

LEVEL 1

GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

EASY-TO-READ STORIES FOR KIDS



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With grateful appreciation to the late
MRS. ELEANOR SEARLE WHITNEY MCCOLLUM
for her contribution and assistance in making
Mission: Literacy possible.

Mission: Literacy contains 30 stories adapted from the *Contemporary English Version* of the Bible. The goal of the program is to provide emergent readers with the texts of key Scriptures in a form and manner that will help them expand their reading skills and discover the joy of reading God's Word.

Mission: Literacy was developed by
American Bible Society
in association with the
Publications and Media Group of the
Bank Street College of Education.

Jesus Is Born is based on Luke 2.1-21. Text adapted by Suzette Haden Elgin.
Book 12 Level 1 • Illustrated by Higgins Bond.

Jesus and the Storm is based on Mark 4. Text adapted by Suzette Haden Elgin.
Book 15 Level 1 • Illustrated by Ian Spiegle.

Jesus Feeds a Crowd is based on Matthew 14.13-21. Text adapted by Suzette Haden Elgin.
Book 16 Level 1 • Illustrated by Cal Massey.

Jesus Walks on the Water is based on Matthew 14.22-33. Text adapted by Suzette Haden Elgin.
Book 17 Level 1 • Illustrated by Pamela Johnson.

A Story of Two Sons is based on Luke 15. Text adapted by Suzette Haden Elgin.
Book 22 Level 1 • Illustrated by Ian Spiegle.

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Dear Reader,

Children are an important part of our families and our communities. All throughout the Bible we also see the important role children can play when we fan the flames of their faith. That is why we are pleased to present this compilation of stories for you to read with the children in your life.

These five stories are part of a larger Bible-based literacy program called Mission: Literacy™. It was created to help children learn about the Bible while reinforcing the critical literacy skills they need to be successful in life.

We encourage you to copy and share this resource with other families in hopes of sparking deeper conversations about the life and journey of Jesus Christ. We also hope that the engaging illustrations and simple text will draw your children into many more encounters with the Bible, and that together you will discover its life-changing message.

Happy Reading!



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STORY 1



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Jesus Is BORN



Jesus

IS BORN



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It was winter, and it was cold.





It was time for Mary's baby.

Even so, Mary and Joseph had to go. . .





to Bethlehem.

It was a long way!





When they got there
they went to the inn.





The innkeeper said, "The inn is full.
But you can stay with the animals."



After Mary and Joseph were inside,





the baby was born.



Mary dressed him

and laid him in a manger . . .





to sleep.



Outside Bethlehem,

under the stars,





there were shepherds with their sheep.



An angel came to them.



“Do not be scared,” the angel said.
“Be glad!”





**“The Savior is born!
You will find him
lying in a manger!”**



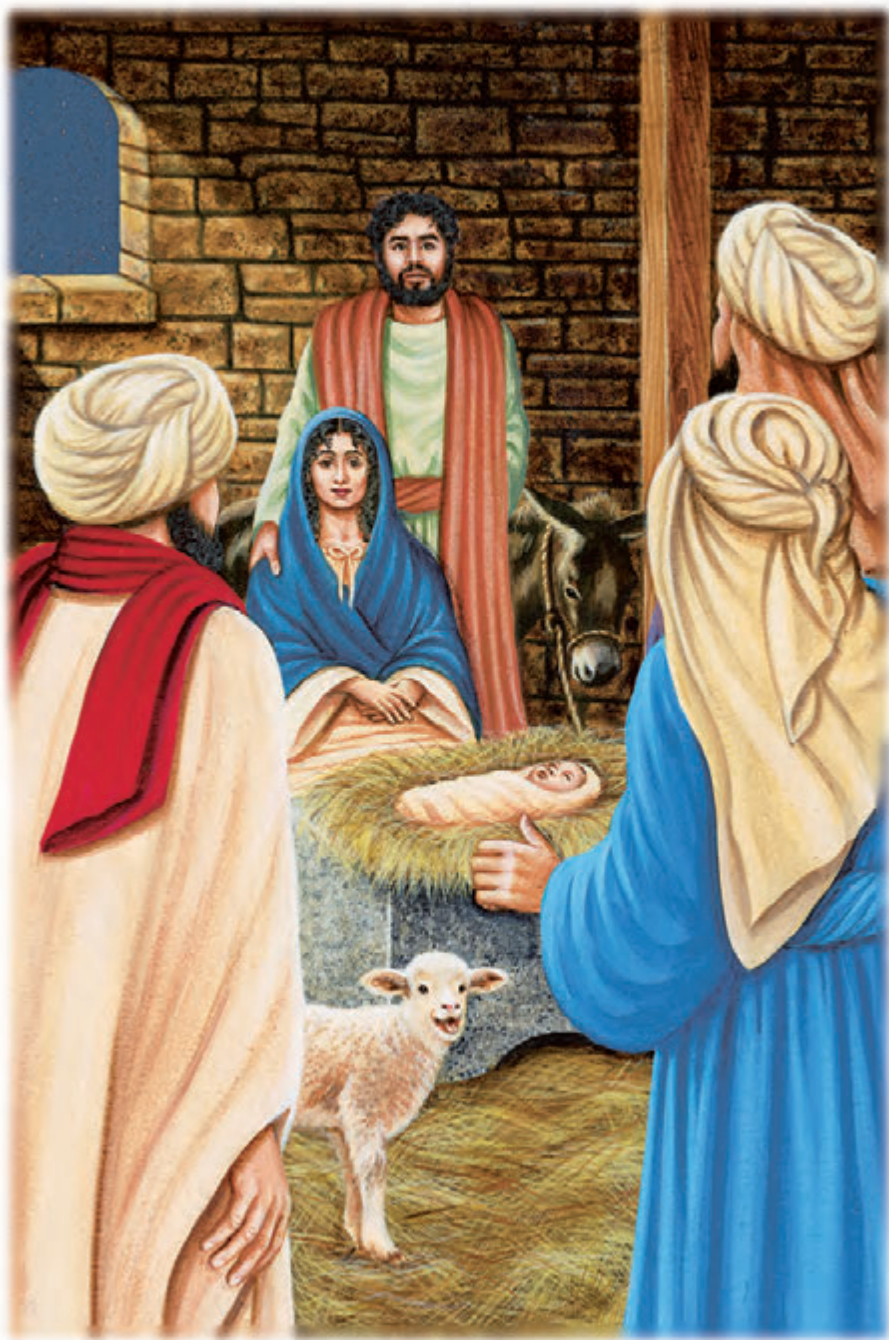
And suddenly there were angels
all around!

The shepherds went to the town.





They found Mary and Joseph
and the baby.



They went inside to see them.



They were so happy!

They went away talking about
what the angel had said.



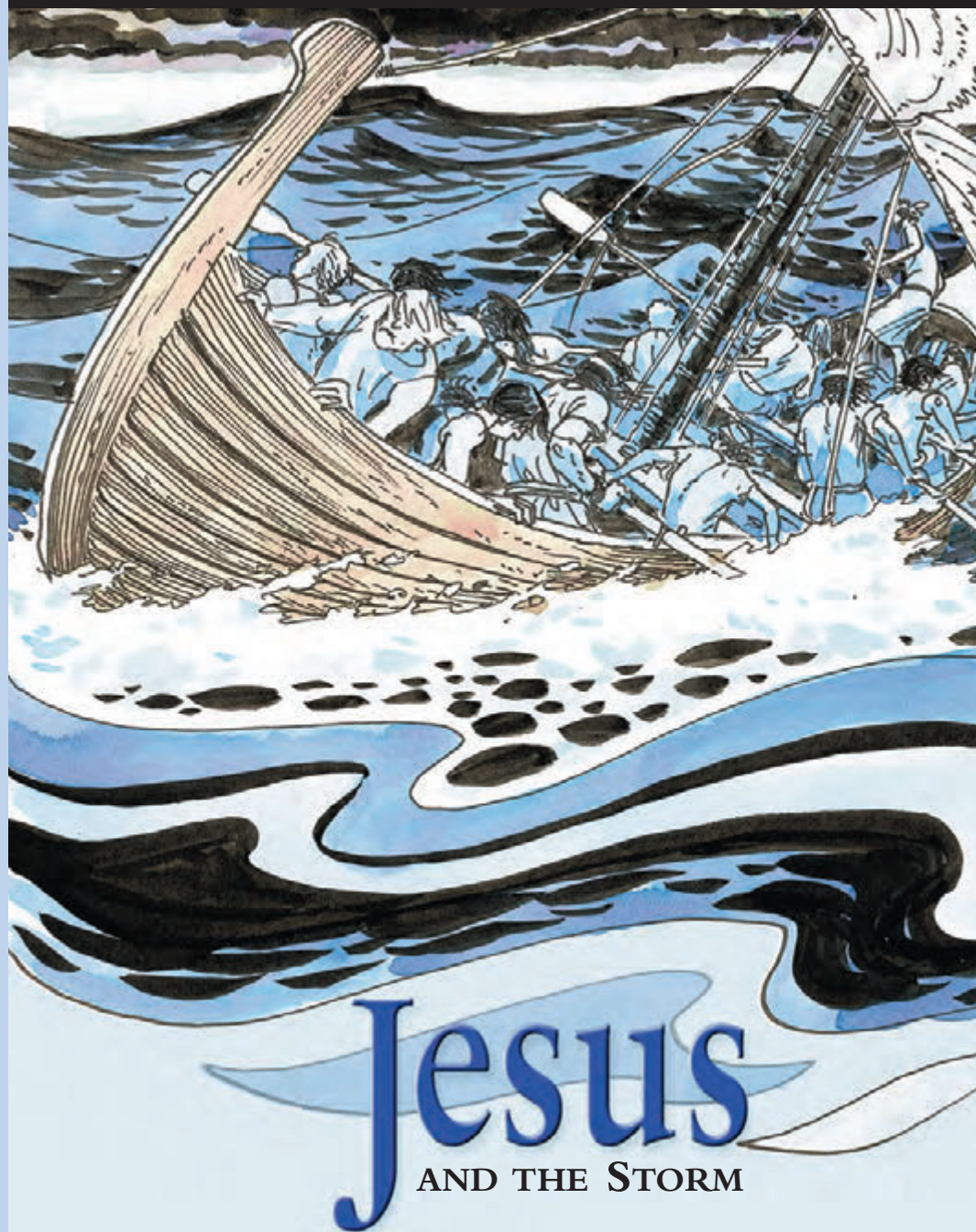
And Mary and Joseph
named the baby Jesus.



STORY 2



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Jesus

AND THE STORM

Jesus

AND THE STORM



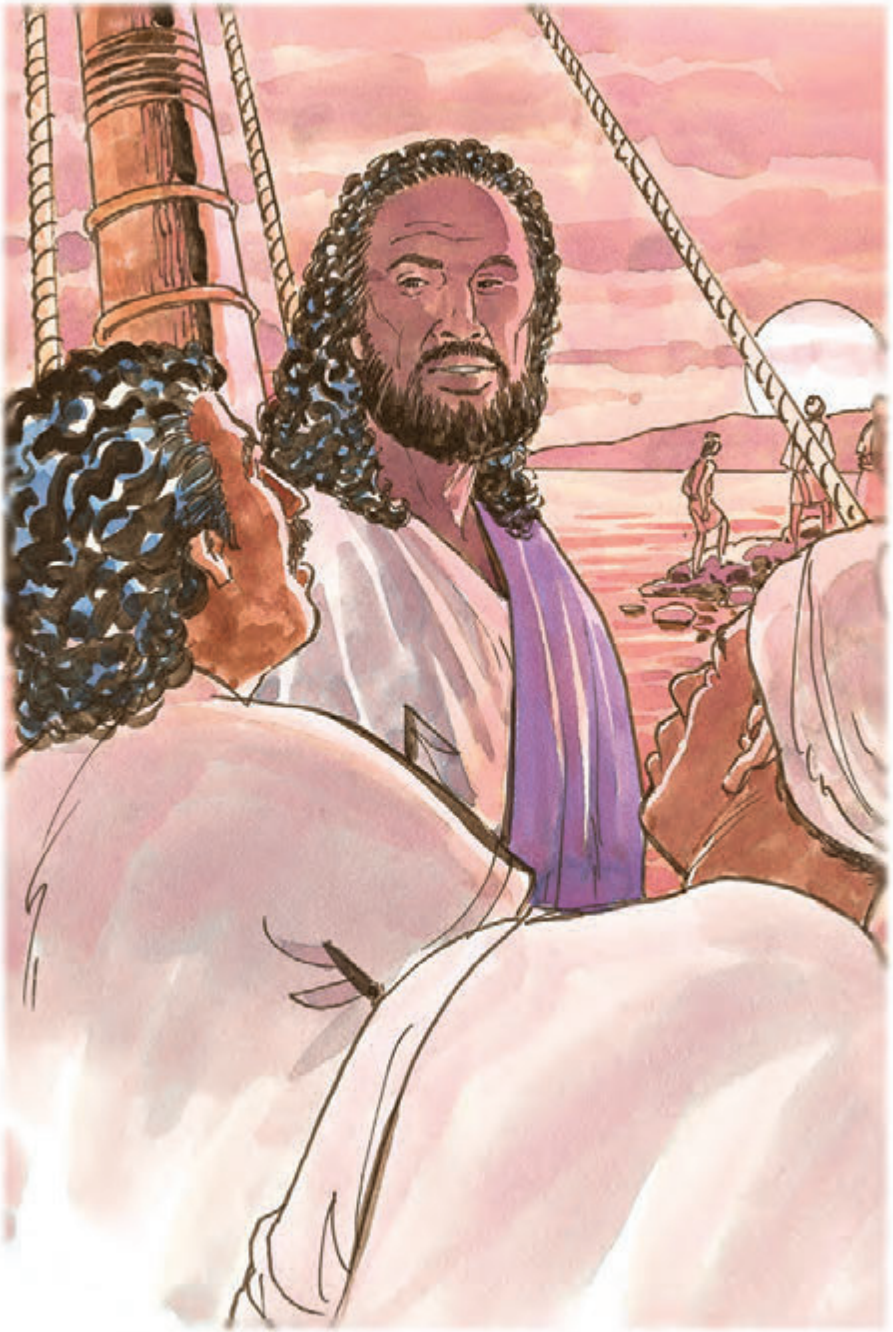
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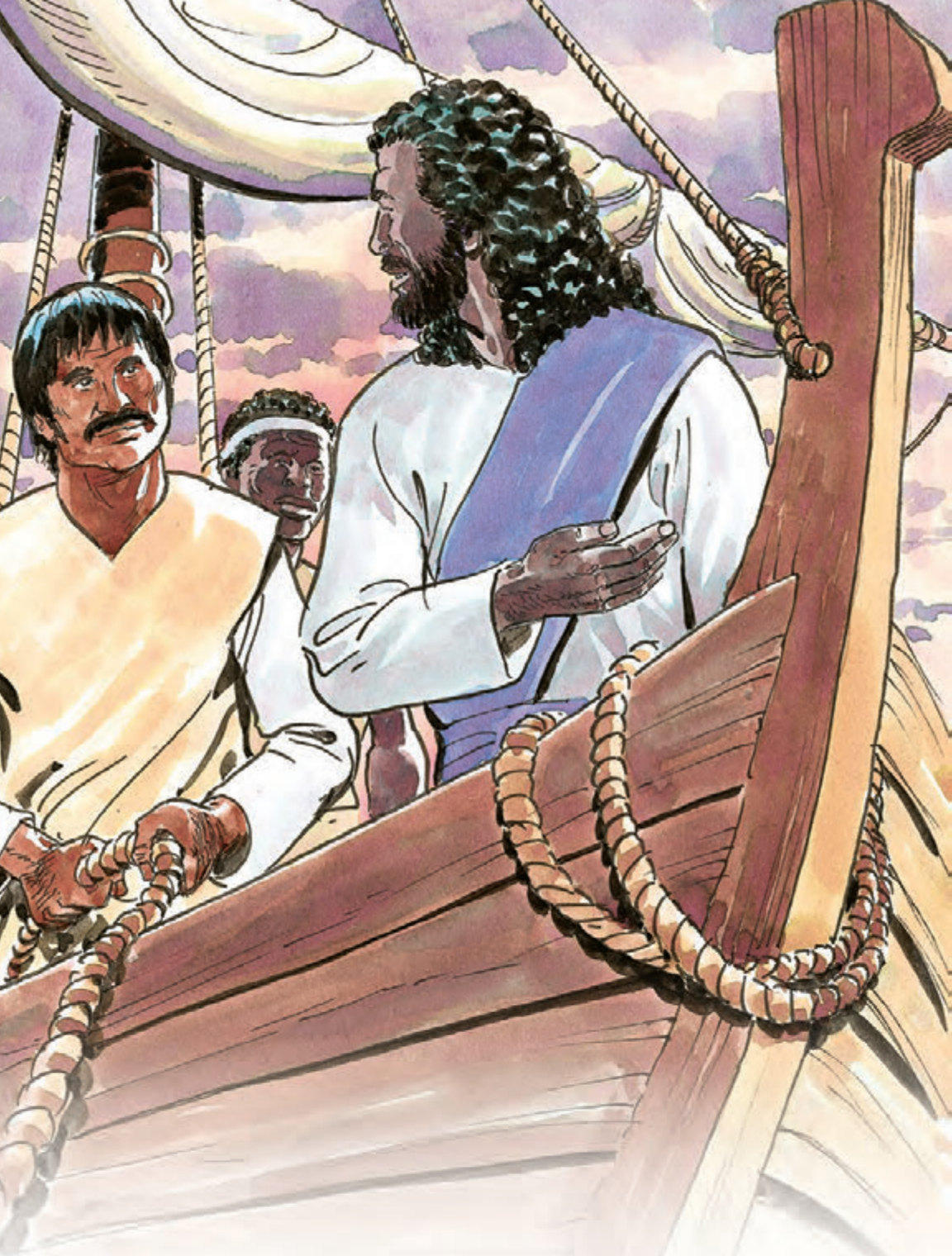
Jesus had been teaching . . .



