

Easter Celebrations 3

Learning Objective:

To think about the Easter Story from the point of view of different characters.



Next

What do you think is the true meaning of Easter?

Think, pair and share your ideas.



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Where does
the Easter Story
come from?

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The Easter Story is recorded in the Bible. There are four different accounts of the events surrounding Easter in four books that were written by men called Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four books of the Bible are known as the Gospels.

Most Christians believe that the Gospels (the books of the Bible that recorded Jesus' life) were written by people who witnessed the events first-hand, although some people disagree and think they were written much later. Either way, most of the details of their four Easter accounts match up to tell the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Let's read the Easter Story together. As you are reading, think about how different characters might have been feeling at different points...

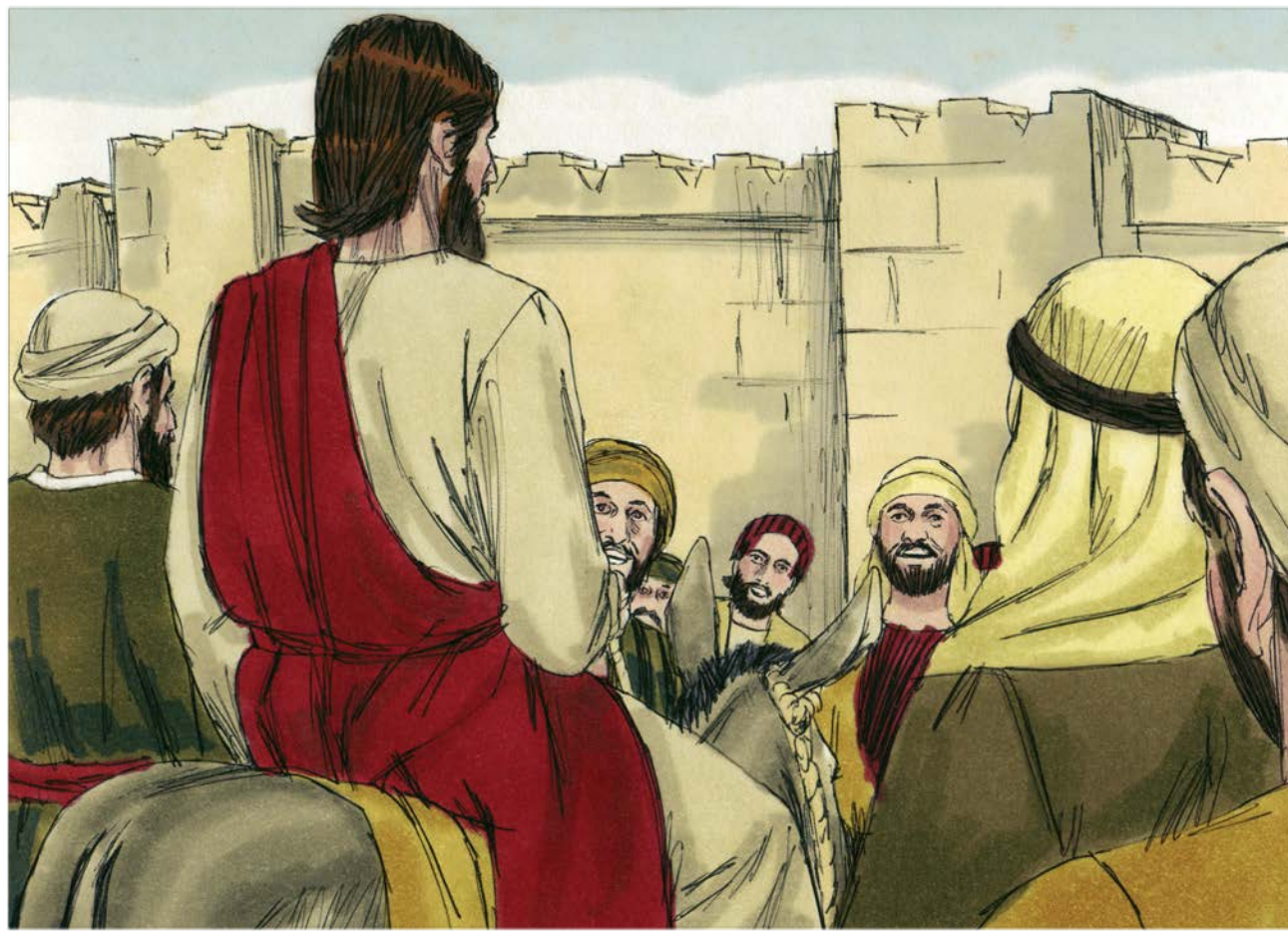
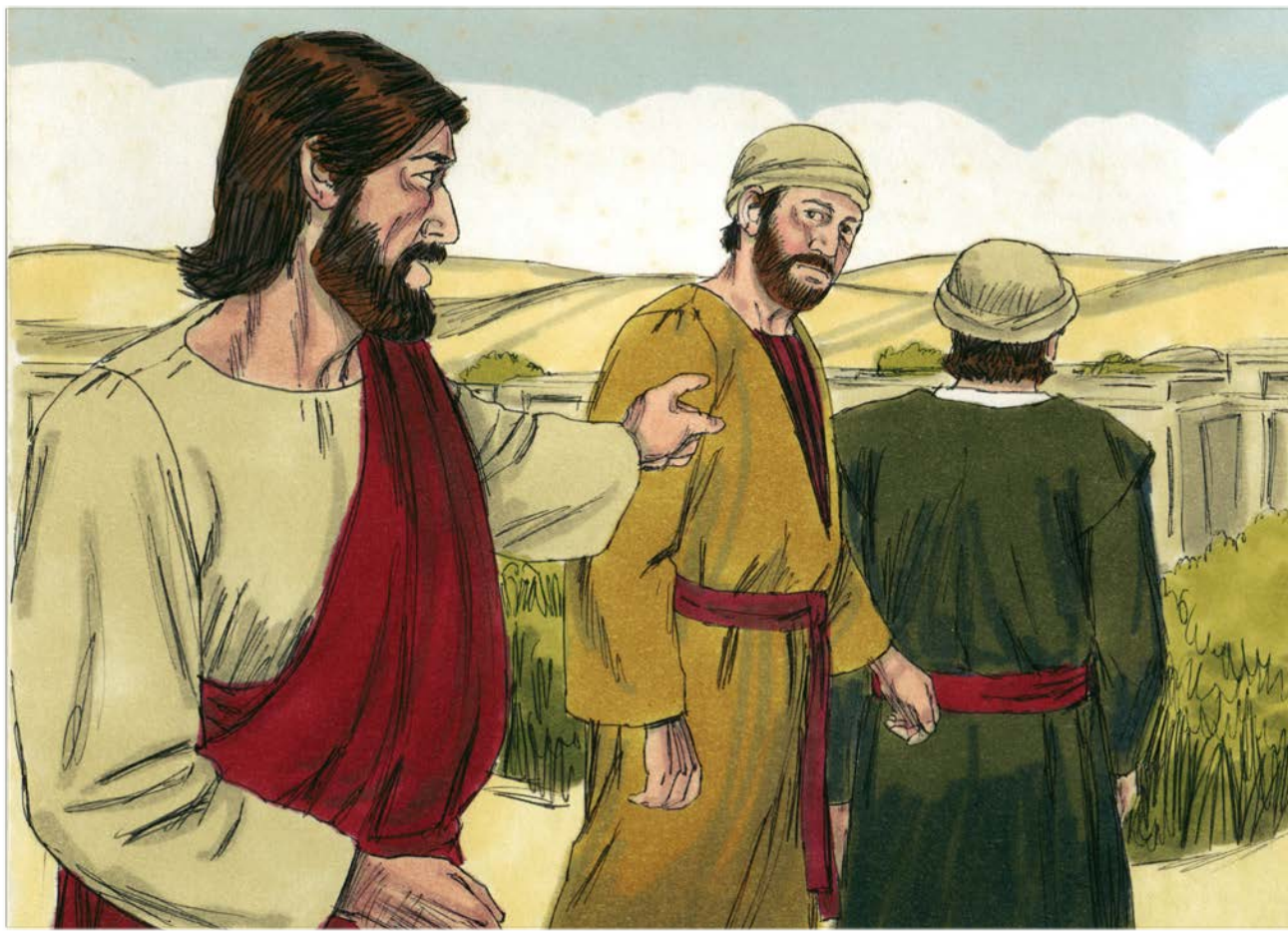


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It was approaching the time for the Passover Festival. When Jesus and his disciples were nearing Jerusalem, Jesus said to two of them, “Go into that village. As soon as you enter it you will find a donkey tied to a post. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone asks what you are doing, tell them that the Master needs it and it will be returned soon.” The disciples went to the village and untied the donkey. Several people in the village asked what they were doing but the disciples did as Jesus instructed and the people let the donkey go.

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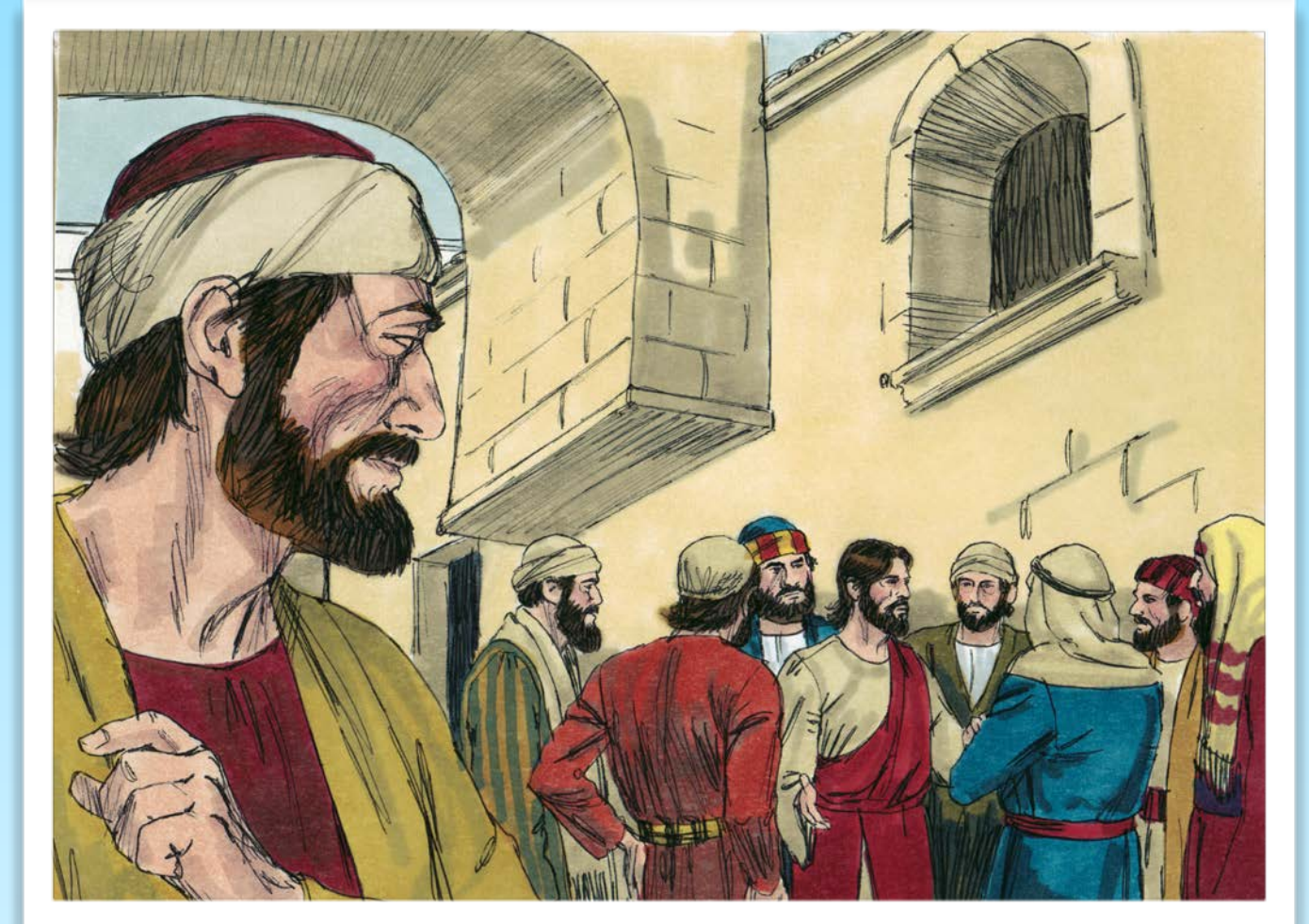
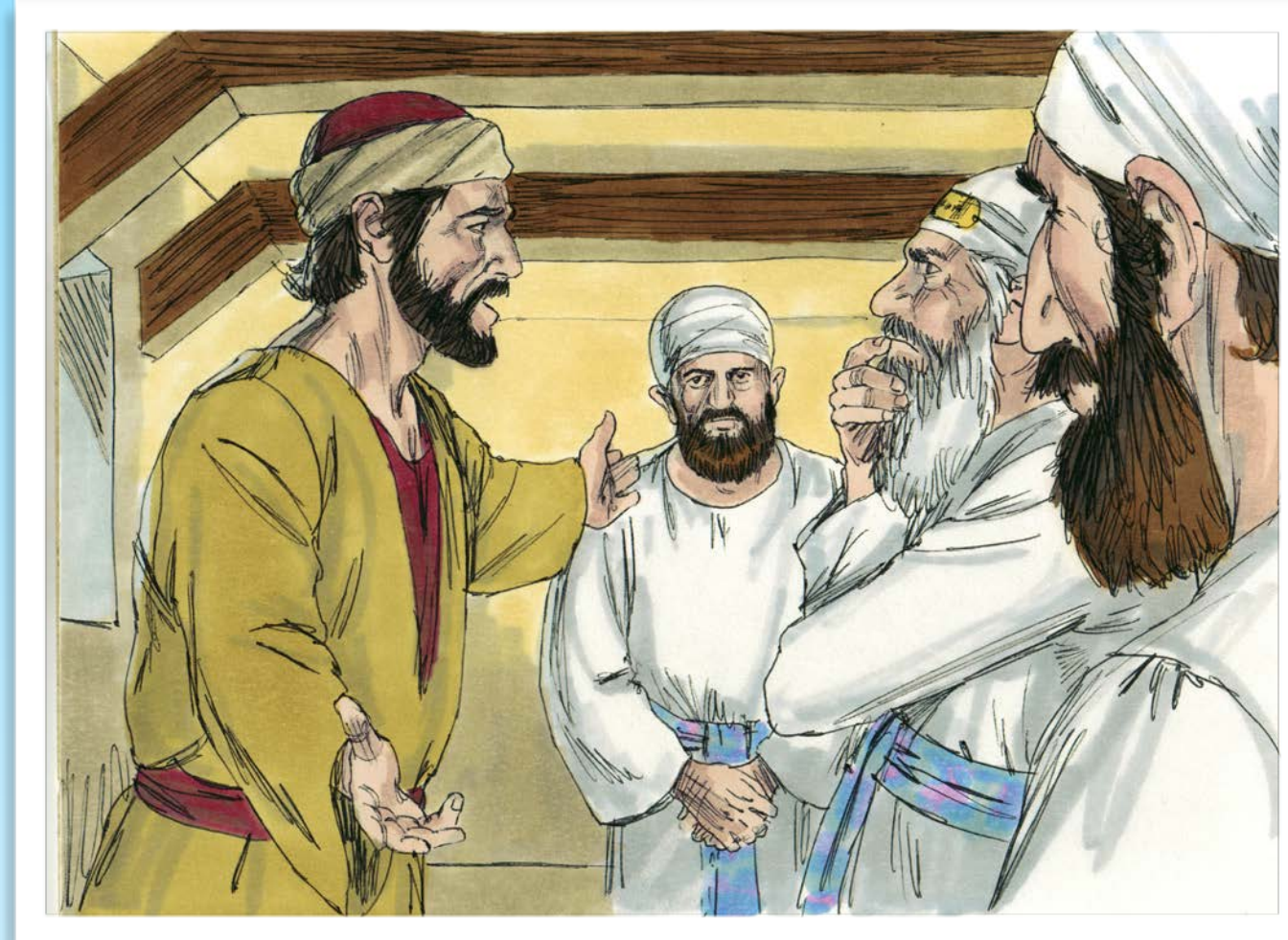
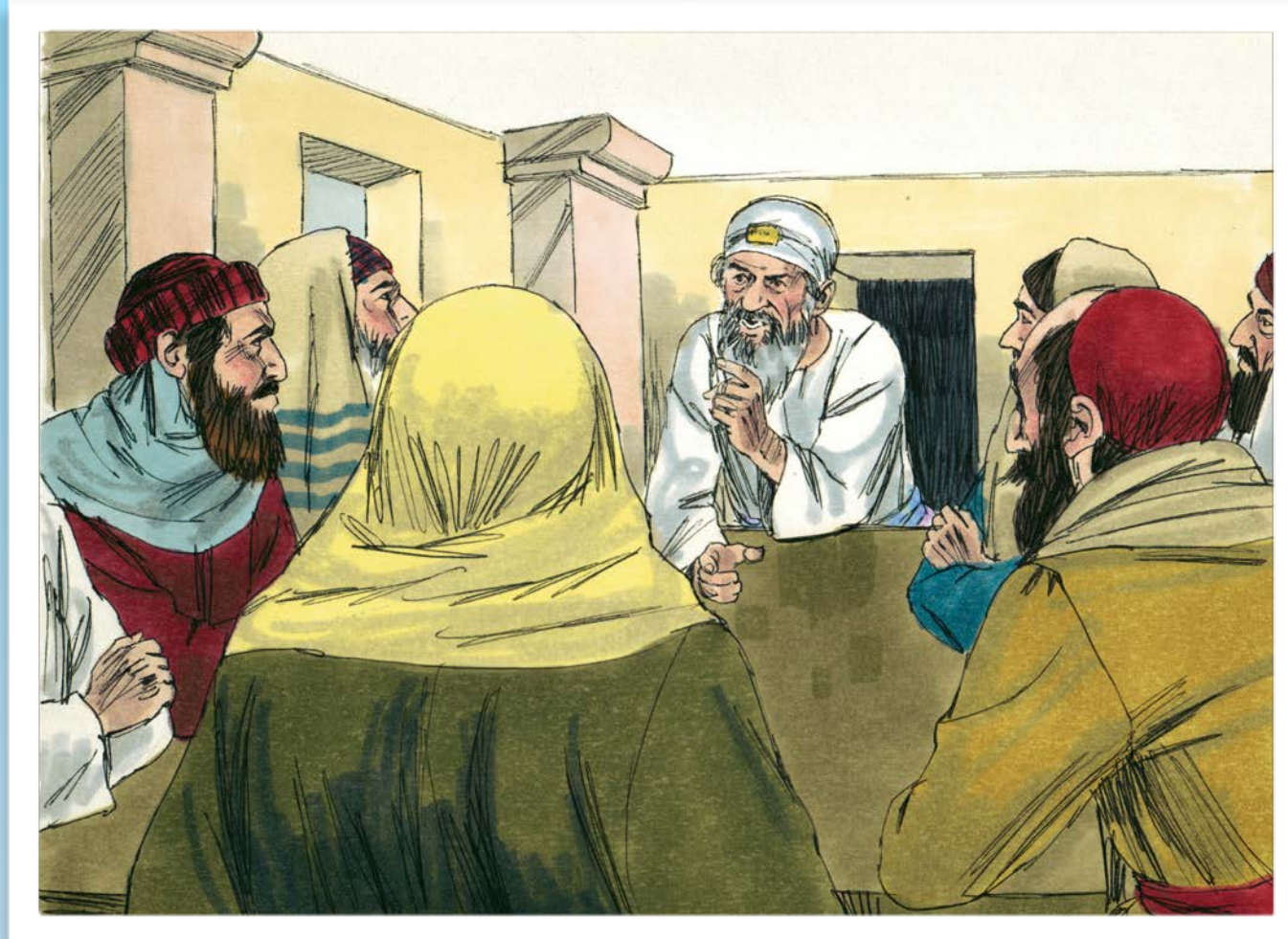
The disciples spread their cloaks over the donkey for Jesus to sit on. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the donkey. The people gave him a great welcome and cried. “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in God’s name!”



