

# **I WAS THERE IN BIBLE TIMES**

*by Robert A. Allen*



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# **I Was There in Bible Times**

Ten monologs of famous  
people from the Bible

by ROBERT A. ALLEN

### ***PRODUCTION NOTES***

Since the ten monologs in this collection are designed for solo performers, no special staging is necessary. Simple biblical costumes would be appropriate, but the purpose of the readings is to cause the listener to see the scene in the mind so the use of a costume should be up to the performer. The performer should envision the scene in his or her own mind and then use any movement or gesture which will bring that scene to life for the audience.

Each selection is approximately six minutes in length. They have been used in church services, at camps, in youth meetings and during school assembly presentations. They have also been performed as contest pieces in speech competition.

These monologs are appropriate for presentation by young people from the upper elementary grades through junior high, or by adults to children in Sunday school or Bible school.

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# **I Was There With Moses**

*(Based on Exodus 14)*

Do you like to camp out? I do, even though I'm a girl. My brothers don't think girls are very good at camping out, but they would have a hard time getting meals ready if Mother and I weren't along — you can be sure of that. This particular camping trip is a little different from others we've taken, though. Usually my family just goes out by themselves, but this time there are a lot of other people with us. In fact, I heard Father say that there might be somewhere around a million, and that's a lot of tents. I do know this — when we all set up our tents at night, I can stand on the highest hill around and still not see the end of the city.

The other thing that is different is that I don't have any idea how long we'll be camping. Not that I need to worry about it. Moses is taking care of that, according to Father. I saw Moses once. He is a real old man with a long, white beard, but I guess he is pretty good at camping. Mother told me he has been camping out for the last forty years, taking care of someone's sheep.

Anyway, I was very happy with the place he chose to set up camp tonight. My favorite places are next to water. My brothers like to fish, but I just like to throw stones in the water and watch the waves lap against the shore. I was hoping we would stay here for a week or so, and was being pretty poky about bringing firewood back to Mother so we could fix supper. Suddenly I heard my brother yelling my name. He sounded upset! I thought he was mad that I was being so slow to gather the firewood. But it wasn't that at all.

"Soldiers! Egyptian soldiers! In chariots! Hurry! Forget the firewood. Hurry!"

He was so excited he couldn't get out a complete

1 sentence. And I understood why as soon as I got to the  
2 top of the hill. Way off in the distance was a cloud of dust,  
3 and in the cloud (if you looked real close) you could see  
4 horses and the sun glinting off hundreds of chariots.

5 “Are you sure it’s the Egyptians?” I said as I ran.  
6 But my brother didn’t even bother to answer. He grabbed  
7 my hand and pulled me along faster. Once at the tent,  
8 we were too busy packing to talk at all. The cloud of dust  
9 grew nearer and nearer, sending the entire camp into  
10 near panic. Everyone loaded food and tents and ran  
11 around gathering their families together.

12 After I helped Mother all I could, I plopped down  
13 on one of the bundles and asked one of the questions I  
14 always seem to ask at the wrong time.

15 “Mother? Where will we go when we get packed?  
16 The army is behind us and the water is in front.”

17 Well, Mother started to cry then, so I knew I had  
18 asked the wrong question. But by that time, everyone  
19 was thinking the same thing. Crying like Mother’s could  
20 be heard all over the camp. I even heard some people  
21 yelling that this was all the fault of Moses for leading us  
22 on this camping trip.

23 Then as I looked around, I saw something else that  
24 people were doing. They were gathering into little groups  
25 and praying. They were asking God for help. I figured  
26 that was a pretty good idea, so I walked over to the  
27 nearest group and stood there listening while one of the  
28 men prayed.

29 As he talked, I thought about God. He is so powerful  
30 and wise. Surely he could find a way out of this mess we  
31 were in. I just hoped he would hurry, because that cloud  
32 of dust was coming nearer all the time.

33 Just then a man came riding over the hill on a horse.  
34 We knew he had to be from Moses so everyone stopped  
35 praying and listened.

1           “Stand still,” the messenger yelled. “Moses says to  
2 stand still and not be afraid. God is going to show us his  
3 salvation. The Lord will fight for you.”

4           That sounded good to me. I would rather have the  
5 Lord do my fighting than to have to do it myself. I just  
6 don’t figure I’m much good at fighting. But not everyone  
7 agreed.

8           “Wouldn’t it be better to just go back and serve the  
9 Egyptians?” someone asked.

10          But the messenger didn’t answer. Instead he pointed  
11 toward the seashore where a man was walking along  
12 carrying a big stick like a shepherd’s staff.

13          “It’s Moses,” I whispered to my brother.

