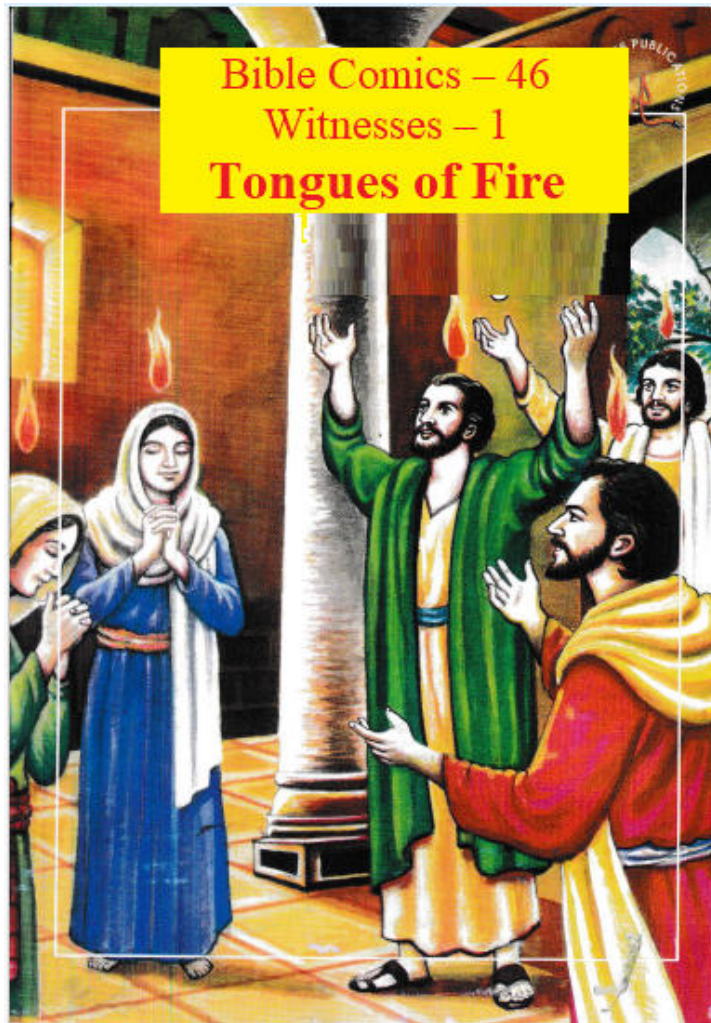


Bible Comics – 46
Witnesses – 1
Tongues of Fire



TONGUES OF FIRE

We are starting a new series comprising four books under the title “witnesses”. During the earthly life Jesus limited his activities to the territories of Israel. But, the good news of salvation brought by Jesus was not to be limited to a particular people or area. So, after the resurrection Jesus sent out the apostles to the whole world. The present series depicts how they accomplished this task by preaching the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, the capital of the then known western

world. These stories are based on the book of the Bible called “The Acts of the Apostles”.

The present book depicts the events that took place in Jerusalem from the coming of the Holy Spirit to the election of the deacons (Acts 1-6). The title “tongues of fire” refers to the mission of the apostles to proclaim the gospel with strength and zeal. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost marked the solemn inauguration of the Church of Christ. The feast of Pentecost was one of the three major feasts of the Jews, the others being Passover and the feast of tabernacles.

Its name, meaning “fiftieth” derives from the fact that it was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Passover. The pilgrims who came to Jerusalem for the Passover feast usually stayed on till the Pentecost.

The coming of the Holy Spirit marked a transformation in the lives of the apostles. They were illiterate fishermen from Galilee, who were hiding in Jerusalem for fear of the Jews, but suddenly became courageous and eloquent speakers. Those who fled at the arrest of Jesus and denied him when questioned started proclaiming

in public that the one they crucified has risen from death and that he is the only Savior. Miracles of healing confirmed their preaching. Touched by the Holy Spirit, the audience could understand the apostles, speech in their own language. As the confusion of language at the “tower of Babel” marked the scattering of peoples, so the coming of the Holy Spirit initiated the gathering of nations into one people.

The people who repented and believed in Jesus Christ were baptized and became one family. The primitive Christian community had four

characteristics. 1. They believed in the teachings of the apostles; 2. shared all material goods; 3. celebrated the memory of Jesus' death and resurrection in the "breaking of the bread" and 4. were united in prayer.

Thousands of people were converted and accepted Jesus as the only Saviour and Lord. But, the Jewish leaders, adamant in their convictions, were determined to destroy the infant Church. Even though they tried to stop the apostles from speaking about Christ through threats and persecution, the Church was growing fast. As the

believers took refuge in ever more ardent prayers, the Holy Spirit gave them strength and courage for bearing witness to Jesus Christ. The episode of Ananias and Sapphira, as well as the election of the deacons show how the apostles dealt with the internal problems of the Church. This ideal picture of the primitive Church is a model and source of inspiration for the Church of Christ at all times. All our actions should be guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Bible Comics – 46

Witnesses – 1

Tongues of Fire

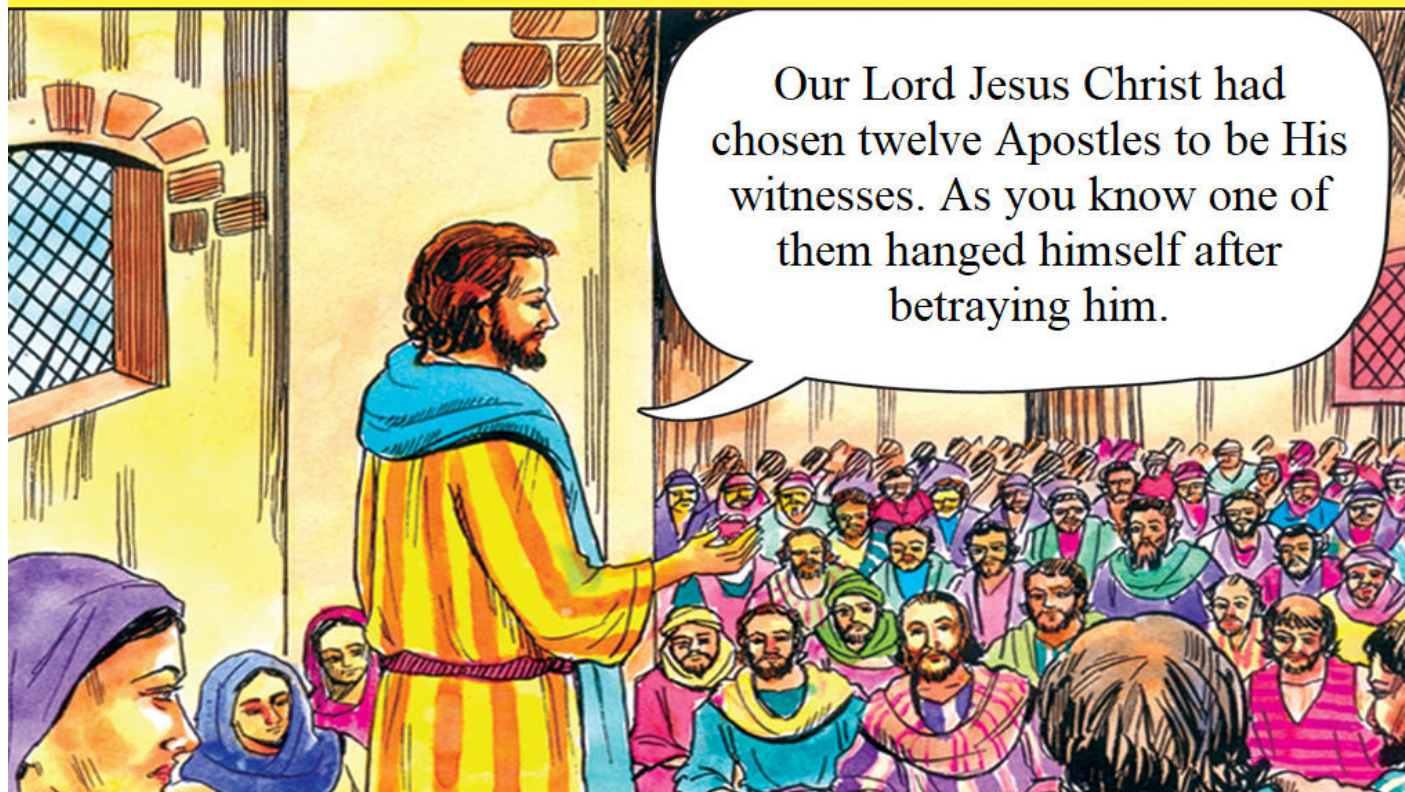
Script:

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration:

Devassy & Benny

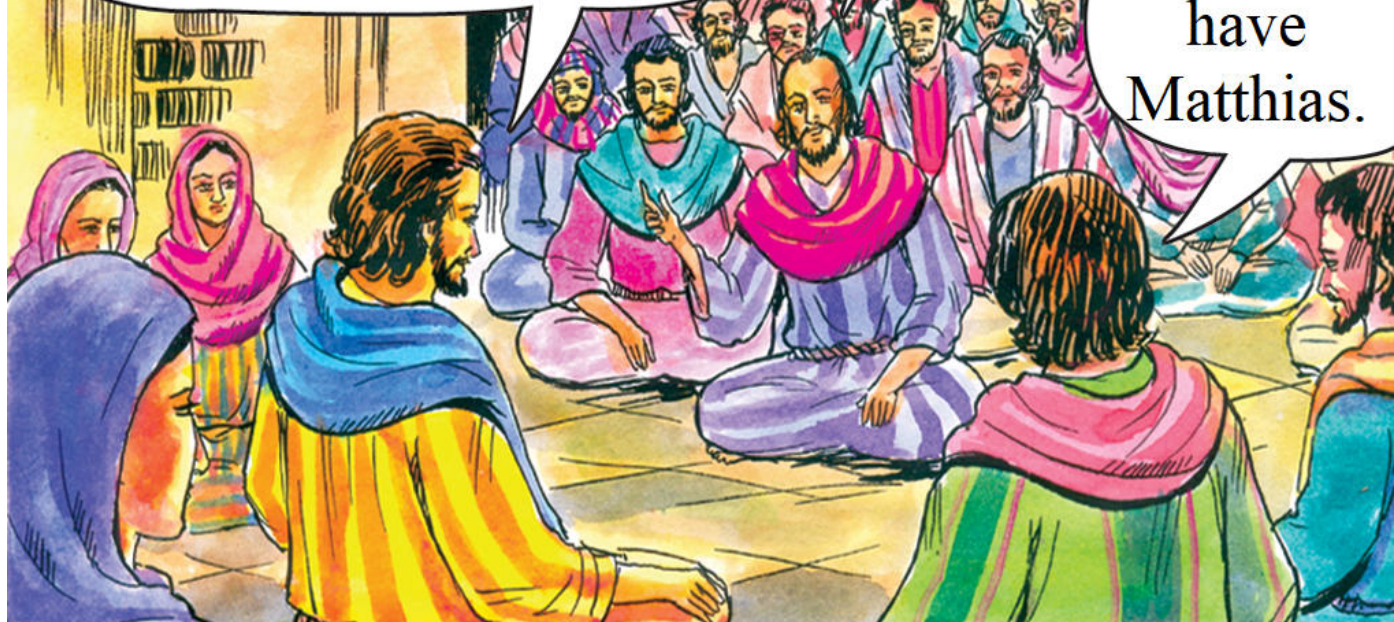
After witnessing the ascension of Our Lord on Mount of Olives, the disciples returned to Jerusalem. they gathered in the upper-room and remained in prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit. One day when there were about 120 disciples gathered, Peter said:



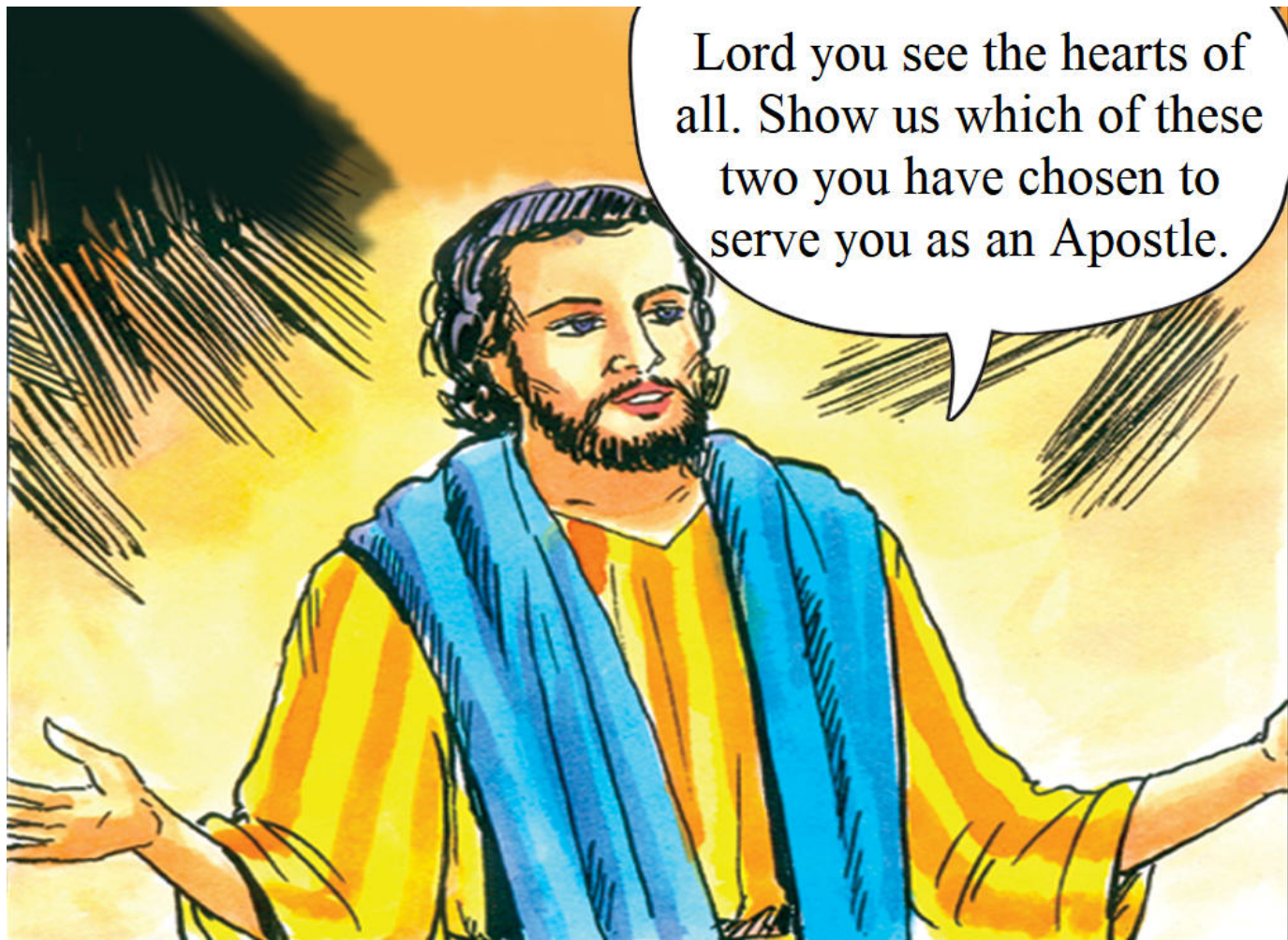
We must choose someone who has been with us from the baptism to the ascension of our Lord. Whom do you suggest?

I propose Barabbas.

Let us have Matthias.



Lord you see the hearts of
all. Show us which of these
two you have chosen to
serve you as an Apostle.



The lot fell on
Matthias



On the day of Pentecost, suddenly they heard a big noise that sounded like a powerful wind.

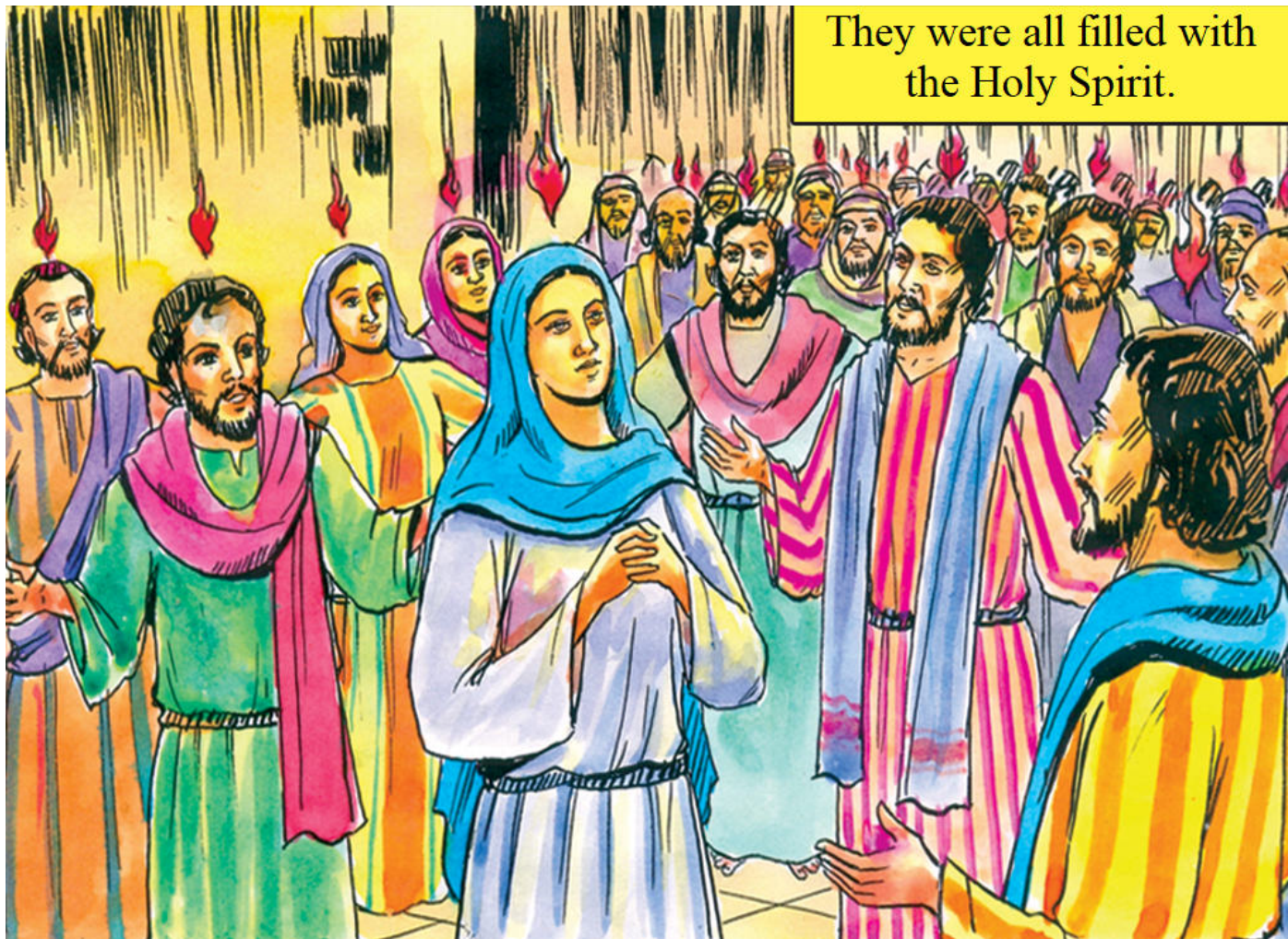
It seems that a tornado has hit that house.

Friends of that Galilean are inside.

Let us go and see what is going on.



They were all filled with
the Holy Spirit.



There were Jews from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem.
Hearing the noise, they came to the house and heard
the Apostles speaking.

Halleluia!

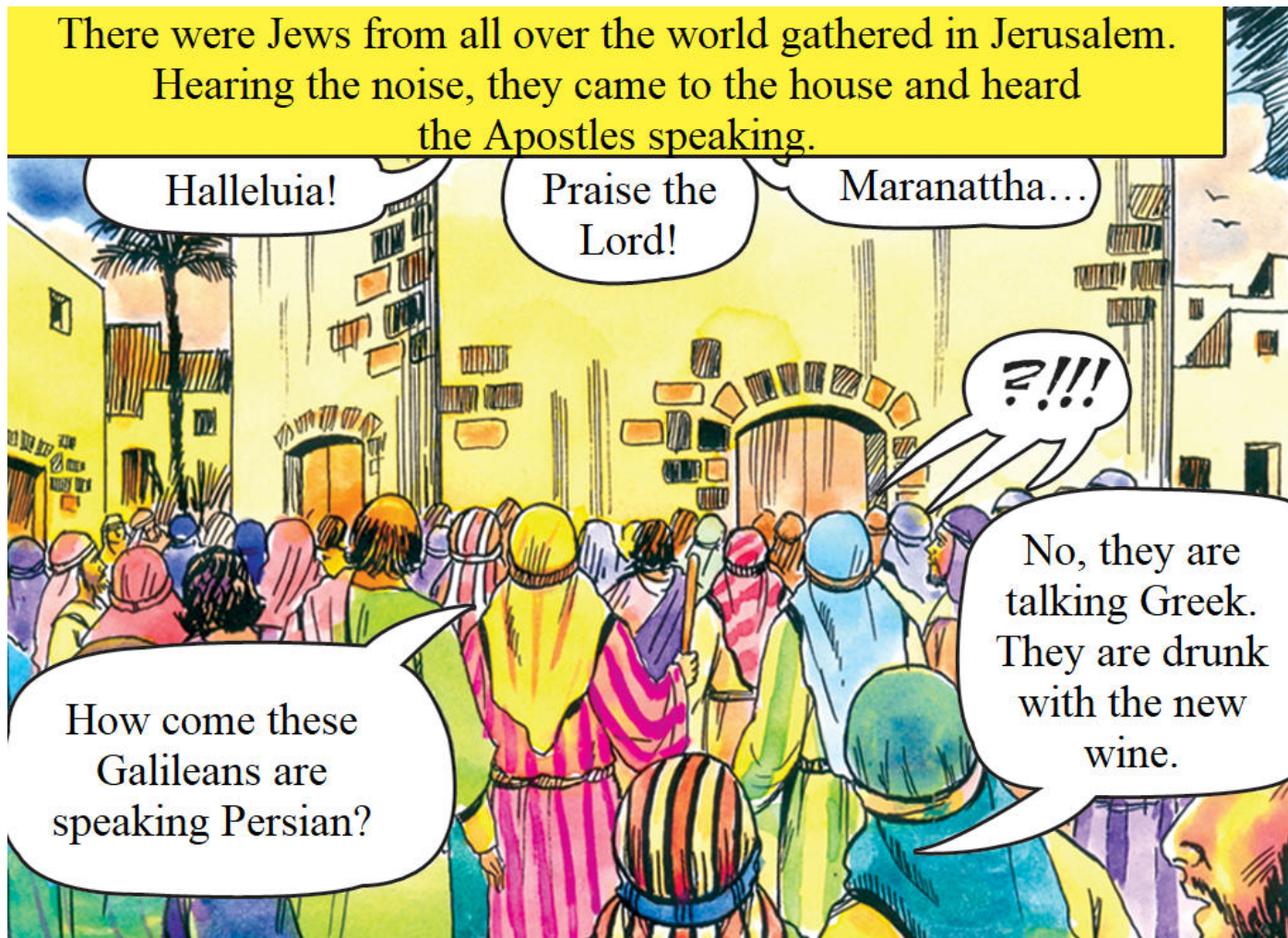
Praise the
Lord!

