
HEROES OF THE FAITH



ESL WORKBOOK
Student Edition

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Preface to Heroes of the Faith

We often hear the word "hero" these days. Anyone who does what he or she should do in a crises situation is called a hero. In some ways this is deserved because not everyone reacts well or selflessly in the face of danger. Often these people refuse to call themselves heroes.

A hero of faith is someone who trusts in God despite the circumstances around him or her. The Bible is full of individuals who had extraordinary trust in God. We have selected only a few. These few represent people who faced different challenges to their faith. Often the challenge was a difficult situation like Gideon who was asked by God to fight against his nation's oppressors. Sometimes it was a matter of valuing what was important to God as in the case of Martha's sister, Mary. Or the challenge could be trusting in God even though God's deliverance took a long time coming, like Noah. In different ways the people in this series found their faith tested but they did not give up. That's what makes them heroes.

- Frances Gray, Roslyn Farmer, Marion Chang

July 2018

Hebrews 11:1.2 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

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Timeline

Before 3000 BC	Cain and Abel	Genesis 4
Before 2500 BC	Noah and the Ark	Genesis 6-8
2081 BC	God's covenant with Abram	Genesis 15
2066 BC??	Abraham's son Isaac is born	Genesis 21
2006 BC??	Jacob and Esau are born	Genesis 25
1928 BC	Jacob tricks his father, Isaac	Genesis 27
1898-1875	Joseph in Egypt	Genesis 39-Genesis 41
1875 BC?	Jacob (Israel) and his family move from Canaan to Egypt	Genesis 46
1525	Birth of Moses	Exodus 1
1446 BC	Moses begins the Exodus from Egypt to Canaan	Exodus 13-18
1406/7 BC	Moses' death. Joshua begins the conquest of Canaan	Joshua 1
1399 BC	The land of Canaan is allotted among the Tribes	Joshua 13-22
1169 BC	Gideon and the Midianites	Judges 6-8
1043 BC	Saul becomes the first king of Israel	1 Samuel 8-10
1010 BC	David becomes the second king of ancient Israel	1,2 Samuel; 1 Chronicles; 1 Kings
967 BC	Solomon becomes king over Israel	1 Kings 3-11
931 BC	Rehoboam becomes king over Israel	1 Kings 11, 12; 2 Chronicles 11
931 BC	Civil war in Israel, Israel splits apart into a northern kingdom (Israel) and a southern kingdom (Judah)	1 Kings, 2 Chronicles
863 BC	Elijah and the Contest	1 Kings 18

722 BC	The northern kingdom of Israel is taken away by the Assyrian Empire	2 Kings, 2 Chronicles
586 BC	Babylon conquers Jerusalem and destroys the city and its temple	2 Kings 25, Jeremiah 52
539 BC	Daniel in the Lions' Den	Daniel 6
537 BC	Cyrus lets the Jewish exiles return to Judah	Ezra 2
63 BC	Roman general Pompey conquers the Seleucids and takes control of Judah	Between the Testaments
40? 41? BC	Roman Emperor Julius Caesar appoints Herod the Great as King of Judea. Judah becomes a province of Rome.	Matthew 2; Luke 2
6 BC ?	Gabriel visits Zechariah, Birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1
6 BC ?	Caesar Augustus Taxes the Roman Empire	Luke 2
5 BC ?	Birth of Jesus	Matthew 1,2; Luke 2
30 AD ?	Jesus stays with Martha and Mary	Luke 10, John 12
30 AD ?	Jesus' betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, and ascension	Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 18, 19; Acts 1
30 AD	Pentecost, first church forms in Jerusalem	Acts 4
30 AD	Peter and John arrested and released	Acts 4, 5
31 AD	Stephen's death	Acts 6,7, 8
34 AD	Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus	Acts 9
47AD	John Mark accompanies Paul and Barnabas to Asia	Acts 13
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey, Paul in Philippi	Acts 16

54 AD	Paul's Third Missionary Journey	Gal. 2; 1 Cor. 18; 2 Cor; Rom. 15; Acts 11, 20
62 AD	Paul writes to the Philippians and to the Ephesians	Philippians 1-4
AD 66-70	First Jewish revolt against Roman Rule.	Not covered in the New Testament
AD 70	Jerusalem falls to Titus. Most of Jerusalem destroyed, Temple destroyed	Not covered in the New Testament
AD 73	Masada falls to Romans under Flavius Silva	Not covered in the New Testament
AD 132-135	Second Jewish revolt led by Bar-Kokhba; most Jews of Judea killed or exiled. Jerusalem ploughed to the ground. Judea renamed Syria Palestine	After the New Testament was written

Source: Bible Timeline - [Biblehub.com/timeline/#complete](https://biblehub.com/timeline/#complete). All dates are approximate.

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-16

Background: Adam and Eve were the first people on Earth, created by God. God had made a beautiful fruit-filled place called the Garden of Eden for them to live in. However, Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and they were forced to leave the Garden of Eden. The result of not listening to God was a much harder life of working and growing **crops** for food. God also told Eve that she would suffer much in childbirth but that her desire would be for her husband and he would rule over her. Would human beings listen to God and be able to live the way He wanted in the future? This story answers that question.

Before You Read

What are some things that are difficult to do, even though they are the right things to do?

The Passage

Adam and Eve named their first son Cain. Eve said, "With the Lord's help I have had a baby boy." ² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Abel took care of sheep. Cain farmed the land. ³ After some time, Cain gathered some things he had grown. He brought them as an **offering** to the LORD. ⁴ And Abel also brought an **offering**. He brought the fattest parts of some of the animals from his flock. They were the first animals born to their mothers. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his **offering**. ⁵ But he wasn't pleased with Cain and his **offering**. So Cain became very angry, and his face was sad.



⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why are you looking so sad? ⁷ Do what is right and then you will be accepted. If you don't do what is right, sin is waiting at your door to **grab** you. It desires to control you. But you must rule over it."

⁸ Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." So they went out. There Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.1 Cain and Abel

"I don't know," Cain replied. "Am I supposed to take care of my brother?"

¹⁰ The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. ¹¹ So I am putting a **curse** on you. I am driving you away from this ground. It has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

¹² When you farm the land, it will no longer produce its **crops** for you anymore. You will be a restless person who **wanders** around on the earth."

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "You are **punishing** me more than I can take. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me away from the land. I will be hidden from you. I'll be a restless person who **wanders** around on the earth. Anyone who finds me will kill me."

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, "No. Anyone who kills you will be paid back seven times." The LORD put a mark on Cain. Then anyone who found him wouldn't kill him. ¹⁶ So Cain went away from the LORD. He lived in the land of Nod. It was east of Eden.

Even though Abel died, the Bible speaks about him in Hebrews 11:4: "Abel had faith. So he brought to God a better offering than Cain did. Because of his faith Abel was praised as a godly man. God said good things about his offerings. Because of his faith Abel still speaks. He speaks even though he is dead."

The Bible also tells us that after the death of Abel, Adam and Eve had another son: Eve named him Seth, saying, "²⁵...God has given me another child. He will take the place of Abel, because Cain killed him."²⁶ Seth also had a son and named him Enosh.

Genesis 4 says, "At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD" (4:25).

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

True or False

1. Abel farmed in the fields. _____
2. Both Cain and Abel brought an offering to the Lord. _____

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.1 Cain and Abel

3. Abel was angry with his brother. _____
4. God warned Cain about sin. _____
5. God killed Cain for his brother's murder. _____
6. Adam and Eve had a third son. _____
7. Abel was forgotten by God. _____

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

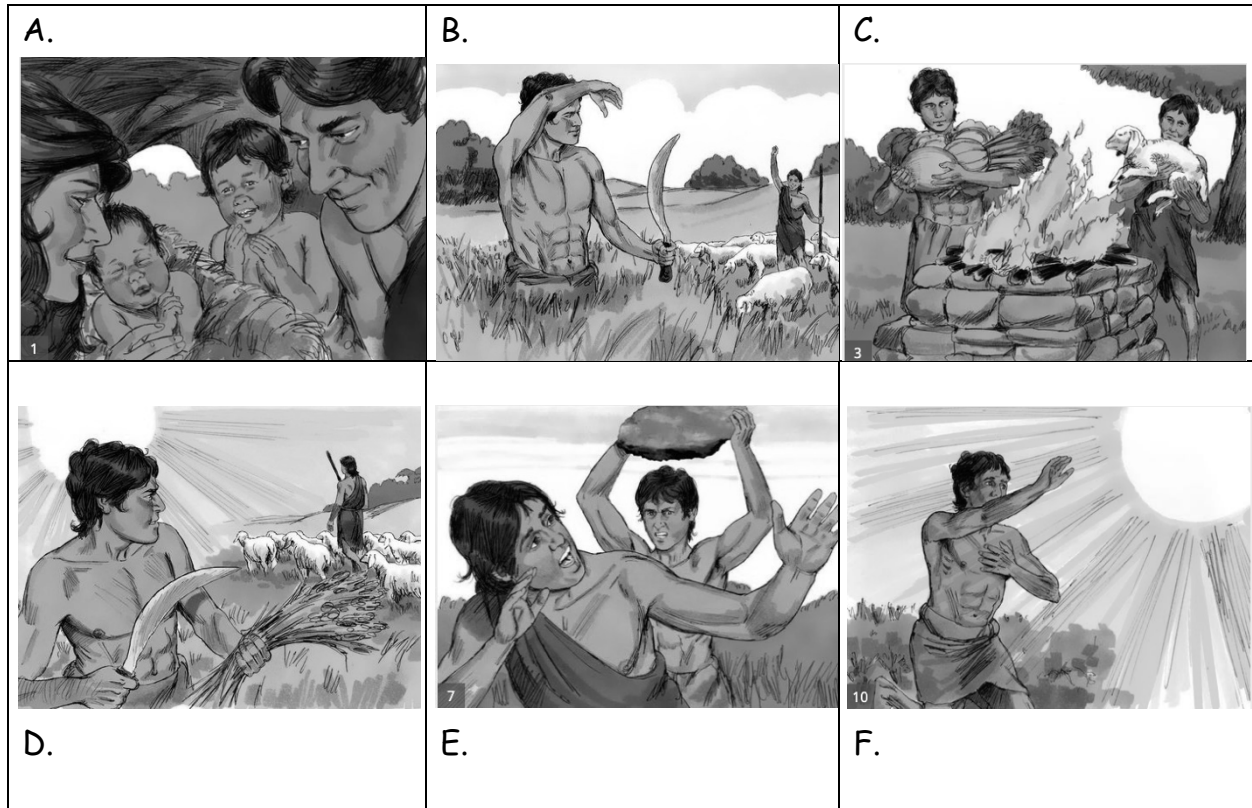
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. _____ crops | a. going place to place, having no permanent home |
| 2. _____ offering | b. hold by force |
| 3. _____ grab | c. the opposite of a blessing |
| 4. _____ punish | d. food plants that farmers grow |
| 5. _____ godly | e. look for (someone) |
| 6. _____ curse | f. to give something in worship |
| 7. _____ wander | g. make someone pay for a crime |
| 8. _____ call on | h. pleasing to God |

Complete the following sentences with the words above.

1. A lot of farmers in Asia grow rice as their _____.
2. God put a _____ on Cain because he killed his brother.
3. God _____ Cain by making him _____ on the earth without rest.
4. God warned Cain that sin was waiting to _____ him.
5. Cain was very angry because God didn't accept his _____.
6. Abel had faith and he was praised as a _____ man.
7. When Seth had children, people began to _____ the name of the LORD, because they wanted to find Him.

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God
1.1 Cain and Abel

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/cain-abel/>

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. What was life like for Adam and Eve once they had been forced out of the Garden of Eden?
2. Describe Eve's reaction to the birth of her first son, Cain.
3. What did Cain and Abel offer to the Lord?
4. Why, do you think, did God accept Abel's offering? Why didn't he accept Cain's?
5. What did God say to Cain after his offering was not accepted?
6. What did Cain do?

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.1 Cain and Abel

7. Do you think Cain was sorry for what he had done? Why?
8. What was his punishment?
9. What was Cain afraid of after God cursed him?
10. What is Abel remembered for in the Bible?
11. What good thing happened after the birth of Seth?

- *Intermediate*

1. What was life like for Adam and Eve once they had been forced out of the Garden of Eden?
2. Describe Eve's reaction to the first birth. Why were her words significant enough to be recorded?
3. What did their two sons offer to the Lord?
4. Why, do you think, did God accept Abel's offering? Why didn't he accept Cain's?
5. What did God say to Cain?
6. What does God's warning to Cain teach us about sin?
7. What did Cain do after he received this warning?
8. Did Cain show any remorse (sadness) for what he had done?
9. Why do you think God didn't strike him down on the spot after He had confronted him?
10. What hope does the birth of Seth give us for humanity?
11. What is Abel remembered for in the Bible? Why is faith important?

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.1 Cain and Abel

- *Challenging*

1. What was life like for Adam and Eve once they had been forced out of the Garden of Eden? Compare their lives before and after.
2. Describe Eve's reaction to the first birth. Why were her words significant enough to be recorded? What is the significance of them?
3. What did their two sons offer to the Lord? Compare the offerings.
4. Why, do you think, did God accept Abel's offering? Why didn't he accept Cain's?
5. What did God say to Cain? What impressed you about God's conversation with Cain?
6. What does God's warning to Cain teach us about sin? Can this be applied to all of us?
7. What did Cain do after he received this warning? Did Cain show any remorse (sadness) for what he had done? What does this show us about the nature of sin?
8. Why do you think God didn't strike him down on the spot after He had confronted him? What bothered Cain more than the death of his brother?
9. What hope does the birth of Seth give us for humanity? What did men begin to do at that time? Why is this important?
10. What is Abel's legacy? He never had the chance to have children, so what did he leave behind?

Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25:21-34; 27:1-36

Background: God promised Abraham and his wife Sarah, that they would have a son. However, Sarah waited for a long time with no children. Finally, when they were over 90, Sarah had a son, named Isaac. Isaac married Rebekah, but she also could not have children until Isaac prayed to God. Then she had twin boys. God had told her that the older one would **serve** the younger one. (Gen. 25: 23)

Before You Read:

What is the most valuable thing you have ever received from your parents?

The Passages

Esau Sells His Birthrights

²⁴ The time came for Rebekah to have her babies. There were twin boys in her body. ²⁵ The first one to come out was red. His whole body was covered with hair. So they named him Esau. ²⁶ Then his brother came out. His hand was holding onto Esau's heel. So he was named Jacob...

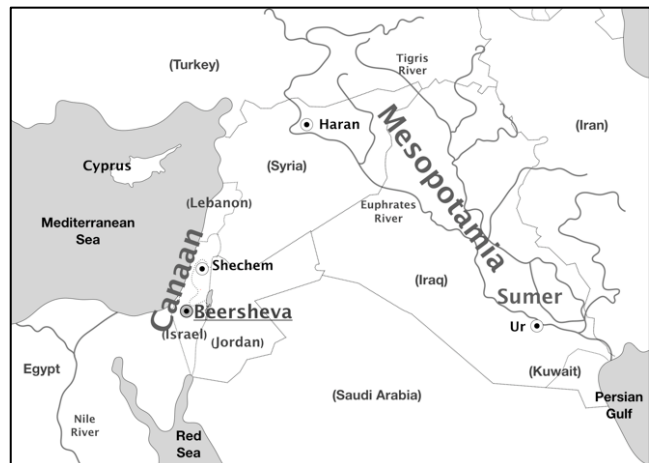
²⁷ The boys grew up. Esau became a skilful **hunter**. He liked the open country. But Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. ²⁸ Isaac liked the meat of wild animals. So Esau was his favorite son. But Rebekah's favorite was Jacob.

²⁹ One day Jacob was cooking some stew. Esau came in from the open country. He was very hungry. ³⁰ He said to Jacob, "Quick! I'm very hungry! Let me have some of that red stew!" That's why he was also named Edom.

³¹ Jacob replied, "First sell me the **rights** that belong to you as the oldest son in the family."

³² "Look, I'm dying of hunger," Esau said. "What good are those **rights** to me?"

³³ But Jacob said, "First promise to sell me your rights." So Esau promised to do it. He sold Jacob all the **rights** that belonged to him as the oldest son.



Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God
1.2 Jacob and Esau

³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some **lentil stew**. Esau ate and drank. Then he got up and left. So Esau didn't value the **rights** that belonged to him as the oldest son.

Jacob Tricks Isaac

Isaac had become old. His eyes were so weak he couldn't see anymore. One day he called for his older son Esau.

² Isaac said, "I'm an old man now. And I don't know when I'll die. ³ Now then, get your weapons. Get your bow and arrows. Go out to the open country. Hunt some wild animals for me. ⁴ Prepare for me the kind of **tasty** food I like. Bring it to me to eat. Then I'll give you my blessing before I die."

⁵ Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. Esau left for the open country. He went to hunt for a wild animal and bring it back. ⁶ Then Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I heard your father speaking to your brother Esau. ⁷ He said, 'Bring me a wild animal. Prepare some **tasty** food for me to eat. Then I'll give you my blessing before I die. The LORD will be my witness.'" ⁸ Rebekah continued, "My son, listen carefully. Do what I tell you. ⁹ Go out to the flock. Bring me two of the finest young goats. I will prepare **tasty** food for your father. I'll make it just the way he likes it. ¹⁰ I want you to take it to your father to eat. Then he'll give you his blessing before he dies."...

*Jacob agreed to his mother's plan to **trick** his father, Isaac. He dressed in Esau's clothes, pretending to be his brother, and he brought Isaac his favourite food. Isaac believed he was Esau and gave him the blessing of the oldest son.*

... ³⁰ When Isaac finished blessing him, Jacob left his father. Just then his brother Esau came in from hunting. ³¹ He too prepared some **tasty** food. He brought it to his father. Then Esau said to him, "My father, please sit up. Eat some of my wild meat. Then give me your blessing."

³² His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

"I'm your son," he answered. "I'm Esau, your oldest son."

³³ Isaac began to **shake** all over. He said, "Then who hunted a wild animal and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came. I gave him my blessing. And he will certainly be blessed!"

³⁴ Esau heard his father's words. Then he yelled loudly and **bitterly**. He said to his father, "Bless me! Bless me too, my father!"

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God
1.2 Jacob and Esau

³⁵ But Isaac said, "Your brother came and **tricked** me. He took your blessing."

³⁶ Esau said, "Isn't Jacob just the right name for him? This is the second time he has **taken advantage** of me. First, he took my rights as the oldest son. And now he's taken my blessing!"

