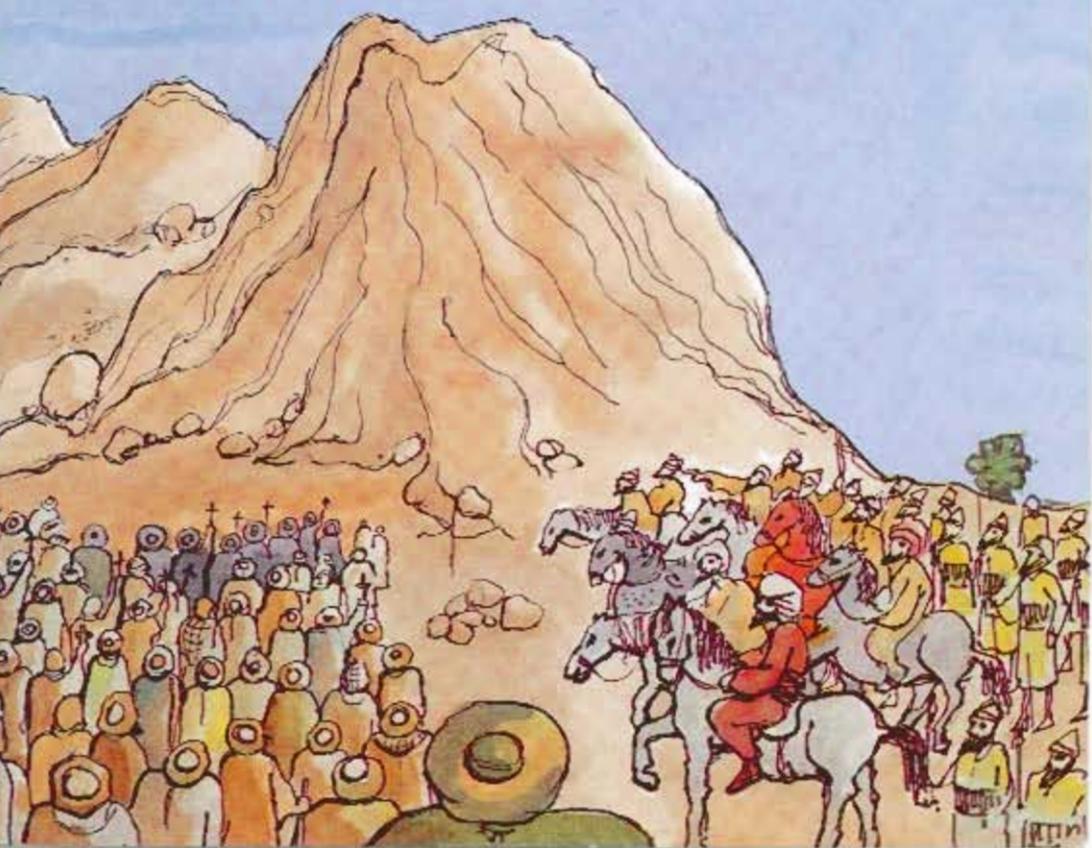


The Day The Mountain Moved



THE DAY THE MOUNTAIN MOVED

Retold and Illustrated by
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One day, long, long time ago, the Patriarch of the Copts was concerned, very concerned.

A few minutes earlier, he was summoned by the Khalif of Egypt. The Khalif challenged him by saying,

" Dear Patriarch, is it true that your Bible says that if you have faith as little as a mustard seed, you will say to the mountain to move from here to there and it will move? "

