

Tropinkka

The Little Path

Christian Magazine for Kids



Exploring Faith
With Friends
Around the World!



Respecting
the Name
of God





JUST BEAUTIFUL EMPTY WORDS

Elena MIKULA

Part 4

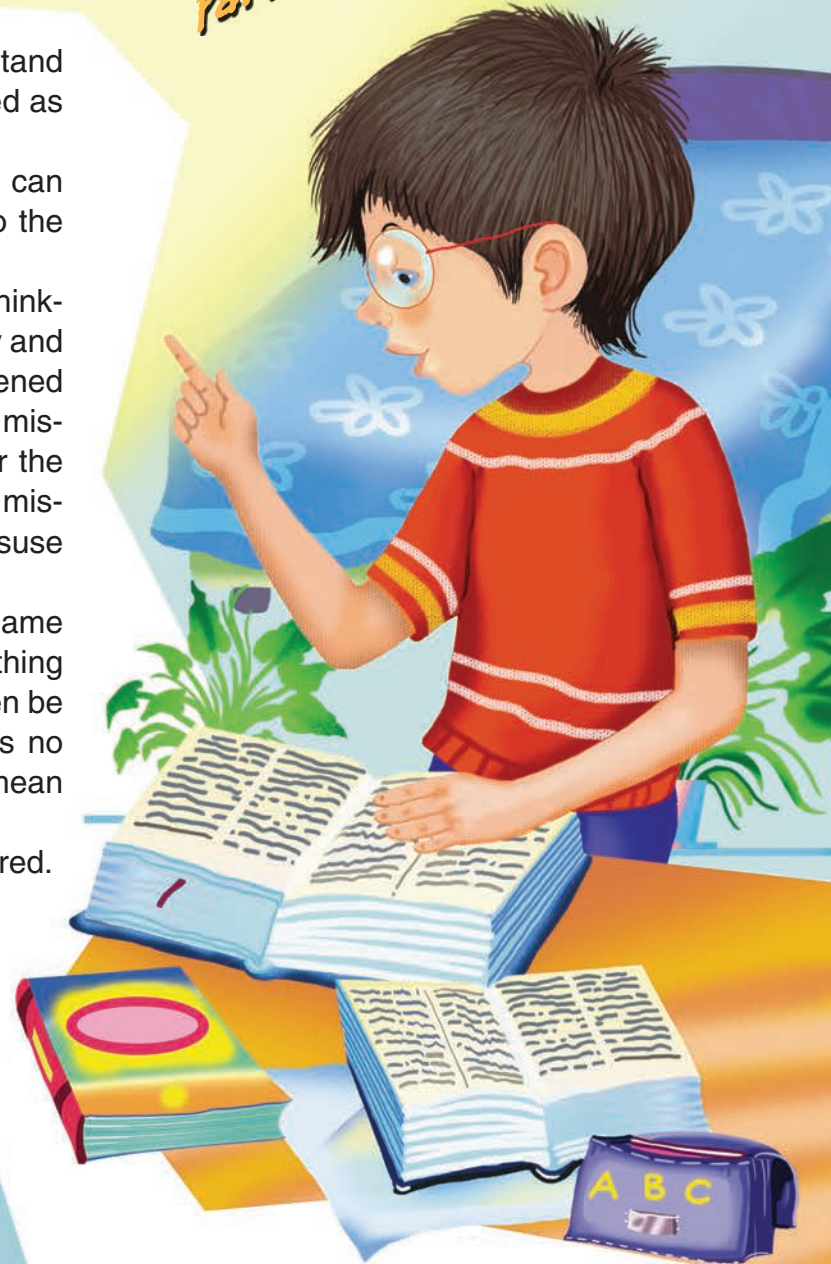
"Mary, I just don't get it! I don't understand the third commandment," Peter announced as soon as Mary opened the front door.

"Come in Peter! Together, I'm sure we can figure it out." Mary led her classmate into the house and they sat down at her desk.

"Yesterday, I spent the whole evening thinking about it. I thought about it all day today and I still don't get it," Peter admitted as he opened the Bible. "Here it says, 'You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.' How does someone misuse God's name?"

"Well, I think people misuse God's name when they say it, but it doesn't mean anything to them," Mary explained. "They might even be saying nice things about God, but there's no love for God in their hearts so they can't mean what they're saying."

"Can that really happen?" Peter wondered.



"Of course! For example, someone says they're a Christian, but they don't read the Bible, they don't pray, and they don't know anything about God. Their words about God are just pretty words with no meaning behind them, no faith – nothing to connect them to God."

"Oh," Peter sighed with relief. "I'm glad you said that. I was worried I might be misusing God's name. I may not read the Bible every day and I don't pray as often as you do, but I know for sure that I'm a Christian."

"You know, sometimes kids who grow up in Christian homes pray just because they see their parents or friends praying. They go to church, listen to the pastor's message, and learn to give the right answers in Sunday School. They talk about God, pray out loud, and call themselves



Christians, but they've never believed in Jesus Christ and trusted him as their Savior. Their hearts are empty," Mary explained.

"Now you're confusing me! How do I know if I'm misusing the LORD's name or not?"

"I think many people – even true Christians – often have a hard time keeping this commandment. They might promise God they'll do something and not keep their promise. Or they pray using words that sound nice, but they're just repeating words they've memorized. Those words don't really come from their heart. I catch myself doing that sometimes," Mary admitted.

"You? No way!" Peter exclaimed. "I don't think you ever sin or do anything wrong."

"Oh I do, lots of times."

"Does that mean God gave us impossible commandments? I mean did He give us commandments we could never follow all the time? Why would God do that?" Peter asked.

"God gave us commandments that teach us about Him and what He expects. God's law is holy and perfect. God gave it to His people so they would try to be holy and perfect."

"Were there any people who could keep all of God's commandments?" Peter wondered.

"No, no one could except for the Lord Jesus Christ," Mary said.

"So no one in the whole Old Testament followed all of the commandments. Does that mean none of those people pleased God?"



"In the Old Testament people could make animal sacrifices for their sins. They went to the temple and the priests prayed for them. They also prayed to God and told Him they were sorry for their sins – and God forgave them. We don't live in Old Testament times and we don't have to offer sacrifices because Jesus Christ was our sacrifice for sin. We can pray, asking God to forgive us and He will!"

"Then we don't have to do everything God commands?" Peter asked.

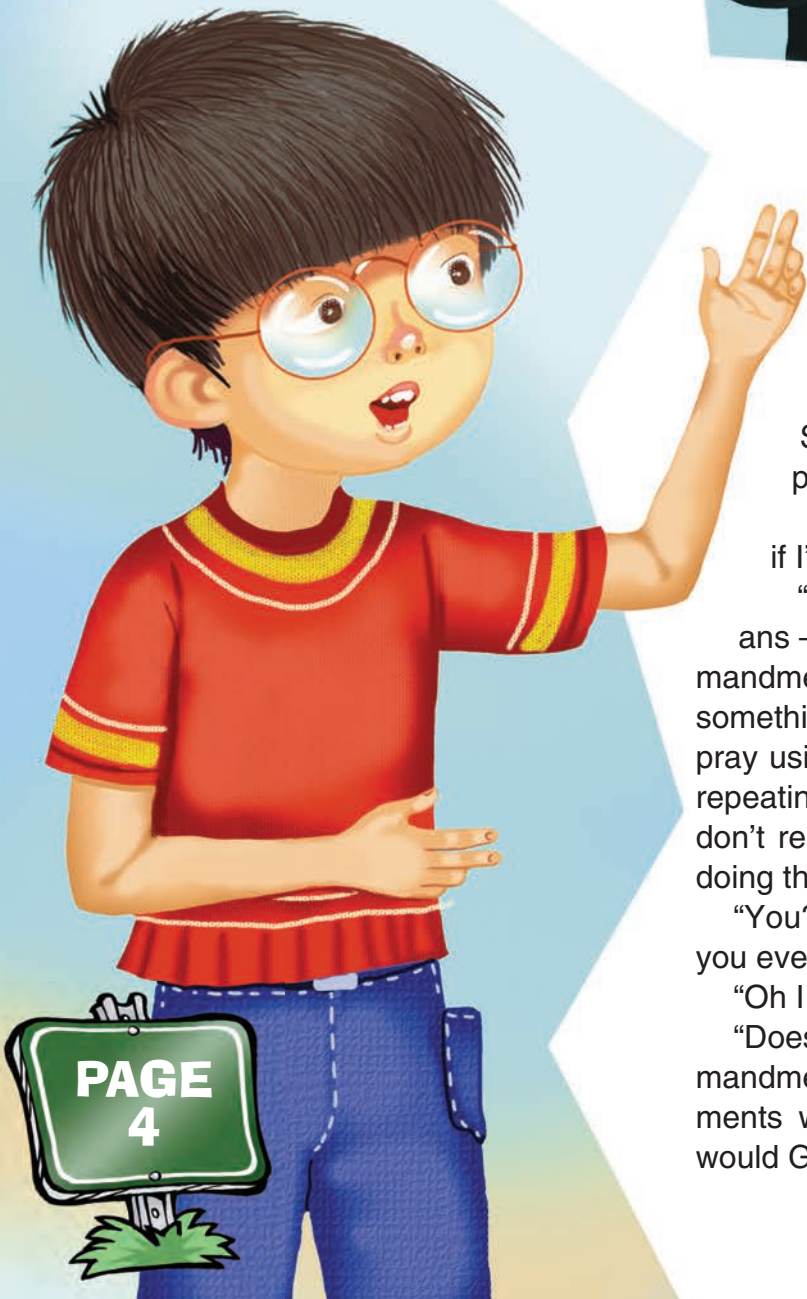
"If you really love God, you'll want to obey Him and you'll try to keep His commandments. God sees your heart. He knows if you're trying to obey or if you're ignoring His commandments. If you decide you can disobey and do whatever you want because Jesus already paid for your sins..."

