

# the Jesus Storybook Bible

Every story whispers his name



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## The teeny, weenie ... true king

*(Samuel anoints David, from 1 Samuel 16)*

GOD'S PEOPLE had a new land. Now they wanted a king.

"But God is your King," Samuel told them. "He is the one who looks after you best."

"We want a real king!" they said. "One we can see!"

God knew that a king might not be kind to his people or look after them as well as he would. But God's people didn't care; they wanted a king and they wanted him now.

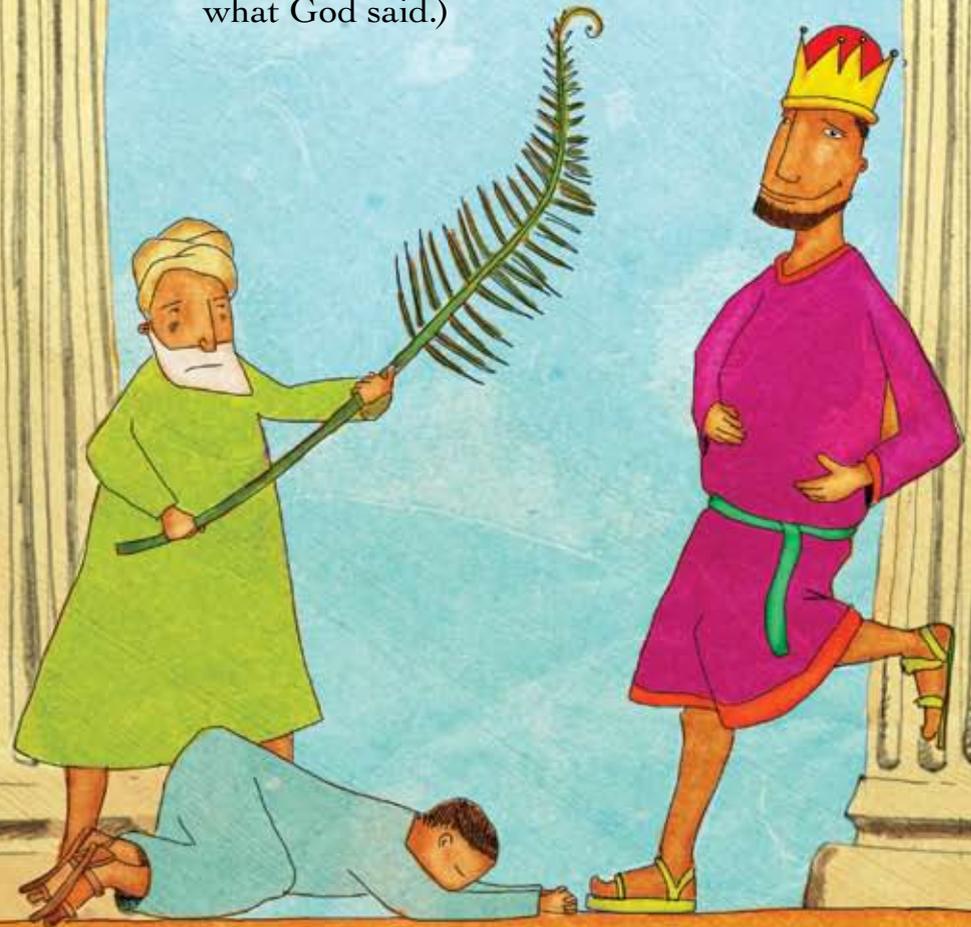
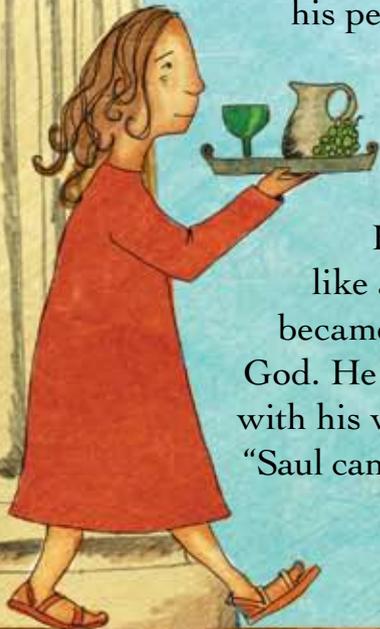
So God gave them a king.

