



MISSION ONE ELEVEN

Gospel Stories

01

GOD AND THE SPIRITS

Before there was heaven, earth or anything else, there was God. God existed before everything else. He has never been created. He has no beginning. He has always existed. He will always exist. He will never die. God is Spirit. He is everywhere at the same time. He is here with us right now, but He also has a throne room in heaven where He sits on His throne. His throne is like a fire. His clothes are shining. The light and glory that shines from God is brighter than the sun. God is the one who created everything else. First, God created the angels. He created many, many angels with great wisdom and strength. He placed them in heaven to serve and worship Him. Day and night, they worship Him. They bow before Him saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty."

The greatest angel was called Lucifer. God gave him a position over all the other angels, as worship leader. One day, Lucifer thought, "I am a unique angel. I am the most beautiful and intelligent one. I want to be God. I want all the angels to worship me instead of Him. I have to take the position of God. I will fight against God to take His position." These were very evil thoughts Lucifer had. He should have obeyed God by worshipping Him and also, leading the other angels to worship Him, but Lucifer did not obey God. Many of God's other angels followed Lucifer to fight against God. Already as Lucifer had these thoughts in his mind, God was on His throne watching everything. He created all of the spirits. He knew what they were thinking and planning. He knew that Lucifer had become proud and wanted to take the place of his Maker. Nothing can be kept secret from God. Would God allow Lucifer to take His position?

No, He would not allow Lucifer to take His position. No one can take God's place, because He is the only true God and the Maker of everybody else. What do you think God did? God didn't have to start a fight with Lucifer. He did not have to arrange His fighters to fight with him. God has all the power. He simply took Lucifer and all the angels that followed him and threw them out of



heaven. They had chosen to be His enemies. They could not stay with Him in heaven anymore. Lucifer and the angels who followed him are now on earth. Lucifer is now called Satan. His angel followers are called demons. They hate God and everything He loves. Still today, they are fighting against God trying to make people worship them instead of God. God has prepared a terrible place of everlasting punishment called the lake of fire.

One day, Satan and all the demons will be sent to the lake of fire. There they are going to suffer greatly forever. God does not tolerate disobedience. God always punishes those who fight against Him. God now had an enemy, Satan, trying to stop everything that He did. God had a plan to do something wonderful He wanted to do something fantastic No one, not even Satan, could stop or hinder Him from fulfilling His plan. In the next story, you will hear about what God planned to do.

SCRIPTURE: Nehemiah 9:6, Job 38:4-7, Psalm 99:1-3, Psalm 103:19-21, Isaiah 45:12, Nahum 1:2-3, Colossians 1:15-16, 1 Timothy 3:6, Luke 10:18, Jude 6, Revelation 12:7-9, 1 John 3:8, John 8:44, Ephesians 2:2, 6:1, 1 Peter 5:8, John 12:31, Ephesians 2:2 / 6:12, Revelation 20:10

02

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

God had a fantastic plan in His heart. He wanted to create something more wonderful than He ever created before, more beautiful than the angels. He wanted to make someone in His own image that He would love and care for very much. Do you know who it was that He was planning to create? Yes, it was mankind. Before He created man, God wanted to prepare the best and most beautiful place where man could live and have everything he needed. So God started to prepare this home.

First, He created the earth. After He made the earth, it was empty and completely dark. There was no light anywhere. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God only had to speak one word to create light. You and I, we can't create anything by speaking, but God created everything by just commanding it to be. For God, everything is possible. He has all the power. He can do anything God is greater than everything else He is the King of the universe. Then God created the sky, sun, moon and stars. God made all the water on the



earth. He made many springs and rivers. He made all of the vegetation: flowers, bushes and trees with fruit. He gave the fruits many different colors, tastes and shapes. He did all of this for us. God created all of the creatures of the sea. He made all of the birds flying in the sky. He created all of the animals that walk on the earth, like camels, cows, goats and sheep.

When God finished all of this, He looked and saw that it was good. Every time He created something, He said, "It is good." It was really good. The world was now prepared for man to live. God had prepared it perfectly so that man would have everything he would need. When God created man, it was the most important and special thing He created. He didn't create him the same way as everything else. He didn't just say a word. God carefully formed the man's body, from dust, with His own hands. When He was finished, He blew His own breath into the man's nose. Life came into the man's body. God gave life to the first man. God loved the man very much. He gave him the name Adam. God created man not like the animals, but like Himself. He gave wisdom to Adam in order for him to think and choose. God didn't want to force man to love and obey Him, but wanted man to choose to love and obey Him. He also gave man a spirit that could know God and live eternally. God created man to have a relationship with God. Even though Adam had many animals around him, God saw that Adam was lonely.

Adam needed someone like himself that could do the same things as him and help him. None of the animals could be a good companion for him. God decided to give Adam a wife. God made Adam fall into a deep sleep, took one of his ribs and from that rib, God formed a woman. God gave the woman to Adam to be his wife. Adam called the woman Eve. He was very pleased by the gift that God had given him. God told Adam and Eve that they should have many children. Adam and Eve were the first man and woman on earth. All the people in the world are descendants from Adam and Eve, including you and I. This is not the end of the story, but only the beginning. Listen to the next story and you will hear what very soon happened to Adam and Eve.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

THE FALL

Now God had finished creating Adam and Eve. He was very pleased with them. There was no fault with them. They were perfectly healthy. There wasn't any sickness, death, hate, fighting, poverty or sorrow. God placed Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden called Eden, He made this place especially for them. It was full of trees and plants with luscious fruits and vegetables. There were always ripe fruits for Adam and Eve to eat. There were lots of springs with clean and fresh water very close. They had everything they needed. Best of all, God was their friend. They lived in peace with God in the garden.

In the middle of this garden, there were two noteworthy trees. If Adam and Eve were to live forever, they had to eat from the fruit of the tree of life. There was also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told Adam and Eve, "You can eat from all of the trees in the garden, except from this one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat from this tree, you will die." Why did God say they would die if they ate that fruit? God knew that if they ate that fruit, they would disobey God, just as Satan had disobeyed God. Then, just like Satan, Adam and Eve would have to be punished. They would be separated from God and die. They would go to the same terrible place that God had prepared for Satan and his demons. Do you remember that Satan was the great enemy of God?

Satan had seen God create man and all the other fantastic things that He had created. He knew that God loved Adam and Eve. Satan hates God. Satan wanted to destroy the man and woman that God had made. He decided to try to trick them to disobey God. One day, Satan went into a snake's body and met with Eve in the garden. He began to speak to Eve. He said to her, "You will not die if you eat the forbidden fruit. God doesn't want you to eat it because He knows when you eat it, you will become wise like Him." Satan lied, what he said about God was not true. Eve was standing there, listening to Satan. She thought she wanted to be wise like God and the fruit looked very good. Eve took a fruit and she ate it. She also gave the fruit to Adam and he ate. Adam and Eve both followed Satan and disobeyed God. They had now become friends of God's enemy, Satan. They were his followers and God's enemies. They were no longer in peace with God. Adam and Eve now realized they were naked. Adam and Eve were naked before they disobeyed God, but they were not embarrassed by it. Now, they



had changed. They were embarrassed by their nakedness. They tried to make clothes for themselves with leaves. In the evening, God came to Eden to visit Adam and Eve as He usually did. This time, when Adam and Eve heard that He was coming, they became scared and hid from God among the trees. They had never been afraid of Him before, but now they had disobeyed Him. They no longer had peace with Him. God loved Adam and Eve. He called for them saying, “Adam, where are you?” Adam answered, “I was afraid of you, so I hid.” God asked Adam, “Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded you not to eat?” God already knew what Adam had done, because He is everywhere and sees everything. God asked these questions because He wanted to give Adam a chance to confess what he had done and to ask God to forgive him. Adam didn’t ask for forgiveness, instead he blamed Eve. He said, “It was the woman who gave it to me.” God then asked Eve what she had done. Eve blamed the snake. Both Adam and Eve blamed someone else. They could not escape God’s punishment for what they had done by blaming somebody else. No one can escape God’s punishment. What do you think God will do with Adam and Eve?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3

04

GOD’S PUNISHMENT AND PROMISE

Adam and Eve both disobeyed God by eating the fruit that He told them not to eat. God said to Adam and Eve, “You have disobeyed me and therefore, you have to be punished. You have to be separated from me. You have to leave the garden and stay outside away from me and the tree of life. One day, you will have to die and go to the same terrible place of punishment that I prepared for Satan and his demons. Don’t you remember that I told you that you would die if you ate from that fruit?” Satan was nearby and heard all God said to Adam and Eve. He was laughing. He thought he had beaten God. He thought he had destroyed the relationship between God and mankind forever. God then turned to Satan. He said loudly, so Adam and Eve could hear, “One day, I will send a Deliverer to this earth. He will be the seed of a woman. He will crush you, deliver mankind from your power, sin and the punishment of death and bring mankind back to me.” Why did God give this promise to Adam and Eve? He could have just left them to die and go to the everlasting punishment that they deserved. But God still loved Adam and Eve and so, He wanted to restore



their relationship. You care about the peace of the (insert tribe name here), but God cares even more about His peace with mankind. After God had spoken to Adam, Eve and Satan, God took an animal and killed it. He took the skin from that animal and made clothes for Adam and Eve. That was the first time something died in the world. God did this to remind Adam and Eve that the punishment for disobeying God is death. After that, God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden.

God placed an angel with a flaming sword at the entrance to the garden. No one, not even Adam or Eve, could ever come into the garden to the tree of life again. This was a very sad day for Adam and Eve. They had been living together with God and been His friends, but now they would not be together with Him anymore. Outside the garden, their life became very tough. They had to work hard on their field to be able to get any food to survive. Adam and Eve grew old outside the garden. They had many children and after many years, died. It was not God's original plan for Adam and Eve to die. They had disobeyed God and the punishment was death. Adam and Eve had been separated from God.