14          Right up to the water he walked. Very slowly he  
15 stretched out his hands and that long rod over the water.  
16 Slowly at first, and then faster and faster, the wind began  
17 to blow over the water. As the wind blew, the water piled  
18 up on itself like huge liquid cliffs. Higher and higher the  
19 water piled up until right through the middle of the Red  
20 Sea lay a path of dry land wide enough for all of us to  
21 walk on with our tents and animals.

22          All that night the people carried their possessions  
23 across the path and set up camp on the other side. The  
24 next day, when the Egyptian army tried to follow us, the  
25 wind stopped and the water came right back down and  
26 drowned them all.

27          Do you suppose anyone was griping and  
28 complaining about God and Moses that day? No sirree!  
29 Everyone in the camp knew now what a powerful God  
30 we were serving.

# **I Was There With Gideon**

*(Based on Judges 7)*

It was a beautiful spring day in Israel. The flowers were in bloom and the birds were singing. I just couldn't stand to stay in the house a minute longer, so as soon as my chores were done, I set out through the hills behind our house for a walk. I knew it was kind of dangerous because everyone said there was going to be a big battle in the valley nearby. But that just made it all the more exciting for me. As far as I was concerned, it was time one of our Israelites taught those soldiers from Midian a thing or two. And if what I had heard my father say was right, Gideon was the man who could teach them.

All my father's friends said Gideon was just about the smartest army captain we had ever had. Maybe even as smart as Joshua himself. I don't believe that, because Joshua is my hero, and I know no one could be as smart as him. But maybe Gideon was close. Just maybe.

I crossed the hill that lay directly behind our farm and was ready to get on the road that runs down to Herod's well where Gideon and his men were camped. But just then a huge cloud of dust drifted up from beyond the next hill. At first I thought the battle had already started, but I couldn't hear any shouting or swords clashing or the screech of chariots running into each other. Even the birds still sang — and I didn't think they would do that during battle.

Rather than get on the road and risk the chance of running into something bigger than me, I ducked behind some bushes and waited. Pretty soon, several columns of Israelite soldiers came over the hill. In fact, there were thousands of them, all kicking up dust as they marched. They weren't in a hurry, so I was sure no one was chasing them. But they were definitely marching away from the battlefield. It just didn't make sense.

1           **"Hey, where are you going?" I yelled at one of the**  
 2 **men. "I thought the Midianites were camped over in the**  
 3 **valley of Moreh."**

4           **"They are," he called back. "That's why we're going**  
 5 **the other way."**

6           **"That's why you're what?"**

7           **"Going the other way. You've heard of Captain**  
 8 **Gideon, haven't you?"**

9           **"Sure! He's supposed to be the smartest captain**  
 10 **since Joshua."**

11           **"Right. Well this morning he announced that we had**  
 12 **too many men in the army. Too many, mind you. Why,**  
 13 **we had thirty thousand at full muster and the Midianites**  
 14 **have more camels than that. Gideon told us that everyone**  
 15 **who was fearful should go home. Well, I hadn't been**  
 16 **scared, but when I saw twenty-two thousand men pack**  
 17 **up and leave, I got scared in a hurry."**

18           **When I heard that, I really began to wonder about**  
 19 **Gideon. But that wasn't the end of it. As I topped the hill,**  
 20 **I could see all the rest of the Israelite army down on their**  
 21 **knees taking a drink. A man in the middle, who looked**  
 22 **just like I always imagined Joshua would look, watched**  
 23 **them.**

24           **But when he opened his mouth, I knew he would**  
 25 **never be as great as Joshua. In fact, he wouldn't be as**  
 26 **great as anyone, because he told all the soldiers who had**  
 27 **been down on their knees to go home like the others.**  
 28 **Only those who had cupped up water in their hands were**  
 29 **to stay.**

30           **Do you know how many stayed? Only three hundred.**  
 31 **What a disappointment. Here I thought there was going**  
 32 **to be a great battle. I was about to head home in disgust**  
 33 **when I heard Gideon again.**

34           **"I want each of you to come and get a trumpet, a**  
 35 **clay pot and an oil lamp," he called to the three hundred**

1 soldiers who were left.

2 “No swords?” I thought. “No shields? No spears? I  
3 think this guy needs to go back to basic training.” But  
4 Gideon wasn’t finished.

5 “Tonight, after dark, we’ll surround the Midianites.  
6 When I give the signal, every one of you will break his  
7 clay pot so the lamp can be seen. Then blow the trumpet  
8 and shout. Shout ‘The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.’ ”

9 I looked all around, but I didn’t see the Lord  
10 anywhere with or without a sword. Maybe Gideon had a  
11 secret weapon hidden somewhere. I decided it was worth  
12 staying to find out.

