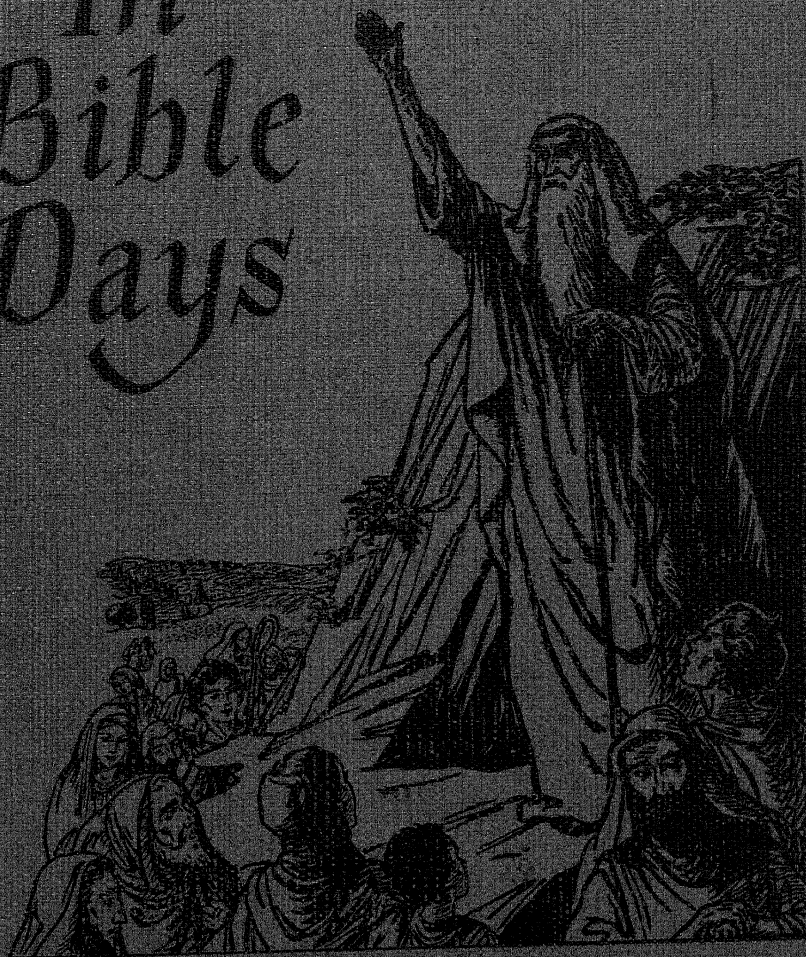


# In Bible Days



• BY • GERTRUDE • HARTMAN •

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IN BIBLE DAYS

By GERTRUDE HARTMAN

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN  
*and how it came to be*

THESE UNITED STATES  
*and how they came to be*

MEDIEVAL DAYS AND WAYS

MACHINES  
*and the men who made the world of Industry*

IN BIBLE DAYS



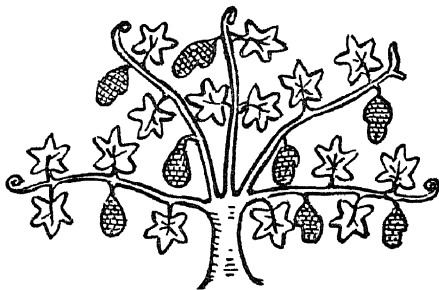
# IN BIBLE DAYS

*By*

GERTRUDE HARTMAN

*Illustrations by*

KATHLEEN VOUTE



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1948

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ing to extend their dominions, passed through this land. As they lived on the main passageway of trade and war, the people of Palestine were often conquered by stronger nations; possession of Palestine was important to the rulers of these nations for the protection of their caravan routes and the safe passage of their warriors. One invader after another led destroying armies into that little country. At different times it became a part of the empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

In ancient times most peoples of the world believed in many gods. The religion of the Hebrews, or Jews as they were called in later days, differed greatly from those of all other nations. They believed that there was but one God, a God of justice and mercy, who forgave those that repented of wrongdoing and tried to live good lives. They were conscious of his constant presence with them, believing that he spoke directly to their leaders, enabling them to guide the people in right ways of living. In no other nation has the whole life of the people been so closely bound up with their religion. The history of the Hebrews, their way of life, their laws and customs, their literature and songs, their heroes and leaders, were all inspired by a great faith.

Although the people of Palestine never became powerful politically, as some of the neighboring nations did, what happened in that country was to influence the lives of people in the world long after the power and glory of the other ancient nations had passed away. In that little land arose two of the world's great religions, that of the Jews and that of the Christians, which all through the ages down to our own time, have brought comfort and hope to many people in many lands and have helped them to lead better lives.

The story of those religions is told in the Bible, which is the greatest expression of man's idea of the beauty of holiness. It is really not one book, but a collection of books, written by a number of men over a long period of time. Much of it was not put in writing until centuries after the events recorded had taken place.

The holy scriptures of the Jews are to be found in that part of the Bible which Christians call the Old Testament. The sacred writings of the Christians include both the Old Testament and the New Testament.



## CONTENTS

### IN THE BEGINNING

God Made Heaven and Earth	3
The Garden of Eden	9
Noah and the Flood	13

### TALES OF EARLY HEBREWS

Abraham, the Great Forefather	21
The Children of Israel	28
Joseph and His Brothers	33

### IN THE LAND OF EGYPT

Seven Years of Famine	41
Let My People Go	45
Out of Bondage	52

### THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

Crossing the Desert	61
At Mount Sinai	65
The End of the Wandering	72

### THE PROMISED LAND

The Conquest of Canaan	79
In the Days of the Judges	83

### THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Kingdom Established	93
David, the Hero King	99
Solomon in All His Glory	104

## A CONQUERED LAND

The Kingdom Divided	113
Great Prophets	118
By the Rivers of Babylon	125

## JESUS OF NAZARETH

In the Little Town of Bethlehem	135
Jesus Increased in Wisdom and Stature	140
The Coming of the King	145

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Ministry of Jesus	153
Jesus and His Disciples	159
Opposition to Jesus Grows	166

## THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS

The Last Supper	173
In Gethsemane	178
Go Ye, Therefore, and Teach All Nations	182





## IN THE BEGINNING

***I**N SIX days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

EXODUS XX:11



## GOD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” These are the opening words of the Bible. In reading the story which follows them there comes to us a sense of the majesty of God, as, step by step, he creates the world and everything in it.

At first, “the earth was without form, and void.” There was nothing but dark, seething water. “The spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” and through the darkness shone the first light. There followed a time of light, which God named day, and a time of darkness, which he called night.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And the evening and the morning were the first day.

On the second day God created the vast expanse of the sky. In it were clouds which drew moisture from the water covering the earth.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which

were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven.

And the evening and the morning were the second day.

The next day more mighty changes took place. The great masses of land which form the continents took shape, and the water which, in the beginning, had covered the whole earth, flowed into the deep places in its uneven surface to make the seas.



And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas; and God saw that it was good.

There was nothing living in the world; the earth was still a barren waste. God covered the bare surface of the earth and made it beautiful with grass, with flowers of many kinds, with plants, and trees.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day.

In the sky God set two great lights, the sun and the moon. The sun rose in the east, traveled across the vast dome of the heavens, and set in the west. The time between its rising and setting marked a day. As the days passed this time became longer and longer, then gradually shorter and shorter, thus making the seasons and the year. The moon first appeared in the sky as a crescent. Night after night it grew larger until it became a beautiful ball of light. Gradually it became smaller and smaller until it disappeared from the sky for a time. Then it appeared again as a crescent and again began its course in the night sky. This time of the changing moon from a crescent until its disappearance represented a month.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.

And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

In the waters of the earth, living creatures developed—great whales, and fish of many kinds; and through the air flew the first birds.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Animals, great and small, came into existence on the land. Cattle grazed in the meadows, and mighty beasts roamed the forests.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

Last of all, on the sixth day, God created man. He was different from all other living things. "God created man in his own image," says the Bible, with the spirit of God within him. He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Man was to have dominion over all the other living creatures of the earth.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. .

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

In six days God had created the heavens, and the earth, and "all the host of them." As he gazed upon each thing he

had made, "behold, it was very good." His great work of creation was finished, and he rested.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made.

Thus in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, the book of beginnings, the Hebrews expressed in beautiful and simple words their idea of the way all things came into existence. They knew that the creation of the world was not something which happened just by chance. They saw in it the magnificent, orderly plan of God, the great ruler of the universe.

According to the Bible story the work of creation was accomplished in six days. Modern scientists believe that it took millions of years for the earth to develop into the form in which the first people knew it. The early inhabitants of Palestine were a poetic people, and possibly they did not mean the word "day" to be interpreted exactly. Very likely they thought of it as representing an indefinite period of time, for one of their psalmists said of God, "a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday."

As God had rested on the seventh day of the week, the Hebrews held that day sacred; on it no work was to be done. It was to be devoted to the worship of the great God, who had made them and everything in the world. One of their commandments said:



Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

## THE GARDEN OF EDEN

God named the man he had created Adam, and made for him a beautiful place, the Garden of Eden, in which to live. To this garden God brought all the living creatures he had made, and Adam named them and had dominion over them.

In the second story of the Bible an account is given of how God made the first woman. Adam was lonely. He longed for a companion, and God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." He caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, and while he slept "took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." Out of this rib God made a woman to be the wife of Adam. The name of this first woman was Eve.

In the garden which God had made were many beautiful trees. On them grew delicious fruits which Adam and Eve could eat. There was one tree, however, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which Adam and Eve were not to touch. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat," God said, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it."

God warned Adam and Eve that dreadful punishment would follow if they disobeyed. "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," he said.

Adam and Eve lived happily in the beautiful garden. They obeyed God and knew nothing of wickedness and wrongdoing. One day, however, when Eve was alone, she was tempted by the spirit of evil in the form of a serpent.

"Hath God said, 'Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" asked the serpent.

"We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden," replied Eve, "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'"

"Ye shall not surely die," the serpent assured Eve, "for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Eve was persuaded by the evil serpent to taste the fruit she had been forbidden to eat. She also gave some of it to Adam.

It was the custom of God to walk in the garden in the cool of the evening and Adam and Eve always walked with him. In the evening of the day they had tasted the forbidden fruit, they knew that they had done wrong and they were afraid to meet God. When they heard him coming, they hid among the trees.

"Where art thou?" God called to Adam. Adam and Eve came from their hiding place and Adam confessed to God. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat," he said.

God spoke to Eve. "What is this that thou hast done?"

"The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat," replied Eve.



In anger God drove the unhappy pair from the garden because they had disobeyed him. Henceforth they were to live in the harsh world beyond it and were to learn the meaning of sorrow and suffering. All the rest of their lives they were to make their living by hard work. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground," declared God, "for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

In order that Adam and Eve should never again enter the garden, God placed at the entrance angels and a flaming sword which whirled around in all directions.

In the story of Adam and Eve the Hebrews explained how the first people sinned by disobeying God. Because of their wrongdoing, sorrow and suffering came into the world.

Some time after Adam and Eve were driven from the garden, two sons, Cain and Abel, were born to them. When they grew up, Abel tended the sheep in the fields, and Cain became a tiller of the soil.

One day the brothers brought offerings to the Lord. Abel brought a newborn lamb as an offering, and Cain brought fruit. God was pleased with Abel's gift but not with that of Cain. Cain was angry at this.

God rebuked Cain, saying, "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

After that Cain grew jealous of Abel because he was favored by God. One day in a fit of blind rage he struck his brother and killed him. Immediately he heard the voice of God saying, "Where is Abel thy brother?"

"I know not," replied Cain. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

God said, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

Cain was to be severely punished for his wicked deed. "Now art thou cursed from the earth. . . . When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength," said God. "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

"My punishment is greater than I can bear," cried Cain in terrible anguish. "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid . . . and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

God replied, "Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." He put a mark on him to warn those who saw him that they should not kill him.

Wretched, guilty Cain, branded as a murderer, went from the presence of God. For the rest of his life he lived in the wilds of Nod, a land to the east of Eden.

Adam and Eve had other children, and in the course of time their descendants populated the earth.

## NOAH AND THE FLOOD

As time passed, evil spread throughout the world. The earth was filled with violence; there was no peace or safety anywhere.

When God saw the wickedness in the world he regretted that he had made man. He decided that the only way to rid

the world of evil was to destroy all the people in it and begin the world all over again. "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth," he declared, "both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

One man "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" because he was good. His name was Noah. He and his family were to be saved.

One day God told Noah what he planned to do. "Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life," he said, "and everything that is in the earth shall die."

God directed Noah to build a large ship called an ark, and take into it with him his wife, his three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. Two of every beast of the field, every bird of the air, and every living thing on the ground were also to go into the ark.

Noah and his sons hewed mighty cedar trees and shaped them into beams and planks. Out of these they built the ark according to the directions God had given Noah. At length the ark was finished and Noah and his family went into it. From near and far came all sorts of living creatures, two by two, who made their way into the ark.

In a few days storm clouds gathered, the sky grew dark, and rain began falling in torrents. For forty days and nights the rain fell without stopping. Higher and higher the water rose on the land until it was above the peaks of even the highest mountains. "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven," says the Bible account.

As the water rose over the earth, the ark was lifted up and floated along on its surface with Noah and his family and all the living creatures within it safe.

After about a hundred and fifty days the water began going down. Noah realized that the ark was no longer moving. It had come to rest on the top of a high mountain, Mount Ararat. After a while Noah opened the window and looked out. He saw that the high land nearby was dry. As he wanted to make sure that the water had gone down far enough so that it would be safe to venture out of the ark, he sent out a raven and a dove. The raven did not come back, but the dove "found no rest for the sole of her foot" and returned to the ark.

After waiting seven days Noah again sent out the dove. When she returned, "lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf." Noah was happy when he saw the leaf for it showed that the flood had gone down below the level of the treetops and that olive trees were putting forth their leaves again.

Seven days later Noah sent the dove out once more. This time she did not return and Noah believed that the flood had subsided. He took the top off the ark, looked out, and was overjoyed to find that all the ground as far as he could see was dry. However he decided to wait until he heard the voice of God telling him what he should do. One day God spoke to him, saying, "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee."

As Noah and his family came out of the ark they saw a new and beautiful world, a fitting place to be the home of man. The door of the ark was opened wide so that all the animals could come out. They scattered all over the land.

In gratitude to God for saving him and his family, Noah built an altar on which he placed offerings. God was pleased with Noah's act of devotion and promised that never again would he destroy the world by flood. "While the earth remaineth," he said, "seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

As a sign of the promise he had made, God set a beautiful, many-colored rainbow in the sky. It was a promise of future happiness. "I do set my bow in the cloud," he said, "and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature."

Noah and his wife and his sons and their wives became the ancestors of a new race of people. Thus the life of man began anew and in the course of time the whole world was peopled again.

The Hebrews knew that the people of the world spoke different languages and they wondered how these languages came to be. Their explanation is given in the story of the Tower of Babel.

In the early days of the world all the people spoke the same language. The men of those early days became dissatisfied with their life and held wicked counsel together. "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven," they said.

According to the ancient belief this was rebellion against the rule of God over the world. God did not allow the people to finish building the tower. He confused their speech so



that they forgot their common language. Each one spoke a different language and no one could understand what the others said. There was nothing but a babble of voices. The confusion which followed prevented the people from finishing the tower.

The tower which the people had tried to build was called the Tower of Babel because of the babble of voices which was created when it was being built. After that God scattered the people all over the world. In that way mankind was divided into different nations speaking different languages.

Underneath these stories about the beginning of the world we can see the basic ideas of the Hebrew religion. In them it is made clear that God made man "in his own image," and created a good world for him to live in. Over and over again in the Bible the idea is brought out that God demands right living on the part of those who believe in him. So long as man obeys God he will live in happiness and peace; but sorrow and suffering will surely come to those who disobey God. One of the Ten Commandments said, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."





## TALES OF EARLY HEBREWS

*N*OW the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.

GENESIS XII:1



## ABRAHAM, THE GREAT FOREFATHER

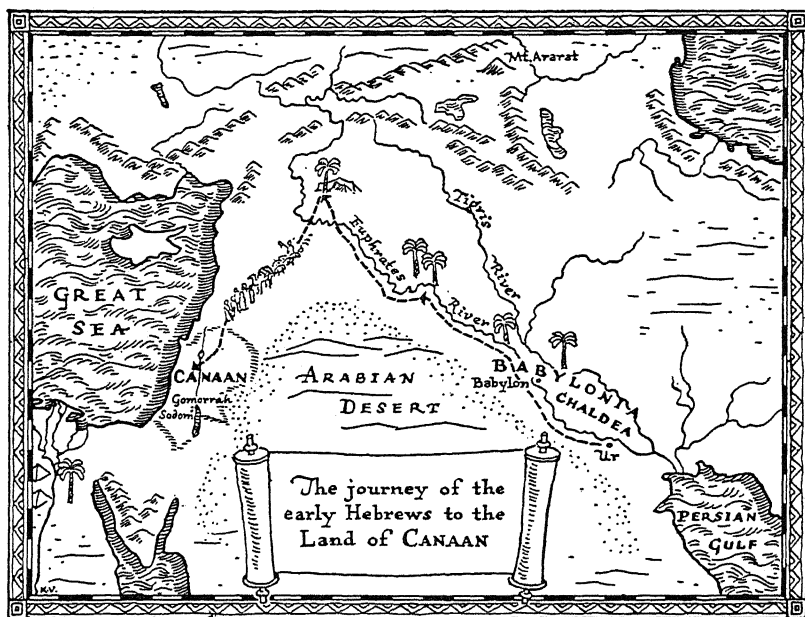
The Hebrews belonged to a large group of ancient peoples known as Semites, who were supposed to be the descendants of Shem, the oldest son of Noah. In their earliest days they lived in the Arabian desert, near the ancient city of Ur, which was not far from the mouth of the Euphrates River. Their great forefather was Abraham, sometimes called Abram, who is thought to have lived about 2000 B.C.

At the time of Abraham most of the people of the world believed in many gods. They made idols of them which they worshipped. Terah, the father of Abraham, made idols for the temples.

Abraham came to believe that there was but one true God. One day it seemed to him that he heard the voice of God urging him to leave his home and travel westward to the land known as Canaan to make a new home there. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee," said God, promising to make the descendants of Abraham into a great nation.

With his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot, and Lot's wife, their flocks and herds and many herdsmen, Abraham set out on the long, hard journey over the vast Arabian desert.

On the way there was trouble between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and those of Lot's cattle. Abraham therefore proposed to Lot that they separate and each take a



portion of the land. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren," he said. "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Lot chose a fertile piece of land in the valley of the Jordan River not far from two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham took other land further away. God said to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it."

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked; they did not believe in the true God. When those cities were destroyed by an earthquake, the Hebrews thought that this disaster was caused by the wickedness of the inhabitants. Just before it occurred, angels appeared to Lot and urged him and all his people to leave. "Escape for thy life," they said, "look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Lot did as he was directed. In a short time God rained down fire and brimstone on the wicked cities and utterly destroyed them. Overcome with curiosity, Lot's wife lingered behind the others and stopped a moment to look back; in that moment the fire and brimstone overcame her and she was turned into a pillar of salt.

