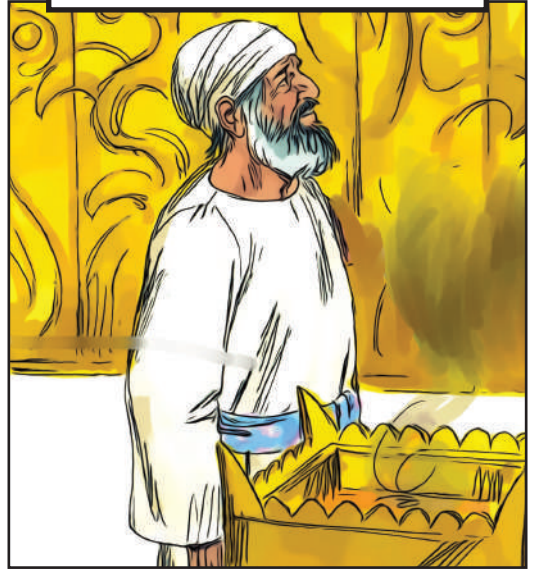


"The Birth of John the Baptist"

IN THE DAYS ON HEROD KING OF JUDEA, THERE LIVED A PRIEST NAMED **ZACHARIAH**. HE HAD A WIFE. HER NAME WAS **ELIZABETH**. THEY HAD NO CHILD AND BOTH WERE WELL ADVANCED IN YEARS.



ONE DAY, ZECHARIAH WAS CHOSEN BY LOT ACCORDING TO THE PRIESTLY CUSTOM TO ENTER THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD AND BURN INCENSE. AND WHEN IT WAS TIME TO BURN INCENSE, ALL THE WORSHIPERS ASSEMBLED OUTSIDE PRAYED.



THEN AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM, STANDING AT THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE. WHEN ZECHARIAH SAW HIM, HE WAS STARTLED BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO HIM:

DO NOT BE AFRAID, ZECHARIAH;
YOUR PRAYER HAS BEEN HEARD. YOUR WIFE ELIZABETH WILL BEAR YOU A SON, AND YOU ARE TO CALL HIM JOHN.





HE WILL BE
A JOY AND DELIGHT TO YOU, AND MANY WILL
REJOICE BECAUSE OF HIS BIRTH, FOR HE WILL BE
GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD. HE WILL BE
FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT EVEN BEFORE HE IS
BORN. HE WILL BRING BACK MANY OF THE PEOPLE OF
ISRAEL TO THE LORD THEIR GOD.

HOW
CAN I BE SURE OF THIS?
I AM AN OLD MAN AND MY
WIFE IS WELL ALONG IN
YEARS.



I AM GABRIEL.
I STAND IN THE PRESENCE
OF GOD, AND I HAVE BEEN SENT TO
SPEAK TO YOU AND TO TELL YOU THIS
GOOD NEWS. AND NOW YOU WILL BE
SILENT AND NOT ABLE TO SPEAK UNTIL
THE DAY THIS HAPPENS, BECAUSE YOU
DID NOT BELIEVE MY WORDS,
WHICH WILL COME TRUE AT THEIR
APPOINTED TIME.

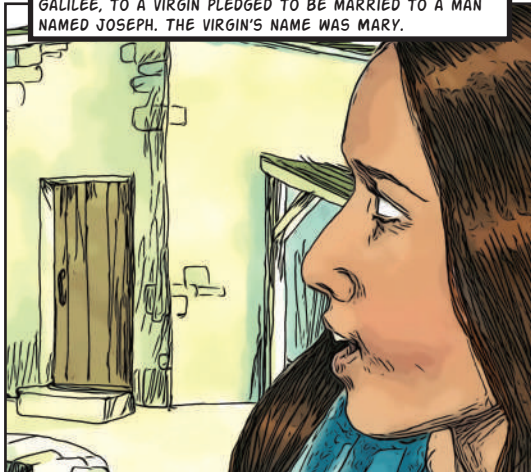
MEANWHILE, THE PEOPLE WERE
WAITING FOR ZEPHARIAH AND
WONDERING WHY HE STAYED SO
LONG IN THE TEMPLE. WHEN HE
CAME OUT, HE COULD NOT
SPEAK TO THEM. THEY
REALIZED HE HAD SEEN A
VISION IN THE TEMPLE, FOR HE
KEPT MAKING SIGNS TO THEM
BUT REMAINED UNABLE TO
SPEAK.



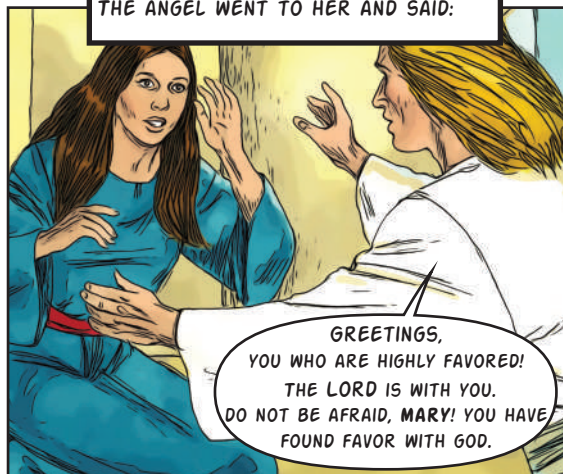
WHAT DID
YOU SEE?

WHAT
HAPPENED?

