

**Bible Storying Handbook**  
**For**  
**Short-Term Church Mission**  
**Teams and Mission Volunteers**

Revised Edition

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Bible Storying Handbook for Short-Term Church  
Mission Teams and Mission Volunteers

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The text is shared for the glory of God and for the benefit of use by short-term mission teams and those needing a manual of ready-to-use Bible stories.

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## FOREWORD

Are you a member of a church mission team or mission volunteer seeking a working knowledge of short-term Bible Storying for use in your ministry? This manual addresses that need. The manual takes a generic approach, which can be readily adapted by storyers as needed for peoples holding differing worldviews. The hope is that local Bible storyers will develop appropriate Bible Storying models that more directly address unreached people groups whose cultures and religions require attention to specific worldview issues.

The Bible Storying method is now used widely in a variety of situations among many different people groups. Both missionaries and national Christians are using Bible Storying strategies as effective witnessing and discipling methodology. Many among mission agencies, major parachurch organizations, and other Great Commission Christians are finding benefit in using Bible Storying in their ministries as well.

The manual touches on the several situations in which Bible Storying is an ideal approach due to listeners' cultural, nonliteracy and orality preference, resistance to traditional gospel presentations, hostility, and other religion factors. For some of these, there is an urgent need to use the most appropriate and acceptable approach for witness, church planting, discipling, and training of emerging leadership.

Orality in the form of nonliteracy, poor education, and oral preference for learning is a major factor among many of the world's unevangelized peoples. This means that some simply cannot read at all. Others read some but poorly and with difficulty in understanding. And many simply learn best orally — that is, by listening rather than reading. Stories are a wonderful way of both holding their attention and providing information in a form that is understandable and memorable, and in a form that makes it easy to share among others of their own people.

For some peoples there may simply be no Bible in their spoken language, or a Bible may be in a similar language (cognate) or a regional (market) language but not their spoken language. This poses vocabulary problems with

Scripture often expressed in a manner that is difficult to understand clearly.

For a few there is a matter of hostility in which a bias exists against what is perceived as Western or “Christian” preaching and teaching. But most of these people welcome stories as entertaining and culturally appropriate. So they will listen. And generally local authorities are more tolerant of telling stories than traditional preaching.

Perhaps the greatest factor is that of introducing God’s Word in a manner that it can easily spread among a people, changing their lives and planting new churches. Bible Storying is highly compatible with initiating church planting movements and fostering the strengthening of existing church planting movements. And Bible Storying is highly relational which is good for those on mission trips and mission volunteers who have opportunity to meet nonbelievers and seekers to share a Gospel witness in a friendly and often conversational manner.

Workshops are still the best way to introduce the concepts of Bible Storying to those interested to use it in their ministries. Workshops allow Bible Storying trainers to model the approaches and demonstrate a Bible Storying session, for participants to work on model Bible stories and actually practice telling the stories in small groups similar to typical mission situations. In these practices, new storyers learn the methods of Bible Storying and find they can do it.

For some this manual may be all that is needed to learn the basics of Bible Storying and how to actually begin using the storying method in their ministry. Diligent practice and experience telling the stories will lead to competency and skill as an evangelistic Bible storyer.

This manual came about through an urgent request from Taiwan missionaries Rob and Nan Sugg in 1999 that were on Stateside Assignment at a church in Mississippi. The need was for a compact Bible Storying model presentation for training a mission team. The original draft, which was needed immediately, drew on the list of core or basic stories and a brief overview of the Bible Storying methodology. Word of the “short-term storying manual” spread and others asked for a copy. Over the years various sections were

added to answer questions or to give additional emphasis. One later request was for more information on what to say after telling the Bible story. The original manual was intended for use by mission teams from churches and those serving as short-term volunteer resident missionaries who have opportunities to share stories with listeners while working among a people.

The primary focus now is on those in U.S. churches desiring to prepare for mission team trips abroad or serving among ministry groups in the U.S. who need a ready source of instruction, direction and story models which can be used during their short term ministry.

This trainer has employed Bible Storying in training sessions with national partner evangelists, sharing the stories by fast-track in a community setting, and using a single story or two in ministry opportunities in homes. These experiences have provided many personal blessings. First there developed deep relationships with those who have served as my interpreters. Often the interpreters said, "I can do this." And they were encouraged to begin their own Bible Storying ministries.

Next has certainly been the relationship with peoples of Asia who have come to love the Bible stories and who look forward to hearing again and again the stories that have changed their lives. This has provided a sense of satisfaction that I am proclaiming the Word for many who have never heard and would not have heard unless I had been faithful to tell them. And you can, too.

Finally, I have received abundant personal blessings in my Bible Storying experiences as I have discovered my own deepening understanding of God's Word as a living story. It has helped me to develop skill in sharing the Good News Message as story. I have become more sensitive to the openness (bridges to the Gospel) and to hindrances (barriers to the Gospel) among the listeners. I have gained personal blessings as God's Word spoke to me (in preparation and presentation of stories) just as the Word speaks to those gathered to hear the stories.

If you are fearful of forgetting part of the stories or making mistakes, let me assure that I have also. If the

thought of learning many stories causes hesitancy, think of learning them one at a time as you use them. Jesus told his disciples to go into all the world and make other disciples by teaching them to observe all things that Jesus commanded. Jesus promised to be with those obedient to his command. Beyond this command we want to tell the story of Jesus, our Savior, to those who need a Savior so they could enjoy the blessing of salvation just as we have.

May you, the new Bible storyer, enjoy the same blessings I have enjoyed as you share the Old, Old Story with a people who have never heard the story of Jesus and what God has done for them through his Son. To the degree that more and more Christians come to proclaim the Good News by the method of Bible Storying, this manual will accomplish its purpose.





## CHAPTER 1

### BIBLE STORYING FOR SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

You have heard about Bible Storying and how it is being used to evangelize, disciple, and train leaders in many countries and among many people groups. Now you would like to use the method yourself during your church mission trip or ministry time during a short term of mission service. *Storying* is a word that storyers coined to more accurately describe what they do and to distinguish this approach from what others do in teaching the Bible through more expositional lessons.

In Bible Storying, storyers practice an intentional preserving of the integrity of the Bible story — keeping it as accurate as practical for a good oral story and *not interrupting* the narrative to insert comments or teaching. Interrupted stories are both *confusing* and *distracting* to oral communicators who are trying to listen to them. The interrupted story is much more difficult to remember and retell as an intact narrative by listeners. Oral communicators among listeners can more easily remember and recall the stories and retell them to their own people when the storyers present the stories without interruption. After telling the story, listeners and storyer can then interact in appropriate teaching and learning activities.

For information on other forms of Bible Storying that allow for significant paraphrasing or even occasions for interrupting the Bible stories to insert teaching, see the book *Basic Bible Storying*.<sup>1</sup> Another source for this kind of information is the booklet on crafting Bible stories which looks at these options and where they may be useful in certain circumstances. Principles are stated as guidelines

more than rules to be strictly followed without any deviation. However the guidelines are distilled from experience.

## **Introduction to Bible Storying**

The Bible is a book of stories. Scholars estimate that between 60-70% of the Bible is in narrative format with the remainder being teaching and meditative. The Bible is a *story* that is the account of the relationship between God and mankind. The stories link together and move toward the focus of God's provision in Christ for restoring the broken relationship because of sin. The Old Testament stories provide needed preparation for seekers as the stories explore the matter of sin, its consequences, and need for God's forgiveness.

The stories generally provide a widely acceptable way of describing:

- The characteristics of God,
- The characteristics of the natural (carnal) man,
- The characteristics of Jesus as both sinless man and the sinless Son of God,
- The characteristics of the born again believer whose sins are forgiven, and
- What God expects of all believers.

The Old Testament stories deal with:

- The issues of the authority and sovereignty of God (why all are accountable to God),
- The broken relationship due to sin beginning with Adam and Eve and continuing through their descendants (our ancestors),
- God's judgment of all sin with punishment for sin, but provision for escaping punishment if one obeys what God says to do,
- God's promise of an Anointed One to suffer as a substitute sacrifice for man's sin.

The Gospel stories share the fulfillment of prophecy in the coming, ministry, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus who returned to the Father when his ministry on earth was finished. The stories of Jesus are built upon the earlier

stories in the Old Testament that provide a foundation for understanding the implications of the story of Jesus. The *JESUS Film*, for example, makes much more sense to viewers if they have some understanding of the Old Testament background leading to the story of Jesus.

Most religions do not have any foundational background like the Old Testament. Some have only mythical accounts of how man came to be. In other religions there are no accounts at all of beginnings, only of the present and ultimate fate of man due to one's action in this life and succeeding reincarnations. Many people in the world, although they think themselves religions, actually have little or no understanding of accountability to a God who is sovereign because He alone is Creator and sustainer of the world and all people, even those who do not know or recognize Him.

The world's major religions are both propagated by stories and maintained by stories. These stories are most often told by leaders and attributed to their religion's founder or other ancestral teachers. Religious teaching in most societies is passed on through stories.

Bible Storying is a method that makes use of stories to communicate the true revelation of God to all of humanity. This method employs a popular means that is widely used among the religions of the world in order to teach the true story of God and man. Humans almost universally respond to stories.

### **Hindrances to the Gospel**

Bible Storying, through its softer approach in story, seeks to overcome significant worldview hindrances that are often barriers to the reception of the Gospel. The barrier-sensitive method has proven effective where other forms of traditional witness or teaching have failed to gain interest or acceptance.

One widespread hindrance to Gospel acceptance is *limited literacy* that limits access to the Good News when shared in print or traditional witnessing methods based on literate logic and thinking. Many peoples remain nonliterate and are primary oral communicators that do not read at all.

Evangelists cannot communicate by using tracts or giving people Bibles to read.

Other people have only limited literacy because of a lack of education. In many nations, the struggle to exist leaves little time or energy for learning. Education limits the abilities of these people to attain literacy and engage in extensive learning by reading.

Another hindrance is the struggle of the people with unfamiliar religious vocabulary. Still others have translated Bibles or Scripture portions in only a regional or trade language used among their neighboring people groups, but not in their own spoken heart language which they understand better and to which they respond more freely.

Still another hindrance to Gospel acceptance is *ingrained resistance*. This is prejudice against Christianity that people have been taught through their culture or past history of events in which those identified as Christians were involved. These ingrained teachings have led people to be resistant to the Gospel message and any attempts to present it, as well as a negative bias toward Christians when they attempt to witness or teach. Those resistant may have been cautioned against the Gospel message as being Western and part of a plan of Western imperialism. In extreme cases the people may be openly hostile to what they construe as *Christian preaching and teaching*.

Any attempt to witness to those with ingrained resistance in a manner that suggests preaching, can be quickly and openly opposed and rejected. It may not be the message so much as the manner of the presentation they are rejecting. The same message in a more relationally compatible and culturally acceptable method, such as Bible Storying that includes narratives, of which they have some familiarity, can be both enjoyable and acceptable to otherwise hostile listeners. Bible Storying can significantly help to overcome ingrained resistance.

The issue of sin is a common hindrance to understanding and gospel acceptance. This relates to a peoples' own view of sin and what must be done about it. This concept is often one of the most difficult hurdles. Storyers must take time to draw the listeners in and hold their attention long enough

through stories for them to say, "We are like those people in the stories who have sinned and are under God's judgment." When the listeners understand their inescapable predicament before a righteous God, they become more ready to hear the Good News of what God has done to redeem sinners through Jesus.

Closely related to a proper understanding of sin is the need for realization that sinners can do nothing on their own powers or efforts to escape the consequences. Bible Storying thus helps overcome this hindrance to gospel acceptance by illustrating the matter of sin and its consequences.

Some religions express in their teaching a faulty concept of sin. In one culture, the concept is that it is a "sin to call a person a sinner!" But persons in that religion have some belief that one's words and actions can lead to loss of peace.

Another major religion looks upon sin as only a shortcoming due to one's ignorance of God's commands — not knowing what one ought to do. Sin can be merely "balanced out" by doing good works so that at the soul's judgment the balance will tip to the good side. And further, followers of this religion popularly believed that God is merciful and will somehow overlook one's sins if they are faithful to follow all the teachings, perform proper rituals, and observe the Pillars of their religion.

Among others, sin is defined as doing bad things like murder or robbing a bank. People think that if one has not done such evil things, then he/she is not a sinner and therefore not guilty. More attention is given to dead ancestors who must be honored and served by the living with offerings and material things to ensure one's continued blessing and freedom from trouble.

For those who believe in virtually endless cycles of reincarnation there is resignation to fulfilling their destiny in the present life. They accept the concept that no person can easily change religions. Their hope is one day to escape from this cycle of suffering and achieve a state of lasting peace. Still others trust in a time of "purifying" in a limited punishment (purgatory) before going on to eternal bliss.

In the teachings of most religions, the emphasis is on works to appease the gods (or spirits) who may be offended

or to somehow gain their favor and blessing in times of need. Christianity alone has the teaching of a God of Grace. The Old Testament Bible stories illustrate that mankind is not able to perform good works consistently and that the nature of mankind is to fall into sin and error through personal choice, as a people, and through influence of their leaders. The Bible stories are relational in that listeners can understand themselves to be like the people in the stories.

The goal of Bible storying is not simply to focus on the hindrances and barriers but to realize how these affect a people's beliefs and every day lives. Knowledge of hindrances and barriers helps to inform the best choice of stories to tell listeners.

### **Bridges to the Gospel**

As there are hindrances to Gospel acceptance there are also bridges to the Gospel. Every witnessing encounter involves a relationship, however brief it may be. Generally, longer encounter give rise to stronger relationships. Longer relationships usually result in greater trust levels and more intense possibilities of listeners coming to understand the implications of the gospel for them.

Bible Storying provides for the bridges of these longer relationships ideally through a series of stories over a period of time. But there is also merit in even the brief story encounter in which a well-chosen Bible story strikes home, providing listeners with warnings about the consequences of sin or communicating hope in the option of repentance and belief in Jesus.

Further, stories are relatively easy to remember and to recall, leading to the possibility of listeners retelling the stories among their own people. The stories serve to anchor the truths related to salvation. Whenever and wherever the stories are retold the witness continues.

Stories are entertaining. You may be thinking, I didn't come to these people to entertain them. Yet, if you fail to attract their attention and hold it long enough to share the gospel, then what have you accomplished? It may be the entertainment value of a well-told story helps to overcome

hostility to hearing more gospel stories. In addition, stories foster fellowship between the storyer and listeners in the communal setting of storying. The story time is a sacred relational encounter.

Many other bridges contribute to gospel acceptance. The perceived needs and longings in listeners' lives often serve as bridges to the Good News of Jesus. Increasingly, people are having dreams, or visions, in which Jesus appears to them and these dreams become bridges to their salvation. Happenings like this are called "redemptive analogies" that can lead to a greater openness to the gospel. There are remnants of Bible stories some people know like the Flood Story. Other events in their history and elements in their culture may also provide an opening or spark an interest because of a parallel to the Bible stories. Look for these.

Many like Hindus are seeking peace in their lives. The downtrodden among outcastes need a message of God's love, acceptance and forgiveness. Some who are suffering distress due to physical disasters will respond to stories of a loving God who is powerful to help in time of need, providing hope of relief. Even the desire to learn English can be a bridge for sharing the Gospel. Bible storyers utilize all the bridges that help bring people to hear the stories of God and Jesus.

### **What are Some Limitations of Bible Storying?**

Bible Storying has great usefulness in proclaiming the Gospel. Some considerations do, however, exist. First, Bible Storying takes time, especially if many stories are used and listeners are given opportunity to participate in the storying sessions. The typical mission visit is short, lasting a few days to a week or two, and usually involves contacts with a number of people rather than being able to remain in one place with the same listeners to teach and witness over an extended period of time.

Stories take personal time to prepare and learn. Outside of initially learning stories, real story learning comes through repeated telling of the stories to listeners. This can be

daunting for the occasional Bible storyer, one who is preparing to go on a mission trip, and who will only be with the people they visit only a short time, and yet needs to learn many stories. What can be done? Some suggestions follow later.

Another concern of persons using the storying method relates to the multitude of stories in the Bible. One list includes 150 popular stories among the several hundred more in the Bible. The *Following Jesus Series*<sup>2</sup> lists 289 unique stories. Beginning Bible storyers may initially have difficulty in selecting which of these many stories to tell. The truth is that not all of these stories are needed for most witness.

Some stories are better for certain peoples, some are best not used until a people become more mature in their faith and can receive the stories without reacting negatively against the Bible because of misunderstanding the stories. So the storyer is left with essentially three choices: 1) Use a basic set of stories like a core story list (basic stories that address the typical Bible Truths leading to salvation), 2) use one of the following story models, or 3) develop their own set of stories which they select and prepare for telling.

It is always helpful to have some understanding of the target people's worldview (barriers or hindrances and bridges) to give clues as to which stories are definitely needed and which ones might best be skipped for the time being. This will give a hint of how many stories are needed to bring people from where they are in their spiritual condition to have an opportunity to understand who Jesus is and why one must accept by faith what Jesus was sent to do.

Bible storyers can take a shortcut if they consider a list of *core Bible stories*. These stories cover the basic biblical truths leading to salvation. The list can be enhanced to cover some of the issues needed for certain worldviews. The storyer is in the best position to pick up clues as to what the people are not understanding or having difficulties in accepting. When the storyers perceive these sources of misunderstanding or failures to understand, they can follow these procedures:



- Simply add more stories with related teaching themes
- Follow the same pattern of crafting and telling
- Delete unneeded or redundant stories
- Make story substitutions to ones that seem more appropriate for the listeners and to which they better understand and relate.

It is important that the listeners perceive the integrity of the stories as being linked together as part of a larger or continuing story. So where there are gaps, as when skipping over stories for the sake of brevity, careful bridging must be done to maintain the relationship of the stories and their continuity. This is not difficult to do. Sometimes it is enough to say, "After a long time had passed...."

At other times carrying forward threads that could be a character such as Abraham, or one of the promises of God, or prophecies looking forward to what was going to happen at some future date maintain the relationship. Summary stories can be used to connect events time does not allow going into all the intervening details of connecting stories. For instance, the Joseph story could be summarized by only mentioning the events to connect Jacob's stories (the Patriarchs) to those of Moses (the Exodus).

For most on short-term mission trips an interpreter is needed. This can be a blessing or a burden. Most new short-term storyers get into trouble when they use idiomatic expressions that do not translate well. A good interpreter will follow the English very carefully while still expressing the thoughts appropriately for their language and culture. It is important for interpreters to know in advance the stories or at least the Scripture references in case they need to refer to their Bibles. Having written-out Bible stories as you plan to tell them can greatly facilitate an interpreter to correctly follow the English story.

The places where there are opportunities to tell the Bible stories may not be well lighted. If you, the storyer, are dependent on frequent referral to your written story, problems could arise. I know this from personal experience.

Storyers frequently encounter noise and other disturbances. Generally these will disturb you, the storyer,

more than the listeners. It may take some concentration to overcome ambient noise or other disturbances while telling a story.

In most cultures good eye contact and attention to the listeners is essential. Telling a story is a relationship between the storyer and the listeners. Realize that for most of the listeners the story is alive and happening right there as you are telling it.

Review in summary form or even retelling of a previous story may be needed where there are opportunities for repeated visits. Don't worry about repeating a story. Most oral communicators will appreciate hearing it again, even if you feel awkward telling it again.

### **When I Needed a Story in a Village**

I had been invited to speak to a group of believers and seekers from the Baptist Hospital ministry in a village north of Bangalore. We arrived at the place not long before dark. The host family wanted us first to have some refreshment. Outside it was getting very dark. Finally the host said that it was time to begin. So we stepped outside where the crowd was gathering. There was no electricity. The only light was an oil lamp fashioned from a brake fluid can and the flame was flickering in the wind. I realized that my Bible and notes were useless in this setting. While the group sang some choruses I prayed: Lord, what to do?

By then the moon was rising and visible through the branches of a tree behind the crowd. It was like a sign from heaven saying: Tell the story of Zacchaeus. That is not a very long story so I stretched it a bit with a bridging about how Jesus was invited to eat with sinners and this offended those who were religious leaders who considered themselves righteous without sin. Finally I began the story of Zacchaeus and related how Jesus visited his town, walked among a crowd of people, and stopped under the very tree where short Zacchaeus had climbed to see Jesus. I had to add a few details about the typical tax collectors for the foreign rulers and how they sometimes enriched themselves at the expense of their own people.



One of the nice things about working through an interpreter is that you have time to think ahead and you need speak only half the time. Prayer for the translator is certainly appropriate. Be certain to allow plenty of time for the translation.

At the conclusion of the story, I asked the people to turn around and look at the tree with the moon shining behind it. I told them that the tree reminded me of the story of Zacchaeus and how Jesus came to his village. Then I added:

Tonight Jesus has come to your village through this story. He has come to visit you and your homes. Zacchaeus' heart was changed by Jesus' visit. Jesus wants to change your heart. Will you turn from whatever sin makes you unworthy and be freed and forgiven like Zacchaeus?" Then I turned the time over to the pastor who was with me to give an invitation and conduct a prayer time.

I needed a story that night. Fortunately, I had it. I just needed to call it up and then tell it. It was only one of many times that a situation developed that needed a Bible story.



## Storying by Volunteers and Journeymen

A team of six volunteers had the challenge of helping disciple a group of people in a village where there were many new believers. Most have not heard the stories that we would consider basic. Traditional discipleship assumes a believer has a certain base of knowledge about creation, God, forgiveness, or God's chosen people. These volunteers, working alongside one of the journeymen had the opportunity to provide that base in a way that the people could understand. South Asia has a large percentage of oral learners who don't necessarily capture truths from reading or traditional methods of teaching that are literature based.

Volunteers prepared fifteen stories from the Old Testament: Creation, Creation of Man and Woman, The Fall, Noah, Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph (presented in three stories), Birth of Moses, Burning Bush, Ten Plagues, Passover and Exodus. They then told the story of the Birth of Jesus. They presented three stories a day, with each team member being responsible for two stories. The stories were told several times, followed by drama, discussion, telling the story in small groups, and retelling in the larger group. The nationals were responsible for the dramas.

Up to seventy people attended each day. Only 75 percent had heard some bits of some of the stories. Even pastors didn't know the stories well. The stories were well received by the believers. A few pastors were critical, feeling like the volunteers should not be teaching in such a simplistic way.

Abraham's test proved to be a difficult one to hear, especially for women. The believers were surprised that someone who was living by faith would have something so severe required of them. The volunteers tied this story to the New Testament and Jesus' sacrifice for us.

The favorite story was Joseph. The people were pleased as God fulfilled his purpose even through an imperfect man.

The journeymen planned to follow up with more story training. Previously, topical storying had been done, but those working here said that the truths came out more naturally with chronological storying. The topic wasn't having to be "forced" in the discovery time following the story.

## CHAPTER 2

### BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS LEADING TO SALVATION

Bible Storying seeks to guide the listeners to the truth of God's salvation and the new life that comes with it. Those who plan to use Bible Storying need to consider the basic biblical teachings that lead to salvation. The following list covers truths that generally need to be addressed in order for people to fully understand their position before God as sinners, the love that God expresses toward mankind, and what God has done for mankind in Christ Jesus. The Bible storyer is advised to go over the list and reword the teachings in his/her own words, combining or expanding the truths according to the spiritual need of listeners.

The amount of attention to each of these teachings is dependent to some extent upon the worldview issues of the listeners and how ingrained their beliefs are. For example, in the Philippines most people have some understanding about sin and have a strong desire to go to heaven and to have a good relationship with God — be a part of God's family. Further, they already know about Jesus and the Bible and may even attend worship services. So these are givens that do not need as much attention. They do need to understand that salvation is not through a church, prayers or ritual, but only through a relationship to Jesus who forgives sin and gives eternal life.

Among Muslims sin is seen as of little consequence due only to man's ignorance of God's laws. God is so great that for man to think of having any relationship with him is blasphemous. And besides, salvation is a matter of little assurance as it depends on Allah's mercy and their Prophet's hopeful assistance in the Last Days.

Others like Hindus see Jesus as another *avatar* or appearance of one of their gods. And they see all religions as leading to God, while acknowledging literally uncountable gods among their country and village deities that they worship for various reasons. Salvation as such is not really understood in the Christian sense as the object is to escape suffering and at last be absorbed into a creator being.

Although few really are as much concerned about this as about meeting daily needs in this life.

Followers of Traditional Religion (*Animists*) believe that the creator god made the world and then left it in the hands of the spirits and lesser gods. They fear the spirit world which exists all around them, influencing their daily lives, and needing more attention than a far away God. So they need understanding of the daily interrelationship that Creator God has with mankind.

With considerations of these and other barriers and bridges the story list will need to vary, but it is still based mainly upon the list of basic truths that follows. You can easily see the correlation between the Bible Truths leading to salvation and the worldview issues of a people. If working with a local missionary, the significant worldview issues and Bible truths needing special emphasis should be available to you for aiding your preparation.

### **Basic Bible Truths Leading to Salvation**

The following list of Basic Bible Truths that lead to salvation is a basic guide of what the storyer typically may need to cover in storying. After this list of truths a list of core stories is given that will help teach these basic truths.

1. God is one God, sovereign, creating and acting in history.
2. God is all-powerful, all knowing, the source of all grace and provision for all people's needs.
3. God is ever present in His Creation, yet is holy and separate from His Creation.
4. God communicates with people by His Word, He is faithful to his Word, keeping His promises.
5. God loves all people, wants fellowship with all.
6. God is righteous, hating sin.
7. God's righteous nature demands that sin be judged and punished by eternal punishment (separation from God).
8. Men and women are accountable to God for all they say and do.
9. Men and women are sinners by inherited nature (birth) and by freewill choice, and are separated from God by their sin.

10. People can do nothing to save themselves from God's judgment and ultimate punishment for sin.
11. A person can be reconciled with God (and sins forgiven) only through the justifying means God has provided through a perfect (acceptable) substitute sacrifice (Promised One who suffered and died in sinners' place).
12. Jesus the Son of God (the Promised One come from God) is the only perfect sacrifice for sin.
13. Salvation for all people involves turning from sin, seeking God's forgiveness, and having faith and trust in God's provision by believing on Jesus as the only Savior to restore the broken relationship with God and redeem one from God's eternal punishment.

**Note:** Take care in how *repentance* is stressed in its relationship to salvation. The concept of repentance should indicate a sign of one's willingness to turn from sin and seek God's forgiveness. Among many of the world's peoples there is a practice of doing *penance* (works of one's own suffering or righteousness) in order to atone for one's own sinful acts and so to earn forgiveness and salvation by one's own works. Repentance is illustrated in many of the OT & NT stories used to evangelize. Repentance as a part of the sanctified life can be covered in greater depth in later discipling lessons. Be aware of how listeners understand it.

