

The Life of Jesus

by Joelee Chamberlain

Would you like to hear some more stories from the Bible? Well, the stories that I like best are the stories of the life of Jesus while He was here on earth, so why don't I tell you some of those now? I know you already know lots of stories about the life of Jesus, but it's so nice to hear about our Lord Jesus over and over again, isn't it?

But before we start in telling some stories about Jesus, where in the Bible do we find these stories about Jesus? Let's think about it a minute. Well, it isn't in the very beginning of the Bible, is it? Remember, first of all in the Bible there was the beginning of everything in the book of Genesis, wasn't there? In Genesis it tells us that God made the earth and sky and everything in them, and He made Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve disobeyed, did the first sin, and ate the fruit they had been told by God not to eat, so they had to leave the Garden of Eden. Lots and lots of people were born, and they were very wicked, so God washed the world clean again with the Flood, didn't He? But who didn't die in the Flood? That's right, Noah and his wife and his 3 sons and their wives. God kept them and lots of animals safe in the ark, didn't He? After the Flood, more people were born and after a while Abraham was born. Abraham had a son named Isaac, and Isaac had a son named Jacob. And God gave Jacob another name, Israel, remember? Jacob had 12 sons. Joseph and Judah and Levi and Benjamin were some of those 12 sons. Joseph became a great leader in the land of Egypt, remember? And then later Jacob and his family went down into Egypt to have food during a famine, and there in Egypt God made these few people into a lot of people, a mighty nation. We call them the children on Israel or the Hebrews or the Jews, don't we? And that is all in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, isn't it?

Then next in the Bible in the book of Exodus, it tells how the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh, made slaves of the children of Israel and was very mean to them. Finally God sent Moses to take the children of Israel out of Egypt and lead them to the promised land of Canaan. But the people didn't trust God to take care of them in the promised land, so they had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, didn't they? In the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, it tells about that wandering in the wilderness and how God took care of them there, remember? Then after that in the book of Joshua, the next leader, Joshua, took the children of Israel into the promised land of Canaan, and God let the children of Israel conquer the land. This land was later called the land of Israel. The Jews, the children of Israel, lived there. Then came the book of Judges. The book of Judges tells how sometimes the Hebrews, the children of Israel, followed God and He blessed them, and sometimes they disobeyed God and worshiped idols and He had to punish them and remind them that they needed to turn back to the real God. So God had their enemies come in and conquer them, but then when the children of Israel turned back to God and asked Him to forgive them, God sent judges who delivered them from their enemies, didn't He? Who were some of those judges, do you remember? Ehud and Deborah and Gideon and Samson were four of the judges, weren't they?

Later in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the Jews had kings. Do you remember who some of those kings were? David and Solomon were the two greatest kings, weren't they?

Well, during the time of the later kings the children of Israel began really disobeying God and worshipping idols a whole lot. Well, finally to punish the Jews and to make them see how bad they were being and to them turn back to the Lord, the only real God, the Lord had Nebuchadnezzar come in and conquer them and take them away to Babylon. That's when the prophet Daniel lived and wrote his book, and many other prophets wrote books of the Bible then. Then is when there is the story of Daniel in the lions' den, there in Babylon, and also the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. In Babylon the Jews turned back to God, and after 70 years God took them back to the land of Israel, just as He had promised them He'd do. (God always keeps His promises, doesn't He?) All of those true stories are in the Old Testament part of the Bible. But, though there are many prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament, we don't find the stories of the life of Jesus here on earth in the Old Testament, do we? So where do we find the stories of the life of Jesus? That's right, in the New Testament.

You see, a long time after the children of Israel left Babylon and went back to the land of Israel comes the New Testament part of the Bible, and that is where we have the stories of Jesus, isn't it? We can read about Jesus' life in 4 books in the New Testament. Do you remember what these books are? Yes, they are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We call those books that tell about the life of Jesus the four Gospels. "Gospel" means "good news", and the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have the good news about the Lord Jesus and how Jesus made a way for us to be able to go to heaven and be with God forever and ever when we die.

