

OLD TESTAMENT

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ILLUSTRATED BY FRED APPS



THAN A



**EXPLORING THE MESSAGE OF THE
BIBLE WITH CHILDREN**

More Than a Story: Old Testament

by Sally Michael

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Our vision at Truth78 is that the next generations know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God. Our mission is to nurture the faith of the next generations by equipping the church and home with resources and training that instruct the mind, engage the heart, and influence the will through proclaiming the whole counsel of God.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	viii
Introduction	ix
A Note for Parents on Reading with Children	xii

OLD TESTAMENT

1 Before the Beginning (God's Nature and Character—Genesis 1:1-13)	19
2 From Him Are All Things (Creation of the World—Genesis 1)	23
3 Let Us Make Man (Creation of Man—Genesis 1:26-2:25).	27
4 Sin and Darkened Hearts (The Fall and Sin—Genesis 3)	31
5 The Curse and the Promise (Results of the Fall—Genesis 3)	37
6 Rule Sin, or It Will Rule You (Cain and Abel—Genesis 4)	42
7 God's Judgement and Mercy (The Flood—Genesis 6-9:1).	47
8 Now My Eye Sees You (The Testing of Job—Job).	52
9 God Scatters the People (Tower of Babel—Genesis 11)	57
10 God's Call and Promise (The Call of Abram—Genesis 12-13)	60
11 An Everlasting Covenant (Abrahamic Covenant—Genesis 15-17)	64
12 God Is Merciful and Compassionate (Rescue of Lot and Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—Genesis 18-19)	68
13 The Promised Son and the Substitute Sacrifice (Birth of Isaac; Abraham's Test and God's Provision—Genesis 21-22).	72
14 God's Steadfast Love (A Wife for Isaac—Genesis 24).	77
15 Two Nations and God's Favor (Jacob is Chosen to Inherit the Birthright and Blessing of God—Genesis 25-27)	81
16 God Almighty Keeps His Promise (God Blesses Jacob—Genesis 28-35)	85
17 A Collar of Iron for a Dreamer (Joseph's Dreams and Slavery—Genesis 37-39)	90
18 From a Collar of Iron to a Gold Chain (Joseph Rises to Power in Egypt—Genesis 40-41).	95
19 God Preserves His Chosen People (Joseph is Reunited with His Family in Egypt—Genesis 42-50)	99
20 God Hears the Groaning of His People (Birth of Moses—Exodus 1-2:10).	104
21 A Greater Reward than the Treasures of Egypt (God Calls Moses to Rescue His People—Exodus 2-4).	108
22 Yahweh Promises to Deliver His People (Moses and Aaron Bring God's Message to Pharaoh—Exodus 5-7).	112
23 "You Shall Know that I Am the LORD" (God Shows His Power in Egypt—Exodus 7-10)	116
24 God's Passover Rescue (The Plague of Death of the Firstborn and God's Rescue of Israel—Exodus 11-12).	121
25 God Brings His People Out of Egypt with Singing (God Defeats Egypt and Protects His People—Exodus 13-15)	125
26 Israel's Healer, Provider, and Protector (Food and Water in the Wilderness; Victory over the Amalekites—Exodus 15-17)	129
27 God's Treasured Possession (God Makes a Covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai—Exodus 19-20).	133
The Ten Commandments Explained	137
28 I Will Dwell Among Them (God Instructs Moses about the Tabernacle and Priests—Exodus 21-31)	139
29 A Jealous God is Faithful to a Stiff-Necked People (Israel Makes a Golden Calf, Yet God Renews the Covenant—Exodus 32-34)	143

30	God's Covering for Israel (Sacrifices—Exodus 35, 40; Leviticus 1)	148
31	Being at Peace with a Pure, Powerful God (The Day of Atonement—Leviticus 16)	152
32	Grumbling in the Camp (Israel Complains about God; Miriam and Aaron Complain about Moses—Numbers 9-12)	156
33	Rebellion and Unbelief Lead to Forty Years of Wandering (Israel Refuses to Trust God and Possess the Land. —Numbers 13-14)	161
34	God Defends His Chosen Leaders (Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and Others Rebel—Numbers 16)	165
35	The End of the Journey (Moses Dishonors God; Bronze Serpent; and Death of Moses—Numbers 20-21, 26-27, Deuteronomy 34)	169
36	Standing Firmly on God's Promise (Spying Out Jericho and Crossing the Jordan River—Joshua 1-4).	174
37	By Faith Walls Fall Down (God Gives Israel Victory over Jericho—Joshua 5-6).	178
38	A Curse and a Blessing (Israel's Defeat at Ai; Achan's Sin; and Victory Over Ai—Joshua 7-8)	183
39	The LORD Fights for Israel (God Gives Israel Victory over the Armies of Southern and Northern Canaan—Joshua 9-11).	188
The Twelve Tribes of Ancient Israel Map		192
40	Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve (Joshua's Farewell and the Next Generation—Joshua 23-24; Judges 1-2)	193
41	God Does Not Forsake His Unfaithful People (God Calls Gideon —Judges 6)	198
42	I Have Given Them into Your Hand (God Leads Gideon in Victory over the Midianites—Judges 7).	202
43	Taking Refuge in the God of Israel (Ruth Leaves Moab and Puts Her Trust in God —Ruth 1-2).	206
44	God Provides a Kinsman Redeemer (God Rescues Naomi and Ruth through Boaz—Ruth 3-4).	210
45	The Glory Departs, Yet There is Hope (God Raises Up Samuel and Brings Judgment on Eli and Israel—1 Samuel 1-4).	214
46	God's Presence—A Blessing or a Curse? (God Destroys the Idol Dagon, and Samuel Calls Israel to Return to the LORD—1 Samuel 5-7)	218
47	Rejecting God, Demanding a King (Israel Demands a King—1 Samuel 8-12)	222
48	Dishonoring God and Losing the Kingdom (Saul Fails to Trust God but Jonathan Shows Confidence in God —1 Samuel 13-14)	226
49	To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice (Saul Disobeys Again, and God Chooses David—1 Samuel 15-16)	230
50	Facing a Big Enemy with a Bigger God (Goliath is Defeated by a Youth with Faith in God—1 Samuel 17)	235
51	Trusting God and Sparing Saul (David Flees from Saul but Clings to God—1 Samuel 18-26)	239
52	The Shepherd of God's People (Saul Dies, and David Becomes King—1 Samuel 27-2 Samuel 5).	244
53	An Eternal Throne (David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem and God' Covenant to Establish David's Eternal Throne —2 Samuel 5-7)	249
David's Song of Thanks		254
54	God's Merciful Discipline (David's Sin Brings Judgment on His Household—2 Samuel 8, 10-12)	255
David's Prayer of Confession—Psalm 51		260
55	The Terrible Consequences of Sin (Absalom Starts a Revolution, and David Flees—2 Samuel 13-19)	262
56	Songs of Joy and Tears in a Bottle (The Songs and Prayers of God's People—Psalms).	267
57	A House for the King and a House for the King of Kings (Solomon Becomes King and Builds the Temple—1 Kings 1-9)	272
58	A Treasure More Precious than Jewels (Seek Wisdom and Reject Foolishness—Proverbs).	277
59	A Divided Heart and a Divided Kingdom (Solomon Turns from God, and the Kingdom is Divided—1 Kings 9-12)	282
The Northern and Southern Kingdoms Map		287
60	Trouble in the Northern Kingdom (God Warns Ahab and Israel through the Prophet Elijah—1 Kings 14-18)	288
61	The LORD, He is God (God Proves He is God to Israel and the Prophets of Baal—1 Kings 18-19)	293