I am indebted to New Tribes missionary David (Dubby) Rodda in West Africa for the initial form of this list and for the concept in how to use it in planning story selection.<sup>3</sup> He called his list "Doctrines Necessary for Salvation."

Though these truths are expressed as theological statements for the convenience of this manual, they will need be conveyed and illustrated through stories for most listeners whether literate or nonliterate.

### **Core Bible Story List**

The following *Core Bible Stories* build off the list of Basic Bible Truths. These stories and any alternative stories form the backbone of most Bible Storying evangelism strategies. The list is descriptive of basic stories but should not in any way limit the use of other needed or to substitute more appropriate stories for listeners. The "Core Bible Story List" includes the following items.

1. What is God's Word and how it came to us (*not a core story but often an essential story for people who do not know the Bible as the source of spiritual authority*).
2. Creation of the Spirit World (*not a core story but a needed story for people who live in fear of evil spirits they worship or attempt to appease in lieu of a far-away Creator God*).
3. Creation of the physical world. (*could be combined with No. 4*)
4. Creation of man and woman. (*could be combined with No. 3*)
5. The first sin and God's judgment. (*Nos. 4 & 5 could be combined*)
6. God's judgment of a sinful world and salvation through God's grace & man's obedience (*Flood story*).
7. God's call and promise to Abraham (*Promise of One to bless all peoples*).
8. God provided the substitute sacrifice for Isaac (*God will provide the Lamb*).
9. The Passover—the sign of blood and the lamb (*saved by obedience and the sign of blood*).
10. God gives His Holy Law—the Ten Commandments.
11. The Sacrifice System—shedding of sacrificial blood as temporary covering for sin (*Leviticus 17—"it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life"*).
12. The Prophets' message and promise of a Redeemer who would suffer for man's sin (*Psalms, Isaiah 53, Zechariah*).
13. Birth of Jesus according to prophecy (*Isaiah, Micah, Matthew & Luke*).
14. Baptism of Jesus—testimony of God the Father, the presence of the Holy Spirit and testimony of John—"Behold the Lamb of God."
15. Jesus taught as one having great authority (*speaking words of the Father and doing what he saw the Father doing*).
16. Jesus has authority to forgive sin—paralyzed man and four friends (*or sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, or woman taken in adultery*).
17. Jesus has authority over nature—Calms the Stormy Sea, walking on the water, feeding the multitudes.
18. Jesus has authority over demons—man in synagogue, Gadarene Demoniac, boy with evil spirit, woman with spirit of infirmity.



19. Jesus is the resurrection—Jesus raises Lazarus to life, also Jairus' daughter, the widow's son.
20. Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man—Man must believe the message of the prophets in this life.
21. Jesus and Nicodemus—"You must be born again of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God".
22. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman—Jesus is the source of living water of salvation (Jn 7:37-38).
23. Story of Prodigal Son—God the Father forgives and restores those who repent and return to him.
24. The Great Wedding Feast and refused invitations.
25. The Last Supper—"This is my body and my blood shed for you".
26. Jesus is betrayed, arrested, falsely accused, tried and sentenced to death as he said would happen.
27. The crucifixion, decisions for and against Jesus by the two criminals, "It is finished," testimony of the Centurion.
28. The resurrection and appearance to disciples and other followers—"He is alive!"
29. Jesus returns to the Father, the Ascension, promise of his return.
30. Jesus the true High Priest (Heb 8-9), an advocate before the Father making intercession for believer's sins (Ro 8:34; Heb 7:25) (*esp. for those who rely on their priests to be intercessors*).
31. Return of Jesus to receive believers unto himself, to judge and punish unbelievers, Satan and the evil spirits, thus fulfilling all promises and prophecies. (Mt 16:27; 25:32; Jn 14:1-3; Ro 2:16; 1Co 4:5; 2Co 5:10; 1Th 4:14-17; 2Th 1:7; 2Ti 4:1; Jude 14-15; Rev 20:12; 22:12 (*esp. for those awaiting another final arbiter who will assist them into Paradise*)).

This core story list initially grew out of the list of commonly told stories in the early days of Bible Storying. Model lists that provided some suggestion of stories to use in the beginning came from *God and Man*<sup>4</sup> (35 stories) and "Bible Stories: Message & Matrix"<sup>5</sup> (26 stories). This list is generic in that it covers the basics of the Redemption Story and Characteristics of Jesus and so could be used in most situations until the spiritual worldview of listeners is better understood.

## Stories for Decommissioning Skulls

Bible storyers need to be flexible. I was in East Malaysia in an Iban jungle longhouse. My Iban evangelist friend had invited me to attend a ceremony to render powerless a basket of human skulls that in former times had been taken from their enemies and kept as a source of spiritual power for that longhouse.

Now the young family was a believing group and realized this was an evil thing to have in their place. The plan was to have a worship ceremony and then take the skulls out to burn them and bury them. There was great fear that the spirits of the skulls would be offended and cause the family harm. So Bible stories were in order to demonstrate God's authority over the Spirit World and its influence on people.

I had early in my storying experience found a need for a story about the Creation of the Spirit World. I realized the need was not to go into all the details about evil spirits but to show that God did not make them evil and that God as Creator of all spirits had authority over them. That story then was the beginning point for the stories of Jesus and his authority over evil spirits. The man in the synagogue and the Gadarene Demoniac were the stories showing Jesus' authority.

Then a story of the coming judgment and punishment of Satan and all the evils spirits in everlasting fire rounded out the stories. Later after prayer the family was kept from destroying the skulls as the longhouse headman said they belonged to the whole longhouse so he took them. The couple rejoiced that they were free of this evil influence.



## CHAPTER 3

### OPTIONS FOR TELLING THE STORIES

Bible storyers may use various ways of telling the stories. These options leave room for creativity and accommodation of circumstances in choosing how to tell the stories. Storyers can select among the various options for telling the stories.

#### **Tell One Story Each Encounter**

This is the best approach if planning to discuss the stories with listeners to draw out the truths in the stories by dialoging about the stories and the implication for listeners. This is the normal strategy followed in Chronological Bible Storying. If the story list is not too long, the time may allow the storyer to tell all the stories, discuss them with listeners, and bring listeners to closure with an invitation to believe.

#### **Tell a Cluster of Stories Each Encounter**

This approach takes advantage of the fact that stories tend to group together around certain themes or characters that link the stories together. The creation stories (*of the spirit world, the natural world and of man and woman*) deal with God's sovereignty. Then a cluster of judgment stories follows: (*Adam and Eve's sin, Cain's sin, judgment of the sinful world in Noah's day, and those building the Tower of Babel*). Next there follows the promise stories: (*God's promise to Abraham of a descendant to bless all peoples, the same promise to Isaac and Jacob*). The Abraham stories also have the substitute sacrifice that is one of the key stories leading to Christ as the substitute sacrifice for sin.

The stories of Jesus also fall into clusters such as the annunciation and birth, his baptism and temptation by Satan, the healings, his forgiveness of sin stories, accounts of power encounter stories, the passion, death, and

resurrection stories. These clusters provide ways to teach the entire story of Jesus and his meaning to people today.

### **Tell As a Continuous Fast-tracked Story**

This is the best approach if time is very limited or there is only a single opportunity to use Bible stories to evangelize. This approach may be done publicly where many are gathered, used with a limited group in a home, used bedside in a hospital, or even one-on-one when visiting or traveling. In this approach there is no attempt to stop the narrative in order to discuss each individual story. The first option is not to stop at all but to continue as telling one long story. The second option is one that allows for a very brief introduction, sensitizing question or transition between stories.

The stories then continue, usually in a somewhat condensed manner, moving smoothly from story-to-story as the stories touch upon all the Basic Bible Truths leading to salvation. An example of a brief question before the Flood story might be:

“Do you think it is important to obey what God tells you to do? Did you know that you are here today because one man long ago obeyed what God told him to do? Here’s the story of that obedience and why it was important then and now.”

Depending upon the listeners’ worldviews, the ratio of Old Testament stories as a preparation for the stories of Jesus can be adjusted as needed. A fast-track option is often accompanied by some kind of picture set to illustrate the stories, the progression of the story and as a focus for listeners’ attention. For more information on the use of teaching pictures see *Using Visual Aids in Bible Storying*.

### **Situational Bible Storying**

Storyers might have opportunities to tell a single appropriate story or small cluster (like several stories of Jesus) in some ministry encounter. The clusters are usually

related thematically. This is *situational storying* or *point of ministry storying* as a story best suited to the situation at hand, chosen and shared during an opportunity to witness or minister to individuals or families in their homes. This opportunistic encounter can easily open up a longer witnessing encounter if the storyer is invited to return. The situational ministry opportunity might be for prayer for an individual or family. Before praying, lift up Jesus with an appropriate story or two as the Holy Spirit leads. Then pray for the person and, before leaving, offer to share more Bible stories if invited back, and pronounce a blessing on the home before departing. In this way, there may be a future opportunity to tell the chronologically arranged stories addressing worldview issues while covering basic Bible truths leading to salvation. The longer storying session will give time for discussing the implication of the individual stories and answering questions by listeners.

### **Probing for Responsiveness and Opening the Way for a Longer Storying Strategy**

By telling Bible stories in a short encounter, the mission trip visitor may open up a door for a local evangelist to come later and, over a much longer period of time, begin to tell the stories one-by-one and lead listeners to talk about what God is saying to them through the stories. This breakthrough could happen as a follow-up to evangelistic crusades where volunteers take advantage of home visits and other personal opportunities to introduce the Bible story.

*Ministry Projects*—Special projects like well drilling, construction of houses, and disaster response ministry and relief aid all provide times of contact and increased interest and curiosity which give opportunity for short-track Bible storying during the ministry or project.

These, too, are further opportunities for a longer and more thorough Bible storying strategy by a local missionary or national partner who knows the people's worldview and speaks their language with the right vocabulary for their understanding.

*Bible Story Tracts*—Some have used Bible story tracts that they give to a potential listener and then asked if the person has heard the story. After telling the tract story, ask if the person liked the story or had some questions about it. Be sure to say there are more stories like it and ask if it would be possible to have a time to meet and share some of these.

*Bible Story Revival*—Another option is a Bible Story Revival type of meeting. This could be done in five nights by telling four stories a night for a total of twenty stories. Some ministry teams in the Philippines had a roadside banner printed that featured twenty stories in five blocks of four pictures. During the day the banner was hung across a road in a public place. Each night the banner was taken down and folded so that one block of pictures was displayed for the stories to be told and discussed in that session. So in five nights all twenty stories were covered and an invitation given to respond. The particular pictures used were from *The Witnessing Kit*.<sup>6</sup>

*Three Night Strategy*—A missionary suggested that among the people he worked with that it was a possibility to have three persons do team storying for three nights with each person telling two stories and alternatively one person telling three stories for a total of twenty-one stories. After telling all the stories then the team leads a discussion of the stories. The stories used are those suggested by the *Storying Scarf*.<sup>7</sup>

In the next chapter the discussion continues with how to begin a Bible storying encounter. The options listed above all can be used to initiate a longer or more in-depth storying encounter. Opportunities, strategies and methods all overlap a bit, but all depend upon being prepared to take advantage of the situation to share the stories pointing toward the need and provision for salvation.



## CHAPTER 4

### HOW TO BEGIN A BIBLE STORYING ENCOUNTER

#### Using a Pocket Photo Album

Some like to begin a casual conversation and then move it toward the family. A photo album is opened to show a picture of the storyer's family (*husband, wife, children*). After some comment, the storyer mentions having another family he/she is part of. The next picture is that of one's church showing people and not just a building.

Discuss what it means to have a family like this who also love you and care for you. Then mention that we are all part of a larger family that has a problem. Turn now to Adam and Eve and their disobedience and proceed through the selected pictures and accompanying stories to the resurrection of Jesus. Then offer an opportunity to be a part of the family of Jesus that is entered through faith in Jesus as God's provision for our "family problem" → sin. *The Witnessing Kit* colorized pictures (*which individual pictures will fit in a pocket photo album*) have been used, though any other album-sized color print or printout could be used as well.

#### Visiting Bedside in a Home or Hospital

Because of a person's illness and possible short attention span this should be a brief presentation that hits only the high spots and minimally the Old Testament with major emphasis upon stories of Jesus. At the conclusion, offer to come again and give a more in-depth presentation when the person is stronger or well and able to go home. Then the other family members and neighbors can also hear the stories told one-by-one or whatever can be arranged for their convenience. It is not uncommon for other patients in a room to hear the stories and inquire about them or ask for a presentation at their bedside.

## **Family Presentation in a Home**

This approach calls for a more relaxed presentation done by Bible women or medical follow-up teams during a home visit. Usually children are present and may need to be accommodated by the choice of stories and by minimizing some of the harshness of certain judgment stories. This presentation may be done by prior appointment or invitation of the family as well as an opportunistic visit.

Picture booklets or small flipcharts can be a very helpful way of illustrating the stories as they are told. Flipcharts have a disadvantage of having pictures already selected and locked into an order. Presentation books have an advantage in that individual pictures may be selected and arranged in the desired order in a clear file (*like a large undivided photo album or clear page holders in a notebook*). This manner of illustrating the stories during the presentation allows for editing by adding pictures or deleting pictures according to the stories being used. Also, other illustrations may be used as needed in the story presentation. Sources of teaching pictures may be from downloaded files, scanned or camera copied from printed teaching pictures or from suitable sized pictures removed from booklets. Use a digital camera to photograph pictures and have the booklet sized prints made directly from the camera memory media or a CD.

## **Using a Preaching Poster**

This approach works well for a small public gathering and can be set up in a moment by hanging the poster on some handy projection and beginning the story. Using a preaching poster takes advantage of the elements of surprise and curiosity. One such poster is "*The Origin & Destiny of Man*" which depicts the Bible story in seven pages. (*See Visual Resource List at end for those living or working in Asia.*) I've hung these from a mango tree while storying or simply held them up while teaching.

Some large Bible teaching pictures that are not too visually cluttered can be used. One clever woman storyer in Bangladesh had difficulty finding listeners for her stories. So



she posted the crucifixion of Jesus picture in a public place. Soon women were saying the picture disturbed them. They wanted to know the meaning of the picture. The storyer told them there was a story behind that picture as asked if they would like to hear it. She reported eleven opportunities to tell the story of Jesus to the now interested listeners.

### **No Visual, Just Telling the Story**

The best way to get into such an opportunity is by asking questions related to origins of man, the nature of man, or other questions that might speak to gaps in listener's spiritual knowledge or worldview. The objective is to raise sensitivity and to create an atmosphere of curiosity and interest into which the storyer says there are some stories which speak to those very questions, and then proceeds to begin the Bible story, expanding where necessary, and skipping over parts to keep the narrative lively and moving toward the story of Jesus.

Some on mission trips have used the digital players with pre-recorded stories already in the local language. This requires some preparing with missionaries where a visit is planned. Also some of the media producers like God's Story<sup>8</sup>, Faith Comes by Hearing<sup>9</sup> or MegaVoice<sup>10</sup> and others may have story sets in the local language already available.

There are advantages to live presentations because the storyer can respond to the listeners' reactions. In a live storying event there is a kind of storyer/listener relationship that exists for the duration of the story. The story begins to "happen" as it is being told. Recorded stories, if done well, have an advantage because the stories are always told exactly the same way every time they are played. And if the storyteller in the recording is gifted and skilled in telling stories there will be interest and understanding. The storyer who plays the recording can still introduce the story and lead in any discussion of the story afterwards.

A retired pastor visiting in the Philippines did not speak any of the local languages. He had asked me if I could help him secure recordings of stories and presentations that he

could play on his cassette recorder while traveling on buses. As soon as he could determine a person's language he would put a cassette of that language in his player. To follow up he kept tracts in the same languages handy to leave with the person.

Creative storyers have done this in market places by setting up several pictures and when people stop to look, then asking the rhetorical questions to raise interest and merging right on into a story..."All of these things began to happen a long time ago when the earth was new and there were yet no people...The God of creation said, 'I will make man and woman in my image, in my likeness, and they shall rule over all that I have created...'"

### **Conversational Storying**

A possibility relates to personal encounters during which a person shares some aspect of their personal story or need. The storyer then should be prepared to respond with a personal story of empathy or sympathy that relates to the first story. Then to follow with a carefully chosen story from God's story. These types of encounters are more likely to happen between peers where a person seeks solace or comfort by sharing their story during a conversation. Once while in India I was visiting over a cup of tea with an evangelist who began to tell how he was abused, robbed and run out of a village when telling about Jesus. He was clearly defeated and shamed by what happened. I shared a personal story of how I had to learn to forgive someone who had wronged me. Then the story shifted to what happened to Jesus who was abused, robbed of his clothing, shamed before his own mother and religious leaders and yet forgave those who were putting him to death. We talked a bit about how difficult it was to forgive people when these things happen, but that it was what Jesus would want us to do.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **BRINGING CLOSURE TO YOUR BIBLE STORYING OPPORTUNITY**

Each storyer should follow the Holy Spirit's leading in the closure to the storying encounter. There is no one and only method for drawing the net. Several possible ways of ending the storying encounter include the following examples.

#### **Simple Invitation**

The simplest invitation at the conclusion of Bible storying is to invite people to believe on Jesus and accept what Jesus has done on their behalf. Whether this is understandable or an acceptable practice will need to be informed by local missionaries or evangelists. One might ask: Now that you've heard these stories, what do you think you should do?

Be careful that any positive response such as a raised hand or verbal acknowledgement is not simply a desire to keep a good relationship with the foreigner. It would be good to have people tell why they are responding that way—to verbalize their sinful condition and desire to believe that Jesus died for their sins. Ask for testimonies. The storyer can give a brief testimony of how he/she responded to these same stories.

#### **One-On-One Presentation**

The one-on-one storying presentation is the easiest method to bring closure. With this approach, the invitation can be personalized and extended as needed. A printed tract that summarizes the major points of the story in a narrative form may be helpful if the people are literate. A picture tract can be helpful for non-literates to cue them to remember the stories. Praying the sinner's prayer could be used. In most countries it is unlikely to have "just" one listener. But the Bible stories would be directed to the person of interest while others listen in. Around eight to ten well-chosen stories are ideal for a personal encounter leading to invitation. A brief

summary of the stories and/or discussion of implication of each story is also helpful.

### **Invitation to Talk One-By-One**

This approach uses an invitation following a public storying presentation to provide a less public meeting when a more intimate presentation of the invitation to believe is given. Circumstances will dictate when best to do this. Provide a brief summary of the overall story again and invite seekers in the group to express their response to the story of Jesus.

The Bible Storyer might ask if he/she can go to a listener's home to talk with the family about the story and what they should do after hearing the story of Jesus. In this way the message might spread beyond the individual and include family members. The possibility exists also that neighbors of the seeker will be drawn to the Gospel. The intent is to make the invitation encounter as intimate and personal as possible.

### **When Public Response Is Difficult**

In some situations, a public response by openly responding or signaling by seekers among the listeners may be hindered because of fear of persecution. This makes it difficult or near impossible to get a public response to the invitation. This situation is particularly a problem for women in Muslim lands and common among young people in many places. Some storyers have invited women to respond by making a mark on a piece of paper and giving it privately to the storyer, or by whispering to the storyer their response. Another possibility for an invitation is for a "silent heart" response in which the women or young people are encouraged in their own hearts to decide what they must do. They can be led to pray a silent prayer to acknowledge their belief in Jesus as God's Son, to confess they are sinners and ask to receive forgiveness of sin, and to promise Jesus they will soon make their decision known to others. They should be encouraged to make their decisions public first by living a

life that is a testimony of Jesus in their hearts. Second they should be encouraged to make their decision publicly known to others as a testimony as the Holy Spirit leads them. The storryer's prayer is that the new believers will be strong in their faith and not weaken and fall away. The new believers should pray for Jesus to help them to share openly their faith in him.

The storryer should always be open to local practice and advice of those who live and work among a people.

### **Invitation to View the *Jesus Film***

This approach opens the way for guiding a people to join the visualized story of Jesus. This film, based on the Gospel of Luke, generally presents the story of Jesus in the language of the people. The whole viewing group can see the story together, respond to it together, and be challenged to believe on Jesus in the story review at the close of the film. The *Jesus Film* has proved to be quite effective as a way of proclaiming the Gospel message in a public setting. Where does storying fit in? If possible plan and prepare to story some of the key Old Testament stories that point to the Messiah and find fulfillment in Jesus. Tell these stories before screening the film.

### **Public Invitation by Storryer or Evangelist**

A Bible storryer or evangelist may directly offer the invitation for public response. It has been observed in public gatherings that listeners can come under conviction and begin responding to the stories even before the last Old Testament story is finished. As listeners identify with characters in the stories they can begin to realize their own sinful condition before a righteous God and their helplessness to save themselves from God's wrath. Public response and professions of faith often strengthen others to follow in their profession of faith as well.

The visiting evangelist must be careful to follow the culturally acceptable patterns of registering decisions. Harm

often results from encouraging foreign patterns of making decisions. A storyer should rely on local leaders to decide on what methods of decisions are most appropriate in the culture.

### **Personal or Favorite Invitations or Closures**

A visiting storyer/evangelist may use his/her own favorite method of invitation or closure. The advantage of this method is the familiarity and comfort the evangelist feels with this approach. The disadvantage is that those living in oral cultures may not always follow the same logic that some of the soulwinning scripture presentations follow. Local worldview and culture are important considerations in how an invitation is given. The wise approach calls for the storyer to consult with a local pastor, leader, or missionary to see if it is culturally acceptable and not likely to be misunderstood by the listeners.

Some use the *Gospel Bridge* picture or a variation of it for their invitation presentation. *Steps to Peace with God* has been popular with those of Hindu background.

### **Immediate Affirmation of New Believers**

In the closure process, it is essential to immediately affirm new believers by going back over the key stories. These key stories include:

- Mankind's broken relationship with God due to sin,
- God's judgment of all sin,
- The substitute sacrifice,
- The covering sacrifice of blood (if appropriate),
- The promise of one who would suffer for sins in our stead,
- The death and resurrection of Jesus, and
- The promise Jesus made to prepare a place and to receive believers to be with him.

Pray with the believers, one-by-one if possible, for the whole group as an alternative. Ask God to strengthen each

one and to protect them from Satan's attack. Ask how their lives will change as new believers. Teach some worship songs and have a thanksgiving worship service, thanking God for His mercy on sinners and asking for His blessing on new believers and watchcare over them.

### **The Bible in Two Hours**

I was teaching Bible stories in a small town on the coast of Malaysia. Some of local Jakun tribal people were brought in from their swamp village for the teaching each night. It was 20 kilometers out to their place and each night someone had to go and get the people and bring them in and then take them home again. Only a few could come each night. The others sent word they would like to hear the stories.

But there was a problem. If a foreigner entered their area someone would come from the Muslim government to investigate. A typical window of safety was about two hours.

When we arrived the people wanted the visitors to have some tea. So with a tea cup in one hand and while some helpers put up the teaching pictures I began to tell the Creation story. I tried to pace myself so that I would not run out of time before finishing the story of Jesus. Mentally I thought ahead choosing the stories I would have time to tell.

The people, though mostly nonliterate or with little education were fascinated and hung on to every word through my Chinese interpreter who spoke their language.

I did rush through the Old Testament stories but then slowed down with more details in the stories of Jesus. Since the ethnic Malays looked down these people, I chose stories in which Jesus lifted people up or made them acceptable to others. They liked these stories. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave the man in the synagogue. Jesus touched and healed the leper. Jesus told the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven and to get up and walk. Jesus spoke to the outcaste Samaritan woman and promised her living water. The woman with the issue of blood was cleansed and made whole. The sinful woman who wept at Jesus' feet was forgiven and sent away with a blessing of peace. The widow's son was restored to life. The Syro-Phoenician

woman's daughter was cleansed of an evil spirit. Jesus fed the hungry multitude twice and there was food left over. Jesus ate with sinners like Zacchaeus. Jesus was so compassionate and forgiving of even those who beat him and were putting him to death. He suffered in our place for our sins, died, was buried, and returned to life again! The people who saw him alive again were excited. Thomas wanted to touch Jesus' wounds. Jesus returned to heaven but the angels said he was coming again as he promised. That was our story from God's Word.

An hour and forty-five minutes had passed. We took down our pictures and bid our good-byes. My interpreter promised to come back (as a local citizen he could go in and out) and review the stories and tell more from God's Word. We chose a different road out just to be safe. We finished our teaching in the town that lasted several nights. I used to think of that experience as "Hit and Run Storying." It was not ideal, but the listeners asked for the stories and were hungry to hear them. That was an opportunistic use of Fast-tracking the Bible stories.

### **Bible Stories in Greeting Cards**

In another part of India where I often visited the people were relatively wealthy and educated. Some had attended religious schools and were familiar with Christian hymns. A man of Syrian Christian background worked for one of the coffee co-ops and knew all the local plantation owners. So he invited me to visit that area and made appointments for me to visit a number of homes.

I was looking for a way to maintain an ongoing relationship with the people. So I asked for their birthdays so I could send greeting cards then and at Easter, Christmas and other auspicious times. They greatly appreciated nice cards and kept them on display for long times in their homes. So in addition to the greetings, I began including Bible stories either by writing stories in the card or printing the stories and attaching them inside the card.





## CHAPTER 6

### RESOURCES FOR BIBLE STORYING

People often ask where to get Bible stories and other resources for Bible Storying. I good-naturedly tell people that I got my stories from the Bible and that is a good place to begin looking! Of course, when they ask this, they are looking for a model set of stories to follow, or at least to use in the beginning until they work out their own stories.

Actually there are a number of resources available. A good one for the story of Jesus is a book called appropriately, *The Greatest Story*<sup>11</sup>. This book attempts to harmonize all the pieces of the Gospel accounts of Jesus into a single gospel narrative organized into easy-to-tell episodes. The book is very helpful in the annunciation and birth narratives, enriched parables and miracles by combining the several accounts into one fuller account, and then picking up with the Last Supper and going through Christ's suffering to the Ascension. It is a great help for preparing a Fast-track presentation on the ministry of Jesus or the birth narrative or the Passion story from entry into Jerusalem to the Ascension.

Another excellent Bible story resource from Tyndale House Publishers is now back in print. I will mention it in the event you see one in a Christian bookstore. It is *The Story: From Adam to Armageddon*<sup>12</sup>, a paperback chronological narrative account of the Bible story. The Living Bible account has been edited into a chronological timeline account with the story presented as a continuing narrative by episodes. There are no book, chapter or verse markings. All redundant accounts have been simplified without repetition of earlier accounts. The kingdom and prophet stories are harmonized into single narratives, the four Gospels are harmonized into one narrative account with individual stories, and Acts and the Epistles are harmonized into one interwoven account by events and letters.

While the storyer might miss some of their favorite passages due to the editing, the book is an excellent resource to show how to combine parallel accounts and tell

them as a harmonized story. The book could be used for a text in an ESL reading class. It is edited on about a 12<sup>th</sup> grade English level.

