



THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

When Jesus died, His frightened followers hid themselves. After Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself to His disciples. Jesus was alive! But - Jesus planned to leave them, to go back to Heaven where He had always lived with God, His Father.



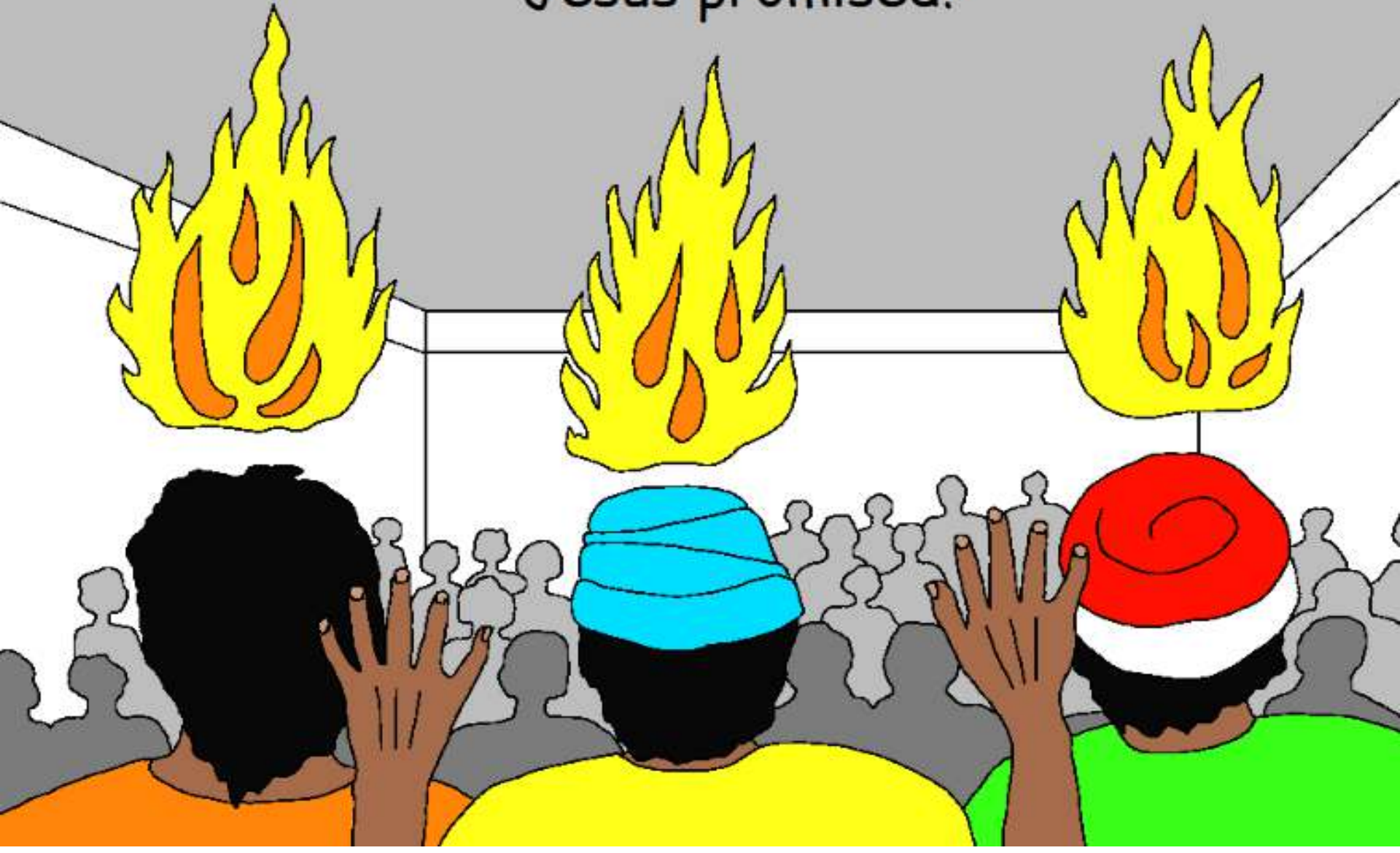
Before He
left, Jesus
promised
His followers

He would send the Spirit of
God to be their Comforter and
Help (John 15:26). The time was
near! A few days after Jesus

It happened this way. About 120 followers of Jesus were praying together in a house. Suddenly, the house was filled with the sound of a rushing mighty wind.

