

THE BIBLE PICTURE BOOK

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT



COLOURED PICTURE BOOK
FOR THE NURSERY

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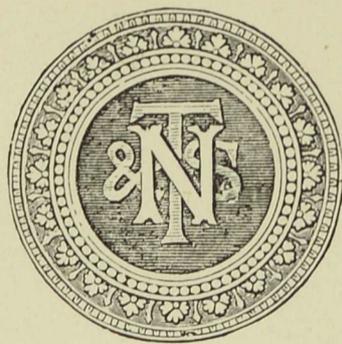
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THE
BIBLE PICTURE BOOK
(OLD TESTAMENT)

CONTAINING

1. The Story of Moses.
2. The Story of King David.
3. The Story of King Solomon.
4. The Story of Ruth.

WITH SIXTEEN COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS.



Thomas Nelson and Sons,
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.



THE FINDING OF MOSES.

THE STORY OF MOSES.



WHEN the Israelites first went to live in Egypt they were only a few people, who lived quietly and kept sheep and cattle.

But God loved the Israelites and blessed them. Their little children were strong and healthy, and they nearly all grew up to be men and women; and then there were a great many Israelites in Egypt,—so many that the Egyptians were afraid of them: for they thought that perhaps some day the Israelites might fight battles with them and overcome them, and have it all their own way in the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh the king of Egypt said, “These Israelites must be kept down. We will make them do all our hard work.” So he set them to make bricks and to build cities; and task-masters were set over them to keep them at work from morning to night.

But the Israelites were clever, useful people; and though they got no rest and never had a holiday, they still were strong and healthy, and their children grew and throve. So Pharaoh was more afraid of them than ever; for he thought there would soon be more Israelites in the country than Egyptians. And he gave an order that in future every little Israelite boy, as soon as he was

born, should be thrown into the river and drowned, so that he might never grow up to be a soldier who could fight the Egyptians.

After this cruel order had been given, one day a beautiful little Israelite baby-boy was born; and his father and mother hid him away where Pharaoh's servants might not find him.

But when he grew to be three months old they could no longer keep it secret that there was a baby in the house. Then his mother made a little basket of bulrushes, and painted it over with pitch, so that no water could get into it. And in the basket she laid her pretty baby, and she placed it among the reeds that grew on the brink of the river; and she told her little daughter to stay near and watch what should become of the little child.

Then King Pharaoh's daughter with her maids came down to the river to bathe; and she saw the basket, and sent one of her maids to fetch it. And when it was opened the baby cried, so that Pharaoh's daughter pitied him and loved him; and she said, "This is one of the Israelites' children."

The little sister, who was watching, saw that the king's daughter was full of pity for the baby, and she came near and said, "Shall I call one of the Israelite women to nurse that little child for you?"

Pharaoh's daughter said, "Do so."

So the girl went and brought her mother.

And Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay you."

So the mother took her own little boy and nursed him. And when he was big enough she gave him again to the princess, who called him Moses, and brought him up as her own son.

So the boy Moses grew up in a palace, and he was taught everything that the Egyptians knew.

But he never forgot that he himself was an Israelite, and he always loved his own people best. He was grieved for the troubles and the hardships of the Israelites (for the Egyptians treated them

worse and worse); and when he was grown up to be a man he took their part and tried to help them.

King Pharaoh was very angry with Moses, and tried to kill him, because he took part with the unhappy Israelites. But Moses ran away, and escaped into the land of Midian; and there he lived for forty years, keeping sheep for a man called Jethro.

But all that time Moses never forgot the Israelites and their bitter troubles, and how cruelly they were treated by the Egyptians. God also remembered the Israelites, whom he loved and had promised to bless, and he saw all the cruelty of Pharaoh and his task-masters.

One day, as Moses was tending Jethro's sheep, he led his flock to a wild, lonely place among the hills; and as he was feeding them there he lifted up his eyes, and saw a little way off from him a bush which seemed to be all on fire; but when he had watched it for a while he saw that the bush was not burned up, though the flame still continued bright and strong. So Moses went nearer, to see why it was that the bush was not burned up.

Then the voice of God spoke to him from the midst of the burning bush; and God said to him, "Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Then Moses put off his shoes from his feet, and he bent down very low, with his face to the ground; for he knew that God was speaking to him.

And God said, "I have seen the troubles of my people the Israelites who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry; and I am come to save them from the hands of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a large and beautiful and fruitful land, which I will give them for their own. And I will send you to Pharaoh to tell him to let my people go; and you shall lead them into the land that I will give them."

Moses was afraid when he heard of this great work that God

was giving him to do ; for he knew that it would be very hard not only to make Pharaoh listen to him, but also to get the Israelites to obey him and follow him. And he said, " Who am I, that I should do this ? "

But God comforted Moses, and told him how he would be with him always, to help him and to tell him what to do ; and that though Pharaoh would certainly refuse at first to let the Israelites go, yet in the end he would have to do so.

Then Moses set out to return into Egypt. And God sent Aaron, the brother of Moses, to meet him, to go with him to Pharaoh, and to help him in all his work. So Moses and Aaron went together into Egypt.

And when they got there they went to Pharaoh and said to him, " Thus saith the Lord God of the Israelites, Let my people go, that they may serve me. "

But Pharaoh said, " Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let the Israelites go. " And he commanded the task-masters to give the Israelites more work than ever, so that they might have no time to think about getting away.

So the task-masters gave them more and more work to do ; and when they could not do it they were cruelly beaten.