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By this time, the high priests were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus. They didn't like what he was teaching as it went against their old laws and traditions. They thought he was a heretic and didn't believe he was the Son of God.



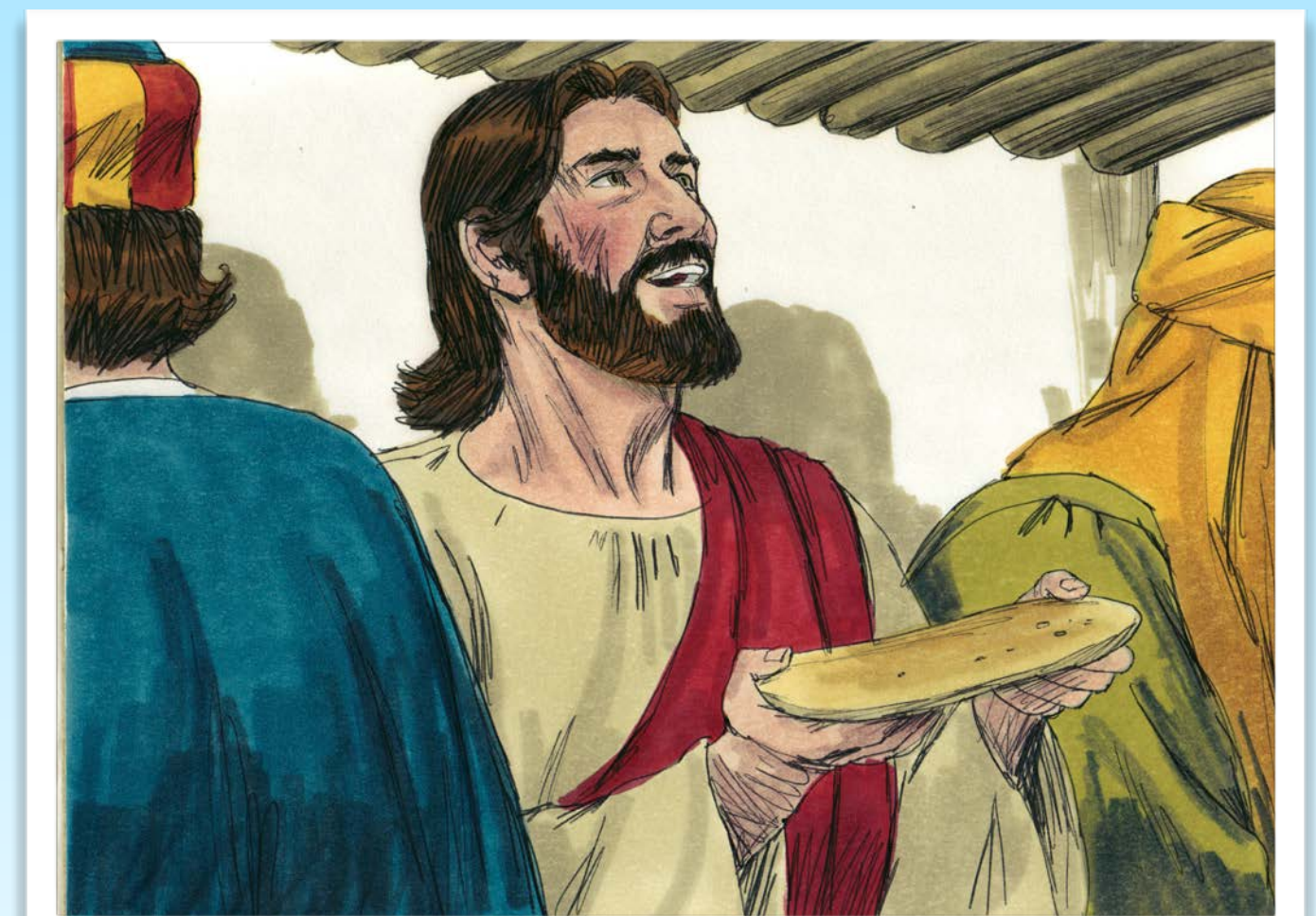
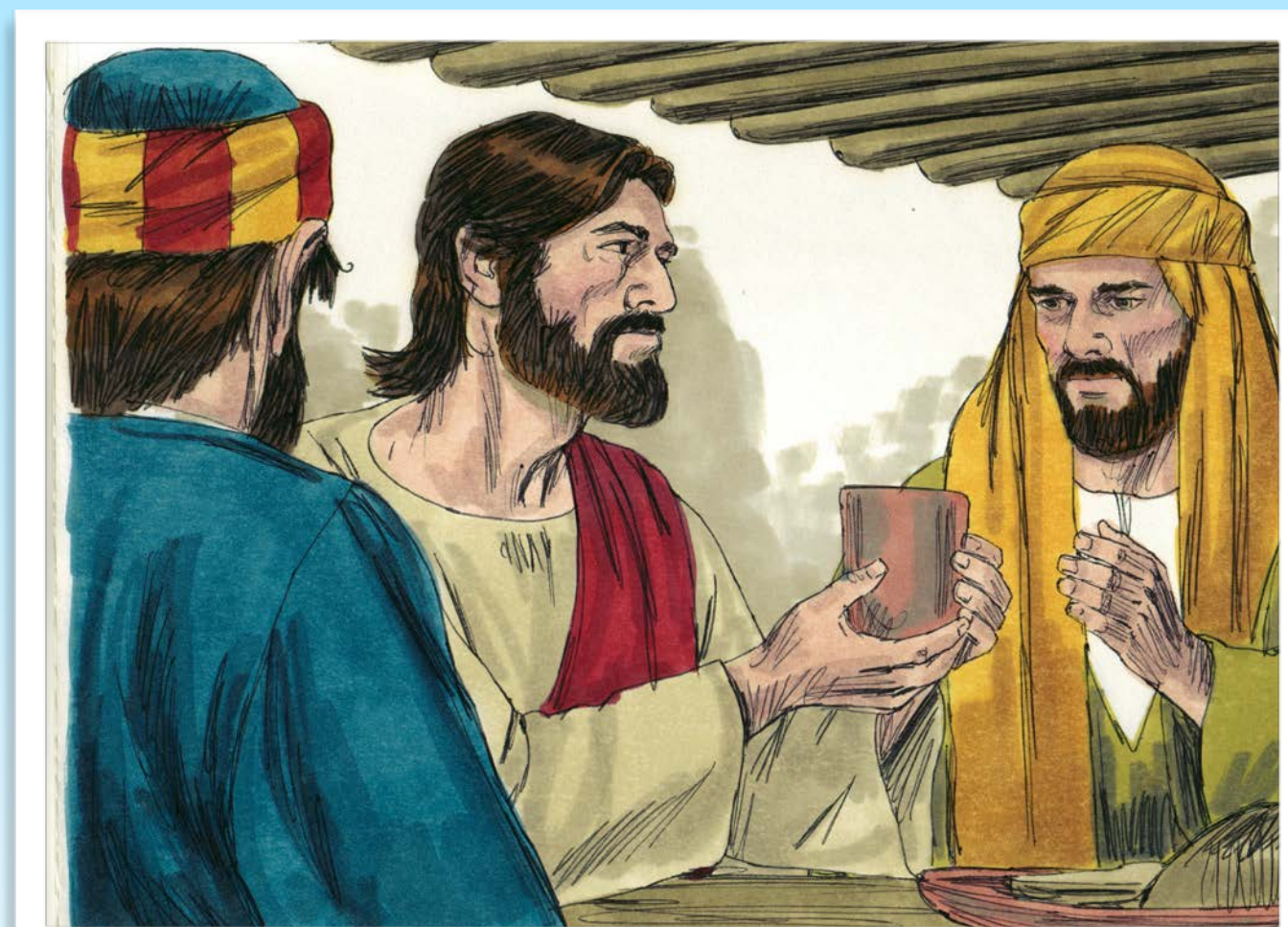
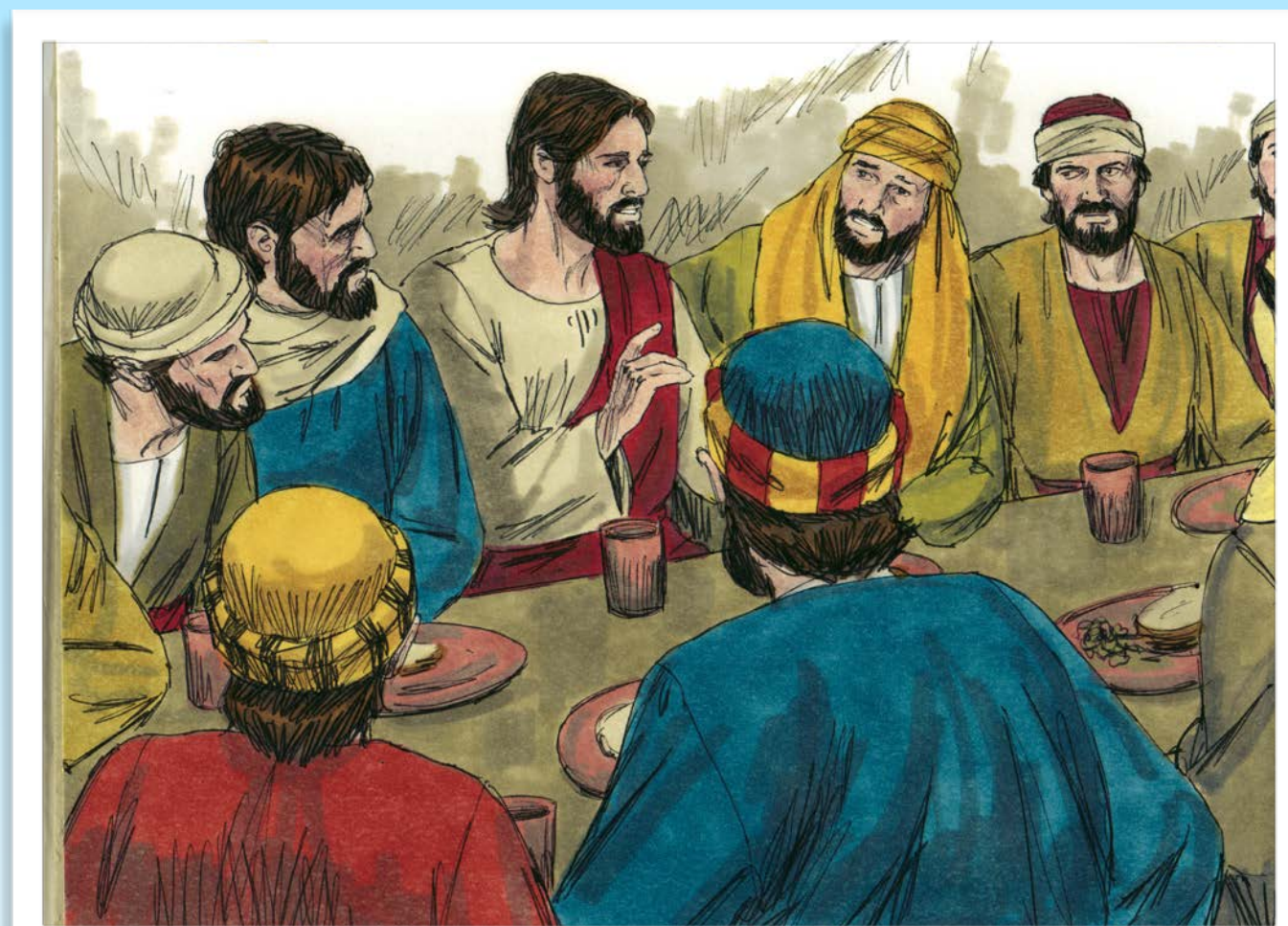
At the same time, Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, was getting ready to betray Jesus. He went to the high priests and agreed to lead them to Jesus in return for thirty pieces of silver.



