

Who is God?

The Big Bible Series for Kids
An Overview of the Old Testament

Written by Vanessa Chappell

Illustrated by Poppy Lindsell



Book 5

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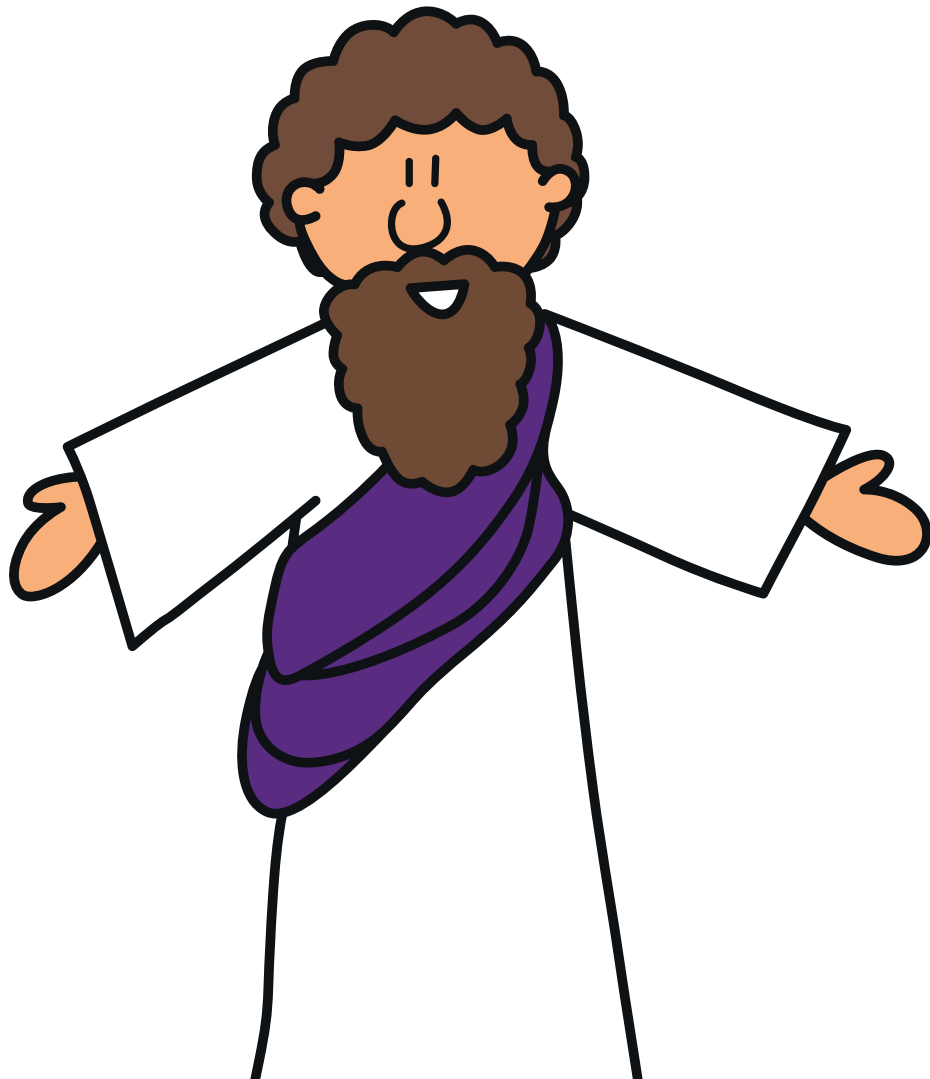
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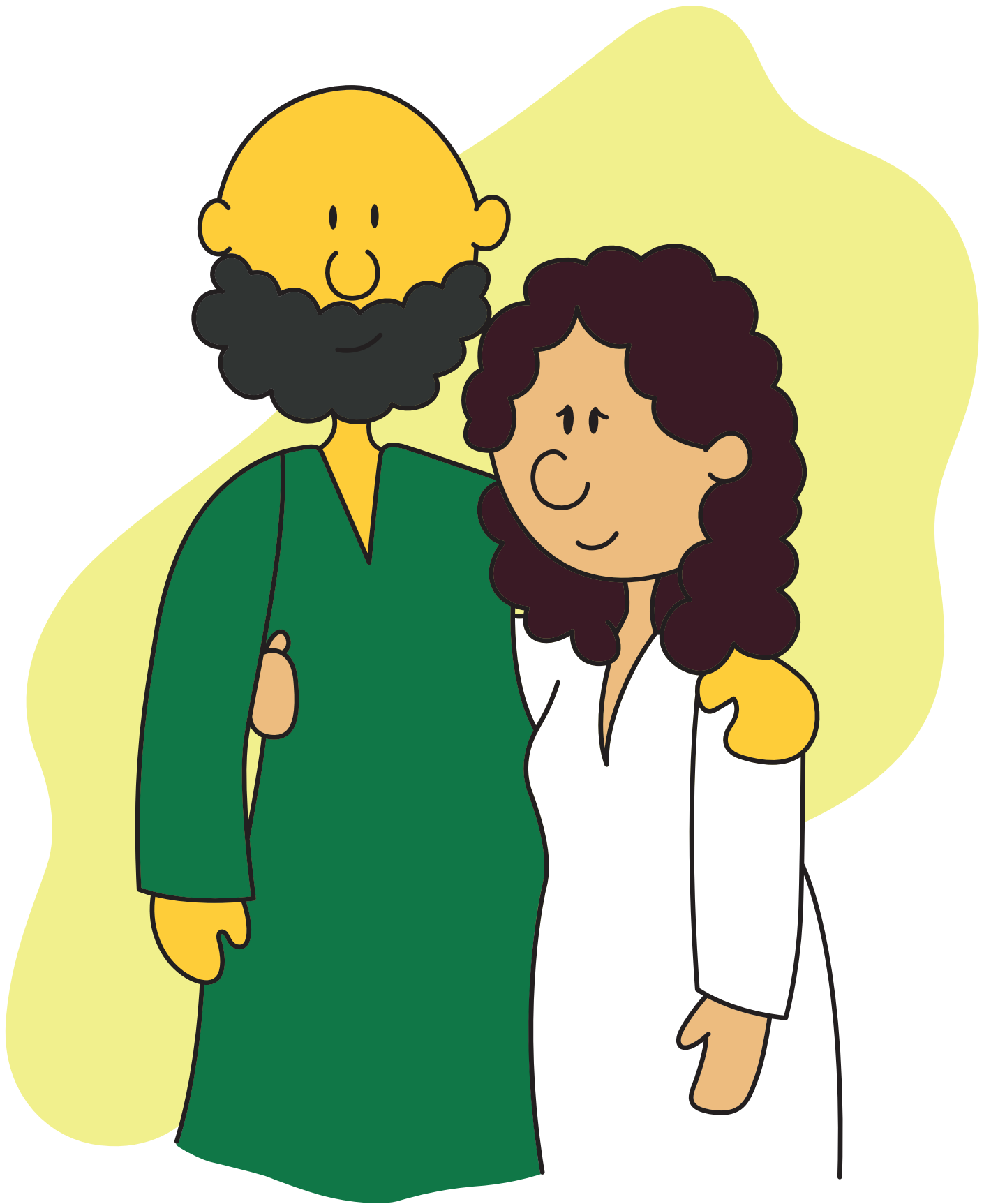
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God's Promise to Hannah



Hannah had been married to Elkanah for many years, but they had no children.



Her husband would say to her,

“Hannah, why are you weeping?

Why don't you eat?

Why are you downhearted?

Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?”



When Hannah was in the house of the LORD she wept bitterly.

Praying to the LORD she said,

“LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life.”



The priest Eli answered,
"Go in peace, and may the God of
Israel grant you what you have
asked of him."



The LORD remembered Hannah,
and in the course of time she
became pregnant and gave birth to
a son.

She named him Samuel, saying,
"Because I asked the LORD for him."

Hannah had not forgotten the
promise she had made though, and
soon after she had weened Samuel,
she gave him to the LORD.



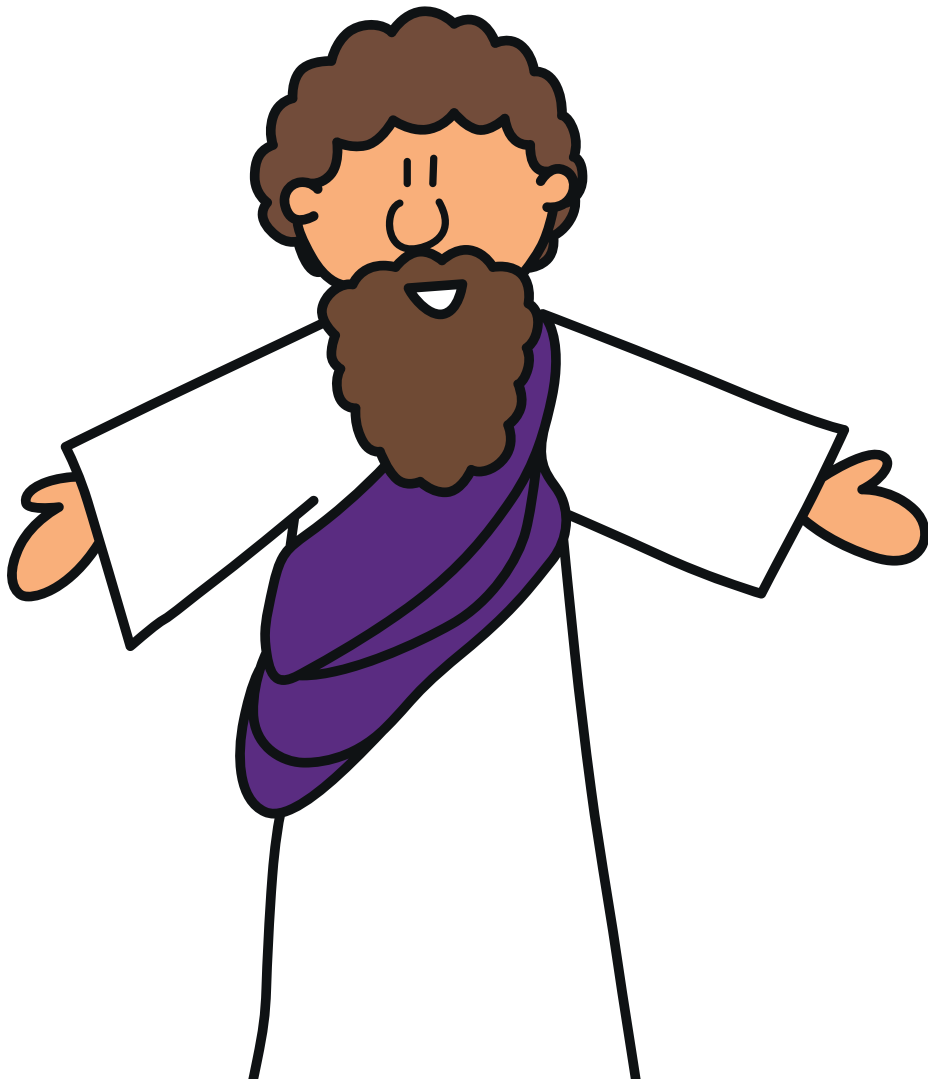
Samuel grew in wisdom and became one of Israel's greatest prophets.

