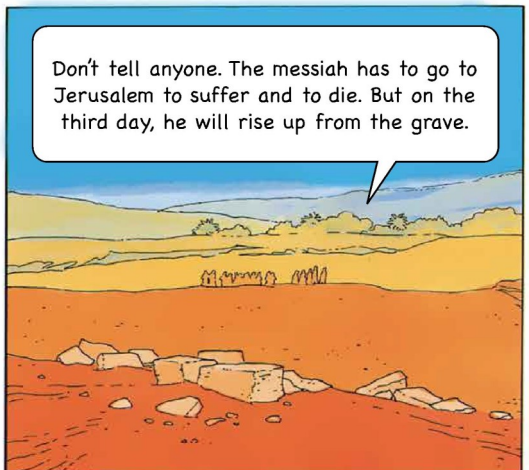
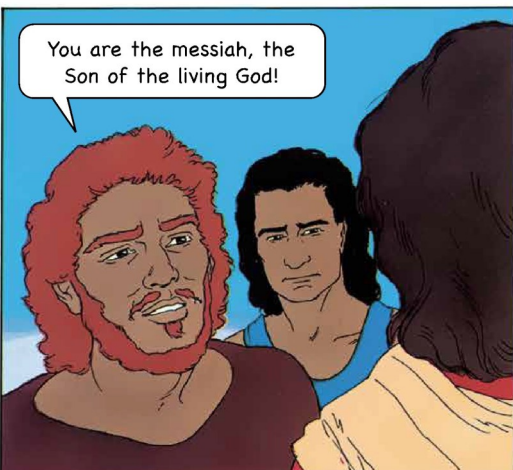
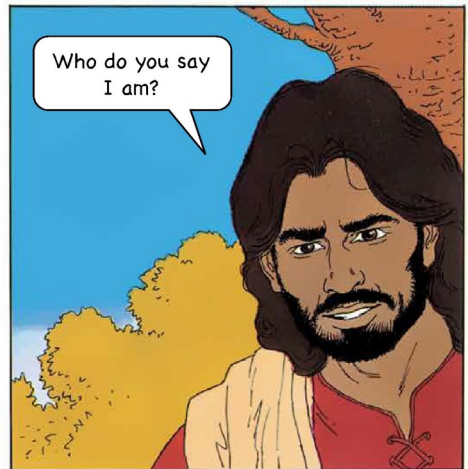
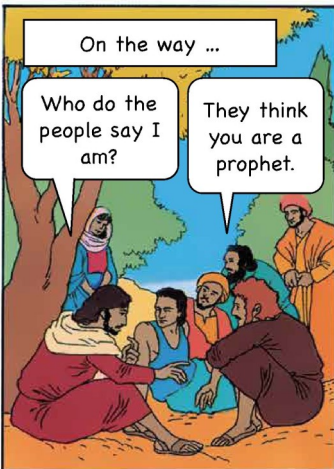
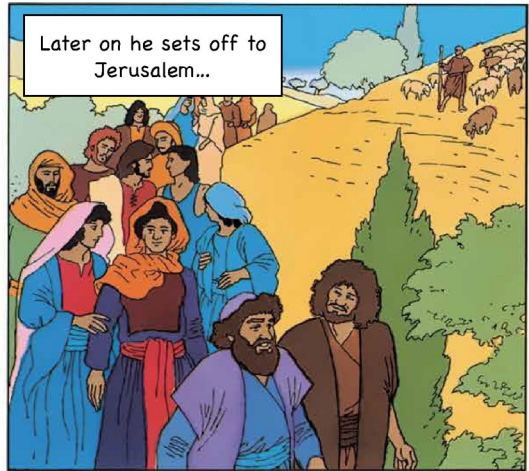