Another possible resource is Jesse Lyman Hurlbut's *365 Short Stories from the Bible*<sup>13</sup>. There are other resources such as the *Reese Chronological Bible*<sup>14</sup> which retains the normal Bible wording but the passages have been arranged chronologically which may help in sorting out some of the Old Testament stories.

A number of additional model story sets compiled and used by this storyer and others in English and several other languages are available on request as digital files or in booklet format.

Some storyers like to use the Living Bible or Today's English Version for the simple wording that is closer to a spoken story. I have used the New International Version quite a bit as it was popular and used by many English speakers in the areas where I worked.

One caution is that occasionally the Bible in the language of the listeners may render wording a bit differently than English versions. Even verse numbering can differ. It has happened when interpreters have said to me in the course of a story: "My Bible doesn't say that." So it is always good to rehearse or go over a story with your interpreter to be sure.

I would suggest not using the more idiomatic modern versions to prepare your stories unless you are with English speaking younger people who might more easily appreciate the casual wording.



## CHAPTER 7

### STORIES ABOUT GOD AND MAN

In the following chapters is a model set of chronological stories and some teaching suggestions that you can use, adapting and revising for your target group. You may want to add some additional stories of your choice. Several optional stories for women are included which is not normally a part of a generic chronological presentation and were not included in the Core Story List. Read these following stories to get an idea of what to do, then go to your own Bible and read aloud several times the same passages. Then prepare the stories in your own words as you would tell them.

*Remember: You don't have to use all the stories which are provided.*

The background scriptures are given for each story and an optional introductory scripture passage that the storyer may read before telling each story to *anchor* the story in the Bible. When the story is told, listeners will hear that read Bible passage as part of the story. This is one way in which the story is authenticated or anchored in the Bible. The scripture references given in parentheses in the stories are for the storyer's reference only and should not be given as part of the story. Later if a person asks a question then refer to the passage. *(Add the storyer's own references and any discussion points or questions to ask listeners.)*

The first several times in attempting to story through the Bible the storyer may feel a need to have outline or teaching notes in hand along with the Bible. Soon the diligent storyer will find it possible to do the stories mostly from memory and not have to constantly rely upon notes. This will free the storyer to gesture and articulate the story for the entertainment of the listeners (*holding their attention*) and for clarity and understanding as they hear the stories from God's Word. If you do need a prompt as you tell the story post an outline on the back of any pictures you use.

Go over what will be done with the interpreter so they will be familiar with the plan (and vocabulary) to tell the stories as story and not a sermon or simple factual account.

### **Some General Guidelines**

In telling the stories in all categories, several general guidelines will provide direction for the storyer.

#### ***Signal that your source is God's Word***

The storyer should indicate that the source of the stories is the Word of God. If it doesn't cause a problem, open the Bible and hold it in hand while telling the stories. This reminds the listeners that the story comes from God's Word. When talking about the story and its implications for listeners, close or put down the open Bible.

A caution must be given. With some nonliterate holding or reading from an open Bible may separate the storyer from the listeners. If it offends that the storyer is literate and they are not, then put the Bible down and tell the stories from memory. In some cultures a teaching Bible with writing or marking in it is offensive, so keep a clean copy handy.

#### ***Avoid Needless Debates Keep the Storying on a Win/Win Basis***

Avoid being drawn into a debate with listeners. Keep the story session on a "win/win" basis. If challenged at some point in the story, tell the listeners that the story is what God had recorded in the Bible. Indicate that the one telling the story is not free to change the story. Some circumstances may require letting some with strong objection have an opportunity to tell *their story* after the storyer finishes the Bible story. Trust the power of God's Word over the words and account of man.

With some Muslims if this is a recurring problem in which some listeners are wondering if the stories have somehow been altered, it may be wise to read the story verbatim from

the Bible and then tell it as a story. Make the transition by saying: "Now let me tell you that story in my own words."

If questions do arise and can be answered briefly it is okay to choose to do so. Beware of people with "pet" questions and trick questions. Others may ask questions in an attempt to demonstrate what they know about the Bible. Try to overlook these or simply thank the person and continue on. At times it is possible to answer a sincere question with a question pointing to the answer or with reference to another story, hopefully one that has already been covered.

### ***Seize Every Opportunity As a Training Event***

Make every shared Bible Storying opportunity a training opportunity. Make best use of every shared opportunity with an interpreter or national Christian partner a training opportunity. In training the storyer will want to *share his/her vision* — why they are doing what they do. *Share a personal testimony* and especially why you were led to share God's Word in this way — a desire for all people to have the same opportunity that you had to hear the good news of forgiveness of sins.

Remind listeners that you the storyer seek for them the opportunity to know Jesus as the One who gave his life as a substitute sacrifice for the punishment their sins deserve. Your own prayer is for all people to be able to enjoy God's fullest blessing on their lives just as you have. If they can read English, be prepared to share a copy of the Bible lessons as you are teaching them. Remember this manual is for your instruction and it may approach preparing for the evangelistic encounter differently than leaders might do in their own culture.

If visuals like teaching pictures were brought, be prepared to leave these in the hands of someone who can be trained to use them. Take time with the person to go through the pictures (*or other visuals*) and explain each one. Then pray with the person that God will bless their use of the pictures as they tell and teach the stories.

## ***When Response Does Not Come***

Times will arise when there is *no apparent response* to the Bible stories. This situation can happen for any of several reasons. First of all, don't be discouraged if the group of listeners seems to diminish after the initial stories. Listeners may have initially come out of curiosity. People have a way of listening *safely* without being present. They will ask someone else who was present what the foreigner said. It is important to keep going if there are any listeners at all. Of course, if some listeners are inadvertently offended by the vocabulary, by something unusually sensitive in the stories, or by the use of a certain picture, be prepared to ask the listeners' forgiveness. Make the necessary changes (*if possible*) and continue on. A pre-story session with one's interpreter can help to head off this kind of problem.

Sometimes there is a *delayed response* to the stories. The people hear the stories but do not respond at that time. The stories will continue to work on them after you leave as the Holy Spirit uses the stories to convict of sin and displace error with truth. *This really happens!* You will have planted the seed that a local missionary or national partner evangelist is able to harvest later. So count yourself as part of the team as Paul said, "*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, and God made it grow*" (1Co 3:6).

The goal in beginning a Church Planting Movement (CPM) is to saturate a people with God's Word conveyed in manner so they can receive it, understand it, consider it, have opportunity to act upon it, and so they can easily share what they hear with others. By training an assistant or helper you will leave behind someone who can continue what you with God's help have begun. It goes without saying that all the preparation and teaching must be covered with prayer for yourself, your interpreter if used, and for your listeners. Your ministry through the Bible stories is a partnership with the Holy Spirit. You tell the story; the Spirit brings conviction.

## CHAPTER 8

### BEGINNING STORIES ABOUT GOD AND MAN

#### 1. The Bible—God’s Word for All People

**Background Scriptures:** Dt 31:24-26; Isa 40:8; Jer 30:2; Jn 20:31; 1Co 10:11; 2Ti 3:15-16; Heb 4:12

**Anchor Scripture:** Ro 15:4

#### God’s Word for All People

Do you know who you are? Do you know where your ancestors came from? Do you know who made the first man and woman? Do you know who loves us and cares for us, providing all our life needs like our food, our health and our families? Do you know who wants to forgive our wrongdoing, and who even has provided for us after our death? We need trustworthy answers to these and many other questions about life.

Long ago the God who created this world and the first people caused the account of these things to be written down. God spoke to a man named Moses and instructed him to write down the history of the beginnings. God inspired and instructed others to write about Himself, to write about the people who lived in that day and what they did, and most importantly of all, to begin telling the story of what God was doing for all people.

The men that God chose to write these words were called prophets. They wrote in the language that they spoke in their day. The message was first to the people who lived in that day. But it was God’s plan to preserve the message because it was for all people, even for us today.

From the time the first words were written until the last was about sixteen hundred years, or about thirty lifetimes. The words written in the beginning agree with those written at the end because God guided the writing. God caused the

writings to be gathered into books and finally into one book which we know today as The Bible. It contains many stories, songs, and teachings, but it is really one story from beginning to end—the story of God and man. In the beginning the Bible tells some important things about God, about ourselves, and about our great problem in this life. Then the Bible begins to tell how God was working out His plan to forgive us for our sin against Him. It tells about a special person that God was going to send. He would make it possible for our sins to be forgiven and remembered no longer.

One writer said these things written in God's Word were to warn us so we would not fall into sin as our ancestors did. He also said that God's Word was to encourage us and to give us hope. Still another writer said that God's Word was very powerful and sharp, able to penetrate our souls and judge our thoughts and attitudes of the heart. But most important of all, it tells us about the Promised One God sent to suffer for our sin. And by believing in that Person we might have forgiveness of our sin and the promise of everlasting life and blessing after our death.

God wants all people to know what His Word says. So He has caused it to be translated into many languages so that all might know the truth. "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." God caused these stories to be written for you. And I am here to tell the stories to you.

### **Suggestions for Telling and Teaching**

This may be your entry point story for witness. The purpose is several fold. Where people have no previous knowledge of the Bible, this is an introduction to an authoritative source of truth. It is a summary of the Bible's message of salvation. Do not argue the merits of the Bible against any other holy book. The Bible story has an integrity and focus that is lacking in all other religious texts. As you tell the succeeding stories the weight of Scripture will be its own testimony. Your role is to keep telling the stories.



## 2. God Is Ruler Over All—Creation of the Spirit World

**Background Scriptures:** Job 38:4-7; Ps 148:2, 5; 103:20; Isa 14:12-14; Eze 28:12b-17; Mt 25:41; 13:39; 24:31; Heb 1:7, 14; Rev 5:11; 12:7-10; 22:8-9

**Anchor Scripture:** Ps 148:2, 5

### God Created the Spirit World

Long ago before God created this world in which we live, or even the first man or woman, God created all the spirits. Because God is righteous (*totally good, without sin*) He created all the spirits like Himself, for God, too, is a spirit. God has always lived. He is eternal, without beginning or end. God commanded and all the spirits were created. They are so many no one can count them. God created them to worship Him and to do the work He gave them. Later God would use the spirits as messengers when God needed to speak to man, to help man, or even to punish man when he sinned against God.

One spirit God created very wise, very powerful, and very beautiful. God had a special work for him to do, to guard God's holy throne in heaven. But this spirit soon became filled with pride because of his great beauty. He desired to take God's place in heaven and rule over all the other spirits God had created. So this spirit led a rebellion among the other spirits. Because of their wickedness and rebellion, which was sin against God, the spirits were driven from heaven. Because God is righteous, that is, without sin, He judged their sin and is preparing a special place of eternal punishment for all the disobedient spirits. The spirit who rebelled against God we know today as Satan. His name means *adversary*.

God's Word tells us that Satan is a deceiver, a liar and the father of lies, and a murderer. He seeks to destroy all the good work of God, and especially to tempt man to sin against God. But God is more powerful and is able to overcome the evil work of Satan so that good will result, instead of evil. Satan knows that he has been defeated and

that his time is short, so he is filled with hatred and works furiously against man. The other wicked spirits we know as demons or evil spirits. In the coming stories we will see that these spirits feared the One sent from God, for they knew who he was and that he had authority over them.

Most of the spirits remained loyal and obedient to God who created them. God uses these spirits as His messengers to warn against sin, to bring words of judgment whenever man sins, and to bring good news. We know these spirits as angels. Sometimes angels appeared as young men dressed in brilliant white clothing with a golden belt. Sometimes angels appeared as servants of fire. Angels are very powerful and wise. But we are not to worship them, for God created them to serve the people who obey God.

Because God created all the spirits, they were created good like God. When they sinned, God judged their sin, punishing them. God rules the Spirit World. That is the story from God's Word.

*Note:* If you do not agree with this interpretation of the passages in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, look for other passages about the sovereignty of God and the work of Satan and his characteristics (Ex: Job; Ps 99:1; 103:19-21; Isa 45:12; Zec 3:1; Jn 8:44; 2Co 2:11, 14; 1Pe 5:8; 1Jn 3:8). The main focus is on the sovereignty of God and only to initially characterize Satan who was created sinless by God but chose to rebel against God. Write your own story. The scriptures for this story were written out on individual 3x5 cards and arranged into a storyline. You can do the same to compile your own story based on Scripture to proclaim the sovereignty of God over the Spirit World.



### 3. God Created the World

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 1:1-2:3; Ne 9:6; Ps 8:3-8; Isa 45:11-12

**Anchor Scripture:** Ps 24:1-2

God Created the World

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was still uninhabited and dark. God's Spirit hovered over the waters that covered the earth. God spoke and said, "Let there be light." And it was so. God saw the light was good. He called the light "day" and the darkness "night."

Then God said, "Let the waters above be separated from the waters below." So God made the sky above and gathered the waters into seas below. Again God spoke and said, "Let dry ground appear." And God saw it was good.

Now God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants of all kinds and trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds according to their kind." And it was so. God was pleased and saw that it was good.

God said, "Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them serve as signs to mark the seasons and days and years." God made the sun as the greater light to govern the day and the moon as the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the water be filled with living creatures, and let birds fly across the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every kind of fish and all living and moving things that swim in the water, each according to their kind. God also made every kind of bird. He blessed the creatures of the water and all the birds and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."

Again God spoke saying, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, wild animals and creatures that move along the ground. God saw that it was good.

Finally God said, "Let us make man in our image and likeness to rule over the birds of the air, over the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his image, both male and female. God blessed them and said to them: "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it." God said to them, "I give you every seed-bearing plant and every tree with fruit that has seed in it as your food." God also provided the

green plants as food for the animals, birds and creatures that move along the ground.

God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. All the work of creation was finished in six days. On the seventh day God rested from all His work. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day God rested from all the work of creating. That is the story from God's Word.

This is a story of God's sovereignty over all creation. It also introduces several characteristics of God: His power, God's authority in His Word, His knowledge in knowing how to make all things, God's grace in providing food, God's love in making us in His image, and God's righteousness in that all He made was good. Talk about the characteristics of God revealed in the story and in the additional verses below. Listeners may want to talk about what being made in God's image means.

Listeners might also have their own creation story and want to tell it. Let them. Then let the listeners compare the two stories. Do not condemn theirs. Read one of the passages from Ne 9:6; Ps 8:1-9; 19:1-6; Ps 104; Isa 40:28; 45:12, 18.

### **Some Characteristics of God**

God is righteous. All His work is good.

God is all knowing. Nothing is hidden from His sight.

God is all-powerful. He can do anything.

God is the source of all grace. He gives us food, water, our children, our health, and forgiveness of sin.



### **4. God Created the First Man and Woman In His Image**

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 1:26-28; 5:1; Ps 8:4-6; 139:13-16; Job 33:4; Mal 2:10; Acts 17:26

**Anchor Scripture:** Ge 5:1-2

God Created the First Man and Woman

God had said, "Let us make man in our own image." So

God created them both male and female in His likeness. God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living being.

God had planted a garden called Eden and there God put the man He had formed to work it and take care of it. God had made all kinds of trees to grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and eating from it one would live forever, and the tree of knowing good and evil.

God commanded the man saying, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowing good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

God had brought all the animals, beasts of the field and birds that God had formed, to the man to see what he would name them. Whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. But God saw there was no suitable companion for the man. So God said He would make a helper for the man.

God caused the man, Adam, to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping God took one of the man's bones from his side and closed up the flesh. From the bone taken from the man God made a woman and brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man." The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

So God knows man because God formed man in His own image. It was "from one man that God made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him." (*Acts 17:26-27*) God did not create the earth to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited. (*Isa 45:18*) One of God's prophets wrote these words: "For you created me in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully

made...All the days of my life were written in your book before one of them came to be." (*Ps 139: 13, 14, 16*) That is the story from God's Word.

Talk about what it means to be made by God. If God made us, are we then accountable to him? Have the listeners ever thought that all the people on earth have a common ancestor in Adam? In what ways are we alike? In what ways are we different? What does it mean to each person to be "made by God?"



## **5. Relationship with God Was Broken By Sin**

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 3:1-24; Isa 59:2; Eze 18:4; Jn 8:44

**Anchor Scripture:** Ro 3:23

### The Broken Relationship with God

Now the serpent was more sly than any of the wild animals God had made. One day the serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from *any* tree in the garden?'" The woman replied, "We may eat from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not surely die," the serpent said. "for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw the fruit of the tree was pleasing to her eye, and good for food, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She gave some to her husband who was with her, and he also ate.

Then their eyes were opened and they realized they were naked. The man and woman sewed leaves together to make coverings for their nakedness. When they heard the sound of God walking in the garden the man and woman hid themselves among the trees. God called out to the man,

"Where are you?" The man answered, "We heard you, and we were afraid because we were naked. So we hid."

God asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?" The man blamed the woman God had given him, and the woman accused the serpent.

Then God judged the serpent saying he was now under a curse and would crawl on his belly in the dust. And one day an offspring of woman would crush the serpent's head, but the serpent would strike his heel. To the woman, God said that her pain in bearing children would be greatly increased and her desire would be for her husband who would rule over her. To the man, God said the ground was now under a curse. Man would have to work hard to grow his own food but the ground would yield thorns and thistles. One day the man would return to the dust from which he was taken.

Then God clothed the man and woman in the skins of animals and banished them from the garden so they could not eat from the tree of life and live forever in their disobedient condition. God placed an angel with a fiery sword to guard the way to the tree of life. The man Adam called his wife Eve, which means, "mother." That is the story from God's Word.

Talk about the disobedience of Adam and Eve that caused them to be separated from the presence of God. Now sin would result in death for the sinner. God had clothed them with the skins of innocent animals which had their blood shed to cover Adam and Eve's sinfulness. The sinful nature would spread to their children and continue to spread to the whole human race. It would be our human nature. A writer in god's Word said, "...Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." (*Ro 5: 12*)

In this story the concept of disobedience as sin is introduced along with its consequences. What is another characteristic of God seen in this story? God despises sin and judges sin and punishes the sinner. Remember that many cultures have faulty or limited concepts of sin and may not view sin as fatal.

Talk about obedience and disobedience: the desire to obey, and the disobedient or rebellious nature. What about a work animal that disobeys when plowing the field? What happens when people in your community are disobedient? What is the consequence for

them? For the community? Can one have fellowship with a disobedient person? Read or quote Isa 59:2 or 1Pe 3:12. Have the listeners talk about what these verses mean.

### **Another Characteristic of God**

God hates sin, judges all sin, and will punish the sinner.



## **6. When God Judged a Sinful World, Saving the Righteous**

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 6:1-9:17; Lev 17:11; Mt 24:38-39

**Anchor Scripture:** Ge 6:22

### God Judged a Sinful World and Saved the Righteous

As the years passed and the descendants of Adam increased on the earth, there was also an increase in wickedness among the people. God saw how great this wickedness had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart were only evil. So God said, "My Spirit will not struggle with man forever, for he is mortal. I will give man one hundred and twenty years to repent." Because of the evil, God said, "I will destroy mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, all creatures that move along the ground and even the birds." But Noah found favor in the eyes of God. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time. He had three sons named Shem, Ham and Japheth.

God said to Noah, "The earth has become corrupt in my sight and full of violence. I am going to put an end to all people. So make for yourself and your family an ark (*boat*) of wood." God revealed to Noah how to make the boat and finish it. Then God said, "I am going to bring floodwaters upon the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it." God would bring to Noah a male and female of all animals on earth and more of the clean animals suitable for food and sacrifice. Noah was



to gather provisions for them and take them into the ark. Noah did all that God commanded him to do.

Then God said, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family because I have found you righteous in this generation. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and nights and destroy every living creature."

So Noah took his wife, his three sons and their wives and the animals into the ark. God closed the door. In seven days the rain began to fall. The floodgates of heaven were opened. The deep springs of the earth burst forth. Soon the earth was flooded for a long time. All living creatures with the breath of life in them died. Only Noah and those with him in the ark were safe.

Then God sent a wind to dry up the water and finally the earth was dry again. God said, "Come out of the ark, you and your family and all the animals so they can multiply and replenish the earth. Noah offered a pleasing sacrifice to God. God blessed Noah and his sons saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and replenish the earth. I now give you everything as your food, only you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it." God promised never again to destroy the earth by flood and gave the rainbow in the sky as a sign of His promise. God had saved the righteous when He destroyed the wicked. God provided a way for the righteous and obedient to escape His judgment. That is the story from God's Word.

The Cain and Abel story was skipped. Use it if you wish as it presents the beginning of the spread of disobedience leading to violence. In this Flood story are several themes to talk about or get the listeners to talk about. Why was God angry with the people? Was God patient with them? In what way? What was God going to do? What did God see in Noah? Did God reveal to Noah how to escape the coming judgment? Did Noah obey God? Was Noah and his family and the animals saved from destruction? What does this tell about obeying what God says we must do? Which people in the story are you like? If you lived in Noah's day, would you be swept away or safe inside the ark? Did the people pay attention to the coming judgment of God? Read Mt 28:38-39. Does God see wickedness? Does God judge sin? Does God punish sinners? Is God faithful to save the righteous? What does being "righteous" mean?

## 7. God's Promise of a Descendant To Bless All People

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 12:1-7; 15:4-6; 17:1-7, 10, 17, 19; Gal 3:16; Acts 7:2-5

**Anchor Scripture:** Ge 12:2-3

God's Promise to Abraham, a  
Descendant to Bless All People

Shem, one of the sons of Noah, had a descendant named Abraham who then lived in a distant country. Abraham had a wife named Sarah. God had called to Abraham to leave his country and his people and go to a land God would show him. Abraham's father was an idol worshiper (*Jos 24:2*). After Abraham's father died, God called again for Abraham to leave the land of his fathers and his people and go to a land God would show him. (*Acts 7:4*)

To Abraham God gave these promises:

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

So Abraham left his people as God had told him and set out for the land God had promised to give him and his descendants. Abraham was seventy-five years old. His wife Sarah was barren with no children and also old. Abraham traveled throughout the land to see that it was a good land. Again God had appeared to Abraham and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." There Abraham built an altar and worshiped God.

Many years passed and still Abraham and Sarah had no children and no one to inherit what God promised him. Once when Abraham asked God if his servant would be his heir, God told Abraham that he would indeed have a son. And God added that Abraham's descendants would be like the stars of the heavens — too many to count! Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old God appeared to him and said:

"I am the Lord Almighty, walk before me and be blameless. ...I will establish my everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants. The sign of the covenant will be circumcision of all male descendants. Your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations."

God also changed Sarah's name. (*it can be confusing to interpreters to use both the original name and the new name*)

Abraham asked God, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a son at the age of ninety?" Then God had said, "Yes, your wife Sarah will bear you a son by this time next year and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.

Abraham had laughed when he learned Sarah would have a son. His son's name Isaac means "laughter." But God always keeps the promises He makes. And God would certainly keep this promise to Abraham and Sarah. That is the story from God's Word.

Do you make promises? Do you keep your promises? What is a promise that someone has made to you? What did Abraham do to deserve God's favor? (*nothing — God chose Abraham, even though Abraham's father worshiped idols*) Now we see again the characteristic of God's grace. God chose Abraham and said He would bless him and through Abraham and his descendants God would bless all people. What do you suppose that blessing would be? Did Abraham believe God? Do you think that God will keep his promise to Abraham? What if God waits a long time to fulfill his promise? If you were Abraham, would you still believe God? In the last story we saw that obedience was very important. In this story what can we say about believing God? Do you believe what God says? Do you believe that God has a blessing for you?



## 8. God Will Provide the Substitute Sacrifice

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 18:1-15; 21:1-7; 22:1-18; Isa 53:5-6; Gal 3:13

**Anchor Scripture:** Ge 22:8

### God Provided the Substitute Sacrifice

God had appeared to Abraham again when three angels came to visit. After Abraham graciously gave them something to eat, one of the angels called the angel of God asked Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" "There in the tent," Abraham replied. Then the angel said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Sarah laughed when she heard these words for she thought to herself, "I am old and worn out, will I now have this pleasure?" The angel said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child now that I am old?' Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

God was gracious to Sarah as He had promised, for soon Sarah was with child and at the appointed time gave birth to a son. Abraham gave his son the name Isaac. When Isaac was eight days old Abraham circumcised him according to the covenant with God. Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me."

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to Abraham, "Take your only son Isaac whom you love and go to a place I will show you. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering. Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey and took his servants to cut some wood for the sacrifice. Then along with his servants and his son Isaac he set out for the place of sacrifice. On the third day Abraham saw in the distance the place of sacrifice. He told the servants to remain behind while he and Isaac went on. Abraham said, "We will worship and then we will return to you."

Abraham took the wood from his servants and placed it on his son Isaac to carry. Abraham carried the knife and the fire. As the two went along together Isaac asked his father Abraham, "Father, the fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering."

At the place of sacrifice Abraham built an altar and placed the wood on it. Then he took his son Isaac and placed him on the altar and took his knife in his hand to kill his son. But then the angel called out to him, "Abraham! Abraham!" Abraham answered, "Here I am." The angel said, "Do not harm your son. Now I know you fear God, because you have not withheld your only son." Abraham looked and saw a sheep caught by its horns in a nearby thicket bush. So Abraham offered the sheep in place of his son Isaac.

Then God said, "I will surely bless you, give you many descendants, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed."

So God Himself had provided the substitute sacrifice. That is the story from God's Word.

This story introduces the concept of a substitute sacrifice, one to suffer and die in the place of another. Many cultures have similar stories of how a father or brother took the punishment for another who was guilty. Others will have trouble with this concept in that they believe each must pay for their own sins. We know this story as one that points to the suffering and death of Christ, our substitute. It is too early to add these details. So talk about being tested and found faithful. Remember the theme of obedience and also that God is righteous and will do what is right.

What do the listeners think about Abraham's obedience to God's command? What about his reply to Isaac when asked about the lamb for the sacrifice? Was God faithful to provide the lamb? What did Abraham gain from his testing? (*his faith in God was now strong*) With Muslims they may argue this was Ishmael and not Isaac.

We have not included the story of Ishmael in this story but it is sometimes helpful to tell Ishmael's story and then Isaac's. If you need to tell Ishmael's story, begin with Abraham and Sarah's journey to Egypt and the servants they were given when they departed. Tell about Sarah's barrenness and how she conspired to give her handmaid to Abraham to provide a child. Tell about

Hagar's mistreatment by Sarah and running away to be found by the Lord and sent back. Mention the circumcision ritual and that Abraham asked God to bless Ishmael, but God said that it would be Isaac that would fulfill God's promise. Tell about Sarah's request to send Hagar and Ishmael away and how God again helped Hagar and Ishmael in their time of need. Later Hagar got a wife for Ishmael from Egypt and God did bless him with twelve sons and a daughter. Then go to the story of God's promise to Abraham, the visit of the three angels, and the birth of Isaac. That way the two stories are pulled apart into separate accounts that show God's love for Ishmael and care for Hagar, but that God had another son in mind for Abraham through his wife Sarah.