1 Samuel 1

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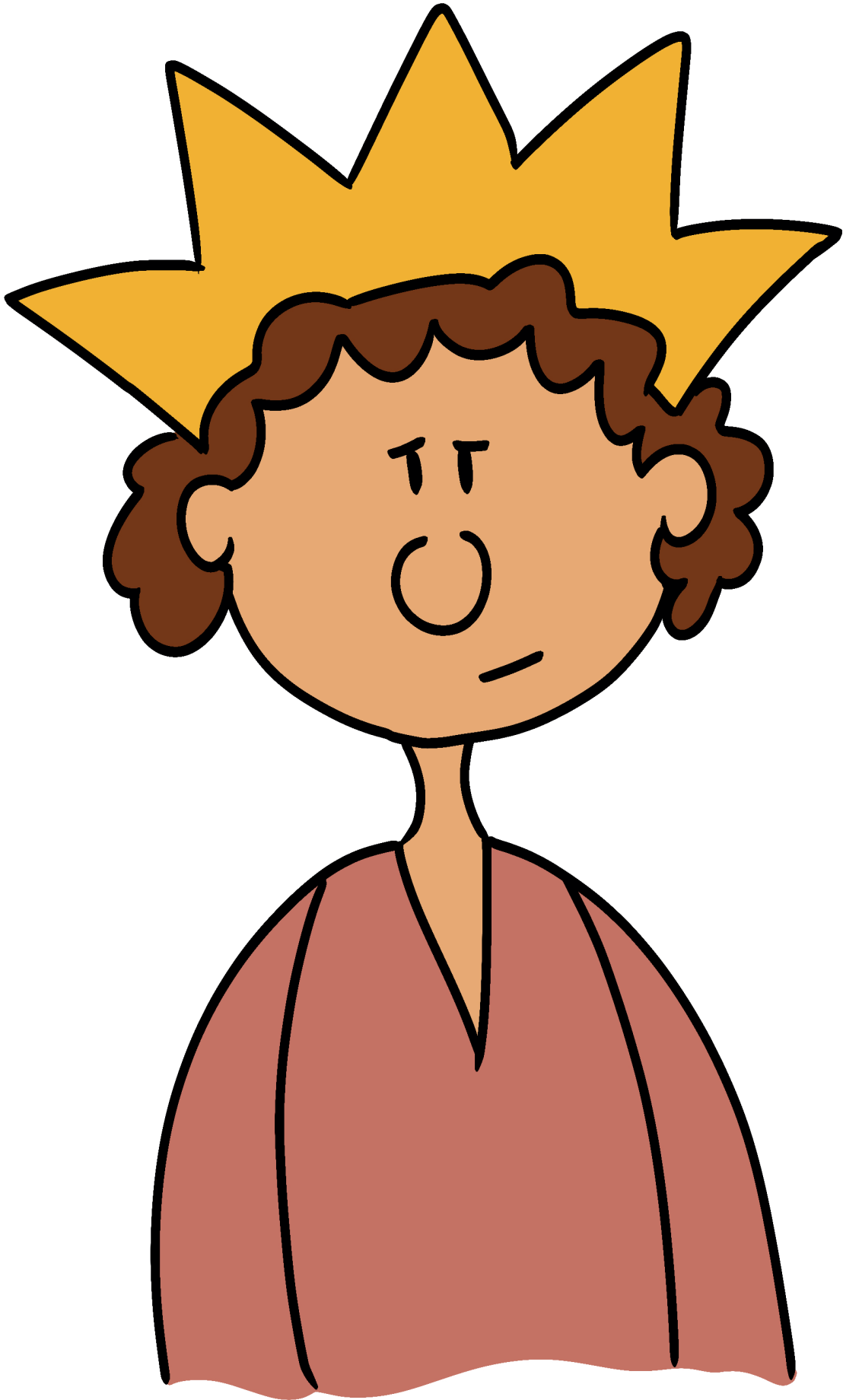


God's Promise to Samuel



Saul had been the king of Israel for many years.

But the LORD regretted making Saul king because he had turned away from the LORD.



So the LORD said to the prophet Samuel, "I am sending you to the man named Jesse. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."



Samuel did what the LORD said.

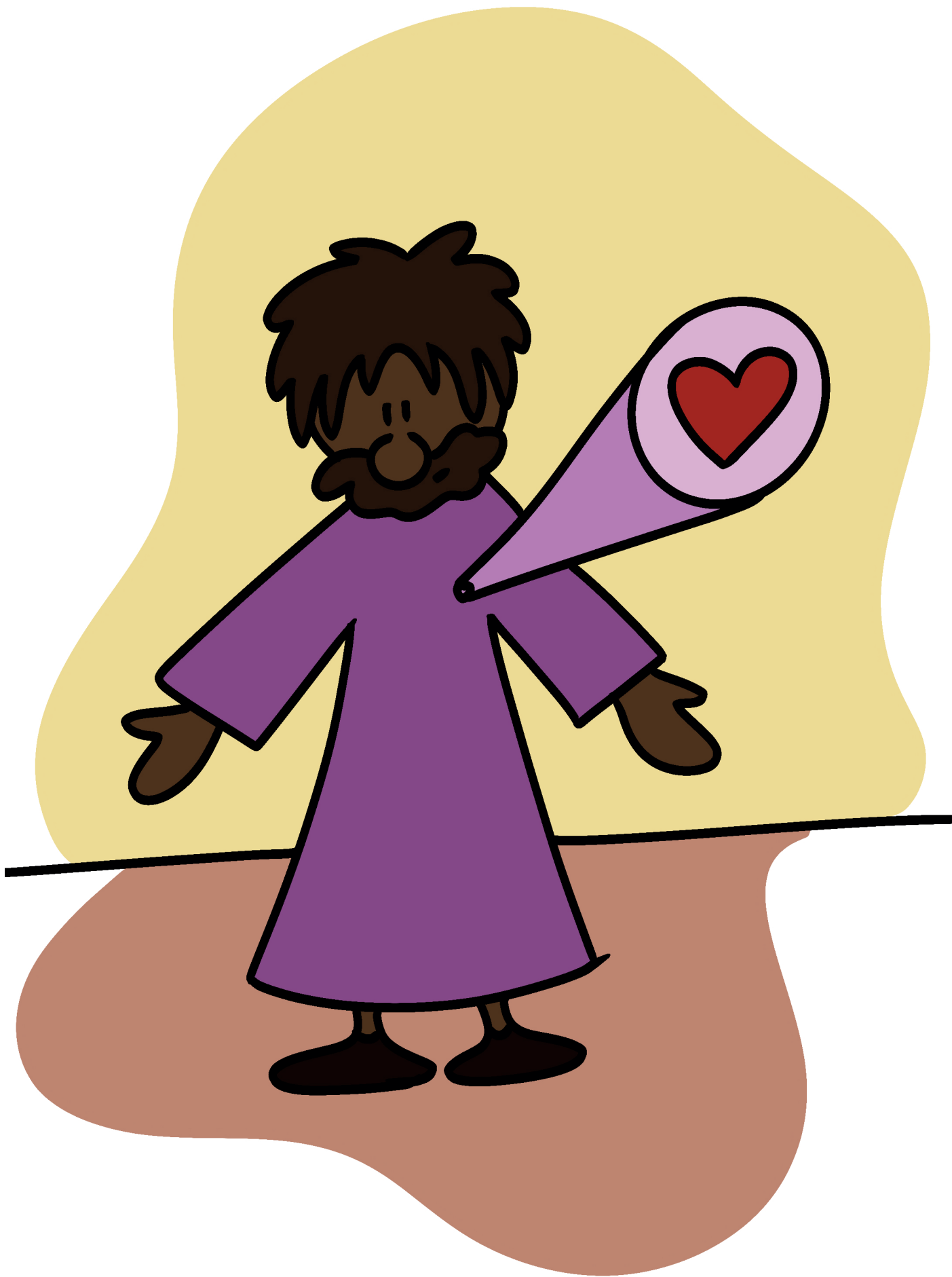
He went to visit Jesse in Bethlehem.



When he saw Jesse's first son, Eliab,
tall and good-looking, Samuel thought,
"Surely this is the LORD's anointed."



But the LORD said to Samuel, "The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD searches the heart."

