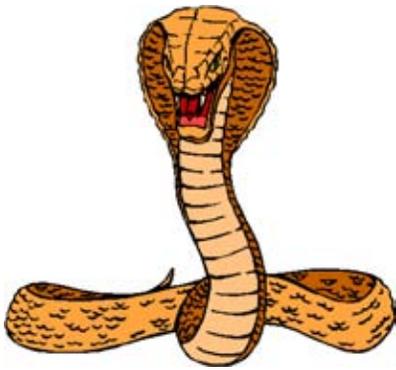


# TEMKIT FOR CHILDREN

## TEMKIT'S MISSION:

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

Year 3 - 4th Quarter - Issue #1



### CREATION CORNER

#### Kissing the Serpent

There is a story Elder Ferrell tells in his article about the 'Master Number'. It tells of a strange practice observed among the serpent-worshippers of India.

"Murl Vance mentioned an old motion picture film that was issued, I believe, in the 1930s. I recall having seen it as a boy. It was called "Wheels Across Asia," and was something of an epic travelogue through Africa and then across the Near East and India. This film was not like the slicks that followed it in the 1940s and beyond. It showed paganism in all its reality. Murl's special interest lay in the scene in India of a woman kneeling before a coiled hooded cobra. She was intent on performing a great act in Hinduism. The snake was equally intent on biting her, and as, without uncoiling, his head would dart forward, she would as instantly move back with her head and trunk. Flecks and streaks of cobra venom could be seen staining her clothing. Then came that special moment; in an instant she darted her head forward -and

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kissed the serpent."

Who on earth would be so foolish as to want to kiss a deadly cobra? Most people have a natural distrust and fear of serpents, especially the poisonous kind. But there are some who seem to have a great attraction to them.

I recall a true story about such a person told in a book called "Eagle in my Bathtub" by J. Mannix. They worked with all kinds of animals and birds mostly for the movies, and they met a sweet little lady that had the most amazing collection of reptiles they had ever seen. She really seemed to have an affinity for them. Some even seemed to respond to her love and would come when called.

She had not only harmless snakes, but some of the most deadly, including a pair of large King Cobras. She worked with these serpents even handling them, they would strike at her but she was expert at quickly snatching her hand out of range or meeting the strike with a flat palm. The cobra has a rather small mouth and no long fangs like a rattler. They have to grab something and chew for the venom to enter the prey. So the flat palm gave them no grip.

This lady spoke lovingly of her cobras, but it was clear that they did not share this love as

they would strike at her. Clearly their intention was to kill her. This never seemed to concern her though, and she continued to lavish her affection on these and others of the deadly serpents in her collection.

She had a tremendous knowledge of reptiles, clearly, at the time the Mannix's met her, there was no one on earth that understood reptile ways better than this little woman who loved serpents. But one day, the inevitable happened.

She was being filmed with some of her strange 'pets', and of course this included the magnificent King Cobras. Whether she was slightly distracted by the filming process, or had grown careless from long years of working with the huge snakes, no one knows. But suddenly one of the cobras darted forward, she met the strike with the palm BUT was just a shade off; the deadly beast fastened to the loose skin between her thumb and hand.

Quickly but gently she detached him and returned him to his container. She rushed to her anti-venom supplies, only to find the cobra antitoxin dried up and useless, the emergency kit had never been used and was ancient. She was so sure of herself that she never bothered to keep the kit up to date.

I can't recall from the story if she was taken to hospital or not, but she knew it was a vain hope as no hospital nearby would stock cobra antitoxin and the poison would kill in a very short time. The lady perished of that bite. The world's most knowledgeable person on cobras, died from the bite of her pet.

What about our devil worshipper in the first story? We know nothing about her, but we can easily see that if she kept up this practice, one day as she aged, or was in some way distracted, the cobra would succeed, and fasten to her face. She would die in minutes.