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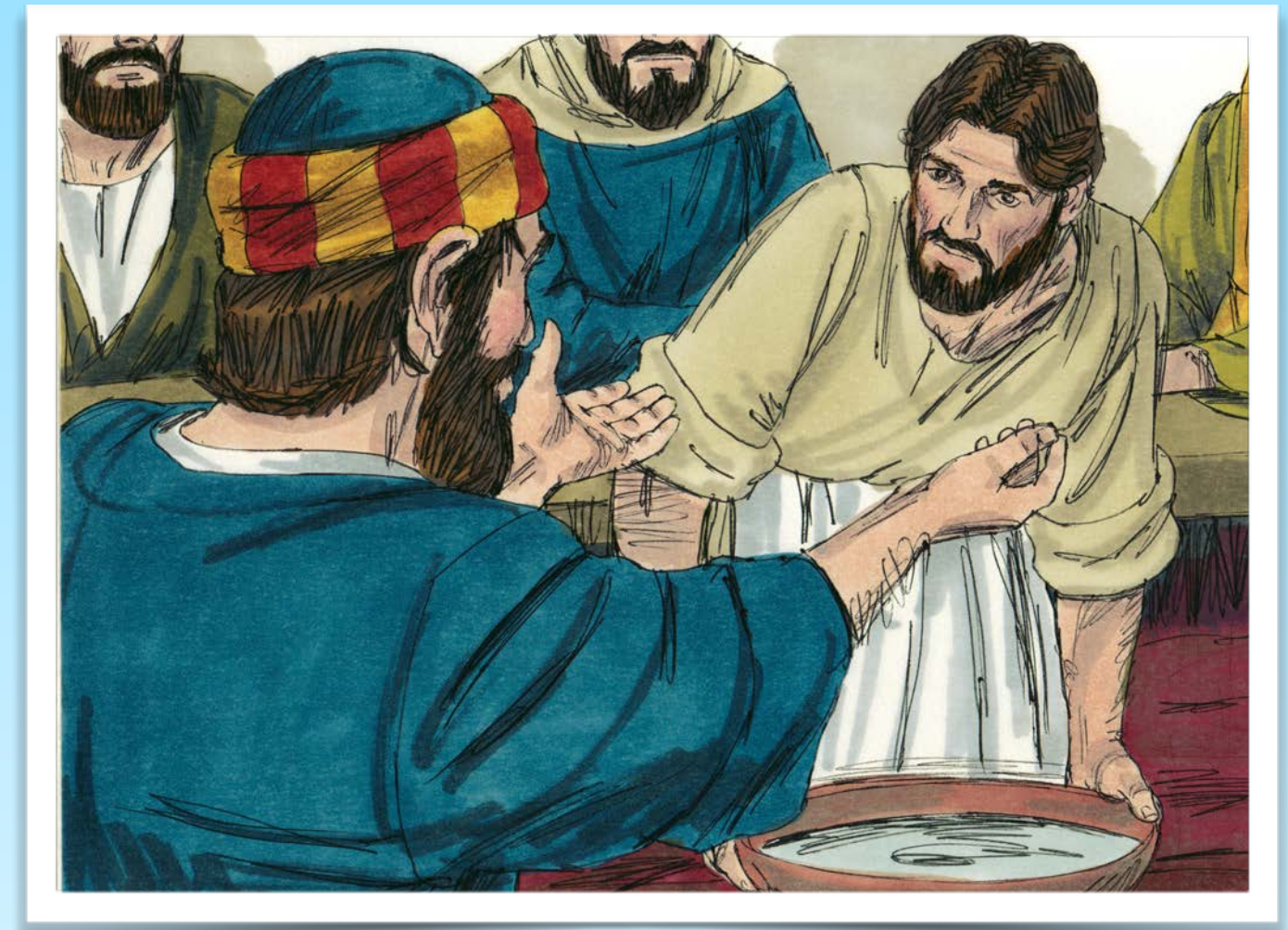
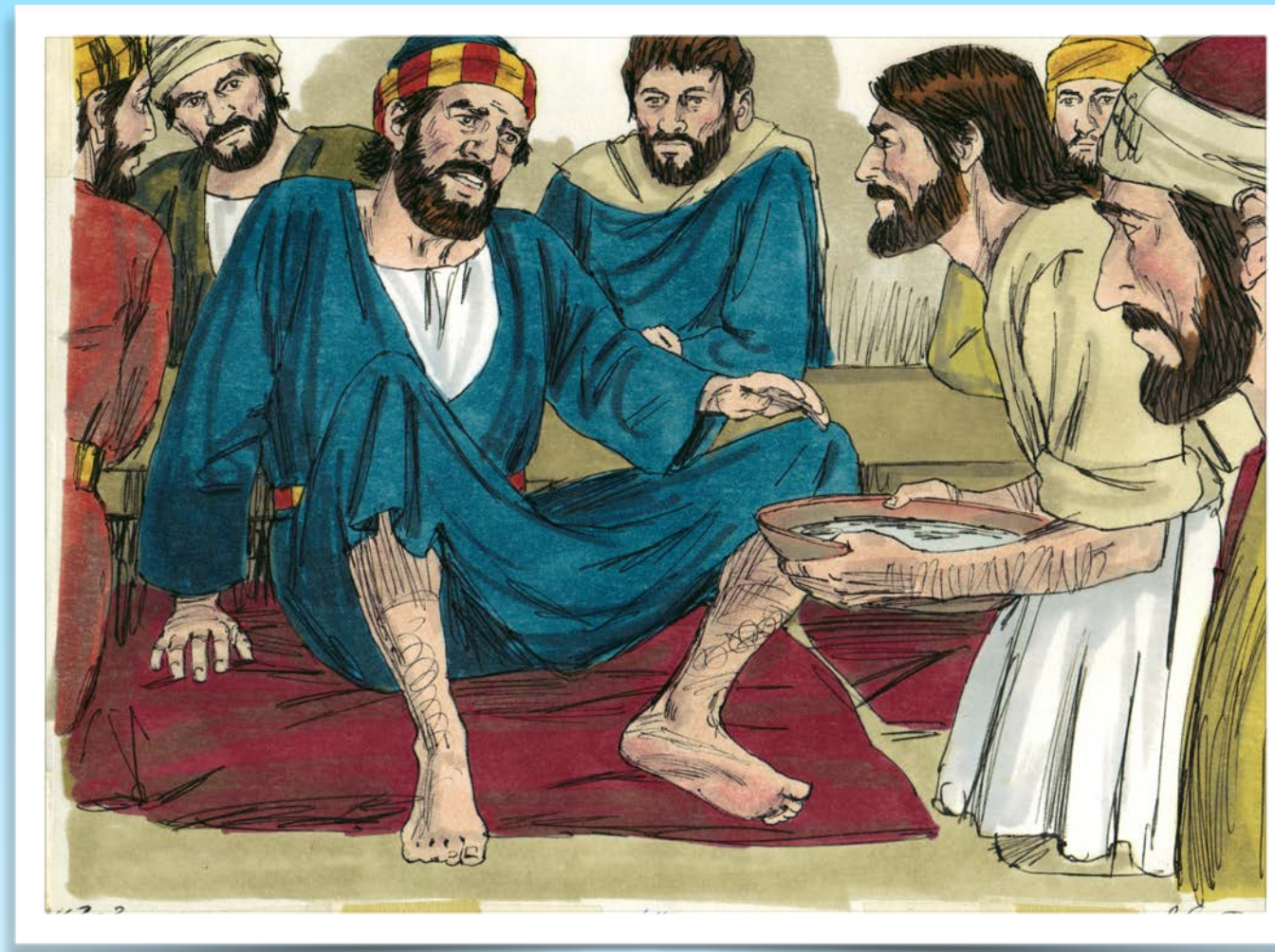
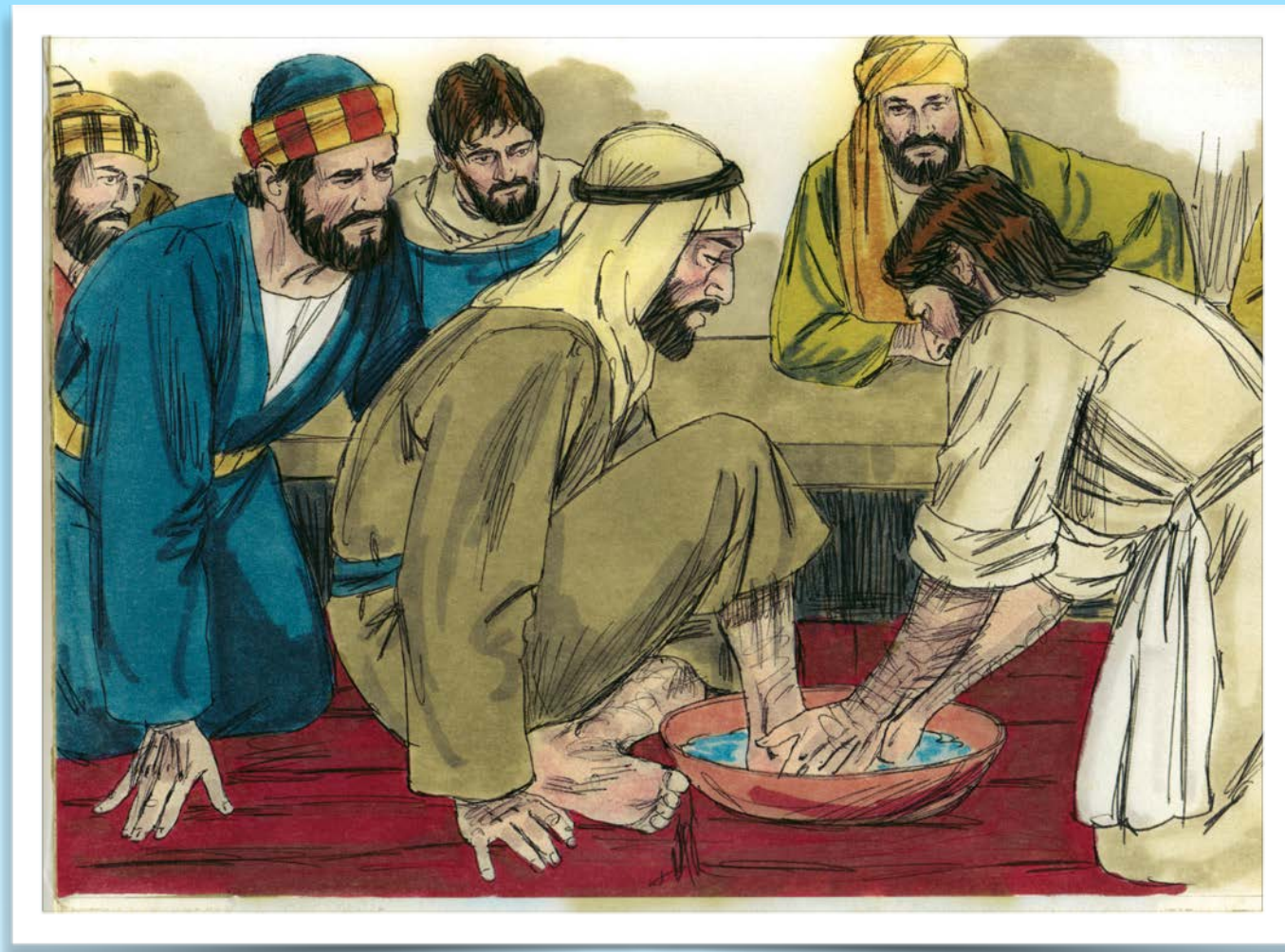
By now, Jesus knew what was going to happen to him. He gathered his disciples together for the Passover feast. This would be his last supper with his friends. He wanted to explain to them what was happening in a way they would understand. He took a cup of wine. He blessed it and said, "Take this cup and pass it amongst you. This cup is a new agreement between you and God written in my blood, blood that is poured out for you." Then he took a loaf of bread, blessed it and tore it. He passed it around to his disciples saying, "This is my body, given for you. Eat it in my memory."



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Jesus then got up from the supper table, poured water into a basin and started to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with his apron. When he got to Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash *my* feet?" Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing but you will understand it later."



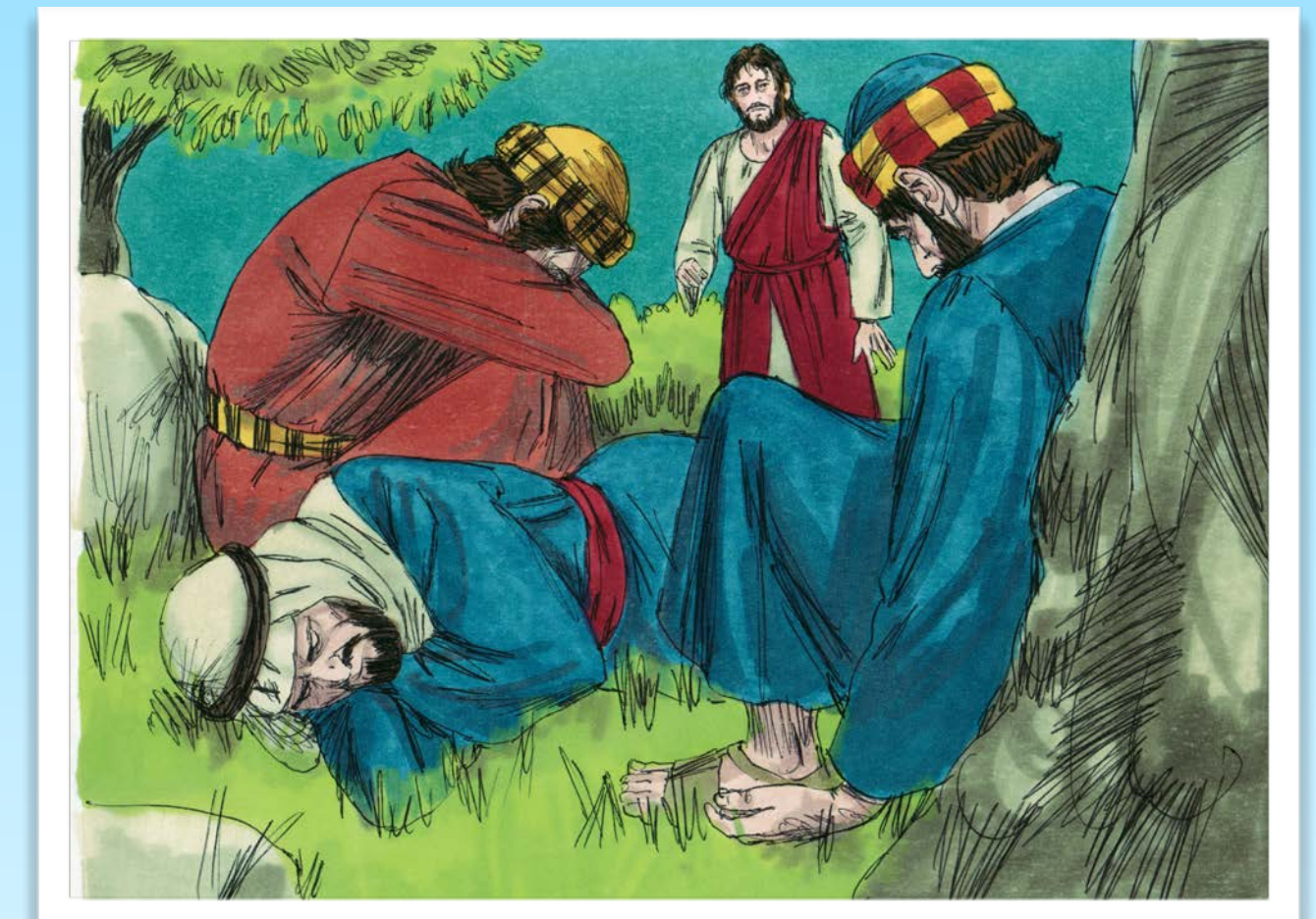
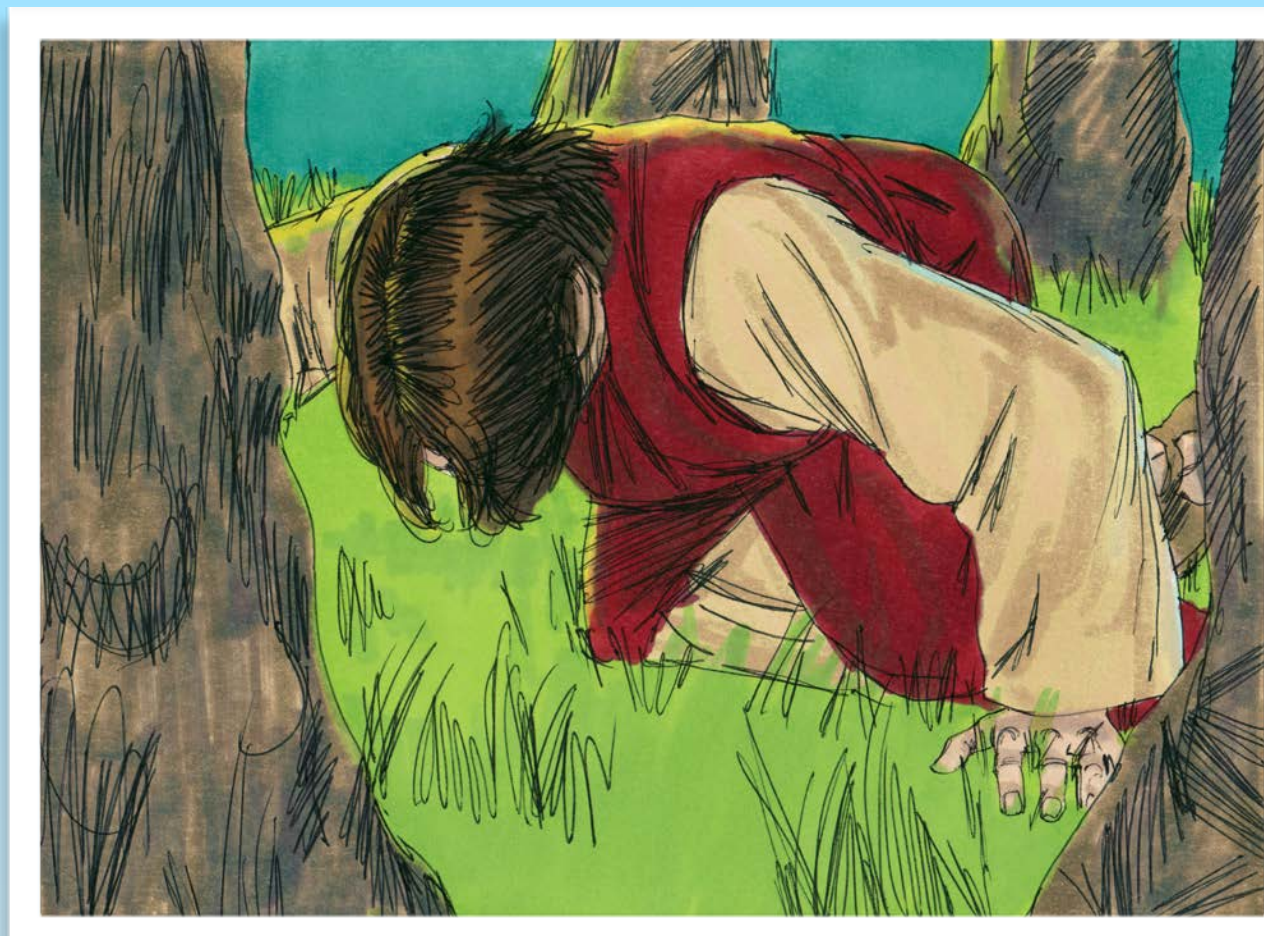
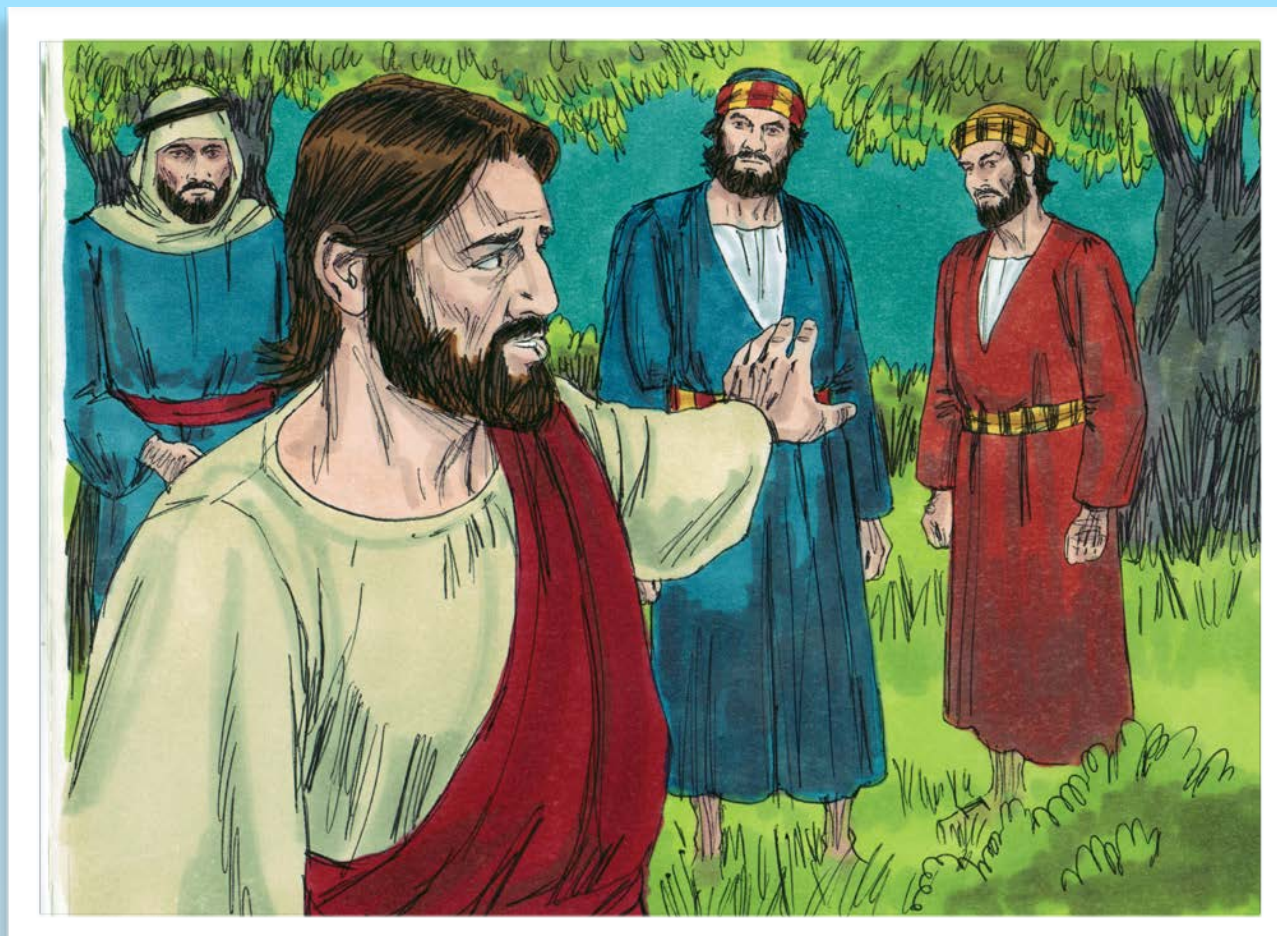
Then he said, "You call me *Master* and *Teacher*, and rightly so. That is what I am. So if I, the *Master* and *Teacher*, wash your feet, that is what you must do to others. I've laid down a pattern for you. Do as I do, and live a blessed life."



