

FOLLOWING JESUS

Introduction

You will enjoy this set of short stories which were first written by a man called "Matthew" who was a boy from a very fine home.

Matthew Levi, for that was his full name, was from a religious family of temple priests. The Levis had land and houses near Jerusalem. Perhaps Matthew was just a little older than Jesus. The first "story" he tells us is about the wise men coming to Jerusalem over a year after Jesus was born.

He says, "Look wise men came to Jerusalem!" Let's imagine little Matthew as a small boy standing in wonder as he looked at the big camels and watched their colourful riders at the city gates. Everyone from far away- traders bringing things to sell and visitors too had to stop at the gates and some would have to pay tax.

The wise men were the talk of the town and at supper time Matthew's dad and mum would have talked about them. Later when Matthew met Jesus he found out that these men met the baby Jesus-indeed that was the reason why they came so far to Jerusalem

When the time came for Matthew to decide whether to become a priest and do what little Samuel did long ago; that is, attend to things in the temple, he decided he didn't want to be a priest after all. After a while he didn't even bother to worship God. He just took a job with the Romans and he was sent Jerusalem (where the Levites lived) to Galilee.

In Galilee there were over a million people and lots of work. Fishermen and fruit-growers and builders using timber and marble worked there. Many things came to Galilee by boat and the sailors had to pay the Romans a tax on each cargo. Matthew's job was to take tax for the ruling Romans at the landing places on the lake of Galilee. He became very rich.

When Jesus called Matthew to follow him he left his tax booth by Galilee and followed Jesus without a question. Matthew's story of Jesus helps us feel like we are travelling with Jesus and listening to what He said. From time to time he asks us to stop and look and wonder and worship when we see Jesus healing and helping. Long ago men talked about the "seven wonders of the world" including the Big Giant cut in stone at Rhodes harbour through whose legs tall ships would sail and of course the Pyramids-the only one of the seven now left. Matthew's first book of stories is about his wonderful friend Jesus-how he met Him and what happened over 3 years after that.

Matthew tells us of the wonderful birth of Jesus and the astronomers who followed the star to where Jesus was. They were sure it told of the birth of a new King of Israel. Matthew tells of these wise men to show us that God had plans for the whole world to know the good news of Jesus -people from east and west, young (and older) people from every nation were invited to follow Him. Matthew gives us over fifty "lessons" from the life of Christ.

These fifty lessons are in *five* books which make up the good news story that Matthew tells. Try to read & master them all. The *first three books* tell about Jesus in Galilee- except for the story of Jesus' baptism and visits to Caesarea, Tyre and Sidon and Hermon and a mission to Jewish towns. Matthew does not tell us of Jesus' holiday visits to Jerusalem but in *books four and five* he tells us about Jesus as he teaches in Jerusalem during the last Passover holiday of His life or the first Easter.

Matthew tells us that at the time he and others began to follow Jesus, Jesus Himself had just started to preach about His Kingdom. Jesus was thinking a lot about words found in Isaiah 9. Here are these important words, "Unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and he shall have the key of government. And He will be called "Wonderful", "Counsellor", "mighty God", "Creator of Eternity", "Prince of Peace".

That part of Isaiah tells of the birth of the baby king who would one day rule of the world.

Isaiah calls that baby king the "Son of God" given to men. He describes Jesus (1) as a "wonderful" or "miracle baby" who is also God; (2) as a teacher who can answer any question and care for and counsel those in need; (3) as One so strong that he can live after death; (4) as One who has and can give eternal life and (5) as the Ruler who will bring peace on earth. You will find the five books into which Matthew divides his lessons fit these topics exactly.

This means that Matthew wrote to help us to look at many surprising and beautiful stories of the King who really did come as Isaiah the prophet said. Better than that He proved by what He did and said that He was a "wonderful King"; "a King who could answer any question"; "a King who was God"; a king who creates "eternal life" and a King who dies to bring "peace" to the hearts of all who follow Him.

Now let me say just a word about getting the best out of the stories. One way to do this is by reading one story at a time (perhaps at bedtime) and stopping when you spot this little signal 🧐 to talk about the story.

Another idea if there are two of you is that someone else reads three or four stories at a sitting and you play a variation of the game of "Snap" as you read. In this case you will need to listen to the reader and not look at the words till he or she come to the word "Look". The idea is to be the first listener to shout "snap". Then the reader and listeners pause and think about what Matthew wants us to look at or learn from the life of Jesus. After completing the number of stories you have decided to read there will be a winner or perhaps it will be a draw.

Because Jesus came alive from the dead and is in heaven we can talk to Jesus too. Why not end the bedtime story session by a little talk with Jesus. You will read in the very last story in the fifth book that Jesus sent his disciples out to the whole world to find other disciples. That has gone on for 2000 years and still Jesus is looking for others to follow Him. I hope you will enjoy the stories and the little pictures by Cliff Pyne. Thank you Cliff; your pictures will keep the stories of Jesus alive in many a young mind when the voice of the narrator has fallen silent. I hope that you too will become a follower of Jesus, the Wonderful Shepherd and King who loves us and died to forgive us and who is coming back soon to rule this topsy-turvy world and bring a new dawn of truth and love.

Westgate, October 2009
Good news for Youth No.1

Dedication

~~Train up a child in the way a child should go and the child will not depart from that way. Proverbs 22.6~~

In sending this second story-book to inform and delight the minds of young people of 8-11 years may I be permitted to express the hope that these stories will be remembered life-long and that that lifetime will be spent *following Jesus*. My prayer is that the lessons will encourage some to put their faith in Jesus as Saviour and King of their lives. I dedicate this title to ~~Ruby Ruth~~ our grand-daughter, whose lovely childhood ways have endeared her to all the family and to my wife Mina and me, to our grandson ~~Ben~~ who is among the very bravest of children and to our first grandchild ~~Ethan~~ in whose life mathematics and justice and faith already make a lot of sense.

Bob Coffey
A Bible Companion

Matthew's Story of a Wonderful Shepherd King

What is a “King”?

A king is a man who rules a whole country. Long ago the name was given to a powerful or wise leader who “could get things done”. “King” means “a man who **can** do”. The king whose life we are going to follow in a five part story by Matthew got things done- wonderful things -He was the greatest king who ever lived. He once claimed to be greater than King Solomon and when you read about His life I’m sure you will agree.

The land of the King

For nearly 1000 years the Jews awaited this wonderful king to be born in their land-the land of Israel. A king called David who played a harp and wrote songs said in one of his songs, “O Gates of Jerusalem open up for the Great King”. This is because Jesus story goes on and on- one day He is coming back from heaven where He is now and He will rule the whole world.


The king comes to earth as a baby boy

On the very first Christmas Jesus-who is the King we are talking about-first came to earth. At that time our story teller Matthew lived at Jerusalem with his daddy who had an important job in the city. Matthew is like a television photographer who spots wonderful things happening and wants to stand and take lots of pictures so that other people who watch the T.V. can see what happened for themselves. When he tells a story he will stop and say, "Look, look at this" because Jesus has done something wonderful. Over and over again-50 times and more he just stops in wonder. Matthew takes us along with him right into the life of Jesus and we see that He is the greatest person that ever lived-every inch a King-but only those **like you** who “stopped to look” could tell He was so special.

What happened to our Story teller Matthew?

The disciples of Jesus loved Him so much that when Jesus went to Heaven they travelled to 12 distant parts of the world to tell the King’s story. Matthew went to Egypt, sailed up the Nile to Ethiopia and told the boys and girls there about Jesus and his wonderful life. Even today there are Christians in Ethiopia because Matthew made that great journey. Some cruel people in that land killed Matthew with a sword. Isn't it good that before that he wrote down the story of Jesus-his wonderful king in a book with five parts-so that it would never be forgotten. The stories retold here come from that famous bible book.

How to enjoy the stories even more

You may have heard of the game of “Snap” where you shout “snap” every time you spot two cards with the same picture. You will notice that the title of this book is “Stop-it's the king!” The idea is that every time you come to a set of eyes like so  you shout out “Stop”. It is good fun if daddy or mummy is reading some of the stories and there are two children-when you come to the LINE or SENTENCE with the “eyes” be ready to shout “Stop” or "Snap" and be first if you can. Even if you don’t play this little game do stop and think about **what a “wonderful” King Jesus is** when you see those “eyes”

Story headings

After the name of each story there is ***the number*** of the story so you can remember where you stopped and start again at the next story number. After the story number there is ***the story reference*** to the bible-that is the place where you can find it written in Matthew's own book in the bible.

Five Books in One

Matthew divides his writing into five parts. Each part tells us more about our Great King, the LORD Jesus Christ. We learn that he is "wonderful", "wise to teach and answer", "kind to care", our "strong God", who "gives Himself for us and to us", and "brings peace"

MATTHEW'S FIRST BOOK 1.1-4.11

In the first seven chapters of his story Matthew tells us that Jesus was born as God's Son and King of all. We don't know much about the first 30 years of Jesus' life but we know He was perfect. His mother Mary once said, "Do whatever He tells you". She had never been disappointed in Him and indeed she knew Him to be kind and wise and that He made perfect decisions. His perfect judgement was tested by Satan in this first part of the story and Jesus proved by conquering temptation to think wrong or think foolishly that He is "the" great King who will never fail to guide His people right



A Very Special Visitor from Heaven No.1 (1.20)

A man called Luke who was a story-teller like Matthew tells in his book that God sent an angel called *Gabriel* to tell Mary she would have a baby boy. That baby was born in Bethlehem when the Jews awaited the king promised by the prophets. But there was a big problem. Mary had been planning to be married to a carpenter called Joseph in a town called Nazareth and the Jews taught that a girl really shouldn't have a baby before she is married-quite right too!

What would Mary do? She was a good and honest girl. She knew it was all happening by God's order and because He was keeping his promise "A virgin shall have a son" (Isaiah 7.14) who would be the Saviour of the world. She could not keep it secret. She told her boy friend and fiancé, Joseph. What do you think Joseph did?

Joseph the carpenter wondered what would happen if Jesus was born in Nazareth with just a few hundred people living in the town. He thought people would not like them any more. He wondered what name to give the boy-it could not be his name-for the child was God's Son not his. He wondered if he should stop seeing Mary and not marry after all. Then "**Look**"

👁️ an Angel appeared -not for much more than 30 seconds-but with a message Joseph would never forget. It all happened in a dream at night.

Did you know that Joseph was really a prince of the royal house of David? "Don't be afraid to get married to Mary", said the angel to this humble prince. He told Joseph that Mary's baby would be "different" and he settled the question of the baby's name. "You will call him Jesus", he said. He finished his great message of about 40 words with this great saying, "He (the baby) will save His people from their sins". Matthew tells us this wonderful thing about the "surprise baby" who would grow up to tell God's great message of forgiveness so we could go to heaven.

*There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin
He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in*

A Wonderful journey's end No.2 (2.1)

Mary stayed out of sight a while at the house of her cousin Elizabeth in Ein-Kerim, and then Joseph married her earlier than planned. Just then Caesar's tax census meant that Joseph and Mary had to register at Bethlehem. So they took the long journey there on "Clipperty Clop" their donkey.

When they arrived at Bethlehem there was no room except in a stable. That's where Jesus was born. Herod the king was still living but he was soon to die. He had built a palace near Bethlehem-taking the top off a mountain to make a bigger foundation below it for his great house.