at the lake.



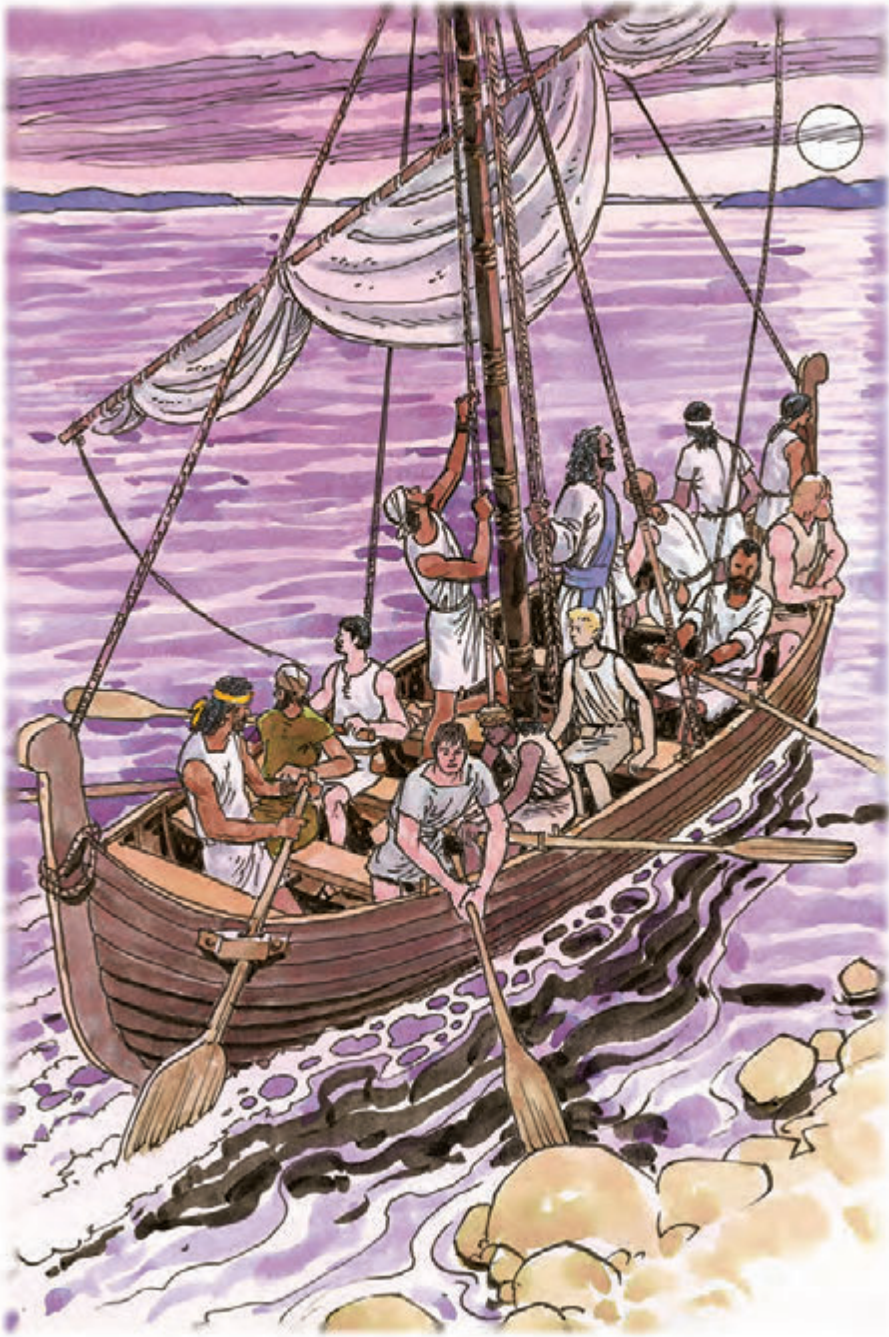
It was getting late.



“E t’s cross the lake,” he said.



They got the boat ready,



and they left.



Jesus went to the back.



He lay down and went to sleep.



The wind started blowing.



It started blowing hard!



It was a big storm,



with big waves!



The boat was rocking!

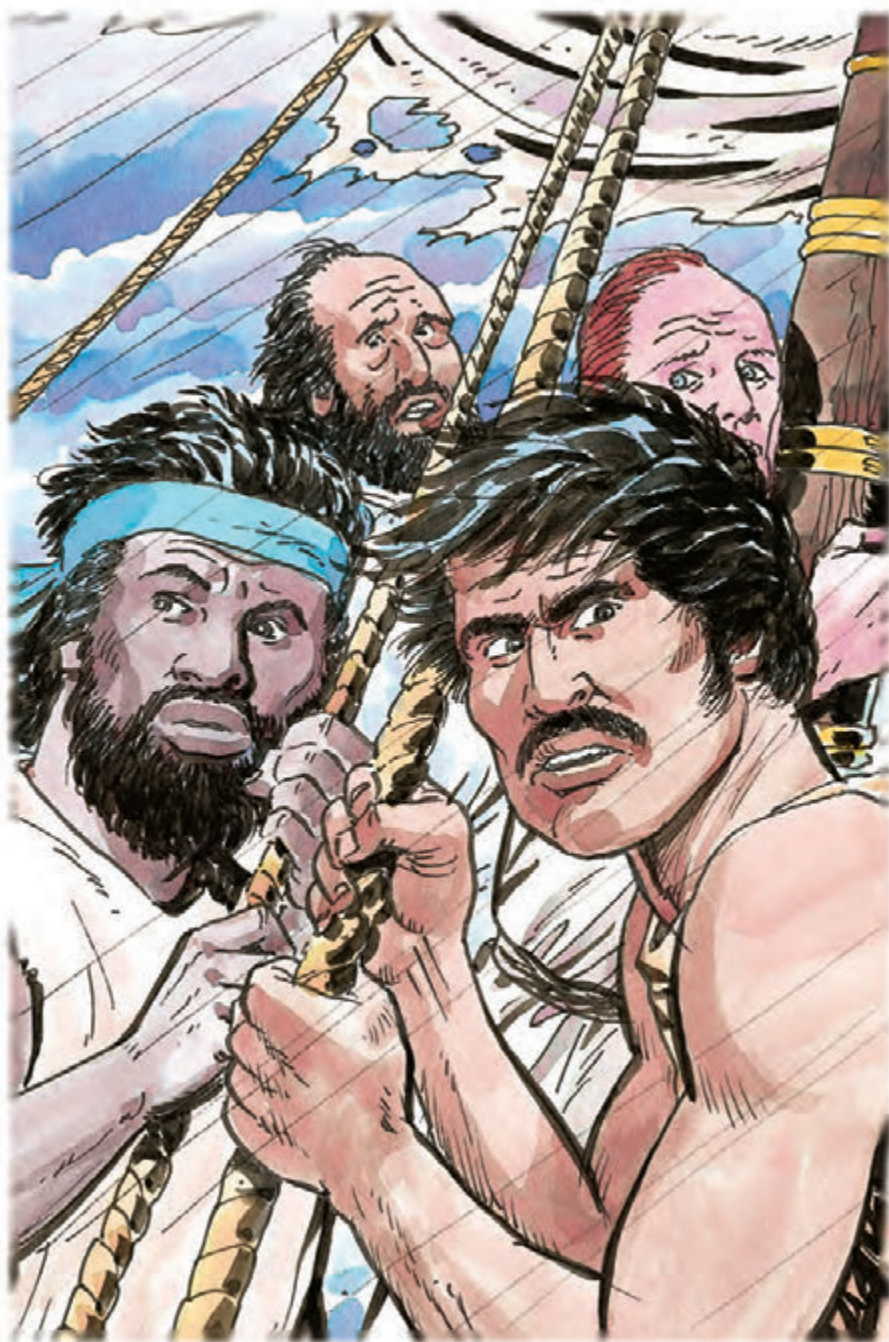




The waves got so big that
they came into the boat!

The boat was filling up with water!





The men were scared!

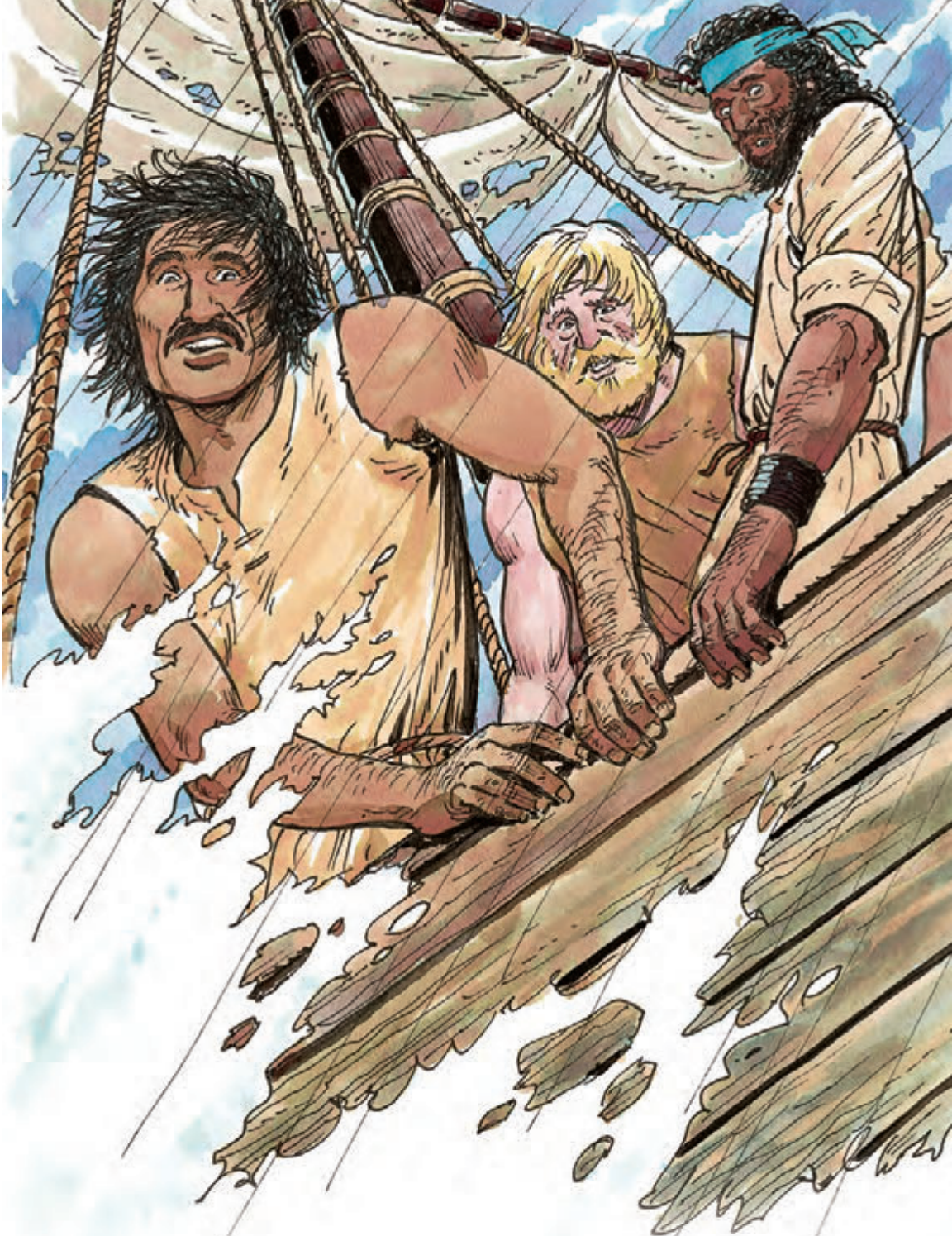




They went to where Jesus was sleeping.



“Wake up!” they said.



“The boat is sinking!”



“We are going to drown!”



Jesus got up.





