

# HE LIVED AMONG US



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## English Edition

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# The WAY to HEAVEN

Due to ignorance most people have a wrong concept of God, although all men instinctively know about God.

**Firstly:** Through our conscience God lets us know what is good or bad. But we are free to choose. That makes us personally responsible.

**Secondly:** Since earliest times God's existence and eternal power have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Getting to know God better comes through the reading of His Word. In the **New Testament** we find the answers to all human questions! He who has ears, let him hear!

Hope is life. All of us hope for the best. We all have beliefs. But are our beliefs based on Truth? Put your hope in the living God and His promise. Believe Him and your hopes shall come true.

The very big question for all men is: Why am I here? For what purpose? The answer is: to find God. To live together as a Father and child. He is calling all of us. But God will not force us. Either we turn to Him or we run from Him. Either we trust Him or we ignore Him.

## **An illustration of God's love:**

Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrong, love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, love never fails.

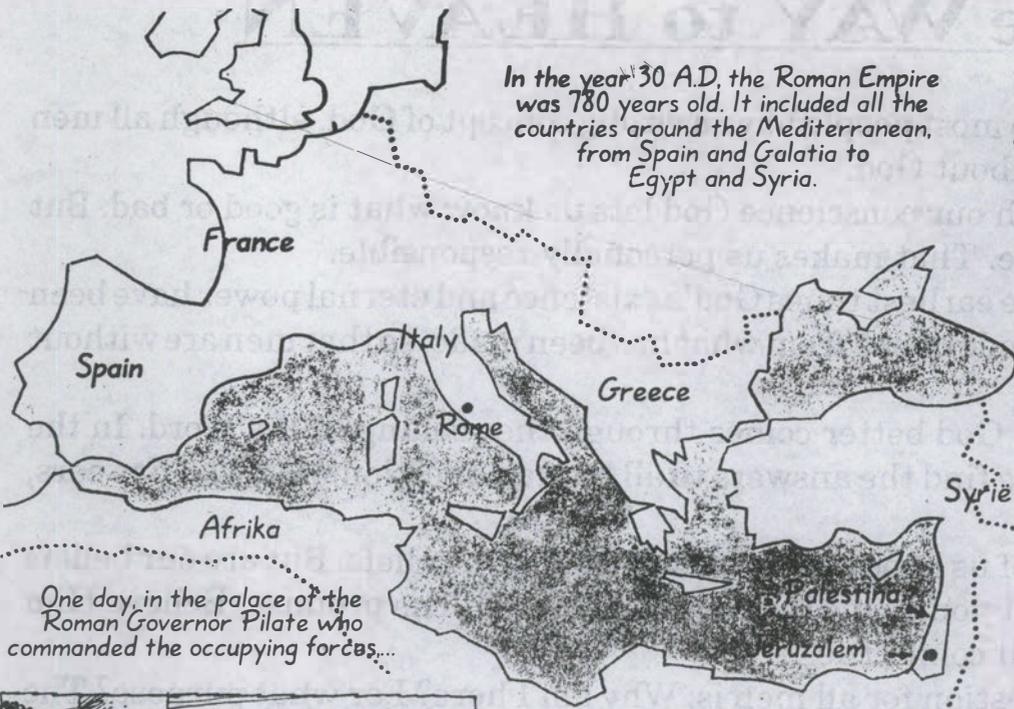
This perfect love is shown to us through His Son Jesus Christ. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of HIS BEING.

**JESUS** became Son of man, so that we can become sons of God. He is the only perfect man, totally sinless, completely innocent, full of compassion. He has healed more broken hearts than the doctors have healed broken bodies and He still does.

**JESUS**, the perfect One, gave His life for you and me. He died on the cross, was buried, but on the 3rd day He rose from the dead: the **RESURRECTION!** **HE IS ALIVE!** His invitation to us is: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls"*.

**PRAYER:** Thank you Lord Jesus, my Saviour, I believe in you and with your help I shall follow you and obey your commands, because I simply love you.

In the year 30 A.D. the Roman Empire was 780 years old. It included all the countries around the Mediterranean, from Spain and Galatia to Egypt and Syria.



One day, in the palace of the Roman Governor Pilate who commanded the occupying forces...

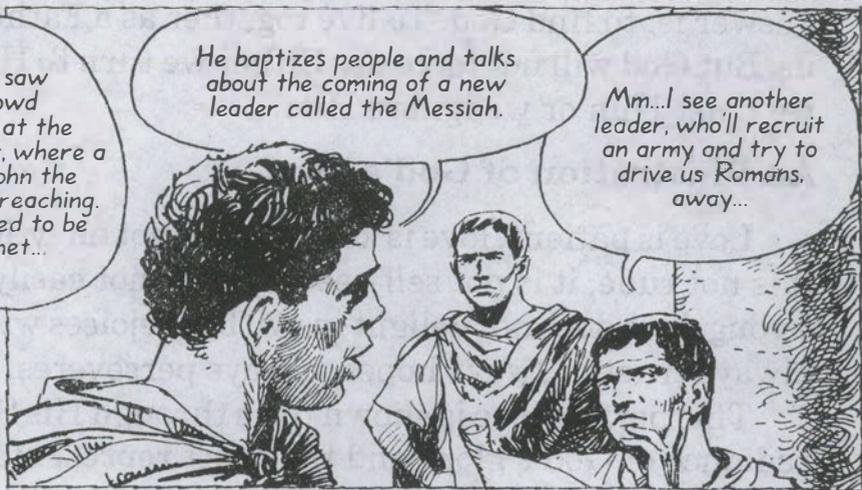


...located in Jerusalem; which was the capital of Judea in Palestine, and belonged to the Roman province of Syria.



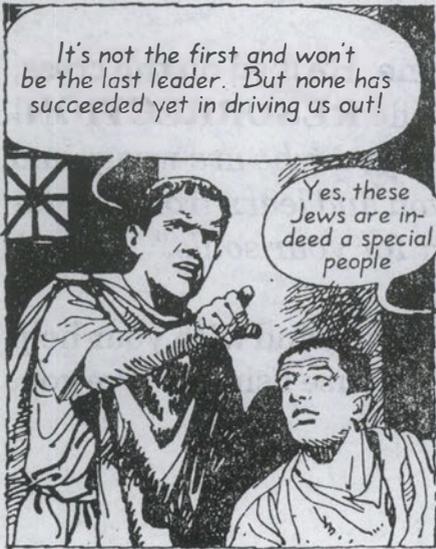
Captain, what kind of news do you have in your weekly report?

Governor, I saw a large crowd of people at the Jordan river, where a certain John the Baptist is preaching. He's believed to be a prophet...



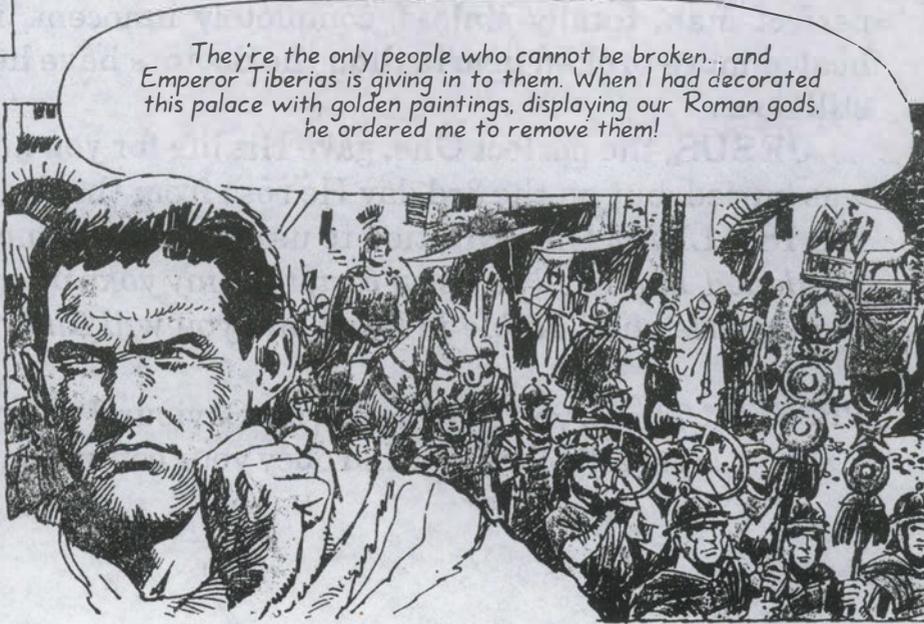
He baptizes people and talks about the coming of a new leader called the Messiah.

Mm...I see another leader, who'll recruit an army and try to drive us Romans away...



It's not the first and won't be the last leader. But none has succeeded yet in driving us out!

Yes, these Jews are indeed a special people



They're the only people who cannot be broken... and Emperor Tiberias is giving in to them. When I had decorated this palace with golden paintings, displaying our Roman gods, he ordered me to remove them!

To these Jews this meant desecrating their holy city. Any pictures of their God are strictly forbidden. All our symbols, related to our Roman Empire are considered blasphemous.

Therefore, they made a complaint to Emperor Tiberias... and they won the case!

They're a difficult people to rule. My job as governor here in Jerusalem is the most unpleasant one in the whole empire!

They don't have to work on the Sabbath day and they're also permitted to refuse entry to their Temple to all non-Jewish people under the pretense of being a chosen people.

That's right. These Jewish people are the only ones in the whole empire who don't have to worship our Roman gods!

Oh, this Jerusalem temple! What a nightmare! When 200,000 pilgrims arrive for the Jewish feasts, one must be careful! Before you know it, they'll cause trouble and start a riot.

We're watching their movements from the Citadel Antonia and can prevent any trouble in time.

Allright, captain. Watch this Jordan river situation closely and keep me informed...

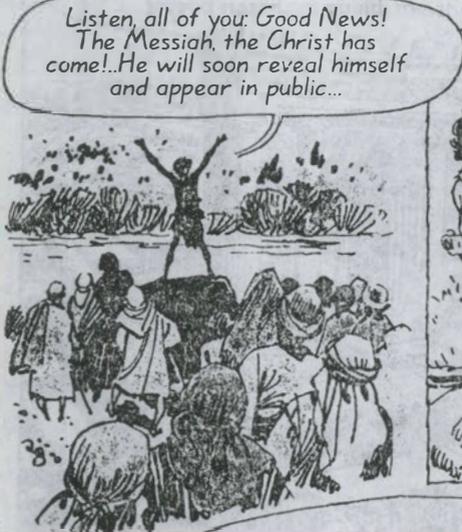
I'm going there myself. I know the Jewish authorities

are also wondering about this John the Baptist; they intend to make an investigation of their own...

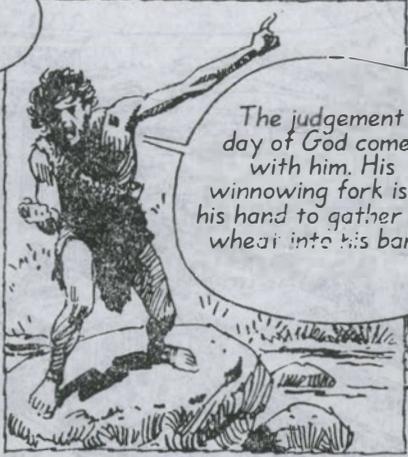
The following day, at the Jordan river.



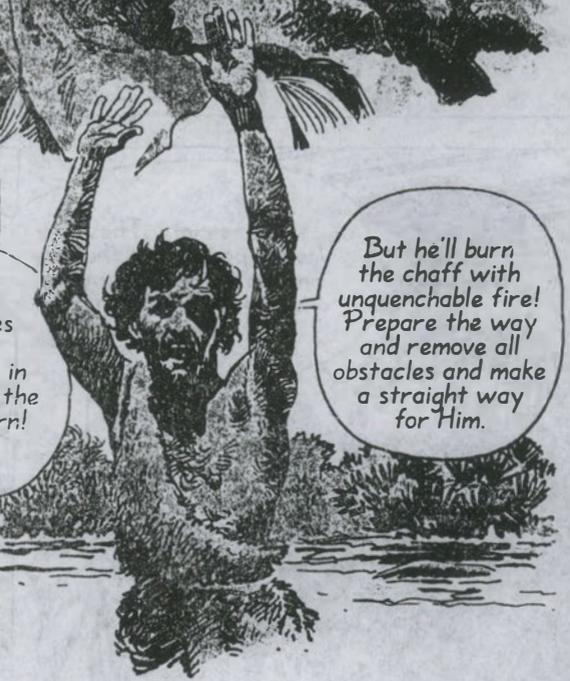
This prophet from the desert really attracts a lot of people... Let's find out why.



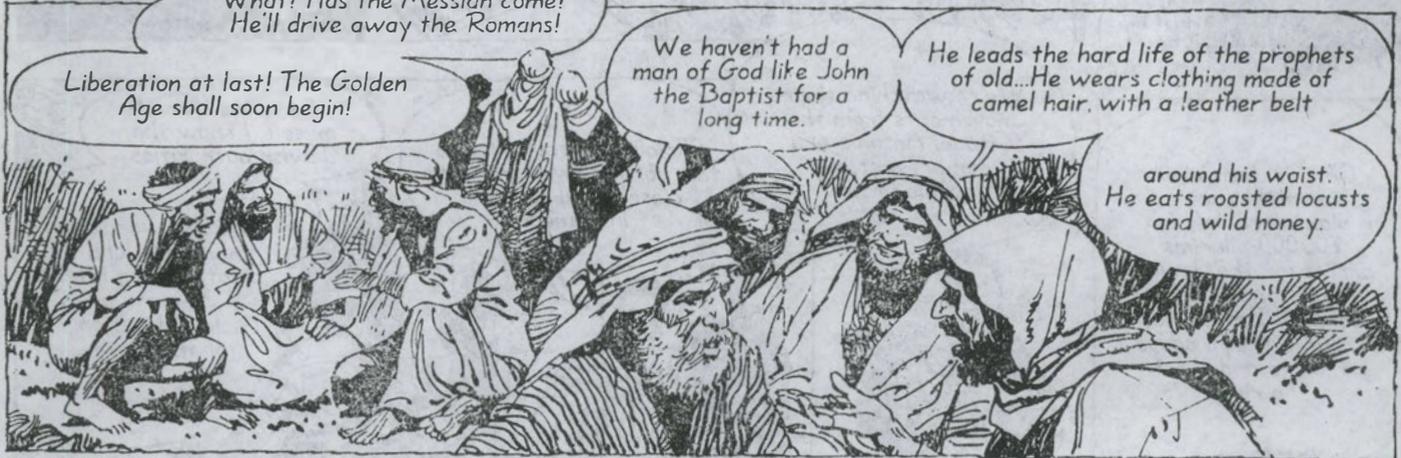
Listen, all of you: Good News! The Messiah, the Christ has come!..He will soon reveal himself and appear in public...



The judgement day of God comes with him. His winnowing fork is in his hand to gather the wheat into his barn!



But he'll burn the chaff with unquenchable fire! Prepare the way and remove all obstacles and make a straight way for Him.



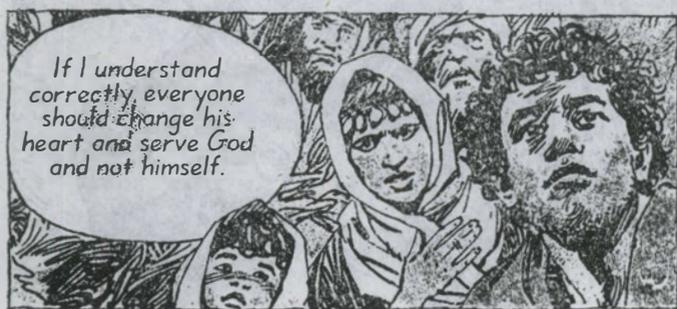
What? Has the Messiah come? He'll drive away the Romans!

Liberation at last! The Golden Age shall soon begin!

We haven't had a man of God like John the Baptist for a long time.

He leads the hard life of the prophets of old...He wears clothing made of camel hair, with a leather belt

around his waist. He eats roasted locusts and wild honey.



If I understand correctly, everyone should change his heart and serve God and not himself.

**Luke 3:1-2**  
In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius Caesar, a message came from God to John (the son of Zacharias), as he was living out in the deserts. (Pilate was governor over Judea at that time; Herod, over Galilee; his brother Philip, over Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, over Abilene; and Annas and Caiaphas were the Jewish High Priests.)

**Matthew 3:1-17**  
While they were living in Nazareth, John the Baptist began preaching out in the Judean wilderness. His constant theme was, "Turn from your sins...turn to God...for the Kingdom of Heaven is coming soon. Isaiah the prophet had told about John's ministry



I immerse you into the water.



And I will lift you up, which means cleansing and renewing.



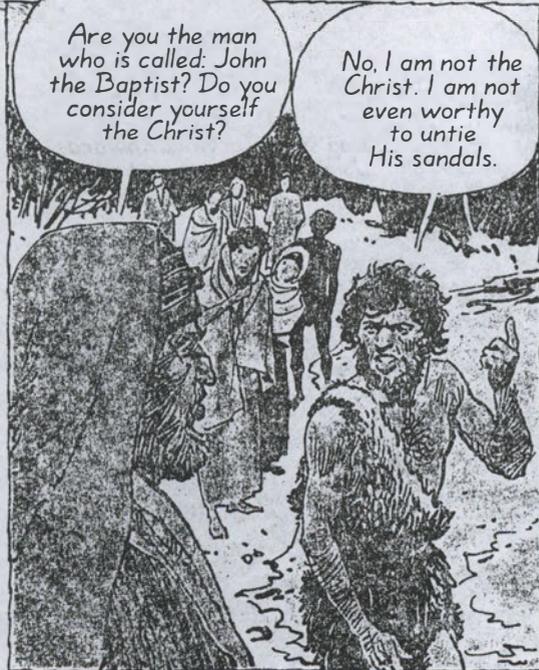
Meanwhile...

Are you not affected by what the prophet proclaims?

We don't need to change ourselves!



We are here to investigate for the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, the High priest and the Pharisees.



Are you the man who is called: John the Baptist? Do you consider yourself the Christ?

No, I am not the Christ. I am not even worthy to untie His sandals.



Who are you then? Where do you come from? In whose name do you speak?



I am the voice of one calling in the desert: "Make straight the way for the Lord!"



For what reason do you baptize the people?

I baptize with water...

but He, Who comes after me, will baptize with fire!

Beware, you brood of vipers! You think...

...that you are safe, because you have Abraham as your forefather.

But there is no favoritism with God. The tree is judged by its fruits...God can raise up children of Abraham out of these stones here!

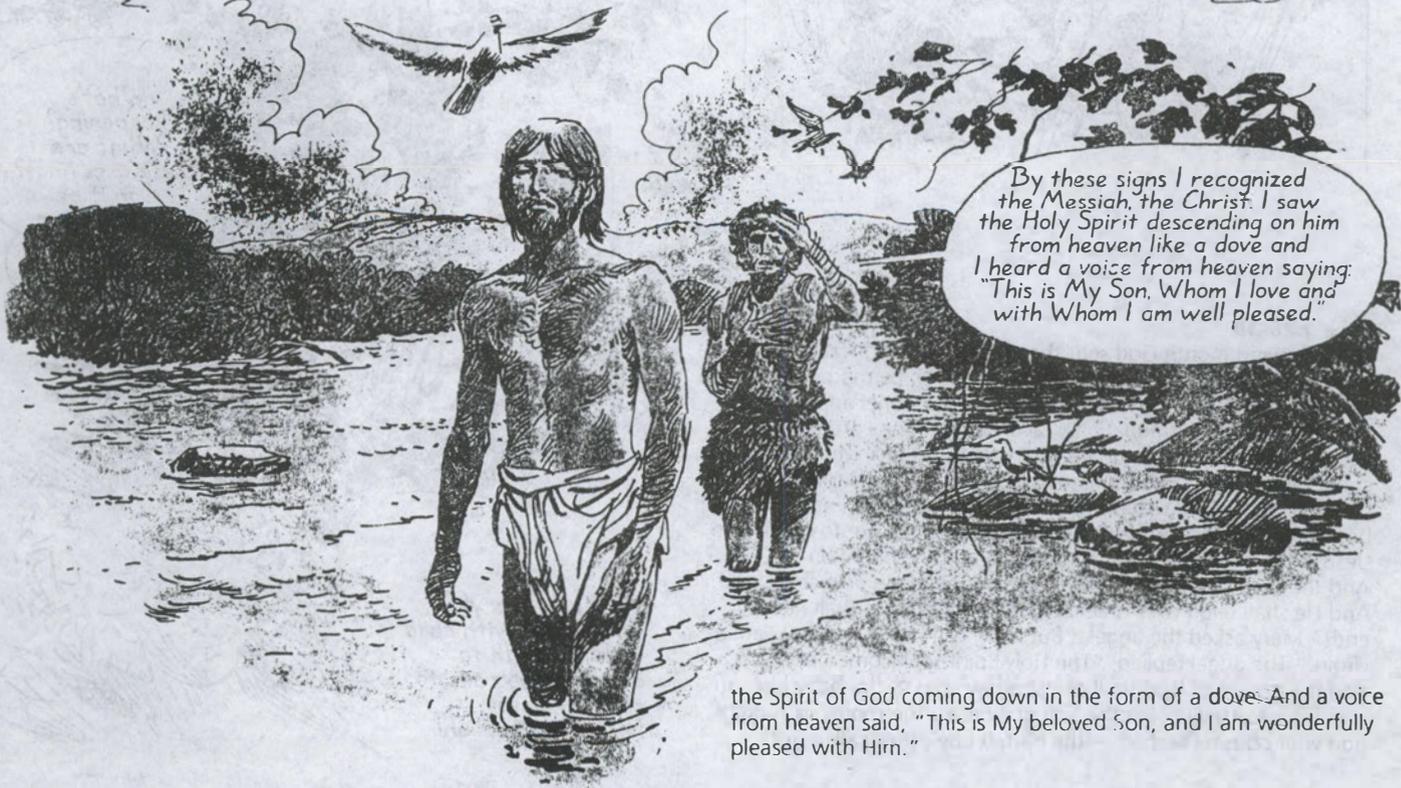
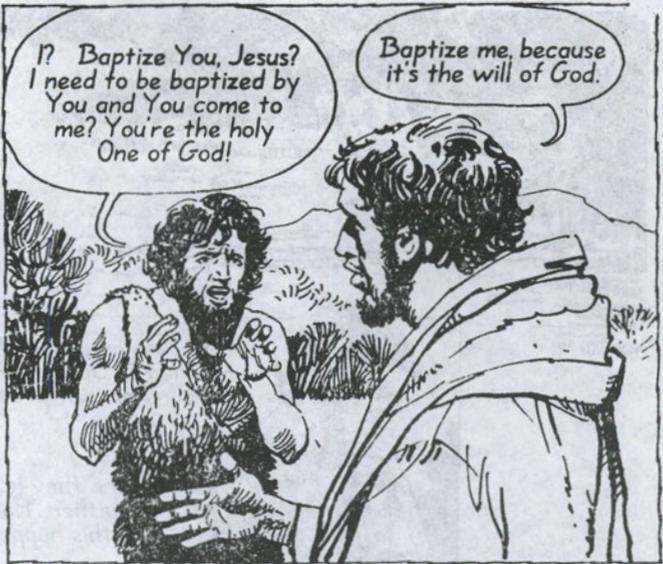
centuries before! He had written, "I hear a shout from the wilderness, 'Prepare a road for the Lord - straighten out the path where He will walk.'" John's clothing was woven from camel's hair and he wore a leather belt; his food was locusts and wild honey. People from Jerusalem and from all over the Jordan Valley, and, in fact, from every section of Judea went out to the wilderness to hear him preach. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized, he denounced them. "You sons of snakes!" he warned. "Who said that you could escape the coming wrath of God? Before being baptized, prove that you have turned from sin by doing worthy deeds. Don't try to get by as you are, thinking, 'We are safe for we are Jews - descendants of Abraham.' That proves nothing. God can change these stones here into Jews! And even now the axe of God's judgement is poised to chop down every unproductive tree. They will be chopped and burned. With water I baptize those who repent of their sins; but Someone else is coming, far greater than I am, so great that I am not worthy to carry His shoes! He shall baptize you with the Holy

At that moment a certain Jesus of Nazareth leaves the crowd...

...and steps forward towards John the Baptist and says:



Spirit and with fire. He will separate the chaff from the grain, burning the chaff with never-ending fire, and storing away the grain." Then Jesus went from His home in Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized there by John. John didn't want to do it. "This isn't proper", he said. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by You." But Jesus said, "Please do it, for I must do all that is right." So then John baptized Him. After His baptism, as soon as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens where opened to Him and He saw



By these signs I recognized the Messiah, the Christ. I saw the Holy Spirit descending on him from heaven like a dove and I heard a voice from heaven saying: "This is My Son, Whom I love and with Whom I am well pleased."

the Spirit of God coming down in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, and I am wonderfully pleased with Him."



Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river at the age of 30. Who was He? He was called the son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. His mother's name was Mary, a relative of the mother of John the Baptist. His parents could tell some wonderful things about the divine happenings which surrounded His birth.



Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph when she found herself pregnant

before they had been together. How did this happen?

You know the promise of the prophet Daniel! The angel Gabriel told him about the birth of the Messiah. I wonder if we shall experience that great day.

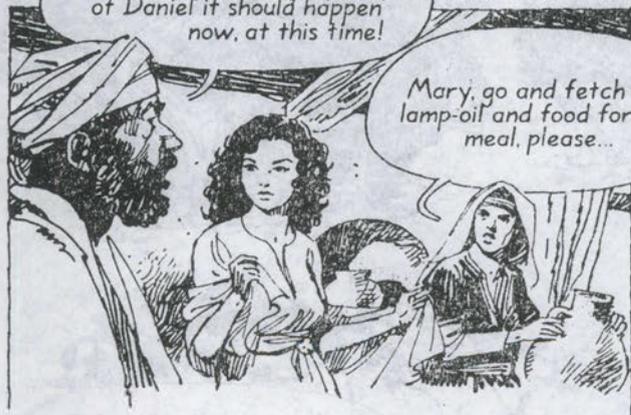
I believe it because...



One Sabbath day, Mary's parents return home from the synagogue:

...according to the prophecy of Daniel it should happen now, at this time!

Mary, go and fetch the lamp-oil and food for the meal, please...



Suddenly...

Rejoice, Mary! You are highly favored by God!



What's happening? What are these greetings? Can it be that this is a message from heaven?

Fear not, Mary! You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to call him Jesus. He is the Messiah!

**Luke 1:26-38**

The following month God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin, Mary, engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Congratulations, favored lady! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be frightened, Mary", the angel told her, "for God has decided to wonderfully bless you! Very soon now, you will become pregnant and have a baby boy, and You are to name Him 'Jesus'. He shall be very great and shall be called the Son of God. And the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His ancestor David. And He shall reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom shall never end!" Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of God shall overshadow you; so the baby born to you will be utterly holy - the Son of God. Furthermore, six months ago your cousin Elizabeth - 'the barren one', they called her -

I don't understand.  
How can I have a child,  
since I'm avirgin?

The Holy Spirit  
will come upon you and  
the power of the Most High  
will overshadow you. So the  
Holy One to be born will be  
called the Son of God. To  
prove that what I announced  
to you will happen:  
Elisabeth, your cousin is  
going to have a child in  
her old age. She, who was  
said to be barren, is in  
her sixth month. For  
nothing is impossible  
with God!

I'm the Lord's servant.  
May it be to me as you  
have said.

A few days later...

Mother, I'd like to spend  
some weeks with our  
cousin Elisabeth.

I see that  
you want  
this with all your  
heart, though you  
don't say why...

Your visit will surely  
make her happy as  
well as her husband  
Zacharias.

But they live  
far from here,  
in Judea.

You can only go if you join  
a caravan passing Nazareth  
on its way to Jerusalem.

Soon afterwards Mary is on  
her way to Judea.

But I'll put you  
in the care of a  
reliable guide,  
who'll look  
after you.

I'm not  
afraid, for I  
know that  
God will  
protect me!

God has blessed  
me with His presence and  
has spoken to me in my heart  
that I shall be the mother of  
the Messiah, Who will save  
us all from our sin. ...Now  
I'm curious as to

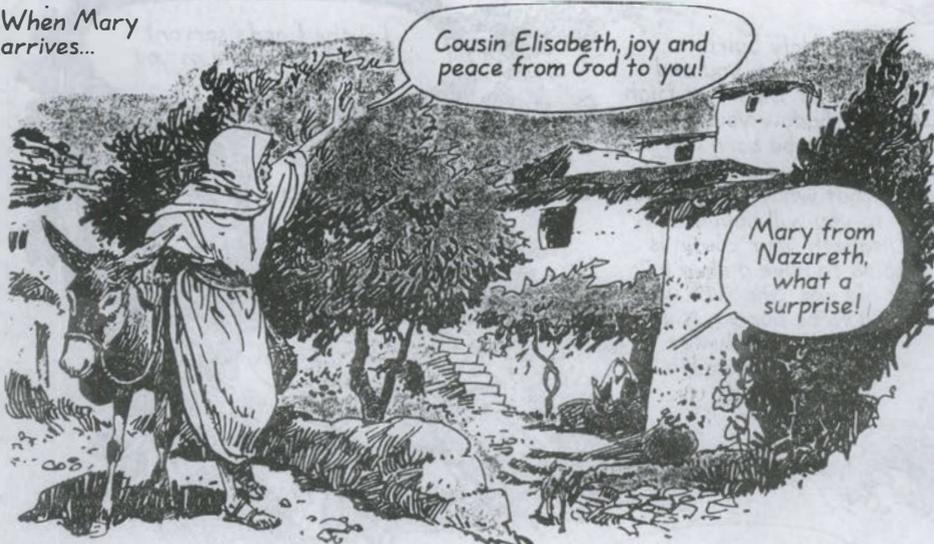
how my  
cousin is doing and  
to find out that  
it is all true!

Mary from  
Nazareth, that's the  
way to Ain-Karin,  
where your cousin  
Elisabeth lives.  
The village is in  
that valley.

Thank you for  
the journey.  
May God  
protect you!

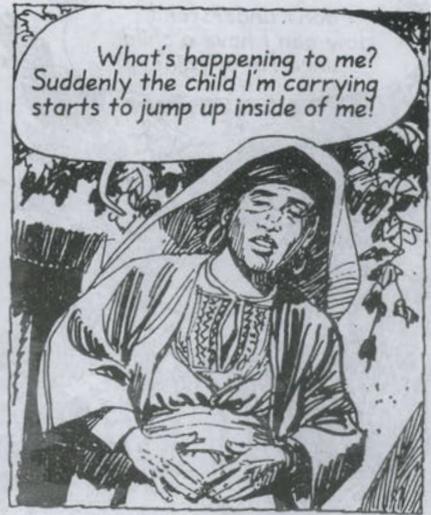


When Mary arrives...



Cousin Elisabeth, joy and peace from God to you!

Mary from Nazareth, what a surprise!



What's happening to me? Suddenly the child I'm carrying starts to jump up inside of me!

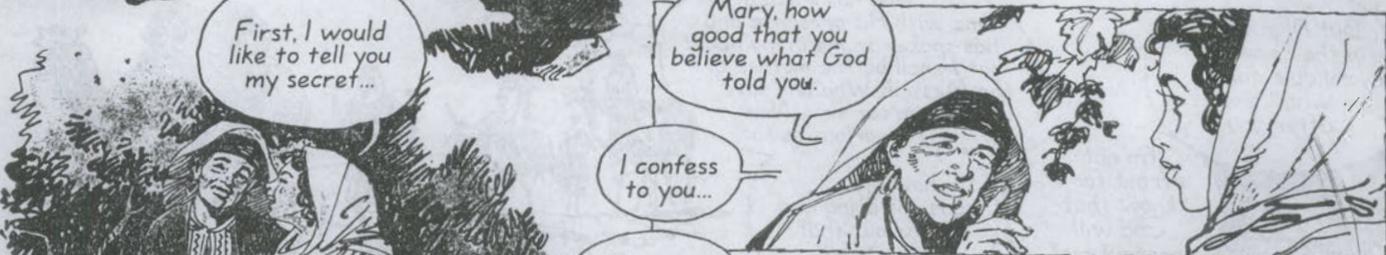


Mary, what's the reason for your visit...

Oh, Elisabeth! How wonderful to see that you are expecting a baby...

...for that proves that all what was told to me has come from God and will come true.

...so unexpectedly?



First, I would like to tell you my secret...

Mary, how good that you believe what God told you.

I confess to you...



... at hearing your voice, my baby jumped in my womb. That is a sign! Why am I so favored,

that the mother of the Messiah should come to me?

became pregnant in her old age! For every promise from God shall surely come true." Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to do whatever He wants. May everything you said come true " And then the angel disappeared.



Blessed are you among all women and blessed is the child you bear!



My soul glorifies the Lord! He has been mindful of my humble state. The Almighty One has done great things to me so that His Name may be magnified!

There comes Zacharias. He cannot speak anymore.

I'll explain it all to you.



Mary, Zacharias has become dumb and that has to do with my pregnancy...

...and also with your pregnancy.



...You know we had no children and no hope left to have any.

Six months ago, Zacharias went to the temple of the Lord with the 300 priests of his division, to serve the Lord, our God...



Draw lots for the name of the priest who will have the honor to officiate in the temple of the Lord and to burn incense!

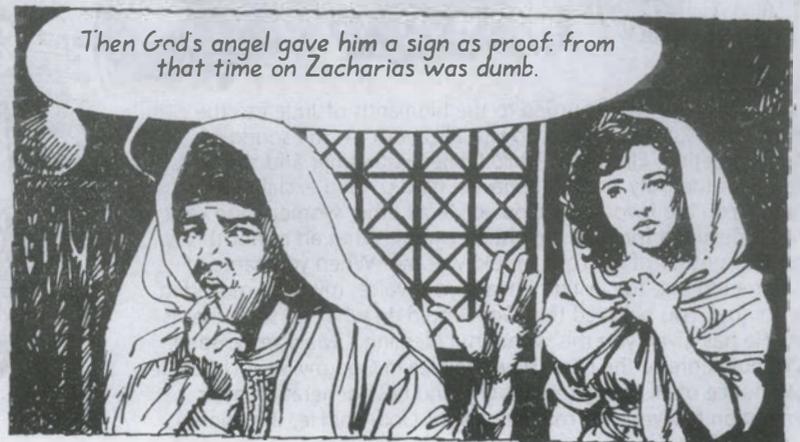
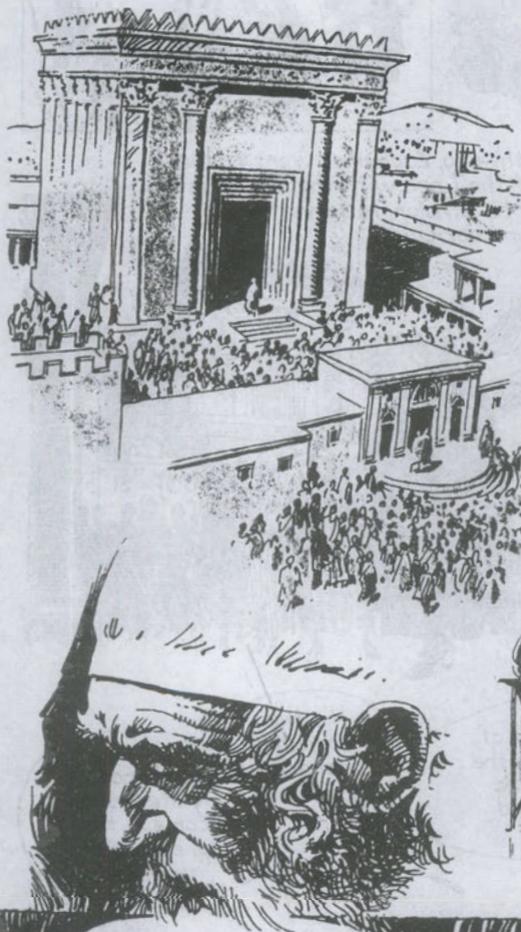
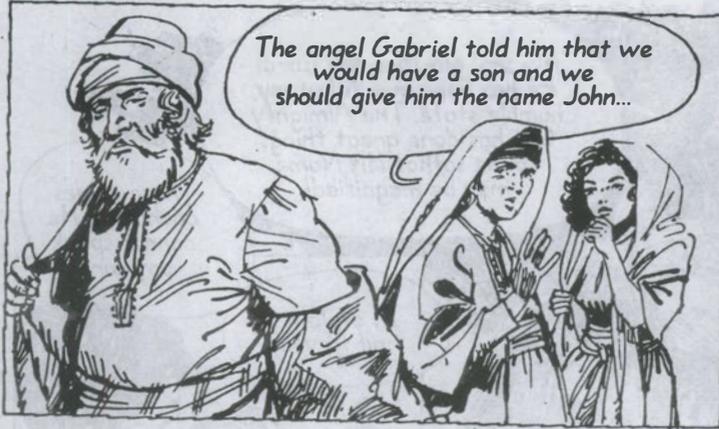
It's the priest Zacharias!

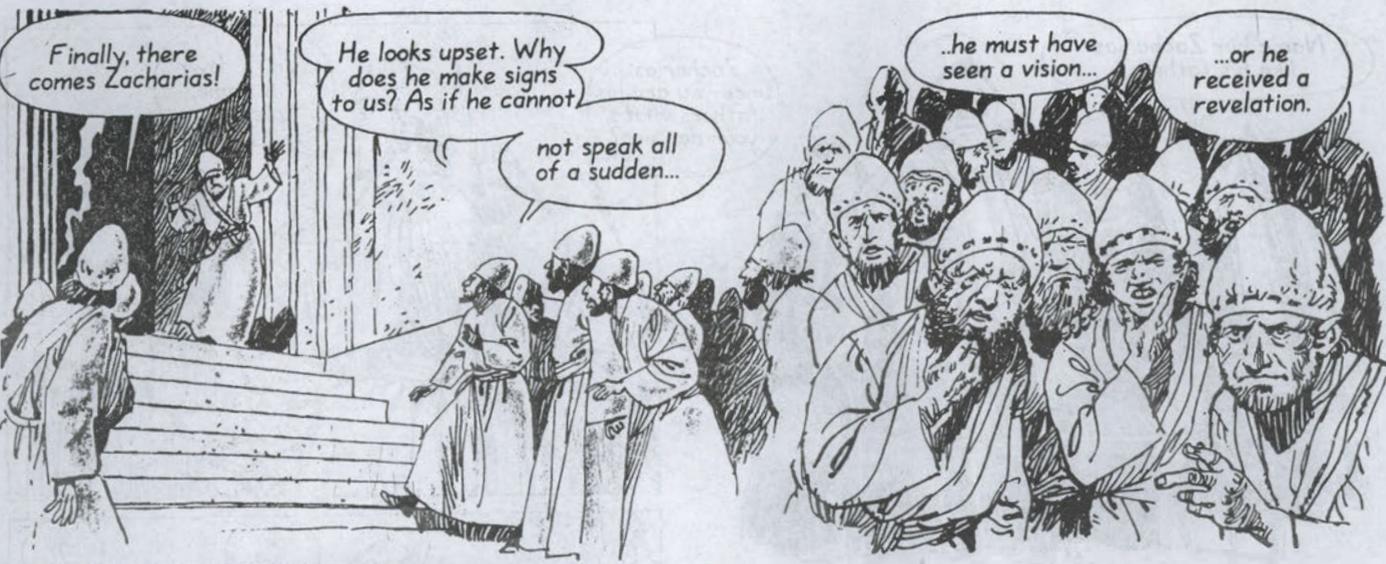
The chance of my life! I shall come in the presence of the Lord!



**Luke 1:39-66**

A few days later Mary hurried to the highlands of Judea to the town where Zacharias lived, to visit Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "You are favored by God above all other women, and your child is destined for God's mightiest praise. What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me! When you came in and greeted me, the instant I heard your voice, my baby moved in me for joy! You believed that God would do what He said; that is why He has given you this wonderful blessing." Mary responded, "Oh, how I praise the Lord. How I rejoice in God my Savior! For He took notice of His lowly servant girl, and now generation after generation forever shall call me blest of God. For He, the mighty





Finally, there comes Zacharias!

He looks upset. Why does he make signs to us? As if he cannot

not speak all of a sudden...

..he must have seen a vision...

...or he received a revelation.



And now I'm six months pregnant.

How great is our God. He has taken away my disgrace...

Mary stayed three months with Elisabeth and returned home to Nazareth. The day came that Elisabeth gave birth to a son. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. At that occasion the child receives his name.



So, the circumcision is finished.



What name do you give this child?

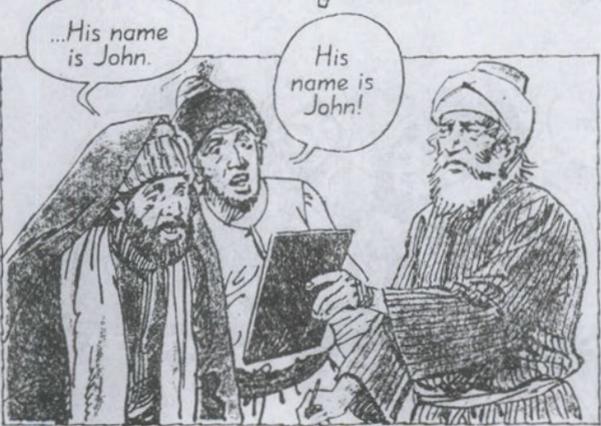
He shall be called John.



A nice name! It means: The Lord is merciful.

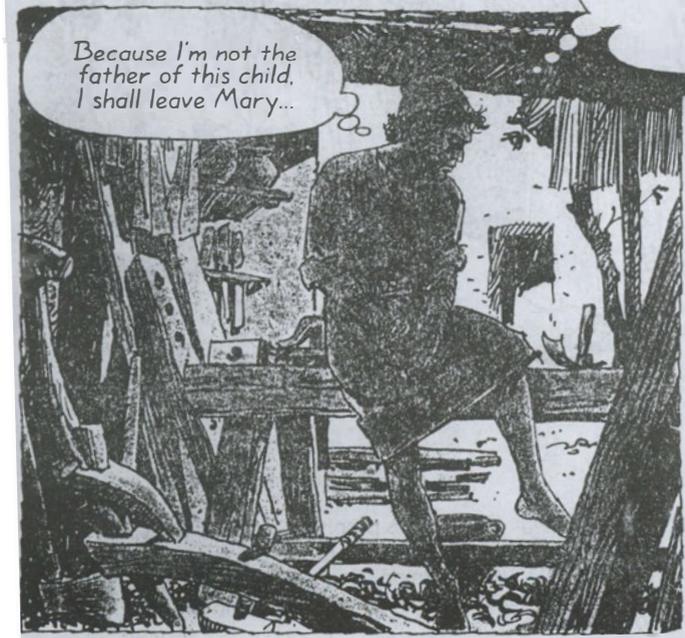
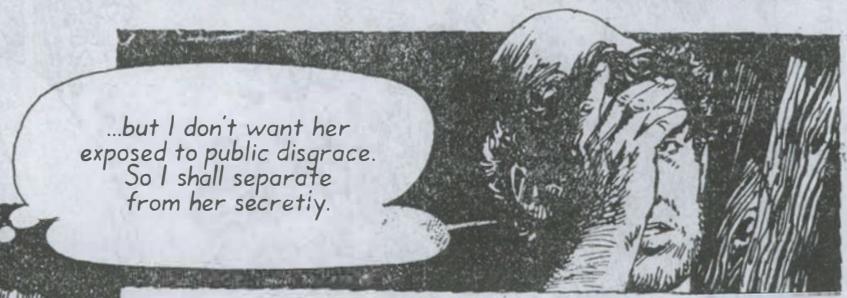
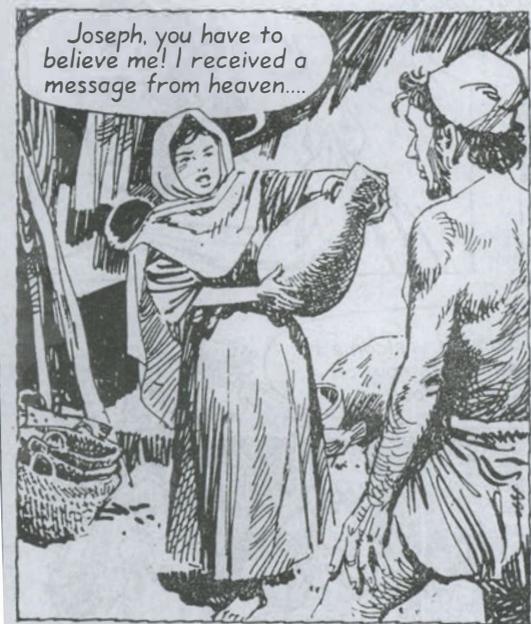
But no-one in your family has that name!

Holy One, has done great things to me. His mercy goes on from generation, to all who reverence Him. How powerful is His mighty arm! How He scatters the proud and haughty ones! He has torn princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. He has satisfied the hungry hearts and sent the rich away with empty hands. And how He has helped His servant Israel! He has not forgotten His promise to be merciful. For He promised our fathers - Abraham and his children - to be merciful to them forever." Mary stayed with Elisabeth about three months and then went back to her own home. By now Elisabeth's waiting was over, for the time had come for the baby to be born - and it was a boy. The word spread quickly to her neighbors and relatives of how kind the Lord



had been to her, and everyone rejoiced. When the baby was eight days old, all the relatives and friends came for the circumcision ceremony. They all assumed the baby's name would be Zacharias, after his father. But Elizabeth said, "No! He must be named John!" "What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name." So they asked the baby's father, talking to him by gestures. He motioned for a piece of paper and to everyone's surprise wrote, "His name is John!" Instantly Zacharias could speak again, and he began praising God. Wonder fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread through the Judean hills. And everyone who heard about it thought long thoughts and asked, "I wonder what this child will turn out to be? For the hand of the Lord is surely upon him in some special way."

After several months of Mary's return to Nazareth....



**Matthew 1:18-24**

These are the facts concerning the birth of Jesus Christ: His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But while she was still a virgin she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph, her fiancé, being a man of stern principle, decided to break the engagement but to do it quietly, as he didn't want to publicly disgrace her. As he lay awake considering this, he fell into a dream, and saw an angel standing beside him. "Joseph, son of David", the angel said, "don't hesitate to take Mary as your wife! For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit! And she will have a Son, and you shall name Him Jesus (meaning 'Savior'), for He will save His people from their sins. This will fulfill

Upon waking one morning...

What a strange dream!...

No doubt God has spoken to me through His angel!

I know Mary isn't lying. The child she expects is from God...

...and will be the Messiah...

...who should be a descendant from King David!

Since Mary and I are descendants from David's royal family...

...this child will be the fulfillment of prophecy

Now I understand what God wants me to do!

I've made up my mind. I'll take Mary as my wife as soon as possible!

Soon after that, the wedding of Joseph and Mary is celebrated...



Mary, my beloved, welcome to this house. From now on it's yours too!



God's message through His prophets - 'Listen! The virgin shall conceive a child! She shall give birth to a Son, and He shall be called 'Emmanuel' (meaning 'God is with us').' When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel commanded, and brought Mary home to be his wife.

Some months later in Nazareth...

Caesar Augustus has issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman Empire, every family head has to go to his native town to register.

Again? Another trick of the Romans! I think they want to raise the taxes...

...or they want to find out how many men could rise up to rebel against them!

