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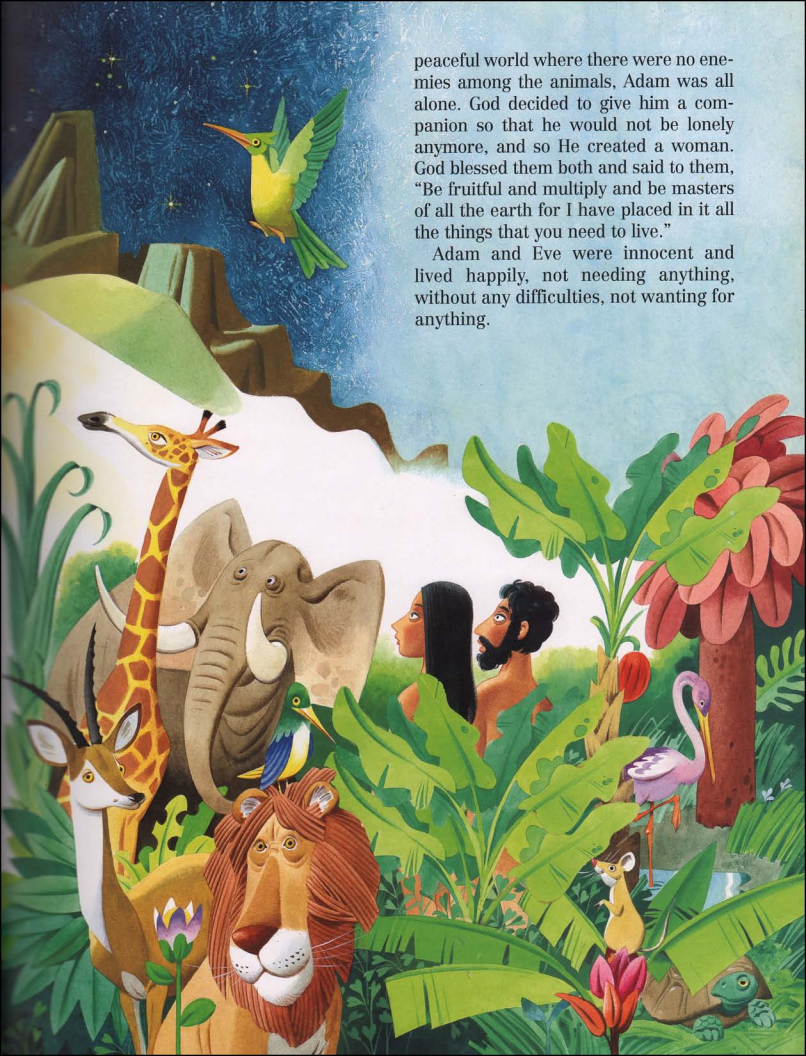
## Creation

**I**N the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was totally lifeless, covered by a darkened sky. God said, "Let there be light," and He divided light from darkness, making the day and the night. He then divided the waters from the dry land, and there were seas and oceans, mountains and plains. He gave a command and plants and trees sprang up from the earth, and they produced flowers and fruit.

God then scattered the stars throughout the skies, and He placed them among the planets and the constellations. He created the moon to light up the night and the sun to light up the day. He commanded the waters and the land to be filled with every type of animal: birds, fish, snakes, and mammals.

He then said, "Let Us make humans in Our image and likeness, and they will be in charge of all the animals on the land and in the sea." And so God created the first man whom He named Adam. He showed His love for him by placing him in a wonderful garden in which there were four rivers flowing with waters that were clean and pure. The garden was full of lush pastures and fruit-giving trees. Among the trees in the Garden of Eden was one whose fruit Adam was forbidden to eat: that of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God warned him, "You can eat anything you want, only don't touch the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, otherwise you will die!" In this



peaceful world where there were no enemies among the animals, Adam was all alone. God decided to give him a companion so that he would not be lonely anymore, and so He created a woman. God blessed them both and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and be masters of all the earth for I have placed in it all the things that you need to live."

Adam and Eve were innocent and lived happily, not needing anything, without any difficulties, not wanting for anything.