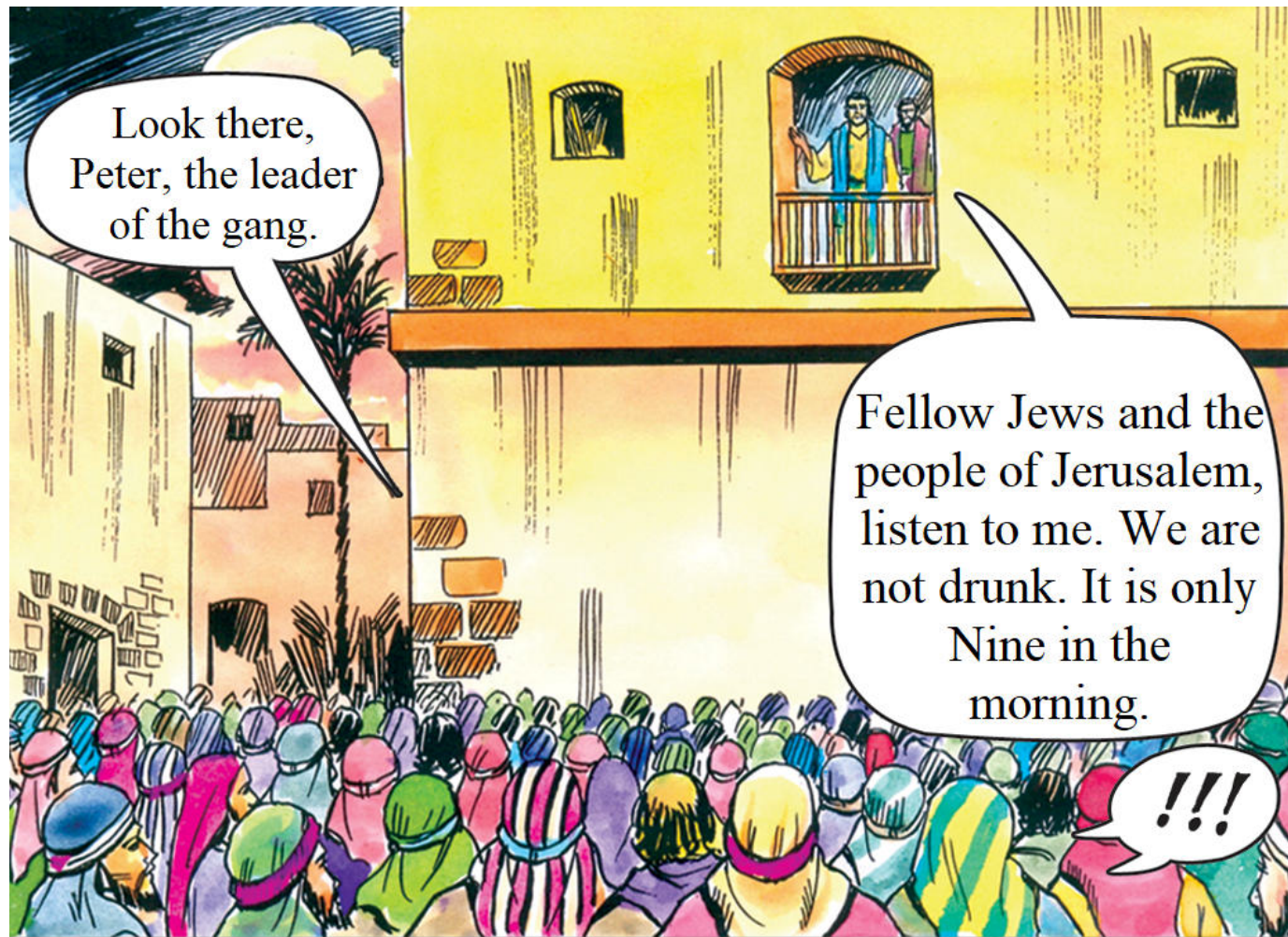
Maranatha...

?!!!

How come these
Galileans are
speaking Persian?

No, they are
talking Greek.
They are drunk
with the new
wine.





Look there,
Peter, the leader
of the gang.

Fellow Jews and the
people of Jerusalem,
listen to me. We are
not drunk. It is only
Nine in the
morning.

!!!

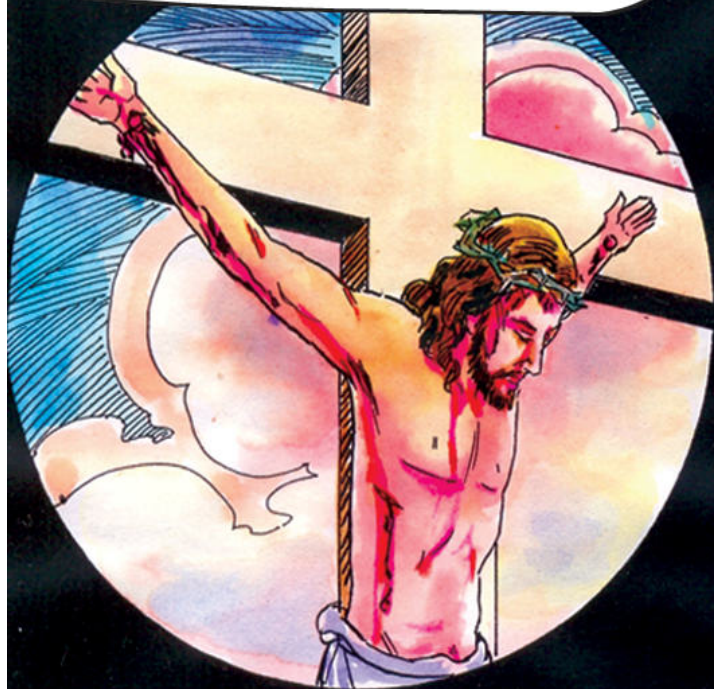
As promised by the
Prophet Joel, God has
poured out His Spirit.



You know the man Jesus.
Many of you have
witnessed the miracles he
performed.



You crucified Him. But God
raised him from the dead.
We are his witnesses.



He received all the
authority from God
and has sent His
Spirit. What you see
and hear are the
works of that Spirit.



Let all the people of Israel know that
God has made this Jesus whom you
crucified both Lord and Christ.

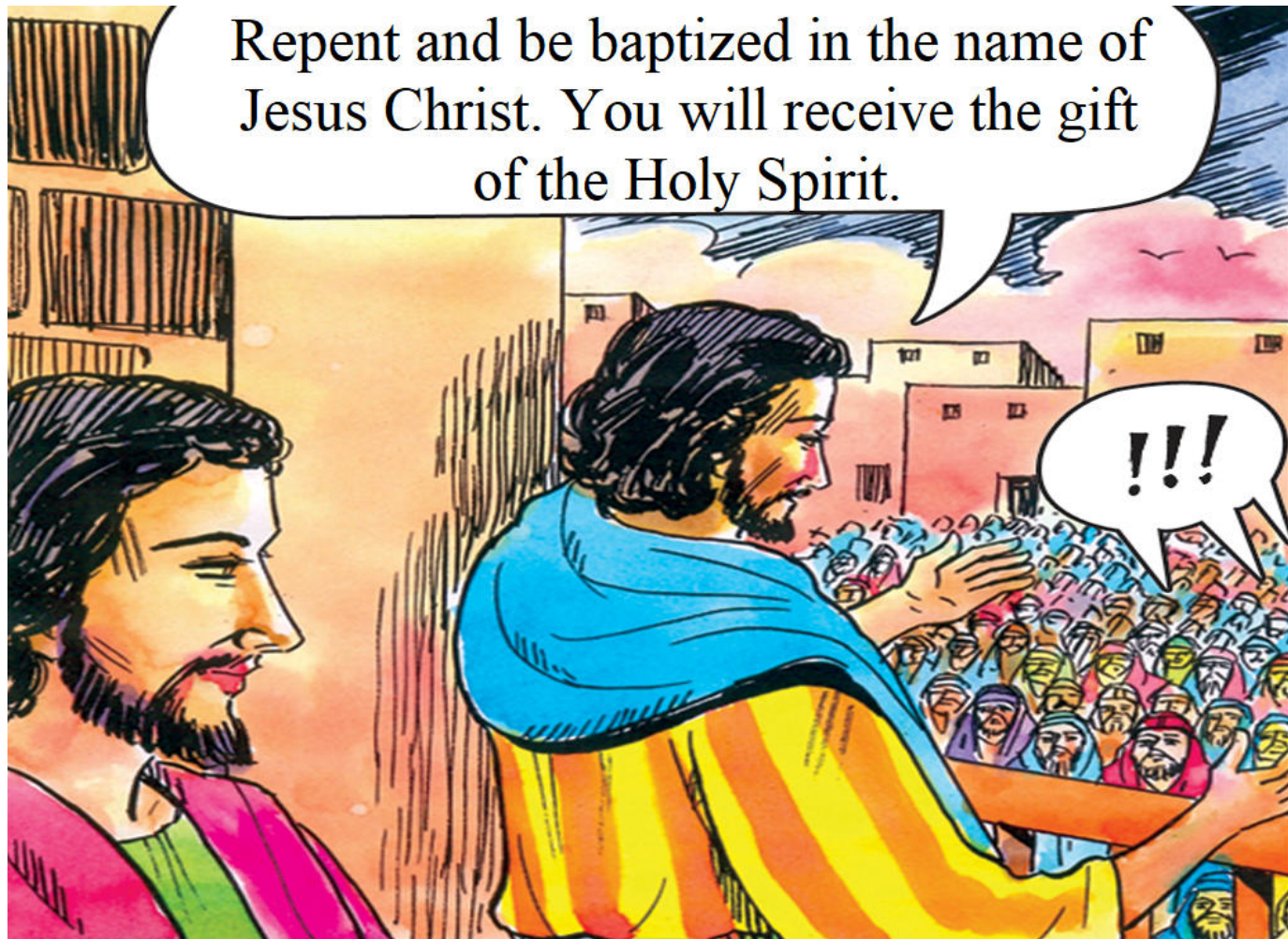




Brothers, we have
committed a big
crime.

What must we do
now?

Repent and be baptized in the name of
Jesus Christ. You will receive the gift
of the Holy Spirit.



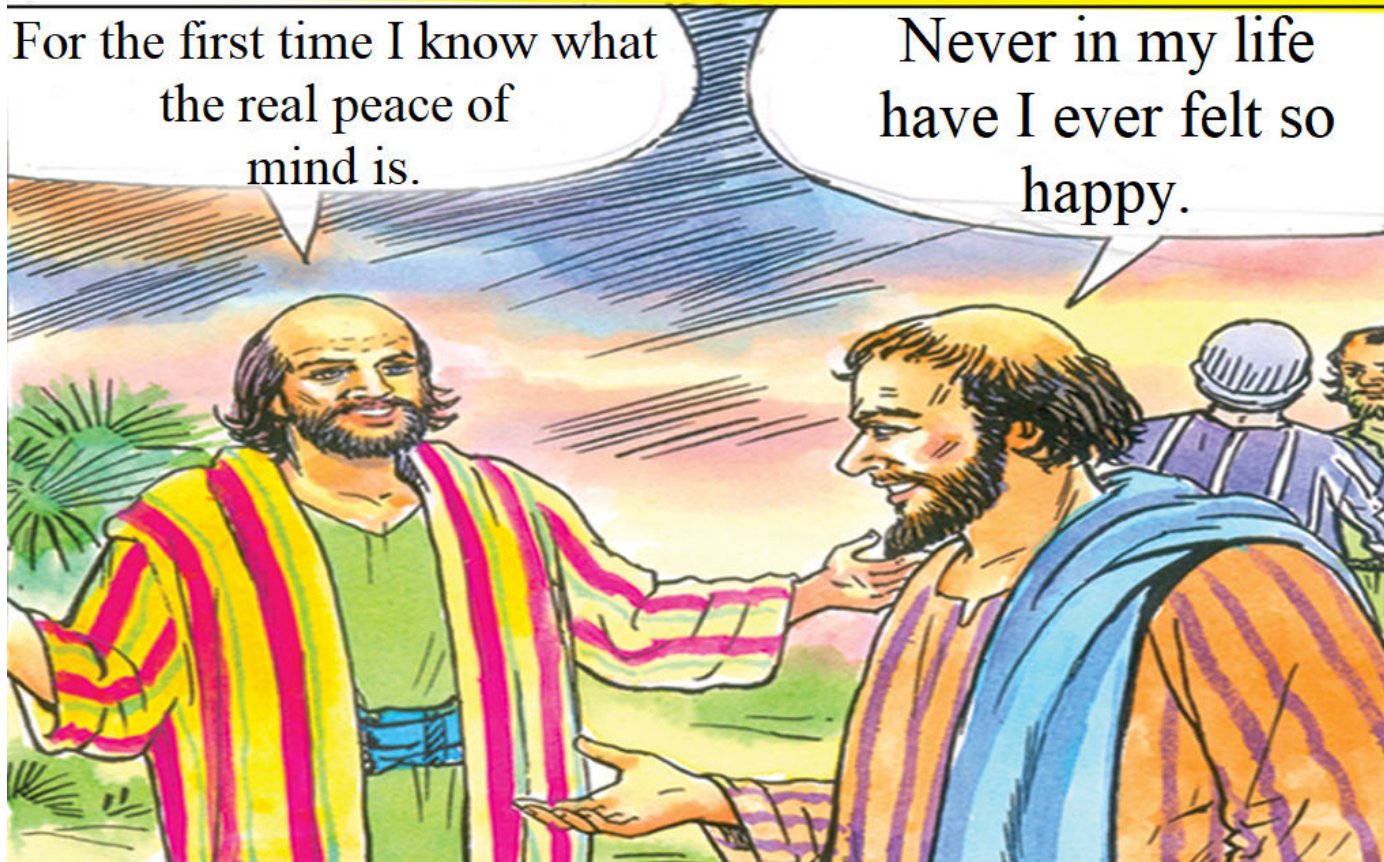
God's promise was
made to you and all the
people in the world.



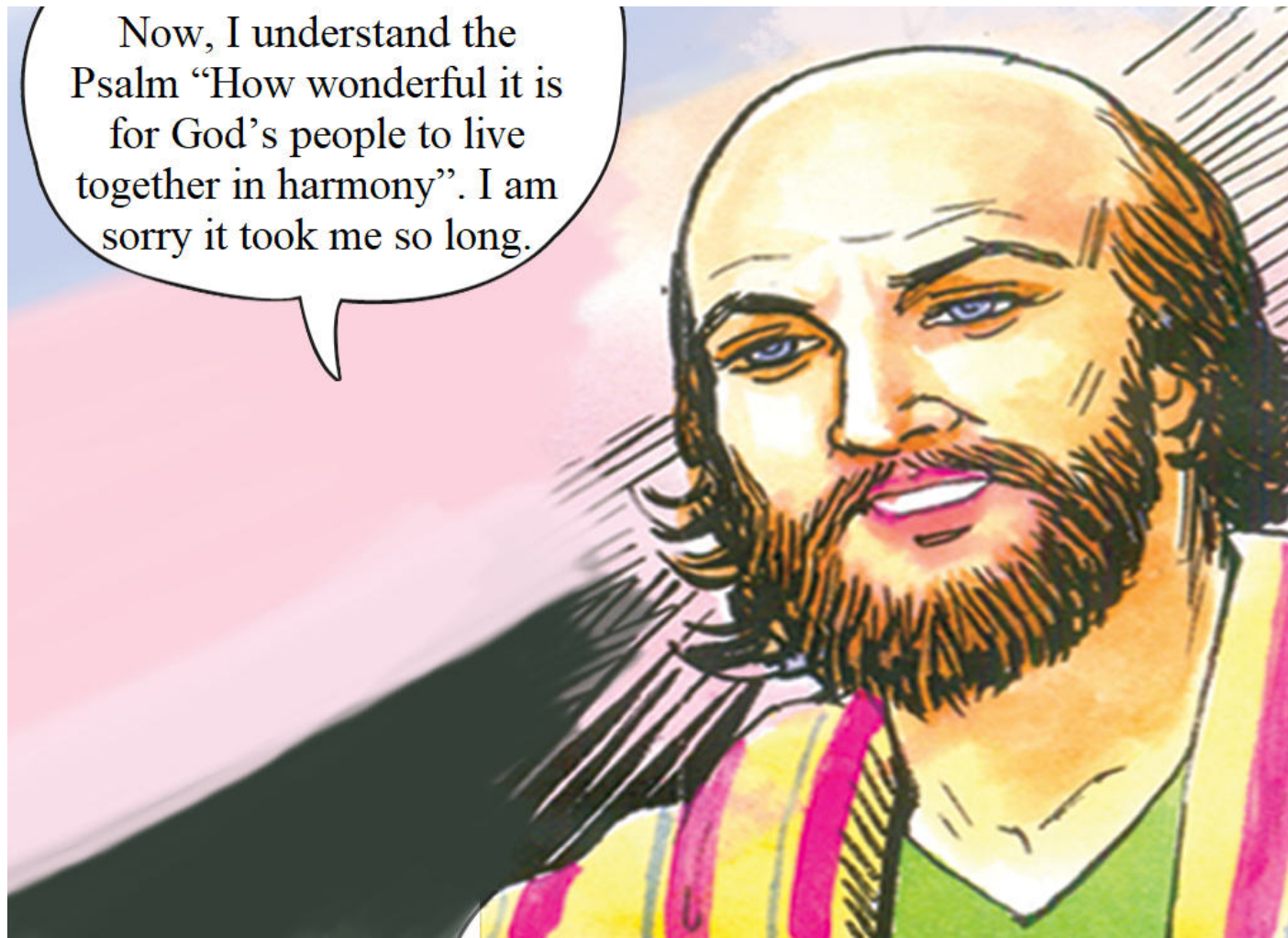
About three thousand people believed and received the Baptism; they all lived as one family.

For the first time I know what the real peace of mind is.

Never in my life have I ever felt so happy.

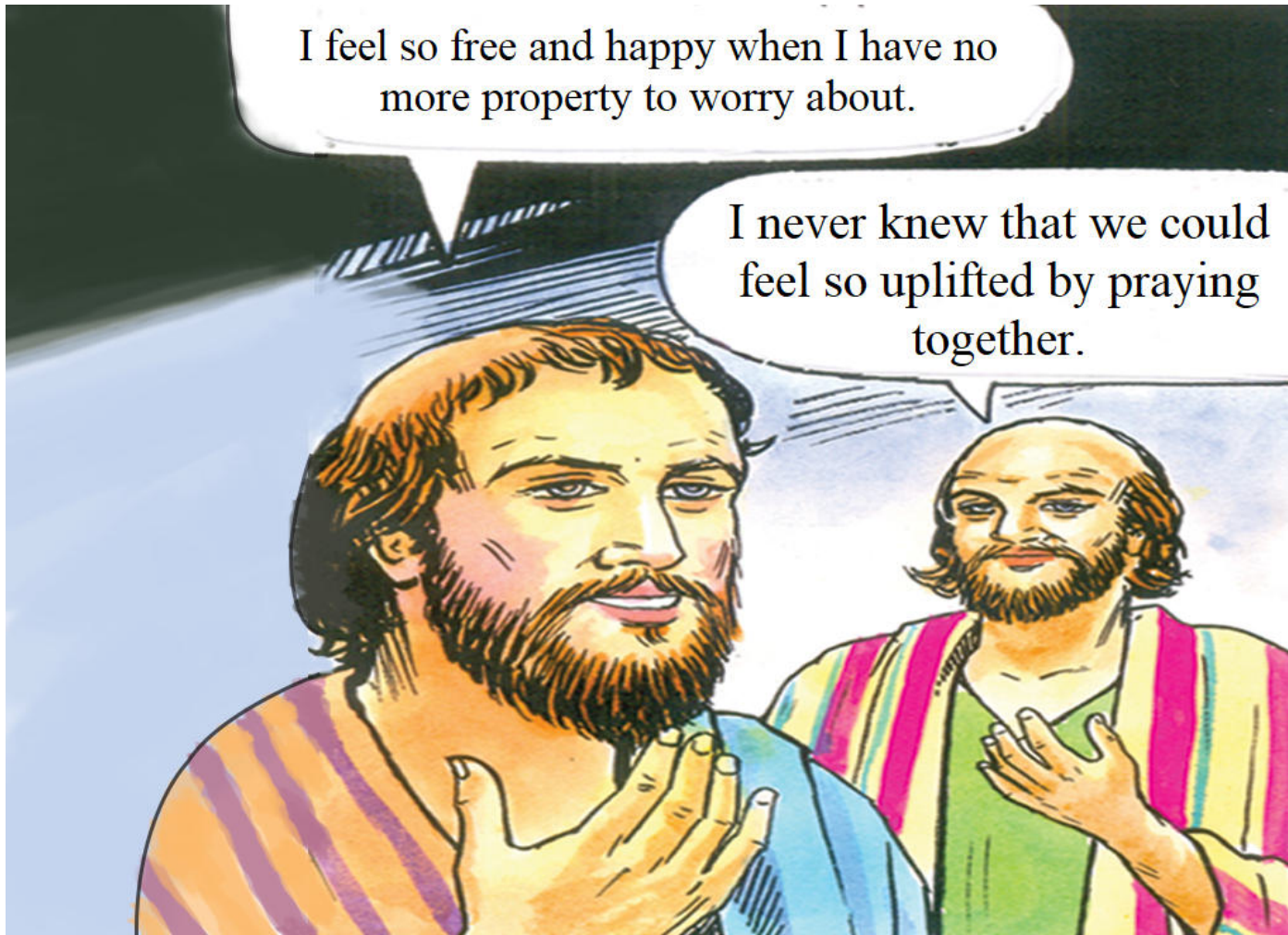


Now, I understand the Psalm “How wonderful it is for God’s people to live together in harmony”. I am sorry it took me so long.