He was called Saul and he seemed like a good king — at first. But he became proud and stopped listening to God. He didn't obey God. Or love God with his whole heart.

"Saul can't help me with my plan," God said.

"I need a king who loves me and will teach my people to love me. I need a true king." God had just the one in mind.

"Go to Bethlehem," God told Samuel. "You'll find the new king there." (Samuel's job was to listen to God and tell people what God said.)



So Samuel went to the little town. God told Samuel to go to Jesse's house. God was going to choose one of Jesse's sons to be the new king.

Jesse had seven strong sons.

Now in those days if you were going to be the king, you didn't have to be the richest or the cleverest (although that was always nice). You had to look like a king, which meant you had to be the tallest and the strongest. (So you could carry the longest swords and biggest armor and defeat everyone.)

And it didn't hurt to be handsome, either.

Samuel asked Jesse to bring him each son in turn. So Jesse brought the oldest, tallest, strongest son. *This must be the new king*, Samuel thought. *He looks like a king.*

But God didn't choose him. "You're thinking about what he looks like on the outside," God told Samuel. "But I am looking at his heart, what he's like on the inside."

So Jesse showed Samuel his next oldest, tallest, strongest son. But God didn't choose him either. In fact, God didn't choose any of the seven sons.

Samuel said, "Is that all?"

Jesse laughed. "Oh, well, there's the youngest one but he's just the weakling of the family, he's only teeny —"

"Bring him," said Samuel.





Jesse's youngest son came running up, and God spoke quietly to Samuel, "This is the one!"

His name was David.

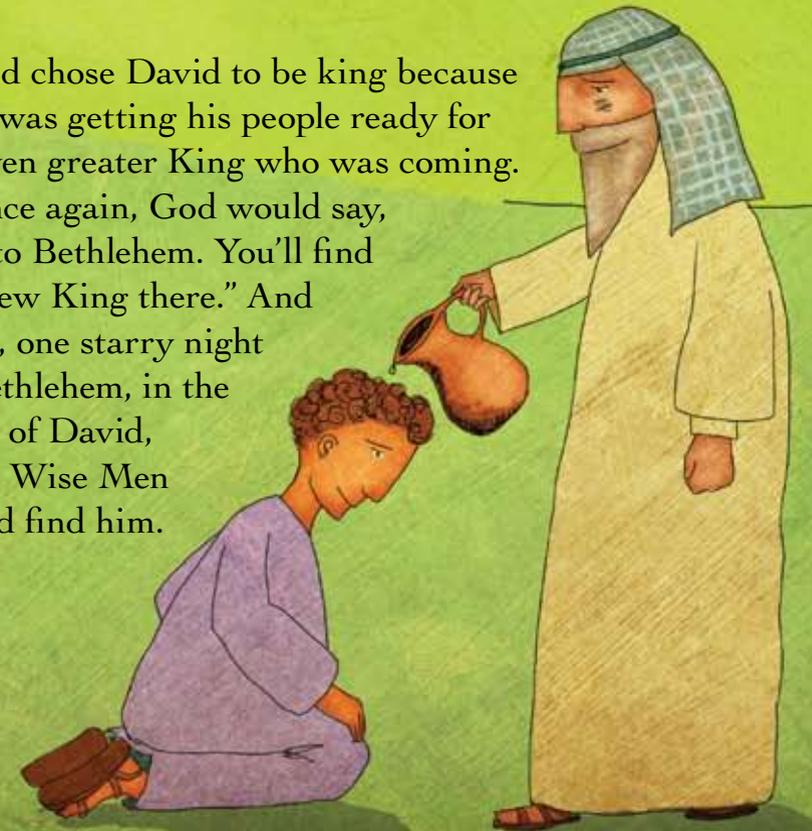
"He has a heart like mine," God said. "It is full of love. He will help me with my secret rescue Plan. And one of his children's children's children will be the King. And that King will rule the world forever."

Samuel anointed David's head with oil — which was a special way to show that you are God's chosen king. "You will be the new king one day," Samuel told him.

And, sure enough, when he grew up, David became the king.

