



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS INC.

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1579 ~ Back to Jerusalem.

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

Sometimes an Australian family will decide to travel around their vast country to visit important places and show their children the history of their homeland. The family's father often takes time off from his job for a year and prepares a caravan for the tour. The children can't miss out on school, so arrangements are made for them to do their lessons by correspondence. When all is ready, the family sets off. Sometimes the younger children don't understand the adventure that they are planning to do. Only a few hours into the journey, such a child will ask their mum and dad: "Are we nearly there yet?"

This same question must have been on the lips of each Israelite child making the long journey back from Babylon to their home city Jerusalem. The people rejoiced that they were free to leave exile in Babylon and return to their own country.

The excitement of starting out on such a long trip may have soon turned into fear: fear of the unknown and unexpected troubles ahead. In the evenings after the tents had been put up for the night, stories from Israel's past history were taught to the children.

It was also a habit of the Israelite people to sing songs as they journeyed along. In the time of Jesus, the people sang 15 psalms as they travelled from their homes to go to Jerusalem for the festivals of worship. These were called the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Psalms 120 to 134 in our Bibles are the songs that they sang. And what encouragement they can be to all of us when we too, are going through tough or uncertain times.

A return from captivity meant a lot to the Israelites as they travelled towards Jerusalem. Some had seen the city when they were young. Many had not and relied on the stories told to them of how the temple, king's palace and protecting walls had looked. The people had high hopes of a new beginning in this new stage of their lives.

When we look at the history of most nations around the world, there's usually a noticeable rise to power and importance as a trading nation, followed by problems within the nation and then a slow decline. Most of these nations never come to world leadership again. From a human point of view, the history of the world goes from one meaningless crisis to the next. But God has a loving and grand plan through all of history and He's preparing a people who will live with Him for all eternity .

Was it God's plan for Israel to return to the greatness it once had held in the earlier days of the kings David and Solomon? Those returning to Israel hoped so, because they worshipped the great Creator God who allows second chances. They only had to think back to King Manassah who sat on the throne of Judah for 55 years. He was a very wicked king until he humbled himself before God and decided to follow God's way. God forgave him and then extended his reign.

But when the people's journey ended at Jerusalem, their high hopes were dashed and turned into disappointment. They surveyed the broken down walls of the city, the destroyed buildings and wrecked Temple. Disappointment must never lead to despair, defeat or self-pity. As recorded in the second chapter of the book of Ezra, some of the heads of the families gave freewill offerings for the Temple to be rebuilt on its site. After this, the people moved out to live in their own towns.

But they returned to Jerusalem for the nation's worship celebrations, as listed in the Law of Moses. When all the preparations for the rebuilding of the Temple were made, the people gathered together again to worship God and see the Temple's foundation laid. The younger people shouted for joy that the work on the Temple had started but the old people who had seen Solomon's Temple wept loudly. They were very disappointed that this new Temple would be so much smaller than the one that was destroyed.

How can we overcome the disappointments of life? No one ever gets everything they want in life. An attitude of thankfulness for what we do have though, always helps. Also, for those who trust their lives to God, they have the added assurance that God has plans to bring good out of every bad situation He's permitted in their lives. In Romans, Chapter 8, it says: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God."

When God knows that a certain situation could arise, from which He would be unable to turn to good, He would not permit it to happen. No matter what happens to you, God is committed to working good out of it and because of that, it is possible to thank Him for everything that happens to you.

While in a Nazi prison camp, Corrie Ten Boom told her sister at prayer time one evening that she couldn't give thanks to God for all the fleas troubling them in their room. Much later, she found out that one of the reasons for the guards not mistreating them was that these very same fleas were protecting them and driving away the guards. From then on, Corrie frequently thanked God for those troublesome fleas!

After the Bible, the world's second most read and published book is called "Pilgrim's Progress", first printed in 1678. This story has been translated into 200 languages and has never been out of print. It's a story with both a literal and underlying meaning. A man called Christian sets out on a lifetime journey to go to heaven. Along the way, he meets a lot of people, most of whom try to stop him or make his journey even more difficult.

The book's author John Bunyan, grew up in England and earned his living by moving from place to place repairing cooking pots and pans. In those times, only a few people could afford to buy a new pot when a hole appeared in the bottom of their old one. Before he was converted to Christ, John Bunyan had a reputation for using so many swear words that he constantly was swearing. But when John became a Christian, his habits also changed completely and he swore no longer. In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossian church, he taught: "No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. Do not lie to one another, for you have put off the old self with its habits and have put on the new self."

In this same period of history, it depended on which religion the king of the country followed if preaching of men like Bunyan was made legal or not. For his insistence upon preaching in private meetings, John Bunyan spent a number of prison terms in the local jail. However, not everyone was sympathetic to the changing laws of the land.

The old jailor was so impressed by Bunyan that he let Bunyan out of the jail in the evenings to attend meetings and preach. Then he let him back into jail when he returned. John Bunyan never broke the trust of the old man. During his periods in jail, John Bunyan wrote both parts of *Pilgrim's Progress*. In the second section of writing, Christian's wife Christiana and their children followed along the same path that Christian had followed. Although she met a new set of characters and achieved victory in reaching heaven, the second section is not as well known as the first.

All of us are on a lifelong journey. God knows how many years each person will spend here on earth yet we don't. We need to prepare for the next life now while we are able to. Some people, however, don't bother but this is very foolish. The end of our earthly life takes us through the door of death into one of two eternal worlds: either heaven or hell.

There's no middle place where the undecided can stay. The group of people heading for hell are proud, self-sufficient and do not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered on the cross of Calvary to pay for their sins.

Instead, they reject Him as their Saviour. But the group of people going to heaven trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their redeemer from sin and believe the words of Scripture. Have you settled your eternal future yet? Pray to the Lord Jesus today and thank Him for all His blessings.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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