

Kids' Chronicle

God asks Ezekiel to warn the people

By Joe Sarnicola

When I was praying in the clearing on top of the hill, as I often do, the Lord spoke to me.

"Ezekiel," God called.

"I hear you," I answered. "Whatever you ask of me, I will do."

"I have appointed you as the watchman of my people, Israel," God said.

I was puzzled by God's words.

"The watchman? What does this mean, Lord? Do you want me to wander the city streets at night with a lamp and watch out for thieves and enemy soldiers?"

The sun went behind a cloud and the ground took on a blue tint as the Lord's voice became softer.

"As the watchman, you are responsible for warning the people," God explained. "If I tell them that they will perish because of their wickedness, and you do nothing to convince them to follow my commandments instead, they will die for their sins. And I will hold you partly responsible because you did nothing to help them."

I put my hand on my forehead and thought about what God had just said to me.

"If I do nothing to help them, it will be my fault," I said. "But suppose I tell them to stop sinning and they do not listen? Am I still responsible?"

"If you warn the people about the consequences of their actions, but they continue to disobey me, their punish-

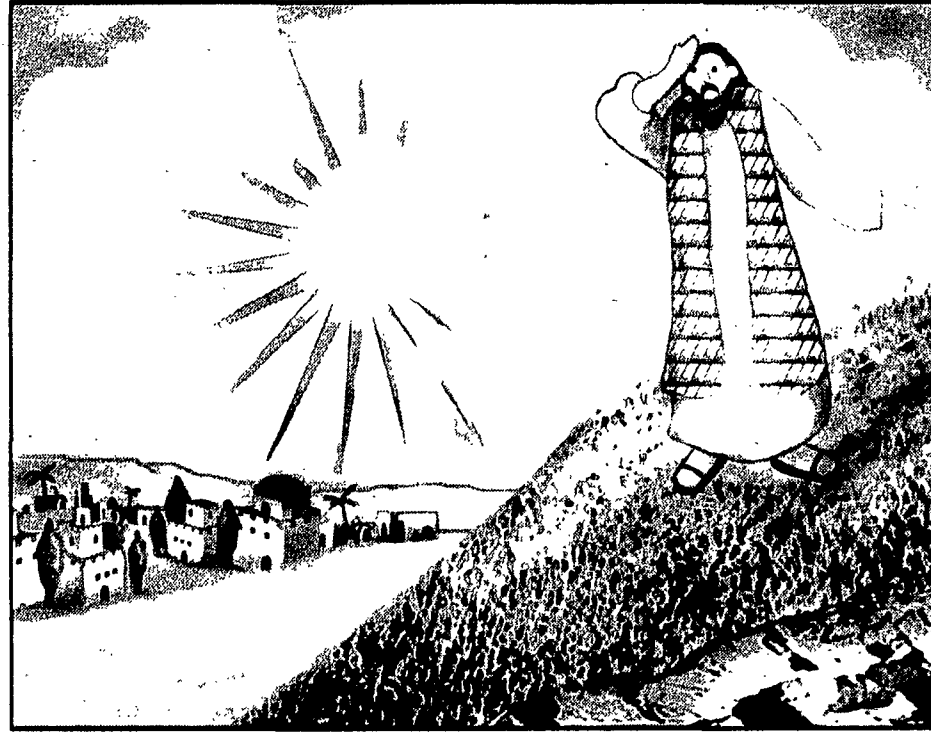


Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

ment will be their own fault. You will not be responsible for them."

Then sun came back out and I found myself standing in the warmth of a bright sunbeam.

"Say this to Israel," the Lord said. "It is not the will of God to see my people perish because of their sins. I want to see them live because they have turned away from doing wrong."

I did not want the Lord to become angry with me, but there were still a

few things I did not understand.

"If those who have been sinners listen to what I say, and obey you, what will happen to them?"

"I will forget the sins they have committed, and they will live," the Lord replied.

"And what of the person who has followed your commands, but who strays into wrongdoing?"

"Then the good that person had done will not prevent the punishment that comes from sin," God answered. "I am a fair judge, and it is by the people's own actions that they will be judged."

"I have seen your works Lord, and I know you are merciful," I said. "I will be your watchman, and I will warn your people about the consequences of sin."

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Ezekiel 33

Q&A

1. What did God want Ezekiel to do?
2. What kind of a judge is God?

Bible Accent

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the term "lay person" means anyone who has been baptized, but is not ordained or a member of a religious order. As lay ministers, lay people have the right and duty to proclaim the good news of salvation to the world, and the church recognizes that without their assistance, "the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective."

Lay ministers serve the church in many ways, including as lectors (readers during Mass), cantors (song leaders), choir members, instrumentalists, religious education teachers and helpers, eucharistic ministers, ushers and greeters. A very important position that is popular with young people is altar server, through which they assist the priest during Mass.

Think about how you can serve as a lay minister both now and as you grow older. The church needs your help.

St. Augustine

St. Augustine was born in the year 345 in North Africa. He was the son of a pagan father and a Christian mother, St. Monica. After spending years studying philosophy, literature and law, he became a teacher.

While living in Milan, Italy, he became friends with the bishop there. The bishop was very persuasive and he convinced St. Augustine to study Christian doctrine. St. Augustine was baptized and he also wrote about the thoughts that filled his mind during this time of his life in a book called *Confessions*. He went back to Africa and established a group of Christian followers who prayed, studied and preached the Gospel.

St. Augustine eventually became a priest and then a bishop. Because of his many influential writings, he was later named a Doctor of the Church.

We honor St. Augustine on Aug. 28.

Puzzle

Hidden in the letters below are the names of six prophets:

Ezekiel, Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Joel, Hosea.

Can you find them all?

Each letter is used only once.

E I D J J H Z S A E O O
E A N R E S K I I E L E I
A E M A E H I L L A H

Bible Trivia

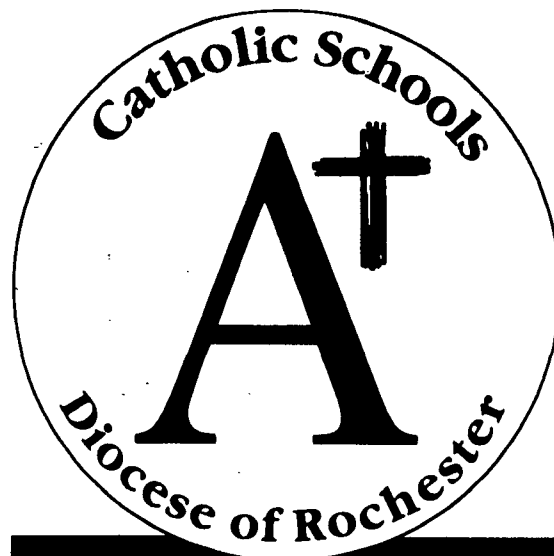
Can you name the three Old Testament prophets whose names start with the letter "J"?

Send Answer to: Catholic Courier Bible Trivia, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name, address and school name.

All entries must be received by Sept. 2. A winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries submitted and given a prize.

Last month's winner was Dan Marchand of DeWitt Road School, Webster.

He correctly identified the person who reads the non-Gospel readings at Mass as a lector.



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