



WISE KING
SOLOMON

King David was a great man of God. During his rule Israel had grown ten times larger than King Saul's kingdom. But now he could not rule any longer.

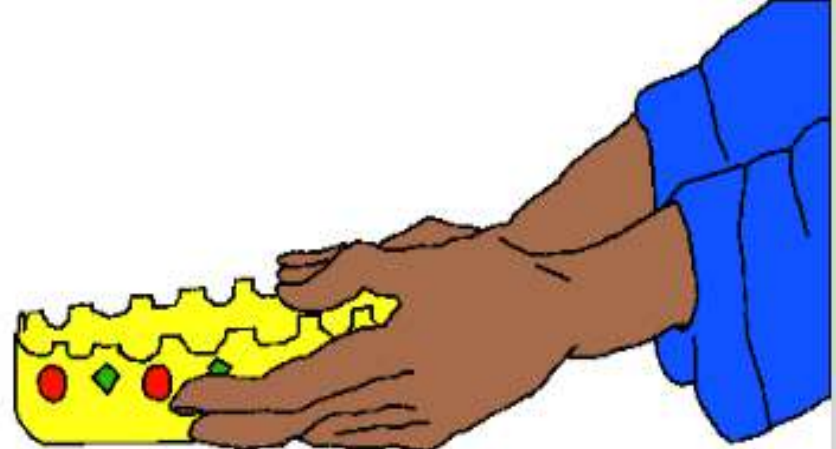
David was old. And tired. And sick! His life on earth was nearing its end.





One of David's many sons, Adonijah, told the people of Israel he would now be king. Although his name means "My Lord is God", Adonijah was not a good man. He tried to steal the throne, knowing David was too weak to resist him. But God had other plans!

David's wife Bathsheba knew her son Solomon should be king. She told David about Adonijah's plans. Sick as he was, David gathered his leaders together and publicly made Solomon king of Israel.



Solomon had no more trouble with Adonijah because the people of Israel believed David. David told them Solomon was the one God had chosen to be their king. Shortly afterwards, David died.





Before David died, he talked to Solomon about obeying God and being a good king. "Walk in God's ways, that you may prosper in all that you do," David told his son. That was good advice! Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father, David, and his kingdom was firmly established.

One night, Solomon had a dream. In his dream, God appeared to him and said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"
What would you have asked for?