"Then you're misusing God's name!" Peter announced.

"Exactly! Now you've got it!" Mary agreed.

(To be continued)

Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA



The Third Commandment

Do you remember when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments? Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights. There, he talked with God. God used His own hand to write the most important laws on stone tablets. We call these laws the Ten Commandments. They tell us about God's relationship with people. There on Mount Sinai, God wrote the first commandment, the second, and then the third which says...

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (Exodus 20:7)



What kind of a commandment is this? Why is it important? Do you remember when God called Moses to be the leader of the Israelites? At that time Moses said, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. That is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" When God gave His name, He told Moses "I AM." That's the absolute truth. God is real. All the other so-called "gods" are just idols, but our God is real!

When we refer to someone, we're using the authority of their name. If you have an older brother, kids may think twice before trying to pick on you at recess. If someone does try to start a fight, all you have to do is say, "Watch out or I'll tell my big brother. He knows karate." You can use your brother's name to scare the bullies away. However, you can't solve every single argument by referring to your brother – especially if you're the one who started it. You also shouldn't pick on others or boss them around just because you have an older brother. That would be misusing your brother's name. The third commandment talks about not misusing God's name. That includes the authority of God's name. Of course we're not supposed to say things like "Oh my God" or use God's name as a swearword. We're also not supposed to say, "I swear to God I didn't do it" (especially if you really did and you're lying).

The way we say God's name needs to show that we love and greatly respect Him. In the Bible, that kind of awe and respect is called the fear of God. When we pray, we need to think about the words we're saying and the way we're using God's name. That's how we show respect for God's name.

Imagine you're talking to a friend that you see every day. Let's say her name is Katherine. As you're talking to her you say, "Listen, Kat, let's go outside. How about it, Kat? Say, Kat, have you read this book. Well Kat?" If you spoke like that all the time, Katherine would probably get annoyed. Wouldn't you get tired of someone using your name like that? God is our friend. He wants us to talk to Him all the time but, as we do, we must not misuse His name by saying words we don't mean or using it as a swearword. God loves us. He wants to hear our prayers and He wants the very best for us. That's why He gave us a very important commandment and said, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God."

Waldemar ZORN



Natasha BOYKOV

GOD'S NAME

There's no one like God.
Remember, He's special—
So is His name!
Our God is real!
He's in control!

Make living for God
Your focus, your goal.

There's no one like God,
Our righteous King.
When we call on Him
The words of our mouth
Must match our heart.

Let's mean what we say
Right from the start.

There's no one like God.
By saying His name
In swearing and oaths,
In careless expressions,
And meaningless words,

You break His commandment.
Who's the one your heart serves?

Let's live for God
And mean what we say.
Let's live for God
In every way.

Our Savior, our Friend,
He's God! He won't change.
With love and respect,
Praise God's holy name.

Illustrated by Margaret HREBTENKO



EXORCISTS

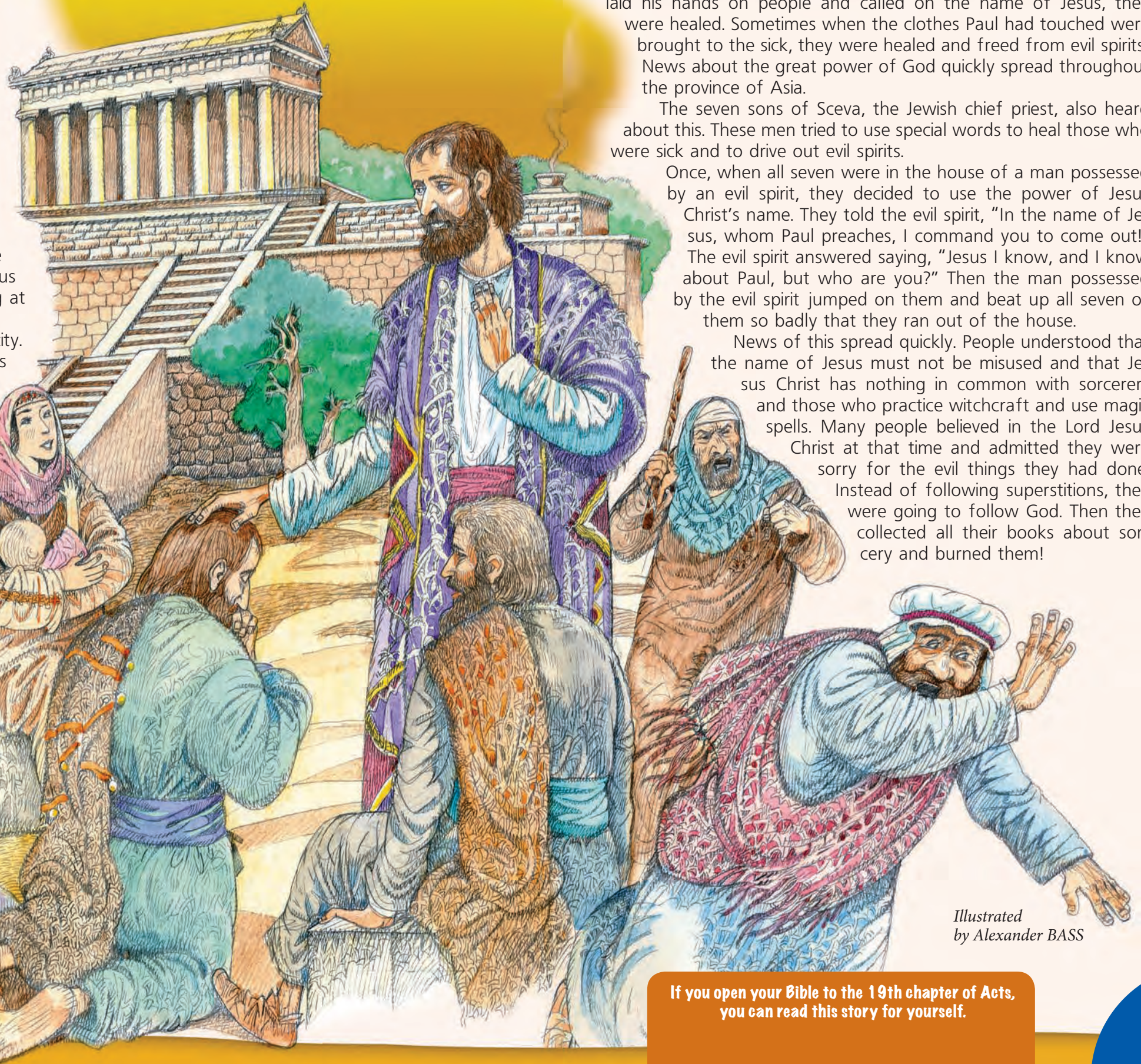
Waldemar ZORN

During the time of the apostles, Ephesus was a very big city. The whole world knew about Ephesus because the temple of Artemis was there. The Greeks worshipped Artemis as the goddess of childbirth and women. The Apostle Paul visited this city. He first preached in the synagogue, the place where Jews met to pray and worship God. Later, when some of the Jews, who heard him preaching about salvation through Jesus Christ, got upset and stirred up trouble, Paul started teaching at the lecture hall of the Greek philosopher, Tyrannus.

Many healers, witch doctors and sorcerers lived in this city. In fact, most of the people who lived in Ephesus were pagans and they were very superstitious. When they got sick, they immediately went to a healer or an exorcist. An exorcist is someone who calls on the name of some powerful god (which is really an evil spirit) and makes the evil spirit causing the sickness to come out of the person. It was a common practice in those days.

Then the Apostle Paul started teaching people that they must turn to God for help. Every day, people came to hear Paul speak. Some of the people who came were sick; others were

possessed. They came because they wanted God's help and God used Paul to do many miracles among them. When the Apostle Paul



Illustrated
by Alexander BASS

laid his hands on people and called on the name of Jesus, they were healed. Sometimes when the clothes Paul had touched were brought to the sick, they were healed and freed from evil spirits! News about the great power of God quickly spread throughout the province of Asia.

The seven sons of Sceva, the Jewish chief priest, also heard about this. These men tried to use special words to heal those who were sick and to drive out evil spirits.

Once, when all seven were in the house of a man possessed by an evil spirit, they decided to use the power of Jesus Christ's name. They told the evil spirit, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out!" The evil spirit answered saying, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man possessed by the evil spirit jumped on them and beat up all seven of them so badly that they ran out of the house.

News of this spread quickly. People understood that the name of Jesus must not be misused and that Jesus Christ has nothing in common with sorcerers and those who practice witchcraft and use magic spells. Many people believed in the Lord Jesus Christ at that time and admitted they were

sorry for the evil things they had done.

Instead of following superstitions, they were going to follow God. Then they collected all their books about sorcery and burned them!

If you open your Bible to the 19th chapter of Acts,
you can read this story for yourself.

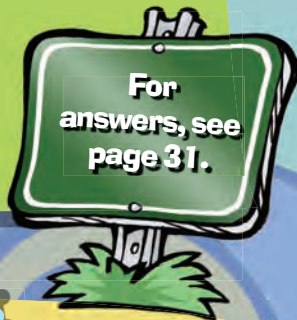
A MESSAGE IN THE MATH

Fill in the blanks below using letters from the table. However, only use the letters from squares where the answer to the mathematical problem is 3 or 9. Write out the letters from these squares in the order that they appear and you'll be able to read a verse from the Bible. May this verse encourage you in the new school year!

