

7<sup>th</sup> February

Memory Verse:

**God is our refuge and strength,**  
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear,  
though the earth be removed,  
and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,  
though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Psalm 46:2-3

This verse tells us that if we trust in the Lord Jesus we need not be afraid. Very small children can learn the words in **bold**. Two or more children learning together can split the words between them, one taking the **orange** and the other the **green** words, swapping over for extra practice. The **pink** words can be said by both together.

Something to read from history

When we think of a refuge, as in today's memory verse, we often think of a tower or castle. In fact, the Bible pictures God in this way for us<sup>1</sup> and this something we can remember every time we have the opportunity to visit a castle. The beautiful castle on the right is **Caernarfon** Castle in North Wales. It is a large castle, very old and very complete. You can see its great defensive towers in the picture. Do go and see it if you are ever in Caernarfon. A very important event happened at this castle on **7<sup>th</sup> February** 1301. Find a relief map of Wales that shows the mountains and look up the places highlighted in **green**. This will help you understand better what happened in the story.



The Welsh leader was Llywelyn, Prince of Wales. The King of England was Edward I. There was no trust between Edward and Llywelyn. Edward wanted all Britain united under him. Llywelyn considered helping the barons to oppose the king – perhaps he might even become their leader. He was betrothed to a daughter of Simon de Montfort, the Good Earl, who had led the barons in opposition to the king in Henry III's reign. However, when war did break out all the barons joined the king's side and Llywelyn, his country invaded, had to accept the Treaty of **Rhuddlan** in 1277. This reduced his lands to the old limits of **Snowdon**. Although he was still allowed to use the title Prince of Wales, he was not allowed to pass the title on to his son, it was now to cease when he died.

Edward still had a desire to unite *all* Britain under his rule. The Welsh were driven to revolt against the new English officials. The chiefs who had earlier been against Llywelyn now looked to him for protection. Edward used border troubles between the Welsh and the English as an excuse to invade Wales and subdue the country. Overrunning South and mid Wales might not be too difficult for Edward if he raised a strong enough army. **Gwynedd** was a different matter. The mountains of **Snowdon** running from **Conwy** to **Harlech** make a natural defensive rampart from sea to sea. The

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 18:10

steep side of the rampart faces east making it almost impossible for the invader to pass. The western slopes on the other side are gentle and here farming could be carried out, protected from the enemy by the mountains and the sea.

Edward divided Wales into shires with English sheriffs who ruled instead of the Welsh chiefs. He gave the old title “Prince of Wales” to his eldest son. The story of how he did this shows something of his character. He called the Welsh chiefs before him and asked what they wanted. They said they would only obey a Welsh prince. While he was talking to them, a message came for the King. When he heard it he was overjoyed. He told the chiefs to come to him in a few days’ time at Caernarfon. There he would give them a prince born in Wales, and who could not speak a word of English. The chiefs were very pleased. The message was that Queen Eleanor, staying at Caernarfon, had given birth to a son. On the appointed day, the Welsh chiefs came to see their new prince. They were shown the King’s son. They knew they had been tricked, but each swore to obey him. The baby prince was named Edward after his father, and was the first Prince of Wales. Ever since, the eldest son of the monarch of England has been the “Prince of Wales”, and England and Wales have been one country under the rule of the the same king.



### Something to make

Take another look at the picture of Caernarfon castle on the first page of this lesson. Then collect together some cardboard boxes of different sizes. Plan out a way to put them together so that they look like a castle with towers, and walls. You can open some boxes and cut crenelations in them. When you are satisfied with the shape, glue the boxes together. Then you can paint them all over with grey paint. We used household white emulsion paint tinted with a little black from a tube of children's poster paint. When the paint is quite dry (leave it overnight) use a black felt tipped marker to mark in features such as windows. You may be able to rig up a draw bridge.<sup>2</sup>

### A book to read



On **7<sup>th</sup> February** one of the best-loved American children's authors died. Mary Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957) grew up in the pioneering days of America and she had a gift for telling the story of her childhood in a fascinating way. All the books make good wholesome reading and are excellent for reading aloud or for children to read by themselves. Be sure you read the original books and do not watch films, cartoons or TV series based on them. These invariably water down the content and spoil it by removing all the good moral lessons. If you do not have copies of your own they can be got cheaply secondhand.<sup>3</sup> The picture on the left shows Mary Ingalls Wilder's parents, the real “Pa” and “Ma” of the books.