## 9. The Passover—The Sign of Blood and the Lamb

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 15:13-16; Ex 11:1, 4-7; 12:1-23; Lev 17:11; Heb 11:17-18; 1Pe 1:2

**Anchor Scripture:** Ex 12:22-23 (or Ex 12:13)

Saved from Destruction by  
the Blood of the Lamb

God had revealed to Abraham that one day his descendants would go to live in a foreign land. There God would bless them and make them into a great nation of people. But in time they would be enslaved and oppressed terribly. God would punish their oppressors and deliver them.

This began to happen in the days of Isaac's grandson Joseph when he was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers and sent to a foreign land. God blessed Joseph that land and in time Joseph became second only to the king of the land. Joseph forgave his brothers and invited them to come live in the land with him. God purposely took Abraham's descendants out of the land of Canaan because of the wickedness the people there were sinning greatly against God. (*The story of Abraham's dream when God told what was going to happen in future days. Gen 15:16*) After Joseph died and many years passed the new king became afraid of

Abraham's descendants and made slaves of them, oppressing them terribly just as God said would happen.

God called a man named Moses to deliver Abraham's descendants from that land. Moses was to tell the king that God wanted his people to go into the desert to worship Him. But the king refused to listen. Even after God sent many plagues upon the people of the land, still the king would not listen. At last God would send one more plague upon all the firstborn of the people.

God revealed to Moses that Abraham's descendants must kill a year-old lamb and sprinkle its blood over the doorway and upon the sides of the door to their homes in order to be safe from God's punishment. When God sent his angel to punish the people the angel would see the sign of the blood and pass over that house sparing those inside from any harm.

In addition, the people were to roast the lamb without breaking any of its bones, bake some bread without yeast, and provide some bitter herbs to eat to remind them of the tears they shed as slaves. This was to be eaten on the night of the Passover. The people listened to the words of Moses and obeyed.

On the appointed day every descendant of Abraham obeyed God's command to prepare for the Passover. They killed the lamb and sprinkled its blood on their doorway. At midnight God sent his angel throughout the land taking the life of the firstborn man and animal in every home of those people. Even the son of the king died that night. There was loud mourning throughout all the land, for there was not a house without someone dead among the people of the land. But among the descendants of Abraham who obeyed God's command, there was not a single death. The sign of the blood had saved their families. That is the story from God's Word.

There are several themes in this story. God knew what would happen in the future because He is sovereign. God wanted Abraham's people to grow into a great nation but not become wicked like the people in the land where Abraham had lived. God had a plan to deliver his people from their

oppression because He loved them and is faithful to do what he promised to Abraham to bless his descendants. God would provide a savior to deliver the people. If there is time you can tell one of the plagues to show how Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to obey God and so brought disaster upon the Egyptian people.

In the earlier story and again in this one I had deliberately not mentioned the Egyptians. You are free to do so if you prefer. In some places where the story might be used there could be sensitivity to mentioning the name of the country. In the same way I had used "Abraham's descendants" in place of "Israelites" because of enmity between Muslims and Israel. The object of the stories is to keep the people listening to the end and not get disturbed and reject the stories too soon. Be your own judge about what is best to do where you may be using these stories.

The main theme of this story, however, is obedience that leads to salvation — if we do what God tells us to do He is faithful to deliver us from destruction. The other is the sign of blood that was to mark each house. Recall that in the Adam and Eve story animals died, implying their blood was shed to cover Adam and Eve's shame after they sinned. Now a lamb was to die and its blood used to mark those who would be safe from destruction. If you knew there was a terrible judgment coming upon the world, would you obey God's command to be safe?



## **10. God's Holy Law Teaches All Are Sinners**

**Background Scriptures:** Ex 20:1-17; Dt 5:32; 6:6; Ro 3:20; 7:7; Gal 3:19, 24

**Anchor Scripture:** Ro 3:19-20

God's Holy Law Judges Our Sin

When God led the descendants of Abraham out of Egypt He brought them to the holy mountain to give them His Law.



Now the people would know what sin is — sin that would lead to God’s judgment and punishment. For God knows what is best for man. God’s Law was to instruct man to live a life pleasing to God. There Moses went up into the mountain for forty days while God wrote His holy Law — The Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. These are the laws:

- You shall have no other gods before me.
- You shall not make for yourselves any idol or image of God.
- You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
- Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.
- Honor your father and mother.
- You shall not murder.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
- You shall not covet what belongs to your neighbor.

God put His Law in charge to lead us to his Promised One (Gal 3:24) that we might be justified by our faith in what he did for us. God’s Law is like a schoolmaster to teach us. A man named Paul once said, “Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law.” (Rom 7:7)

A man once asked the Teacher (*Jesus is not mentioned by name here since we haven’t come to his part of the story yet.*) which was the most important commandment in God’s Law. The Teacher said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:37-38).

The Law cannot save man from God’s wrath. “For whoever stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” (Jas 2:10) A leader named Joshua said, “Do not let the Book of the Law depart from your mouth, meditate on it day and night, so that you will be careful to do everything written in it.” (Jos 1:8) Another writer said the law of the

Lord is perfect. (Ps 19:7) The person who meditates on God's law day and night is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields fruit in due season and whose leaf never withers, for all he does prospers. (Ps 1:2-3) That is the story from God's Word.

This story deals with God's requirement for man to live a life of obedience that is pleasing to God. One of the issues you will encounter with many people in shame cultures is the attitude toward whether something is wrong because it is wrong or only if one is caught. Yet all peoples have some resident moral values that guide their lives. Have listeners talk about what is right and wrong in their culture. How do they know it is right or wrong? Who decides? What value is there in knowing what is right or wrong? Once people know what is right to do, what should be their behavior? God's law is like a mirror for a person with a dirty face. Without the mirror one cannot see the dirt on his own face. But holding up the mirror one can see clearly their condition.

In this lesson is also a glimpse of the eternal purpose of God as expressed in Gal 3:24 in which the KJV expresses the law as a *schoolmaster* to lead us to Christ. It is too early to introduce Christ now. So only talk about the greater purpose that God has for his holy law. Read Pv 15:3 and then if there is time tell the story from 1Ki 21:1-19 of Naboth's vineyard and then let the listeners pick out the commandments that were broken. You will notice that Jesus was not mentioned by name in the main story, only referred to as the Teacher. Talk about the two greatest commandments and what these mean for us. Which commandments do we break? If we are guilty what do we need from God? (*forgiveness*)



## 11. The Blood Sacrifice to Cover Sin

**Background Scriptures:** Ex 30:10; Lev 4:1-7; 17:11; Heb 9:7, 20-23; 10:3-4

**Anchor Scripture:** Heb 9:22

The Substitute Blood Sacrifice for Sin

When God gave prophet Moses the Ten Commandments, God also gave his laws for making a sacrifice when a person

sinned. God said to Moses, "When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, they are guilty. When they become aware of the sin they committed, they must bring an animal without blemish or defect to the anointed priest. There they must lay their hands on the head of the animal and so lay their sins upon the animal.

The priest will kill the animal and take some of the blood and sprinkle it before the Lord on the altar and pour out the remainder before the altar. The priest is to remove all the fat from the animal and then burn it on the altar. In this way the priest will make atonement for a person's sin through a substitute, and the person will be forgiven. That is the story from God's Word.

The account of the sacrifice ritual is deliberately simplified. Rather than go into all the various details for different sacrifices, the animals required, and the ritual, I instead focused on the exchange of the innocent for the guilty and the shedding of blood to make the needed atonement. If you need more background recall the Garden of Eden story when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and then tried to cover their nakedness with leaves, God provided for them coverings of animal skins that required the shedding of innocent animal blood. When Cain killed his brother Abel, God said that Abel's blood cried out to Him from the ground where Cain had spilled it. (*You may need to tell a summarized account of the Cain & Abel story here.*) After the flood when Noah and his family came out of the ark, God gave permission for Noah to eat meat, but warned that the lifeblood must first be drained from the meat before eating. At the time when the death angel passed over the Israelite homes in Egypt, it was the sign of blood on their doors which saved the firstborn Israelites from destruction.

God instructed Moses that the life of the animal was in its blood. God was giving the shedding of blood on an altar as a way of atoning for sin. That is, it was an exchange of the animal's innocent life for that of the guilty sinner as required by God's righteous nature.

The blood sacrifice was a reminder that the person was a sinner. The sacrifice had to be repeated each time a person sinned either intentionally or unintentionally. Once each year the high priest first offered a blood sacrifice for his own sins. Then he offered a sacrifice for the sins of the nation by entering into the

Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle, never without blood that he offered for himself and for the sins of the people (Heb 9:7).

What was needed was a more perfect sacrifice which did not need to be repeated over and over. The substitute blood sacrifice would serve as a temporary substitute until the better one could be found. It was only a shadow of what God was going to provide as a permanent atonement for our sin. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (Heb 9:9; 10:3).

To make this more of a narrative you might tell a story of how a man sinned in that day — perhaps coveting the field of another man and moving the boundary stone to make his own field larger. Then he remembers God's law about coveting and goes to confess his sin and ask forgiveness of the man he has stolen from, and of God for breaking God's law to covet what belonged to his neighbor. He goes to his own flock of animals and taking one that has no blemish — no wounds or deformity, he takes it to the place of sacrifice. There he solemnly places his hands on the animal's head and confesses his sin before God. The priest takes the animal, kills it and sprinkles some of its blood on the sides of the altar as God commanded. The fat inner portions are then burned as a sacrifice offering for one's guilt. (Lev 7:1-5) Also God's law required that restitution be made for certain offences (Lev 6:1-7).

Talk about the cost of sin. If each time a person sinned they had to bring a guilt offering, this would be very costly. Yet sin is costly. Soon in a story we will learn about the real cost of sin and who paid for it. God's Word says: "No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him — the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough..." (Ps 49:7-8) What could these verses mean? Who could pay such a ransom?



## **12. A Woman's Fear of God and Obedience Saved Her Family** *(Optional Story for Women)*

**Background Scriptures:** Jos 2:1-21; 6:22-25; Mt 1:5; Jas 2:25

**Anchor Scripture:** Heb 11:31

### **Rahab's Faith and Obedience Saved Her Family from Destruction**

After the death of Moses, when Joshua became leader of

Abraham's descendants, he sent two spies into the strongly fortified city of Jericho to determine its weaknesses. The spies found lodging in the house of a woman named Rahab who was an innkeeper. When the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab to bring out the men, she hid them on her roof under some flax stalks, and said that the men had already departed the city.

Before the two spies settled down to stay the night, Rahab went up on the roof and said, "I know that the Lord has given this land to you. A great fear of your people has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are quaking with fear." Rahab related how her people had heard what God had done to the people who made slaves of Abraham's descendants. She confessed, "...For the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below."

Rahab reminded the men that she had shown kindness to them. Would they now show kindness to her and her family when the city of Jericho was destroyed? "Will you spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters?" she asked the men. "Give me a sure sign you will do this for me."

The men replied, "Our lives for your lives! If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

So Rahab let the men down by a rope through the window, for her house was part of the city wall. The men had said, "You must tie a red cord in the window where you let us down. Do not let anyone go outside the house into the street, or their blood will be on their own head." When the men departed, Rahab obeyed and tied the red cord in the window.

Later when the city of Jericho was destroyed by the Lord and by Abraham's descendants, Joshua instructed the two men, "Go into Rahab's house and bring her out and all who belong to her." The young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. So Joshua spared the lives of Rahab and her family.

Later one of the spies, a man named Salmon, a descendant of Judah the great-grandson of Abraham,

married Rahab and she became an ancestor of God's Promised Savior.

And that is the story from God's Word.

In telling this story, one question that might arise is why Jericho was going to be destroyed and its people killed. See Gen 15:16 for the prophecy this was going to happen because of the Canaanite (*Amorite*) people's wickedness. These people were descendants of Canaan, a grandson of Noah. God had told Moses that He would drive out the inhabitants of the land (Ex 33:1-2). And God warned not to have anything to do with the Canaanites because of their wickedness (Ex 34:11-16). God knew the Canaanites would be a bad influence on the descendants of Abraham (Jdg 2:11-13).

But this story is about a woman who heard what God did to those who made slaves of Abraham's descendants. Rahab feared God and confessed that He was the true God. She protected the men and bargained with them for the lives of her family.

Ask listeners what the men required Rahab to do in order to save her family? What would happen if she disobeyed? What did Rahab confess about God? Did Rahab believe that her people were doomed? Did Rahab believe that God might save her life? Could we say that Rahab's fear of God and faith in God saved her family from destruction? What would happen to her family if she disobeyed the men? Is it important always to obey what God tells us to do?



### **Bible Stories for Historical Locations**

A mission team from a certain church was planning to go to Iran. While they could not witness openly, they planned to learn and tell the Bible stories from Daniel and Esther that happened in some of the popular biblical tourist locations. At each location one of the team would say, "I know a story that happened here. May I tell it?"

## CHAPTER 9 THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS

### 13. Messages of Warning to Repent and Coming Judgment

**Background Scriptures:** Dt 28:1-14, 15, 58-59; 1Ki 18:21; Isa 6:8-10; Jer 44:4-5, 15-17a; 1Co 10:6-11

**Anchor Scripture:** 1Co 10:11

When the People Turned  
Their Hearts Back to God

A time came when the kings ruling over the descendants of Abraham began to turn away from worshiping true Jehovah God and worshiped the false gods of the other peoples in the land, and even followed their other wicked practices like sacrificing their children and having prostitutes at the places of worship. One king named Jereboam even made golden calf idols for the people to worship, and so broke God's commandment about idols.

The prophets also gave false prophecies speaking lies saying their words came from God. So Abraham's descendants also began to turn away from the true God. Even the priests and religious leaders fell into sin and led the people into still greater sin as worship of God was neglected. So God sent prophets to warn the people and to turn their hearts back to the true and living God. The prophets warned the people that God would judge their sins and punish them if they continued to sin in this way against God. One prophet named Elijah told the people, "You cannot waiver between two opinions, you must choose which God you will worship." Through him God demonstrated that He alone is the true God in Israel. Elijah invited the people and all the false prophets to gather on a mountain to offer sacrifices to their gods. He said to the false prophets, "We will each build an altar and prepare the sacrifice but put no fire to the altar. We will pray and the god who answers by fire — he is the true God.

So the false prophets prepared their altar and sacrifice and began to dance and pray around it. All day they cried out to their gods, even cutting themselves with knives, but there was no answer. Finally, at the time for the evening sacrifice, Elijah stepped forward and called the people to him. He prepared an altar with twelve large stones for each tribe of his people. He prepared the sacrifice and wood. Then Elijah asked three times that water be poured over the sacrifice. At last Elijah began to pray: "Oh Lord, let it be known today that you are God and I am your prophet. I have done what you commanded me. Answer me so the people will know you are turning their hearts back to the true God." Then fire fell from heaven and burned up the sacrifice and even the stones of the altar and the water. The people fell down and worshiped shouting, "The Lord — He is God!"

For a time the people would listen and turn back to God but soon they fell into sin again and even imprisoned and killed the prophets of God. At last God sent their enemies against these descendants of Abraham to punish them. Many died and others were sent into exile or taken into captivity for a time.

God still loved the people but was not pleased with their sin. Even though God judged them and punished them when they sinned, the people would always fall back into sin again and again. God would need to provide a better way to save the people from their sin. And that would fulfill God's promise to Abraham. That is the story from God's Word.

There are too many prophet stories to tell. A brief recounting of Jeremiah's story and his rejection might be helpful if needed. We've skipped over the stories in the book of Judges which also depicts people falling into sin even after being warned what would happen if they did. Two things to get the people to think about: If God sent a prophet today what would He warn the people about? And if God did send a prophet, would the people listen and repent? Do they think God is speaking to them through these stories? Would they, like the people in the stories, continue to fall into sin? Most of us would, it is our sinful nature inherited from our ancestor Adam. We need a new nature to overcome sin. How can we find or get such a new nature? Is there any hope for sinful mankind?)





## 14. God Loves All People

**Background Scriptures:** Jn 1-4

**Anchor Scripture:** Jn 3:10; 4:11b

God's Concern for the  
People in a Great City

There was a prophet named Jonah. One day God spoke to Jonah saying, "Go to that great city of Nineveh and preach against it because of its wickedness." But instead of going at once to Nineveh, Jonah ran away down to the sea port, paid the fare, and boarded a ship. After the ship put out to sea, God sent a great wind on the sea with such a storm that the ship began to sink. The sailors struggled to save their ship, while Jonah was down below asleep. The sailors were so afraid they were each crying out to their god to save them. The captain found Jonah and said to him, "Get up and call on your god! Perhaps your god will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

Then the sailors cast lots to see who was responsible for the storm. The lot fell to Jonah. Jonah confessed that he was running away from his God. Jonah said, "I worship the God of heaven who made the sea and the land." Because the storm was worsening, Jonah said to the sailors, "Throw me into the sea because I am responsible." The sailors did not want to do this for they were saying, "Lord, please do not let us die for taking this man's life." Then they threw Jonah into the sea and the sea became calm again.

God had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. He was inside the fish three days and three nights. From inside the fish Jonah prayed to God saying that he knew God could save him. Jonah prayed: "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, my prayer rose to you...What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord." Then God commanded the fish to spit Jonah out on dry land.

Again God spoke to Jonah saying, "Go the great city of Nineveh and proclaim the message I gave to you." This time Jonah obeyed. When he arrived in Nineveh, Jonah went all

throughout the city proclaiming; "Forty more days and the city will be destroyed."

When the people of Nineveh heard these words they believed God. The people began to fast and put on sackcloth and ashes as a sign of repentance and mourning. When the king heard what was happening, he took off his royal robes and began to mourn as well.

When God saw what the people were doing and how they turned from their evil ways, God had compassion and did not bring the destruction he had threatened. Jonah was displeased that God had spared the people. Jonah said that he was angry enough to die! But God said, "Nineveh has many people and cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?" That is the story from God's Word.

Several themes are in this story, that is, the themes of God's omniscience knowing about the evil in Nineveh, God's judgment of Nineveh's sin, and Jonah's disobedience to God's command. There is the love of God who was concerned about the people even though they were wicked. When Jonah repented, God had mercy on him and spared his life. When the people of Nineveh repented, God had mercy on them and spared their lives, too. For your listeners talk about God's love for all people — his servants like Jonah even when they were disobedient, the sailors who were religious but did not worship the true God, and the people of Nineveh even though they were wicked. The focus themes for your listeners are God's love for all people and that of repentance and the salvation it brings. When Jonah repented God spared him. When the people of Nineveh repented, God spared them. Talk about knowing a God who loves you and who wants you to repent of your sin and be forgiven. Talk about what might happen to a people who reject God's love and do not repent. If your listeners had lived in Nineveh would they have listened to Jonah and believed God?



## 15. Messages of Coming Hope

**Background Scriptures:** Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; 53:3-12; Ps 16:10; 22:6-8, 16, 18; 27:12; 41:9; Zec 12:10; Ro 15:4  
**Anchor Scripture:** Isa 53:5

### A Message of Hope for Sinners

During the time of the warnings against sin, and even after when God's severe judgment and punishment fell on the rebellious people, God gave to the prophets a new message of hope about the coming Anointed One. The Anointed One was to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem the home of King David. He was to rule on the throne of David, the king who had feared God and was called a man after God's own heart. The Anointed One would be called *Emmanuel* which means *God with man*.

God's spirit would rest on him to anoint him as the Promised One. The Promised Anointed One would teach as one having great authority and not as the religious teachers taught. He would have compassion on the lowly, the sick and free those oppressed by evil spirits.

However, the prophets said the Anointed One would be despised and rejected by his own people who would seek his death. He would be betrayed by a friend, falsely accused by sinful religious leaders, beaten by soldiers, and finally condemned to die the dishonorable death of a criminal. He would be buried among the wealthy and raised to life again as promised on the third day, before returning to God the Father who sent him.

The Anointed One would fulfill God's promise to Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob of a descendant to bless all people, He would fulfill the words of God spoken in the Garden of Eden of an offspring of woman who would crush the serpent's head, but would in return be struck in the heel. He would be a prophet (Dt 18:15), a king (Jer 23:5) and a priest (*Zec 6:12-13*). But before he came there would be one coming like a mighty prophet to prepare the way for the Lord. All of this would happen to reveal the glory of the Lord, "...for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." (Isa

40:3-5; Mal 3:1; 4:5-6) Then for a long time there was no new word from the Lord until time came to fulfill the promise. That is the story from God's Word.

This second half of the prophet stories focuses on the message of hope. This narrative is a pasting together of the prophecies into a narrative framework. It can be further personalized if time allows by expanding the story surrounding the prophecies. However, the focus is to stir up curiosity about how the promise of the Anointed One would be fulfilled. Anointing was a way of putting God's blessing on the person selected to lead a people. You could refer to David's anointing. (1Sa 16) The prophet Isaiah speaks of God's Spirit anointing the coming One. (Isa 11:2; 42:1) This was the sign that convinced John the Baptist (Jn 1:33).

This is a good time to summarize all that has been covered in the preceding Old Testament lessons before moving on to the story of Jesus. Be sure to review the characteristics of God as revealed in the stories. Talk about the problem of disobedience that led to the first sin. And talk about the continuing problem of wickedness that God judged and punished.

Talk about the substitute sacrifice that God provided for Abraham, and the sign of the blood to protect Abraham's people from God's judgment in Egypt. Review the Law which God gave to define sin for us and the blood sacrifice which was commanded in that day to atone for sin.

Remind the listeners that we cannot save ourselves from God's wrath when we have rebelled or acted wickedly. But God still loves us and in his love has provided a way to escape if we obey what He tells us to do.

One last thought. Perhaps you are wondering why the Israelites are being referred to as *Abraham's descendants*. Many of you will be sharing among Islamic peoples where mention of *Israel* and *Israelite* may immediately raise a barrier that could keep people from listening to the story. Another reason for doing this is that many non-Western peoples are very much conscious of ancestors and their extended family members and descendants.



**CHAPTER 10**  
**STORIES ABOUT JESUS**  
**16. The Birth of Jesus According**  
**to Scripture**

**Background Scriptures:** Lev 12:2-4, 6-8; Nu 18:15-16;  
Isa 7:14; 49:6; Mic 5:2; Lk 2:1-40; Mt 2:1-23

**Anchor Scripture:** Lk 2:10-11

The Birth of Jesus According  
to God's Promise

First an angel appeared announcing to the priest Zechariah the coming birth of a son who would prepare the way for the Lord just as God said would happen. Then the angel again appeared to a young woman named Mary who was a descendant of King David. She was to give birth to a son who would be named Jesus. He would be Son of the Most High God. God's Spirit would cause this to happen. Mary and her husband had not yet come together as man and wife. In a dream the angel told Mary's husband Joseph what was going to happen. Before the baby was born Joseph had to go to the town of Bethlehem, the home of his ancestor David, to register for a census.

While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth to her son. That same night angels appeared to some shepherds who were watching their sheep on the hillsides near Bethlehem. The angels announced, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born. He is Christ (*Anointed One*) the Lord." Then the angels praised God and went away into heaven. On the eighth day the baby boy was circumcised according to God's covenant with Abraham's descendants. And the baby boy was named *Jesus (Jehovah is salvation)* because he would save his people from their sins. Later Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem so Mary could offer the required sacrifice for her cleansing after giving birth (Lev 12). Also they had to pay a

redemption fee for their firstborn son according to the Law God gave to Moses (Nu 18:15-16).

At the temple was an old man named Simeon. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he saw the Lord's salvation. Simeon took the baby in his arms and praised God saying the child was God's salvation for his people and also a light for revelation to the Gentiles ().Isa 49:6

Some time later wise men came from an eastern country seeking the one born king of those descended from Abraham. A star guided their search and led the wise men to the house where Mary and Joseph now lived in Bethlehem. When the wise men saw Jesus, they each worshiped and presented gifts. One gift was gold for a king. Another brought incense for a priest. And the third brought a fragrant ointment called myrrh that was used to anoint a body for burial — a gift for someone destined to suffer and die. After the wise men returned to their own country, King Herod was jealous and gave orders to kill all the boy babies in Bethlehem. An angel told Joseph to flee to Egypt and remain until it was safe to return. Later Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth where Jesus grew up. Mary and Joseph had other natural children of which Joseph was the father. But Jesus was the Son of Most High God. That is the story from God's Word.

At last the time came when God fulfilled his promise to send the Anointed One. Ask the listeners why he was named Jesus. Do they have trouble understanding that the birth of Jesus was caused by God's Holy Spirit and Mary was to be the mother? If Jesus was born of God's Spirit, could we say he was the Son of God? And since he had an earthly mother could we also say that he was the Son of Man? Jesus later called himself "Son of Man." Who was Jesus' true Father?

Where did the prophet say the Anointed One was to be born? Did it happen that way? Did you know that Bethlehem is the place where shepherds kept the sheep used in the sacrifices at the temple? Who were the first people to hear the good news? (*shepherds*) Why do you think Mary and Joseph went to the temple to offer sacrifices and pay the redemption fee? (*because they were righteous and obeyed the ancient law*) Do you think the gifts of the wise men had special meaning? In what way? Who do you think

caused King Herod to be jealous and want to kill Jesus? Read Mt 2:21-23 and Lk 2:52. What do the people think Jesus will do when he is grown?



## 17. Three Testimonies About Jesus

**Background Scriptures:** Mk 1:4-8; Mt 3:13-17; Isa 11:2

**Anchor Scripture:** Jn 1:29b

First, there were the many testimonies of the prophets about the coming Anointed One or Messiah. He would be Mighty God (Isa 9:6). The angel who announced his birth to Mary said he would be Son of the Most High God. The night of Jesus' birth the angel said that night in the town of David was born a Savior who was Christ the Lord. The wise men called Jesus "the one born King."

The mighty prophet announced first by Isaiah and then by the angel to his father Zechariah was named John. As the child grew and became strong in the Spirit, John lived in the desert until time to begin his ministry. Now John preached that people must repent of their sins and be baptized to prepare the way for the Lord. Many people came to hear John preach, to confess their sins, repent and be baptized. John told them: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of his sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

When Jesus became of age to begin his ministry he went from Nazareth to John to be baptized. "No", John said, "You should baptize me." But Jesus said, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." So John baptized Jesus in the river.

As Jesus was coming up out of the water the heavens were opened and the voice of God spoke saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am pleased." (Mt 3:17) The Spirit of God was seen descending like a dove and lighting on Jesus fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah. (Isa 11:2; 42:1).

The next day when John the Baptizer saw Jesus coming toward him, John exclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29) Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1:32-34).

