

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

What about all the Prophets? - John the Baptist

It's a bright sunny Sunday in Memphis. Isabella and Luis are swinging in the backyard with Luca and Maya, eating popsicles. Sofie, Isabella's baby sister, is napping inside. Mama works in her backyard garden, and Papa is raking leaves. Isabella asks Mama what's for supper, and Mama replies, "Arroz con pate de papa with tostones for dessert." Isabella smiles, happy it's her favorite. Later, Mama brings out Sofie for a swing, and Papa gently pushes her. When supper is ready, everyone heads in to wash up. Over dinner, Papa suggests a trip to the Memphis Botanical Gardens next Saturday if everyone behaves well at church during the week. They agree, excited for the adventure and the chance to pack a picnic lunch. After supper, Mama bathes Sofie, Isabella helps Bela in the kitchen, and Luis prepares for Street Reach Week 3. He looks forward to meeting new church teams.

Monday comes, hot and sunny—perfect for Bible Club. Isabella and Luis get dressed and have breakfast. After breakfast, Isabella, Luis, Luca, and Maya wait outside for the church team. Bela joins them to wait. The team soon arrives, and after a quick word with Bela, they all head out to their Club site.

Isabella and Luis had done this before, so they knew the drill. After check-in, they formed a circle under the big tree and waited for the story leader. A change in energy filled the air as their story leader stood up and introduced herself, telling the kids they were from South Carolina. They were all excited to have a fun week.

"This week," the story leader said, "we will be talking about some prophets from the Bible. Does anyone know what a prophet is?" (allow children time to respond)

"Let's get right to it!"

With the introduction complete, the story began. And today's story goes something like this...

There once was a man named John the Baptist, who actually was one of Jesus' cousins. He became a preacher and told others to ask for forgiveness for their wrongdoings. He wanted to help others change their lives so they could become a brand-new person inside.

He was doing this not to be better than Jesus, but to help Jesus. By preaching to others to feel bad for their mistakes and to ask for forgiveness. By teaching that they needed God in their lives, he was preparing the people to hear from Jesus himself.

John wanted a simple life, so he traveled through the desert to teach others about God. John didn't have a house or big meals. He often slept outside or with friends. For food, John ate locusts and wild honey, living simply as he felt God was all he needed.

When people heard that John was in the area, they came from all over to listen to him and be baptized. Now, for some of you, you might not quite understand what baptism is, and that's okay. If you've ever seen someone get baptized, it's sort of like taking a bath with clothes on.

When someone believes in God, baptism is a way to show others that they believe in Him and want to live their lives the way God wants. It's like having a bath to make yourself clean on the inside. When you get baptized, it's a special way of showing that you understand that you have and need God's forgiveness.

When some men named the Pharisees and Sadducees came to listen to John, he had a strict warning for them: they needed to feel bad for the wrong things they had done and ask forgiveness for their mistakes. But these men didn't think they were doing anything wrong; they weren't sorry, and so John would not baptize them.

As people came to John to be baptized, they wondered whether he was the Savior they had waited for. John heard what they were saying, and he told them, "I am baptizing you now, but very soon someone greater than me will come. He is so great that if He asked me to carry His shoes, it would be an amazing honor."

John continued to preach and baptize people until one day Jesus came by to be baptized. John didn't know what to say; all he thought was, "How could I, just a regular man, baptize Jesus the Savior of the world?" John said to Jesus, "You should be baptizing me. I cannot baptize you, Lord."

Jesus replied, "It's important that I do this now. I am ready, and I want to be an example to others and show them that it's important."

So, John took Jesus and baptized Him. He placed his hand on His back and laid him down in the water until He was covered. Then he brought Him back up again. As soon as Jesus was baptized, the sky opened up, and the Holy Spirit came like a beautiful white dove and landed right on Jesus' shoulder. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, I love him, and I am pleased with him."

Just like when Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. When we lie down in the water, we are dying or getting rid of all the bad things we've done. In the water, we are buried. Then, when we are brought out of the water, we are a brand-new person to God.

