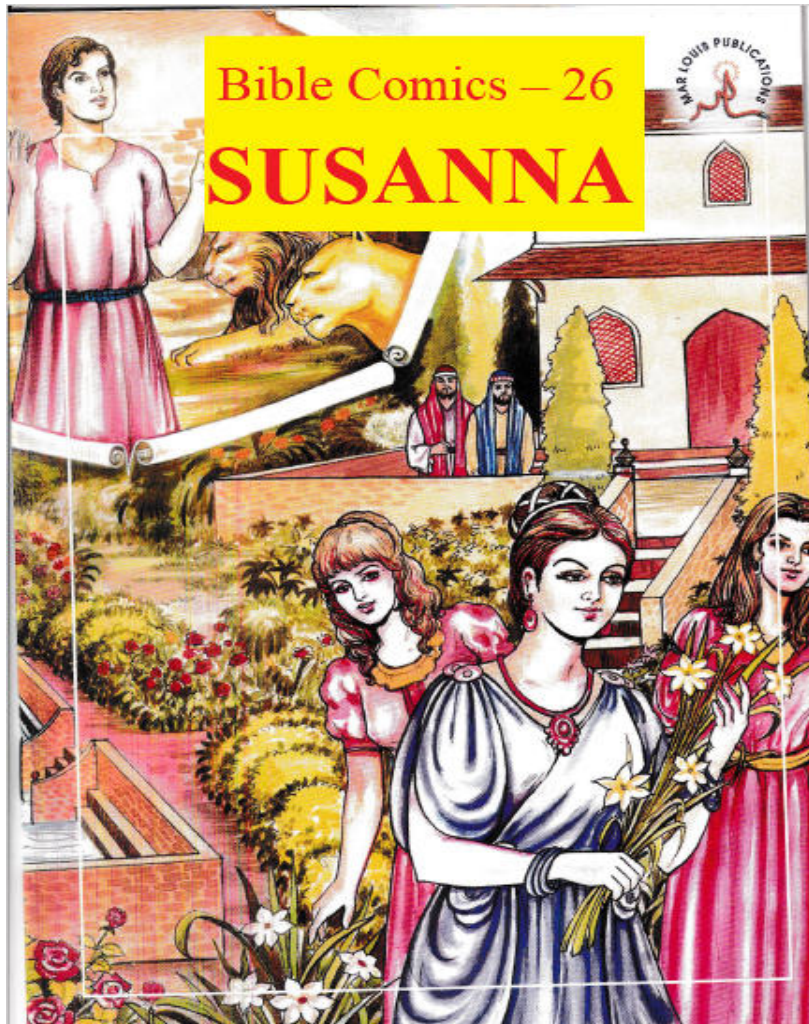


Bible Comics – 26

SUSANNA

MAZ LOUIS PUBLICATIONS



SUSANNA

Daniel is considered as one of the four Major Prophets. The division of the sixteen books of prophets into major and minor is based purely on the amount of material contained in the book attributed to each prophet. In the previous story (No. 25) we have seen that it was during the persecution unleashed by the Syrian king Antiochus IV that the book of Daniel was written. Though Daniel is counted among the prophetic books, it is quite different from the others. It is a

collection of anecdotes and visions. The present story depicts four episodes from Daniel's life.

The first episode is related to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (B.C. 605-560). Probably taking inspiration from Isaiah's satire on the death of a tyrant (Is. 14, 3-21), the story depicts the pride and arrogance of the king who destroyed Jerusalem, burnt down the temple and carried away thousands of Jews captives to Babylon. He pretends to be God Almighty and the Lord of the universe. Behind this picture of

Nebuchadnezzar one can detect the figure of Antiochus IV.

Human pride that denies God by pretending to assume His position is seen by the Bible as the Sin. The sin of Adam and the sin of those who tried to build 'a tower reaching up to heaven' are understood in this sense. Nebuchadnezzar is seen as a type of all those rulers who try to make themselves God.

The Bible understands the human person as the image and representative of God on earth. It is this relationship to God that makes him a person.

When this relation is severed he loses his identity as human person and becomes like a beast. This profound truth is vividly depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's punishment. The "Fall of a Tyrant" is a lesson and a warning to all. Accepting the Lordship of God does not diminish human dignity. On the contrary, it is God who guarantees freedom and dignity to all human persons.

There is only one God and only Him shall we adore. This is a fundamental affirmation of the Bible. Idol worship is denial of God. That God

will not abandon His faithful servants who are ready to suffer persecution and death in order to affirm His Lordship is colorfully presented in the second episode.

The story of Susanna exhorts not to succumb to temptation and intimidations. One must not obey any authority, even a religious authority, if one is asked to do evil. God who delivered Susanna from the hands of the wicked judges will always protect the innocent ones who resist evil. The name Susanna means “lily”. She is a model of purity and of total trust in God.

The last episode, “Eating Statue”, reveals the folly of idolatry. It exposes the treachery of those who enrich themselves by exploiting the simple faith of the people. Idols are made by man and have no power in themselves. Those who worship them are being deceived. However, it is not only statues that can become idols; whatever takes the place of God is an idol. Money, which Jesus called ‘mammon’ is perhaps the biggest idol that is being worshipped today almost everywhere. It is the duty of true believers in God to denounce and destroy such idols, as Daniel did with Bel.



Bible Comics – 26

SUSANNA

Script

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration

Devassy & Benny

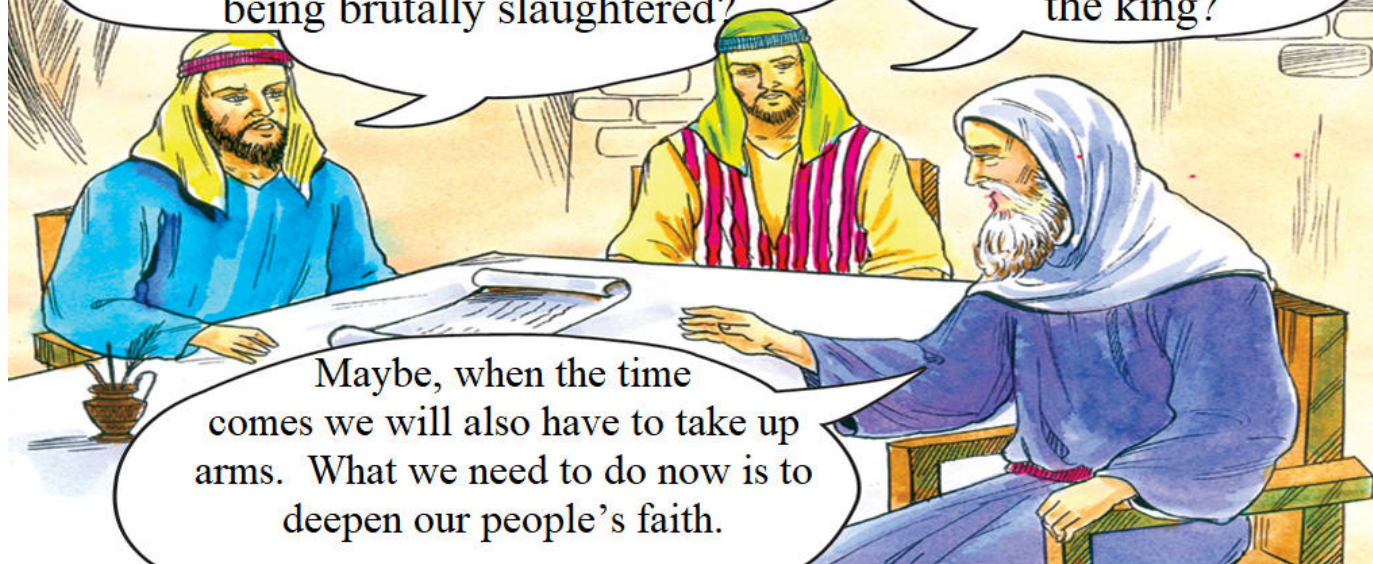


The book of Daniel was written during the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV. The book presents various episodes from the life of Daniel who remained faithful to the Lord in the midst of severe persecution. The present book is a continuation of the previous one "Daniel".

Is it enough that we sit here and write stories when our people are being brutally slaughtered?

How can we win fighting the army of the king?

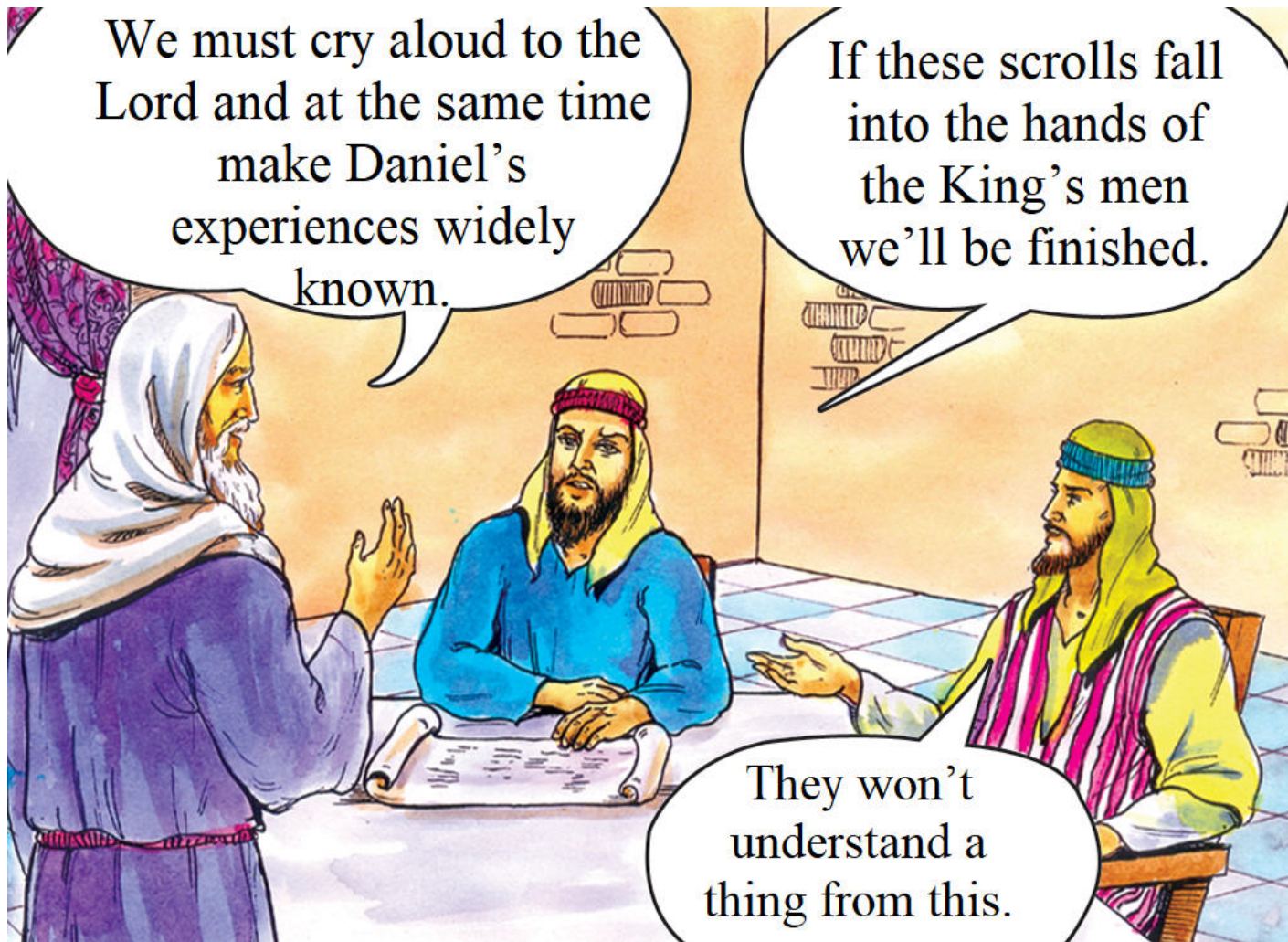
Maybe, when the time comes we will also have to take up arms. What we need to do now is to deepen our people's faith.



We must cry aloud to the Lord and at the same time make Daniel's experiences widely known.

If these scrolls fall into the hands of the King's men we'll be finished.

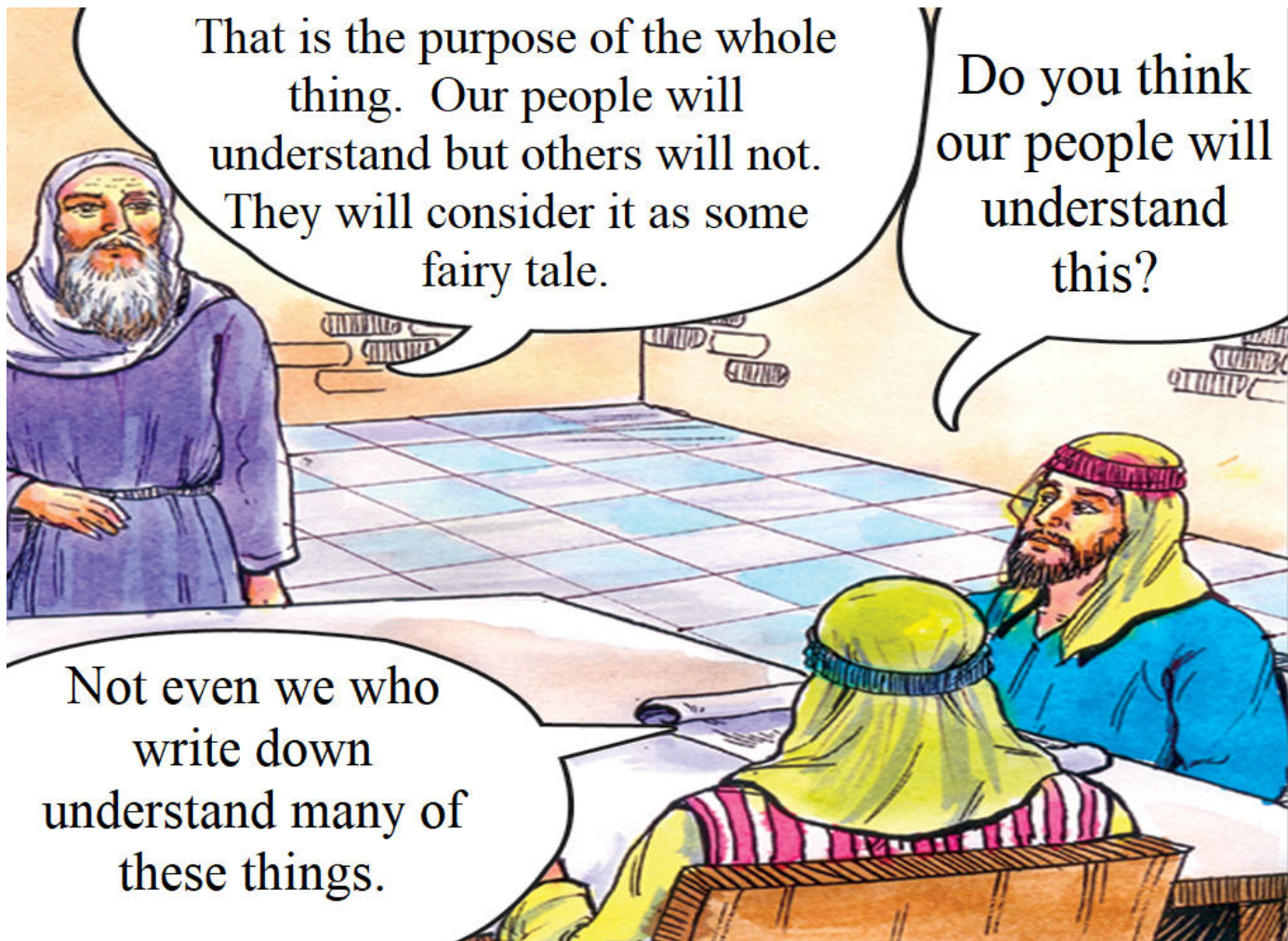
They won't understand a thing from this.

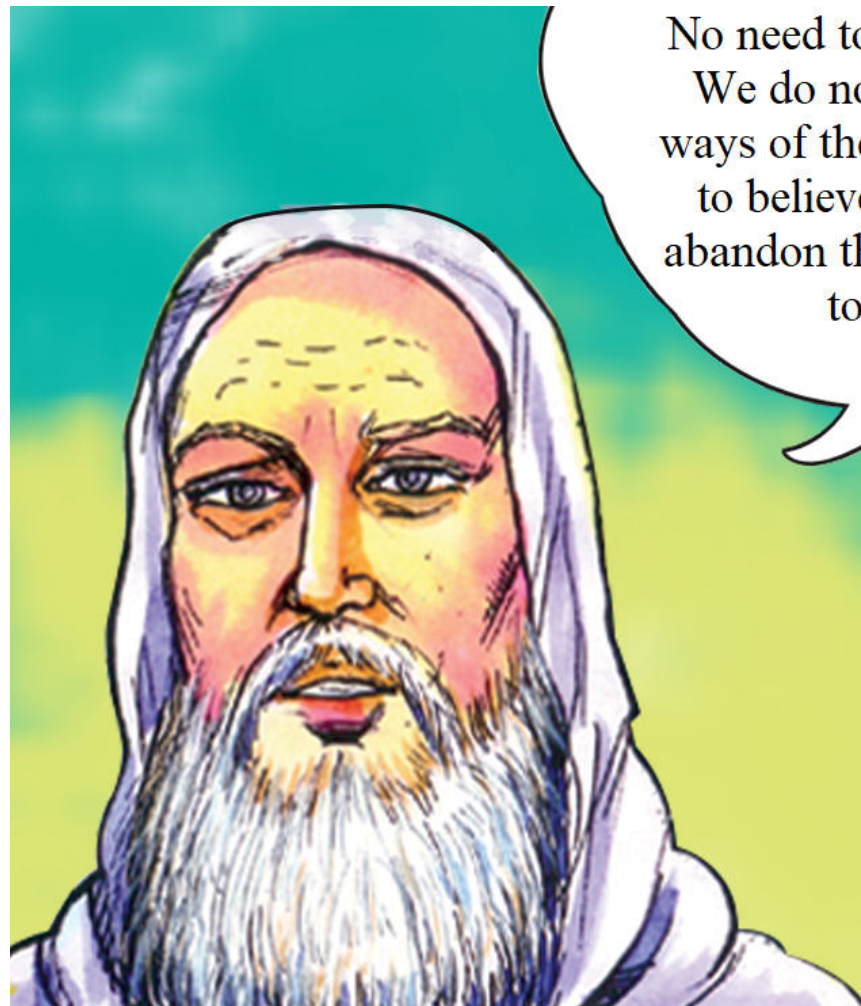


That is the purpose of the whole thing. Our people will understand but others will not. They will consider it as some fairy tale.

