

Journal Page

List three ways you can encourage, protect, or help people in your life this week.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How can you see God at work in this story?
- Talk about how your neighborhood is special. What do you like about where you live?
- What are some ways you can help others in your neighborhood or community?



Esther Became Queen

Esther 1-4

MAIN POINT: ESTHER AGREED TO HELP HER PEOPLE.

Ahasuerus became the new king of Persia. The king needed a queen. He chose Esther to be queen. Esther was a Jew and had been raised by her cousin Mordecai. Esther did not tell the king that she was a Jew.

One day, Mordecai heard that Haman, a very important leader who worked for the king, was planning to kill all the Jews. Mordecai and all the Jews cried.

Esther sent a messenger to ask Mordecai why all the Jews were upset. Mordecai told Esther about Haman's evil plan.

"You have to do something!" Mordecai said. "Ask the king to save the Jewish people."

Esther sent a message back to Mordecai. "No one can approach the king unless the king calls for that person first," Esther said. "The punishment is death—unless the king holds out his scepter; then you may live."

Mordecai encouraged Esther to think about it. "You are a Jew," he said. "Maybe this is why you are the queen." Maybe God put Esther in the palace to save her people!

Esther asked Mordecai to gather the Jewish people and to fast. They would pray to God for help. Then Esther would go to the king. She was willing to die to save the Jews.

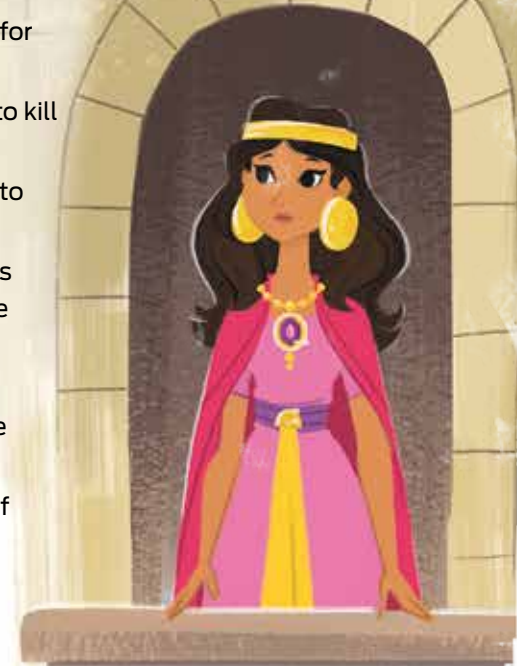
Christ Connection: God's plan all along was to send the Messiah through Abraham's family. Haman's evil plan might have stopped God's plan, but God was in control. He was working out a plan to use Esther to rescue His people and make the way for His Son, Jesus, to come into the world.

FOLD

Who's That?

Use the clues to discover who each person was and what he or she did. Mark correct answers with a dot and incorrect answers with an X.

1. Esther was not a leader for the king of Persia.
2. Mordecai did not want to kill the Jews.
3. Haman was not willing to die to save the Jews.
4. The queen of Persia was willing to die to save the Jews.
5. The leader for the king of Persia did not ask the queen for help.
6. Esther was the queen of Persia.
7. Esther's cousin asked the queen for help.



	Esther's cousin	queen of Persia	leader for king of Persia	wanted to kill the Jews	asked the queen for help	was willing to die to save the Jews
Esther						
Mordecai						
Haman						
wanted to kill the Jews						
asked the queen for help						
was willing to die to save the Jews						

Esther Quiz

Circle the correct word to fill the missing details about today's Bible story.

The king of Persia needed a queen. He chose _____ to be queen. Esther did not tell the king that she was a _____. One day, Mordecai heard (Bathsheba or Esther) (Jew or widow)

that _____ was planning to kill all the Jews. Mordecai and all the Jews _____. Mordecai said to Esther, "You are the _____. Ask the (Saul or Haman) (cried or danced) (princess or queen)

_____ to stop Haman. Ask him to _____ the Jewish people." Esther asked Mordecai to gather the Jewish people and to _____. (king or police officer) (ignore or save) (fast or sleep)

They would _____ to God for _____. Then Esther would go to the king. She was willing to _____ to _____ the Jews. (pray or sing) (fun or help) (travel or die) (teach or save)

Journal Page

God desires for everyone to be saved, and He uses ordinary people to share the gospel all over the world. Write about one way God can use you to accomplish His plan.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was it dangerous for Esther to approach the king?
- Who else put His life at risk to save His people?
- Why should we be willing to risk our lives to tell people about Jesus?