Matthew says, "Look" 👁️ wise men from "the east" who knew lots about the stars (we call them "astronomers") had been following a special star for hundreds of miles to Jerusalem. They rode on camels one behind the other but as they rode up to the walls of Jerusalem the camels came side by side before the city gate and the riders in silk robes made them kneel and got off and asked about "the king who had been born".

Boys and girls were all around them-maybe Matthew himself was one of them or maybe his dad first told him this great story. These astronomers told of that special star that had appeared in a part of the night skies called "Leo" which astronomers thought told them about events in Israel. Their camels could not get through the gates of Jerusalem but they were given water and watched by their servants as the judges at the gate sent them to meet the king.

Their question for the men at the gate and for the cruel ruler Herod was this, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews for we were watching His star in the east and we have come to worship Him?" Herod (whose name meant "trembling") trembled at the idea of a new king and the city "trembled" because Herod had already put many in prison. Herod asked men who knew the bible where God's king would be born-and they said "Bethlehem"(Read about it in Micah 5.2) Herod then called the astronomers without anyone

knowing and asked them how long the star had been shining at night. We don't know exactly how they put it-but he thought they meant a year or more.

So Jesus was born over a year before (Matthew 2.16). The wise men watched the star first in their homeland-then during their travels for the rest of that year. Herod sent them to Bethlehem. We know Herod would only live till March 13, 3BC. Joseph & the family were again in Bethlehem on the next year and staying in a house (Matthew 2.11) there. The astronomers arrived in January-for by February Herod was away from Jerusalem because he was very sick. *Like the wise men who followed a star we follow Jesus beginning with first steps-guided into the way by Jesus who is **the light** that came from heaven. That's why we celebrate Christmas.*

The miracle star No.3 (2.9)

The wise men were invited to the palace. They listened to Herod but said very little- after all they were “wise men” and soon found out that he was a bad king. Now that Herod's clever men had shown that Israel's great king would be born in Bethlehem the wise men wanted to be off for it was getting dark and they trusted the skies more than Herod. Once outside they sat up high on their camel humps –made the big animals stand up and turned their heads south towards Bethlehem. In the night-sky all of a sudden one of them pointed above “**Look**” “the star –the star!” he shouted gleefully.

A big cheer went up-they felt like singing-the star was travelling with them. Now they really believed the God of the Jews was guiding them and were glad they had not promised to tell Herod what they discovered. They were cantering along for about 4 miles when all of a sudden the Star stopped. It was standing over a little house. “This must be the place where the King is living.

They got their camels to kneel and their servants got out special boxes and flasks from the bags of their camels. These were presents for the King who had come from God. Joseph, who was getting used to special things happening, heard the camel grunts and the strange voices of foreign people at the door. He was a hospitable man and he invited them in. They greeted Mary and were falling over one another to see the baby that they had come thousands of miles to worship. It was wonderful-these wise men were beaming with smiles and had tears of joy in their eyes. Jesus took their breath away-even as a child he looked like a king!




God had shown them this special King would change the world by the things he did and die as a sacrifice to change the future and bring in a golden age and a kingdom that would never be destroyed. They knew they had found “The Great King of Israel” They all fell on their knees. They opened treasure boxes and gave Jesus gold frankincense and myrrh. The child Jesus took them all in his little hands.

Joseph was really hospitable to these wise men-Bethlehem was quiet in the month of January and Joseph remembered how Mary and He had to bed down in a cattle shed when they came from Nazareth the year before. He found the visitors a place to stay and they had a restful sleep until suddenly one of them woke up from a dream with a start.

The wise man had heard God speak to him in that dream. God **"make a deal"** with them all or **"gave kingly titles"**. This is the way the bible says, "God made them his followers and gave them new dignity as His men". The dream warned them not to return to Herod. These astronomers did not come as kings but when they met Christ and bowed to worship him in the dream they had a new God given dignity-God made them "kings". That means that we are quite right to call them "kings". They slipped out from where they were staying, mounted their camels and were gone as quickly as they came. They travelled many miles before the bad King Herod awoke and began his terrible slaughter of innocent children. *Like the wise men when we discover the joy of finding Jesus our LORD we will worship Jesus and follow Him ever after.*

A Wonderful guardian Angel visits Joseph No.4 (2.13)

It was still night-time the very same night-and Joseph and Mary and the boy Jesus were sleeping. But well before morning **"Look"**  Joseph saw a bright angel of the LORD standing beside him saying, "As soon as you have got dressed take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt and be there **till I tell you** for Herod will look for **the child** to slay Him."


Joseph got up and he saddled the donkey and fed it. Mary hurried to wrap Jesus up warm for it was cold. Oh, and they didn't forget the lovely presents that tell us Jesus would **rule over** us, **pray for** us and **die for** us. *Clipperty Clop* Joseph's donkey trotted steadily through Hebron and on to Beersheba where he would have had a long drink at the well and the family could also get something to eat in the market. Did you know, by the way, that donkeys can carry as many as four people! *Clipperty Clop* was a strong little fellow and over the river of the border of Egypt he went trotting along. Joseph and Mary felt happier now; they were out of Israel and in the land of Egypt- safe from Herod. The little donkey had travelled 150 miles. He enjoyed a long rest and maybe some carrots?



An old tradition tells us Joseph lived for a time in the town of "Onion" where other Jews had settled. "Onion" is a strange name for a town but the countryside around was good for growing onions which are healthy diet; and more important Joseph could find work in the Jewish part of town. Onion was not far from Alexandria. The biggest library in the world was in that city. Meanwhile back in Judea King Archelaus took over at the beginning of 3BC for Herod had died after suffering a very painful illness. *The bible teaches that God guards young lives by angels till we come to follow Jesus when the Holy Spirit becomes our special guide. Read more in Hebrews 1.14*

Jesus' amazing home-call to Nazareth No.5 (2.19)



One night as Joseph slept soundly along with his wife Mary in their little house in Onion, Egypt, "**Look**"  the bright angel appeared to him again in a dream. He didn't say, "Fear Joseph, don't be afraid"-can you think why not? Yes, of course you can. It was because this was the angel's third visit. Notice the angel had been in Nazareth Bethlehem and in Egypt too. God can see us everywhere and send angels to any part of the world. Just think about it, God's mail 2000 years ago was faster than e-mail today! Isn't that wonderful!

Let's follow the story further. "Get up from bed", said the angel, "take the Young Child and His mother and go to the land of Israel for those who were looking for the Child to kill Him are dead." Herod himself was dead. Indeed he had killed many of his leading nobles and soldiers in the last year of his life-and the angel said the important people who took part in the search for Jesus were dead.

So the family stayed in Egypt only a few months. Jesus and Mary with Joseph and *Clipperty Clop* were back on the sandy road. *Clipperty Clop* would faithfully carry them 100 miles further this time-away north to a new town of about 600 people called Nazareth, where Joseph could build new houses and Jesus would grow up helping in a carpenter's shop. *This story teaches that God guides aright those who love and follow Jesus*

Startling! The door of Heaven opens! No.6 (3.16)

Twenty-eight years passed since our last story and Israel had changed. The king now was called Herod "the tetrarch". Like his father he was more like a builder than a king. He ruled only a quarter of his Father's lands. He built a city called **Tiberius** by the lake of Galilee. A governor from Rome, Pilate by name, took office a year ago in AD 26; he was the real ruler.

Jesus cousin John had grown up and was living in the desert. He was a famous and great prophet of God and was now calling Israel back to God. Thousands were turning from wrong and being baptised as they waited for God to send Israel's long-expected king from heaven. Soldiers, tax-men, every sort of people were longing for this "wonderful king". The rich leaders and priests did not like John because he said God was angry with their evil deeds. They didn't want God's great king to come because they loved doing just what they liked.

One day as the prophet John was baptising people in the Jordan River Jesus came walking to the riverside. Jesus was as pure as a lamb-he had no need to say "sorry" for He had never done or said or even thought anything wrong; still, He wanted to be baptised. John said, "I need you to baptise me, why should I baptise You." Jesus said, "Allow it". You see, Jesus wanted to show He was willing to become "as if" he was a bad person, take our punishment and even die so that we could be forgiven. Jesus' baptism -as He went down under the water

and rose again-is a picture of his future death on the cross at Calvary and rising again to send his Spirit into our hearts.



As John baptised Jesus **"Look"** 🕶 a great gap opened in the heavens and there seemed to be a mighty dove tumbling in freefall from way up in the skies and it came to rest on Him. No-one had seen heaven opening up as if into another world -it was strange. What did it mean? It meant that Jesus was able to open a way for us into that wonderful world and right into the home of God. Never in human history had heaven opened like this. Never had heaven seemed so near. *It was because Jesus came humbly in love for us that heaven opened like it did. God opens the door of heaven to those who follow Jesus*

Jesus **"perfect"** before God and man No.7 (3.17)

Never since the beginning of the world except perhaps when Abraham offered up Isaac was there a voice quite like the one that John and the people heard above the Jordan. **"Look"**



🕶 Out of the open heavens came the mighty voice of a very happy Father God. God said, "This is my beloved Son, I am so pleased with My Son; with His life, and with what He has just done!" Jesus had showed he was ready not only to go under water but to go to die for men and women boys and girls. John the Baptist as he looked at Jesus had said, "Look, the (perfect) 'lamb' of God."

When God spoke to Abraham from heaven long ago, He was making sure Abraham did not sacrifice Isaac. He said, "Do not lay your hand on your son". This time God was saying something like this: *"I am going on to allow my own Son to die on this mountain to defeat evil and make it possible for Me to forgive sin and open My home in heaven to those who repent and believe just like I opened the skies just now."*



Wonderful conqueror of Satan and King of angels No.8 (4.11)


The devil was once one of God's leading angels but he became proud and thought he could take over from God. He got lots of angels to follow him. God put them out of heaven. Satan and his angels have been scheming to win the world from God. The first big attempt was in Paradise; the second before the Flood; the next before the Exodus, and now the most daring attempt yet-to get God's wonderful King Jesus to give up his kingdom. He had planned three attacks on

Jesus -they are called “temptations”

Jesus met the devil on the mount of temptation. On that mountain even today there are small round stones like **bread rolls** all over the ground. You remember that the devil challenged a hungry Jesus to change these stones which looked like bread into real bread. Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that goes out of the mouth of God!'"

The devil next dared Jesus to trust to the promise of Psalm 91.11-12 which was “God will not let you hurt even your foot-He will send angels to prevent it.” The devil when he asked Jesus to jump from a high building was saying "God will take care of you whatever foolish thing you do!" and to jump from the high point of the temple was very foolish and wrong. This time Jesus said "It is written, 'do not put the LORD your God to the test!'"

The devil finally took Jesus to show Him his plans for a great future when the world was much like it is today and said he would give Him this world if He (Jesus) would bow to him (Satan) now. Jesus said! "Away with you Satan -it is written 'You shall worship the LORD your God and serve him only'."

Then, "**Look**"  those angels from heaven that Satan talked about really did come-they chatted to Jesus –bringing their support from heaven and taking a message of victory back to heaven. Long ago angels fed Elijah in the desert-they may even have brought Jesus a special meal of celebration after his “wonderful” victory of Jesus God’s great future King over the Devil. *Their King is our king and in His strength and by prayer we can conquer sin & temptation-and when we feel very weak God cares most for us -remember how he helped Daniel.*

MATTHEW'S SECOND BOOK

In this book Jesus comes down from the mountain where he taught what His kingdom would be like and found many poor sick people looking for him. This is the story of His love as a Shepherd King who never failed anyone and who always had wise answers to hard questions. As we read this book we see that when Jesus is "busy" people push in; when He is speaking in public friends arrive, when he is eating crowds want help. Anyone else would say, "Go away, I can't be bothered" but Jesus is a very special King-He is full of compassion. In this part of the book He lived up to His words, "Come unto me all you who have big burdens.


