



# God's **BIG** **PICTURE** Bible Storybook



**140** Connecting Bible Stories  
of God's Faithful Promises

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY **Helena Perez Garcia**



## What are Humans?

*This poem is from the book of Psalms. The poet gives praise and thanks to God for creating the world and helping humans to look after it.*

God, the Lord, is great and mighty.  
All creation sings his song.  
Even little children praise him,  
Shaming everything that's wrong.

When we gaze on stars and planets,  
Sometimes we are bound to ask,  
Why does God think us so special?  
What are humans? What's our task?

Yes, we're small, much less than angels,  
But we're made to share God's reign,  
Caring for his whole creation,  
Looking after his domain.

Sheep and oxen, all the creatures,  
Birds and fishes, great and small,  
We are here to help them flourish,  
Caring wisely for them all.

God, the Lord, is great and mighty,  
All creation sings his song.  
All the earth proclaims his glory,  
We will praise him all day long!

Where's this  
in the Bible?

Psalm 8

*What else in God's big story  
links up with this?*



**Jesus, the New  
Beginning**  
p. 284



## The World Goes Wrong

In God's garden there lived all kinds of animals. One day, a crafty snake slithered up to the woman and asked her a question: "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowing Good and Evil? Why would God say that? Could it be because God knows that if you eat it you will become wise, like him?"

The woman looked at the tree and thought she would like to be wise. So she reached up and picked some of the fruit. How delicious it tasted! Then she gave some to the man, and suddenly they both knew that something was wrong. They looked at each other and felt ashamed. Quickly, they covered themselves with leaves and hid behind some bushes.

That evening, as usual, God visited the garden. "Why are you hiding?" asked God.

"Because we're naked," replied the man.

"How did you know?" asked God. "Did you eat from that tree?"

The man pointed to the woman. "It was her fault," he said.

The woman shook her head. "No!" she protested. "It was the snake's fault."

God had wanted the man and woman to trust him. He was sad that they had listened to the crafty snake. He was sad, too, when they tried to blame one another. So with a heavy heart, God told them that they would have to leave the garden. From now on they would be exiles: people who could no longer live in the place where they really belonged. An angel with a flaming sword would guard the garden gate. Life would become hard, and the world would be dangerous.

God also had something to say to the snake. It would be the lowest of all the animals, and one day a special child would be born, who would fight the snake. The child would win the fight and put right everything that had gone wrong.

*What else in God's big story links up with this?*



**Exile!**  
p. 120



**Jesus Goes into the Desert**  
p. 152

Where's this in the Bible?

Genesis 3



## Jubilee!

God wanted his people to remember how he had rescued them from Egypt. He also wanted them to look forward to the day when they would enter the Promised Land, the land God had promised to Abraham and his children. And now they were nearly there! To help the people remember, God gave them special days, called holy days. On these holy days the people would stop working, and instead, they would spend time together and thank God for everything he had done for them.

Once a week, on the seventh day, the people were to stop work and rest completely. This day was called the "Sabbath", which means "to rest." It would remind them that one day they would rest in the land that God had promised.

Once a year, they were to celebrate the festival of Passover. They would eat flatbread, like the people had done on the day God rescued them from Egypt.

They would also celebrate the beginning of the harvest, and seven weeks later they would celebrate the full harvest. This was called the festival of Pentecost, when they would remember the time God gave Moses his special agreement on Mount Sinai.

When they arrived in the Promised Land, they would farm the land for six years. Then, every seventh year, they would stop ploughing and planting and allow the land to rest. After every forty-nine years (7 x 7), they would have an extra-special celebration. This was called the Jubilee. The priests would blow the Jubilee horns. Everybody who owed anything to anyone would have their debts cancelled. Every family, even slaves, would be able to return to their own houses.

The whole land belonged to Yahweh. He wanted everyone to share it fairly.

