



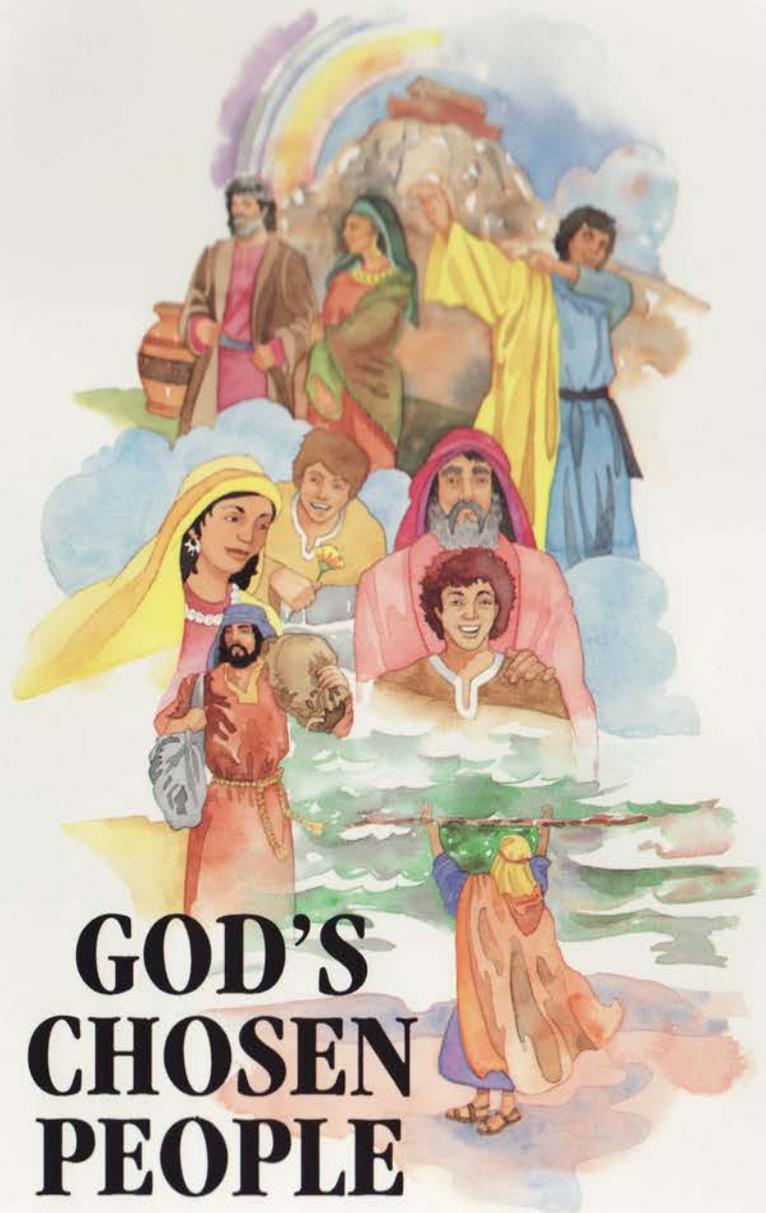
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Shell Year—Primary, Unit I

