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COLORING HOLY WEEK

With Bonus Pages from
Coloring Women of the Bible



COLORING HOLY WEEK

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INTRODUCTION

Lent is the journey from the death of the body to the death of God — a death that is then reversed in hell so that in this world, the remains of an anointed corpse begins breathing newly. This moment of Easter is Good News for this Jesus, who is fully human and fully God, yet is even better news for the world: God has not only moved into the world with humans but the fullness of God has taken on flesh. And Easter, we should remember, is only a provisional period before the Ascension of Christ disseminates the Holy Spirit upon all flesh on the Day of Pentecost. Easter is a season, and Easter is a lifestyle, but we should not lose sight of the fact that this mystery and miracle of Easter is only a short time in the scheme of history, and the greatest acts of God have yet to come through the enfleshment of God's people—us.

As you color these pages, then, consider how your fingertips, your palms, your body have now become the habitat of God, and following the stories of the Hebrew and New Testaments, consider how we might also walk the same journey of Jesus.

Like Jesus' path, ours call us to transfiguration. Each step of our walk is part of an eschatological vision. We can make this moment dazzling and spectacular through self-giving acts and by transforming those places where we only find death to become brimming with life.

Our Lenten discipline must lead us to live cruciform-shaped lives in self-giving and bold ways ... but even further, as a church, when we embody and enflesh the still-speaking God, we affirm that this same God who pours out Godself into a Son and pours out Spirit into all flesh on the Day of Pentecost, to invoke the words of Gabriel Vahanian, "entrusts the world with God." That which was once regal has been relegated and invested into our hands and feet. May we color our worlds with this exquisite responsibility as renewed, restored resurrection people.

Christopher D. Rodkey

A Prayer

FOR HOLY WEEK:
PREPARATION TO ENTER A NEW TEMPLE

The Cloud dissipates.

The Holy Temple stands ready to crumble.

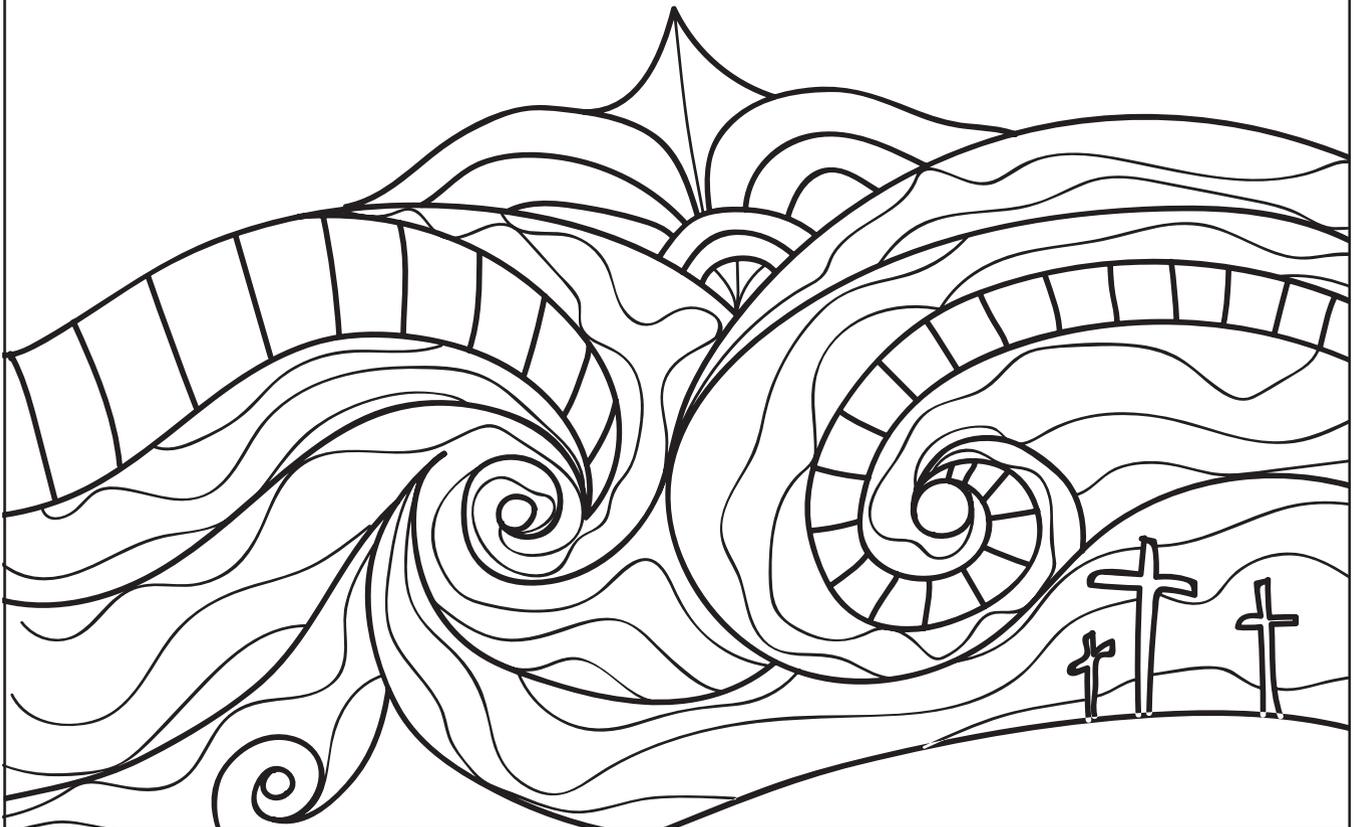
The Incarnated is perishing.

A new Temple is being prepared, no longer invoking the Cloud with the blood of goats or
the ashes of a heifer.

May we in like manner encourage each other in our shared task of preparing our hearts to
be liberated sepulchres of the Divine, which pours out perpetually as love for one another
and especially for the poor and the hopeless.

Amen.

Hebrews 9, 10†



Shout Out!

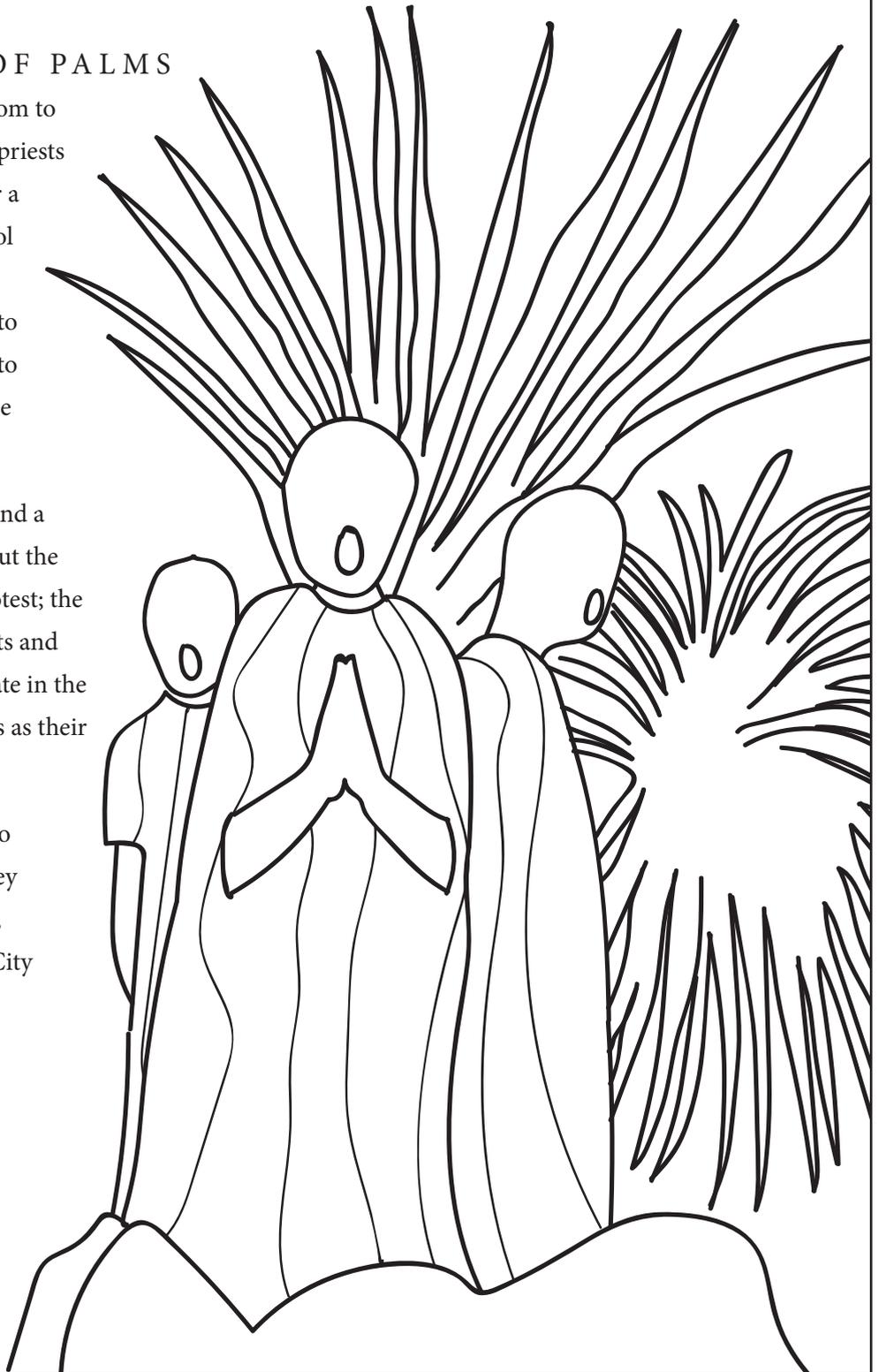
THE PARADE OF PALMS

To have the religious freedom to celebrate the Passover, the priests agree to allow the Emperor a Parade of Palms as a symbol of colonial triumph. The people come to the streets to patronizingly pay homage to Caesar Tiberius, “Son of the Divine.”