Do you think our people will understand this?

Not even we who write down understand many of these things.





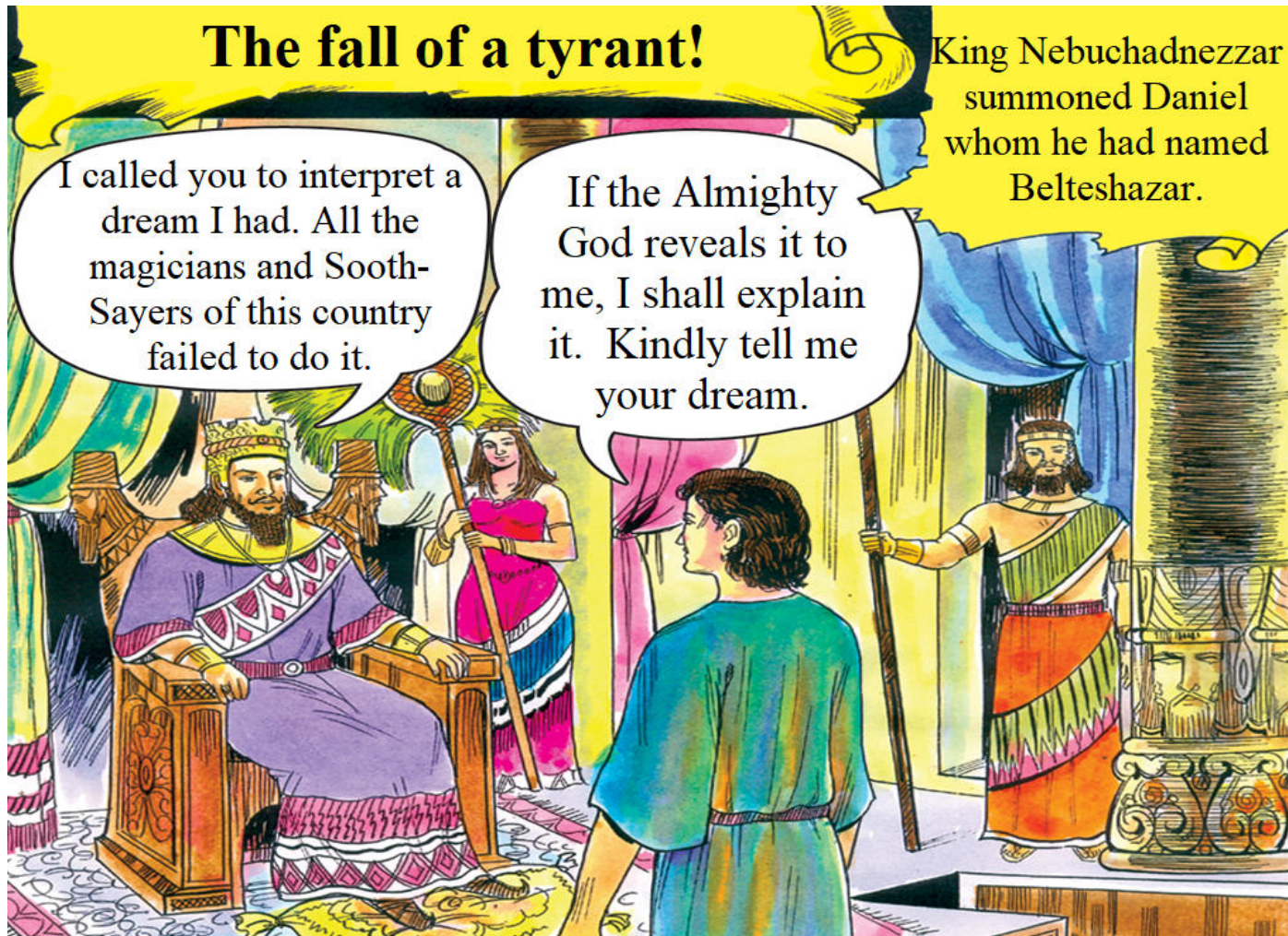
No need to understand everything.
We do not know the mysterious
ways of the Lord. Our people need
to believe that the Lord will not
abandon those who remain faithful
to Him. Write....

The fall of a tyrant!

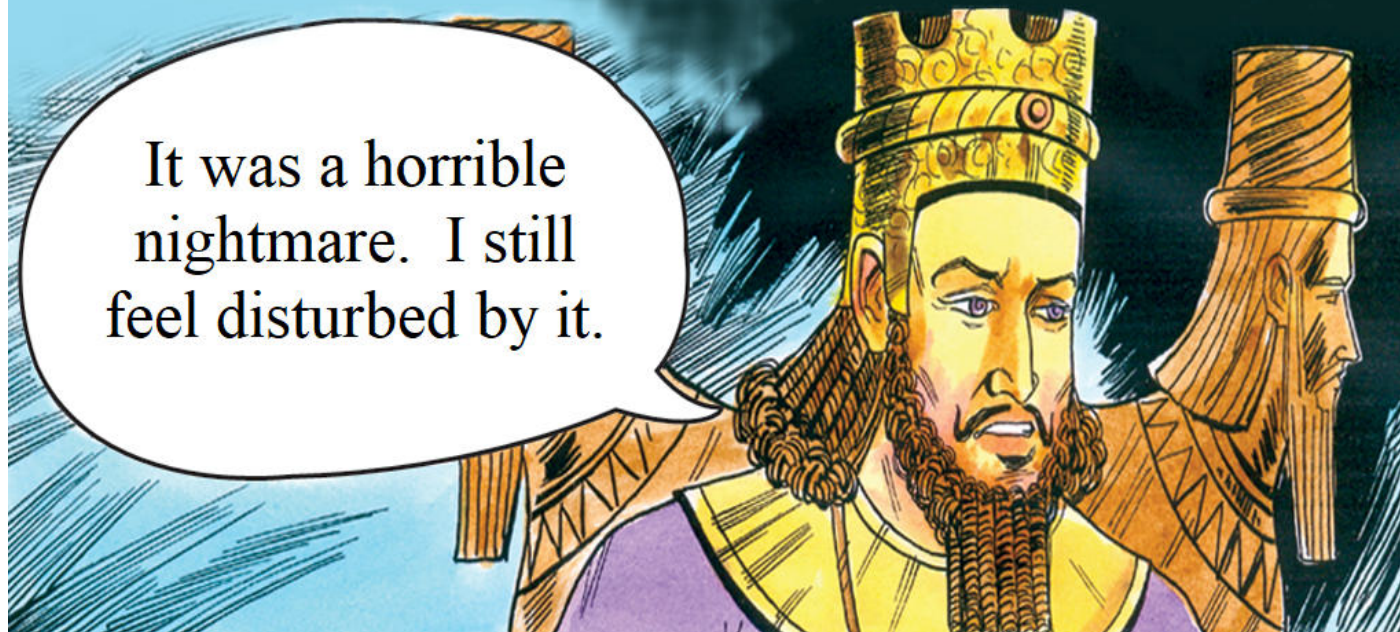
King Nebuchadnezzar
summoned Daniel
whom he had named
Belteshazzar.

I called you to interpret a
dream I had. All the
magicians and Sooth-
Sayers of this country
failed to do it.

If the Almighty
God reveals it to
me, I shall explain
it. Kindly tell me
your dream.



It was a horrible
nightmare. I still
feel disturbed by it.

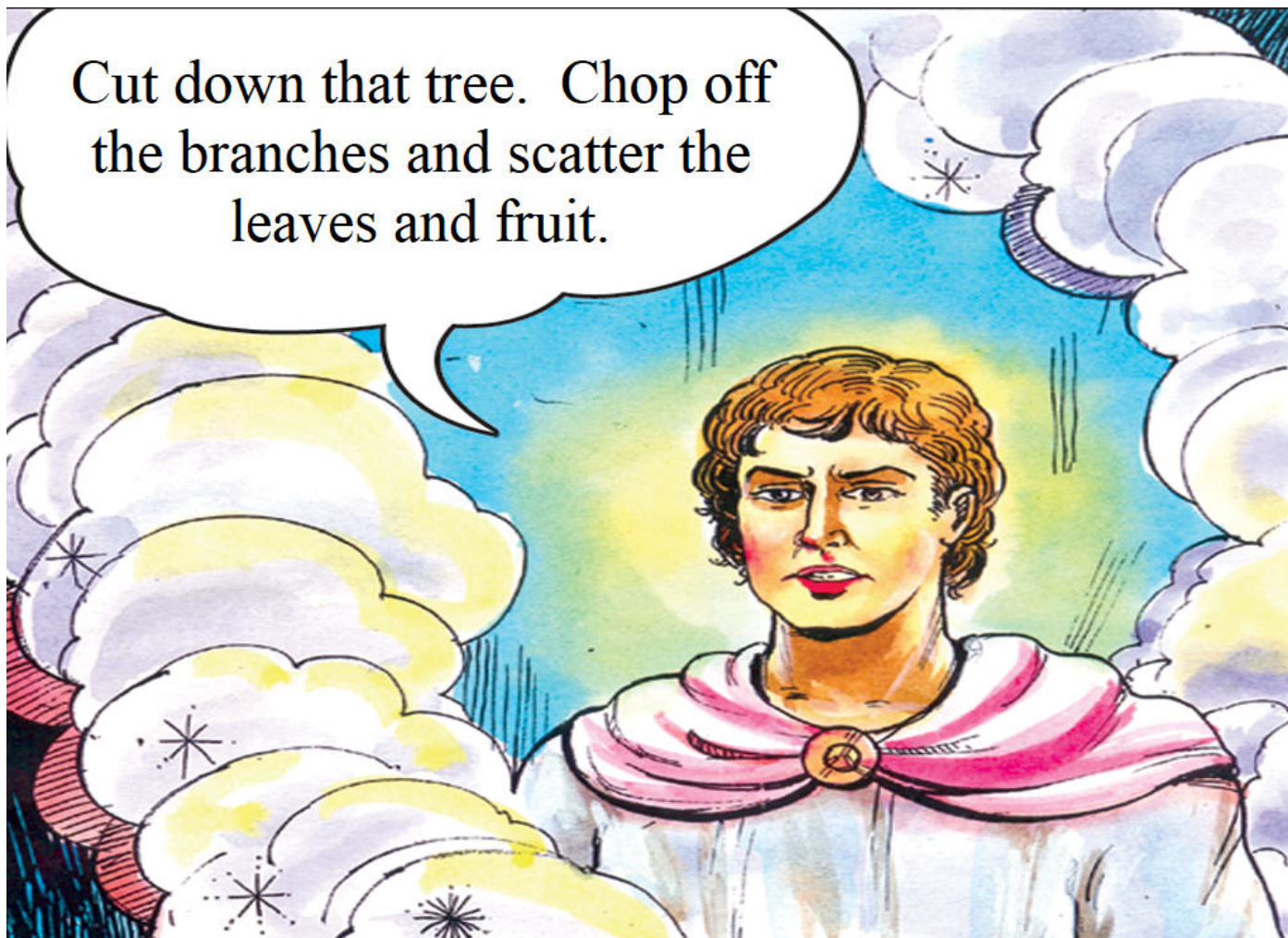


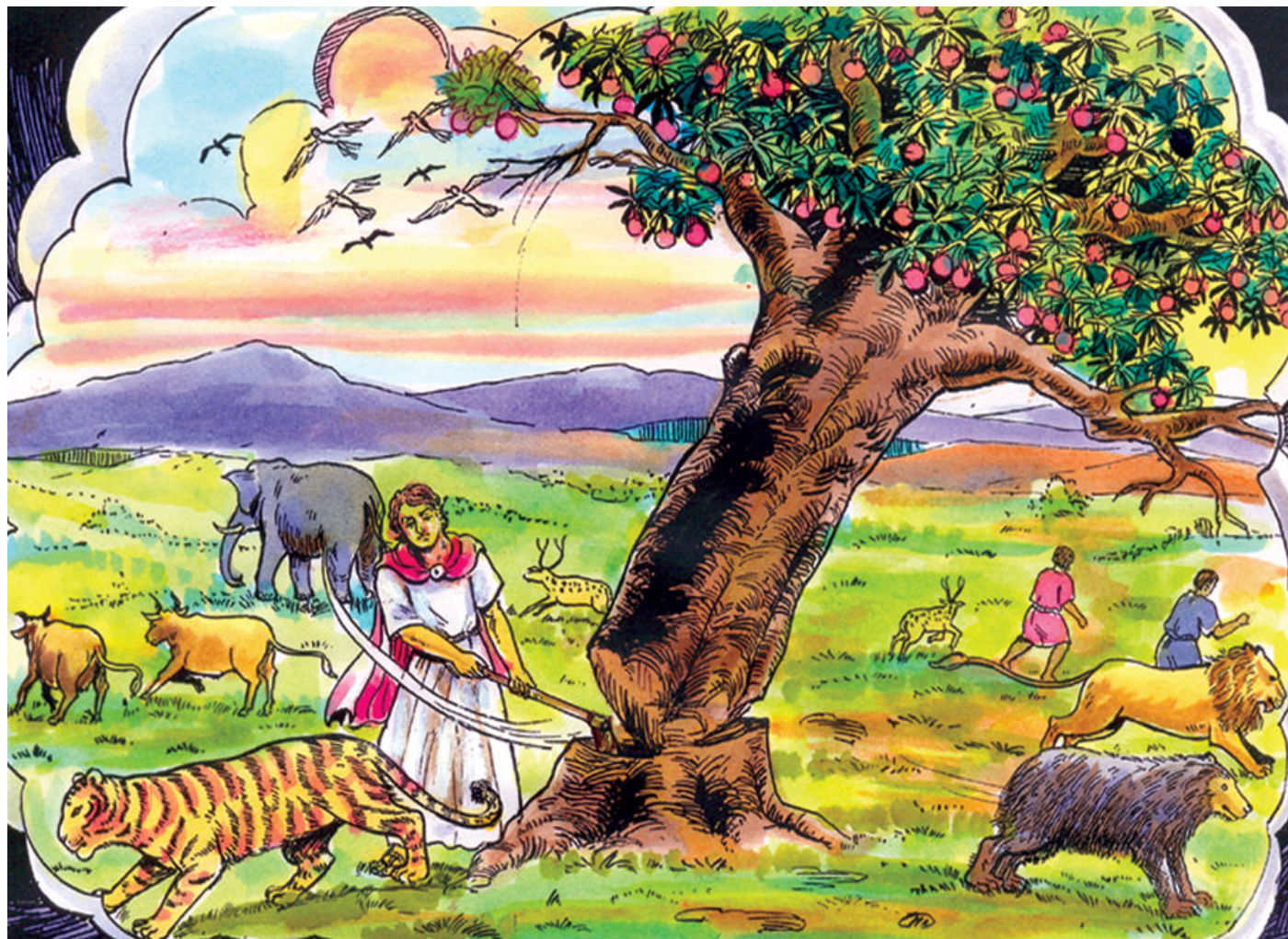


On that tree reaching
up to the sky birds built
their nests. Animals
rested under its shade,
and all were fed by its
fruit.