62	Very Different Ends for Very Different People (Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah Come to the End of their Lives on Earth 297 –1 Kings 20-2 Kings 2)	297
63	A Light Thing in the Sight of the LORD (God Works Miracles through Elisha–2 Kings 3-5)	302
64	Blind Eyes and Blind Hearts (God Sends Horses and Chariots of Fire and Opens the Windows of Heaven–2 Kings 6-7)	306
65	Salvation Belongs to the LORD! (God Has Mercy on Nineveh–Jonah)	310
66	Torn Down that He May Heal (The Destruction of the Northern Kingdom–2 Kings 17, Hosea, Amos)	315
	God's Heart for His People.	319
67	Our Eyes are on You (Judah Looks to the LORD for Help, and God Fights the Battle–2 Chronicles 19-20)	320
68	The Lamp of the Wicked and the Promise of God (The Kings of Judah Walk in Darkness–2 Chronicles 21-26)	324
69	A Holy God Gives Hope to an Unholy People (Isaiah's Vision and Message–Isaiah 6-7; 2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 27-28)	329
70	Reform and Ridicule (Hezekiah's Reforms and Assyria's Ridicule–2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 28-32)	334
71	Rescue, Rebuke, and Future Redemption (God Rescues Jerusalem and Promises Redemption for His People 338 –2 Kings 19-20; 2 Chronicles 32)	338
	The New Heavens and New Earth	343
72	True Repentance and True Faith (Manasseh Sins and Repents; Josiah Follows Yahweh and Finds the Lost Book 344 of the Law–2 Chronicles 33-35)	344
73	A Question and an Unexpected Answer (Habakkuk Questions God and Determines to Trust Him–Habakkuk)	348
74	Warnings and Words of Hope (Jeremiah Preaches, but the People Refuse to Repent–2 Kings 24; Jeremiah 36)	352
75	Total Destruction, Yet Hope Remains (The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Promise of God 356 –2 Kings 25; Jeremiah 37-39)	356
76	God Scatters His People but Will Gather Them Back (Ezekiel Gives His Prophetic Message to the Exiles–Ezekiel)	360
77	Standing Strong, Even in Babylon (Daniel Determines to Honor God–Daniel 1-2)	365
78	There is a God in Heaven (God Reveals the Future to Daniel through Nebuchadnezzar's Dream–Daniel 2)	369
79	The God Who is Able to Rescue (God Rescues Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego–Daniel 3)	373
80	The Most High Rules the Kingdom of Men (God Humbles Nebuchadnezzar and Shows His Sovereign Will–Daniel 4)	377
81	Weighed in the Balances and Found Wanting (God Writes on a Wall and Judges Babylon–Daniel 5)	381
82	The Living God is a Strong Deliverer (God Delivers Daniel from the Mouths of Lions–Daniel 6)	385
83	Strange Visions and Great Hope (God Gives Daniel Visions of the Future, and Daniel Prays for His People–Daniel 7-9)	389
84	The Promised Return (God Keeps His Promise to the Exiles–Ezra 1-4)	394
85	The Presence of the LORD Strengthens His People (The Temple is Finished and the People are Taught–Ezra 5-9)	399
86	Royal Orders . . . and God's Sovereign Plan (God Gives Esther Favor and Places Her in the Palace–Esther 1-4)	403
87	The God of Great Reverses (God Delivers the Jews–Esther 5-10)	407
88	Rebuilding the Walls through Prayer (God Gives Nehemiah Favor in Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem. 412 –Nehemiah 1-4, 6)	412
89	Many Reforms but the Same Problem (Nehemiah's Reforms and the Jews' Stubborn Hearts–Nehemiah 5, 8-12)	416
90	Cold Hearts and Faithful Love (God Sends His Messenger to Argue His Case Against Judah–Malachi)	420
	Silent . . . But Not Inactive (The Intertestamental Period)	425

PREFACE

There are amazing stories within the pages of the Bible! There is a story of a boy who defeats a giant with a sling and a stone, and a story about a big fish that swallows a prophet and spits him up on the shore. There's one about a city whose walls come tumbling down when people shout, one about a blind man who receives his sight, and one about a troubled sea that is made calm. But these true stories are not isolated incidents. Though amazing in themselves, they tell a bigger story. They tell the story of our Creator who made all things simply by speaking them into being. He placed every planet in its orbit, gathered billions of stars into galaxies, intricately formed every plant and living creature, and fashioned man in His image from the dust of the earth. Throughout all these wonders is our sovereign Creator God who planned every day of every life, every happening in history, and every detail of every moment in this universe.

