

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ

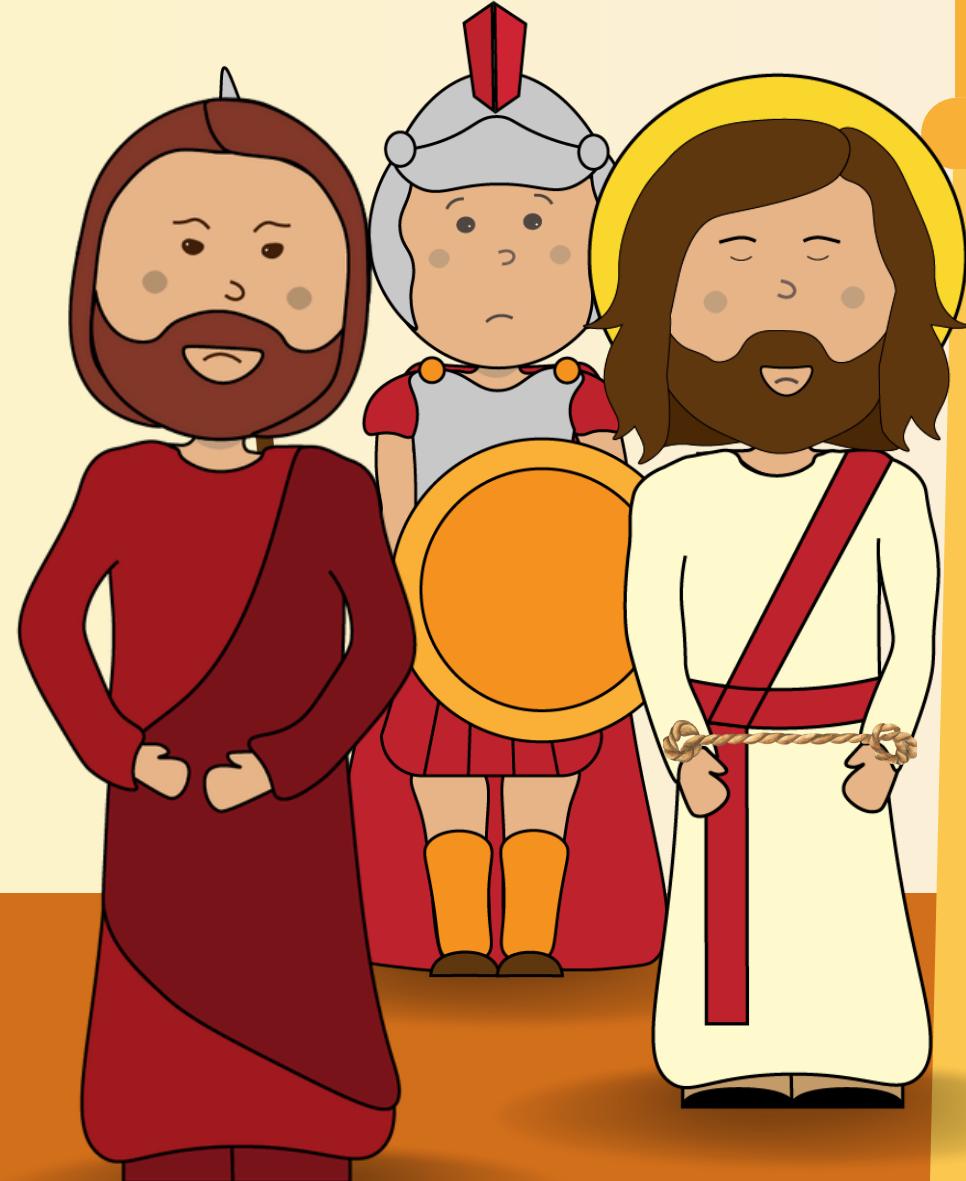
Matthew 27:11-54

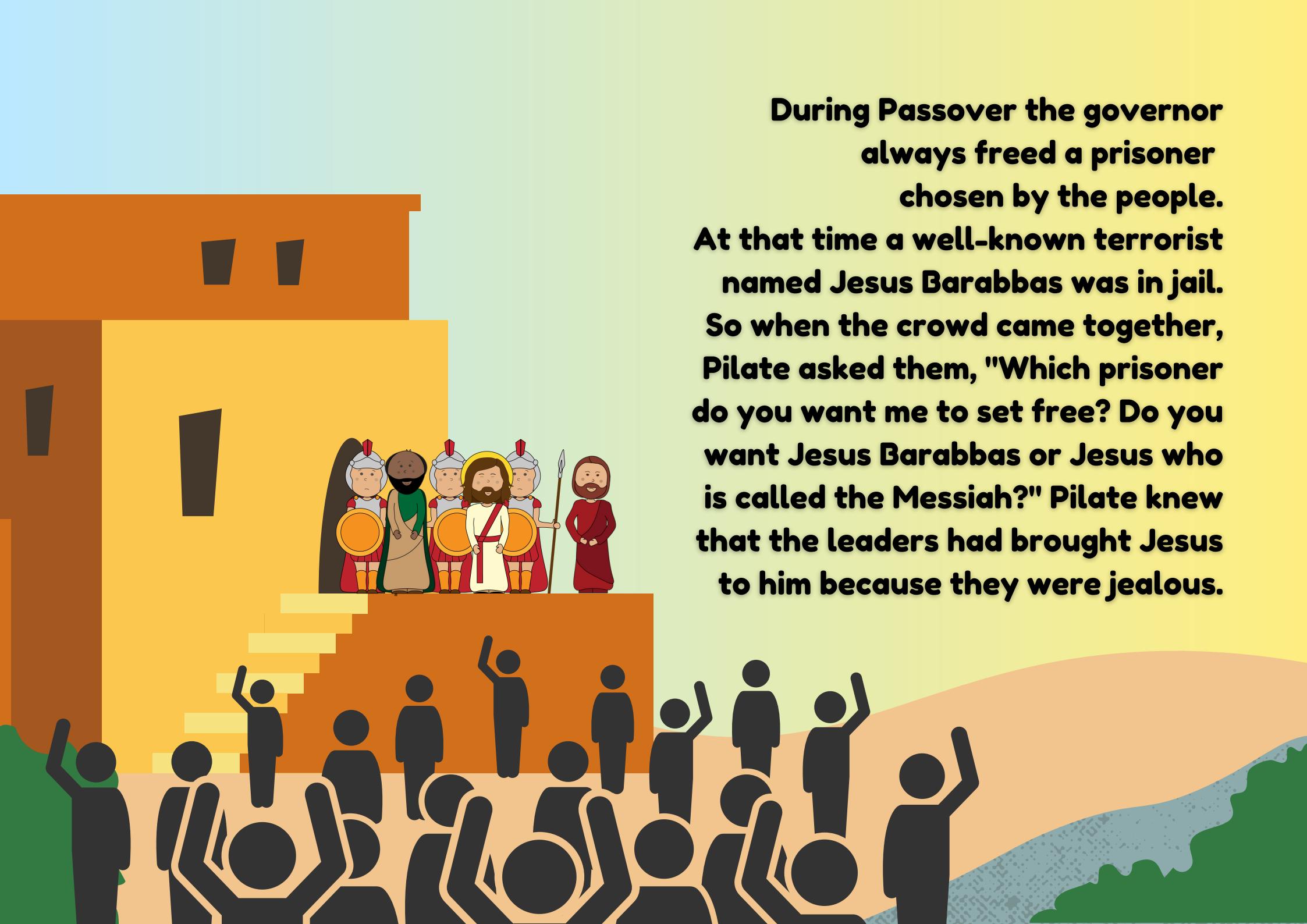


Jesus was brought before Pilate the governor, who asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" "Those are your words!" Jesus answered.

And when the chief priests and leaders brought their charges against him, he did not say a thing. Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear what crimes they say you have done?"

But Jesus did not say anything, and the governor was greatly amazed.





During Passover the governor always freed a prisoner chosen by the people.

At that time a well-known terrorist named Jesus Barabbas was in jail. So when the crowd came together, Pilate asked them, "Which prisoner do you want me to set free? Do you want Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate knew that the leaders had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous.



**While Pilate was judging the case,
his wife sent him a message. It said, "Don't have anything to do
with that innocent man. I have had nightmares because of him."**

But the chief priests and the leaders convinced the crowds to ask for Barabbas to be set free and for Jesus to be killed.

Pilate asked the crowd again, "Which of these two men do you want me to set free?"

