

TEMKIT FOR CHILDREN

TEMKIT'S MISSION:

To provide Bible based, true reading material for children and youth.

Year 3 - 3rd Quarter - Issue #8

TRUE-STORY-TIME

It Happened on the Brooklyn Subway

"God setteth the solitary in families:" Ps 68:6

Marcel Sternberger, a native of Hungary, was a man of nearly fifty, with bushy white hair and kind brown eyes. A methodical man, he always took the 9:09 train from his suburban home to Queens, New York, where he caught a subway into the city.

On the morning of January 10, 1948, Sternberger boarded the 9:09 as usual. En route, he suddenly decided to visit a Hungarian friend who lived in Brooklyn and was ill. So Sternberger changed to the subway for Brooklyn, went to his friend's house, and stayed until mid-afternoon. He then boarded a Manhattan-bound subway for his Fifth Avenue office. Here is Marcel's incredible story.

"The train car was crowded, and there seemed to be no chance of a seat. But just as I entered, a man sitting by the door suddenly jumped up to leave, and I slipped into his empty place.

"I'd been living in New York long enough not to start conversations with strangers. But being a photographer, I have always had the peculiar habit of analyzing people's faces, and I was struck by the features of the passenger on my left.

"He was probably in his late thirties, and when he glanced up, his eyes seemed to have a hurt expression in them. He was reading a Hungarian-language newspaper and something prompted me to say in Hungarian, 'I hope you don't mind if I glance at your paper.' The man seemed surprised to be addressed in his native language. But he answered politely, 'You may read it if you like. I'll have time later on.'

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WEEKLY BIBLE LESSON

"Instead of reading, we began to talk. During the half-hour ride to town, I learned his name was Bela Paskin. A law student when World War II started, he had been put into a German labor battalion and sent to the Ukraine. Later he was captured by the Russians and put to work burying the German dead. After the war, he covered hundreds of miles on foot until he reached his home in Debrecen, a large city in eastern Hungary.

"When he went to his former address, he found the apartment that had once been occupied by his father, mother, brothers and sisters — as well as the apartment he had shared with his wife — were both occupied by strangers. None of them had ever heard of his family.

"Full of sadness, he turned to leave when a boy ran after him, calling, 'Paskin bacsi! Paskin bacsi!' That means 'Uncle Paskin.' The child was the son of some of his old neighbors. He went to the boy's home and talked with his parents. 'Your whole family is dead,' they told him. 'The Nazis took them to Auschwitz.'

"Auschwitz had been one of the worst Nazi concentration camps. Hearing this, Paskin gave up all hope. A few days later, too heartsick to remain any longer in Hungary, he set out again on foot, stealing across border after border until he

reached Paris. He managed to immigrate to the United States in October 1947, just three months before I met him.

“The entire time he had been talking, I kept thinking that somehow his story seemed familiar. A young woman whom I had met recently at the home of friends had also been from Debrecen; she had been at Auschwitz; from there she had been transferred to work in a German munitions factory.

Her relatives had been killed in the gas chambers. Later, she was liberated by the Americans and was brought here in 1946, in the first boatload of displaced persons.

“Her story moved me so much that I had written down her address and phone number, intending to invite her to meet my family and thus help relieve a little of the terrible emptiness in her life.

“It seemed impossible that there could be any connection. I fumbled anxiously in my address book. I asked in what I hoped was a casual voice, ‘Was your wife’s name Marya?’

“He turned pale. ‘Yes!’ he answered. ‘How did you know?’

“I said, ‘Let’s get off the train.’ I took him by the arm at the next station and led him to a phone booth. He stood there like a man in a trance while I dialed her phone number.

“It seemed a long time before Marya Paskin answered. (Later I learned her room was near the telephone, but she was in the habit of never answering it because she had few friends and the calls were always for someone else. This time, however, there was no one else at home, and after letting it ring for a while, she responded.)

“When I heard her voice at last, I told her who I was and asked her to describe her husband. She seemed surprised at the question, but gave me a description. Then I asked her where she had lived in Debrecen, and she told me the address.