Though the Bible is full of stories, it is *MORE THAN A STORY*. It is the authoritative Word of God that weaves throughout its pages the majestic character of God, His work in this world, and His plan of redemption for sinful people through His Son, Jesus Christ. As you read this book, you will discover His goodness, His greatness, His holiness, His wisdom, His power, His justice, His mercy, His faithfulness, His self-sufficiency. You will discover that He is a Refuge, a Deliverer, a Rock, and a Strong Tower to those who trust in Him. Every word He speaks is truth. Every promise He makes will be fulfilled.

When you read about the perfect world God created where man could live in perfect fellowship with God, may you yearn for that fellowship with your Creator. May the tragic reality of man's rebellion against God and the darkness of sin, misery, sickness, and death that came into the world, cause you to grieve over your own sin. May God's promise of a Redeemer and its fulfillment through the sacrifice of His own Son on the cross bring you to repentance and faith. And when you read the prophetic vision of the end of history, may you overflow with hope and joy that Jesus will make all things new. He will redeem His people to live with Him forever!

May this book, *More Than a Story*, lead you to THE BOOK, God's unchanging, clear, sufficient, necessary, true Word of God.

Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. (Psalm 119:89)

Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it. (Psalm 119:140)

INTRODUCTION

By Jill Nelson

For the past three decades, I have had the great privilege of teaching the Bible to children. I can honestly say that the longer I teach, the more I am absolutely stunned by the grandeur and power of God's written Word. The answer to every pressing question, every longing of the heart, every struggle of the will, and every hope of all-satisfying joy is found in the Bible. Therefore, there is no more pressing need than for our children to become fully acquainted with the Bible. Parents—and every believer—this is your sacred responsibility and privilege. Timothy's mother and grandmother knew this to be the case. Here is what the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy:

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Now more than ever, our children need to know, understand, and embrace the truths of Scripture. Toward that end, they also will benefit from solid Bible resources that not only reveal and explain the grand narrative of Scripture but also clearly help children understand the particular parts. Furthermore, they need Bible resources that serve to guide, challenge, and urgently impress upon them the need to whole-heartedly respond to God's Word with faith in Christ, resulting in love, honor, obedience, and worship of Him. I am delighted to say that *More Than a Story* is such a resource. It stands out as a unique discipleship tool for acquainting children with God's holy Word. Here are some distinguishing features that I deeply appreciate about this resource:

A Reverence for God's Holy Word

More Than a Story treats God's Word in the manner it rightly deserves. The clearest evidence of this is the sizable amount of biblical text included in every chapter and the meticulous care given to explain biblical truths clearly and accurately—nothing fanciful, exaggerated, silly, or speculative. Your child will be continuously reminded of the authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency of the Bible. God's Word is truly "more than a story"!

A Comprehensive Introduction to the Breadth and Depth of Scripture

By the time your children finish reading the Old and New Testament volumes of *More Than a Story*, they will have taken a chronological survey of the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. They will have discovered the Bible's many books and literary genres, as well as the major events, people, places, and themes. Additionally, your children

will be exposed to the disciplines of biblical theology, systematic theology, and moral instruction, all grounded in the gospel.

Child-Appropriate Without Compromising the Text

There is a great tendency when writing for children to take too much creative license in order to make the resource more “child-friendly”—fun and engaging. Sadly, children are often left with a delightful and memorable storyline but one that leaves out or minimizes essential biblical truths. This resource uses child-appropriate language to creatively convey biblical stories and truths, without compromising the nature or intent of the text.

A Clear Presentation of the Key Doctrines of the Christian Faith

Throughout *More Than a Story*, you will find numerous phrases and statements highlighted in bold font. These serve to develop a systematic theology for your children by highlighting key doctrines essential for the Christian life—doctrines concerning God, creation, man, the fall, redemption, providence, the church, and many more.

A Serious and Sober Portrayal of the Problem of Sin

One of the unique features of *More Than a Story* is its depiction of the essence, pervasiveness, and problem of sin. Chapter after chapter your children will be confronted by the utter wretchedness of man’s sin against a holy and righteous God. Rather than being distressed by this, consider it a great gift meant to point your children toward utter dependence on Christ. As D. A. Carson has stated:

There can be no agreement as to what salvation is unless there is agreement as to that from which salvation rescues us. The problem and the solution hang together: the one explicates the other. It is impossible to gain a deep grasp of what the cross achieves without plunging into a deep grasp of what sin is; conversely, to augment one’s understanding of the cross is to augment one’s understanding of sin.

To put the matter another way, sin establishes the plot line of the Bible.¹

Grounded in the Gospel

Every chapter in this book is grounded in the glorious reality of the gospel. Every chapter points Christ-ward. However, in saying this, it is important to note that not every chapter in the Old Testament volume of *More Than a Story* overtly mentions Christ’s redeeming work on behalf of sinful man. Rather, the author carefully lets the historical, progressive nature of Scripture unfold. This lays the crucial foundation on which to build true understanding and appreciation for the person and work of Christ. Where warranted, key connections to Christ are emphasized.

Guides Children in How to Study the Bible

Not only do children need to become acquainted with the actual text of Scripture, they also need to be taught how to study the Bible. *More Than a Story* has been written in an

1 D.A. Carson, “Sin’s Contemporary Significance,” Chapter 1 of *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2013), as republished on www.monergism.com.

interactive manner that prompts children to observe and ask specific questions of a text in order to discover the meaning. This type of interaction not only encourages children to be eagerly and actively engaged, but it also develops critical thinking skills that will serve a lifetime of biblical study as they grow and mature.

Addresses the Mind, Heart, and Will

It isn't enough for a child to simply *know* the Bible—although that is the first step in the life of faith. God's Word must also be embraced by the heart and acted upon by the will. *More Than a Story* keeps all three realities in mind. Woven throughout every chapter are questions guiding your children to respond to what they read: How does God want me to respond? What should my heart feel and desire? What does God want me to think, be, and do?

