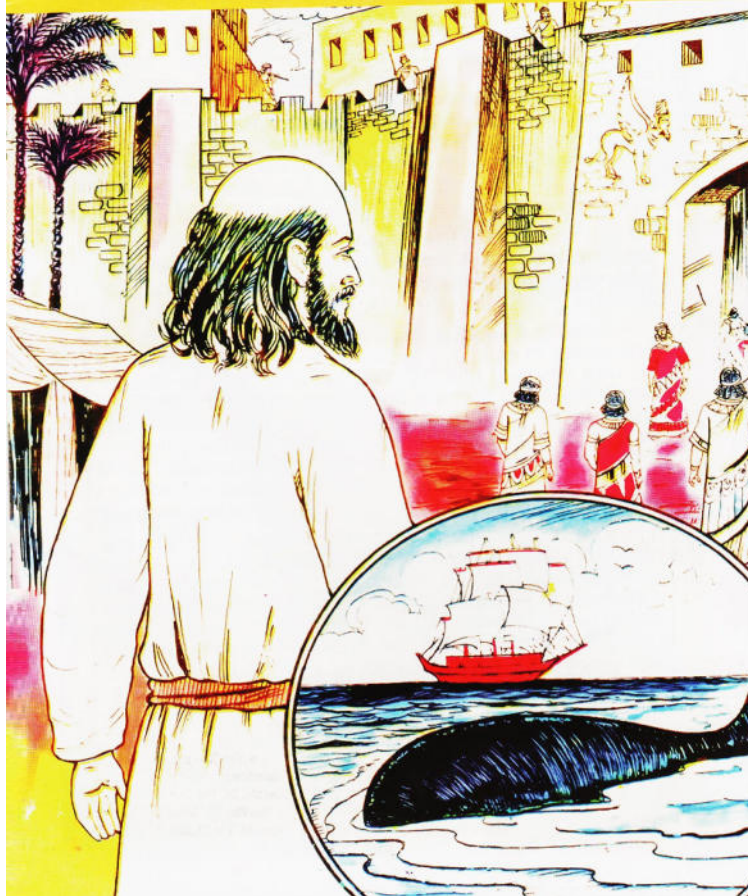


Bible Comics - 22

JONAH



Bible Comics – 22

Jonah

Script

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration

Devassy

JONAH

The Book of Jonah, on which the present story is based, belongs to the group of biblical books called “The Twelve Minor Prophets”. Even though “Jonah” is counted among the prophets, it differs from the other prophets in style and content. While the prophetic books record mainly the teachings of the prophets, Jonah is mostly a narrative. The other prophetic books are very sparing in the reports of miracles, whereas in the Book of Jonah, in

less than forty verses we have not less than ten miracles. It would seem that the sacred author is exaggerating to make a point.

Jonah, the hero of the story, is a prophet who lived in Israel in the eighth century B.C., during the reign of Jeroboam II. The sacred author has made use of this historical figure to convey the message of God's love for all the nations. God asks Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and call its inhabitants to repentance. But Jonah flees in the opposite

direction. However, God does not allow Jonah to escape from his mission nor the people of Nineveh to perish in their sins.

The story, abounding in miraculous incidents, wants to show that God is the Lord of the universe. The sea and the storm obey him. At his command the whale swallows Jonah and on the third day spits him out on the shore of Nineveh. Plants and animals promptly execute his orders.

The almighty God is full of compassion and love towards all. Even the threats of the most severe punishments are meant for the conversion of sinners. It is to proclaim this universal love of God that the people of Israel were chosen. In spite of their refusal to carry out this mission, God will make them the instrument of salvation to all. This truth is clearly depicted in the story of the prophet who tried to run away from God, but finally was forced to preach in Nineveh. Conversion

of the sinners is the work God; but someone has to convey God's call. Jonah was chosen for this purpose.

The fact that one is chosen by God does not give any ground for being proud. The choice imposes a duty on those chosen, and one will be judged according to one's fidelity. The post-exilic Israel became very proud of their election and treated the gentiles with contempt. The story of Jonah reminds them of their responsibility of being "light to the

gentiles” and teaches them that the so called gentiles are equally loved by God and they are often better than the Israelites.

God gives even Jonah a chance to repent. The story does not say if he repented and turned to God accepting His love for all the nations. The people of Israel, as well as all those who read the story, have to make the decision for themselves. Thus “Jonah” is a parable calling to conversion. It is in this aspect that Jesus referred to Jonah. Jesus

invited his listeners to repent as the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching for Jonah. Jonah remaining three days in the belly of the fish before emerging on the shore of Nineveh is interpreted by Jesus as a symbol of his remaining in the tomb before his resurrection on the third day.

During the second half of the fifth century B.C. while Artaxerxes was ruling Persia, a Jewish scribe called Ezra, with royal permission, came to Israel with a group of exiles. The priests and the people gave them a warm welcome.

This gold and silver are the gifts from the king to beautify the Temple.

Praise and glory to God who inspired the king to be so kind to us.



Lord our God allowed us to come back from exile. We offer this sacrifice in thanksgiving to the Lord who brought us back.



The king has promised that you, the rulers, would give us all that is needed to beautify the Temple. Here is the order.

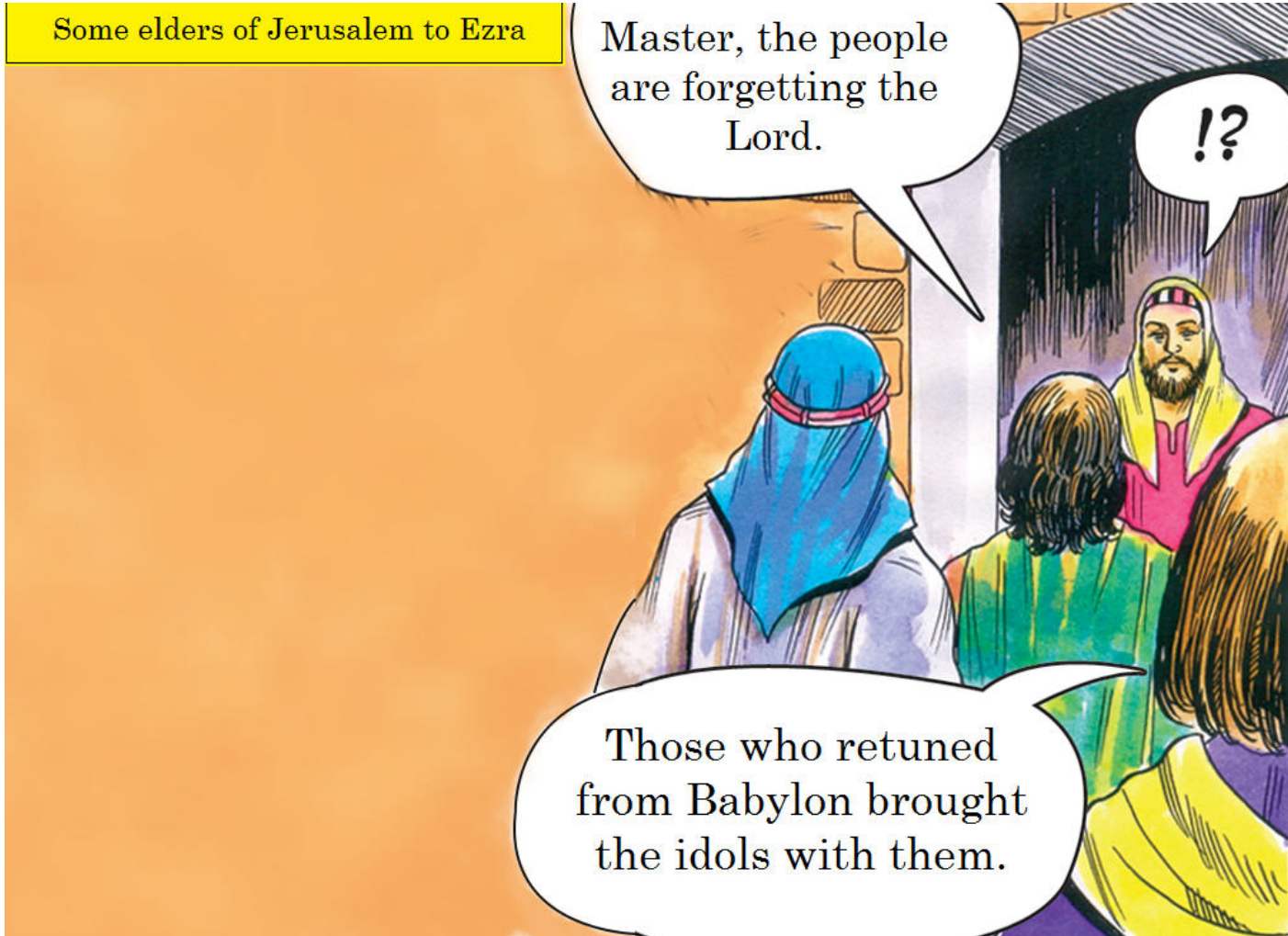


Some elders of Jerusalem to Ezra

Master, the people
are forgetting the
Lord.

!?

Those who returned
from Babylon brought
the idols with them.



They worship the idols at home.

Many have taken wives from Babylon.



What? Israelites marrying gentile woman?

Those who remained
here married
Canaanite women.

Our faith and
traditions are
falling apart.

The very existence
of Israel is at stake.

Our children will be
learning the customs
of the Gentiles.



Lord, don't let this happen.

!???



The next day a
Proclamation was
heard all over
Judea.

All those who returned
from exile must
assemble in Jerusalem
on the third day from
today. If anyone fails to
attend the meeting, his
belongings will be
confiscated and he will
be cast out of the
society.



The assembly in Jerusalem.

Brethren, you have sinned gravely. All those who married Gentile woman must renounce them and the children born of them.

!??

What are you saying? Impossible!

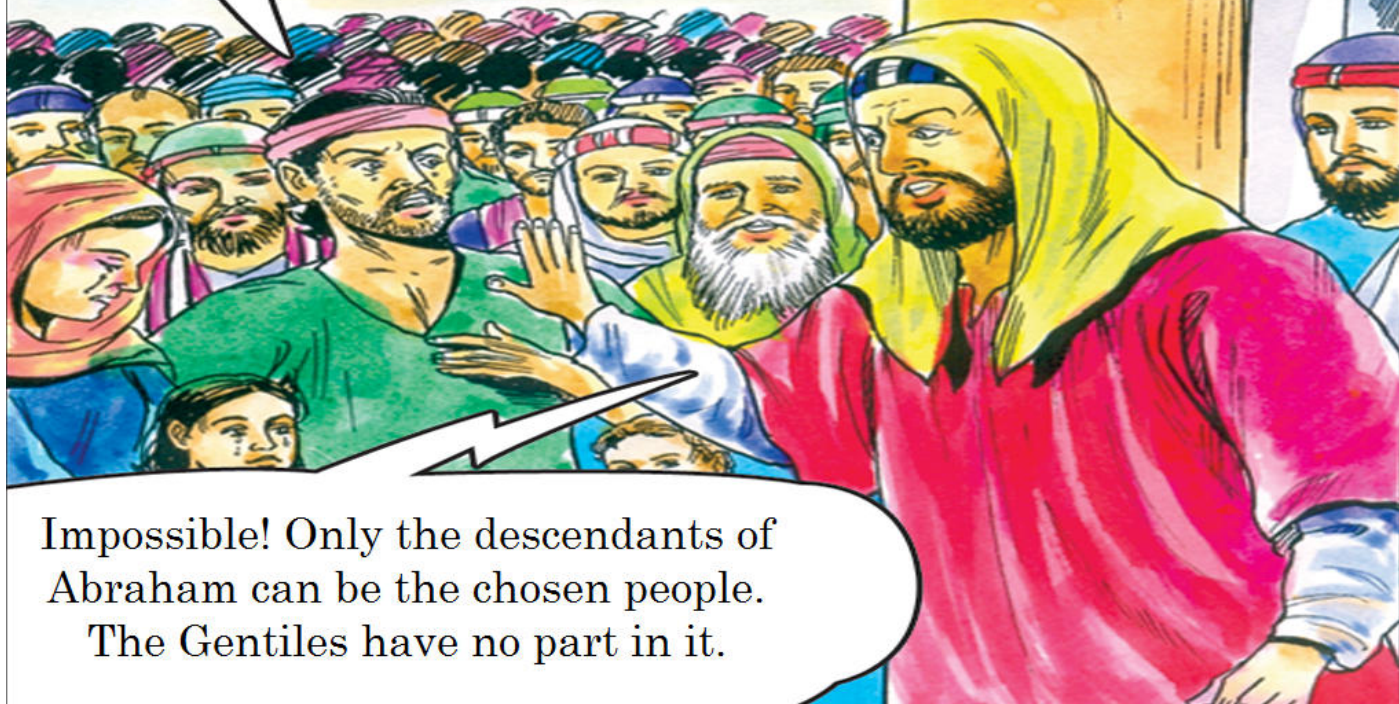
It is your contact with the accursed Gentiles that is ruining this country.



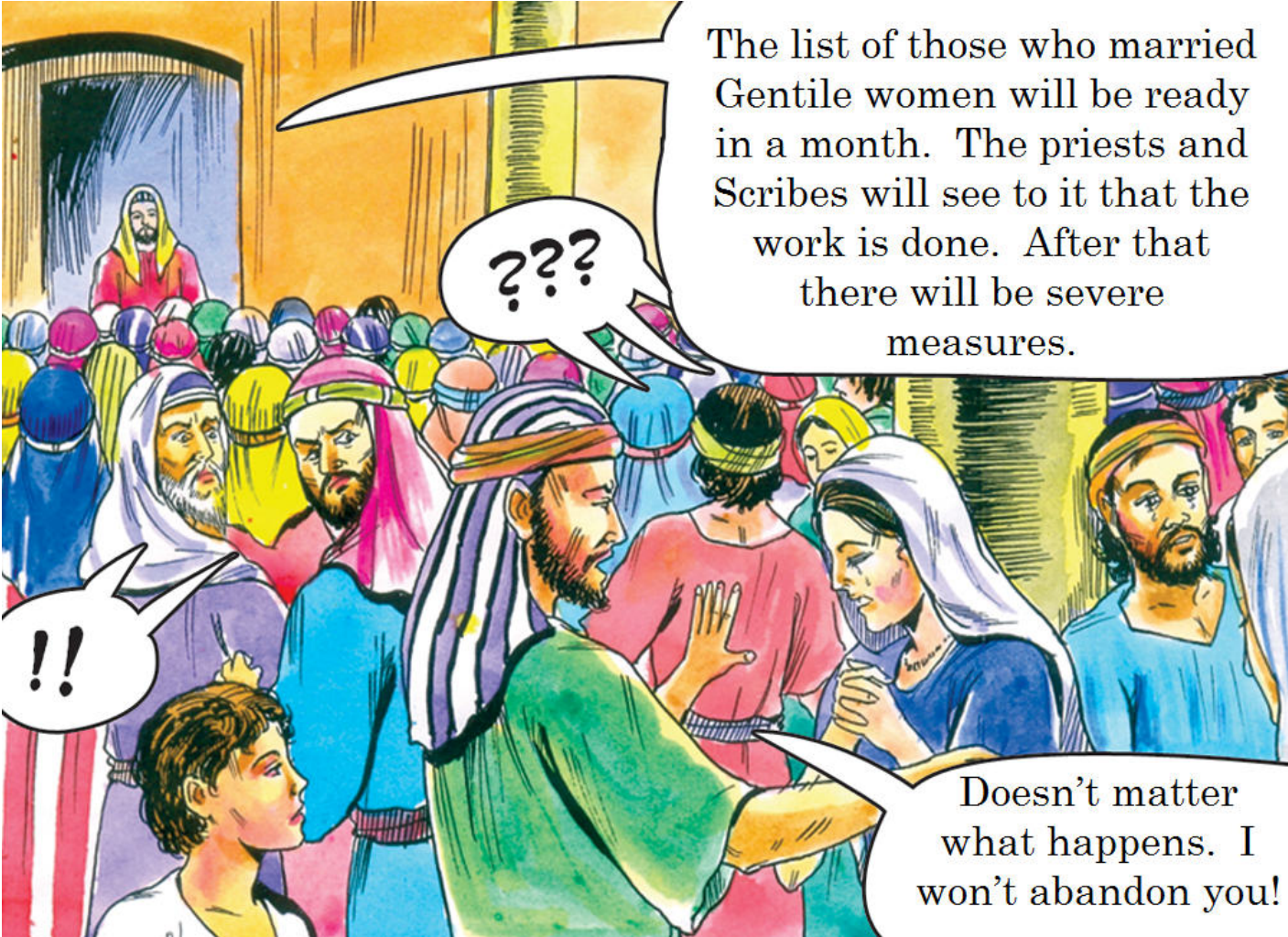
Israel is the chosen
people of the Lord.
Marriage with Gentiles
is a grave sin.



But, these are my wife
and children. Can't
they become Israelites?



Impossible! Only the descendants of
Abraham can be the chosen people.
The Gentiles have no part in it.



The list of those who married
Gentile women will be ready
in a month. The priests and
Scribes will see to it that the
work is done. After that
there will be severe
measures.

???

!!

Doesn't matter
what happens. I
won't abandon you!

Nehemiah who came with the authorization from Persia hastened the religious reform. Some protested the cruel and inhuman measures. The disciples of some of the old Prophets led the protest. Thus, there emerged a few groups of resistance.

How cruel! So many innocent women and children are cast out into the streets.

Just because they have the power, they think that they can do anything.

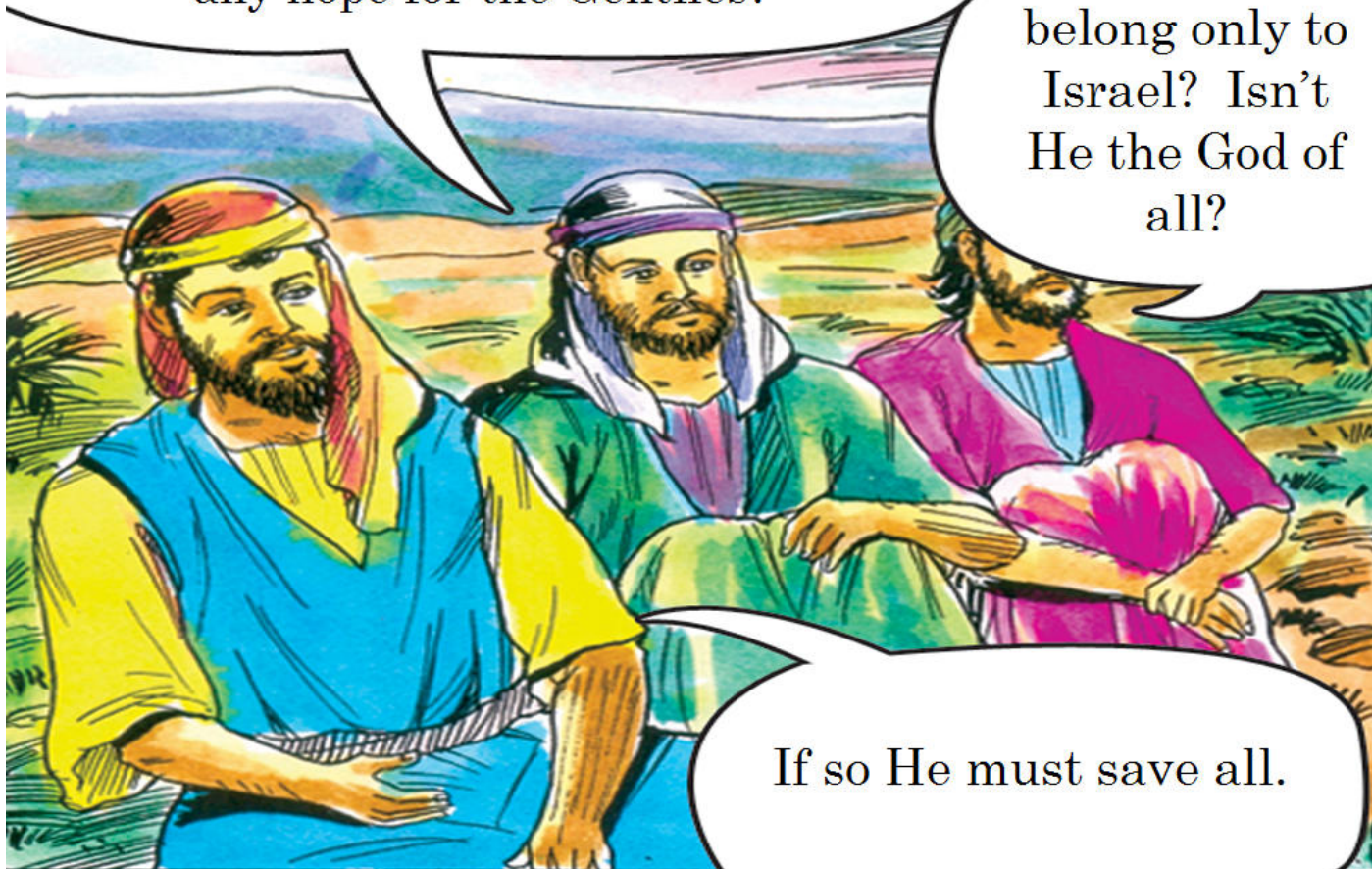
Their enthusiasm for the law is crossing all limits.

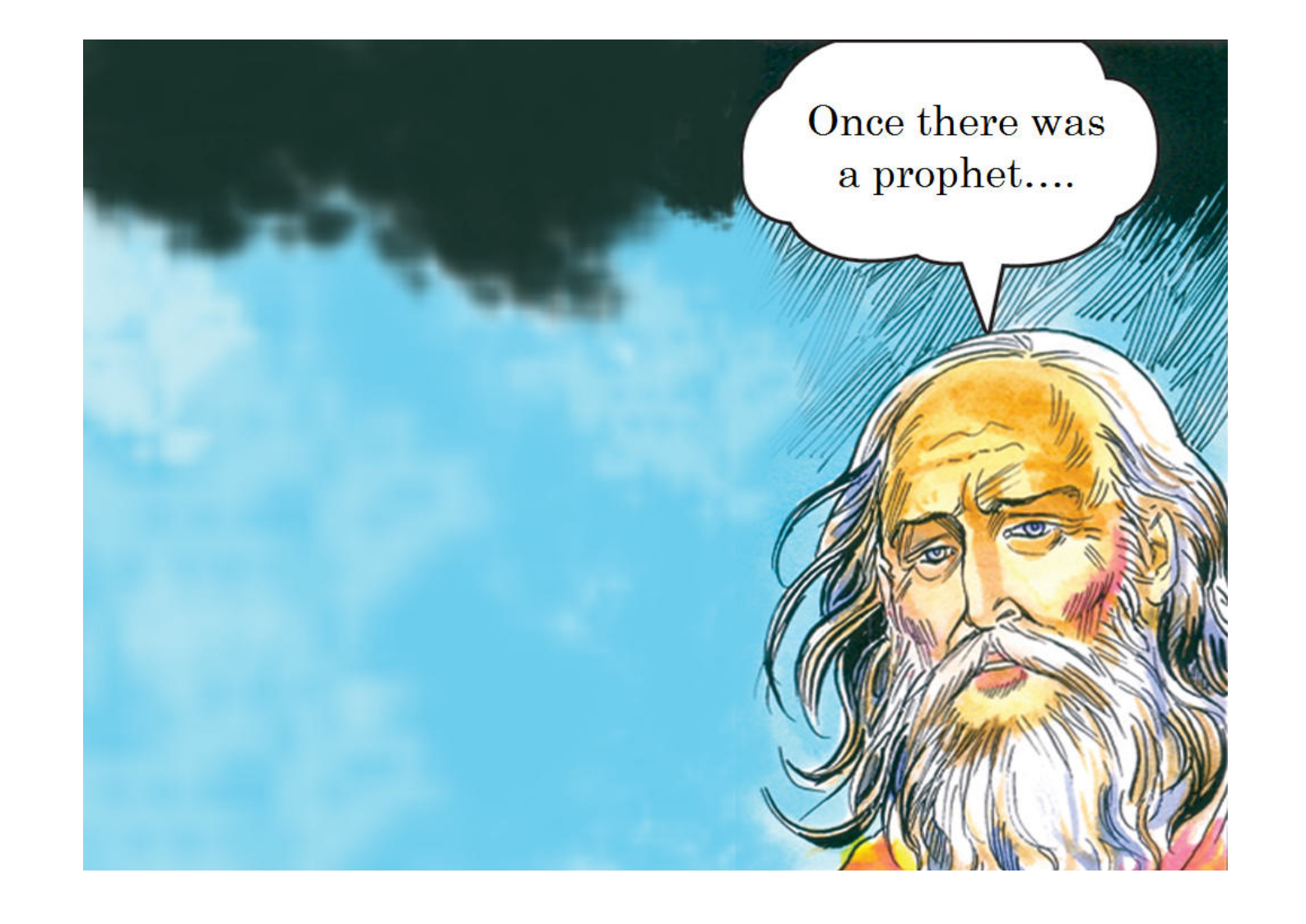


If what they say is the truth, can there be any hope for the Gentiles?

