

The warrior leader

Joshua and the battle of Jericho, from Joshua 3 and 6

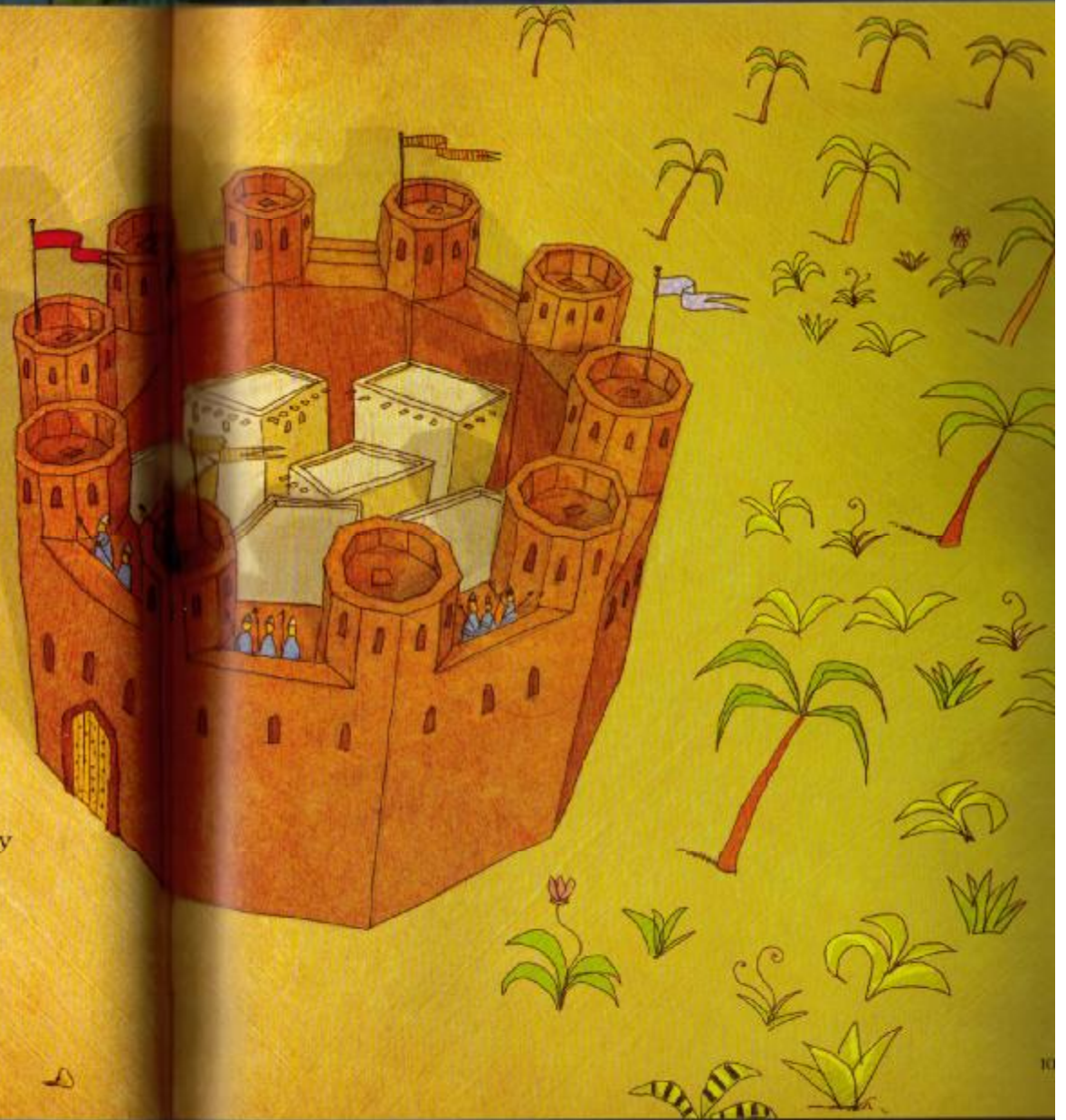
AFTER MOSES DIED, God gave his people a new leader. His name was Joshua, which means "The Lord Saves." Joshua was going to lead God's people into the special land God had promised to give them.