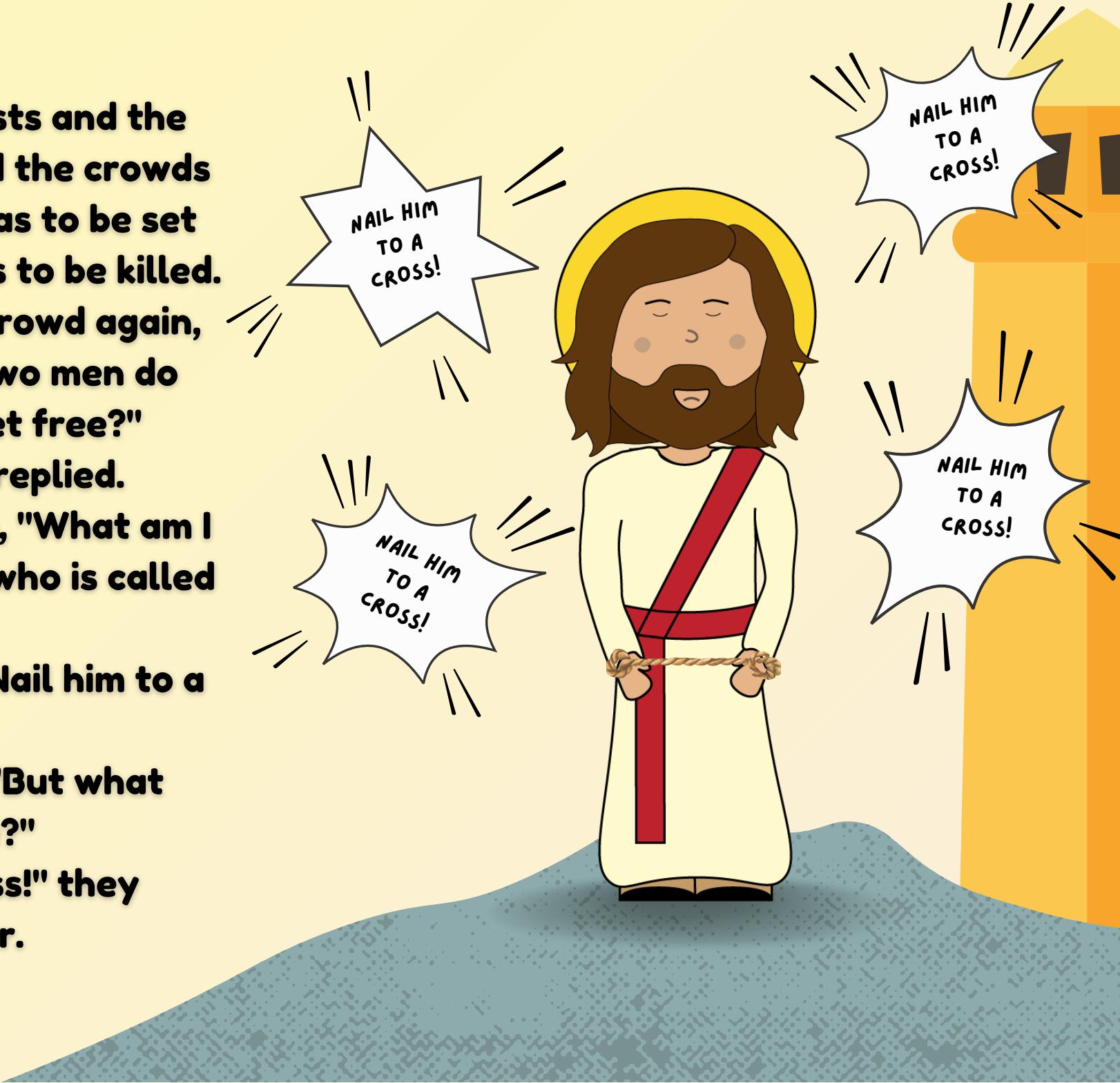
"Barabbas!" they replied.