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Then Jesus went with his disciples to a garden called Gethsemane and told them, "Stay here while I go over there and pray." He took three of his disciples with him. "This sorrow is crushing me. Please stay with me and keep vigil while I go and pray." Jesus went a little further by himself and put his face to the ground. "My Father, if there is any way, get me out of what is to happen." He knew what was to come and he was distraught. "But let it not be what I want. What do You want?" He went back to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you not last even one hour? Stay alert and keep watch."



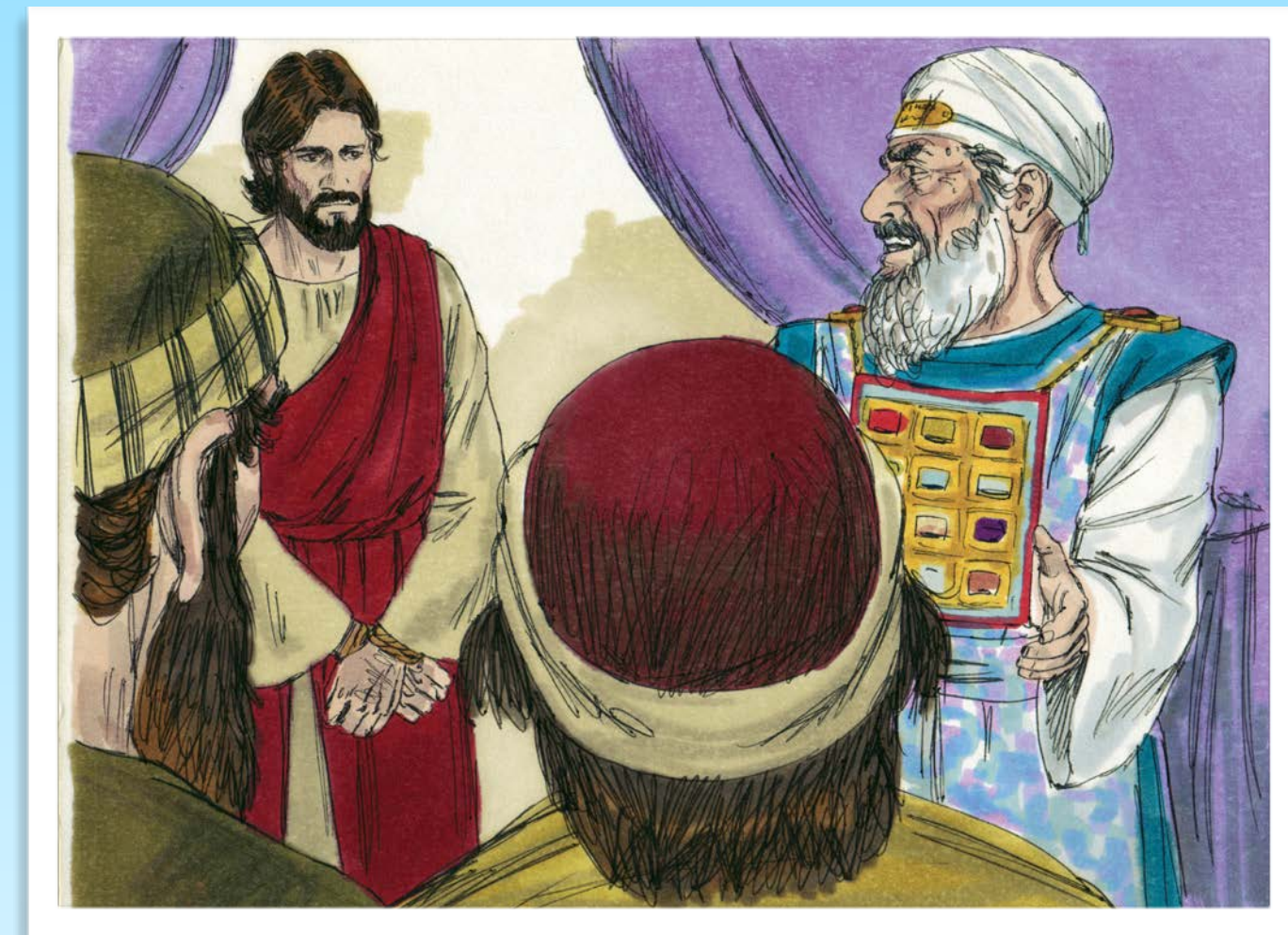
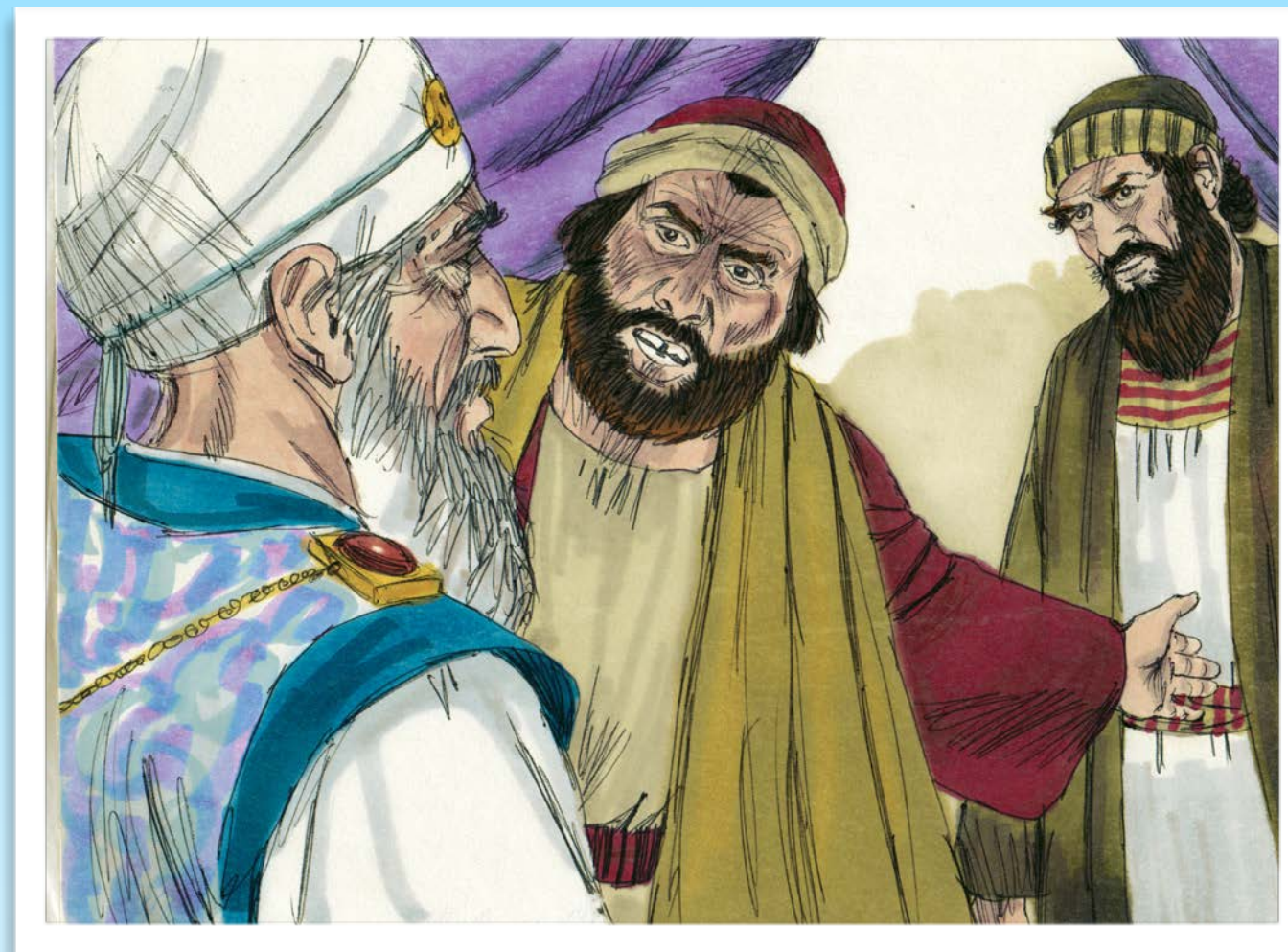
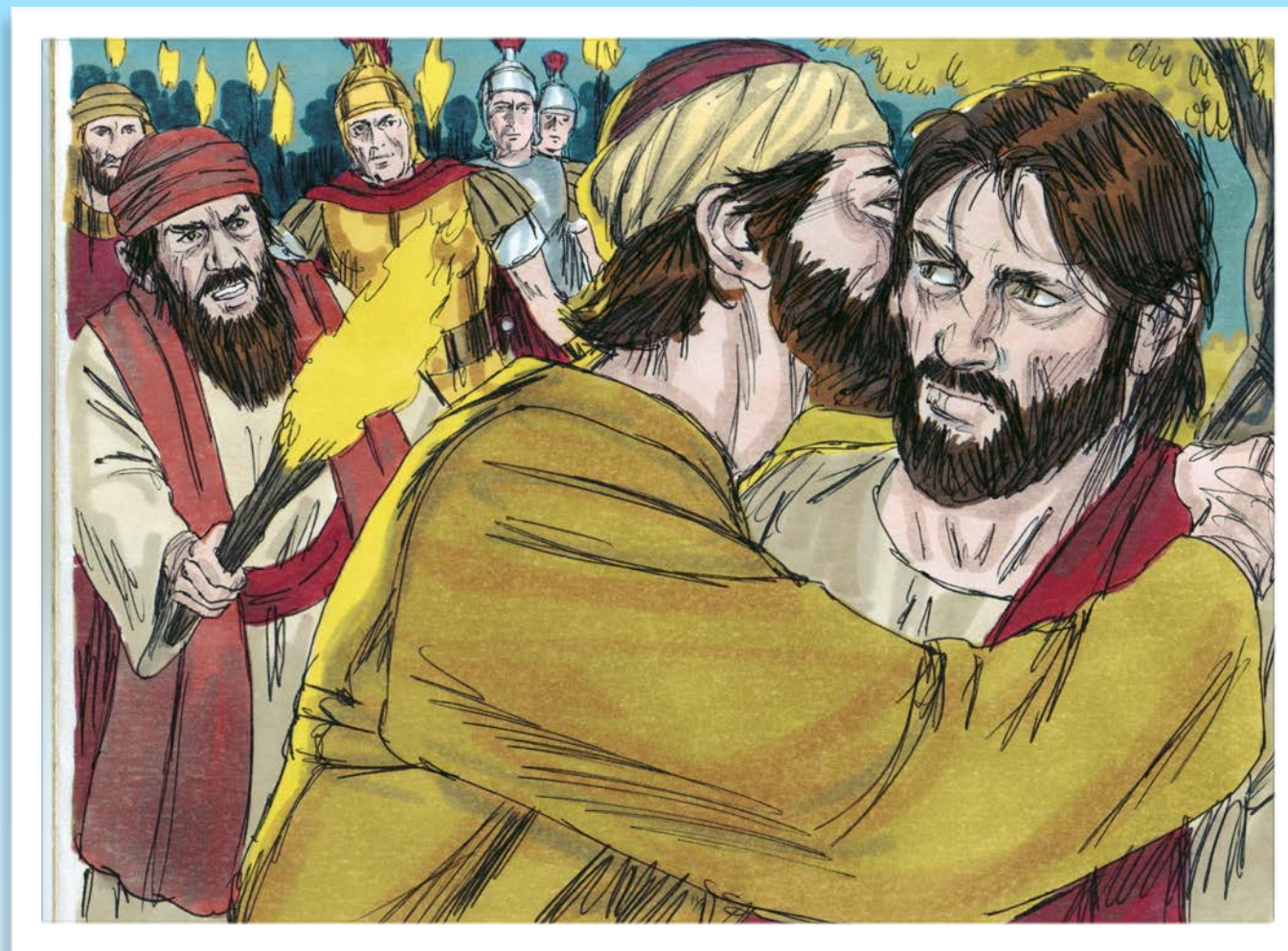
Jesus went away to pray again. "Father, if this cup cannot be taken away from me, I'm ready. I will do Your will." He went back to his disciples again and once more found them sleeping. This time, he didn't wake them but went back to pray a third time. When he came back to them, he woke them and said, "Are you going to sleep all night? My time is up. The Son of Man is about to be handed over to the enemy. Get up! My betrayer is here."



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No sooner had he said these words when Judas appeared with the high priests and a mob of soldiers holding clubs and swords. Judas had agreed a sign with the priests that the man he kissed on the cheek would be the man they were to arrest. Judas went to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, how are you?" and kissed him on the cheek. The soldiers grabbed Jesus and led him away. The disciples ran.