In their old age a son was born to Abraham and Sarah. They named him Isaac, which means Laughter. "For," said Sarah as she gazed happily at the newborn babe, "God hath made me to laugh."

The story is told that when Isaac had grown to be a sturdy boy, God decided to test Abraham's faith. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of," he said.

Though filled with sorrow at the thought of losing his son, Abraham made ready for the sacrifice, and taking Isaac with him, set forth on his sad journey. Isaac carried on his shoulders the wood for the sacrifice, and in his hands a pan full of fire, and a knife. When they reached the place of which God had told Abraham, the father built a rough altar.

Isaac wondered why his father had not brought a lamb for the sacrifice. "My father, behold the fire and the wood," he said, "but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

"My son," replied Abraham. "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

Abraham built an altar, laid the wood on it, bound his son, and laid him on the wood. He was taking up the knife to slay Isaac when suddenly he heard a voice from heaven calling, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here am I," answered Abraham.

"Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him," said God, "for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

Abraham happened to see a ram caught by his horns in the underbrush of a nearby thicket. He seized it and offered it as a sacrifice instead of his beloved son. Then Abraham and Isaac returned home with joy and thanksgiving in their hearts.

When Isaac was grown, the time came for him to have a wife. Calling to him an old and trusted servant, Abraham bade him go to the land of his brother to try to find a suitable young woman.

With several camels and many costly gifts for the bride-to-be and her family, the old servant set out on his journey. It was evening when he reached his destination. The camels knelt down by the well in the city. At that time of day maidens came to the well, carrying on their shoulders or balancing on their heads large jars, which they filled with water.

Earnestly the old servant prayed to God to send him a



young woman who would be the right kind of wife for Isaac:

“Behold I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water,” he said. “And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, ‘Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,’ and she shall say, ‘Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also,’ let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.”

Just at that moment a maiden by the name of Rebekah came to the well, carrying her water-jar on her shoulder. She was very fair to look upon. When she had filled her jar the servant went up to her and said, “Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.”

Taking her jar from her shoulder, Rebekah answered courteously, “Drink, my lord,” and she added, “I will draw water for thy camels also.”

The servant gave Rebekah golden earrings and bracelets and said to her, “Tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy father’s house for us to lodge in?”

Rebekah replied, “We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.”

Believing that his quest was ended, the faithful servant bowed his head and gave thanks to God, saying, “Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth.”

Rebekah ran ahead and told her family what had happened. When Abraham’s servant arrived at the house, food was set before him but he said, “I will not eat, until I have told mine errand.”



After he had finished telling his story, he said, "And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

"Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken," was the reply of Rebekah's family.

They called Rebekah and said to her, "Wilt thou go with this man?"

"I will go," she replied.

With the blessings and good wishes of her family Rebekah started out on her long journey. After many days, the travelers reached the place where Isaac lived. It was evening and it happened that Isaac was out in a field, as it was his custom to go out in the evening to meditate and pray. He saw camels approaching and knew that he was soon to see the young woman who was to be his wife.

Happening to catch sight of Isaac, Rebekah said to the servant, "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?"

"It is my master," replied the servant.

Rebekah got down from her camel and went to meet Isaac. He took her to the tent of his mother. A short time later they were married.

## THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. The two brothers were quite different in appearance and character. Esau, the older brother, grew up to be a hunter and lived much in the open. He had red hair and a ruddy complexion and his skin was covered with thick hair. He was easygoing and good-natured. Jacob preferred to work among the tents and with the sheep. He was clever and willing to stoop to trickery to gain his ends. Esau was the favorite of his father, while Jacob was his mother's favorite.

One day Esau came home from hunting, tired and hungry. He found Jacob preparing a stew, or pottage as it was called, of little red lentils. The appetizing odor from the steaming food seemed delicious to the hungry hunter and he said to Jacob, "Feed me, I pray thee, with that red pottage, for I am faint."

As the oldest son of Isaac, Esau would become the head of the family after his father's death, and would inherit most of his father's property. That was his birthright. Jacob, the younger brother, would have a smaller portion of the property.

Seeing how hungry his brother was, Jacob decided to make a bargain with him. "Sell me this day thy birthright," he said.

Esau, thinking more about the food than about his birthright, agreed, and Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentils. Thus Esau gave up his birthright for a mess of pottage.

Years passed. Isaac was growing old and feeble and he could not see. As he felt that he might not live much longer, it seemed to him that the time had come for him to hand down the blessing of Abraham to his oldest son. He sent for Esau and said to him:

“Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison: and make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.”

Rebekah happened to overhear this conversation. She wanted her favorite, Jacob, to inherit Isaac’s property and to have the privileges which belonged to the oldest son. Calling Jacob to her, she said:

“I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, ‘Bring me venison and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.’ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids. I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth; and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.”

Jacob was afraid his father would know that he was not Esau. “Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man,” he said. “My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.”

“Upon me be thy curse, my son,” replied his mother. “Only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.”

Jacob brought the kids to his mother and she made the

savory meat. She found some of Esau's clothes and Jacob put them on. She tied the skins of the kids on Jacob's arms and hands in such a way that they would feel rough and hairy if Isaac touched them.

Jacob took the savory meat to his father saying, "My father, here am I."

"Who art thou, my son?" asked Isaac.

"I am Esau thy firstborn," replied Jacob. "I have done according as thou badest me; arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."

Old Isaac was puzzled. "Come near, I pray thee," he said, "that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not."

Jacob went up close to his father and Isaac felt of his hands and arms and found that they were hairy like Esau's. "The voice is Jacob's voice," he said, "but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Still not satisfied, Isaac asked, "Art thou my very son Esau?"

"I am," replied Jacob.

"Come near now, and kiss me, my son," said Isaac.

As Jacob kissed his father, Isaac smelled the garments of Esau which Jacob wore and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed."

Isaac ate the savory meat, then Jacob knelt and his father gave him his blessing:

God give thee of the dew of heaven,  
And of the fat places of the earth,  
And plenty of corn and wine.  
Let peoples serve thee,  
And nations bow down to thee.

Be lord over thy brethren,  
And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.  
Cursed be every one that curseth thee,  
And blessed be every one that blesseth thee.

Shortly afterwards Esau returned from hunting and made some savory meat for his father, as his father had asked him to do. He took it to his father saying, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me."

In great surprise the blind father asked, "Who art thou?"

"I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau," replied Esau.

"Who?" repeated his bewildered father. "Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it to me, and I have eaten it before thou camest, and have blessed him?"

Realizing that Jacob had deceived his father, Esau cried out bitterly against his brother. "He hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing."

Esau begged his father to bless him also. "Hast thou but one blessing, my father?" he asked. "Bless me, even me, also."

It was impossible to undo what had been done. Bowed with sorrow, Isaac replied, "Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him."

Esau hated Jacob for his deception and vowed that he would kill him. When Rebekah heard this, she was frightened and she decided to send Jacob to the land where her own people lived.

Jacob traveled over valleys and mountains and through forests and fields. One night he was very weary and lay

down to sleep under the open sky. He dreamed that a great ladder of light rose from the earth, its top reaching to heaven. On the highest rung stood God, who said to Jacob:

“I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereupon thou liest, to thee will I give it. . . . And thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. . . . And behold, I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again unto this land.”

Thus God renewed to Jacob the promise he had made to Abraham and Isaac that the land of Canaan should belong to their descendants.

For many years Jacob lived in the land of Rebekah's people. There he met Rachel and married her. In the course of time they had twelve sons. He came to be very rich, owning many flocks and herds.

Jacob decided to return home. Fearing that Esau had not forgotten the wrong done him, he sent servants ahead with a gift of many sheep and cattle for him. When he was nearing Canaan he saw Esau coming toward him. Everything turned out well. When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him, threw his arms about him, and embraced him. Long before that he had forgiven his brother and was happy to see him again.

It was said that on the way home Jacob had a vision in which God appeared to him and said, “What is thy name?”

“Jacob,” replied Jacob.

Then God said to him, “Thy name shall be called not any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name.”

After that Jacob was known as Israel, and the Hebrews called themselves Israelites, or the children of Israel. They



were divided into twelve tribes, each tribe bearing the name of one of Jacob's sons.

## JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Of all his sons Jacob loved Joseph best. He favored him in all things and gave him many presents. One time he made for him a beautiful coat, woven with yarn of many colors, similar to those worn by people of importance. Joseph's brothers were envious of him because of the favors bestowed upon him by his father.

One night young Joseph had an unusual dream which he told his brothers. "Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed," he said. "Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf."

The brothers tried to think what the dream meant. "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" they asked in alarm.

A short time later Joseph had another dream which he told his brothers. "I have dreamed a dream more," he said. "And behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me."

Jacob was annoyed and rebuked his son. "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

After hearing these dreams Joseph's brothers hated him more than ever.

Jacob's sons spent most of their time in the field tending their father's sheep. In order to find good pastures for them they often had to go quite a distance. One time the older sons were away from home for several days. As Jacob did not know where they had gone, he grew anxious about them. Calling Joseph to him, he said, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again."

Joseph put on his bright-colored coat and set forth. He searched in the fields until he found the place where his brothers were. When they saw him far off, one of them said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, 'Some evil beast hath devoured him.'"

Reuben, the oldest brother, persuaded his brothers that it would be better not to kill Joseph. "Let us not kill him," he said. "Shed no blood but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness."

When Joseph came up to his brothers, they seized him, stripped off his beautiful coat, and threw him into the pit.

At that time a wonderful civilization had developed in Egypt along the banks of the Nile River, in northeastern Africa. It happened that some merchants on their way to Egypt to sell their goods passed by the place where Joseph's brothers were. Judah, one of the brothers, suggested that they sell Joseph to the merchants and the others agreed. They lifted Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. Then they dipped his coat in the blood of a goat they had killed and took it back to their

father, saying, "This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no."

When Jacob saw Joseph's beautiful coat all stained with blood, he was heartbroken. "It is my son's coat," he cried. "An evil beast hath devoured him."

For many days the father mourned for his beloved son and could not be comforted.

In Egypt Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the guard in the palace of the Pharaoh, as the king of Egypt was called. He was a faithful servant and his master was much pleased with him. After a time he gave Joseph charge over his entire household.

Unfortunately for Joseph, Potiphar's wife tried to make him unfaithful to Potiphar. When he refused to listen to her, she made false charges against him to her husband. Potiphar believed his wife and had Joseph put in prison.

It happened that there were in the prison at that time the chief butler and the chief baker of the Pharaoh, who had offended him in some way. One day, as they were awaiting sentence, they were greatly disturbed by dreams they had had the night before. At that time people believed that important messages were sometimes sent to them in dreams and they tried to find out their meaning.

"Wherefore look ye so sadly today?" asked Joseph one morning.

"We have dreamed a dream and there is no interpreter of it," replied the butler and the baker.

"Do not interpretations belong to God?" said Joseph. "Tell me them, I pray you."

First the butler told him his dream. In it he had seen three clusters of grapes hanging on three branches of a vine.

He squeezed the grapes into a cup and gave the juice to the Pharaoh, who drank it. Joseph explained that the dream meant that in three days the butler would be released from prison and restored to his place in the palace of the Pharaoh.

The chief baker then told his dream. He had dreamed that there were three white baskets on his head. In the top basket were all kinds of baked things he had made for the Pharaoh's table. Birds were eating them. After considering this dream, Joseph told the baker it meant that he had only three days to live.

Both dreams were fulfilled in the way Joseph had foretold. In three days' time the butler was allowed to return to the palace and serve the Pharaoh once more, and that same day the baker was hanged.

Two years passed and Joseph was still in prison. Then it happened that the Pharaoh had a strange dream. In it he was standing on the bank of the Nile River. Out of the river came seven cows, well fed and fat. They grazed peacefully in the nearby meadows. While they were feeding, seven thin, lean cows came out of the river. They fell upon the seven fat cows, and devoured them.

The Pharaoh woke from his dream, but soon fell asleep again and had another dream. This time he saw seven ears of corn growing on a stalk. They were large and strong. Seven thin, withered ears were growing on another stalk. The seven thin ears ate up the seven good ears of corn.

Much troubled, the Pharaoh sent for his wise men and asked them to explain his dreams, as he felt that they had some deep meaning he ought to know. No one could give him an explanation.

The chief butler remembered that Joseph had explained

his dream and suggested that the Pharaoh send for him. Messengers were hurriedly sent to the prison and Joseph was brought to the Pharaoh. After the Pharaoh had related his dream to Joseph, he was able to explain it to him.

The people of Egypt were entirely dependent for their life and health on the great river Nile which flows through that land. Usually, once a year, the Nile overflowed its banks and the water of the river spread far over the low-lying land on each side of it; then the water gradually went down again. When the river had returned to its banks, a thick layer of rich black earth covered the river valley. In this fertile soil the Egyptians were able to raise ample crops to supply the needs of all the people.

Sometimes, however, the water of the river did not rise high enough to overflow its banks. When that happened Egypt was dry and barren, and nothing would grow. At such times there was famine throughout the land, causing much suffering among the people.

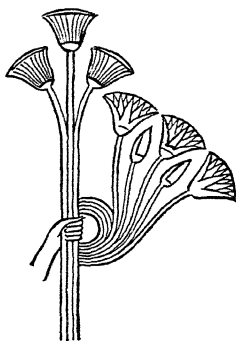
Joseph told the Pharaoh that the seven fat cows and the seven good ears of corn he had seen in his dreams meant that there would be seven years of good crops in Egypt. The seven thin cows and the seven withered ears of corn represented seven years of famine which would follow the seven years of plenty.

The Pharaoh was greatly impressed by Joseph's explanation and asked him what should be done. Joseph advised him to have people plant as much corn as possible in the next few years. The surplus grain should be stored so that everyone would have enough to eat during the years of poor crops. Joseph's plan seemed to the Pharaoh an excellent one and he decided to adopt it.

Joseph also suggested that the Pharaoh appoint someone to have charge of gathering the grain and storing it. "As God hath shown thee all this," said the Pharaoh, "there is none so discreet and wise as thou. . . . According unto thy word shall all my people be ruled, only in the throne will I be the greater than thou."

Taking from his finger a ring with his seal on it, the Pharaoh gave it to Joseph as the symbol of his power. He arrayed him in robes of finest linen and put a gold chain, the emblem of high rank, around his neck. He gave him one of the royal chariots to use on his travels, and decreed that everyone was to bow to him as he passed by.

Thus Joseph became a great man in Egypt, next to the Pharaoh in power and honor.



## IN THE LAND OF EGYPT

***M**ARVELLOUS things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt.*

*He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.*

*In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. . . .*

*And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.*

PSALM 78.





## SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE

Every year for seven years the water of the Nile overflowed its banks, making the river valley so fertile that "the earth brought forth by handfuls." During those years Joseph was busy seeing that the surplus crops were stored in enormous storehouses which he had built.

In the following seven years the Nile River flowed sluggishly through the land. The earth in the valley of the river was parched and dry, and each year the harvests failed. Unable to raise enough food the people cried to the Pharaoh for bread.

"Go unto Joseph," the Pharaoh said to them, "what he saith to you, do."

Because of Joseph's foresight the Egyptians were not to suffer from hunger during the years of famine. The royal granaries were full of corn which Joseph sold to the people.

There was famine in other countries as well as in Egypt. The wells dried up, flocks and herds suffered, and many people died. In Canaan the earth was parched and the crops failed. Old Jacob, hearing that there was grain in Egypt, said to his sons, "I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die."

Joseph's ten older brothers made their way down to Egypt. Benjamin, the youngest brother, did not accompany them, as Jacob feared that something might happen to him

on the journey. In due time the brothers appeared before the great man who gave out grain. Seeing him dressed in fine linen, with the king's signet ring on his finger, and the gold chain about his neck, they recognized him only as some high Egyptian official and they bowed low before him. They had no idea that he was the brother they had sold into slavery years before.

Joseph immediately recognized his brothers; but he gave no sign that he knew them.

"Whence come ye?" he asked.

"From the land of Canaan to buy food," replied the brothers.

Joseph pretended that he did not believe this. "Ye are spies," he said in a harsh tone. "To see the nakedness of the land ye are come."

The brothers protested, saying that they were not spies, but peaceful shepherds living with their father in Canaan. "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not," they said.

"Ye are spies," repeated Joseph. "Hereby ye shall be proved; ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. . . . Bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die."

Joseph gave his brothers the grain they needed, but decided to keep one of them, Simeon, as a prisoner until the others returned. Their sacks were filled with corn and loaded on donkeys and the brothers started out on their journey home. On the way they stopped at an inn and one of the brothers opened his sack. What was his surprise to

find that the money he had brought to pay for the grain was stowed away in his sack.

When the brothers arrived in Canaan they related to their father all that had happened. They told him that the great man in Egypt had kept Simeon in prison and had said that they would be given more grain if they needed it, but only on condition that Benjamin accompany them to Egypt.

Jacob refused to let Benjamin go. "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away," he said. Then the famine grew worse in Canaan and Jacob said to his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food."

His son Judah replied, "If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down."

Finally the father agreed to let Benjamin accompany his brothers. In due time they arrived in Egypt and made their way to Joseph.

"Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me?" asked Joseph. Turning to Benjamin, he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son." Then, overcome with emotion at seeing his young brother, he left the room.

The next day Joseph had the sacks filled with grain and ordered a servant to put the little silver cup he had used as a child into Benjamin's sack. The brothers had not gone far on their way home when the servant overtook them and told them that a cup belonging to his master was gone and that he had been sent to see whether they had stolen it. The sacks were opened and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Once more the brothers returned to Joseph and Joseph

said that Benjamin must remain with him as a slave. Judah told Joseph that it would break his father's heart if Benjamin did not return and offered to be a slave in his place.

Joseph could no longer pretend that he did not know his brothers and he told them who he was. "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt," he said.

When the brothers heard this, they were overcome with shame; but Joseph reassured them. "Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither. . . . God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God," he said.

As he knew that there would be five more years of famine, Joseph urged his brothers to go back and tell their father to bring his family to Egypt to live. "Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen," he promised them, "thou and thy children and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. . . . Make haste and bring down my father hither."

The Pharaoh was much pleased when he heard about Joseph's family. He told Joseph to say to his brothers, "Go, get you unto the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households, and come unto me; and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat of the fat of the land. Take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. The good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

When the brothers arrived in Canaan they told their father the wonderful news about Joseph. "Joseph is alive!" they said. "He is governor over all the land of Egypt."

Old Jacob was almost overcome. "Joseph, my son, is yet

alive!" he cried out. "I will go and see him before I die."

Jacob and his family and many other Israelites made their way to Egypt with their flocks and herds and all their possessions. Joseph rode out in his chariot to meet them. When the aged father and his son met, they fell into each other's arms. "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive," cried Jacob.

When Joseph presented his family to the Pharaoh, the Pharaoh said to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell."

Thus the Hebrews received as their new homeland the land of Goshen, a very fertile part of Egypt near the delta of the Nile River.

Joseph lived in Egypt for many years. Before he died he called his kindred to him and said to them, "I die; and God will surely remember you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."

Joseph's wish that his bones should be taken to the Holy Land was fulfilled hundreds of years later when the Israelites left Egypt.

## LET MY PEOPLE GO

For four hundred years the children of Israel lived happily in the land of Goshen. They prospered and increased

in numbers until "the land was filled with them." Then came changes which brought them terrible suffering. There was on the throne of Egypt a Pharaoh who "knew not Joseph." All that he had done for the Egyptian people during the time of famine long before was forgotten. It is thought that this Pharaoh was Rameses II, who reigned from about 1292 to 1225 B.C.

