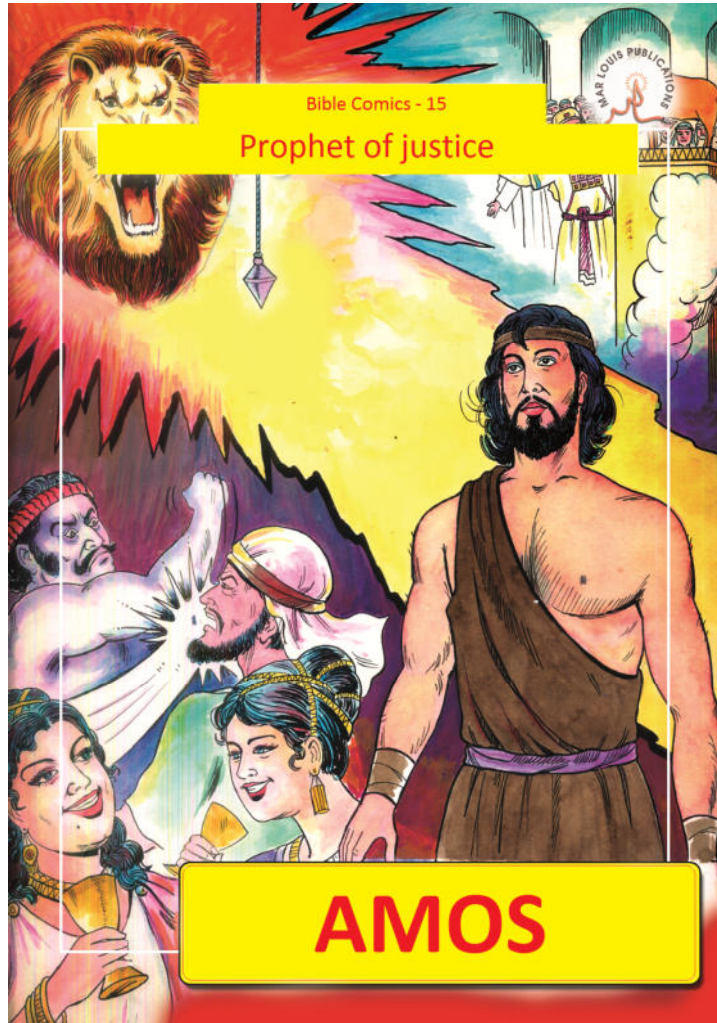


Bible Comics - 15

Prophet of justice



**AMOS**

Bible Comics - 15

# Amos

Script

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration

Devassy

# Prophet of Justice

## AMOS

The words of Yahweh pronounced through Prophet Elijah, regarding King Ahab and his family, became true in 841 B.C. when a military commander, Jehu, exterminated the family of Ahab and became king of Israel. During the reign of Jeroboam II, the great grandson of Jehu (783-743 B.C.) the Northern kingdom, Israel, reached the zenith of its glory. However, the prosperity was enjoyed only by a few.

While a handful of rich people lived in extreme luxury, the vast majority of the population was reduced to utter misery. Heavy taxes and exorbitant interest on loans caused the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few. The courts failed to execute justice. Gradually, the poor lost not only their property but also their freedom. They were auctioned out like animals in the slave markets. Not even the religious system was helpful to the poor. Sacrifices and festivals gave the illusion that God was pleased with the rich.

It was under these circumstances that Yahweh called Amos, a shepherd from Tekoa, and sent him as His spokesman to Israel. His message is recorded in the book of “Amos”. Since the Bible tells us very little about his personal life, in the present story, imaginary setting is used to situate his prophecies.

Amos’ prophetic mission starts with a vision of the Lord standing by a wall holding a plumb line in His hand. It gave him the conviction that the Lord is going to punish Israel for her crimes. Yahweh is the creator of the universe and the

Lord of all the nations. He had chosen Israel and entrusted her with the mission for bearing witness to Him. Since she failed miserably in this mission, God is going to punish her without mercy.

Most of Amos' prophecies are denunciations of the crimes of Israel. His positive demand can be summed up in one sentence: "Let justice roll down like waters and integrity like an unfailing stream" The image he uses is that of a torrential flood that carries away every obstacle that stands in the way, a flood that continues for ever. Justice

should always be executed. A life according to the commandments of the covenant is what Amos intends by “integrity”. By “justice” he means the protection the courts of law should give to the poor and the weak.

Offering sacrifices and celebrating festivals will be no substitute for executing justice for the poor, Amos proclaimed. In a society where the poor are oppressed, sacrifices and feasts become an insult to God, a sin, not only because what is offered on the altar was robbed from the poor but also because the sacrifices pacify the conscience

of the rich without making them change their ways.


Amos was a man of courage. At the sight of the misery of the poor, insensibility of the rich, venality of the judges, and hypocrisy of the priests, he burst out like a roaring lion against the corrupt systems. He became the spokesman of God's judgment upon an oppressive society. He spared no one of the oppressors from his criticism. Enraged by the prophetic denunciations of Amos, the ruling class joined hands against



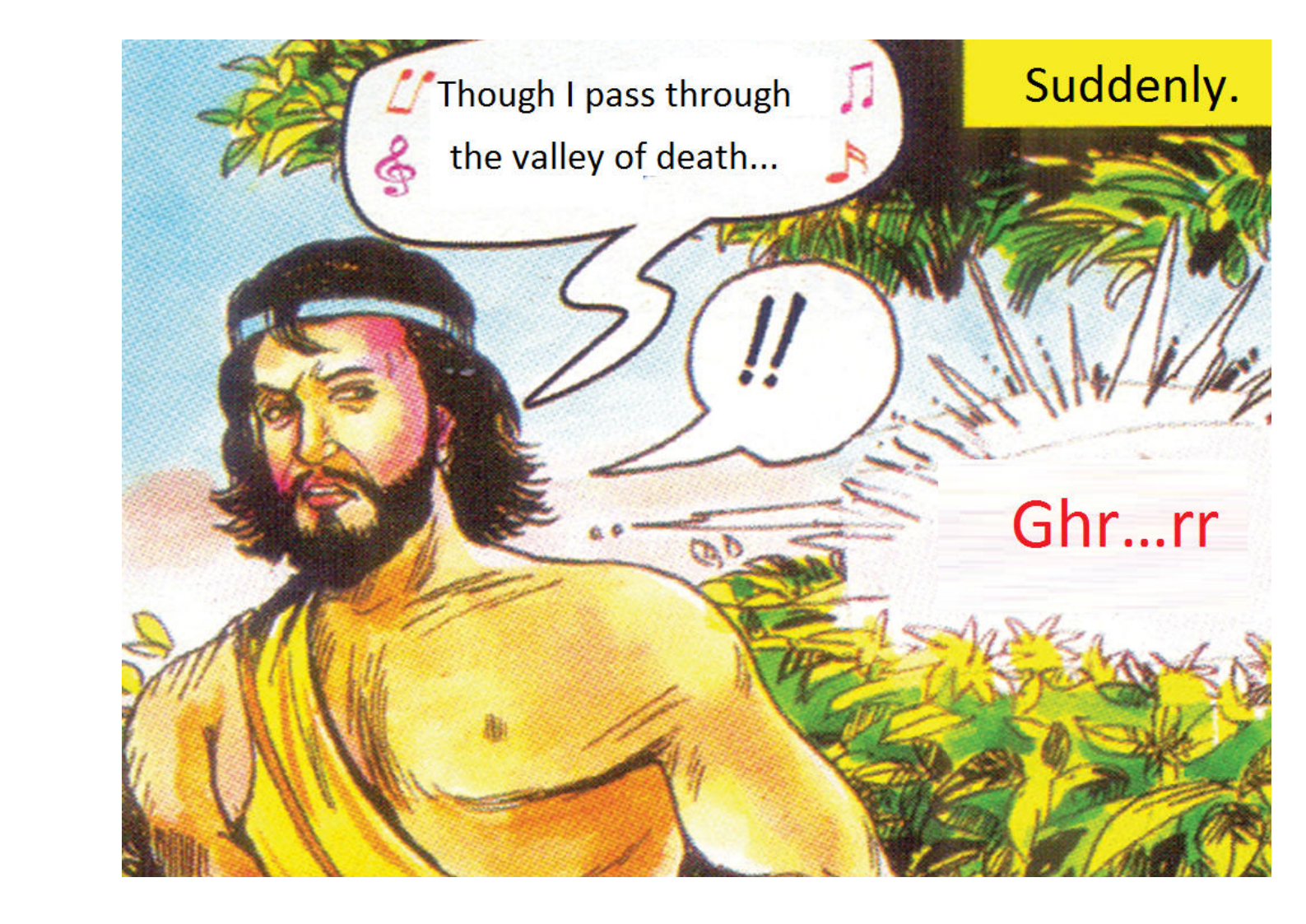
him. The Jewish tradition believes that Amos was killed by his opponents.

Amos' prophetic ministry lasted only for a very short period. Still, even after centuries, his call for justice resounds like the roaring of a lion. Amos continues to be a source of inspiration for all who struggle for justice.

In the eighth century B.C. there was a shepherd named Amos. He lived in Tekoa, a small town south of Jerusalem. Amos tending his flock.

 The Lord is my shepherd.  
Nothing indeed shall I want....





Though I pass through  
the valley of death...

Suddenly.

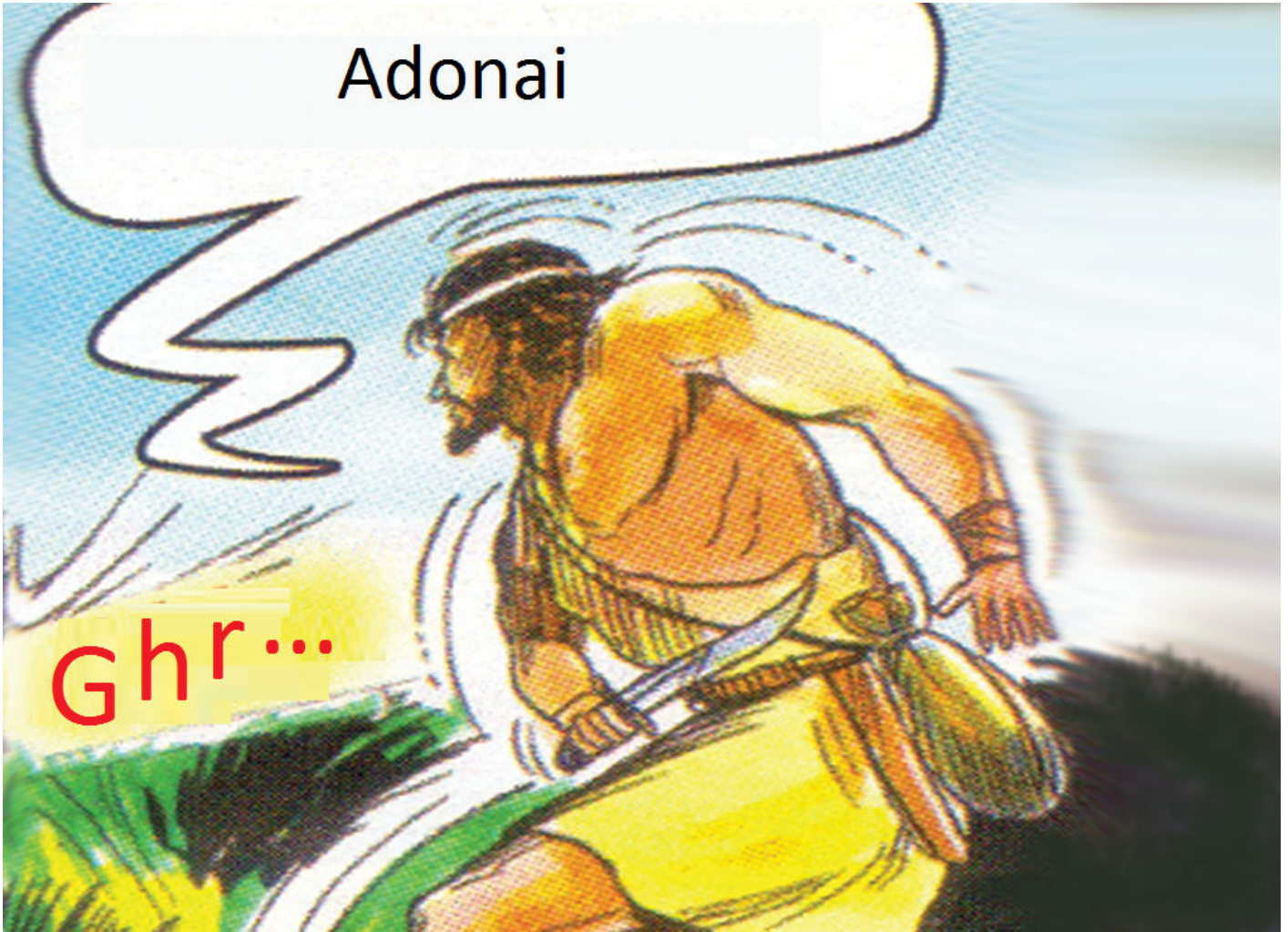
!!

Ghr...rr



Adonai

Ghr...



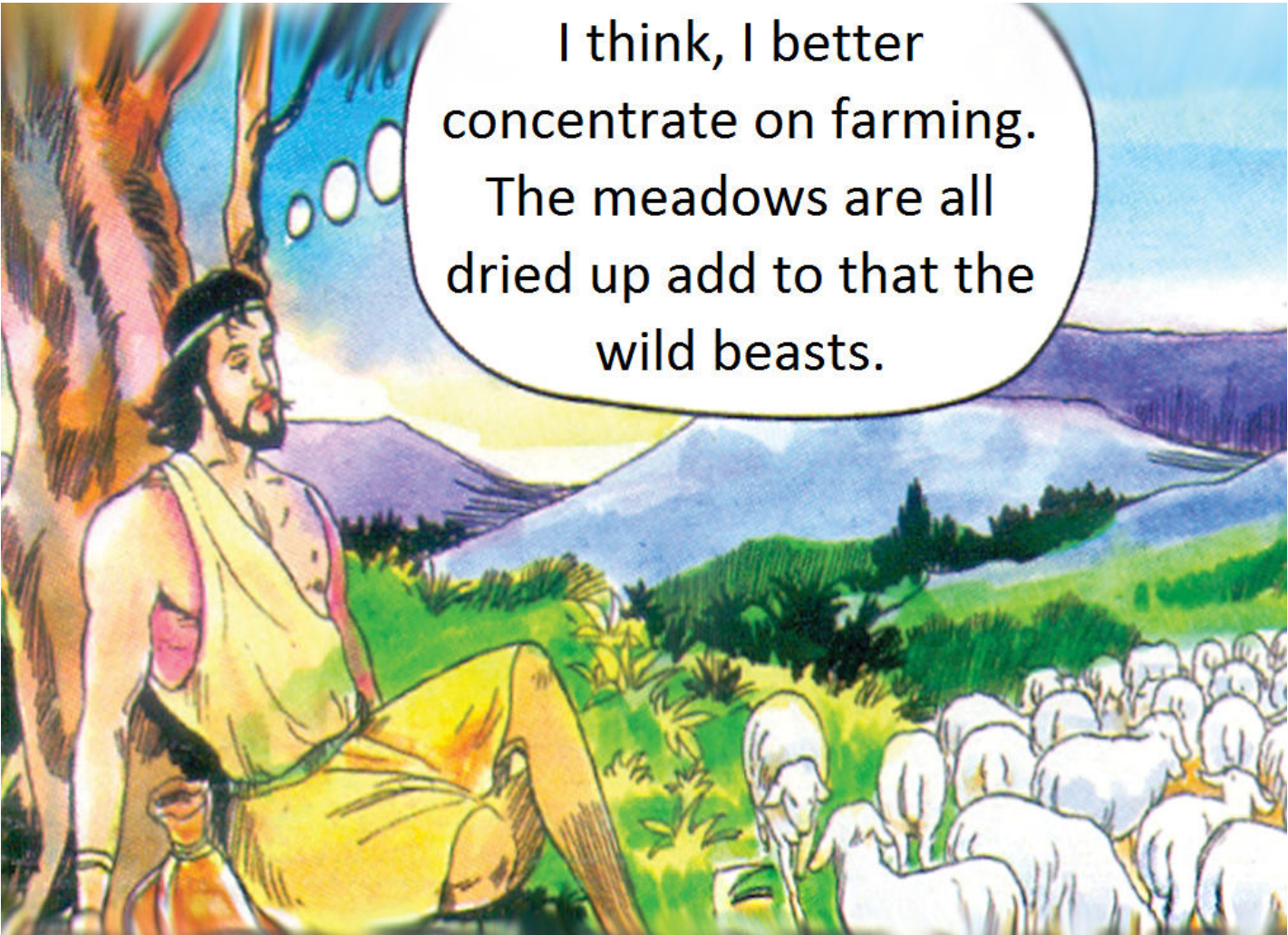
G h r . r r



Amos continued  
singing.

The Lord is with me,  
I fear no harm.



A man with a beard and a headband, wearing a yellow tunic, is sitting on the ground under a large tree. He is looking towards a flock of white sheep in the distance. The background shows rolling green hills and a blue sky with a few white clouds. A speech bubble is positioned above the man, containing text.

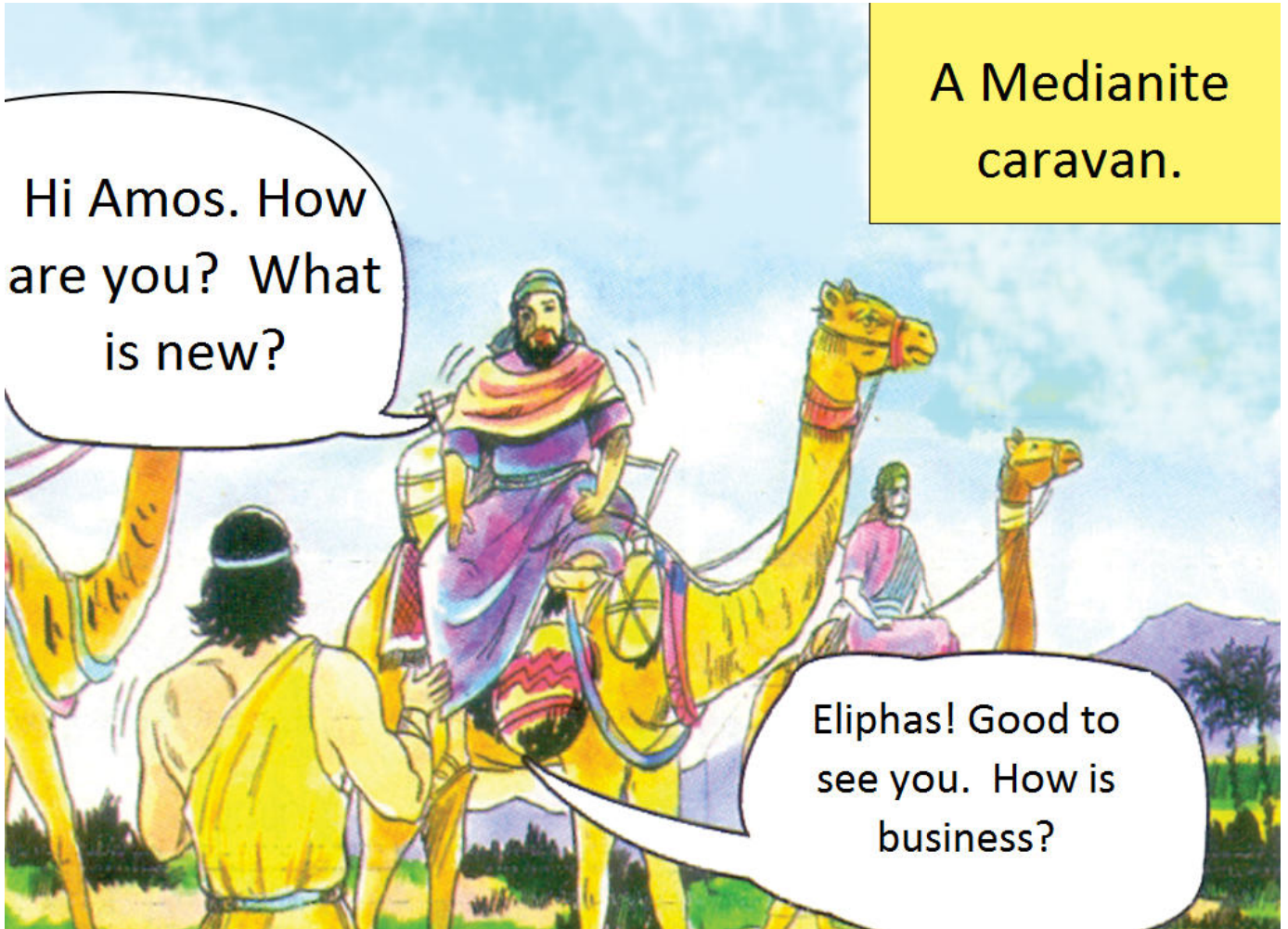
I think, I better  
concentrate on farming.  
The meadows are all  
dried up add to that the  
wild beasts.

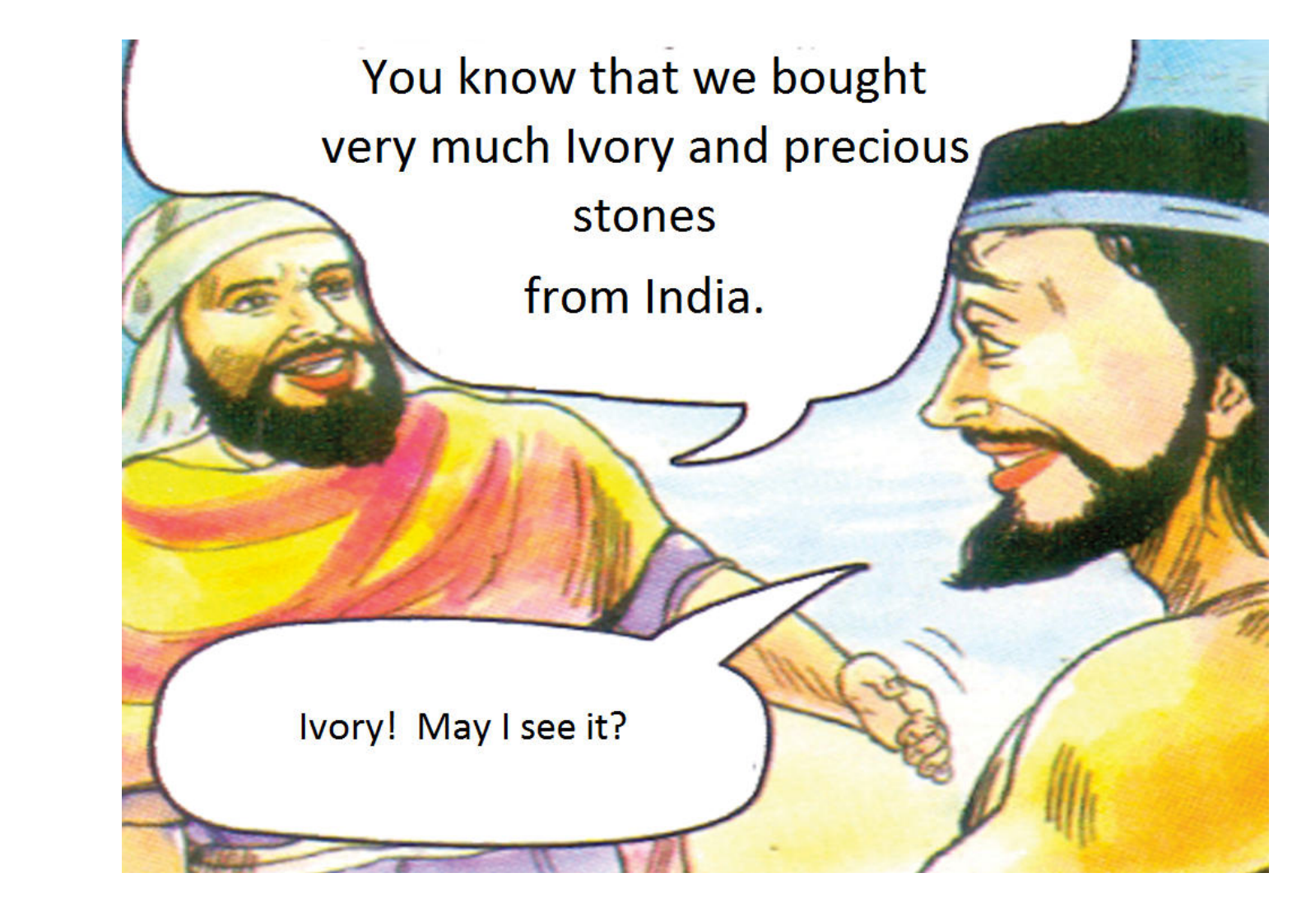


A Medianite  
caravan.

Hi Amos. How  
are you? What  
is new?

Elphas! Good to  
see you. How is  
business?





You know that we bought  
very much Ivory and precious  
stones  
from India.

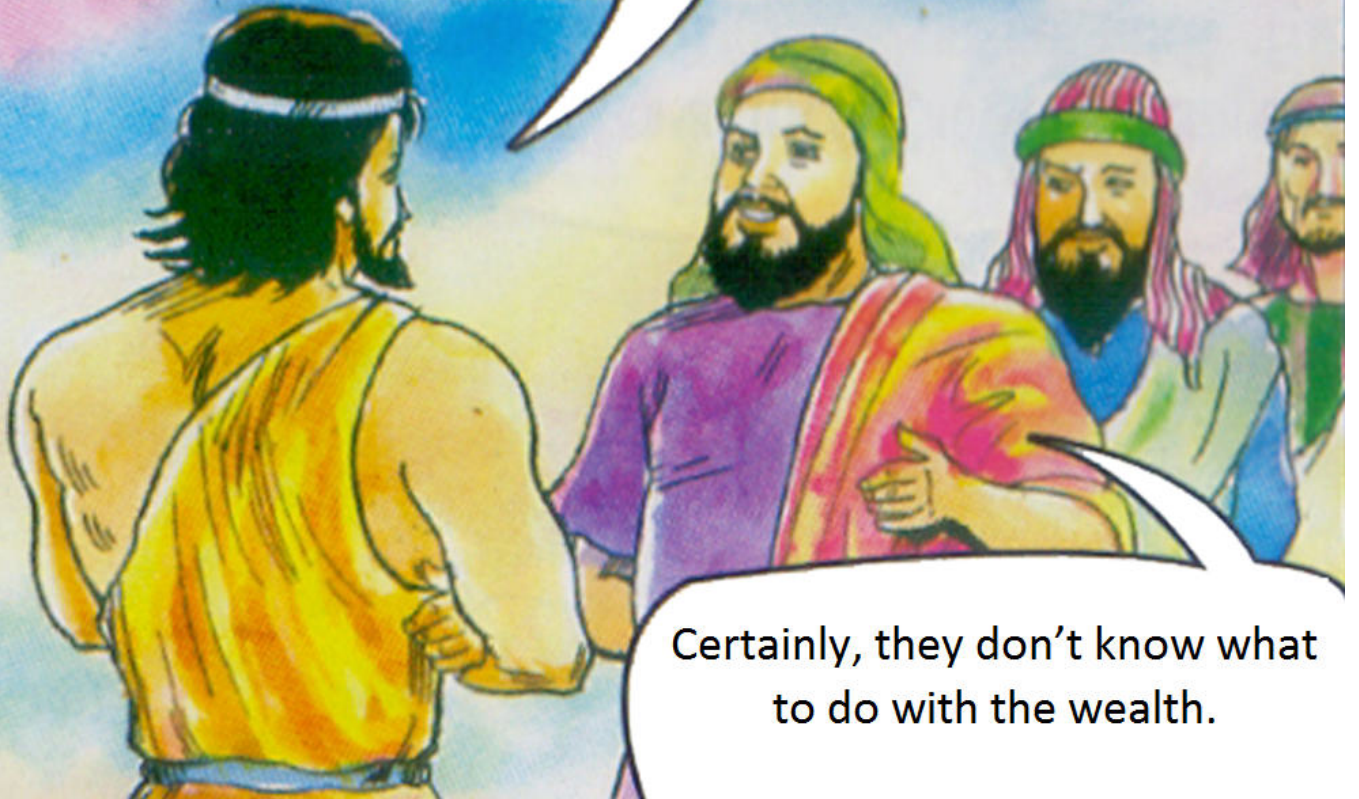
Ivory! May I see it?