Inspires Worship of God, for the Glory of God

Psalm 86 gives a beautiful summary of what biblical teaching is meant to inspire, fuel, and produce.

*⁹All the nations you have made shall come
and worship before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.*

*¹⁰For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.*

*¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.*

*¹²I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.*

More Than a Story has been written with this glorious, God-centered goal in mind. Every chapter clearly and readily shines forth the incomparable greatness and worth of God, inspiring children to eagerly and whole-heartedly worship Him as their greatest treasure and delight!

In conclusion, *More Than a Story* is a wonderfully engaging discipleship tool for parents, grandparents, teachers, and anyone else who cares for the faith of the next generations. But bear in mind that it is also a serious tool, one conveying weighty truths that require our utmost attention. Will it be worth the added effort? Consider this thought and exhortation from John Piper:

The issue of earning a living is not nearly so important as whether the next generation has direct access to the meaning of the Word of God. We need an education that puts the highest premium under God on knowing the meaning of God's Book, and growing in the abilities that will unlock its riches for a lifetime . . . Lord, let us not fail the next generation!²

2 John Piper, "A Compelling Reason for Rigorous Training of the Mind: Thoughts on the Significance of Reading," July 13, 2005. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-compelling-reason-for-rigorous-training-of-the-mind>

CHAPTER 11

AN EVERLASTING COVENANT

Abrahamic Covenant—Genesis 15-17

“...I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” (Genesis 17:7)

Abram was in a strange situation. God had promised that from Abram He would make a great nation with so many people or descendants that they couldn't be counted. But there was a problem. *Do you know what the problem was?* Abram didn't have any children (or “offspring”). How could he be the father of a great nation if he didn't have even one child? Would a servant in his house be his “heir” and inherit or receive all his animals, wealth, and God's blessing when he died? Or would he have a son?

God had a great plan and great promises for Abram. He told Abram that Abram's very own son, not his servant, would be his heir. His own son would be the beginning of the great nation promised by God to Abram. One night, God brought Abram outside and said:

... “*Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.*” Then he said to him, “*So shall your offspring be.*” And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:5-6)

Have you looked up at the stars and tried to count them? There are too many to count ... and there would be too many descendants of Abram to count. What a great promise God had made to Abram! God made this promise even more certain by making a *covenant* with Abram.

A covenant is a serious agreement to keep certain promises.

In His covenant promise, God also told Abram that his descendants or offspring would be strangers in a foreign land where they would be mistreated for four hundred years.

But then God would judge the nation that mistreated them, and Abram's descendants



would leave with many possessions (animals and wealth). Abram believed God's word; He trusted God, and his faith made him righteous, or acceptable, to God.

Still, Abram had no children, and Sarai was getting impatient. So she decided to do something about it! She gave Abram her Egyptian servant, Hagar, as another wife, so Abram might have a child. This was not right, but she did it anyway. Hagar got pregnant and was proud that she was carrying Abram's child. *Do you think this made Sarai happy?* Not at all! Instead, Sarai was angry and jealous, even though it had been her idea for Abram to take another wife to give him a child. Sarai was so angry that she treated Hagar very harshly, so harshly that Hagar ran away into the wilderness.



What would happen to Hagar and her baby? The God who sees all saw Hagar in the wilderness and sent an angel to her. The angel told her to return to Sarai and obey her. But that wasn't the whole message from God. Hagar would have a son, whom she should name Ishmael or "God hears." God had listened to and understood Hagar's difficulties. *So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me."* **God is a "God of seeing"—a God who is full of compassion, or kindness.** He watches over everything in this world. Nothing goes unnoticed by Him.

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. (2 Chronicles 16:9a)

Hagar obeyed the word of the LORD and returned to Abram and Sarai. She had her baby boy. And just as she had been commanded, she named him Ishmael. Now at 86 years old,

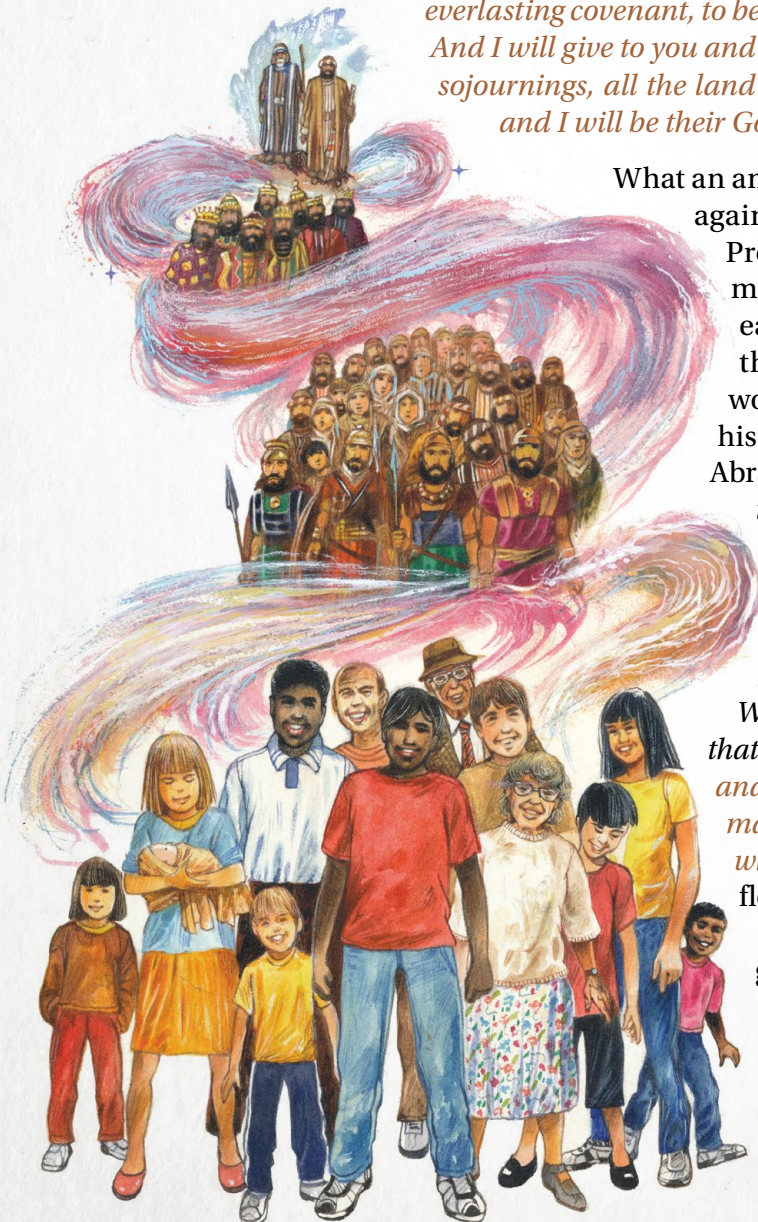
Abram had a son, a descendant. But this was not God’s plan; it was Abram’s and Sarai’s plan to try to have a son their own way. Ishmael was the son of a slave woman; he was not the son of God’s promise to Abram.

