

Bible Comics - 25

# DANIEL



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# Daniel

Script

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Illustration

Devassy

# DANIEL

After the time of the prophets there emerged two types of sacred literature in Israel namely, Wisdom, and Apocalyptic. The former was highly influenced by the Greek culture (Hellenism) while the latter reflected a strong reaction against it. Alexander the great, a disciple of the great Greek philosopher Aristotle, had taken upon himself the task of uniting East and West under the

patronage of the Greek culture. Even though his empire fell apart as quickly as it was built up, the cultural heritage he bequeathed made a lasting impact on the world as a whole. The Jews were not left immune to this influence. Greek became the common language of the elite. Hellenism permeated all spheres of life.

The Bible was translated into Greek and new sacred writings appeared in this language. The Wisdom literature as a whole

analyzes the problems of life and proposes ways and means for success and happiness. Literary forms such as Drama, historical novels, stories and sayings were adopted by this literature. Even though Hellenism was accepted by a large number of Jews with great enthusiasm, there were a few among them who perceived the danger that was implicit in this materialistic culture. Greek sports were intimately related to the worship of Greek gods like Hermes. The gymnasia

were centers for diffusion of the pagan culture. Jews with deep faith in Yahweh saw that Hellenism posed a grave threat to the very existence of Israel as the chosen people of God. Hence they formed circles of resistance to this new culture.

In the beginning of the second century B.C. the over enthusiasm of some of the Hellenized Jews and the strong measures of Antiochus IV provoked violent reactions from those anti-Hellenistic circles. A severe

persecution followed in which numerous Jews lost their lives. It was in this context that the second form of literature, namely apocalyptic, became prevalent. It continued to be popular till the second century A.D.

The word apocalyptic means 'pertaining to revelation'. It is an offshoot of the prophetic literature, and deals with revelations concerning the end of this world and the coming of a new world. The authors do not reveal their names, but present their writings

as revelations received by well known personages of ancient times. Use of symbolic language and visions is a characteristic of this literature. Books of this kind express the firm belief that God is the Lord of the universe and that He guides the course of its history. Religious persecution is viewed as a trial for the Israelites to prove their fidelity to Yahweh.

The present story is based on the books of Daniel, and 1,2 Maccabees. After a brief

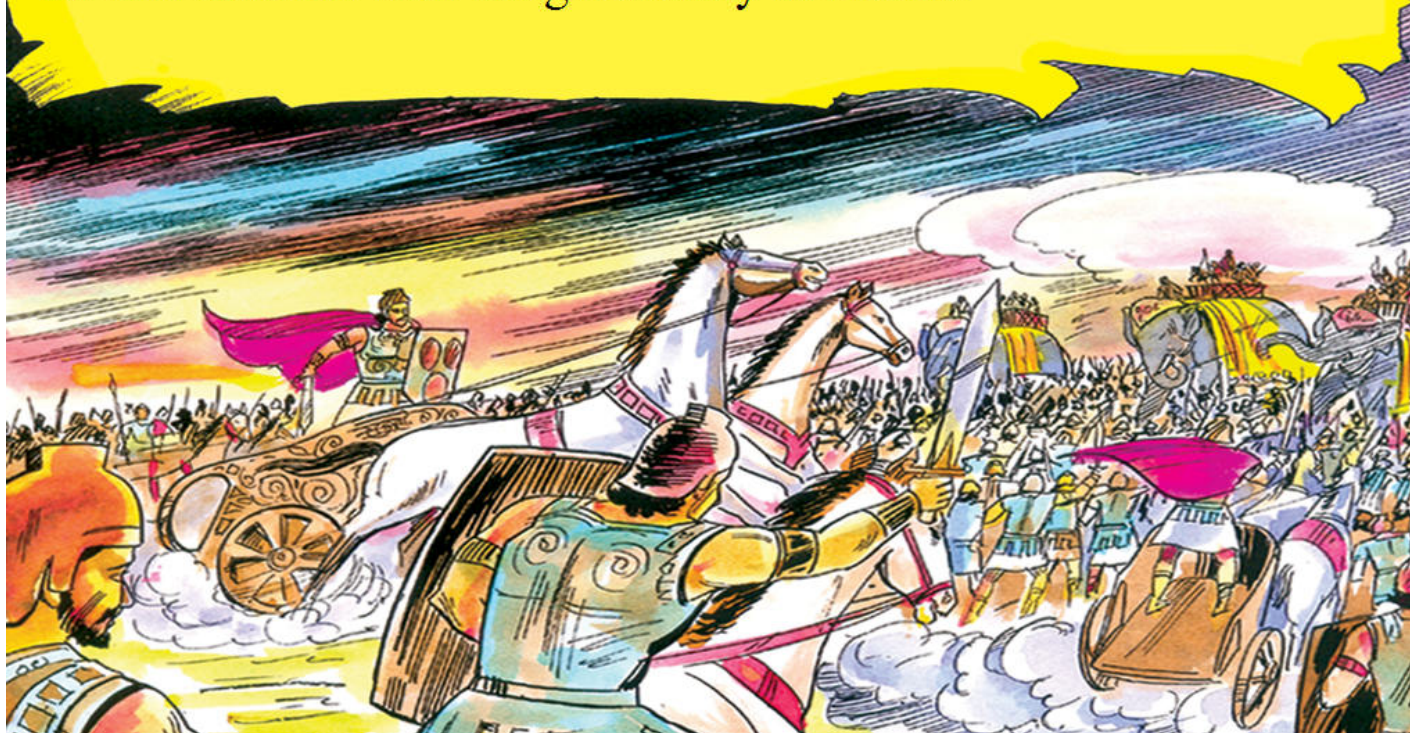


survey of the conquests of Alexander and the spread of Hellenism, it depicts a few episodes from Daniel's life and some of his visions. All the episodes emphasize the necessity of observing the laws of Yahweh, and the visions point to the end of persecution and the triumph of the persecuted.

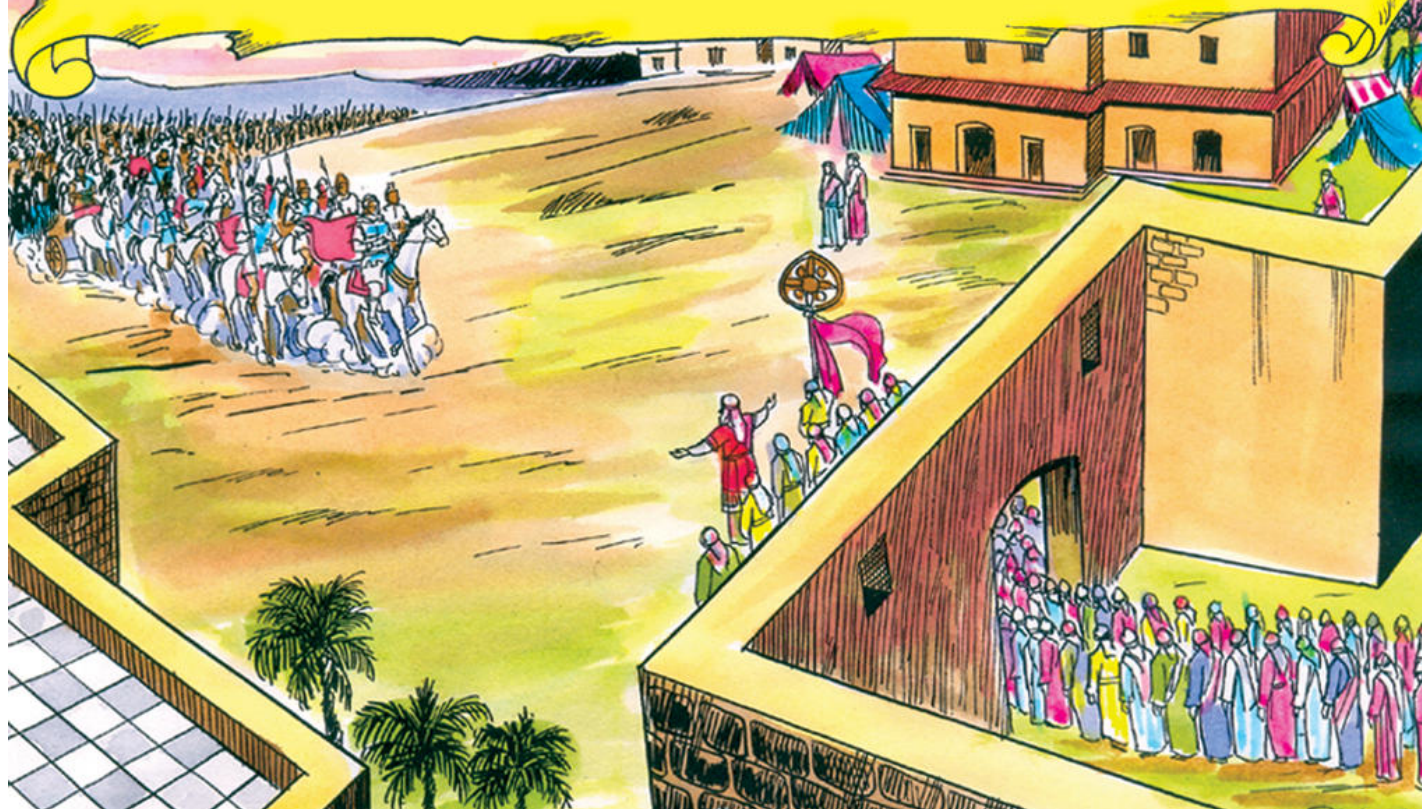
The "Son of Man" coming on clouds is the most important vision of Daniel. By this the sacred author conveys the message that the people who are being persecuted for their

faith would be glorified before God. The N.T. considers this as a prophecy concerning the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ as the Lord and Judge of the world. Jesus himself alluded to this prophecy in his response to the High Priest (Mt 26,64). The name “Daniel” means “God judges”. It is a proclamation of the faith that God will execute his judgment by punishing the wicked and saving the just who are persecuted.

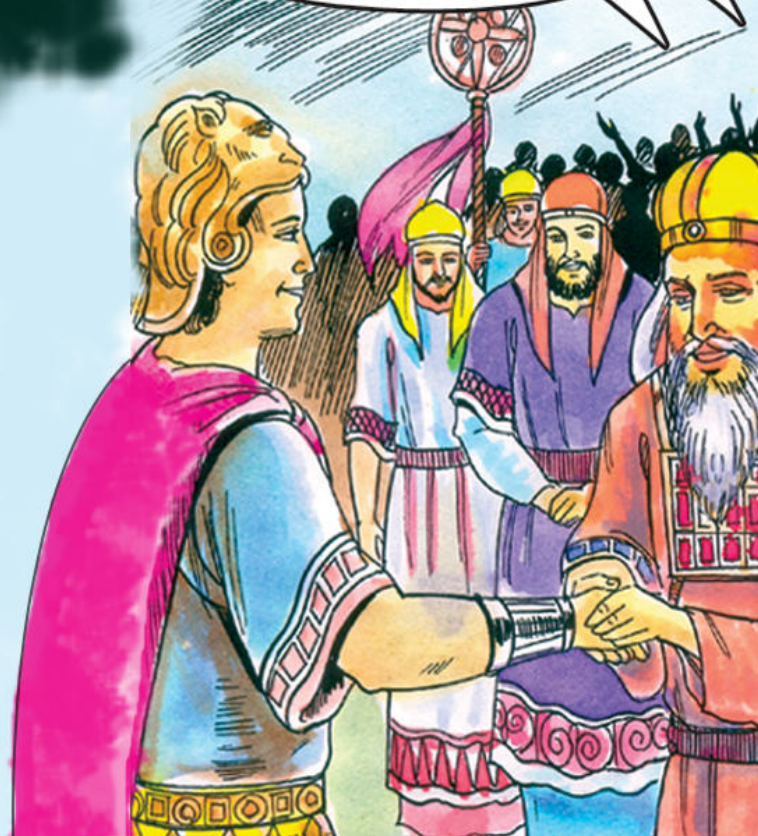
B.C. 336. Darius became emperor of Persia. During the same year Alexander, a youth of twenty, became king of Macedonia. Determined to liberate the Greeks from the Persian dominion, Alexander advanced eastward like a mighty storm. In B.C. 333 he met in battle with the great army of Darius.

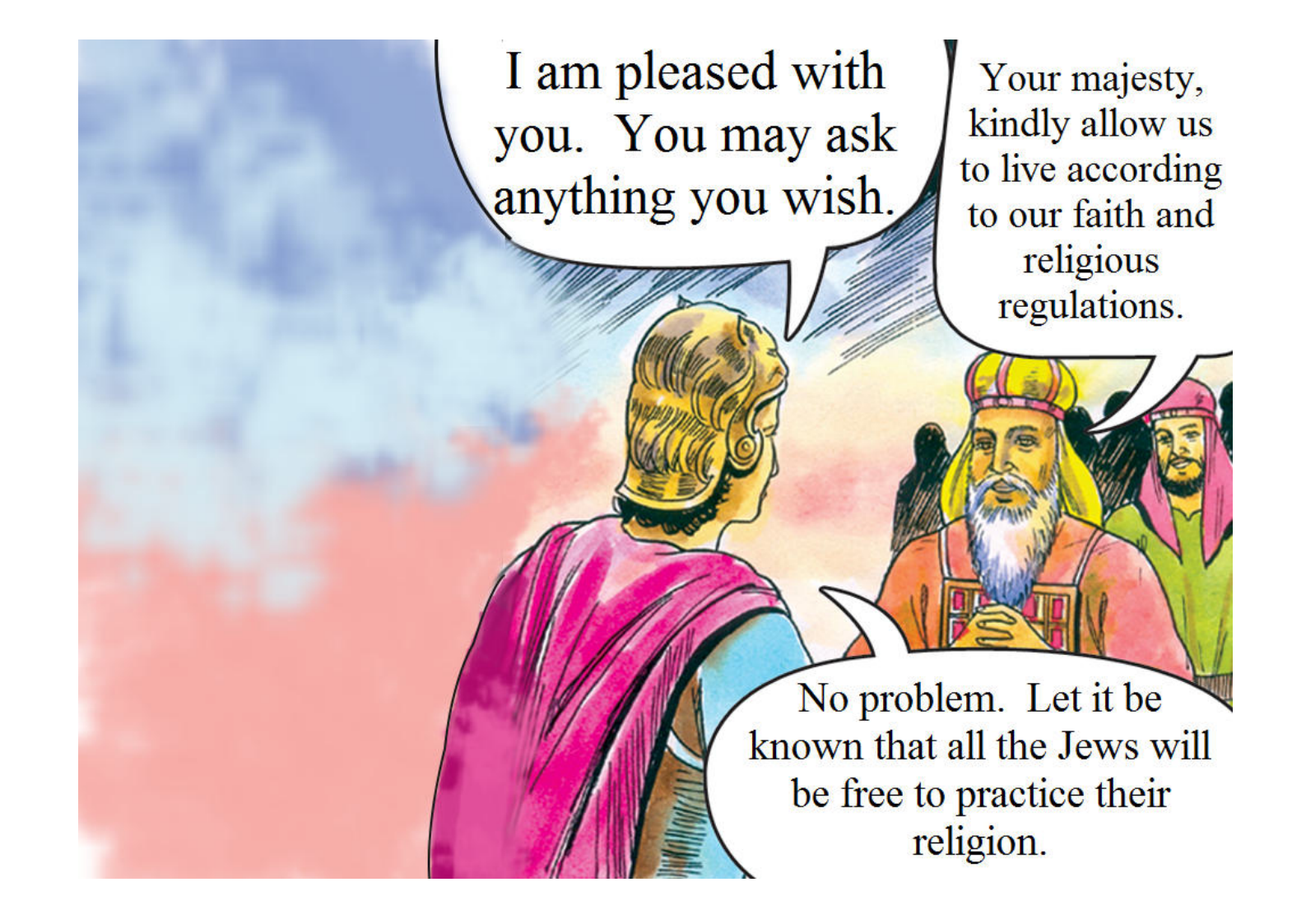


After defeating Darius II and capturing Tyre, Sidon and other neighboring towns, Alexander approached Jerusalem. The Chief Priest Jaddua set out to welcome him.



Long live Emperor  
Alexander!



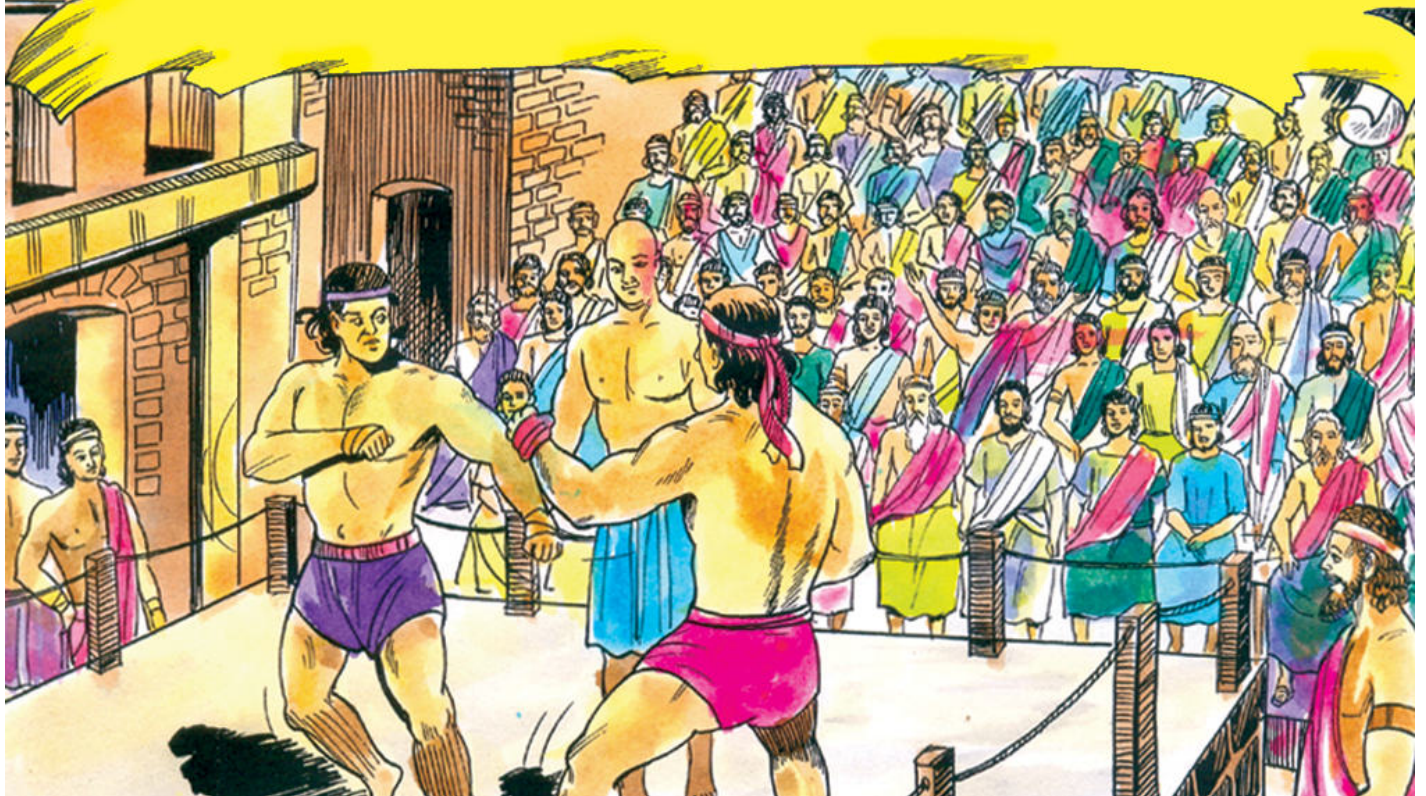


I am pleased with you. You may ask anything you wish.