We stopped at Samaria and sold  
everything.



They bought things at price  
we named.


They must be very rich in  
Samaria.



Certainly, they don't know what  
to do with the wealth.

Their women are loaded  
with gold and Jewels.





Even in the villages?

We don't stop in the villages.

So, the wealth is only in  
the cities.

Look Amos, we go to  
people who can buy.



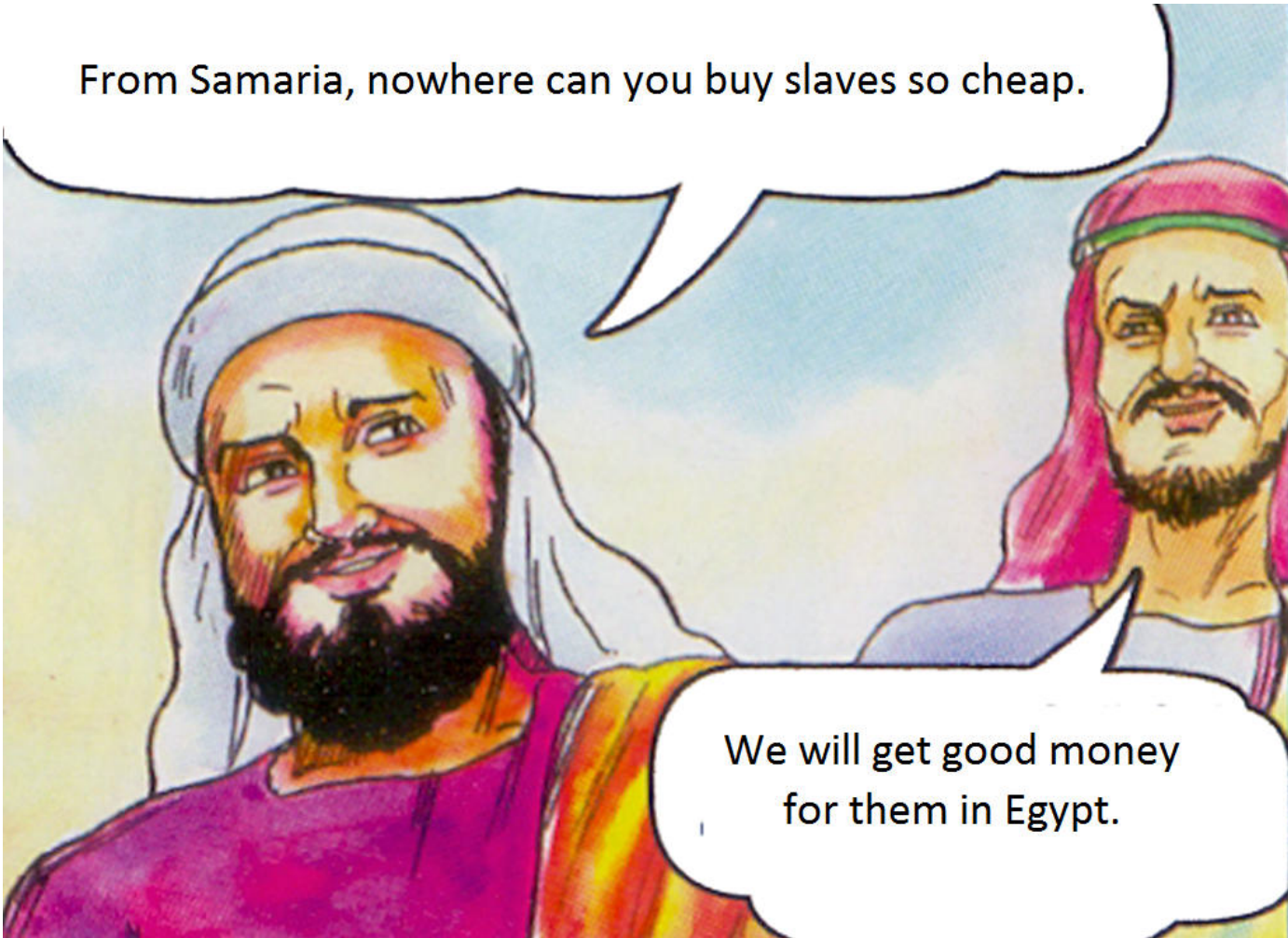
If you want to know  
about the villagers,  
ask the slaves.

Slaves, where did you  
get them?

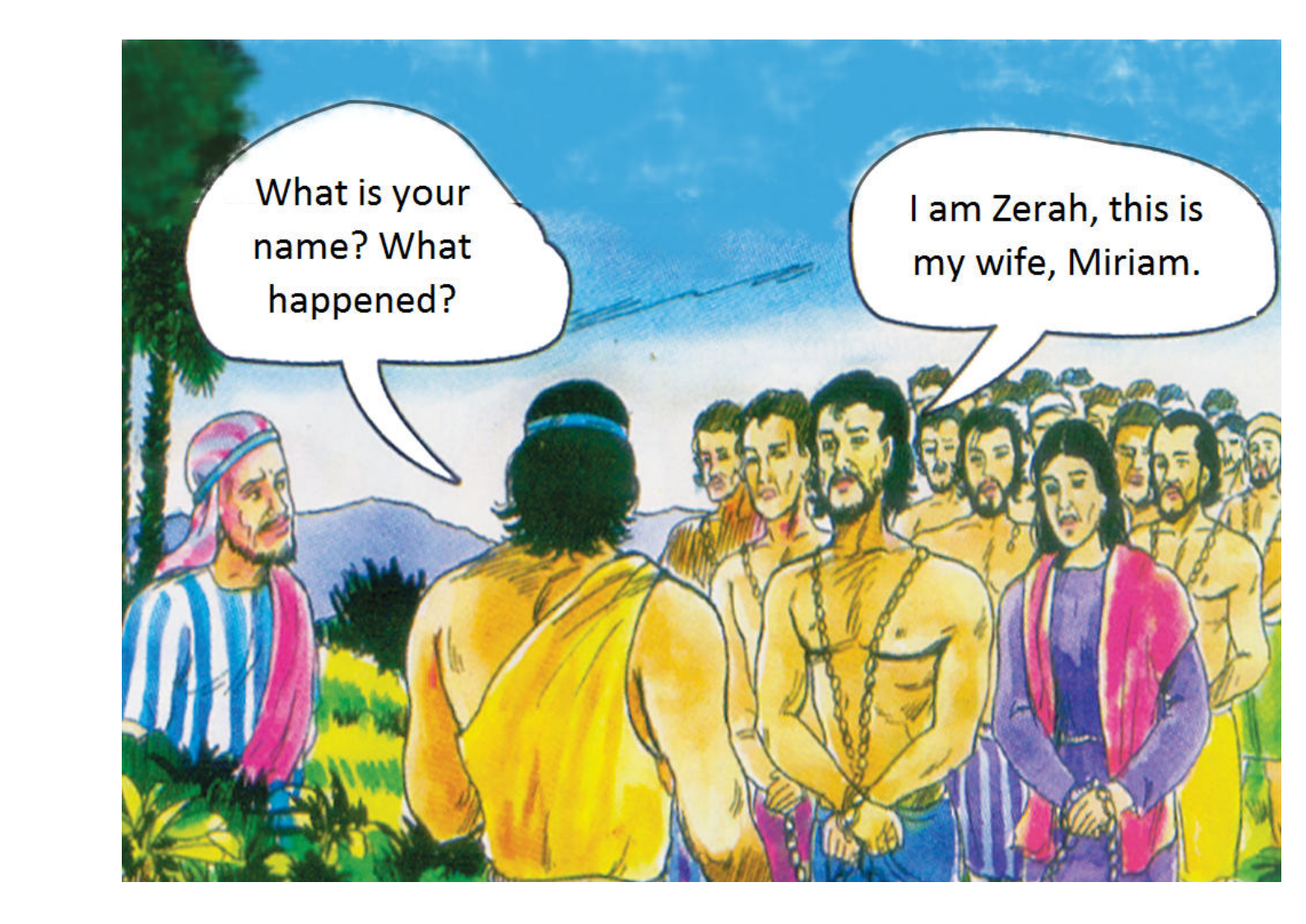




From Samaria, nowhere can you buy slaves so cheap.



We will get good money  
for them in Egypt.



What is your name? What happened?

I am Zerah, this is my wife, Miriam.

We are farmers from Jezreel.  
One year the crop failed we  
couldn't pay the taxes.



We borrowed  
some money from  
the Landlord. The  
next year when we  
went to return...



We had to pay double the amount. They cheated us also with the weights and measures.

What? Tampering with scales and bushels!



We had to give everything but it wasn't enough.



They confiscated our  
land.



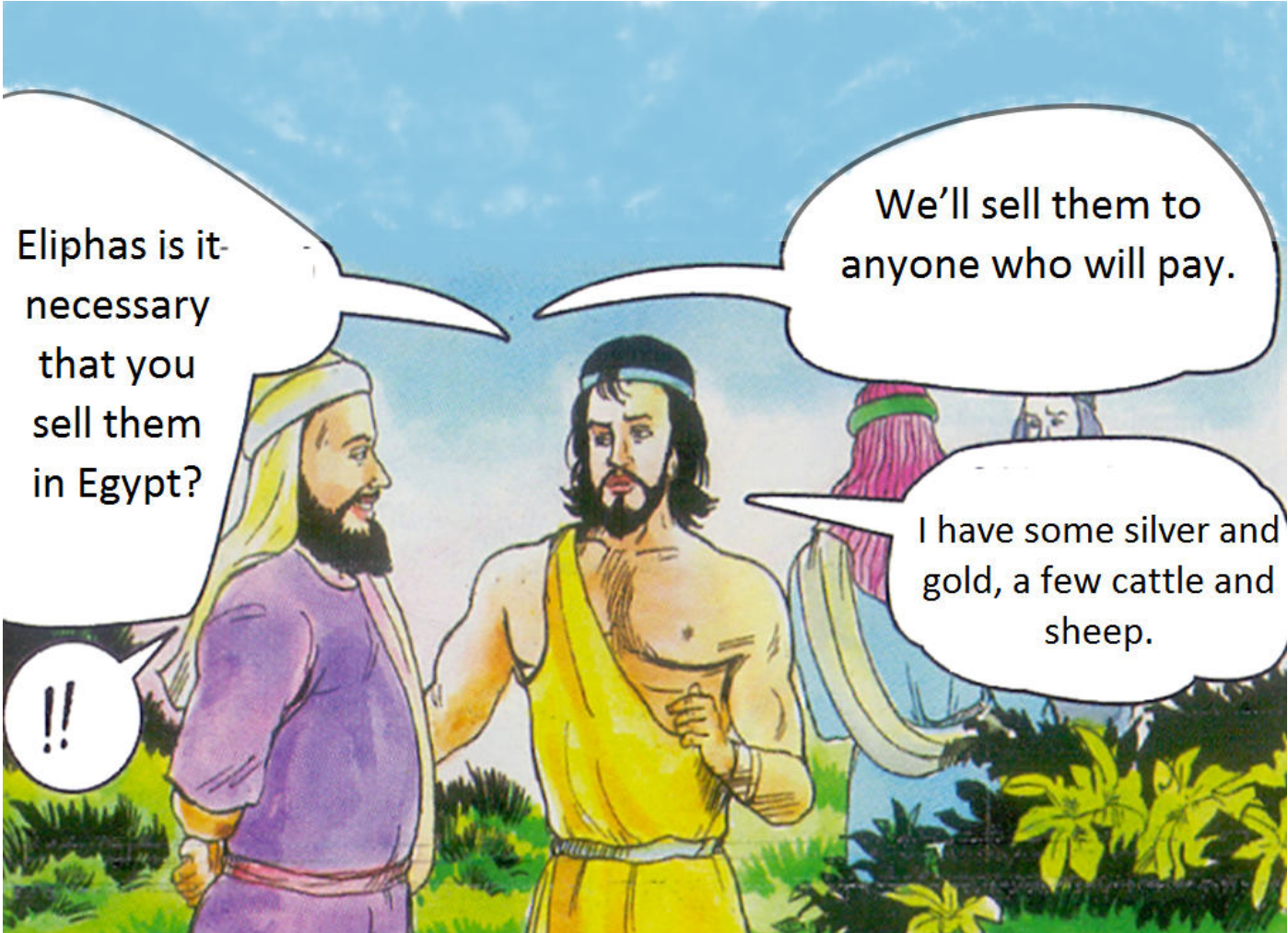


They took us to slave market.

We don't know what happened to our children. All these people will have similar stories to tell you.







Eliphaz is it-  
necessary  
that you  
sell them  
in Egypt?

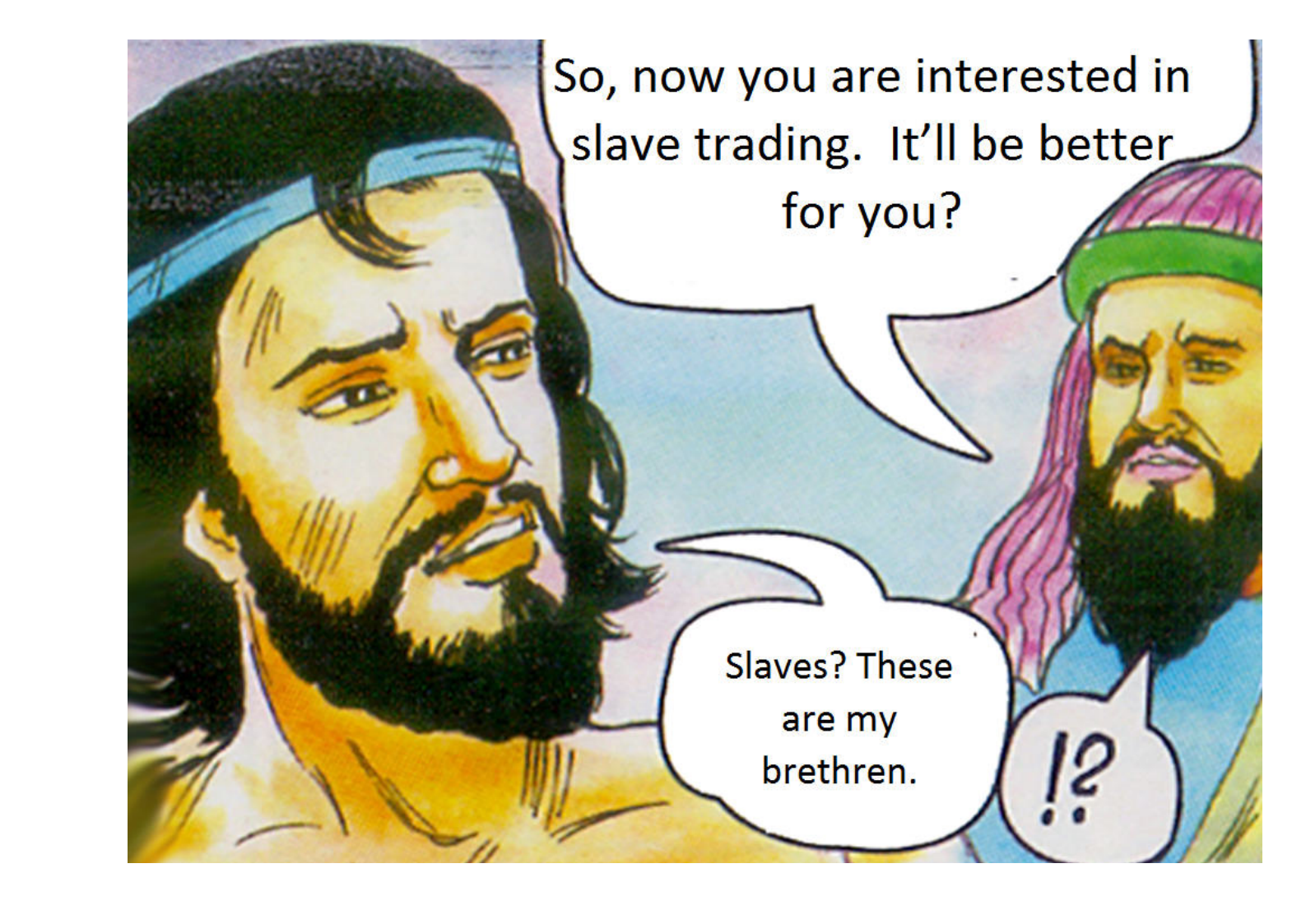
We'll sell them to  
anyone who will pay.

I have some silver and  
gold, a few cattle and  
sheep.

!!

We don't want any sheep. Do you have any camels? Two slaves for a horse, one slave for a donkey.

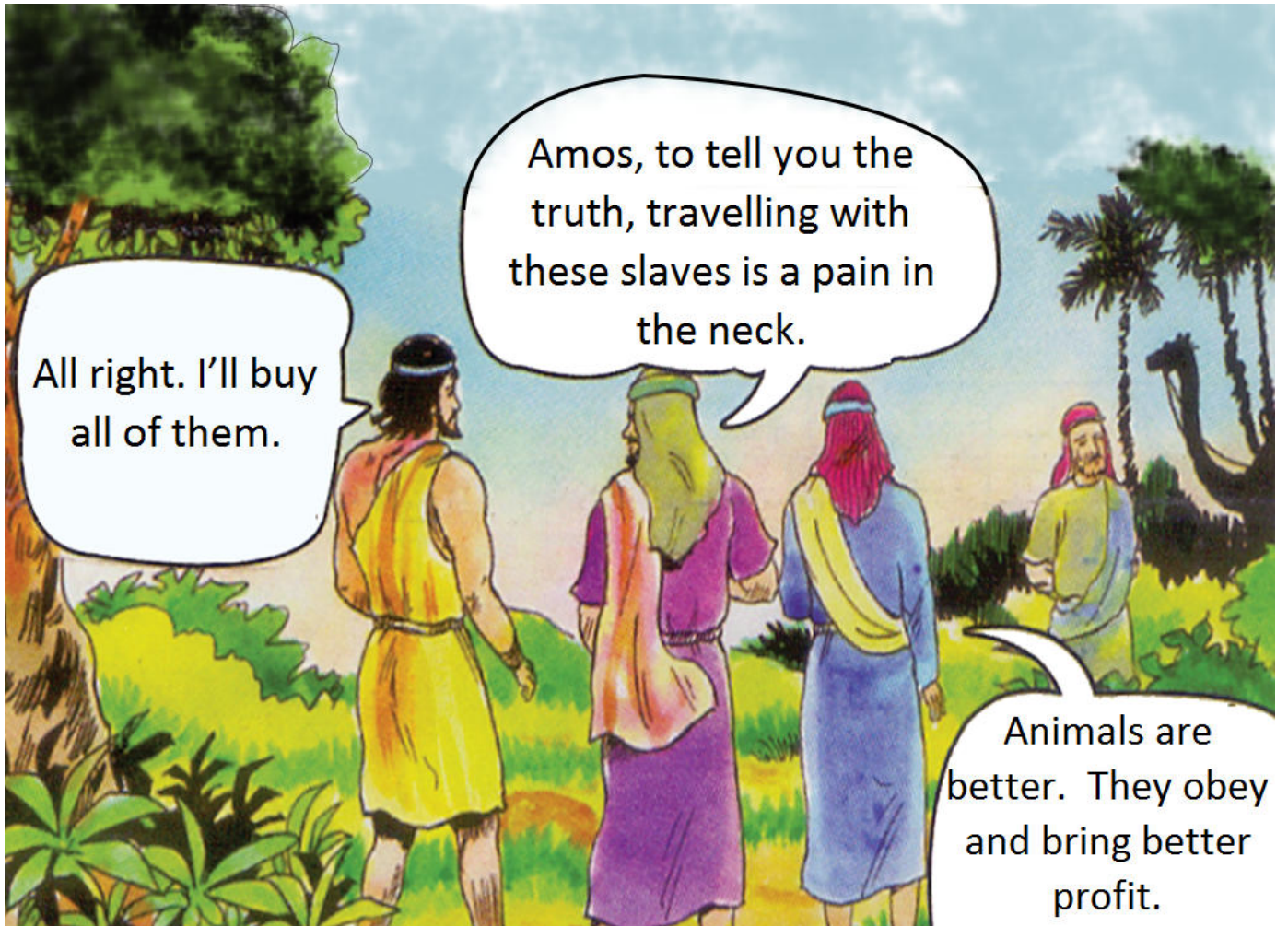




So, now you are interested in slave trading. It'll be better for you?

Slaves? These are my brethren.

!?



All right. I'll buy all of them.

Amos, to tell you the truth, travelling with these slaves is a pain in the neck.

Animals are better. They obey and bring better profit.

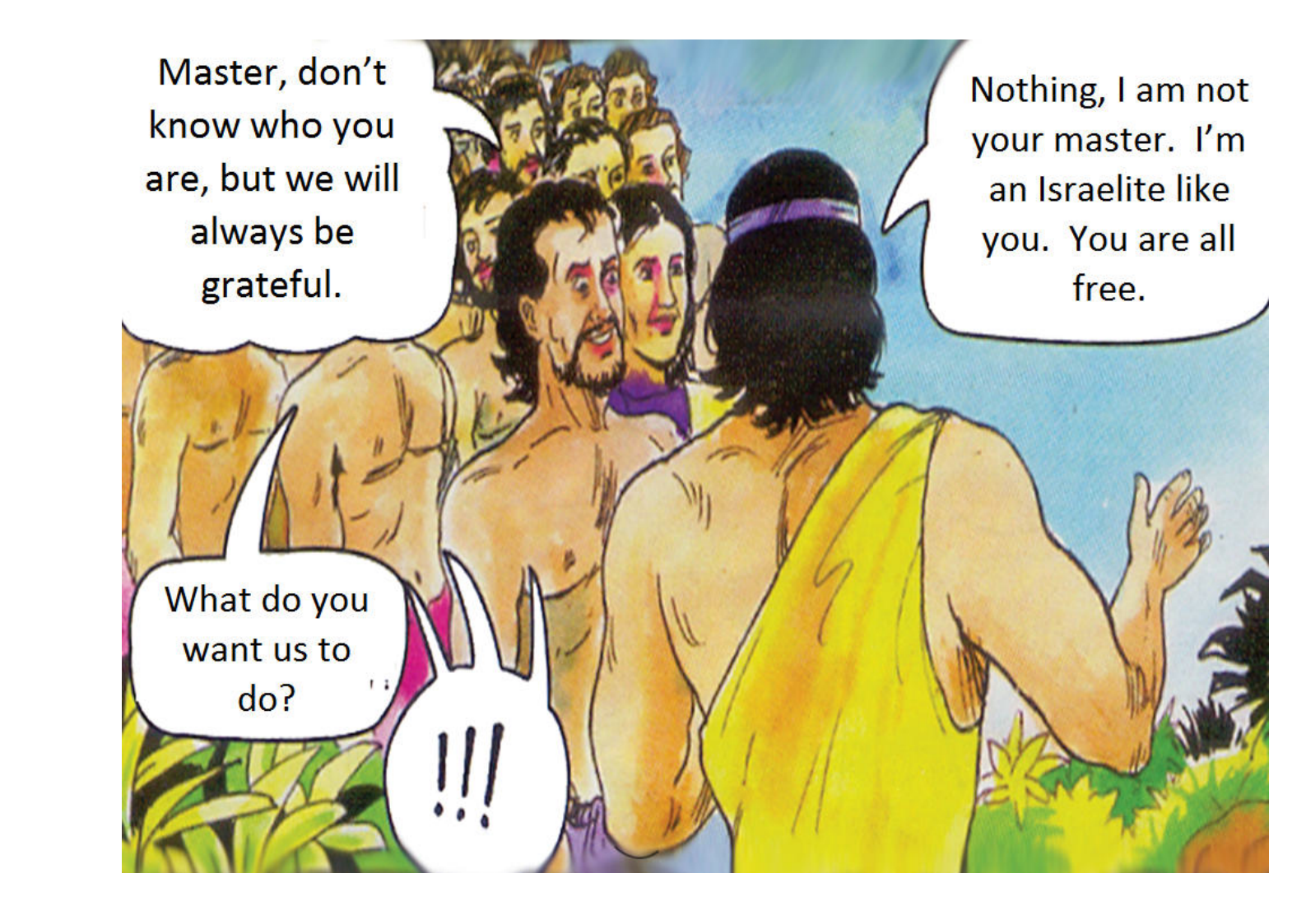
Here, you can have this.

!!

I want only the  
people. You can keep  
the chains.

We won't be responsible if  
they ran away.





Master, don't know who you are, but we will always be grateful.

Nothing, I am not your master. I'm an Israelite like you. You are all free.

What do you want us to do?

!!!

Amos freed the slaves he bought and gave them his land. That night:

How could they sell their own people as slaves?






Amos received his call.



**AMOS**

A person with dark hair, wearing a yellow shirt and a blue headband, is shown from the back, looking up at a large, colorful thought bubble. The thought bubble is yellow with a pink border. To the right of the person's head is a white speech bubble containing two exclamation marks. The background is a light blue sky with faint clouds.

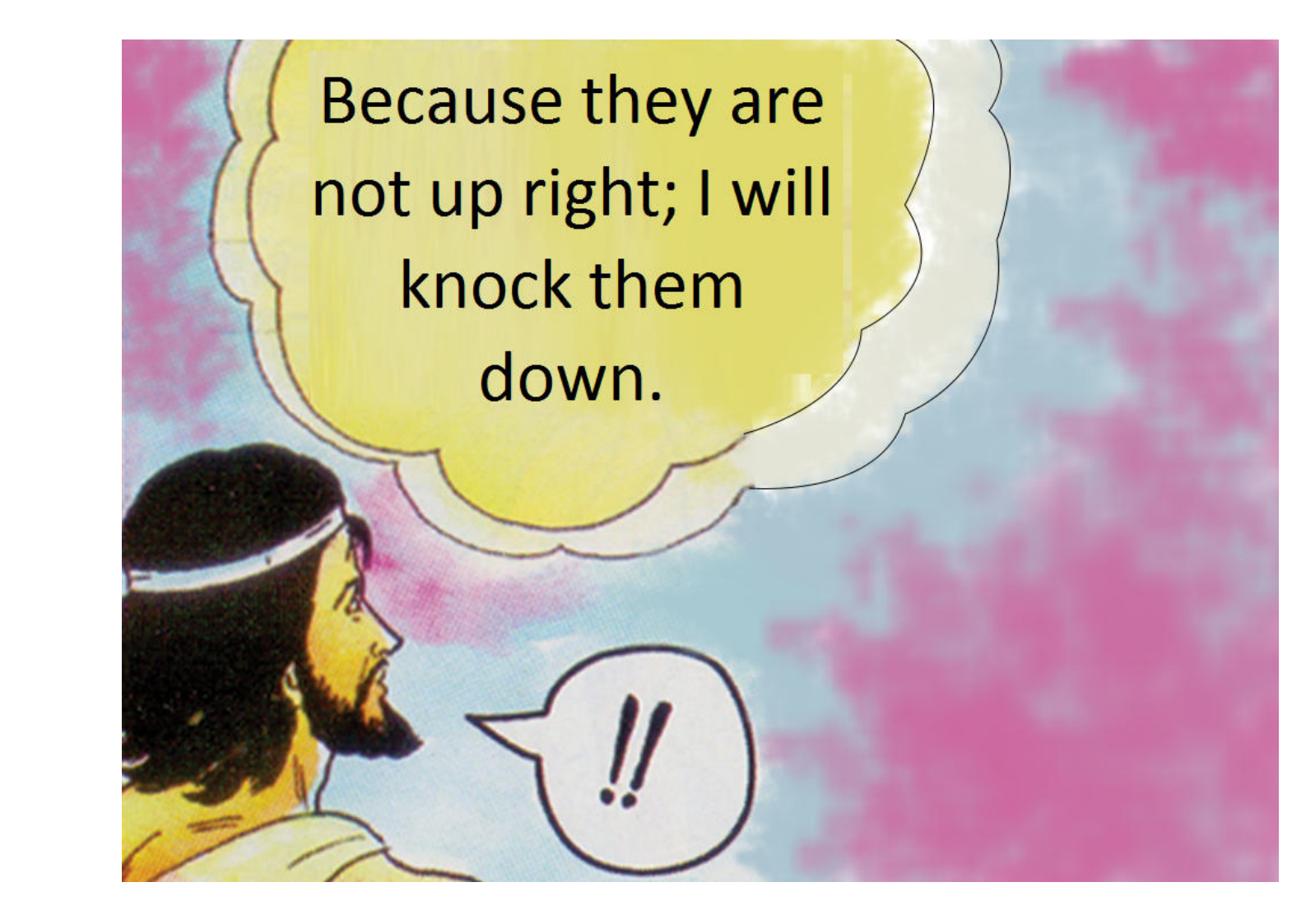
What do  
you see?