Others gave their testimonies that Jesus was the Messiah or Anointed One come down from heaven. Even the evil spirits, when they saw Jesus, would cry out in a loud voice, "We know who you are. You are Son of the Most High God!"

But there were people who were offended that Jesus spoke of God as "Father" and spoke as though he knew what God was saying (Jn 7:16) and he was doing what he saw God doing (Jn 5:19-23). Jesus was very popular with the people who wondered if he might be a great prophet, others believed Jesus to be the Christ. But the religious leaders became jealous of Jesus because of his words and his popularity with the people.

One day Jesus asked his followers who did the people think he was. They said, "Perhaps one of the great prophets." Then Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" A follower named Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Then Jesus warned his followers not to tell anyone he was the Christ. This story is from God's Word.

How did Mary the mother of Jesus know who he was? How did Joseph the earthly father parent of Jesus know who he was? How did the shepherds know who Jesus was? How did John the Baptizer know who Jesus was? How do you think the evil spirits knew who Jesus was? How do you think Peter knew who Jesus was? Read Mt 16:17.

If you had lived in that day what would have said about Jesus? What are you thinking about Jesus now? Could he really be the Messiah come from God to bless all people and save them from their sins? Talk about it.





## 18. You Must Be Born Again to Enter the Kingdom of God

**Background Scriptures:** Mt 18:3; Jn 1:10-14; 3:1-21

**Anchor Scripture:** Jn 3:16

You Must Be Born Again!

A certain man named Nicodemus who was a leader of the people came to see Jesus one night. Nicodemus was seeking to enter the kingdom of God by carefully living a righteous life and following all of God's Law as given to Moses. He spoke highly of Jesus saying, "Teacher, we know you are come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"How can a man be born again when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born?"

Again Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with anyone born of the Spirit."

"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

"You are yourself a teacher," said Jesus, "and you do not know these things? How can I speak to you about heavenly things if you do not know earthly things? The Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because of his unbelief in the name of God's one and only Son."

A disciple named John said of Jesus, "He was in the world, and the world did not recognize him. He came to his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God — children born not of natural descent, but born of God. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the one and only Son, who came from the Father." And Jesus said, "...Unless you become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3). That is the story from God's Word.

In Hinduism and Buddhism there is a teaching about rebirth either to a nobler or lesser state depending upon one's works in each life cycle. With listeners like these you need to be careful to be sure they hear that one must be born of the Spirit — that is, of God, and not according to one's own works of righteousness or again and again.

Others may believe that by being a good person one is accepted by God (able to *enter God's kingdom*). Nicodemus was a righteous person; carefully obeying all the requirements of the law God gave the people. Yet Jesus said he must be born a second time of the Holy Spirit.

Talk about how a person might be changed if they were "born of the Spirit." Nicodemus belonged to the Pharisees who were known for their strict keeping of the law. Yet many of the Pharisees did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

Why did God send his Son into the world? What do the listeners think this means? What do they think John meant when he said Christ came into the world but the world did not receive him? What do they think Jesus meant about becoming the "children of God?" What about becoming like "little children?" How would a little child be different from an adult?

What did Jesus say about God's love? What did God do to show his love? What must we do to receive God's love? Do you want to receive God's love?)



## 19. A Drink of Living Water From the Messiah (Optional Story for Women)

**Background Scriptures:** Isa 55:1; Jn 4:4-42; 6:35; 7:37-38; Rev 22:17

**Anchor Scripture:** Jn 4:42b

### A Drink of Living Water Leading to Salvation

Jesus said he had to go through the district called Samaria. At noon he came to a well dug by Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, a long time before. Jesus sat down by the well. Soon a Samaritan woman came to get water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The woman was surprised that Jesus, a proud descendant of Abraham, would ask her, a Samaritan, for a drink. They considered the Samaritans as low caste and so looked down on them.

The woman replied to Jesus, "You ask me, a Samaritan for a drink?"

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have instead asked him, and he would have given you *living water*."

"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw water and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob (*grandson of Abraham*) who gave us this well?"

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, bubbling up to everlasting life."

The woman said to Jesus, "Give me some of this water so that I won't have to keep coming to this well to draw more water."

Jesus told her, "Go call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," the woman replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying you have no husband. For you've had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband."

Cleverly the woman replied, "Sir, I can see you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this place, but your people claim the place we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declared, "A time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. They are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming. When he comes he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I am the Messiah."

The woman left her water pot and ran back to tell the people in the town saying, "Could this person be the Messiah?" Many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. They urged Jesus to stay and because of his words many more became believers. The people said, "We know that this man really is the Savior of the world." That is the story from God's Word.

The story of enmity between the Jews and Samaritans goes back to the time of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and when Israel went into exile and foreigners were brought in to intermarry with the local people. The foreigners also brought their own national gods (2Ki 17:24-34).

There are two interesting things about this story. The people believed that flowing or "alive" water was more tasty and satisfying. So they sought springs for their water. And at the bottom of this well was a flowing spring that is still there today. So what kind of water did the woman think Jesus was talking about? Where did she think this water could be found? Was she surprised at the words of Jesus about never thirsting again? Did she want some of this living water? What did Jesus ask the woman to do first? What do you think about her life? Good or bad? How did she try to justify herself and her people?

Finally what did the woman say about the Messiah? What did Jesus reply? When the woman's people heard Jesus' words, did they believe he was the Messiah? If you heard Jesus' words would you believe he was truly the Messiah? In these stories you are hearing the words of Jesus. In these stories Jesus is visiting your village or city. Hear what he has to say and then decide for yourself if Jesus really is the Savior of the world.



## 20. Jesus Has Authority to Forgive Sin

**Background Scriptures:** Mk 2:1-12; Mt 9:1-8; Lk 5:18-26  
**Anchor Scripture:** Mt 28:18

### Jesus Forgave a Man's Sin and Healed Him

Many people heard about Jesus and came to hear him teach. The house was filled with people who considered themselves righteous. Many were religious teachers. So many had gathered there was no room remaining for anyone to enter, even to stand outside the door. Jesus was seated there teaching the people. The power of God was present for Jesus to heal the sick.

Some men came bringing a paralyzed man on a mat, carried by four of them. They tried to take the paralyzed man inside the house to lay him before Jesus to be healed. When they found they could not do that because of the crowd, they went upon the roof and lowered the paralyzed man through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus looked up and saw the faith of the four men, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Those present in the room immediately began thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus knew in his spirit what they were thinking in their hearts. So he said to the people, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier to say to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take up your bed, and walk'? But that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your bed and go home."

Immediately the man stood up in front of the people, took up his bed and walked out in full view of everyone. The people were amazed and began to praise God saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Jesus, the Son of Man, has authority on earth to forgive sin, and to heal. At another time when Jesus was in his own home town he could not do any miracles there except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith (Mk 6:4-5). That is the story from God's Word.

Do you remember in the earlier stories we talked about the characteristics of God? God was all-powerful and God did what was right and good. Remember in another lesson Jesus said that he only did what he saw the Father doing.

Why do the listeners think the four men brought the paralyzed man to Jesus — what did they want Jesus to do for their friend? Did they give up when they could not enter the room? What did Jesus see on the faces of the four men when he looked up? What did Jesus say to the paralyzed man? When those present in the room listening to Jesus heard his words what did they think in their hearts? Remember in our first stories that God knew when people were sinful, God knew what was in their hearts. If Jesus knew in his spirit what the people were thinking, would you say he was like God his Father?

What important thing did Jesus say about himself to the people in the room? (*the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sin*) Do you think the people believed him right then?

Then what did Jesus say or do? (*commanded the paralyzed man to get up and go home*) Did the man obey Jesus? What had happened to the man? Do you think the paralyzed man believed in Jesus? Do you think the people in the room now believed in Jesus. If you had been there, would you have believed in Jesus?

Would you like to have your sin forgiven? Who can forgive your sin? Soon you will have an opportunity to say whether you believe Jesus' words or not. If there is time, briefly tell the story of Zacchaeus (*Lk 19*) and mention Jesus' words in Lk 19:10. Recall Jn 3:16. Ask why God sent his Son into the world. Ask the listeners why Jesus said he came into the world. Are they glad Jesus came into the world?)



## 21. Jesus Is Lord Over Nature

**Background Scriptures:** Mt 8:23-27; 14:22-33; Mk 4:35-41; Lk 8:22-25

**Anchor Scripture:** Mk 4:41

### Jesus Calmed the Raging Storm

One day when evening came Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." Leaving the crowd of people behind, the disciples took Jesus along with them in their boat.

Without any warning a furious storm came up on the lake. The wind was strong. The waves were beginning to sweep over into the boat so that it was nearly filled with water. Jesus was in the back sleeping on a cushion. The disciples urgently woke him saying, "Teacher! Teacher! Don't you care if we are about to drown?"

Jesus woke from his sleep, stood up, and commanded the wind and the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and the sea was completely calm again.

Jesus then said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you have no faith?" They were terrified at what happened and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Another time Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him in a boat while he dismissed the crowd and went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came the boat was already far from land and being buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the night Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water. When the disciples saw him they were terrified. Jesus said, "Take courage! It is I, don't be afraid." The disciple named Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water." And Jesus said, "come."

Then Peter got out of the boat and began walking on the water to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and sank into the stormy water. He cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught Peter. "You of little faith," Jesus said, "why did you doubt?"

When they had climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then the disciples said to Jesus, "Truly, you are the Son of God." That is the story from God's Word.

What do we learn about Jesus in these stories? Did the wind and waves obey Jesus? Who made the wind and the water? If something obeys you can we say that you rule over it? What do you think Jesus meant about having little faith? Why were the disciples afraid of Jesus? Should they be afraid of Jesus? If you had been in the boat, would you be afraid of Jesus? Do you believe Jesus truly is Lord?



## **22. Jesus Forgave a Sinful Women and Granted Her Peace** *(Optional Story for Women)*

**Background Scriptures:** Lk 7:36-50

**Anchor Scripture:** 1Jh 1:9

Go in Peace, Your Faith Has Saved You

A religious person named Simon invited Jesus to have dinner at his house. Jesus and Simon reclined at the table eating. A woman who had lived a very sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at Simon's house. She came in carrying a small jar of perfume.

She came to stand behind Jesus, weeping at his feet so that her tears fell and began to wet Jesus' feet. She began to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair. Then she began kissing the feet of Jesus and poured the perfume on them.

When Simon who had invited Jesus saw what was happening, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of a woman she is — she is a sinner!"

Jesus answered Simon saying, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, Teacher," Simon replied. Then Jesus told this story:

"There were two men who owed money to a certain money lender. One man owed the moneylender an amount



equal to five hundred days' wages. The other man owed a smaller amount equal to fifty days' wages. When it came time to repay the debt, neither had the money to repay the moneylender. So the moneylender canceled the debts of both men. Now which of them will love the money lender more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your home and you did not give me any water to wash my feet. Yet she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her own hair. You did not give me a kiss of greeting. But this woman from the time she entered has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with any fragrant oil, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven — for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.

Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." That is the story from God's Word.

As in many of the other stories, there are certain cultural things happening. You may need to explain how the woman could get to the feet of Jesus as many sit on the floor with their legs crossed in front of them when eating. Also in certain cultures it is an act of deep reverence to bow and touch an honored person's feet with your head or hands. What do the listeners think the guests were thinking in their hearts when they saw the woman do this? What did Simon think? Did Jesus know what Simon was thinking?

What story did Jesus tell Simon? Do listeners think Simon understood the story? Then what did Jesus do? (Jesus *compared what Simon did not do with what the woman did do*) Do the listeners think this was shameful for Simon to hear Jesus' words. Why do they think Jesus spoke so harshly to Simon? (*to teach Simon a lesson about forgiveness and love*) What did Jesus do for the woman? (*forgave her sin*) What blessing did Jesus give the woman? (*Go in peace*) Have your sins been forgiven? If they were, would you love Jesus much or little? If Jesus came to your house would he be welcome? Would you be ashamed to honor Jesus as

this sinful woman did? What can we say about Jesus and sinners?  
(*Jesus loved sinners and wanted to forgive their sin.*)



### **23. Jesus Has Authority Over Evil Spirits**

**Background Scriptures:** Mk 1:22-27; 3:11-12; 5:1-19; Col 1:16

**Anchor Scripture:** Mk 3:11

#### The Evil Spirits Feared Jesus and Obeyed Him

Jesus had returned to a city near his home. When the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the place of worship and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not like their teachers.

Just then a man in their worship hall who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" Jesus sternly rebuked the spirit, "Come out of him!" The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were amazed that Jesus gave orders to evil spirits and they obeyed him. For whenever evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God!" Jesus commanded the evil spirits not to tell anyone.

Another time Jesus and his disciples had just crossed the lake. When Jesus stepped out of the boat a man with an evil spirit came from among the tombs to meet Jesus. The man wore no clothing, and would often cry out and cut himself with stones. Even when bound with chains the possessed man would break free.

When the man saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees before Jesus shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" Jesus was

saying to the evil spirit, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

Then Jesus asked the evil spirit, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," the evil spirit replied, "for we are many." The evil spirit was begging Jesus not to send them away.

A large herd of pigs were feeding on the nearby hillside. The evil spirits begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." Jesus gave the evil spirits permission, and the evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs. The whole large herd of pigs rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. The herders tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and the people came out to see what had happened. When the town people arrived, they saw the man who had been possessed by evil spirits now clothed and in his right mind sitting before Jesus. The people who saw what happened told about the man and about the pigs. Then the people were afraid and began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

The man begged Jesus to let him go along. Jesus did not let him, instead, Jesus said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you." But the man went away and began to tell everyone what Jesus had done for him. The evil spirits knew Jesus was the Son of God and feared him. That is the story from God's Word.

These will be powerful stories among many who are afraid of the spirit world. You might explore the stories by asking: Did the evil spirits know who Jesus was? What did the evil spirit ask Jesus? Was Jesus afraid of the evil spirit? What did Jesus command the evil spirit? Did the evil spirit obey Jesus? What did Jesus tell the man not to do? Why do you think Jesus said not to tell anyone? What else did the evil spirit say to Jesus? Was this spirit alone or were there many? What was the unusual request of the evil spirit — where did he want to go? What did Jesus do? (*gave him permission*) Then what happened? What were the evil spirits doing to the men they possessed? (*hurt them*) What did Jesus tell the man to do? What did the people ask Jesus to do? Why do you think they said that? What can we learn about Jesus from these two stories? Are you afraid of evil spirits? Do they bother you? Do you believe that Jesus is more powerful than the spirits? Were the

spirits evil when God first made them? Do you remember the story about when God created all the spirits? What do you think God will do to these evil spirits one day?



## 24. Jesus Is the Resurrection

**Background Scriptures:** Lk 10: 38-42; Jn 11:1-46

**Anchor Scripture:** Jn 11:25-26

Whoever Believes in Jesus  
Will Never Die

Jesus and his disciples had visited in the home of Mary and Martha in the village of Bethany near Jerusalem. The sisters had a brother named Lazarus. Because the enemies of Jesus sought to kill him, Jesus had gone to stay in a distant place. One day Jesus received word that Lazarus was sick. The sisters were asking if Jesus would come to heal Lazarus. When Jesus heard this he said, "His sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory, so God's Son may be glorified." So Jesus stayed in that place two more days and then said, "Let us go back."

The disciples reminded Jesus that some people were waiting to kill him. Then Jesus told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up." The disciples thought Jesus was saying Lazarus was sleeping and getting well. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I'm glad I was not there so you may believe."

When Jesus arrived at the village he found that Lazarus had already been dead four days. Martha came out to meet Jesus and said, "Lord, if only you had been here my brother would not have died. But I know God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus replied, "Your brother will rise again."

"I know he will rise in the resurrection at the last day," Martha answered.

Jesus said to Martha, "I am the *resurrection* and the *life*. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And

whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," Martha told Jesus. "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." Then Martha went inside and told Mary, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you."

When Mary reached Jesus she, too, fell at his feet saying if only Jesus had been there Lazarus would not have died. Mary's weeping, and also her friends' weeping, saddened Jesus. "Where have you laid him," Jesus asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. When Jesus saw their sadness he, too, wept.

Then Jesus instructed, "Take away the stone covering the tomb."

"But, Lord," Martha protested, "there will be a bad smell. He has been dead four days." Then Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" When they took away the stone Jesus looked up toward heaven and began to pray. "Father, I thank you that you always hear me when I pray. I am praying for the benefit of the people standing here so they will believe you have sent me." Then Jesus commanded in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out still wrapped in the burial cloths. Many who had come to comfort Mary and Martha believed. Others went to report to the religious leaders what happened. The religious leaders began to plan how to kill Jesus. That is the story from God's Word.

It might be helpful to know that the people in that day believed that a person's spirit remained near the body for three days and then left when decay set in. On the fourth day Lazarus was really dead! Jesus knew what he was going to do and that it would result in glory for God. Was Jesus afraid to go back even after some wanted to kill him? Did Jesus know that Lazarus was really dead? What did Martha say to Jesus when she met him? Did Martha have faith in Jesus?

Can you remember what Martha said that showed her faith in Jesus? (*God will give you whatever you ask*) Who did Jesus say he was? If you believe in Jesus what will happen when you die? Is this hard for you to understand? Who did Martha say that Jesus was? What did Jesus say when he prayed to God? What did Jesus call out to Lazarus? Did Lazarus obey? When the people saw what

happened what did some do? And what did others do? What did the religious leaders decide to do? If you had been there, what would you do? What Characteristic of God did Jesus demonstrate when he raised Lazarus to life again? He was all-powerful.



## **25. You Must Believe in This Life Before You Die**

**Background Scriptures:** Lk 16:19-31; Acts 16:31; 2Pe 2:9  
**Anchor Scripture:** Heb 9:27

### You Must Believe Before You Die

Some people who loved money heard Jesus' teaching and were laughing at him. Jesus said, "God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight." Then Jesus told the people this story.

"There was a rich man who was dressed in the finest clothing. He lived in luxury every day. While at his gate was a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat the food that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked the poor man's sores. A time came when the beggar died and angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in great torment, the rich man saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

So the rich man called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this place. But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things. Now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

The man in torment answered, 'Then I beg you, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my own father's house, for I have

five brothers. Let Lazarus warn them, so they will not come to this place of torment.'

Abraham replied, 'Your brothers have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

'No, father Abraham,' the man begged, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

Abraham said to the man, 'If your brothers do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead'."

So Jesus warned those listening to him that each person must decide in this life whether to believe God or not. For after one dies he cannot change his circumstances, nor can he help others in his family. Man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment. The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the Day of Judgment, while continuing their punishment. Once a man asked what he must do to be saved. He was told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved — you and your household." That is the story from God's Word.

This story is not a parable but has a ring of reality about it. In those days it was believed that if you were healthy and wealthy it was a sign of God's blessing. But if you were a sinner then you would be poor and sickly. While poor Lazarus was living the rich man never noticed him or called his name. Now that the rich man was suffering terribly, he was calling out for Lazarus to come help him. Was God punishing the rich man for his wealth? Abraham was a wealthy man. What could be the difference in the two men? Listen carefully to the story to see the difference. Lazarus was with Abraham in the pleasant place because he believed the message of the prophets while still living.

The rich man and his brothers had not listened (*and so not believed*) to the message of the prophets. Was Abraham able to help the suffering rich man? What did the rich man ask Abraham to have Lazarus do? What did Abraham reply to the rich man? What was happening to the rich man? Could he escape and go to Abraham? Could he go back to warn his brothers? What warning do you think Jesus was giving when he told this story? When you die which place would you rather go? What do you need to do in order to go to the better place? Soon we will how to do that.)



## 26. This Is My Body Given For You, My Blood Poured for Your Sins

**Background Scriptures:** Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; Lk 22:7-27; Jn 6:33, 35; 13:3-17; 14:1-10, 15, 21; 1Co 11:23-26

**Anchor Scripture:** Lk 22:19-20

### My Body and My Blood Poured Out for You

Jesus knew the time for his death was very near. It was Passover time when the descendants of Abraham celebrated the time that God's death angel passed over their homes while they were slaves in a foreign land. God had commanded they celebrate the Passover each year as part of their Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was desirable to celebrate the Feast in Jerusalem. So Jesus and his disciples returned to Jerusalem. He sent his disciples into the city to prepare the place and the food for the Passover meal.

When the evening hour had come Jesus and his twelve disciples reclined around the table to eat the Passover meal of roasted lamb which had none of its bones broken, bread baked without yeast, some bitter herbs, a bowl of salty water to dip the bread in, and the drink made from grapes. Jesus said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

After eating the meal, Jesus again took bread and when he had blessed it, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "This is my body given for you; eat this to remember me."

In the same way Jesus took the cup of drink, gave thanks, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray him. As each one asked who it might be, Jesus took a piece of bread and dipped it into the bowl and gave it to one named Judas and said, "Go and do quickly what you plan to do." Judas went out to betray Jesus to the religious authorities.



Then Jesus began to teach the disciples saying: "Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go I will come back to take you to be with me, to be where I am." Then Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by me." Another disciple said, "Show us the Father and that will be enough."

Jesus replied, "You have seen me, you have seen the Father. The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me who is doing His work. If you love me, you will obey what I command. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him." Jesus also taught that he was the true vine and his followers were the branches. If they remained in him they would bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing." After Jesus had prayed for his disciples he led them out of the city to a nearby garden to pray. That is the story from God's Word.

The Passover was a special time for the people when they remembered how God had spared their lives when He judged the people in the land where they were slaves. It was the sight of the Passover lamb's blood on the doorway that marked each home. Remember, John the Baptizer said that Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. One time Jesus said: "For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world....I am the bread of life." (Jn 6:33, 35) What could Jesus mean by these words? Now Jesus has said that the bread he gave his disciples was his body and they were to eat it and remember him. Then Jesus said what about the cup of drink? What do you think Jesus meant by those words? Did Jesus know someone was going to betray him? (*Read the prophecy in Ps 41:9*). Why was Jesus going away?

What promises did Jesus make to his disciples? Jesus said that he was the way, the \_\_\_\_\_, & the\_\_\_\_\_. No one came to the Father but by \_\_\_\_\_. When one of the disciples asked to see God, what did Jesus tell him? What did Jesus say about his words and what he was doing? Whose words was Jesus speaking and whose works was he doing? Do you believe that Jesus came down from God in heaven? Do you believe he is the true bread of life? Do you believe Jesus is the way to God in heaven?



## 27. Jesus Was Falsely Accused and Sentenced to Die

**Background Scriptures:** Ps 27:12; 41:9; 69:4; Isa 53:3, 7; Zec 11:12-13; Mk 8:31; 9:31-32; 10:32-34; 14:61-64; 15:12-15

**Anchor Scripture:** Mk 15:12-14

Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

Many times Jesus told his disciples that he must be betrayed into the hands of the religious leaders who would condemn him to death and then hand him over to foreigners who will mock him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. Yet the disciples did not understand Jesus and were afraid to ask Jesus about it. Each time Jesus said that he would be raised up on the third day.

After the Passover meal with the disciples, Jesus led them to a quiet garden where he prayed asking God, if it were possible, to let the cup of suffering pass from him. But always Jesus ended his prayer saying, "Not my will, but yours be done." He was willing to submit obediently to God, even unto death.

Judas had gone to the religious leaders and betrayed Jesus telling the leaders where to find Jesus when no crowd was present. The disciples had fled away in fear into the night. Now Jesus was brought before the religious leaders. Many false accusations were brought against him but there were no two witnesses who agreed (Dt 17:6). Finally the high priest asked if Jesus were the Son of God. "I am," Jesus declared. The high priest tore his clothes shouting, "Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy." So they all condemned Jesus as worthy of death while spitting on him, blindfolding Jesus and striking him, asking Jesus to prophesy who hit him.

Very early the next morning the entire religious ruling council reached their decision that Jesus must die. They led Jesus before Pilate the Roman governor and accused Jesus of claiming to be a king and leading a rebellion. When Pilate questioned Jesus he remained silent. (Isa 53:7) Finally,

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you a king?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied, but my kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate found no reason for Jesus to be put to death. He knew it was for envy that the leaders handed Jesus over. So Pilate tried to reason with Jesus' accusers to have him beaten as a troublemaker and then released. Pilate even tried to give the people a choice of which prisoner to release. But the leaders began to shout, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate again asked, "Why, what has he done?" But the people shouted all the louder, "Take him away! Crucify him! Let his blood be upon us and upon our children" (Mt 27:25).

The leaders continued shouting until their shouts prevailed. Finally Pilate handed Jesus over to the guards to be flogged and then to be crucified. Jesus was led away by the guards. God's prophet had said this would happen (Isa 50:6). That is the story from God's Word.

When Jesus went to pray what was his prayer? (*Let this cup pass from me. Not my will but yours be done*). What do you think Jesus meant by these words? Do you think he was willing to suffer and die if he had to? Who betrayed Jesus? What did his disciples do? Could witnesses be found to give true testimony against Jesus? What did the high priest ask Jesus? What did Jesus reply? Do you think Jesus was telling the truth? What did the religious leaders accuse Jesus of doing when they handed him over to the foreigners? Was Jesus guilty of anything? What happened to cause Jesus to be condemned to death? Who shouted? Who tried to save Jesus? Do you know what flogging is? (*39 lashes with a leather whip that had pieces of metal—there were 13 lashes on each side of the back and 13 on the chest*) The prophet said this would happen.

Read Isa 53:3-5. The prophet said he would offer his back to those who beat him, his cheeks to those who pulled out his beard, and he did not hide his face from mocking and spitting (Isa 50:6). Do you know why Jesus had to suffer in this way? Was Jesus a sinner who needed to be punished? Have you ever heard of an innocent person taking the punishment of the guilty person? Why do you think the religious leaders wanted Jesus to die? They were jealous of him and angry because Jesus said God was his Father.



## 28. Jesus Died for Our Sin

**Background Scriptures:** Ps 22:6-8, 18; Isa 53:5-6, 8-9, 12; Zec 12:10; 13:1; Mt 27:27-60; Mk 15:15-46; Lk 23:32-54; Jn 19:1-42; Heb 9:28; 10:10

**Anchor Scripture:** 1Pe 2:24

### Jesus Died for Our Sin

Jesus was handed over to the soldiers to be stripped of his clothes and flogged or beaten. Afterward the soldiers put a purple robe upon Jesus and a crown of thorns on his head and mocked Jesus saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" The soldiers struck Jesus on the head with a staff and fell on their knees in mock worship. Then they led Jesus outside the city to crucify him.

Jesus was crucified between two criminals, one on the left and one on the right (Isa 53:12). The soldiers nailed Jesus through his hands and feet to a wooden cross to hang until dead (Ps 22:16). The religious leaders stood watching and mocking saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God." But Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Ps 109:4). At the foot of the cross the soldiers gambled for Jesus' clothing. (*Ps 22:18*).