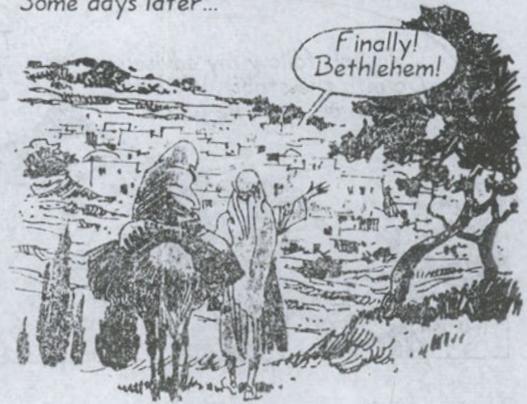


Some days later...

David's family, to whom I belong, came from Bethlehem. I

It won't be long before Mary will give birth, so I'll take

Finally! Bethlehem!



So many people! Joseph, where do we find a room?

With some of my relatives. You can't count on that. But first let me fulfill all the formalities.

In the census office...

Line up! Pay attention! False statements will be severely punished!

Jesse, I'm furious! I, as a descendant of King David is being forced to give account to these Romans!

Believe me, their power won't last much longer!



A new star has been found. What if that means that the Messiah is coming?

Remember Balaam's prophecy. "A star shall come out of Israel and he will be a great ruler."



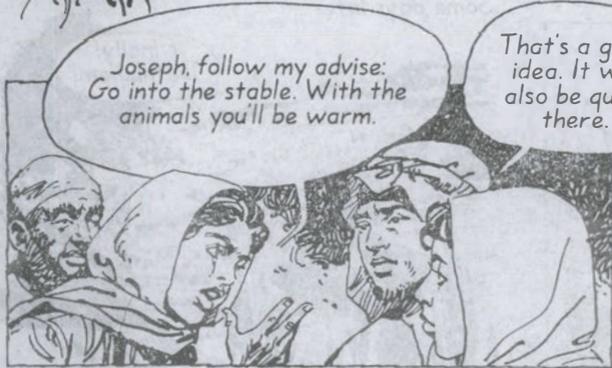
Luke 2:1-20

About this time Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the nation. (This census was taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) Everyone was required to return to his ancestral home for this registration. And because Joseph was a member of the royal line, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, King David's ancient home - journeying there from the Galilean village of Nazareth. He took with him Mary, his

At the house of the relatives...



May I introduce Mary, my wife? She expects her child soon. Where can we find a room for her?



That night Mary gave birth to her first-born son...



She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger...



... fiancee, who was obviously pregnant by this time. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born; And she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped Him in a blanket and laid Him in manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn. That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared among them, and the landscape shone bright with the glory of the Lord. They were badly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you the most

In Bethlehem's field, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night...

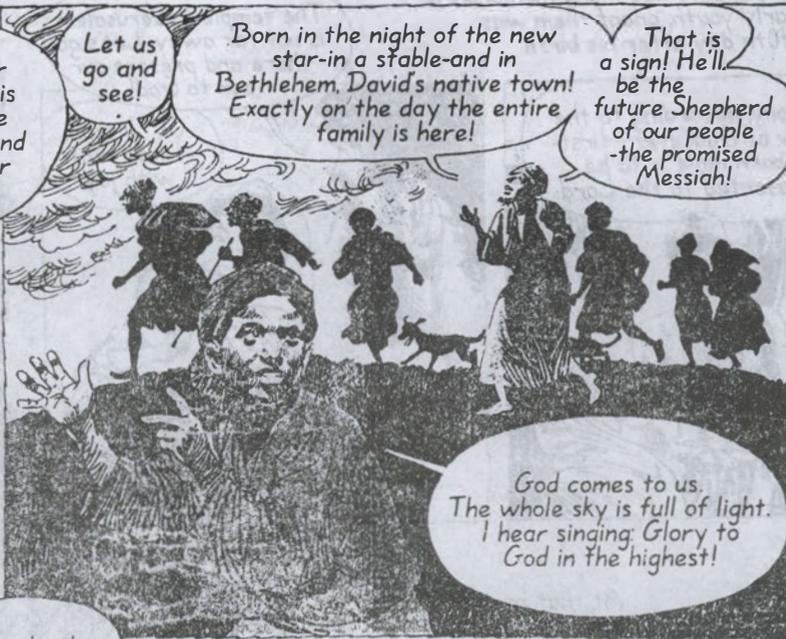


Good News for you all! A child is born to you - the Saviour! You'll find him in a manger in Bethlehem.

Let us go and see!

Born in the night of the new star - in a stable - and in Bethlehem, David's native town! Exactly on the day the entire family is here!

That is a sign! He'll be the future Shepherd of our people - the promised Messiah!



God comes to us. The whole sky is full of light. I hear singing: Glory to God in the highest!

Certainly, this is the chosen Child!



On the eighth day the child was circumcised. Circumcision was given to all Jewish male children as a sign and a seal of God's covenant with Abraham.

The next day the news spreads around quickly.



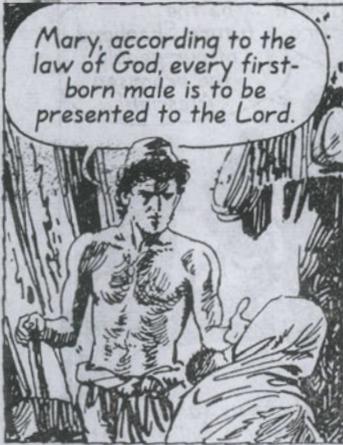
Joseph, what name do you give this child?

His name is Jesus!

Which means: God saves us!

joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone! The Savior - yes, the Messiah, the Lord - has been born tonight in Bethlehem! How will you recognize Him? You will find a baby wrapped in a blanket, lying in a manger!" Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others - the armies of heaven - praising God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven", they sang, "and peace on earth for all those pleasing Him." When this great army of angels had returned again to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Come on! Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." They ran to the village and found their way to Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. The shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story expressed astonishment, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and often thought about them. Then the shepherds went back again to their fields and flocks, praising God for the visit of the angels, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had told them.

Jesus' parents had many memories of his early youth; one of them was the 40th day after his birth.



Mary, according to the law of God, every first-born male is to be presented to the Lord.



The temple in Jerusalem is not far away. Let's go there and present our son to God!

Oh, Joseph, I'll do that with joy!

In the temple court...



A fine sheep for a proper sacrifice.

No, it's too expensive for us. I'll buy that pair of doves.

At that moment, an old man enters the temple. His name is Simeon, well known to many...



Simeon, what brings you to the temple today?

Anna, I sense that I'll meet someone today! The Holy Spirit sends me...

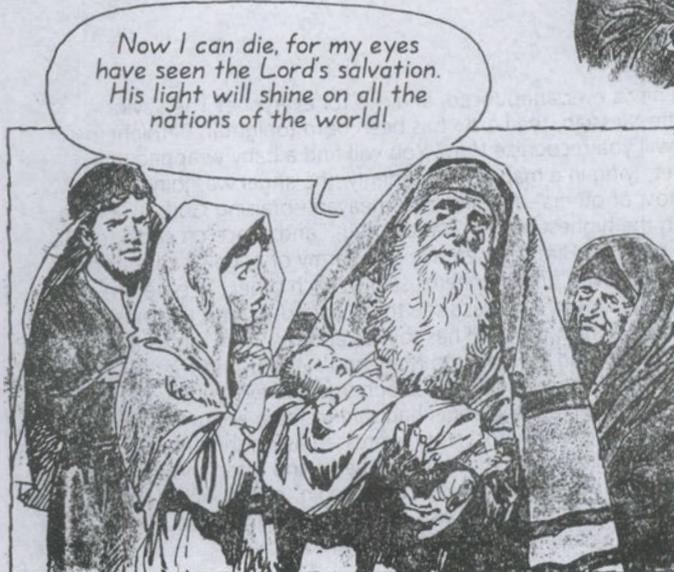
Simeon. He often said that he will not die before he has seen the Messiah.

Who's that old man overthere?



Simeon... look at this child!

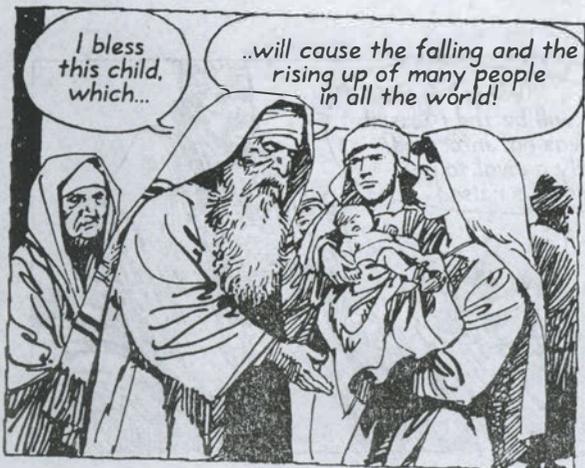
Oh, what a joy is overwhelming my soul!



Now I can die, for my eyes have seen the Lord's salvation. His light will shine on all the nations of the world!

**Luke 2:22-38**

When the time came for Mary's purification offering at the Temple, as required by the laws of Moses after the birth of a child, His parents took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. For in these laws God had said, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he shall be dedicated to the Lord." At that time Jesus' parents also offered their sacrifice for purification - "either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" was the legal requirement. That day a man named Simeon, a Jerusalem resident, was in the Temple. He was a good man, very devout, filled with the Holy Spirit and constantly expecting the Messiah to come soon. For the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen Him - God's anointed King. The Holy Spirit had impelled him to go to the Temple that day, and so, when Mary and Joseph arrived to present the baby Jesus to the Lord in obedience to the law, Simeon was there and took the child in his arms, praising God. "Lord", he said.



I bless this child, which...

...will cause the falling and the rising up of many people in all the world!

"now I can die content! For I have seen Him as You promised me I would. I have seen the Savior You have given to the world. He is the Light that will shine upon the nations, and He will be the glory of Your people Israel!" Joseph and Mary just stood there, marvelling at what was being said about Jesus. Simeon blessed them but then said to Mary, "A sword shall pierce your soul, for this child shall be rejected by many in Israel, and this to their undoing. But He will be the greatest joy of many others. And the deepest thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed." Anna, a prophetess, was also there in the Temple that day. She was the

Jesus' parents also remembered the events with the astronomers. That meeting showed how Jesus was welcomed by foreigners but rejected by his own people. At the time of Jesus' birth, there arrived in Jerusalem Magi (wise men) from the East...



Where's the new-born child, who'll be King of this nation?

We have seen his star appear in our countries.

What? Has the Messiah come?

Impossible! We would have known it in Jerusalem! But nobody has heard anything.

The King should hear this news immediately!



Majesty! Some foreigners are looking for a child, who is the promised Messiah!

They say that his birth has been shown through the position of the stars!

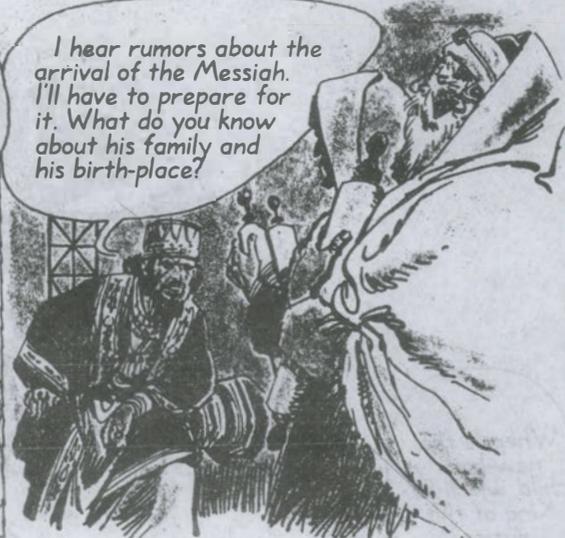
What? A child will be the Messiah and I was not informed? Secretly a rival to my throne is raised.



I have to be clever to uncover this new conspiracy!

Call the Pharisees at once!

I hear rumors about the arrival of the Messiah. I'll have to prepare for it. What do you know about his family and his birth-place?



The Holy Bible says: The Messiah will be a descendant of King David...and King David came from Bethlehem.

It is written: "Bethlehem, out of you will come the ruler who will be the shepherd of my people."



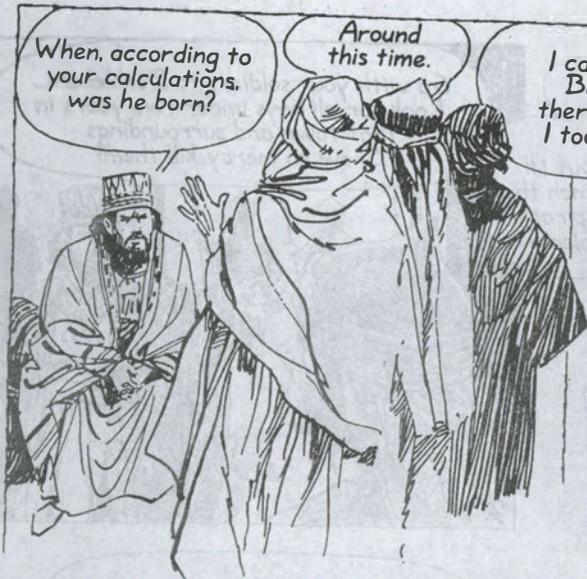
A little later...

I understand you're looking for a child, the Messiah?

Yes, we've seen his star!



daughter of Phanuel, of the Jewish tribe of Asher, and was very old, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; she was a widow, of about eighty-four years, who never left the Temple but stayed there night and day, worshipping God by praying and often going without food. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she also began thanking God and publicly proclaiming the Messiah's arrival to everyone in Jerusalem who had been awaiting the coming of the Savior.



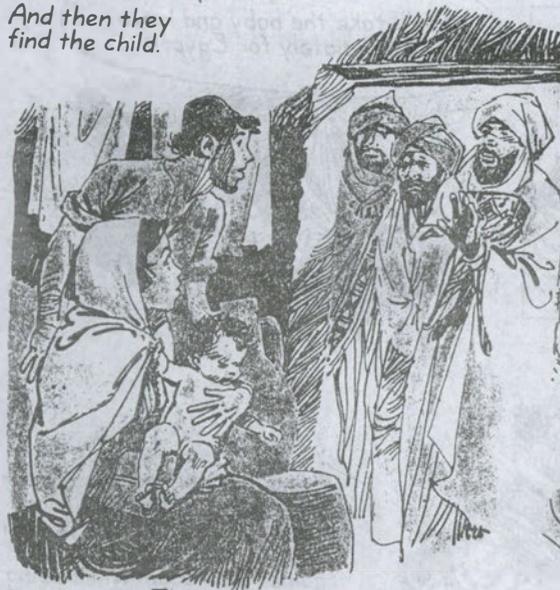
When, according to your calculations, was he born?

Around this time.

I can help you: He was born in Bethlehem...search for him there and report to me, so that I too may go and worship Him!



And then they find the child.



The next morning, when they awake....



Some gold I humbly bring to the descendant of David...

I hope that this fragrant incense will be pleasing to the messenger of God...

...I bring this myrrh for him who'll understand our sufferings.

They leave Jerusalem and go on to Bethlehem...



I had a terrible dream last night... I saw King Herod chasing the Child, trying to kill him.

Joseph, be careful! We don't trust King Herod...

This child has raised his suspicion.

So, we won't return to our countries via Jerusalem!

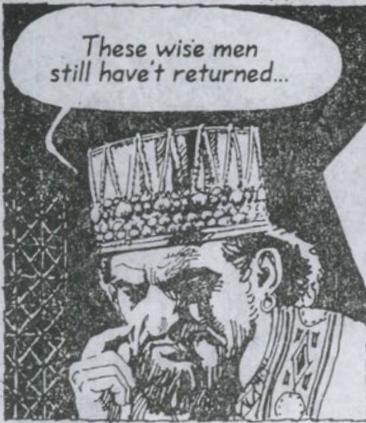


**Matthew 2:1-15**

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem, in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. At about that time some astrologers from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in far-off eastern lands, and have come to worship Him." King Herod was deeply disturbed by their question, and all Jerusalem was filled with rumors. He called a meeting of the Jewish religious leaders. "Did the prophets tell us where the Messiah would be born?" he asked.

"Yes, in Bethlehem", they said, "for this is what the prophet Micah wrote: 'O little town of Bethlehem, you are not just an unimportant Judean village, for a Governor shall rise from you to rule My people Israel.'" Then Herod sent a private message to the astrologers, asking them to come to see him; at this meeting he found out from

While the days pass...King Herod is waiting in his palace...



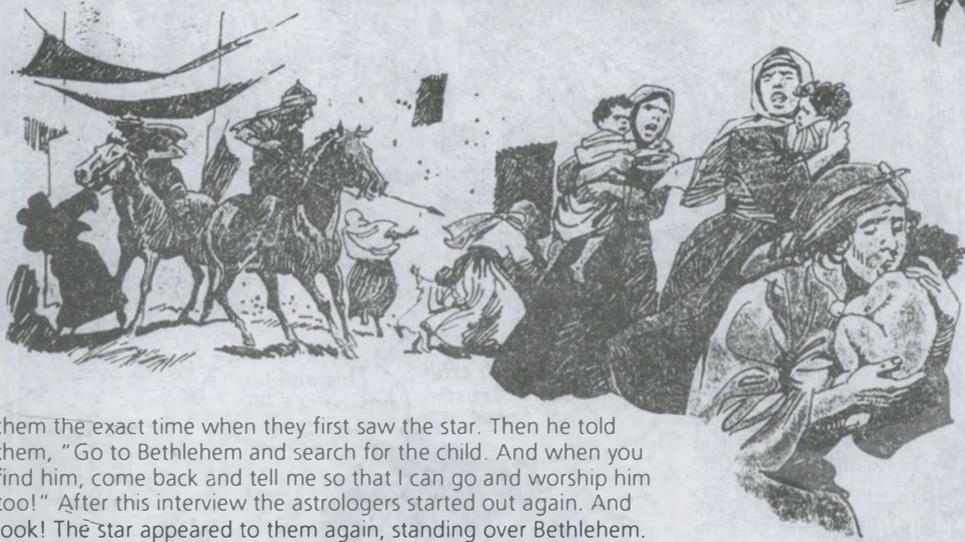
No doubt, they hid this descendant of David from me to rob me of my throne!



Go with your soldiers to Bethlehem... Look for all boys under two years in that town and surroundings. Show no mercy..kill them!



We'll take the baby and leave immediately for Egypt!



After having been in exile for some time, Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth in Galilee. There Jesus grew up and gained in wisdom while being obedient to his parents. At the age of thirty, he went to John the Baptist and was baptized.

them the exact time when they first saw the star. Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him too!" After this interview the astrologers started out again. And look! The star appeared to them again, standing over Bethlehem. Their joy knew no bounds! Entering the house where the baby and Mary His mother were, they threw themselves down before Him, worshipping. Then they opened their presents and gave Him gold, frankincense and myrrh. But when they returned to their own land, they didn't go through Jerusalem to report to Herod, for God had warned them in a dream to go home another way. After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up and flee to Egypt with the baby and His mother", the angel said, "and stay there until I tell you to return, for King Herod is going to try to kill the child. That same night he left for Egypt with Mary and the baby, and stayed there until King Herod's death. This fulfilled the prophet's prediction, "I have called My Son from Egypt."

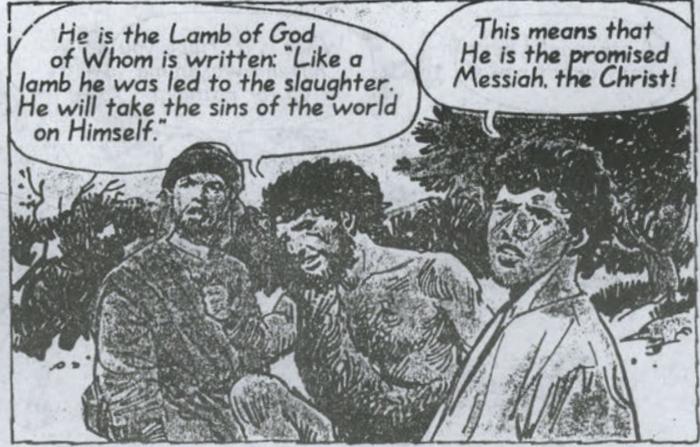
**Luke 2 :39-40**  
When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of God they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child became a strong, robust lad, and was known for wisdom beyond His years; and God poured out His blessings on Him.



One day, John the Baptist sees Jesus passing by....



I tell both of you, my disciples, do you see that man?



He is the Lamb of God of Whom is written: "Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter. He will take the sins of the world on Himself."

This means that He is the promised Messiah, the Christ!



Yes, I saw the Spirit of God come down from heaven on him...That is why I testify that He is the Son of God!

Come Andrew, we'll follow Him!



What do you look for?

Where do you live? We want to speak with you...

Come and see.

They spent considerable time with Him...



That was a heart-touching conversation.

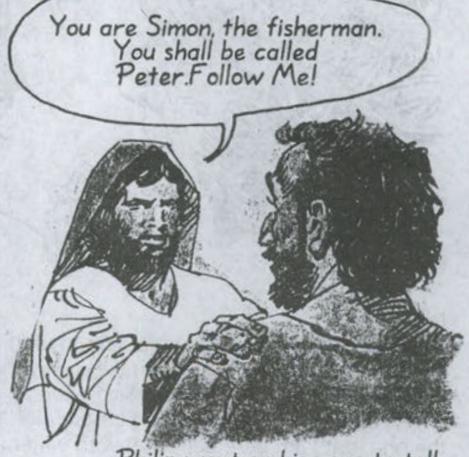
I have to tell my brother Simon at once!



Simon! Simon! We found the Messiah! The Christ! Hurry up, I'll lead you to Him!



What? The Messiah? The Christ? Impossible!



You are Simon, the fisherman. You shall be called Peter. Follow Me!

Philip went on his way, to tell a friend.

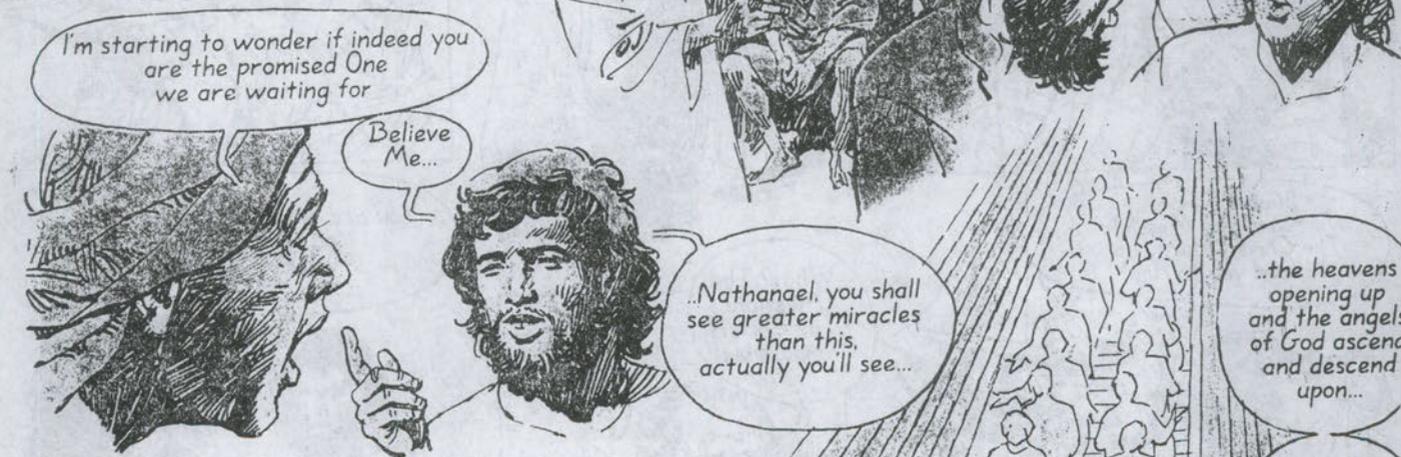
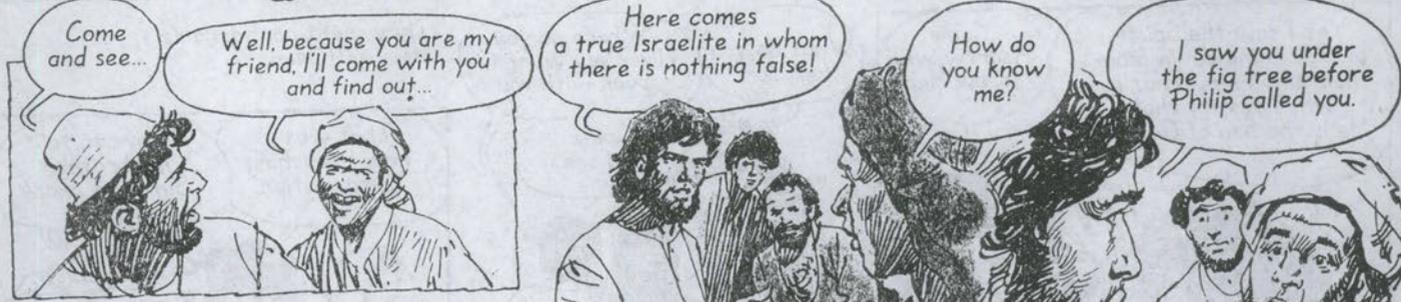


Jesus, this is Philip, he's a friend of us... he's also from Bethsaida...



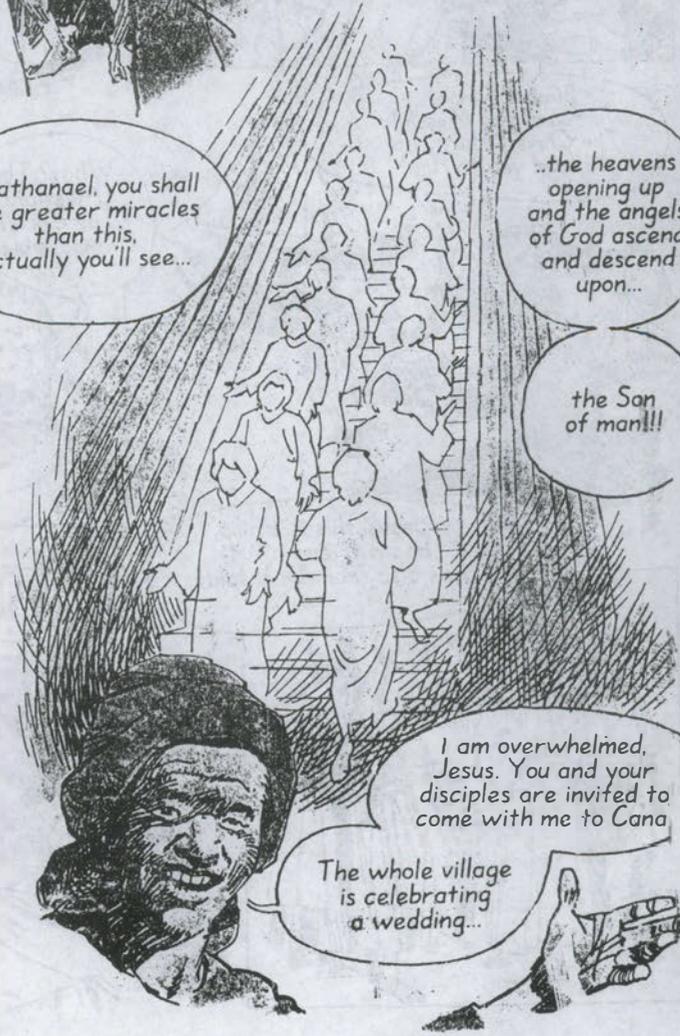
Philip, follow Me and become my disciple.





**John 1:29-51**

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin! He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Soon a man far greater than I am is coming, who existed long before me!' I didn't know He was the one, but I am here baptizing with water in order to point Him out to the nation of Israel. Then John told about seeing the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending from heaven and resting upon Jesus. "I didn't know He was the one", John said again, "but at the time God sent me to baptize He told me, 'When you see the Holy Spirit descending and resting upon someone - He is the one you are looking for. He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' I saw it happen to this man, and I therefore testify that He is the Son of God." The following day as John was standing with two of his disciples, Jesus walked by. John looked at Him intently and then declared, "See! There is the Lamb of God!" Then John's two disciples turned and followed Jesus! Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" He asked them. "Sir", they replied, "where do You live?" "Come and see", He said. So they went with Him to the place where He was staying and were with Him from about four o'clock that afternoon until the evening. (One of these men was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.) Andrew then went to find his brother Peter and told him, "We have found the Messiah!" And he brought Peter to meet Jesus. Jesus looked intently at Peter for a moment and then said, "You are Simon,





John's son - but you shall be called Peter, the rock!" The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and told him, "Come with Me." (Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's home town.) Philip now went off to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the Messiah! - the very person Moses and the prophets told about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth!" "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from there?" "Just come and see for yourself", Philip declared. As they approached, Jesus said, "Here comes an honest man - a true son of Israel." "How do you know what I am like?" Nathanael demanded. And Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you." Nathanael replied, "Sir, You are the Son of God - the King of Israel!" Jesus asked him, "Do you believe all this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see ten proofs than this. You will even see heaven open and the Son of God coming back and forth to Me, the Man of Glory."

Jesus, you've come to the wedding. I am so glad to see



However I should say that there's no more wine left! Can you do something?



Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come!



My jar is empty!



And there's no wine left!

I know, but listen to me...when Jesus

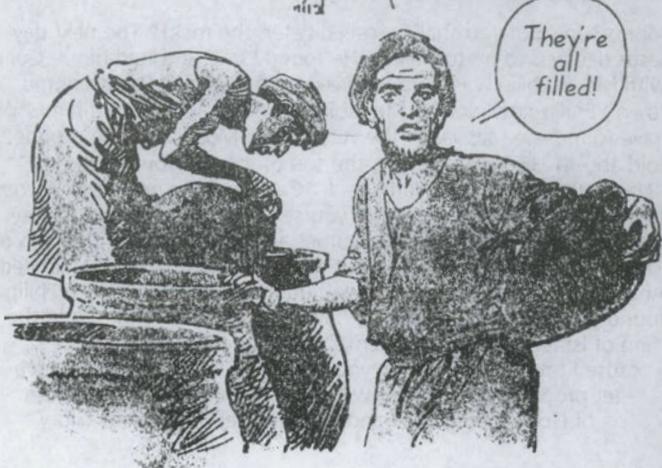
asks you to do something, do as He tells you!

Over there are six big barrels for ceremonial washings...be so kind and fill them with water...

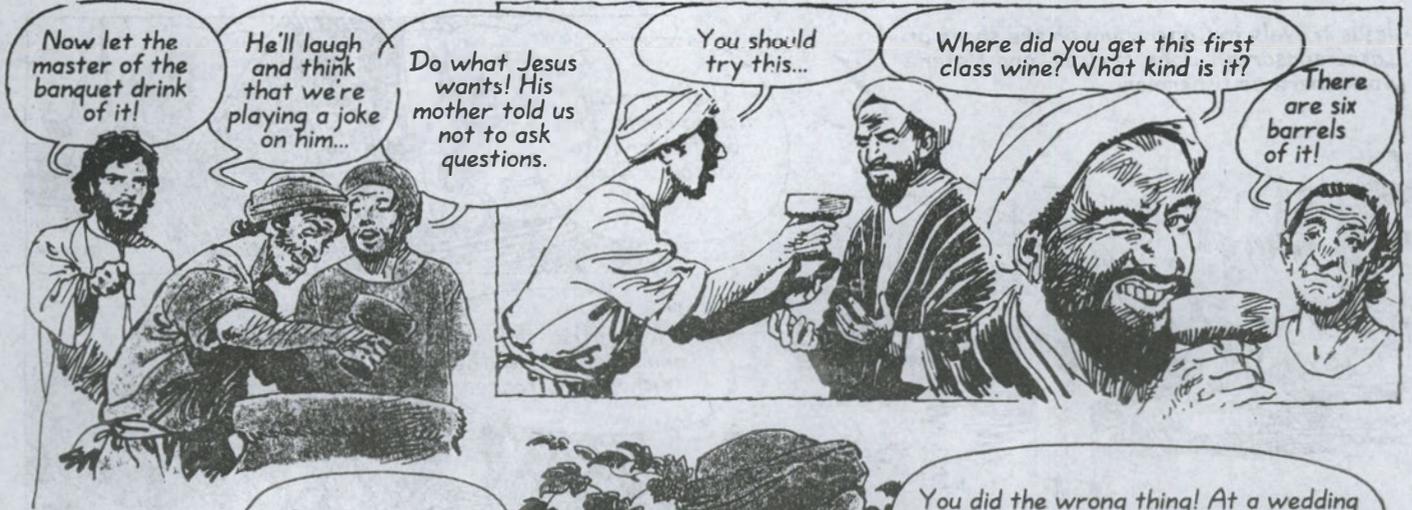


As you wish, Jesus.

**John 2:1-11**  
Two days later Jesus' mother was a guest at a wedding in the village of Cana in Galilee. And Jesus and His disciples were invited too. The wine supply ran out during the festivities, and Jesus' mother came to Him with the problem. "I can't help you now," He said. "It isn't yet My time for miracles." But His mother told the servants. "Do whatever He tells you to." Six stone waterpots were standing there; they were used for Jewish ceremonial purposes and held perhaps 20 to 30 gallons each. Then Jesus told the servants to fill them to the brim with water. When this was done, He said, "Dip some out and take it to the master of ceremonies." When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants



They're all filled!



Now let the master of the banquet drink of it!

He'll laugh and think that we're playing a joke on him...

Do what Jesus wants! His mother told us not to ask questions.

You should try this...

Where did you get this first class wine? What kind is it?

There are six barrels of it!

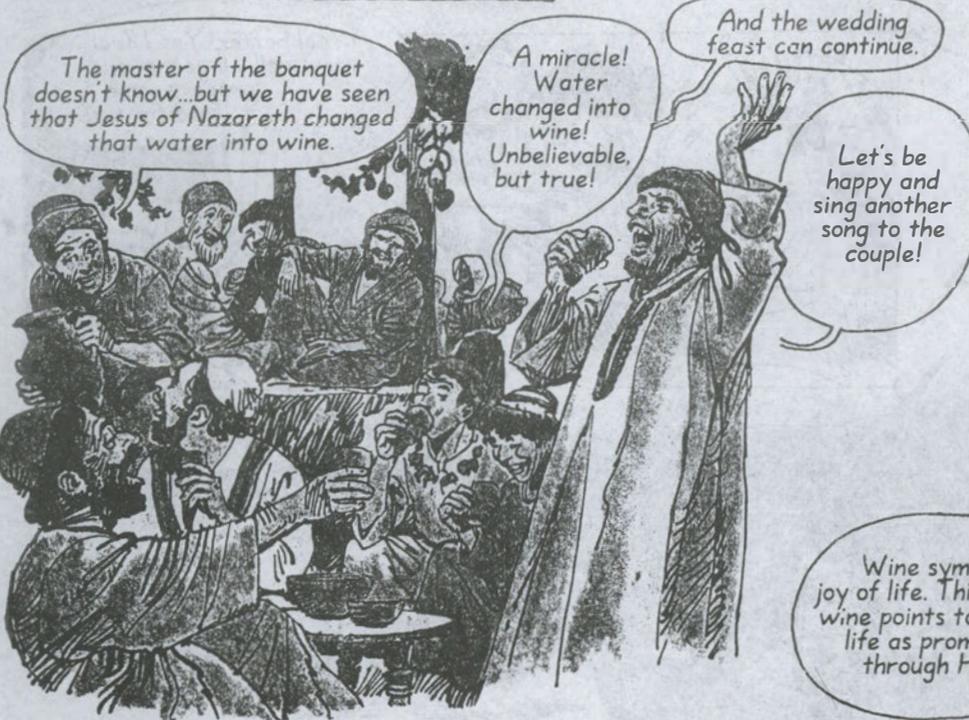


Say, bridegroom,

you served the cheaper wine first and kept the best wine for now!



You did the wrong thing! At a wedding the choice wine is served first and then later the cheaper wines are served!



The master of the banquet doesn't know...but we have seen that Jesus of Nazareth changed that water into wine.

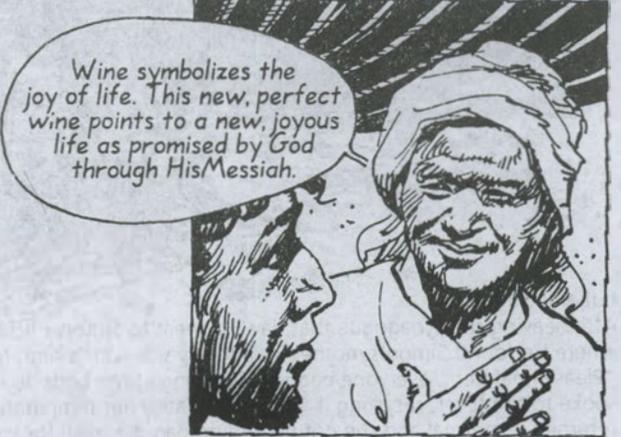
A miracle! Water changed into wine! Unbelievable, but true!

And the wedding feast can continue.

Let's be happy and sing another song to the couple!



Believe me, no man can do such a miracle, only God can do that; could it be that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah?



Wine symbolizes the joy of life. This new, perfect wine points to a new, joyous life as promised by God through His Messiah.

did), he called the bridegroom over. "This is wonderful stuff!" he said, "You're different from most! Usually a host uses the best wine first and afterwards, when everyone is full and doesn't care, then he brings out the less expensive brands. But you have kept the best for the last!" This miracle at Cana in Galilee was Jesus' first public demonstration of His heaven-sent power. And His disciples believed that He really was the Messiah.

Jesus travels to Capernaum on the shore of Lake Genasareth. John, Andrew and Peter work there as fishermen.



There are our fishing boats. This boat belongs to Simon... Peter.



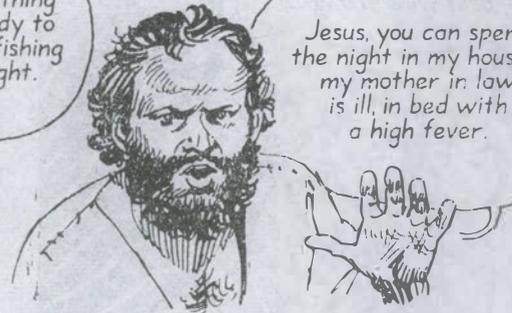
My brother James and I, John, know the fishermen's trade.



You, fishermen, shall be my first disciples! Follow Me!

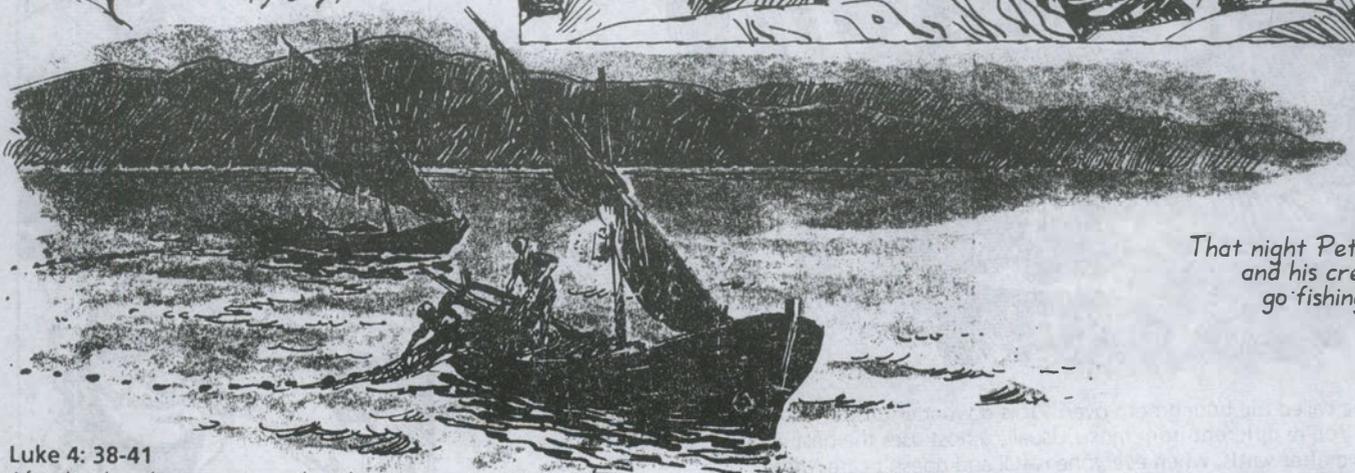
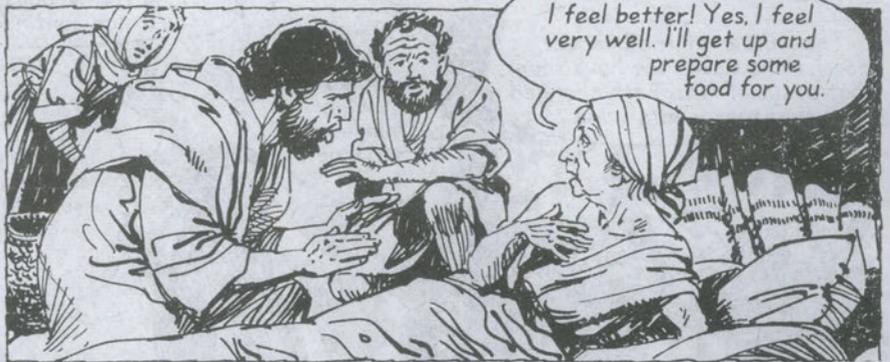
Everything is ready to start fishing tonight.

Jesus, you can spend the night in my house... my mother in law is ill, in bed with a high fever.



Let's go, Peter... Believe me, your mother in law will be healed!

I feel better! Yes, I feel very well. I'll get up and prepare some food for you.



That night Peter and his crew go fishing...

**Luke 4: 38-41**

After leaving the synagogue that day, He went to Simon's home where He found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her", everyone begged. Standing at her bedside He spoke to the fever, rebuking it, and immediately her temperature returned to normal and she got up and prepared a meal for them! As the sun went down that evening, all the villagers who had any

sick people in their homes, no matter what their diseases were, brought them to Jesus; and the touch of His hands healed every one! Some were possessed by demons; and the demons came out at His command, shouting, "You are the Son of God." But because they knew He was the Christ, He stopped them and told them to be silent.

The next morning...

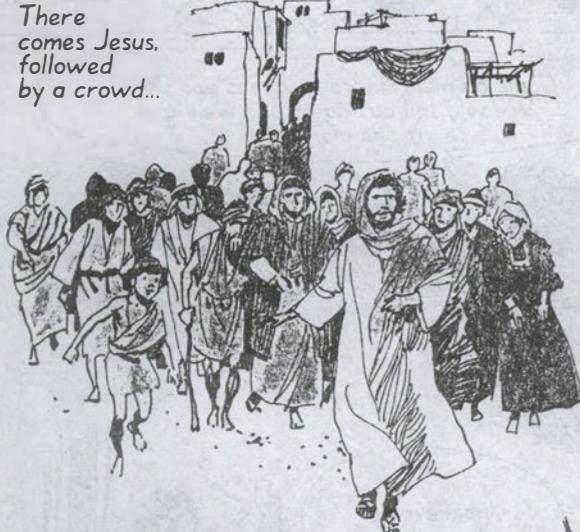


What happened? My baskets are empty. Nothing for sale today?

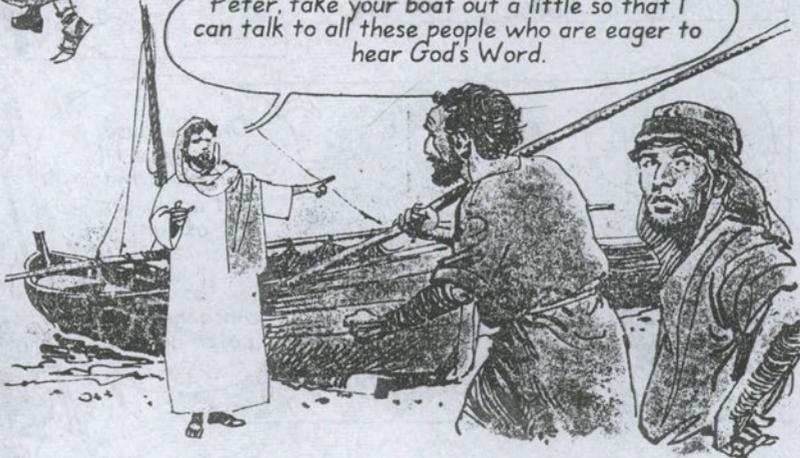
We had an exhausting night, but caught nothing! Now we have to clean our nets.



There comes Jesus, followed by a crowd...

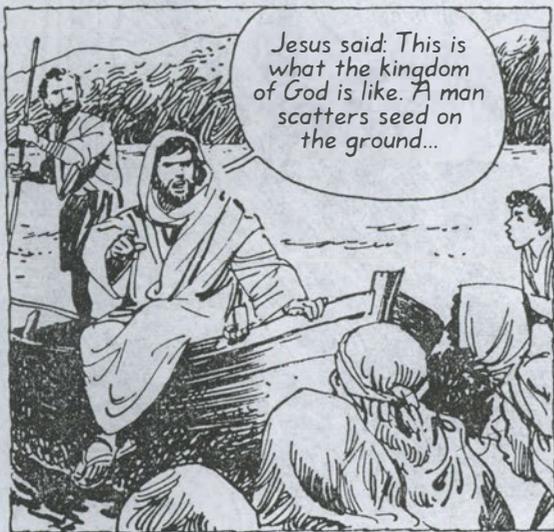


Peter, take your boat out a little so that I can talk to all these people who are eager to hear God's Word.



Night and day, whether he sleeps or is awake, the seeds sprout and grow...

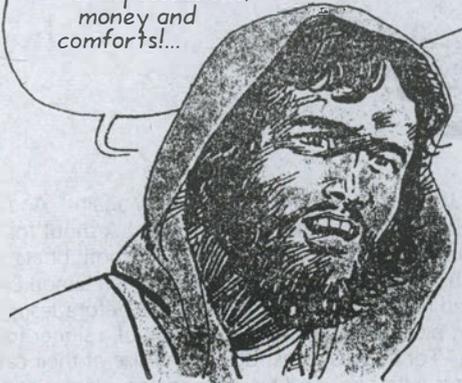
..though he does not know how, all by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head—producing our daily bread.



Jesus said: This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground...

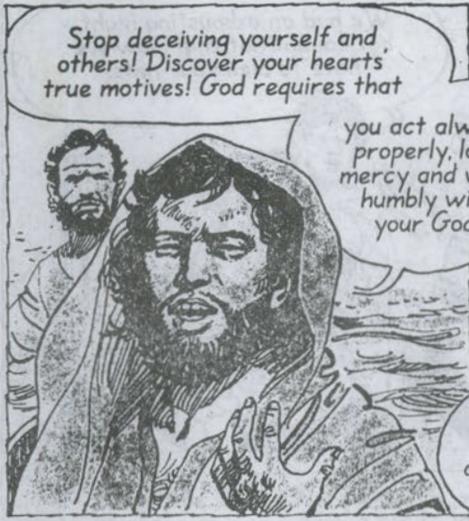


All of you are invited to enter! But you must change your lives! Your hearts should not be hard like a rock or like the soil filled with thorns, overgrown with desires for.....possessions, money and comforts!...



Luke 5:1-11

One day as He was preaching on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, great crowds pressed in on Him to listen to the Word of God. He noticed two empty boats standing at the water's edge while the fishermen washed their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push out a little into the water, so that He could sit in the boat and speak to the crowds from there. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper and let down your nets and you will catch a lot of fish!" "Sir", Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't



Stop deceiving yourself and others! Discover your hearts' true motives! God requires that

you act always properly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God!

When Jesus finished teaching... he turns to Peter.



Peter, now go out fishing...put the boat out into the deep water and let down the nets.

Why? We have worked all night and we haven't caught a thing.



Peter, I repeat, sail out and let down your largest net!