IN THE SIXTH MONTH OF ELIZABETH'S PREGNANCY, GOD SENT THE ANGEL GABRIEL TO NAZARETH, A TOWN IN GALILEE, TO A VIRGIN PLEDGED TO BE MARRIED TO A MAN NAMED JOSEPH. THE VIRGIN'S NAME WAS MARY.



THE ANGEL WENT TO HER AND SAID:



GREETINGS,
YOU WHO ARE HIGHLY FAVORED!
THE LORD IS WITH YOU.
DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY! YOU HAVE
FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD.

YOU WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON,
AND YOU ARE TO CALL HIM JESUS. HE
WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE MOST
HIGH. THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE HIM THE
THRONE AND HE WILL REIGN OVER
JACOB'S DESCENDANTS FOREVER; HIS
KINGDOM WILL NEVER END.

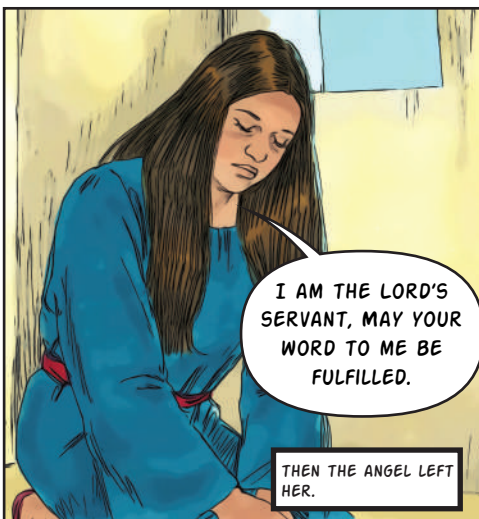


HOW WILL
THIS BE, SINCE
I AM A VIRGIN?



THE HOLY SPIRIT
WILL COME ON YOU,
AND THE POWER OF THE MOST HIGH WILL
OVERSHADOW YOU. SO THE HOLY ONE TO BE
BORN WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD.
EVEN ELIZABETH YOUR RELATIVE IS GOING
TO HAVE A CHILD IN HER OLD AGE,

I AM THE LORD'S
SERVANT, MAY YOUR
WORD TO ME BE
FULFILLED.



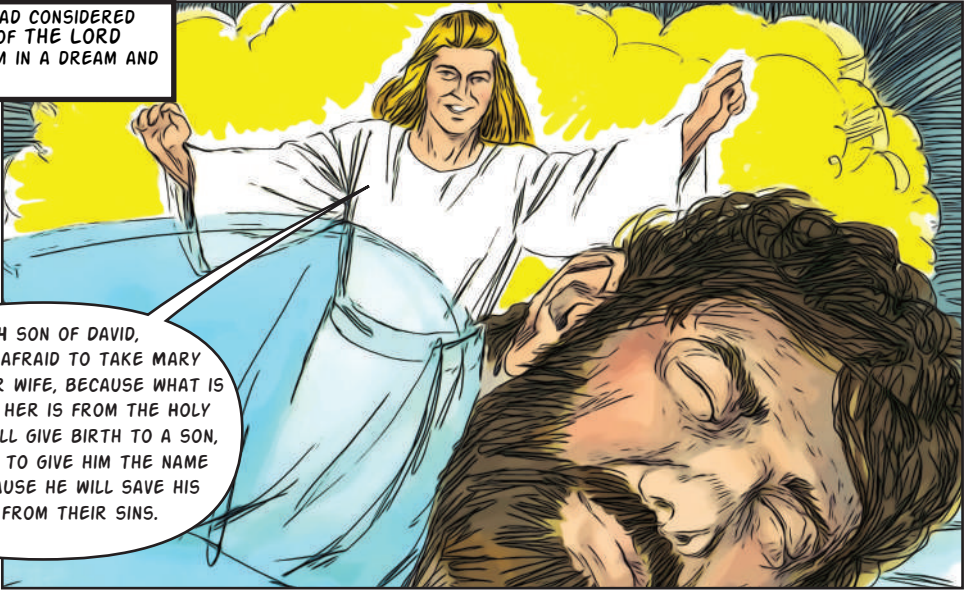
THEN THE ANGEL LEFT
HER.

WHEN JOSEPH FOUND OUT
THAT MARY WAS PREGNANT,
HE DECIDED TO BREAK OFF
THE ENGAGEMENT WITHOUT
PUBLICITY. FOR HE WAS A
GOOD MAN AND DID NOT
WANT TO ACCUSE HER IN
PUBLIC.



BUT AFTER HE HAD CONSIDERED THIS, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN A DREAM AND SAID:

JOSEPH SON OF DAVID, DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TAKE MARY HOME AS YOUR WIFE, BECAUSE WHAT IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT. SHE WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND YOU ARE TO GIVE HIM THE NAME JESUS, BECAUSE HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.