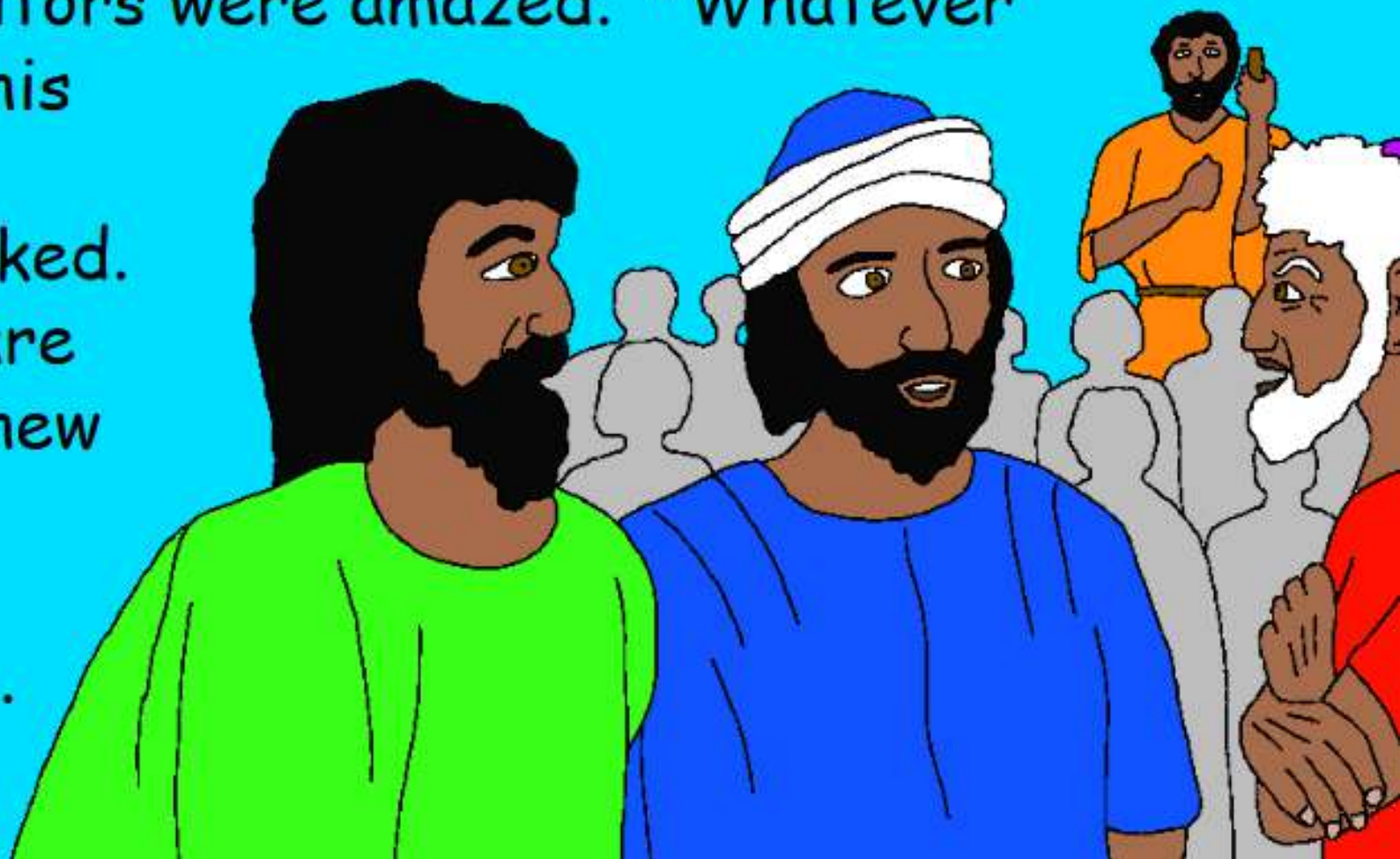


Forked flames of fire rested upon each person.
They were all filled with the Holy Spirit - just as
Jesus promised!