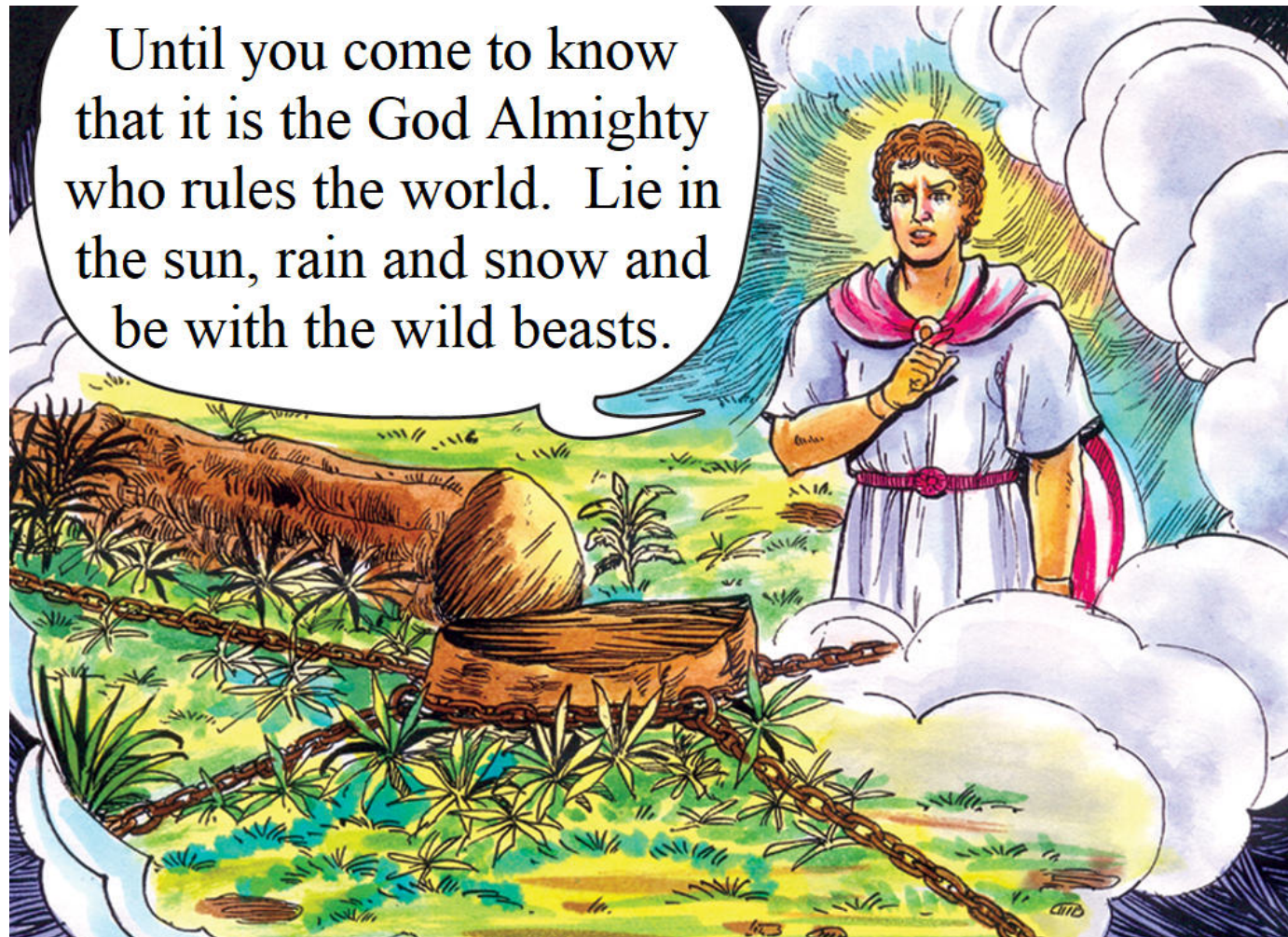


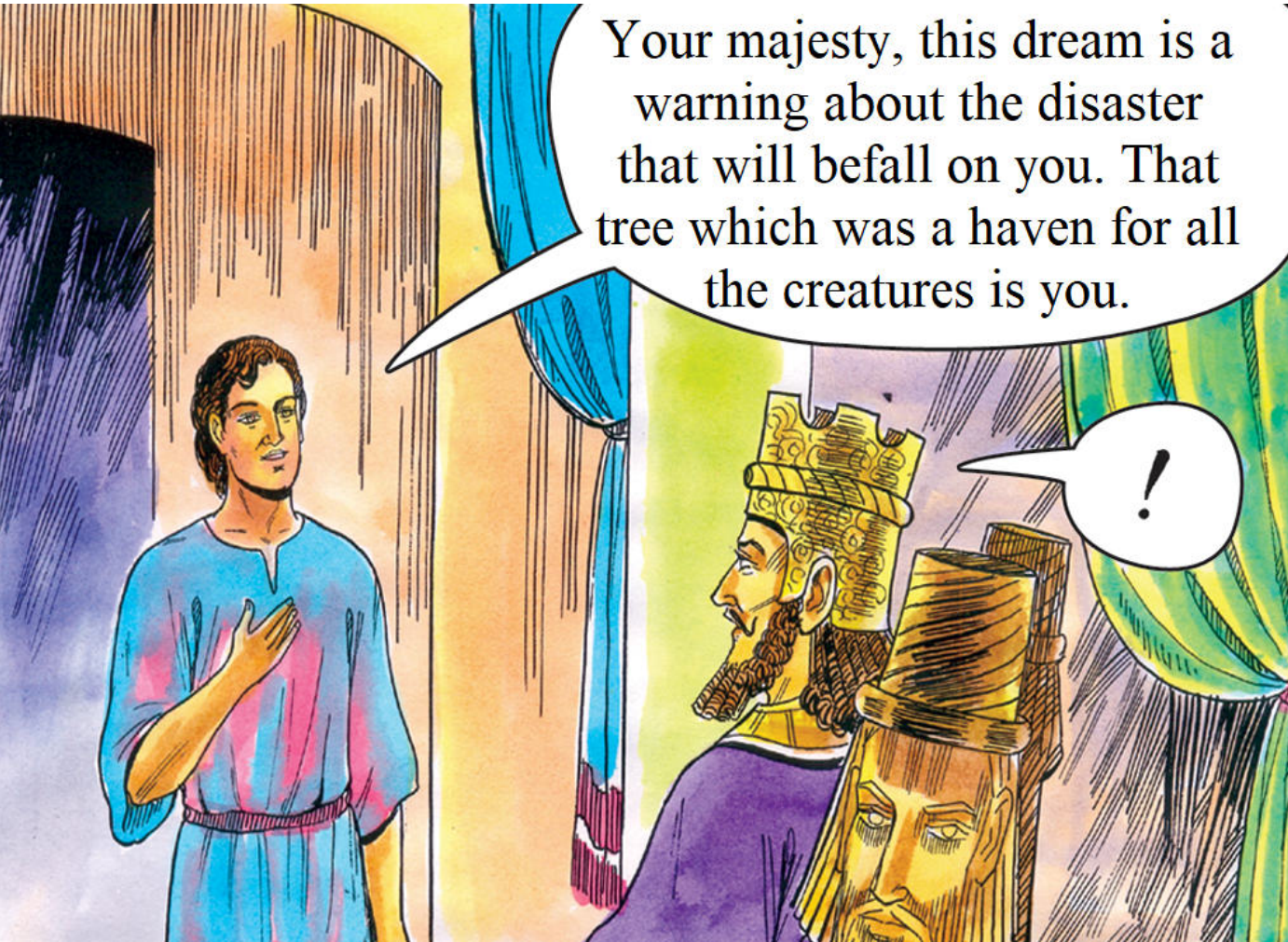
Cut down that tree. Chop off
the branches and scatter the
leaves and fruit.





Until you come to know
that it is the God Almighty
who rules the world. Lie in
the sun, rain and snow and
be with the wild beasts.



A man with dark hair, wearing a blue robe with a pink sash, stands on the left, gesturing with his right hand towards two men on the right. The man on the right is a king with a beard, wearing a golden crown and a purple robe. Next to him is a high official with a long golden beard, wearing a tall, tiered golden hat. The background features a blue curtain on the left and a green and yellow striped curtain on the right. A large speech bubble originates from the man in the blue robe, and a smaller one with an exclamation mark originates from the high official.

Your majesty, this dream is a warning about the disaster that will befall on you. That tree which was a haven for all the creatures is you.

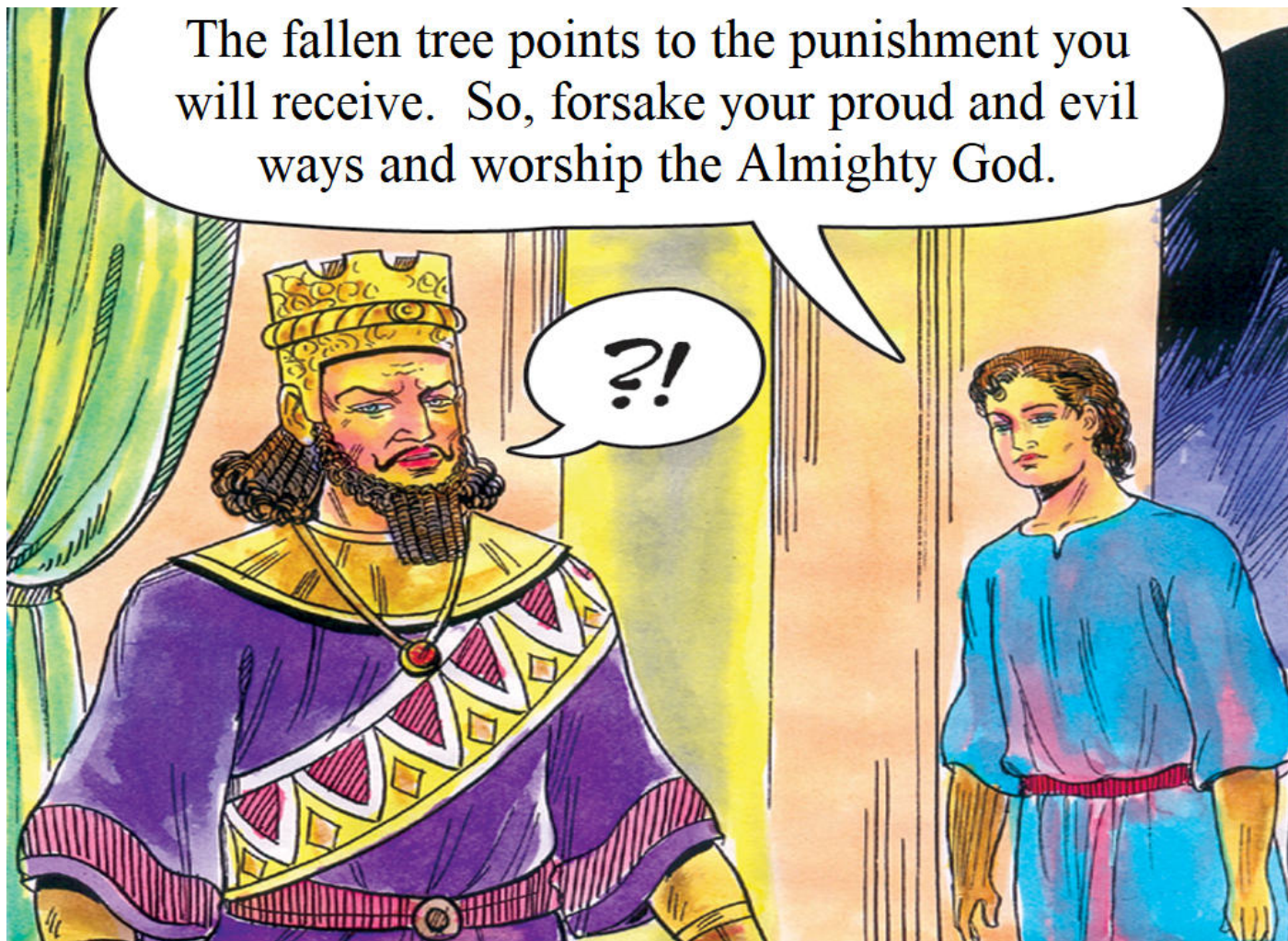
!

“Tall enough to reach the Sky” shows the false pride you might have at the peak of your power.




The fallen tree points to the punishment you will receive. So, forsake your proud and evil ways and worship the Almighty God.

?!



The King did not listen to the warning. A year later...

A king with brown hair, wearing a purple robe with a yellow collar and pink trim, stands on a stone balcony. He is looking out over a vast, densely packed city with many yellow and orange buildings. In the distance, a large pyramid is visible. The sky is dramatic, with a bright yellow sun or moon on the left and a dark, stormy blue and purple sky on the right. There are large, billowing white and yellow clouds in the center. Several birds are flying in the sky. The king's hand is resting on the balcony railing.

I built this city to proclaim my glory. Isn't it more beautiful than heaven itself!

Before he finished saying it.



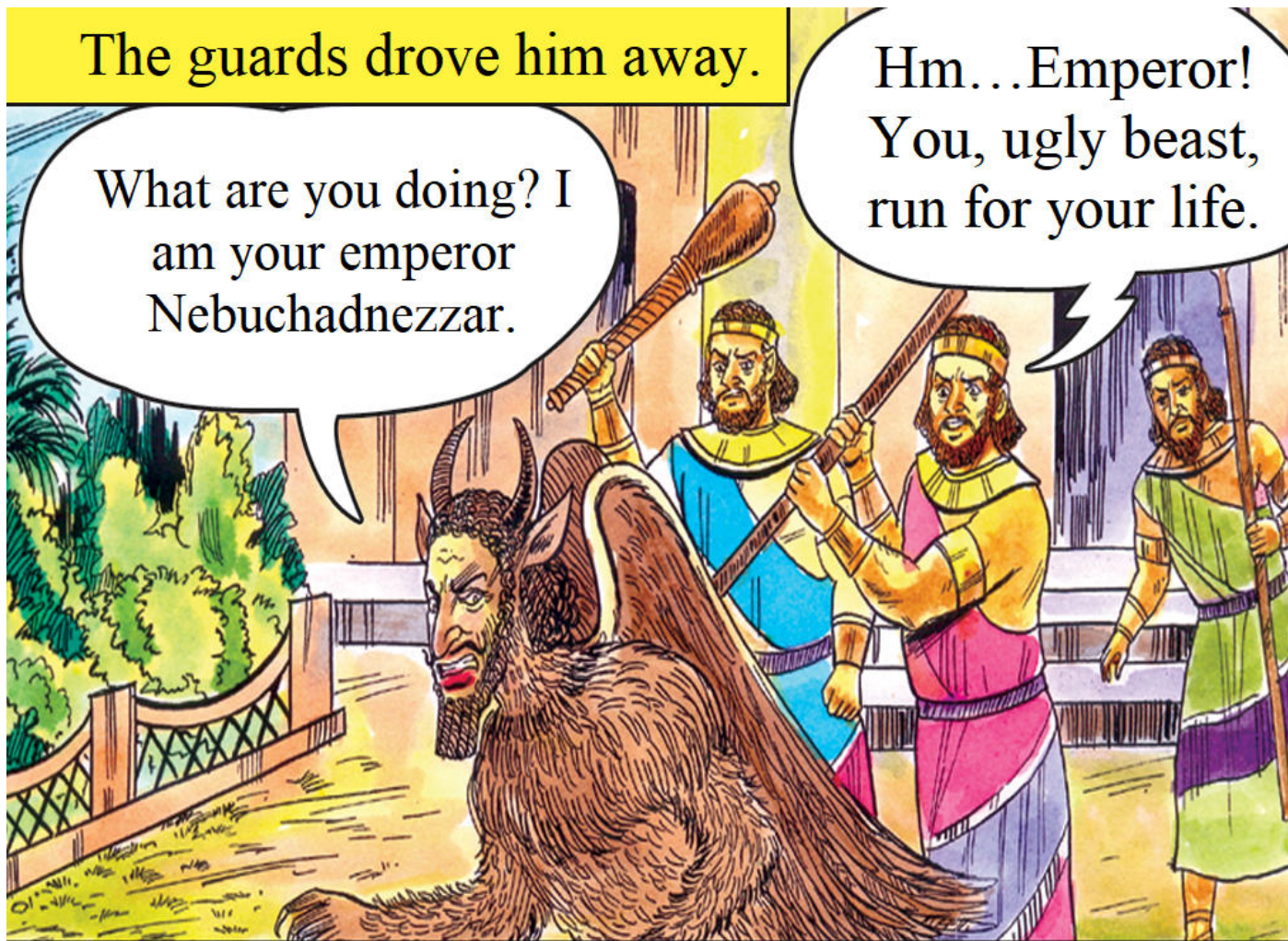
The next moment.

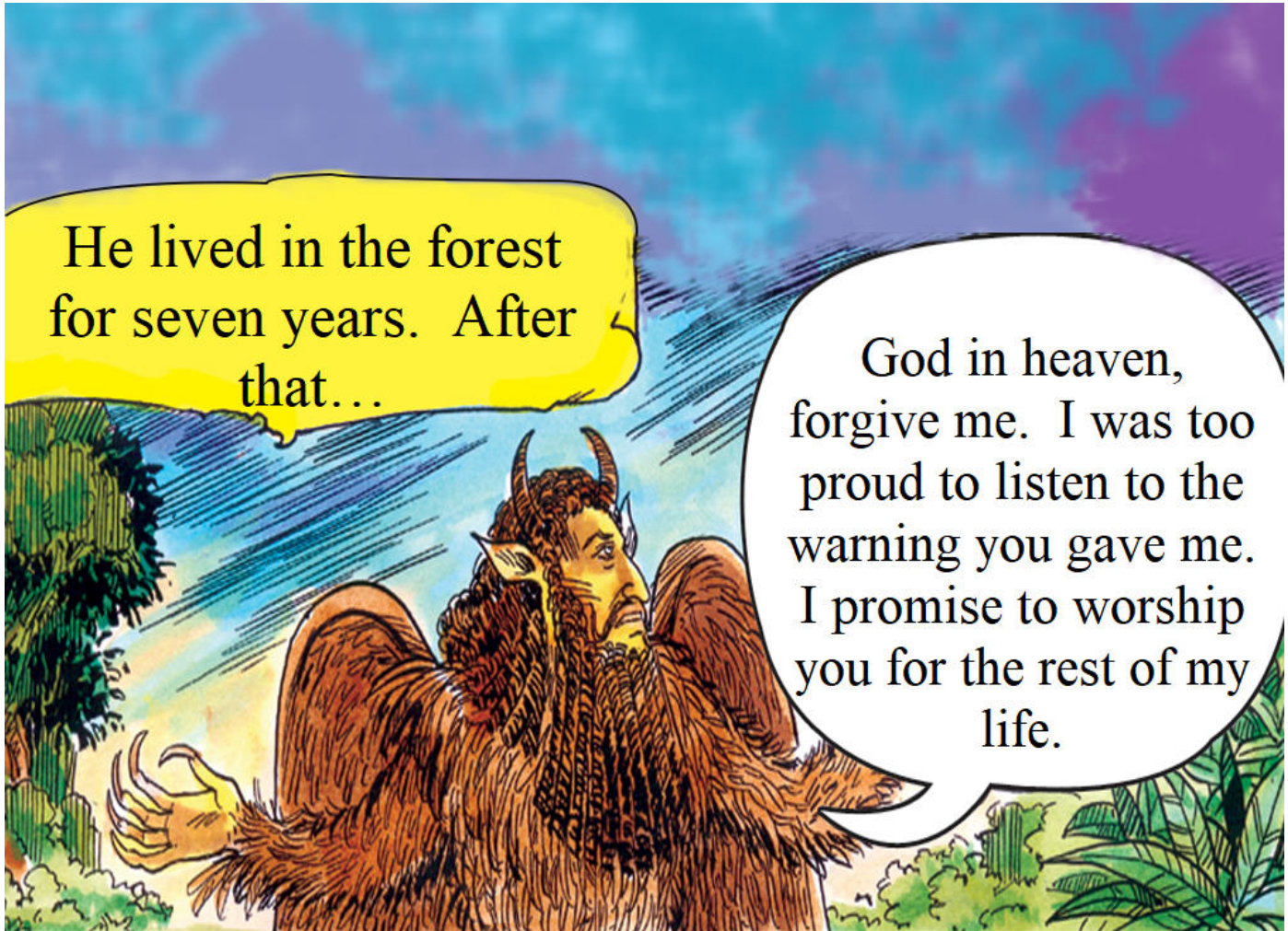


The guards drove him away.