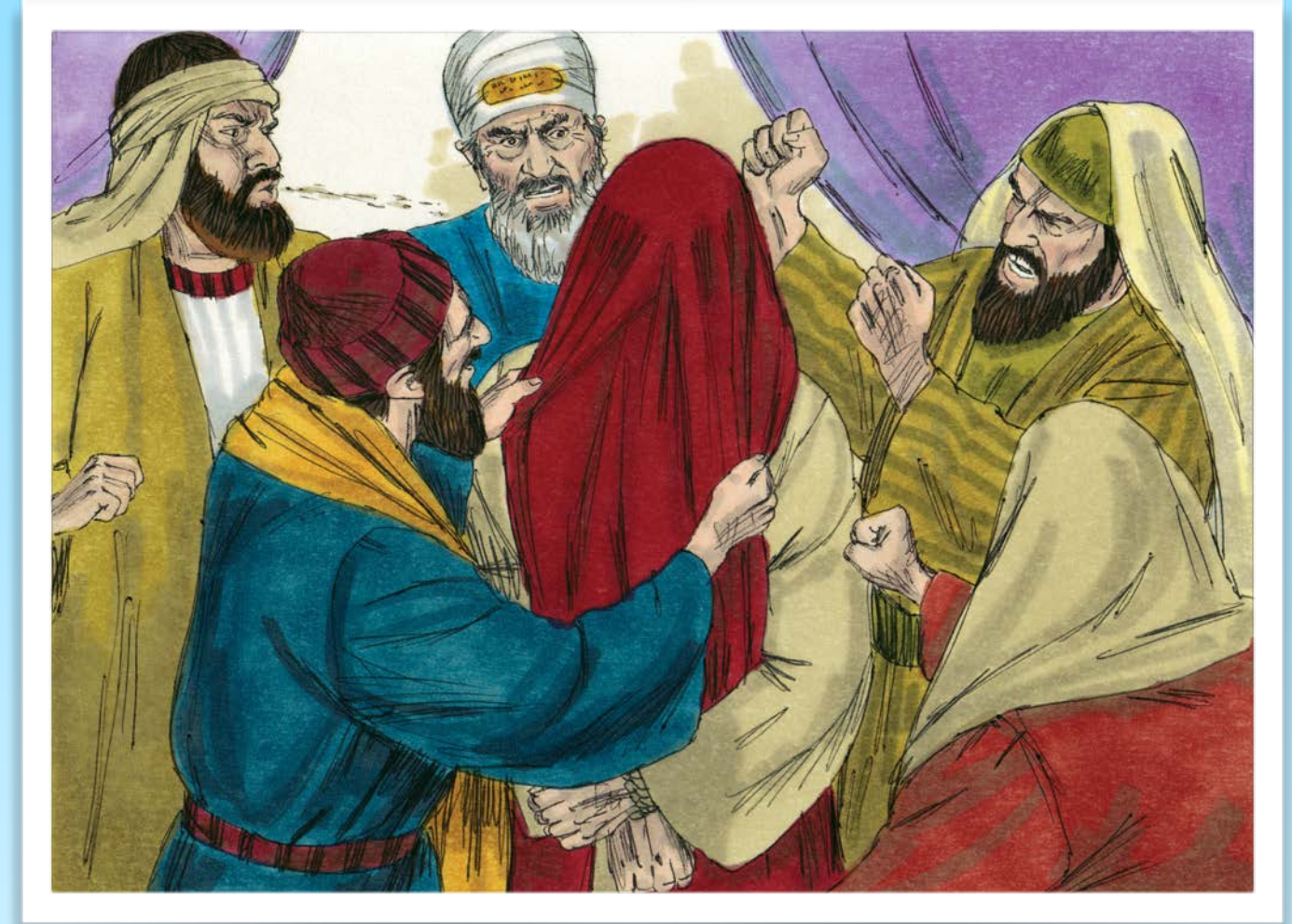
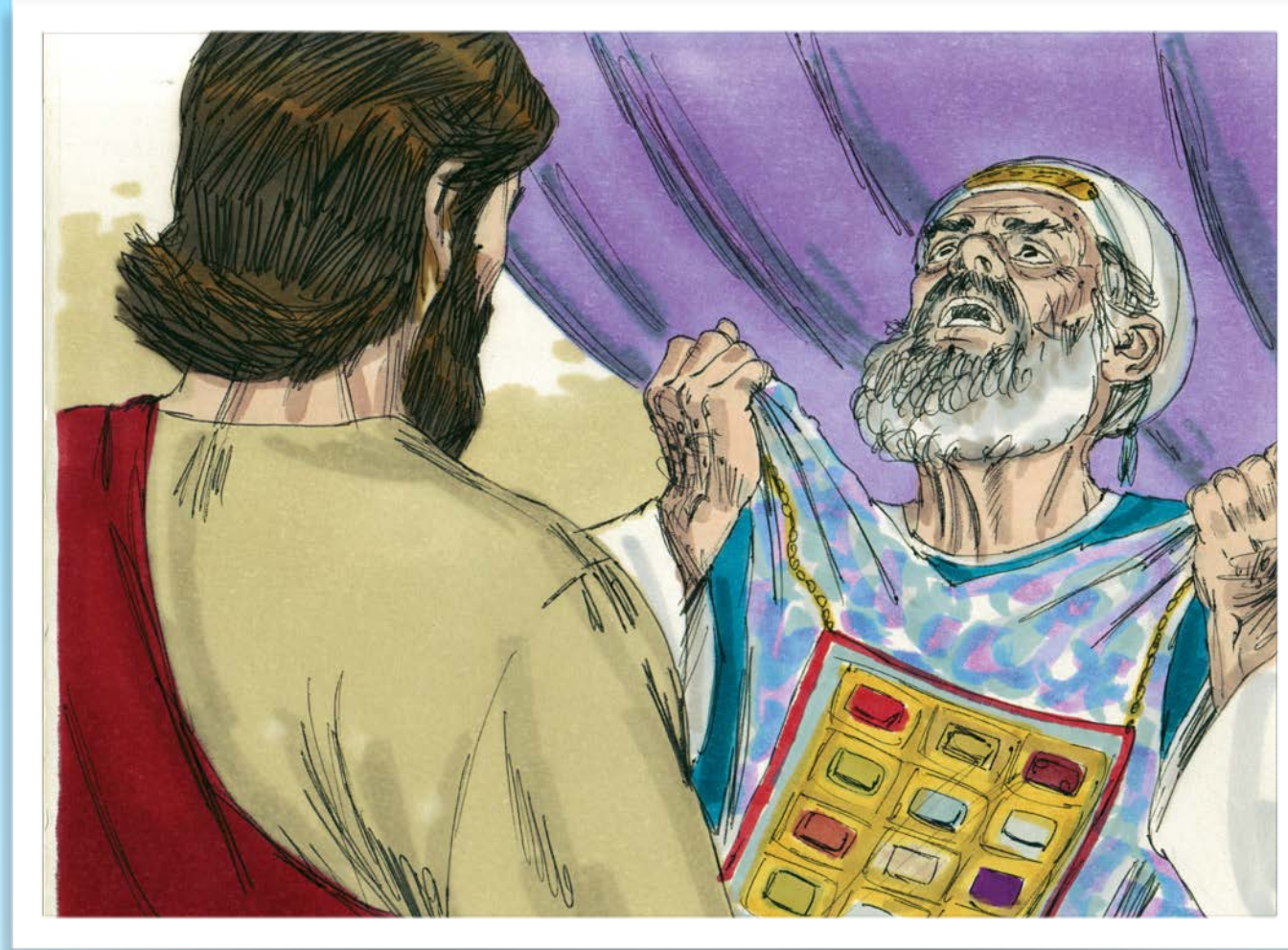
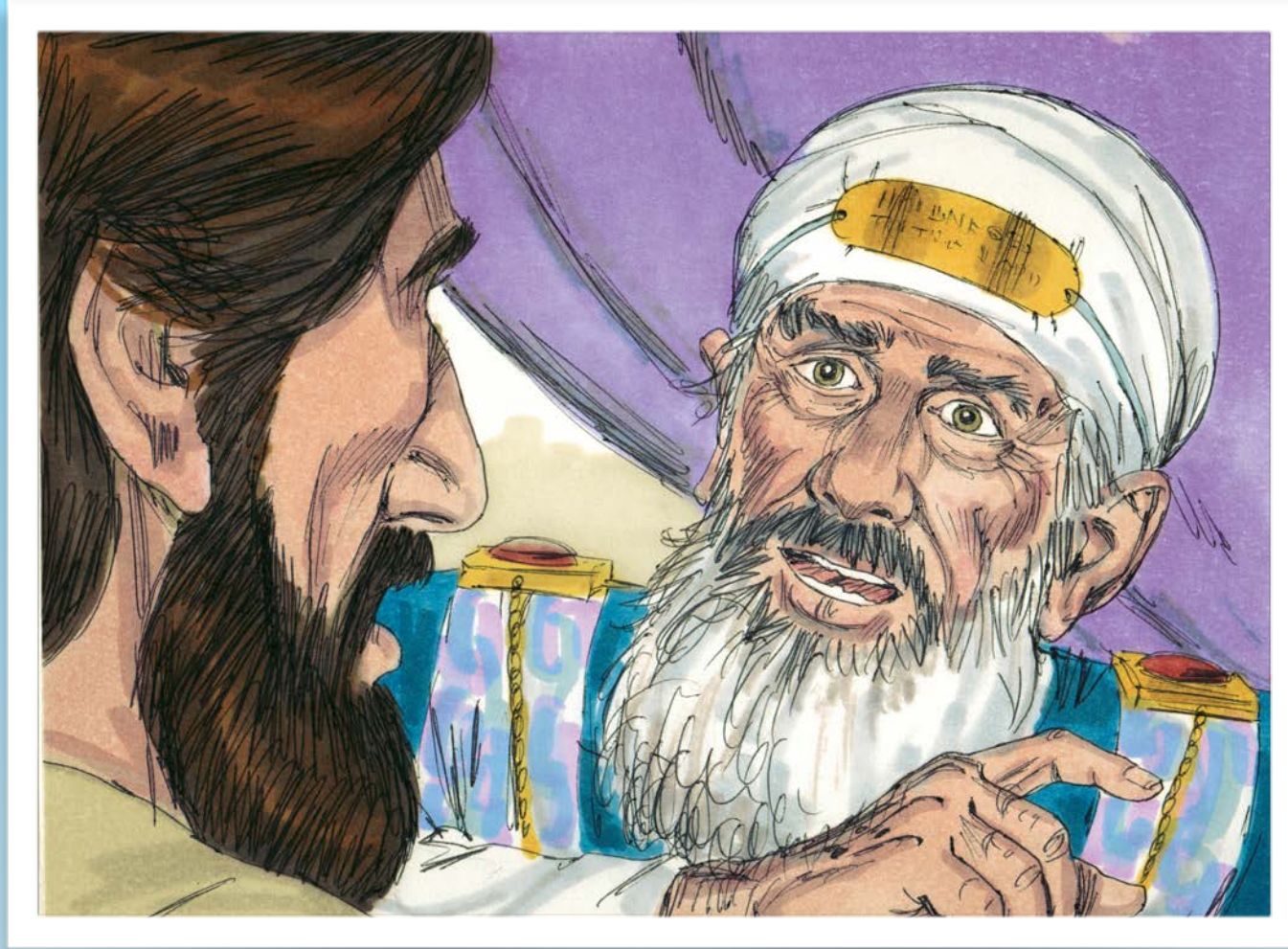
The soldiers took Jesus to Caiaphas, the Chief Priest. The Jewish Council and high priests tried to make up charges against Jesus. They brought forward lots of witnesses, making up one false accusation after another, but nothing was believable.



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The Chief Priest became angry. “I command you in the name of the Living God to tell me if you are the Messiah. Are you the Son of God?” Jesus replied, “You yourself said it. And that’s not all. Soon you will see for yourself too.”



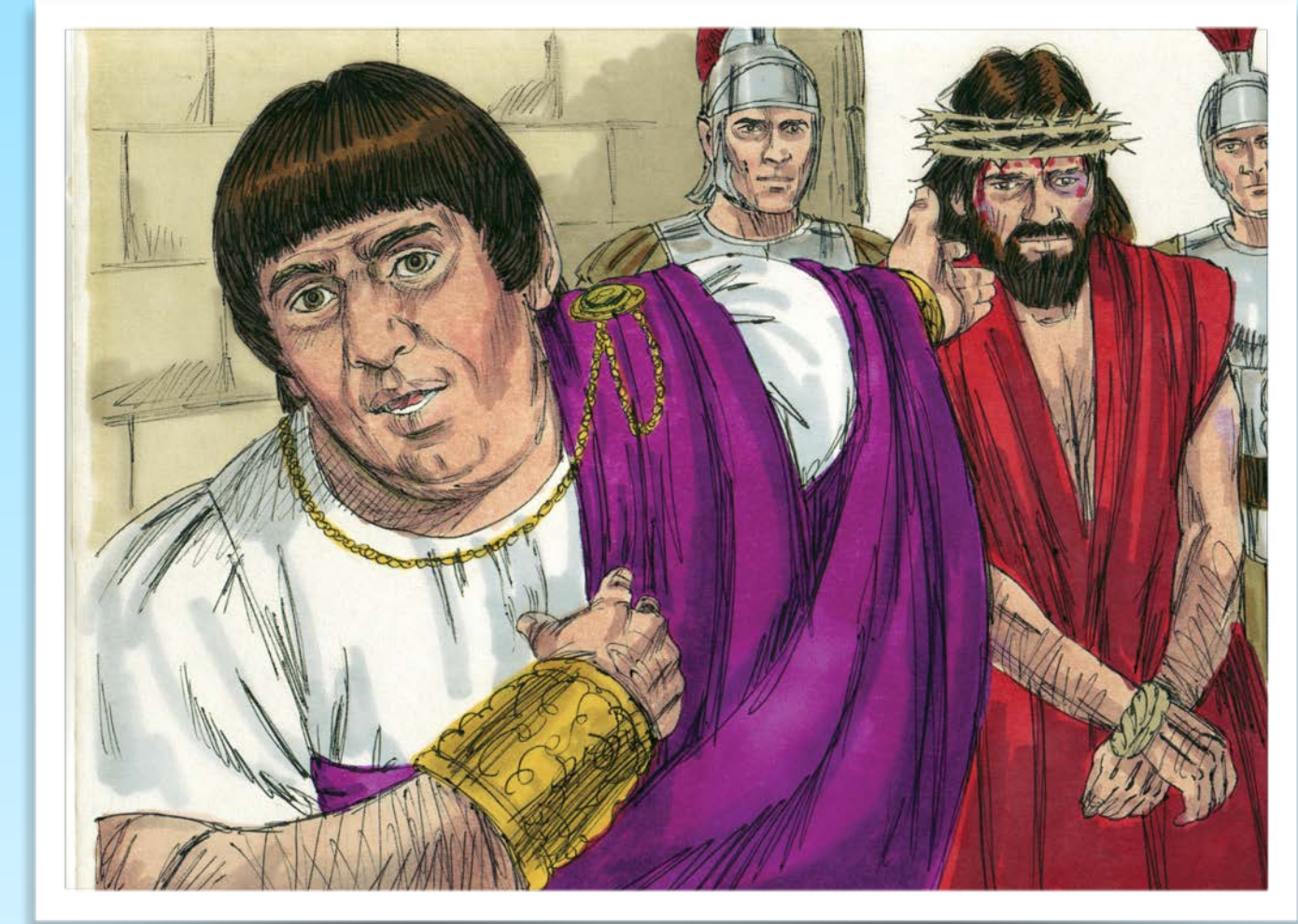
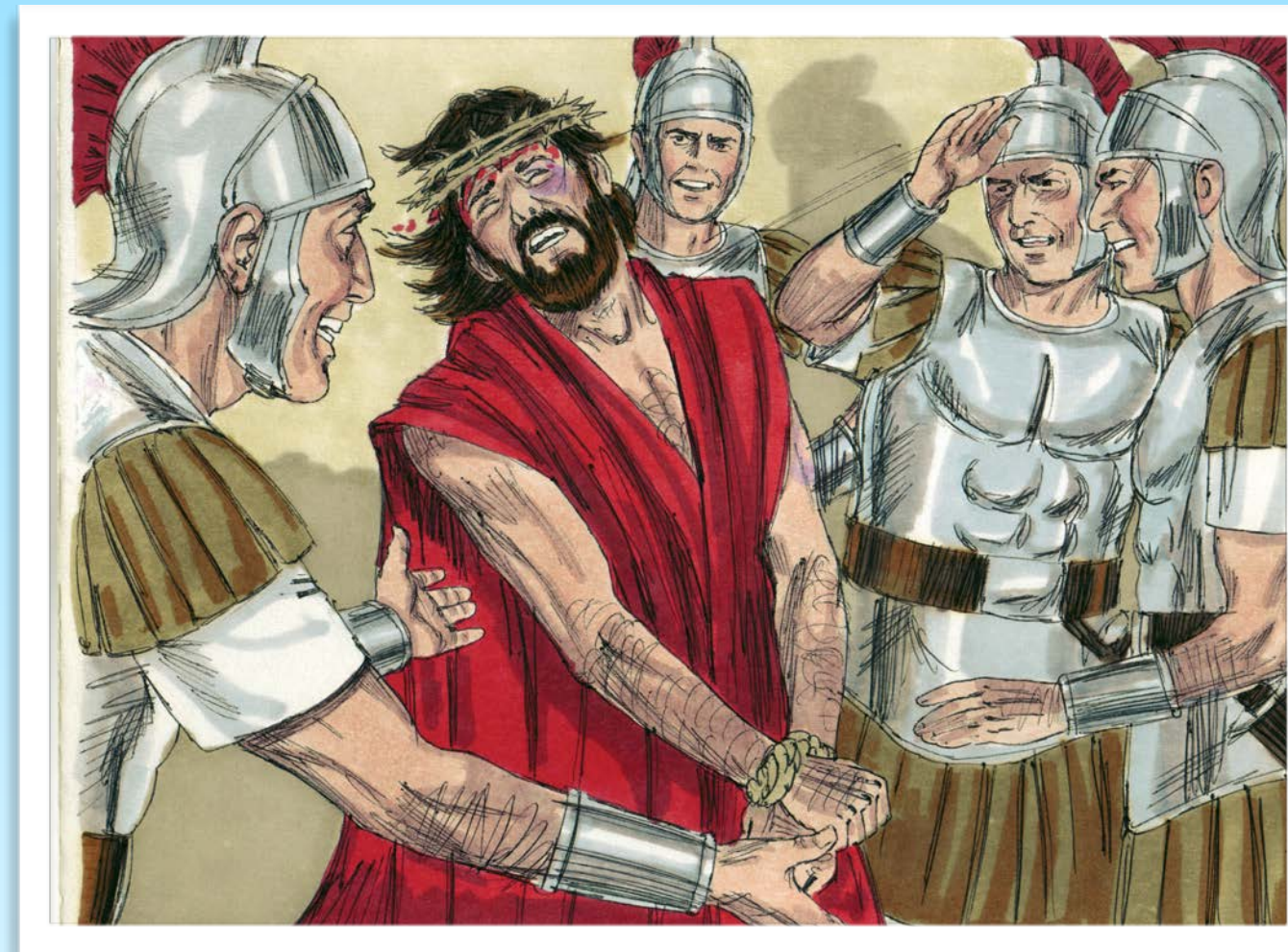
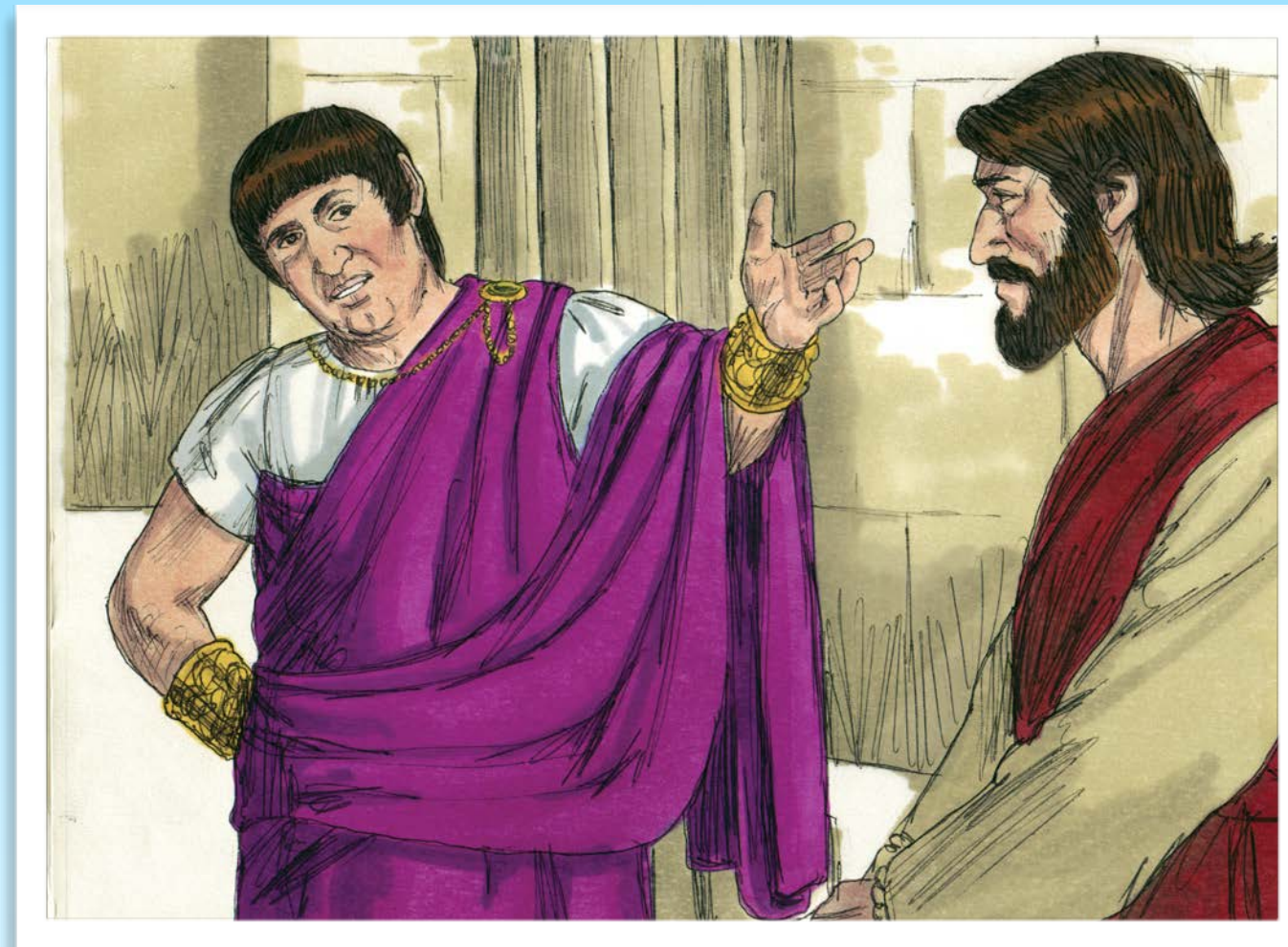
“Blasphemy!” cried the Chief Priest, who started ripping his robes. “You all heard him! Are you going to stand for such blasphemy?” The crowd started shouting, “Death! His sentence should be death!” So they took him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor.