Baptism is important. Jesus made sure this was the first thing He did when He started His ministry. It is also the last thing He said before ascending into heaven. He said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..."
Matthew 28:19-20

Luis thought eating bugs sounded gross—he preferred hamburgers. After snacks and going home, Bela greeted them with a thumbs-up from the church leader.

Group Discussion Questions

How did God show his pleasure with Jesus?

What do you think the dove represented?

What do you think about the lifestyle John the Baptist chose?

Bible Verse

"When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized, and while He prayed, the heavens were opened." Luke 3:21

Word of the Day: Baptism

A symbol of having your sins washed away

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

What About all the Prophets? - Abraham

Isabella and Luis sat on the front porch with Bela and told her all about their morning at Bible Club. The transition from learning to sharing was natural. According to Luis, it was great fun! Luis told her about John the Baptist and how he ate bugs – yuck. (Have any of you ever eaten a bug?) Luis was thoughtful for a moment and finally said, “He must have been very faithful to God’s direction.” Bela agreed and told him that’s what God desired: total faithfulness to his direction.

Tuesday was warm and sunny. Isabella and Luis were up and dressed early, ready for Bible Club. Luca and Maya appeared. They were all ready for another fun day at Bible Club.

Soon, the church team showed up. With a bye to Bela, the kids all joined the group and walked to their club site. Isabella asked the church person who they would be talking about today. She just smiled and told her, “Another prophet!” They gathered under the big tree and waited for the story leader. Soon she stood up and said, “Today we will talk about a man who started out as Abram and ended up as Abraham! Confusing, right?”

And our story goes something like this...

Once there was a man named Abram. One day, the Lord came to talk to Abram, and Abram asked, “Who will have all my things when I die?” God promised Abram and his wife, Sarai, that they would one day become parents, even though they were old and had no children.

God wasn’t sure that Abram understood. So that night, he took him outside and said, “Do you see all the stars that are in the sky”? When Abram looked up, the whole night sky was full of stars, so many in fact that he would never be able to count them. Then God said, “That is how many children you will have”.

Quite a few years later, when Abram was ninety-nine years old (older than even your grandparents), the Lord decided to change Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many." He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah.

God told them again that they would be parents and that they would have a boy. This time Abraham laughed so hard he fell on his face! It was hard to believe that he and Sarah would have a child in their old age.

One day, three visitors came to Abraham's house. He hurried to meet them. "May I get you something to eat and drink?" Abraham asked.

"Please come in, join us, and have a rest on the couch."

The visitors agreed, so Abraham brought them some fresh bread, milk, and hamburgers.

While the visitors were eating, they asked Abraham, "Where is your wife, Sarah?" Abraham thought this was a little strange, but he replied, "She's in the other room". Then one of the men spoke, saying, "I will come back to see you at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening behind the living room door. She started to laugh, but covered her mouth and laughed to herself because she didn't want to be heard. Then she said to herself, "How can I have a child? I'm almost one hundred years old?"

Later, when the visitors had left, Abraham and Sarah realized that the man who had told them this was indeed God.

A year later, Sarah did have a son. She and Abraham named him Isaac, which means "he laughs."

They were very excited and remembered to thank God for Isaac.

Isabella thought for a minute. That would be like Bella's mother having a baby! She was having trouble understanding. The church person gently reminded her that God can cause anything to happen. And that's just what He did. Isabella was going to have to think this one over. She'll talk to Bela when she gets home.

Group Discussion Questions

What is faith?

What did God ask Abraham and Sarah to have faith in?

Who hears us when we pray?

Bible Verse

"Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." Genesis 15:5

Word of the Day: Faith

Trusting God and believing what He says is true, even when you can't see Him or evidence

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

What about all the Prophets? - Miriam the Prophetess

Note to teachers:

There is a map of the Exodus in this packet. It could be very helpful. You can either print one out from the attachment or easily order a poster-sized one from Amazon.