Your majesty, kindly allow us to live according to our faith and religious regulations.

No problem. Let it be known that all the Jews will be free to practice their religion.

B.C. 332. Alexander captured Egypt. He constructed a new city and called it Alexandria. Extra care was taken to spread the Greek culture in all the counties he conquered.



Alexander's empire expanded as far as the river Indus. On his way back, while in Babylon he became sick and died in 323 B.C. Before dying Alexander divided the empire between the four commanders of his army.

Greece and  
Macedonia



Cassander

Asia Minor



Lyssimachus

Egypt



Ptolemy

Babylon and  
Syria



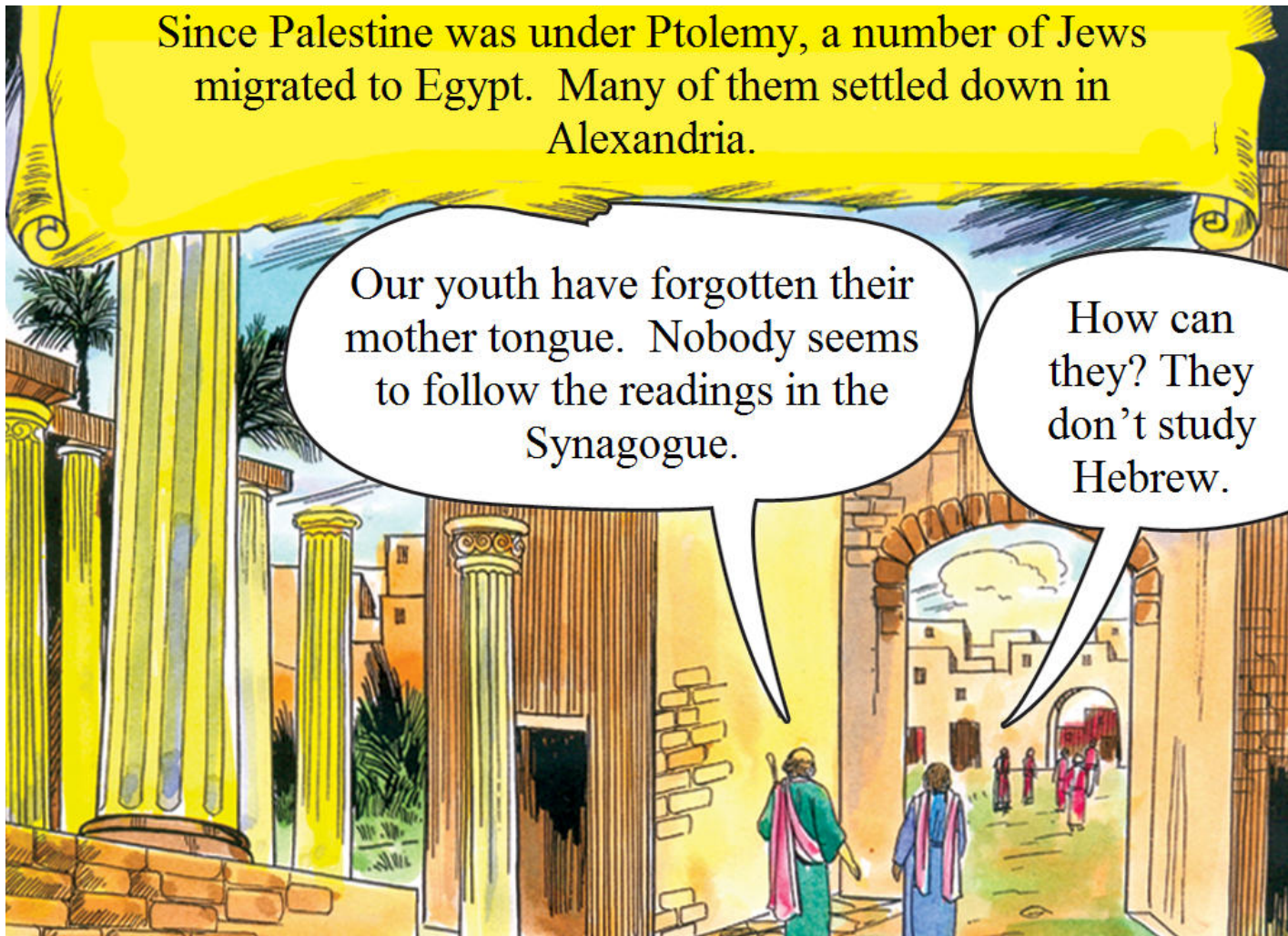
Seleucus

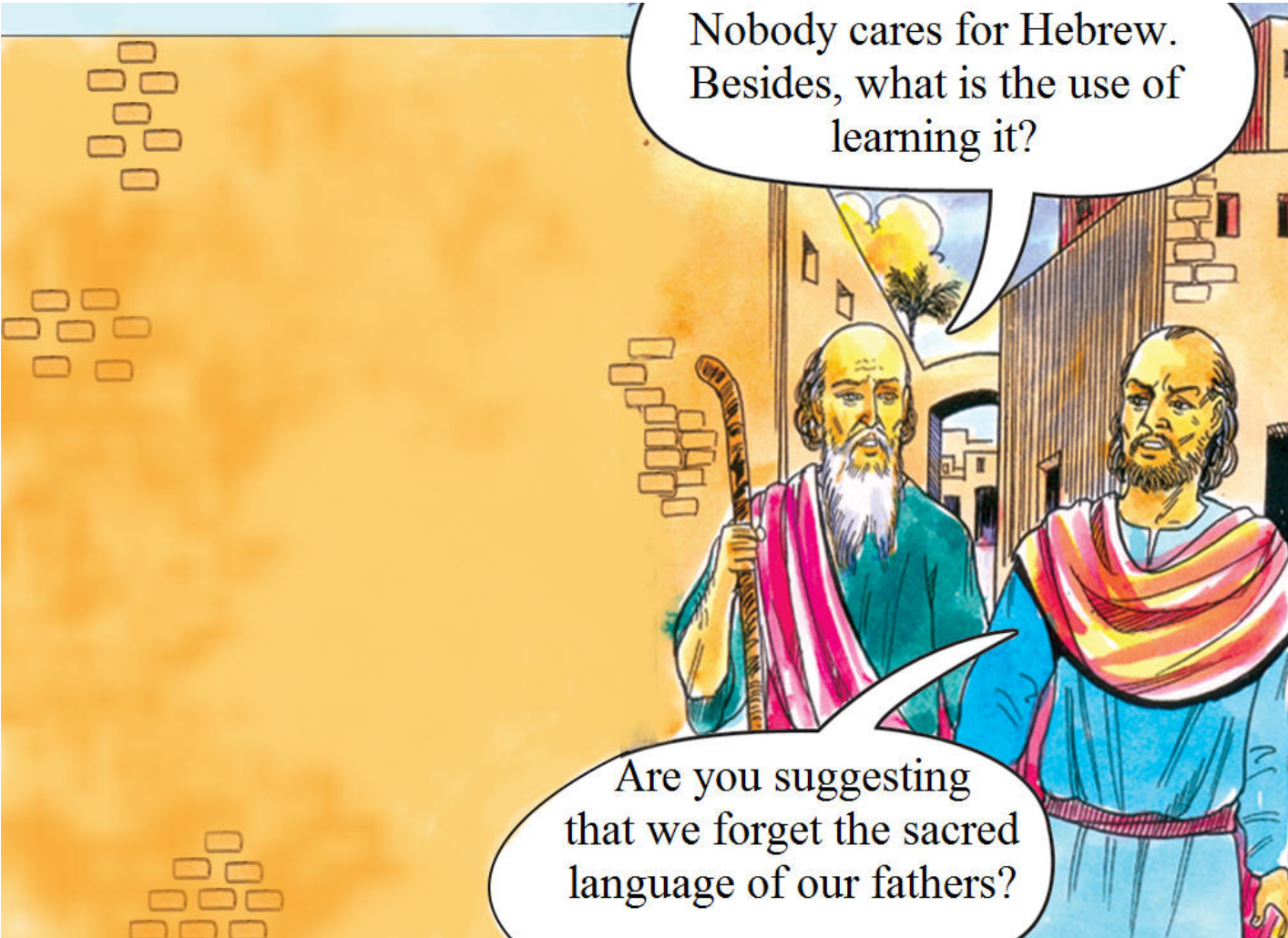


Since Palestine was under Ptolemy, a number of Jews migrated to Egypt. Many of them settled down in Alexandria.

Our youth have forgotten their mother tongue. Nobody seems to follow the readings in the Synagogue.

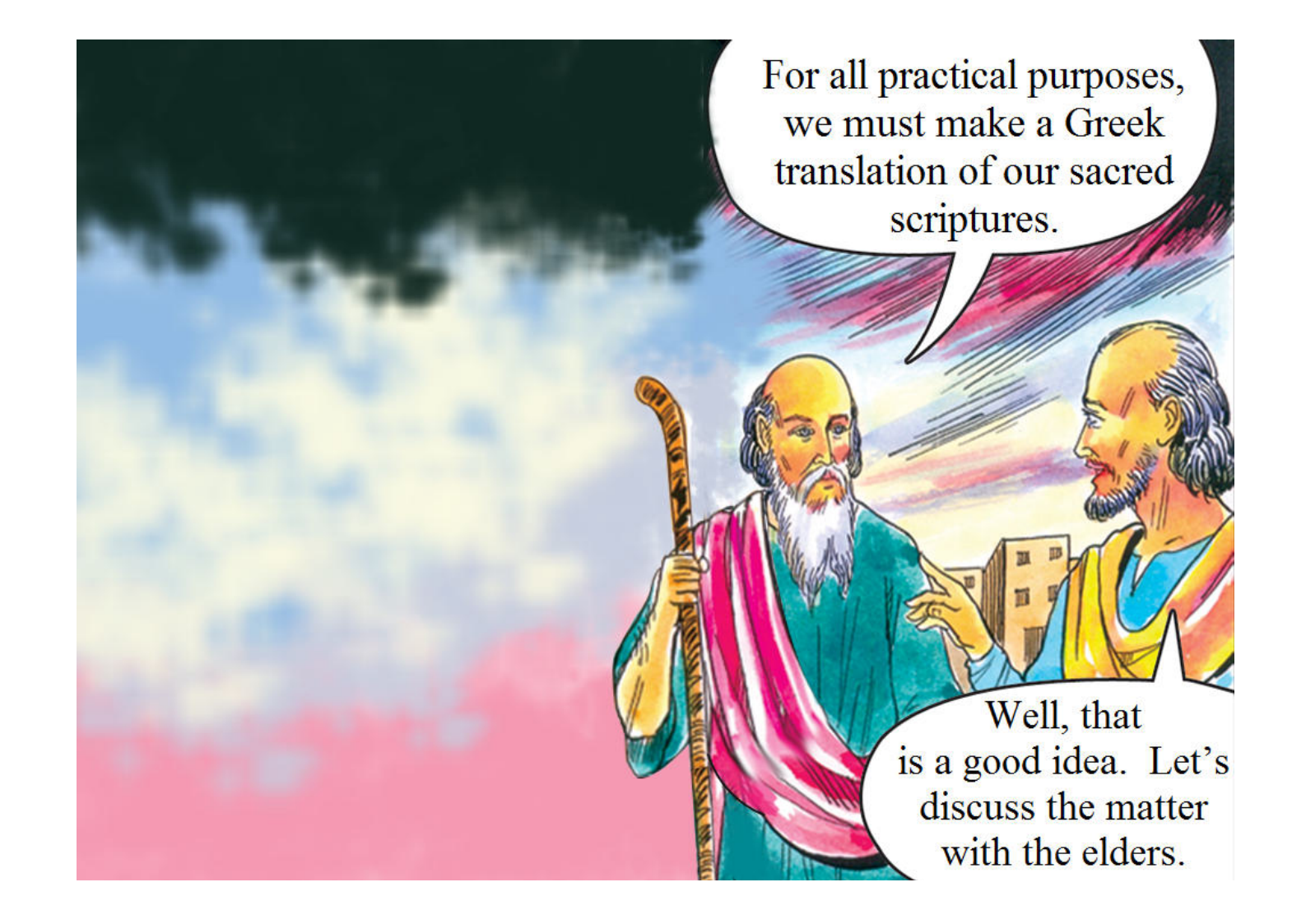
How can they? They don't study Hebrew.





Nobody cares for Hebrew.  
Besides, what is the use of  
learning it?

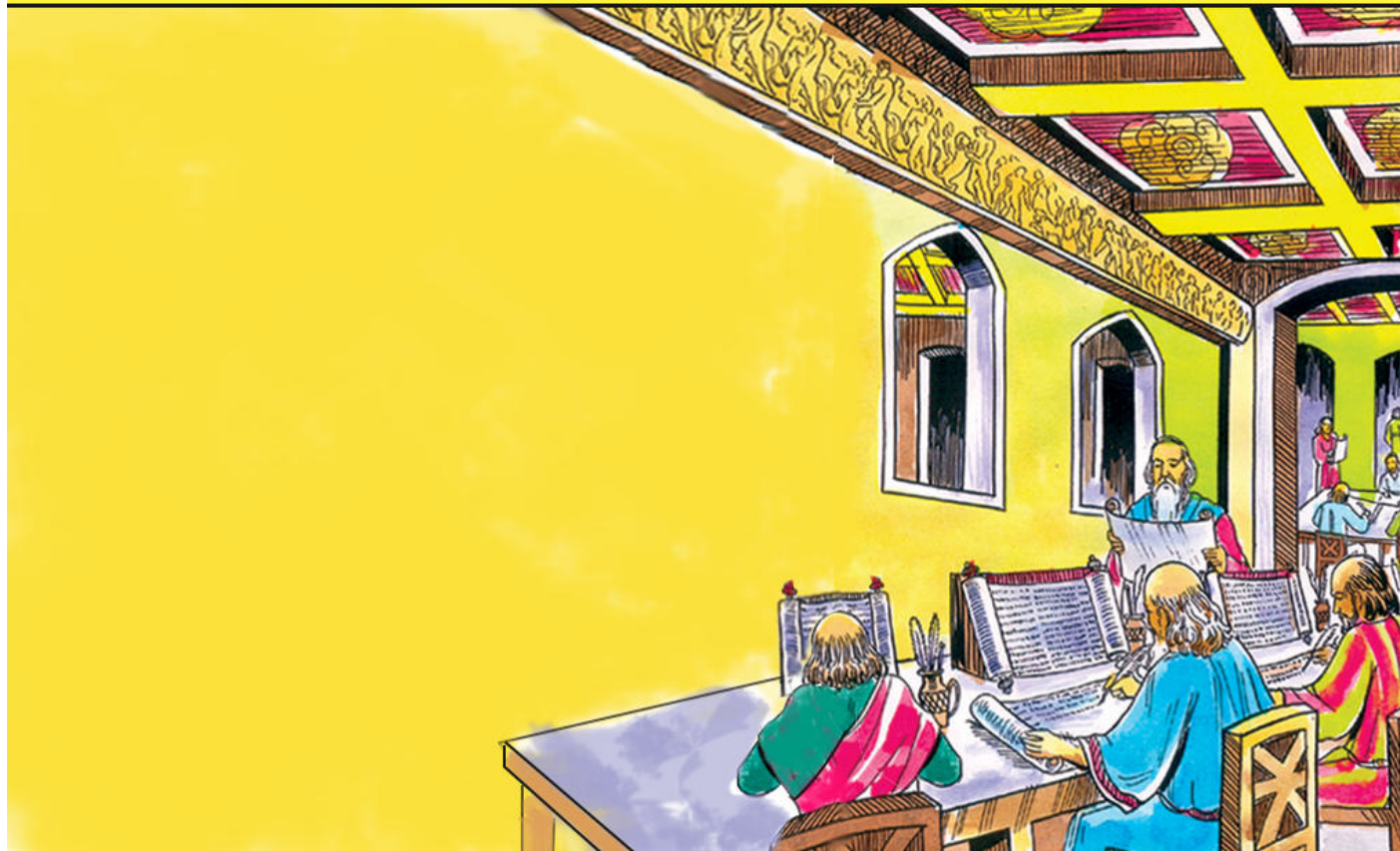
Are you suggesting  
that we forget the sacred  
language of our fathers?



For all practical purposes,  
we must make a Greek  
translation of our sacred  
scriptures.

Well, that  
is a good idea. Let's  
discuss the matter  
with the elders.

During the first half of the third century B.C. with the help of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, seventy learned Jews got together and made the Greek translation of the Bible, which is known as the Septuagint, meaning seventy.



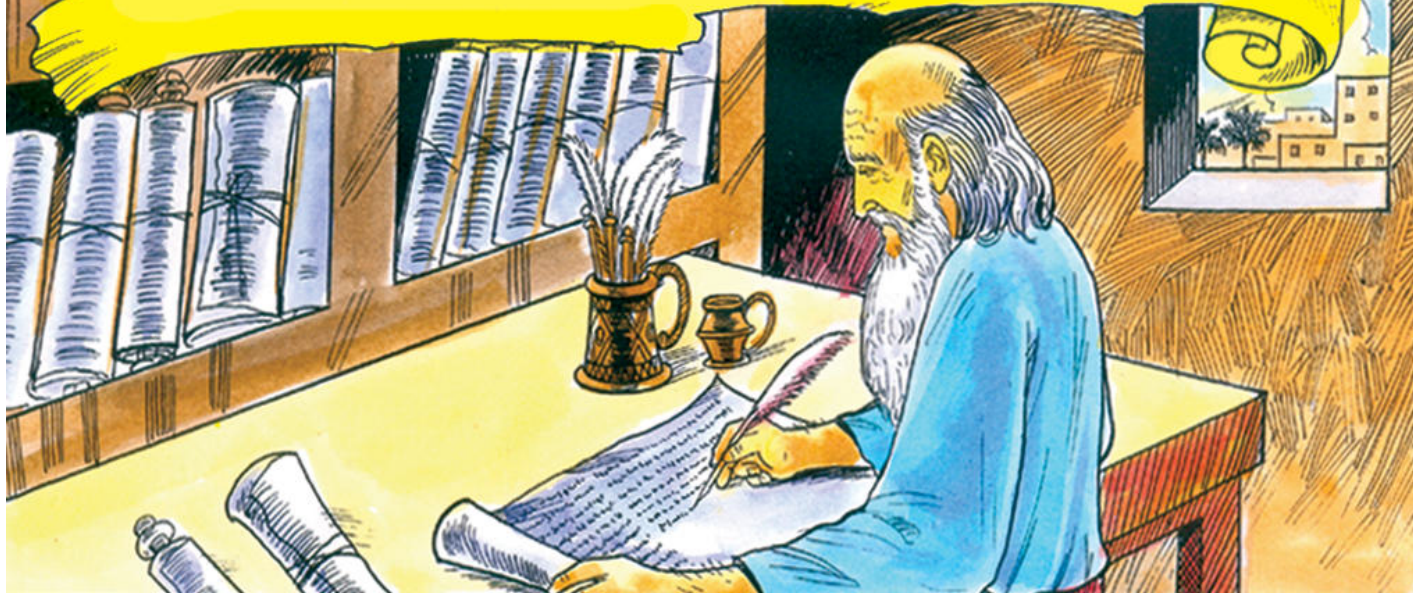
Eventually many of the Jews accepted the philosophy and culture of the Greeks. Libraries and schools were started.