<sup>2</sup> A different way to make a cardboard castle can be seen here: [https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=make+your+own+cardboard+castle#kpvalbx=\\_KethYZLAJo7vgAbpt634Cw16](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=make+your+own+cardboard+castle#kpvalbx=_KethYZLAJo7vgAbpt634Cw16) You can use this method or you can adopt some of the ideas into your own design.

<sup>3</sup> They can also sometimes be downloaded. *Little House on the Prairie* is available here: [https://vanburenela.weebly.com/uploads/8/7/4/9/8749804/little\\_house\\_on\\_the\\_prairie\\_text.pdf](https://vanburenela.weebly.com/uploads/8/7/4/9/8749804/little_house_on_the_prairie_text.pdf)

## Something to listen to

Composer William Boyce (1711-1779) died on 7<sup>th</sup> February. At his death his friend Charles Wesley wrote these verses:

FATHER of harmony, farewell!  
Farewell for a few fleeting years  
Translated from the mournful vale,  
Jehovah's flaming ministers  
Have borne thee to thy place above,  
Where all is harmony and love.

Thy generous, good, and upright heart,  
Which sigh'd for a celestial lyre,  
Was tuned on earth to bear a part  
Symphonious with the heavenly choir,  
Where Handel strikes the warbling strings,  
And plausive angels clap their wings.

Thy brow a radiant circle wears,  
Thy hand a golden harp receives,  
And, singing with the morning stars,  
Thy soul in endless raptures lives,  
And hymns, on the eternal throne,  
Jehovah and His conquering Son.

Boyce was a contemporary of Handel and if you like Handel's music you will probably enjoy Boyce's too, although he is far less well known. Try to listen to one of his eight symphonies.<sup>4</sup> Boyce's most famous work is a song, *Heart of Oak*, which was originally part of an opera. It is now the official march of the royal navy<sup>5</sup> and has an interesting background. The words are included in today's optional resources files so that you can sing it yourself.

The first verse refers to a “wonderful year”. This was 1759-60. Britain was at war with France (The Seven Years War) and during this year there were a number of significant victories. The Battle of Quiberon Bay on 20 November 1759, for instance, put paid to a French attempt to invade England. British warships were made of wood at this time that is why the song is about “hearts of oak”.

## Something to think about

Today is the anniversary of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990. All Christians should pause to give thanks to God for the fall of this evil regime that was implacable in its hatred of Christianity. In blue below are some extracts from an important document that illustrates this.

In November 1982 a report on the *Implementation of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe : Findings and Recommendations Seven Years After Helsinki*<sup>6</sup> was submitted to the Congress of the United States of America. It makes distressing reading. The report painstakingly catalogues the situation in the Warsaw Pact countries (Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria the German Democratic Republic [East Germany], Romania, Czechoslovakia and the USSR ([Russia])

4 The first one can be heard here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDtkJ1HVqoo> and includes a score for you to follow, if you want to, as you are listening.

5 You can hear it played here by the Royal Marines <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwoYH20zdeQ> although I think Boyce would be rather surprised at the style.

6 The original report can be found here:  
<https://www.csce.gov/sites/helsinkicommission.house.gov/files/Implementation%20Report%20-%20Findings%20and%20Recommendations%207%20Years%20After%20Helsinki.pdf>

at that time regarding the civil, political, religious, economic, and social rights of the peoples of those countries. Their governments all signed the Helsinki Declaration. That declaration specifically included fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. The report came to the conclusion that people in those countries were being systematically and often brutally oppressed. It makes depressing reading. Far from carrying out their responsibilities under the Helsinki Declaration, the report found that things were particularly repressive in the Soviet Union (Russia):

The official Soviet campaign of repression against all forms of independent expression which the Soviet Union in Principle VII [of the Helsinki Declaration] is pledged to respect continues unabated. In the area of civil and political rights, the official Soviet threat to prosecute 75 - year - old retired lawyer, Sofya Kalistratova, forced a halt to the activities of the Moscow Helsinki Group<sup>7</sup> on September 8, 1982. Nobel Peace Laureate Andrei Sakharov remains in illegal banishment in Gorky, subject to official harassment.