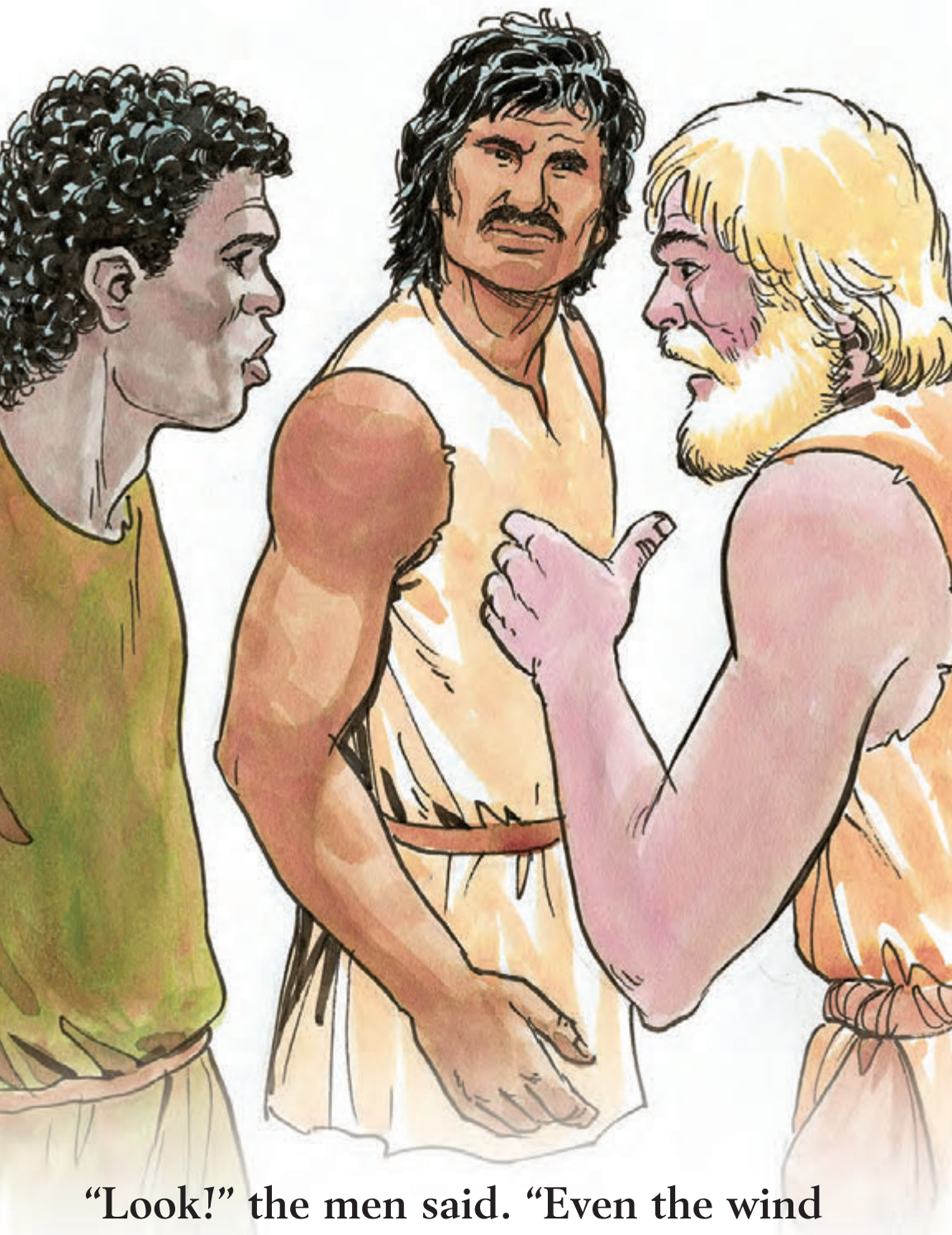
He said to the wind, "Be still!"
He said to the waves, "Be still!"



And the storm went away!



“Why were you scared?” Jesus said.
“I am here with you.”



“Look!” the men said. “Even the wind and the waves do what he says!”

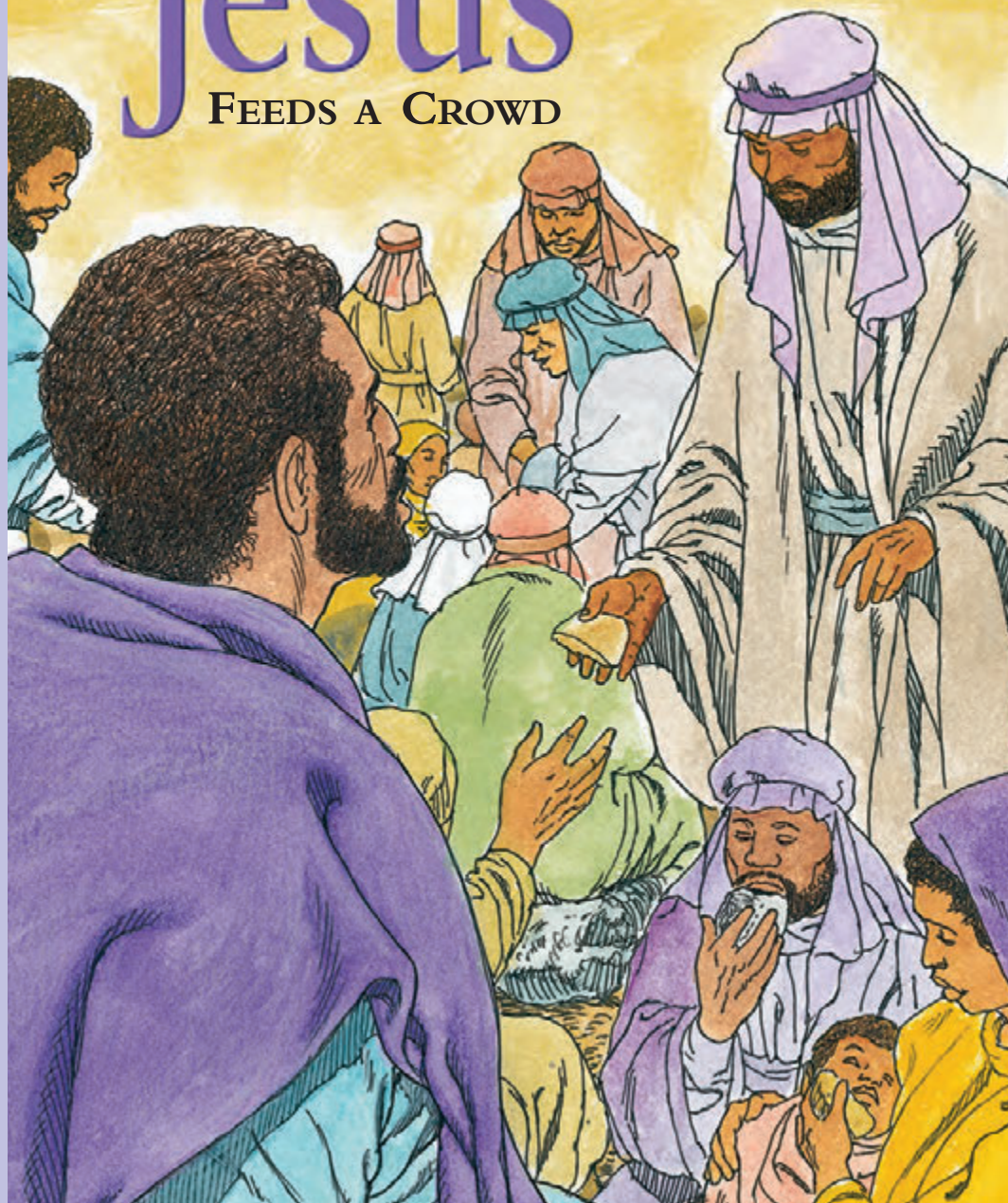
STORY 3



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Jesus

FEEDS A CROWD



Jesus

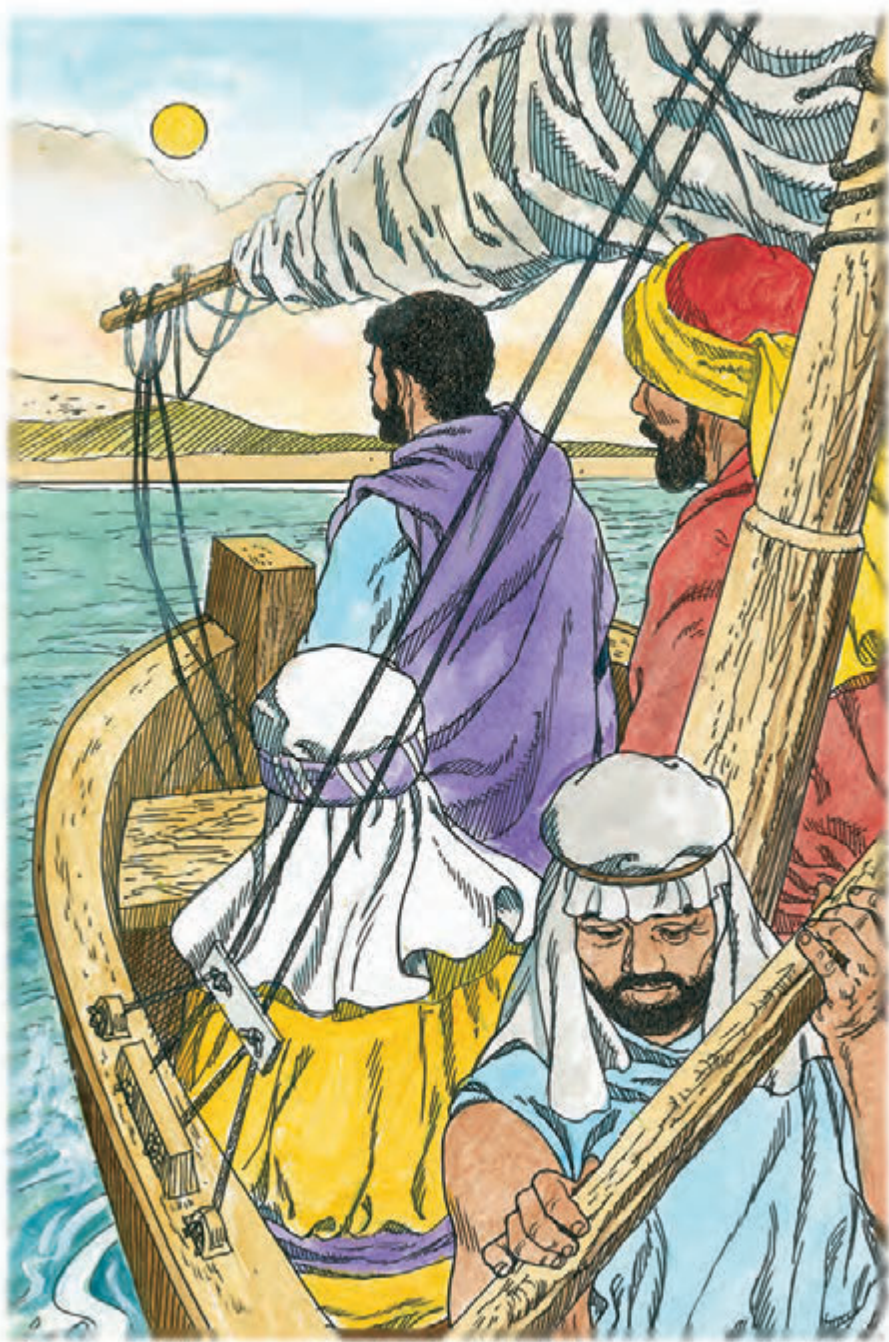
FEEDS A CROWD



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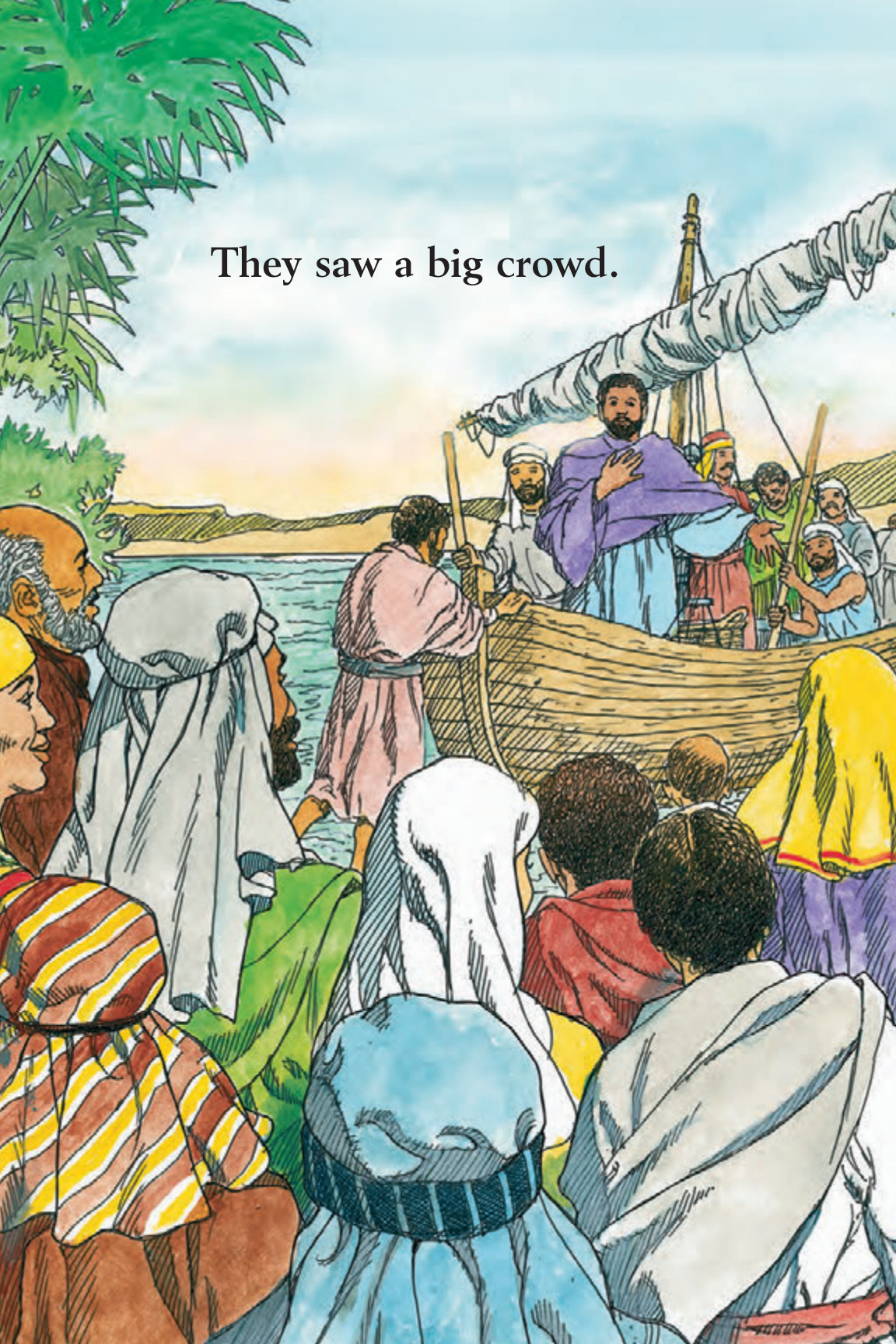


