

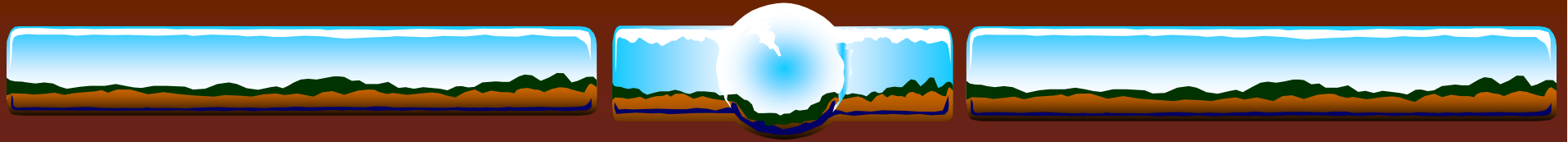
Saint Philopatir Mercurius



His Life

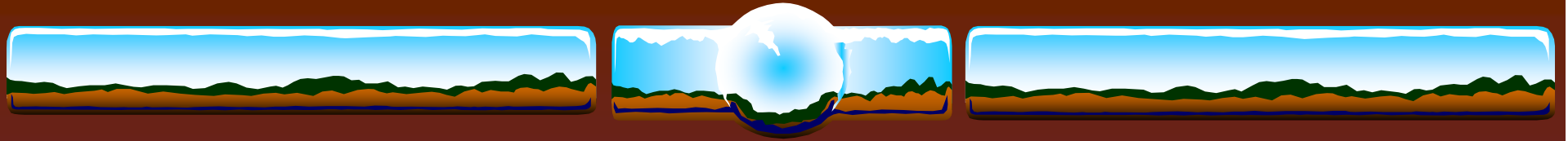
- ❖ Born in Rome in 225 AD
- ❖ He was a very brave, responsible young man & well-respected among his peers that he was selected to join the Roman Army by the age of 17. He was quickly promoted as a commander of the army.
- ❖ He was a man of virtue & always asked for God's help in all his actions. An Angel appeared to him during fierce battle, and gave him a second sword, which he used to win his battle. From that point onwards, he was named: "Abu-Sefein" – "The Man of Two Swords".





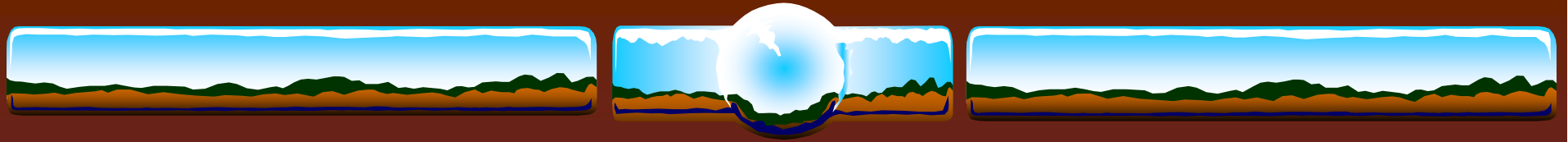
Witnessing Christ

- ❖ As a result, he was quickly promoted to the post of the Supreme General Commander of the whole army for his accomplishments. And he was invited by the Emperor to worship his gods with him as a reward.
- ❖ But the humble & courageous Abu-Sefin refused to take the credit for himself, & instead he declared in front of everyone & in front of the pagan emperor that it was God's Hands that helped him through his victories. He proudly & happily declared his Christianity & his love to God which prevents him from worshipping the pagan gods, even if it would cost him his great position or his life.



❖ He knew that the pagan emperor wouldn't be happy with what he have done & that he will suffer because of his confession, but he didn't care. All what he knew is that he could not betray God who have shown him all those blessings.

❖ Seeing God's work in his life, Abu-Sefin longed all the more to dedicate his heart to God, and just enjoyed being in God's presence. He simply preferred God's love to the world's glory.



