebuchadnezzar's dream really means.



## 17. IN THE FIERY FURNACE

### Aim

*To show God is able to save those who have faith in Him and obey His Law.*

### Synopsis

*The friends of Daniel were saved from death because they trusted and obeyed God.*

*Daniel 3*



### THE GOLDEN IMAGE

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, made a great image of gold. He set it up on a plain outside the city for all to see. Then he called together all the chief men of his Kingdom to come to the dedication of the image. Then the king's servants cried aloud, "When you hear all the music playing, everyone must fall down and worship the golden image which the King has set up. Anyone who does not fall down and worship the image, will be thrown that very hour into a burning fiery furnace."

### THE THREE FRIENDS WILL NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE

At the set time the loud music was heard across the plain of Babylon. The large crowd who had gathered there bowed down to the image as the King commanded them. But there were three men who remained standing! They were the friends of Daniel, whom the King had named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They loved the God of Israel. They knew that God had commanded them not to bow down to idols. They would *not* bow down to the golden image.

King Nebuchadnezzar was furious. He commanded Daniel's three friends to be brought before him. Angrily, he said to them, "Is it on purpose that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image which I have set up? I will give you one last chance. If you do not worship the image you will be thrown straight away into the burning fiery furnace. And what God can save you from that?"

## **THE THREE FRIENDS ANSWER THE KING**

But the three friends were not afraid of the King. They knew that they must obey God. If it was God's will, He would save them from the fire. If it was not God's will to save them, they would rather die than disobey God. Bravely they answered the King, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to think over the answer to that question! The God whom we serve is able to save us from the burning fire and from your power, O King. But even if He does not, understand this: We will not serve your gods and we will not bow down before the golden image which you have set up" (Dan. 3:16-18).

When he heard this answer, the King was filled with rage. He would argue with these men no longer. With an angry face he commanded that the fire be made seven times hotter. The mighty men of his army grabbed Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, bound them, and threw them into the middle of the terrible fire!

## **GOD SAVES THE THREE FRIENDS**

So hot were the flames of the fire that the soldiers themselves were burnt to death as they threw the three friends into the fiery furnace. But the three friends tightly bound, fell down into the midst of that terrible fire.

Then, as Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fire, he saw an amazing sight. He jumped straight up and called his rulers and said to them, "Look! I can see *four* men loose, walking in the midst of the fire and they are not burnt. And the fourth looks like a son of God."

It was true! God had sent His angel into the midst of the fire to save Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego, because they had trusted and obeyed Him! Nebuchadnezzar went near to the door of the furnace and called out, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, you servants of the Most High God, come out."

As they came out, everybody crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not burnt them at all. Not one hair of their heads had been singed. Their clothes were not burnt and there was not even any smell of the fire upon them!

## **THE KING MAKES A NEW LAW**

In front of all his people, Nebuchadnezzar then blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He could see for sure that their God had saved them, because of their trust in Him. So their God must be greater than any other god or idol. Nebuchadnezzar then

made a new law and sent it throughout his kingdom. This was the law: “Any people, nation or language who says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut to pieces and their house shall be destroyed, for there is no other God who can save in this way.”

Then the King gave Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego important positions in his kingdom.

So, once more, the friends were blessed, because they had trusted in God and obeyed Him.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

This is, of course, a true story — like all our Bible lessons. These things really happened long ago. Even today we have nothing to fear if we trust in God. His angels watch over us and keep us from harm in the evil world that is around us — as long as we obey God.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Nebuchadnezzar built a great golden image. When the music — played he commanded everyone to bow to it.
- \* Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down.
- \* Nebuchadnezzar filled with rage commanded them to be thrown into the fiery furnace which was heated seven times hotter.
- \* God sent His angel to save them from the fire.
- \* Nebuchadnezzar made a new law that all people were to respect God.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. What did Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, order all his people to do, when they heard the sound of music?
2. Who would not bow down to the King's golden image?
3. What did the three friends tell the King?
4. What did the King do with the three friends when they would not bow down to the golden image?
5. What did the king see after the three friends were thrown into the burning fiery furnace?
6. What new law did the King make when he saw that God had saved the three friends?

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years

7. Why did not the three friends bow down to the golden image?
8. Tell the story of how God saved Daniel's three friends from the burning fiery furnace, starting from the beginning when King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge golden image.







## 18. DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

### **Aim**

*To show that faith and obedience in God will gain deliverance from death.*

### **Synopsis**

*Daniel prayed to God continually, although it was against the law of the king. He was thrown into a den of lions, but God saved him from the lions' mouths.*

*Daniel 6*

### **THE PRINCES ARE JEALOUS OF DANIEL**

A new King reigned in Babylon, whose name was Darius. He had one hundred and twenty princes to help him rule the kingdom. Among these was Daniel, the faithful servant of God. King Darius grew to love Daniel more than all his princes, for Daniel was so wise and good in all that he did. And the king made Daniel the ruler over all the princes and wanted to make him the head over all the kingdom.

The other princes became jealous of Daniel. They tried to find some fault in him, but they could not. They said to each other, "We will not find any fault in Daniel, unless it be about the way he worships his God." Together they thought of a wicked plan to make the king get rid of Daniel.

