



God's COLORFUL Easter

The Good News Is
for Everyone

written by **Esau McCaulley** | illustrated by **Rogério Coelho**



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God's Colorful Easter: The Good News Is for Everyone

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When we imagine heroes today, we think of swords and punches. Aren't heroes supposed to fight?

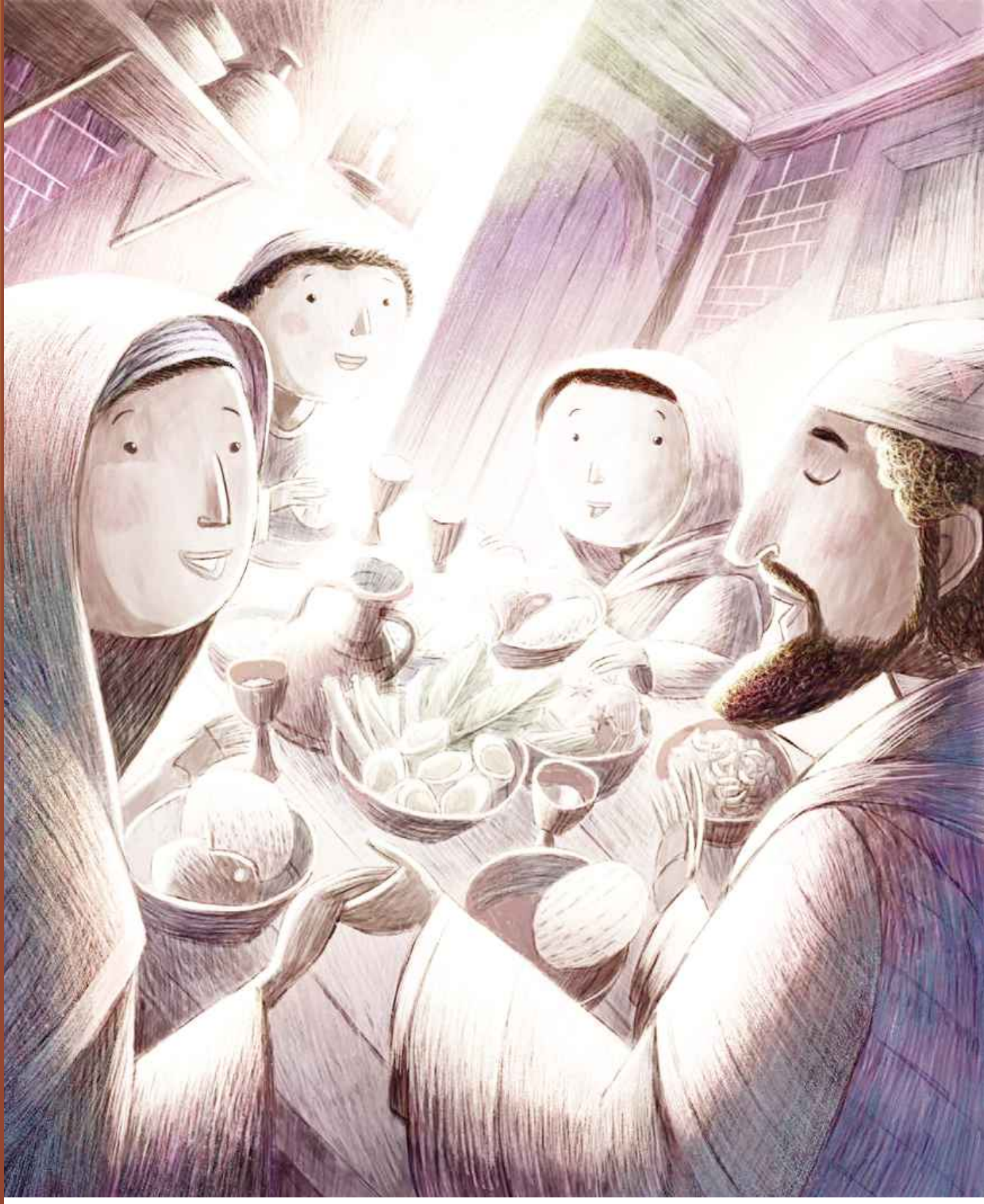
This book is about a different kind of hero. In fact, you're going to meet two heroes in our story. Neither one ever shot laser beams from his fingertips or swung a sword at dragons.