So after they finished their rotations and had snacks, they all headed home with the church teams. When they got to Isabella's house, the church leader gave Bela two thumbs up. "They had a great day and asked good questions!"

Isabella couldn't wait to talk to Bela about this having a baby at 99-years-old thing. Bela just smiled. "Isabella," she said, "the story is more about God's prediction or prophecy. That He could make her have a baby at 99 years old is just showing how powerful He is." Bela paused to let Isabella think about it. "Does that make sense?" Isabella nodded yes.

On Wednesday, it was kind of cloudy, but at least no rain that morning. Soon they heard them and waved bye to Bela. They joined the group and headed to their Bible Club site. The kids all gathered under the big tree in a circle. The story leader stepped up and asked them if they had heard of a female prophet. The kids all just shook their heads no.

The story leader began, "Miriam was an important leader among the Israelites during their journey from Ancient Egypt to the Promised Land (does anyone know where the Promised Land was?) She is known for her wisdom and her role in helping her people. Miriam is one of the few women in the Bible called a prophet. Here is where we begin."

And today's story goes something like this...

Miriam's story begins when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. The Pharaoh, Egypt's ruler, ordered that all newborn Israelite boys be thrown

into the Nile River. Miriam's mother, Jochebed, hid her baby brother, Moses, for three months.

When she could no longer hide him, Jochebed placed Moses in a basket and set him in the Nile. Miriam watched from a distance to see what would happen. Pharaoh's daughter found Moses and decided to adopt him. Miriam bravely approached Pharaoh's daughter. She offered to find an Israelite woman to nurse the baby. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and Miriam brought her own mother, Jochebed, to nurse Moses. This clever plan allowed Moses to grow up safely with his own family for a time.

Miriam played a key role in the Exodus, the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt. After Moses led the people out of Egypt, they faced the Red Sea. God parted the waters, allowing the Israelites to cross on dry land. After crossing the Red Sea, Miriam led the Israelite women in a joyful celebration. She took a tambourine and sang a song of praise to God. This event is known as the "Song of the Sea". It shows her leadership and her ability to inspire others.

Miriam also became known as a prophetess, meaning she received messages from God and shared them with the people. She, along with Moses and Aaron, guided the Israelites through the wilderness for 40 years. Life in the wilderness was hard, and the Israelites often complained. Miriam, like her brothers, faced these challenges. She helped to lead the people and remind them of God's presence.

Miriam is acknowledged as the first prophetess, the first woman in the Bible to receive this designation, showing her divine connection and leadership role. She also started the first acts of what we call "corporate worship" (explain this term to the children), leading the women in song and dance to praise God for their miraculous salvation from the Egyptians. Miriam served as an early model of women's leadership and prophetic voice. Miriam did not enter the Promised Land. She died in the wilderness at a place called Kadesh. The Bible says she was buried there. Her death marked the end of an era for the Israelites, as they were nearing the end of their long journey to the Promised Land.

We remember Miriam for 3 main marks during her time. First, her actions saved Moses' life, which was necessary for the Exodus. Second, she led the women in worship and celebration.

Finally, Miriam served as a prophet and leader for her people.

(Allow time for questions here.)

Isabella liked the story today! She loves hearing about women doing things, and way back in Bible times, at that! The kids finished their rotations, had snacks, and started home. Isabella was walking proudly. Maybe she could be "someone" one day.

Group Discussion Questions

What is corporate worship?

How long was Miriam's journey with the Israelites?

Where is the Promised Land?

Why is it called the Promised Land?

Bible Verse

"Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider, he has thrown into the sea!" Exodus 15:21

Word of the Day: Prophetess

God's special messenger or spokesperson who tells people what God wants them to know; in this term, a woman (a man is called a prophet)

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

What about all the Prophets? Elijah and Elisha

Thursday morning arrived a little cloudy but warm. The kids got dressed and went in for breakfast. They were excited to get to Bible Club. After breakfast, they helped to clean up and went out front to wait for the church team. Luca and Maya came over to wait with them. Soon, the church teams came into sight. The kids all waved bye to Bela and joined the group to walk to their site. The church person told them they would like today's story. Once at the site, everyone sat in the circle under the big tree, waiting for the story leader. Then she appeared.