Now, have you ever wondered why there are four different books in the Bible that tell about Jesus when He was here on earth and how that often the different books tell the same story about Jesus and other times they tell about different things in the life of Jesus? Why would that be, do you think? Well, if you and 3 other children went to a big party, when you got home, you'd all want to talk about it, wouldn't you? One of you might tell about what you had eaten at the party. Another of you might tell about a gift you'd received at the party and that there was a cat there. One of you might tell about how nice someone had been to you and about the pretty clothes that the children wore. And the last of you might tell about the food too, but also about how there were both a cat and a dog at the party. You would all have been at the same party, wouldn't you? And you would have told some of the same things about the party but also some different things about the party, right? And that's the way it is with the 4 Gospels. God had these 4 men each write a Gospel, and sometimes they wrote about the same thing and sometimes they wrote about different things. But they were all writing about Jesus when He was here on earth.

Now, you remember that all through the Old Testament God had told the people through prophets that a Saviour would come and save them from their sins, to make a way for them to go to heaven and be with God when they died. This Saviour was called the Messiah or the Christ. (Messiah and Christ both mean the same thing in two different languages.) So people were looking for this Christ, this Saviour, because they knew that God always keeps His promises. And we know that Jesus is that Saviour, don't we? So now let's talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Let's tell some stories about Jesus, okay?

We'll start at the very beginning of Jesus' time here on earth, when He was born. You

remember the story of when Jesus was born, don't you? It's such a nice story, and we especially remember it at Christmas time. But let's tell it again, all right?

Well, to start with, one day an angel named Gabriel came to an old man named Zacharias. Zacharias and his old wife, Elizabeth, had no children at all, though they had wanted some. Zacharias was a priest, and the angel came to Zacharias one day while he was working in the temple. Gabriel told him, "Zacharias, your wife is going to have a little baby boy, and you will name him John." Then the angel Gabriel said to Zacharias, "Your son John will grow up and tell people about the Lord; John will make the people ready for the Lord to come." Of course, the Lord that Gabriel said John would talk about was Jesus. (We call this John "John the Baptist," because when he got to be a big man, he would baptize people.)

A little later the angel Gabriel went to a young woman from the tribe of Judah named Mary. Mary was the great-great-granddaughter of David (this is the same David who had killed the giant Goliath and later had become king). Gabriel said to Mary, "You are going to have a baby boy and you will name Him Jesus. He will someday be a mighty king and reign forever."

Mary said, "But I'm not married, so how could this happen, that I have a baby?" But Gabriel told her that God by the Holy Spirit would just make Jesus grow inside of her and that Jesus would be called the Son of God. Then Gabriel said to Mary, "Your old cousin, Elizabeth, is finally going to have a baby, too." Mary said, "Let God do what He wants to do." Then Mary was so excited, and she went to see her cousin Elizabeth, Zacharias' wife, and they were both very happy together about their babies that would be born. They knew that both of the babies would be special, but Mary's baby, Jesus, would be especially important. After all, Jesus is God and the Saviour as well as just a person! Jesus is the only one who was ever both God and a man at the same time, isn't He?

Well, Mary was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. He was a very good man. God told Joseph about the baby Mary was going to have, and God told Joseph to get married to Mary right away and not wait until later as they had planned. So Joseph did; he married Mary right away and took care of her. And after a while it was almost time for Jesus to be born. But Joseph and Mary had to make a long journey then. They didn't have cars like we do, so it was hard making that trip. But they finally got to where they were going, to a town named Bethlehem. (This Bethlehem is also called the City of David, because it's where King David was born many, many years before.) Anyway, when Joseph and Mary got to Bethlehem, they tried to get a room in the inn, the hotel, but the rooms were all full. So they went out to where the animals were kept. And there Jesus was born, and his mother Mary put him in the manger for a bed. A manger is where food for animals is put. Now, Jesus is God, and He had made the whole world and the sky and everything in the sky and world and ocean, but when He came as a person in order to make a way for us to go to heaven, He was born in where animals were kept!