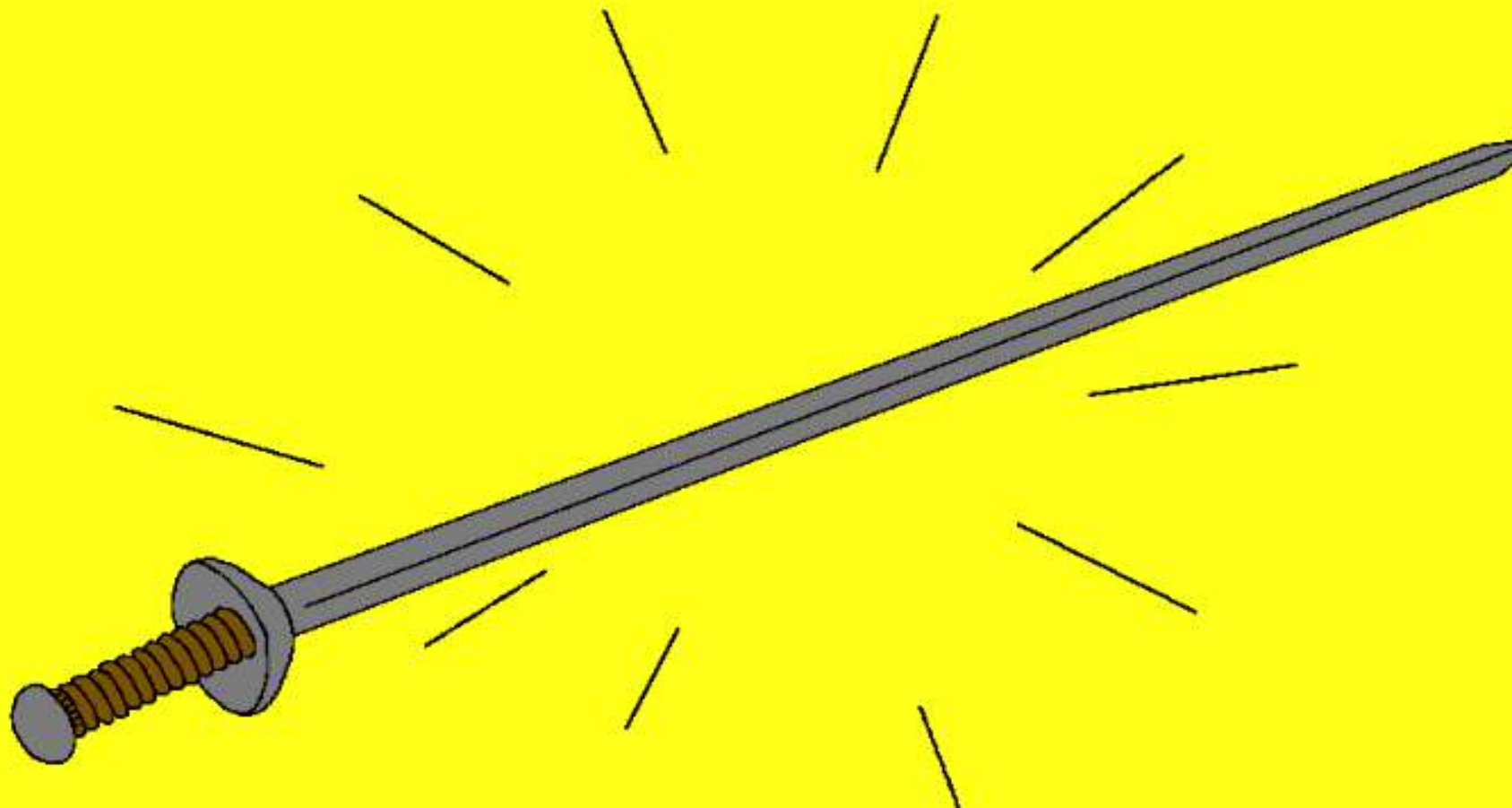
Solomon asked for wisdom to be a good king. The young king's request pleased God. Solomon got what he asked for - but God also promised him great riches and honor.



It did not take long for people to discover Solomon's wisdom. One day, two mothers came before him, with one baby. "This woman's son died in the night, and she switched her dead baby for my live one," one lady said. "No! But the living one is MY son, and the dead one is your son," the other lady said. How could the king tell which was the true mother?



Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. What do you think the king was planning to do with a sword?



And the king said, "Divide the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." Then the mother of the living baby said, "O my lord, give her the living child and by no means kill him."



