

Dinner with Sinners

BASED ON MATTHEW 9:9-13; 12:9-14

THE JEWS HATE THE TAX COLLECTORS. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE ALSO JEWS, TAX COLLECTORS WORK FOR THE ROMANS, AND THEY CHEAT THEIR FELLOW JEWS OUT OF MONEY. BUT JESUS DOESN'T CARE WHAT THE PEOPLE THINK. HE LOVES EVEN THE TAX COLLECTORS. ONE DAY IN CAPERNAUM, JESUS LOOKS INTO THE EYES OF A HATED TAX COLLECTOR ...

PIX

Summer Les. 02

MATTHEW,
COME AND
FOLLOW ME.



IMMEDIATELY MATTHEW GIVES UP HIS PROSPEROUS-BUT CORRUPT-JOB AND FOLLOWS JESUS.

NO GOOD
JEW EVER WANTED
MATTHEW FOR A
FRIEND.



MATTHEW THROWS A DINNER PARTY TO HONOR JESUS. OTHER TAX COLLECTORS COME TO DINNER TOO. THE PHARISEES SEE THIS WITH DISAPPROVAL.

WHY DOES
YOUR TEACHER EAT
WITH TAX COLLECTORS
AND OTHER SINNERS?



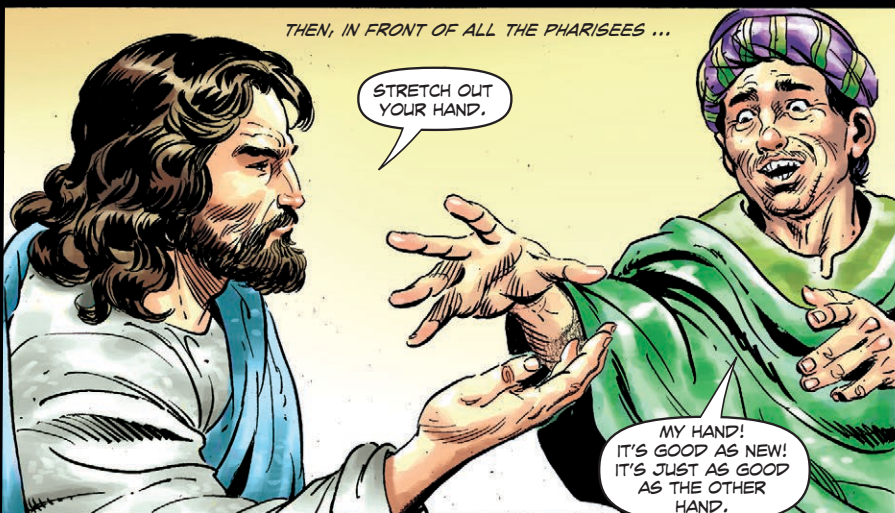
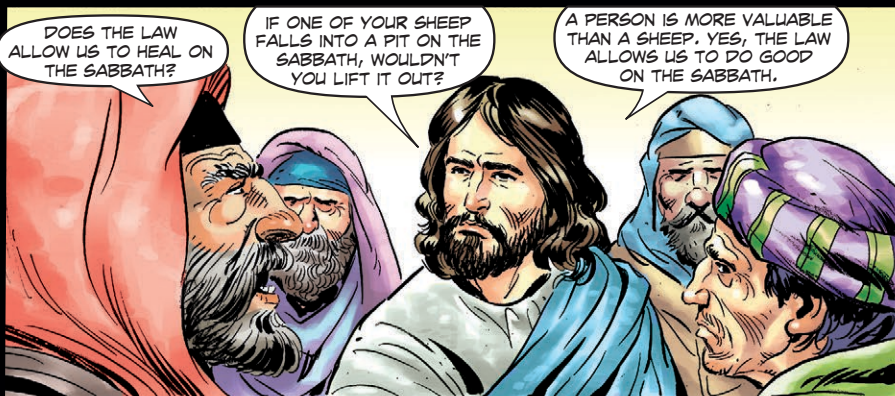
PEOPLE WHO ARE
HEALTHY DON'T NEED A
DOCTOR. SICK PEOPLE
DO. THE SINNERS ARE
THE ONES WHO
NEED ME.