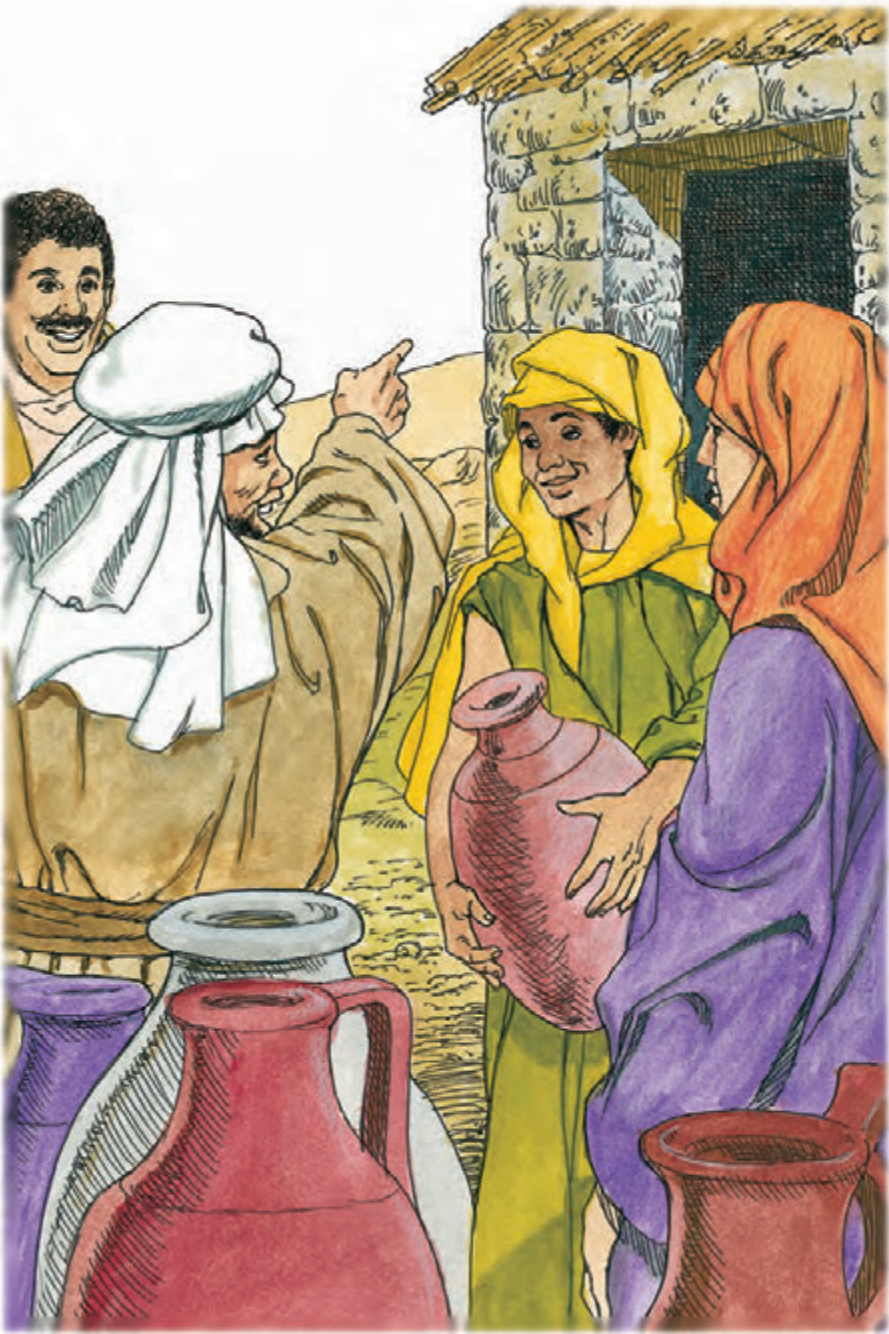
One day, Jesus . . .



was with his helpers.

They saw a big crowd.





The people had found out where Jesus was.

They had walked a long way to see him.





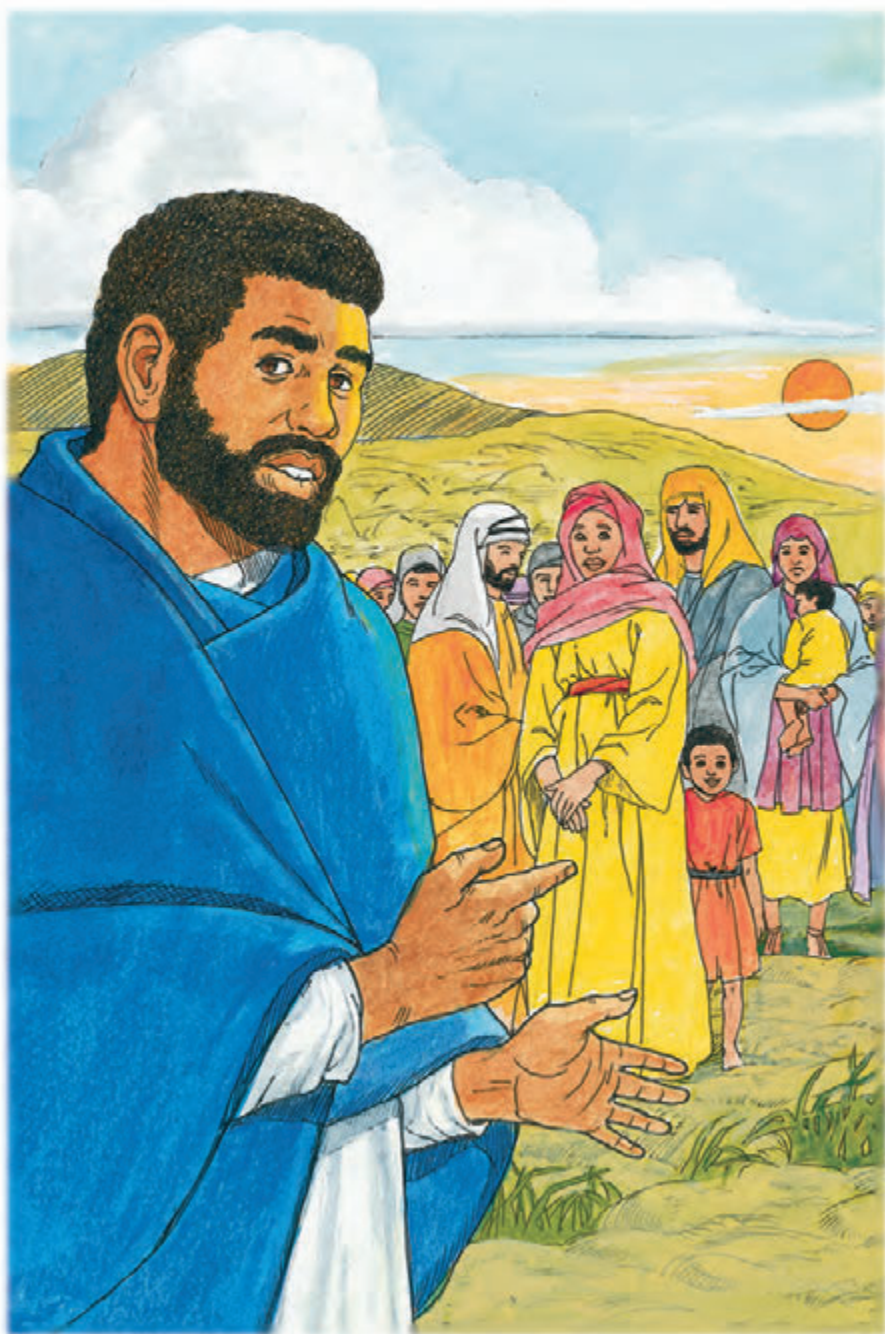
So Jesus spent all day healing them.

Then his helpers came to him.



“It’s getting late,” they said.
“People need to go buy food.”





“No,” Jesus said, “they can stay.”

“You can give them food.”



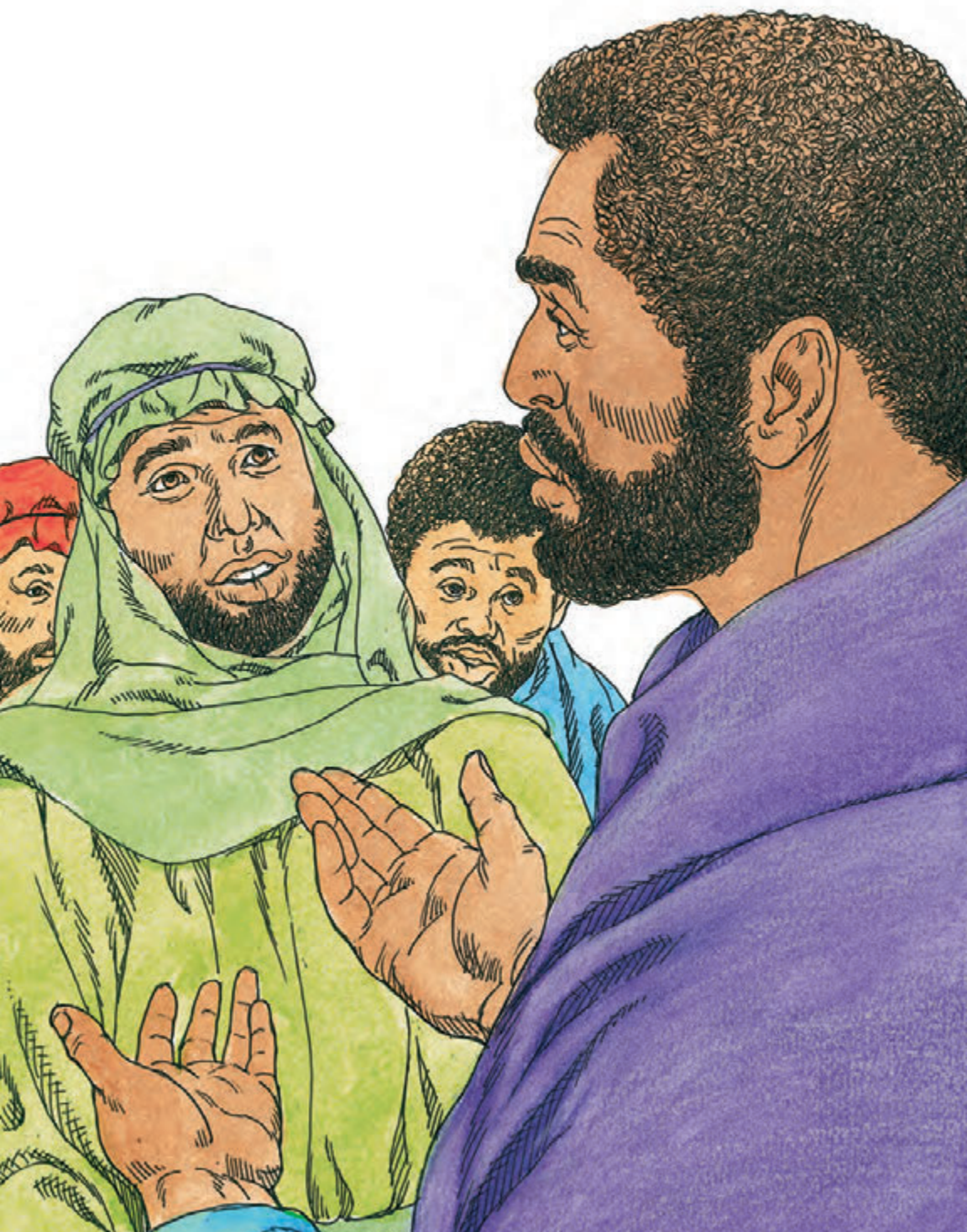
The men stared at him.



“All we have is a little bread and fish!”
they said.



“Bring me the food,” Jesus said.



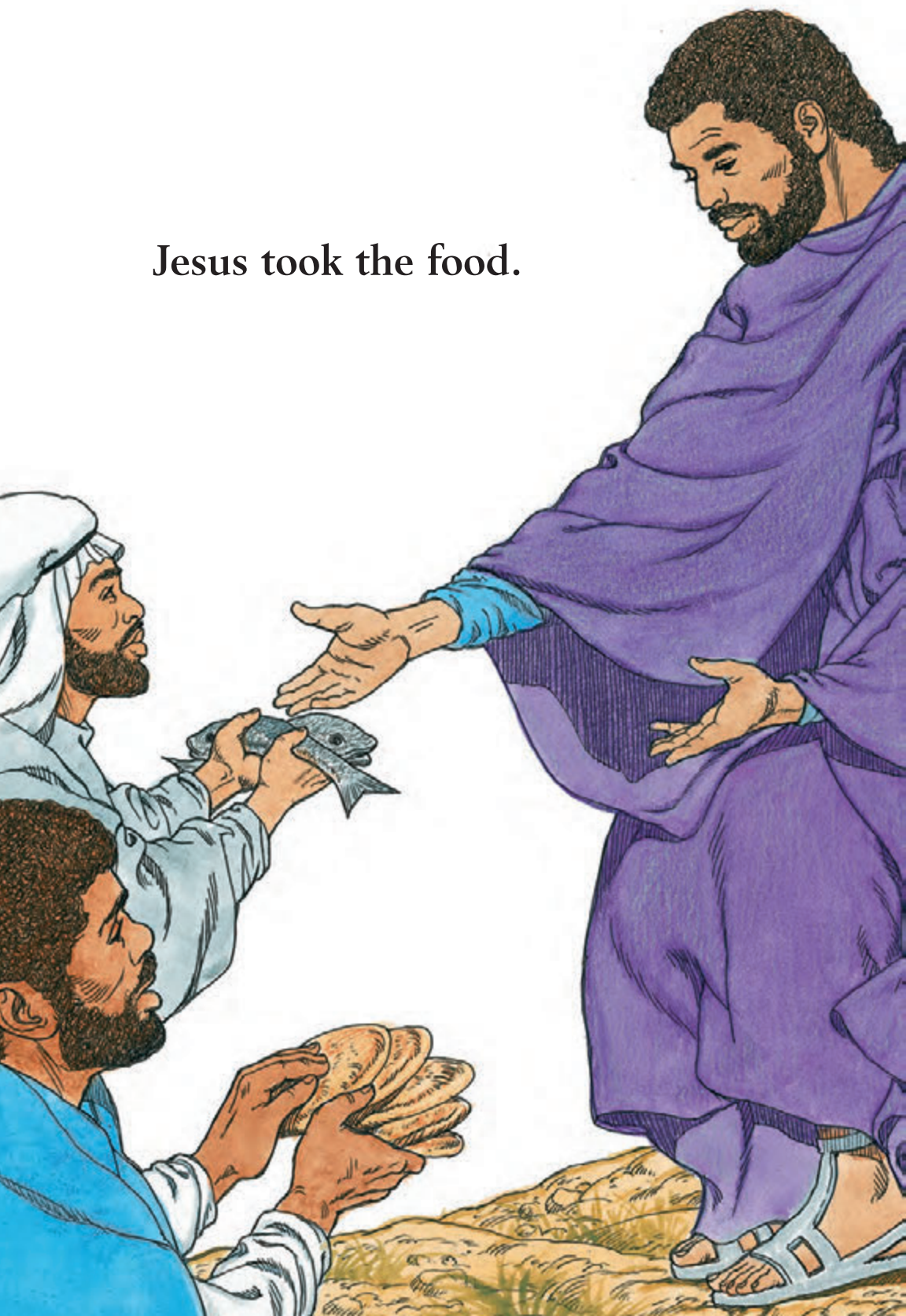
He told the people to sit down.