### **THE WICKED PLAN OF THE PRINCES**

The princes knew that Daniel loved the God of Israel and that he prayed to God three times a day. They came to the King with a clever plan. They said to the King, "King Darius, live forever! All the rulers of the kingdom have decided that whoever asks anything of any God or man for 30 days, except of you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions." The King could see nothing wrong with this plan. So he signed his name on the decree. Alas, he did not know that the princes had tricked him into making this law, just so that Daniel would be

killed. The law was made known throughout the land. It could not be changed!

## **DANIEL PRAYS TO GOD**

Daniel heard about the new law. But he still continued to pray to God knowing that God would help him if he obeyed. He decided that not even the King's law would stop him. He would obey God rather than obey men.

So Daniel went into his house. With the windows open towards Jerusalem, he kneeled down three times a day and prayed and gave thanks to his God, just as he had always done. Secretly, the princes watched him. This was what they had been waiting for! They hurried to tell the King that Daniel had broken the law. He must be thrown into the den of lions!

## **DANIEL IS THROWN INTO THE DEN OF LIONS**

The King was very unhappy when he heard about Daniel. He did not want to throw Daniel into the den of lions. How could he save Daniel? By the end of the day, he still had not thought of a way to save Daniel. He could not change a law once it was made. Sadly he called Daniel before him. The King said to him, "Your God, whom you serve continually, he will save you." Daniel was then thrown to the lions and a large stone was rolled across the door of the den.

## **GOD SAVES DANIEL**

The King went back to the palace. He was very worried. He could eat no food. He could not enjoy listening to any music. He could not sleep at all. At last the morning came and he hurried to the den of lions. He called out sadly to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is your God, whom you serve continually, able to save you from the lions?"

To the King's great joy, the voice of Daniel called back to him, "O King, live for ever. My God has sent His angel and has shut the lions' mouths. They have not hurt me. For I have done no wrong in God's sight and I have done no wrong to you, O King." God *had* been able to deliver Daniel!

The King then ordered that Daniel should be taken out of the den. He found that Daniel had no wound of any kind upon him, because he believed and had faith in his God.

Then the King turned to the jealous princes. Their wicked plan

had come to nothing. Now *they* would be thrown into the lions' den, together with their families. Hungrily the lions jumped on them and ate them all up, even before they came to the bottom of the den. In this way, God punished them for their hatred and jealousy of Daniel.

### **THE KING'S NEW LAW**

The King now knew that Daniel's God was the only true God. He wrote a new law to all his people. The law stated, "I now command that in every part of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. He is the living God, who never changes. His kingdom shall never be destroyed. For He has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

So because of Daniel's faith and courage, all the people learnt about the God of Israel.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

Like Daniel, we should pray to God every day. If we learn God's Word and pray to Him often, we will become strong in faith and courage. Even when there are dangers, we will still believe in God and His angels will care for us.

#### **Remember these points:—**

- \* The jealous princes get the King to make a new law.
- \* Daniel still prayed 3 times a day.
- \* Daniel was thrown into the lions den even although the king tried to save him.
- \* God saved Daniel by shutting the lions' mouths.
- \* The King made a new law.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Why were the princes in the land of Babylon jealous of Daniel?
2. What was the wicked plan of the princes which would cause Daniel to be killed?
3. What did Daniel do when he heard about King Darius' new law?
4. What happened when Daniel was put into the lions' den?
5. What happened to the jealous princes when Daniel came safely out of the lions' den?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. What happened when Daniel would not obey King Darius' law?
7. Why was Daniel saved from the lions' den?
8. What was the new law the king wrote to his people?

## 19. ESTHER THE QUEEN



### **Aim**

*To show that true beauty of character comes from knowing God and obeying Him.*

### **Synopsis**

*There were Jews living in the land of Persia after Jerusalem had been destroyed. One of them became Queen of Persia.*

*Esther 1, 2:1-18*

## **VASHTI DISOBEYS THE KING**

Ahasuerus was King of Persia in those days. He was very rich and important. His wife was Queen Vashti. One day he called together all the princes of his land and made a great feast for them, which lasted for days and days. Shushan, the palace, was decorated with rich fabrics of purple, green and white, tied with silver rings to pillars of marble. There were beds of silver and gold on coloured stone pavements. Everyone drank wine from beautiful golden cups. Everyone had whatever they pleased.

Queen Vashti held a feast of her own for all the women at the palace.

Now King Ahasuerus wanted to show Queen Vashti to his guests. He wanted them to see how beautiful she was, for she was very lovely indeed. But when the king's messenger came to summon her, she refused to go. You can imagine how angry king Ahasuerus was when he heard that! He was furious. Nobody was allowed to say "No" to the king. So he called his wise men and said to them: "What shall we do to Queen Vashti, because she won't come when the king calls for her?" The wise men answered, "All the women in Persia will hear what the queen has done and they will take no notice of their husbands either. So, if it please the king, let the king send out a law that says Vashti shall be queen no longer." And that is just what King Ahasuerus did. But now he had to find someone else to take Vashti's

place. This time, though he wanted a queen who was not only very beautiful to look at, but one who would want to please him.