All Adam and Eve's children and descendants, which is all of us today, were born separated from God. It's like a branch with small twigs on it. When the branch is broken off from the tree, the twigs will die like the branch. The tree is a picture of God. The branch is a picture of Adam and Eve. The twigs on the branch are pictures of their descendants. When Adam and Eve were separated from God, all of us as their descendants were also separated from God and will all die like them.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 3

05

CAIN AND ABEL

Two of Adam and Eve's sons were Cain and Abel. Abel worked with keeping animals. Cain worked with the soil. One day, both Cain and Abel brought offerings to God. Abel brought from his animals one firstborn lamb. He killed it, let the blood run out and offered it. Abel remembered what his parents told him about what happened in the garden of Eden when they had disobeyed God. God had killed an animal to show them that the punishment for sin is death.



Now Abel killed a lamb and offered it to God. He showed God that he understood he also was a sinner that deserved the punishment of God and needed God's forgiveness. He was hoping in and waiting for the Deliverer whom God had promised to send to Adam and Eve. Because of this, God accepted Abel's offering and forgave Abel his sin.

Cain brought some of the fruit of his soil and offered it to God. Cain did not believe and trust in God like Abel did. He didn't agree with God that he was a sinner that deserved the punishment of death. Therefore, God didn't accept the offering and could not forgive Cain his sin. Was it because Cain was a bigger sinner than Abel that God did not accept his offering? No, they were both sinners. It was because Cain did not believe that he was a sinner that needed God's forgiveness. Cain was very angry and jealous of his brother, Abel, because his offering had been accepted and his own was not. Cain had bad thoughts in his mind. Before Adam and Eve sinned, all of their thoughts were good all of the time. When they sinned, they became sinners. Their minds were changed and bad thoughts began to come into their minds.

Cain was so angry and jealous he decided to kill his brother. He said to Abel, "Let us go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked Abel and killed him. This was the first murder in the history of man. God saw Cain had murdered Abel. God asked him, "Where is your brother Abel? What have you done?" God asked Cain this question, because He wanted to give Cain a chance to confess, the same way he gave Eve and then Adam a chance to confess. God wanted him to say, "I killed my brother. I have sinned against You. Please forgive me." Cain didn't confess what he had done. He lied saying, "I don't know where my brother is". God said to Cain, "I know you killed your brother. Now you have to be punished." God always has to punish everyone who sins against other people. After this, Cain went away to live in another place. When we sin, we are against both God and our community. We will not get acceptance from anyone. Cain, his brothers and his sisters had many children and grandchildren.

Many generations passed by. Many people came and filled the earth. All of these people were sinners from birth because Adam was a sinner. They were all his descendants. They also loved their sin. They refused to agree with God. They were sinning more and more, just like Cain. They were jealous and



hateful. They lied and tricked one another. They were adulterers and thieves. They even murdered people. They had no thought at all about how they should please God. God saw all their sin. He loved people, but He hated their sin. He had to punish their sin. What do you think God did with these sinful people?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4

06

NOAH'S ARK

The descendants of Adam had filled the earth. They were all sinning greatly against God. God decided that He would send a flood over the earth to destroy all who would not repent and trust Him, because the punishment of sin is death. Among all of these evil people, there was one man who listened to and trusted God. His name was Noah. Noah believed in God like Abel had done. He believed that he was a sinner that deserved punishment. He was waiting for the Deliverer whom God had promised to send Adam and Eve. Because of this, God decided to accept and save Noah from the flood.

God told Noah what He was going to do. He told Noah to build an ark, a big boat, so that all those who trusted in God would go into the boat and be saved. God gave Noah detailed instructions on how to build this ark. Noah could not just make up his own plans for this ark or make it his own way. Noah built the ark exactly like God told him. He also told all the people living on the earth what God had said. He told them that God hated their sin and was going to send a flood to destroy everything in the world. He told them that if they changed their attitude and believed in God, they could enter the ark and be saved. The people did not want to listen. They loved their sinful ways and would not repent. For 100 years, Noah was building the ark. During this time, God was waiting for the people to change their mind. The people did not. Instead, they were laughing at Noah. They said, "You have been building your boat for 100 years. Where is the flood? The flood will never come." Do you think God would send the flood? Yes, He would.

God always does what He says He will do. It was now time for God to punish the people. God told Noah to take his family and two of all the animals, male and female, with him into the ark. Noah did. He brought cows, goats, camels



and all other wild animals. They all went into the ark. No other people followed Noah into the ark or believed in God. When Noah and his family were safely in the ark, God shut the door. He did not let any other people in. Now, God sent the rain. He made it rain for forty days until the whole earth was covered, even the highest mountains. Everyone outside the ark was destroyed by God. Everyone died because they had not believed. Only Noah, his family and the animals with them survived, because they had believed in God and in His words.

When everybody was dead, except Noah and his family, God stopped the rain. He sent a wind to dry up the water and dry land appeared. Noah, his family, and all of the animals came out of the ark. Noah built an altar and offered animals to God. By doing that, Noah showed God he believed that he was sinner who deserved to die, just like the animal he slaughtered had died, and also, that he trusted in God to save him. God also promised He would never again destroy the earth by flood. He gave them the rainbow as a sign of this promise. Every time we see the rainbow, we can remember and know God keeps His promises. Even though God had destroyed all things on earth, except Noah and his family, He had not forgotten His promise to send mankind a Deliverer. Listen to the next story. I will tell you how God started to prepare for the Deliverer to come.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:9-17

07

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

After the flood, Noah's sons had many children. They spread over all the earth. Many years and generations passed by, but these generations did not follow God like Noah did. Instead, they turned away from God and did not even care about Him. They were sinning greatly. Instead of worshipping God, they worshipped idols. In this time, there was almost no one who believed in God, but there was one man who did. His name was Abraham.

He believed and trusted in God, just like Abel and Noah. He knew he was a sinner who deserved to be punished, but he believed God would save him through the coming Deliverer. Abraham believed and trusted in God. God accepted Abraham as if he had no sin. God spoke to Abraham many times and told Abraham what He was going to do. God told Abraham that he wanted to destroy the



two cities close to where Abraham was living.

The cities were named Sodom and Gomorrah. The people were just like the people during the time of Noah. They forgot about God and what He wanted them to do. They were sinning greatly. They were adulterers and murderers. The people were having sex with animals. Men got married to men and women to women. The nephew of Abraham, Lot, and Lot's family lived in Sodom.

One day, God sent two angels to warn Lot that He would destroy the city the following morning. The following morning, the angels told Lot to take his wife and two daughters away from the city, because God would destroy it. The angels told them not to look back while running to the mountains. When Lot and his family had left the city, the Lord rained fire from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah. The two cities were consumed by fire. Every sinner in the city was killed.

When Lot and his family had already escaped from Sodom, Lot's wife looked back. She did not obey the words of the angels and was turned into a pillar of salt. Abraham did not live in these wicked cities. He was a nomad with many cattle. Abraham was moving from well to well, always staying in a tent. One night, God took Abraham outside his tent, told him to look up into the sky and see if he could count the stars. God then told Abraham that his descendants would be as many as the stars and that all the people on earth would be blessed through his descendants. God's plan was that one of Abraham's descendants would be the Deliverer who would bless all people. Do you remember what God had promised to Adam and Eve? Do you remember He said that He would send a Deliverer who would save mankind from Satan's power, sin, punishment of death in the lake of fire and bring mankind back to God?

Now God promised this to Abraham because He wanted Abraham and his descendants to be prepared to receive the Deliverer. When Abraham received this promise, he and his wife didn't have any children. They both grew old without having any children. Finally, when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old and it was naturally impossible for them to have a child, God made a miracle. Sarah gave birth to a son. Abraham and Sarah named their son Isaac. They loved Isaac very much. Through him, they could now become a great people. They believed in God's promise, that the coming Deliverer would come



from Isaac's descendants. Very special things would happen to Abraham and Isaac. Listen to the next story. I will tell you what happened.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 19:1-29

08

ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE

God had given Abraham and Sarah their promised son, Isaac. They believed the coming Deliverer would come through Isaac. One day, God told Abraham to do a most unexpected and difficult thing. God wanted to see if Abraham loved Isaac more than he loved God. God told Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved, and go to a mountain He would show him. There, he should sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. This was very difficult for Abraham because he loved Isaac very much. How could the Deliverer be one of Isaac's descendants if Isaac was dead? But Abraham trusted God.

He knew God would not lie, but would keep His promises. Abraham believed that even if he did kill Isaac in obedience to God, that God would raise Isaac from the dead. Abraham obeyed. Early the next morning, he took his son Isaac and set out for the place God had told him about. As the two of them went on together, Isaac asked Abraham, "Father, the fire and wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered Isaac, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." The two of them continued on. When they reached the place God had told them about, Abraham built an altar there. He bound his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar. He reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. There was no way for Isaac to escape. He was born a sinner, and like everybody else, he deserved to die. Only God could save him. Only God could save Noah and his family from the flood and now, only God could save Isaac from being killed. Do you think God saved Isaac? Just as Abraham was about to kill Isaac, God stopped Him. He called out from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham, don't touch your son. Now I know you love Me." Isaac could not be saved if there was no other sacrifice to die instead of him. God provided a sacrifice.

When Abraham looked up, he saw a lamb caught by its horns in a bush. If it had been caught by another part of its body, it would have injured itself and



not been perfect without blemish. It would not have been an acceptable offering to God. God is perfect and will only accept whatever is perfect. Abraham took Isaac off the altar, put the lamb, which God had provided, on the altar and killed it. God provided the lamb to die instead of Isaac. Abraham called that place, “The Lord will provide.” He believed that just as God provided a lamb to die instead of Isaac, God would also provide the Deliverer to rescue mankind from the punishment of sin, as He had promised Adam and Eve in the garden. Isaac grew up and had two sons. One of them was called Israel.

