

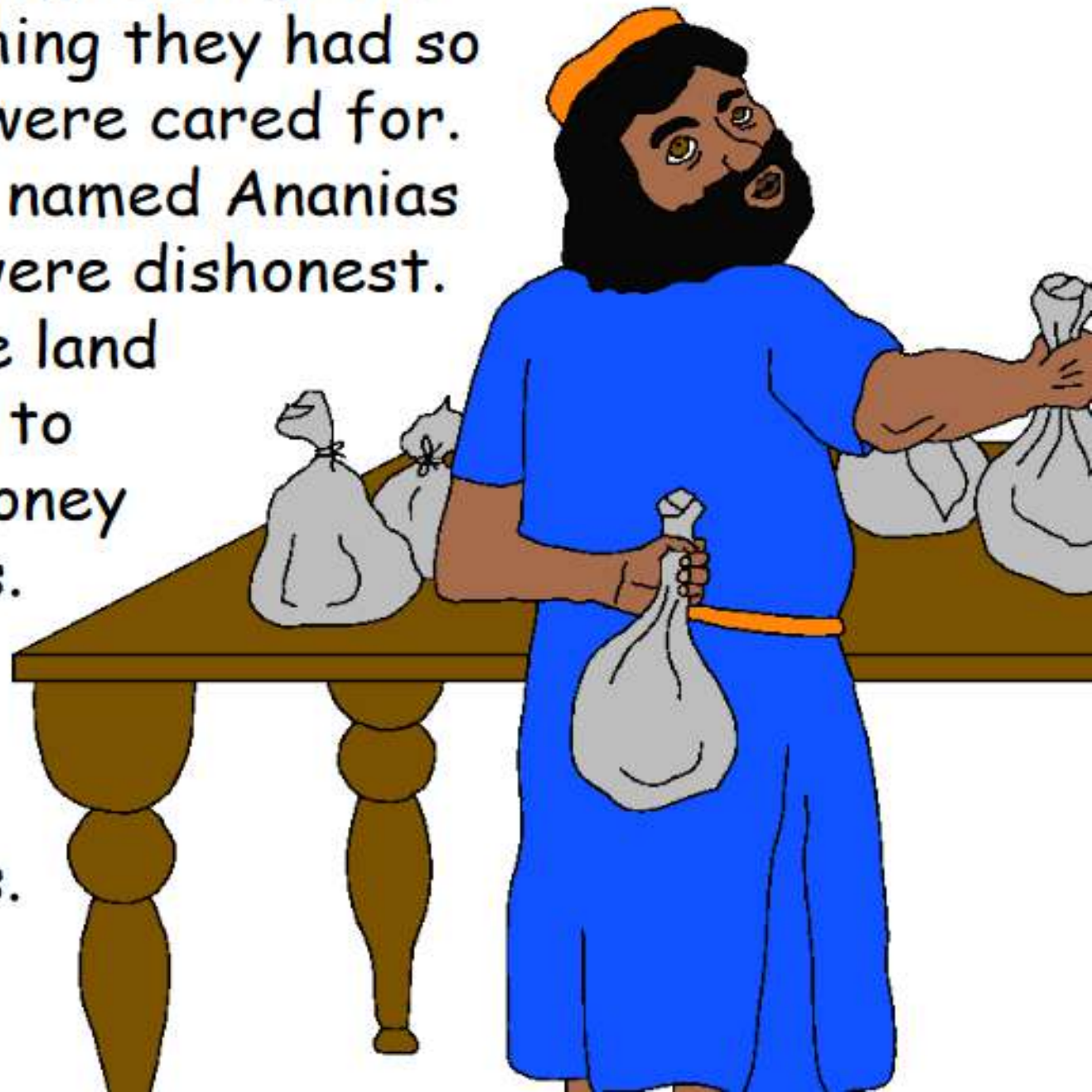



THE
CHURCH
MEETS
TROUBLE

Fifty days after God's Son Jesus rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit came to live within His followers. Although the disciples didn't understand how God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit could all be one God, they were happy to have God with them. God did wonderful things to help the apostles tell others about Jesus.