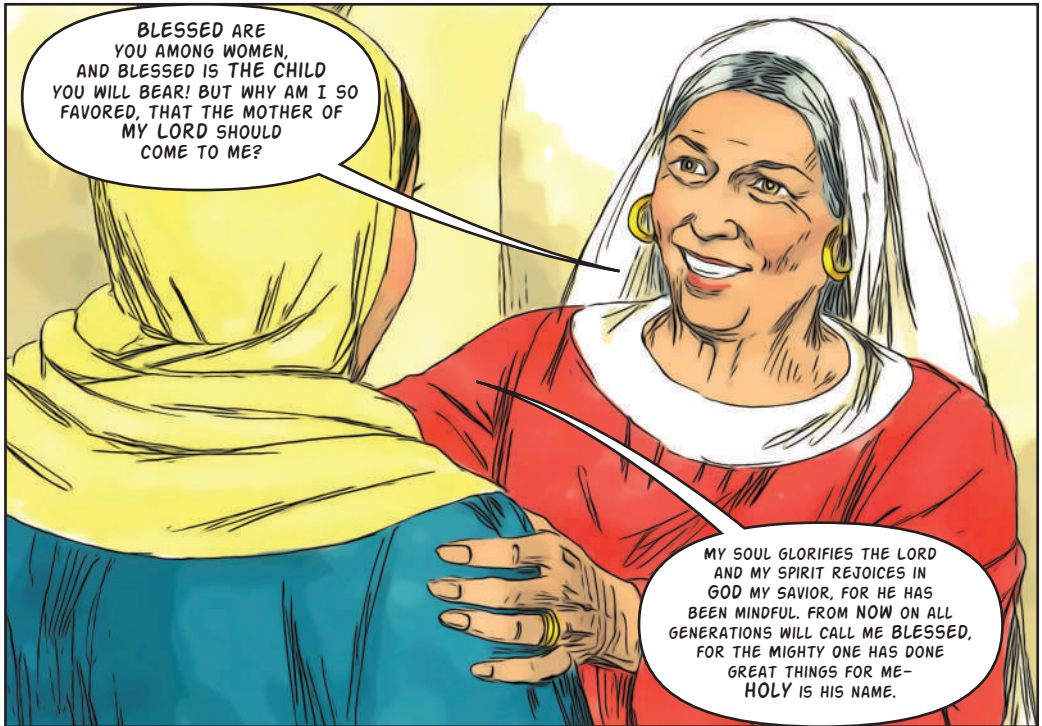
WHEN JOSEPH WOKE UP, HE DID WHAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HAD COMMANDED HIM AND TOOK MARY HOME AS HIS WIFE.



AT THAT TIME MARY GOT READY AND HURRIED TO A TOWN IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDEA, WHERE SHE ENTERED ZECHARIAH'S HOME AND GREETED ELIZABETH.



ELIZABETH HEARD MARY'S GREETING, THE BABY LEAPED IN HER WOMB, AND ELIZABETH WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.



MARY STAYED WITH ELIZABETH FOR ABOUT THREE MONTHS AND THEN RETURNED HOME.



THEREAFTER, ELIZABETH GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.

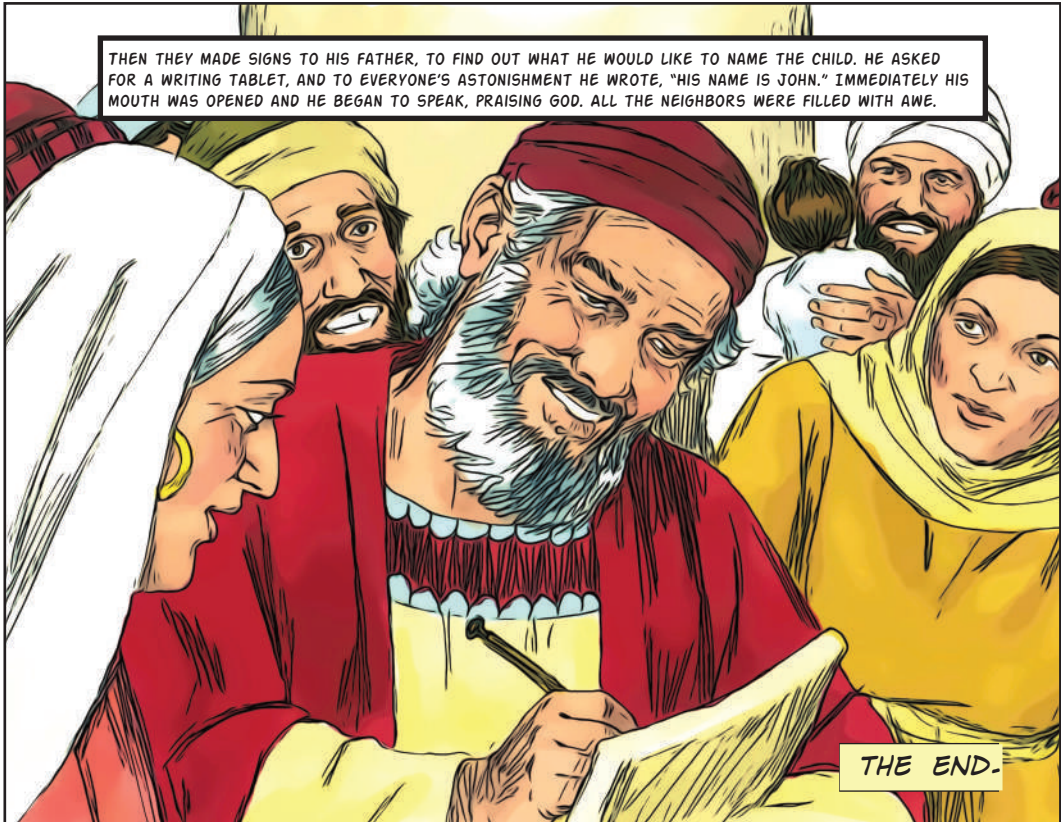
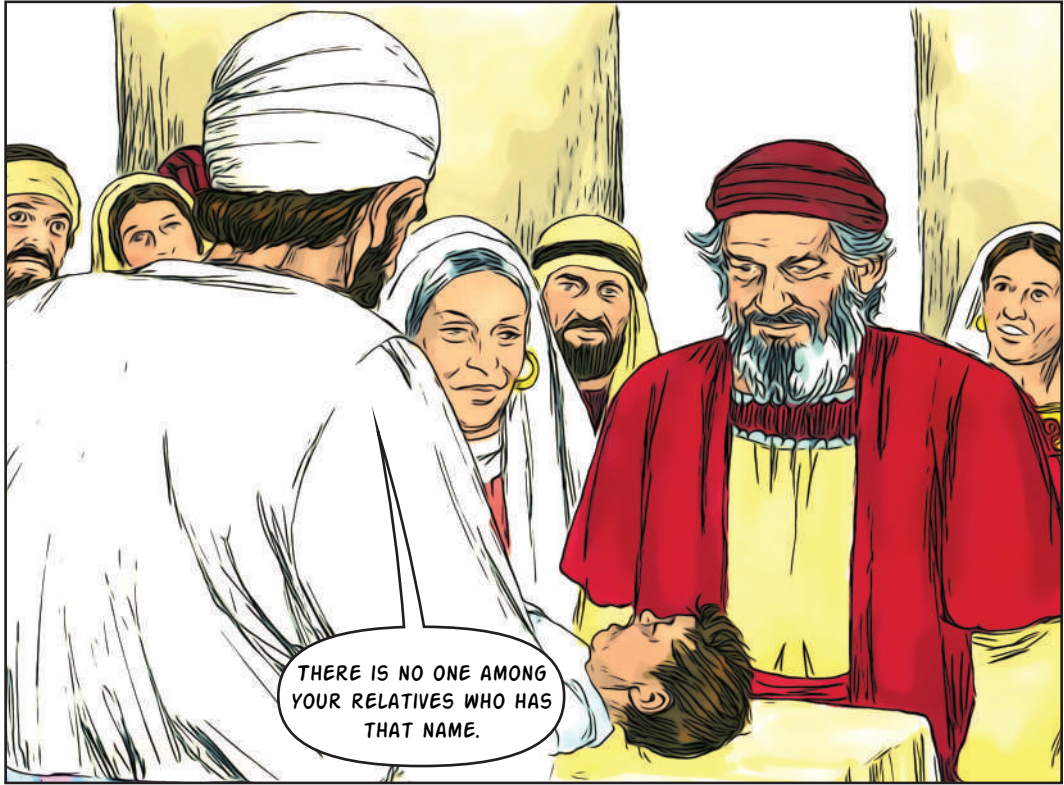