~~A cheeky leper that~~ Jesus helped No.9 (8.2)

Jesus now had 12 men learning the sayings he spoke. They stayed with Him a lot. They all climbed up a hill called “the mount of beatitudes”. There *all day* Jesus taught beautiful lessons. He told them how to be "happy"; how to be "a light to show others the way"; how to keep the "commandments" in our hearts; how to care by "giving to others"; how to "talk

privately to God"; how "money" should serve God; how to stop "saying bad things about others"" and how to "ask God for things we need".

There was so much to learn from Jesus-nobody *ever* taught like Him before. He pointed to the flying birds and said-"they have no barns but God feeds them" He pointed to the spring flowers and said they are better dressed than kings & queens-and added-God cares far more for us than the birds and the grass"

Jesus also taught us to "do to others what we would like them to do to us"; to go on "the narrow way " to God; to follow teachers who live "good lives"; to "obey God's will" and because He had built houses Himself He finished off telling of two men-one built on sand the other on rock. The house of the first fell-the other man's house stood even when floods ran round it. Jesus said His teaching is "the foundation" of life.


After a tiring day Jesus came down the mountain and **"Look"** , a man with the worst disease of the time- leprosy – was waiting for Him. Who would have believed it? He was so cheeky he walked right up to Jesus with a disease which caused your fingers and toes to fall off. There was a rule that he should have stayed away and shouted "Unclean, unclean" so that others were not in danger of getting his disease. Any other tired man would say, "Go away" but Jesus stood listening patiently.



The man bowed before Jesus. He said, " LORD, if You are willing you are able *in one act* to make me clean once for all" Jesus put His hand out and healed the leper. Jesus told him to go and offer two little sparrows to God. One sparrow would die over running water while one would fly free with the blood of the other on its wings and tail. This old time story that you can read in Leviticus Chapter 14 *challenges us to live for Jesus-the one who died instead of us.*

Jesus protects his disciples in a tsunami No.10 (8.24)



Have you heard of a "Tsunami"? In 2007 a big wave struck Aceh, Indonesia. In 2009 one hit Samoa & Philippines. It is an earthquake below the sea-which creates very big strong waves. You can read where Jesus predicted this to happen later in history in Luke 21.25. In the old writings of Matthew which were in the Greek language it says, **"Look"**  "a great earthquake shock under the sea took place" and waves swept over the boat.

Worst of all Jesus was sleeping. Disciples shouted "We are going to drown". The first thing Jesus said, was "Little


faiths, why are you afraid?" With the wonderful Son of God in the boat they were safe but with a boatful of waves they felt their last day had come.

Jesus stood up and told the waves and the sea to stop being disturbed, immediately it was calm. What would you think if that happened to you? You also would be afraid of the waves, you too would be amazed at the storm and then you would talk about how or why Jesus could do this-after all king Canute couldn't halt the sea. The disciples asked, "What kind of person is this?" Where does He really come from? The answer is that Jesus is our wonderful creator and wave control was no big deal for Him. *Jesus is Master of the sea and in any trouble He is near enough to hear you call-that gives you confidence. Jesus makes all the difference.*

Jesus has compassion on two wild men and answers the demons wisely No.11 (8.29)



Galilee has a beautiful round lake-Jesus came to a place on its east side where people used to put the bodies of their dead friends in tombs. There were two men who were very wild and who followed the devil. They probably make a door to their tomb by breaking an end off and just threw out the bones of the buried people or used them as tools. The tombs where they made their homes were about the size of tents. God created them to be like Him but they had become like wild animals because demons had disturbed them.

The men scared everybody -so that nobody could walk round that lake. They lived in the tombs which were like small stone houses. **"Look"**,  these men were shouting at Jesus, "We want nothing to do with you." "You are God's Son." Jesus was wonderful-He wasn't scared -He was patient-even with the devil and **demons**-and would not judge them before the time.

*(You may not have heard of "**demons**"-they are spirits who once were angels and who agreed with Satan when He planned a revolt in heaven. He and they were cast out and they continue as angels did from long ago to be able to come to earth. They try to control people who are willing to follow Satan.)*

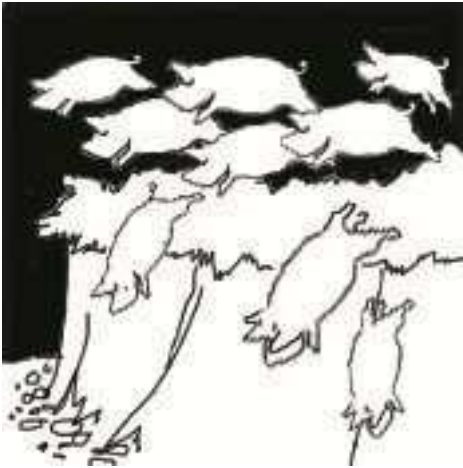
Just imagine what rebels these demons were and think of how they feared Jesus. They said, "Are you going to judge us before the time God appointed?" They really hated Jesus. The devil controlled them knew who Jesus was and the devils knew they were in for judgment for what they did in heaven. These demons were even controlling what the wild men said. They did not want to go to Hell so they pleaded to be allowed to live in the pigs on the nearby hillside when Jesus sent them out of the men. *Every creature will be judged; Christians; demons, angels, nations, sinners. we need to follow Jesus and walk with God*

Jesus frees the two wild men from Satan's power No.12 (8.32)

Compare Luke chapter 9. 30-38

In this unusual story please remember that Jesus came to earth to "save men and women boys and girls and that He did not come to judge men or angels or demons-that is for the future.

In this story **demons** (who as you will remember are "fallen angels that try to control people") went into the bodies of the pigs, and "**Look**" 📖 the pigs took fright and ran over a cliff into the sea. Now you know pigs can't fly and they can't swim either.



The devil brought these men so low as to live in tombs and cut themselves with knives and became very fierce. The demons in these men feared the chains of God's prison and asked to live in the pigs instead of the men.

The devil destroyed these pigs to get Jesus off the territory he controlled. Because the pigs died the demons could **get free** and wander about looking for other people whose lives they could disturb. The devil himself will one day **be bound** for ever in a prison from which he will never escape.

The demons who were once angels had left heaven and lived in tombs with men they made wild. When they had to leave the company of men they were willing to enter the life of pigs instead of wandering without home or going to the place God prepared for Satan and his angels or demons. When the pigs died the demons went through trouble and had to "wander about"

Looking one way you could see all the bodies of the pigs in the sea. Looking the other way you could see those two men who were very precious to Jesus sitting quietly and talking joyfully and free from the devil's power. We see how different Jesus is from the devil in this important story. *Jesus brings freedom and self control, Satan brings slavery and fear*

Jesus' love tested by the people of Gerasa city No.13 (8.34)



The herdsmen ran for the owners of the pigs and "**Look**" 📖 they came along with lots of people -a whole city of people-and begged Jesus to go away. For years they had not been able to take their families down to the lake because of these wild men. They really should have said, "Thank You" to Jesus and then they could have invited Jesus to their city.

Anyway, they could get new pigs very quickly for pigs have very big families-sometimes 14-20 little pigs all at once. Even though they hurt Jesus and


sent him away He left them two men to show them that if they changed their mind He still loved them. How kind!

Do you know what? These men who had been freed from the devil's power wanted to go with Jesus to the other side of the lake. It would have been so lovely to live with Him. But instead Jesus sent them to tell in their country all He had done for them. These good men who were now **following** Jesus went and told the story of Jesus in "ten towns" near where they lived- big towns which were more like cities. They wanted others to know that Jesus could change their lives and conquer the devil.

When we discover how much Jesus loves us we want to be useful to Him.

Jesus helps a paralysed man and answers the teachers No.14 (9.1)

How would your mum and dad like it if somebody who wanted to see him took out some double glazing and came in the window? Would they call the police?

When Jesus got home to Capernaum (a town named after the prophet Nahum who foretold Jesus saying, "**Look**"  on the mountains the feet of Him who brings good news"-Nahum 1.5) an unusual thing awaited Him.

It seemed like a man had been run over with a car and was being carried on a stretcher by four men-but there were no cars or hospitals in those days. The man they carried was paralysed. He had no power to walk or work.



They climbed an outside stair and whipped away the sun baked clay and matting on the roof and lowered the paralytic before Jesus. It was a surprising thing to do-but they knew Jesus was just so amazing-to Him a broken roof would be nothing but the need of their friend would be important. Jesus said to the man who couldn't walk "***Your sins are forgiven***".

What Jesus meant was, 'everything the man had done wrong and every bad thought and every unkind word were all forgiven there and then.'

There were important Jewish teachers listening to Jesus speaking. They heard Jesus say "forgive" and were very angry. They whispered among themselves, "rubbish, evil words-only God forgives." Now there was something about Jesus-he could hear what people were **thinking** just as easily as what they were **saying**.-because ***Jesus was God as well as man***.

Jesus said, "Why do you think evil thoughts" Then he added "It is easier to say, 'Your sins be forgiven' or to say 'rise up and walk' but in order that you may know that I have heaven's authority I now say, "rise up and walk" and suddenly the Paralysed man jumped up took his mat and walked home. Everybody was amazed. Wouldn't you have been too?

Always remember how hard it was for Jesus to get pardon and forgiveness for us-He had to die! If you do you will know Jesus more clearly and follow Him more nearly and love Him more dearly

Jesus helps Matthew and answers the hypocrites wisely No.15 (9.10)

Matthew when he was a young man had no time for the "pretend holy men" around Jerusalem. They seemed very good but he soon discovered that they "played" at being good. (A 'Hypocrite' is a 'player') They told others to give money but they made 'big' money on the sale of sacrifices and from stalls every holiday.

Matthew was not the only one to doubt these "holy men"-John the Baptist who was a really good man-like Matthew-decided not to follow his father who was one of the few good priests left- and so he went out into the desert to live with God and people called Essenes did the same



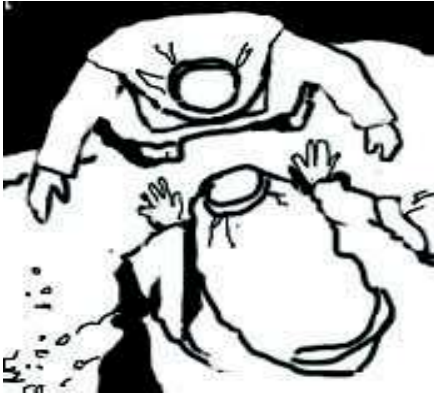
Now we discover how Jesus caught up with Matthew who later wrote all these "wonderful stories of the King". Though from a religious family called Levi he decided to get away from Jerusalem **hypocrites** and began collecting tax for the Romans and he got well paid for it. Jesus called Matthew to follow him and he did that real smart. He left lots of money on his open air desk-for he was probably taking tax from people bringing wood and marble in by sea on sailing ships to the anchorage at Capernaum.

Jesus said, "I'd like to have a meal with you!" Matthew said, "Come to my place" and I'll invite lots of my friends!" Jesus thought that was an excellent idea. He loved to meet people who needed Him and to change their lives.