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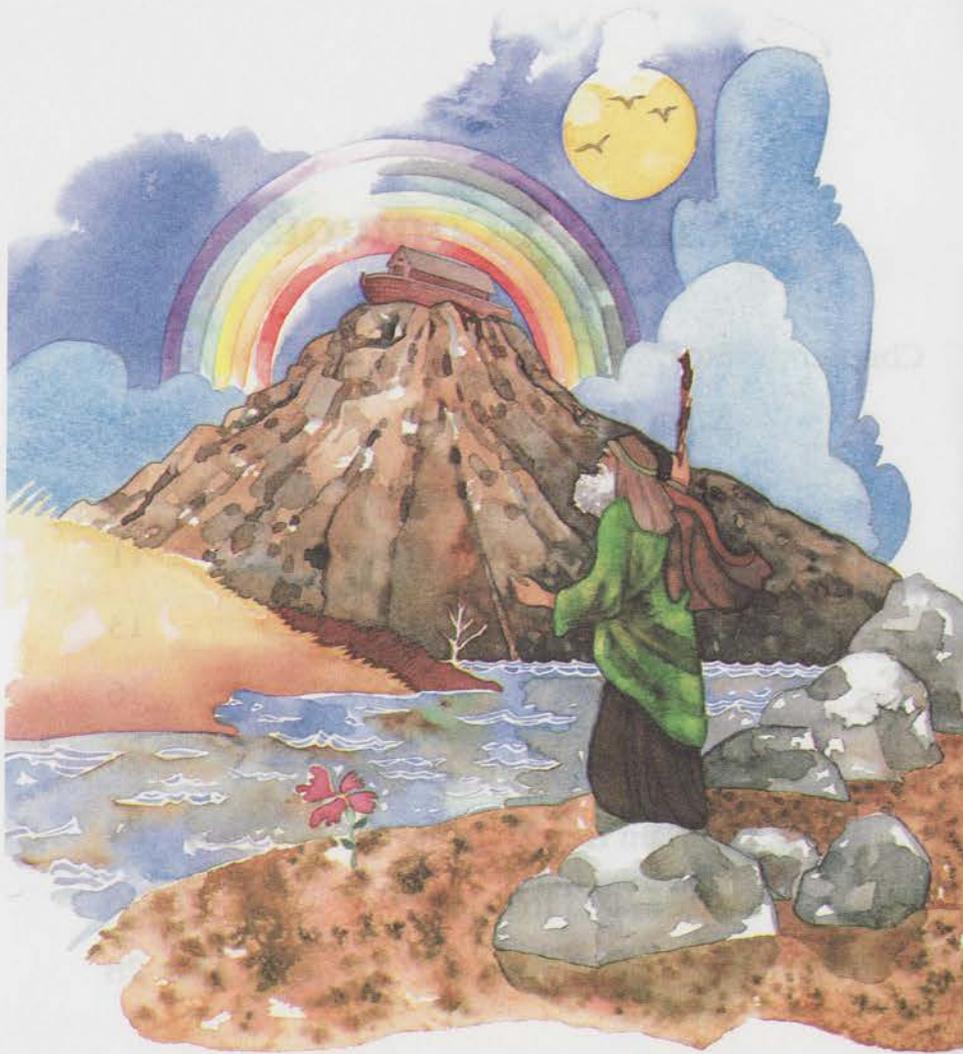
Illustrations by Bobbi Tull



GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

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God made a rainbow after the flood.

CHAPTER 1

Noah Made an Ark

Noah was a good man. God told Noah that a day was coming when a great flood would cover the earth and wash everything away. But God would save Noah and his wife, and their three sons with their wives.

“Make yourself an ark,” God said. “It must be big enough for all your family and for pairs of all the animals and birds in the world. Gather food. You will be in the ark many days, and you must plan to have enough to eat.”

Noah did just what God asked him to do.

When the mighty flood came, Noah’s family and the animals were safe inside. The dry ark floated on the rushing water.

Rain fell forty days and forty nights. Then came the long wait for the water to go down. Noah waited a hundred and fifty days!

At last the ark came to rest on the high mountains of Ararat. After another forty days, Noah opened a

window and sent a raven out. The raven went back and forth, so Noah knew it was still not safe to leave the ark. Then he sent out a dove. The dove came back because there was still no dry land.

Seven days later, Noah put the dove out once more. Soon it returned with an olive leaf.

Seven more days went by. Noah sent the dove again, and this time it did not return. Now it was safe for all people and all creatures on the ark to return again to the land.

Once more, God spoke to Noah.

God said, "I am making a covenant with you and your whole family, and with all the animals that came out of the ark.

"Never again will I destroy the earth with a flood. I will put a rainbow in the sky, and it will shine through the clouds to be a special sign. The rainbow will remind you of my promise, and I will keep the promise forever."

We can read, in *Genesis, chapters 6-9*, the whole story of Noah and the covenant God made.