ON THE EIGHTH DAY THEY CAME TO CIRCUMCISE THE CHILD, AND THEY WERE GOING TO NAME HIM AFTER HIS FATHER



BUT ELIZABETH SPOKE UP AND SAID:





"The Birth of Jesus"

ONE DAY CAESAR AUGUSTUS ISSUED A DECREE THAT A CENSUS SHOULD BE TAKEN OF THE ENTIRE ROMAN WORLD. AND EVERYONE WENT TO THEIR OWN TOWN TO REGISTER.



SO JOSEPH ALSO WENT UP FROM THE TOWN OF NAZARETH IN GALILEE, TO BETHLEHEM, BECAUSE HE BELONGED TO THE HOUSE AND LINE OF DAVID. HE WENT THERE TO REGISTER WITH MARY, WHO WAS PLEDGED TO BE MARRIED TO HIM AND WAS EXPECTING A CHILD.

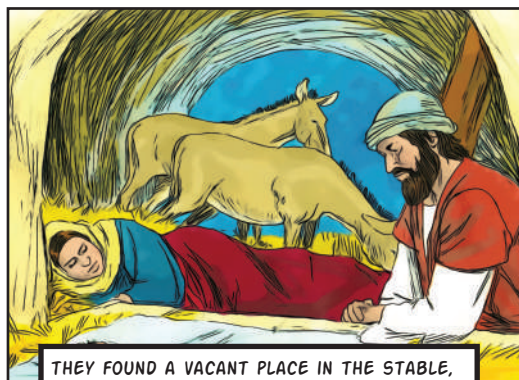


WHILE THEY CAME THERE, THERE WAS NO GUEST ROOM AVAILABLE FOR THEM.



I HAVE NO PLACE. TRY TO FIND ELSEWHERE.

THIS NIGHT SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HER FIRSTBORN, A SON. SHE WRAPPED HIM IN CLOTHS AND PLACED HIM IN A MANGER.



THEY FOUND A VACANT PLACE IN THE STABLE, AMONG THE ANIMALS.



THERE WERE SHEPHERDS LIVING OUT IN THE FIELDS NEARBY, KEEPING WATCH OVER THEIR FLOCKS AT NIGHT. AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO THEM.



LOOK OVER THERE!

DO NOT BE AFRAID.
I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS!



WHO IS THIS?

THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE AROUND THEM, AND THEY WERE TERRIFIED.



TODAY IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU; HE IS THE MESSIAH, THE LORD. THIS WILL BE A SIGN TO YOU: YOU WILL FIND A BABY WRAPPED IN CLOTHS AND LYING IN A MANGER.