Then God sent terrible troubles upon the Egyptians, because the king would not obey him. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and still he refused to let the Israelites go. So God sent thunder and lightning and hail-storms to destroy the Egyptians' corn and fruit ; and their grass and every green thing was eaten by locusts, and their cattle died, and they themselves had sores and sicknesses.

And at last Pharaoh's servants said to him, " Do as the Lord God commands you : let the Israelites go, or we shall all be dead men. "

But even then Pharaoh would not obey God.



GOD APPEARING TO MOSES IN THE BURNING BUSH.



MOSES BEHOLDING THE IDOLATRY OF THE PEOPLE.

At last God said to Moses, "I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and after that he will let you go."

And so one night the eldest son in every family of the Egyptians died, from the eldest son of Pharaoh the king to the eldest son of the poorest of the Egyptians. And at midnight a great cry was heard throughout all the land of Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Then Pharaoh rose up and sent hastily for Moses and Aaron; and he bade the Israelites take their cattle and their goods and be gone out of the land. And the Egyptians gave them presents and hurried them away.

So the Israelites went out by night from their homes in Egypt. And they gathered together at a place on the borders of the land; and then they all set out to go to that beautiful land that God had promised to bring them to. And God showed them the way to go, and he led them through the wilderness.

Now, a wilderness is a wild and lonely place, where there is scarcely anything to be found to eat, and in many parts of it there is no water. But God knows that men, and women, and little children, and beasts also, must have food to eat and water to drink, or they will die. So he sent them food from heaven. They used to find this food in the morning lying upon the ground round about the place where they had stopped for the night. It looked like hoar-frost upon the ground, and the people called it manna. And every morning each family gathered as much of it as they wanted for the day.

After that they came to a dry, hot place, where there was no water. And the people complained bitterly. And they got angry with Moses, for they said that he had brought them out from their homes in Egypt to die of thirst in that dry and scorching wilderness.

But Moses in his trouble cried to God and said, "What shall I do? The people are almost ready to kill me."

And God said, "Take your staff in your hand, and strike with your staff upon the rock in Mount Horeb, and water shall come out of the rock, that the people may drink." And Moses did so, and water came out of the rock abundantly,—enough for the people and all their cattle.

You see the Israelites were very ignorant, and God was teaching them by degrees how great he is and how good; but they were slow to learn, and often they would not trust God, and sometimes they dared to disobey him, and then God taught them by terrible punishments that men must obey God.

When they had been three months in the wilderness they came to a mountain called Mount Sinai. Here God told Moses that he was now going to give his people laws, which they must always obey. And he commanded that they should prepare themselves, and behave in a very reverent and solemn manner, because they should hear the voice of God speaking to them from the mountain. They should not see him, for man cannot see God. And they must not come near to the mountain nor touch it, but they must stand far off and listen to the voice of God giving them commandments; only Moses and Aaron might come near.

So the people prepared themselves; and they stood at the foot of the mountain. And there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and the sound of a trumpet loud and terrible, so that all the people trembled. And thick smoke rose up from the mountain, for fire came down upon it; and the mountain shook and trembled. And the voice of God was heard out of the midst of the fire and the cloud and the thick darkness, giving commandments to his people.

And the people trembled and were afraid. And they said to Moses, "Let God speak to you, and you shall tell his laws to us; but let us not hear the voice of God any more, for this is awful and terrible: we cannot bear it."

Then Moses said, "This is to teach you to fear God, that you may obey him for ever."

After that God spoke no more to all the people; but he called Moses up into the mountain and gave him laws for the people. And Moses was in the mountain forty days and forty nights. And God gave to Moses his commandments, written upon two tables of stone.

But when so many days passed and Moses did not come back to the people, they grew impatient, and they said to Aaron, "We know not what is become of this Moses, and we will not worship God any more: make us images, and we will worship them, and we will call them our gods, and we will go up with them into the land of Canaan."

Then Aaron dared to make a golden calf for the people to worship, though God had commanded them from the mountain that they should never make an image, to bow down before it and worship it. And the people made a great feast in honour of the calf, and they feasted, and sang, and danced before it.

But Moses was coming down from the mountain with the tables of stone in his hand; and he heard the noise of singing and feasting. And when he came near and saw how the people had sinned, he cast out of his hands the two tables of stone on which the holy commandments of God were written, and broke them beneath the mountain, for he feared that God would now destroy all the people for their sin. Then he went down to the people, and he broke in pieces the golden calf that they had made. And many of the people died there because of that sin. But Moses prayed to God for the people; and God forgave them, and took care of them again, and showed them the way to go.

When they had been a year on their journey they came to the borders of Canaan; and they might have gone in then to that beautiful land, but they were afraid of the people who lived in it.

They had not yet learned to trust God or to believe that he would really do as he had promised, and give them the land for their own. Therefore God sent them back again into the weary wilderness to wander there for forty years, until they should learn to obey him and to believe his word. And all that time he taught them and took care of them; and Moses led them and spoke God's words to them. Many times they sinned and brought upon themselves bitter trouble; and many times God forgave them when his servant Moses prayed for them. And at the end of forty years they came again to Canaan.

Now at last they had learned to trust God and to obey him, and now they might go in and take possession of the promised land.

But Moses was not to go with them into Canaan. He was now a very old man, and though his eye was not dim, and he had not grown feeble, yet the time was come for him to die. So he blessed the people and spoke many beautiful words to them. And when he had thus taken leave of them, he went up into a mountain, from which he could see all that beautiful land, to the borders of which he had led the people.