CHAPTER 2

Abraham and Sarah Had Faith

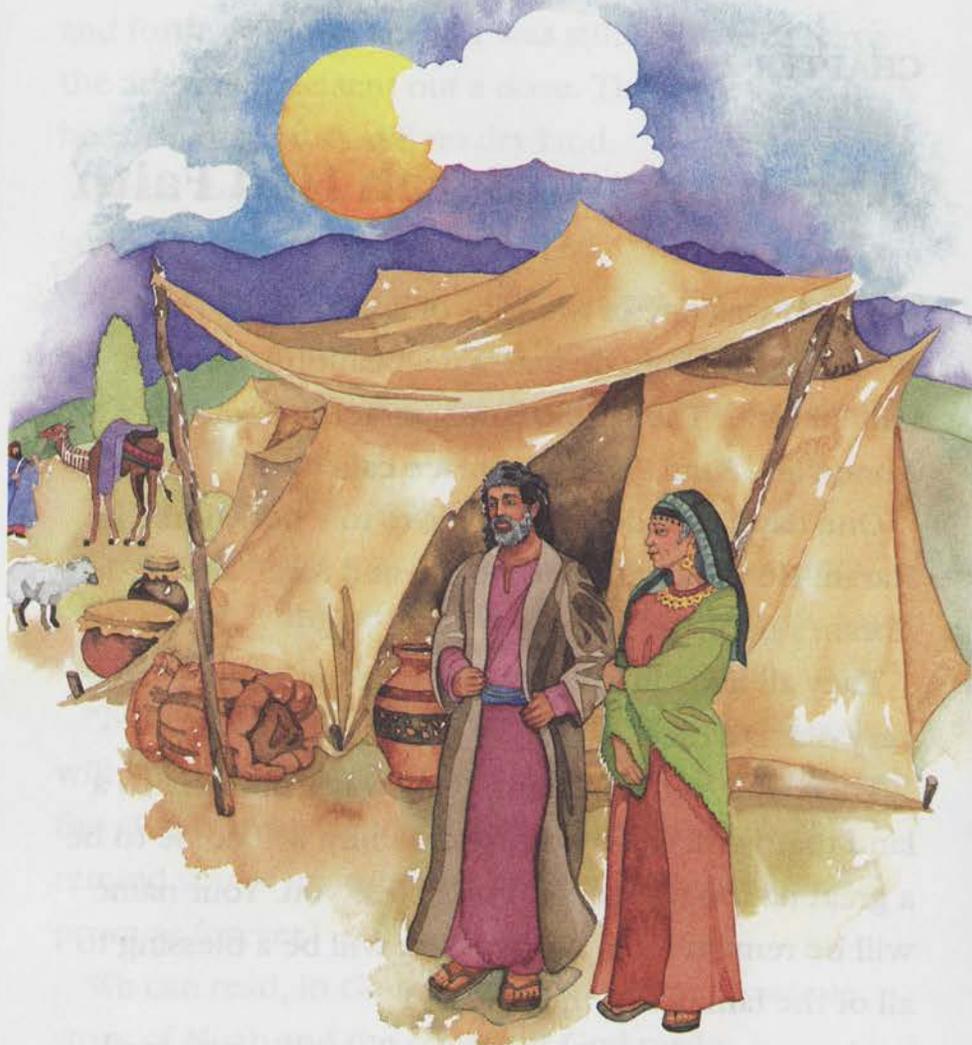
Abram was one of the sons of a man named Terah. When he grew up, he married a beautiful woman named Sarai. The whole family of Terah, including Abram and Sarai, lived in a place called Ur.

One day Terah decided to move to a new home in Haran. He took with him Abram and Sarai, and Abram's nephew, Lot.

They all lived in the city of Haran until Terah grew very old and died.

Then God said to Abram, "Go away from here to a land that I will show you. Your family will come to be a great nation of people. I will bless you. Your name will be remembered always. You will be a blessing to all of the families of the earth."

Abram must have wondered where this new land was. Should he and Sarai pack up all of their things and start traveling? What would happen to them? How long would the trip last? Would they be safe?



God called Abram and Sarai
to go to a new land.

Would they find a good place to live?

But Abram believed and trusted God.

Abram, Sarai, and Lot took their clothes and all that they had. They took food and what they needed for cooking. They had no maps to guide them, only God's promise.