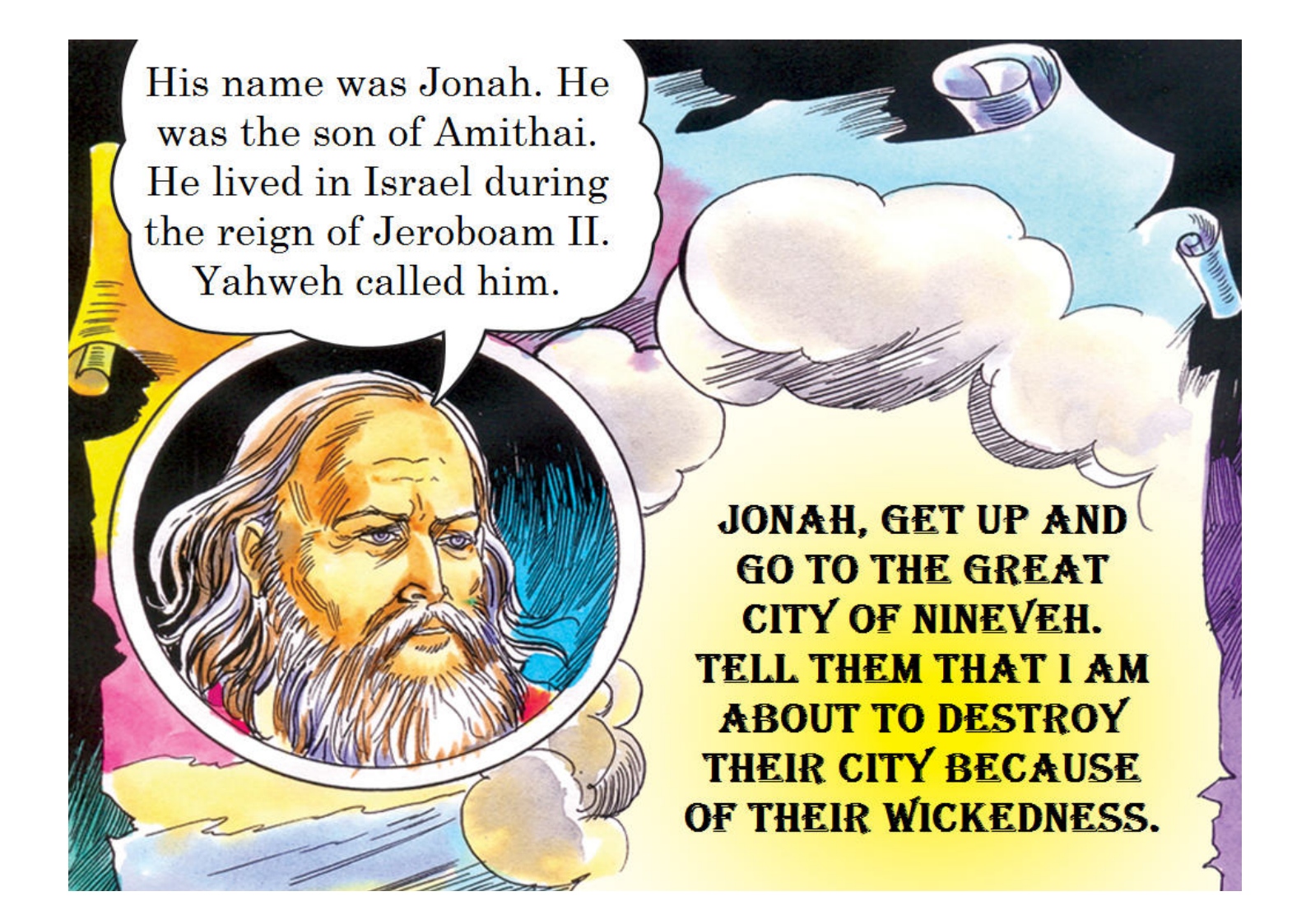
Does Yahweh belong only to Israel? Isn't He the God of all?

If so He must save all.



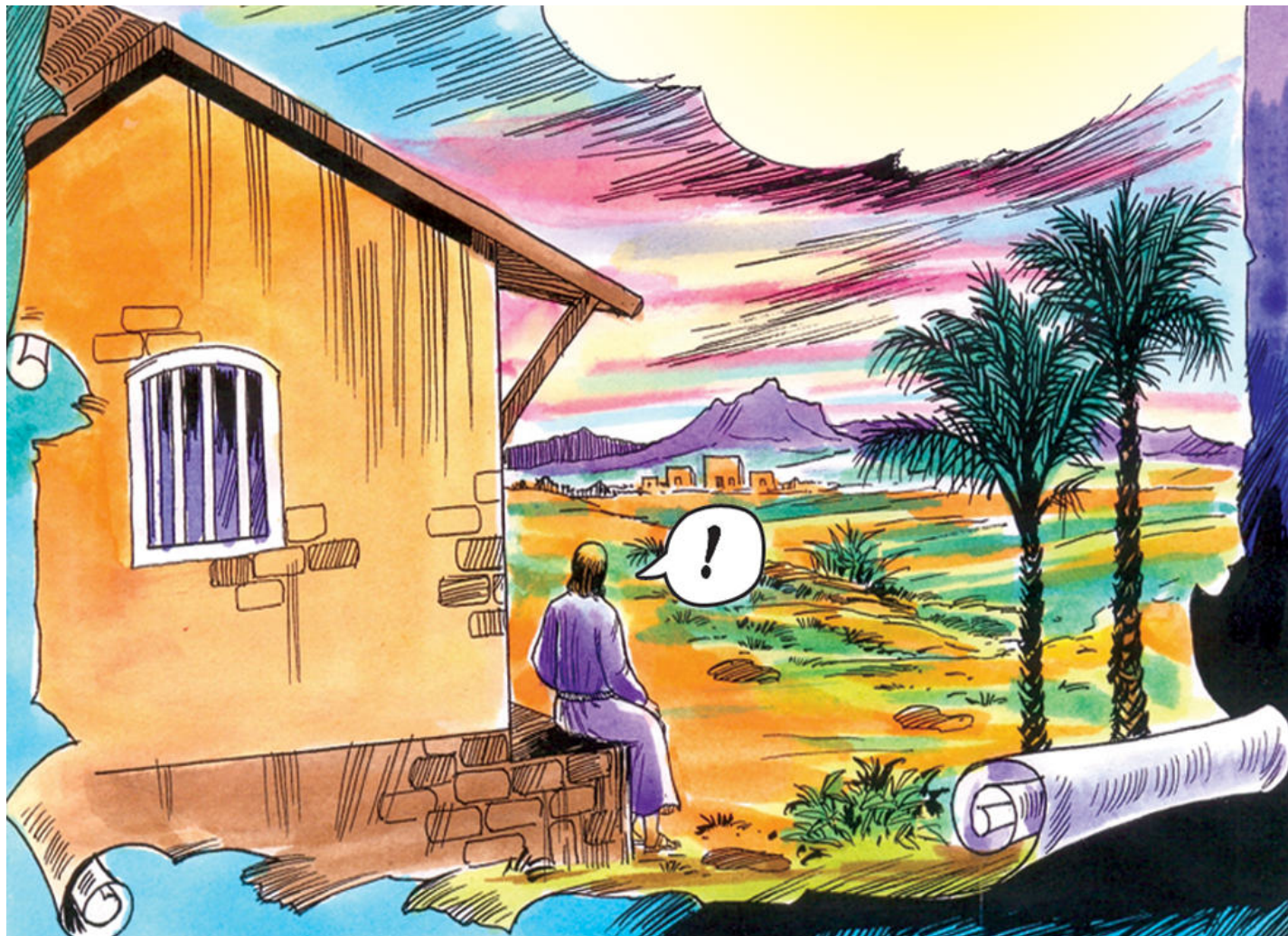


Once there was
a prophet....



His name was Jonah. He was the son of Amithai. He lived in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. Yahweh called him.

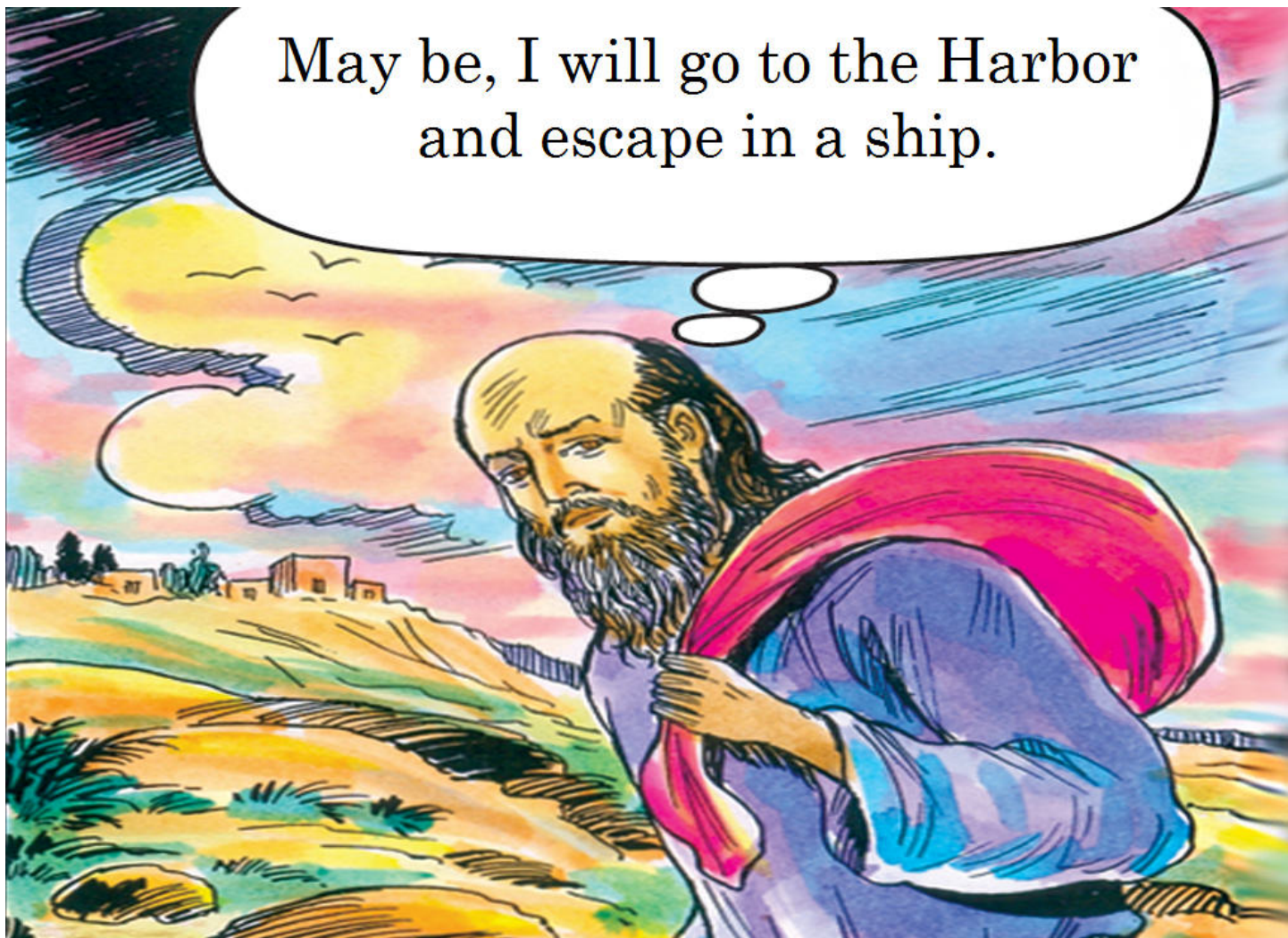
JONAH, GET UP AND GO TO THE GREAT CITY OF NINEVEH. TELL THEM THAT I AM ABOUT TO DESTROY THEIR CITY BECAUSE OF THEIR WICKEDNESS.



True, it is Yahweh who called me. But, I can't go to Nineveh. I'll go somewhere else.



May be, I will go to the Harbor
and escape in a ship.





Where is
that ship
going?

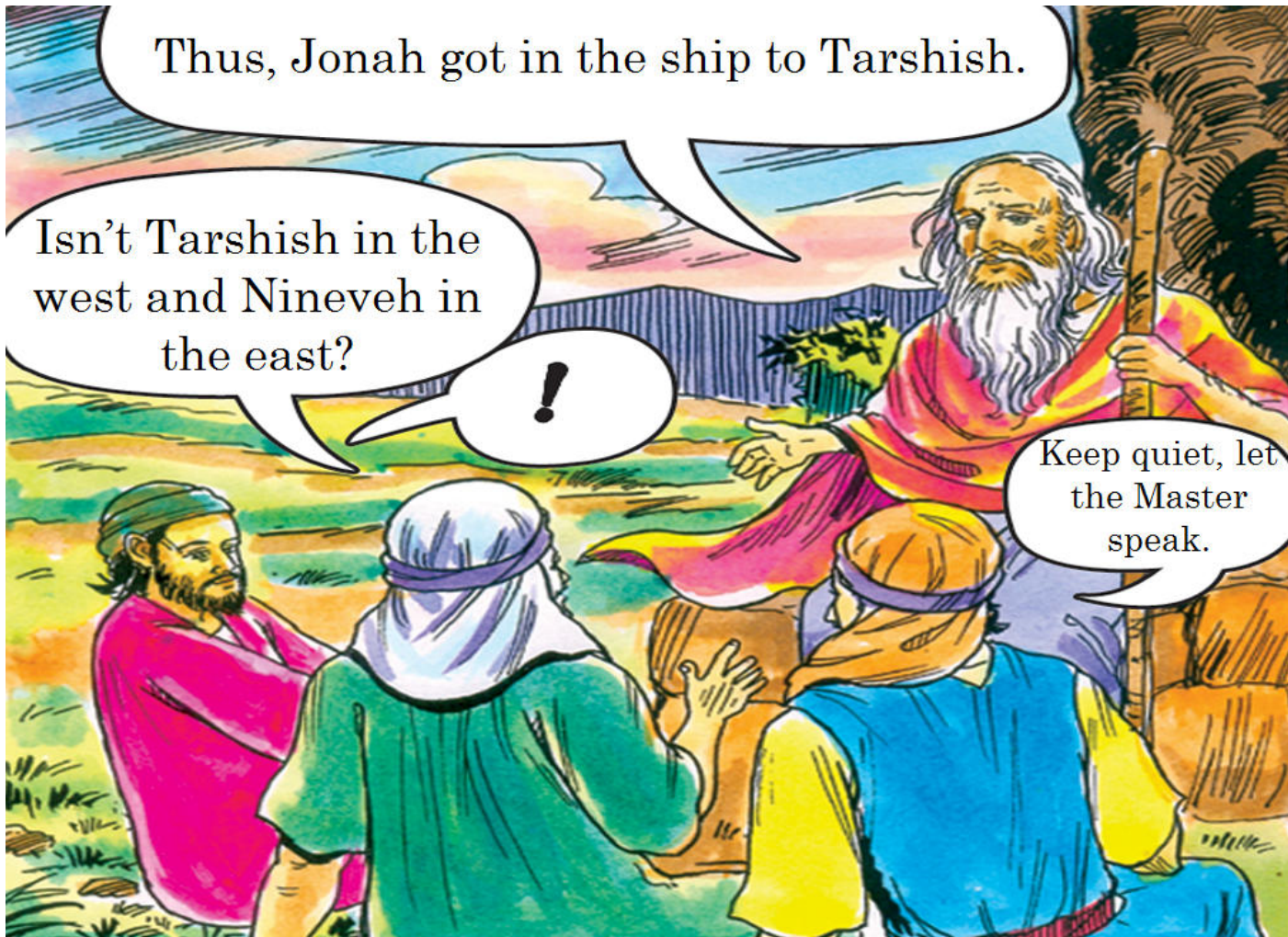
We are going
to Tarshish to
buy gold. Care
to join us?

Thus, Jonah got in the ship to Tarshish.

Isn't Tarshish in the west and Nineveh in the east?

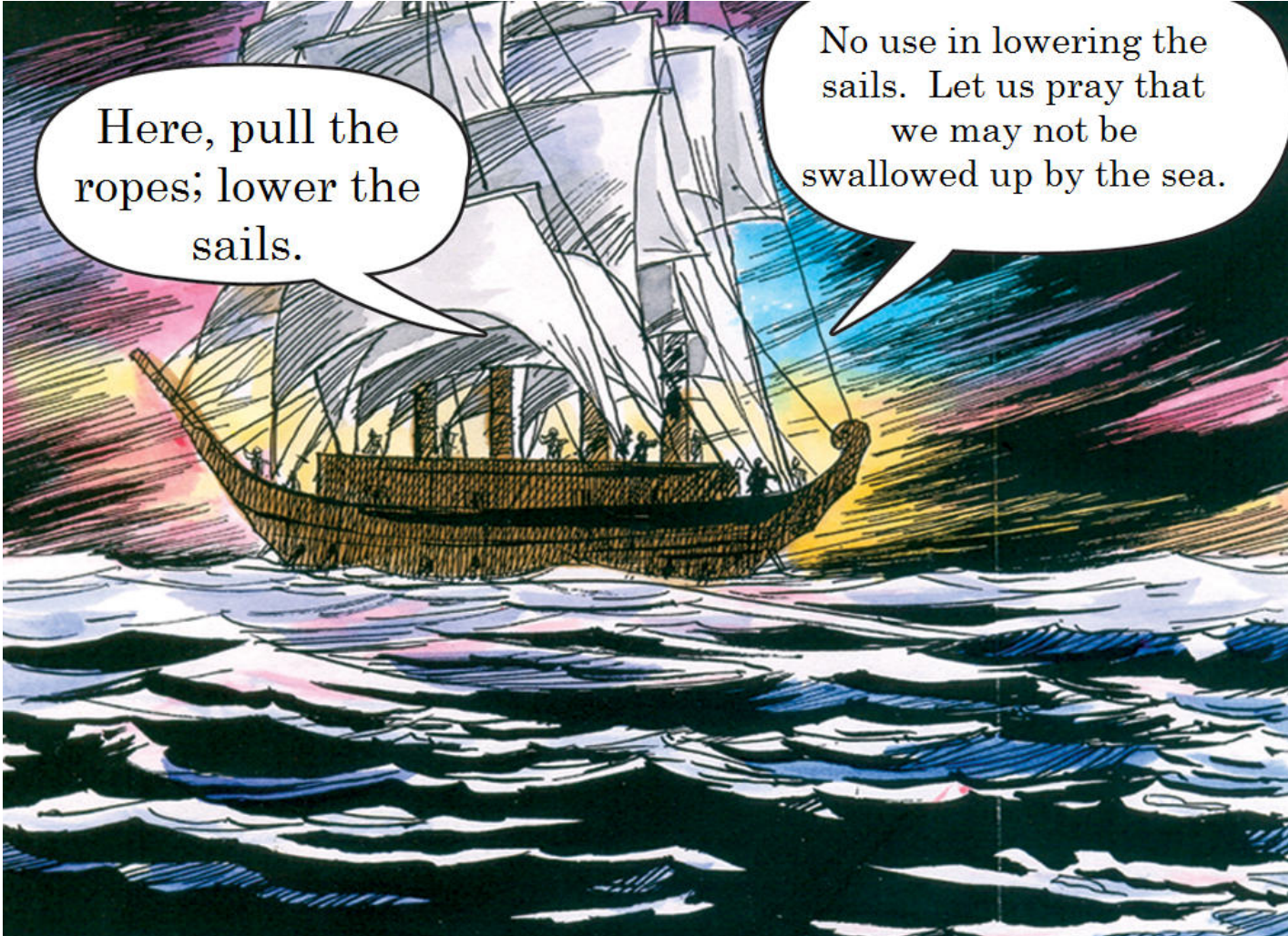
!

Keep quiet, let the Master speak.



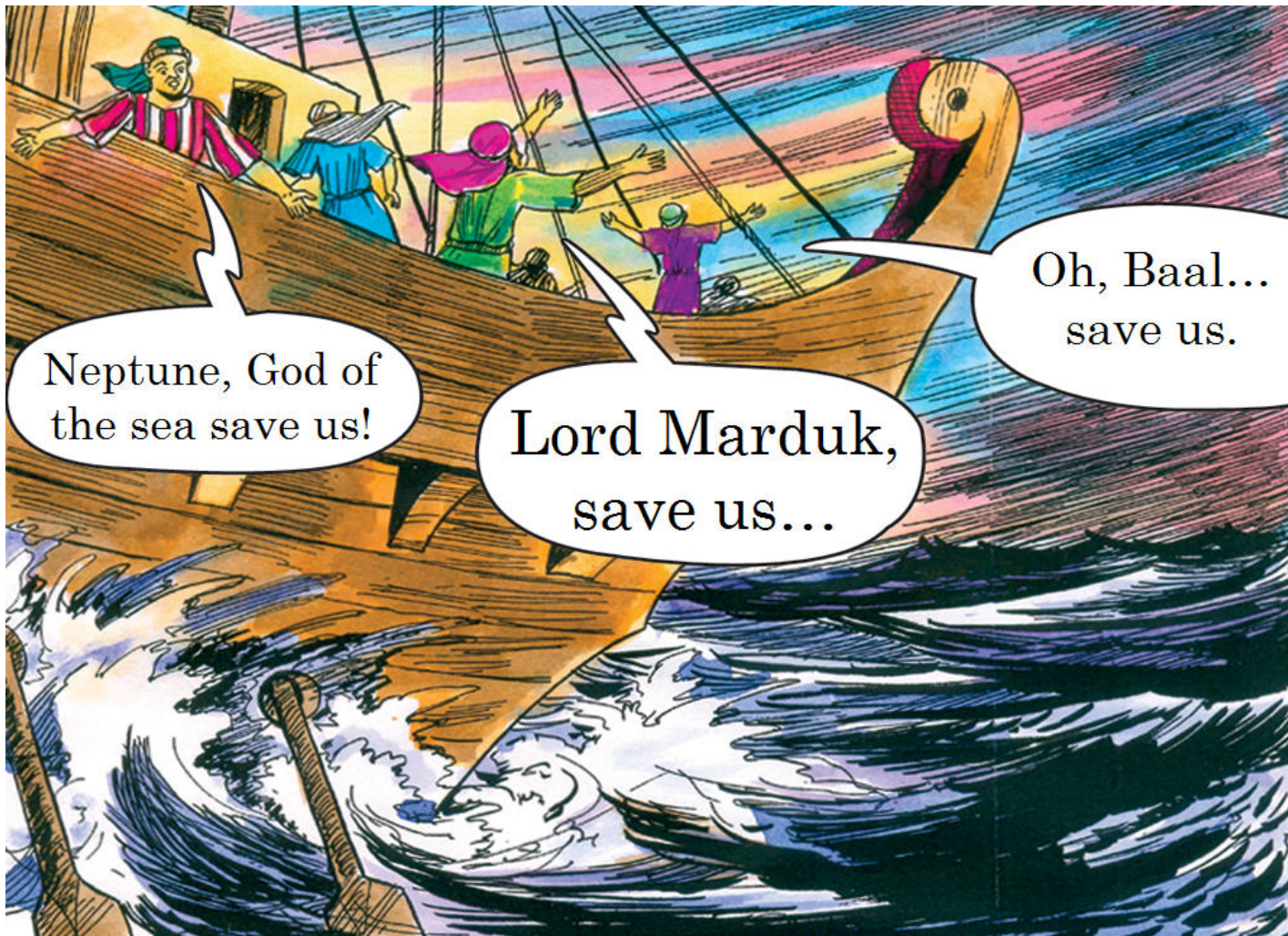
Right, Jonah was
trying to run away from
God. But when the
ship got into the deep
sea..





Here, pull the ropes; lower the sails.


No use in lowering the sails. Let us pray that we may not be swallowed up by the sea.



Neptune, God of
the sea save us!