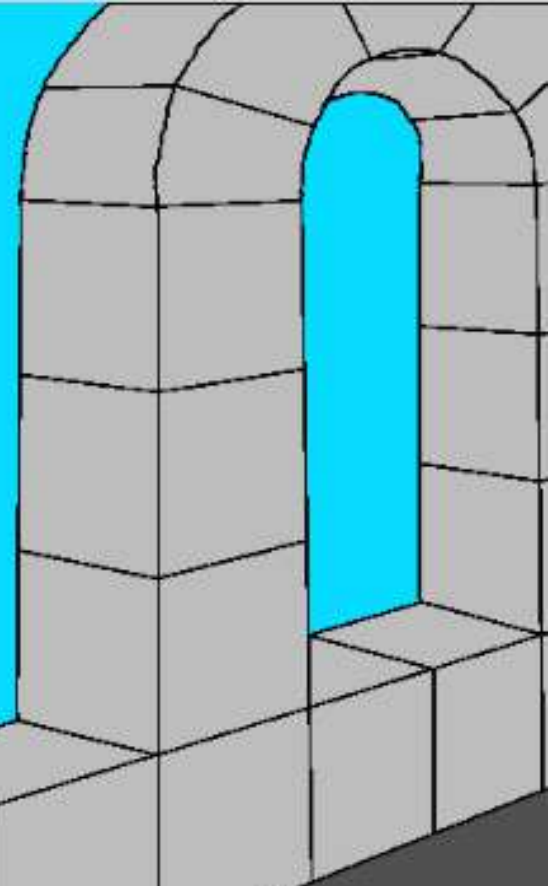
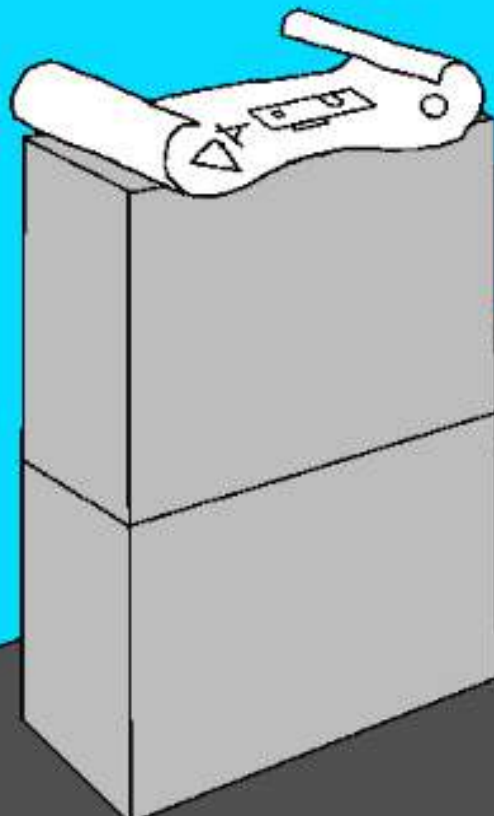
But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him."