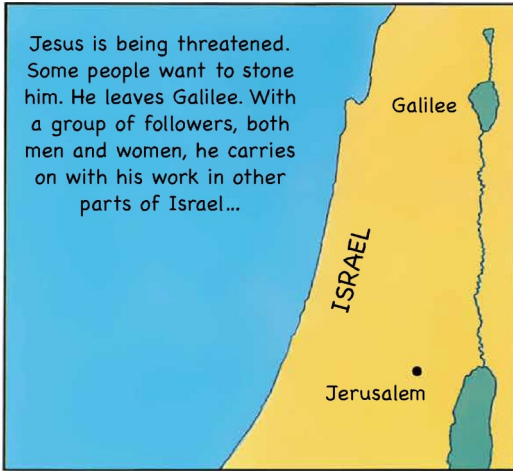
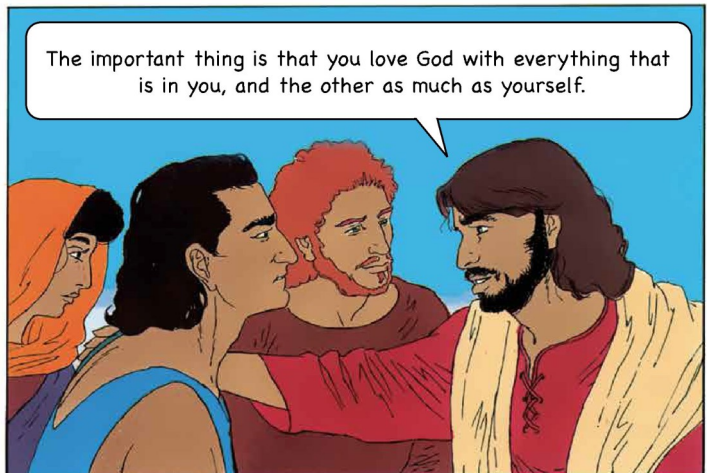
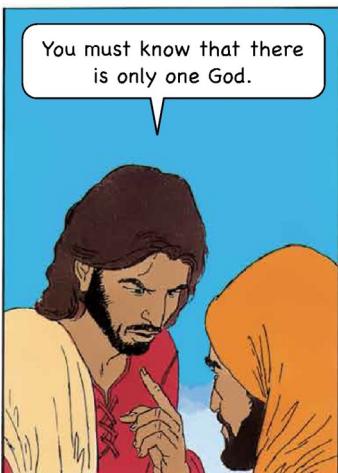
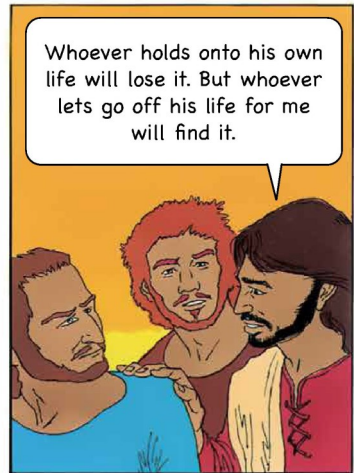
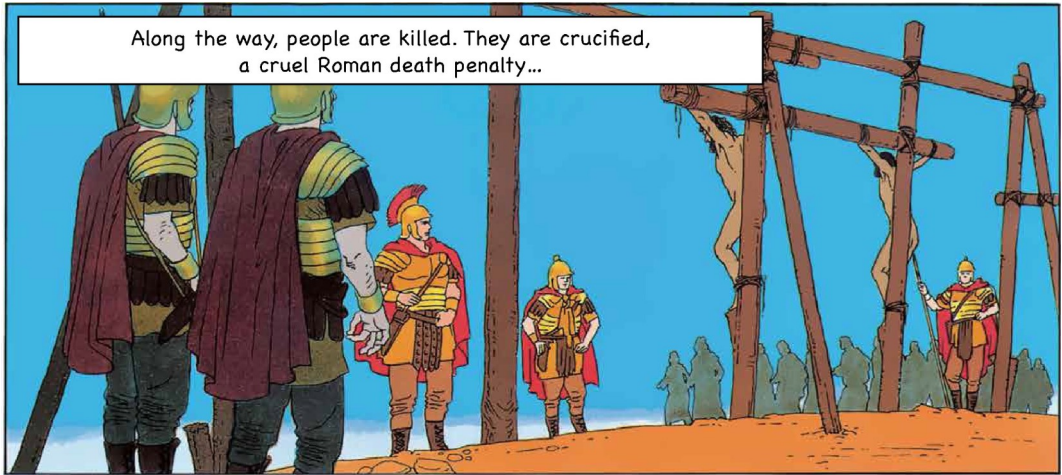