Jesus asks his disciples to find a donkey for him to round out the parade as a parody and protest; the cityfolk lay down their coats and palm-branches to participate in the parody or to welcome Jesus as their savior into the Holy City.

The Pharisees order Jesus to silence his followers. “If they would be silent,” he replies, “these stones of this Holy City would shout out the same blasphemy!”

*Matthew 21, Mark 11,
Luke 19, John 12†*



And Not One Will Remain

JERUSALEM! JERUSALEM!

Returning to the Mount of Olives, Jesus weeps in lament over the Holy City. “Jerusalem! Jerusalem!” he cries. “Like a mother hen, the Cloud has called you to unite the world under Her wings, and you refuse to listen!

“Only you can stone your own prophets! But the time is coming when the stones of the city walls will be surrounded, and not one will remain, and the Cloud will no longer surround the city.”

Luke 13, 19



Drove Out

THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE!

Again entering the city, Jesus comes near the Temple, and there sees the money changers who profit off of the priests' refusal to allow an image of the Empire on coins to enter the Temple—after allowing the Emperor to be worshiped in the streets out of political obligation.

Jesus makes a whip, overturns the money changers' tables, and drives the people and the animals out from the entrance to the Temple. He says, "As history has unfolded for our people, I will destroy this temple, and then raise up its body!"

Luke 19, John 2



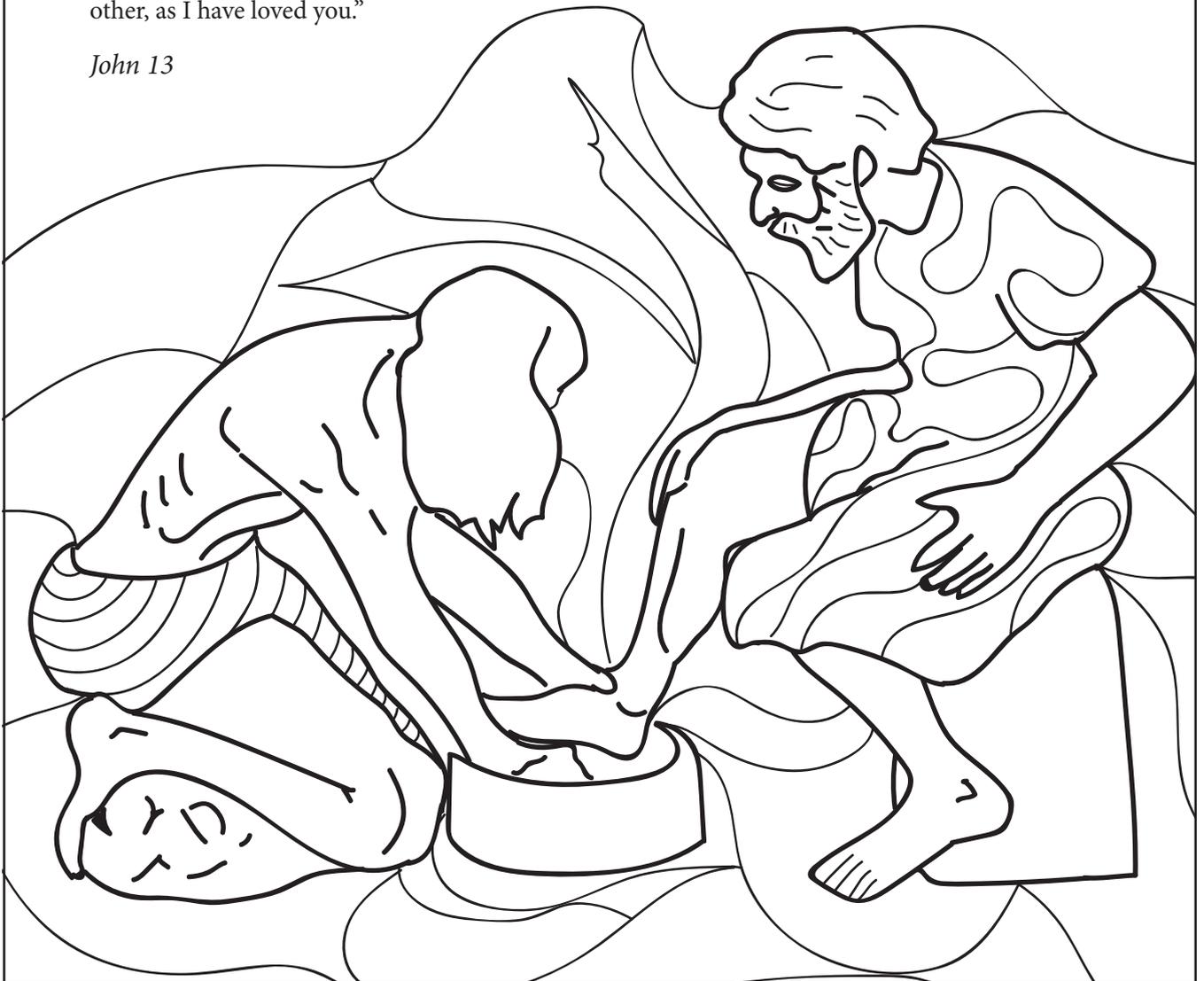
Not All Of You Are Clean

NOT ALL OF YOU ARE CLEAN

Jesus hurriedly gathers his disciples for a Passover meal. Once they all arrive, Jesus takes off his robe, ties a towel around himself, and washes the disciples' feet. He says to Peter, "You are clean," turning to the disciples, "but not all of you are clean."

He then puts on his robe and teaches them. "If you are my disciples, and I your teacher, you should follow my example and wash one another's feet. Humble yourselves to each other, and love each other, as I have loved you."

John 13



Jesus Broke the Bread

A REVERSAL OF PASSOVER

Jesus begins the Passover meal, but there is no lamb. What he has,

Jesus offers to his disciples in the opposite order of tradition.

First Jesus breaks the bread, blesses it, and says, “Eat, for this is my body.”

Second, he takes the wine, instructing, “Drink, this is the Blood of the Covenant, poured out to atone for the sins of many.”

Then Jesus teaches them. “I have looked forward to this Passover meal with all of you, but the sacrificial animal to be eaten will not be feasted upon until the Kingdom arrives.”

Jesus then tells his followers that some will betray him. They all reply, “Not I, Rabbi?”