God Saved His People Through Esther

Esther 5–10

MAIN POINT: GOD USED ESTHER AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE.

The Jews in Persia were in trouble. Haman, an enemy of the Jews, was plotting to kill all of them! Esther was queen, and she was also a Jew. She was going to try to help them.

Esther went to the king. The king saw Esther and held out his golden scepter. “What is it, Queen Esther?” the king asked. “I will give you anything—up to half of my kingdom.”

Esther said, “Would you and Haman come to a feast today?”

So Haman and the king went to Esther’s feast. After eating, the king said, “What do you want, Queen Esther? I will give you anything—up to half of my kingdom.”

“Please come to my feast tomorrow, you and Haman,” Esther said.

The next day, Haman and the king went to Esther’s feast. After eating, the king said, “What do you want, Queen Esther? I will give you anything—up to half of my kingdom.”

Esther spoke up, “There is a plan to kill me and my people.”

The king replied, “Who is responsible for this plan?”

“This evil enemy—Haman!” Esther said.

The king was angry! He ordered for Haman to be hanged. He made a law to keep the Jewish people safe from their enemies.

Christ Connection: God was in control over Haman’s evil plan to destroy the Jews. Like Haman, Satan wants to destroy believers. Satan thought he had won when Jesus died on the cross, but God raised Jesus from the dead and defeated Satan once and for all.

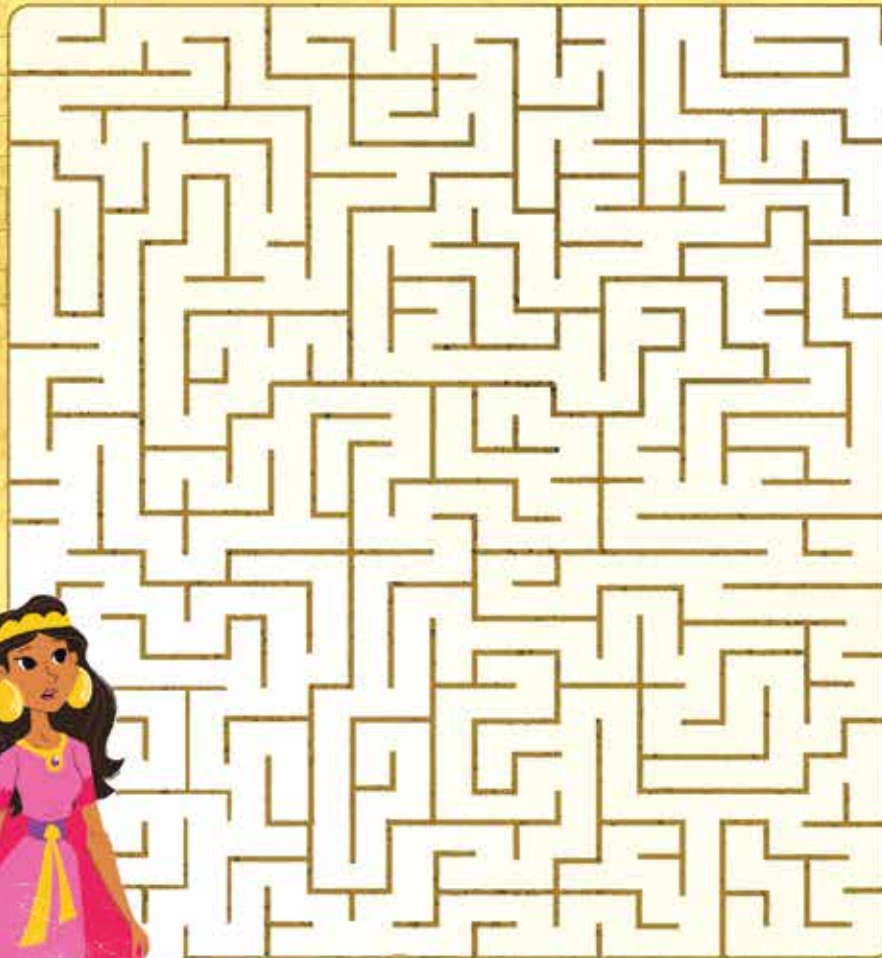
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Esther's Quest

Trace the path from Esther to King Ahasuerus.