“Asking her to hold the line, I turned to Paskin and said, ‘Did you and your wife live on such-and-such a street?’

“‘Yes!’ Bela exclaimed. He was white as a sheet and trembling.

“‘Try to be calm,’ I urged him. ‘Something miraculous is about to happen to you. Here, take this telephone and talk to your wife.’

“He nodded his head in mute bewilderment, his eyes bright with tears. He took the receiver, listened a moment to his wife’s voice, then suddenly cried, ‘This is Bela! This is Bela!’ and he began to mumble hysterically. Seeing that the poor fellow was so

excited he couldn’t talk coherently, I took the receiver from his shaking hands.

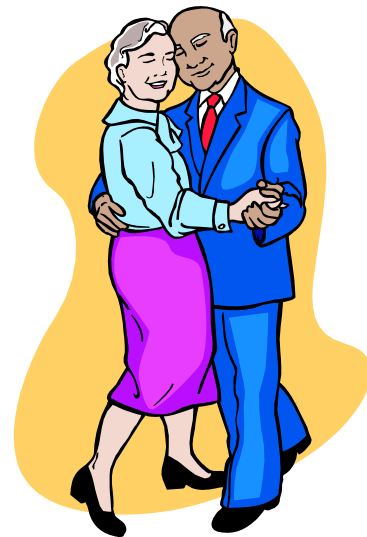
“‘Stay where you are,’ I told Marya, who also sounded hysterical. ‘I am sending your husband to you. We will be there in a few minutes.’

“Bela was crying like a baby and saying over and over again, ‘It is my wife. I go to my wife!’

“At first I thought I had better accompany Paskin, lest the man should faint from excitement, but I decided that this was a moment in which no stranger should intrude. Putting Paskin into a taxicab, I directed the driver to take him to Marya’s address, paid the fare, and said goodbye.

“Bela Paskin’s reunion with his wife was a moment so poignant, so electric with suddenly released emotion, that afterward neither he nor Marya could recall much about it.

“‘I remember only that when I left the phone, I walked to the mirror like a dream to see if maybe my hair had turned gray,’ she said later. ‘The next thing I know, a taxi stops in front of the house, and it is my husband who comes toward me. Details I cannot remember, only this I know; I was happy for the first time in many years.’ (From a story by Paul Deutschman)



STORY LESSON

4. Rejoiceth Greatly to hear His Voice

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”
John 3:29.

One of my favorite morning hymns that brings Christ near to me is “I come to the garden alone”. How we love to sing it, but do we hear God’s voice falling on our ears? Does He walk with us and talk with us?

Job refers to prayer as “communion.” (Job 4:2.) So does Moses (Exodus 25:22), so does Samuel (1 Samuel 19:3), and so does Sister White. “As you seek unto those living springs, you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ.” Mount of Blessing, p. 36.

Now tell me, Is communion a monolog, or a dialog? Is just saying our prayers communion? Or should there be conversation both ways? Herein lies the secret of the mystery of joyfulness of prayer. If we could only learn to hear His voice as God talks to us, we would certainly re-joyce greatly. Again and again we are assured of the possibility and the necessity of knowing God’s voice as He seeks to lead us through these last days

“To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God.... They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.” Messages to Young People, p. 166.

We have all experienced the unhappy feeling when someone comes to visit us and not only does all the talking but talks so much that we can’t get a word in edgeways. How embarrassing we must make it for God sometimes when we do all the talking and do not wait to let Him speak a single word to us.

In Clifton’s Food for Thought, May 15, 1947, I read of a woman who, after returning from a concert in a large opera house of one of our great cities, discovered she had lost a valuable diamond pin. Frantically the woman telephoned the manager of the opera house, and asked whether such a pin had been found. The man asked the number of her seat, then told her to hold the line, and he would have a look. He found the pin, but when he got back to the phone, the woman had hung up. He waited, hoping she would call again; he even

advertised that he had found her treasure, but he never heard from her again.