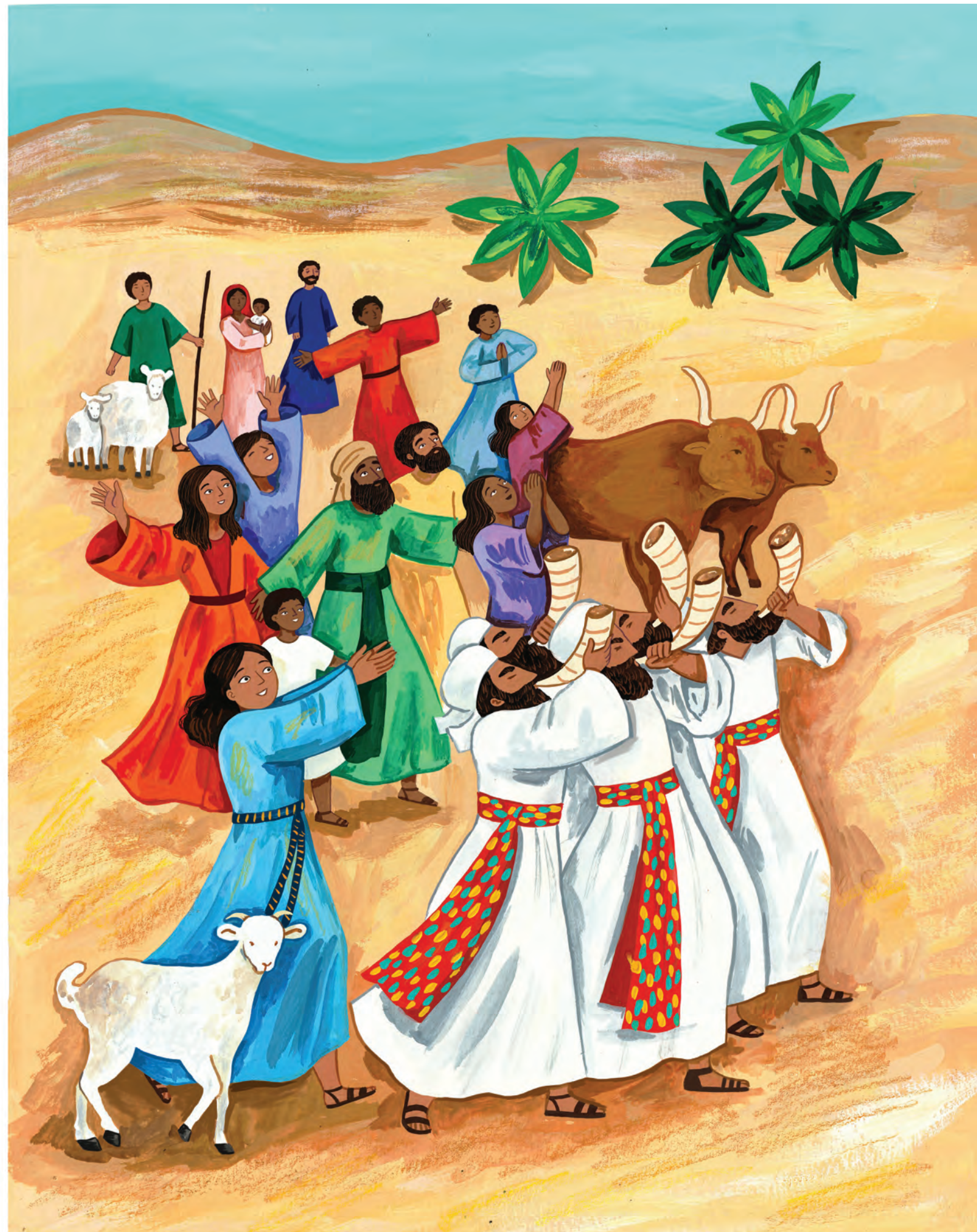
*What else in God's big story links up with this?*



**What is the Sabbath For?**  
p. 162

Where's this in the Bible?

Leviticus 25



## Esther Rescues Her People

The king of Persia wanted a new queen. All the beautiful young women in his kingdom were brought to him. The one he chose was Esther. She was a Judean. Her family had been brought there from Jerusalem, but her parents were now dead, and she lived with her uncle, Mordecai.

One day Mordecai discovered some men plotting to kill the king. He told Queen Esther, and she told the king. The plot was foiled. But Haman, one of the king's officials, hated the Judeans. He planned to have them all killed, and he was going to start with Mordecai. Esther was worried. She knew that Haman planned to have her uncle executed, but what could she do to protect him? And what could she do to stop her people being killed?

