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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1876 ~ David's Courtesy Rejected.

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

Today's *Bible Adventure* is about rejection. How do we feel when we're rejected? Imagine the life of a two-month-old baby named Demetrius, who was rejected by his mother so badly that she gave him acid in his milk bottle to kill him. His face was eaten by the acid and he had to have many surgeries to fix things up as best as doctors could. He was never able to smell and his face remained disfigured. He lived in an orphanage until he was five years old, before his grandmother took him back to care for him. He grew up hating his mother, who had gone to prison for what she'd done to him.

Because he looked different from the other children at school, Demetrius was ridiculed, bullied and rejected. As he grew older, he took out his anger with his fists on anyone who stared at his face. He was soon in trouble with the law and did stints in detention centres. When he turned 18, Demetrius was charged with attempted murder of another man and given a life term in prison. He was afraid to enter the adult prison and expected to live as best as he could by fighting.

However, one of the other prisoners in his cell started talking to him about Jesus, and showed him a Bible. Not only did Demetrius learn to read and write, something he'd never achieved in school, but he also heard about the love of Jesus for him personally. In time, he gave his life to Jesus and heard Jesus tell him: "I love you." Demetrius was very thankful for his salvation and learnt to forgive his mother.

After 5 years, Demetrius was released from prison for good behaviour. He went straight to his mother, who was now also out of prison, to tell her that he'd forgiven her. She was very thankful to hear her son's words, and to know that although she'd rejected him as a baby, he as an adult wasn't rejecting her. Demetrius went on to become a full-time evangelist and writer. How gracious is our God to care enough for a disabled person like Demetrius to teach him of God's love for him, in spite of his circumstances! God called Demetrius into work for the Kingdom of God.

Not all examples of rejection end so positively. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land of Canaan, God instructed them not to harass or contend with the people of Ammon, as He had given them possession of the land that they inhabited. However, the Ammonites didn't worship the God of the Israelites, so the Israelites were forbidden to intermarry with the Ammonites in order to stop the introduction of false god worship.

In King David's time, the descendants of Abraham's nephew, Lot, lived in the eastern region of the Dead Sea. They were called Moabites and Ammonites. The Ammonites were nomadic people who lived in modern-day Jordan and were known for their cruelty. When King Saul started his time as the king of Israel, Nahash the Ammonite had besieged an Israelite town and wanted to gouge out the right eye of all the men as a condition of surrender. However, Saul led an army against Nahash and defeated him.

During the time David was on the run from Saul, he took refuge in Ammon territory under the king Nahash, the same man Saul had defeated in Israelite territory. Although the Ammonites had been hostile to the Israelites during Saul's reign, David wished to maintain a friendship with them. When King Nahash died, David sent a delegation to his son, King Hanun, to express his sympathies.

Does it pay to upset other people needlessly? Instead of the new King Hanun of Ammon trying to keep a friendship with David going, he ordered discourtesy and embarrassment on the delegation that David had sent. Hanun's counsellors thought that David's men were spies only pretending a friendship, to gain advantage for war. David's delegation was treated as sometimes inflicted on prisoners of war. When this was reported back to King David, to spare his men further embarrassment, he told the delegation to wait at Jericho until their beards had grown back. Jericho had remained largely uninhabited since being defeated by Joshua.

Hanun's counsellors obviously thought that now was a good opportunity to go to war with David. But they had made a big mistake: Israel was much larger and stronger than Ammon; nor did they count on Israel's God being against them. To even up the numbers, they hired 20,000 Syrian soldiers and troops from other kingdoms too. According to 1st Chronicles, Chapter 19, Hanun paid these foreign troops 34 tonnes of silver so they would help fight against Israel.

For such a large battle, David sent out his entire army to fight against Ammon and its allies. David's commander-in-chief, Joab, and his brother, Abishai, divided up the Israelite army into two sections and worked out a battle plan. They agreed to help each other if they were being beaten by their enemies. Joab said: "And may the Lord do what is good in His sight." Joab then took his section of army towards the Syrians, who fled from him and the battlefield.

When the soldiers of Ammon saw the Syrians running away from the battle, they too, fled from Abishai and returned to their city. In 2nd Samuel, Chapter 10, it's recorded that Joab returned to Jerusalem. Although the Israelites had won the initial victory, it wasn't decisive enough to be final. The Ammonites and their hired soldiers regrouped. A very powerful king named Hadadezer, whom David had defeated earlier in Chapter 8 of 2nd Samuel, recruited even more Syrians from across the Euphrates River as well as from other smaller nations that he controlled.