Israel had many sons. He and all of his family moved from their country down to the land of Egypt. After some generations, they had become a great people group in Egypt called the Israelites. They were very rich. They had many cows, goats and sheep. Satan knew the coming Deliverer would come through the Israelites. He didn’t want any Deliverer to come and deliver mankind from his power. Therefore, he wanted to destroy the Israelites. He decided he would make it very difficult for them. The Israelites became slaves under the King of Egypt, Pharaoh. It was a terrible time for them. They had to work hard building buildings for Pharaoh. They were suffering a lot. Pharaoh even killed all of their baby boys. Do you think that God had abandoned the Israelites or that He would not keep His promise to them? Listen to the next story. I will tell you what happened.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 22:1-19

09

THE PASSOVER

Abraham and Isaac’s descendants, the Israelites, were living as slaves in Egypt. It was a terrible time. When they cried to God to save them, God gave them a leader, Moses. Moses went to Pharaoh on behalf of the Israelites and told him to let God’s people go. Pharaoh refused and therefore, God sent many plagues over Egypt. Every plague was very difficult for the Egyptian people. Still, Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. Finally, Moses went to Pharaoh and told him, “This is what the Lord says, ‘At midnight, I will go throughout all of Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh to the firstborn of all the cattle as well. Since you did not obey me and let the Israelites go, you will be punished in this way.’” If the Israelites were to be saved



from this, they had to believe in God and obey Him. God told them exactly what they were to do. They had to do it exactly as God told them, just as Noah had to build the ark exactly as God had directed him. God told them that they had to take a lamb, one for each household.

The lamb they were to choose had to be perfect, like the lamb that was offered instead of Isaac had to be perfect. They were to slaughter the lambs the same evening that the Lord would go through the land. They had to let the blood flow out and catch it in a basin. They had to put the blood on both sides and the top of the door where they would be eating the lamb. They had to stay in the same house the whole night. God promised them when He would see the blood on the doorframe, He would pass over and their firstborn would not die. The blood from the slaughtered lamb would be the sign that a lamb in that house died instead of the firstborn. The day came when the Lord was going to go through the land. All of the Israelites did exactly as the Lord had instructed them.

At midnight, the Lord struck down all of the firstborns in Egypt. Pharaoh and all of the Egyptians woke during the night. There was a loud wailing, for there was not an Egyptian house where the firstborn had not died. All of those who had obeyed the Lord, slaughtered a lamb and put the blood on their doorposts, were saved. None of their firstborns had died. All of the Israelites obeyed and were saved. The lambs had died instead of their firstborns, just like a lamb had died instead of Isaac. During this night, even Pharaoh's own son, whom he loved very much, died. In the middle of the night, Pharaoh called Moses. He told him to take the Israelites out of Egypt immediately. That same night all of the Israelites left Egypt. The Egyptians gave the Israelites all of their gold, silver, cows, camels and riches. For hundreds of years, the Israelites had been oppressed by Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

They had been in great pain, but now the Israelites were free. God had heard their cries and saved them. This was a big day God told the Israelites to celebrate this at a certain time every year to remember what God did. They were to call this celebration, Passover, to remember how God passed over every house that had blood on the doorpost and saved them. When the Israelites left Egypt, they reached a sea called the Red Sea. Pharaoh changed his mind. He sent his army to kill the Israelites. God did a miracle. He divided the sea in front of the Israelites so that they could go through it on dry land. The Egyptians followed



them into the sea, but when the Israelites were safe on the other side, God again drove the waters back over the Egyptians. The whole Egyptian army died in the waters. God punishes all those who fight against Him, but saves those who trust and believe in Him.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 4:29 - 12:42, 12:17-22, 14

10

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

God had delivered the Israelites from slavery and brought them out of Egypt. God began to lead them back to the land, called Canaan, that He had promised to give to the Israelites. The Israelites reached a mountain called Sinai. There, they camped in their tents with their cattle around the mountain. Moses went up on the mountain. God spoke with him there. God told Moses, "Tell the Israelites that I'm going to give them My commandments. If they obey them fully, then I will be with them and bless them. I will bless their families and their cattle. I will send rain on their land. If they don't obey My commandments, then I will have to punish them. Hunger, sickness and death will come upon them." Moses went down from the mountain to the Israelites and told them.

The Israelites all answered Moses, "Tell God that we will obey His commandments fully." The Israelites had forgotten they were sinners. They did not believe like Noah and Abraham, that they were sinners. Instead, they thought that they could obey all of the commandments fully. Moses went up on the mountain again. He told God what the people had answered. God said, "Tell the people I'm going to come down to the bottom of the mountain to speak with them. I will tell them My commandments. When I come down, they can not touch the mountain, because I am holy and they are sinners. If they touch the mountain, they will die." Moses went down. He told the people everything that God had said. They put up boundaries all around the mountain so no one would come close and touch it. God came down to the people.

When He came down, it was like thunder. The mountain was shaking. The whole mountain was covered by fire and smoke. All the people were very scared. They realized God was a holy God. God spoke with a loud voice. He said, "I'm the Lord, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. These are my



commandments to you. If you obey them, I will be with you and bless you, but if you break even one of them you will be punished.”

The first commandment is that you shall have no other gods than Me. The second commandment is that you shall not make any picture or statue of anything in heaven or on earth and worship it. You shall not worship anything else but Me. The third commandment is that you shall not misuse My name. The fourth commandment is that you shall rest on the seventh day of the week. The fifth commandment is that you shall honor your father and mother. The sixth commandment is that you shall not murder any person. Even if you just hate another person you are a murderer and have broken this commandment. The seventh commandment is that you shall not commit adultery. The eighth commandment is that you shall not steal. The ninth commandment is that you shall not lie. The tenth commandment is that you shall not desire anything that belongs to someone else, not their house, wife, servants, cattle or anything else. If you are jealous of someone because of what they have, you have broken this commandment.

These were the commandments that God told the Israelites from the mountain. He also gave these commandments to us. If we break even one of these commandments, we have sinned and deserve punishment. Have you ever broken any one of these commandments? Yes, we have all broken these commandments. We are all sinners.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 19, 20:1-24

11

THE GOLDEN CALF

After God revealed himself to the people on Mount Sinai and told them the Ten Commandments, He went back up the mountain. Moses went up the mountain to God again. God then wrote the Ten Commandments on two stone tablets. He gave them to Moses so the Israelites would have these tablets and not forget the commandments. He wanted them to remember the commandments. The commandments would make them realize they were sinners who could not obey every command. God wanted them to believe like Noah and Abraham, that they were sinners who needed God’s forgiveness. Moses stayed on the



mountain for a long time with God.

When the people saw that Moses was taking a long time in coming down from the mountain, they said, “We don’t know what happened to Moses and God. They are gone. Let us now make a god who will lead us.” They made a calf out of gold. They danced around it, offered animals to it, bowed before it and worshipped it. They said, “This is the God that brought us out of Egypt.” While the people were dancing around the calf, Moses came down from the mountain. When he saw what they were doing he was very angry; he was so angry that he threw the tablets with the commandments to the ground and broke them. God had to give him new tablets later.

Moses took the calf, burned it and told the people they had sinned greatly against God. God was also very angry. He had just given the commandments to the Israelites. One of them was they should not make a picture or anything else to worship other than Him. The people had all said they would obey God’s commandments, but they had already broken them in a terrible way. God punished the Israelites for their sin. He told Moses to stand at the entrance of the camp and shout, “Everyone who is a follower of Lord God, come here and stand with me.” Moses told the people who came to him that God commanded them to take their swords, go through the camp and kill all those people who refused to follow God. The people did like Moses told them.

That day, all who refused to change their minds to follow God were punished and died. If we worship spirits, trees, animals or anything else created by God or make a picture of anything to worship, like the Israelites did, we have broken God’s commandments and deserve His punishment. God punished the Israelites this time for their sin. He wanted to prepare a way in the future the Israelites could be forgiven of their sins and come to Him. Even though we deserve punishment, God always prepares a way for people to be saved from their punishment. Listen to the next story. I will tell you what God prepared for the Israelites.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32, 34:1-17

THE TABERNACLE AND THE SIN OFFERINGS

The Israelites had broken the commandments and sinned greatly against God by making the golden calf and worshipping it. God punished them for their sin. God always has to punish sin. The Israelites were sinners. They sinned over and over again by breaking the commandments. God still loved the Israelites. He wanted to make a way for them to be saved from the punishment of their sins. God told Moses how they should do this. They should build a special place called the Tabernacle. There God would live for them to come to Him, be forgiven and saved. God gave Moses specific instructions on how to build the Tabernacle. It had to be made exactly the way God told Moses. Moses and the Israelites built the Tabernacle exactly the way God had said. This is how it looked.

First, there was a big courtyard around the Tabernacle. Just inside the entrance to the courtyard was an altar. When an Israelite wanted to come to God to receive forgiveness for his sins, he could bring an animal to this altar. By doing this, he was admitting to God that he was a sinner who deserved to die, but he asked God to accept the animal's death instead of his own. Inside the courtyard was the Tabernacle. It was built as a tent so the Israelites could easily bring it when they moved. The Tabernacle had two rooms. The first room was called the Holy Place. Only priests could enter it when they were serving God. The second room was called the Most Holy Place. In this room, there was a box called the ark. God's presence was in the ark. This was the place where God lived. In the ark were the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them.

Between the two rooms, there was a thick curtain. If anyone went behind the curtain and entered the Most Holy place, where God was, they would have been killed, because God is holy and the people were sinners. Only the High Priest could go into this room one time a year on a special day. On that day, the High Priest first had to admit the people were sinners. He was to kill an animal and catch its blood in a basin. After he passed behind the thick curtain, the High Priest was to sprinkle the blood on the ark. If the High Priest did everything the right way, then God promised to hold off the judgement the Israelites deserved and forgive their sins for the past year. The High Priest had to do this every year because the animal was not a perfect offering that would take away their sins for all eternity.



Now, when Moses and the Israelites had finished building the Tabernacle exactly as God told them to build it, God came to live in the Most Holy place in the Tabernacle. The cloud that guided the Israelites every day covered the Tabernacle. The glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. This Tabernacle was the way God gave to the Israelites to come to Him and be forgiven for breaking the commandments. We are all sinners just like the Israelites. We have all broken the commandments and deserve to be punished. Do you think the Tabernacle would continue being the way for the Israelites and us to come to God or would God provide another way? I will soon tell you about God's plan.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 25-26, Leviticus 5:14-19

13

THE BRONZE SNAKE AND ISRAEL

The Israelites took all their cattle, packed their tents and the Tabernacle and left Mount Sinai. They would continue their journey to the land of Canaan, the land that God had promised to give them. For many years, the Israelite people were walking in the desert. It was very hot and very dry in the desert. Many times there was no water or food for them or their cattle, but God was their Shepherd and He provided them with water and food in miraculous ways. For example, one time God told Moses to take his staff and strike a rock with it.

