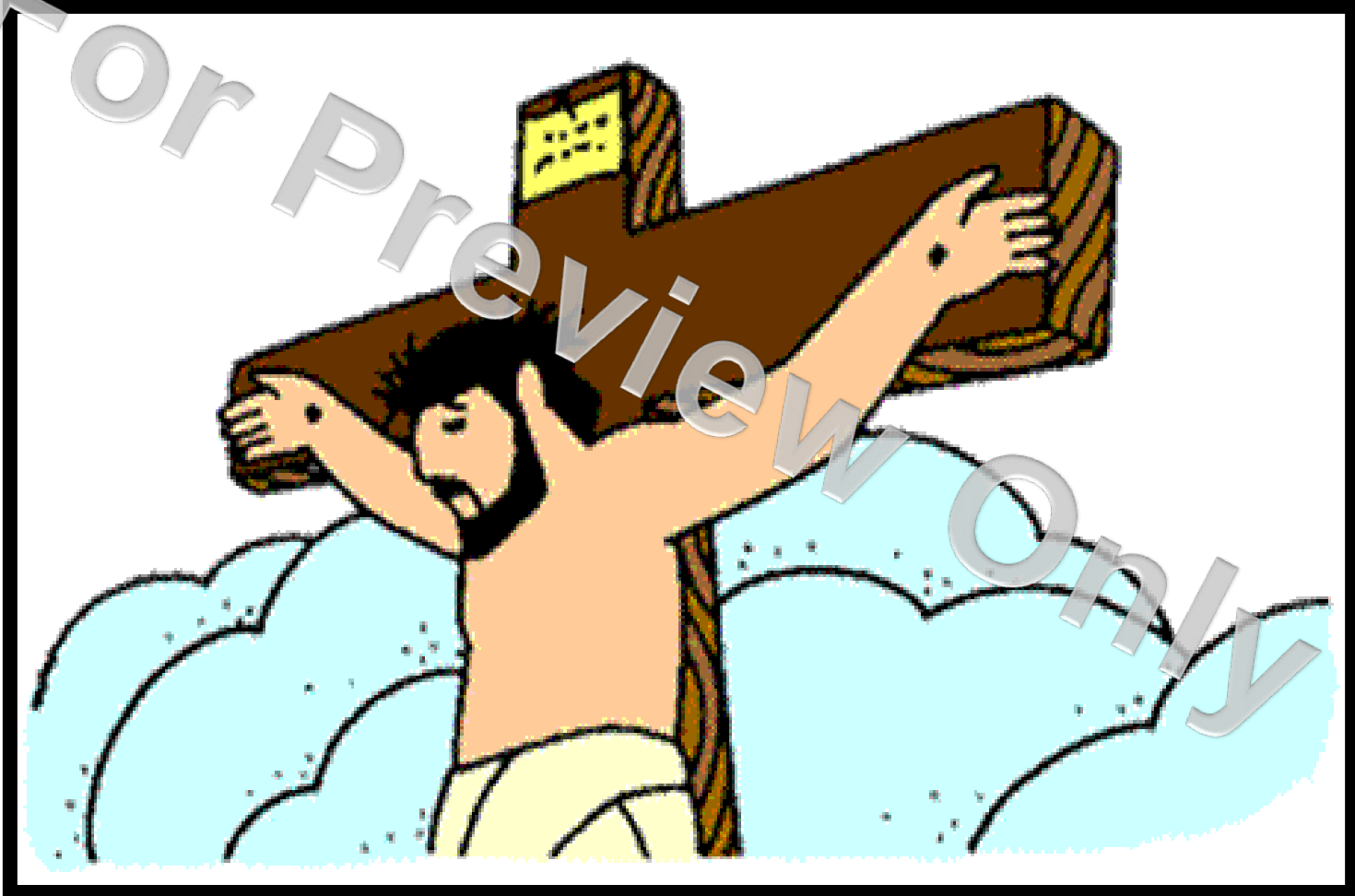


The Easter Story



Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Jesus and his disciples were walking to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.



As he rode into Jerusalem, people saw Jesus coming and covered the path with their garments and palm leaves. They shouted 'Hosanna' and 'Jesus is the King.'



Most people were very happy, but this did not include some of the priests who were jealous of Jesus.

They did not like it that ordinary people liked him so much.

The priests and elders gave Judas, one of Jesus's disciples, thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus. From then on he waited for his chance to get Jesus into trouble.