What are you doing? I
am your emperor
Nebuchadnezzar.

Hm...Emperor!
You, ugly beast,
run for your life.



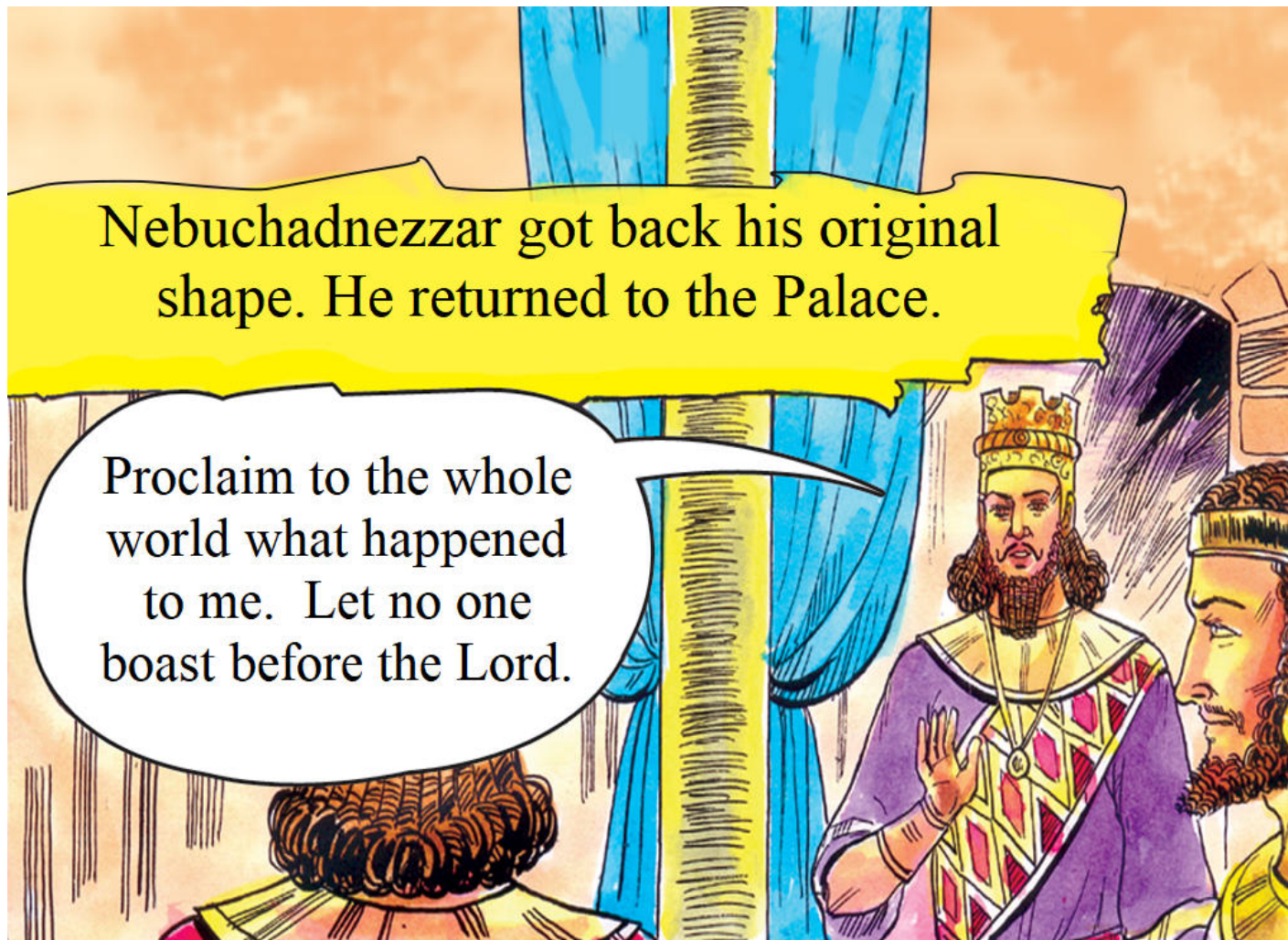


He lived in the forest
for seven years. After
that...

God in heaven,
forgive me. I was too
proud to listen to the
warning you gave me.
I promise to worship
you for the rest of my
life.

Nebuchadnezzar got back his original shape. He returned to the Palace.

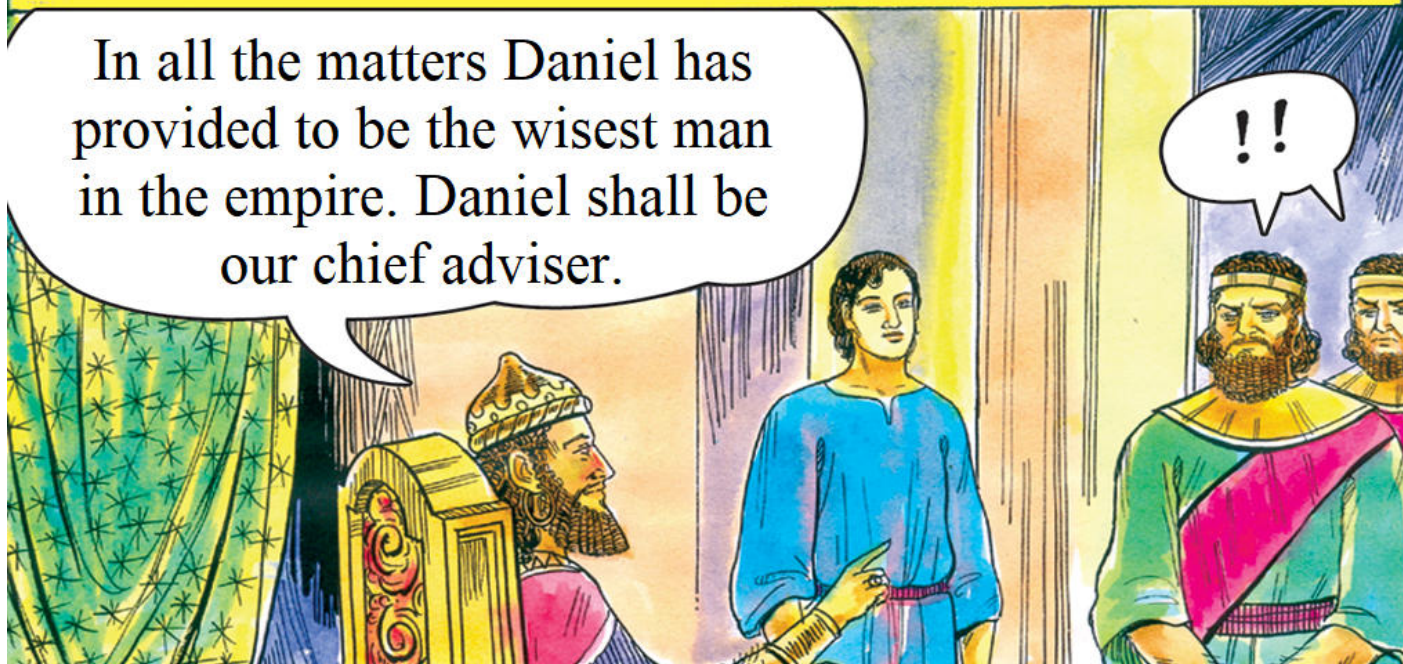
Proclaim to the whole world what happened to me. Let no one boast before the Lord.



Daniel in the Lions' pit.

Darius, the emperor of Persia divided the empire into 120 provinces and appointed governors for each province. Daniel was one of the three appointed presidents over them.

In all the matters Daniel has provided to be the wisest man in the empire. Daniel shall be our chief adviser.



Daniel's decision must be considered as final in all the matters concerning the empire. Do nothing without consulting him.



After the meeting

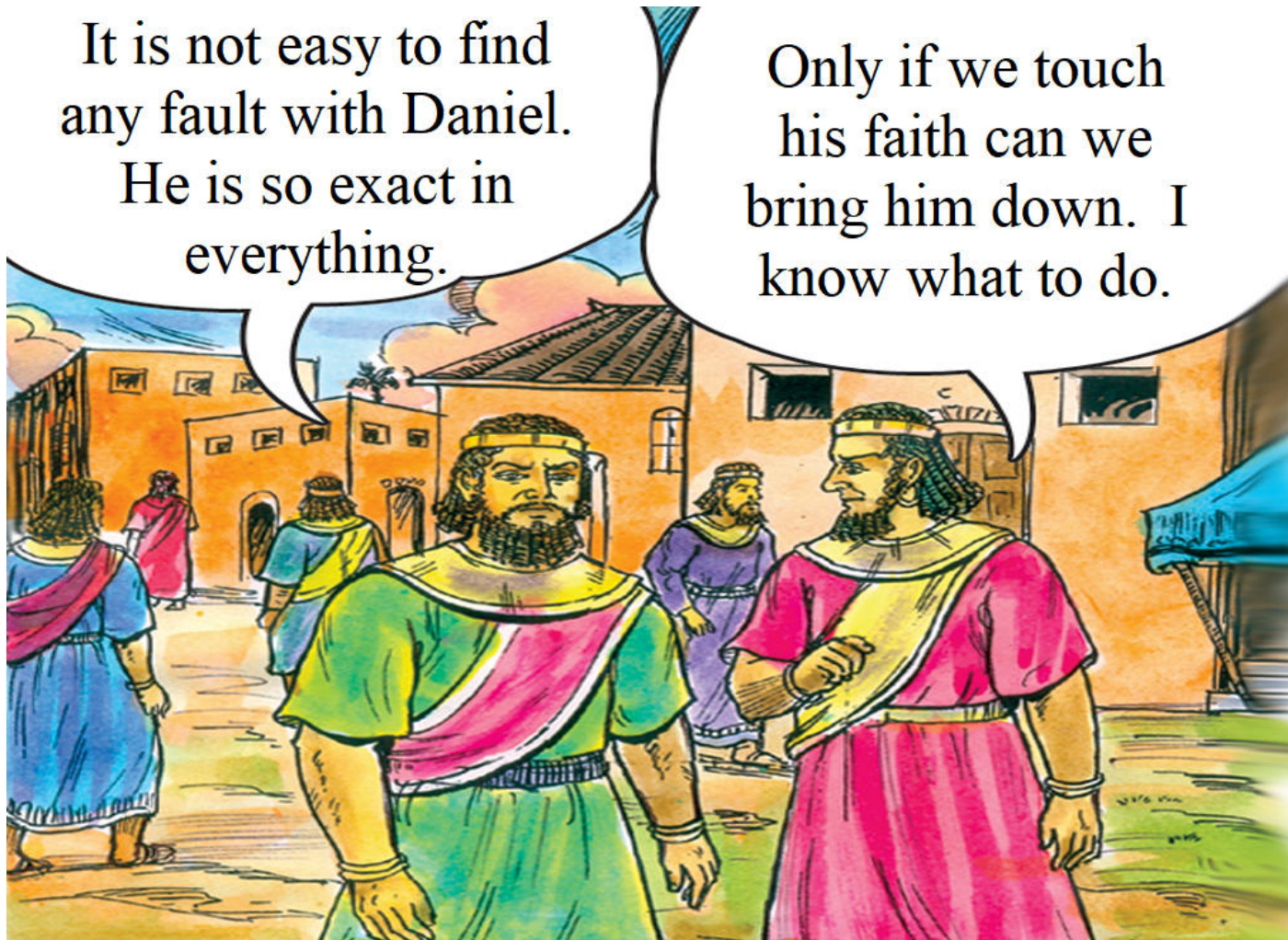
See that Hebrew? What nonsense! We have to consult him. Who does he think he is?

We must find a way to turn the king against Daniel.



It is not easy to find
any fault with Daniel.
He is so exact in
everything.

Only if we touch
his faith can we
bring him down. I
know what to do.



Strictly between
us.... If the king
agrees, we have
won.

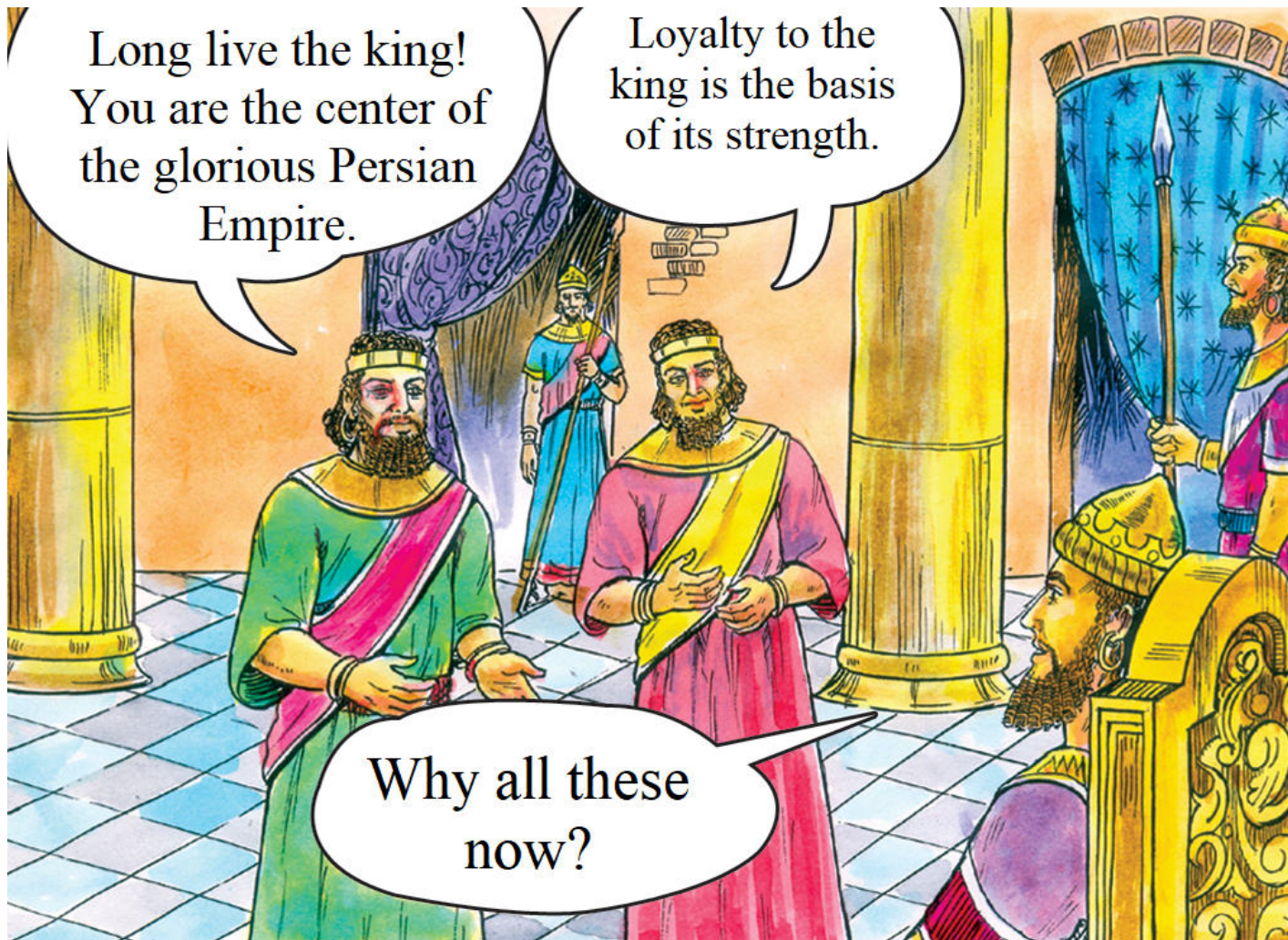
After convincing
the other
Governors we
shall approach
the king.



Long live the king!
You are the center of
the glorious Persian
Empire.

Loyalty to the
king is the basis
of its strength.


Why all these
now?



In an empire like Persia where there are so many religious groups, we need unity in worship to ensure unity in the empire.

As an experiment, it will be good to issue a royal command that all should worship only the emperor for the next thirty days.





Anyone who refuses to
obey must be fed to
the Lions.

It must be an
unbreakable
command in
accordance with the
customs of Persia
and Media.

Here, I put my signature.
Proclaim this command all
over the empire.