And Moses died peacefully there in the mountain; and he went to be with God, whom he loved.

And all the people mourned for Moses and wept for him; for they had no other such teacher as Moses, to whom God spoke face to face.

But before he died Moses had told them that one day God would send into the world another and a greater Teacher, whom men must listen to and obey.

The Teacher he spoke of is our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Moses, he speaks God's words to men; and, like Moses, he prays for them, and God forgives our sins for his sake. But Jesus pleads, not as Moses did, for one people only, but for all mankind.



MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK.



DAVID AS A SHEPHERD.

THE STORY OF DAVID.



THERE was once a shepherd boy whose name was David. He was one of eight brothers, the sons of a man called Jesse, who lived in Bethlehem, in the land of Canaan. David was Jesse's youngest son, and he kept his father's sheep. He was a brave, noble youth, who loved God and feared nothing in the world; for he knew that God was everywhere.

And so one day, when a lion came and took away a lamb out of his flock, David was not afraid to follow the lion; and he struck him and killed him, and saved the lamb out of his very jaws. He also killed a bear; for God was with him, and gave him strength to overcome these savage beasts.

David's mind was full of beautiful and happy thoughts, and he used to turn these thoughts into sweet psalms, which are written in the Bible. He believed that God was watching him and taking care of him, just as he watched and tended his sheep, and therefore he sang, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," and the rest of that beautiful psalm, which I am sure you have often heard. He could also play very sweetly upon the harp.

The king of the country where David lived was a man called Saul. He was the king of the Israelites. He was a tall, strong

man, and a good soldier ; but he had disobeyed God, and therefore he was no longer fit to be king over God's people.

The old prophet Samuel was very sorry for Saul, because he had been bad, and because he might not continue to be king. For God had told his prophet that he would choose another king,—a man who should do his will.

And God said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul? He is not to continue to be king. Go to the house of Jesse at Bethlehem; for I have chosen a king among his sons, and you shall anoint the man whom I have chosen to be king."

So Samuel filled a horn with oil ; for he must pour oil upon the head of the man who was chosen to be king. And he went to Bethlehem, and sent for Jesse and his sons.

And when they were come, Samuel looked at the eldest son, and he said in his mind, "Surely this is the man whom God has chosen to be king."

But God answered his thoughts, and said to him into his mind, "Do not regard his beautiful face or his noble height ; I have not chosen him. For the Lord sees not as man sees ; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Then Jesse brought his second son to Samuel ; but Samuel knew that God had not chosen him either. And when seven sons of Jesse had passed before the old prophet, he knew that he had not yet seen the one whom God had chosen to be king. So he said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?"

And Jesse replied, "There is one more, the youngest ; he is keeping the sheep."

Then Samuel bade them fetch this youngest son.

And Jesse sent for David, and brought him to Samuel,—a beautiful young lad, with a fresh, pleasant face, and a bright colour.

And God said to Samuel, "Anoint him, for this is he." So Samuel poured the oil on the head of David.

After that David went back to his sheep again ; for though he had been anointed, he was not to be king for a long time yet.

But while David, with his mind full of happy thoughts about God, was minding his sheep, King Saul in his grand house grew fearful and gloomy and sad ; for an evil spirit troubled him.

And some of his servants said to him, " Let us seek a man who can play well upon the harp, and bring him here to play for you, and the music will do you good."

Then another said, " There is a son of Jesse at Bethlehem who plays upon the harp very beautifully ; and he is wise and good, and the Lord is with him."

So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, saying, " Send me David your son, who is with the sheep."

Therefore David left his sheep and came to Saul. And when he played sweet music upon his harp the king was refreshed and was well for that time. And David went back to his sheep again.

There were people called the Philistines, who were a great trouble to the Israelites ; for they used to come and fight battles with them, and rob them and take away their cattle and their goods. There had been war for a long time between the Philistines and the Israelites ; and sometimes the Philistines got the victory, and then they were sure to ill-treat the Israelites and make them very miserable indeed.

Now King Saul and all the Israelites worshipped God, but the Philistines worshipped idols.

These Philistines gathered a great army and came into the Israelites' country, and there they set up their tents on the side of a hill. So King Saul gathered an army to fight them. And Saul's soldiers set up their tents upon the side of another hill, facing the Philistines ; and there was a valley between the two hills.

But the two armies had not yet begun to fight. For every day a very large and powerful man—a giant, whose name was

Goliath—came and stood in the front of the Philistines' army on the hill, and called out in a loud voice to Saul's army, "I am a Philistine, and you are the servants of Saul. Choose a man from among you, and let him come down and fight with me in the valley. If he is able to fight with me and to kill me, then we shall be your servants; but if I kill him, then you shall be our servants."

Saul and all his army were troubled and greatly afraid when they heard these words; for Goliath was a giant, all clothed in armour of brass, which neither sword nor spear could pierce; and he wore a huge helmet of brass upon his head, and carried a spear which no one else could lift, and his sword was far too large and heavy to be used in battle by any hand but his own; and a man carrying a shield went before him. There was not one in all the army of the Israelites who could attempt to fight with this huge Philistine; so every day for forty days he called out, "Give me a man, that we may fight together!" and as yet no one had dared to answer him.

Now, three of David's brothers were soldiers in Saul's army; but David himself remained at Bethlehem, keeping his father's sheep. One day his father said to him, "Go to the camp and see how your brothers are getting on, and carry with you some bread and parched corn and cheeses for the soldiers to eat."