Rameses looked upon the Hebrews with suspicion and distrust. He was afraid they would become so strong that they might rise up against him. To his people he said, "Behold, the people of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also our enemies and fight against us."

The Egyptians believed in many gods. Rameses built vast temples to the gods and monuments to himself, hewn from mighty blocks of granite. The Hebrews were made to work as slaves on these great structures. They hewed and cut the stone in the quarries and dragged huge blocks of stone on wooden rollers over long distances. Some of them were set to work making bricks. They dug the clay, they carried the water in jars to moisten it, they kneaded it and mixed it with chopped straw to hold it together. Then they forced it into molds to form bricks which were baked in the sun. Always the slaves labored under the lash of the cruel overseers.

In spite of this harsh treatment, the Hebrews continued to increase in numbers. Then the Pharaoh decreed that all baby boys born to them should be thrown into the Nile River to drown.

At that time there was born a Hebrew boy who, in later life, was to become a great leader of his people and was to free



Kathleen Urcic

them from slavery. When the account of his life was written down many centuries afterward, the story was told that his mother, when she heard the cruel decree of the Pharaoh, determined to try to save her little son. From the reeds which grew along the banks of the Nile River, she wove a little basket, and she laid him in it. She hid the basket among the tall reeds, hoping that someone would find it and take care of the baby.

It happened that the daughter of the Pharaoh came with her maidens to bathe in the river near the place where the basket was. Noticing it among the reeds, she sent one of the maidens to bring it to her. The princess knew about the cruel decree her father had passed. When she saw the baby, her heart was touched with pity. "This is one of the Hebrews' children," she said. She decided to adopt the baby and bring him up as her son. She named him Moses, which means "out of the water," because, she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Although Moses was brought up as an Egyptian he knew that he was an Israelite. He often went among his own people, and when he saw their suffering, he was unhappy and longed to help them. One day as he was wandering alone in the desert, it seemed to him that a voice said to him:

"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. . . . I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters. . . . And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Come now, therefore, and I will send thee



unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

Moses went to the Pharaoh and said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.'"

The Pharaoh did not wish to free the Hebrew slaves who were so useful to him. "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" he said. "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

That day the Pharaoh summoned the taskmasters of the Hebrews and directed them to increase the people's work. Those who made bricks had been given the straw they needed. Now the Pharaoh said to the taskmasters, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves."

After that the Hebrews had to go out into the fields and hunt for straw. This meant many more hours of labor, yet they were required to make as many bricks as they had made when the straw was supplied to them. If they failed to do so they were beaten by their taskmasters.

"Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people?" said Moses. "Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

God replied, "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. I am the Lord."

The hot damp valley of the Nile was frequently subject to pestilences and it was afflicted by several at that time.

First the waters of the Nile River, upon which the Egyptians were so dependent, turned red like blood. All the fish in the river died and the Egyptians could not drink the water.

In spite of this calamity, the Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go.

Again Moses went to the Pharaoh and said, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Let my people go that they may serve me.'"

Once more the Pharaoh refused, and another disaster came upon the Egyptians. There were many frogs in the shallow waters near the banks of the Nile River. They came out of the river in great numbers and hopped all over the land and into the houses of the Egyptians.

The Pharaoh sent for Moses and begged him to ask God to stop the plague, promising that he would let the Hebrews leave. Moses did so; but as soon as the frogs were gone, the Pharaoh forgot his promise.

Then came another plague. This time it was lice, which spread everywhere in the land, on people and on animals. Again Moses went to the Pharaoh and warned him that there would be more plagues if he did not set the children of Israel free; but the Pharaoh would not listen to him.

Soon swarms of flies filled the air, causing sickness among the Egyptians and their cattle. Again the Pharaoh pleaded with Moses to ask his God to do away with the plague.

Moses prayed to God and the swarms of flies disappeared. When they were gone the Pharaoh once more broke his promise.

A terrible disease struck all the cattle of the Egyptians and many of them died. Only the cattle of the Hebrews were saved. Still the Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let his slaves go.

Another misfortune followed. The bodies of all the Egyptians were covered with terrible sores which no one could cure. Moses gave the Pharaoh God's message: "Let my people go that they may serve me." But again the Pharaoh "regarded not the word of the Lord."

There came a terrible hailstorm, ruining all the crops which were ready to be harvested. Lightning struck the houses and barns in which the grain for the following year was stored. Only in the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived, was there no hail.

The Pharaoh was frightened. Calling Moses to him, he said, "I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go."

Moses appealed to God and the thunder and hail ceased. When the Pharaoh saw this, he changed his mind and again refused to let the Hebrews leave.

Once again Moses went to the Pharaoh and said to him:

"Thus saith the Lord God, 'How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast, and they shall cover the face of the earth.'"

But again the Pharaoh refused to allow the Israelites to leave. Soon locusts swarmed over the land. They flew down to the ground and filled the houses of the Egyptians and devoured every green thing in the fields.

The Pharaoh called Moses to him and said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat

the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only."

Moses asked the Lord to take away the locusts and a strong west wind blew them into the Red Sea. When they were gone, the Pharaoh hardened his heart against God's people.

Sweeping in from the desert came a violent sandstorm. The air was so full of sand that the light of the sun was obscured. For three days all of Egypt except the land of Goshen was in complete darkness.

Filled with dismay at this new disaster, the Pharaoh sent for Moses. "Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed."

Moses refused this condition. "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God," he said.

In anger the Pharaoh cried out, "Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die."

"Thou hast spoken well," replied Moses. "I will see thy face again no more."

## OUT OF BONDAGE

After the last refusal of the Pharaoh, God brought upon the Egyptians the most terrible punishment of all. Through Moses he communicated his plan to his people: "About midnight," he said, "will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-

born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt."

The children of Israel were to be saved from this awful disaster. God directed them to kill young lambs and smear the blood on the side posts and the upper post of the doors of their houses. "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt," he told them.

That night God smote the first-born in every Egyptian family. But wherever the angel of death found the lamb's blood on the doorway of a house, he passed by, knowing that it was the home of a Hebrew family.

There was mourning and despair throughout Egypt, "for there was not a house where there was not one dead."

The Pharaoh no longer refused to let the Israelites leave Egypt. "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people," he said to Moses, "both ye and the children of Israel. . . . Also take your flocks and herds, as ye have said, and be gone."

The Hebrews made hurried preparations for their journey. They were so afraid the Pharaoh would change his mind that they did not take time to bake the bread they had been making, but took with them the unleavened dough. Gathering together their possessions and piling them on beasts of burden, they assembled in groups with their flocks and herds.

Soon a great caravan was moving eastward toward the Red Sea. Ahead went a leader carrying a long pole on the

top of which was a brazier filled with smoking coals. In the daytime the smoke, rising in the clear atmosphere of the desert, could be seen at a great distance. Thus all the people of the long caravan could tell where their leader was and in what direction they were to go. Even those who straggled far behind would not be lost. At night the bright red light rising from the glowing coals in the brazier served as guide. To the ancient writer who described the scene, it seemed that "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light."

When the Pharaoh discovered that the Hebrew slaves had gone, he was sorry he had given them permission to leave. "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" he asked.

Hastily summoning his captains, the Pharaoh bade them gather together their charioteers, and go after the Israelites and bring them back. Six hundred chariots were soon on their way.

As the fleeing Hebrews were approaching the Red Sea, they saw clouds of dust rising in the desert, they heard the rumbling of chariots, they saw the flashing of spears in the sunlight, and they realized that they were being pursued by the Egyptians. Terrified, they cried out to Moses, "Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? . . . It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

Moses, strong in his faith in God, replied, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever."



Then Moses stretched forth his hand over the Red Sea and a high wind blew so strongly over it that the waters were forced back, leaving a shallow passageway. Through this the Hebrews made their way safely across.

Soon afterward the Egyptians reached the Red Sea and attempted to cross it. Again Moses stretched forth his hand, the wind changed, and "the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them."

"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians," concludes the Old Testament account.

In joy and gratitude, the Hebrews sang a song of thanksgiving to God.

I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. . . .

The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. . . .

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. . . .

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . .

Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. . . .

The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

Miriam, the sister of Moses, beat upon a timbrel. All the women danced and Miriam sang:

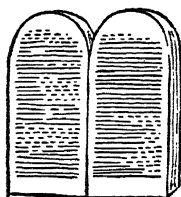
Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

This time of liberation from slavery was to be observed by all future generations of Hebrews. "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial: and ye shall keep it a feast throughout your generations," commanded God. "And when your children shall say unto you, 'What mean ye by this service?' ye shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.'"



Thus arose the feast of the Passover, one of the sacred festivals of the Hebrew year, which is still celebrated today by Jewish people all over the world. It is a week-long festival, with certain ceremonials in homes and synagogues. It begins with a very special family meal, the Seder. On the table are certain foods as a reminder of the harshness of the time of bondage in Egypt. There is a plate of apples, almonds, and raisins, finely chopped and mixed with cinnamon and wine. This represents the clay from which the children of Israel made bricks. There is lamb, prepared in a certain way in remembrance of the blood of the lamb which marked the doors of the houses of the Israelites, when God smote the Egyptians. Matzoth, unleavened bread, "the bread of affliction," is also served, because the Hebrews, in their hurried flight from Egypt took with them the unleavened dough of the bread they had been baking. A dish of bitter herbs is a reminder of the bitter life of the people during the time of slavery. As part of the home ceremony, prayers are said, and the head of the house tells how God saved the children of Israel and made them a free people.





## THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

***T**HEY wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way;  
they found no city to dwell in.*

*Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.*

*Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he  
delivered them out of their distresses.*

*And he led them forth by the right way . . .*

PSALM 107.

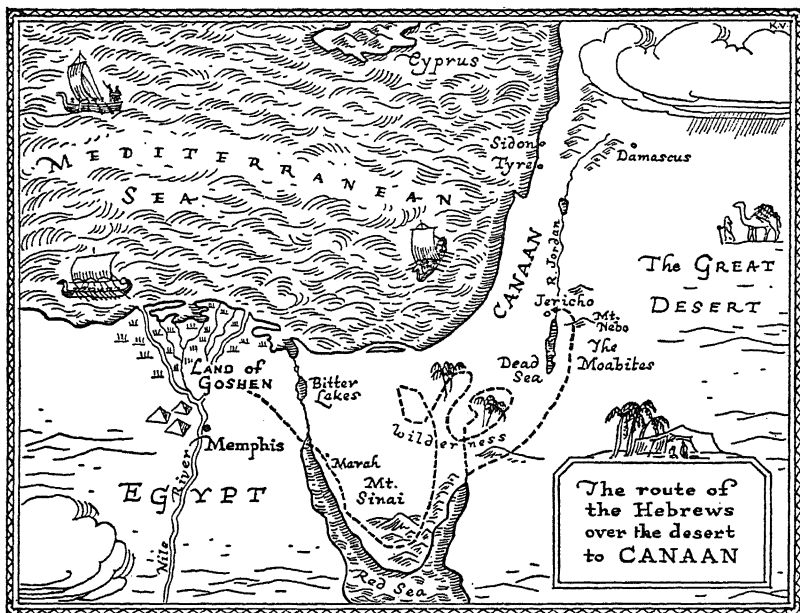


## CROSSING THE DESERT

Working through Moses, God had led his people out of bondage. They were now free, but they were wanderers without any settled place in which to live. They were no longer in a land where there were streams of water and an abundance of food; on all sides of them stretched a vast desert, a region of bare rocks and shifting sands. In this new land they would have to depend for food and water on what they could find in the few fertile spots called oases. Through this barren region the Hebrews set out on their pilgrimage to Canaan, which God had promised to their ancestors.

In this strange unknown land the wanderers were forced to meet many new difficulties and dangers. During their long, hard journey they suffered from blistering heat in the daytime and intense cold at night. Sometimes their food gave out; at other times they had no water, for there were only a few springs in the desert and those were often far apart. Many times in the course of their wanderings the people forgot all they had suffered in the land of Egypt and wished they were back there again.

The travelers had not gone far when they came to a place where the water was so bitter they could not drink it. Because of the bitter water they called the place Marah which means "bitterness." They blamed Moses for bringing them out into the desert to die. "What shall we drink?" they demanded.



Moses called on God for help and God directed him to throw into the water some branches of a laurel tree. These sweetened the water so that the thirsty travelers were able to drink it.

For a time after that all went well. The wanderers came to a wonderful oasis where there were twelve springs and many palm trees which gave welcome shade. They set up their tents and camped for a long time near the cool springs.

Then came a new hardship. The food which had been brought from Egypt was gone and the people suffered from hunger. "Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger," they complained to Moses.

God sent a message to his people. "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God."

That evening a large flock of quail came flying into the camp and the promise of meat was fulfilled. In the morning the ground was covered with small white flakes, like snow, or frost. The Hebrews had never seen anything like it before. "Manhu?" they asked, "What is it?"

Moses replied, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. Gather of it every man according to his eating."

This food came to be known as manna. Modern students of the Bible think that it may have been the sugary sap of the tamarisk trees which dripped to the ground during the heat of the day and solidified during the cold night.

From this breadlike food the people were able to make excellent little cakes. Every morning except the Sabbath day they gathered as much as they needed. On the sixth day of the week they gathered enough for two days so they would not have to work on the Sabbath. After a while, however, they tired of having nothing but manna to eat. They wished they were back in Egypt where food was plentiful. "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely," they said, "the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes."

Later on, the wanderers came to a place where there were few springs and they suffered from thirst. Again they turned against Moses. "Wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" they cried.

Moses called upon God for help. "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me."

The Lord made known to Moses that if he struck a certain rock with his staff he would find a spring. Moses beat the rock many blows with his heavy staff; in a short time a stream of water gushed forth and there was plenty for everyone to drink.

"Behold! he smote the rock that the waters gushed out and the streams overflowed," joyously chanted the people, rejoicing at the sight.

So far in their journeying the Hebrews had met no enemies. But a new danger arose when they were attacked by the Amalekites, a fierce desert tribe. Moses summoned to him Joshua, a young captain, and bade him lead the best men to fight the enemy. During the battle Moses prayed to God on a nearby hilltop. So great was the victory of the Israelites over the Amalekites that Moses built an altar to mark the spot and gave the place the name Jehovah-nissi, which means, "The Lord is thy standard-bearer."

Often there were disagreements and quarrels among the people. At first Moses decided who was right and who was wrong. But this came to be a heavy burden, so he divided the people into groups. In charge of each group he placed an able man, who was to act as judge, to hear complaints and settle disputes, so that the people might live peaceably together as good neighbors.

"Hear the causes between your brethren," said Moses to the judges, "and judge righteously between every man and his brother and the stranger that is with him."

Only the most important matters were to be left for



Moses to decide. "The cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me and I will hear it," he told the judges.

Again and again in the course of the long journey there were complaints because of lack of water, scarcity of food, and other hardships. Forgetful of past mercies, ungrateful and rebellious, the Hebrews blamed Moses for every misfortune which befell them. Once, in despair, he cried out to God, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people on me? I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me and if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

The task of Moses was indeed no easy one; but always he sought to lead his people in the ways of righteousness. Always he comforted and encouraged them, and he gave them his blessing:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

## AT MOUNT SINAI

Now that the Hebrews were free they must learn how God wished them to live and how they could best serve him.

Moses led them through a barren wilderness to a bleak, rocky height, Mount Sinai. Towering above the desert, with its summit almost always veiled in clouds, it was an awe-inspiring sight. There Moses was to receive from God the laws by which his people were to be governed. At the foot of the mountain a great encampment was made.

God said to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.'"

Moses called the people together and told them what God had said to him and they answered, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

Shortly after that Moses made his way up the holy mountain and remained there for forty days communing with God, who gave him Ten Commandments, which were carved on two tablets of stone.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

While Moses was up on the mountain, a terrible thing happened. He had remained away so long that the people thought he had forsaken them and would never return. When they were in Egypt they had seen the Egyptians worshipping idols and they wanted an image of a god, to whom they could pray. They went to Aaron and said, "Make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him."

Aaron weakly yielded to this plea. The people brought him all kinds of golden ornaments, and these Aaron melted in a hot fire into a mass of gold. From this he fashioned a

golden calf similar to the idols worshiped by the Egyptians. He built an altar on which he set the idol, and proclaimed a feast day.

"These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!" shouted the people and they prostrated themselves before the golden image. Then, following the rites of the Egyptians, they brought offerings to their new god and danced around the altar, singing wildly.

As the sound of the wild singing came up the mountain, God said to Moses, "Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."

Moses returned to the camp, carrying with him the two tablets of stone on which were inscribed the Ten Commandments. When he saw his people worshipping a heathen idol he was filled with horror. In anger he threw down the stone tablets and they broke into many pieces. Then he pulled down the golden image and ground it into powder.

There was turmoil in the camp.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" cried Moses. "Let him come unto me!"

The men of the tribe of Levi gathered about Moses. Sternly he ordered them to fall upon those who had brought disgrace upon the people. About three thousand of those who had worshiped the golden calf were slain.

The next day Moses said to the people, "Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin."

Once more Moses made his way to the summit of the holy mountain. He pleaded with God for the people and God forgave them. When he returned to the camp he



brought with him two new tablets of stone on which were carved the same Ten Commandments as those on the tablets he had destroyed. These became the most important laws of the Hebrews.

Many more laws Moses, inspired by God, gave the people. In later times new laws were added to those of Moses as they were needed. There were laws governing the kinds of food to be eaten and the way they were to be prepared, laws concerning family life and the care of children, laws protecting the health of the people, laws on ways of worshiping and on the observance of feast days, and so on. When these laws were written down many centuries later, they were all thought to be the work of Moses, and he was always looked upon by his people as their great lawgiver.

God directed Moses to make a place where the people could assemble to worship. "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them," he said.

On the outskirts of the camp Moses set up a large tent, which was called the Tabernacle, or the Tent of Meeting. It was oblong in shape and was divided into two parts, separated by heavy curtains. In the outer half, called the Holy Place, was set up an altar where burnt offerings could be made. The inner part, the Holy of Holies, was the most sacred part of the Tabernacle. In it was kept a beautiful chest, called the Ark, made of fine wood overlaid with gold. Over it were two cherubims with outstretched wings, beautifully made of beaten gold. The two tablets of stone on which were carved the Ten Commandments were kept in the Ark.

God said to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." The

people brought their most precious possessions for the adornment of the house of God. Some brought linen beautifully embroidered, others brought oil for the lighting, and fragrant spice for the incense used in the services. Those who were skilled workers in gold or silver fashioned beautiful things for the altar. The women wove fine stuffs of blue and purple and scarlet for the hangings. So generous were the people with their work that Moses had to send word through the encampment, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary."

When all was finished, "the glory of the Lord" filled the Tabernacle and a high pillar of cloud floated over that part where the sacred Ark was kept. The people believed that as long as the cloud rested above the Tabernacle, they should remain encamped where they were. When the cloud rose and drifted away, they journeyed to the place to which it led them.

At the beginning of a journey, Moses lifted up his hands and prayed to God:

Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered;  
And let them that hate thee flee before thee.

When an encampment was made, the tent of meeting was set up, the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, and Moses prayed:

Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.