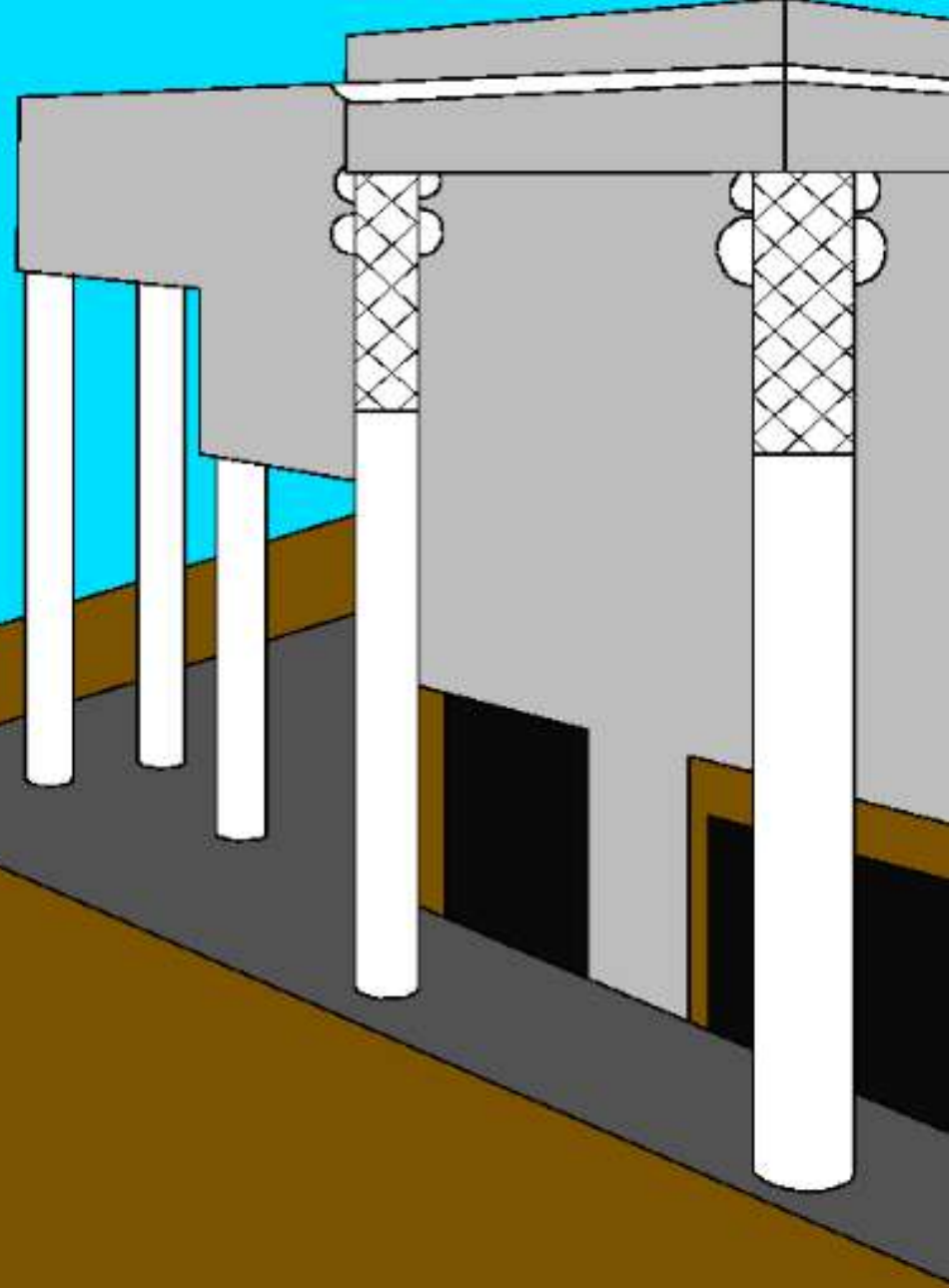
So the king said,
"Give the first woman
the living child. She
is the mother." And
all Israel heard of
the judgment, and
they greatly respected
the king. They saw
that the wisdom of
God was in him.

The people of Israel had no temple in which to worship God. When David planned to build one, God had said, "Your son shall build the house for My Name."