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Jesus, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" The other criminal rebuked him, "Don't you fear God?" he said, "We are punished justly, getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then the second criminal said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:39-43). The disciple named John was standing by Jesus' mother. "Take care of my mother," Jesus said to him (Jn 19:26-27).

At about noon the sun stopped shining. It became very dark. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1). At this very moment the sinless Son of God took upon himself the sin of all people and the holy eyes of the Father could not look upon the Son

(*Hab 1:13*). For a time the fellowship was broken, Jesus suffered the second death of separation from the Father. He had suffered in our place for the punishment we deserve. At last the sacrifice was accepted and Jesus cried, "It is finished!" Then Jesus said, "Father, into your hands I give my spirit." Having said this, Jesus bowed his head and died. The Lord had laid on Jesus the iniquity (*sin, wrongdoing*) of us all (*Isa 53:6*).

The religious leaders did not want the bodies of the criminals and Jesus to remain on the cross during the Sabbath day of worship. (*Dt 21:22-23*) So they asked the soldiers to break the legs of each being crucified so they would die quickly. When the soldiers came to Jesus he was already dead. (*Ps 34:20*) A soldier pierced his side and water and blood flowed out. (*Zec 12:10*) A wealthy secret follower named Joseph (*of Arimathea*) asked for the body of Jesus to bury it in his new tomb (*Isa 53:9*). Nicodemus brought linen and spices to prepare Jesus' body. It was the evening of the first day. The followers went home very sad. Some of the women agreed to return on the third day (*after the Sabbath rest*) to anoint Jesus' body with fragrant spices. That is the story from God's Word.

All of the prophecies about Jesus were coming true, even the ones Jesus himself gave. Pilate the Roman governor had intended only to have Jesus beaten as a troublemaker and released. But the leaders would not have it; they wanted Jesus to die. Crucifixion was a slow painful suffering death. On that day two others were crucified. What did one of them say when he insulted Jesus? What did the other criminal say to Jesus? What was Jesus reply to him?

Notice that Jesus as the oldest son was concerned for his mother who was likely a widow by then. When Jesus prayed the first time asking God to forgive those who crucified him, what did Jesus call God? (*Father*) When Jesus cried out in a loud voice during the darkness what did he call God? (*My God*) Then finally before he died what did Jesus call God? (*Father*) What do you think was happening when Jesus cried out "My God"? Were Jesus' legs broken like the two criminals? Why not? Did this fulfill any prophecy? Read *Exo 12:46*, then read *Ps 34:20*. Why did the religious leaders want the bodies taken down from the crosses? Read *Dt 21:22-23*. Do you remember what the prophecy said about who Jesus would die among? Who he would be buried among? Read *Isa 53:9*. The Living

Bible makes this a bit clearer: "He was buried like a criminal, but in a rich man's grave; but he had done no wrong and had never spoken an evil word."

Can you recall who saw Jesus die? (*Foreign soldiers who put him to death, religious leaders, two criminals, Jesus' own mother, his disciple John and there were other followers and secret disciples.*) How did the soldiers know Jesus was dead? (*They pierced his side so that blood and water flowed out.*) Who buried the body of Jesus? Did the followers of Jesus understand what had happened? What did they do after Jesus was buried? (*they went home sad*)

There is another little story that follows the death of Jesus. The religious leaders were afraid that Jesus' disciples would come and steal away his body and say that he had risen. So the leaders asked that the grave be sealed and guarded by soldiers. (Mt. 27:62-66; 28:11-15) Many Muslims have been taught to believe that Jesus was taken from the cross and another, perhaps Judas, put in his place to die, or that Jesus revived in the tomb. The story that Jesus' followers took away his body was widely told among some who did not believe. What did Jesus say would happen on the third day after he was put to death? Do you think Jesus knew for certain this would happen?



## 29. God Raised Jesus to Life Again

**Background Scriptures:** Ps 16:10; Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-14; Lk 24:1-42; Jn 20:1-29

**Anchor Scripture:** 1Co 15:3b-4

He is Alive!

Jesus told his disciples that he must suffer many things, be rejected by the religious leaders, be killed and after three days rise again. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant and were afraid to ask. (*Mk 9:31-32*) Jesus explained to Martha that he was the Resurrection, the one having power over death. Jesus said to the religious leaders, "If you tear down this tabernacle, I will rebuild it again in three days." They did not understand he was talking about his own death and resurrection.

Early on the third day after Jesus' death some of the women were going to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. They found the tomb opened and an angel sitting inside who said to the women, "Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Go and tell his disciples." The women went to tell the disciples but the disciples thought the women were speaking foolishness. Two of the disciples, Peter and John did go to investigate. They saw the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' body. But Jesus was gone.

Outside the tomb one of the women named Mary Magdalene was crying. Through her tears she saw a man standing nearby but did not recognize Jesus. Thinking he was the caretaker of the burial ground, Mary said, "If you have carried his body away, tell me where you put him, and I will get him."

Then the man spoke to her saying, "Mary!"

She recognized the voice. It was Jesus! She went to tell the others, "I have seen Jesus!"

Jesus later appeared to two disciples walking along a road discussing his death. They did not recognize Jesus when he asked what things they were talking about. The two replied, "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people." But the two men were sad because they had hoped Jesus would be a great leader for his people. But instead he had been put to death. And now even his body was missing. Jesus said to them "How slow you are to understand all the prophets have spoken — that the Christ must suffer these things and then enter his glory."

Jesus explained to them from Moses and all the prophets what was said in all the Scriptures about himself. When the men invited Jesus to eat with them, Jesus took the bread and blessed it and gave it to the men. Then their eyes were opened but Jesus disappeared from their sight. They hurried back to tell the others they had seen Jesus.

Jesus had also appeared to the other disciples gathered in a closed room. The disciples were afraid, thinking Jesus was a ghost. Jesus asked for a piece of fish to eat to assure

them he was no ghost. One of the disciples named Thomas was not present. He would not believe it was Jesus unless he could see and feel the wounds in Jesus' body.

Later Jesus again appeared to the disciples and Thomas was present. When Thomas saw the wounds he cried, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to Thomas: "Because you have seen me, you believe. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus appeared to others like his own brother James (*1 Co 15:7*), to the disciple Peter (*1 Co 15:5*), and even to more than five hundred followers at one time (*1 Co 15:6*). Jesus had risen from the grave just like the prophets had said, just like Jesus himself said would happen. He had been faithful to his heavenly Father, even unto death. God had honored Jesus by raising him as the firstfruit of the resurrection. Yes, Jesus was alive.

After Jesus died and was buried the religious leaders asked that the tomb be sealed and guarded so no one could take away Jesus' body. But early on the third day there was a powerful earthquake and an angel came and rolled away the stone. When the soldiers saw the angel they became like dead men, quaking in fear.

After Jesus had risen from the grave the soldiers went to tell what happened. Then the religious leaders devised a plan. They gave the soldiers a large sum of money and told them to say, "That Jesus' disciples came during the night and took his body while the soldiers were sleeping." So the soldiers took the money and this story was widely spread.

Judas saw what happened so he went to the religious leaders and tried to give back the money for betraying Jesus. The leaders did not want the money back. So Judas threw the money down in the temple and went out and hanged himself. The money was used to buy a burial place for poor people. That is the story from God's Word.

What can we learn from this story? Did Jesus promise to rise again from the grave? Did he fulfill his promise? Did the disciples and other followers of Jesus understand this? (*no*) Even if we do not understand many things of God, does this mean they will not happen? (*no, God is faithful to do what He says He will do*) Did the followers of Jesus recognize him? Was Jesus a ghost (*spirit*)? How



did Jesus show that he really was alive? (*ate some fish*) If God is powerful to raise Jesus from the grave, do you think God could also raise you from the grave? Jesus said he was going away to prepare a place for his disciples? Do you think he included you too? If Jesus said he would come again for his disciples, do you think Jesus would come for you too? Do you believe Jesus was who he said he was? (*the Son of God*)



### **30. Jesus Returned to the Father Who Sent Him**

**Background Scriptures:** Lk 24:50-51; Jn 1:1-2, 14; Acts 1:9-11; 1Jh 1:2-3; Heb 7:25

**Anchor Scripture:** Lk 24:50-51

#### Jesus Returned to the Father in Heaven

After God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus appeared to many of his followers. He had appeared to Mary Magdalene outside the tomb, to the two disciples on the road, to the disciple Peter and the other disciples including Thomas who wanted to see the wounds on Jesus, and to more than five hundred followers at one time in Galilee.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Go into all the world, make disciples of all peoples, baptize them and teach them to obey all my commands." Jesus continued to teach for forty days after his resurrection until he was taken up into heaven. He taught about the kingdom of God. Jesus told his followers to remain in Jerusalem until his Father sent the promised gift, the Holy Spirit. For he said, "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes" (*Acts 1:4, 5, 8*).

After Jesus had finished teaching his disciples he led them to a hillside outside the city of Jerusalem. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. And while he was blessing them, before their very eyes he was taken up into heaven

until a cloud hid him from their eyes (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9).

Jesus' followers were still worshiping when suddenly two angels stood beside them saying, "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

And so Jesus the Son took his place at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Eph 1:20, Heb 8:1) where he lives to make intercession before the Father for all believers (Ro 8:34; Heb 7:25).

Jesus told the people, "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father taught me...I always do what pleases Him" (Jn 8:28-29). "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me" (Jn 7:16). And Jesus said, "I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence" (Jn 8:38). Again Jesus had said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me" (Jn 7:33).

"Jesus was found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name." (Php 2:8-9) One day every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Php 2:10-11). That is the story from God's Word.

Do you remember the man Nicodemus that visited Jesus one night? Jesus said to him: "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (Jn 3:17). Do you remember what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well? "Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. The water I give will become a spring of living water, swelling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14). Do you remember what the Samaritan people said about Jesus? "We have heard for ourselves, and we know this man really is the Savior of the world" (Jn 14:42).

Now you have heard all these stories about Jesus and what he said. Soon you will need to make a decision too. You remember the story about the rich man who died and went to the flames of torment because he failed to believe the words of Moses and all the Prophets.

At last Jesus' time on earth was ending. He told his followers what they must do to obey him. They were to make disciples of all

people, baptize them, and teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded. Jesus promised to be with his followers always, even to the end of the age (Mt 28: 19-20). Then Jesus returned to heaven after promising to send the Holy Spirit. The angels said Jesus would return one day just as he went away.)



### **31. Jesus Is the True High Priest Interceding For Us**

**Background Scriptures:** Zec 6:12-13; Heb 7:25; 8:1-2;  
9:11-15, 24-28; Heb 10:10-14

**Anchor Scripture:** Heb 7:24-25

#### Jesus is the True High Priest

In the days of Moses God gave the tabernacle to the people as the place of true worship where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin. God also anointed Moses' brother Aaron and his descendants to be the high priests to conduct the sacrifices to atone for sin. On the day of Atonement each year when the sins of the people were covered by blood, the priest had first to offer a blood sacrifice for his own sin. Then he was to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people.

The blood of the sacrifice the priest carried into the tabernacle, into the most holy place where God's presence dwelled, and sprinkled the blood on the atonement seat. This sacrifice had to be repeated year after year as an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls to take away sin (Heb 10:3-4). It was only a picture of a greater and lasting sacrifice to come.

The earthly tabernacle was a copy of the true tabernacle in heaven that Jesus did not enter with the blood of sacrificial animals, but he entered the Most Holy Place with his own blood to obtain eternal redemption. He did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest had to enter with animal blood not his own. But now Jesus has appeared once for all to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

For this reason Christ is the true mediator (*priest*) of the new covenant, the new relationship between God and man.

A priest is needed as a mediator between God who is holy and sinless, and man who is born with the nature of sin from our ancestor Adam, and from our own sin which comes from our choices when we disobey God.

In the beginning before the first man and woman sinned they enjoyed the presence of God. After their sin there was fear and a desire to hide from God while attempting to cover their sinfulness. God had a plan to restore the broken fellowship. His plan was put in place even before the creation of the world (1Pe 1:19-20). God would provide first a temporary covering for our sin through the blood of animals until in His time He would provide the lasting and permanent covering for our sins through the blood of Jesus.

So those who believe on Jesus have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. God said He would remember our sins and lawless acts no more. "And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin" (Heb 10:17-18). So we can have our sins forgiven and be able once again to enter the presence of God who is our heavenly Father. Those are the teachings from God's Word.

**Let's talk:** Why did God command the people in the days of Moses to offer a blood sacrifice? (*to cover their sin — the innocent animal died in place of the sinner*) Read Lev 17:11. Do you remember what John the Baptizer said about Jesus? (*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*)

In the days of Moses before the high priest could offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people what must he do for his own sins? (*offer a sacrifice*) Were the people sinners? Was the high priest a sinner? Could the high priest offer his own blood? (*no, because he was a sinner, too*) What did Jesus do when he died on the cross? What about his blood? Was Jesus like a sacrifice? Did God accept Jesus' sacrifice? How did God show He approved of Jesus' sacrifice? (*raised Jesus to life again*) The Bible says that what happened on earth is a picture of what happened in heaven. Read Heb 8:1-5; 9:11-12. The Bible says that Jesus had appeared once for all to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Is God holy? Are we sinful? Can a sinful person appear before a holy sinless God? What do we need to represent us before God? We need a high

priest who is sinless. We need the high priest who offered his own blood for our sin. Does this sacrifice need to be repeated? (*no*).



### **32. Jesus Will Return to Judge All Unbelievers**

**Background Scriptures:** Mt 16:27; 24:27; 25:31-32; Jn 5:22; 14:3; Acts 1:11; Col 3:4; 2Ti 4:1; Heb 9:28; 1Pe 5:4; Rev 20:12-13, 15

**Anchor Scripture:** Heb 9:28

#### Jesus Will Return to Judge Unbelievers

When Jesus was taken up into heaven the angels said that one day he would return in the same way which he was taken up. Before his death on the cross Jesus promised his followers that he would return for them to take them where he was.

Jesus taught several parables about a master who went away for a time and then returned suddenly. His servants each had to give an accounting of themselves (Mk 13:35-36). In one parable Jesus said his return was like that of a bridegroom who suddenly comes for his bride. Those unprepared cannot enter in with him (Mt 25:13). In another parable a man was found at a festive occasion without the proper clothing and was cast out into the darkness (Mt 22:11-12). Believers will be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus and not in their own filthy garments of works (Ro 13:14).

The return of Jesus will be in great glory with his angels. He will be seen like the lightning that flashes from the east to the west and is seen by all. He will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. For the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son. All the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the believers from the unbelievers like a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats. He will reward each person according to what they have done.

The dead in Christ will rise first. After this those who are still alive will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord and to be with the Lord forever (1Th 4:17). Christ will judge the living and the dead, for death and Hades will give up the dead in them. He will judge everyone, to convict the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way; and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Christ (Jude 15).

“So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people, and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” (Heb 9:28).

“I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness...” (Isa 61:10). For when Christ, who is the life of believers appears, then all believers will appear with him in glory (Col 3:4) And we will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away (1Pe 5:4).

The warning is very clear that Jesus will return. Will you be ready for him? That is the teaching from God’s Word.

**Let’s Talk:** This is a narrated account of Jesus’ return and not a story as such. Really this is drawing together promises and teachings of Jesus regarding his return. If there is time you can tell the parables of the returning master or the foolish bridegrooms who were not prepared.

It might be good to ask listeners to talk about what they would do if Jesus should return now or very soon. Would they be ready? Would they welcome Jesus? Do they think everyone would welcome Jesus? Why not? What should they do to get ready to welcome Jesus?

In much of the world there are people who are excluded from certain levels of society because of caste or occupation. Many wear festive garments during festivals. One would want to be properly dressed so as not be ashamed. In communal societies there is a need to belong, or not be excluded. People live in those communities and share their lives. Those like lepers or certain castes in various countries are often excluded from public festivities.

In ritual worship many people have priests or intermediaries in their religions that intercede for them, or perform some ritual

function that a non-priest cannot do for themselves or their family. Also many observe having a go-between whenever there is a broken relationship, or desire to repair a broken relation or offence. Jesus is our priest, our go-between before a righteous God.



### **Stories to Affirm New Believers**

I was traveling with a radio evangelist in a tribal area of eastern India. We had agreed to meet with radio listeners who were now believers and with those who listened but were still seekers. We arrived around mid morning and were to be with them about three hours.

The group wanted to sing some of the songs they heard in the radio program. Then it was my turn to teach, to disciple and bring to faith those who were seekers. The radio evangelist was my interpreter. I had asked him to speak since the people knew his voice. But he said that the people were honored to have a foreigner to come and teach them.

I began with a review of the Creation story and how it was through disobedience that sin came into the world. I jumped ahead to the Flood story to show that it was through one man's obedience that his family and the animals were saved from destruction in the judgment. Then in Abraham's story I told of the promise of One to bless all peoples and how God had given Abraham a son in his old age and then tested Abraham's faith when God provided the sacrifice.

Then I told of the Prophets' stories of the coming Messiah who would suffer for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserved upon himself. Then the Birth of Jesus and the angel's words that he would save his people from their sins and that he was God's Messiah.

I told how Jesus was called the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. I told how Jesus resisted the devil when tempted to sin. The story of Nicodemus told how God gave his only begotten Son so that all who believe on him might be saved. I told briefly the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man and how one must believe in this life. Then the story of the other Lazarus when Jesus said the he was the resurrection and the life and by believing on him one would never die. I skipped the last Supper and went to the post-

supper teaching of Jesus' promise to prepare a place for believers and to come back for them. Then a very brief Crucifixion story followed by Jesus' teaching that he was the bread come down from heaven and whoever ate of him would never hunger and that he provided living water that quenched spiritual thirst and bubbled up to salvation.



### **Half the Mission Team Told Stories**

A mission team at a seminary asked for an introduction to Bible Storying. When the team arrived in their designated country, some of the team decided not to tell the Bible stories, but to use some traditional witnessing presentations. The other half did tell the Bible stories. Soon word spread about those who were telling the Bible stories which attracted much attention among the local people. The non-storying half of the team saw the difference in response but apparently did not change their strategy. Those who told the Bible stories returned expressing their excitement at the response of the people who came to listen to their stories.



### **How Did Your Mission Team Feel About Using Storying?**

I believe the team enjoyed storying. I do not believe, however, that we did a great job with each story. Sometimes when the average team member stands in front of 80 listeners and tries to tell a Book story from memory, he/she can "freeze up" and forget some important aspect of the story. Learning to speak through an interpreter takes some getting used to. If we had it to do over again, I think we could have improved greatly on some of our storying.

DWJ



## CHAPTER 11

### ADDITIONAL INVITATION STORIES

#### 33. It's Your Decision (Optional)

**Background Scriptures:** Ge 6:5-7:7; Jos 2:1-14; Dan 12:1b-2, 10; Lk 16:19-31; Rev 20:11-15

**Anchor Scripture:** 1Co 15:3

#### It's Your Decision to Believe and Live

Do you remember the story that Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus? Remember that both men died but found they were in different places after death. The rich man was in the flames of torment because he did not pay attention to the warning of Moses and the Prophets. During his lifetime he did not consider it important to believe the warning from God. He had lived a good life. In the story we did not see that he was a bad person except that he did not show any concern for poor Lazarus laid daily at his gate. He just did not believe.

Remember the story of the flood in the days of Noah? God saw the evil and wickedness of the people and sent his judgment upon them. To righteous Noah God revealed how to escape the judgment. It required that Noah believe God's words and carefully obey what God told him to do. When Jesus spoke about that story he said the people were eating and drinking and marrying right up to the time God sent the flood. (Mt 24:38-39) There was the story of Rahab who was saved along with her family when her city was destroyed. God was bringing judgment upon a wicked people who lived in Rahab's city. She knew that destruction was coming and asked to be saved from it. She had to do exactly what the two spies told her to do to save herself and her family.

Jesus has warned that one day he will return as judge of all the earth. Both the living and the dead will be gathered to stand before him for judgment. He will separate out those

who are his, that is, who have believed that he is the Son of God, and that he died for their sins as their substitute. Those who are believers are the ones who have put their faith in Jesus as their Savior.

Those who are not believers and those who have scoffed and mocked the Son of God will have to confess that Jesus really is the Son of God. Every knee will bow before him. Sadly, these who have not believed in Jesus, whose sins have not been covered by his blood, will stand guilty before him. They will be judged and punished for their own sins, and will spend an eternity in darkness and torment away from the presence of God.

An angel told the prophet Daniel these words: "Everyone whose name is found written in the book — will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt." Then the angel said that until that time comes "Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. For none of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand."

You alone are able to determine the ending to your story. Will your story have a happy ending as you come to the end of your life? Or will your story have an unhappy ending as you die without choosing Jesus as your Savior? It is up to you.

My work has been to bring this story of Jesus to you so you can hear it and decide for yourself. I have chosen to believe that Jesus is God's Son who died for my sins. I have chosen to have life in him and to enjoy all the blessings he has promised those who accept him as Savior and follow him as Lord. That is the teaching from God's Word.

**Let's Talk:** You may have other salvation presentations to use in witness invitations. Try to base what you say on the stories which have presented the issues of the broken relationship with God because of sin, the judgment of God which one cannot escape, and the gift of God's grace in providing a salvation through Jesus and his suffering and death on the sinner's behalf. Remember that in many cultures it is a common practice for a listener to be polite by agreeing (*or give some positive sign of assent*) to questions being asked by a foreigner. So a "yes" is not always a "yes": It may

mean I am listening and want to have a good relationship with you and so will agree to whatever you want. And it can be a sincere “yes” that means they do understand and want to follow what is being asked of them.

Take some time to examine the listener to see if they do indeed understand the implication of the stories for them. Ask them to tell you what they believe. Affirm them as they share. If necessary, gently nudge them with guiding questions as they may not know the best way to express their belief. Rejoice with them and pray with them as they do pray to receive Christ. Urge them to tell someone what they have decided.

Also it is good to tell the new believer that their faith is like a new seed that has been planted. In order for it to grow it must be nurtured and watered. Nurturing comes from God’s Word and being in the presence of other believers in worship, Bible study and prayer. Watering is the presence of the Holy Spirit who gives eternal life (Jn 4:14; 7:38).

While on a mission trip your time with new believers may be limited. You will need to leave them in the hands of another who can continue to disciple them and to gather a church if you have not been able to do so.

There are many approaches to discipling. One might be to use the Book of Ephesians as a general outline as it reviews salvation as a gift of God’s grace, deals with unity of believers in Christ, one’s testimony in living as Children of Light, relationships, and finally a reminder about God’s provision for one to stand strong in the Lord.

Initial discipling is to affirm new believers, to stabilize them in their new faith, to begin their growth in Jesus through faith and prayer and Bible study, and to point to the new way of life that pleases God, leaving behind the old way. Beyond this would be discipling that corrects any errors in belief and deals with cultural issues that may be contrary to God’s Word or syncretistic.



### **34. Do You Accept or Refuse the Invitation?**

**Background Passages:** Lk 14:15-24; Mt 22:4-14

**Anchor Passage:** Lk 14:16-17

Parable of the Great Banquet  
An Invitation

Jesus was invited to the home of a prominent religious person. Some of the guests were watching Jesus carefully.

Jesus noticed how some of the guests were choosing for themselves a place of honor at the table. Jesus commented that it was better to be humble and choose a less important place, for he said, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

When one of those at the table heard Jesus' teaching, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

Jesus replied with this parable: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet the man sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

But all those invited began to make excuses. One said they had just bought a field and needed to go inspect it. Another said he had just bought some oxen and was on his way to try them out. So he asked to be excused. Still another said that he had just gotten married and so he could not come.

The servant returned and reported these excuses to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and paths of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

When the servant returned he reported that he had given the invitations to others, but there was still more room for additional guests.

The master told his servant, 'Go out into the roads and country lanes and urge them to come in so that my house will be full. For I tell you, not one of those who were invited and refused will get a taste of my banquet.'"

At another time Jesus told a similar parable about a king who gave a wedding banquet. When the hall was filled with guests, the king came to see all the guests. The king noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. "Friend," the king asked, "how did you get in here without wearing wedding clothes?" The man could not answer. Then the king told his servants, "Tie the man hand and foot and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then Jesus said, "For many are invited, but few are chosen." That is the story from God's Word.

**Let's Talk:** These two parables while similar deal with two different issues. In the first parable the only focus is on the refused invitation to join the banquet, even when the food is prepared and ready to eat. In the second parable the additional issue is that of persons present who are not properly clothed. Obviously, both of these parables deal with the invitation to believe on Jesus as Savior and so be able to join Jesus in the blessing to come. The second parable further mentions that matter of someone being present who was improperly clothed for the occasion. Several scriptures mention this problem. All our righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight. (Isa. 64:6) We rejoice in God who clothes us with garments of salvation and arrays us with a robe of (his) righteousness. (Isa. 61:10).

In many parts of the world one of the greatest compliments is to be invited to join in eating. It is an act of arrogance and even hostility to refuse a host who has graciously invited one to eat and then prepared the food and sent word that the meal is ready.

So as an invitation story talk about the implication of refusing to attend a wonderful banquet (feast) that has been prepared and invitations sent out. The very stories that have been told are that invitation to join Jesus in the place he has prepared for all. But the warning is that we cannot attend clothed in our own righteousness (goodness or deeds or whatever else we may feel qualifies us). By confessing our sins we put off the filthy rags of our righteousness and by believing on Jesus we are clothed with his righteousness.

Further there is a note of urgency in that the servants were told to go and invite others and even to compel them to come in. God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. (1Ti 2:4) The Lord is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish. (2 Pe 3:9)

Paul speaks of not having a righteousness of his own that comes from obeying the law, but his comes through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. (Php 3:9) John adds in Revelation: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb! (Rev 19:9)



## A Volunteer Mission Team Evaluation

### **1) How did you, as a team, prepare for using storying?**

We visited [www.chronologicalBookstorying.com](http://www.chronologicalBookstorying.com) website several times and looked at Trevor McIlwain and Nancy Everson's book, *Firm Foundations, Creation to Christ*. We practiced telling our stories to one another. One of our interns, SM, has been to South Asia and done storying before. He listened to our stories and gave us feedback on how to improve. Almost all of us wrote out our stories and practiced them over and over.

### **2) Now that the trip is behind you, is there anything else you would add to the preparation for storying?**

I think we needed to know more about how to lead the listeners in the question and answer time. We were not prepared very well for helping listeners review the various aspects of the story. While in South Asia, JC helped us learn how to do that. We learned after telling our stories that it was good for the translator to repeat the story himself in the heart language—from beginning to end. When he finished, we asked questions about the story to make sure listeners could remember various parts of the story. Then we engaged them in a variety of interactive teaching-learning methods. We involved listeners in role playing the story, in dramatic interpretations of the story, in games about the story, and other creative teaching-learning methods. We would also ask listeners to stand and retell part or all of the story in their own words. This approach also helped reinforce learning. We tried to use a variety of inter-active methods so the listeners would not get bored and would have fun. Telling the story took about 10 to 15 minutes. Then getting listeners to retell and re-enact the story would take 60 to 90 minutes or more.