## Moses

**A**FTER Joseph died, a new cruel Pharaoh took the throne in Egypt. He issued a command that no one dared disobey: When any Israelite boy was born, he was to be thrown into the Nile River.

One day a woman from the tribe of Levi, one of the tribes of Israel, gave birth to a son. She loved him so much that she hid him so he would not be killed. Then three months later, entrusting him to the mercy of God, she went down to the Nile River with her daughter. She covered a basket with pitch so that it would float and she placed her baby in it. She then lowered it into the water, telling

her daughter, "I can't stand to stay here. Remain here awhile and watch over your brother."

Not too far away there was a spot where the water was deep and clear and calm. Pharaoh's daughter went down there with her handmaids. Seeing the basket floating among the reeds, she asked them, "What is in that basket?" The handmaids answered, "It's a baby," and she ran over to take a look. The princess was a good and merciful woman. Moved with pity, she said to herself, "It must be an Israelite baby."

The baby's sister, hearing this, came out from the reeds where she had been

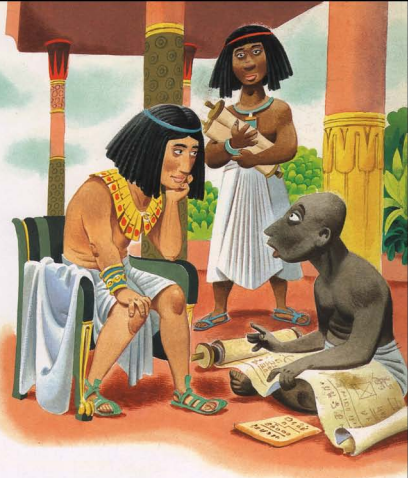
hiding. She said, "Princess, would you want me to call one of the Israelite women to take care of this baby?"

Pharaoh's daughter said, "Do it." The girl ran to her mother and told her everything. The woman was overjoyed and she ran forward to take the child in her arms. The Princess, not knowing that she was speaking to the child's mother, said, "I will pay you to care for him." When he was a bit older, his mother took him to the palace and handed him over to the Princess. She named him Moses, a name that means, "I saved him from the water."

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's palace, being raised as if he were a prince. He was taught by the priests and the wise men, just as if he were being raised to lead his people one day.

Certainly, the kind princess who had found Moses could not have imagined that he would one day become a great leader, a fierce enemy of her own Egyptian people.

Moses grew up strong, well mannered, and intelligent. He was well trained in the use of arms and leadership. Yet, he

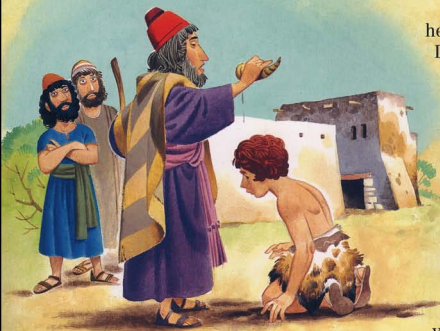


hardly knew anything about the Israelites who were living as slaves in Egypt. He didn't concern himself with them until he found out that he himself was one of them.

When he found out that he was one of them, young Moses approached the Israelites and found his brother Aaron who told him all about Joseph and what had happened to his people since he had died.

But Moses had been raised by the Egyptians, saved from death by Pharaoh's daughter. He found it difficult to believe that the Egyptians would treat the Israelites that poorly. He decided to go down to the Israelites and see for himself whether everything that he had heard was true. One day he left the palace without telling anyone where he was going. Anxiously, he snuck down to the camp where the Israelites had to live and work.





## David

**D**AY by day, Saul became more dark and depressed. It was as if he were suffering from a serious illness. In the meantime, Samuel traveled to Bethlehem as God had commanded him, for it was there that he would find a man worthy to be anointed as the king of Israel. In Bethlehem, Samuel found a red-haired young boy. He was handsome and strong. He asked, "Who is that boy?"

A man named Jesse answered, "He is David, my son."

Samuel then knew what he had to do. He called the boy over and anointed him with holy oil, secretly proclaiming him to be the king of Israel. And so God's plan was fulfilled. A short time later, Saul wished to find someone who could play the lyre because its music would comfort him when he felt depressed and overwhelmed. David was quite good at playing the lyre, so he was brought to the royal court. He played for Saul. Saul felt better when he listened to the music, and sometimes

he even broke into a smile. He loved David and took him under his protection.