## **THE KING LOOKS FOR A NEW QUEEN**

The King sent his servants throughout his great kingdom. They must look for the most beautiful young maidens in all the land and bring them back to the palace. There, they would prepare for a whole year before they came in front of the king. The king would then choose the loveliest of them all to be his queen.

The servants obeyed their king. Among the girls they brought to the palace was a beautiful girl called Esther. She was one of God's people, the Jews. They had been taken away from their own land to live in the land of Persia. Esther was among them. When she was very young, her mother and father had died. Her kind cousin, Mordecai, had looked after her as if she were his real daughter. He had taught her about Yahweh, the God of Israel, and what she must do to please Him. God was pleased with Esther. He knew that she would be a help to Ahasuerus if she were queen, and that she would be able to help God's people, the Jews, too.

## **ESTHER IS CHOSEN AS QUEEN**

So Esther was taken to the special part of the palace where the young ladies lived. Every day Mordecai visited her to find out how she was. Carefully the maidens prepared themselves for the time when the King would ask to see them. At last the time arrived. Each girl was allowed to take anything she wanted with her, to make her more beautiful in the eyes of the King.

One by one, the maidens came before King Ahasuerus. When Esther's turn came, she made no fuss. Quietly she took with her only the things which the king's servant gave her. She hadn't bothered with all the flashing jewels and rich clothes and perfumes that the other maidens used. Because she loved God she was a much nicer person than any of them. Everyone who saw her could tell that.

God was with Esther. The King loved Esther above all the other young ladies he saw. Out of all the loveliest girls in Persia he chose Esther to be his Queen. He made a great feast for her and called it "Esther's Feast." So Esther the Jew, became the wife of the great and famous King Ahasuerus, Queen of the land of Persia.

## **LESSON FOR US:**

Esther pleased King Ahasuerus because she was a lovely person and not just beautiful to look at, but she was loving, obedient and faithful. God is not interested in fine clothes and beautiful faces. He wants us to be loving, obedient and faithful. We must learn what He wants us to do, just as Esther learned from Mordecai. The Bible tells us what to do to please our God and king.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Proud Vashti refused to obey King Ahasuerus.
- \* He decides to choose another Queen.
- \* The most beautiful maidens in the Kingdom prepare for the choice of a new Queen.
- \* Esther refused outward show.
- \* Esther chosen by Ahasuerus as his new Queen.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. What was the name of the beautiful first wife of Ahasuerus, the King of Persia?
2. What happened when Ahasuerus told Vashti to come to his feast?
3. What did Ahasuerus do to Vashti because she would not come to his feast?
4. Whom did Ahasuerus choose as Queen instead of Vashti?
5. Why did Ahasuerus choose Esther to be his Queen?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. Why was Vashti to be Queen of Persia no longer?
7. Tell the story of how Esther was chosen to be the new Queen of Persia.



## 20. HAMAN THE JEWS' ENEMY

### **Aim**

*To show how through Esther's obedience and courage God preserved His people, the Jews.*

### **Synopsis**

*God made Esther to be Queen of Persia so that she could save her people, the Jews.*

*Esther 3-5, 7-8*

### **ESTHER, JEWISH QUEEN OF PERSIA**

Ahasuerus, mighty king of the land of Persia, had chosen Esther to be his Queen. However, he did not know that Esther's people were the Jews. Nor did he know that Mordecai, the humble Jew who served the king at the gate of the palace, was really Esther's cousin. He had brought Esther up as his own daughter. Esther had kept this a secret, just as Mordecai had told her to do.

### **THE WICKED HAMAN**

In the kingdom, there was a proud prince called Haman. King Ahasuerus made him greater than all the other princes and commanded that everybody must bow down to him as he passed by. But each day, as he came to the gate of the king's palace, there was one man who did not bow before him. This man was Mordecai, the Jew. Like Daniel and his friends in Babylon, Mordecai would not worship men or idols but the God of Israel only. Proud Haman was filled with anger. He grew to hate Mordecai and all Mordecai's people. At night when he went home to his wife and family, he thought of how he would love to be rid of Mordecai and all the Jewish people.

### **HAMAN'S TERRIBLE PLAN**

At last, Haman thought of a clever wicked plan. He came before

the King and told him, "There is a certain people in Persia, who do not keep the laws of the land or obey the King's commands. The King should destroy them."

Ahasuerus listened to the words of Haman. He agreed that these people should be killed. He did not know that the people whom Haman was talking about were the Jewish people. He trusted Haman and left the matter to him. So a terrible law was made, that on a certain day, all the Jews who lived in the land of Persia must be killed.

## **WEeping AND SADNESS AMONGST THE JEWS**

Soon the whole land of Persia heard the news. The Jews wept very much and were very unhappy. Mordecai sent a message to Queen Esther. She must go in before King Ahasuerus and ask him to save her people.

But Esther knew that no one could come before the King, unless invited by him. She was sure to be put to death unless the King held out his golden sceptre or rod to her. What was Esther to do? If she did not go in to see the King, she might be killed with the other Jews. But if she did go in to see the King, she might still be killed, because it was against the law.