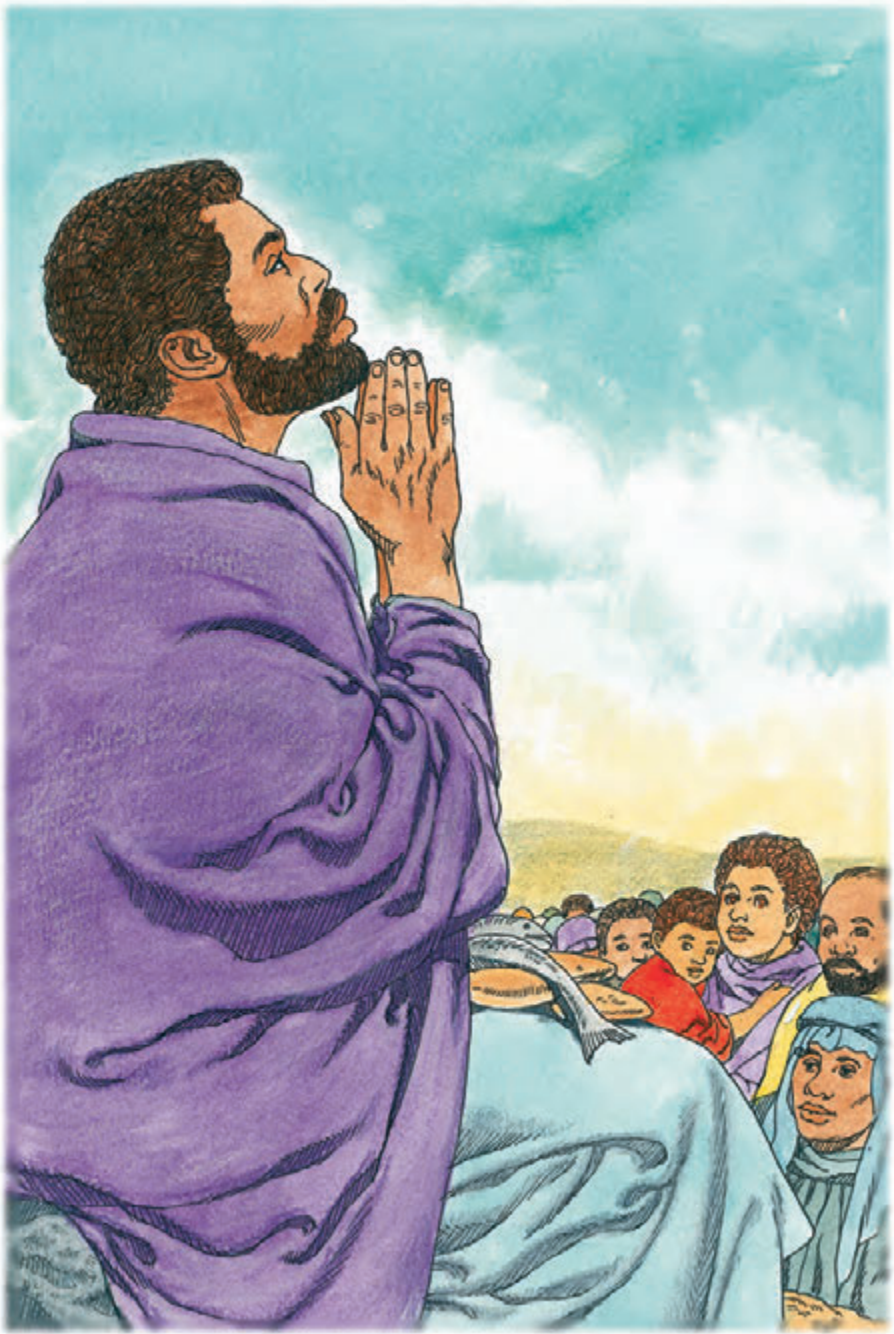




There were many, many people.

Jesus took the food.

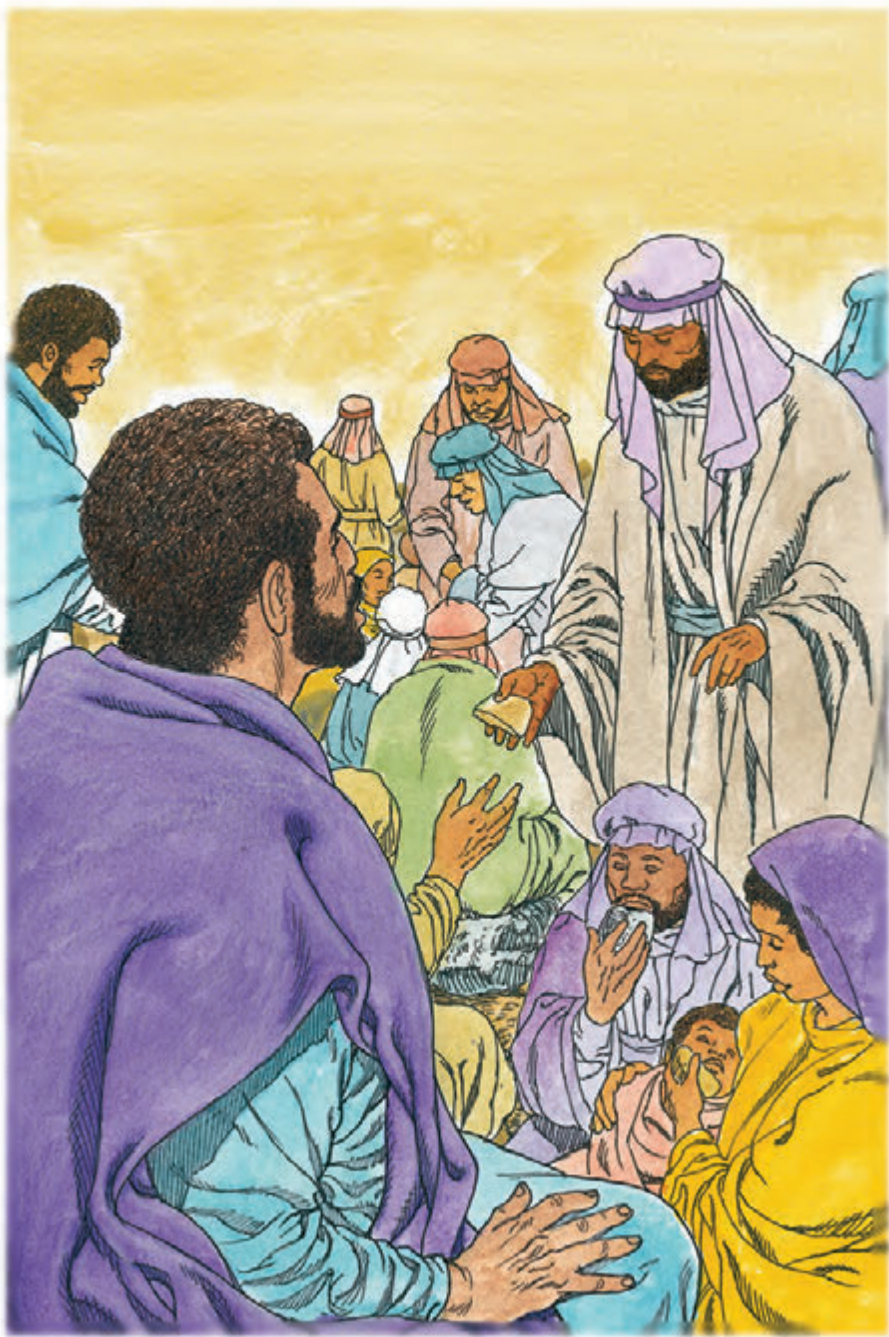




“Bless this food,” he said.

He gave the food back



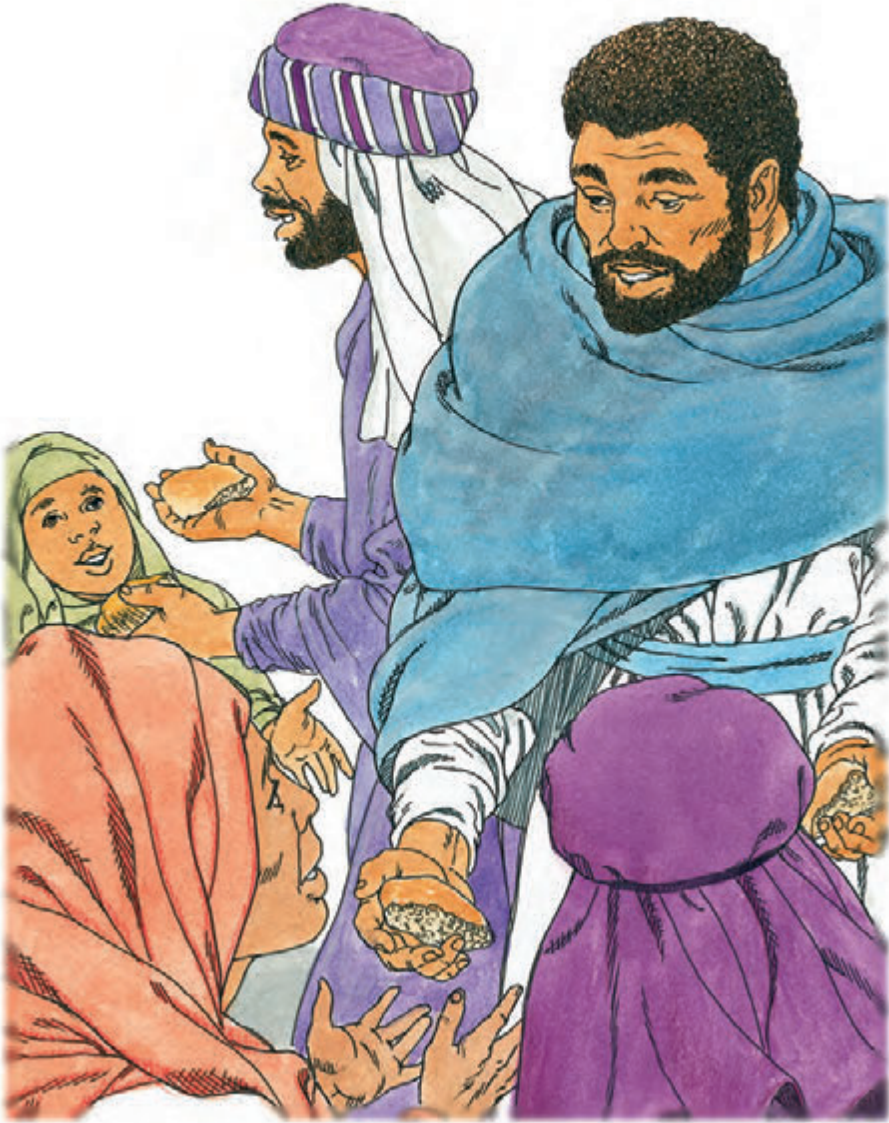


to his helpers,

and they gave the food to the people.
“This won’t work!” they were thinking.







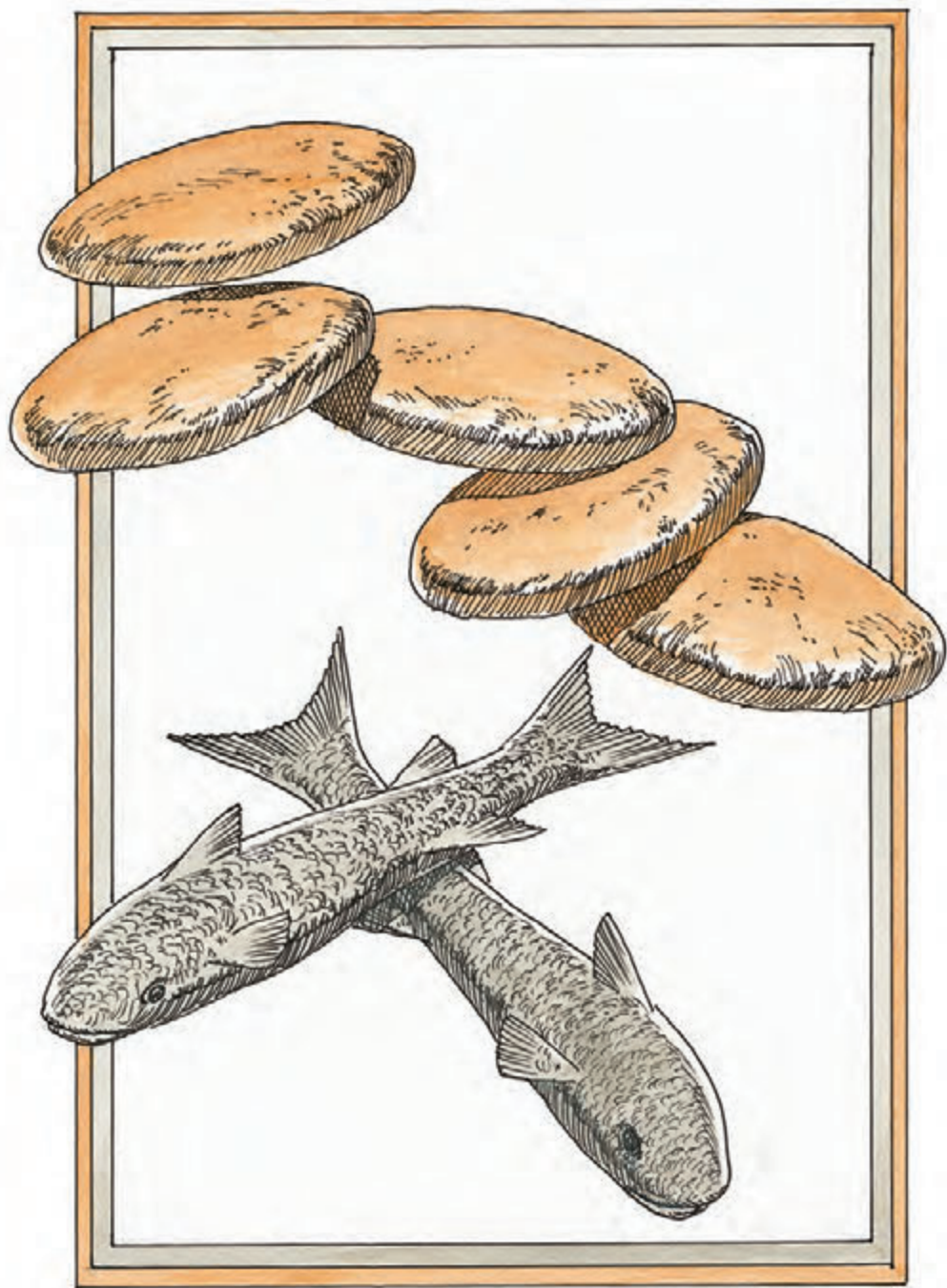
But it *did* work!

The people ate all they wanted.