5×6 PM	3×1 GET	7-5 KOL	8+1 WIS	4×3 LOM	10-2 CRA	2+1 DOM	3×2 MUC
5-2 GET	4+4 MAR	5+4 UN	6+9 SOL	10-1 DER	9×4 TRI	6+3 STA	12-6 PAR
7+2 ND	9-2 REB	6÷2 ING	6×4 ERS	1+2 DO	10×4 LY	18-9 NOT	12÷6 SUP
9×1 FOR	15×5 SHA	12÷4 GET	45÷9 ULF	11+5 TER	14-5 MY	8+4 HIB	11-2 WOR
36÷2 GO	32-29 DS	15-2 TIM	5-2 PROV	6+2 ISH	15+8 THE	40-37 4:5	8-1 5:4

“ _____ ”
 (.)

Sent in
by Rustam
AHMADULLIN



CROSSWORD

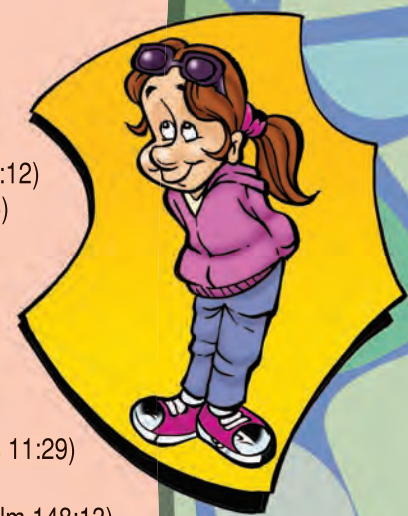


ACROSS:

1. What did Esau sell to his brother, Jacob? (Genesis 25:29-33)
4. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of what? (Psalm 111:10)
6. What covered Mount Sinai when Moses went up to talk with God? (Exodus 24:15)
7. What did God give Joseph when he was in prison? (Genesis 39:22-23)
10. Nehemiah and the Jews worked to rebuild this. (Nehemiah 4:1)
11. God gave the Israelites this bread from heaven. (Exodus 16:1-31)
14. God's _____ love surrounds the man who trusts God. (Psalm 32:10)
15. Animal offered as a burnt sacrifice (Genesis 22:7)
16. The Babylonian king sent King Hezekiah a gift and what else? (2 Kings 20:12)
17. Hearing a sound made by this bird, Peter began to cry. (Matthew 26:69-75)

DOWN:

2. What did Solomon build for the Lord? (1 Kings 6:1-2)
3. Joseph's brothers threw him into this. (Genesis 37:12-24)
5. Who put everything she had into the temple treasury? (Mark 12:41-44)
8. Weasels, rats, and lizards were _____ animals for the Israelites. (Leviticus 11:29)
9. Name of heavenly messenger of God (Luke 1:19)
12. "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is _____" (Psalm 148:13)
13. While Daniel was in the lion's den the king couldn't do this. (Daniel 6:18)



NAMES OF GOD

In the Bible, God is described by different names. Some of those names are hidden in the crossword puzzle. Can you find them all?

WORDSEARCH

By Natasha BOYKOV

X	J	C	O	M	F	O	R	T	E	R	B
L	Y	T	H	G	I	M	L	A	E	Q	R
E	R	E	T	T	O	P	M	G	H	E	G
U	C	L	K	I	N	G	D	T	H	S	D
N	T	O	O	J	E	U	C	T	A	E	T
A	M	C	U	V	J	D	A	V	L	K	E
M	A	R	Z	N	E	F	I	I	L	L	A
M	S	E	D	N	S	O	V	U	N	J	C
I	T	A	O	Q	R	E	L	W	G	D	H
Z	E	T	G	L	R	W	L	G	J	L	E
P	R	O	M	E	J	B	M	O	V	B	R
X	V	R	R	R	Y	Q	J	H	R	J	P

LOVE, KING, GOD, ALMIGHTY, DELIVERER, GUIDE, SAVIOR, POTTER, COUNSELOR, FATHER, TEACHER, IMMANUEL, COMFORTER, CREATOR, JUDGE, MASTER



"I SWEAR..."

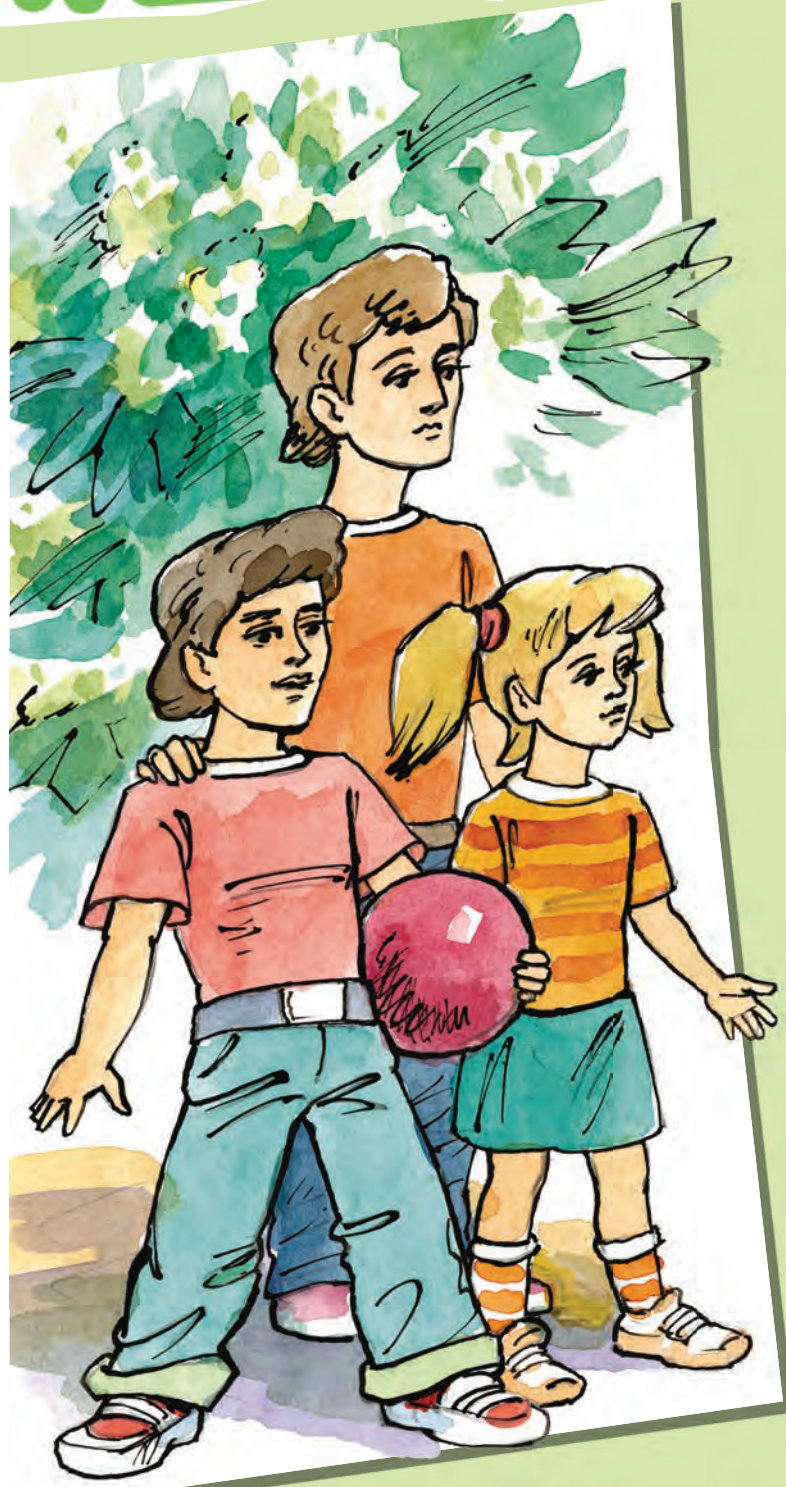
Once upon a time there lived a boy and his parents. He was named Samuel. One day he asked his dad about it.

Samuel and his parents were Messianic Jews. From an early age, his parents taught him to honor God's name. He often heard them saying, "Don't misuse the name of the Lord." But sometimes he felt like his parents were too strict about this commandment. They even wrote G-d instead of God because they wanted to be sure they treated God's name with respect each time they used it. If the paper on which they wrote "God" got crumpled or thrown in the trash, that wouldn't be very respectful and they didn't want God's name to be treated that way. Samuel didn't really understand why it was so important not to say the name of the Most High. One day he asked his dad about it.

His father said, "Using God's name when it's not necessary leaves no room for holiness in man's heart. When there's no room for holiness, the disease of his heart becomes incurable."

Samuel didn't quite understand his father's answer. Since he didn't feel it was an important issue, he didn't spend a lot of time thinking about it. However, it wasn't long until something happened to remind him of his father's words.

A new family moved into the house next door. From the day they moved in, the quiet, peaceful neighborhood was no longer very peaceful. The neighbors were loud and they argued a lot.



The grandparents lived with them and their grandson, who was Samuel's age, was always picking on others and bothering them. If anyone fought back he would run to his grandmother, yelling so loudly the whole neighborhood could hear him. A minute later, his grandmother would hurry to the house of the one who had hit her grandson.

"My boy came home black and blue! I swear he was just covered with bruises!" she'd shout.

