

TELL HIS WONDERS

Book 2

# HIS FRIENDS AND SERVANTS

BIBLE STORIES BY  
NATHAN J. LANGERAK

ILLUSTRATED BY  
MICHAEL WELPLY



*To my little friends, the catechumens of the Beginners' Bible Stories class,  
that I taught at Crete Protestant Reformed Church these many years.  
You filled me with joy.*

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Printed in China

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Reformed Free Publishing Association  
1894 Georgetown Center Drive  
Jenison, Michigan 49428

rfpa.org  
mail@rfpa.org  
616-457-5970

Cover design by Erika Kiel  
Interior design and typesetting by Katherine Lloyd, theDESKonline.com

ISBN: 978-1-944555-66-5  
LCCN: 2020938862

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## PREFACE

This book is part of a series of Bible story books entitled Tell His Wonders. The series intends to cover a selection of the main events of Old and New Testament history. The entire series aims to be covenantal. Biblical history is covenantal. God's covenant is the gracious relationship of fellowship and friendship between the triune God and his elect people in Jesus Christ. God is the covenant God in himself. His whole purpose with creation is the revelation of himself as the covenant God, so that his people might know and enjoy him as the only blessed God. The whole of the Bible is the revelation of that gracious covenant of God. The covenant is the reason for all of history. All things serve the perfection of God's covenant in the new heavens and new earth.

The fulfillment of God's covenant purpose is the work of God's grace, so the fulfillment of God's purpose is always by a wonder of grace. These wonders fill the pages of the Bible, culminating in the great wonder of grace in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The calling of the church and believers is to know these wonders themselves and to tell these wonders to their children that they might believe them and tell them to their children.

The title of this volume comes from Isaiah 41:8: "Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." God's covenant people are his friends and servants. In the covenant, God is their friend and sovereign and they are his friends and servants.

That relationship is the essence of their salvation. God made Adam as his friend and servant. By his sin Adam departed from God, who was Adam's blessedness and life. Adam plunged himself and the whole human race into the death and darkness of sin. Man by nature is not a friend of God. The natural mind is enmity against God. Man by nature is the friend of the devil and the enemy of God. This is man's misery and woe. To live apart from God is death.

According to his eternal decree of election and by his grace, God calls his people out of darkness into his marvelous light. He regenerates them and makes them new creatures. He gives them faith. He forgives their sins and causes them to walk in all the works that he ordained for them from before the foundation of the world. The abiding calling of God to his people is to stand over against the world as God's friends and servants in every area of their lives.

This volume relates the history of some of God's friends and servants as that is found in the Old Testament. The book intends to teach about the wonder of God's grace to choose, save, preserve, and glorify his friends and servants.

## Chapter 1

# ABEL

GENESIS 4, HEBREWS 11

Do you remember who Adam and Eve were? God made them his friends, and they walked with God in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day. God's friendship is his covenant.

The devil, a fallen angel who rebelled against God, tempted Eve. She and Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As punishment for their sins, God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden. But God gave them good news: he would make them and all his people his friends in a better way—friends in Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace. God promised to send a child who would save us from our sins and destroy all the works of the devil. This made Adam and Eve happy, and it makes us happy too. We always look for the promised Savior.

Soon after Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, Eve had two sons. The one son she called Cain, which means a man. He was strong and attractive. The other son Eve called Abel, which means a vapor. He was little and weak. Just as the breath that comes out of your mouth on a cold day quickly disappears, Abel seemed frail and ready to fade away and die. Adam and Eve raised the boys together and taught

them God's promise of salvation through Jesus Christ. Cain and Abel learned that God would make a sacrifice to cover the sins of his people and the sacrifice would save them from their sins and from all the power of the devil.

When the boys grew up, they did different work. Cain was a farmer who plowed the ground and raised good food. Abel was a shepherd who raised sheep. When Cain and Abel came to worship God, Cain brought some of the fruits of his farming and offered them to God. But Abel sacrificed one of his precious lambs on the altar to God.

Abel's sacrifice of the little lamb pleased God because that lamb pictured God's promised savior, Jesus Christ. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith. When Abel offered





that sacrifice, he was saying he was a sinner before God who only deserved to go to hell and that without God's promised savior, Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, he *would* die in his sin and go to hell.

God forgave Abel his sins and told him all his sins were forgiven, that he loved Abel, and that he would save Abel and bring him to heavenly glory for Jesus Christ's sake. Abel was saved by faith alone.

Cain's sacrifice of the fruits of the ground was wicked. Cain did not believe God's promise of a Savior. When Cain brought his sacrifice, he was saying he had no sins and did not need forgiveness. When Cain brought the fruits of the ground, he was saying God should accept him because of his works and because of his sacrifices he made for God. God rejected Cain's offering. God hated Cain's sacrifice of the fruits of the ground and never blessed him. This made Cain angry with God.