Well, it was night time, and there were shepherds outside in the fields watching over their sheep, and suddenly an angel of God came to them. There was a bright light all around them. This all really scared the shepherds! But the angel told them, "Don't be afraid!" Then the angel said to the shepherds, "I have good news for you! The Saviour, Christ the Lord, has been born in Bethlehem! You

can go see Him lying in the manger." Then a whole bunch of angels were there and began singing praises to God.

Well, the shepherds were so excited that they just ran off to see this baby who was to be the Saviour, and they worshipped Him. We worship God, don't we? And God is the only thing that we must worship, and Jesus is God, so He is to be worshipped, isn't He? Then the shepherds went and told lots of people about Jesus.

Later Joseph and Mary and Jesus moved to a house there in Bethlehem. Now, some wise men who lived far away saw a special star and some way they knew that it meant that the king of the Jews had been born. That would be Jesus, wouldn't it? Jesus will some day be not only the King of the Jews but the King of the whole world, won't he? Anyway, these wise men made a long journey to bring this new King presents. They finally got to the house in Bethlehem and worshipped Jesus, who was a big baby by now, and they gave Him their presents of gold, frankincense (a special kind of perfume stuff), and myrrh (a special, expensive spice). Then the wise men went back to their own homes. The bad king of Jerusalem, Herod, heard about this baby who was to be the king of the Jews, and Herod tried to kill baby Jesus, but God saved Jesus by warning Joseph to take Him away from there.

Well, Jesus grew and grew, just like any baby and any boy would. But, remember, Jesus was God as well as a baby and then a boy and then a man. And Jesus was different from us in another way, too. Jesus never in His whole life did anything bad; He never sinned at all. All of us sin sometimes, even when we try not to sin, but Jesus never did sin.

When Jesus had grown to become a big man, John the Baptist, (Zacharias and Elizabeth's son, remember?) was also a big man. John the Baptist began getting the people ready for Jesus, the Christ, by telling them that Christ was coming and that they should be sorry for their sins and to stop doing their sins. And the people who really wanted to follow God would come to John the Baptist, and he would baptize them. They were baptized to show other people that they were sorry for their sins and that they wanted to obey God and do what God said.

Well, one day Jesus came to where John the Baptist was, and John the Baptist knew that this was the Christ and the Saviour that they had all been waiting for. And John said to the people, "Look, there's the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" Jesus asked John to baptize Him, so John did. Just after Jesus had been baptized, God the Father spoke from heaven and said, "This is my Son whom I love and am very pleased with." And at the same time God the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and was there, too. And John the Baptist heard God the Father speaking from heaven and saw God the Holy Spirit come down like a dove onto Jesus who is God the Son. Remember, there is just one God, isn't there? But this one God has three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are all God, aren't they? That is hard to understand, I know, but it's true. We're just people, aren't we? So we can't understand everything about God. But when John baptized Jesus, all 3 persons of God were there for John to know about, and John heard the Father and saw the Son and saw the Holy Spirit.

Anyway, Jesus began to preach now and do miracles. Miracles are something very special that

regular people can't do unless God gives them special power. Jesus did these miracles to help people and to show who He really was. There were many sick people that Jesus made well. There were even some people who had died that Jesus made alive again. And two different times when a lot of people came to hear Him preach and got hungry, Jesus gave them lots of food from just a few little fish and a few pieces of bread. The people saw these miracles, and many believed on Jesus because of His miracles. Would you like for me to tell you about a few of the miracles Jesus did? All right.