God chose David to be king because God was getting his people ready for an even greater King who was coming.

Once again, God would say, "Go to Bethlehem. You'll find the new King there." And there, one starry night in Bethlehem, in the town of David, three Wise Men would find him.



# Heaven breaks through

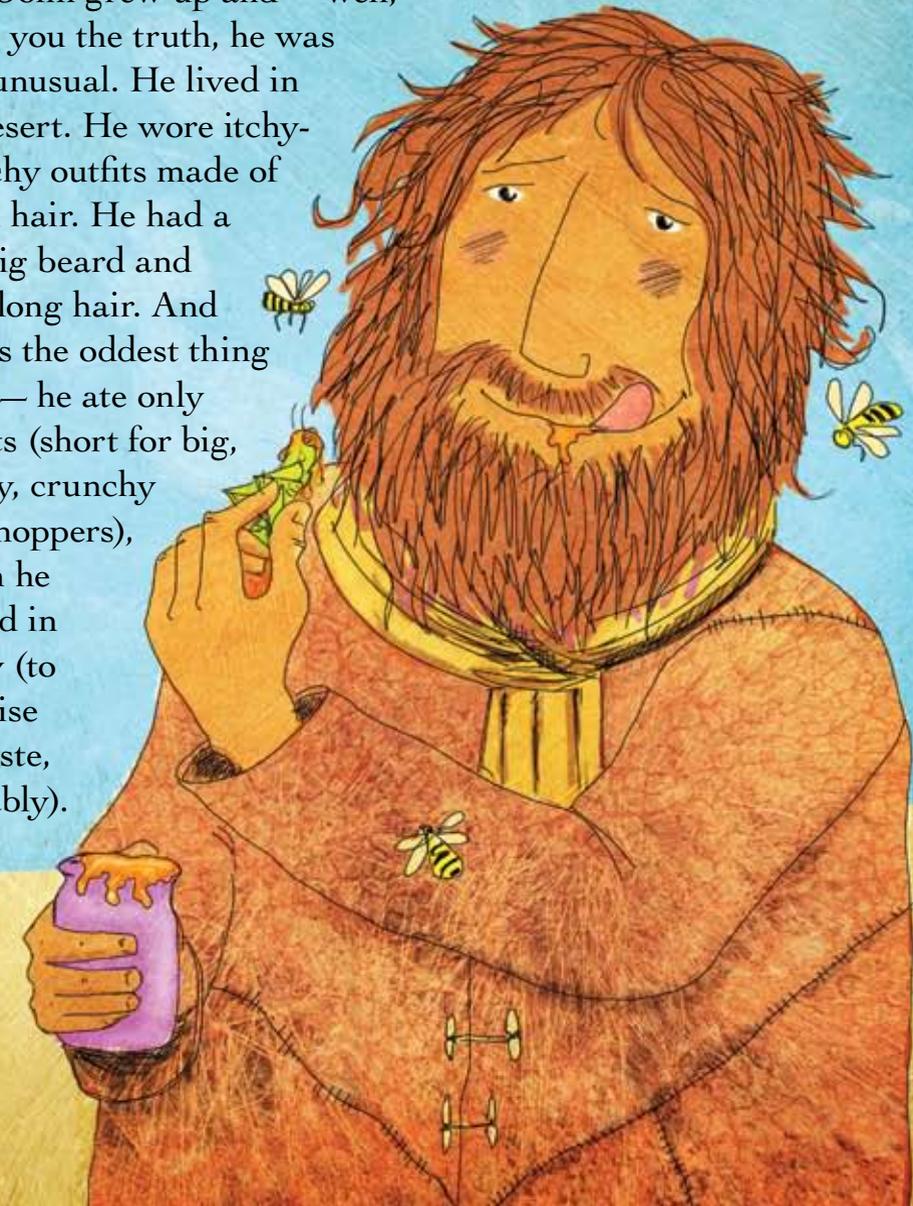
*(The story of John the Baptist, from Luke 1, 3; John 1)*

ABOUT THE same time Jesus was born, another baby was born. His name was John and God had a special job for him. John was going to get everyone ready for Jesus.