When they got around the tables, just **look** 🕶️ -a huge number of fellow collectors of tax piled in to sit beside Jesus and the disciples. Strange as it seems the "pretend holy men" Matthew hated were snooping around and argued with His disciples saying that they and Rabbi Jesus should eat separate-not in the same room with these filthy tax guys. "They are not 'nice' and they are not 'clean' people because they eat without washing their arms up to the elbows!" said the "pretend holy men"

Jesus was having none of it. He said, "Those who are healthy do not need a doctor only those who are sick" Then He told the "Holy Joes" to go and find in their long scroll bibles the words of an old prophet Hosea which read, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." You see Jesus had not come to deal with people who thought they did not need Him. He came for those who knew they had done wrong and to those who were willing to believe in Him. *There is a lesson tucked into the story-none of us is good enough to do without forgiveness and so we all need Jesus.*

Jesus cared for a little girl No.16 (9.18)



In Jesus' days they kept wine in strong animal skins instead of bottles. These skins could be re-used. In time they cracked and then when this happened the wine was lost. Jesus was teaching that the law was like the skins and the good news He brought like the wine that would not agree with the old ideas


Just then a man who taught the old ideas came running and "**Look**"  the man bowed before Jesus because he needed the **wonderful power** of the news Jesus had. His little daughter was about to die and He knew Jesus could cure the sick. He asked

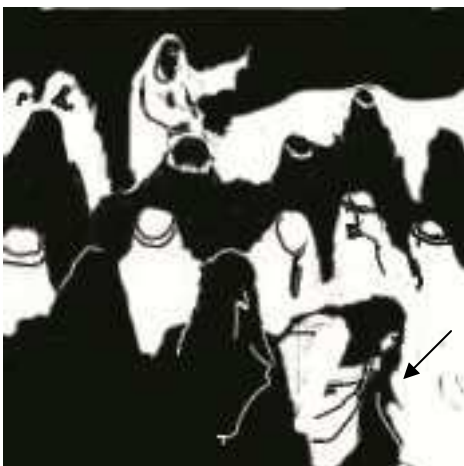
the LORD to come quickly. Now another ill person whose story I will tell next stopped Jesus as He went to the little girl and the girl died because of the delay. We are told by Mark (Mark 5.21ff) that servants came to Jairus who was the synagogue leader and said, "Don't bother now, she's dead." For an ordinary doctor that would be tragic-but Jesus is very wonderful.

Mark tells us Jesus said to the ruler "Don't be afraid, just believe." So on they went and arrived after the funeral wailers and musicians were called. Jesus said the little girl was "sleeping" and they laughed at Him. He put them all out and took some disciples and the parents and took the girl by the hand and lifted her. She had been dead alright and now she was alive. Talk about the wonders of the world-this was extra-ordinary!

What a thrill when the little girl herself heard the full story of her second life. She owed it all to Jesus. He would be her hero. Every day she would try to find out more about Him and the great things He did in Galilee. Her dad was a Rabbi with a difference now-he accepted that Jesus had a message more powerful than Moses-one that could give new life. He would ask himself, "Who can raise the dead but God?" and end up **a follower** of Jesus as the anointed King. *The lesson-don't let fear stop you following Jesus.*

Jesus had time for a woman who pulled at His coat No.17 (9.20)

Now for the story of the lady who delayed the LORD and his disciples and Jairus as they were trying to get to Jairus' house where his daughter was dying. "**Look**" 



A woman who had a terrible problem with bleeding-she had been bleeding for 12 years came up behind Jesus to *secretly* touch his coat. She was quite desperate-for she had paid lots of doctors and still she was bleeding more and more. Here clothes were being ruined and as she got older she was becoming very white.

She came secretly –still she believed that that to touch the "hem" of Jesus coat she would be healed and she was for her bleeding stopped. She was better. She took herself away quickly. What she did not know was that Jesus "knew all things". He turned and asked "Who touched me?" "Many

have touched You in the rush", said the disciples.

But the little lady decided to come out of the crowd and fell shaking at Jesus feet and told her whole story. Jesus gently said, "Go in peace of mind and soul your faith has made you well in every way."

As Jairus, the father of the little girl who died watched this at first he was irritated at the delay but when he saw Jesus succeed to lift his dead girl to life again he was over the moon. The lesson is, "*Don't be afraid in your prayers to ask Jesus to help when things are very hard.*"

Jesus helps a man who could not talk No.18 (9.32)

Jesus left the house of Jairus where he brought the little girl back to life. He had done so much but another big job faced Him. Two blind men followed him and asked for eyesight. Jesus had been so busy-and still more people came. He didn't send them away but took them indoors perhaps even to His own house and said, "Do you believe I can do this for you *in one act?*" They said, "Yes." Jesus touched their eyes and suddenly the whole world and its beauty appeared as they had never seen it. It is very difficult not to be able to see and wonderful when people get sight back as happens today with retina grafts and cataract removal.

Jesus asked these men to do *just one thing* for him-"to tell no-body." Instead they told everybody. Why did Jesus ask them to tell no-body? He wanted them to love and obey Him. Instead they told everybody and never came back to Jesus house again because they had disobeyed Him and were ashamed. Their eyes were better but in their minds they disobeyed Jesus.

Look just as 🕶️ Jesus left the house a man who was controlled by the devil and could not




talk was brought to Jesus. This meant that Jesus now had two more problems. He would love to have gone somewhere quiet or visited a friend but the world was full of need and He had come to heal. Jesus sent the devil away and gave the man a lovely new voice. Lots of people had gathered near the house because the two blind men had gone away shouting about their healing. There were even religious leaders at Jesus door now. The ordinary people said, "*This is great-nothing like it has ever been seen*" but the old religious play actors said, "He has done this by the god of flying demons." They did not believe that Jesus was God's own Son and the great King. *The first thing is to know He whom you follow is God in the flesh.*

Jesus teaches and heals the Jews and promises to teach and heal people of every nation No.19 (10.16)




Jesus sent out His disciples every town of Israel. In those days a friend could stay free in a home for three days. The disciples would be welcome because they taught about Jesus as the "coming king" and many were glad Israel was to have a better king. The disciples would be really welcome when they healed friends in lots of homes as they went along for Jesus had given them power to heal the sick; raise the dead; heal lepers and cast out demons. This was a wonderful time-the disciples were able to do even more than doctors and hospitals do today. So they did not need money or extra clothes because people whose leper friends were better,

whose dead friends came back to life or whose mad friends were in their right mind again would give them food and any clothes they needed.

Jesus  told them that at a future time He would send them out again even to the whole world after His own death and resurrection. That was after Pentecost; then the whole world would discover Jesus' power. At that later time Jesus warned disciples would be chased around by those who hated them and put under lock and key. He said this was a small trial run and they should learn to melt into the background like snakes do and be gentle and quiet as doves as they moved around. He knew in the future it would be dangerous to talk about His good news-and disciples would be like sheep living in the middle of a pack of wolves. Today that prophecy of Jesus has become real in many lands and anyone who speaks to others about Jesus could be arrested. *All who follow Jesus have to bear the cross*

Jesus teaches not to be stubborn 20 (11.8)

Jesus knows how men and women love to dress up. He said, "Look,  people with really posh clothes live in palaces." He went on to speak about John the Baptist who had no nice clothes-just some camel hair and a leather belt-but Jesus said,"you could not find as good a man in Herod's palace."



Then He talked about His message of faith and joy and John's message of sin and death. One had a lot of happiness in it and the other a lot of sadness. He compared the two messages to "weddings" and "funerals" and the people of Israel as children who were playing together in a market. Some had little flutes and they asked the other children to dance to the tune as if it was a wedding. The others said "No, we don't want to play weddings!" Then the musical ones

said, "Alright, we will sing a sad song and you just pretend you are crying as if it is a funeral-that's easy!"

The other children huffed and said, "No, we are not doing what you say! We won't play with you!" "Anyway-who wants to play funerals?" Jesus was telling us that John the Baptist's disciples would not join his ranks though John encouraged them-when he pointed John the beloved disciple and Andrew to Jesus. *We learn from this that it is important that Christians love each other and do things together and not be stubborn.*

Jesus wise answer to John's disciples No.21 (11.10)

The good news was that Jesus disciples by now had visited many Jewish cities. The bad news was that Herod the king had thrown John the Baptist into prison. He was a truly great man. Like Jesus he had disciples who visited him in prison and from that fortress called Machaerus near the Dead Sea he sent them to Jesus saying, "Are you really the king who is to come?"

Jesus replied, "The blind see; the lame walk; lepers are cured; the deaf hear; the dead are raised to live again and the poor believe the good news." In other words Jesus was saying "Yes I am" to John. Jesus did the very best for his discouraged cousin; He showed He was not going to give up because of what Herod did to John and sent back the upbeat message "my kingdom and its message is marching on!"

John's disciples were preparing to leave when Jesus said something that they dare not miss-He said John was the greatest of the prophets. John was so important to God's plan that 400 years before he was born the bible talks about him as "**The** messenger of the LORD".



Jesus said this beautiful thing about poor sad John in the cold prison. He said, "**Look**" 👁️ "What did we all go out to the desert to see; a man who would change his mind as often as the wind changes?" No! Did we go out to see "A man who needed fine clothes to make him look great?" "No" He had that something special-he didn't need to be in a palace and wear purple-he was as good as any king.

Why did John go out to the desert? John went because God called him to be the king's **forerunner**. John obeyed & went to live in the desert "A voice calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way' (Isaiah 40.3, Malachi 3.1) Words written many hundreds of years before about John). Jesus said he was the "greatest man ever born of a wife". The followers of John left with these great words of encouragement for their friend John. *Jesus encouraged His followers and we should encourage each other*


Jesus as king loved 'all' His people No.22 (11.19)

Let's think back to those children who could not agree on which games to play. They were playing in the market where there were lots of stalls and people were buying and selling food and clothing and things they had made. When you have playmates you like to meet them as often as you can. It was like that with Jesus and His disciples

Jesus said that when they wanted to play a sad song they were being like John the Baptist



who did not drink any wine and ate locusts and honey. *You would like the honey but you would not be too keen to eat the locusts which were like grasshoppers.* John's disciples would be very quiet and didn't laugh a lot. It was like **being at a funeral** every day. It was a tough life, calling men to turn away from sin. The best part was dipping all the thousands that came to John in the Jordan waters. But John just said "bye-bye" to those who repented after that.


The people who did not like Jesus used to say, "**Look**  he is **having a party** again today" because people who were healed and people who changed to live right invited Him for a meal. Jesus' way of life seemed *like having a wedding every day*. Jesus did drink Jewish diluted wine and was often invited to feasts where He enjoyed the best food and shared much joy and laughter. Every day He was meeting and getting to know new people and keeping in touch with them. They gathered often in great crowds around Him. He was like a partner who had made a vow to be their friend for ever. *Once you met Jesus you wanted to be with him, to follow Him wherever He went and get back to see Him as often as you could.*

Jesus wise answers to the Pharisees No. 23 (12.2)

A few years ago in the 1990's the author visited the lovely hill overlooking Galilee called the "Mount of the Blessings" where Jesus is said to have talked about His happy kingdom.



Once, when the author and his wife were walking down that hill towards the sea, a farmer was ploughing the field nearby. On another occasion we walked on a path through quite tall ripe corn in early May. The birds were wheeling and swooping in the sky right overhead. They would feed from the corn left by the farmer.

One Saturday Jesus was walking through cornfields like these and "**Look**"  His disciples were hungry and decided to pick some corn -roll off the husks by rubbing them in their hands-and eat the corn inside. Some *Pharisees* (who thought they were very good but could

not see far ahead) said the disciples were doing with their fingers what farmers did with a flail and we do with a combine-separating husks and corn seed-they were "threshing." The Pharisees said this was work and no work according to the Jewish traditions should be done on Saturday.