That is the way some of us pray. We call up our heavenly Father and tell Him all our needs; then we grow weary of waiting, and hang up. When the time comes for our prayers to be answered, we are not there.

In the Youth’s Instructor, March 1, 1938, I read a beautiful story of a young woman who walked 150 miles to attend one of our schools in the Southern States.

“I’m sorry,” said the matron after learning that she had no money at all, “but I’m afraid you’ll have to go home again. You see, it is just impossible to work all your way, and our student-aid funds are all used up. If you had half of the fees in cash, or even one third, you might be able to make it. Of course we can arrange for you to stay here to-night, but in the morning you must start back home again.”

In the morning the matron called her in to say good-by. “Try again next year,” she said.

But the girl who had walked 150 miles replied, “Matron, I just can’t go home. I’ve been praying for a long time that the Lord would open the way for me to attend one of our Christian schools. And I think the Lord has opened the way and let me come.”

“Then,” said the matron, “If you have that much faith, suppose you go upstairs, find a room that is not occupied just now, and there pray that God will send some money in this morning’s mail.”

“All right,” said the girl. And she turned toward the stairs.

Several hours went by, and the matron really forgot all about the girl. At last the morning mail came. As the matron opened one letter she found a substantial check enclosed. It was from one of our churches in Illinois that had furnished one of the dormitory rooms and had subsidized a student the previous year. It said in part, “We were so pleased with the report of the girl who occupied our room last year that we have decided to support another student this year.”

“Go upstairs,” said the matron to one of the teachers who was there, “and find out who is occupying that room please.”

The teacher went up and walked along the hall till she found the name plate bearing the name of the church in Illinois. She opened the door, and there in the middle of the floor was the girl who had walked 150 miles to school, still on her knees!

And she did stay on in school.

“God longs to lead and guide us,
And take us by the hand;
Would whisper His assurance,
And help us understand.
But in too great a hurry
To linger long in prayer,
We often rise to duty,
And leave Him waiting there.”

The night of March 12, 1942, was the darkest, most discouraging night through which I have ever existed. E. M. Meleen, our Burma Union superintendent, W. W. Christensen, F. A. Wyman, H. Baird, and I were caught on the eastern side of the Irrawaddy River while fleeing for our lives from the onrushing Japanese Army. We had two cars loaded with valuable mission equipment, but there was no way to get them across the river. Once across the river, there was a rough bullock-wagon road starting from Pakokku, leading to Ta Mu, three hundred miles north, which was the pass into India.

We had succeeded in hiring two country boats about sixty feet long and nine feet wide, and had tied them together with long bamboo poles, but we couldn't get long planks to run the cars onto the boats. We had found some shorter planks and had tied and trussed them up, but an attempt to load one of the cars almost ended disastrously, and as the sun set that night we sank down in despair, not knowing what to do next.

There was a sawmill in the city, but the owners and workers had evacuated the mill three weeks before. And where they had gone nobody knew. We were tired, exhausted, and discouraged, for we were human. As we lay on our beds stretched out on our suitcases and luggage, we could hear the boisterous Burmese boatmen laughing as they said, “They're stuck! They're stuck! They'll have to leave their cars and luggage here and walk!”

“I'm going to have a wheel,” said one.

“And I need a tire,” said another.

“I'm going to have one of those suitcases,” added still another. And thus they talked, till I felt sick all over. I think I know how the children of Israel felt the night before they crossed over the Red Sea.

Sleep was unthinkable and impossible, but as I lay there in the darkness, as soon as I could think, I thought of started off over the sandbank to the little town of Myingyan, three miles away. As we entered the town the sky was just becoming gray. “Of course, it's too early,” I said to the boatman.

“Even if someone did come today, he wouldn't come yet.” But when we got to the sawmill, the great gates were open. We could see no one around, but drove right in. At the far end of the enclosure we could see some piles of long, heavy planks, and in a few minutes had selected four splendid planks eight and one-half inches wide, two and one-half inches thick, and twenty-one feet long. Just then a Burmese lad about fifteen years old stood beside me and said in perfect English, “Do you want to buy those planks, sir?”