The day John was born, his dad knew God's promise to Abraham was coming true — God was sending the Rescuer. And he was so happy he sang a song:

Because God loves us with a Never Stopping,  
Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love,  
Heaven is breaking through!  
He is sending us a Light from heaven  
To shine on us like the sun  
To shine on those who live in Darkness  
And in the shadow of Death  
To guide our feet into the way of Peace.

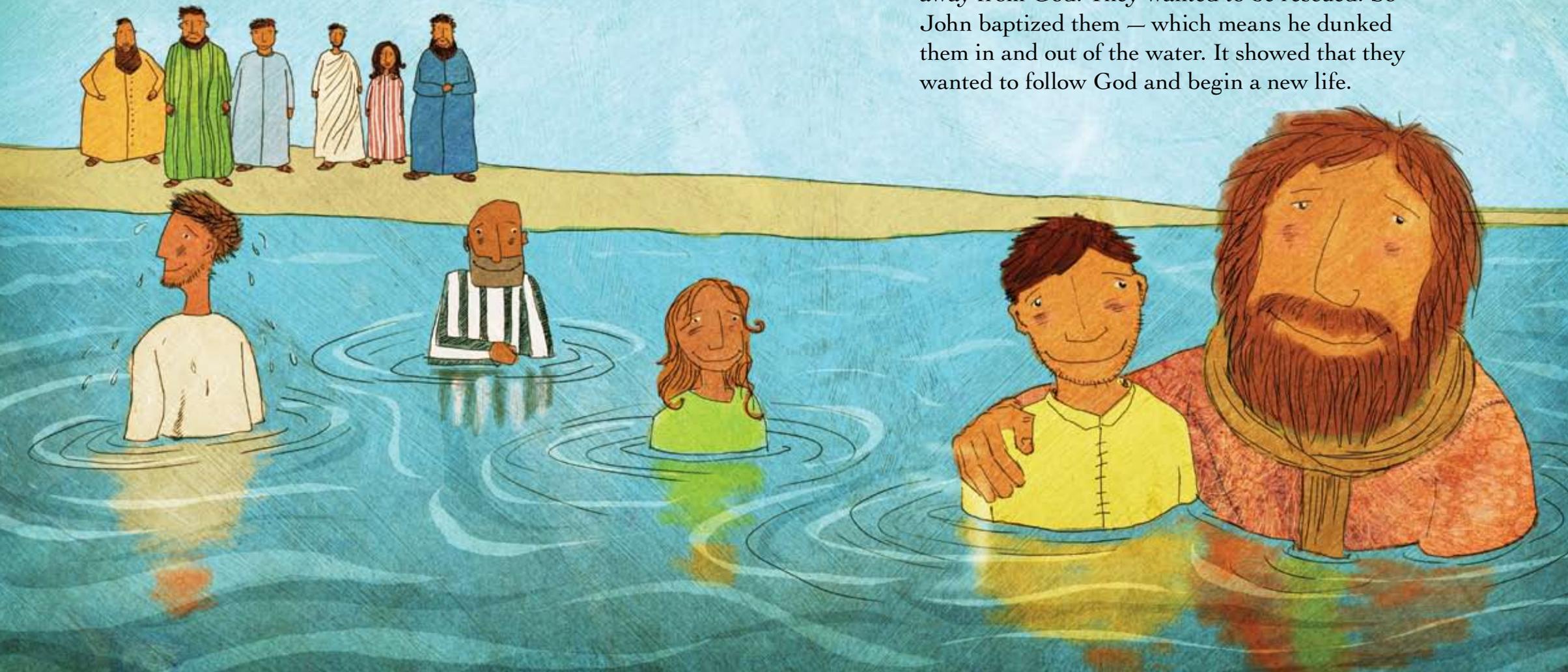
So John grew up and — well, to tell you the truth, he was a bit unusual. He lived in the desert. He wore itchy-scratchy outfits made of camel hair. He had a big, big beard and long, long hair. And here is the oddest thing of all — he ate only locusts (short for big, creepy, crunchy grasshoppers), which he dipped in honey (to disguise the taste, probably).



But God sent John to tell his people something important: “Stop running away from God and run to him instead,” John said. “You need to be rescued. I have good news — the Rescuer is coming!”

