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Opening extract from

50 Favourite Bible Stories

Selected and narrated by

Cliff Richard

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THE OLD TESTAMENT

1 IN THE BEGINNING

Everything, everywhere, began with God. There was once a time — long before time itself even started — when there was nothing in our world except swirling waters and total darkness.

But God was there. A moment came when he said, 'Let there be light!' and, suddenly, light streamed through the darkness — and God began creating the world that we now know.

God started by making the light and darkness into day and night, and putting the sky in place. Then he pushed back the waters and heaped up the land in order to make sea and earth so that trees and plants could begin growing on the earth and start producing flowers, fruits and seeds.

With each new day, God took pleasure in seeing his creation take shape. He made all the stars and the planets of the universe, the fiery sun to give warmth to the earth during the day, and the cool, pale moon to give light at night.
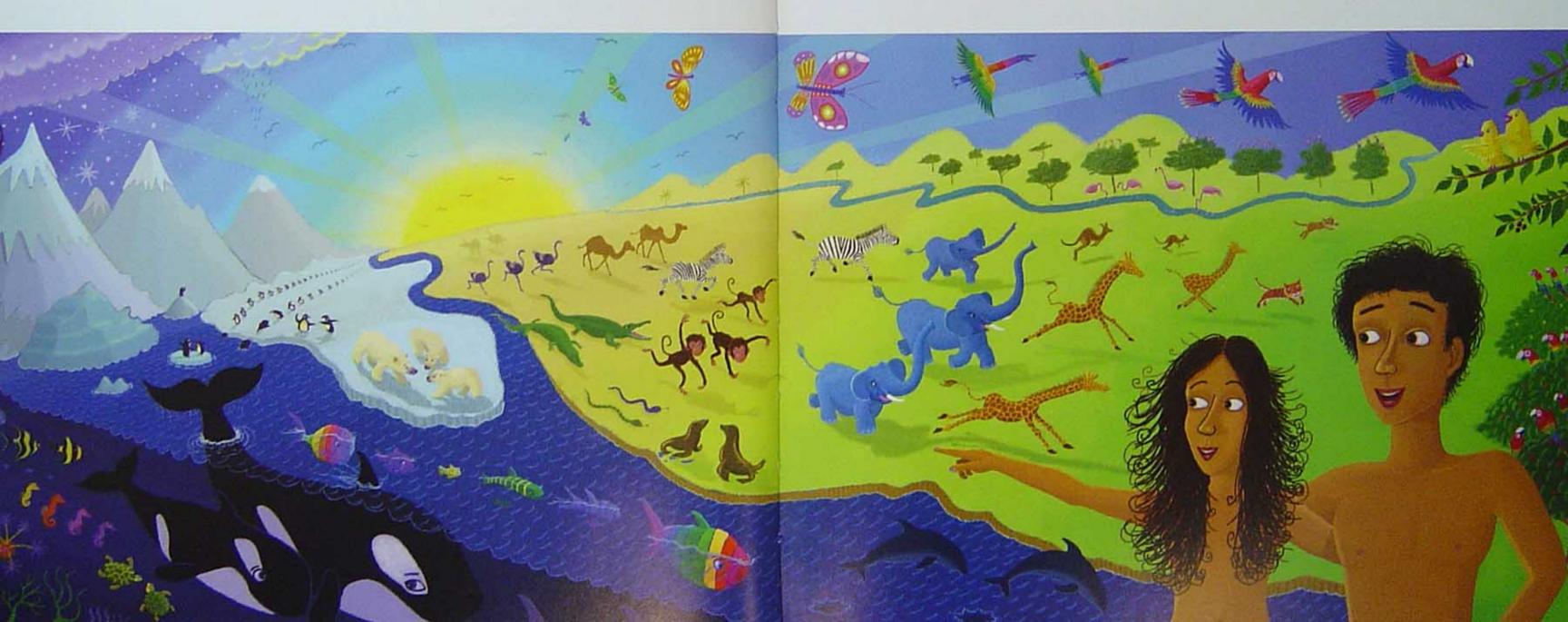
Next, God made the seas swim and swarm with fish and all kinds of sea creatures, while the skies all over the earth were filled with birdsong and the sound of beating wings.

Then all kinds of animals began to appear on the earth – from big, slow, lumbering ones to small, quick, furry ones. There were animals that ran, crawled, slithered, hopped, jumped, leaped and galloped. There were animals that roared, trumpeted, bellowed, mooed, snorted, bleated, barked, meowed and squeaked.

And then, when everything else was complete, God decided to make human beings – a man and a woman. God made them to be like himself, and he blessed them and put them in charge of his whole creation so that they could care for this perfect world that he had made.

His work finished, God sat back, took a long look at everything and decided that it was good. Very good.