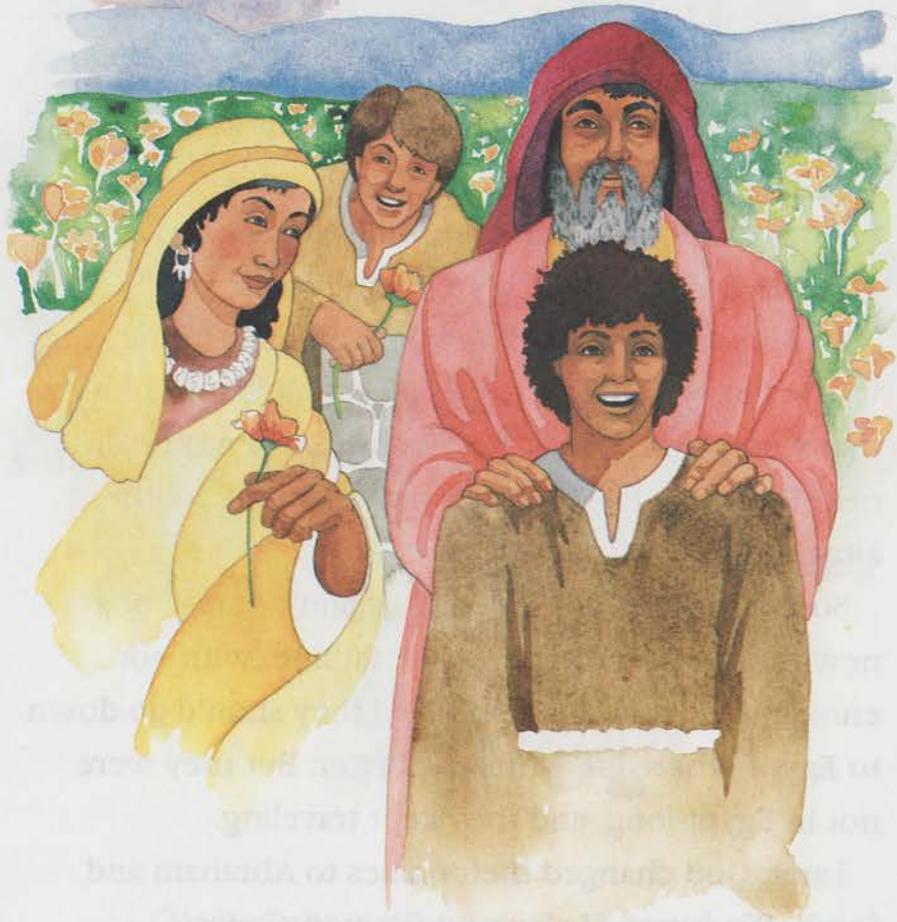
After many days, they came to the land of Canaan. They traveled to Shechem and to a spot where there was a giant oak tree.

Once more, God made a promise to Abram, "I will give this land to you and your family after you."

So Abram took stones and built an altar, for he wanted to remember that God had spoken to him in that very place. He and Sarai moved to a mountain near Bethel and set up their tent. He built another altar and prayed to God.

Soon they were on the move again because of a new problem. There was a bad famine, with not enough food. So Abram decided they should go down to Egypt where life would be better. But they were not in Egypt long, and they kept traveling.

Later, God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah. We can read all about them in *Genesis*, beginning with *chapter 11*.



Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons.

CHAPTER 3

Isaac and Rebekah Had Twins

God kept his promises to Abraham and Sarah. When they were old, they learned that they would have a baby son. Sarah was so surprised that she laughed. So when the child was born, he was named Isaac, which means “laughter.”

Isaac grew up well and strong. He married Rebekah.

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons named Esau and Jacob.

Esau, who was born first, had much hair on his body. He loved to be outdoors, and he liked hunting and working in the fields.

The second son was named Jacob. He was a quiet person who was happier staying in his tent.

In those days, the son who was born first had what was called a “birthright.” It meant that he would be more important. He would inherit the most. Jacob knew that his brother, Esau, had the birthright in their family.

One day Jacob was making some lentil soup. It smelled very good indeed as it steamed in the pot.

Esau came in from the field where he worked. He was very hungry. He asked for some of the food Jacob was cooking.

Jacob thought to himself, "Now is my chance!"

He said to Esau, "Sell me the place in our family that now belongs to you."

Esau answered, "I am so hungry I am going to die. What good is it that I was born first?"

Esau then made a promise that Jacob could have his place as the firstborn child in exchange for some food.