But there was always another war to fight. The Philistines invaded Israel again, and this time they brought with them a great giant named Goliath. He wore iron armor and carried a huge spear. Goliath stood in front of the Israelites and cried out, "Why have you all gone to all this trouble? Let one of your men come out and fight me. If he wins, the Philistines will be your slaves. But if he loses, you will be our slaves."

No one was brave enough to go out and fight the giant. Day after day he shouted out his challenge.

Then, one day, David said to Saul, "I can't stand it that this Philistine animal keeps insulting the people of God. O king, I will go out to fight him."

"You?" asked the shocked king. "You're nothing but a boy!"

"No, I am God's soldier."

"At least put on some armor, David, or Goliath will tear you apart."

David put on the armor, but couldn't even move in it. He said, "O king, I want to go fight Goliath dressed as I am."

He grabbed five stones from the riverbed, and he confidently marched toward the camp of the Philistines, carrying only his staff and a sling.

Goliath saw him coming out, and as he marched out to meet him he cried out, "What do you want, boy?"

"I am going to fight you, because you have been insulting the people of God for far too long."

Goliath roared with laughter. "Is that so? It won't be too long before the dogs





and vultures are eating your carcass.” Grasping his huge spear, he came forward. David fearlessly waited for him. He prepared his sling and the rock went flying out, striking the giant between the eyes. He let out a groan and slumped to the earth. In an instant, David was standing over him. He drew out the giant’s sword and then, as a stunned silence descended on those who were watching, he cut off his head.

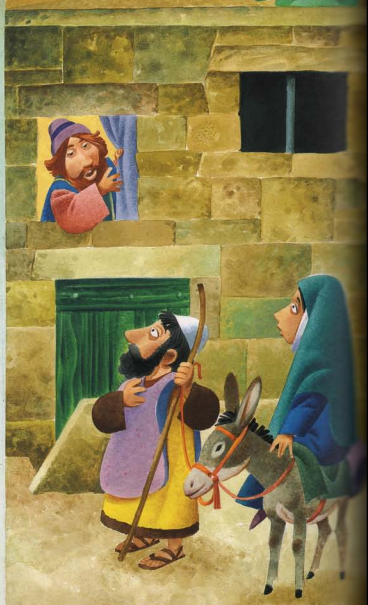




## Birth of Jesus

**T**HIS is a true story about what happened in Israel over 2,000 years ago. The Israelites lived in that land, but it was ruled by the Romans who dominated most of the known world. The story begins on a starry night in the town of Bethlehem, the province of Judah. That night a carpenter named Joseph and his wife Mary arrived there because the Roman emperor wanted to know how many people lived in his empire.

Everyone was to go to the city in which they had been born and register with the Roman officials there. Joseph, who lived in Nazareth in the province of Galilee, had been born in Bethlehem. So he set out with Mary. She probably rode upon a donkey for she was expecting a Child. They arrived in Bethlehem after sunset and they went to an inn to ask for a room. The innkeeper came to the window and told them, "There's no room. All the inns are full. On your way now!"



So Joseph and Mary had to find room in a stall with the animals. While they were there, Mary said, "Joseph, I think that the Baby is coming." A little later, some shepherds who were watching over their flocks saw a great light approaching them. From that light an Angel told them, "Do not be afraid! I bring you good news that will fill everyone with joy. Today the Savior of the world is born in Bethlehem. He is wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem. They found a Baby as the Angel had said. His parents were alongside Him, as were the animals who kept the Baby warm with their breath. They heard beautiful music coming from the heavens.