Well, one day Jesus decided to go in a boat across a big lake called the Sea of Galilee. He and His disciples got into a boat, and some other boats went with them. Some of His disciples were fishermen and they were used to going out in boats. Well, Jesus fell asleep in the boat. Then suddenly a great big storm came up. There were terrible waves that were sweeping over the boat, but Jesus still slept on in the back of the boat. The disciples were afraid that the boat would sink, and they woke Jesus up. "Master, Master!" they said, "save us! Don't you care if we drown?!" Jesus woke up, and He sort of scolded the disciples. "Why do you have so little faith?" Jesus asked. "Why are you afraid?" Then what do you think Jesus did? Why, then Jesus just spoke to the wind and the waves. He said to them, "Be quiet! Calm down!" And what do you think happened then? The wind stopped blowing and the waves stopped being big!! You see, Jesus is God. Way back in the beginning of the world, Jesus had made the whole earth and He'd made the wind and the waves, hadn't He? So everything on the earth has to obey Him, don't they? Yes, even the wind and waves have to obey Jesus! Well, when the storm just suddenly stopped like that, Jesus' disciples were scared. "Why," they said to each other, "Jesus can even give orders to the wind and waves, and they obey Him!"

Did you like hearing about that miracle that Jesus did? Well, let's talk about two other miracles that Jesus did in one day, okay? Well, one day Jesus had been traveling by boat across the Sea of Galilee. He got out of the boat, and a whole bunch of people crowded around Him. An important man named Jairus came up to Jesus, and Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet and began begging him to come with him. "Please come with me," Jairus said. "My little girl is so sick that she is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will get all well."

So Jesus started going toward Jairus' house, and there was still a big crowd of people around Him, following Jesus. Well, in the crowd was a woman who had been sick for many years. This woman thought, "Oh, if I can just touch the edge of Jesus' robe, I'll get well." So she came up behind Jesus and just touched his robe. And what do you think happened? Why, right away she was well! That was a miracle, wasn't it? But even with that crowd of people all around Him, Jesus knew that the woman had touched Him. Jesus turned around and said, "Who touched me?" His disciples said, "What do you mean, who touched you; there's a whole crowd of people pushing around against you!" But Jesus knew that someone special had touched Him, and He was looking around. The woman knew that she was well now, so even though she was sort of scared, she came up to Jesus and fell down at His feet and told how she had touched Him to get well, and that now she was well. Jesus was very nice to her and told her that it was all right and that her faith had healed her.

Well, Jairus, whose daughter was so very sick, was still with Jesus while this was going on, and right about then some men came to Jairus from his house. "Your daughter is dead," they told Jairus, "don't bother the teacher any more."

Jesus heard this and said to Jairus, "Don't worry. Just believe, and she will be all right." And they went on to Jairus' house. When they got there, lots of people were crying. Jesus said to them, "Why are you crying like this? The girl isn't dead; she's asleep." But the people laughed at Jesus. They figured that they knew she was dead. But Jesus had the people all go out, and he took the girl's mother and father and His disciples who were with Him, and they went in to where the dead girl was lying. Jesus took the girl by the hand and said to her, "Little girl, get up." And what do you think happened to that dead girl? Why, right away she was alive, and she was well, and she got up!! That was another miracle! Jesus can do anything, can't He?! Well, then Jesus told her parents to get her something to eat! Wasn't Jesus kind?

Those are just three of the many miracles that Jesus did, stopping the storm, healing the sick woman and making the dead girl alive again. He did many, many more miracles. We don't have time here to talk about them, but you can read about them some time in the Bible. Now, do you remember where in the Bible you can read about them? That's right. In the New Testament, in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But let's tell some more stories about Jesus when He was here on earth, all right?

Well, Jesus traveled around in different places doing many more miracles and preaching about God and telling how to please God. Jesus had many people who traveled with Him, listening to Him preach and learning more about God from Him. We call these people disciples. A disciple means someone who learns from someone. There were some women with Jesus, too, who helped buy food for Him so that He could just preach and not have to stop and work for food. Finally Jesus chose out 12 men to be His special followers. He taught these men very carefully and got them ready to go out and preach after He Himself went back to heaven. These men we call the Apostles. Apostle means someone who is sent out, a messenger. These apostles were going to be sent out to teach about Jesus after Jesus went back to heaven. They were going to bring the message about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, to people. Some of these apostles were Matthew, Peter, James, and John. Matthew and John wrote two of the Gospel books in the Bible that tell about the life of Jesus when He was here on earth, the books named Matthew and John.