At first people believed the elderly lady. However, they soon learned all those things she swore were the truth never happened. Just half an hour later, her grandson would reappear, act like nothing had happened, and start bothering the other kids.

"I bet I'm stronger than any of you!" he'd brag.

The other boys would try to ignore him or tell him to go away, but he wouldn't leave them alone. Then someone would push him out of the way and again the boy would run crying to his grandmother. Once in a while, Marat (that was the name of the boy) went outside to play and not to fight with the others. When he did, the others didn't want to play with him because he cheated and lied to them. If one of the kids caught him in a lie, you'd be able to hear Marat

arguing and shouting all the way at the other end of the street.

"I swear to God I didn't do it! It's all legit!" he'd yell.

Samuel, who was used to treating oaths with a lot of respect, was amazed that God didn't strike the neighbors – and especially their son – with some very serious punishment. The grandmother herself swore what she said was true when it wasn't,





about them and try to tell them about salvation through the Messiah.”

“Mom!” Samuel smiled. “Do you really pray like that? I think they’ve tormented both us kids and the grown-ups long enough!”

“Yes, it’s true that I’m tired of them, but I’m afraid to think about what will happen when they reap all the harm that they’ve sown. They’ve only lived here for a little while and they’ve worn everyone out with the way they behave. Can you imagine how their old neighbors feel? The ones that had to put up with them for a lot longer!”

“Yeah, I hadn’t thought of that,” Samuel said. “It’s just that when Marat and his grandmother swear they’re telling the truth, nobody believes them. They say it at least four or five times a day, but all their promises don’t mean a thing! I wonder if Marat’s

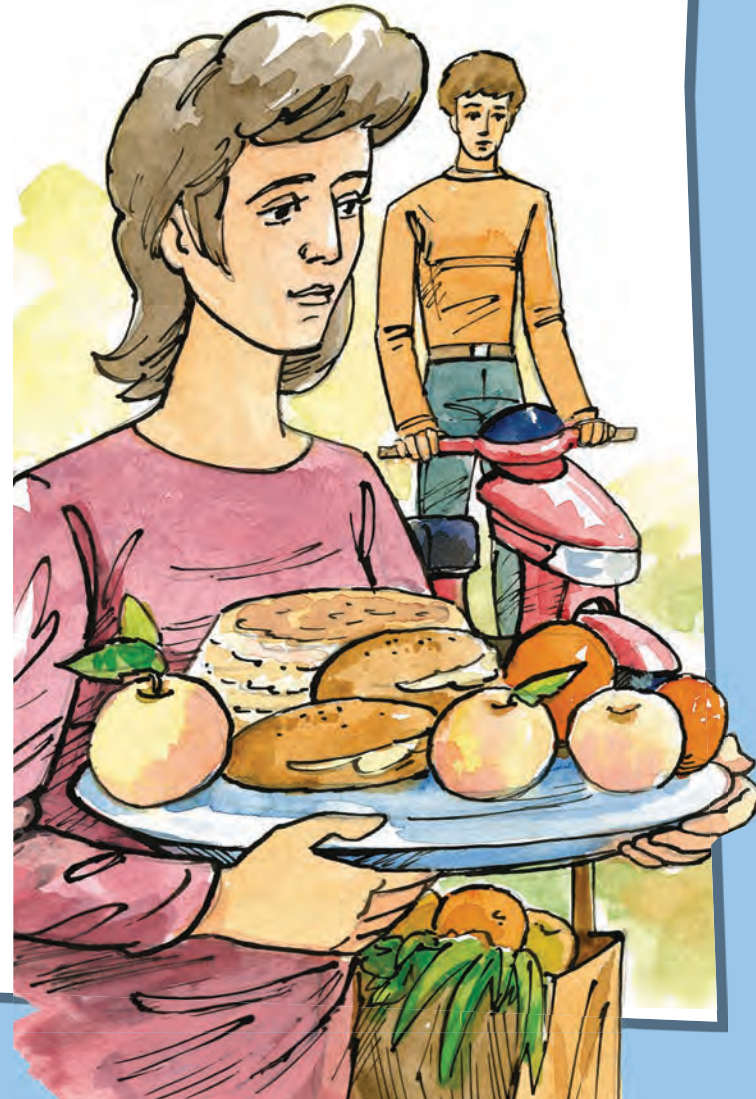
and what Marat did was even worse. He swore using the name of the Most High and he did it while lying! Samuel couldn’t understand this.

He asked his parents about it. “If God said He wouldn’t let the guilty go unpunished, why is everything going well for the neighbors?”

“Son, read Psalm 73,” Mother told him.

“Why?”

“That psalm is all about a man who was upset because he was in the same situation you’re in. God is merciful, that’s why it sometimes looks like people are getting away with treating God in a disrespectful way. But for everything there is a time and a season. I pray that God would show mercy when it’s time for the neighbors to reap what they have sown. I see that in their family they very carefully follow another commandment, ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ They even stand up when someone who is older walks into the room. Maybe that’s why God is still waiting for them to repent. I pray



parents are any different. We never see them because they’re always at work.”

“That’s why I’m asking God to show them mercy,” Mother sighed. “I think Marat’s parents really are different, but who knows...”

Five years passed. The boys became young men. Marat’s habit of falsely swearing in God’s name didn’t change, but the lies became less frequent and more skillful after he got beat up a couple times for lying. Samuel did his best to stay out of the fights. Sometimes he saw his mother take food over to Marat’s house and he wondered if Marat’s family was struggling to make ends meet.

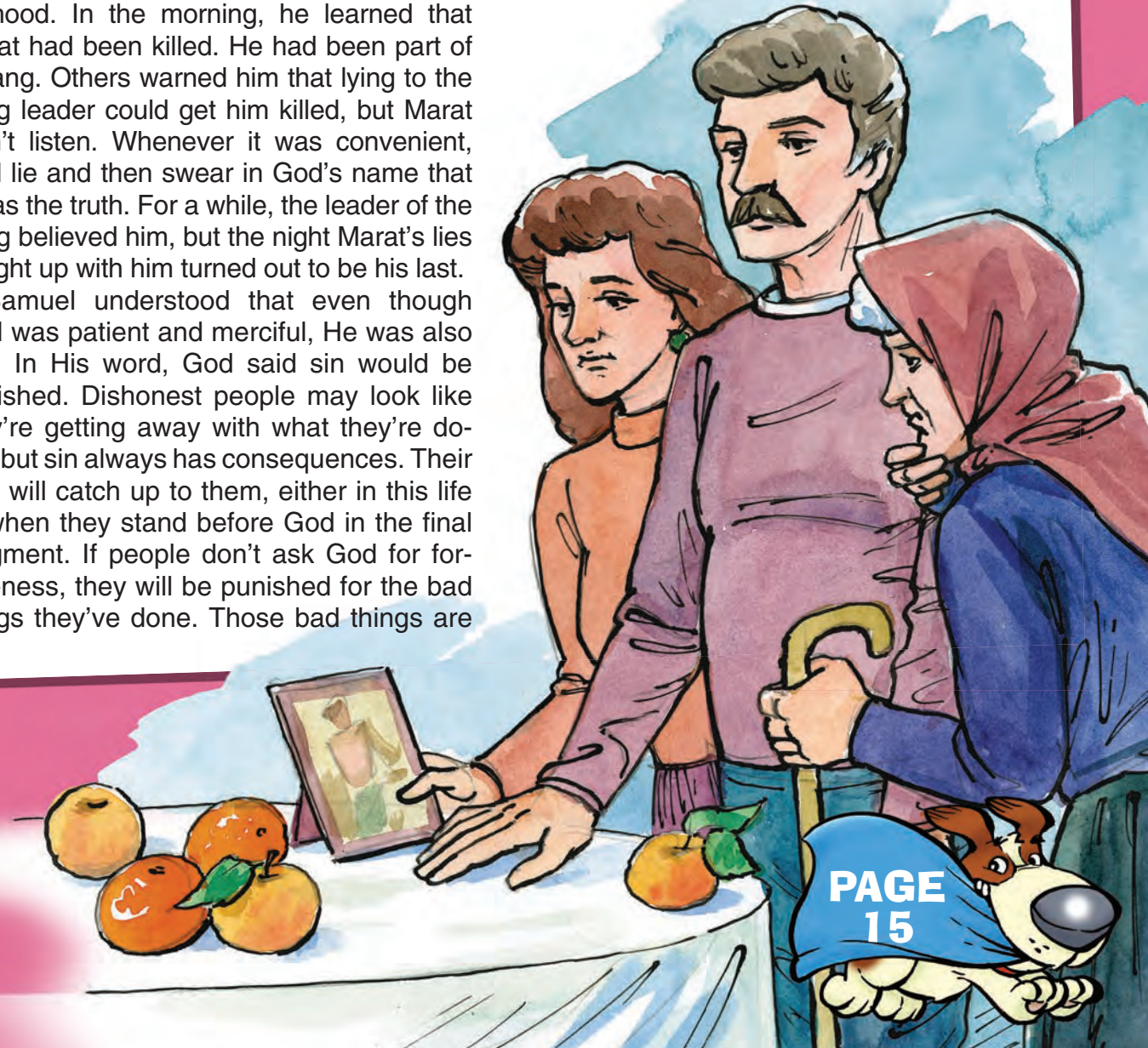
One night, loud shouts and cries coming from Marat’s house woke the whole neighborhood. In the morning, he learned that Marat had been killed. He had been part of a gang. Others warned him that lying to the gang leader could get him killed, but Marat didn’t listen. Whenever it was convenient, he’d lie and then swear in God’s name that it was the truth. For a while, the leader of the gang believed him, but the night Marat’s lies caught up with him turned out to be his last.