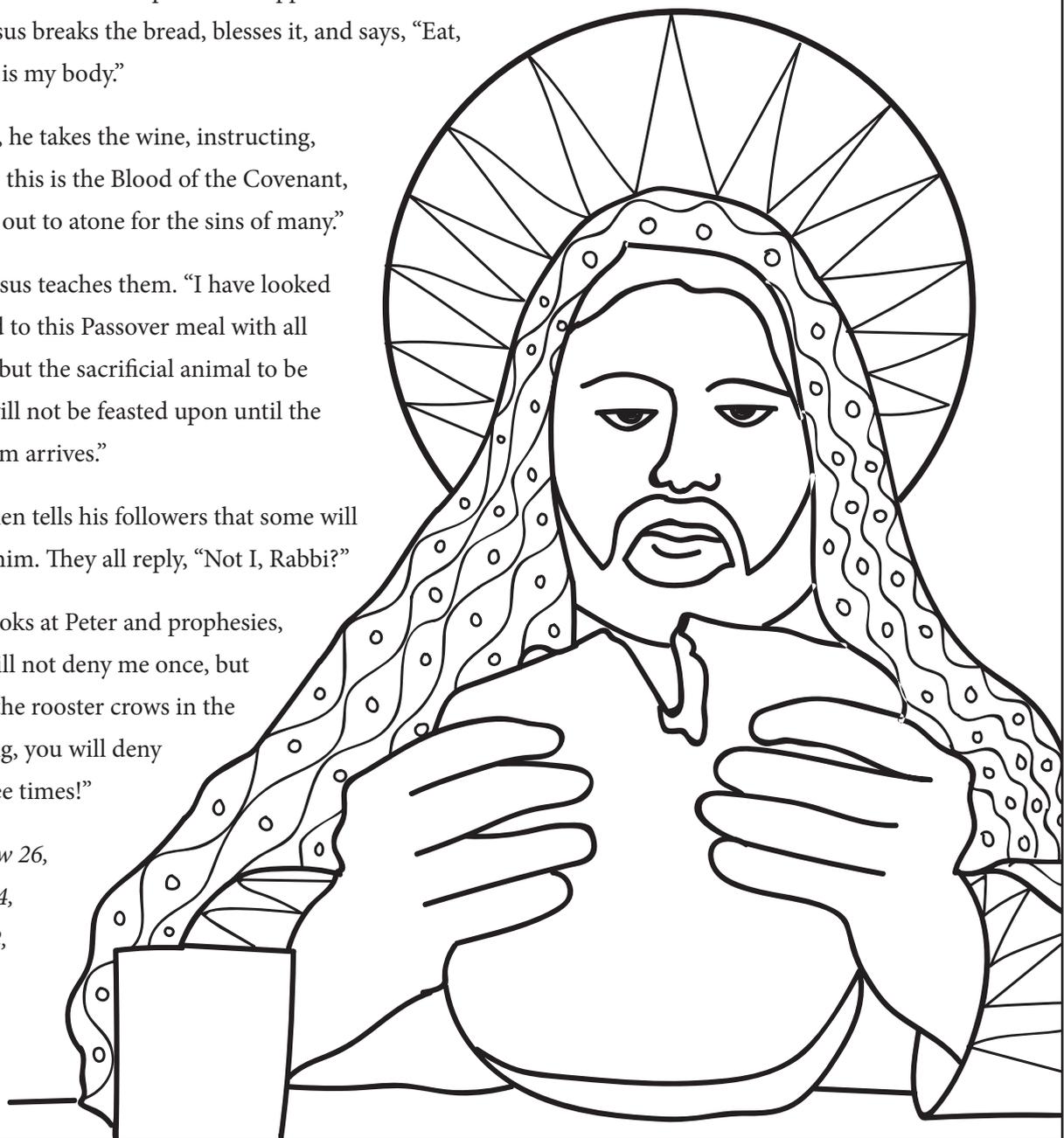
Jesus looks at Peter and prophesies, “You will not deny me once, but before the rooster crows in the morning, you will deny me three times!”

Matthew 26,

Mark 14,

Luke 22,

John 13





Jesus Collapses

I AM DEEPLY GRIEVED

Leaving the Holy City and crossing out of the Kidron Valley, Jesus arrives at the Garden of Gethsemane, one of his favorite places to pray. Upon arrival, Jesus asks the disciples to keep watch while he prays.

In private, Jesus collapses onto the earth, sweating blood, and praying to the Cloud, “Abba, let this cup pass from me.”

Meanwhile, the disciples fall asleep.

Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18

Then They Arrest Him

THE HOUR IS AT HAND

Judas arrives with the authorities to arrest Jesus and finds the disciples, sleeping.

Judas points at Jesus, saying, "This is my Teacher!" And Judas kisses Jesus; then they arrest him.

Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18



Peter Draws A Sword

PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPONS

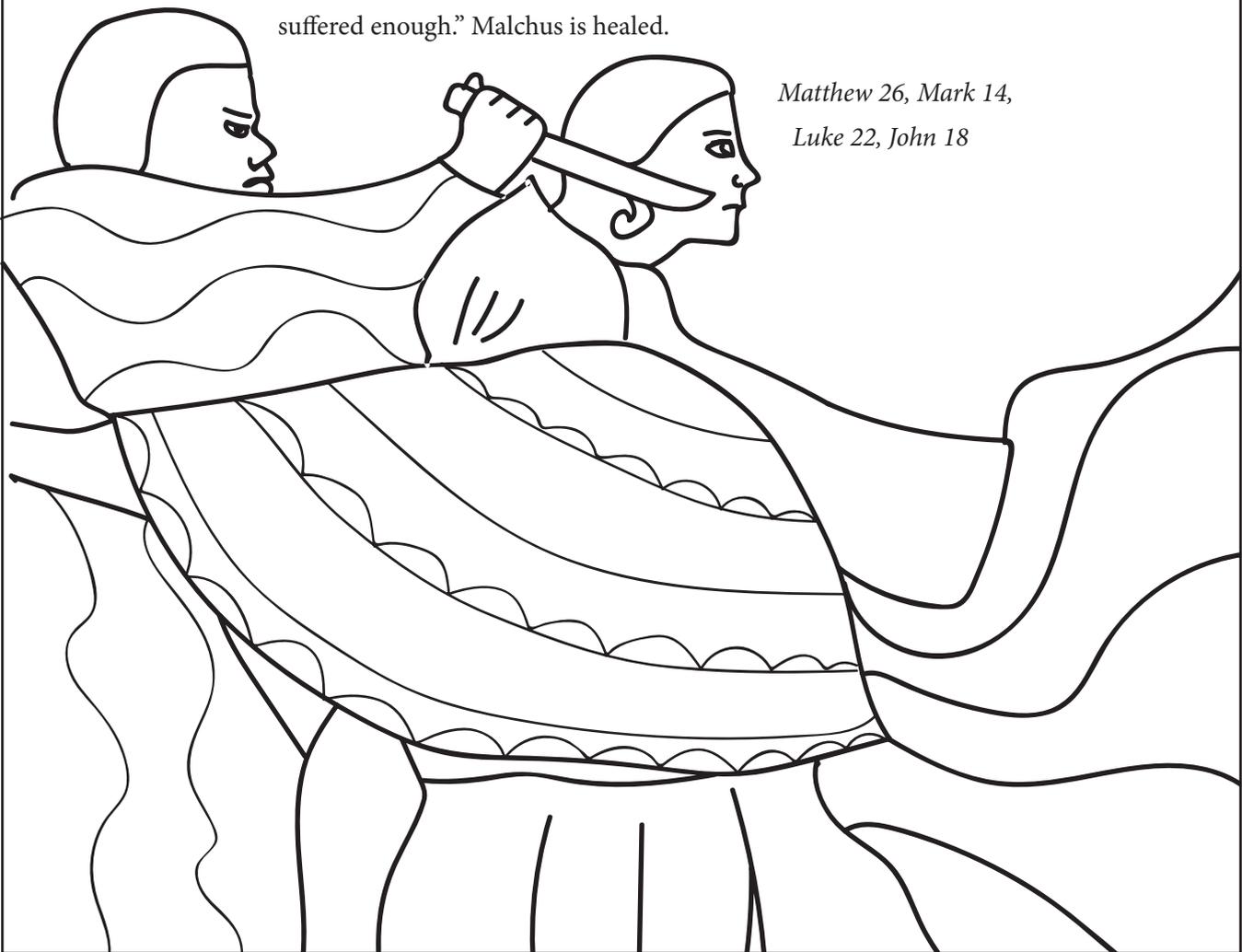
Peter draws a sword and cuts off the ear of Malchus, a slave belonging to the High Priest.

Jesus admonishes his followers directly, "If you live by violence, you will die by violence!" Looking at the weapons of everyone gathered, Jesus teaches them with questions: "Do you not believe I can do what Satan has tempted me? Have I not spoken peacefully and faithfully in the Temple, and you never bothered to arrest me there?"

Before he is arrested, Jesus turns to the High Priest's slave and touches him, saying, "You have suffered enough." Malchus is healed.

Matthew 26, Mark 14,

Luke 22, John 18



They Are Afraid

THE ROOSTER CROWS

Then Jesus' disciples run away, for they are afraid.

Except Peter, who follows Jesus as he is taken to trial, to observe what happens. Two servant girls and some passers-by accuse him in the streets of following Jesus. Three times, Peter denies knowing Jesus, the last time swearing with an oath, "I do not know the man!"

Then the rooster crows. From a distance, Jesus looks back at Peter, who is weeping bitterly.

Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18





On Trial



BEHOLD THE MAN!

Jesus is placed on trial five times, accused of inciting a riot, advising people to not pay their taxes to the Empire, and blaspheming against both the Jewish religion and the emperor-cult of Rome. Jesus' accusers break the law and tradition to ensure Jesus will be executed.

Pontius Pilate invokes the custom of releasing a prisoner before the Passover, and presents the mob with a choice: release a violent man, or release the one who came to teach peace? Thirsty for blood, the crowd demands Jesus' execution.

Pilate washes his hands, announcing, "I am innocent of this man's blood!" Then he orders Jesus to be executed.

Matthew 27, Mark 14, Luke 23, John 18†



King of the Jews!

A GAME OF STONES AND KNUCKLEBONES

The Roman soldiers loved to play a game called Kings, in which a prisoner was selected to be dressed as a phony king, and a game board was scratched on the ground where the “king” would be praised, honored, tortured, and often killed. The prisoner’s fortune would be decided by pebbles on the board, dice made of sheep knucklebones and small reeds to move the stones.