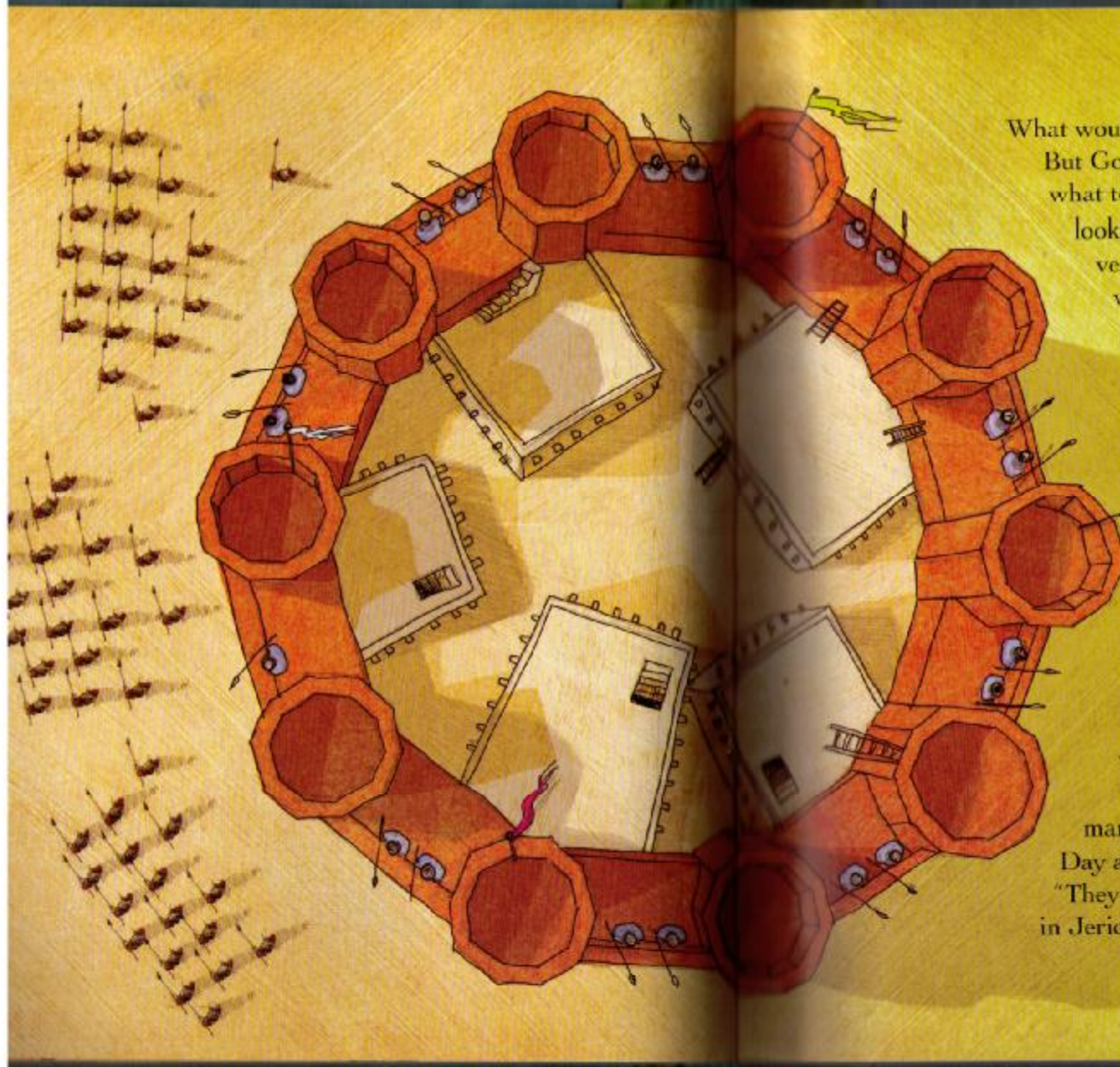
By this time, God's people had been wandering around in that baking desert for 40 years! So you can imagine how sick they were of sand and anything yellow and tents and walking and being hot. And how happy they were to reach the edge of the desert and to see their beautiful new home — right there in front of them — all cool and green and lovely. There was only one problem.

Jericho.

Jericho was a city — but it wasn't just any old city. It was a fortress and it stopped anyone from getting into the land.

The people looked at Jericho. At the big, giant, scary walls all around it. At the tall towering ramparts. At the heavy iron gates bolted shut. At each other.





What would they do? No one knew. But God knew. And God told Joshua what to do. But Joshua must have looked surprised because it was a very odd battle plan indeed, as we'll soon find out.