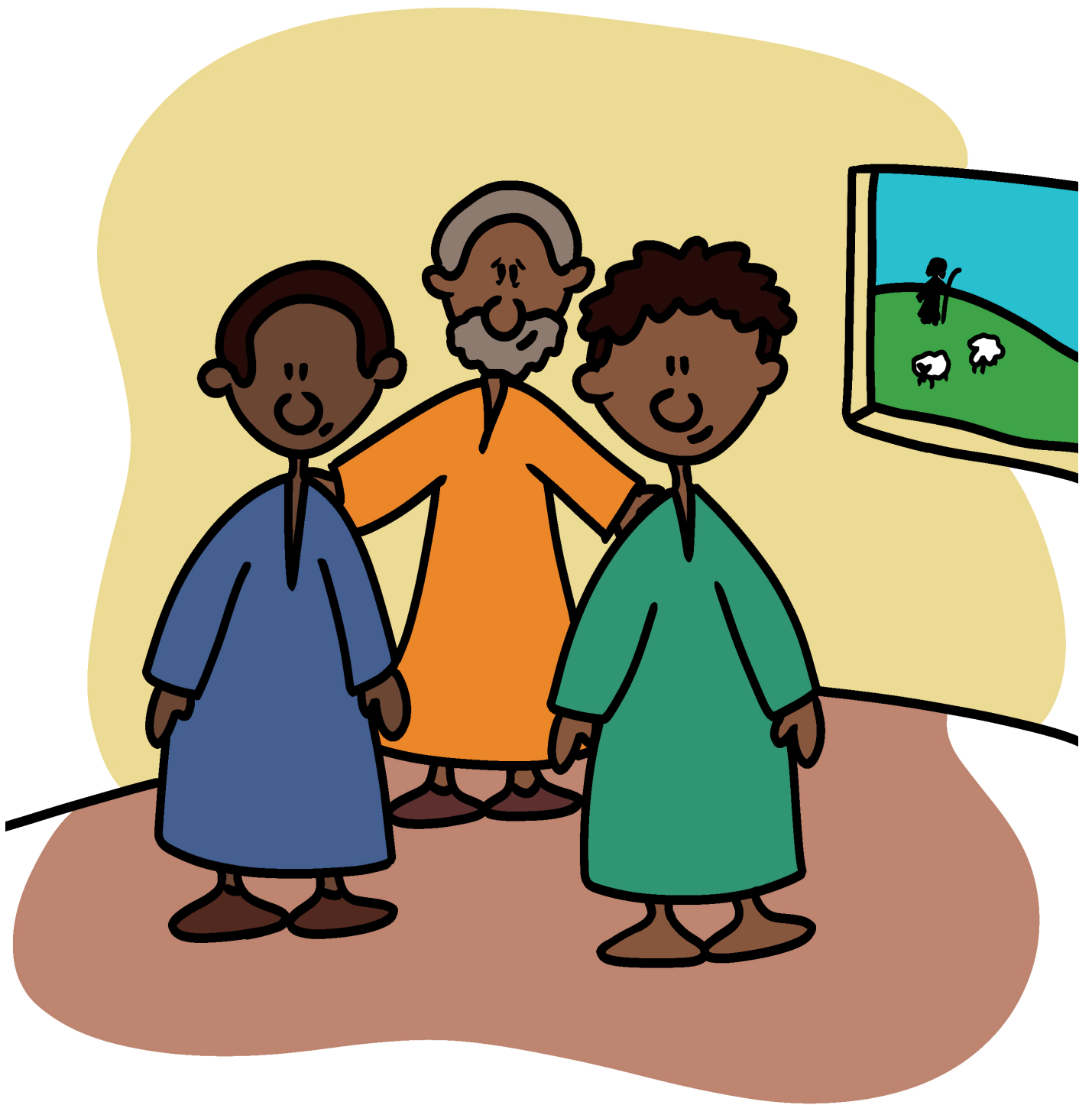


Then Jesse called his next son, Abinadab, and had him pass in front of Samuel.

But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either,"

Jesse then had his next son, Shammah, pass by.

Samuel said again, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one."



Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel.

But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen these. Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," said Jesse. "He is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him."



When he arrived the LORD said,
"Anoint him; this is the one."

Samuel took the oil and anointed David
as the future king of Israel.

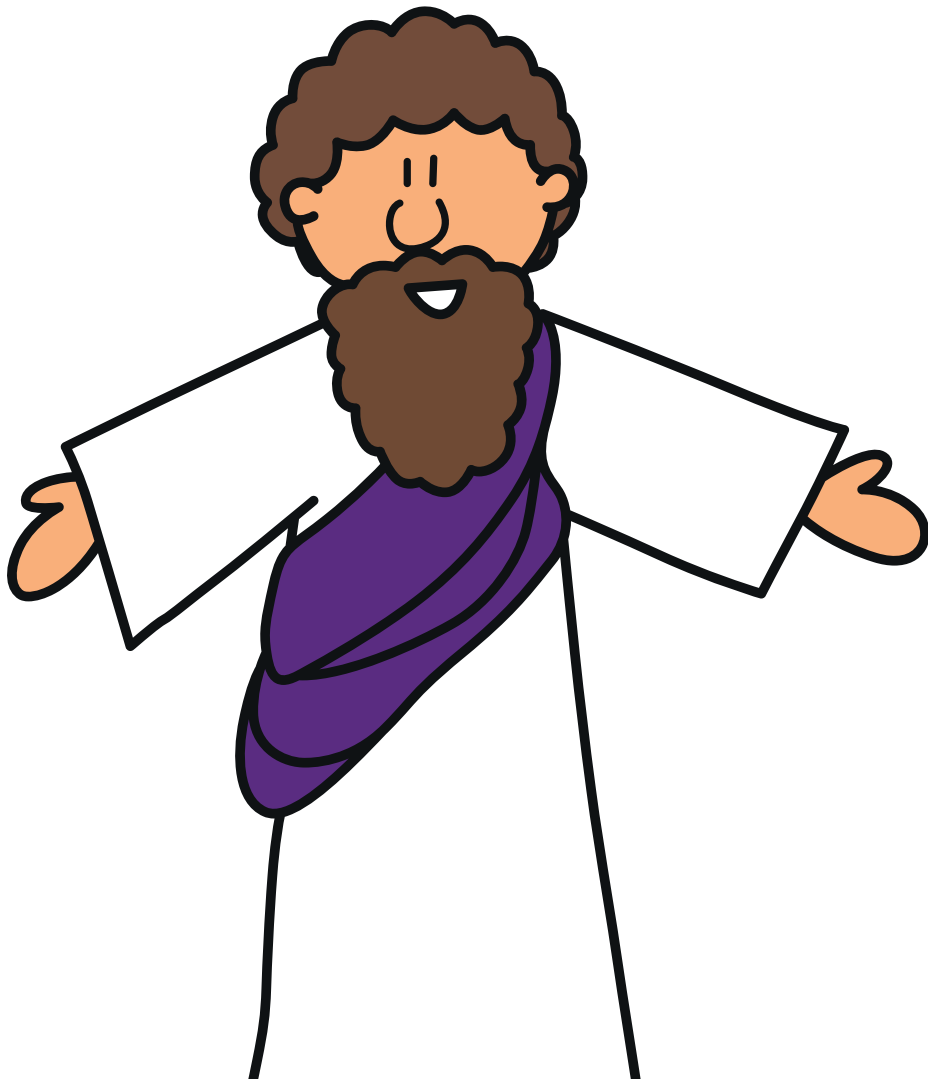
From that day on the Spirit of the
LORD came powerfully upon David.

1 Samuel 16

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God's Promise to David and Goliath



Shortly after Samuel had anointed David as the future king of Israel, the Philistines gathered their forces for war.

They assembled on one side of the valley.

The Israelites gathered on the other side.

The champion named Goliath came from the Philistine camp. He was a giant man and wore a coat of bronze armor. Goliath shouted, "Choose a man to fight me. If he is able to kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him, you will become our subjects and serve us."

King Saul and all the Israelites were terrified.



For forty days Goliath came forward and took his stand. But whenever the Israelites saw him, they fled in great fear.

David asked the Israelites, "Who is Goliath that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

David said to King Saul, "Do not lose heart. I, your servant, will go and fight him."

Saul replied, "You are not able to go and fight him; you are only young."

David said, "The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from Goliath."



David chose five smooth stones from the stream, and with his sling in his hand, approached Goliath.

Goliath came closer. He looked at David and saw that he was not much more than a boy, and he despised him.

David said to Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty."

As Goliath moved closer, David reached into his bag. He took out a stone, slung it and struck Goliath on the forehead. Goliath fell face down on the ground.

When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.



After this, whatever mission King Saul sent David on, David was successful in.

When Saul saw that the LORD was with David, granting him success, he pursued him.

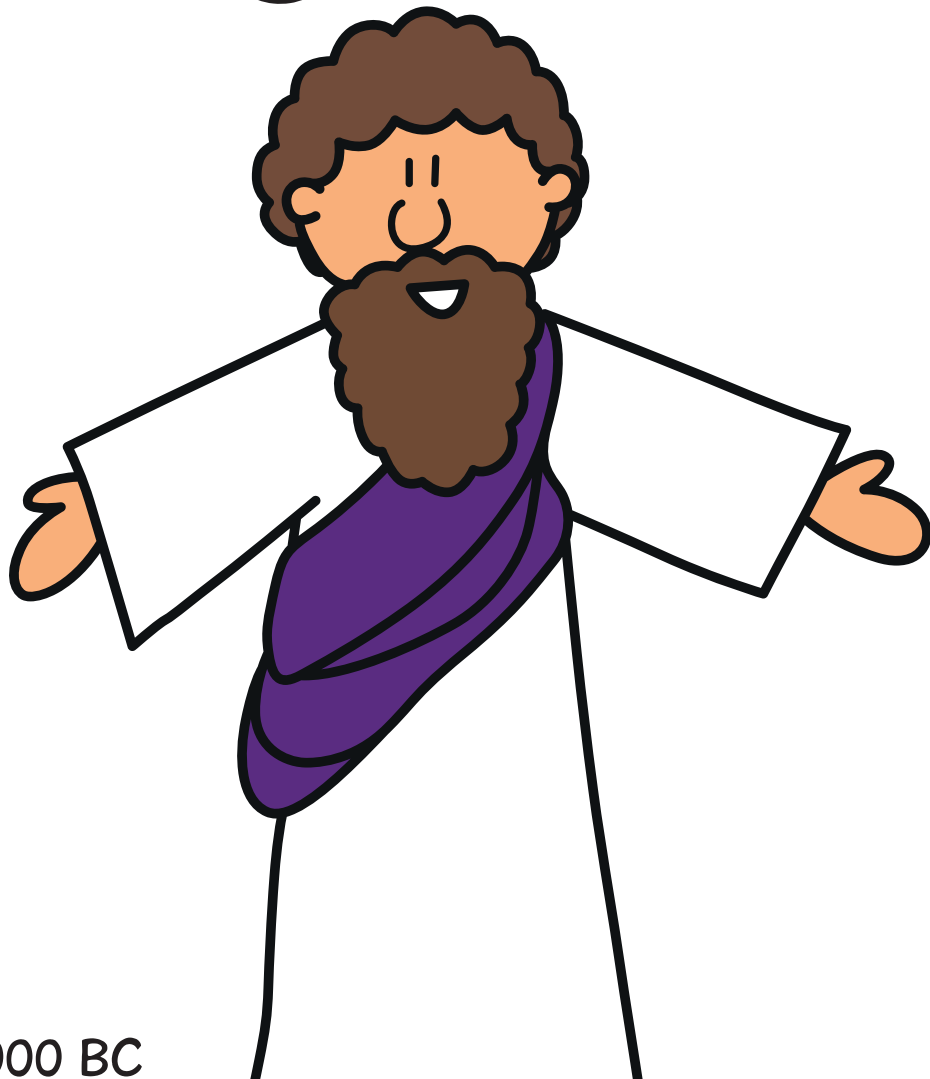
But the LORD settled David in a safe place where he stayed while Saul was king of Israel.