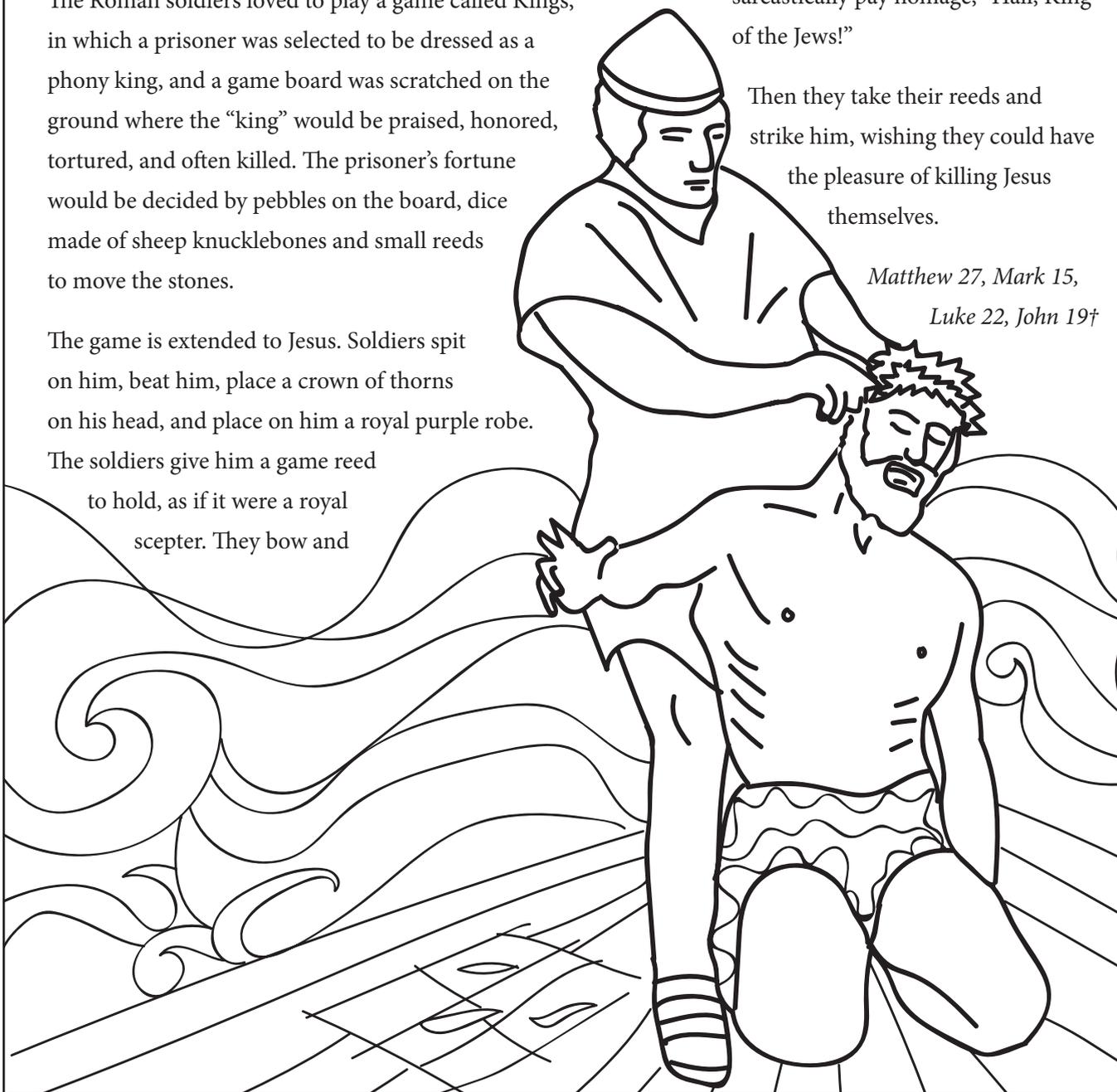
The game is extended to Jesus. Soldiers spit on him, beat him, place a crown of thorns on his head, and place on him a royal purple robe. The soldiers give him a game reed to hold, as if it were a royal scepter. They bow and

sarcastically pay homage, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Then they take their reeds and strike him, wishing they could have the pleasure of killing Jesus themselves.