Jesus was quick to answer. He said David went into the old tabernacle one Saturday (which Jews call "Shabbat" meaning "rest) when there was no fresh bread and ate loaves....and that even priests ate from offerings of lamb and bread on Saturday too.

He told them to look up Hosea 6.6 in the bible and learn it. It says, "I would rather have people who love me truly and know me personally as Saviour than eat lambs at twilight on the Sabbath of Passover

"As the Son of Man" (or creator) Jesus said he planned Saturday and "had full authority to say what the Sabbath was for-it was for man's good"

The early church worshipped the Creator on the Saturday and on Sunday joined together to sing praise to the risen Christ as God and have a meal together afterward. Saturday was given as a leisure day on which to rejoice in what God has made *Sunday is our day to remember the New Life Jesus brought through His resurrection-a day to rejoice and a day of worship.*

Jesus helped people every day No.24 (12.10)

Just after saying all these things about Saturday Jesus and his disciples arrived in synagogue (a place to get together to read scripture, hear a talk and pray) "**Look**",  "there was a man there who had a hand which was very thin and his skin was all dry." The man had come to worship but he was too weak to work during the week. He became poor. He could not buy proper food and soon he would get ill and die. Jesus saw him.



The Pharisees (people who thought they were better than others) belonged to this synagogue. It was "theirs". They decided to get their own back. "Jesus" they said, "is it right by our law to heal a man on the day of creation rest-Saturday?" Jesus answered, "If your sheep fell into a pit on

Saturday when would you lift it out? Would you wait till Sunday or Monday-when would you do it? There was a stony silence. Lots of Shepherds were there-they knew what they would do.

If the Pharisees had said, "Wait till Monday" there would have been howls of laughter round the synagogue. So Jesus went ahead to heal the man and he went out to do a good week's work in the days ahead. *A follower of Jesus does not put off till tomorrow the kind deed He can do today.*

Jesus was content to live unrecognised No.25 (12.18)

The Pharisees did not give up! They could not find a fault in Jesus so they started to plot to kill Jesus. But Jesus could read what people were thinking. He knew their plans and travelled north for a while. Jesus' had still to offer Himself as King at Jerusalem at the precise time announced long ago by Daniel the prophet and was wisely avoiding an early plot on His life. Crowds followed Him north and he healed all the sick people they brought with them.

He said, "**Look**" 🧐 "Don't tell anyone who I am!" He did this because He was really God living quietly as a man among men on earth as the prophet Isaiah foretold 600 years before.



Isaiah said that this part of the life of Jesus would be **quiet**-living to serve. Jesus spent many years as a carpenter. Isaiah also said that Jesus would be unknown - except when God His Father would speak from heaven and tell those who followed Jesus who he really was. God did say, "This is the way I chose Him to live. I love Him, He is my Son, I am delighted with Him. He will tell the world about justice. He will not quarrel or shout in the streets. He will be kind to the old and care a lot about those who follow Him-especially young boys and girls." (Isaiah 40.11, 42.2)

Even more wonderful God has a great big surprise in store for one day Jesus will come again to earth with **a shout** of victory. He will bring in the justice He called for long ago and then His name will be known all over the world as King of Kings. *Jesus is coming again, it may be morning, it may be noon it may be evening and could be soon so keep on following Him faithfully*

Jesus answer to the Pharisees -the sign of Resurrection No.26 (12.42)



The Pharisees were at it again! This time they asked Jesus for a very big sign to prove who he was. Jesus said that only wicked people who did not really want to be his friends or follow Him would keep on asking for a sign to prove that He was the King.

He gave them a strange sign. Do you remember the true story of Jonah who was swallowed up by a big fish and lived 3 days in the belly of the fish? Jesus said "Jonah's story was great but something greater than that will happen to me."

Jesus said "**Look**", 🧐 "I will be three days in the tomb as Jonah was three days alive in a fish." In the story Jonah the fish vomited Jonah out and he lived on to help people in a far away city called Nineveh to get to know God. Jesus said he too would come alive in just 3 days.

That really did happen! Three days after Jesus died the stone of his tomb was rolled away by an angel but he was not inside-only some clothes He left. The soldiers who tried to keep the tomb safe "fell down unconscious" when the angel came -and Jesus appeared again and again to his disciples before He went to heaven but the Pharisees did not believe and the leaders paid the soldiers not to tell the truth. Jesus came out alive from that tomb-wonder of wonders!


Jesus finished this talk with the Pharisees about "a sign" by saying that when He judged the world in the future the people of Nineveh would stand up and condemn the Jews. *Followers of Jesus do not fear the judgment because the Judge is their friend.*

Jesus says to the Pharisees- "unless you repent an ancient queen will witness against you" No.27 (12.42)

These Pharisees were still standing there so Jesus put another challenge out to them. He said, " I am greater than Solomon for the Queen of Ethiopia came to ask him questions and went home believing the answers she got and she became a great friend of Solomon. Now Solomon was the wisest king that ever was. He was also the richest king Israel ever had.

Jesus was saying that he could answer any question. Wouldn't you like to be able to do answer all the questions in class or in your school exams? But only God is wise enough to answer big questions. Jesus was giving these Pharisees a big clue to who He was.




Even though Jesus answered every question they ever asked Him still the Pharisees did not believe He was God's king. "**Look**",  Jesus said, "When the world is judged this ancient queen of Ethiopia would stand up in a future age and point a finger at you Pharisees (Men who did not look far ahead) for refusing to believe." Jesus knew He would one day be the judge of these Pharisees and was warning them to hurry up and change their minds or they would not be in His

kingdom that goes on for ever. *Again and again in the bible we are told to be swift to answer God's call to follow Jesus*

Jesus mother loved to visit Him No.28 (12.46)

Jesus was chatting with a big crowd at His own house in Capernaum. Jesus had a house but he tells us Himself that he did not have a "bedroom". You see he spent days serving multitudes of people and nights in prayer and simply resting wherever He could.

Everybody was enjoying Jesus' stories and teaching-and the weather was warm. Then **Look**  who do you think should turn up? Can you guess? It was Jesus' mother Mary, who had

come down to the seaside on this beautiful day to see Jesus. She had other sons at home but Jesus was God's son and very special to her. She had brought His brothers James and Joseph junior too. They had travelled 15 miles. It would have taken them about an hour and a half. Most people in those days travelled on donkeys. It would have been a pleasant journey but they were ready for something to drink.



They were very surprised and a bit annoyed. Jesus' house had no electric bell-for they had not been invented and they had no mobile phones to say they were coming. They thought they might get to chat with Jesus or have some nice fish with bread-a treat that they didn't get at Nazareth.

Instead there were people standing outside the house and couldn't get in-for Jesus must have kept an "open house" which is one where anybody is welcome to call. Nobody seemed to take the slightest notice of them. Mary was not well known at Capernaum. The three of them stood around

for some time. They certainly were not going home till they saw Jesus. Eventually they decided to ask somebody to go in and tell Jesus they were there. *Jesus loved His earthly family-for 30 years he lived in Nazareth and when Joseph died he became the main bread-winner. Jesus' family loved Him. We learn to follow Him by showing kindness to other members of our family.* The next story tells us what happened after that (Mark 4.31)

Jesus would never run away No.29 (12.47)

Someone went in to tell Jesus the news. He must have said, "Your family has come."

Look"👁️ Your mother and brothers have arrived-they are waiting outside-they want to tell You something!" Jesus **didn't** say "Friends, would you excuse me, that's the end of the talk for today. My family have come from Nazareth. I must go out to welcome mother and my brothers!"



Jesus knew things we could never know. Maybe He knew why His family had come. It might have been just to visit but maybe not. It sounds strange when Matthew tells us they came to speak to him "once for all." It seems they were not just coming for a day trip.


They may even have heard the rumour that He was going to get into big danger because the Pharisees wanted to kill Him and they wanted to warn Him to keep quiet for a while and not to go back to Jerusalem where dangers awaited.

They might even have wanted to get Him back to village carpentry. They really loved Him and didn't want to lose him but *if Jesus had done what His family thought best or gone back*

to being a carpenter and avoided the cross He would not have finished God's will and we could not have had a Saviour to forgive our sins

Jesus answer to the news- "My disciples are my family too" No.30 (12.49)



Do you know what Jesus did next? He stretched His arm out right around the room where His disciples were sitting and said, "**Look**"  these disciples **are** my mother and my brothers-for whoever desires to do the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."


Jesus talked about his "sister" when He spoke. His sister had not come. Why did she not come? Was it because there was going to be an argument? Was she looking after the house at Nazareth for her mother? The brothers might have been worried that Jesus was getting into trouble with the leaders and were not happy. They might simply have wanted Him to come back home out of all the trouble.

They knew that they both had to be there to persuade him-but mother came too-she was always sure that Jesus would make the right decision. This time she was "piggy in the middle"-she loved Jesus so much she didn't want anything to happen to him but she knew there was something important for everybody -something very sad- in Jesus life, and that could not be stopped. She was told about it by Simeon just after Jesus was born.

Jesus had plans for all our lives and He would not give them up. It is very important for us not to do what we like but to do instead what God wants and what pleases Jesus.

Perhaps Jesus family wanted Him to live a life of comfort and not a life of risk. But Jesus talked to His Father in heaven every day and though His path of obedience was difficult He did the Father's will every day and all that way to Calvary. *We can be very close to Jesus just like his family were and still not obey God's will. We need to put what He wants first and what we want last*

Jesus teaches us to give as He gave his life No.31 (13.3)

Jesus saw farmers sowing grass and corn and barley -they were sowing seed in the spring and hoping to reap a big harvest in the autumn. In a special sense Jesus came to sow seed but not just seed out of a bag." **Look**"  Jesus **the** Sower sowed his life into the ground of death and when He rose from the tomb he was looking forward to millions of boys and girls making Him their king-that is the harvest He wanted.



Had Jesus not died on the cross to forgive us there could not have been a harvest of men and women boys and girls who would share life in heaven with Jesus for ever and ever? Some who listen to the story of Jesus are not changed by it. They are like the seed sown along the path which tells us of very busy people and the seed that fell on the rocks where as the sun scorched the seed so the angry hard words that wicked people shout stops some from following Jesus.

Others are like seed falling among the thorns-they are not interested in Jesus because they have lots of money and other things that they want much more than Jesus.


But the boys and girls who love Jesus go on as they grow up to help others escape these traps and *it might even be that through your life thirty or sixty or even a hundred other people will come to follow Jesus,*

MATTHEW'S THIRD BOOK

In this book Jesus is transfigured and shows He is the "Mighty God" or "warrior God" who is able to face being put on a cross and he talks about this with Moses and Elijah

A foreign woman trusts in Jesus' faithfulness to her No.32 (15.22)

Jesus was now near the Mediterranean Sea close to Tyre and Sidon. These cities used to be very busy with trading ships going in and out of these ports 1000 years before in the days of the ancient *Phoenicians*.

A very rude woman from that nation came running after Him. Matthew says, "**Look** at her"  she was shouting Jesus' name-and "she kept on shouting **like a barking dog.**" The disciples wanted Jesus to send her off. She was pleading with Jesus for her daughter who was going haywire. We would say she was mad. A demon was living in her.



Jesus said it is not fair to give the children's bread to the "**dogs**". Remember she had been acting just like an angry dog. She was very smart to reply. She said, "Even the little puppies pick up tit bits from what children throw from the table.