Why would a person play with a deadly serpent? There is a certain pride in taking risks, there is an exhilarating feeling that comes with doing something others are afraid to do. But there is another serpent that people seem to love to kiss. Just as deadly and just as hateful, they convince themselves it is a good pet to have around. Having it and using it makes them feel sophisticated. They think it is a sign of the 'better life', a symbol of being rich and affluent. The Bible tells us about this serpent.

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is

red, ... At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Proverbs 23:31,32

Yes, all too many kiss the deadly serpent of ALCOHOL and think it is beautiful and will never hurt them. They think that although other people may find their lives ruined, their bodies and minds damaged and destroyed, their family brought to sorrow and despair; this would never happen to them.

They are the experts, they can have the serpent in their home and kiss it regularly and yet they will not go to excess, they will not suffer harm from it. It gives them a prestige to play with the serpent and they would not want to be the one to say to friends, "No WAY! I will not play around with this harmful and deadly stuff!!" Of course not, they might be laughed at or considered 'straight-laced' or peculiar.

Friends, Alcohol is one of the biggest lies of the devil. We hear a lot about the 'drug scene', but it is no longer fashionable to tell the truth that ALCOHOL is the King Cobra of drugs and year after year wrecks more lives and damages more bodies than any other substance.

I am going to give you a few facts here that you may not realize. When in training for RN, I had the privilege of having a few lectures by the Chief of staff of Psychiatry in the hospital where I trained, who was very knowledgeable in the effects and addiction of alcohol. Here are a few things I learned from him and also facts that have been demonstrated by medical studies.

So many lies are told about Alcohol, and most people think that alcohol is just fine as long as you don't drink it too often or enough to get drunk. (By the way, I have never met any drunken person who would not tell you he had only had a couple drinks. The fact of drinking too much is something almost no-body will admit.)

The reality is that even one drink containing alcohol has noticeable and measurable effects on the circulation, brain and nervous system. These effects do not just go away in a couple hours. Here is a medical test that was done. A group of non-drinking young people was divided, and part was given one beer to drink in the evening, the others were not given any alcohol.

The next day, a medical expert examined each of the people, without knowing who had the alcohol and who did not. Invariably he could pick out each person who had been given the one

beer the night before. Effects were still visible the next day. He used the eyes to examine, but the effects would have been found other places as well.

So you see, even a person that does not drink, and is given one drink, will have effects from that drink. How did he spot this? The tiny capillaries of the eye would show groups of red cells sticking together and blocking the capillaries. Alcohol, even in a small amount makes red blood cells sticky. Bloodshot eyes? Yes, but the same effect is also in the brain.

Now if a sticky mass of cells goes into a blood vessel where blood cells can only pass one by one, it gets stuck there. What happens to the cell at the other end of that vessel that needs the oxygen these cells are bringing? Well, it is damaged and even killed. When this happens in the brain, it is especially bad, because these cells are not replaced like those in most other parts of the body.

Now it has also been shown that if a person is in the habit of taking a drink each evening quite often or regularly, he is actually a type of alcoholic. His body will show signs of damage in many places and if he wants to quit, he will find withdrawal symptoms. In addition to that, it will take many months before all traces of alcohol and its effects are out of his body. An established alcohol dependant person takes more than a year to clear it from the system.

People think they can go out and party and get roaring drunk, then the next day, they are sober and off they go to work. This is another BIG lie, even for the person who only does this occasionally, it will be weeks before all effects of the alcohol are gone, and the brain cells killed by that 'party' are gone forever. What effect does this have on society? A LOT! Many accidents are caused by people who think they are sober when they are not.

Here is another way in which alcohol is cruel to your body. Your body requires a LOT of water to run its functions and clean itself; also your brain runs partly on hydroelectric energy it makes by running water through special tissues. If you are average sized man, you need about 2 quarts a day, just for your body to manage.

So you feel thirsty and instead of giving your poor body the good pure water it needs to do its work and keep you healthy, you give it some-

thing with alcohol in it. This is stupid and really is cruelty to your body. What little water the body can get from this, has to be used to try and flush out the poisonous alcohol and the body is left parched and having to do all kinds of extra work just to keep you alive.