Matthew 27, Mark 15,

Luke 22, John 19†



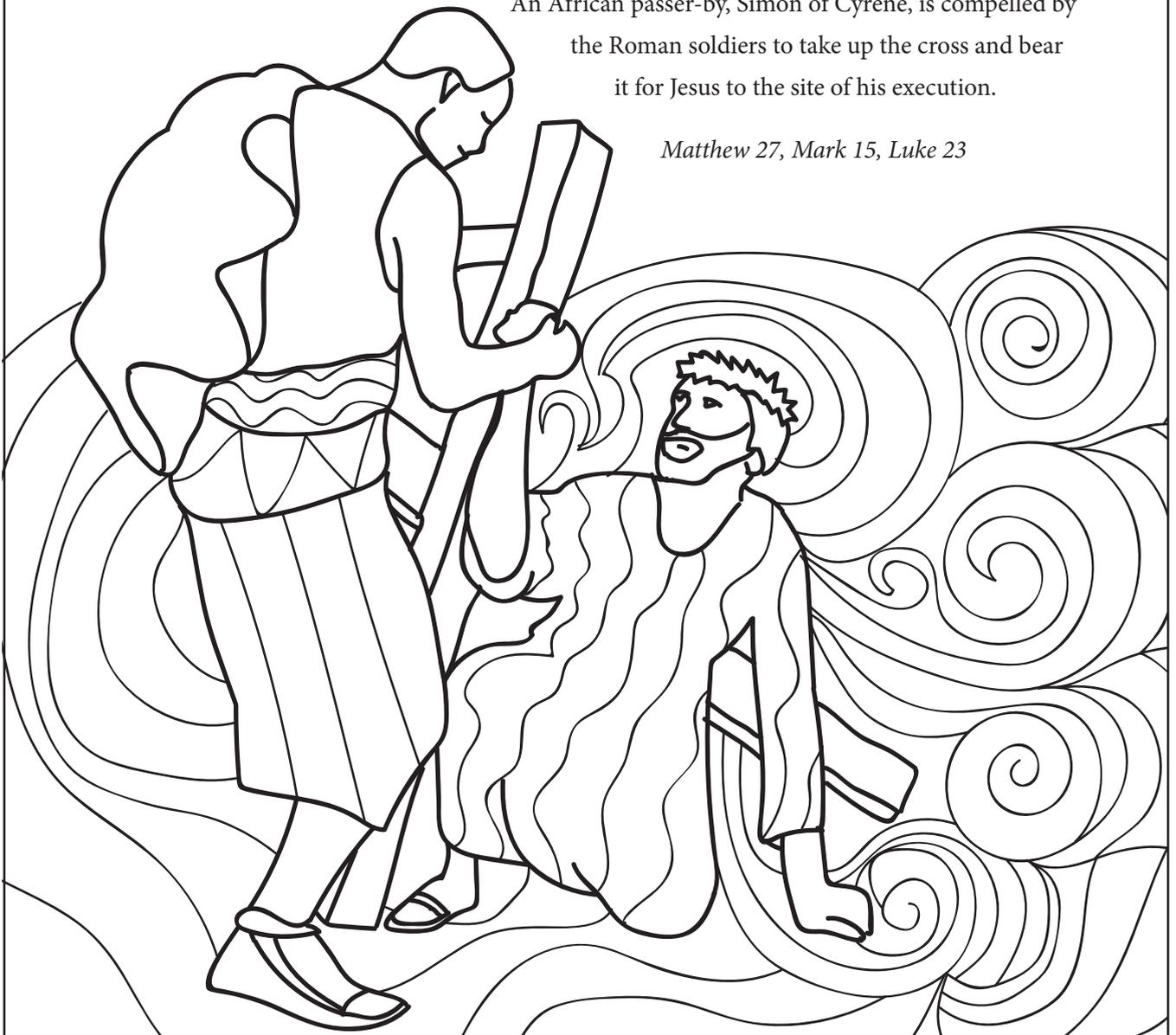
Simon of Cyrene

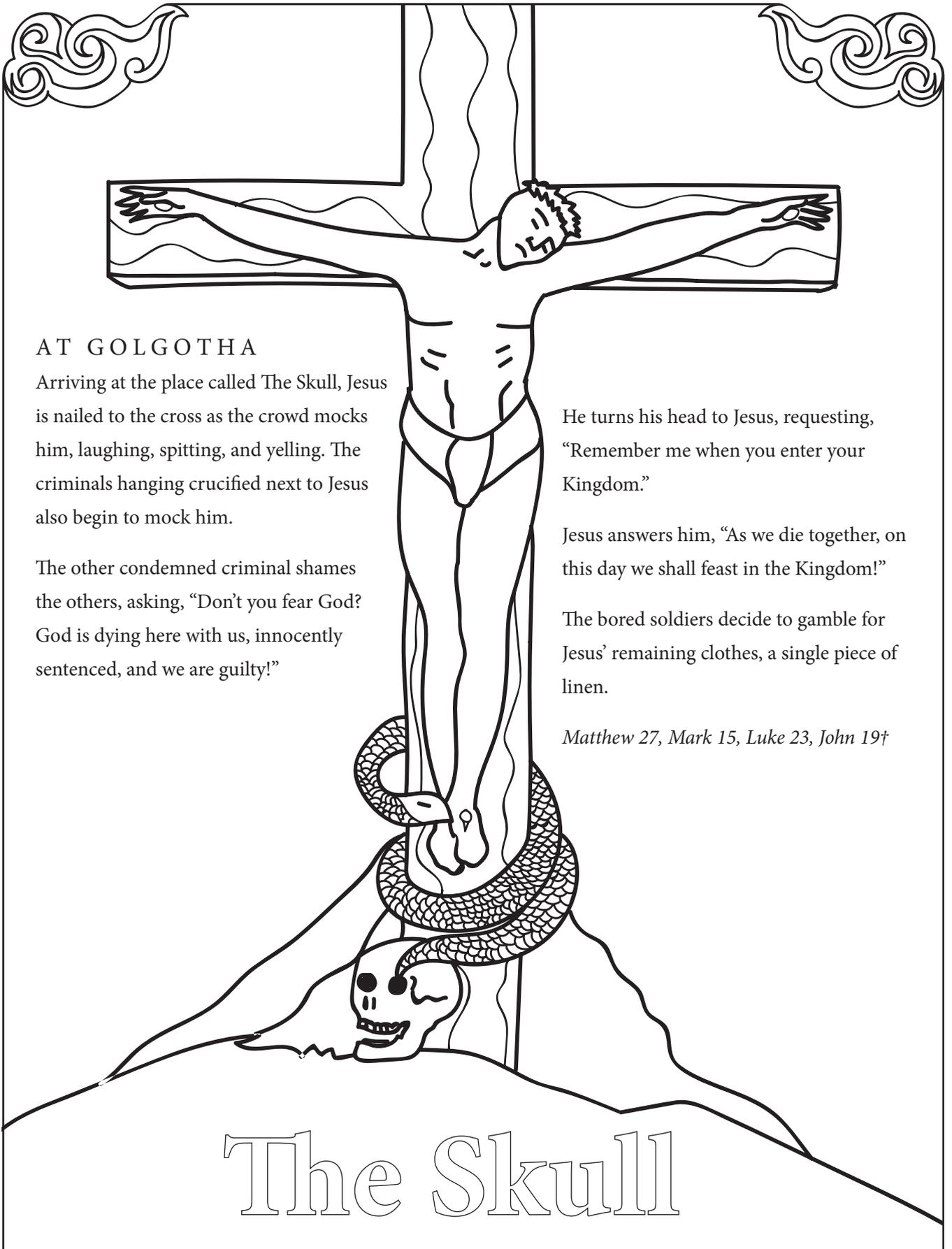
IS ANY SORROW LIKE MY SORROW?

Under the gaze of his mother, Jesus—thirsty, hungry, bleeding, tired, and facing his own death—falls on the narrow streets of the Holy City while carrying the cross.

An African passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, is compelled by the Roman soldiers to take up the cross and bear it for Jesus to the site of his execution.

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23





AT GOLGOTHA

Arriving at the place called The Skull, Jesus is nailed to the cross as the crowd mocks him, laughing, spitting, and yelling. The criminals hanging crucified next to Jesus also begin to mock him.

The other condemned criminal shames the others, asking, “Don’t you fear God? God is dying here with us, innocently sentenced, and we are guilty!”

He turns his head to Jesus, requesting, “Remember me when you enter your Kingdom.”

Jesus answers him, “As we die together, on this day we shall feast in the Kingdom!”

The bored soldiers decide to gamble for Jesus’ remaining clothes, a single piece of linen.

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19†

The Skull

My God

WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED ME?

As the Cloud of darkness covers the earth, Jesus cries out in dereliction: “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”

The cityfolk think he is invoking a country-dweller custom to appeal to Elijah as an intercessor, since Elijah did not experience human death, but instead ascended to heaven.

Jesus’ words were from the song of King David: “I am not human, but a worm. The mockers call on me to ask for a rescuer. I am poured out like water; dogs and bulls surround me. Why are you so far away; my God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”

Psalm 22, Matthew 27, Mark 15 Luke 23†

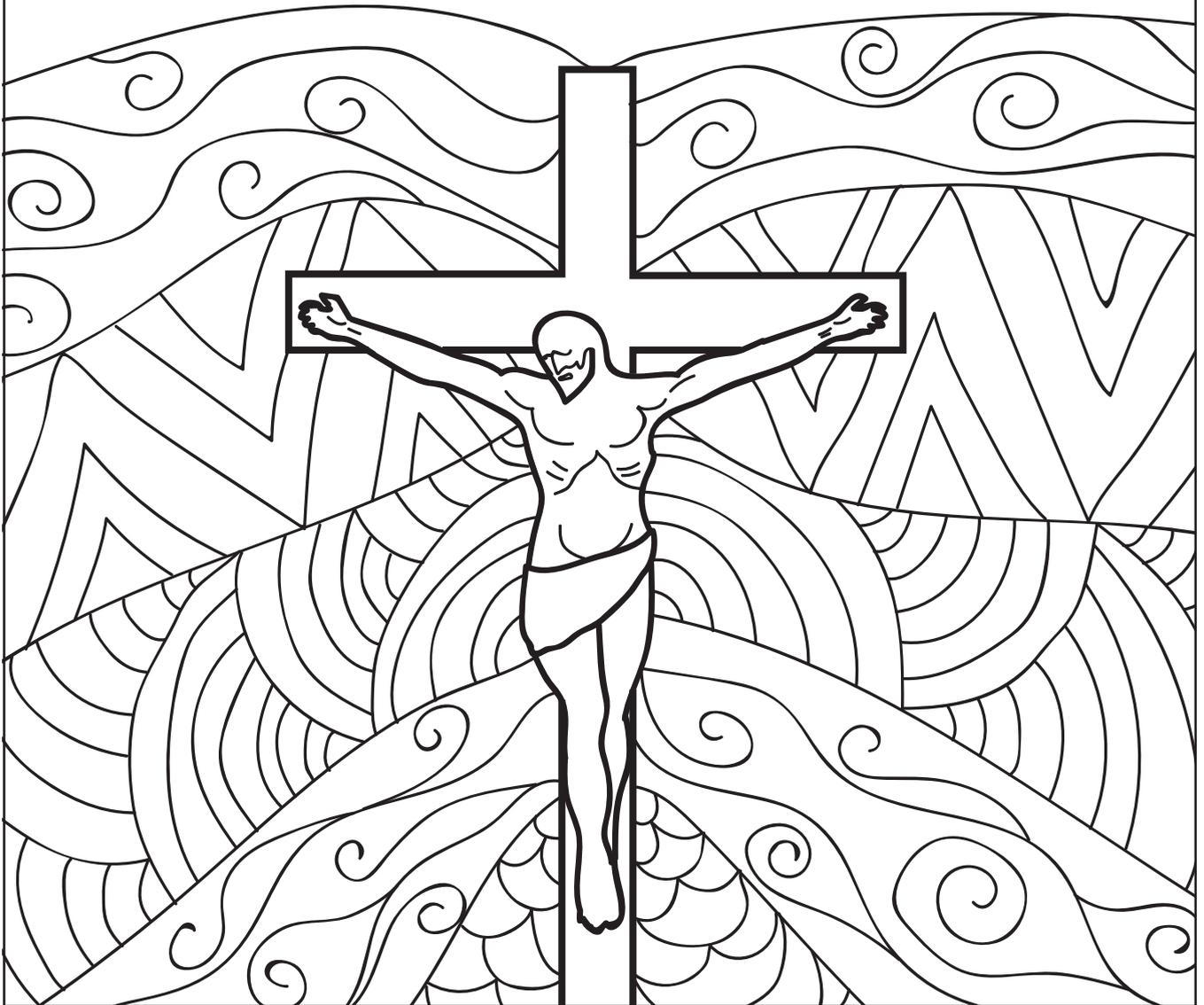


Into Your Hands

IT IS FINISHED

Dying of doubt more than asphyxiation, Jesus prays again, "Into your hands I commend my spirit," adding, "it is finished," and takes his final breath.

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19†



The Burial of God

JOSEPH'S TOMB

Because of the religious festivities and observances, the bodies of the crucified needed to be removed immediately if they were to receive proper burial. A wealthy man from Arimathea and dissenting councilman, Joseph, asks Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body.

