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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1796 ~ Hagar and Ishmael.

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

Do we make the same mistakes over and over again? It's been well said that those who don't learn the lessons of history are forced to repeat them. And although Abraham was severely rebuked by Pharaoh in Egypt when he was 75 years old for passing off his wife as his sister, again, Abraham proceeded to do the same thing with Abimelech, the king of the city of Gerar when he was 99 years old. Gerar was located on the southwest border of Canaanite territory near Gaza.

And this time, even Sarah lied. Why did this couple do this? The easy answer is that they were human. The Bible shows us both the virtues and weaknesses of the people recorded in its pages. And this should be an encouragement to us; we don't have to be perfect to find acceptance with God. Instead, we need to believe that Jesus is perfect and that He can represent us and make us holy before God, His loving Father in heaven.

It's true of every Christian that we have certain sins that easily capture and entangle us. If we're going to be the kind of Christians God wants us to be, we must obey the words of 1 Peter, Chapter 2: "Lay aside all evil." Also in Romans, Chapter 6, "Don't let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lust." All fleshly lusts or desires war against the believer's soul and make us unavailable for God's service. Of course, we can't overcome sin in our own strength but need to rely on God's Holy Spirit to help us.

As for Abraham, God protected Sarah despite her and Abraham's lies, and He gave warnings to King Abimelech that he must restore Sarah to her husband.

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In life, you may meet someone who does the same as Abraham did by telling half-lies. Just for example, Christians may tell you that the word 'rapture' isn't in the Bible. They imply that if you believe in a rapture, you hold a vain hope in something that's non-existent. The rapture will happen when Jesus returns to the air to take up out of the world all those who love Him and obey Him.

The word 'rapture' isn't in the Bible because it's from a Latin word 'rapturo', and not a Greek one. The Apostle Paul wrote all his letters in Greek. The Greek word is 'harpazo', which is found in 2 Corinthians Chapter 12, Verse 2 and 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 4, Verse 17, and both 'rapturo' and 'harpazo' mean 'caught up'.

The catching up or rapture of all those who believe in Christ will happen on God's time schedule. Some believe it'll happen before the Bible's 7-year Tribulation period; others believe it's possible at other times too. This brings a question into sharp focus: will the Lord Jesus be coming back once or twice?

There are no warning signs or events that the Bible gives that will take place just before the Lord Jesus comes to catch-up His bride from earth and meet Him in the air. However, the Lord Jesus did teach His disciples to watch for His return. In Luke, Chapter 12, He said: "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

In early church times, the Apostle Paul wrote in Titus, Chapter 2, that believers in Christ "should give up ungodly living and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this world, as we wait for the blessed Day we hope for, when the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ will appear." And we're to be ready at all times.

Some in the church at Thessalonica at that time had the wrong idea about the return of Jesus and they'd given up their jobs in anticipation. Paul wrote his second letter to them to say that there had to be a 'falling away' or an apostasy to come first. Apostasy is not new, as Paul wrote about it in his letters. Have there been any signs of apostasy over the past 50 years? Apostasy is turning away from the truth and rebelling against God. The test for apostasy is doctrine. Your doctrinal beliefs determine your entire walk with God. They determine who you believe Jesus to be, how you worship Him and what you expect from Him.

Too few Christians actually study their Bibles and test themselves to see if they're on the right path or not. Mostly they are too busy to spend time on those things that have only eternal consequences. The here and now is far more pressing and too important to neglect.

To make things easier for themselves, many Christians would rather believe what men have to say about the Bible than to read it for themselves! And in doing so, they may slide into error, then into heresy and eventually into apostasy. We as Christians are instructed to question and "test the spirits." We should be willing to take the time to study the Bible. In 2nd Timothy Chapter 2, it says: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God; a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5 says: "Put all things to the test: keep what is good and avoid every kind of evil."

The Bible is our guide to everything we think, say and do. There are many doctrines out there in churches that are not Biblical. They're either extra biblical or man-made. This is what the Bible calls false doctrine. Paul told the Church at Rome to avoid those who do not hold to the doctrine he taught. Those who teach that doctrine isn't important aren't fit to be church leaders, yet many are. When Jesus comes to take away His beloved people, He won't be taking everyone in every church; it will be only those who are actively trusting in Him and depending on Him to live the Christian life.

Many churches around the world are full of false doctrine and apostasy and their leaders teach the doctrine of demons as opposed to God's doctrine of truth in the Bible.

In 1st Timothy, Chapter 4, Paul says: "The Spirit says clearly that some people will abandon the faith in later times; they will obey lying spirits and follow the teachings of demons. Such teachings are spread by deceitful liars, whose consciences are dead, as if burnt with a hot iron." Has the great falling away in the churches already happened? Sadly, in many places, it has and people don't want to hear that they need to be ready to meet the Lord, for this might mean that they need to change their ways and align with the Bible. There is only one way to heaven and that is through Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures.

After the true believers have departed the earth with Jesus and gone to heaven, many Christians believe that there'll be a time when the Antichrist, as Satan's representative, will arise. He will rule the earth and tolerate no dissent. When the Antichrist confirms the already-made treaties with Israel and surrounding nations, the Bible indicates there will follow a 7-year period of God's intense anger upon the earth. This time refers to the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy in Chapter 9 of his book of Daniel, and this is actually referring to 7 years of testing for the Jewish people before a national redemption of Israel.

Following this dreadful time, the Lord Jesus will send his angels to gather all the wicked people still living on the earth and take them away for judgment. Can you see there are two comings for the Lord Jesus, the first to the air above the earth and the second to stand on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem? At the Rapture, the Lord Jesus Himself comes for His believers but at the second coming, He will defeat His enemies, restore the earth to its original condition and set up His 1,000-year reign with believers left on the earth at the end of the Tribulation.

Rather than fearing what is to come, we are to be faithful until Christ returns. Like Abraham, we have to wait patiently for God's promises to come true. Instead of fearing dark times ahead, we're to be lights in this world as we watch and wait and pray. In Luke, Chapter 12, the Lord Jesus taught that there's a special reward for all those servants of Christ who are awake and ready at His return.

In Romans, Chapter 10, Verse 13, it says: "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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