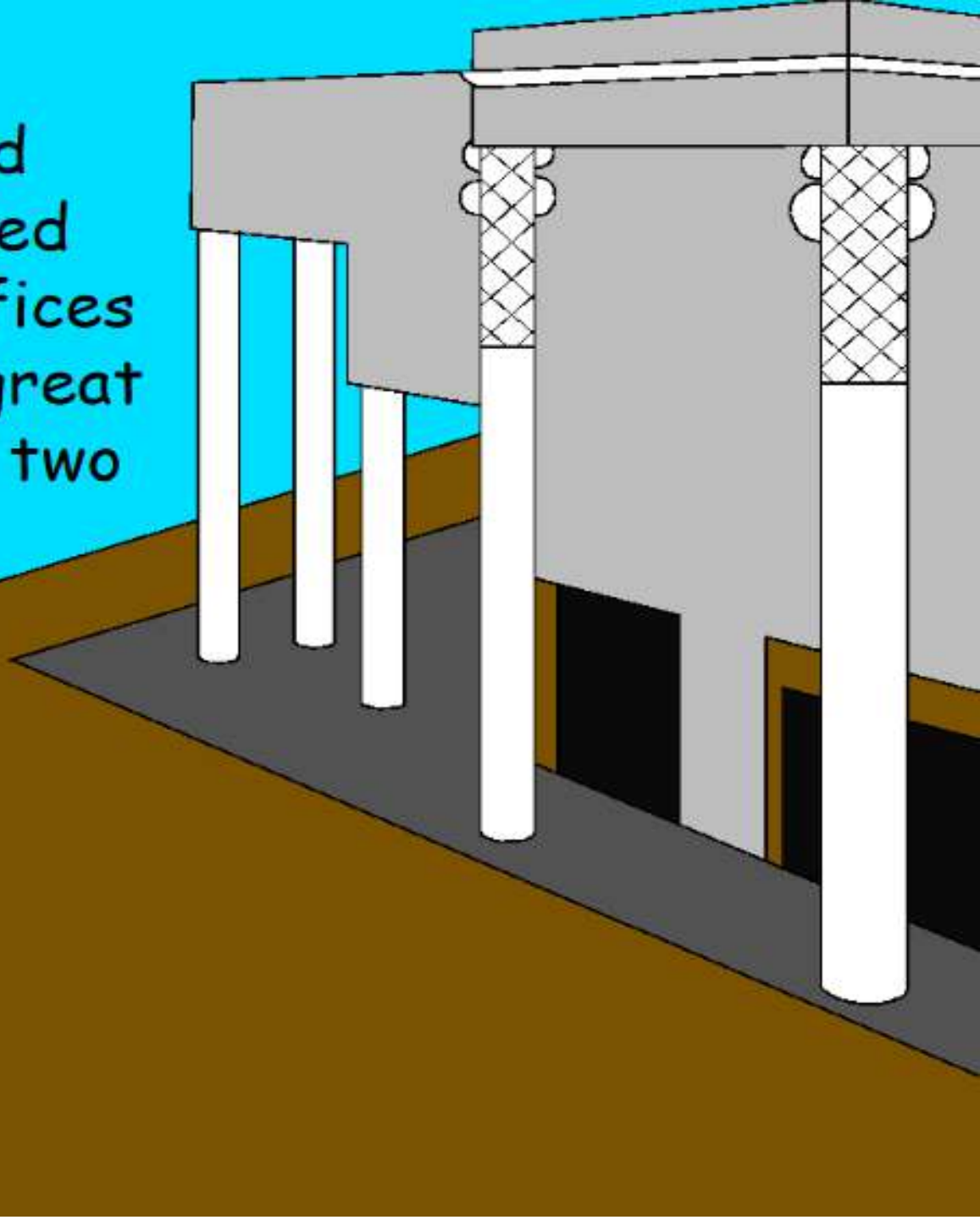
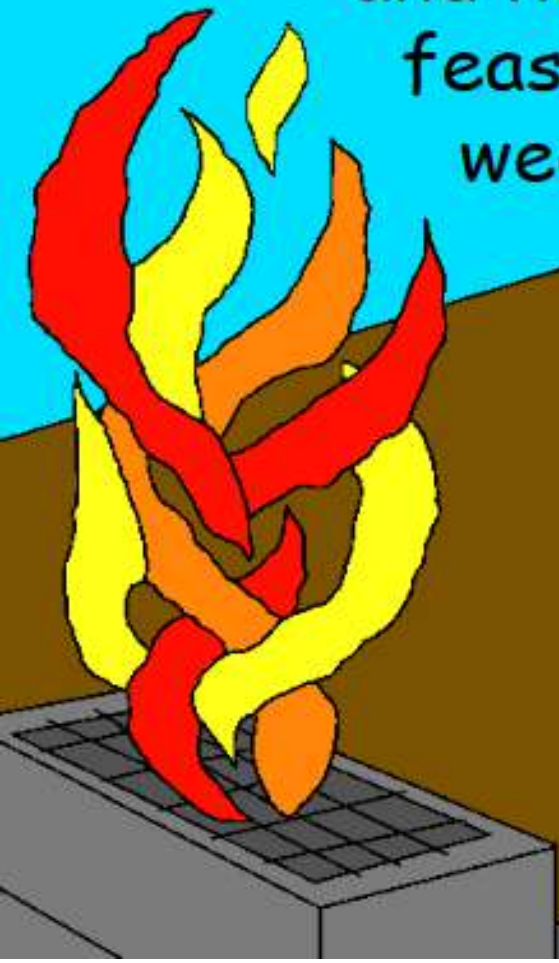


So Solomon began to build a wonderful temple at Jerusalem.