13 It was pitch dark when the men sneaked away to  
14 surround the enemy camp. When the signal came and  
15 they broke the pots, it was like someone turned on the  
16 lights. You know how it is when you are asleep and  
17 someone turns on the lights? Well, that’s the way it was  
18 for the Midianites. They couldn’t see and they got all  
19 confused with the noise and started swinging their  
20 swords at each other. Gideon’s men just kept shouting  
21 and blowing trumpets. The more they shouted, the more  
22 confused the Midianites grew, and the more they fought  
23 with each other.

24 Pretty soon they started a foot race to see who could  
25 run back to Midian the fastest, and Gideon and his army  
26 ran right behind them, chasing them all the way.

27 Right then and there, I decided that Gideon really  
28 was a great leader, and he really did have a secret  
29 weapon. His weapon was obedience to God. It was the  
30 sword of the Lord which made him great — just like  
31 Joshua.

## I Was There With Naaman

*(Based on II Kings 5)*

I have a friend. She's about the best friend I've ever had, but I can't tell my mother and father about her because they wouldn't like it. Not that they don't like Hannah. They do. But I don't think they would like her to be my special friend. You see, Hannah is a slave girl.

My father is a great captain of the king's army here in Syria where I live. A few months ago he led a battle against the land of Israel, and when he came back, he brought Hannah and lots of other boys and girls like her along. He appointed Hannah to be my mother's slave. Now, I don't think that was very nice at all. I know I wouldn't want some soldier to come along and take me to be a slave for his wife. But Daddy doesn't seem to think about it like that.

Anyway, I was telling you about Hannah. She is just about my age — maybe a little older. And she helps my mother around the house. She works really hard. Sometimes when no one is watching, I help her. Then we have more time to play and to talk.

It was during one of our talks that she asked about my father.

"Is your father very, very sick?" Hannah asked me. "Is he going to die?"

At first I was angry. Father's sickness was something else I was not supposed to know anything about, and was not supposed to say anything about. But then I decided I would be in enough trouble already if I were found playing with a slave girl, and I couldn't really get into any more trouble if I talked to her about things we weren't supposed to know.

"It must be really bad," I whispered to my friend. "I asked mother about it once, and she just cried. But I

1 heard the nurse tell the cook that it was leprosy. And no  
2 one ever gets rid of leprosy."

3 "I know someone who can," Hannah whispered  
4 back.

5 "Can what?"

6 "Get rid of leprosy. His name is Elisha. He is a  
7 prophet of God who lives in Israel where I used to live.  
8 If your father would just go to him, he could cure him of  
9 his leprosy."

10 "We've got to go tell him," I shouted, forgetting all  
11 about the need to whisper. Then I remembered and  
12 dropped back down to the floor. "But we can't. I'm not  
13 allowed to talk to Father except when he asks me a  
14 question after my lessons. And I'm sure he would never  
15 let you talk to him. You're only a slave."

16 I could see by the look on Hannah's face that I hadn't  
17 said a very nice thing. "I'm sorry, Hannah. I didn't  
18 mean . . ."

19 "It's all right," she smiled sadly. "I am a slave. And  
20 he wouldn't let me talk to him. Besides, I think I would  
21 be afraid to talk to him. But maybe if we tell your  
22 mother?"

23 "That's a great idea!" I jumped to my feet again, then  
24 dropped back down just as quickly. Mother didn't even  
25 know we were friends. How could we run in and tell her  
26 we had discussed something we weren't even supposed  
27 to know about, when we weren't even supposed to be  
28 talking? But again, Hannah understood.

29 "That's all right. Next time I go in to comb her hair,  
30 I'll just say something about how wonderful Elisha is,  
31 without even mentioning you. All right?"

32 I nodded happily. It was wonderful to have a friend.

33 I didn't get a chance to talk to Hannah again for  
34 several days, but I knew something must have happened  
35 because Father began to prepare for a trip. He saddled

1 dozens of horses and took sacks of gold and silver and  
2 new clothes. One thing Father knew how to do was to  
3 give gifts. I just knew that when Elisha saw all those  
4 expensive gifts, he would be glad to heal my father of his  
5 leprosy.

6 While Father was gone, I was able to play with  
7 Hannah quite a few times. It seemed like she always knew  
8 more about what was going on around the house than I  
9 did. But then, I was never allowed into the big dining  
10 room during meals. Hannah had to be there waiting on  
11 Mother while she ate. So it was Hannah who found out  
12 what happened and told me about it after Father  
13 returned.