A man, that once worked in a hot factory with my father, went home on a hot day and drank, instead of water, an alcoholic drink in large amounts. His body just quit on him and he died on the spot- victim of his own ignorance and stupidity. It is so much better to properly care for your body, and say "NO" to anything that is even a little harmful! People will make fun? Perhaps so, but if you are wise and they are foolish like that, you will have the last laugh.

No friends, kissing the serpent for whatever reason, is not smart, it is not sophisticated, it does not make you distinguished. It will make you extinguished sooner or later and every sip, gives permanent damage to the wonderful body God gave you to care for. = ^ .. ^ =

## HISTORY

### **Master Counterfeiter 11 How the Devil Sought to Sanctify, the Things God Hates**

IT HAS ever been the plan of Satan, the master counterfeiter, first to get men in his power, then so to destroy their characters by vicious habits that it seems a hopeless task for them ever again to regain their respectability. Such was the definite program in the worship with which our discussion deals.

In the previous article we noted how immorality was required of the worshipers in Babylonian temples; but that was only a step in the downward path of degradation. All who were initiated into Babylonian "mysteries" were also required to drink of "mysterious beverages," ...Alcohol was the chief ingredient in these potions, and the feasts of the temple were little more than drunken debauches.

Further insight into the full significance of liquor drinking in religious ceremonies is perhaps best gained by the custom of the South American Indians in drinking their "holy" drinks. Not only was the liquor drunk from golden cups at religious services, just as in old Babylon, but the Indians also literally "drank

the serpent." A winding groove representing a serpent was cut in a narrow sloping stone. The liquor was poured in at the top, and as it serpented its way toward the bottom, the worshippers stood on both sides and lapped up the "firewater" as it passed along. With the "serpent" (typifying the evil one also among the native Americans) inside, the Indians were ready to begin a devil dance, go on a scalping party, or to do almost anything else required by the devil of his worshippers as only drunken Indians can.

Liquor was not the only habit-forming drug used by ancient devil worshippers to degrade the human character, Hashish, known in America as marijuana, was used by religious zealots of the East. Some of the effects of this drug, the use of which is spreading rapidly in America, are indicated by the fact that our English word "assassin" comes from hashishin, the Arabic name for hemp eaters.

Tobacco was widely used by the American Indians in their sun worship. In some Indian tribes the chief faced east each morning before making his offering of tobacco - to the sun-god. Indians claimed that the haze of Indian summer was caused by the sun-smoking just before retiring for night. The chiefs of the Huron tribes offered tobacco as incense to the sun, and claimed that the peace pipe was derived from the sun. The peace pipe was always held up three times as an offering to the sun before it began its journey from mouth to mouth.

The Greeks always offered the first puff of the calumet to the sun. The Louisiana Indian chief faced east each morning, prostrated himself to the sun, then "smoked the sun," as the offering of tobacco to the sun-god was generally known among the Indians. At the sun dance, basketsful of native tobacco were cast upon the fire by the sun priest while he chanted a thanksgiving hymn.

The smoking of drugs had a double significance. Not only were they offered as incense to the sun-god, but the smoker had, in the end of his glowing pipe or cigar, an excellent sun charm to ward off the evil spirits, for fire was universally considered by devil worshippers as the sun spirit upon earth. Babylonian prayers contain the plea, "May the herb of Venus absolve me." Just what this "herb of Venus" was I have not so far been able to learn; but more than likely it was a drug of some kind. Nor have I yet done

any research to discover whether or not the opium of Japan and China was used originally in demon worship: but research in other fields indicates that such a connection might doubtless be established.

### Defying the Creator in Eating

Throughout all the rituals of the counterfeit system of religion there is a marked tendency to sanctify that which God declares He abhors, and to desecrate that which He declares holy. This tendency is in evidence in the foods considered as sacred by the Babylonians. We read in Deuteronomy 14:3, 8: "Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing." 'And the swine, . . . it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh.'" In Isaiah 66:15-17, we find that this restriction concerning unclean foods-because of the eating habits of the creatures involved and the nature of their flesh is to continue until the destruction of the wicked: "Behold, the Lord will come with fire.... They that sanctify themselves . . . in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."