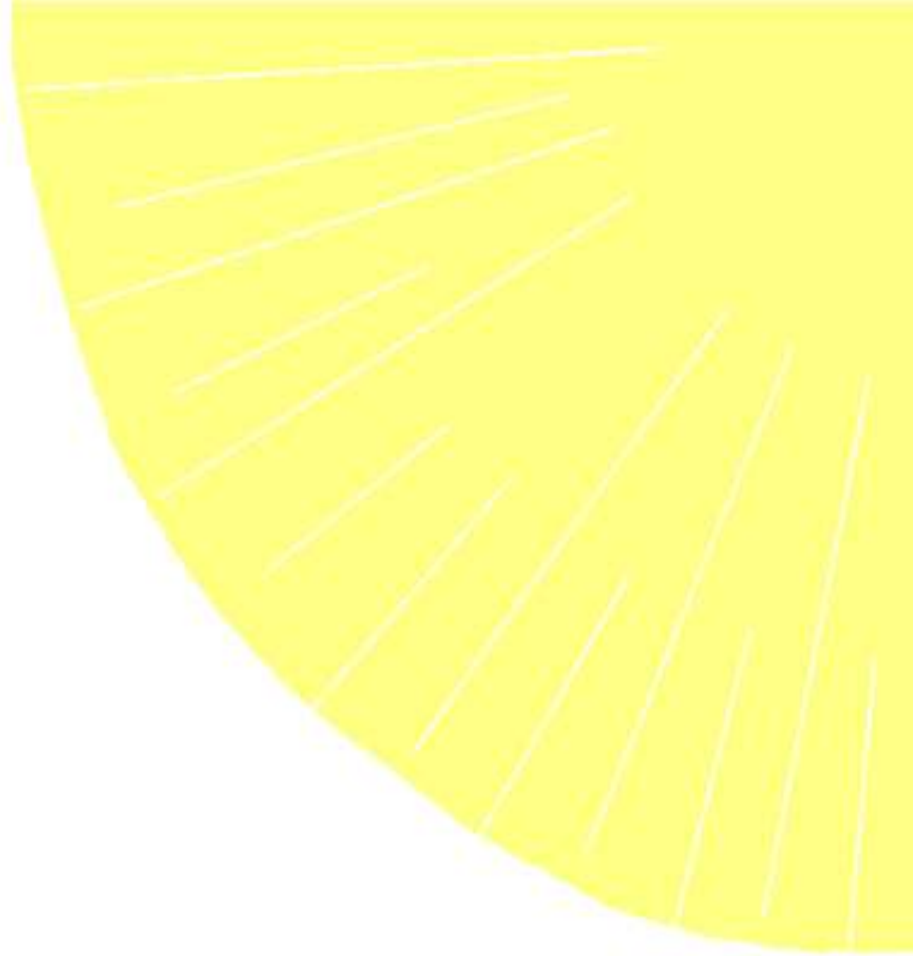
It took seven long years to build the temple. But the great day came when everybody gathered to hear Solomon dedicate the temple to the LORD.