14 Since Father had a letter from the king of Syria, he  
15 delivered it to the king of Israel. I know Hannah had told  
16 him to go to Elisha, but parents don't listen to us kids very  
17 well sometimes. So he went to the king of Israel, but the king  
18 couldn't do anything for him. When Elisha heard he was  
19 there, he sent a messenger telling him to come to his place.

20 So Father went to Elisha's home with all his horses  
21 and gold and silver and chariots. He sat outside, waiting  
22 for Elisha to come and accept all the gifts and heal him.  
23 But Elisha didn't come out. He just sent a servant to talk  
24 to Father. You know what Father thinks about talking  
25 to slaves! Well, the servant told Father to go wash seven  
26 times in a muddy river nearby. And Father got angry. I  
27 can just imagine that, because I've seen him angry myself.  
28 Anyway, he got mad and started home. But one of his  
29 men convinced him to try what Elisha had said. And when  
30 he did, his leprosy was gone!

31 Isn't that great? I was so excited when Hannah told  
32 me about it. I wanted to hear all about Elisha. But Hannah  
33 said she would tell me about someone even greater than  
34 Elisha. She's going to tell me about Elisha's God. Isn't it  
35 wonderful to have a friend?

## I Was There With Samuel

*(Based on 1 Samuel 3)*

Have you ever had a dream that was so real that you were sure if you just reached out your hand you could touch the thing you were dreaming about? Well, I had a dream like that the other night. And yet, it wasn't really a dream either. Eli says it was a vision.

But I guess you don't know Eli, do you? Let me tell you about him. Eli is the man who has raised me. I live with his family. He's not my father, though. My father's name is Elkanah. I suppose you're wondering why I don't live with my parents. It's certainly not because they don't love me. They do—they love me very much. It's because—well, let me tell you how I came to live in the temple and maybe that will help.

My mother's name is Hannah. She didn't have any children, and she wanted a child very much. So she prayed about it. That might seem kind of strange to you, but not to my mother. She prays about everything. So she prayed about having a child, and she promised the Lord that if he would give her a son, she would give him right back to God.

And God gave her a son. That's me! My name is Samuel.

Mother and Father loved me from the moment I was born, but they wouldn't have ever considered forgetting their promise to God. As soon as I was old enough to feed myself, they brought me here to the temple to serve God. Eli is the high priest, so I help him here in the temple.

But I suppose you're wondering about my dream. Well, I sleep in a little room furnished with a cot and a little table. Eli's family lives in several rooms just off from the temple. My room is very near to theirs; close enough so Eli can wake me during the night if he needs my help.

1 I was sleeping there in my little cot the other night  
2 when I thought I heard Eli calling me.

3 "Samuel," he called. "Samuel."

4 Just like always I called back to him, "Here I am."  
5 Then I waited for him to tell me what to do, but he didn't  
6 say anything else. So I jumped out of bed and ran to the  
7 room where Mr. and Mrs. Eli sleep, thinking he wanted  
8 me to come there. Sometimes I have to do what I think  
9 Eli wants me to do, even when he doesn't tell me to do  
10 it. I guess that's because he is getting rather old and a  
11 little bit forgetful. But he always tells me that doing what  
12 is right without being told is the best kind of obedience  
13 anyway. So I try to think what he would like me to do  
14 and do it without being asked. Anyway, I ran to his room,  
15 but he said he had not called me at all and I should go  
16 back to bed.

17 Well, I didn't argue with him, but I was sure I had  
18 heard someone call. That's what I was telling you about —  
19 the dream being so real that I felt I could have reached  
20 right out and touched the person who was calling.

21 The second time it was just the same. I had just  
22 fallen back to sleep when I heard it again.

23 "Samuel! Samuel!"

24 I suppose I should have been afraid to hear voices  
25 like that. But it was such a sweet voice that I didn't even  
26 think to be afraid. Besides, I still thought it was Eli. I  
27 jumped up again and ran into his room. I told him I was  
28 there and asked what he wanted me to do.

29 "I didn't call you, Samuel," he said, kind of tired  
30 like. "Go back to bed and get some sleep."

31 Well, there was nothing to do but go back to my little  
32 room again. But this time I didn't go to sleep at all. I just  
33 lay there, awake, until I heard it again.

34 "Samuel! Samuel!"

35 I guess that's why Eli says it was a vision and not a

1 dream. You don't have dreams when you are awake. As  
2 soon as I heard the voice, I ran in to Eli.

3 "Here I am, Eli. You did call me. I know you did."