It is not only individual Soviet human rights activists who suffer as a result of official repression. Leaders of striking workers protesting severe food shortages have been subjected to harsh punishments. Ordinary Soviet citizens who complain to the authorities about pervasive corruption are subjected to detention in psychiatric hospitals.

Particularly sad reading are the passages in the report that detail the terrible persecution of Christians in these countries. The persecution was all the more fierce because the number of Christians was increasing, especially among young people. This was completely the opposite of what Communist teaching predicted should happen in a Communist country and the authorities were both puzzled and enraged. Why was Christianity not dying out and confined to old and feeble minded people? The growth of Christianity was an indicator to anyone who thought about it of the failure of Communism. The more the authorities tried to root it out, the stronger it became.

The Evangelical Protestant groups represent a particular problem for the Soviet authorities: even under the repressive conditions of the Soviet Union, they are growing rapidly ....

Among Evangelical Protestants in the USSR, most is known about the reform or "unregistered" Baptists. According to pastor Georgy Vins, there are over 2000 such Baptist congregations: over half of these Baptists are between 20 and 30 years old. The members of reform Baptist communities in the USSR have been subjected to a particular campaign of repression and imprisonment. There are currently 154 imprisoned reform Baptists in the Soviet Union, reports Pastor Vins. Other reform Baptists are subjected to various forms of harassment. On December 6, 1980 in Kharkov, Ukraine, 11,000 rubles intended for the children of Baptist prisoners were confiscated by the Soviet police; in July 1981 police raided Baptist prayer meetings in the RSFSR<sup>8</sup> in Rostov-on-don, Ryazan, in Dedovsk and Murom; on October 16, 1981, police set dogs on Baptists to break up a prayer meeting in Kishinev, Moldavia; in late October 1981, the police confiscated Bibles and other religious literature from dozens of Baptists in Kiev; in February 1981 there were dozens of Bibles confiscated from Baptist homes in Tashkent, in Kazakhstan, and in Estonia; in June 1982, there were house searches and dispersals of prayer meetings of Baptists in Rostov-on-Don, Zaporozhe, Kirovograd, Moscow, Perm, Sverdlovsk, Tiraspol, Kishine, Džambul and some other cities.

A particular KGB target is the 12 man reform Baptist organization of pastors, the Council of Churches. The Chairman of the Council, Pastor Gennady Kryuchkov, however, has evaded arrest for 12 years by living in hiding. According to exiled Pastor Georgy Vins, Vitaly Fedorchuk, the new

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7 A group of Russian academics who tried to report the violations of the Helsinki Declaration that were taking place in their country to the outside world.

8 Stands for "Soviet Federative Socialist Republic"

KGB chief, has issued instructions that Kryuchkov be arrested by the end of 1982. Thus, not only is there an intensified countrywide search for Kryuchkov underway, but Kryuchkov's brother in Tula, was told that the KGB plans to shoot Kryuchkov when they find him. Currently, nine of the 12 Baptist pastors on the Council of Churches are imprisoned. ...

The secret Baptist “Christian” printing press provides much information about the situation of reform Baptists in the USSR. Consequently, the Soviet authorities continue a concentrated but unsuccessful campaign to eliminate this source. KGB raids have been launched against the “Christian” press in Latvia (1974), the Leningrad region (1977), Ukraine (January 1980), Krasnodar, (June 1980) and Kirgizia (1982). Nevertheless, the “Christian” press still prints thousands of copies of religious literature in Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, German, Ossetian, Moldavian and other languages of the Soviet Union, and prints the Council of Churches monthly journal, *Fraternal Leaflet*, and its quarterly, *The Herald of Truth* and the monthly Bulletin of the Council of Relatives of Baptist Prisoners. As a result of such publishing activity, six Baptists were arrested on February 13, 1982 in Tokmak, Kirgizia for printing Bibles on the “Christian” press: Ivan and Antonina Kinas, Olga Bozler, Maria Tissen, Pavel Sukhorukov, and Daniil Shevchenko. In March 1982 in Krasnodar, RSFSR Baptist printers Ivan Plett and N. Volkov were each sentenced to four years camp – even though Volkov has lung cancer.