It must have been open defiance to these injunctions that caused the Babylonians to make a god out of the hog. The boar was called the "divine messenger," and could not be eaten on certain days of the year sacred to him. The Egyptians followed suit, and not only made a god out of the hog, but also offered swine as sacrifices at the doors of their temples. (Ever notice how popular it is to eat ham on Easter? It certainly is not in honor of Jesus!) Steindorff declares that the mouse was also sacred in Egypt, as was also the rat. The sun-god is frequently addressed in Babylonian prayers the "lord of swine."

Thus men ate, smoked, and drank that which was sacred to the evil one, defying their Creator with their abominations, and selling themselves in slavery to the god of this world --and they still do. Unknowingly today men continue to burn incense to the great serpent, failing to answer the question of Isaiah, "Where-fore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" Isaiah 55:2.

Instead, in America alone, nearly millions of people daily "smoke the sun," burning enough

money by their drug addiction in a year's time to feed and to clothe those on relief for many years. They continue to take into their bodies enslaving drugs and contaminated flesh directly contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures.

Indeed, Lucifer was successful in destroying among the human race the pure and unadulterated worship of the true God. Those who find themselves enslaved by drugs-and let any user who thinks that he is not, try to quit in his own power--will find comfort in the promise of John 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

To those who find themselves honoring the evil one instead of the God of heaven in their daily habits, the call of the Scriptures is clear and forceful: "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; He will render unto her a recompense. . . . The nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." Jeremiah 51:6,7. Revelation 18: 2-4 "Babylon the great is fallen. . . . Come out of her, My people." Murl Vance: 1940 = ^..^ =

## **TRUE-STORY-TIME**

### **The Drunkard's Vow**

"GOOD-BY, Jim Brown, you have got the last cent of my money that you will ever get," said a poor, miserable looking wretch, as he turned to leave the barroom of a hotel, where a large company of men sat drinking and carousing.

"I guess when you find a few cents, I shall get them, Jake," answered the besotted landlord with a sneer, "but I tell you again that you will get no more drinks of me until you pay off the old debt."

"Good-by, Jim Brown," said old Jake again, you will never get one cent of it, nor will you ever sell me another glass of strong drink."

"Goin' to sign the pledge, Jake?" queried another voice, "guess 'twill not do you much good if you do, for you like rum too well to keep it long."

"Maybe I shall sign the pledge," was the reply, but I consider my word here, just as sacred and binding as a written pledge, and so I solemnly swear before God and man never to touch another drop of the accursed poison so long as

I live," and Jake retreated toward the door as he said it.

"Hold on, Jake, don't go yet," called out another voice, "come back and I will treat you. Here, landlord, give him a good glass of whiskey to make him better natured." But Jake never looked toward the speaker, and still kept moving slowly toward the door.

"You will try in vain, I guess," he slowly said, "for I have drunk my last glass of liquor, God helping me," and old Jake Bell walked away.

"Wonder what has got into the old fool," said one of the barroom loungers, "for I never knew him to refuse a glass of whiskey before."

"Guess he'll come back before many days go by," was heard from another part of the room. "Suppose that old Jake should reform," said one who had not spoken before, "I never saw him with such a fit on, and if he should stick to what he said, Landlord Brown has lost one of his best customers."

"And a few shillings besides," chimed in another voice. "Guess he has not lost much by old Jake Bell, for if I'm not mistaken, his money has been quite an advantage to Jim Brown for a number of years," was the reply.

"Stop your noise, will you?" said the landlord, with a scowl on his face, "I'll take care of old Jake."

"Perhaps he'll take care of himself," was his reply, "and I think he would do quite as well, and his wife and children would be the gainers."

"Stop your infernal noise, Bill Gray, or leave the room," yelled the landlord, growing black with passion.