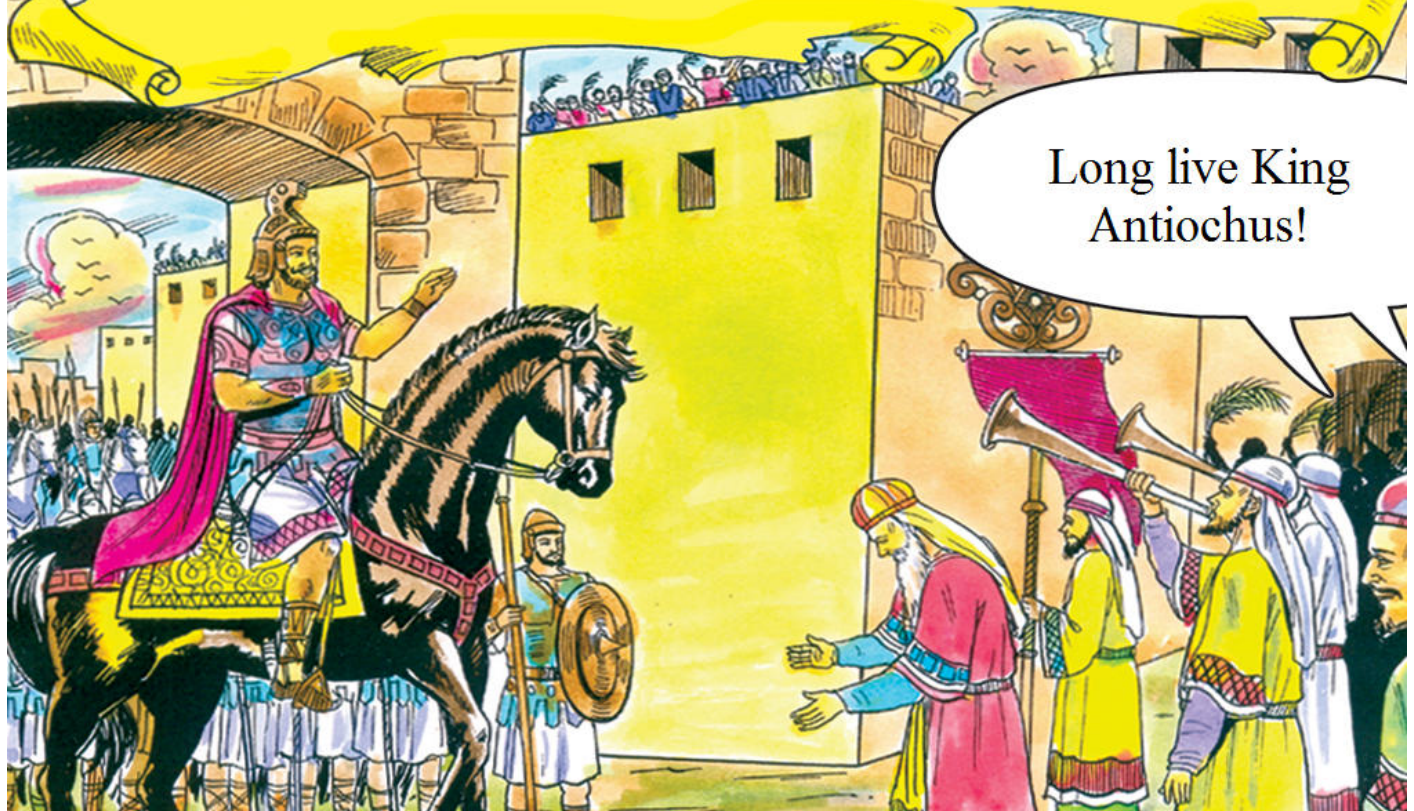
Gymnasiums were  
opened.



Greek philosophy and culture influenced the Jews greatly. Some of the wisdom books of the Bible, such as Sirach and proverbs were written during this period.



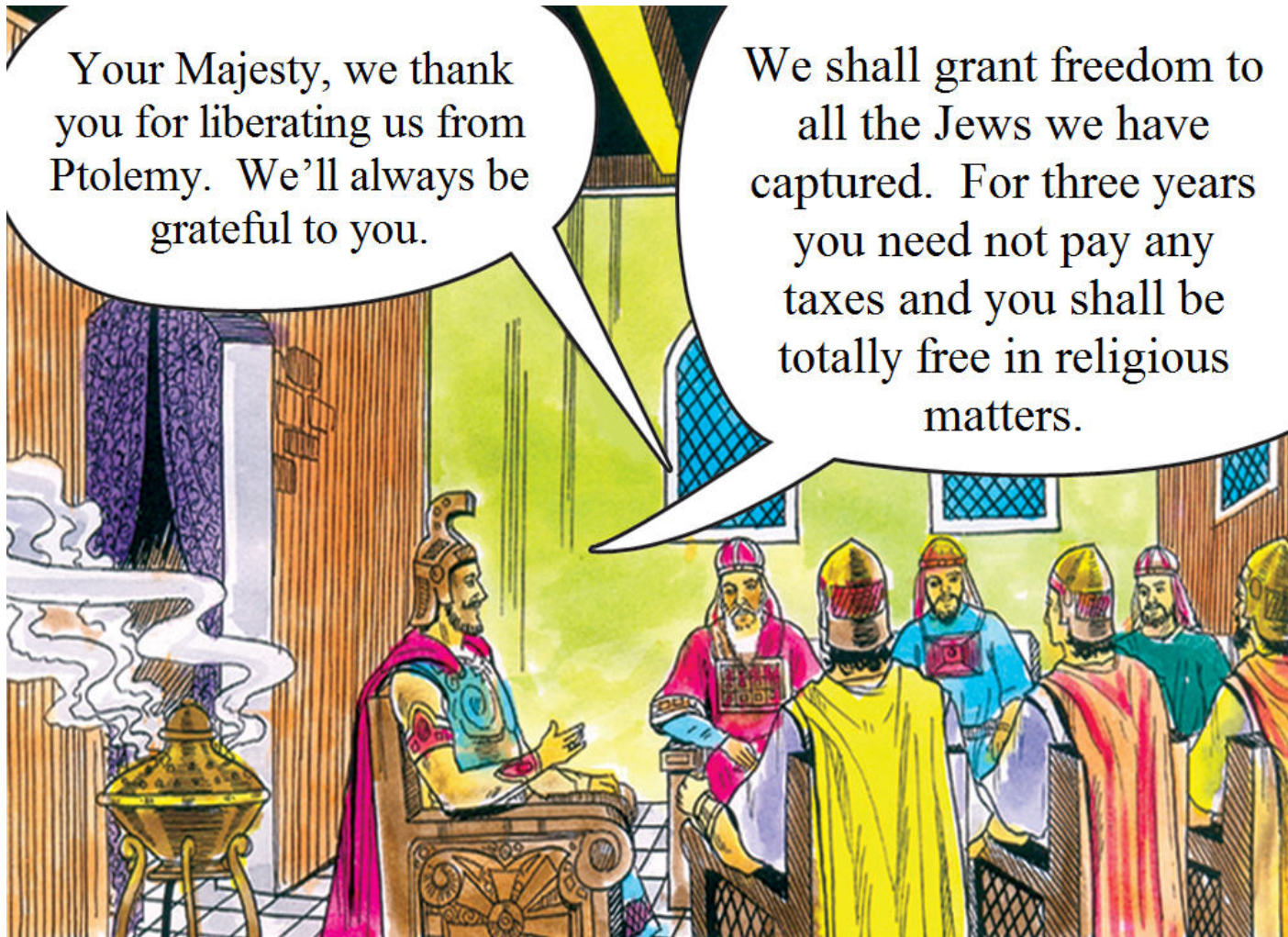
Meanwhile, Antiochus III, a king from the Seleucid Dynasty, defeated Egypt and captured Palestine. The Israelites gave a warm welcome to him. Antiochus III in Jerusalem:



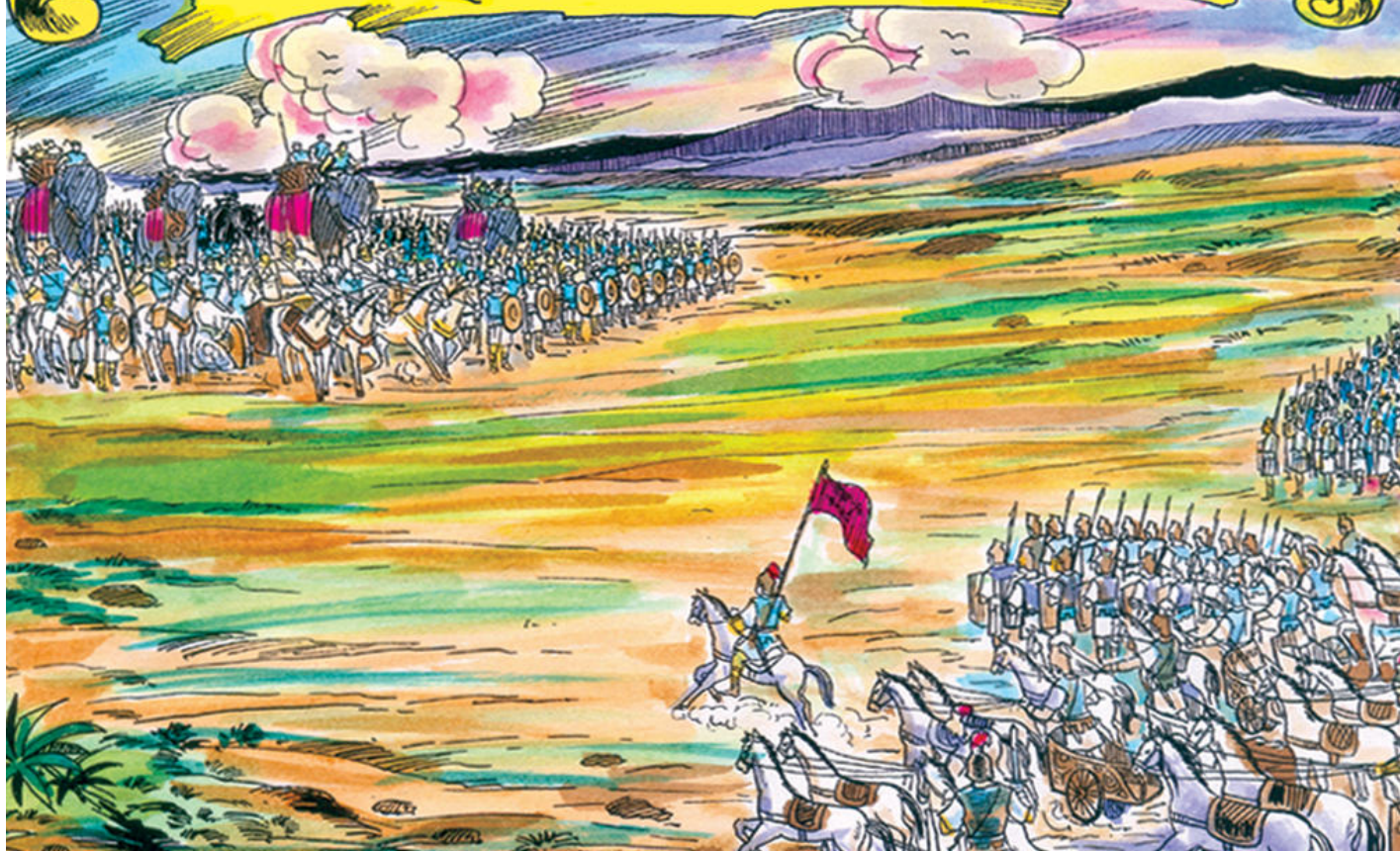


Your Majesty, we thank you for liberating us from Ptolemy. We'll always be grateful to you.

We shall grant freedom to all the Jews we have captured. For three years you need not pay any taxes and you shall be totally free in religious matters.



Becoming too proud by his victories, Antiochus III  
dared to attack the Romans and was miserably defeated  
in B.C. 190.



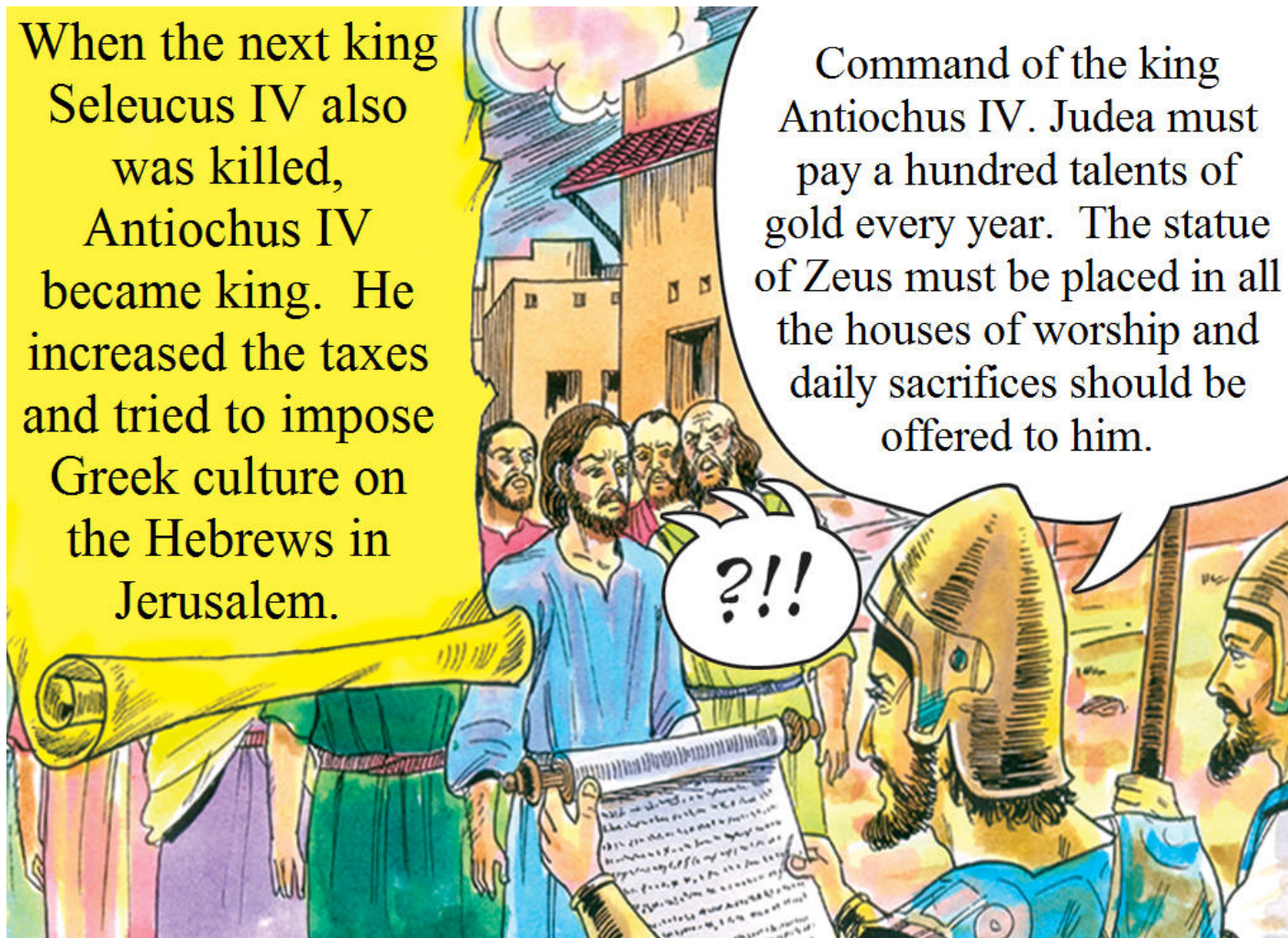
Being unable to pay the heavy tribute to the Romans, Antiochus III plundered the temples. In B.C. 187, while plundering the temple in the valley of Elam...



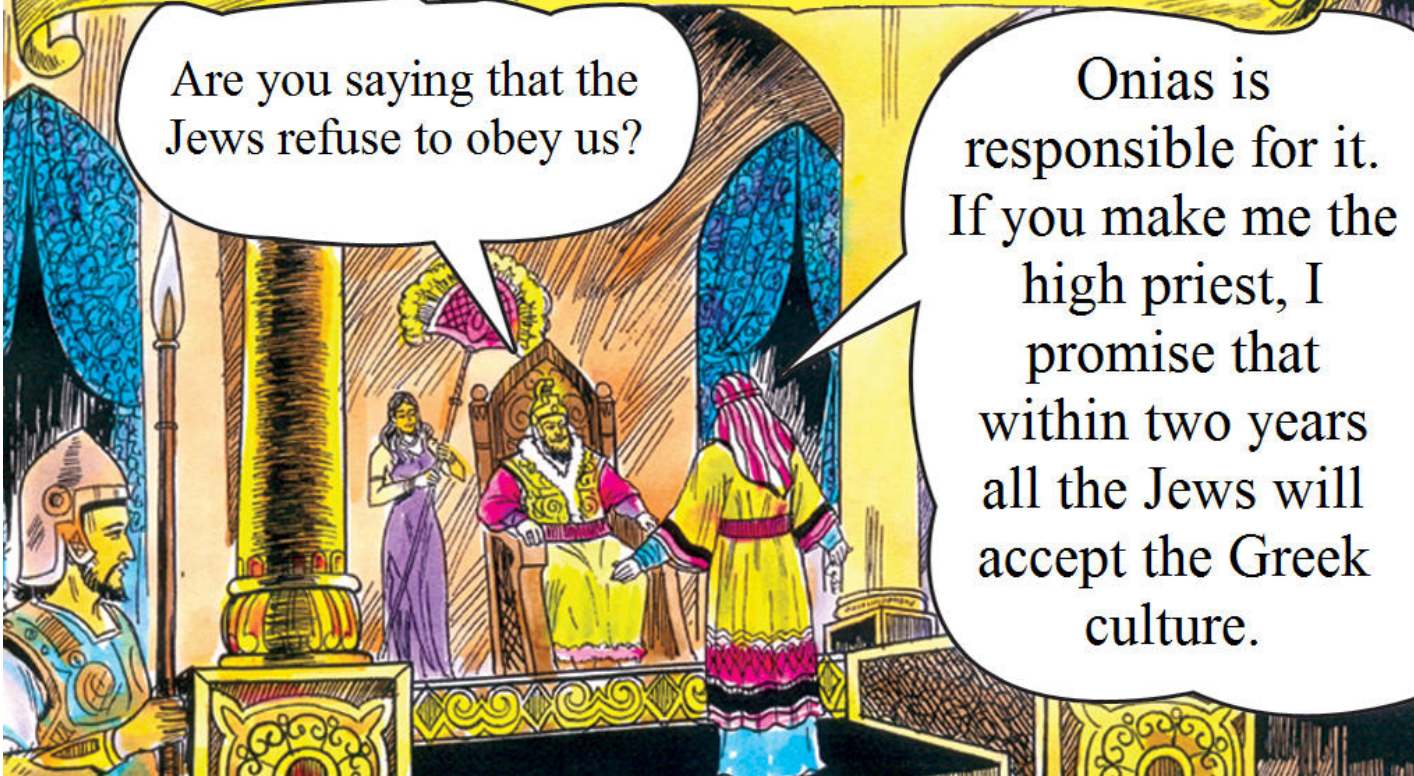
When the next king Seleucus IV also was killed, Antiochus IV became king. He increased the taxes and tried to impose Greek culture on the Hebrews in Jerusalem.

Command of the king Antiochus IV. Judea must pay a hundred talents of gold every year. The statue of Zeus must be placed in all the houses of worship and daily sacrifices should be offered to him.

?!!



Many among the Jews opposed this new policy. Some progressive ones welcomed it. Jason, brother of the highest priest Onias came to see Antiochus IV.



Are you saying that the Jews refuse to obey us?

Onias is responsible for it. If you make me the high priest, I promise that within two years all the Jews will accept the Greek culture.

I shall pay all the taxes  
regularly and besides  
give a hundred Talents  
of Silver every year to  
the loyal treasury.