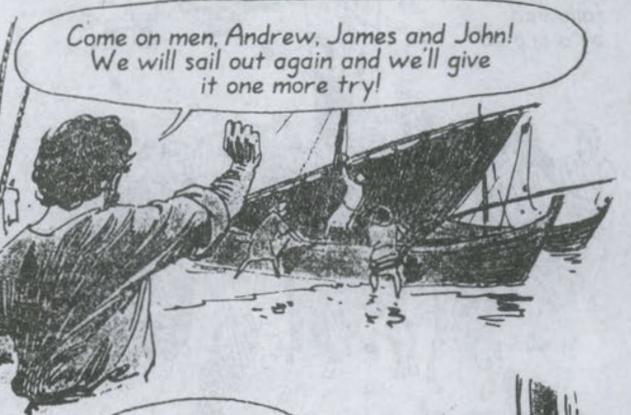
It's no use! The time isn't right...the fish are no longer at the surface anymore!



Do as I say, Peter! Trust Me!

Only because You say so, I'll let down the net again, for as far

as I'm concerned we'll catch nothing.



Come on men, Andrew, James and John! We will sail out again and we'll give it one more try!

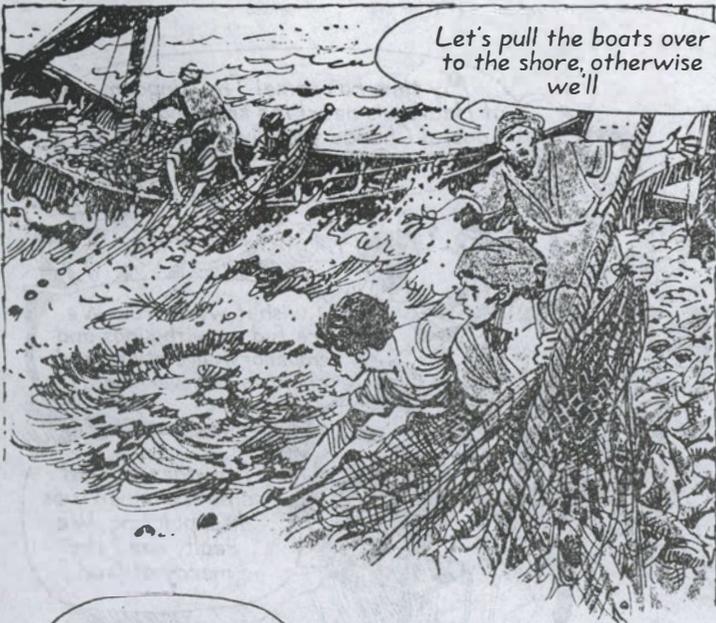


Unbelievable! What a catch! The net will break!

Hey, friends, come over and help us!



catch a thing. But if You say so, we'll try again." And this time their nets were so full that they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking. When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, sir, please leave us - I'm too much of a sinner for You to have around." For he was awestruck by the size of their catch, as were the others with him, And his partners too - James and John, the



Let's pull the boats over to the shore, otherwise we'll



This is fantastic! I've never seen so much fish before!



Oh, Jesus, what can I say? Help me to trust You more!

I'm beginning to learn not to do it our way, but rather Your way.

Fear not, Simon Peter, from now on you'll no longer catch fish! But men!



Yes, friends, follow Me! I will make you fishers of men!

Then they left their boats and nets and followed Jesus!..



sons of Zebedee. Jesus replied, "Don't worry! From now on you'll be fishing for the souls of men!" And as soon as they landed, they left everything and went with Him.

Jesus traveled through all of Galilee, preaching the Good News and healing the sick, crowds followed Him...



My time has come! The Kingdom of Heaven is near! It's knocking at your doors! Change your lives and turn to God and serve Him!

I wish it were true. We are fed up with kings and emperors, revolutions and changes of governments!

For ages all that came from men was disappointing. We really need the mercy of God.

All the prophets wrote about the coming Messiah and by what signs we could recognize Him! The blind would see and the lame walk!

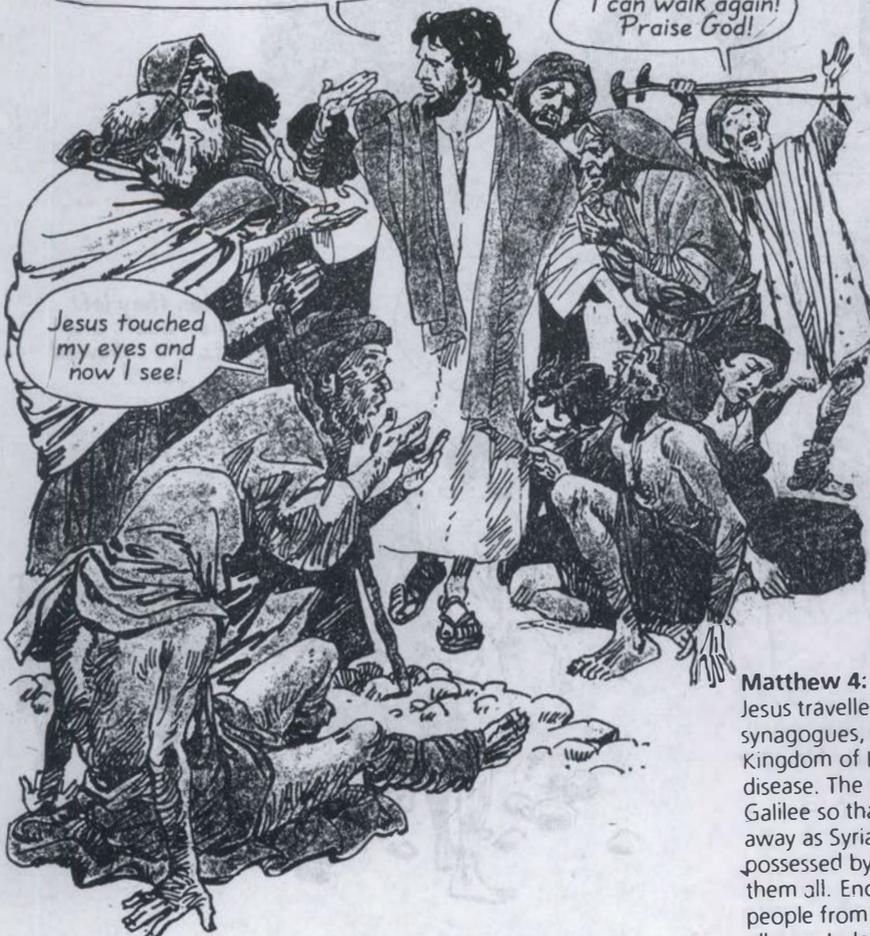
Come, all to Me who are weary and tired and I shall give you rest! Learn from Me. I am gentle and humble in heart.

I can walk again! Praise God!

The people with contagious diseases have to live in isolation. They are waiting for Jesus at the city gate.

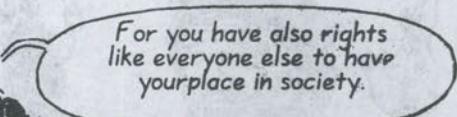
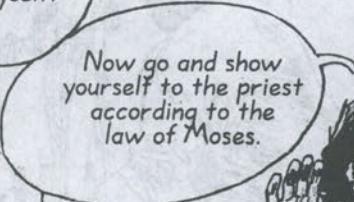
I hear the bell of a leper! Let's step aside.

Jesus touched my eyes and now I see!



**Matthew 4: 23-25**

Jesus travelled all through Galilee teaching in all the Jewish synagogues, everywhere preaching the Good News about the Kingdom of Heaven. And He healed every kind of sickness and disease. The report of His miracles spread far beyond the borders of Galilee so that sick folk were soon coming to be healed from as far away as Syria. And whatever their illness and pain, or if they were possessed by demons, or were insane, or paralyzed - He healed them all. Enormous crowds followed Him wherever He went - people from Galilee, and the Ten Cities, and Jerusalem, and from all over Judea, and even from across the Jordan River.



**Luke 5:12-14**

One day in certain village He was visiting, there was a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When he saw Jesus he fell to the ground before Him, face downward in the dust, begging to be healed. "Sir", he said, "if You only will, You can clear me of every trace of my disease." Jesus reached out and touched the man and said, "Of course I will. Be healed." And the leprosy left him instantly! Then Jesus instructed him to go at once without telling anyone what had happened and be examined by the Jewish priest. "Offer the sacrifice Moses' law requires for lepers who are healed", he said. "This will prove to everyone that you are well."

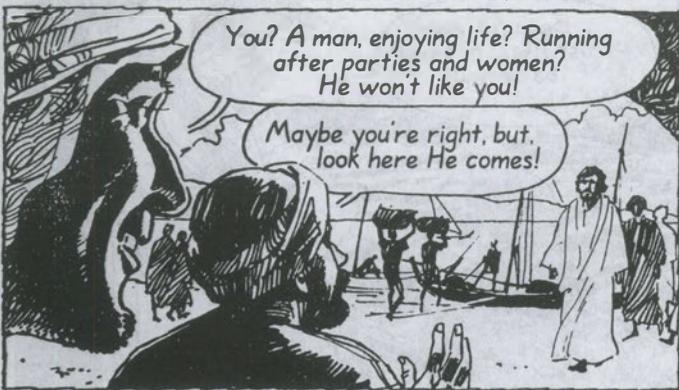
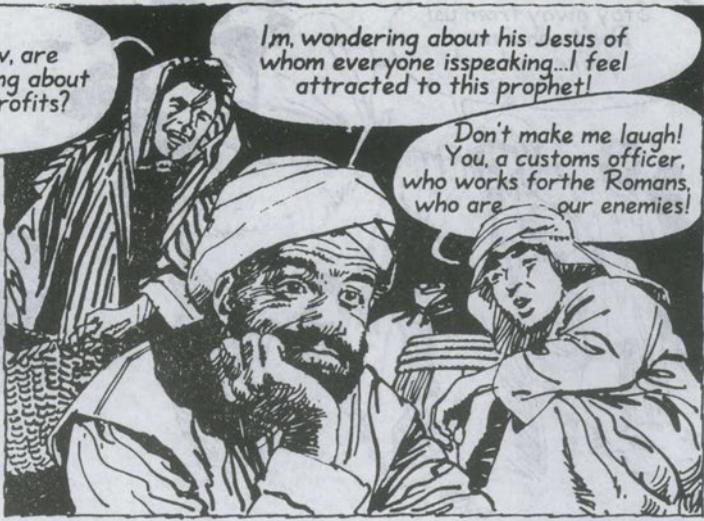
At the border near Capernaum, there was a customs office...



Matthew, are you dreaming about all your profits?

I'm wondering about his Jesus of whom everyone is speaking... I feel attracted to this prophet!

Don't make me laugh! You, a customs officer, who works for the Romans, who are our enemies!

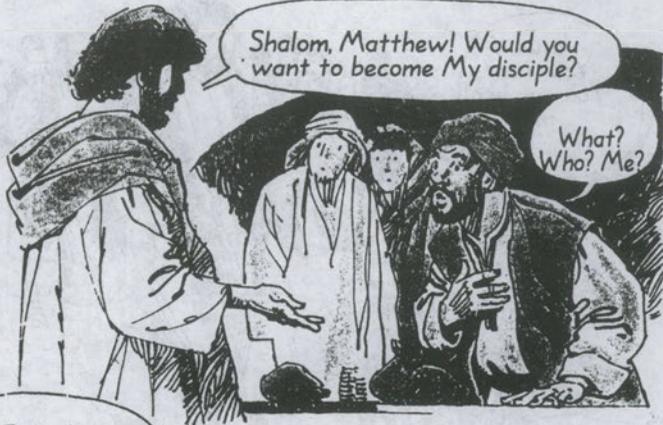


You? A man, enjoying life? Running after parties and women? He won't like you!

Maybe you're right, but look here He comes!

Shalom, Matthew! Would you want to become My disciple?

What? Who? Me?



Then suddenly....

Jesus, I promise: I shall follow You!

Friends, great news....

I'm going to leave you and follow Jesus! Are you surprised? But He really wants me to follow Him!



**Matthew 9:9-13**

As Jesus was going on down the road, He saw a tax collector, Matthew, sitting at a tax collection booth. "Come and be My disciple", Jesus said to him, and Matthew jumped up and went along with Him. Later, as Jesus and His disciples were eating dinner at Matthew's house, there were many notorious swindlers there as guests! The Pharisees were indignant. "Why does your teacher associate with men like that?" "Because people who are well don't need a doctor! It's the sick people who do!" was Jesus' reply. Then He added, "Go away and learn the meaning of this verse of Scripture, 'It isn't your sacrifices and your gifts I care about - it's that you have some pity.' My job down here on earth is to get sinners back to God - not to worry about the good people."

**Mark 2:1-12**

Several days later He returned to Capernaum, and the news of His arrival spread quickly through the city. Soon the house where He was staying was so packed with visitors that there wasn't room for



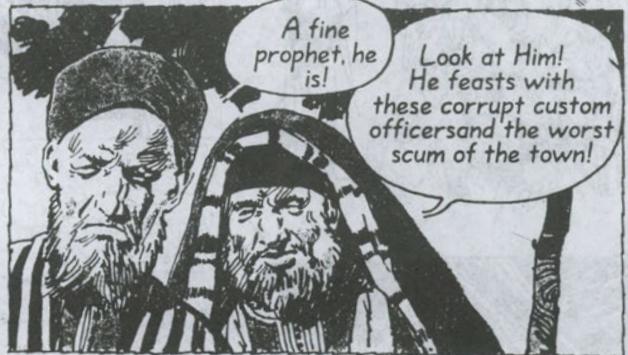
To celebrate my departure, I'm giving a great banquet and Jesus shall be present. All are invited!

One of the following evenings....



Jesus, look, some of these Pharisees are spying. They say that it's really shocking what you do.

Indeed!



A fine prophet, he is!

Look at Him! He feasts with these corrupt custom officers and the worst scum of the town!

You understand nothing. It's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick! Rather, think about what is written: God speaks....



"I desire mercy, not sacrifice!" He loves a man who is compassionate and merciful!

One day the inhabitants of Capernaum gather in the house of Simon, the fisherman where Jesus is. Everyone wants to hear Him....



Let's go and find out who Jesus is. We'll follow Him discreetly.

But we should hurry if we want to be in the house.

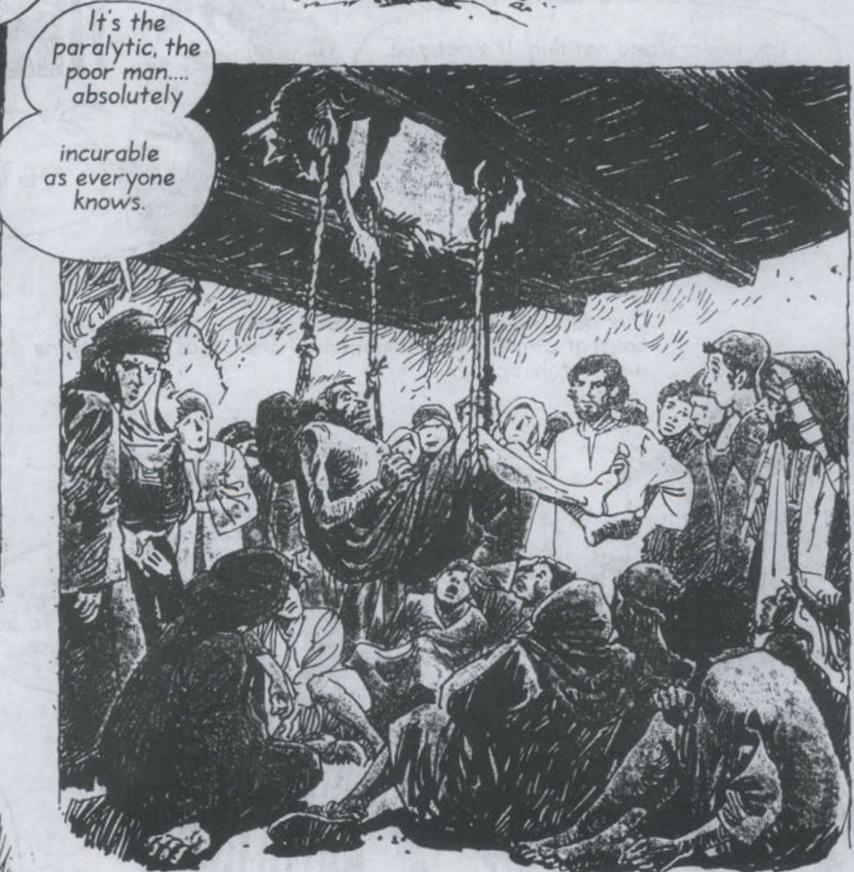
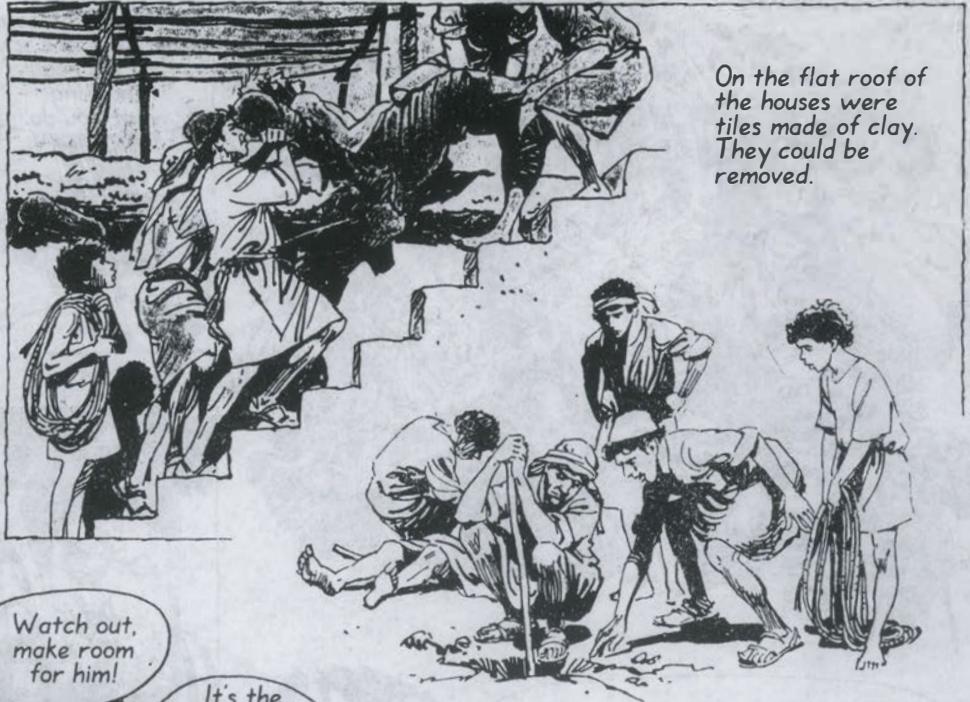


You see? The door is blocked by people. And we cannot enter.

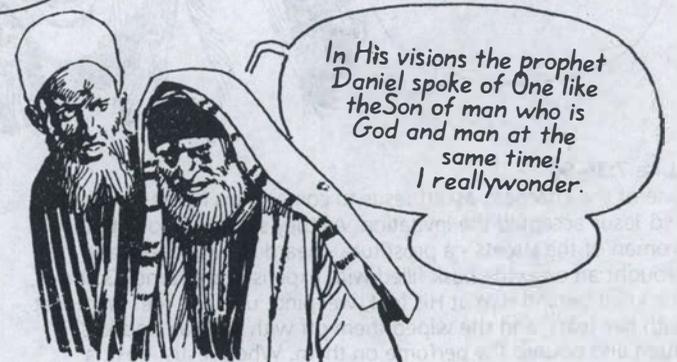
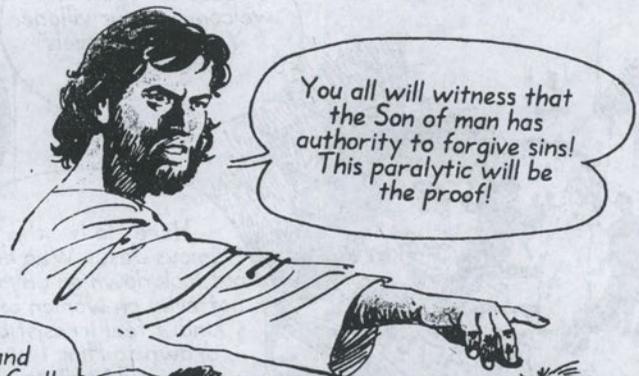
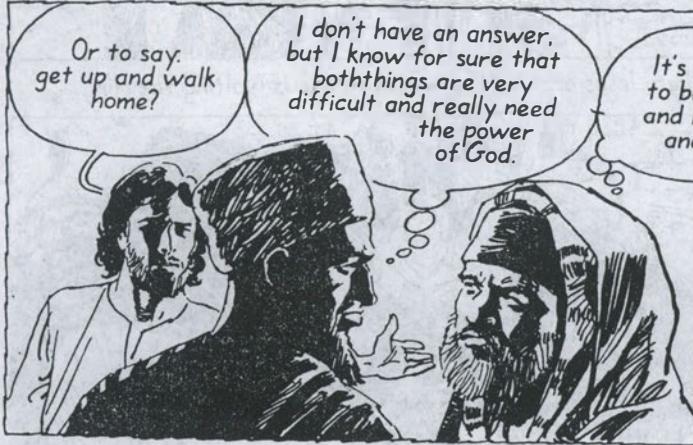
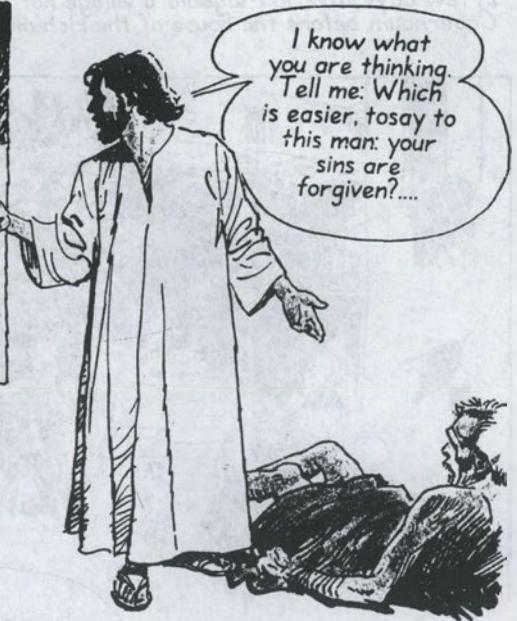
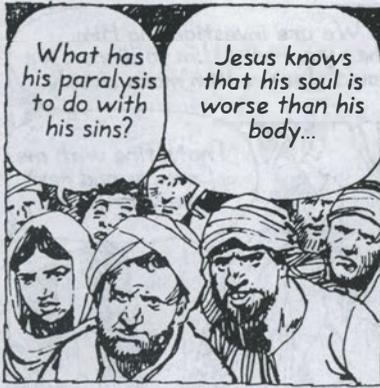
Please, do something! Even though it seems impossible, I must see Jesus! Only He can heal me!



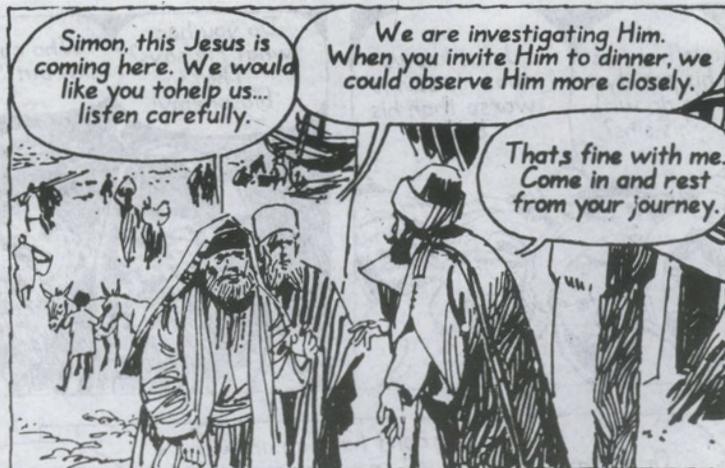
a single person more, not even outside the door. And He preached the Word to them. Four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a stretcher. They couldn't get to Jesus through the crowd, so they dug through the clay roof above His head and lowered the sick man on his stretcher, right down in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw how strongly they believed that He would help their friend, Jesus said to the sick man, "Son, your sins are forgiven!" But some of the Jewish religious leaders said to themselves as they sat there, "What? This is



blasphemy! Does he think he is God? For only God can forgive sins." Jesus could read their minds and said to them at once, "Why does this bother you? Is it any harder to forgive his sins than to heal him? So, to prove that I, the Man from Heaven, have forgiven his sins", -turning to the paralyzed man He said, "You are healed. Pick up your stretcher and go home!" The man jumped up, took the stretcher, and pushed his way through the stunned onlookers! Then how they praised God. "We've never seen anything like this before!" they all exclaimed.



A few days later, in Magdala, a village not far from Capernaum, before the house of the rich man Simon....



Simon, this Jesus is coming here. We would like you to help us... listen carefully.

We are investigating Him. When you invite Him to dinner, we could observe Him more closely.

That's fine with me. Come in and rest from your journey.

When Jesus arrives, the whole village is waiting for Him.



Jesus of Nazareth, welcome to our village. Your fame travels ahead of you.



Here He is... the famous Jesus, who does not look down on anybody, not even on women of my kind! I feel irresistibly drawn to Him. I wish I could talk to Him privately.



I have invited all the prominent people for dinner. Please honour us with your presence.

I accept your invitation.

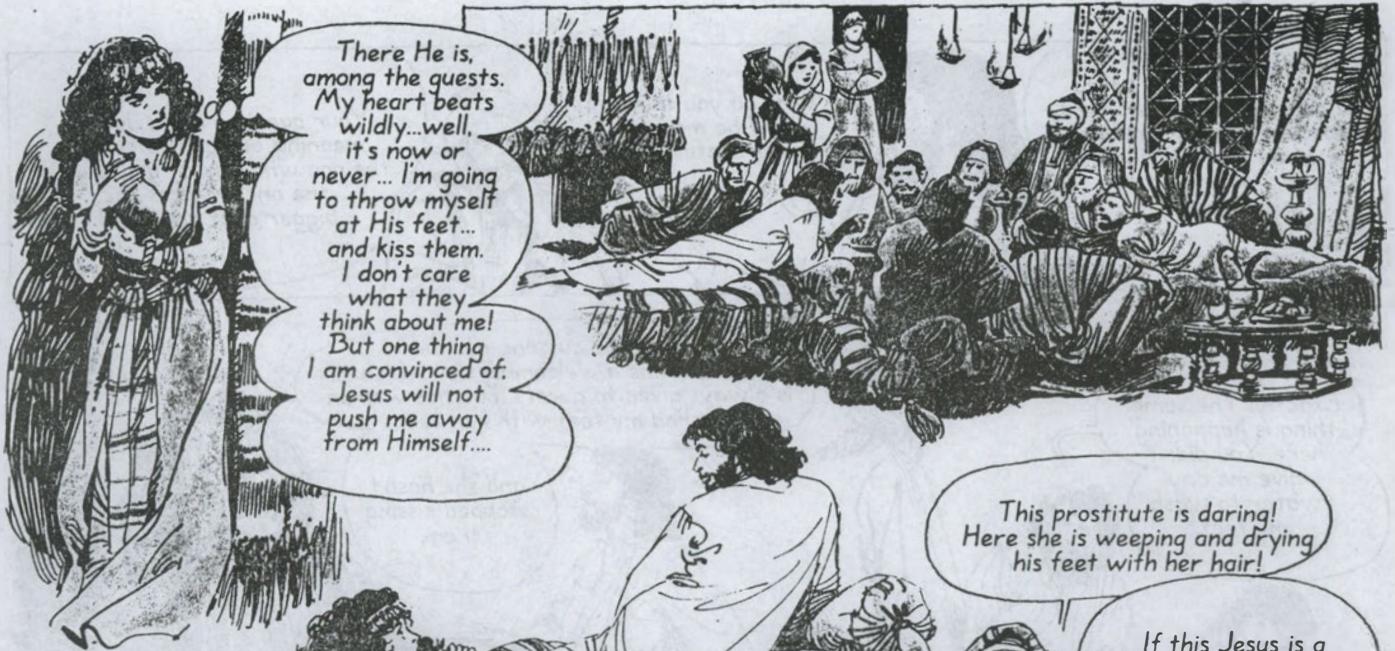


This evening He'll be with the Pharisees... I'll make myself ready. This day will be a very special one for me.



**Luke 7:36-50**

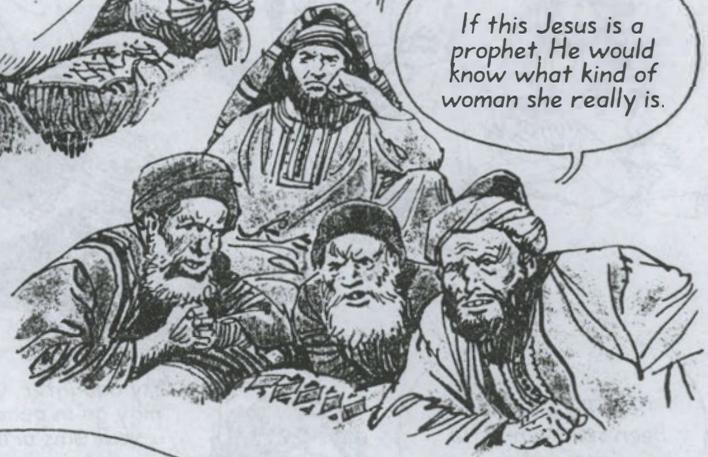
One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to come to his home for lunch and Jesus accepted the invitation. As they sat down to eat, a woman of the streets - a prostitute - heard He was there and brought an exquisite flask filled with expensive perfume. Going in, she knelt behind Him at His feet, weeping, until His feet were wet with her tears; and she wiped them off with her hair and kissed them and poured the perfume on them. When Jesus' host, a



There He is, among the guests. My heart beats wildly...well, it's now or never... I'm going to throw myself at His feet... and kiss them. I don't care what they think about me! But one thing I am convinced of: Jesus will not push me away from Himself....

This prostitute is daring! Here she is weeping and drying his feet with her hair!

If this Jesus is a prophet, He would know what kind of woman she really is.



Yes, and He would give her a slap in her face!

But instead: He permits her to touch Him.

Simon... I have something to tell you.

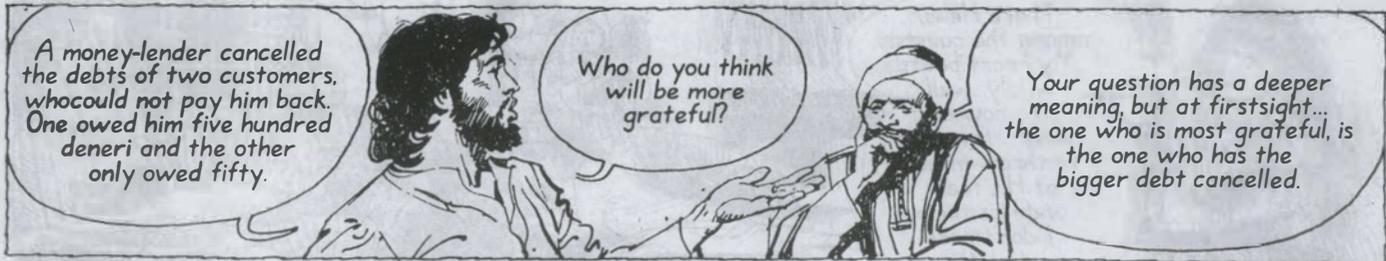
With pleasure, go ahead!



I'll tell you the following parable....

Pharisee, saw what was happening and who the woman was, he said to himself, "This proves that Jesus is no prophet, for if God had really sent him, he would know what kind of woman this one is!" Then Jesus spoke up and answered his thoughts. "Simon", He said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you." "All right, Teacher", Simon replied, "go ahead." Then Jesus told him this story: "A man loaned money to two people - \$ 5,000 to one and \$ 500 to the other. But neither of them could pay him back, so the kindly forgave them both, letting them keep the money! Which do you suppose loved him most after that?" "I suppose the one who had owed him the most", Simon answered. "Correct", Jesus

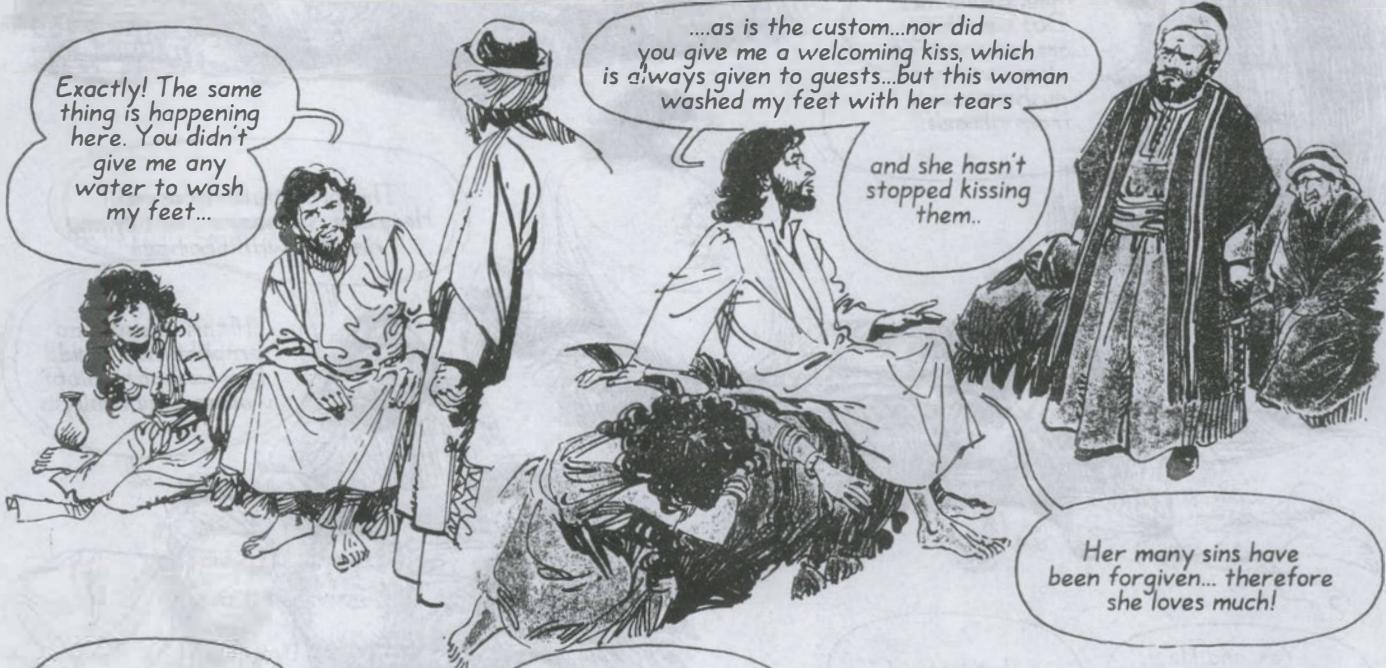
agreed. Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Look! See this woman kneeling here! When I entered your home, you didn't bother to offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but



A money-lender cancelled the debts of two customers, who could not pay him back. One owed him five hundred denari and the other only owed fifty.

Who do you think will be more grateful?

Your question has a deeper meaning, but at first sight... the one who is most grateful, is the one who has the bigger debt cancelled.

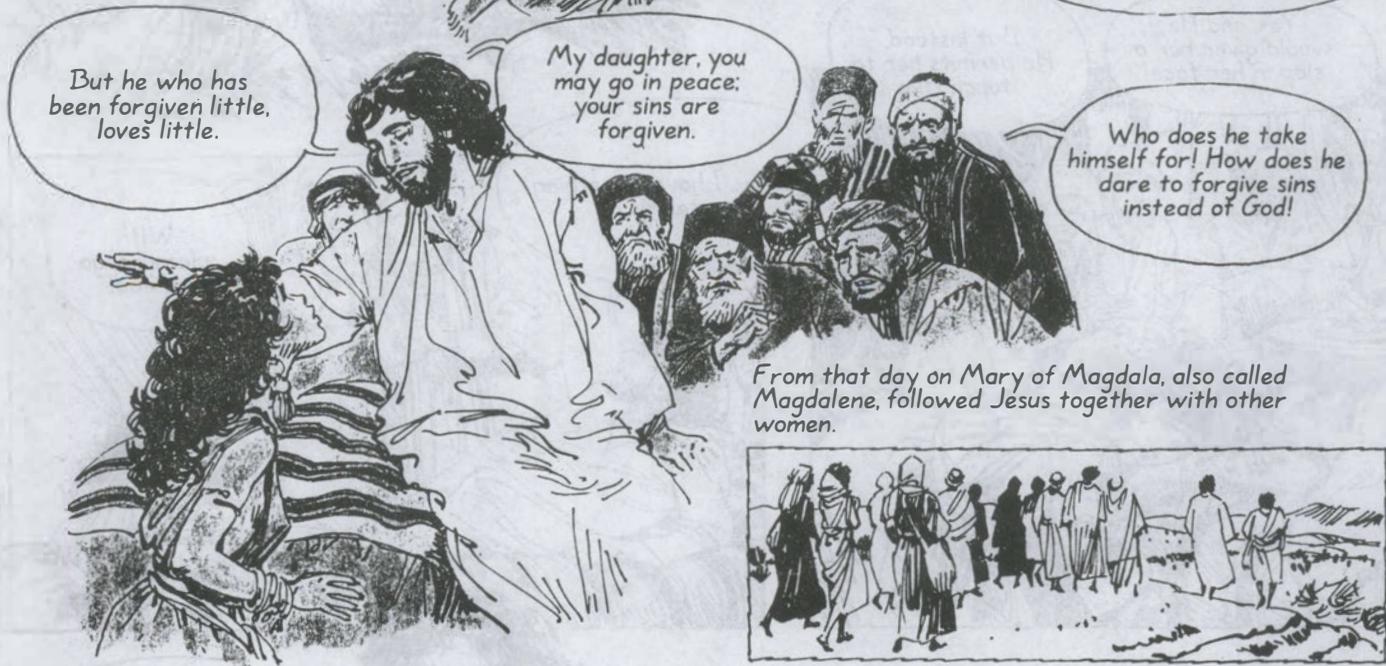


Exactly! The same thing is happening here. You didn't give me any water to wash my feet...

...as is the custom...nor did you give me a welcoming kiss, which is always given to guests...but this woman washed my feet with her tears

and she hasn't stopped kissing them..

Her many sins have been forgiven... therefore she loves much!



But he who has been forgiven little, loves little.

My daughter, you may go in peace; your sins are forgiven.

Who does he take himself for! How does he dare to forgive sins instead of God!

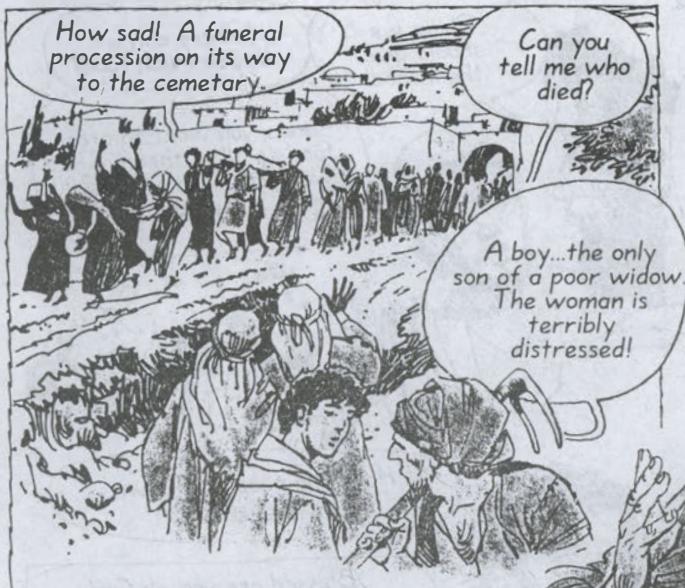
From that day on Mary of Magdala, also called Magdalene, followed Jesus together with other women.



she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair! You refused Me the customary kiss of greeting, but she has kissed My feet again and again from the time I first came in. You neglected the usual courtesy of olive oil to anoint My head, but she has covered My feet with rare perfume. Therefore her sins - and

they are many - are forgiven, for she loved Me much; but one who is forgiven little, shows little love." And He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then the men at the table said to themselves, "Who does this man think He is, going around forgiving sins?" And Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Traveling through Galilee, Jesus and His disciples enter the village of Nain...



How sad! A funeral procession on its way to the cemetery.

Can you tell me who died?

A boy...the only son of a poor widow. The woman is terribly distressed!



Woman, don't cry!...

..and you, bearers, stop!

...?



Look! The boy is getting up!

I've never seen such a thing!

Where am I?



Young man, rise!



Woman, I give your son back to you.

My son! Praise God, Who grants such power!



Who is this man?

Jesus of Nazareth, the town nearby...

A new prophet appeared to us...God does not forget His people.

What a miracle! Jesus is more powerful than death!

**Luke 7:11-17**

Not long afterwards Jesus went with His disciples to the village of Nain, with the usual great crowd at His heels. A funeral procession was coming out as He approached the village gate. The boy who had died was the only son of his widowed mother, and many mourners from the village were with her. When the Lord saw her, His heart overflowed with sympathy. "Don't cry!" He said. Then He walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. "Laddie", He said, "come back to life again." Then the boy sat up and began to talk to those around him! And Jesus gave him back to his mother. A great fear swept the crowd, and they exclaimed with praises to God, "A mighty prophet has risen among us", and, "We have seen the hand of God at work today." The report of what He did that day raced from end to end of Judea and even out across the borders.

On the shore of Lake Genesareth, Jesus meets crowds of people who wish to hear him...One day, He takes them to a remote place and speaks to them until evening...

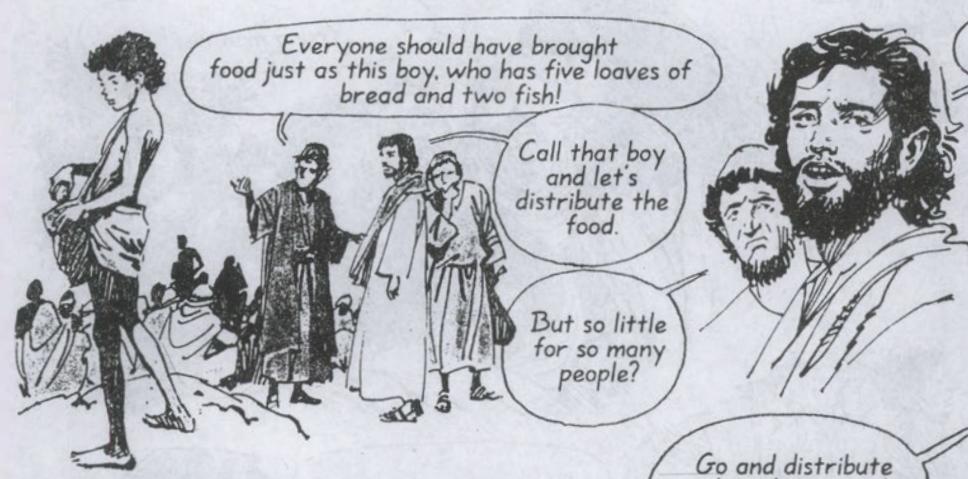


Philip, we should give them food!

Where can we buy so much food?

Jesus, you want to offer food to all of them?...That would cost more than 200 silver coins!

Jesus, it's getting late and there's no village nearby. Send the people away...so that they can buy some food.

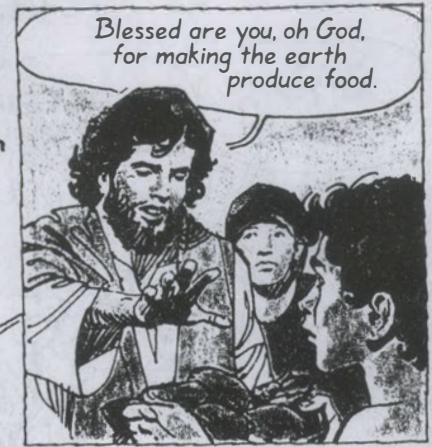


Everyone should have brought food just as this boy, who has five loaves of bread and two fish!

Call that boy and let's distribute the food.

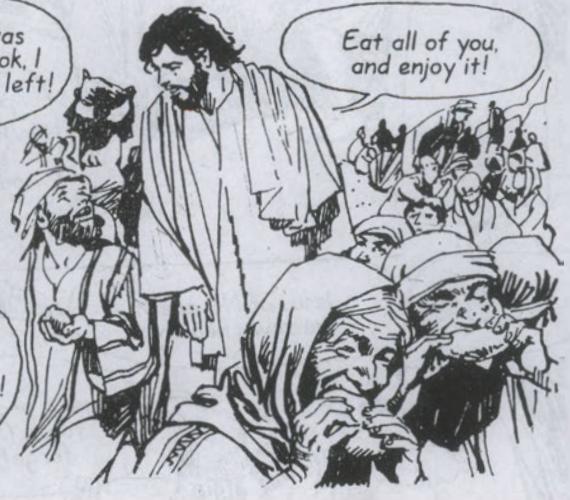
But so little for so many people?

Have the people sit down on the grass to eat!



Blessed are you, oh God, for making the earth produce food.

Go and distribute these loaves and fish to all of them.



Eat all of you, and enjoy it!



That was good! Look, I have food left!

Fantastic! What a great picnic!

**John 6:1-15**

After this, Jesus crossed over the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. And a huge crowd, many of them pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration, were following Him wherever He went, to watch Him heal the sick. So when Jesus went up into the hills and sat down with His disciples around Him, He soon saw a great multitude of people climbing the hill, looking for Him. Turning to Philip He asked, "Philip, where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" (He was testing Philip, for He already knew what He was going to do) Philip replied, "It would

take a fortune to begin to do it!" Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. "There's a youngster here with five barley loaves and a couple of fish! But what good is that with all this mob?" "Tell everyone to sit down", Jesus ordered. And all of them - the approximate count of the men only was 5,000 - sat down on the grassy slopes. Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks to God and passed them out to the people. Afterwards He did the same with the fish. And everyone ate until full! "Now gather the scraps", Jesus told His disciples, "so that

After everybody has eaten enough...

Gather the left-overs, don't waste anything.



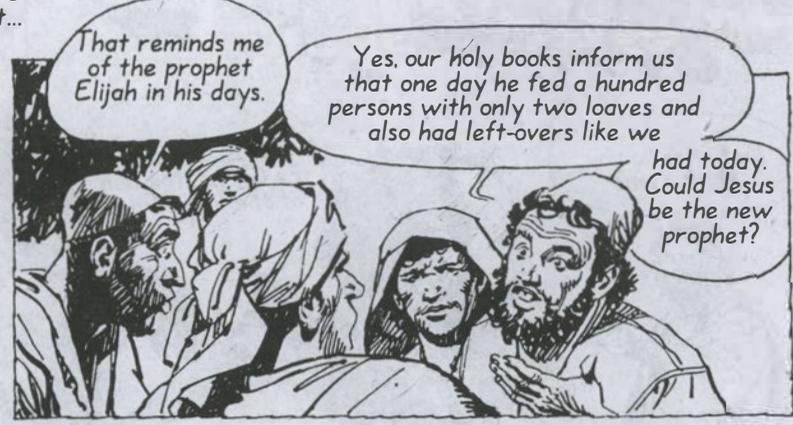
Meanwhile, some are discussing the event...



Ten...eleven...twelve baskets full of bread.



Enormous, what this Jesus has done! Enough food for so many with so little at first!



That reminds me of the prophet Elijah in his days.