So David left his sheep and set out for the place where the army was encamped. And he went in among the soldiers to see his brothers. And while he was talking with them Goliath came out upon the hill opposite, and called for a man to come and fight with him, as he had done so many times before.

And David said to the men who were near him, "Who is this heathen Philistine, that he should defy the people who worship God?"

And the men told him how King Saul had promised rewards and great honours to any one who should fight with the giant and



SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID.



DAVID RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE PHILISTINE.

overcome him, but that there was no soldier in all the army who could dare to do it.

When David's eldest brother heard him speaking in this way about the giant he got angry, and he said to him, "What business have you to come here at all? You should have stayed with your sheep. I know why you have come here: you want to see the battle."

But when the brave words of young David were told to King Saul, he desired that the lad should be brought to him; so they brought him in before the king.

And David said, "Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine; I will fight with him."

But Saul said, "You are not able to fight with this Philistine; for you are but a youth, and he has been fighting battles for many years."

Then David told the king how, when he kept his father's sheep, he had killed a lion and a bear; and he said, "The Lord, who saved me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will also save me out of the hand of this Philistine."

When Saul heard this he said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you." And he gave him his own armour, and put a helmet of brass on his head, and gave him a sword to use in the battle.

But when David had put them on he found that he could not go out with Saul's sword and armour, for they were too heavy for him; so he said, "I cannot go with these, for I have never worn such things before, and I know not how to use them."

So he put off Saul's armour and went out with his shepherd's staff and his sling, and he had a bag fastened at his side, as shepherds used to have. And he chose five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his bag, and went to meet Goliath the Philistine.

And Goliath came on to meet David; but when he saw the young lad who was come to fight with him—and not so much as a sword in his hand—he mocked and said, “Am I a dog, that you should come to me with a staff? Come along; I will soon kill you, and the wild beasts and the birds shall eat you.”

But David answered, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear; but I come to you in the name of the Lord, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied: this day will God give you up into my hand. And all these people shall know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hands.”

So Goliath came on, and David ran to meet him. And as he ran he drew a stone from his bag and put it in the sling. And he shot it out from the sling, and it struck the giant and sank into his forehead, so that he fell upon his face on the ground. And David ran and stood upon the giant, and drew the great sword that was by the giant’s side, and cut off his head. So David overcame the giant with a sling and with a stone.

And when the Philistines saw that their great soldier was dead, they ran away in great confusion, leaving their tents and their goods behind them. And the Israelites shouted and ran after the Philistines, and drove them back to their own country.

But David was brought in before King Saul, holding the head of Goliath in his hand. And the king gave David great honours, and made him a captain in the army, and would not let him go back to be a shepherd again.

Now Jonathan, Saul’s son, was standing by when his father was speaking to David. And the king’s son loved the noble shepherd boy; and they became such friends that people often say of friends who love each other very dearly, “They are like David and Jonathan.”

And David behaved himself wisely in all that the king gave

him to do ; and the people loved him, because he was a brave captain as he had been a brave shepherd. And he prospered in all that he did ; for he trusted in God, and God blessed him.

But once, when there had been a great victory over the Philistines, and King Saul was returning to his home in triumph, the people came out to meet him, rejoicing that the fierce Philistines had been driven from the land. And for joy the women sang songs and played on timbrels, and danced in time to the music as they sang. But in their songs they praised David more than they praised Saul ; therefore Saul got cross with David, and hated him from that day forward.

The next day, as David was playing the harp before the king, —for again the evil spirit troubled him,—Saul cast a javelin at David, thinking to kill him ; but David avoided the javelin and escaped.

Then Saul sent him to fight the Philistines again, for he hoped he might be killed in battle ; but David returned in triumph, and the people loved and praised him more than ever. So Saul became very angry and jealous ; for he believed that the people wanted to have David for their king.

At last David had to run away and hide himself in a wild, lonely place ; for he saw that Saul was determined to kill him. And there many of his friends came to him and stayed with him. Saul used to go out with men to seek for them, and he hunted them from place to place ; but though David and his friends were brave and strong soldiers, and knew how to fight, yet David would never fight with King Saul. He said he would never lift his hand to hurt the man whom God had made his king.

David knew well that some day he himself should be king, for God had chosen him. But he did not want to take the kingdom for himself,—he would wait until God gave it to him. Jonathan, Saul's son, also knew that David would yet be king ; but he was

not angry or jealous, for he loved David as his own soul. He used to come to him sometimes and comfort and encourage him.

At last one day a messenger came and told David that Saul and his sons had been killed in a battle. And David mourned for Saul and his sons, especially for his dear and true friend Jonathan.

Then the people made David king; for they loved him, and they had no one else who was such a brave soldier, and who would drive their enemies from the land, so that they might live in peace.

For a long time after that King David had battles to fight. But he trusted in God and believed his promises, and in the end God gave him rest from all his enemies.

Now the Israelites had many beautiful things which used to be kept in a tabernacle; that is, a kind of tent where they used to go to say their prayers and to worship God, as we do in church. One of these sacred things was a beautiful golden ark, which was called the Ark of God. When King David had rest from his enemies, he had all these things brought up to Jerusalem, where he lived, so that they might be always near him,—his great wish was to build a very beautiful house to keep them in.

So the ark of God and all the other sacred things were brought up to Jerusalem with joy and with shouting and with sounding of trumpets. And King David himself danced before the ark for very gladness; for David's greatest joy was to worship God and to praise him.

When his wars were over, and his enemies troubled him no more, he made a beautiful psalm of thanksgiving, which begins, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust."