People who believed on Jesus shared everything they had so that the poor were cared for. But one couple named Ananias and Sapphira were dishonest. They sold some land and pretended to bring all the money to the apostles. Secretly, they kept some back for themselves.

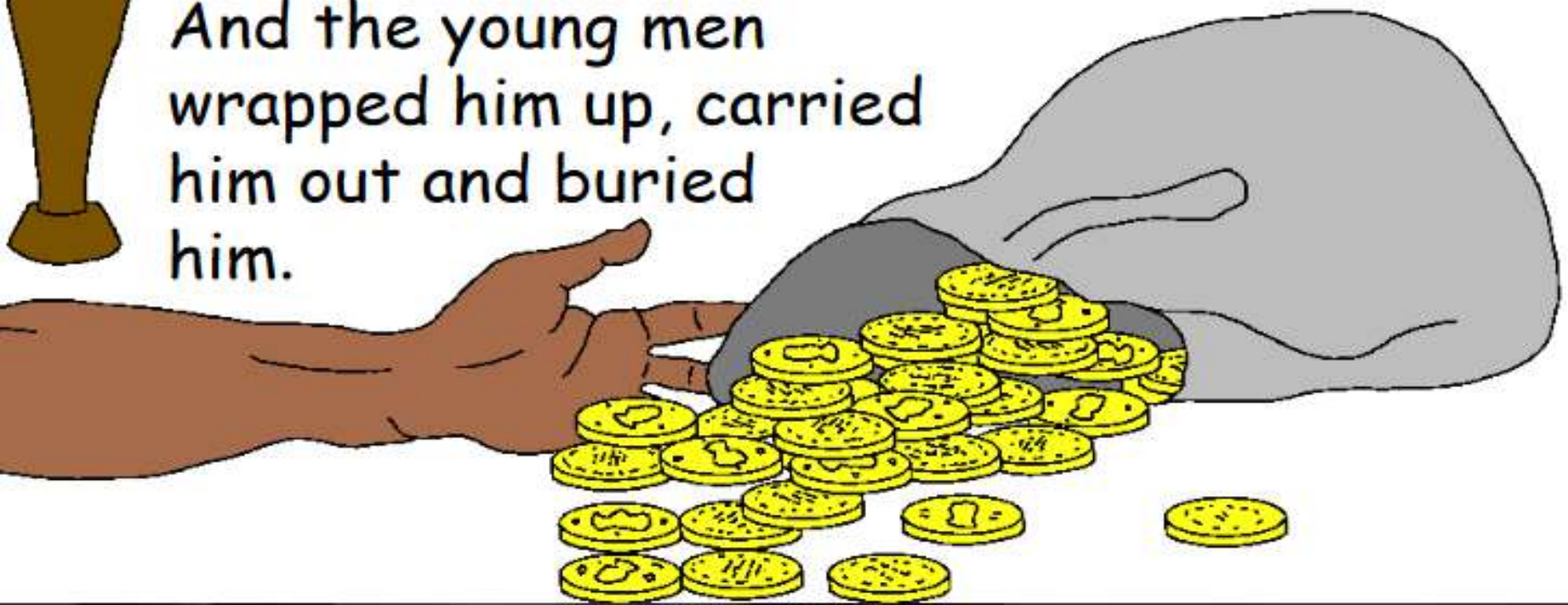




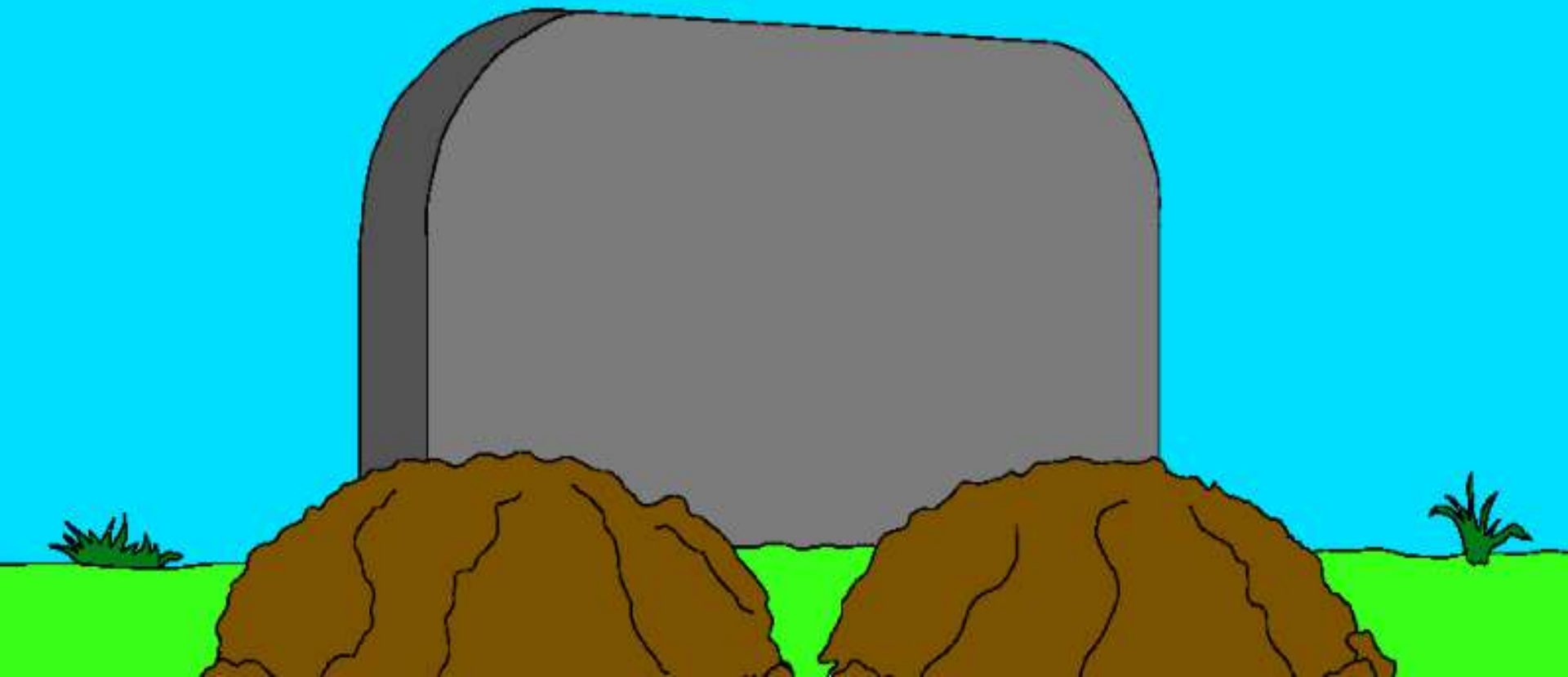
"Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit . . . ?" Peter asked Ananias. "You have not lied to men but to God." Then Ananias fell down and breathed his last.



