

THE STORY OF JESUS' PEOPLE

BY R.A. SHEATS

EDITED BY JOSHUA SCHWISOW



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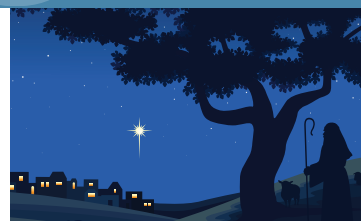
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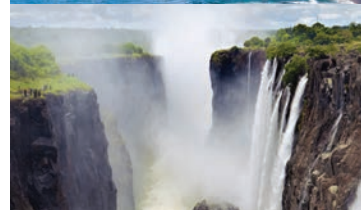
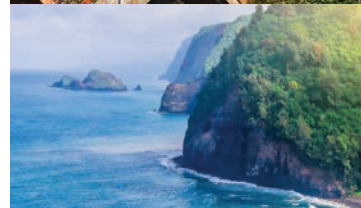
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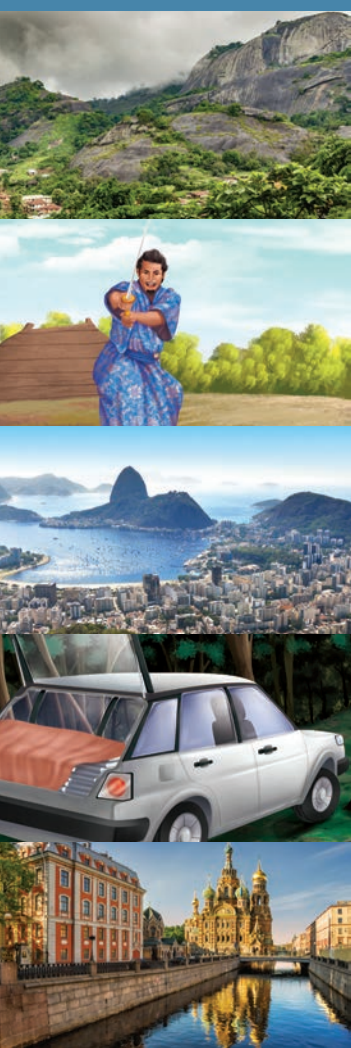
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INTRODUCTION

Studying the works of God in the past is always a fascinating and rewarding task. By studying history, we learn of God's mighty deeds upon the earth and how He uses faithful men and women in His kingdom work. Amazing stories of God's works inspire us to worship, honor, and praise our glorious King Jesus and to press forward in the work He has set before us.

The Story of Jesus' People records the remarkable history of God's church from the first century to the present day. Young children will be enthralled by the marvelous tales of kings and emperors, missionaries and mothers, ordinary people, and even little children used by God to extend His kingdom on earth. From Athanasius to David Livingstone, from Martin Luther to modern-day Bible smugglers, young readers will delight in the exciting and action-packed tales included in this volume.

Within this book, it has not been our intention to record only the most well-known stories of church history. Instead, *The Story of Jesus' People* captures thirty-one snapshots of the working and growth of Christ's church on every continent and in every age. Great champions of the faith such as Martin Luther and Alfred the Great stand alongside lesser-known heroes such as nine-year-old King Edward, the fearless Kapiolani of Hawaii, and Paul Sawabe, the Japanese samurai who sacrificed everything for Jesus Christ.

God uses men and women of all walks of life to build His church and extend His kingdom on earth. Children will learn how hymn writers, queens, scientists, musicians, pastors, mothers, explorers, kings, and even samurai warriors are used by God to glorify Himself. Old men and little children, housewives and noblemen are all a part of God's marvelous work of redemptive history.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS IN EDUCATION

The study of history is paramount in a child's education. However, studying history is not an end in itself. Though children will learn much from this book, much more is required to truly instill in them an understanding of history and of their place in God's glorious work of redemptive history.

This book is merely a tool to be used. The primary means by which a young child will grow in the knowledge of himself, the world around him, and God is through meaningful conversations with his father and mother. This curriculum has been produced with the intention of providing a suitable platform and opportunity to stimulate and foster such conversations. Parents are encouraged to discuss each chapter with their child, drawing out the principles contained in it and assisting their child in putting into practice the Faith Lessons included at the end of each reading.

THE SCOPE OF THIS VOLUME

The Story of Jesus' People is intended to provide an introduction to church history for a first-grade audience. Children will learn much from this book. Though they may not remember all the names, dates, and places involved, these thirty-one stories will offer them a window into the past and will lay a foundation on which future studies can be built.