Jesus replied, "O woman, you have great faith-you shall have what you wish for your daughter. Jesus may not have liked her noisy ways but he loved the fact that she would not

give up and that she really believed in Him *Jesus loves his followers even though our personalities are so different and none of us is without fault.*

Moses and Elijah need Jesus like you and me No.33 (17.3)

One of the greatest surprises of all in the 3 years when Jesus walked in Galilee and in other places in Israel was the time he went up Mount Hermon. There was still some snow on the mountain top. Have you ever been up a mountain? Slieve Donard is the highest mountain peak in the Mourne Mountains rising 2796 feet above the town of Newcastle in Co. Down, the home town of the author from which base I climbed it with my wife and two young boys.

Jesus took three fit disciples with Him and climbed some way up Mount Hermon which is the highest mountain in the area. As they got to a certain point Jesus suddenly changed and His face became bright as the sun and his clothes white as light or whiter than any washing powder could make them.

Then suddenly "**Look**"  Peter James and John could see two other people who had not climbed the mountain and who had lived hundreds of years had suddenly arrived to join Jesus. They were called Moses and Elijah.



It was amazing. Jesus actually started talking with them and the three disciples were not only tired-since they had been taken into a bright shining cloud and they felt very sleepy. But they were startled to hear these men speaking to Jesus about how he would die at Jerusalem.


It was a great day in their lives-they could never forget it. The only thing that concerned them a lot was that Jesus was soon to die. Jesus didn't allow them to tell about the visitors from heaven till He had died and risen again. They didn't even like to talk to Him about dying-nobody likes to talk about dying. They didn't like the thought that Jesus must die-but now they knew it had to be to fulfil God's will. *Followers of Jesus know that death is a door to heaven not the end.*

A mountain meeting of Jesus with Moses and Elijah where Jesus discusses His death No.34 (17.5)

Have you ever watched the sun coming out from behind a white cloud- have you had to turn away or close your eyes? The brightness is so great. Did you know that long ago there was a very bright cloud stayed for years with Moses and the Jews in the desert? Let's call it the "God cloud" for wherever it was God was there. It even travelled around above their big camp. It was called SHEKINAH-that's a very big word-and it means "here to stay" for God travelled along with the Jews through the desert for 40 years.


Now the three disciples were up this big mountain with a snow cap on the top and as we have already discovered two famous people came from the past-one lived 1300 years before on earth and the other about 800 years before-both loved mountains. Moses climbed Mt.Sinai and Mt.Nebo long ago and Elijah climbed Mt.Carmel. These men were chatting away to Jesus just like they had known each other for a long time.



Suddenly as they talked, "**Look**"  the bright cloud that was with Moses 1300 years ago came down and surrounded them all and the disciples felt very frightened. This cloud only appears when God is present and that *is* awesome! That meant that Jesus was God and this time God the Father was there too for He spoke. We know that God the Holy Spirit was always with Jesus-so God was present big time. *Followers of Jesus pray to the Father and are guided by the Holy Spirit.*

God the Father and God the Son No.35 (17.5b)

I'm sure you have friends that you wished would stay a little longer at your home because you were enjoying playing in the garden? Peter was like that-he wanted Moses & Elijah to stay for days on end. He wanted to gather wood and build some shacks for them to live in. But they had come from heaven and were not staying. They just faded out of the picture.

That wasn't the end of it-for "**Look**"  and listen-a very frightening voice just then came from heaven above them. It was like the voice that John the Baptist heard when Jesus was baptised. It was God speaking and he said, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him"



Now the disciples had spent time with Jesus-they knew He was different. But they were not expecting *this*. Jesus was so important to the Father that God commanded them to pay attention to every word He spoke and obey him. What a day. These three fishermen were sworn to secrecy by Jesus. They would not whisper a word-for God had told them to be faithful to Jesus.

Just imagine when Jesus had died and rose again and they were free to talk about this what a special story it would be for everyone they talked to. Moses was actually alive-you have seen him! Whoa! And Elijah who went up in the chariot of fire to heaven -he is alive as well.


These great men know one another and they are all living in heaven today. What a wonderful thing. *It just goes to prove that Jesus can bring us to His home in heaven where we will live for ever and other Christian who know Jesus as King and Lord and follow Him will be there too.*

MATTHEW'S FOURTH BOOK

In the fourth book Jesus teaches on the Mount of Olives and He showed He was the Great King and "created eternity". He made the way to heaven and showed His disciples what will happen in future

Jesus knew the way to heaven and made it possible for us to get there by His death on the cross No.36 (19.16)



Hi! "**Look** "  at this guy. He must be very rich. His clothes were silk. He was wearing lots of gold and he spoke quite proper. "Good teacher, I'm ready to do something real good -what good deed will get me into heaven?"

Jesus replied, "You call me good-do you know there is only one deserves to be called good-that is God." Jesus was asking him to work out if he really wanted to say that Jesus was God or if he was just being nice to Jesus. It is very important that we admit and believe that Jesus is God for then we will obey Him no questions asked.

Jesus asked the man if he kept the commandments-that would show if he was "good". He **said** he kept them since he was a boy. He thought he was very good. Jesus was not happy when people claimed to be so good.

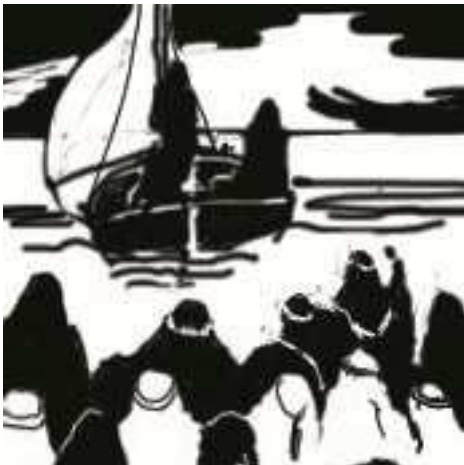
You see there are just two kinds of people-those who will go to the doctor and those who say they never need a doctor. Those who do wrong things and those who say they never do wrong. Jesus said, "sell everything and give to the poor and follow me" He went away disobedient to Jesus and Jesus is God-so that was serious. *To follow Jesus as King begins when we admit we do wrong things*


Jesus said His disciples would sit on thrones No.37 (19.27)

Jesus said, "It is harder for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to heaven". There were small city gates called "needle eye gates" that were just big enough for people to enter-where animals could not get in. It looks like Jesus had this sort of gate in mind. Just as a rich man could not take his camel through needle eye gate a man cannot get through the gate of heaven carrying all he had on earth.

Peter began to think about the boat he owned and the house he owned and the money he earned from fishing-and about John who had a big fishing business that sent fish as far as

Jerusalem. Then there was Matthew who was very rich before he began to follow Jesus. Peter wondered if they would make it to heaven. Peter could not keep this all to himself any longer.



Just "**Look**"  at him as he put the big question to Jesus, "Lord we were well off-we made lots of money-but we left it all to follow you! What will happen to us?"


Jesus replied, "I am going to begin things on earth again just as if it was Genesis-except there will be many people who believe in me still on earth. You will then sit on thrones and be given full charge of affairs in Israel. Everyone who has left houses and loved ones to herald the news of my kingdom will be there with me for ever and have a hundred times more than they ever owned. *Followers of Jesus will be rewarded even for little deeds like giving a cup of cold water*

to a thirsty person!

Jesus knew how and where and when He would die No.38 (20.18)

You will be off school every year for the Bank Holiday in May if you live in England. Better than that you will still get an Easter holiday which lasts about a week. About the same time of year the Jews had a holiday called the Passover. Millions of people were on the move and ended up in Jerusalem to remember how God brought the Jews out of Egypt. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem with the twelve.



Without warning Jesus turned off the highway and took the disciples to a quiet place and sat down and began to explain why they were travelling. "**Look**", said Jesus,  we are going up to Jerusalem -not to purchase lambs to feast because of the Egyptian miracle-but instead I myself will be betrayed, condemned by the Jewish council, mocked flogged and nailed to a cross but three days after I will rise to life again."

The twelve were stunned and silent. How could they do without Jesus? Could you do without Jesus? Had He really said He is going to come to life again? How could this be

possible?


After this news hit them like a bombshell Jesus called them to **follow**. He was ready for what was ahead. The question was, "How ready were the twelve? This was not going to be a carefree holiday-instead it would be the saddest holiday they ever had but also the most exciting-when Jesus rose again. *Follow Him even when the path is rough and steep-keep your eyes on Him*

Jesus came to lift the curse of sin No.39 (20.30)

The disciples had reached Jericho-the lowest city on earth. It is a very hot city. There are palm trees everywhere. Do you remember what happened here long ago to the city walls? Joshua and all Israel walked around the walls thirteen times and blew trumpets and the walls slid down into the earth so his army could just walk in.

Joshua said, "Cursed is the man who rebuilds Jericho" but wonderfully Jesus visited that city and cured many blind people. You see, Jesus was going to the cross to "take the curse away from us" and to bring us happiness and life.



As Jesus marched through Jericho, "**Look**",  two blind men shouted out, "Sir, David's Son, You must help us!" Lots of people in the crowd said, "Hush, be quiet". People wanted to hear what Jesus was saying. But silence is not golden when you need to make someone listen. These men had only one chance to be healed and they were jolly well going to shout to get Jesus' attention.

Louder still they bellowed, "Sir, Son of David, You must help us".

Jesus heard them all right. "What do you want?" "Our sight" they shouted back. Jesus cared enough to go over to the men and touch their eyes and a great wave of joy rippled through the big crowd. The men were up and following Jesus as if they meant to go with Him anywhere He would lead them. They did not know He was soon to die (to forgive their sin) and to rise again so they could live for ever-but they loved him because he cared for them. *He loved us first and now like the blind men we love Him and just want to follow Him day by day*

Jesus fulfils what Daniel foretold to the very day No.40 (21.5)

There is a wonderful view from the top of the mountain just east of Jerusalem-the Mount of Olives. The author once stood at Bethphage the village at the mountain top where Jesus started his famous ride to the city gates. Jesus sent two disciples to that town to fetch a little donkey and its foal.



Five hundred years before a very young man called Zechariah foretold that Israel's king would come into Jerusalem on a donkey. Another prophet called Daniel even foretold how many days it would be from his time till Jesus came. It was to be 173,880 days. That date brings us to the 6th of April AD 32-the exact day Jesus came to Jerusalem on that donkey. Jesus was 33 years of age.

The prophet Zechariah was given a picture of what would happen 500 years later. "**Look**"
👓 "O city built as King David's capitol city, your anointed or Christ King is coming to you
-He is ever so gentle and he is riding side saddle on a donkey and colt".

It was a great sight. People were throwing their coats on the road and climbing trees and waving palms to welcome a conqueror. Little did they know-but He would soon conquer death!

They were shouting out "Save us right now" but little did they know He was going to die to take the punishment for their sins so that He could save all who call on Him for ever and ever. *The follower is ready to do Jesus' will just like that little donkey*

Jesus who never broke His word promised to come back for Christians No.41 (22.4)



Have you been to a wedding? At a wedding there is music and lots of nice things to eat and people dress up in new clothes. The lady who is to be married is called **the bride** and she is "the" beautiful lady on that day. Jesus told a special story about a wedding. In His story He is to be married but not in the usual way. Instead He is coming from heaven with **Christians who have died** and joining them with **Christians who are alive** and taking them all back to heaven for a time of great rejoicing-for they are all people He loves-**they are His bride**.