Now Mordecai and Esther believed in the God of Israel. He was watching over His people and had made Esther queen, so that she might save them. Mordecai encouraged Esther, "Who knows?" he said, "you may have become Queen, just so that you can help your people at this time." Esther decided to put her trust in God and go before the King. She said to Mordecai, "I will go into the King, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish."

## **ESTHER TELLS THE KING**

The King sat upon his royal throne. Suddenly, he noticed that somebody had entered his court. It was Esther, his lovely young Queen. Straightway he held out to her his golden rod for he was happy to see her. So Esther came near and touched the top of his royal sceptre. He gently asked her, "What do you want, Queen Esther? It shall be given to you even to half the Kingdom."

With thanks to God in her heart, Esther spoke to the King. She invited both the King and Haman to two feasts. On the second day she would let the King know what she wanted of him.

So, at the second feast, Esther told the King that she and all her people, the Jews, were to be cruelly killed. The King was shocked at



this news. He had not known that it was Esther and the Jews who were to be killed. "Who has dared to do this?" the King asked. "The enemy who has done it is this wicked Haman," Esther replied. Trembling, Haman fell to his knees and begged for mercy.

## **THE JEWS ARE SAVED**

But the King would show no mercy to wicked Haman. He deserved no kindness: He and his family were put to death and his riches were given to Queen Esther. The King had the cruel law changed immediately. All the Jews throughout the land were saved. Mordecai, the Jew, became a very great man. He was made the second ruler in all the land of Persia.

So, in this wonderful way, the God of Israel saved His people.

## **LESSON FOR US:**

We cannot see God, but He is present everywhere and knows everything that happens. He will care for His people if they have faith in Him. We are His people if we do the things that please Him. He will also punish those who hate His people.

### **Remember these points:—**

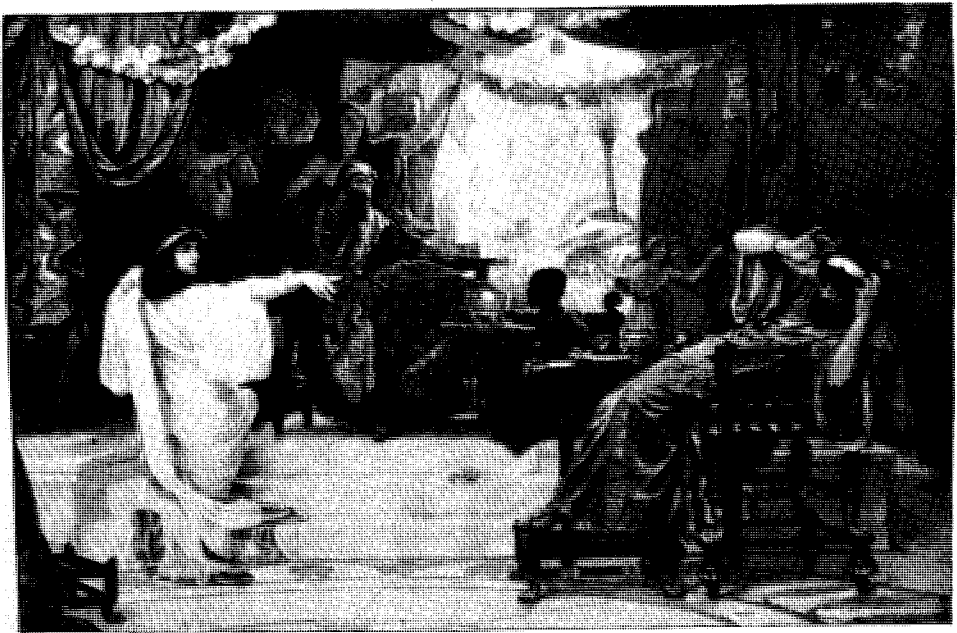
- \* Proud Haman hated Mordecai because he refused to bow down to him.
- \* Haman planned to kill all Jews.
- \* The Jews mourn because of Haman's plot. Mordecai sends to Esther.
- \* Esther's reply to Mordecai.
- \* She invites the King and Haman to a feast.
- \* At the second feast she shows the King, Haman's wicked plan.
- \* The Jews are saved from death.
- \* Mordecai made the second ruler in all Persia.

## **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Who were Esther's people?
2. Why did Haman hate Mordecai?
3. What was Haman's wicked plan?
4. What did Esther have to do to save her people?
5. What happened to Haman?

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. Why did Haman want to kill all the Jews?
7. How did Queen Esther save her people?



## 21. NEHEMIAH BUILDS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

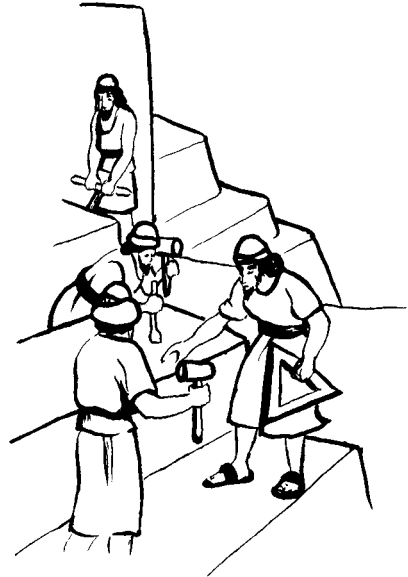
### Aim

To show Nehemiah was a man of prayer and action therefore God blessed his work.