Samuel understood that even though God was patient and merciful, He was also just. In His word, God said sin would be punished. Dishonest people may look like they’re getting away with what they’re doing, but sin always has consequences. Their sins will catch up to them, either in this life or when they stand before God in the final judgment. If people don’t ask God for forgiveness, they will be punished for the bad things they’ve done. Those bad things are

sins, and the punishment for sin is death. Samuel had often been mad at Marat, but he never wished for him to die.

In his heart, Samuel wasn’t afraid that God would strike him down when he did something wrong because he knew God was his friend and Heavenly Father. Samuel’s love for God had long since pushed out that kind of fear. However, Samuel now had new respect for the One who always kept His word even while He patiently waited for people to turn from their sins and ask for forgiveness.

*Illustrated by
Taras GONCHARENKO*



DO YOU KNOW THEIR NAMES?



1

He was the eldest son of Aaron. He and more than seventy others went part of the way with Moses when he went up on Mount Sinai. This man died because he and his brother offered "unauthorized fire before the Lord."

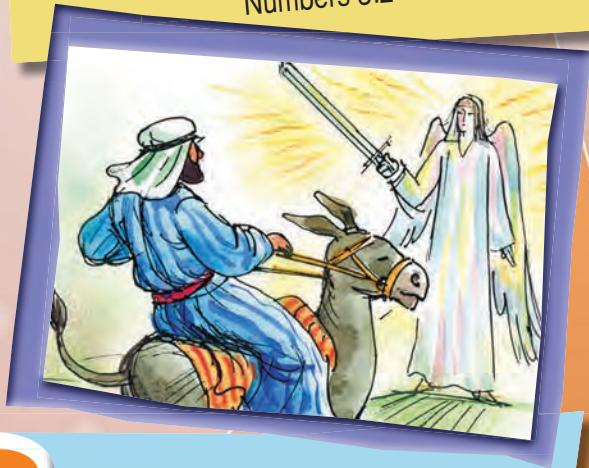
Answer: Exodus 24:1, Leviticus 10:1-7, Numbers 3:2



2

The third king of Judah was a grandson of Solomon. He ruled for 41 years. At first he depended on God, called for people to follow God's commands, and didn't allow idol worship. The end of his rule was filled with war and disease because he stopped trusting in God.

Answer: 2 Chronicles 14-16



3

The king of Moab sent for this well-known diviner so that he would come and curse the people of Israel. However, God appeared to him at night and told him to only say the words he was commanded to speak. God used this man as a prophet and, instead of cursing the people of Israel, he blessed them.

Check your answers on page 31!

Answer: Numbers 22-24

4

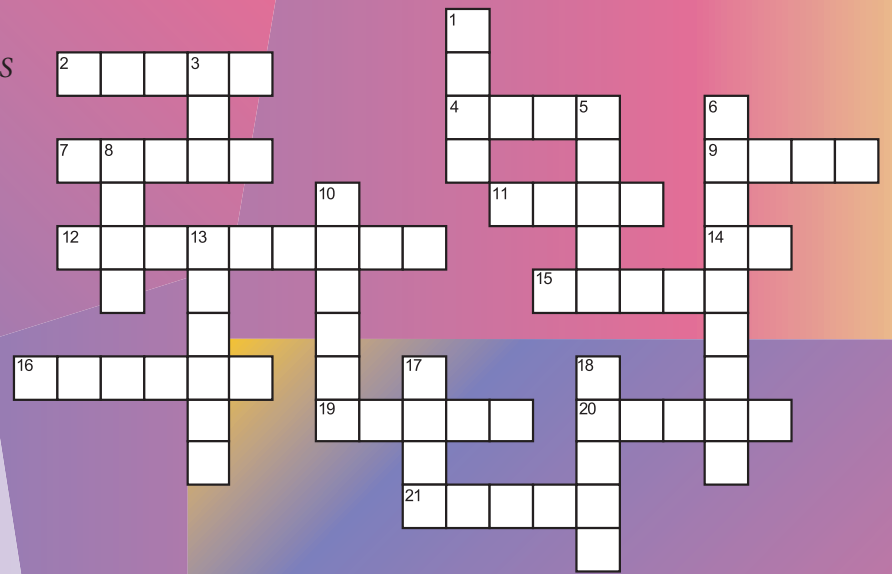


The son of Kish became an example of a king who did not obey God. He did what only the priest was supposed to do and offered a sacrifice to the Lord. The prophet Samuel told this man that what he did was wrong and that he would lose the throne. That's exactly what happened because this man didn't listen to the warning.

Answer: 1 Samuel 9-15

CROSSWORD

Adapted from puzzle by Ivan KLIMETS



Across:

- 2. Type of venomous snake (Prov. 23:32)
- 4. The first man (1 Chron. 15:45)
- 7. He killed a lion and a bear while caring for sheep (1 Sam. 17:34-35)
- 9. The Israelites stopped at this place of springs and palms (Ex. 15:27)
- 11. Jesus turned water into this at Cana (Jn. 2:1-11)
- 12. On the mountain, Jesus' clothes became as bright as this (Lk. 9:28-29)
- 14. Land where Job lived (Job 1:1)
- 15. Stringed musical instruments (Ps. 137:2)
- 16. Samuel's mother (1 Sam. 1:20)
- 19. What threatened the ship because of Jonah? (Jon. 1:4-12)
- 20. Priests serving at the Tent of Meeting had to use this or they'd die (Ex. 30:22-25)
- 21. Structure people built to make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:1-9)

Down:

- 1. One of the patriarchs (Gen. 6:9)
- 3. Samuel served the LORD under this priest (1 Sam. 3:1)
- 5. Name of the bread God gave the Israelites in the desert (Ex. 16:1-31)
- 6. John saw this new city coming down out of heaven (Rev. 21:1-3)
- 8. Name of the month in which the Israelites left Egypt (Ex. 34:18)
- 10. Jesus talked about these flowers when he told us not to worry (Mt. 6:28-29)
- 13. Elijah anointed this man king over Aram (1 Kings 19:13-15)
- 17. Used by Jesus to cross the lake (Mk. 5:21)
- 18. Weapon used by Peter to cut off an ear (Jn. 18:10)

Did you know...

that the caper plant can handle the high temperatures found in the desert? Capers grow as a bush with spreading branches, but what helps them the most are their long roots. These roots reach deep into the ground and allow the plant to find water. Capers can grow on bare rocks and even walls of buildings! Some of these walls get very hot in the summer — up to 170°F!



WHO AM I?

Sh-sh-sh-sh! Hello! Sh-sh-sh-sh... What you're hearing is the rustling of my leaves. They're singing with the wind because they're so happy to see you, my dear reader!

Our kind includes about 300 varieties and you can find us in different places around the world. We're also quite common all over the United States. In fact, you'll even find us in Alaska and Hawaii! My leaves are long and narrow with a pointy end. I can be a shrub or a tree and grow up to 40 feet high. My young branches are very flexible. They've served many purposes because of their flexibility. For example, from Ancient Roman times till the 19th century, they were used in schools as whips to correct the behavior of lazy students. My flexible branches are also used to make baskets and woven furniture.

My flowers are tiny. They're nothing compared to a rose or a lily, but that's okay. During a Christian holiday which is celebrated a week before Easter, many people use my flowering branches.

Do you remember how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? The people greeted him, spread their cloaks on the road before him, and waved palm branches. In places where palm trees don't grow, it's often hard to find blooming flowers in the early spring. However, I bloom very early and continue to bloom 'till leaves appear. That's why, on Palm Sunday, Christians in many countries decorate their houses with my branches and use them as a reminder of the celebration that happened when Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