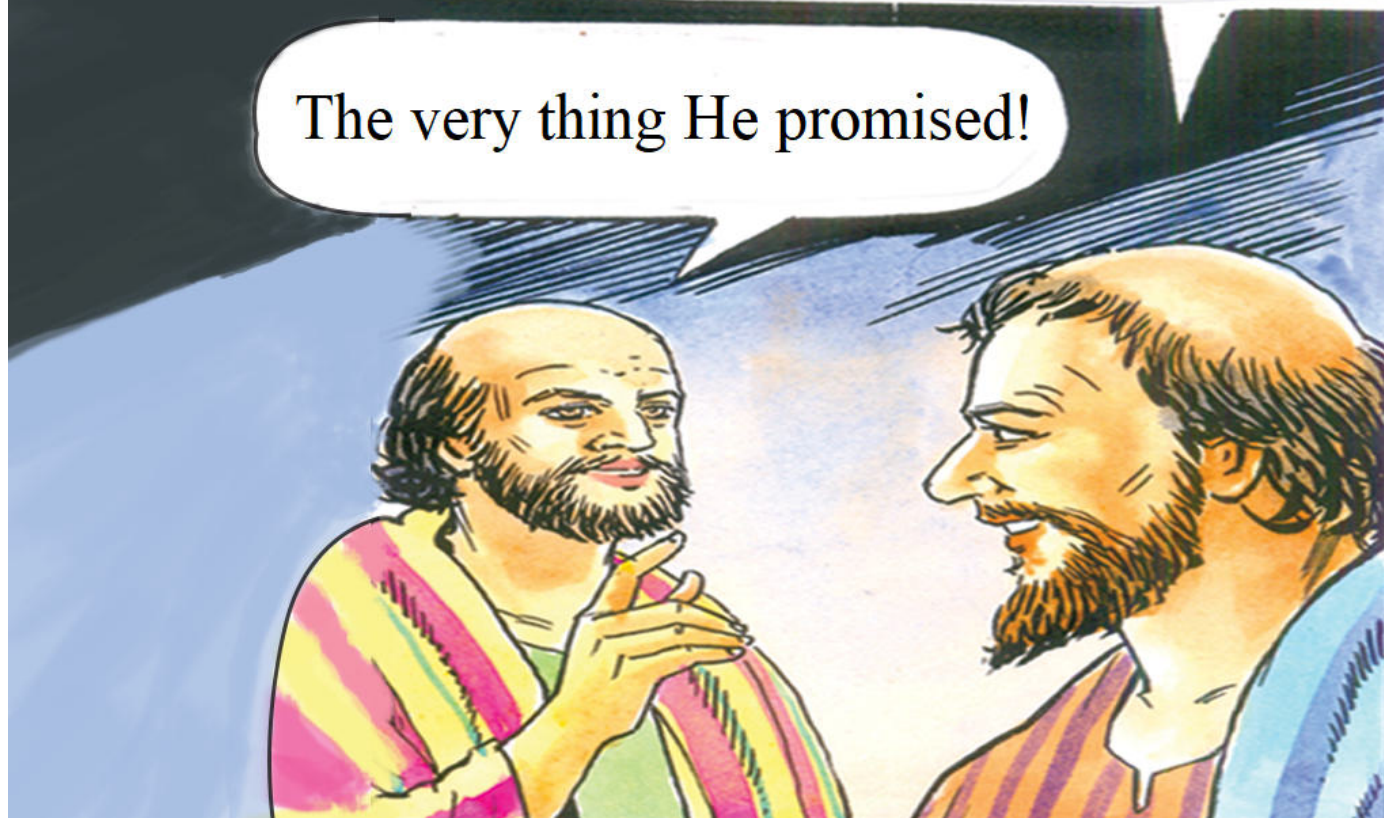
I feel so free and happy when I have no more property to worry about.

I never knew that we could feel so uplifted by praying together.



I feel that the Lord is standing right
in our midst while we pray together.

The very thing He promised!



That afternoon Peter and John went to the Temple to pray

Give alms,
please!

Those who are walking on
both legs, have mercy on
this one with no legs.

Look at us!



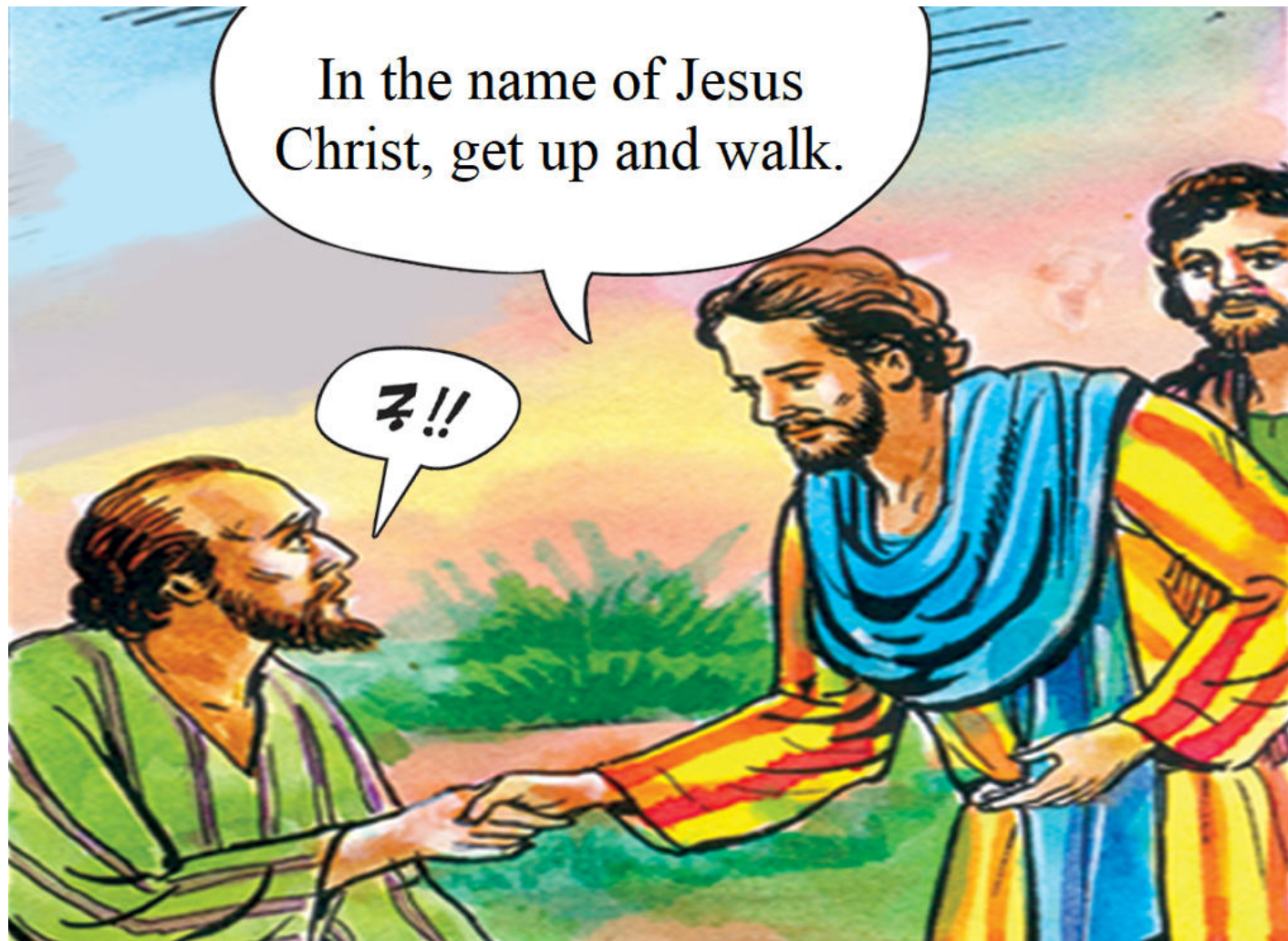
They will surely give me something.

We have neither silver nor gold. But, we shall give you what we have.



In the name of Jesus
Christ, get up and walk.

??!!



Immediately he got up.

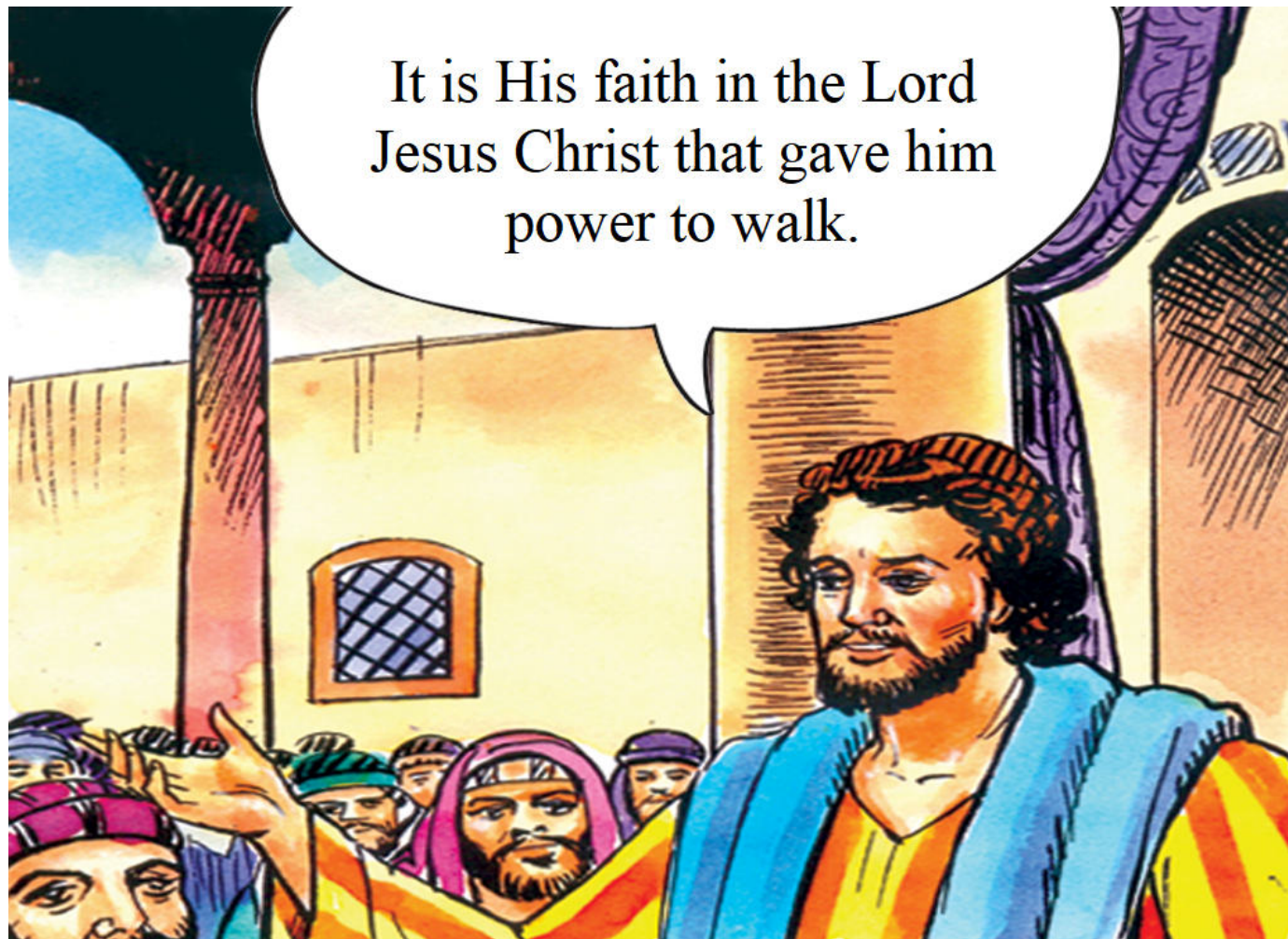
Halleluia! Praise
the Lord who
makes the cripple
walk.

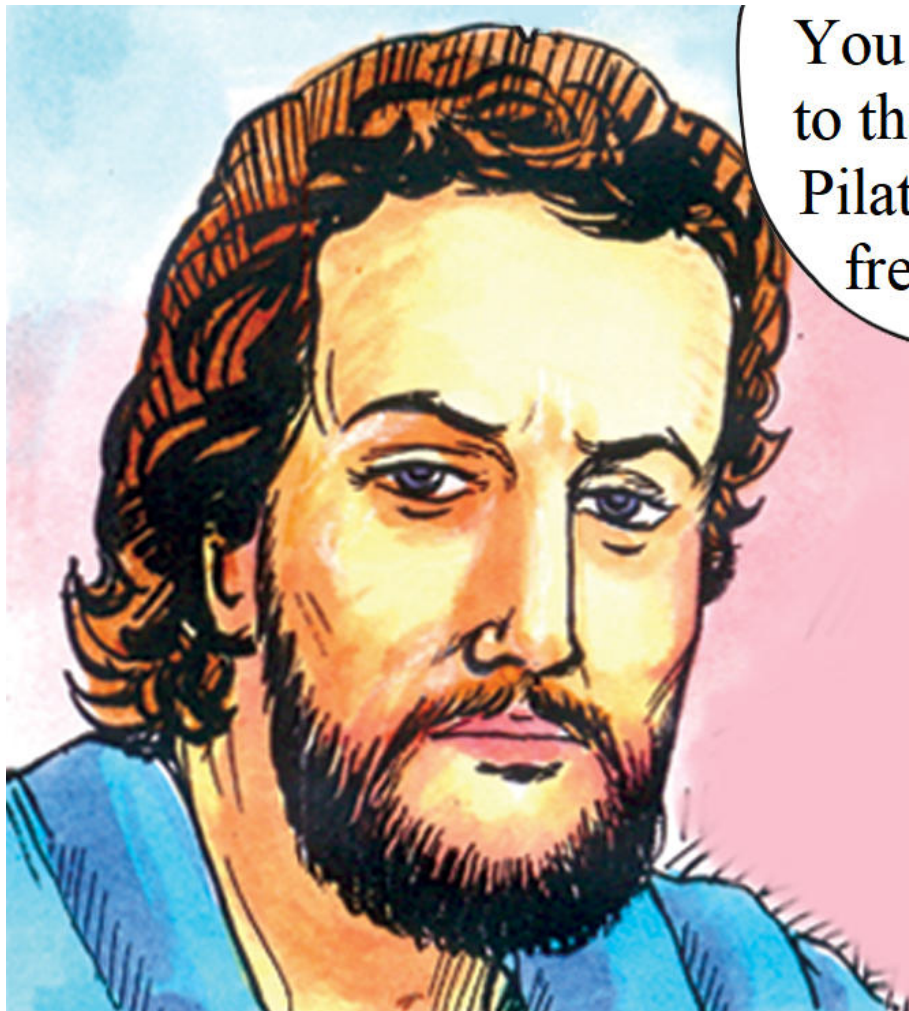
Miracle! How did they
cure the one who was
crippled from birth?

Why stare at
us? We
didn't heal
him.



It is His faith in the Lord
Jesus Christ that gave him
power to walk.



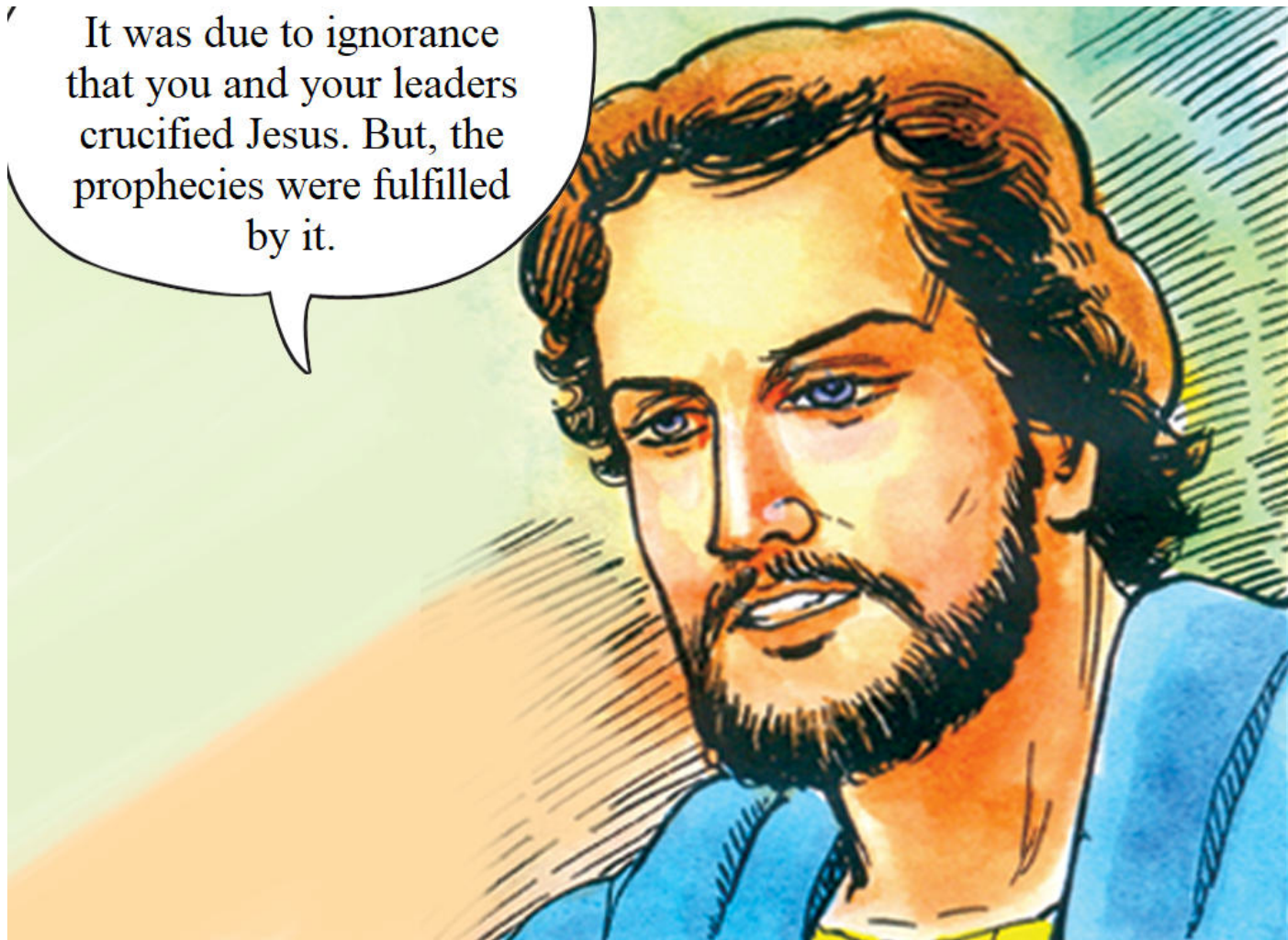


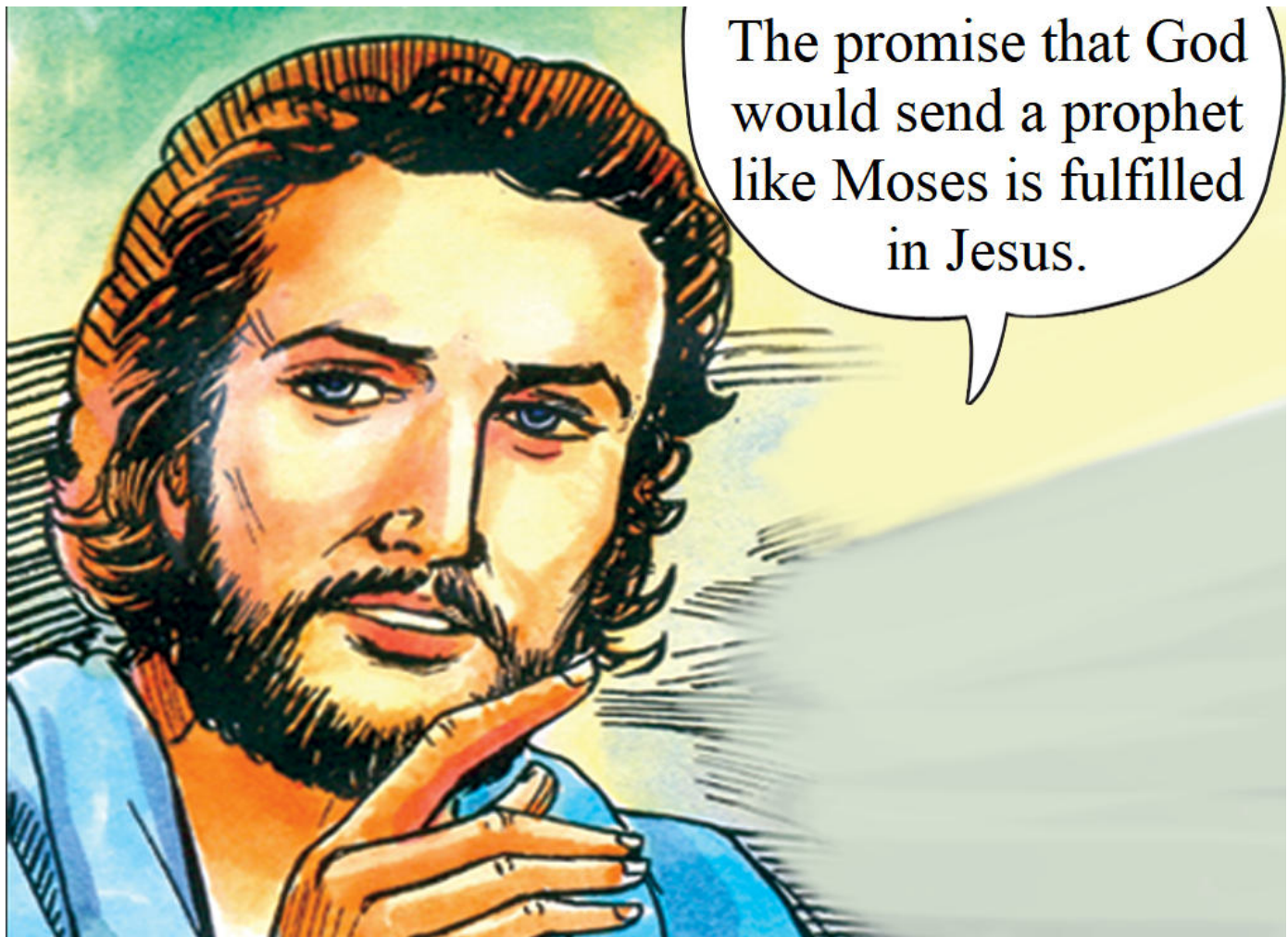
You handed him over
to the Gentiles. When
Pilate tried to set him
free you opposed.

You killed the prince of life. But
God raised Him from the dead.
It is faith in His name that has
cured this man.



It was due to ignorance
that you and your leaders
crucified Jesus. But, the
prophecies were fulfilled
by it.





The promise that God would send a prophet like Moses is fulfilled in Jesus.

Aren't you the sons of Abraham
and heirs of the Covenant? It was
to you that God sent
His Only Son.



The temple guards arrested Peter and John.



Tomorrow morning, you shall
appear before the Holy
Sanhedrin.



Praise the name of the Lord
Jesus Christ.



The next morning the Apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin.

Who gave you the authority to preach here? By what power do you do all these?

Elders, rulers of Israel, are you putting us on trial because we cured a lame man?



He was strengthened in the name of
Jesus whom you crucified, but God
raised from the dead.





The stone rejected by
you the builders,
became the corner
stone. Jesus Christ is
that stone.