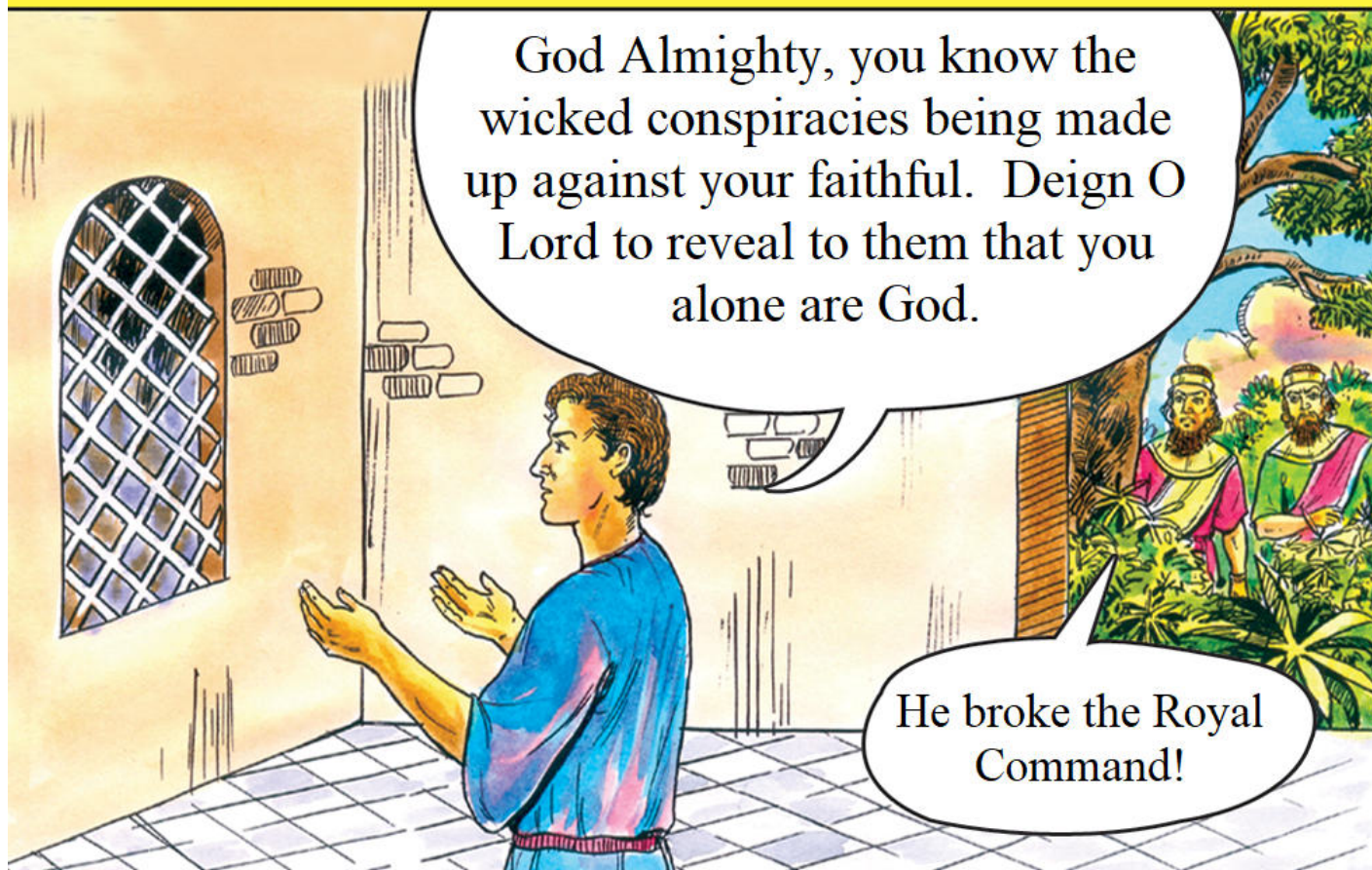
As they were returning from the
Palace.

We got it. All we
have to do now is
to watch Daniel.

For sure, he is
not going to
worship the
Emperor.



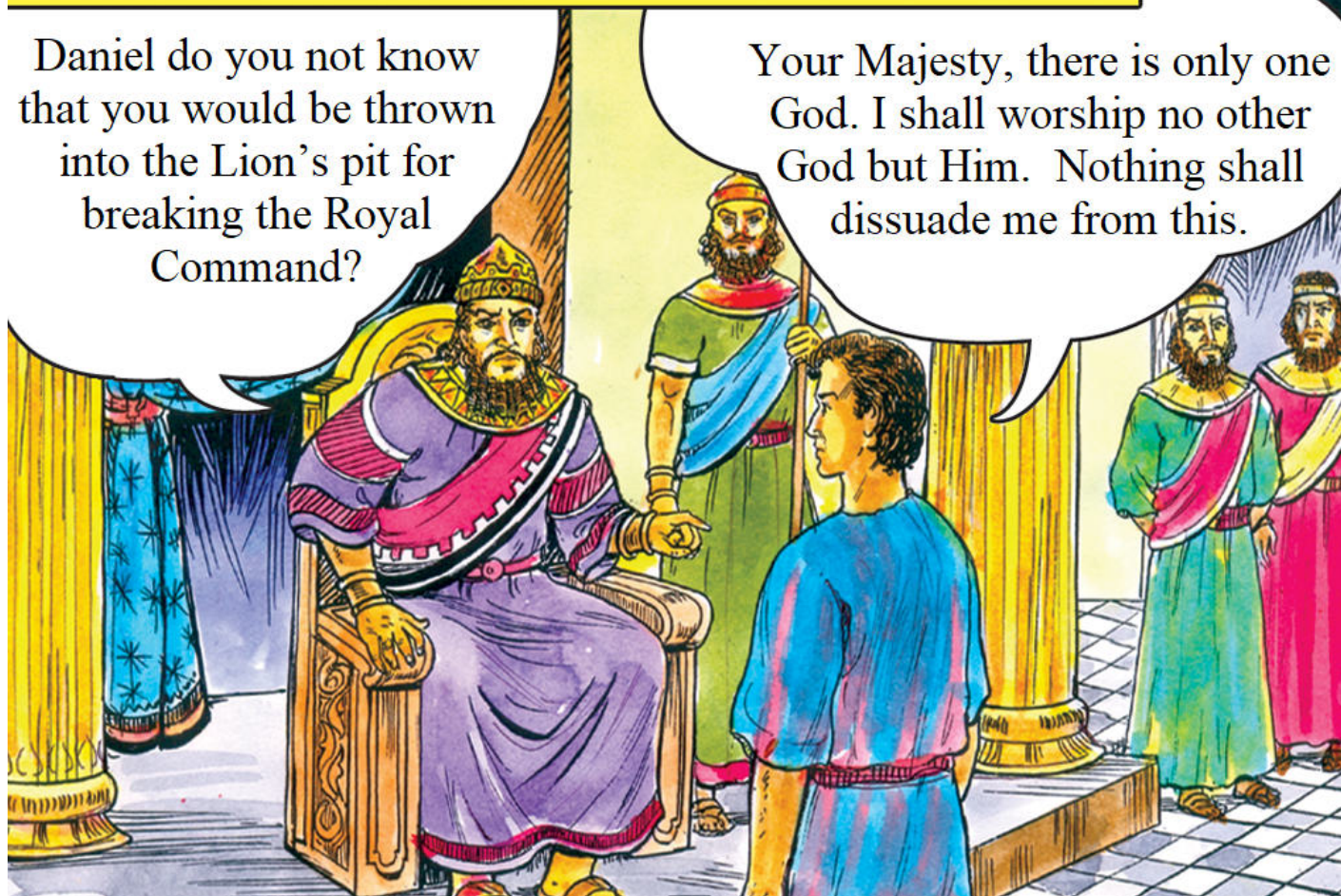
Daniel continued to pray to the Lord three times a day, turning towards Jerusalem as he used to.



Daniel was summoned by the Emperor.

Daniel do you not know
that you would be thrown
into the Lion's pit for
breaking the Royal
Command?

Your Majesty, there is only one
God. I shall worship no other
God but Him. Nothing shall
dissuade me from this.



According to the Royal command, they threw Daniel into the Lion's pit. The pit was closed and sealed.

Lord, you never
abandon those who
put their trust in you.
I praise you.



That night Darius was greatly troubled thinking about Daniel. The next morning.



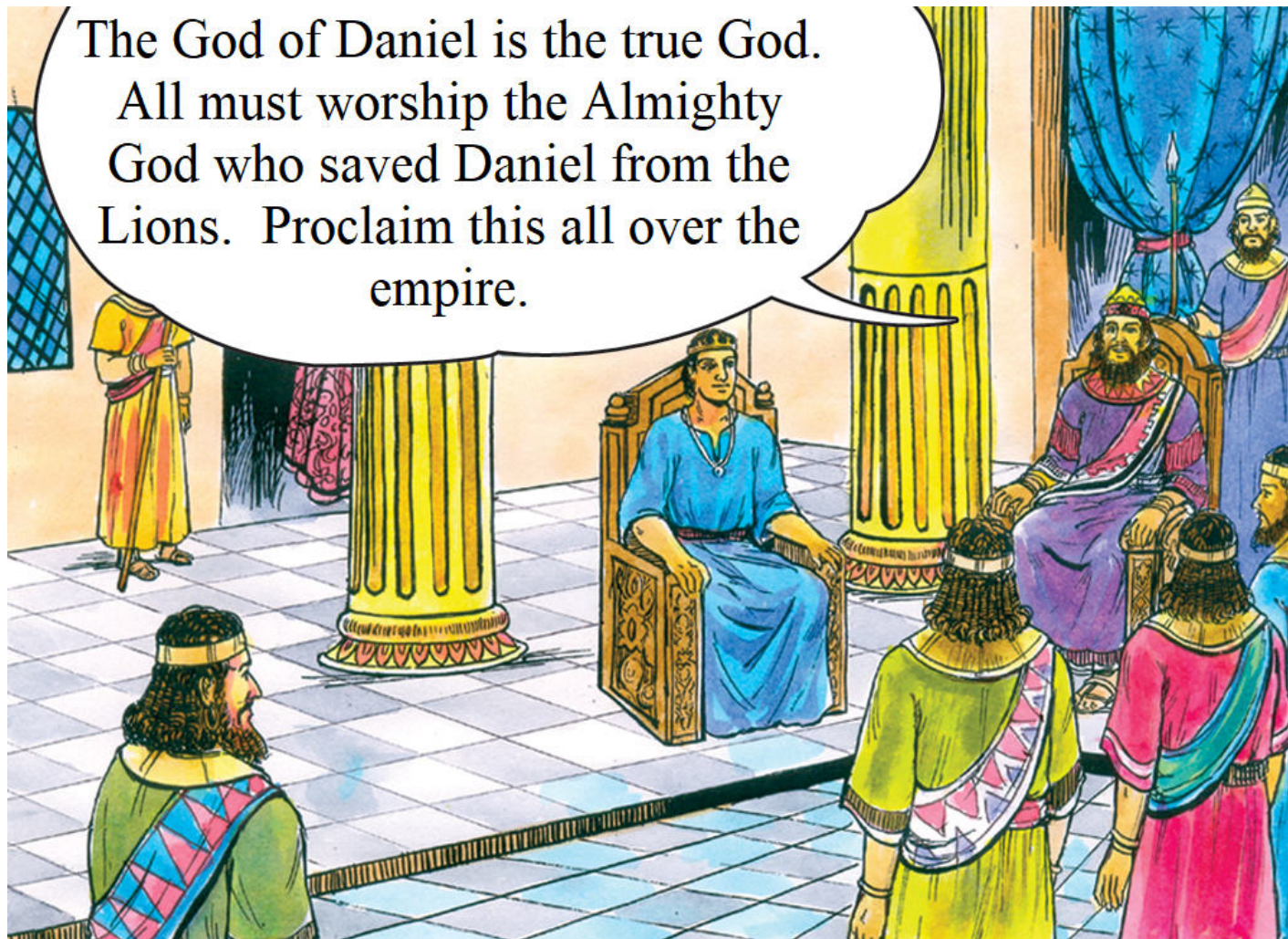


Yes, M'Lord,
God has
protected me.

Immediately Daniel was pulled out of the pit and the ones who accused him was thrown into the Lion's pit.

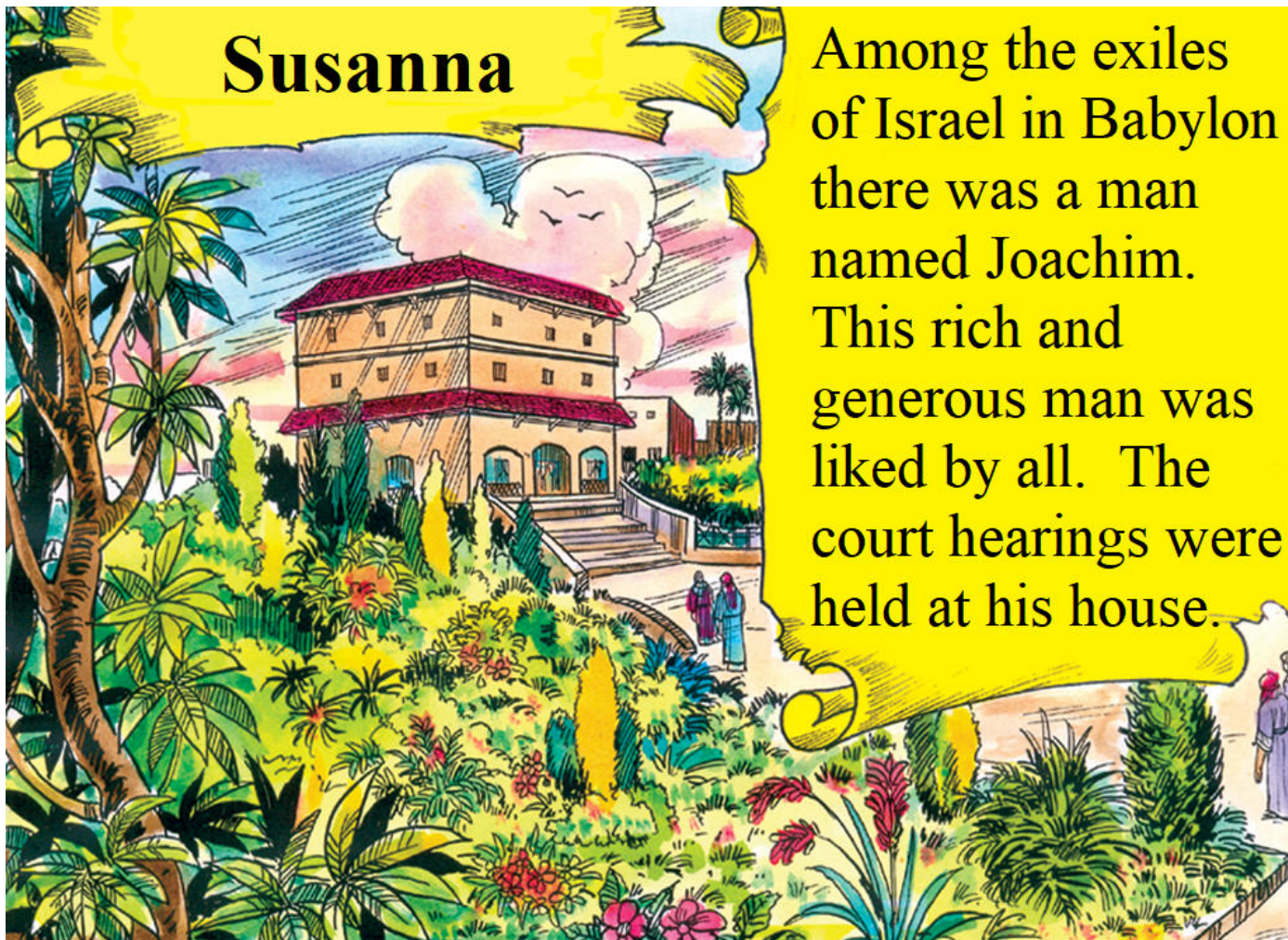


The God of Daniel is the true God.
All must worship the Almighty
God who saved Daniel from the
Lions. Proclaim this all over the
empire.



Susanna

Among the exiles of Israel in Babylon there was a man named Joachim. This rich and generous man was liked by all. The court hearings were held at his house.