The Israelites remained at Mount Sinai for nearly a year. Then the cloud above the Tabernacle lifted and began to move slowly away. The people took down their tents and continued on their way across the desert.

## THE END OF THE WANDERING

For many years the Hebrews wandered through the desert wilderness. The Bible tells us that forty years passed before they came to the end of their journey. At length they reached the border of the land of Canaan.

Many tribes had gone to Canaan from less favorable regions. These the Israelites would have to overcome before they could gain possession of the Promised Land.

Realizing that he knew very little about the land his people were to conquer, Moses sent out some young men as spies to find out about it. "See the land, what it is," he said to them, "and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strongholds."

After some time the men returned, bringing with them fruits from Canaan—pomegranates and figs, and a branch with a cluster of grapes on it so heavy that two men were needed to carry it on a staff slung between them. They reported that the land was very fertile. "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey," they said, "and this is the fruit of it."

Bad news for the travelers the spies also reported. "The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great. We be not able to go against the people; for they are stronger than we. . . . All the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature."

The Hebrews had spent many years in the desert wilder-



ness and had endured many hardships. Always they had dreamed of reaching a land where life would be easier. During the long years of wandering a new generation had grown up. Some of these had not been born during the time of suffering in Egypt; others were so young at the time that they had forgotten it. When they heard about the people they would have to conquer before they could enter Canaan they were disheartened.

“Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?” they cried. “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.” And they plotted together to overthrow Moses and choose another leader who would take them back to the land of Goshen.

In vain Moses pleaded with them and the spies tried to reassure them. “The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land,” said the spies. “If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us. . . . Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.”

The people refused to listen to the spies and threatened to stone them. The patience of the Lord was exhausted. “How long will this people provoke me?” he said to Moses. “And how long will it be ere they believe me? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them.”

Moses interceded with God on behalf of the people, saying, “Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even unto now.”

God listened to the plea of Moses, and forgave his rebel-

lions people. When Moses told them what God had said they were repentant. "We will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised," they said, "for we have sinned."

Moses was not to accompany the Hebrews into the Promised Land. His great work was finished. Throughout his long life he had served his people whom he loved so well. He had freed them from bondage, he had given them their laws and had appointed judges to rule over them, he had given them the principles of their faith and had taught them how God wished them to live. Now he had brought them to the border of their new homeland. He felt that a younger man should take up the task of leadership.

The aged leader called the people together and made a solemn farewell speech, in which he told them the many things they should remember when they came to live in Canaan. He reminded them of all that God had done for them. He gave them wise counsel, urging them to observe the Ten Commandments and all the other laws God had given them.

"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him and shalt swear by his name," he said. "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you, lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. . . .

"Thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers. . . .

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all commandments which I command thee this day that the

Lord thy God will set thee high above all nations on the earth.”

Much more the great leader said to his people in his last message to them. At the close of it he lifted his hands and gave them his blessing:

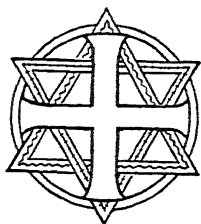
The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.

After that Moses made his way alone to Mount Nebo. From its summit he gazed westward across the blue waters of the Jordan River to the land which his people were to inherit. In the clear atmosphere, mountains, plains, and valleys spread out before him. Here and there on the hill-tops were villages and towns, enclosed by white walls. In the fertile valleys were olive orchards, and vineyards, and fields of waving grain. In the broad pastures sheep and cattle grazed. It was a goodly land and fair to look upon.

God said to Moses, “This is the land which I promised Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.”

There on that lonely mountain, Moses, “the servant of the Lord,” died. The people mourned for their lost leader, “whom the Lord knew face to face.” They buried him in the land of Moab; but, says the Bible writer who wrote of this much later, “no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.”





## THE PROMISED LAND

***T**HE Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths springing forth out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey. And thou shalt eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.*

DEUTERONOMY VIII: 7-10



## THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

When, shortly before his death, Moses realized that he was too old to lead the Hebrews any longer, he had summoned to him Joshua, who was trusted by the people, and said to him, "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them: and thou shalt cause them to inherit it."

After the death of Moses, it seemed to Joshua that God spoke to him, saying, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them."

Beyond the Jordan River was the important city of Jericho with its strong, protecting walls. On its downfall depended the taking of the land beyond it. Joshua sent out spies to find out what they could about the city and how it could best be attacked. When the spies returned they reported that the people of Jericho dreaded the invaders and would make no effort to resist them. "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land," they said, "for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

Joshua called the people together and ordered them to cross the Jordan River. "The Lord will do wonders among you," he told them. As soon as the priests bearing the sacred

Ark reached the river, the waters divided, allowing the Israelites to pass over a dry pathway to the western bank.

God had told Joshua how the city was to be taken. "Ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once," he said. "Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the Ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat."





Joshua ordered the priests to do as God had directed. To the people he said, "Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout."

The next day and every day following for six days the priests carrying the Ark on their shoulders marched around the city, followed by the people. On the seventh day, after they had marched around the city seven times, the priests blew on their rams' horns and Joshua cried out to the people, "Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city."

The people shouted a great shout, and "the wall fell down flat," so that the invaders could enter the city.

With the taking of Jericho began the long struggle for the possession of Canaan. Once in an important battle the enemies of the Hebrews realized that if they could hold out a few hours longer it would be night and they might be able to escape. Joshua knew that he must be victorious in the battle or much that had been gained would be lost. The day was passing all too quickly; in a few hours darkness would settle down. According to the old tradition the leader of the Hebrews called upon the sun and the moon to stand still so that there would be longer daylight. "Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," he cried out.

The sun and the moon obeyed Joshua. "So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day," says the old account, "and there was no day like that before it or after it."

With longer daylight the Hebrews were able to continue the attack and by the time the sun finally went down they were victorious in the battle.

Battle after battle was won by the children of Israel and numerous cities were taken. So the tide of conquest swept over the Land of Promise. Joshua divided the conquered land among the twelve tribes, giving each tribe a portion of it in which to settle.

Years passed. Joshua was an old man; his work was done. Gathering the tribes together, he gave them his farewell message. "Ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you. . . . Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: 'I have given you a land for which ye did not labor, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth.'

"Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses," urged Joshua, "that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left. . . . If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you."

Solemnly the people answered Joshua, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods. . . . The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

Joshua wrote those words in the book of the law. Then he took a great stone and set it up under an oak tree, telling the people that it would be a reminder of the promise they had made. Shortly after that Joshua died.

At the time of the death of Joshua the Hebrews had by

no means conquered all of Canaan. Rich parts of the land were still in the possession of their enemies. The conquest of the various peoples inhabiting that land was to be a long and difficult task, and many years were to pass before all of Canaan was subdued.

The return to the land of Canaan brought great changes in the lives of the people. They no longer lived in tents and wandered about from place to place in search of food and water for themselves and their flocks and herds. They became a settled people, living in houses of stone or baked clay. Some of them became farmers. Vineyards and olive groves flourished on the hillsides and grain grew in the fertile valleys. On many hilltops were walled villages and towns, and town life developed. Far away from the settled regions, however, shepherds still lived with their flocks.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

For a long time after the Hebrews settled down in Canaan they had no king. They were still divided into separate tribes, each one ruled over by a local leader called a judge. During that time other peoples made almost constant war on them. Among their enemies were the Philistines, a strong people and fierce fighters, who lived on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, southwest of Canaan.

One of the legends of the time when the judges ruled was that of a young man of tremendous strength named Samson, who lived near the border between the Israelites

and the Philistines. As he had never been allowed to have his hair cut, it grew long and fell about his shoulders. The longer it grew, the stronger Samson became.

Samson loved a Philistine woman named Delilah and took her for his wife. The Philistines attacked the Hebrews, but Samson prevented them from being successful. The leaders of the Philistines went to Delilah and said, "Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him." They promised Delilah a large sum of money if she would get this information for them.

Delilah flattered Samson about his great strength. "Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth," she begged, "and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee."

Samson replied, laughing, "If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man."

The leaders of the Philistines brought seven green withs, the tough stems of vines difficult to break. While Samson was asleep, Delilah bound them about him. Then she wakened him saying, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson."

In a few moments Samson broke the tough withs.

"Behold thou hast mocked me, and told me lies," said Delilah. "Now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound."

Samson replied, "If they bind me fast with new ropes, then shall I be weak, and be as another man."

Soon Delilah found an opportunity to bind Samson with strong, new ropes. Then she cried out, "The Philistines be

upon thee, Samson." But to Delilah's disappointment Samson broke the rope as easily as if it had been thread.

Again Delilah questioned Samson and he answered, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web."

Delilah wove Samson's locks into some cloth she was weaving and fastened them with a large pin. But Samson walked away unharmed.

"How canst thou say, 'I love thee,' when thine heart is not with me?" asked Delilah. "Thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth."

Day after day Delilah made Samson's life miserable with her questions. At last he decided to tell her the truth. His great strength, he said, came from his long hair. "If I be shaven," he said, "then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

In high spirits the wicked Delilah sent for the leaders of the Philistines, saying to them, "Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart."

The Philistines came and Delilah waited until Samson had fallen asleep. After one of the Philistines had shaved off his hair, she cried exultingly, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson."

When Samson woke, he found that his strength was indeed gone. In vain he struggled against the deadly weakness that had come upon him. The Philistines fell upon him, bound him, put out his eyes, and carried him away to prison.

Not long after that, great crowds of Philistines gathered together in one of their temples to give thanks to their god, "for," they said, "our god hath delivered into our hands the

destroyer of our country which slew many of us." They called for Samson and the blind champion was led to the temple.

Samson said to the boy who was leading him, "Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them." Then he asked God to grant his one final prayer: "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines."

While Samson was in prison his hair had grown again and his strength had returned to him. Taking hold of the two middle pillars supporting the roof, he cried, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He bent over and pulled on the pillars with all his strength. They gave way and with a great crash the roof fell, killing all the people who were in the temple.

Very different from the story of Samson is another tale of the time when the judges ruled, the beautiful story of Ruth and Naomi. At one time during that period there was a severe famine in the land of Judah. A certain man who had been living in Bethlehem, heard that there was plenty of food in the land of Moab, across the Jordan River. He and his wife, Naomi, and their two sons went there to live.

Naomi's husband died, and her sons married Orpah and Ruth, two young women of the land of Moab. In time both sons died. Naomi was left alone in a strange land. In her sorrow and loneliness she felt a deep longing for her native land and the little town where she had been born, and she decided to return to Bethlehem to live. She bade her daughters-in-law farewell, saying, "Go, return each to her mother's



house: the Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me."

Orpah and Ruth loved Naomi and were sad when they learned her decision to return to her own land. They could not bear to be parted from her. "We will return with thee to thy people," they said.

Naomi would not consent to this as she thought that her daughters-in-law would be happier if they remained with their people. Orpah did as Naomi asked and sorrowfully went back to her family to live; but Ruth refused to leave Naomi.

Embracing her tenderly, Naomi said to Ruth, "Thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law."

"Entreat me not to leave thee," pleaded Ruth, "or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."

Naomi could say no more, and the two women traveled together to Bethlehem. When they arrived there, it was the beginning of the harvest season. The reapers were busy in the fields, cutting the ripe grain and binding it into sheaves. As it was necessary to get food, Ruth asked Naomi's permission to go out into a field to gather some grain. It was the custom of that time to allow anyone in need to gather the loose grain which had not been bound into sheaves by the reapers.

"Go, my daughter," said Naomi, and Ruth went out into a nearby field and gathered grain to grind and make into enough bread for Naomi and herself. It happened that this



field belonged to Boaz, a young man of wealth and a kinsman of Naomi's husband.

Boaz came into the field where Ruth was, to watch the reapers at work. Noticing the beautiful stranger, he asked one of the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?"

"It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab," replied the reaper. "She said, 'I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.'"

Boaz called Ruth to him. "Go not to glean in another field," he said, "neither go from hence, but abide here."

Ruth bowed low and asked, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?"

Boaz answered, "It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore." Then he blessed her, saying, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

"Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thy handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens," replied Ruth in gratitude for the kindness Boaz had shown her.

Boaz invited Ruth to eat with his reapers. "At mealtime come thou hither and eat the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar," he said. So Ruth sat with Boaz and the reapers and shared their meal.

After Ruth had left the table to go back to the field, Boaz said to his reapers, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her and leave them, that she may glean them."

All day long Ruth gleaned. When evening came she took to her mother-in-law the grain she had gathered.

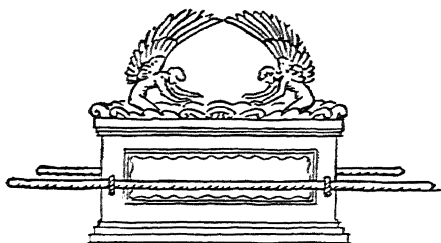
"Where hast thou gleaned today?" asked Naomi.

"The man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz," answered Ruth.

Naomi was delighted when she heard that Ruth had been gleaning in the field of her husband's kinsman and told Ruth the good news. "The man is near of kin unto us," she said, "one of our next kinsmen."

"He said unto me also, thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all the harvest," Ruth told her mother-in-law.

Every day after that Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz until all the grain was harvested. All through the time of harvesting Boaz treated her with great courtesy. He came to love her and later on he made her his wife. Naomi rejoiced at the happiness that had come to her beloved daughter-in-law.



## THE UNITED KINGDOM

***A**ND I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great.*

GENESIS XII: 2



## THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

The greatest of the judges was Samuel. For many years he ruled faithfully, hearing the grievances of the people and dealing with them justly. He wanted his sons to be judges after him, but they were not upright and holy like their father. The elders of the people were troubled. They wanted someone to rule over them who would unite the different tribes into one strong kingdom. "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways," they said. "Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

Samuel was uncertain whether God would approve of a king. He sought help in prayer as he had done since his childhood. The Lord answered him in these words: "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee."

The aged leader gathered the people together and warned them what might happen to them if a king ruled over them. "He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. . . . And he will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants," he said.

But the people realized that with powerful enemies around them they were always in danger so long as they were divided into small tribes and not united under the leadership of one man. They refused to listen to Samuel. "Nay; but we will have a king over us," they said, "that we

also may be like all the nations; and that our king may go out before us, and fight our battles."

After again consulting the Lord, Samuel replied, "It shall be as ye require." He called an assembly of the people and brought before them Saul, "a choice young man and godly," saying, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen." Joyously the people shouted, "God save the king!"

Thus about the year 1025 B.C. the rule of the judges came to an end and the Hebrew nation was established with Saul as its first king.

At that time there was growing up in Bethlehem a boy, David, who in later life was to play a most important part in the history of his people. He was the son of Jesse, the grandson of Ruth and Boaz.

David spent most of his time in the fields tending his father's sheep. He carried with him a bag filled with things to eat, a staff to help to guide the sheep, and a rod, or club, to use against animals which might attack the sheep. As he was musical he often carried a small harp.

As the sheep browsed in the meadows David sometimes sang beautiful songs which he composed. The lovely Shepherds' Psalm is thought to be one of these.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

King Saul was "tormented by an evil spirit." He was melancholy and was haunted by bad dreams. It was thought that music might soothe him. Someone remembered David, the shepherd boy, who could sing and play on the harp, and he was sent for. When the evil spirit came upon the king, David played and sang to him, and the music refreshed Saul and eased his distress of mind. Saul grew to love David as a son.

During the reign of Saul, the Hebrews were once more at war with the Philistines. Among the Philistines was a champion fighter, a giant named Goliath. How David overcame the giant and won a victory for his people is one of the best-known Old Testament stories.

Goliath challenged the Hebrews: "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."

When the Israelites heard this challenge they were filled with terror, as they had no one who was a match for Goliath.

It happened that the three oldest sons of Jesse were fighting against the Philistines and Jesse had sent David to take food to them. He arrived at the camp of the Hebrews just

at the time when Goliath roared his challenge to them. When he heard it, David cried out, "Who is this Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And he offered to fight the giant.

David's words were reported to Saul and the king sent for him. Again David offered to fight Goliath.

"Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him," said the king, "for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

David pleaded earnestly with the king and finally persuaded Saul to let him fight the giant.

"Go, and the Lord be with thee," said the king.

David chose five smooth stones from a brook and put them into his shepherd's bag. With his sling in his hand he made his way to the camp of the Philistines.

When little David ran toward Goliath, the giant, brandishing his spear, shouted scornfully, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

Clear and strong rang out David's reply:

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

Goliath rushed at David, expecting to overcome him with a single blow of his spear, but David circled nimbly around Goliath and before he had a chance to raise his spear, sent a stone from his sling. So true was his aim that the stone struck Goliath in the middle of the forehead. Stunned by



the blow, he fell headlong to the ground. David took Goliath's sword and slew him.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, panic seized them and they fled. The Hebrews pursued them, and won a great victory over them.

After killing the giant, David returned to King Saul, who took him into his service. "Thou shalt remain with me and be my man," said the king. "I cannot spare thee to thy father's house."

Jonathan, the oldest son of Saul, to show his friendship for David, took off his princely robe and threw it around David's shoulders. He gave him his jeweled girdle, his sword, and his bow. From that time on Jonathan and David were devoted friends.

Young David soon became the hero of the people. When the Hebrew army returned after overcoming the Philistines, the women went out to meet them, dancing and playing on musical instruments. As they danced they chanted:

Saul hath slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands.

Saul was afraid the people might want to make David king and his affection for the young hero turned to jealousy. "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands," he said to himself. "What can he have more but the kingdom?"

Twice, Saul hurled his javelin at David, but David was able to avoid being hit. Jonathan, however, remained faithful to his friend. Greatly grieved when he found that the king had tried to kill David, he said to his father, "Let not the king sin against his servant, David; because he hath not

sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good; for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

In spite of the pleadings of his son, Saul still sought to kill David. Realizing that his friend's life was in danger, Jonathan persuaded David to flee into the desert. There he remained for some time, becoming a wanderer in the wilderness.

Once more war broke out between the Philistines and the Hebrews. In a terrible battle both Saul and his son Jonathan were slain. When David heard of this he sorrowed greatly. In spite of the cruel way Saul had treated him, he mourned for the king, and he was heartbroken at the death of his devoted friend Jonathan.

In later years the beautiful words of David's lament for Saul and Jonathan were written down and preserved for us.

The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:  
How are the mighty fallen!

. . . . .  
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,  
And in their death they were not divided:  
They were swifter than eagles,  
They were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,  
Who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights;  
Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.  
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!  
O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

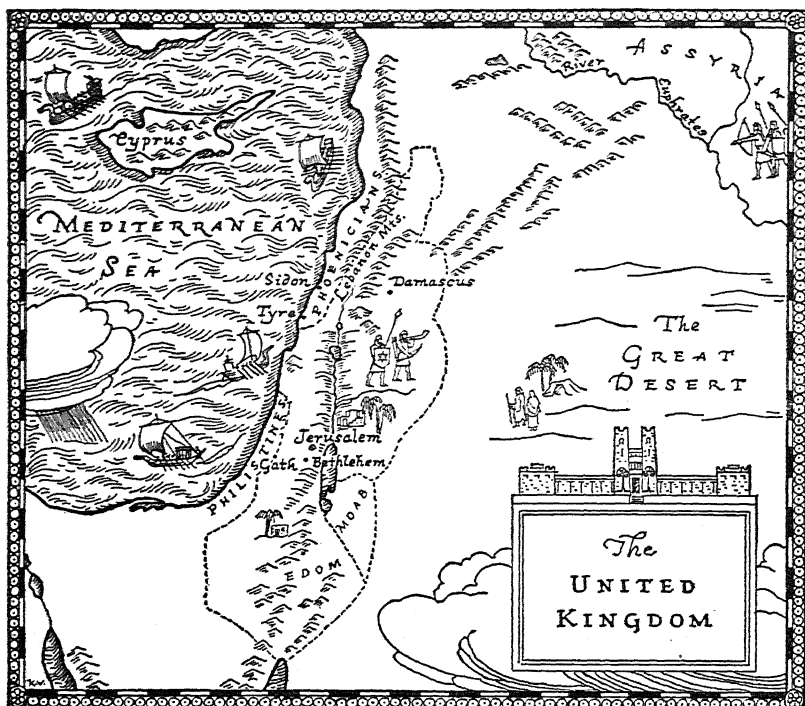
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:  
Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.  
How are the mighty fallen,  
And the weapons of war perished!

