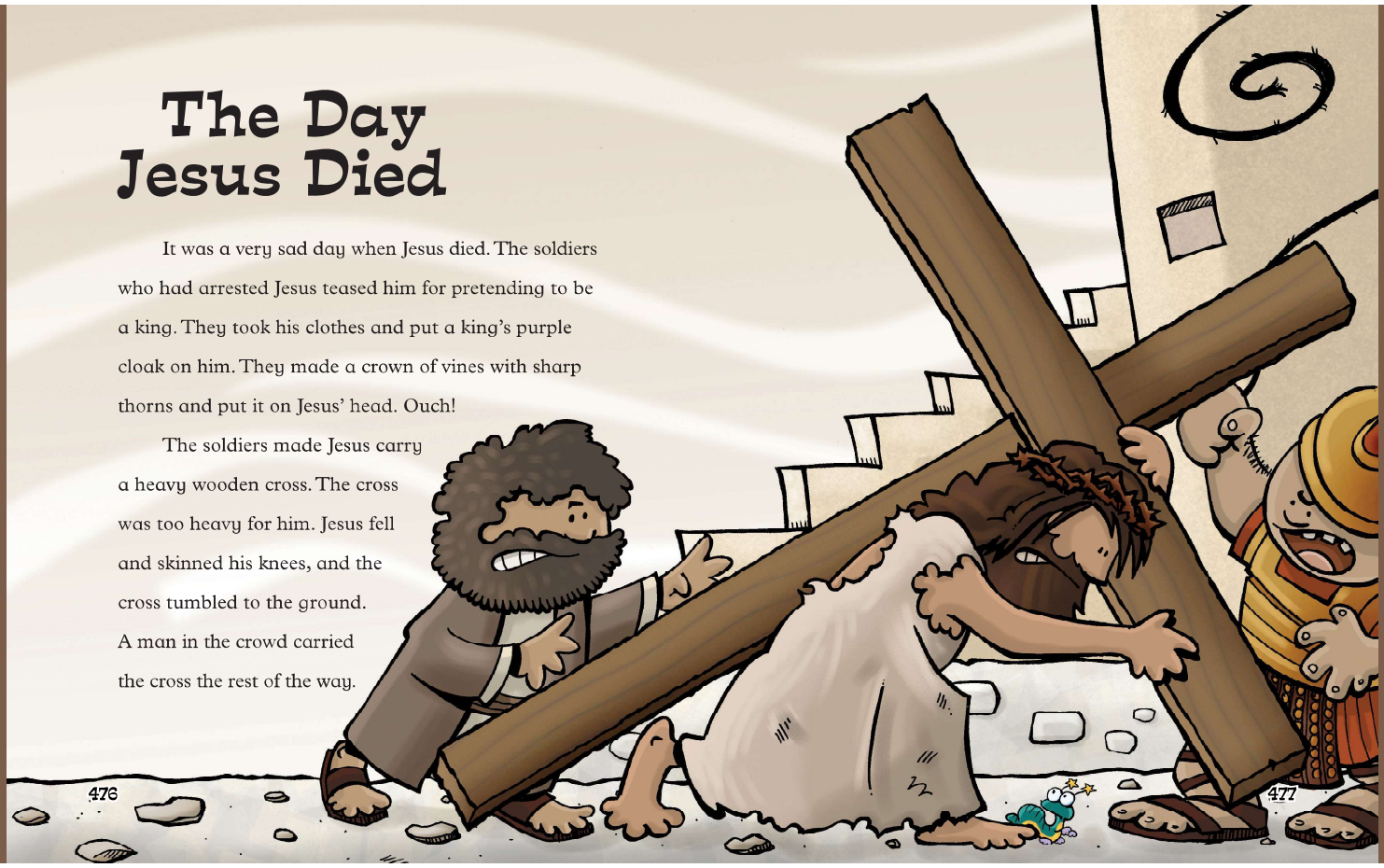
The Day Jesus Died

It was a very sad day when Jesus died. The soldiers who had arrested Jesus teased him for pretending to be a king. They took his clothes and put a king's purple cloak on him. They made a crown of vines with sharp thorns and put it on Jesus' head. Ouch!

The soldiers made Jesus carry a heavy wooden cross. The cross was too heavy for him. Jesus fell and skinned his knees, and the cross tumbled to the ground. A man in the crowd carried the cross the rest of the way.



The soldiers nailed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross. They raised Jesus' cross up on a hill between two other men. The other men were thieves and they were being crucified too. One of the men was angry with Jesus.

"If you are a powerful king, can't you save yourself? Why don't you save us too?!" The man spat at Jesus.



But the other thief believed in Jesus. He shouted back, "Don't you know who this is? This is God's Son. He hasn't done anything wrong. We are being punished for our mistakes. But Jesus shouldn't be here."

The man turned to Jesus and asked, "Will you take me to heaven with you?"

Jesus looked at the man and loved him. Jesus told him, "Yes, today we will be in heaven together."



After a while, the world grew very dark, as if a terrible thunderstorm was coming. It was as if all of creation was crying because Jesus was about to die. Jesus was feeling all alone and prayed to see if God was still there. Of course, God never left Jesus. God was with him the whole time.

Jesus looked at the crowd. He was so sad that people didn't believe that he was God's Son. He asked God to forgive them for killing him. The soldiers offered him some sour wine, but he didn't want to drink it.

He was ready to die. Finally, Jesus had fought for long enough. He said, "God, the work you gave me to do here is finished." He breathed a final, long, slow breath, and then he died.