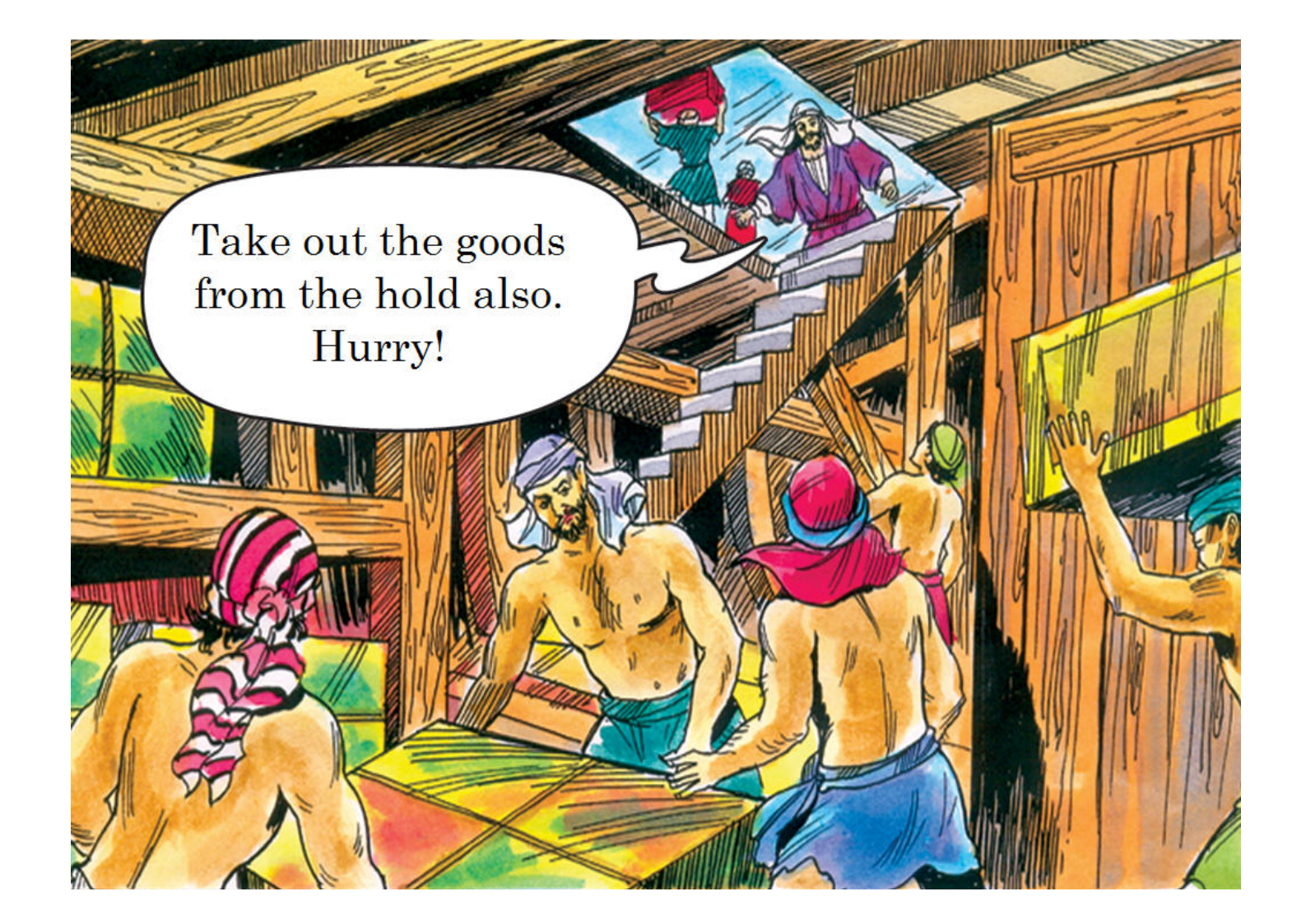
Lord Marduk,
save us...

Oh, Baal...
save us.



Praying alone won't do.
We have to reduce the
weight. Dump the
goods into the sea.

!!



Take out the goods
from the hold also.
Hurry!





Is there a beast
in the ship?

Someone is
snoring.

Kr...Kr...Kr...

Kr...Kr...Kr...

They entered the room.

Look at him!

Let us take him to the
Captain.





We shall, once we
get on the deck.


What are you
doing? Let me go.

!?

Why are you
sleeping when we
are about to perish?
Don't you have a
God? Pray to Him.

!





This is no ordinary storm. It is the wrath of God.

Someone with a curse is on the ship.

Let us cast lots and find him.

The lot fell on Jonah.

Who are you? Where do you come from? Why did you get on this ship?

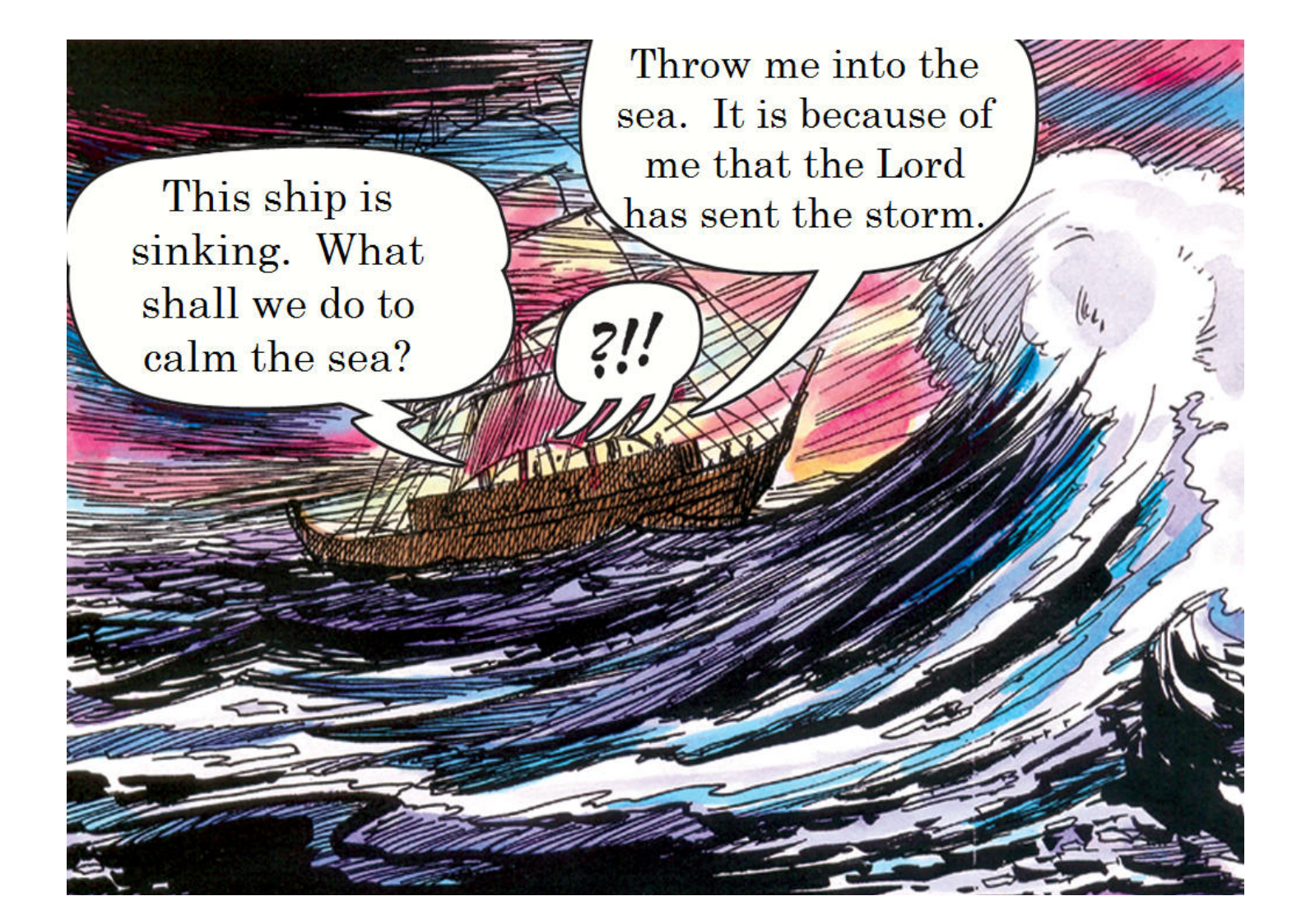
I am a Hebrew. I worship Yahweh who created the heaven and earth.



What did you do?

I was running away
from God.






This ship is sinking. What shall we do to calm the sea?

Throw me into the sea. It is because of me that the Lord has sent the storm.

?!!

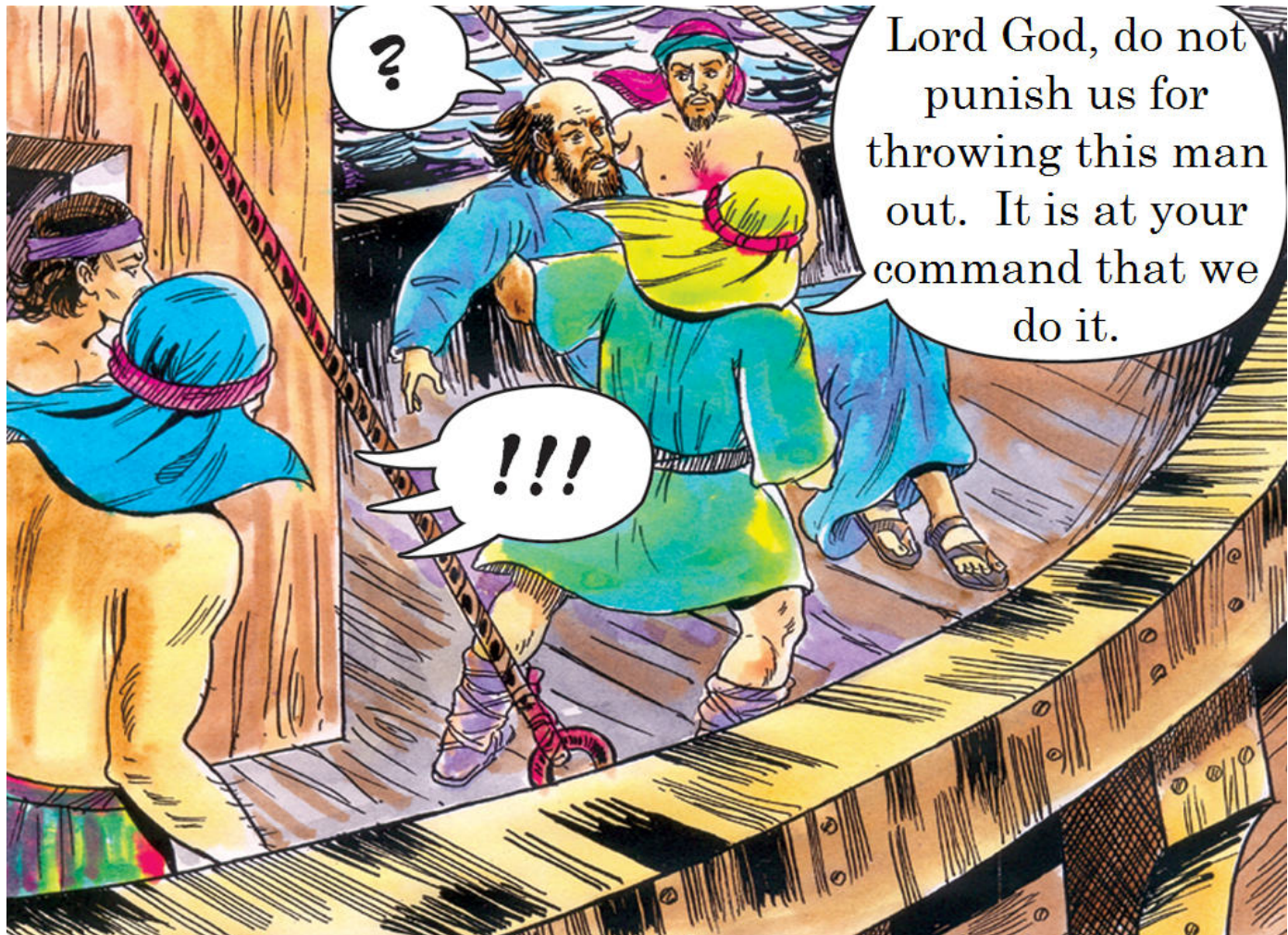


We can't just throw someone into the deep sea. Come on, let us try harder and see if we can reach land.

Alas!

Oh! Baal..

No use, we are doomed.

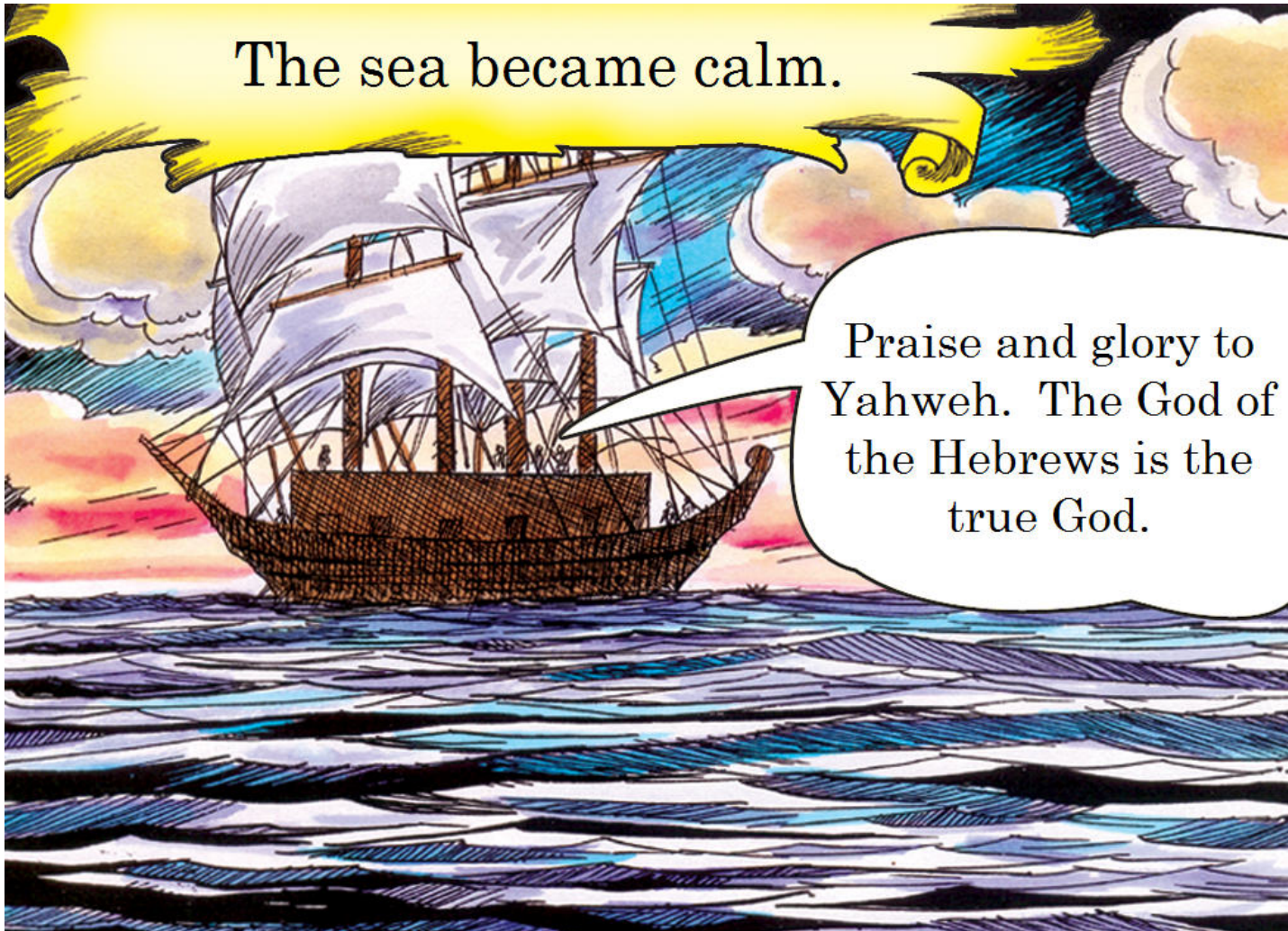


?

!!!

Lord God, do not punish us for throwing this man out. It is at your command that we do it.

The sea became calm.

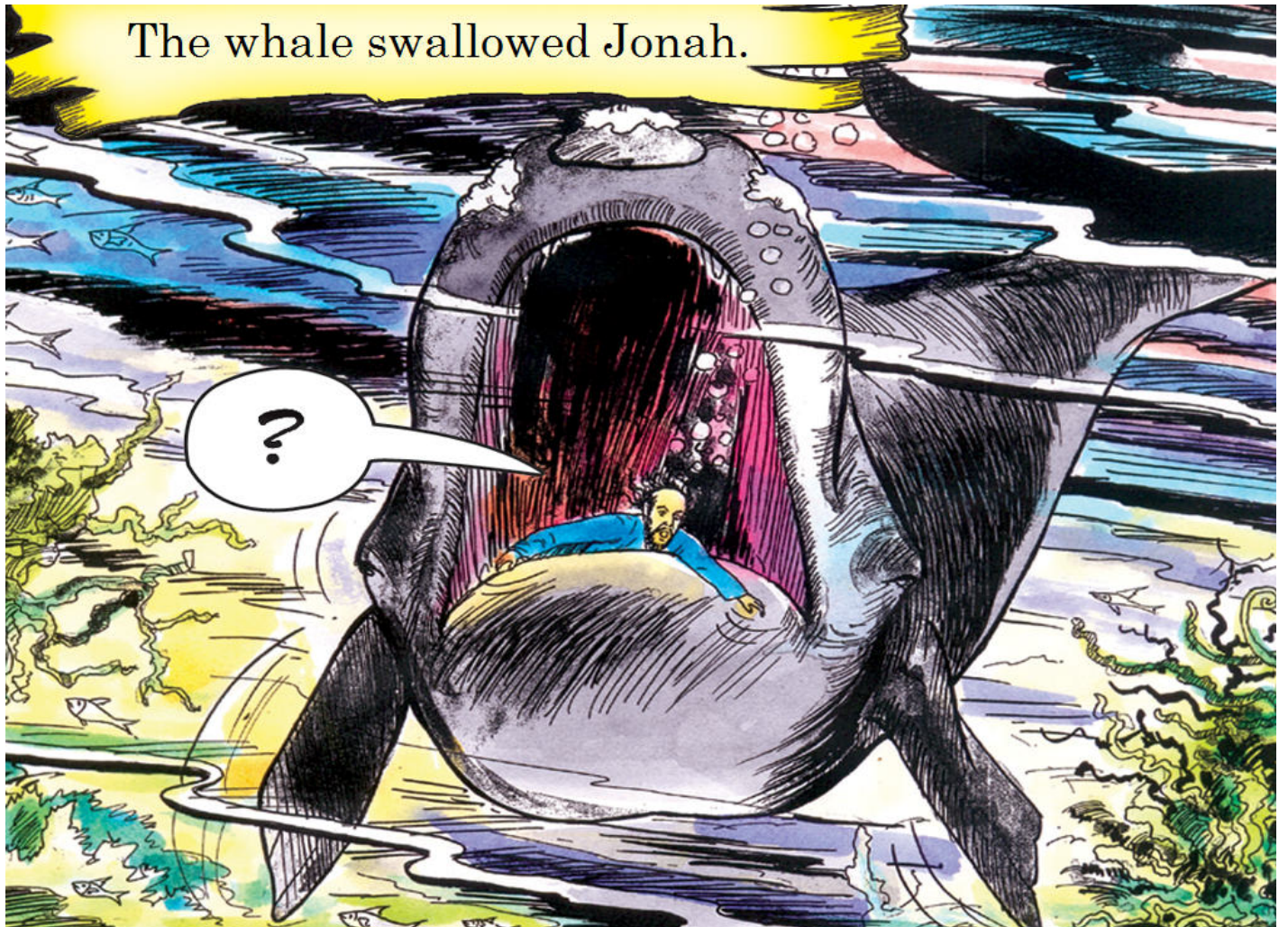


Praise and glory to
Yahweh. The God of
the Hebrews is the
true God.

Saved! Now, I won't have
to go to Nineveh. Oh,
No! Whale!



The whale swallowed Jonah.

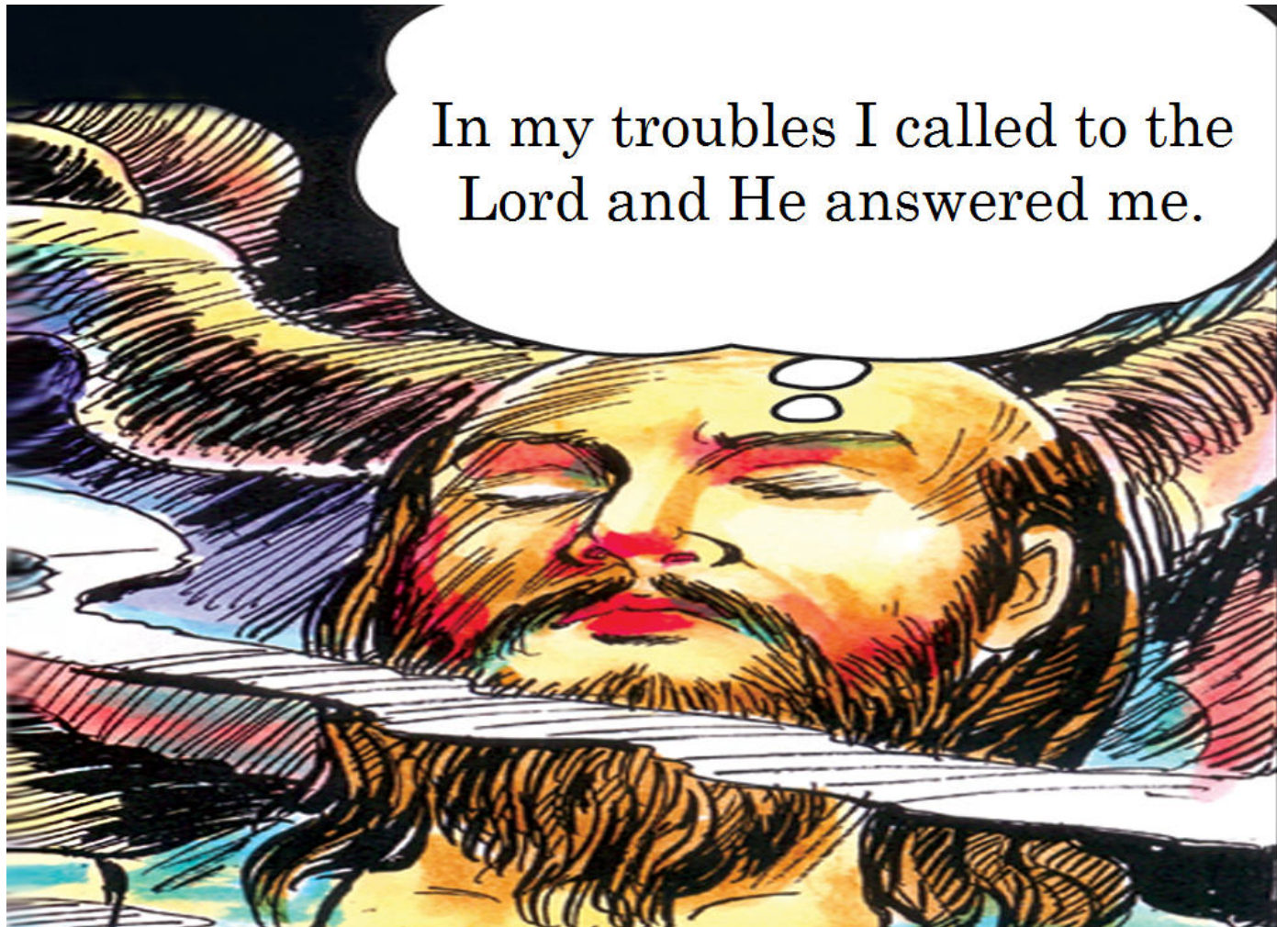


Jonah in the whale's belly.

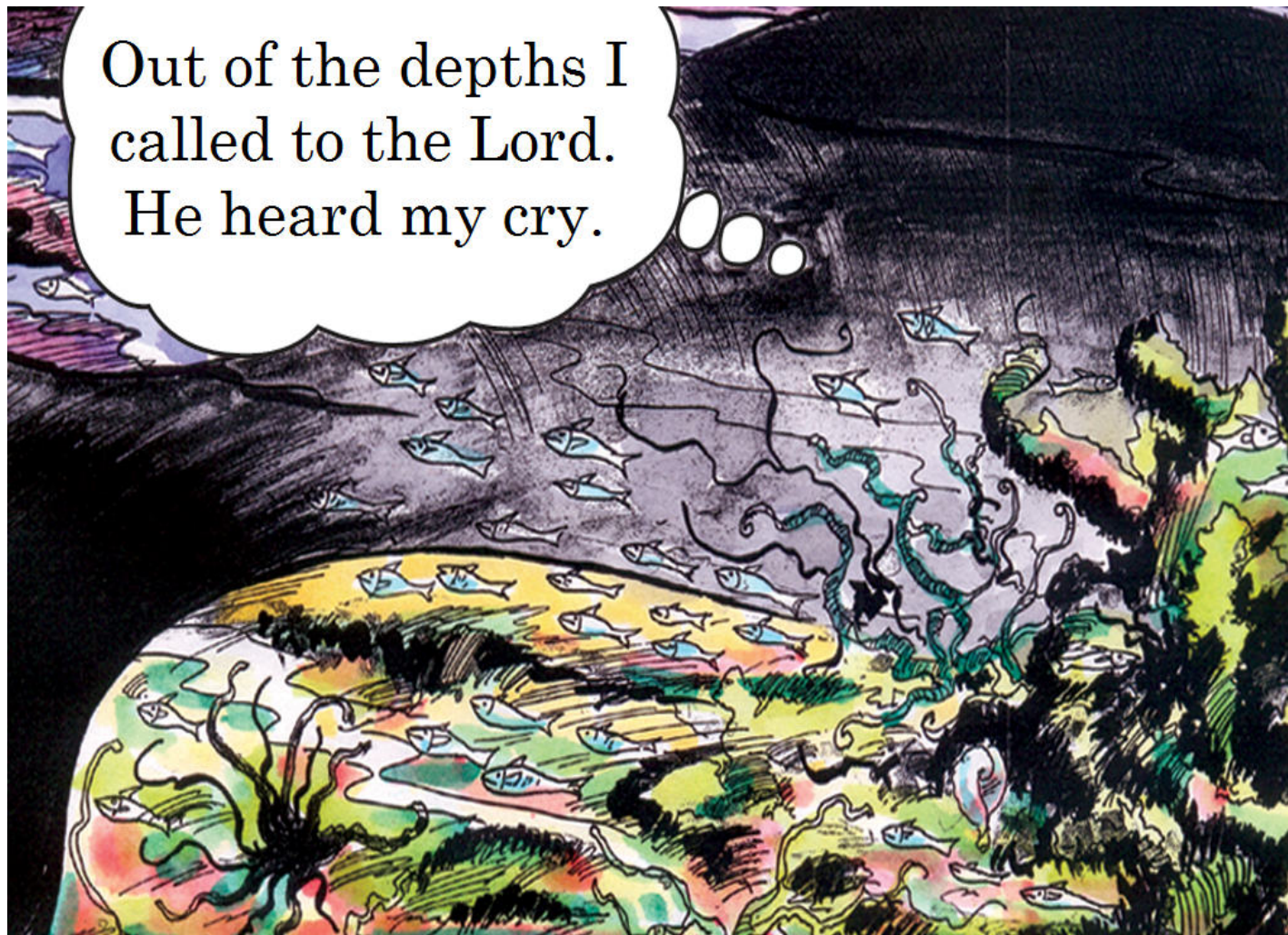
I am still alive. But soon I
will become a part of
this fish.