### DAVID, THE HERO KING

Saul had laid the foundation upon which the two kings who followed him built up the Hebrew nation. After his death, David was anointed king. He succeeded in routing the Philistines and by conquering enemy tribes added more land to his kingdom.

David thought that the new nation should have as its capital a city which would be strong enough to protect the people from their enemies. There was in the middle of his kingdom an ancient city, Jerusalem, still held by other tribes. It was built on a high hill and surrounded by a strong wall. The Hebrews had never been able to capture it. David determined to gain possession of it. His warriors stormed this stronghold and succeeded in taking it. And David made it his capital. From that time on it was the greatest city in Palestine. It was often referred to as "the City of David."

David decided to build a great palace which would be in keeping with his dignity as king. There were no good building materials in the land of the Hebrews, but northwest of Canaan was the kingdom of Phoenicia, which could provide them. On the slope of the Lebanon Mountains grew tall



cedars and other trees. David's friend, Hiram, king of Tyre, one of the principal cities of Phoenicia, agreed to supply him with timber and stone for the building and with skilled carpenters and stonecutters.

Jerusalem was to be the great religious center of the kingdom. David decided to bring there the Ark, the sacred chest containing the Ten Commandments. He built a tabernacle or tent of meeting where it could be kept.

Great was the rejoicing of the people when they learned that the Ark was to be brought to the City of David. On the appointed day a great procession of people, led by the priests

bearing the sacred relic, approached the city gates, which were closed. They raised their voices, chanting:

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof;  
The world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas,  
And established it upon the floods.

Priests within the city asked:

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
Or who shall stand in his holy place?

Those outside replied:

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;  
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,  
Nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,  
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

The whole procession of people broke into a joyous chorus:

This is the generation of them that seek him,  
That seek thy face, O Jacob.

The priests outside the gates asked permission to enter the city with the Ark:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in.

The priests within the gates asked:

Who is this King of glory?

From the people outside came the answer:

The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle.

Again the priests at the head of the procession demanded admission:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory shall come in.

Again came the question from within the gates:

Who is this King of glory?

Once more came the answer:

The Lord of hosts,  
He is the King of glory.

The gates of the city were thrown open and with great reverence the Ark was set up in the place which had been prepared for it.

David placed burnt offerings on the altar and blessed the people in the name of the Lord. Then the priests made music with cymbals and harps and lutes, and David sang a song of thanksgiving:

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good;  
For his mercy endureth for ever.  
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever.

It was David's dream to build a beautiful temple in Jerusalem as a more fitting place for the Ark than the Tabernacle. "I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and had made ready for the building," he said to the chief men of the kingdom. However that dream was not to be fulfilled. The honor of building the temple was to be given to David's son, Solomon, who reigned after him.

The last years of David's reign were disturbed by rebellions. One of these was led by his own son, Absalom, who conspired against his father and tried to make himself king. The rebellion spread and David was forced to flee from Jerusalem. At last the insurrection was put down; but in the uprising Absalom had been slain.

When David heard of the death of his son he was overcome with grief and cried out, "O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son."

David reigned for forty years. When he realized that his life was coming to a close, he called a great assembly of the people and proclaimed his son, Solomon, king. He asked the blessing of God for his people and for Solomon:

O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their hearts unto thee:

And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes.

Shortly after this David "slept with his fathers." He was buried in Jerusalem, the "City of David."

In later ages David became one of the great heroes of the

Hebrews and was regarded as their ideal king. They looked back on his reign as the greatest in their history. Although temptations had come to the king, and he sometimes did wrong things, the people forgot his shortcomings; but they never forgot his heroic deeds.

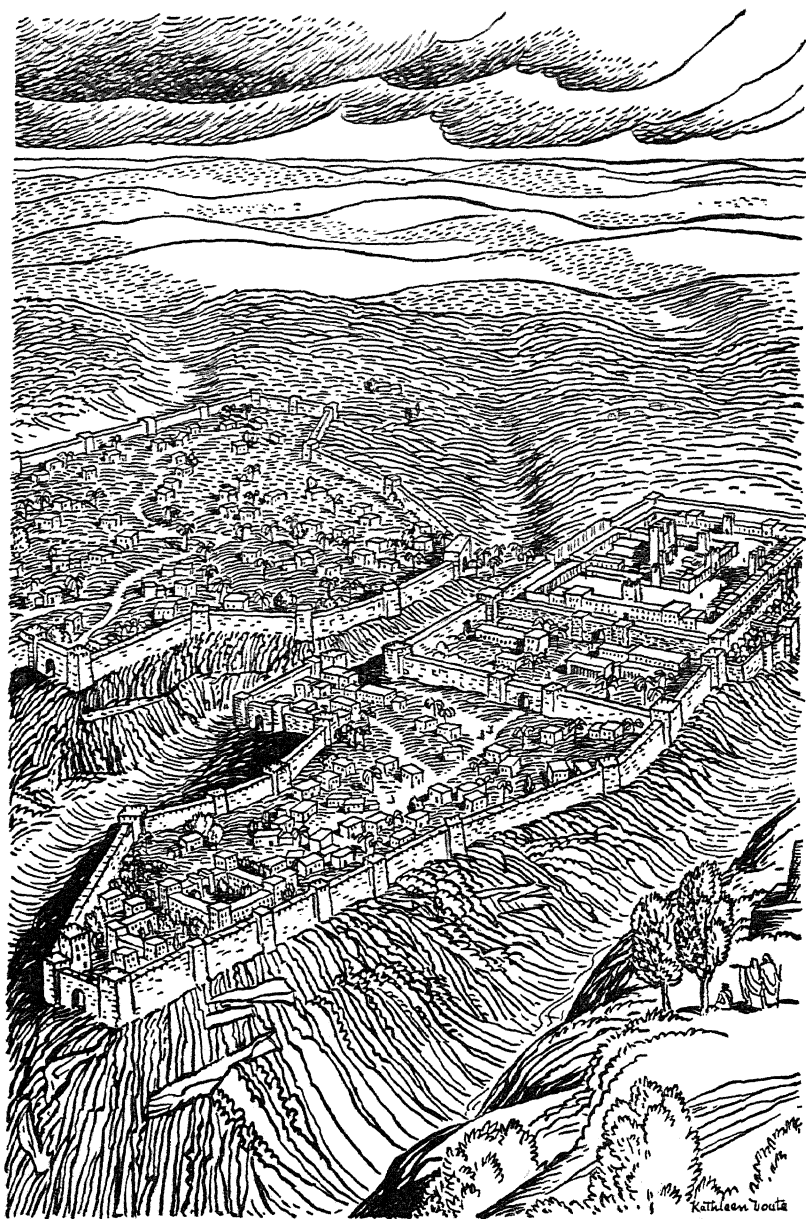
David was revered not only as a king; his fame spread also as a poet and a singer. He was often called "the sweet singer of Israel," and was thought to be the author of many of the psalms. Although he composed a number of these, many more were ascribed to him which were probably written after his time.

## SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY

During the reign of Solomon the Hebrew kingdom reached its highest glory. Solomon decided to make Jerusalem into a splendid city. Shortly after he became king he built a palace. It was an enormous building with a great hall of state in which was the king's throne made of ivory and gold. Six steps led up to it, each side of them adorned with lions sculptured from stone. There were many other rooms, richly decorated, and there were open courts with beautiful gardens in which fountains played.

Surrounded by every luxury Solomon lived in great splendor. At the table all the dishes were made of pure gold. During mealtimes harpists played sweet music. There were forty thousand horses in the king's stables for the chariots of the king and twelve thousand charioteers in his service.





Many new roads were laid out by Solomon. Over them caravans of camels brought from other countries their most valuable wares. His ships sailed on the Great Sea, now called the Mediterranean, and on the Red Sea, laden with luxuries of distant lands. Thus during the reign of Solomon the Hebrews gained importance as traders and merchants.

The fame of Solomon spread far and wide. Kings and queens and other important people came from foreign lands to see the splendor of his court. The most famous of these was the queen of Sheba, a country in Arabia regarded as one of the richest lands in the world.

For a long time the queen had been hearing about Solomon and she wanted to see for herself whether all the wonderful tales she had heard were true. With a long train of camels laden with costly gifts—rich spices, rare perfumes, gold and silver, and precious stones—she made her way to Jerusalem. Solomon entertained her in a manner befitting her importance.

The queen was greatly impressed by the rich display and magnificence she saw on every side, and expressed to Solomon her admiration for all that he had accomplished. "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom," she said, "Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. . . . Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel."

Solomon decided that the time had come to carry out David's dream of building a temple. "I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord, my God," he said, "as

the Lord spake unto David, my father, saying: 'Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne, he shall build an house unto my name.'"

For seven years a host of workmen labored in the building. The walls were of stone, lined on the inside with fragrant cedar wood, elaborately carved with flowers and palm trees, and winged angels. The altar was rich with decorations of gold and silver. On it were the things used in the service, all beautifully made.

Like the Tabernacle the Temple had an inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. Its walls were overlaid with gold. In it stood two golden cherubims with wings meeting in the center of the room, but so wide that when outstretched the wing of one touched one wall and the wing of the other touched the other wall. Between them was placed the sacred Ark containing the two stone tablets on which were carved the Ten Commandments.

Around the building was a spacious courtyard where the people could assemble on great feast days.

At last the glorious Temple was finished and Solomon called the people together to take part in a solemn ceremony to dedicate it.

Reverently the Ark was borne into the Holy of Holies by the priests and placed under the widespread wings of the cherubims. Then in hushed silence Solomon, standing before the altar, offered a prayer to God for his people:

Lord God of Israel, there is no god like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath. . . . Hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee today. . . .

Forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee. . . .

For they be thy people. . . . For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses, thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

When Solomon finished praying he blessed the people and made a peace offering to God. The minstrels played on harps and lutes, the priests sounded their trumpets, and all the people raised their voices in the hymn of praise and thanksgiving:

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

From that time on the Temple was the pride and joy of the Hebrews and the center of their religious life. There the priests conducted the services, explaining the holy laws to the people. There several times a year great religious festivals were held to which people came from all parts of Palestine.

For forty years Solomon reigned. After his death legends grew up about the wisdom of the king. Shortly after he became king he had a dream in which God appeared to him and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon answered,

“Thou hast showed unto thy servant, David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness. . . . And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.”

This answer was pleasing to God, and he replied, “Because thou hast asked this thing and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself . . . I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.”

Thus, says the Old Testament writer, “God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much.”

Many wise sayings in the Book of Proverbs were attributed to Solomon. It seems likely, however, that these were collected over a long period of time. Here are some of them which are well known today:

A soft answer turneth away wrath, but a grievous word stirreth up anger.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

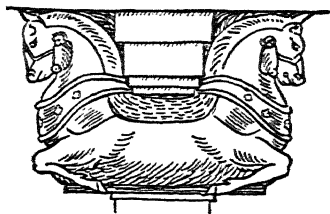
Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.



## A CONQUERED LAND

***B**Y THE rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

*We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*

*For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*

*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*

PSALM 137.





## THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

Sad to say, the kingdom built up to such magnificence by Solomon was not to last. Even during his reign all was not well in the kingdom. The many ambitious undertakings of the king and the luxury of his court had to be paid for by heavy taxes, and the poor people suffered. Discontent spread among them, and at one time there was threat of a rebellion, but Solomon was able to prevent an uprising.

Solomon was followed on the throne by his son, Rehoboam, who cared little for the welfare of the people. Soon after he became king, the people made known to him their grievances and begged him to lighten their burdens. "Thy father made our yoke grievous," they said. "Now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and the heavy yoke he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

"Depart yet for three days, then come again to me," replied Rehoboam.

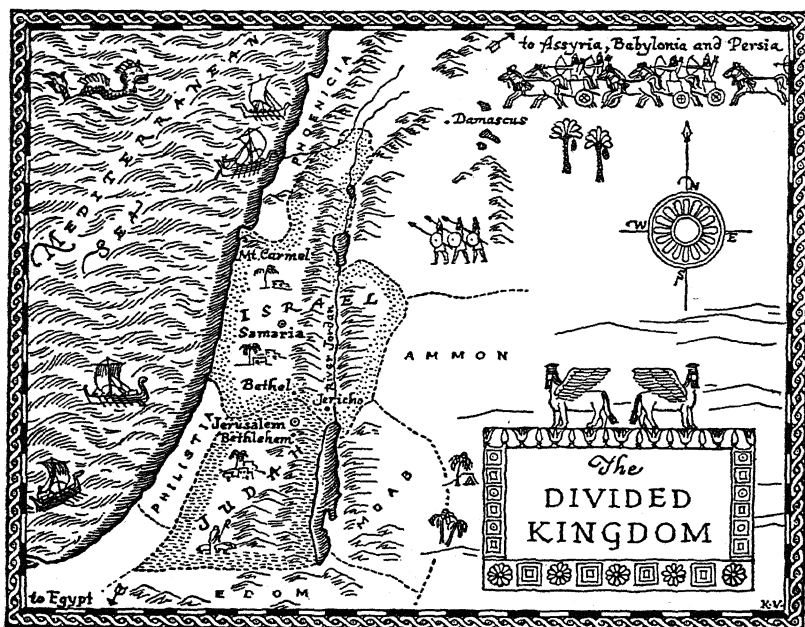
The king consulted some of his older councilors. "How do ye advise that I may answer this people?" he asked.

As these councilors realized that there was great unrest among the people, they advised the king to be lenient. "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and answer them, and speak good words to them," they said, "then they will be thy servants for ever."

Rehoboam was not satisfied with this advice and consulted some of his younger advisers. They were not so wise as the

older men, and they urged the king to be harsh. When the people returned to him on the third day, the king followed the advice of the young men and spoke to them harshly. "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke," he said sternly. "My father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

When the people heard these cruel words, they knew that they could expect no justice or mercy from the new king and most of them rose up in rebellion against him. The ten tribes who lived in the north formed an independent kingdom, Israel, and chose a young man named Jeroboam as their king. The capital of the new kingdom was the city of Samaria.



Through his folly Rehoboam had lost the greater part of his kingdom. Only two tribes remained faithful to him. They formed the kingdom of Judah in the south, with Jerusalem as the capital.

Thus the brief life of the united Hebrew kingdom came to an end. Thereafter, instead of one strong kingdom, there were two weak kingdoms.

There was bitter feeling between the two kingdoms and frequently they were at war with each other. Had they remained united, they might have been able to maintain their independence. Divided as they were, they were at the mercy of the more powerful nations of the region and in time were conquered by them.

Northeast of Palestine, in the northern part of the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was Assyria, a strong military nation. The Assyrians were a cruel, warlike people, ruled by ambitious kings, who constantly made war on other nations in order to extend their dominions. They were greatly feared by other peoples, for whenever their armies invaded a country, they left ruin and destruction behind them.

Early in the eighth century B.C. the Assyrians swept down upon the kingdom of Israel. For three years the people defended their capital, Samaria, against the invaders, but in the year 721 B.C. it was captured. All the best inhabitants were sent to Assyria as captives; only the poor people were allowed to remain in Israel. The Assyrians sent colonists to Samaria who intermarried with the Hebrews there. Their descendants, a mixed race, were called Samaritans.

Thus came to an end the kingdom of Israel. The people who had been taken captive by the Assyrians never returned

to their homeland. They were scattered and mingled with other peoples. For that reason they were often referred to in later days as the "lost tribes of Israel."

The little kingdom of Judah continued its independent existence for about a hundred years. During that time the Hebrews came to be known as Judeans, or Jews.

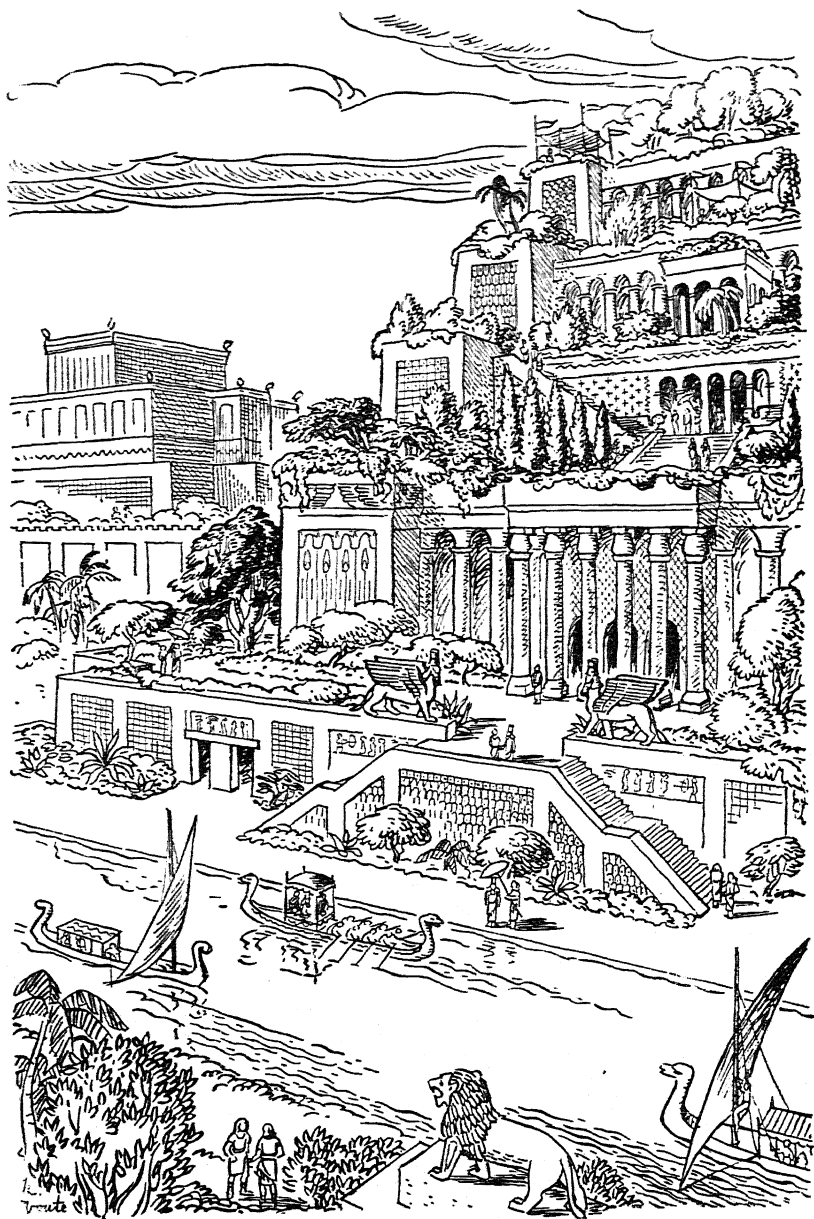
In the year 617 B.C. the Assyrian empire, the terror of the ancient nations, came to an end when it was conquered by Babylonia, the nation in the southern part of the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. After the fall of Assyria, Babylonia under a great king, Nebuchadnezzar, became the greatest empire of the time.