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescrptures.com

Passage Questions

Match the Questions to the right Answers

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. _____ What did Isaac do when his wife Rebekah was not able to have children? | A. He traded some stew. |
| 2. _____ What did God tell Rebekah about her twins. | B. Rebekah dressed her son Jacob to feel like Esau, so Isaac thought the youngest was the oldest. |
| 3. _____ Who did Isaac like best and why? | C. She liked Jacob best. |
| 4. _____ Who did Rebekah like best? | D. He yelled loudly and bitterly. |
| 5. _____ What did Jacob offer to trade for Esau's rights as an eldest son? | E. He prayed to the LORD for her. |
| 6. _____ Why did Isaac bless Jacob and not his oldest son, Esau? | F. He said the older brother would serve the younger brother. |
| 7. _____ What did Esau do when he learned that Jacob had gotten his blessing? | G. He liked Esau, because he brought his favourite meat. |

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God
1.2 Jacob and Esau

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ take advantage of | a. delicious |
| 2. _____ serve | b. with great sadness; without hope |
| 3. _____ hunter | c. to cause someone to believe a lie |
| 4. _____ rights | d. move back and forth; tremble |
| 5. _____ trick | e. food made with small beans |
| 6. _____ lentil stew | f. treat unfairly for one's own good |
| 7. _____ shake | g. work for or obey someone |
| 8. _____ tasty | h. special freedoms |
| 9. _____ bitterly | i. someone who catches animals for food |

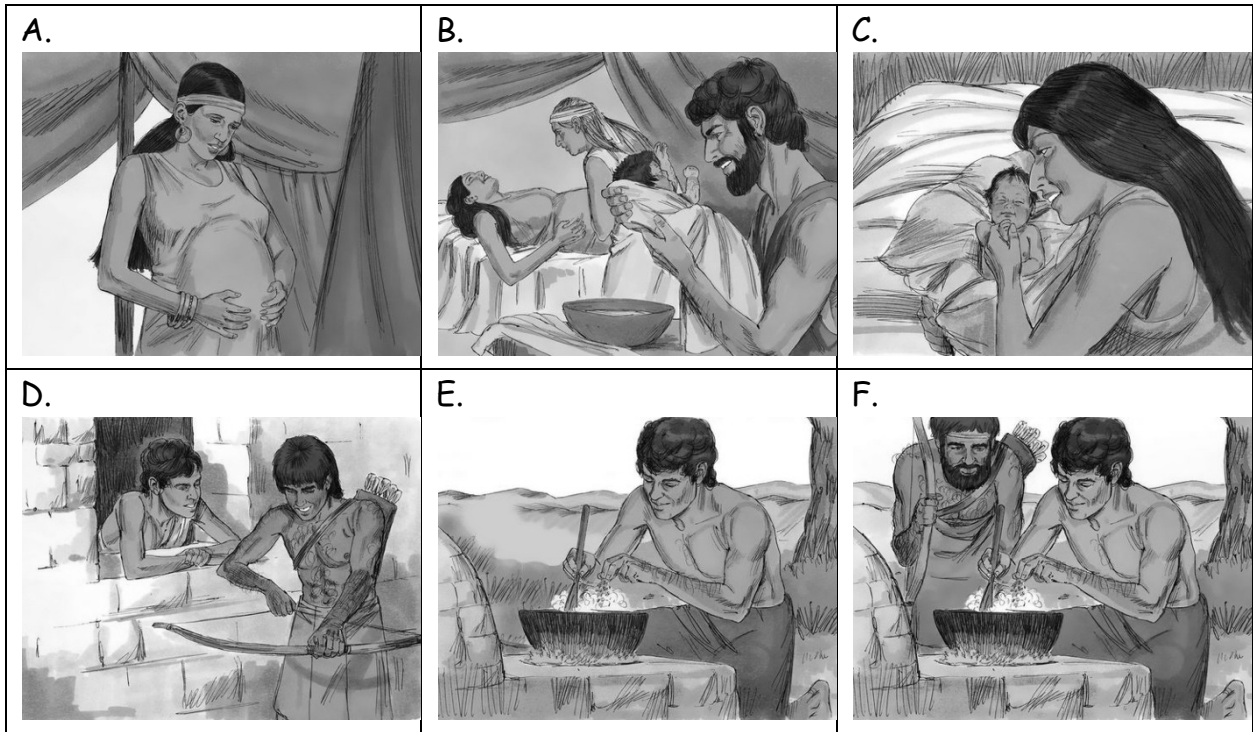
Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

1. Isaac began to _____ when he heard Esau ask for his blessing.
2. Rebekah helped Jacob _____ Isaac to get his blessing.
3. Esau yelled _____ when he heard Jacob had taken his blessing.
4. Esau really wanted to eat Jacob's _____.
5. Isaac liked to eat the _____ food that Esau brought him.
6. Esau was a _____, and he loved the open country.
7. Esau gave away his _____ as an oldest son to his brother Jacob.
8. God told Rebekah that the older brother would _____ the younger.
9. Esau said that Jacob had _____ him.

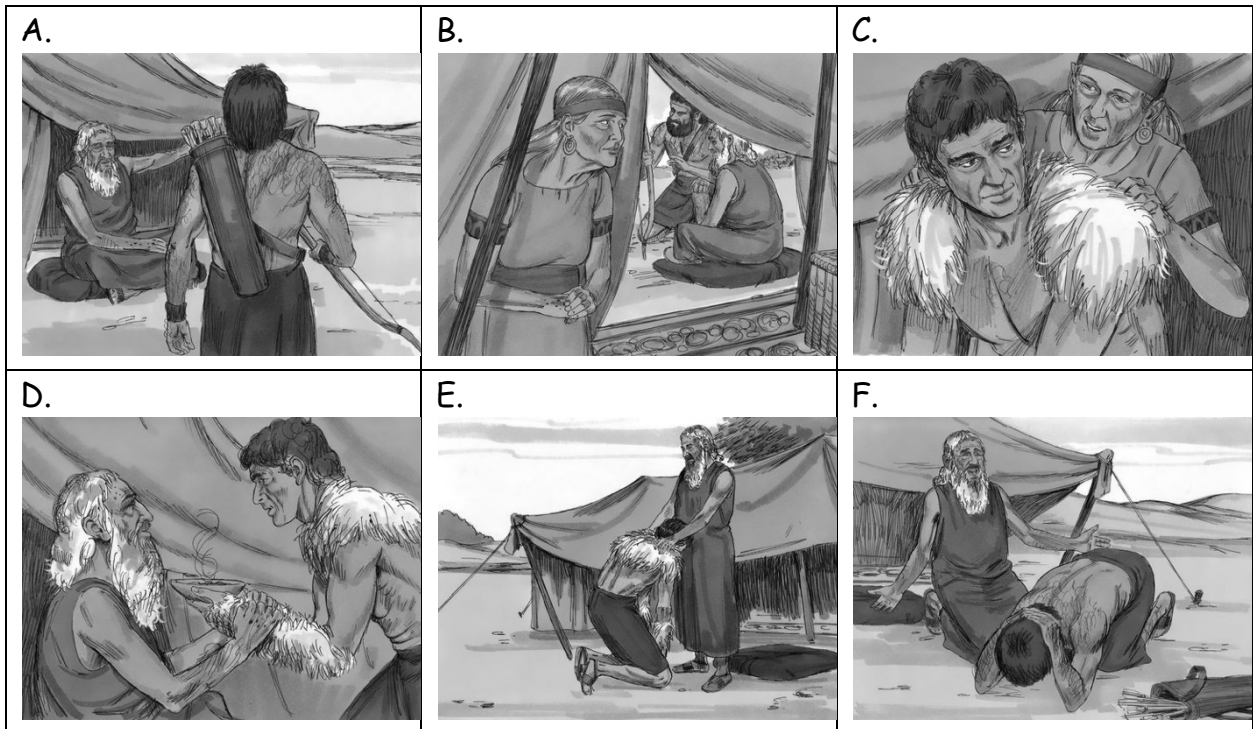
Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God
1.2 Jacob and Esau

Re-tell the two Stories using the pictures below:

Esau sells his birthright <http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/esau-jacob/>



Jacob deceives Isaac <http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jacob-deceives/>



Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God
1.2 Jacob and Esau

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. What did God tell Rebekah about her sons?
2. Were Jacob and Esau similar or very different? Explain.
3. Did Esau care about his rights as an eldest son? What did he want in exchange?
4. What did Isaac want to do for Esau? What did he ask Esau to do first?
5. Whose idea was it to steal Esau's blessing?
6. How did Jacob trick Isaac? What happened when he did this?
7. How did Esau feel about Jacob when he learned the truth? Would you feel the same if your brother tricked you like that?
8. What was the prophecy that God gave to Rebekah before Jacob and Esau were born? Did this prophecy become true?

- *Intermediate*

1. What did God tell Rebekah about her sons? How important is this information for the rest of the story?
2. Compare Jacob and Esau, how are they similar and different?
3. What did Esau say about his birthright? What did he want in exchange? Do you think this was a good deal for Jacob?
4. What did Isaac want to do for Esau? What did he ask Esau to do first? What was the significance of the blessing?
5. Whose idea was it to steal Esau's blessing? What does this reveal about Rebekah and the relationships within the family?

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.2 Jacob and Esau

6. How did Jacob deceive Isaac? What happened when he did this? What effects on the family do you think this action had?
7. How did Esau feel about Jacob when he learned the truth? Would you feel the same if your brother tricked you like that?
8. How was the prophecy that God gave to Rebekah fulfilled through Jacob and Esau's actions?
9. Why did God still choose Jacob to be the father of his people after he had lied and cheated?

• *Challenging*

1. Gen 25: 23 gives God's full answer to Rebekah during her difficult pregnancy: "Two nations are in your body. Two tribes that are now inside you will be separated. One nation will be stronger than the other. The older son will serve the younger one." How important is this information for the rest of the story? Do you think it affected how their sons were treated? What does this information reveal about God?
2. Compare Jacob and Esau. In what ways are they similar and different? Which do you identify with the most and why?
3. What did Esau say about his birthright? What did he want in exchange? Do you think this was a good deal for Jacob? How do you think Jacob should have responded to Esau's request?
4. What did Isaac want to do for Esau? What did he ask Esau to do first? What was the significance of the blessing? How is the blessing different from the birthright? Do you think Esau valued this blessing?
5. Whose idea was it to steal Esau's blessing? What does this reveal about Rebekah and the relationships within the family? Do you think Rebekah thought about how this would affect her family?

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.2 Jacob and Esau

6. How did Jacob deceive Isaac? What happened when he did this? What effects on the family do you think this action had? Although God did say that the older would serve the younger, do the ends justify the means?
7. How did Esau feel about Jacob when he learned the truth? Would you feel the same if your brother tricked you like that? What can we understand about the Bible when it reveals some of the bad things that people who are chosen by God do?
8. Esau doesn't only disrespect his birthright by giving it away so casually, he also chose to marry women whom his parents didn't like (Genesis 26:34,35). What does this show about Esau's character and perhaps why God preferred Jacob? Read Malachi 1:2-3 and Romans 9:10-13.

Martha and Mary: Two Visits Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8

Background: Lazarus, Martha and Mary were a brother and sisters who lived in Bethany, a village about 3 km from the city of Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples would often stay in their home when they were in the area, and Jesus would teach them there. It was the custom for a teacher to sit on a chair and have disciples sit on the floor.

There are two stories in this passage. Both stories take place at the home of these three siblings in Bethany. The first story tells about Mary quietly leaving the kitchen to sit with the disciples. The second story tells about a party to **celebrate** after Jesus brought Lazarus back to life (he had been dead for 4 days) (John 11: 1 - 44). A week after the second story, Jesus died on the cross.

Before You Read

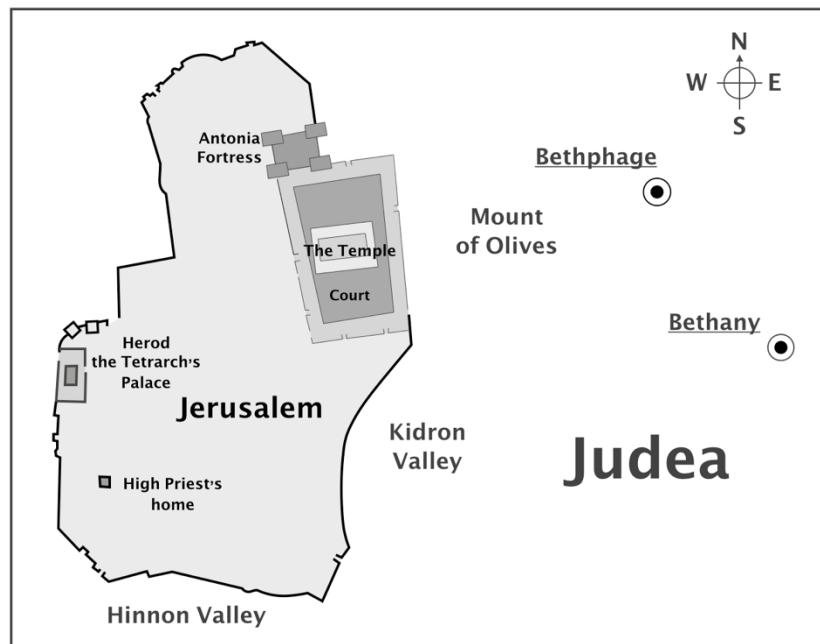
How do you show people that they are important to you?

The Passages

Luke 10

- ³⁸ ...Jesus came to a village where a woman named Martha lived. "She welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary. Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was busy with all the things that had to be done. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, my sister has left me to do the work by myself. Don't you care? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered. "You are worried and upset about many things. ⁴² But few



Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.3 Mary and Martha: Two Visits

things are needed. Really, only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better. And it will not be taken away from her."

John 12

¹It was six days before the **Passover** Feast. Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. Lazarus was the one Jesus had **raised from the dead**. ² A dinner was given at Bethany to honour Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was among the people at the table with Jesus. ³ Then Mary took about a **pint** of pure **nard**. It was an expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

⁴ But Judas Iscariot didn't like what Mary did. He was one of Jesus' disciples. Later he was going to hand Jesus over to his enemies. Judas said, ⁵"Why wasn't this perfume sold? Why wasn't the money given to poor people? It was worth a year's pay." ⁶He didn't say this because he cared about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. Judas was in charge of the moneybag. He used to **help himself** to what was in it.

But Jesus defended her. ⁷"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "The perfume was meant for the day I am buried." ⁸You will always have the poor among you. But you won't always have me."

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Change these False statements to be True:

1. Mary and Martha were friends.
2. Jesus told Mary to go and help her sister.
3. Jesus told Mary that women should not join the disciples.

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.3 Mary and Martha: Two Visits

4. Jesus said that it is more important to serve people than to learn about God.
5. A pint of nard cost the same as a worker's pay for a whole day.
6. Mary poured the nard on Jesus feet and wiped it with a towel.
7. Judas really wanted to help the poor.
8. Judas praised Mary for pouring the perfume on Jesus' feet.
9. Jesus thought Mary's action was a waste of money.

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. _____ celebrate | a. take for oneself without asking |
| 2. _____ nard | b. bring back to life after death |
| 3. _____ Passover | c. show happiness for a special occasion |
| 4. _____ raise from death | d. a unit for measuring liquids (about 500 ml) |
| 5. _____ help (oneself) to | e. religious holiday to remember God's rescue of Israel from slavery |
| 6. _____ defend | f. expensive plant with a sweet-smelling root that grows in India & Afghanistan |
| 7. _____ pint | g. protect |

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

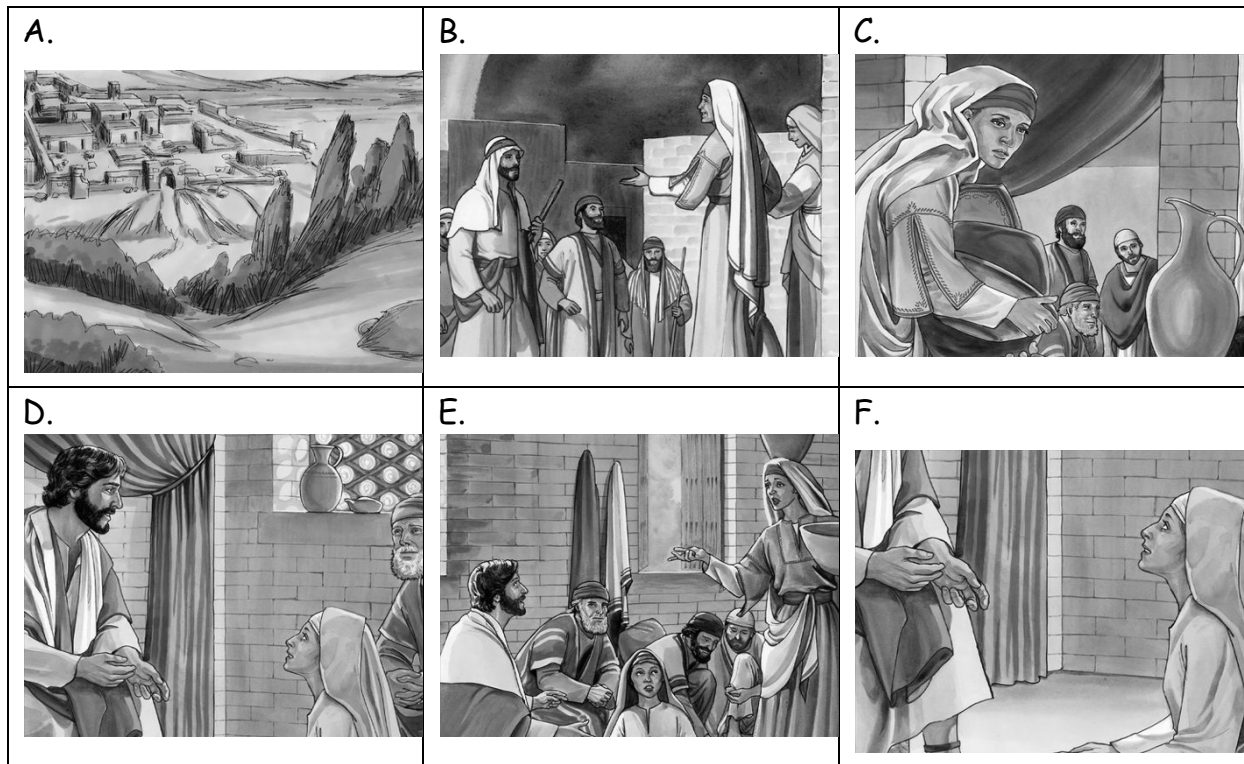
1. Jesus had _____ Lazarus from _____.
2. Mary poured a _____ of _____ on Jesus' feet.
3. Judas liked to _____ the money for the poor.
4. _____ is a holiday that _____ God's rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.3 Mary and Martha: Two Visits

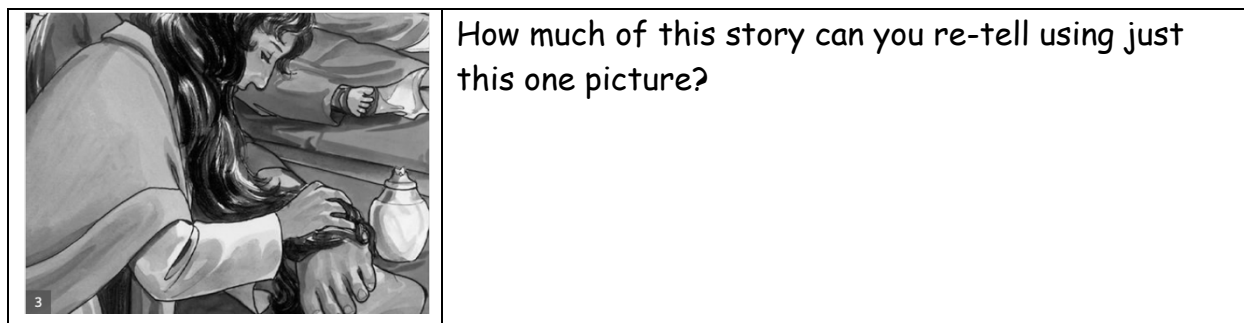
Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.

Luke 10 Martha and Mary



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-065-mary-martha/>

John 12 Mary anoints Jesus' feet



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-084-jesus-anointed/>

Discussion

- *Easier*
1. Where did Mary, Martha, and Lazarus live?
 2. Why was Mary sitting at Jesus' feet?

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.3 Mary and Martha: Two Visits

3. Why was Martha upset with Mary?
4. What did Jesus say about Mary?
5. What was the reason that Mary and Martha were giving a dinner in the second story?
6. How did Mary honour Jesus at that dinner? What did it cost her?
7. Why did Judas Iscariot complain about Mary?
8. What did Jesus say about Mary's "misuse" of the perfume?

- *Intermediate*

1. How do you know that Jesus had a close relationship with Martha, Mary, and Lazarus?
2. The Bible teaches that good works come from faith and are evidence of faith. But Jesus often rebuked the Pharisees for teaching that what you do is more important than spending time with God and reading what He had to say in the Scriptures.
 - a. What was Martha busy doing? Was it good that Martha was doing this?
 - b. What was Mary busy doing? Was it good that Mary was doing this?
 - c. How did Martha ask for help from Mary? Was it okay for her to ask for this help? Why was this not a good way to ask for help?
 - d. Are you surprised that Jesus rebuked Martha, not Mary?
 - e. How do we find a balance between good works and spending time with God, listening to His heart and mind?
 - f. Can a man or a woman, in a marriage, do the good works of a husband or wife, yet at the same time fail to love their spouse?

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.3 Mary and Martha: Two Visits

3. How do you think Martha's family felt after Jesus raised Lazarus from death? (How have you shown those kinds of feelings to someone?)
4. Why do you think Jesus spoke about his burial at the dinner?
5. Do you think Mary knew that Jesus' burial would be soon?
6. Jesus defended Mary twice in these stories.
 - a. Why do you think Jesus defended Mary when she joined the disciples when He was teaching them?
 - b. Why do you think Jesus defended Mary when she poured a pint of expensive perfume on his feet?

- *Challenging*

1. Why would Jesus and his disciples stay at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus? How do you know that they had a close relationship?
2. The Bible teaches that good works come from faith and are evidence of faith. But Jesus often rebuked the Pharisees for teaching that what you do is more important than spending time with God and reading what He had to say in the Scriptures. As a result of their theology, the Pharisees didn't recognize who Jesus was when He was right in front of them.
 - a. What was Martha busy doing? Was it good that Martha was doing this? Was it necessary for Martha to do this?
 - b. What was Mary busy doing? Was it good that Mary was doing this? Was it necessary for Mary to do this?
 - c. How did Martha ask for help from Mary? Was it okay for her to ask for this help? Why was this not a good way to ask for help?
 - d. Are you surprised that Jesus rebuked Martha, not Mary?
 - e. How do we find a balance between good works and spending time with God, listening to His heart and mind? Why, although both are

Chapter One: Valuing what is Important to God

1.3 Mary and Martha: Two Visits

important and necessary, does Jesus put the listening higher than the works?