Start



Finish



Saved from Destruction

Unscramble the mixed-up words. What does today's Bible story teach us about Jesus?

God was in control over _____'s evil
(ANMAH)

plan to destroy the _____. Like Haman,
(ESWJ)

_____ wants to destroy believers. Satan
(TSAAN)

thought he had won when _____ died
(EUSSJ)

on the cross, but God raised Jesus from

the _____ and defeated Satan
(DAED)

once and for _____.
(LAL)

Journal Page

Write about something in your life that you can ask God to help you with.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do we sometimes forget to pray about our problems?
- How can we know prayer really helps?
- Who do you know who needs help this week? How can you help?

FOLD



Nehemiah Heard News of Jerusalem

Nehemiah 1-2

MAIN POINT: NEHEMIAH PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD HELP HIS PEOPLE REBUILD JERUSALEM'S WALLS.

Nehemiah was one of God's people. God's people had lived in Babylon for many years until King Cyrus let them go home. Some of God's people stayed in Babylon. Nehemiah stayed and worked for the king of Persia.

One day, some men came from Judah. Nehemiah asked, "How are God's people doing in Jerusalem?"

The men had bad news. "The people are in trouble. The walls around Jerusalem are broken down, and the gates have been burned down."

Nehemiah sat down and cried. "God," he prayed, "we have sinned against You. Please remember Your words to Moses: 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. But if you return to Me and obey Me, I will gather you from the ends of the earth and bring you to the place I have chosen.'"

Nehemiah went back to serving the king. The king asked him, "What's wrong? Why are you sad?"

Nehemiah told the king, "The city where my ancestors are from is in trouble." "Please send me to Jerusalem so I can rebuild the city."

The king agreed. The king made sure Nehemiah had wood to help rebuild the city gates and wall. He even sent some men from his army to protect Nehemiah.

Nehemiah arrived safely in Jerusalem. Nehemiah went to look at the city's walls. Then he told the people there, "Come, let's rebuild Jerusalem's wall."

Nehemiah told the people how God had helped him, and he told them everything the king had said and done. The people said, "Let's start building," and so they did.

Christ Connection: Nehemiah trusted that God would keep His promise to protect His people and give them a home. When we trust in Jesus, we believe God will keep His promise to give us—His people—a home. Jesus obeyed God perfectly. He died on the cross and rose again so we can have a home with Him forever.

Breaking News!

Use these questions to interview a friend. Tell your friend to imagine an event that happened—real or imaginary. Then write the answers in the blanks to complete the breaking news story.

FRIEND'S NAME: _____

WHO was involved? _____

WHAT happened? _____

WHEN did this happen? _____

WHERE did this happen? _____

WHY did it happen? _____



_____ told reporters yesterday that _____,
(FRIEND'S NAME) **(WHEN)**

_____ **(WHO)** _____ **(WHAT)** _____ **(WHERE)**

When asked to explain this event, _____ replied,
(FRIEND'S NAME)

“ _____ ”
(WHY)

Yes or No?

Does God keep His promises? Color in the even numbers to find the answer to the big picture question.

1	2	7	8	1	5	1	4	3	1	7
5	6	1	4	1	8	6	2	5	6	8
7	4	3	8	7	2	4	8	7	2	4
3	9	1	6	5	1	6	2	1	5	1
8	1	4	8	3	8	2	8	4	6	1
2	5	6	2	9	6	8	4	2	8	5
4	7	8	4	5	1	5	6	7	9	1

Write the big picture answer here: _____

What promise did Nehemiah trust God to keep? _____

Journal Page

List three ways that you can honor God by helping your friends or family members this week.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What can make us feel discouraged when we have difficult tasks to do?
- How does God's Word encourage us to keep working hard?
- Tell about a time you worked hard to accomplish a task. How did you feel?



Jerusalem's Walls Were Rebuilt

Nehemiah 3:1-6:16

MAIN POINT: GOD USED NEHEMIAH TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE AS THEY REBUILT JERUSALEM'S WALLS.

