

Way of Escape—Praise

The opening lines of *Jesus Storybook Bible* read, "The Bible is not a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a story. It's an adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne; everything to rescue the one he loves.

There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all of the stories are telling one Big Story, the Story of how God loves his children and comes to rescue them. It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. At the center of the Story is a baby. Every Story in the Bible whispers his name. He is the missing piece in a puzzle—the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together, and suddenly you can see the beautiful picture."

Jesus is the missing puzzle piece of The Story. Jesus is the master storyteller. He taught by stories, answered critics with stories, healed with story and loved with story. Jesus joined and fulfilled The Story. One title by which Jesus is known is Son of David.

We are instructed in Proverbs, "Bring up children in the way of the Story, and when they are older, they will return to it." This is why I love children's Sunday school so much. This is the best time to learn The Story. Leonard Sweet in *The Well-Played Life* wrote, "When children are born into a family, they learn the family name, identity, traditions, practices, life line, and character. Shared stories and songs create collective identities. An English-speaking family teaches its children to speak English. Spanish-speaking families teach their children to speak Spanish." In the same way we pass along our faith.

The history of the Jews is fascinating. The percentage of the world's population that is Jewish is about 0.2%. It's hard to get much smaller than that and still be measured. Almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of all Nobel Prize winners are Jewish. The results are similar for Pulitzers, Oscars, Grammys, Fields Medals, Kennedy Center honors, patents and copyrights.

Jewish faith is passed along by Story. Every child is able to see himself or herself in the sandals of Moses standing up to Pharaoh. "Remember" is a very important word in Jewish culture. Stories are told around the dinner table. These are victory stories of God's miracles and deliverance. Every Jewish family includes themselves in this on-going Story.

We are now part of the story. **Galatians 3:7-9**, "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."

King David is a wonderful part of The Story. David had enormous understanding of The Story of God's love and favor. By his faith in God David kills lions, bears and giants. David is the chosen and anointed King of Judah and Israel. God made an everlasting covenant with David and his descendants. Jesus is the Son of David.

But, on his way to becoming king, David faced great adversity. In fact the reigning King Saul was determined to kill David.

1 Samuel 21:1-7

- Jonathan and David just had their last meeting together
- David is fleeing from King Saul.
- David came to Ahimelech the priest
- Ahimelech is afraid of Saul

- David lied and said that he is on a secret mission for the king
- Asked for food. There was no common bread, only holy bread

1 Samuel 21:8-22:1

- David is desperate
- David is cornered
- David is in deep trouble
- David changed his behavior
- David pretended madness—*halal*—praise: to celebrate, to boast, to shine, to make a show, emotional display

Philippians 4:4-7

Romans 8:31-39

Just like David...

- God loves you
- His favor is upon you
- His victory is yours
- When surrounded by trouble
- Change your behavior
- Praise the Lord!

Discussion Guide

Primary Text: Philippians 4:4-7

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Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus used parables to preach His message?
- What can stories do that simple facts or statements cannot?
- How do you fit into God's story of redemption?