Yes, our holy books inform us that one day he fed a hundred persons with only two loaves and also had left-overs like we

had today. Could Jesus be the new prophet?

But Jesus recognized that they intended to make him their king by force...



Sure! He must be the long awaited Messiah!

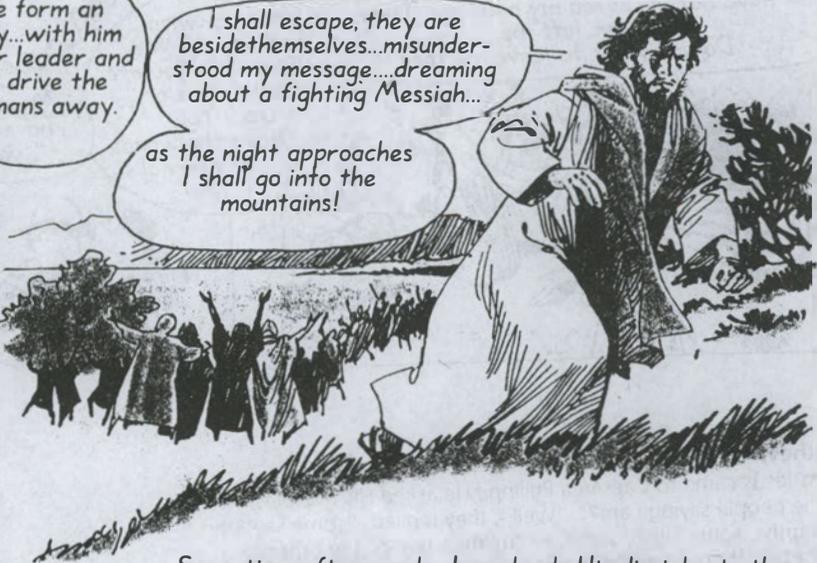
Pass the word around; we want Jesus to be our king.

Let's gather around our king.

We form an army...with him as our leader and we drive the Romans away.

I shall escape, they are besidethemselves...misunderstood my message...dreaming about a fighting Messiah...

as the night approaches I shall go into the mountains!



Some time afterwards, Jesus leads His disciples to the north of the region of Caesarea (nowadays called the Golan Heights) near Mount Hermor.

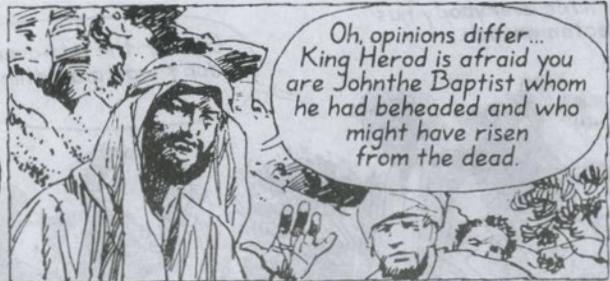
nothing is wasted." And 12 baskets were filled with the leftovers! When the people realized what a great miracle had happened, they exclaimed, "Surely, He is the Prophet we have been expecting!" Jesus saw that they were ready to take Him by force and make Him their king, so He went higher into the mountains alone.





We're far from the crowds now... here we can rest and meditate. I want to ask you this question: Who do the people say that I am?

Who do they take me for?



Oh, opinions differ... King Herod is afraid you are John the Baptist whom he had beheaded and who might have risen from the dead.



Many think you are the prophet Elijah, who disappeared so mysteriously and who will return some day.

Many say that you are a new prophet, gifted by God with great power.

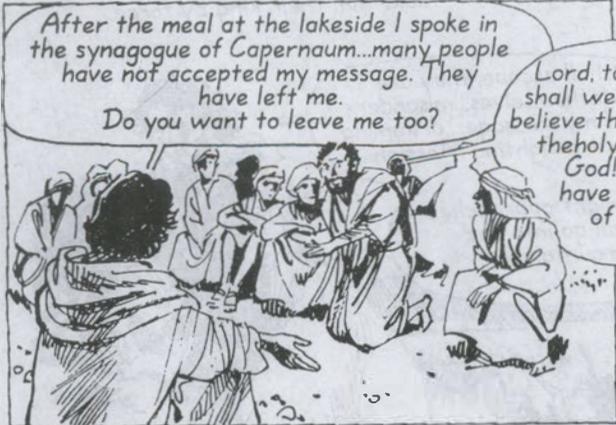


But who do you think I am?

To us: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Simon, this was not revealed to you by men, but by my Father in heaven!

God will reveal it to all men who trust in Him.



After the meal at the lakeside I spoke in the synagogue of Capernaum...many people have not accepted my message. They have left me. Do you want to leave me too?

Lord, to whom shall we go? We believe that you are the holy one of God! You have the words of eternal life!

My dear disciples, have I not chosen you twelve?

Yet, one of you belongs to the Devil!



Jesus meant Judas, who would betray him.

**Matthew 16:13-19**

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who are the people saying I am?" "Well", they replied, "some say John the Baptist; some Elijah; some, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." Then He asked them, "Who do you think I am?" Simon Peter answered, "The Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God." "God has blessed you, Simon, son of Jonah", Jesus said, "for My Father in heaven has personally revealed this to you - this is not from any human source. You are Peter, a stone; and upon this rock I will build My church; and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; whatever doors you lock on earth shall be locked in heaven; and whatever doors you open on earth shall be open in heaven!"

**John 6:66-71**

At this point many of His disciples turned away and deserted Him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you going too?" Simon Peter replied, "Master, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words that give eternal life, and we believe them and know You are the holy Son of God." Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, and one is a devil." He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would betray Him.



Finally, Jesus has decided to go to Jerusalem.

What will happen when he arrives there in the middle of the feast... the people might rise in revolt and try to make him king by force!

And we also will have a part of the leadership!



My brother John and I, James, are the first disciples of Jesus, so we will be the most important of all!

What? You can't be above us! There are others among us who are as able and clever as you!

Mother, you should ask Jesus to do us a favor.



Teacher, my two sons are your first disciples. Grant to them that they may sit at your right and at your left in your kingdom.

You don't know what you are asking... Are you willing to drink the cup I'm going to drink?



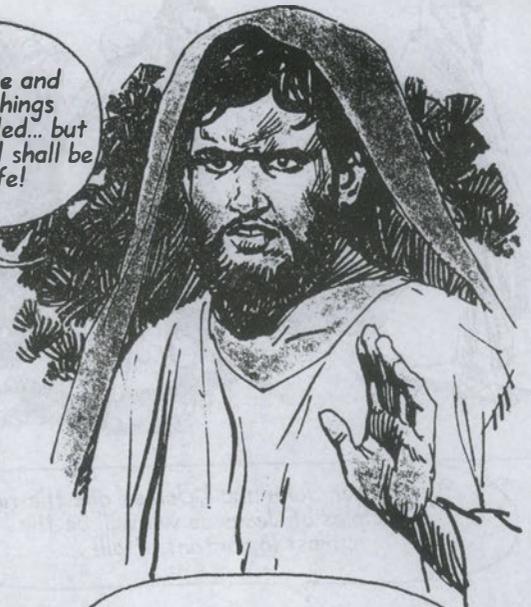
We will do anything.

**Matthew 20:20-24**

When the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, brought them to Jesus, bowed, and asked a favor. "What is your request?" He asked. She replied, "In your kingdom, will you let my two sons sit on two thrones next to yours?" But Jesus told her, "You don't know what you are asking!" Then He turned to James and John and asked them, "Are you able to drink from the terrible cup I am about to drink from?" "Yes", they replied, "we are

My friends, you're having the wrong ideas... we are going to Jerusalem, but not to become political leaders.

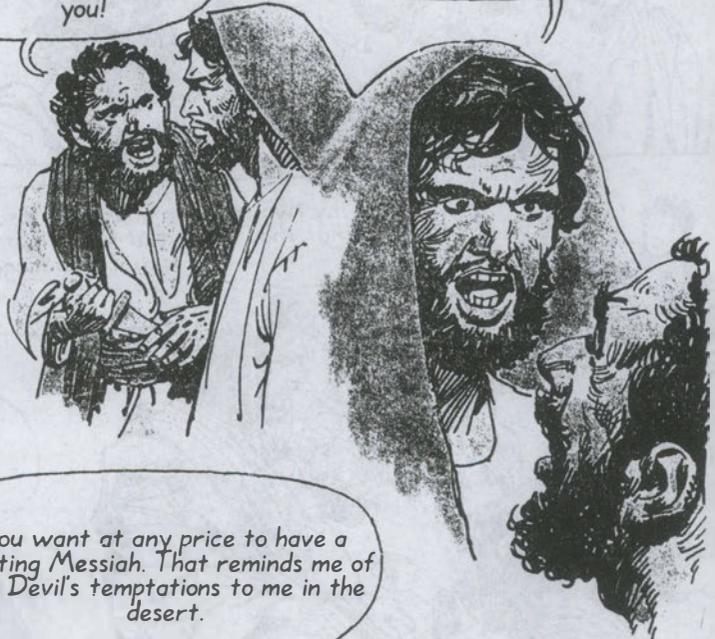
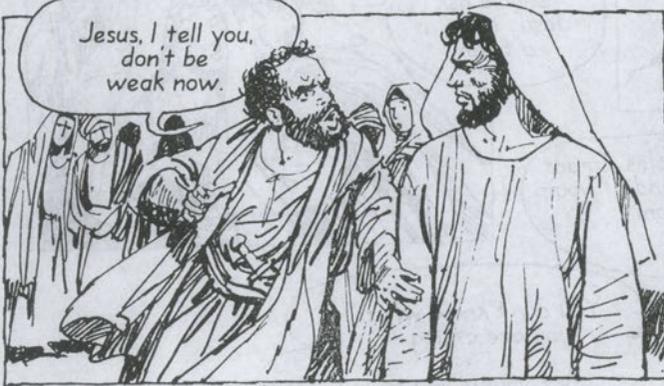
I must go there and suffer many things and I must be killed... but on the third day I shall be raised to life!



This will never happen to you! Impossible! We'll come and defend you!

Get behind me, Satan! You try to hinder Me in fulfilling my mission!

Jesus, I tell you, don't be weak now.



You want at any price to have a fighting Messiah. That reminds me of the Devil's temptations to me in the desert.



**Matthew 16:21-23**

From then on Jesus began to speak plainly to His disciples about going to Jerusalem, and what would happen to Him there - that He would suffer at the hands of the Jewish leaders, that He would be killed, and that three days later He would be raised to life again. But Peter took Him aside to remonstrate with Him "Heaven forbid, sir", he said. "This is not going to happen to You!" Jesus turned on Peter and said, "Get away from Me, you Satan! You are a dangerous trap to Me. You are thinking merely from a human point of view, and not from God's."

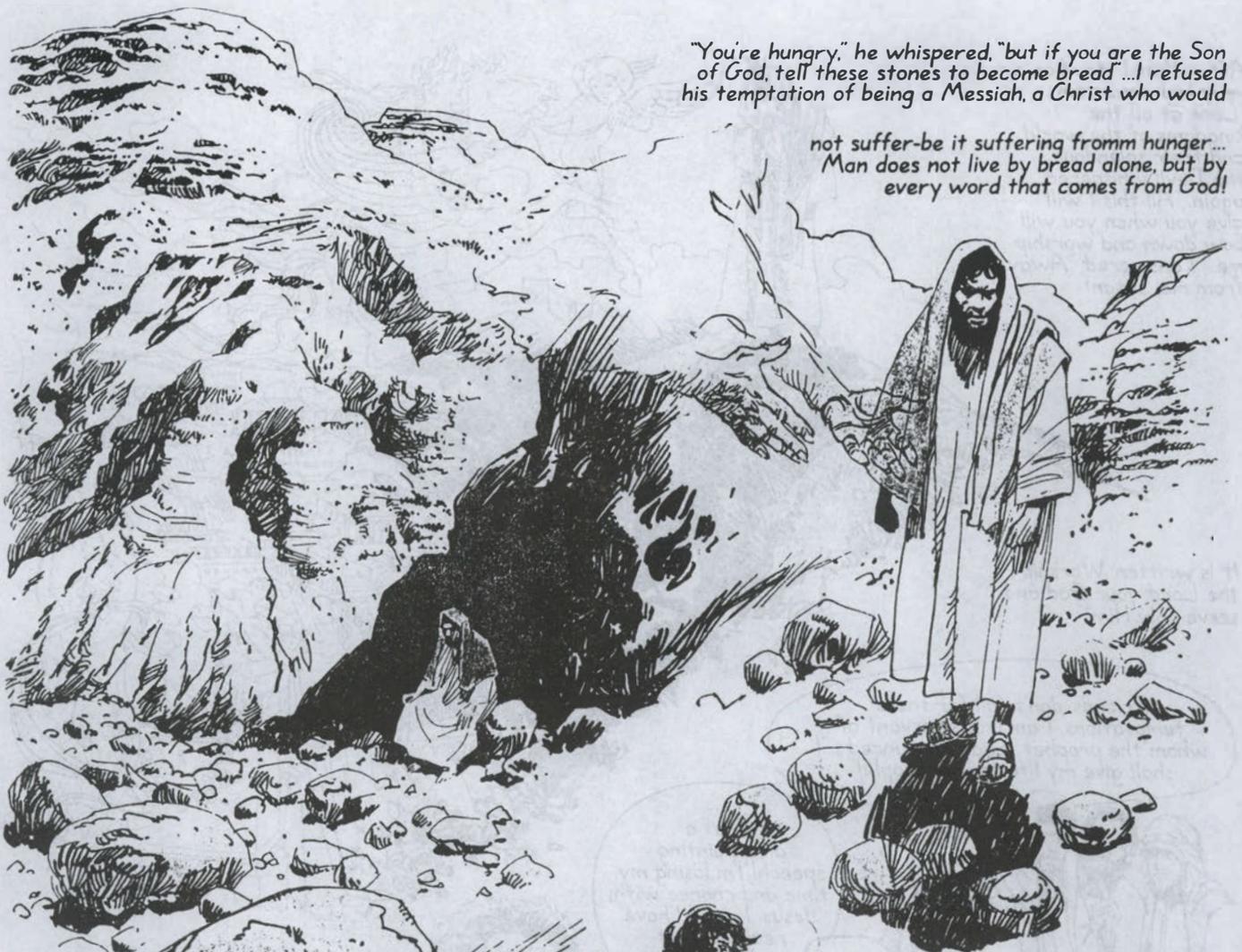
able!" "You shall indeed drink from it", He told them. "But I have no right to say who will sit on the thrones next to Mine. Those places are reserved for the persons My Father selects." The other ten disciples were indignant when they heard what James and John had asked for.

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, to be tempted there by Satan. For forty days and forty nights He ate nothing and became very hungry. Then Satan tempted Him to get food by changing stones into loaves of bread. "It will prove You are

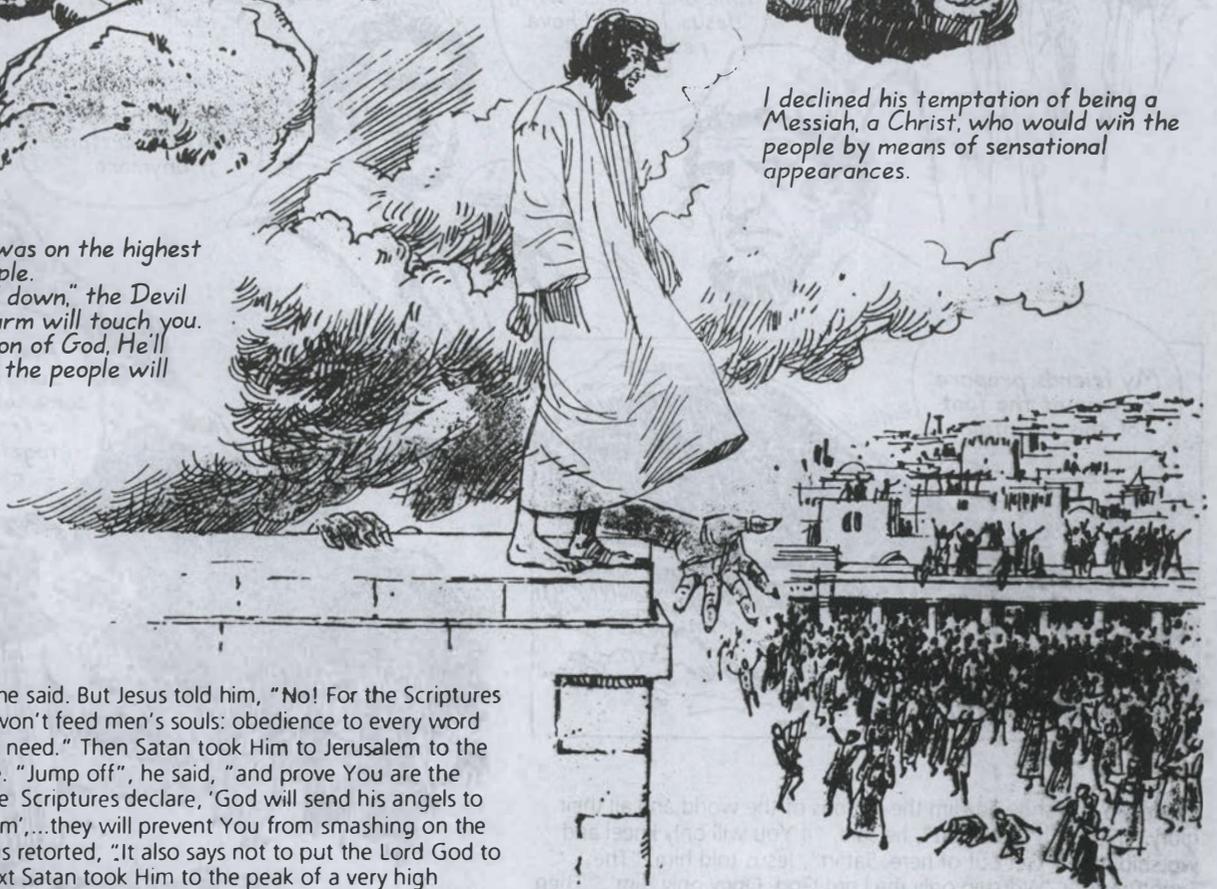
"You're hungry," he whispered, "but if you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread ...I refused his temptation of being a Messiah, a Christ who would

not suffer-be it suffering from hunger...  
Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God!



I declined his temptation of being a Messiah, a Christ, who would win the people by means of sensational appearances.

Another time I was on the highest peak of the temple.  
"Throw yourself down," the Devil whispered, "no harm will touch you. If you are the Son of God, He'll protect you and the people will adore you."



the Son of God", he said. But Jesus told him, "No! For the Scriptures tell us that bread won't feed men's souls: obedience to every word of God is what we need." Then Satan took Him to Jerusalem to the roof of the Temple. "Jump off", he said, "and prove You are the Son of God; for the Scriptures declare, 'God will send his angels to keep you from harm',...they will prevent You from smashing on the rocks below." Jesus retorted, "It also says not to put the Lord God to a foolish test!" Next Satan took Him to the peak of a very high

After that I stood on a very high mountain... "Look at all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour," the Devil whispered again. "All this I will give you when you will bow down and worship me." I answered: "Away from me, Satan!"

It is written: Worship the Lord, your God and serve only Him!"

Friends, don't fall for these temptations. I am God's servant of whom the prophet Isaiah announced... "I shall give my life for my people!"

What a disappointing speech! I'm losing my time and chance with Jesus. I should have realized that before!

I'm confused. I don't understand it anymore....

My friends, prepare a camp at the foot of this mountain.

And you, Peter, James and John, come with Me! We'll spend the night together on the mountain.

mountain and showed Him the nations of the world and all their glory. "I'll give it all to You", he said, "if You will only kneel and worship me." "Get out of here, Satan", Jesus told him. "The Scriptures say, 'Worship only the Lord God. Obey only Him'." Then Satan went away, and angels came and cared for Jesus.

I've taken you three apart to comfort you tonight.

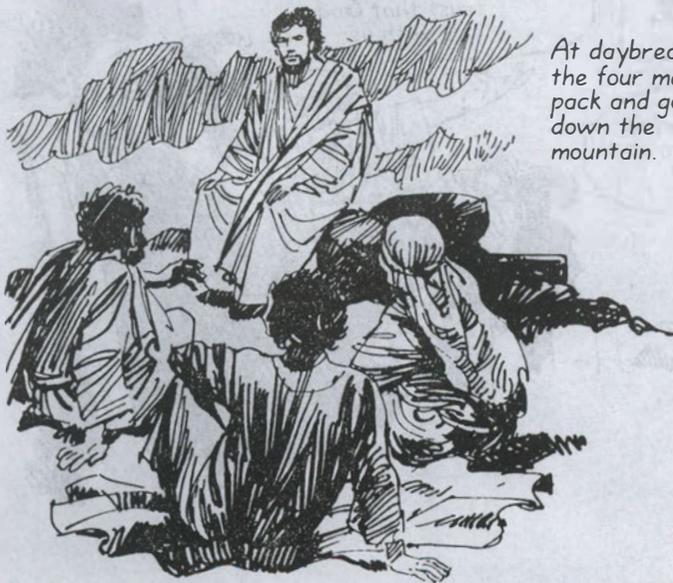
On a mountain Moses as well as Elijah met with God and took courage.



At midnight, a blinding light awakes Peter, James and John. Jesus appears in brilliant light to them and is talking with Moses and Elijah.



When the appearance ends, they see Jesus just as before.



At daybreak, the four men pack and go down the mountain.

#### Matthew 17:1-9

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John to the top of a high and lonely hill, and as they watched, His appearance changed so that His face shone like the sun and His clothing became dazzling white. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Him. Peter blurted out, "Sir, it's wonderful that we can be here! If You want me to, I'll make three shelters, one for You and one for Moses and for Elijah." But even as he said it, a bright cloud came over them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, and I am wonderfully pleased with Him. Obey Him. At this the disciples fell face downward to the ground, terribly frightened. Jesus came over and touched them. "Get up", He said, "don't be afraid." And when they looked, only Jesus was with them. As they were going down the mountain, Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after He had risen from the dead.

There are no words to express the events of last night...it's become very clear to me that Jesus is far greater than Moses and Elijah!

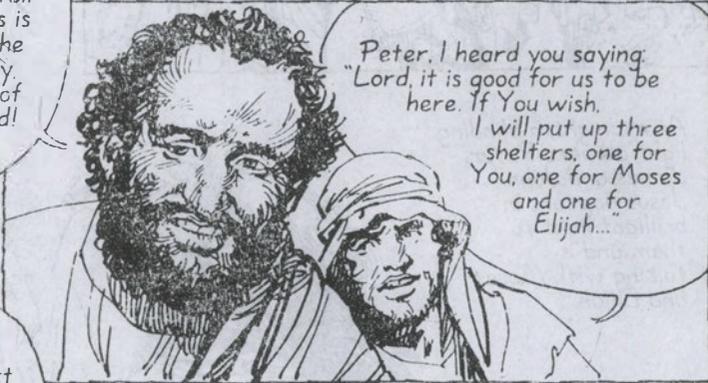


Oh, yes. They have only prepared His coming... He is part of God's glory Himself!

I heard the voice from heaven saying: "Jesus is My Son Whom I love... follow Him, listen to Him."



I saw the same, John, and I tell you that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. Surely, He's the Son of the living God!



Peter, I heard you saying: "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You wish, I will put up three shelters, one for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah..."

My friends, I instruct you: don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of man has been raised from the dead!



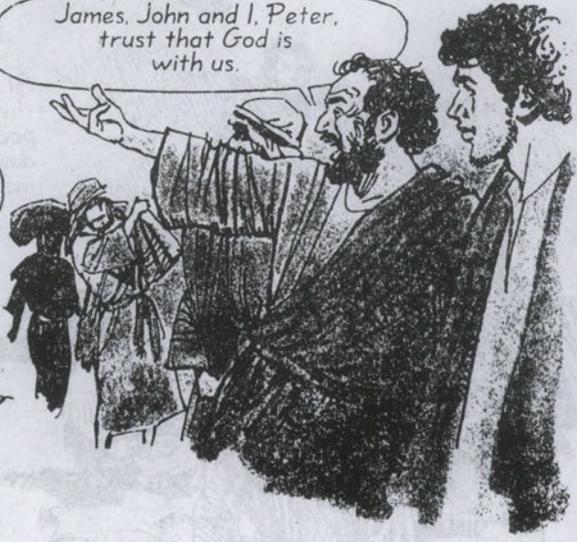
I don't fully understand, but we promise to remain silent.



James, John and I, Peter, trust that God is with us.



Come along, friends, let's go up to Jerusalem!



Jesus has decided to go up to Jerusalem for the Pass-over Feast...with His disciples He comes to the Mount of Olives.

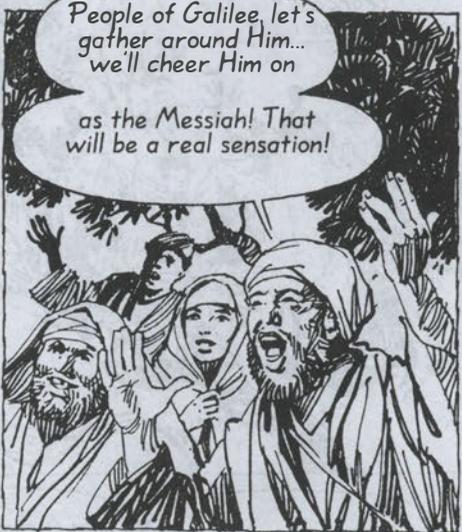
Here they meet some pilgrims from Galilee, who are also going to Jerusalem...



Look!  
There's Jesus of  
Nazareth!

The famous  
prophet of our  
province of  
Galilee!

We must  
organize a parade  
when Jesus enters  
the city!



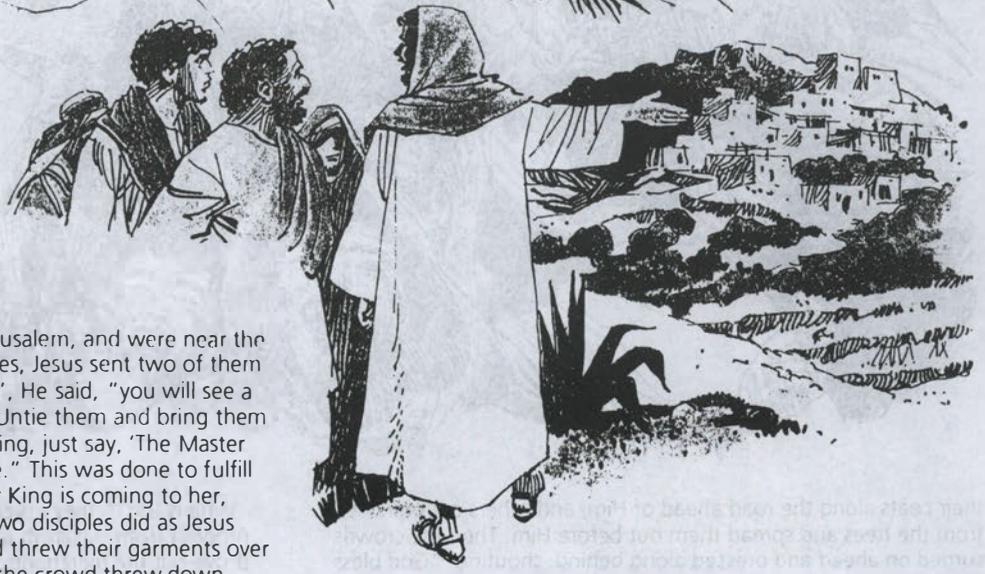
People of Galilee, let's  
gather around Him...  
we'll cheer Him on

as the Messiah! That  
will be a real sensation!

Jesus, please for  
once accept this  
proposal!

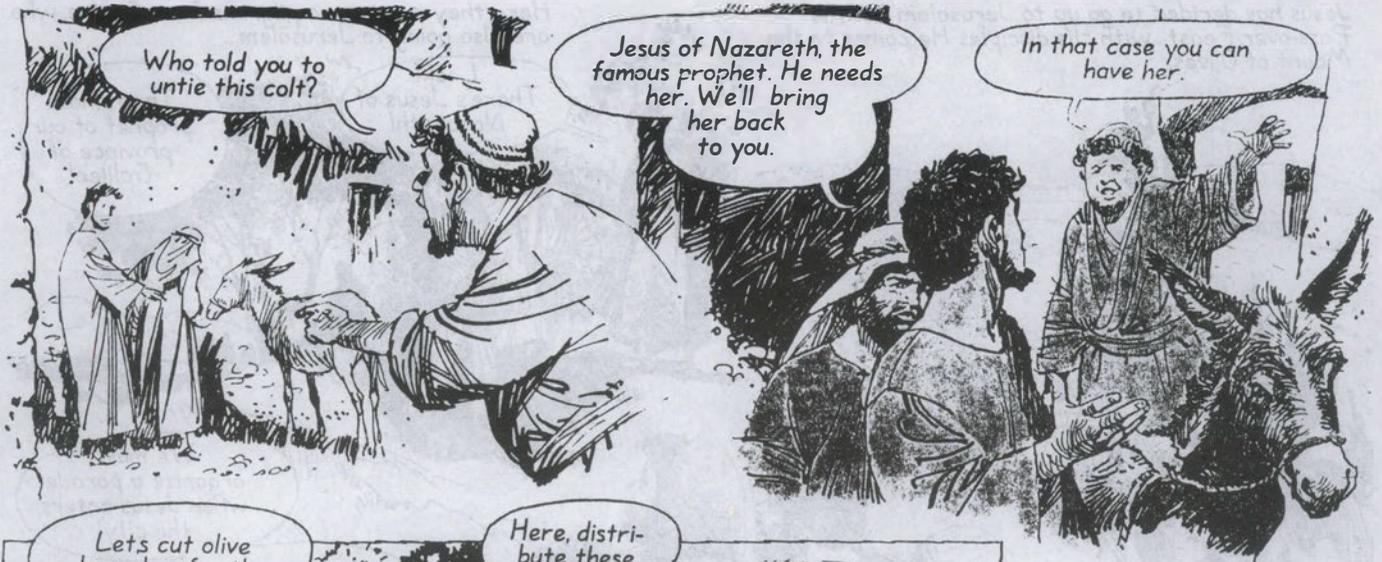
I agree...

Go into that village  
where you'll find a colt.  
Untie her and bring  
her to Me...I'll  
ride on her...



**Matthew 21:1-17**

As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, and were near the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of them into the village ahead. "Just as you enter", He said, "you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them here. If anyone asks you what you are doing, just say, 'The Master needs them', and there will be no trouble." This was done to fulfill the ancient prophecy, "Tell Jerusalem her King is coming to her, riding humbly on a donkey's colt!" The two disciples did as Jesus said, and brought the animals to Him and threw their garments over the colt for Him to ride on. And some in the crowd threw down



Who told you to untie this colt?

Jesus of Nazareth, the famous prophet. He needs her. We'll bring her back to you.

In that case you can have her.



Lets cut olive branches for the parade!

Here, distribute these branches!

When we enter Jerusalem, spread your coats on the road asa sign of honor. And you, children, look for flowers!



Long live Jesus of Nazareth!

The Messiah, the Son of David!

Hosannah!

their coats along the road ahead of Him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them out before Him. Then the crowds surged on ahead and pressed along behind, shouting, "God bless King David's Son!"..."Praise Him!"..."God's Man is here!"...Bless Him, Lord!" The entire city of Jerusalem was stirred as He entered.

"Who is this?" they asked. And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth up in Galilee." Jesus went into the Temple, drove out the merchants, and knocked over the money-changers' tables and the stalls of those selling doves. "The Scriptures say "M' Temple is a place of prayer", He declared, "but you have turned it



To whom are you cheering?

Jesus of Nazareth, the new prophet!



What does this mean?

Mm...when the Romans find out about this, their army might very well take action...

The parade has arrived at the Temple area...beggars, sick and disabled people follow Him...



Now the children start cheering Jesus.

Get away, you dirty people! You're unclean and aren't allowed to enter the Temple!

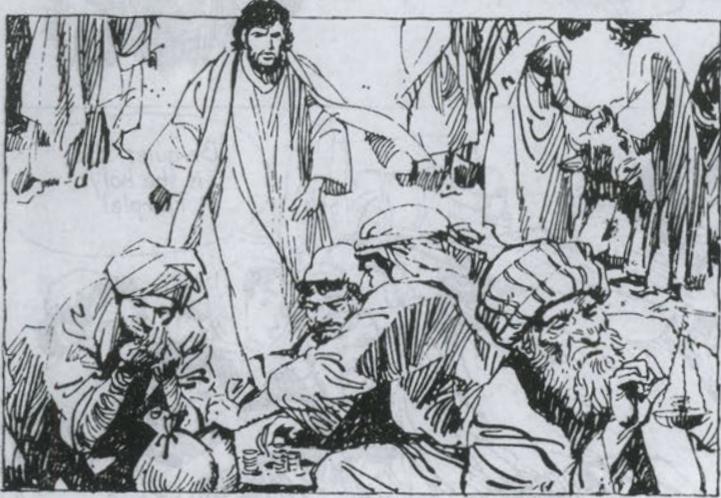
Never mind that I'm disabled: Jesus will heal me!



Long live Jesus of Nazareth!



Be quiet, this is the holy Temple!





into a den of thieves." And now the blind and crippled came to Him and He healed them there in the Temple. But when the chief priests and other Jewish leaders saw these wonderful miracles, and heard even the little children in the Temple shouting, "God bless

the Son of David", they were disturbed and indignant and asked Him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes", Jesus replied. "Didn't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, "Even little babies shall praise Him!" Then He returned to Bethany, where He stayed overnight.

Now all that we planned so carefully is a complete mess!

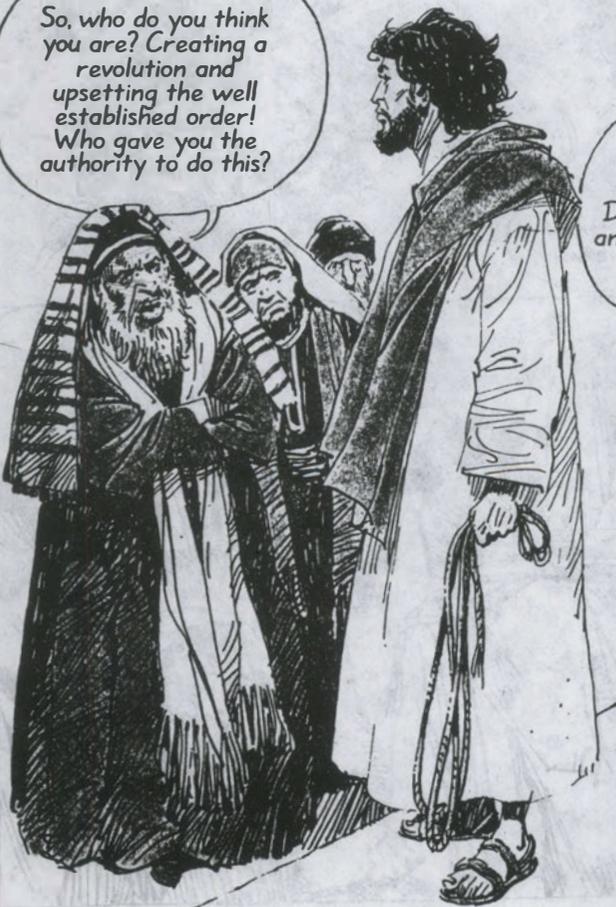
Our profits are gone and how will we manage?



Let's call this (so called) Messiah to order: He has to justify Himself.



So, who do you think you are? Creating a revolution and upsetting the well established order! Who gave you the authority to do this?

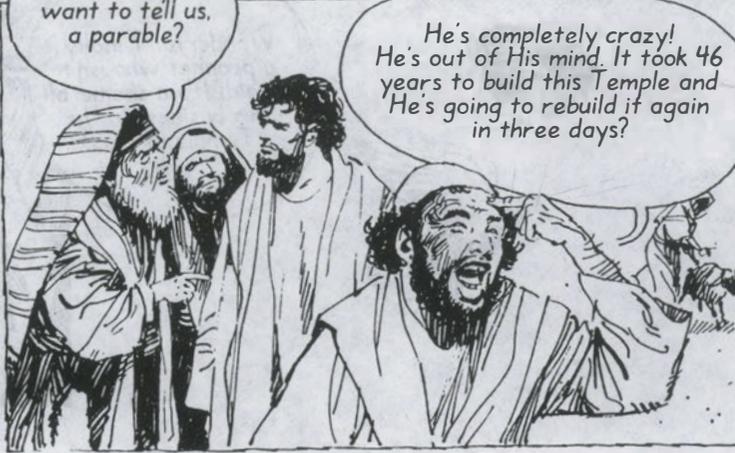


You want proof for My authority? Destroy this Temple and I'll rebuild it again in three days!



What do you want to tell us, a parable?

He's completely crazy! He's out of His mind. It took 46 years to build this Temple and He's going to rebuild it again in three days?



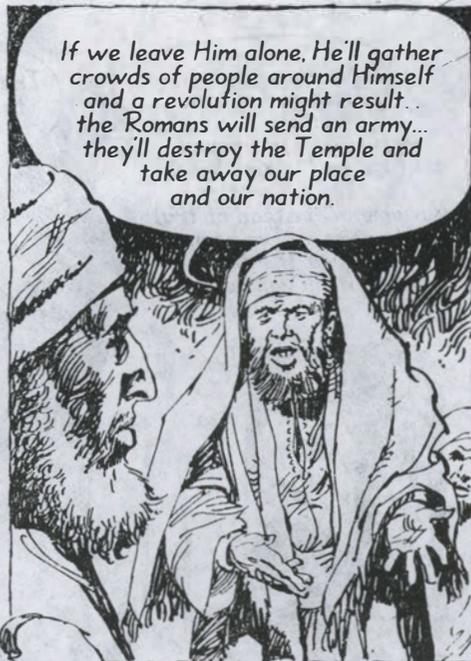
It was a parable indeed. Jesus spoke of His body, the new temple of God!...Destroyed, killed, He would rise again from the dead after three days. After Jesus' resurrection the disciples understood it.

Shortly afterwards, the Pharisees who were the enemies of Jesus, met together under the leadership of the high priest Caiaphas



But what shall we do? His miracles are real!

His teachings weakens our authority...all the people are following Him.



If we leave Him alone, He'll gather crowds of people around Himself and a revolution might result... the Romans will send an army... they'll destroy the Temple and take away our place and our nation.



What's your opinion, high priest Caiaphas?



My opinion is that it's better for all of us that one man die for the people, rather than that the whole nation will perish.



I agree completely!

That's right! If we want to live, then Jesus must die.



We managed to win over one of His disciples to our side, a certain Judas...

**John 11:47-54**

Then the chief priests and Pharisees convened a council to discuss the situation. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other, "for this man certainly does miracles. If we let him alone the whole nation will follow him - and then the Roman army will come and kill us and take over the Jewish government." And one of them, Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year, said, "You are stupid idiots - Let this one man die for the people - why should the whole nation

perish?" This prophecy that Jesus should die for the entire nation came from Caiaphas in his position as High Priest - he didn't think of it by himself, but was inspired to say it. It was a prediction that Jesus' death would not be for Israel only, but for all the children of God scattered around the world. So from that time on the Jewish leaders began plotting Jesus' death. Jesus now stopped His public ministry and left Jerusalem. He went to the edge of the desert to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with His disciples



Jesus' cause is lost. I, Judas, had put my future on His success. I hoped that He, as Messiah, would lead the Liberation Movement ...instead of that He gives in...I've been deceived. If I don't watch it, all will be lost.

The only way to succeed now...

...is to go over to His enemies and to help them to get hold of Him.

I believe the authorities might be right! Jesus might endanger our nation!

I've made up my mind!

Some days afterwards, at night....



It's me, Judas....

Good, Judas, you've kept your promise.



I've decided to hand Him over to you.

Judas...you do our nation a great service... we're much obliged to you.

It's a deal! Thirty silver coins! That's the price... that we are willing to pay you for delivering Jesus to us!



The money is here: now wait for the right moment.



Be careful: not in public, for the crowds might protect Him and then arresting Him will be impossible.

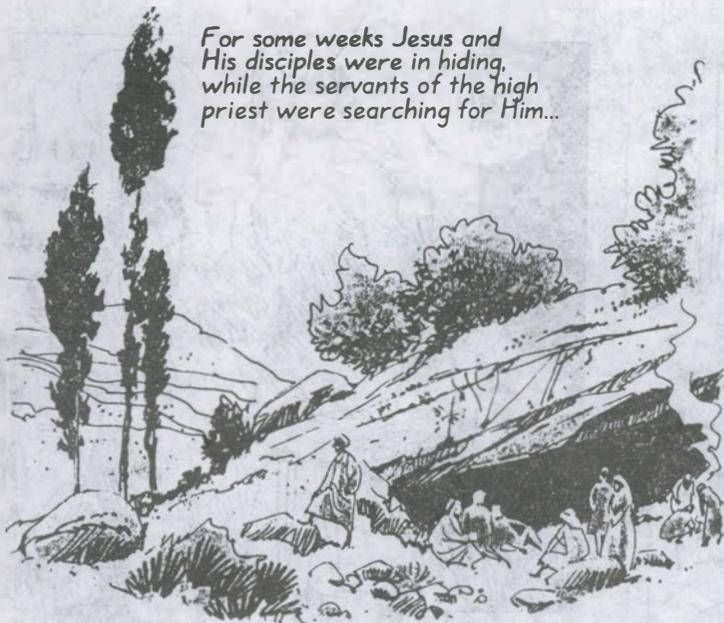
Preferably at night...that's our time!

RA 8

**Matthew 26:3-5 + 14-16**

At that very moment the chief priests and other Jewish officials were meeting at the residence of Caiaphas the High Priest, to discuss ways of capturing Jesus quietly, and killing Him. "But not during the Passover celebration", they agreed, "for there would be a riot." Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, went to the chief priests, and asked, "How much will you pay me to get Jesus into your hands?" And they gave him thirty silver coins. From that time on, Judas watched for an opportunity to betray Jesus to them.

For some weeks Jesus and His disciples were in hiding, while the servants of the high priest were searching for Him...



My friends, today the Pass-over is celebrated. Peter and John, go and make preparations for us to eat the Pass-over.

Yes, Lord. But where? With whom?

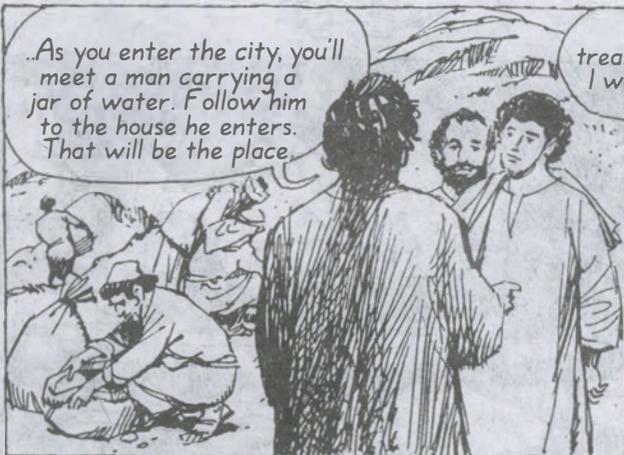


I've reserved a large room in Jerusalem. You must go and find it...



..As you enter the city, you'll meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him to the house he enters. That will be the place.

Aha. Jesus doesn't trust me anymore...but as the treasurer I have the right to prepare the Pass-over ...then I would've known the meeting place!



Then I could have informed the authorities so that they could have arrested Him.

Some hours later...

Women carrying water jars, that's nothing special.

But there I see a man carrying a jar, which is unusual! Could he be the man?

It must be! Let's follow him!

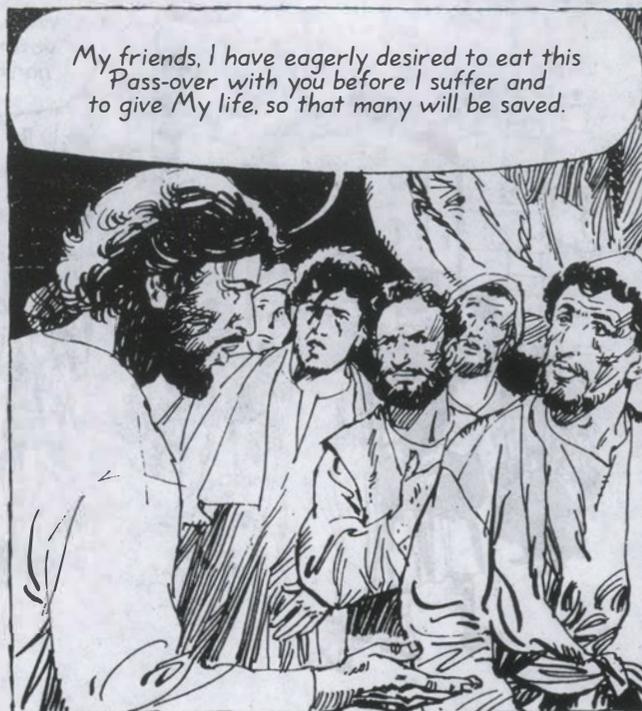




..and here's the large room prepared according to Jesus' wish...you see that all is in proper order.



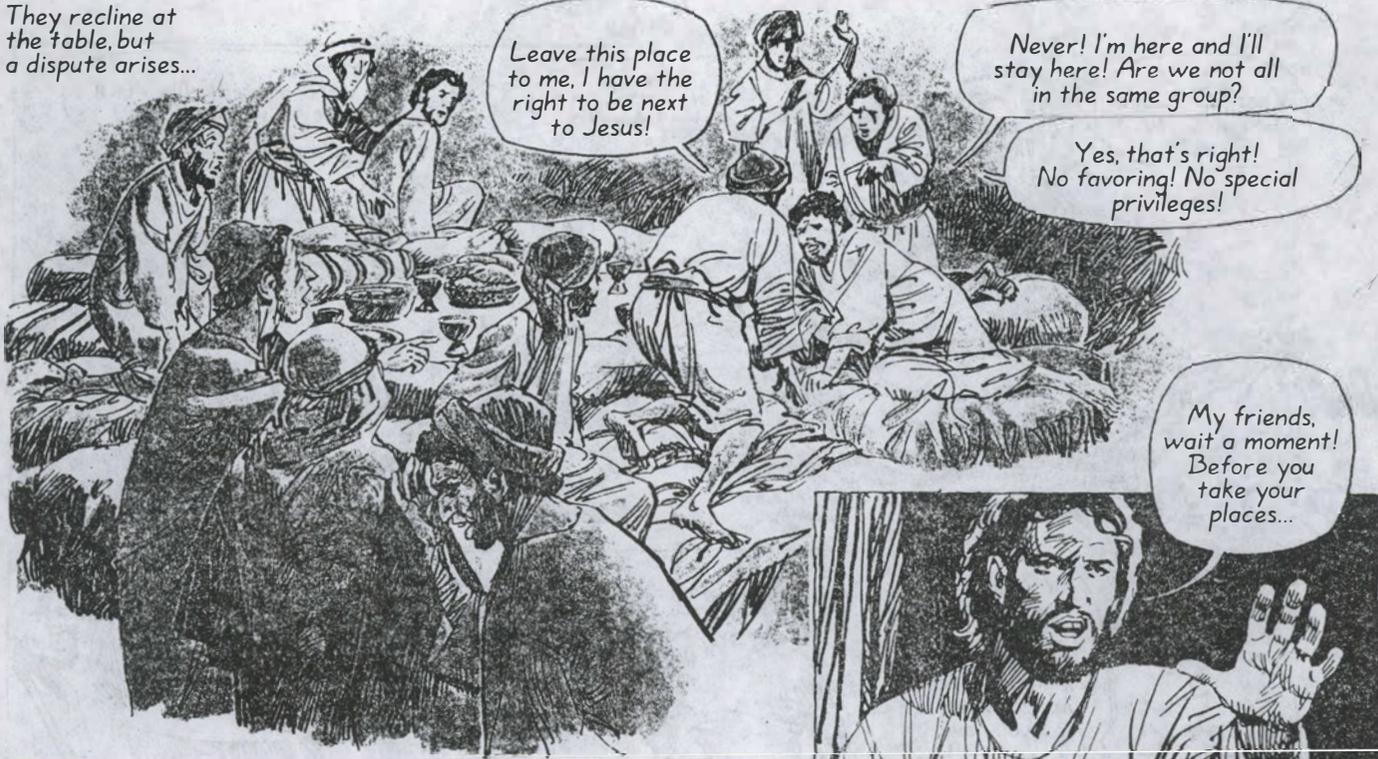
That evening...