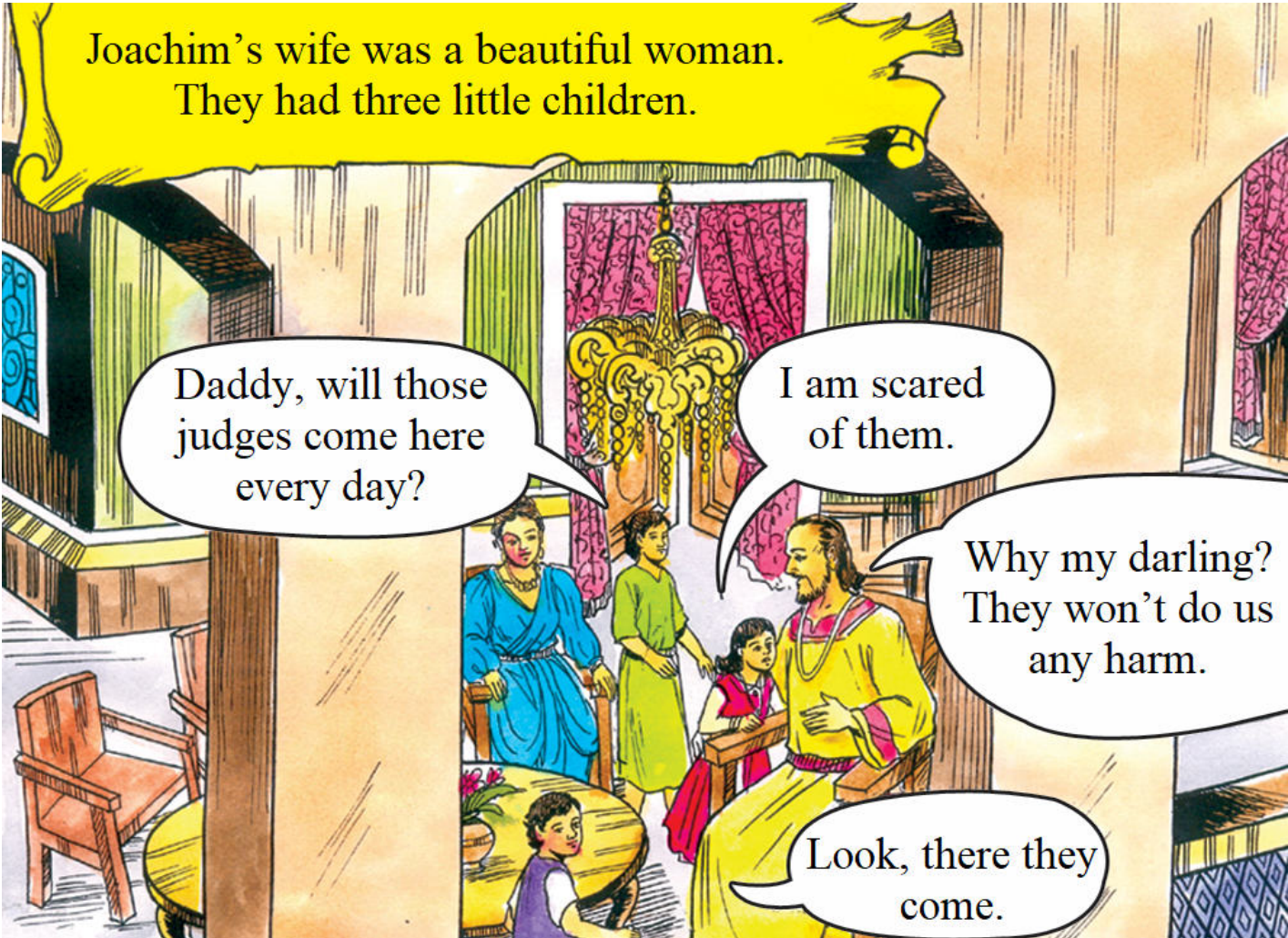
Joachim's wife was a beautiful woman.
They had three little children.

Daddy, will those
judges come here
every day?

I am scared
of them.

Why my darling?
They won't do us
any harm.

Look, there they
come.



The two judges elected that year were wicked men with no fear of God.

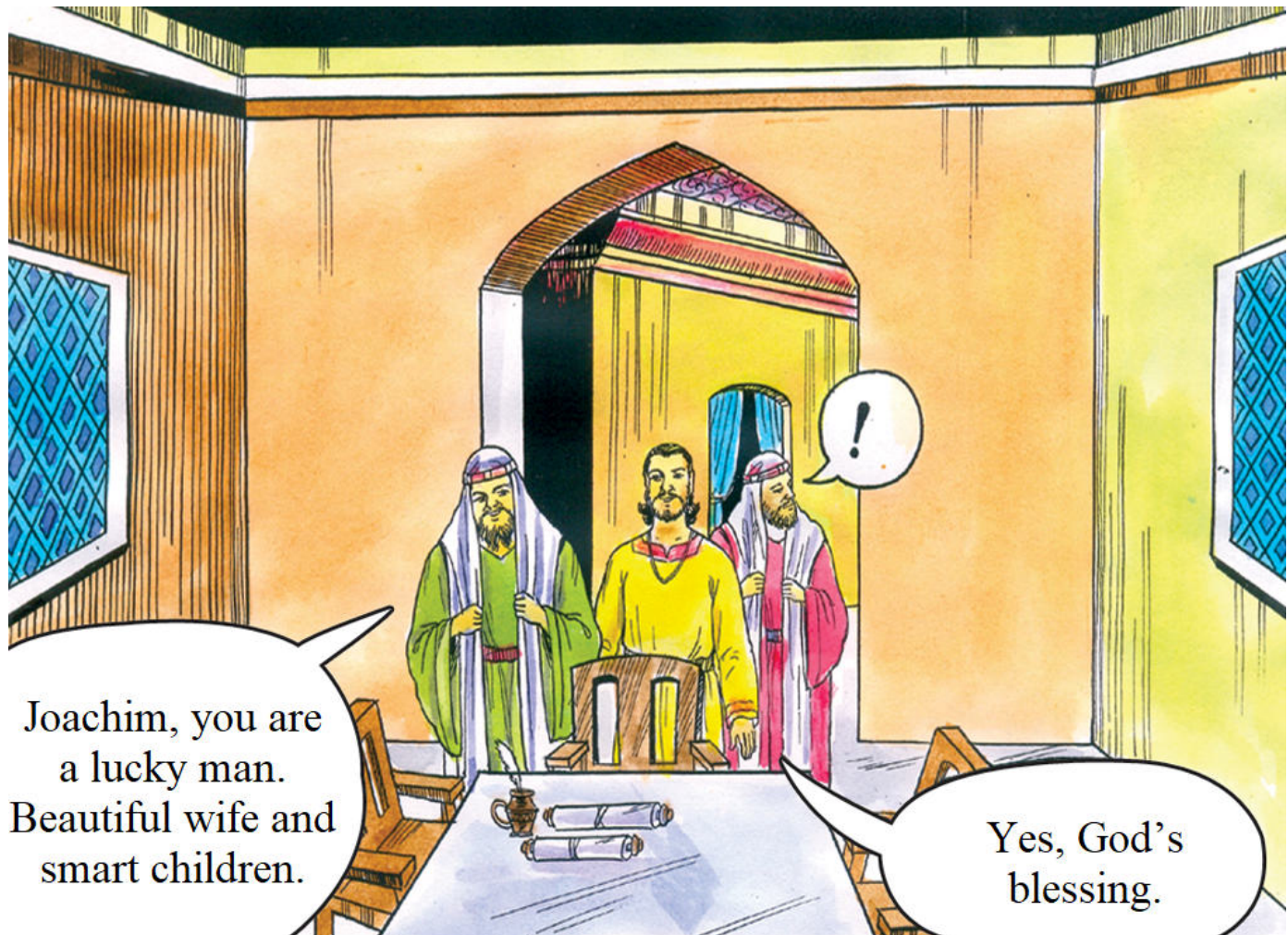
Come in we are always happy to see you.

Come on kids, let us go inside.

!!

There is no need you to go. We still have plenty of time to start the hearing.





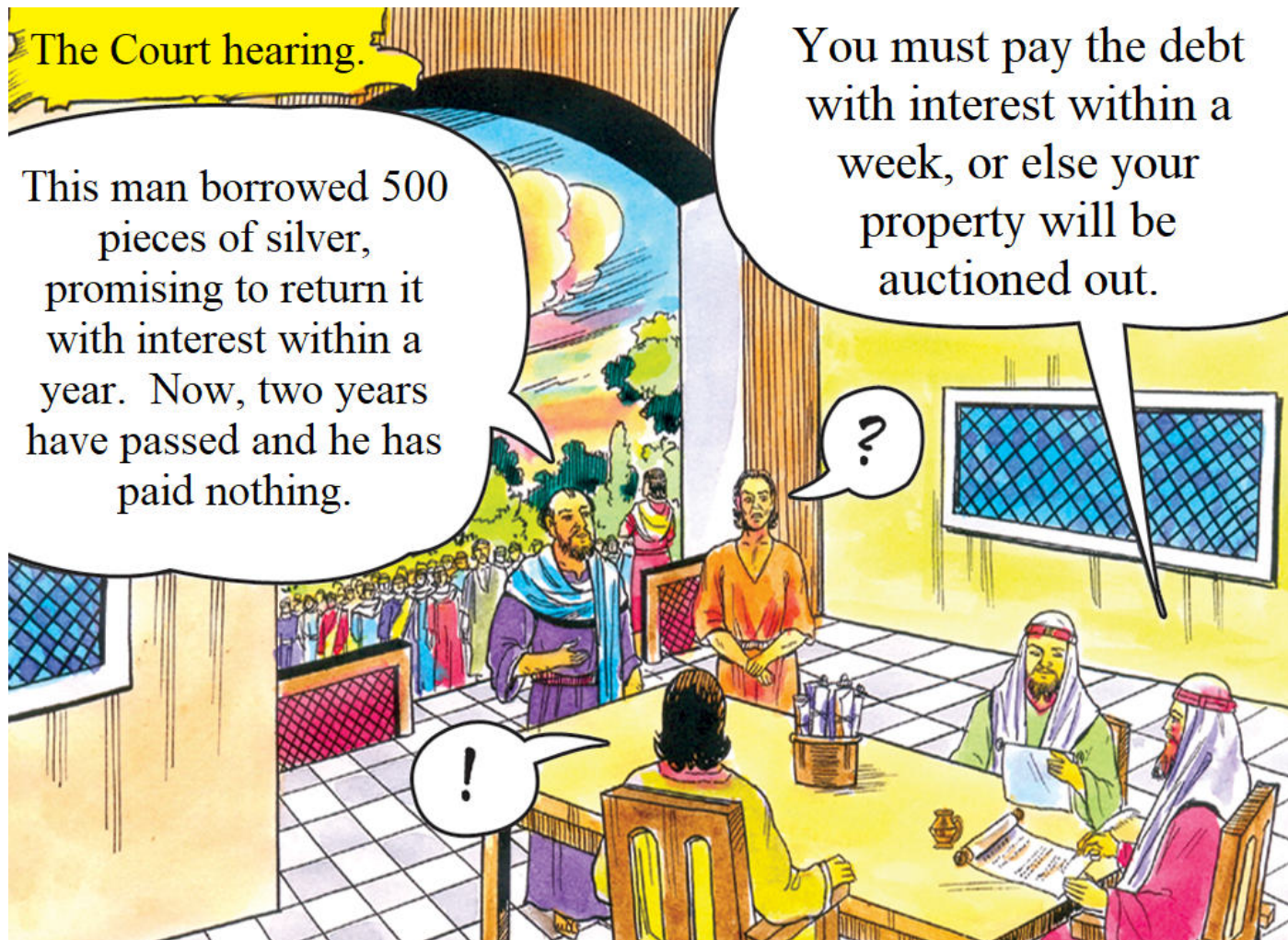
Joachim, you are
a lucky man.
Beautiful wife and
smart children.

Yes, God's
blessing.

The Court hearing.


This man borrowed 500 pieces of silver, promising to return it with interest within a year. Now, two years have passed and he has paid nothing.

You must pay the debt with interest within a week, or else your property will be auctioned out.



After everybody had gone, Susanna used to take a walk in the garden.





See you
tomorrow.

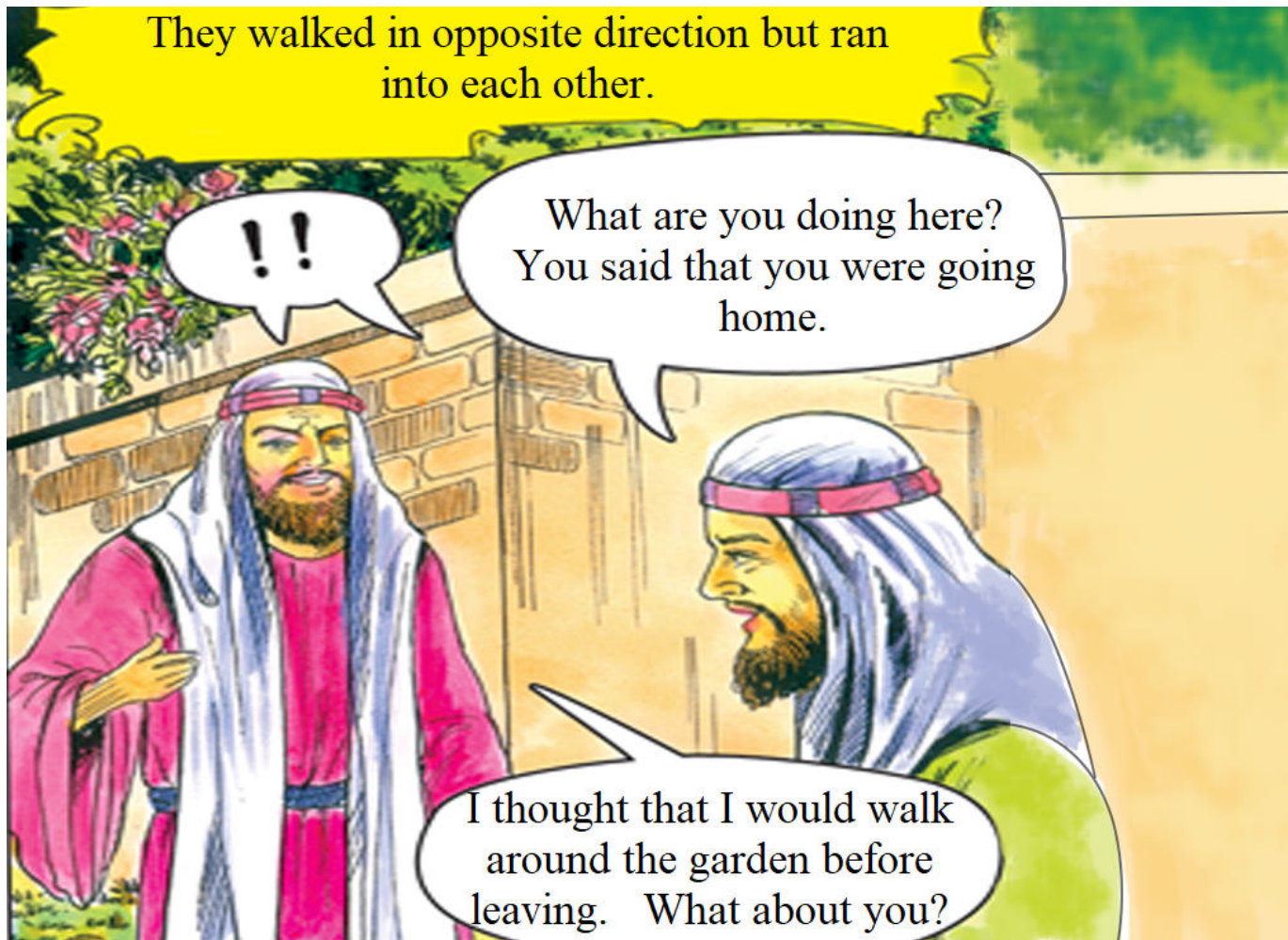
O.K.

They walked in opposite direction but ran
into each other.

!!

What are you doing here?
You said that you were going
home.

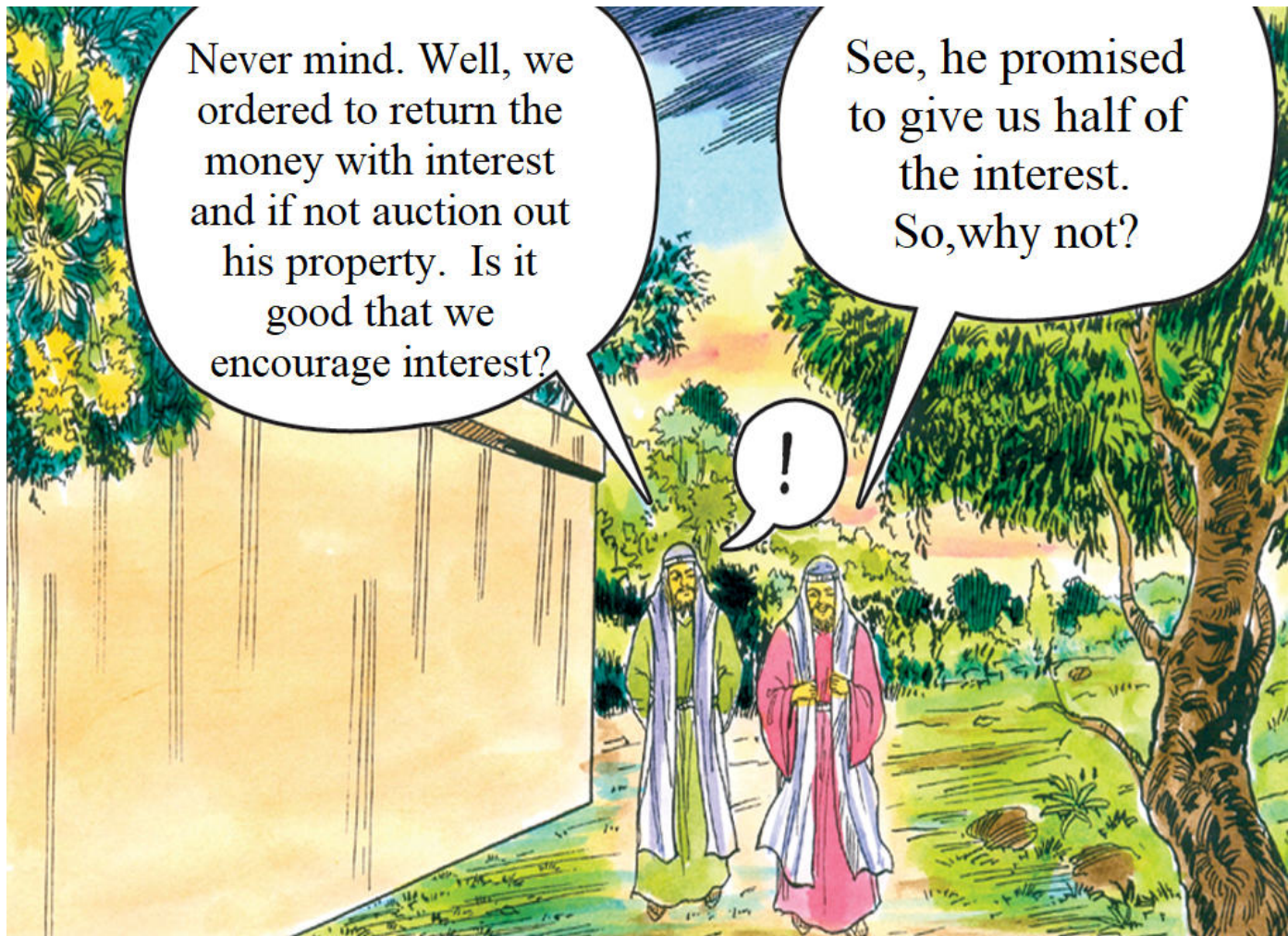
I thought that I would walk
around the garden before
leaving. What about you?