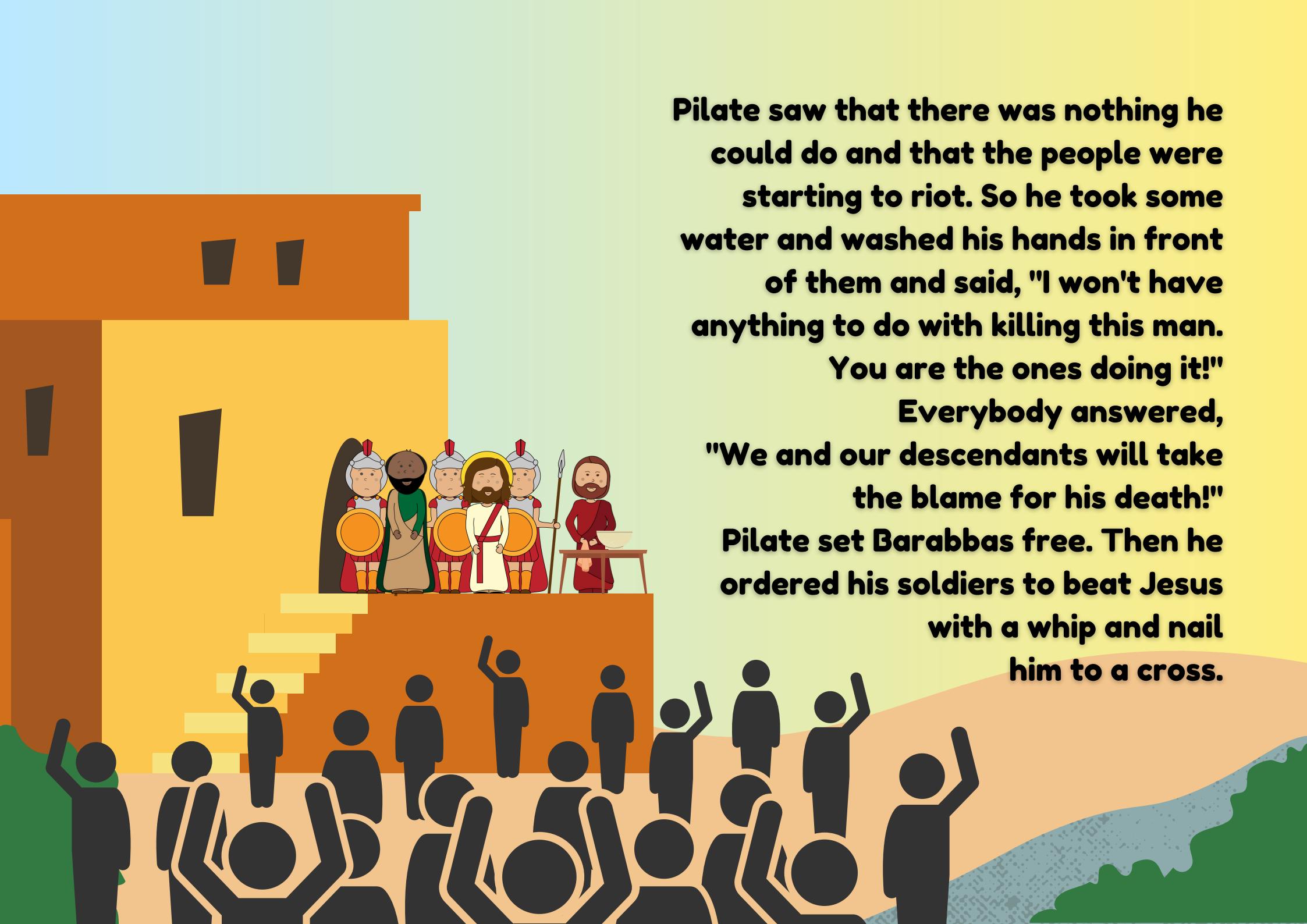
Pilate asked them, "What am I to do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?"

They all yelled, "Nail him to a cross!"

Pilate answered, "But what crime has he done?"

"Nail him to a cross!" they yelled even louder.





Pilate saw that there was nothing he could do and that the people were starting to riot. So he took some water and washed his hands in front of them and said, "I won't have anything to do with killing this man. You are the ones doing it!"

Everybody answered, "We and our descendants will take the blame for his death!"