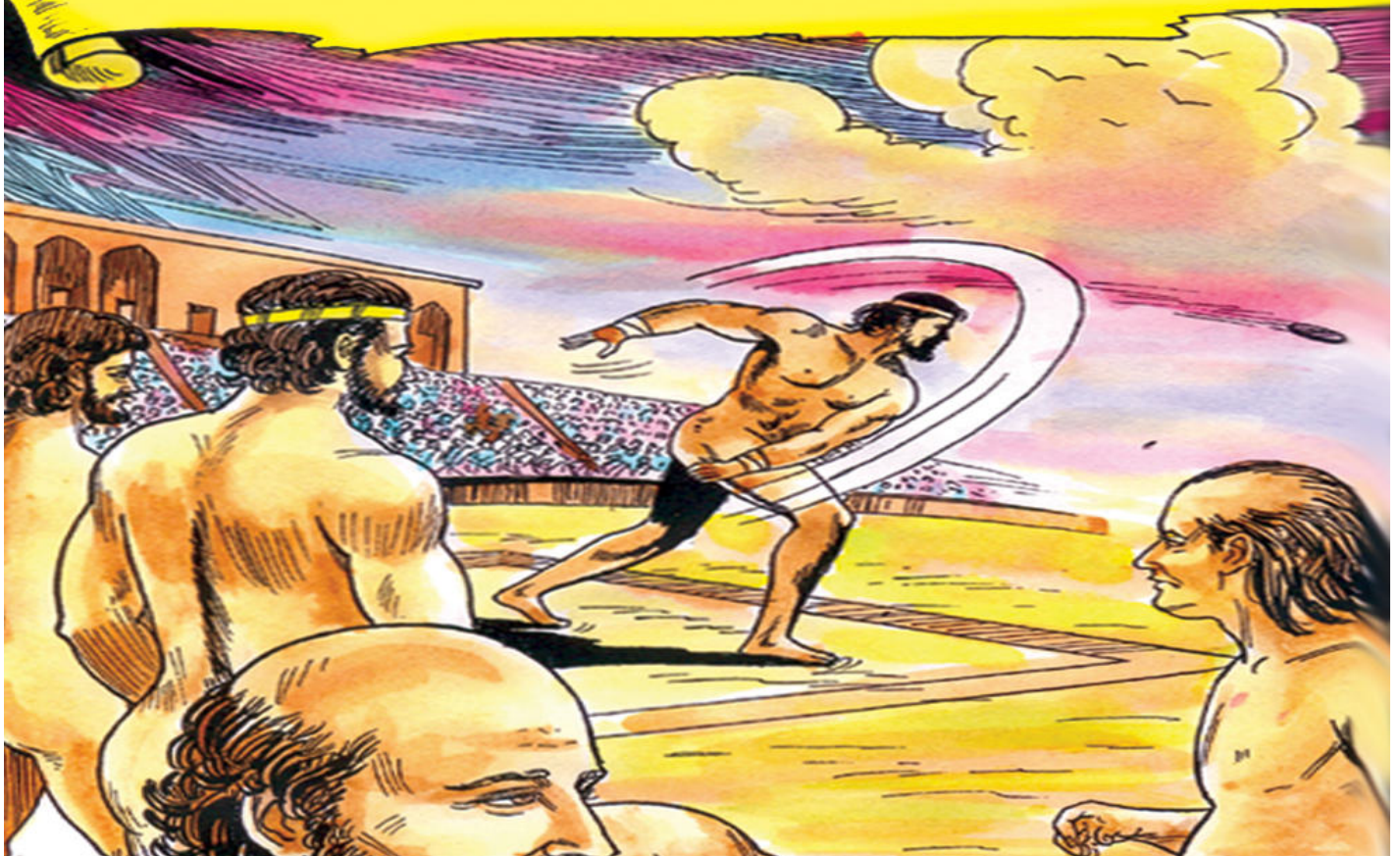


If the Jews can be granted Greek  
Citizenship, an additional Four Hundred  
Talents shall be given.

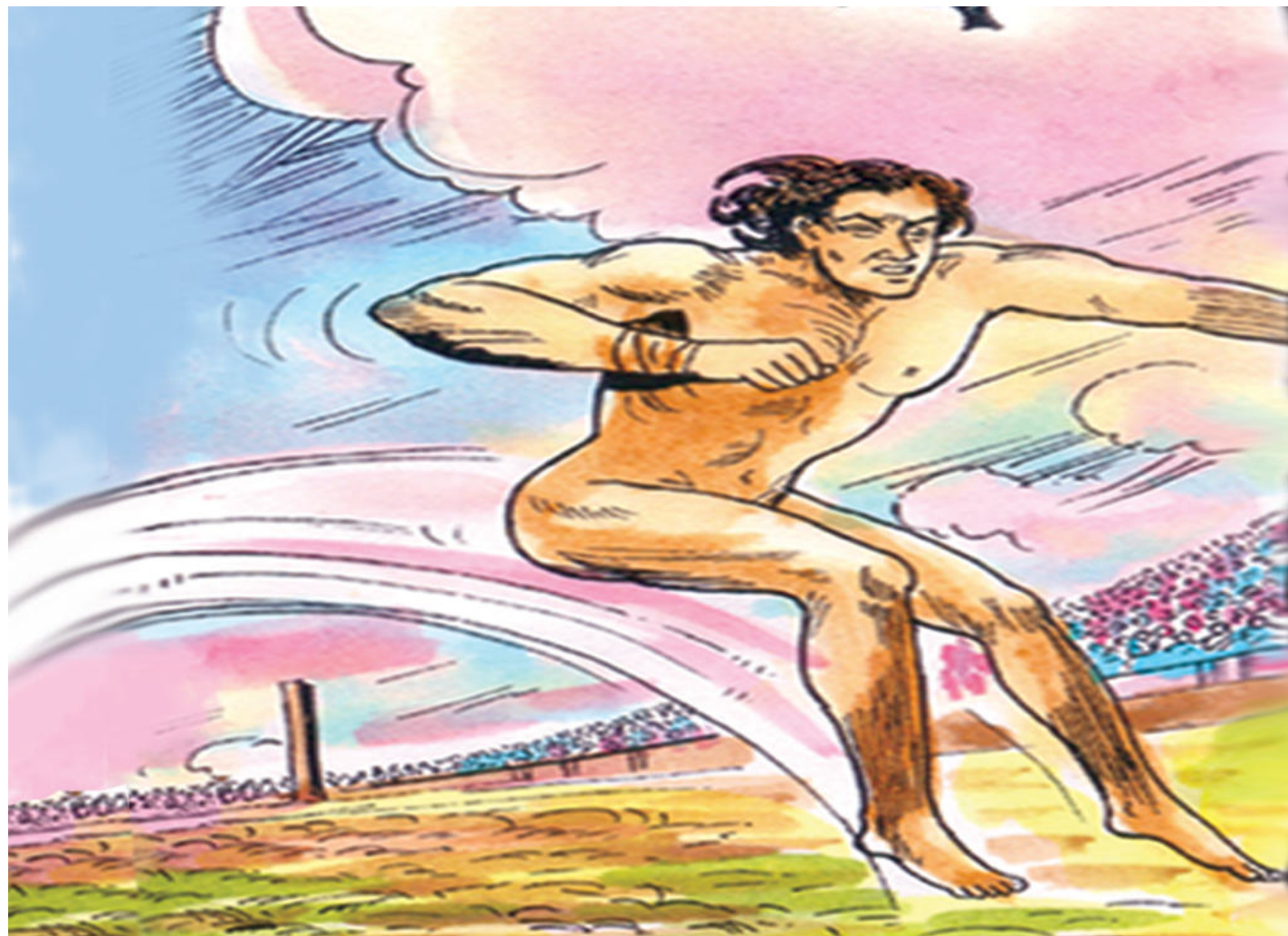


I grant you everything you  
asked for. Tomorrow you can  
have the official papers.

Jason established gymnasiums in Jerusalem. Even the priests joined in the games, giving up temple worships.







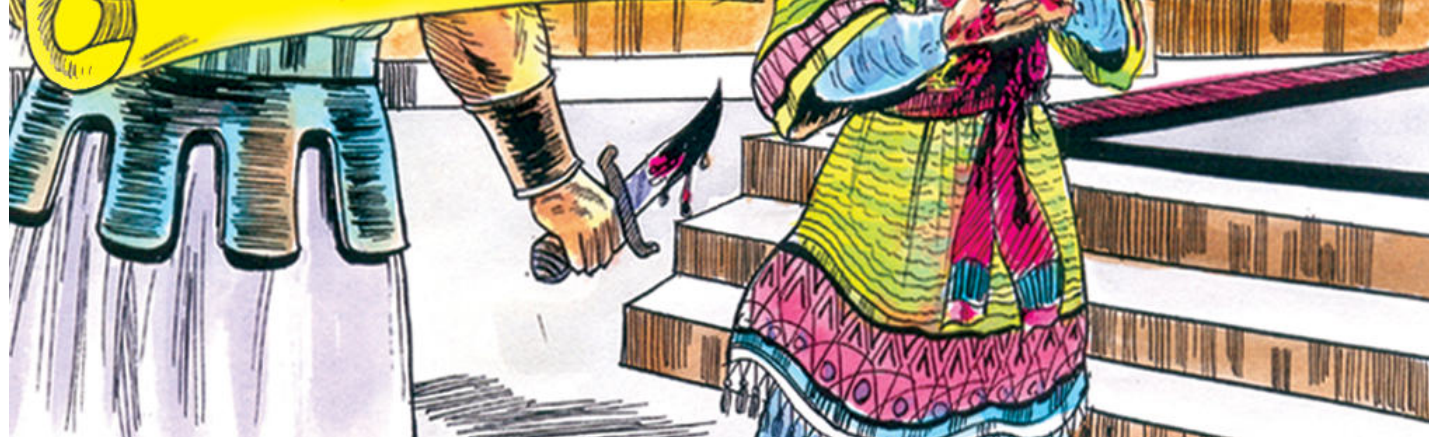
To give the  
promised amount,  
Jason plundered the  
Jerusalem temple.



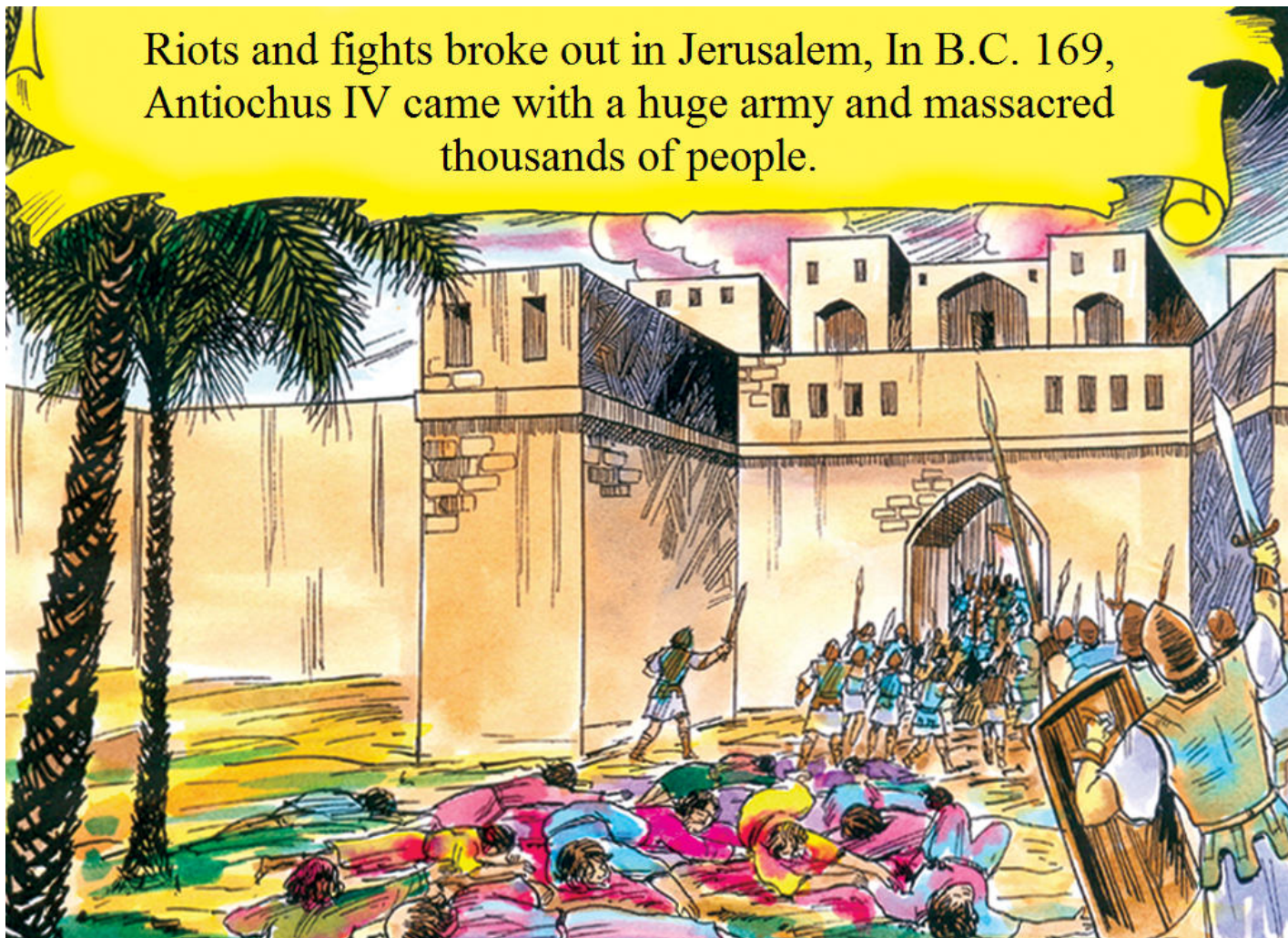
Three years later Menelaus gave a greater amount of money to the king and bought the high priesthood. He then arranged for the assassination of Onias, the legal High Priest who was in hiding.



O, Lord...



Riots and fights broke out in Jerusalem, In B.C. 169, Antiochus IV came with a huge army and massacred thousands of people.



When Antiochus pulled back the revolt resumed. In B.C. 167 he sent his commander-in-Chief, Apollonius to crush the revolt. He killed thousands, had the statue of Zeus placed in the Jerusalem temple and pork was offered in sacrifice.



Royal proclamation! In all the places of worship pigs should be sacrificed to God Zeus. All the Jews must eat pork. Circumcision and observance of Sabbath are crimes deserving capital punishment.

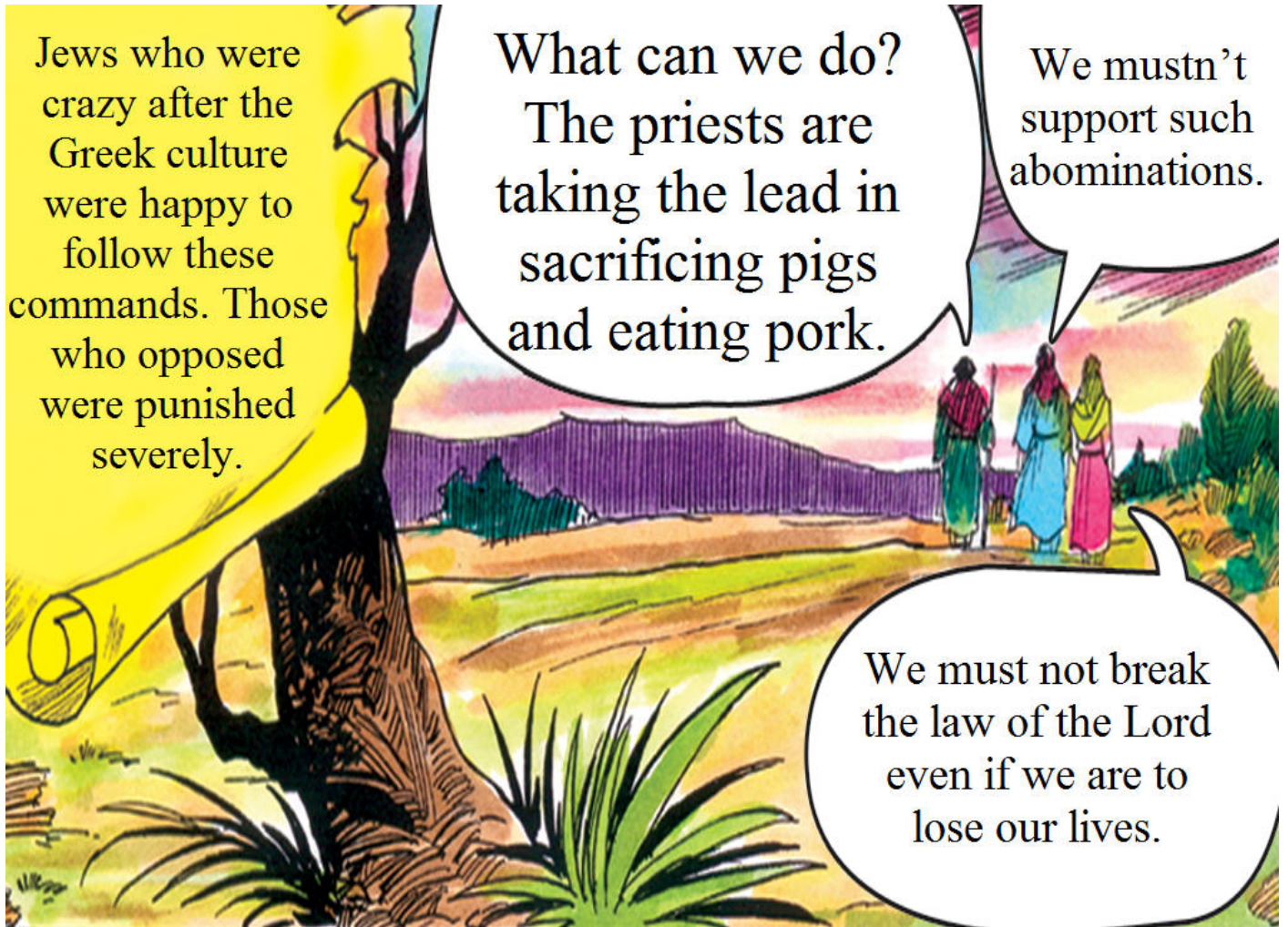


Jews who were crazy after the Greek culture were happy to follow these commands. Those who opposed were punished severely.

What can we do?  
The priests are taking the lead in sacrificing pigs and eating pork.

We mustn't support such abominations.

We must not break the law of the Lord even if we are to lose our lives.



Some of the Jews who resolved to observe the law at any cost formed into a group and called themselves Hasidim, meaning the holy ones. Later on, they came to be known as the Pharisees, meaning separated.

We must do something. More and more people are abandoning their faith every day.

We must help our brethren to remain faithful. This persecution won't last long.

Severe punishment on the one side, tempting promises of the king on the other side. No wonder many are falling away.



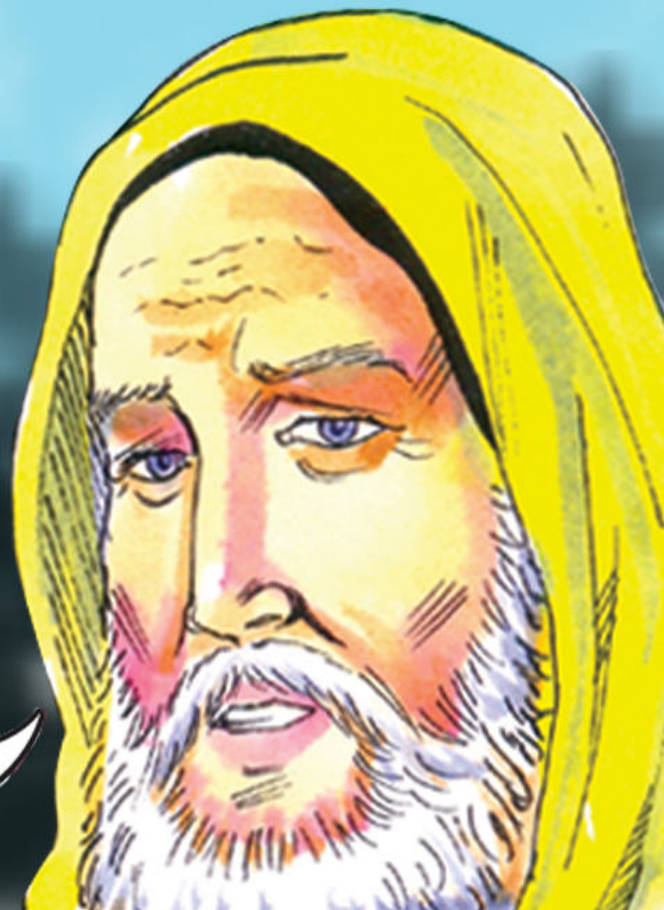


What shall we do?