In my troubles I called to the
Lord and He answered me.

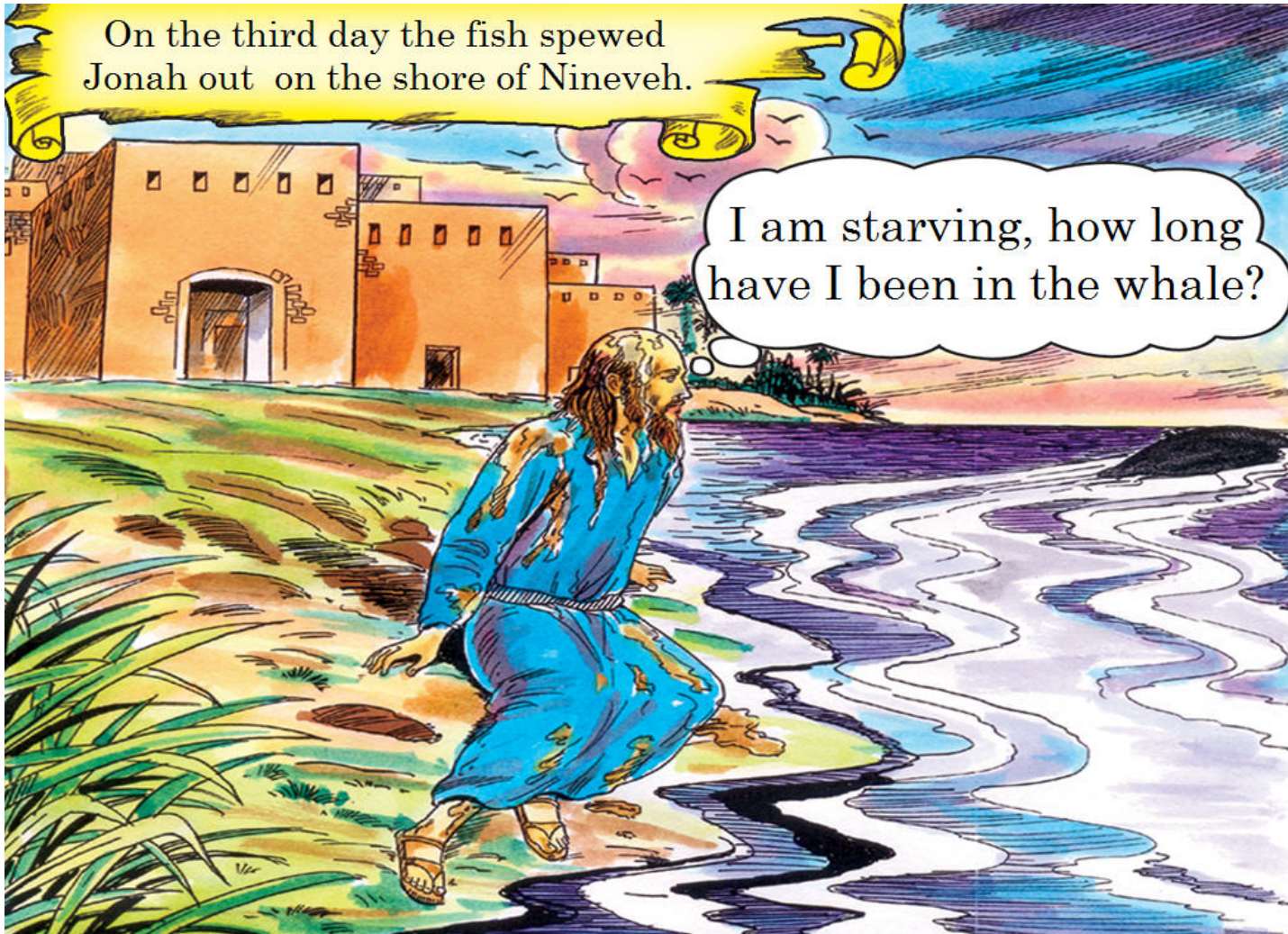


Out of the depths I
called to the Lord.
He heard my cry.



On the third day the fish spewed
Jonah out on the shore of Nineveh.

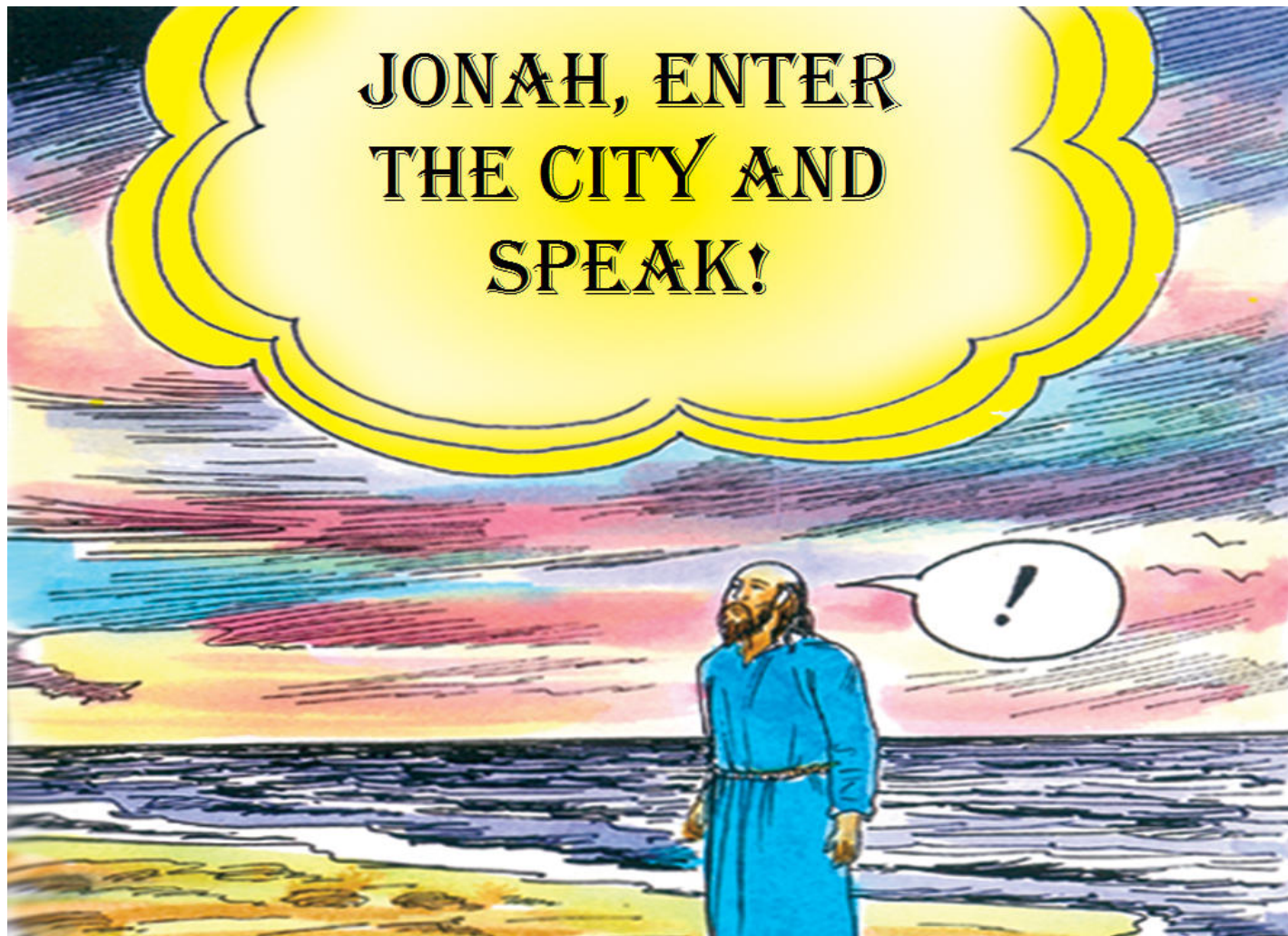
I am starving, how long
have I been in the whale?



Where can I go now? In the water that monster is waiting. Oh, my God I am in Nineveh!



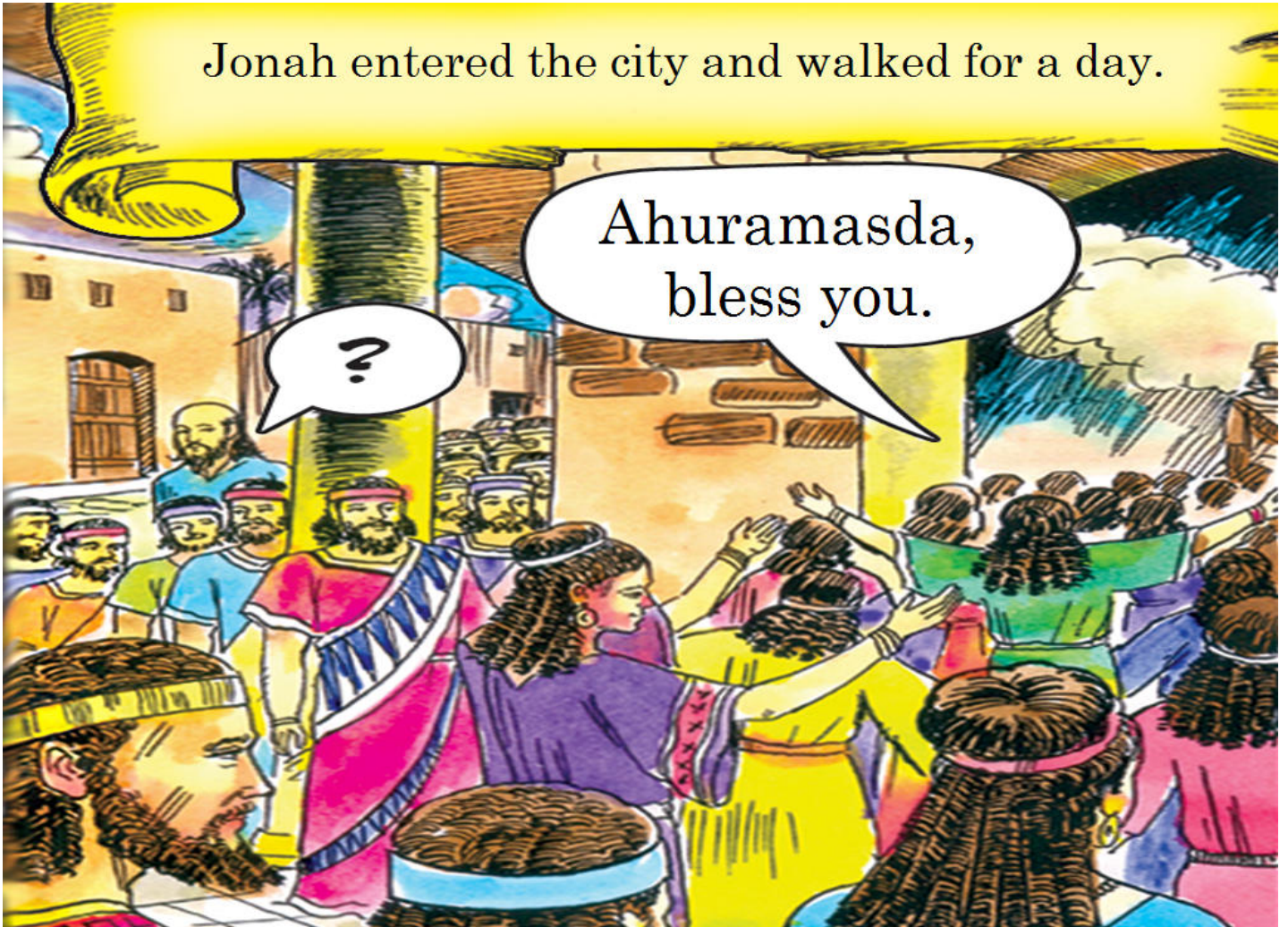
**JONAH, ENTER
THE CITY AND
SPEAK!**

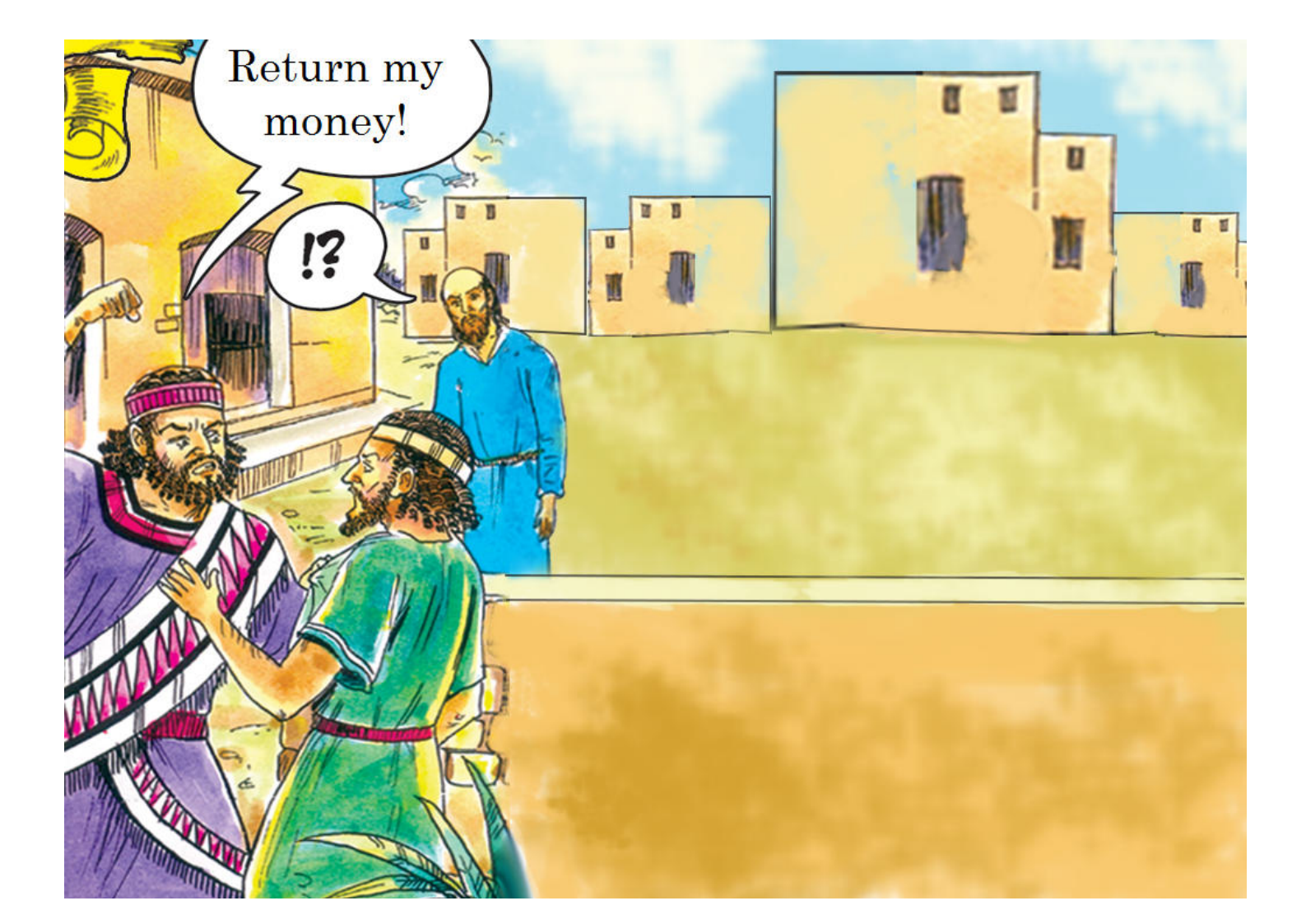


Jonah entered the city and walked for a day.

Ahuramasda,
bless you.

?





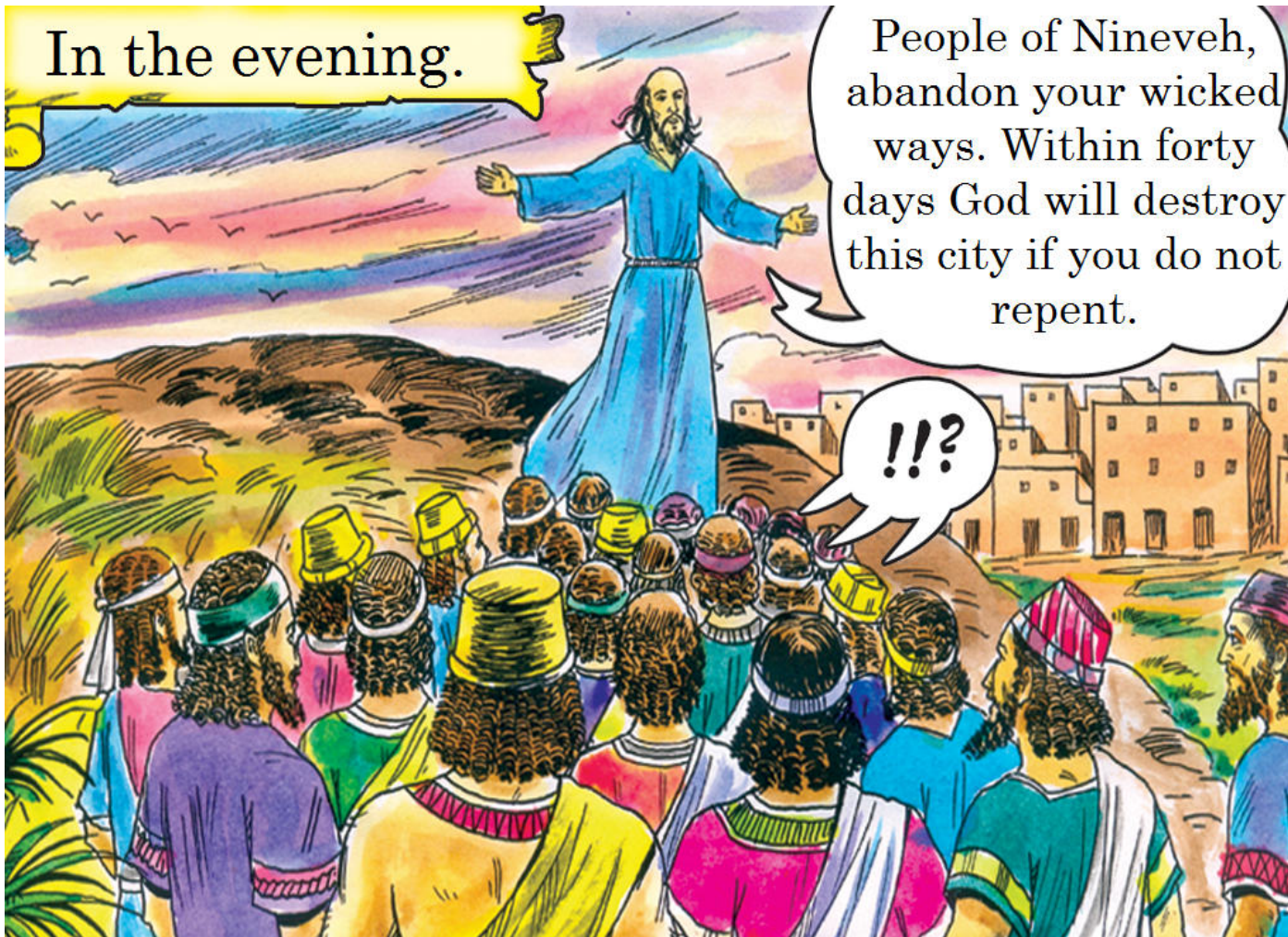
Return my
money!

!?

In the evening.

People of Nineveh,
abandon your wicked
ways. Within forty
days God will destroy
this city if you do not
repent.

!!?



After the talk.

Will be interesting to see this
Gentile city burning down like
Sodom and Gomorrah!



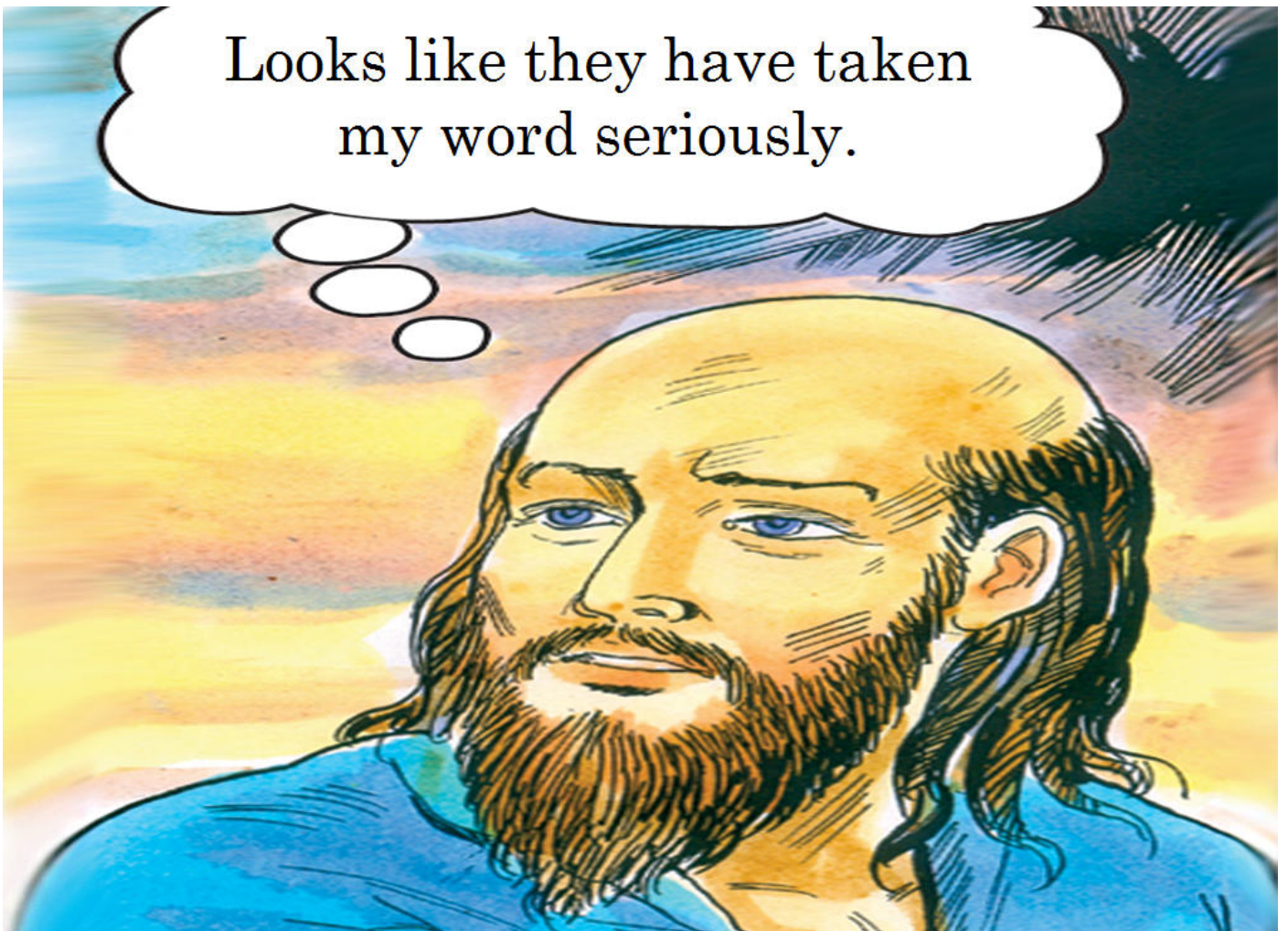


Gentiles, you
deserve it.