Because of the limitations of space, each chapter does not include a full biography of the individual under study. It is our hope that the stories included will inspire young minds to further pursue the study of history and to delve more deeply into the amazing lives surveyed here.

A NOTE ON QUOTATIONS AND HISTORICAL ACCURACY

Special care has been taken to preserve historical accuracy in the retelling of the stories contained in this book. However, the reader will note that dialogue often appears in these chapters. Though we do not possess the actual text of conversations involving many of the historical characters introduced

in this book, the material for these dialogues has generally been taken from firsthand accounts and original documents. These quotes from primary sources have been rewritten in conversational form to render them understandable to young children. Though the content of these quotations remains unchanged, the original wording of the documents has been simplified or paraphrased to make the material accessible to a first-grade audience. A list of a few of the main original sources quoted in the book is included below.

Tertullian's quotes in chapter 2 have been taken from his *Five Books Against Marcion*. The account of Marcus Aurelius and his words in chapter 3 have been derived from Eusebius' account and from the letter of Marcus Aurelius contained in Justin Martyr's *First Apology*. Prudentius' words in chapter 5 are taken from his autobiographical writings.

In chapter 6, Patrick's thoughts and words are drawn from his *Confession* and letters. Conversations in chapter 7 are taken from Willibald's *Life of Saint Boniface*. The words of Bede in chapter 8 were paraphrased from the preface to his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and from the autobiographical notes contained in that volume. King Alfred's words in chapter 9 are derived from his writings and from Asser's *Life of King Alfred*.

Material for chapter 10 was taken from several histories of Russia, and Martin Luther's words in chapter 11 are drawn from his writings as well as his *Tabletalk* and his speech given at the Diet of Worms in 1521. The story of the three swords at Edward IV's coronation dates from the sixteenth century, though it has been questioned by historians since that time. The words of his prayer are taken from the prayer the young king made immediately prior to his death. Pierre Viret's words at the Lausanne Disputation in chapter 13 are translated from Arthur Piaget's *Les Actes de la Dispute de Lausanne 1536*. The material for Richard Hakluyt's thoughts and words in chapter 16 are taken from his book, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*.

In chapter 17, John Gyles' account is drawn from his autobiography, and John Brainerd's words in chapter 18 are taken from his journals and letters. The scene from Robert Boyle's childhood in chapter 19 is taken from his autobiography. Quotes appearing later in the chapter are paraphrased from his

scientific writings. Count Zinzendorf's words and prayers in chapter 20 are derived from Enoch Pond's *Memoir of Count Zinzendorf*, and the account of the organ challenge in chapter 21 is taken from a letter written by a personal friend of Johann Sebastian Bach's. The original German title of the Bach cantata mentioned in the chapter is *Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut*.

Details of Hans Egede's life in chapter 22 are drawn from materials contained in Jesse Page's *Amid Greenland Snows*, and Matthew Bohil's adventures in chapter 23 are taken from his autobiographical writings. The account of Janet Paton's life in chapter 24 is taken from her son's autobiography, *The Autobiography of John Paton*. Material for chapter 25 has been taken from first-hand accounts included in Rufus Anderson's *Kapiolani, the Heroine of Hawaii*. David Livingstone's words in chapter 26 are drawn from his writings, particularly his *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. The accounts of Dandeson Crowther appearing in chapter 27 are derived from his father Samuel Crowther's writings.

Paul Sawabe's words in chapter 28 are taken from Otis Cary's account in his *A History of Christianity in Japan*, and information for chapter 29 was gleaned from interviews with a personal friend of Raymond Boatright as well as eyewitness accounts recorded in Roque Lisa's book *Os Heróis dos Avia-mentos*. The material for chapter 30 was gleaned from personal interviews with Ellen Reece and her husband Matthew. (Please note that the names of the individuals included within this chapter have been changed to protect those involved.) Finally, the words of Vladimir Marcinkovsky have been taken from various Russian sources.

It is our prayer that these tales of the mighty men and women of the past will inspire and encourage a new generation to stand strong in the good fight as they continually look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith!

R. A. Sheats

The Generations Curriculum Team

March 2021



Shepherds in Bethlehem

GOD IS WRITING A STORY

We have heard with our ears, O God,
Our fathers have told us,
The deeds You did in their days,
In days of old.
(Psalm 44:1)

In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. He made the land and the skies and the fish and the birds and all other animals. Everything He made was very good. Then God made Adam and Eve. He made them to rule over His creation and to worship and obey Him. Adam and Eve were perfect, and they lived in a perfect world that God created. But do you know what happened next?