!!

I have  
measured my  
people, Israel  
with a plumb  
line.

!?






Because they are  
not up right; I will  
knock them  
down.

!!

Yahweh's voice reached him like a roaring  
Lion.



A man with dark hair and a blue headband, wearing a yellow sash over a light-colored tunic, stands with his back to the viewer. He is looking up at a large, multi-colored, cloud-like shape in the sky. The scene is set outdoors with a stone wall on the left, green foliage, and a palm tree in the background. Three speech bubbles are present: one on the left, one in the sky, and one on the right.

Lord,  
what shall  
I do?

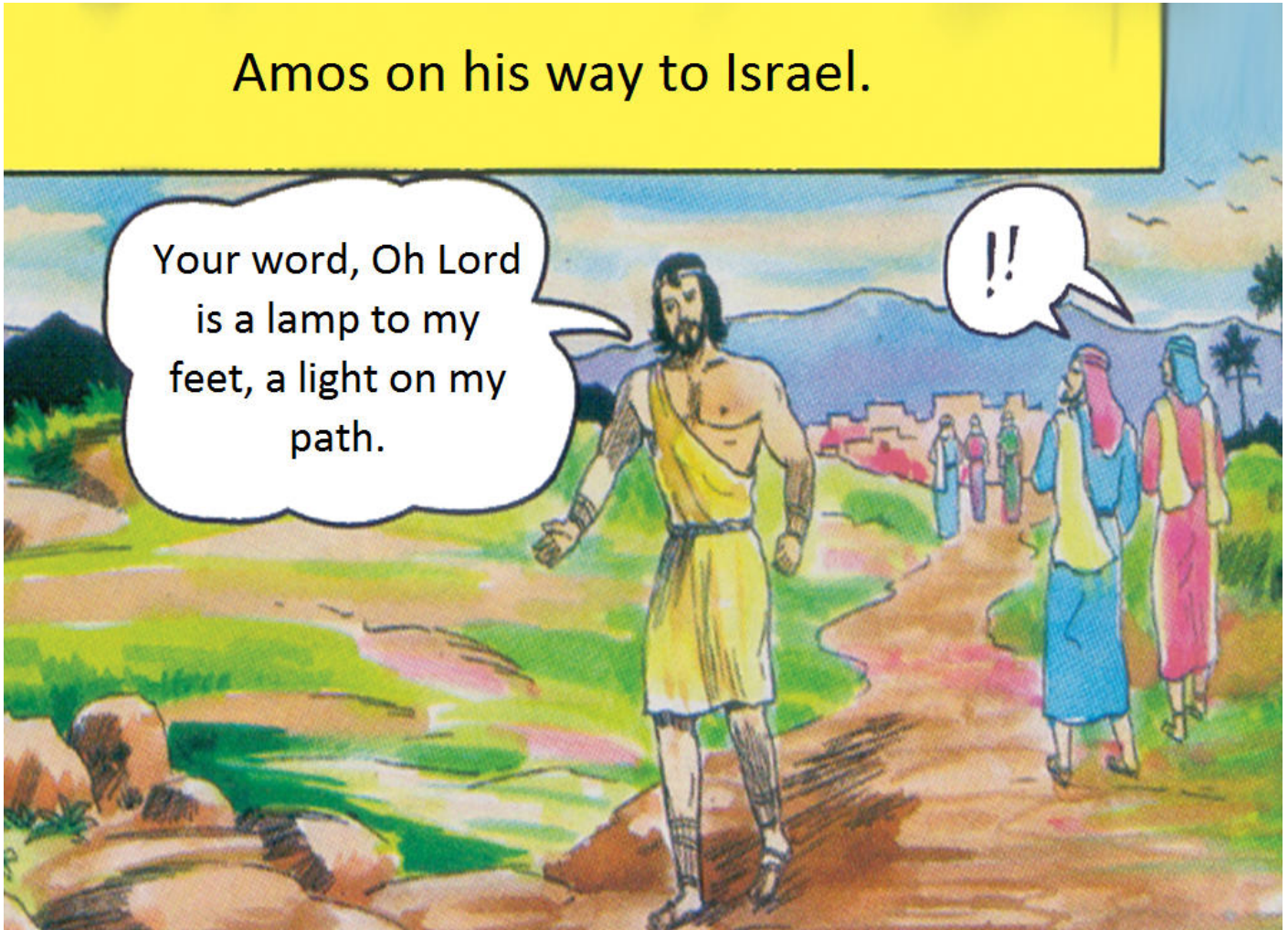
Go to Israel, I will  
instruct you  
there.

!!

## Amos on his way to Israel.

Your word, Oh Lord  
is a lamp to my  
feet, a light on my  
path.

!!



On the way

What are you doing to him?

Mind your own business. Don't you know that one must pay one's debts?

?

Lord, help me.





Amos continued on his journey.

Adonai

You shut up and pay.

!?

Stop it.



Amos in another village



Stop lying and  
bring more oil.

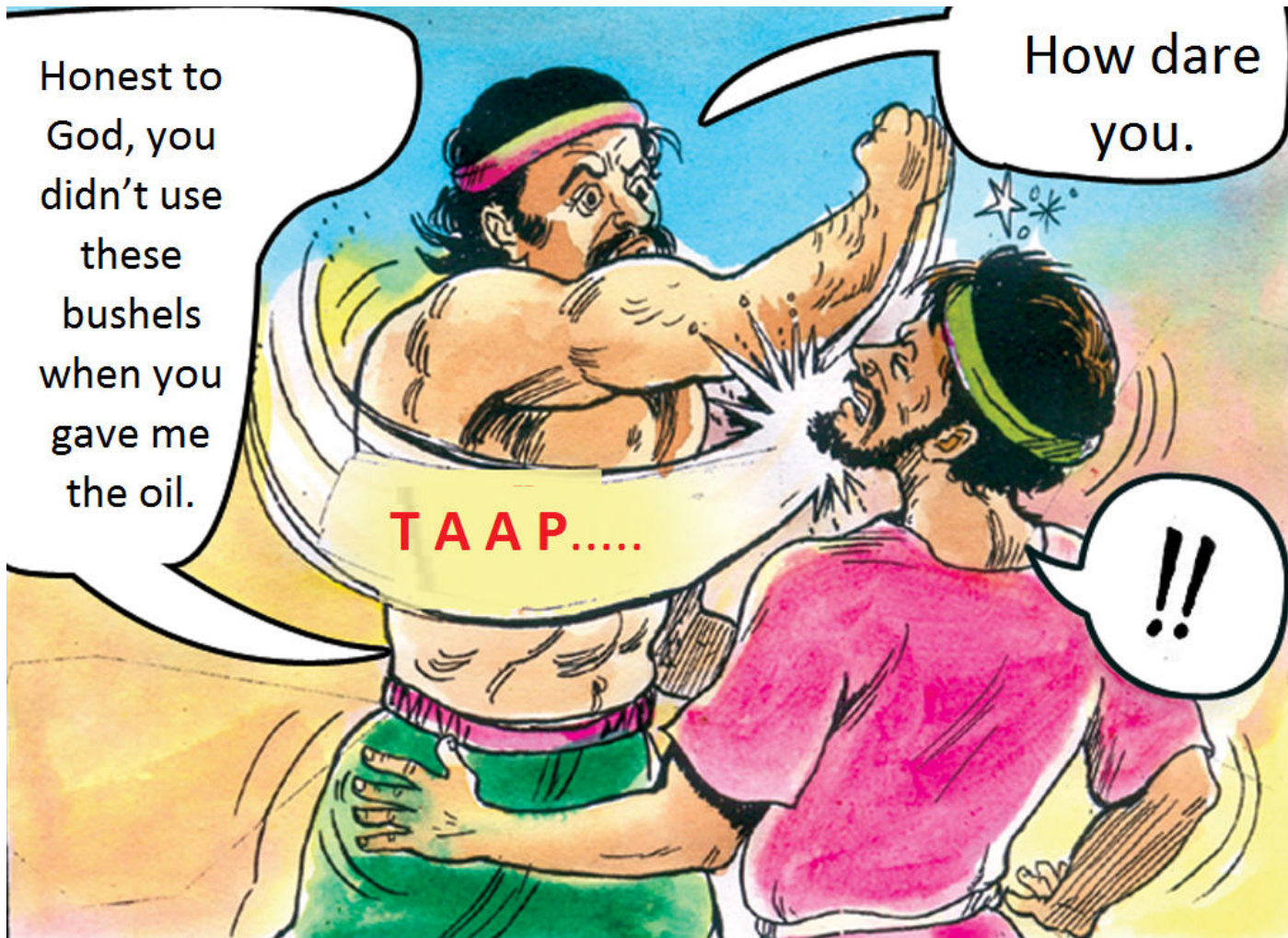


Honest to God, you didn't use these bushels when you gave me the oil.

How dare you.

**TAAP.....**

!!

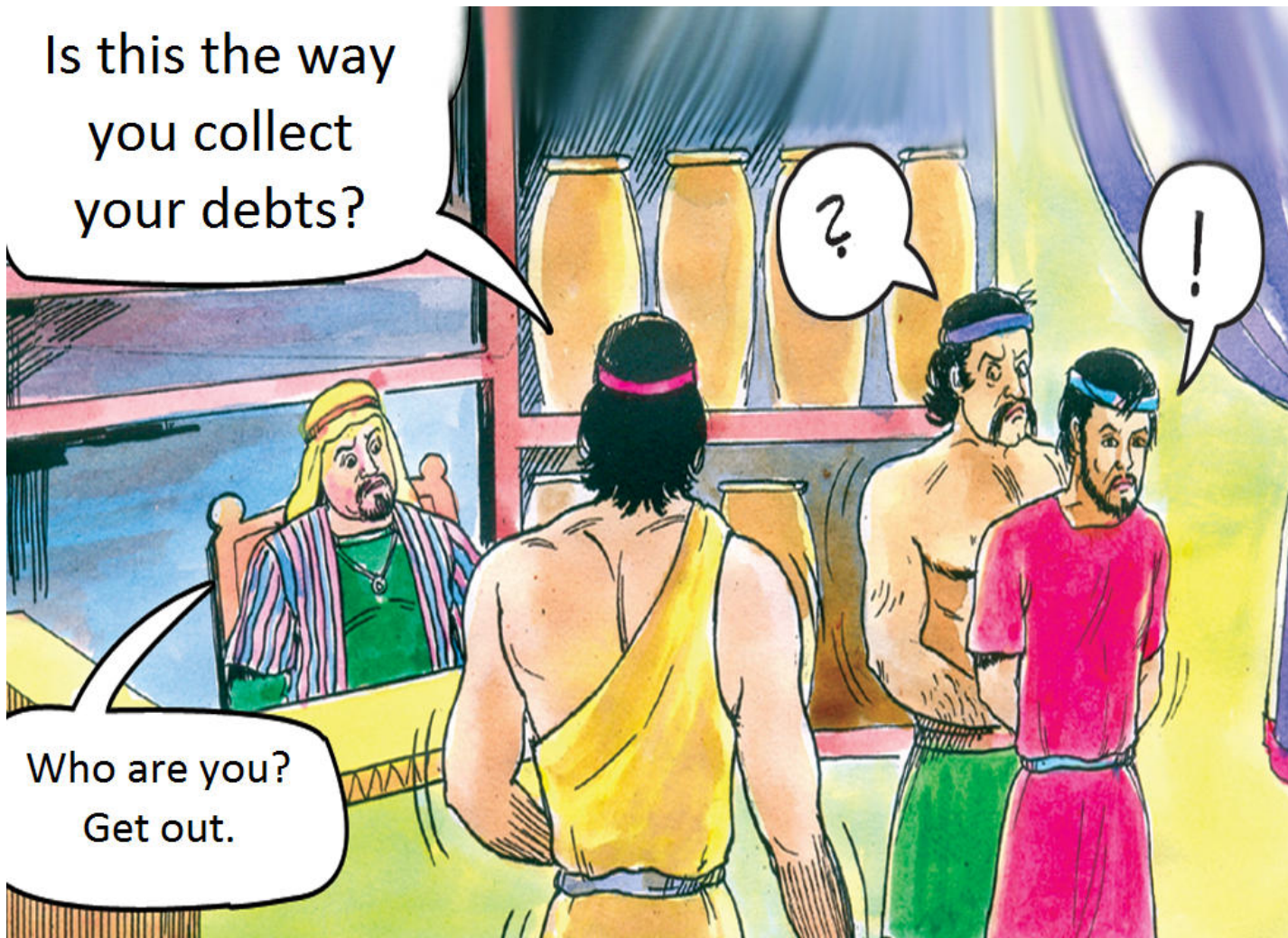


Is this the way  
you collect  
your debts?

?

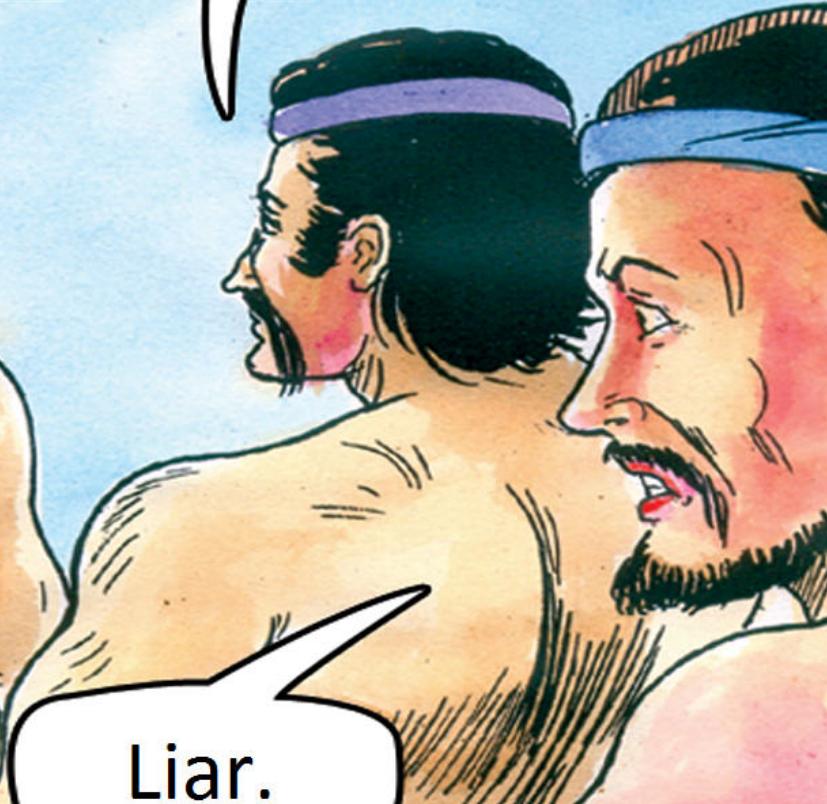
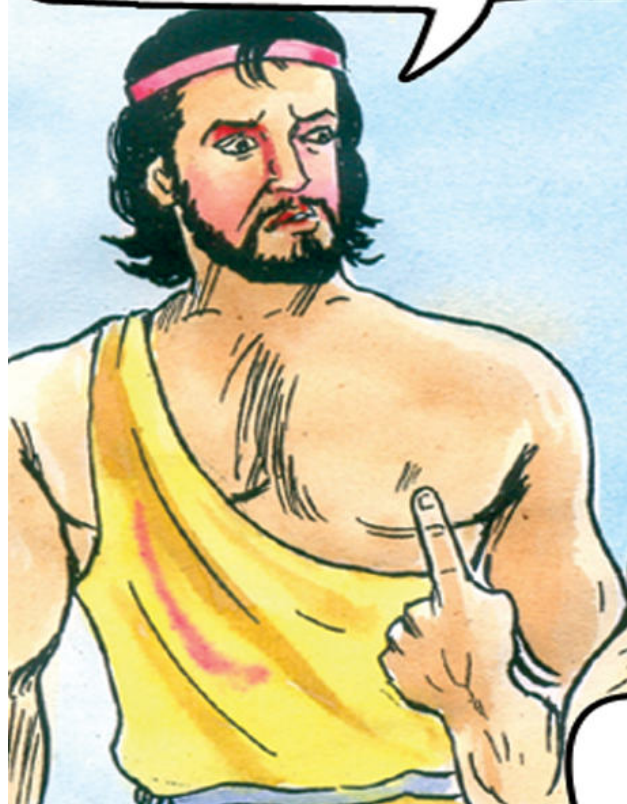
!

Who are you?  
Get out.




Do you have two kinds of  
Bushels and scales?

No, we use only  
one measure.



Liar.



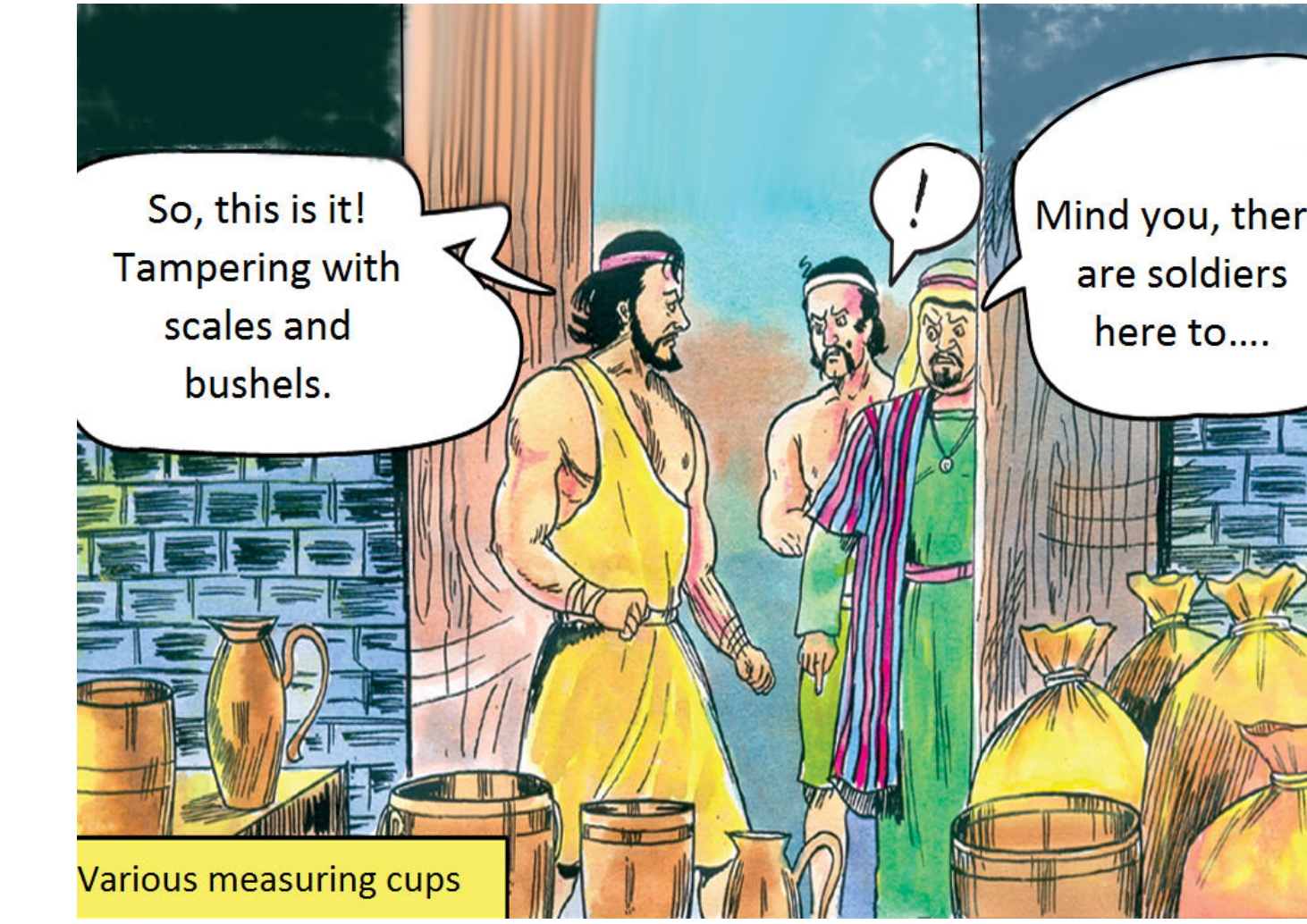
Where are your measuring cups?

What's your business here?

Amos dashed inside.







So, this is it!  
Tampering with  
scales and  
bushels.

! Mind you, there  
are soldiers  
here to....

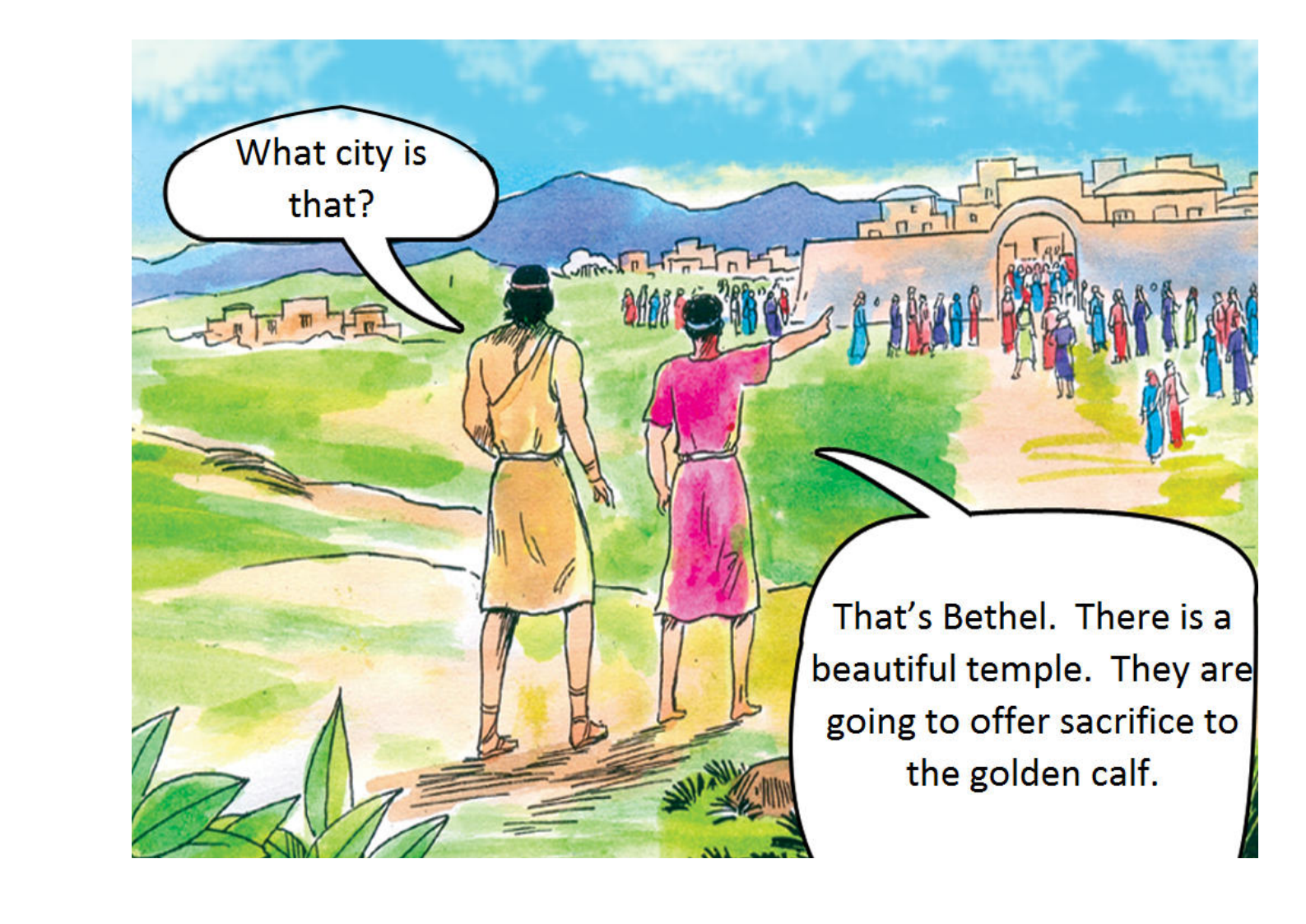
Various measuring cups

You won't escape from  
the Lord with the help of  
your army.




Go in peace. Yahweh the  
God of Israel is with you.





What city is that?

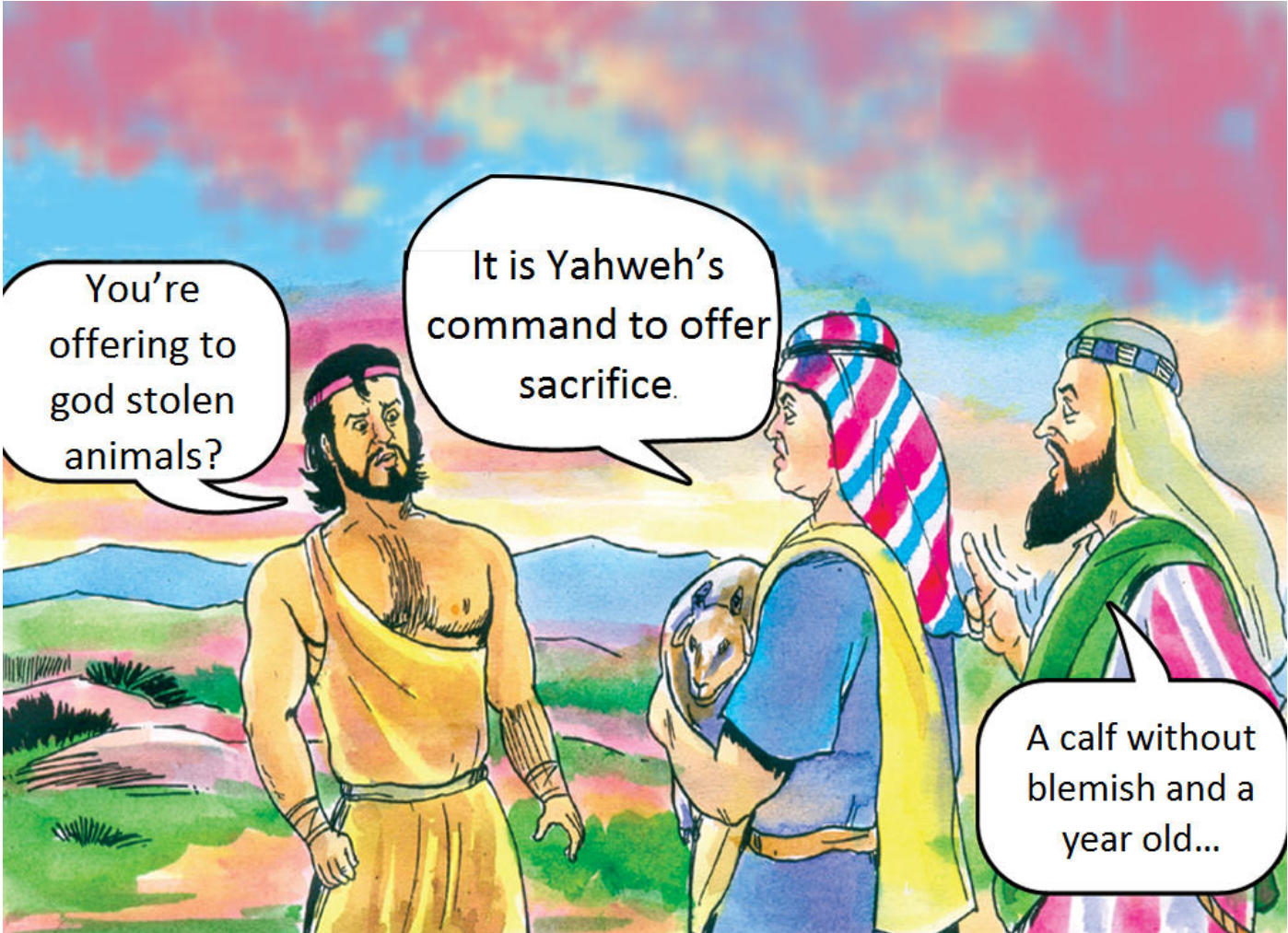
That's Bethel. There is a beautiful temple. They are going to offer sacrifice to the golden calf.