Nebuchadnezzar made Babylon, the capital of Babylonia, into one of the most magnificent cities of his day. Through the city flowed the Euphrates River. Along its banks were built splendid palaces, brilliant with gaily colored bricks and tiles. At the doorways were immense stone figures which had the bodies of bulls, the wings of eagles, and the heads of men.

For the pleasure of his queen, the king built the wonderful hanging gardens of Babylon, which were famous throughout the ancient world. These were a series of terraces, built one above another on arches of brickwork, each one planted with beautiful trees and flowers.

The Babylonians believed in many gods and built temples in honor of them. They were like square towers built up in tiers, each story somewhat smaller than the one below it. At the top of the tower was a small temple which was thought to be the dwelling place of the god.

To protect Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar built massive walls all around the city. They were so thick that on the roadway



on top of them, two four-horsed chariots could pass each other without danger.

Nebuchadnezzar wanted to have possession of Judah to protect his western frontier. In the year 586 B.C. Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonians. The city was captured, the Temple was destroyed, its treasures carried off to Babylon. The greater part of the inhabitants of the kingdom were sent into exile in Babylonia. This brought to an end the independence of Judah.

For fifty years the Jews remained in Babylonia and gradually adapted themselves to their life there. But they remained faithful to the religion of their forefathers and they never forgot Jerusalem, the city of God. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning," they said. "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

## GREAT PROPHETS

In the days after the kingdom was divided, evil kings reigned in both Israel and Judah and the people fell away from the faith of their forefathers. During that time there arose men of godly spirit, who believed that they were directed by God to lead their people back to the ways of righteousness. These great religious leaders were called prophets.

During the reign of one evil king the worship of a heathen god, Baal, became widespread in Israel. His followers be-

lieved that this god brought the sunshine and the rain which made all green things grow. When crops failed, they thought that failure was due to neglect of Baal. They set up images of the god in groves and on hilltops where sacrifices were offered and festivals were held in his honor. Thus the people of the northern kingdom became idol-worshippers and broke one of the Ten Commandments God had given his people.

From the wild region east of the Jordan River came to the northern kingdom the prophet Elijah. Dressed in a rough garment of sheepskin, with long, shaggy locks falling over his bare shoulders, he attracted crowds wherever he went. He was a man of mystery. Suddenly he would appear in the market place of a town, speak to the people, and then would disappear as suddenly as he had come. A few days later he would appear in another place.

Elijah decided that the people of Israel must be made to understand that Baal was not the true God and could do nothing for them. He summoned the followers of the heathen god to Mount Carmel and told them to choose which God they would worship. "If the Lord be God, follow him," he said, "but if Baal, then follow him."

At the suggestion of the prophet two altars were built, one to Baal and one to the God of Elijah. Wood was laid on each altar, and a bullock which was to be offered as a sacrifice.

Elijah challenged the followers of Baal to prove the power of their god. "Call ye on the name of your gods," he said, "and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the god that answereth by fire, let him be God."

The people agreed to this plan. "It is well spoken," they said.





All day the followers of Baal appealed to their god, imploring him to set fire to the wood on their altar; but there came no answer to their prayers. Elijah stood nearby watching them. "Cry aloud," he said mockingly, "for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

That evening Elijah prayed to his God: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me."

Almost immediately came the answer to Elijah's prayer. Lightning struck the altar which Elijah had built to God, burning the bullock which he had offered as a sacrifice. When the people saw the power of the God of Elijah they were convinced that he was the true God. Falling down on their knees they cried out, "The Lord he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!"

Thus, through the work of Elijah the influence of the heathen god, Baal, over the people of Israel was broken.

Throughout his long life Elijah preached fearlessly against the evils of his day. He was the first of many fearless and inspired religious leaders who at different times carried on their work of reform in both the northern and the southern kingdoms.

In the eighth century B.C. another prophet in sheepskin appeared in Bethel, a city of the northern kingdom. This was Amos, a simple herdsman, who had come from the hills of Judah. During the long hours while he was watching his sheep as they grazed on the hillside, he had much time for thought. He often went to the market towns of both

Judah and Israel to sell the wool of his sheep or the fruit of sycamore trees. There he saw wealthy people enjoying every luxury while the poor lived in misery. Those who were powerful took advantage of the weak and helpless. Merchants gave false weight and short measure, judges were dishonest, rendering decisions in favor of those who gave them money. There was no chance for poor people to get justice in the courts.

Filled with grief at what he saw, Amos came to believe that he had been chosen by God to speak out against the wickedness of his time. In stirring words he denounced the rich people for their selfishness and their hardheartedness toward the poor and needy. "Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor . . . ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. For I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins. . . .

"Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, for, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought . . . the Lord, the God of hosts, is his name."

Many people thought that if they attended the services in the Temple or the synagogues and laid expensive offerings on the altars, they were doing all that was required of them. Amos preached against this empty following of outward forms and ceremonies, in which the true spirit of religion was lacking. According to him God said, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I

regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; and let me not hear the melody of thy psalteries. But let justice well up as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

"Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you," pleaded Amos. "Hate the evil and love the good and establish justice in the gate."

The noblest of the prophets was Isaiah. For forty years this great statesman-prophet taught in Jerusalem. He gave his people this promise God made if they would repent and live in the way he wished them to live:

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

More than any other prophet Isaiah was filled with a sense of the greatness of God. He dreamed of a golden age in the future when the ways of men would be the ways God had taught them, and all injustice and wrong would be swept away.

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. . . .

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

This blessed time was to be not only for the Hebrews but for all mankind. When it came, the terrible scourge of war would be banished from the earth. "The nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks," prophesied Isaiah. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

There were other prophets—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. One and all, these great reformers sought to lead the people in the ways of righteousness. There must be a society in which there was justice for all men and one's duty toward one's neighbors must be carried out in the daily life of the people. "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" cried the prophet Malachi. "Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?"

Throughout the ages the lofty teachings of the prophets have influenced the hearts and minds of men. They have significance for the world today, as they had in the days in which the prophets lived. Today, as in those olden times, the words of Micah are true: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

## BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

Sometimes the refusal of the Jews to worship the gods of Babylonia while they were in captivity there, brought severe punishment. Centuries later, stories were told of the miracles that had happened to those who remained faithful to their religion in spite of suffering and persecution. Among the best known of these stories are those about Daniel and his three friends, whom the Babylonians named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

At one time King Nebuchadnezzar commanded his most skilful craftsmen to make a golden image which was set up on a pillar of cedar wood. The king called together the governors of the various provinces and a herald proclaimed: "At what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, and all kinds of music, ye shall fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up, and whoso falleth not down shall be cast in the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

At the appointed times all the people of Babylon gathered to worship the golden image. Some of the priests complained to Nebuchadnezzar that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship it. Angered that anyone dared to disobey his command, the king ordered the three men brought to him and warned them that if they continued to disobey him they would be cast into a fiery furnace.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery

furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King."

Then Nebuchadnezzar commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should be bound and cast into a fiery furnace. So fierce were the flames that the soldiers who cast the men into the fire perished.

Nebuchadnezzar watched the carrying out of his decree. As he watched he was filled with astonishment at what he saw. "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" he asked his councilors.

"True, O King," they replied.

"Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God," said the king.

Nebuchadnezzar bade Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come out. When they appeared, it was seen that they were unharmed, "nor was an hair of their head singed." The king blessed the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who had saved those who trusted in him, and had "yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." He passed a decree ordering that anyone who spoke evil of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego should be severely punished, and he gave them positions of honor in Babylon.

Years passed. King Nebuchadnezzar died, and after his death the power of Babylonia declined. In the land east of the Euphrates valley a new nation, Persia, was growing strong. In the year 539 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, decided to conquer Babylonia.

An interesting story is told of how Cyrus took possession of Babylon. At that time Babylonia was governed by a weak king, Belshazzar.

One night, so the story goes, Belshazzar was giving a banquet for a thousand of his nobles in the great hall of his palace. They feasted and drank wine from the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon years before from the Temple at Jerusalem. Although it was known that the Persians were outside Babylon, everyone felt secure because of the massive walls which protected the city.

When revelry was at its height, silence suddenly fell on the merrymakers and everyone stared at something which was taking place high up on one of the walls of the hall. There the fingers of an armless hand traced several mysterious words—*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN*—and disappeared.

The king was terrified. What did the strange words mean? Hastily he summoned his wise men and said to them, "Whoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

Unfortunately, none of the wise men could explain the meaning of the words. The queen remembered that Daniel could interpret dreams and suggested that he might be able to tell what the mysterious words meant. Daniel was hastily brought into the banquet hall and shown the writing. He said to the king:

"O thou King, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor. All people and nations trembled and feared before him. . . . And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of

heaven. . . . Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written."

Daniel then gave the king the interpretation of the writing. It was a message of doom. *MENE* meant, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." *TEKEL* meant, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." *UPHARSIN* meant, "Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Persians."

Thus Daniel foretold the fate of Babylonia, which meant the death of Belshazzar and the capture of his kingdom by the Persians.

Events quickly followed which proved that what Daniel had said was true. King Cyrus had devised an ingenious plan by which Babylon might be taken in spite of its strong, protecting wall. His soldiers turned most of the water of the Euphrates River, which flowed under one part of the wall, into a canal which they dug outside the wall. When the water of the river was shallow enough, the Persian soldiers crept under the wall and made their way along the river bed. The city of Babylon was captured and Belshazzar was slain. Thus in the year 539 B.C., the Persians became masters of Babylonia.

Cyrus appointed Darius as king of the country. Under him were a hundred officials and over them Darius set three to whom they were accountable. One of these was Daniel. So well did Daniel carry out his duties that in time he was given charge of the whole kingdom.

The Persian officials were envious of Daniel and plotted to overthrow him; but they were unable to find anything wrong with his work. At length they thought of a way by which they could bring punishment upon him. They per-



suaded Darius to issue a decree that anyone who made a petition to any god or man except the king should be cast into a den of lions. Without realizing that he was bringing death to his faithful public servant, Darius issued the decree.

Although Daniel knew of the decree, he remained faithful to his religion. With his windows wide open he knelt down three times every day and prayed to God as it had always been his custom. One day his enemies broke in upon him, found him on his knees praying, and charged him with breaking the decree Darius had issued.

Darius was unhappy when he realized what had happened, but he had to punish Daniel. He hoped, however, that Daniel's God would save him. "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee," he said to Daniel.

Daniel was thrown into a den where there were several lions. A heavy stone was placed at the mouth of the den and sealed with the royal seal so that no one could roll it away.

That night Darius could not sleep. Very early the next morning he hastily made his way to the den. Breaking the seal and rolling away the stone, he called out, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

From within the den Daniel answered, "O King, live for ever. My God hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."

Rejoicing, Darius had Daniel brought out of the den. He had the men who had tried to take Daniel's life, thrown into the den and they were devoured by the lions.

In the year 538 B.C., King Cyrus allowed the Hebrews to return to their native land and take with them the treasures

of the Temple which had been brought to Babylon. Singing the songs of Zion, a great caravan of people made their way over the desert and after months of travel reached their beloved homeland. There they found widespread desolation. Jerusalem had been destroyed and the Temple lay in ruins.

At once the returned exiles began the work of restoring the Temple. The foundations were relaid, the walls rebuilt, and an altar set up. For years the people labored, and at last the Temple was finished and the beautiful treasures of gold and silver brought back from Babylon were placed in it.

The younger people "shouted with a great shout," but many of the older people who had known the old Temple "wept with a loud voice, so that the sounds of joy could not be told from that of the weeping."

At that time Jewish scholars among the returned exiles collected the ancient writings of their people, which had come down from earlier ages, and gathered together all the old laws. These collected works became the first part of the scriptures.

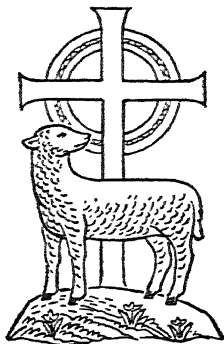
For the services in the Temple was made a remarkable collection of a hundred and fifty hymns. In later days these made up the book of the Psalms in the Bible. In them is expressed in beautiful and poetic language the noblest thoughts of the Hebrews, their sense of the greatness of God, and their gratitude for his loving care of them.

In later times additions were made to the sacred writings of the Jews. They were divided into three parts: the Torah or the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

The Jews remained under Persian rule until Persia was

conquered by Alexander the Great in 334 B.C. After the death of Alexander there was almost ceaseless strife and turmoil in Palestine for about two centuries. At last, in 63 B.C., Roman legions under Pompey captured Jerusalem and Palestine became a part of the Roman Empire. Herod, who was partly Jewish, was made king of the Jews; but he reigned only under the authority of the Roman governor of Palestine, Pontius Pilate.





## JESUS OF NAZARETH

*U*NTO us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

ISAIAH IX: 6



## IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Toward the end of the reign of Herod there was born in Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, who, when he was grown, became the founder of a new religion. We gain our knowledge of Jesus from the first four books of the New Testament called the Gospels, an old English word which means, "good tidings." These accounts were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each one told the story in his own way, stressing those parts which seemed to him to be the most important. Although the accounts differ somewhat in details from one another, from them as a whole we are able to get a fairly clear picture of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus, lived in Nazareth, a little village in Galilee, as the northern part of Palestine was called. Shortly before the birth of Jesus, the Roman emperor ordered that a list should be made of all the families in Palestine so that the tax collectors would know who paid their taxes. Everyone was to be registered in the place from which his ancestors came. As Joseph was descended from David, who had come from the town of Bethlehem, he and Mary had to go there to be registered.

When the travelers reached Bethlehem the little inn was full and they could find no place to stay. They were obliged to seek shelter in a grotto in a nearby hillside which was used as a stable for cattle and beasts of burden. There Jesus was born.





Beautiful stories were told about the birth of Jesus. One of the loveliest was that about some shepherds who were watching their flocks that night in the fields not far from Bethlehem. All around them stretched the dark, silent meadows. Suddenly it seemed to the shepherds that the sky was ablaze with dazzling light and in the light appeared a glorious angel.

The shepherds were frightened, but the angel said to them:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Then it seemed that there was with the angel a whole company of heavenly beings praising God and joyously singing:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The singing died away, the angels disappeared, the glorious light in the heavens faded, and darkness settled down once more upon the wondering shepherds.

“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us,” said one of the shepherds.

Making their way to the little town, they found Mary and Joseph in the stable and the newborn babe in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, just as the angel had said.

Filled with awe they knelt down and worshiped the infant. Then they returned to their flocks, "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

Another story was that of three magi, who set out for Bethlehem that night. In the East it was the custom of some learned men to study the stars, as it was believed that they had great influence on the lives of men. By studying them men could see into the future and foretell things that would happen. Such men were called magi, which means "wise men."

One night some wise men who were watching the stars as they moved across the vast space of the heavens, in a land far to the east of Palestine, were startled by the sudden appearance of a strangely brilliant star they had never seen before. They believed that this star signified the birth of a king, and they decided to follow it as it moved westward across the sky, to find out where it would lead them.

Taking with them as gifts the choicest products of their land—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—the magi followed the star westward. When they arrived in Jerusalem they inquired, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

When news of this reached King Herod, he was alarmed. What did those strangers from a distant land mean? Would someone, someday, dare to set up another king in his place? Hastily he gathered together his most learned men and asked them where such a future king might be born.

"In Bethlehem of Judaea," answered these learned men, "for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes

of Juda; for out of thee shalt come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel.' ”

Herod called the magi to him and directed them to go to Bethlehem. He did not let them know his thoughts, but pretended that he too wanted to worship the newborn child. “Go and search diligently for the young child,” he said, “and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”

The magi traveled south to Bethlehem and, according to the Bible story, the star which they had seen in the east, “went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.” They followed where it led them, “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him.” When they had opened their treasures, they presented him with their gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

For some days Herod waited for the magi to return to Jerusalem to give him the information he sought about Jesus; but they did not appear. They had been warned in a dream that they should not go back to Herod, so they returned to their own country by another route.

When Herod realized that the magi were not returning to Jerusalem he was very angry. In order to make sure that no one in Bethlehem should grow up to claim his throne, he issued a cruel decree that all the children of that town under two years of age should be killed.

Herod's slaughter of the little children of Bethlehem was in vain, for Jesus was not slain. An angel had appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until

I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.”

Joseph and Mary went to Egypt as the angel had directed them to do. A short time after this Herod died and they returned to their home in Nazareth.



## JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND STATURE

The Bible does not tell us much about the childhood of Jesus, but Joseph and his family probably lived the simple life of poor Jewish people of that time. Along the narrow

streets of Nazareth were rows of little, one-story, flat-roofed houses built of stones which were whitewashed. The women were busy all day with their many household tasks. They ground grain and baked the bread which they made from it on hot stones on the hearth and prepared the other things for the simple meals. They wove cloth and dyed it for clothes and for other household uses. They drew water from the village well and filled their jars with it. The men were busy in the nearby fields sowing and reaping the grain, or in the vineyards caring for the grapes to be used for making wine, or in the meadows tending their flocks and herds. Some of them engaged in simple trades.

In their home Mary and Joseph followed the old Jewish customs of family life and they no doubt brought up Jesus in the way prescribed for the children of devout Jewish parents. When he was a little boy his mother told him stories of Hebrew heroes—of Abraham, the forefather of the Jewish people; of Moses who had led their ancestors out of bondage and had given them their laws; of David, the shepherd boy who became a great king. She told him about God and his loving-kindness to his people, and she taught him to say the words Moses had given them many centuries before: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

"These words," Moses had said at that time, "shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house."

Perhaps Mary taught her little boy to chant some of the beautiful psalms, especially the Shepherd Psalm of David,

and those sung by the people when they traveled to Jerusalem for the celebration of one of the Jewish feasts.

When Jesus was older, he went to the school in Nazareth, which was in the synagogue. There he and the other children of the village were instructed by the rabbi. From a long scroll covered with Hebrew writing, the rabbi read passages from the holy scriptures. These the scholars repeated over and over until they could say them from memory. Later on they studied important parts of the sacred writings.

Every Sabbath Jesus accompanied his parents to the service in the synagogue. At the beginning the whole congregation said together the words Jesus had learned from his mother:

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

After that prayers were said and parts of the sacred writings were read by the rabbi. Then followed a discussion of what had been read. If an important stranger happened to be present he might be asked to speak. The service closed with the beautiful benediction of Moses:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Each year Joseph and Mary made the long journey to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover. When Jesus

was twelve years old he was taken with them. It was the custom for a number of families from the same neighborhood to travel together. Some rode on camels, some on donkeys, many walked. As they traveled along they sang the well-known and well-loved psalms. When they started on the journey they sang:

I was glad when they said unto me,  
Let us go into the house of the Lord:  
Our feet shall stand at thy gates,  
O Jerusalem.