I said, “I certainly do, my boy; what time will the clerk come?”

“The clerk will not come, sir,” replied the lad, “but I am the son of the millowner, and I can sell you that lumber.”

“What made you come so early?” I asked as he figured away on the price.

“Sir, it is rather a strange experience. You know, we evacuated to the other side of the river three weeks ago. But this morning quite suddenly at four o'clock my father woke me up and said, ‘Son, I've just thought of some important papers that are still in my desk; go now and get them. If you wait till day, people will see you and will want to buy lumber, and you will be detained. So go now, son.’ And do you know I had just opened the gates and gone into the office when I heard you drive in.”

My eyes were big with wonder as he spoke, and I said, “My boy, it was my God that woke your father up at four o'clock this morning.” Then I told him of the experience we had gone through, and told him I was sure it was all God's way of answering prayer.

“Maybe so, sir!” he replied solemnly.

We loaded our planks into our bullock wagon, and drove out of the gate. As we turned south to go to the riverbank, where our car ferry was being built, the son of the millowner came out, shut and locked the gates, and turned in the opposite direction, to take the important papers to his father.

I cannot describe the joy that filled my heart. My Lord was so real I could almost feel His presence. I didn't feel like talking, so walked silently along, thanking God every step of the way, and we walked over a mile before the boatman broke the silence. He touched my hand and solemnly said: “Your God did talk to you, didn't He! He told you what to do, didn't He!”

The planks were at the river's edge by nine-thirty. We had them placed and laced down by ten-thirty, the two cars were both loaded by eleven-thirty, and

with the cars and all our luggage on board, we pushed out into the current. We arrived at Pakokku, fifty miles south and on the other side of the river, early the next morning, after sleeping part of the night on a quiet little sandbank. The cars were unloaded, and in ten more days we were at the pass leading into India, out of danger from the Japanese Army. = ^ .. ^ =



STORY LESSON

How Sister Watched the Baby

MAMMA was going to prayer meeting with papa. He was the minister; so, of course, he must be there. Josie was playing outside.

"I am going now, dear," said mamma. "I have left Buddie asleep in the bedroom. Don't go out of the yard; and if he wakes, take good care of him. I shall be away only an hour."

Josie kicked the dirt with her shoe. She did not think it was fair for her to have to watch baby brother when she wanted to play.

In a little while, Fannie Gage came along. "Come on, Josie," she called. "Let's go over and play with Mabel."

"I can't go. Mamma has left me to take care of Buddie while she has gone to prayer meeting."

"I don't see him."

"He's asleep in the bedroom."

"Why can't you go then? He won't wake up, and he'll be all right. You can come for a little while anyway."

Josie yielded to temptation and soon she and Fannie were going around the corner with their arms about each other.

"I'm glad there are no babies at our house," said Fannie. She was an only child, and had grown very selfish, caring only for her own comfort and pleasure.

Josie did not feel happy while she was playing, for she knew she was doing wrong. She meant to keep in sight of the house, but she forgot. When

she and Fannie started home, Fannie said meanly: "Perhaps you will find that somebody has stolen Buddie while you were gone. You know babies are stolen sometimes."

"No, no! cried Josie, "I don't want my little brother stolen!" Frightened she ran into the house to see that Buddie was all right. She looked in his little bed. He was not there. "Buddie! Buddie!" she called, but there was no answer. "He is stolen," she thought; and she rushed over to the church, which was near, to tell mamma.

Just as she came to the door of the church, there was Buddie, climbing onto the platform to see papa. He had come in during prayer time, and nobody had noticed him in his little white nightgown. But just then, mamma saw the little fellow, and she got him and brought him home. Josie was so thankful her little brother was not stolen that she never wanted to be selfish and leave him alone again! = ^ .. ^ =

Tales from 'Our Little Friend' 1916

Are You Rich?

