



THE MAN WITH TWO NAMES (Children's Story)

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Dr. Jim Zackrison, Field Services
Voice of Prophecy Discover Bible Schools

Text Reference: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come (Matthew 24:42, NIV).

Good morning, Boys and Girls! Our story today is about a man who liked to read.

A man with a strange name (*we will learn his name later*) stood looking at the ship that would take him far across the ocean to a new land he had never seen before. He had no family waiting for him – no friends – just some people he didn't even know.

Not only that, but he was not going away because he wanted to. He belonged to a group of religious people who got into trouble with the government. The government told them that they all had to leave the country and never come back! So this man looked at that ship with a really sad heart.

Sometimes bad things happen to us. Sometimes we lose good friends because they move away, or maybe all of a sudden they don't like us anymore. Sometimes *we* have to move away, or we have to change schools, or something happens that upsets us pretty badly.

When this man got to his new country, he discovered that the place where he was staying had a really good library where he could borrow books or go and sit and read.

Everybody likes to do something. Maybe if he had been around today he would have been into computer games or something else that is popular today. What our friend did like to do was read the Bible and religious books. That's a good idea for all of us. You always learn more about Jesus when you spend some time reading the Bible.

Then something happened. The man discovered that what he was reading in the books in the library did not agree with what the Bible said. So he read, and read – believe it or not, he read 1000 books! If you know what 1000 is, raise your hand!

Then he said, "I'm going to write a book that explains what the Bible says."

Now, he was mostly interested in what the Bible says about Jesus coming back to earth the second time. So he wrote a book about the second coming of Jesus. But he knew the people in the library, and the people in charge of the place where he lived would not like what he wrote, so even though he had a strange name himself, he decided to give himself a new name – "Rabbi Ben Ezra, a Converted Jew." He called his book *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. That's a long name for a book, but that's what they did in those days.

And guess what happened? His book was so popular that it went all over the world! He didn't even write it in English because his language was Spanish. One famous person in

England liked the book so much that he learned Spanish just so he could translate the book into English.

A famous politician in one country became so interested in what the book said that he actually began keeping the Sabbath and all the people who worked on his large ranch keep the Sabbath too.

So – who remembers the man’s new name he gave himself? [Accept responses.] Ben Ezra, a Converted Jew, that’s right!

Who remembers the name of his book? [Accept responses.] *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty.*

And here’s his real name – Manuel Lacunza. – Everybody say “Lacunza!”

Boys and girls – study your Bible – learn about Jesus’ soon coming, and make sure you are as excited about it as our friend Lacunza was!

Let’s pray.