Nicodemus, who had been taught by Jesus, also comes with myrrh and aloe. He and Joseph wrap Jesus' body in a linen cloth, and bring Jesus to Joseph's own tomb.

Jesus' mother and the other women follow them to the garden tomb just outside the city walls, and watch as Jesus is laid into Joseph's tomb. They return to their homes to prepare more spices for Jesus' body on the following day.

Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19



The Sealing

STANDING GUARD

Concerned that Jesus' followers will claim that Jesus is really alive, Pilate orders that soldiers go to Joseph's tomb, authenticate the body of Jesus, seal the tomb with clay, and place the seal of Imperial Rome upon the clay—indicating the severity of the crime of interfering with the tomb.

The soldiers then keep watch, guarding the tomb all night.

Matthew 27



Death Transfigures

EASTER SUNRISE

Now, out of the darkness, God, arise into the Light!

Rise up, so we might become enfleshed with your Light and
become children of the Light.

In the Light, the bare nakedness of the
world is exposed,

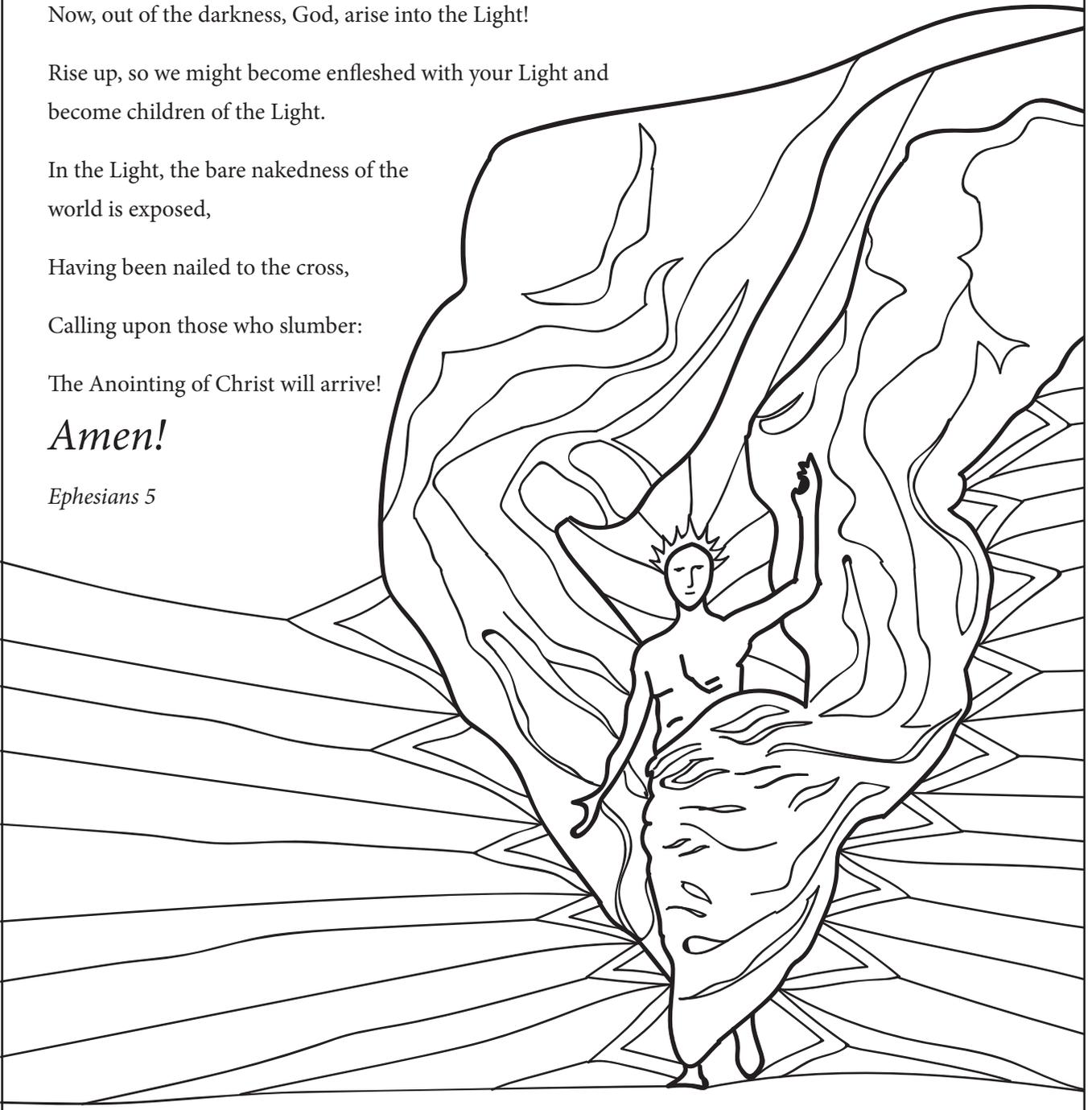
Having been nailed to the cross,

Calling upon those who slumber:

The Anointing of Christ will arrive!

Amen!

Ephesians 5



Flesh Transfigures

EASTER MORNING

The women come to the tomb with anointing spices early the next morning to discover that the tomb has been opened. Terrified, Mary Magdalene tells Peter and the disciple Jesus loved what has happened, and they run to the tomb to find it empty except for a linen cloth.

While the disciples return home amazed and perplexed, Mary Magdalene sits behind and weeps.

Then she sees two angels inside of the tomb, dazzling white, like lightning!

And they speak! “Do not be afraid! Why do you weep? Why are you searching for the living among the dead?”

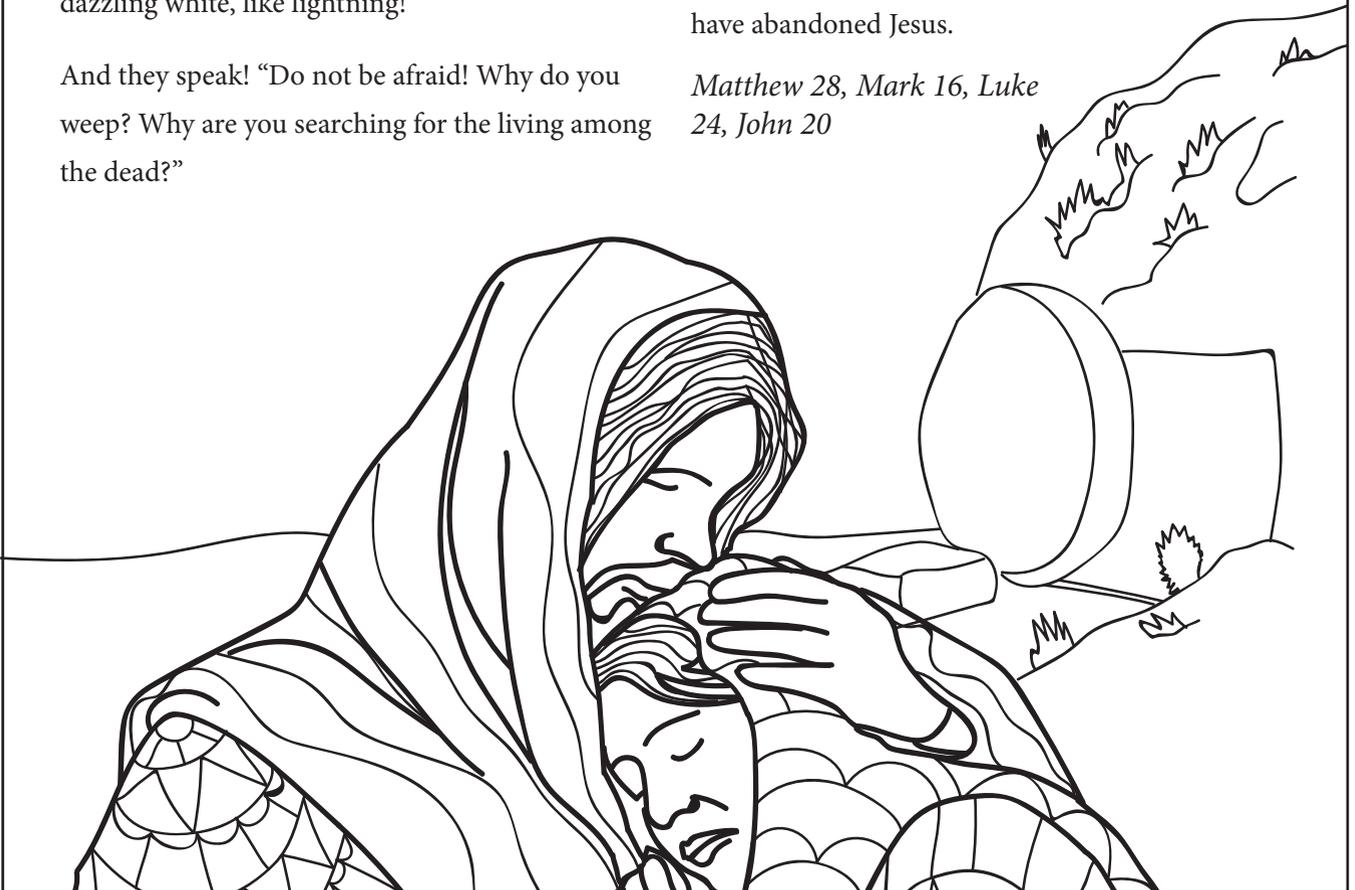
A voice from behind her asks her the same question: “Why do you weep?” and then calls her by name.