As they approached a beautiful hill perhaps they repeated the words of another psalm:

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

The roads near Jerusalem were thronged with pilgrims from all parts of Palestine. When the Holy City came into view, the whole company joyously burst out in song:

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
And into his courts with praise:  
Serve the Lord with gladness;  
Come before his presence with singing.  
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The first visit of Jesus to Jerusalem made a deep impression on the twelve-year-old boy. He saw for the first time the beautiful Temple surrounded by its spacious courts. Within the Temple he heard the most learned men of the time explain the laws which the people were to obey. He took part in the sacred ceremonies connected with the solemn festival of the Passover.

The days of the Passover passed quickly and at the end of the week Mary and Joseph with their neighbors from Nazareth started out on their journey homeward. Jesus was not with them, but they were not disturbed for they thought he was with some of their friends. When the pilgrims encamped for the night, however, Jesus was nowhere to be found.

After an anxious night, Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem. They searched everywhere for the missing boy and on the third day they came upon him in the Temple. He was seated among the learned rabbis, deep in a religious discussion, listening to them and answering their questions. "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers," says the Bible account.

Sadly Mary said to Jesus, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt



with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.”

Jesus seemed surprised that his parents did not understand. He had not meant to give them trouble, but his duty to find out more about God was above all other duties.

“How is it that ye sought me?” he asked. “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

Jesus returned to Nazareth and lived happily with Joseph and Mary in their simple home. Joseph was a carpenter and Jesus helped him with his work. Evidently he obeyed his parents as a good son should, for the Bible tells us he was “subject unto them.”

So Jesus grew to manhood in the little village of Nazareth. As the years went by he grew strong in mind and body and it became apparent that he had unusual spiritual qualities. As St. Luke put it in his account, Jesus “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

## THE COMING OF THE KING

During their long time of suffering under foreign conquerors, the Jews had dreamed of the coming of a messiah, the “anointed one.” That term was applied to a king because it was the custom to anoint a new king with oil. Many centuries earlier the prophets had foretold a time when God would send the Hebrews a wonderful king under whom they would find peace and happiness. The great Isaiah had prophesied the coming of such a messiah. “The

spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him," he said, "and the spirit of wisdom and understanding."

This king was to be a descendant of David. "Behold," said the prophet Jeremiah, "the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." According to another prophet the king was to be born in Bethlehem.

Although for hundreds of years the Jews looked forward to the realization of their dream, centuries passed and no king appeared. Now, when they were suffering under the Romans, the people looked forward even more eagerly to the fulfilling of the ancient prophecies. Many believed that at last the day of deliverance was at hand. Everywhere, in homes, in village inns, in the market places, in the synagogues—wherever people gathered together—they discussed the coming of the messiah, the anointed one. "When will he come?" they asked.

From the time of the birth of Jesus some people had thought that he was the longed-for messiah. When the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, they spoke of Jesus as "King of the Jews." A short time after his birth, when Jesus was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem, an old man, Simeon, saw him. He had been told by God that he was not to die until he had seen the messiah. Taking the infant Jesus in his arms, Simeon gave thanks to God, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people."

At the time when Jesus was born, there lived an elderly couple, Zacharias and Elizabeth. To them was born a son,

who was later known by his Greek name, John. When John grew to manhood he became a prophet, wearing a garment of camel's hair fastened with a leather girdle, and eating simple desert foods.

John went about preaching to the people in the synagogues and in the market places, telling them that the messiah was coming. He believed that the Jews were not ready for this great event. They must first repent their sins. Always his message to them was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As the outward sign that they had repented they were baptized, that is, they confessed their sins and were dipped in the waters of the River Jordan. This ceremony was the symbol that the person was cleansed of all sin.

John's fame spread far and wide and throngs of people came from all parts of Palestine to hear him preach and to be baptized. Some of those who came under his influence thought that he was the messiah. John, however, believed that he was merely the messenger, sent by God to tell the Jews that the messiah was coming. "I indeed baptize you with water," he said, "but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose."

News of John's preaching reached Nazareth and Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized by him. When Jesus presented himself to John, John expressed surprise. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

Jesus replied, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Then John baptized Jesus.

As Jesus was coming out of the river, a strange thing happened which changed the course of his life and had a tremendous influence upon the whole future history of the

world. From his earliest childhood he had felt his nearness to God. Now it seemed to him that the heavens opened and that he saw the spirit of God descending in the form of a dove. He heard a voice saying to him, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Throughout his life Jesus had heard people talking about the coming of a messiah. The idea came to him that he was to be the messiah, chosen by God to save his people. Overcome by this suggestion he felt the need of being alone, to think and to pray to God for guidance. He went to a quiet place in the nearby wilderness where he remained for forty days. During that time he did not eat and after his long fast he was hungry. There came to him the thought, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." In the words of the Bible, Jesus was tempted by Satan.

For a moment the idea appealed to Jesus. He soon realized, however, that the real test of his power was not whether he could turn stones into bread, but whether he could carry out the will of God and lead others to follow it. Recalling the words of the Bible, he replied to Satan, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Again temptation came to Jesus. Satan took him up to the top of a high mountain where he could see all the kingdoms of the world, and said to him, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." Thus the advantages of power and glory were presented to Jesus and he wrestled with the temptation to gain earthly power. Should he drive

the Romans out of Palestine and thus make himself king?

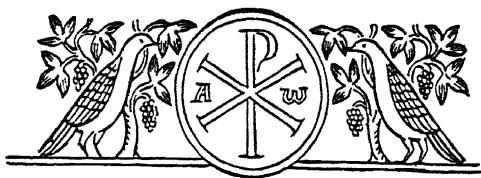
Once more Jesus overcame temptation. Sternly he answered Satan, "Get thee behind me Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Still Satan persisted. Taking Jesus to Jerusalem, he set him up on a high pinnacle of the Temple and said, "If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, 'he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.'"

This temptation Jesus also resisted, saying to Satan, "It is said, thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God."

Jesus returned from his long vigil in the wilderness, "in the power of the Spirit." He had decided what his work in the world was to be. He would devote his life to the loving service of his fellow men. He would try to bring about a change in the hearts and minds of people, helping them to live as God wished them to live. Instead of seeking political power he would undertake the great task of leading people through his preaching to an understanding of the kingdom of God, a kingdom based not on force, but on love. He believed that as the spirit of the brotherhood of man spread among people, there would gradually grow up a society in which the spirit of God would prevail.





## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

***T**HOU shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,  
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

*This is the first and great commandment.*

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor  
as thyself.*

*On these two commandments hang all the law and the  
prophets.*

MATTHEW XXII: 37-40





## THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Jesus began his ministry at the Jordan River near the place where John had been preaching. To the crowds who gathered to hear him he gave a message similar to that of John: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the good news."

Soon Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in the northern part of Palestine on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. As he was preaching there one Sabbath it happened that an insane man was in the synagogue. At that time it was thought that the world was full of spirits, some good and some evil. An evil spirit could enter into a person, take possession of him, and make him insane.

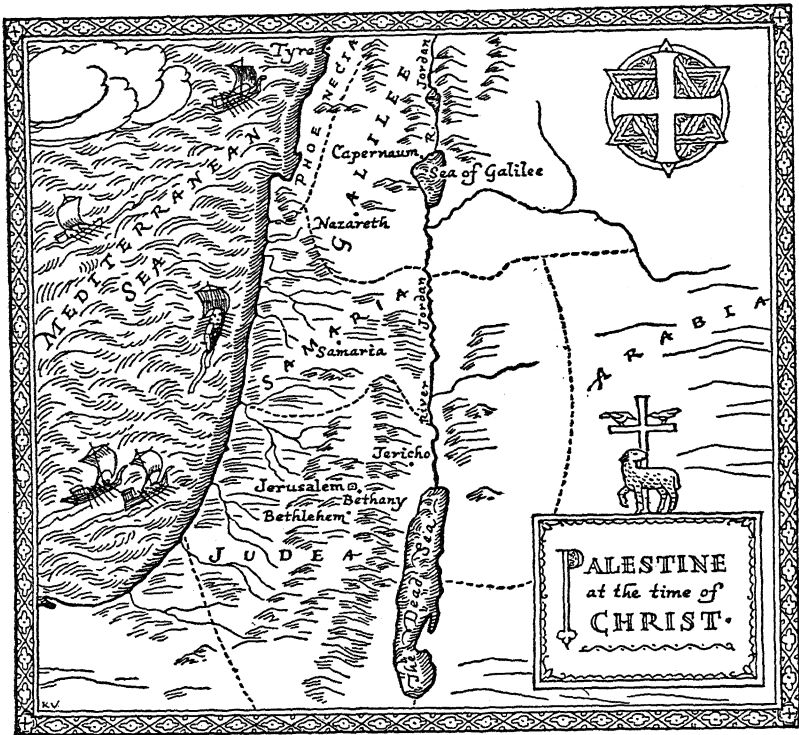
As the insane man listened to Jesus he was deeply stirred and in great excitement he shouted, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?"

Jesus rebuked the man, saying, "Hold thy peace." Then as if speaking to the evil spirit within him, he said, "Come out of him."

Uttering a terrible cry, the man was restored to sanity. The people were amazed, and said, "What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits and they do obey him."

After that Jesus traveled about through the towns and villages of Galilee, preaching in synagogues, on the streets,

at the seashore, and on the mountainside—anywhere that people would listen to him. Always he tried by his words and his example to make those who heard him understand the nature of the kingdom of God which he hoped to see



established on earth. This kingdom was not the kingdom they expected; it was not to be gained by rebellion against their enemies. It was to come through a change in the hearts of men so that they would learn to live together in loving kindness. "The kingdom of God is within you," he taught.

Deeply touched by poverty and suffering, Jesus "went

about doing good." His heart went out to the oppressed and downtrodden. To them he gave the comforting message, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Humble folk found new hope in this message and turned eagerly to him.

One incident of the travels of Jesus through Galilee was the curing of a person afflicted with leprosy, a terrible skin disease. Any person having that disease was considered unclean and whatever he touched became unclean. He had to live apart from family and friends, and wherever he went along the street he had to cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" so that no one would go near him. Thus the lepers lived lives of hopeless misery.

A leper knelt before Jesus, seeking his help. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

Jesus stretched out his hand to the suffering man and said, "I will; be thou clean."

To the astonishment of those who were present, the man was immediately cured.

The fame of Jesus as one who had the power to heal, spread rapidly. All kinds of people thronged to him to be healed. He restored sight in the blind, brought back hearing to the deaf, and speech to dumb people. And he healed "many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons."

As time passed, many tales grew up about the powers of Jesus. It was said that he was able to feed several thousand people with five loaves of bread and two small fish, that he walked upon the sea, that he brought the dead back to life, and performed many other miracles. In those days people easily believed in miracles. To their simple minds anything

seemed possible and stories of boundless marvels were told in all ancient religions about holy men.

Often Jesus made clear great truths by means of parables. These were simple stories which everyone could understand. They usually dealt with incidents from everyday life with which the people were familiar.

At one time when Jesus was preaching by the Sea of Galilee, so many people gathered to hear him that he had to go out in a fishing boat and preach from it. He told the following story, trying to make his listeners understand how knowledge of the kingdom of God grows in men's hearts.

Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

And when he had sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

The sower was one who preached the word of God. To some people who heard the word, temptation came and the good which had been sown in their hearts was lost. Other people heard the word, but it fell "on stony ground." As they had no deep roots within themselves the effect could not last and it "withered away." Still others heard the word,

but deceitfulness and desire for riches choked out its good effects. Fortunately some seeds "fell on good ground." These were the people who received the word of God gladly and made use of it in their daily lives.

In the hot valley of the Jordan River plants grow luxuriantly. There the mustard plant sometimes grows to a height of ten or fifteen feet. In a parable Jesus compared the growth of the kingdom of God in men's hearts to that of the mustard plant from a tiny seed, "which indeed is the least of all seeds." Day by day the plant grows. No one can see the change going on within it, but in the course of time it "becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches: so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."

So it is with the growth of the kingdom of God in the heart of a person; it grows "he knoweth not how," said Jesus.

One day a lawyer said to Jesus, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered by asking the lawyer another question: "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

The lawyer knew the laws of the Hebrews and immediately answered in the words from the Bible: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

"Thou hast answered right," said Jesus. "This do and thou shalt live."

The lawyer was not satisfied. He questioned further. "And who is my neighbor?"

To answer that question Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him.

And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, "Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

When the story was ended, Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?"

"He that showed mercy on him," replied the lawyer.

Jesus said simply, "Go, and do thou likewise."

In order to understand the full meaning of the story of the Good Samaritan we must realize that those who gave no help to the suffering man were men high up in religious circles. The man who aided him was from Samaria. Most Jews looked down upon the inhabitants of that part of Palestine because the people in that region were the mixed race which grew up after Assyria had sent colonists there many centuries earlier. By this parable Jesus showed that even such a person is truly religious if he carries out the

commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and the Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

## JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

As Jesus walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee one day shortly after he began his teaching, he came upon two fishermen, Simon, sometimes called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were busy washing their nets. Jesus said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught."

Simon answered, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net."

When the net was brought up it was so full of fishes that it broke, and Simon and his brother had to get some other fishermen to help them. Simon fell down on his knees before Jesus, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Jesus replied, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

The two brothers left their nets and followed Jesus.

A little further on Jesus saw two more fishermen, two brothers, James and John, in a ship with their father, mending their nets. He called to them, and immediately they left the ship and followed him.

The following day Jesus found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We

have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael replied, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Philip answered, "Come and see."

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

Nathanael was surprised and asked, "Whence knowest thou me?"

Jesus replied, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."

Nathanael cried, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

Jesus said, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these."

These men became the first disciples of Jesus, his faithful followers, who accompanied him wherever he went. Some months later, Jesus decided to increase the number of his disciples to twelve. He went up on a mountain and called to him many men. From these he selected those who were to help him in his work.

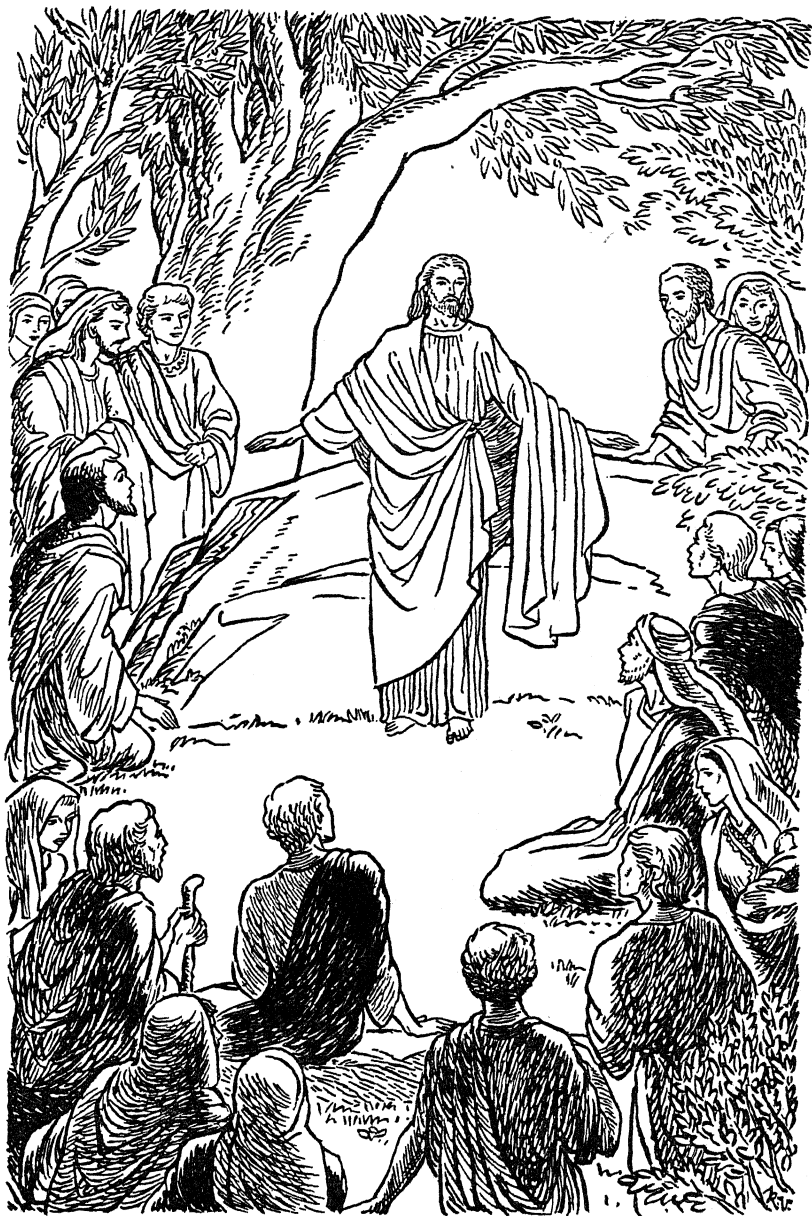
There on the mountain he preached a sermon to his disciples which came to be known as the Sermon on the Mount. It opens with the beautiful verses, sometimes called the Beatitudes.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.





Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Jesus wanted to make his disciples understand that he had no desire to do away with the ancient laws of the Hebrews. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets," he said. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

What was to be their relationship to their fellow men? "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy,' " said Jesus. "But I say unto you, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' "

Later on in the sermon Jesus gave the rule for the finest way for people to live together, when he said, "All things

whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This is known as the Golden Rule.

He taught those who would live as God wished them to live, how they should pray. "When thou prayest," he said, "enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." He suggested that they use words like these:

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

This short, simple prayer came to be known as the Lord's Prayer and has been a part of the service in most Christian churches down to our own day.

Jesus warned his disciples that not every person who listened to his teachings would enter into the kingdom of heaven; only those who carried them out in their daily lives. To illustrate what he meant he told about the wise man and the foolish man who built houses:

Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Many more things Jesus taught his disciples. He told them that they were "the light of the world." He pleaded with them: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Such was the instruction Jesus gave his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount, as told by St. Matthew and St. Luke. Jesus no doubt instructed them many other times with regard to their duties. The account of the Sermon on the Mount, as given by St. Matthew, is quite long, and it is thought by Bible scholars that he included in it things which Jesus said at other times.

In the course of time Jesus attracted many more devoted followers. He sent a number of them out, two by two, to preach. They were to take no thought as to what they should eat, or drink, or wear, for, he said:

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . .

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . .

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Jesus loved children. One day some mothers brought their children to him that he might bless them. The disciples, thinking that Jesus had more important things to do, rebuked the mothers; but Jesus said to his disciples: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Then he put his hands upon the children and blessed them.

Another time the disciples asked Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Jesus called a little child to him, and taking him up in his arms, said: "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

## OPPOSITION TO JESUS GROWS

At the time when Jesus lived, a certain class of men, called Pharisees, had become very influential. They were the great religious teachers of the day. They were strict in their views and were opposed to any changes in the old laws and customs.

Although Jesus had great respect for the ancient laws and customs, he believed that there must be a new spirit in religion and that this spirit must express itself in new ways. In his preaching he frequently began what he had to say with the words, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time," quoting some ancient law; then following this with the words, "But I say unto you," giving his own interpretation of that law. These new interpretations of the sacred texts shocked the Pharisees.