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to help the people rebuild the city walls. The people started working together to fix the walls and the burned-down gates.

The workers put in doors, bolts, and bars. They cut stones and lifted them into place on the wall, and they filled in gaps and holes. All around the city, people worked side by side. Soon the wall was half as tall as it had once been!

Some men who lived nearby were angry. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked the people. Sanballat said, "These walls are just piles of trash and dirt. They can't be rebuilt!"

Nehemiah prayed. God's people kept working on the walls, but their enemies made a plan to attack them and stop their work.

Nehemiah reminded the people that God was with them. "Do not be afraid. God is great and powerful! If our enemies attack us, God will fight for us!"

So God's people went back to work. They were always ready to fight, just in case.

Nehemiah was a wise and good leader of God's people. The people kept working very hard. In just 52 days, the wall was complete! When all of Jerusalem's enemies heard that the wall had been rebuilt, they were afraid because they knew God was with His people.

Christ Connection: Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our enemies. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue people from sin and death.

FOLD

Timed Art

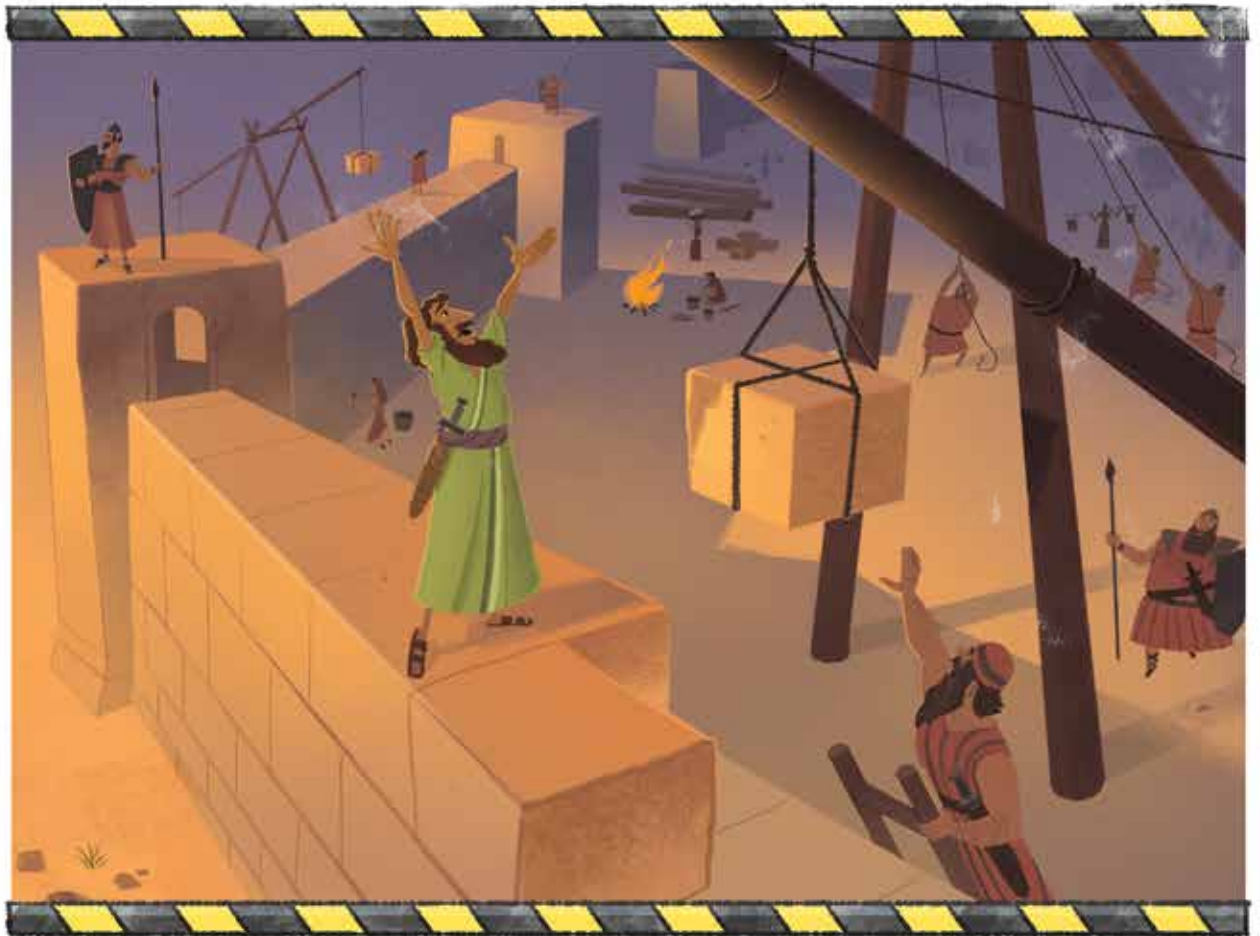
In the first frame, draw a picture of your favorite animal in 10 seconds.