First, I want to introduce you to a man named Simon who played a small role in God's greatest miracle ever. Later in our story, you'll meet **JESUS, THE GREATEST HERO OF ALL TIME.**





Simon had traveled all the way from North Africa to Jerusalem. He and his family worshiped God there during the season of Passover, a holiday that celebrates God's great rescue of his people from slavery in Egypt. Simon must have wondered when God would do something that amazing again.





One day Simon saw a crowd of people following a man down the road as he carried a heavy wooden cross. Simon stopped a member of the crowd and asked, "Who is this? What is going on?"

"**THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH**—the one who performed all the miracles and claimed to be the Savior."

Simon saw Jesus, tired and bloody, and he felt sorry for this man. Then Simon made eye contact with a soldier, who yelled, "Come here!"

Simon went quickly.

The soldier said, "He is too weak to carry this cross. Help him!"




Simon did as he was told. As he lifted the cross, Simon must have thought, *There is something about this man. He is no common criminal.*

Simon walked with Jesus all the way up the hill, and then he slid back into the crowd, shaken by what had happened.







When Jesus died, it seemed like a defeat. But God is good at turning defeats into victories.

Jesus wasn't a hero who fought with fists or swords. Instead of fighting, **JESUS HEALED**. He died on the cross to show





us how far God's love reaches. He took the punishment that we deserve and made it possible for us to turn toward God. By dying in our place, **JESUS DEFEATED THE POWER OF SIN AND DEATH** for everyone who chooses to follow him.



After Jesus died and was placed in a tomb, some of the women who followed him didn't know what to do. Then one of them had an idea: the least they could do was honor his body.


"Let's go to the tomb and pour oil and spices on Jesus' body," said Mary Magdalene.

"How will we get to him with that huge stone in front of the tomb?" another woman named Mary wondered.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," said Mary Magdalene.
"Let's go!"





An illustration on the left side of the page shows several birds in flight against a light, hazy background. The birds are depicted with dark wings and lighter bodies, some in various stages of flight. The overall style is soft and painterly.

**When they arrived at the tomb,
the ground beneath their feet
started to shake. It was an
earthquake!**





Then something even more terrifying took place. An angel came down from heaven. He was as bright as lightning. The women's jaws dropped.