“Make your hearts ready for him. Yes! Get ready because your King is coming back for you.”

Great crowds listened to John. They were sorry they had sinned and they wanted to stop running away from God. They wanted to be rescued. So John baptized them — which means he dunked them in and out of the water. It showed that they wanted to follow God and begin a new life.



One day John was baptizing people in the Jordan River as usual, when he looked up and saw a man walking down to the water's edge.

God spoke quietly to John, "This is the One!"

John's heart leaped. This was the moment he'd been waiting for all his life.

"Look," John said, as Jesus came down into the

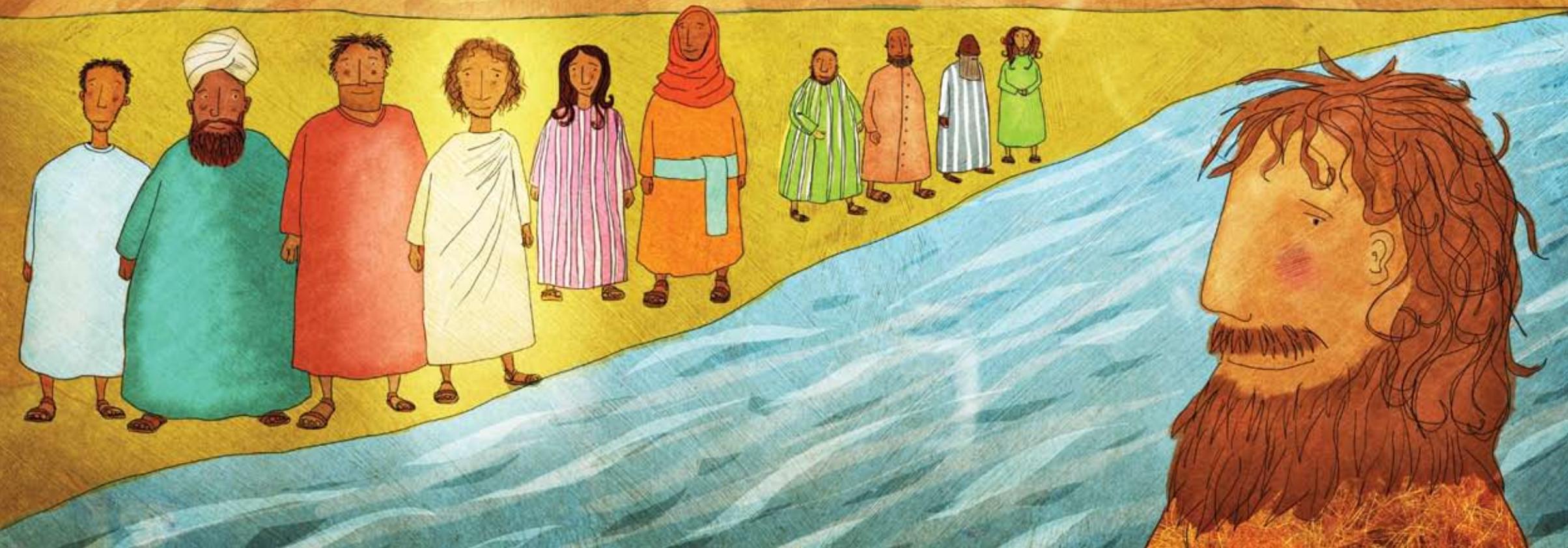
water. But his voice came out as a whisper. He couldn't make it any louder. It was all he could do to even speak. "The Lamb of God ... God's best Lamb ... who takes away the sins of the whole world."

"Will you baptize me, too?" Jesus asked.

"Who am I," John asked, "to baptize you?"

"It's what God wants me to do," Jesus said.

So John baptized Jesus.



Suddenly it was as if someone had drawn back curtains in a dark room, as if heaven itself had opened, because a beautiful light broke through the clouds and shone down on to Jesus, bathing him in gold. Beads of water glittered and sparkled like tiny diamonds in his hair.

A white dove flew down and gently rested on Jesus. And a voice came down from heaven. It was clear and strong and loud so everyone could hear. "This is my own Son. And I love him. I am very pleased with him," God said. "Listen to him."

Heaven had broken through.

The great rescue was just about to begin.