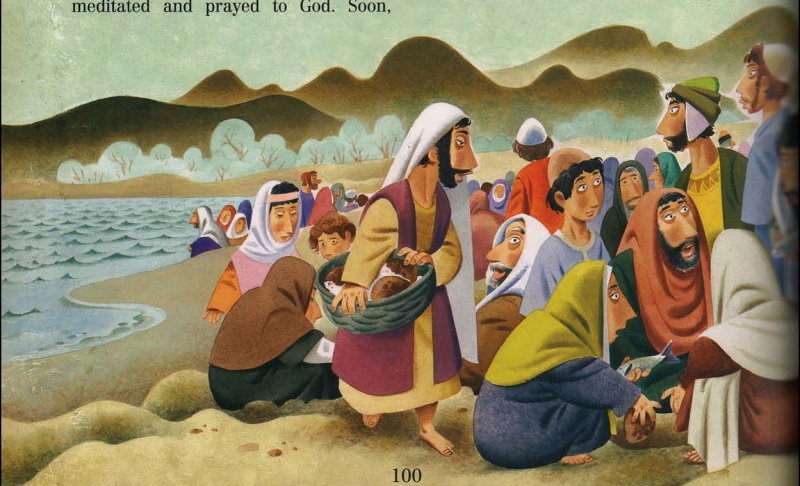
## Jesus Feeds the People



**S**ADDENED by the death of John the Baptist, Jesus and His disciples withdrew to an isolated place where they meditated and prayed to God. Soon,

though, word spread where He was, and a large crowd of people gathered on the lakeshore where they asked Him to teach them. Jesus preached and performed miracles because He had compassion on them. When the day drew on, Jesus' disciples said, "Master, it is late now, and this is a very deserted spot. Let the people go into the nearby villages to find something to eat."

Jesus smiled and told them, "There is no need to send them on their way to get something to eat. You can feed them." The disciples, confused, said, "Lord, we don't have enough food. In fact, the only food any of these people has is five loaves of bread and two fish, carried by a young boy. What could we do with so little food? How could we feed them all?"





Jesus said, "Bring Me those five pieces of bread and those two fish." They did this, and the boy came forward. Meanwhile, the people sat down; there were about five thousand of them, not counting the women and the children.

Jesus took the basket containing the bread and the fish, looked up into the heavens, and said to the Apostles, "Give these people something to eat." The Apostles, mystified, obeyed Him and began to hand out the bread and the fish. The basket seemed to have no bottom. The Apostles kept handing out the bread and the fish to the people who were pressing in on them, and there was enough for everyone.

So many hands were reaching out to them, and none of them was left empty.

Filled with awe, the disciples passed from group to group, giving everyone something to eat, praising the Lord the whole time. Everyone ate the bread and fish that had miraculously been multiplied until everyone was full.

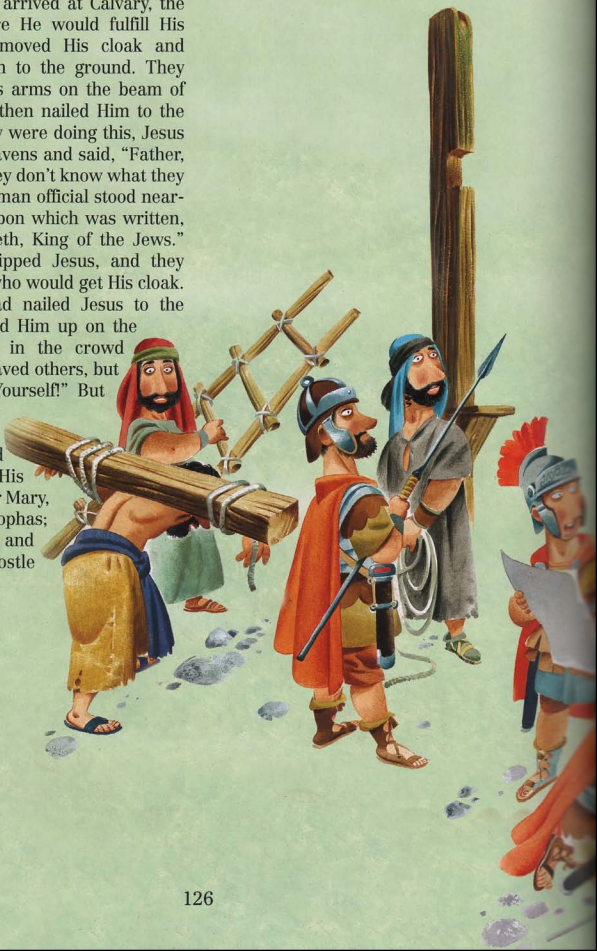
The Apostles came back to Jesus and said, "Lord, we even have food left over from what You gave us." Jesus commanded them, "Gather up what is left over so that nothing goes to waste." The disciples obeyed and filled up twelve baskets with the leftover food. The people cried out, "Jesus is truly a Prophet. Let us make Him the King of the Jews." Jesus said nothing. He went off to a mountain all alone where He prayed and meditated.