4 This time Eli sat up in bed and looked right at me,  
5 almost as if he was seeing me for the first time. He stared  
6 at me long and hard without saying anything. Finally he  
7 spoke.

8 "Samuel, I didn't call you. But I know who did. There  
9 has not been a vision from Jehovah God for many years  
10 in Israel. But I really believe God has found in you  
11 someone who will listen to him, and therefore, he wants  
12 to speak to you. Go back to bed. When the voice comes  
13 again, say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

14 I was trembling with excitement when I heard Eli  
15 say those words. Could it really be that God would speak  
16 to me as he had to Moses and Joshua? Could it really be  
17 the Lord who knew my name and was calling me? Quietly  
18 I lay down on my bed and waited. Soon the voice came  
19 again.

20 "Samuel! Samuel!"

21 Just like Eli had said to do, I took a deep breath and  
22 spoke to the One I knew was right there with me.

23 "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

24 And the Lord did speak to me. He told me what he  
25 was going to do in Israel and what he was going to do  
26 with Eli. Best of all, he told me that he wanted me to  
27 serve him and be his prophet all the days of my life.

28 How glad I was that when the Lord talked to me I  
29 had answered, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth."

# **I Was There With David and Goliath**

*(Based on I Samuel 17)*

I was just walking down a dusty road minding my own business when I saw him. He was the tallest man I had ever seen, and the ugliest. His head was up in the branches of a tree that was so big I didn't think I could even climb it. And his face was all gnarled and twisted like one of the knots on the side of the tree. He looked like he was coming right down the road after me — and let me tell you, I was scared!

Like I said, I was just minding my own business and I didn't really like him looking like he was about to mind it for me, but I didn't really have to worry. He had bigger things on his mind. I figured that out when he rushed past me like an express chariot and headed on down toward the valley of Elah.

I suppose the smart thing to do at that exact minute would have been to turn my toes in the opposite direction and tell my shoes to move me toward home. But I guess my curiosity got the best of me again. That's what my big sister always says anyway, "Jason, your curiosity is getting the best of you again."

So I turned my toes in the direction the giant had just headed — that's what he was, you know — a giant. I told my shoes, "Shoes, let's go see the action in the valley of Elah."

When I arrived on the top of a small hill overlooking the valley, there wasn't much action going on at all. On one side of the valley as far as my eyes could see, there were green and gold striped tents. They were beautiful tents made out of the best camel's hair, so I knew they belonged to the Philistines. Everyone in my country knew what a Philistine tent looked like. For years they had been coming into our land and camping anywhere

1       they wanted. They had been stealing anything they  
2       wanted, too. We didn't like it much, but no one was strong  
3       enough to do anything about it.

4       The Philistines were tough.

5       On the other side of the valley were the rag-tag  
6       group of soldiers that my people called an army — the  
7       Israelites. They didn't look much like an army. No two  
8       uniforms matched, and the best weapons they carried  
9       were some spears made from leftover farm tools.

10       Suddenly I saw that ugly fellow again — the one as  
11       big as the trees. He stood in the middle of the valley, right  
12       between the two armies, yelling so loud that it sent  
13       shivers up and down my backbone like a bouncing ball.

14       “Send someone out here to fight me,” he yelled. “If  
15       he wins, we will be your servants.”

16       That sounded like a pretty good deal to me. We'd  
17       been serving the Philistines for a long time. I would have  
18       liked having a big fellow like that around to take out the  
19       garbage and carry jugs of water up from the stream. But  
20       the giant wasn't finished.

21       “And, if I win, you will be our servants.”

22       That didn't sound like much fun at all. His garbage  
23       cans were probably as big as my dad's chariot, and four  
24       men could ride in that at the same time. I could just see  
25       myself trying to empty the garbage for him every day.

26       Pretty soon I got tired of waiting for one of our brave  
27       Israelite soldiers to take up the giant's challenge, so I sat  
28       down on the hill and fell asleep. I really don't know how  
29       long I slept, but what woke me up was that ugly voice  
30       again.

31       “Am I a dog that you come to me with a stick?” His  
32       voice shook the ground I was lying on, and I sat up  
33       quickly. Down in the valley below there were two people  
34       now. But the second one looked like a little ant compared  
35       to the giant. Why, it was a boy — no bigger than me. And

1 he was walking right across the valley toward the  
2 monster who made a tree stump look beautiful. I covered  
3 my ears as the voice thundered again.

4 “Come to me. I’ll feed your flesh to the birds and the  
5 beasts. Come on, if you dare!”

