

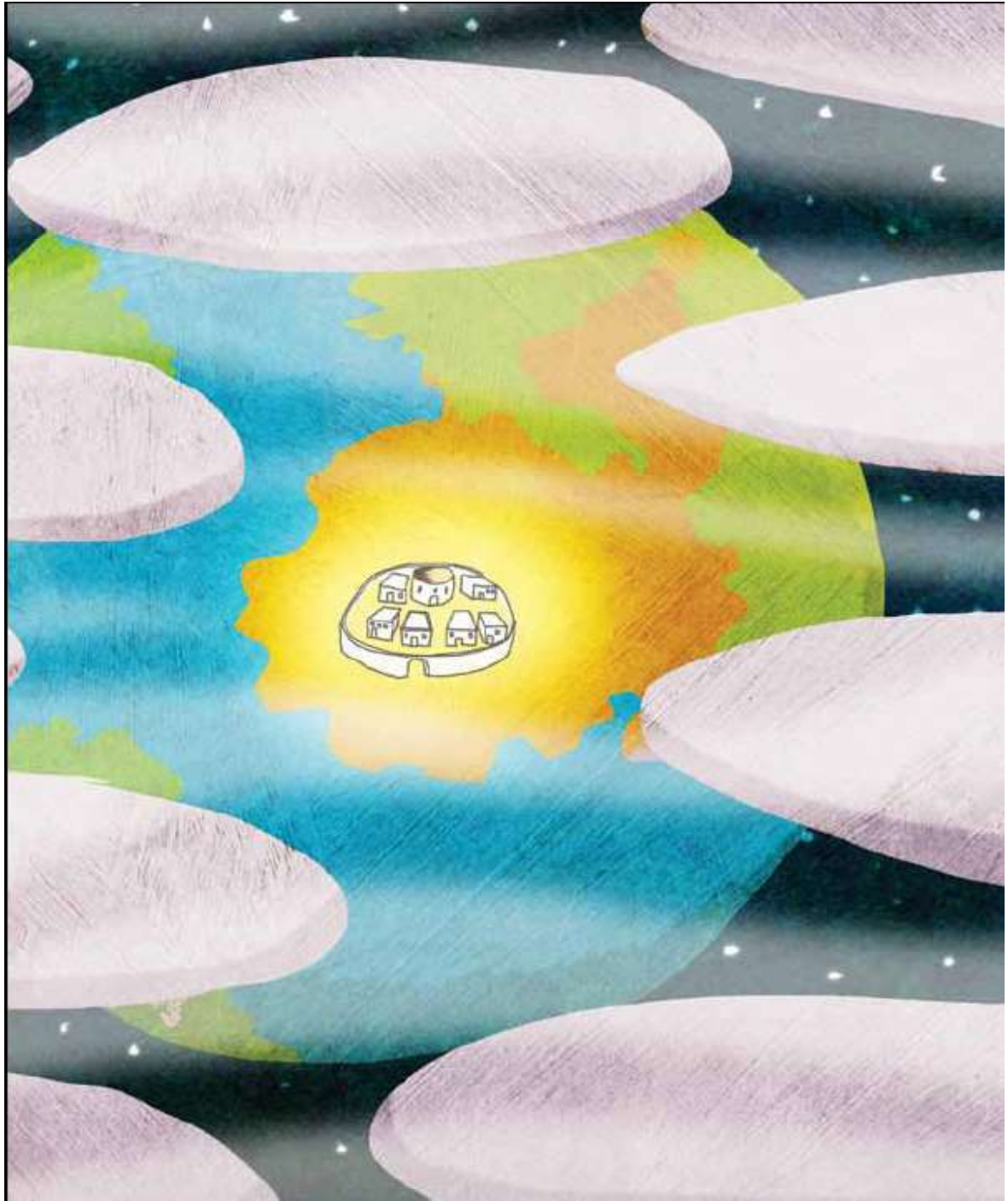
## He's here!

### *The Nativity, from Luke 1 – 2*

EVERYTHING WAS READY. The moment God had been waiting for was here at last! God was coming to help his people, just as he promised in the beginning.

But how would he come? What would he be like? What would he do?

Mountains would have bowed down. Seas would have roared. Trees would have clapped their hands. But the earth held its breath. As silent as snow falling, he came in. And when no one was looking, in the darkness, he came.





There was a young girl who was engaged to a man named Joseph.  
(Joseph was the great-great-great-great-great grandson of King David.)

One morning, this girl was minding her own business when, suddenly, a great warrior of light appeared—right there, in her bedroom. He was Gabriel and he was an angel, a special messenger from heaven.

When she saw the tall shining man standing there, Mary was frightened. “You don’t need to be scared,” Gabriel said. “God is very happy with you!”

Mary looked around to see if perhaps he was talking to someone else.

“Mary,” Gabriel said, and he laughed with such gladness that Mary’s eyes filled with sudden tears.



“Mary, you’re going to have a baby. A little boy. You will call him Jesus. He is God’s own Son. He’s the One! He’s the Rescuer!”

The God who flung planets into space and kept them whirling around and around, the God who made the universe with just a word, the one who

could do anything at all—was making himself small. And coming down...as a baby.