When Abram was ninety-two years old, God appeared to Abram again. Once again, God reminded Abram of His covenant promises.

“Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” (Genesis 17:4-8)

What an amazing promise God pledged to Abraham again! Abraham would inherit or receive the Promised Land of Canaan. He would have many descendants. And, as God promised earlier, he would be a great blessing to all the nations of the world! Best of all, God would be his God. He would be his Helper, his Protector, his Provider, and his Friend—to Abraham and to his offspring. *How long would this covenant last?* It was an everlasting covenant—a forever covenant of promises that God would surely keep.

God also changed Sarai’s name to Sarah, and He promised to give Sarah a son. *What do you think Abraham thought about that? Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”* After the flood, people as old as Abraham and Sarah did not have babies! That would be like your grandma and grandpa having a baby . . . or your great grandma and grandpa! This was impossible! Surely, it was a better idea, Abraham thought, for God to make His promise come true through Ishmael. But that was not God’s way . . .



God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.” (Genesis 17:19)

God would still bless Ishmael because he was born from Abraham. But he was not the promised child. He was not the chosen one of God. God was very firm about this.

“... I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year.” (Genesis 17:21)

Sarah laughed when she heard God’s promise that she would have a son. She was ninety years old. She was “worn out,” and Abraham was “old.” How could this possibly happen? Surely, this could not be true!

But it was true. God not only makes promises, but **He fulfills all His promises. God does everything He says He will do.** Sure enough, just as God had said, ninety-year-old Sarah became pregnant! Something impossible and miraculous had happened—something only God could do!

Why is nothing impossible for God? What proof do you have of your answer? What does this tell you about whether God can be trusted?

...“What is impossible with man is possible with God.” (Luke 18:27)

MAKING YOU WISE FOR SALVATION

*What does this story tell us about God? Talk about and apply the **biblical truths** in **bold** text.*

Salvation Thread: God was calling a people to be in His family through Abraham. God is still calling people to be His children. *Do you have to be a descendant of Abraham to be in God’s family? How does a person become a child of Abraham? How does a person become accepted by God as righteous?*

Tell your child about a time when God did something impossible (either from the Bible, in your life, or in the life of someone else.)

Talk About: *“... I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” (Genesis 17:7)*

Why do you think God repeated His promise to Abraham? How could this help Abraham to keep believing God’s promise? (God made His promise to Abraham four times—Genesis 12, 15, 17, and 22. This repetition shows how important this promise is.)

Pray: Praise God that He always keeps His promises. Ask Him to help you to trust Him even when you have to wait a long time for an answer to prayer or to see His work in a situation.

Think About: *What does it mean to have God as “my God”?*

Memorize: Luke 18:27

CHAPTER 50

FACING A BIG ENEMY WITH A BIGGER GOD

Goliath is Defeated by a Youth with Faith in God—1 Samuel 17

...“The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:37a)

Do you remember when Israel defeated the Midianites with torches and trumpets? Why did God reduce the army to just three hundred men? He wanted Israel, the nations, and us to see that He is **Yahweh who is sovereign, self-existent, eternal, all-powerful, unchanging, and victorious**. God doesn't need big armies or smart people to accomplish His purposes. **God doesn't need anyone or anything. And nothing can stop His mighty works**—including a large Philistine army and a giant of a man.

Saul and the men of Israel were on one mountain and the Philistines on another with a valley between them. The Philistines had a champion. He was a very large man—a huge giant of a man. He was mean, vicious, and insulting—and his name was Goliath. With his helmet of bronze, a coat of mail, armor on his legs, and a javelin, Goliath stood where he could be clearly seen. He mockingly shouted his challenge to the army of Israel. Goliath would fight an Israelite soldier, and whichever side lost would be the servants of the winning army. Not one



of the Israelite men volunteered to fight Goliath. They wanted to stay far away from this battle! Saul and all the men of Israel were “dismayed and greatly afraid.” Would no one fight Goliath? Saul had promised riches and his daughter in marriage to the man who defeated Goliath—but no man stepped up to fight Goliath.

The three oldest sons of Jesse—Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah—had joined Saul to fight the Philistines. They were standing on Israel’s battle line, with Saul’s army facing the Philistine battle line, when David came with grain, bread, and cheese for his brothers. While David was talking to his brothers, Goliath appeared, shouting his challenge again. When they saw Goliath, the men of Israel “fled from him and were much afraid.” But David had a very different view of things—he was indignant! He was irritated and offended—*“Who is this . . . Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”* Goliath had mocked Israel and Israel’s God. David was furious! Israel was the army of Yahweh, who fights for His people! How could this Philistine think he could resist the army of God?

Saul sent for David when he heard about the brave words David had said. Imagine what he thought when David showed up. David was just a youth, probably about 16 years old. And here he was, reassuring Saul, *“Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”* What do you think Saul thought of this?