- f. Why are both good works and good doctrine important to God?
 - g. Can a man or a woman, in a marriage, do the good works of a husband or wife, yet at the same time fail to love their spouse?
3. How do you think Martha's family felt after Jesus raised Lazarus from death?
 - a. How did Mary show her feelings?
 - b. How have you shown those kinds of feelings to someone?
 - c. How do people show those feelings to God?
 4. Why do you think Jesus spoke about his burial at the dinner?
 5. Do you think Mary realized that it was the "day" (i.e. the period of time) when Jesus' burial was imminent, or do you think it was just a spontaneous act of love?
 6. Jesus defended Mary twice in these stories; both defenses were written in the Bible for everyone to read for all generations to come.
 - a. What was the importance of Jesus' defense of Mary when she joined the disciples when He was teaching them?
 - b. What was the importance of Jesus' defense of Mary when she poured an entire pint of expensive perfume on his feet?

Gideon Part One

Judges 6:1-6,

11-17, 25-27, 31-32, 34, 36-40

Background: Our story begins in the time after the Israelites had settled in the land God had promised to them. Unfortunately, during this time, the people began to forget the promises their ancestors had made to God. The **covenant** God had made with them was that He would protect and prosper them if they obeyed the laws that He had given to Moses. When they did not obey, and worshiped other gods, the LORD allowed the surrounding nations to attack them, kill them and steal from them. When the people turned back to obey God, God would send them help.

Before You Read:

Have you ever experienced something that most people would say is impossible?

The Passage

Judges 6

¹The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So for seven years he handed them over to the people of Midian... ²The Midianites treated the Israelites very badly... They didn't **spare** any living thing for Israel... ⁶The Midianites made the Israelites very poor. So they cried out to the LORD for help...

¹¹The angel of the LORD came. He sat down under an oak tree in Ophrah.... Gideon was **threshing** wheat in a winepress at Ophrah ... to hide the wheat from the Midianites. ¹²The angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon. He said, "Mighty **warrior**, the LORD is with you."

¹³"Pardon me, sir," Gideon replied, "you say the LORD is with us. Then why has all this happened to us? Where are all the wonderful things he has done? Our people of long ago told us about them. They said, 'Didn't the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has deserted us. He has handed us over to Midian."



Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.1 Gideon Part One

¹⁴ The LORD turned to Gideon. He said to him, "You are strong. Go and save Israel from the power of Midian. I am sending you."

¹⁵ "Pardon me, sir," Gideon replied, "but how can I possibly save Israel? My family group is the weakest in the tribe of Manasseh. And I'm the least important member of my family."

¹⁶ The LORD answered, "I will be with you. So you will strike down the Midianites. You will leave no one alive."

¹⁷ Gideon replied, "If you are pleased with me, give me a special **sign**. Then I'll know that it's really you talking to me. ¹⁸ Please don't go away until I come back. I'll bring my offering and set it down in front of you."

Gideon brought meat and bread, then he put it on a rock and poured soup on it. The angel touched the offering with the tip of his walking stick, and fire burned up all of the food. Gideon was very afraid, because he knew the person was truly an angel.

²⁵ That same night the LORD spoke to Gideon. He said, "Get the second bull from your father's herd...the one that is seven years old. Tear down the altar your father built to honor the god named Baal. Cut down the pole ...used to worship the female god named Asherah. ²⁶ Then build the right kind of altar. Build it to honor the LORD your God... on top of this hill. Then use the wood from the Asherah pole you cut down. Sacrifice the second bull as a burnt offering."

²⁷ So Gideon ...did just as the LORD had told him. But he was afraid of his family. He was also afraid of the people in the town. So he did everything at night instead of during the day....

*The next day the **furious** people of the town demanded that Joash, Gideon's father, should bring him out so they could kill him.*

³¹ But Joash replied to the angry crowd around him. He asked, "Are you going to stand up for Baal? Are you trying to save him? Those who stand up for him will be put to death by morning! Is Baal really a god? If he is, he can stand up for himself when someone tears down his altar." ³² That's why they gave Gideon the name Jerub-Baal¹ on that day...

³⁴ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon. ... He called for the men of Manasseh to fight. He also sent messengers to the men of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali...³⁶ Gideon said to God, "You promised you would use me to save Israel. ³⁷ Please do something for me. I'll put a piece of **wool** on the threshing floor.

¹ Jerub-Baal means ' Let Baal stand up '

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely
2.1 Gideon Part One

Suppose dew is only on the wool tomorrow morning. And suppose the ground all around it is dry. Then I will know that you will use me to save Israel. I'll know that your promise will come true." ³⁸ And that's what happened. Gideon got up early the next day. He squeezed the dew out of the wool. The water filled a bowl.

³⁹ Then Gideon said to God, "Don't be angry with me. Let me ask you for just one more thing. Let me use the wool for one more test. But this time make the wool dry. And let the ground be covered with dew." ⁴⁰ So that night God did it. Only the wool was dry. The ground all around it was covered with dew.

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Put the story in the right order. The first one is done for you.

- a) The angel caused fire to burn up Gideon's offering of wet food. _____
- b) The angel of the LORD told Gideon he was to save Israel. _____
- c) Joash told people that Baal could stand up for himself. _____
- d) The Israelites began to worship other gods. 1
- e) The Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he gathered an army. _____
- f) Gideon asked the angel for a special sign. _____
- g) God had allowed the Midianites to attack Israel. _____
- h) Gideon obeyed the angel and destroyed his father's altars at night. _____
- i) Gideon used a wool fleece (the wooly coat of a sheep) twice to test whether what God promised was true. _____
- j) The people of the village wanted to kill Gideon when he destroyed his father's altars to false gods. _____

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.1 Gideon Part One

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

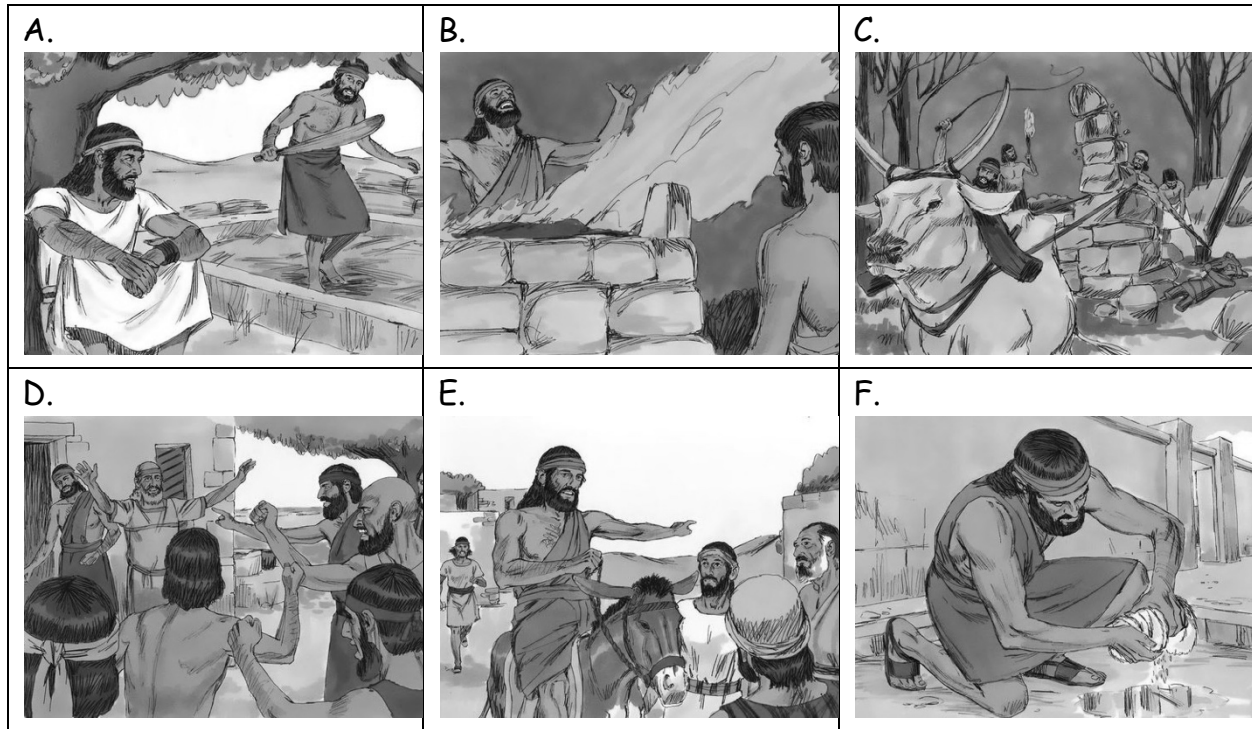
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. _____ covenant | a. water that appears on the ground in the morning |
| 2. _____ spare | b. a courageous fighter |
| 3. _____ warrior | c. very angry |
| 4. _____ sign | d. the soft, thick hair of sheep |
| 5. _____ thresh | e. not destroy or harm |
| 6. _____ furious | f. to hit wheat so the grain falls out |
| 7. _____ wool | g. an event like a miracle to prove something is true |
| 8. _____ dew | h. a promise between people and God |

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

1. In those days, people had to _____ the wheat by hand.
2. Gideon asked the angel for a _____ to prove he was from God.
3. God made a _____ with the Israelites, but they broke it.
4. Gideon squeezed out the _____ that was in the _____.
5. The Midianites did not _____ any living thing for the Israelites.
6. The angel called Gideon a _____ who would save his people.
7. The village was _____ with Gideon because he had destroyed their god's altar.

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely
2.1 Gideon Part One

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below:



<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gideon-fleece/>

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Did the people stay faithful to God after they entered the land He had promised?
2. Why did God allow the Midianites to invade?
3. What good thing did the Israelites do when the Midianites attacked?
4. What was Gideon doing when the angel appeared to him?
5. At first, did Gideon believe the angel was from God? What changed his mind?
6. Why do you think was Gideon so afraid?
7. What did Gideon do to his father's altars?

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.1 Gideon Part One

8. Why, do you think, were the people so angry with Gideon?
9. What did Gideon do after the Spirit of the LORD came on him? Do you think this showed faith?
10. Why did Gideon lay out the wool twice?

• *Intermediate*

1. Why do you think the people of Israel didn't stay faithful to God after they entered the Promised Land?
2. Describe the situation with the Midianite invasion. Why did God allow this?
3. Why do you think Gideon was so surprised by the angel of the Lord?
4. What challenges did Gideon face concerning his father's gods?
5. What was interesting about his father's response to the furious townspeople?
6. Why did Gideon lay out the wool fleece (the wooly hair of a sheep)?
7. Gideon asked God for 2 signs with the fleece. What does this show about Gideon's faith?
8. Christians sometimes talk about laying out 'a fleece' . Do you think this shows faith or a lack of faith?
9. What is more important: that our faith be strong or that we trust in the character of God? Are these the same thing? Why or why not?

• *Challenging*

1. Why do you think the people of Israel didn't stay faithful to God after they entered the Promised Land? What would cause them to act this way?
2. What were the results of their breaking their covenant with God?

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.1 Gideon Part One

3. What good thing did they do when they felt the oppression of the Midianites? As Christians, do we experience similar things?
4. Why do you think Gideon was so surprised by the angel of the Lord? What kind of spiritual environment was Gideon living in?
5. What challenges did Gideon face concerning his father's idols?
6. What was interesting about his father's response to the enraged townspeople? What do you think his father believed in?
7. Why did Gideon lay out a wool fleece (the wooly hair of a sheep)? What does the second fleece show about Gideon's faith?
8. Christians sometimes talk about laying out a fleece. Do you think this shows faith or a lack of faith?
9. What is more important: that our faith be strong or that we trust in the character of God? Are these the same thing? Why or why not?

Gideon, Part Two

Judges 7:1-22

Background: In the last lesson we learned about Gideon, a man God chose to save his people from the Midian army. Gideon needed a lot of encouragement to believe and trust God, and he asked God for proof three times. Finally, Gideon brought an army together to save the people of Israel. But in this story God tests Gideon's trust just as Gideon tested Him.

Before You Read:

Have you ever been asked to do something that you thought was impossible?

The Passage

"Early in the morning, Gideon and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. ² The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would **boast** against me, 'My own strength has saved me.' ³ Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

⁴ But the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will **thin** them **out** for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

When Gideon took the men down to the water, the Lord told him to separate the men according to how they drank the water. Most of them put their face down into the water and drank it. But three hundred of the men cupped the water in their hands, then brought their hands to their mouth to drink.



⁷ The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that cupped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home." ⁸ So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and **trumpets** of the others.

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.2 Gideon Part Two

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley.⁹ During that night the Lord said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands.¹⁰ If you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah¹¹ and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp.¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore.

¹³ Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and **collapsed**."

¹⁴ His friend responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

¹⁵ When Gideon heard the dream and its **interpretation**, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The Lord has given the Midianite camp into your hands."¹⁶ Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty **jars** in the hands of all of them, with **torches** inside.

¹⁷ "Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do.¹⁸ When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon.'"

¹⁹ Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.²⁰ The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"²¹ While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

²² When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath.

Thus Midian was **subdued** before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land had peace forty years (Judges 8:28).

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely
2.2 Gideon Part Two

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

True or False

1. God thought Gideon's army was too big. _____
2. God used the way the men drank water to make the army even smaller.

3. Gideon now had 500 men in his army. _____
4. God knew Gideon wasn't afraid to attack the Midianites right away.

5. Gideon overheard a man talking about a dream he had. _____
6. Gideon tricked the Midianites into believing he had a big army. _____
7. The Midianites remained in the land of Israel. _____

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

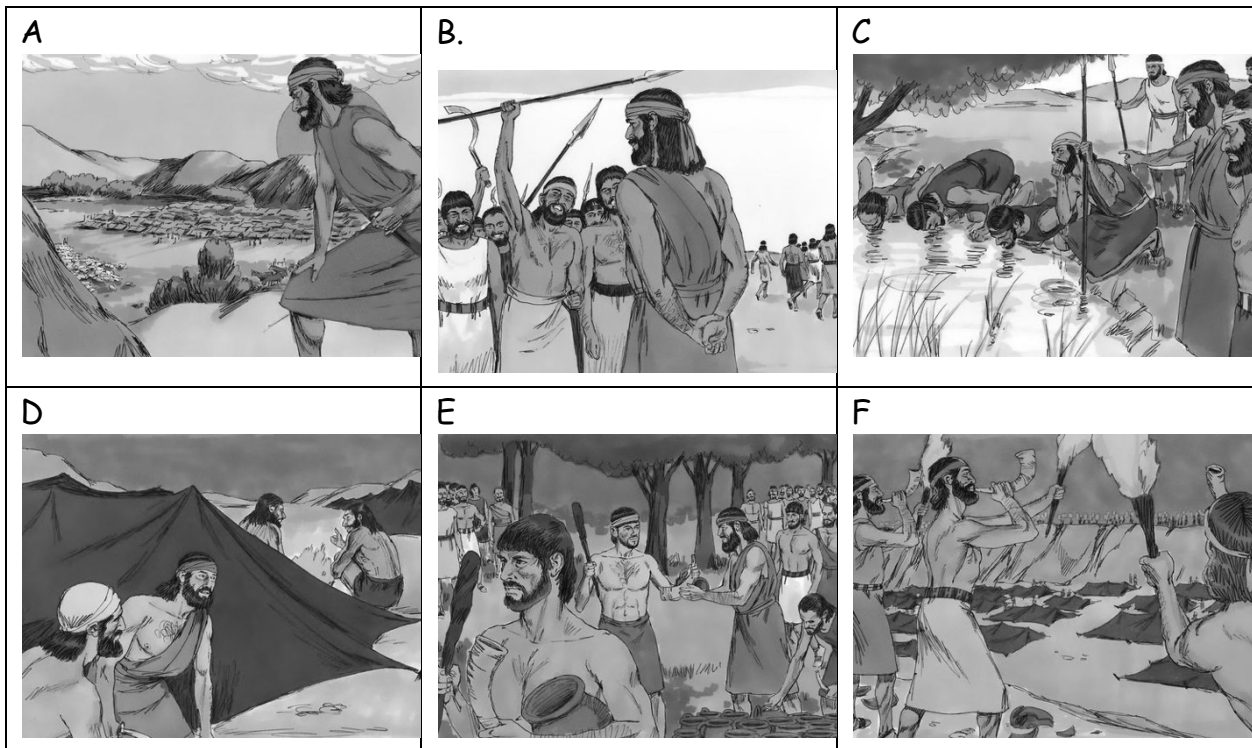
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. _____ boast | a. fall down flat |
| 2. _____ thin out | b. containers for liquids |
| 3. _____ collapse | c. loud musical instruments |
| 4. _____ interpretation | d. to defeat an enemy |
| 5. _____ torch | e. to speak proudly |
| 6. _____ trumpets | f. burning stick |
| 7. _____ jars | g. meaning |
| 8. _____ subdue | h. to make smaller |

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely
2.2 Gideon Part Two

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

1. Long ago people used _____ to light the outside at night.
2. They used _____ to carry water.
3. Gideon's men used the _____ to frighten their enemy.
4. The Israelites were able to _____ the Midianites.
5. God wanted to _____ the army by using a water test.
6. A Midianite dreamt that a loaf of bread would _____ their tent.
7. The dream's _____ was that Gideon would defeat Midian.
8. God did not want the Israelites to _____ so he made Gideon take a very small army.

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gideon-midianites/>

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely
2.2 Gideon Part Two

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. What was the first thing God said to Gideon in this story?
2. Why didn't God want Gideon to take a big army?
3. How did God help Gideon choose the men for his army?
4. What did God tell Gideon to do if he were afraid to attack the camp?
5. What did Gideon and his servant overhear?
6. What did Gideon tell his army to do? Why?
7. What happened when the Midianites heard the trumpets? Why do you think they were so frightened?
8. What was the result of this attack?

- *Intermediate*

1. What was the first thing God said to Gideon in this story? Why didn't God want Gideon to raise a large army?
2. What kind of test did Gideon use to choose the men who would remain in his army? Why didn't God just tell him to choose 300?
3. Why wasn't God angry with Gideon because he didn't attack the Midianites right away?
4. What did Gideon learn when he overheard the Midianite's dream?
5. What did Gideon tell his army to do? Why?
6. What happened when the Midianites heard the trumpets? Why do you think they were so frightened?

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.2 Gideon Part Two

7. What was the result of this attack?

- *Challenging*

1. What was the first thing God said to Gideon in this story? Why didn't God want Gideon to raise a large army?

2. What kind of test did Gideon use to choose the men who would remain in his army? Why didn't God just tell him to choose 300?

3. Why wasn't God angry with Gideon because he didn't attack the Midianites right away? What does this show about God's understanding of us?

4. What did Gideon learn when he overheard the Midianite's dream? How important are dreams? What does this dream reveal about the state of mind of the Midianites?

5. What did Gideon tell his army to do? Why?

6. What happened when the Midianites heard the trumpets? Why do you think they were so frightened?

7. In Judges 7: 23-24 we read: "²³ Israelites from the tribes of Naphtali, Asher and all of Manasseh were called out. They chased the Midianites. ²⁴ Gideon sent messengers through the entire hill country of Ephraim. They said, "Come on down against the Midianites. Take control of the waters of the Jordan River before they get there. Do it all the way to Beth Barah."

So all the men of Ephraim were called out. They took control of the waters of the Jordan all the way to Beth Barah."

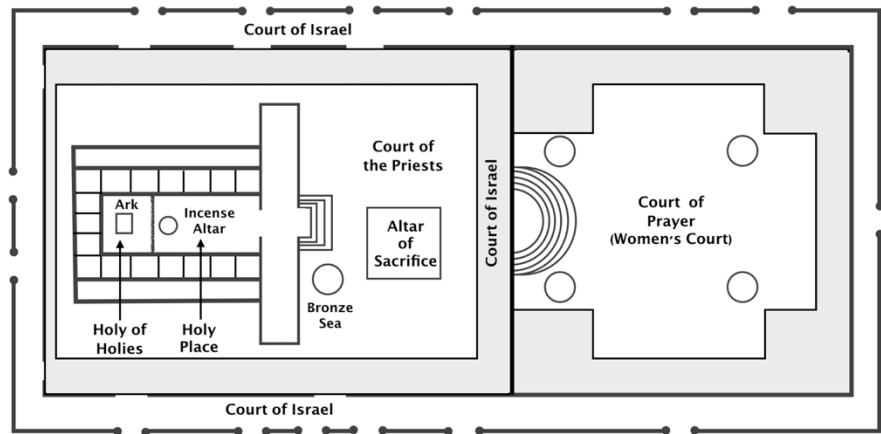
What impact did Gideon's attack have on the whole tribe of Israel?