6 I couldn’t hear what the boy said in reply. His voice  
7 was much smaller than the giant’s, just like his body. But  
8 he must have said something to make the giant mad,  
9 because he started running right toward the little fellow.  
10 As he ran he pulled a sword and started shouting terrible  
11 things about the God we Israelites worship. If it had been  
12 me with that mountain of a man heading my way, I would  
13 have told my feet to make themselves scarce in a hurry.  
14 But not this fellow. He just stood there calmly like he  
15 had some secret weapon hidden somewhere.

16 The giant was covering ground faster than an  
17 Egyptian chariot. I figured it was all over for that boy  
18 when I saw his arm come up and start to swing around  
19 with a sling. Now, I’m pretty good with a sling myself.  
20 But I’d never seen anything like this. He slung that sling  
21 around until it buzzed louder than a hive full of angry  
22 bees. And then — zing! Out whizzed a rock, flying straight  
23 toward the oncoming Philistine.

24 Next thing I knew there was a sound like an arrow  
25 hitting a tight leather shield. I figured the rock had hit  
26 the giant’s armor and bounced harmlessly away. But as  
27 I watched in amazement, the giant stopped in his tracks,  
28 threw his hands up to his forehead, and then slowly  
29 toppled forward and crashed to the valley floor.

30 He had done it! The boy had sent that rock straight  
31 into the one place not protected by any armor. What a  
32 shot!

33 Quickly I jumped to my feet. “Shoes,” I said, “we’re  
34 going down there for a closer look at that fellow. Either  
35 he’s the bravest kid I’ve ever seen or my name isn’t Jason.”

1           Well, every man in the Israelite army must have  
2 thought the same thing, because they all came charging  
3 down into the valley, too. And the Philistines? Well, they  
4 must have thought we were attacking them, 'cause they  
5 started to run. So we chased them! We chased them all  
6 the way back into their own country.

7           I never did get one of them to carry the garbage for  
8 me. But it was a great victory anyway.

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## **I Was There With Joash**

*(Based on II Kings 11 and II Chronicles 22:10-23:21)*

I'll bet you are wondering about my crown, aren't you? You've probably never seen such a young king before. Well, let me tell you this. You wouldn't be seeing one now unless God had been with me in a very special way. I'm really supposed to be dead.

It all started when my father died. His name was Ahaziah, and he was the king of Judah. One day, while he was visiting his good friend Joram, king of Israel, a fellow named Jehu led a rebellion against King Joram and killed both him and my father. I really don't remember that because I was less than a year old.

When my grandmother, Athaliah, heard that my father was dead, she went into action. I know you may find this hard to believe because most grandmothers are the nicest people in the world. But my grandmother was wicked. I think it was because she worshiped a false god by the name of Baal. Anyway, she was so wicked that she ordered the murder of all her grandchildren. You see, one of the king's sons was supposed to become king when his father died. But Grandmother Athaliah didn't want one of her grandsons to be king. She wanted to rule Judah herself as the queen. That way she could make everyone worship her god, Baal. So she decided to kill all the boys who were in line to be king.

The soldiers she sent to do the killing were very mean men. They came right into the palace and killed all my brothers. But right there is where God helped me, like I said. I was in my cradle when my aunt Jehosheba ran into the room.

"Quickly," she yelled. "Grab Joash and run for your life."

She was talking to my nursemaid but the girl was too

1       scared to do anything, so my aunt grabbed me and ran  
2       for the door.

3       Since Jehosheba had been raised in the palace, she  
4       knew all the back stairways and exits. While the soldiers  
5       searched all the rooms for more children to kill, she  
6       carried me out through a back alleyway and then ran up  
7       the street toward the temple.

8       “Jehoida the priest will protect him,” she said to my  
9       nursemaid as they ran. “He still worships the one true  
10      God of Israel. If we can just make it to the temple, little  
11      Joash will be safe.”

12      Well, I guess you know we made it safely since I’m  
13      not dead. Jehoida the priest was glad to see me. He hid  
14      me and my nurse in the temple for the next six years. All  
15      that time my grandmother just kept getting more and  
16      more wicked.

17      Finally Jehoida decided it was time to act. He came  
18      to my room one morning just after I had turned seven  
19      years old.

20      “Joash,” he said, looking very solemn. “Today you  
21      are going to become the king of Judah. Put on your best  
22      robes and a pair of shoes. No more going barefoot when  
23      you are the king.”

24      I didn’t especially care for the shoes part, but let me  
25      tell you, I forgot I even had them on when I came out of  
26      the room into the temple itself. There were more soldiers  
27      there than I could ever have imagined. Soldiers  
28      everywhere! They were lined up from the right corner  
29      of the temple all the way along the wall to where the  
30      altar stood and then back along the way by the front gate  
31      and along the other wall way back to the left corner of  
32      the temple. They all had weapons — shiny swords, and  
33      spears that looked at least fifty feet long.