**Luke 22: 7-16 + 24-26**

Now the day of the Passover celebration arrived, when the Passover lamb was killed and eaten with the unleavened bread. Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to find a place to prepare their Passover meal. "Where do You want us to go?" they asked. And He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, you will see a man walking along carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house he enters. And say to the man who lives there, 'Our Teacher says for you to show us the guest room where He can eat the Passover meal with His disciples.' He will take you upstairs to a large room all ready for us. That is the place. Go ahead and prepare the meal there." They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and prepared the Passover supper. Then Jesus and the others arrived, and at the proper time all sat down together at the table; and He

They recline at the table, but a dispute arises...



Leave this place to me, I have the right to be next to Jesus!

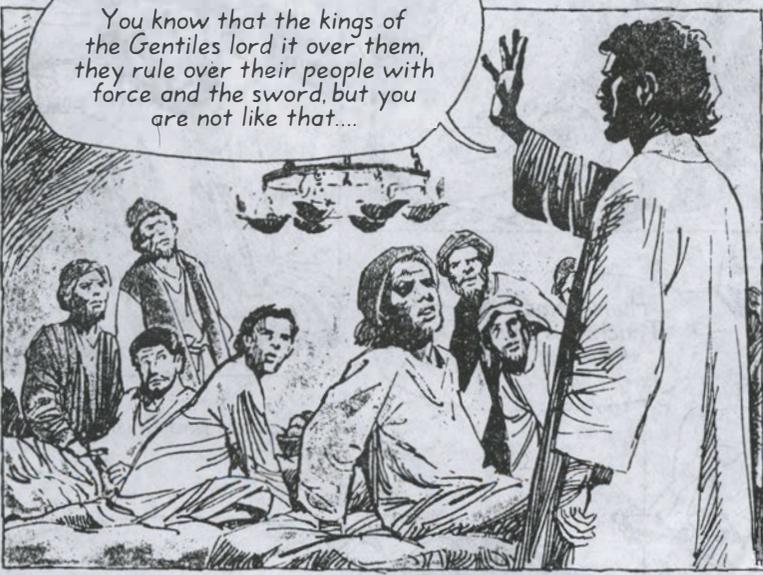
Never! I'm here and I'll stay here! Are we not all in the same group?

Yes, that's right! No favoring! No special privileges!

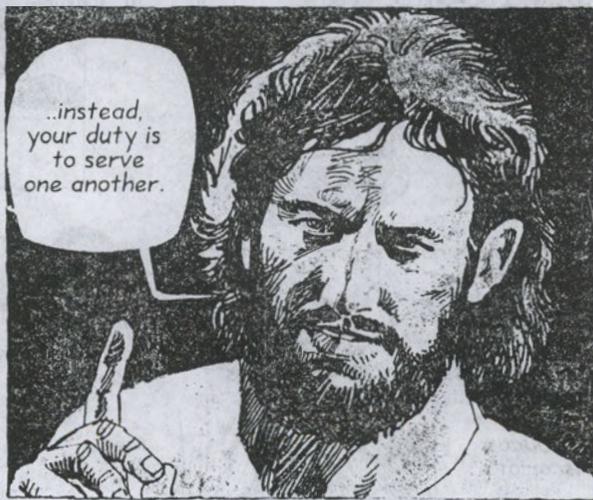
My friends, wait a moment! Before you take your places...



You know that the kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, they rule over their people with force and the sword, but you are not like that...



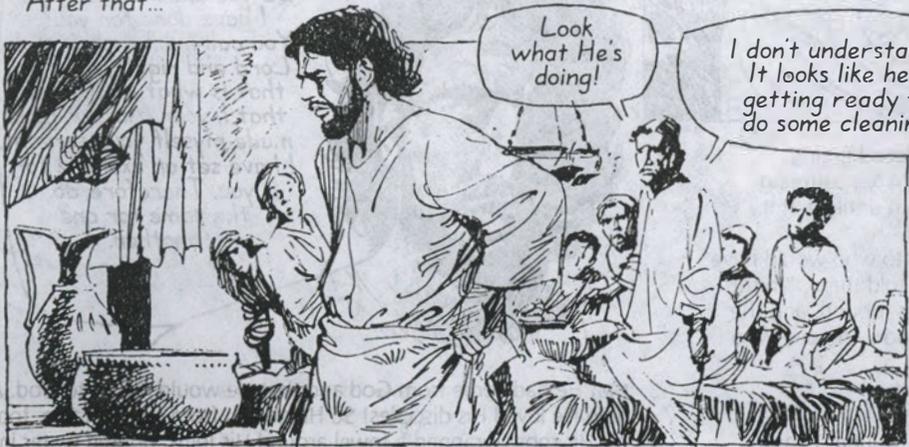
...instead, your duty is to serve one another.

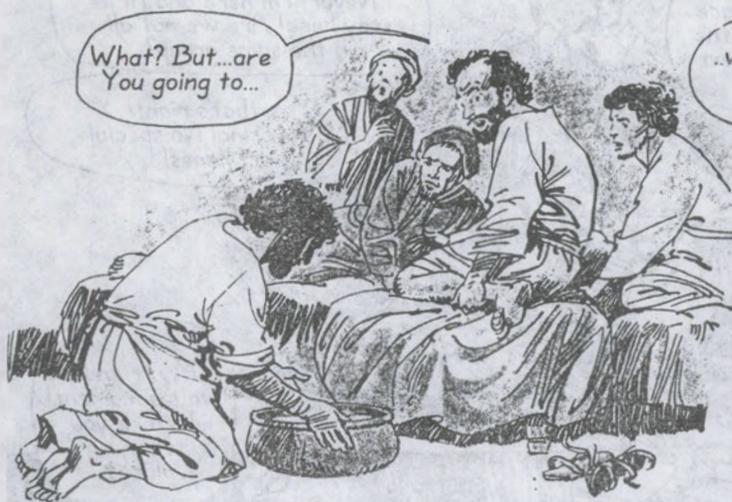


After that...

Look what He's doing!

I don't understand! It looks like he's getting ready to do some cleaning



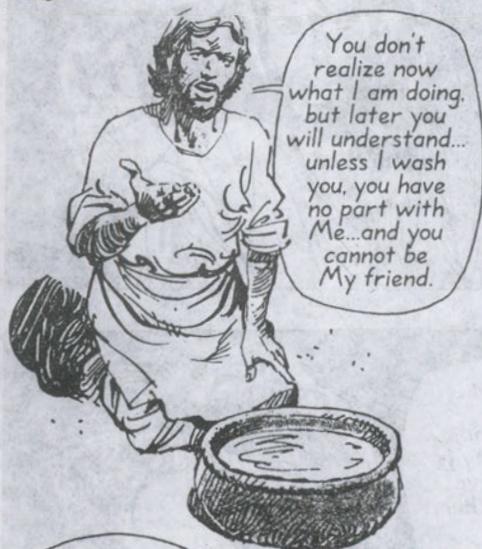


What? But...are You going to...

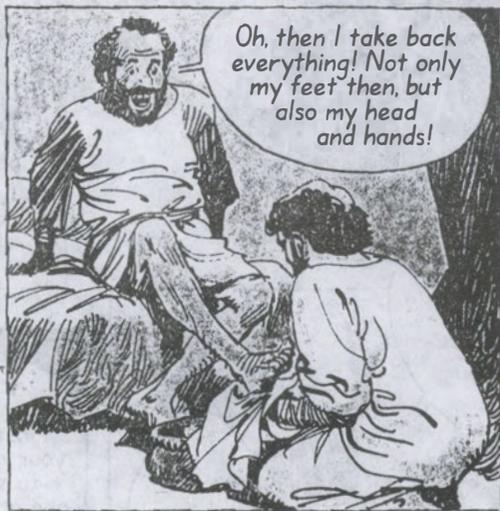


...wash my feet?

Lord, my feet? No, You'll never wash my feet!



You don't realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand... unless I wash you, you have no part with Me...and you cannot be My friend.



Oh, then I take back everything! Not only my feet then, but also my head and hands!



A man who has had a bath, needs only to wash his feet: you are clean now...

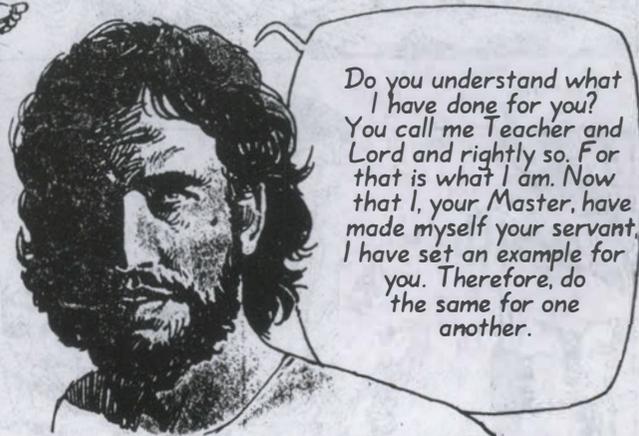


...though not everyone.

Saying these words, Jesus thought of Judas Iscariot...

Humiliating, what the Teacher is doing! That's the work of a slave!

When Jesus had finished, He said...



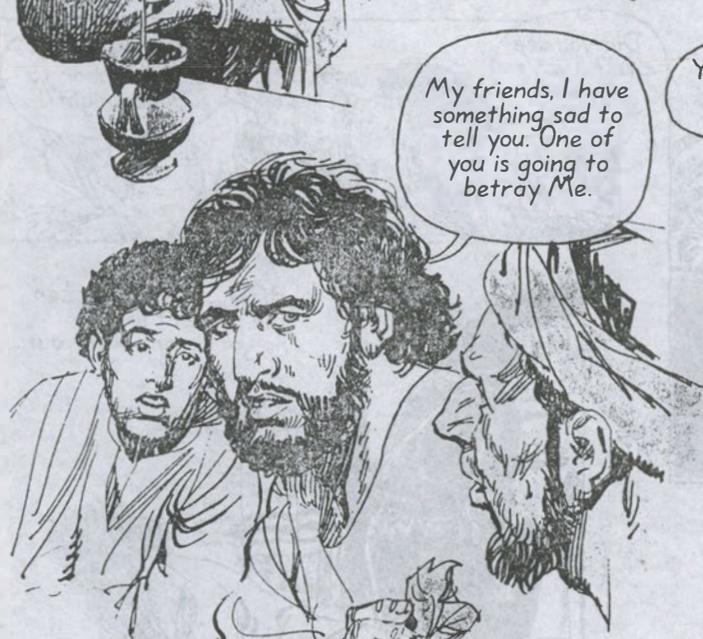
Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me Teacher and Lord and rightly so. For that is what I am. Now that I, your Master, have made myself your servant, I have set an example for you. Therefore, do the same for one another.

said, "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before My suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat it again until what it represents has occurred in the Kingdom of God." And they began to argue among themselves as to who would have the highest rank in the coming Kingdom. Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men order their slaves around, and the slaves have no choice but to like it! But among you, the one who serves you best will be your leader."

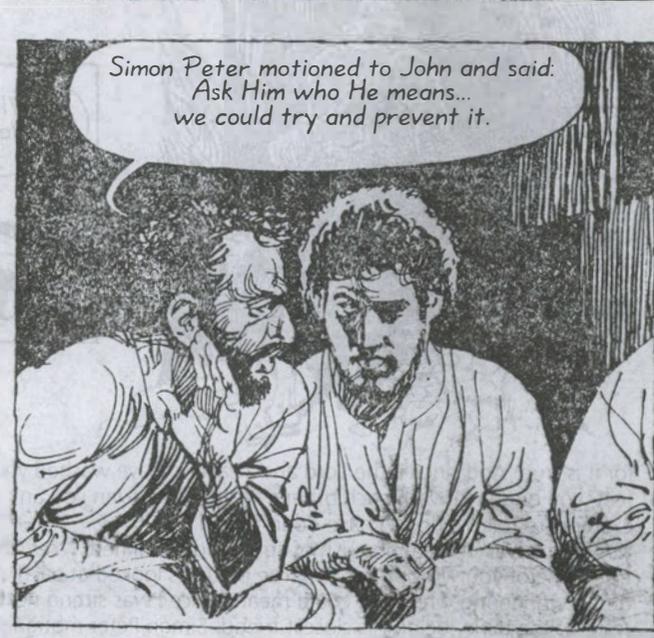
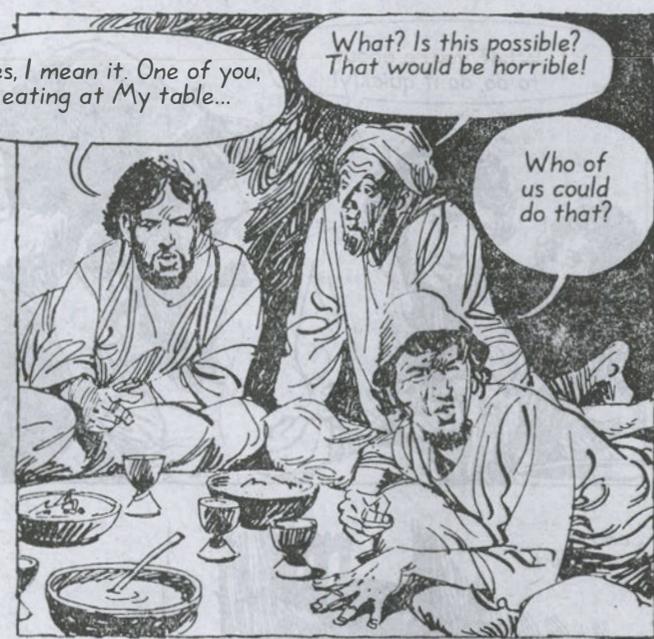
**John 13:2-15 + 21-30**  
 During supper the Devil had already suggested to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, that this was the night to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had given Him everything and

that He had come from God and that He would return to God. And how He loved His disciples! So He got up from supper table, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His loins, poured water into basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel He had around Him. When He came to Simon Pet

At the beginning of the meal, Jesus and the disciples eat the bitter salad, to remember the time of oppression which their forefathers experienced in Egypt before the great Exodus.



Peter said to Him, "Master, You shouldn't be washing our feet like this!" Jesus replied, "You don't understand now why I am doing it; some day you will." "No", Peter protested, "You shall never wash my feet!" "But if I don't, you can't be My partner", Jesus replied. Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well - not just my feet!" Jesus replied, "One who has bathed all over needs only to have his feet washed to be entirely clean. Now you are clean - but that isn't true of everyone here." For Jesus knew who would betray Him. That is what He meant when He said, "Not all of you are clean." After washing their feet He put on His robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? You call Me 'Master' and 'Lord', and you do well to say it,



My friends, I have something sad to tell you. One of you is going to betray Me.

Yes, I mean it. One of you, eating at My table...

What? Is this possible? That would be horrible!

Who of us could do that?

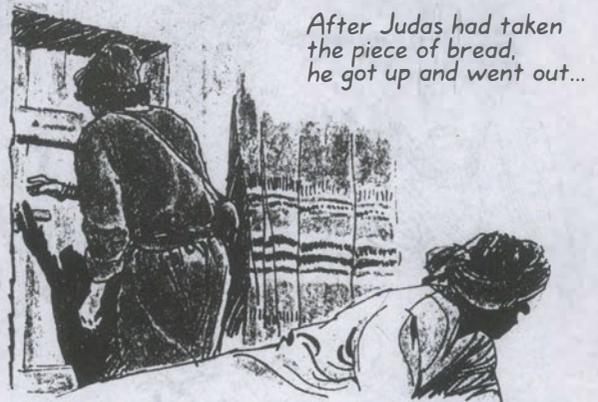
...or me?

I hope you don't mean me?

Simon Peter motioned to John and said: Ask Him who He means... we could try and prevent it.



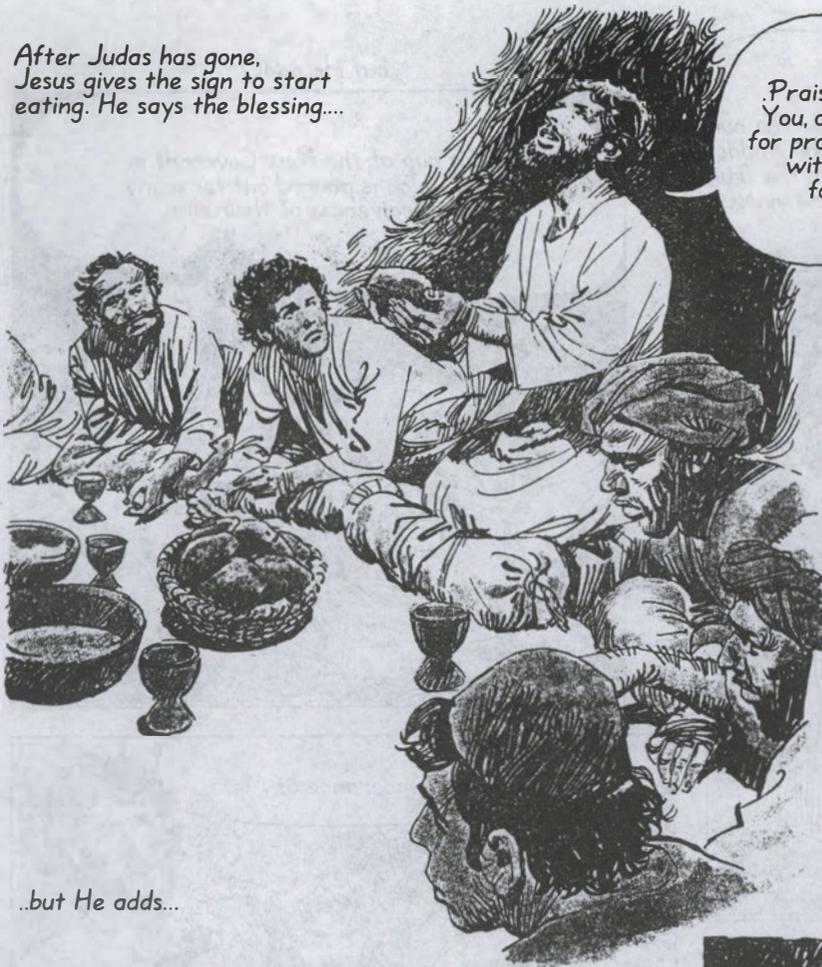
It is the one to whom I'll give this piece of bread...



for it is true. And since I, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow: do as I have done to you." Now Jesus was in great anguish of spirit and exclaimed, "Yes, it is true - one of you will betray Me." The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom He could mean. Since I was sitting next to Jesus at the table, being His closest friend, Simon Peter motioned to

me to ask Him who it was who would do this terrible deed. So I turned and asked Him, "Lord, who is it?" He told me, "It is the one honor by giving the bread dipped in the sauce." And when He had dipped it, He gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas had eaten it, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry - do it now." None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. Some thought that since Judas was their treasurer, Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. Judas left at once, going out into the night.

After Judas has gone,  
Jesus gives the sign to start  
eating. He says the blessing...

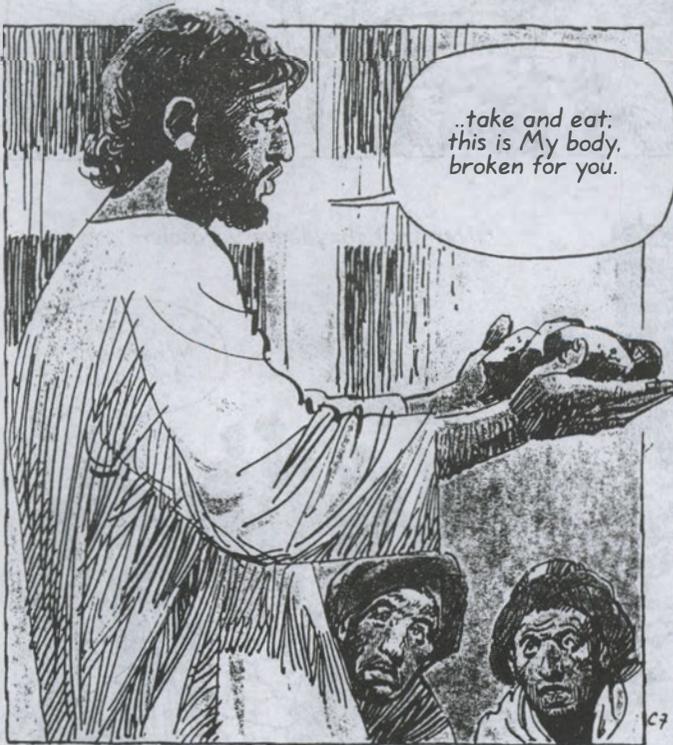


Praise be to  
You, our God,  
for providing us  
with this  
food!

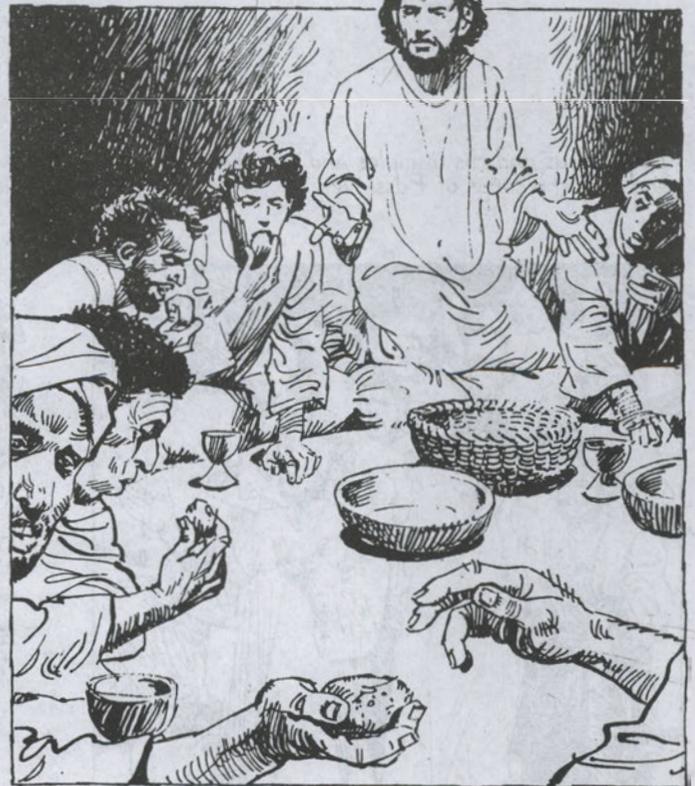
He breaks the bread  
and gives it to them...



..but He adds...



..take and eat;  
this is My body,  
broken for you.

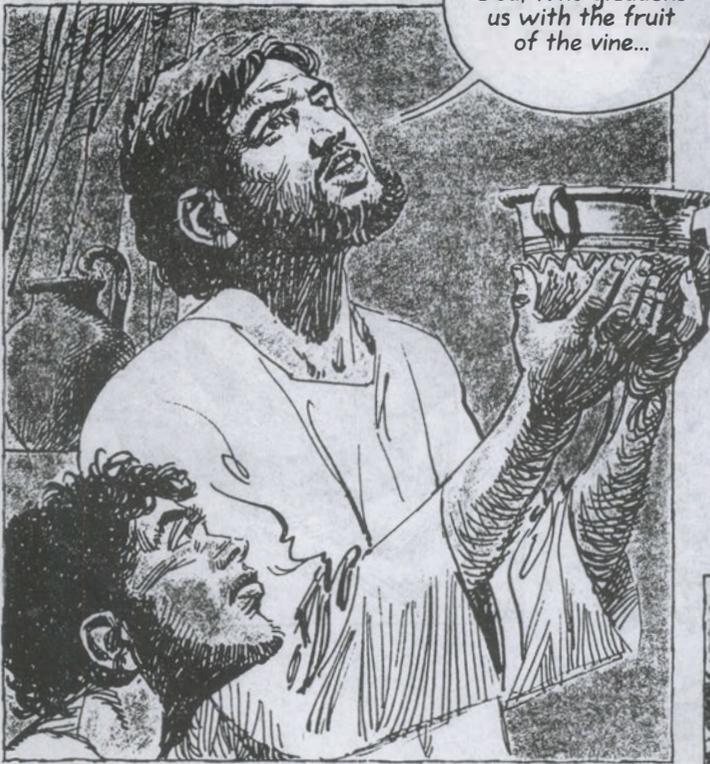


**Luke 22:19-20**

Then He took a loaf of bread; and when He had thanked God for it, He broke it apart and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body, given for you. Eat it in remembrance of Me." After supper He gave

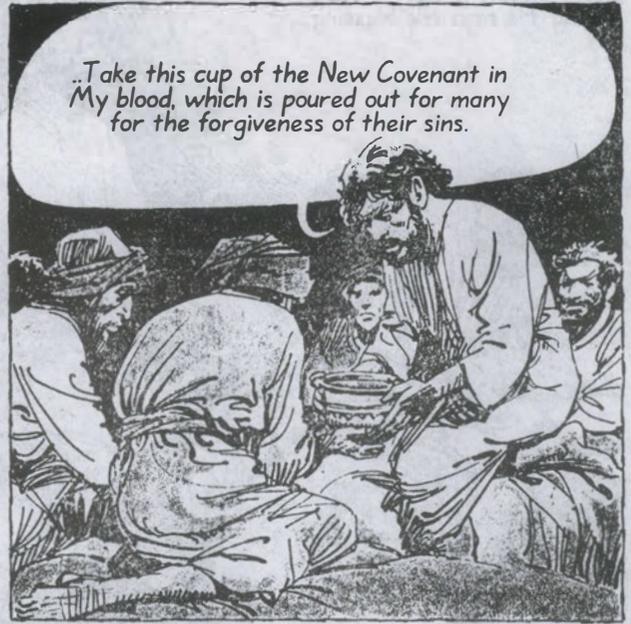
them another glass of wine, saying, "This wine is the token of God's new agreement to save you - an agreement sealed with the blood I shall pour out to purchase back your souls."

After eating the bread, Jesus takes the cup and gives thanks...



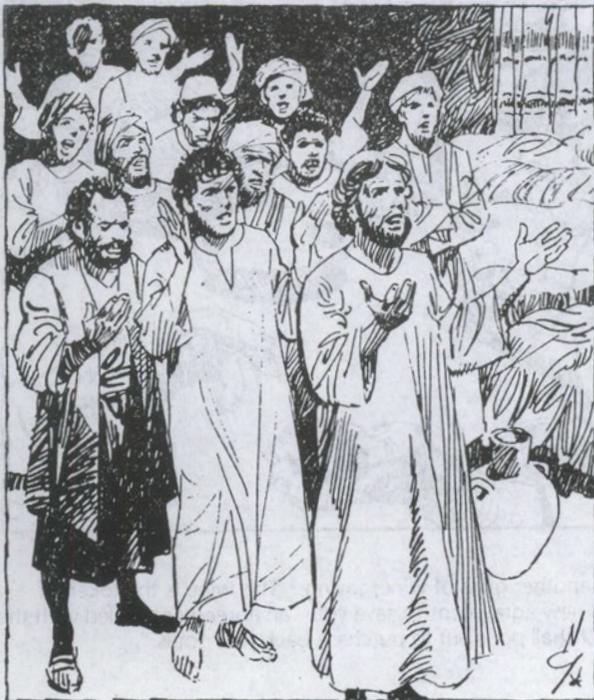
..Thank You, our God, Who gladdens us with the fruit of the vine...

..but He adds...



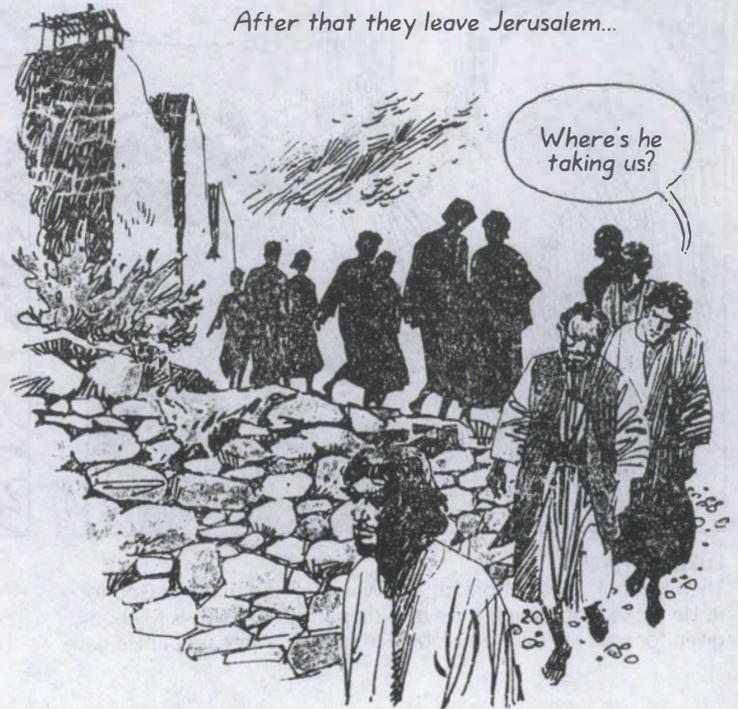
..Take this cup of the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of their sins.

Then Jesus and His disciples end the meal and sing the songs of Pass-over.



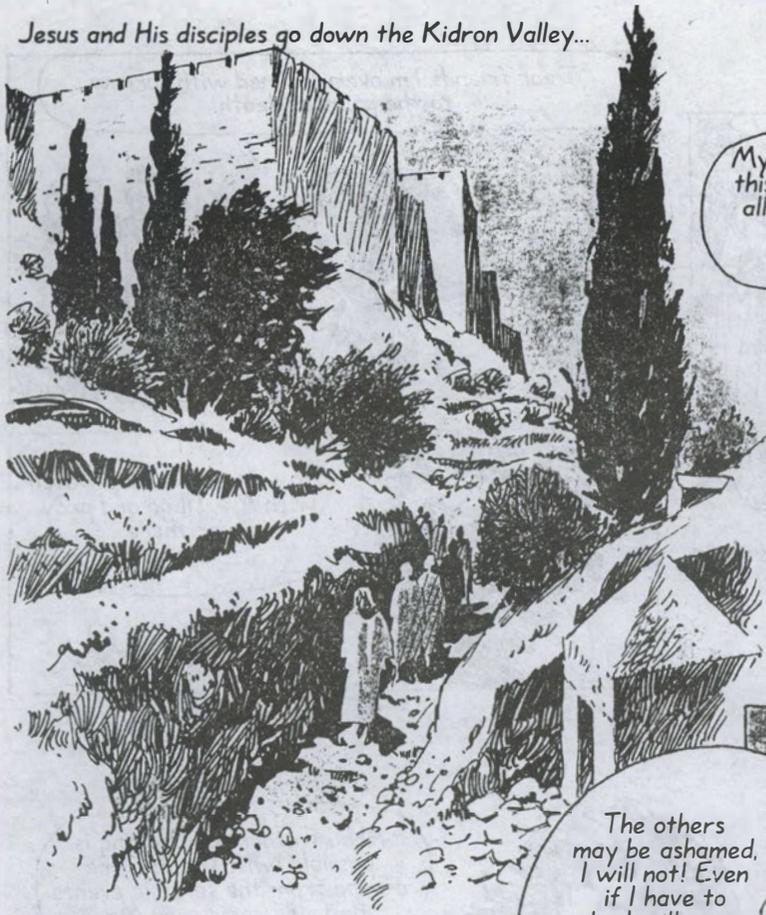
Do this in remembrance of Me.

After that they leave Jerusalem...

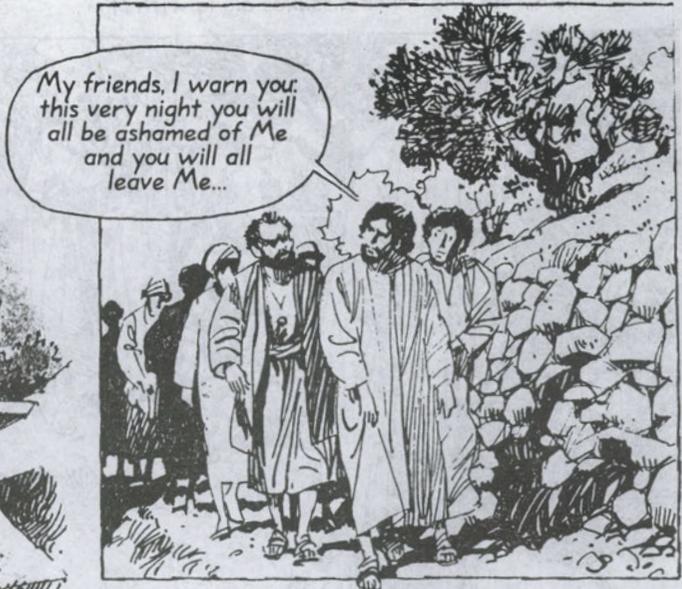


Where's he taking us?

Jesus and His disciples go down the Kidron Valley...



After crossing Kidron river, they begin to climb the Mount of Olives.

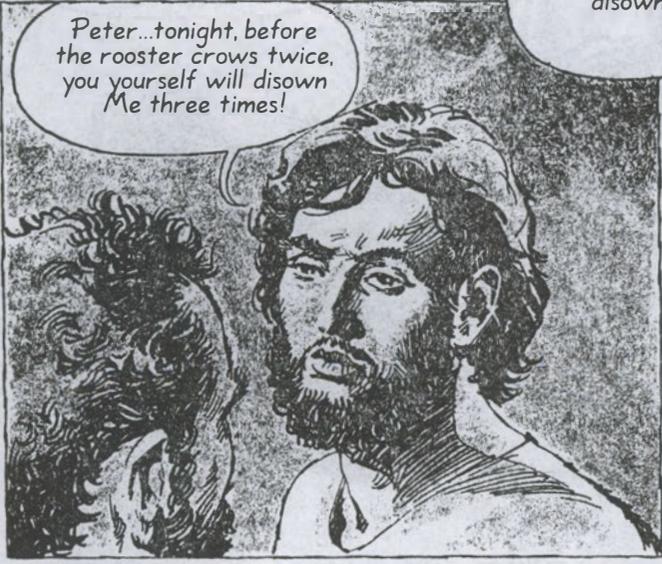


My friends, I warn you: this very night you will all be ashamed of Me and you will all leave Me...

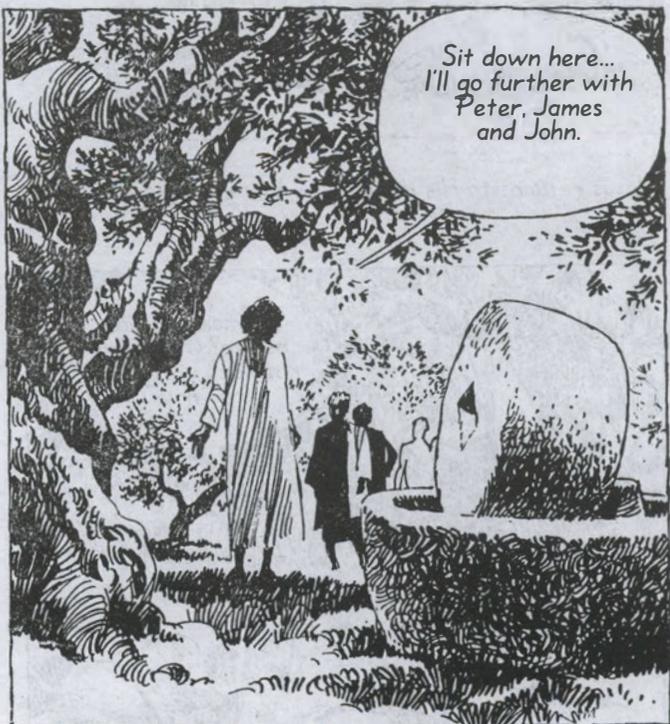
The others may be ashamed, I will not! Even if I have to die, I will never disown you!



Peter...tonight, before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will disown Me three times!



they went to the garden called Gethsemane...

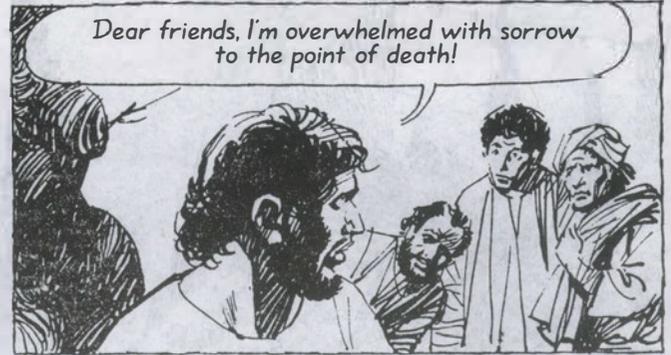


Sit down here... I'll go further with Peter, James and John.

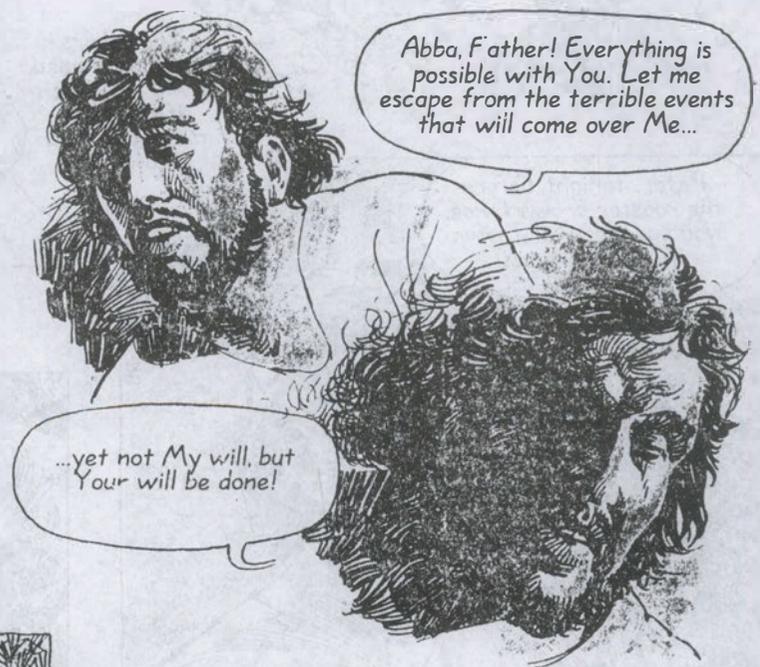
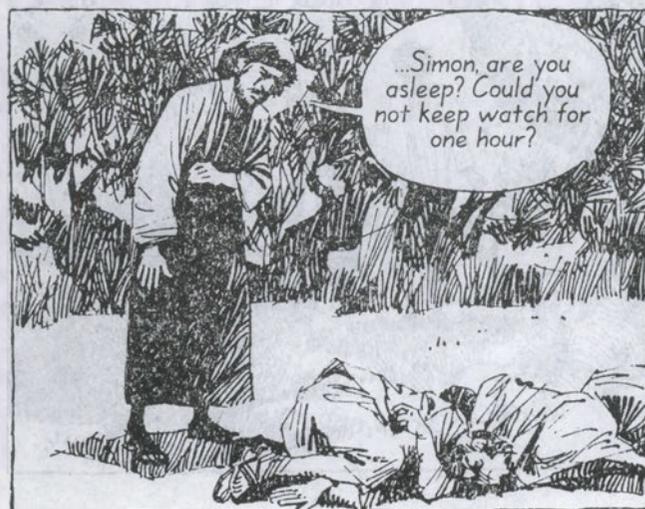
**Mark 14: 26-72**

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. "All of you will desert Me", Jesus told them, "for God has declared through the prophets, 'I will kill the Shepherd, and the sheep will scatter.' But after I am raised to life again, I will go to Galilee and meet you there." Peter said to Him, "I will never desert You no matter what the others do!" "Peter", Jesus said, "before the cock crows a second time tomorrow morning you will deny Me three times." "No!" Peter exploded. "Not even if I have to die with You! I'll never deny You!" And all the others vowed the same. And now they came to an olive grove called the Garden of Gethsemane, and He instructed His disciples, "Sit here, while I go and pray." He took Peter, James and John with Him and began to be filled with horror and deepest distress. And He said to them, "My soul is crushed by

Jesus took the three disciples along with Him...



Jesus returns to His disciples to find comfort, but...



sorrow to the point of death; stay here and watch with Me." He went on a little further and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the awful hour awaiting Him might never come. "Father, Father", He said, "everything is possible for You. Take away this cup from Me. Yet I want Your will, not Mine." Then He returned to the three disciples and found them asleep. "Simon!" He said. "Asleep? Couldn't you watch with Me even one hour? Watch with Me and pray lest the Tempter overpower you. For though the spirit is willing enough, the body is weak." And He went away again and prayed, repeating His pleadings. Again He returned to them and found them sleeping, for they were very tired. And they didn't know what to say. The third time when He returned to them He said, "Sleep on; get your rest! But no! The time for sleep has ended! Look! I am betrayed into the hands of wicked men. Come! Get up! We must go! Look! My betrayer is



What matters now is to watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation....



.you see, the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

Meanwhile...at the garden entrance ...



Judas, it is very dark under the trees. What does He look like, this Jesus? Whom should we arrest?



The man whom I'll kiss, He'll be your man!

My hour has come! Look, I'm betrayed into the hands of sinners! Rise! Let's go! Here comes My betrayer.

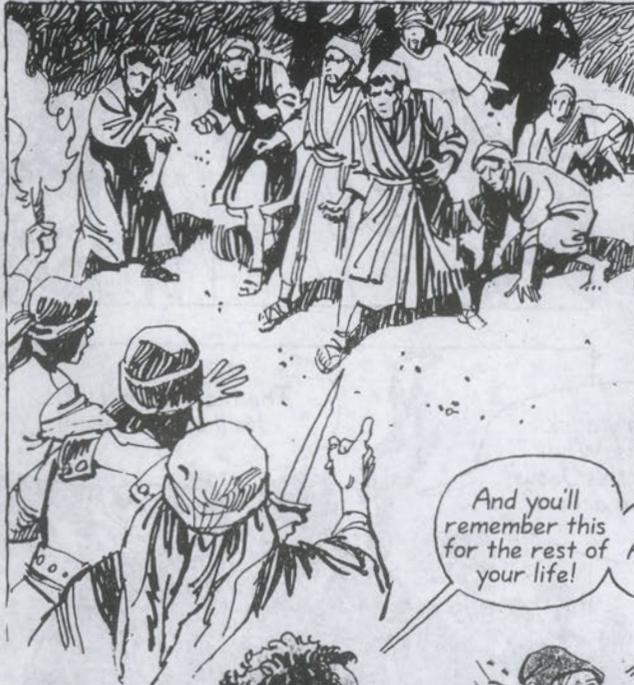


Good evening, Master!

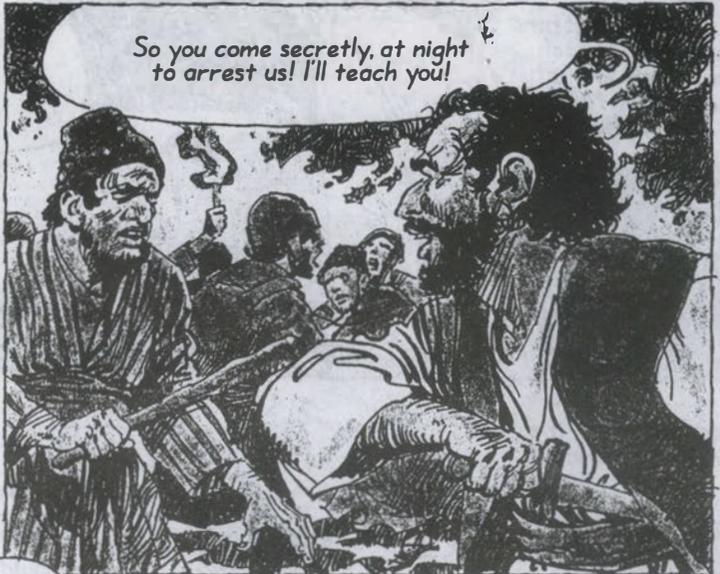


here!" And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas (one of His disciples) arrived with a mob equipped with swords and clubs, sent out by the chief priests and other Jewish leaders. Judas had told them, "You will know which one to arrest when I go over and greet Him. Then you can take Him easily." So as soon as they arrived he walked up to Jesus. "Master!" he exclaimed, and embraced Him with a great show of friendliness. Then the mob arrested Jesus and held Him fast. But someone pulled a sword and slashed at the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Jesus asked them, "Am I some dangerous robber, that you come like this, armed to the teeth to capture Me? Why didn't you arrest Me in the Temple? I was there teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill the prophecies about Me." Meanwhile, all His disciples had fled. There was, however, a young man following

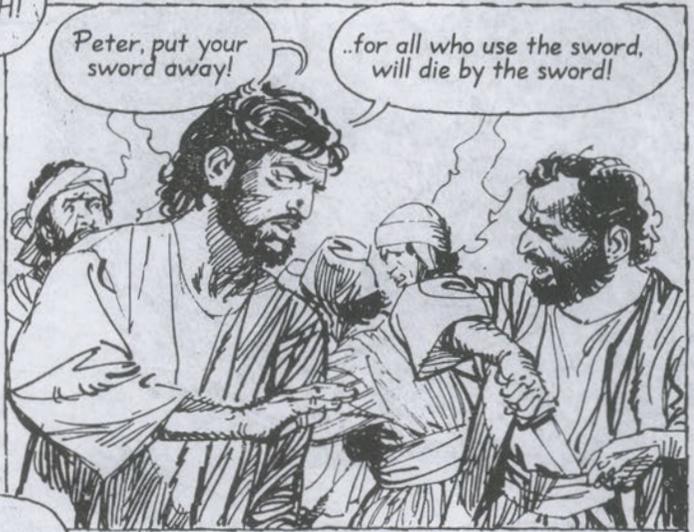
After the first surprise, the disciples of Jesus recovered themselves...



And you'll remember this for the rest of your life! AUGH!



So you come secretly, at night to arrest us! I'll teach you!



Peter, put your sword away!

..for all who use the sword, will die by the sword!

Am I leading a rebellion, that you come out with swords and clubs to capture Me?

Every day I was in the Temple courts teaching.... You did not arrest Me there.... But this is your hour... when darkness reigns.

Jesus allows them to seize Him...seeing this, all the disciples desert Him and flee away.



along behind, clothed only in a linen nightshirt. When the mob tried to grab him, he escaped, though his clothes were torn off in the process, so that he ran away completely naked. Jesus was led to the High Priest's home where all the chief priests and other Jewish leaders soon gathered. Peter followed far behind and then slipped inside the gates of the High Priest's residence and crouched beside a fire among the servants. Inside, the chief priests and the whole Jewish Supreme Court were trying to find something against Jesus

The company of soldiers took Jesus away from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem....