God told Adam and Eve what to do and how to live, but Adam and Eve disobeyed Him. Because of this, sin entered the world. Now all people are sinners. We are all filled with sin even before we are born! We were made to worship and obey God, but we don't do this because of our sin. This is a big problem.

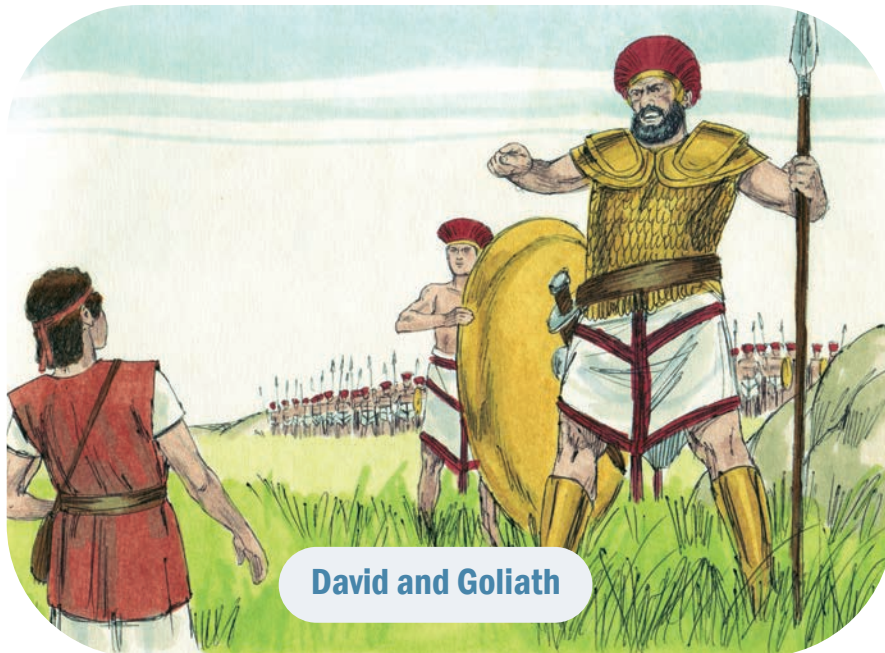
God is a very wise God. He knew Adam and Eve would sin. But God is also very good. He made a way to save us from our sin. He made a way to rescue us. Do you know how He did this?

When Adam and Eve sinned, God promised to send a Savior who would rescue them from sin. This Savior is Jesus Christ. For many years, people waited for God to send His Savior. They waited for four thousand years! Then, finally, in a little town called Bethlehem, a Child was born. This Child was Jesus.

Through Jesus, God made a way for us to be saved from our sin. Now, He is saving people from all over the world. These people are called His church. They belong to Jesus Christ. They are Jesus' people.

WHOSE STORY IS IT?

One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
(Psalm 145:4)



David and Goliath

From the very beginning, God has been writing a story. This story tells us how God is working in the world and in our lives. We call this story **history**. God started this story when He created the world. You've probably learned about Adam and Eve and Abraham and Joseph and King David. These people are all part of God's story. We can read the history