"If I do go," said Bill quietly, "I shall go as old Jake did, never to come back again. You know that what Bill Gray says, he means."

Susan Bell sat by the low window of her house, looking out upon the beautiful landscape, bathed with the golden rays of the setting sun. There was an expression of pain and sadness upon her face, and occasionally a tear gleamed in her faded eyes.

We doubt if the glory of the fields and the sky had awakened one cheerful thought in her heart, and if it did, the dark clouds of misery soon turned the ray of sunlight to gloom again. Ah! The bright hopes of other days had long ago died out from the heart of Susan Bell, and the gray shadows of wretchedness had long

thronged her pathway.

But the time had been when this wretched woman had seen bright days of happiness, though they appeared now like some fairy dream, which cast its mocking glory upon the barren wastes of life.

Strong drink had destroyed the hopes of poor Susan Bell, and driven peace and plenty away from the once cheerful fireside. It had ruined the prospects of Jacob Bell, and made him a miserable, besotted wretch. In other days he had been loved and respected, for he possessed many noble, generous qualities, and he seemed likely to become a man of more than ordinary usefulness in the world.

But he became possessed with a thirst for strong drink, and so started upon the fearful road of sin and ruin. His children once made music in their home, but after he began his career of sin and shame, disease laid its hand upon two of them, and they died.

Mrs. Bell did not murmur as the death angel claimed them, for she saw the storm that was gathering. It came all too soon, and then she thanked God that there were only two children left to suffer the abuse of a drunken father and to bear the heavy load of want and poverty. Jim Brown had taken the earnings of the husband and father for many years, and in return, gave him the deadly poison that made him a brute and deadened every impulse of nobleness.

"He has gone to Brown's, as usual," said Susan Bell to herself. "Oh, how I wish that he would not go there so often! He will never even try to reform as long as he goes there to spend his leisure hours." A tear dropped from her eyes as she looked in the direction of the village tavern. "It will do no good to hope any longer, for he will never do any better," she said half aloud.

The sun went down behind the western mountain and twilight began to gather over the earth. Still Susan Bell sat by the low window, looking toward the now lighted barroom. "Why! he is coming!" she exclaimed, as she saw the well known form of her husband, coming down the street, in the twilight "How strange that Jacob should come home so early; I wonder what it means."

Jacob walked steadily into the house, and in a pleasant voice asked: "Susan, will you get some supper? I am very hungry."

"We have but little to eat, Jacob," was the reply, "but I will get you what we have."

"Have we any flour or sugar, Susan," was the next inquiry.

"None," was the reply.

"Then I will go and buy some," said Jacob. "Mr. Grant is owing me for a half day's work, and I guess he can pay me."

"Susan Bell's heart beat very fast as her husband started out again. "Oh, if he does not stop at Brown's!" she exclaimed to herself.

He did not stop at Brown's, although a dozen voices called to him as he was passing by. "I think you will not succeed," he said quietly, as he walked toward home.

"Now, make supper, Susan," he said, as he placed several small packages upon the table.

His wife quickly obeyed, and in a short time Jacob sat down to a better supper than he had had for many a day.

"I am very tired tonight," he said, as he finished the meal, "but please call me early in the morning, Susan, for I am going to work for Mr. Grant. I have taken the job of building his barn, and want to get it well started this week."

Mrs. Bell could scarcely sleep that night; there was a strange, deep joy in her heart that she had not known for years. And yet, she hardly dared to hope. She really could not account for the strange conduct of her husband.

The day came with its beautiful splendor, and just as the morning sun began to bathe the far away mountains with light, Jacob Bell sat down to his morning meal.

After breakfast, he asked: "Have you enough flour to last today?"

"We have a little," was the reply.

The day passed away at last, and just as the sun was setting, Jacob Bell entered the door of his home. "Here are three dollars, Susan," he said. "Take the money and use it as you think best. Herbert can bring home whatever you like, for he will not work any longer for Mr. Hill. He is not strong enough to do such work as he has been in the habit of doing there. He will go to school the rest of the summer."