What made Cain even angrier was that his righteous brother, Abel, talked about these things with him. Abel told Cain his offering was evil and it did not please God because Cain would not confess that he was a sinner and needed salvation in Jesus Christ, God's lamb. Perhaps these talks went on for some time, but Cain did not repent. He did not say, "Abel, let me have a lamb," or, "I will buy a lamb from you so I can make an acceptable sacrifice to

God." This is because Cain did not believe in Jesus Christ.

Cain hated Abel. He hated that Abel told him his worship was not pleasing to God. Cain became angrier every day until one day, as Abel again talked to Cain in the field, Cain grabbed Abel, threw him to the ground, and killed him. Cain wiped his hands, left Abel there, and went home. Now he did not have to hear from Abel anymore.

But God saw everything, and he asked Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother?"

"I do not know," Cain snapped back. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain was very wicked and hated God. Because he hated God he killed his righteous brother. God cursed Cain for murdering Abel and made Cain a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth. The wicked are always wanderers in the earth and live as God's enemies. Often, like Cain, they kill God's people.

The wicked live in the earth for a time, but the earth is the Lord's, and he will give it to his precious friends. God's friends suffer for Jesus Christ's sake in many ways because, as Abel, they speak against the wickedness of the wicked. Sometimes God's friends lose their lives for God's sake. But God gives them salvation, and he will give them the new heaven and new earth after Jesus comes again.



## Chapter 2

# JOB'S PATIENCE

JOB 1-42, JAMES 5

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. He was a righteous friend of God who feared God and hated evil. God gave him ten children and made him the richest man in the East. Job had thousands of cattle and many servants. He showed his faith in God's promise. He sacrificed for his whole family and prayed that God would forgive their sins.

The devil, whom we call Satan, saw that Job was happy and content, and he hated Job's love for God. God asked Satan whether he noticed that there was no man in the whole earth who loved him as much as Job did. Satan, that cruel demon, said to God, "Job only loves you because of everything you have given him and because you protect him from evil! Take everything away, and Job will curse you!"

What terrible things that evil spirit said. But God knew Job would never curse him. "Everything Job has is in your power, but you may not touch his body," God said. Satan left to do his evil work.

One day a messenger ran to Job and said, "The Sabeans stole all of the oxen and donkeys and killed all the herders, and I alone escaped."

While that messenger spoke, another

came and said breathlessly, "A fire of God fell from heaven and consumed the sheep and the shepherds, and only I got away."

The words were barely out of his mouth when another came and said, "The Chaldeans captured all the camels and killed all the servants."

Then another servant rushed in and told Job, "A mighty wind smote the house where your children were eating together, and they all are dead!"

Job's whole life was destroyed in a single day. He tore his clothes, shaved his head, and worshiped God, saying, "Naked came I out of the womb, and naked shall I return: Jehovah gave and Jehovah took away; blessed be Jehovah's name!"

That is not what Satan wanted to hear. He went back to God to accuse Job again. "Do you see how Job still worships me?" God asked Satan. "Even though you move me to destroy him without cause?"

Satan answered, "Job still worships you because you would not let me touch his body. If you touch his flesh and his bones, he will curse you."

"Job is in your hands but save his life," God said. So Satan struck Job from head





to toe with boils so painful Job wished he were dead.

Now even Job's wife turned on him. "Curse God and die," she said.

But Job rebuked her: "Shall we receive good from God and not evil?"

Then came Job's greatest trial. His three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, heard of his troubles and visited him. They were not good friends, but instruments Satan used to oppress Job.

They believed God's blessing on the righteous was gold, health, and long life. Since God took away all the good things he had given Job, Job must be wicked. One after the other, the friends accused Job, mocked him in his troubles, and wore him down with their evil words.

"You are all miserable comforters," Job said. But he also confessed, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and he shall stand at the latter day on the earth! Though worms destroy my body, I shall see God!" What faith Job had in all his suffering—hope in the Savior and the resurrection of the body, and hope in salvation in Jesus Christ!

But Job was not sinless. "Why me?" he said. "Am I not righteous and

without sin? God counts me as his enemy." Job did not understand that because God is greater than man, he does not explain his dealings with man. God is right in everything he does. He controls all things, even the devil and all the evil God sends on his people whom he loves. God's purpose in suffering is to keep us from pride, to deliver us from our sinfulness, to make us hope for salvation, and to teach us to trust him alone and to worship him at all times.

To teach this to Job, God spoke to him out of a mighty whirlwind. "Where were you when I created the earth, the angels, the winds, the seas, the sun, moon, and stars?" God asked. "Who makes the rain, the ice, the cold, and controls all the stars in their courses? Who hunts food for the lions and helps the animals when they have their babies? Do you have an arm that is strong like God's? Can you thunder with a voice like God's that shakes the earth?"

"I know that Jehovah can do all things and he knows all things," Job confessed. "I repent in dust and ashes."

God told Job's friends that he was angry with them because they did not speak rightly about God, so Job must pray for them. After his trial the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before and ten more children. Job lived to be 140 years old.

God is very gracious and merciful to his friends. In our trials he strengthens us by his grace and turns all evil to our profit.