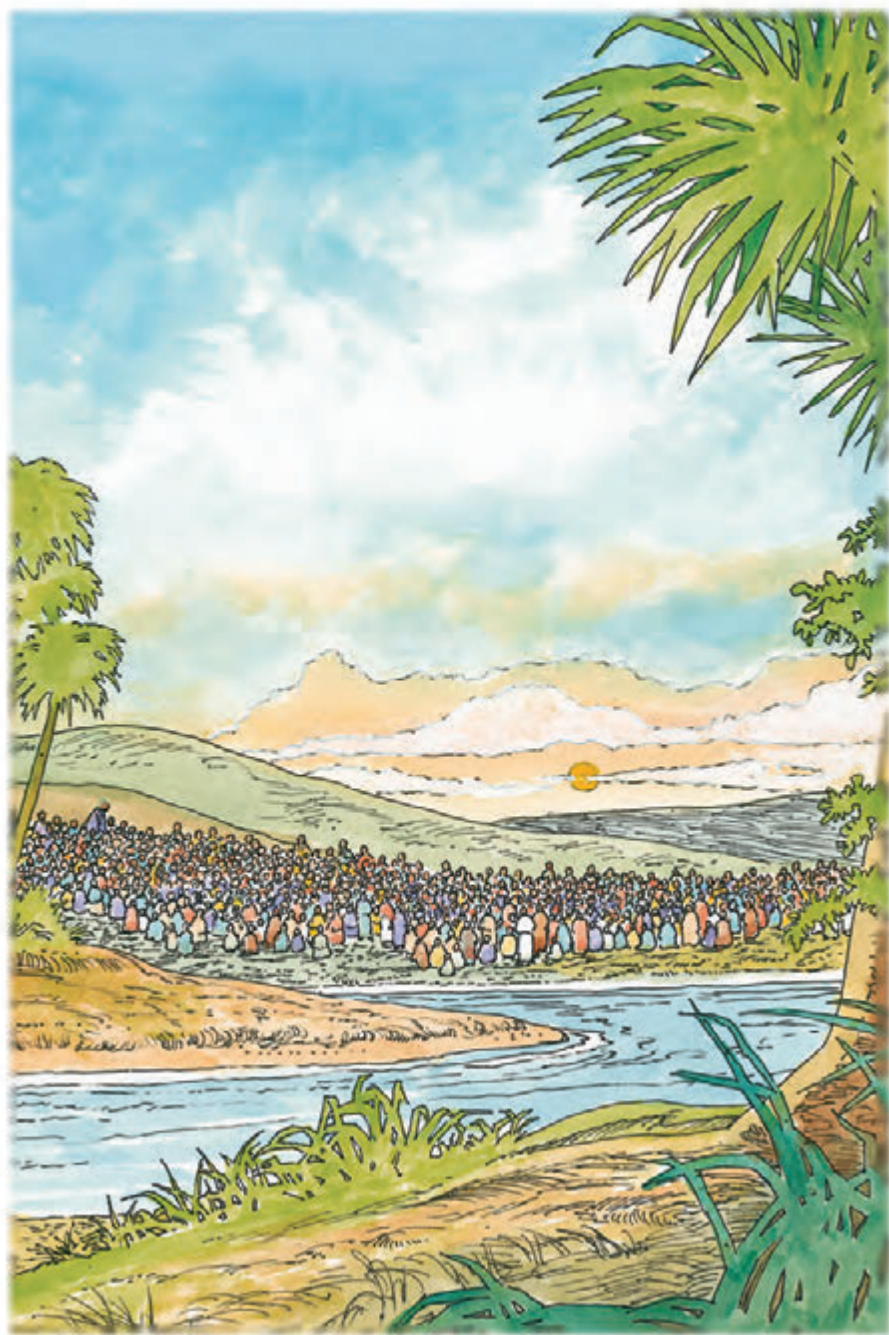


The helpers picked up the leftovers.





With a little bread and fish . . .



they had fed all those people!

And the leftovers . . .



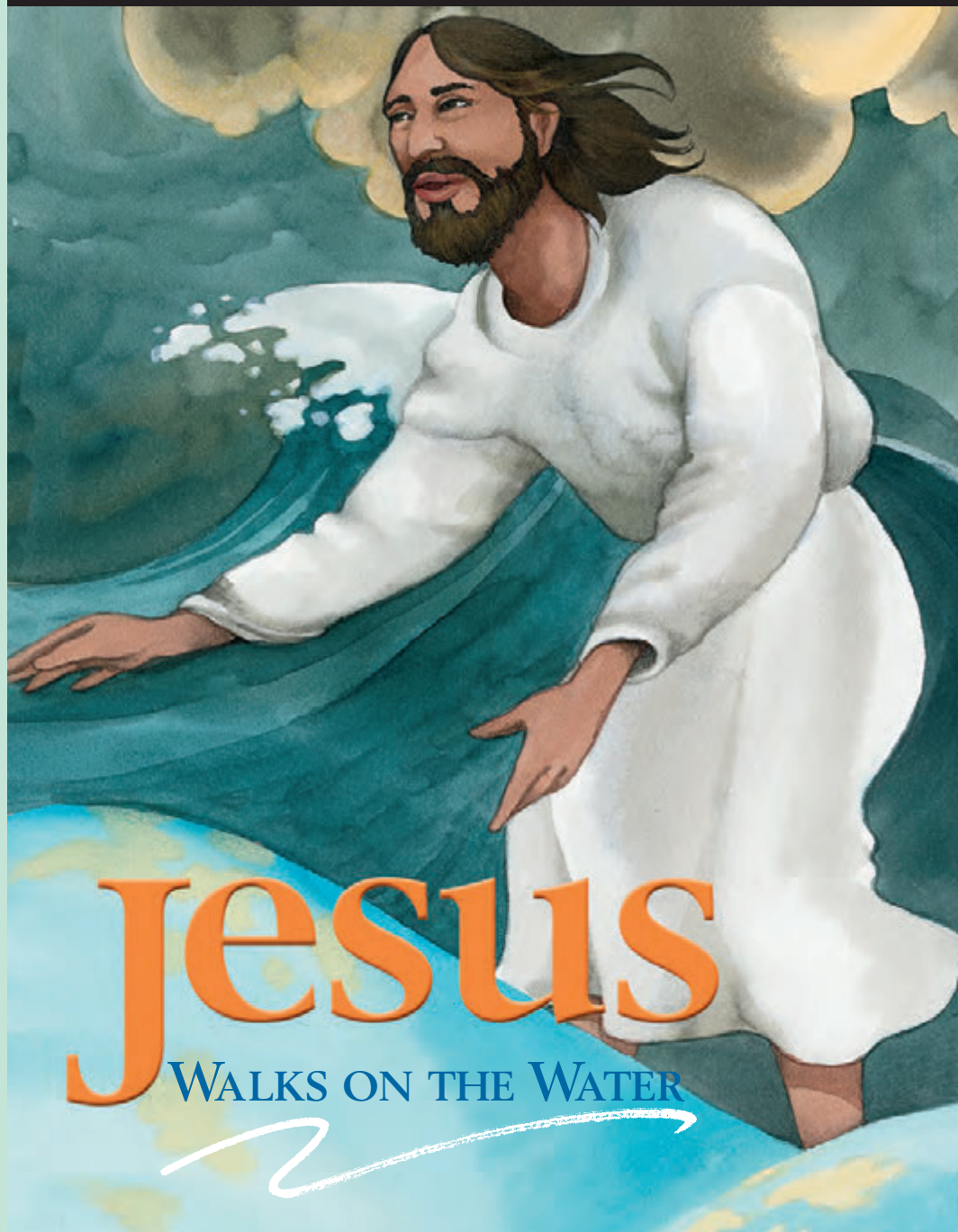


filled twelve big baskets!

STORY 4



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Jesus

WALKS ON THE WATER



Jesus

WALKS ON THE WATER

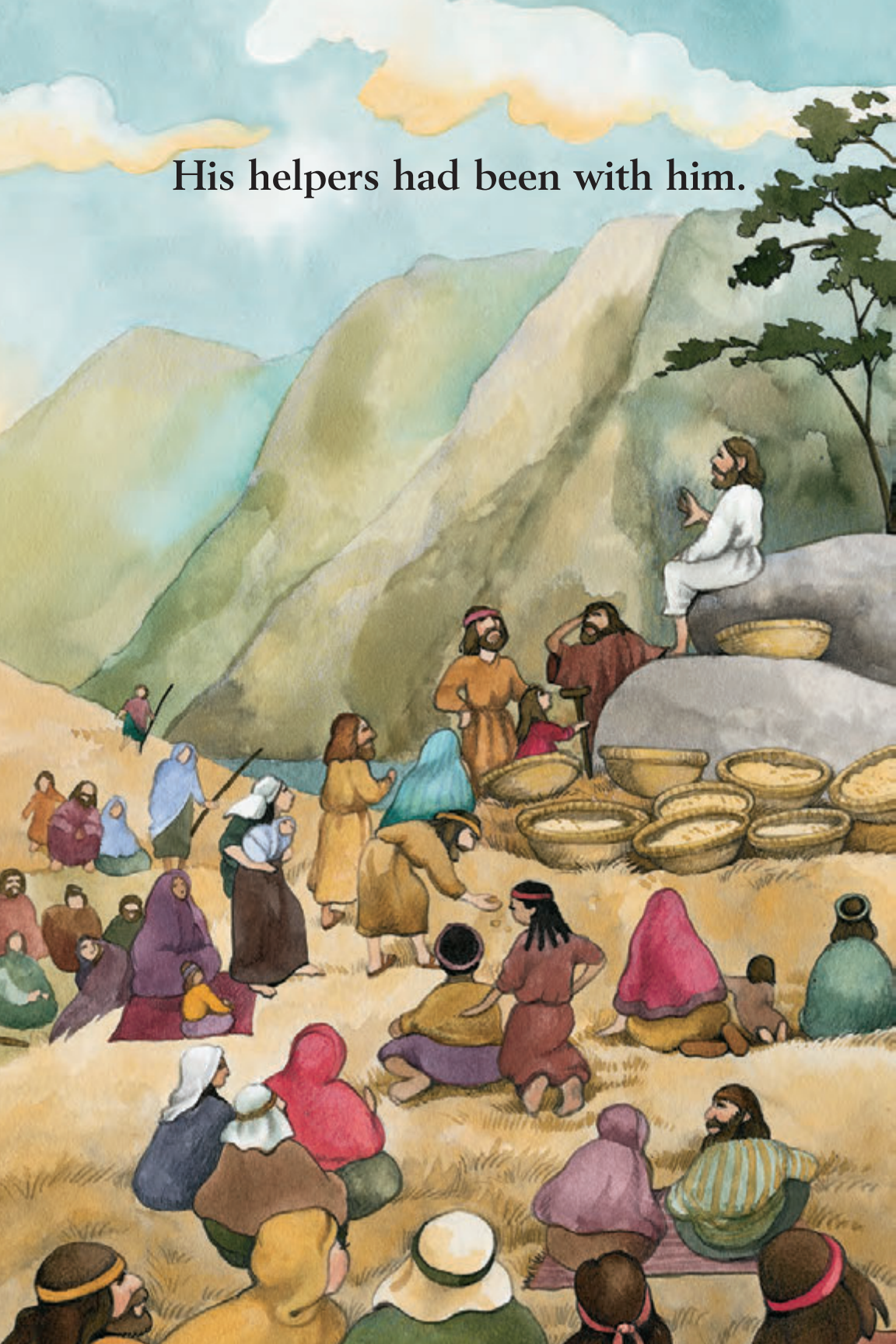


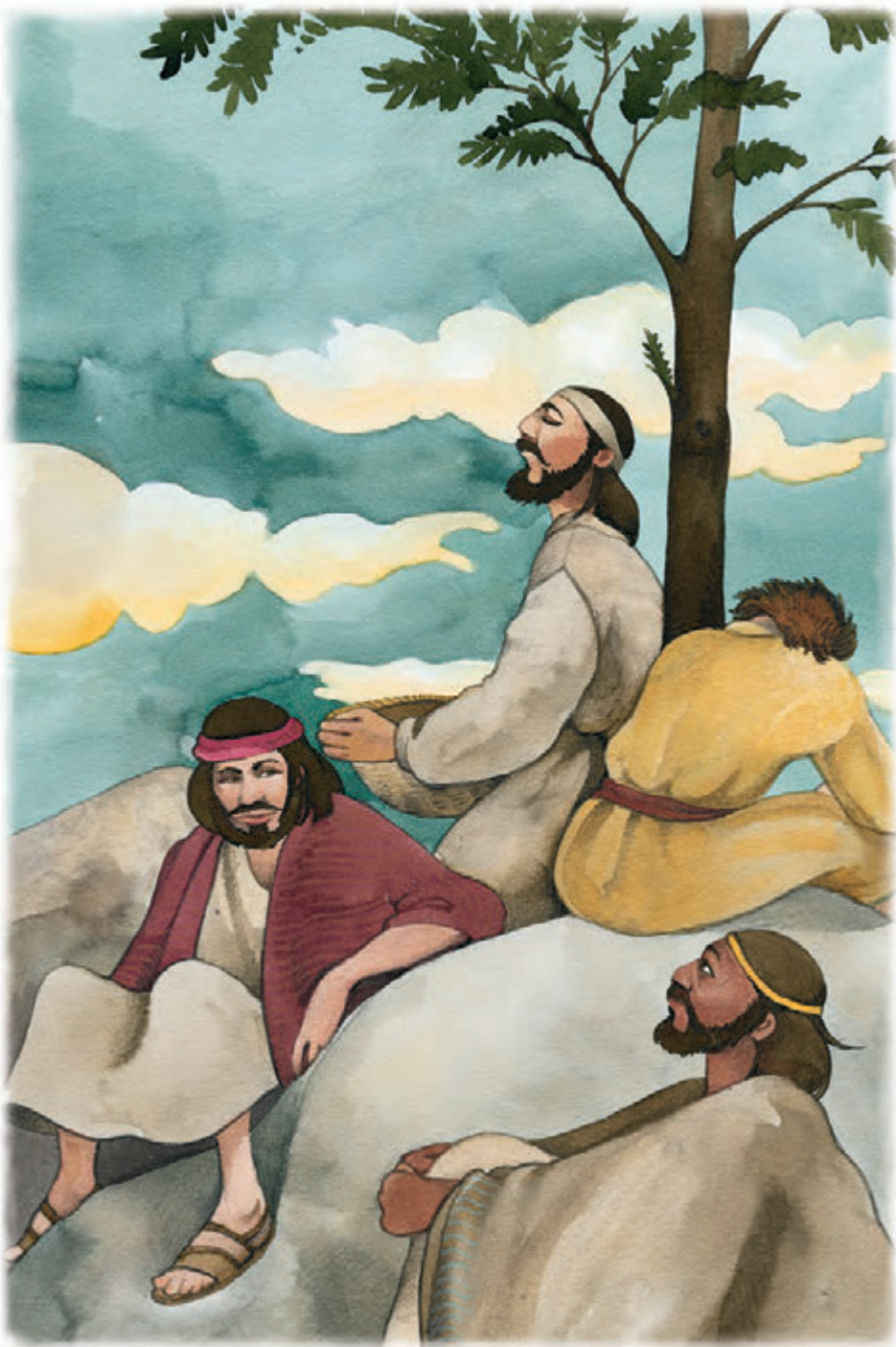
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All day, Jesus had been talking
to big crowds.



His helpers had been with him.





They were all so tired.