Saul was not convinced. Goliath had been a “man of war” since his youth. He was an experienced soldier, while David was just a young shepherd boy. Saul knew David as a palace musician, but he did not know that David had been anointed to be the next king. David insisted, telling Saul that he had rescued his father’s sheep from the mouths of lions and bears. This Philistine would be just like one of the lions and bears he had killed, for Goliath had defied the armies of the living God. David had great confidence in God. He had seen God work in the past. He knew that the **unchanging God** would be with him. *And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go and the LORD be with you!”*

Saul put his own armor on David—his helmet, his coat of mail, and his sword. But David couldn’t move around in them. He wasn’t used to the bulky, heavy armor. So David took the armor off and picked up his staff. He chose five smooth stones from the stream, which he put in his shepherd’s pouch. He took his sling in his hand . . . and he walked out to meet the giant, Goliath.

What do you think Goliath thought when he saw David coming to fight him? He was insulted! He said to David, *“Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?”* And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. *The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.”* How dare the Israelites send a boy to fight against him! Goliath was arrogant and self-confident. He was already boasting of his victory.

But David, full of confidence in the LORD, looked right at Goliath and said,

“You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your

head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand.” (1 Samuel 17:45-47)

David spoke words of faith. He was not facing the enemy alone. The LORD of hosts—the God of the armies of heaven—was with him! Goliath was not fighting David; he was fighting Yahweh, who never loses a battle! David was full of confidence—but his confidence was not in himself but in his God. He saw how big Goliath was, but he knew his God was so much bigger!

When Goliath started to approach, David ran quickly toward the battle line. He would face this Philistine with the strength of the LORD! David took a stone out of his bag. He put it in his sling, swung it around . . . and let it go. God gave David perfect aim . . . and the stone of God struck Goliath smack in the middle of his forehead! It hit him with such a force that it sank into his forehead “and he fell on his face to the ground.” *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him.*



When the Philistines saw that their hero, their champion, Goliath, was dead, they turned and fled! The men of Israel and Judah “rose with a shout.” They chased the Philistines for about twelve miles, striking down the Philistines on the way. Then they raided the Philistine camp on the way back, taking whatever was valuable.

God does not need an army to defeat His enemies! He can use a boy with a sling and a stone to kill a giant and defeat His enemies. **God is the LORD of hosts, who is always victorious!** God defeats His enemies with hailstones, confusion, marches around city walls, and even a stone. **Nothing is too hard for God!**

*Why did God give David victory over Goliath? So **that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.** God’s mighty acts show that He is God Almighty. Every act of God is intended to show us His glory—His greatness and worth—so that we might put our trust in Him. When God is on your side, you do not need to fear the giants in your life. *Do you truly believe that God can do anything? Do you know in your heart that God is bigger than anything you face? Have you put your full confidence and trust in Him?**

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. (Psalm 125:1-2)

MAKING YOU WISE FOR SALVATION

What does this chapter tell us about God? Talk about and apply the **biblical truths** in **bold** text.

Salvation Thread: Faith is trusting that God is who He says He is. The kingdom of Satan is at war with the Kingdom of God, but God always defeats His enemies.

Why was David able to defeat Goliath? (Give a complete, well-thought-out answer.)

Talk About: *Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. (Psalm 125:1-2)*

What does faith in God look like in your everyday life?

Pray: Praise God for being the LORD of hosts, who is always victorious. Thank God that He is bigger than anything else is, and that He has promised to help His people. Ask God to give you an unshakable faith in His goodness, love, power, and wisdom.

Think About: *How can I have the kind of confidence in God that David had? How does “remembering the deeds of the Lord” strengthen my faith?*

Memorize: Psalm 125:1-2

CHAPTER 56

SONGS OF JOY AND TEARS IN A BOTTLE

The Songs and Prayers of God's People—Psalms

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)

How do you think David felt when he left Jerusalem and ran from Absalom? We know he was sad. He was probably discouraged, scared, and even angry. But he also told himself great truths *when he fled from Absalom his son*. We can read about them in Psalm 3:

O LORD, how many are my foes [enemies]! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in God." But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill. (Psalm 3:1-4)

A very large group of enemies was chasing David and his small group of followers—yet he had confidence in God. Through all the problems in his life, David never lost his faith in God. He knew that **God is faithful and can be trusted**. No matter what the situation, David found his comfort, confidence, and hope in God. Even though he failed many times, he was a man who longed for friendship with God.

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. (Psalm 63:1-3)

Because David was a musician, he put many of his prayers to music. As a young shepherd boy, he would play his lyre and sing his prayers to the LORD. He continued to sing his prayers and praises throughout his whole life—during Saul's fits of madness, while hiding in the wilderness, after victories



over his enemies, and as the king of Israel longing for a Greater King. These songs are included in the book of Psalms. They tell us David's experiences of seeing God's glory, power, and faithfulness in all kinds of situations—even the hard ones.

Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright. O LORD, save the king! May he answer us when we call. (Psalm 20:6-9)

David wrote almost half of the psalms. Asaph, the sons of Korah, and other worship leaders in the temple wrote many of the other psalms. *Do you remember who Korah was?* Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron. *Do you remember what happened then?* The ground split beneath them and swallowed them up, along with their families and possessions. This was God's judgment for their rebellion. But remember that **God is just, and He is also merciful.** God spared some of the sons of Korah, and God had a plan and purpose for Korah's descendants. Many of them became worship leaders in Israel, using both instruments and singing. *What does this tell you about God's mercy and faithfulness to His people?*