The story is a "parable" -a story with a secret. Parables are hard to understand.

Jesus said that when the time for the wedding came many that He invited to the wedding would be busy doing other things. Some would be in the fields, some busy at jobs in the cities, others would be torturing His followers.

He told his followers to go everywhere and invite others to the wedding. They were to say that "Jesus Himself had prepared the feast"-in other words, He had died on the cross to bring His people together in heaven. "**Look**",👓 He said, I have prepared my feast." Jesus servants were to speak of **the "cross"** as they invited others to follow Jesus.


One day Jesus' followers will attend the happiest event of all time-and all Christians from all ages will be there-and Jesus will be the centre of it all

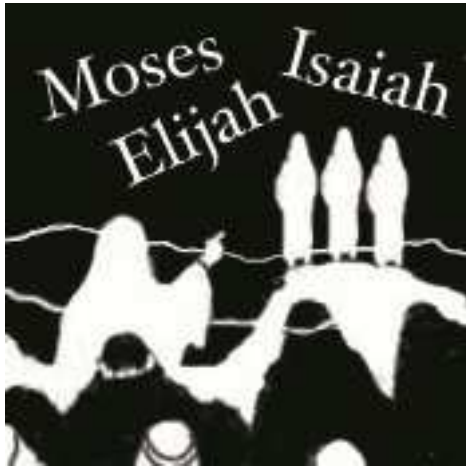
Jesus foretold the fall of Jerusalem (70AD) No.42 (23.34)

Snakes look lovely but many of them are very dangerous. Jesus would have seen snakes in the desert but he also met men who were so dangerous He called them "vipers". They were

so very evil that He predicted they would kill some of his followers after He rose again. They would flog others with whips and send them out of town.

It is hard to believe but Jesus even loved these "viper-people" and He asked them "How they would slip out of judgement?" He would be glad if these persecutors changed their ways like Saul of Tarsus did and He even planned a second effort after his work was ended to win them to be His followers.

"Look"  "I will send you prophets to warn you about the future (like Agabus) and wise men to answer all your questions about the bible (Stephen was one of these) and teachers (like Saul) but they will not listen to them"




Jesus said because people would not listen there would be a great calamity that would fall before people of His age died-that is coming about 40 years later. This really happened for in AD 70 the Romans burned Jerusalem and over a million Jews died. *It is very important to listen to those Jesus sends to us and learn from them to repent and trust and follow Jesus.*

Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be deserted No.43 (23.38)

Have you ever seen a chick coming out of an egg? It is a wonderful thing. Have you ever seen little frightened chicks run to their mother who folds them under her wings and sits down -hiding them so perfectly you wouldn't know they were there at all?

Matthew, our writer, once heard Jesus say with tears in His eyes, "O Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you would not run to me?" Matthew always enjoyed being back to the city of his earliest memories and he would probably have been there when Jesus spoke these words.



Then Jesus said with great sadness **"Look"**  your house is left to you just a desert!" Matthew was startled. The city of his boyhood-the shining city with its golden temple outside whose walls he stood as a boy watching the wise men and their camels-could it really be doomed? Was it to be flattened like a desert and was there to be no houses-no people-just a place where foxes roamed and owls hooted at night and goats and sheep grazed in day time?

Jesus was always accurate -so precise were these words that Jerusalem was later called

"Jerusalem the desert" We are not sure if Matthew did live to see the city of his earliest memories burned and levelled to the ground. He did live to see many priests and Levites

following Jesus. This cheered him up when he thought about what would happen later. *The tears of Jesus are for followers and for those who refused to follow.*

Jesus said a terrible time would come after His "sudden" visit No.44 (24.23)


The next few stories Jesus told as He sat with His disciples on the Mount of Olives. From there you could see Jerusalem below. Jesus loved to teach there in the open. Jesus prayed on mountains and taught on mountains and met Moses and Elijah on a mountain. But this mountain was very special to Jesus. He planned to return to earth and to come back one day to stand on this very spot- the Mount of Olives- and in that far distant future time to be



welcomed back to Jerusalem. You can read about that in Zechariah Chapter 14 verses 4-5.

On the Mount of Olives Jesus taught about what would happen before He came back to earth. He said it would be the worst time to be alive since the beginning of the world. Always remember that he also promised a "sudden visit" (You can learn more about that visit right in this chapter at verses 3, 27, 38 & 39) before that terrible time when he would take those who love him home to the big wedding in heaven of which we learned earlier.

Jesus said that a deceiver would rise up and men would believe lies for the short time after his "sudden visit" and before He comes in great power with His angels.

These liars would say, "**Look**"  "Christ is here" and "Look, Christ is there" at that time because Jesus would have taken the church and the Christians to the heavenly wedding and those who were left would not know the bible and not know that when Jesus really did return with great power everybody would be sure. *It is important for the follower of Jesus to read and know what the bible says*


Jesus predicted that Jews would tell the world of Jesus in the last days and two men from heaven would help them No.45 (24.25)



When, some years from now, we don't know how many- Jesus makes his "sudden visit" to take Christians and all who love and follow Him to heaven a short time of great trouble will come on earth.

At that time the LORD will leave two great prophets from the past that came from heaven who know God's future plans. A number of Israelis who recognise them will then believe Jesus is the King and Messiah and will warn the

whole world to prepare for Jesus coming again in power as King to rule for a thousand years. Those who believe this message Jesus calls the "elect".

Jesus left **a special message** for these new "elect" believers who will face great trials and have no churches as we do and will not understand the bible very well. He said, "**Look**",  "some will come trying to guess the future and others will try to trick people by big shows into thinking that they are God."

Jesus warned simple believers in Him who would live in these perilous last days not to follow them. *This is an important warning and we too should be very careful always to follow only those who love and honour Jesus*

Jesus said He would take the last generation of Christians home without dying No. 46 (24.26)




Have you ever lost something and you find it again. You say "That's funny-I don't know where it went." Mummy says, "It's a mystery". For those left behind when Jesus comes on His "sudden visit" to take Christians to heaven the **mystery** of where He went and where the Christians went will be unsolved.

Where is Jesus today? We know that 2000 years ago He lived as a boy in Nazareth. We also know that He ascended to heaven after His resurrection and has been there ever since.

He promised to come back again and that day is getting nearer and nearer.

When He makes his long promised "sudden visit" to take Christians to the heavenly wedding He will go back into heaven. But only those who know the bible will know this and those left behind on earth will not know the bible and so they will ask, "Where did all those people go?"

It stands to sense if someone from the past appeared in the sky and then faded away again you might ask has He landed somewhere on earth. "**Hi, Look**"  **Perhaps He has come down in a desert place** or perhaps **He has gone to a secret hideout on earth.**

Jesus himself left a message for these confused people. He said "Don't believe people who say **I am hidden on earth** for I will be in heaven. I will come back like lightning so that the whole world will know for" they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with great power and glory" *Jesus final return will be seen all over the world and every follower of Jesus will have some part in His great final kingdom*

MATTHEW'S FIFTH BOOK

Jesus shown to be the Great King and the "Prince of Peace" who made peace between God and man by the cross

Jesus teaches that it is important to be at peace with God No.47 (25.6)

Jesus told another story about a wedding a bit like No.41. In Jesus' time every bride was a Queen and every bridegroom a King. You see He was looking forward to the day when all the work he started in His Church at Pentecost would be finished. Then the day would come when He could bring all those who love him who were alive to join those who had gone to heaven after they died. He called it "the joy that was set before Him".



This time there are five foolish girls and five wise. They are waiting for the man who is to be married to come in the night and take his beautiful wife to his father's house for the wedding. They fall asleep but the wise have oil in their lamps so that when they wake they can run to welcome the husband in the story.

All ten girls awake rub their eyes and get out of bed. They hear a very excited man calling, "**Look** 🕒 down the road- the bridegroom is coming."

The foolish girls are in a tizzy. One girl is crying. "My lamp won't start-I have no oil left-she turns to the second girl-who blurts out in tears-"my lamp is empty!" One-two-three-four girls have got their lamps lit-and are all smiles-and then another gets her lamp going with a cheer but the other five have tears running down their cheeks-for their lamps just will not start. These five unwise girls look around the house for oil and the other five rush out to join the happy bridegroom.

The five who go out are carried away by the bridegroom's chariots while the other girls run to the door. "They're gone", they shout, and they begin to weep buckets of tears-they have missed seeing the King and they will not get to the king's home.

Before we begin to follow Jesus our life is like an empty lamp with no bright welcoming light. When we trust Jesus as our Saviour the Holy Spirit of God comes into our lives and makes us happy and radiant like the wise girls.

It is hard to stop doing what we want-and begin to read the bible and doing what God wants for our lives-but it is the only way to please God. To those who have lives like empty lamps the "sudden visit" of Jesus will be a terrible surprise. To be left behind in the world at that time would bring many tears and regrets.


To follow Jesus is to have the Holy Spirit guiding our lives. The Holy Spirit in our life vessel is like oil in the girls lamps.

Peace through prayer No.48 (26.45)

Have you ever had a toothache and dreaded going to the dentist? It is just for an hour-maybe only a few minutes -but you dread it all day till it's over. I would say "Don't worry" because dentists can sort your teeth with hardly any pain and are really kind.

For years Jesus knew that there would come a "*dreadful hour*" in His life when the disciples who followed him would run away. He would be tied up and taken for questioning. Then in quick succession He would be beaten, condemned and crucified and the hour would finish as he cried "*My God my God why have you forsaken me?*"




"*Look*"  said Jesus, "the hour is near." He had been praying in a garden on that mountain we learned about in Story 44 and He had felt so lonely because the disciples were tired and miserable and sleeping that God the Father sent a special angel to encourage Him for the suffering ahead.

When you feel alone and have to face hard things remember God will send someone or something to help you if like Jesus you simply pray about it all.

Peaceful and meek He was deeply hurt when Judas used the sign of a kiss to betray Him in the olive woods No.49 (26.46-47)

When the curtains are pulled across in your bedroom it probably doesn't seem so dark because you can see the moon through the curtains sailing like a boat in the sky. On the night when Jesus was handed over by Judas there was a moon shining. Through the trees of the olive wood garden Jesus could see lamps and He knew that they were coming to get him.

"*Look*",  the man who is handing me over is coming close", He said. At that the disciples sat bolt upright-they rose and began to whisper to one another. They were very afraid. Peter felt for his sword. He thought, "I will make a fight before I allow them to take Jesus". They had slept for *an hour*-but now they were awake and very scared.



Matthew was there too. It had been three full years since he first left his tax job in Galilee to follow Jesus. Was this the end? In the darkness he could make out people his family knew so well-*the chief priests*. How easily he could have been on the other side-had Jesus not come into his life and called him.

"But what next?" he thought. What next indeed? Judas whom he knew well -who had never lost the love of money--

Judas stepped forward and gave Jesus a whole lot of kisses-they seemed very affectionate. "What was happening?" Matthew thought. Then Jesus said, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? *Matthew and the other disciples learned that day that love must be sincere.*

Peace not the sword-the story of Malchus No.50 (26.51)

In the darkness Matthew could see the little knot of men closest to Jesus-there was Peter James and John-burly fishermen every one of them. Matthew was no fighter but what would these strong men do?