Wait. God was sending a baby to rescue the world?

“But it’s too wonderful!” Mary said and felt her heart beating hard. “How can it be true?”

“Is anything too wonderful for God?” Gabriel asked.

So Mary trusted God more than what her eyes could see. And she believed. “I am God’s servant,” she said. “Whatever God says, I will do.”

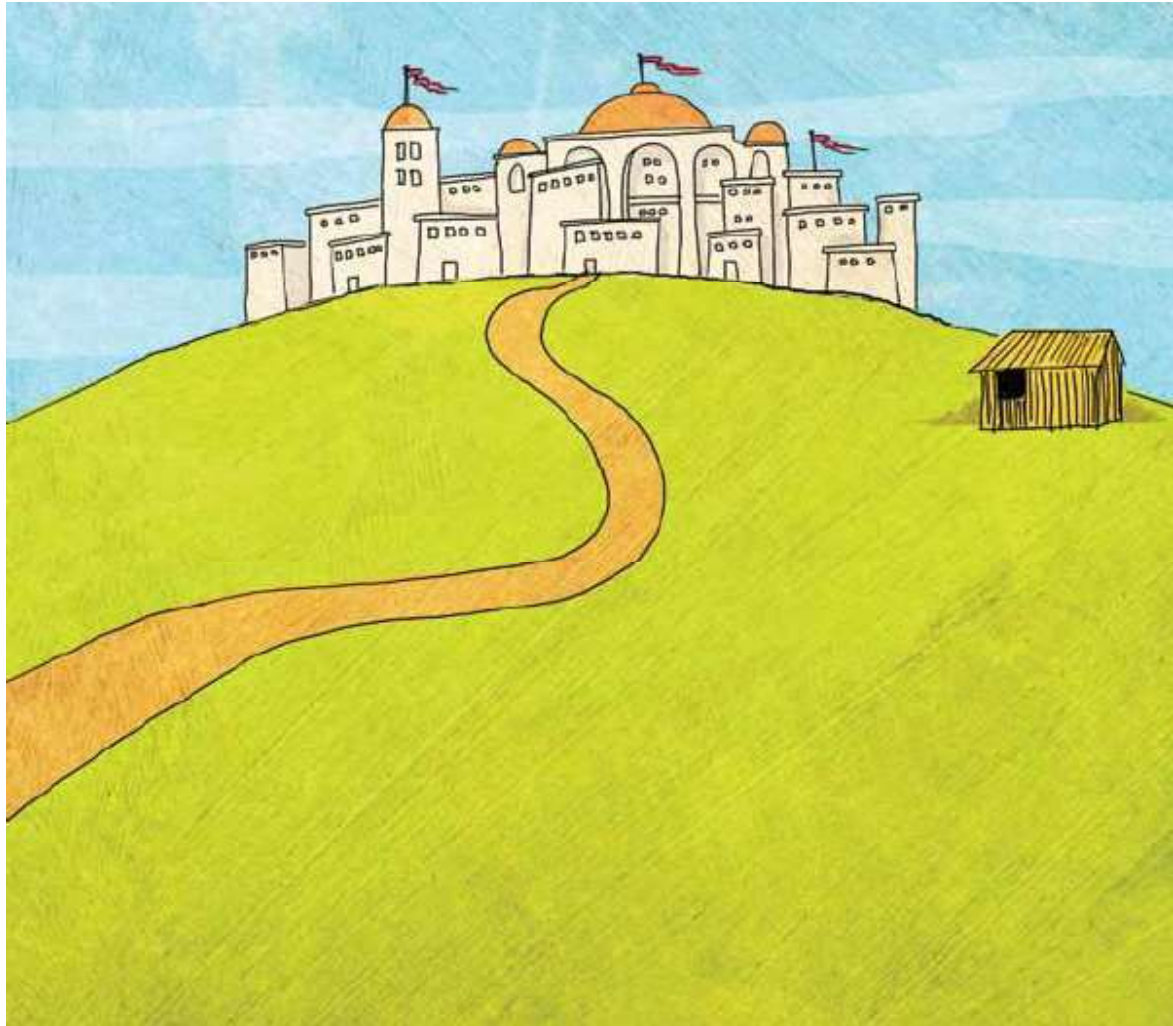
Sure enough, it was just as the angel had said. Nine months later, Mary was almost ready to have her baby.

Now, Mary and Joseph had to take a trip to Bethlehem, the town King David was from. But when they reached the little town, they found every room was full. Every bed was taken.



“Go away!” the innkeepers told them. “There isn’t any place for you.” Where would they stay? Soon Mary’s baby would come.

They couldn't find anywhere except an old, tumbledown stable. So they stayed where the cows and the donkeys and the horses stayed.



And there, in the stable, amongst the chickens and the donkeys and the cows, in the quiet of the night, God gave the world his wonderful gift. The baby that would change the world was born. His baby Son.

Mary and Joseph wrapped him up to keep him warm. They made a soft bed of straw and used the animals' feeding trough as his cradle. And they gazed in wonder at God's Great Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

Mary and Joseph named him Jesus, "Emmanuel"—which means "God has come to live with us."

Because, of course, he had.