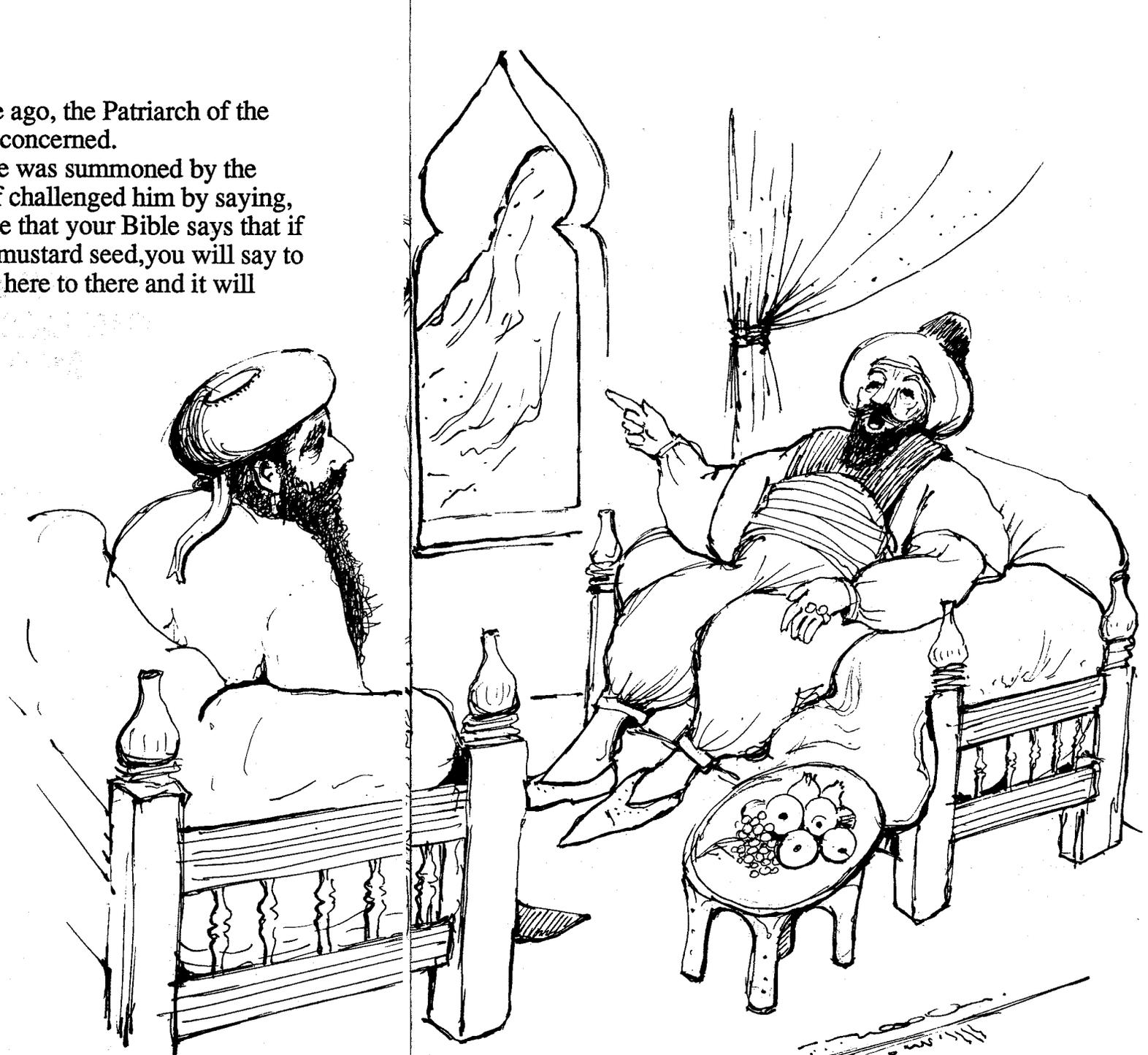
The Patriarch, surprised by the khalif's question, answered,

" Yes. It is true. "

" Then why don't you ask your God to move the mountain on the outskirts of our city. After all, you are the Patriarch and surely you have that little amount of faith required to do so. Or possibly one of your people has. Remember, only one is required. "

The Patriarch's burden grew heavy. He paused for a few moments, but the Khalif raised his voice and with a serious look on his face grumbled,

" Listen, if you can't do it then your God is not the true God. And your



Bible is a false book since it contains false claims. Therefore I command that the mountain be moved, and if not moved, all the Copts in the land will be put to the sword! "

By then the Patriarch was horrified. He felt that he held the lives of all the Christians of Egypt in his hands.