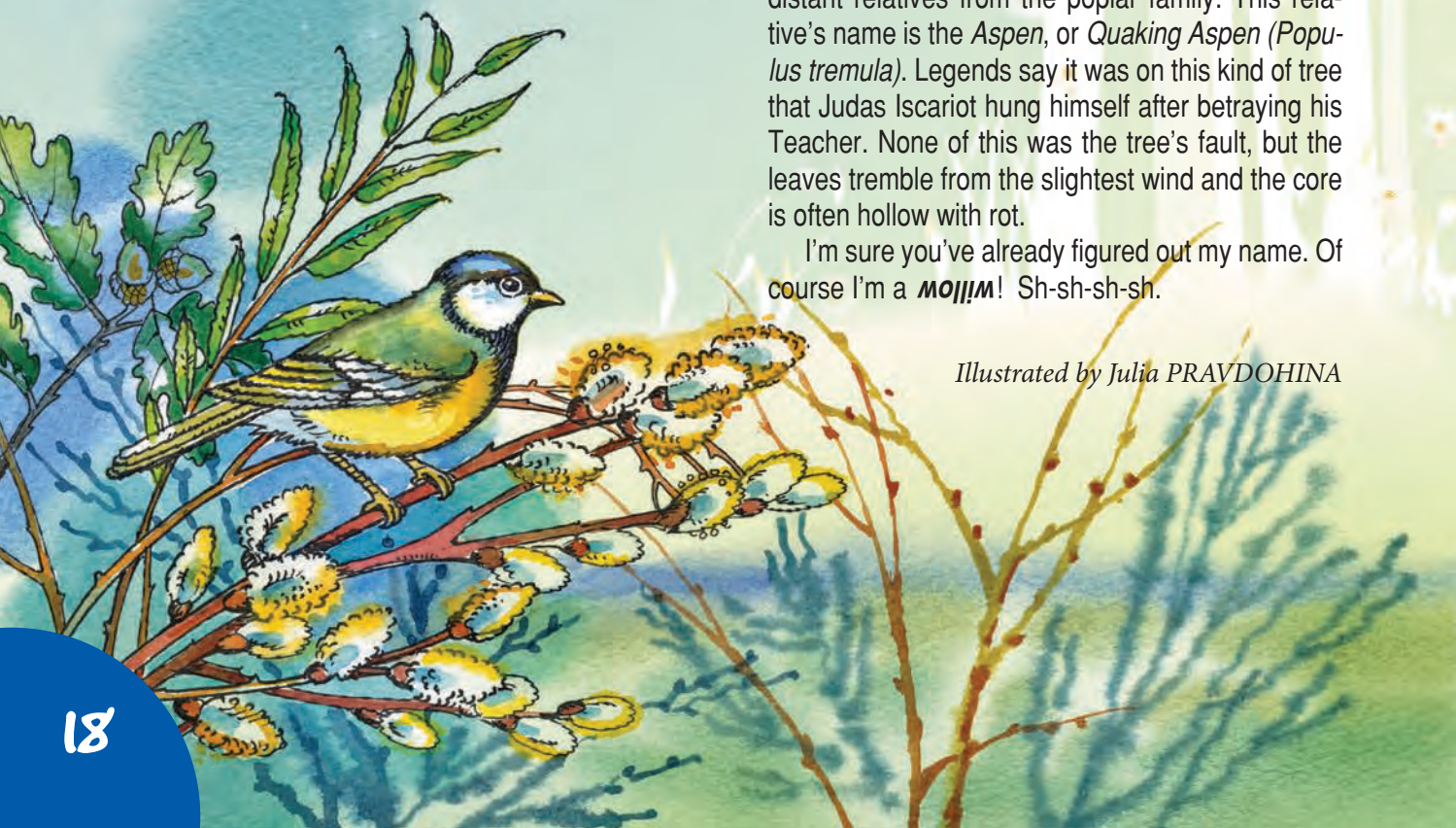
Medicine has been made from my bark. Long ago, people would rub my bark on their gums when they had a toothache. Since then, scientists have studied the special ingredient in my bark and made aspirin.

My relatives have some very interesting names. One of them is the *White* kind, another is the *Peeking*, and the third – the *Goat* kind! There's also the *Crack* kind, *Long-leaved*, *Alpine*, and *Arctic*. Sh-sh-sh... Some people are even afraid of one of my distant relatives from the poplar family. This relative's name is the *Aspen*, or *Quaking Aspen* (*Populus tremula*). Legends say it was on this kind of tree that Judas Iscariot hung himself after betraying his Teacher. None of this was the tree's fault, but the leaves tremble from the slightest wind and the core is often hollow with rot.

I'm sure you've already figured out my name. Of course I'm a **MOJIM!** Sh-sh-sh-sh.

Olga MARTYNOVA

Illustrated by Julia PRAVDOHINA



Did you know?



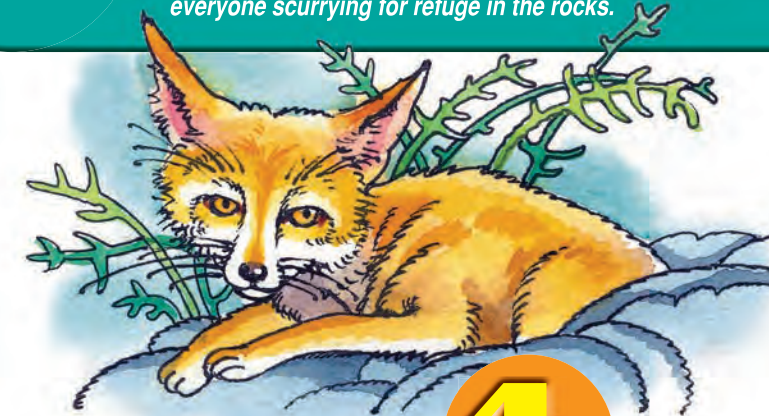
Camelthorn is a symbol of the desert. It grows in some of the driest conditions because, as its strong roots search for water, they can reach a depth of 65 feet! The reddish-pink flowers are on the plant's thorns, which can be over an inch long. Camels love to eat the beans that grow on this plant.



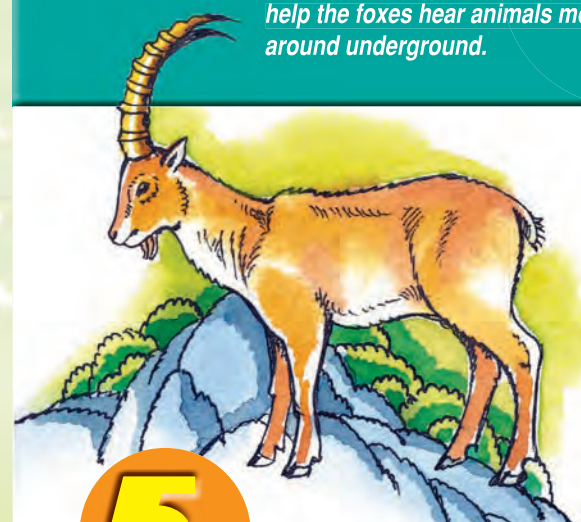
The **Rock Hyrax** gets most of the moisture it needs from its food and can go for days without drinking any water. It lives in groups and one member usually stands guard and watches for danger while the rest look for food. If a predator is spotted, a warning cry sends everyone scurrying for refuge in the rocks.



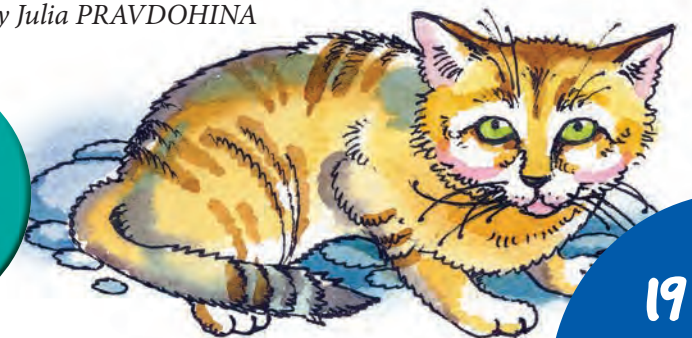
Fennec Foxes only weigh 3.5 pounds. These small, graceful animals have huge ears up to 6 inches long! Such big ears help the foxes hear animals moving around underground.



Ibex can climb very steep slopes and jump from rock to rock. Their hooves have a sharp outer edge that lets them cling to cracks in the rocks and a soft inner pocket that acts like a suction cup on the rocky surface. The males also have horns that can be up to 3 feet long.

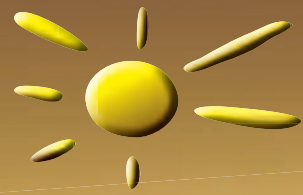


Sand Cats live in sandy deserts. They are the smallest of the wild cats. The pads on their feet have long, stiff hairs that protect them from the hot desert sand. Thick, soft fur also protects the Sand Cat from the cold at night.



Illustrated by Julia PRAVDOHINA

Desert of Paran



A few plants like these grow in the Desert of Paran

“Who remembers what desert we talked about last time?” asked Miss Katie, the Sunday School teacher.

Almost everyone’s hand went up. At least one person couldn’t wait and blurted out, “The Desert of Sinai!”

“That’s right. I’m glad you haven’t forgotten,” Miss Katie smiled. “And how long were the Israelites in this desert? I know David wants to answer this question.”

“A very long time!” David said.

“Yes, you’re right.” Miss Katie leaned forward to be closer to her students and continued the story of the Israelites and their wanderings in the desert. “After the people of Israel left Egypt they traveled through the deserts of Shur and Zin, and then the Sinai desert. The desert ahead of them was the Desert of Paran. Whenever

the pillar of cloud lifted from the tabernacle, it was a sign from God that they should pack up and continue traveling. So they left Mount Sinai and entered the Desert of Paran, which borders the land of Canaan. After three days of walking, they came to their next stop.

“The Desert of Paran covers a large area of the hilly, northern part of the Sinai Peninsula. If you’re in the Desert of Paran and you go west, you’ll reach the Desert of Shur and if you go south, you’ll reach the Sinai Desert. Hagar and her son, Ishmael, lived in the Desert of Paran after they were forced to leave Abraham’s house, but this happened long before the Israelites reached this desert.

“While the people of Israel were in the Desert of Paran, Moses sent 12 spies into

Canaan to explore the land. Just imagine, after 40 days the spies return and they’ve got something with them. It’s a branch with a cluster of grapes – and it’s so big two men have to use a pole to carry it! Out of those 12 spies, only Caleb and Joshua encouraged the people. The others scared the Israelites by saying that the people of Canaan were too strong for Israel to conquer. That’s when the Israelites rebelled against God’s directions. By saying they didn’t want to go into Canaan, they were really saying they didn’t want to listen to God. Since they rebelled, God didn’t let that generation of grown-ups go into the Promised Land. The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years. During this time, everyone from the older generation died –

everyone except Caleb and Joshua. Most of their wandering was in the Desert of Paran. The people of Israel learned some hard lessons by wandering in that desert.

“Today, the desert area that stretches from the Sinai Peninsula to Israel is called the et-Tih, which means ‘wanderings.’ It’s not a very nice place to visit with its lonely, unchanging landscape. There are no trees or shrubs. Only the white chalk hills found in some areas bring a little shade to the sun-baked land. That’s what the Desert of Paran is like,” Miss Katie concluded.