Pilate set Barabbas free. Then he ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus with a whip and nail him to a cross.

The governor's soldiers led Jesus into the fortress and brought together the rest of the troops. They stripped off Jesus' clothes and put a scarlet robe on him.

They made a crown out of thorn branches and placed it on his head, and they put a stick in his right hand.

The soldiers kneeled down and pretended to worship him. They made fun of him and shouted, "Hey, you king of the Jews!"

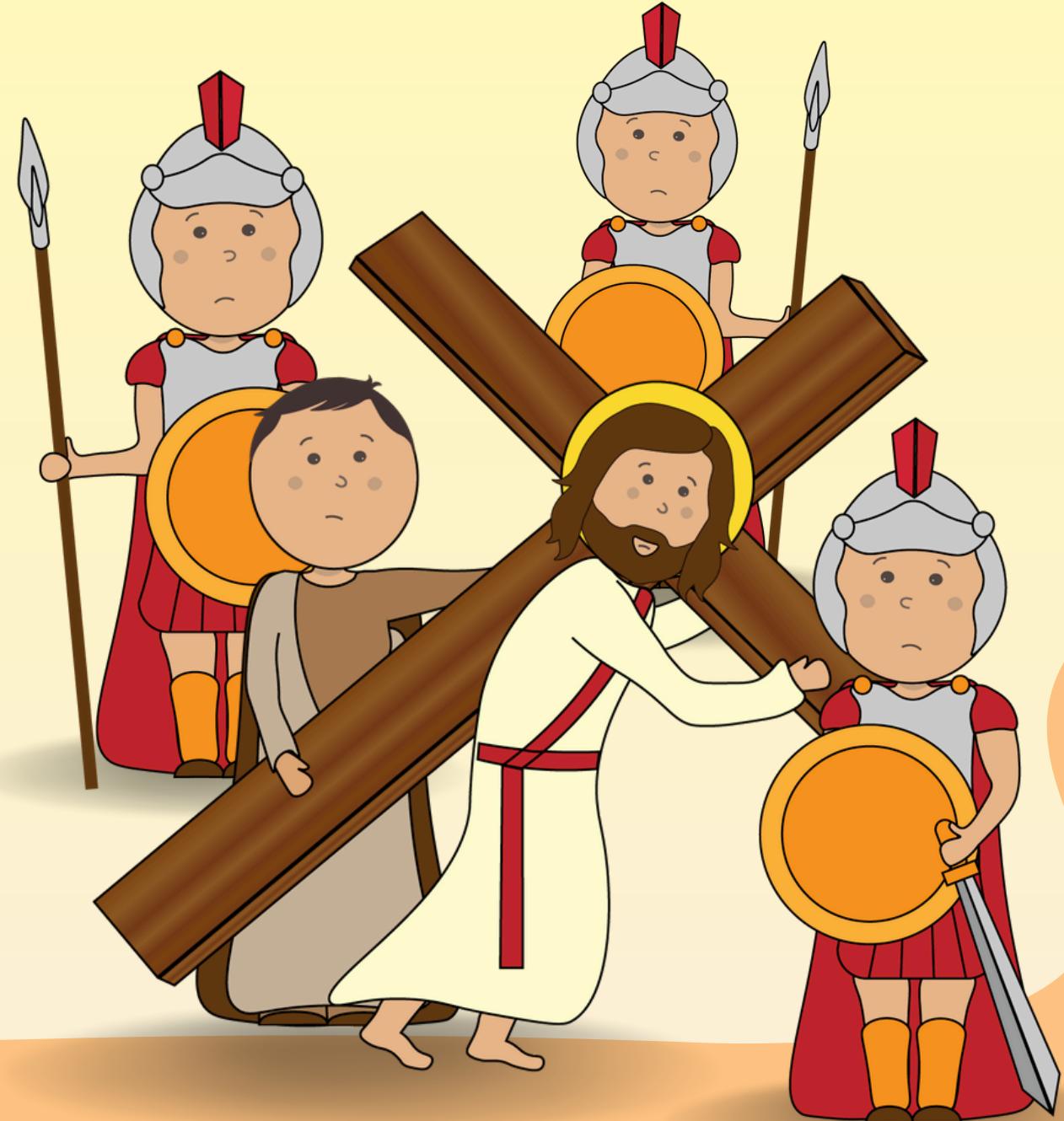
Then they spit on him. They took the stick from him and beat him on the head with it.



