



THE Easter Story



Celebrating the Greatest Love of All





HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON




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The Easter Story

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Text by Janice Emmerson

Illustrations by Netscribes

Portions of this book originally appeared in *The Complete Illustrated Children’s Bible*.

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-8974-9 (pbk)

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Printed in China

25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 / IPS / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1





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JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12



Jerusalem was packed. It was the week of the Passover festival, and everyone had gathered to celebrate. It was also time for Jesus to start the last stage of his earthly life.

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a humble donkey. Some of his followers threw their cloaks or large palm leaves on the dusty ground before him, and he was met by an enormous crowd, for many had heard of the miracles he had performed. The religious leaders might fear and hate Jesus, but many of the people truly saw him as their king, and they tried to give him a king's welcome.

His followers cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

But Jesus was sad, for he knew that in a very short time these people cheering him would turn against him.





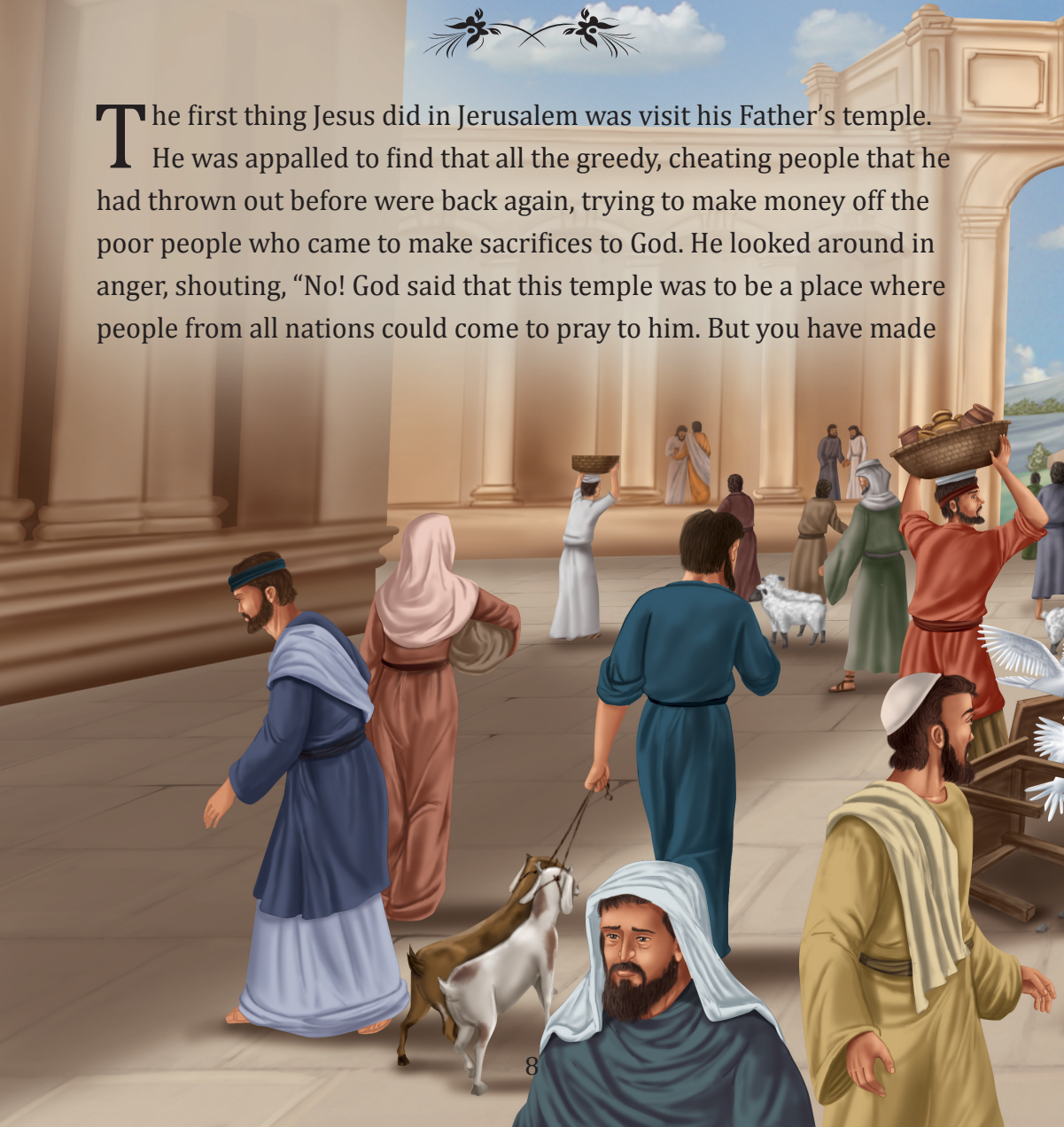
TROUBLE IN THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19