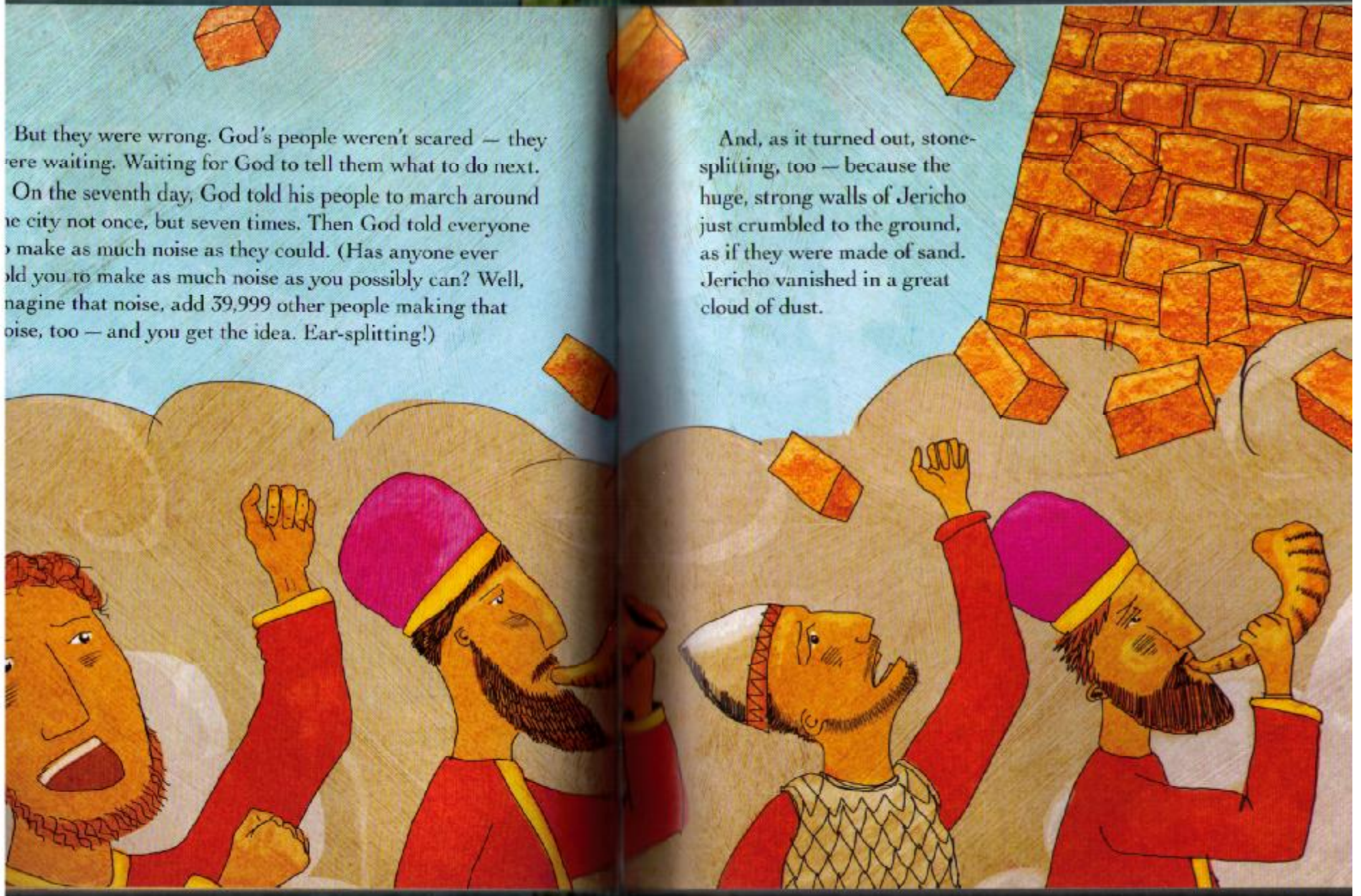
Then God made his people a promise. "I will always be with you. And I will never, ever leave you. If you do what I say, your lives in the new land will be happy and everything will go well."

So Joshua gathered his army together. They had their swords and spears and shields. They were ready to fight. But the plan wasn't about fighting; it was about trusting and doing what God said.

Joshua's army went marching, marching, marching around the city. Day after day after day. "They're too scared to fight!" the people in Jericho said.

But they were wrong. God's people weren't scared — they were waiting. Waiting for God to tell them what to do next. On the seventh day, God told his people to march around the city not once, but seven times. Then God told everyone to make as much noise as they could. (Has anyone ever told you to make as much noise as you possibly can? Well, imagine that noise, add 39,999 other people making that noise, too — and you get the idea. Ear-splitting!)

And, as it turned out, stone-splitting, too — because the huge, strong walls of Jericho just crumbled to the ground, as if they were made of sand. Jericho vanished in a great cloud of dust.



So it was that God's people entered their new home. And they didn't have to fight to get in — they only had to walk.

Joshua said, "God has brought you safely here. Now will you do what he says?"

Everyone said, "We promise!"

"Only God can make your heart happy," Joshua said. "So don't pray to pretend gods."

"No," they said. "Never!"

I'm afraid they didn't keep their promise. They didn't do what God said and many years later, just as God warned them, things would go badly for God's people. They would lose their home. Enemies would capture them and take them off as slaves. And God's people would scatter into many different lands.

But God's Plan was still working.

One day he would give his people another Leader. And another home.

But this home, no one could ever take from them.