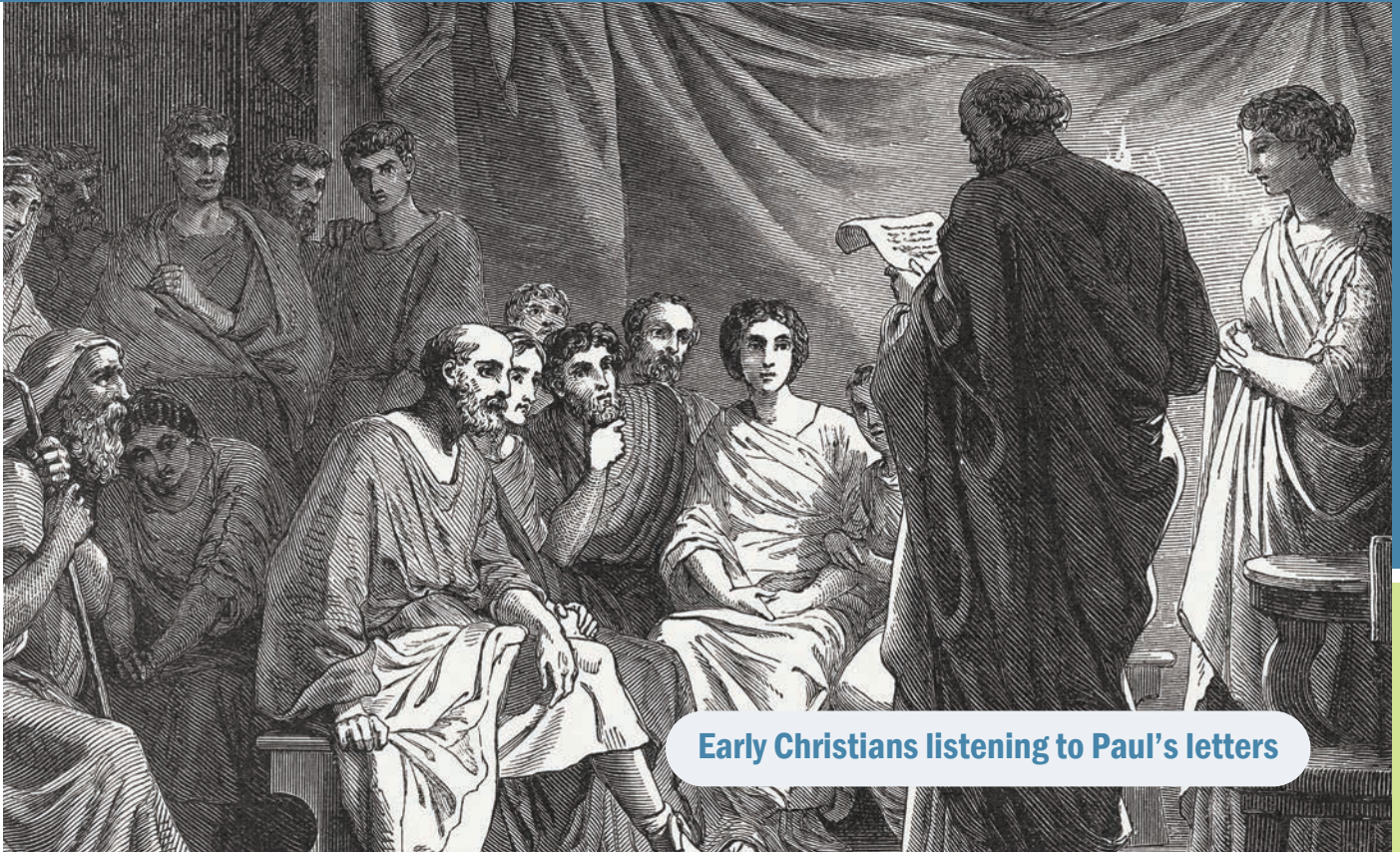
about them in the Bible.

When Jesus came to Earth, God kept writing His story. Have you learned about Peter and John and Paul? They are part of the story too. You can read about them in the New Testament.

In the Bible, we read part of God's story of history. But the story didn't end when God finished writing the Bible. After Jesus went back up into heaven, His disciples preached the gospel all over the world. They began telling everyone about Jesus and His salvation.



Joseph



Early Christians listening to Paul's letters

God saved men and women and boys and girls. He began to build His church, and it grew bigger and bigger. The stories about what God did with these people is part of history.

HELPING LITTLE CHILDREN AND WIDOWS

When we study history, we learn more about the story that God is writing. Sometimes stories from history are exciting. Other stories can be scary. But remember that God is in control of everything that happens in the world. God has a purpose for everything that happens. These stories are all part of history. This is God's story, so it is the biggest and best story in the whole world!

We don't have time to read about all of history today, so we'll start with one story. This story is about the church in Rome.

Rome was a wicked city. Evil people did terrible things here. But Jesus' disciples preached the gospel there. Some people in Rome became Christians. They began to love and obey God. Before, they hated each other and fought and killed one another. But now they loved each other and took care of one another. The Christians said, "We will live differently. We will worship and



Roman Coliseum

serve Jesus Christ. We will live our lives the way He wants us to live.”

In Rome, parents sometimes killed their children if they didn’t want them anymore. They didn’t take care of old or sick people either. But the Christians knew this was wrong.

“We must care for people who need help,” they said. “We must love them the same way Jesus has loved us.”