### Synopsis

God had not forgotten His city or His people. The time had come for Jerusalem to be built again. Now God began to help His people to return to their beloved city, to rebuild the Temple and the walls and houses. This story is of one of the faithful builders.

*Nehemiah 2*



### NEHEMIAH IS SAD

Nehemiah lived in Persia, in the palace of the King. He was the King's cup-bearer. One day, his friends told him some sad news. They said to him, "The people who have returned to Jerusalem are in great trouble. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burnt with fire." Nehemiah wept when he heard this. He, also, was a Jew and he loved his people and his own land. He prayed to God and asked God to help him, for he wanted to build the walls of Jerusalem again.

One day when Nehemiah brought wine to the King, the King noticed that he looked sad. He asked Nehemiah, "Why do you look so sad?" Then Nehemiah was afraid that the king would be angry with him. So he made a short, silent prayer to God for help. Then he said to the King, "Please send me back to the land of Israel, to the city of Jerusalem, where my people have always lived. I want to build Jerusalem again." The King said that Nehemiah could return to Jerusalem. God had heard Nehemiah's prayer. Soon he set out from Persia for the work which he so much wanted to do.

## **NEHEMIAH AT JERUSALEM**

Nehemiah arrived safely at Jerusalem and had been there for three days. The next night, he quietly set off in the darkness with a few close friends to look at the walls and gates of the city. In the dark of the night he sadly gazed at the ruined city and the broken walls. He began to plan how he would set about the work of building it again.

Calling together the rulers of the people, Nehemiah asked them to join in the work. When they heard how God had blessed Nehemiah, they were eager to help.

“Let us rise up and build!” they said. So, amid the dirt and ruin of God’s city, the people began the work together.

## **WORKING ON THE WALL**

The Samaritans lived in the land at that time. They did not want the Jews to return. So when they heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being built again, they became very angry. Together they made plans to attack the men as they built. They were determined to stop the work. But Nehemiah heard of their plan. The work of building must go on! So Nehemiah prayed to God for help and set a watch for the enemy, both in the day time and at night. Half of Nehemiah’s men worked on the wall and the other half stood ready with spears and shields and bows. Even the builders worked with their swords at their sides. Nehemiah told the people, “When you hear the sound of the trumpet, wherever you may be, run to help fight the enemy. Our God will fight for us.”

So the wall rose higher and higher. Nehemiah never grew tired of the work. He helped the men who were building the walls. He was also the watchman over the city. Neither he, nor his brethren, nor his servants took off their clothes by day nor by night, they were so busy getting the work finished.

Nehemiah was a true leader of God’s people. He was both a man of *prayer* and a man who *worked* for God.

## **THE WALL IS FINISHED**

At last the wall was finished. The enemy had often tried to stop them, but Nehemiah and the people trusted in God. They had kept on with the work and God had blessed them. Now, after only 52 days, the wall around the city of Jerusalem stood up once again.

## **THE LONG WAIT**

So God's people dwelt again in the city of Jerusalem. For a time they remained faithful, but little by little they forgot God and His Word. Many, many years passed with only just a few people remembering God's promises, and waiting for the promised Saviour.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

When we are in trouble we must be like Nehemiah. We should pray to God and believe that He will help us. We should also do all that we possibly can to help God. He will then answer our prayer and bless our work.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Nehemiah was sad when he heard the wall of Jerusalem was broken and its gates burned with fire.
- \* He asked the King if he could visit the city.
- \* Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem and stirred up the rulers; they said "Let us rise up and build."
- \* Nehemiah was a man of prayer and action and even with opposition the work on the wall continued.
- \* The wall was completed in 52 days.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Why was Nehemiah sad when he brought the wine to the King of Persia?
2. What did the rulers of the people say when Nehemiah asked them to help build the walls of Jerusalem?
3. What did Nehemiah do when he knew that the enemy wanted to stop the work of building?
4. How did Nehemiah help in the work of building the wall?
5. How long did it take to build the wall of Jerusalem?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. How was Nehemiah a true leader of God's people?
7. Tell the story of how Nehemiah and the people built the walls of Jerusalem again.

## 22. THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

### Aim

To show how God had prepared the way for the birth of John the Baptist who would tell the people about the Messiah.

### Synopsis

The Angel Gabriel appeared to a priest named Zacharias and told him that he would have a son named John. John was going to teach the people about God and prepare them for Jesus, God's son who was born a little while afterwards.

Luke 1:5-25, 57-66



### AN ANGEL APPEARS TO ZACHARIAS IN THE TEMPLE

Nearly two thousand years ago, just before Jesus was born, there lived a man named Zacharias. His wife was named Elisabeth. They were very old, and a little sad, for they had no children. But they served God faithfully and well, and deep down inside they knew that God would always do what was best for them.