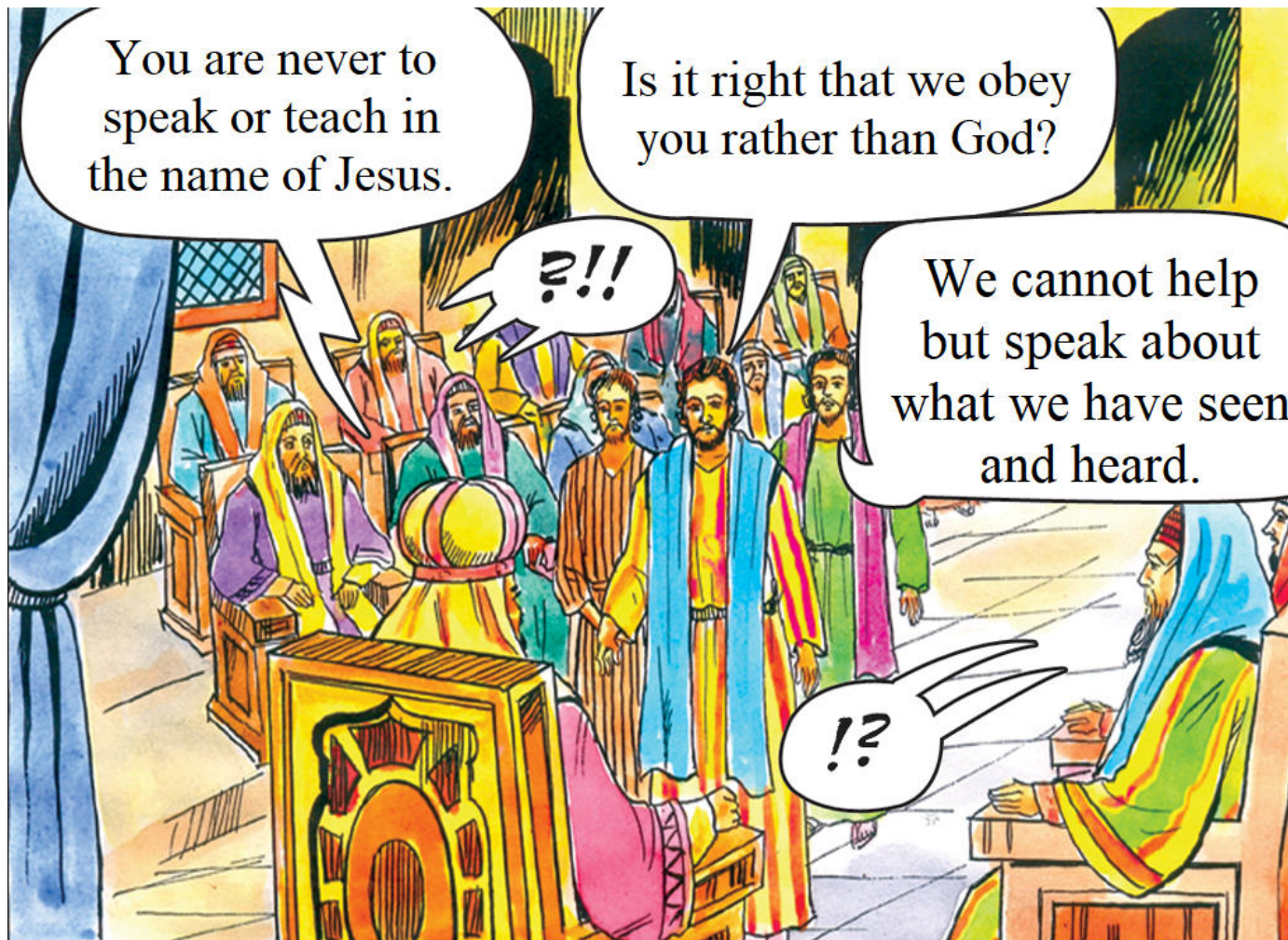
You are never to
speak or teach in
the name of Jesus.

Is it right that we obey
you rather than God?

?!!

We cannot help
but speak about
what we have seen
and heard.

!?



This man Jesus was condemned to death for blasphemy and high treason. Following him is a crime deserving capital punishment.

God raised the one you condemned. Whom should we believe? Whom should we obey?



You dare to teach us? If you preach in His name again, you shall meet the same fate as He did.

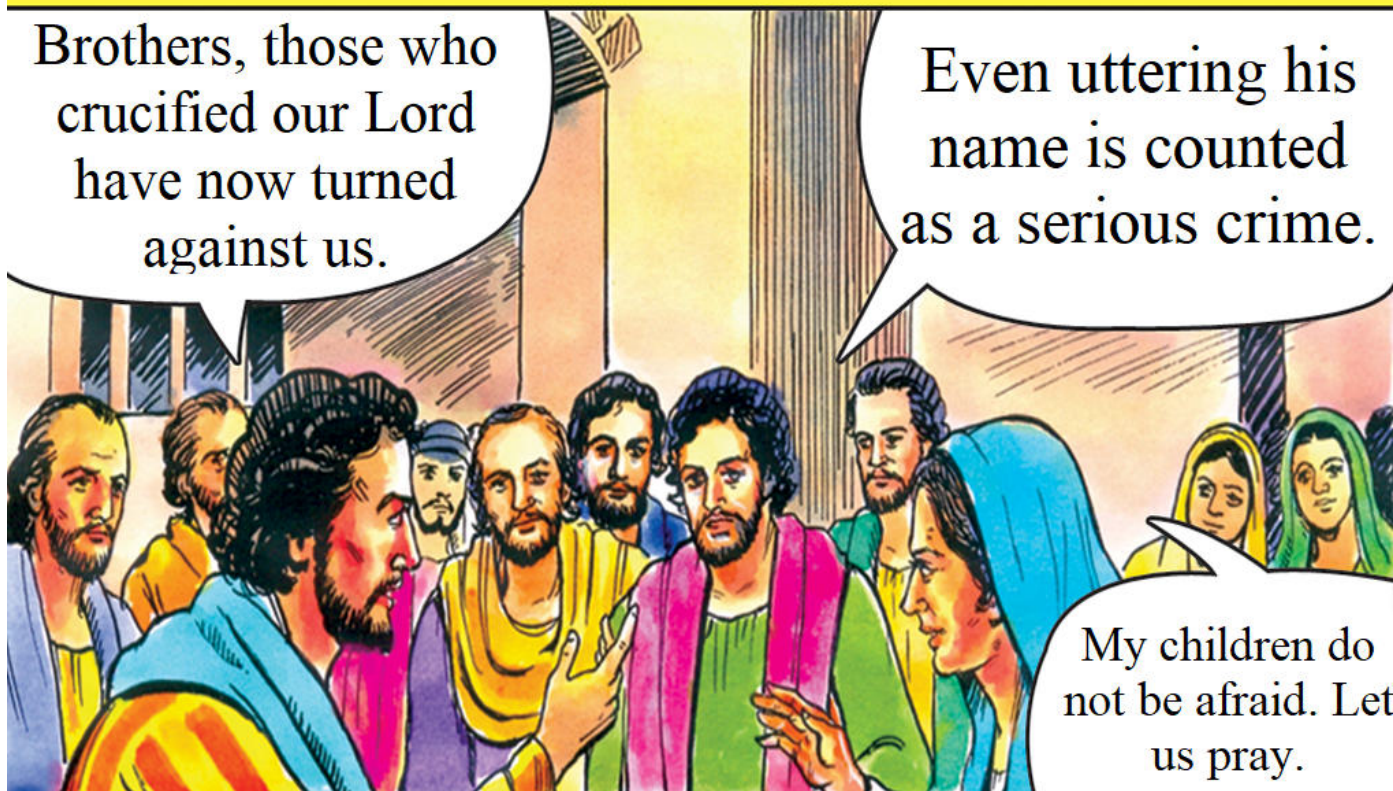
We shall accept
it with great joy.



The Apostles were released with strict warning.
They returned to the upper-room.

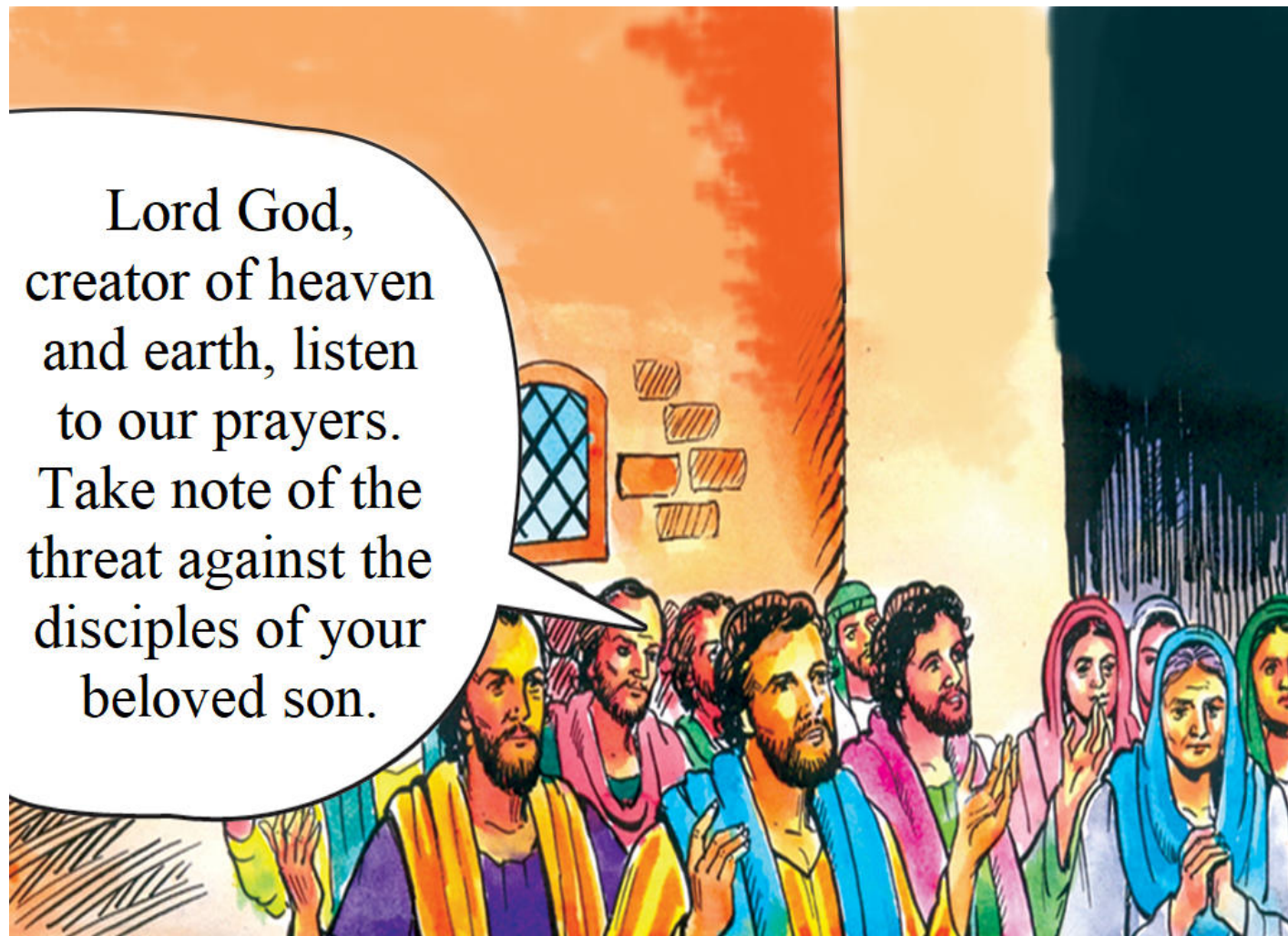
Brothers, those who
crucified our Lord
have now turned
against us.

Even uttering his
name is counted
as a serious crime.

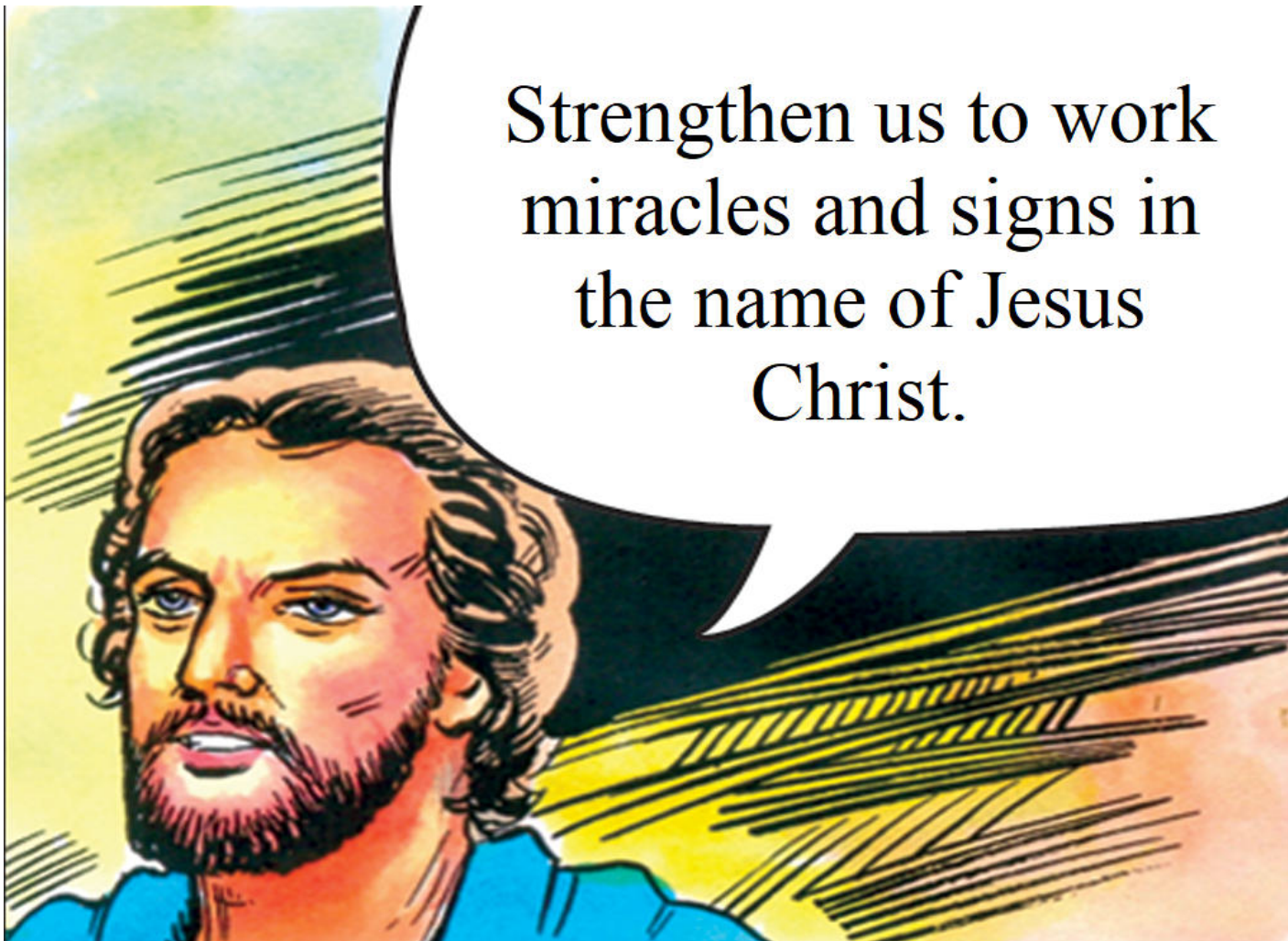


My children do
not be afraid. Let
us pray.

Lord God,
creator of heaven
and earth, listen
to our prayers.
Take note of the
threat against the
disciples of your
beloved son.



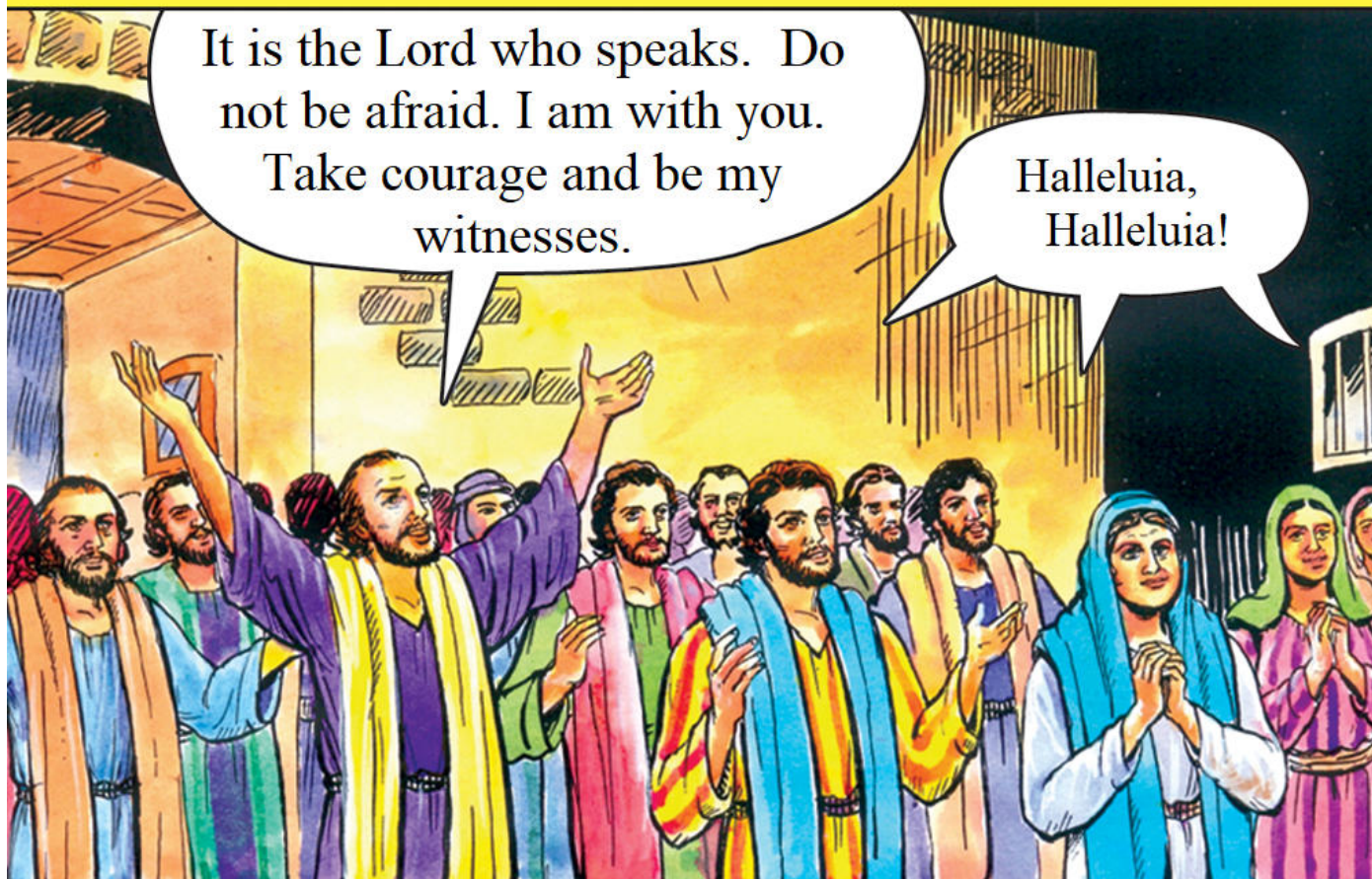
Strengthen us to work
miracles and signs in
the name of Jesus
Christ.



Give us the courage
to preach your word
faithfully.



As they prayed, the house where they were assembled rocked. They all were filled with the Holy Spirit.

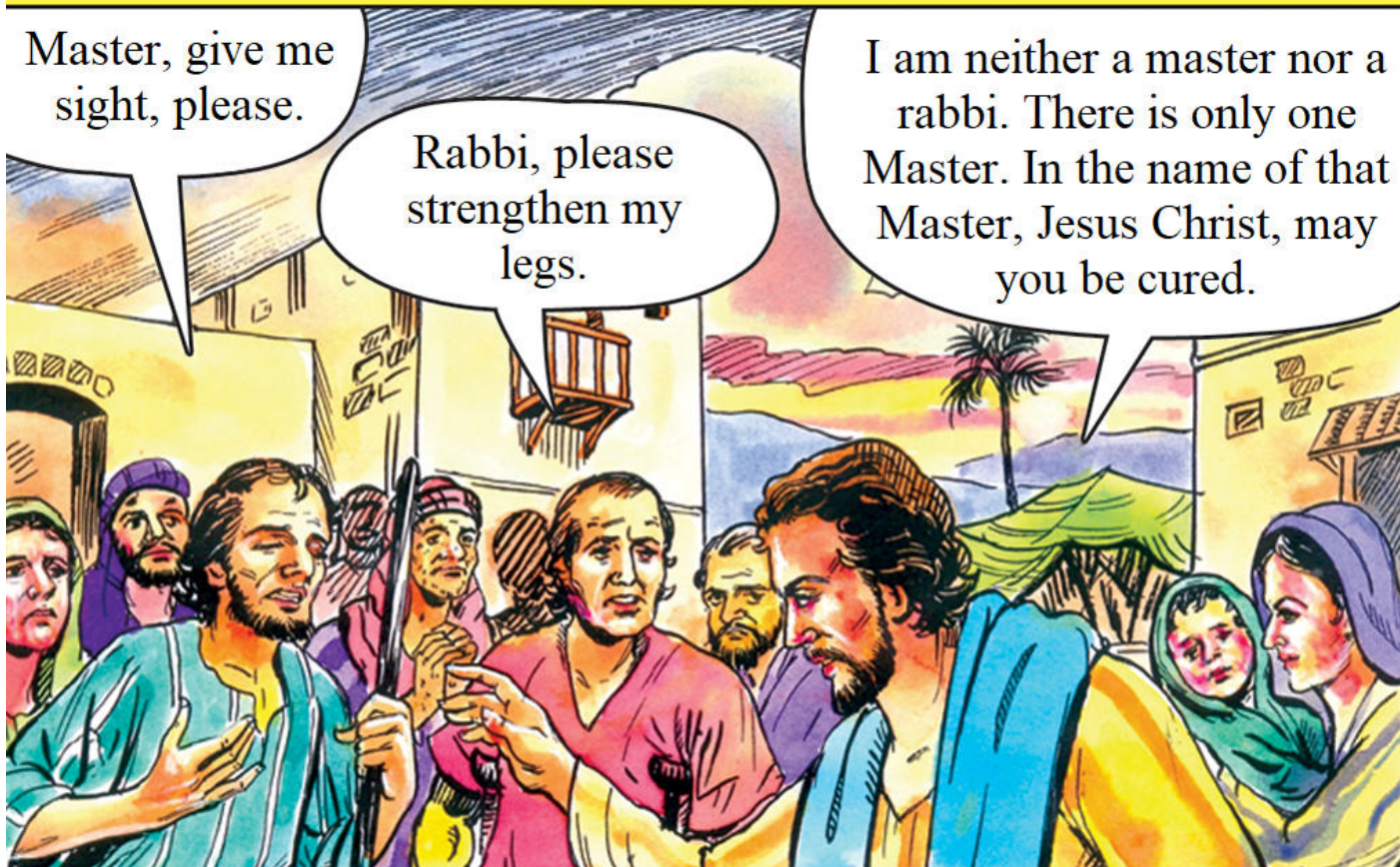


Strengthened by the spirit, the Apostles preached with greater courage. Many miracles were performed through them.