What if they repent?
Hope they won't.



Looks like they have taken
my word seriously.



Among the people of Nineveh.

He is a Prophet.
What he said
might come
true.

God is merciful. If
we repent, He will
forgive us.

Let us
inform the
king.

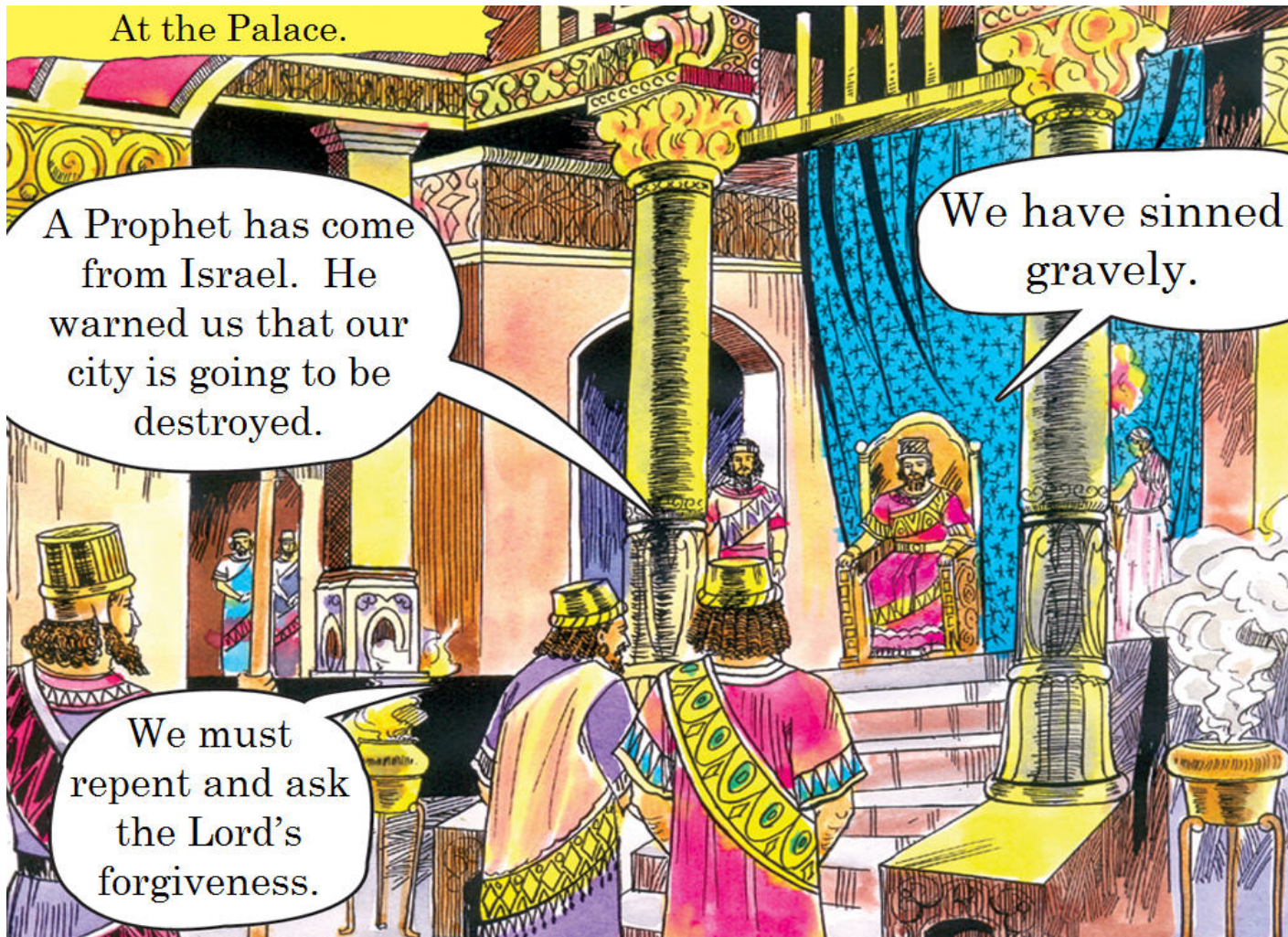


At the Palace.

A Prophet has come from Israel. He warned us that our city is going to be destroyed.

We have sinned gravely.

We must repent and ask the Lord's forgiveness.



Starting tomorrow, we must fast
and do penance. Man and beast, all
must fast. No food or drink!

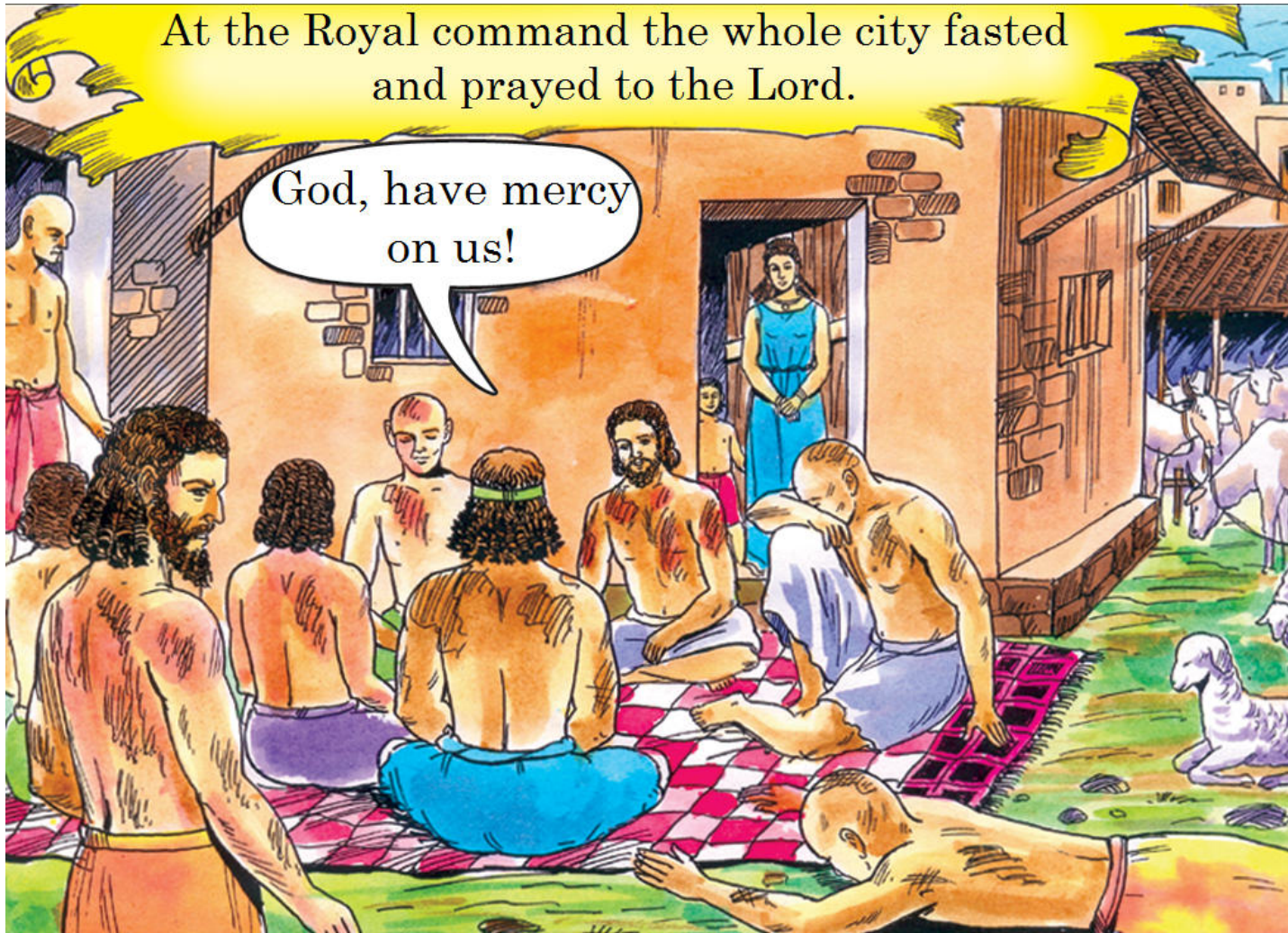


All must wear sack clothes. Cover themselves with ashes, and pray for God's mercy. Announce this command throughout the city!

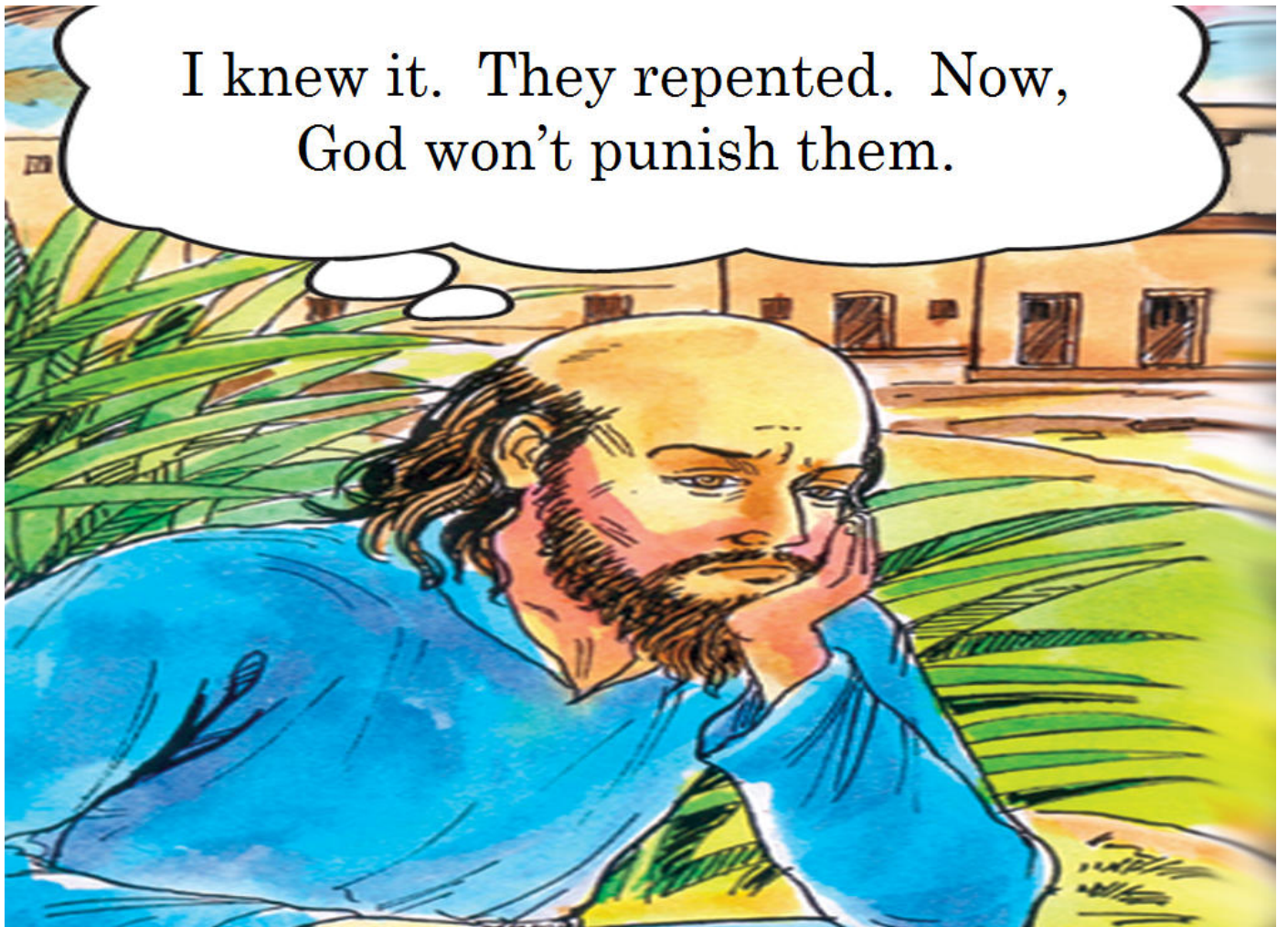


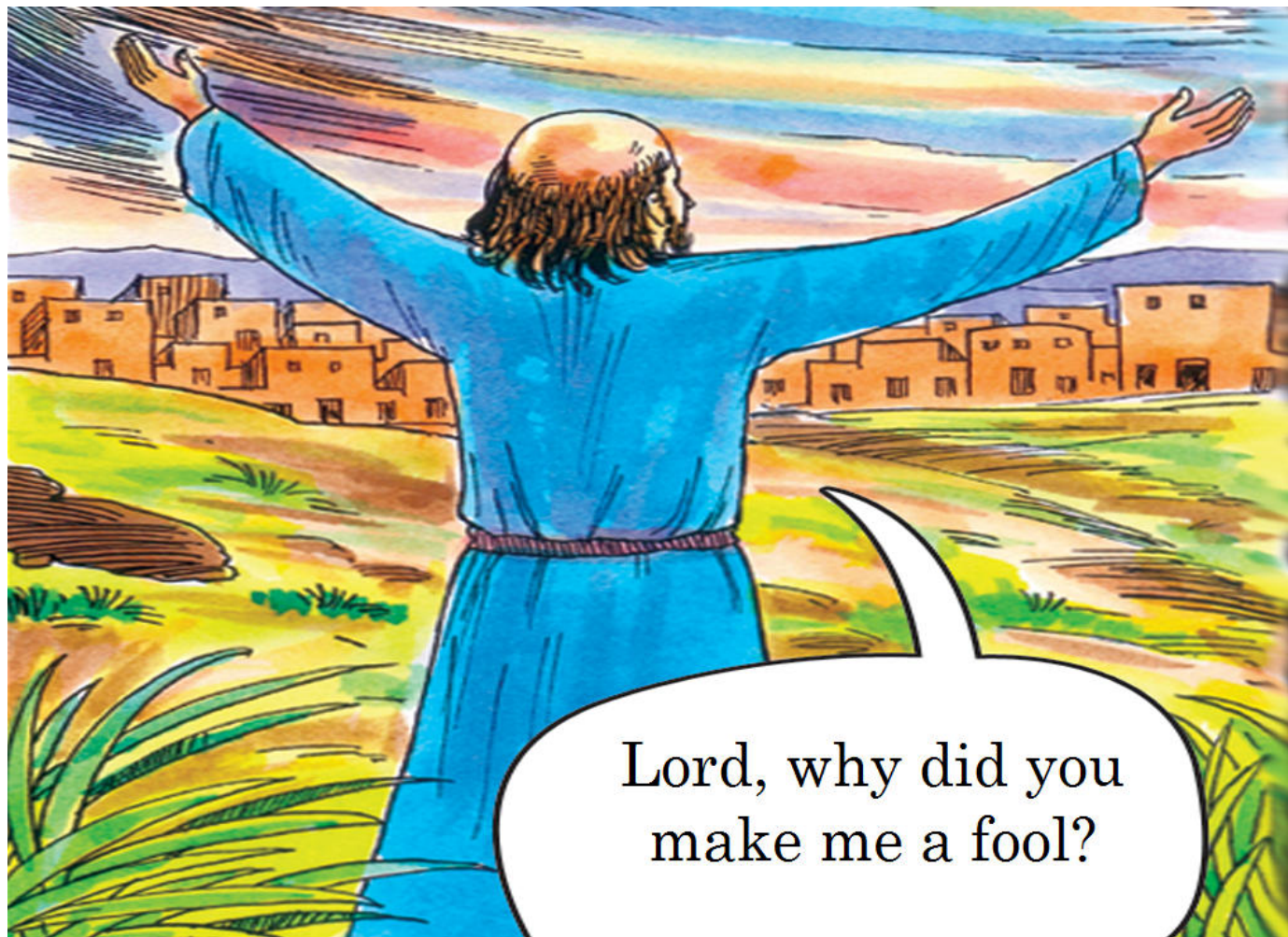
At the Royal command the whole city fasted
and prayed to the Lord.

God, have mercy
on us!



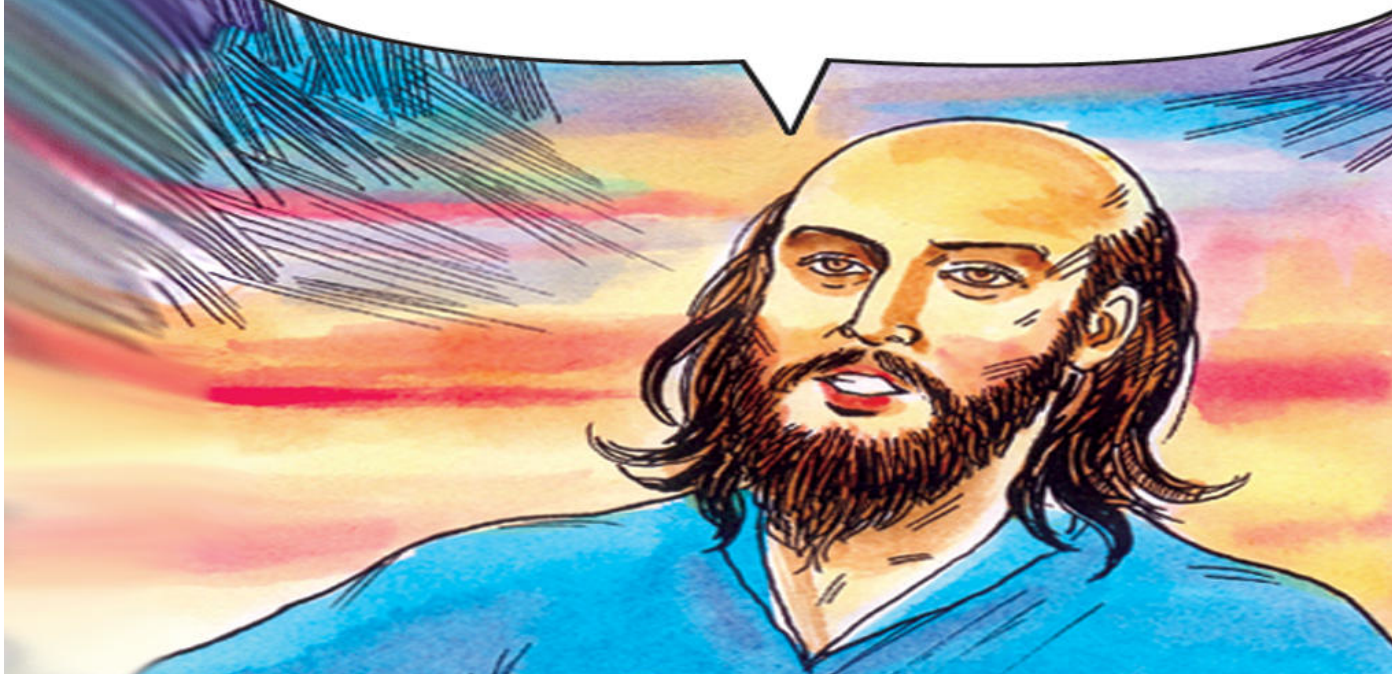
I knew it. They repented. Now,
God won't punish them.



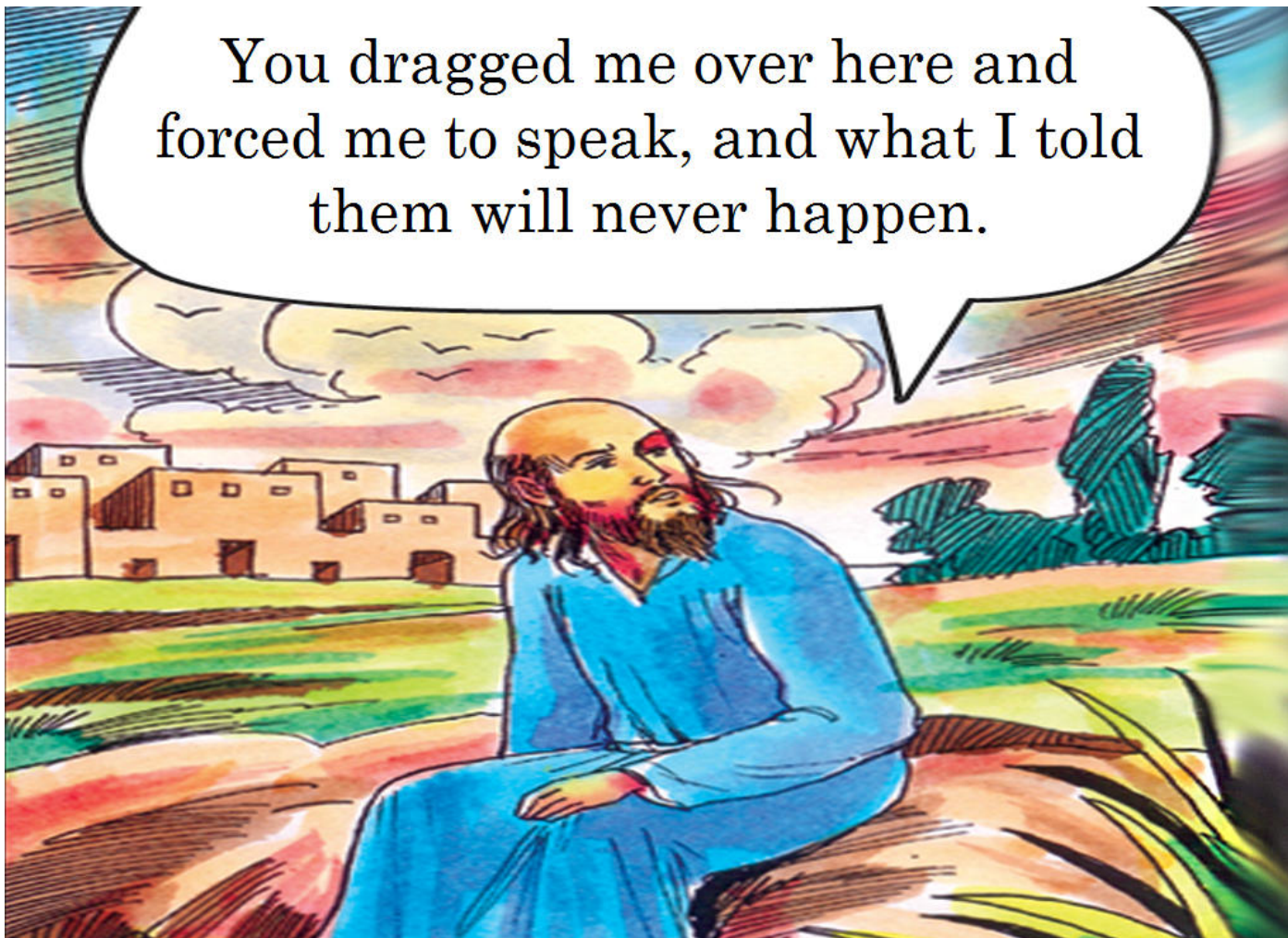


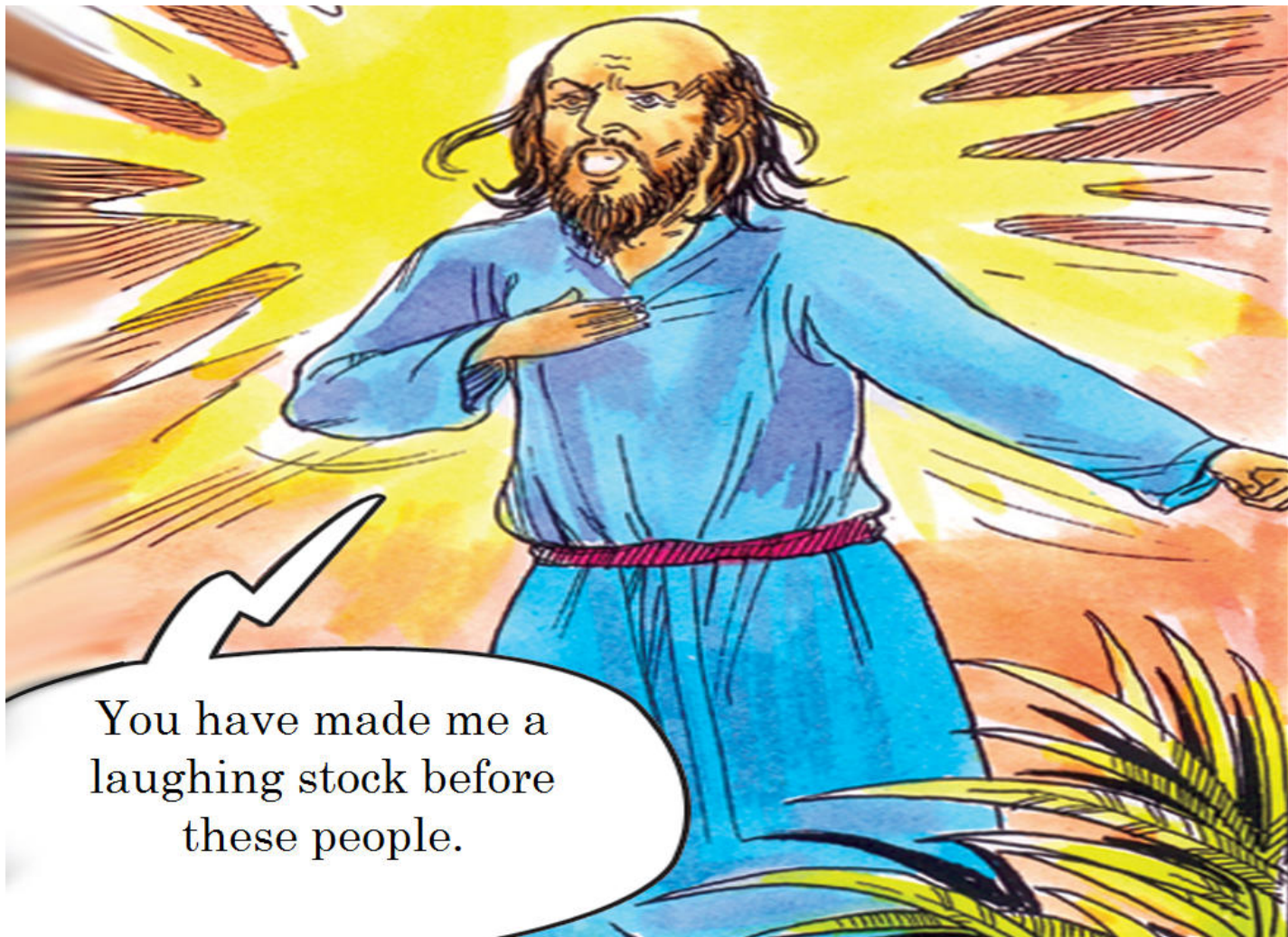
Lord, why did you
make me a fool?