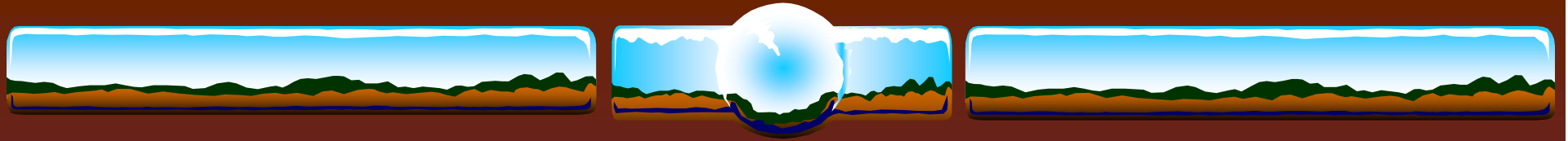
The Emperor's Reaction

- ❖ Being the great man he was, Abu-Sefin was much loved by the emperor, that he couldn't imagine losing a man with his qualities, so he tried to persuade him by all kinds of rewards & gifts. But in spite of all of that, Abu-Sefin had his eyes set on the main goal, & he knew that there could be nothing compared to the happiness & joy he experiences in his relationship with God.
- ❖ So the emperor, shocked by his bravery & loyalty to God, he had no other option than to torture him, & after many warnings, he started inflicting all kinds of pain upon him (emotional & physical).

Examples of his Torture

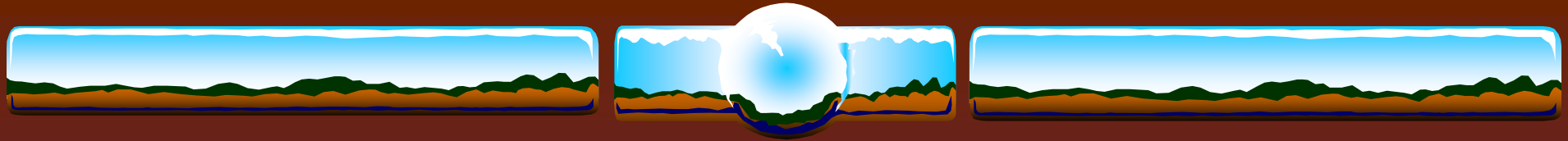
- ❖ Humiliated, stripped of his medals, and jailed.
- ❖ Struck with nails.
- ❖ His flesh cut with sharp blades.
- ❖ Burnt over hot coal.
- ❖ Hung upside down with a large rock hanging around his neck.
- ❖ Finally he earned the honour of being a martyr & was beheaded.





Reflection

- ❖ It is said that Abu-Sefin possessed two swords – one was his military sword, and the second sword given to him was the sword of divine power.
- ❖ Through God's Grace, we too may possess spiritual gifts. What do you think is a spiritual gift that God may have given you? & how do you use it?
- ❖ Do you use this spiritual tool to its full potential to witness for Christ's great love?
- ❖ It's always enjoyable to enjoy the spotlight or to receive admiration from others for our achievements. Do you readily acknowledge and confess to others that it was by the Grace of God that you achieved this success? Or do you prefer to bask in all the glory yourself & ignore God's help?



Our Hero

- ❖ We can learn from Abu-Sefin's courage – How he stood against the mighty, powerful emperor & all of his followers.
- ❖ When we are bold in our witness to God, God will always be with us and strengthen us. Abu-Sefin was supported by God whilst alive (the angel would touch his body after he was tortured, and heal him, as if nothing had happened). After his death hundreds of years ago, his body continues to perform mighty miracles to this day.
- ❖ We need to be heroes of our Faith, in the same way Abu-Sefin was. Not afraid of being different, or feeling rejected. Following others is not always the right thing, we have to stop, think & ask: “Is that what I am supposed to do? Will this make me a better person? Does this contribute to my life? – Abu-Sefin & all the other saints, would they have done the same?”.
- ❖ We must learn to seek the supplications of these saints, who have earned themselves a place in the kingdom of God.