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Pilate spent some time talking to Jesus to try and find out why he had been brought to him. Eventually, he said to the crowd “I find nothing wrong with this man. He has committed no crime. It is the custom during Passover that I release one prisoner. Do you want me to release Jesus?” But the crowd starting shouting, “Not this one! Release Barabbas!” Barabbas was a man who had been arrested for taking part in an uprising. The crowd were starting to get agitated.

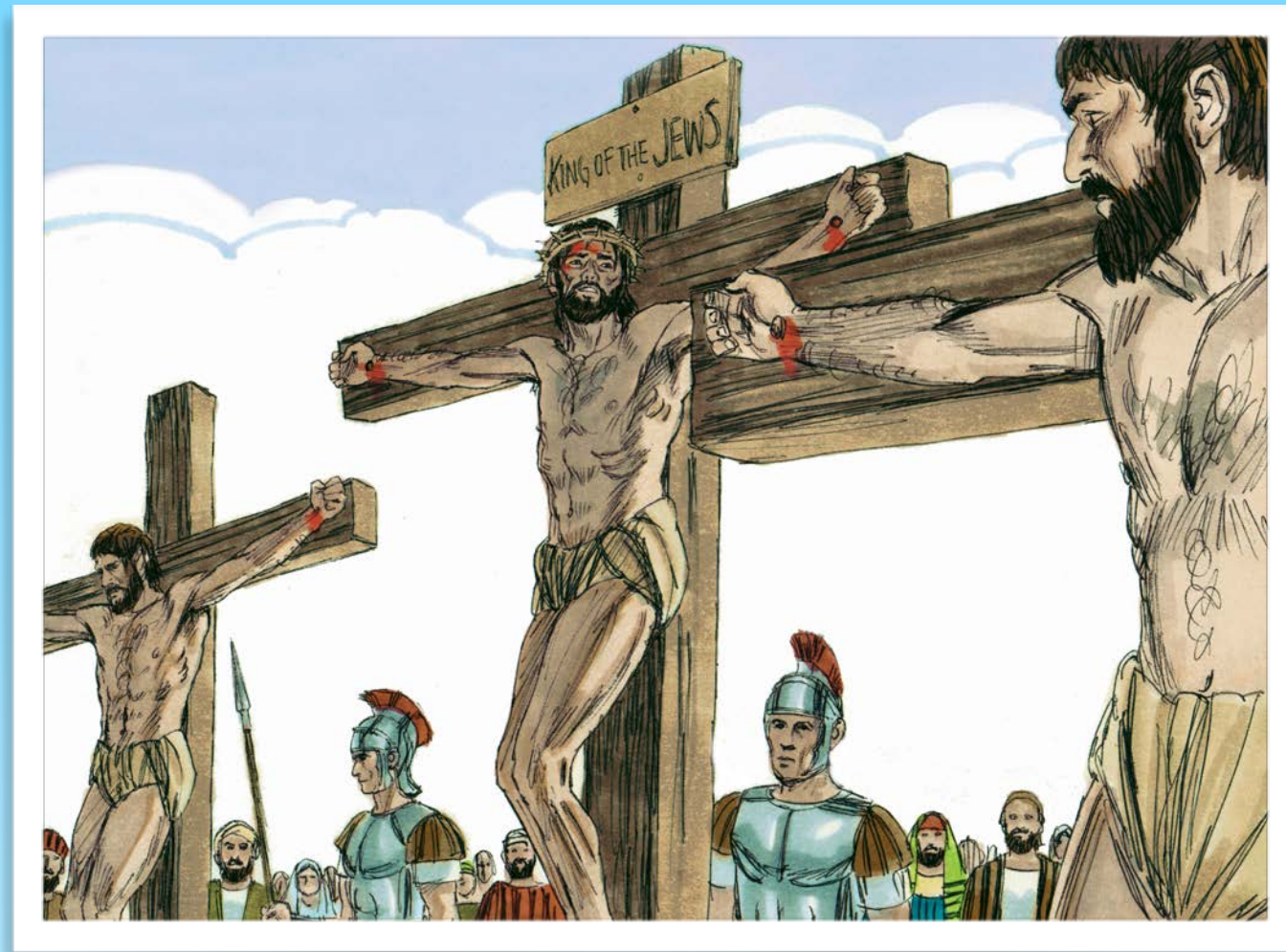
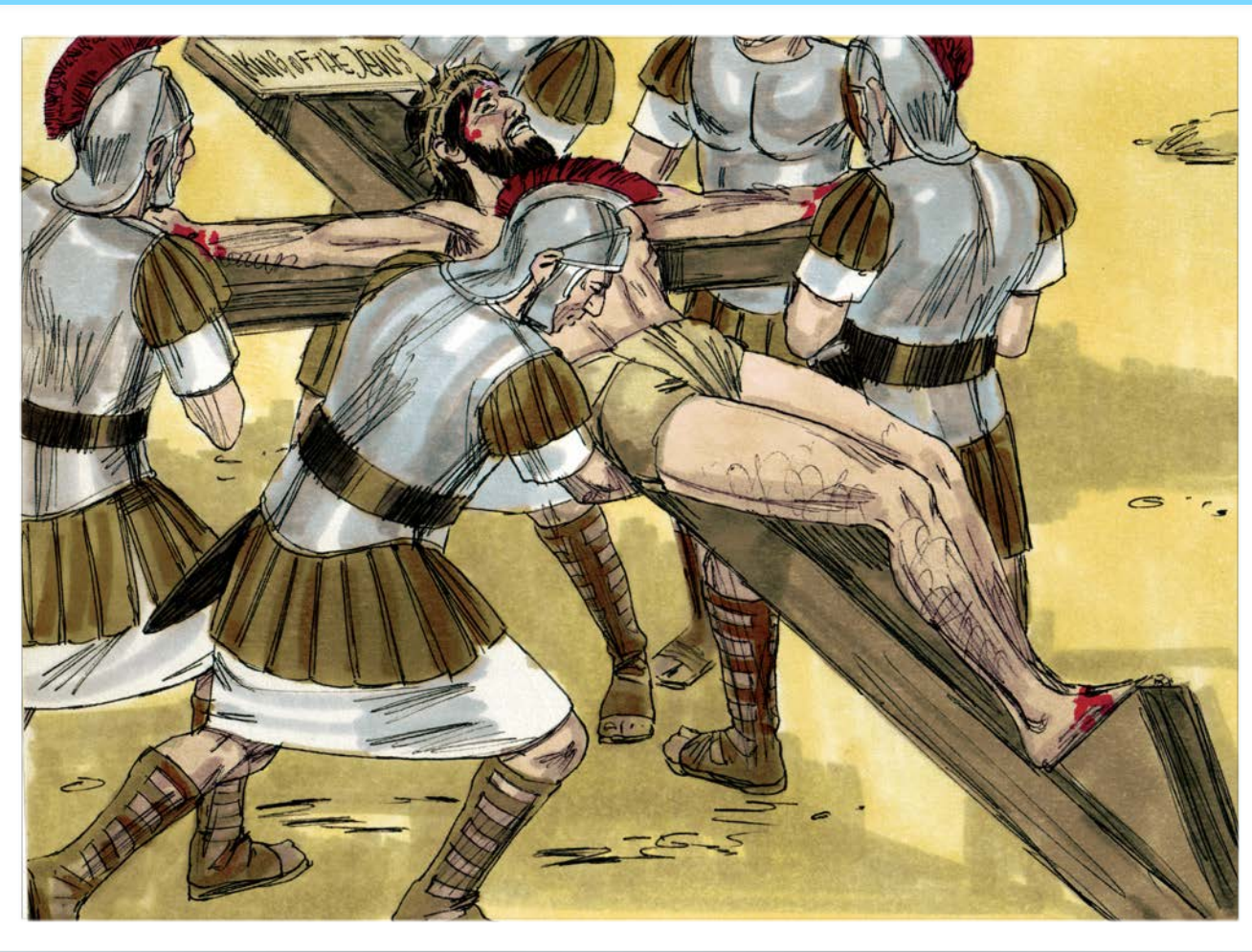


To keep the crowd happy, Pilate ordered for Jesus to be flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and pushed it onto his head. “Hail King of the Jews,” they laughed and slapped him in the face. Pilate brought Jesus before the crowd again. “Are you happy now?”



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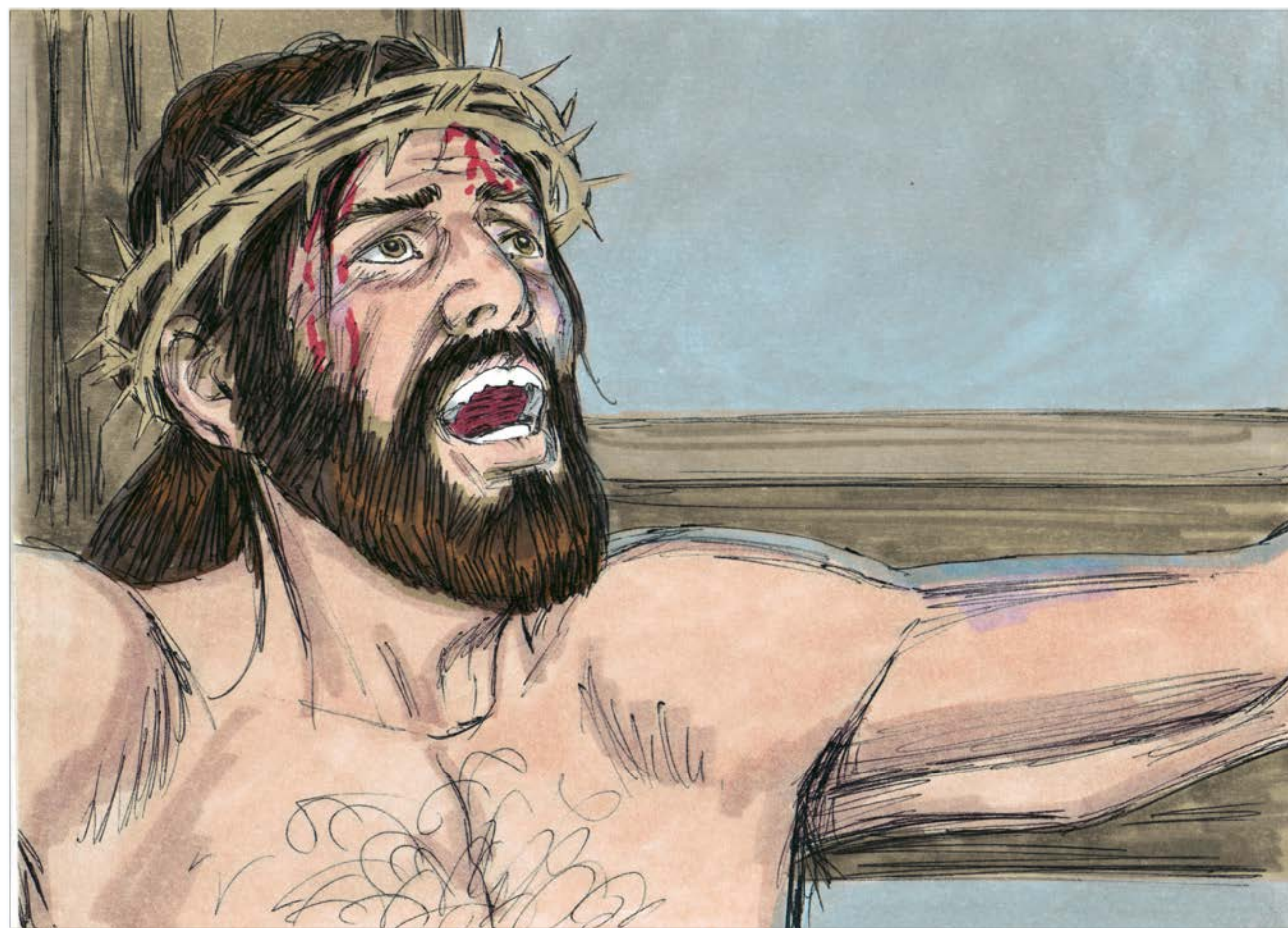
But the crowd were not satisfied. “Crucify him!” they yelled. Pilate didn’t agree that Jesus should be put to death but he didn’t want the crowd to turn against him. “I wash my hands of this,” he said and handed Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified. Jesus carried his cross to Golgotha (which means the place of the skull). There the soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross with two other criminals crucified beside him. Jesus’ mother Mary as well as many of Jesus’ other friends and followers looked on in horror.



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At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At this time, the curtain of the temple was torn in two and Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." He then breathed his last. The centurion who was standing guard saw these things and said, "Surely this man was who he said he was. Surely this was the Son of God." The people watching saw what had happened. They were overcome with grief and started heading home.