I knew that you are merciful and slow to anger. That's why I tried to go to Tarshish.



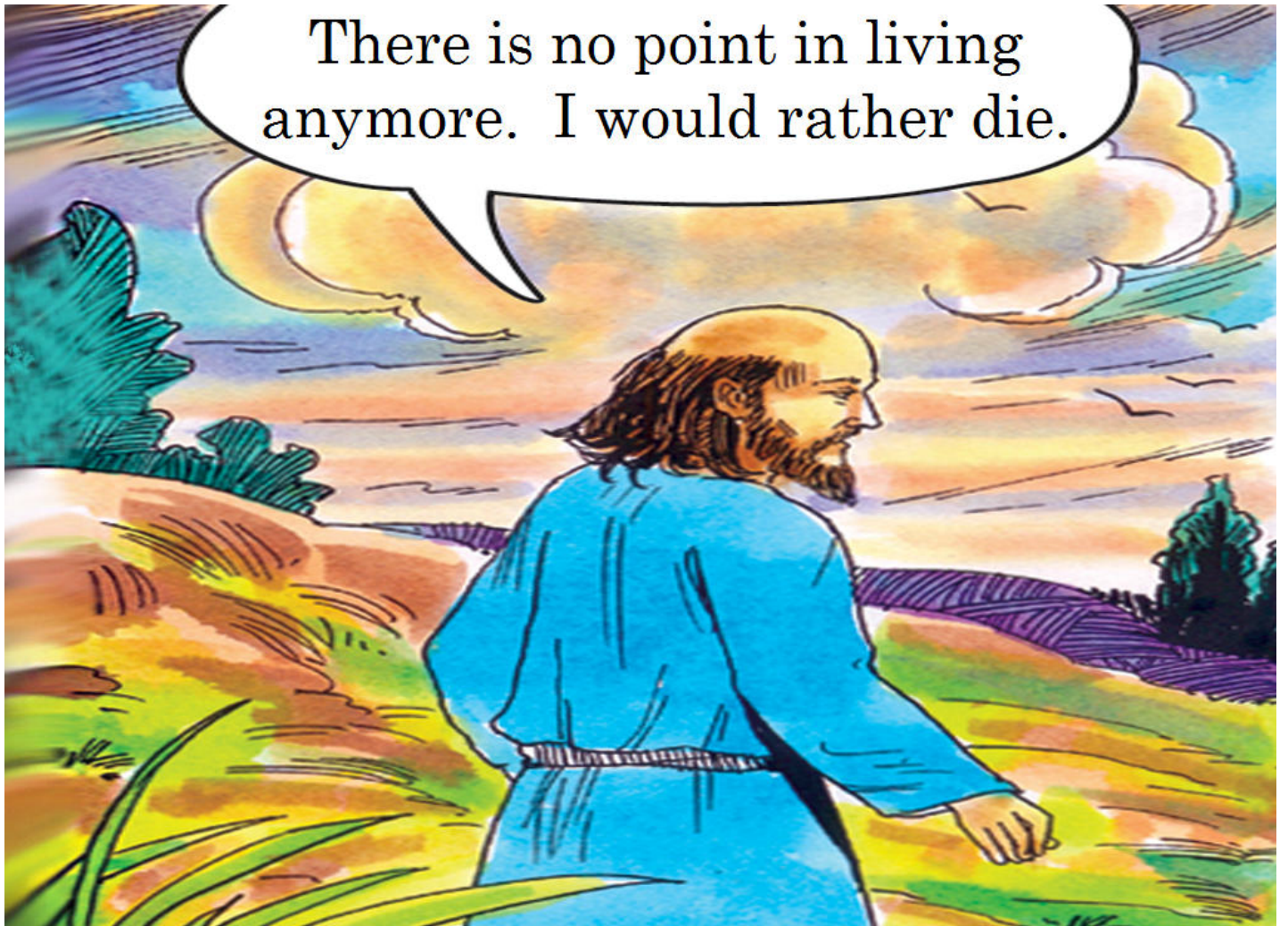
You dragged me over here and forced me to speak, and what I told them will never happen.



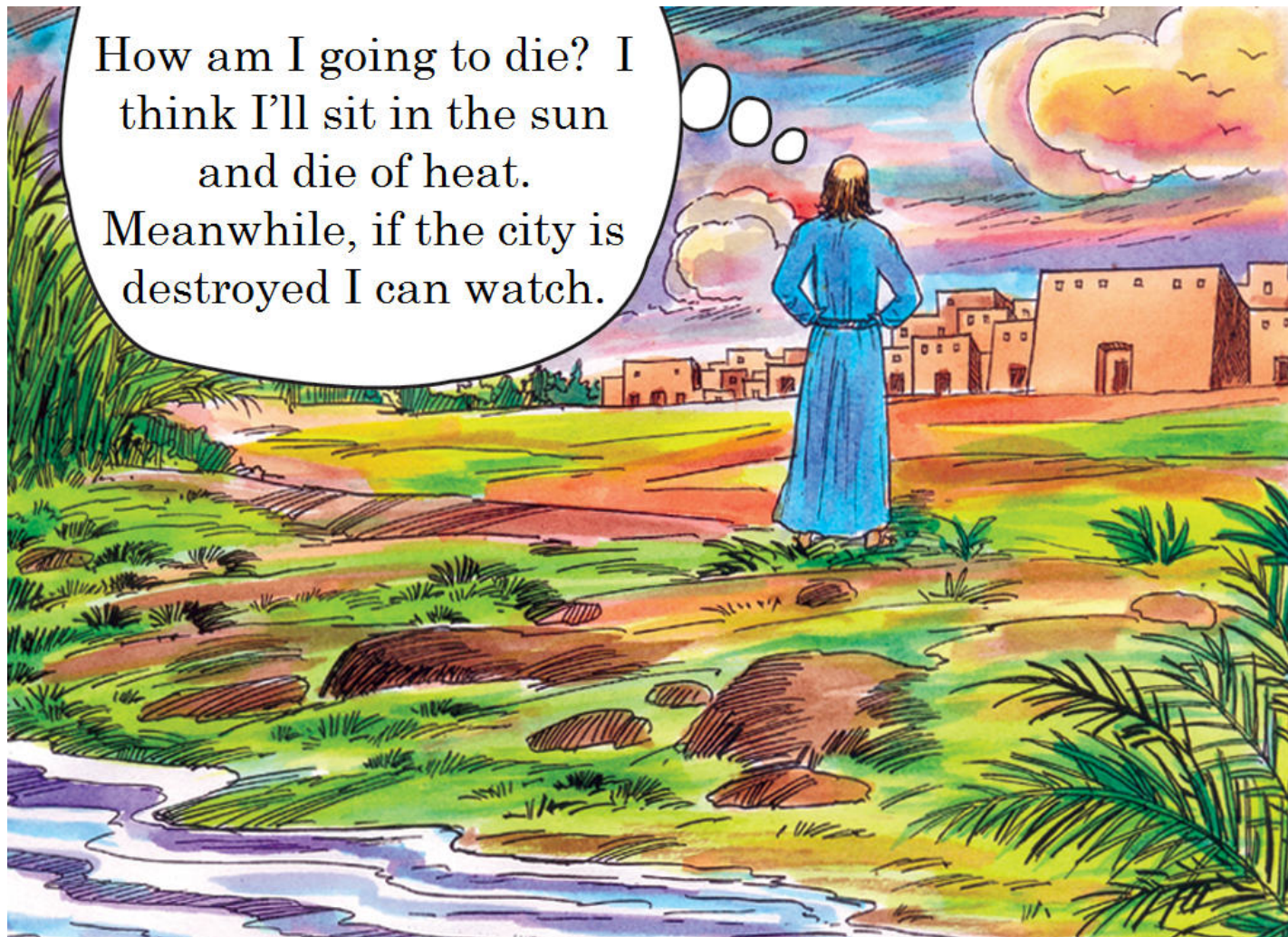


You have made me a laughing stock before these people.

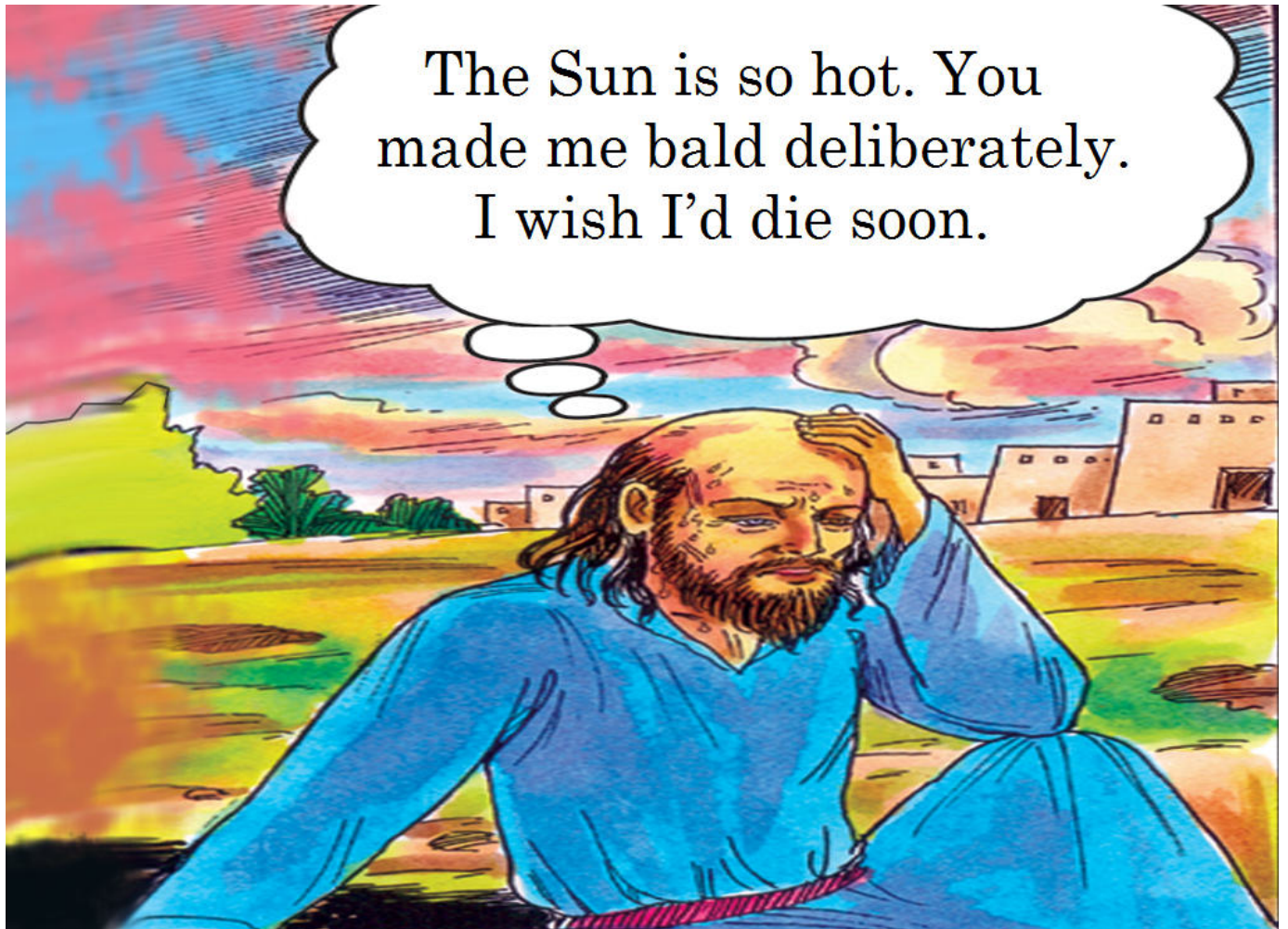
There is no point in living
anymore. I would rather die.



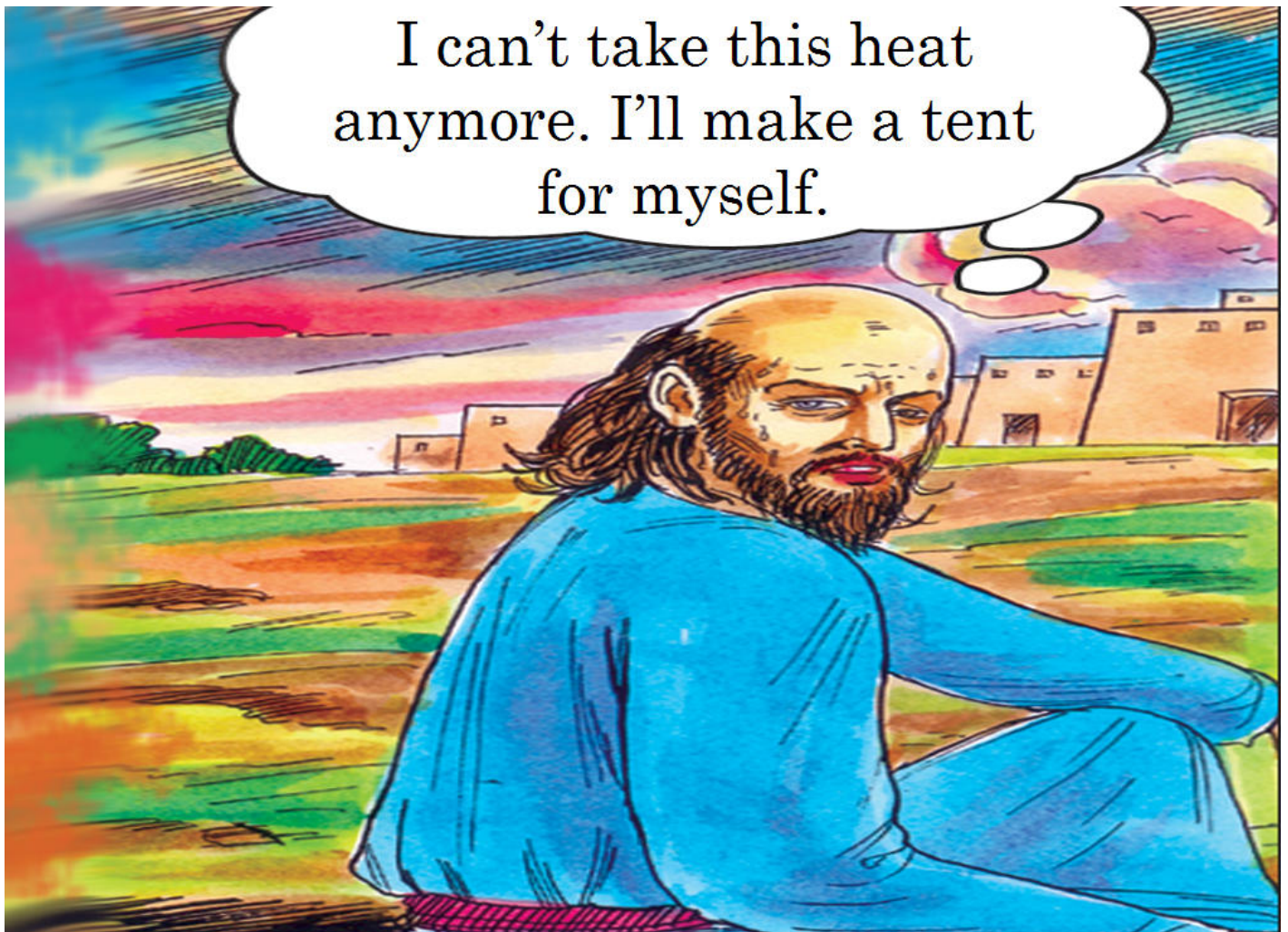
How am I going to die? I think I'll sit in the sun and die of heat. Meanwhile, if the city is destroyed I can watch.



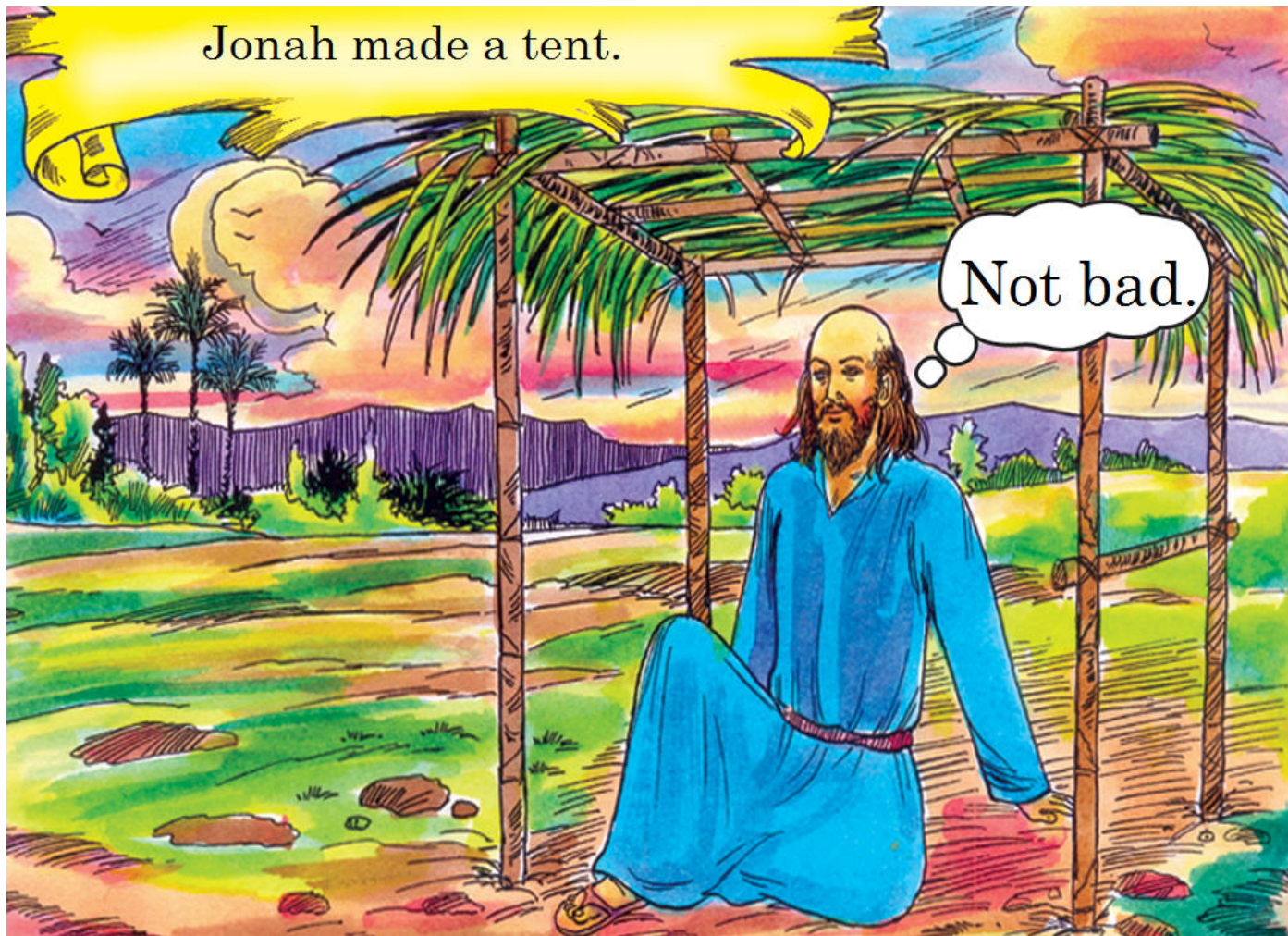
The Sun is so hot. You
made me bald deliberately.
I wish I'd die soon.



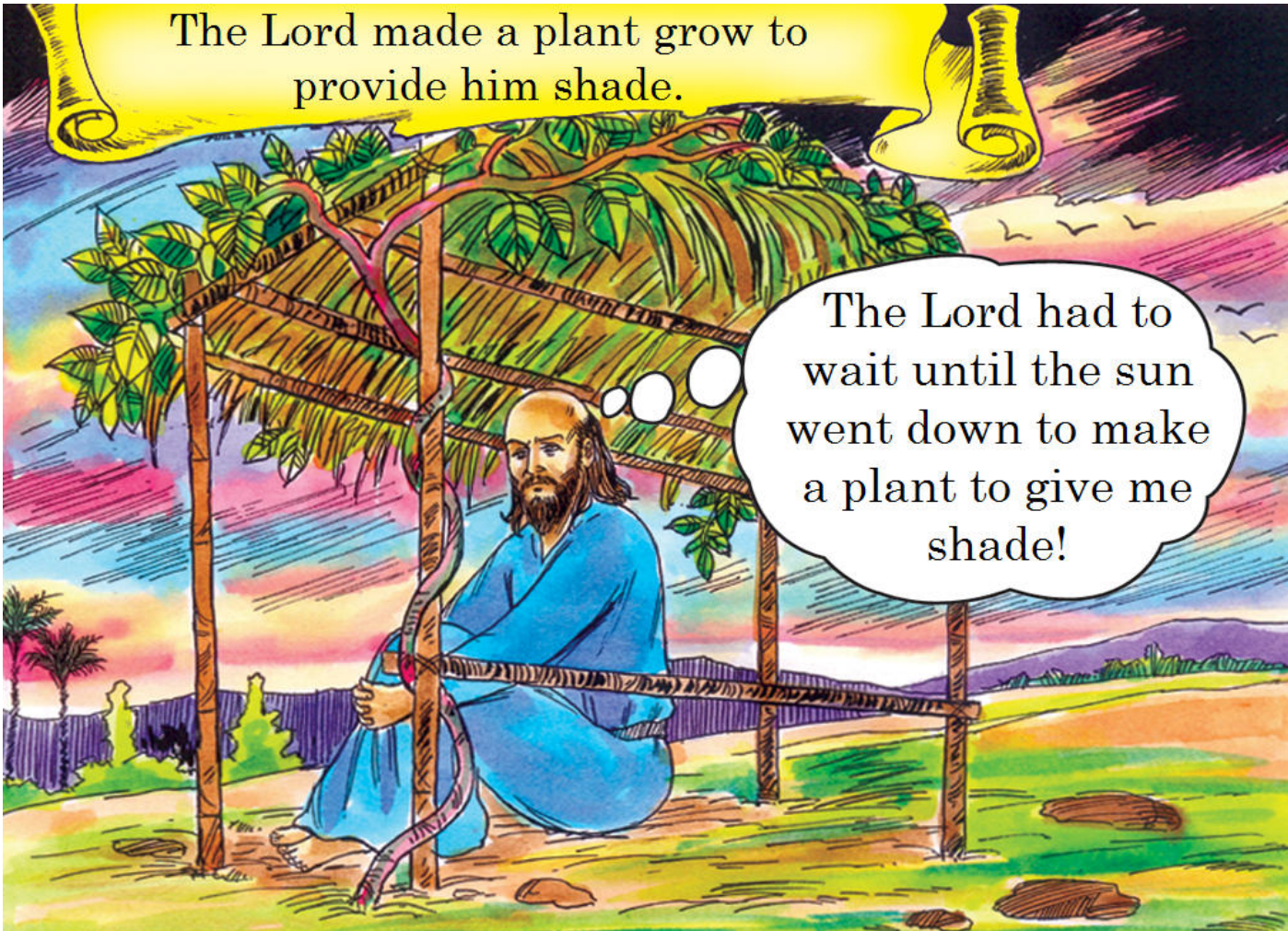
I can't take this heat
anymore. I'll make a tent
for myself.