When he did, water flowed from the rock and there was enough for all the people and their cattle to drink. For food, every day God let bread, called manna, rain down from heaven. God loved and cared about the Israelites like you love and care for your herds of cattle. Another time, when they did not have any water, the Israelites started to complain to Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to let us die here in the desert?" They had forgotten how God had always given them food and water. They did not believe in God to save them this time. Instead of asking for water, they now complained to Moses. Because the people did not believe in God, but instead were complaining against Him, God's punishment came upon the Israelites. He sent poisonous snakes among them. The snakes were everywhere, in their tents and out in the open. They were also attacking the people. Many, many people were bitten and many died. The Israelites could not escape the deadly snakes sent by God.



Now the Israelites realized they had sinned and could not save themselves from the punishment they deserved. They went to Moses, confessed their sin and asked Moses to pray to God to take away the snakes. Moses prayed for them. God told Moses, “Because the people admitted they are sinners and asked Me to save them from this punishment, I will make a way they can be saved. Now, make a metal snake and put it up on a pole. Anyone who is bitten can look at it, be healed and not die.” Moses made a metal snake and put it on a pole. When a snake bit anyone, they could just look at the metal snake and not die. It would not be the snake that healed them, but God. Only the ones who did exactly as God had told them to do were healed and did not die. Those who prayed but did not look were not healed. Only the ones who looked at the snake were healed. God will always make a way to be saved from punishment for sin for those who admit they are sinners and trust in God to save them. After many years in the desert, God led the Israelites into the land of Canaan. God helped the Israelites to conquer the peoples there and gave them the whole land as their inheritance.

Satan had tried to destroy the Israelites in many ways because the Deliverer would be one of the Israelites, who were Abraham’s descendants. Satan had tried to destroy them in slavery in Egypt. He tried to kill them by the Red Sea. Each time, God saved and protected the Israelites. He saved them from slavery in Egypt, led them through the Red Sea, protected and gave them everything in the desert and now He had given them their own land. God would not let the Israelites be destroyed. He would not let anyone hinder Him in fulfilling His plan to send the Deliverer through the Israelites. Listen to the next story. I will soon tell you more about this Deliverer.

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 21:4-9

14

DAVID AND SOLOMON

God had led the Israelites through the desert into the land of Canaan. He had helped them to conquer the people there. Now they lived in their own land, the land of Canaan, which is now called Israel. After some generations passed, the Israelites asked God to give them a king that could lead them like the other



countries had. God gave them kings. One of the first kings was a man called David. David was a man after God's heart. Before David became a king, he was a young shepherd taking care of his sheep. David knew God when he was watching his sheep. He used to sing and praise God. He sung, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything I need." David called God his Shepherd. God was the one who led David. Just like David led his sheep to places with water and grass, God was leading, caring for and giving David everything he needed.

David had seen that God is a good God who cared for him all his life. Just as David protected his sheep from wild animals, God protected David from all evil. Just like David's sheep followed and obeyed him, David wanted to follow his Shepherd, God, all the days of his life. He did not want to follow God's enemy like Adam and Eve had done. He wanted to live in peace with God like a sheep with its shepherd. God sent His prophet, a messenger, to anoint David to be king. David ruled Israel for many years. He was a godly king who led the Israelites to worship God. Just like David, all the Israelites followed God. God was their Shepherd. David believed like Abel, Noah and Abraham that he was a sinner who needed God's forgiveness. He waited for the promised Deliverer. Therefore, God gave David the same promise that He had given Abraham, David's forefather. He promised that one of David's descendants would be the Deliverer, the Deliverer who would be King and rule forever.

When David died, his son, Solomon, became the king. At this time, all the Israelites were living in houses made of stone, but the Tabernacle was still a tent. Therefore, Solomon built a house of stone for God, but in the same way the Tabernacle was built, with the Holy place and the Holy of Holies. They called it the Temple. For a while, the Israelites were worshipping God and coming to God in the way He had shown bringing sacrifices to the Temple. Every year, the High Priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy of Holies to receive forgiveness for the people. After Solomon died, other kings came. After some time, the people and the king of the Israelites began to forget everything God had done, how He had brought them out of Egypt into Canaan. Instead, they began to look to other countries and the false gods they were worshipping. They turned away from the true God. Instead, they brought sacrifices to worship these false gods. They even sacrificed children to these false gods. This made God very sad. He loved the people, but had to punish them for their sin.

God let their enemies come and conquer the Israelites. These enemies destroyed their cities and even destroyed the Temple. The enemies also took many of the Israelites, brought them to foreign countries and made them their slaves. When the Israelites were slaves in other countries, they realized they had disobeyed God and sinned greatly against Him. They confessed to God they were sinners. They prayed that He would bring them back to their land, which He once had given them. When God saw the Israelites turned to Him with all their hearts, asking Him to forgive and save them, He delivered them from slavery and brought them back to their land, Israel. God has to punish sin, but He will always forgive and save those who turn back to Him and ask Him to save them.

SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 7:1-17, 1 Kings 2:1-4, 8:22-30, 9:1-9, 10:23-25, 11:1-13

15

THE PROPHECIES

The Israelites had been in slavery because of their sin. When they turned to God, He had saved them and brought them back to their land again. When the Israelites came back to Israel, they rebuilt their cities and they also rebuilt the temple. For a time, the Israelites worshipped God. They brought their sacrifices to the temple as God had told them to do. But the Israelites were sinners like all people because of their forefather Adam's sin. Even though they tried to obey God, they could not. After a time, they turned away from God again and started to worship false gods. When they did this, the same thing happened. Their enemies came and conquered them. They destroyed their cities and the Temple and brought them away as slaves again. This happened many times, over and over again.

This was a very bad situation. God was longing to live together with the people and have a good relationship with them. He longed to be their Shepherd like He had been David's Shepherd, to take care of them and for them to follow and obey Him. They were sinners that could not stop sinning. They were always sinning and the Temple was destroyed again and again. Therefore, God spoke through His prophets and promised the people that soon, He would send the Deliverer. The Deliverer would come and deliver the people from their sin. He would forgive them all for their sins and bring them back to God and back to



the same relationship that Adam and Eve once had with God. God also said through the prophets that when the Deliverer would come, God would no longer live in the Temple that so easily could be destroyed, but instead God would come and live in the people's hearts. The people's hearts would be His new temple.

God told the prophets many special things about the Deliverer to prepare them to receive Him. He said that the Deliverer would become three things, which no one else had been able to become before. He would become the final King, the final High Priest and the final Prophet who would forever bring the people back to God. God told the prophets that the Deliverer would not have a human father. His mother would be a virgin, so He would be the seed of a woman. The Deliverer would be born in a town called Bethlehem. He would be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, wisdom, understanding, counsel, power and knowledge. He would be rejected by the Israelites and be hated without cause. He would be betrayed by a friend and sold for thirty pieces of silver. He would greatly suffer. He would be spat upon, beaten and mocked. He would not open His mouth to defend Himself. He would be led like a lamb to the slaughter. His hands and feet would be pierced. He would be crushed for our sins. He would bear the sins, sorrows and sicknesses of many. By His wounds, we would be healed. They also said that the Deliverer would die but rise again and go back to heaven. In the next story, I will tell you how God is beginning to fulfill these plans.

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 16:29-33, 17:1-6, 18:16-45, Micha 1:1-3, 51-5a, Isaiah 6:1-8, 7:13-14, 8:11-22, 9:1-7, 11:1-3, 10, 40:1-5, 42:1-9, 52:13-15, 53

16

JESUS' BIRTH

Many years had passed in Israel since the last prophet had prophesied, but God had not forgotten His promise. Finally, the time came when God decided to send the Deliverer. God sent an angel named Gabriel to a virgin named Mary. Mary believed in God. She trusted in God to send the Deliverer and also, that they would be saved through this Deliverer. Therefore, God chose her to be the mother of the Deliverer. Mary was the woman God had been speaking about when He told Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that the Deliverer would be the seed of the woman. Mary was also the virgin that the prophets



had been speaking of when they said that the Deliverer would be the Son of a virgin. When the angel Gabriel came to Mary, he told her that she would give birth to a son and that she was to name Him Jesus. Jesus means Savior.

Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? How can I have a child when I am a virgin?" Gabriel answered that the Spirit of God would make a miracle in her and she would become pregnant. The child would not have a human father. He would be called the Son of God. He would be given by the Spirit of God. All that the angel Gabriel told Mary happened. She became pregnant, though she had never been with any man. Mary had promised to be married to a man named Joseph. Joseph was a descendant of King David, therefore, God chose him to be the earthly father of the Deliverer. It was God's promise to David that the Deliverer would be one of his descendants. One night, when Joseph was sleeping, an angel came to him in his dreams. The angel said to him, "Joseph, son of David, you will be married to Mary and she will give birth to a son. You will give him the name Emmanuel, which means 'God with us.'

God will come down to become a man and live with people here in this world." Joseph did what the angel had said and married Mary. After some time, Mary gave birth to a son and named Him Jesus. Jesus was born in a barn in the town called Bethlehem. This was just as the prophets had said. They said that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. One of your (insert tribe name here) stories tells of this. God one time came to sleep in a barn. Some of the men in (insert tribe name here) used to take away a pole from the entrance to the barn in the morning as a memory of this and symbol for God to leave before the light of the morning comes. This happened when Jesus was born. Jesus was God and He came down and slept in a barn. In the same region, some shepherds were watching their flocks.

Suddenly, an angel appeared to them and said, "I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord." Then a great amount of angels appeared and they all sang praises to the Lord. After this, the shepherds went to see the baby Jesus. Also, wise men from a country far away came to worship Jesus. They had been waiting for the Deliverer to come. They saw a new star in the sky that led them to the place where Jesus was. When they found Him, they bowed down, worshipped Him and gave Him gifts. Was it right for the wise men to worship Jesus? God had written in the



law, which He gave to the Israelites, that only God should be worshipped. Do you think it was wrong of these men to worship Jesus? No, because Jesus was God Finally, the promised Deliverer that everyone had been waiting for had come to earth Jesus had a great work to do here, but Satan would continue trying to destroy God's plan. Listen to the next story and you will hear what happened.

Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20

17 THE LAMB OF GOD, JESUS

Jesus grew up and became a man. At this time, there was another man named John. He prepared the people for the coming Deliverer. John taught the people that they had to admit they were sinners and they needed a savior to save them from the punishment they deserved. People came from every part of Israel to listen to John. John baptized many people by dipping them under water. By being dipped under water, the people showed that they agreed they were sinners who deserved death, but they were trusting in God to send the Deliverer to save them. One day, when John was teaching, he saw Jesus coming towards him.

John pointed at Jesus and said to the people, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world " Do you remember that God provided a lamb to die instead of Isaac? Do you remember how God had told the Israelites that if they came to the Tabernacle and killed a lamb they would be forgiven their sins for the past? Now, John said that Jesus was the Lamb, given by God, to take away the sins of the world. Do you remember that the lamb that Abraham sacrificed instead of Isaac and the lambs sacrificed in the Tabernacle had to be perfect?

Also, Jesus, the Lamb of God, had to be perfect. Jesus wanted to be baptized by John, but John tried to hinder Him knowing that he himself needed to be baptized by Jesus. Jesus wanted to be baptized, not because He was a sinner and needed a savior like all the others who were baptized by John, but because He wanted to be a good example to the Israelites in showing them the right thing to do. So, John baptized Jesus. When Jesus came up out of the water, heaven opened up and the people could see the Spirit of God descending like a dove on Him. A voice came from heaven that said, "This is my Son whom I love, with



Him I am well pleased.” God, the Father, in heaven called Jesus His Son, and He sent His Spirit upon Jesus. John said to the people, “I baptize you with water. But He who comes after me, Jesus, He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” After this, God sent Jesus out into the desert to be tested by Satan. Jesus was fasting and praying for forty days. At the end of the forty days, Jesus was very hungry and tired. Then Satan came to him. Satan would try to tempt Jesus like he had tempted Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He would try to make Jesus obey him just like Adam and Eve had done. He wanted Jesus to sin like them, so that he would not be the perfect lamb of God anymore. Satan said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Even though Jesus was very hungry and even though He had the power to make bread from the stone, Jesus refused to obey Satan.

Then Satan led Jesus up to a high place and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. Satan said to Jesus, “If you fall down and worship me, I will give you the authority over all these kingdoms. For it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want.” But again, Jesus refused to obey, he refused to worship Satan. He answered, “It is written ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’” Jesus did not fall into sin like Adam and Eve had done when Satan tempted them.

When Satan had finished all this tempting, he left Jesus, and angels came and attended Jesus. Jesus was tempted by Satan many more times after this. He was tempted in everything like you and me. But Jesus never sinned. He lived perfect. He never thought, said or did anything that was wrong. He obeyed God in everything. Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God. Jesus came with a very special message to the people. Next time, I will tell you more about that.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 3:1-18, Matthew 3:13-17, 4:1-11, Luke 4:14-30

18

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

After Jesus had been tempted by Satan, He came back to the people and began to speak to them. Many people came to listen to Jesus. They were amazed



over His teaching because He explained to them the writings of Moses and the prophets in a more understandable way than any teacher had done before. Jesus said to the people: "You have to repent and realize that you are sinners in need of a Savior. You have to get ready for the kingdom of God because the kingdom of God is near. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden, Satan has been king over this world and everybody has been in Satan's kingdom. Now, the kingdom of God is near and people will be brought from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God." Among the people who were listening to Jesus were many of the religious leaders in Israel.

They did not like Jesus' teaching. They did not believe like their forefathers Noah, Abraham, and Moses that they were sinners in need of a savior. They thought they were already in God's kingdom and not in Satan's. They thought that it was enough if they did many good things and tried to keep every one of God's commands. Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he said: "Let me tell you a story. Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a religious leader and one was a known sinner among the people. The religious leader prayed like this, 'God, I thank you that I am not a sinner. I'm not a robber or murderer. Thank you that I'm not like that sinner over there. I fast twice a week and I give a tenth of all I get.' But the other man stood at a distance.

He did not even look up to heaven, but he beat his breast and said, 'God have mercy on me, I'm a sinner.'" Then Jesus told the people, "This man went home justified and forgiven by God because he believed like Abel, Noah and Abraham that he was a sinner that needed God's forgiveness. The religious leader did not go home justified. God could not forgive him his sins because he did not admit that he was a sinner." One of the religious leaders who was standing there listening to this story was named Nicodemus.

When he heard what Jesus was saying he thought to himself, "I am just like that religious leader Jesus is speaking about. I'm trying to keep all the commandments. I am fasting, giving a tenth of all my money to God and offering sacrifices in the temple. This is not enough for me to be accepted by God?" Nicodemus wanted to talk to Jesus about this, but he was afraid of what the other religious leaders would say if he asked in front of everybody. One night, when everybody was sleeping, he went to meet with Jesus. Jesus knew Nicodemus and what he was thinking.



Before Nicodemus had time to ask his questions, Jesus said, “Nicodemus, I know that you fear God and try to do everything in the right way, but that is not enough for you to be saved and accepted by God. No one can be saved from sin and see the kingdom of God unless He is born again.” Nicodemus did not understand this, so he asked, “How can anyone enter his mother’s womb a second time to be born again?” Jesus answered, “It is not your body that has to be born again, but your spirit. Your sin has to be forgiven. You have to become a new person, clean from sin, on the inside. You have to be born again by the Spirit.” Now Nicodemus asked Jesus, “So how can this happen? How can the spirit be born again?” Jesus answered, “Do you remember when God sent poisonous snakes among the Israelites in the desert?” Nicodemus answered, “Yes, I remember.” Jesus said, “Just like the metal snake was lifted up on a pole, in the same way, I have to be lifted up.

Everyone that looks at me and trusts only in me will be born again, forgiven of their sins and become a new person on the inside. Not only that, they will also be saved from the punishment of death for their sins. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son that whoever believes in Him will not die but have eternal life.” Now, Nicodemus had the answer to his questions and he went home believing what Jesus had told him. Other religious leaders did not accept Jesus’ words like Nicodemus did. Instead, they became very angry with Jesus. Listen to the next story and I will tell you what they did to Him.

SCRPTURE: John 3

19

JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS

Most of the religious leaders did not like Jesus’ teachings. They started to hate Jesus more and more. They started to try to make Jesus say things of which they could accuse Him. One day, they brought a woman to Jesus and said, “This woman was caught in the act of adultery. The Law of Moses commands us to stone such a woman. Now what do you say?” Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger. When they kept on questioning Him, He stood up and said to them, “The one of you who has never sinned can throw the first stone at her.” He sat down again. Those who heard Him began to drop the



stones they were holding. They left one at a time until only Jesus was left with the woman. Now Jesus asked her, "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one." Jesus had forgiven her sins and made her a new person. She was born again. Jesus set her free from sin and He told her, "Go and sin no more."

Another time, Jesus was teaching in a home. Many people gathered and there was no room left for anyone to enter the house. Four men came carrying their paralyzed friend on a mat. They believed that Jesus was the Deliverer and that He could heal their friend. When they realized that there was no way for them to get to Jesus because of the crowd, they carried their friend up on the roof of the house. They made a hole in the roof and lowered down the paralyzed man into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw the faith of these men, He said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." There were a lot of religious leaders in the room and they began to think to themselves, "How can He say that? Only God can forgive sins." Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "Why are you thinking like that? Which is easier to say to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven or get up, take up your mat and walk?' But that you may know that I have authority to forgive sins, I say to this man, 'Get up, take your mat and go home.'"

Immediately, the paralyzed man stood up in front of people, took up his mat and walked out in front of everyone. The people were amazed and began to praise God, "We have never seen anything like this." Jesus had shown to everyone that He has the authority to forgive people their sin. Another day, Jesus was walking on a road and a big crowd was following Him. He was teaching them. They reached a place where a blind man, called Bartimaeus, was sitting by the roadside begging. Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was coming down the road. He began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the Deliverer that God had promised to David to be one of his descendants. Bartimaeus asked Jesus for mercy. He knew that he was a sinner and that he did not deserve to be healed. He trusted in Jesus as his Deliverer that He could heal him.

Many were yelling at Bartimaeus saying, "Be quiet." Bartimaeus shouted even louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus really cared for Bartimaeus. He stopped and called Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus jumped up, threw off



his robe and ran to Jesus. Jesus asked Him, “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus answered, “I want to see.” Jesus said, “Go, your faith has healed you.” Immediately Bartimaeus received his sight and followed Jesus. His faith in Jesus made it possible for Jesus to forgive him of his sins and to make him a new person and to restore his sight Jesus healed many who, like Bartimaeus, trusted and believed in Jesus as their Deliverer. Greater than that was how Jesus forgave people and set them free from their sin. Jesus forgives everyone who admits they are sinners and will trust in Him as their Deliverer. the disciples and the good shephard

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:18-25, John 8:1-11, 9

20

THE GOOD SHEPARD

Jesus was walking around teaching the people that they had to repent from their sin and believe in Him to be saved. He forgave many people of their sins and healed people from sickness. Jesus did not only want to help people and forgive them their sins. He also wanted them to follow Him, be together with Him, get to know Him and become like Him. He called 12 people to be extra close to Him, to leave everything they had to follow Him, to live with and learn from Him. These 12 people He would later send out to tell others the good news that He was bringing. These 12 people were called Jesus’ disciples. He called them from different places.

For example, one day Jesus was walking beside a lake. He saw two brothers sitting in a boat together with their father preparing their nets. They were fishermen. When Jesus saw them, He said to them, “Come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” They both left their father in the boat and followed Jesus. Jesus told the people that He was like a Good Shepherd. In this time in Israel, many of the Israelites were shepherds, keepers of the sheep. Just like many of you are keepers of cattle. The shepherd in those times lived with the sheep. If there was no grass to eat in the place the sheep were staying, the shepherd would be the one to move them to another place with plenty of grass.