Never mind. Well, we ordered to return the money with interest and if not auction out his property. Is it good that we encourage interest?

See, he promised to give us half of the interest. So, why not?

!



Another day the judges met in the garden under the same circumstances.

There is something wrong. Why are you here now?

I would ask the same to you.



If you'd tell me the truth, I shall
tell you my reason.

Why should we hide the
truth between us?



See, this time
Susanna takes a
walk. I was hoping
to see her alone.

Honestly that
was my plan
too. But, so
far I haven't
succeeded.



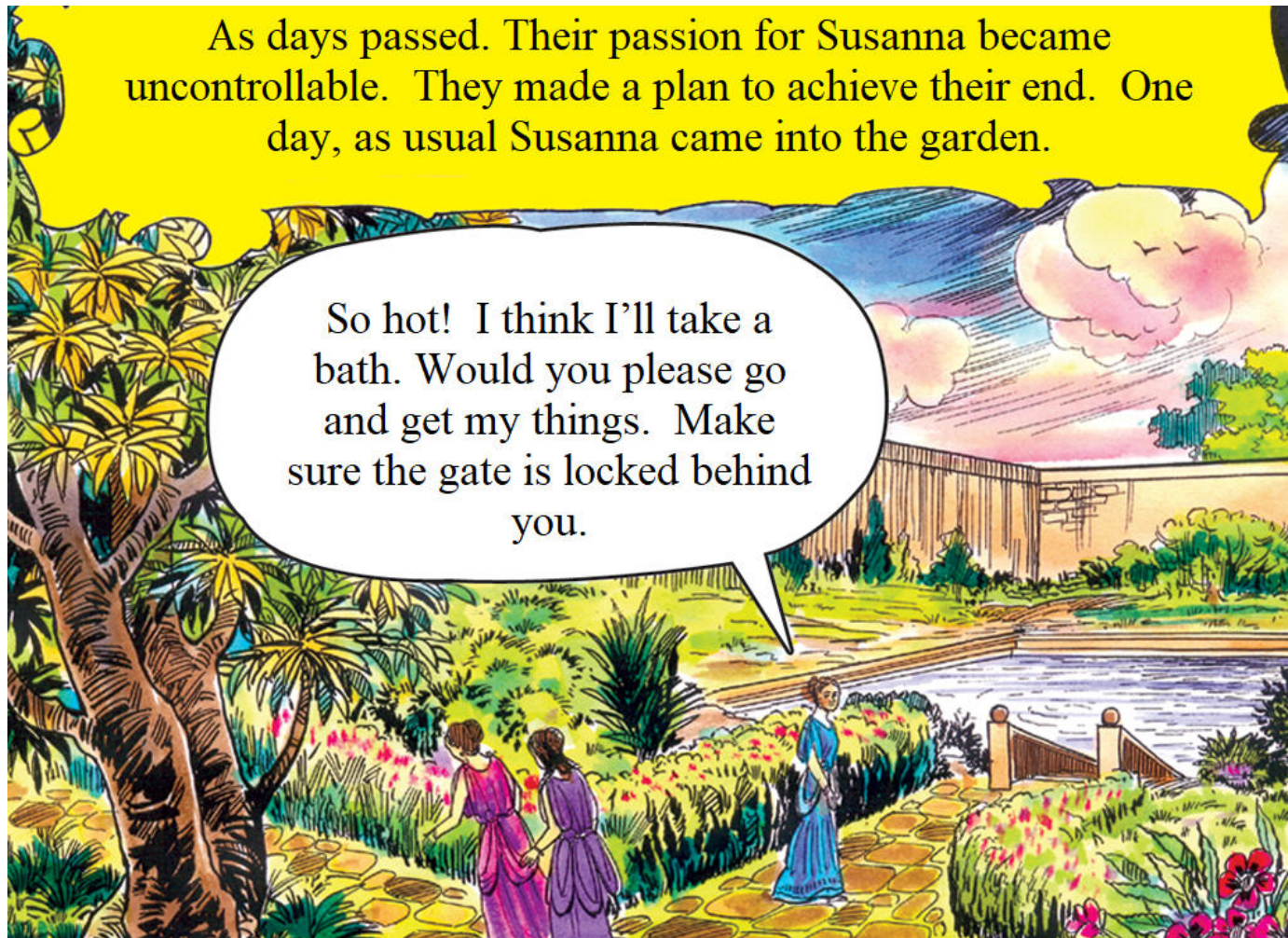
Ever since I saw her, I just can't
keep her out my mind.

Same with me.



As days passed. Their passion for Susanna became uncontrollable. They made a plan to achieve their end. One day, as usual Susanna came into the garden.

So hot! I think I'll take a bath. Would you please go and get my things. Make sure the gate is locked behind you.



When the servants left, the judges
came out of hiding.

The best chance we
can ever get. Hope
she will agree.

We'll force her.
We won't get
another chance
like this.



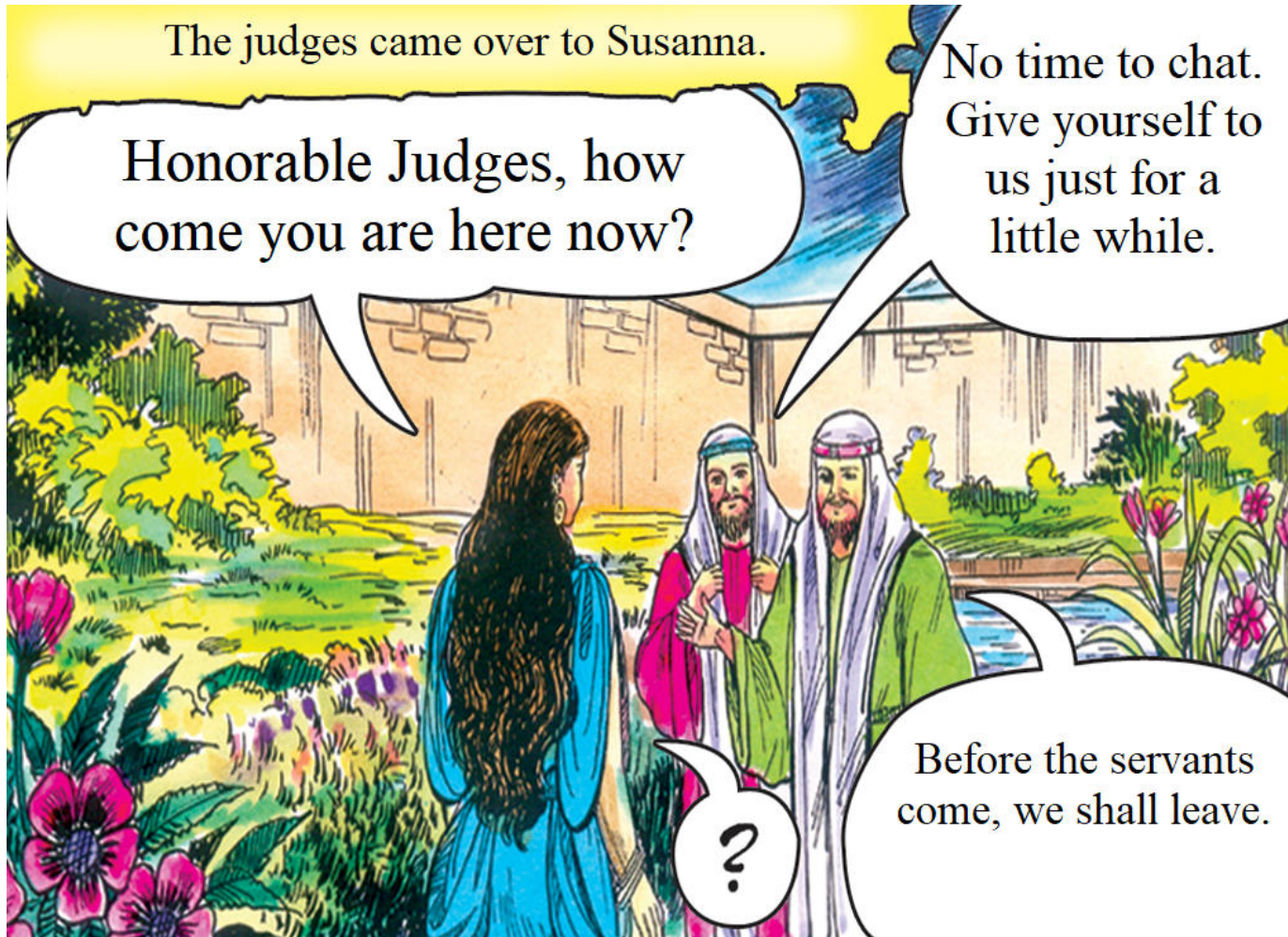
The judges came over to Susanna.


Honorable Judges, how come you are here now?

No time to chat.
Give yourself to us just for a little while.

Before the servants come, we shall leave.

?






What are
you saying?
That is a sin.

No, never!
Against God
and my husband
I will not do
this. It is wrong.

We know all that.
Nobody is going to
know. You just agree.

!?

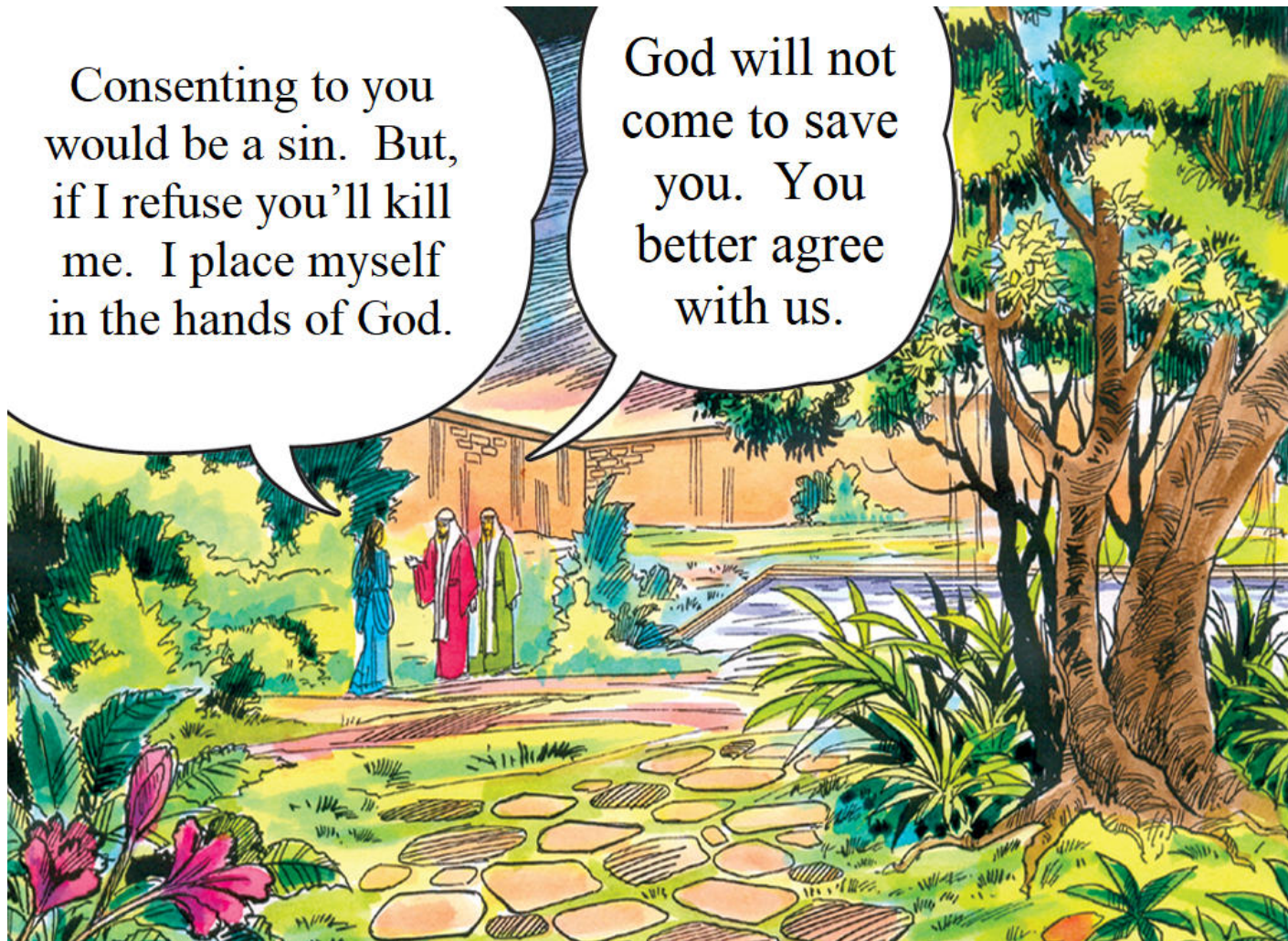
A comic book illustration featuring two men in traditional Middle Eastern attire, including white head coverings and blue and red headbands. The man on the left has a serious expression, while the man on the right has a more intense, almost angry look. They are set against a background of dark, swirling smoke or clouds. Two speech bubbles are present: one on the left from the first man and one on the right from the second man.

You don't have
to teach us
what is wrong
and what is
right.

If you don't
agree we'll
destroy you.

Consenting to you would be a sin. But, if I refuse you'll kill me. I place myself in the hands of God.

God will not come to save you. You better agree with us.



As Susanna cried aloud, the judges went and opened the gates and told the servants who came running in.

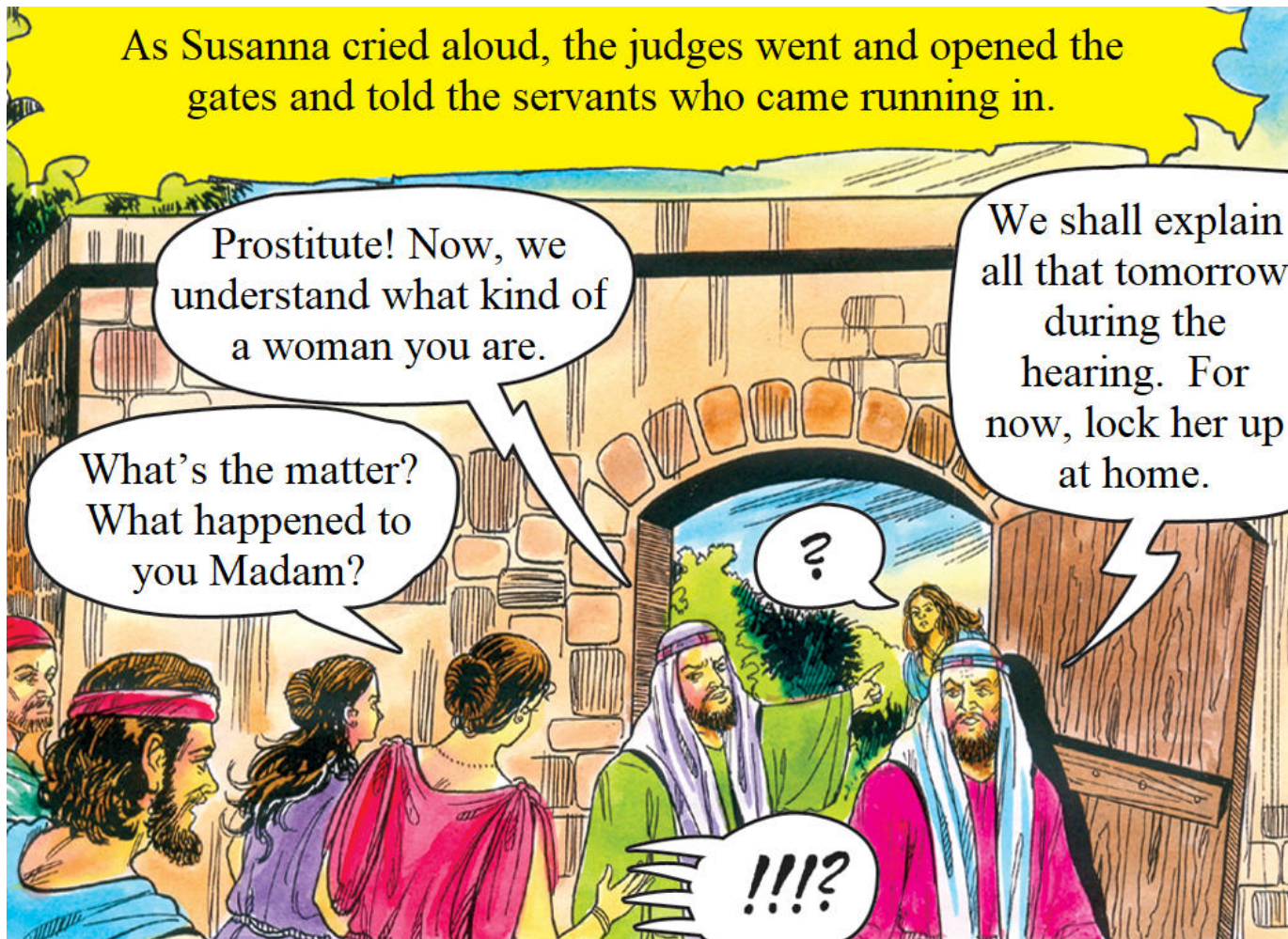
Prostitute! Now, we understand what kind of a woman you are.