"Oh, my!" said Ben. "I wish I were rich, and could have things like some of the boys who go to our school."

"I say, Ben," said the father, turning around quickly, "how much will you take for your legs?"

"For my legs!" said Ben in surprise.

"Yes. What do you use them for?"

"Why, I run and jump and play ball, and, oh, everything."

"That's so," said the father. "You wouldn't take ten thousand dollars for them; would you?"

"No, indeed," said Ben, smiling. "And your arms! I guess you wouldn't take ten thousand dollars for them, would you?" "No, sir."

"And your voice. They tell me you sing quite well, and I know you talk a little bit. You wouldn't part with that for ten thousand dollars, would you?" he asked. "No, sir."

"And your good health?" "No, sir."

"Your hearing and your sense of smell are better than five thousand dollars apiece, at the very least; don't you think so?" "Yes, sir."

"Your eyes, now. How would you like to have fifty thousand dollars, and be blind the rest of your life?" "I wouldn't like it at all."

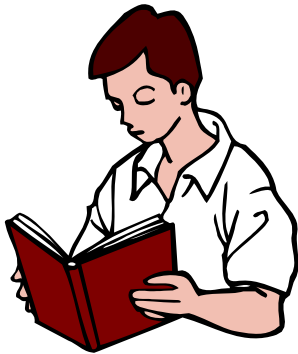
"Think a moment, Ben; fifty thousand dollars is a lot of money. Are you sure you wouldn't sell your eyes for that much?"

"Yes, sir. I am very sure I wouldn't want to."

“Then they are worth that much, at least. Let’s see now,” his father went on, figuring on a sheet of paper. “Legs, \$10,000; arms, \$10,000; voice, \$10,000; hearing, \$5,000; taste, \$5,000; good health, \$10,000; and eyes, \$50,000; that makes \$100,000. You are worth \$100,000 at the very lowest figures, my boy.

“Now run and jump, throw your ball, laugh, and hear your playmates laugh, too. Look, with those \$50,000 eyes of yours, at the beautiful things around you, and come home with your usual appetite for dinner, and think now and then how rich you really are.”

It was a lesson Ben never forgot; and since that day, every time he sees a cripple or a blind man, he thinks how many things he has to be thankful for. And it has helped to make him contented. In fact, he feels very rich every time he thinks about it. How about you? = ^ .. ^ =



Year 3: 3rd Quarter:

“GOD’S MESSENGERS: THE PROPHETS”

WEEKLY BIBLE LESSON 8: “ISAIAH 2”

This series of Bible Story Lessons is about God’s Messengers, His Prophets. For our Bible lessons we are going to use the King James Version of the Bible. Just like the boys and girls used to use to learn to read from in the pioneer days. There will be some texts to look up for each day and you should practice your memory verse until you can say it without looking. Don’t forget to learn the text too.

MEMORY VERSE: “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.” Isaiah 44:22

Sunday

Text: Isaiah 44:28 “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to

the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” Isaiah 45:1 “Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.”

One of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible is found in Isaiah. At the time Isaiah was writing it, Judah had not even gone into captivity and yet God is here showing, by name, the very person who would be the one to make it possible for the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it, after it had been destroyed. It would be more than a century before this man, Cyrus, was even born!

This prophecy was telling how Cyrus and his armies would be able to capture the Great city of Babylon, the most impossible city to capture in the whole world. It was told that the gates would not be shut. If they were shut there is no way the city could have been captured, but on that fatal night during Belshazzar’s foolish, drunken feast, the gates from the river were left open. Cyrus entered through them and Babylon was captured.

In the time of Daniel’s escape from the lion’s den, Cyrus’ attention was brought to the prophecies and power of the God of Israel, through Daniel. Imagine how amazed he was to find his very name recorded in Hebrew Prophecy! He saw how he had taken the city in the very way the Lord said he would.