“Now I have some desert coloring pages for you so you can show everyone what you think the Desert of Paran looks like.” Miss Katie passed out the coloring pages and the kids got to work.

Illustrated by Julia PRAVDOHINA

Did you know...
that Hagar and Ishmael got lost in the desert after they left Abraham’s house. They ran out of water and could have died if an angel of God hadn’t appeared and brought them to a well.



DON'T SWEAR!

(Based on Aesop's fable "Two Travelers and a Bear")

Actors: Narrator, two friends named Joey and Shawn, a Bear

Narrator is on stage.

Narrator: Hi guys! You're about to see a skit about those of us who make promises by saying things like, "I swear today I'll do such and such" or "I swear I didn't do it!" What does our Lord Jesus Christ think about such things? He teaches that we shouldn't say such things. In the Bible He tells us, "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'"

Narrator leaves. Joey and Shawn enter the scene.

Shawn: We've had such a great time exploring the woods! Here's a nice grassy spot, let's sit down and rest. I'm tired from all the walking.

Joey: Yeah, I agree! We've had fun. When we're together, these woods aren't scary at all.

Shawn: Why don't we do everything together? Like homework and exploring and...

Joey: Absolutely! We can even promise to always help and protect each other!

Shawn: Sure!

Joey: No, to really mean it we need a strong oath!

Shawn: Oh, how do you do that?

Joey: It's simple. We stand facing each other (*Joey moves Shawn so they're face to face*) and we say "I swear on my grave to always stand up for my friend!"

Shawn: Oh, that sounds scary. I wouldn't let anyone pick on you even without the oath.

Joey: No! It has to be with an oath. Come on, say it with me!

Joey and Shawn: (*in unison*) I swear on my grave to always stand up for my friend!

Joey: Let's come up with some more oaths for our friendship.

Shawn: Like what?

Joey: Well, you could swear to let me copy your math homework. You know I'm horrible at math and you're practically a genius.

Shawn: No, I can swear to help you with the problems, but it's not good to copy.

Joey: Eh, fine! You're my friend so we'll do it your way. Okay, let's swear to...

The bear enters the scene. Joey sees him, panics, shouts "Run for it!" and hides under a bush. Shawn stands with his back to the bear and doesn't see it.

Shawn: Joey? What's wrong? Where did you go?



Bear roars. Shawn turns and sees the bear.

Shawn: Ahh! A b-b-bear! Joey, help me! (*Faints from fear*)

The bear sniffs Shawn, picks up his arm and watches it fall, then tries the same with his other arm and legs. Joey watches from behind the bush. The bear sniffs Shawn one more time and leaves. Joey runs up to Shawn and starts shaking him.

Joey: Shawn! Shawn! The bear is gone. Come on, get up you coward!

Shawn: (*opens his eyes, gets up, looks around*) Where... where is the bear? Did he leave?

Joey: Yeah. He must have been a weird bear 'cause he didn't eat you! He just sniffed and sniffed...

Shawn: He was a strange one. He even whispered something in my ear.

Joey: Really? What was it? What did the bear say?

Shawn: He said that a real friend doesn't abandon a friend who's in trouble.

Joey: (*getting upset*) Was he talking about me? That stupid bear! I ran over to those bushes to... to get a stick! I swear it was to get a stick to chase him away.

Shawn: And where is this stick?

Joey: Uh...uh... I couldn't find one, I swear!

Shawn: You know Joey, I don't believe your oaths.

Joey: What do you mean? You believe some bear, but you won't believe me? What about our friendship?

Shawn: Let's forget about the bear and just be friends without swearing oaths.

Joey: No, a real friendship just doesn't work without oaths!

Shawn: We'll make it work. Let's do it this way: saying "Yes, I'll do it" means I'll definitely do it. Saying, "No, I won't betray my friend" means I'll never ever betray him. Okay?

Joey: Okay! Of course I agree! Those are the right words. The words are real, and that means the friendship will be real too! Great idea!

Shawn: I'm not the first one who came up with that idea.

Joey: Really? Who said it first?

Shawn: My grandma says that's what Jesus Christ taught people to do. He told them not to swear at all, but to keep their word in everything.

The Narrator and the Bear enter the scene.

All the actors hold hands and bow.

Narrator: What about you guys? Do you like Jesus' advice? Should people say what they mean instead of making up all kinds of oaths?

Audience: Yes!

Bear: I like Jesus' advice too!

Narrator: Some of you out there in the audience have probably acted like Joey, but we won't point out who you are. We just hope that all of you will follow Jesus' teaching.

All actors: (*in unison*). "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'"

The End

4. The Secret to Success

An engraving of Tertullian



Why does one team win the soccer game and another team lose? Is it just because one team got lucky and the other team didn't? Yes, chance plays a part, but the team that keeps winning has players who are dedicated to the game and who don't give up. The early church was like that because it had dedicated Christians. They were determined to follow Christ no matter what and they didn't give up. Those early Christians were willing to follow Him to the end, even to their death.

By the II century A.D., Christianity had spread throughout most of the Roman Empire. Little communities of Christians formed in many cities. The good news continued to spread. In those days, Christians didn't have organizations that would send out and support missionaries. Some preachers would travel from place to place, but they usually preached in places that had churches. People believed in Jesus Christ because of the Christians around them. These Christians were ordinary people who shared their faith with their neighbors and the people around them.

Asia Minor (modern day Turkey and Syria) had the most Christians. Spain, Gaul (modern day France), northern Africa, and areas where Germanic tribes lived also had well-known Christian communities. In Carthage, which is modern day Tunisia, a man named Tertullian – one of the most famous Christian writers of those days – wrote as though he was speaking to the emperor and said, "We are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all the places that belong to you – cities, islands, forts, towns, exchanges; the military camps themselves, tribes, town councils, the palace, the senate,

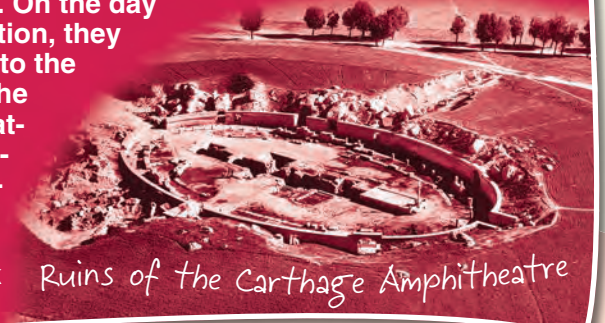
the market-place... If we alone are your enemies, then you have more enemies than citizens, because all your citizens have become Christians." Of course Tertullian was exaggerating when he said all the citizens had become Christians. He wanted the emperor to agree to stop persecuting Christians. Some of the emperors did stop the persecution, but others saw how fast Christianity was growing and did their best to stop it.

Illustrated by Alexander BASS



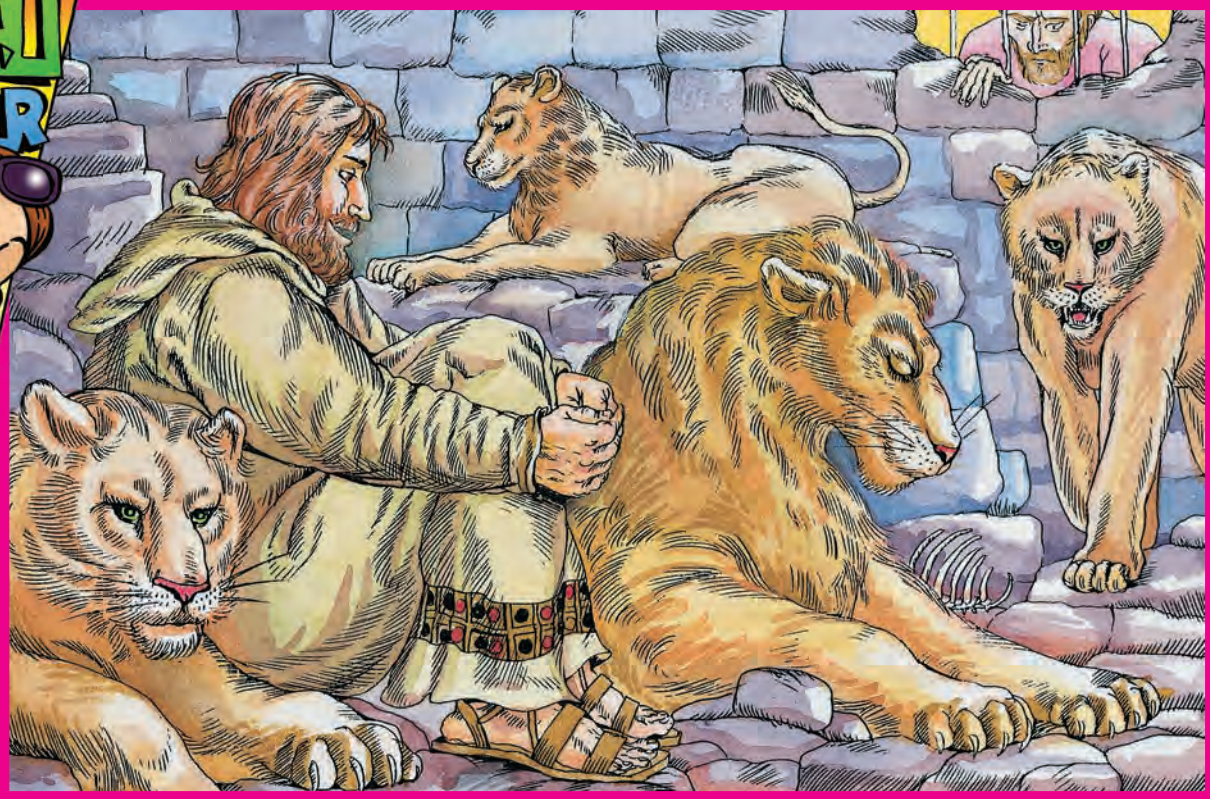
By the beginning of the III century A.D., the emperor Septimius Severus enforced a strict law saying no one could turn from their pagan beliefs and accept a different god. The punishment for not obeying this law was death. At about this time a widow of a noble in Carthage and a slave accepted Christ as their Savior. The widow's name was Perpetua and the slave's name was Felicitas. They were put in prison and questioned by the authorities. Perpetua's father came to the prison and begged her to say she wasn't a Christian. Perpetua pointed to a nearby pitcher of water and said, "Father, can this thing be anything other than what it really is – a pitcher?" "No," her father replied. "And I can't say that I am anything other than what I am – a Christian."