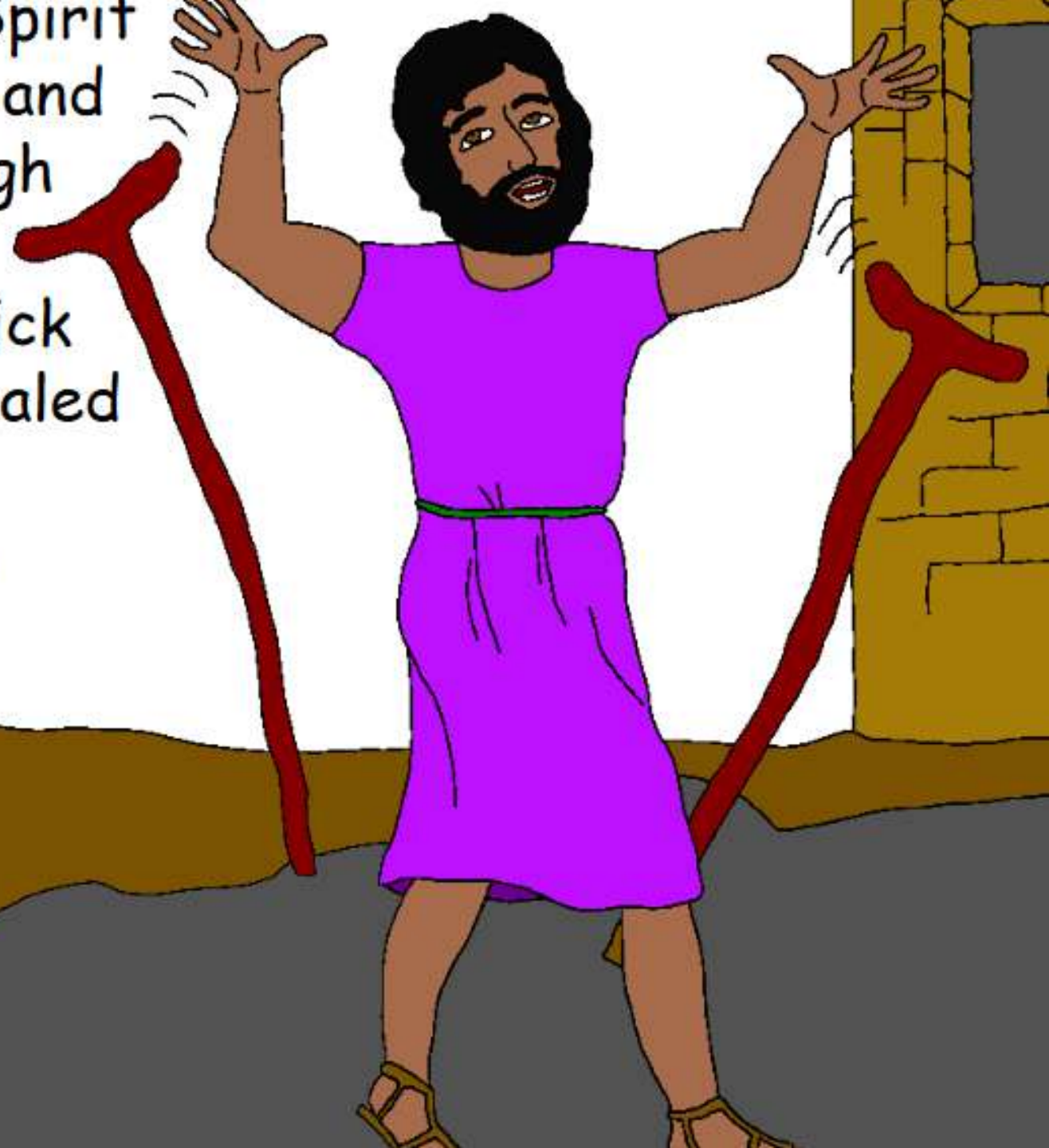
And the young men wrapped him up, carried him out and buried him.



A short time later, Sapphira came in, not knowing that her husband had died. She also lied about the money - and the same thing happened to her. Great fear came on all who heard these things.