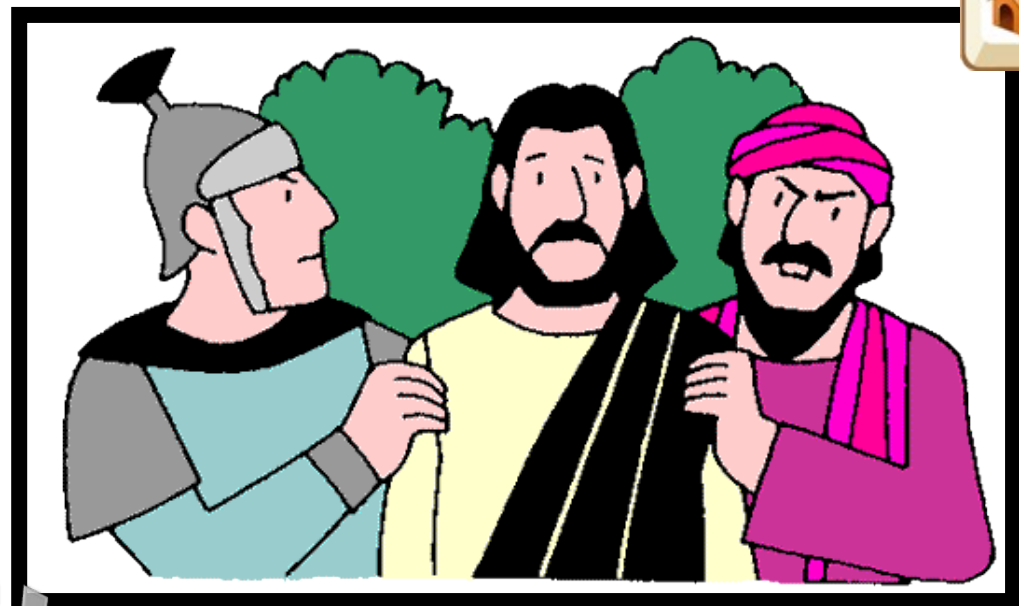


Jesus told his friends about the people in Jerusalem who did not like him and that the next day he would be arrested and nailed to a cross.

So that they would remember him Jesus broke some bread and said 'This is my body. Take it and eat it and remember me.' Then he took a cup of wine and told them that it was his blood. They should drink it and remember him.



Jesus and his friends walked to the garden of Gethsemane.



Jesus was very sad and asked Peter, James and John to watch over him while he prayed. As he prayed, his friends fell asleep as they were very tired. Just then, Judas arrived with many men who carried swords. They had been sent by the priests to arrest Jesus.

Judas went up to Jesus and kissed him on the cheek. This was Judas' way of picking out Jesus to the soldiers.



Straight away two of the guards seized Jesus. Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of these men. Jesus told him he should not have done that. He touched the man and his ear was healed. The disciples were afraid and ran for their lives.



The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus to be guilty. They found it difficult to find anything that he had done wrong, even though they paid people to lie about him.

Eventually they asked him if he was the Son of God. Jesus replied 'I am.' This was enough. They said this was an insult to God. Jesus was taken before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor.

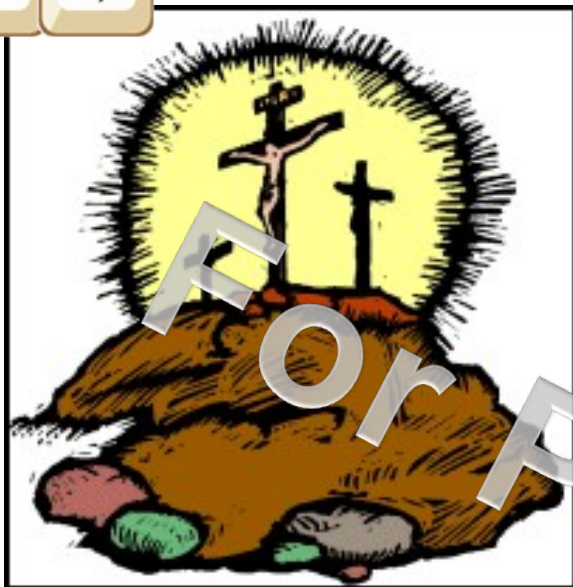


After seeing Pontius Pilate The soldiers took Jesus away, removed his clothes and dressed him in a purple robe. On his head they placed a crown of thorns.



Mocking him they knelt down before him and said 'Hail, King of the Jews'. As the blood ran down his forehead they made fun of him. Jesus never said a word.

Then they took him away and laid a heavy wooden cross on his back.



Jesus was made to carry the cross out of the city gates and up a nearby hill. On the way some of the crowd cheered, others wept.

On top of the hill Jesus was put on the cross and nails were put through his hands and feet. The cross was raised up. Two robbers were also put on crosses, one on either side of Jesus. One of the robbers was feeling very afraid. Jesus spoke to him and comforted him.