Christians in Rome began to help little children who needed a home. They adopted these children and made them part of their families. Then they found old people who needed help, and they cared for them. They protected widows and orphans and welcomed them into their homes. (An orphan is a child who doesn’t have a mom or dad to take care of them.) Soon the church in Rome was taking care of 1,500 widows and other people who needed help!

It took a lot of work to take care of all these people. But the Christians in Rome weren’t afraid of hard work. “God has done great things for us,” they said. “Now we will work for Him. We will love God. And we will love other people too!”

The Christians were glad to serve the Lord Jesus. The widows and orphans were happy too. But someone else wasn't happy. He didn't like the Christians, and he wanted to destroy them. Do you know who he is?

He is the devil. He thought of a plan to destroy the Christians and to stop God's church from growing. Do you think his plan will work? We'll learn more about his evil plan in the next chapter.

The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad.
(Psalm 126:3)



FAITH LESSONS

- **God rules the world and everything in it**

God created the world. Even though we can't see Him, God still rules over the world He made. He rules over everything, even people! He has a plan for His world, and He makes this plan happen every single day. We call this God's providence. Providence is a big word that means God cares for and rules over the world He made and the people in it. He is a holy, wise, and powerful God.

- **History teaches us about God**

When we learn about history, we are learning about what God did in the world before we were born. It is good for us to study history. It teaches us about God and about how He saves His people.



Roman Forum

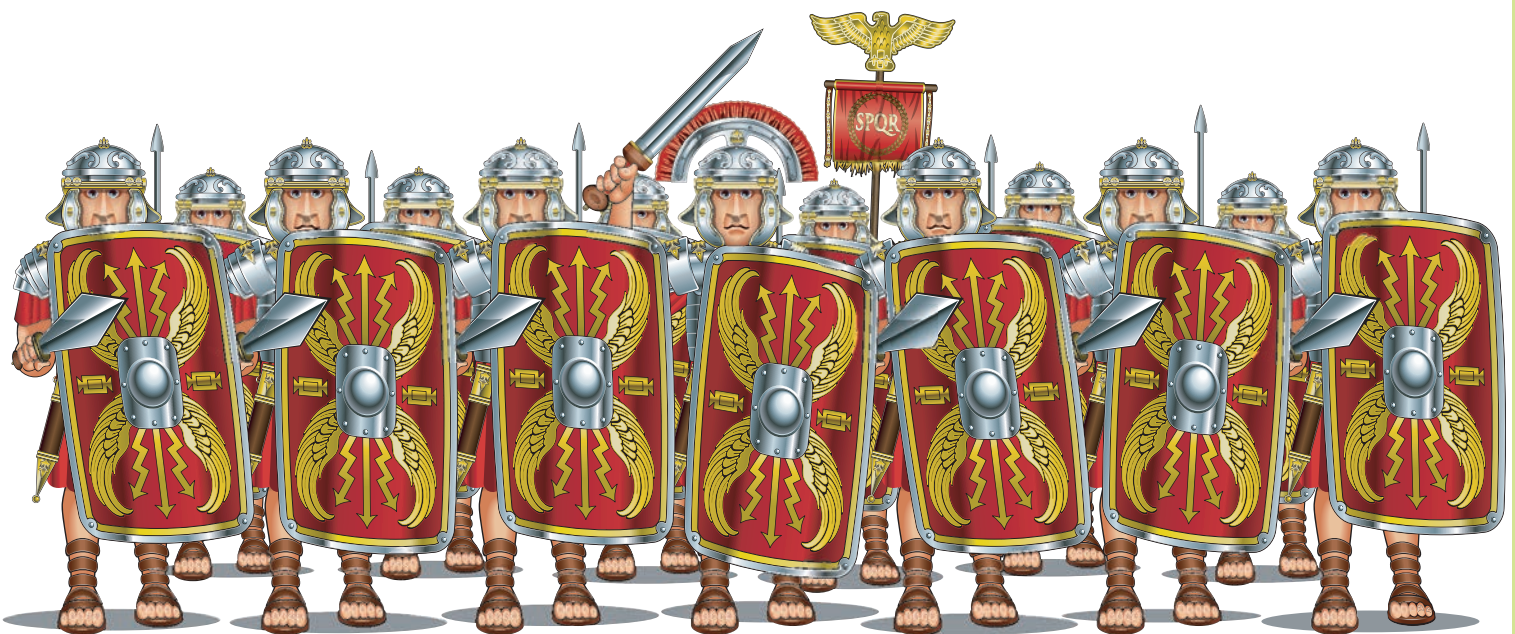
TERTULLIAN AND A MOST DANGEROUS MOUSE

2

Then Jesus said . . . “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
(John 8:31-32)

Year after year, the church kept growing. God saved more and more people. Soon there were thousands and thousands of Christians all over the Roman Empire. (The Roman Empire was a kingdom that ruled over many other countries.) Jesus Christ promised to build His church, and it kept getting bigger and bigger.