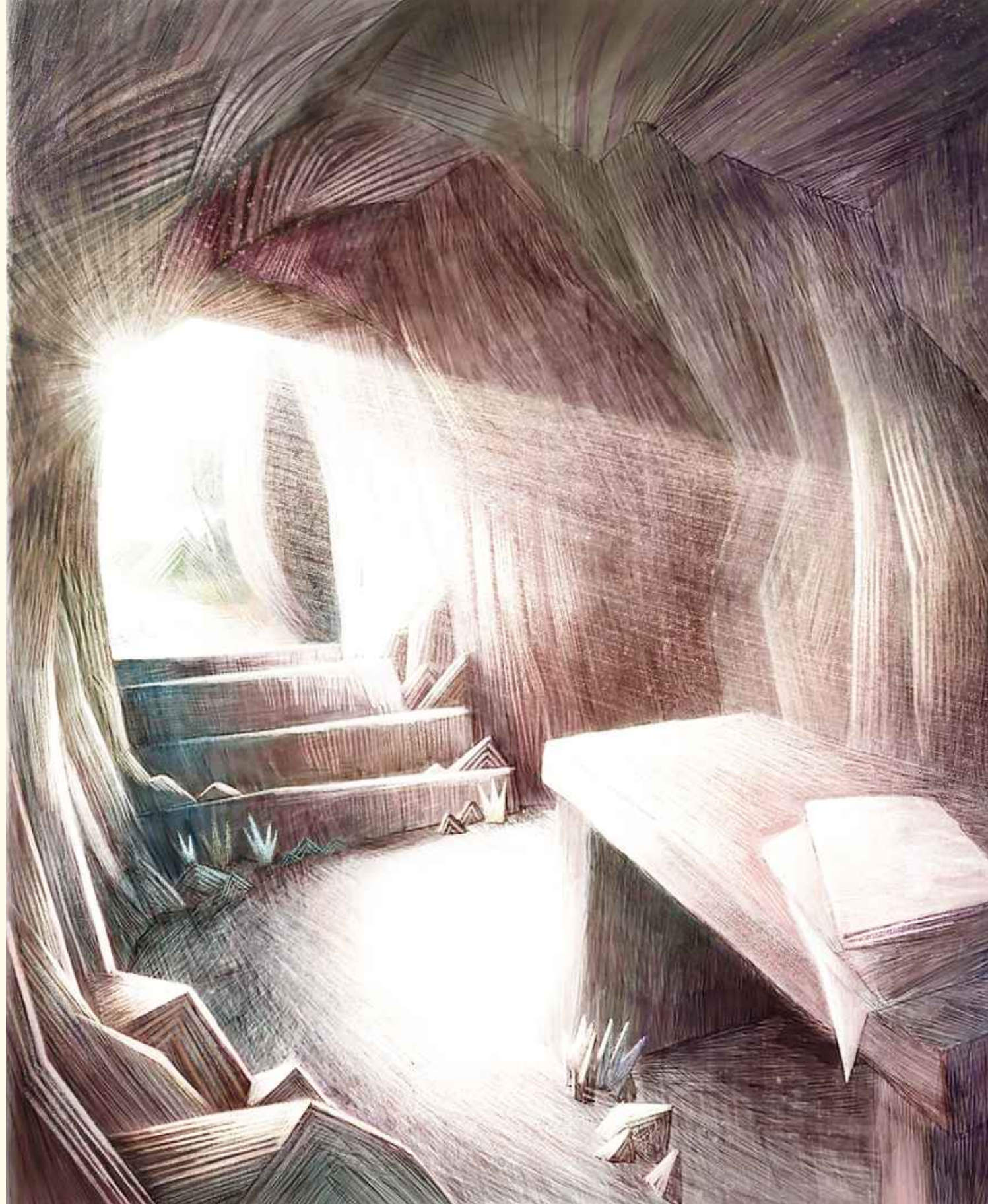
**THE ANGEL ROLLED AWAY
THE GIANT STONE.** The guards
at the tomb were so afraid they
started trembling and fell to the
ground.





The angel said to the women,
"Do not be afraid, for I know that
you are looking for Jesus, who was
crucified. **HE IS NOT HERE;**
HE HAS RISEN, just as he said.
Come see the place where he lay."

The women saw the empty tomb
and were amazed. They were burst-
ing with happiness and excitement.
They had to share the news with
others! They ran back to tell Jesus'
other disciples.