When the soldiers had finished making fun of Jesus, they took off the robe.

They put his own clothes back on him and led him off to be nailed to a cross.

On the way they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross.



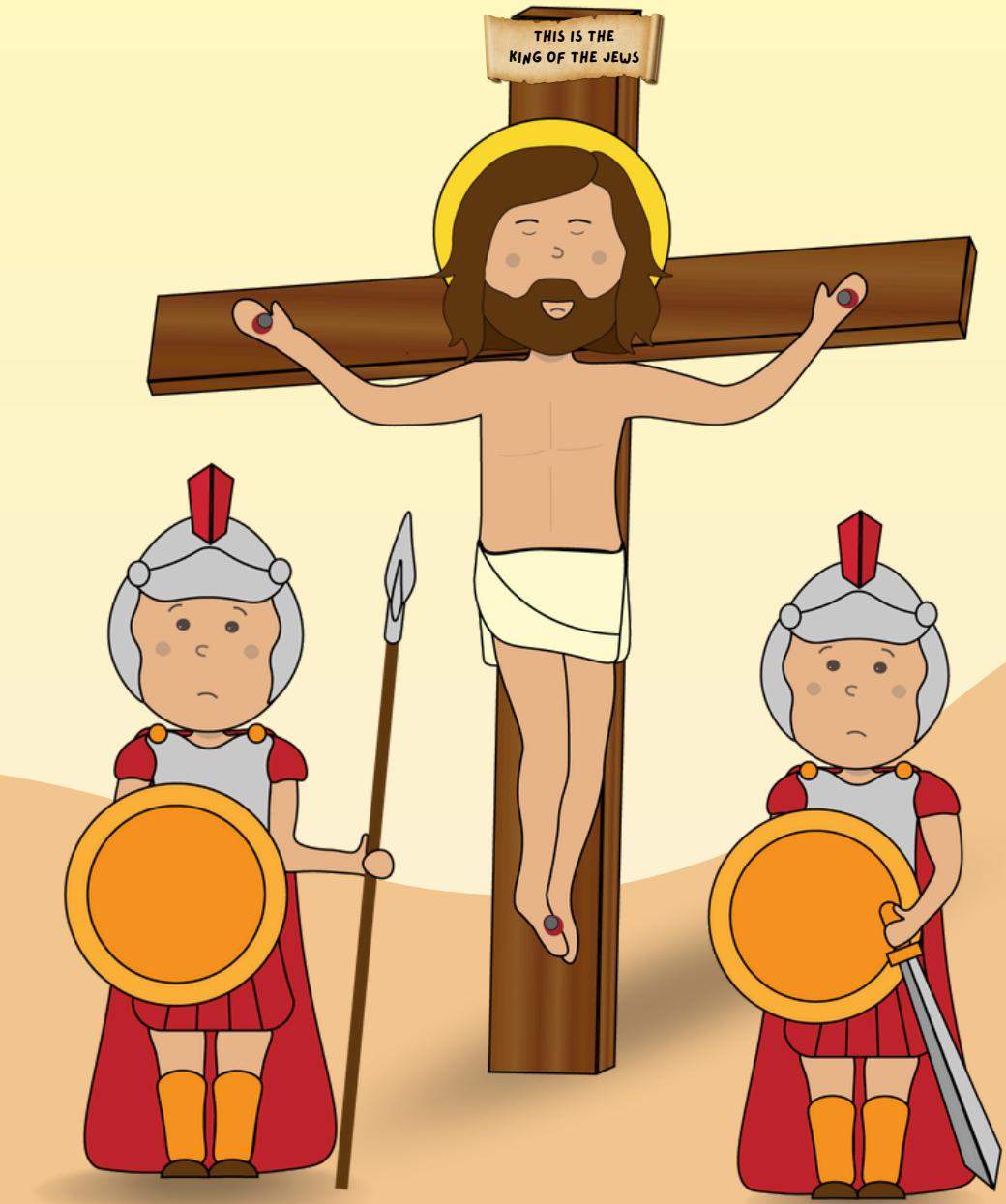
They came to a place named Golgotha, which means "Place of the Skull."