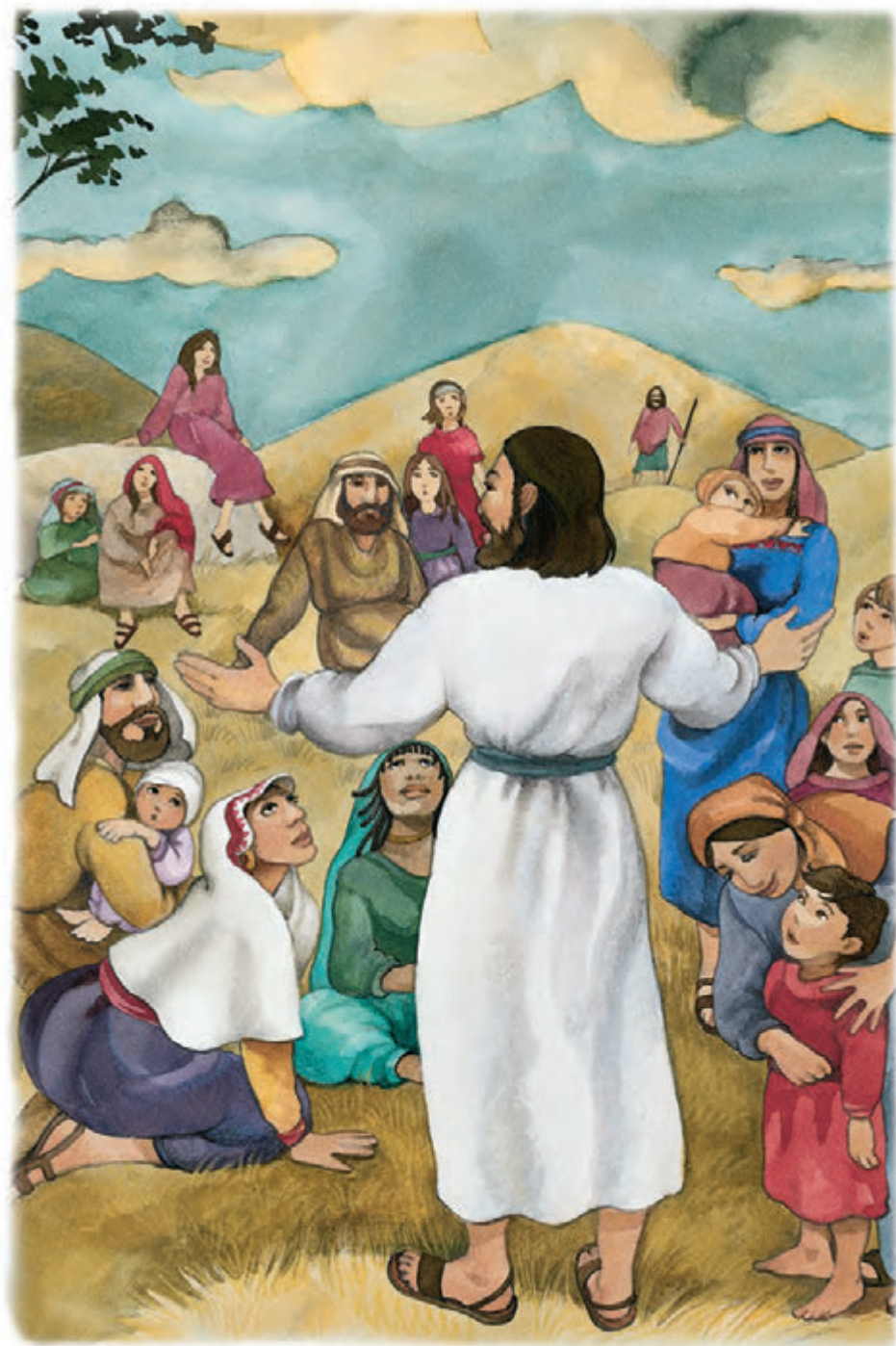


“Go back across the lake,” Jesus said.
“I will stay here.”





The men left in the boat.



Jesus sent the crowds away.



Then he went to pray.



By now the boat was far from land.



It was going into the wind.



That was hard to do.



It was hard to make the boat go.



And then—the men saw Jesus.



He was walking on the water!
It scared them. "It's a ghost!"
they yelled.





“No, it’s I!” Jesus said.
“Don’t be scared!”



Peter said, “If you are Jesus,
tell me to come to you!”



“Come on!” said Jesus.



Peter did try, but he was too scared.



He started sinking!



“Help!” he yelled. “Save me!”





Jesus helped Peter. He helped him
stay on top of the water.



“Peter,” he said, “why did you get scared?”



Jesus and Peter got into the boat.
And the wind stopped!



The men had seen all of this.

“You *are* the Son of God!” they said.







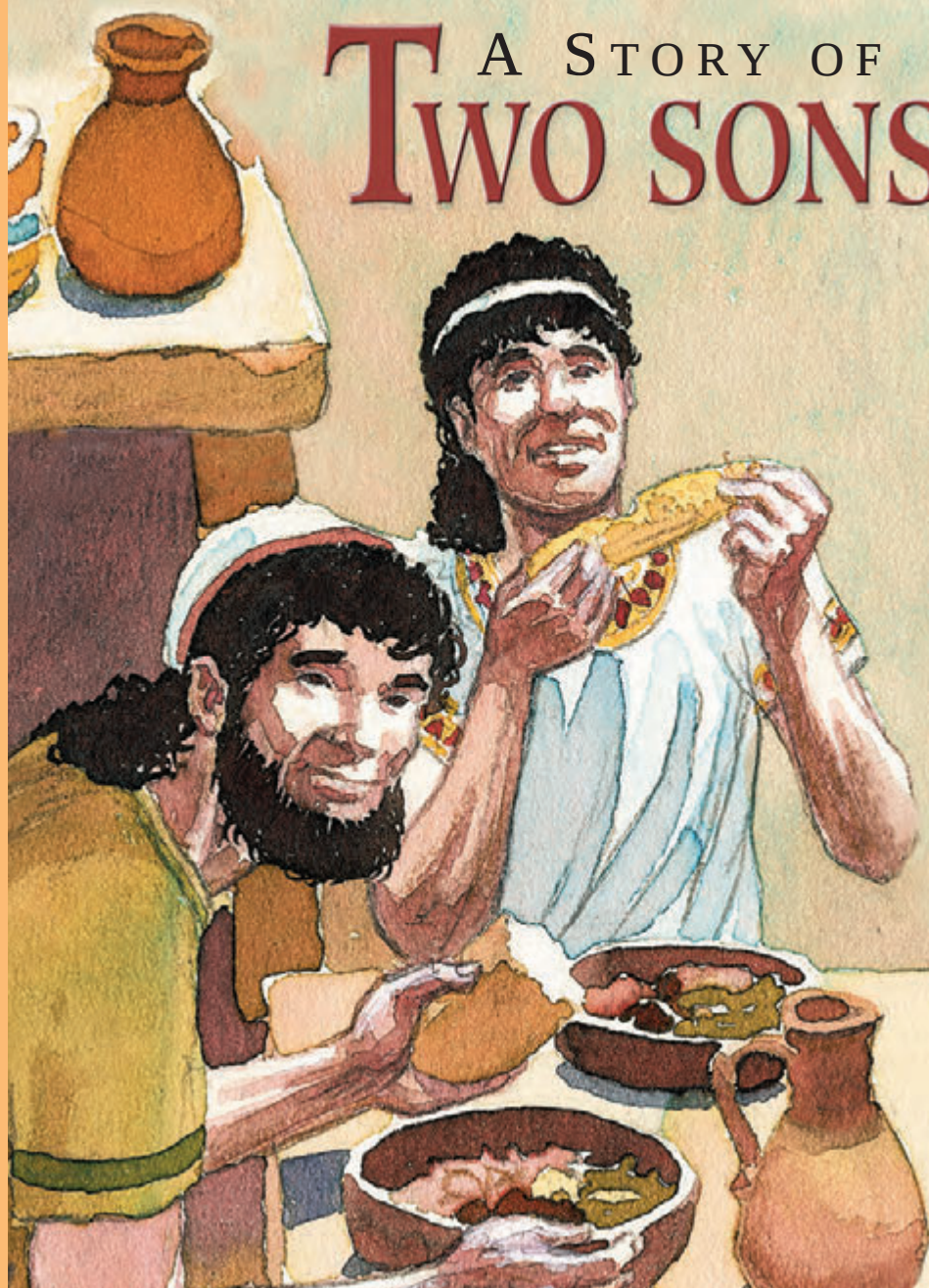
And they all went on together
in the boat.

STORY 5



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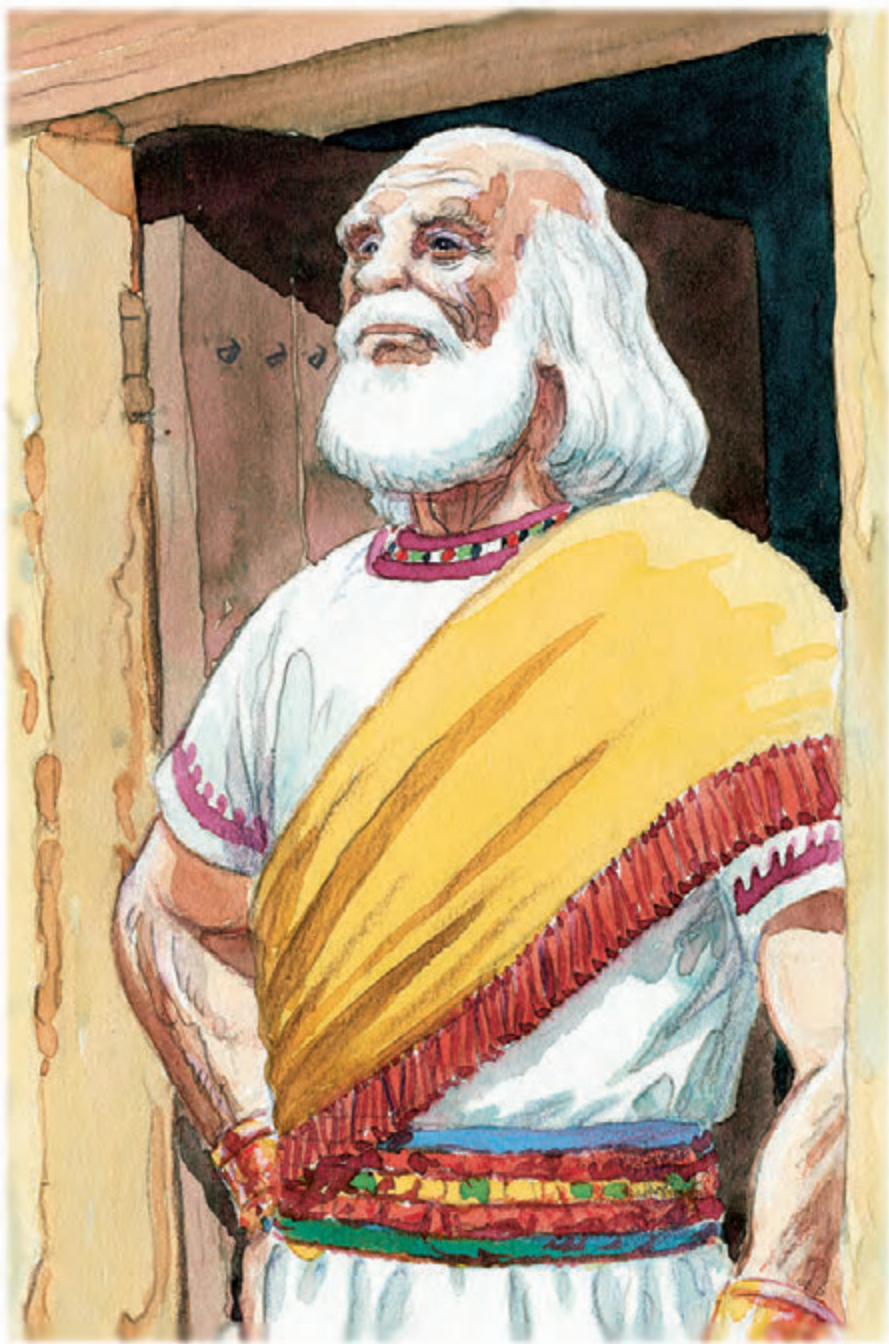
A STORY OF TWO SONS



A STORY OF TWO SONS



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A rich man had two sons.





The younger son said to him,
“I want my share of the money *now!*”



So the father gave it to him.

The younger son took all his belongings and left home.





He did bad things.
Soon his money was gone.





Then a famine came.



He had no food.



He got a job looking after pigs.
The pigs had food, but he didn't!





He remembered the good food
his family ate.



So he went home.



His father saw him coming.

He ran to meet him.
He hugged and kissed him.





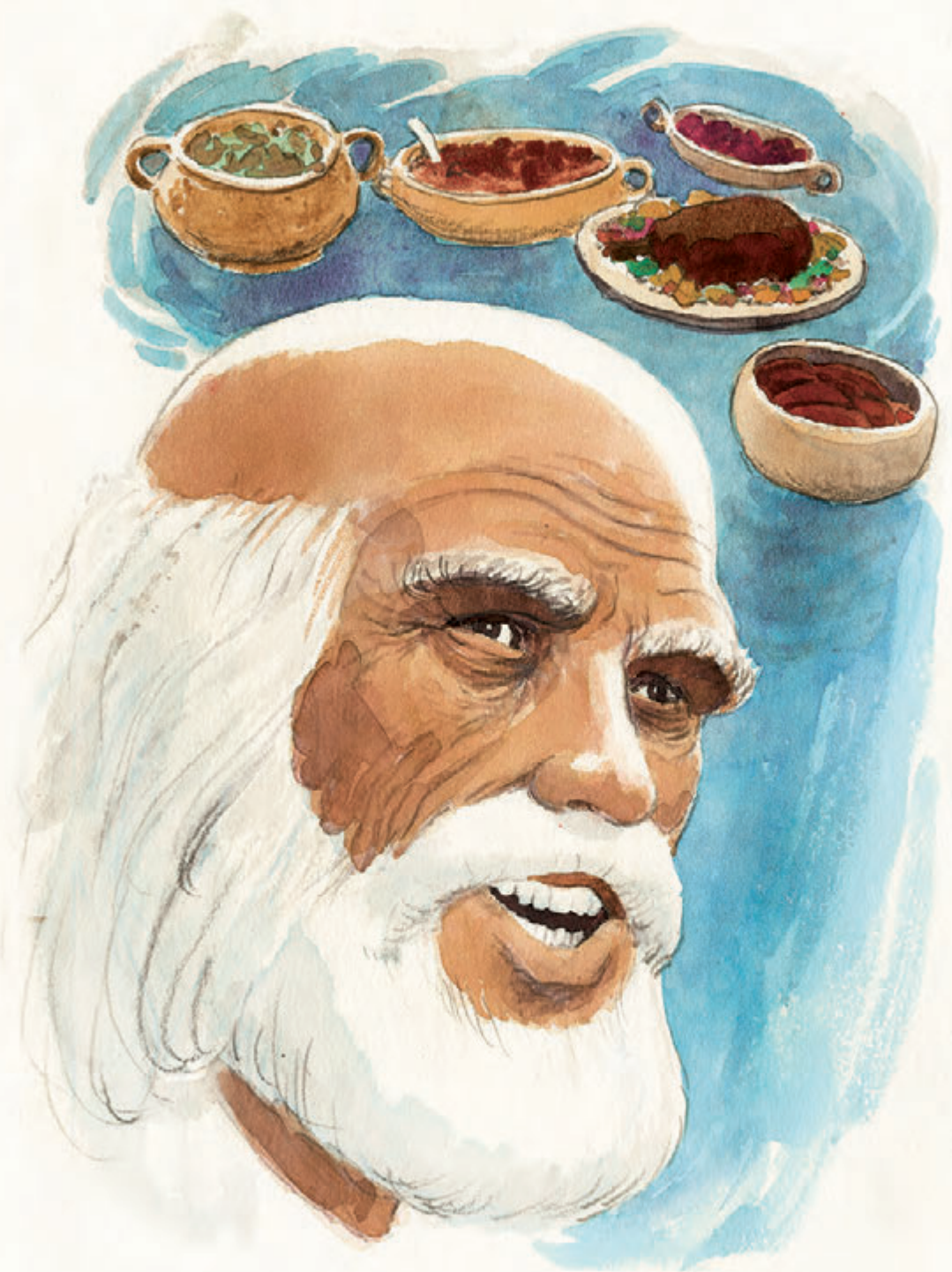
“Father, I have been so bad,” the son said.
“I am not fit to be called your son.”





But the father told his servants,
“Go! Hurry! Get good clothes for him!”