"TAKE UP YOUR CROSS!"

READ FOR YOURSELF: Matthew 16:13-28





"TAKE UP YOUR CROSS!"

The method used for capital punishment by the Romans is crucifixion. Other nations also use this form of capital punishment. Criminals are hung up on wooden crosses beside the road until they die.

To increase the agony even more, the condemned people have to carry their own timbers to the place where they will die. These planks are fastened together in the form of a cross, and then the condemned are hung up with ropes and nails. They die after hours (sometimes days) of suffering from dehydration in the heat and from cramp and exhaustion.

The disciples refuse to accept that the Lord Jesus will go to Jerusalem to die there. The Messiah, the Son of the living God, will surely not be crucified? And why does He say that they too will carry a cross? Is that the only way to follow Him?

Taking up your cross does not mean to commit suicide. But that you follow Jesus and rather trust in Him than in yourself.

Paul says it like this:

"So far as the Law is concerned, however, I am dead — killed by the Law itself — in order that I might live for God. I have been put to death with Christ on His cross, so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave His life for me."
(Galatians 2:19, 20)

WHO IS JESUS?

Christ

"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16)

Christ means: 'Anointed one'. It is the title that is given to the promised Messiah. That is the man whom God will anoint to be an everlasting king.

He is already predicted by Jacob in Genesis 49:10a:

Jesus is descended from Judah:

"Judah will hold the royal sceptre and his descendants will always rule"

MEMORY VERSE

"If anyone wants to come with Me, he must forget self, carry his cross, and follow Me."
(Matthew 16:24)

SURRENDER YOURSELF!

Taking up your cross means denying yourself and denying yourself means that you consider others more important than yourself. That is not always easy. Our ego often gets in the way. But you can learn it: by surrendering yourself to Jesus. So that He becomes more important than you. It is not hard to surrender yourself to Him, because He loves you so much. If you learn to think of Him first, that will help you to think more of others. The Lord Jesus is the only one who can free you from being self-centred (2 Corinthians 5:15).

12



OLD TREASURES

The very first Bible passage that Jewish children have to memorize is this one from Deuteronomy:

*"Israel, remember this! The Lord—and the Lord alone—is our God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."
(Deuteronomy 6:4-5).*

For the Jews it is not surprising that Jesus points to this text as the summary of God's commandments. It is part of their creed. They recite it every day. However, it is surprising that Jesus connects another passage with it, from Leviticus:

"Love your neighbours as you love yourself. I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:18b).

The Jews know 613 commandments from the Law of Moses. But these two commandments, according to Jesus, contain the whole Law. He Himself makes this come true in full. And He gives you His love and then you can do it too. God's Spirit makes it possible that from now on you can love God and love others.



EXTRA INFORMATION

Why Jesus Christ?

Often you hear people say Jesus Christ when they are talking about Jesus.

Why the word Christ after Jesus?

Christ is a Greek word (the New Testament was written in Greek, the world language of that time). The Hebrew word for Christ is 'Messiah' (Hebrew is the language of the Jews). It is one of Jesus' titles. Christ means: the anointed King.

Why the anointed King?

Priests, prophets and kings were anointed with oil in the Old Testament.

That signified, from now on the Lord God supports them. He gives them authority.

Jesus is anointed with the Holy Spirit. His followers also are anointed with the Holy Spirit. God supports them.



DO YOU KNOW...?

1. How are the wooden planks brought to the place of crucifixion?

2. What are the three causes of death for someone who is crucified?

a.

b.

c.

3. What does Jesus mean by taking up your cross?

- a) That you have to die like a criminal.
- b) That everyone needs to see how humble you are.
- c) That you are offering yourself to Jesus.

4. What does Jesus Christ mean?

- a) Jesus the anointed king.
- b) Jesus the son of Christ.
- c) Jesus saves.

5. What does Jesus Messiah mean?

6. Have a look at the map in the picture story. Is Galilee in the north or the south of Israel?

And where is the Mediterranean Sea?

7. What does Jesus think is more important: to love God or to love your neighbour?

BIBLE READING

Sun	Mark 12:29-31
Mon	Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Leviticus 19:18
Tue	Luke 10:25-37
Wed	Matthew 16:13-20
Thu	Matthew 16:21-28
Fri	Matthew 11:27-30
Sat	Galatians 2:20



ACTION POINT!

Love can be measured by the amount of time you give for another.

Think of an average weekday in your life.

Think of how you spend your time:

1. How many hours a day do I spend for myself?
2. How many hours a day do I spend on family and friends?
3. How many hours a day do I spend on other people?

Don't keep on thinking only of yourself; but think also of others!