Mrs. Bell said not a word. She only hoped and prayed. Another day passed away and three dollars more were placed in her hands. A whole week went by, and her husband had worked every day, and had not once visited Jim Brown's saloon.

Then he came home one night with a new suit of clothes. "These were a present to me," he said simply, in reply to Susan's inquiry. "Mr. Grant gave them to me."

"And why did he do it, Jacob?" asked Susan in a trembling voice.

"If I tell you, then you will know my secret. But I think I will. It was because I signed the pledge."

"Have you signed the pledge, Jacob?" asked the wife in a voice choked with emotion.

"Yes," he quietly answered, "and with God's help, I will keep it. Jim Brown has got the last cent of my money that he will ever get."

"Why did you take this step?" Susan asked, trying very hard to keep her voice from trembling.

"I can't really tell you, Susan, but Mr. Grant, I think, was the true cause of it. He has talked so earnestly and kindly to me of late, that I saw myself as I never did before.

"And then about a week ago, I went to Jim Brown's barroom and asked him to trust me for a drink. I was owing him a few shillings, and as he was nearly drunk himself, he refused to trust me. I was very angry; and then I made a vow before all present never to drink another drop of liquor, and as I have said before, God helping me, I will never taste that accursed poison again."

Susan Bell silently thanked God, and earnestly prayed that he would help her husband to keep his vow sacredly.

Five years have passed away with their sunshine and shadow, and still Jacob Bell keeps his vow. His skillful hand has transformed the old brown house, and it is the prettiest cottage in the village. Everything about the place betokens thrift and plenty.

Jacob Bell looks much younger than he did five years ago, and for some reason, people do not call him "Old Jake" any more. The village tavern still stands, but old Jim Brown died long ago with delirium tremens. Another rum seller fills his place, but Jacob Bell has never spoken to him. Thus the drunkard, by the help of God, did keep his vow.

## Saying NO!

"No!" The word was clear, sharp, and ringing, with an emphasis that could not fail to arrest attention.

"It isn't right, and I won't have anything to do with it. When I say No, I mean it."

"Well, anyway, you needn't speak so loud, and tell everybody about it," one of the boys responded impatiently.

"I am willing everybody should hear what I have to say about it. I won't take anything that does not belong to me; and I won't drink cider, anyway."

"Such a fuss about a little fun! It's just what we might have expected. You never go in for fun."

"I never go in for doing wrong. I told you No, to begin with. And you are the ones to blame if there has been any fuss."

"I don't often hear such a negative as that," remarked one gentleman to another as they were passing the playground.

"It is not often anyone hears it. The boy who uttered it can say Yes, too, quite as emphatically. He is a newcomer here, an orphan, Ned Dunlap, who lives with his uncle, about two miles away. He walks in every morning, bringing his lunch, and walks back at night. He works enough to pay his board, and does more toward running his uncle's farm than the man does himself. He is the most coarsely dressed boy in the school, and the greatest favorite. Everybody knows just what to expect of him."

"Quite a character. I should like to meet him. Boys of such a sturdy makeup are getting to be scarce."

The next day, a call was made at his uncle's, and although years passed before he knew what a friend he had gained that day, Ned's future was assured. After he had grown to manhood, he was offered a good job. He asked why it had been offered him.

"Because I knew you could say No if necessary," answered his employer. "'No' was the first word I heard you speak, and you spoke it with a will. More people, old and young, are ruined for want of using that word than from any other cause. They do not wish to do wrong, but they hesitate over the temptation until the tempter has them fast. The boy or girl who is not afraid to say 'No' is reasonably certain of becoming an honorable man or woman." = ^ .. ^ =



**Year 3: 3rd Quarter:  
"JESUS OUR SAVIOR"**

**WEEKLY BIBLE LESSON 1: "PROPHETS  
FORETOLD"**

This series of Bible Story Lessons is about Jesus. 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: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21**

**Sunday**

**Text: Malachi 4:5, 6 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."**

**Luke 1:76 "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."**

Zacharias was an old priest in the land of Judah close to the time of the birth of Jesus. He was one of the few who were faithful in obeying and serving the Lord, and so he seldom ever got a chance to minister in the Temple services.