So Jacob fed Esau. When Esau was full, he went on his way. He had given up his birthright to his brother Jacob for a simple meal of bread and soup.

Jacob would now be the next leader of God's people. We can read about Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, in *The Book of Genesis*.

CHAPTER 4

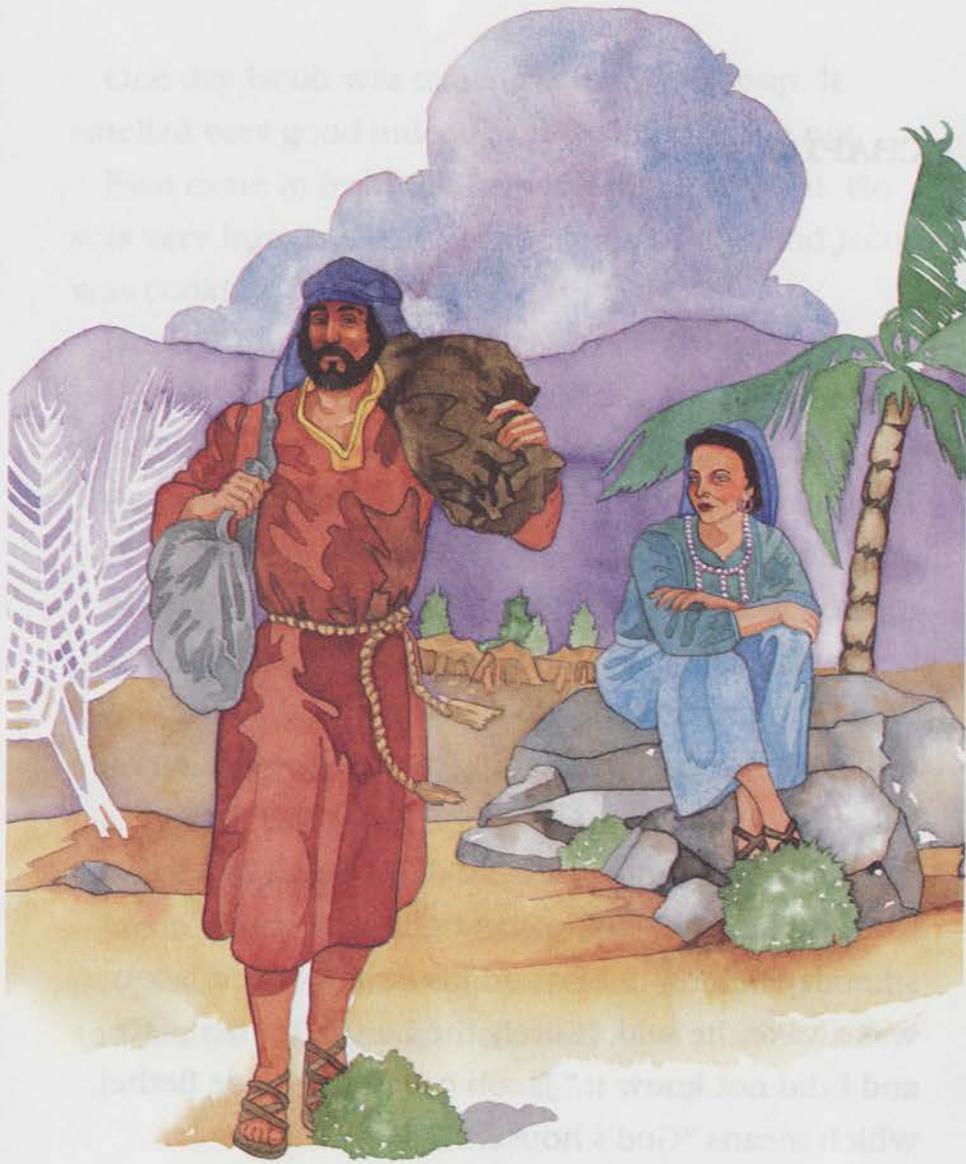
Jacob Was Blessed

Jacob received the blessing of his father, Isaac. It was a blessing that should have been given to Esau. The twins had nothing to do with each other for a long time.