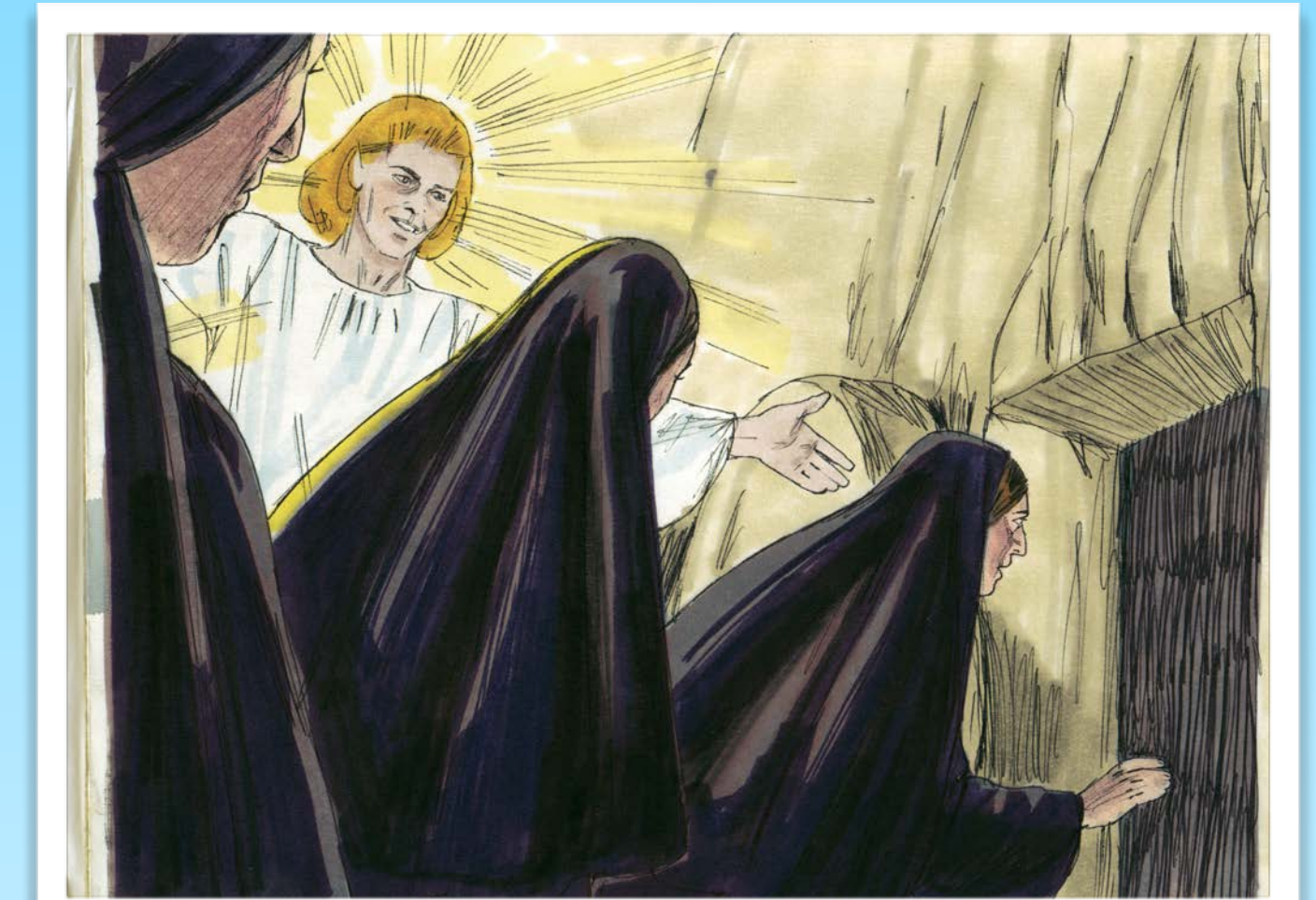
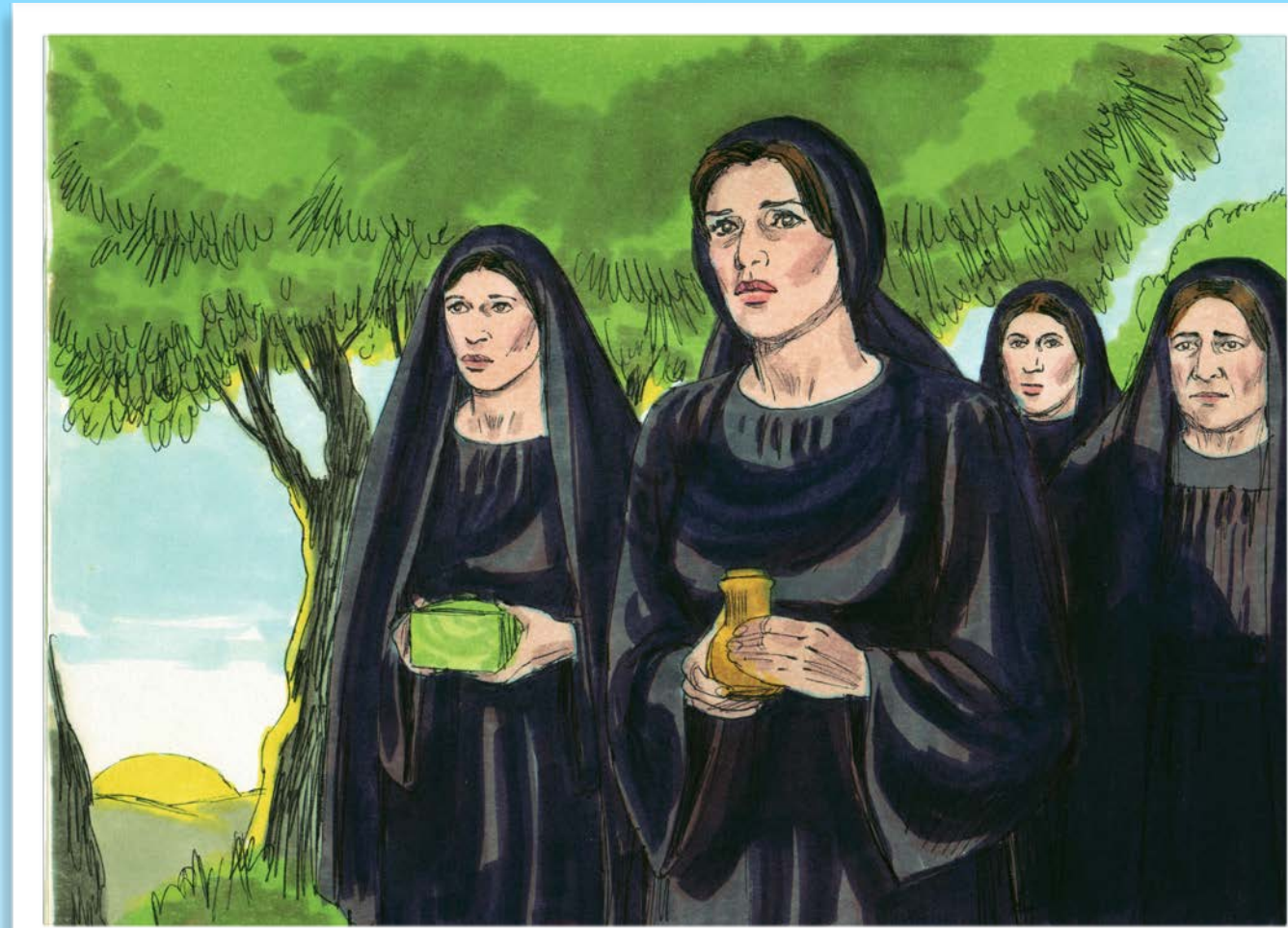
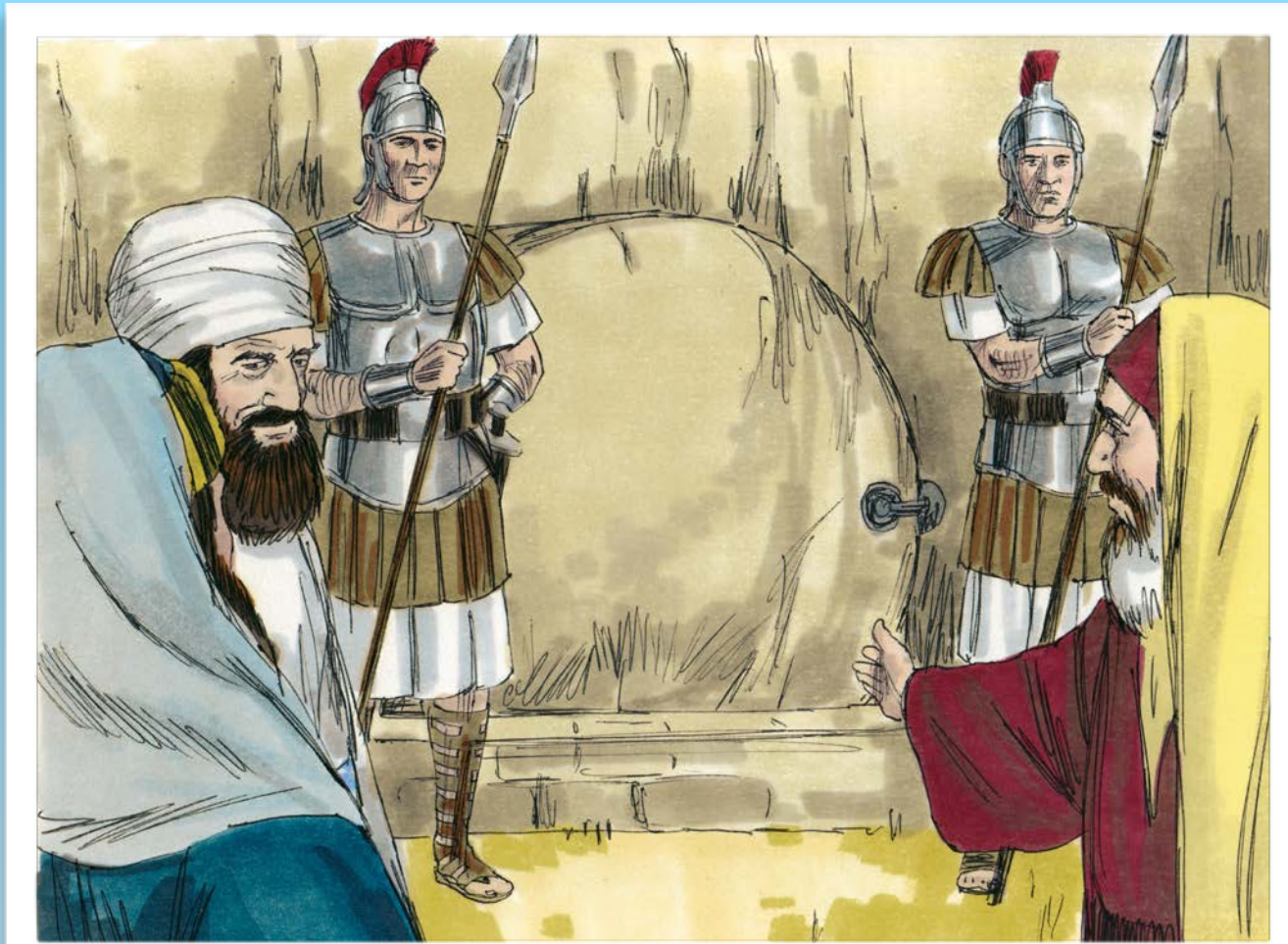
Jesus' body was taken down and placed in a tomb. The women who had been Jesus' companions went away to prepare burial spices and perfumes.



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The tomb was well guarded by Roman soldiers. A great stone had been placed in front of the tomb.



On the third day, the women came to the tomb to perform the burial rituals. However, when they got to the tomb they saw that it was empty. They couldn't understand it. Suddenly, an angel appeared. The women were awestruck and bowed down in wonder. "Why are you looking for the Living One in a cemetery? He is not here. He has risen, just as he said he would."

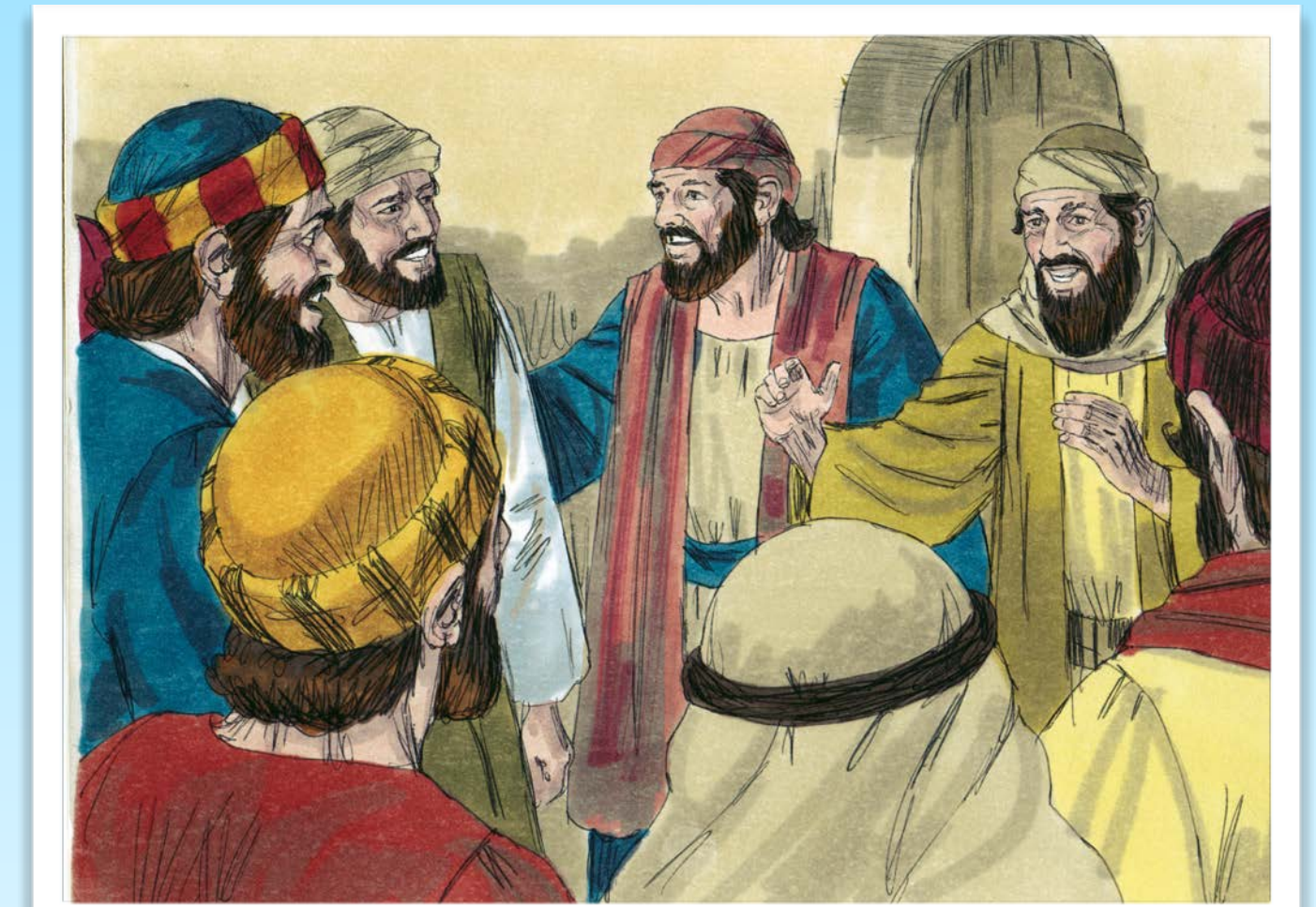
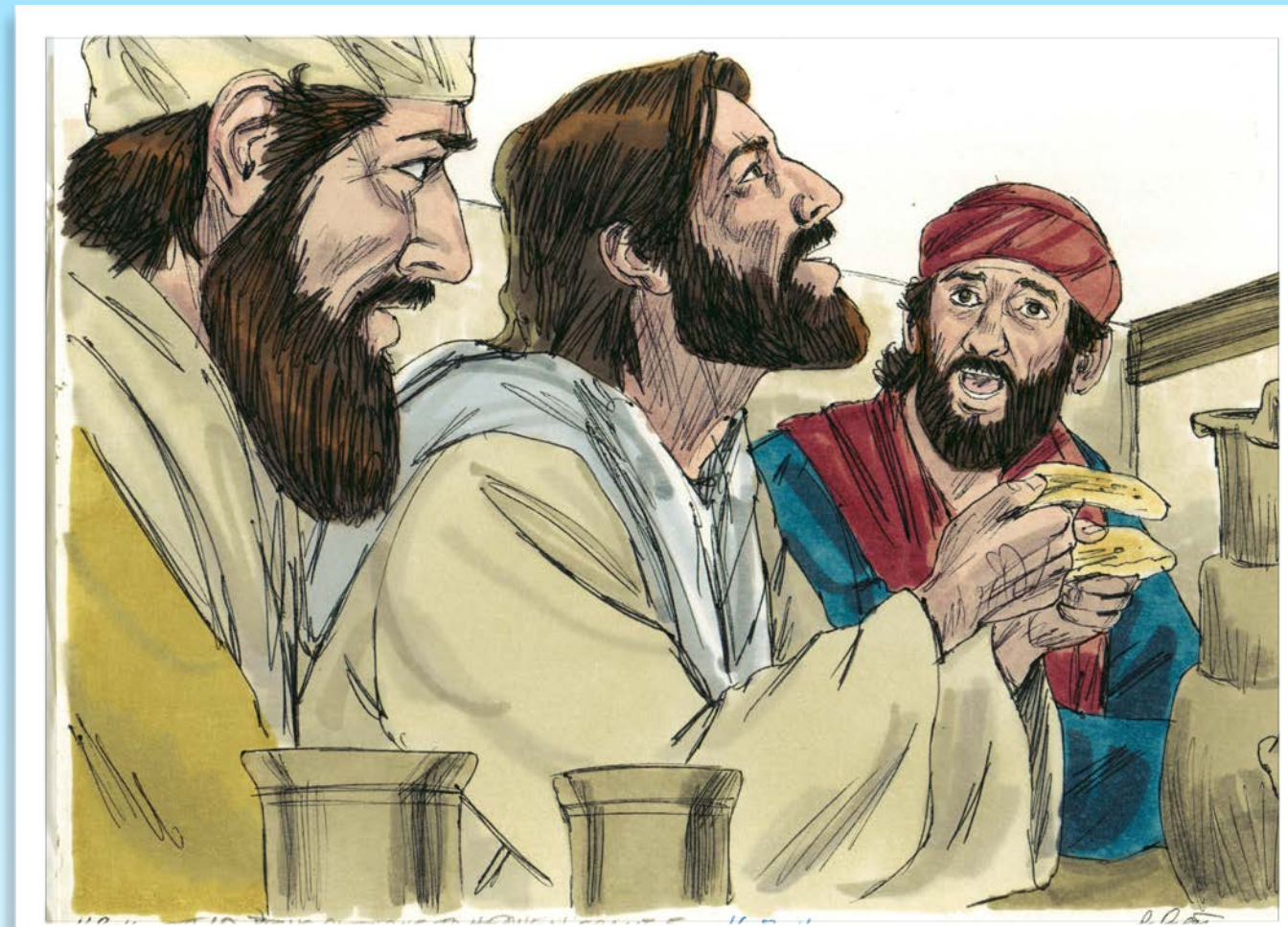
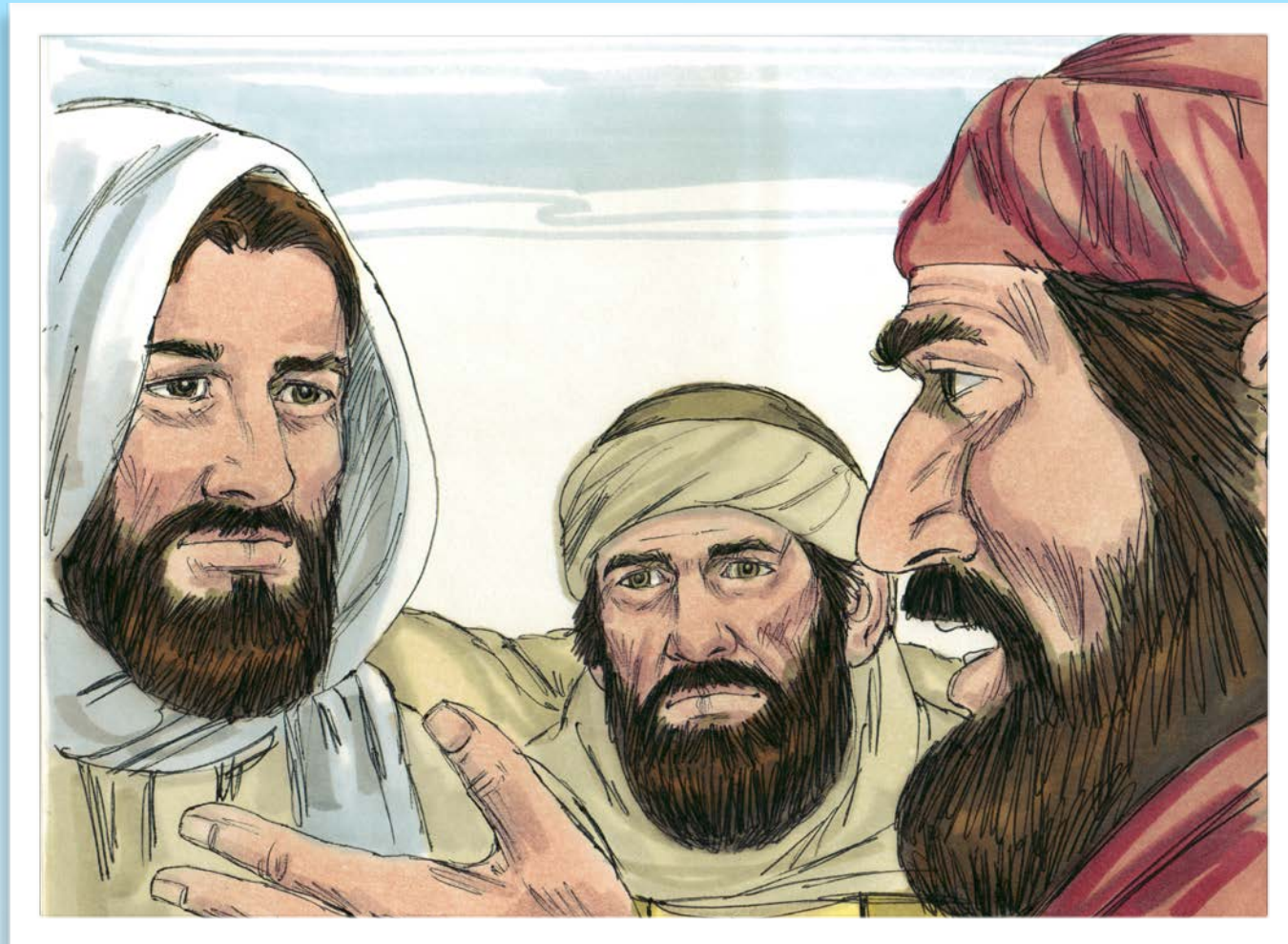
The women hurried away to tell the disciples what had happened but they didn't believe them.