The Khalif was serious. No pleading. No excuses. Abba Abraam, the Patriarch, had nothing to say to the Khalif, the threat was real. He only asked for some time.

" Three days. Only three days ! " the Khalif sternly replied !

The Patriarch left the palace heavy hearted. What could he do to move a mountain?

" Have I got enough faith to move a mountain?
A M O U N T A I N ? Does anyone of my people possess such faith? "

He felt the answer within him,
" Yes! there is. But WHO ?? "

Abba Abraam knew that the only thing he could do was to ask the One who gave the promise, Jesus Himself!

So he gathered the bishops, the priests, the monks and the elders to St. Mary's church, known as Al Moallaka. There he told them his grievous story. Then he said,

" Brethren, we are to fast for three days and nights and remain in fervent prayer within our churches asking God to have mercy upon us and to guide us to pass this difficult trial. "



All the Copts fasted and prayed for three days. They all felt that God was their only refuge. But no one despaired, especially the Patriarch. "Remember, it is either the mountain or the sword!" the words of the Khalif kept ringing in his ears!

On the third day, very early in the morning, Abba Abraam fell asleep in the church. He was very tired. Our Lady the Virgin Mary appeared to him in bright apparel and said, "Don't be sad, go immediately and open the *Iron Gate* and you will see a one-eyed man called Simon. This man will help you."



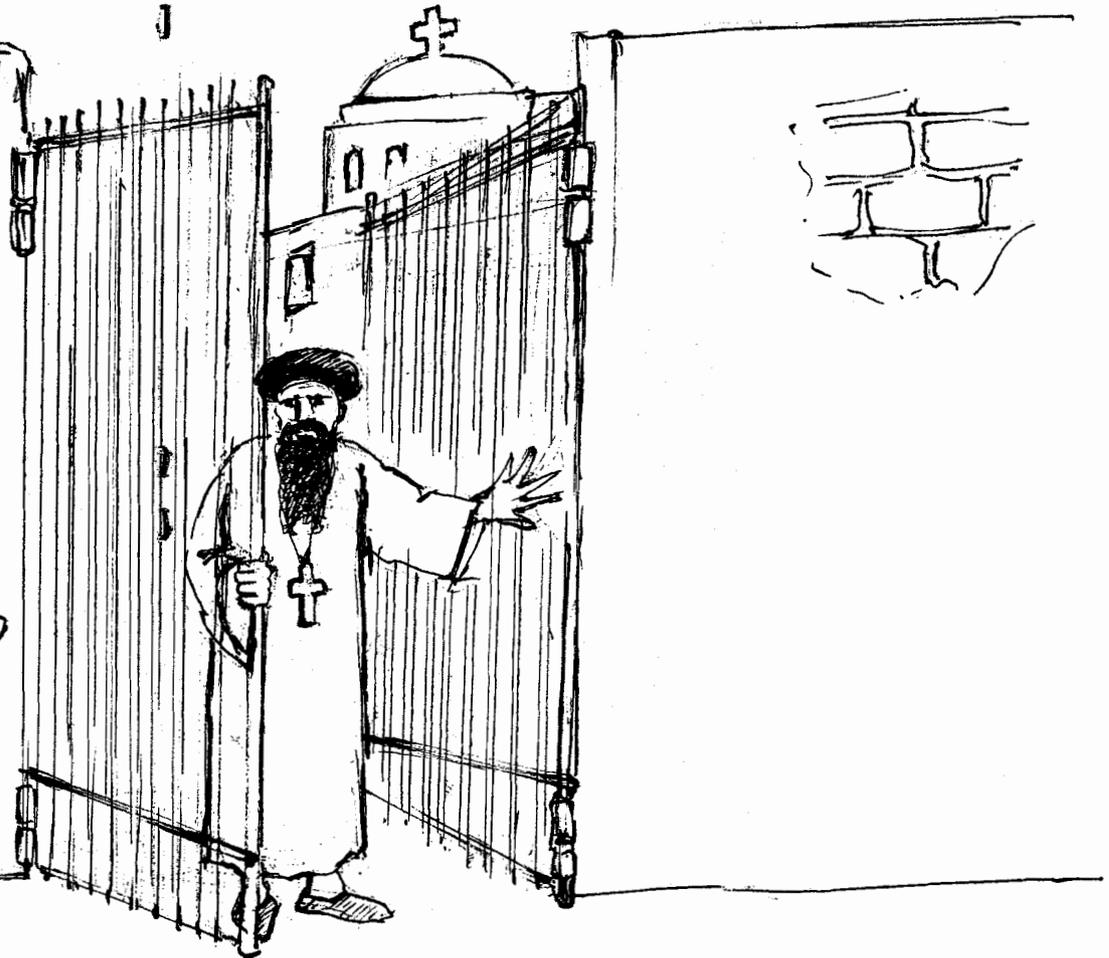
The Patriarch woke up in astonishment. He went to the *Iron Gate* and opened it. Outside, while everybody was still asleep, he indeed saw a one-eyed man walking with a big water skin on his bent back. Abba Abraam stopped him.