1 Samuel 17 - 23

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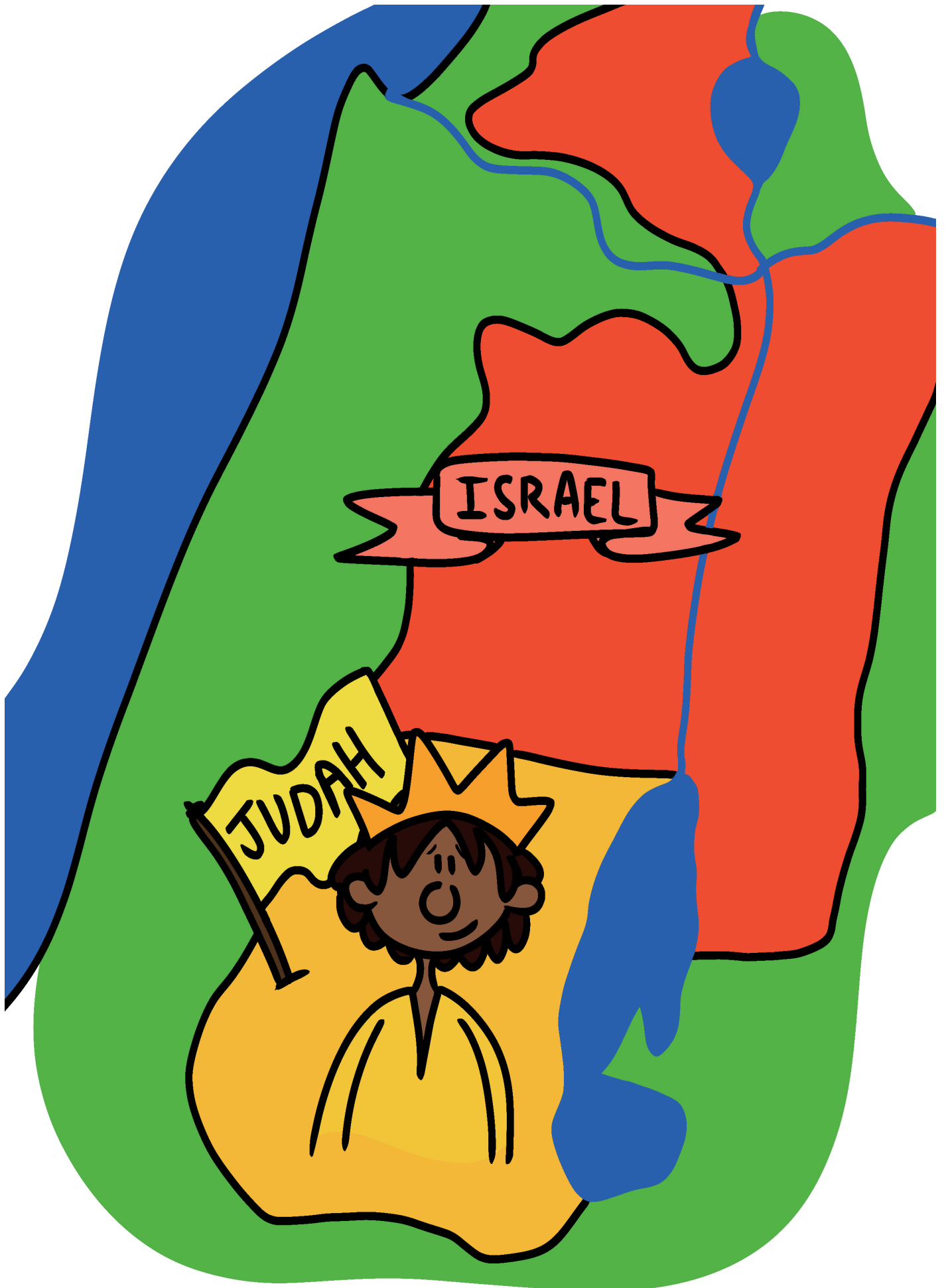
God's Promise to King David



Circa 1000 BC

Following the death of King Saul, Saul's son succeeded him as the king of Israel.

But the men of Judah took some oil and anointed David king over the tribe of Judah.



The war between Saul's son and David lasted a long time.

The house of David grew stronger and stronger while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.



When Saul's son died, the tribes of Israel came to David and said, "While Saul was king over us, you led Israel in their battles. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will be their ruler.'"

When they finished speaking, they anointed David king over all Israel.

After King David had settled in his palace, a word from the LORD came to the prophet Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'I will make your name great. I will give you rest from all your enemies. My love will never be taken away, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your kingdom will endure forever before me.'"



But it was not long before King David defied the living God.

King David said to his commander, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah so that I may know how many fighting men there are."

But his commander said, "May the LORD multiply the troops and may the king see this. But why do you, the king, want to do such a thing and defy the living God?"

But King David had the army commanders go and count the fighting men.

After nine months they came back to Jerusalem and reported the number of fighting men to the king. Eight hundred thousand men were counted in Israel, and in Judah, five hundred thousand.



On hearing this, King David was grief stricken. He said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant."

But the LORD was angry with David and sent a plague on Israel.

David cried out to the LORD, "I am the one who sinned and who has done wrong. These people are but sheep. Let your hand fall on me."

Seeking the LORD's mercy, David built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed offerings on it. Then the LORD answered his prayer and the plague on Israel was stopped.

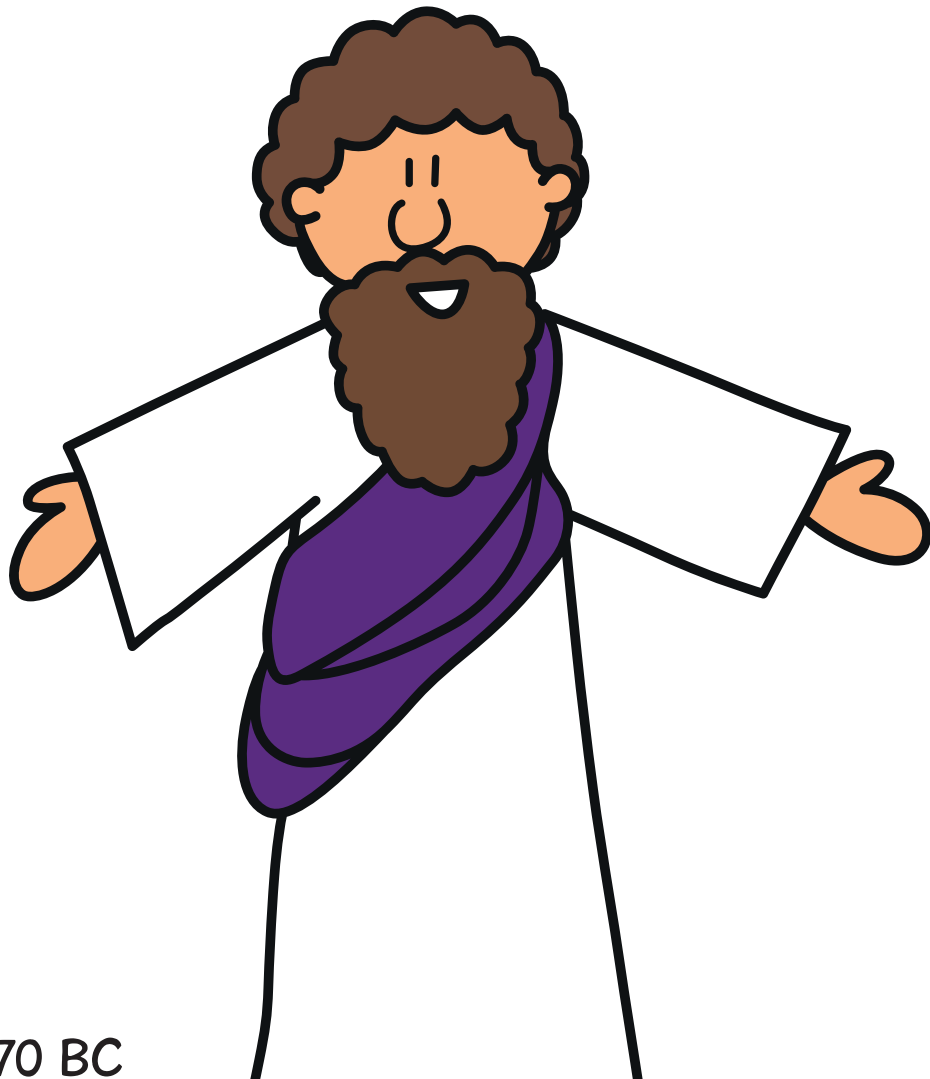
King David ruled Judah and Israel for thirty-three years. His son Solomon succeeded him as king.

2 Samuel 1-7 & 24

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God's Promise to King Solomon



Circa 970 BC

After the death of David, Solomon, his son, became king.

Appearing to Solomon in a dream, the LORD said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

Solomon answered, "You have made me king in place of my father David. But I do not know how to carry out my duties. So give your servant wisdom to be able to distinguish between right and wrong."