Zechariah: Breaking the Silence

Luke 1

Background: Hundreds of years before this story begins the prophet Isaiah had told the Jewish people that God would send a **Saviour**, the Messiah. The prophet Daniel said this would happen during the fourth kingdom's (Rome) rule over Judah. Another prophet, Malachi, had said that God would send Elijah, a powerful prophet, to prepare the people before Messiah came. Everyone was expecting this to happen soon, but since Malachi, God had been silent for 400 years. He had not sent any messages to His people.

At the time of this story, the Jews worshipped within the outer **court** of the large temple in Jerusalem. Only a priest (priests were from the family line of Aaron) could go inside to the Holy Place and burn **incense**. The priest would do this only once in his lifetime, and he would have been chosen **by lot**.



Before You Read:

Can you think of a time when someone did not believe you? How did you feel?

The Passage:

Luke 1

⁵...There was a priest named Zechariah... His wife Elizabeth also came from the family line of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them did what was right in the sight of God... ⁷ But they had no children because Elizabeth was not able to have any. And they were both very old...

⁹ He (Zechariah) happened to be chosen, in the usual way, to go into the temple of the Lord... ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at the right side of the incense altar. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was **amazed** and **terrified**. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must call

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.3 Zechariah: Breaking the Silence

him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. ¹⁵ ... He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will prepare the way for the Lord. He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had...

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too."

¹⁹ The angel said to him, "I am *Gabriel*. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That's because you did not believe my words. They will come true at the time God has chosen."

..." ⁵⁷ The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby. She gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very kind to her. They shared her joy.

⁵⁹ ... They were going to name him Zechariah, like his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother spoke up. "No!" she said. "He must be called John."

⁶¹ They said to her, "No one among your relatives has that name."

⁶² Then they motioned to his father. They wanted to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was amazed. ⁶⁴ Right away Zechariah could speak again. Right away he praised God. ⁶⁵ All his neighbors were filled with fear and wonder. Throughout Judea's hill country, people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it. And because the Lord was with John, they asked, "What is this child going to be?" ⁶⁷ John's father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit. He **prophesied**..."

⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare the way for him.

⁷⁷ You will tell his people how they can be saved.

You will tell them that their sins can be forgiven...

Jesus said of John, ¹⁰ He is the one written about in Scripture. It says, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you. He will prepare your way for you' ... 'and if you are willing to accept it, John is the Elijah who was supposed to come. ¹⁵ Whoever has ears should listen'" (Matthew 11:10,14-15).

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹Questions taken from www.storyingthescrptures.com

Passage Questions

Match the sentence beginning with the right ending.

- | | |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Hundreds of years before Zechariah, the prophet Isaiah | a. ...that he would have a son. |
| _____ 2. The prophet Malachi told people | b. ...and they could not have children. |
| _____ 3. Zechariah and Elizabeth were old, | c. ...John is the Elijah who was supposed to come". |
| _____ 4. God sent the angel Gabriel to tell Zechariah | d. ...told people that God would send a Saviour, the Messiah. |
| _____ 5. Zechariah could not speak because | e. ...that God would send Elijah to prepare them for the Messiah. |
| _____ 6. Gabriel said that | f. ... John would have the same spirit and power that Elijah had. |
| _____ 7. Jesus said, "if you are willing to accept it, | g. ...he had not believed what Gabriel told him. |

Match the following words with their meanings.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| _____ 1. saviour | a. a messenger from God |
| _____ 2. court | b. a strong feeling of wonder |
| _____ 3. incense | c. someone who saves or rescues |
| _____ 4. by lot | d. to be very frightened |
| _____ 5. prophet | e. a gum or spice that gives off a sweet smell when burned |
| _____ 6. terrified | f. tell a message from God, often |

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.3 Zechariah: Breaking the Silence

about the future

_____7. prophecy

_____8. amazed

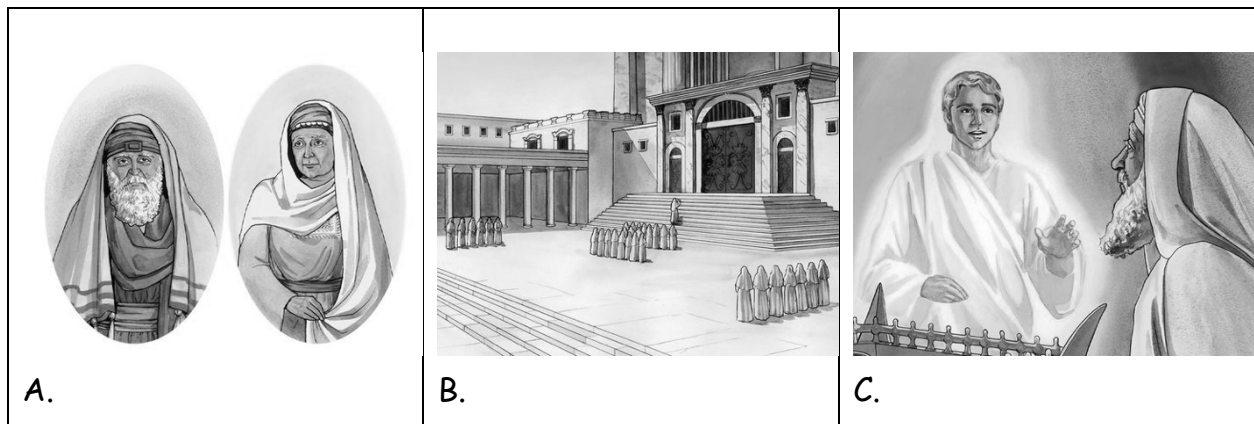
g. an open space surrounded by walls

h. when each person from a group takes a small object from a container, and the person who gets a marked object is chosen for a task.

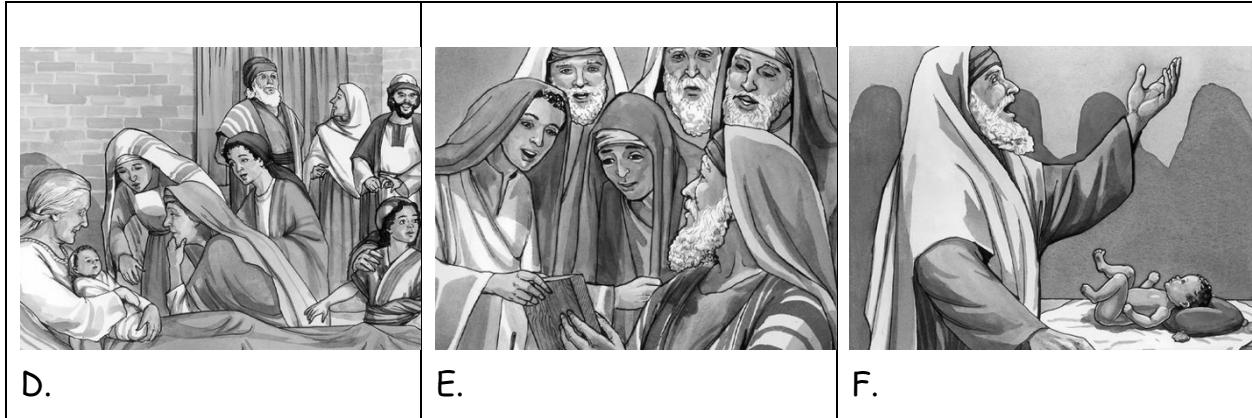
Fill in the Blanks with the vocabulary words above.

1. When Zechariah saw Gabriel, he was _____ and _____.
2. The family of Aaron would choose a priest _____ to go and burn _____ in the temple.
3. Only the priests of Aaron could go into the temple, so other people had to stay in the _____.
4. Daniel was a _____ who had _____ that God's _____ would come during Roman rule

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.



Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely
2.3 Zechariah: Breaking the Silence



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-002-zechariah/>
<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-005-birth-john/>

Discussion

- *Easier*
 1. Before Zechariah, when was the last time that a prophet spoke to God's people? Who was that prophet?
 2. How often would a priest have the chance to go into the Temple and burn incense? How was the priest chosen to do this?
 3. What sorrow did Zechariah and Elizabeth have in their lives?
 4. When did the prophet Daniel say that the Messiah would come to save the people?
 5. Do you think people in Zechariah's time were expecting this Saviour? Why or why not?
 6. What did Gabriel tell Zechariah to name his son?
 7. Why was Zechariah unable to speak? When was he able to speak again?
 8. What did Zechariah say in his prophecy about his son?

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.3 Zechariah: Breaking the Silence

- *Intermediate*

1. Before Zechariah, how long had it been since God had spoken to his people by a prophet? Who was that prophet, and what had he said?
2. How often did Zechariah serve in the Temple? How did he happen to be the priest who served that day?
3. Do you think Zechariah would have been praying for a son?
4. Do you think people in Zechariah's time were expecting the Messiah? Why or why not?
5. Zechariah would have prayed for the people when he was burning the incense. Why would Zechariah have probably prayed for the Messiah to come?
6. How did Zechariah respond to Gabriel's message that he and Elizabeth would have a son? Why do you think he responded this way?
7. Why might Gabriel have silenced Zechariah until his son was born?
8. What did Zechariah prophesy about John? How did his words match the meaning of what Gabriel had spoken about his son?

- *Challenging*

1. Before Zechariah, how long had it been since God had spoken to his people by a prophet? Why do you think God had been silent to His people for so long?
2. What did Malachi prophesy about the Messiah's messenger? What was God's message to Daniel?
3. This would have been Zechariah's one and only day to serve in the Temple. Why might Zechariah have used that opportunity to pray for the Messiah to come?
4. Zechariah entered the first room of the Temple to burn the incense. The first room was separated from the second room by a heavy drape. Only the high priest was allowed to enter the second room, the Holy of Holies - and he could

Chapter Two: Believing God for the Unlikely

2.3 Zechariah: Breaking the Silence

only enter once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. He would burn incense and sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed lamb on the mercy seat of the Ark. The blood was to make atonement for his own sins and for the sins of the people. God said that He would appear in the Holy of Holies. What do you think were God's purposes were in closing off the second, inner room?

5. Do you think Zechariah would have still been praying for a son? Why or why not? Why do you think Gabriel's first words to him were that he would have a son?
6. What did Gabriel tell Zechariah about his son? How would this fulfill Malachi's prophecy?
7. How did Zechariah respond to Gabriel's message that he and Elizabeth would have a son? Why was it both understandable for him to respond this way - yet at the same time ridiculous for him to do this?
8. Why might Gabriel have silenced Zechariah until his son was born? What did you learn about Zechariah from this story?
9. While Elizabeth was pregnant with John, Mary visited Elizabeth. Mary was pregnant with Jesus at the time. Elizabeth said to Mary, ⁴³ *But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me?* ⁴⁴ *As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy.* ⁴⁵ *You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that the Lord would keep his promises to you!*" (Luke 1:43-45).

What do you learn about Elizabeth from all this?

10. a. What did Zechariah prophesy about John?
b. How did his words match the meaning of what Gabriel had spoken about his son?
c. What do you learn about God from His plans for this messenger?
11. What did you learn about prophecy in this story?

Noah and the Ark

Genesis 6, 7, 8

Background: Hundreds of cultures have stories about a great flood. This story from the Bible is very well-known around the world. At the time this happened, people lived for hundreds of years. Gen 6:5-6 says they "only thought about evil things" and this filled God with sorrow. However, one man was different, and this story is about him.

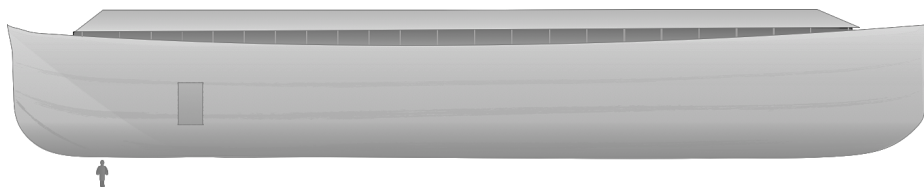
Before You Read: Do you know of a situation that became so bad, people had to start over again?

The Passages

- *Genesis 6:9-22*

⁹...Noah was a godly man. He was without **blame** among the people of his time. He walked faithfully with God ...

¹¹ The earth was very sinful in God's eyes. It was full of people who did mean and harmful things. ¹² God saw how sinful the earth had become. All its people were living very sinful lives. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to everyone. They have filled the earth with their harmful acts. I am certainly going to destroy them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark out of cypress wood. Make rooms in it. Cover it with **tar** inside and out... ¹⁸ But I will make my **covenant** with you. You will go into the ark. Your sons and your wife and your sons' wives will enter it with you. ¹⁹ Bring a male and a female of every living thing into the ark. They will be kept alive with you... ²¹ Take every kind of food that you will need. Store it away as food for you and them". ²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him.



*The ark was 150 m long, 25 m wide, and 15 m high. It had three **decks**. There was an opening for air underneath its roof. There was a door in its side.*

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.1 Noah and the Ark

- *Genesis 7:11-24*

¹¹Noah was 600 years old. It was the 17th day of the second month of the year. On that day all of the **springs** at the bottom of the oceans burst open. God opened the windows of the sky. ¹²Rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights.

¹³On that same day Noah entered the ark together with his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah's wife and the wives of his three sons also entered it...Then the LORD shut him in...

¹⁷For 40 days the flood kept coming on the earth. As the waters rose higher, they lifted the ark high above the earth ... ²⁰The waters continued to rise until they covered the mountains by more than 20 feet (7 metres) ... ²³...Everything on earth was destroyed. Only Noah and those with him in the ark were left. ²⁴The waters flooded the earth for 150 days.

- *Genesis 8: 1-20*

¹But God showed concern for Noah. He also showed concern for all the wild animals and **livestock** that were with Noah in the ark. So God sent a wind to sweep over the earth. And the waters began to go down... ⁴On the 17th day of the seventh month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to go down until the tenth month. On the first day of that month, the tops of the mountains could be seen...¹⁴By the 27th day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the ark. Bring your wife and your sons and their wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out every kind of living thing that is with you. Bring the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground. Then they can multiply on the earth. They can have little ones and the number of them can increase."

...²⁰Then Noah built an altar to honor the LORD. He took some of the "clean" animals and birds. He sacrificed them on the altar as burnt offerings...



Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith
3.1 Noah and the Ark

[God said] ²¹“I will never put a **curse** on the ground again because of human beings. I will not do it even though their hearts are always directed toward evil. Their thoughts are evil from the time they are young. I will never destroy all living things again, as I have just done.

- *Genesis 9:8-13*

...⁸ Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons who were with him. He said, ⁹“I am now making my covenant with you and with all your children who will be born after you. ¹⁰I am making it also with every living creature that was with you in the ark ... It is a covenant for all time to come. Here is the sign of the covenant I am making. ¹³I have put my rainbow in the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Put the story in the right order. The first one is done for you.

- a) God told Noah to build an ark and bring in pairs of all kinds of animals.

- b) Noah was not like other people, and he walked faithfully with God. _____
- c) Over a year later, the earth was finally dry. _____
- d) The people on the earth were always thinking about and doing evil things.
__1__
- e) Noah's family came out of the ark, and he sacrificed animals to God.

- f) God decided to flood the earth and make a new beginning. _____

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.1 Noah and the Ark

- g) God felt _____ when He saw what people were doing. _____
- h) Noah and his family went into the ark, and God shut the door. _____
- i) God put a rainbow in the clouds to show his covenant that He would never again destroy all living things. _____
- j) The ocean springs burst open, and it rained for 40 days and nights. _____

Match the following words with their meanings.

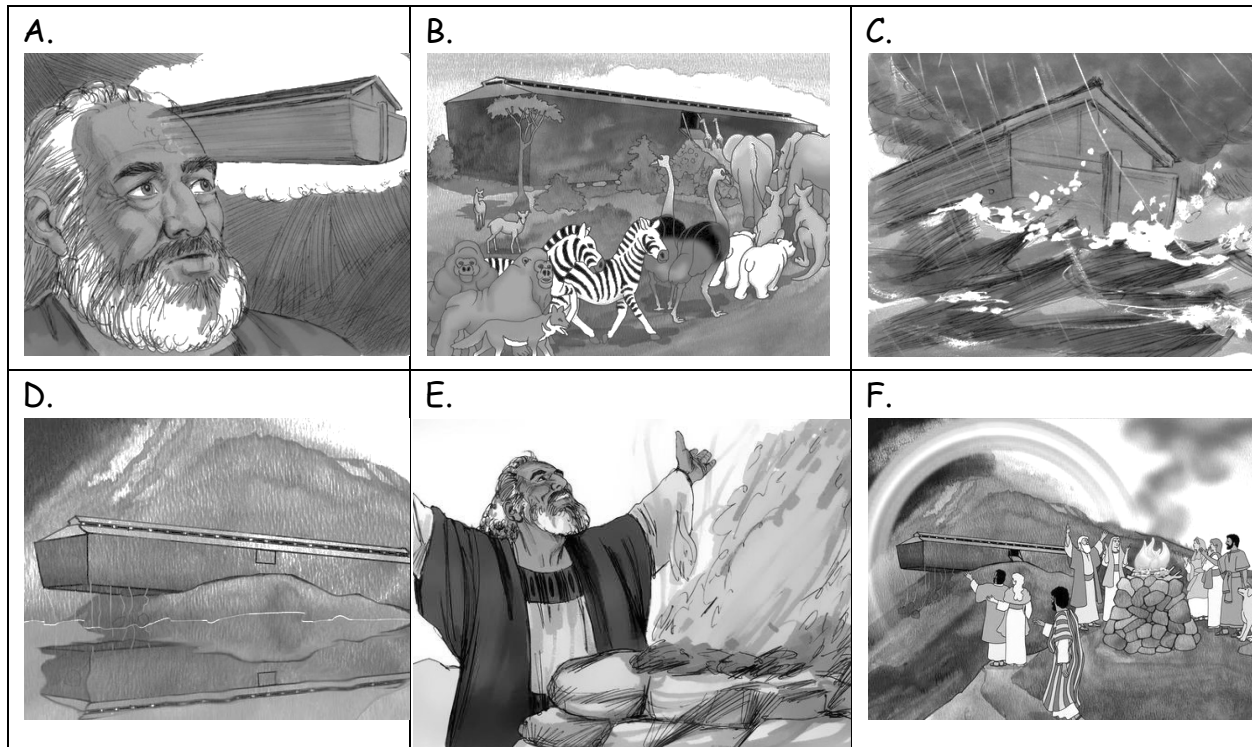
- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| _____1. blame | a. animals used by people |
| _____2. deck | b. a black substance that makes things waterproof |
| _____3. livestock | c. evil saying or event |
| _____4. spring | d. a formal and serious agreement or promise |
| _____5. tar | e. caring feelings |
| _____6. concern | f. to be responsible for evil |
| _____7. curse | g. a source of water coming up from the ground |
| _____8. covenant | h. floor level in a boat or ship |

Fill in the Blanks with the vocabulary words above

1. Noah pleased God, because he was without _____, unlike the people of his time.
2. The ark was covered in _____, it had three _____, and there was room for all the _____ and the wild animals.
3. God showed _____ for everyone and everything on the ark by drying up the earth.
4. Rain poured down from the skies and water burst up from the _____ of the oceans.
5. God made a _____ with Noah's family and the animals to never again put a _____ on the ground to destroy it.

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith
3.1 Noah and the Ark

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/noah-ark/>; <http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/yo-noah/>

Discussion

- *Easier*
1. How was Noah different than the people around him?
 2. Why did God decide to destroy all the people?
 3. How difficult do you think it would be to build an ark like Noah's? How long might it take?
 4. Why do you think God didn't just give an ark to Noah?
 5. What do you think Noah's friends, relatives, and neighbours were saying while Noah was building the ark?
 6. About how long were they shut up in the ark? [See Gen 7:11 and 8:14]

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.1 Noah and the Ark

7. Why do you think that Noah sacrificed animals to God when they finally got out on dry land?
8. What was the covenant that God made with Noah and the animals? Why do you think God made the rainbow a sign of this covenant?
9. What does the Bible teach about the family of mankind?

- *Intermediate*

1. How would you compare Noah to the people of his time?
2. Describe what life must have been like for Noah during the time that he was building the ark. What do you think were the reactions of Noah's friends and neighbours during this long building time? Would you have reacted the same way?
3. Whose plan was it to build the boat and fill it with animals and food? What can you learn about God from this boat building process?
4. Well over a hundred cultures across the world have accounts of a global flood in which a sole family survived on a boat. What do you think about the truth of this story?
5. What did Noah do first when he left the ark? What does that show about his relationship with God? Would you have done the same?
6. What promise did God make to His creation? What was the symbol of this promise? What are your feelings when you see a rainbow?
7. According to the Bible, all people are descendants of Noah. How does that affect how people from different parts of the world should view each other?

