

## **NEW YEARS GREETINGS FROM THE THREE LITTLE PIGS(2-2-08)**

The classic children's story of the Three Little Pigs has served as a character-building story for over one hundred and fifty years. Hopefully each of us will be able to weave these simple but valuable threads of truth into the portrait of our lives during 2008.

The retold story, by Margot Zemach, begins as mamma pig sends the three little pigs out to seek their fortunes with this admonition, "Build good strong houses and watch out for the wolf."

Many of the classic writings that we enjoy were based on Bible stories. The original writer of The Three Little Pigs could easily have built the story based on these four references.

One of the most prominent references actually names the burnable building materials of wood, hay and stubble that were used by the two pigs. 1Cor. 3:12. Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8. Beware of false prophets that come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Matt.7: 15. The wise man built his house upon a rock and the foolish man built his house upon the sand. Matt. 7: 24-27.

The drama unfolds as each pig demonstrates his character, attitudes, wisdom and decision-making skills.

Selective hearing must have been a strong characteristic of the first little pig. When his mother admonished her children, "Build good strong houses and watch out for the wolf," he seems to have heard only the words "build" and "house." At least those are the only words he acted upon. He also took the path of least resistance. When he saw a man with plenty of straw he showed no concern about the wisdom of building a house of straw. He immediately built a straw house. The wolf was rewarded with a delicious pork dinner that cost him only a few huffs and puffs to blow the straw shack away and render the little pig a helpless victim.

Comparative judgment may have been the downfall of his brother. His stick house was more excellent than his brother's straw house. However he either denied or ignored the presence and firm intentions of the wolf to devour gullible little fat pigs. Once again Mr. Wolf purchased this succulent meal with only the power of his breath. We may be tempted to wonder if the wolf mockingly rewarded this second little pig's "superior wisdom" by prominently displaying him on a silver platter with an apple in his mouth.

Certainly the third little pig was the brightest, wisest and most successful of the three. He used bricks to build a very good and strong house that withstood the hot, foul and furious breath of the devilish wolf. He knew that the wolf was a reality in his world and that his life was in danger. Even when the wolf pretended to be loving, helpful and kind, that little pig knew that he was a liar and a pig eater. Armed with that basic knowledge he saw through every deceptive scheme that the wolf devised. The climax of the story reveals that it was in fact the wolf, and not the pig, that was stewing in the pot.

We would be remiss if we failed to consider with which of these little pigs we can best identify. Each pig gave us an example to follow. Will we or the wolf be found in the fire? Perhaps the mother's words will become our watchword for the New Year: "Build good strong houses and watch out for the wolf."