THE CASE OF THE ABSENT HOMEROOM TEACHER

“Class,” Mrs. Williams told her ninth-grade students with a twinkle in her eyes, “starting Monday, I’ll be on maternity leave.” Everybody gasped. They had hoped she would be with them on the class trip.

“That’s great!” Susan Wiltshire said, collecting herself. “If it’s a girl, name her Susan!”

“No way!” Jim Usher joined in. “It’s going to be a boy, and she’s naming him after me.”

“Well, as great as you all are,” Mrs. Williams smiled, “the names are already chosen. If it’s a boy, he’ll be named after my husband, and if it’s a girl, she’ll be named after me.” She hurried on to cushion the class’s disappointment. “While I’m gone, though, I want Jim to make sure Team A finishes their science project, and Susan can do the same with Team B.”

“How long will you be gone?” Jim asked.

“A few weeks, but a substitute will be here to teach you. Since you’ve just about finished your projects, pass them in by 9:00 May 14, a month from today.”

“That’s when we go on the class trip!” Susan gasped. “If we don’t finish our projects, we can’t go!”

“No to fear, Susan,” Mrs. Williams replied. “You’ve got more than enough time to finish.” Then, her eyes twinkling, she added, “And I’ll work them out for you!”

After Mrs. Williams went on leave, the groups worked hard on their projects. Then everybody gradually slacked off, figuring they’d finish everything later. However, Susan’s group made its materials, while Jim’s group waited for a department store sale to buy theirs.

They all stopped. “Guys,” Susan yelled, heading for the last of the materials. “Let’s finish everything now!”

“Hey,” Jim bellowed, “we need materials . . . Quick, Susan, lend us some of yours.”

“Sorry, Jim. We don’t have enough for our group and yours. Hurry to the store!”

Jim’s group left in a cloud of dust. While they were gone, Susan’s group finished their project, and Mrs. Williams came and took the jubilant Team B on their exciting class trip.
You'll never regret it!

Would you disappoint Someone who loves you that much? Who did so much for you? Who values you so highly? Pleasure, money, and popularity can never compare with Him! Can never match the wonderful gift today.

Before your birth, He formed you, preparing your pathway for life. After birth, He stuck by you in good times and in bad. Despite your sins, He loved you as though you were the only person on earth. After birth, He stuck by you in good times and in bad. Despite your sins, He loved you as though you were the only person on earth.

But true to His nature of love, God has extended the time for us to get ready for Jesus’ return. The awful things we see around us He uses to warn us. But the time for making the choice to let Him get us out of this mess is almost over. Very soon He has to come and put an end to sin and rescue those of us who have chosen to let Him fix us up and get us out of here.

Why on earth would a wise person want to waste this last bit of time, when making the decision to follow Jesus out of all this will guarantee a forever life of peace, joy, and adventure?

Look around you. Everything in this world is in a mess, and doesn’t seem to be getting any better. Wars overturn governments, destroy buildings, and split up families. Everywhere there is death and there is loss. Mysterious disasters strike, threatening whole groups of humans, as well as animals. Natural disasters are on the rise, and crime keeps inventing new ways to inflict pain and terror.

These events all shout that something BIG is about to happen. Just like a person dying from cancer or AIDS, our hopelessly sick world announces that it cannot last much longer. Life has strayed so far from what God intended it to be that God must surely send His Son to destroy sin and restore earth to the wonderful, perfect place He created it to be.

The Second Coming is going to be the greatest event in history. It represents the victory of God’s way over Satan’s way. Accompanied by millions of rejoicing angels, Jesus comes to earth with a trumpet blast that wakes the dead. Like a champion who has defeated a powerful enemy, He shouts His joy about bringing sin and suffering to an end.

Before your birth, He formed you, preparing your pathway for life. After birth, He stuck by you in good times and in bad. Despite your sins, He loved you as though you were the only person on earth. Now as He enters earth’s atmosphere, He looks for you. He itches to hug you, to take you away from every remembrance of sin and death forever, and, at long last, to introduce you to His Father.

Would you disappoint Someone who loves you that much? Who did so much for you? Who values you so highly? Pleasure, money, and popularity can never compare with Him! Can never match the wonder of living with Him in a perfect world that daily increases your joy, peace, and love! Please make up your mind to accept this wonderful gift today.

You’ll never regret it!

CONNECTING

Read Matthew 24:27.

Review the memory verse.

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BIBLE INSIGHTS

Match the text with the verse.

Matthew 1:21 (NIV) ______
John 14:1-3 (NIV) ______
1 Peter 5:8 (NIV) ______
Matthew 24:24 (NIV) ______
Matthew 24:27 (NIV) ______
Luke 12:32 (KJV) ______
Isaiah 11:6-9 (KJV) ______
Isaiah 65:22 (NIV) ______

A. “No longer will they build houses and others live in them…”
B. “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus…”
C. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb…”
D. “Do not let your hearts be troubled…”
E. “Do not be afraid, little flock…”
F. “For as lightning that comes from the east…”
G. “For false messiahs and false prophets…”
H. “Be alert and of sober mind…”

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APPLYING

Think of all the things that you really love. Often what we value is determined not only by what we say about something but also by what we think of it and do about it. What, for instance, is it you think of most? What is it you spend a lot of time doing—or wishing that you could do? What is it that you could talk about for a long time—and not feel time pass? In short, what is it that really has your affections? Write a paragraph identifying these things.

After writing, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Can the things that I love compare with Jesus or match what He has in store for me in heaven?
2. Is what I love helping or hindering my preparation for Jesus’ second coming?
3. If they are helping my preparation, how can I share them with others?
4. If they are hindering my preparation, are they worth my time and affection?

Write another paragraph recording your answers to the questions.

End the activity by asking God to reveal Himself to you as your best Friend. Ask Him to help you to continue loving the things that help you and others get ready for His return, and pray for strength to stop doing anything that hinders your relationship with Him or readiness for His coming.

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