Jacob left home because of his brother's anger. As he was traveling, he had a dream one night. In the dream he saw a high ladder that reached all the way to heaven. Angels were going up and down the ladder.

Jacob heard the voice of God. God told Jacob that the land he was standing on right now would someday belong to him and his family. When Jacob was awake, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." Jacob called the place Bethel, which means "God's house."

Jacob fell in love with a beautiful and lovely woman named Rachel. He wanted her to be his wife so much that he worked for her father fourteen years.



Jacob heard the voice of God.

Some time later, Jacob and Esau met again. They hugged each other. They both cried. They were no longer enemies.

God told Jacob to take his family and return to Bethel. God appeared there to bless Jacob. God said to him, "Your name is Jacob. Now you shall have a new name. You shall be called Israel, and you shall be a leader of a great nation."

God said, "I am God Almighty. Your children will have many children. A nation will descend from you. Then other nations will descend from you.

"The land I gave your grandfather, Abraham, and your father, Isaac, will now be given to you, Israel."

Jacob built an altar at Bethel because here he had once again heard the voice of God. Here Jacob received his new name.

Not long after that, Rachel died as she gave birth to a son named Benjamin.

Israel had twelve sons. He had a daughter named Dinah. Twelve tribes of God's people were named for the sons of Israel. We can read about them in *The Book of Genesis*.

CHAPTER 5

Joseph Was Made a Slave

Israel loved his son, Joseph, very much. He gave him a beautiful long coat with sleeves. This made his brothers very jealous.

Joseph had a dream. He told it to his brothers. He said, "We were bundling grain in the field. My bundle stood up, and all your bundles came and bowed down to mine."

The brothers asked Joseph if he was their ruler. The dream did not make them any happier with him, and their hate grew.

Then Joseph had a second dream. He saw the sun and the moon and eleven stars. They all bowed down to him. When his father heard about this dream, he scolded Joseph. Did Joseph think his own mother and father and brothers would have to bow down to him?

The brothers were even more jealous. Joseph's father could not get the dream out of his mind!

Soon the brothers went away to another place to

find pasture for their father's herd. Israel sent Joseph to find them and bring news of how they were.

When Joseph was still a long way off, the brothers saw him coming. They said, "Let us kill Joseph and take his coat. We can say a wild beast ate him."

But Reuben, the oldest brother, had another idea. "No," he said. "Let us just throw him into the dry pit over there."

Reuben had a plan. He would come back to the pit and save Joseph. He did not like the idea of killing him. The brothers agreed to Reuben's plan, and they led Joseph to the pit.

Later, while they were eating, a merchant caravan came by.

A brother named Judah said, "Why don't we sell Joseph to the traders? We can be rid of him without leaving him to die."