### **3) As a leader can you think of other ways that**

**storying could be used with volunteers?** The only other effective use that I saw for storying was in telling personal, real-life testimonies, especially testimonies that included painful life experiences and tragedies. Our listeners could identify with life tragedies and always listened with rapt attention even though these were not Bible stories.



**CHAPTER 12**  
**AFFIRMATION AND WARNING STORIES**  
**35. Blessed State of Believers**

**Background Passages:** Jn 14:1-4; 1Th 4:16-17; Rev 21:1-8; 22:1-5

**Anchor Passage:** Rev 21:4

The Great Blessing

On the night before Jesus was crucified, while he was eating the Passover meal with his disciples, Jesus taught that he must go away for a time. The disciple Simon Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "You can't follow me now, but later you can."

Then Jesus began to teach his disciples saying, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will surely come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

When Jesus was taken up into heaven the angels said to Jesus' followers, "This same Jesus, who had been taken up into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go."

A follower of Jesus named Paul wrote these words to believers: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command...and those believers who have died will rise to meet the Lord. And those believers who are still alive will also be caught up with the others in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." (1Th 4:16-17)

One of the disciples named John had a wonderful vision about the things that would happen in the last days. John was commanded to write down the things he saw and heard. He saw a new heaven and a new earth. A loud voice

proclaimed, "Now the dwelling place of God will be among men and he will live with them. They will be his people, and he will be their God.

"God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain; for the old things are all passed away." (Rev 21:1, 3-4)

"To him who is thirsty I will give to drink the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son." (Rev 21:6-7)

In his vision an angel showed John the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb of God. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit with one crop each month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. Those in the city will see the face of God and the Lamb. There will be no more night for the Lord will be their light. And those with God will be with him for ever and ever. (*Rev. 22:1-5*) That is the story from God's Word for those who believe on Jesus as their Savior.

**Let's Talk:** The purpose of this narrative is to express the blessings for those who believe on Jesus and their sins are forgiven. First is that Jesus himself has gone to prepare a place for them in his Father's house with room for all. Jesus promised to return to get his followers so they might be where he was. Jesus would call the believers to him, both dead and living, when he returns. All the old way of life with its pains and sorrows, sickness and death is now passed away. The curse is broken and the future for the believers will be in the presence of their God and all the other believers. This picture is quite different from what many believe about the next life. Some animists believe that after death one simply continues to live a mirror existence on the "other side" and still has all the needs of this life. Others believe that it is a Paradise for their pleasure but have no understanding of being in the presence of God and the Lamb—Jesus. Others long for a time when they will simply no longer exist and continue being reborn into this life. Instead, for the believer it is a wonderful life with God and their Savior Jesus with great blessing that lasts forever.





### 36. Destiny of Unforgiven Sinners

**Background Passages:** Mt 13:24-30, 36-42, 47-50; Mt 25:31-33, 41, 46; Lk 16:19-51; Rev 20:11-15

**Anchor Passages:** Mt 25:31-33, 41

#### The Awful Destiny of Unforgiven Sinners

Jesus told a parable about man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping his enemy came and sowed weeds among the good seed. When the good seed sprouted, then the weeds also appeared.

When the servants saw this they asked, "Didn't you sow good seed in the field? Do you want us to go and pull the weeds out?"

The owner answered, "No, let them grow together until the harvest. Then collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned. Then gather the good crop and bring it to my barn."

Later Jesus explained this parable to his followers. The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man (Jesus). The field is the world and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one. The enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. The Son of Man will send his angels to weed out everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will be thrown into the fiery furnace where there is great suffering.'

At another time Jesus taught about the coming separation of believers and unbelievers. He said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne. All the nations will be gathered before him. He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the

devil and his angels. Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

A prophet named Daniel wrote about the coming time of great distress. Everyone whose name is found written in the book will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (*Dan 12:1-2*)

One of Jesus disciples named John saw a vision of the coming judgment. He wrote these words: “I saw a great white throne and all the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. Books were opened. The book of life was opened and the dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. Each person was judged according to his life. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Remember the story of Lazarus the poor beggar and the rich man? The rich man did not believe the words of God’s prophets about Jesus and so when he died his sins were not forgiven and he immediately went to a place of torment.

A teacher named Paul wrote these words: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (*Ro 3:23*) and again he wrote: “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (*Ro 6:23*) The disciple Peter wrote: “God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (*2Pe 3:9*)

The same disciple John who warned about the coming judgment wrote: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.” (*1Jn 1:8-9*)

Then John wrote: “Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, is the sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but the sins of the whole world.” (*1Jn 2:2*)

Those who are wicked whose sins are not forgiven, and all those who do not believe on Jesus as God’s Son, the sacrifice for our sins, will one day suffer a horrible fate. Why should you suffer when Jesus has already suffered for your sins? It is your choice. That is the warning from God’s Word.



## Chapter 13

### STRATEGY CHECKLIST FOR SHORT TERM MISSION TRIPS

1. Be aware of whether Bible Storying is being used by local missionaries, how it is being used or the local strategy, and how you can best fit in.
2. Short term mission Bible Storying may consist of:
  - a. Use of shorter story tracks—21 or less stories, mostly stories of Jesus.
  - b. Use of Jesus stories to probe for responsiveness for later follow up.
  - c. Use of abbreviated OT track to introduce JESUS Film.
  - d. Jesus stories used during in-home ministry.
3. Typically a set of five to ten stories is easiest to learn and use during a short visit.
4. Models like the Storying Scarf have been used in part or whole.
5. Fast-tracking is a possibility but a big challenge for a short-termer to prepare and competently use.
6. Bible Storying can be used in conjunction with disaster response and relief ministry visits using stories that tell of God's love and providence for those in need. (The HOPE Stories, The WATER Stories, The FOOD Stories)
7. As the story list grows shorter the greater percentage must be given to stories of Jesus. In a typical ten-story model there might be only three OT stories and seven stories of Jesus.
8. Bible Story sermons are good if asked to preach. Typically the stories are the main points.

9. There can be opportunities for praying in homes for family needs. If asked to do so, it may be possible to tell one (or more) stories to lift up Jesus before the family as the One who came from heaven and taught us how to pray in his name. Then pray for the need and offer to return to tell more stories if there is interest.
10. If invited into a *man of peace* home be prepared to tell them that you are a storyteller and will share some stories with them if they would like to hear them. Have a short story list in mind that can be done in a reasonable length of time.
11. In some situations short-termers will need to be prepared to share more stories if there is interest and the people ask for the stories. One possibility is to team teach the stories, dividing up the story list.
12. There have been opportunities to tell Bible stories “non-evangelistically” in schools as part of moral education programs.
13. Bible Story tracts have been used along with telling selected stories.
14. Some have recorded their stories in English or had a native speaker to record the stories in the local language so they could play the stories for listeners or share copies of the stories.
15. Some have used picture sets, often in clear files, to display while telling a short set of stories in a home. Some more timid short-termers may be more comfortable having a visual aid in hand when telling the stories.
16. A separate set of stories appropriate for children could be told by one of the team members.

17. In some places where there is little or no interest in the stories, it is often possible for one member of the team to begin telling a story to the others within earshot of the local people. It appears that sometimes people are more willing to listen if not being addressed directly by the storyteller.
18. In Islamic areas a clean unmarked Bible is required as it is offensive to see a Bible (Holy Book) that has marking in it.
19. If personal stories are used be sure there is a clear delineation between them and the Bible stories. In telling Bible stories always bracket the story with something like: "Now here is the story from the Bible." And "That is the end of the story from the Bible." For personal stories: "Here is my story..."
20. Don't apologize for making a mistake in telling the story or leaving anything out. Simply correct yourself and continue. Keep the story intact — unbroken by teaching comment or anything more than the briefest aside comment if needed for clarity.
21. Bible Storying training is available at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth — in May and November. There may be training in your area. Check with your local Missions office.
22. It is important to begin early to prepare stories and practice them before going on a mission trip.
23. Consider using the Bible Storying experience gained on a short-term mission trip to train others.
24. Bible stories can be used along with other traditional witnessing plans by adding in the stories as illustrations or to demonstrate the witness truths.

## A Mission Trip Report

A team of eight men—three Americans, four Sudanese and a Zambian—traveled to Southern Sudan in 2007. The trip was to plant new churches and strengthen existing ones among the Dinka Agar people.

We spent about one and a half hours each evening telling selected stories from the evangelism story set. Since the people had gone through this same story set the previous year, it was a needed review for many of them.

Before we left, we spent a lot of time stressing the importance of following and obeying Jesus, particularly with regard to baptism. At the end of the storying time, our discussions indicated that there were a number of true believers who had not been baptized, including the leader of the church.

In another village we found about fifty of them agreed to listen to our stories. Whereas in the previous village we told the Bible stories in more or less chronological order, this time we felt God leading us to tell stories about idolatry. We told the stories of (1) the creation of the spirit world (2) Aaron and the golden calf (3) Moses and Pharaoh (4) Elijah and the prophets of Baal and (5) Simon the sorcerer. At the end of the stories we told the people that God was a jealous God who would not share His glory with anything He had created. We told them they would have to choose between their demons and Jesus, that they could not have them both. At the conclusion of our storying, 41 people made a commitment to follow only Jesus!

When we returned on Tuesday, we told them stories about the Power of God over demons, over illness, over nature and over death. About 110 people came, at least in part to hear us.

We finished up our storying with a time of prayer for the community, having established that God was both Lord and that He loved them more than the demons of Hell ever could. TA



**Chapter 14**  
**EXAMPLES OF SHORT STORY SETS**  
**Ten Basic Salvation Stories**

The basic salvation stories (but not necessarily listeners' favorites):

1. Creation—Who are we? (*God made us in His image*)
2. Fall—What happened to us? (*Through disobedience we sinned*)
3. Flood—God's attitude toward sin and provision of salvation for the obedient
4. Abraham and Isaac—the substitute sacrifice—God will provide the Sacrifice or The Prophecies of the Suffering Servant who would bear our sins (*Isaiah 53*)
5. Birth of Jesus—He will save us from our sins
6. The Lame Man and 4 Friends—Jesus has authority to forgive our sins *or* The woman Who Wept at the Feet of Jesus—also forgiveness (*Luke 7*)
7. Raising of Lazarus—"I am the resurrection and the life" (*John 11*)
8. Last Supper—"This is my blood shed for the remission of sins"; "I am the way the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me." (*Luke for supper & John for teaching*)
9. Parable of the Great Banquet with refused invitations (*Luke 14*) or Parable of the Prodigal Son who came to his senses and returned to his father
10. Jesus has prepared a place for us and will return for those who believe on him; Ascension and promise of return, promise of blessing or judgment

## Short Track Five Story Set

1. Begin with story of Adam and Eve (*tell in your own words*)
  - God made them and provided for their needs
  - God warned about the consequences of disobedience
  - Disobedience brought a separation from God and punishment
2. God promised a Redeemer—Abraham & Isaac
  - God promised that a descendant of Abraham would one day bless all people
  - God gave Abraham a son and then tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son
  - God provided the Substitute Sacrifice
3. God sent his prophets to tell of the coming Messiah who would suffer for the sins of all people. (*see prophecy story*)
4. Raising of Lazarus story to include Jesus' words to Martha—"I am the resurrection..."  
Later Jesus told his disciples "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except by me."
5. Jesus was crucified, died, buried and resurrected. Thomas wanted to see the resurrected Jesus. When he did, he believed. But Jesus said to him, "More blessed are those who have never seen yet they believe."

## Typical Prophet Story

When Adam and Eve sinned God said that one day a son of woman would bruise Satan's head. To Abraham God promised that a descendant would bless all people. After many years had passed the people turned away from God and fell into great sin. God sent his prophets to warn the people and to turn their hearts back to Him. A prophet named Isaiah one day had a wonderful vision in which God called him to bring a message to his people. A time would come when a virgin would give birth to a son who would be called Immanuel — God with man. He would be called



Mighty God and Prince of Peace. The Spirit of God would rest on him. He would take up our weaknesses and carry our sorrows. But this Son would be despised and rejected by his own people. He would be betrayed by a friend who shared his bread. He would be mocked and spit upon, his clothing gambled for by others. His hands and feet and side would be pierced for our transgressions (*sins*). He would forgive those who were putting him to death. By his punishment and wounds we would be healed. We are like sheep who have wandered away from God and our sins have been laid upon God's Anointed One. God would make his life a guilt offering. He would bear our sins and make intercession for us. He would suffer and die, be buried, and be raised to life again.

But before the Promised Anointed One came another prophet like the mighty prophet Elijah would come to prepare the way for the Lord.

### Storying Scarf

This is a list of 21 chronologically arranged stories that are illustrated on a "storying cloth." This shorter list of stories was originally prepared for use in West Africa but has found use by many in other areas. The pictures are b/w line drawings printed onto the cloth. For details and copies of the cloth see the list of Visual Resources. Low-resolution color pictures and lessons can be downloaded.

#### STORYING SCARF STORIES

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| 1. Creation—God made everything good. Ge 1:1-3, 31a                                    | 12.The Baptism of Jesus—Jesus started his ministry with baptism. Baptism is the norm for new believers. Mt 3:13-17 |
| 2. The Fall—Man sinned, turned away from God. Ge 3:1-3                                 | 13.Jesus Calms the Sea—Jesus had power over the natural world. Lk 8:22-25  |
| 3. Cain and Abel—Adam and Eve's offspring were sinners like their parents. Ge 4:1, 2-7 | 14.Jesus heals a demon-possessed man—Jesus has power over evil. Mk 5:1-5   |
| 4. Noah—God punishes sin, keeps his promises, and provides a savior. Ge 6:5-8          | 15.Jesus heals a young girl—Jesus has power over death. Mk 5:35-36   |

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|---|---|
| 5. Sodom and Gomorrah—God hates and punishes sin. Ge 19:1, 12, 13   | 16. Jesus feeds a multitude—Jesus cares for people’s needs. Lk 9:16, 17   |
| 6. Abraham and Isaac—God has a plan. Ge 22:1-2  | 17. Jesus heals a blind man—Jesus has power over illness. Jn 9:31-33  |
| 7. Egypt—God keeps his promises and blesses those who have faith in him. Ex 1:7                                 | 18. The Lord’s Supper—Jesus showed us what good leaders are like and showed us how to remember him. Mt 26:26-28 |
| 8. The Burning Bush—God calls someone to rescue his people. Ex 3:1, 2, 4  | 19. The Arrest and Crucifixion of Jesus—He gave his life for us. 1pe 3:18                                       |
| 9. Ten Commandments—God expects righteousness. Ex 20:1-17   | 20. The Resurrection—Jesus has power over his own death. Lk 24:1-6  |
| 10. Bronze Serpent—God is merciful and provides a way of salvation, He wants us to do things His way. Nu 21:5-6 | 21. He waits—Jesus is still alive and people can glorify god through him. Jn 14:6                               |
| 11. The Birth of Jesus—God keeps his promises and sends a special child. Lk 2:8-11                              |   |

### **CESA Kanga Cloth (*Maasai Stories*)**

This is colorful cloth of 42 pictures based on stories originally used among the Maasai in East Africa. The cloth can be used as illustration during the telling of each story. This Kanga Cloth and the Story Scarf are both convenient and durable means of carrying story illustrations. However, one disadvantage is that listeners’ eyes will tend to wander all over the pictures in the beginning. Later the cloth is very useful for reviewing the stories and illustrating visually the progression of the stories. The pictures are relatively small so the cloths work best for small groups where listeners are sitting around in a circle. Use of a storying cloth then dictates which stories you will need to tell. See ordering information in Visual Resources.

## KANGA CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE STORIES

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>THE BEGINNING</b>                                    |   |
| 1. Spirit World   | Job 1:6-7; 38:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6 |
| 2. The Beginning  | Genesis 1:1-2:3   |
| 3. Adam & Eve   | Genesis 1:26-3:2  |
| 4. Cain, Abel, Seth & Noah                              | Genesis 4:1-16, 25-26; 5:3, 28-32   |
| 5. Flood  | Genesis 6:9-9:17  |
| <b>THE PATRIARCHS</b>                                   |   |
| 6. God's Covenant with Abram; Sarah Promised Baby Isaac | Genesis 15:1-6; 18:1-15; 21:1-7   |
| 7. Abraham Tested                                       | Genesis 22:1-19   |
| 8. Jacob Gets Isaac's Blessing                          | Genesis 27:1-45   |
| 9. Jacob's Dream at Bethel                              | Genesis 28:10-22  |
| 10. Jacob Marries & has 12 Children                     | Genesis 29:1-35; 30:1-24; 35:16-21  |
| 11. Jacob Wrestles With God                             | Genesis 32:22-32; 35:10-15  |
| 12. Joseph in Egypt                                     | Genesis 37 & Genesis 39-45  |
| <b>DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT</b>                           |   |
| 13. The Birth of Moses                                  | Exodus 1:1-2:10   |
| 14. Moses and the Burning Bush                          | Exodus 2:11-4:17  |
| 15. The Ten Plagues                                     | Exodus 5:1-6:1; 7:8-11:10   |
| 16. The Passover  | Exodus 12   |
| 17. Crossing the Sea                                    | Exodus 13:17-14:31  |
| <b>THE WILDERNESS</b>                                   |   |
| 18. Giving of the Ten Commandments                      | Exodus 19:1-20:21   |
| 19. The Golden Calf                                     | Exodus 32   |
| 20. The Tabernacle                                      | Exodus 40   |

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|--|---|
| 21. Twelve Sent to Spy on Canaan   | Numbers 13:1-14:38  |
| 22. The Lord Calls Samuel; Israel Asks for a King  | 1 Samuel 3; 1 Samuel 8  |
| <b>KINGS OF ISRAEL</b>   |   |
| 23. Samuel Anoints Saul; God Rejects Saul Because of Sin                                       | 1 Samuel 9-10; 1 Samuel 15  |
| 24. Samuel Anoints David; David Promised a Descendant to Reign Forever; Desire to Build Temple | 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 2 Samuel 7:1-17   |
| <b>ELIJAH</b>  |   |
| 25. Elijah on Mount Carmel   | 1 Kings 18:17-40  |
| <b>BIRTH AND LIFE OF JESUS</b>   |   |
| 26. Prophecies Concerning the Messiah  | Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 53:1-9; Psalm 22:1-2, 6-7, 14-18  |
| 27. The Birth of Jesus   | Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20  |
| 28. John the Baptist Prepares the Way; the Baptism of Jesus; the Temptation of Jesus           | Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18; Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:29-34; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13 |
| 29. The Calling of the first Disciples   | Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-51;   |
| 30. Jesus Heals Many; Jesus Heals a Paralytic  | Mark 1:21-34; Luke 4:31-41  |
| 31. Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman   | John 4:4-42   |
| 32. Jesus Feeds the 5,000  | Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15   |
| 33. The Healing of the Demon-Possessed Boy; Christ Foretells His Death and Resurrection        | Matthew 17:14-23; Mark 9:14-32; Luke 9:37-44  |
| 34. Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead   | John 11:1-46  |
| 35. The Rich Young Man   | Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-29  |
| 36. Jesus Anointed at Bethany, the Plot to Betray Him  | Matthew 26:1-16; Mark 14:1-11; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8  |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 37. The Lord's Supper              | Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23; John 13:1-30   |
| 38. Gethsemane; Jesus on Trial     | Matthew 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53; John 18:1-12; Matthew 27:1-26; Mark 14:53-65; 15:1-15; Luke 22:66-23:25; John 18:19-24; 18:28-19:16 |
| 39. The Crucifixion                | Matthew 27:27-66; Mark 15:16-47; Luke 23:26-56; John 19:17-42   |
| 40. The Resurrection               | Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18  |
| 41. Jesus Appears to His Disciples | Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:36-53; John 20:19-29  |
| 42. Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven     | Acts 1:4-11   |

### **A Fast-Track Story** FIVE MINUTE STORYING MODEL

In the beginning there was only God, for God has always existed. After God had created the world and all the things in it, he also made the first man and woman and placed them in a garden. God gave them work to do caring for the garden. Also God gave one commandment as a warning: The man and woman could eat fruit from any of the trees growing in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for to do so they would die. In time the evil angel came and spoke to the woman saying it was all right to eat from the forbidden tree. The woman did eat and her husband also ate. Because of their disobedience God said that they would suffer during their lives and one day would die and return to the dust. The man Adam and woman Eve became fearful and tried to hide from God. God still loved them and clothed their nakedness, but put them out of the garden where they had lived.

The disobedience of the man and woman continued to spread first to their own sons when the older killed the younger. Soon disobedience spread to all the descendants of

that first man and woman. The whole population became filled with violence and evil. God saw this evil and pronounced judgment upon it. He would destroy all the sinful people and animals. But God saw the man Noah who tried to live a life that was pleasing to God. So God revealed to Noah that he must build a large boat, for God was going to save some of the animals and Noah's family. Noah carefully did all that God commanded him to do. When a great flood came only Noah and his family and the animals were saved. After the flood was gone Noah offered a sacrifice to thank God.

Again the population on the earth increased but people soon forgot God again. One day God called a man named Abraham. God said to him that one day he would have many descendants and through one of them God would bless all people. Abraham and his wife Sarah were already old and had no children. Then one day God sent an angel to say that soon Sarah would have a son. Abraham believed God and trusted God to do what he promised. After the birth of the son and some years passed, God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son. Immediately Abraham began to obey God but told his son that God would surely provide a substitute sacrifice. At the time of the sacrifice God stopped Abraham from harming his son and provided a sheep for the sacrifice.

After many more years had passed the descendants of Abraham had gone to live in another land. There God had blessed them until they became many in number. But the local people feared Abraham's descendants and forced them into slavery. God heard the cry of the people and called a prophet named Moses to deliver the people out of their bondage. When the king of the land refused to obey God's command, God punished the people of that land with many terrible plagues and finally even the death of their firstborn sons. But God told the descendants of Abraham what they must do to live — they were to sacrifice a sheep and put its blood on the sides of the door and over the door of their houses. They would be kept safe from the punishment by obeying God and by the sign of the blood.

While Moses was leading the people to the land God promised, God gave his holy law known as the Ten

Commandments to help the people know what was sinful. Also God appointed some of Moses' relatives to be the priests who would lead the people in their worship of God. To cover the sin of the people when they happened to disobey God, the people were told to sacrifice an animal and sprinkle its blood on the altar. The innocent animal would die in place of the person who sinned and its blood would provide a covering for sin.

But over the years the descendants of Abraham and all the people who lived around them continued to fall into terrible sin. They broke God's holy law and offended God in many ways. Even the kings, and the priests and some prophets fell into terrible sin and led the people also to sin against God. In spite of God's many warnings of coming judgment the people refused to listen. At last the people were overcome by their enemies and taken away into captivity. But God still loved them and wanted to bless them. So God sent prophets to tell the wonderful news that one day a Messiah or Savior would be born who would suffer for the sins of the people like a sacrifice who would die, but he would rise again. The prophets told where this Savior would be born, that he would be a descendant of the great king David.

After many more years passed one day it began to happen just as God had said. For God sent an angel to a young virgin named Mary to tell her that she was to give birth to a son who would save his people from their sins. When Mary's husband heard about this he was disturbed. An angel told Mary's husband that God's Holy Spirit was causing this to happen. The son was to be named Jesus, a name that means God is salvation. At his birth God sent angels to announce that God's Messiah had been born according to the prophecies. Later wise men from a foreign country saw a sign in the sky and believed that a great king had been born. When they came and found Jesus, they worshiped him as a king, a priest and as someone who was going to suffer and die.

When Jesus came of age he sought out a prophet named John who was baptizing people who repented of their sins. Jesus asked John to baptize him, and when Jesus was

coming from the water God spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, and I am well pleased with him." Later when John again saw Jesus he cried out, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" When the evil one Satan tested Jesus, Jesus refused to sin and each time quoted from God's Word what was the right thing to do.

Soon Jesus began to teach about the kingdom of heaven. Many people came to hear him. When the people saw that Jesus had the power to heal the sick and raise the dead, they brought many sick people to be healed. As Jesus saw their faith he healed them. He also forgave the sin of people and warned them not to sin again. But the religious teachers were displeased because Jesus called God "Father." Jesus also taught that he had come down from heaven and obeyed God in all that he said and did. Many doubters and enemies of Jesus came to test him with difficult and foolish questions. Each time Jesus answered them wisely.

One of the friends of Jesus became sick and was dying. The man's sister sent for Jesus. But before Jesus arrived the brother died. Jesus told the sister that her brother would live again. Jesus said that he was the life and the resurrection and all who believed in him would live. Then Jesus raised the dead man back to life. When the religious leaders heard about this they were jealous and decided that Jesus must die. Jesus told his followers many times that a time would come when he would be arrested, falsely accused and put to death but he would live again.

At last a time came during the feast that remembered God's salvation during the days of Moses when the people marked their houses with the blood. As Jesus was eating with his disciples he blessed a cup of drink prepared from grapes and told the disciples the drink represented his blood which was being shed for the sins of many. Later he said that he must go away to his Father's house to prepare a place for his followers but he would come back to receive them. For Jesus said that he was the way the truth and the life and no one came to the Father in heaven but by him.

That night Jesus was betrayed by one of his followers, arrested and taken before the religious authorities. Many false witnesses came to testify against Jesus but there was



no agreement. At last the chief leader asked Jesus: "Are you the Son of God?" When Jesus said that he was, all agreed that he was worthy of death. In the court of the Roman governor the people asked that Jesus be crucified. So he was taken to be terribly beaten, mocked, and despised just as the prophets had said. Then Jesus was led out to be crucified by nailing to a wooden cross between two thieves. One of the thieves mocked Jesus but the other asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus came into his kingdom. The religious leaders stood near the Cross and were mocking Jesus while he prayed asking God to forgive the leaders because they did not know what they were doing.

Later that terrible day it became very dark and Jesus cried out in a loud voice saying: "My God, my God, what have you turned away from me?" For at this time Jesus, the holy sinless one come from God, took upon himself the sins of all people who had ever lived and who would live even in the future. He suffered their guilt. Fellowship with his holy Father in heaven was broken because of the sin that Jesus now took upon himself. When the sacrifice was accepted by God, Jesus cried out with aloud voice: "It is finished! Father, into your hands I give my spirit." So Jesus died.

Some of his faithful followers buried Jesus in a rich man's tomb. Jesus' followers went home very sad thinking that he was now gone. Jesus had promised that on the third day he would live again. Very early on the third day a powerful angel came and opened the tomb and Jesus rose to life again. Jesus appeared to his disciples and to some of the women followers. One of the disciples doubted that it was really Jesus. So Jesus asked that disciple to touch the wounds in the hands and side. When the disciple did, he cried out: "My God, now I believe!" Jesus said to him, "You believe because you have seen me. More blessed are those who believe but have never seen me." The time came when Jesus returned to his Father in heaven. He told his followers that they must be his witnesses where they lived, to their neighbors and even to the end of the earth.