Esther told her friends to pray. Then, that night, the king could not sleep, and he asked his servants to read him the stories of what had happened in his reign. And he remembered how Mordecai had saved his life.

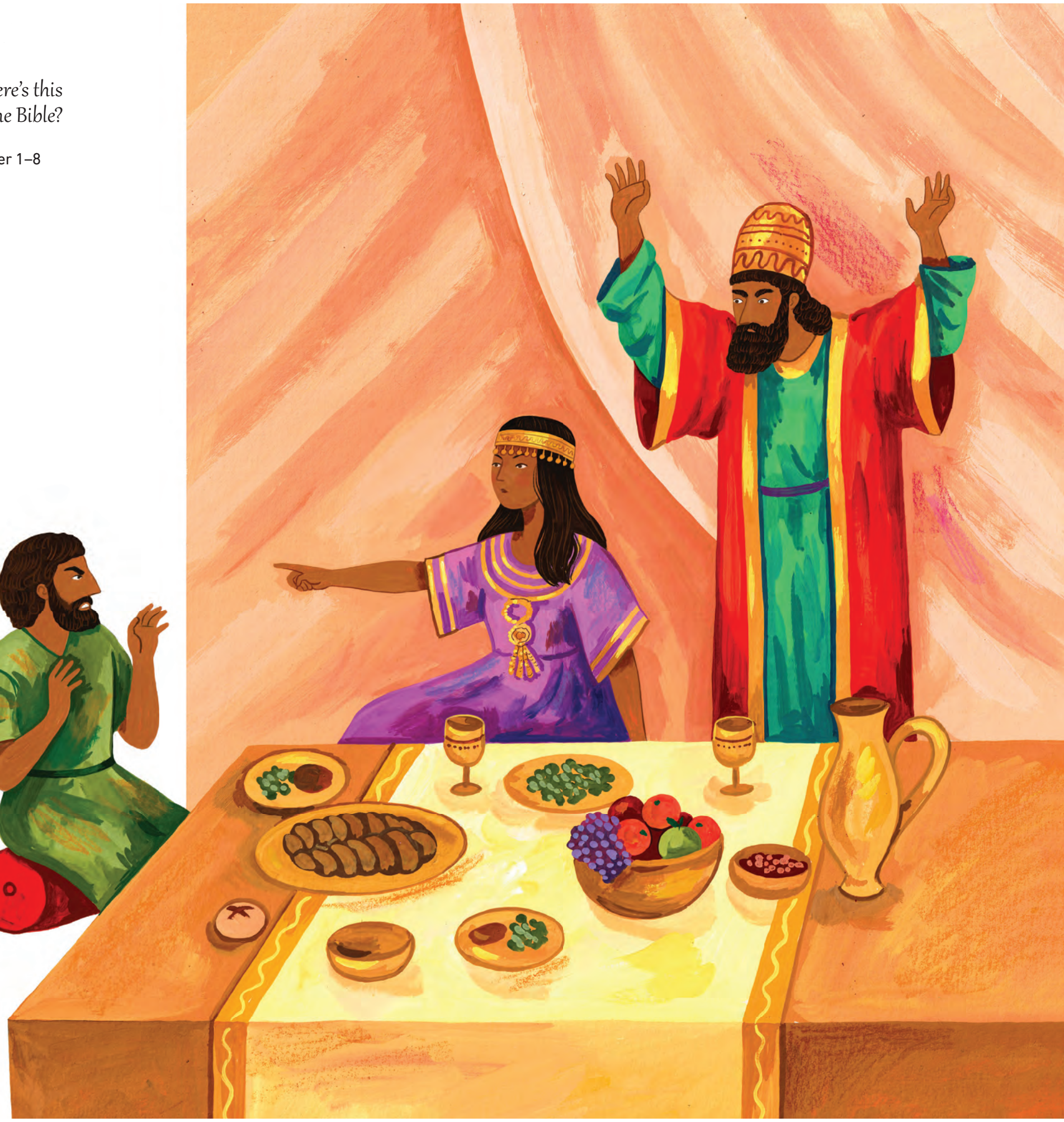
Then Esther invited Haman to a special feast at the king's palace. It would be just the three of them. Haman felt very proud to be there. But when the feast was nearly over, Esther told the king, "Haman has been plotting behind your back to kill my people." The king's face turned red with anger, and Haman became very frightened. The king jumped up from the table and stormed out of the palace in a rage! Haman's face turned pale with fright.