34      Ten of the biggest soldiers with the longest spears  
35      surrounded me as soon as I came through the door. They

1 walked in a tight circle around me over to one of the  
2 pillars at the head of the stairs leading down into the  
3 temple courtyard. In the courtyard were so many more  
4 soldiers that it looked like a sea of bodies with the tops  
5 of the spears as waves.

6 Jehoida the priest came up to me then and placed  
7 a huge crown on my head. It felt like it weighed as much  
8 as I did. Then he handed me a copy of the law of God and  
9 told me that God wanted me to study it and obey it when  
10 I was the king. Next he took a vase with some oil in it  
11 and poured the oil over my head. When he did that, all  
12 the soldiers and everyone else clapped their hands and  
13 shouted, "God save the king!"

14 I guess they were happy to be rid of grandmother  
15 and her false god, Baal. Oh, but I didn't tell you what  
16 happened to grandmother. She heard all the shouting  
17 and the trumpets blowing, and she came over to the  
18 temple. When she saw me wearing the crown, she yelled  
19 "Treason! Treason!" in a terrible voice and ran toward  
20 me like she was going to finish the job she had sent the  
21 guards to do six years before. But the soldiers caught her  
22 and took her away. I'm not exactly sure what they did  
23 with her, but I haven't seen her since then.

24 Well, I have to go study the law of God now. We kings  
25 are busy people, you know. See you later.  
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# **I Was There With Queen Esther**

*(Based on Esther 3 and 4)*

My, have things been exciting around here lately! Have you noticed how sometimes things go along real boring-like for weeks at a time, and then when something finally happens, everything else happens all at once? That's the way it had been here in the palace at Shushan.

I bet you're wondering what I'm doing in a palace. I'm certainly not a princess. I'm just a little servant girl. But I'm in the palace because I happen to be the servant girl of the most beautiful lady in all the land — Queen Esther. I know she is the most beautiful because the king had a contest to choose a new queen, and Queen Esther won the contest. That was exciting all right, but it was quite a while ago. It isn't one of the exciting things that has happened recently.

After Esther became queen and I was chosen along with several other young girls to wait on her, things got real boring, as I said. We would get up in the morning, wash and fix her hair, serve breakfast and do some sewing. Then came lunch and a walk through the palace gardens. Then the evening meal and we'd help her get ready for bed. Boring, wouldn't you say? You'd think there would be more to do in a palace, but there really isn't. Once in a while the king had a party, and maybe if we were lucky we could see some of the beautiful dresses as the ladies stepped out of their chariots at the front gate. But most of the time — boresville!

There is one thing Queen Esther does every day that I forgot to tell you about. Once in the morning and again in the afternoon, and again before bedtime, she goes to one of the windows in the rooms where she lives and kneels down and prays. I asked her once who she was praying to, because she doesn't have any statues of

1 gods in her room like some of the others here in the  
2 palace. She said she was praying to the true God, the  
3 only one who could hear and answer prayer. I don't know  
4 what to think about that. I'm used to seeing images of  
5 the gods I pray to. But maybe she's right about her God  
6 after all. Someone must have been listening to her  
7 prayers in order to take care of what happened here this  
8 week.

9 It all started about five days ago when the rumor  
10 went around that someone was trying to kill the king.  
11 Everyone knew there was a terrible plot, but no one knew  
12 who was supposed to do the killing. What a problem! The  
13 king didn't take the idea of someone trying to kill him  
14 lightly. The king has been known to put people in prison  
15 just because one of his friends asked him to do it. So  
16 things were pretty tense around the palace. Exciting —  
17 but tense.

18 In order to keep himself from getting killed, the king  
19 ordered two of his guards to stand outside the door all  
20 day and all night. They were not to allow anyone in  
21 without his permission. Before the king ate anything,  
22 someone else had to taste it to see if it was poisoned.

23 Then, last night, it happened. We had just helped  
24 Queen Esther get ready for bed and were thinking about  
25 going to bed ourselves when someone knocked on the  
26 door. I have kind of a wild imagination, and I had been  
27 thinking that if they couldn't kill the king, they might  
28 try to kill the queen. So I didn't open the door. I just  
29 called out, "Who's there?"

30 "Mordecai," came back a deep voice. It was the  
31 queen's uncle. "I must see Esther right away."

32 I just about said, "How do I know you're not a  
33 murderer pretending to be Mordecai?", but I knew better  
34 than to let my imagination get completely away from me.  
35 I unlocked the door and one of the other girls ran to get

1 the queen. When Esther arrived, Mordecai was pacing so  
2 fast I thought he was going to wear a hole in the marble  
3 floor.