At last King David died, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.



JOY ON THE ARK'S RESTORATION.



DAVID GIVETH A CHARGE TO SOLOMON.

THE STORY OF SOLOMON.



KING DAVID, who lived in Jerusalem and ruled over the Israelites, had many children; but Solomon, one of his younger sons, was the man whom God chose to be the next king.

King David himself, from the time he was a boy, loved God and served him. He had many troubles in his life, and he had to fight many battles against the cruel, fierce enemies of his people. But God comforted him in his troubles, and gave him the victory in his battles; and now when he was old he gave him rest from all his enemies, for they were afraid

to come and fight with him any more. Also God promised him that his son Solomon should be rich and prosperous, and have a quiet, peaceful time, and be a very great and glorious king indeed.

When David was old, and the time was drawing near that he must die, Solomon was still a very young man. His father used to speak to him of the time when he should become king. And the old king gave his son many directions about what he must do when that should come to pass.

There was one thing which David himself had very much wished to do. This was to build at Jerusalem a very beautiful house in which people should worship God. But he had never

been able to do it, because he had been a man of war. He had been obliged to fight battles and to kill people, and God desired that his house should be built by a man of peace. Therefore Solomon should build it when the time came for his peaceful reign.

But David had the matter so much at heart that though he might not build the house his great delight was to make preparation for it. So he got together a quantity of the most beautiful and costly materials, and a great abundance of gold and silver, and he charged his young son Solomon to build with them such an exceeding magnificent house that people in every country should talk of the glorious and beautiful temple of God at Jerusalem. "For you," he said, "shall be a man of peace; for God has promised to give rest and quietness to the people in your days."

Also David said to Solomon, "You must obey God always, and serve him with a willing heart and with a perfect mind; for God searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. May God give you wisdom and understanding, that you may keep the law of the Lord your God."

Then David told all the people that Solomon was to be king, and that they must obey him.

And soon after that good old King David died.

Now a king in those days needed to have a great deal of wisdom and knowledge, for he had to make the laws all by himself, and he had to be at the head of everything that was done in the kingdom. People used to come to him to settle their disputes; and he had to punish bad people and keep them from robbing and hurting their neighbours. And he had to find out fit persons to set over anything that he could not look after himself. So if the king was careless, or if he did not know how to manage, everything would go wrong: bad people, if they were strong, would have all their own way, and weak or poor people would be robbed and oppressed, and there would be no peace or comfort for any one in the land.

The young Solomon wanted to be a really good king, and he felt what a hard thing it was to rule wisely, and he knew that unless God was with him he could not know how to be a good king.

So he sent for all the chief men of the kingdom. And they came. And the king and all the chief men worshipped God together in a very solemn manner.

And afterwards, in the night, God spoke to Solomon in a dream and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you."

And Solomon answered, "O Lord God, thou hast made me king in the place of David my father, and I am like a little child,—I know not how to act. And I am in the midst of thy people, a great people that cannot be counted, they are so many. Give me therefore an understanding heart to rule thy people, that I may know what is good and what is bad; for who is able to judge so great a people!"

And it pleased God that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said to Solomon, "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life nor riches, but have asked for yourself understanding, to rule well, I have done according to your words. I have given you a wise and an understanding heart; and I have also given you that which you have not asked—both riches and honour, so that there shall be no king so great as you all your days. And if you will walk in my ways and obey me as David your father did, then I will give you long life as well."

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding and largeness of heart, so that he was wiser than all the learned men in any of the countries around. He knew about all the things which God had made,—about trees, and beasts, and birds, and fishes. He also knew a great deal about people's hearts, and about the kind of feelings they have in them. And this knowledge was a great help to him when he had to settle disputes and find out who was right and who was wrong.

One day two women who had a bitter quarrel came in and stood before the king; and one of them carried a little baby in her arms.

And the other woman said, "O my lord, I and this woman live in one house, and we each had a little son of the same age, and there was no one in the house besides ourselves. And this woman's child died in the night, because she overlaid it. Then she came while I was asleep and took my little child away from me; and she put her dead child into my arms, and carried off my baby in her arms. And when I awoke in the morning I found that the child which was in my arms was dead; but when I looked I saw that it was not my own little boy at all."

Then the other woman said, "It is not so: the living child is mine, and the dead child is hers."

But the first woman said again, "No; that is my little baby which is still alive."

Then King Solomon said to his servants, "Bring a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to the one woman and half to the other."

Then the true mother of the child was filled with grief and terror, and cried out, "O my lord, give her the living child; oh, do not kill it."

But the other woman was satisfied, and said, "Let it not be given to either of us, but divide it."

And the wise king said, "The woman who would not hurt the child is his mother; give him to her, and do not kill him."

And when all the people heard of this judgment they honoured their king; for they saw that God had given him wisdom to rule well.

Soon after he became king, Solomon set about getting all the things ready for the great temple which his father had charged him



THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.



SOLOMON'S PRAYER AT THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

to build ; for though David had left for it gold and silver and precious stones, besides a great quantity of marble and brass and iron, the plan of the temple was so splendid and costly, that Solomon had to prepare many more materials before he began to build.

So he called for all the clever workmen in his kingdom, and he set them to work to hew stones and to cut timber. He also asked the king of Tyre, who was a great friend of his, to let some of his clever workmen come and help. And the king of Tyre sent Solomon great quantities of cedar trees, and other beautiful and costly kinds of wood, which these workmen cut down.