Why all these animals? Going to a cattle market?

No, we are going to the Temple to offer sacrifice.

!!




You're offering to god stolen animals?

It is Yahweh's command to offer sacrifice.

A calf without blemish and a year old...

Stop it. You who crush  
the poor dare to recite  
the law of Yahweh.

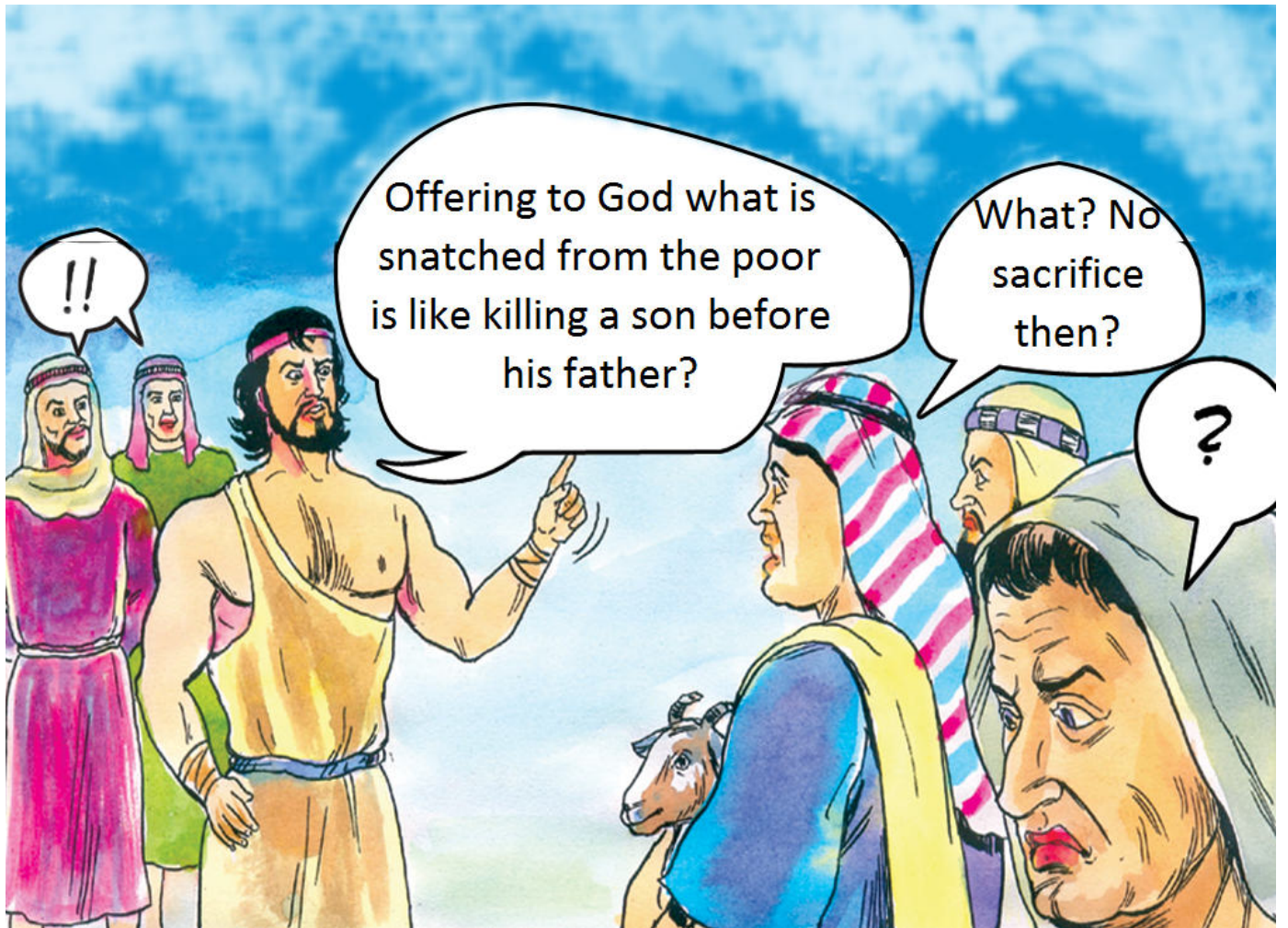




Go to the Temple, offer  
the spoils and complete  
your sin.

??





Go ahead, roast the beef,  
grill the mutton and  
gobble all you can. That  
is what you like, no?



Your hands are stained with human blood. Yahweh will not accept your offering.

What are we to do?

№#\*



Do justice. Put an end to  
oppression. Let the poor live.



What he says is the truth. He must be a prophet.

He is being too bold. We must inform the chief priest.



Wish this sacrifice would get over fast. We have to go the slave market.

The price of slaves has gone up so much.



If we join hands, we can bring it down.



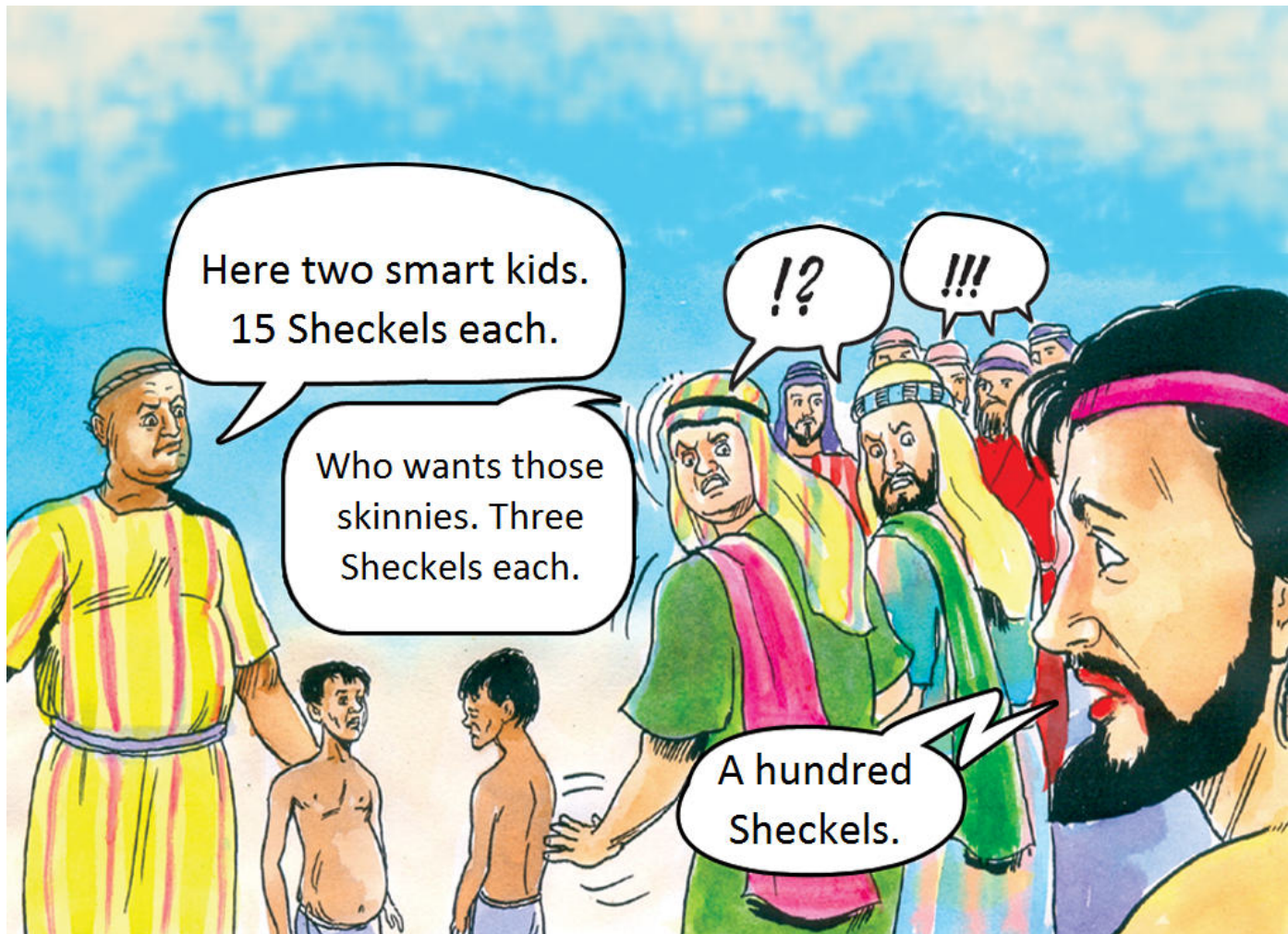
A slave market in Bethel.

Here is youth of  
twenty. Fifty Sheckels.

That is too  
much, five  
Sheckels








Here two smart kids.  
15 Sheckels each.

Who wants those  
skinnies. Three  
Sheckels each.

!?

!!!

A hundred  
Sheckels.

A person with dark hair and a pink headband is shown from the back, looking out over a landscape. The background is a mix of blue and yellow, suggesting a sky and a field. A speech bubble is positioned above the person's head.

How dare you to auction off  
the people whom Yahweh has  
liberated.



Stop this slave trade, set them free.

If you disagree, why don't you leave?

You auction the poor. Sell the just for a pair of sandals. The Lord's curse upon you.

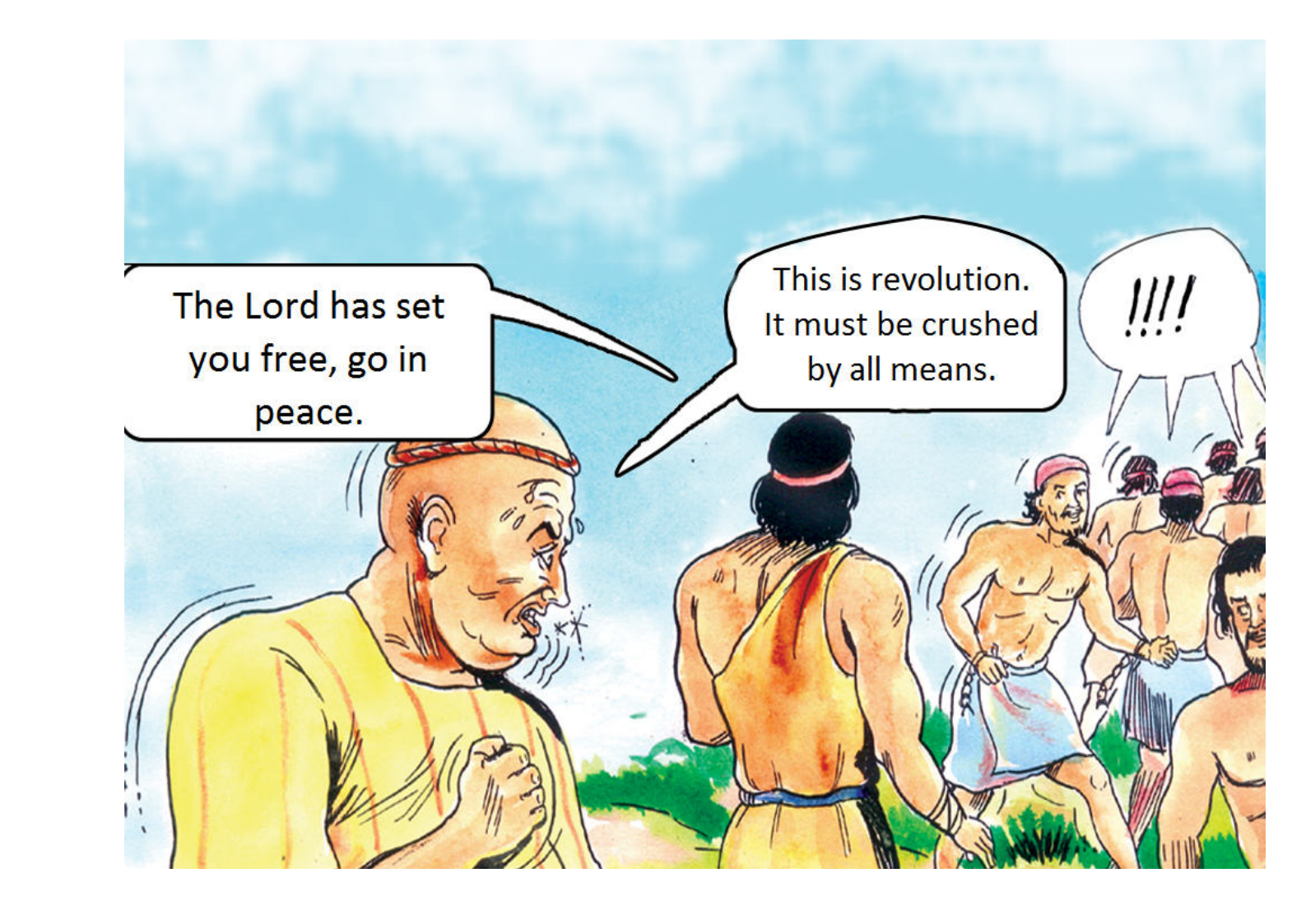


Where are the soldiers? Arrest this lunatic.



The soldiers and armies will not save  
you from wrath of the Lord.





The Lord has set  
you free, go in  
peace.

This is revolution.  
It must be crushed  
by all means.

!!!!

A man who escaped from the slave market got back to his village.

Hello, Perez is it really you? They let you go?

A prophet came from Judah and created a riot in the slave market.

What did he do?



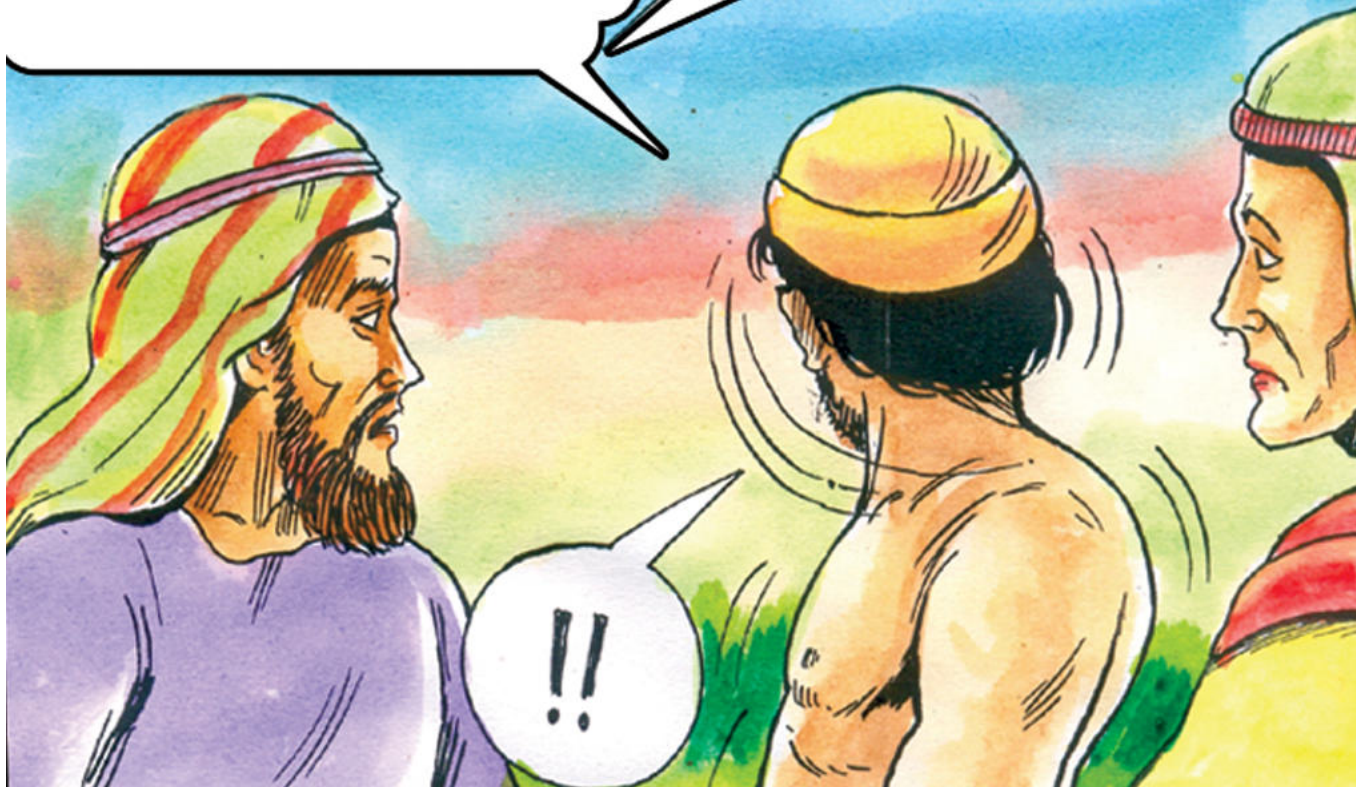
He said the children of God are not to be enslaved. He also said that we should not pay the unjust taxes and interest on debts.






The Lord freed us.  
We walked home.

Then the army will be on  
your heels.





With the taxes and interest the rich are exploiting us.

We can't go on feeding them like this.

!!!

There he comes.

Master, I can never forget what happened this morning. But now I am scared.

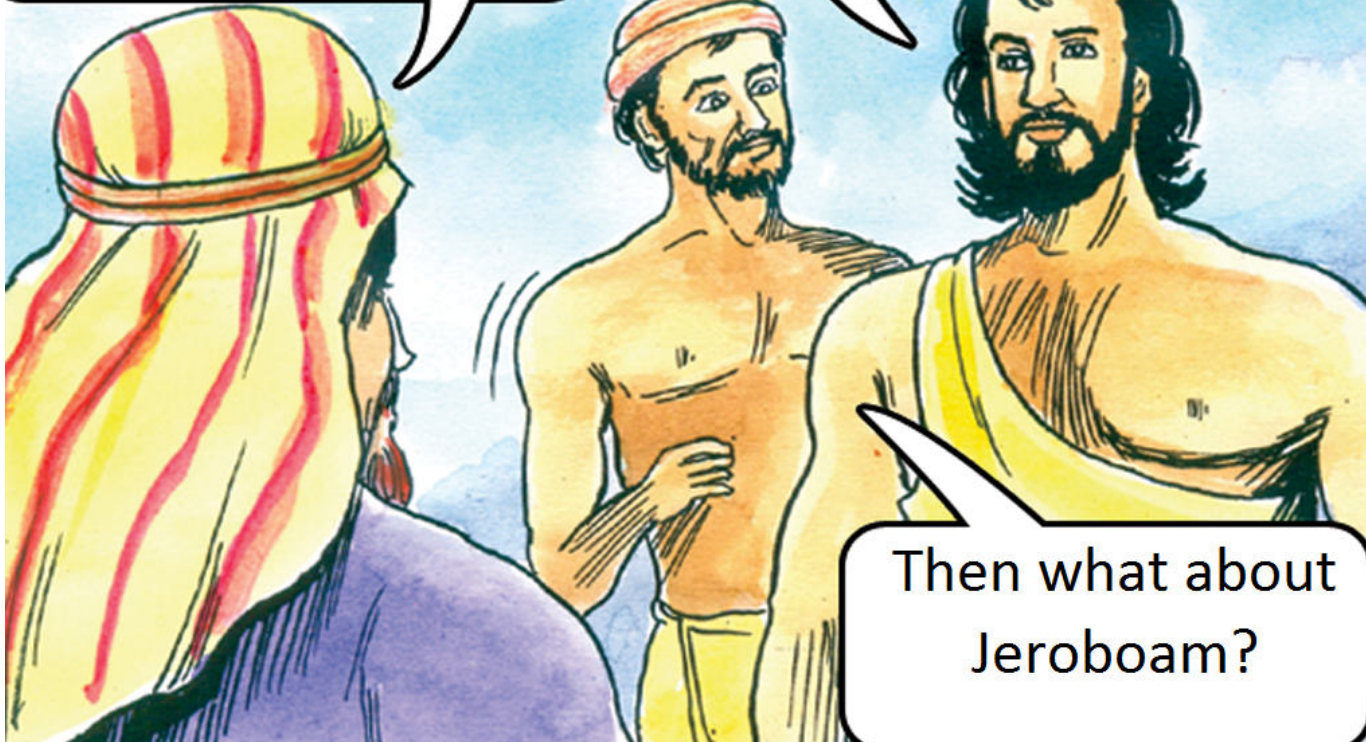
Fear no more! We have the law of the Lord to rule this country.

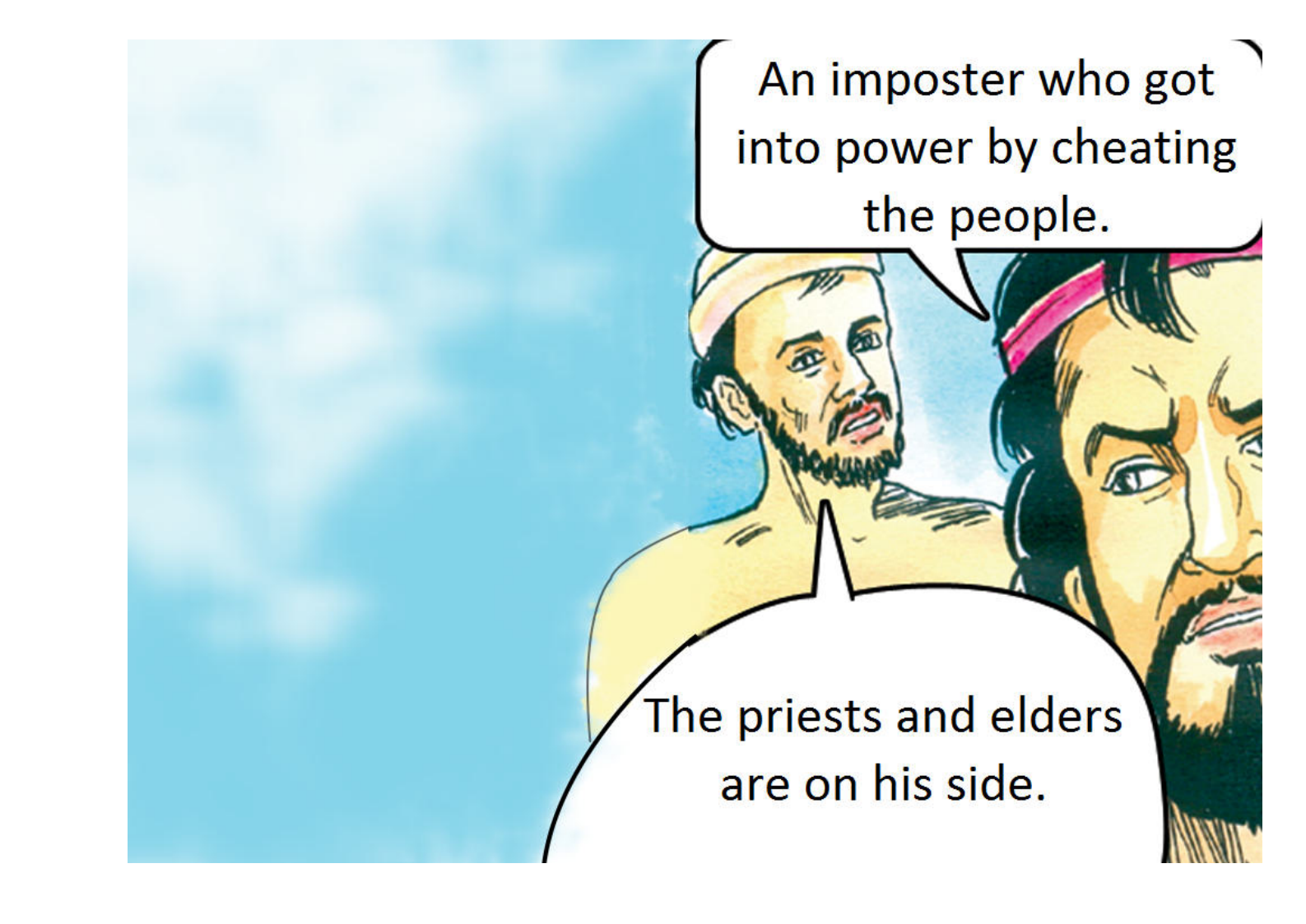


The king and the rich  
have taken that law  
into their hands.

Yahweh is the king of  
Israel.

Then what about  
Jeroboam?





An imposter who got  
into power by cheating  
the people.

The priests and elders  
are on his side.

All've ganged together to exploit you. However, Jeroboam's days are numbered. There, I hear the sound of the Assyrian army marching.