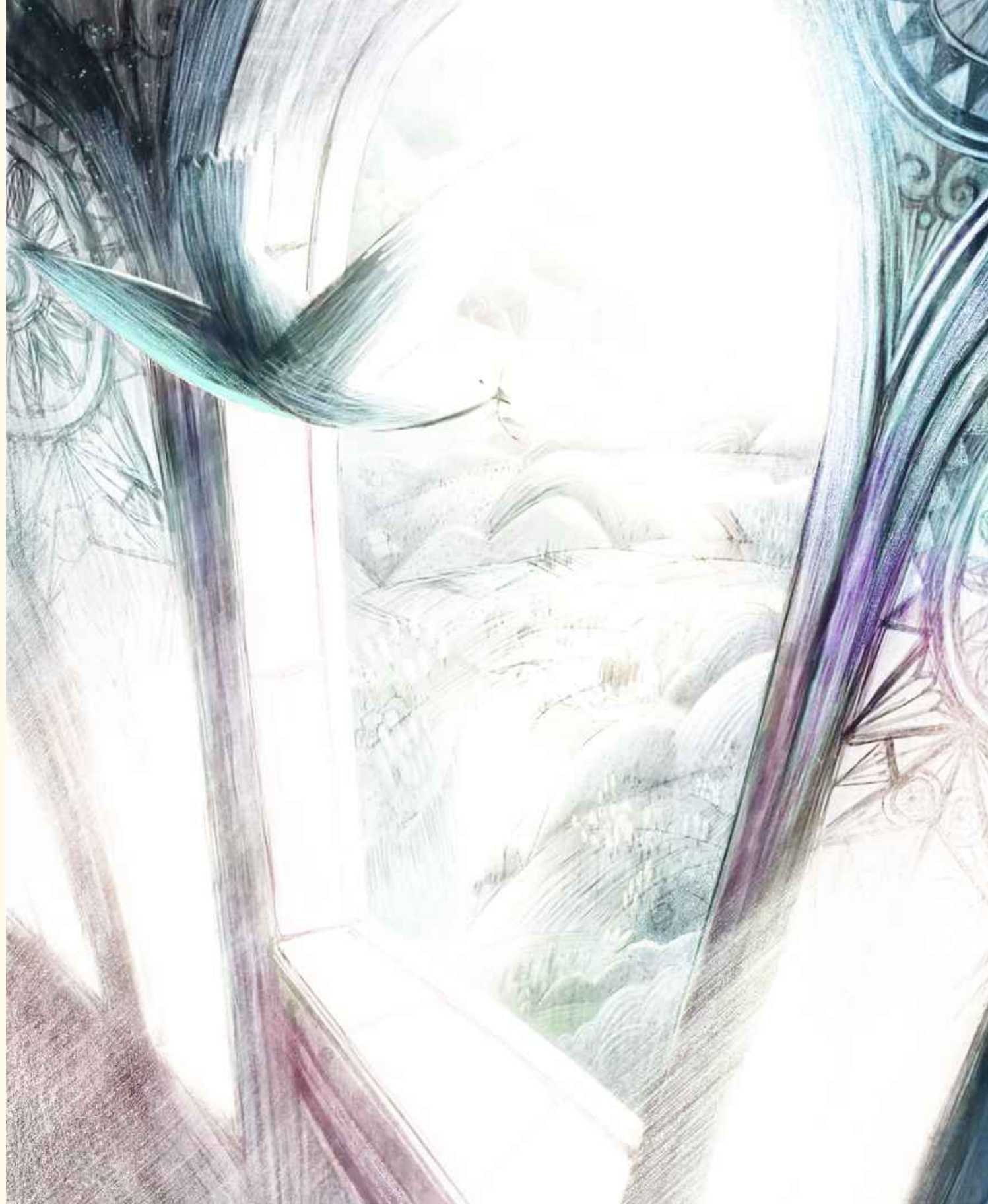


On their way, the women met Jesus.

"Don't be afraid!" he told them.

**The words of the angel were true!
Jesus had risen from the dead.**







If the death of Jesus was the world's saddest day, his resurrection was the day filled with the most joy. And this joy is not just for you and me. It is for the whole world.