" You must be Simon. " the Patriarch asked. Simon recognized the father Patriarch at once. Then Abba Abraam said, " Come with me to the church Simon, I have something to tell you. "



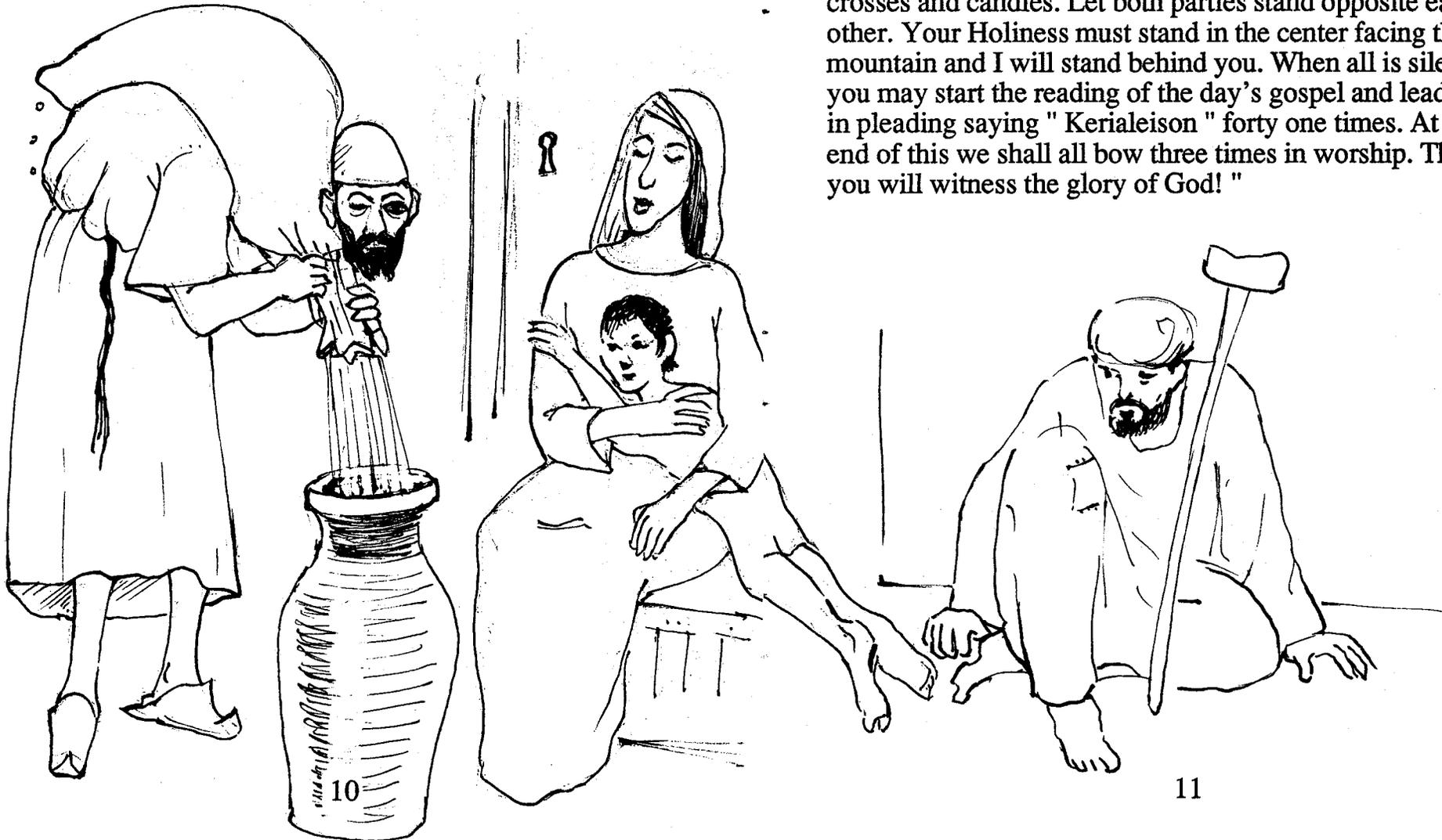
The two of them went into the church and the Patriarch sat him down and said,