And Solomon had many thousands of burden-bearers, who brought the wood and the hewn stones up to Jerusalem to the place where David had directed that the temple should be built.

When all was ready they began to build. But there was no noise of hammers or chisels or saws heard where the building was going on ; for all the stones had been so cut and prepared beforehand that each stone was brought ready to lay into its own place ; and the beams for the roof, and the doors, and the pillars, and all the wood-work were also prepared before they were brought there, so that the builders had nothing to do but to put them together.

Inside the temple the walls were all lined with cedar-wood, beautifully carved and overlaid with gold. The doors and the ceilings were also carved and overlaid with gold ; and the candlesticks and all the vessels for the temple were made of pure gold ; and there were pillars of polished brass in the porch.

It took seven years to finish this beautiful temple. Everything was of the richest materials and the most beautiful workmanship that Solomon could get ; and the king of Tyre had sent a man who could work in silver and gold and every kind of beautiful carving. And Solomon set every man in his own kingdom who was clever at this kind of work to help the man from Tyre. And together they ornamented the temple with very beautiful devices indeed.

At last, when all was finished, King Solomon sent for all his people to come to Jerusalem, that they might offer sacrifices to God, and praise God together at the opening of the temple.

So the people came into Jerusalem. And the priests brought into the temple all those holy things which they used to have in the place where they worshipped God. And a great crowd of singers and of men who played upon instruments of music stood inside the temple, dressed in white robes, with harps and with cymbals; and there were a hundred and twenty men with trumpets. And when the priests had brought in the holy things and put them in their places in the temple, then the singers praised God together with a loud voice and sang, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." And the harps and the cymbals and the trumpets sounded out and made joyful music together with the singers.

Then the priests offered sacrifices to God upon the altar.

And King Solomon stood upon a high platform in the court of the temple, in the midst of his people. And the king blessed the people, and then he knelt down upon the platform in their sight and spread forth his hands towards heaven and prayed to God a very beautiful prayer for all his people, and also for those who should come from distant lands to pray in that temple.

And when Solomon had finished his prayer fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices which the priests had offered upon the altar. And the glory of God filled the temple.

And the people bowed down with their faces to the ground and worshipped God.

After that the king made a great feast for all the people, and they had great rejoicings in Jerusalem for a whole week; and they thanked and praised God. And then the king sent them to their homes, glad and happy at all they had seen and heard.

After Solomon had finished the temple he built a very beautiful

palace for himself; and he also made other costly buildings in Jerusalem. And he brought so much gold and silver into the city that they became quite common things there; for Solomon was very, very rich and great. And all his days the people lived in peace and quietness, every man in his own home. There was now no need for them to go out and be soldiers and fight battles, for their enemies came no more into their land.

So all the world heard of the wisdom and the greatness and the splendour of Solomon; and the kings of all the countries around came to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom which God had put into his heart. And every king who came brought presents of gold, and silver, and spices, and horses, and mules.

In a country very far away in the south there was a queen who, like a great many other people, had many thoughts in her heart about things that no one had ever been able to explain to her. She was called the Queen of Sheba.

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the wisdom and greatness of Solomon, she determined to go all the way to Jerusalem to find out if he was really as great as people said, and if he could indeed answer all those hard questions which troubled her, for she did not quite believe that he could.

So she took with her a very great train of servants and all sorts of costly gifts—gold and precious stones and spices. And they set off for Jerusalem, riding upon camels all the way; and they were many, many long days on the journey.

And when she came to Solomon she told him all that was in her heart. And he answered all her questions, and told her everything that she wanted to know: there was nothing that she asked him too hard for King Solomon to answer.

And when she had heard his wonderful wisdom and had seen his splendour, and his palace, and the beautiful temple which he had built, there was no more spirit left in her. And she said, "When

I was told in my own country of the king's wisdom and greatness, I did not believe all I heard; but now I have seen it with my own eyes, and I know that not only was it all true which I heard, but the half was not told me. Happy are these servants of yours who stand near you always and hear your wisdom. Blessed be the Lord your God, who loved the Israelites and has made you their king, to rule them with wisdom and with justice."

Then Solomon and the queen of Sheba gave each other costly gifts. And after a while she went back again into her own country.

The Bible does not say what it was that the queen of Sheba asked King Solomon about, but I am nearly sure that she asked him about the Lord God, whom the Israelites worshipped, and whom she had never heard much about before. I am nearly sure that he told her about God's works, and his commandments, and his great love to mankind.

Many, many years after this time, when our Lord Jesus was on earth, he said to the people who would not listen to what he told them, that the queen of Sheba was more pleasing to God than they were. For he said, "She came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."



VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA TO KING SOLOMON.



RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.

THE STORY OF RUTH.



THERE was a man called Elimelech, who lived at Bethlehem in the land of Canaan. His wife's name was Naomi; and they had two sons, whose names were Mahlon and Chilion.

And when there was a famine in the land of Canaan, Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons left their home at Bethlehem, and went and stayed in the land of Moab, for there was plenty of food there.

Now Elimelech and his family were Israelites, and they worshipped God; but the Moabites did not know anything about God, except when they learned from the Israelites to worship him. And therefore they made idols, which they called their gods; and they worshipped their idols, as all heathen people do.

Elimelech died in the land of Moab; and Mahlon and Chilion were married to Moabite women. The name of Chilion's wife was Orpah, and the name of Mahlon's wife was Ruth.

And after a while Mahlon and Chilion died also. So Naomi had no one left to her, her husband and her two sons being now dead.