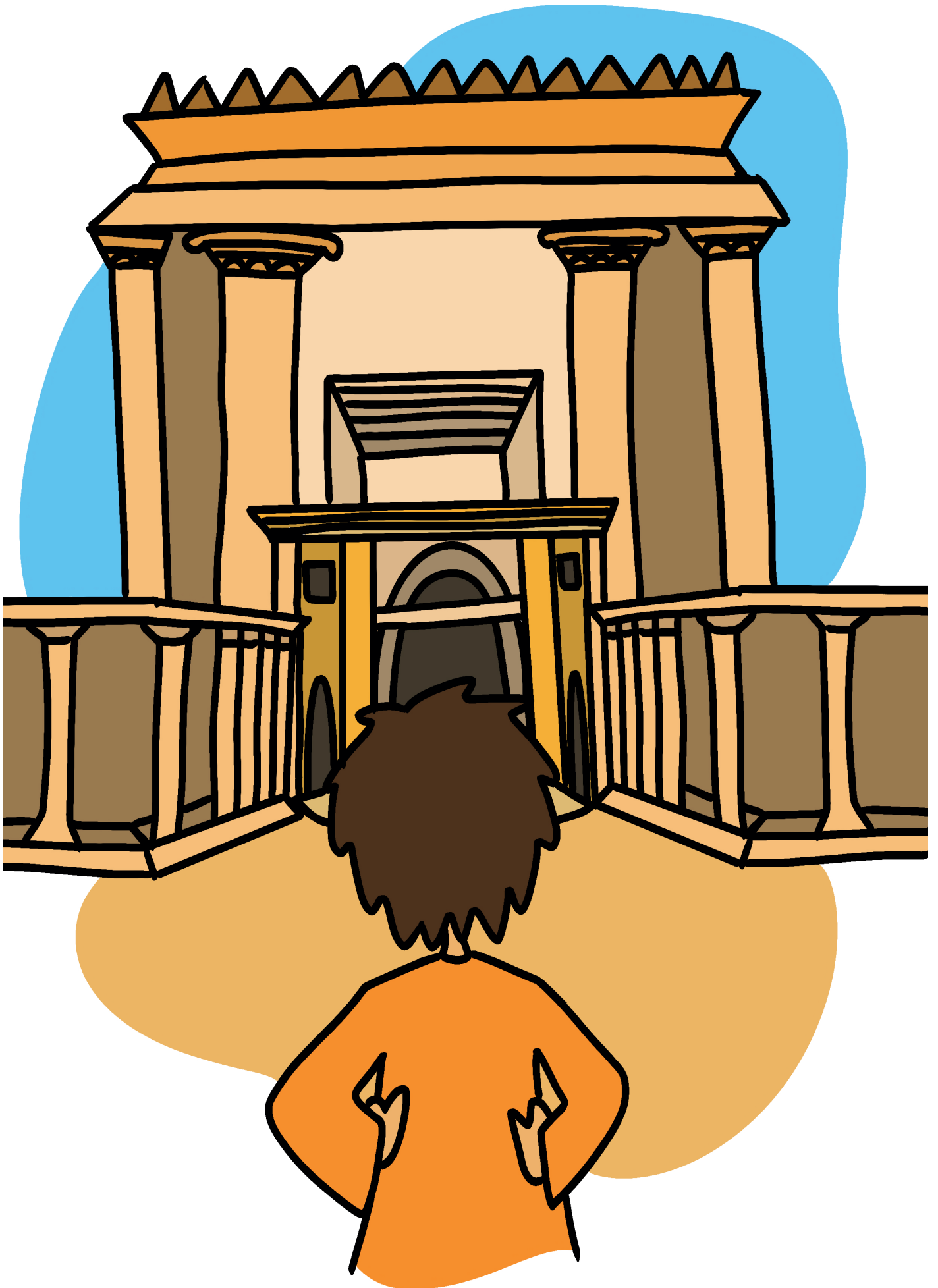
The LORD was pleased with Solomon. He said, "Since you have asked for this and not long life or wealth, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise heart so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for — both riches and honor. And if you obey me, I will give you a long life."



God gave Solomon greater wisdom than all the wisdom of Egypt. People from every land came to listen to his wisdom.

And while Solomon enjoyed peace from his enemies, he oversaw the building of the temple of the LORD.

When it was finished, the LORD appeared to him a second time and said, "I have made this temple a holy place. My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk faithfully, and do all I command, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever as I promised David."



King Solomon grew in wealth and wisdom.

But King Solomon did not walk faithfully as the LORD God had commanded. For the king loved many foreign women from the nations which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them because they will turn your hearts after their gods."

And as Solomon held fast to them in love, his wives turned his heart after other gods.



The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD.

So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have not obeyed me, I will tear the kingdom away from you. But because of the promise I gave David, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of my promise to David."

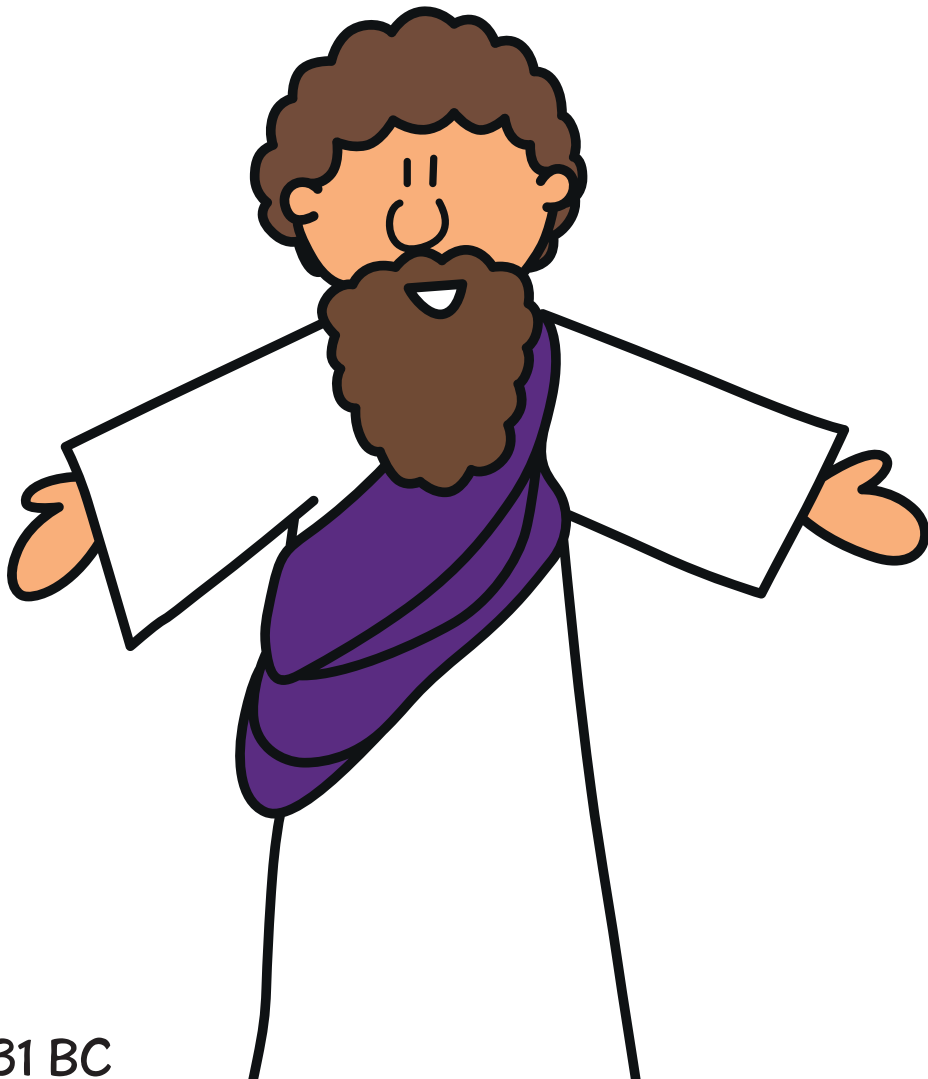
Solomon reigned over all Israel for forty years. He was then was buried in the city of David.

1 Kings 1 - 11

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God's Promise and Israel Divided



Circa 931 BC

Following the death of King Solomon, Rehoboam, his son, succeeded him as king.

When Jeroboam, a royal official, heard there was a new king, he came to the king and said, "Your father, King Solomon, was harsh. Now lighten this harsh labor he put on us, and we will serve you."

King Rehoboam replied, "Go away for three days and then come back to me."



The king then consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon.

The elders said, "If today you will be a servant to these people and give them a kind answer, they will always be your servants."

But King Rehoboam, rejecting the advice, asked his young friends, "What is your advice?"

They said, "Tell these people, my father made you work hard; I will make it even harder."



Three days later, when Jeroboam returned, the king gave his reply.

He answered them harshly.

The king did not listen to the people. For this was from the LORD to fulfil a promise given to Jeroboam.

King Rehoboam's harsh reply stirred the Israelites. They rebelled against the king and instead made Jeroboam their new king over all Israel.

Only the tribe of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to King Rehoboam.



Mustering his tribes, King Rehoboam planned to make war against the new house of Israel to regain back his kingdom.

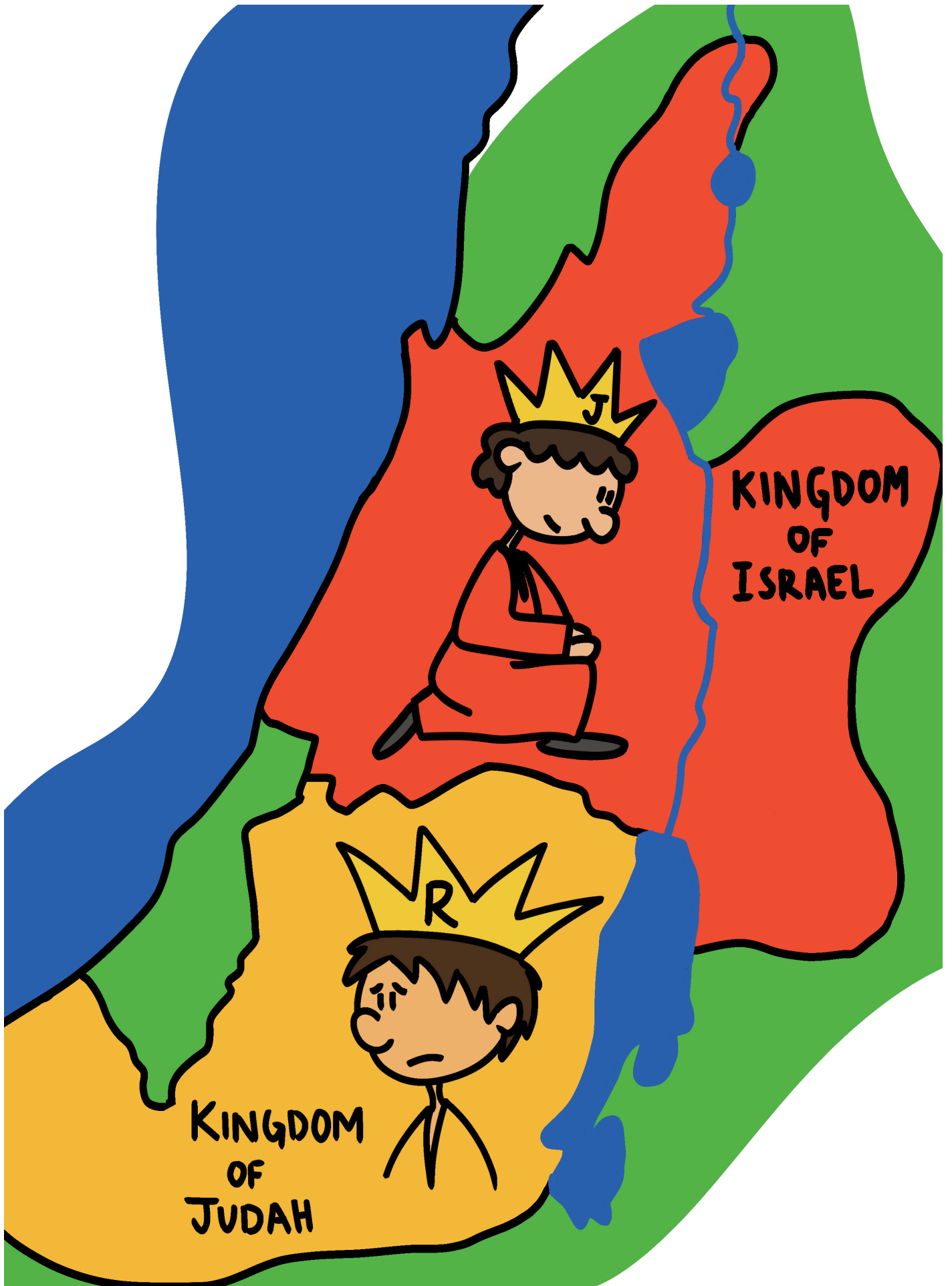
But God said, "King of Judah, do not fight your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing."