SUDDENLY A GREAT COMPANY OF THE HEAVENLY HOST APPEARED WITH THE ANGEL, PRAISING GOD AND SAYING,



GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN,
AND ON EARTH PEACE TO THOSE ON WHOM HIS FAVOR RESTS.

WHEN THE ANGELS HAD LEFT THEM, THE SHEPHERDS SAID TO ONE ANOTHER:

LET'S GO TO BETHLEHEM AND SEE THIS THING THAT HAS HAPPENED, WHICH THE LORD HAS TOLD US ABOUT.

SO THEY HURRIED OFF AND FOUND MARY AND JOSEPH, AND THE BABY, WHO WAS LYING IN THE MANGER. SHEPHERDS SPREAD THE WORD CONCERNING WHAT HAD BEEN TOLD THEM ABOUT THIS CHILD.

AND ALL WHO HEARD IT WERE AMAZED AT WHAT THE SHEPHERDS SAID TO THEM. MARY TREASURED UP ALL THESE THINGS AND PONDERED THEM IN HER HEART.

THE SHEPHERDS RETURNED, GLORIFYING AND PRAISING GOD FOR ALL THE THINGS THEY HAD HEARD AND SEEN, WHICH WERE JUST AS THEY HAD BEEN TOLD.

IN THE COUNTRY TO THE EAST THERE LIVED SAGES WHO ONE DAY SAW A HUGE AND BRIGHT STAR IN THE SKY. IT WAS A SIGN FOR THEM THAT A NEW KING WAS BORN.



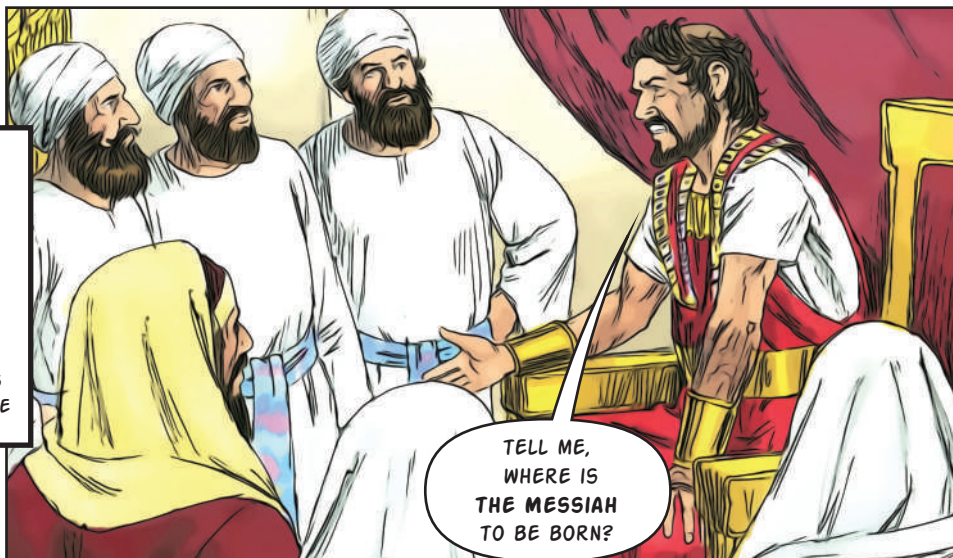
SO THEY PACKED GIFTS FOR THIS KING AND SET OUT TO FIND HIM. FOR MANY WEEKS THEY FOLLOWED THIS STAR, AND IT LED THEM TOWARDS JERUSALEM, TO THE LAND RULED BY THE KING OF HEROD.

WHEN THEY GOT TO THIS CITY THEY ASKED:



WHERE IS THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN KING OF THE JEWS? WE SAW HIS STAR WHEN IT ROSE AND HAVE COME TO WORSHIP HIM.

WHEN KING HEROD HEARD THIS HE WAS DISTURBED. WHEN HE HAD CALLED TOGETHER ALL THE PEOPLE'S CHIEF PRIESTS AND TEACHERS OF THE LAW, HE ASKED THEM:



TELL ME, WHERE IS THE MESSIAH TO BE BORN?