And then, when she had heard that the famine was over in the land of Canaan—for God had given his people plenty of food once more—she left the place where she had been staying in Moab,

and she set out to return to her old home at Bethlehem. And her two daughters-in-law—the women who had been married to Mahlon and Chilion—went with her part of the way.

And when they came to the borders of the land of Moab, Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, “Go now, return each of you to her mother’s house; and may God be kind to you, as you have been kind to me, and to your husbands who are dead. God grant that each of you may find a happy home in the house of another husband.” Then Naomi kissed her daughters-in-law and bade them good-bye.

But Orpah and Ruth cried when she said those words to them, and they answered, “We will go with you, and make our home among your people.”

But Naomi told them that she had no home for them any more, for she was old and would never marry another husband, and that she had no more sons who could marry them and give them happy homes again; therefore it was best for them to return to their own parents.

Then Ruth and Orpah cried again, for they were grieved to hear Naomi speak so sadly. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and bade her farewell and left her; but Ruth went on with her still.

So Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law is gone back to her people and to her gods; do you go back too after your sister-in-law.”

But Ruth answered, “Ask me no more to leave you, or to return from following after you: where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I too will die, and there will I be buried; for only death shall now part you and me.”

For Ruth loved Naomi, and she did not want ever to worship idols any more; for she had learned from her husband and from Naomi to love and trust God, and to worship him only.

When Naomi saw that Ruth's mind was quite made up to stay with her, she did not tell her any more to go back.

So they went on together, and at last they came to Bethlehem. And when Naomi's old neighbours saw her returning to her old home, they said, "Is this Naomi?"

Now the name "Naomi" means *pleasant*, and this poor, lonely widow, whose heart was so sad, thought that Pleasant was no longer a fit name for her, so she answered, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for God has sent very bitter sorrows to me. I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home empty. Why then do you call me Naomi, when such bitter troubles have befallen me?" (For the name "Mara" means *bitter*, and the widow thought that name would be fitter for her now.)

So Naomi and Ruth lived alone together at Bethlehem.

It was early in the harvest-time when they came there, and people were beginning to reap their barley. Now one of the kind laws which God had given to the Israelites was, that when people reaped their corn and bound it in sheaves, they should not carefully gather up *all* the ears of corn from the ground, but those ears which the binders had passed over at first should be left on the ground, that poor people might gather them up and keep them for themselves. And so people who had no fields of corn of their own could get a little corn in this way. And when rich people gathered in their fruit, they must leave some of that also for the poor to glean.

Now Ruth and Naomi were poor, and had no corn of their own; for all this while there had been no one to till Elimelech's fields at Bethlehem. So Ruth said to her mother-in-law, "Let me now go into the corn-fields and glean ears of corn in the field of some one who shall be kind to me."

And Naomi answered, "Go, my daughter."

So Ruth went out into the corn-fields. And when she came

to a field in which there were some men reaping barley, she said, "I pray you let me glean after the reapers in this field."

And they gave her leave to glean there.

This field of barley belonged to a rich and honourable and very good man, whose name was Boaz. Now Boaz was the cousin of Ruth's husband, who was dead, but Ruth did not know that he was any relation to the family.

By-and-by Boaz came out into his field; and he saluted his reapers very kindly. And he saw Ruth gleaning among the sheaves, and he knew that she was a stranger.

So when she had gone away to rest herself for a little while in the shed in which the reapers used to get shelter from the hot sun at mid-day, Boaz said to his servant, "Who is this young woman who is gleaning here to-day?"

And the servant answered, "That is the young woman who came back with Naomi out of the land of Moab. She asked leave to glean in our field, and she has been following our reapers since the morning until just now."

Now Boaz had heard the story of Naomi's kind and dutiful daughter-in-law, and he was pleased that she had come to glean in his field. So he went to Ruth and said to her, "Do you hear, my daughter? You shall glean in my fields all through the harvest. Do not go away into any one else's field, but keep close by my reapers; for I have desired them to be kind to you: no one will be rude to you as long as you stay here; and when you are thirsty you may go and drink some of the water that my reapers have drawn for themselves."

Then Ruth bowed down before this honourable and good man to thank him, and she said, "How is it that you are so kind to me, although I am a stranger?"

Boaz replied, "I have been told how loving and dutiful you have been to your mother-in-law since the death of your husband,



RUTH RECEIVING THE MEASURES OF BARLEY.



BOAZ PURCHASING THE INHERITANCE OF ELIMELECH.

and how you have left your own relations and the land where you were born, and have come to dwell among people who are strangers to you. May a full reward be given to you by the Lord our God, in whom you have learned to trust."

Then Ruth was glad, and she said, "You are very good to me, my lord; for you have comforted me, and spoken friendly to me, though I am a stranger, and not like the women of this country."

And Boaz said, "At meal-time you must come and eat and drink with us."

So at meal-time Ruth came and sat down beside the reapers. And Boaz gave her parched corn and bread—more than she could eat; so she kept some of it to bring home to Naomi.

And when they all returned to their work again, Boaz desired his reapers to let some of the ears of corn fall on purpose for Ruth to gather them, and to let her take as much as she could gather.

So she gleaned in the field until the evening. And when she beat out the grain from the ears which she had gathered, there was as much corn as she and Naomi could eat for several days.

Then she took up the corn, and went home and told her mother-in-law all that had happened. And she gave her the bread and parched corn which she had left after her own dinner.

But when she said, "The name of the man who has been so kind to me is Boaz," then Naomi knew that it was her husband's cousin.