In response, David himself led Israel's army across the Jordan River to fight Hadadezer's forces as they gathered on Israel's eastern border. Once again, the Israelite army overcame their enemy. When the kings of the various northern nations who'd been under Hadadezer's control saw that they'd been defeated, they surrendered to the Israelites and made peace with them. From then on, the Syrians were afraid to help the Ammonites fight the Israelites any more.

During the next spring, following the winter's rainy season and after the defeat of Hadadezer and the Syrians, David renewed his battle against the Ammonites, who were then without the extra hired Syrian soldiers. David sent Joab to command the Israelite army, and then destroyed the Ammonites. They also laid siege to the city of Rabbah and overthrew this too. In 1st Chronicles, Chapter 20, Joab's troops gained a large amount of spoil from that city. It says that David took Rabbah's king's crown from his head, even though the king isn't named. So what happened to the Ammonites as a people? They aren't heard of anymore past the 2nd Century AD, and seemed to have been absorbed into Arabian society.

Does it pay to upset other people needlessly? Some might argue that if King Hanun hadn't started a war with Israel, some other nations would have. People often take risks in the hope of getting more of something or something better. But the risk is that they themselves might also have to lose everything. Hanun did lose in more ways than one. He may not have been in war at all if he'd shown friendship to David in the 1st place. He certainly lost a lot of money, as well as many soldiers' lives, and possibly his throne.

Many people fear rejection because they desire the approval of other people and what this can give them. Some accept rejection as a challenge to get motivated. But sometimes human rejection may actually be God's divine protection and we should look at it this way. Although we may be rejected here on earth, our supreme desire is to be accepted in heaven by the King of kings, and the only one who has the authority to send our souls to hell.

The greatest rejection in the Scriptures is when the Lord Jesus came to His own Israelite people, those who'd been chosen by God, to be rejected by them. This rejection of Christ the Messiah was prophesied in Isaiah, Chapter 53, where it says: "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ... He was despised and we did not esteem Him." Jesus taught openly in Mark, Chapter 8, that "the Son of Man (that is, Jesus Himself) must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and after three days rise again."

In Psalm 118, it further says: "The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all." Jesus quoted this same verse in Matthew, Chapter 22, and when Jesus had finished telling a parable, the chief priests and Pharisees knew that Jesus was referring to them as the mistaken builders. They weren't at all pleased to hear this, but were afraid to do anything because the people thought Jesus to be a prophet.

Rejection doesn't have to be permanent. It wasn't for Jesus – as He rose from the grave like He said He would. His victory over all sin and death can be our victory too. Just as Jesus trusted His Father in heaven with His spirit while dying on a Roman cross for the sins of the world, as well as you and me, we too must trust Jesus completely with our lives here on earth. We need to ask Him for forgiveness from all our wrongdoing; for Him to take control of us and to help us to live for Him each day. When we do this, Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit to indwell within us and guide us to all truth, as shown in the Bible. Jesus has promised that one day, He is coming back for His believers to take them out of this evil world, to live with Him forever.

Jesus spoke about this in Luke, Chapter 17, after his prediction of His own suffering and death on the cross. He said: "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

Jesus spoke of everything in society going along as usual, and implied that His return to earth would catch the world out by surprise. We're now currently living in an age where nothing is sacred. Every institution, whether it be marriage, the family, technology, commerce, worship, sexuality, and so forth, everything has already, or is in the process of being corrupted. We are witnessing an all-out assault on everything that God considers good, or at least necessary for humanity to continue living with a reverence and fear of the Lord. The world seems to be racing towards only doing evil continually, and evil is now the new normal. But living in a world of evil adversely affects Christians who wish to see God's truth and life prevail instead. In Matthew, Chapter 24, Verse 12, it says: "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold."

The fact that things are rapidly deteriorating on a global scale, means the window for this age is closing very soon. Attacks on the Gospel of Jesus Christ are ramping up to levels not seen since the days of the Roman Caesars. But even so, in Matthew, Chapter 24, Verse 14, it says: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Are you ready to meet the Lord Jesus when He returns? If not, today is the time to receive His righteousness and through His Holy Spirit, stand steadfastly for Him.

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The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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