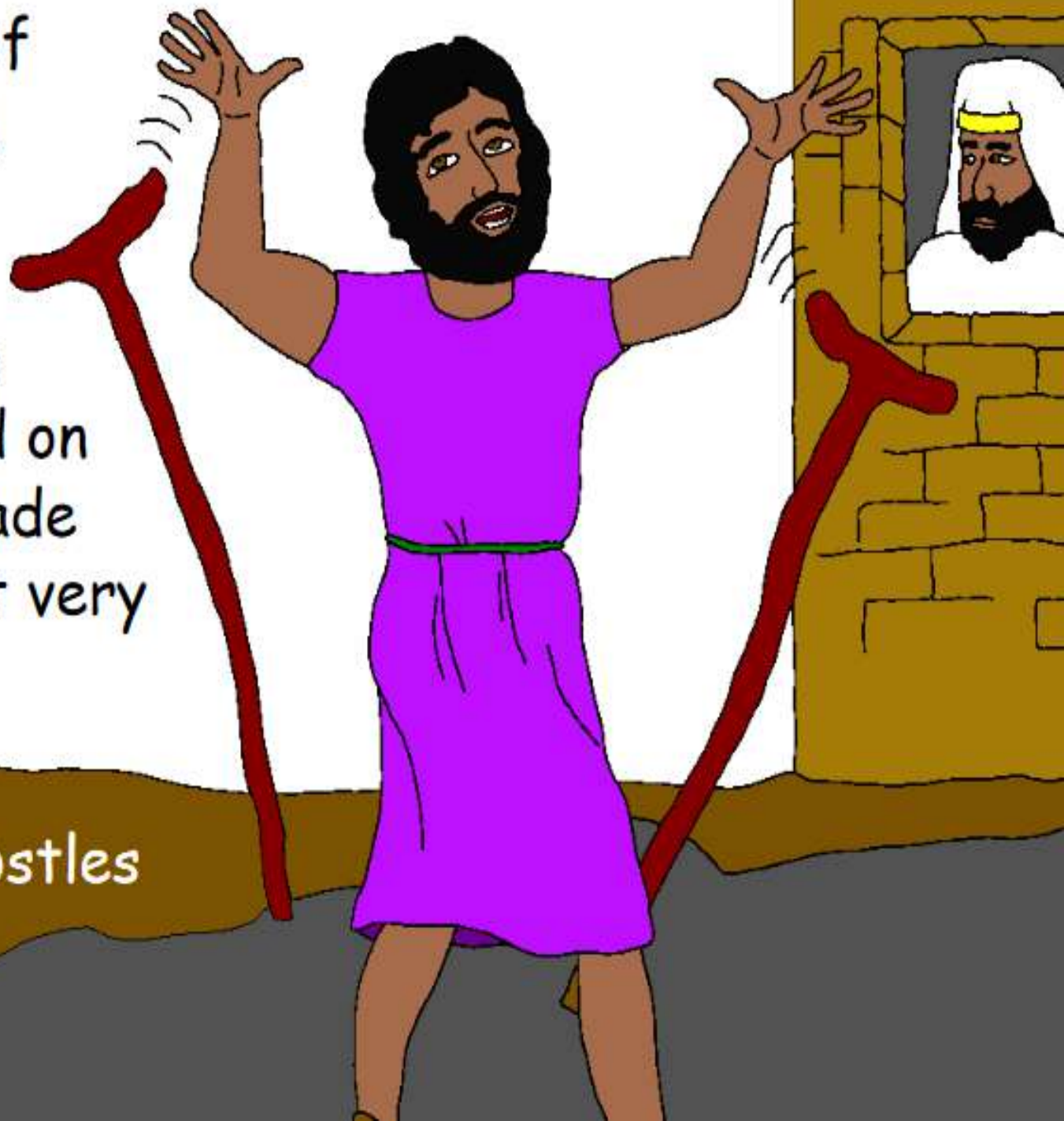
God the Holy Spirit
did many signs and
wonders through
the apostles.
For example, sick
people were healed
when Peter's
shadow fell on
them.



It was a time of great miracles, showing God's presence.

More and more people believed on Jesus. This made the High Priest very angry.

He had the apostles put in jail!





But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the

words of this life." The apostles went out and began to preach about Jesus. In the morning, the High Priest's men found the jail empty.

When he finally found them, the High Priest scolded the apostles. "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this Name?" "We ought to obey God rather than men," Peter and the other apostles answered. The High Priest was so furious, he ordered them to be beaten and released.

In spite of their pain, the apostles obeyed God and carried on preaching about Jesus.

