

A BIBLE STORY WITHOUT NAMES.

(1) A disorderly rabble, half-crazy with anger, rush through the streets of the capital, dragging a helpless prisoner with them. Outside the city walls they halt, and some of them, stripping off their flowing upper garments, place these robes in charge of a stern-faced, keen-eyed young man who is evidently a superior among them. Then they gather around their prisoner who has been flung on the ground, and picking up the stones that lie beside them, they stone him with savage fury until he is dead.

(2) In the vast sandy desert that lies to the east we again see this young man. Since last we saw him, a great, an unspeakably great, change has come over his life. He has been led to champion the cause he formerly sought to suppress, and those who were his friends, and admirers, and supporters have become his bitterest enemies. To make sure of himself, he has retired to the solitude of the desert. Away from friend and foe alike he tries and learns to make himself stronger and better for the work that he has now been called to do; and for three years he stays there.

(3) Darkness has fallen over a great city on the edge of the desert. The solitary wanderer has some time ago come to this city, and his actions there have so enraged his enemies that his life is in danger, and day and night are the city gates watched lest he escape. But on this night his friends have planned to help him to get away. All round the city, houses are built leaning against the wall, with here and there windows jutting out over the wall. In the silence and darkness one of these windows is opened; by means of a long rope the persecuted one is safely let down to the ground in a basket, and at once takes his solitary way southwards.

(4) It is a year or two later. The young man has started on a long journey with a friend, going to plead his cause from town to town. We see them now approaching a city after days of weary wandering in a rough and desolate highland district. They enter the town, and deliver the great message that has been given them, and the young man shows forth the power that has been committed to him in so wonderful a manner that the rude, ignorant natives prepare to offer sacrifice to them as to gods come down from heaven in human form. But the two messengers will have none of their worship, and enemies following them persuade the fickle natives to turn round,

with the result that the young man is attacked in the streets and stoned. He who once watched others stoning to death is now himself stoned! He is so cruelly assaulted that at last he is taken for dead, and is dragged through the streets to be thrown carelessly outside the city.

(5) Once again we see him, and he is a prisoner on his way to appear before the Emperor, to whom he has appealed. There is a whole band of prisoners under the charge of a centurion and body of soldiers, and one who accompanies them has written the whole story for us. They have a long voyage before them, and from the very first circumstances are against them. Because of contrary winds they have to zig-zag the course of the vessel, and when at length they arrive at a certain harbor, the centurion finds there a large ship bound for their destination. He accordingly puts all his prisoners on board, bringing up the numbers to 276 souls. The wind is still against them, and they proceed but slowly.

The winter is drawing near, and our prisoner advises them at length to stay in a favorable harbor until the spring. But his warning is unheeded, and tempted by a soft south wind the sailors proceed westwards. Suddenly a gale springs up from the north-east, and increasing to a violent hurricane, drives the ship before it. All hands are employed in lightening the vessel, but for nearly a fortnight the storm continues, neither sun nor stars being visible in all that weary time. Now the prisoner shows his courage and inspires every one with hope. When they hear the noise of breakers, and find themselves nearing land, he exhorts them to be of good cheer, he urges them to eat in order that they may have strength for what lies before them, he prevents the sailors from abandoning the ship, and when at last the ship is run ashore and begins to break up, for this man's sake the centurion keeps the soldiers from killing all the prisoners. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."

1. Who was stoned to death. (Section 1).
2. To what desert country did the young man retire?
3. From what city did he escape by a basket?
4. Mention any other people in the Bible who escaped in the same way.
5. Where was the young man stoned as told in section (4)?
6. Give another occasion in which he was taken for a god. — *Morning Rays*.