Master, give me sight, please.

Rabbi, please strengthen my legs.

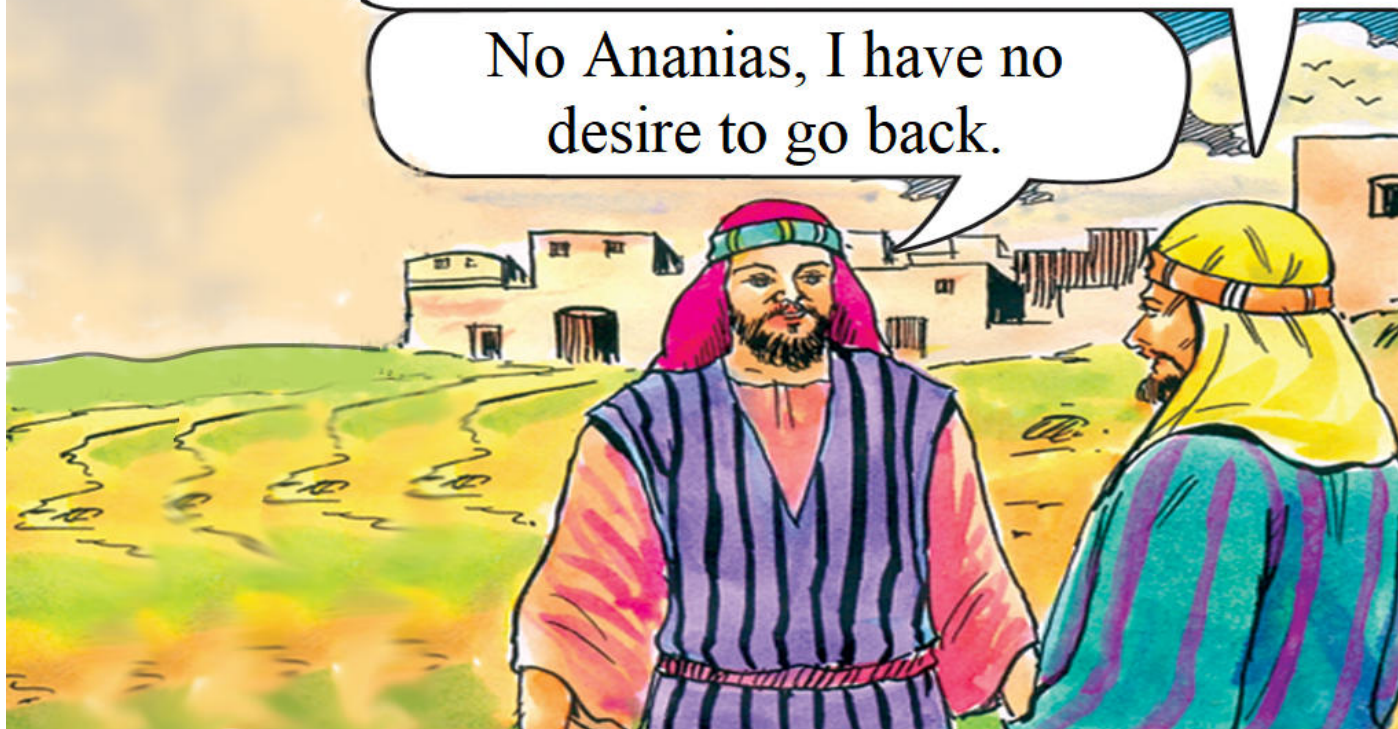
I am neither a master nor a rabbi. There is only one Master. In the name of that Master, Jesus Christ, may you be cured.



The number of believers increased day by day. A conversation between two Jews in Jerusalem.

Joseph, I heard that you sold your property here in Jerusalem. Are you planning to return to Cypress.

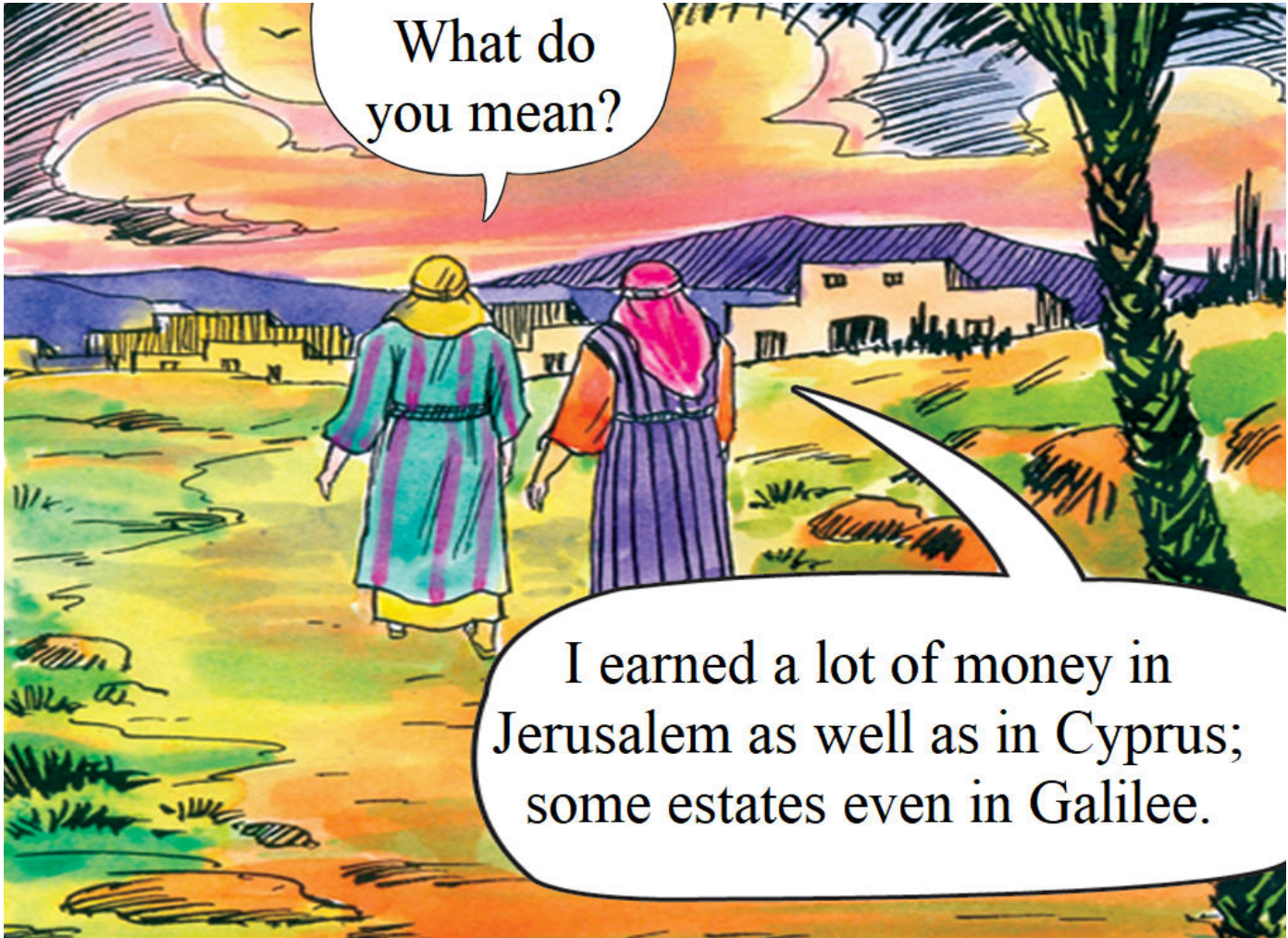
No Ananias, I have no desire to go back.



Then, how come you cashed everything? Starting a business?

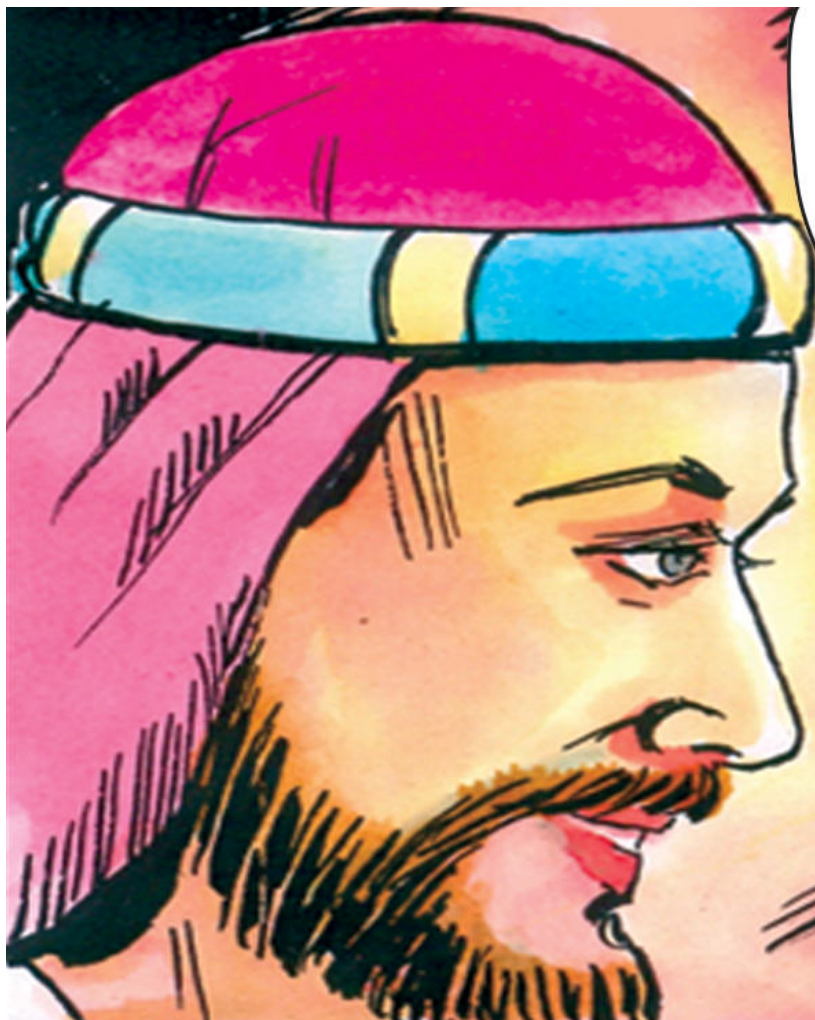
Yeah, this is a kind of business.
Sell the property and buy the
Kingdom of God.





What do
you mean?

I earned a lot of money in
Jerusalem as well as in Cyprus;
some estates even in Galilee.




But, only after
meeting Jesus did I
find true peace and
happiness.

You mean, you met that Nazarene
who was crucified two months ago?

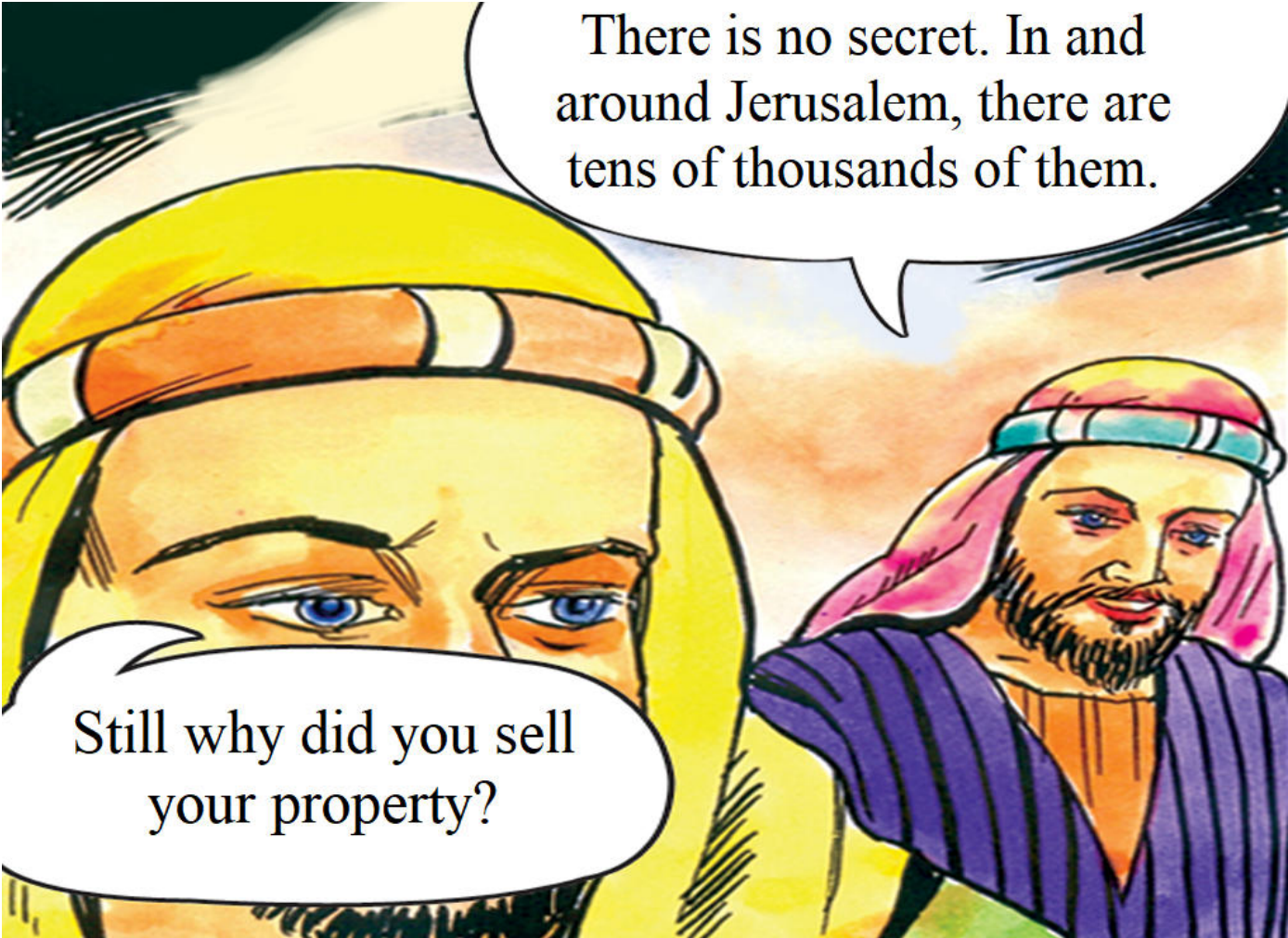


Yes, He still lives. I
heard of His resurrection
for the first time from
Peter.



Then I saw the miracles
performed by the Apostles
and I wanted to know more
about them.

Isn't it a secret
organization? I heard that
they won't allow anyone else
to join them.



There is no secret. In and around Jerusalem, there are tens of thousands of them.

Still why did you sell your property?

Why do I want my own land? I became rich by making others work.

Didn't you give them just wage?

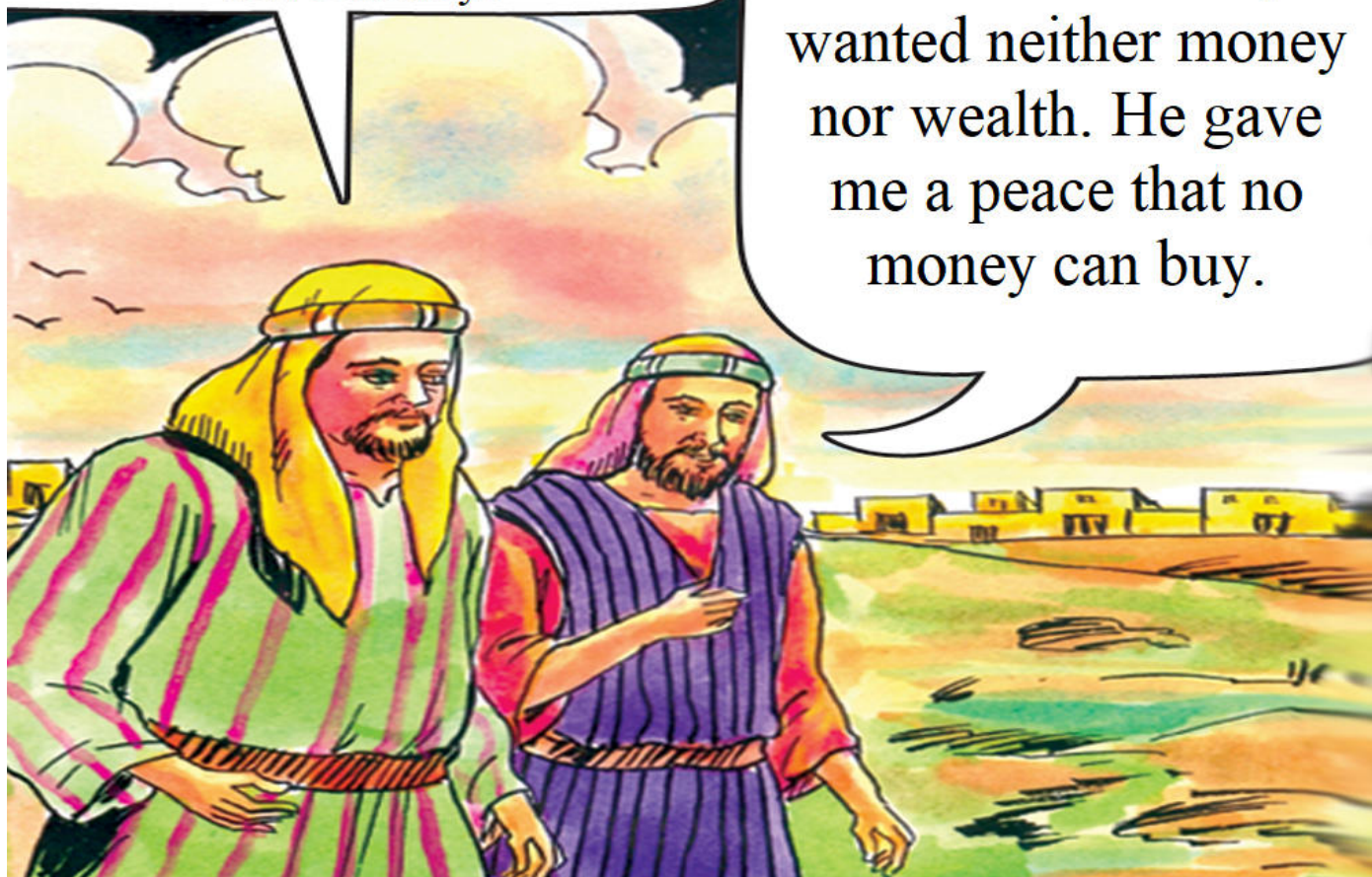


What wage? When my workers had just enough to eat, I lived in luxury and feasted lavishly!



What is wrong with that if you
have money?

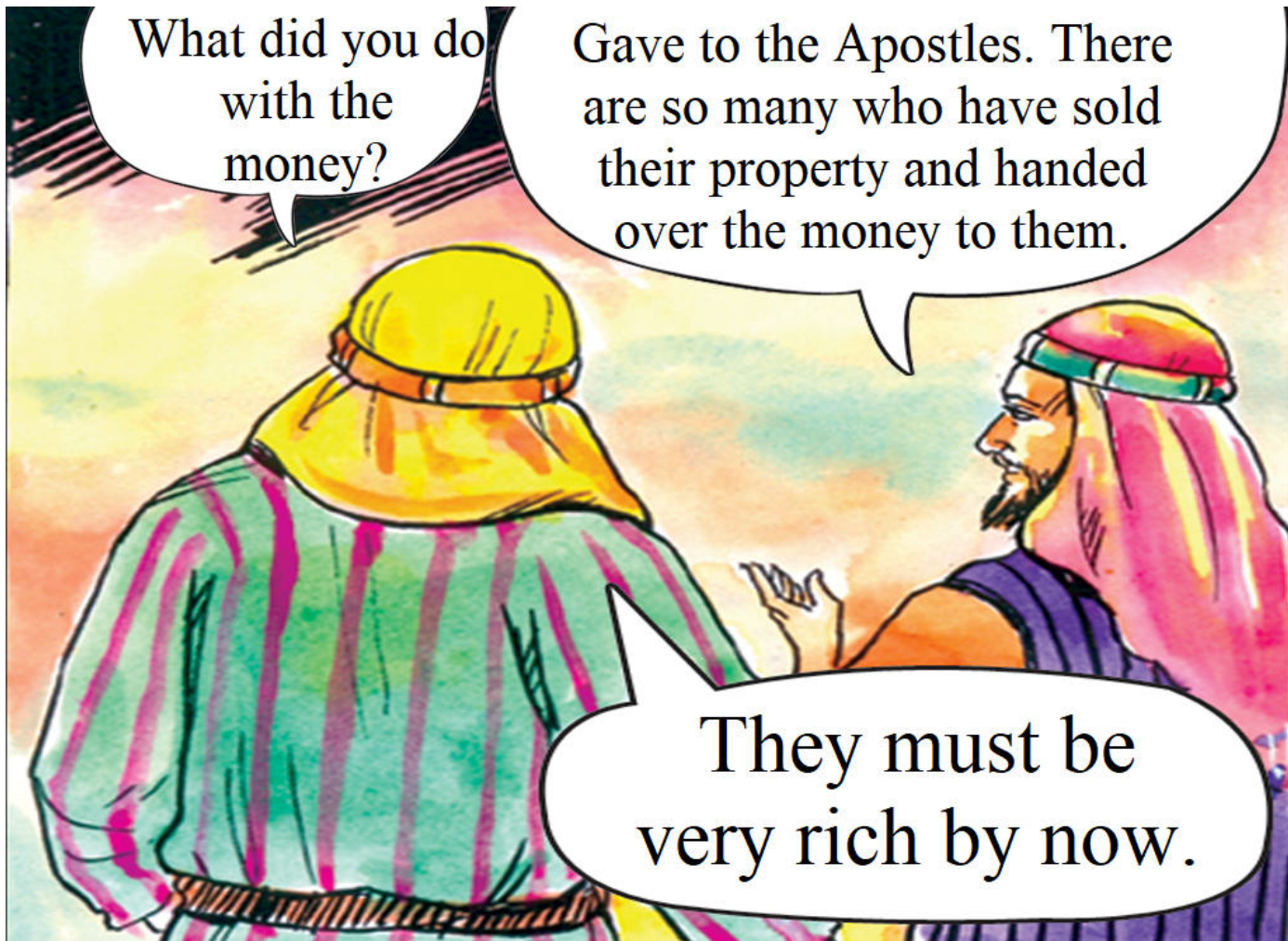
Once I met Jesus, I
wanted neither money
nor wealth. He gave
me a peace that no
money can buy.



What did you do
with the
money?

Gave to the Apostles. There
are so many who have sold
their property and handed
over the money to them.

They must be
very rich by now.



No! They distribute it among the
people. There is plenty for all!
Nobody is in want.

Would they accept
anyone without money?