4 “Esther, you must get a message to the king. I have  
5 discovered who is trying to kill him, and they are going  
6 to do it tonight.”

7 “But I can’t,” said Esther. “He hasn’t asked me to  
8 come. Besides, he is guarded at the door by two guards,  
9 Bigthan and Teresh. No one could possibly get by them  
10 to kill the king.”

11 “That’s the problem,” said Mordecai. “Bigthan and  
12 Teresh are the ones who want to kill him.”

13 You should have seen the hustle and bustle around  
14 this place then. We dressed Esther so fast our heads were  
15 spinning. Then we called her personal bodyguards. They  
16 walked her over to the king’s quarters where Esther  
17 alerted the king’s bodyguards who rushed up to his  
18 bedroom. Sure enough — there were no guards at the  
19 door. Instead, Bigthan and Teresh were standing over  
20 the sleeping king with their knives raised to kill.

21 Before you could say Nebuchadnezzar, they were  
22 arrested, and the king’s life was saved. It was exciting,  
23 that’s for sure. Queen Esther came back to tell Mordecai  
24 and us all about it. All the time she was telling the story,  
25 she kept saying, “I’m sure glad that God answers prayer.”

26 I think I like Esther’s God, even if we can’t see him.  
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# **I Was There With Elizabeth**

*(Based on Luke 1)*

We're going to have a baby! Oh, not me — but Elizabeth is, and it's so exciting because she's too old to have a baby and she's never had one before. She said I could help her take care of it, and I just love babies!

It all started after her husband Zechariah made his last visit to the temple in Jerusalem where he works. I go next door to help Elizabeth every day while Zechariah is gone because she needs me to help gather the eggs and feed the chickens and sometimes to milk the goats. So I was there the day he came back from Jerusalem.

It was the strangest homecoming I've ever seen. He walked in the door and walked over and sat down at the table without saying a word. Then he picked up a sheet of paper and started writing a letter. Elizabeth greeted him and asked him how things were in Jerusalem, but he didn't say a word. He just kept on writing. Finally he handed the letter to his wife.

"Elizabeth," she said aloud. "I am writing you this note because I can't talk. An angel told me we are going to have a son."

I could hardly believe my ears. I told you Elizabeth was old. Well, Zechariah is even older. Everyone else their age is a grandmother or grandfather, and he was telling her they were going to have a baby!

I just about laughed, but I knew better than to do that in front of Elizabeth. But I'll tell you this — when I went home and told my mother, she laughed. She was real happy for Elizabeth, but she laughed just the same. "Elizabeth a mother," she kept saying while she laughed. "Elizabeth a mother."

It took a long time for Zechariah to write out the whole story, but apparently the angel appeared to him

1 while he was working in the temple. This angel told him  
2 that they would have a son and that he would be a great  
3 man for God. The reason he couldn't talk was because  
4 he told the angel he was too old to have children. The  
5 angel said that since he didn't believe the message, he  
6 would not be able to talk until the child was born. And  
7 he hasn't talked since.

8 So now Elizabeth is going to have a baby. Even though  
9 Zechariah is home, I go over every day to help her. She  
10 needs lots of help 'cause she's getting real big. I cook and  
11 clean the house and help her sew clothes for the baby.  
12 And I even run errands and do the grocery shopping  
13 because Elizabeth is hiding so no one will see her in this  
14 condition.

15 Well, just when I didn't think things could get any  
16 more exciting, I was over at Elizabeth's one day when  
17 someone knocked on the door. Elizabeth asked me to  
18 answer it, and when I did, there was another lady who  
19 was obviously going to have a baby. But she was as young  
20 as Elizabeth is old. Not much older than me, I bet.

21 "Is this the home of Zechariah?" she asked.

22 I just nodded, but Elizabeth called from the other  
23 room, "Mary. Come in. I'd know your voice anywhere."

24 So I opened the door and Mary came in. As Elizabeth  
25 came into the front room to greet her, I heard the  
26 strangest thing since Zechariah had come home. I heard  
27 Elizabeth say, "Blessed are you among women, and  
28 blessed is the fruit of your womb. As soon as I heard your  
29 greeting, the child within me leaped for joy. You are the  
30 mother of my Lord."

31 I wasn't sure what Elizabeth meant by that, but it  
32 was exciting anyway. For the next several weeks I  
33 listened to them talk as I worked around the house. Mary  
34 had seen an angel, just like Zechariah did. The angel told  
35 her that she would also have a son, but this son would be



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