She then recognizes Jesus. “Rabbouni!” They embrace.

“Do not hold on to my body,” he says, “for I have not yet ascended. But tell the others, and I will meet them in Galilee. Do not be afraid!”

The woman runs away in terror and excitement to tell the others who do not believe, are hiding, or have abandoned Jesus.

Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20



Why Are You Afraid?

EASTER EVENING

The disciples and followers of Jesus gather in Jerusalem. Some of them believe that they have seen Jesus alive; some recognize him in the taking, blessing, and breaking of bread.

Among the small crowd, a voice announces, "Peace be with you!" Then Jesus reveals himself to them.

Believing Jesus to be a ghost, they are astonished and terrified. He asks, "Why are you afraid? Why

do you doubt? Touch my flesh; ghosts do not have flesh such as this."

As they stand in wonderment, he adds, "I'm hungry, do you have something to eat?"

Jesus then teaches them: "You are witnesses to the unfolding, enfolding, and encircling of scripture, which began with God speaking creation. And as I now speak, and you will speak, we are now living scripture and establishing the New Creation!"

Luke 24



Benediction

Now go, and break the seal of the entombments around you and others. Like Jesus, smash open the gates of hell in those places where there is only death, bringing new life!

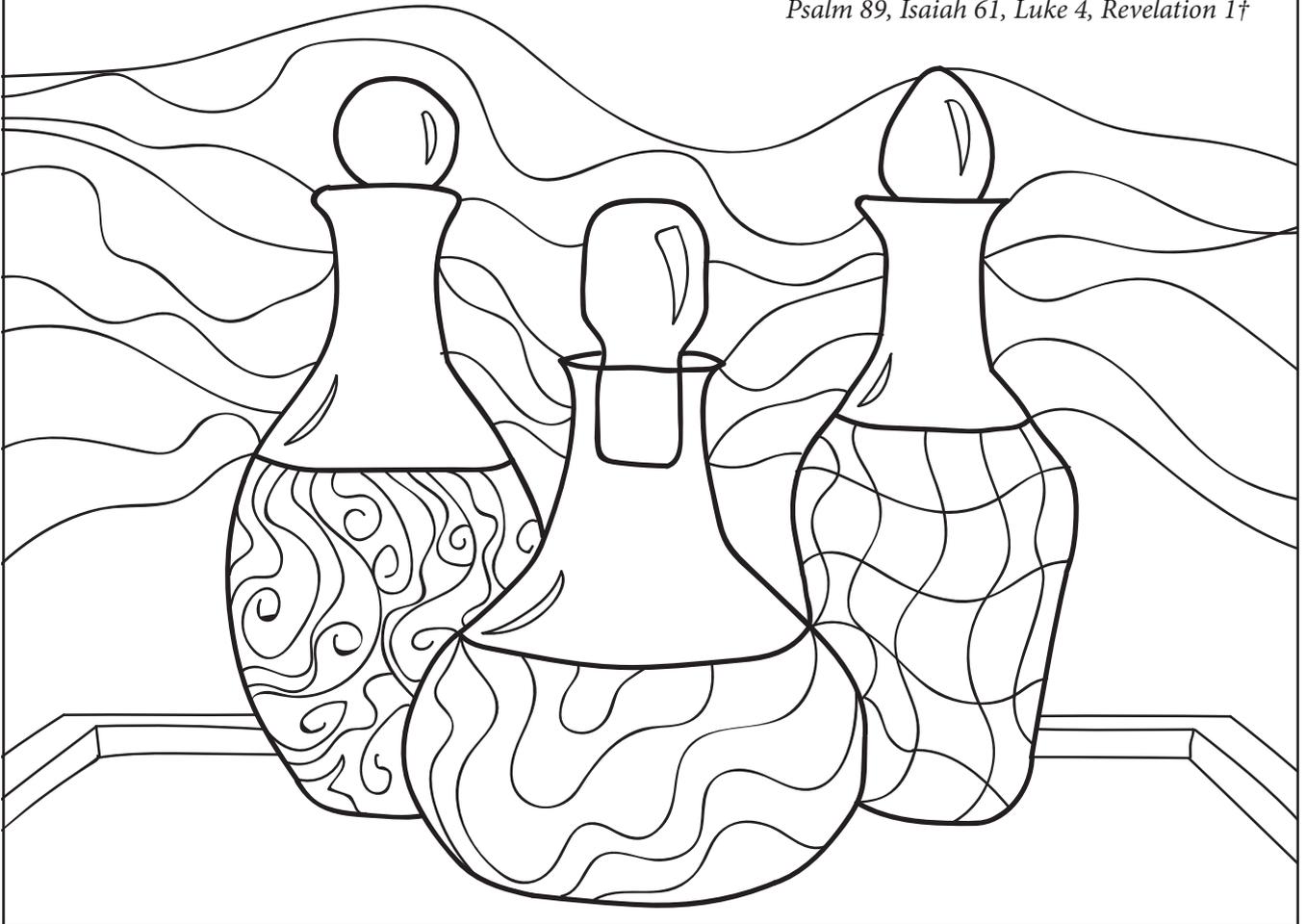
You have been given this new life through the Cloud, which speaks through Fire, Water, and Mist: you are anointed with Christ newly as Priest of the Order of Melchizedek, Prophet in the tradition of the Isaiahs, and King from the cursed lineage of David.

With your authority may you preach to all that you meet the Good News of the chrism of salvation, and building the Kingdom of God, and the reversal of the world in the name of the Alpha and Omega, as a member of the living Body of Christ which arrives through and with the Cloud.

For on this day, and every day that follows, shall the scriptures be fulfilled in your hearing.

Amen.

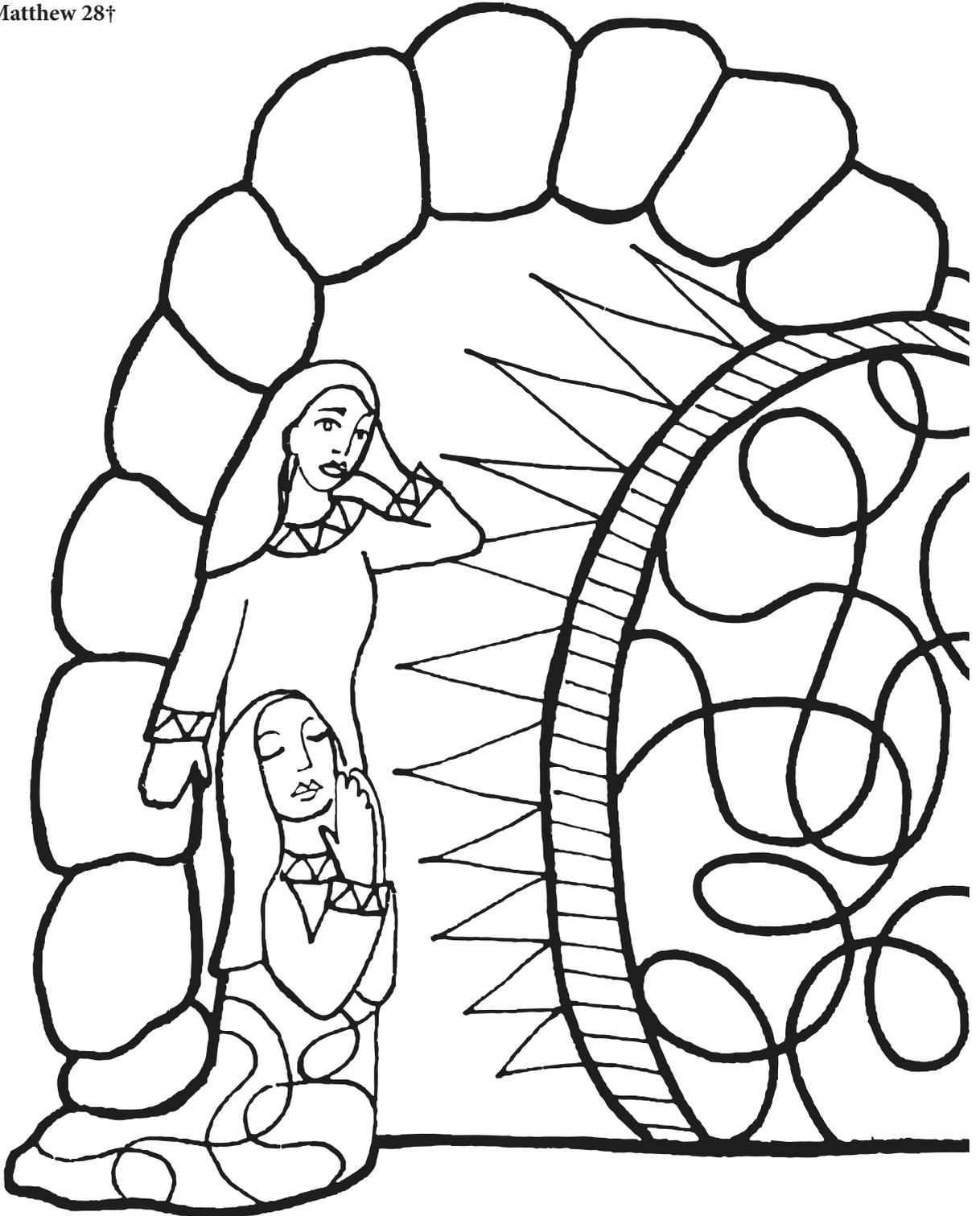
Psalm 89, Isaiah 61, Luke 4, Revelation 1†