The angel Gabriel, and even Jesus Himself, were there to impress Cyrus with the desire to do as God wished him to do, and allow the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

“As he read the message addressed to him by the Ruler of the universe, “I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me;” as he saw before his eyes the declaration of the eternal God, “For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me;” as he traced the inspired record, “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward,” his heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission. Isaiah 45:5, 6, 4, 13. He would let the Judean captives go free; he would help them restore the temple of Jehovah. In a written

proclamation published “throughout all his kingdom,” Cyrus made known his desire to provide for the return of the Hebrews and for the rebuilding of their temple.” Prophets and Kings 557.

Thought - There are people today that try and tell us that God does not really know the future. They even write books full of such lies as this. But this prophecy, and many others like it, show that God does know the end from the beginning. He is never surprised by anything and so we can trust in Him to take care of us always!

Monday

Text: Isaiah 63:9 “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.”

Part of the message, which Isaiah was called to tell to the rulers and people, was about the character of God. Because of the influence of paganism and heathen ideas, the idea had come in that God was a harsh tyrant and the sacrifices and ceremonies were meant to somehow ‘keep Him happy’ so He would bless them.

Even from the time that God had lead Israel out of Egypt, they had false ideas about what God was really like. Except for a few faithful ones, here and there down through the ages, man has mostly believed the lies of Satan, who has led men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death. Those who believed Satan’s lies, imagined that God was harsh and exacting. They thought He was just watching so He could denounce and condemn them.

Satan deceived men into believing that God was unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a legal excuse for not helping him. The law of love by which heaven is ruled, he had presented to men as a restriction upon men’s happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape. He declared that it could not be obeyed and that God would punish some and excuse others, just according to His mood. These lies are still believed today, even by professed ‘Christians’.

Israel had no excuse to not know what God was really like. Over and over He had shown them and told them about His love for them. Remember what Moses was shown when he asked to see God’s Glory?

“And the LORD passed by before him, and

proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” Exodus 34:6,7. What was His glory? It was His character.

Why do so many seem to prefer to think of God as a harsh tyrant? It is because they want an excuse to rebel and disobey Him. You see, if we do something wrong to someone, and we don’t want to be sorry for it, we will make up a lie in our minds that the other person was mean, or something like that, so we can feel alright about the wrong we do to them.

When we know what God is really like, we see there is no excuse for anyone to sin against Him!

Thought – Think carefully about how you understand God’s character. How do you see Him? Is He like a loving Father to you, or like some harsh being on a throne just waiting to punish you? How we see the character of God, affects our whole life, now and forever.

Tuesday

Text: Isaiah 53:6,7 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

As we learned last week, the 53rd chapter of Isaiah tells about the life of Jesus when He was on the earth. It clearly shows Him as a suffering sacrifice, an innocent Lamb, slain to bear the punishment that was due to sinners.

He took our place under the load of sin, and bore it all until it crushed out His life on Calvary. Was it the nails and the cross that killed Jesus? No, the thieves were nailed to the cross too, and they were still alive in the evening. In fact people crucified often lived for days.

The order came in the evening from the priests, to break the men’s legs so they would die quickly and could be taken down before the Sabbath. Once their legs were broken, they were unable to push themselves up so to be able to breath and they died very soon. But just like the Passover Lamb, no bone of Jesus was ever broken.

“Who killed Jesus, many years ago?
 Who was guilty of a crime so low?
 Why did He have to die?
 What is the reason why?
 Who killed Jesus? I would like to know.”

What killed Jesus? Your sins and mine! Verse 5 “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

Thought – We are told that Jesus would have gone through all that, if only one person would be saved. That one person could be you or me. When you see what Jesus did, remember it was for you, and His promises and love are all for you personally too.

Wednesday

Text: Isaiah 1:1 “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”

“The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beerai, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.” Hosea 1:1.

“The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.” Micah 1:1.

Conditions were very bad in Judah, as we learned last week. Isaiah was bearing his messages and few of the people listened to him. God also had at least two other prophets bearing messages from Him in the land at the same time. Hosea and Micah. They also left books, which are in our Bible, for us to read today.