Obeying the LORD, they went home.

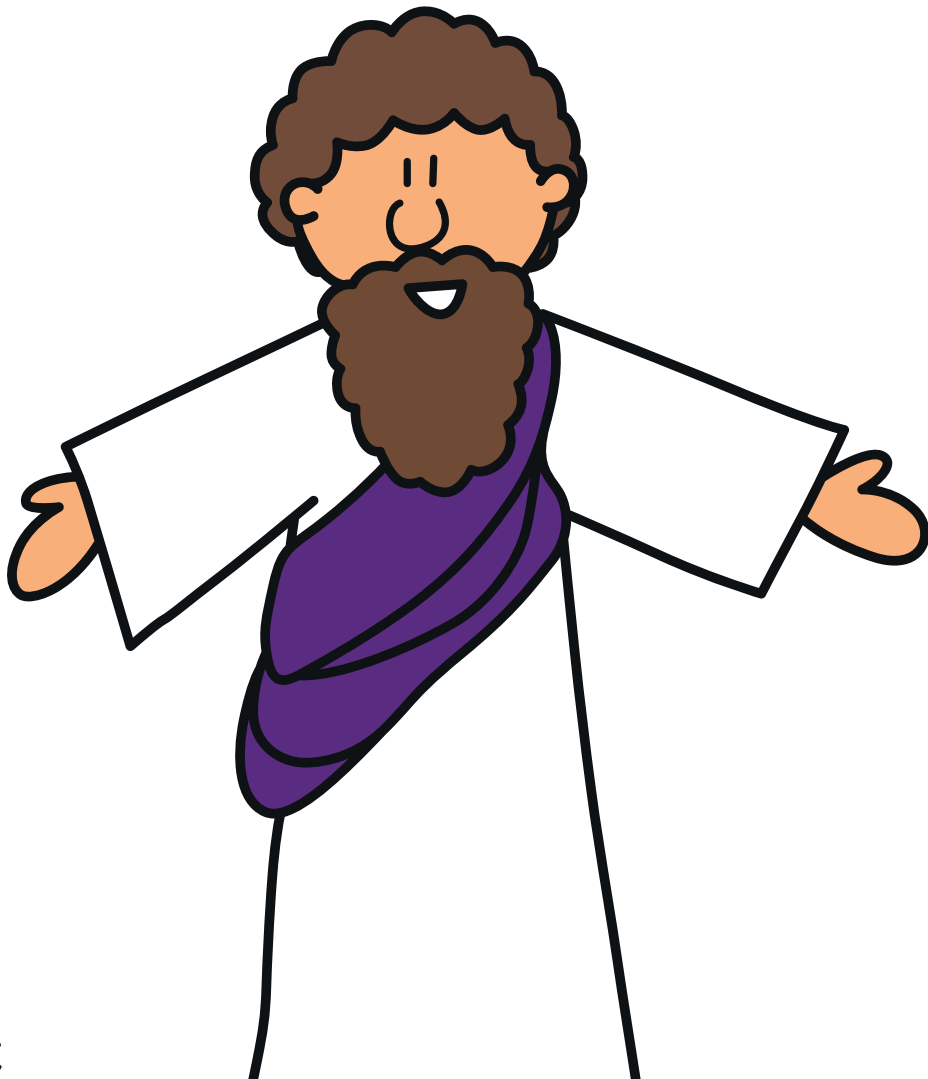
The kingdom was now divided. Ten tribes in the north followed Jeroboam. This was the kingdom of Israel. The remnant, in the south, was from the line of David. They became the kingdom of Judah.

1 Kings 1 - 12

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God's Promise and the Exile of Israel



722 BC

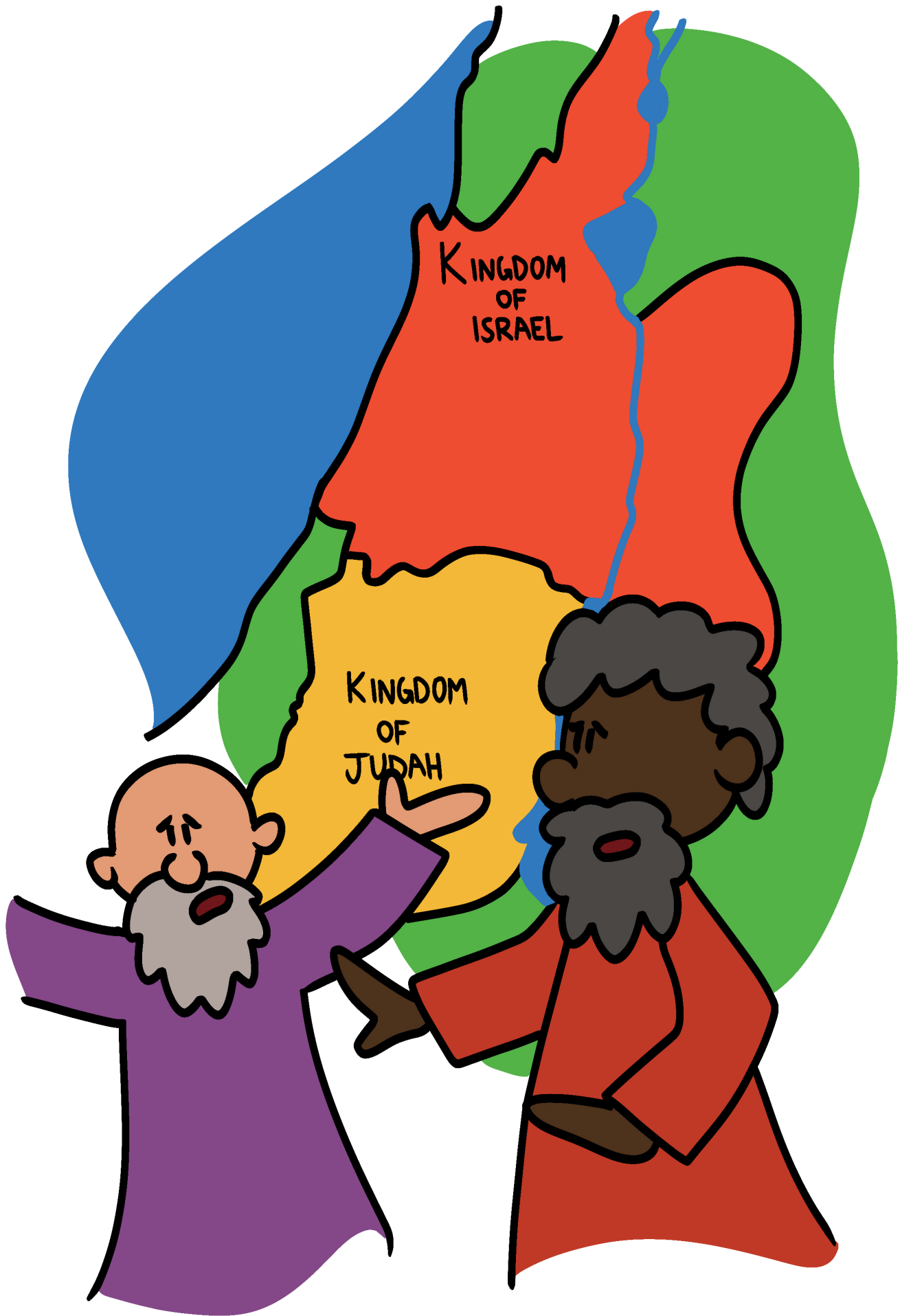
The land of Israel was now divided into two kingdoms. Israel lay in the north, with its capital Samaria. Judah, along with its capital Jerusalem, lay in the south.

King Hoshea ruled Israel and King Ahaz, Judah.

As the kings before them had done, both kings did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

The LORD warned his people through the prophets, "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands."

But they would not listen. They were stubborn. They persisted in disobeying the LORD's commands.



The Israelites continued to sin against the LORD their God.

They worshipped other gods.

They set up sacred stones and made idols in the shape of calves.

They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger.

They did not turn away from their sins so the LORD gave them over to their enemies.



The king of Assyria came down and attacked the northern kingdom of Israel.

The king of Israel was imprisoned, and the entire land of Samaria was invaded.



The people of Israel were then marched from their homeland into exile in Assyria.

All this happened because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them out of Egypt. They had imitated the nations around them even though the LORD had ordered, "Do not do as they do."