## Jesus Is Crucified

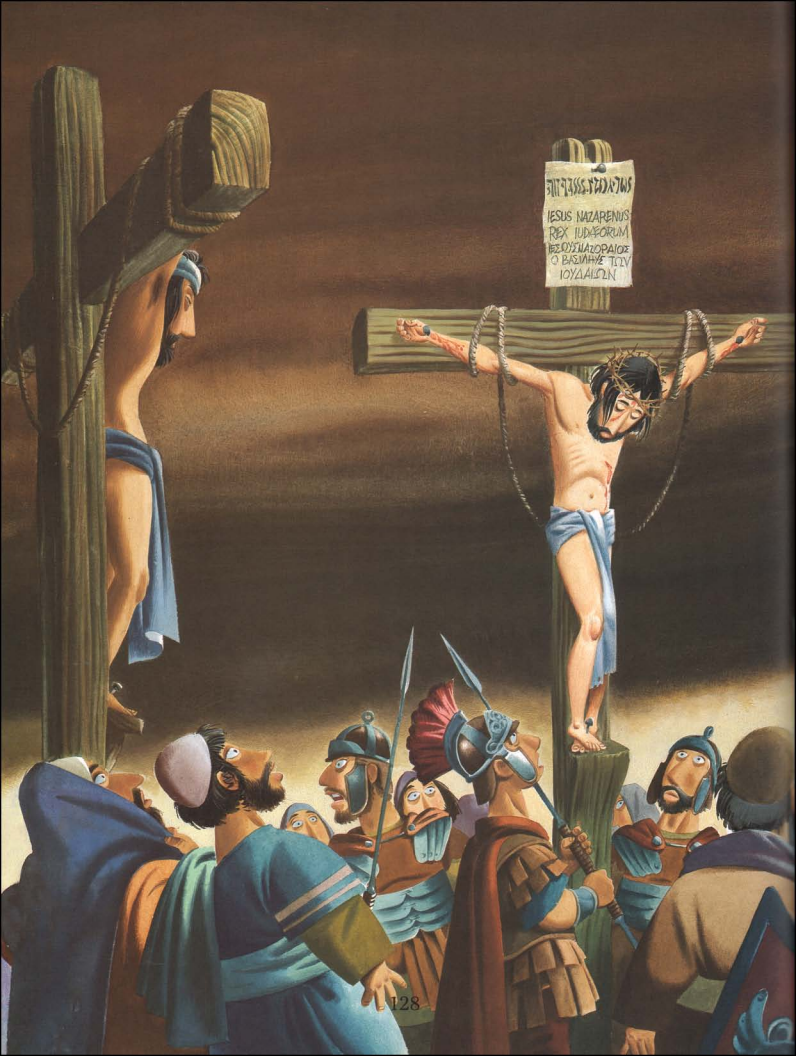
**W**HEN Jesus arrived at Calvary, the place where He would fulfill His destiny, they removed His cloak and threw Him down to the ground. They stretched out His arms on the beam of the Cross. They then nailed Him to the Cross. While they were doing this, Jesus looked to the heavens and said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." A Roman official stood nearby with a sign upon which was written, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The soldiers stripped Jesus, and they cast dice to see who would get His cloak.

When they had nailed Jesus to the beam, they raised Him up on the Cross. Someone in the crowd cried out, "You saved others, but You can't save Yourself!" But there were also some standing nearby who loved Him: Mary, His mother; her sister Mary, the wife of Cleophas; Mary Magdalene; and the young Apostle John.









ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΝΑΖΑΡΕΤΩΤΗΣ  
ΡΕΞ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ  
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ  
ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ



## Jesus Dies

**T**HE sky grew darker, and Jesus cried out from the Cross, "My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?" And then He died. The earth shook and the people felt their hearts tremble. The Son of God was dead.