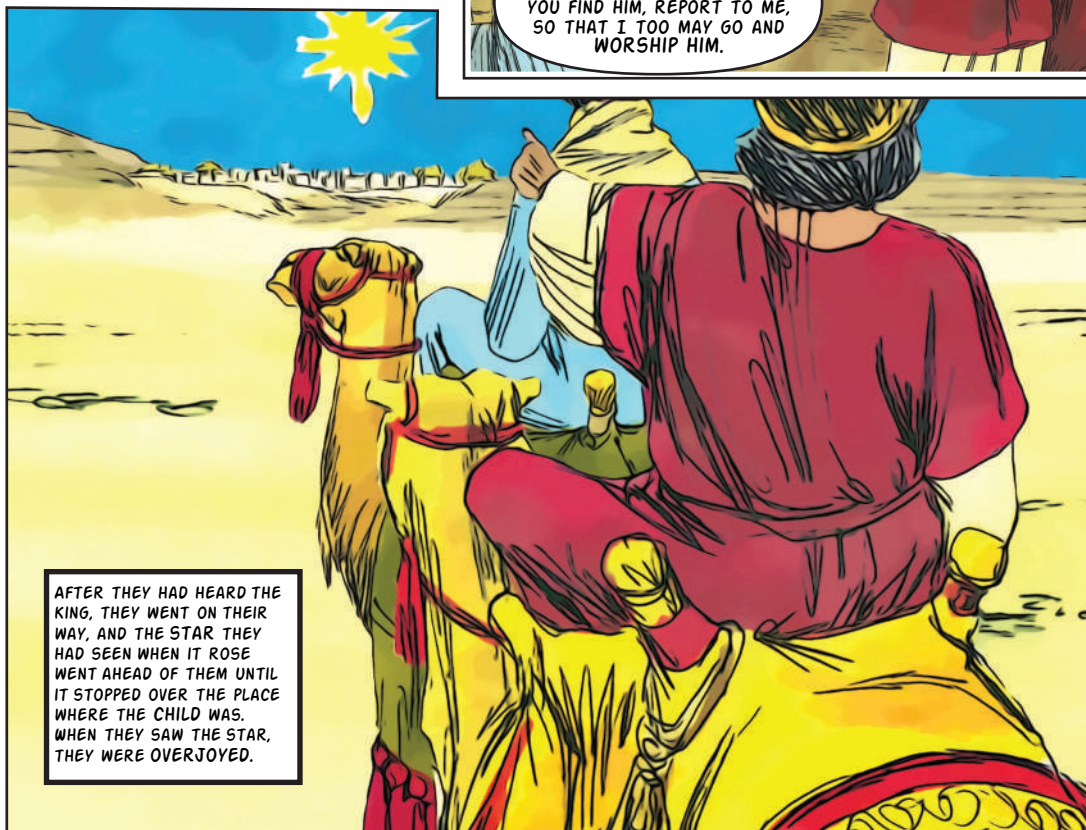
THEY REPLIED:

IN BETHLEHEM
IN JUDEA, FOR THIS
IS WHAT THE PROPHET
HAS WRITTEN:
"BUT YOU, BETHLEHEM,
IN THE LAND OF JUDEA,
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST
AMONG THE RULERS OF
JUDEA;
FOR OUT OF YOU WILL COME
A RULER
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY
PEOPLE
ISRAEL."

THEN HEROD CALLED THE
MAGI SECRETLY AND FOUND
OUT FROM THEM THE EXACT
TIME THE STAR HAD
APPEARED. HE SENT THEM
TO BETHLEHEM AND SAID:

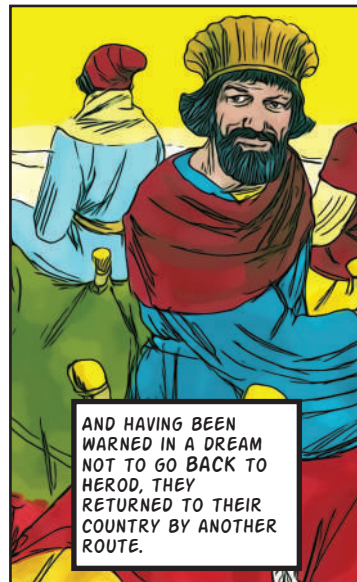


GO AND SEARCH CAREFULLY
FOR THE CHILD. AS SOON AS
YOU FIND HIM, REPORT TO ME,
SO THAT I TOO MAY GO AND
WORSHIP HIM.



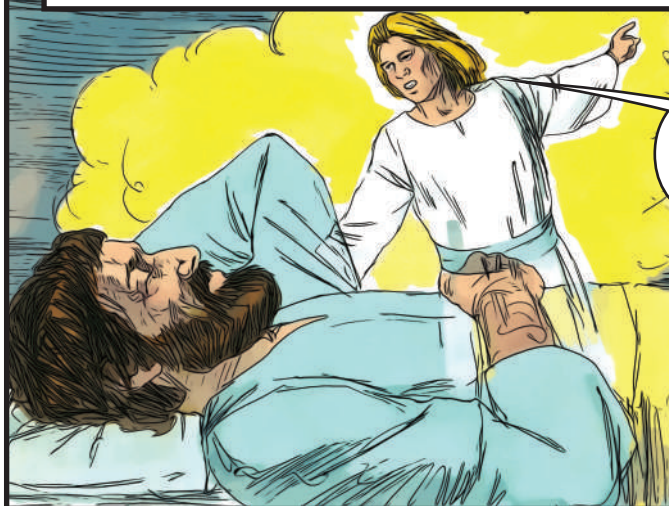
AFTER THEY HAD HEARD THE
KING, THEY WENT ON THEIR
WAY, AND THE STAR THEY
HAD SEEN WHEN IT ROSE
WENT AHEAD OF THEM UNTIL
IT STOPPED OVER THE PLACE
WHERE THE CHILD WAS.
WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR,
THEY WERE OVERJOYED.

ON COMING TO THE HOUSE, THEY SAW THE CHILD WITH HIS MOTHER MARY, AND THEY BOWED DOWN AND WORSHIPED HIM. THEN THEY OPENED THEIR TREASURES AND PRESENTED HIM WITH GIFTS OF GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.



AND HAVING BEEN WARNED IN A DREAM NOT TO GO BACK TO HEROD, THEY RETURNED TO THEIR COUNTRY BY ANOTHER ROUTE.

WHEN THEY HAD GONE, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO JOSEPH IN A DREAM. AND HE SAID:



GET UP!
TAKE THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER
AND ESCAPE TO EGYPT. STAY THERE
UNTIL
I TELL YOU, FOR HEROD IS GOING TO
SEARCH FOR
THE CHILD TO KILL HIM.