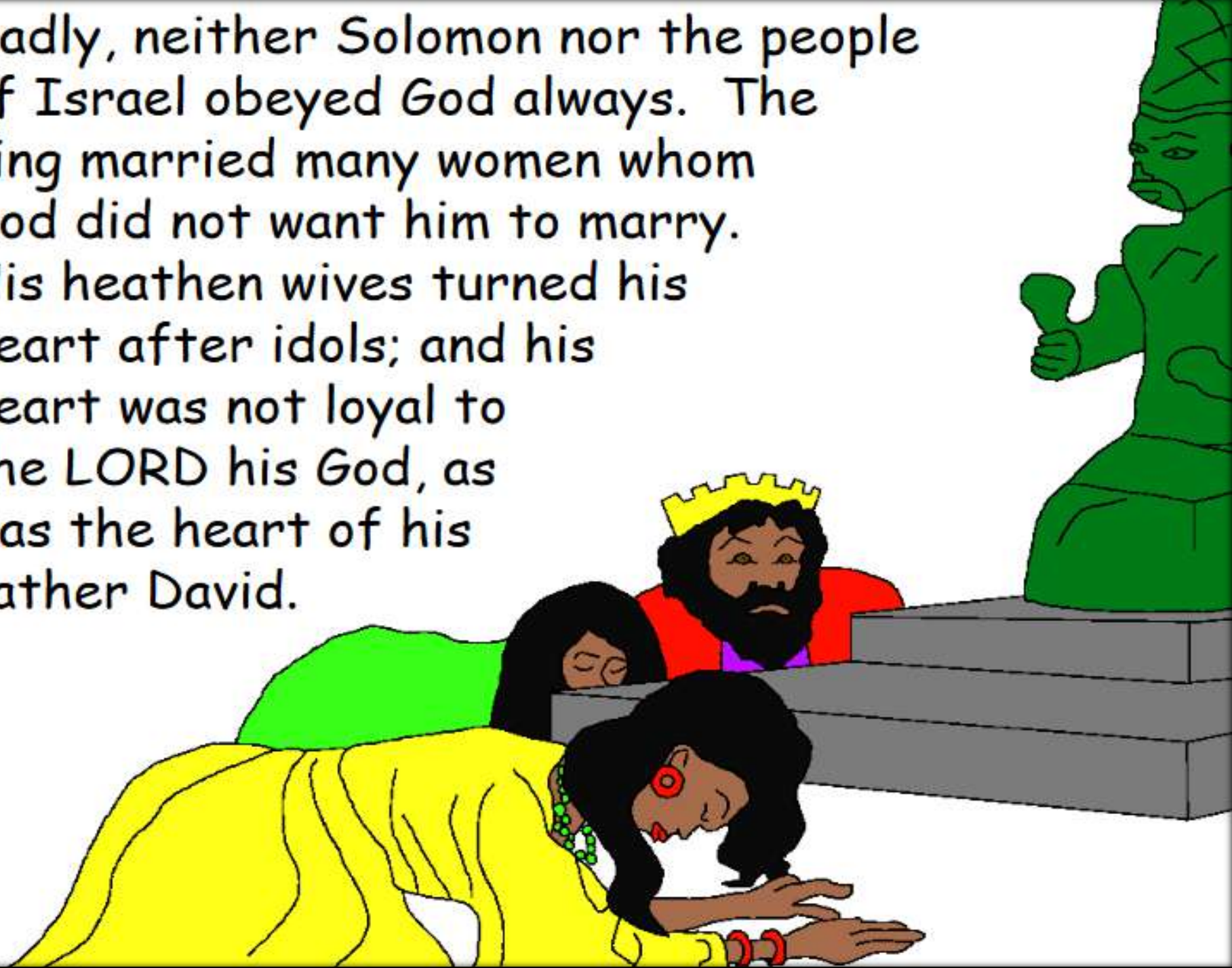
After a wonderful prayer, the king and people gladly offered thousands of sacrifices and had a great feast for two weeks!



After this, God appeared again to Solomon and promised to bless him and Israel as long as they obeyed the LORD.