In the same way, Jesus wants to be the shepherd for everyone who believes in Him. He wants them to follow Him and always be led by Him. Jesus wanted to



be their Shepherd who gives them peace and everything they need. Jesus also said that He was like the door for the sheep. In Israel, when it was evening, the shepherd would make a fence of stone and wood in order to protect the sheep from wild animals. The shepherd would sleep in the entranceway to the sheep pen. Anyone or anything that wanted to go in would have to first pass by the shepherd. The shepherd became the “door” to the pen of the sheep. The sheep had to pass by the shepherd.

In the same way, Jesus is the door to everlasting life in heaven. Anyone who wants to be saved and receive everlasting life has come through Jesus. They have to believe only in Jesus. Anyone who believes in Jesus is also safe from all evil. Jesus will protect from the evil one, just like the shepherd protected the sheep from the wild animals. Jesus said that He was the same as a good shepherd. The good shepherd is always ready to die for his sheep. Jesus fulfilled this because He was willing to die for us. In the next story, I will tell about more wonderful miracles that Jesus did.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:1-16, 6:12-16

21

THE DEMON POSSESSED MAN AND LAZARUS

Jesus healed many sick people. He also freed many people from evil spirits. One day, a man that was filled with demons came to Jesus. He was living among the caves. Many people had tried to tie him up with chains because he was a danger for himself and other people. The demons in him were so strong that they even broke iron chains. Often, he would cry loudly and cut himself with stones. When the man saw Jesus, he ran to Him and fell down on his knees in front of Him. Jesus said, “Come out of him, you evil spirit.” The man shouted, “What do you want with me Jesus, Son of Most High God? Promise me that you will not torture me.” The demons knew that Jesus was the Son of God. They feared that He would deal with them immediately by sending them to the everlasting fire. A large herd of pigs were feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, “Please send us into the pigs.” Jesus gave them permission, the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs. There were many pigs and they all ran down the hillside into a lake and drowned. Many people now came from the city to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus,



they saw the man that had been possessed sitting there, dressed and in his right mind. He was totally free and changed Jesus had delivered him and given him peace with God.

Jesus came to deliver mankind from Satan's power. Those who come to Jesus never have to live in the kingdom of Satan anymore. Jesus has all the power over Satan. Jesus had a friend named Lazarus. One day, Lazarus got very sick and his sisters sent a message for Jesus. When Jesus received the message, He told His disciples it was an opportunity for God to be glorified. Jesus waited for two days. Then He said to the His disciples, "Now Lazarus is dead; let us go to him." Jesus was far away and no one told Him what had happened, but still He knew what had happened. When Jesus and His disciples arrived in the village, Lazarus had already been in the grave for four days.

One of Lazarus' sisters met Jesus on the road. She said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus said, "Your brother will rise again." She answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection day." Jesus had taught them that one day, the dead would be risen and everybody would be judged before God's throne. Jesus was not speaking of this day. He meant He would raise Lazarus immediately. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Everyone who believes in Me will live forever. Do you believe this?" She answered, "Yes, I believe You are Christ, the Son of God." They went together to Lazarus' grave.

There were many people there crying. Jesus felt sorry for them and was sad when they cried. He also wept. He told them to take away the stone that covered the entrance to the grave. They did. Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed so everyone could hear, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know You always hear Me." He called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." Lazarus stood up and came out from the grave. He was covered with the linens that covered dead people. Jesus told the people to take off the linens from Lazarus. Many people saw how Jesus woke Lazarus up from the dead and believed in Jesus. They believed He had power over death, was the resurrection, and could give them eternal life.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 5:1-20, John 11

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AND THE BREAD

One day, Jesus and His disciples were walking through an area called Samaria. The people who lived there were called Samaritans. The Israelites hated the Samaritans. These two tribes were always fighting with each other. They would not go through each other's land or drink from each other's wells. It was just like with the (insert tribe name here) and some of your neighboring tribes. Jesus was not like other people. He walked through the Samaritan land.

When He became thirsty, He sat down by one of their wells. A Samaritan woman came to the well. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." The woman replied to Jesus, "You are an Israelite. How can you talk to me and ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who I am, you would have instead asked Me and I would have given you living water." She asked, "You have nothing to draw water with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks the water from this well will be thirsty again. Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Instead, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, bubbling up to eternal life." The woman said to Jesus, "Give me some of this water so that I won't have to keep coming to this well to draw." Jesus told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." She replied, "I have no husband." Jesus said, "You are right. I know that you've had five husbands and the man you live with now is not your husband."

The woman was amazed that Jesus knew all about her. He knew that she had many husbands and none of them had been able to give her what she was longing and thirsting for. She understood that Jesus had not come to give her another husband. He had come to quench her thirst, set her free from sin and give her eternal life. She understood that Jesus was sent by God. She told Him, "I know the Deliverer is coming. I'm waiting for Him." Jesus said, "I am the Deliverer." Then, the woman believed in Jesus. She left her waterpot and ran back to tell the people in the town. She said, "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. I think He is the Deliverer." Many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony. They said, "We know that this man really is the Deliverer of the world." People came from all over Israel to hear Jesus teach and to see His miracles. Many large crowds would gather around Him.



One day, when Jesus was teaching, He saw that the people were hungry. He asked His disciples, “Where can we get food for all these people?” One of His disciples answered, “Here is a boy with five small loaves of bread and two small fish, but it could never be enough for so many people.” There were more than 5,000 people there. Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” He took the bread and fish, gave thanks to God for the food and the bread and fish multiplied in Jesus’ hands. He gave out to all the people as much as they wanted.

When they all had enough to eat, Jesus’ disciples gathered the leftover food. They filled 12 baskets with it. After that, many followed Jesus only because He had given them food. They did not believe they needed Him to deliver them from the punishment of sin which is death. Jesus told them, “You are following Me just because I gave you food for your bodies, but you need to receive bread for your soul that will give you eternal life. I am the bread of life who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Whoever believes in me will never die, but have eternal life.” Jesus came to give people eternal life, the water of life and bread of life. Some believed and received it, but some did not believe and they continued in their sin. Jesus did a lot of miracles, but there was another even greater thing that Jesus was about to do. Listen to the next story to hear what it is.

SCRIPTURE: John 4, 6:1-15

23

THE LAST SUPPER

The people had seen Jesus do many miracles. The people had forgotten Jesus was the Deliverer that would deliver them from their sin. Many people only believed Jesus was the great king that would come and wanted Him to become their king. The prophets said the new king would enter Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, riding on a donkey. When the people saw Jesus one day riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, they spread their clothes on the road. All the people praised Him as their new king of which the prophets had spoken. When the religious leaders saw how the people were praising Jesus, they became angry and tried to find a way to kill Him. The prophets had said that the Deliverer would suffer, die and rise again. Jesus knew this was going to happen. He told



His disciples and the people, “I must suffer a lot and be rejected. I must be killed, but after three days I will rise again.” The people and the disciples could not understand. Many people left Jesus when they heard this. How could He become the new king if He would die?

Now the time of year came to celebrate the Passover. Jesus and His disciples went to eat the Passover dinner. When they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to His disciples. He explained to them just as the bread had been broken, so His body would soon be broken for many. Jesus took the cup of wine, gave it to them and told them that just as the wine was poured, so His blood would be poured out for many people’s sins. Jesus stood up from the meal, poured water into a basin and started to wash the disciples’ feet. Jesus told them, “I do this to show you how much I love you. From now on, I do not call you My servants, but you are My friends. As My Father loves Me, so I love you. I love you so much that I am ready to die for you. My commandment to you is that as I love you, so you have to love one another.”

One of the disciples named Judas was there planning to betray Jesus. Jesus knew this. He said, “One of you will betray Me.” This surprised the disciples a lot. Jesus turned to Judas and said, “Go and do what you plan to do.” Judas went out to the religious leaders to tell them where Jesus was, so they could arrest Him that night. The religious leaders gave Judas 30 pieces of silver for doing this. After Judas had left, Jesus said to the rest of the disciples: “I am now going to leave you to go to My Father in heaven. When I go there, I will not leave you alone. I will send the Holy Spirit. He will be with you and live inside you. He will teach you and remind you of everything I have said. He will give you peace. You don’t have to worry or be afraid.

Now I am going to My Father and in His house are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you. One day, I will come back and take you there with Me. I am the way to that place. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” One day, Jesus will come and bring everyone who believes in Him to heaven. Jesus later showed one of His disciples what heaven will look like. That disciple said that in heaven there will be no more sorrow, tears, sickness or death. There will be no sun, because God Himself will be there shining brighter than the sun. Just like the garden of Eden, the tree of life will be there and we will eat from it and live forever. Jesus, the Lamb of God, will be our Shepherd.



He will lead us to springs of living water and we will live forever together with God in perfect peace. After this, Jesus and His disciples stood up and went out together. Jesus was now about to do something very special and important. Listen to the next story and I will tell you what happened.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 21:5-38

24

JESUS ARRESTED AND CRUCIFIED

After Jesus and His disciples had eaten, they went out to a garden called Gethsemane. There, Jesus started to pray. He was very distressed and troubled, even sweating blood, because He knew what He was about to do was a very difficult thing. Now the religious leaders were coming together with Judas to arrest Him. Jesus rose up to meet them. When Judas saw Jesus, he went and kissed Him. This was the sign to show which one was Jesus.

They arrested Jesus and all of His disciples fled away from Him. No one stayed with Him. In the darkness, they brought Jesus to the High Priest. There all the religious leaders tried to find something to accuse Jesus, but they could not find anything. Jesus hadn't done anything wrong. Finally, the High Priest asked Jesus, "Are you Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus answered, "I am and you will see Me sitting at the right side of God in heaven." The High Priest tore his clothes and said, "He has made Himself equal to God. He deserves to die." They all condemned Him that He should be put to death. They were not allowed to kill anyone without permission from those who were ruling the country.