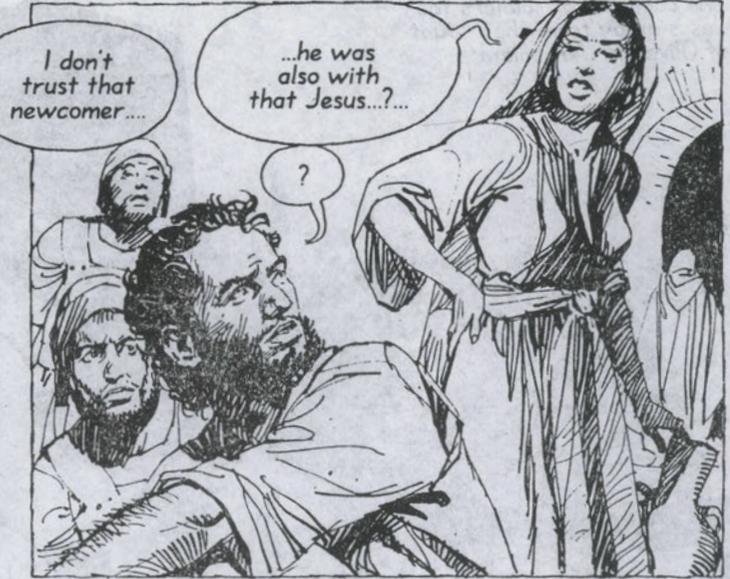
They've taken Him to the house of the high priest.



I'll enter the court yard to find out what they intend to do!



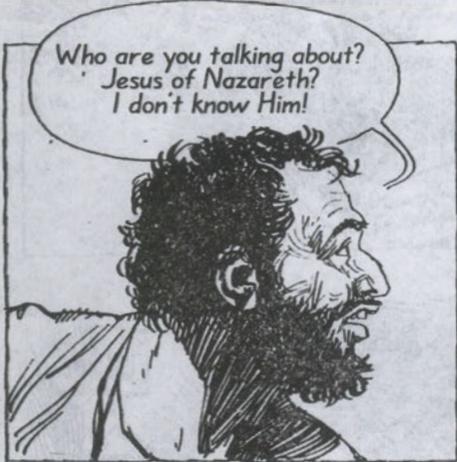
that would be sufficient to condemn Him to death. But their efforts were in vain. Many false witnesses volunteered, but they contradicted each other. Finally some men stood up to lie about Him and said, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this Temple made with human hands and in three days I will build another, made without



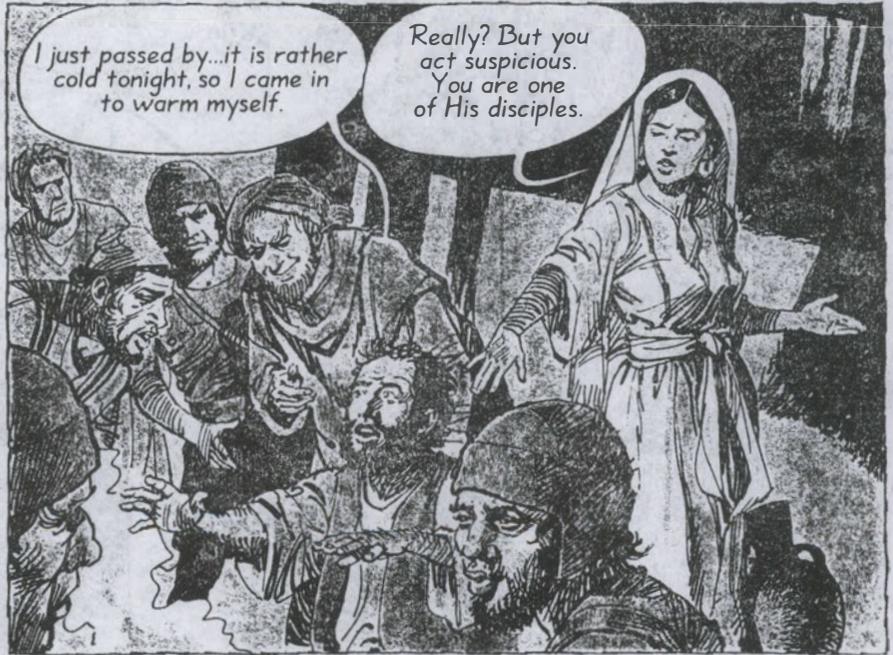
I don't trust that newcomer....

...he was also with that Jesus...?...

?

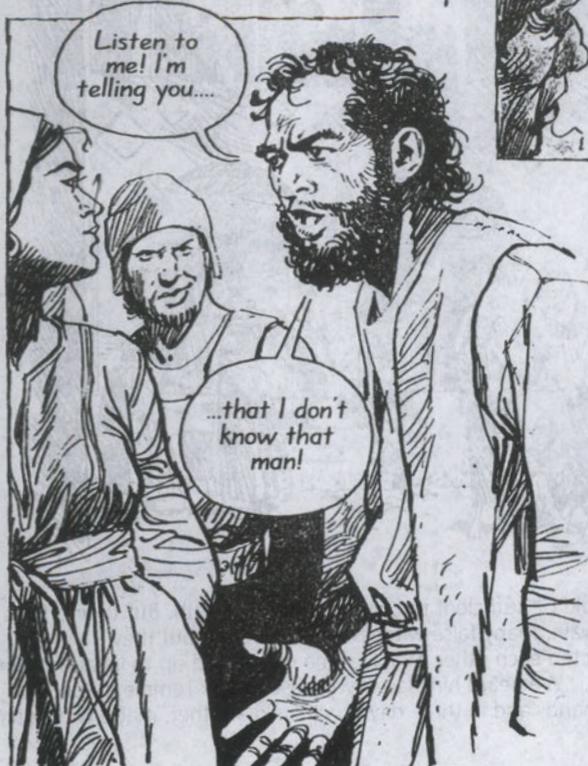


Who are you talking about?  
Jesus of Nazareth?  
I don't know Him!



I just passed by...it is rather cold tonight, so I came in to warm myself.

Really? But you act suspicious. You are one of His disciples.



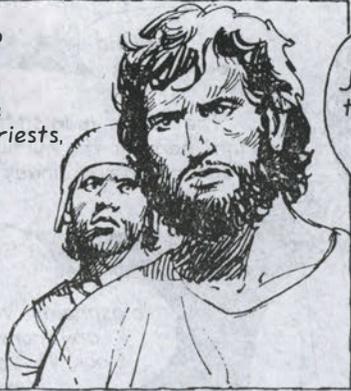
Listen to me! I'm telling you....

...that I don't know that man!

Meanwhile, in the official residence....

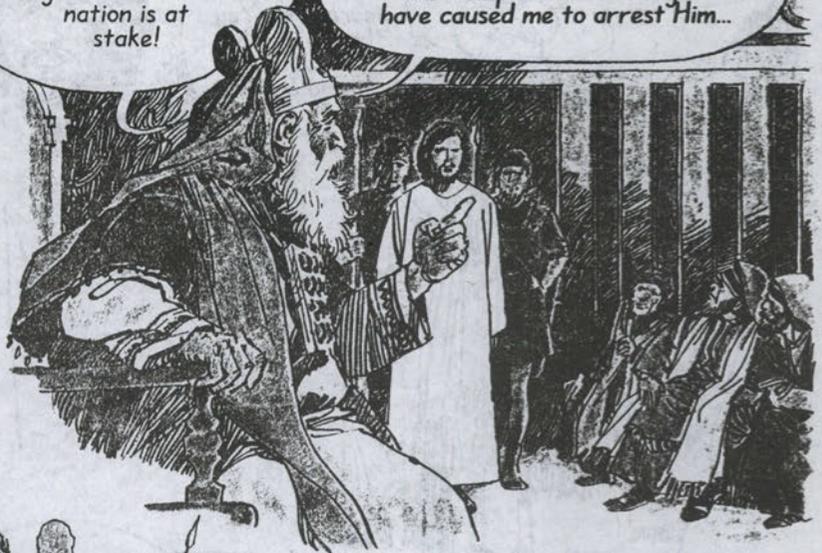


Jesus is taken to the high priest, who has called a meeting of the Sanhedrin: the priests, the elders and teachers of the law...



I've called you to investigate the case of Jesus of Nazareth, because the highest interest of our nation is at stake!

His sensational actions are disturbing public order, his revolutionary statements against the Temple and our religion have caused me to arrest Him...



...and bring Him before our court so that we can try Him according to our laws. Bring in the witnesses!



I heard Him say: "you may destroy this Temple and in three days I will rebuild it!"



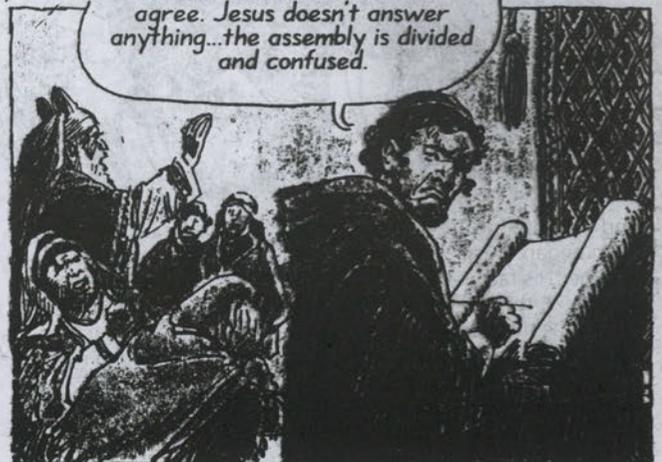
No, He didn't say that! But rather, "I'll destroy this man-made temple and I'll build another one, not made by man!"

It's hard to believe that He dared to speak

against the glory of God and the Temple.



I record: the witnesses don't agree. Jesus doesn't answer anything...the assembly is divided and confused.

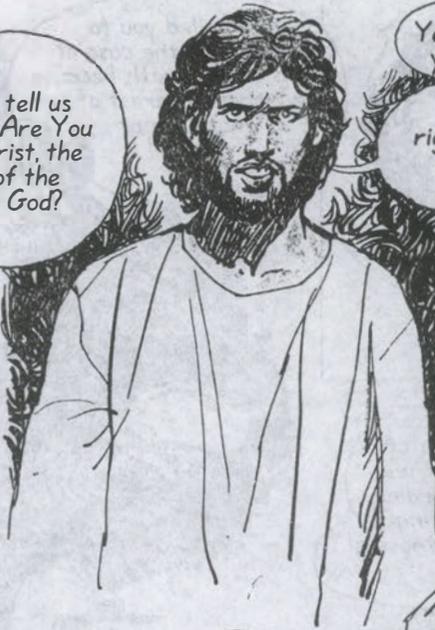


human hands!" But even then they didn't get their stories straight! Then the High Priest stood up before the Court and asked Jesus, "Do you refuse to answer this charge? What do you have to say for yourself?" To this Jesus made no reply. Then the High Priest asked Him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" Jesus said, "I am, and you will see Me sitting at the right hand of God, and returning to earth in the clouds of heaven." Then the High Priest tore at his clothes and said, "What more do we need? Why wait for witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?"



Let's drop these discussions about the Temple, because the accused does not answer... let's go on...

Jesus, tell us clearly: Are You the Christ, the Son of the living God?



Yes, I am! And you will see

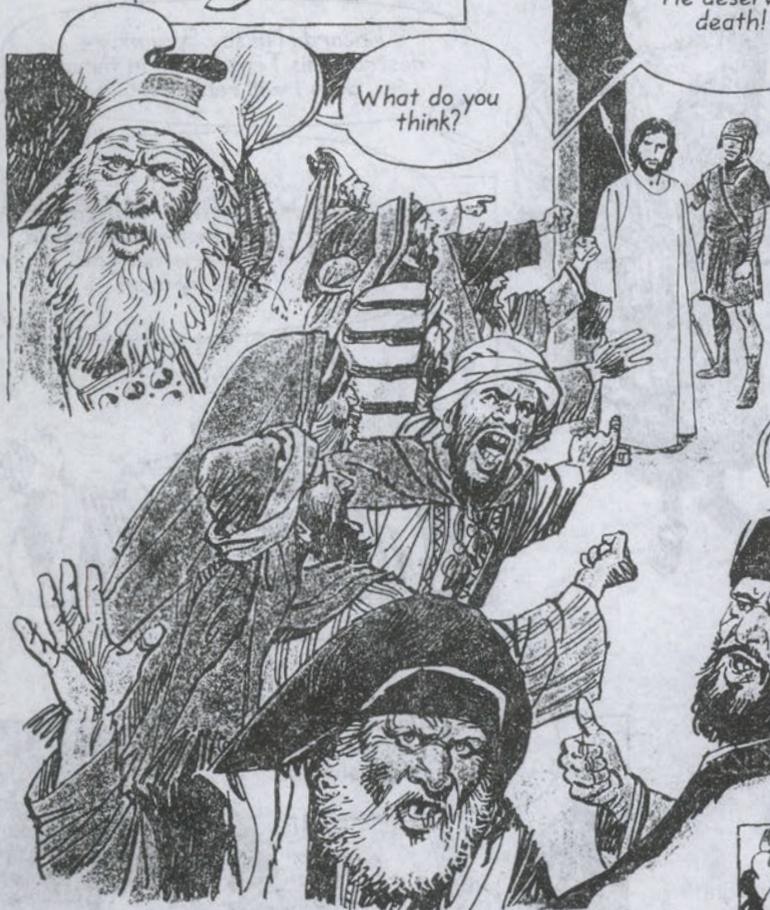
the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the Almighty God and coming on the clouds of heaven!

He's spoken

blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, you've all heard the blasphemy!



He deserves death!



What do you think?

And this Jesus pretends to be the Son of man the prophet Daniel spoke of in a vision. The person to be taken in the presence of God Who will be given power and authority over all the nations!

What a blasphemous arrogance!

I record: All judges are outraged upon hearing this blasphemy and the high priest tears his clothes to show his indignation.



And the vote for the death sentence was unanimous. Then some of them began to spit at Him, and they blindfolded Him and began to hammer His face with their fists. "Who hit you that time, you prophet?" they jeered. And even the bailiffs were using their fists on Him as they led Him away. Meanwhile Peter was below in the courtyard. One of the maids who worked for the High Priest noticed Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and then announced, "You were with Jesus, the Nazarene." Peter



The case is settled!  
But for every death sentence...

..the consent of the Roman  
Governor must be obtained.

Yes, that's right.  
Only he can pass a death  
sentence and  
have someone executed.

Let's send Jesus to  
Pilate who is in  
Jerusalem to oversee the  
Feast of Pass-over.

Meanwhile, around  
the fire in the  
court yard...

Coo-ou-oooh...



I wouldn't be  
surprised if you  
were also with  
this Jesus!

Yes, you're a  
Galilean! Your  
accent gives you  
away!

Peter begins to  
curse and swears  
to them: I don't  
know Him!



But...  
oh...

Coo-ou-oooh...  
Coo-ou-oooh...



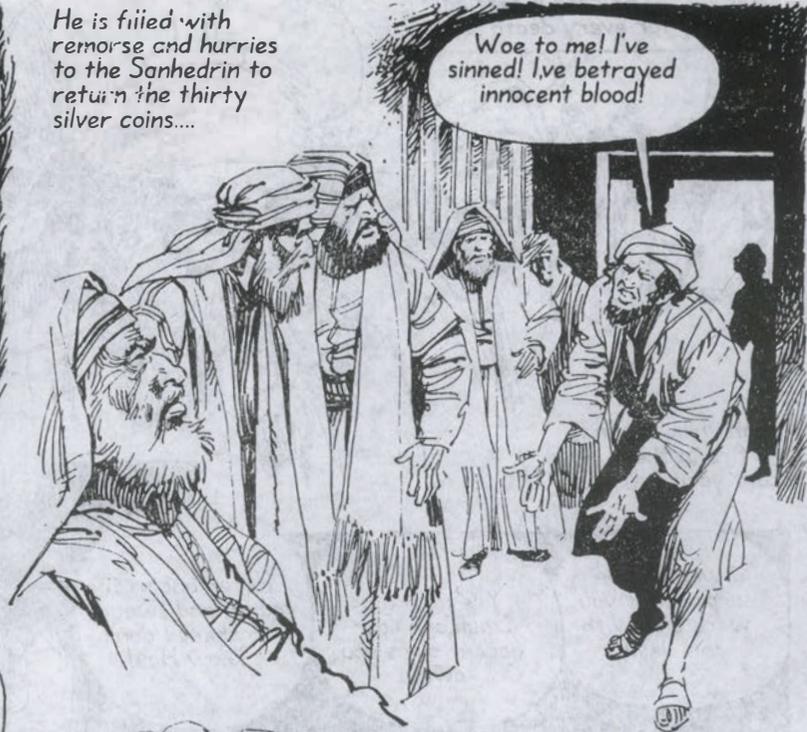
I now remember  
the words of Jesus:  
"Before the rooster  
crows twice, you will  
disown Me three times."  
Ooh I'm a coward... a  
miserable, hopeless  
coward!

denied it. "I don't know what you're talking about!" he said, and walked over to the edge of the courtyard. Just then, a rooster crowed. The maid saw him standing there and began telling the others. "There he is! There's that disciple of Jesus!" Peter denied it again. A little later others standing around the fire began saying to Peter, "You are, too, one of them, for you are from Galilee!" He began to curse and swear. "I don't even know this fellow you are talking about", he said. And immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Suddenly Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to cry.

Judas heard that the Sanhedrin has condemned Jesus.



He is filled with remorse and hurries to the Sanhedrin to return the thirty silver coins...



Woe to me! I've sinned! I've betrayed innocent blood!

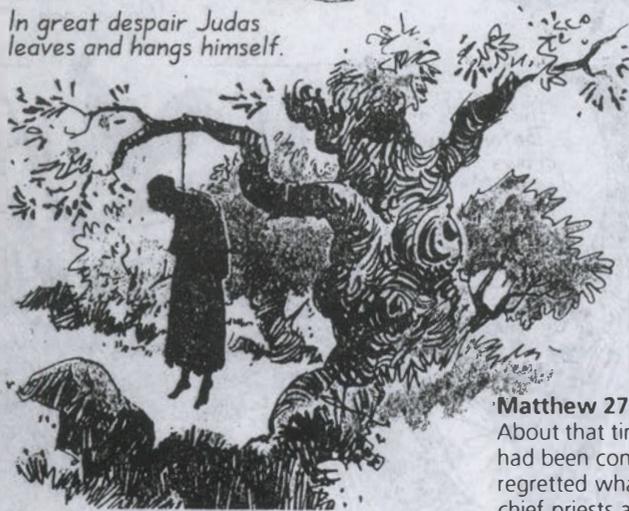
I don't want your money!



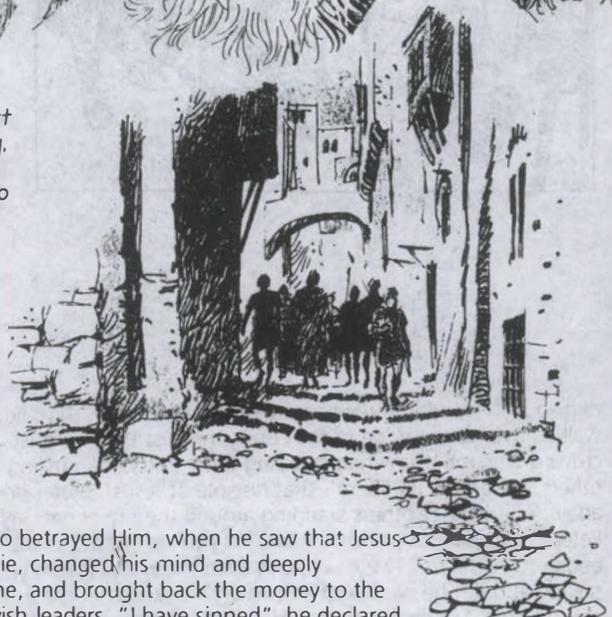
I've betrayed an innocent man!

That's your business, not ours!

In great despair Judas leaves and hangs himself.



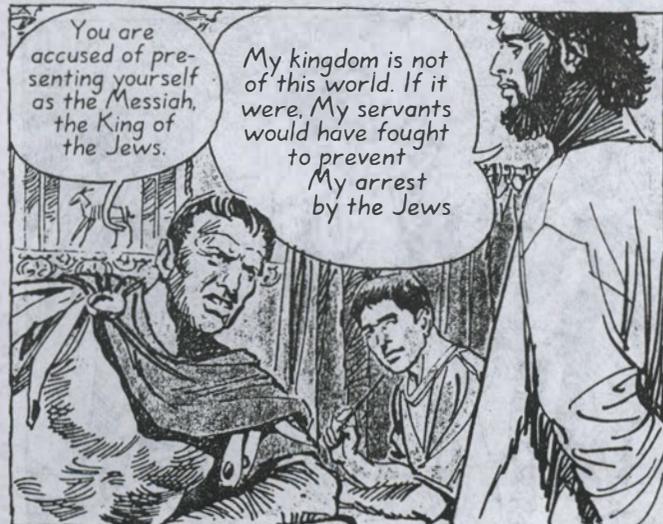
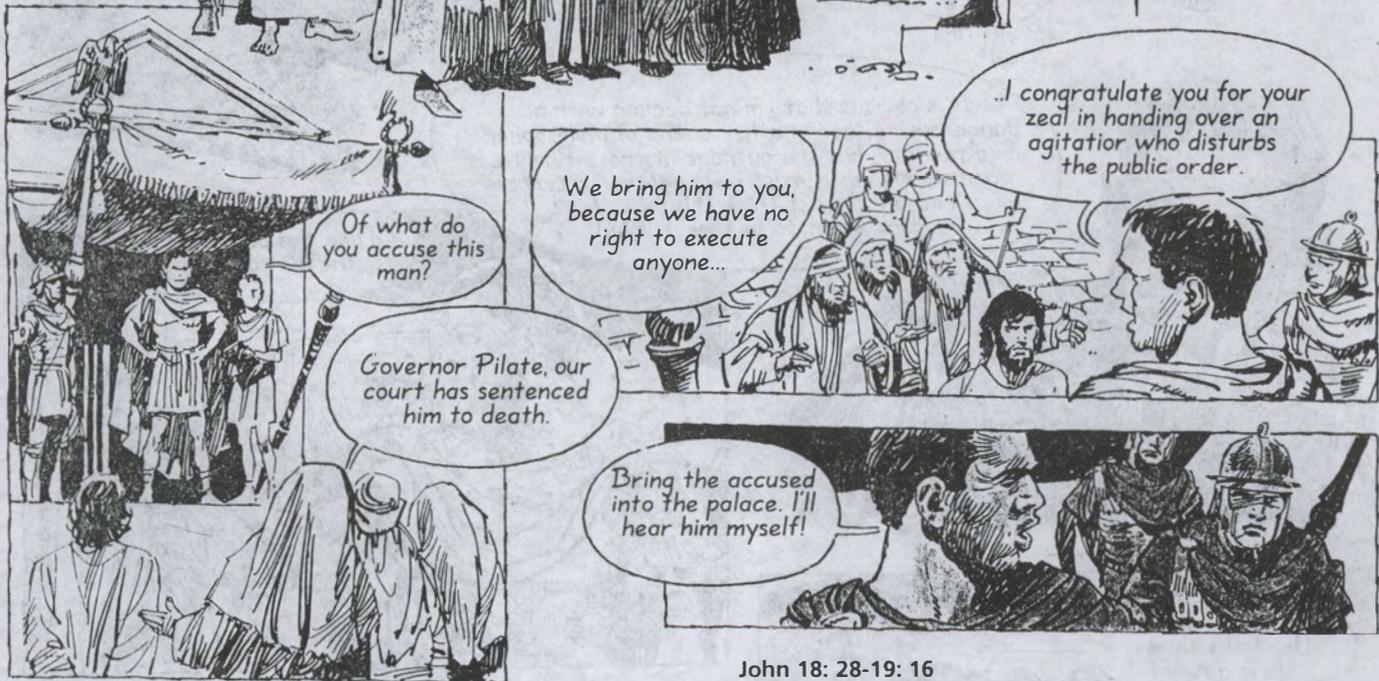
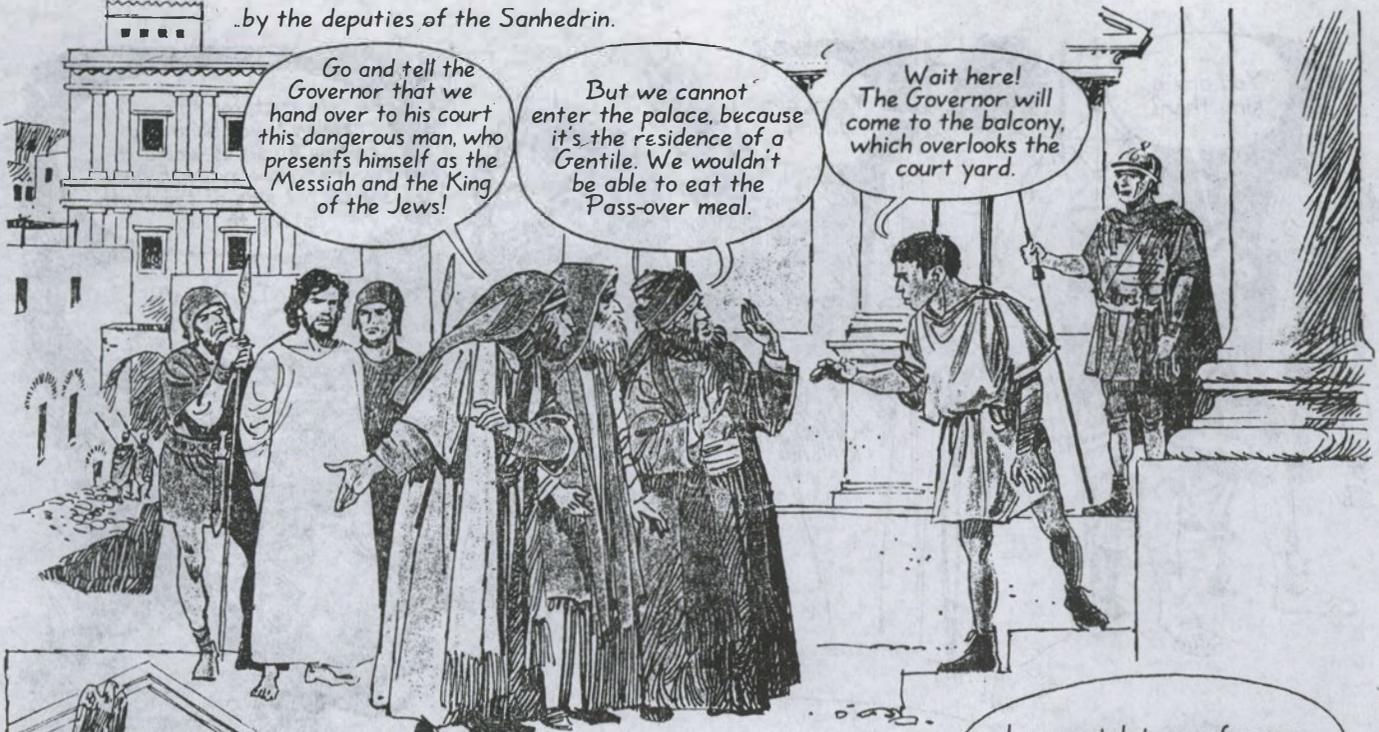
The next morning, Jesus is taken to Pilate...



**Matthew 27:3-5**

About that time Judas, who betrayed Him, when he saw that Jesus had been condemned to die, changed his mind and deeply regretted what he had done, and brought back the money to the chief priests and other Jewish leaders. "I have sinned", he declared, "for I have betrayed an innocent man." "That's your problem", they retorted. Then he threw the money onto the floor of the Temple and went out and hanged himself.

..by the deputies of the Sanhedrin.



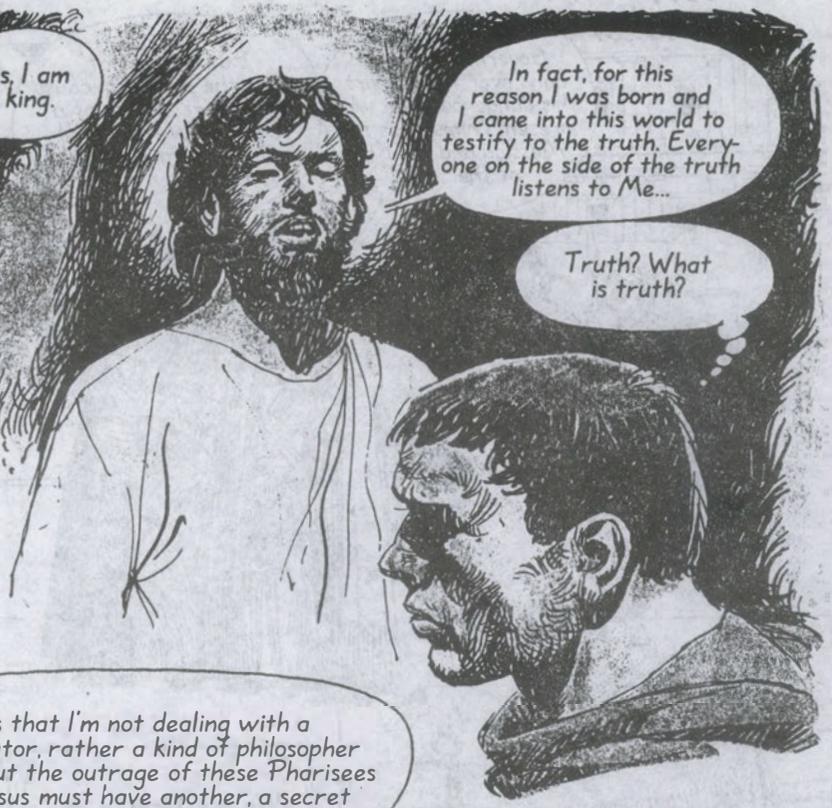
**John 18: 28-19: 16**

Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Next he was taken to the palace of the Roman governor. His accusers wouldn't go in themselves for that would 'defile' them, they said, and they wouldn't be allowed to eat the Passover lamb. So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man? What are you accusing him of doing?" "We wouldn't have arrested him if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted. "Then take him away and judge him yourselves by your own laws", Pilate told them. "But we want him crucified", they said, "and your approval is required." This fulfilled Jesus' prediction concerning the method of His execution. Then Pilate went back into the palace and called for Jesus to be brought to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" he asked Him. " 'King' as you use the word or as the Jews use it?" Jesus asked. "Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their chief priests brought you here. Why? What have you done?" Then Jesus answered, "I am not an earthly king. If I were, My followers would have fought when I was arrested by the Jewish leaders. But My Kingdom is not of the world." Pilate



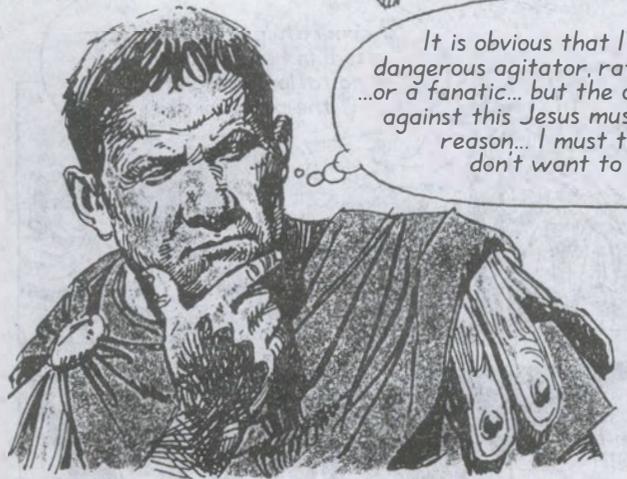
You are a king then?

Yes, I am a king.

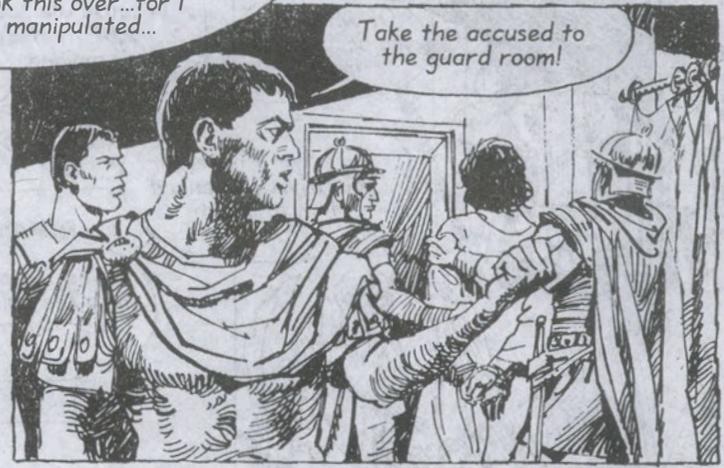


In fact, for this reason I was born and I came into this world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of the truth listens to Me...

Truth? What is truth?



It is obvious that I'm not dealing with a dangerous agitator, rather a kind of philosopher...or a fanatic... but the outrage of these Pharisees against this Jesus must have another, a secret reason... I must think this over...for I don't want to be manipulated...



Take the accused to the guard room!



Hey, here come the One Who thinks He is a King!

The King?



Majesty, come here! We want to enjoy ourselves...



Sit down here!

Oh, what a beautiful royal robe!

That's the right one for you, majesty!



But the crown is still missing!



And here is your scepter!

And now friends, all of us go up to Him, and say: "Hail, King of the Jews!"



Here, now you have one!



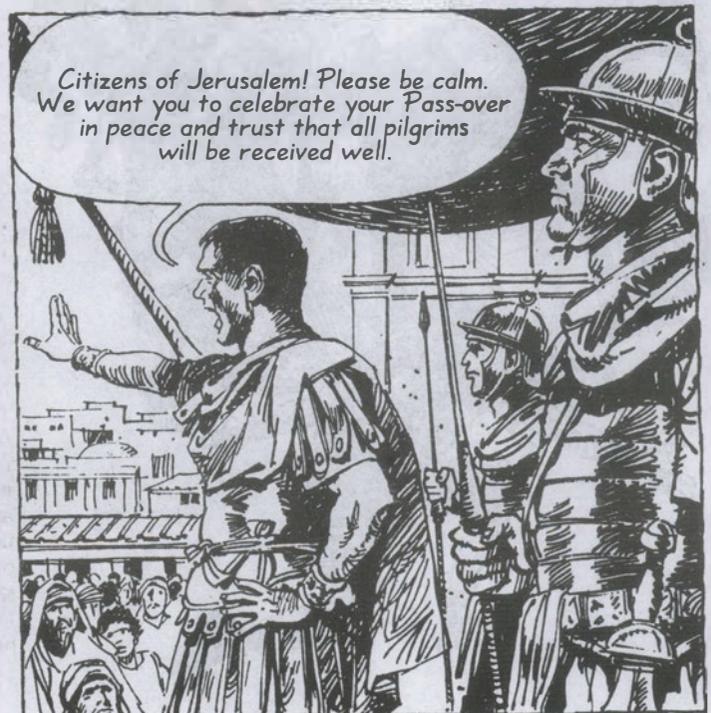
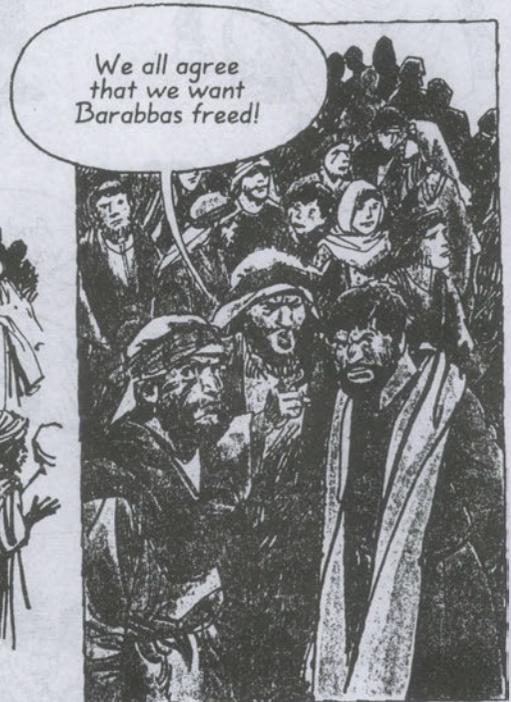
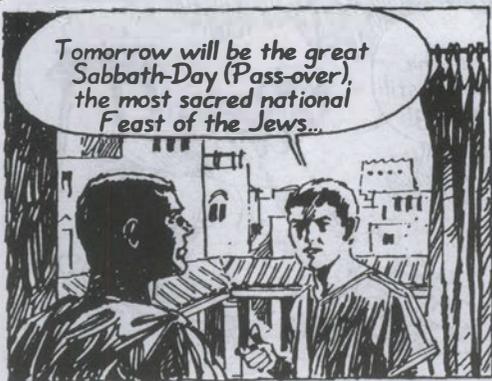
Hail to you, King of the Jews!

Meanwhile, with Pilate...



The crowds are coming into the city!

replied, "But you are a king then?" "Yes", Jesus said. "I was born for that purpose. And I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth are My followers. "What is truth?" Pilate exclaimed. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release someone from prison each year at Passover. So if you want me to, I'll release the 'King of the Jews'." But they screamed back, "No! Not this man, but Barabbas!" Barabbas was a robber. Then Pilate laid open Jesus back with a leaded whip, and the soldiers made a crown of thorns and placed it on His head and robed Him in a royal purple. "Hail 'King of the Jews!'" they mocked, and struck Him with their fists. Pilate went outside again and said to the Jews, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him NOT GUILTY." Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Behold the man!" At sight of Him the chief priests and Jewish officials began yelling, "Crucify! Crucify!" "You crucify him", Pilate said. "I find him NOT GUILTY." They replied, "By our



I remind you, that the Roman army has been strengthened and is watching from the Citadel Antonia to prevent any problems.



Finally, according to the custom at the time of Pass-over, I'll release a prisoner of your choice.



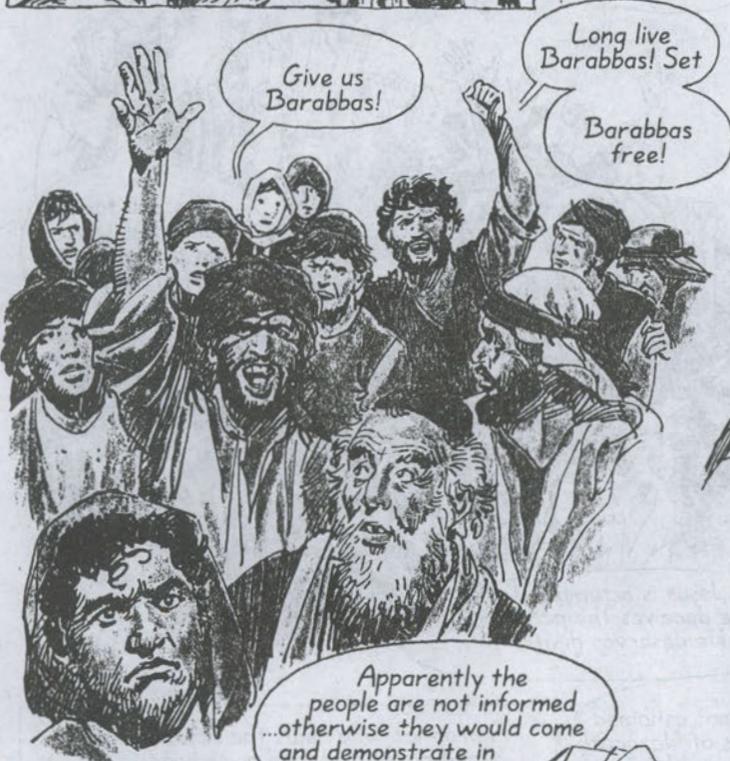
Two of them are wellknown: Jesus and Barabbas. Which one of them do you want released?



Give us Barabbas!

Long live Barabbas! Set

Barabbas free!



Did I hear him speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, the great prophet? Did the Romans arrest him?

When? and for what reasons?



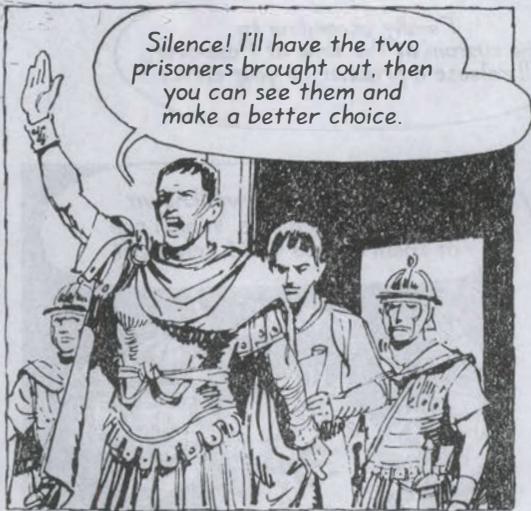
What a strange people! They prefer a rebel over a wise and innocent man!

And I thought that I could cross the plans of these Pharisees!



I see mostly Zealots and foreigners. How sad!





Silence! I'll have the two prisoners brought out, then you can see them and make a better choice.



Guards! Bring Jesus and Barabbas here!



Look the man!

No, not Jesus, but Barabbas!

Barabbas! We want Barabbas! Set him free!

Crucify! Crucify Jesus! He deserves death!

Yes, call for Barabbas! you'll do the nation a great service!

Jesus is a tempter! He deceives the people! He deserves death!



Barab-bas!!

Barab-bas!!

Aren't you not ashamed to have Jesus of Nazareth put to death?

A prophet who heals the sick, blind and paralyzed...and gives hope to the poor, exploited and desperate people?



Oh, look how terrible. They have beaten Jesus!

And we thought He was the Messiah we were waiting for!

You want to force me into sentencing Jesus to be crucified. You take Him and crucify Him yourselves! As for me, I find Him innocent!

We have no longer the right to execute...but according to our law, He must die because He claims to be the Son of God.



Be careful, Pilate! You're getting yourself into trouble!

He claims to be a king. So He opposes Caesar in Rome! If you set Him free, you'll no longer be a friend of Caesar.



Please, don't risk your position! A Jew more or less, what's that to you?



Don't persist in defending this innocent man. The leaders of His people want Him dead at any cost...if you set Him free, they'll complain to Emperor Tiberias about you...

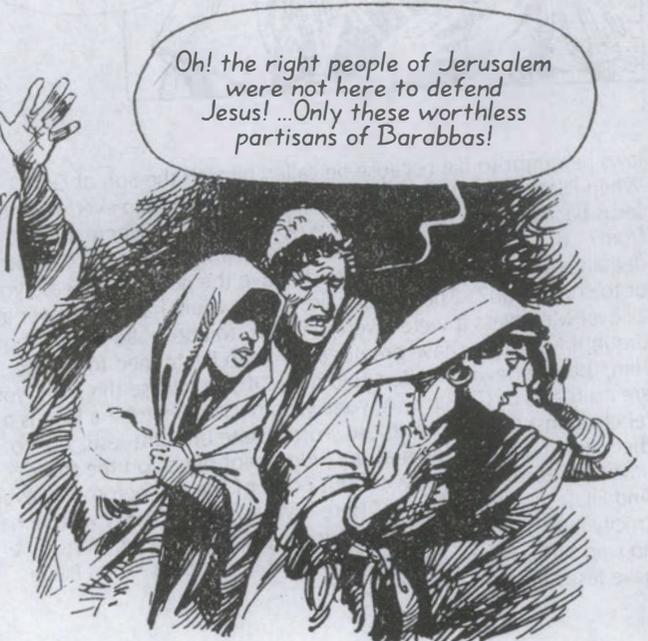
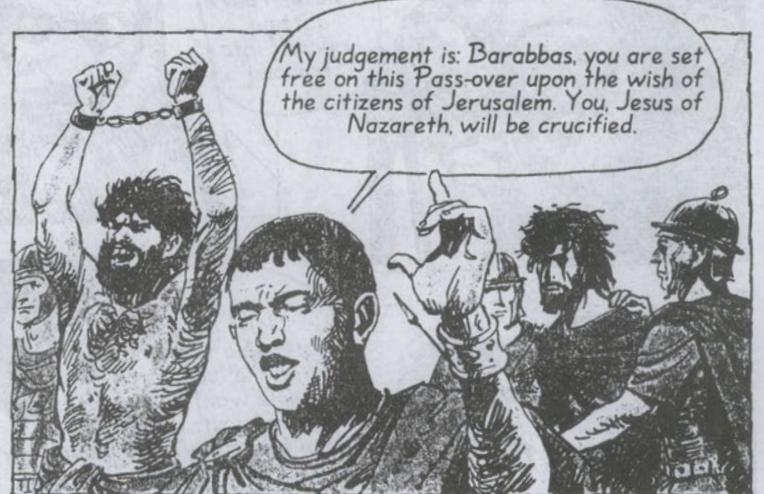


laws he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. He took Jesus back into the palace again and asked Him, "Where are you from?" but Jesus gave no answer. "You won't talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or to crucify you?" Then Jesus said, "You would have no power at all over Me unless it were given to you from above. So those who brought Me to you have greater sin." Then Pilate tried to release Him, but the Jewish leaders told him, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar's. Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar." At these words Pilate brought Jesus out to them again and sat down at the judgement bench on the stone-paved platform. It was now about noon of the day before Passover. And Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king!" "Away with him - crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar", the chief priests shouted back. Then Pilate gave Jesus to them to be crucified.



Citizens of Jerusalem, shall I crucify your King?

We have no king, but Caesar of Rome!





Here's the substitute for Barabbas.

Don't worry! We'll take care of Him.



He pretends to be a king, so give Him a real good treatment! Royally!



On this day three executions will take place...and according to custom, every condemned man must be whipped.

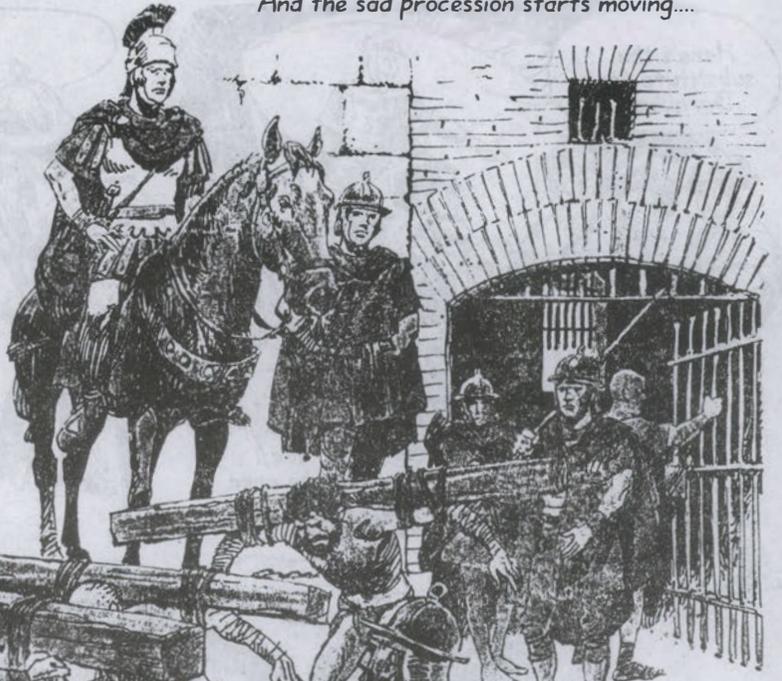


That's it for the King of the Jews... I think He's had enough.

Now Jesus must carry the cross-beam of His own cross, with a notice around His neck, proclaiming the judgement.



And the sad procession starts moving...



Make room!  
Let us  
pass!

Who's that  
one?

He looks like Jesus  
of Nazareth...the  
famous prophet!



Here we see the man, who only did good, he healed the sick and defended the poor and the oppressed. Oh, what a terrible injustice!

The Pharisees hated Him, because He spoke the truth and exposed their hypocrisy!

One is falling down!