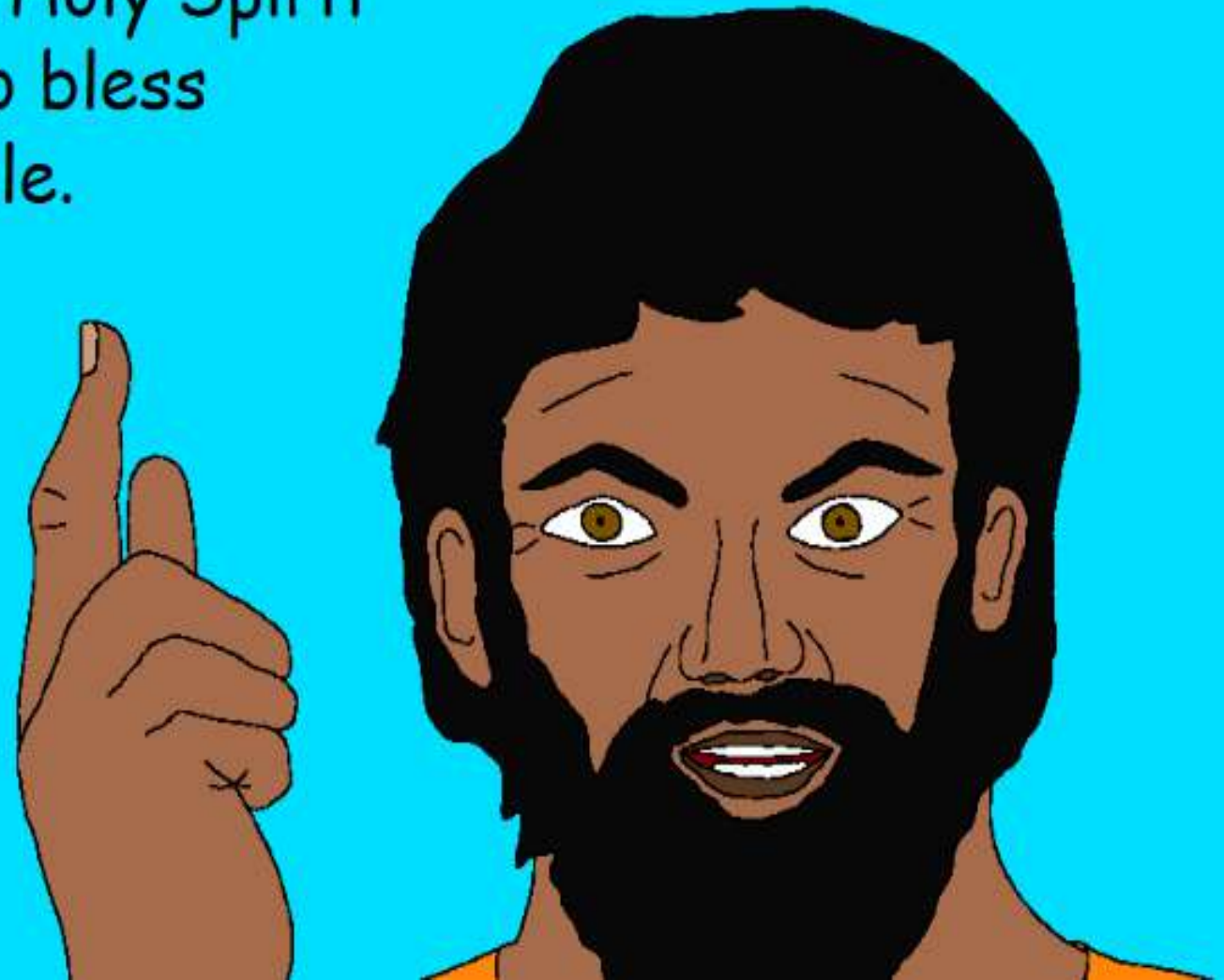


Out in the streets, Jesus' followers spoke languages they had never learned. Foreigners visiting Jerusalem heard the disciples talk about the wonderful works of God in many languages. The visitors were amazed. "Whatever

could this mean?" they asked. "They are full of new wine," others mocked.




But Peter said, "These are not drunk ... this is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel ..." Peter then reminded them that many years before, God had promised the Holy Spirit would come to bless and help people.