Haman was right to be scared. The king ordered him to be executed instead of Mordecai. Then the king declared that the Judeans should be allowed to take up arms and defend themselves from their enemies.



Where's this  
in the Bible?

Esther 1–8



## Zechariah and the Angel

Zechariah was a priest. He and his wife Elizabeth were sad because they had no children. For many years they had hoped and prayed for a child, but now they were too old.

One day, Zechariah was working in the Temple in Jerusalem when suddenly he saw an angel standing next to him! Zechariah was frightened, and he started to back away. Then the angel spoke.

“Don’t be afraid. God has heard your prayer. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you must call him John. He will be a great prophet, filled with God’s Spirit, and he will guide the people back to God.”

Zechariah couldn’t believe it. “How can this happen?” he exclaimed. “Elizabeth and I are far too old!”

“I am Gabriel,” said the angel. “I stand in God’s presence. Now, because you didn’t believe me, you won’t be able to speak again until it happens.” With that, the angel disappeared. And so did Zechariah’s voice.

The weeks went by, and then one day Elizabeth said to Zechariah, “We’re going to have a baby!” Zechariah’s face glowed with happiness, but still he couldn’t speak.

Later that year, the baby was born. It was a boy! Friends and relatives from all around came to celebrate. They knew this must be a very special child, and they asked what his name would be. Zechariah beckoned for a writing tablet. Everything went quiet and they all watched as he wrote, “His name is John.” And suddenly Zechariah could speak again! He sang a song of praise to God, and everyone laughed and danced for joy.

Where’s this  
in the Bible?

Luke 1



What else in God’s big story  
links up with this?



**Hannah’s Special  
Child**  
p. 78

## Jesus is Baptized

Many years later, when he had grown into a man, Jesus made the journey south from Galilee to Judea. He had heard that his cousin, John, had become a great prophet. People were calling him John the Baptist.

John was getting the people ready for God to come back and rescue them. He taught them how to turn away from selfishness and sinful living and follow God's ways instead. To show them what this meant, he called the people into the desert where he would plunge them, one by one, into the River Jordan. (That's why John became known as John the Baptist: to baptize something means to plunge it under water.) As John lifted each person back out of the water, their sins were washed away and they were reminded of the time when God saved his people from slavery in Egypt.