Early the next morning, they took Jesus to the governor. When the religious leaders arrived with Jesus, they pointed to Jesus and said, "This man is against you. He claims He is our new king." The governor asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Israelites?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is as you say. But My kingdom is not of this world." After questioning Jesus, the governor said to the people, "This man has done nothing to deserve death. It is our custom to release one prisoner every year at the Passover. Do you want me to release Jesus?" All of the religious leaders and the people that were there started to shout they wanted the other man, who was a cruel murderer, to be released instead. The governor asked, "So what shall I do with Jesus?" They all shouted, "Crucify Him Cru-



cify Him ” Crucifying someone was the most terrible and painful way to kill someone. This was what they wanted to do to Jesus. They wanted to kill Him even though He had never done anything wrong. They had forgotten how He had healed the sick and done many good things. Now they were just shouting, “Crucify Him Crucify Him ”

Finally, the governor could not resist them anymore so he decided to crucify Jesus. The governor’s soldiers took Jesus and beat Him until His back was all torn apart. The soldiers mocked Jesus and put a crown of thorns on His head. They forced Him to carry His cross to the place where He was going to be crucified. There, they crucified Him. The soldiers drove nails through Jesus’ hands and feet into the wooden cross. This was just like the prophets had said about the Deliverer, that His hands and feet would be pierced. They lifted up the cross so that Jesus was hung upon the cross.

Do you remember that Jesus told Nicodemus, as Moses lifted up the snake on the pole in the desert, so Jesus, the Deliverer, had to be lifted up so that sinners could be saved from punishment? Now Jesus was hanging, bleeding and suffering on the cross. Jesus looked at the people who crucified Him and prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Jesus loved the people so much. He even loved the ones who were killing Him and forgave them for the sin they did.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 22:1-53, Luke 22:54-71, Matthew 27:1-10, 27-31, Luke 23

25

JESUS’ DEATH

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, the people around Him insulted Him. They said, “He saved others, but He can’t save Himself. If You are Christ, come down from the cross, then we can believe in You.” Jesus had all the power. It would not have been difficult for Him to step down from the cross, but He did not. Why did He not do that? Because there was something much greater He was about to do. Suddenly, darkness came over the whole land and it was completely dark for three hours. Jesus cried in a loud voice, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” God turned away from Jesus and left Him alone, because Jesus was taking our punishment for sin. He was separated from God



instead of us, so we can be forgiven and brought back to God. Jesus then cried out in a loud voice, “It is finished.” He breathed His last breath and died. Jesus finished the work of delivering sinners from Satan, sin and death, by being separated from God and dying as the full payment for our sins. In the moment when Jesus breathed His last breath and died, there was a great earthquake and the curtain in the temple, that was hanging before the Most Holy Place where God lived, was torn into two pieces from top to bottom. God tore this curtain apart.

This curtain had been separating the people from God. Now God wanted to show that Jesus had opened the way to God. No one would have to be separated from God anymore. God also wanted to show that there was no need for the High Priest to continue bringing the blood of animals through this curtain into the Most Holy Place every year. Jesus’ blood was enough and had completely paid the price for sins for all eternity, both past and future. Jesus died instead of us because of our sins just like the animals that were sacrificed at the Tabernacle died instead of the Israelites because of their sins.

When the people saw Him die, and felt the earth quake and heard what He had said, the leader over the soldiers said, “Surely this man was the Son of God.” Among the people, there was a religious leader that had secretly believed in Jesus. He took down Jesus’ body, wrapped it in linen and put it in a grave built as a cave. He put a big stone in the entrance to the grave, so no one could enter. Soldiers were put there to guard the grave so Jesus’ disciples could not come and steal the body. Now everybody thought it was finished. It seemed that Jesus had died and could not come back again. Listen to the next story and I will tell you what happened.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 23

26

JESUS’ RESURRECTION

Now Jesus was in the grave and everybody thought it was over with Jesus. Do you remember what Jesus said would happen? He said He would rise again after three days. Three days after Jesus had been buried, there was another earthquake. An angel came down from heaven and rolled away the stone to the



grave. When the soldiers guarding the grave saw the earthquake and the angel, they were terrified and became like dead men. At the same time, some women that had been followers of Jesus were on their way to the grave to anoint Jesus' body. On their way they asked, "Who will roll away the stone from the entrance for us?" When they arrived, they saw the large stone already had been rolled away. They entered the grave and saw a man dressed in a white robe sitting there. They were terrified. The man was an angel. The angel told them, "Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He has risen He is not here. Look, here is the place where they laid Him. Now, go tell His disciples what has happened." God raised Jesus from the dead Jesus had finished paying the punishment for our sins. He had been separated from God and died.

Now, God was satisfied with the punishment Jesus paid; therefore, He was released from death and rose again Jesus had told His followers many times that He would die, but that He would rise again after three days. His followers had not understood this. They were not expecting Him to rise again. Therefore, these women were very surprised and ran away from the grave terrified. The soldiers also ran away. They told the religious leaders all that had happened. The religious leaders gave them a lot of money. They told the soldiers, "Don't tell anybody what happened. Instead, say that Jesus' disciples stole His body while you were sleeping."

Some days after Jesus had risen, He showed Himself to His disciples. Jesus said to them: "In a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. I will send Him to you. When He comes upon you, you will receive power to go to the whole world and tell them about Me. For this is My command to you and to everyone who believes in Me, you shall go into all the world and tell everyone the good news that I died for their sins and rose again. Everyone that trusts in Me and believes that I died for their sins will be forgiven and saved from Satan, sin and death. Everyone who does not believe in Me will remain under Satan's power and go with him to the lake of fire. When you go to tell this, I will be with you always to the very end of the age. These signs will follow you. You will speak in new tongues, heal the sick and drive out demons."

After Jesus said this, He was taken up into heaven before their eyes until they could not see Him anymore. While they were looking up into the sky to see Him, two angels appeared beside them. They said, "Why are you looking into

the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will one day come back in the same way from heaven.” That day, He will judge the whole earth. He will throw all those who do not believe into the lake of fire. Everyone who believed in Jesus gathered together, prayed and waited for the Holy Spirit to come. Just like Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came and filled them all. They were filled with power. Immediately, they obeyed Jesus’ command and went out into all the world to tell the good news about Jesus. Still today, people are going into all the world telling the good news. God is working with them confirming His words by signs and miracles that follow them. Next time, I will tell you more about why Jesus had to die.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:1-49, Acts 1:3-11

27

LOOKING BACK PART 1

Today, I want to go through the stories I told up to now to show you God’s message to us through these stories. Do you remember when I told you about Adam and Eve? They had a wonderful life in the garden of Eden. They were in relationship with God. They were His friends. There was no sickness, sin, hate or fights. When Adam and Eve sinned, they and all their descendants were separated from God. Satan became their king and they were all going to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. God gave a promise to Adam and Eve that He would one day send a Deliverer.

God said the Deliverer would crush Satan and bring mankind back into relationship with God. This is what Jesus did when He died on the cross and rose again. He crushed Satan’s power, because everyone who believes in Jesus will not be under Satan’s power anymore. They will become the children of God. They will have the same relationship as Adam and Eve had with God before they sinned. Do you remember when I told you about Noah? All the people were sinners and deserved to die. The people on earth today are not better. We are also all sinners and deserve death like the people in Noah’s time. We are all on our way to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

In Noah’s time, God prepared a way for people to be saved from the flood. To be saved from the flood, people had to believe God’s message, admit they were



sinners who deserved to be punished and enter into the ark, the big boat, that Noah was building. There was no other way to be saved. Everybody that did not believe and enter the boat died. Just like there was only one way to be saved from the flood, there is only one way to be saved from everlasting punishment. That is to believe God's message, admit you are a sinner and believe in Jesus and His death for you. Jesus is just like the boat. He is the only way prepared by God to be saved from everlasting punishment like the boat was the only way prepared to be saved from the flood. Do you remember when I told you about Abraham? Abraham had just tied Isaac to the altar and was about to kill him, but God stopped Him. Even though Isaac deserved to die, God provided a perfect lamb to die instead of Isaac. Do you remember what John said about Jesus? He said Jesus was the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. Just like the lamb died instead of Isaac because of his sin, Jesus died instead of us because of our sins. Next time, I will tell more about why Jesus had to die.

28

LOOKING BACK PART 2

Do you remember when I told you about the Passover? God was going to send punishment over the Egyptians for their disobedience to God. All of their firstborns would die. There was only one way the Israelites could be saved from this punishment so their firstborns would not die. They were to take a perfect lamb, kill it and let the blood flow out. They were to take this blood and put it on their doorposts. Just like the lamb's blood flowed out to save the Israelites' firstborns, Jesus' blood flowed out to pay for our sins and save us from death.

The Israelites could not just kill the lamb and let the blood flow out. They had to take the blood and put it on their doorposts. They had to stay inside that house. They had to trust and believe they would be saved because of the blood on the doorposts. In the same way, we can not just admit we are sinners and know Jesus died for our sins. We have to personally trust only in Jesus and His blood for our salvation from sin and death. Do you remember when I told you about the Tabernacle? God prepared a way for the Israelites so they could come to God and be forgiven of their sins. They had to build the Tabernacle.

Every year, the High Priest had to kill an animal and bring the blood to God in the Most Holy Place. The blood of animals could not pay for sin completely. It



could only hold off the judgement for the last year. Do you remember God said that Jesus would be the Final High Priest? When Jesus died, He went to God in the real Tabernacle in heaven. The Tabernacle that the Israelites built was only a copy of the real one in heaven. Jesus did not bring the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place in heaven, but He brought His own blood. His blood was the perfect payment for sin. It could take away all the sins of the world. After this, no other High Priest was needed and no more animals had to be killed. God showed this by tearing the curtain in the Temple when Jesus died. Do you remember when I told you about the snake on the pole? God sent poisonous snakes among the Israelites, because they had grumbled against Him. When the Israelites repented, God made a way for them to be saved. God told Moses to make a metal snake and hang it on a pole. Everyone who looked on the snake was healed. It was not enough for the Israelites to pray to God to forgive them their sins and take away the snakes. They had to believe in this way that God had prepared for them to be saved. They had to obey God and simply look at the snake.