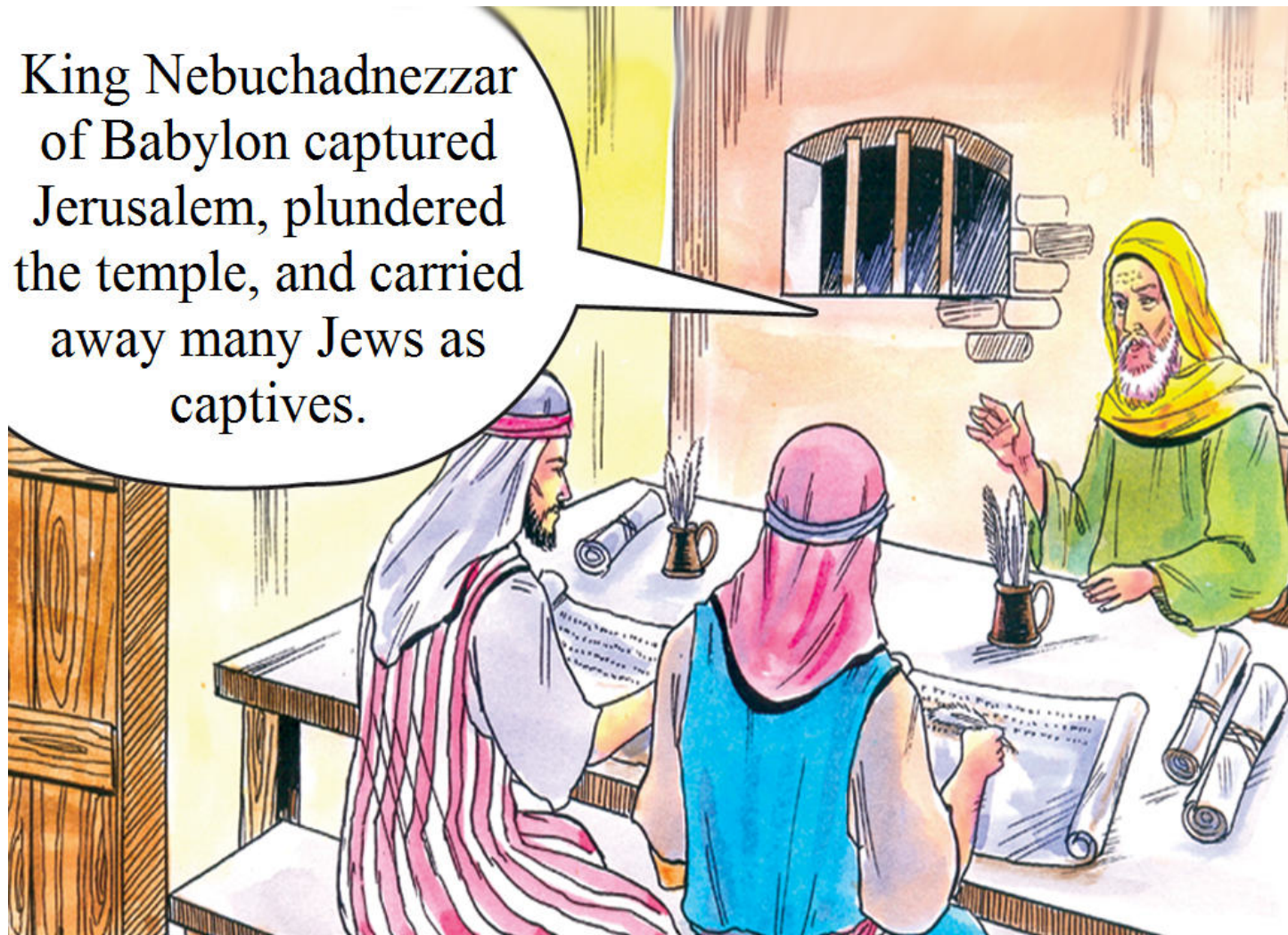
The Lord has shown us a way.

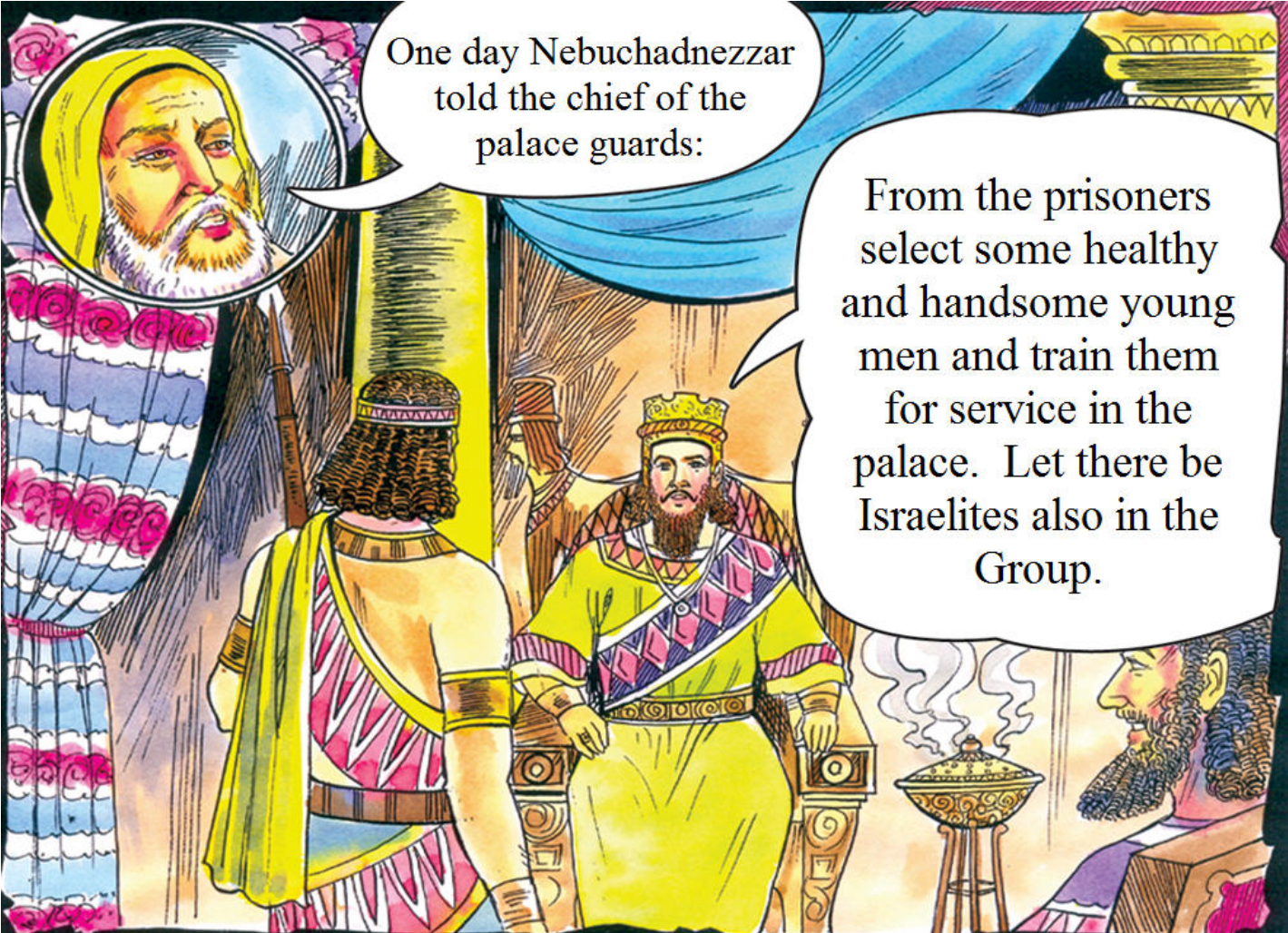


Write down what I say. We will circulate the scrolls among our people in secret. The Lord will strengthen them.



King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captured Jerusalem, plundered the temple, and carried away many Jews as captives.





One day Nebuchadnezzar  
told the chief of the  
palace guards:

From the prisoners  
select some healthy  
and handsome young  
men and train them  
for service in the  
palace. Let there be  
Israelites also in the  
Group.

Among those selected were four Israelites named Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

You will be going through training for three months. Those who master the etiquette of the palace will be given further training in various sciences.





You will be given the best palace food. You must eat meat and drink wine, and get fat. All must take Babylonian names.



Daniel

Beltshazzar



Hananiah

Shadrach



Michael

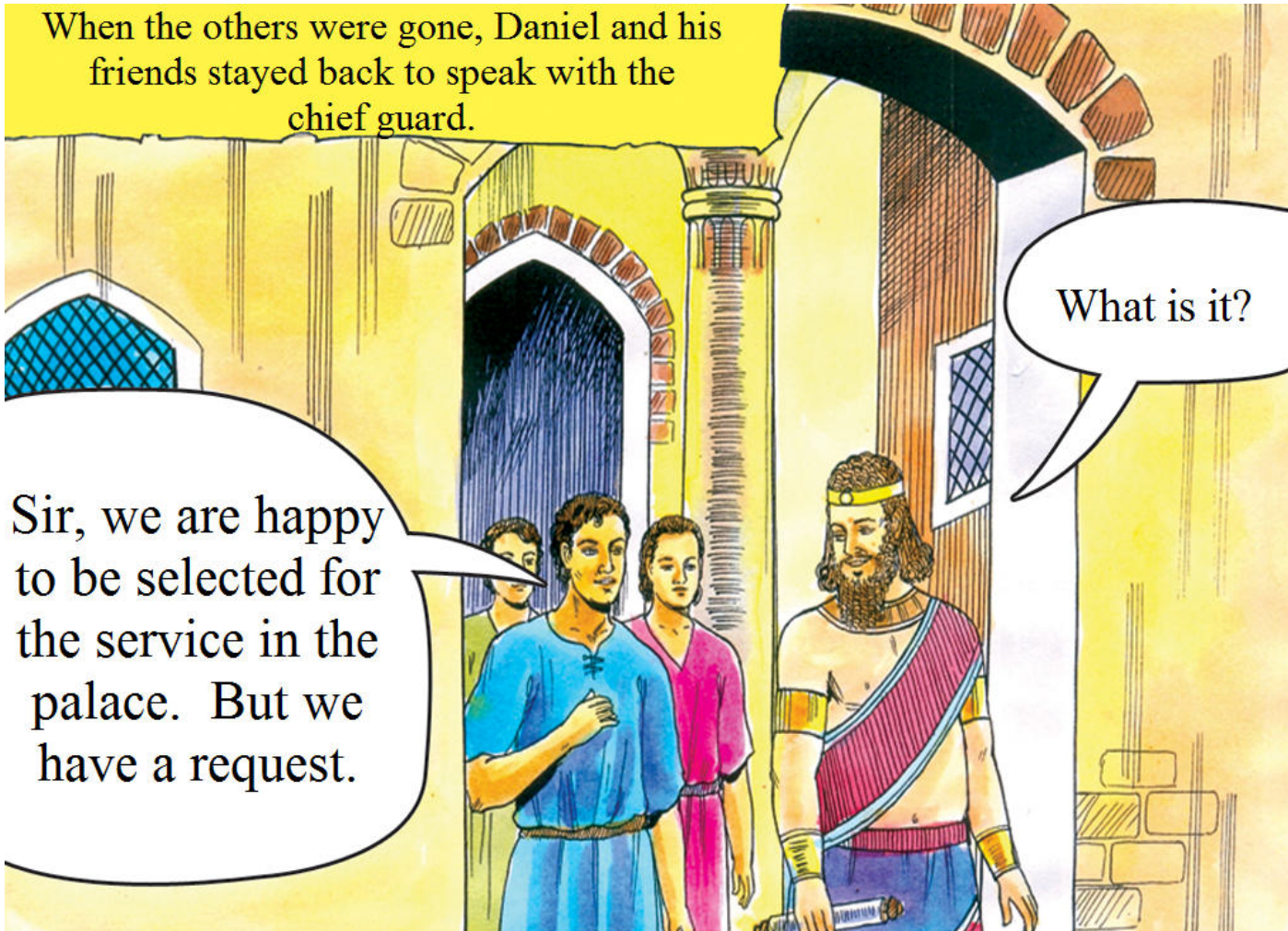
Meshach



Azariah

Abednego

When the others were gone, Daniel and his friends stayed back to speak with the chief guard.



Sir, we are happy to be selected for the service in the palace. But we have a request.

What is it?



We worship the  
Almighty God.  
Kindly grant us  
permission to keep  
the diet according to  
our religious  
regulations.



You are already too thin. If you still lose more weight, the king will blame me.

Allow us to try this for ten days. Then decide for yourself.

Yes.



After 10 days.

Sir, about our diet?

You have improved, so continue the same diet.

Wonder what they were eating!



Daniel and his friends followed the laws of the Lord faithfully. The Lord protected them and made them wiser than all the others.

5  
Your Majesty, their training is completed.

We are going to test them. Name a creature that walks on fours in the morning, on twos at noon, and on threes in the evening.

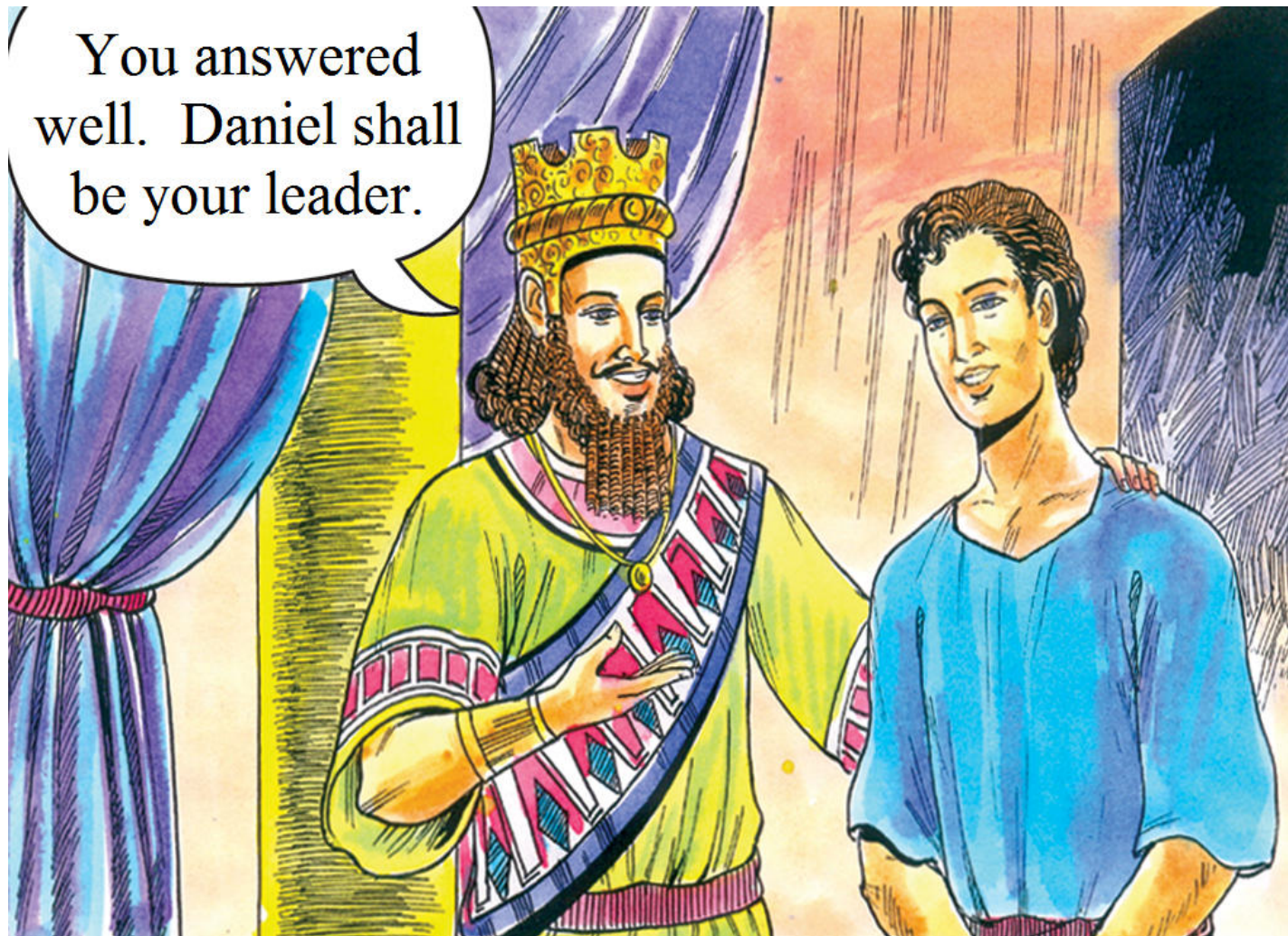
?!!!



Man. A baby walks on  
fours; old men walk  
with a staff, as if on  
threes.



You answered well. Daniel shall be your leader.



A few months later, Nebuchadnezzar called all the wise men in his kingdom.

I had a horrible dream. Narrate my dream and interpret it. The one who does it will be rewarded richly.

Your majesty, tell us your dream, and we shall interpret it.

!!?



You are a bunch of cheats.  
If you do not tell me my  
dream and its interpretation  
within a week, all of you  
will be put to death  
and your property  
shall be confiscated.  
Hm... Get out!



This is a cruel trap. How can we find the answer?

Only the gods can know this kind of secrets. We are not gods.





Hearing the news Daniel  
and his friends prayed to  
the Lord.

Lord, God of heaven  
and earth, all powerful  
and mighty God, have  
mercy on us. Reveal  
to us the King's dream  
and its interpretation.