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith
3.1 Noah and the Ark

- *Challenging*

1. In the English Standard Version translation of *Genesis 6*, it uses words like 'thoughts were only evil continually', 'corrupt', and 'filled with violence' to tell what God saw on the earth.
 - a. What do you think people were doing at that time?
 - b. Describe the differences between Noah and the people around him.
2. What can you learn about God from the plans for the ark, and from the building of the ark?
3. What might life have been like for Noah while building the ark - i.e. how would his family, relatives, friends, and neighbours have reacted? What would make you think that Noah was or wasn't a crazy man?
4. Why didn't God just take Noah from the earth, like He did with Enoch? Why put him through the task of building the ark, and experiencing the flood?
5. In *Matthew 24*, Jesus told his disciples, ³⁷ *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.* ² *Peter 3:3-6* says, ³ *First of all, I want you to know that in the last days men will laugh at the truth. They will follow their own sinful desires.* ⁴ *They will say, "He promised to come again. Where is He? Since our early fathers died, everything is the same from the beginning of the world.* ⁵ *But they want to forget that God spoke and the heavens were made long ago. The earth was made out of water and water was all around it.* ⁶ *Long ago the earth was covered with water and it was destroyed." Are people today like they were in the time of Noah?*
6. What promise did God make with Noah, his family, and the animals? Why do you think God used a rainbow as the sign of this covenant? What are your feelings when you see a rainbow? Do you know of any poems, songs, or paintings about rainbows?

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.1 Noah and the Ark

7. According to the Bible, all people are descendants of Noah and his wife - or more specifically descendants of Shem, Japheth, and Ham and their wives. How does that affect how people should relate to each other?

John Mark: Nine Passages Mark 14; Acts 12,13,15; Col. 4;
Phil. 1; 2 Tim. 4; 1 Peter 5

Background: John Mark, often just called Mark, wrote the gospel of Mark. He and his mother lived in Jerusalem. After Jesus' death and **resurrection**, Jesus' disciples formed the first church in Jerusalem. And that church often met at Mark's mother's home. Mark was well-known by Peter and Paul; he is mentioned by them in several passages in the Bible. This story comes from eight of those passages, and a ninth passage that is believed written by Mark himself. They cover a period of 30 years in the life of John Mark.

Before You Read: **Details** are important to any story. Can you think of a story that although you know it well, yet you still find new details in it each time you read it?

The Passages

- *Passage 1: Mark 14:43-51 (Timeline: ~ 30 A.D.) **

"The night before Jesus was crucified, he and his disciples went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus had been praying while the disciples slept. Jesus woke them up just before Judas arrived with a crowd.

The crowd was carrying swords and clubs. They grabbed Jesus and arrested him. The disciples ran away. One young disciple had only a linen **sheet** around him. When the crowd grabbed him, he fled **naked** into the night, leaving his sheet behind."

Most scholars believe that young disciple was Mark.

- *Passages 2&3: Acts 12:25; 13:1-5 (Timeline: ~ 47 A.D.)*

Saul had been a dangerous and committed persecutor of the church. But when Jesus appeared to Saul, Saul became His follower. The Antioch church in Syria sent a man called Barnabas with Saul (now called Paul) to Jerusalem to take a gift to the struggling church there. When they went back to Antioch, they took Mark with them.



Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.2 John Mark: Nine Passages

12: ²⁴Barnabas and Saul finished their task. Then they returned from Jerusalem. They took John Mark with them.

13: ¹In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers. ... ² While they were worshiping the Lord and **fasting**, the Holy Spirit spoke. "Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me," he said. "I have appointed them to do special work." ... ⁴ Barnabas and Saul were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. They went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ They arrived at Salamis. There they preached God's word in the Jewish synagogues. John Mark was with them as their helper.

When they were there, the governor of Cyprus sent for them. They went, and the governor was amazed by their teaching, and believed.

- *Passages 4&5: Acts 13: 13; 15:36-41 (Timeline: ~ 48 A.D.)*

"¹³ From Paphos, Paul and his companions (including Barnabas and Mark), sailed to Perga in Pamphylia. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem."

Barnabas and Paul would face intense persecution on their journey. Once Paul had been dragged out of a city, stoned, and left for dead. Paul and Barnabas finished their missionary trip through Asia Minor, and returned to Antioch.

15: ³⁶ Some time later Paul spoke to Barnabas. "Let's go back to all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord," he said. "Let's visit the believers and see how they are doing." ³⁷ Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them. ³⁸ But Paul didn't think it was wise to take him. Mark had **deserted** them in Pamphylia. He hadn't continued with them in their work. ³⁹ Barnabas and Paul strongly disagreed with each other. So they went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. ⁴⁰ But Paul chose Silas.

- *Passages 6 - 9: Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24, 2 Timothy 4:11, 1 Peter 5:13 (Timeline: ~ 61 A.D.)*

Paul was imprisoned in Rome because he was telling people about Jesus. While in prison, he wrote many letters to churches. These short passages are from Paul's letters:

Colossians 4:10: "¹⁰ Aristarchus is in prison with me. He sends you his greetings. So does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas...If he comes to you, welcome him."

Philemon 1:24: "Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke work together with me. They also send you greetings."

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.2 John Mark: Nine Passages

2 Timothy 4:11: "...Get Mark and bring him with you. He helps me in my work for the Lord."

Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times the night the crowd arrested Jesus on the Mount of Olives, but he would later die for speaking about Jesus. This last passage comes from one of Peter's letters: 1 Peter 5:13: " ¹³ ... Mark, my son in the faith, sends you his greetings."

*Timeline of the Apostle Paul. Blue Letter Bible.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/paul/timeline.cfm>

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about these passages? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about these passages?
3. What do you learn about people from these passages?
4. What do you learn about God from these passages?

¹Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Change these False statements to True:

1. Mark stayed with Jesus when he was arrested.

2. Mark was the only one in his family who followed Jesus.

3. Mark was a helper to Peter and Paul but not a writer.

4. Saul was John Mark's cousin.

5. John Mark stayed in Asia Minor, even when Paul and Barnabas were persecuted.

6. Paul gave John Mark another chance on his second journey.

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.2 John Mark: Nine Passages

7. Mark never helped Paul again.

8. Mark stayed fearful all his life.

Match the following words with their meanings.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. desert | a. fine points or facts |
| _____ 2. resurrection | b. someone who treats others unfairly because of religion, nationality or political beliefs |
| _____ 3. details | c. returning to life after being dead |
| _____ 4. crucified | d. not wearing clothes |
| _____ 5. persecutor | e. stop eating for a period of time |
| _____ 6. sheet | f. killed by nailing to a cross |
| _____ 7. naked | g. big piece of cloth |
| _____ 8. fasting | h. to leave someone in their time of need |

Fill in the Blanks with the vocabulary words above

1. Each of the passages has just one or two _____ about Mark.
2. When Jesus was arrested, the crowd grabbed Mark's linen _____, and he ran away _____.
3. When Jesus was arrested and _____, most of his disciples _____ him.
4. After Jesus' _____, Saul was a _____ of the church, but he changed after he saw Jesus alive.
5. The Spirit of God spoke to the Antioch church when they were worshipping and _____.

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Why do you think Mark included the embarrassing story of the young disciple who fled naked when Jesus was arrested?
2. How do you think John Mark met the apostle Paul?
3. What happened to the apostle Paul on his missionary trip through Asia Minor (now Turkey) after Mark deserted?
4. Why did Paul not want to take John Mark with him on his next missionary trip through Asia Minor? Who was willing to give John Mark a second chance?
5. In how many of his letters did Paul mention Mark? What does this tell you?
6. How had the apostle Peter deserted Jesus when he was a disciple? Did Peter change later?
7. Why do you think Peter "adopted" John Mark as his spiritual son?

- *Intermediate*

1. Do you think that Mark's story about the young disciple who fled naked was a story about himself? Why do you think he included it?
2. The Jerusalem church often gathered to pray in the home of Mark's mother. How do you think this would have impacted John Mark?
3. How do you think John Mark met the apostle Paul?
4. What happened to the apostle Paul on his missionary trip through Asia Minor (now Turkey)?
5. Why did Paul not want to take John Mark with him on his next missionary trip through Asia Minor? Who was willing to give John Mark a second chance?

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.2 John Mark: Nine Passages

6. In how many of his letters did Paul mention Mark? What does this tell you?
7. How had the apostle Peter 'deserted' Jesus when he was a disciple? Did Peter change?
8. Why do you think Peter "adopted" John Mark as his spiritual son?

- *Challenging*

1. Do you think that Mark's story about the young disciple who fled naked was a story about himself? Would you have wanted to include such an embarrassing story about personal failure, if you knew it would be read by all the churches?
2. The Jerusalem church often gathered to pray in the home of Mark's mother. How do you think this would have impacted John Mark?
3. How do you think John Mark met the apostle Paul? Was this meeting a coincidence?
4. Why did Paul not want to take John Mark with him on his next missionary trip through Asia Minor? Who was willing to give John Mark a second chance?
5. In how many of his letters did Paul mention Mark? What does this tell you about Mark? About Paul?
6. On the night Jesus was arrested on the Mount of Olives, the soldiers took Him to the home of the high priest. Peter and another disciple followed them into the courtyard of the home. There Peter was asked three times if he was one of Jesus' disciples, and each time Peter said he was not. John 21: 15 - 19 records that after Jesus' resurrection, he asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Peter responded each time, "You know that I love you." Jesus told Peter to take care of His followers and to "Follow me!"
 - a. What did Jesus' forgiveness build into Peter?
 - b. How were Peter and John Mark alike?

Joseph in Prison Genesis 39:19-23; 40:1-23; 41:1-40

Background: Joseph was the firstborn son of Jacob and Rachel, Jacob's second but favorite wife. His older sons were very **jealous** of the **favoritism** shown to Joseph. Joseph didn't help matters by telling them of the prophetic dreams he was having where they all **bowed down** to him. One day the brothers had the opportunity to **seize** Joseph. They sold him to passing traders, and Joseph ended up as a **slave** in Egypt. Later he was put in prison there because someone lied about him.

Before You Read: Have you ever had to wait a long time to get out of a bad situation? What happened?

The Passage

Genesis 40: ¹Some time later, the Egyptian king's baker and wine taster did something their master didn't like. ²So **Pharaoh** became angry with his two officials... ³He put them in prison in the house of the captain of the palace guard. It was the same prison where Joseph was kept...

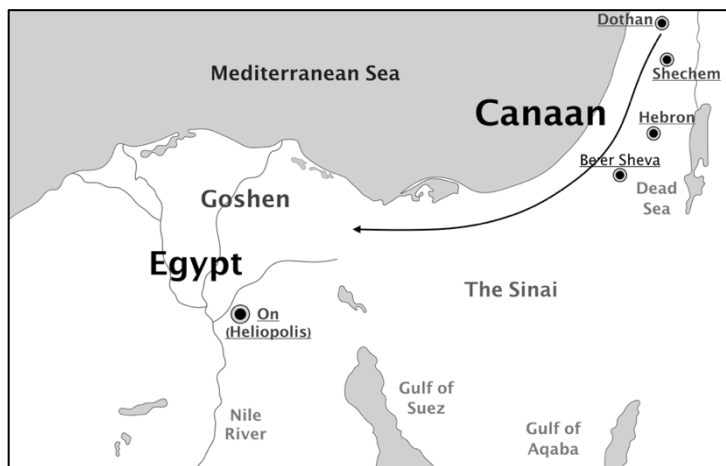
⁵ Then each of the two men had a dream. ⁶Joseph came to them the next morning. He saw that they were sad. So he asked them, "Why do you look so sad today?"

⁸ "We both had dreams," they answered. "But no one can tell us what they mean."

Then Joseph said to them, "Only *God* knows what dreams mean. Tell me your dreams."

After the wine taster and the baker told their dreams, Joseph was able to tell the meanings. He told the wine taster that Pharaoh would free him, but he told the baker that Pharaoh would kill him.

Joseph asked the wine taster, "¹⁴But when everything is going well with you, remember me. Do me a favor. Speak to Pharaoh about me. Get me out of this prison."...



Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.3 Joseph in Prison

²²Everything happened just as Joseph had told them when he explained their dreams.

²³ But the chief wine taster didn't remember Joseph. In fact, he forgot all about him."

Genesis 41: " ¹ When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. In his dream, he was standing by the Nile River. ² Seven cows came up out of the river. They looked healthy and fat... ³ After them, seven other cows came up out of the Nile. They looked ugly and skinny. They were standing beside the other cows on the riverbank. ⁴ The ugly, skinny cows ate up the seven cows that looked healthy and fat. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵ He fell asleep again and had a second dream. In that dream, seven heads of grain were growing on one stem. They were healthy and good. ⁶ After them, seven other heads of grain came up. They were thin and dried up by the east wind. ⁷ The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads... ⁸ In the morning he was worried. So he sent for all the **magicians** and wise men of Egypt...But no one could tell him what they meant.

⁹ Then the chief wine taster spoke up. *...He reminded Pharaoh that he had been imprisoned... He told Pharaoh that Joseph had interpreted their dreams and that his interpretations had proven true...* ¹⁴ So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. He was quickly brought out of the prison...

¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream. No one can tell me what it means. But I've heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it."

¹⁶ "I can't do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh. "But God will give Pharaoh the answer he wants." So Pharaoh told Joseph his dream.

²⁵ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Both of Pharaoh's dreams have the same meaning. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do... ²⁹ Seven years with plenty of food are coming to the whole land of Egypt. ³⁰ But seven years when there won't be enough food will follow them... Terrible hunger will destroy the land... ³² God gave the dream to Pharaoh in two forms. That's because the matter has been **firmly** decided by God. And it's because God will do it soon.

³³ So Pharaoh should look for a wise and understanding man. He should put him in charge of the land of Egypt...They should take a fifth of the harvest in Egypt during the seven years when there's plenty of food. ³⁵ They should collect all the extra food of the good years that are coming...They should keep it in the cities for food. ³⁶ ... It will be needed during the seven years when there isn't enough food in Egypt. Then the country won't be destroyed just because it doesn't have enough food."...

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.3 Joseph in Prison

³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God has made all this known to you. No one is as wise and understanding as you are. ⁴⁰ You will be in charge of my palace. All my people must obey your orders. I will be greater than you only because I'm the one who sits on the throne."

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescritures.com

Passage Questions

Choose the best answer:

1. Joseph's brothers did not like Joseph because:
 - a. their father loved Joseph more than them
 - b. Joseph didn't work hard
 - c. Joseph had a dream that they would bow down to him
 - d. both a and c
2. Joseph's brothers seized him and:
 - a. killed him
 - b. sold him to traders
 - c. took him to Egypt
 - d. both b and c
3. Joseph was sent to prison because:
 - a. he had lied to his owner
 - b. he had stolen from his owner
 - c. he had hurt his owners' wife
 - d. someone had lied about him to his owner
4. The wine-taster and baker:
 - a. were prisoners with Joseph
 - b. had made Pharaoh happy
 - c. were friends of Pharaoh

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.3 Joseph in Prison

- d. did not listen to Joseph
- 5. The wine-taster told Pharaoh about Joseph:
 - a. as soon as he got out of prison
 - b. after 2 years
 - c. when Pharaoh asked him to tell him about the prison
 - d. after 1 month
- 6. Pharaoh had a confusing dream:
 - a. about cows
 - b. about heads of grain
 - c. about 7 sick things destroying 7 healthy things
 - d. all of the above
- 7. Pharaoh understood his dreams after:
 - a. asking God for help
 - b. his wise men explained it to him
 - c. Joseph told him the meaning
 - d. thinking about the dreams for a long time

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. _____ jealous | a. surely |
| 2. _____ favouritism | b. someone owned by another person |
| 3. _____ bow down | c. people who had magic powers |
| 4. _____ seize | d. Egyptian king |
| 5. _____ slave | e. to bend the body low to show great respect |
| 6. _____ Pharaoh | f. liking someone more than others |
| 7. _____ firmly | g. hold by force |
| 8. _____ magicians | h. to be angry because someone has what you feel should be yours |

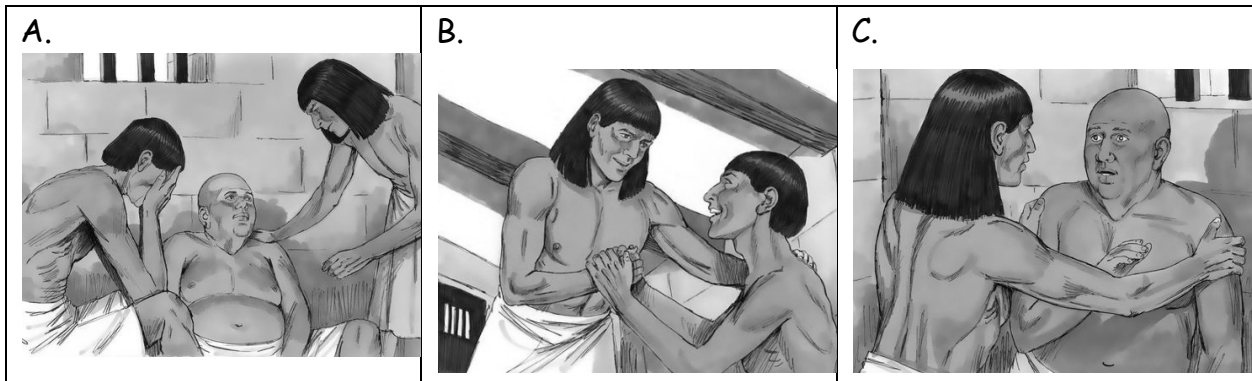
Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith
3.3 Joseph in Prison

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

1. Jacob showed _____ to his son, Joseph, so his brothers were very _____.
2. Joseph's brothers _____ him and sold him to traders as a _____ in Egypt.
3. Joseph had dreams that his family _____ to him.
4. _____ sent for Joseph because he could interpret dreams.
5. The _____ could not tell the king the meaning of his dreams.
6. Pharaoh's dream came in two forms to show him that God had _____ decided to do it.

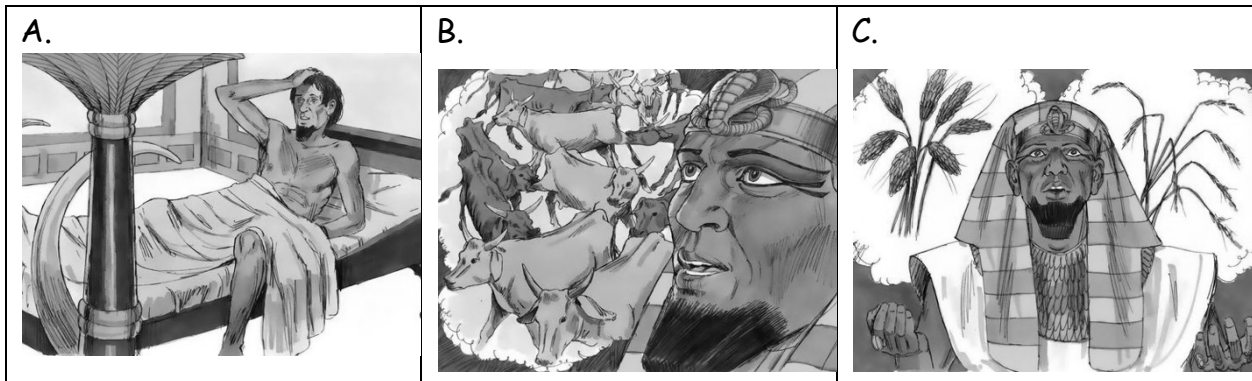
Re-tell these stories using the pictures below:

Genesis 40:



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/joseph-prison-dreams/>

Genesis 42:



Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith
3.3 Joseph in Prison



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/joseph-pharaoh-dreams/>

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Why did Joseph's brothers hate Joseph?
2. How did Joseph end up in Egypt?
3. Why was Joseph sent to prison?
4. Who were the two men who were sent to prison? Why were they sad?
5. What did Joseph ask the wine taster to do for him?
6. Was Joseph's interpretation of their dreams correct? Was the wine taster good at keeping promises?
7. What did Pharaoh dream about? Why was Joseph sent to Pharaoh?
8. What did Pharaoh's dreams mean? How important were these dreams?
9. What did Pharaoh decide to do about Joseph? How important was this job?
10. What role does God play in this story? Do you think he does the same for us?