Woe to them! In their hatred they handed Him over to the Romans.



He's too weak to carry his cross; he lost too much blood because of the whipping.



Hey, you! I order you to carry the cross of this condemned man to Golgotha! That is an order! Now, obey!



Me?...But I'm not from Jerusalem! I'm a decent man from Cyrene!

Be wise and don't resist or you will be sorry. Romans are tough and besides, it's not so far to Golgotha from here.

I'll carry it for you! Get up!

Help Him, He's innocent! He's Jesus of Nazareth, the great prophet!





Daughters of Jerusalem, why do you weep for Me? Rather weep for yourselves and your children...

..as not long from now a terrible punishment will fall on Jerusalem.



Look, heres the place for the execution, which is called Golgotha or "the skull".

From far the rock looks indeed like a skull.

And the place is well chosen! Everyone who comes to Jerusalem is reminded of the cost to challenge the Romans.

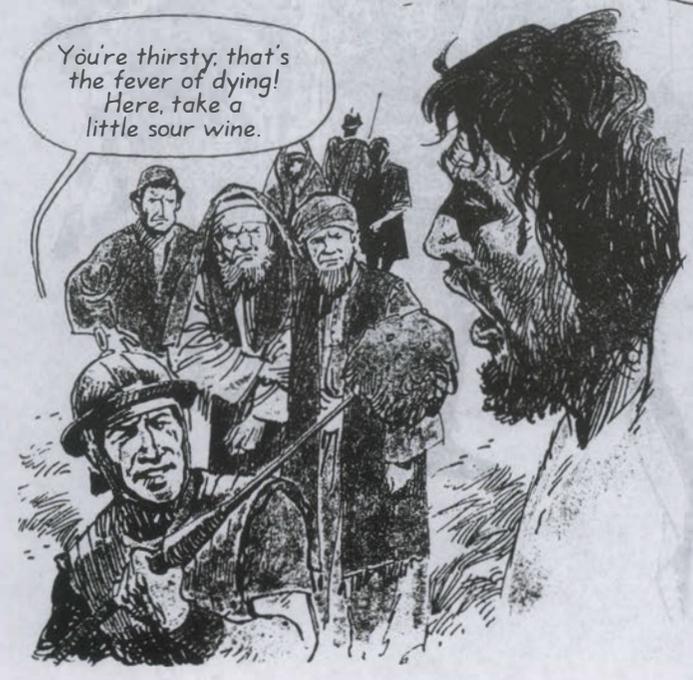


**Luke 23: 25-56**  
 And he released Barabba's, the man in prison for insurrection and murder, at their request. But he delivered Jesus over to them to do with as they would. As the crowd led Jesus away to His death, Simon of Cyrene, who was just coming into Jerusalem from the country, was forced to follow, carrying Jesus' cross. Great crowds trailed along behind, and many grief-stricken women. But Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for Me, but for yourselves and for your children. For the days are coming when the women who have no children will be counted fortunate indeed. Mankind will beg the mountains to fall on them and crush them, and the hills to bury them. For if such things as this are done to Me, the Living Tree, what will they do to you?" Two

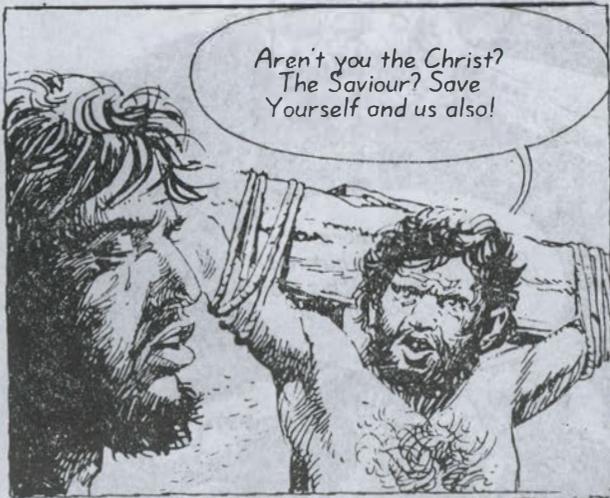
When they arrive at Golgotha, they brutally take off Jesus' clothing.

Pile these clothes up over there! We will divide them later!





others, criminals, were led out to be executed with Him at a place called 'The Skull'. There all three were crucified - Jesus on the center cross, and the two criminals on either side. "Father, forgive these people", Jesus said, "for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for His clothing, throwing dice for each piece. The crowd watched. And the Jewish leaders laughed and scoffed. "He was so good at helping others", they said, "let's see him save himself if he is really God's Chosen One, the Messiah." The soldiers mocked Him, too, by offering Him a drink - of sour wine. And they called to Him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" A signboard was nailed to the cross above Him with these words: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS". One of the criminals hanging beside Him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself - and us, too, while you're at



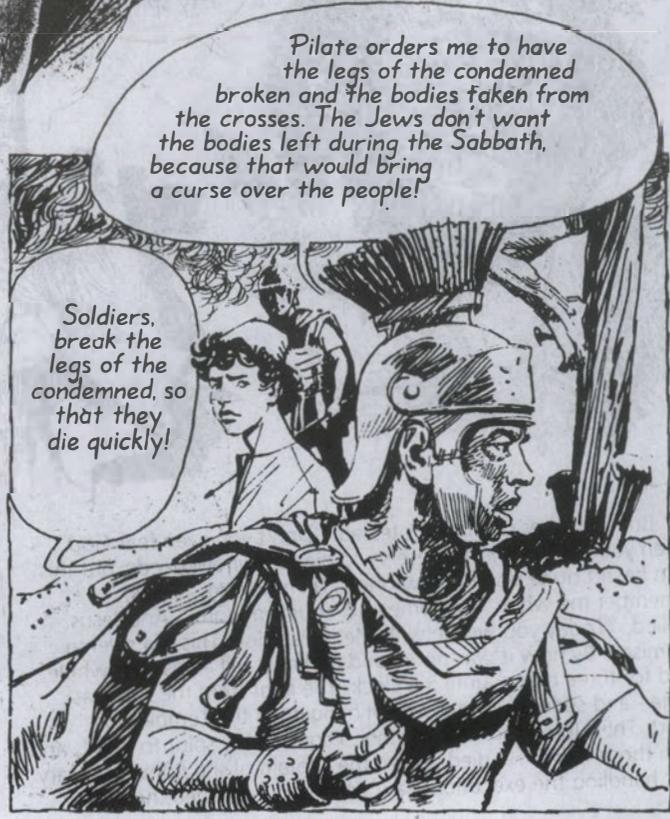
it!" But the other criminal protested. "Don't you even fear God when you are dying? We deserve to die for our evil deeds, but this man hasn't done one thing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise. This is a solemn promise." By now it was noon, and darkness fell across the whole land for three hours, until 3 o'clock. The light from the sun was gone - and suddenly the thick veil hanging in the Temple split apart. Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I commit My spirit to You", and with those words He died. When the captain of the Roman military unit handling the executions saw what had happened, he was



I've seen more prisoners dying, but not like this! Surely this man was the Son of God!



Captain, a message from Pilate!



Pilate orders me to have the legs of the condemned broken and the bodies taken from the crosses. The Jews don't want the bodies left during the Sabbath, because that would bring a curse over the people!

Soldiers, break the legs of the condemned, so that they die quickly!

stricken with awe before God and said, "Surely this man was innocent." And when the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw that Jesus was dead, they went home in deep sorrow. Meanwhile, Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed Him down from Galilee, stood in the distance watching. Then a man named Joseph, a member of the Jewish Supreme Court, from the city of Arimathea in Judea, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He was a godly man who had been expecting the Messiah's coming and had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other Jewish leaders. So he took down Jesus' body and wrapped it in a long linen cloth and laid it in a new, unused tomb hewn into the rock (at the side of a hill). This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation for the Sabbath. As the body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw it carried into the tomb. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to embalm Him; but by the time they were finished it was the Sabbath, so they rested all that day as required by the Jewish law.



He's already dead!

Let's pierce His side with a spear to make sure...



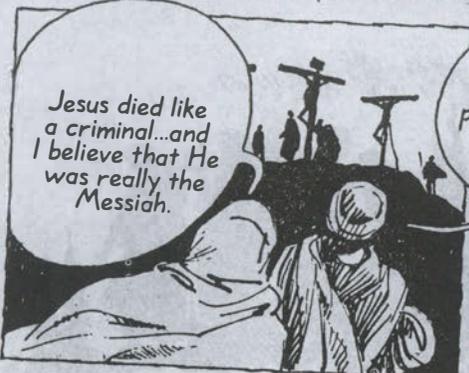
Out of His heart runs a flow of water and blood.

Meanwhile...



Joseph of Arimathea, I'm exhausted..

Hurry up, Nicodemus! Soon it will be night!



Jesus died like a criminal...and I believe that He was really the Messiah.

I've asked Pilate's permission to take Jesus' body so that I can bury Him.



Not far from here, I have a garden with a new, unused tomb...I've decided to bury Jesus' body there.



As soon as I heard of His death, I made a mixture of myrrh and aloes... and Joseph is bring a shroud and strips of linen..

Let's hurry, before the trumpet announces the Sabbath and the Pass-over...After that, we aren't not allowed to bury Him.





*At last the heavy stone is rolled in front of the entrance of the tomb..*



Early in the morning, on the day after Pass-over Sabbath, the women are going to the tomb...



Salome, last week we didn't have enough time...

...to prepare the body of Jesus properly...

...but with these first class spices we'll do it right!



Magdalene, who'll roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb?

I'm not sure, but we're with three of us...



Look, the stone is away! The tomb is open!

Who could have been here before us? The sun has just risen.



Oh, how terrible, how horrible! They've taken Jesus body away!

He's not here! What's happened?

All of a sudden, I remember. He has said He would rise from the dead!

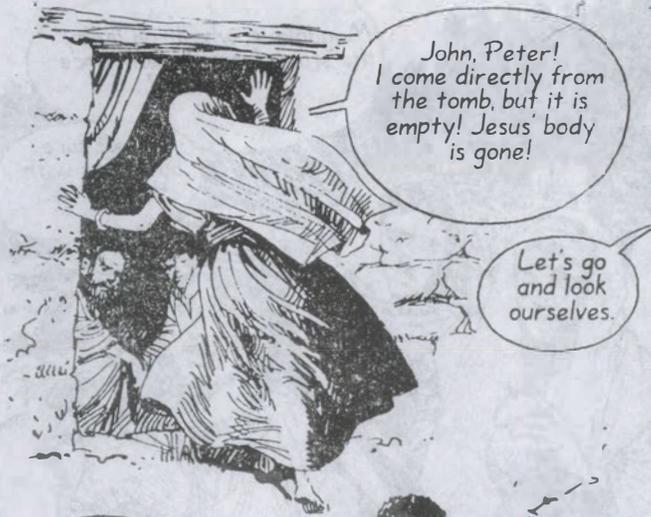


Let's leave the spices here.... I'll run and tell the disciples!

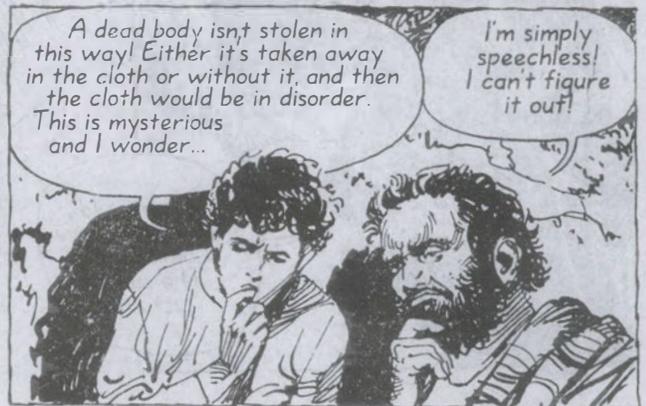


**Mark 16:1-8**

The next evening when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene and Salome and Mary the mother of James went out and purchased embalming spices. Early in the following morning, just at sunrise, they carried them out to the tomb. On the way they were discussing how they could ever roll aside the huge stone from the entrance. But when they arrived they looked up and saw that the stone - a very heavy one - was already moved away and the entrance was open! So they entered the tomb - and there on the right sat a young man clothed in white. The women were startled, but the angel said, "Don't be so surprised. Aren't you looking for Jesus, the Nazarene who was crucified? He isn't here! He has come back to life! Look, that's where His body was lying. Now go and give this message to His disciples including Peter: 'Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there, just as He told you before He died!'" The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, too frightened to talk.



Let's go  
and look  
ourselves.

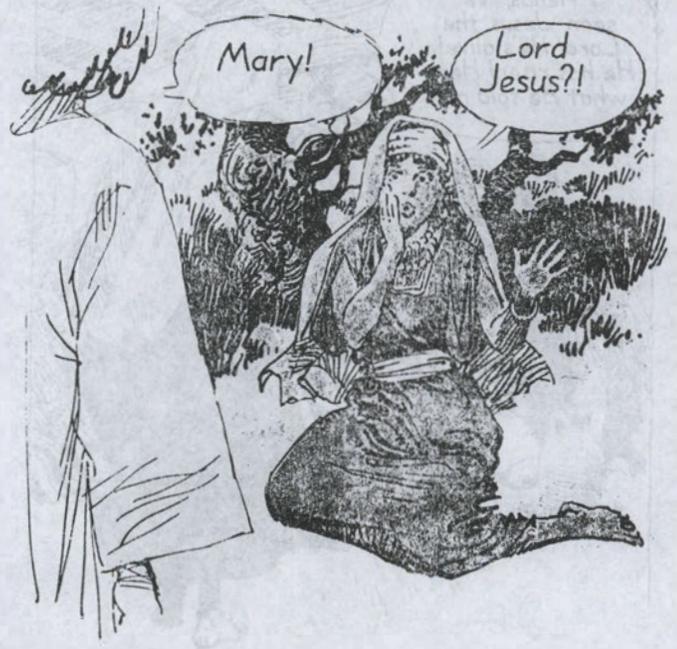


**John 20: 1-18**

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone was rolled aside from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and me and said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put Him!" We ran to the tomb to see; I outran Peter and got there first, and stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but I didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went on inside. He also noticed the cloth lying there, while the swath that had covered Jesus' head was rolled up in a bundle and was lying at the side. Then I went on too, and saw, and believed that He had risen - for until then we hadn't realized that the Scriptures said He would come to life again! We went on home, and by that time Mary had returned to the tomb and was standing outside crying. And as she wept, she stooped and looked in and saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Why are you



Mary Magdalene has returned to the tomb...wondering and weeping..



crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord", she replied, "and I don't know where they have put Him." She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize Him! "Why are you crying?" He asked her. "Whom are you looking for?" She thought He was the gardener. "Sir", she said, "if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will go and get Him." "Mary!" Jesus said. She turned toward Him. "Master!" she exclaimed. "Don't touch Me", He cautioned, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find My brothers and tell them that I ascend to My Father and your Father, My God and your God." Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them His message.

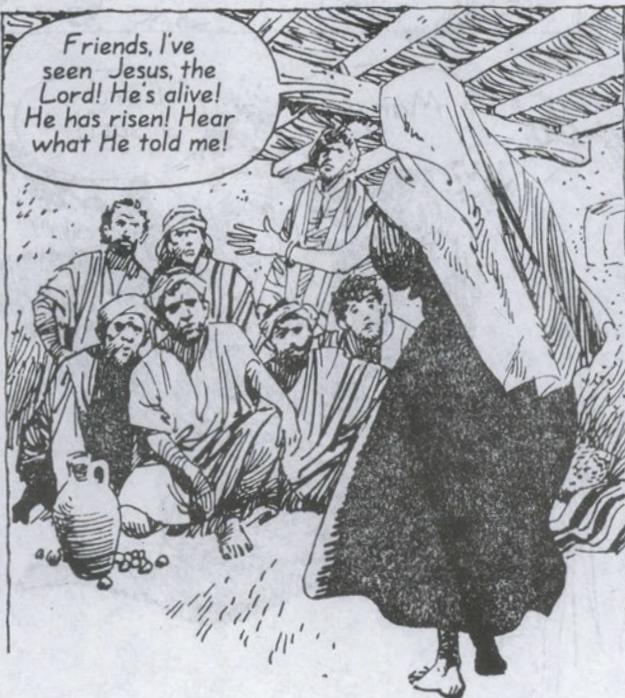


My Master!

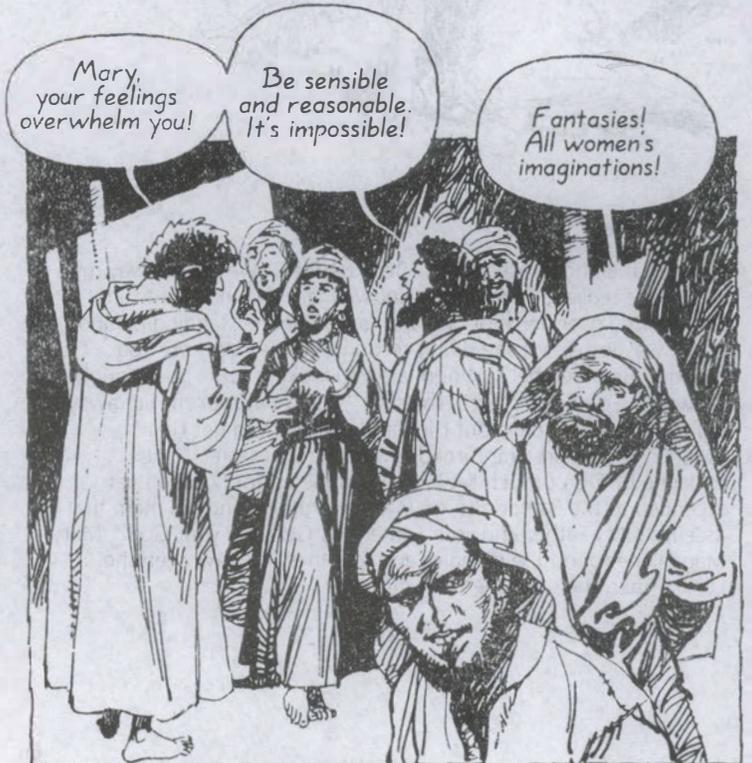
Don't try to hold on to Me....



...for I'll return to My Father in heaven, but go and tell My disciples!



Friends, I've seen Jesus, the Lord! He's alive! He has risen! Hear what He told me!



Mary, your feelings overwhelm you!

Be sensible and reasonable. It's impossible!

Fantasies! All women's imaginations!

That same day, in the evening, two of the disciples travel from Jerusalem to Emmaus...



What a disappointment! I believed Jesus and thought He would be the Messiah the world is waiting for.



And instead He was sentenced to death and crucified like a criminal!

Yes, Cleopas, what a disappointment! I'm as confused as you are...



Shalom, friends! You seem to be sad...what are you discussing?

Try to explain; maybe I can help.



Don't you know the events that shock Jerusalem these days? The things about Jesus of Nazareth?



We had hoped that He was the One who would redeem Israel...

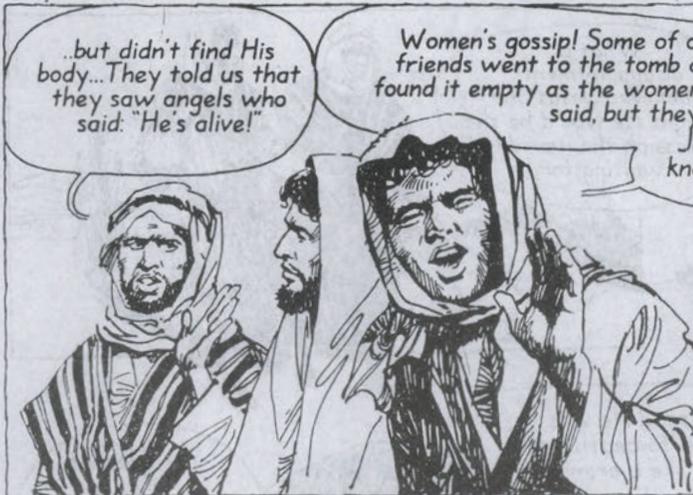
...yes, for He was the Christ... But it's over. It's the...

third day since all this took place and now He's dead.

Some of our women have amazed us...

...they went to the tomb early this morning...





...but didn't find His body...They told us that they saw angels who said: "He's alive!"

Women's gossip! Some of our friends went to the tomb and found it empty as the women had said, but they didn't find Jesus...so we don't know what to think.

How foolish you are and how slow of heart in believing all that the prophets have written!



One hour later....



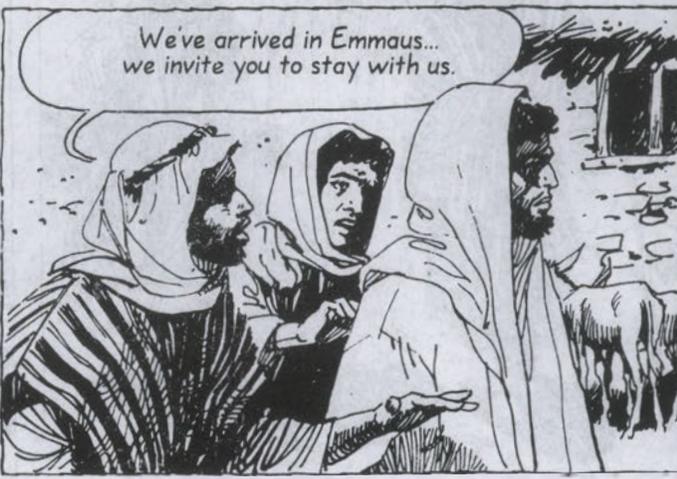
Let me explain to you what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Him...

We're listening to you with great interest.



**Luke 24:13-35 + 24:36-48**

That same day, Sunday, two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles out of Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking of Jesus' death. When suddenly Jesus Himself came along and joined them and began walking beside them! But they didn't recognize Him, for God kept them from it. "You seem to be in a deep discussion about something," He said, "What are you so concerned about?" They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. And one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about the terrible things that happened there last week." "What things?" Jesus asked. "The things that happened to Jesus, the Man from Nazareth", they said. "He was a Prophet who did incredible miracles and was a mighty Teacher, highly regarded by both God and man. But the chief priests and our religious leaders arrested Him and handed Him over to the Roman government to be condemned to death, and they crucified Him. We had thought He was the glorious Messiah and that He had come to rescue Israel. And now, besides all this - which happened three days ago - some women from our group of His followers were at His tomb early this morning and came back with an amazing report that His body was missing, and that they had seen some angels there who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, Jesus' body was gone, just as the women had said." Then Jesus said to them, "You are such foolish, foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures! Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering His time of glory?" Then Jesus quoted them passage after passage from the writings of the prophets, beginning with the book of Genesis and going right on through the Scriptures,



We've arrived in Emmaus... we invite you to stay with us.



When they were at the table, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them...



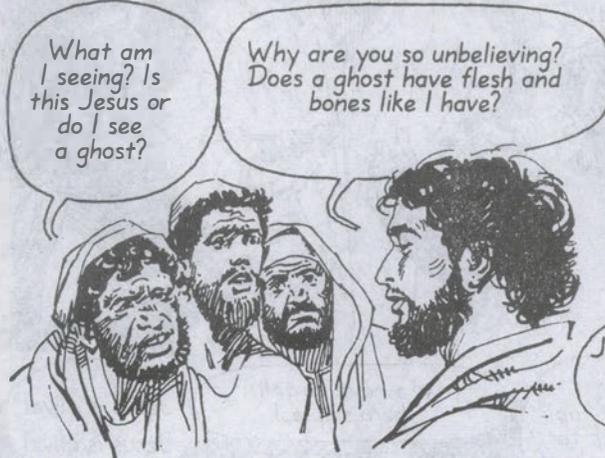
..then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.



explaining what the passages meant and what they said about Himself. By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus would have gone on, but they begged Him to stay the night with them, as it was getting late. So He went home with them. As they sat down to eat, He asked God's blessing on the food and then took a small loaf of bread and broke it and was passing it over to them, when suddenly - it was as though their eyes were opened - they recognized Him! And at that moment He disappeared! They began telling each other how their hearts had felt strangely warm as He talked with them and explained the Scriptures during the walk down the road. Within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem, where the eleven disciples and the other followers of Jesus greeted them with these words, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter!" Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road and how they had recognized Him as He was breaking the bread.



Suddenly, Jesus stands among them...



Jesus lives! What a joy! Oh, He's really alive!

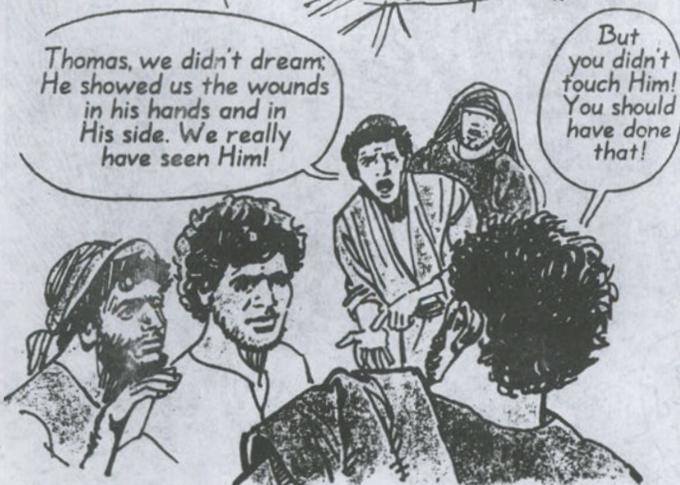
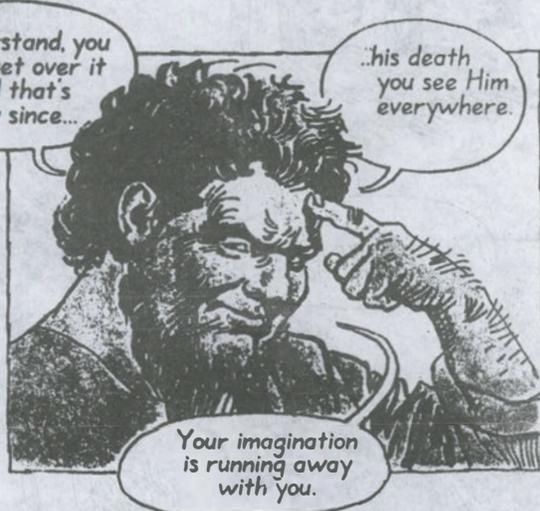
Some of you are still doubting... Do you have something to eat?



And just as they were telling about it, Jesus Himself was suddenly standing there among them, and greeted them! But the whole group was terribly frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! "Why are you frightened?" He asked. "Why do you doubt that it is really I? Look at My hands! Look at My feet! You can see that it is I, Myself! Touch Me and make sure that I am not a ghost! For ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do!" As He spoke, He held out His hands for them to see the marks of the nails and showed them the wounds in His feet. Still they stood there undecided, filled with joy and doubt. Then He asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He ate it as they watched! Then He said, "When I was with you before, don't you remember that My telling you that everything written about Me by Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must all come true?" Then He opened their minds to understand at last these many Scriptures! And He said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day; And that this message of salvation should be taken from Jerusalem to all the nations: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to Me. You have seen these prophecies come true.

The Scriptures have announced that the Christ would suffer and be killed, but also that He would rise from the dead. You are all witnesses of this! Preach the Good News in all the world!

The risen Jesus had appeared to His disciples on the evening of the day after the Pass-over. A week later they met again...



Then you would have found out that you were entertaining illusions!

Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my hand into His side, I won't believe it! Never!



**John 20:19-29**

That evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors, in fear of the Jewish leaders, when suddenly Jesus was standing there among them! After greeting them, He showed them His hands and side. And how wonderful was their joy as they saw their Lord! He spoke to them again and said, "As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you." Then He breathed on them and told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you refuse to forgive them, they are unforgiven." One of the disciples, Thomas, 'The Twin', was not there at the time with the others. When they kept telling him, "We have seen the Lord", he replied, "I won't believe unless I see the nail wounds in His hands - and put my fingers into them - and place my hand into His

Suddenly they see Jesus standing among them...

Peace be with you, friends!

Thomas...

Come to Me!



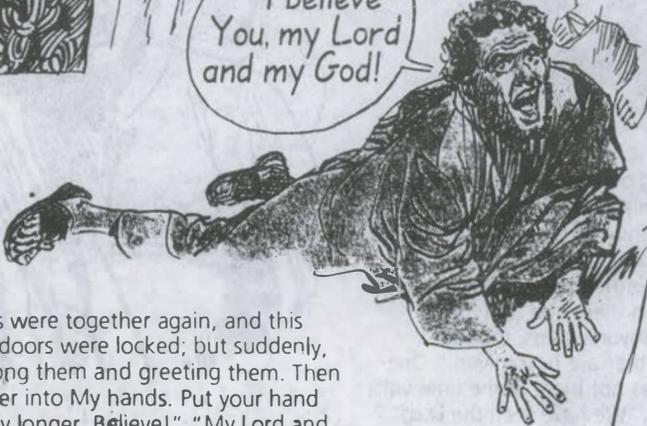
Now put your finger here, see my hands!

..and lay your hand into My side!

Stop doubting and believe!



I believe You, my Lord and my God!



Thomas, you believe because you see.

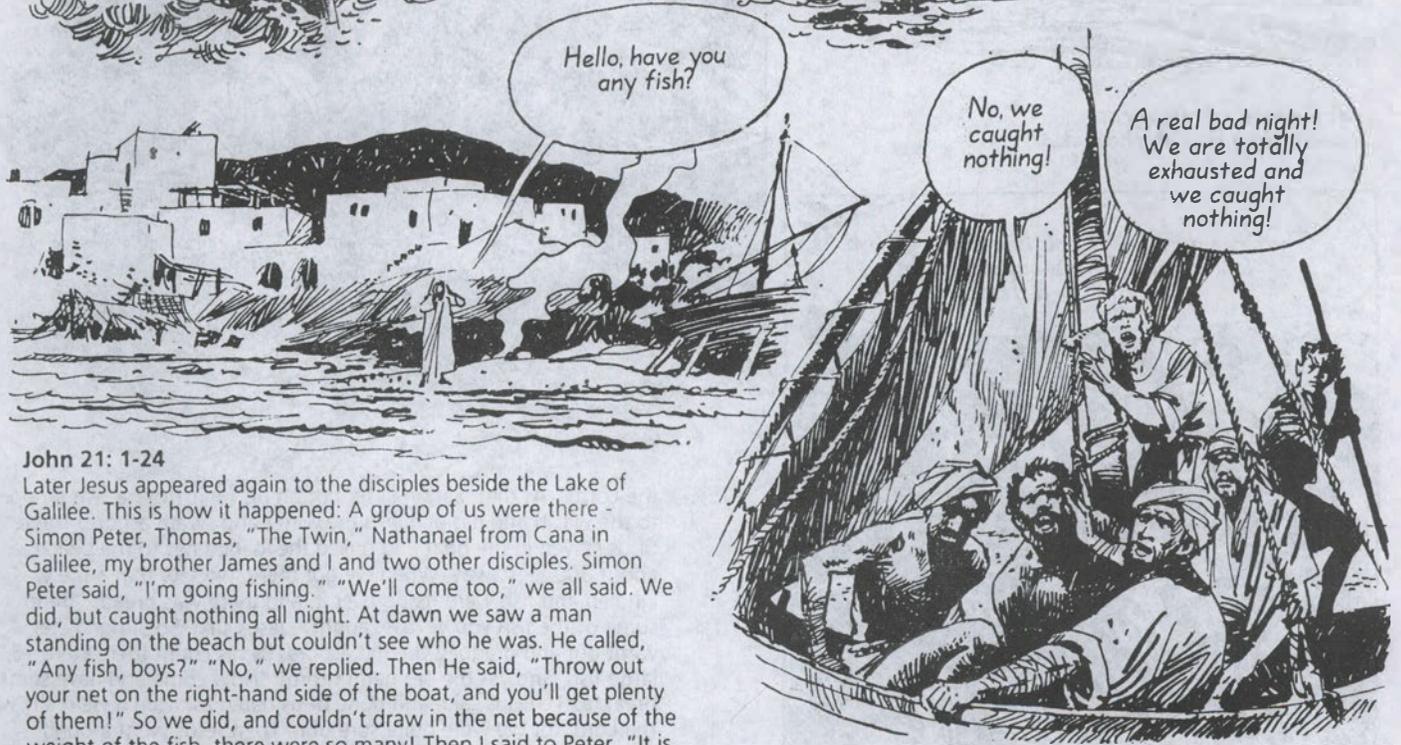
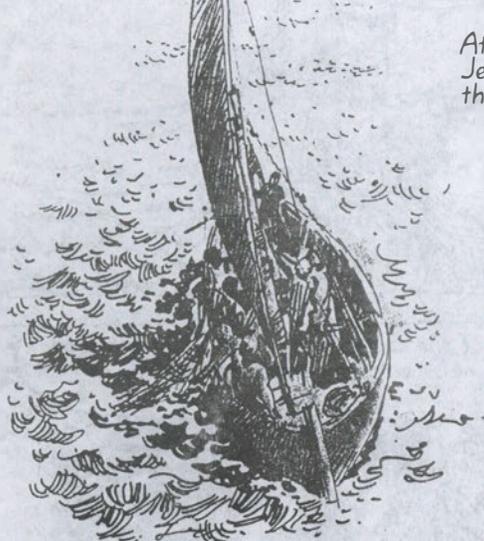
Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe!

side." Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them and greeting them. Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger into My hands. Put your hand into My side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" "My Lord and my God!" Thomas said; Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen Me. But blessed are those who haven't seen Me and believe anyway."



That night they caught nothing.

At day break Jesus stands on the shore....

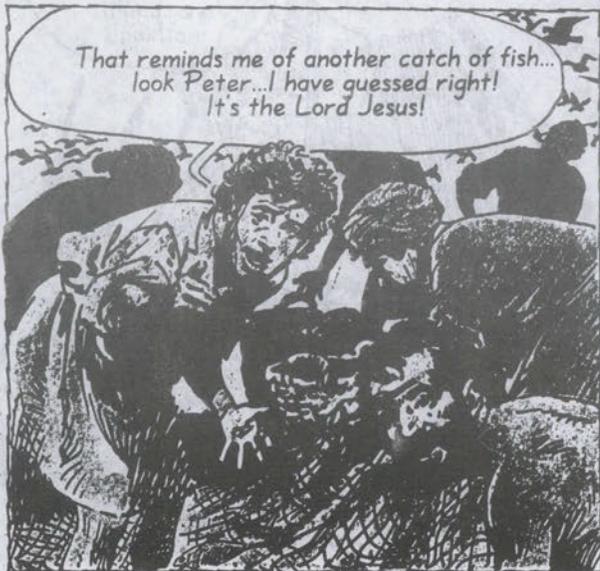


**John 21: 1-24**

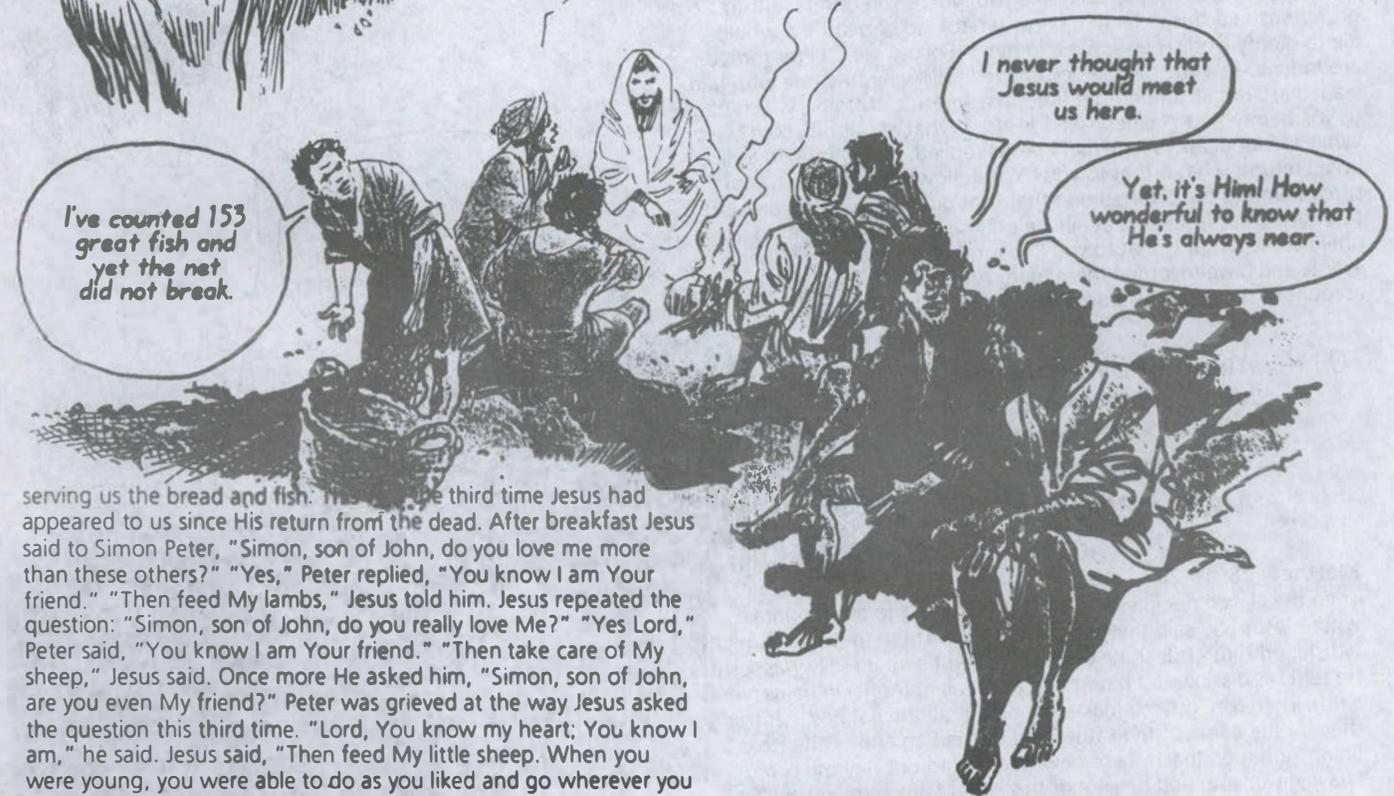
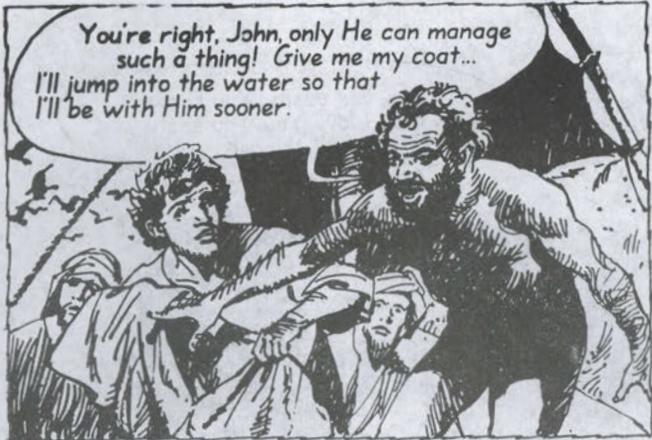
Later Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Lake of Galilee. This is how it happened: A group of us were there - Simon Peter, Thomas, "The Twin," Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, my brother James and I and two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." "We'll come too," we all said. We did, but caught nothing all night. At dawn we saw a man standing on the beach but couldn't see who he was. He called, "Any fish, boys?" "No," we replied. Then He said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get plenty of them!" So we did, and couldn't draw in the net because of the weight of the fish, there were so many! Then I said to Peter, "It is



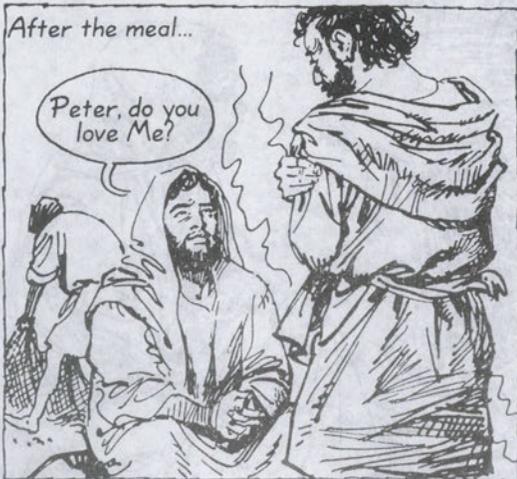
A moment afterwards,  
while they haul in the net...



the Lord!" At that, Simon Peter put on his tunic (for he was stripped to the waist) and jumped into the water and swam ashore. The rest of us stayed in the boat and pulled the loaded net to the beach, about 300 feet away. When we got there, we saw that a fire was kindled and fish were frying over it, and there was bread. "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. So Simon Peter went out and dragged the net ashore. By his count there were 153 large fish; and yet the net hadn't torn! "Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said; and none of us dared ask Him if He really was the Lord, for we were quite sure of it. Then Jesus went around



...serving us the bread and fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to us since His return from the dead. After breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others?" "Yes," Peter replied, "You know I am Your friend." "Then feed My lambs," Jesus told him. Jesus repeated the question: "Simon, son of John, do you really love Me?" "Yes Lord," Peter said, "You know I am Your friend." "Then take care of My sheep," Jesus said. Once more He asked him, "Simon, son of John, are you even My friend?" Peter was grieved at the way Jesus asked the question this third time. "Lord, You know my heart; You know I am," he said. Jesus said, "Then feed My little sheep. When you were young, you were able to do as you liked and go wherever you wanted to; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands



After the meal...

Peter, do you love Me?

Do you love Me, more than the others?

Yes, yes Jesus... You know that I love You, You know all things!



Take care of My sheep and My lambs. Be a good shepherd.



Poor Peter... He's almost crying... This fire seems to remind him of the fire in the court yard of the high priest.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.



Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations... and I shall be with you always! Till the end of the age!



and others will direct you and take you where you don't want to go." Jesus said this to let him know what kind of death he would die to glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow Me." Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following, the one who had leaned around at supper that time to ask Jesus, "Master, which of us will betray You?" Peter asked Jesus, "What about him Lord? What sort of death will he die?" Jesus replied, "If I want him to live until I return, what is that to you? You follow Me." So the rumor spread among the brotherhood that that disciple wouldn't die! But that isn't what Jesus said at all! He only said, "If I want him to live until I come, what is that to you?" I am that disciple! I saw these events and have recorded them here. And we all know that my account of these things is accurate.

*On the Mount of Olives, the disciples saw Jesus go up into heaven and He shall come back in the same manner very soon!!!*

**Matthew 28: 16-20**

Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had said they would find Him. There they met Him and worshiped Him - but some of them weren't sure it really was Jesus. He told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, And then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this - that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

# JAMES

## CHAPTER 1

1 From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations. Greetings!

2 Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy.

3 For when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow.

4 So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full bloom, then you will be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete.

5 If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask Him, and He will gladly tell you, for He is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him, He will not resent it.

6 But when you ask Him, be sure that you really expect Him to tell you, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind;

7,8 And every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you turn first this way, and then that. If you don't ask with faith, don't expect the Lord to give you any solid answer.

9 A Christian who doesn't amount to much in this world should be glad, for he is great in the Lord's sight.

10,11 But a rich man should be glad that his riches mean nothing to the Lord, for he will soon be gone like a flower that has lost its beauty and fades away, withered—killed by the scorching summer sun. So it is with rich men. They will soon die and leave behind all their busy activities.

12 Happy is the man who doesn't give in and do wrong when he is tempted, for afterwards he will get as his reward the crown of life that God has promised those who love Him.

13 And remember, when someone wants to do wrong it is never God who is tempting him, for God never wants to do wrong and never tempts anyone else to do it.

14 Temptation is the pull of man's own evil thoughts and wishes.

15 These evil thoughts lead to evil actions and afterwards to the death penalty from God.

16 So don't be misled, dear brothers.

17 But whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God, the Creator of all light, and He shines forever without change or shadow.

18 And it was a happy day for Him when He gave us our new lives, through the truth of His Word, and we

became, as it were the first children in His new family.

19 Dear brothers, don't ever forget that it is best to listen much, speak little, and not become angry;

20 For anger doesn't make us good, as God demands that we must be.

21 So get rid of all that is wrong in your life, both inside and outside, and humbly be glad for the wonderful message we have received, for it is able to save our souls as it takes hold of our hearts.

22 And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. So don't fool yourselves.

23 For if a person just listens and doesn't obey, he is like a man looking at his face in a mirror;

24 As soon as he walks away, he can't see himself anymore or remember what he looks like.

25 But if anyone keeps looking steadily into God's law for free men, he will not only remember it but he will do what it says, and God will greatly bless him in everything he does.

26 Anyone who says he is a Christian but doesn't control his sharp tongue is just fooling himself, and his religion isn't worth much.

27 The Christian who is pure and without fault, from God the Father's point of view, is the one who takes care of orphans and widows, and whose soul remains true to the Lord—not soiled and dirtied by its contact with the world.

## CHAPTER 2

1 Dear brothers, how can you claim that you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, if you show favoritism to rich people and look down on poor people?

2 If a man comes into your church dressed in expensive clothes and with valuable gold rings on his fingers, and at the same moment another man comes in who is poor and dressed in threadbare clothes,

3 And you make a lot of fuss over the rich man and give him the best seat in the house and say to the poor man, "You can stand over there if you like, or else sit on the floor"—well,

4 This kind of action casts a question mark across your faith—are you really a Christian at all?—and shows that you are guided by wrong motives.

5 Listen to me, dear brothers: God has chosen poor people to be rich in faith, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs, for that is the gift God has promised to all those who love Him.

6 And yet, of the two strangers, you have despised the poor man. Don't you realize that it is usually the rich men who pick on you and drag you into court?

7 And all too often they are the ones who laugh at

Jesus Christ. Whose noble name you bear.

8 Yes indeed, it is good when you truly obey our Lord's command "You must love and help your neighbors just as much as you love and take care of yourself."

9 But you are breaking this law of our Lord's when you favor the rich and fawn over them, it is sin.

10 And the person who keeps every law of God, but makes one little slip, is just as guilty as the person who has broken every law there is.

11 For the God who said you must not marry a woman who already has a husband, also said you must not murder, so even though you have not broken the marriage laws by committing adultery, but have murdered someone, you have entirely broken God's laws and stand utterly guilty before Him.

12 You will be judged on whether or not you are doing what Christ wants you to. So watch what you do and what you think;

13 For there will be no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. But if you have been merciful, then God's mercy toward you will win out over His judgment against you.

14 Dear brothers, what's the use of saying that you have faith and are Christians, if you aren't proving it by helping others? Will that kind of faith save anyone?

15 If you have a friend who is in need of food and clothing,

16 And you say to him, "Well good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat hearty," and then don't give him clothes or food, what good does that do?

17 So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all—it is dead and useless.

18 But someone may well argue, "You say the way to God is by faith alone, plus nothing; well, I say that good works are important too, for without good works you can't prove whether you have faith or not; but anyone can see that I have faith by the way I act."

19 Are there still some among you who hold that "only believing" is enough? Believing in one God? Well, remember that the devils believe this too—so strongly that they tremble in terror!

20 Dear foolish man! When will you ever learn that "believing" is useless without doing what God wants you to? Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.

21 Don't you remember that even our father Abraham was declared good because of what he did, when he was willing to obey God, even if it meant offering his son Isaac to die on the altar?

22 You see, he was trusting God so much that he was

willing to do whatever God told him to; his faith was made complete by what he did by his actions, his good deeds.

23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say, that Abraham trusted God, and the Lord declared him good in God's sight, and he was even called "the friend of God."

24 So you see, a man is saved by what he does, as well as by what he believes.

25 Rahab, the prostitute, is another example of this. She was saved because of what she did when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road.