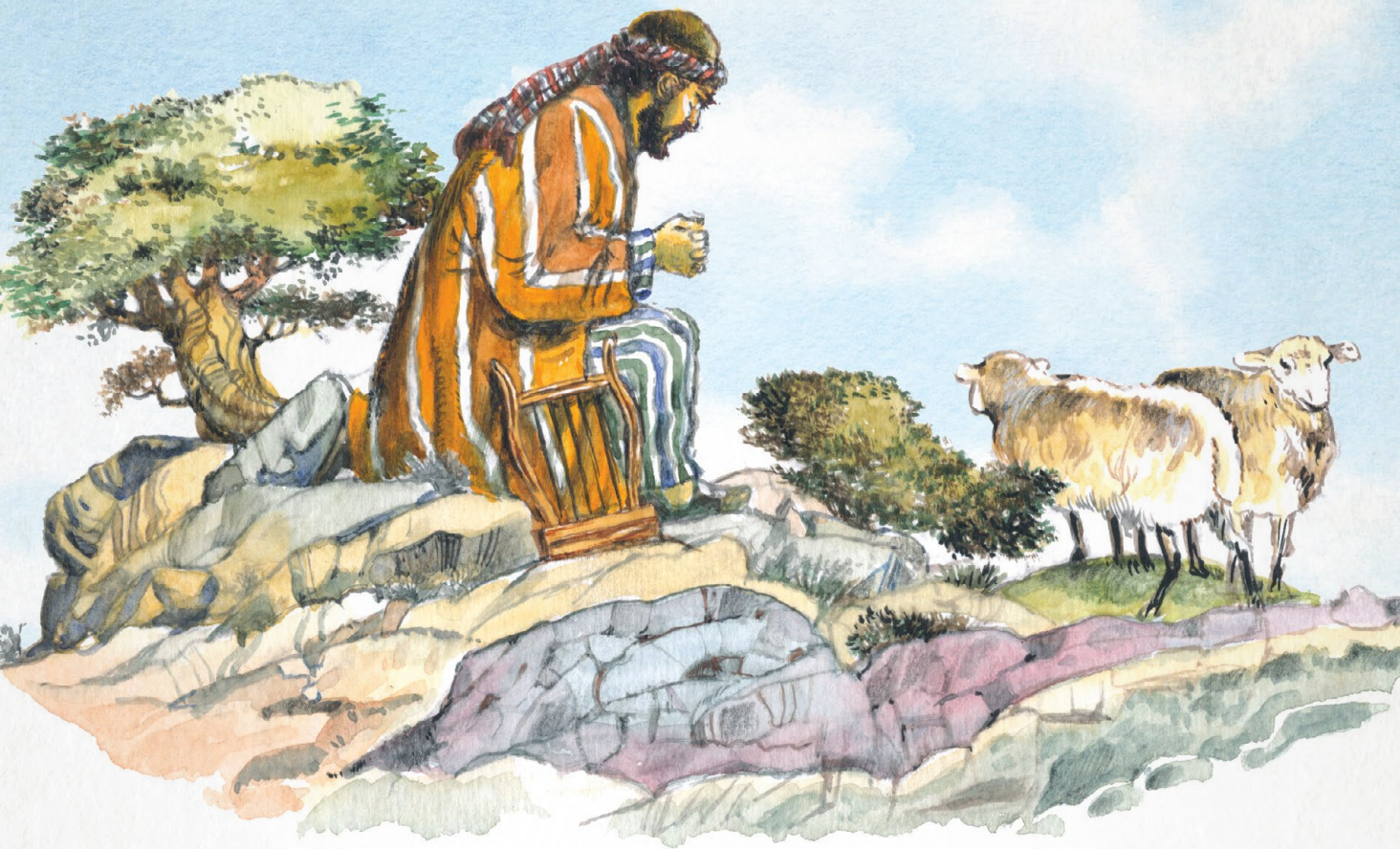
The book of Psalms became the worship songs, prayers, and poems of Israel. They show the honest emotions of God's people: joy, sorrow, desperation, discouragement, thanksgiving, praise, trust, fear, all kinds of feelings.

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together! (Psalm 34:1-3)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. (Psalm 22:1-5)

But the psalms are not just Israel's book of worship. They are also worship songs and prayers of God's people used throughout the world today. They help us tell our thoughts and emotions to God. They give us words to praise God. They help us remember the greatness and goodness of God. They give us truth and wisdom. They strengthen our faith. And they remind us of the coming King. Many of the psalms tell us about the Messiah, the Savior who will defeat all evil and bring salvation to His people. This King from the line of David will fulfill God's promise to Abraham to bring God's blessing to all nations. He will someday return as the victorious King, who will put a final end to evil and establish God's Kingdom rule over all the nations of the world!

It is easy to forget who God is and be stuck feeling sad or afraid. So the book of Psalms also teaches us a very important pattern. Sometimes we can see the whole pattern in a psalm, and sometimes we see just part of it. This three-part pattern shows us how to respond to everything in life:



POUR OUT YOUR HEART

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.
(Psalm 62:8)*

We have the same emotions as the psalmists did. So we can learn from the psalmists how to respond in faith to our circumstances. Instead of just stuffing our feelings—pretending they aren't there—we can bring them to God. As long as we don't sin with our words, we can tell God honestly how we feel—no matter what we feel. The psalms show us people with all kinds of feelings:

My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:3)

Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest;" (Psalm 55:5-6)

But we don't just stay stuck in our emotions. We don't have to be controlled by our feelings. The psalms tell us next to:

LIFT UP YOUR EYES: SEE GOD

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1-2)