The Priesthood was so corrupt by this time

that only the special friends of the High Priest, a man that got his job through bribery and even murder, would get to take part in the special feasts. But when God wants a man in a certain place, He has ways of getting him there.

So it was that godly Zacharias was in Jerusalem to do the job of burning the incense before the Lord on a certain day. As he was doing this, all at once he saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar. The right side meant it was a message of peace; the left would be a message of doom.

Still Zacharias was startled and afraid. But the angel spoke kindly to him. "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." Luke 1:13.

Now He and his wife had long wanted a child and had prayed for one for years, but none came. Now both of them were old and it seemed impossible for them to have a child now. Zacharias spoke out his doubts to the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

Now the Angel rebuked him for his unbelief saying, "I am Gabriel, who stands near to God in heaven. I have been sent to tell you this and because you don't believe me, you won't be able to talk until it happens."

The angel went away and Zacharias came out to the people, who wondered why he was taking so long in there. He could not tell them anything, but could only make hand signals. After his work was done he went home to his wife Elisabeth.

**Thought:** I imagine Zacharias was excited to tell his wife all about what the angel said, don't you? But he would have to write it all down.

**Monday**

**Text: Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."**

**Luke 1:26-28 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art**

**highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."**

Six months later after Elisabeth was expecting her miracle baby, the same messenger, Gabriel showed up at the home of a young lady who was not married, but engaged to be married soon to a widower named Joseph. He was older than her, but a godly and kind man.

As Mary was working one day she heard a musical and kindly voice and looking up saw an angel of the Lord. He told her that the Lord had chosen her for a great honor. She was to be the mother of the Messiah. How the thought must have struck her, Me? The mother of the Messiah? Why, that is what all Israelite mothers had longed to be all down the ages since Eve!

Mary was not like Zacharias, she did not disbelieve, but she wondered how such a thing could happen. Gabriel told her that through the Power of God this would happen. He then told her that her cousin Elisabeth was also expecting a baby in her old age and was six months along.

The angel left then and Mary hardly knew what to think for a while. She was excited about the news of her cousin and as soon as she could she hurried to go to the hill country to visit her cousin. Sure enough, what the angel said was true and she found Elisabeth rejoicing in the promise of her special son.

As soon as Mary entered the home of this dear lady, she was informed by the Holy Spirit that this, her young cousin Mary, was to be the mother of the promised Messiah. The Bible says that even the little unborn baby leaped inside for joy and the Holy Spirit filled him even then.

Thought – God tells us He often chooses people, even before they are born, to do a certain work for Him when they are older.

### **Tuesday**

**Text: Luke 1:46-49** "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name."

There are people in the world today who claim that Mary was a special person born without any sinful nature like other people but no-

vice the she herself says she rejoiced in her Savior. If she was some kind of magical, sinless woman, she would not need a Savior.

Mary stayed at her cousin's for three months and was likely there when the promised miracle baby was born. By then she also knew for sure that the message of the Angel to her was also true, she was going to have a baby.

After Elisabeth's baby boy was born, family and friends asked what his name was to be. Remember, Zacharias had not been able to speak a word since he had seen the angel. People thought the boy would be called after his father, but Elizabeth said that he was to be called John. (Which meant 'Jehovah Favored'.)

Zacharias asked by signals for a writing pad and wrote, "His name is John." Right away, he was able to speak again and gave a wonderful prophecy about the work his son would do as the forerunner of the Messiah. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." Luke 1:68, 69

Jacob, in a prophecy had said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10. Now King Herod, the man who was sitting on the throne of Judah was not even a Jew, the time had indeed come for the Messiah to be born of the line of King David.

**Thought** – All the prophecies about Jesus, even ones given thousands of years earlier, all came true. Over 300 different prophecies were fulfilled in the Life of our Savior!