There they gave Jesus some wine mixed with a drug to ease the pain.

But when Jesus tasted what it was, he refused to drink it.

The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross and gambled to see who would get his clothes.

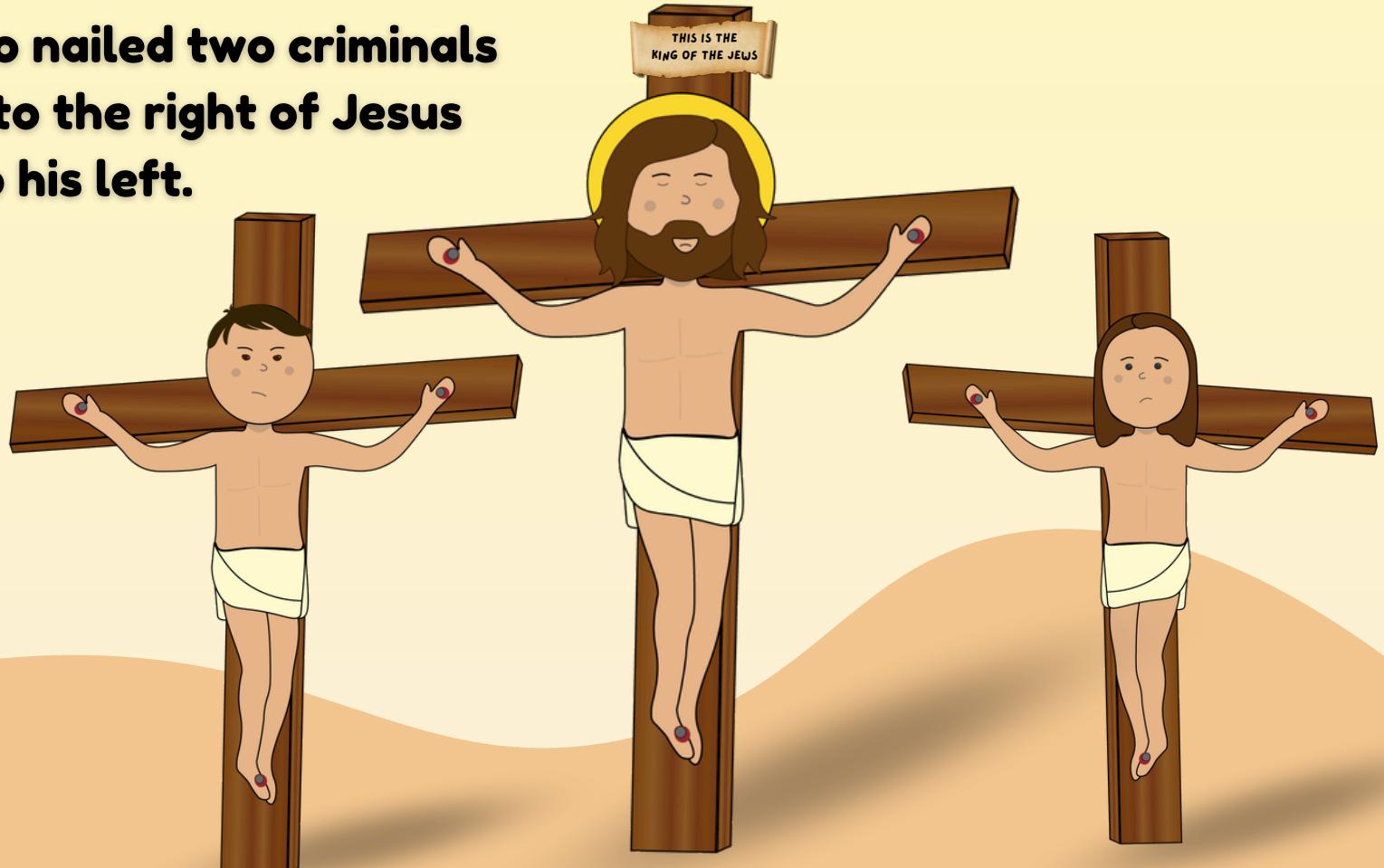
Then they sat down to guard him.



