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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

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Thou Shalt Call His Name Jesus.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the times of Jewish marriages 2,000 thousand years ago when a man and woman became betrothed, they made their promises to be faithful and true to each other for the rest of their lives. Although they were known as husband and wife, the bridegroom lived in his father's house while he prepared a new home for his new family. This home preparation usually took about a year.

If, however, the bride had been unfaithful to her husband during those 12 months, the bridegroom was entitled to divorce her. And this was the only period throughout the husband's lifetime that God recognized the husband's right to divorce his wife.

When it became obvious to Mary that she was expecting a baby, she told her betrothed husband Joseph. He was most unhappy about the situation. There was only one conclusion to make: Mary had been unfaithful to him. Yet Joseph was unwilling to bring Mary public disgrace and resolved to fix the matter with a secret divorce.

While he was thinking it over, an angel came to him in a dream and explained to him about the special baby Mary was carrying. Joseph was told what he should do: take Mary as his wife and name the baby Jesus, which is the Greek form of the name Joshua that means 'Saviour'. Mary and Joseph went ahead with the wedding but there was no physical marriage relationship between them until after the baby Jesus was born.

Mary and Elizabeth were cousins but they came from different tribes. Mary was from the tribe of Judah while Elizabeth was from Levi. This meant there must have been some intermarrying between the tribes. Although many years older than Mary, Elizabeth humbly and graciously put herself beneath Mary in importance because Mary was going to give birth to the Son of God!

When the two women greeted each other, the Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Elizabeth blessed Mary because Mary had believed the message from God about the coming birth of the Messiah. Mary responded to Elizabeth's blessing in praise to God. Although she felt unworthy of the honour given to her, Mary spoke of God's goodness and quoted from a number of Old Testament passages.

At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, written primarily for the Jewish people, the ancestral line of Jesus was traced from the royal line of King David through his step-father Joseph. His genealogy is traced forward from Abraham and shows His relationship to the Jewish people. This is why the writer Matthew didn't go back any further than Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus' real genealogy through Mary was given at His baptism in Chapter 3. Here Jesus' genealogy followed backwards to Adam but it indicates that Jesus was the supposed son of Joseph. Joseph and Jesus, however, were not related by bloodlines. When checking both accounts, Joseph the husband of Mary, has been listed as being the son of Jacob in Matthew and son of Heli in Luke. As a man can't have two fathers, it is assumed that Heli was Joseph's father-in-law and Mary his daughter. It was unusual in these times to pay attention to the genealogy of a woman. Yet all this is very important because the Messiah had to be a descendent of King David.

When Mary travelled from Nazareth to the Judean hills to visit Elizabeth, she may have walked as far as 60 kilometres by herself. As society in recent times has become very security conscious, most parents or betrothed husbands wouldn't now agree to such a trip. But Elizabeth gave her a warm welcome. In the Scriptures, there are times when God used relatives to support each other for His work. Moses had his brother Aaron and his sister Miriam to help him. And now the Lord Jesus has a relative in the role of the forerunner to His ministry, known as John the Baptist.

Elizabeth gave birth to Jesus' cousin John and he was dedicated to the Lord on the 8th day. When Zechariah declared on a writing tablet that the baby's name was to be John, as the angel had told him to do, Zechariah's ability to speak returned at last. He praised God and thanked Him for this little boy. People all over the hill country heard about this child and wondered what he might grow up to be.

After Mary had returned to Nazareth, she tried to explain to her betrothed husband about the baby she was carrying. What other explanation could there be but that she had been unfaithful to him. How could Joseph possibly trust her? There had never before been a young woman who got pregnant without sexual intimacy with a man. Mary needed acceptance from Joseph and his help to rear this most important of all babies.

Joseph was worried that people would count the months back from when the baby was born and realize that the marriage customs had been broken. Gossip would destroy their good name and standing in the community. God lists gossip alongside such sins as greed, hate, envy and murder.

We need to remember always that what comes out of our mouths indicates what we are thinking in our hearts. So we must learn to keep a guard over what we say, for gossip tears down the reputation of others, especially as gossip can be twisted from the truth or be plain lies prompted by envy.

God came to Mary's rescue by sending an angel to appear to Joseph in a dream. Joseph accepted the situation, kept Mary as his wife and did his part in caring for God's precious little child.

In marriage, trust in one's partner is at the heart of the relationship and a necessity for lifelong mutual loyalty and friendship. If trust is damaged, it is often difficult to restore to its original glow. Even more important is to learn to trust in our Creator God.

A young woman went to a counsellor saying that she couldn't trust anyone. In the conversation, she said that she was flying to another city in a few days. The counsellor asked her how she had ordered her ticket. She replied that she had phoned the booking clerk and reserved a seat. He asked how she was getting to the airport. By taxi, she said.

The counsellor showed her that she trusted a booking clerk she didn't know to do the right thing and a taxi driver to take her to the right place. He further added that she was trusting her life to an airline pilot that she had never even met. If we didn't have a good level of trust in other people, we wouldn't do much at all. Life is a big teamwork effort and nothing much is achieved without it.

Many years ago, a missionary and his family worked in a small village in the African jungle. The missionary taught the children how to read and write, as well as what the Bible said. The children loved their teacher and after a couple of years, one child named Kimbu, asked the missionary's God to be his God too.

Kimbu's trust in God was tested by the other students. "Kimbu, you serve a strange God. Show me the God you serve," they asked. Kimbu bravely answered, "I cannot show you the God I serve, but I can show you the god you serve." With that he picked up a block of wood lying on the ground and with a few handfuls of mud made a face on it. "There," he said, "that's the dead god you serve."

The matter came up again a few days later. The missionary had given each child five marbles. As they hadn't seen such things before, they greatly valued them. Of course, some children stole marbles from the others and Kimbu told them that that was wrong.

The largest child said, "We can't even see your God, so how can He see us?" The child pointed to an idol at the edge of the school yard and said, "Our god sees us, but he doesn't care if we steal."

Kimbu took some mud and walked over to the idol. He rubbed mud over the eyes of the idol and said, "Your god can't see, so he must be a dead god if he lets me rub mud in his eyes." Kimbu was often teased, but God gave him the strength to stand these tests of trust in his invisible God. Later the other children began to respect him, although not all of them stopped their idol worship.

Many things in life besides our God cannot be seen with human eyes. Who can see happiness and kindness? We simply see the effects of such things in the response and behaviour of other people. Is our God worthy of complete trust? While we were still His wretched enemies, He loved us enough to send us His own dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to accept our sin debt owed to God and pay it for us. Jesus died and rose again to set us free. And how very thankful we should be!

When we trust in His role as our substitute, we commit our whole lives to Him in an ongoing relationship. This trust believes that God has our best interests at heart. When the good things we do benefits others, we receive the joy of being God's servant. When we realize that to disobey God brings harm to us, we will be more guarded against being disobedient and sinning.

In the last New Testament book of Revelation, Chapter 4, it says of God: “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power. For you created all things.” God deserves our praise because He has the highest authority there is and keeps everything under His control. Don’t neglect His free offer of clearing your sin debt. If you don’t let Him pay for you now, you will still have it on Judgment Day. But it will be too late then to try to have it removed. So pray to Jesus right away!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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