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.3 Joseph in Prison

- *Intermediate*

1. What caused Joseph's brothers to hate Joseph? How should they have responded to Joseph's dreams?
2. How did Joseph end up in Egypt?
3. Why was Joseph sent to prison?
4. What were the roles of the two men who were sent to prison? How did Joseph interpret their dreams?
5. What did Joseph ask the wine taster to do for him? What does this show about Joseph's confidence in his interpretation of the dream?
6. Was Joseph's interpretation of their dreams correct? What happened to the men? Was the cupbearer good at keeping promises? How important was this to God's plan for Joseph?
7. What did Pharaoh dream about? How successful were his wise men and magicians at explaining his dreams? Why was Joseph sent to Pharaoh?
8. What did Pharaoh's dreams mean? How important were these dreams? Why did God use dreams to speak to Pharaoh?
9. What did Pharaoh decide to do about Joseph? How important was this job? Do you think that this quick decision was a good way to do things? How would this decision affect Egypt?
10. What role does God play in this story? Do you think he does the same for us?

- *Challenging*

1. What caused Joseph's brothers to hate Joseph? How should they have responded to Joseph's dreams? What were the real causes of the rift in this family?

Chapter Three: Carrying on in the Faith

3.3 Joseph in Prison

2. How did Joseph end up in Egypt? Why was Joseph sent to prison? Do you think he still trusted God after these injustices?
3. What were the roles of the two men who were sent to prison? What did they dream about? What did Joseph tell them about God? How did Joseph interpret their dreams?
4. Was Joseph's interpretation of their dreams correct? What happened to the men? Was the wine taster good at keeping promises? How important was this to God's plan for Joseph? Do you think God has this level of planning for each of our lives?
5. What did Pharaoh dream about? How successful were his wise men and magicians at explaining his dreams? Why was Joseph sent to Pharaoh? Who is the true interpreter of dreams? What does this show about Joseph's relationship with God?
6. What did Pharaoh's dreams mean? How important were these dreams? Why didn't God just tell Pharaoh what was about to happen? Why use dreams? How does Joseph fit into this?
7. What did Pharaoh decide to do about Joseph? How important was this job? Why do you think Pharaoh awarded such an important job to Joseph? Does this suggest that Pharaoh might have respected the God of Joseph?
8. What role does God play in this story? Do you think he does the same for us?

Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents Exodus 1: 6 - 2:10

Background: In the last lesson we read of how God caused Joseph to go from being a slave to being the main advisor to Pharaoh, King of Egypt. The famine that Joseph had told Pharaoh about did come to the whole area, just as God had said it would. That famine brought Joseph's 11 brothers with their father Jacob (also called Israel) from Canaan to Egypt so they would have food. At the time, Jacob's sons, their wives, children and grandchildren numbered 70 people. They settled in the region of Goshen.

Before You Read:

What is the biggest risk you have taken? Was the risk worth it?

The Passage

Exodus 1: 6 - 22

⁶ Joseph and all his brothers died. So did all their children. ⁷ The people of Israel had many children. The number of them greatly increased. There were so many of them that they filled the land.

⁸ Then a new king came to power in Egypt. Joseph didn't mean anything to him. ⁹ "Look," he said to his people. "The Israelites are far too many for us. ¹⁰ Come. We must **deal with them** carefully. If we don't, there will be even more of them. Then if war breaks out, they'll join our enemies. They'll fight against us and leave the country."



¹¹ So the Egyptians put **slave drivers** over the people of Israel. The slave drivers treated them badly and made them work hard... ¹² But the worse the slave drivers treated the Israelites, the more Israelites there were. So the Egyptians became afraid of them... ¹³ They didn't show them any **pity**. ¹⁴ The people suffered because of their hard **labour**...

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.1 Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents

¹⁵ There were two Hebrew women named Shiphrah and Puah. They helped other women having babies. The king of Egypt spoke to them. He said, ¹⁶ "You are the ones who help the other Hebrew women. Watch them when they get into a sitting position to have their babies. Kill the boys. Let the girls live." ¹⁷ But Shiphrah and Puah had respect for God. They didn't do what the king of Egypt had told them to do. They let the boys live. ¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt sent for the women. He asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

¹⁹ The women answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like the women of Egypt. They are strong. They have their babies before we get there."

²⁰ So God was kind to Shiphrah and Puah. And the number of Israelites became even greater. ²¹ Shiphrah and Puah had respect for God. So he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave an order to all his people. He said, "You must throw every Hebrew baby boy into the Nile River. But let every Hebrew baby girl live."

Exodus 2: 2 - 10

² A man and a woman from the tribe of Levi got married. ² She became pregnant and had a son by her husband. She saw that her baby was a fine child. And she hid him for three months. ³ After that, she couldn't hide him any longer. So she got a basket made out of the **stems** of tall grass. She coated the basket with **tar**. She placed the child in the basket. Then she put it in the tall grass that grew along the bank of the Nile River. ⁴ The child's sister wasn't very far away. She wanted to see what would happen to him.

⁵ Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile River to take a bath. Her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket in the tall grass. So she sent her female slave to get it. ⁶ When she opened it, Pharaoh's daughter saw the baby. He was crying. She felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

⁷ Then his sister spoke to Pharaoh's daughter. She asked, "Do you want me to go and get one of the Hebrew women? She could **breast-feed** the baby for you."

⁸ "Yes. Go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and feed him for me. I'll pay you." So the woman took the baby and fed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter. And he became her son. She named him Moses...

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.1 Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents

Hebrews 11:23 says of Moses' parents: "Moses' parents had faith. So they hid him for three months after he was born. They saw he was a special child. They were not afraid of the king's command."

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

True or False

1. The number of Israelites greatly increased in Egypt. _____
2. The king of Egypt was afraid the Israelites would join his enemies. _____
3. The Israelites became fewer in number after they were enslaved. _____
4. The king wanted the midwives to kill all the Hebrew babies. _____
5. The midwives obeyed the king. _____
6. Moses' mother placed him in a basket. _____
7. The king found Moses among the tall grass of the river. _____
8. Moses was hidden by his parents for four months. _____

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. _____ risk | a. hard work |
| 2. _____ deal with | b. a supervisor of slaves |
| 3. _____ slave driver | c. feed a baby with milk from a woman's breast |
| 4. _____ pity | d. chance of something going wrong |
| 5. _____ labour | e. thick, black liquid that is waterproof |

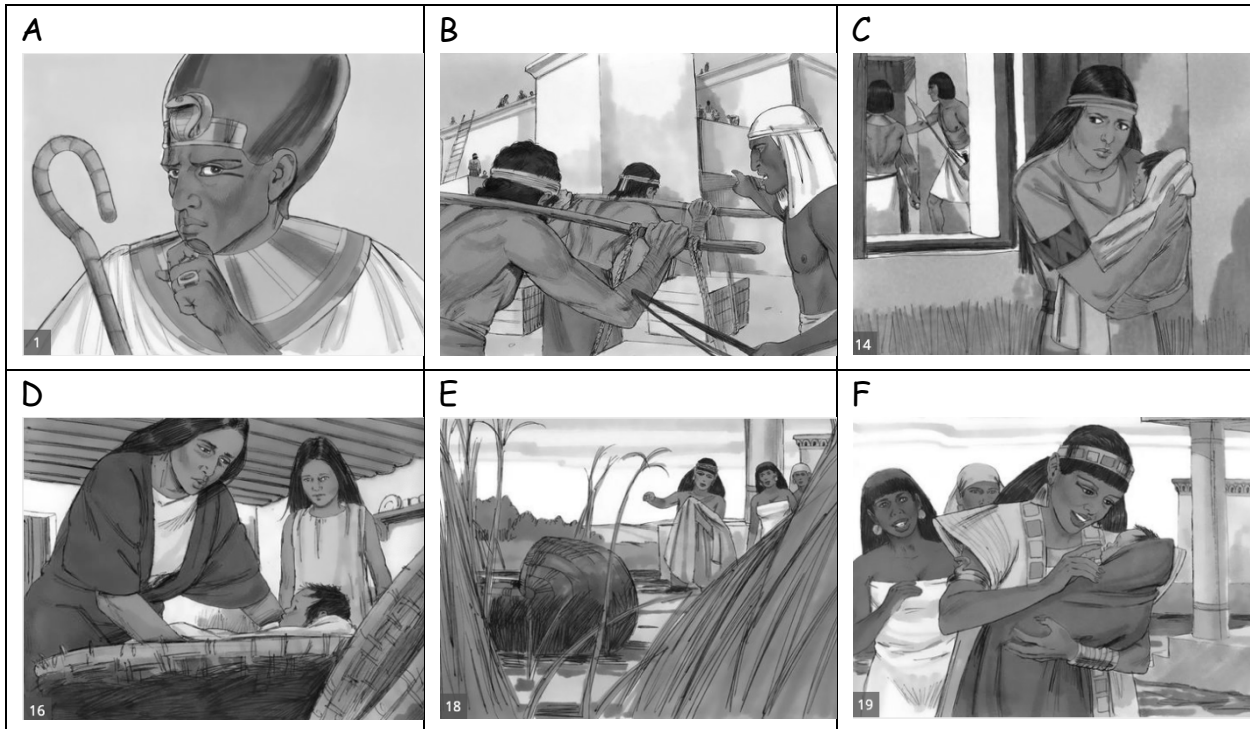
Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.1 Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents

6. _____ stem f. feeling sorry for someone
7. _____ tar g. do something about a difficult situation
8. _____ breast-feed h. main, straight part of a plant

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/baby-moses/>

Discussion

- *Easier*
1. How many of Jacob's children and grandchildren first came to Egypt?
 2. Why was the king worried about the Israelites?
 3. What did the king do to the Israelites?
 4. What did the king ask the midwives to do?

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.1 Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents

5. Did the midwives obey the king? What did they tell the king?
6. How did God bless the midwives?
7. What did Moses' parents do?
8. What happened to Moses after he was put in the basket in the river?
9. Who did Pharaoh's daughter pay to breast-feed baby Moses? How did this happen?
10. Why did Moses' parents hide their baby?
11. What do you think about Pharaoh's command? Would you have dared to disobey?

- *Intermediate*

1. How many children and grandchildren of Jacob first came to Egypt? Why do you think their numbers grew so quickly?
2. What were the worries of the king about this foreign group in Egypt?
3. What was the king's solution?
4. What did the king want the midwives to do? What did he hope to accomplish?
5. How did the midwives defy the king? What kind of risk did they take? How did they excuse themselves?
6. How did God reward the midwives? Do you think this was a good reward?
7. What did Moses' parents do? Why was this risky?
8. Describe what happened to Moses after he was put in the basket in the river. Do you think the family knew who might find the basket?

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.1 Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents

9. Who looked after baby Moses? What happened to his mother? How important to God's plan was it that Moses was raised in the king's household?
10. What were reasons mentioned in Hebrews as to why Moses' parents hid him. Would you do the same for your children?
11. Do you have any further questions or comments about the story?

- *Challenging*

1. How many descendants of Jacob first came to Egypt? What do you think caused their numbers to grow so quickly? What are the usual causes of growing populations?
2. What were the worries of the king about this foreign group in Egypt? Can you see any modern-day parallels?
3. What was the king's solution? Do you think his worries were justified? Was his treatment of the Israelites based on any truth? Was it legal or fair?
4. What did the king want the midwives to do? What did he hope to accomplish? Do you think this was an effective plan?
5. How did the midwives defy the king? What kind of risk did they take? How did they excuse themselves?
6. How did God reward the midwives? Do you think this was a suitable reward? Why or why not?
7. What did Moses' parents do? Why was this risky? Would you have taken this chance?
8. Describe what happened to Moses after he was put in the basket in the river. Do you think the location of the basket was important? Do you think the family knew who might find the basket?

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.1 Midwives of Egypt and Moses' Parents

9. Who looked after baby Moses? What happened to his mother? How important to God's plan was it that Moses was raised in the king's household? Do you think his parents knew what might happen?
10. What were reasons mentioned in Hebrews as to why Moses' parents hid him. Would you do the same for your children?
11. Do you have any further questions or comments about the story?

A Beggar Questions the Pharisees

John 9:1-41

Background: In Jesus' time, the Pharisees were Jewish leaders who honoured Moses and God's Law. However, they added their own rules to the Law, and many of them valued their power more than God's ways. Some of their rules were about the 'Sabbath Day', which God gave as a day of rest. But their many added rules did not make that day restful!

Before You Read: Can you think of a way that people are blind in their thinking?

The Passage

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who was blind. Jesus told his disciples that the man had been born blind, "so that God's power could be shown by what's going to happen." Jesus also said, "I am the light of the world."

⁶ After he said this, he spit on the ground. He made some mud with the spit. Then he put the mud on the man's eyes. ⁷ "Go," he told him. "Wash in the Pool of Siloam." Siloam means Sent. So the man went and washed. And he came home able to see...

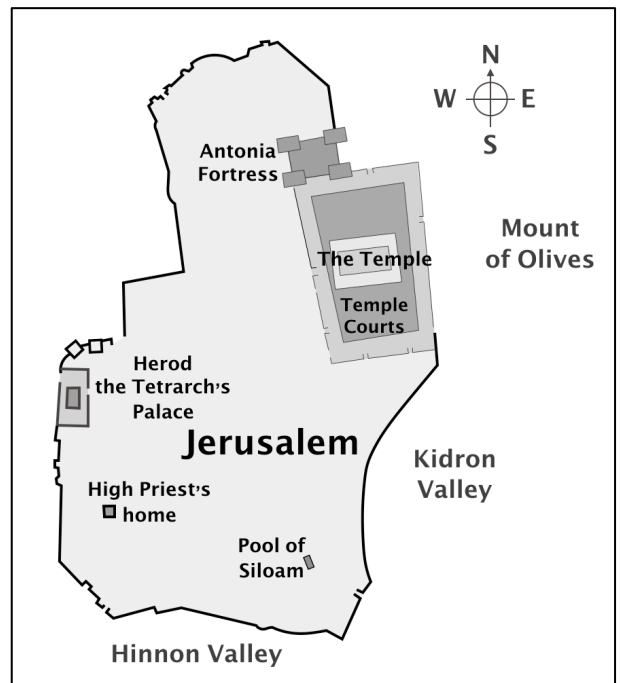
People were amazed that the blind man was now able to see, and they brought him to the Pharisees.

¹⁴ The day Jesus made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath day. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied. "Then I washed. And now I can see."

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, "Jesus has not come from God. He does not keep the Sabbath day."

But others asked, "How can a sinner do such signs?" So the Pharisees did not agree with one another.

¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man. "What do you have to say about him?" they asked. "It was your eyes he opened."



Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.2 A Beggar Questions the Pharisees

The man replied, "He is a **prophet**..."

The Pharisees then called in his parents. His parents would only say their son had been born blind because they were afraid of the Pharisees.

²⁴ Again the Pharisees called the man who had been blind to come to them. "Give glory to God by telling the truth!" they said. "We know that the man who healed you is a sinner."

²⁵ He replied, "I don't know if he is a sinner or not. I do know one thing. I was blind, but now I can see!"

²⁶ Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

²⁷ He answered, "I have already told you. But you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

²⁸ Then they began to attack him with their words. ... ²⁹ "We know that God spoke to Moses. But we don't even know where this fellow comes from."

³⁰ The man answered, "That is really surprising! You don't know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does what he wants them to do. ³² Nobody has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man had not come from God, he could do nothing."

³⁴ Then the Pharisees replied, "When you were born, you were already deep in sin. How **dare** you talk like that to us!" And they threw him out of the **synagogue**.

³⁵ Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out of the synagogue. When Jesus found him, he said, "Do you believe in the **Son of Man**?"

³⁶ "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me, so I can believe in him."

³⁷ Jesus said, "You have now seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you."

³⁸ Then the man said, "Lord, I believe." And he **worshiped** him.

³⁹ Jesus said, "I have come into this world to judge it. I have come so that people who are blind will see. I have come so that people who can see will become blind."

⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this. They asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

⁴¹ Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be **guilty** of sin. But since you **claim** you can see, you remain guilty."

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescritures.com

Passage Questions

Number the story so it is in the right order. The first is done for you.

- a. _____ The Pharisees questioned the man to see if Jesus really healed him.
- b. _____ Jesus put mud on the blind man's eyes.
- c. _____ The Pharisees threw the man out of the synagogue because they were angry with him.
- d. 1 Jesus said he was the light of the world.
- e. _____ Jesus told the man that he was the Son of Man, and the man believed.
- f. _____ The blind man washed in the pool of Siloam, and he was able to see.
- g. _____ Jesus spit on the ground.
- h. _____ The man said he had been born blind, and that Jesus was a prophet.
- i. _____ Jesus declared his purpose of coming into the world was so that the blind would see and those that see would become blind.
- j. _____ The man said that only someone from God could heal a man born blind.

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. _____ honour | a. say something is true |
| 2. _____ spit | b. Jewish place of worship |
| 3. _____ signs | c. to show love for God |
| 4. _____ prophet | d. having done something wrong |
| 5. _____ synagogue | e. greatly respect |
| 6. _____ Son of Man | f. a person who spoke the words of God |

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.2 A Beggar Questions the Pharisees

7. _____ worship g. miracles
8. _____ claim h. to push water or saliva out of your mouth
9. _____ guilty i. Messiah - the one who prophets said God would send

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

1. The blind man called Jesus a _____.
2. Because the Pharisees _____ to see, they were _____.
3. Jesus _____ on the dirt to create mud.
4. When Jesus told the man that he was the _____, the man believed and _____ Jesus.
5. Giving sight to a man who was born blind is a _____ from God.
6. The Pharisees _____ Moses and God's Law, but they did not understand God.
7. The Pharisees threw the man out of the _____, because they didn't like what he said.

Re-tell the story using the pictures below.



Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.2 A Beggar Questions the Pharisees



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-061-jesus-blind-man/>

<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/blind-man/>

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Why did Jesus say the man had been born blind?
2. What did Jesus say about himself?
3. What happened after Jesus put mud on the blind man's eyes?
4. Why did the Pharisees think the person who healed the blind man was not from God?
5. Did the Pharisees think the blind man's sin caused his blindness?
6. Why did the blind man become annoyed with the Pharisees when they questioned him again?
7. What did the Pharisees do when the blind man told them Jesus must be from God?
8. Why did Jesus look for and find the blind man?
9. What did Jesus say about his purpose for coming into the world?

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.2 A Beggar Questions the Pharisees

- *Intermediate*

1. In John 9:2, the disciples ask Jesus about the blind man, "Rabbi, who sinned? Was this man born blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?" What did Jesus answer? How did what Jesus say differ from the common beliefs?
2. What did Jesus mean when he said, "I am the light of the world."?
3. What happened after Jesus put mud on the blind man's eyes? Why were the people so amazed by this healing?
4. Why did the Pharisees think the man who healed the blind man was not from God? How important was keeping the Sabbath to the Pharisees?
5. What did the Pharisees mean when they said the blind man was already deep in sin at his birth?
6. Why did the blind man become annoyed with the Pharisees when they questioned him again? What should they have understood?
7. What did the Pharisees do when the blind man told them Jesus must be from God? Were they right to do so?
8. What was Jesus' purpose in looking for and finding the blind man?
9. Jesus declared his purpose of coming into the world was so that the blind would see and those that see would become blind. What does this mean?

- *Challenging*

1. What did Jesus mean when he said, "I am the light of the world."? How profound a statement is that?
2. What happened after Jesus covered the blind man's eyes with mud? Why were the people so amazed by this healing?

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.2 A Beggar Questions the Pharisees

3. In Isaiah 61:1 we read about the Messiah / Son of Man:

*"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners.*

What does that imply about Jesus?

4. How important was keeping the Sabbath to the Pharisees? How could this commandment given by God lead them to think Jesus was not doing God's work?
5. *In John 9:2, the disciples ask Jesus about the blind man, "Rabbi, who sinned? Was this man born blind because he sinned? Or did his parents sin?"* What did the Pharisees mean when they said the blind man was already deep in sin at his birth? How does that relate to what the disciples believed at the beginning of this passage? What did Jesus reveal about this kind of belief?
6. Why did the blind man become annoyed with the Pharisees when they questioned him again? What should they have understood? What does that reveal about the Pharisees?
7. What did the Pharisees do when the blind man disagreed with them about Jesus? Were they right to do so? Do you think they did the right thing for the situation at the time?
8. What was Jesus' purpose in looking for and finding the blind man? Why was this action important for the blind man's understanding of what had happened?
9. Jesus declared his purpose of coming into the world was so that the blind would see and those that see would become blind. What does this mean? Do you think the Pharisees understood him? Why or why not?