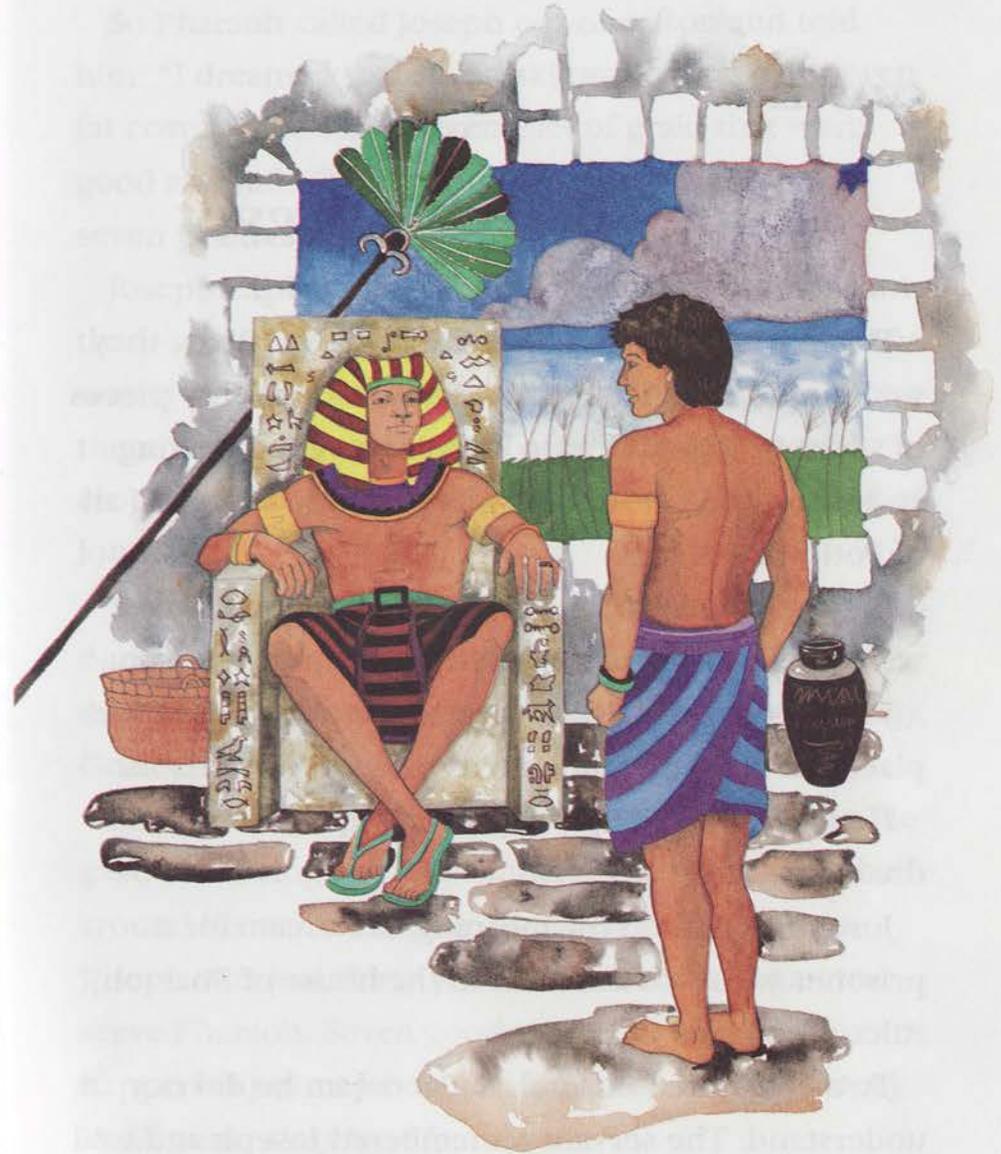
For twenty pieces of silver, Joseph was sold to the traders and carried off to Egypt. The brothers killed a goat and put blood all over Joseph's coat. They took the coat back to their father, Israel.

"Joseph is dead," Israel said. He was so sad that he cried for many days.

All this we can read in *Genesis, chapter 37.*



Joseph had a long coat with sleeves.



Joseph helped Pharaoh in Egypt.

CHAPTER 6

Joseph Served in Egypt

When Joseph was carried to Egypt by traders, they sold him to a man named Potiphar—for twenty pieces of silver. In time, because Joseph was good looking and able to be a leader, he was placed in charge of all of Potiphar's affairs.

But there came a day when Joseph was no longer welcome in Potiphar's house. He was put in prison.

Joseph impressed the captain of the guard and was placed in charge of the others who were in prison.

He was able to help people find out what their dreams meant.

Joseph explained the meaning of a dream for a prisoner who was a servant in the house of Pharaoh, ruler of the land of Egypt.

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream he did not understand. The servant remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him. "Joseph was right when he explained my dream," the servant said.

So Pharaoh called Joseph out of prison and told him: "I dreamed that seven skinny cows ate up seven fat cows. Then I saw seven ears of grain that were good and full. These good ears were eaten up by seven poor ears."

Joseph explained to Pharaoh that the dream meant there would be seven years ahead in which the crops would be good and there would be much grain. Then there would be seven years of hard times when the crops would be poor and people would be in need of food.

Joseph told Pharaoh that he should store up food during the good years so that there would be plenty during the bad ones. Pharaoh took his advice. Clearly, God was with Joseph.

Soon Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt. He gave him a ring and fine clothes, and put a gold chain around his neck. He gave him a chariot to ride in. Joseph was just thirty years old when he began to serve Pharaoh. Seven good years and seven bad years happened just as Joseph said. We can read this story in *Genesis, chapter 41*.