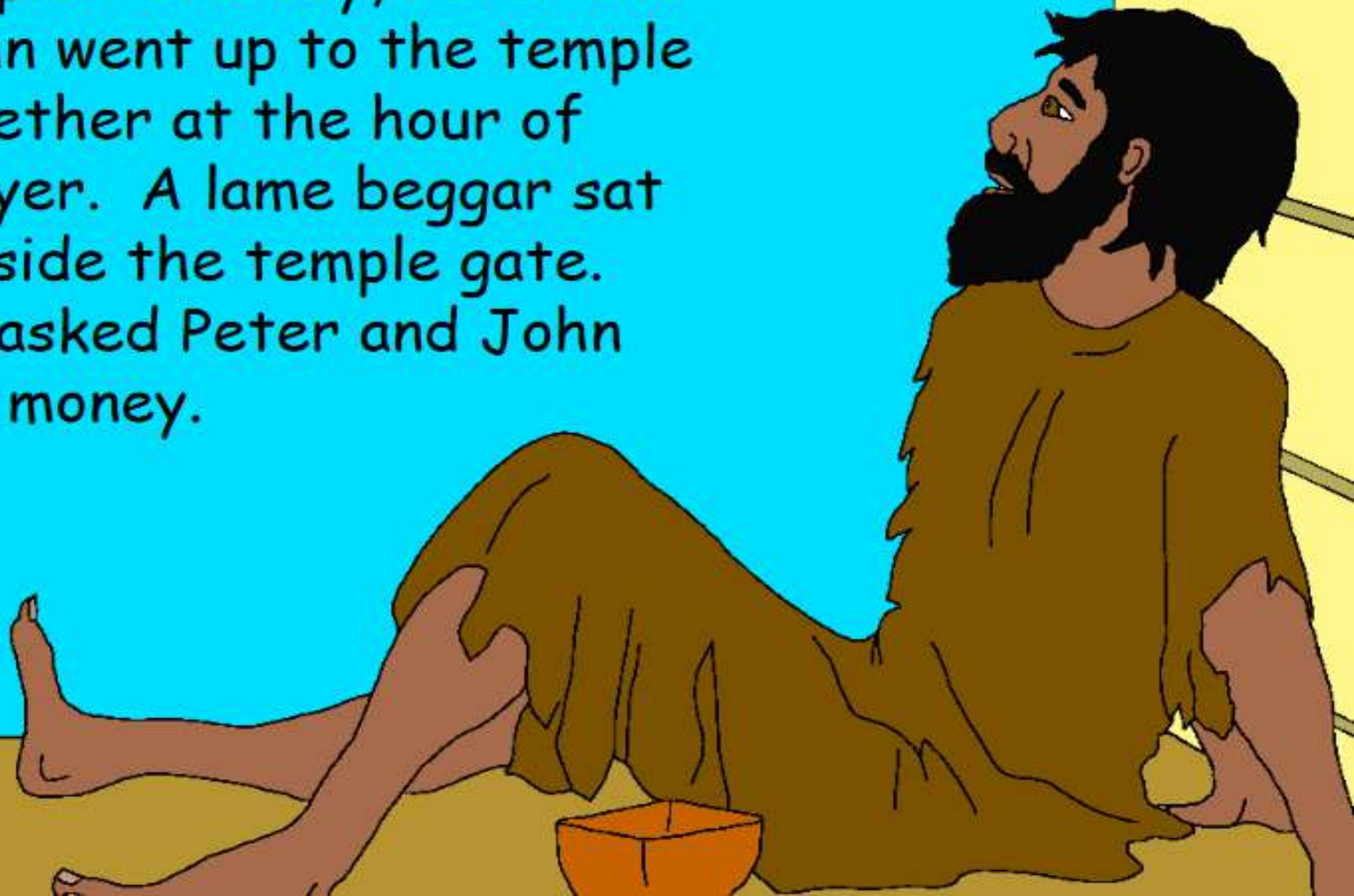
Peter told the people they must turn away from their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. "... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," Peter said. Around 3000 people obeyed. They joined the disciples as worshipers of

Jesus. As time passed, more and more people were added to the church God started the day the Holy Spirit came.

An illustration of a crowd of people, represented by grey silhouettes of heads and shoulders, arranged in two rows. The top row consists of 20 smaller silhouettes, and the bottom row consists of 10 larger silhouettes.

3000

The Holy Spirit brought His power into the lives of God's people. One day, Peter and John went up to the temple together at the hour of prayer. A lame beggar sat outside the temple gate. He asked Peter and John for money.