Jesus did many other things which seemed wrong to these religious teachers. One Sabbath when he was teaching in a synagogue, a woman who had been ill for eighteen years was there. Jesus called her to him and said, "Woman thou art loosed from thine infirmity." As he laid his hands on her she was immediately made well.

The ruler of the synagogue was indignant at this because he thought that Jesus was breaking the commandment God had given Moses that no work should be done on the Sabbath. He said to the people in the synagogue, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day."

“Doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to watering?” replied Jesus, defending his action. “And ought not this woman whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bind on the sabbath day?”

Jesus frequently made friends with people who were despised by the Pharisees. He welcomed the opportunity to give them his message. As he was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee one day, he came upon a tax collector named Matthew, at a toll place. Although the tax collectors, or publicans as they were called, were Jews, they were very unpopular because they collected the taxes for the Romans. The Jews hated to pay their hard-earned money to the Roman government, and any Jew who became a publican was looked upon as a traitor to his people.

Matthew invited Jesus to his home where he gave a feast to which he invited a number of other publicans. Some Pharisees who happened to pass by while the feast was going on were horrified to see Jesus eating in the house of a publican.

“How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?” they asked.

The explanation Jesus gave was: “They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Another time those who were regarded as sinners by the Pharisees gathered around Jesus to hear him preach. Again the Pharisees criticized Jesus, saying, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

Jesus replied by telling the following parable:

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

“Likewise,” said Jesus, “joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

Jesus then told the parable of the Prodigal Son, which showed how a loving father forgave his son who had sinned. A certain rich man had two sons. The younger son was fond of gay times and, tiring of the quiet life he led at home, took his share of his father’s wealth and went to live in a distant land. There he spent all his money and soon was in want.

“How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger,” he said to himself. “I will go to my father and will say unto him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.’”

When the son was approaching his father’s house, his father saw him and ran out to meet him. Rejoicing at his return, the father called to the servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him: and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf that we may eat and be merry.”



The older son was at work in a nearby field. Hearing merrymaking in the house, he called a servant and asked what it meant.

“Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound,” replied the servant.

When the older brother heard this, he was very angry and said to his father, “Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.”

The father replied, “Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found again.”

In the story of the Prodigal Son Jesus taught that God forgives those who repent wrongdoing and return to him.

At that time it was thought that sickness was sent to people by God as punishment for their sins. One day when Jesus was preaching, some men brought to him lying on a bed a man who had palsy and could not move. When Jesus saw him, he said, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

Some Pharisees who were nearby were horrified because Jesus was assuming the right to forgive sins. “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies?” they said to one another. “Who can forgive sins but God only?”

Jesus said to the sick man, “That ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, ‘Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine own house.’”

Immediately the man rose, took up the bed on which he had been lying, and made his way to his home.

As time passed the gap between the Pharisees and Jesus widened. Alarmed at his rapidly growing influence on the people, the Pharisees became convinced that Jesus was a dangerous man. "What do we do?" they said. "This man doeth miracles. If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation."

In an effort to get Jesus to say something for which he could be condemned, several Pharisees went to him and asked him a question. They hoped that by his answer he would prove that he was against the Roman government.

"Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth," said one of the Pharisees. "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?"

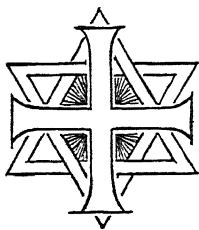
Understanding the motive of the Pharisee in asking the question, Jesus replied, "Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny that I may see it."

On that small coin was stamped the head of the Roman emperor. When he was given a penny, Jesus asked, "Whose image and superscription hath it?"

"Caesar's," replied a Pharisee.

Then Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

In this answer Jesus had said nothing on which a charge of disloyalty to the Roman government could be based. He had made it clear, however, that loyalty to that government should not interfere with anyone's religious belief.



## THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS

*A NEW commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. . . .*

*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

JOHN XIII: 34-35



## THE LAST SUPPER

The time for the celebration of the Passover was approaching. The Pharisees hoped that Jesus would come to Jerusalem and that they might have an opportunity to arrest him. As they needed someone to help them, they gave out word that anyone who saw Jesus in Jerusalem should report to them. Although Jesus knew that his life was in danger, he decided to go to Jerusalem to take part in the sacred feast.

At Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, he borrowed a donkey belonging to a friend and rode on it into the Holy City. Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims. As Jesus made his way through the streets, crowds gathered around him. Many people remembered the ancient prophecies that the messiah would be a descendant of David and that he was to come from the town of Bethlehem. One of the prophets had said that he would enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey. These people knew that Jesus, through his father, Joseph, was descended from David, and that he had been born in Bethlehem. When they saw him was it not natural for them to think that the messiah had come to release them from the oppression of the Romans and declare himself king?

When a king was proclaimed, rugs were spread before him to walk on. As the people had no rugs, some of them took off their cloaks and threw them down on the road



before Jesus, others cut down the leafy branches of nearby palm trees and strewed them along his path. "Hosanna!" they shouted joyously. "Hosanna to the son of David!" "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

The sound of the shouting reached people farther away. They wondered what was happening. "Who is this?" they asked.

"This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee," was the reply. Excitement spread through the city.

Shortly after this triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus went into the Temple. The Jews sacrificed animals as burnt offerings on the altar of the Temple. As many worshipers came from a distance to take part in the great Jewish festivals, the custom had grown up of having for sale in one of the outer courts of the Temple many sacrificial animals so that pilgrims might buy them there. It had also become necessary to have in the court men who changed the many kinds of coins brought by pilgrims into Jewish coins called shekels, which was the only money accepted by the priests for the support of the Temple.

During these times of celebration this Temple court was a place of noise and confusion. Crowds of pilgrims were hurrying to and fro and gathering about the money-changers and the men who had the sacrificial animals for sale. Around the stalls of the animals there was much bickering and haggling over prices as those who sold them tried to make as high a profit as possible. Sometimes they cheated the poor people out of their hard-earned savings. At such times the Temple court seemed more like a market place than a part of the house of God.

To Jesus all this seemed wicked. He quoted the words of Isaiah: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Turning to the traders and money-changers he added, "Ye have made it into a den of thieves," and he drove them out of the court.

At that time there came to one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, a terrible temptation, to which he yielded. He decided to betray Jesus. Knowing that the chief priests wanted to be informed as to his whereabouts, he went to them and asked, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?"

The priests agreed to give Judas thirty pieces of silver. He accepted their offer and awaited an opportunity to seize Jesus.

On the first day of the Passover the disciples said to Jesus, "Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?"

To two of them Jesus said, "Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say to the goodman of the house, 'The Master saith, "Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?"' and he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared there make ready for us."

The disciples did as they had been directed and made ready the sacred meal. That evening Jesus sat down with his disciples to what was to be his last supper with them. There was lamb, prepared in the same way as it had been for centuries, and unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, and wine. As the disciples took their places at the table Jesus said to them, "I have desired to eat this passover with you



before I suffer. . . . For I say unto you, I will not drink thenceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come."

Sadly Jesus continued, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

In consternation the disciples looked at one another, not knowing whom he meant. One after another sorrowfully inquired, "Lord, is it I?"

Jesus knew about the treachery of Judas. He dipped some of the bitter herb in a dish of sauce and as he passed the dish to Judas he answered, "It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

In confusion Judas cried, "Master, is it I?"

"Thou hast said," replied Jesus.

Judas hurried from the room and left the house.

On this his last night with his disciples, Jesus wanted to leave with them some ceremony by which, in future years, they would remember his life and his work with them. Taking some bread, he blessed it, broke it into pieces, and passed it about to them, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body." Taking a cup of wine he gave thanks for it, and said, "Drink ye all of it. Do this in remembrance of me."

After that Jesus sat for some time with his disciples, speaking to them lovingly like a father taking leave of his children. "Little children," he began, "yet a little while I am with you. . . . Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you, a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Many more beautiful things Jesus said to his disciples. Tenderly he said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." Toward the end of his talk he said, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. . . . If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I abide in my Father's commandments and abide in his love. . . . This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

They sang a hymn together and then, as they were preparing to leave the room, Jesus said, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night."

Peter spoke up, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."

Jesus replied, "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Again Peter declared, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."

It was late at night. Jesus and his disciples made their way through the quiet streets of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives beyond the city walls to a secluded spot which was called Gethsemane.

## IN GETHSEMANE

When Jesus and his disciples reached Gethsemane, he said to them, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." Peter,

James, and John, however, he took with him. After going a short distance, he said to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me." Then he went on a little farther and sought strength and courage in prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Jesus continued praying for a long time. When he returned to the three disciples he found them sleeping. Sadly he said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Then he added gently: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

A second time Jesus went away and prayed: "O, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." When he came back he found his disciples asleep. Looking down on the sleeping men, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." Then he went away for a third time to pray.

In the meantime Judas Iscariot was carrying out his plan to betray Jesus. He knew that Jesus and the other disciples would go to Gethsemane after the supper. He led the Temple guards and a detachment of soldiers to the place where they were. Jesus had just returned for a third time to his disciples when through the trees could be seen the flickering of many torches. He roused his disciples, saying, "Arise, let us be going: behold he is at hand that doth betray me."

As Jesus spoke, Judas, followed by Temple guards, and soldiers armed with swords and staves, approached. He had

arranged a signal to let the Temple guards know which one in the group was Jesus. "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast," he had told them.

"Hail, Master," said Judas going up to Jesus and kissing him.

Jesus said to him reproachfully, "Judas, betrayeth thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

To those who had come to seize him he said, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? When I was daily with ye in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

The Temple guards seized Jesus, bound him, and led him back to Jerusalem to the palace of the high priest where he was to be tried. All the disciples except Peter had fled. Peter followed the crowd at a distance.

While Jesus was being examined, Peter was sitting by a fire in the hall. A maidservant happened to notice him, and after looking at him more closely, said to him, "Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee."

Peter was overcome by panic. He knew it was dangerous to be a friend of Jesus, and he denied that he had ever known him. "I know not what thou sayest," he replied.

In a short time another maid noticed Peter and said to those who were with her, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

Again Peter denied this, saying angrily, "I do not know the man."

A man, noticing that Peter spoke like a person from Galilee, said to him, "Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee."

A third time Peter denied knowing Jesus, saying, "I know not the man."

Night was turning into day. The sky was streaked with the gray light of dawn. From somewhere in the distance came the sound of a cock crowing. Peter recalled the words of Jesus a few hours earlier: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." He remembered he had assured Jesus that he would always be faithful to him. Overcome with shame, he left the house weeping bitterly.

That same morning Judas Iscariot realized what a terrible thing he had done. He took back to the priests the thirty pieces of silver he had received, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." Tortured by remorse and shame, he could endure life no longer, and he went out and hanged himself.

Jesus was taken before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, who questioned him for a long time. Finally he was convicted and sentenced to be crucified.

Two robbers were to suffer the same punishment as Jesus. One of them said to him, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."

His companion rebuked him, "We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Then, turning to Jesus, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Jesus comforted the robber, "Verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise."

After hours of suffering on the cross, Jesus died. His last words were, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." A Roman officer in charge of the soldiers whose duty it was to keep watch during the crucifixion heard these

words and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God."

Shortly after the death of Jesus, a rich man from Ari-mathaea, named Joseph, asked Pontius Pilate to allow him to place the body of Jesus in a tomb he had recently had made for himself and his family, and his request was granted. Joseph wrapped the body in fine white linen and reverently laid it in the newly made tomb. Across the front of the tomb he rolled a great stone for protection.

A little group of faithful women who had followed Jesus from Jerusalem watched from a distance to see where Jesus was buried. Then they went away weeping, returning to their homes to prepare spices and ointments with which to anoint the body.

## GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS

Thus, after a few brief years of preaching and helping people to lead better lives, the life of Jesus came to an end. But his influence on the hearts and minds of men was to live on.

Early in the morning of the first day of the week following the death of Jesus, the women who had prepared spices to anoint his body made their way back to the tomb. As they were approaching it, one of them, remembering the heavy stone at the entrance, asked, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" As they came closer they were amazed to find that the stone had been rolled away. They saw that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb and they were frightened.

From within the tomb a figure in white spoke to them, saying, "Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell the disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him."

The women hurried away with their wonderful news. With deep joy the disciples received the great tidings. They had been overwhelmed with grief at the death of Jesus and thought that his work had come to an end. Now they knew that the spirit of their beloved master would remain with them. They remembered he had told them that he would rise again. "He is indeed risen!" they cried joyously.

The disciples made their way to Galilee as they had been directed to do and there Jesus spoke to them, telling them to carry on the work for which he had died. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," he said, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Carrying out the will of Jesus, the disciples traveled about Palestine preaching and making many converts. Gradually a new sect grew up. As its members believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the messiah, they called themselves Nazarenes. They lived together simply as they thought Jesus would want them to live, sharing with one another all they possessed, and helping the poor and oppressed.

Most of the Jewish people did not accept Jesus as the messiah. As time passed the differences between those who followed the Jewish faith and those who believed in the teachings of Jesus became greater and greater. The followers of Jesus called him by his Greek name Christ, and them-

selves Christians. Thus a second religion, Christianity, gradually developed in Palestine.

Through the work of devoted missionaries Christianity was to spread beyond Palestine among Gentiles, people who were not Jews. The greatest of the early missionaries was Saul, later known as Paul.

Saul grew up in Tarsus, an important city of Asia Minor. As a boy he learned the trade of tentmaking, weaving material for tents from goats' hair. He was brought up strictly in the Jewish religion and as a young man was sent to Jerusalem to study in the Temple with a famous rabbi.

At first Saul was violently opposed to the Christians and joined in the persecution of them. One day, however, an amazing thing happened to him, which entirely changed his life. Hearing that a band of Christians were spreading their religion in Damascus, he decided to bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished. As he was traveling along a lonely road near the city, suddenly a dazzling white light shone all about him and he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Saul fell to the ground, crying out, "Who art thou, Lord?"

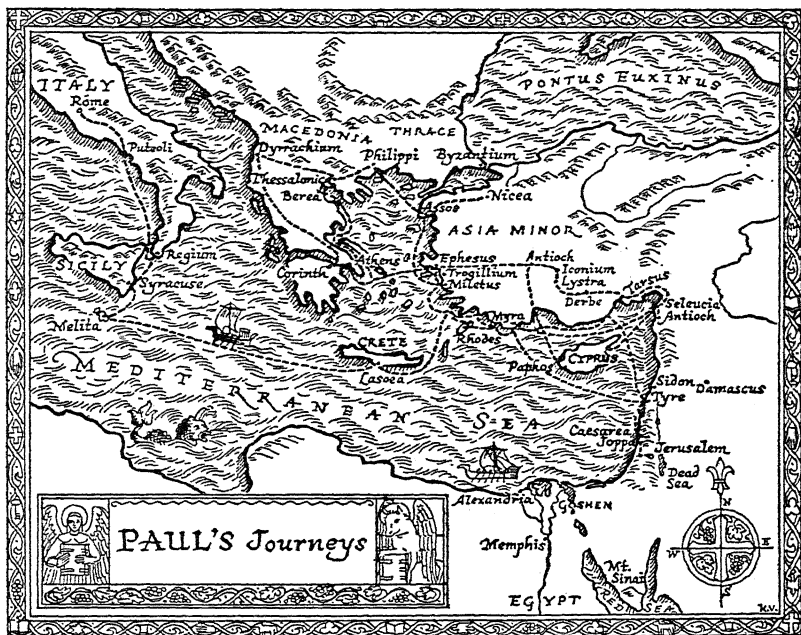
The voice answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Trembling, Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The voice commanded, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Saul rose and was led by his companions to Damascus, as he had been blinded by the brilliant light. For three days he remained there fasting and praying and unable to see. On the third day a holy man came to him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the





way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight." He told Saul that he had been chosen to carry the message of Christ to many people.

Saul's sight was restored and immediately the man who a short time before had persecuted the Christians, began preaching in the synagogues "as the servant of Christ."

Those who heard Paul, as he was now called, were amazed. "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?" they asked.

Some of the Jews looked upon Paul as a dangerous man and decided to kill him. Day and night they watched at the

city's gate to seize him. To save him, his friends let him down outside the wall of the city at night in a basket.

Paul's life was a full one. He gave himself up wholly to his work of carrying the message of Christ to all who would listen to him. Everywhere he went he organized little groups of Christians and established churches. He kept in touch with these groups by writing them letters, or epistles as they are called in the Bible. He traveled not only through all parts of Asia Minor, but in the important countries of his day in Europe.

In the beautiful city of Athens in Greece, Paul found the people worshiping idols and noticed on an altar an inscription **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**.

Certain philosophers who had heard about Paul said to him, "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."

On Mars Hill Paul addressed the people, "Ye men of Athens," he said, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**." The true God, Paul said, was not to be worshiped by means of idols "of gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Long and earnestly he spoke to them of God "that made the world and all things therein."

Some of Paul's hearers mocked him; some treated him with indifference. Discouraged by his failure to impress the people of Athens, he went to Corinth. Afterwards he wrote letters to the people of that city. In one of these is a passage

explaining what he meant by charity, which is considered by many people as his finest message:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

\* \* \*

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

Does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

\* \* \*

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

In the year 61 A.D. Paul went to Rome to organize a Christian church. By his preaching he won many converts. He was arrested and charged with treason. For two years he languished in prison, then he was released. He continued to preach, and in the year 67 A.D. he was arrested again, tried, and executed. Shortly before his death, he wrote his last letter from his prison cell, to his friend, Timothy, a young man whom he loved as his own son. In it he said: "The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith."

In later times both the religion of the Christians and that of the Hebrews spread to all parts of the world.

For nearly three hundred years the Christians were cruelly treated by the Romans. Many of them were cast into prison, others were burned at the stake, and still others were thrown to wild beasts in the arena of the Coliseum. In spite of all persecution, however, the new religion continued to spread. In the year 313 A.D. the Roman emperor became a Christian. After that the worship of the old Roman gods was forbidden and Christianity became the official religion of the widespreading Roman Empire.

The religion adopted by Rome was to flourish long after the splendor of the Roman Empire had passed away. Age after age the teachings of Christ and his message of the brotherhood of man were carried to the people of many lands through the work of zealous Christian missionaries. In the course of time Christianity became a world-wide religion.

The Hebrew religion also was to spread far beyond the boundaries of Palestine. The Roman governors in Palestine treated the Jews so cruelly that they were in despair. In the year 66 A.D. open rebellion flared up. Roman legions under Rome's ablest generals were sent to Palestine to put down the uprising. For four years the conflict raged. Finally Jerusalem was captured by the Romans and destroyed. A few years later the Jews were forced out of Palestine and were scattered through many parts of the world. Thus the life of the Jews in their own land came to an end, and they became a people without a country.

It might seem as if all that was great in Hebrew history was to be lost to the world. But with the scattering of the

Jews there began a new chapter in their life. Often in the countries in which they had settled they were persecuted; but in spite of centuries of oppression they remained faithful to the religion of their forefathers. Generation after generation in many lands they followed in their everyday life the old Jewish traditions and customs, they gathered in synagogues to hear the holy scriptures read, and they observed the great Jewish feast days. In this way the rich religious heritage of the Jews was handed down from age to age and preserved.

Thus it came about that the two great religions which had their early development in Palestine, lived on through the ages. Today in many lands they are a source of spiritual strength to millions of people, seeking to understand their relationship to God and to their fellow men.















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