" Simon, you were chosen by God to help save our people. Our Lady appeared in a dream and told me that you are the one to help us. Tell me, who are you? what were you doing in the streets so early? and why you? You must tell me! "



Simon, still puzzled by the Patriarch's questions, answered,

" My life is very simple. I woke up early in the morning to fill my water skin from the well and I go to the homes of the sick and disabled to fill their jars. Then I go to work. I work for a tanner outside the city. At the end of each day I go to church to worship God. As you can see father, my life is simple. I wonder what can I do to help, and in what way? "



The Patriarch told Simon about the church's dilemma and said,

" This is God's will that you are the one to help the church. "

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Simon answered without hesitation saying,

" Ask the Khalif to come with his soldiers and advisors to the foot of the mountain. And ask the clergy and deacons and the elders to come as well with censors, crosses and candles. Let both parties stand opposite each other. Your Holiness must stand in the center facing the mountain and I will stand behind you. When all is silent you may start the reading of the day's gospel and lead us in pleading saying " Kerialeison " forty one times. At the end of this we shall all bow three times in worship. Then you will witness the glory of God! "

The Patriarch felt relieved.

He confidently went to the Khalif and asked him to come with all his men the next morning to the foot of the mountain.

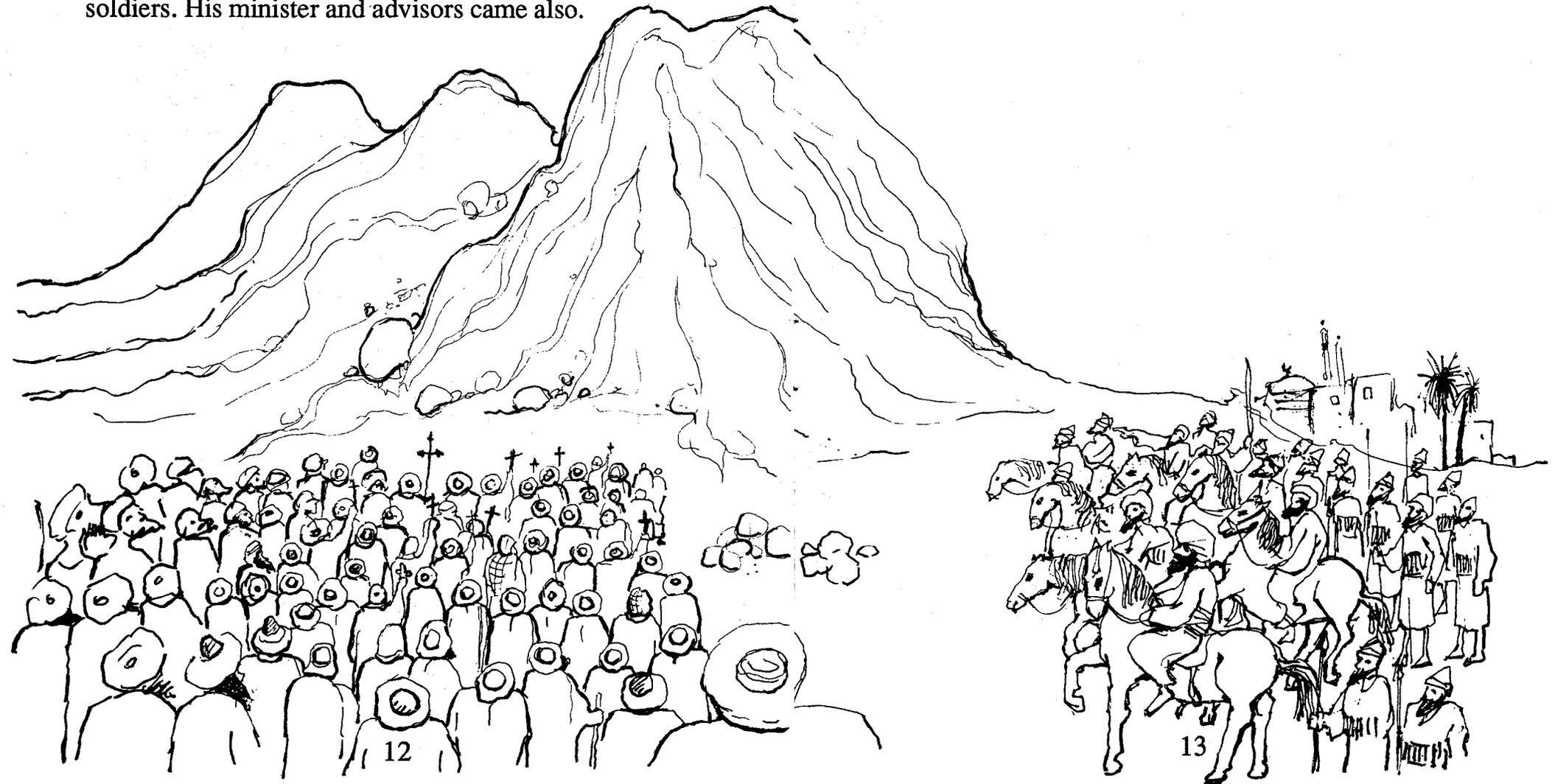
That morning has its place in history. It is so hard to find words to describe what had happened. The morning in which the Christians' faith in the word of God was put to the test!

The Khalif came on his horse with many armed soldiers. His minister and advisors came also.

Abba Abraam was there with the bishops, priests and the elders, all carrying their crosses and candles.

The Patriarch led the people in prayer. Simon stood humbly behind him. After the reading of the gospel, the Copts chanted in one voice " Kerialeison " forty one times, bowing down at the end with one accord.

Every time they raised their heads the high mountain moved upward by the power of God. And everytime they bowed their heads the mountain came down again !