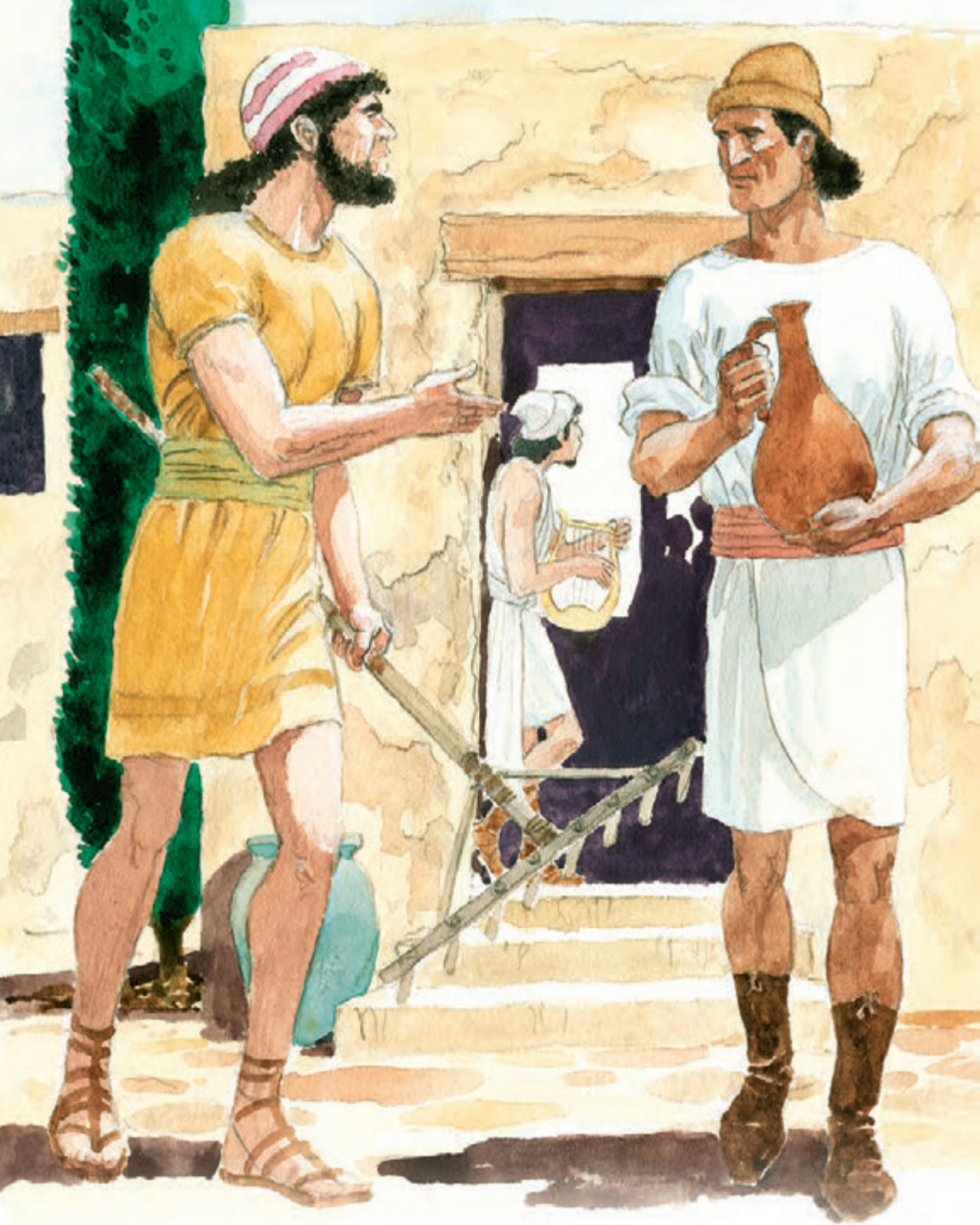




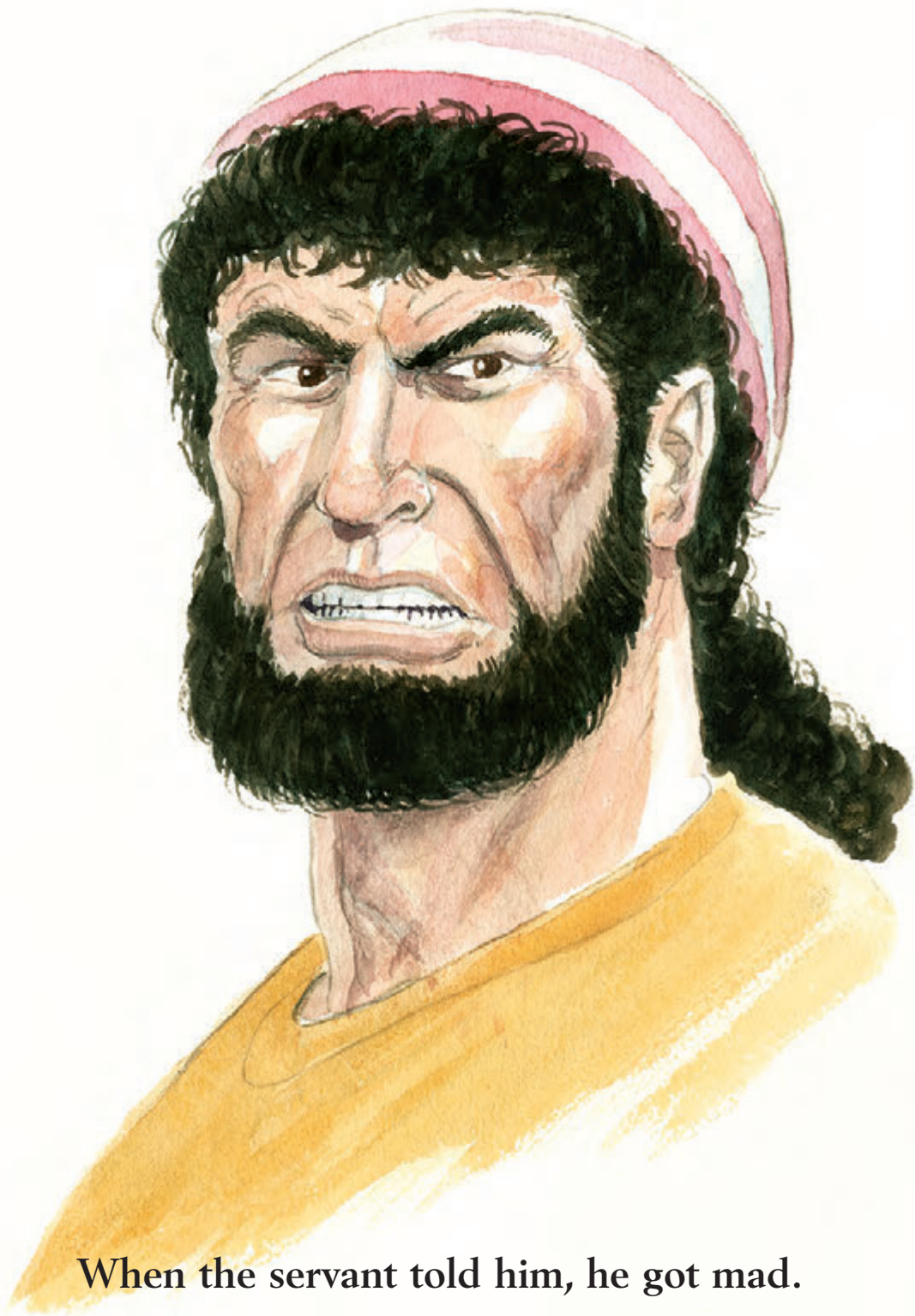
“Start cooking! We will have a feast!”



Soon the celebrating began.



Then the older son came.
“What is going on?” he asked.



When the servant told him, he got mad.



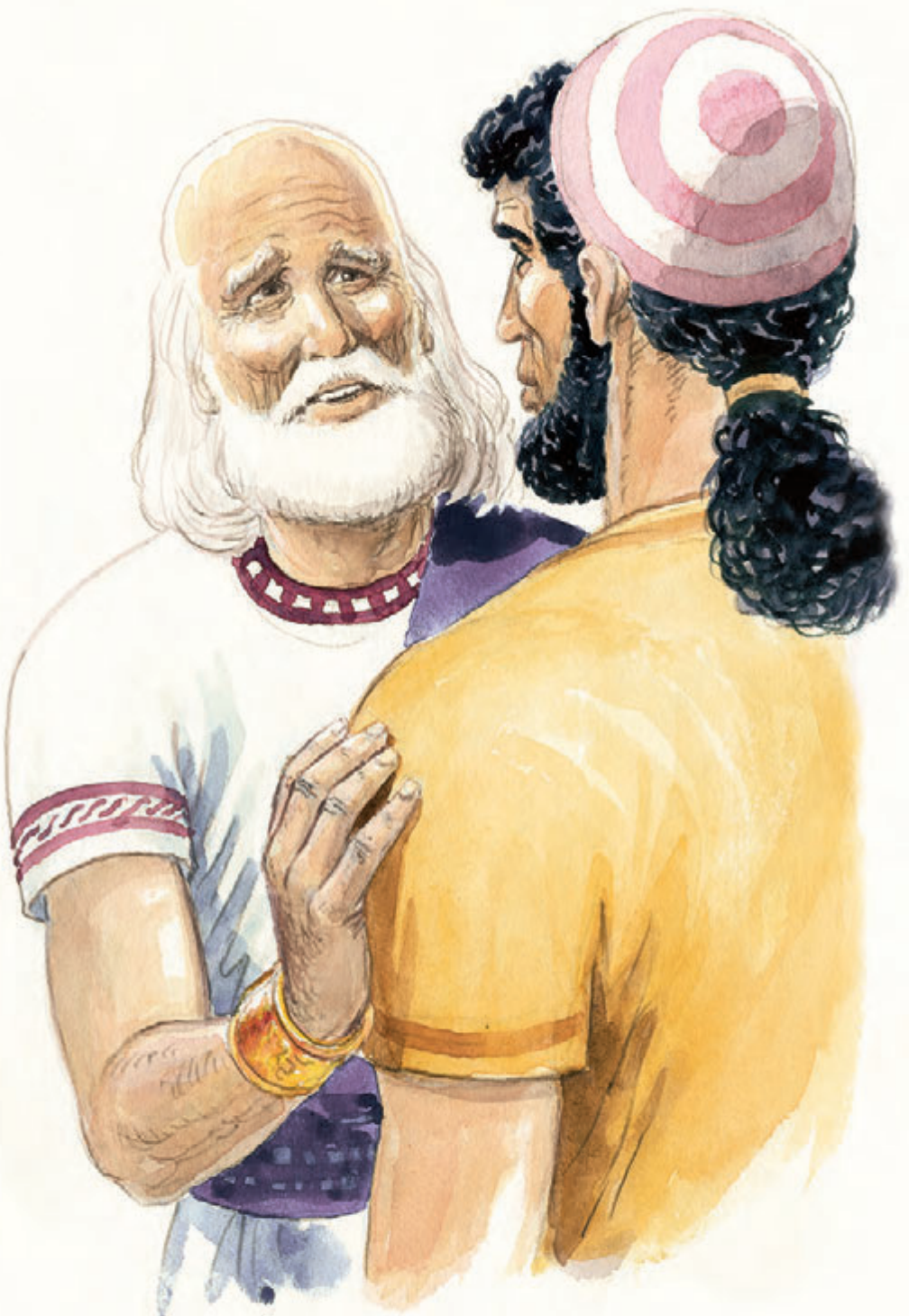
His father came and said,
“Come inside with us!”



But the older son said, "I work hard!
I do what you say!"

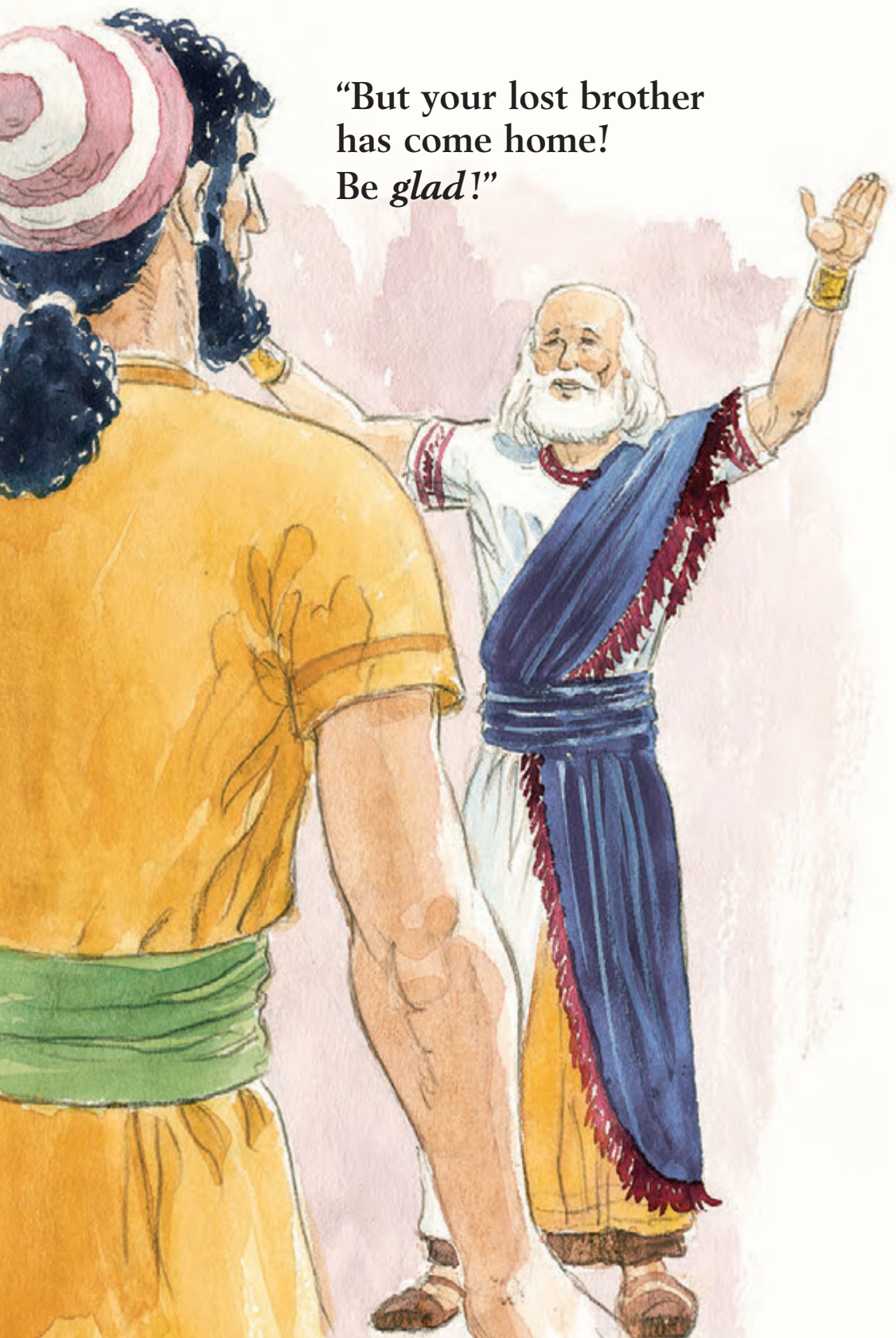


“And you have a feast for my *brother*!
It’s not *fair*!”



“I love you,” the father said. “Everything I have is for you.”

“But your lost brother
has come home!
Be *glad!*”





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