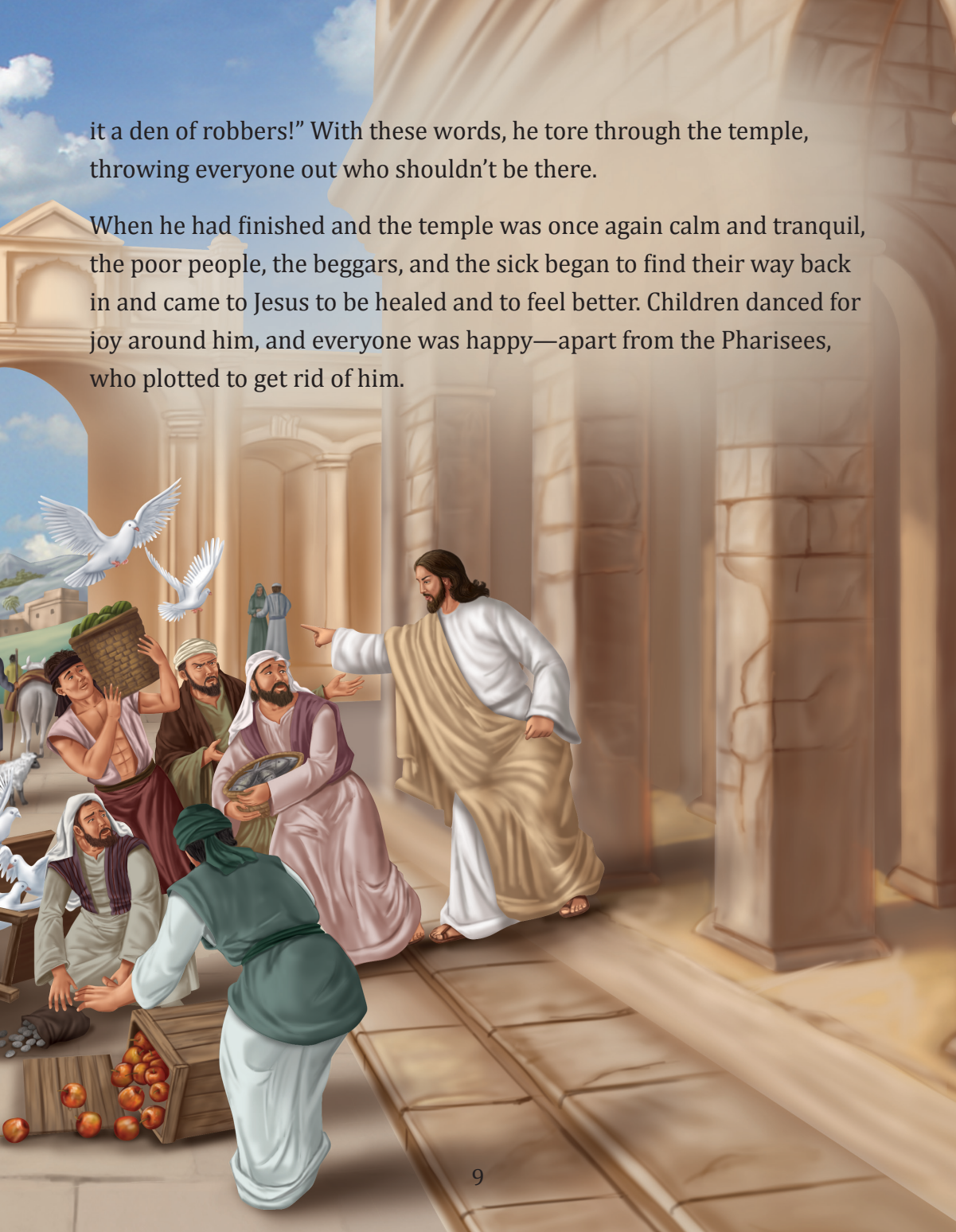
The first thing Jesus did in Jerusalem was visit his Father's temple.