Zacharias was a priest who used to take turns with other priests in working in the temple at Jerusalem. One day it was his duty to burn incense on the altar of incense. The sweet smelling perfume rising from the incense altar reminded all the people of prayer, which goes up to God and gives Him pleasure too. So while the incense burnt inside the temple, the people gathered outside to pray. Zacharias said his prayers as well. Suddenly there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, named Gabriel.

### GABRIEL'S WONDERFUL MESSAGE FOR ZACHARIAS

Zacharias was terribly afraid. But Gabriel said to him: "Fear not Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth." Then Gabriel told Zacharias that his son would teach the people, so that they would be ready to hear God's Son when he came.

## **ZACHARIAS IS MADE DUMB**

Even though he had prayed to have a son, Zacharias could not believe that his prayer was going to be answered. He wondered if he heard correctly and if all this would be done by his son, so he said, "how shall I know this will happen?" The angel said "Behold you shall be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things are done, because you did not believe what I said."

And that is what happened. Zacharias came out and tried to speak to the people outside, but he could not. He was dumb.

When his turn at working in the temple was over, he went home again.

## **JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BORN**

Soon afterwards, Zacharias and Elisabeth found out that Gabriel was right and they were going to have a baby. When their baby was born and was eight days old, they took him up to the temple.

Everyone thought that they would call the baby Zacharias, the same name as his father.

"No," said Elizabeth, "he shall be called John."

"None of your relatives is named John," they said to her, "we had better ask his father what he wants to call him."

Zacharias still could not speak. So they had to bring him something to write on. To everyone's surprise, he wrote, "His name is John."

## **ZACHARIAS SPEAKS AGAIN**

As soon as he had finished writing, Zacharias found that he could speak again. The first thing he did was to praise God for the wonderful things that He had done. Then he spoke of the things that John would do when he grew up. "Thou child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways: to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the forgiveness of their sins." He would speak God's words and make the people ready to listen to the Lord Jesus Christ when he came. He would teach them what they must do to please God and be saved.

Everyone who lived near Jerusalem heard about these wonderful events. They thought that this child must be going to be very important, for all these strange things to happen!

## **LESSON FOR US:**

When God makes a promise, He always keeps it. He has made many wonderful promises, and we can believe them all knowing that He will do just what He says.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* An angel spoke to Zacharias as he burnt incense in the Temple and told him that his wife Elizabeth would have a son, who was to be called John.
- \* Zacharias was made dumb when he said, “How shall I know this will happen?”
- \* The baby is born and taken to the temple when 8 days old.
- \* Zacharias is able to speak again and praises God.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 7 years**

1. What was the name of John the Baptist’s father?
2. What did he do in the temple?
3. Who spoke to Zacharias in the temple?
4. What promise was made to Zacharias and his wife?
5. Why was Zacharias made dumb?
6. What name was the baby to be called?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

7. What did the burning of incense remind the people of?
8. Tell what happened when the baby was eight days old.



## 23. THE MESSIAH IS BORN

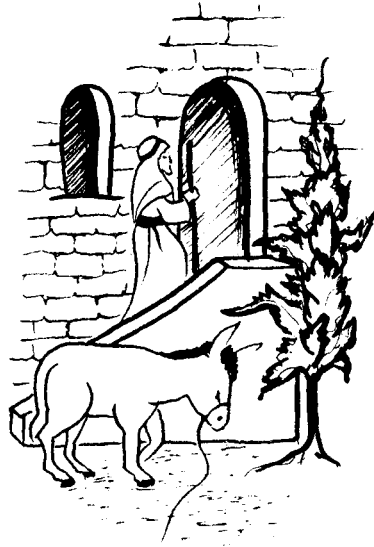
### Aim

*To show what happened at Jesus' birth and how God was watching over Mary and Joseph.*

### Synopsis

*Mary had a son named Jesus. His Father was God. Everyone wondered about the strange things that happened when he was born, but Mary thought about them very carefully.*

*Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20*



### GABRIEL'S MESSAGE FOR MARY

Before John the Baptist was born, the angel Gabriel was sent to someone else as well. Gabriel was sent to a young lady named Mary, who lived in Nazareth. She was a lovely person, because she loved the Word of God, and so did Joseph, the man she was soon going to marry. Mary was very poor. You would not know from looking at her that she was one of the descendants of King David, who had been the king over all Israel!

Gabriel came to Mary and said, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

Mary was very worried about what the angel said at first. She wondered why he should greet her with words like that.

"Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God," said Gabriel — and then he went on to tell her that she was going to have a baby boy. His name would be "Jesus," which means "Yah shall save." God was going to be his Father, and she was going to be his mother. One day, he was going to rule over Israel as king David had done. Only his kingdom would last forever! But he would need to be looked after while he was little. So God told Joseph to marry Mary, so that he could look after them both.

## **MARY AND JOSEPH GO TO BETHLEHEM**

Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, but God's prophets had said that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. This was a long way from Nazareth, but we will see how wonderfully God made His Word come to pass.

The king over all the land in those days was named Caesar. He had said, "I want everyone to go back to the town that their family came from. I want to have their names written down so that I can tax them!" Joseph was of the family of David, just like Mary. So just before Jesus was born, he had to take Mary back to Bethlehem.