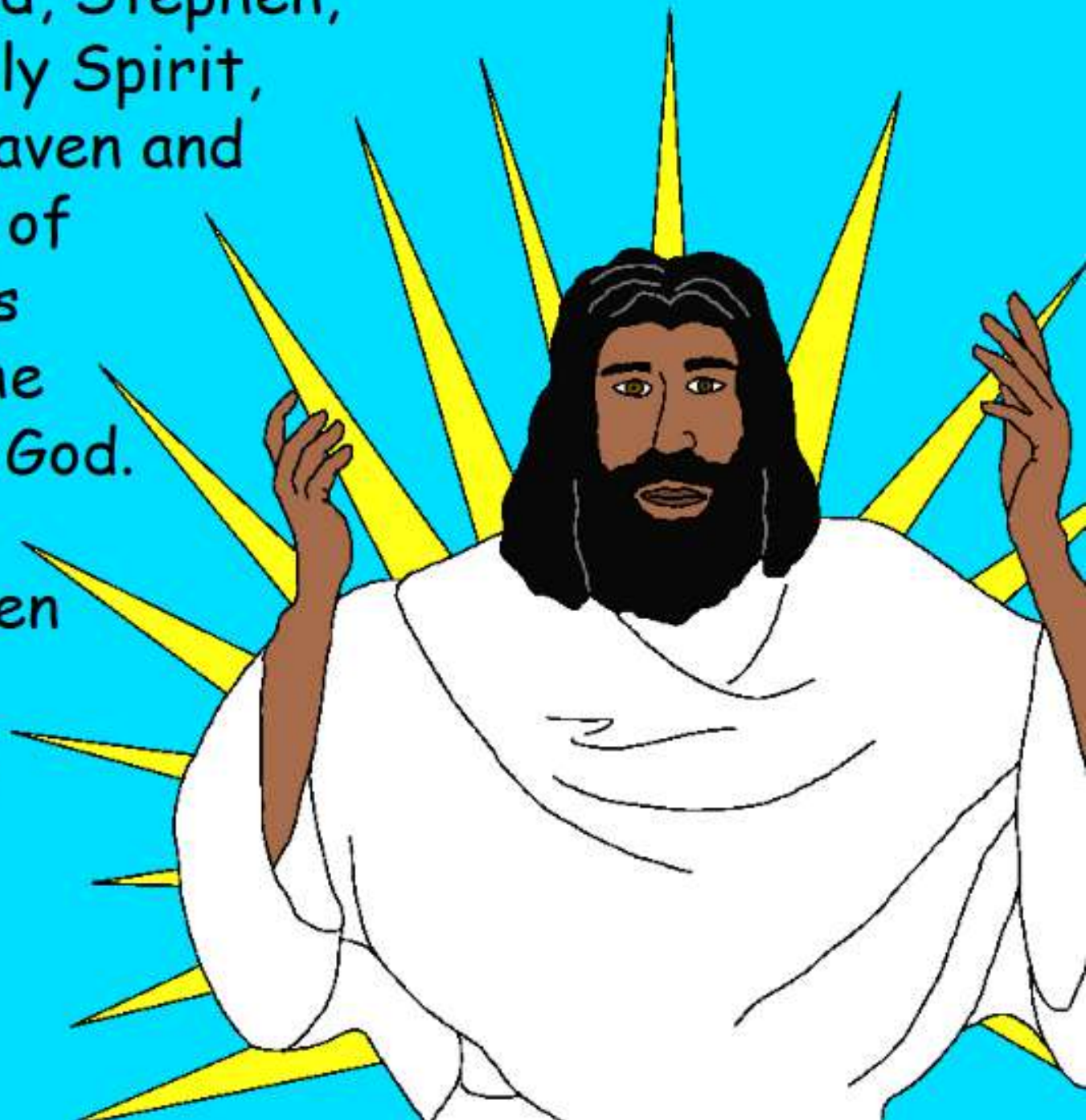


One day a man called Stephen was arrested. Stephen loved the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit was using him to tell others about Jesus. Some men lied, saying that Stephen was speaking against God. After a mock trial, Stephen