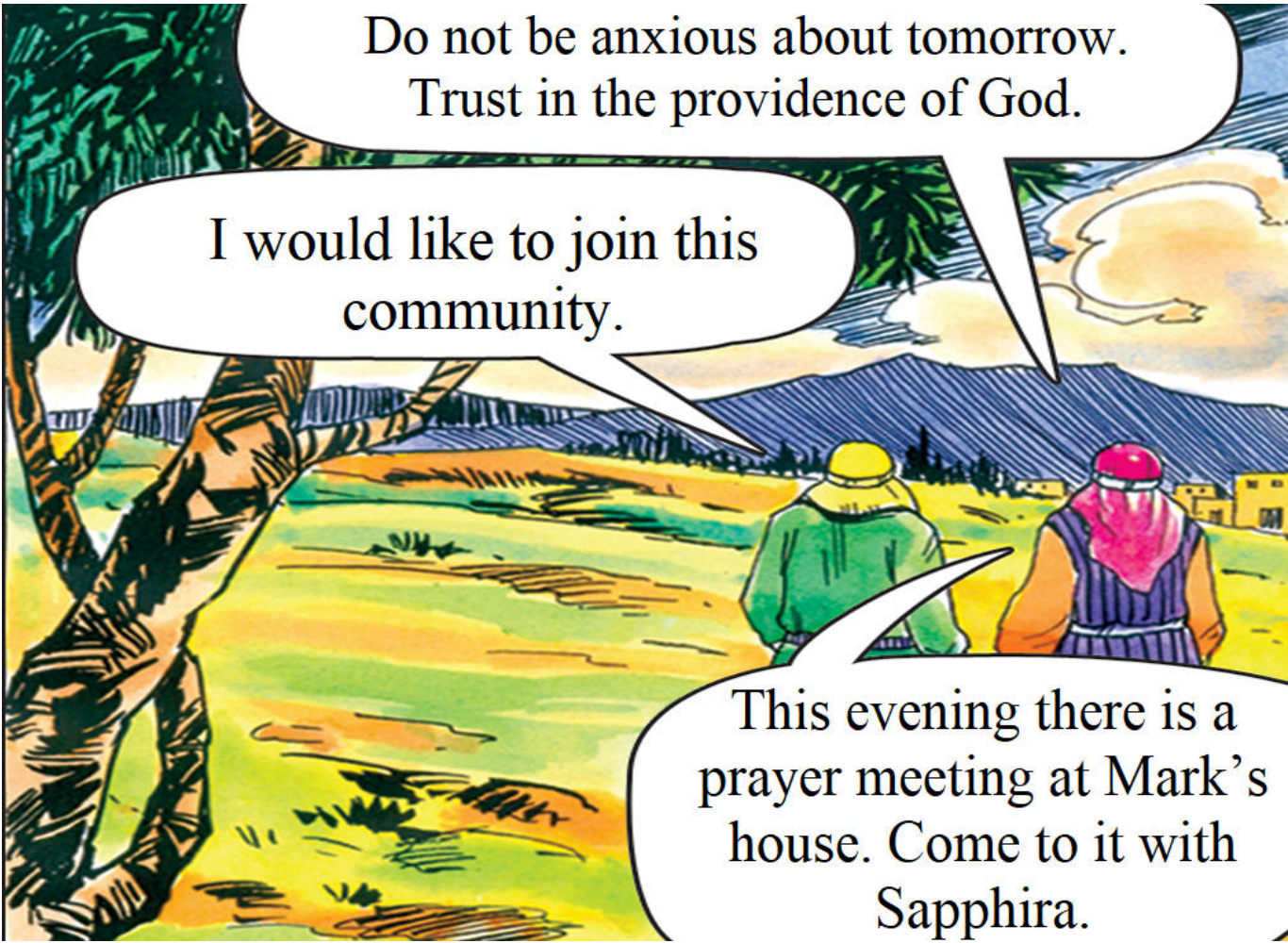




In this community, there is no difference between the rich and the poor. Everything is common to be taken as needed.

What if they run out?





Do not be anxious about tomorrow.
Trust in the providence of God.

I would like to join this
community.

This evening there is a
prayer meeting at Mark's
house. Come to it with
Sapphira.



Sure, she has been talking about this new community.

At Mark's house.

Brothers I was a fisherman. Sometimes I get a lot of fish and in two days I would finish all I get.



Sometimes I get nothing, then I borrow or starve, a meaningless life. I hated the Romans and the tax collectors!



But, when Jesus called me, my
life changed. He revealed to me
the secret of the Kingdom of
God, something money can
never buy.



Peter continued to
speak about Jesus.

Brothers, I denied Him
three times. Yet He
forgave me.



He rose from the
dead and is here in
our midst.

Praise to you Lord
Jesus Christ.



Now, we are going
commemorate the Last Supper.
Those who have not received
the Baptism may leave.

My wife and I
would like to join
this community.



In the name of Jesus Christ, you are welcome. Tomorrow you can receive the Baptism and then join us for the breaking of the bread on the day of the Lord.

What is this "Day of the Lord?"

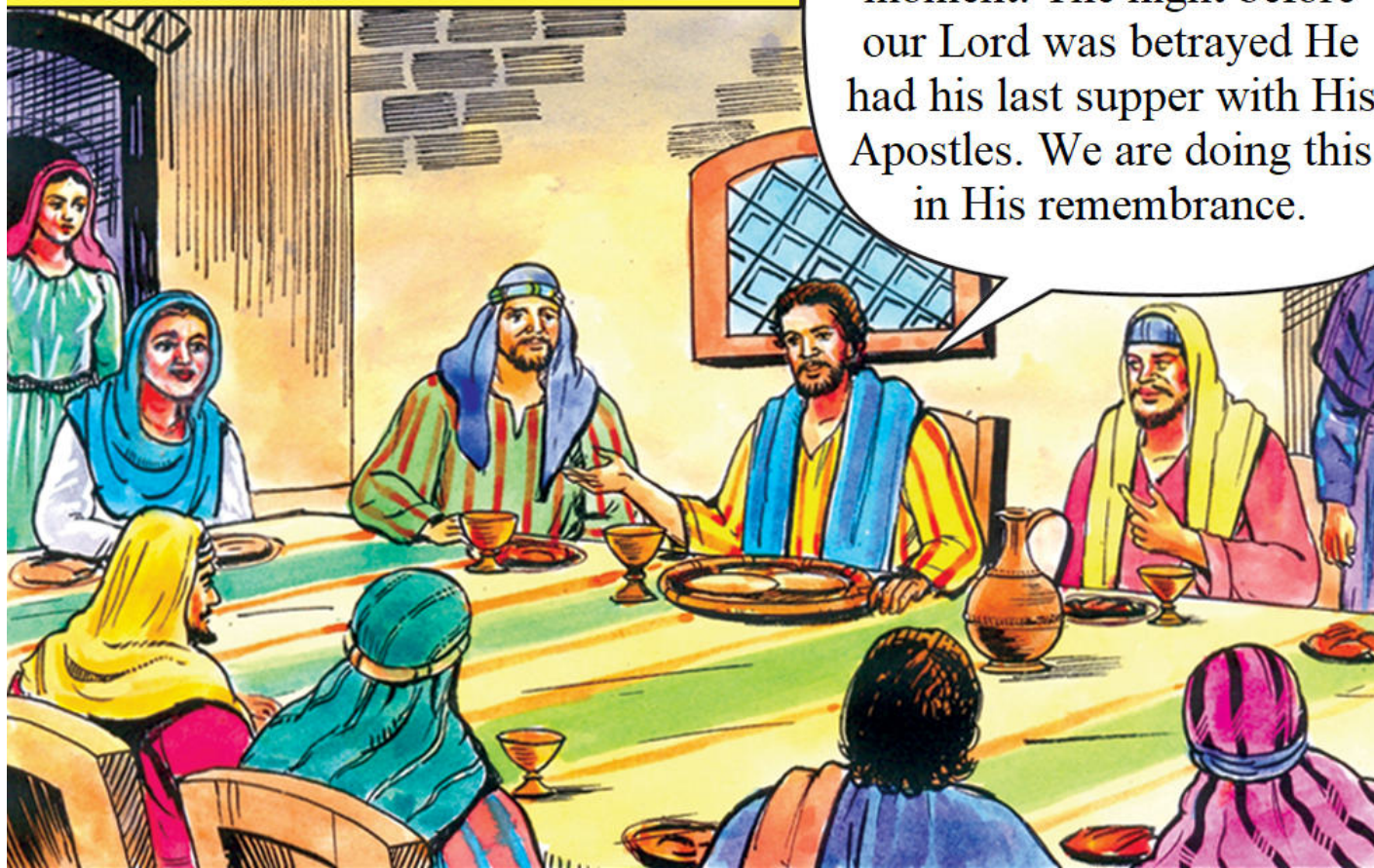


The day we celebrate
the resurrection of our
Lord, the first day of
the week. Mark's
mother will explain to
you the rest.

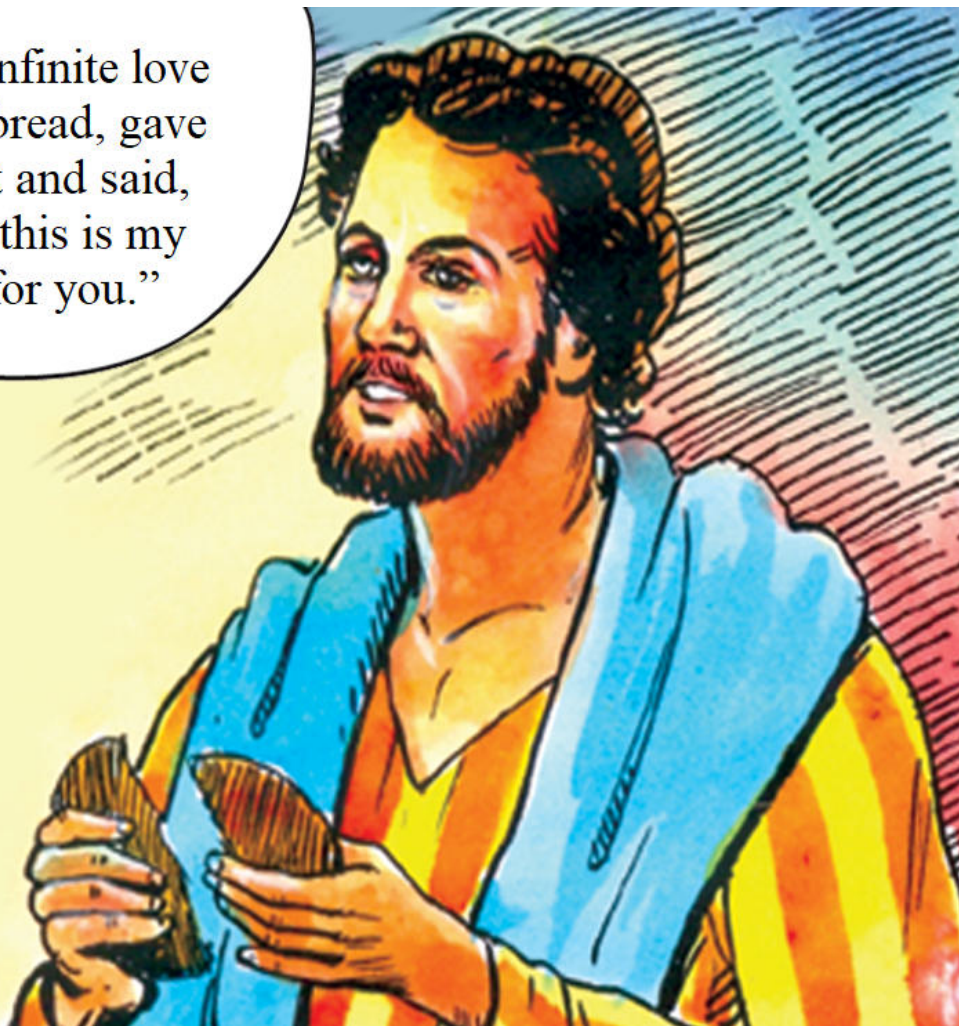


Those who had not received the
Baptism left.

Brothers this is a sacred
moment. The night before
our Lord was betrayed He
had his last supper with His
Apostles. We are doing this
in His remembrance.



To express His infinite love
for us, He took bread, gave
thanks, broke it and said,
“Take and eat, this is my
body broken for you.”



After the supper he took the cup, said the blessing over it and gave to us. "Take and drink", He said "this is my blood, the blood of the New Covenant".



We celebrate the memory of
His death and resurrection
until He returns in glory.





We, who partake in the
body of Christ, become
one body. We must
love one another as He
has loved us.

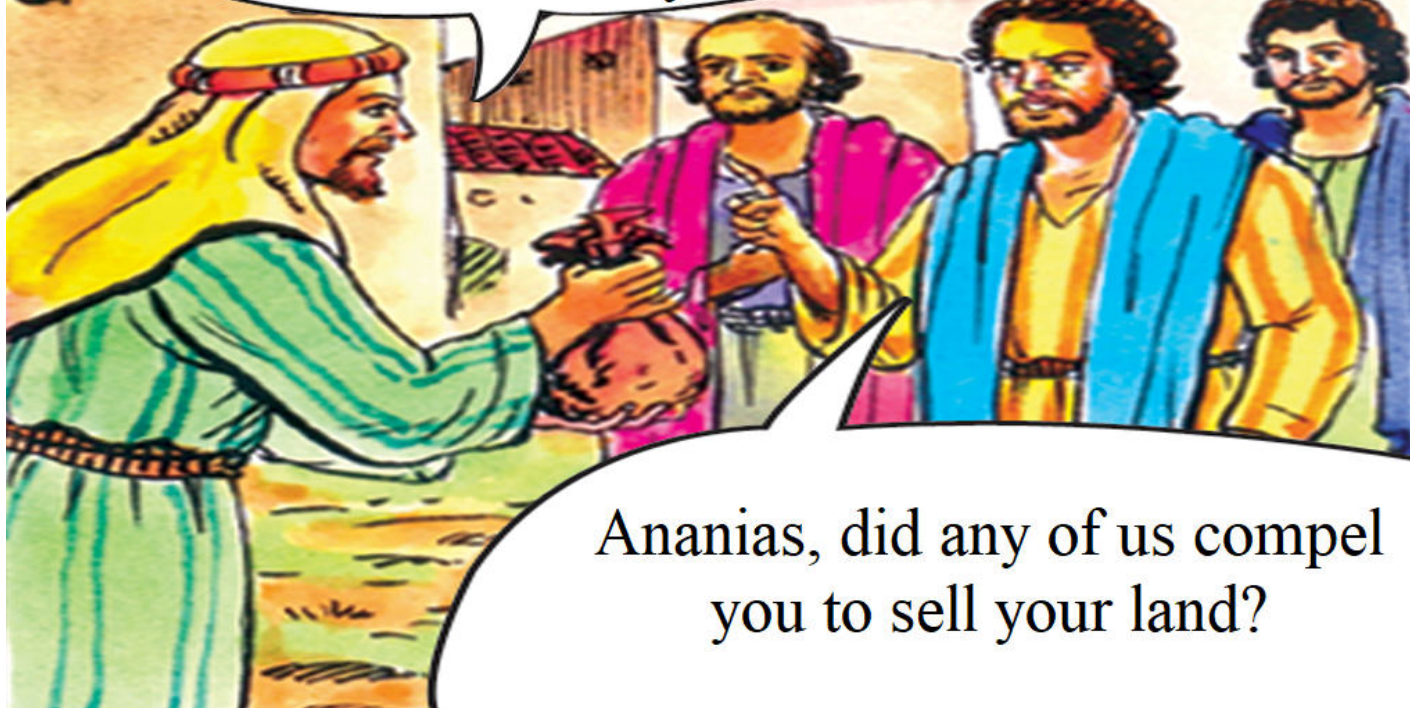
A few days after receiving the Baptism, Annanias and Sapphira sold their property.

I shall give this Three Thousand Shekels to Peter. No need to say anything about the Thousand we have set aside.



Who knows how long this kind of community will last. It is only wise ... just in case...

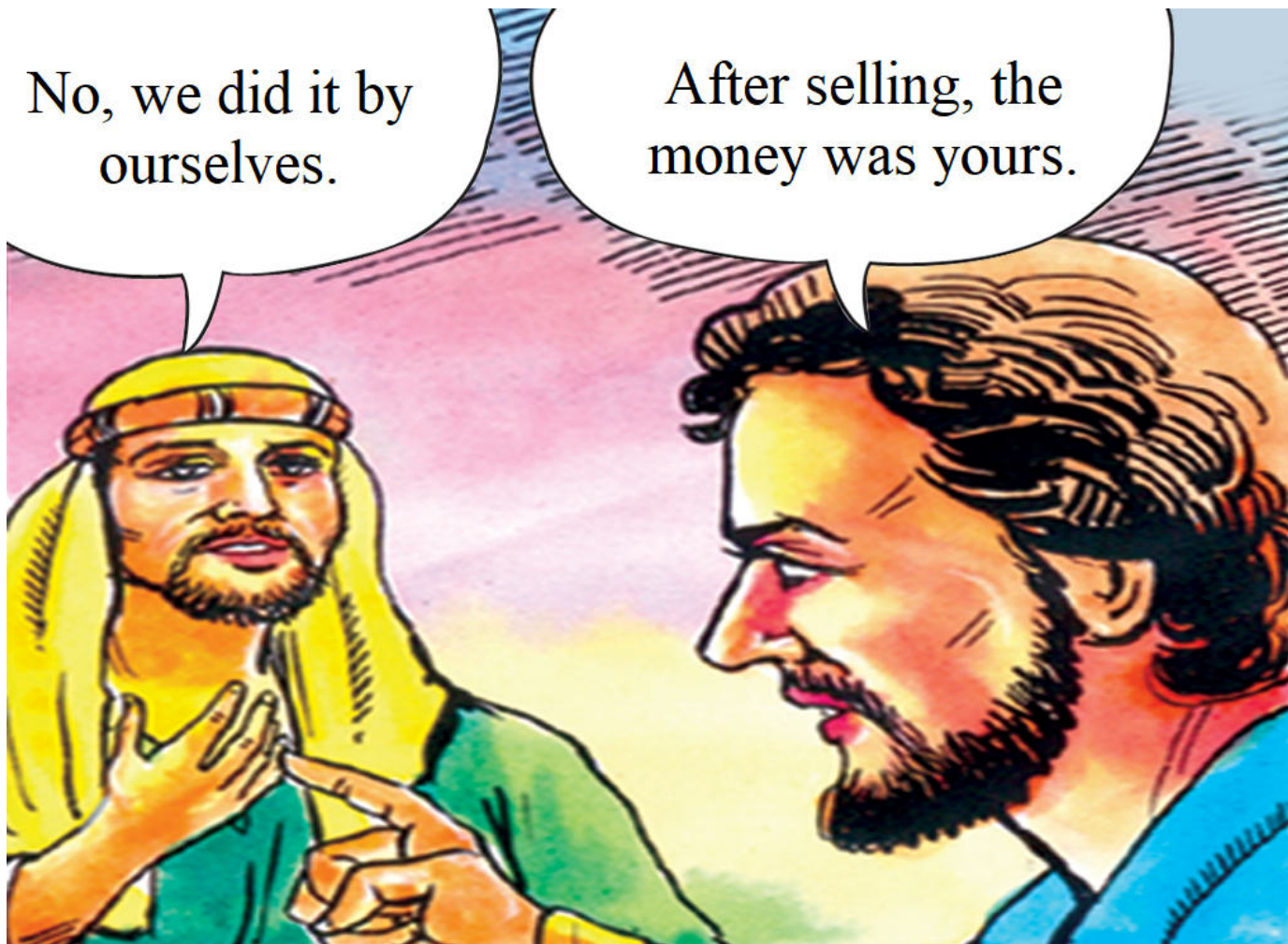
Here is the money we got from selling our property. We donate all the Three Thousand Shekels to the community.



Ananias, did any of us compel you to sell your land?

No, we did it by
ourselves.

After selling, the
money was yours.

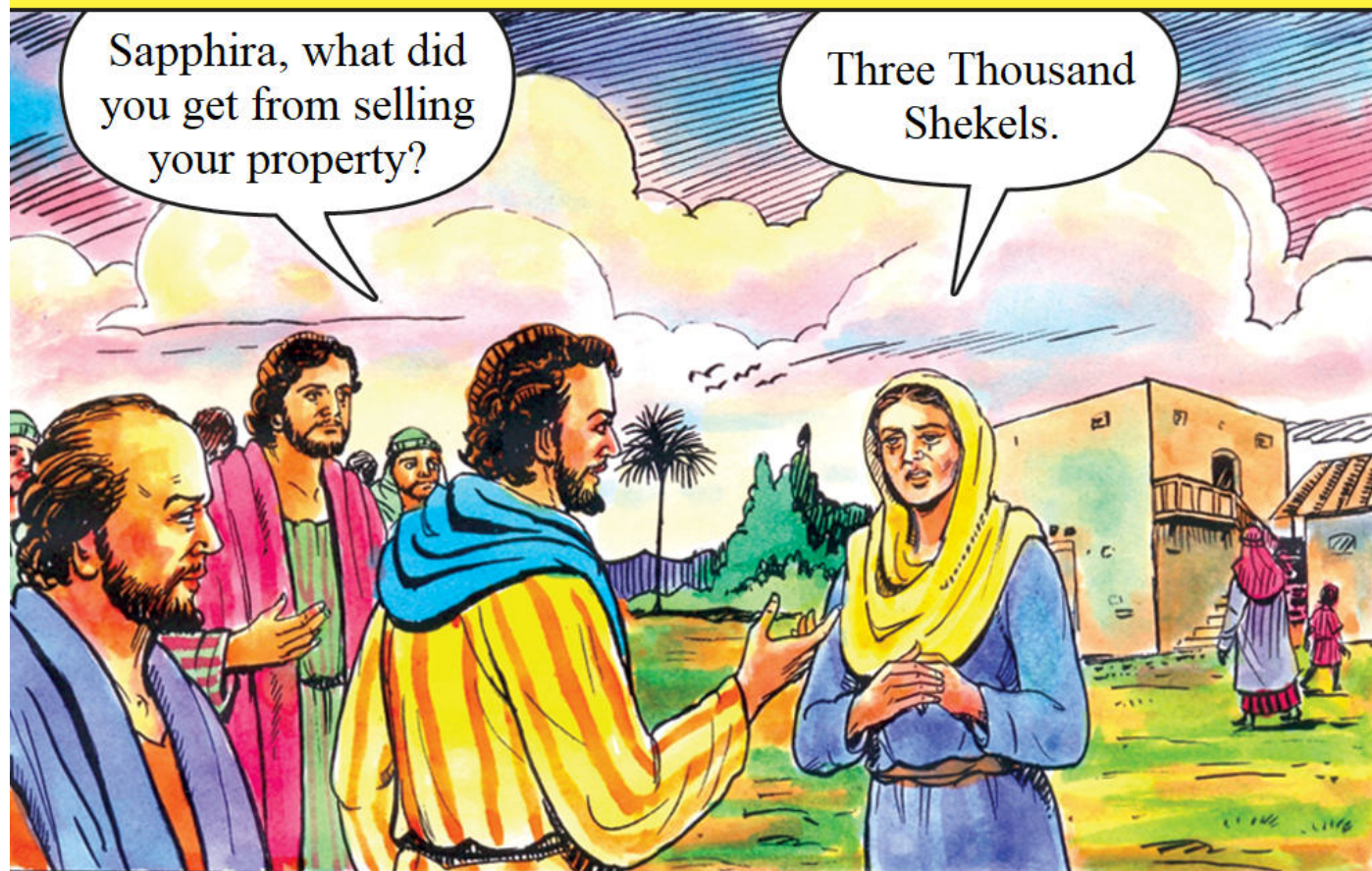


We want nothing
for ourselves.