*DANIEL, GO  
AND TELL THE  
KING.*

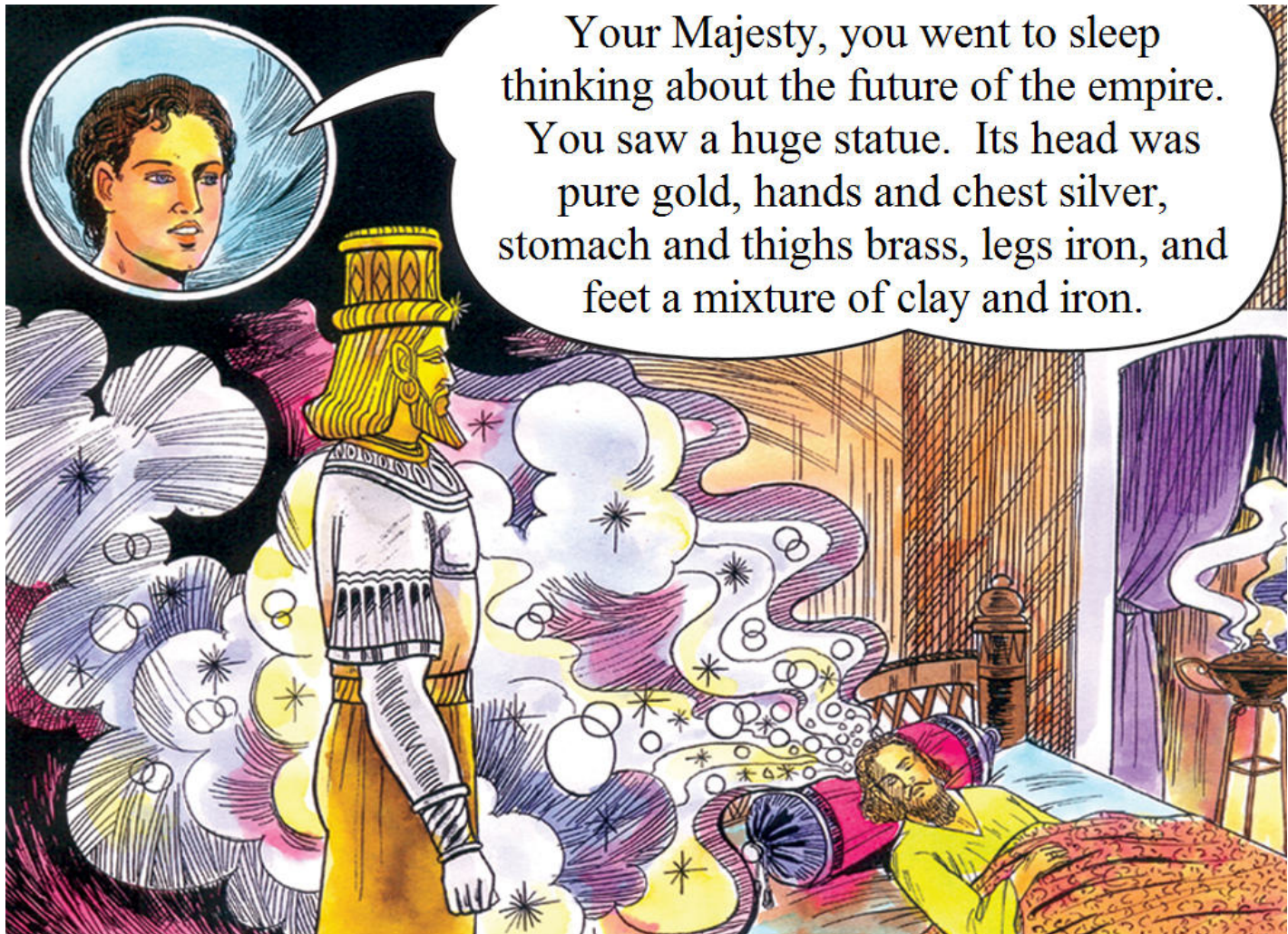
Daniel before the king.

Daniel, so you can explain my dream! Go ahead and the gift will be yours.

It is the Almighty God who reveals the hidden things. I am only His servant.



Your Majesty, you went to sleep thinking about the future of the empire. You saw a huge statue. Its head was pure gold, hands and chest silver, stomach and thighs brass, legs iron, and feet a mixture of clay and iron.



A big stone rolled down from the mountain and hit the feet of the statue and shattered it.

The statue is the great empire, the Almighty God has entrusted to you. You are the golden head. Your successors are represented by the other parts.



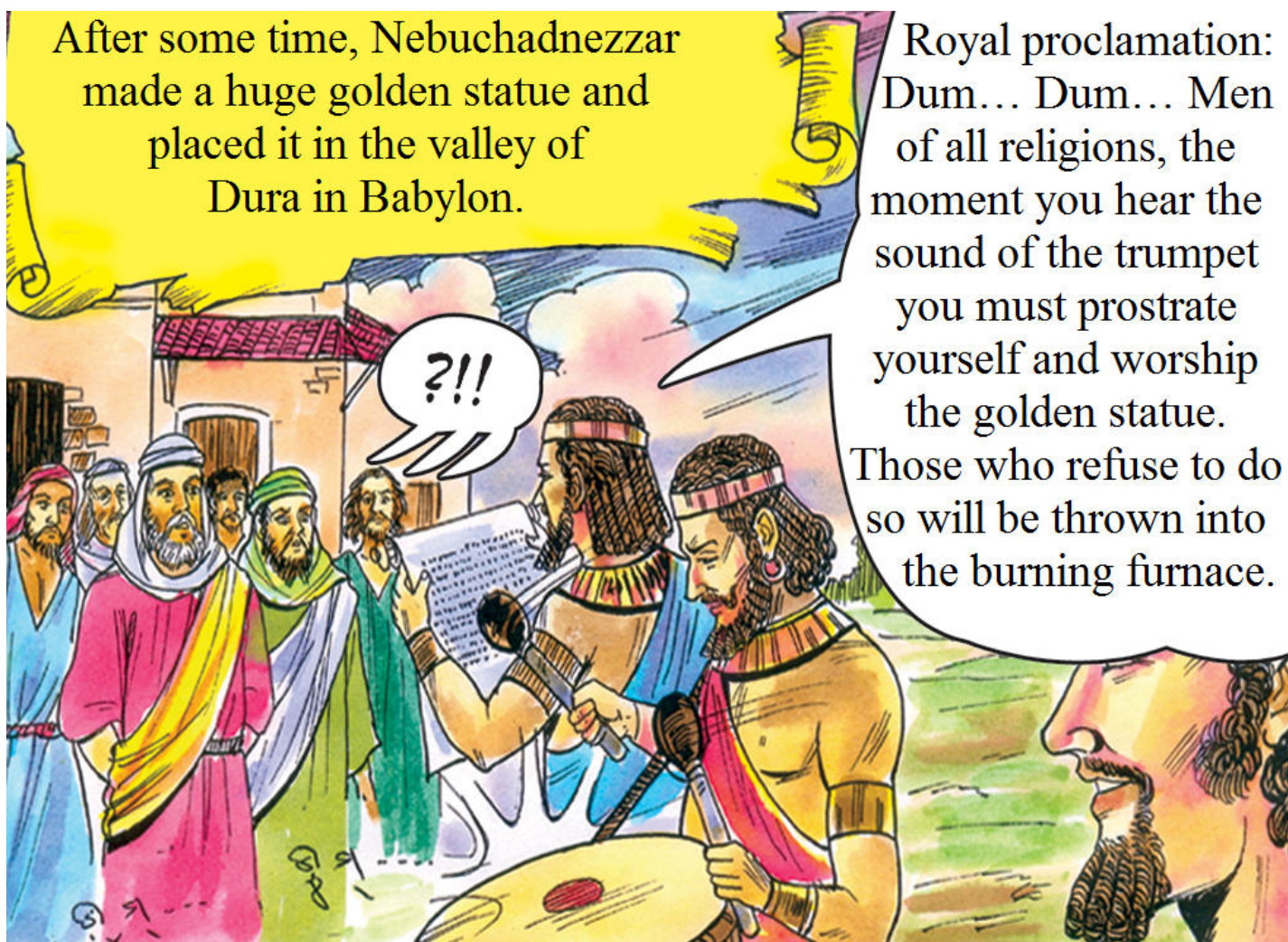
The feet of clay and iron stand for the last king. During the time of that weak ruler the empire will be shattered.

Your God is the true God. You shall be the head of all the wise men in Babylon, your three friends shall be rulers of three provinces.



After some time, Nebuchadnezzar made a huge golden statue and placed it in the valley of Dura in Babylon.


Royal proclamation:  
Dum... Dum... Men of all religions, the moment you hear the sound of the trumpet you must prostrate yourself and worship the golden statue. Those who refuse to do so will be thrown into the burning furnace.







Your Majesty, the Hebrews  
Shadrach, Meshach and  
Abednego refuse to worship  
the golden statue.



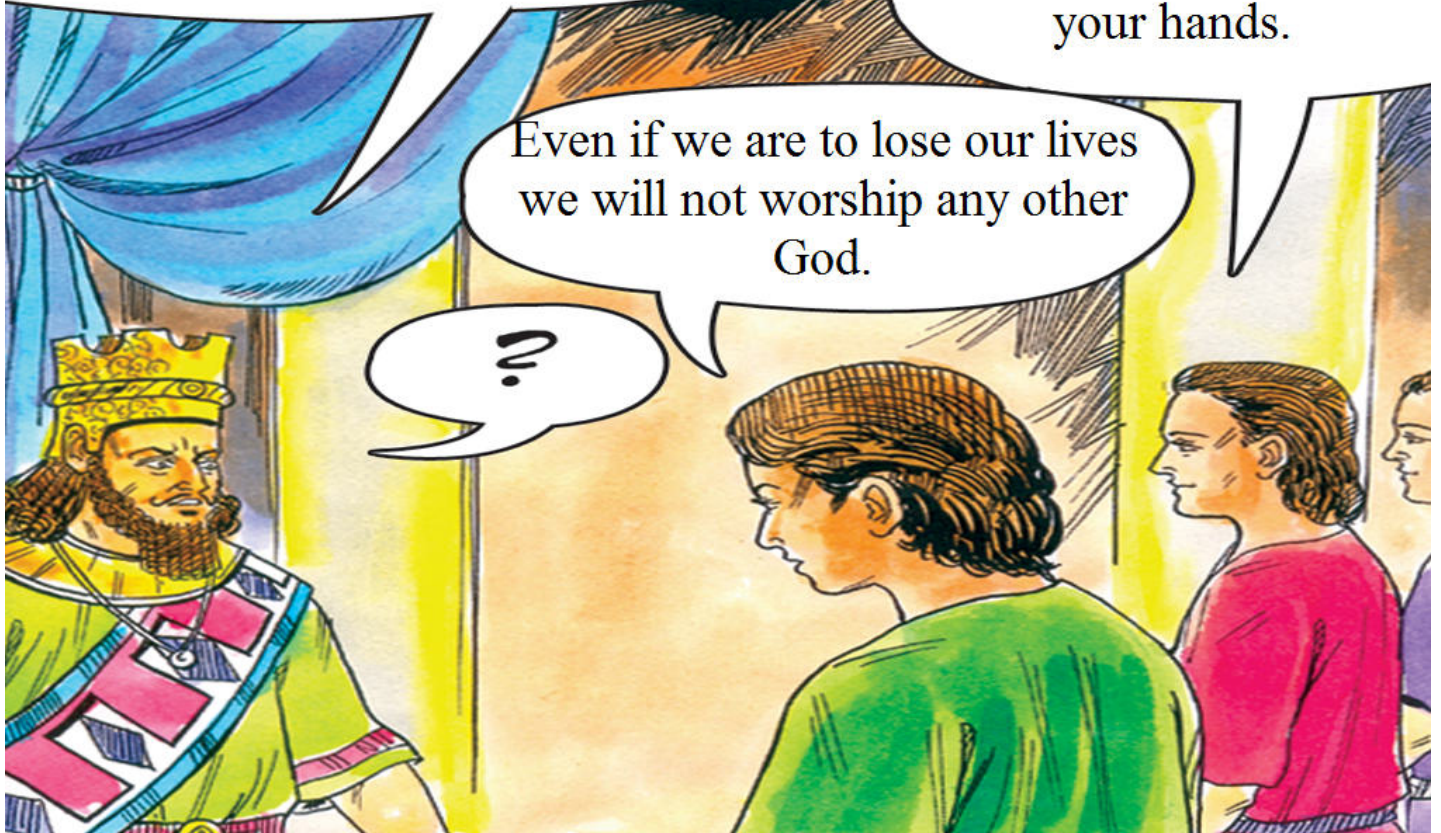
Bring them  
here!

Is it true that you do not worship the golden statue? Don't you know the punishment for it?

We worship no one but the God in heaven. He will save us from your hands.

Even if we are to lose our lives we will not worship any other God.

?



Heat the furnace  
seven times more than  
the usual and throw  
them into it!



The Lord sent his angel to protect them in the furnace.

Fire and the heat  
praise the Lord! Rain  
and snow praise  
the Lord!

Did I not have three  
thrown in the fire?  
How come there are  
four now?

?!



Servants of the  
Most High God,  
come out!



Your God alone is the only true God.

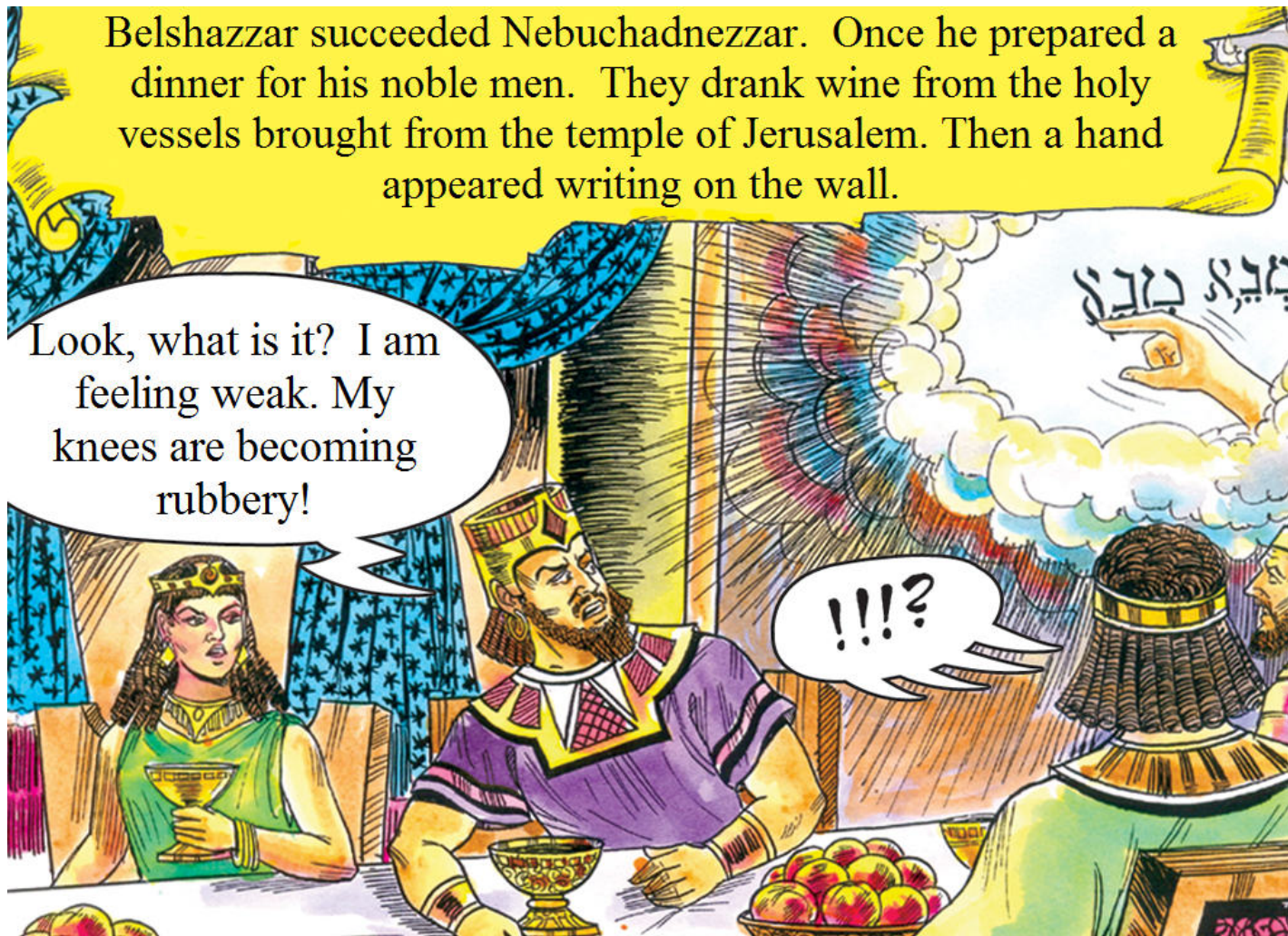
Bring the ones who accused  
these people and throw them  
into the fire.



Belshazzar succeeded Nebuchadnezzar. Once he prepared a dinner for his noble men. They drank wine from the holy vessels brought from the temple of Jerusalem. Then a hand appeared writing on the wall.

Look, what is it? I am feeling weak. My knees are becoming rubbery!

!!!?



Don't worry my Lord. That writing is a  
good omen.

בָּיָמָא בְּבֵינָא תִּבְקַל דְּפִרְמִיז

We will call the magicians. They  
will read and explain it.





The one who reads and interprets it shall be dressed in purple with a golden chain around his neck, and be made the third in rank in the kingdom.



None of the magicians were able to interpret the writing on the wall. Finally, Daniel arrived.

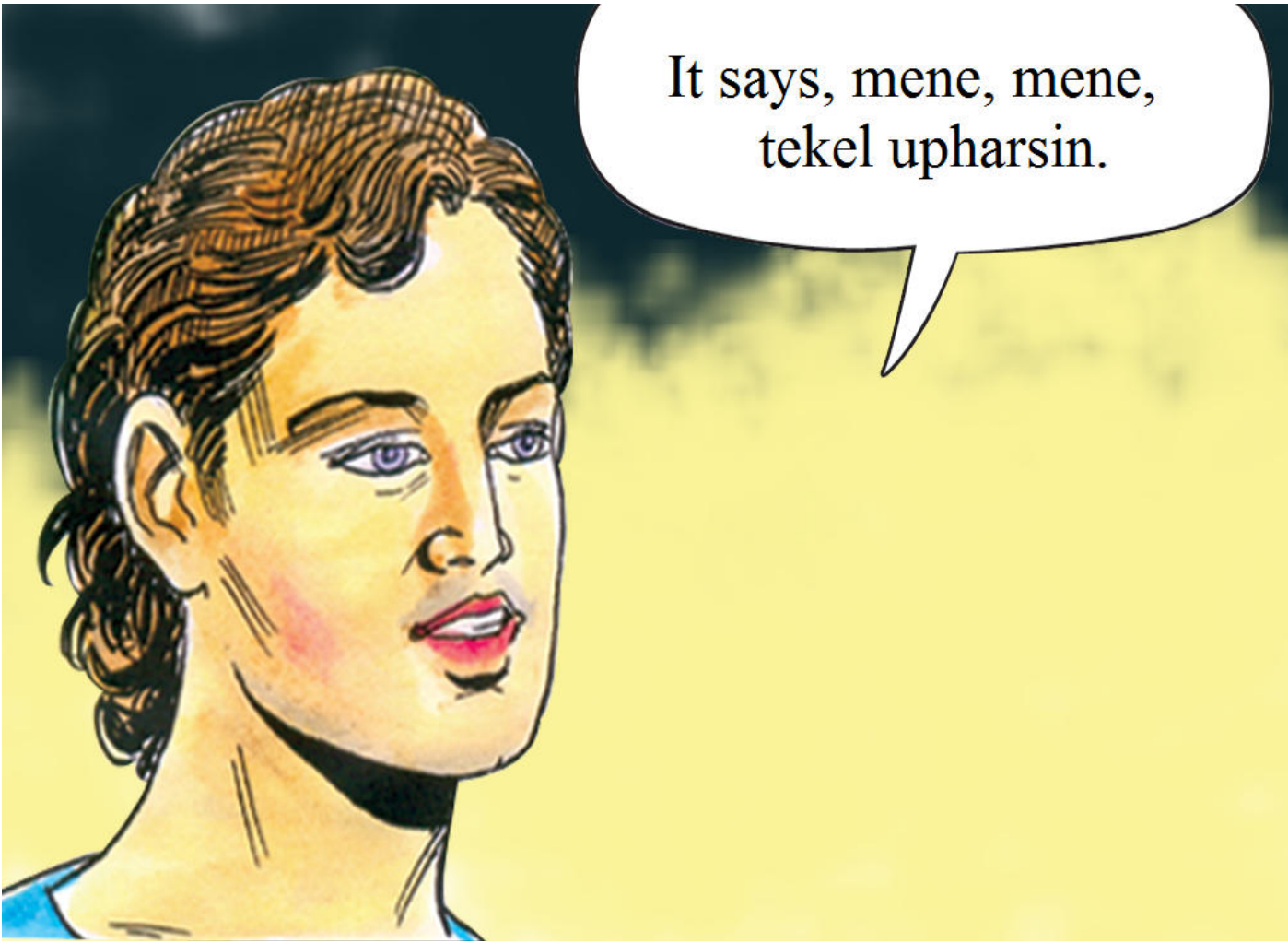
Your majesty, I hope these terrible words are written about your enemies.