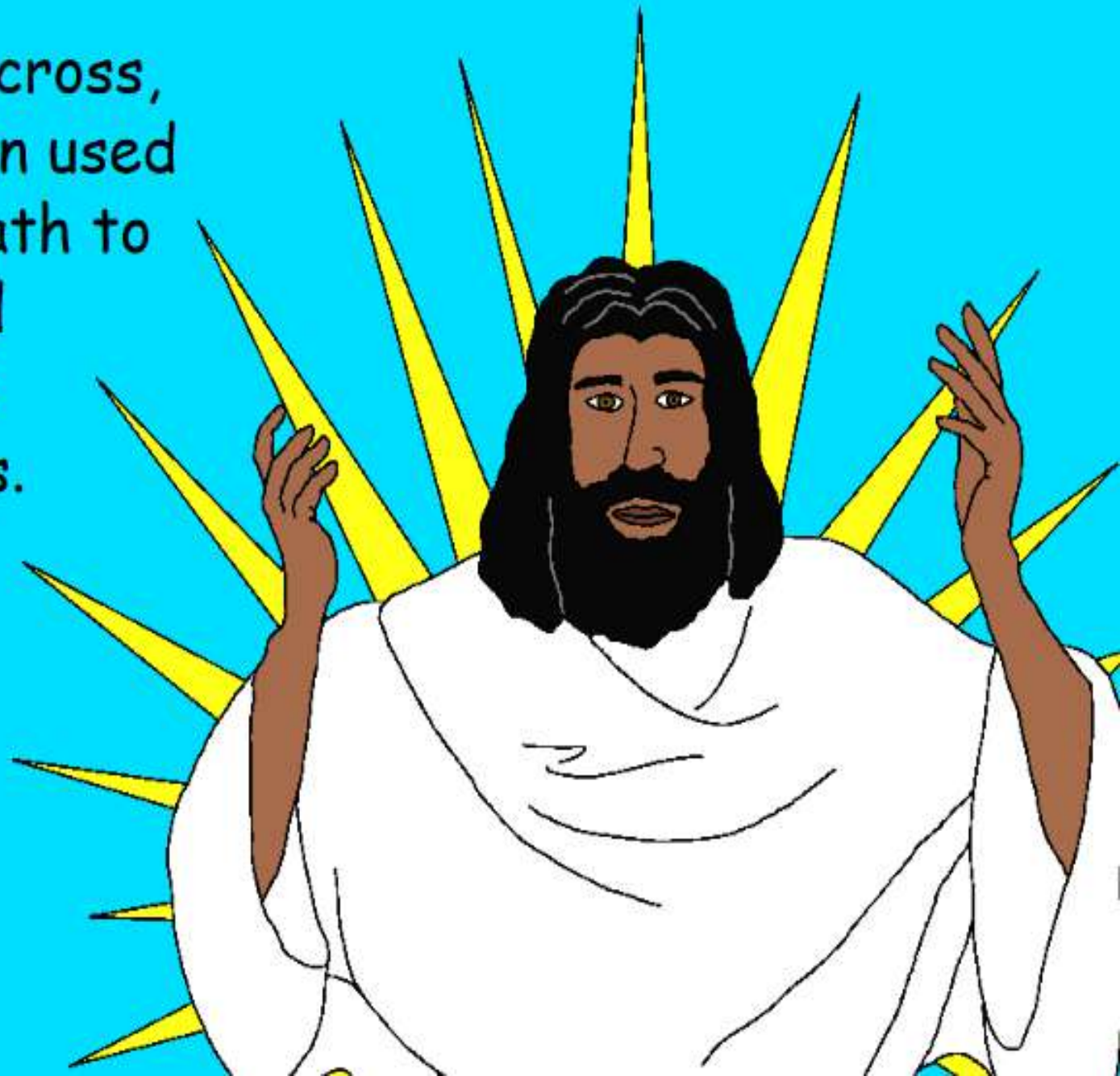
was stoned to death because of his faith in Jesus.



Before he died, Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The crowd stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."



Then, like
Jesus on the cross,
this brave man used
his dying breath to
pray that God
would forgive
his murderers.



Stephen's death started a new wave of persecution. A young man named Saul, who had helped Stephen's murderers, arrested every Christian he could find. Many of them fled from their homes and were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Only the apostles stayed in Jerusalem.



Although their enemies tried to kill them, those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the good news about Jesus. Nothing could stop the followers of Jesus - because God's Holy Spirit lived in them and worked through them.