Jonah made a tent.



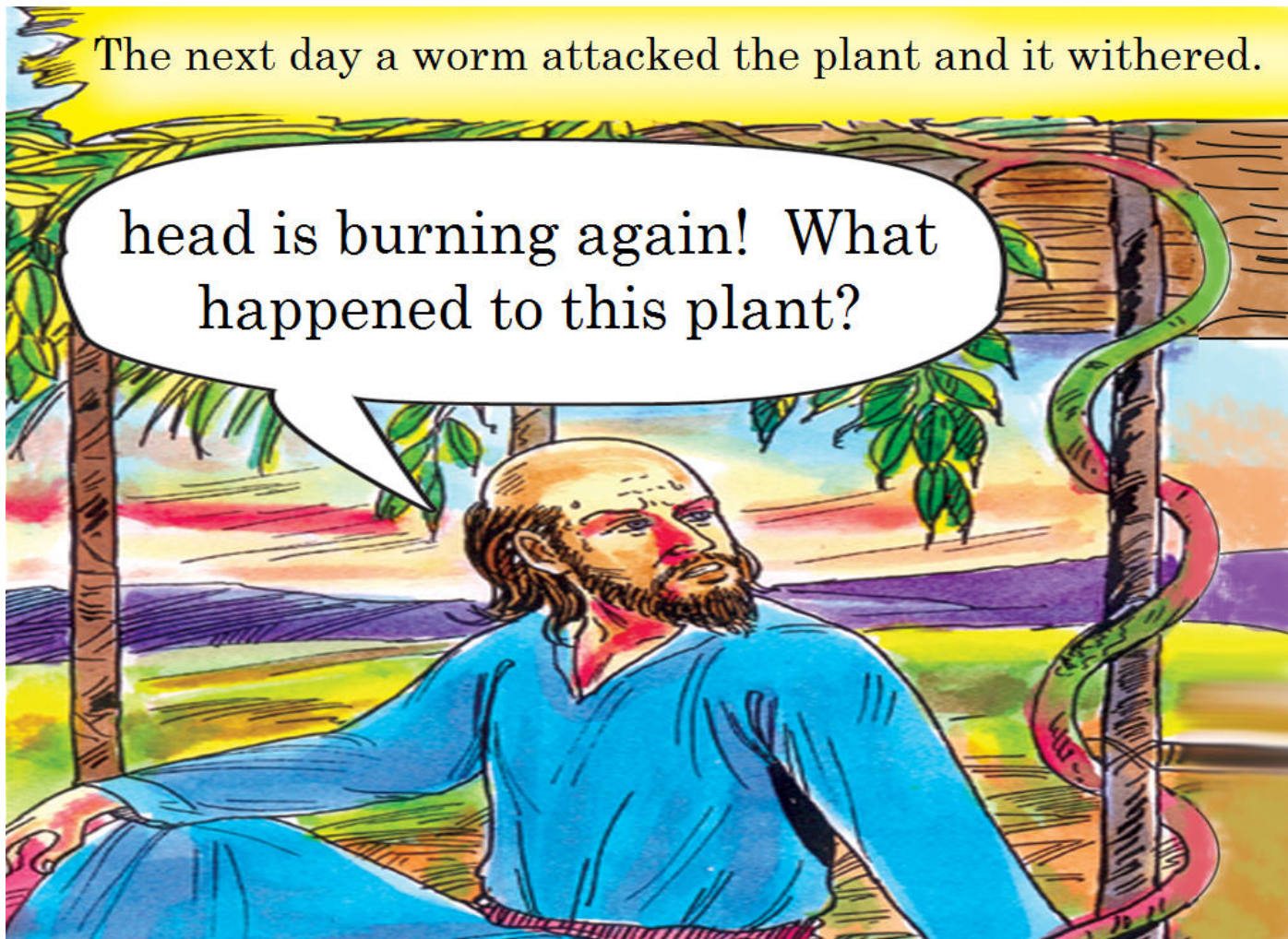
The Lord made a plant grow to provide him shade.



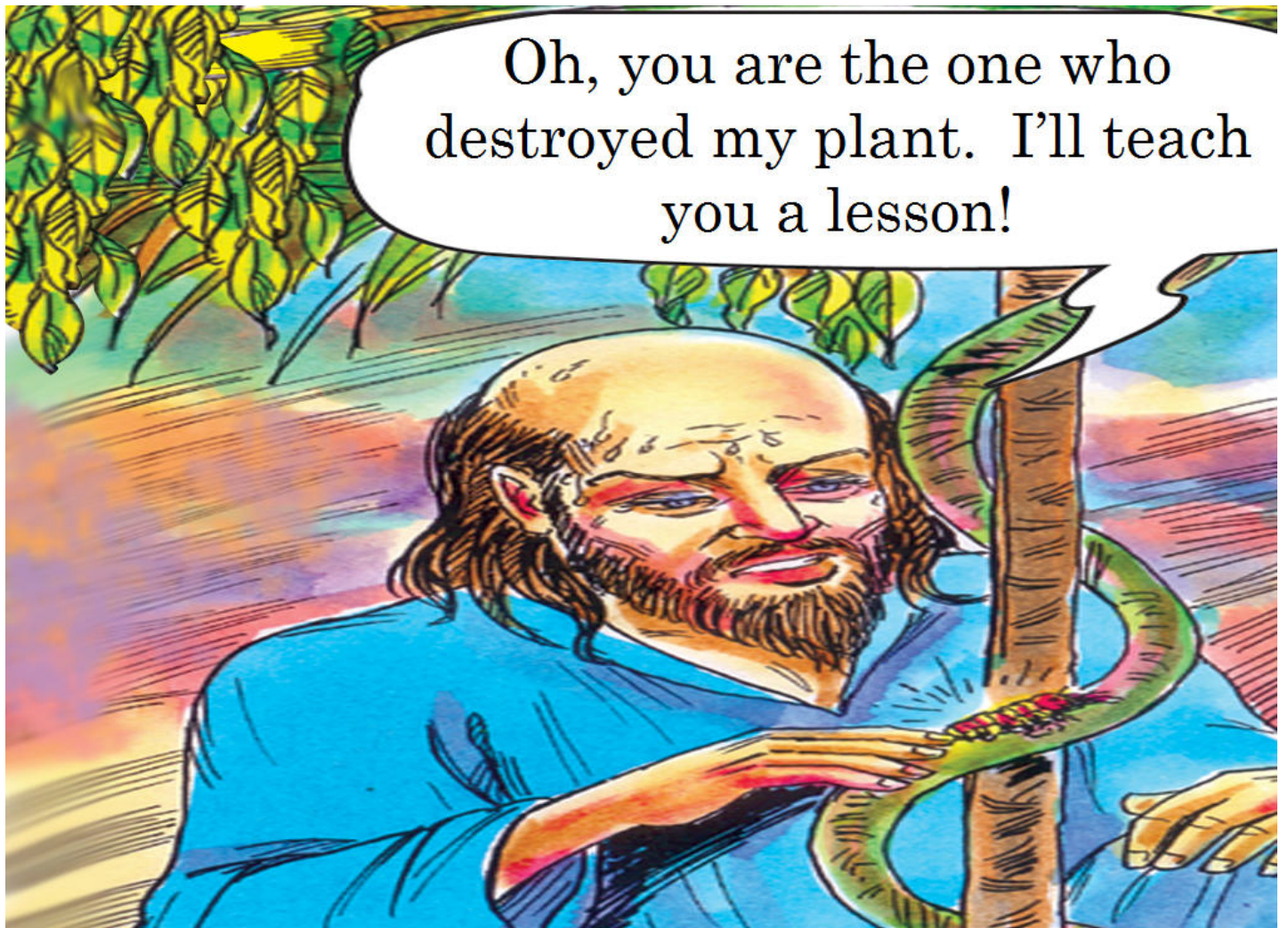
The Lord had to wait until the sun went down to make a plant to give me shade!

The next day a worm attacked the plant and it withered.

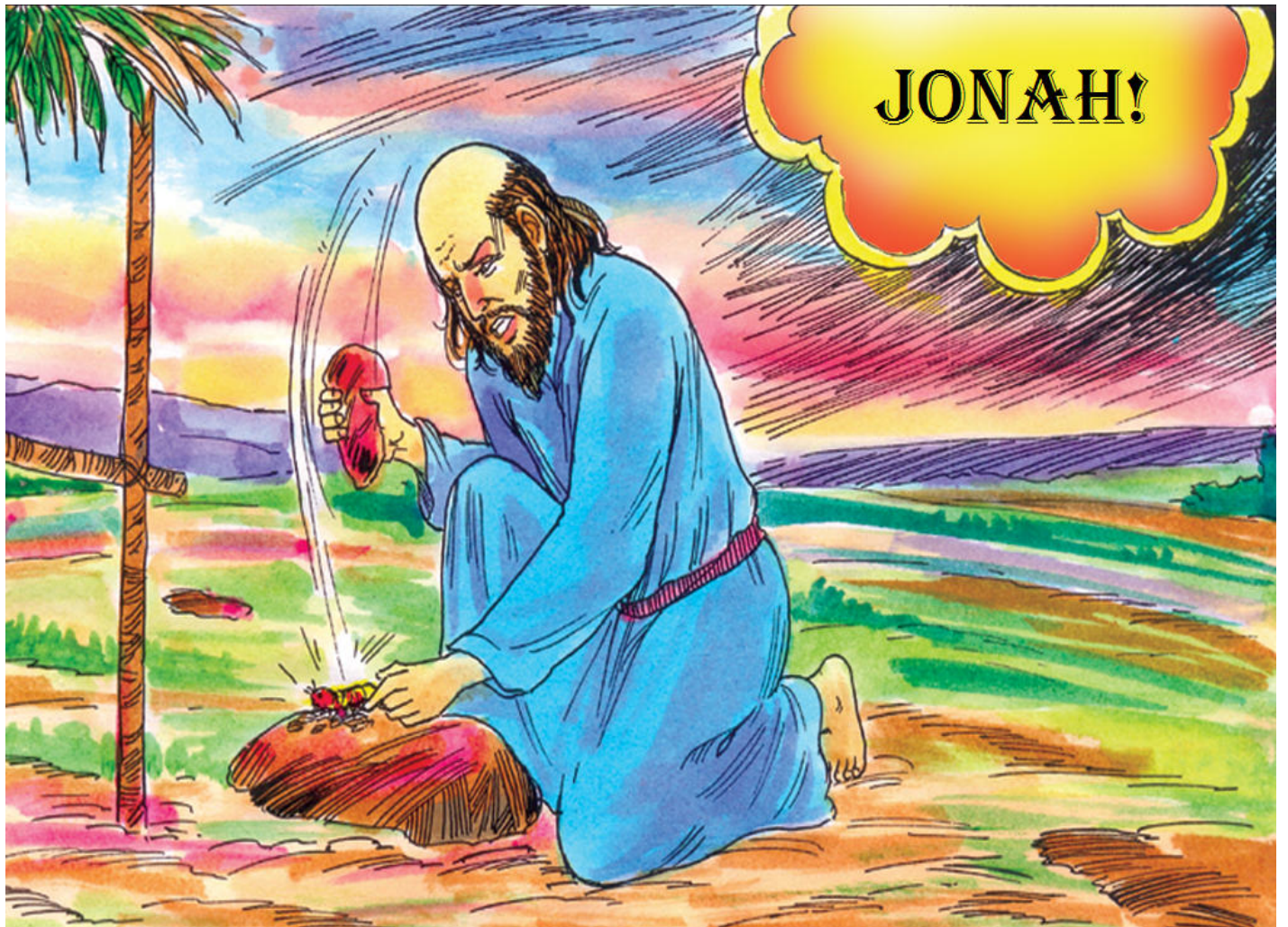
head is burning again! What happened to this plant?



Oh, you are the one who
destroyed my plant. I'll teach
you a lesson!



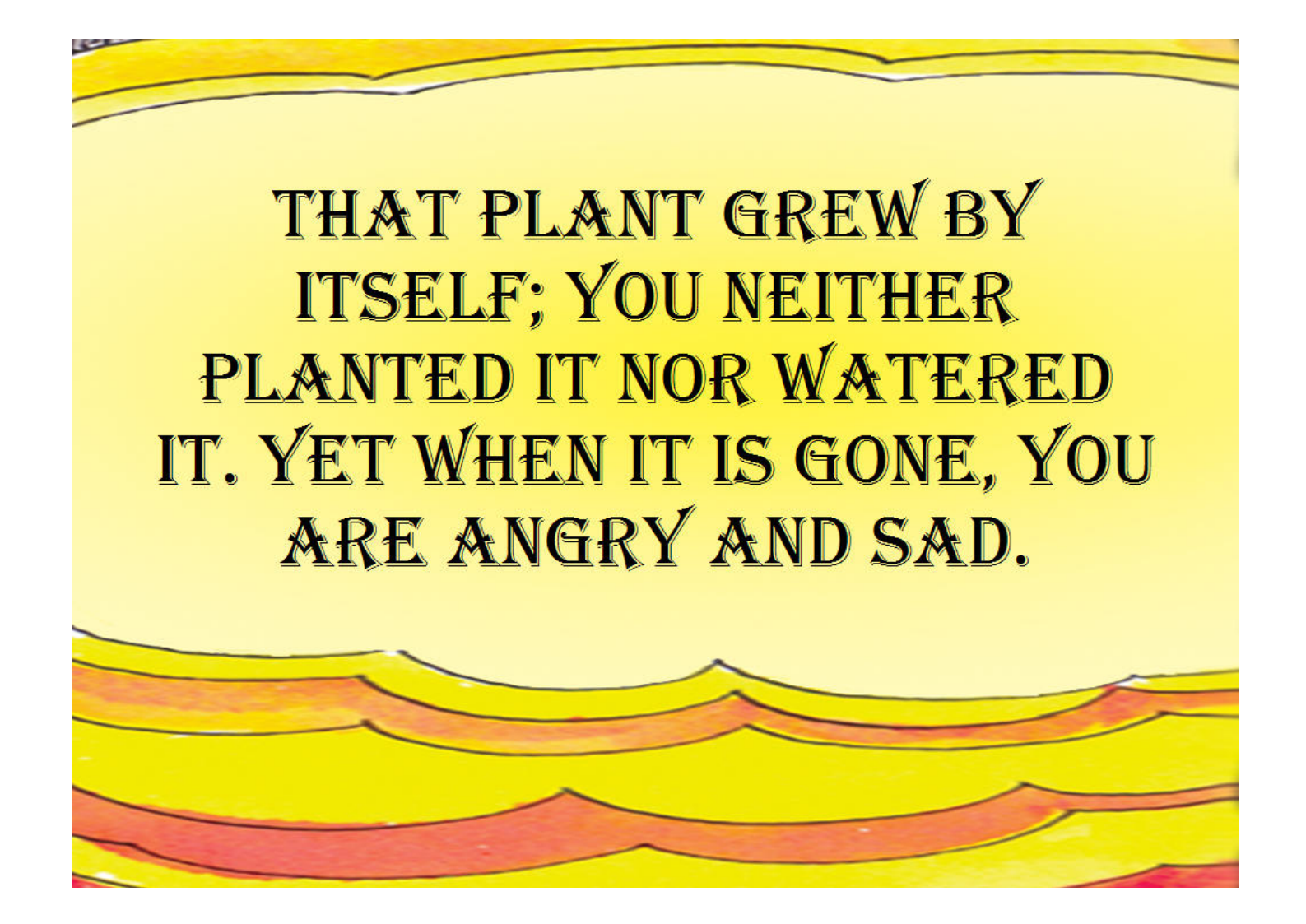
JONAH!





JONAH, WHY ARE
SO ANGRY?

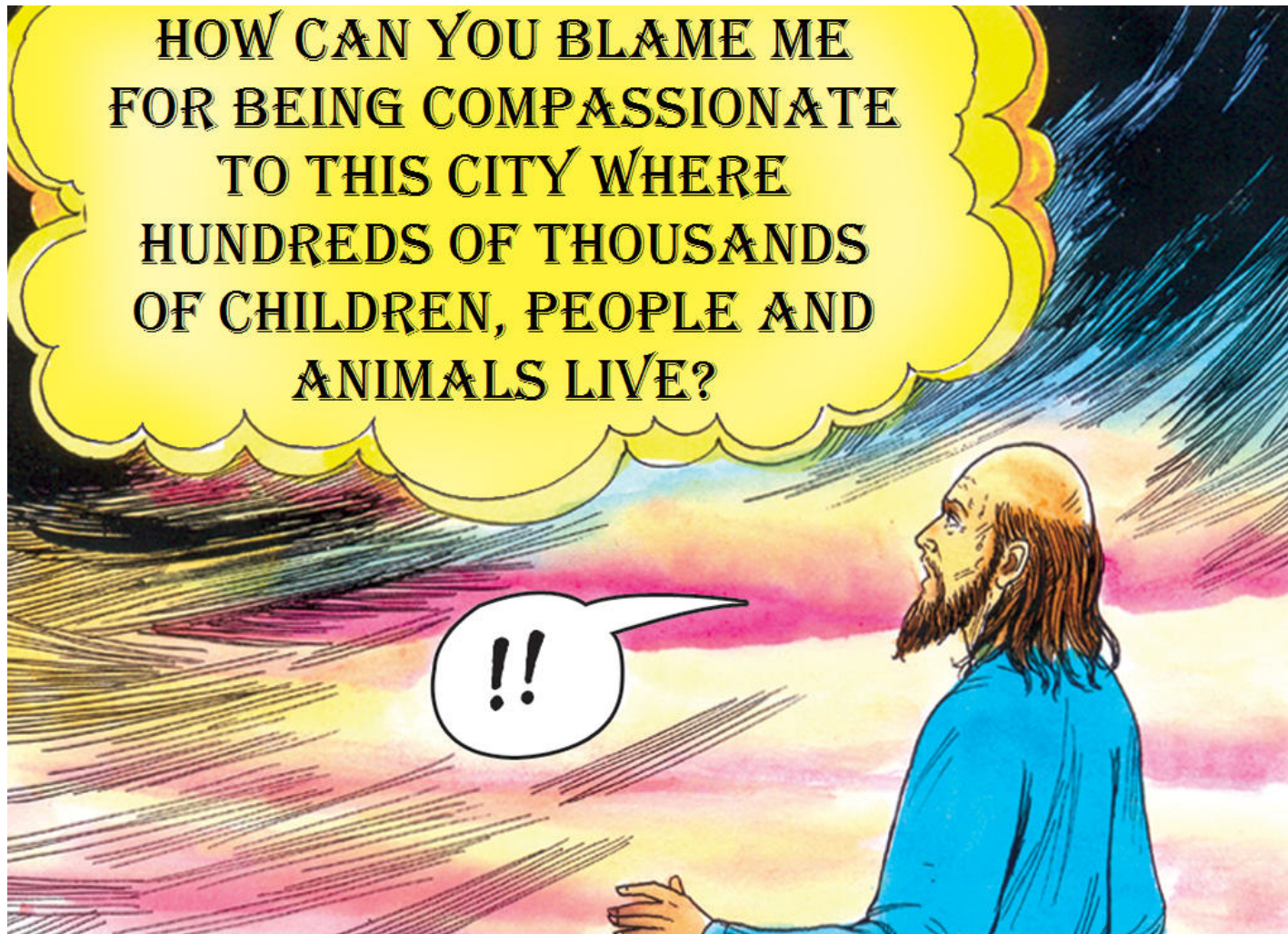
Should I rejoice that the
plant which provided
the shade is destroyed?

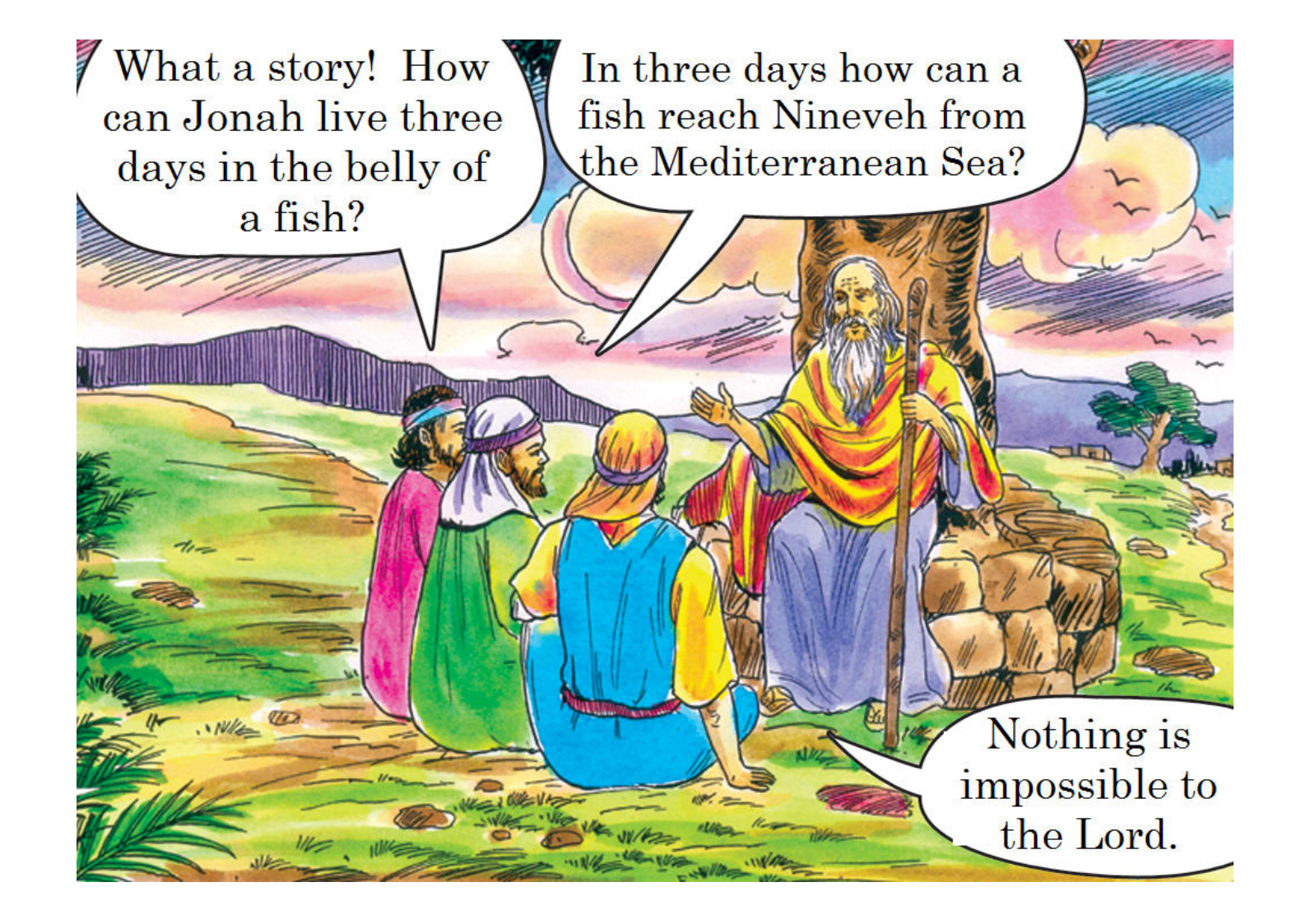


THAT PLANT GREW BY
ITSELF; YOU NEITHER
PLANTED IT NOR WATERED
IT. YET WHEN IT IS GONE, YOU
ARE ANGRY AND SAD.

HOW CAN YOU BLAME ME
FOR BEING COMPASSIONATE
TO THIS CITY WHERE
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS
OF CHILDREN, PEOPLE AND
ANIMALS LIVE?

!!





What a story! How can Jonah live three days in the belly of a fish?

In three days how can a fish reach Nineveh from the Mediterranean Sea?