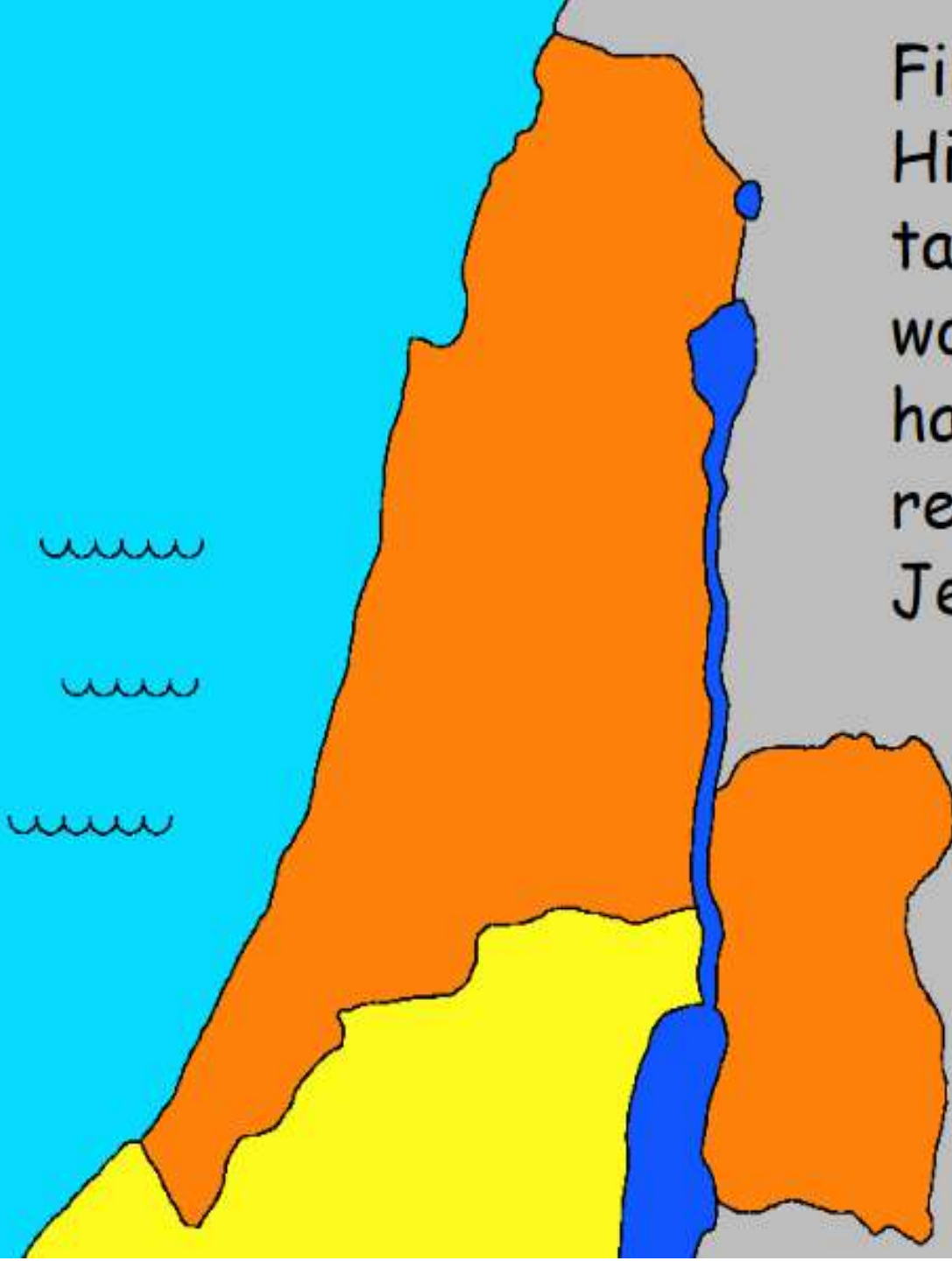


Sadly, neither Solomon nor the people of Israel obeyed God always. The king married many women whom God did not want him to marry. His heathen wives turned his heart after idols; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.



While Solomon wasted his chance to obey God, one of his officers named Jeroboam had a strange experience. A prophet told him God would divide Solomon's kingdom and Jeroboam would rule over ten of the twelve tribes. Jeroboam quickly escaped to Egypt. He knew Solomon would kill him if he stayed.





Finally Solomon died. His son, Rehoboam, taxed the people even worse than Solomon had done. Ten tribes rebelled - and chose Jeroboam to be their leader. Solomon's great kingdom was divided in two, just as God's prophet had said. God cannot bless disobedience!