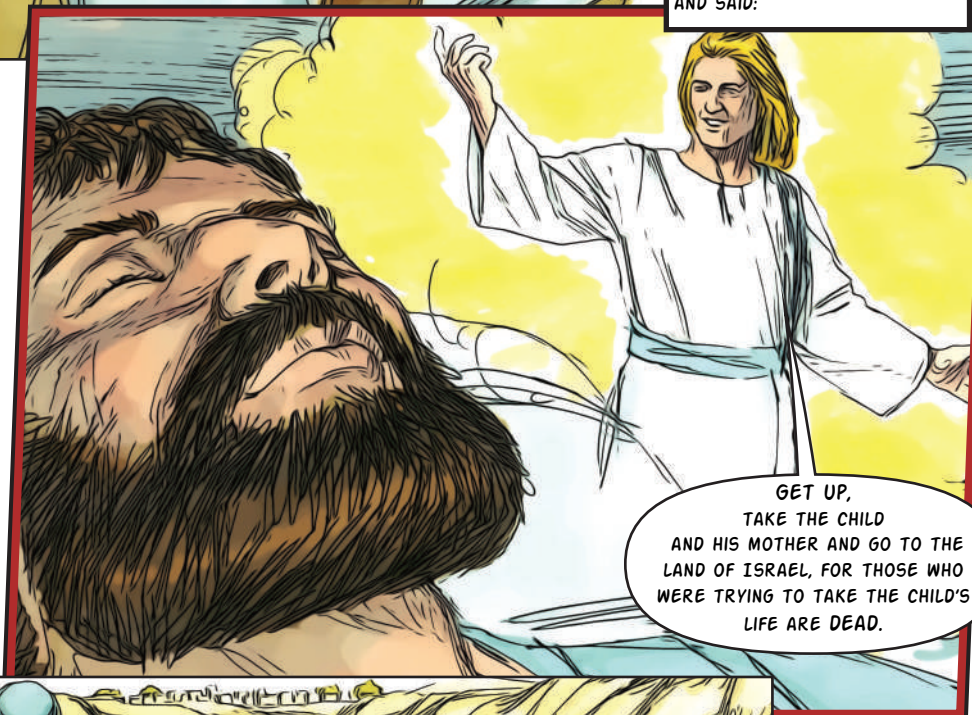
SO HE GOT UP, TOOK THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER DURING THE NIGHT AND LEFT FOR EGYPT.



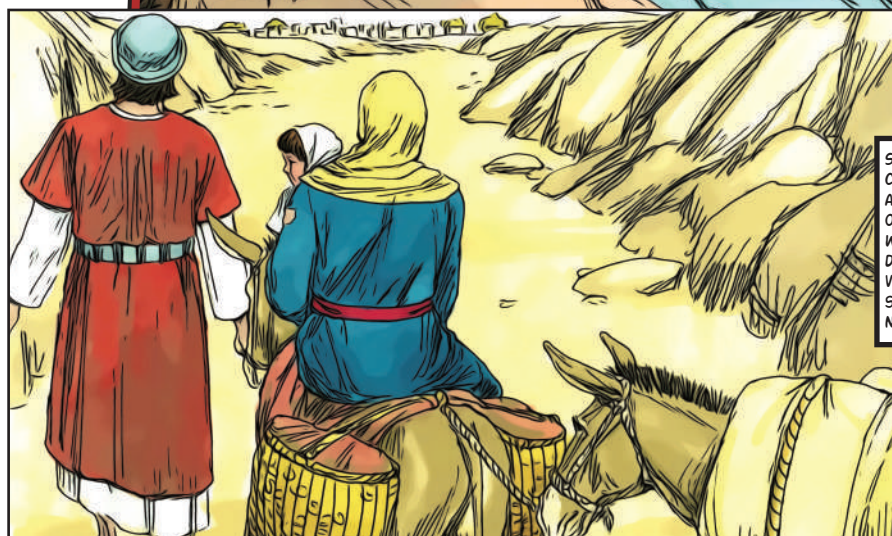


WHEN HEROD REALIZED THAT HE HAD BEEN OUTWITTED BY THE MAGI, HE WAS FURIOUS, AND HE GAVE ORDERS TO KILL ALL THE BOYS IN BETHLEHEM AND ITS VICINITY WHO WERE TWO YEARS OLD AND UNDER.

AFTER HEROD DIED, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED IN A DREAM TO JOSEPH IN EGYPT AND SAID:



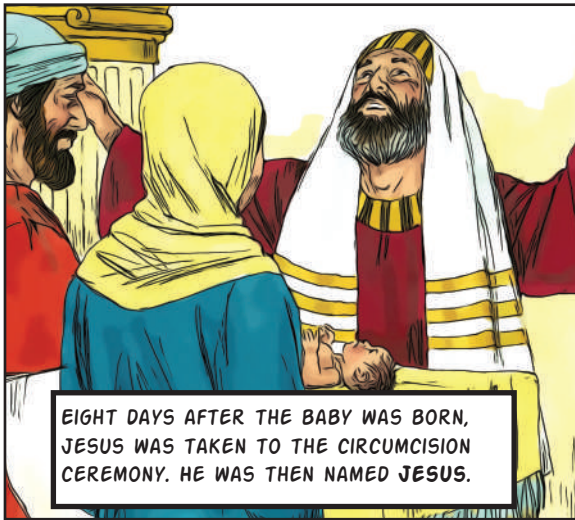
GET UP,
TAKE THE CHILD
AND HIS MOTHER AND GO TO THE
LAND OF ISRAEL, FOR THOSE WHO
WERE TRYING TO TAKE THE CHILD'S
LIFE ARE DEAD.