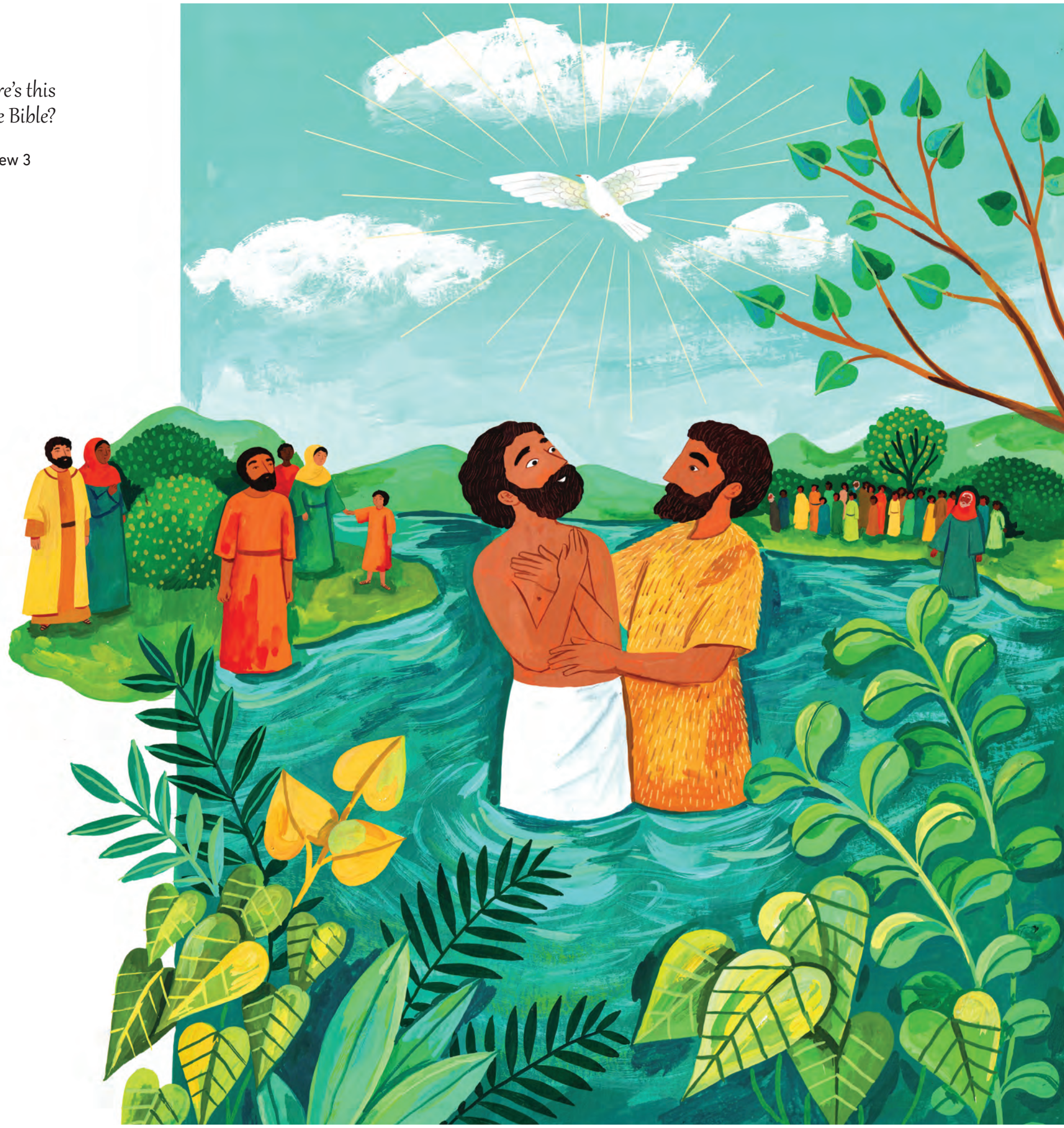
John told the people: "I am baptizing you with water, but someone more powerful than me will come. He will baptize you with God's Holy Spirit and with fire." The people wondered who this person could be.

One day, as John was teaching the people, Jesus came and asked to be baptized. When John saw Jesus, he said, "I should be baptized by you, not the other way around!" But Jesus insisted, and so John plunged Jesus into the water. As Jesus came back up, God's hidden world suddenly opened! People could see right in. They looked on in amazement as God's Spirit came from heaven and settled on Jesus like a dove.

Then they heard a voice saying to Jesus, "You are my son! You are the one I love! You make me very glad!"

Where's this  
in the Bible?

Matthew 3



What else in God's big story  
links up with this?



**A Journey through  
the Sea**  
p. 48

Step inside a story that unfolds over the centuries, until at last it is fully revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus.



## About the Author

Tom (N. T.) Wright is the former Bishop of Durham and Senior Research Fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University. He is one of the world's leading New Testament scholars and the award-winning author of many books, including *After You Believe*, *Surprised by Hope*, *Simply Christian*, *Interpreting Paul*, and *The New Testament in Its World*, as well as the series *Christian Origins and the Question of God*.



## Key Points

- Written by one of the world's leading Bible scholars and award-winning author of over 85 books, including *Surprised by Hope*, which has sold over 150k copies
- Illuminates the connections between Bible stories with a linking stories section
- Includes 140 stories from the Old and New Testament, many more stories than most other storybooks, including Scripture stories less commonly adapted for children
- For homeschoolers and parents of elementary-aged kids who want to expand their connection with Bible stories and scripture
- Author's hometown is Oxford, UK