Perpetua's son was still a baby and Felicitas gave birth to a baby girl while in prison. The judge felt sorry for these babies, who would be left without their mothers, and tried to convince the women to deny Christ. However, Perpetua and Felicitas wouldn't do it. On the day of their execution, they were brought to the arena where the women were attacked and severely wounded by a wild cow. Gladiators then took their lives.



Ruins of the Carthage Amphitheatre

Of course not all of the early Christians were ready to die for Christ. For example, in the II century A.D. a Christian from Philadelphia by the name of Quintus saw the wild animals in the arena, got frightened, and agreed to turn away from Christ. He wasn't the only one. However, many Christians were willing to die for what they believed. These people were martyrs. Their lives and deaths affected the people around them in such a way that many became Christians. Julian the Apostate, an emperor of the Roman Empire, believed Christianity spread so quickly because it valued things like charity and honesty. Christians lived a holy life – which Julian described as fanatical – and were completely dedicated to Christ. The people who saw how these Christians lived started to understand that these people really did have God's power. Modern day Christians can learn a lot from these early believers.



Daniel among the Lions

Find 10 differences in the pictures and color the second picture.



Illustrated by Victoria DUNAYEVA



WHO WHAT

1. What language did people speak before the Tower of Babel? (Kolya K., Ukraine)

We can read about this topic in the 11th chapter of Genesis. There, it says all the people of the earth had one language and everyone understood each other. Then God confused their languages. He split the language they spoke into many languages so that the people couldn't understand one another. God did this so they would stop building a monument to honor themselves and false gods. People need to remember that man is not the Creator – he is a creation of God. Since he is God's creation, man can't worship himself or idols. Man needs to worship and obey God. Every Bible story has a message and a lesson for us. From the Tower of Babel we learn that the person who lives for himself and does everything to make his name great is going to fail. God warns us in His Word that we will only find true joy when we serve our good and just God and live the way the Bible tells us to live.

So what was the first language on earth? We don't know. Scientists and linguists who study languages also don't know, even though there are definitely some similarities between the different languages. These similarities suggest that they all came from a single parent language, just like the Bible says!

Answer by Marina KUZNETSOVA

2. Can a person who believes in God, but doesn't follow His commandments go to heaven? (Olya, Ukraine)

Let's think about this. Does someone who believes in Jesus Christ, goes to church, and has already been baptized always keep all of God's commandments? No. Even the most faithful and sincere Christians don't always do the right thing. They still sin, that's a fact. I also know that if a Christian wants to live for God and do God's will, God protects that person and helps her turn away from sin. However, a person who says she's a Christian, but chooses to keep sinning is probably not a Christian. If that person thinks God has to forgive her, she is using God's love and kindness as an excuse to keep sinning. What does it mean to believe in God? It's more than just knowing that God is somewhere in heaven. Believing in God means you have a relationship with Him because you've accepted Him into your heart. If He's in your heart, He will remind you of what is right and what is wrong. He warns you so that you don't sin, and He helps you overcome sin. The people who say they are Christians, but stubbornly refuse to turn away from their sins most likely don't have a relationship with Jesus and their faith isn't real. They may say they're Christians, but in reality they're not. Only those with a relationship with Jesus will go to heaven.

Answer by Elena MIKULA

POSTAGE





LABYRINTH

A woman's son just died. She called her husband and asked him to prepare a servant and a donkey so she could go to the man of God for help. This story is found in the 4th chapter of 2 Kings. Which road will lead the woman to where Elisha is on Mount Carmel?

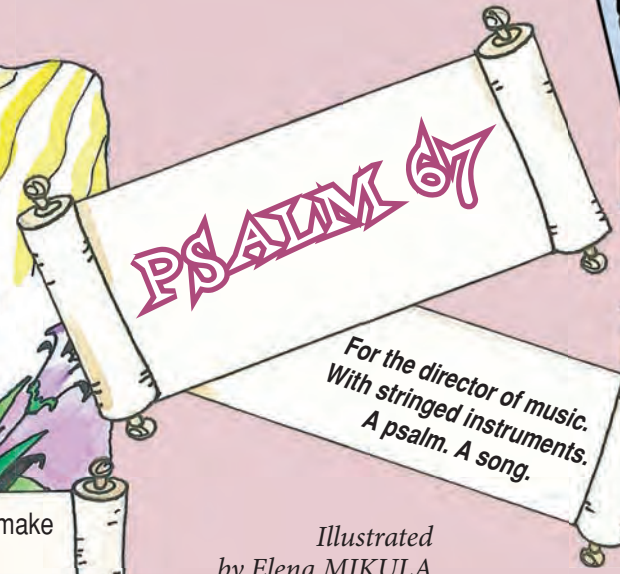


1

2

4

3



For the director of music.
With stringed instruments.
A psalm. A song.

Illustrated
by Elena MIKULA



May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.



May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.



May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.



May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.



Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.





Marsia VLADYANO, 10 years old, USA



Maria BUDLAK, Moldova



Anna VOLOTKO, 12 years old, Ukraine

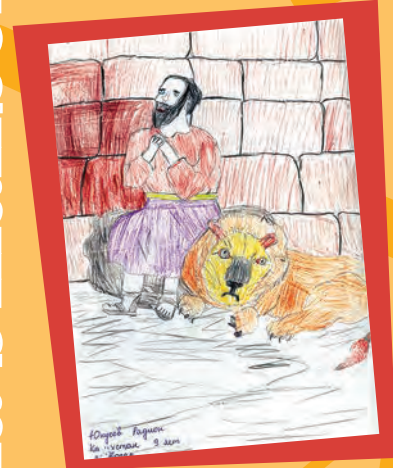
Hello, Tropinka!
My name is Irene. I'm 12 years old. I really like your magazines. They have helpful hints for me. I really like the stories, crossword puzzles, the pretty pictures and the nice assignments. I'm really thankful that God gave us these magazines.

Irene Rusev, USA

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Irene RUSEV, 12 years old, USA



Radion YUNUSOV, 9 years old, Kazakhstan



Gelena GRIGORIEVA, 14 years old, Ukraine



Diana SHILO, USA



FIND 10 DIFFERENCES!



Drawn by Olga KOZEL, 13 years old, and Anastasia ZAGURSKAYA, 11 years old, Ukraine



Victoria KAZANTSEVA, 12 years old, USA



Vova BOTEZAGU, 7 years old, Moldova

Answers

Page 2: I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God
Page 10: MESSAGE IN THE MATH: "Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words..." (Proverbs 4:5)
WORDSEARCH:

X	J	C	O	M	F	O	R	T	E	R	B
L	Y	T	H	O	I	M	L	A	E	O	R
E	R	E	T	O	P	M	G	H	E	G	
U	C	K	I	N	G	D	T	H	S	D	
N	T	O	O	J	E	U	C	T	A	E	T
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M	A	R	Z	N	E	F	I	L	L	A	
M	S	E	D	N	S	O	V	U	N	J	C
I	T	A	O	O	R	E	L	W	G	D	H
Z	E	T	G	L	R	W	L	G	J	L	E
P	R	O	M	E	J	B	M	O	V	B	R
X	V	R	R	R	Y	Q	J	H	R	J	P

Page 11: CROSSWORD: ACROSS: 1. birthright 4. wisdom 6. cloud 7. success 10. wall 11. manna 14. unfailing 15. lamb 16. letters 17. rooster
DOWN: 2. temple 3. cistern 5. widow 8. unclean 9. Gabriel 12. exalted 13. sleep.
Page 16: 1. Nadab 2. Asa 3. Balaam 4. Saul
Page 17: CROSSWORD: ACROSS: 2. Viper 4. Adam 7. David 9. Elim 11. Wine 12. Lightning 14. Uz 15. Harps 16. Hanna 19. Storm 20. Water 21. Tower
DOWN: 1. Noah 3. Eli 5. Manna 6. Jerusalem 8. Abib 10. Lilies 13. Hazael 17. Boat 18. Sword
Page 28: LABYRINTH: Path 3

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For elementary and middle school age children.



Ilya VEZIKOV

God is Great



His voice made the hills and flowers,
And He directs sunshine and showers,
Our God is great.

His hands keep all the stars from falling,
And lift His children when He hears them calling,
Our God is great.

His eyes they see all people everywhere,
His ears will listen and answer each prayer,
Our God is great.

His heart loves and cares for everyone,
So much that He sent us His Son,
To save us from our many sins,
So let us follow daily after Him.

Because our God is very great.