And she said, "May God bless him who shows such kindness to you and me for the sake of his relations who are dead. The man is a near relation of ours—one of the nearest we have."

And when Ruth told her that he had asked her to glean in his fields all through the harvest, Naomi said, "That is well, my daughter; do not go into any other field."

So Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz all through the harvest,

until the barley and the wheat were all reaped. And every night she went home to her mother-in-law.

Now when Elimelech, Naomi's husband, lived at Bethlehem, he had fields of his own there; and when Naomi returned to her old home these fields were hers. But she had no one now to till them, and very likely she had no money to buy corn-seed to sow in them or to pay people for working in them, and so she wished to sell them.

The Israelites had a law which said that when any piece of ground was to be sold, the nearest relation of the man to whom it had belonged ought to buy it: but if he refused to buy it, then it was offered to the next nearest relation; and he had to call together all the chief men of the place where he lived, that they might see how the nearest relation had refused to buy the ground, and that he now had the right to buy. But according to another law which the Israelites had, the man who should buy Elimelech's ground should also marry Ruth.

Naomi wished greatly that she might sell her fields to Boaz, and at the same time give him Ruth to be his wife, because he was such a good, kind man,—she knew he would make her very happy. So she sent Ruth to tell him that she was going to sell the ground.

Boaz would have liked very much to marry Ruth, for he had seen how sweet and good she was, and he loved her; but he knew that there was another man in Bethlehem who was a nearer relation to Elimelech, and who therefore must first be asked if he would like to buy the ground and to have Ruth for his wife.

So he said to her, "The Lord bless you, my daughter; for you have indeed been good and kind, and all the people in Bethlehem know that you are a good woman. And it is true that I am a near relation to your dead husband, but there is one who is nearer yet. I will go and see him, and ask him whether he wishes to

buy Naomi's fields. If he wishes to buy them, then he has the right to do so; but if he refuse, then I will buy them, and you shall be my wife."

Then he gave Ruth six measures of barley. So she held out her mantle, and he poured the barley into it,—as much as she could carry. And he laid it on her, and sent her home to Naomi; and he himself went down into the city of Bethlehem.

When Ruth came to her home it was still early in the morning. And Naomi hastened to let her in and to ask her what Boaz had said. So Ruth told her every word, and how he had given her all that barley.

Then said Naomi, "Be at rest, my daughter, for the man will not be satisfied until he knows whether he may have you for his wife."

Now Boaz had gone down into Bethlehem, and there he sat in the gate of the city until the man came by whom he wished to speak with. And he called him; and the man came and sat down beside Boaz in the gate. Then he called for ten of the chief men of the city, and they also came and sat down in the gate.

And when they were all there Boaz told his business, and he asked the other man whether he would like to buy Naomi's fields.

And the man said, "I will buy them."

Then Boaz said, "He who buys this ground must also marry Ruth, the Moabite woman, who was the wife of Naomi's son."

But the other man did not want to marry Ruth, so he said, "Buy the fields for yourself; I give up my right to you."

So he plucked off his shoe and gave it to Boaz; for that was a sign that he gave up to him his right to buy the fields and have Ruth for his wife.

So Boaz bought the fields. And Ruth became his wife, and then she had her home in his house.

And the people of Bethlehem gave them kind wishes; for both

Boaz and Ruth were greatly honoured in the place where they lived.

And Boaz and Ruth had a son, who was called Obed, which means a *restorer*; for the women of Bethlehem said to Naomi, "This little child shall be a restorer of your life and a nourisher of your old age; for he is the child of Ruth your daughter-in-law, who loves you, and who is better to you than seven sons."

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom and nursed it; and she was comforted at last for the sons she had lost.

And this little child grew up; and his name too is honoured to this day, for he was the grandfather of the great and good David who afterwards became King of the Israelites.

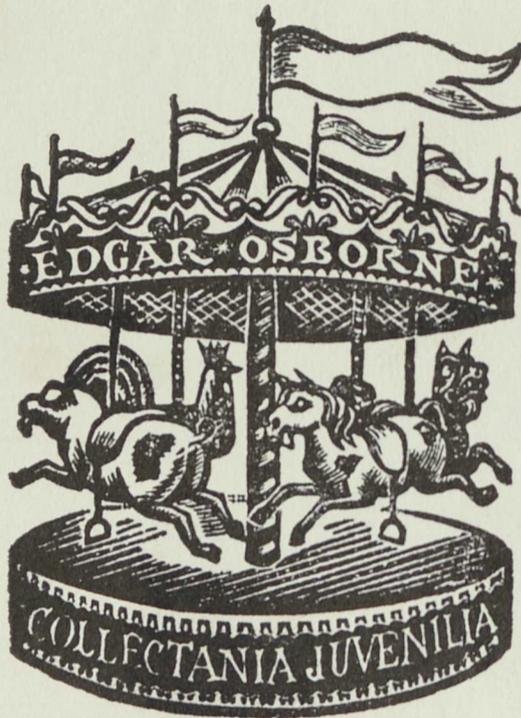
So Ruth the Moabitess, who was born in a heathen land, and who in her youth was taught to worship idols, was loved and honoured among God's people; because when she heard of God she loved him and resolved to serve him, and she was dutiful and good and kind.

Thus God blesses those sons and daughters who honour their parents; and it is such sons and daughters who make parents glad and happy, even in their old age. The Bible says that "a wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." And this is just as true of daughters as it is of sons.



NAOMI NURSING RUTH'S SON.

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BIBLE PICTURE...



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