Jesus preached and taught and did miracles for over 3 years, then it was time for Him to do the main thing that He had come to earth to do. Do you remember what that was? Well, first, remember, we all do sins, so we need to be punished for them, don't we? And the punishment for our sin is that we can't go to heaven and be with God when we die, isn't it? But God loves us so much that He made a way that our punishment could be taken away from us and we can go to heaven when we die. Isn't that wonderful? God loves us so much! And that is the main reason that Jesus became a person as well as God and was born and lived on earth -- He came to make a way for us to have our sins and their punishment taken away so that if we trusted in Him, we could go to heaven to be with God when we die. In order for Jesus to take this punishment for us, though, Jesus would have to die for us; He would have to take our punishment for us. And God had a plan for this, just as God has a plan for everything. Let's talk about that now, all right?

Well, then, some of the wicked leaders of the people who hated Jesus got together and made a

plan to kill Jesus. They made up lies about Jesus. They arrested Jesus and took Him to the governor, the ruler there. The governor of the area was named Pilate, and Pilate didn't think Jesus had done anything wrong, but the wicked leaders kept bothering Pilate until finally Pilate said that Jesus would be killed. That was wrong of him, wasn't it? But remember, all of these wicked people were working out God's plan for Jesus to die for us, but they didn't know that.

So Jesus was taken out to where there were crosses, and He was put on one of the crosses. Yes, I'm afraid that this all hurt Jesus very much. And Jesus could have called for lots of angels to come stop the bad people, couldn't He? But Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to be hurt and to die for us, so that we could go to heaven to be with Him when we die.

Now, this all happened at Passover time; Jesus died on Passover. You remember about Passover, don't you? We heard about the first Passover in the book of Exodus, didn't we? Remember, Passover is the time when the Jews remembered that a long, long time before they had been slaves in Egypt and that God had passed over their houses and didn't kill their first born child if they had killed a lamb and put the blood of the lamb around their doorway and had stayed inside. Well, Passover was a picture of when God would forget our sins, pass over them, if we trust in the Lord Jesus. You see, the Bible calls Jesus our Passover Lamb, because He died for us; those lambs that were killed at Passover were a sort of picture of Jesus who would die for us. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. We are saved by His blood that was shed for us. God passes over our sins if we trust Jesus to save us.

Anyway, as Jesus was dying on the cross on that Passover day, suddenly the sun stopped shining for a while. Right there in the middle of the day it didn't shine for 3 whole hours. And when Jesus actually died, there was a big earthquake. Remember, Jesus had way back in the beginning of time made this sun and made the earth. Anyway, Jesus died. Some of His friends were there, and they were very sad. They didn't realize that this was actually a good thing for them, because it was part of God's plan to make a way to heaven for them and for us.

After Jesus was dead, two rich men came and took Jesus' body that was on the cross and buried His body in a new grave. Actually the grave was a cave. Then they rolled a big rock, a stone, in front of the cave's opening, and Jesus' friends all went home very, very sad. You see, they didn't know about the very happy thing that was going to happen in just 3 days! And that happy thing is what we celebrate at Easter time.

So let's talk about this happy thing, all right? Well, there were soldiers guarding the cave where Jesus was buried. And 3 days later, after Jesus had died and was buried, early in the morning before the sun was up, there was another big earthquake. Do you know what caused that earthquake? Why, it was an angel that came down from heaven and rolled that great big stone away from the cave and then sat on the stone!! And the cave was empty! Jesus wasn't in it anymore! The soldiers there were so scared!! Then they just ran away to tell the leaders what had happened!

Then just about that time the women who used to go with Jesus and His disciples came up to the cave. They found the stone rolled away, and they saw that the cave was empty! Jesus' body wasn't there! They thought someone had come and opened the cave and stolen His body away. But as the

women were looking around inside the cave, suddenly two angels were there with them and told them, "You're looking for Jesus; but He's not dead anymore! He's alive again!!" Being made alive again is called being "resurrected." We talk about the Resurrection of Jesus, and that means that He's not dead anymore. He's alive! And He's still alive today and will always be alive!