Stephen Schools the Sanhedrin Acts 6:1-15; 7:1-60; 8:1-3

Background: Following the resurrection of Jesus, and Pentecost, the 12 apostles formed the first church in Jerusalem, meeting in the Temple courts. The church was increasing daily and had grown to thousands. Every day the church distributed food to **widows**. To take care of this the apostles told the church, "Brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men. They must be known as men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them" (Acts 6:3). Stephen was one of the seven men they chose. Acts 6:8 says, "Stephen was full of God's grace and power. He did great wonders and signs among the people."

Before You Read: Can you think of any example when someone suffered because of doing the right thing?

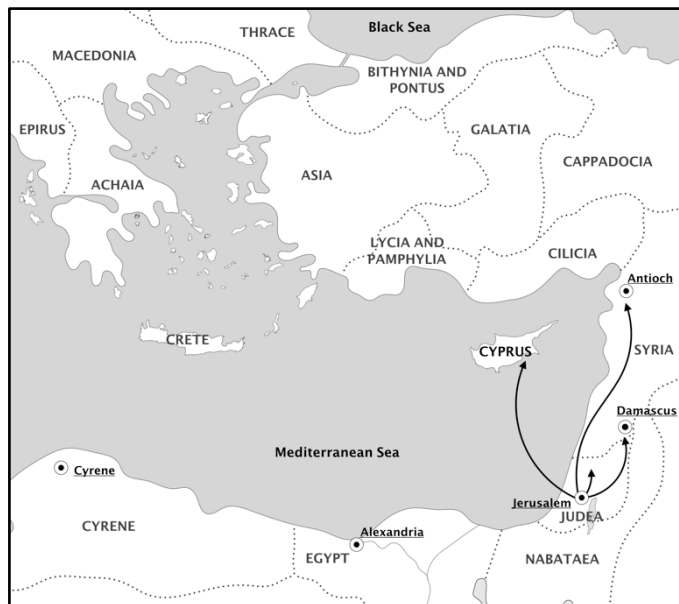
The Passage

*One day, when Stephen was speaking, he was **publicly** opposed by some of the non-believing Jews. Stephen answered them with the Holy Spirit's wisdom. And when these opponents realized they weren't winning against him, they became very angry.*

Acts 6:11-7:1

¹¹ Then in secret they talked some men into lying about Stephen. They said, "We heard Stephen speak evil things against Moses and against God."

¹² So the people were **stirred up**. The elders and the teachers of the law were stirred up too. They arrested Stephen and brought him to the Sanhedrin. ¹³ They found witnesses who were willing to tell lies. These liars said, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place. He also speaks against the law. ¹⁴ We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place. He says Jesus will change the practices that Moses handed down to us."



Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.3 Stephen Schools the Sanhedrin

¹⁵ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked right at Stephen. They saw that his face was like the face of an angel. ¹“Then the high priest questioned Stephen. “Is what these people are saying true?” he asked.

*Stephen's answer was to give them a history of the Jewish people. He told of God's faithfulness to Israel throughout all this history, and of Israel's frequent failure to be faithful to God. Stephen finished his speech with this **accusation**:*

Acts 7 ⁵¹“You **stubborn** people! You won't obey! You won't listen! You are just like your people of long ago! You always oppose the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your people didn't try to hurt? They even killed those who told about the coming of the **Blameless One**. And now you have handed him over to his enemies. You have murdered him.”...

⁵⁴ When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they became very angry. They were so angry they ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ But he was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up to heaven and saw God's glory. He saw Jesus standing at God's right hand. ⁵⁶ “Look!” he said. “I see heaven open. The Son of Man is standing at God's right hand.”

⁵⁷ When the Sanhedrin heard this, they covered their ears. They yelled at the top of their voices. They all rushed at him. ⁵⁸ They dragged him out of the city. They began to throw stones at him to kill him. The people who had brought false charges against Stephen took off their coats. They placed them at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ While the members of the Sanhedrin were throwing stones at Stephen, he prayed. “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” he said. ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees. He cried out, “Lord! Don't hold this sin against them!” When he had said this, he died.”

8: ¹ ...On that day the church in Jerusalem began to be attacked and treated badly. All except the apostles were **scattered** throughout Judea and Samaria. ² Godly Jews buried Stephen. They **mourned** deeply for him. ³ But Saul began to destroy the church. He went from house to house. He dragged away men and women and put them in prison. ⁴ The believers who had been scattered preached the word everywhere they went.

Saul continued to arrest Christians until Jesus appeared to him. Then Saul changed completely and became an apostle of Christ. We know him by his Roman name of Paul.

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Match the sentence beginning with the right ending.

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ 1. The first church met | a. ...because he was full of the Holy Spirit. |
| _____ 2. The Jerusalem church | b. ...gave food to its poor widows. |
| _____ 3. The unbelieving Jews hated Stephen | c. ...of murdering Jesus |
| _____ 4. Stephen was wise, and he did signs and wonders | d. ...in the Temple courts |
| _____ 5. People told lies about Stephen | e. ...because he argued wisely against them in public. |
| _____ 6. Stephen accused the Sanhedrin | f. ...so they scattered to other places. |
| _____ 7. Christians in Jerusalem were afraid of arrest | g. ...so the people were stirred up and he was arrested. |

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| _____ 1. widows | a. not willing to listen or change |
| _____ 2. publicly | b. openly, in front of a lot of people |
| _____ 3. stir up | c. spread out |

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.3 Stephen Schools the Sanhedrin

_____4. accusation	d. usually poor women whose husbands have died,
_____5. stubborn	e. make somebody emotional
_____6. Blameless One	f. to be very sad about someone or something
_____7. scattered	g. the one without sin that the prophets said would die for others' sins (Messiah)
_____8. mourned	h. saying someone has done something wrong

Fill in the Blanks with the vocabulary words above.

1. Another name for the Son of Man is _____.
2. Two-year-old children can be very _____.
3. The church of Jerusalem helped poor _____ by giving them food.
4. When Stephen _____ shamed non-believing Jews, they made _____ against him and _____ the people.
5. After Stephen was killed, the church _____ for him.
6. Saul began to destroy the church, and many Christians _____ outside Jerusalem.

Discussion

- *Easier*
1. Who formed the first church? Where was it located?
 2. How did the church take care of its widows?
 3. Did Stephen's opponents question him alone, or in public? Why do you think they wanted to do that?
 4. Why did Stephen's opponents become angry?
 5. What did Stephen's opponents do?
 6. What did Stephen say about God in Israel's history?
 7. What did Stephen say about his people, the people of Israel?

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.3 Stephen Schools the Sanhedrin

8. What did Stephen see when he finished his speech?
9. What happened to the church after Stephen's death? What good came from that?
10. What happened to Saul?

- *Intermediate*

1. When did the first church form? Where did they meet?
2. What does the early church's care of its widows show?
3. What was Stephen like?
4. Why do you think his opponents opposed him publicly? How did that hurt their cause?
5. What did his opponents tell the false witnesses to say? Why did they want them to say that?
6. Why do you think Stephen gave a speech on Israel's history? Why did this upset his opponents?
7. What happened when Stephen finished his speech?
8. Why would Stephen ask God not to "hold this sin against" his murderers?
9. What happened to the church? Where did they go? (see map)
10. Stephen's life was cut short. But what did he accomplish?

- *Challenging*

1. Describe how the early church formed and what it was like.

Chapter Four: Standing up to Authorities

4.3 Stephen Schools the Sanhedrin

2. How large was the early church becoming? Why do you think it grew so quickly?
3. Describe Stephen's character.
4. Why did Stephen's opponents want to question him publicly? What were they wanting the people to believe?
5. Why was Stephen able to argue well against them? Does God give everyone wisdom? Why is God's wisdom important to have?
6. What did the false witnesses accuse Stephen of? Why did they choose this to accuse him of?
7. How did Stephen defend himself to the Sanhedrin? Why do you think he chose this to give a speech on? What did Stephen accuse his opponents of?
8. Why would Stephen ask God not to "hold this sin against" his murderers?
9. What did Stephen's life accomplish for God's purposes?

Elijah and the Contest 1 Kings 18:17-29, 36-39, 44-45

Background: This story happens when the 12 tribes of Israel are divided into two kingdoms, and the people are not obeying God's most important commandment: "Do not put any other gods in place of me". Ahab was the northern king of Israel. He and his wife, Jezebel, did evil things to worship the goddess Asherah and Baal, the god of dew and rain. They **influenced** many people to turn against God. God sent the prophet Elijah to Ahab with a message: There would be no dew or rain until Elijah said so. Israel suffered terribly in the **drought** for three years. Ahab and Jezebel wanted to kill Elijah, but no one could find him because God hid him.

Before You Read: Tell about the most exciting contest you have seen, either in sports, school or the workplace. What did the contest prove?

The Passage

After three years God told Elijah to return to Ahab. 1 Kings 18: "17 When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you? You are always stirring up trouble in Israel."

18 "I haven't made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have turned away from the LORD's commands. You have followed ... Baal. 19 Now send for people from all over Israel. Tell them to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the 450 prophets of the god named Baal. Also bring the 400 prophets of the female god named Asherah. All of them eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab sent that message all through Israel. He gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 Elijah went there and stood in front of the people. He said, "How long will it take you to make up your minds? If the LORD is the one and only God, worship him. But if Baal is the one and only God, worship him."

The people didn't say anything".



Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

Elijah told the people to get two bulls. He told the prophets of Baal to choose one bull, cut it into pieces, and lay it on wood on their altar to Baal. Elijah would do the same with the other bull. Elijah said, ²⁴"Then you pray to your god. And I'll pray to the LORD. The god who answers by sending down fire is the one and only God!"... All the people agreed.

Elijah told the prophets of Baal to go first.

...²⁶ So they prepared the bull they had been given. They prayed to Baal from morning until noon. "Baal! Answer us!" they shouted. But there wasn't any reply. No one answered. Then they danced around the altar they had made.

²⁷ At noon Elijah began to **tease** them. "Shout louder!" he said. "I'm sure Baal is a god! Perhaps he has too much to think about. Or maybe he has gone to the toilet. Or perhaps he's away on a trip. Maybe he's sleeping. You might have to wake him up." ²⁸ So they shouted louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears until their blood flowed. That's what they usually did when things really looked hopeless. ²⁹ It was now past noon. The prophets of Baal continued to prophesy with all their might. They did it until the time came to offer the evening **sacrifice**. But there wasn't any reply. No one answered. No one paid any attention" ...

Then Elijah called the people to come to him, and he prepared his bull on an old altar to God that he had repaired. The altar had twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes of Israel. Then he dug a trench around the altar, put a pile of wood on it, and had people pour four large jars of water over the offering and the wood. He asked them to do that three times, until the water filled the trench.

...³⁶ When it was time to offer the evening sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward. He prayed, "LORD, you are the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Today let everyone know that you are God in Israel. Let them know I'm your servant. Let them know I've done all these things because you commanded me to. ³⁷ Answer me. LORD, answer me. Then these people will know that you are the one and only God. They'll know that you are turning their hearts back to you again."

³⁸ The fire of the LORD came down. It burned up the sacrifice. It burned up the wood and the stones and the soil. It even dried up the water in the ditch.

³⁹ All the people saw it. Then they fell down flat with their faces toward the ground. They cried out, "The LORD is the one and only God! The LORD is the one and only God!"

Elijah told the people to seize all the prophets of Baal and had them all killed.

Elijah stayed on the mountain and prayed for rain. Then he told his servant, ⁴⁴...

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

"Go to Ahab. Tell him, 'Tie your **chariot** to your horse. Go down to Jezreel before the rain stops you.'"

⁴⁵ Black clouds filled the sky. The wind came up, and a heavy rain began to fall....

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Change these False sentences to be True:

1. Ahab was the king of the southern kingdom of Judah.

2. Jezebel worshipped the God of Israel.

3. Baal stopped the dew and rain for three years.

4. Ahab asked Elijah to hold a sacrifice to Baal on Mount Carmel.

5. Ahab respected Elijah because he was God's prophet.

6. Baal answered his prophets by lighting the fire.

7. The prophets of Baal thought that offering gold would please him.

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

8. It rained because the people believed that God was most powerful.
-

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| _____ 1. dew | a. affect in a certain direction |
| _____ 2. trouble | b. a ditch; a long narrow channel dug in the ground |
| _____ 3. tease | c. gift of something valuable to God |
| _____ 4. influence | d. table for worship |
| _____ 5. drought | e. vehicle with 2 wheels |
| _____ 6. trench | f. problems or difficulties |
| _____ 7. altar | g. no rain to grow things |
| _____ 8. sacrifice | h. small drops of water that form on grass and leaves in the morning |
| _____ 9. chariot | i. make fun of someone |

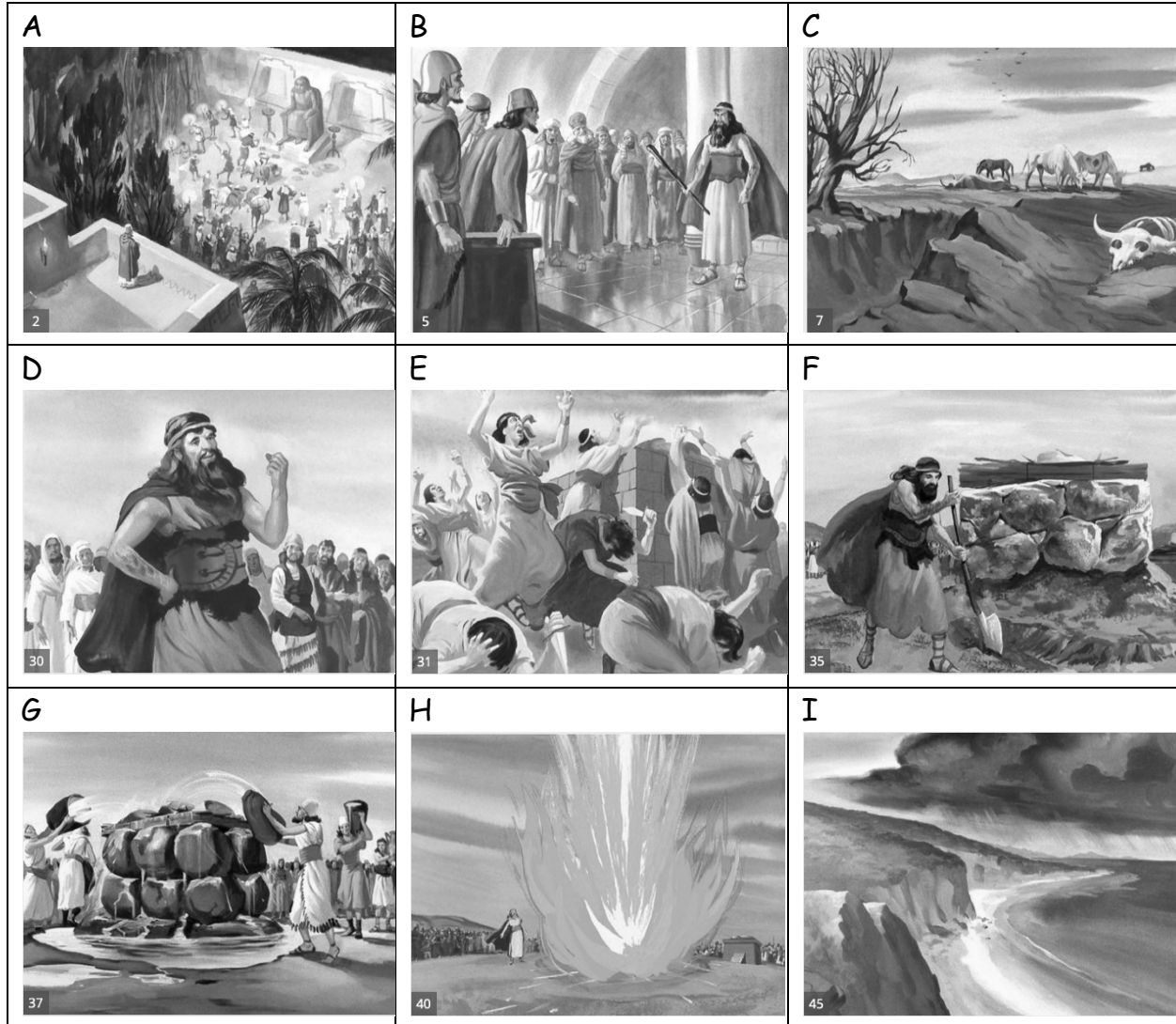
Fill in the Blanks with the vocabulary words above.

1. It was Ahab who caused _____ in Israel because he was worshipping Baal.
2. Ahab and Jezebel _____ many people to worship Baal.
3. Elijah dug a _____ around his altar.
4. There was a _____ for three years because God stopped the _____ and the rain.
5. Elijah offered a bull as a _____ on the _____.
6. When Baal did not answer the people's cries, Elijah _____ them.
7. King Ahab rode in a _____ pulled by horses.

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below.



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/elijah-prophets-baal/>

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Who was Ahab? Who was Jezebel?
2. What was Baal? What did the people think Baal could do?
3. Why do you think Elijah told Ahab that God would stop the rain and dew?

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

4. Why did Ahab and Jezebel want to kill Elijah?
5. How many prophets of Baal and Asherah (the goddess who was Baal's mother) came to Mount Carmel and called on Baal?
6. How many prophets of God were on Mount Carmel to call on God?
7. What did Elijah tell the prophets of Baal to do?
8. How did Elijah tease the prophets of Baal?
9. How did Elijah prepare the altar of God?
10. Why did the people now say that the Lord is God?
11. Why would Elijah order the prophets of Baal and Asherah to be killed?

- *Intermediate*

1. Who were Ahab and Jezebel? Were they well suited for each other?
2. What was Baal? What did the people think Baal could do? Why did they leave serving God for serving Baal?
3. Why did Elijah tell Ahab that God would specifically stop the rain and dew?
4. 1 Kings 18:4 says, "Ahab's wife Jezebel had been killing off the LORD's prophets. So Obadiah (a servant of Ahab, but a worshipper of God) had hidden 100 prophets in two caves. He had put 50 in each cave. He had supplied them with food and water." Why do you think Jezebel wanted to kill Elijah and the other prophets?
5. How many prophets of Baal and Asherah (the goddess who was Baal's mother) came to Mount Carmel and called on Baal? How had the worship of Baal spread so quickly?

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

6. How many prophets of God were on Mount Carmel to call on God? Why weren't there more prophets of God there?
7. What did Elijah tell the prophets of Baal to do? How did these prophets call on their god?
8. Why did Elijah tease the prophets of Baal? Do you think it's okay to mock a false god in front of those who worship that god?
9. How did Elijah prepare the altar of God? Why did he prepare it this way?
10. Why did the people now say that the Lord is God?
11. Why would Elijah order the prophets of Baal and Asherah to be killed?

- *Challenging*

1. Who were Ahab and Jezebel? How were they alike?
2. What was Baal and what was he supposedly able to control? Why were the people of the northern kingdom enamored with Baal?
3. Why did Elijah tell Ahab that God would specifically stop the rain and dew?
4. 1 Kings 18:4 says, "Ahab's wife Jezebel had been killing off the LORD's prophets. So Obadiah (a servant of Ahab, but a worshipper of God) had hidden 100 prophets in two caves. He had put 50 in each cave. He had supplied them with food and water." Why do you think Jezebel wanted to kill Elijah and the other prophets?
5. How many prophets of Baal and Asherah came to Mount Carmel and called on Baal? How many prophets of God were on Mount Carmel to call on God? Why weren't there more prophets of God there?
6. How did the prophets of Baal call on their god? How did Elijah call on his God?

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.1 Elijah and the Contest

7. Why did Elijah tease Baal in front of the prophets of Baal? Do you think it's okay to mock a false god in front of those who worship that god?
8. How did Elijah prepare the altar of God? Why did he prepare it this way?
9. Do you think that the people were convinced that the Lord is God?
10. Why would Elijah order the prophets of Baal and Asherah to be killed?