Later the followers of Jesus were filled with the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised would be sent. The followers of Jesus preached to the people that they must repent of their

sins and believe on Jesus as their Savior. For they said, there is salvation in none other than Jesus, and all who call upon his name will be saved.

One day Jesus will return as he promised and the dead will be raised from the grave. Those who do not believe in Jesus will be judged for their sins and eternally punished. Those who have believed, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will receive their reward and everlasting blessing with Jesus.

One of the stories Jesus told was about a son who demanded his share of the inheritance from his father. Then the son went away and wasted the money living a life that dishonored God and his father. At last when his money was gone the son was hungry with no food and forced to live among some pigs even desiring to eat their food. At last he admitted that he had sinned against both God and his father. So he would return home and ask only to be hired as a servant. But when his father saw the lost son returning he was filled with compassion for his son and welcomed him back and restored him to the family and called for a celebration. Jesus said it was like that in heaven when one sinner repented and returned to the Father.

Another story Jesus told to warn people was about two men. One, a rich man, lived in great luxury, satisfied in every way. The other was a poor man who was sick and covered with sores who longed for any scraps of food from the rich man's table. Both men died, the rich man found himself in the flames of torment. The poor man found himself in the arms of Abraham. The rich man cried out for Abraham to send the poor man to touch his finger in some water and place it on his tongue, for he was in great torment. The rich man also asked that Abraham send the poor man back to warn his five brothers so they would not come to that terrible place. But Abraham said that his brothers had the words of Moses and the prophets which they should hear and obey. Even if someone went back from the dead to warn the brothers still they would not listen.

God's Word contains the words of Moses and the prophets and Jesus' own testimony about who he was, the One sent from God to teach about the way to heaven, to

suffer for our sins and die in our place. Jesus' salvation was God's gift to all people who are willing to turn from their sin and believe on Jesus as Savior. Jesus said to a man named Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." God's Word also says: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." And "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — not by your works, it is the gift of God so no one can boast." "God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." (2 Pe 3:9)

Now that you have heard this story, what is your decision?



### **Other Model Story Sets**

The person contemplating a short-term mission trip should think about what several Bible stories that could be told as stand-alone stories or along with other evangelistic teaching. All of the stories given in this manual are suggested stories and ways of telling and discussing them. So any or all of them could be used as there is opportunity or need. What if there is opportunity to tell only one story? It might go something like this:

The God who created this world sent his Son to forgive our sins and take the punishment for wrongdoing that we deserve. On the night before he was to suffer and die this Son, Jesus, told his followers that in his Father's house were many rooms. He was going to prepare a place for his followers and would one day return for them so they might be where he was. Jesus told a woman that he was the resurrection—anyone who believed in him would never die, and whoever died believing in him would live.

A prophet said that one day God would send someone to take our sins upon himself, to suffer and die. And through his death as a sacrifice our sins would be forgiven.

Jesus was falsely accused though he did no wrong. Jesus had said that he only taught the words he heard his Father in heaven speak and did the work he saw his Father doing. So Jesus was condemned to death and nailed to a cross to suffer and die. On the third day after his death and burial Jesus rose to life again. Many people saw him. Jesus told his followers to go and tell the people of the nations about him so they could believe on him, to obey his commands, and to be baptized. Then Jesus returned to his Father in heaven. An angel said that one day Jesus would return. Jesus taught his followers they must be ready for that day. Jesus told a story about a man who did not believe God during his lifetime. When he died he discovered himself in a terrible place of suffering where no one could help him and he could not escape. But for those who believe that Jesus is God's Son who suffered and died for their sins, there is forgiveness for their sins and a future life of great blessing. God's Word says that there is salvation in none other than Jesus. Whoever believes on Jesus will be saved from that terrible punishment. I have shared this good news with you so that you might also share in the great blessing after this life. I have believed on Jesus and I invite you to believe also. It's your decision.



If you could tell only a few stories, tell the story of the broken relationship because of sin in the Adam and Eve story. Then tell about the promise God made to Abraham of One to bless all peoples. Tell of the prophecies (*see the prophet story*) of One coming to suffer and die for our sins. Tell of Jesus' words to Martha in the Lazarus story and the promise he made to his disciples in John 14. Finally tell of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection and coming return one day.

Summarize the stories and leave out the dialog except where Jesus speaks to Martha and Jesus' words to his disciples. If you can't remember all these details as words, then think of the story scenes and tell it from your heart in your own words.

If you could tell only one story you might choose the Crucifixion Story, or Jesus' words to his disciples in John 14, or the Lazarus and Rich Man Story, or the Nicodemus Story. For an invitation think of a story like The Great Banquet when invitations were sent out but people chose not to come so that others were gathered in. This story has a cultural ring to it. The Prodigal Son story is great to use because of the filial piety when the son repented and humbled himself before his father who loved him and restored him to the family.

Following are some model story sets that I have used at times in the past and shared with others. There are more stories than you might be able to use on a typical mission trip. Again, it is possible to pick and choose stories to fit the opportunities you have and the spiritual openness of your listeners.

*God and Woman*—90 Bible stories and lessons originally developed for South Asian Muslim women which addressed many of their spiritual worldview issues.

*Heaven is for Women*—A 36 story set that attempted to address more carefully that salvation is a relationship with God the Father made possible through Jesus the Son more than simply a destination after death. Also based on common spiritual worldview issues among South Asian Muslim women.

*The Grief Stories*—A third set of 35 Bible stories for Muslim women about women who suffered misfortune in their lives and God redeemed their lives. Intended for those women not interested in any "Christian" teaching so no lessons, only stories are given. Some helps for the storyer are included.

*The Hope Stories*—A set of 34 resource stories for use during disaster response and relief ministries where people need assurance of God's love and reminded that God is powerful to change the circumstances of their lives. Subtly evangelistic.

*The Water Stories*—Originally prepared for use during clean water projects in Asia. There are 22 stories about water in

creation, the Flood, wells, cleansing, baptism and to quench spiritual thirst. This story set provides subtly evangelistic possibilities.

*The Food Stories*—A set of stories reminding listeners that God provides our food and is compassionate and powerful to provide food in our times of hunger. Also a reminder about spiritual hunger and who can satisfy that.

*God's Plan to Forgive Sin*—A basic set of stories developed for sharing during agricultural training camps in Bangladesh.

*The Suffering Servant*—A set of stories originally developed for use among Muslims in Bangladesh. In their worldview they saw themselves as a suffering people who needed the assurance of God's love. The stories remind that sin leads to suffering and that God sent One to suffer for our sins.

*God and Man*—An original set of 35 Bible story lessons developed for a tribal group in the Philippines and translated into English. Many have found this series useful among those in other animistic tribal situations.

*Chronological Storytelling: 54 Bible Stories*—A series of 54 paraphrased Bible stories with 27 OT and 27 NT included. Originally developed for generic tribal use in the Philippines and translated into English.

Another series of two short sets used in Brazil are by Christy Brawner. In *Good News of Jesus* are seven story lessons from Matthew's Gospel. In *Beginning a New Life in Christ* are eight lessons, also from Matthew's Gospel. English, Spanish, Portuguese.

<http://www.wsaresourcesite.org/Topics/storying.htm>

For additional story sets in Spanish visit the following websites:

<http://hwww.ethnomex.com/stories/>

[www.Contare.org](http://www.Contare.org)

<http://www.geocities.com/andeanteam/spanishbiblestories.html>

<http://www.wsaresourcesite.org/Topics/storying.htm>

## Chapter 15

### Using Visual Aids in Bible Storying

The Bible story is a narrative that usually does not need any pictures while telling the story. However, pictures do help to focus attention on the stories or a certain aspect of the story, to suggest how to visualize some unfamiliar things in the stories (*like the ark, altar or cross*). Pictures are an aid to visualizing the chronological flow of the stories in both the telling and in any review that is done in bringing closure in an invitation, or in affirming new believers. And you may be a person who feels more comfortable with pictures in hand to visually cue you as you tell the stories.

### Displaying Pictures While Telling the Story

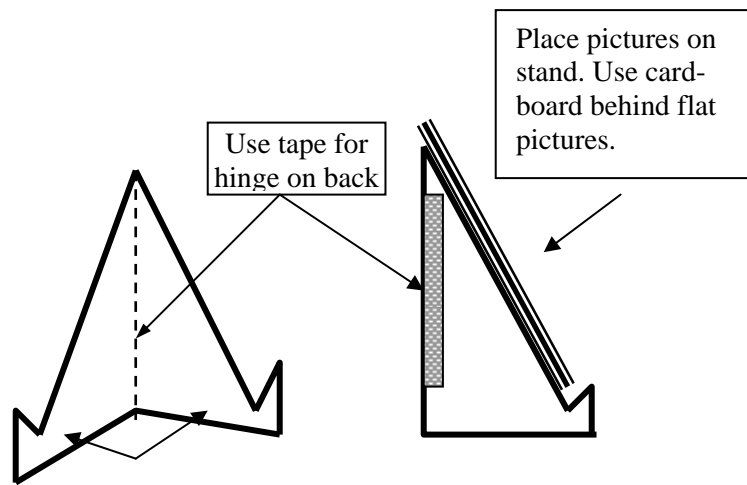
Storyers may elect to display pictures as they tell the story. Larger flat pictures are needed for the public groups while booklets or even photo-album pictures may be used for smaller more intimate groups of listeners or one-on-one storying. For one-on-one witness in going door to door or with individuals, a set small pictures in a photo album or booklet usually is helpful.

There are many different ways to display pictures while telling the story. In some places a thin line strung up like a clothesline has been used successfully (I suggest your putting it high enough to clear the heads of those who don't see it and might run into it). Fasten the pictures on the line with plastic clothespins while telling each story. From time to time review the stories already told by walking from picture to picture while telling the related story.

Folding tripods with an easel can be used to display the pictures. The disadvantage is another piece of equipment to carry around. Further, if there is any wind some clothes pins will be needed to keep the pictures from blowing away (*especially unbound flat pictures — clip pictures to a piece of heavy cardboard*).

Some of the pictures come in a flipchart format. This is excellent as the pictures are stabilized and can't blow away,

and they are locked in the right order. But the pictures can only be displayed one at a time by flipping the pages. Again, use a tripod stand or make a table stand out of cardboard. See the following example:



Corrugated cardboard table stand for flat pictures or flipcharts.

In home Bible Storying insert the pictures into a clear file like a large photo album, or use them loose and lay them out on a table while telling the story.

For bedside use the little bound Bible picture books or a photo album with pictures inserted are perhaps best. For personal witnessing to individuals the little bound books of chronological pictures are ideal.

Others have used flannelgraph sets to visualize the stories. The largest and best is expensive. It is the Betty Lukens "*Bible in Felt*"<sup>15</sup> set. You don't need to take the whole set with you but can take a representative assortment of backgrounds, objects like trees and rocks, and characters necessary to tell each story. Put the pieces for each story into individual plastic bags and label them. This will greatly facilitate using the felts on a mission trip. The set comes in two sizes, a small group size with six inch figures and a



larger public size with twelve inch figures. The bright colors and the creation of a picture by adding pieces draws attention of listeners.

Preaching flashcards are another helpful visual aid for telling the story. These are large color multi-page flipcharts which are bound at the top. One of the most popular ones for Bible Storying is "*The Origin & Destiny of Man*". It has seven pages with story panels on each page. The first page covers creation through Adam and Eve's sin and judgment. Next page are the stories of the Flood, the Tower of Babel, Abraham, and Moses. Next is the story of the birth of Jesus, several of his miracles and teaching, then the crucifixion, the church age, and finally two pages on the coming judgment and the blessed state of believers. The first three pages up through the crucifixion are the most often used pages. The flashcard set of seven presentations is *Good News Made Visible* from OMF Publishers in Bangkok.

Timeline charts usually come in a series of pages which must be joined by cellophane tape and then may be displayed along a wall. *The Panorama of the Bible*, is an older version published as part of a Bible study lesson. It has certain dispensational notation that the storyer may or may not want to reference. Included in the book is an eleven page summary of the Bible story in Scripture and in narrative paraphrase. To use the timeline one would need either to remove the pages from the book and join them, or prepare *one color copy* of the pages that can be joined together as a timeline. (*It would not be ethical to make more than one such copy for personal use to preserve the book.*)

### **When Pictures Are Not Acceptable**

It is not always acceptable to use pictures, especially of Jesus. This is a warning for those going to certain Muslim cultures where pictures of the prophets (*which includes Jesus*) might not be appropriate to use. There will be other cultural or social things in some of the pictures which might offend certain listeners. The length of women's clothing is one issue and the social propriety of some pictures like Jesus and the Samaritan woman alone at Jacob's Well might be

disturbing. Alter offensive pictures by adding some flower stickers or extra covering for Adam and Eve as many pictures of the unclothed Adam and Eve are not culturally acceptable among some potential viewers.

Some have found that black & white line drawing pictures that have less detail are not as offensive to Muslims. These are quite inexpensive, may be photocopied as needed and hand colored, and could even be left behind for local people to use. The "*Telling the Story...*" pictures from Church Strengthening Ministry and New Tribes Mission are available as black and white line drawings taken from the color Bible teaching pictures.

Global Recordings Network has an excellent set of *Look, Listen & Live* color pictures in eight flipcharts or eight booklets. The pictures are basically b/w line drawings that are colorized with bright colors so they view well even in diminished light. In addition, scripts are available with a summarized story for each picture.

An earlier flipchart from Global Recordings Network is *Good News* that has an evangelism and discipling storyline all in one chart. It, too, is in the same b/w line drawing style that is brightly colorized.

One other resource is *The Living Christ* set of A4 size 120 color pictures. These are the same pictures used in the *Look, Listen & Live* flipcharts but in loose A4 size. The set covers rather well the miracle and teaching stories of Jesus.

If any visual aids are found to be disturbing or offensive, discontinue their use and rely upon the Bible story itself. Also it is advisable to test or at least get advice about the propriety of using any planned visuals.

You might find that some impromptu dramas of the Bible stories are interesting and illustrative for some listeners. Many cultures use songs to teach and to remember stories. If so, try to encourage talented listeners to compose songs about the stories that they can continue to sing.

For sets of contextualized pictures available in several countries contact me at [jot2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jot2@sbcglobal.net) for information on ordering or where to find the visuals locally.

Multi Language Publications (*Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*) have some excellent Bible visuals. See Links at: <http://www.wmcwels.com/cgi-bin/home.pl>.

Most churches may have perfectly usable color teaching pictures stored in children's ministry closets.

Following are some sources of visual materials which you may want to consider using.

## Visual Resources

1. "**Telling the Story...**" Color chronological Bible teaching pictures. 105 picture set includes Acts. 40 Picture set includes only basic evangelistic pictures.  
Church Strengthening Ministry, Inc.  
PHILIPPINES  
Email: [direct@csmpublishing.com](mailto:direct@csmpublishing.com)  
[http://csmpublishing.org/r\\_adults.htm](http://csmpublishing.org/r_adults.htm)
2. "**Telling the Story...**" Color chronological Bible teaching pictures. Same as above also available laminated for greater durability. Also CD-ROM of color and b/w teaching pictures. Ask for catalog.  
New Tribes Mission  
1000 E. First Street  
Sanford, FL 32277-1487  
Tel 407-323-3430  
Email: [bookstore\\_hq@ntm.org](mailto:bookstore_hq@ntm.org)  
<http://www.ntmbooks.com/index.jsp?categoryid=61>
3. "**Look, Listen & Live**" Eight chronologically arranged color pictures flipcharts or booklets—five OT story sets, 2 sets of Jesus, 1 Acts  
Global Recordings Network  
<http://globalrecordings.net/topic/download>
4. Betty Lukens, **Bible in Felt** (600 piece felt set, manual for 150 stories in two sizes—six inch figures and twelve inch figures)  
<http://www.bettylukens.com/>
5. "**Good News Made Visible**" flashcard set and six other story presentations (*Including "The Origin and Destiny of Man"—Bible story in seven pages*). (Contact [jot2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jot2@sbcglobal.net) for scripts)  
Kannok Bannasan (OMF Publishers)  
86/122-4 Soi Tha Kham  
28/1 Rama 2 Rd. Bangkhuntian  
Bangkok, 10150 Thailand  
Tel. 0 2417 2511-3

Email: [weborders@kanokbannasan.org](mailto:weborders@kanokbannasan.org)  
<http://www.kanokbannasan.org/books.php?bookid=927>

6. **The New “Panorama” Bible Study Course No. 1 “The Plan of the Ages”** (Color timeline chart with 11-page synopsis of Bible story.), Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey  
<http://www.oakknollpublishing.com/>
7. **Storying Scarf** (Original West Africa B/W Storying Scarf)  
<http://www.storyingscarf.com/>
8. **Kanga Cloth** (West Africa Color Chronological Storying Cloth)  
<http://imbresources.org/index.cfm/fa/store.prod/ProdID/1619.cfm>

## 16 APPENDIX

### PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH AND FULFILLMENT Arranged Chronologically

| Prophecies   |  | Fulfillment  |
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| Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.   | <b>Would be the Offspring of a woman</b> | Gal 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. (Lk 2:7; Rev 12:5)  |
| Ge 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. (Gen 12:3; 22:18)   | <b>Promised offspring of Abraham</b>     | Acts 3:25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." (Mt 1:1; Lk 3:34)   |
| Ge 17:19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.  | <b>Promised offspring of Isaac</b>       | Mt 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers." (Lk 3:34)  |
| Nu 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel... (Gen 28:14)   | <b>Promised offspring of Jacob</b>       | Lk 3:34 ...the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor. (Mt 1:2)  |
| Ge 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of nations is his.   | <b>Will descend from tribe of Judah</b>  | Lk 3:33 ...the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah. (Mt 1:2-3)   |
| Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. (Isa 11:1-5; 2Sa 7:13; Jer 23:5; ) | <b>Heir to the throne of David</b>       | Mt 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Mt 1:6)<br><br>Lk 1:32-33 ..The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." |

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| Mic 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be the ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.   | <b>Place of birth</b>        | Mt 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem. (Lk 2:4-7)  |
| Da 9:25 Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven "sevens" and sixty-two "sevens". It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. | <b>Time of birth</b>         | Lk 2:1-2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (Lk 2:3-7)   |
| Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and you will call him Emmanuel.   | <b>Born of a virgin</b>      | Mt 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. (Lk 1:26-35)  |
| Jer 31:15 This is what the Lord says, "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.   | <b>Slaughter of infants</b>  | Mt 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. (Mt 2:17-18) |
| Hos 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son.   | <b>Escape into Egypt</b>     | Mt 2:14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt. (Mt 2:15)  |
| Dt 18:15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.  | <b>A Prophet, Like Moses</b> | Jn 6:14 After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." (Joh 1:45; Act 3:19-26)   |

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| <p>Isa 9:1-2 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the gentiles, by way of the sea, along the Jordan — The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.</p> | <p><b>Ministry in Galilee</b></p>        | <p>Mt 4:12-16 When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali — to fulfill what was said by the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.</p> |
| <p>Ps 110:4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Zec 6:12-13)</p>   | <p><b>A Priest, like Melchizedek</b></p> | <p>Heb 6:20 Where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (Heb 5:5-6; 7:15-17)</p>   |
| <p>Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Psa 2:2)</p>   | <p><b>Rejected by Jews</b></p>           | <p>Jn 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (Jh 5:43; Lk 4:29; 17:25; 23:18)</p>  |
| <p>Isa 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Psa 45:7; Isa 11:3-4)</p>  | <p><b>Characteristics</b></p>            | <p>Lk 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Lk 4:18)</p>  |
| <p>Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Isa 62:11)</p>  | <p><b>His triumphal entry</b></p>        | <p>Jn 12:13-14 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written. (Mt 21:1-11; Jh 12:12)</p>   |

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| Psa 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trust, he who shared by bread, has lifted up his heel against me.  | <b>Betrayed by a friend</b>                   | Mrk 14:10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. (Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:43-45)   |
| Zec 11:12 I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it" So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. (Zec 11:13)  | <b>Sold for 30 pieces of silver</b>           | Mt 26:15 And asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted for him thirty silver coins. (Mt 27:3-10)  |
| Zec 11:13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.     | <b>Money returned for a potter's field</b>    | Mt 27:6-7 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. (Mt 27:3-5, 8-10)  |
| Ps 109:7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty, and may his prayers condemn him. May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.  | <b>Judas' position to be taken by another</b> | Acts 1:18-20 (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field, there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, 'May another take his place of leadership.'" (Acts 1:16-17) |
| Psa 27:12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. (Psa 35:11)  | <b>False witnesses accuse him</b>             | Mt 26:60-61 But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, "this fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"  |
| Isa 53:5 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Ps 38:13-14) | <b>Silent when accused</b>                    | Mt 26:62-63 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you? But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under  |



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|  |                               | oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." (Mt 27:12-14)   |
| Isa 50:6 So I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.  | <b>Struck and spit upon</b>   | Mk 14:65 Then some began to spit at him, they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him. (Mk 15:17; Jn 19:1-3; 18:22)   |
| Psa 69:4 Those who hate without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal. (Ps 109:3-5)  | <b>Hated without cause</b>    | Jn 15:23-25 He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: "They hated me without reason." |
| Isa 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isa 53:6, 12) | <b>Suffered vicariously</b>   | Mt 8:16-17 When evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took up our infirmities and carried out diseases." (Ro 4:25; 1Co 15:3)                       |
| Isa 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.  | <b>Crucified with sinners</b> | Mt 27:38 Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. (Mk 15:27-28; Lk 23:33)   |
| Ps 22:16 Dogs have surrounded me, a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. (Zec 12:10)   | <b>Hands and feet pierced</b> | Jn 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." (Jn 19:37; 20:25-26)   |

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| Ps 22:6-8 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me, they hurl insults, shaking their heads; "He trusts in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."   | <b>Mocked and Insulted</b>                       | Mt 27:39-40 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God!" (Mt 27:41-44; Mk 15:29-32) |
| Ps 69:21 They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.   | <b>Given gall and vinegar</b>                    | Jn 19:29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. (Mt 27:34, 48)   |
| Ps 22:8 He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.   | <b>Hears prophetic words repeated in mockery</b> | Mt 27:43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."   |
| Pa 109:4 In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. (Isa 53:12)   | <b>Prays for his enemies</b>                     | Lk 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.  |
| Zec 12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. | <b>His side to be pierced</b>                    | Jn 19:34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.   |
| Ps 22:18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.   | <b>Soldiers cast lots for his clothes</b>        | Mk 15:24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. (Jn 19:24)  |
| Ps 34:20 He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. (Exo 12:46)  | <b>Not a bone to be broken</b>                   | Jn 19:33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.  |

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| <p>Isa 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.</p>                           | <p><b>To be buried with the rich</b></p> | <p>Mt 27:57-60 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered it should be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.</p> |
| <p>Ps 16:10 Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. (Mt 16:21)</p>  | <p><b>His resurrection</b></p>           | <p>Mt 28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Lk 24:36-48)</p>  |
| <p>Ps 68:18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious—that you, O Lord God; might dwell there. (Eph 4:8)</p> | <p><b>His ascension</b></p>              | <p>Lk 24:50-51 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. (Act 1:9)</p>  |

(This chart is adapted from The Thompson Chain Reference Bible, B. B. Kirkbride Co. Inc, Zondervan)

## A Personal Testimony

It wasn't until early last year ('04), that the Lord led me to the CBS web site and to surf the many articles. The first test was when I went to visit the Philippines where I largely used storying with narrative. I must admit not using the chronological approach often – but largely in the sense of “putting one foot in front of the other.” And since most of my listeners grew up in the predominant Church and schools I thought I could leave out some items. But about half-way through my stay, I woke up to the fact that a large percentage of my listeners were from the cults. They were hungry for the truth, looking for a hope greater than what they had been given. Few were there as critics.

I must admit I also thought at times with longing of using the good 'ole expository presentations. But it would have hurt their understanding the Gospel, since their use of English varied from a little too perhaps 60-70 percent. Still there are areas where I need vast improvement: First, connecting and overview of the story needs more smoothness and much more variety.

I need to greatly improve the question and answer period, making them more unique to each story and use them.

I need to practice, practice – the storying, vocal inflection and body gestures. I call it being highly excited, to get them excited.

I need to memorize a lot more Bible stories. That's going to be the hardest task, because I'm prone to look for shortcuts.

I'm using the NKJV quite often because I grew up on the KJV. For some stories I like NASV, Peterson's The Message, and the New Century. I'm not inclined to the NIV, because the language is more stilted and formal, and the words don't flow as easily.

DWJ



## 17 References

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- <sup>1</sup> J.O.Terry, *Basic Bible Storying*, Church Starting Network, [www.churchstarting.net](http://www.churchstarting.net).
- <sup>2</sup> Avery T. Willis, *Following Jesus: Making Disciples of Primary Oral Learners*, [www.fjseries.org](http://www.fjseries.org).
- <sup>3</sup> David Rodda, "Sharing the Gospel With Muslims: a Chronological Approach", *SEEDBED*, Vol. VII, No. 4, pp 51-58 1992), a journal of Arab World Ministries.
- <sup>4</sup> Dell G. & Rachel Sue Schultze, *God and Man*, Church Strengthening Ministry, Manila, 1994.
- <sup>5</sup> Jacob A. Loewen, "Bible Stories: Message & Matrix," *Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective*, William Carey Library, 1975. (p. 374)
- <sup>6</sup> Johani Gauran, *The Witnessing Kit*, Church Strengthening Ministry, Manila, Philippines.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Storying Scarf*, [www.storyingscarf.com](http://www.storyingscarf.com).
- <sup>8</sup> God's Story, [www.gods-story.org](http://www.gods-story.org).
- <sup>9</sup> Faith Comes By Hearing, <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/>.
- <sup>10</sup> MegaVoice, <http://www.megavoice.com/>.
- <sup>11</sup> Johnston M. Cheney & Stanley Ellisen, *The Greatest Story* (Multnomah Books, Questar Publishers, P. O. Box 1720, Sisters, Or 97759).
- <sup>12</sup> Adapted by Ted Miller, *The Story: From Adam to Armageddon* (Tyndale House Publishers).
- <sup>13</sup> Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *365 Short Stories From the Bible*, Barbour Books, Box 1219, Westwood, NJ 07675. (Also available as *Bedtime Bible Stories*—same stories word for word.)  
consistently

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<sup>14</sup> *Reese Chronological Bible* (KJV), (Bethany House Publishers, 11300 Hampshire Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55438).

<sup>15</sup> Betty Lukens, *Through the Bible in Felt*, <http://www.bettylukens.com/>.