When they arrived, it was so crowded in Bethlehem that the only place where they could stay was in the stable of an inn. That was where all the animals slept! But there, that night Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and put him to sleep in the manger from which the animals ate their hay. Who would have thought that this baby in the manger would one day be king of the world? But God's Word says that he will!

## **AN ANGEL TELLS SHEPHERDS ABOUT JESUS**

A little way off in the countryside, some faithful shepherds were watching over their flocks by night. Suddenly, a bright light shone all around them and an angel of God appeared to them. They were very frightened. But the angel said, "Fear not, for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. You will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Then suddenly a great crowd of angels appeared, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

## **THE SHEPHERDS COME TO SEE JESUS**

The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go into Bethlehem and see this new baby that God has told us about." They hurried into Bethlehem and saw Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Jesus was lying in the manger, just as they had been told.

Then they went about telling everyone what the angels had said and what they had seen. Everyone said, "I wonder what all of these strange things mean?" But Mary kept all the things that had happened in her heart, and thought about them all the time.

## **LESSON FOR US:**

Mary had a son named Jesus, and his Father was God. God told Mary that Jesus was going to rule over Israel one day, and his kingdom would never end. Mary listened carefully to what God said about His Son and believed Him. We must read the Bible carefully and learn what God says about His Son, and we must believe Him, too.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* The angel Gabriel tells Mary she is to have a son.
- \* God was to be his Father.
- \* His name was called Jesus.
- \* Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem where Jesus was born in a stable.
- \* Angels sang at Jesus' birth and the shepherds after hearing them hurried to see the baby.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Who was the Father of Jesus?
2. Who was the Mother of Jesus?
3. Where was Jesus born?
4. Who came to see Jesus when he was born?
5. What does the name "Jesus" mean?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. What did the angel say to Mary?
7. What did the angels say to the shepherds?

## 24. THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS



### **Aim**

*To show how God cared for His Son and prepared him for the great work he was to do.*

### **Synopsis**

*When wicked King Herod tried to kill Jesus, Joseph took him to Egypt and saved his life. When he was only twelve, Jesus was already busy doing the things God wanted him to do.*

*Matthew 2:1-15  
Luke 2:40-52*

### **WISE MEN COME TO SEE JESUS**

There were some wise men who lived a long way from Israel, in the East. They saw a sign of a star in heaven that Jesus had been born. They travelled hundreds of miles to try and see him. At last they came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?"

There was in those days a very bad king named Herod, who ruled over the country of Judea, where Bethlehem was. He heard that there was a new baby who was going to be a king one day, but he could not find where he was. So he called the priests and teachers together and said, "In what town is that king promised to David going to be born."

"In Bethlehem," they said, "for thus it is written by the prophet, 'Out of thee (Bethlehem) shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel'."

### **HEROD TRIES TO KILL JESUS**

"You go to Bethlehem and find out exactly where he is," said Herod to the wise men. "I want to worship him too." This was a terrible lie. He really wanted to kill Jesus, so that he could go on being king himself!

When the wise men went to Bethlehem they saw again the star which they had seen in the East. It guided them to the very house where Jesus was, with Mary his mother. They were very excited and happy. They bowed down before him to worship him and gave him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they didn't go back and tell Herod where Jesus was. God had warned them in a dream of Herod's wicked plan. So they hurried home another way instead.

## **JOSEPH TAKES MARY AND JESUS TO EGYPT**

The angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream. "Take the young child and his mother down to Egypt," he said, "and stay there until I tell you to come back. Herod is going to try and kill Jesus."

While it was still dark, Joseph took Mary and Jesus and they went to Egypt. There they stayed until Herod died. Then an angel told them that it was safe to come back to Israel. So they returned to live at Nazareth.

## **JESUS VISITS JERUSALEM**

As Jesus grew he learned everything he could about the Word of God. He was very wise, even when he was only young, and God was with him.

Every year his mother Mary and Joseph travelled up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Passover. Everyone used to travel together in a big crowd. They kept each other company and protected themselves from robbers and wild animals.

When Jesus was twelve years old, he went for the first time to keep the feast of Passover with Mary and Joseph, but after the feast, Jesus stayed behind! Mary and Joseph did not know until the first day was over. They thought he was with some of their relatives in the crowd somewhere, but he was not.

## **JESUS IN THE TEMPLE**

Joseph and Mary hurried back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they came to the temple. There he was, sitting in the middle of all the wise teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at how much of God's law he understood — and he was only *twelve years old!*

"Why did you do this to us?" said Mary to him, "we have been looking anxiously for you everywhere."

"How is it that you sought me?" he replied, "do not you under-

stand that I must be about my Father's business?" They should have known that they would find him in the temple! Even when he was so young, Jesus cared more about God than anything else.

### **LESSON FOR US:**

While we are young, we must learn as much as we can about God. This will make us grow up more like Jesus, who always spoke the truth, and wanted to serve and obey God his Father, more than anything else.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* Wise men from the East followed a star to find the Messiah.
- \* Joseph was warned by God to take Jesus to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill him.
- \* When Jesus was 12 years old he went to the Passover Feast with Mary and Joseph.
- \* After three days searching he was found in the Temple talking with the Teachers and asking questions.