Draw a picture in the second frame of the same animal, but take 2 to 3 minutes to draw.



Which drawing looks better? Why?

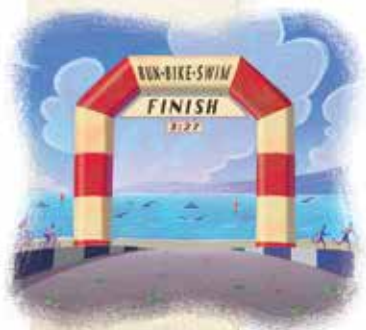


In a Nutshell

Use the following key words to write what happened in today's Bible story in your own words: *Nehemiah, walls, gates, enemies, God, weapons, complete.*

Journal Page

List three ways that knowing God's Word can be helpful.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- When might we feel sad when reading God's Word?
- What do we know from the Bible that gives us a reason to celebrate?
- When can you read the Bible together as a family? Make a plan and spend time this week reading God's Word.

FOLD



Ezra Read the Law

Nehemiah 8:1-12

MAIN POINT: EZRA READ GOD'S WORD TO TEACH THE PEOPLE HOW TO OBEY GOD.

The walls around Jerusalem were finished—at last! All the people in Jerusalem gathered together early in the morning at one of the city gates. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God's Word.

Ezra the priest brought out the book of the law of Moses that God had given to His people.

Ezra read the law, and all the people listened carefully. All the people stood up. They had respect for God's Word. Ezra praised God, and the people lifted up their hands.

Some of the leaders there explained the law to the people and helped them understand the words Ezra read. As the people heard the words of the law, they began to cry. They realized they had sinned.

Ezra, the Levites, and Nehemiah said, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad or cry."

Then Ezra said to them, "Go home and prepare a feast! Share what you have prepared with those who have nothing prepared. Today is holy to the Lord our God. This is not a day to be sad because the joy of the Lord is your strength."

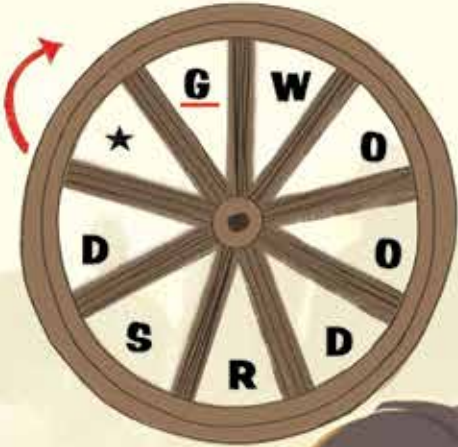
The people obeyed Ezra. They were glad because they understood the words of the law that were explained to them.

Christ Connection: God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people changed their ways and loved God more. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

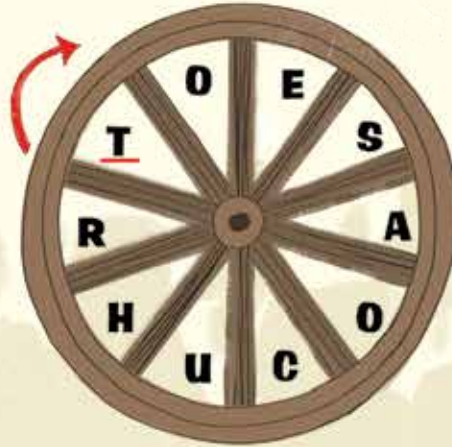
Word Wheels

Follow the instructions for each wheel. Use the words to fill in the main point of today's Bible story.