CHAPTER 7

Miriam Helped to Save Moses

There came a time when the land of Egypt had a new ruler (Pharaoh). This Pharaoh did not know all that Joseph had done many years before. He was afraid of the people of Israel who were growing in number.

First, Pharaoh made the people serve as slaves. Then he ordered that baby boys of the Hebrews be killed. Baby girls were allowed to live.

Among the Hebrew slaves, a man from the house of Levi married. He and his wife had a daughter. Her name was Miriam.

The next child was a boy. His mother could not bear that he would be killed! For three months she kept the baby hidden. She knew she could no longer keep him a secret. She made a basket out of plants that grew by the river. She lined the basket to make it safe and dry.

Gently the mother put the baby inside the basket



Moses grew up in Egypt.

and floated it among the reeds by the river's edge. She said to Miriam, "Stay here and watch so you can tell me what happens. I will wait at home."

Soon Pharaoh's daughter came to the river to bathe. She saw the basket in the water and sent her maids to bring it to her.

She looked inside. The baby was crying.

"This is one of the Hebrew children," she said. She felt sorry for the baby.

At that moment Miriam came near and asked if she could find someone to take care of the child. "Yes," the woman said.

Miriam went home quickly and found her mother. Together they returned to the river.

"Take this child and nurse him for me," ordered Pharaoh's daughter. "Bring him to me when he is older."

The mother did as she was asked. When the baby grew older, she brought him back. The child became a son to Pharaoh's daughter. She gave him the name Moses. It means "drawn from the water."

We can read this story in *Exodus, chapters 1-2*.



Moses led the people across the sea.

CHAPTER 8

Moses Led the Hebrews

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's house. He enjoyed all the good things that came his way. Moses knew that he was a Hebrew, and he cared very much when he saw his own people being hurt. One day, God spoke to Moses from a burning bush and called him to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt.

After many hard times, the people of Israel heard good news. Pharaoh had decided to let them leave. Moses would take them to a new land.

But Pharaoh changed his mind again! He called for his chariot and his army, to chase Moses and the Hebrews and bring them back.

The Hebrews set up camp by the sea. They looked back and saw the army coming. They were trapped and afraid. They turned to Moses. "What have you done to us?" they asked. "It would be better to go back and be slaves again than to die out here in this place."

Moses said, "Do not be afraid. The Lord will save us. You will see the Egyptians no more. All you have to do is keep still."

God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea. The sea would divide. The people could walk through the sea on dry land.

So Moses did as God told him. The people crossed the sea, just as God promised.

The Egyptians tried to follow, but the chariots were stuck in the wet land and could not move. They said, "Let us run away from the people of Israel. The Lord is fighting for them and against us."

It was too late for the Egyptians to turn back. God told Moses to stretch out his hand once more. The waters of the sea began to cover the Egyptians. They all drowned.

The people were amazed at what God did to save them. They believed in God with all their hearts. They believed in God's servant, Moses. They sang a song to the Lord, and we can read it in *Exodus, chapter 15*.

CHAPTER 9

We Remember

In this book, we have read about these people:

Noah and his family,

Abraham and Sarah,

Isaac and Rebekah and their twin sons,

Jacob and Rachel,

Joseph,

Moses and his sister, Miriam.

All of them were leaders God chose. God made promises to them. We call the great promises “covenants.”

The rainbow reminds us of God’s covenant with Noah.

The birth of Isaac reminds us of God’s covenant with Abraham.

The exodus of the people of God from slavery in Egypt reminds us of God’s covenant with Moses.

We do not want to forget all that God did when he chose these great leaders. Our Jewish friends



We remember all the leaders
of God’s people.

remember them all when they celebrate Passover. Jewish parents teach the stories to their children.

Jesus learned about the people of Genesis and Exodus. He knew the same stories that are in this book. The disciples of Jesus knew the stories, too.

The songbook we call “Psalms” tells us about these people God chose. The Psalms are in our Bibles and in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Each year, on All Saints’ Day, we remember the people of Genesis and Exodus along with all the Saints of the Church.

We sing about these leaders in many hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*.

At Holy Eucharist each week, we join “our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven” to sing praise to God. Our song begins, “Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, . . .” The “company of heaven” includes all the leaders of God’s people we have read about in this book! Give thanks to God for these stories. We shall learn many more in the years to come.

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