

THE STORY

Jesus stood before Pilate. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked.

"It is as you say," replied Jesus.

When a large crowd had gathered, since it was the custom to release a prisoner at Passover, Pilate asked, "Which of these do you want me to release to you, Barabbas or Jesus?"

"Barabbas," they answered.

"What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that an uprising was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said.

"Let his blood be on us and our children!" all the people answered.

Then Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. Then with the whole company of soldiers Jesus was stripped and they put a scarlet robe on him, and twisted a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt before him, and mocked him and said, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They spit on him, and struck him on the head again. Then they put his own clothes on him and led him away to be crucified.

As they were going out, they forced Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross. They came to Golgotha, and there they crucified Jesus. The soldiers divided up Jesus' clothes by casting lots. Above Jesus' head they placed the charge against him: **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.** Two robbers were crucified with him.

Those who passed by hurled insults at him. The chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. The two robbers crucified with him heaped insults on him.

From the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice and gave up his spirit.

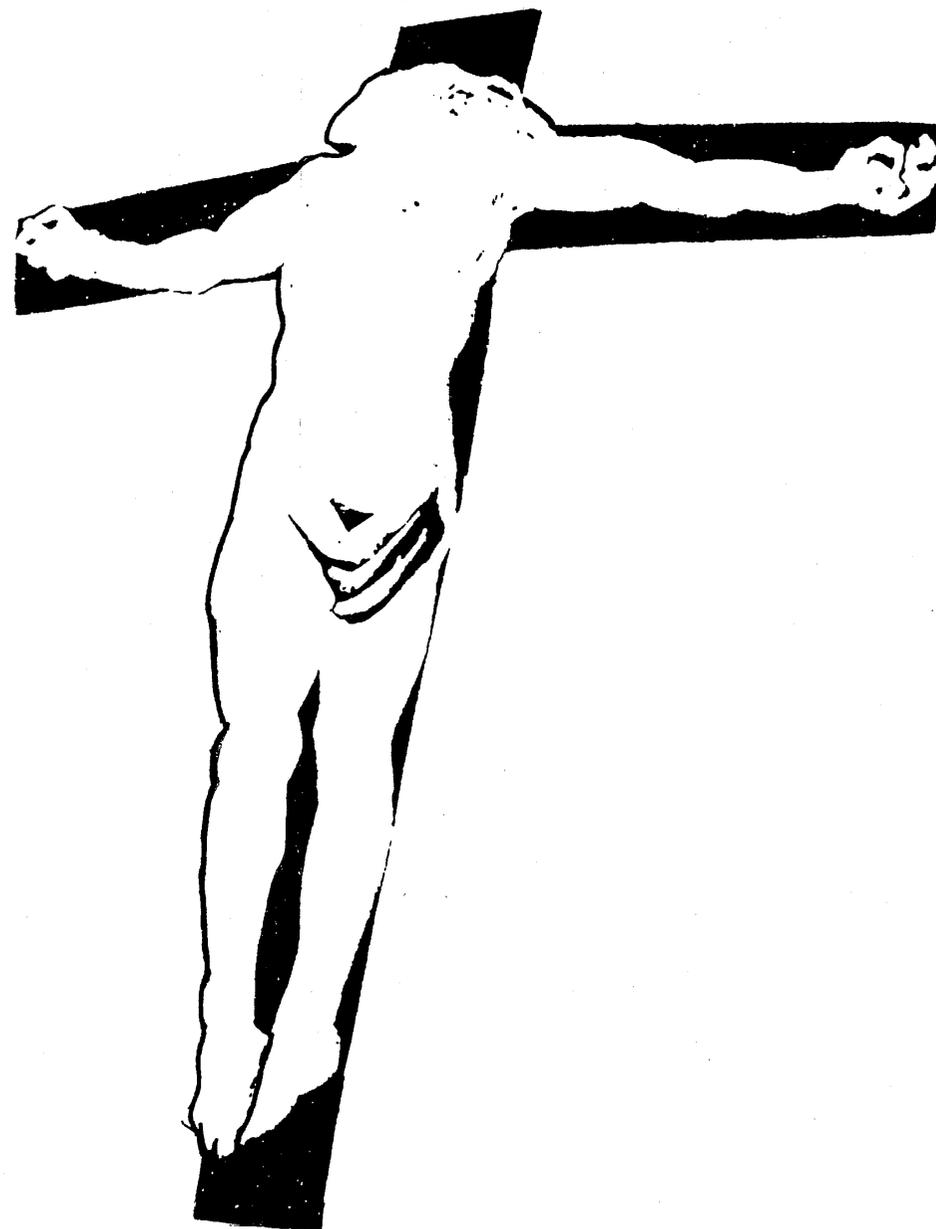
At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. Tombs broke open and holy people were raised to life and came out of the tombs. When the centurion and the guards with him saw what had happened, they were terrified and exclaimed, "Surely this was the Son of God!"

FAITH AND FAMILY TIME

- Talk about the story picture and the children's activities. Read more about Jesus' suffering and death in Matthew 27:11-54 or in a Bible story book.
- Take an article of badly stained clothing and let children try to wash out the stains. Our sin is like such stains. Only Jesus' suffering and death (his blood) can remove the stains of sin.
- Have a special devotion for each day of Holy Week. Matthew 27:1-11 can be read on Palm Sunday and selections from Matthew 26 and 27 during the week. Draw a symbol for the story read each day.
- On Easter Saturday, paint some eggs with Easter symbols.
- Invite some friends to worship with you on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, we are so bad but you are so good. Our sins are so great that you had to die for them in order to save us. Thank you for loving us so much. We know we don't deserve your love. You are very good to us. Thank you. Amen.



JESUS' SUFFERING AND DEATH

Matthew 27:11-54