During the reign of Jotham, things improved a little, as he “did that which was right in the sight of the LORD” but “the people did yet corruptly”. 2 Chronicles 27:2. The people did not turn from their wicked ways and idol worship and paganism continued to be practiced along side of the worship of the God of Heaven.

Jotham had a prosperous reign, but when he died things got very much worse. Ahaz, his son came to be king at the young age of 20 years. He openly followed paganism and worshipped idols. He even offered his own children to idols as burned

offerings. During his reign, rulers and leaders who before had at least outwardly followed the Lord, began to really push the practices of idolatry on the people.

Isaiah and the other prophets put forth message after message of loving warnings from God. The Great God of the Universe humbly pleaded with the people to repent and return to Him and He would forgive and heal them.

Why did God keep pleading and trying to help these people when nearly all of them were doing terrible things before His eyes and would not listen at all to His messages?

For the sake of the few who remain faithful, and for the sake of some who do hear and return to the Lord, God keeps pleading and blessing a people who deserve only to be destroyed! But soon God allowed enemies to attack from Syria and Israel and the kingdom suffered much decline under Ahaz.

Thought – Why does God hate sin? Because He knows that any sin at all, unless put away, would eventually destroy the whole Universe!

Thursday

Text: Isaiah 7:14-16 “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.”

Ahaz was a wicked king, and yet God offered to help him against his enemies and even gave him one of the most precious promises about the Messiah. Of course the prophecy was for all the people and for us as well. It is the prophecy telling that the Messiah would be born to a virgin and He would be called ‘Immanuel’ which means, “God with us.”

God promised Ahaz that the enemies banded together would not be able to harm him, if he would only trust in the God of Heaven and obey Him. Imagine how kind and generous God was to offer to help this wicked king!

It would have been so good if Ahaz would have trusted in the word of God, but he did not. Instead he sent a present to the Assyrian king asking him to come and help him fight against Syria and Ephraim. Ahaz preferred to lean on the arm of men rather than to trust the word of God.

The Assyrians did help, and things improved,

but only for a short time. The rich treasure Ahaz had sent as a present to the Assyrian king, caused that greedy king to decide they wanted more of such riches. Soon they attacked Judah as well. Now Ahaz had double trouble.

Did he repent and turn to God? No, he hated God more and more, because he could not have his own way. One of the last things he did before he died, was to have the doors of the temple closed, so no one could worship God at His temple any more!

Thought – Think about what the words, “God with us”, mean to you and me. What if God got fed up and turned away from all of us forever? We would be lost with no hope, helpless victims of Satan’s cruelty.

Friday

Text: Isaiah 8:3, 4 “And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.”

God told Isaiah to do some strange things to make living prophecies to the people. His wife was also a prophetess, and they had children. One boy was named Shearjashub, and another Mahershalalhashbaz. How would you like to have that for a name?

Isaiah told the people; “Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” Isaiah 8:18.

The names of these children were prophetic warnings.

When he was told by God to go out and meet Ahaz in a certain place, he was to have his son, Shearjashub with him. This name means, ‘A Remnant will return.’ Mahershalalhashbaz, means ‘hastening to the spoil’, in other words, enemies were coming to attack Judah and take away her treasures.

At one time Isaiah was told to do something that must have been hard for him to do, but he obeyed God totally and did it faithfully. Read about it here:

“At the same time spake the LORD by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.” Isaiah 20:2.

And he did not do it just one day either:

“And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia...” Isaiah 20:3.

He did it for three whole years! This was to warn that the Egyptians, whom Judah was counting on to help them, were going to be taken away naked as slaves by the Assyrians.

Thought - God used every means to try and get His messages across to the people, and Isaiah faithfully carried the messages, whether in writing, by voice, or even object lessons. One thing that God will not do though, is to force anyone to obey Him. He pleads and warns and encourages all to come to Him and promises to save them from sin, but each must choose for himself if he will accept God’s salvation - or stay in rebellion and be lost. = ^ .. ^ =