### **Wednesday**

**Text: Matthew 1:20, 21** "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Now when Mary returned from her visit to Elisabeth, one of the first things she had to do was to tell Joseph about the miracles. Sad to say, Joseph did not believe her and was planning to break off their engagement.

But God sent the angel to talk to him in a dream and explained the whole thing to him. Then Joseph believed the angel and did as the angel told him in the dream.

Now Joseph was a carpenter, and they lived in the town of Nazareth of Galilee. But the prophecies had foretold that the Messiah would be born in the town of Bethlehem. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. How was that going to happen?

God has a thousand ways to do what He says He will do. In fact prophecy had already foretold how it would be done. In Daniel 11:20 we see that there would arise "a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle."

This was Caesar Augustus, and he did just what Daniel foretold, he was a raiser of taxes and commanded that all the people should return to the cities of their ancestors and be registered and taxed. He had a fairly short reign after this main event of his life.

Now Joseph and Mary were of the family of David and from the town of Bethlehem. By now, when the order came from the Emperor, Mary was very close to the time when the wonderful baby was to be born. It was not easy for them to travel so far at such a time, but they had to obey the decree or be in trouble with the Romans.

**Thought** – The true people of God will always respect the laws of the earthly governments, as long as they do not go against the Law of God.

### Thursday

**Text: Luke 2:4,5 "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child."**

Taking their donkey for Mary to ride on, they went on their long journey to the town of Bethlehem. How tiring it must have been for Mary at such a time to have to go so far from her home. Angels were watching over this couple

as they made their long journey.

As they got close to the town of Bethlehem, they began to know that they would not make it home again, before Jesus was born. They had been looking forward to getting a room and having a good rest, but now they had a more important reason to need a place of shelter, the special baby was soon going to be born.

Can't you just imagine how anxious Joseph was as they hurried from place to place trying to find a room? Because there were so many people coming there to be registered also, there just were no rooms to be had, not anywhere. At last they found a bit of shelter in a rude building where animals were kept.

In the stable, the wonderful baby all the earth had waited for so long to receive, was born. Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger for a cradle. Here was Jesus, the King of heaven, lying in a stable where beasts were kept. The richest palace on earth would have failed to properly honor the Lord of the Universe. But those who should have been looking for His coming, had twisted the scriptures to suit their own ideas all mixed up with Greek philosophy and did not know anything about His birth.

**Thought** – All too many people today, so busy with their own ideas and plans, also fail to know the truth about the Savior, just like the rulers of old.

### Friday

**Text: Luke 2:10-12 "And the angel said unto 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 Saviour, 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."**

"Men know it not, but the tidings fill heaven with rejoicing. With a deeper and more tender interest the holy beings from the world of light are drawn to the earth. The whole world is brighter for His presence. Above the hills of Bethlehem are gathered an innumerable throng of angels. They wait the signal to declare the glad news to the world. Had the leaders in Israel been true to their trust, they might have shared the joy of heralding the birth of Jesus. But now they are passed by." {DA 47.1}

The angels are anxious to bring the good news of the birth of the Messiah, but as they look in Jerusalem and also in Bethlehem, they find hardly anyone that is even thinking about the coming of the Promised One.

How strange it seemed to them, the greatest event in the history of the world, and no one seems to even care. No sense in telling such people anything. Then they find a group of simple shepherds watching their sheep on the hills of Bethlehem, just as David had done so long before. They are talking together about the prophecies of the Messiah.

Suddenly the bright angel appears to bring them the good news. He tells them not to be afraid for he brought good news. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,

which is Christ the Lord."

He also told them where to look, 'Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'

After giving them a moment to adjust to the brightness, the whole host of heavenly angels appear and pour out their beautiful song. It was the brightest scene human eyes had ever looked at.

Earth was hushed, and heaven stooped to listen to the song,—

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

**Thought** - If they had not been told where to look for the baby Savior, I am sure they would never dreamed of finding Him in a stable!

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