Well, the angel told the women, "Go quickly and tell the disciples this good news, that Jesus is alive and will see them!" Oh, the women were so happy! They were confused, too; everything was so strange. But they turned around and started running to tell the disciples, when Who should meet them but Jesus Himself!!! They fell down at His feet and worshipped Him, and He told spoke kindly to them and again told them to go tell the other disciples that He was alive. So they started running back into the city to tell the disciples.

Well, the disciples didn't believe the women. They thought, "How could Jesus be alive? We saw Him die." But later Jesus suddenly appeared to the disciples. At first they couldn't believe that He was really and truly alive, but He just ate some fish and honeycomb in front of them. "See," Jesus said, "if I weren't alive I couldn't be eating, could I?" Then they believed that Jesus was really alive again, and they were very, very happy!

After Jesus was resurrected, made alive again, He was seen by hundreds of other people, too. And Jesus taught His disciples many things. He told them that they needed to believe what the Bible said, and He reminded them of the many prophecies in the Old Testament about a Saviour and explained to them that since He was to be that Saviour, the Christ, the one who would make it so we could have our sins forgiven and go to heaven, that He'd had to die and then be made alive again, just as the prophets had said, and that He'd never die again. But He was going to go back to heaven very soon. And when He went back to heaven, God the Holy Spirit would come. They wouldn't be able to see the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit would be there and would help them. And then the apostles were to go everywhere and tell everyone about Jesus. They were to tell people that if they just believed that Jesus had died for them and was now alive and if they trusted Jesus and asked Jesus to take their sins away and to take the punishment for their sins, then Jesus would do that. Then when they died, then their spirits would be able to go to heaven and be with Jesus. All they had to do was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

After Jesus had been resurrected and talked to His disciples for some days, then He went back to heaven, but we'll talk more about that the next time I tell you stories when we talk about the book of Acts. But first, why did Jesus have to be resurrected, to be made alive again? Well, for one thing, Jesus is God, and God can't stay dead, can He? But by being made alive again and then staying alive, that showed just who Jesus is, that He is God, and that He had really taken the punishment for our sins.

But another thing, when Jesus was made alive again, it also was to show us that God promises in the Bible that if we trust the Lord Jesus, then after we die, our spirits, the part of us that thinks and loves and knows things, will go to heaven to be with Him forever and ever. But did you know that the Bible also tells us that Jesus is coming back? He is coming back as the king of everything. And then when He comes again as a king, we will be resurrected, that is, our bodies will be made alive again and that then even our bodies will be with Jesus forever and ever. You see, our spirits are the important part of us, and God made our bodies to hold our spirits. But even our bodies will be made alive again

when Jesus comes back, because that is the way that God made us to be, a body and a spirit. Isn't that exciting?!

Well, after being with His disciples for a few days, Jesus, the Christ, went back to heaven where He is now with God the Father. And though we can't see God the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit is here with us and helps us to understand about how the Lord Jesus died for us; and after we believe in Jesus, God the Holy Spirit helps us to be able to live more like how Jesus wants us to live. Because when we believe in the Lord Jesus, He is our King! King Jesus, the Christ, our God and Saviour!

There are many more things about Jesus in the Bible. But the most important thing in the whole Bible is that Jesus died for our sins and became alive again, and that if we just want to do what He wants us to do and ask the Lord Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. And then we will always be a child of God and will be able to be with Jesus forever and ever when we die. I pray that you will learn to trust Jesus and that you will ask Him to take your sins away and then that the Holy Spirit will help you to love Jesus more and more. And then some day we will all be together with Jesus in heaven. Won't that be wonderful? God really loves us a lot, doesn't He?

The next time we'll talk about how Jesus went back up to heaven and what his disciples did then. All right?