Even though the church was growing, it was dangerous to be a Christian in the Roman Empire. The Roman rulers didn't like people who worshiped the one true God. They arrested them or killed them. Many Christians died during this time. Rome was a powerful enemy. It had weapons and soldiers and strong rulers and emperors. Rome used all these things to fight against the church.



Roman Soldiers



But the church had another enemy that was even more dangerous than Rome. This enemy was sneaky. It didn't use weapons or soldiers. It used something much more dangerous. Can you guess what this enemy was?

About fifty years after Jesus went back up into heaven, a man named Marcion was born. This was around the year AD 85. When Marcion grew up, he joined the church. He pretended to follow the one true God.

"I am a Christian," Marcion said. "I go to church. I read the Bible. I believe in Jesus."

Marcion said he was a Christian, and people believed him. But then he started telling lies about the Bible.

"The Old Testament is wrong," he said. "It teaches us that God made the world, but this isn't true. The world is evil. God didn't make it. God only made our minds and spirits. He made the things we can't see. These things are good, but everything we *can* see is evil."

Some people listened to Marcion's lies. They thought he was telling the truth. They went to see him, and he told them many things. He even began writing books.

"You shouldn't get married," he told people. "And you shouldn't have any children. The earth is bad, so we shouldn't have any more children to live on it."

Then Marcion took the Bible and began to cut it apart. He took out the Old Testament. "This isn't God's Word," he said. Then he threw out the books of Matthew, Mark, and John. "These have mistakes in them," he said. He took out other books of the Bible and threw them away. Soon Marcion only had a few parts of the Bible left. "This is the true Bible!" he cried. "Everything else is wrong."

Even though Marcion kept some parts of the Bible, he still changed their meaning. He taught the Bible wrongly. The Bible calls people like Marcion "false teachers."



A BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE

“Your word is truth.” (John 17:17)

Marcion died around the year AD 160. But even after he died, people kept believing what he taught. They read his books and followed what he said.

About the same year that Marcion died, a child was born. His name was Tertullian. He was the son of a Roman soldier. Tertullian served God and loved Him. He loved God’s people too. He was glad to be a part of the church. But he knew that the church was in danger. Strong enemies were fighting against it.

“The rulers of Rome want to destroy the church,” he said. “But we have even worse enemies than the rulers of Rome. We have an enemy inside the church that is trying to destroy God’s people.”

Who was this enemy? It was Marcion.

Tertullian knew that Marcion had lied about the Bible. He had lied about God and about the good world God made. These lies were a very dangerous weapon. They were stronger than all wicked Roman rulers and all their soldiers.



Tertullian

FIGHTING THE MOUSE

With his lies, Marcion tried to destroy the church. He didn’t try to knock down the buildings or kill all the people. Instead, he crept inside the church and tried to destroy it from the inside. He tried to stop people from believing in the true God. He didn’t want Christians to believe in the God of the Bible. Tertullian studied the Bible, so he knew that Marcion was telling lies. He

wanted other people to know this too, so Tertullian wrote books to tell Christians the truth.

“Marcion is not a Christian,” he wrote. “He is a liar. He is a dangerous mouse who has come to eat away the Bible.”



When a mouse comes into a house, he doesn't walk in the front door where everyone will see him. He is a sneaky animal. He quietly gnaws a hole through the wall and creeps inside before anyone knows he's there. Then he begins to eat things. He works secretly so that no one will find him. Sometimes a mouse can eat or destroy many things inside a house before anyone finds out he's there.

Marcion was just like a mouse. He crept inside the church. Then he started to chew up the Bible. He ripped out pages and destroyed them just like a mouse gnaws on things and ruins them. He was a very dangerous mouse. He tried to destroy God's Word. He tried to make people believe in lies.

But God stopped this terrible mouse. God used people like Tertullian to teach the church that Marcion was wrong. God protected His church, and He protected His holy Bible from wicked mice like Marcion. Let us praise Him for taking care of His church!

The word of the LORD is right,
And all His work is done in truth.
(Psalm 33:4)