Above his head they put a sign that told why he was nailed there.

It said, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

The soldiers also nailed two criminals on crosses, one to the right of Jesus and the other to his left.



People who passed by said terrible things about Jesus. They shook their heads and shouted, "So you're the one who claimed you could tear down the temple and build it again in three days!"

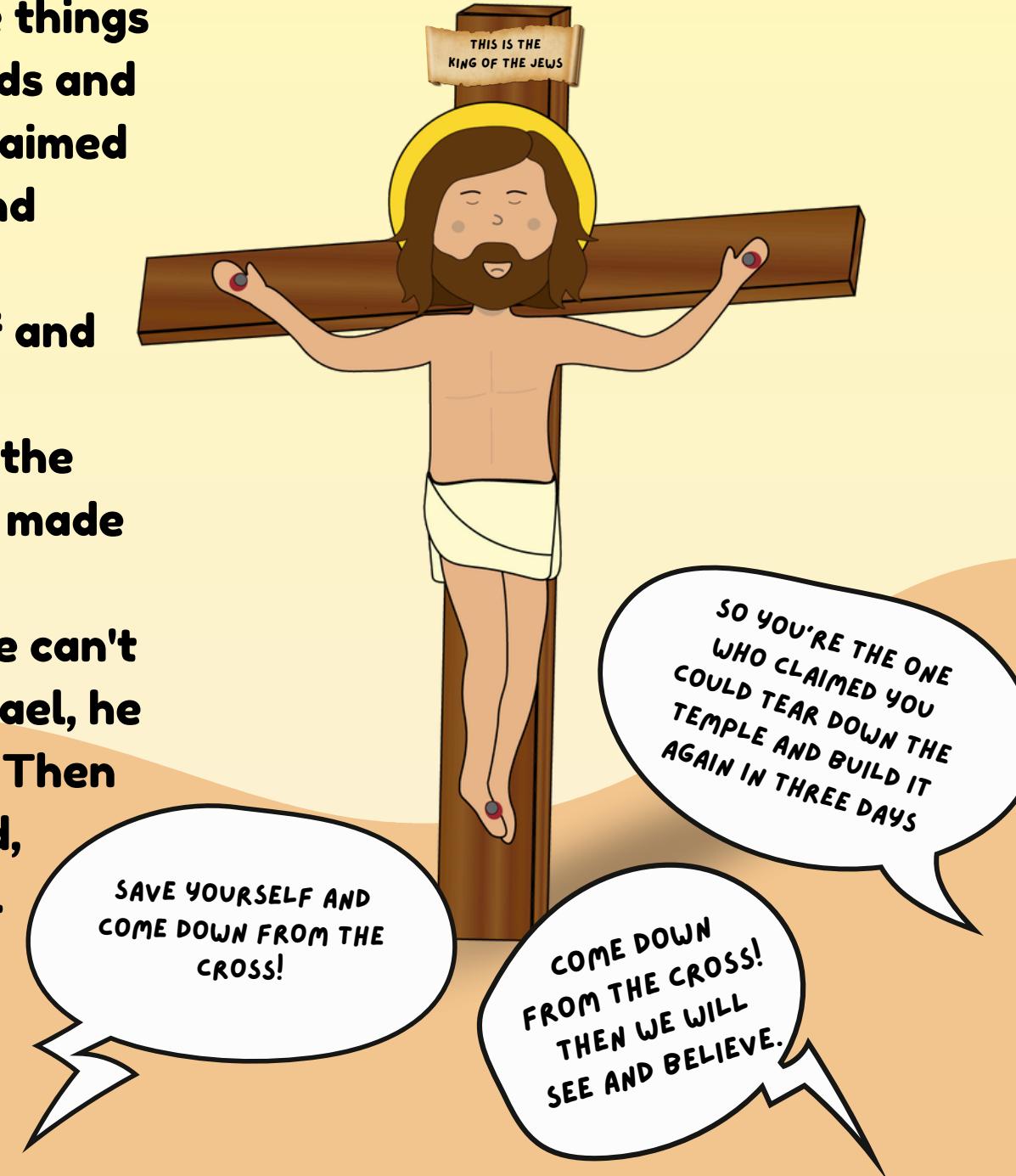
If you are God's Son, save yourself and come down from the cross!"