Don't worry, tell me what it means.

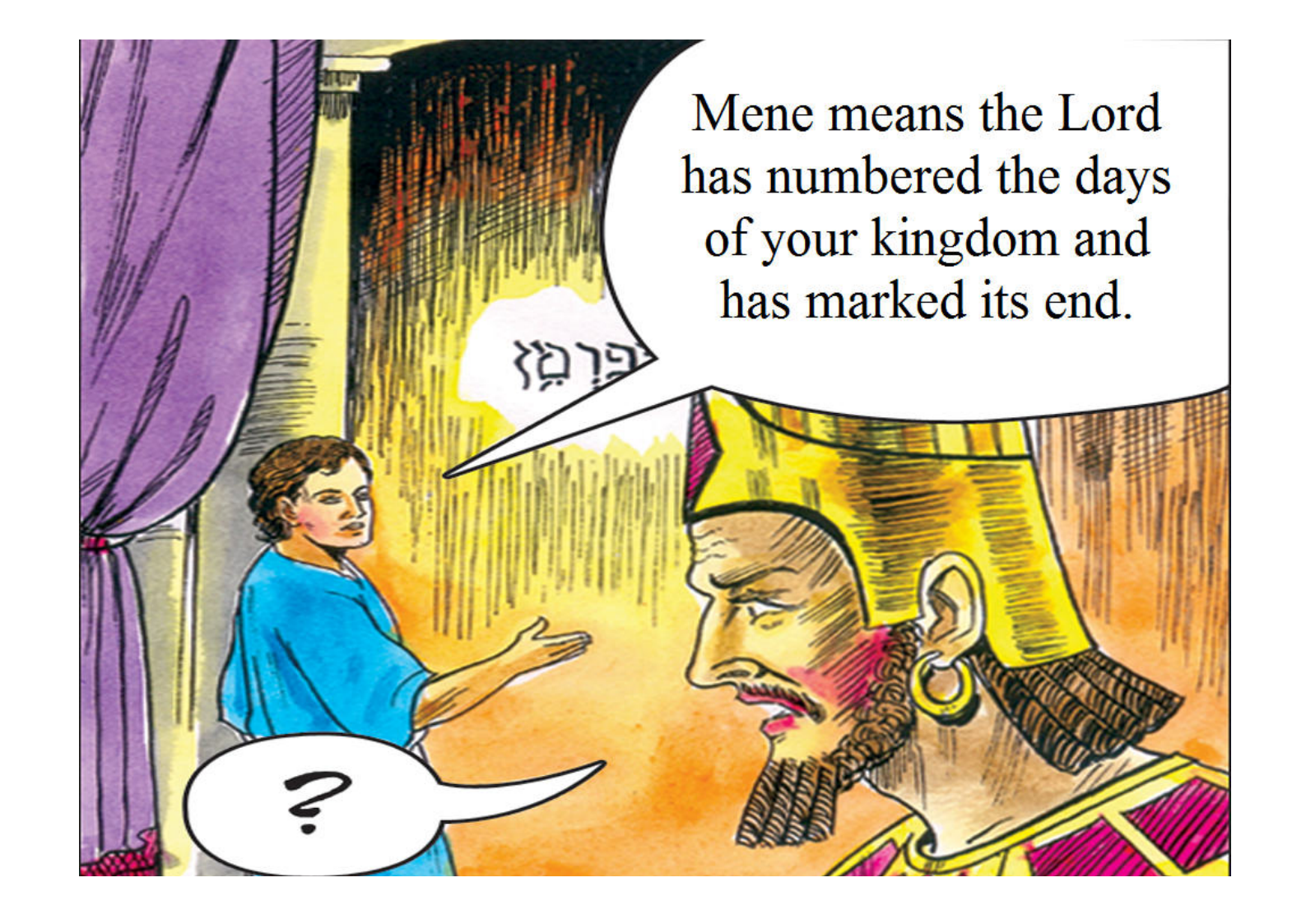
!

דְּבָרֵי מֵיז



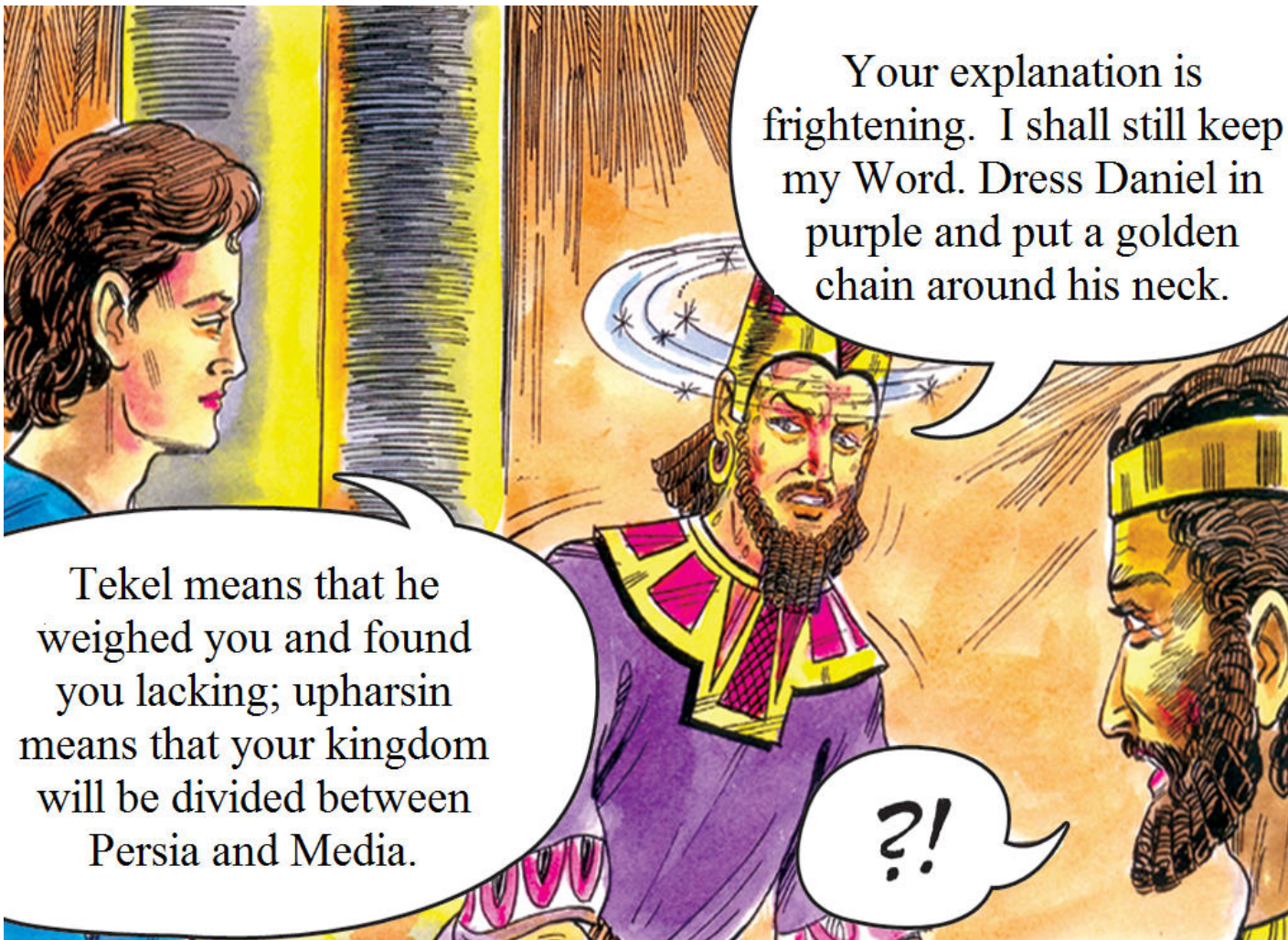


It says, mene, mene,  
tekel upharsin.



Mene means the Lord  
has numbered the days  
of your kingdom and  
has marked its end.

?



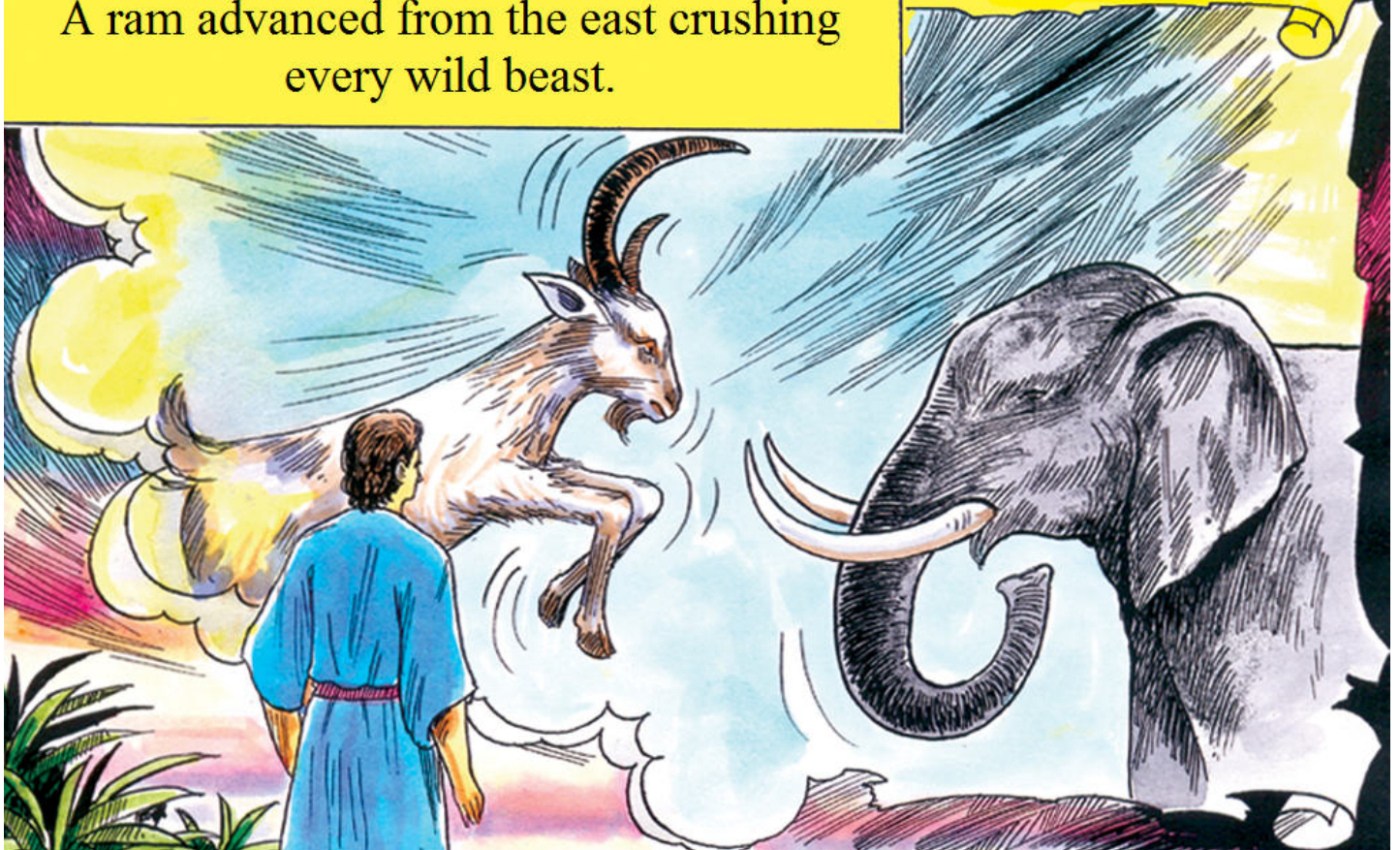
Tekel means that he weighed you and found you lacking; upharsin means that your kingdom will be divided between Persia and Media.

Your explanation is frightening. I shall still keep my Word. Dress Daniel in purple and put a golden chain around his neck.

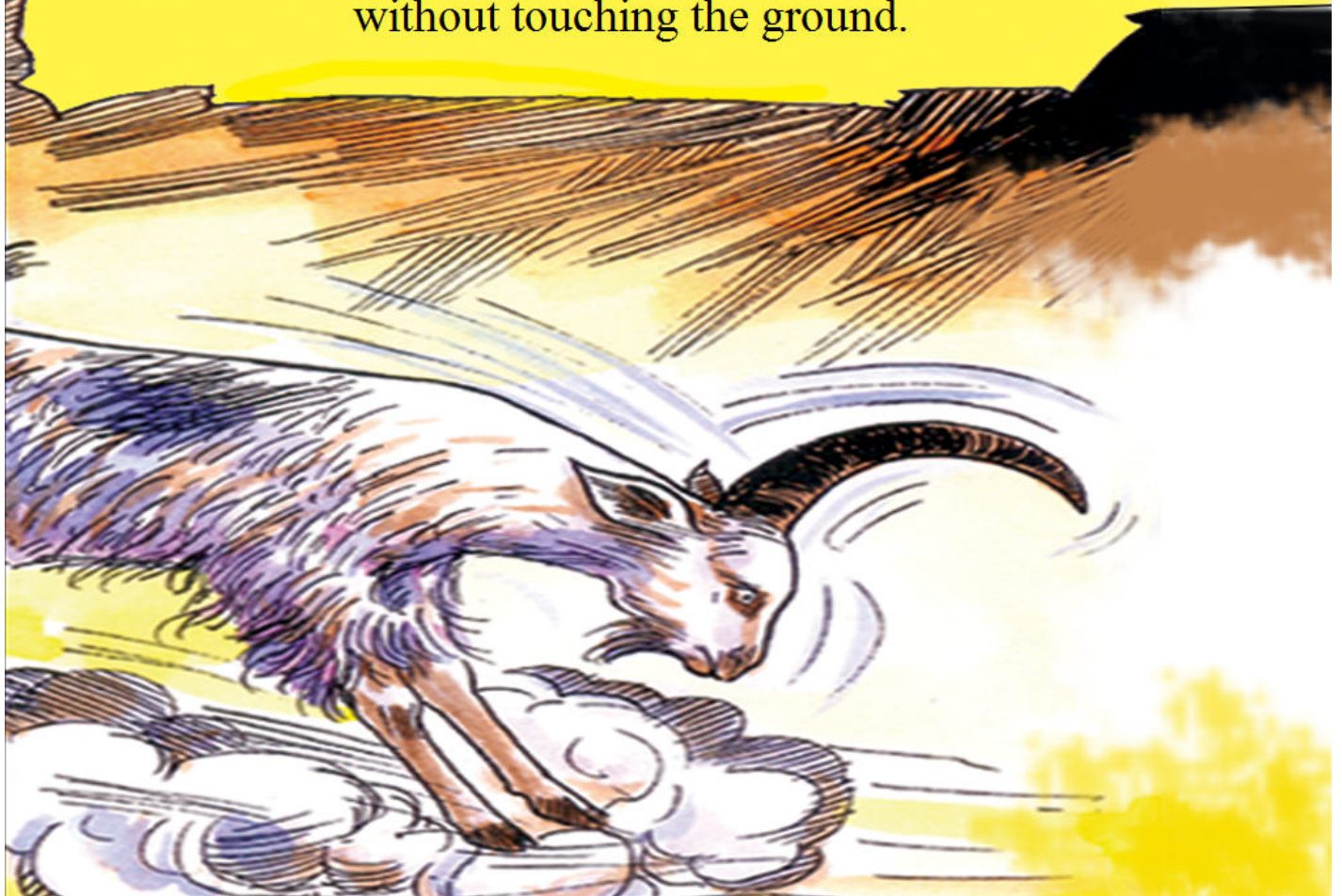
?!

That night the king died. After some time Daniel had a vision. In the vision he was standing in Susa, a town on the bank of the river Ulai. Then:

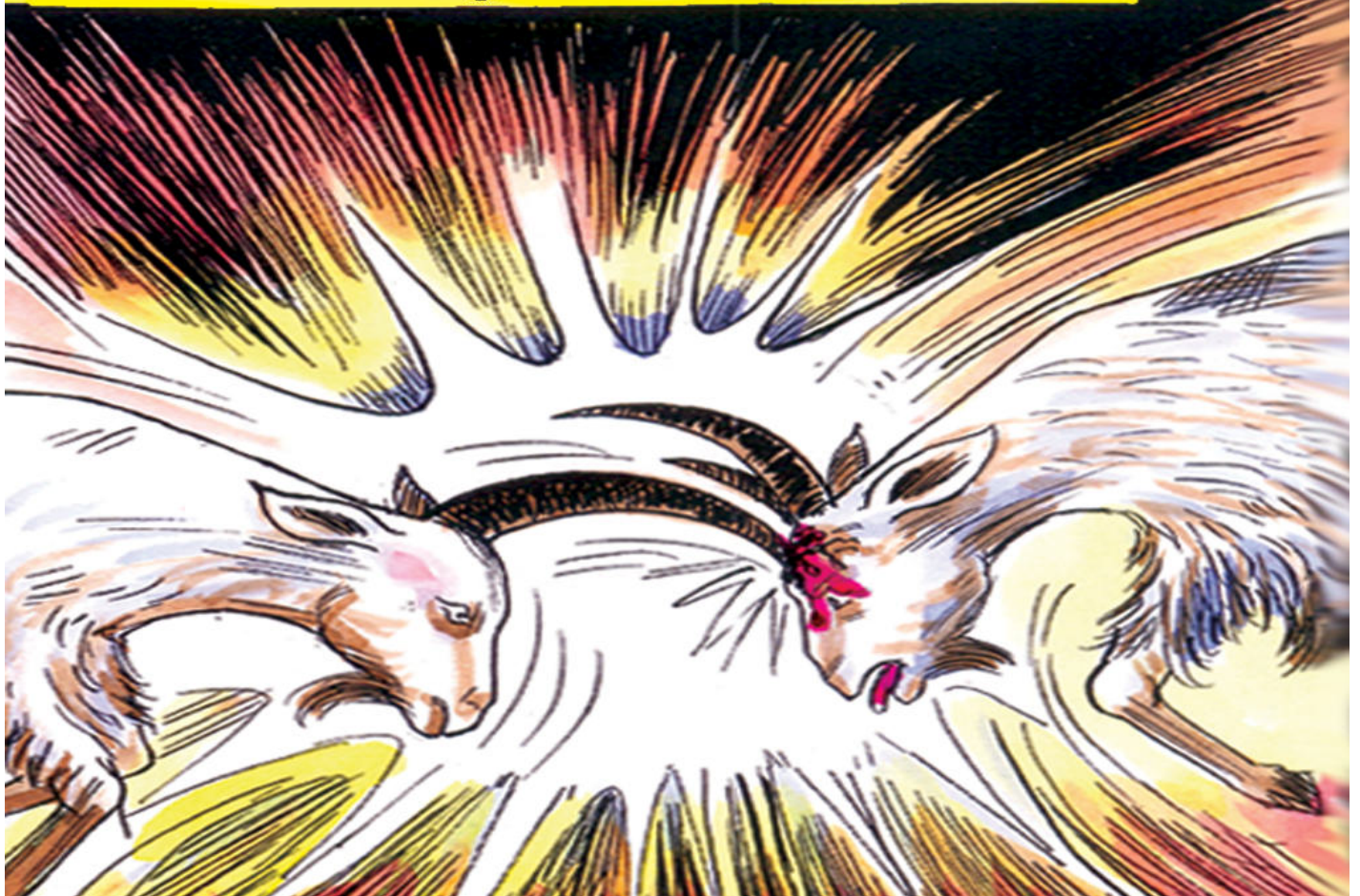
A ram advanced from the east crushing every wild beast.