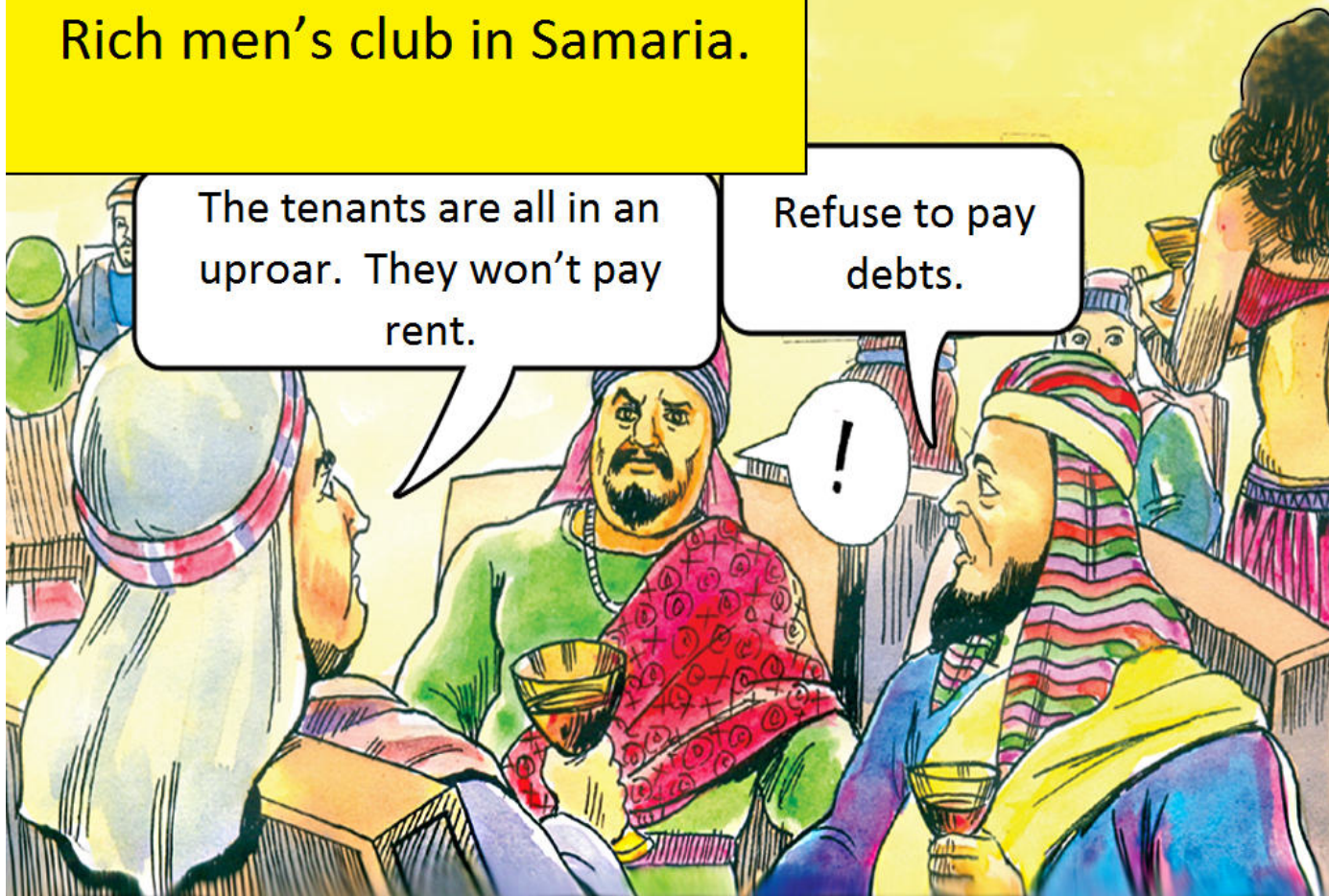


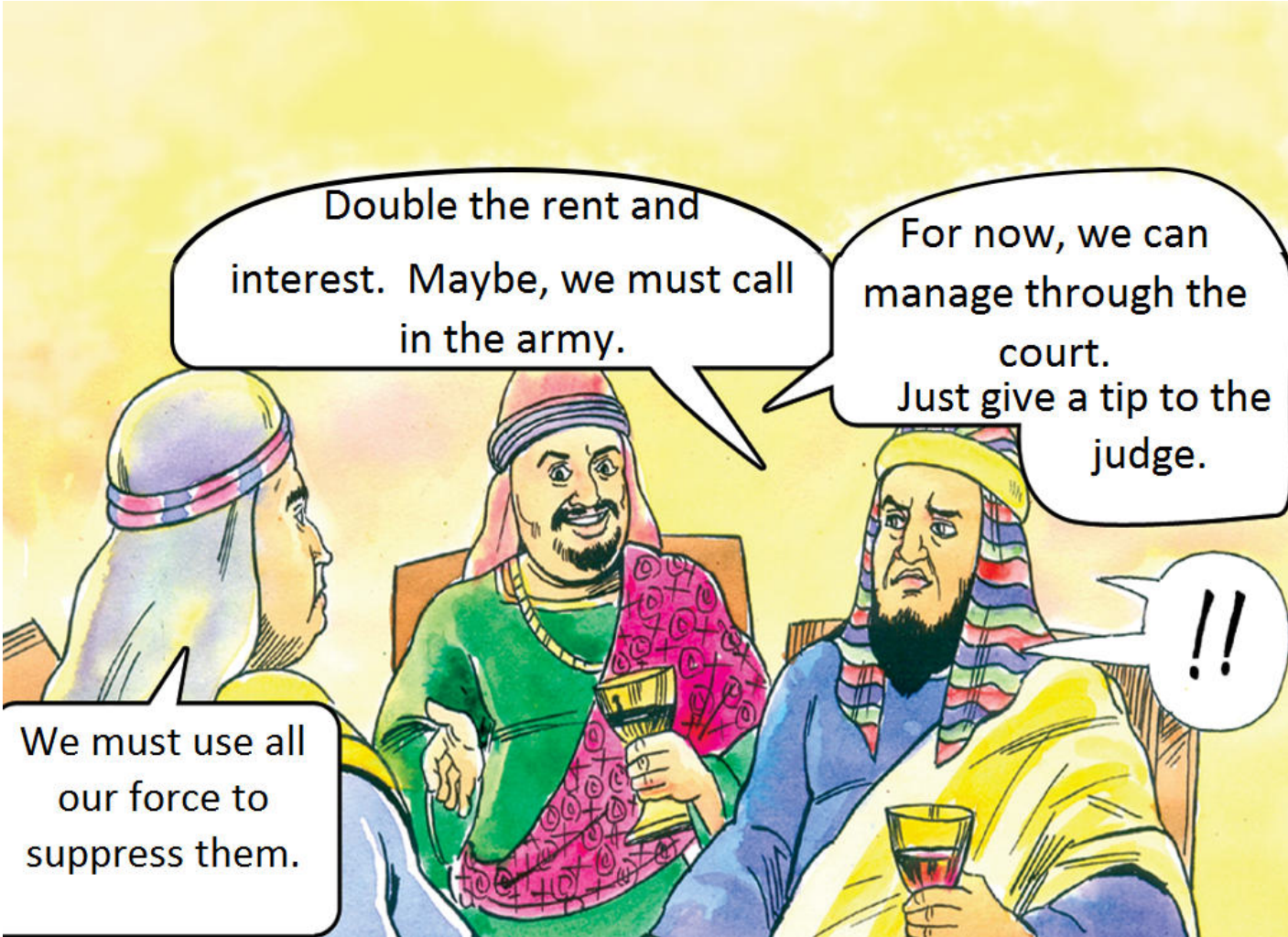
## Rich men's club in Samaria.

The tenants are all in an uproar. They won't pay rent.

Refuse to pay debts.

!





Double the rent and interest. Maybe, we must call in the army.

For now, we can manage through the court. Just give a tip to the judge.

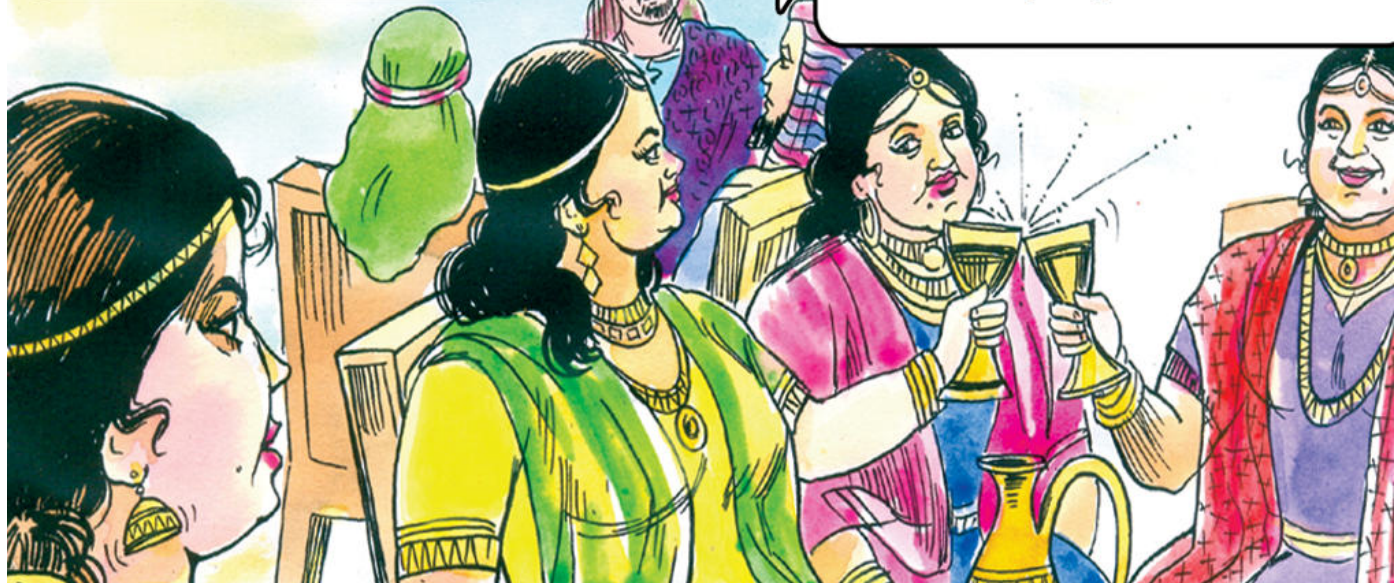
We must use all our force to suppress them.


!!



Why this unrest  
now?

A revolutionary from Tekoa  
has come. He claims to be a  
prophet



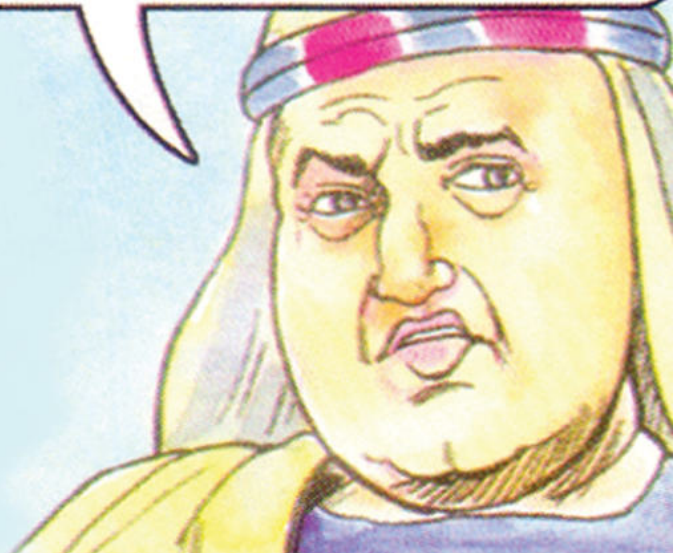


He wants to topple the Government. Free all the slaves and ban all worship. He doesn't spare even the priests.

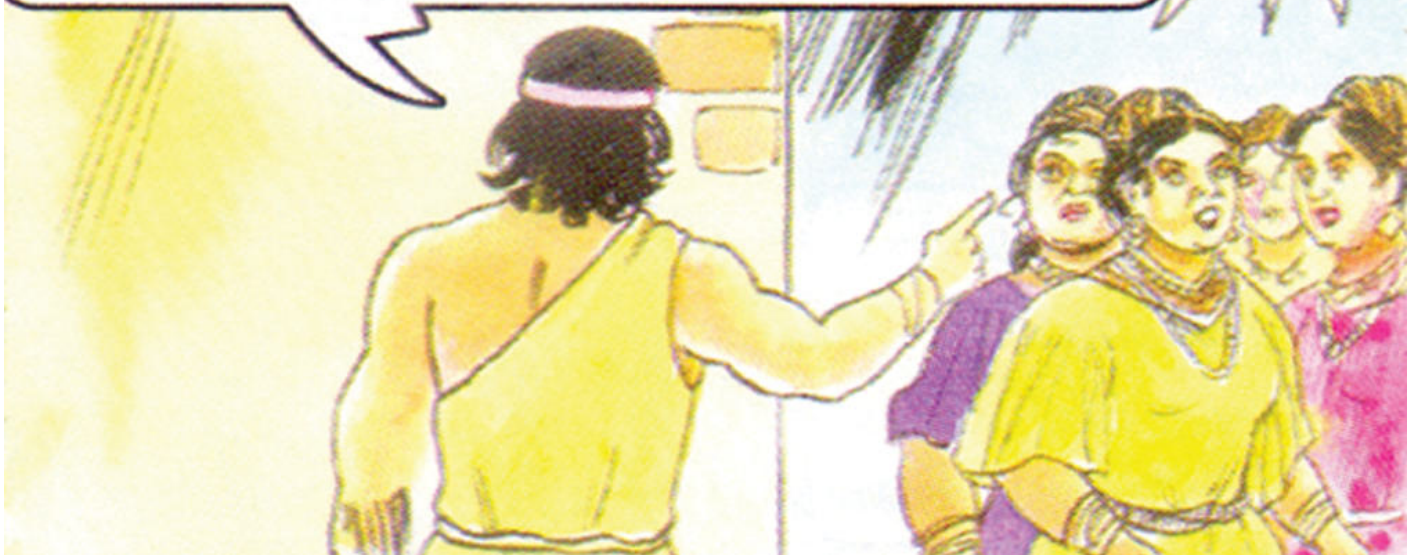
Today at the slave market...

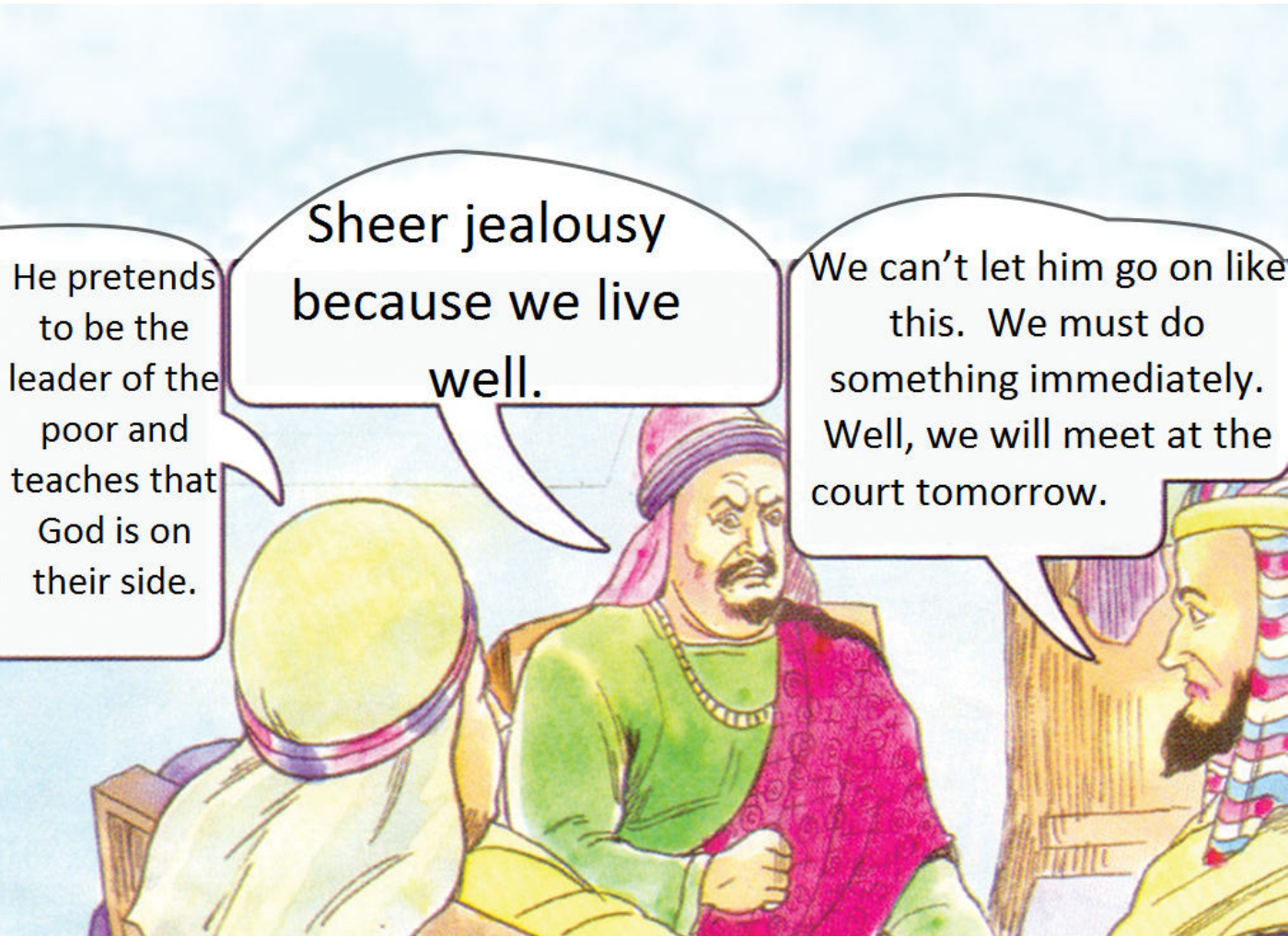
?

He spares no one and no place. Yesterday he walked into the Women's club and insulted them.



Listen you cows of Bashan, you force your husbands to oppress the needy and crush the poor for your luxury drunken orgies.





He pretends to be the leader of the poor and teaches that God is on their side.

Sheer jealousy because we live well.

We can't let him go on like this. We must do something immediately. Well, we will meet at the court tomorrow.

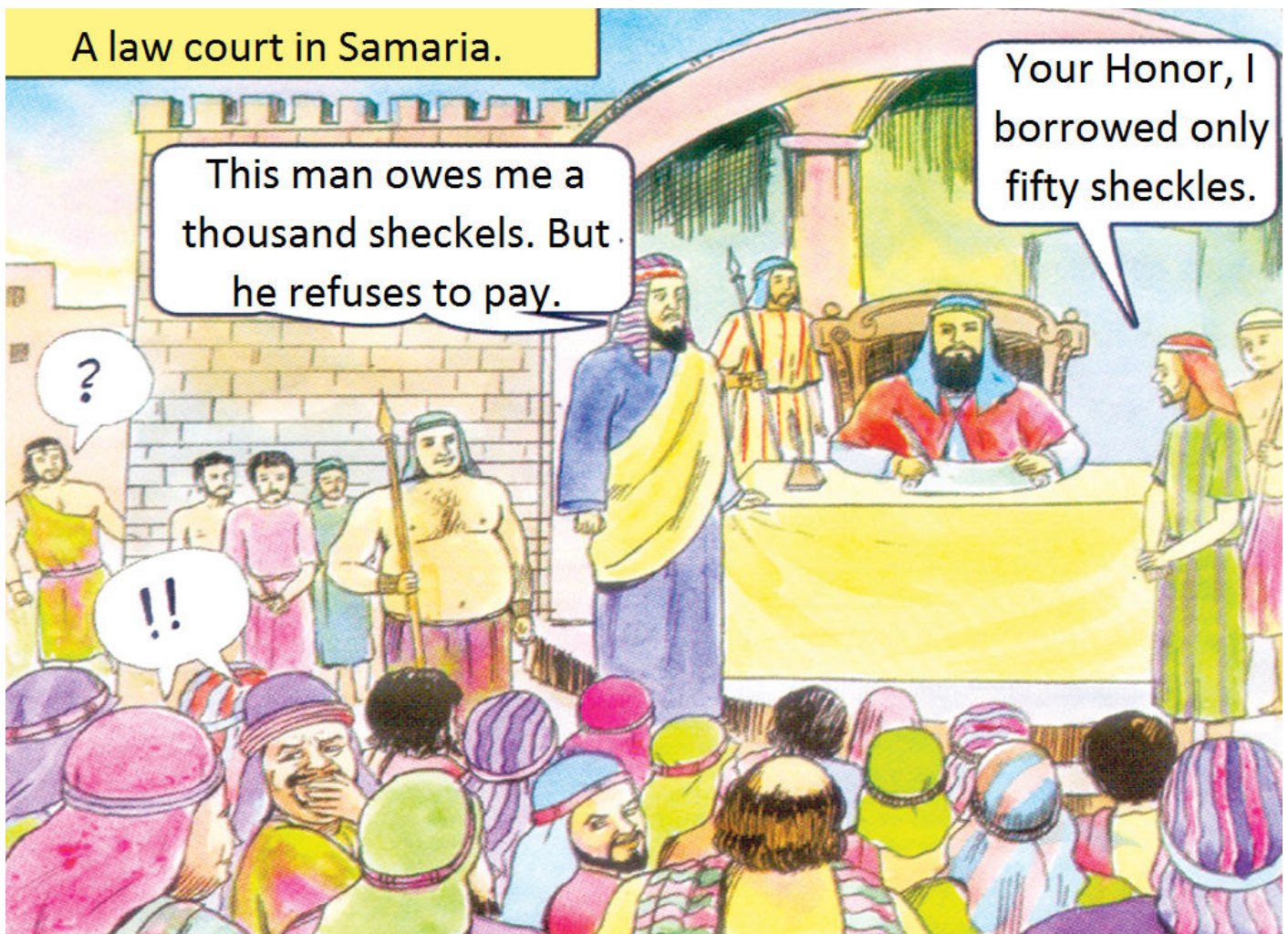
A law court in Samaria.

This man owes me a thousand sheckels. But he refuses to pay.

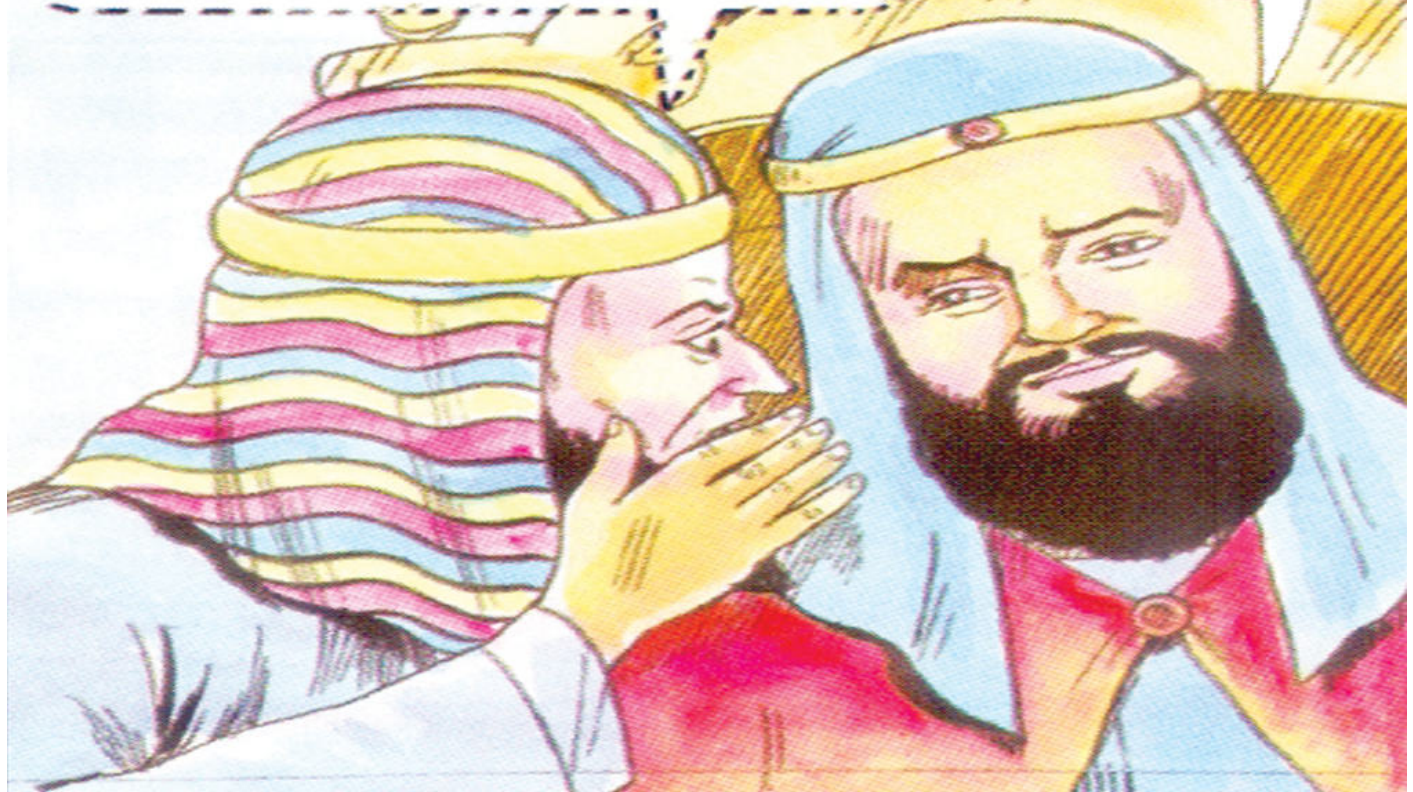
Your Honor, I borrowed only fifty sheckels.

?

!!



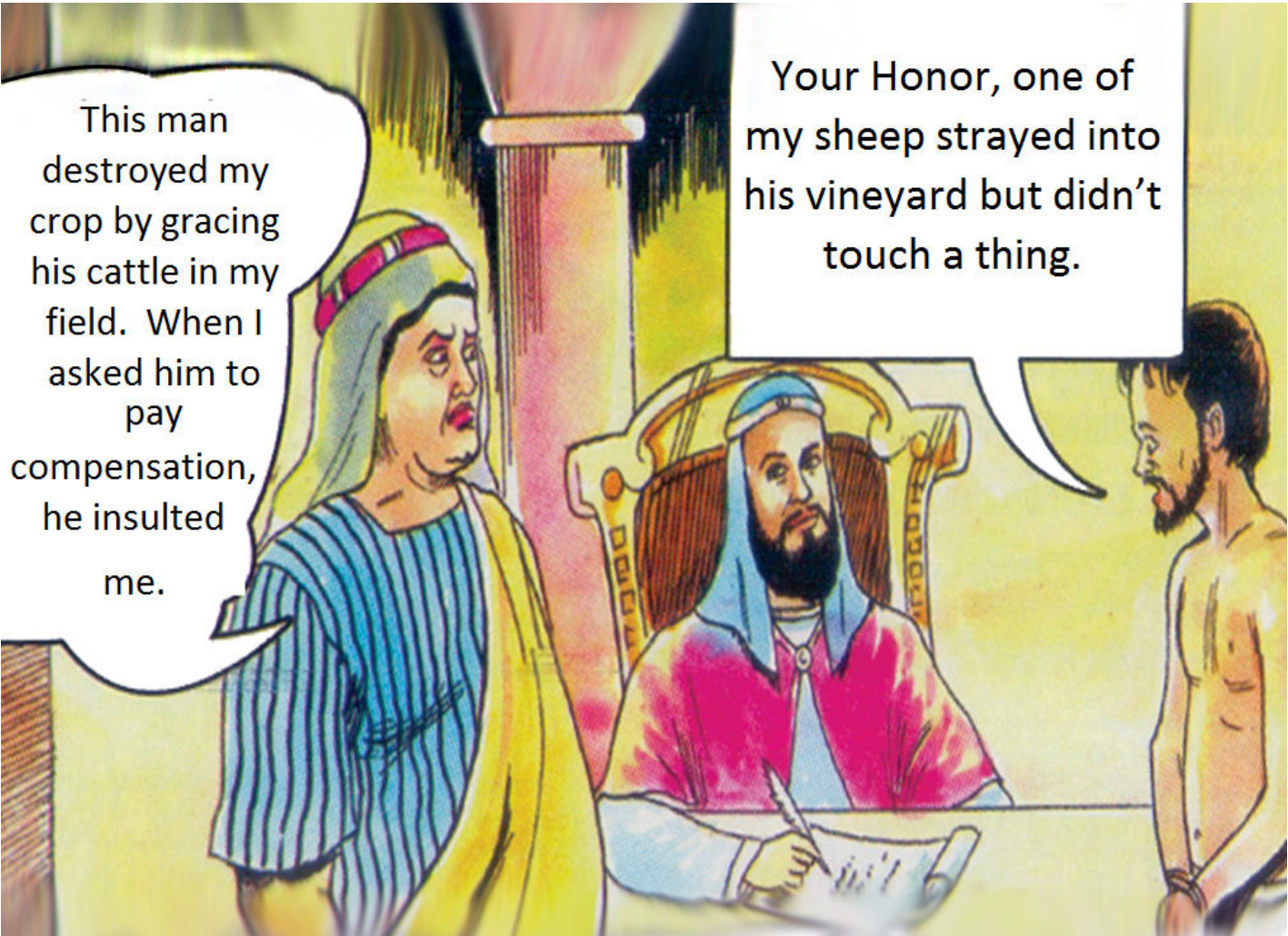
If you judge in my favor, you  
can have 300 sheckles.