THE FIRST PREACHERS: MANY MARYS

On the very first Easter, Mary the Virgin and Mary the Follower meet the risen Jesus. As they grasp at his feet in joy and awe, Jesus commissions the women to be the first preachers of the Christian faith: to tell the male disciples, who are hiding in fear, that Jesus will meet them where they are.

Matthew 28†



**ARISING HOSPITALITY: PETER'S
MOTHER-IN-LAW**

*Jesus touches Peter's mother-in-law, curing her fever. Rising from
her sickness, she provides hospitality to Jesus and his disciples.*

Matthew 8, Mark 1, Luke 4



WOMEN'S MARCH: THE MANY OF JESUS

Jesus forgives a sinful woman who provided him, as a stranger, extravagant hospitality, and praises her faithfulness over his closest disciple, Simon Peter. From there Jesus and his 12 male disciples bring the Good News to many villages and towns. A number of women begin to follow Jesus—including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna.

Luke 7-8



LOVING SISTERHOOD

Ruth embraces Naomi and pledges her loyalty and companionship: "I will go where you go. I will sleep where you sleep. Your family will be my family. Your God will be my God. I will die where you die—and also my remains."

May the church ever be thus. Blessed Be.

Ruth 1



CLOSING PRAYER

CLOSING PRAYER: SHEKINAH

*God of Love, and of Body, and of Spirit,
You have dwelt among us.*

May our lives be a mirror reflecting the faith of our mothers and fathers

That You will dwell with us, among us, and in us.

And approaching others as mirrors may we fall in love with what we see.

Your Holy Temple.

Amen.

2 Maccabees 14†



NOTES

A Prayer for Holy Week

The language here is intentionally meant to reference Nietzsche's parable of the madman—"the sepulchers of God," "what sacred games shall we have to invent?"—in *The Gay Science*, 125. The terminology of a perishing deity is again a reference to the radical theology of Altizer.

The Parade of Palms

For more on this interpretation of the Procession of Palms, see Christopher Rodkey, *Too Good to Be True* (Winchester, UK: Christian Alternative, 2014), 108–14.

Behold the Man!

Ecce Homo is Latin for "Here is" or "Behold the Man!" According to the Latin Vulgate translation of John 19, Pilate uses these words to present Jesus to the mob. The phrase is also the title of Nietzsche's final work, in which he places himself on trial; the work is subtitled *Wie man wird, was man ist*, that is, How One Becomes What One Is. Given Jesus' question of identity, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29, Matthew 16:15) we make the connection here that Jesus is becoming what even Pilate says in his presentation to the angry crowd. Through the trial, Jesus is becoming the archetype for humanity.

A Game of Stones and Knucklebones

The carvings for this game, *Basileus*, can be seen anywhere one would have found Roman soldiers, and can be plainly seen in Israel today.

At Golgotha

The image here makes a connection to the theme of the *Nehushtan* in our narrative, with the serpent, but also a nod to the artistic tradition of a skull at the foot of the cross. The symbolism is that the site of Jesus' crucifixion is also the long-lost site of the grave of Adam; another tradition holds that the place is called "The Skull" because a nearby rock formation that appears to be a skull is the remnants of the head of Goliath, placed on this site by David.

Why Have You Abandoned Me?

"*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*" is Aramaic for "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" In the radical theology tradition (in particular, Altizer and Slavoj Žižek), this is interpreted to imply that any hope for the interventionist, "Big Other" God is about to die with Jesus' cry of abandonment from the cross. For a deeper explanation of this, see Marcus Pound, *Žižek: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 23–52 and Adam Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology* (New York: T & T Clark, 2008), 94–95.

It Is Finished

If Jesus' Aramaic words of dereliction indicate an end to the belief in a "Big Other" God (see note above), these words here take on new meaning.

The Benediction

The Chrism Mass is a special liturgical observation performed on Maundy Thursday by Roman Catholic bishops, usually with the local priests in attendance, to bless the three kinds of anointing oils ("chrism") that will be used by the priests to administer sacraments in the coming year.

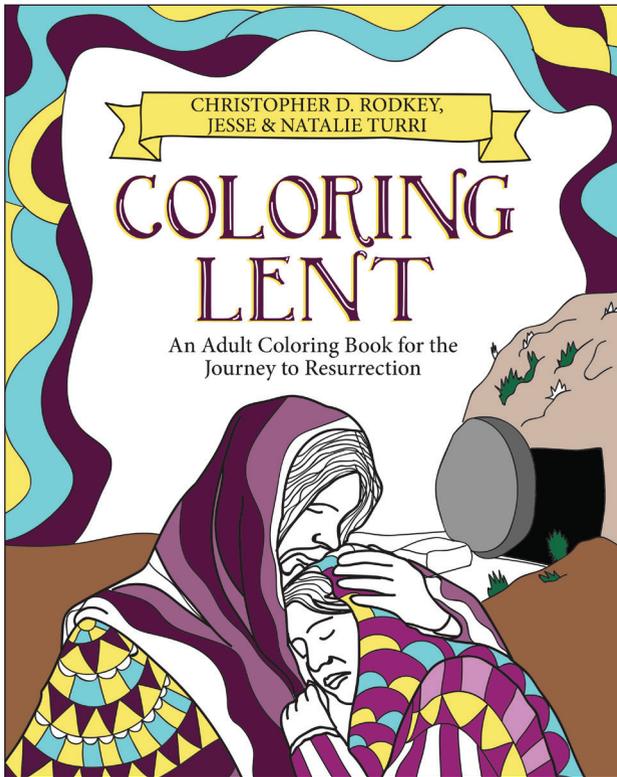
The First Preachers: Many Marys

Only the Matthew 28 account of the resurrection places the two Marys as the only women together at the empty tomb. Mark includes the two women and Salome (Mark 16); Luke mentions Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary (mother of James), and others (Luke 24); and John, only Mary Magdalene.

Closing Prayer: Shekinah

"Shekinah" in rabbinic tradition is the feminine aspect of God which denotes dwelling or presence.

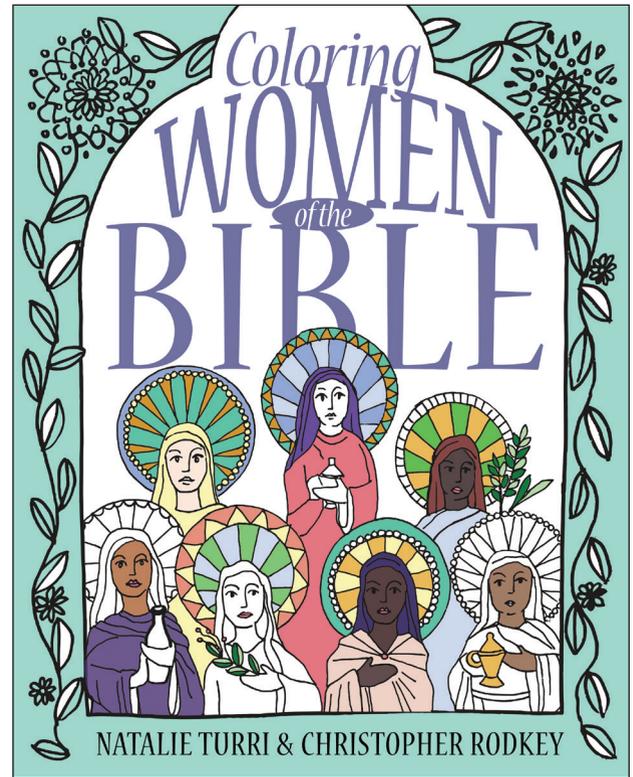
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Add the spiritual practice of “coloring the Bible” to your journey. Color and contemplate each day of Lent (from Ash Wednesday through Easter) with evocative illustrations of God’s Resurrection story, from the Old Testament prophecies of Emmanuel to Jesus’ victorious appearances after his crucifixion to the loyal disciples.

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ABOUT THE CREATORS

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