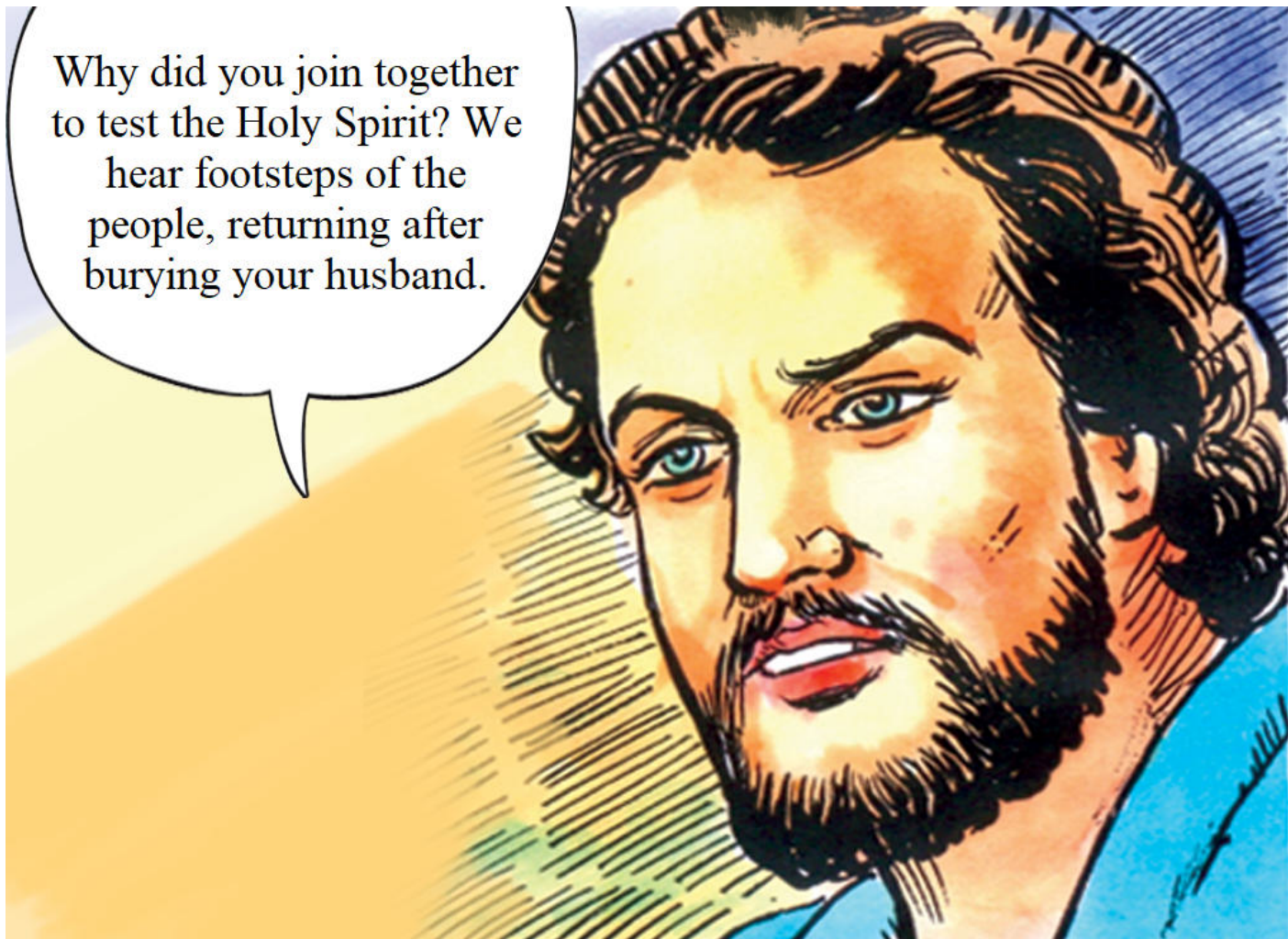
Whom are you trying to
cheat? You lied not to man
but to the Holy Spirit.



Suddenly Ananias fell dead. They burned his body. After a while, his wife arrived.



Why did you join together
to test the Holy Spirit? We
hear footsteps of the
people, returning after
burying your husband.

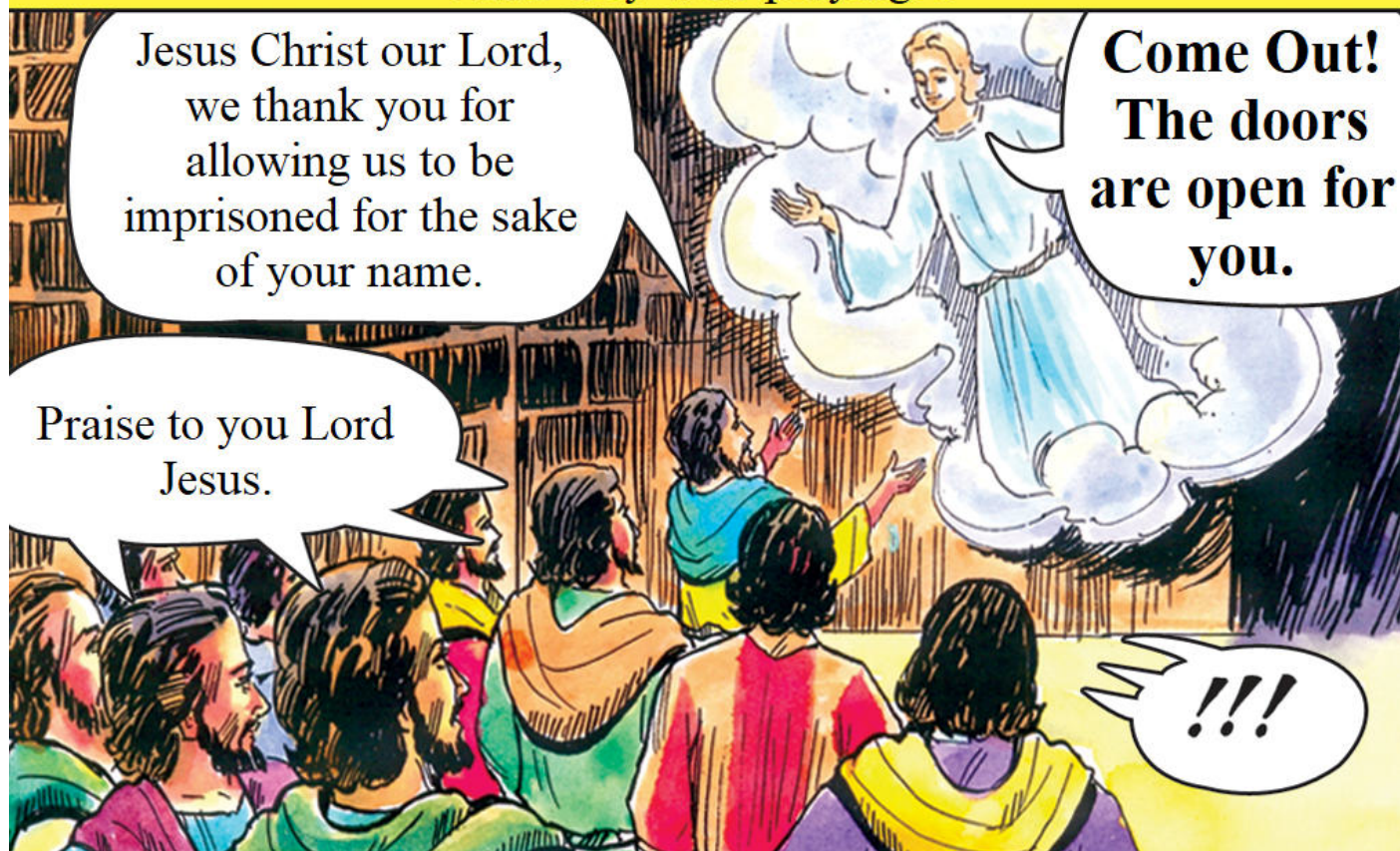


Sapphira dropped dead.

The followers of Christ must not lie.
Must not lie, must not deceive anyone.



Months passed. The number of disciples kept increasing. Moved by jealousy, the Jewish leaders put the Apostles in prison. At night while they were praying...

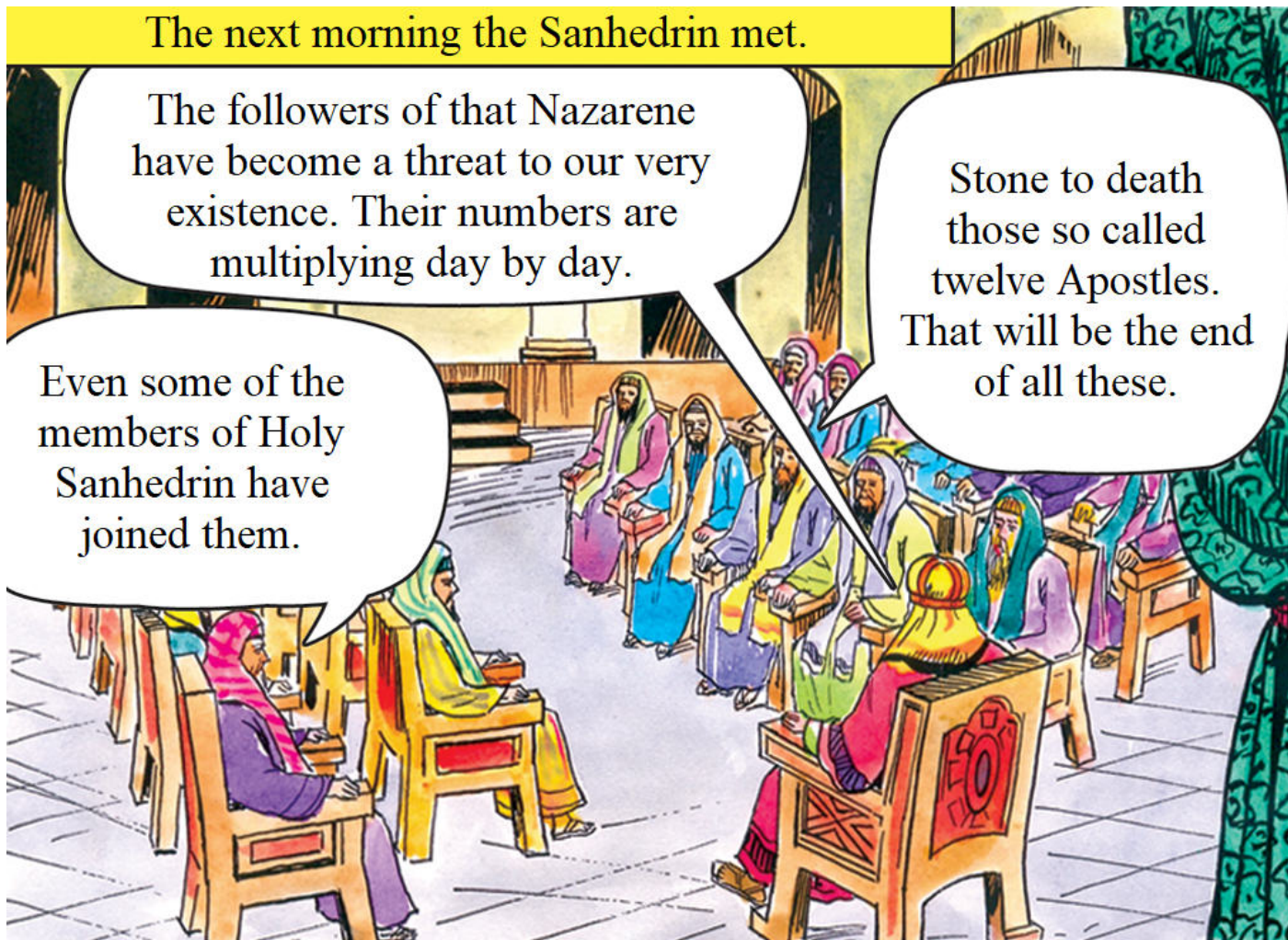


The next morning the Sanhedrin met.

The followers of that Nazarene have become a threat to our very existence. Their numbers are multiplying day by day.

Even some of the members of Holy Sanhedrin have joined them.

Stone to death those so called twelve Apostles. That will be the end of all these.



We have put them all in prison. I called this meeting to prosecute them.

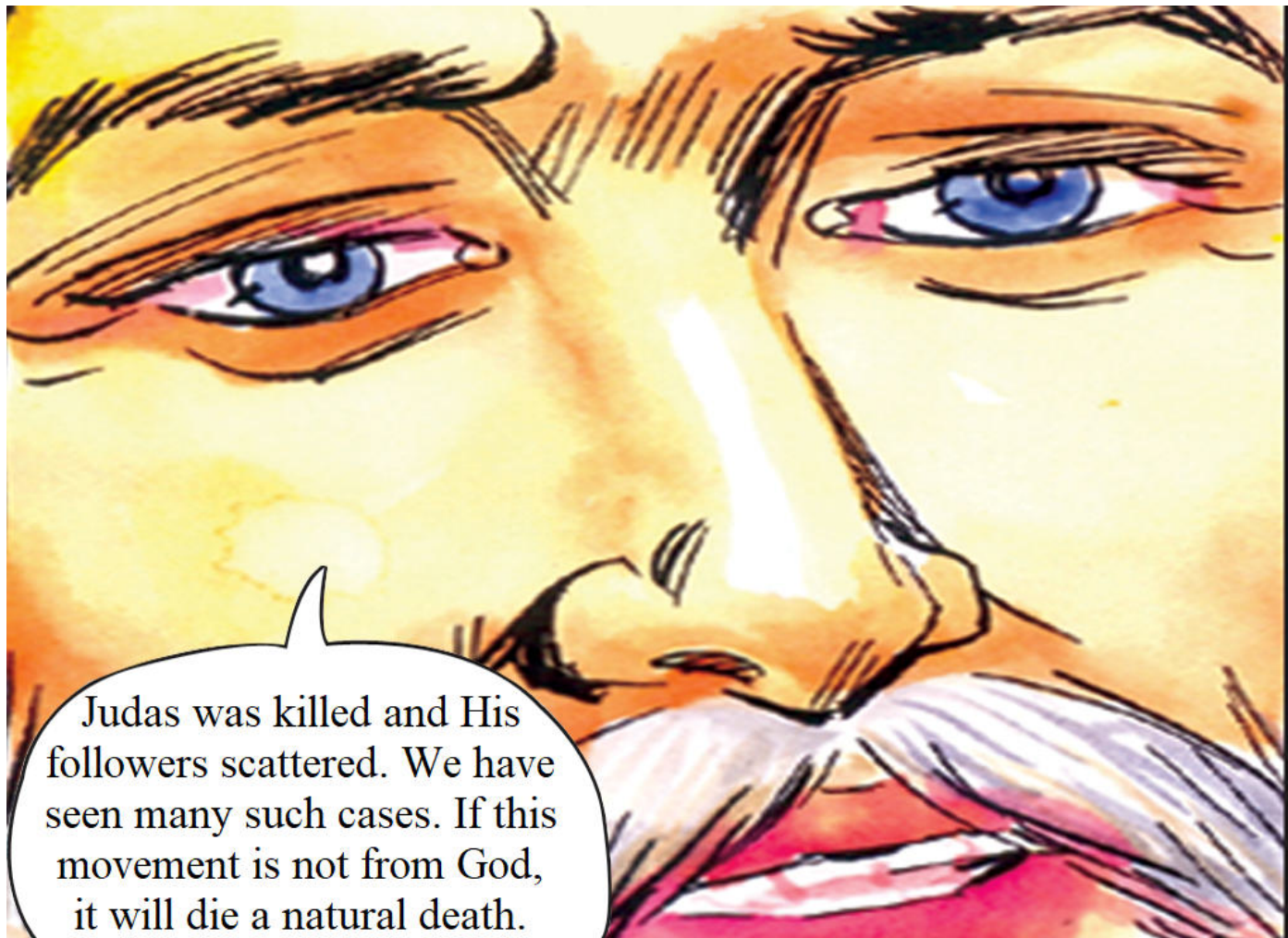
We must cautious in dealing with those Galileans.

Rabbi Gamaliel,
what do you
Mean?





We all know about
that Judas from
Galilee who tried to
start a revolution
against Rome.



Judas was killed and His followers scattered. We have seen many such cases. If this movement is not from God, it will die a natural death.

If it is from God, we can do nothing
against them and we will end up
opposing God.

Guards bring them in!



They are nowhere to be seen. The doors
are locked and guarded.

Then how did they disappear?



Then another Guard

They are preaching
in the Temple.

Bring them in
here.



We have strictly warned you not to teach in the name of Jesus. Yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teachings and keep on trying to make responsible for His death.

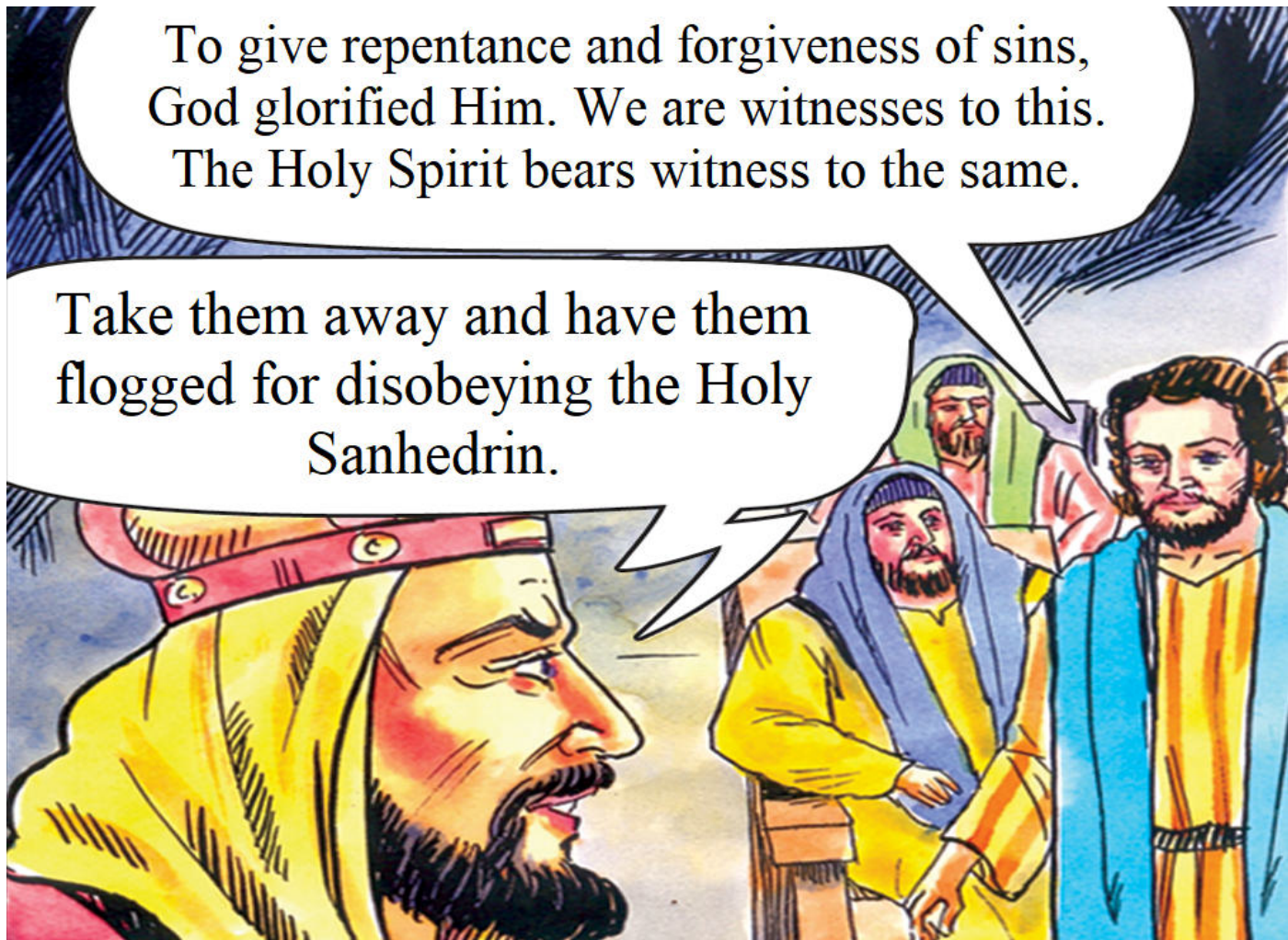


We must obey God
rather than Man. God
raised to life the one
you killed.



To give repentance and forgiveness of sins,
God glorified Him. We are witnesses to this.
The Holy Spirit bears witness to the same.