The chief priests, the leaders, and the teachers of the Law of Moses also made fun of Jesus.

They said, "He saved others, but he can't save himself. If he is the king of Israel, he should come down from the cross! Then we will believe him. He trusted God, so let God save him, if he wants to.

He even said he was God's Son."

The two criminals also said cruel things to Jesus.



At noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until three o'clock.

Then about that time Jesus shouted,

"Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"

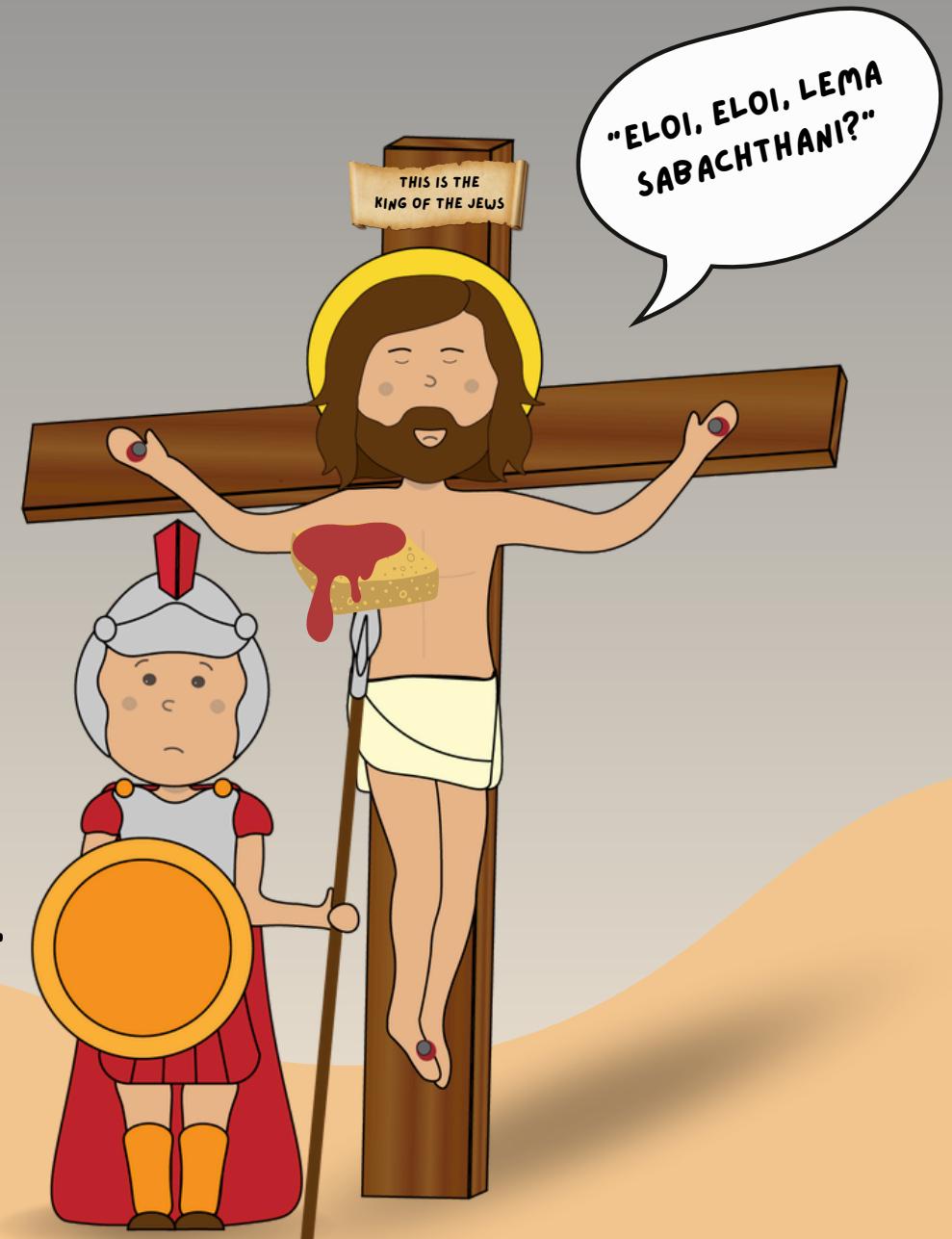
which means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?"

Some of the people standing there heard Jesus and said, "He's calling for Elijah."

One of them at once ran and grabbed a sponge. He soaked it in wine, then put it on a stick and held it up to Jesus.

Others said, "Wait! Let's see if Elijah will come and save him."

Once again Jesus shouted, and then he died.



At once the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, and rocks split apart. Graves opened, and many of God's people were raised to life. Then after Jesus had risen to life, they came out of their graves and went into the holy city, where many people saw them.

The officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus felt the earthquake and saw everything else that happened. They were frightened and said, "This man really was God's Son!"