"Look" 🧐 One of Jesus' disciples reached for a sword. The blade flashed in the moonlight. A man cried-he was holding his head-what had happened. It was John who stood close to Peter who told this story in detail (You will find it in John Chapter 18)



Peter set to in a skirmish with Malchus and cut off his ear. Jesus last noble act was to pick up the ear and put it back on-wonderful! Jesus even when betrayed was considerate and kind to those who showed up as His enemies, doing a miracle to put right a wrong-just as adorable as ever.

Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back" for Peter was ready to fight as many as would take him on. Then Jesus said "He that takes the sword will perish by the sword." We are told in a story not in the bible that Peter was crucified upside down. We know that people who are crucified are usually killed by the sword to spare them final suffering. Jesus words were not for nothing. What Peter did should teach us not to try to get our own back but to be kind like Jesus and even when under stress not forget to be helpful. *Always ask yourself, "What would Jesus want me to do?"*

Punched & beaten Jesus stayed peaceful and calm No.51 (26.65)

Who is Jesus? Is He a good man or a great prophet or God in the flesh? Lots of bible sentences tell exactly what would happen the first time He came. Many more sentences give details of His coming in the future to reign over all. Everybody in the world has to decide what he or she thinks of Jesus.




The Jewish religious leaders made Jesus swear by the "living God" that He was Christ the Son of God. Jesus did not swear but said, "You are right in what you say". Jesus looked ahead and foretold that He would sit on the throne of God and come with faithful people now in heaven -who

would be as dense as clouds that cover many lands when He returned to earth as King of kings



The high priest ripped his garment right down and said, "He has blasphemed"-there's no need of any more witnesses.

"**Look**", he said, "you have heard Him blaspheme-how does it seem to you?" Jesus had the same right to call Himself God's Son as you have to call yourself your parents' child.

The things these men said about Jesus were evil and they did not really believe Jesus was God. Do you know what they did with Jesus after that? They spat on His face; they punched Him and they even slapped Him with bare hands saying, "Name the one who slapped you!" they said. That Jesus took this ill-treatment shows us how much He loves us and how *Jesus longs for us to say "sorry" to allow Him to be our Saviour and change our sinful lives.*

In suffering He never spoke back-He brought peace to the dying thief No.52 (27.51)

This is a story which should be read from a modern copy of the bible like "The Message". There is so much detail in it that the events have been listed below-the dark italics show that as a result of Jesus' death no priests were needed to get into God's presence but at any time and any place any person can call on the name of the LORD in repentance and faith and be forgiven of all sin and failure.



The most important events in the world since creation were the birth death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The cross was simply two pieces of wood joined in the middle high above the ground at a place called "skull hill" which can be seen today. Jesus was nailed hand and foot to this rack of torture.

At the cross these things happened:

- (1)Soldiers crucified Jesus.
- (2)Soldiers gave Him vinegar-wine to dope Him to prevent suffering-He refused it.
- (3)Soldiers played dice for his belt tunic shoes headscarf and inner garment
- (4)Pilate had a board put above it which read, "Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews"
- (5)Two thieves were crucified on either side-***one believed and died at peace***
- (6)Passers by said, "You who built the temple in 3 days-now come down from the cross"
- (7)The Chief priests said, "Come down and we will believe you"
- (8)From noon to mid afternoon deep darkness fell on the earth-seen in distant lands

(9) Jesus cried, "My God my God why have You forsaken me?"

(10) They offer Jesus a stick with vinegar on a sponge

(11) Jesus cried out again and His head dropped in death

(12) **Look** 📖 *the veil of the temple tore from top to bottom*

(13) *There was a mighty earthquake*

(14) *Many bodies arose* and went into Jerusalem-these last events show Jesus' power

Of all these things Matthew draws our attention to the veil opening up-which allows anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and follows Him to meet God and go to heaven

At the peaceful garden tomb two worried women find peace **No.53 (28.2)**

Three days after the very sad death of Jesus and His very wonderful sacrifice for us He rose again. It was so early it was still dark. "Look, there was another great earthquake-everything was shaking." There had been one when Jesus died-now another showing Jesus through death had not lost his power over the whole world.

A great angel appeared and rolled back a round stone weighing many tons. But Jesus was already out of the tomb. Walls could not hold Him.



There had been Jewish guards at the tomb-they all dropped down as if dying.

Two women-Mary Magdalene and another Mary were nearby. The angel said to them, "Don't fear I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified" **"Look"**, 📖 see the important place where the LORD lay".

During several visits to the "garden tomb" close to Golgotha (Assuming this is the place of Jesus' burial) the author has stood where the women stood. The ceiling is pock marked by thousands of neat chisel marks and the tomb was made longer to hold a taller man than the one who made it for himself when it was fresh cut out of rock.

The weeping chamber or porch is still there and the groove where the heavy stone was rolled in front is still there. This "place" was hidden for centuries by the houses of Arabs who lived all around some time afterward and until the 1860's. It is possible to visit it today and many believe that it is "the" garden tomb of the bible.

The angel invited them into the tomb and there were the clothes but no Jesus. "Behold the place where He lay" said the angel. *Followers of Jesus say with certainty "the tomb of Jesus is empty" and "Christ has risen indeed" for He brings New Life to his followers*

Jesus meets 500 disciples No.54 (28.7)

Then the angel said, "Tell the disciples **"Look"**, 🕶️ He is going before you to Galilee, there you will see Him with delight" After all that happened at Jerusalem sadness was everywhere even after Jesus rose. The disciples could not at first believe the good news and were crying.

Jesus had decided to gather a mass crowd of disciples who truly loved him "on a mountain in Galilee". He would have wanted to greet every one of them with the traditional "Shalom". This time it meant so much-for their sins were forgiven and they really were "delighted."



But why meet in Galilee?

First, because it was called "Galilee of the nations" because many Gentiles lived there too-and Jesus was preparing his disciples to take his message of peace to the whole world.

Second, it was there that He first taught all about His kingdom. Now he was calling them to the place of beginning -the Sermon on the Mount area-so that they could remember His teaching and believe in His power to forgive each one of them and guide their lives.

Third, there each of them could also meet him personally and talk to Him and strengthen their faith and love and hope so that whatever happened to them they could believe He would raise them from death to share with Him in the world He would one day rule.

You can read about this big meeting in Matthew chapter 28 verse 17.

Jesus appeared at the time he had promised on the mountain in Galilee-90 miles from the tomb from which He rose from death. We know there were 500 men there (and there may have been as many women) from 1Corinthians Chapter 15 verse 6. *Followers of Jesus are called Like Matthew to be true to Jesus even if others hate us. Many give their lives yet today millions have "taken up the cross" to follow Him*

The challenge of convincing sad disciples No.55 (28.8)

The two Mary's did not want to leave the tomb. It was so special. The body of Jesus had left the cloth sheets wrapped round and round over it without disturbing them. The knot in the napkin tied around Jesus' head had not been untied. The LORD'S head just left it. (You can



read about this in John 19.7) This was perhaps the most wonderful day in the lives of these ladies.

They wanted to take it all in. They stood on and on. It was like a dream.

The Angel spoke again for they seemed far away and there was news to tell. He said, **"Look"**, 🕶️ "I have told you". They had been so surprised by things in and around the tomb that they were glued to the spot.

The angel spoke with authority "Go quickly and tell His disciples." They jumped to it. They left the tomb quickly and set off to reach the house where the other disciples were still crying about Jesus' death


The two Mary's were quite fearful but also very joyful. Their joy was far greater than their fear. They kept running. Would you not have run as fast as you could if you were the first person to know that Jesus had risen from the dead? *It's exciting to be a Christian and a follower of Jesus!*

Jesus says "Welcome" to the two Mary's No.56 (28.9)



The Jews have a lovely word for "Welcome"-it is "Shalom" and it means "Peace".

The ladies were like soldiers bringing a message of victory from a battlefield. They were running with greater news than Phidippides the first marathon runner had when he reported the defeat of the Persians.

Then they stopped for an even more wonderful thing happened. **"Look"**  the LORD Jesus Himself met them. He was going the other way-probably on the road from the Damascus gate. Jesus spoke a word which means "Welcome" and "Farewell".


These women forgot even the angel and the crying disciples. They so wanted to be able to talk to Jesus. They were overcome with surprise. They did a wonderful thing-they held on to the feet of Jesus- those scars told them it really was their LORD Jesus- and they worshipped the LORD.

Jesus could feel them trembling, telling of their joy and calling out His wonderful name amid tears.

Jesus said, "Fear not, Go on together-announce to my brothers that I am going away to Galilee, and there with great delight they will see me." And they were on their way again. They had the proof of the resurrection at their finger tips. Still with all this the disciples were to find their story so strange they did not at first believe it-but hearing about the "empty tomb" Peter and John ran to investigate further. *Jesus trusts us to bring good news to those who do not know He is alive and has a plan for their lives*

The two Mary's carry the message of Peace to the disciples No.57 (28.11)



The guard guys who had fallen to the ground when the angel took over at the tomb had now awakened and **"Look"**  they ran helter-skelter past the women. These guys were racing into the city to alert the religious people who plotted Jesus' death to what seemed to them

very sad facts. They would tell the truth about the angel who rolled the stone away and about how they felt weak and dropped into a deep sleep at the tomb and about how when they woke up they found the strange empty clothes and no body.

They were told never to speak a word of that honest report again. The High priests and elders gave them a big bribe of silver coins and asked them *to tell a terrible lie*-that the disciples had come the night before while they were sleeping and stolen the body of Jesus from the tomb.

Now the watch knew they had not fallen asleep for guards who fell asleep on duty used to be killed. But the leaders said they would see to it the guards did not die as long as they agreed to tell lies about what happened at the tomb of Jesus.

Matthew tells us that not all the guards went to the priests. Did the others wake up later and share the money? Did some of them wake up and look in the tomb and say, "This is a miracle", "This Man was Christ". Did they become Christians and later tell Matthew this part of the story?

The lie about the disciples went on being told for years and even *in Rome the emperor brought out a law against people who steal from tombs*. The real truth was that Jesus had risen and the power of heaven was too great for guards to control. *To follow Jesus is to live by the truth and to be free.*

The Prince of Peace sends disciples to teach his peace to the world **No.58 (28.20)**




You can't be in two places at the same time-but *Jesus* said that He will be everywhere the disciples are witnessing for Him. He is God and God knows all, has all power and can be present everywhere.

Jesus long ago had taught His followers in the "Sermon on the Mount". Now in the power of His resurrection He was back where He began. He drew near and came down the mountain to meet them but some doubted if He was really Jesus. Soon He came very close they heard His voice-they saw his arms with the marks still there. They doubted no more.

Some disciples as they climbed the mountain were not too sure it was Him but as Jesus drew near His voice and His accent and the marks left by His wounds convinced them; they did not doubt any more. Each would have a chance to talk with Him-for He knew and loved every one of them. Just fancy these five hundred people going home that evening -every one had seen Jesus alive after death. They were so excited-they couldn't keep this news to themselves.

They heard Him speak with the same authority He always had only this time he pointed out that He was master of the whole world. "All power is given me" He said. "Go into all the world and make disciples, baptise them in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit and teach all nations everything I taught you"

Jesus last words promised he would watch over the 500 and every disciple every day till He came back. He said, "And **Look,  I am with you all the days until the end of the age**" Jesus was promising that even though we cannot see Him we can be sure He is near and that He knows all about our troubles and shares our joys as well. He is so near you can talk to Him just like you would talk to a friend in your own home. *When you do pray don't forget to thank Him for dying to forgive you and if you believe He is God why not begin to follow Him. Remember He is the King who is coming again.*

THE END

Bob Coffey
A Bible Companion