He was appalled to find that all the greedy, cheating people that he had thrown out before were back again, trying to make money off the poor people who came to make sacrifices to God. He looked around in anger, shouting, "No! God said that this temple was to be a place where people from all nations could come to pray to him. But you have made



it a den of robbers!” With these words, he tore through the temple, throwing everyone out who shouldn’t be there.

When he had finished and the temple was once again calm and tranquil, the poor people, the beggars, and the sick began to find their way back in and came to Jesus to be healed and to feel better. Children danced for joy around him, and everyone was happy—apart from the Pharisees, who plotted to get rid of him.



BY WHOSE AUTHORITY?

Matthew 21; Luke 20



Each day, Jesus would go to the temple to teach his followers and to offer comfort and healing to those in need of it. The priests, the teachers of the Law, and the elders were not happy about this.

“Who gave you authority to do these things?” they asked him, and Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. If you can answer me, then I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Tell me, was John’s baptism from heaven or of human origin?”

The priests and elders didn’t know how to answer. If they said it was from heaven, then he would ask why they didn’t believe him, but if they said it was of human origin, then the people would be cross with them, for they truly believed that John was a prophet. In the end, they mumbled, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said, “Then I will not tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”





THE WICKED TENANTS

Matthew 21; Mark 12; Luke 20



Jesus told a parable: “Once, a man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers, and then went away. At harvesttime he sent a servant to collect his share of the fruit. But the tenants beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. He sent another servant, but again they beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent a third, and that one was killed!

“In the end, he decided to send his beloved son. ‘Surely they will respect *him*,’ he said to himself.

“But when the tenants saw him coming, they plotted among themselves. ‘This is the heir,’ they said. ‘If we get rid of him, then we will become the new owners!’ and they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

Jesus looked at the priests and Pharisees who were listening. “What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do to the tenants when he finds out?”

“He will kill them and give the vineyard to others who will give him his rightful share,” they replied, but when they realized that Jesus had been talking about *them*, they felt tricked and angry!



THE GREAT BANQUET

Luke 14



Jesus told a story about a man who was preparing a great feast. It was to be a very special occasion for it was in honor of his son's wedding. He had invited many guests, and when the food was ready, he sent his servant to tell them it was time to come. But every last one of them had some kind of excuse and would not come—and some were rude and nasty to the servant!

When the man heard this, he was furious. He told his servant to go back outside, and this time he was to invite all the poor people, anyone who was blind or crippled or lame, and bring them in to enjoy the banquet.



When this had been done, and the servant told his master that all the places at the table weren't yet full, the man told him to search further afield and find yet more people, and make them come in so that his house would be full. As for his original guests, he promised that not a single one of them would get even a taste of his feast!

God had invited his people to be saved through his Son, Jesus Christ, but many, especially the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, refused to accept Jesus as their Savior. They made excuses to explain why he wasn't the Son of God, and they took refuge in their traditions. So God extended his invitation across the world—to everybody, not just the Jews.

God has invited us all to his wonderful feast.
Let's not miss out!