Others from the “Christian” press in Krasnodar received three – year camp terms, including S. Volkov, V. Keller, M. Epp, and N. and V.Sidorovy. Another Baptist printer, Larisa Zaitseva, was sentenced for the second time in Rostov-on-Don in late 1981 to 18 months of imprisonment... Another important reform Baptist organization is the 12 – woman Council of Relatives of Baptist Prisoners, which reports on the status of Baptist prisoners of conscience. This group has also been the target of Soviet repression. Aleksandra Kozorezova, head of this council, was sentenced in Voroshilovgrad, Ukraine, on August 21, 1981 to a conditional sentence of three years in camp. On August 20, 1982, six other members of the Council of prisoners' Relatives were detained for ten days; one, Lidia Bondar, is in pretrial detention. (The release of five of these women, including Aleksandra Kozorezova, may be due to intensive activity on their behalf mounted by Protestant groups in the Netherlands.) Reform Baptist pastors who are not members of the Baptist Council of Churches have also been sentenced to prison terms. ...

Although imprisonment is the fate of many activist reform Baptists in the USSR , there are also some known cases of psychiatric detention. Ukrainian Baptist, Vladimir Khailo, 50, father of 15, was placed in a psychiatric hospital on September 22, 1980 and in December 1980 was sentenced to an indefinite term of psychiatric detention for seeking to emigrate... Leningrad Baptist, 44-year-old Anatoly Runov, is undergoing forced drug “treatment” in the special psychiatric hospital in Leningrad where he has been held since at least April 1981. Another Baptist, Raisa Matveichuk, was arrested on March 19, 1982 in the Chernovtsy in Ukraine while carrying a list of Baptist prisoners. Since Raisa refused to give any information to her interrogators, she was sent for a psychiatric examination....

We can see from this document that persecution was particularly fierce in the 1970s and 1980s. In the late 1980s there was a change due to international political and events initially sparked by happenings in Poland.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the Soviet system was crumbling and on February 7<sup>th</sup> 1990 the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party agreed to give up its monopoly of power. The individual states of the former Soviet Union went their various ways; some in Central Asia and the Caucasus becoming Islamic Republics, Belarus remaining Communist and so on. This dissolution of the soviet system, although it did not ultimately lead to a free, democratic society in Russia itself,

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9 There changes are too complex to go into in this lesson. See also the lessons for 29<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> January.

did bring a great measure of relief to suffering Christians in Warsaw Pact countries generally and enabled many families in Russia who were worn out by persecution to emigrate to the USA. Russian Christians who had been imprisoned for their faith were released.

Why is it important to remember these things today? Firstly it helps us remember that God is not about to let his church die out. Despite cruel persecution from an atheistic government, the report notes about the Christian congregations that, "...they are growing rapidly .... [there are] over 2000 such Baptist congregations: over half of these Baptists are between 20 and 30 years old..." As we notice an increasingly atheistic government in our own country we can remember that God does things that astound the cruelest of atheists, demonstrating before their eyes that whereas their own system is empty and provides no fulfillment, the Gospel satisfies man's deepest needs. Secondly it helps us remember that God is in charge of governments, even persecuting ones and can bring them to an abrupt end. Which all brings us back to our memory verse!

### Something to read

For a good illustration of what life was like under atheistic Communism in Russia you can read the *Ivan* books by Myrna Grant, published by Christian Focus. They are not only accurate and exciting but uplifting as well. There is more information about Russian Christians in this period in the lesson for December 13<sup>th</sup>.