Jesus told Nicodemus that in the same way the snake was lifted up, so He also would be lifted up. This happened when Jesus was lifted up on the cross. All that looked to Him and trusted only in Him would be saved from everlasting punishment. Just like the Israelites in the desert, it is not enough for you to admit you are a sinner and pray to God to forgive you. You also have to trust in the way God has prepared for you. You have to look to and trust only in Jesus and His death for you.

29

YOUR DECISION

Through these stories, I told you about a lot of people who believed in God. I told you about Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses and others. They all admitted they were sinners. They believed they deserved to die. They also trusted in the Deliverer whom God said would come. Therefore, God forgave them their sin and saved them from everlasting punishment. There has been and will always be only one way to be saved from sin, separation from God and everlasting punishment; You have to believe like Abel, Noah, Abraham and Moses that you are a sinner who deserves the punishment of death. You have to believe in the Deliverer, Jesus, who died instead of you, so your sins could be forgiven.



Some of you may think, “This was a good story, but I want to think about it and decide later if I am going to believe Jesus is my Deliverer.” I want you to listen to the story I am now going to tell you. One day, when Jesus was still here on earth, He told the people this story about the lake of fire. He said: “There was a rich man who dressed in very nice clothes. He lived in luxury every day, but at his gate laid a beggar named Lazarus. He was suffering a lot. He was covered with sores the dogs used to come and lick. He was hungry and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Finally, the beggar died and angels carried him to Abraham’s side in heaven. The rich man died, but he did not go to heaven. He went to the lake of fire. There he was suffering a lot.

When he looked up, he saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. So, he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip his finger in water to cool my tongue, because I am suffering a lot. Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember in your lifetime you received good things while Lazarus received bad things. Now, he is comforted here and you are suffering. Between us and you, there is a great chasm. No one can go from here to you and no one can go from where you are to us.’ The suffering man said, ‘I beg you, send Lazarus to my father’s house to my five brothers. Let him warn them so they will not come to this terrible place. Abraham replied, ‘Your brothers have the writings of Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ ‘No, father Abraham,’ the man begged, ‘if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Abraham said to him, ‘If your brothers do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Jesus told this story to warn us. We don’t know when it will be our last day. We don’t know if we will live tomorrow. One day, we will all die and face judgement and then it is too late to decide if we will believe in Jesus as our Deliverer. Each one of us must listen to the story of God that Moses and the prophets wrote down. This is the story we have now told you, the story about the Deliverer. Each one of us must decide in this life if we will believe in Jesus as our Deliverer or not. After we die, we can’t change our situation or help others in our family.

God has given you this day an opportunity to decide if you will believe in Jesus as your Deliverer. What is your decision? Do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe that He died for your sins and is the only way you can be saved? If the answer is yes, God says that all your sins are forgiven. You are not under Sa-



tan's power anymore, but you have become the child of God. When you die, you will not go to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. You will live forever in heaven with God.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 1:16-25, 2:5-6, 3:20-26: 6:6-12, 10:1-13

30

THE FIRST CHURCH

The disciples had watched, astonished as Jesus ascended into heaven. Two men, dressed in white, asked them, "Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

So, the disciples returned to Jerusalem, as they were a day's walk from the city at the Mount of Olives. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. There were the disciples, Peter and John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. Jesus' brothers were also there along with his mother Mary and some other women. They all joined together constantly in prayer. There were about 120 of them. One man, Matthias, who had been with them from the beginning of Jesus' ministry, was chosen to be an apostle and to fill Judas Iscariot's place. After Judas had betrayed Jesus, Judas had bought a field and it was in that field that he had died.

Many weeks went by. Then, one day, when they were all together in a house the day of Pentecost came. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit guided them.

Now, there were devout Jews from every nation in the world living in Jerusalem. When they heard the sounds of Pentecost, a great crowd gathered. The people were astonished because each one heard his language being spoken by the disciples. They asked, "Aren't these people from Galilee? How is it that we hear, each of us in his own mother tongue? We hear them telling in our own



languages about the mighty works of God.” They were amazed and asked each other, “What does this mean?” But others made fun of the disciples and said, “They are drunk”

But Peter, standing with the other eleven apostles, spoke loudly, saying, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, listen to me. These men are not drunk as you are saying. It is only 9:00 a.m. But this is what was told about by the prophet Joel, ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all people and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams... And I will show wondrous things in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes. And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Peter cried, “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man shown worthy to you by God with mighty works and miracles which God did through him in your midst, this Jesus, delivered up according to God’s definite plan and knowledge, this Jesus, you crucified and killed. But God raised him up, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was not possible for death to hold him.

For David said about him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body will live in hope because you will not abandon me to the grave...”

“Brothers,” Peter continued, “I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day. Being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ. This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. Exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear...Let all the people of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and



the rest of the disciples, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off— every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

With many other words Peter warned them saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized. About 3,000 people were added to their number that day. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Everyone was filled with wonder and the apostles did many miracles. All the believers were together and shared with each other. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together at the temple and in their homes. They ate together in their homes with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God. And all the other people approved of them. And the Lord added to their number day by day, those who were being saved.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 1:10-26, Acts 2

31

THE CHURCH AS A SEEDLING

One day, the apostles Peter and John were going to the temple at the time of prayer at three in the afternoon, when a man who had been crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate to beg for money. When the man saw Peter and John about to enter the temple courtyard, he asked for money. Peter and John looked straight at him. Then Peter said, “Look at us” So, expecting to get some money, the man lifted up his eyes. But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

And taking him by the right hand, he helped the beggar up. Instantly, the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they knew he was the



beggar who used to sit every day by the temple gate, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them, "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why are you staring at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you denied and handed over to Pilate to be killed. You denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. And his name and the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all."

"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you —even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

For Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people."

"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on have foretold these days. You are the children of these prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers. God said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you in turning every one of you from your wickedness."

While they were speaking, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them. The Sadducees were very disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and put them in jail until the next day as it was already evening.



But many who heard the message believed, and the number of believers who were men grew to about five thousand. The next day the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. They had Peter and John brought before them and asked them, “By what power or what name did you do this?”

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “If you are asking us about this act of kindness we showed to a cripple and are asking how he was healed then you and all the people of Israel must know that it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead that this man stands before you healed. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

When the temple leaders saw Peter and John’s courage and realized that they were uneducated, ordinary men, they were astonished and they recognized that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. They ordered them out of the room and talked together. “Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

So they called them in again and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, “You decide whether we should obey you or God, for we can’t help speaking about what we have seen and heard. After further threats, the religious leaders let them go because they couldn’t decide how to punish them because all the people were praising God for the healing of the beggar who had been lame for over forty years.

When they were released, Peter and John went back to the believers and reported all that had happened. When the people heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer, praising God and asking him to help them speak his word with boldness in spite of the threats. “Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus,” they prayed. After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.



All the believers were united in heart and mind. They shared everything they had. The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and much grace was upon them. There were no needy persons among the believers for from time to time, those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet to be distributed to anyone in need. In this same fashion, a Levite named Joseph whom the apostles called Barnabas which means Son of Encouragement, sold a field he owned and gave the money to the apostles.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 3, Acts 4

32

THE CHURCH GROWS

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution following the murder of Stephen, traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the gospel message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. A great number that believed turned to the Lord.

News of this reached the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year, Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. Antioch was the first place the disciples were called Christians.

During this time, a prophet from Jerusalem came to Antioch and predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. They sent Barnabas and Saul to take their gift to the elders in Jerusalem. When they had finished their mission, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch taking



a young man, John Mark, with them. In the church there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucid and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John Mark was with them as their helper. They traveled and preached and the word of the Lord spread through the whole region. They encountered hardships and persecution, mostly from the Jews. Paul and Barnabas told them, "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. When Saul, now called Paul, and Barnabas were expelled from a region for preaching the good news, they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to other places. Often they returned to the churches that had begun, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church, and with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

After some time, they sailed back to Antioch where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers that unless they were circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses that they could not be saved. This brought Paul and Barnabas in sharp dispute



and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas and some other believers were appointed to go to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way. As they traveled, they shared the news about the conversion of many Gentiles. They were welcomed by the church in Jerusalem, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

Some believers who were also Pharisees said that the Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses. The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them, “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

SCRIPTURE: Acts 11:19-30, 12:24-25, 13:1-5, 46-52, 14:21-28, Acts 15:1-35

33

THE CHURCH BEARS FRUIT

Some time after Paul and Barnabas had been in Antioch, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul did not think it was wise to take him because he had not continued with them in the work but left them during their journey. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted ways, Barnabas taking John Mark and Paul choosing Silas. They went to different areas, strengthening the churches. Paul went to Derbe where a young disciple named Timothy lived. His mother was a Jewess and a believer, but his father was a Greek. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him so as not to offend the Jews in that area. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia,



having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. In one area that they tried to enter, the Spirit would not allow them, so they went to another place. There, during the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Following the vision, he and his companions left for Macedonia, concluding that God had called them to preach the gospel to them. When they arrived in the area, they went outside a city gate to a river, expecting to find a place of prayer. They encountered a woman named Lydia, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to Paul’s message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited Paul and his companions to stay at her house.

Once, Paul and Silas prayed for a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. When the spirit left her in response to their prayer, her owners were furious because they realized they wouldn’t make any more money from her predictions. They stirred up a crowd and lied about Paul and Silas to the authorities. As a result, Paul and Silas were stripped and severely beaten, then thrown into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully, so he put them in chains in an inner cell.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly, there was such a violent earthquake, that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they shared God’s word with him and with all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.



When it was daylight, the authorities ordered Paul and Silas to be released. The jailer told them they could leave and to go in peace. But Paul said to the officers that they would have to escort them out because they were Roman citizens but had been beaten without a trial and thrown into prison. This disturbed the authorities, as they had not known that they were Roman citizens. They came and apologized to Paul and Silas and asked them to leave the city.

After Paul and Silas came out of prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the believers and encouraged them. Then they left. Paul and his companions traveled to many different areas, sharing the gospel and starting new churches. They endured many hardships. After some time, when Paul was returning to Jerusalem and was not able to stop by Ephesus, a place where he had begun work, he called for the elders to come to them.

When they arrived he said to them, "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house...the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me— the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace....Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are being sanctified. I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."



When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 15:36-41, 16:1-40