God loves the whole world and wants everyone to know what Jesus, our Hero, has done. **GOD WANTS ALL PEOPLE TO BELONG TO HIS COLORFUL KINGDOM.**



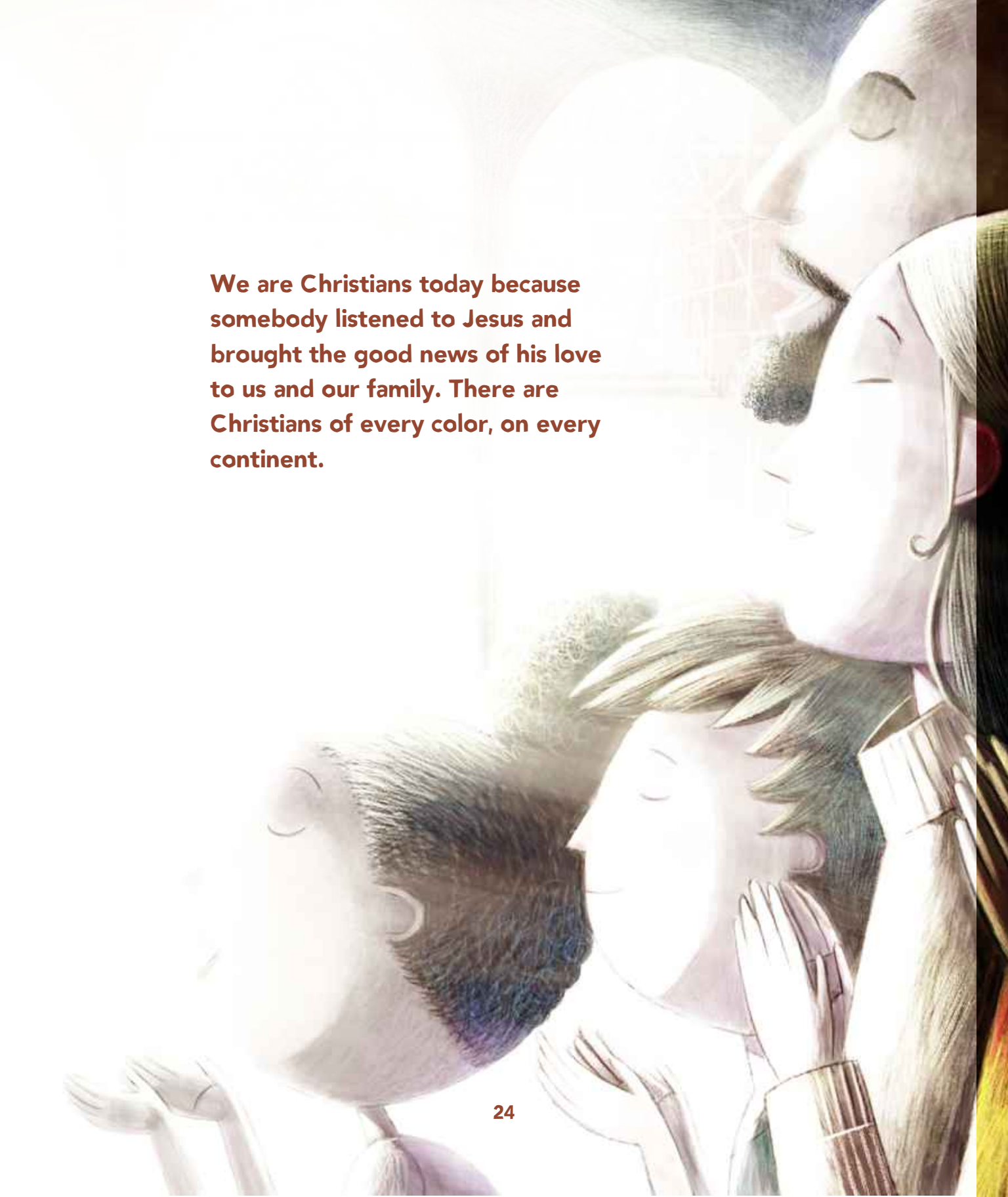
Jesus spent forty days with his friends, and hundreds of people saw he was alive again. But Jesus had to return to be with God in heaven. Before he left, Jesus gave his followers an important job. He said, "Go and make disciples of all the different peoples of the world. Teach them all that I taught you."