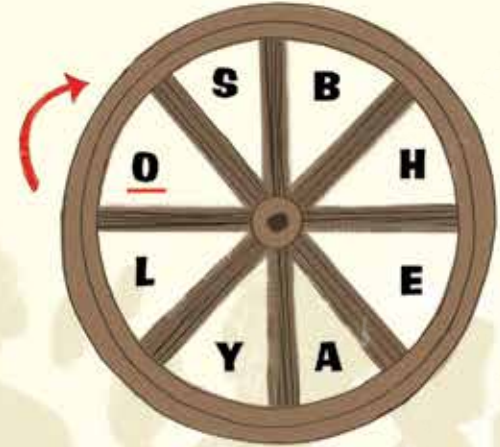
1. Begin at the G. Move around twice, collecting every other letter.



2. Begin at the T. Move around once, collecting every other letter.



3. Begin at the O. Move around once, collecting every other letter.



Ezra read _____, _____ to _____
the people how to _____ God.

Where in the Bible?

Match each statement with where it is found in the Bible.

- God created everything.
- Everyone has sinned.
- God sent Jesus into the world.
- Jesus died to save sinners.
- Only Jesus saves.
- Romans 5:8
- John 14:6
- John 3:16-17
- Colossians 1:16-17
- Romans 3:23

Journal Page

Think about the ways you worship and connect with God. Write two or three sentences that describe how you worship.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What are ways we can grow lazy in worshipping God?
- How does God want us to give?
- Who was the messenger Malachi prophesied about?
(See Malachi 3:1; Mark 1:2-4.)

FOLD



Malachi the Prophet

Malachi 1-4

MAIN POINT: GOD TOLD HIS PEOPLE TO REPENT AND GET READY FOR JESUS.

The Jewish people had returned to the promised land, and they were ready for God to bless them. The people waited, but nothing happened. Sometimes their lives were hard, and they wondered if God really loved them.

The Lord loved His people, and He wanted them to be holy. So God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi. God told the people about their sins and called them to turn back to Him.

The priests had disobeyed God. God said to the priests, “It is your job to help people follow Me, but you taught them wrong things.”

God warned the people that a day of judgment is coming when God will punish sin and reward righteousness. God said, “I am going to send My messenger.” The messenger would have a very important job: to get the people ready for God’s promised Messiah.

Next, God talked about some of the wrong things the people were doing. The people were not offering to God a share of their wealth.

Some of the people were saying things about God that weren’t true. But other people did honor God, and God noticed them.

He said, “A day is coming when everyone who is wicked will be destroyed. But those who honor Me will go out and playfully jump like calves.”

Malachi told the people to be patient. God had not forgotten about them. Life was not easy, but if they served God and followed Him, they would be happy on the day when God would keep His promise to rescue His people.

Christ Connection: Malachi was a messenger—a prophet—who told God’s people to repent. Malachi also told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get them ready for a final Messenger, Jesus Christ. Jesus would bring good news of salvation.

Who Am I?

Use your Bible to answer the following questions. Unscramble the circled letters to find out whom the prophet Malachi spoke about.

1. In which testament is the Book of Malachi?

○ _____

2. What is the name of the sixth book of the Bible?

_____ ○ _____

3. How many books are in the Old Testament?

_____ ○ _____

4. Which book comes after the Book of Isaiah?

○ _____

Malachi said God was going to send a messenger to get people ready for the promised Messiah.

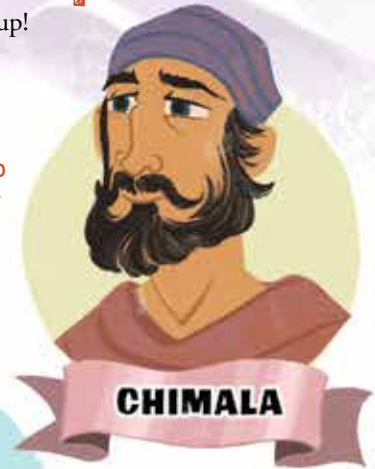
The messenger's name was

_____.

Messenger Mix-Up

The names of these messengers are all mixed up!
Can you sort them out?

_____ was a messenger—a prophet—who told God's people to repent. He also told about another messenger God would send.



_____ the Baptist called people to repent and to get ready for a final Messenger.



_____, the final Messenger, brought good news of salvation.