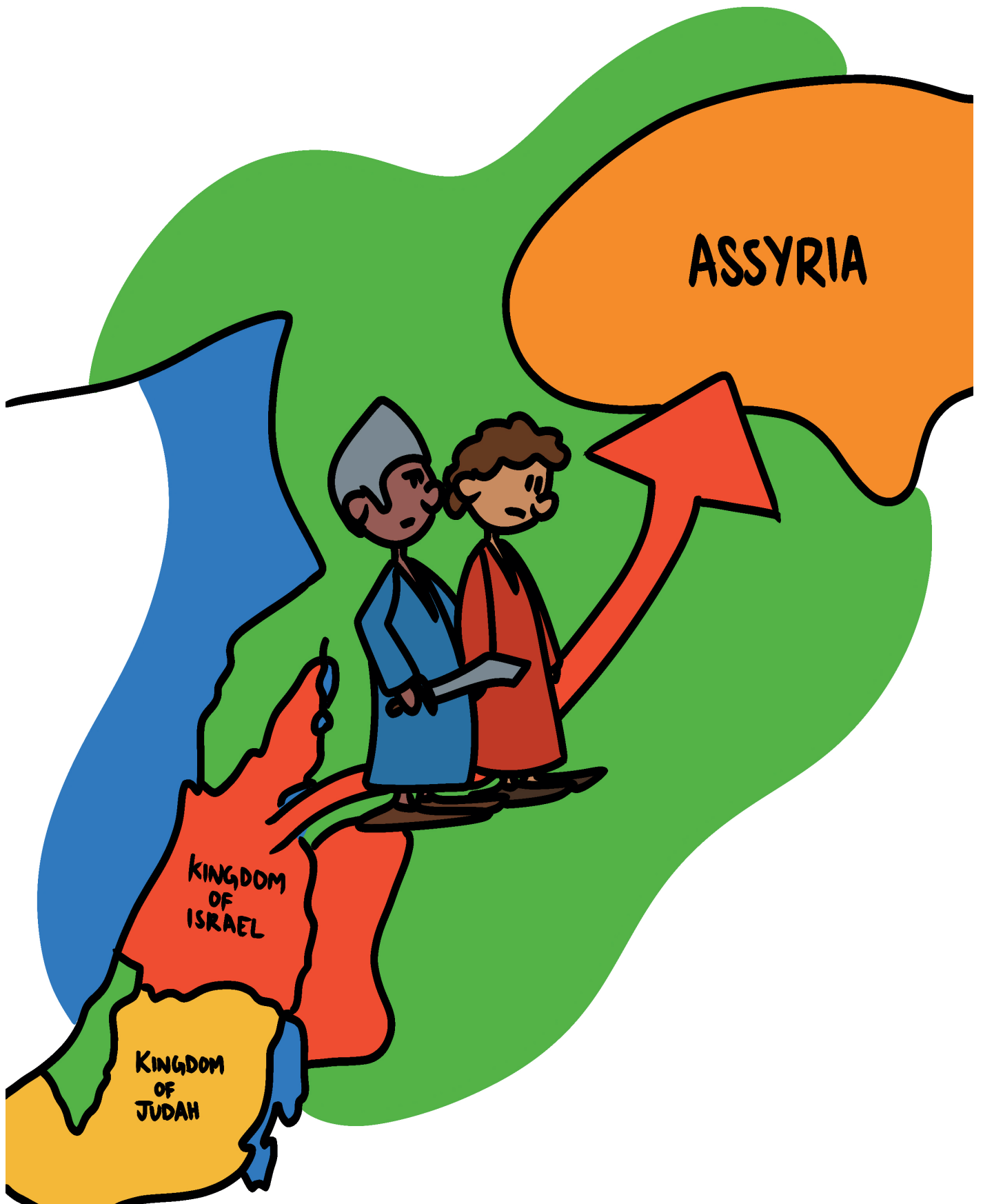
The LORD was very angry with his people and removed the kingdom of Israel from his presence.

Only the kingdom of Judah remained.

But even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD.

2 Kings 17: 1 - 23

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God's Promise and the Exile of Judah



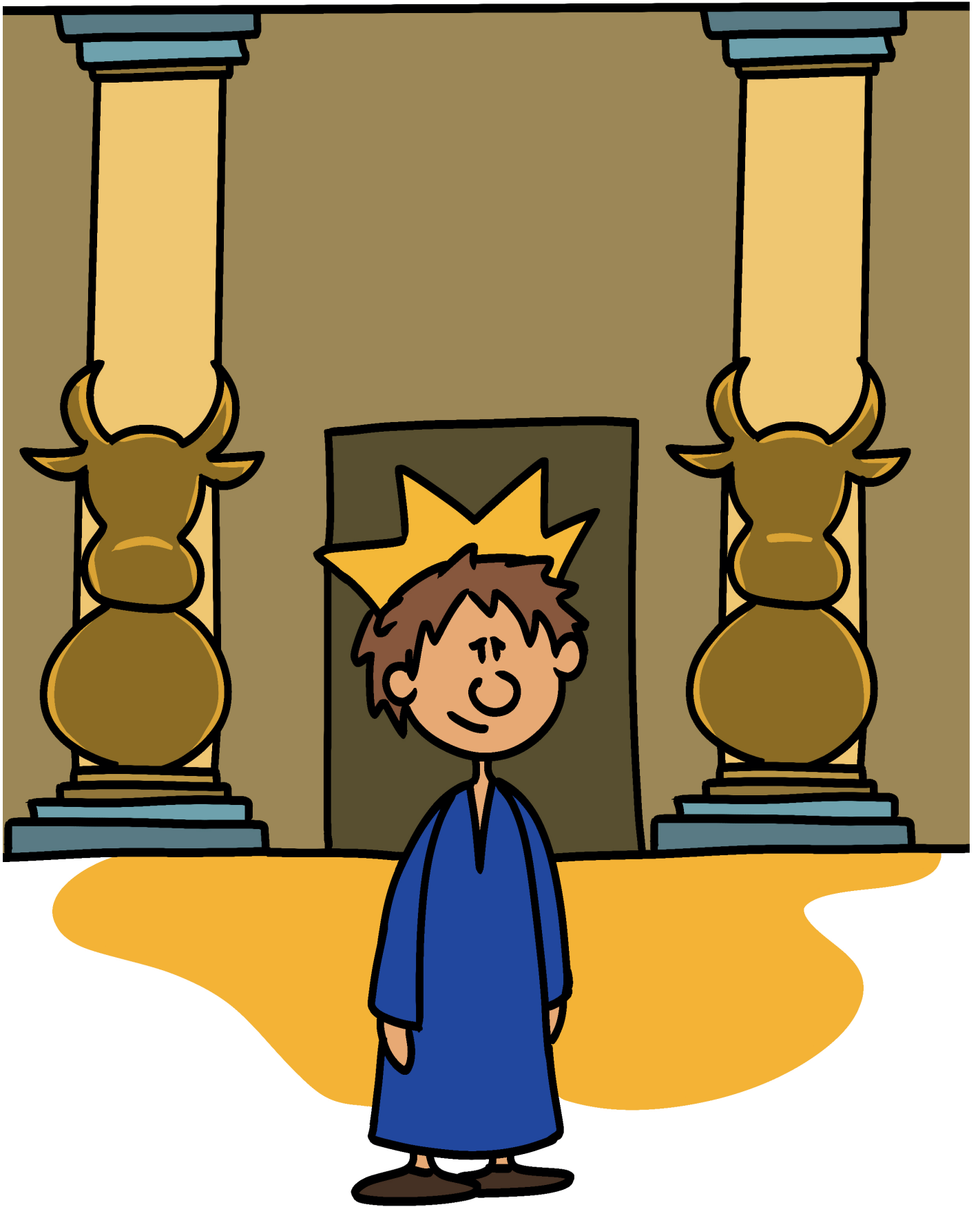
597 and 586 BC

Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah.

As many of the kings before him had done, he did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

He hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

During King Zedekiah's reign, the people and priests became more unfaithful and misused the temple in Jerusalem.



Because the LORD had pity on his people, he sent prophets to warn them about the consequences of their disobedience.

Prophet Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "The Babylonians will attack this city. They will capture it and burn it down. You will be handed over to the king of Babylon."

But they mocked God's messengers and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.



King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and his army, marched against Jerusalem.

They broke through the city wall and carried to Babylon all the valuables from the temple of God.

The Babylonians set fire to the temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem.

They carried the people of Judah into exile to Babylon where they became their servants.

But the commander did leave behind a remnant in the land of Judah, some of the poorest people who owned nothing. He gave them vineyards and fields.



Later the LORD spoke to the people living in exile in Babylon through the prophet Ezekiel.

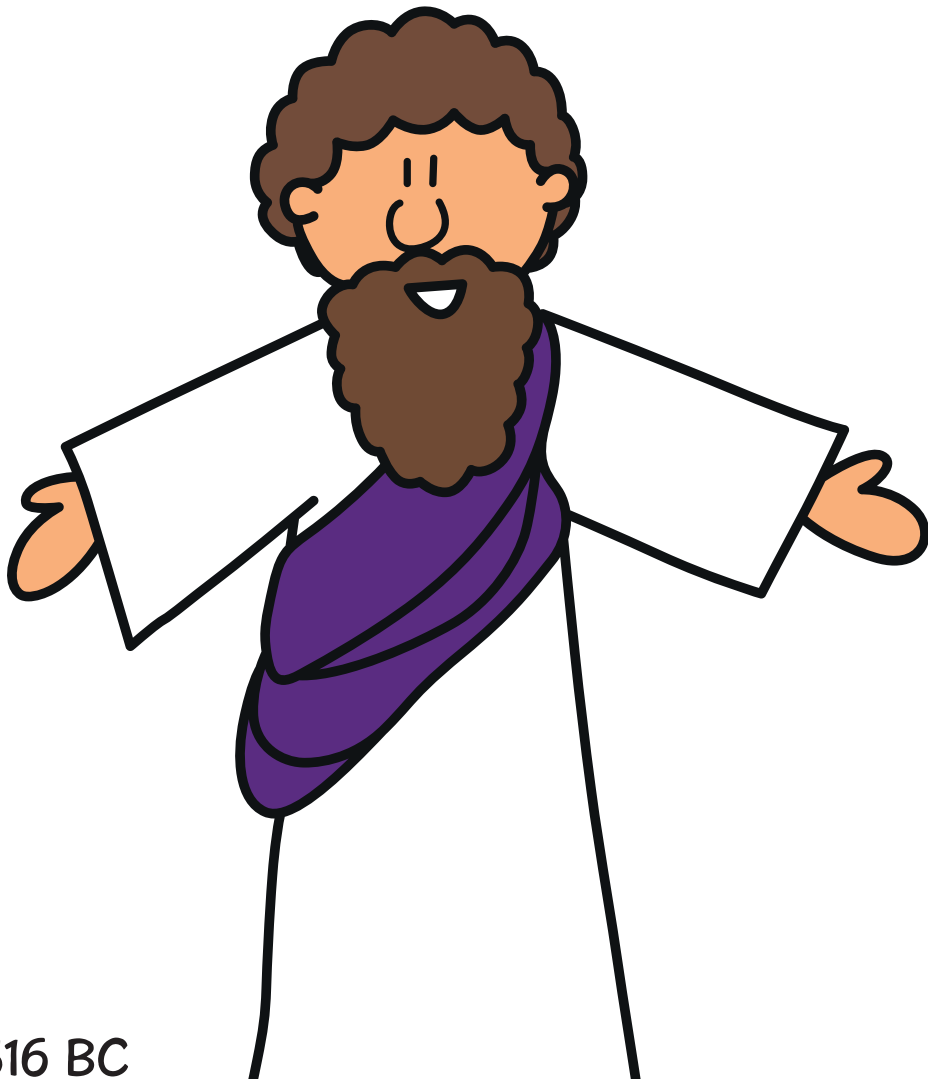
He said, "I will search for my sheep and look after them. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered. I will bring them back to their own land. I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will be their prince forever. I will make an everlasting promise of peace with them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. I the LORD have spoken."