"This story is about two prophets – Elijah and Elisha," she said. "Elijah was a regular man who made mistakes, who was afraid sometimes, yet when it really mattered, he trusted God. Elijah did amazing things with God's help, and God did amazing things for Elijah. When Elijah was older, God told him to find Elisha and anoint (who knows what that means?) him as his successor.

A few things you should know before we start the story are that the land of Israel, where Elijah was going, was very evil. There was a king named Ahab who believed in a god named Baal (the weather god). He and most of the people worshipped this god and did many things that the Bible says we shouldn't do. So let's dive into our story."

And today's story goes something like this...

We first meet up with Elijah when he foretold a three-year drought in the land of Israel. The drought was caused by King Ahab's evil ways. Elijah made many prophecies but had to flee for safety.

God told Elijah to tell the prophecies to the evil king and queen; they resisted, and there was much destruction and death. But Elijah stayed true to God, and his prophecies all came about. Elijah had to hide many times from the evil king and, of course, Queen Jezebel.

Elijah defeated many of the evil ways of the evil king and queen. As the years passed, God told Elijah to find Elisha and anoint him as Elijah's successor. Elijah found him on his family's farm plowing. Elisha was a young man, probably in his early 20's. Elijah threw his cloak (or mantle) on Elisha, symbolizing the prophetic call. (What is a "mantle"?) Elisha immediately left his old life to follow Elijah, becoming his faithful servant. It is thought that Elisha spent about 10 years with Elijah, learning his ministry and witnessing his miracles. Elisha had an unwavering loyalty to Elijah and his ministry work.

The time finally came for Elijah to be taken home by God. He told Elisha to stay behind. They passed through Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, but Elisha refused, saying, "I will not leave you". When they reached the Jordan River, Elijah struck the water with his cloak, and it parted. The two were able to cross on dry ground. Then a chariot of fire and horses appeared, separating the two men, and Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Elisha, of course, witnessed this. Elijah's mantle fell to the ground, and Elisha picked it up. Before Elijah left, he asked Elisha what he could do for him. Elisha simply asked for a "double portion of his spirit". Elisha touched the Jordan River with the mantle, and it parted just as it had for Elijah. At this point, Elisha began his ministry of miracles and prophecy. It is estimated that Elisha lived to be 80-100 years old. His ministry spanned more than 50 years. Unlike his mentor, Elijah, Elisha died an earthly death. There is a story that after he was buried, another man who had died was placed on top of Elisha and immediately came back to life. Perhaps it was Elisha's final miracle.

These two men represent one of the most interesting friendships in the Bible. Elijah and Elisha were in a holy friendship that helps us draw close to God.

Isabella was thinking. Elijah and Elisha – very confusing that their names were so much alike. Still, they both were prophets and walked according to God's plan. Isabella was very impressed by how these prophets were so faithful to God's desire for them. She wondered if she could do that. Luis whispered the same thing to Isabella – how could they be that faithful? They both resolved to talk to Bela about this when they got home.

After their rotations and snacks, they started home with the church team. Bela was, of course, waiting on the front porch in her rocker when they arrived. Thumbs up from the church leader again!

Group Discussion Questions

What is a mantle?

What did Elisha ask for?

How can we be brave like Elisha when we're scared?

What's one way to show God's love to someone who needs it?

Bible Verse

"Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 2 Kings 2:11

Word of the Day

Courage

Biblical definition: doing what's right and obeying God despite fear, rooted in faith and God's presence, not self-confidence

The Adventures of Isabella & Luis

What about all the Prophets? Enoch

Isabella sat with Bela on the front porch for a time, just telling her all about Elisha and Elijah. She told Bela it was unbelievable that Elisha didn't die like most people but went right up to heaven. Bela just nodded, "yes," she said. "God thought very highly of Elisha and just took him home."