Jesus' mother watched him on the cross. He called to one of his friends to look after her now. Many people in the crowd were cruel. They said 'You saved other people, why don't you save yourself now?'

At noon darkness fell on the land. It lasted a few hours.

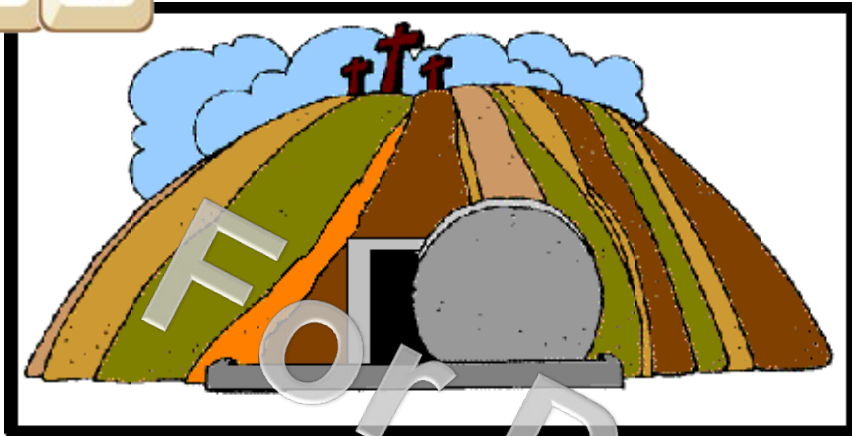


Jesus cried out aloud, 'My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?' In the sadness and the dark, Jesus died.



At the moment Jesus died, the earth shook. One of the soldiers who had been keeping guard said 'This man was the Son of God.' Many people began to feel afraid.

Some of the friends of Jesus and his mother waited for permission from Pontius Pilate to take Jesus down from the cross. They laid the body in a tomb cut in the rock. The tomb was sealed with a large stone.



Two days later a friend of Jesus known as Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.

She was astonished to find that the huge stone had been moved and the body had gone. She ran to tell Peter and John who only found burial sheets in the tomb. Mary, weeping, was approached by a man she did not know, who asked her why she was crying. She explained that it was because they had taken her Lord away. The man was Jesus risen from the dead.



Believing him to be the gardener, Mary asked if he knew where Jesus body had been taken.

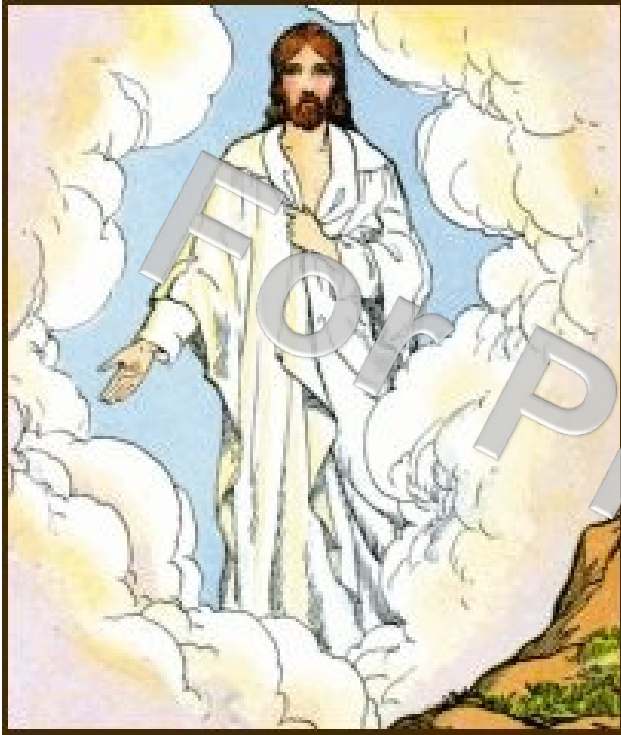
Jesus said 'Mary, it is I'.

Mary was full of joy. Jesus told her to tell his friends that she had seen him and that he would soon be with his father in Heaven. Mary ran back to tell all their friends the news. At first not everyone believed her.



Jesus appeared to the disciples several times. Once, when they had been fishing on the Sea of Galilee, he called to them from the shore. He asked them if they had caught many fish. They replied 'Nothing.'

Jesus told them to drop their nets on the right side of the boat. They did this and when they pulled in their nets, they were full of fish. It was only then that they realised that the man was Jesus. They came ashore and had a meal of fish with him.



Later Jesus spoke to all of the disciples telling them that once he had left them they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit. He wanted them to spread the word of God throughout the world.

Jesus was then taken up into heaven. Two angels appeared and told his friends not to be sad because one day Jesus would return.