2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 37 - 39 and Ezekiel 34

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God's Promise and the Return of the Exiles



538 - 516 BC

The prophet Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the exiles living in Babylon.

The letter said,

"This is what the LORD says; 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my promise to bring you back into your own land. For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. I will be found by you.'"



Seventy years after Jeremiah's prophecy, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, to make a proclamation.

King Cyrus said, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of God's people may go up to Jerusalem and build the temple of the LORD."

The families of Judah and Benjamin, along with the priests and Levites, prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem.

King Cyrus also brought out the valuable items belonging to the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had carried from Jerusalem to Babylon.

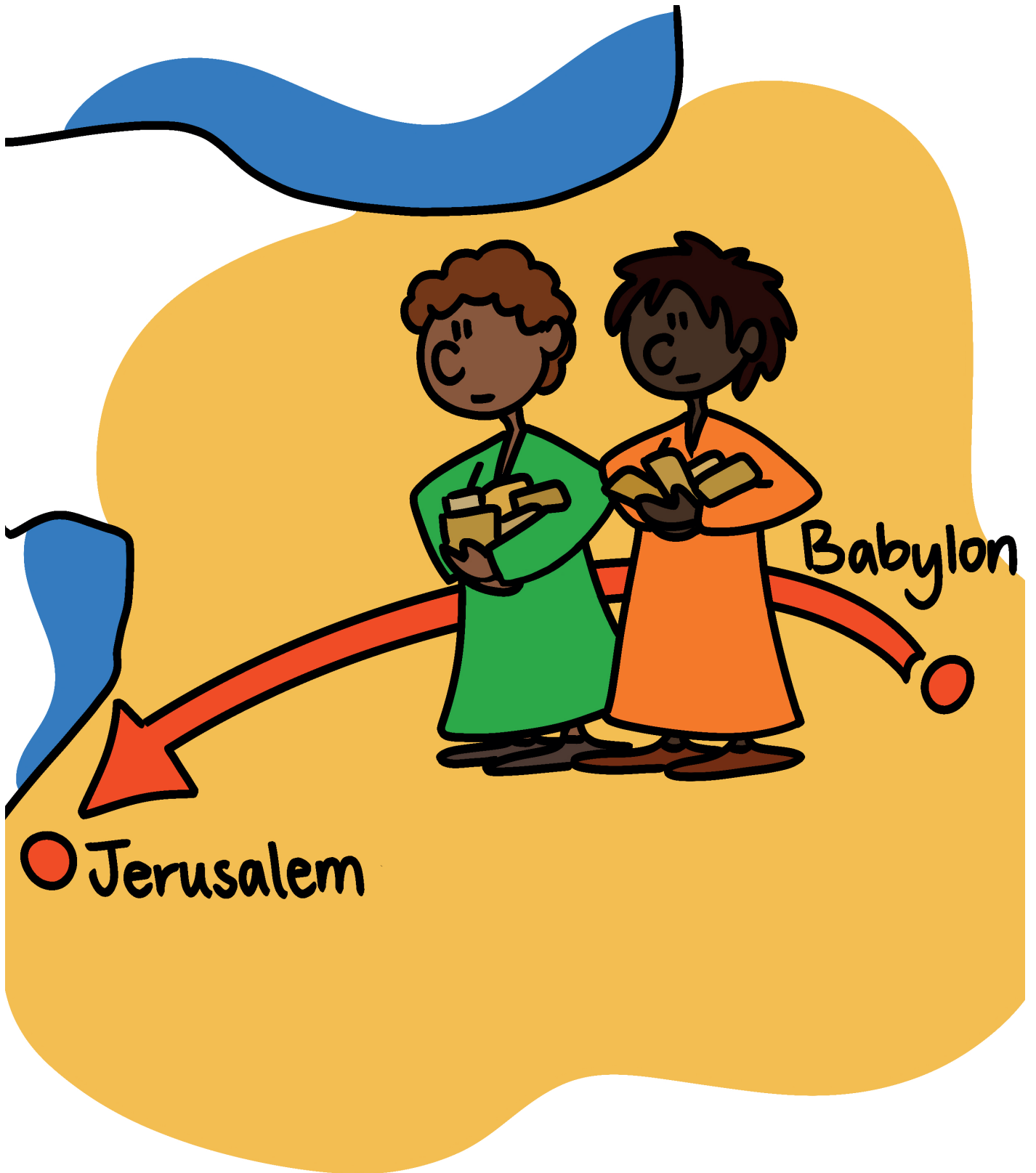


Taking the articles, along with the gifts of gold, silver and livestock, the Israelites left and settled in towns around Jerusalem.

The priests began to build the altar of the God of Israel.

And as the builders laid the foundation of the temple, the younger priests came forward with trumpets to praise the LORD. But many of the older priests and Levites wept aloud when they saw that the foundation did not match the former temple's glory.

In the days that followed the people around them discouraged the people of Judah and work on the temple stalled.

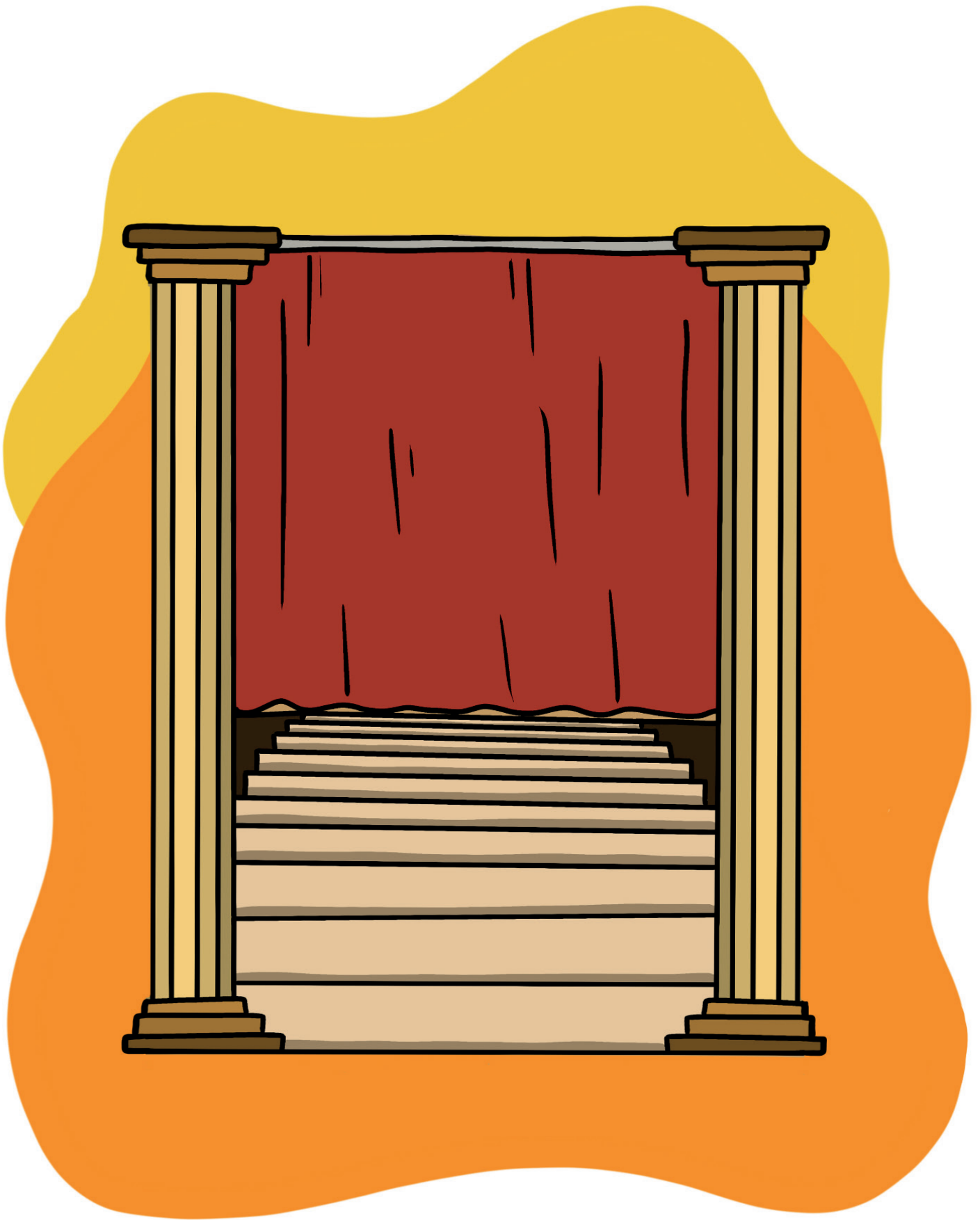


The LORD then sent a word to the people through the prophet Haggai, "Is it time for you to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

And the LORD stirred up the spirit of the people to begin work on the house of the LORD their God.

Two years later the temple was finished.

While not as grand as Solomon's temple, the people celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy.



Of the new temple, the prophet Haggai said,

“This is what the LORD Almighty says, ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. The treasured of all nations will come in and I will fill this house with glory. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house. And in this place, I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 29, Ezra 1 - 6 and Haggai

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