Daniel in the Lions' Den

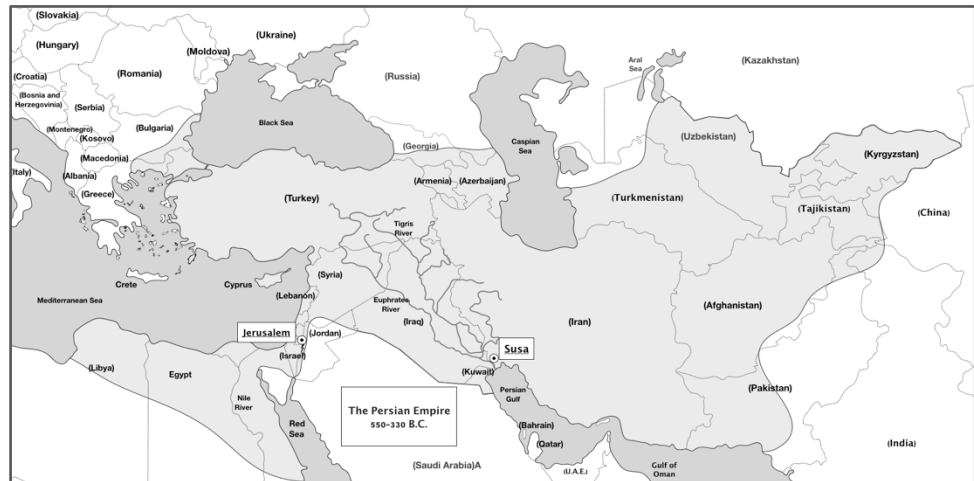
Daniel 6:1-28

Background: In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonian Empire, conquered Jerusalem and took many royal male youths back to Babylon to serve in his court. One of the youths was named Daniel. He became a wise and faithful government advisor until Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. Then Daniel served in that empire as King Darius' governor.

Before You Read: What is the greatest rescue you have ever heard about or have ever experienced yourself?

The Passage: Daniel 6:1-27

"¹ It pleased Darius to appoint 120 royal rulers over his entire kingdom. ² He placed three leaders over them. One of the leaders was Daniel. The royal rulers were made accountable to



the three leaders... ³ Daniel did a better job than the other two leaders or any of the royal rulers. He was an unusually good and able man. So the king planned to put him in charge of the whole kingdom".

⁴ But the other two leaders and the royal rulers heard about it. So they looked for a reason to bring charges against Daniel... ⁵ Finally these men said, "We want to bring charges against this man Daniel. But it's almost impossible for us to come up with a reason to do it. If we find a reason, it will have to be in connection with the law of his God."

⁶ So the two leaders and the royal rulers went as a group to the king. They said, "King Darius, may you live forever! ⁷ ... We've agreed that you should give an order. And you should make sure it's obeyed. ...Don't let any of your people pray to any god or human being except to you. If they do, throw them into the lions' den..."

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.2 Daniel in the Lions' Den

¹⁰ Daniel found out that the king had signed the order. **In spite of** that, he did just as he had always done before. He went home to his upstairs room. Its windows opened toward Jerusalem. He went to his room three times a day to pray...

¹¹ Some of the other royal officials went to where Daniel was staying. They saw him praying and asking God for help. ¹² So they went to the king. They spoke to him about his royal order... The king answered, "The order must still be obeyed. It's what the law of the Medes and Persians requires. So it can't be changed."

¹³ Then they spoke to the king again. They said, "Daniel ... doesn't obey the order you put in writing. He still prays to his God three times a day"...¹⁴ When the king heard this, he was very upset. He didn't want Daniel to be **harmed** in any way. Until sunset, he did everything he could to save him... *But, the law could not be changed.*

"¹⁶ So... Daniel was brought out and thrown into the lions' den. The king said to him, "You always serve your God faithfully. So may he save you!"...

¹⁸ The king returned to his palace. He didn't eat anything that night. He didn't ask for anything to be brought to him for his enjoyment. And he couldn't sleep.

¹⁹ As soon as the sun began to rise, the king got up. He hurried to the lions' den. ²⁰ When he got near it, he called out to Daniel... with great concern. He said, "Daniel! You serve the living God. You always serve him faithfully. So has he been able to save you from the lions?"

²¹ Daniel answered, "**Your Majesty**, may you live forever! ²² My God sent his angel. And his angel shut the mouths of the lions. They haven't hurt me at all. That's because I haven't done anything wrong in God's sight. I've never done anything wrong to you either, Your Majesty."

²³ The king was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. So they did. They didn't see any **wounds** on him. That's because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴ Then the king gave another order. The men who had said bad things about Daniel were brought in. They were thrown into the lions' den...

Then King Darius gave another order.

²⁶ "I order people in every part of my kingdom to respect and honor Daniel's God.

"He is the living God.

He will live forever.

His kingdom will not be destroyed.

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances
5.2 Daniel in the Lions' Den

His rule will never end.

²⁷ He sets people free and saves them.

He does miraculous signs and wonders.

He does them in the heavens and on the earth.

He has saved Daniel

from the power of the lions".

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

True or False

1. Daniel was from Jerusalem. _____
2. Darius was king of Babylon. _____
3. Daniel was wise and had good judgment. _____
4. Darius made Daniel a governor. _____
5. The administrators and high officers were happy for Daniel's success. _____
6. Darius was angry with Daniel and wanted him killed. _____
7. Darius hoped that Daniel's God would save him. _____
8. The lions did not touch Daniel. _____
9. Darius did not believe in Daniel's God. _____

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. _____ youths | a. accuse of breaking a law |
| 2. _____ accountable to | b. even though |

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances
5.2 Daniel in the Lions' Den

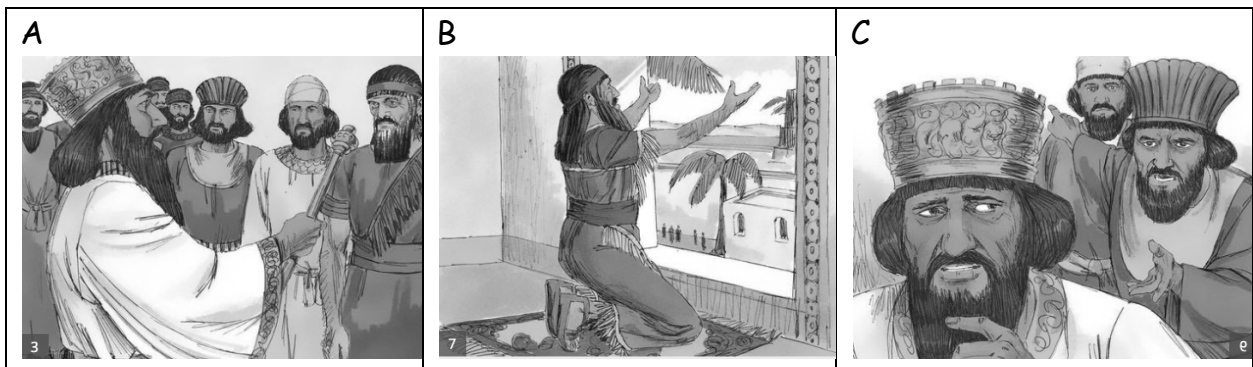
(someone)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 3. _____ bring charges against | c. place where wild animals live |
| 4. _____ den | d. a name of respect for a king or queen |
| 5. _____ wound | e. to hurt |
| 6. _____ in spite of | f. young people |
| 7. _____ harm | g. an injury caused by a cut or blow |
| 8. _____ Your Majesty | h. under (someone's) authority |

Fill in the Blanks with the vocabulary words above

1. There are many _____ on the high school soccer team.
2. Daniel could not be taken out of the lions' _____ until morning, but he had no _____, because he was not _____ by them.
3. Daniel continued to pray to God, _____ knowing he could be killed.
4. The royal rulers _____ Daniel because they did not want to be _____ him.
5. If Queen Elizabeth II came to visit our class, we would call her "_____".

Re-tell the Story using the pictures below:



Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances
5.2 Daniel in the Lions' Den



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/daniel-lions/>

<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/moody-daniel-lions/>

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Look at the map. How big was the Persian Empire?
2. How did Darius organize the government of his kingdom?
3. Why did Darius want to place Daniel over the other royal rulers?
4. How did Daniel pray? How often did Daniel pray?
5. What new law did the leaders and rulers want Darius to make?
6. Why do you think Darius signed this new law?
7. Why was Daniel thrown in the lions' den?
8. Did Darius want to rescue Daniel? How do you know this?
9. Who did the lions eat?
10. What did Darius learn about Daniel's God?

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.2 Daniel in the Lions' Den

- *Intermediate*

1. How far did the Persian Empire extend?
2. Describe how Darius organized the government.
3. Why did Darius choose Daniel to oversee the other royal rulers?
4. Describe how Daniel said prayers.
5. Why did the other administrators resent Daniel?
6. What did the people of Babylon have to do to show honour to Darius?
7. Why do people 'fast', or go without food? Why do you think Darius went without food, enjoyment or sleep?
8. What did Darius say to Daniel when he put him in the lion's den? What does this show about Darius?
9. What did Darius do first thing in the morning? What was he hoping for?
10. What happened to those who had plotted against Daniel? Do you think this was a just punishment?
11. What did Darius say about Daniel's God?

- *Challenging*

1. How far did the Persian Empire extend? Do you think an army of that time would be able to control such a large area?
2. Describe the government that Darius set over his kingdom.
3. Why do you think Darius promoted Daniel to such a high position?
4. Describe how Daniel said prayers. Why do you think he prayed this way?

Chapter Five: Trusting God in Difficult Circumstances

5.2 Daniel in the Lions' Den

5. Why did the other administrators resent Daniel? How did they try to remove him from office?
6. What did the people of Babylon have to do to show honour to Darius? Do you think the people would have agreed to do this?
7. How hard did Darius try to keep Daniel from being thrown to the lions? Why was he unsuccessful?
8. What did Darius say to Daniel when the men were about to throw Daniel to the lions? Why would Darius say this?
9. How was Darius affected by what was done to Daniel? What did he do first thing in the morning? Do you think it was reasonable for Darius to hope that Daniel survived?
10. What happened to those who had plotted against Daniel? Do you think this was a just punishment?
11. How did Darius honour Daniel's God? Do you think Darius had faith in God? What do you think Daniel may have thought of the experience?

Peter and John in Prison

Acts 4:13-21; 5:12-42

Background: After the death of Jesus, the apostles went about Jerusalem proclaiming that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. In addition they were doing miracles just like Jesus had done. Many people began to believe as the apostles met together to tell about Jesus in the temple at Solomon's Colonnade.

Before You Read:

Was there a time in your life when you had some wonderful news? Who did you tell about it first?

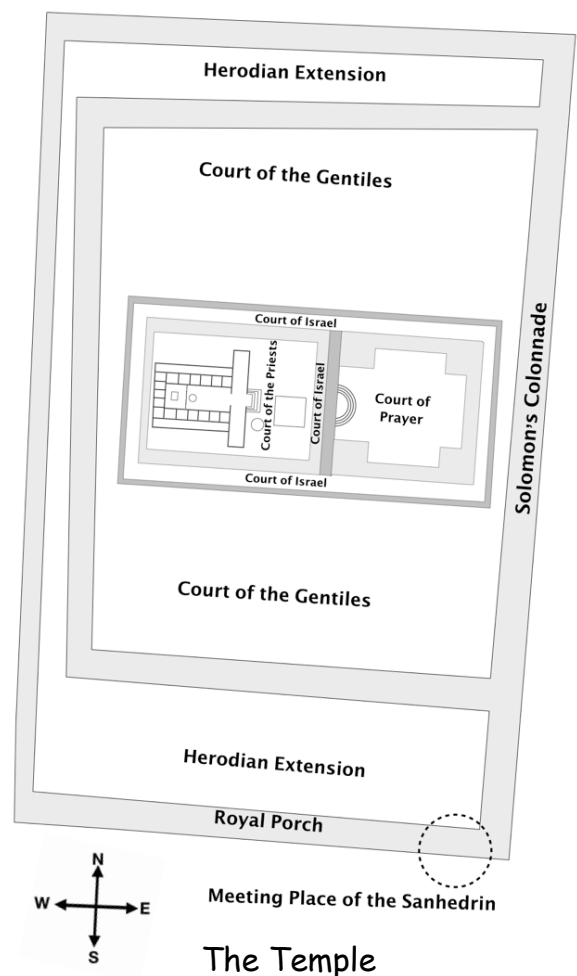
The Passage

First Interaction with the Jewish leadership. Acts 4: 13-21

Peter and John had healed a man born lame, in Jesus' name. The religious leaders brought them in for questioning.

¹³ The leaders saw how bold Peter and John were. They also realized that Peter and John were ordinary men with no training. This surprised the leaders. They realized that these men had been with Jesus... ¹⁶ "What can we do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed an unusual miracle... ¹⁷ We have to stop this thing. It must not spread any further among the people..." ¹⁸ ...They commanded them not to speak or teach at all in Jesus' name. ¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Which is right from God's point of view? Should we listen to you? Or should we listen to God? You be the judges!" ²⁰ ...We have to speak about the things we've seen and heard."

²¹ The leaders warned them again. Then they let them go... They knew that all the people were praising God for what had happened.

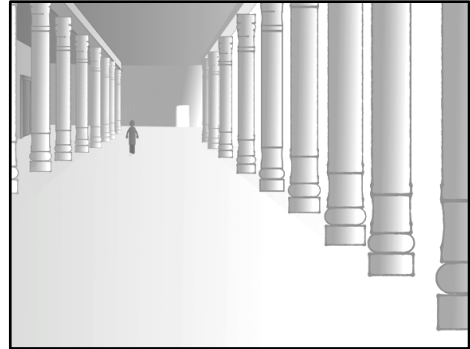


Second Interaction with the Jewish leadership, Acts 5:16-41

The news spread that Jesus' followers could heal in his name.

¹⁶ Crowds even gathered from the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick people. They also brought those who were suffering because of evil spirits. All of them were healed.

¹⁷ The high priest and all his companions...were very **jealous** of the apostles. ¹⁸ So they **arrested** them and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord came. He opened the doors of the jail and brought the apostles out. ²⁰ "Go! Stand in the temple courtyard," the angel said. "Tell the people all about this new life."...



²¹...The Sanhedrin was a gathering of all the elders of Israel*. They sent for the apostles who were in jail. ²² The officers arrived at the jail. But they didn't find the apostles there. So they went back and reported it. ²³ "We found the jail locked up tight," they said. "The guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, we didn't find anyone inside."

...²⁵ Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courtyard. They are teaching the people." ²⁶ So the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles back... ²⁷ The high priest questioned them. ²⁸ "We gave you clear orders not to teach in Jesus' name," he said. "But you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You want to make us **guilty** of this man's death."

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied, "We must obey God instead of people! ³⁰ You had Jesus killed by nailing him to a cross. But the God of our people raised Jesus from the dead. ³¹ Now Jesus is Prince and Savior. God has proved this by giving Jesus a place of honor with him. He did it to turn Israel away from their sins and forgive them. ³² We are telling people about these things. And so is the Holy Spirit. God has given the Spirit to those who obey him."

³³ When the leaders heard this, they... wanted to put the apostles to death. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel stood up in the Sanhedrin. He was a teacher of the law. He was honored by all the people... ³⁵ "Men of Israel," he said, "think carefully about what you plan to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared. He claimed he was really somebody...But he was killed. All his followers were **scattered**. So they accomplished nothing...³⁸ So let me give you some advice. Leave these men alone! Let them go! If their plans and actions only come from people, they will fail. ³⁹ But if

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their plans come from God, you won't be able to stop these men. You will only find yourselves fighting against God."

⁴⁰ His speech **won** the leaders **over**. They called the apostles in and had them **whipped**. The leaders ordered them not to speak in Jesus' name. Then they let the apostles go...⁴¹ The apostles were full of joy as they left the Sanhedrin. They considered it an honor to suffer **shame** for the name of Jesus.

*The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was a Jewish council of seventy-one elders (rabbis) that acted as a Supreme Court. They met every day (except on festivals and the sabbath) in the Temple in Jerusalem. The first such council began in the time of the Exodus, when God told Moses to gather together seventy men from the elders of Israel to help him govern the Israelites (Numbers 11:16).

What Do You Think?¹

1. What do you like about this story? Why?
2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What do you learn about people from this story?
4. What do you learn about God from this story?

¹ Questions taken from www.storyingthescriptures.com

Passage Questions

Choose the best answer:

1. The religious leaders warned the apostles not to:
 - a. speak about Jesus
 - b. disobey God
 - c. teach in Jesus' name
 - d. both a and c
2. Peter and John refused to be quiet because:
 - a. they did not like the religious leaders
 - b. God wanted them to proclaim Jesus was Messiah
 - c. they wanted to share good news about God
 - d. both b and c
3. The religious leaders were jealous of the apostles because:
 - a. the apostles were very popular with the people

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- b. the apostles were bold
 - c. the apostles were ordinary men
 - d. the apostles had a lot of money
4. The religious leaders were surprised because Peter and John:
- a. were not from Jerusalem
 - b. had been with Jesus
 - c. were ordinary men with no training
 - d. did not listen to them
5. The apostles were not in the prison because:
- a. their friends paid the jail keeper
 - b. an angel opened the doors and brought them out
 - c. the guards let them go
 - d. the leaders had killed them
6. Gamaliel warned the Sanhedrin about:
- a. killing the apostles
 - b. fighting against God
 - c. not thinking carefully
 - d. all of the above
7. The apostles did not stop teaching about Jesus because:
- a. an angel told them to tell people about this new life
 - b. they had to obey God, not people
 - c. a & b
 - d. they liked being in jail

Match the following words with their meanings. Write the correct letter on the line.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. ____ proclaiming | a. feeling or knowing you have done something wrong |
| 2. ____ point of view | b. other people's bad opinion of you |
| 3. ____ judges | c. way of thinking |
| 4. ____ arrested | d. authorities who decide if you are guilty |
| 5. ____ jealous | e. speaking publicly about someone or something |
| 6. ____ scatter | f. unhappy feeling when someone has what should belong to you |

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- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 7. ____ guilty | g. get people to agree with you |
| 8. ____ win over | h. to be caught by the police |
| 9. ____ whip | i. hit with a thin object, cutting the skin |
| 10. ____ shame | j. spread over an area |

Use the words above to complete the following sentences.

1. The apostles were _____ that Jesus was the Messiah.
2. The Jewish leadership _____ the apostles because they were very _____ of how crowds followed them.
3. The high priests thought the apostles were making them _____ of shedding Jesus' blood.
4. Peter and John challenged the Sanhedrin to be the _____ of what was right from God's _____.
5. Gamaliel _____ the religious leaders, when he said that if the apostles were not from God, they would _____ and accomplish nothing.
6. After the Sanhedrin had _____ them, the apostles were full of joy, because they considered it an honor to suffer _____ for Jesus name.

Discussion

- *Easier*

1. Why did the Jewish leadership notice Peter and John?
2. Why were they confused about what to do with the apostles?
3. What did the Jewish leadership order them to do?
4. How did Peter and John answer them?
5. Why were crowds bringing sick people to the apostles?

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6. Why did the Sanhedrin arrest the apostles?
 7. What happened when the Sanhedrin sent for the apostles to be taken out of jail?
 8. What did Peter say when he was accused of disobeying the Sanhedrin?
 9. What was Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin?
 10. How did the Sanhedrin treat the apostles?
 11. What was the apostles' reaction to this treatment?
- *Intermediate*
 1. What caused the Jewish leadership to notice Peter and John? What did they realize about the apostles? Why was this unusual?
 2. What did the Jewish leadership order them to do? Why do you think they didn't try to kill the apostles?
 3. How did Peter and John answer them? How did they become so bold?
 4. Why were crowds bringing sick people to the apostles?
 5. Why did the Sanhedrin arrest the apostles? What does this show about the spiritual state of the Jewish leadership?
 6. What happened when the Sanhedrin sent for the apostles to be taken out of jail? Why are these details important?
 7. What did Peter say when he was accused of disobeying the Sanhedrin? Explain what you think he meant.
 8. What was Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin? How wise, do you think, is his advice?

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9. How did the Sanhedrin treat the apostles? Do you think they were being fair?
10. What was unusual about the apostle's reaction to this treatment?

- *Challenging*

1. What caused the Jewish leadership to notice Peter and John? What led up to this part of the story? (Read Acts 3.) What did they realize about the apostles? Why was this unusual? How does this show the power of the Holy Spirit?
2. What did the Jewish leadership order them to do? Why do you think they didn't try to kill the apostles?
3. How did Peter and John answer them? Do you think you could have answered the authorities as boldly as Peter and John? How did they become so bold?
4. Look at Acts 5:15. It states that the people of Jerusalem brought out their sick when they heard Peter was passing by. Why were they doing this? What did this show about the impact of Peter and John's ministry?
5. Why did the Sanhedrin arrest the apostles? What does this show about the spiritual state of the Jewish leadership?
6. What happened when the Sanhedrin sent for the apostles to be taken out of jail? Why are these details important? How do details add to the apparent truthfulness of a testimony?
7. What did Peter say when he was accused of disobeying the Sanhedrin? Explain what you think he meant. Why is that important?
8. What was Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin? How wise, do you think, is his advice? Did the Sanhedrin listen to him?

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9. How did the Sanhedrin treat the apostles? Do you think they were being fair? How should they have treated the apostles?
10. What was unusual about the apostle's reaction to this treatment? Would you have reacted the same way? How does the grace of God figure into this?