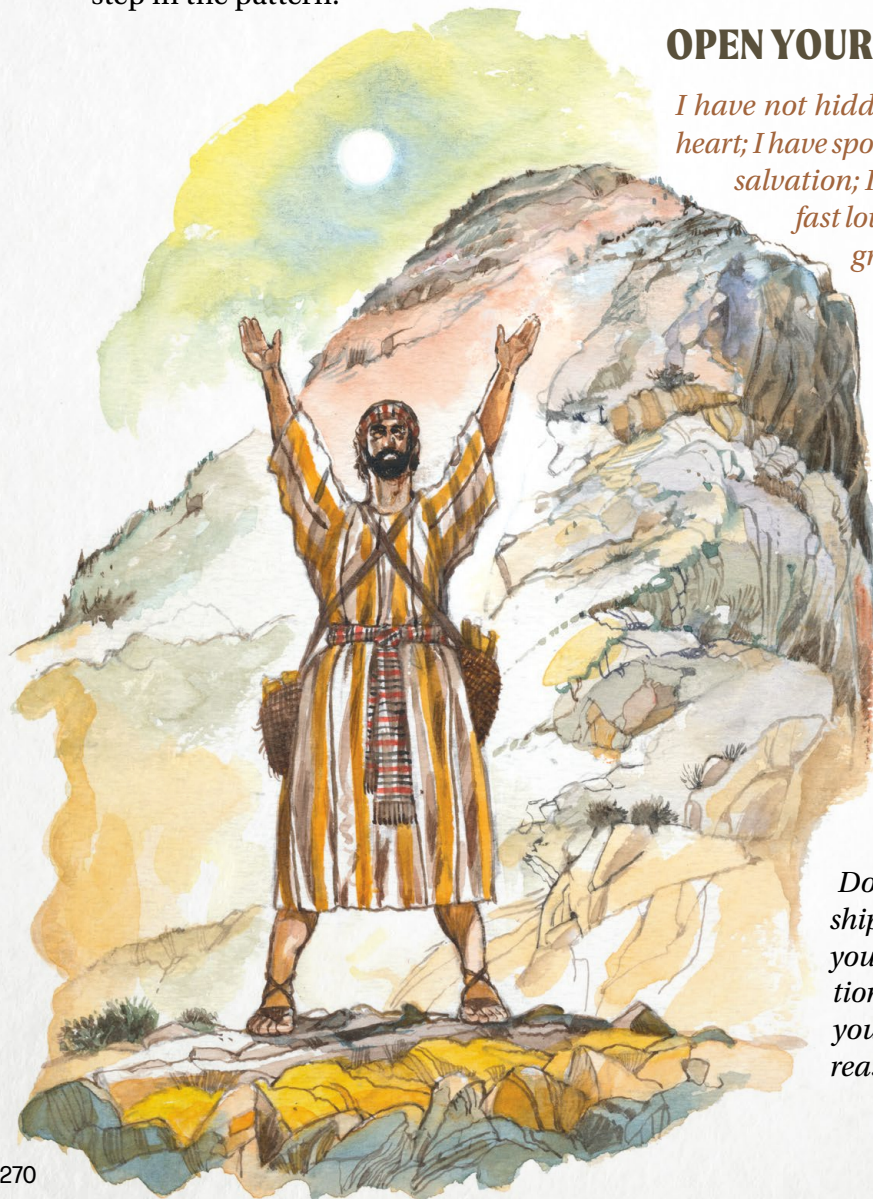
When we see LORD written in all capital letters, what name of God is that? LORD is the way the English Bible writes Yahweh, God's personal name. The writer of this psalm knows Yahweh. He has a personal relationship with God. *What does Yahweh mean?* The name Yahweh tells us that **God is sovereign, self-sufficient, eternal, almighty, and unchanging.** He is the covenant God of Israel. No matter how we feel, God's people can look to God and remember who He is and what He has promised His children. We can remind ourselves of the truth. When we see Yahweh, our problems and feelings become very small compared to the greatness and goodness of God. God will work for His children! That leads to the next step in the pattern:

OPEN YOUR MOUTH: PRAISE GOD

I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart; I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation; I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation. (Psalm 40:10)

Pour out your heart to God. Lift up your eyes to see the greatness of God and His sure promises. Then open your mouth in praise to God for His faithfulness, help, and deliverance. The psalms show us that if we are a child of God, we always have a reason to praise Him. **He is the faithful, unchanging God, the great and mighty warrior who fights for His people, and the coming King who will rule with goodness forever!**

Do you have a personal relationship with Yahweh? Can you tell him your hurts, fears, failures, frustrations, victories, joys, and hopes? Do you believe that there are always reasons to trust and praise God?



Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing! Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he
who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to
him; bless his name! For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100)

MAKING YOU WISE FOR SALVATION

What does this chapter tell us about God? Talk about and apply the **biblical truths** in **bold** text.

Salvation Thread: God is worthy of praise. God promised to send the Messiah, who would rule forever in righteousness.

Ask Dad or Mom to share a favorite psalm. Share one of your favorites. Why is it a favorite?

Talk About: *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)*

There are different kinds of psalms—thanksgiving, praise, remembrance (tell of God's work), lament (express suffering or struggles), wisdom, trust, celebration. *Why are there different kinds?* Can you find some of these kinds of psalms?

Pray: Thank God for giving us His Word and the book of Psalms.

Think About: Why is there always reason to praise God? Put into practice the pattern in the psalms.

Memorize: Psalm 23, 100, or 121

*For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction,
that through endurance and through the encouragement of the
Scriptures we might have hope.—Romans 15:4*

The glorious account of creation and the sobering account of the flood; the scattering of peoples and a people becoming a nation; a burning bush that is not extinguished and an offering consumed by fire from heaven; a giant killed by a boy's stone and a boy brought back to life through a prophet's prayer; water from a rock and bread from heaven—the pages of this book are filled with stories from the Bible, all of them absolutely and eternally true, telling one grand story. More than a storybook, this book displays God's manifold character as well as His glorious deeds, righteous commands, sure promises, warnings through the prophets, and plan of redemption.

More Than a Story takes children on a chronological journey through the Bible, exploring both the breadth and depth of Scripture. Key doctrines of the Christian faith are emphasized and clearly explained, all leading to the glorious realities of the gospel. Actual texts of Scripture are woven into each chapter, exposing children to the variety of literary genres, events, people, places, and themes of the Bible. Written in an interactive style, it enables parents and children to engage in conversations addressing the mind, heart, and will, encouraging children to “set their hope in God” (Psalm 78:7).

*Above all, More Than a Story was written to
inspire the worship of God for the glory of God!*

*All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you,
O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do
wondrous things; you alone are God.—Psalm 86:9–10*

Sally Michael is a co-founder of Truth78 and has authored curricula and books marked by a passion for developing God-centered resources for the spiritual development of children. For 16 years, Sally served as minister for children at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota under the leadership of John Piper and of her husband, David. Sally and David live in Indianapolis, Indiana, where they continue to spread a passion for the discipleship of the next generations through the ministry of Truth78. They enjoy spending time with their daughter Kristi, daughter Amy and her husband Gary, and three grandchildren.

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