Abiah is right. The defendant must pay 1000 sheckles. If he doesn't, let his land be confiscated, sell his wife and children and auction him off at the slave market. The next one.





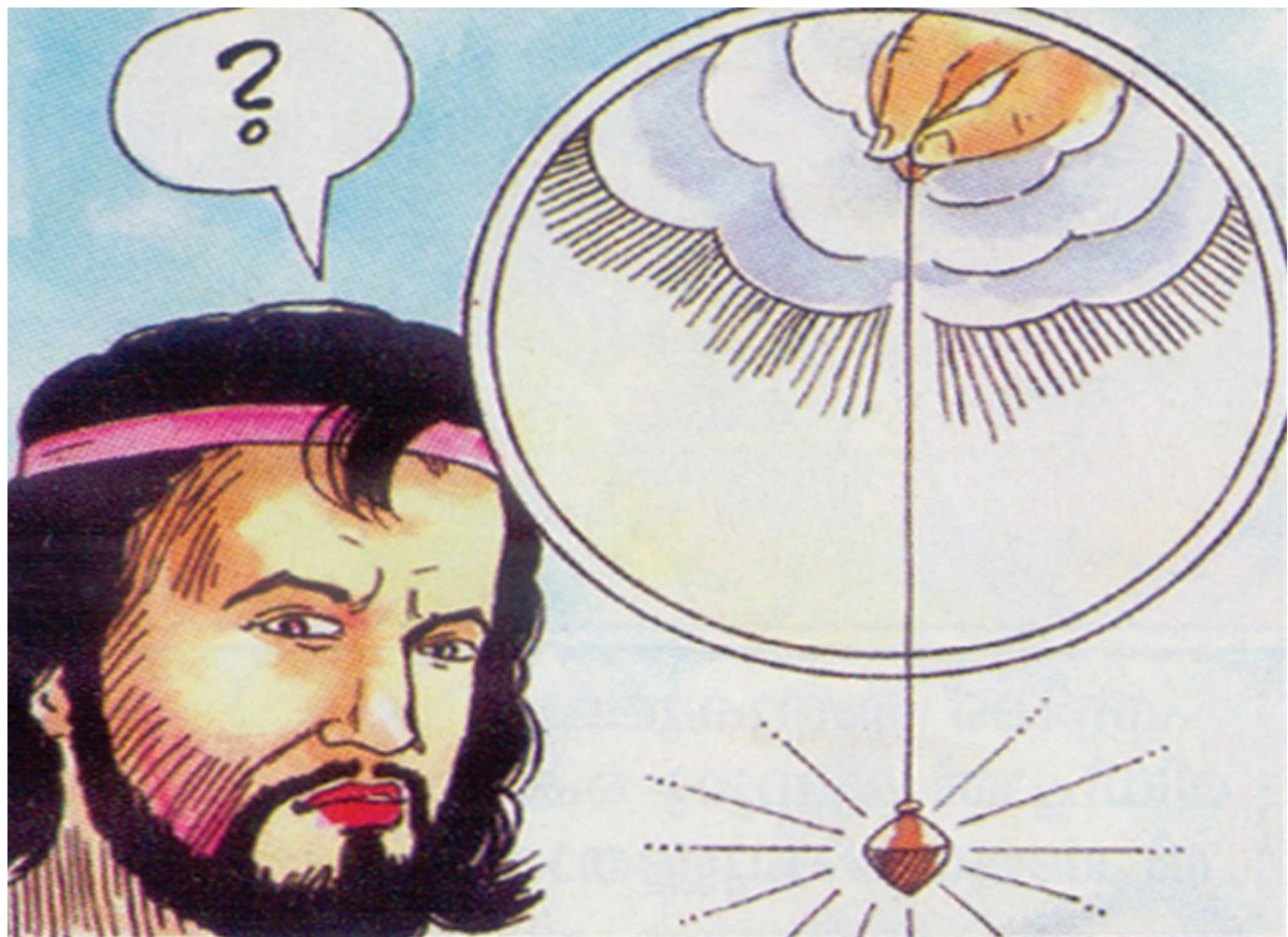


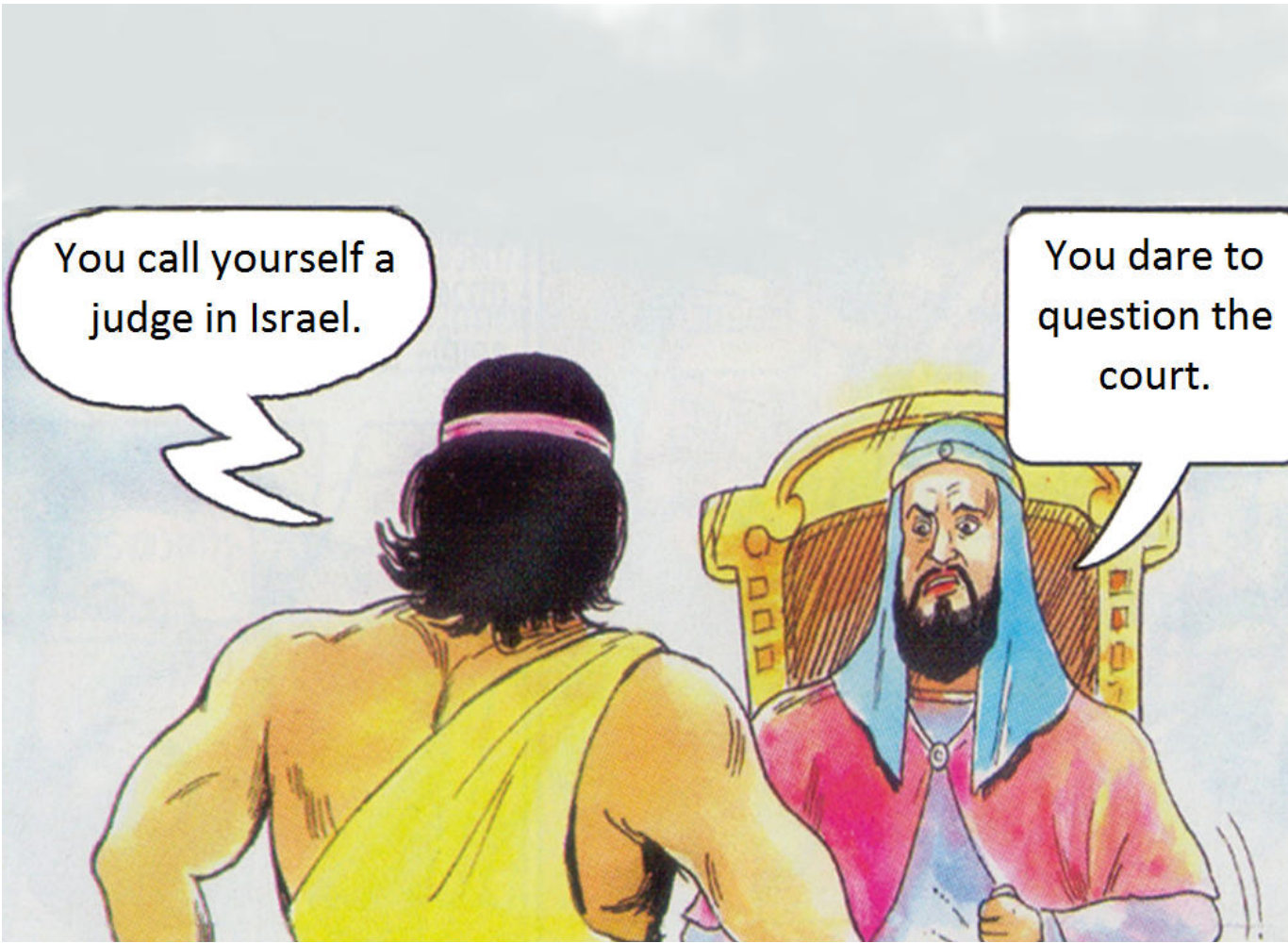
This man destroyed my crop by grazing his cattle in my field. When I asked him to pay compensation, he insulted me.

Your Honor, one of my sheep strayed into his vineyard but didn't touch a thing.

Pay 800 shackles for property damage and a 1000 Shekels for insulting.



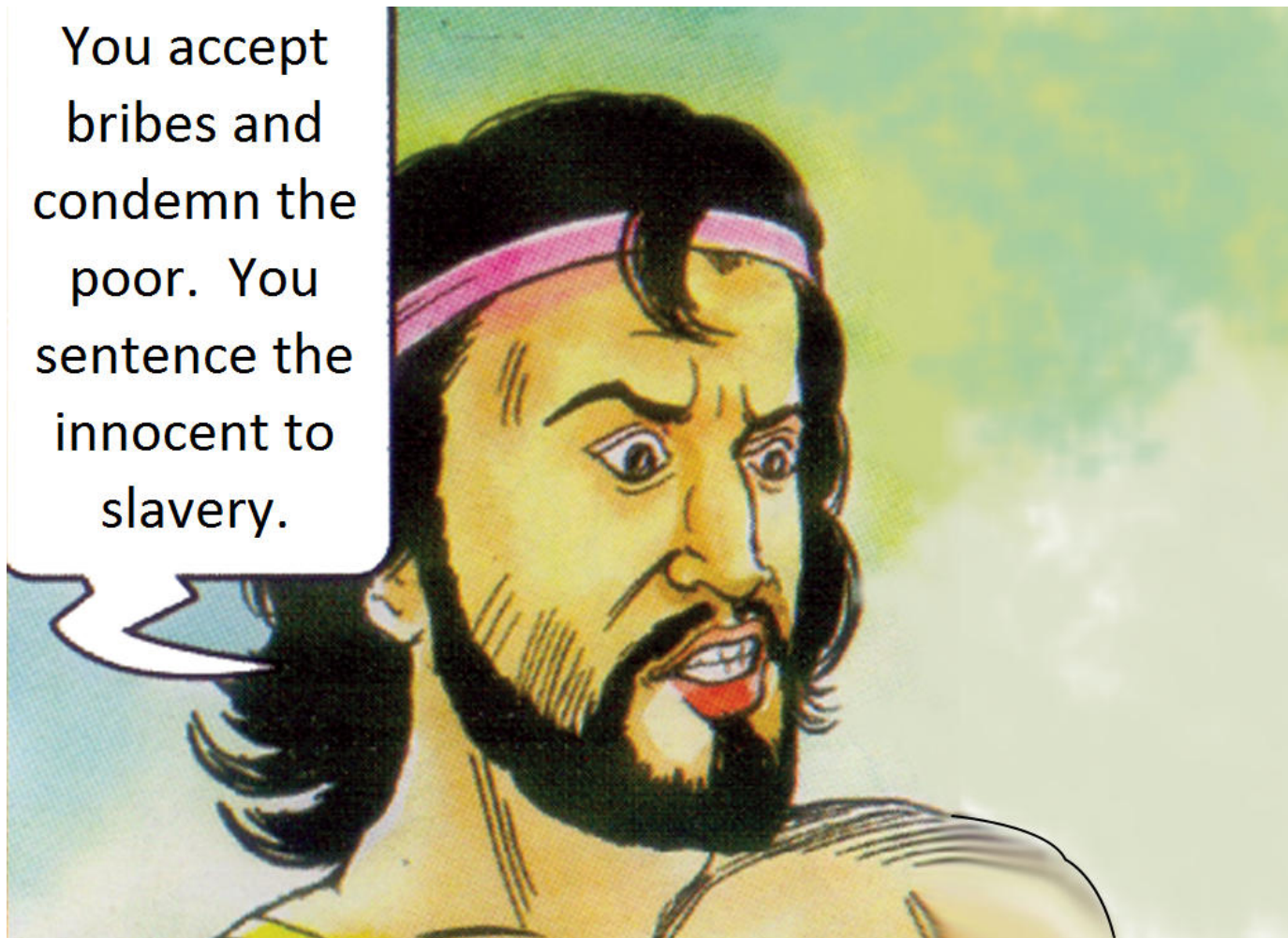




You call yourself a  
judge in Israel.

You dare to  
question the  
court.

You accept  
bribes and  
condemn the  
poor. You  
sentence the  
innocent to  
slavery.



Order in the court.





Your law is a  
dagger that cuts  
the throat of  
justice while the  
blood of the poor  
is crying for  
vengeance.





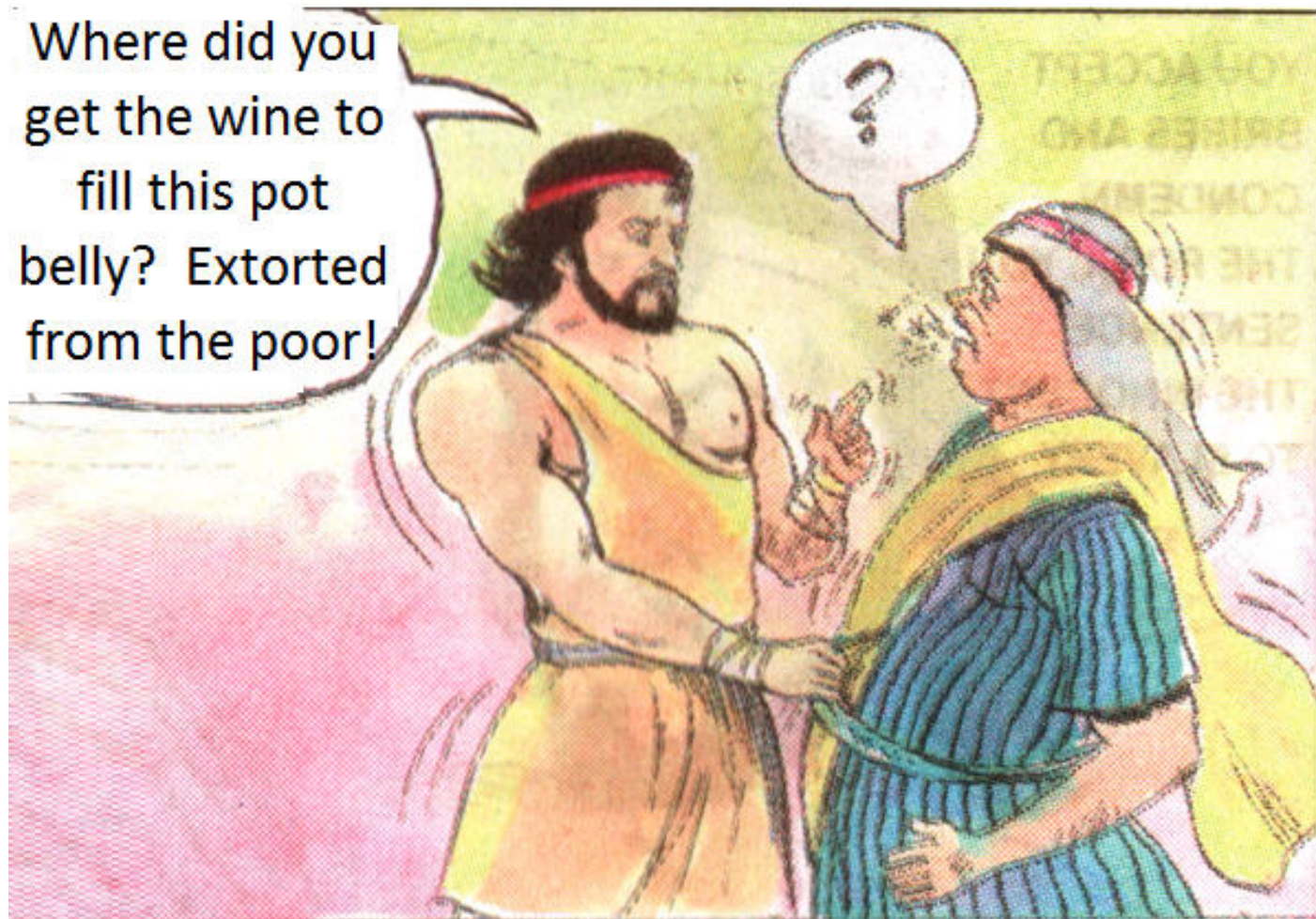
So, you dare to  
question even the  
laws?



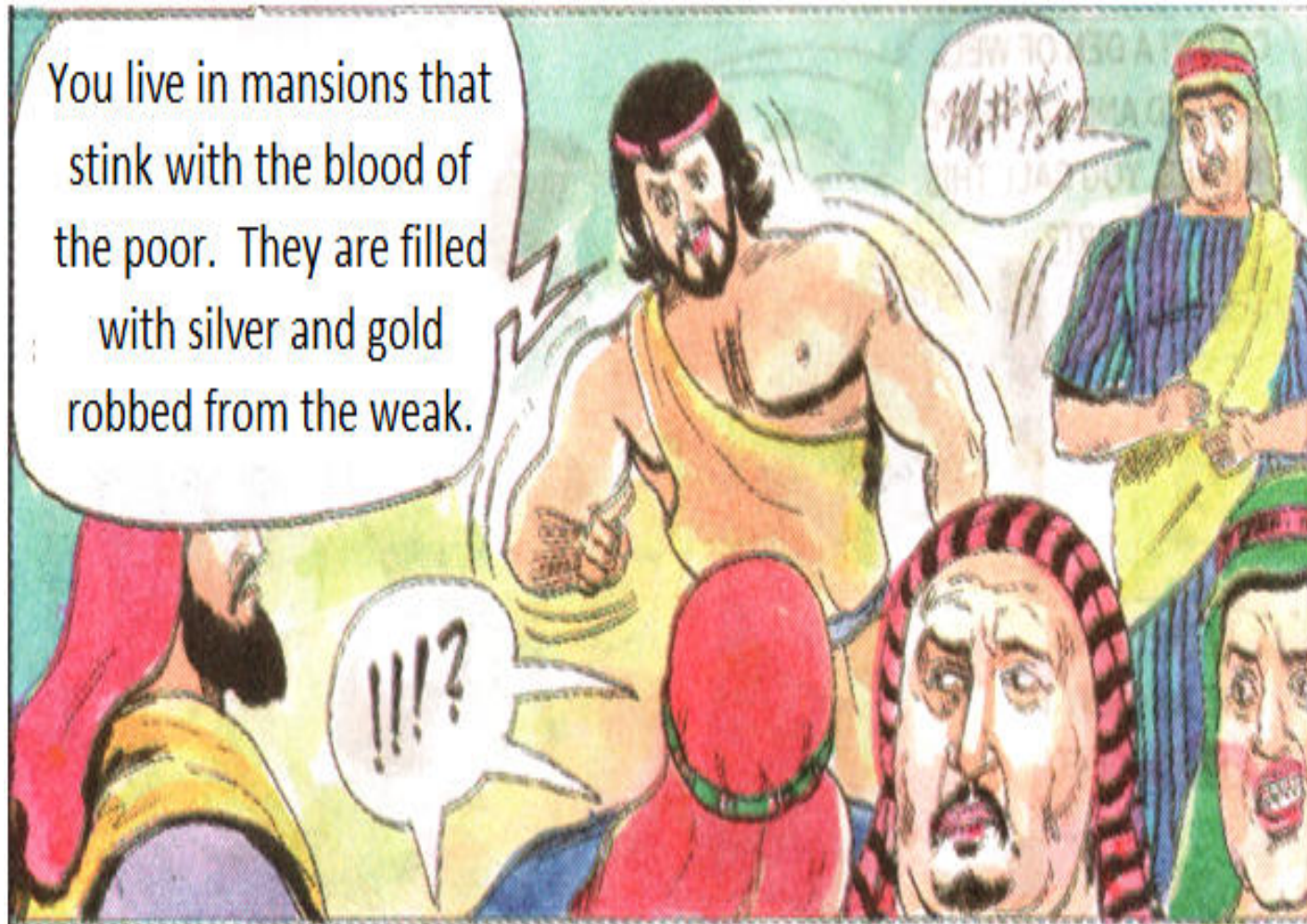
You hate the just and detest those  
who say the truth. You are robbers  
and murderess not judge.



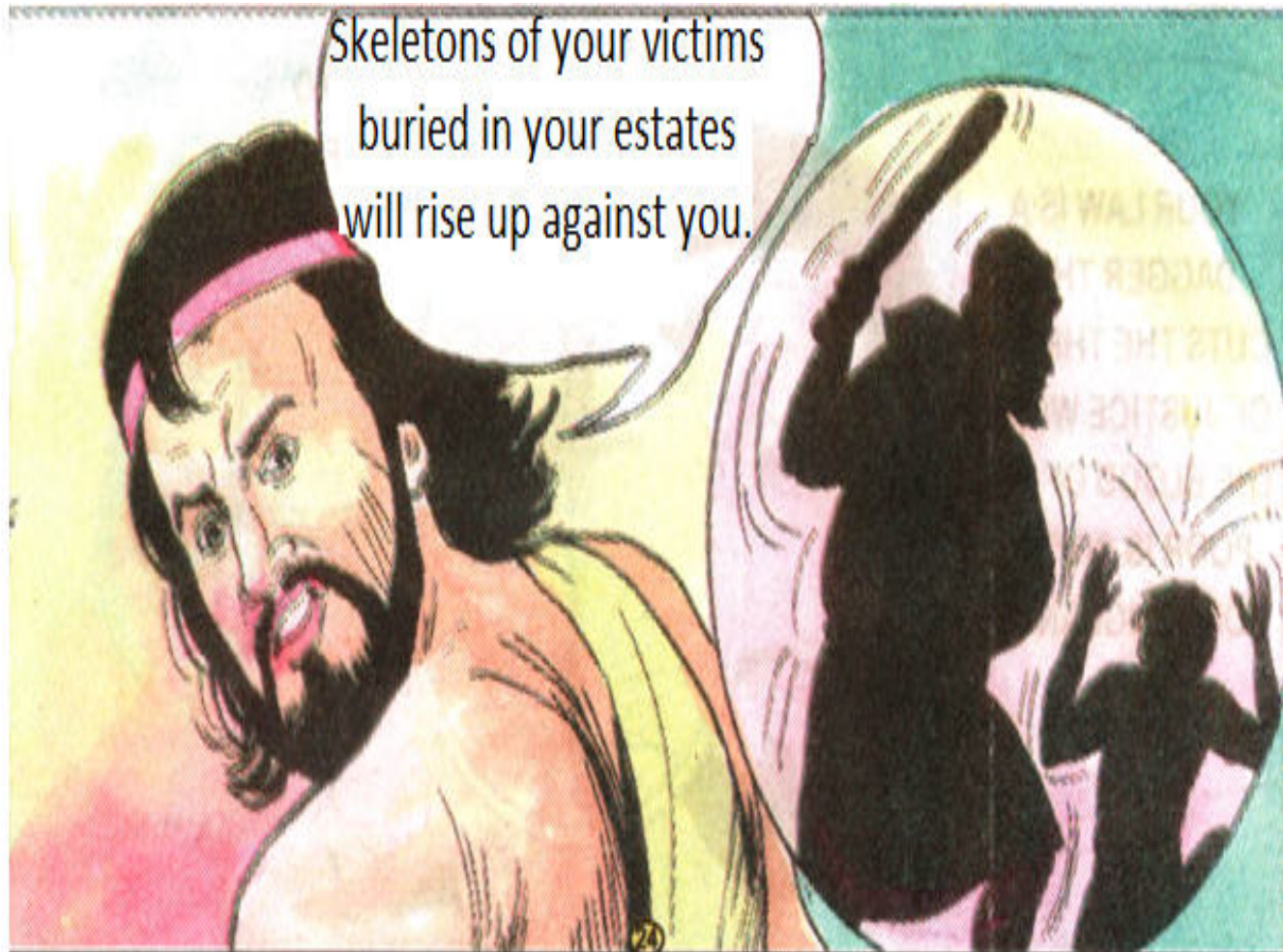
Where did you  
get the wine to  
fill this pot  
belly? Extorted  
from the poor!



You live in mansions that  
stink with the blood of  
the poor. They are filled  
with silver and gold  
robbed from the weak.



Skeletons of your victims  
buried in your estates  
will rise up against you.

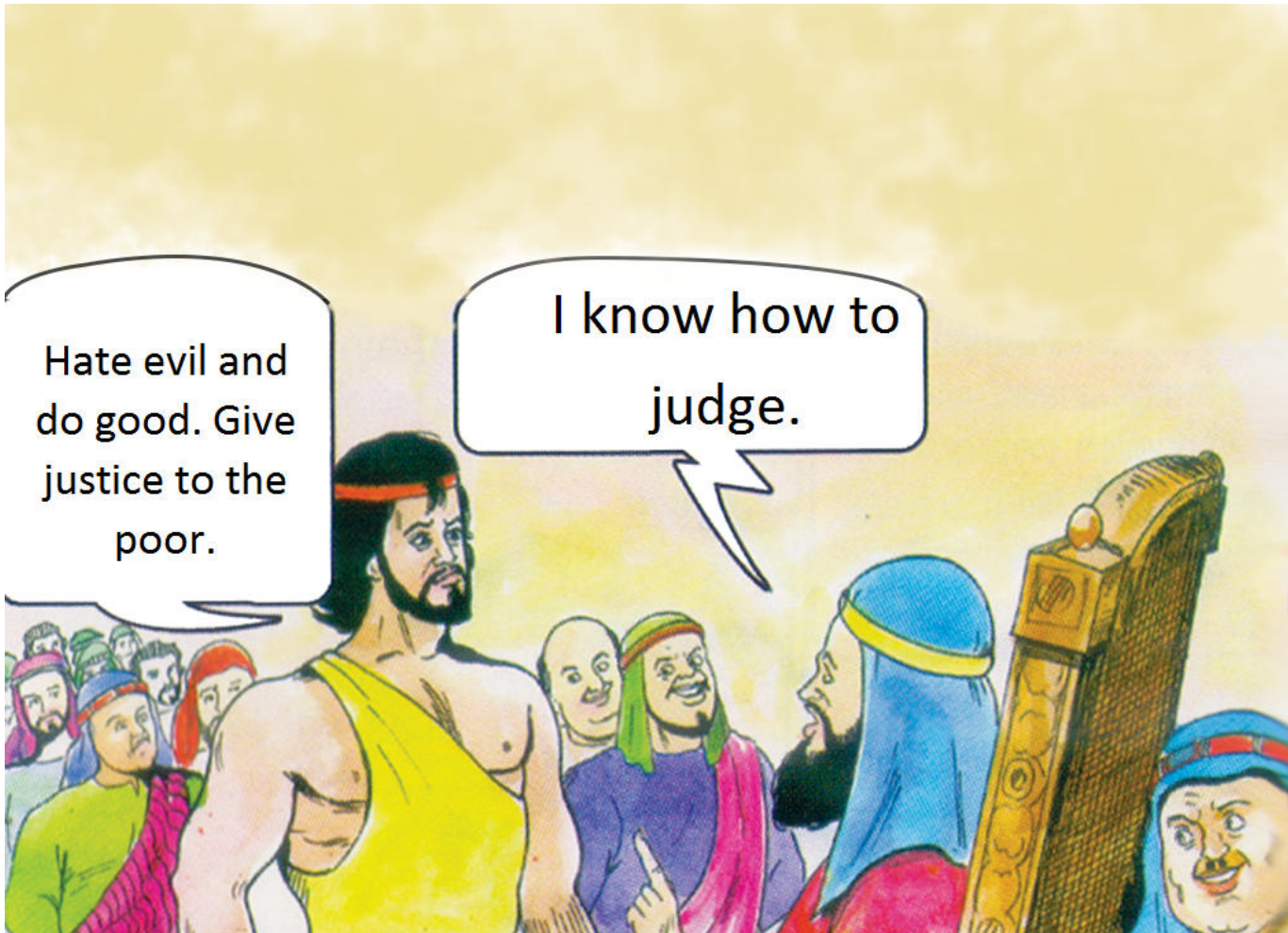


It is Yahweh who speaks. I have heard the cry of the poor, no one will escape my judgment.