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A little while later, two of the disciples were walking together to the village of Emmaus. They were deep in conversation about all the events that had happened. Suddenly, Jesus appeared and started walking with them. The disciples were so sad about the loss of Jesus and so caught up in their conversation that they didn't recognise him. "What are you talking about so seriously?" asked Jesus. "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who has not heard of the events of the last few days?" they asked, and they told Jesus everything that had happened.



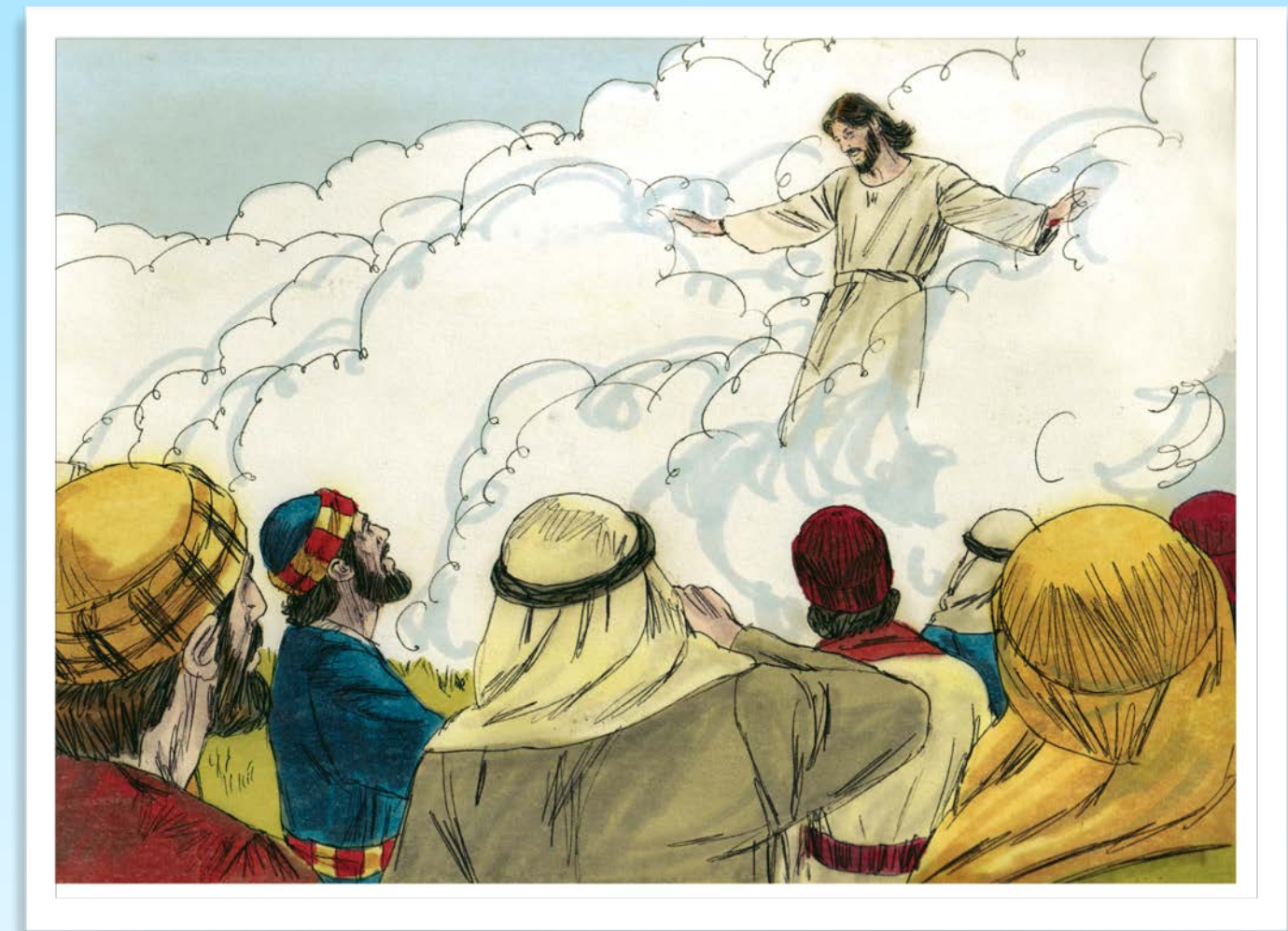
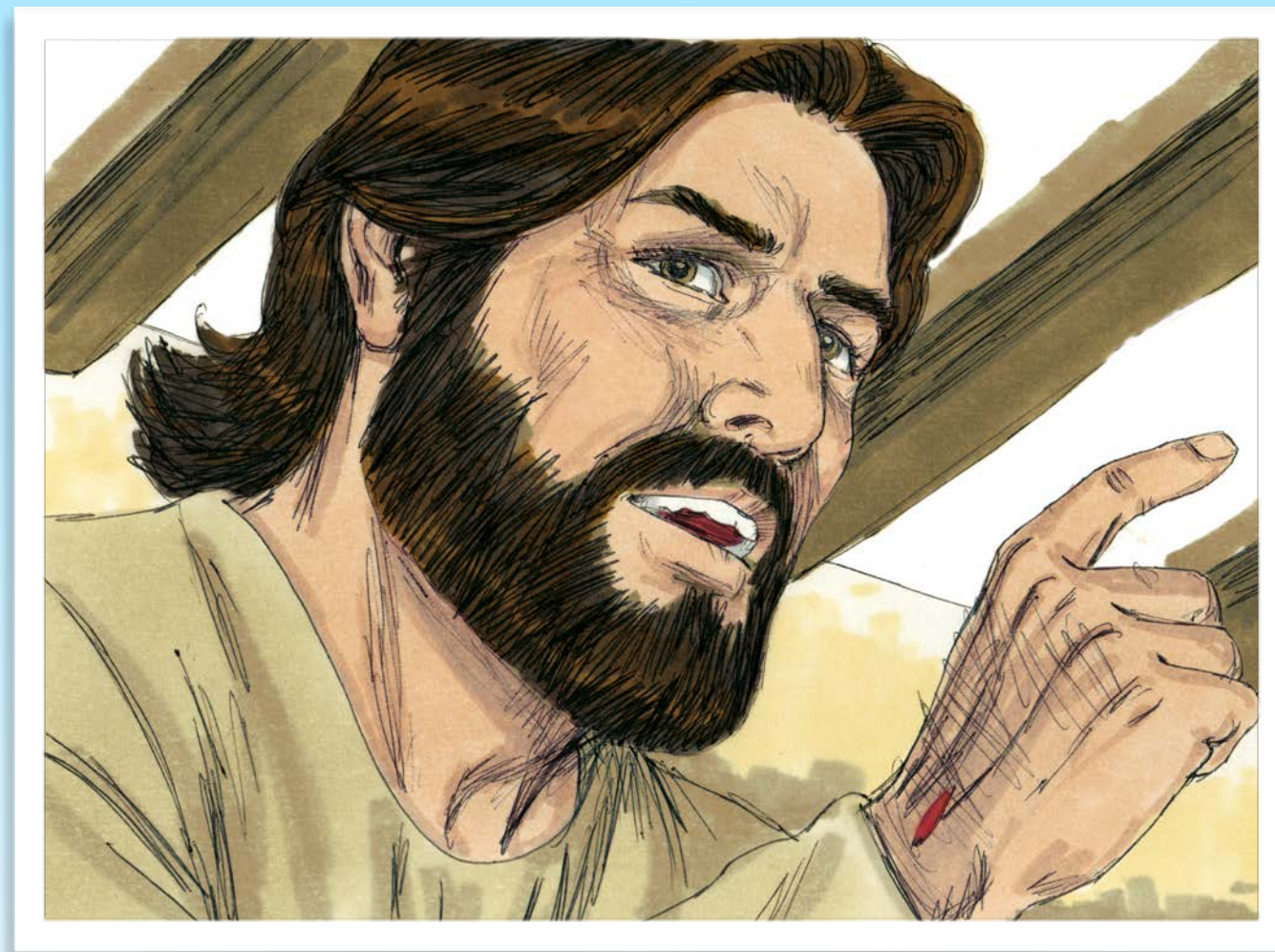
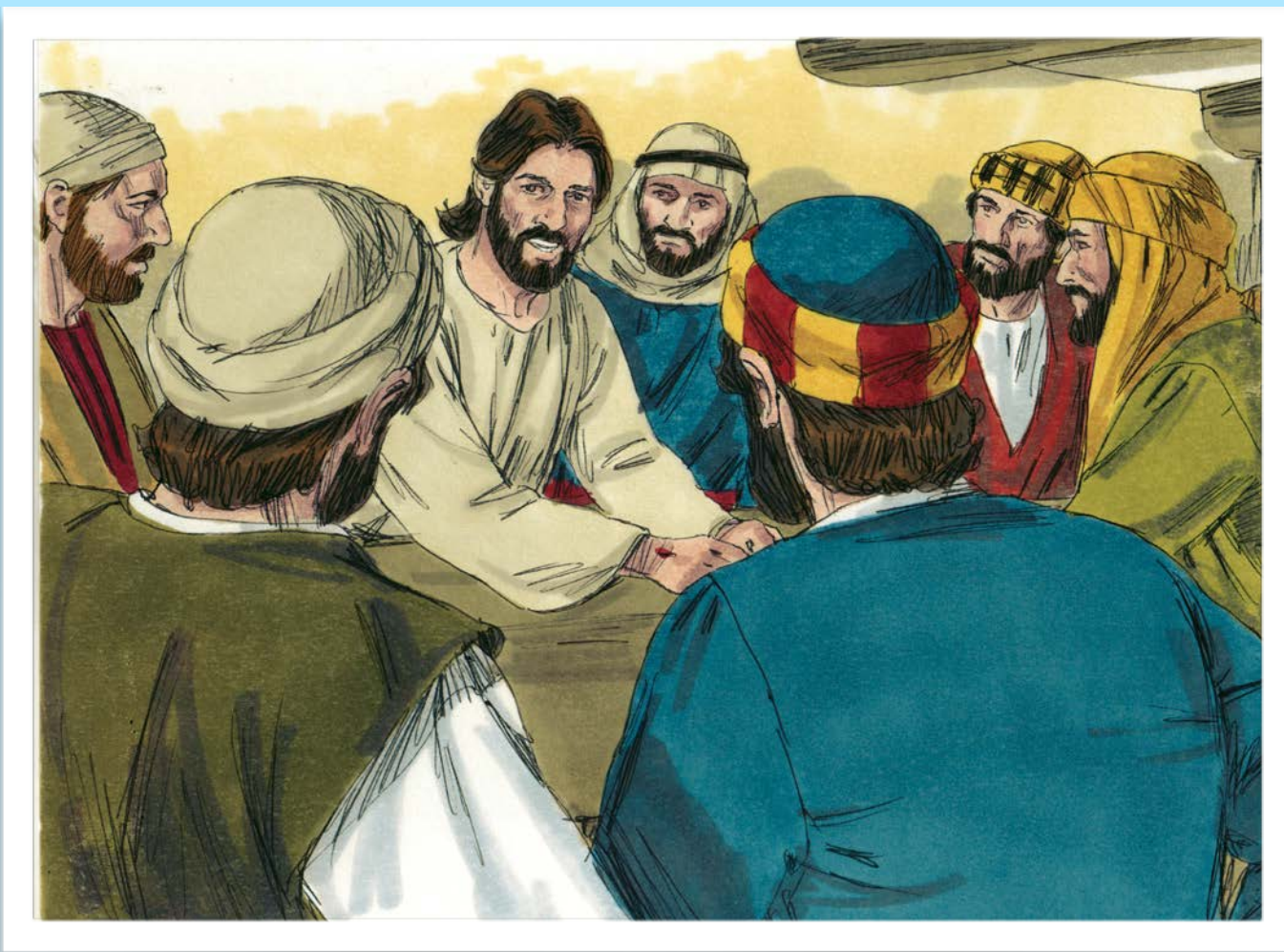
When they got to Emmaus the three men had dinner together. Jesus took a loaf of bread and broke it, just as he had done at his last supper. It was then that the disciples finally realised who he was. Straight away they raced back to tell the other disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead.



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While the disciples were explaining what had happened, Jesus appeared. "Peace be with you," he said. "Don't be upset, and don't let all your doubting questions take over. Look at me closely - it is really me!" He explained to them everything that he had told them before he had died had now been fulfilled. "You can see now how it is written that the Messiah suffers, rises from the dead and then a total life-change through the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in his name to all nations. You are the first to see and hear this. Now you must go and spread the good news. Teach people all the things I taught you and I will be with you as you do this, day after day until the end of the age."



Jesus spent some more time with his disciples explaining to them what to do, then he ascended to heaven to be with the Father.



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There are lots of characters involved in the Easter Story who would have had very different opinions about the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection.

How do you think the disciples might have felt when they were having the Passover meal with Jesus?

How do you think the soldiers might have felt when they were taking Jesus to be crucified?

How do you think the disciples might have felt when they saw Jesus dying on the cross?

How do you think they might have felt when they realised that Jesus had risen from the dead?



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Plenary:

a) Jesus shares bread and wine with his disciples.

b) Jesus washes his disciples' feet.

c) Judas arranges to give Jesus to the high priests in exchange for silver.

d) The women go to the tomb to find it is empty.

e) Jesus goes to pray in the garden of Gethsemane.

f) Jesus appears to the disciples and tells them to spread the good news.

g) Jesus is flogged and given a crown of thorns.

h) Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey.

i) Jesus is crucified.

j) Jesus is arrested.

k) Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb.

l) Jesus ascends to heaven.

Can you put these sentences in the right order to show the events of the Easter Story?



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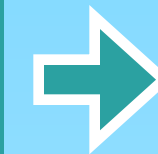
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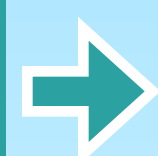


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Did you get it right?



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