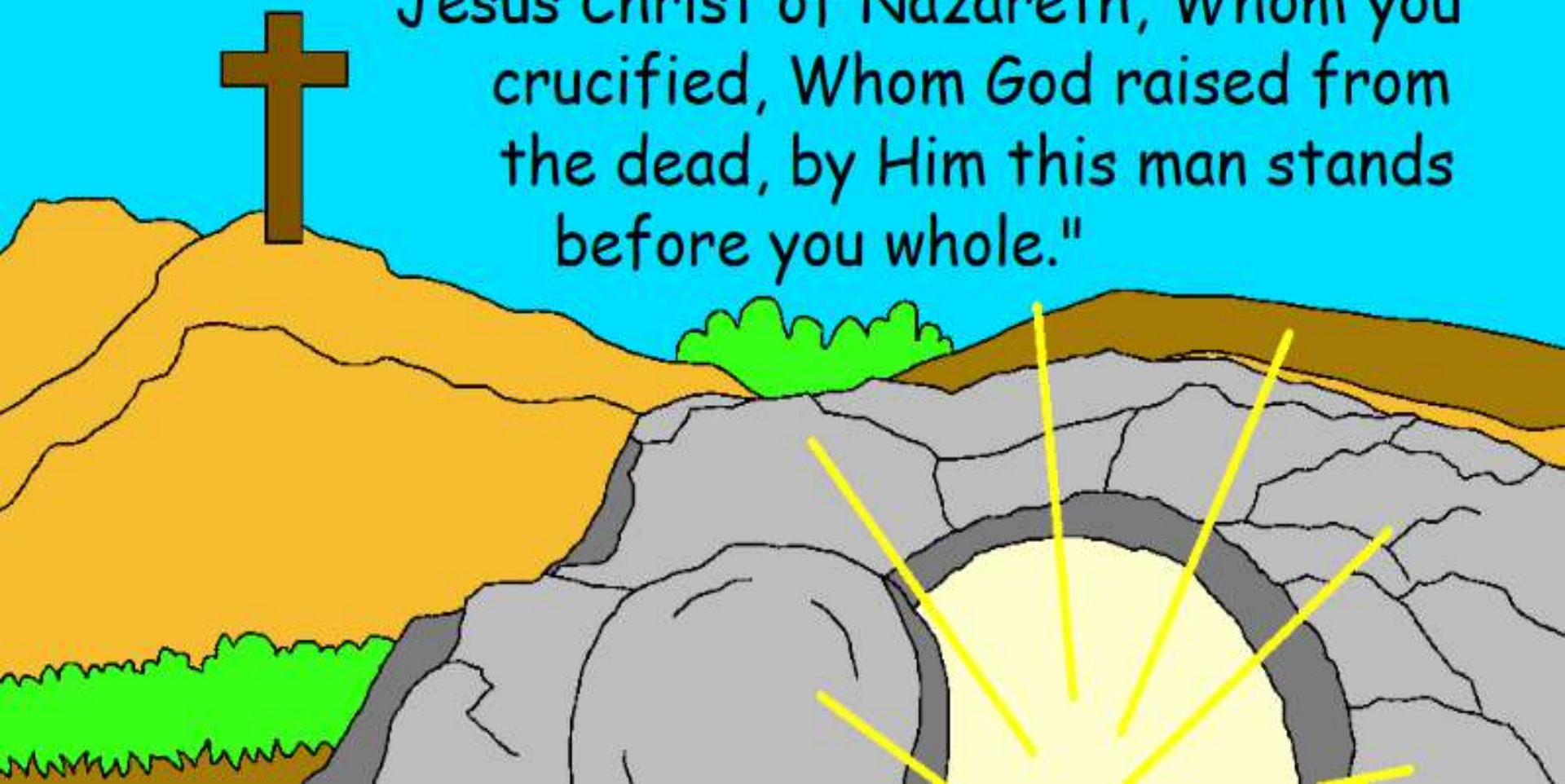
Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them - walking, leaping, and praising God.

A great crowd gathered, amazed at the miracle. Peter told them it was God's power, not his own, which healed the crippled man. When Peter



reminded these Jews that God raised Jesus from the dead, the temple leaders angrily seized Peter and John and put them in jail. However, about 5000 men believed in Jesus.

Next day, Peter and John stood before the Temple rulers. "By what power or by what name have you done this?" the rulers asked. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter answered bravely. "... by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands before you whole."





Peter continued fearlessly, "...there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Not wanting the people to believe on Jesus, the rulers severely threatened Peter and John.

"From now on you must speak to no man in Jesus' name."



Peter had once been afraid to stand up for Jesus. But that was before the Holy Spirit came. Now nobody could frighten him.



Peter and John answered, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

After more threats, the rulers released Peter and John. God's brave servants told their companions all about jail and court. Then they held a great prayer and praise meeting. Again, God's Holy Spirit filled His people with power - and the infant church grew and grew.