### **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Who came to Judea looking for Jesus?
2. What gifts did the wise men bring for Jesus?
3. What did Herod try to do to Jesus, and where did Joseph take him?
4. Where did Joseph take Mary and Jesus to live when they came back from Egypt?
5. What did Jesus say to Mary when she told him they had been searching for him?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

6. How old was Jesus when he went with Joseph and Mary for the first time to keep the feast of Passover?
7. Tell how Jesus got left behind in Jerusalem and what he said when Mary and Joseph found him.

## 25. JOHN THE BAPTIST MAKES ISRAEL READY

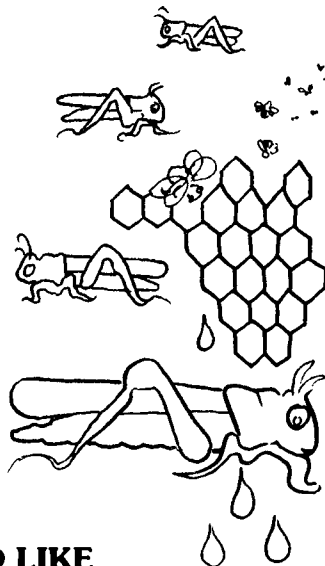
### Aim

*To show how God sent John the Baptist to prepare Israel, His people, for His Son.*

### Synopsis

*John told the people that Messiah was coming soon. If they changed their sinful ways God would forgive them.*

*Luke 3:1-18*



### WHAT JOHN THE BAPTIST LOOKED LIKE

John the Baptist had grown up. He lived in the wilderness of Judea. He was so concerned about the things of God that he didn't worry about fine clothes. He had a garment of camel's hair tied about with a leathern girdle and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

### JOHN THE BAPTIST COMES PREACHING

One day he came to the edge of the Jordan and cried, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He was fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah, who had said that there would be "a voice crying in the wilderness, saying 'prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight'."

Some people believed what John said and were sorry for their sins. So he baptised them. To be baptised they had to go right under the water, like being buried, only covered with water, and then coming out of the water again. This showed the people that they must change their ways. Their old way of living had gone, and now they must start a new life as though they were born again! Some people he would not baptise, because they had not repented or really decided to change their ways at all.

### JOHN TELLS THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES WHAT HE THINKS OF THEM

There were people called Pharisees and Sadducees. They were

leaders among the Jews. They always tried to look as though they were doing what God said, but really they just wanted people to praise them. They thought everyone would praise them if they let John baptise them. So they came to him one day by Jordan.

When John saw them he called them 'a generation of vipers!' that is, a family of snakes! The things the Pharisees and Sadducees taught the people were no better than poison. They would never be saved by listening to them because they didn't teach God's way. The Pharisees and Sadducees themselves had to be humble and change their ways. Only then would God be pleased with them.

### **JOHN TELLS PEOPLE WHAT TO DO**

Some people said: "What will we do then to change our ways?"

John said, "Do good to other people and share what you have with others. Don't be selfish and think only of yourselves."

Some tax gatherers came and said: "What will *we* do?" These men often used to collect more than they should and keep it for themselves.

John said to them, "Don't collect any more tax than you are told to do."

Some soldiers were there listening to John too. "What will we do?" they asked. "Don't be rough and cruel to people, but be fair to everyone. And be content with the wages you get too."

### **JOHN PREACHES ABOUT JESUS**

Some people listened to John and thought: "I wonder if this is the Messiah that the Bible says will come?"

But John said: "There is one coming who is mightier than I! He is much greater than I. I am not even worthy to undo his shoe laces!" John went on to tell of Jesus' work. He was going to separate the good people from the bad, the way a farmer separates wheat from chaff!

### **THE PEOPLE ARE PREPARED FOR JESUS**

Everyone heard about John, and what he said about the Messiah who was coming. John taught them from the Old Testament writings in the Bible. When the people heard his words, some of them waited eagerly for Messiah to appear in Israel. The Jews called him Messiah. We call him Christ. Both words mean "anointed king." He was already born, of course, and was about the same age as



John, but no one knew yet that Jesus was the coming king — not even John!

But soon after Jesus started to preach, those whom John had prepared for him believed Jesus straight away.

## **LESSON FOR US**

Before Jesus appeared, John taught the people that God wanted them to prepare for his coming by turning from their sinful, selfish ways and being baptised. Jesus is coming back to earth soon, and God wants us to be prepared for him by turning away from our sinful ways, learning about him and being baptised too.

### **Remember these points:—**

- \* John the Baptist grew up in the wilderness of Judea.
- \* He taught the people to repent and be baptised.
- \* Some people listened but the Pharisees and Sadducees were too proud.
- \* John told them he was not the Messiah but he taught them about the Messiah or Anointed King to come.

## **QUESTIONS 5 to 8 years**

1. Where did John the Baptist live?
2. What did he wear?
3. What did he eat?
4. What did John do to people if they really changed their ways?
5. What kind of things did John tell people to do to show that they wanted to change their ways?
6. John told the people that someone greater than he was coming. Who was it?

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 7 to 8 years**

7. Why would John not baptise some people?
8. What did John do to people to baptise them?