THE PHARISEES DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. BUT THEY GET EVEN ANGRIER AT JESUS AND START LOOKING FOR WAYS TO CRITICIZE HIM IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE. ONE SABBATH DAY IN THE SYNAGOGUE ...

LOOK, JESUS IS TALKING TO
THAT MAN WITH THE TWISTED HAND.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN TRICK HIM
INTO BREAKING GOD'S LAW.







DANGER IN SPACE

Part Two

Jeff is returning home after spending a year on earth with his grandparents. He is aboard a space shuttle, flying to Ag-4, the space station where he and his parents live. As the shuttle nears its destination, a radio message from the station informs the shuttle that a swarm of meteoroids is endangering the station. The station's only laser cannon isn't working, so they're without protection from the flying rocks. All eyes are glued to the image of Ag-4 on the shuttle's screen.

"They've taken two hits, Captain, and they're not

answering our radio signals," the communications officer reported. "It's a dead station."

A pang of fear gripped Jeff. "What do you mean, a dead station?" he blurted out.

The communications officer looked up. He hadn't noticed Jeff enter the flight deck. "A dead station is a station we can't make radio contact with. It doesn't mean that there isn't any life on the station," he said reassuringly.

The captain, a tall slender woman, turned and looked at Jeff. "We'll keep trying, son. They've probably all gone to

the safest place on the station to wait this problem out. I'm sure your parents are fine." Then she turned back to the view screen. "Keep monitoring the station for any signs that they've heard us," the captain ordered. "Meanwhile, I'll move the shuttle in as close as possible just in case we need to attempt a rescue."

Jeff watched quietly as the captain flew the space shuttle toward Ag-4.

"We're entering the meteoroid swarm, Captain," the radar operator announced.

Jeff could hear the sound of tiny meteoroid particles the size of sand grains hitting the sides of the shuttle as the captain skillfully flew around the big meteoroids in their path. "Dear God, keep us all safe," Jeff prayed under his breath.

"I'm taking us in behind the station," the captain explained. "It's the safest place for us to stop. We'll let the station act as our shield. We won't be able to help anyone if we're damaged too."

"I'm still unable to make radio contact, Captain," the communications officer reported. "It looks like their radio tower was damaged by one of the explosions."

"There are still a few lights

showing in the station's windows," the captain noted. "So we know that those parts of the station have power for their life support systems, but we don't know for how much longer. What we need now is some way to communicate with the station. If anyone has an idea, I'm open to suggestions."

It seemed a long time before Jeff heard anyone speak. Then Paul came over to him and whispered, "Why not ask your God for a good idea, kid? If He's really able to hear you, maybe He'd help us out."

Jeff couldn't tell if Paul was serious or not, but it didn't seem important. This definitely was the time to pray. "Please, God, help us find some way to communicate with Ag-4," Jeff said under his breath.

For the next half hour, Jeff couldn't take his eyes off the space station's few lighted windows. *Are my parents safe inside one of those rooms?* He wondered. One thought kept crossing his mind, *The lights, Jeff, think about the lights.* Then something he had learned a long time ago came to mind. "Morse code!" he cried.

Everyone on the flight deck turned and stared at Jeff. "Morse code," he continued.

"My dad taught it to me a long time ago. It's an ancient way to communicate using short and long bursts of sound. Maybe we can use it with short and long flashes of light," he explained excitedly.

The captain discussed the idea with the communications officer, and then she decided to give the idea a try. "Let's hope your dad is standing near one of the station's lighted windows and can figure out what we're trying to do."

Jeff explained the code to the communications officer. Then, one of the shuttle's powerful spotlights was flashed on and off to send the first message.

"AG FOUR CAN YOU READ THIS MESSAGE?"

Everyone stared at the lighted windows on the station and the message was repeated.

"AG FOUR CAN YOU READ THIS MESSAGE?"

Nothing happened, but after the message was repeated one more time, the light in one of the station's windows started to blink on and off. Jeff watched it carefully, then exclaimed, "They're saying, 'WE READ YOU.'"