A he-goat with a single horn came rushing from the west,  
without touching the ground.



It charged into the ram.





In the zenith of its power, the single horn broke and in its place four horns sprouted.

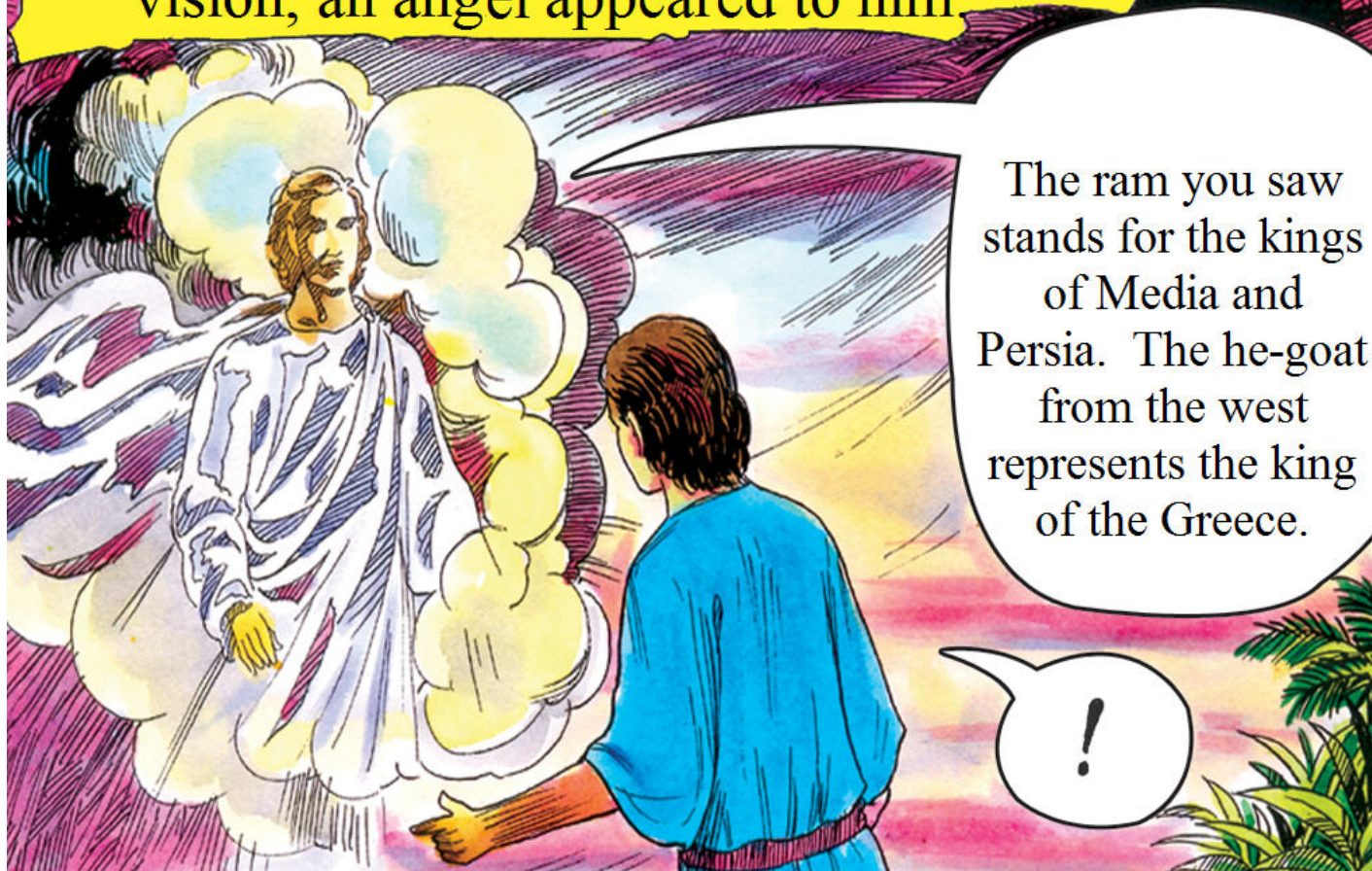


Of the four horns one grew extremely strong, with several branches and challenged God.

If God is powerful, let Him  
come down.  
I will tear him apart.

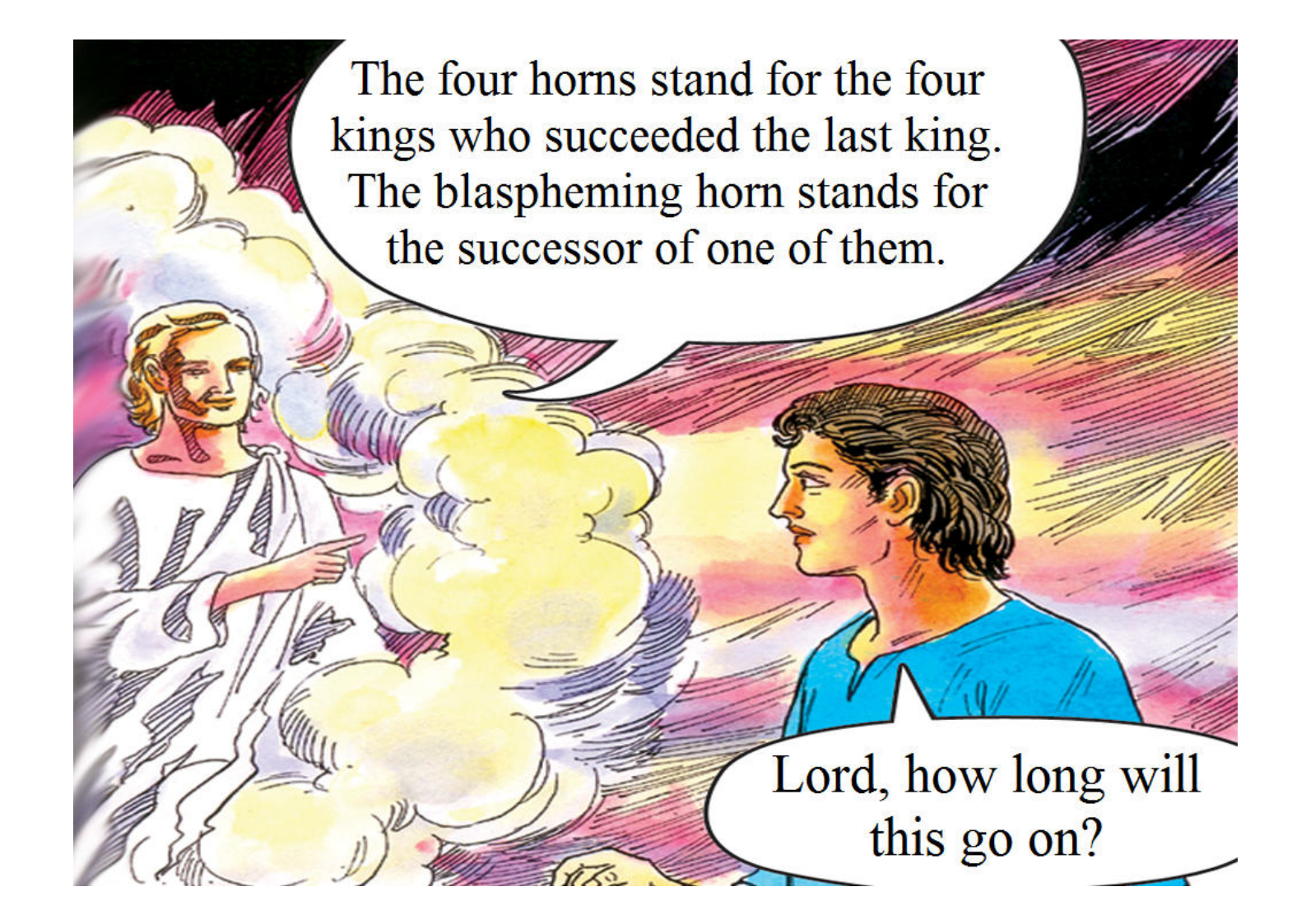


As Daniel stood wondering about the vision, an angel appeared to him.



The ram you saw stands for the kings of Media and Persia. The he-goat from the west represents the king of the Greece.

!



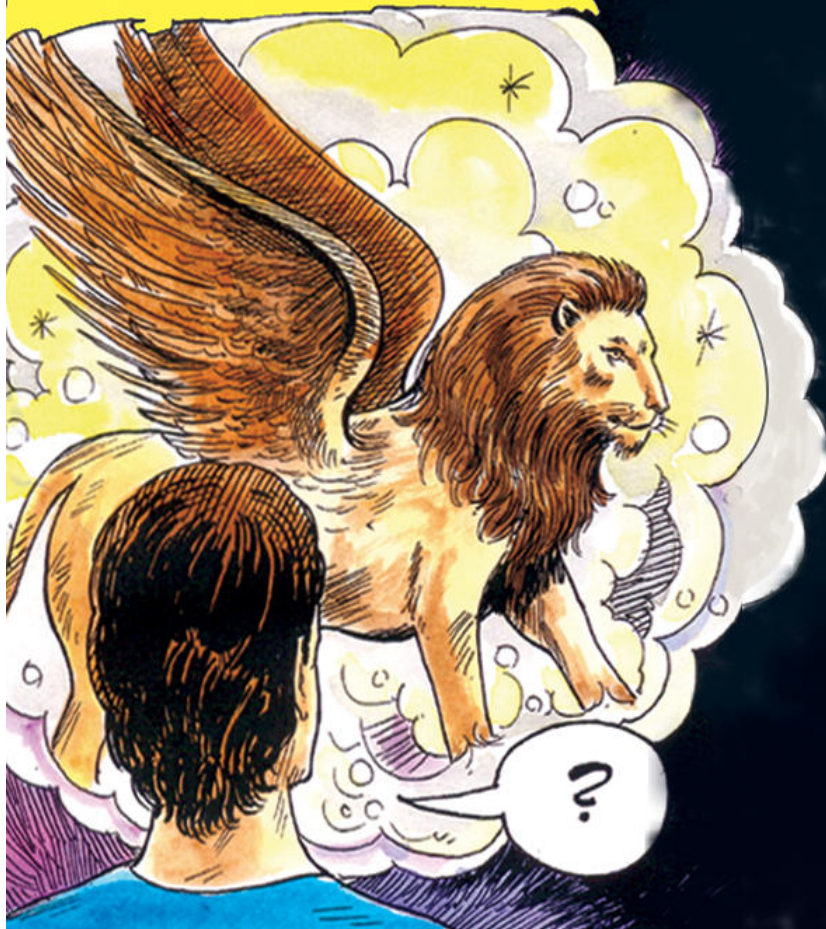
The four horns stand for the four kings who succeeded the last king. The blaspheming horn stands for the successor of one of them.

Lord, how long will this go on?

He will continue in his wicked ways for 2300 days. He will defile the temple and persecute the just. But, in time, he will be destroyed.



Daniel had another vision.



The wings were plucked  
out and the animal stood  
up on two legs like a man.



He had another vision.





An animal with a  
boasting horn.



Then the heaven opened  
before Daniel.



The Son of Man who came on  
the clouds was crowned as King.



An angel explained the vision to Daniel.

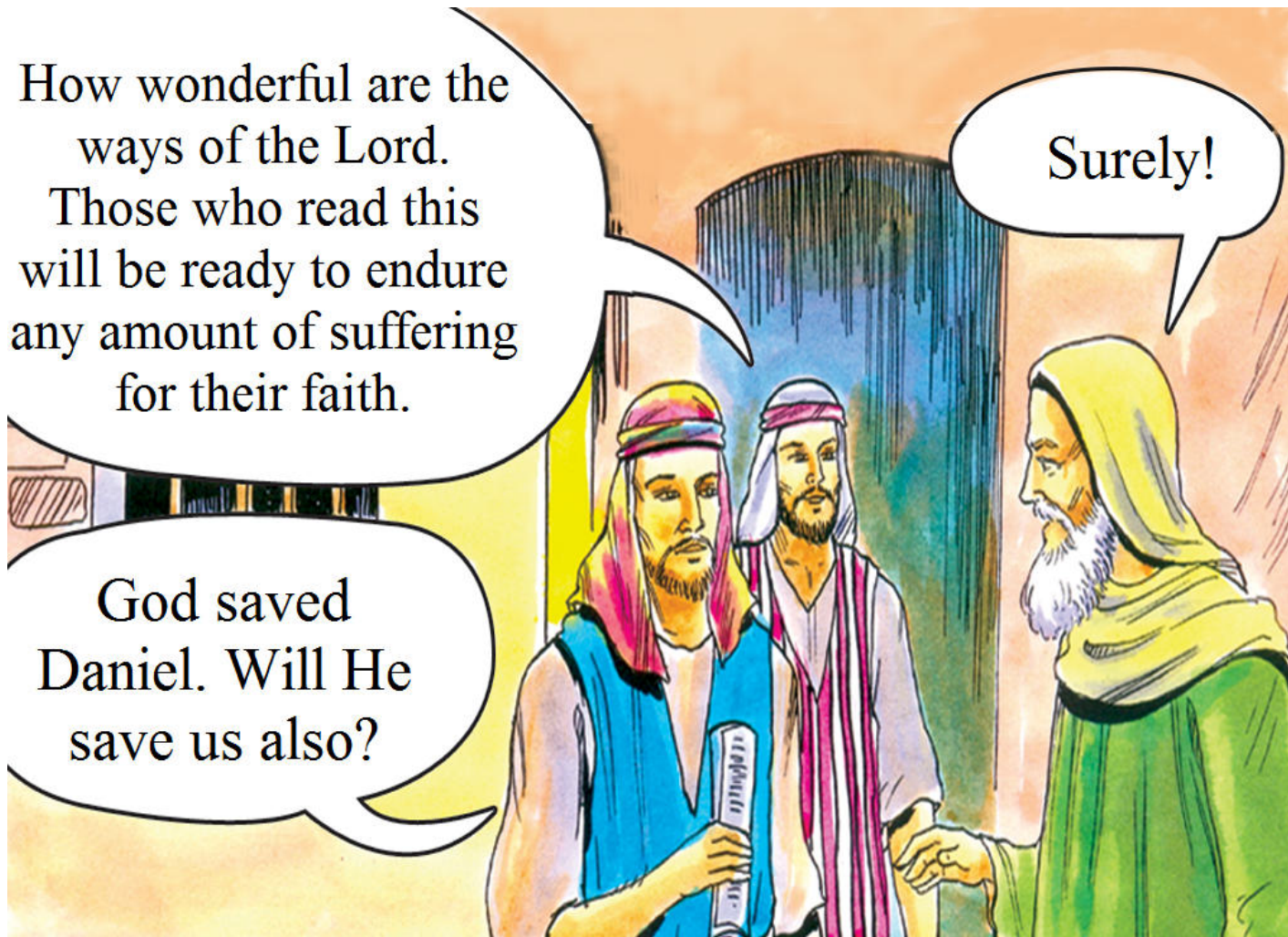
The four animals represent the four big empires. The persecuted people of God are represented by the Son of Man. After the persecution, they will be glorified.



How wonderful are the ways of the Lord.  
Those who read this will be ready to endure any amount of suffering for their faith.

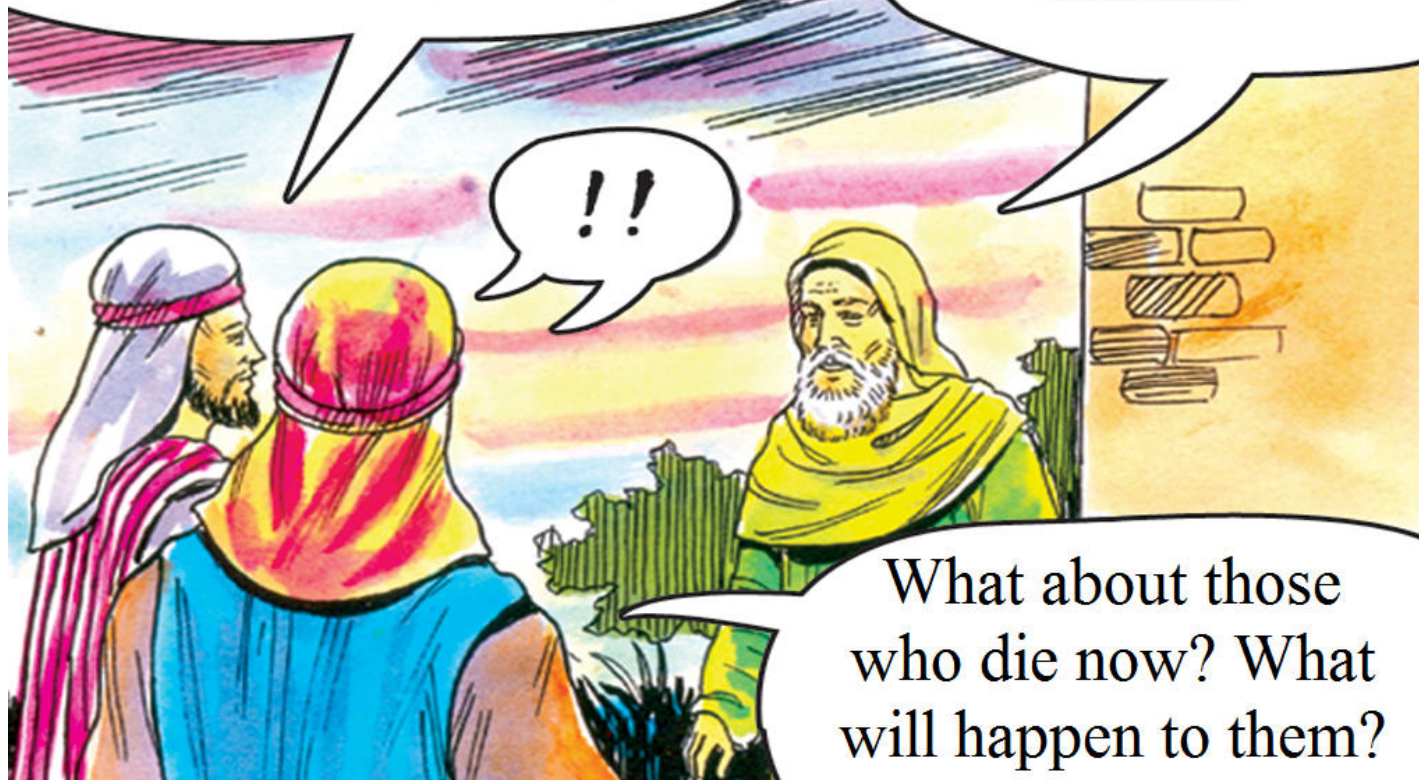
God saved Daniel. Will He save us also?

Surely!



But, the persecution is increasing and the persecutor is becoming stronger.

Soon, the Lord will put an end to this. He has heard the cry of the innocent.



What about those who die now? What will happen to them?

Didn't you understand  
the vision about the Son  
of Man? The Lord will  
give them new life.  
Those who suffer for the  
Lord will be raised from  
the dead and placed on  
thrones. The wicked  
will be punished.



The Lord will protect those who remain faithful to Him. The wonderful works of Daniel continue.





# QUESTIONS

1. Name the Persian King who was defeated by Alexander.
2. Name the four generals who inherited Alexander's empire.
3. Explain the circumstances under which the apocalyptic literature became popular.
4. Who started the religious persecution in Israel?
5. What was the cause of the persecution?
6. Give the Hebrew and Persian names of the four young men selected by Nebuchadnezzar.
7. Explain the writing that appeared on the wall of Belshazzar.
8. Who was the fourth person in the furnace?
9. What do the ram and the goat in Daniel's vision signify?
10. Explain the meaning of the "Son of Man" in Daniel and in the New Testament.

# 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