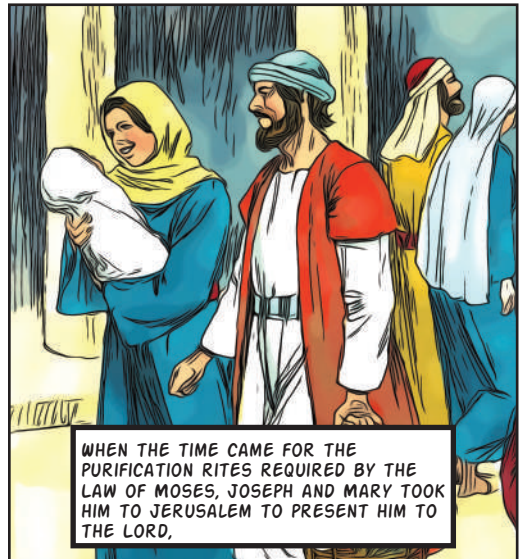
SO HE GOT UP, TOOK THE
CHILD AND HIS MOTHER,
AND WENT TO THE LAND
OF ISRAEL. LATER, HE
WAS AGAIN WARNED IN A
DREAM, WITHDREW TO THE
VICINITY OF GALILEE, AND
SETTLED IN THE CITY OF
NAZARETH.

THE END.

„Jesus Presented in the Temple”



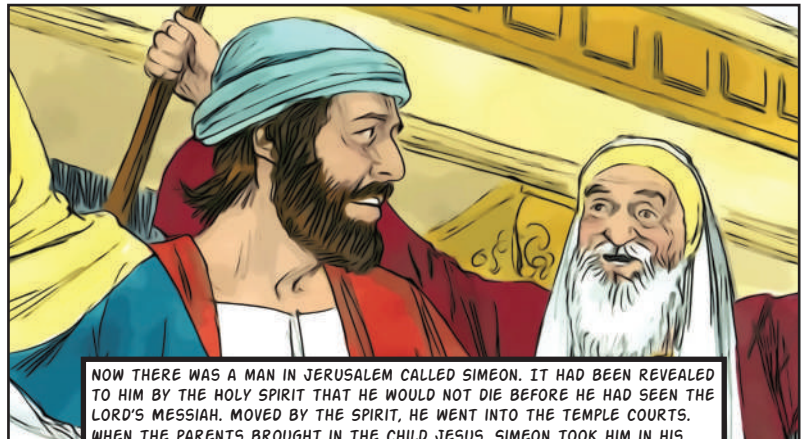
EIGHT DAYS AFTER THE BABY WAS BORN, JESUS WAS TAKEN TO THE CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY. HE WAS THEN NAMED JESUS.



WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR THE PURIFICATION RITES REQUIRED BY THE LAW OF MOSES, JOSEPH AND MARY TOOK HIM TO JERUSALEM TO PRESENT HIM TO THE LORD,



AND TO OFFER A SACRIFICE IN KEEPING WITH WHAT IS SAID IN THE LAW OF THE LORD: "A PAIR OF DOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS*."



NOW THERE WAS A MAN IN JERUSALEM CALLED SIMEON. IT HAD BEEN REVEALED TO HIM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT HE WOULD NOT DIE BEFORE HE HAD SEEN THE LORD'S MESSIAH. MOVED BY THE SPIRIT, HE WENT INTO THE TEMPLE COURTS. WHEN THE PARENTS BROUGHT IN THE CHILD JESUS, SIMEON TOOK HIM IN HIS ARMS AND PRAISED GOD, SAYING:

SOVEREIGN LORD, AS YOU HAVE PROMISED, YOU MAY NOW DISMISS YOUR SERVANT IN PEACE. FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION, WHICH YOU HAVE PREPARED IN THE SIGHT OF ALL NATIONS: A LIGHT FOR REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, AND THE GLORY OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL.



*SPECIES OF BIRD

THE CHILD'S FATHER AND MOTHER MARVELED AT WHAT WAS SAID ABOUT HIM.

THERE WAS ALSO A PROPHET, ANNA. SHE WAS VERY OLD; SHE NEVER LEFT THE TEMPLE BUT WORSHIPED NIGHT AND DAY, FASTING AND PRAYING.

THIS CHILD IS DESTINED TO CAUSE THE FALLING AND RISING OF MANY IN ISRAEL, AND TO BE A SIGN THAT WILL BE SPOKEN AGAINST, SO THAT THE THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS WILL BE REVEALED. AND A SWORD WILL PIERCE YOUR OWN SOUL TOO.

COMING UP TO THEM AT THAT VERY MOMENT, SHE GAVE THANKS TO GOD AND SPOKE ABOUT THE CHILD TO ALL WHO WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE REDEMPTION OF JERUSALEM.

WHEN JOSEPH AND MARY HAD DONE EVERYTHING REQUIRED BY THE LAW OF THE LORD, THEY RETURNED TO NAZARETH. THE CHILD GREW AND HE WAS FILLED WITH WISDOM, AND THE GRACE OF GOD WAS ON HIM.

THE END.