"Great idea, Jeff!" Paul said, slapping Jeff on the shoulder.

"Thanks, but I can't take the credit for it," Jeff said. "My dad helped me learn the code, and

God helped me figure out how to use it."

The messages flashed back and forth between the shuttle and the station for almost an hour. Jeff was happy to learn that everyone on the station was safe, and he even got to talk to his mom and dad. The meteoroid swarm had taken them by surprise, and one of the first things damaged was the laser cannon. That's when everyone took shelter.

"Captain, our sensors show that the meteoroid swarm is over now," Paul reported.

"Good. Let Ag-4 know that we'll circle the station to check on the damage. Then we'll dock to unload," the captain ordered. As the shuttle neared the docking bay, Jeff's smile vanished. The docking bay was heavily damaged.

"Looks like you'll be going back to Earth for a while, Jeff," Paul said, putting his arm around the boy's shoulders. "The folks on Ag-4 have a few repairs to make before a shuttle can dock here. Say, all this excitement has made me hungry again. I promise not to give you a hard time about praying if you'll have dinner with me."

Jeff and Paul headed back to the mid-deck. "You know, Paul, I've been space-walking



since I was a little kid. I could space walk from here to the station,” Jeff suggested.

“That’s another great idea, kid, but we only have two space suits aboard and they’re both too big for you,” Paul said sadly.

Jeff’s face broke into a big grin. “Wait right here!” Then he hurried off to the equipment bay. When he returned, he was pushing a large crate. “You have three space suits aboard this trip,” he said. “I just bought a new one when I was on Earth. I’m a growing boy, you know. I even have a new jet pack.”

“Put it on, Jeff,” Paul said with a grin. “I’ll inform the captain that one of her passengers would like to get out and walk.”

By the time Jeff was suited properly, Paul returned to help with the air lock. “I’ll miss you, Gigabyte Brain. I was hoping you’d have a chance to tell me more about this God of yours.

I’m beginning to think He just might really exist.”

Jeff smiled. “You know, Paul, I’m going to have to leave most of my stuff here on the shuttle. I can’t space walk it all home.

Would you like to borrow my Bible? There’s a story in it that reminds me of you. It’s about a bright light and a man who had some things he needed to learn about God. Why, he even had the same name as you. I’ll mark the place, if you’d like.”

Paul took the Bible and put it with his things. Then he helped Jeff open the air lock and exit the shuttle. The space walk back to Ag-4 was fun. It had been a whole year since Jeff had zoomed around the station. *Everyone’s going to be kept pretty busy getting this station back in working order,* he thought as he got a good look at the damage. *I don’t mind. It’s great to be home!*

As Jeff passed one of the lighted windows, he saw his parents praying with several other people. “They’re thanking You, God. And I do too,” he prayed. Then he headed for a service port and opened an air lock. “I’m home!” he cried. “I’m safely home.”



Pause a minute

1. You wouldn't miss, for anything, that big event—the one thing you've looked forward to all week. You know you're going to enjoy an epic good time. You need that. It's been a tough week. You need some rest or fun and love to get through the rough stuff coming up next week. **Read Exodus 20:8.**



Take a look back

3. How do you feel when someone misses a big event you've planned to attend with them? How do you get closer to God when you keep the Sabbath?

key verse

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."

Exodus 20:8



Record your thoughts

4. What three things help you keep dates with God? What times do you enjoy most with Him: singing His praises? Doing His work, serving? Reading His Word? Talking with Him?

Read more this week about keeping a special day to enjoy God:

☐ Exodus 20:8–11 ☐ Matthew 11:28–30 ☐ Matthew 12:1–15

**faith
forward**
in touch with God



Play it out

2. Jesus defined the Sabbath for the Pharisees when they challenged Him for healing a man. Try this definition: Keeping the Sabbath holy is all about determining, that no matter what, you're going to make your date with God and His people so you can enjoy and be encouraged by them. You know things go better with God because He gets you through and cares for you. He's given you His people to spend time with and show you His love when you need to see it.