Friday arrived sunny and warm. Luis and Isabella were so ready! They went to the front porch, where Luca and Maya were waiting for the church team. It wasn't long before they came down the street. The kids all waved bye to Bela and joined the group. Isabella was excited for the day, but a little sad that this was the last day with this group. But she knew next week would bring a new group with more Bible Stories and activities.

Once at their site, all the kids gathered in a circle under the big tree to wait for the story leader.

"Enoch was born not very long after God had created the earth. In fact, when Enoch was born, Adam, the first man, was still alive!" she started out. "Enoch was a very special guy. He wasn't special because he was super smart. Or because he had lots of stuff. Or because he was a really nice guy. No, those things don't matter much to God at all. This is a special story, so listen closely," the story leader said.

And today's story goes something like this...

Enoch was so special to God because he KNEW God. He was close to God. He walked WITH God. And God liked that. A lot. Because Enoch was God's friend and companion, he didn't need to know where he would go or what he would do tomorrow. He didn't need to know where God was taking him; he was just happy to be God's friend.

Even though God was in Heaven, and Enoch was on Earth, that didn't stop Enoch from being close to God. Even though Enoch couldn't touch God

with his earth-hands or see God with his earth-eyes, that didn't stop Enoch from walking with God. He was close to God with his heart, his mind, and his spirit.

When Enoch woke up in the morning, he didn't think about all the fun things HE wanted to do today. He thought only about what GOD wanted. And he talked to God, "Good morning, God, what are You thinking about today? What would make you happy today?"

And when Enoch walked through the town during the day, he didn't think, "Hey, that guy has a nice house." Or "That person has lots of fun things. I wish I had things like that."

Instead, he thought, "All these things I am seeing with my earthly eyes are just around for a little while. But God, YOU are unseen. What else is unseen? What do you see? God, I love You so much, and I love everything about You. I want to see what you see."

And because Enoch lived his life like that, talking to God all throughout the day about everything that happened, Enoch started to deeply KNOW God. And as Enoch and God grew closer and closer, God changed what Enoch could see. Enoch began to see not just the seen world, but also the UNSEEN world.

Now, when Enoch walked through the town, he didn't just see people and houses and stuff — he could actually see that there was a whole different world, an invisible world, right in front of him! Most people can't see this invisible, unseen world, but Enoch could — because he saw with Heaven-Eyes!

Every day, as Enoch walked and talked with God, they grew to be really good friends. They talked together all the time.

One day, as Enoch was walking along, talking with God and enjoying His company, God said, "Hey, Enoch, just come on up here! Let's finish this conversation face-to-face. I really want you to come up here and be with me in Heaven right now."

Well, Enoch sure liked the sound of that! So... poof! Enoch disappeared, to the human eye. (But to Heaven-Eyes, he was right where he belonged.) Nope, he didn't die. God just liked Enoch so much that He took Enoch to

come be with Him. And now, happy, happy, happy Enoch would get to be with God in Heaven forever and ever!

I want to be that kind of friend to God, just like Enoch was. Don't you? Isabella just blinked. Another one? First, it was Elijah who didn't die but just went to heaven to be with God. And now Enoch? This was almost too much. The kids

finished their rotations and snacks before starting home. Isabella asked one of the church people if many people were just taken up to Heaven like Elijah and Enoch. The church person told her, "No, as far as she knew, just those two." Isabella knew that would be the topic at supper tonight. At the same time, she was excited knowing that tomorrow was going to be the trip to the Botanical Garden and a picnic!

When they arrived at home, there sat Bela waiting for the kids. The church leader told her it had been a great week, and maybe they would be back next year. Two thumbs up appeared! Isabella and Luis were very happy! The week was over. See everyone next week!

Group Discussion Questions

What do you think Enoch's family and friends thought when he just disappeared?

If you could ask God one question, what would it be?

Is it easier to do right when you are with friends or alone? Why?

Where do you think God took Enoch?