26 Just as the body is dead when there is no spirit in it, so faith is dead if it is not the kind that results in good deeds.

### CHAPTER 3

1,2 Dear brothers, don't be too eager to tell others their faults, for we all make many mistakes, and when we teachers, who should know better, do wrong, our punishment will be greater than it would be for others. If anyone can control his tongue, it proves that he has perfect control over himself in every other way.

3 We can make a large horse turn around and go wherever we want by means of a small bit in his mouth.

4 And a tiny rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot wants it to go, even though the winds are strong.

5 So also the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do. A great forest can be set on fire by one tiny spark.

6 And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is full of wickedness and poisons every part of the body. And the tongue is set on fire by hell itself, and can turn our whole lives into a blazing flame of destruction and disaster.

7 Men have trained, or can train, every kind of animal or bird that lives and every kind of reptile and fish,

8 But no human being can tame the tongue. It is always ready to pour out its deadly poison.

9 Sometimes it praises our heavenly Father, and sometimes it breaks out into curses against men who are made like God.

10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Dear brothers, surely this is not right!

11 Does a spring of water bubble out first with fresh water and then with bitter water?

12 Can you pick olives from a fig tree, or figs from a grape vine? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty pool.

13 If you are wise, live a life of steady goodness, so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't

brag about them, then you will be truly wise!

14 And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie.

15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil.

16 For wherever there is jealousy or selfish ambition, there will be disorder and every other kind of evil.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness. Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is wholehearted and straightforward and sincere.

18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.

#### CHAPTER 4

1 What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it because there is a whole army of evil desires within you?

2 You want what you don't have so you kill to get it. You long for what others have, and can't afford it, so you start a fight to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it.

3 And even when you do ask you don't get it because your whole aim is wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

4 You are like an unfaithful wife who loves her husband's enemies. Don't you realize that making friends with God's enemies—the evil pleasures of this world—makes you an enemy of God? I say it again, that if your aim is to enjoy the evil pleasure of the unsaved world, you cannot also be a friend of God.

5 Or what do you think the Scripture means when it says that the Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, watches over us with tender jealousy?

6 But He gives us more and more strength to stand against all such evil longings. As the Scripture says, God gives strength to the humble but sets Himself against the proud and haughty.

7 So give yourselves humbly to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 And when you draw close to God, God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and let your hearts be filled with God alone to make them pure and true to Him.

9 Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and sincere grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy.

10 Then when you realize your worthlessness before

the Lord, He will lift you up, encourage and help you.

11 Don't criticize and speak evil about each other, dear brothers. If you do you will be fighting against God's law of loving one another declaring it wrong. But your job is not to decide whether this law is right or wrong, but to obey it.

12 Only He who made the law can rightly judge among us. He alone decides to save us or destroy. So what right do you have to judge or criticize others?

13 Look here, you people who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to such and such a town, stay there a year, and open up a profitable business."

14 How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your lives is as uncertain as the morning fog—now you see it; soon it is gone.

15 What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we shall live and do this or that."

16 Otherwise you will be bragging about your own plans, and such self-confidence never pleases God.

17 Remember, too, that knowing what is right to do and then not doing it is sin.

#### CHAPTER 5

1,2 Look here, you rich men, now is the time to cry and groan with anguished grief because of all the terrible trouble ahead of you. Your wealth is even now rotting away, and your fine clothes are becoming mere moth-eaten rags.

3 The value of your gold and silver is dropping fast, yet it will stand as evidence against you, and eat your flesh like fire. That is what you have stored up for yourselves, to receive on that coming day of judgment.

4 For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. Their cries have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts.

5 You have spent your years here on earth having fun, satisfying your every whim, and now your fat hearts are ready for the slaughter.

6 You have condemned and killed good men who had no power to defend themselves against you.

7 Now as for you, dear brothers who are waiting for the Lord's return, be patient, like a farmer who waits until the autumn for his precious harvest to ripen.

8 Yes, be patient. And take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Don't grumble about each other brothers. Are you yourselves above criticism? For see! the great Judge is coming. He is almost here [let Him do whatever criticizing must be done].

10,11 For examples of patience in suffering, look at the Lord's prophets. We know how happy they are now because they stayed true to Him then, even though they

suffered greatly for it. Job is an example of a man who continued to trust the Lord in sorrow; from his experiences we can see how the Lord's plan finally ended in good for He is full of tenderness and mercy.

12 But most of all, dear brothers do not swear either by heaven or earth or anything else; just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and receive God's curse.

13 Is anyone among you suffering? He should keep on praying about it. And those who have reason to be thankful should continually be singing praises to the Lord.

14 Is anyone sick? He should call for the elders of the church and they should pray over him and pour a little oil over him, calling on the Lord to heal him.

15 And their prayer, if offered in faith, will heal him, for the Lord will make him well; and if his sickness was caused by some sin the Lord will forgive him.

16 Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results.

17 Elijah was as completely human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for the next three and one-half years!

18 Then he prayed again, this time that it would rain, and down it poured and the grass turned green and the gardens began to grow again.

19 Dear brothers, if anyone has slipped away from God and no longer trusts the Lord, and someone helps him understand the Truth again,

20 That person who brings him back to God will have saved a wandering soul from death, bringing about the forgiveness of his many sins.

Sincerely, James

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## ROMANS

### CHAPTER 1

#### Dear Friends in Rome,

1 This letter is from Paul, Jesus Christ's slave, chosen to be a missionary, and sent out to preach God's Good News.

2 This Good News was promised long ago by God's prophets in the Old Testament.

3 It is the Good News about His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who came as a human baby, born into King David's royal family line;

4 And by being raised from the dead He was proved to be the mighty Son of God, with the holy nature of God Himself.

5 And now, through Christ, all the kindness of God has been poured out upon us undeserving sinners; and

now He is sending us out around the world to tell all people everywhere the great things God has done for them, so that they too, will believe and obey Him.

6,7 And you, dear friends in Rome, are among those He dearly loves; you, too, are invited by Jesus Christ to be God's very own—yes His holy people. May all God's mercies and peace be yours from God our Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord.

8 Let me say first of all that wherever I go I hear you being talked about! For your faith in God is becoming known around the world. How I thank God through Jesus Christ for this good report, and for each one of you.

9 God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to the one I serve with all my might, telling others the Good News about His Son.

10 And one of the things I keep on praying for is the opportunity God willing, to come at last to see you and, if possible, that I will have a safe trip.

11,12 For I long to visit you so that I can impart to you the faith that will help your church grow strong in the Lord. Then, too, I need your help, for I want not only to share my faith with you but to be encouraged by yours: Each of us will be a blessing to the other.

13 I want you to know, dear brothers, that I planned to come many times before (but was prevented) so that I could work among you and see good results, just as I have among the other Gentile churches.

14 For I owe a great debt to you and to everyone else, both to civilized peoples and heathen nations, yes, to the educated and uneducated alike.

15 So, to the fullest extent of my ability, I am ready to come also to you in Rome to preach God's Good News.

16 For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is God's powerful method of bringing all who believe it to heaven. This message was preached first to the Jews alone, but now everyone is invited to come to God in this same way.

17 This Good News tells us that God makes us ready for heaven—makes us right in God's sight—when we put our faith and trust in Christ to save us. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scripture says it, "The man who finds life will find it through trusting God."

18 But God shows His anger from heaven against all sinful, evil men who push away the truth from them.

19 For the truth about God is known to them instinctively, God has put this knowledge in their hearts.

20 Since earliest times men have seen the earth and sky and all God made, and have known of His existence

and great eternal power. So they will have no excuse [when they stand before God at Judgment Day].

21 Yes, they knew about Him all right, but they wouldn't admit it or worship Him or even thank Him for all His daily care. And after awhile they began to think up silly ideas of what God was like and what He wanted them to do. The result was that their foolish minds became dark and confused.

22 Claiming themselves to be wise without God, they became utter fools instead.

23 And then, instead of worshipping the glorious, ever-living God, they took wood and stone and made idols for themselves, carving them to look like mere birds and animals and snakes and puny men.

24 So God let them go ahead into every sort of sex sin, and do whatever they wanted to—yes, vile and sinful things with each other's bodies.

25 Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they prayed to the things God made, but wouldn't obey the blessed God who made these things.

26 That is why God let go of them and let them do all these evil things so that even their women turned against God's natural plan for them and indulged in sex sin with each other.

27 And the men, instead of having a normal sex relationship with women, burned with lust for each other, men doing shameful things with other men and, as a result, getting paid within their own souls with the penalty they so richly deserved.

28 So it was that when they gave God up and would not even acknowledge Him, God gave them up to doing everything their evil minds could think of.

29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness and sin, of greed and hate, envy, murder, fighting, lying, bitterness, and gossip.

30 They were backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud braggarts always thinking of new ways of sinning and continually being disobedient to their parents.

31 They tried to misunderstand, broke their promises, and were heartless without pity.

32 They were fully aware of God's death penalty for these crimes, yet they went right ahead and did them anyway, and encouraged others to do them, too.

## CHAPTER 2

1 "Well," you may be saying, "what terrible people you have been talking about!" But wait a minute! You are just as bad. When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are talking about yourselves, for you do these very same things.

2 And we know that God, in justice, will punish

anyone who does such things as these.

3 Do you think that God will judge and condemn others for doing them and overlook you when you do them, too?

4 Don't you realize how patient He is being with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see that He has been waiting all this time without punishing you, to give you time to turn from your sin? His kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.

5 But no, you won't listen; and so you are saving up terrible punishment for yourselves because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin, for there is going to come a day of wrath when God will be the just Judge of all the world.

6 He will give each one whatever his deeds deserve.

7 He will give eternal life to those who patiently do the will of God, seeking for the unseen glory and honor and eternal life that He offers.

8 But He will terribly punish those who fight against the truth of God and walk in evil ways—God's anger will be poured out upon them.

9 There will be sorrow and suffering for Jews and Gentiles alike who keep on sinning.

10 But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who obey Him, whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

11 For God treats everyone the same.

12,13,14,15 He will punish sin wherever it is found. He will punish the heathen when they sin, even though they never had God's written laws, for down in their hearts they know right from wrong. God's laws are written within them; their own conscience accuses them, or sometimes excuses them. And God will punish the Jews for sinning because they have His written laws but don't obey them. They know what is right but don't do it. After all, salvation is not given to those who know what to do, unless they do it.

16 The day will surely come when at God's command Jesus Christ will judge the secret lives of everyone, their inmost thought and motives; this is all part of God's great plan which I proclaim.

17 You Jews think all is well between yourselves and God because He gave His laws to you, you brag that you are His special friends.

18 Yes, you know what He wants; you know right from wrong and favor the right because you have been taught His laws from earliest youth.

19 You are so sure of the way to God that you could point it out to a blind man. You think of yourselves as beacon lights, directing men who are lost in darkness to God.

20 You think that you can guide the simple and teach

even children the affairs of God, for you really know His laws, which are full of all knowledge and truth.

21 Yes, you teach others then why don't you teach yourselves? You tell others not to steal do you steal?

22 You say it is wrong to commit adultery do you do it? You say, "Don't pray to idols" and then make money your god instead.

23 You are so proud of knowing God's laws, but you dishonor Him by breaking them.

24 No wonder the Scriptures say that the world speaks evil of God because of you.

25 Being a Jew is worth something if you obey God's laws, but if you don't, then you are no better off than the heathen.

26 And if the heathen obey God's laws, won't God give them all the rights and honors He planned to give the Jews?

27 In fact, those heathen will be much better off than you Jews who know so much about God and have His promises but don't obey His laws.

28 For you are not real Jews just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the Jewish initiation ceremony of circumcision.

29 No, a real Jew is anyone whose heart is right with God. For God is not looking for those who cut their bodies in actual body circumcision but He is looking for those with changed hearts and minds. Whoever has that kind of change in his life will get his praise from God, even if not from you.

### CHAPTER 3

1 Then what's the use of being a Jew? Are there any special benefits for them from God? Is there any value in the Jewish circumcision ceremony?

2 Yes, being a Jew has many advantages. First of all, God trusted them with His laws [so that they could know and do His will].

3 True, some of them were unfaithful, but just because they broke their promises to God, does that mean God will break His promises to those who love Him?

4 Of course not! Though everyone else in the world is a liar, God is not. Do you remember what the book of Psalms says about this? That God's words will always prove true and right, no matter who questions them.

5 "But," some say, "our breaking faith with God is good, our sins serve a good purpose, for people will notice how good God is when they see how bad we are. Is it fair, then, for Him to punish us when our sins are helping Him?" (That is the way some people talk.)

6 God forbid! Then what kind of God would He be,

to overlook sin? How could He ever condemn anyone?

7 For He could not judge and condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty brought Him glory by pointing up His honesty in contrast to my lies.

8 If you follow through with that idea you come to this: the worse we are, the better God likes it! But the damnation of those who say such things is just. Yet some claim that this is what I preach!

9 Well, then, are we Jews better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all men alike are sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles.

10 As the Scriptures say, "No one is good no one in all the world is innocent."

11 No one has ever really followed God's paths, or even truly wanted to.

12 Every one has turned away; all have gone wrong. No one anywhere has kept on doing what is right; not one.

13 Their talk is foul and filthy like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are loaded with lies. Everything they say has in it the sting and poison of deadly snakes.

14 Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

15 They are quick to kill, hating anyone who disagrees with them.

16 Wherever they go they leave misery and trouble behind them,

17 And they have never known what it is to feel secure or enjoy God's blessing.

18 They care nothing about God nor what He thinks of them.

19 So the judgment of God lies very heavily upon the Jews, for they are responsible to keep God's laws instead of doing all these evil things; not one of them has any excuse; in fact, all the world stands hushed and guilty before Almighty God.

20 Now do you see it? No one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what the law commands. For the more we know of God's laws, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying them; His laws serve only to make us see that we are sinners.

21,22 But now God has shown us a different way to heaven not by "being good enough" and trying to keep His laws, but by a new way (though not new, really, for the Scriptures told about it long ago). Now God says He will accept and acquit us declare us "not guilty if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like.

23 Yes, all have sinned, all fall short of God's glorious ideal;

24 Yet now God declares us "not guilty" of offend-

ing Him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in His kindness freely takes away our sins.

25 For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from His wrath. In this way He was being entirely fair, even though He did not punish those who sinned in former times. For He was looking forward to the time when Christ would come and take away those sins.

26 And now in these days also He can receive sinners in this same way, because Jesus took away their sins. But isn't this unfair for God to let criminals go free, and say that they are innocent? No, for He does it on the basis of their trust in Jesus who took away their sins.

27 Then what can we boast about doing, to earn our salvation? Nothing at all. Why? Because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds; it is based on what Christ has done and our faith in Him.

28 So it is that we are saved by faith in Christ and not by the good things we do.

29 And does God save only the Jews in this way? No, the Gentiles, too, may come to Him in this same manner.

30 God treats us all the same, all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are acquitted if they have faith.

31 Well then, if we are saved by faith, does this mean that we no longer need obey God's laws? Just the opposite! In fact, only when we trust Jesus can we truly obey Him.

#### CHAPTER 4

1,2 Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What were his experiences concerning this question of being saved by faith? Was it because of his good deeds that God accepted him? If so, then he would have something to boast about. But from God's point of view Abraham had no basis at all for pride.

3 For the Scriptures tell us Abraham believed God, and that is why God canceled his sins and declared him "not guilty."

4,5 But didn't he earn his right to heaven by all the good things he did? No, for being saved is a gift; if a person could earn it by being good, then it wouldn't be free—but it is! It is given to those who do not work for it. For God declares sinners to be good in His sight if they have faith in Christ to save them from God's wrath.

6 King David spoke of this describing the happiness of an undeserving sinner who is declared "not guilty" by God.

7 "Blessed, and to be envied," he said, "are those whose sins are forgiven and put out of sight.

8 Yes, what joy there is for anyone whose sins are no longer counted against him by the Lord."

9 Now then, the question: Is this blessing given only to those who have faith in Christ but also keep the Jewish laws, or is the blessing also given to those who do not keep the Jewish rules, but only trust in Christ? Well, what about Abraham? We say that he received these blessings through his faith. Was it by faith alone? Or because he also kept the Jewish rules?

10 For the answer to that question, answer this one: When did God give this blessing to Abraham? It was before he became a Jew—before he went through the Jewish initiation ceremony of circumcision.

11 It wasn't until later on, after God had promised to bless him because of his faith, that he was circumcised. The circumcision ceremony was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him just and good in His sight before the ceremony took place. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who believe and are saved without obeying Jewish laws. We see, then, that those who do not keep these rules are justified by God through faith.

12 And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those Jews who have been circumcised. They can see from his example that it is not this ceremony that saves them, for Abraham found favor with God by faith alone, before he was circumcised.

13 It is clear, then, that God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was not because Abraham obeyed God's laws but because he trusted God to keep His promise.

14 So if you still claim that God's blessings go to those who are "good enough," then you are saying that God's promises to those who have faith are meaningless, and faith is foolish.

15 But the fact of the matter is this: when we try to gain God's blessing and salvation by keeping His laws we always end up under His anger, for we always fail to keep them. The only way we can keep from breaking laws is not to have any to break!

16 So God's blessings are given to us by faith, as a free gift; we are certain to get them whether or not we follow Jewish customs if we have faith like Abraham's, for Abraham is the father of us all when it comes to these matters of faith.

17 That is what the Scriptures mean when they say that God made Abraham the father of many nations. God will accept all people in every nation who trust God as Abraham did. And this promise is from God Himself, who makes the dead live again and speaks of future events with as much certainty as though they were already past!

18 So, when God told Abraham that he would give him a son who would have many descendants and

become a great nation, Abraham believed God even though such a promise just couldn't come to pass!

19 And because his faith was strong, he didn't worry about the fact that he was too old to be a father, at the age of one hundred, and that Sarah his wife, at ninety, was also much too old to have a baby.

20 But Abraham never doubted. He believed God, for his faith and trust grew ever stronger, and he praised God for this blessing even before it happened.

21 He was completely sure that God was well able to do anything He promised.

22 And because of Abraham's faith God forgave his sins and declared him "not guilty."

23 Now this wonderful statement that he was accepted and approved through his faith wasn't just for Abraham's benefit.

24 It was for us, too, assuring us that God will accept us in the same way He accepted Abraham when we believe the promises of God who brought back Jesus our Lord from the dead.

25 He died for our sins and rose again to make us right with God, filling us with God's goodness.

## CHAPTER 5

1 So now, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith in His promises, we can have real peace with Him because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

2 For because of our faith, He has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be.

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials for we know that they are good for us they help us learn to be patient.

4 And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady.

5 Then, when that happens, we are able to hold our heads high no matter what happens and know that all is well, for we know how dearly God loves us, and we feel this warm love everywhere within us because God has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

6 When we were utterly helpless with no way of escape, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners who had no use for Him.

7 Even if we were good, we really wouldn't expect anyone to die for us, though, of course, that might be barely possible.

8 But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

9 And since by His blood He did all this for us as sinners, how much more will He do for us now that He has declared us not guilty? Now He will save us from all of God's wrath to come.

10 And since, when we were His enemies, we were brought back to God by the death of His Son, what blessings He must have for us now that we are His friends, and He is living within us!

11 Now we rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God-all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done in dying for our sins-making us friends of God.

12 When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned.

13 [We know that it was Adam's sin that caused this] because although, of course, people were sinning from the time of Adam until Moses, God did not in those days judge them guilty of death for breaking His laws because He had not yet given His laws to them, nor told them what He wanted them to do.

14 So when their bodies died it was not for their own sins since they themselves had never disobeyed God's special law against eating the forbidden fruit, as Adam had. What a contrast between Adam and Christ who was yet to come!

15 And what a difference between man's sin and God's forgiveness! For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this one man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's mercy.

16 Adam's one sin brought the penalty of death to many, while Christ freely takes away many sins and gives glorious life instead.

17 The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to be king over all, but all who will take God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal are kings of life because of this one man, Jesus Christ.

18 Yes, Adam's sin brought punishment to all, but Christ's righteousness makes men right with God, so that they can live.

19 Adam caused many to be sinners because he disobeyed God, and Christ caused many to be made acceptable to God because He obeyed.

20 The Ten Commandments were given so that all could see the extent of their failure to obey God's laws. But the more we see our sinfulness, the more we see God's abounding grace forgiving us.

21 Before, sin ruled over all men and brought them to death, but now God's kindness rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER 6

1 Well then, shall we keep on sinning so that God can keep on showing us more and more kindness and forgiveness?

2,3 Of course not! Should we keep on sinning when we don't have to? For sin's power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptized to become a part of Jesus Christ; through His death the power of your sinful nature was shattered.

4 Your old sin-loving nature was buried with Him by baptism when He died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought Him back to life again, you were given His wonderful new life to enjoy.

5 For you have become a part of Him, and so you died with Him, so to speak, when He died and now you share His new life, and shall rise as He did.

6 Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with Him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin;

7 For when you are deadened to sin you are freed from all its allure and its power over you.

8 And since your old sin-loving nature "died" with Christ, we know that you will share His new life.

9 Christ rose from the dead and will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him.

10 He died once for all to end sin's power, but now He lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God.

11 So look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin, and instead be alive to God, alert to Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Do not let sin control your puny body any longer; do not give in to its sinful desires.

13 Do not let any part of your bodies become tools of wickedness, to be used for sinning; but give yourselves completely to God—every part of you—for you are back from death and you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for His good purposes.

14 Sin need never again be your master, for now you are no longer tied to the law where sin enslaves you, but you are free under God's favor and mercy.

15 Does this mean that now we can go ahead and sin and not worry about it? (For our salvation does not depend on keeping the law, but on receiving God's grace!) Of course not!

16 Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with acquittal). The one to whom you offer yourself he will take you and be your master and you will be his slave.

17 Thank God that though you once chose to be

slaves of sin, now you have obeyed with all your heart the teaching to which God has committed you.

18 And now you are free from your old master, sin; and you have become slaves of your new master, righteousness.

19 I speak this way, using the illustration of slaves and masters because it is easy to understand just as you used to be slaves to all kinds of sin, so now you must let yourselves be slaves to all that is right and holy.

20 In those days when you were slaves of sin you didn't bother much with goodness.

21 And what was the result? Evidently not good, since you are ashamed now even to think about those things you used to do, for all of them end in eternal doom.

22 But now you are free from the power of sin and are slaves of God and His benefits to you include holiness and everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## CHAPTER 7

1 Don't you understand yet, dear Jewish brothers in Christ, that when a person dies the law no longer holds him in its power?

2 Let me illustrate: when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, she is no longer bound to him; the laws of marriage no longer apply to her.

3 Then she can marry someone else if she wants to. That would be wrong while he was alive, but it is perfectly all right after he dies.

4 Your "husband," your master, used to be the Jewish law; but you "died," as it were, with Christ on the cross; and since you are "dead," you are no longer "married to the law," and it has no more control over you. Then you came back to life again when Christ did, and are a new person. And now you are "married," so to speak, to the one who rose from the dead, so that you can produce good fruit, that is, good deeds for God.

5 When your old nature was still active, sinful desires were at work within you, making you want to do whatever God said not to, and producing sinful deeds, the rotting fruit of death.

6 But now you need no longer worry about the Jewish laws and customs because you "died" while in their captivity, and now you can really serve God, not in the old way, mechanically obeying a set of rules, but in the new way, [with all of your hearts and minds].

7 Well then, am I suggesting that these laws of God are evil? Of course not! No, the law is not sinful but it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have

known the sin in my heart the evil desires that are hidden there if the law had not said, "You must not have evil desires in your heart."

8 But sin used this law against evil desires by reminding me that such desires are wrong and arousing all kinds of forbidden desires within me! Only if there were no laws to break would there be no sinning.

9 That is why I felt fine so long as I did not understand what the law really demanded. But when I learned the truth, I realized that I had broken the law and was a sinner, doomed to die.

10 So far as I was concerned, the good law which was supposed to show me the way of life resulted instead in my being given the death penalty.

11 Sin fooled me by taking the good laws of God and using them to make me guilty of death.

12 But still, you see, the law itself was wholly right and good.

13 But how can that be? Didn't the law curse my doom? How then can it be good? No, it was sin, devilish stuff that it is, that used what was good to bring about my condemnation. So you can see how cunning and deadly and damnable it is. For it uses God's good laws for its own evil purposes.

14 The law is good, then, and the trouble is not there but with me, because I am sold into slavery with Sin as my owner.

15 I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to—what I hate.

16 I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience proves that I agree with these laws I am breaking.

17 But I can't help myself, because I'm no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things.

18 I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't.

19 When I want to do good, I don't; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway.

20 Now if I am doing what I don't want to, it is plain where the trouble is: sin still has me in its evil grasp.

21 It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong.

22 I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned;

23,24,25 But there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature, that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. In my mind I want to be God's willing servant but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin. So

you see how it is: my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin. Oh what a terrible predicament I'm in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free.

## CHAPTER 8

1 So there is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus.

2 For the power of the life-giving Spirit and this power is mine through Christ Jesus has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death.

3 We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God, because we can't and don't keep them, but God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent His own Son in a human body like ours except that ours are sinful and destroyed sin's control over us by giving Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

4 So now we can obey God's laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us.

5 Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower natures live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God.

6 Following after the Holy Spirit leads to life and peace, but following after the old nature leads to death.

7 Because the old sinful nature within us is against God. It never did obey God's laws and it never will.

8 That's why those who are still under the control of their old sinful selves, bent on following their old evil desires, can never please God.

9 But you are not like that. You are controlled by your new nature if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ living in him, he is not a Christian at all.)

10 Yet, even though Christ lives within you, your body will die because of sin; but your spirit will live, for Christ has pardoned it.

11 And if the Spirit of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, lives in you, He will make your dying bodies live again after you die, by means of this same Holy Spirit living within you.

12 So, dear brothers, you have no obligations whatever to your old sinful nature to do what it begs you to do.

13 For if you keep on following it you are lost and will perish, but if through the power of the Holy Spirit you crush it and its evil deeds, you shall live.

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

15 And so we should not be like cringing, fearful slaves, but we should behave like God's very own children, adopted into the bosom of His family, and calling to Him "Father, Father."

16 For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts, and tells us that we really are God's children.

17 And since we are His children we will share His treasures for all God gives to His Son Jesus is now ours too. But if we are to share His glory, we must also share His suffering.

18 Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will give us later.

19 For all creation is waiting patiently and hopefully for that future day when God will resurrect His children.

20,21 For on that day thorns and thistles, sin, death, and decay—the things that overcame the world against its will at God's command—will all disappear, and the world around us will share in the glorious freedom from sin which God's children enjoy.

22 For we know that even the things of nature; like animals and plants, suffer in sickness and death as they await this great event.

23 And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as His children, including the new bodies He has promised us—bodies that will never be sick again and will never die.

24 We are saved by trusting. And trusting means looking forward to getting something we don't yet have—for a man who already has something doesn't need to hope and trust that he will get it.

25 But if we must keep trusting God for something that hasn't happened yet, it teaches us to wait patiently and confidently.

26 And in the same way—by our faith—the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how to pray as we should; but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words.

27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows, of course, what the Spirit is saying as He pleads for us in harmony with God's own will.

28 And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are called according to His plans.

29 For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him—and all along He knew who would—should become like His Son, so that His Son would be the First, with many brothers.

30 And having chosen us, He called us to come to Him; and when we came, He declared us "not guilty," filled us with Christ's goodness, gave us right standing with Himself, and promised us His glory.

31 What can we ever say to such wonderful things as these? If God is on our side, who can ever be against us?

32 Since He did not spare even His own Son for us but gave Him up for us all, won't He also surely give us everything else?

33 Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His own? Will God? No! He is the one who has forgiven us and given us right standing with Himself.

34 Who then will condemn us? Will Christ? NO! For He is the one who died for us and came back to life again for us and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, pleading for us there in heaven.

35 Who then can ever keep Christ's love from us? When we have trouble or calamity, when we are hunted down or destroyed, is it because He doesn't love us anymore? And if we are hungry, or penniless, or in danger, or threatened with death, has God deserted us?

36 No, for the Scriptures tell us that for His sake we must be ready to face death at every moment of the day we are like sheep awaiting slaughter;

37 But despite all this, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us enough to die for us.

38 For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow

39 Or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when He died for us.

## 1 PETER

### CHAPTER 1

1 From Peter, Jesus Christ's missionary. To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

2 Dear friends, God the Father chose you long ago and knew you would become His children. And the Holy Spirit has been at work in your hearts, cleansing you with the blood of Jesus Christ and making you to please Him. May God bless you richly and grant you increasing freedom from all anxiety and fear.

3 All honor to God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; for it is His boundless mercy that has given us the privilege of being born again, so that we are now

members of God's own family. Now we live in the hope of eternal life because Christ rose again from the dead.

4 And God has reserved for His children the priceless gift of eternal life; it is kept in heaven for you pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.

5 And God, in His mighty power, will make sure that you get there safely to receive it, because you are trusting Him. It will be yours in that coming last day for all to see.

6 So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though the going is rough for a while down here.

7 These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it—and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold; so if your faith remains strong after being tried in the test tube of fiery trials it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day of His return.

8 You love Him even though you have never seen Him; though not seeing Him, you trust Him, and even now you are happy with the inexpressible joy that comes from heaven itself.

9 And your further reward for trusting Him will be the salvation of your souls.

10 This salvation was something the prophets did not fully understand. Though they wrote about it, they had many questions as to what it all could mean.

11 They wondered what the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about, for He told them to write down the events which, since then have happened to Christ: His suffering, and His great glory afterwards. And they wondered when and to whom all this would happen.

12 They were finally told that these things would not occur during their lifetime, but long years later, during yours. And now at last this Good News has been plainly announced to all of us. It was preached to us in the power of the same heaven-sent Holy Spirit who spoke to them; and it is all so strange and wonderful that even the angels in heaven would give a great deal to know more about it.

13 So now you can look forward soberly and intelligently to more of God's kindness to you when Jesus Christ returns.

14 Obey God because you are His children; don't slip back into your old ways—doing evil because you knew no better.

15 But be holy now in everything you do, just as the Lord is holy who invited you to be His child.

16 He Himself has said, "You must be holy, for I am holy."

17 And remember that your heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites when He judges. He

will judge you with perfect justice for everything you do, so act in reverent fear of Him from now on until you get to heaven.

18 God paid a ransom to save you from the impossible road to heaven which your fathers tried to take, and the ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver, as you very well know.

19 But He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

20 God chose Him for this purpose long before the world began, but only recently was He brought into public view, in these last days, as a blessing to you.

21 Because of this, your trust can be in God who raised Christ from the dead and gave Him great glory. Now your faith and hope can rest in Him alone.

22 Now you can have real love for everyone because your souls have been cleansed from selfishness and hatred when you trusted Christ to save you; so see to it that you really do love each other warmly, with all your hearts.

23 For you have a new life. It was not passed on to you from your parents, for the life they gave you will fade away. This new one will last forever, for it comes from Christ, God's ever-living Message to men.

24 Yes, our natural lives will fade as grass does when it becomes all brown and dry. All our greatness is like a flower that droops and falls;

25 But the Word of the Lord last forever. And His message is Good News that was preached you.

## CHAPTER 2

1 So get rid of your feelings hatred. Don't just pretend to be good! Be done with dishonesty and jealousy and talking about others behind their backs.

2,3 If you have tasted the Lord's goodness and kindness, cry more, as a baby cries for milk—and grow strong in the Lord and be saved.

4 Come to Christ, who is the living Foundation of Rock upon which God builds; though men have spurned Him, He is very precious to God who has chosen Him above others.

5 And now you have become living building-stones for God's use in building His house. What's more, you are His holy priests; so come to Him [you are acceptable to Him because of Jesus Christ] and offer to God those things that please Him.

6 As the Scriptures express it, "See, I am sending Christ to be the carefully chosen, precious Cornerstone of My Church, and I will never disappoint those who trust in Him."

7, 8 Yes, He is very precious to you who believe; and to those who reject Him, well—"The same stone that

was rejected by the builders has become the Cornerstone the most honored and important part of the building." And the Scriptures also say, "He is the Stone that some will stumble over, and the Rock that will make them fall." They will stumble because they will not listen to God's Word, nor obey it, and so this punishment must follow—that they will fall.

9 But you are not like that, for you have been chosen by God Himself—you are priests of the King, you are holy and pure, you are God's very own—all this so that you may show to others how God called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.

10 Once you were less than nothing, now you are God's own. Once you knew very little of God's kindness, now your very lives have been changed by it.

11 Dear brothers, you are only visitors here. Since your real home is in heaven I beg you to keep away, from the evil pleasures of this world; they are not for you, for they fight against your very souls.

12 Be careful how you behave among your unsaved neighbors; for then, even if they are suspicious of you and talk against you, they will end up praising God for your good works when Christ returns.

13 For the Lord's sake, obey every law of your government: those of the king as head of the state,

14 And those of the king's officers, for he has sent them to punish all who do wrong, and to honor those who do right.

15 It is God's will that your good lives should silence those who foolishly condemn the Gospel without knowing what it can do for them, having never experienced its power.

16 You are free from the law, but that doesn't mean you are free to do wrong. Live as those who are free to do only God's will at all times.

17 Show respect for everyone. Love Christians everywhere. Fear God and honor the government.

18 Servants, you must respect your masters and whatever they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are tough and cruel.

19 Praise the Lord if you are punished for doing right!

20 Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong; but if you do right and suffer for it, and are patient beneath the blows, God is well pleased.

21 This suffering is all part of the work God has given you. Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in His steps:

22 He never sinned, never told a lie.

23 Never answered back when insulted; when He suffered He did not threaten to get even; He left His case

in the hands of God who always judges fairly.

24 He personally carried the load of our sins in His own body when He died on the cross, so that we can be finished with sin and live a good life from now on. For His wounds have healed ours!

25 Like sheep you wandered away from God, but now you have returned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls who keeps you safe from all attacks.

### CHAPTER 3

1,2 Wives, fit in with your husbands' plans; for then if they refuse to listen when you talk to them about the Lord, they will be won by your respectful, pure behavior. Your godly lives will speak to them better than any words.

3 Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on jewelry, or beautiful clothes, or hair arrangement.

4 Be beautiful inside, in your hearts, with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit which is so precious to God.

5 That kind of deep beauty was seen in the saintly women of old, who trusted God and fitted in with their husbands' plans.

6 Sarah, for instance, obeyed her husband Abraham, honoring him as head of the house. And if you do the same, you will be following in her steps like good daughters and doing what is right, then you will not need to fear [offending your husbands].

7 You husbands must be careful of your wives, being thoughtful of their needs and honoring them as the weaker sex. Remember that you and your wife are partners in receiving God's blessings, and if you don't treat her as you should, your prayers will not get ready answers.

8 And now this word to all of you: You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.

9 Don't repay evil for evil. Don't snap back at those who say unkind things about you. Instead, pray for God's help for them, for we are to be kind to others, and God will bless us for it.

10 If you want a happy, good life, keep control of your tongue, and guard your lips from telling lies.

11 Turn away from evil and do good. Try to live in peace even if you must run after it to catch and hold it!

12 For the Lord is watching His children, listening to their prayers but the Lord's face is hard against those who do evil.

13,14,15 Usually no one will hurt you for wanting to do good. But even if they should, you are to be envied,

for God will reward you for it. Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, and do it in a gentle and respectful way.

16 Do what is right, then if men speak against you, calling you evil names, they will become ashamed of themselves for falsely accusing you when you have only done what is good.

17 Remember, if God wants you to suffer, it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong!

18 Christ also suffered. He died once for the sins of all us guilty sinners, although He Himself was innocent of any sin at any time, that He might bring us safely home to God. But though His body died, His spirit lived on.

19 And it was in the spirit that He visited the spirits in prison, and preached to them

20 Spirits of those who, long before in the days of Noah, had refused to listen to God, though He waited patiently for them while Noah was building the ark. Yet only eight persons were saved from drowning in that terrible flood.

21 (That, by the way, is what baptism pictures for us: in baptism we show that we have been saved from death and doom by the resurrection of Christ; not because our bodies are washed clean by the water, but because in being baptized we are turning to God and asking Him to cleanse our heart from sin.)

22 And now Christ is in heaven sitting in the place of honor next to God the Father, with all the angels and powers of heaven bowing before Him and obeying Him.

#### CHAPTER 4

1 Since Christ suffered and underwent pain; you must have the same attitude He did; you must be ready to suffer, too. For remember, when your body suffers, sin loses its power.

2 And you won't be spending the rest of your life chasing after evil desires, but will be anxious to do the will of God.

3 You have had enough in the past of the evil things the godless enjoy—sex sin, lust, getting drunk, wild parties, drinking bouts, and the worship of idols, and other terrible sins.

4 Of course, your former friends will be very surprised when you don't eagerly join them any more in the wicked things they do, and they will laugh at you in contempt and scorn.

5, 6 But just remember that they must face the Judge of all, living and dead; they will be punished for the way they have lived. That is why the Good News was

preached even to those who were dead—killed by the flood—so that although their bodies were punished with death, they could still live in their spirits as God lives.

7 The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore be earnest, thoughtful men of prayer.

8 Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other for love makes up for many of your faults.

9 Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay for the night.

10 God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings.

11 Are you called to preach? Then preach as though God Himself were speaking through you. Are you called to help others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies, so that God will be glorified through Jesus Christ—to Him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

12 Dear friends, don't be bewildered or surprised when you go through the fiery trials ahead, for this is no strange, unusual thing that is going to happen to you.

13 Instead, be really glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in His suffering, and afterwards you will have the wonderful joy of sharing His glory in that coming day when it will be displayed.

14 Be happy if you are cursed and insulted for being a Christian, for when that happens the Spirit of God will come upon you with great glory.

15 Don't let me hear of your suffering for murdering or stealing or making trouble or being a busybody and prying into other people's affairs.

16 But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being in Christ's family and being called by His wonderful name!

17 For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin first among God's own children. And if even we who are Christians must be judged, what terrible fate awaits those who have never believed in the Lord?

18 If the righteous are barely saved, what chance will the godless have?

19 So if you are suffering according to God's will, keep on doing what is right and trust yourself to the God who made you, for He will never fail you.

#### CHAPTER 5

1 And now, a word to you elders of the church. I, too, am an elder; with my own eyes I saw Christ dying on the cross; and I, too, will share His glory and His honor when He returns. Fellow elders, this is my plea to you:

2,3 Feed the flock of God, care for it willingly, not grudgingly; not for what you will get out of it, but

because you are eager to serve the Lord. Don't be tyrants, but lead them by your good example,

4 And when the Head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in His glory and honor.

5 You younger men, follow the leadership of those who are older. And all of you serve each other with humble spirits, for God gives special blessings to those who are humble, but sets Himself against those who are proud.

6 If you will humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, in His good time He will lift you up.

7 Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.

8 Be careful—watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion, looking for some victim to tear apart.

9 Stand firm when he attacks. Trust the Lord; and remember that other Christians all around the world are going through these sufferings too.

10 After you have suffered a little while, our God, who is full of kindness through Christ, will give you His eternal glory. He personally will come and pick you up, and set you firmly in place, and make you stronger than ever.

11 To Him be all power over all things, forever and ever. Amen.

12 I am sending this note to you through the courtesy of Silvanus who is, in my opinion, a very faithful brother. I hope I have encouraged you by this letter for I have given you a true statement of the way God blesses. What I have told you here should help you to stand firmly in His love.

13 The church here in Rome—she is your sister in the Lord—sends you her greetings; so does my son Mark.

14 Give each other the handshake of Christian love. Peace be to all of you who are in Christ.

Peter

## 1 CORINTHIANS

### CHAPTER 15

1 Now let me remind you, brothers of what the Gospel really is; for it has not changed—it is the same Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then and still do now, for your faith is squarely built upon this wonderful message;

2 And it is this Good News that saves you if you still

firmly believe it, unless of course you never really believed it in the first place.

3 I passed on to you right from the first what had been told to me, that Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures said He would,

4 And that He was buried, and that three days afterwards He arose from the grave just as the prophets foretold.

5 He was seen by Peter and later by the rest of "the Twelve."

6 After that He was seen by more than five hundred Christian brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now.

7 Then James saw Him and later all the apostles.

8 Last of all I saw Him too, long after the others, as though I had been born almost too late for this.

9 For I am the least worthy of all the apostles, and I shouldn't even be called an apostle at all after the way I treated the church of God.

10 But whatever I am now it is all because God poured out such kindness and grace upon me—and not without results: for I have worked harder than all the other apostles, yet actually I wasn't doing it, but God working in me, to bless me.

11 It makes no difference who worked the hardest, I or they; the important thing is that we preached the Gospel to you, and you believed it.

12 But tell me this! Since you believe what we preach, that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying that dead people will never come back to life again?

13 For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ must still be dead.

14 And if He is still dead, then all our preaching is useless and your trust in God is empty, worthless, hopeless:

15 And we apostles are all liars because we have said that God raised Christ from the grave, and of course that isn't true if the dead do not come back to life again.

16 If they don't, then Christ is still dead,

17 And you are very foolish to keep on trusting God to save you, and you are still under condemnation for your sins;

18 In that case all Christians who have died are lost!

19 And if being a Christian is of value to us only now in this life, we are the most miserable of creatures.

20 But the fact is that Christ did actually rise from the dead, and has become the first of millions who will come back to life again some day.

21,22,23 Death came into the world because of what one man (Adam) did, and it is because of what this other man (Christ) has done that now there is the resurrection from the dead. Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, being members of his sinful race, and wherever there is sin, death results. But all who are related to Christ

will rise again. Each, however, in his own turn: Christ rose first; then when Christ comes back, all His people will become alive again.

24 After that the end will come when He will turn the kingdom over to God the Father, having put down all enemies of every kind.

25, 26, 27 For Christ will be King until He has defeated all His enemies, including the last enemy—death. This too must be defeated and ended. For the rule and authority over all things has been given to Christ by His Father; except, of course, Christ does not rule over the Father Himself, who gave Him this power to rule.

28 When Christ has finally won the battle against all His enemies, then He, the Son of God, will put Himself also under His Father's orders, so that God who has given Him the victory over everything else will be utterly supreme.

29 If the dead will not come back to life again, then what point is there in people being baptized for those who are gone? Why do it unless you believe that the dead will some day rise again?

30, 31 And why should we ourselves be continually risking our lives, facing death hour by hour? For it is a fact that I face death daily; that is as true as my pride in your growth in the Lord.

32 And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those men of Ephesus—if it was only for what I gain in this life down here? If we will never live again after we die, then we might as well go and have ourselves a good time: let us eat drink, and be merry. What's the difference? For tomorrow we die, and that ends everything!

33 Don't be fooled by those who say such things. If you listen to them you will start acting like them.

34 Get some sense and quit your sinning. For to your shame I say it, some of you are not even Christians at all and have never really known God.

35, 36 But someone may ask, "How will the dead be brought back to life again? What kind of bodies will they have?" What a foolish question! You will find the answer in your own garden! When you put a seed into the ground it doesn't grow into a plant unless it "dies" first.

37 And when the green shoot comes up out of the seed, it is very different from the seed you first planted. For all you put into the ground is a dry little seed of wheat, or whatever it is you are planting,

38 Then God gives it a beautiful new body just the kind He wants it to have: a different kind of plant grows from each kind of seed.

39 And just as there are different kinds of seeds and plants, so also there are different kinds of flesh. Humans, animals, fish, and birds are all different.

40 The angels in heaven have bodies far different from ours, and the beauty and the glory of their bodies is different from the beauty and the glory of ours.

41, 42 The sun has one kind of glory while the moon and stars have another kind. And the stars differ from each other in their beauty and brightness. In the same way, our earthly bodies which die and decay are different from the bodies we shall have when we come back to life again, for they will never die.

43 The bodies we have now embarrass us for they become sick and die; but they will be full of glory when we come back to life again. Yes, they are weak, dying bodies now, but when we live again they will be full of strength.

44 They are just human bodies at death, but when they come back to life they will be superhuman bodies. For just as there are natural, human bodies, there are also super-natural, spiritual bodies.

45 The Scriptures tell us that the first man, Adam, was given a natural, human body but Christ is more than that, for He was life-giving Spirit.

46 First, then, we have these human bodies and later on God gives us spiritual, heavenly bodies.

47 Adam was made from the dust of the earth, but Christ came from heaven above.

48 Every human being has a body just like Adam's, made of dust, but all who become Christ's will have the same kind of body as His—a body from heaven.

49 Just as each of us now has a body like Adam's, so we shall some day have a body like Christ's.

50, I tell you this, my brothers: an earthly body made of flesh and blood cannot get into God's kingdom. These perishable bodies of ours are not the right kind to live forever.

51 But I am telling you this strange and wonderful secret: we shall not all die, but we shall all be given new bodies!

52 It will all happen in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For there will be a trumpet blast from the sky and all the Christians who have died will suddenly become alive, with new bodies that will never, never die; and then we who are still alive shall suddenly have new bodies too.

53 For our earthly bodies, the ones we have now that can die must be transformed into heavenly bodies that cannot perish but will live forever.

54 When this happens, then at last this Scripture will come true—"Death is swallowed up in victory."

55, 56 O death, where then your victory? Where then your sting? For sin—the sting that causes death—will all be gone; and the law, which reveals our sins, will no longer be our judge.

57 How we thank God for all of this! It is He who makes us victorious through Jesus Christ our Lord!

58 So my dear brothers, since future victory is sure, be strong and steady, always abounding in the Lord's work, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever wasted as it would be if there were no resurrection.

# The lost son

"A man had two sons. When the younger told his father, "I want my share of your estate now, instead of waiting until you die!, his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and took a trip to a distant land, and there wasted all his money on parties and prostitutes.

About the time that all the money was gone, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him to feed his pigs. The boy became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding to the swine looked good to him, but no one gave him anything.

When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, "At home, even the hired men have food enough to spare, and here I am, dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, "Father I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as one of your hired man".

So he returned to his father. And while he was still a long distance away, his father saw him coming, and was filled with loving pity and ran out and embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and you, and I am not worthy of being called your son". But his father said to the servants, "Quick!

Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. And a jewelled ring for his finger; and shoes! And kill the calf we have in the fattening pen. We must celebrate with a feast. **For this son of mine was dead and has returned to life. He was lost and is found**".

So the party began. Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working; when he returned home, he heard dance music coming from the house. So he asked one of the servants what was going on. "Your brother is back", he was told, "and your father has killed the calf we were fattening and has prepared a great feast to celebrate his coming home again unharmed."

The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him, but he replied, "All these years I've worked hard for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to; and in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends. Yet when this son of yours comes back after spending your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the finest calf we have on the place."

"Look, dear son", his father said to him, "you and I are very close, and everything I have is yours.

But it is right to celebrate. **For he is your brother; and he was dead and has come back, to life! He was lost and is found!**"

Luke 15:11-32

# The rich man and Lazarus

“There was a certain rich man,” Jesus said, “who was splendidly clothed and lived each day in mirth and luxury.

One day Lazarus, a diseased beggar, was laid at his door.

As he lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.

Finally the beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham in the place of the righteous dead. The rich man also died and was buried,

And his soul went into hell.

There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham.

‘Father Abraham,’ he shouted, ‘have some pity! Send Lazarus over here if only to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in these flames.’ But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted and you are in anguish.

And besides, there is a great chasm separating us, and anyone wanting to come to you from here is stopped at its edge; and no one over there can cross to us.’

Then the rich man said, ‘O Father Abraham, then please send him to my father’s home—For I have five brothers—to warn them about this place of torment lest they come here when they die.’

But Abraham said, ‘The Scriptures have warned them again and again. Your brothers can read them any time they want to.’

The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham, they won’t bother to read them. But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.’

But Abraham said, ‘If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they won’t listen even though someone rises from the dead.’”

Luke 16:19-31