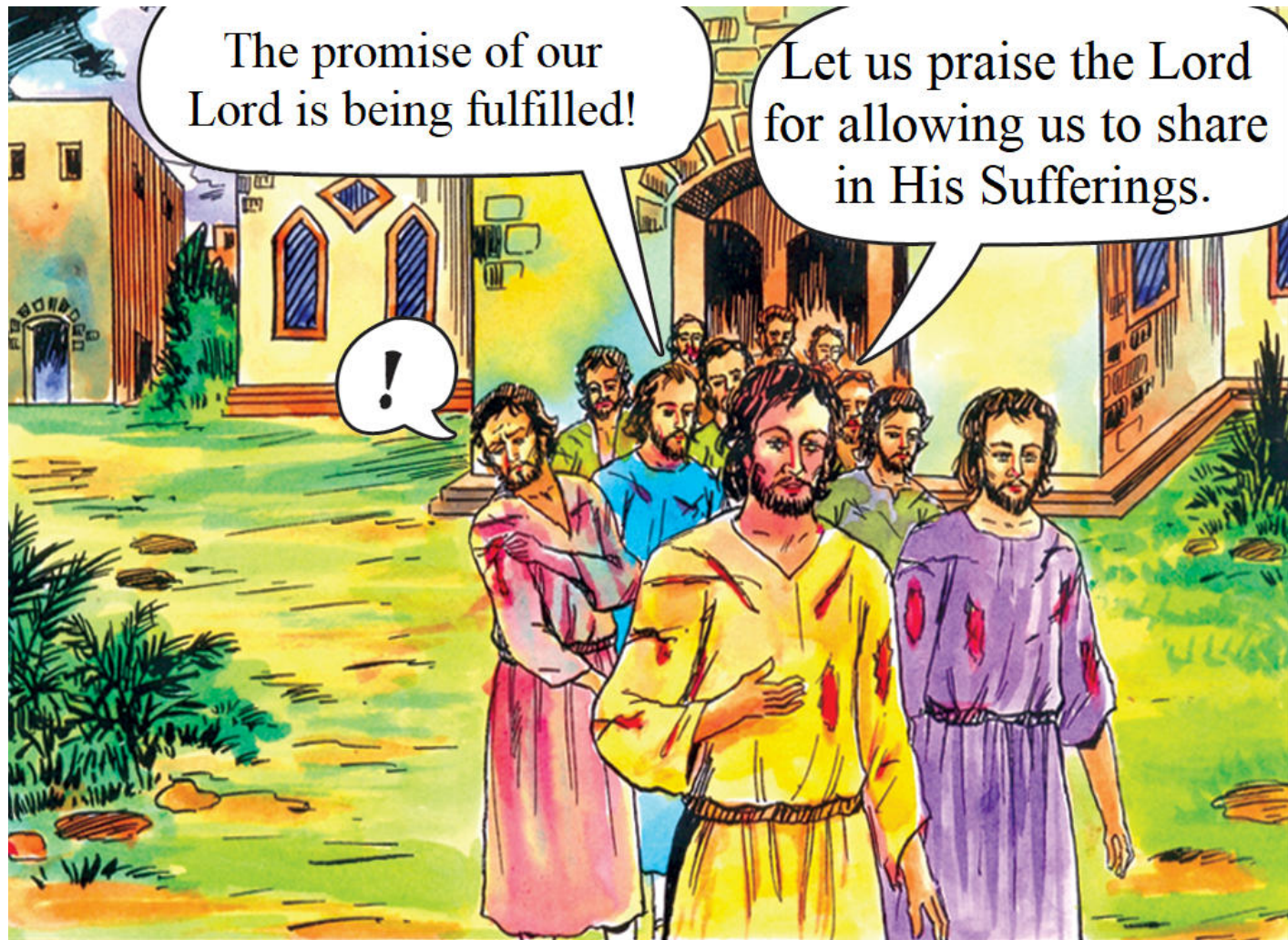
Take them away and have them
flogged for disobeying the Holy
Sanhedrin.



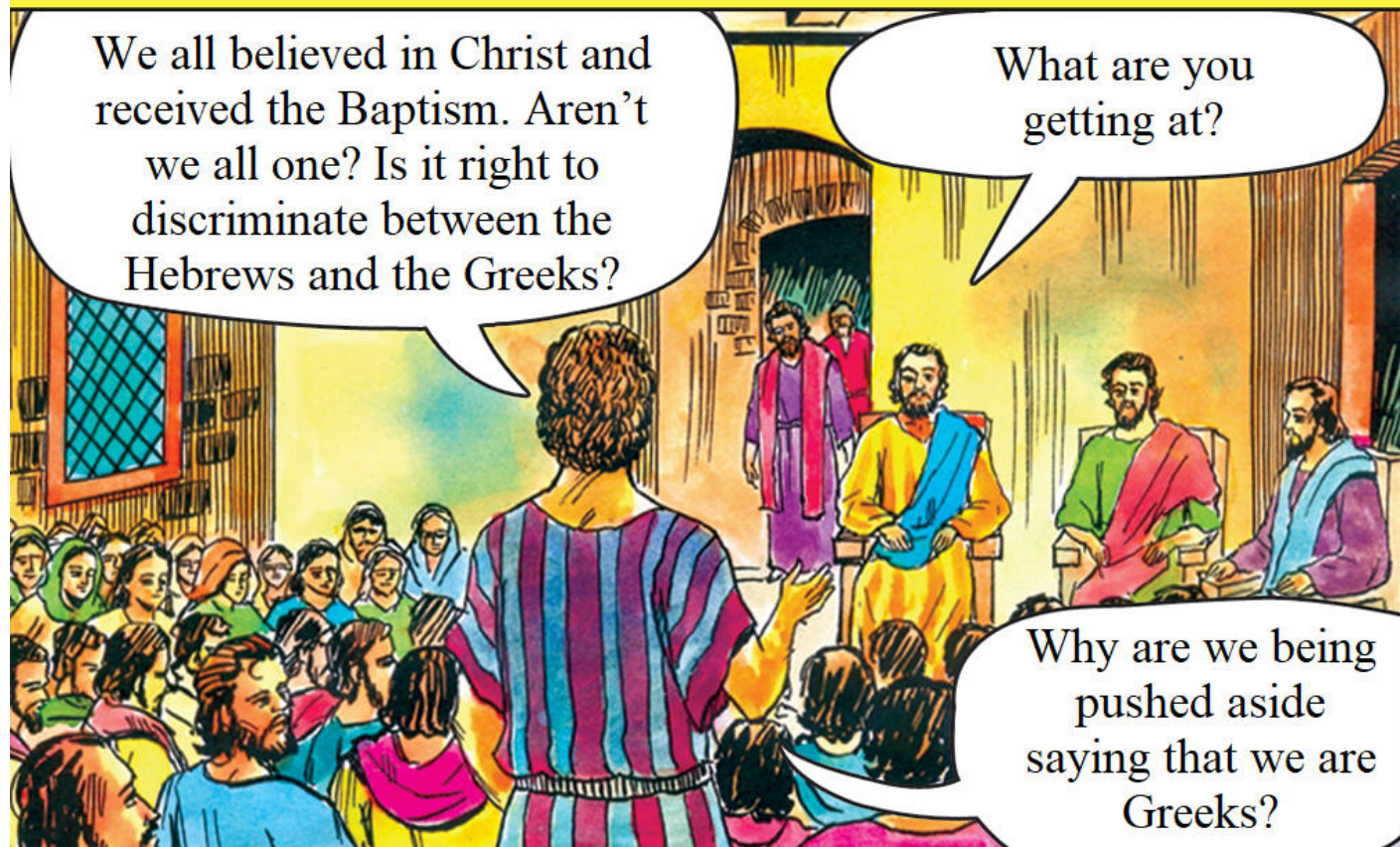
The promise of our
Lord is being fulfilled!

Let us praise the Lord
for allowing us to share
in His Sufferings.

!



The Apostles continued their preaching with greater fervor. Five years passed. Palestinian Jews and Hellenistic Jews continued to join the group. One day:



Tell me what
happened?



Greek widows and orphans are neglected in the daily distributions.

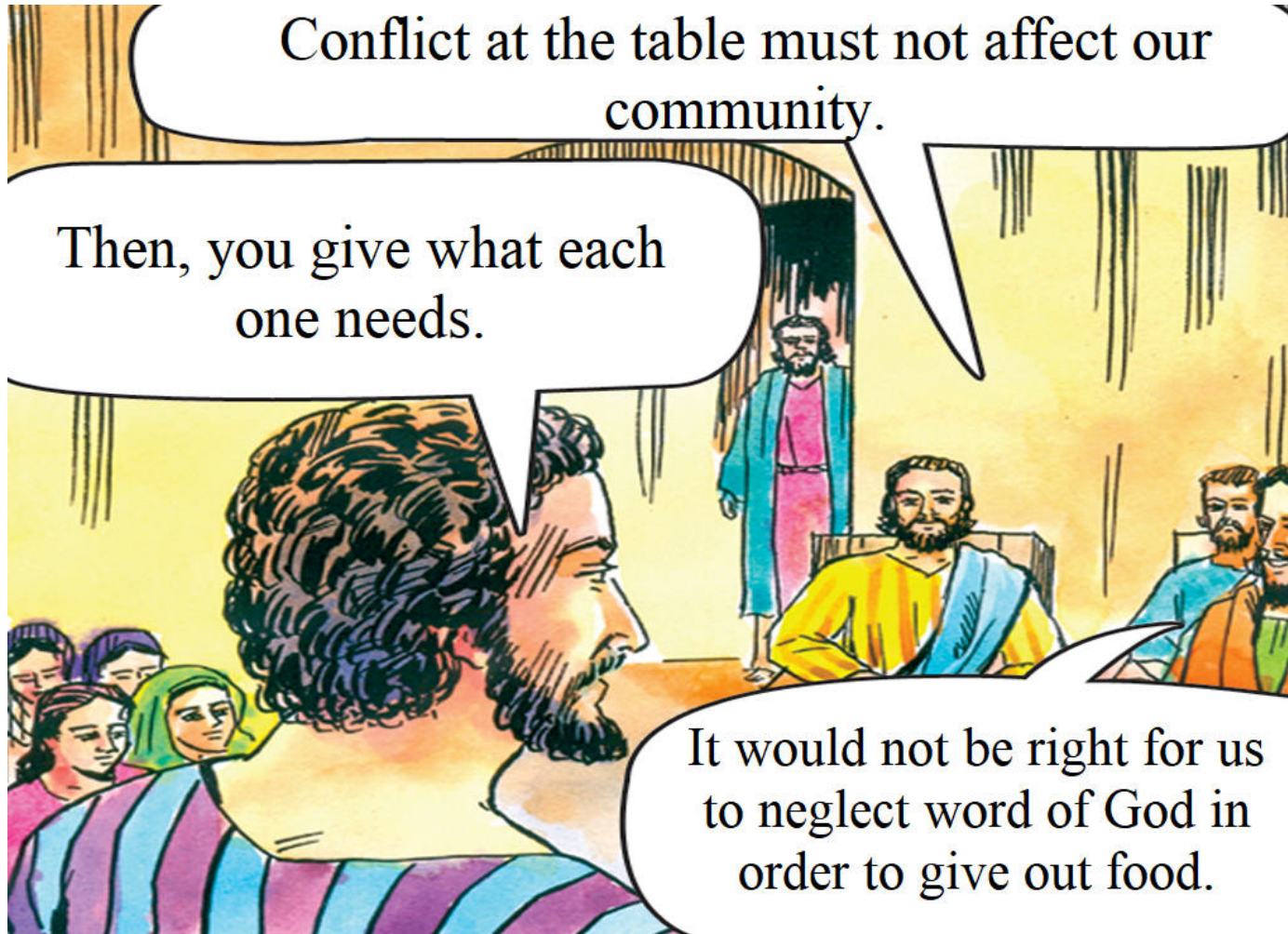
They seem to think that all their women are widows, and all their children orphans. How can we give out the common goods like that?



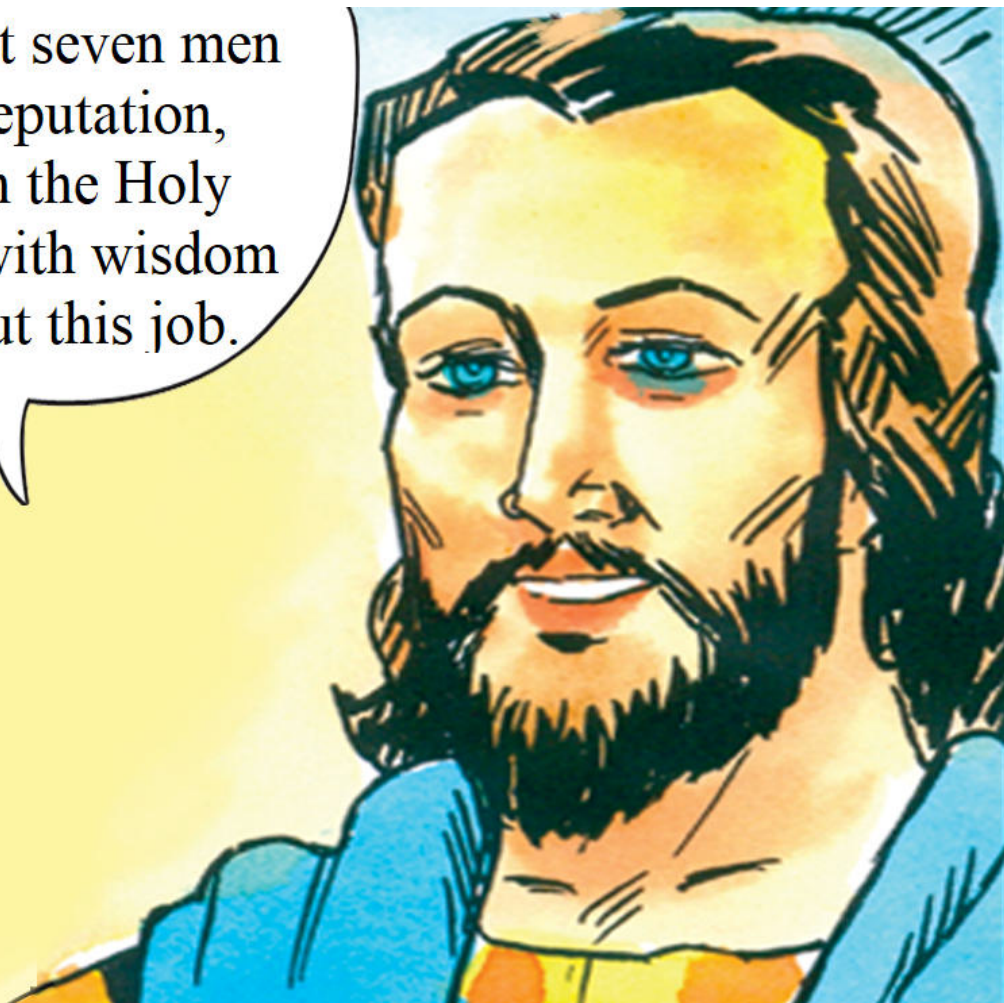
Conflict at the table must not affect our community.

Then, you give what each one needs.

It would not be right for us to neglect word of God in order to give out food.



Let us select seven men
of good reputation,
filled with the Holy
Spirit and with wisdom
to carry out this job.



Being satisfied with this suggestion, they elected Stephen, Philip, Prochorous, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas.

Lord Jesus these men are selected for the special service of your people. Send your Spirit upon them that they may serve you and the community.

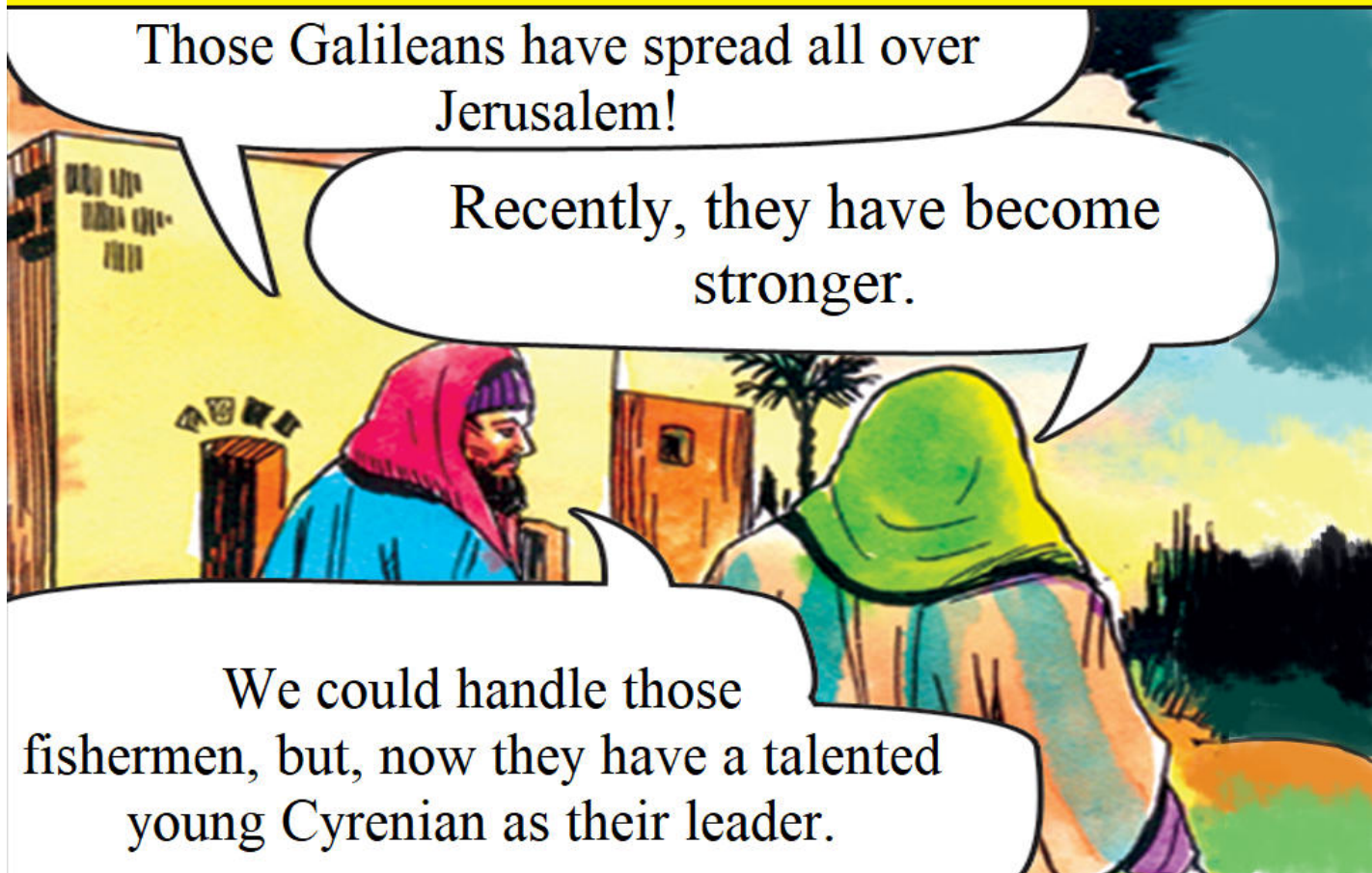


They were called the “Deacons” which meant “those who serve”. Stephen was the leader of that group. A conversation between two Jews:

Those Galileans have spread all over Jerusalem!

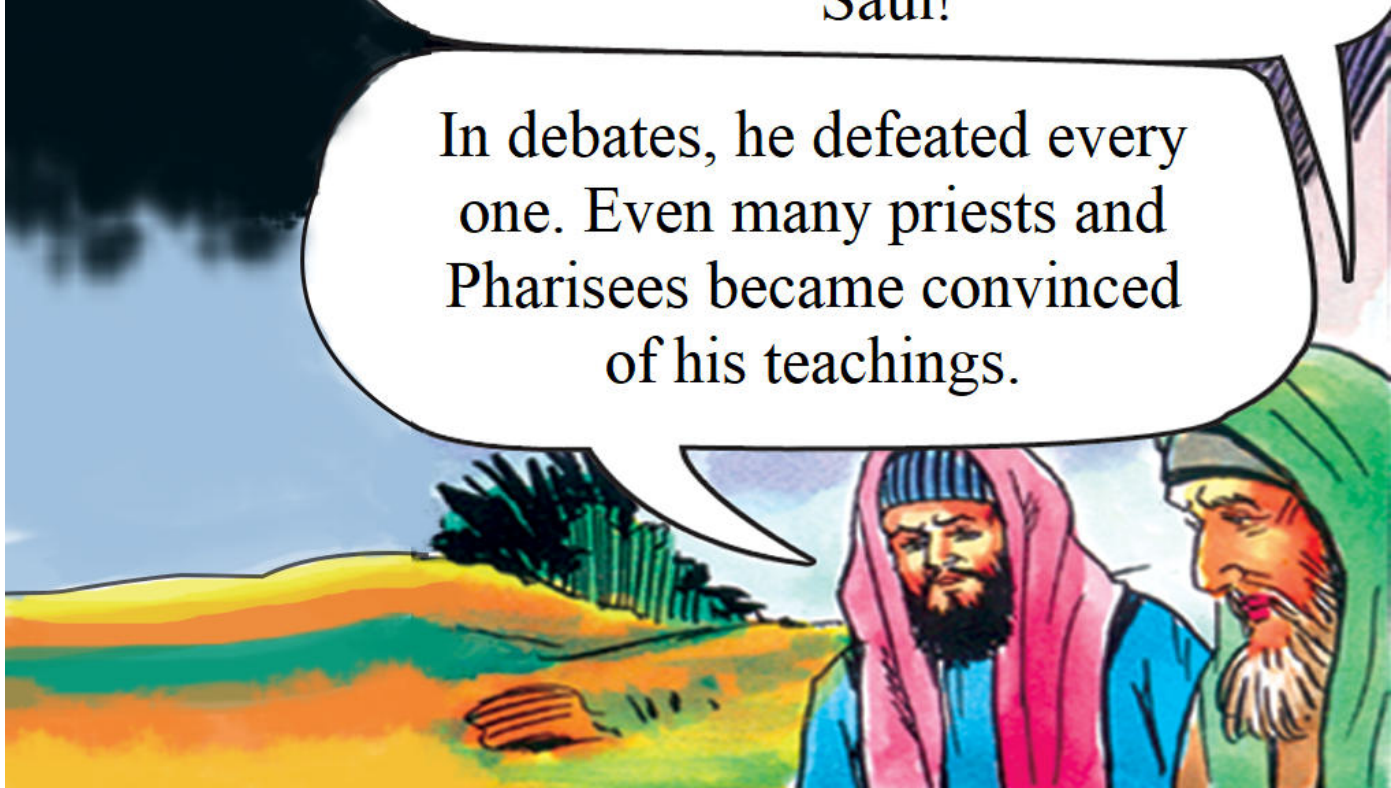
Recently, they have become stronger.

We could handle those fishermen, but, now they have a talented young Cyrenian as their leader.



That Stephen! Better informed
than Gamaliel, more eloquent than
Saul!

In debates, he defeated every
one. Even many priests and
Pharisees became convinced
of his teachings.



The other day, even Saul, was put
to shame!

He mustn't any longer.
But we can't just kill like
that.



Try him before the
Sanhedrin. All we
need are a few
witnesses.



Next Story



BAPTISAM IN BLOOD

Questions

1. Explain the meaning of “Pentecost” in the Old and New Testaments.
2. Why is the book called “Tongues of Fire”?
3. Why did the disciples elect an apostle?
4. How did the apostles become courageous?
5. Compare the Pentecostal experience with that of the “Tower of Babel”.
6. What were the four characteristic traits of the first Christian community?
7. Give a summary of the first sermon of Peter.
8. What was the response to the first miracle performed by the apostles?
9. What attracted the people to the Church?
10. Explain the situation that led to the election of the deacons.

Memorize: “When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me” (Acts 1,8)

THE ENTIRE BIBLE IN COMICS

1. Cain and Abel
2. Abraham
3. Jacob
4. Joseph
5. Moses
6. Joshua
7. Samson
8. Ruth
9. Samuel
10. Saul
11. David
12. King David
13. Solomon
14. Elijah
15. Amos
16. Hosea
17. Micah

18. Isaiah
19. Jeremiah
20. Ezekiel
21. Zechariah
22. Jonah
23. Job
24. Tobit
25. Daniel
26. Susanna
27. Esther
28. Judith
29. Maccabeus
30. The Maccabees
31. A World Awaiting
32. Light of the world
33. The Herald
34. The Prophet
35. The Liberator

36. The One to come
37. The Lord of the Universe
38. Son of God
39. The Son of Man
40. In the shadow of the cross
41. The Way
42. Son of David
43. Bread of Life
44. The Redeemer
45. With us forever
46. Tongues of fire
47. Baptism in blood
48. The chosen vessel
49. Libation
50. Come, Lord Jesus
51. Woman