That includes everything Jesus said about love, obedience, justice, and compassion.

"Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," Jesus said. "No matter what happens, know that **I AM WITH YOU**. Even to the very end of the age."





An artistic illustration of a diverse group of people in profile, facing right, with their eyes closed and hands raised in prayer. The style is soft and painterly, with a warm, golden light emanating from the background, suggesting a church or a place of worship. The people have various skin tones and hair colors, representing a multicultural group. The background is bright and slightly blurred, showing architectural elements like an archway.

We are Christians today because somebody listened to Jesus and brought the good news of his love to us and our family. There are Christians of every color, on every continent.



Remember Simon? He and his sons joined God's new family after **JESUS** –**THE GREATEST HERO**–rose from the dead. God always wanted a beautifully diverse family gathered around the cross. Simon was just one part of God's colorful Kingdom.







God's plan is unfolding.
HIS COLORFUL KINGDOM IS GROWING.
His work continues through us.

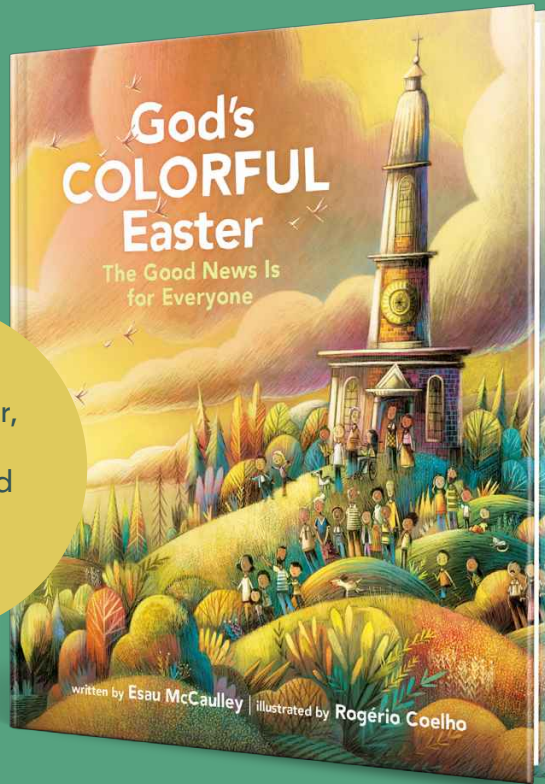


About the Author

Esau McCaulley, PhD, is an associate professor of New Testament at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. Dr. McCaulley also serves as theologian in residence at Progressive Baptist Church, a historically Black congregation in Chicago. He is the author of *How Far to the Promised Land: One Black Family's Story of Hope and Survival in the American South*, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope*, and *Josey Johnson's Hair and the Holy Spirit*. Dr. McCaulley is also a contributing opinion writer for the New York Times. His writings have appeared in the Atlantic, the Washington Post, and Christianity Today. He is married to Mandy, a pediatrician and Navy reservist. Together, they have four wonderful children.

About the Illustrator

Rogério Coelho lives in Curitiba, a city in the south of Brazil. He has worked as a professional illustrator for twenty-five years, illustrating more than one hundred books for Brazilian publishers, and has twice received the Jabuti Award (2012 and 2016), Brazil's most important literary award. In 2015, Rogério began illustrating for publishers in England (*Storytime Magazine*, a magazine aimed at children) and in the United States. His wordless picture book *Boat of Dreams* received starred reviews from *School Library Journal* and *Booklist*, was named a Best Book for Kids by the New York Public Library in 2017, and received the Independent Publisher Book Awards' gold medal for children's picture books. Rogério also illustrated *You Be You* (written by Richard Brehm), which received the same gold medal for children's picture books in 2021.



By noted
biblical scholar,
theologian,
professor, and
author Esau
McCauley

A beautiful Easter storybook honoring God's diverse and colorful kingdom

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