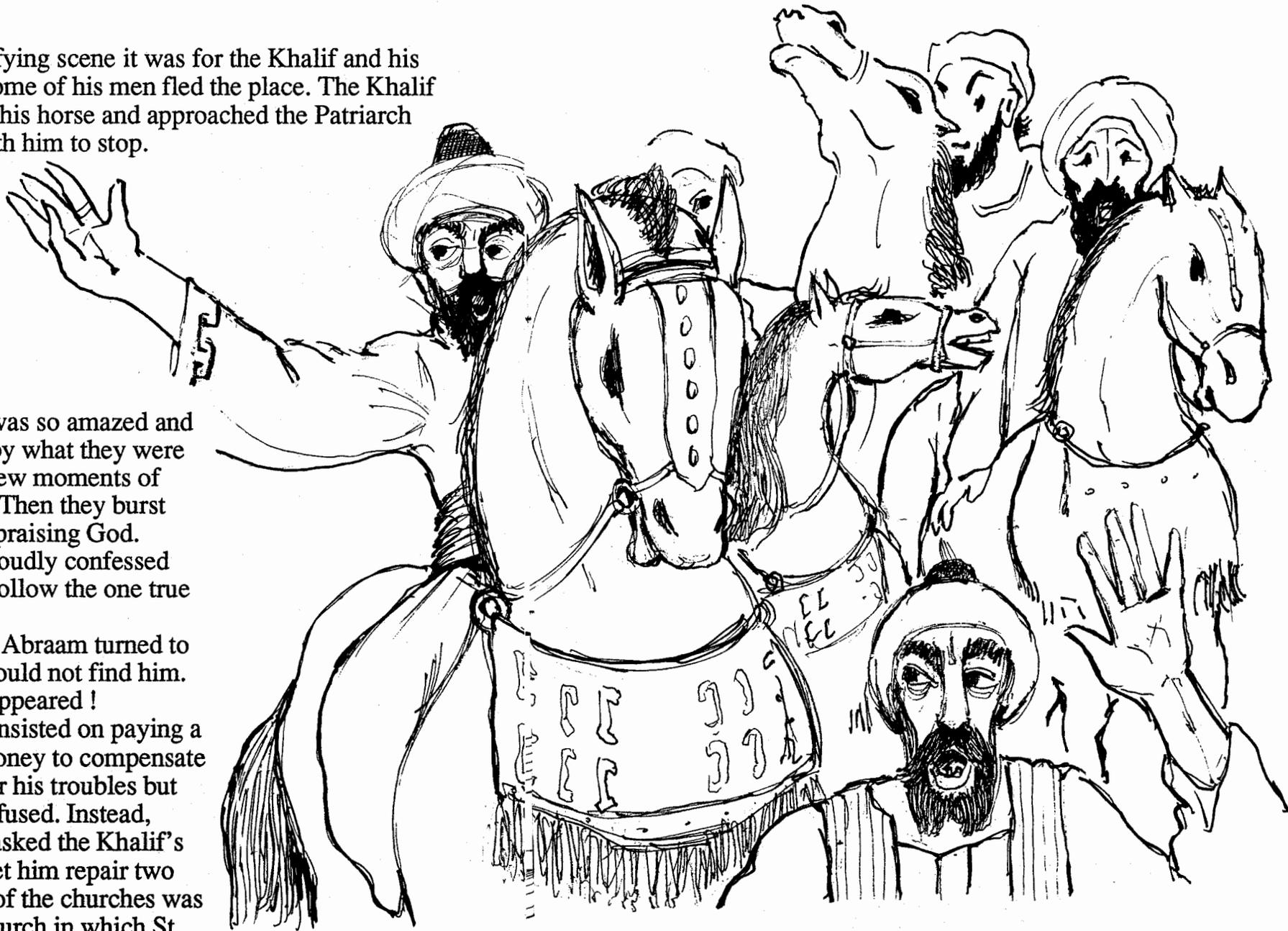
What a terrifying scene it was for the Khalif and his companions. Some of his men fled the place. The Khalif came down off his horse and approached the Patriarch and pleaded with him to stop.

The crowd was so amazed and dumbfounded by what they were witnessing. A few moments of silence passed. Then they burst into a loud cry praising God.

The Khalif loudly confessed that the Copts follow the one true God.

When Abba Abraam turned to see Simon he could not find him. Simon had disappeared !

The Khalif insisted on paying a large sum of money to compensate the Patriarch for his troubles but the Patriarch refused. Instead, Abba Abraam asked the Khalif's permission to let him repair two churches. One of the churches was Al Moallaka church in which St. Mary appeared to Abba Abraam.



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