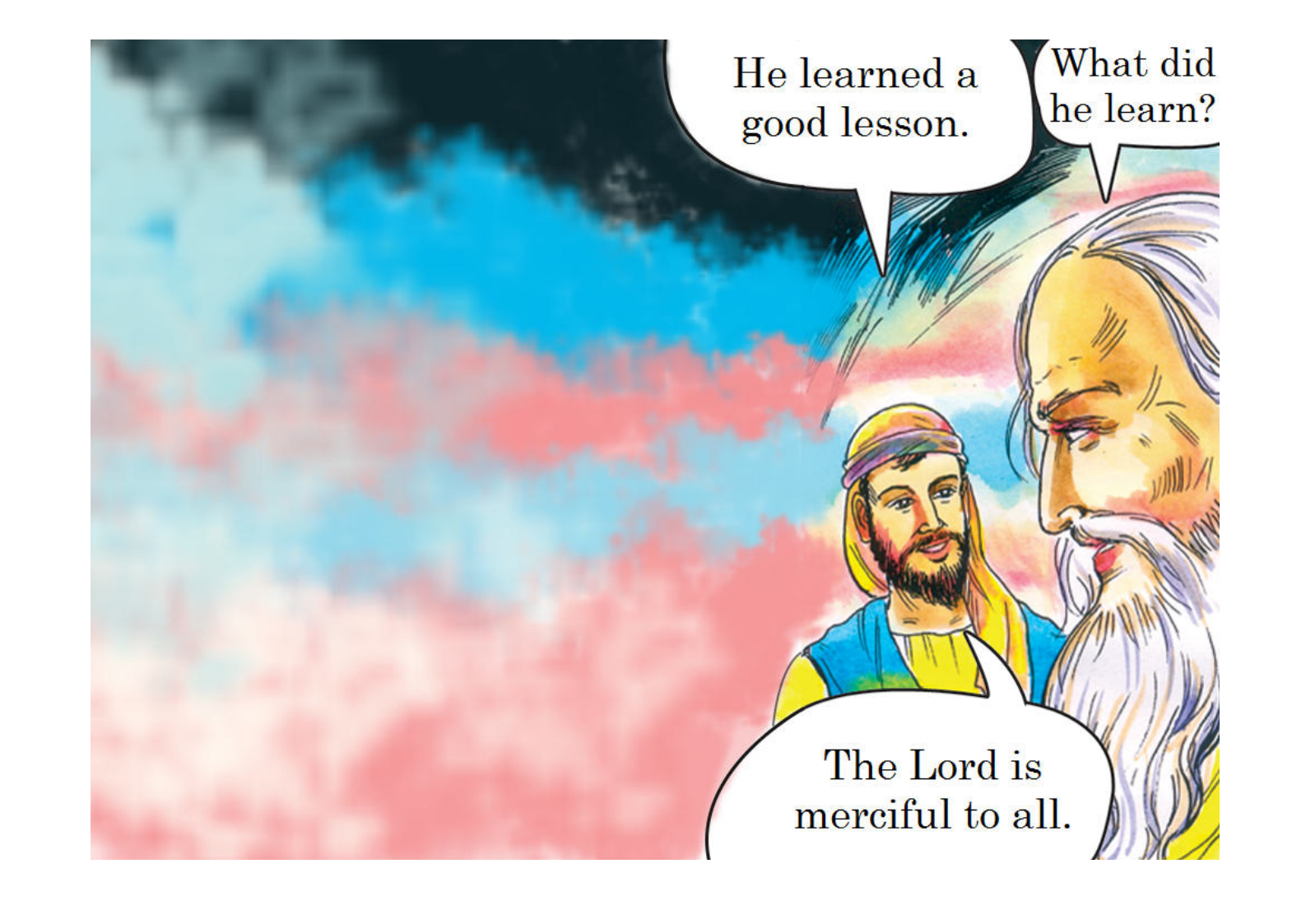
Nothing is impossible to the Lord.

The Captain and sailors of the ship were good people.

The people of Nineveh repented so fast.

Jonah was remarkable!






He learned a
good lesson.

What did
he learn?

The Lord is
merciful to all.



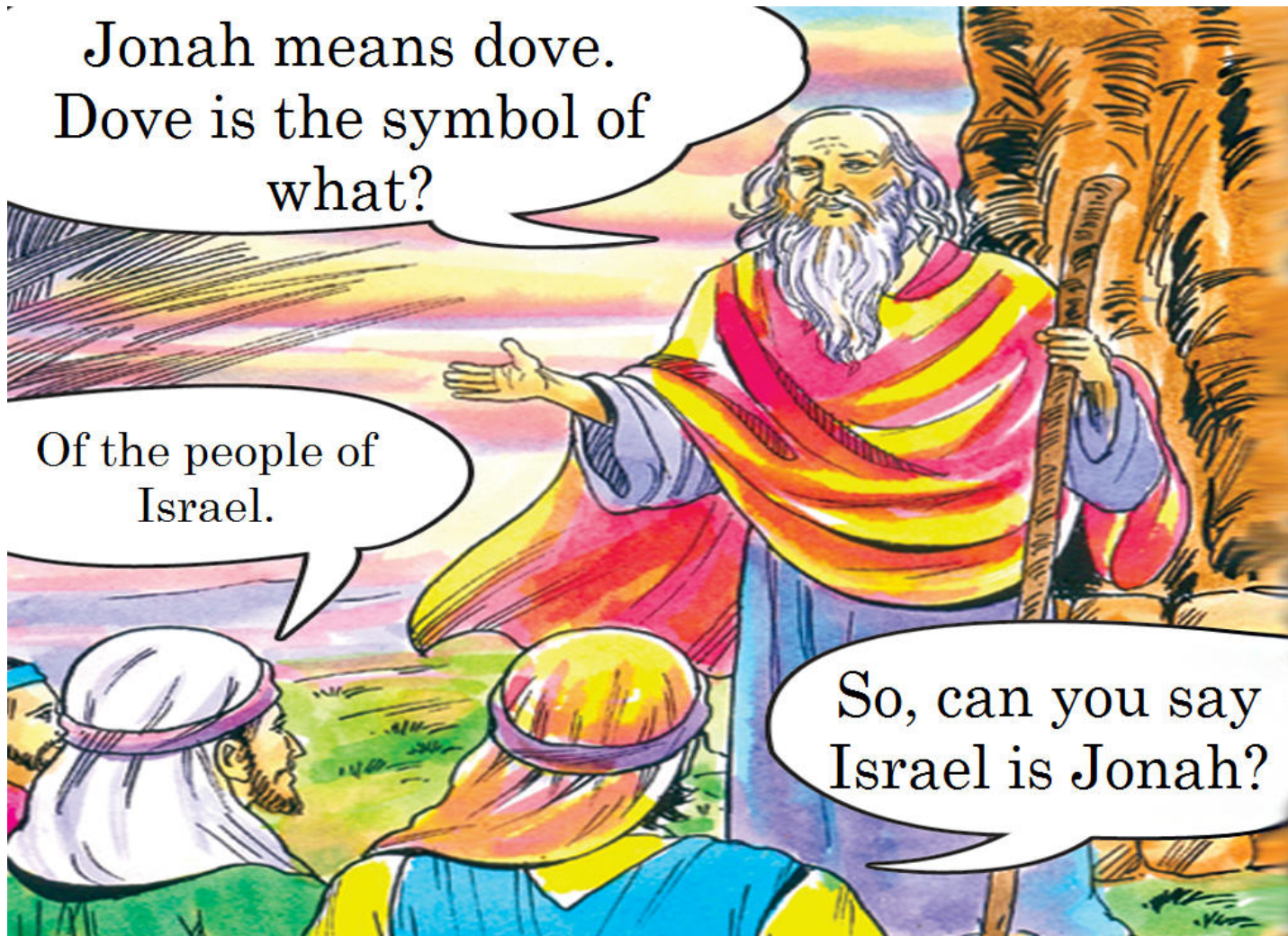
Is this true or
just a story?

A story that
has truth
in it.

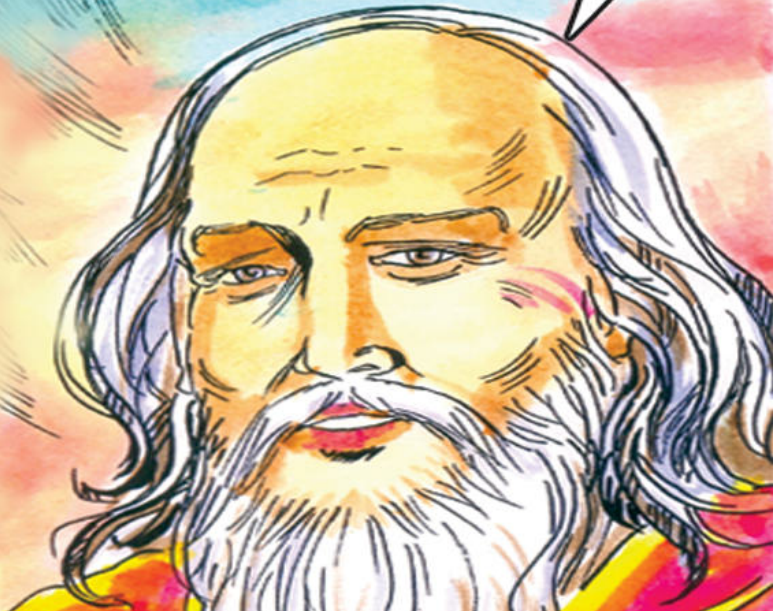
Jonah means dove.
Dove is the symbol of
what?

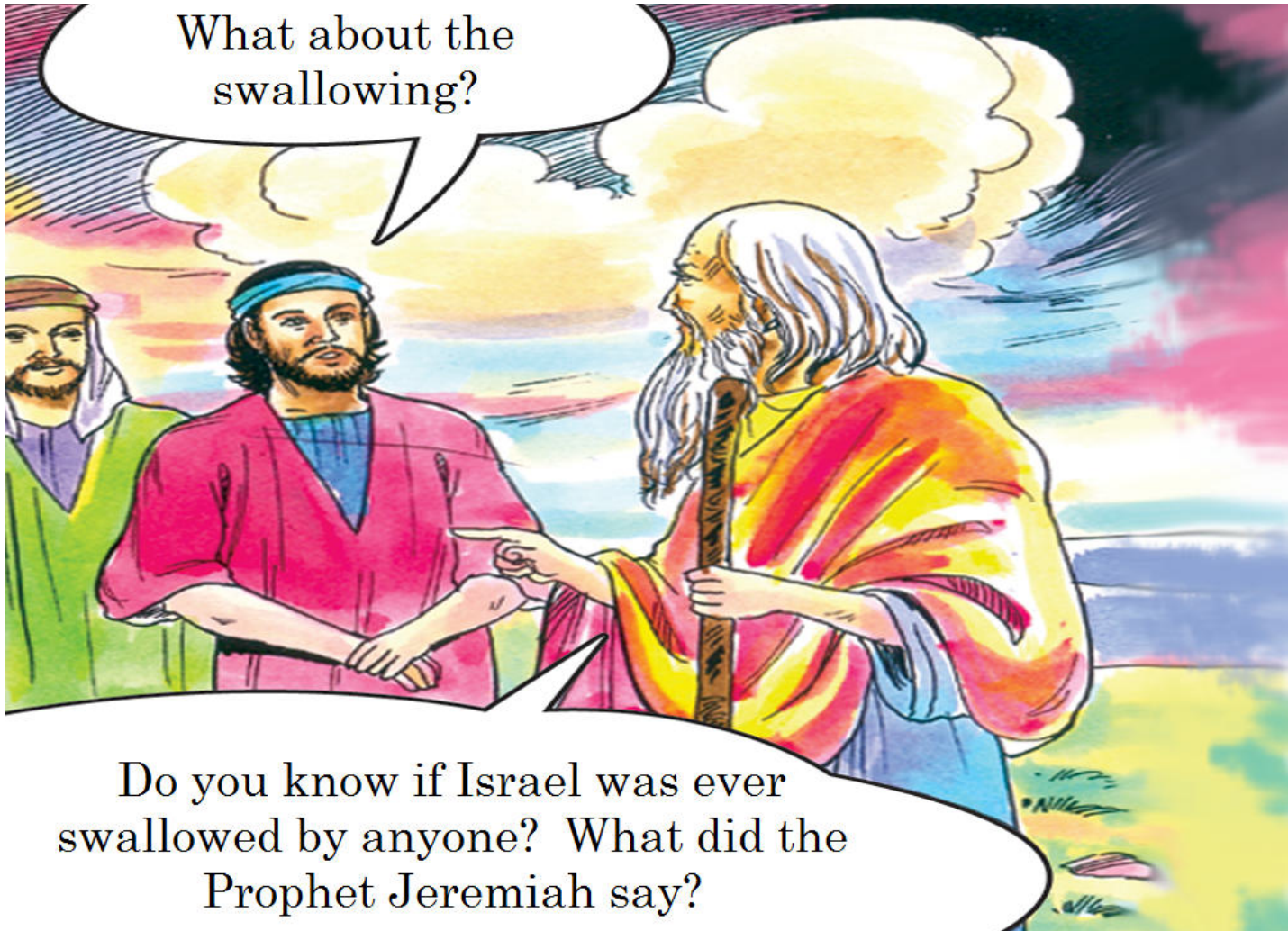
Of the people of
Israel.

So, can you say
Israel is Jonah?



Well, you can say that. Israel
is chosen to spread the
knowledge of Yahweh among
all the peoples.





What about the
swallowing?

Do you know if Israel was ever
swallowed by anyone? What did the
Prophet Jeremiah say?

As a cruel
monster
Babylon
swallowed
Israel.





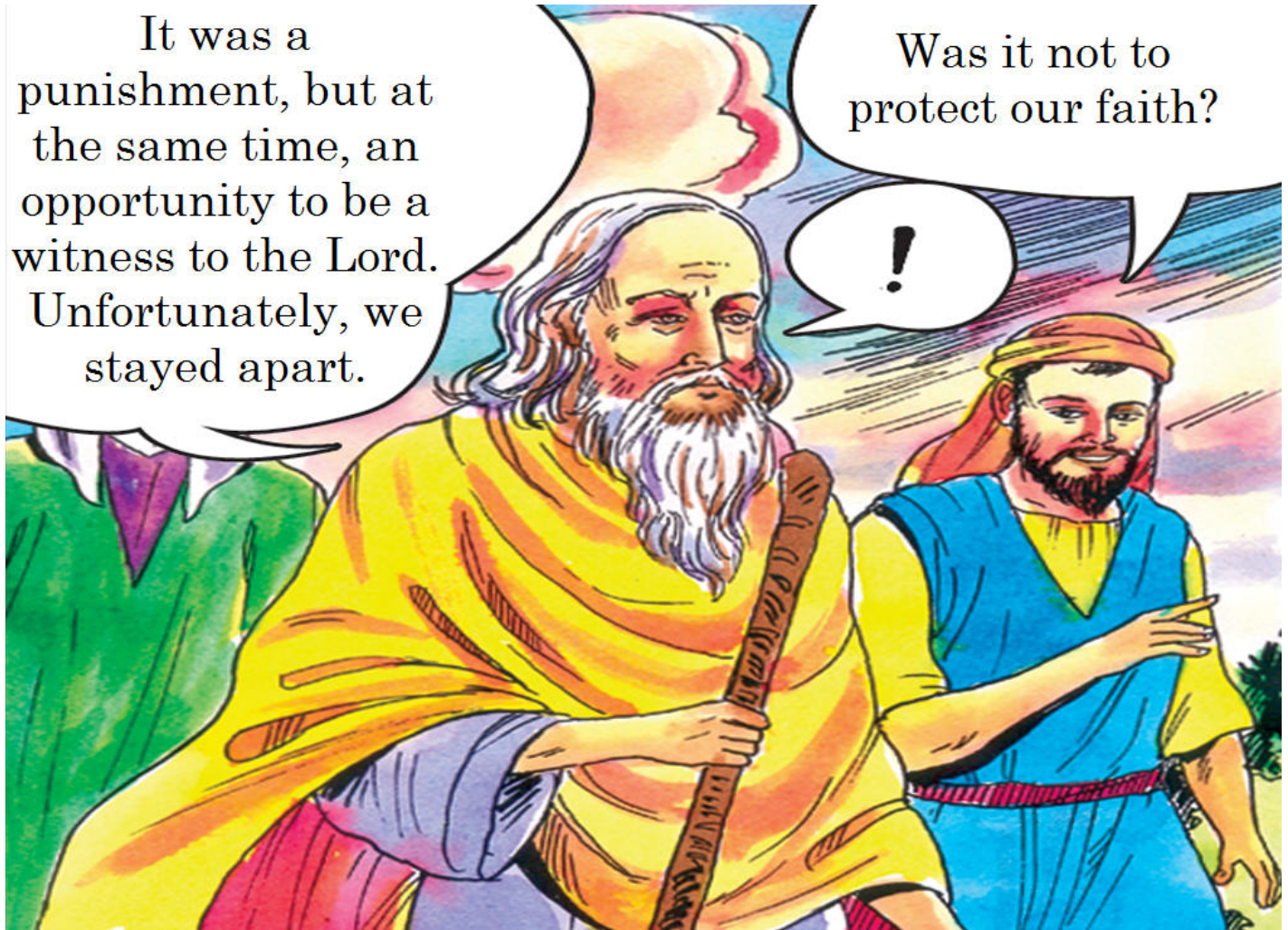
Through the Babylonian captivity,
Yahweh carried Israel into the midst
of the Gentiles.

Wasn't it a
punishment?

Sure, it was.

It was a punishment, but at the same time, an opportunity to be a witness to the Lord. Unfortunately, we stayed apart.

Was it not to protect our faith?



It is not by keeping
away from the
Gentiles that we
protect our faith.

By seeing our
good life they
must turn to
God.



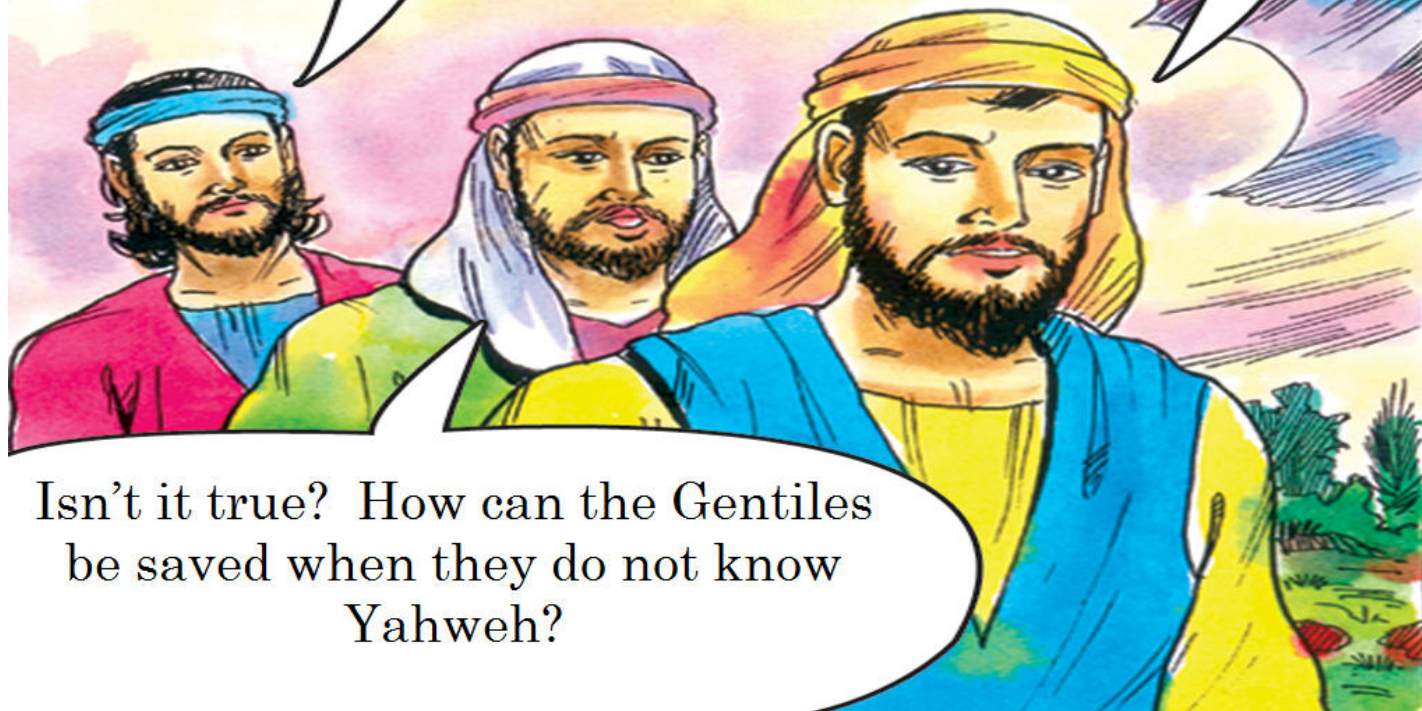
Really the people in the
ship and in Nineveh were
better than Jonah.

Sure! Often the people we
consider as “no good” are
better than us.



Then what about
the teachings of our
leaders?

They claim that
only the Israelites
will be saved.



Isn't it true? How can the Gentiles
be saved when they do not know
Yahweh?

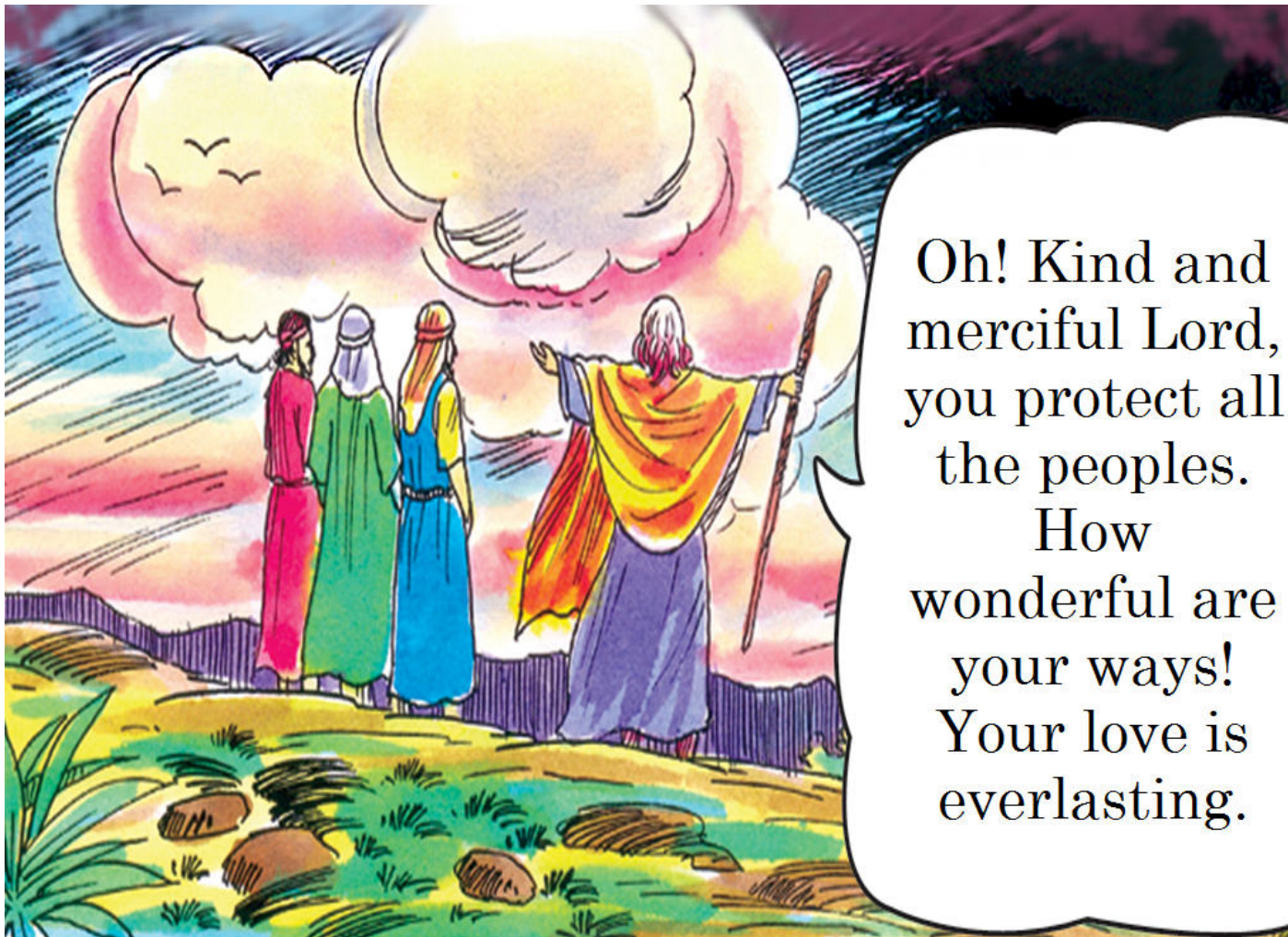
Who is responsible for
them not knowing
Yahweh?

We are! We failed to
carry out the mission
entrusted to us.




Salvation is not exclusive.
The Lord wants all people
to be saved and we must
proclaim this
to everyone.





Oh! Kind and
merciful Lord,
you protect all
the peoples.

How
wonderful are
your ways!
Your love is
everlasting.



Master, if the Lord is merciful why do we have to suffer so much?

Is it just that the good people suffer and the wicked flourish?

Answer will be given tomorrow.

!!!



Next Story

Suffering of a just man

JOB

QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions after reading the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Jonah.

1. What does the name “Jonah” mean?
2. Name the two leaders who led the post-Exilic religious reform.
3. Why did they insist that the Israelites must renounce their gentile wives?
4. Explain the circumstances under which the Book of Jonah was written.
5. Where was Jonah asked to go and preach?
6. Why did Jonah run away?
7. Why were the sailors reluctant to throw Jonah into the sea?
8. How did the people of Nineveh respond to Jonah’s call?
9. What did you learn from the book of “Jonah”?
10. Find out the passages in the Gospels that refer to Jonah.

Memorize ***Give thanks to the Lord, His love is everlasting.***

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