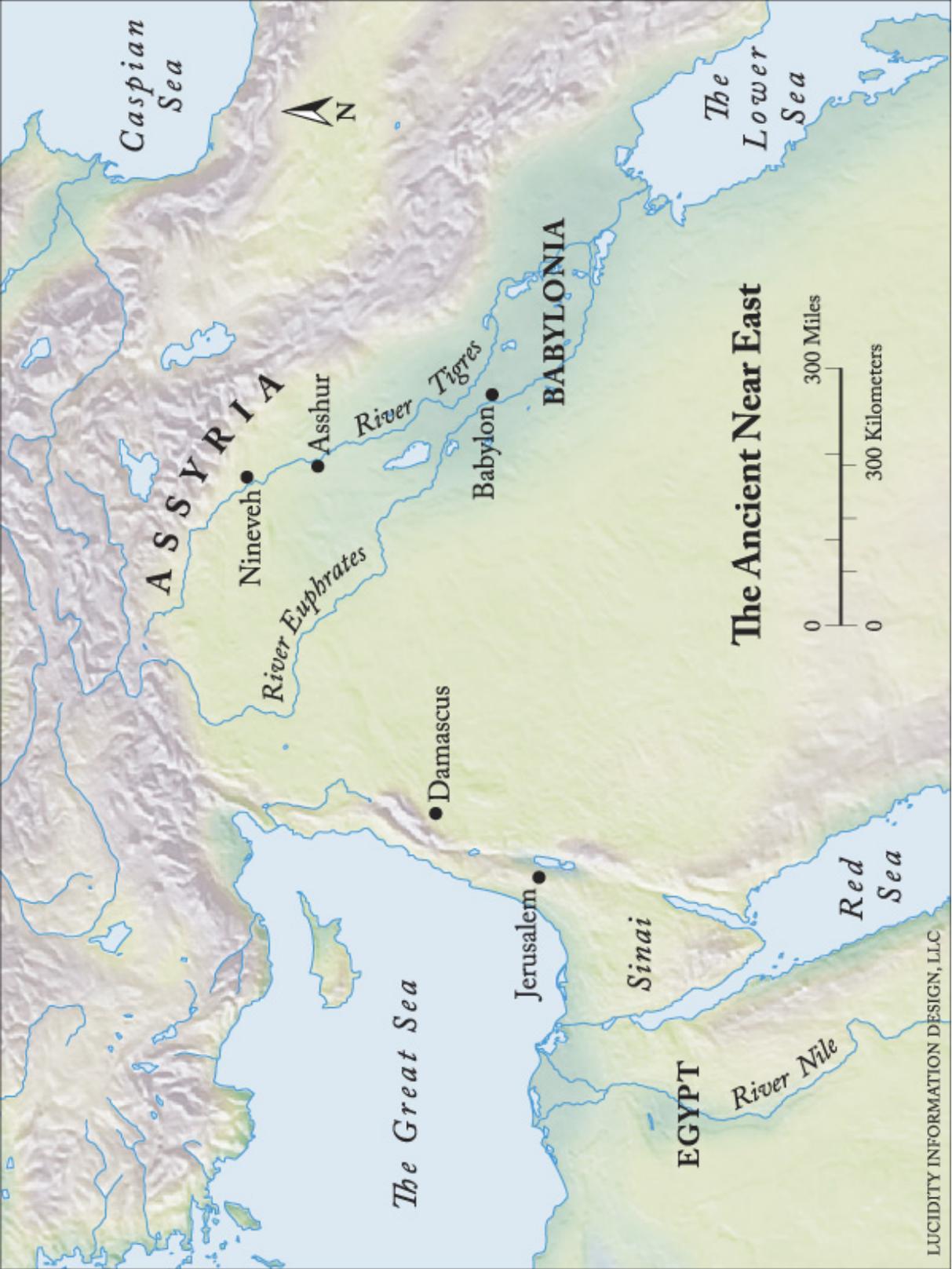
Bible Verse

"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Genesis 5:24

Word of the Day: Friend

Someone loyal, loving, and helpful



The Ancient Near East