If you open your  
mouth again, we will  
shut it forever.






Hate evil and  
do good. Give  
justice to the  
poor.

I know how to  
judge.

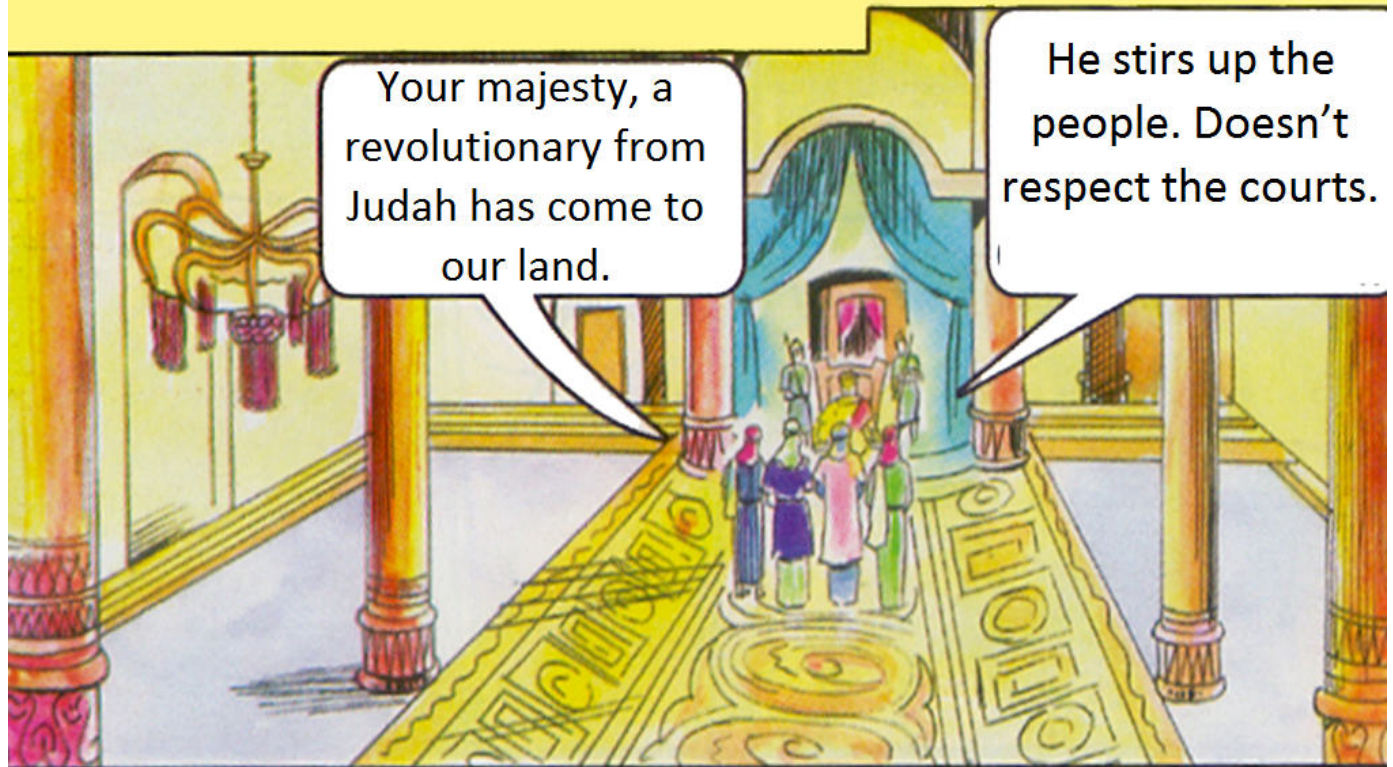




If you don't listen to  
the cry of the poor  
now, you'll be the  
ones crying  
tomorrow.

Take him  
away.

The elders of Samaria met with King Jeroboam II to speak against Amos.



Your majesty, a revolutionary from Judah has come to our land.

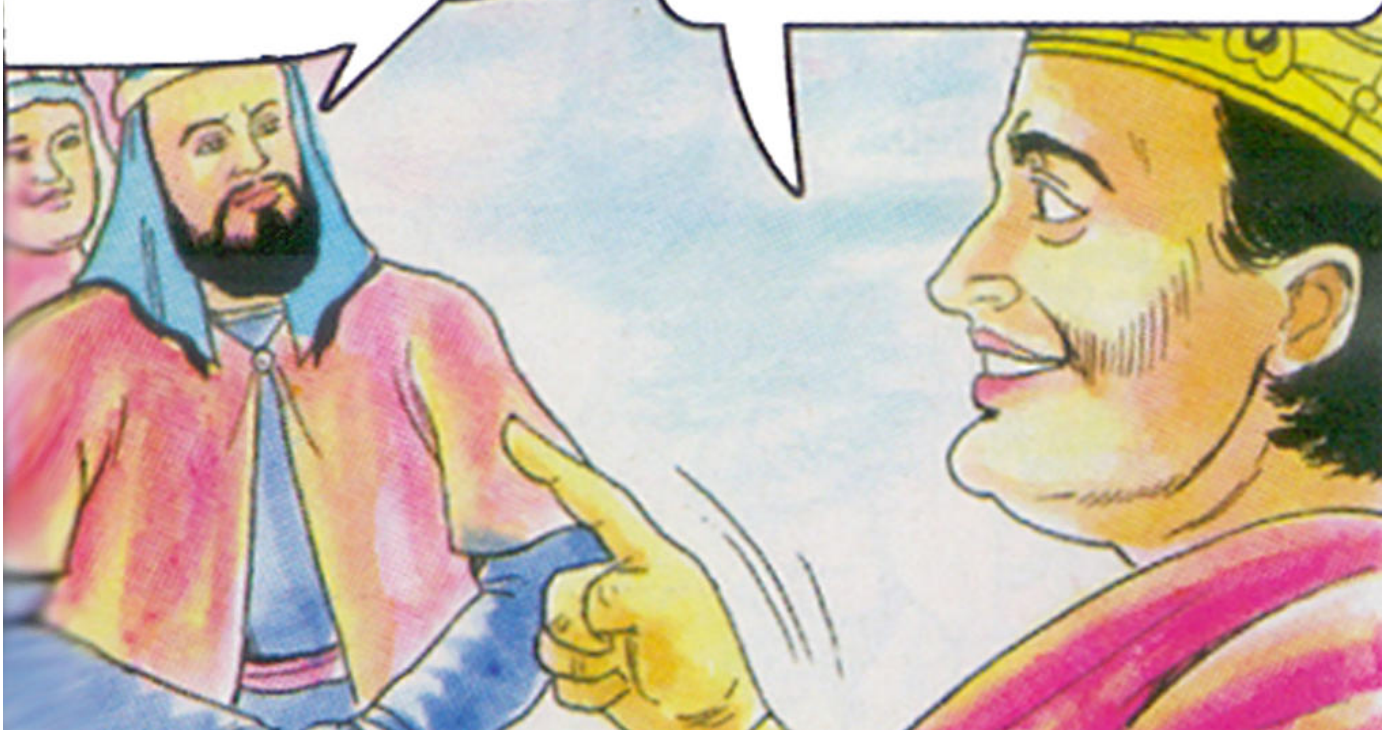
He stirs up the people. Doesn't respect the courts.

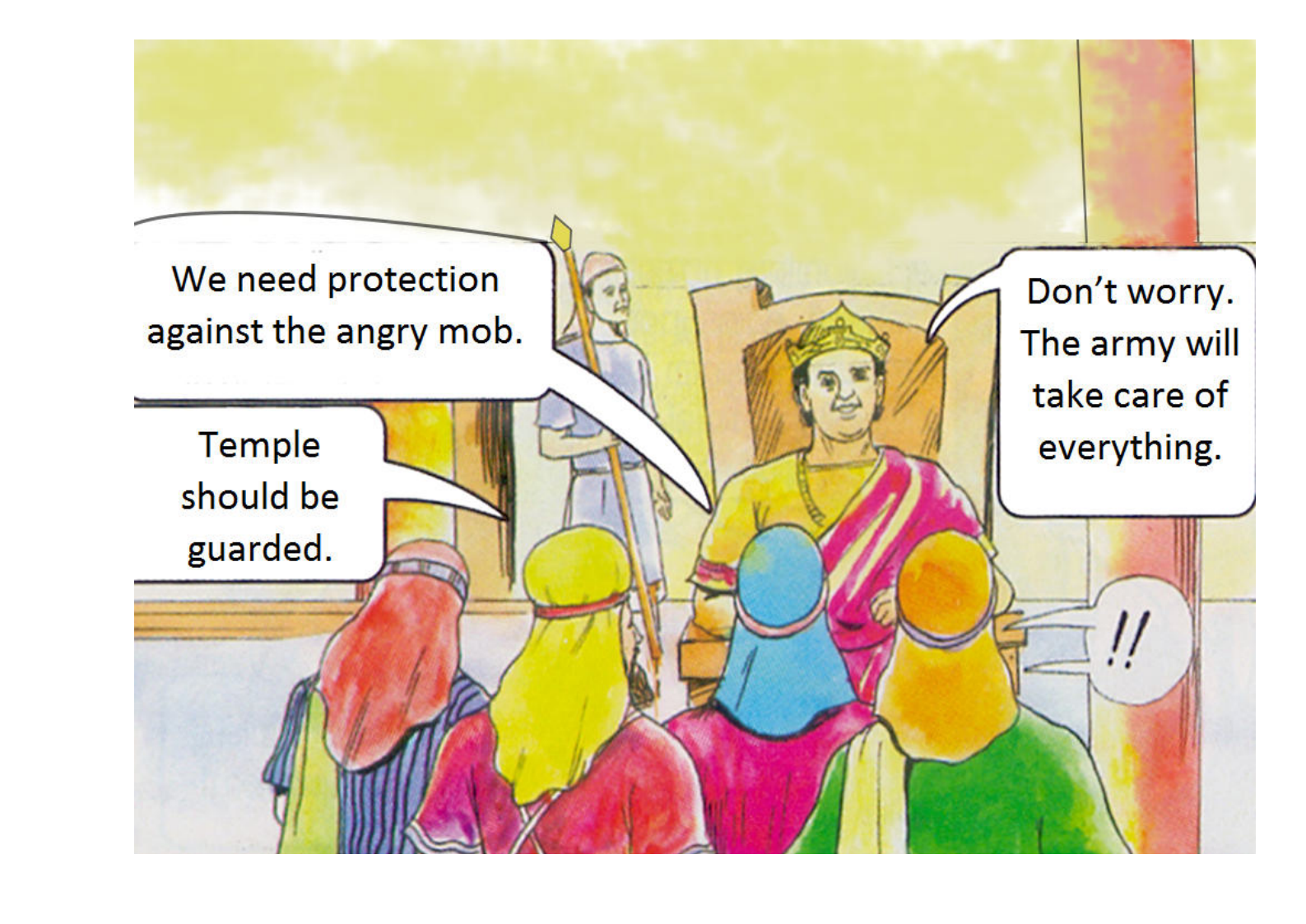
He is instigating the people to open revolt, saying that the very idea of monarchy is against the law of Yahweh.



He says that you will  
be killed and Israel will  
go into exile.

We'll send him back to  
Judah or better to Sheol.





We need protection  
against the angry mob.

Temple  
should be  
guarded.

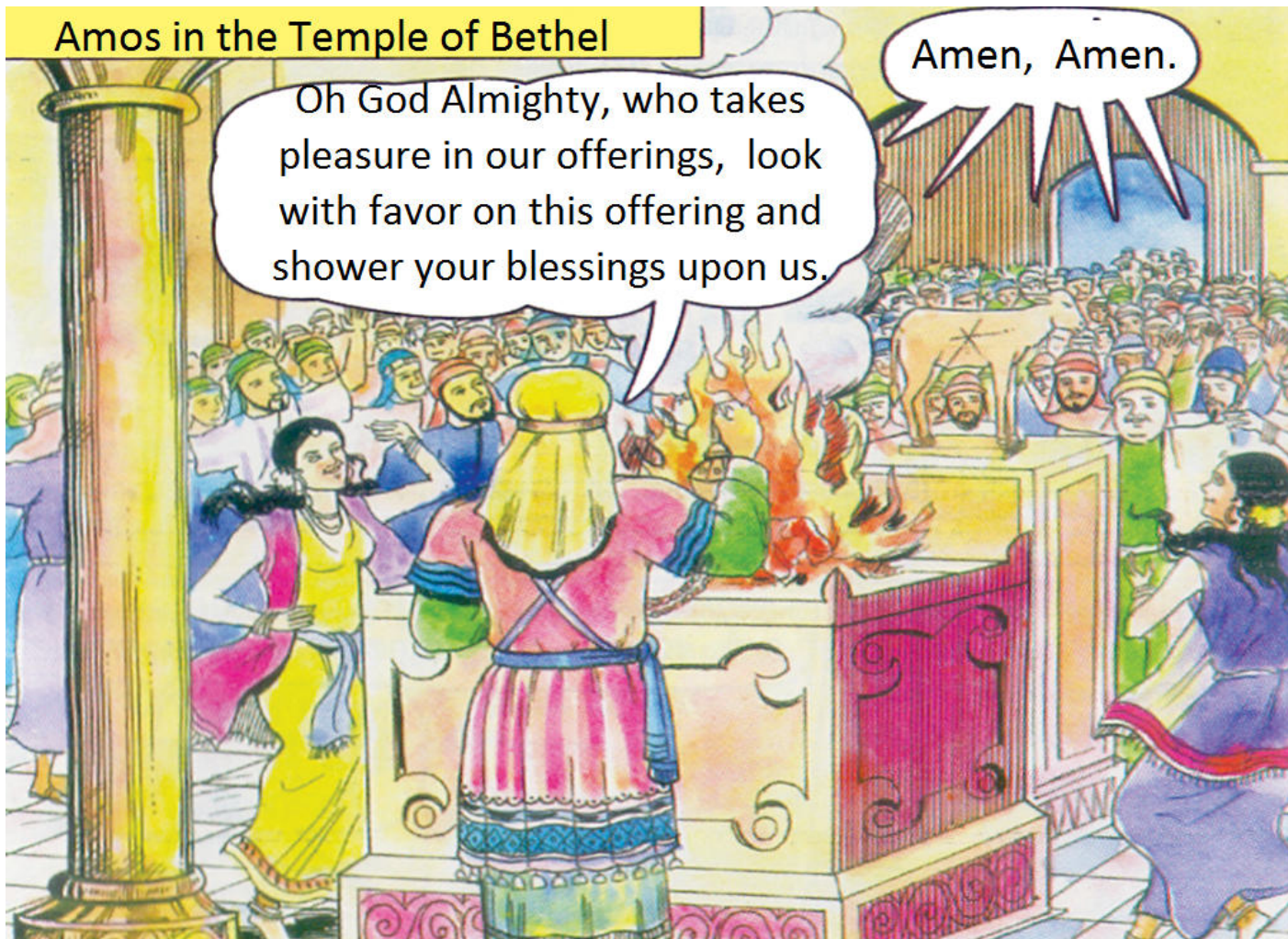
Don't worry.  
The army will  
take care of  
everything.


!!

## Amos in the Temple of Bethel

Oh God Almighty, who takes pleasure in our offerings, look with favor on this offering and shower your blessings upon us.

Amen, Amen.



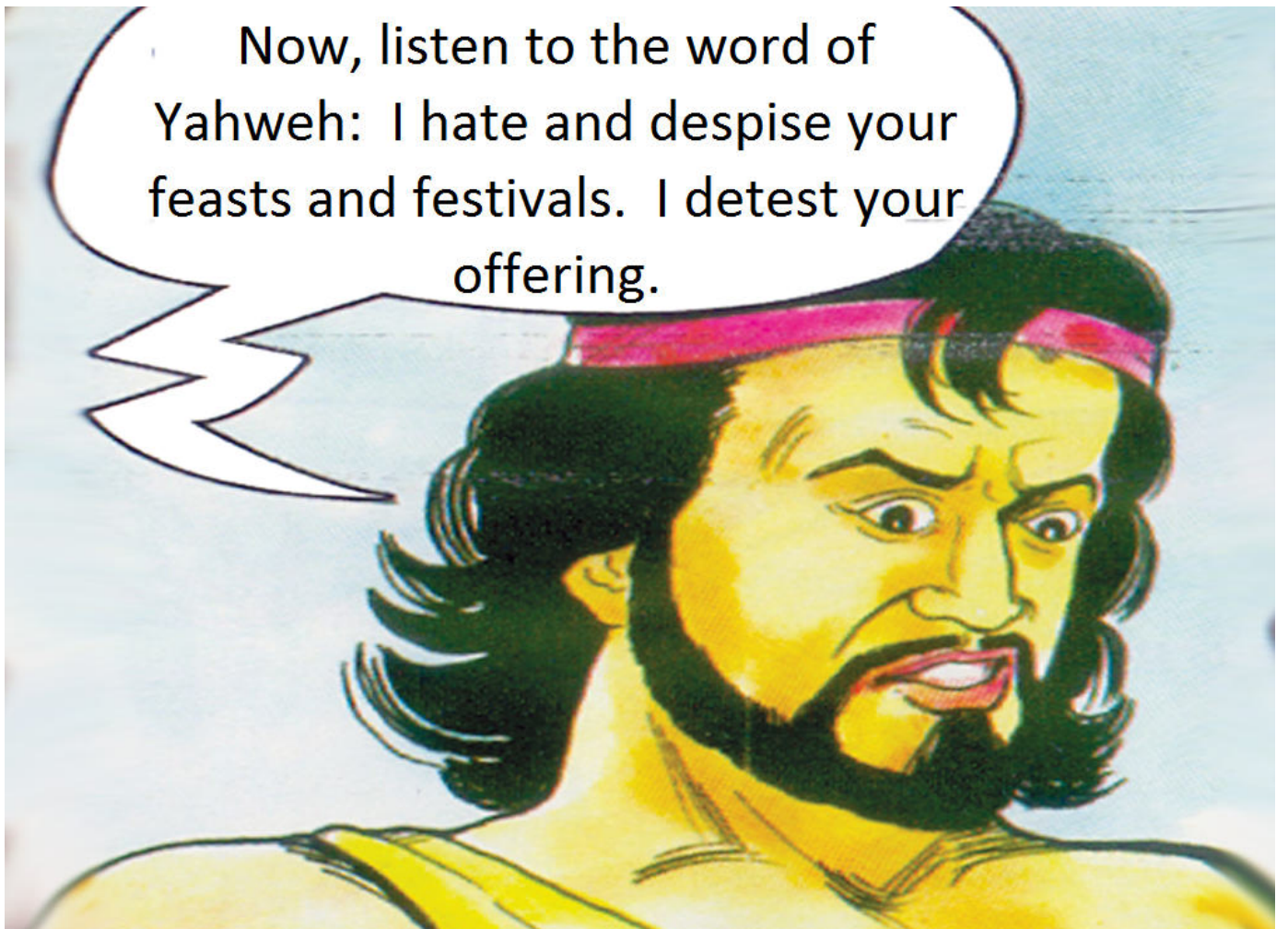


Give us wealth and prosperity.

!?

Stop your chanting.

Now, listen to the word of  
Yahweh: I hate and despise your  
feasts and festivals. I detest your  
offering.





I'm fed up with the blood of bulls and  
fat of rams.



God has commanded us  
to offer sacrifices.

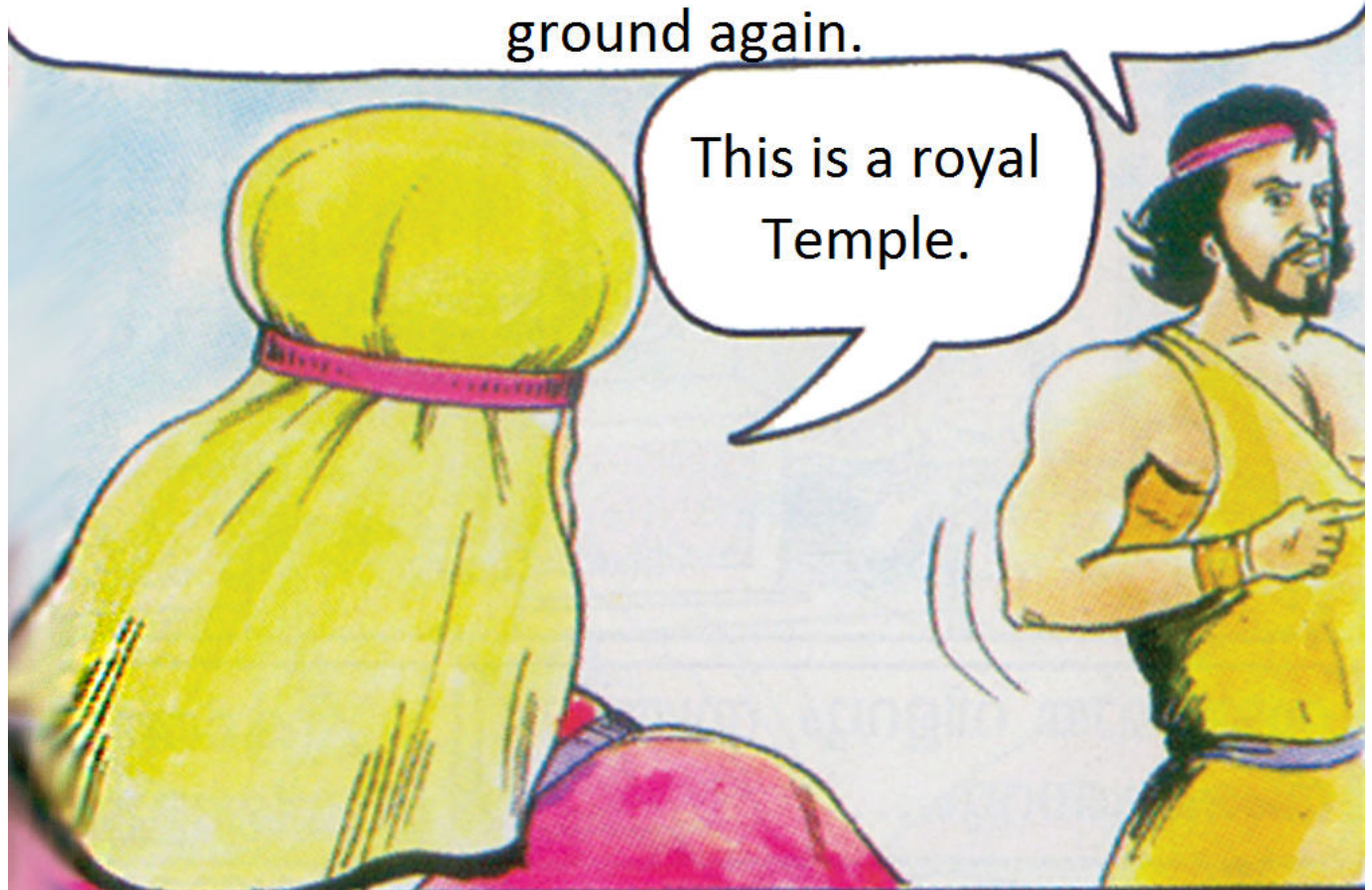
Do you hope that I will overlook your wickedness just because you offered me silver and gold?



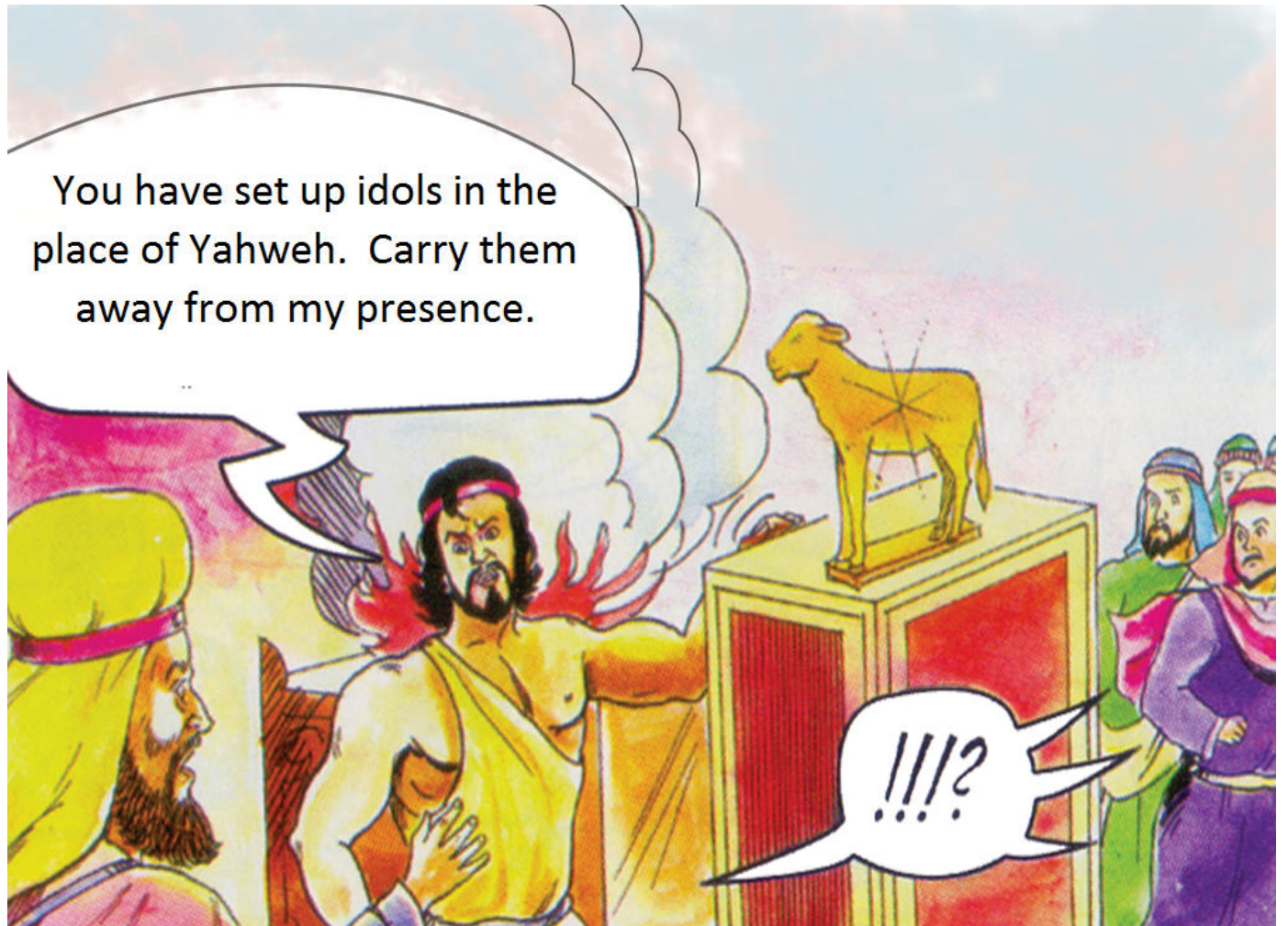
Favors! You accept bribes,  
exploit the poor and cheat the  
weak. The wealth so  
accumulated you call favors?

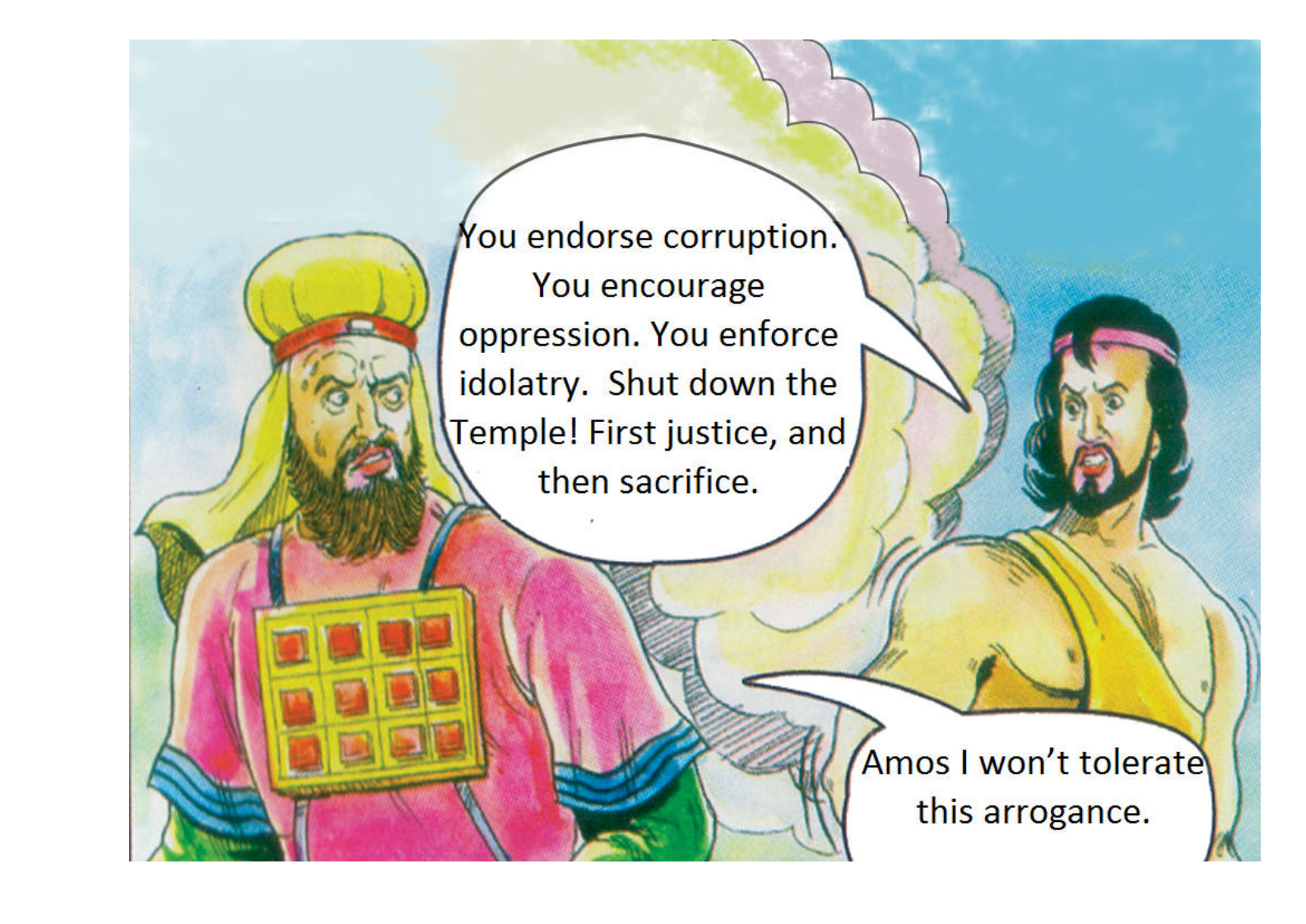


Away with your offerings! Never step in this ground again.



You have set up idols in the place of Yahweh. Carry them away from my presence.





You endorse corruption.  
You encourage  
oppression. You enforce  
idolatry. Shut down the  
Temple! First justice, and  
then sacrifice.

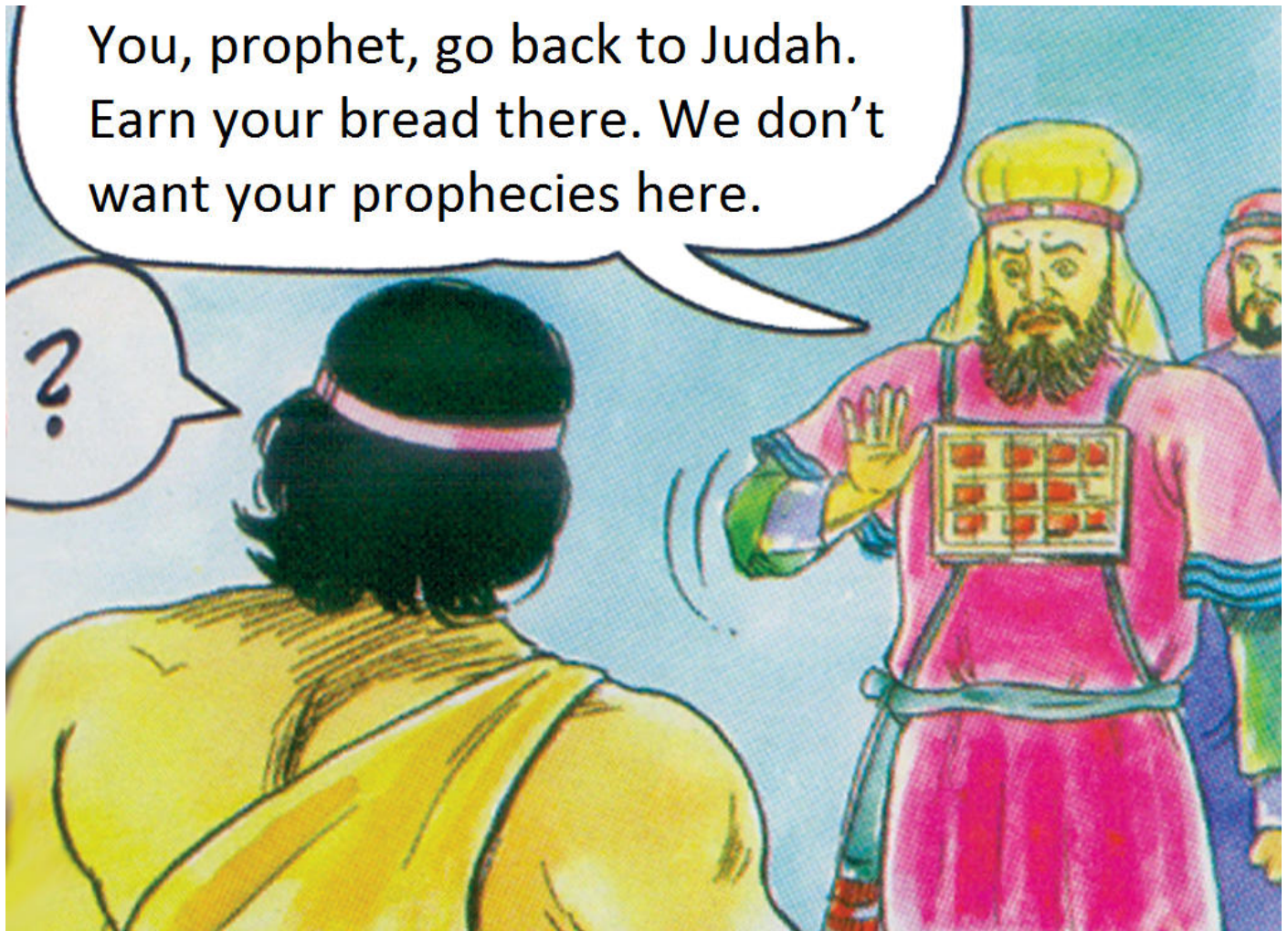
Amos I won't tolerate  
this arrogance.

Let justice roll down like  
waters, integrity like an  
unfailing stream.



You, prophet, go back to Judah.  
Earn your bread there. We don't  
want your prophecies here.

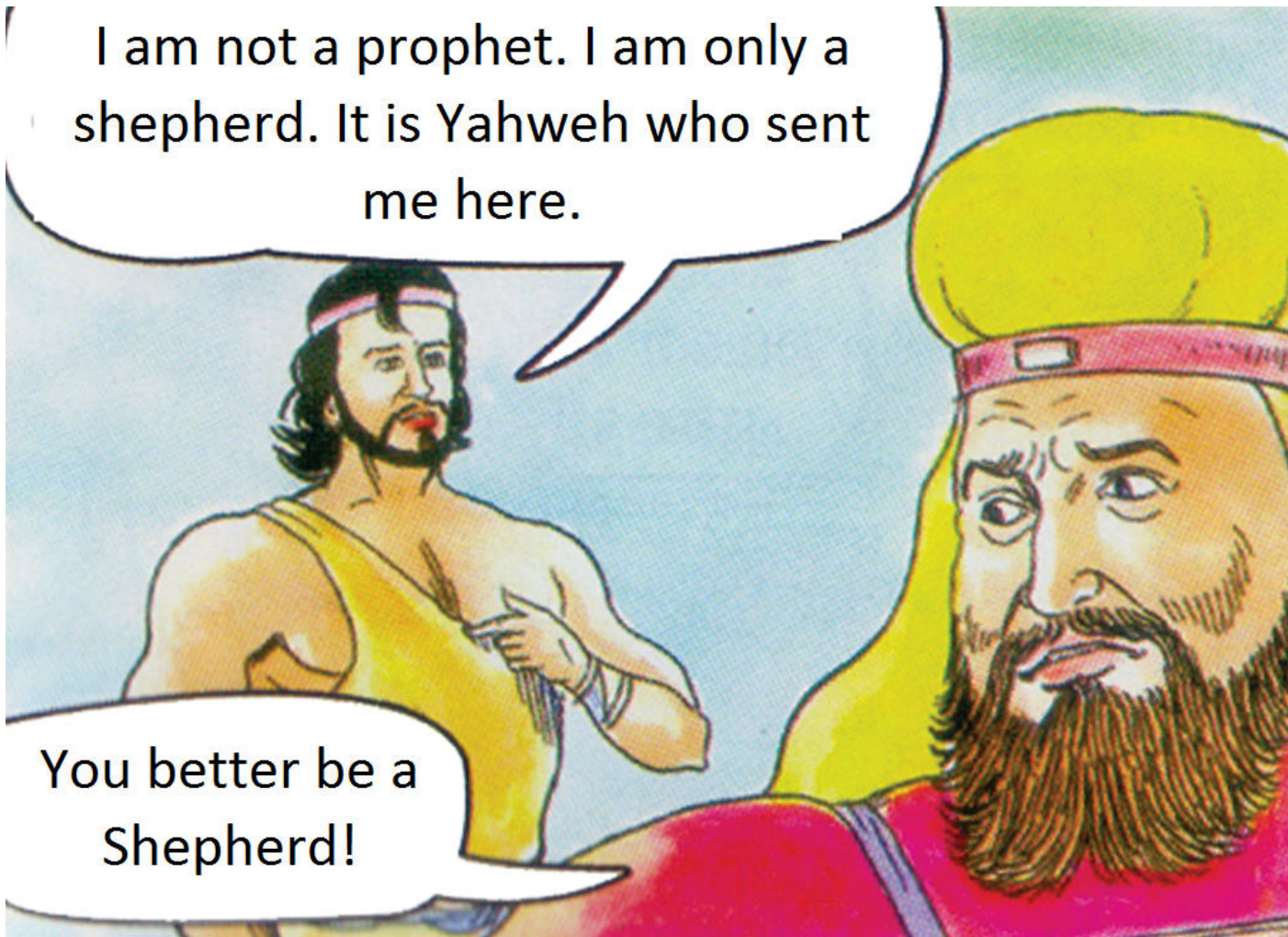
?





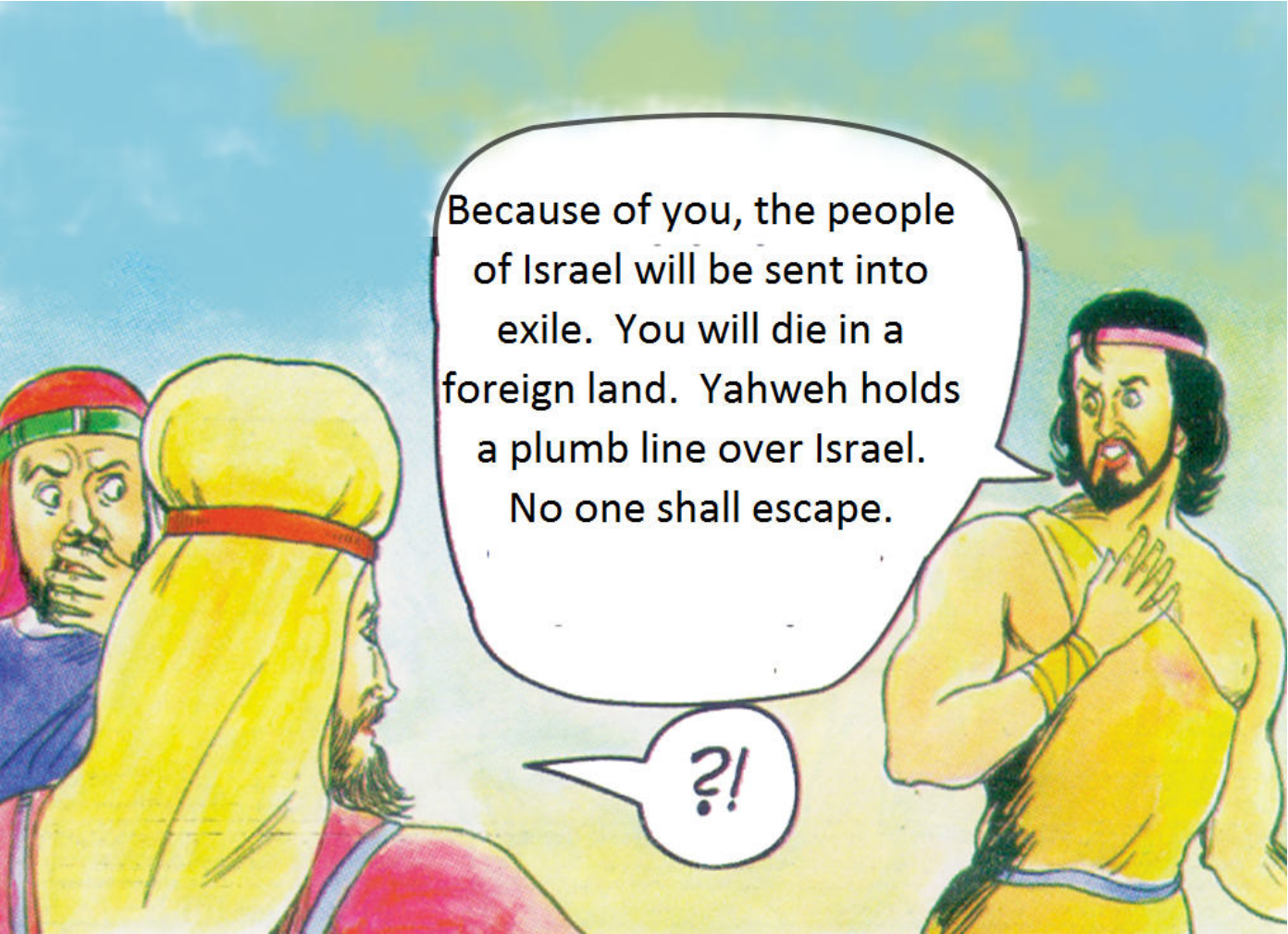
I am not a prophet. I am only a shepherd. It is Yahweh who sent me here.

You better be a Shepherd!



Yahweh says; your wife shall  
be forced to go to the  
streets; your children shall  
fall by the sword.






Because of you, the people  
of Israel will be sent into  
exile. You will die in a  
foreign land. Yahweh holds  
a plumb line over Israel.  
No one shall escape.

?!

Strike the Capitals, let the roof tumble down and  
crush everyone.





The king, the priest and  
the judges, all will be  
banished.

You, serpents, closed your ears against the word of God.



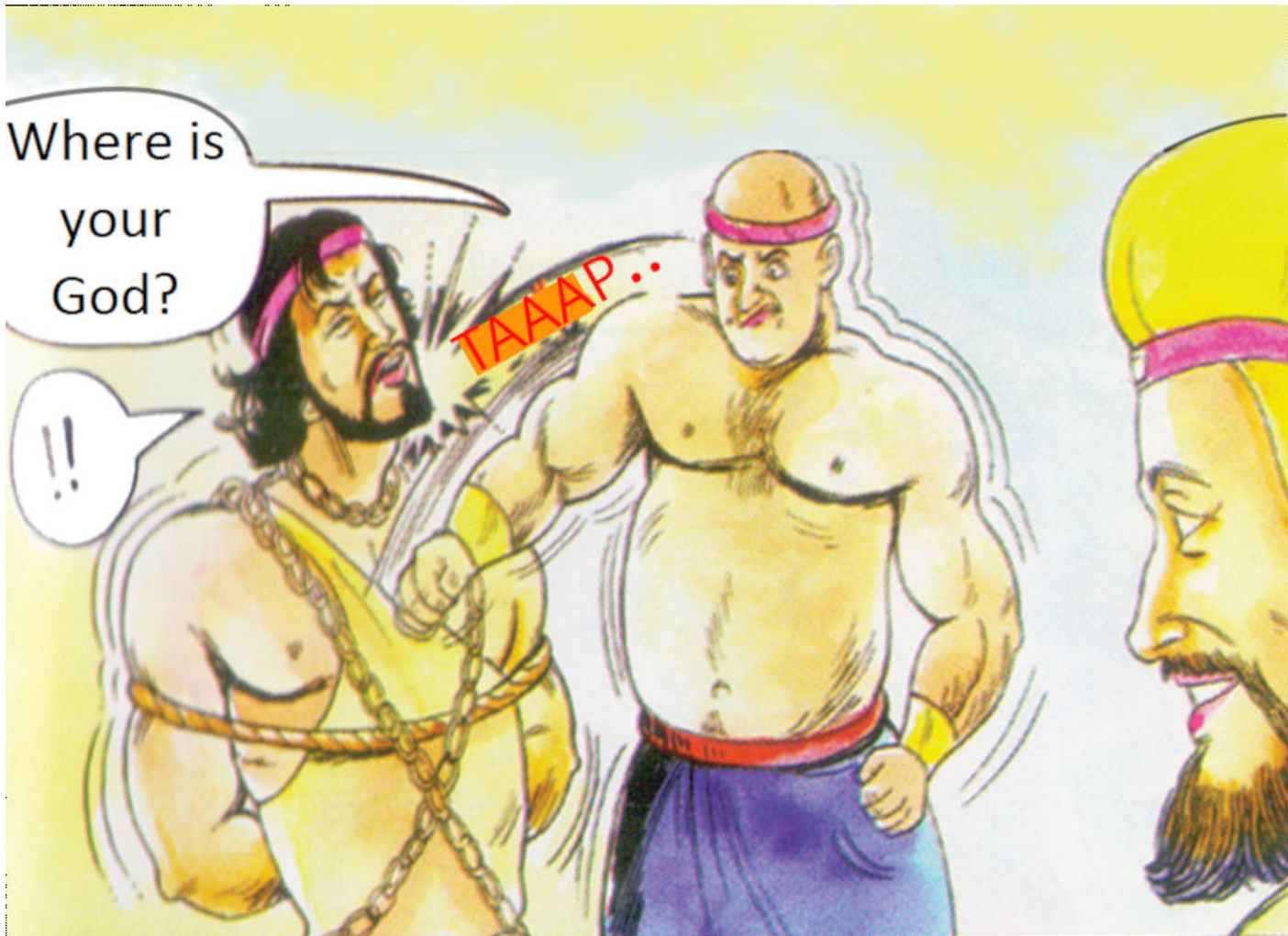
The wrath of God is coming down upon you like a roaring flame.



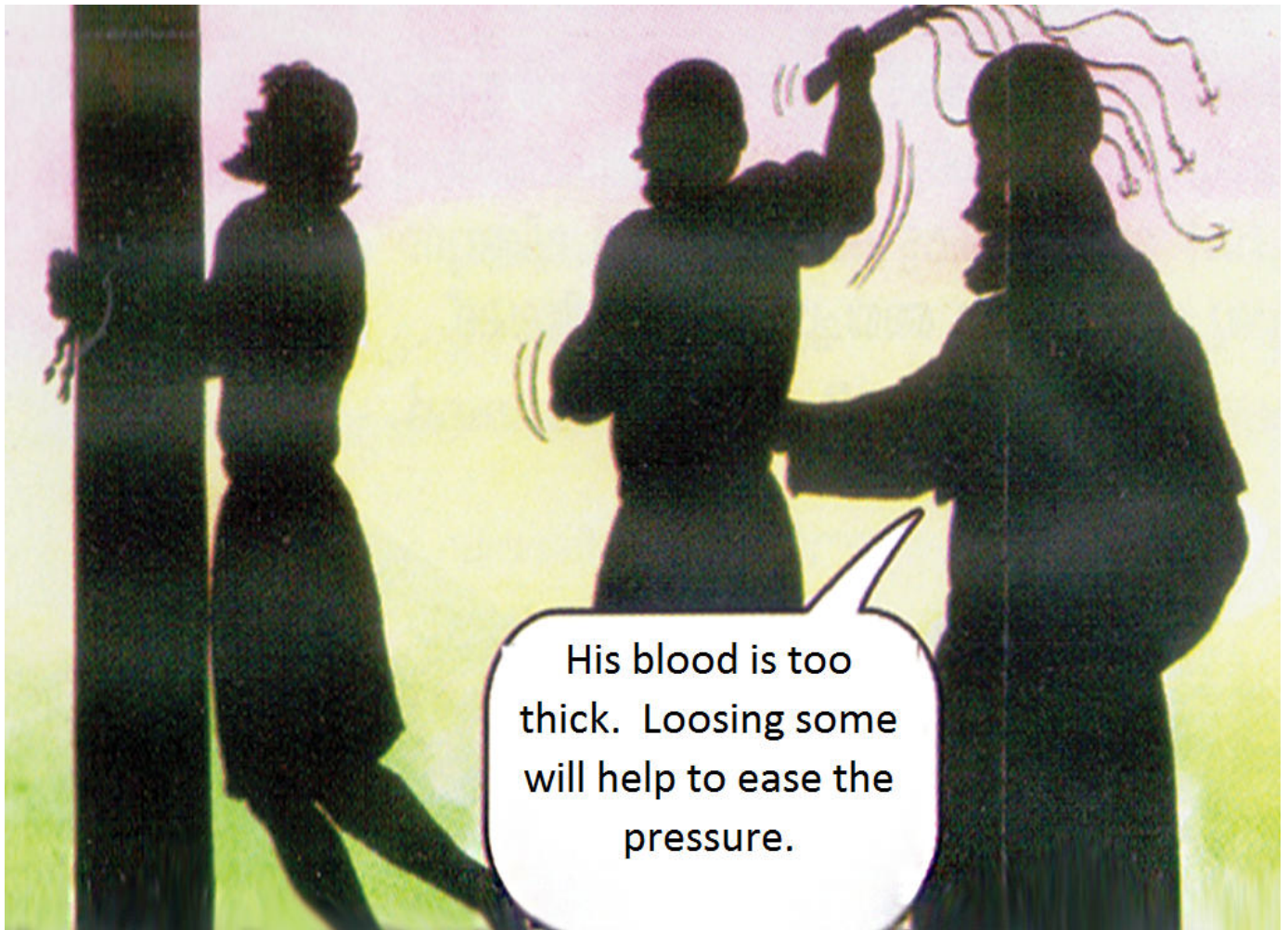
Where is  
your  
God?

TAAAP...

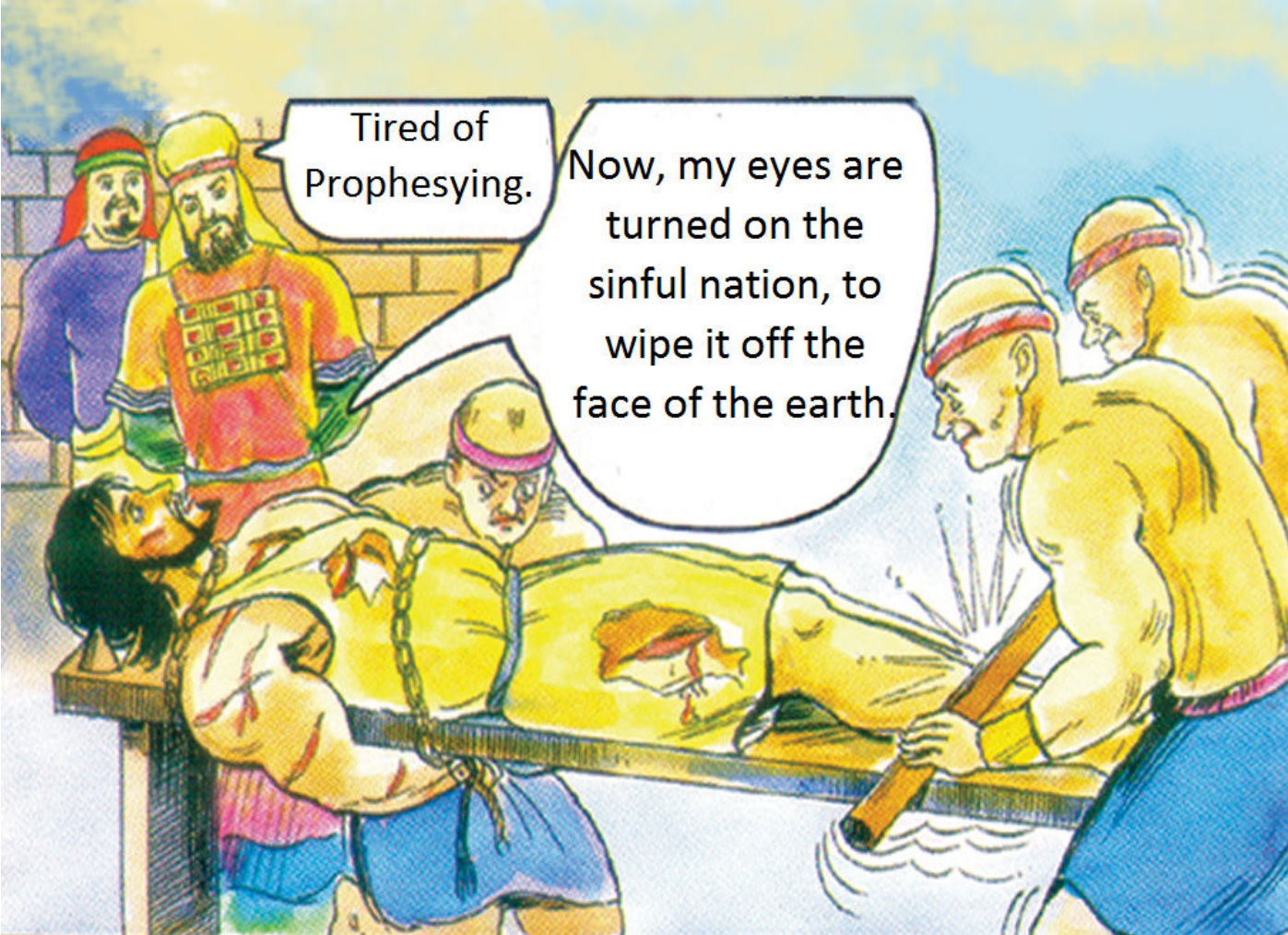
!!








His blood is too thick. Loosing some will help to ease the pressure.



Tired of  
Prophecying.

Now, my eyes are  
turned on the  
sinful nation, to  
wipe it off the  
face of the earth.



Take him away,  
silence him  
forever.

Let justice roll  
down...

Amos's call for justice fell on deaf ears. Will those who closed their ears to the roar of justice open their hearts to the cry of love? Before executing the punishment, announced by Amos, God sent another Prophet to Israel. A man who experienced the pain of loving as Yahweh did.

Next Story

Love Betrayed

# Hosea

# Questions

1. Explain the circumstances under which Amos appeared on the scene.
2. Where was he from?
3. What are the accusations he raised against the judges?
4. Was Amos against the Temples and worship? Explain.
5. Yahweh hated their festivals. Why?
6. When does sacrifice become a sin?
7. What was the mission entrusted to Israel by Yahweh?
8. What did Amos demand from the people?
9. Amos was a man of courage. Explain.
10. In the light of the words of Amos, analyze the present social, religious system.

# 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