What's the matter?
What happened to you Madam?

We shall explain all that tomorrow during the hearing. For now, lock her up at home.

?

!!!?

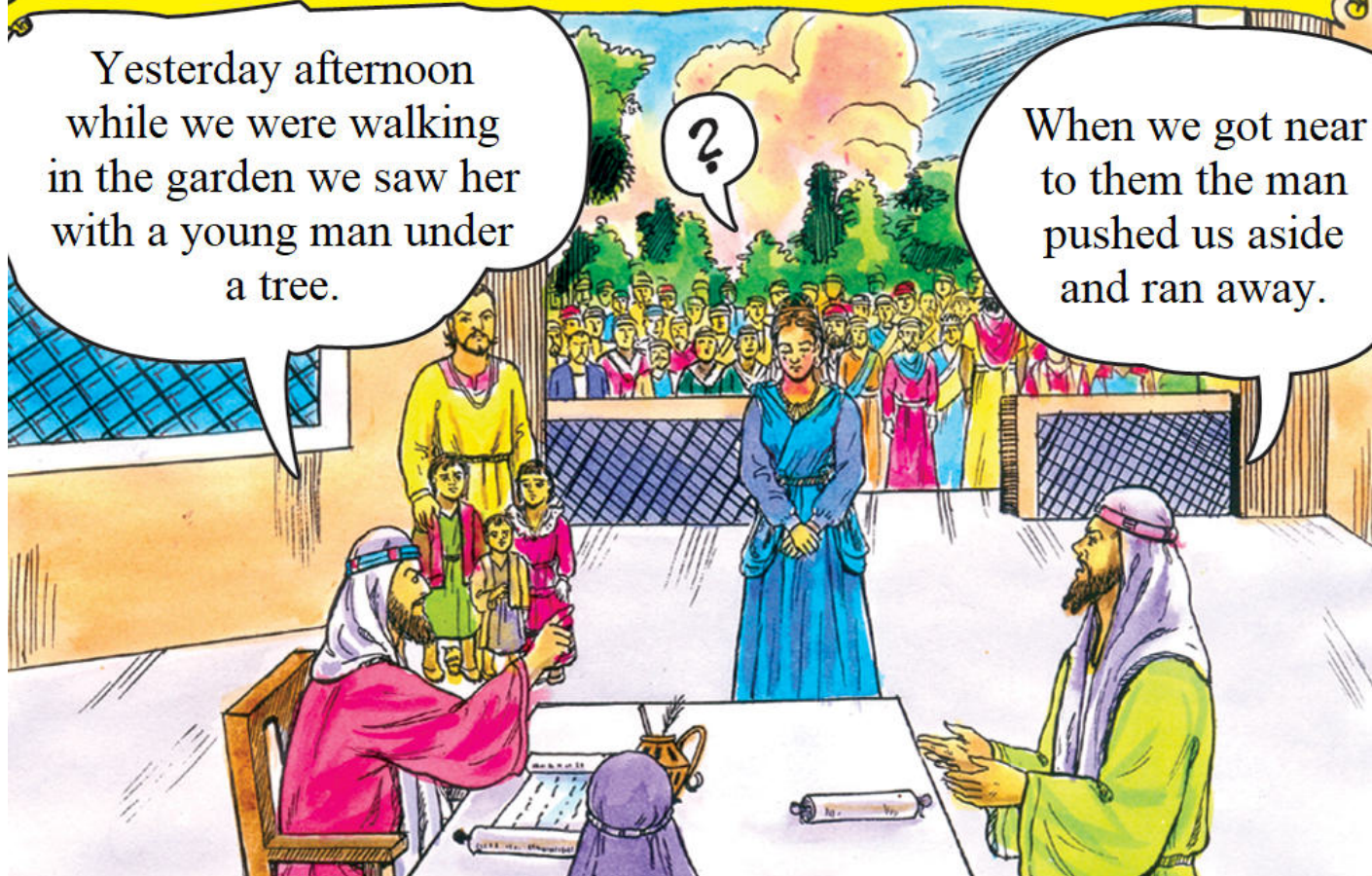


The next day the judges came to Joachim's house. People gathered. Susanna was brought to the court.

Yesterday afternoon while we were walking in the garden we saw her with a young man under a tree.

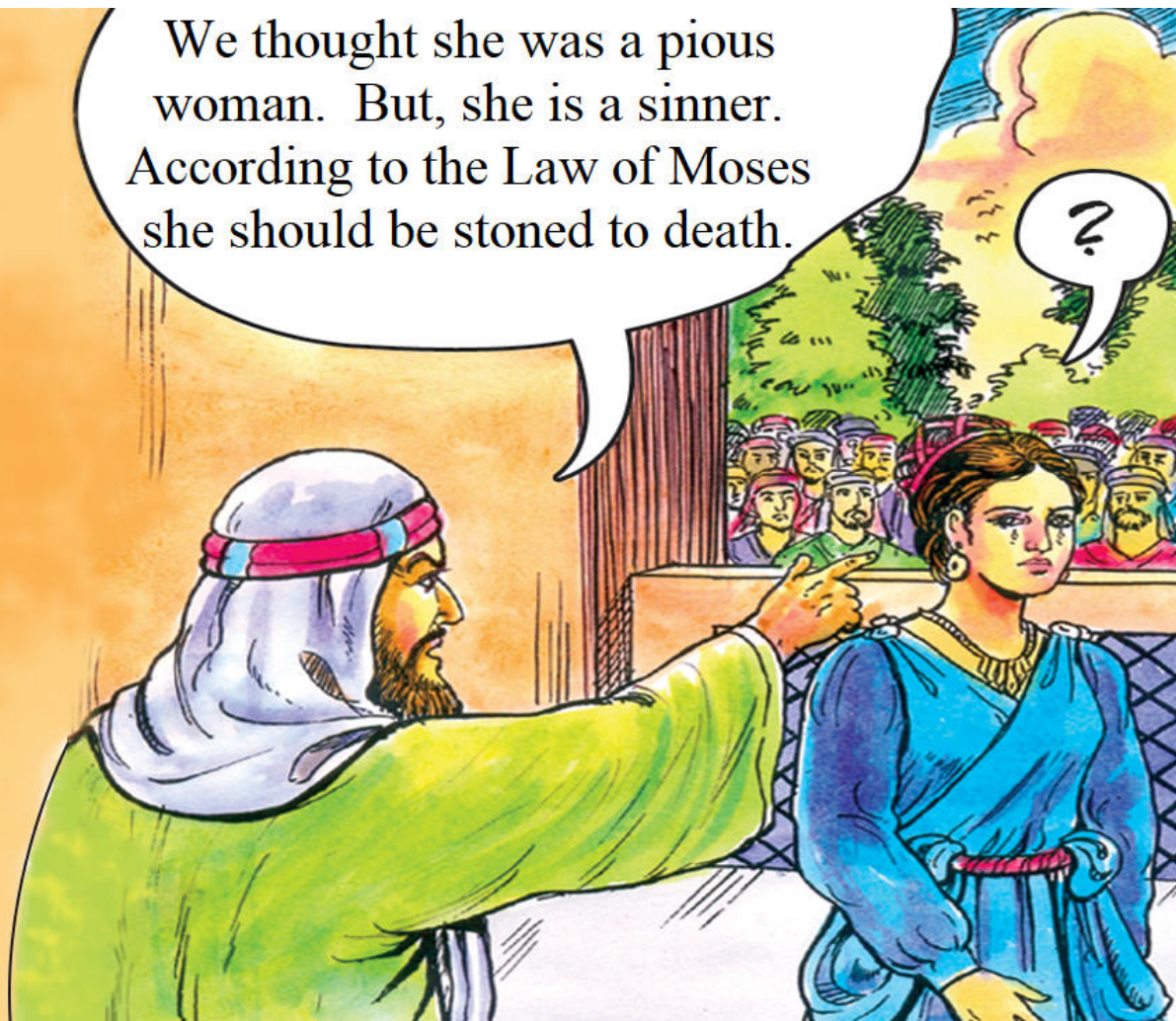
When we got near to them the man pushed us aside and ran away.

?

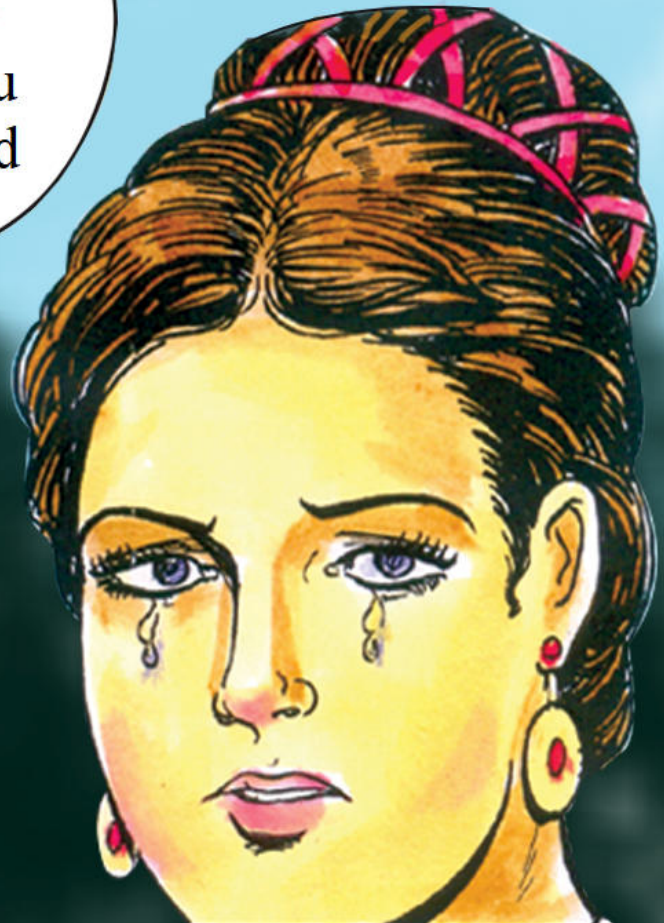


We thought she was a pious woman. But, she is a sinner. According to the Law of Moses she should be stoned to death.

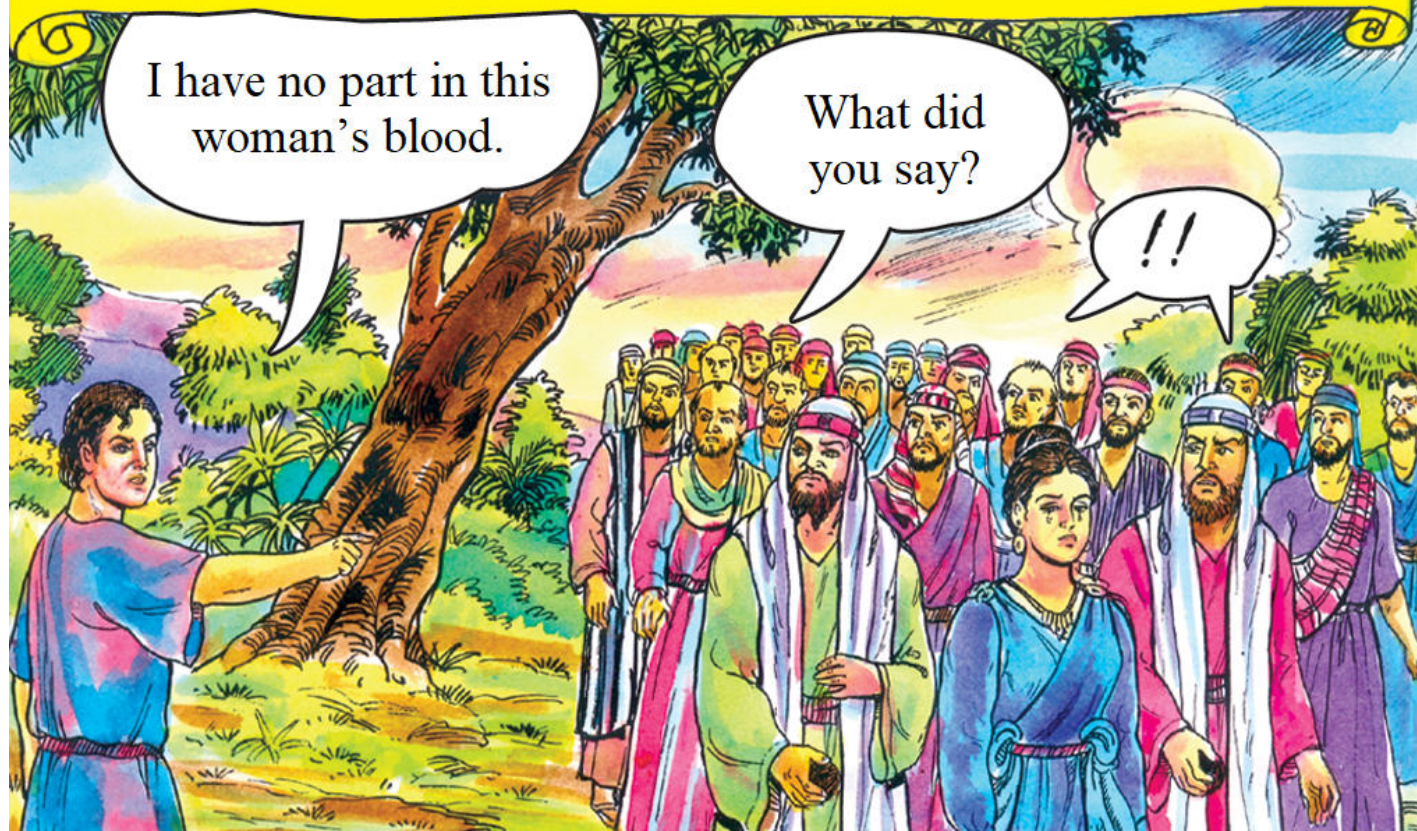
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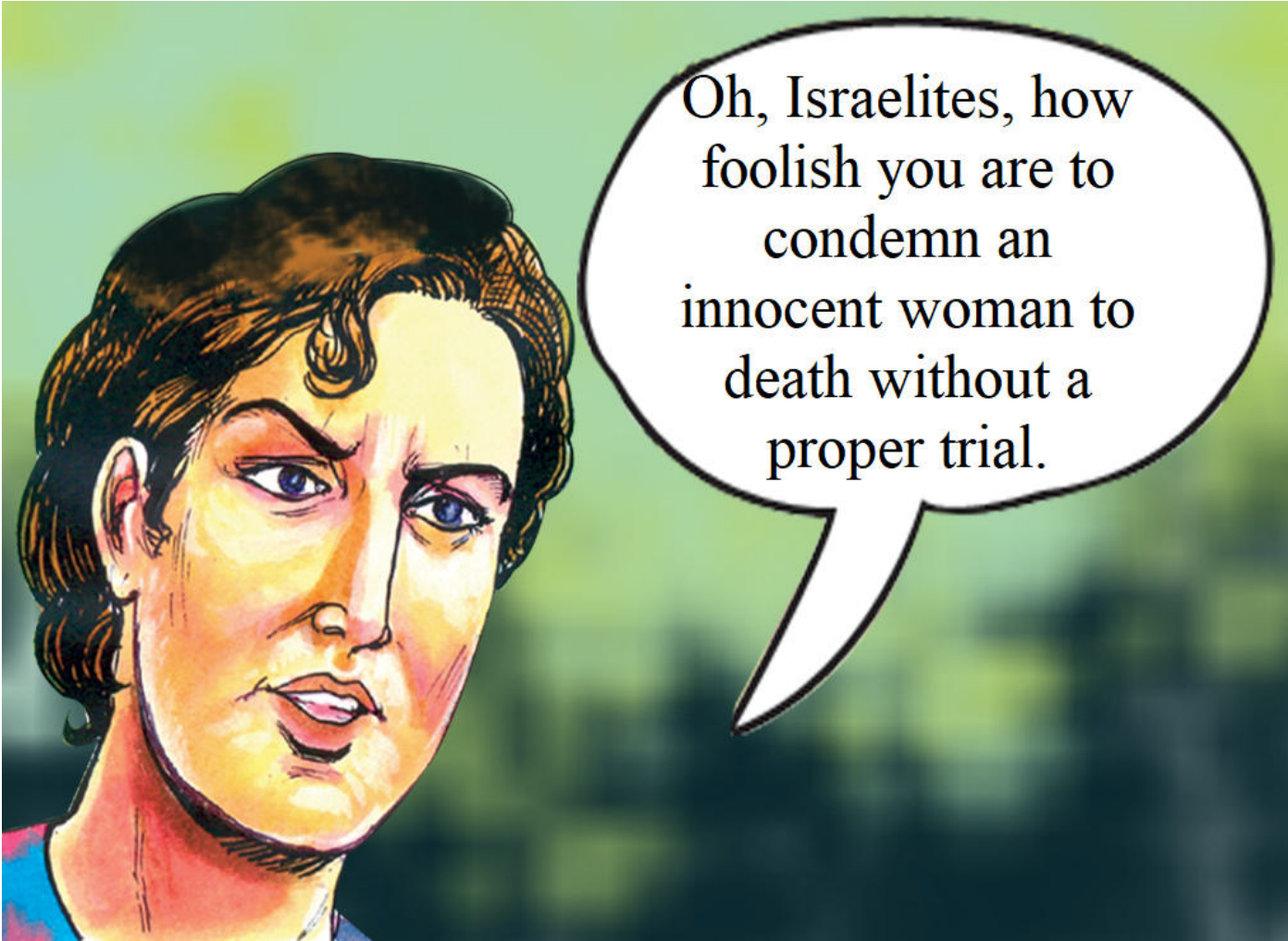


All that you said is a big lie. You give false witness and then you judge. May the Lord protect me.



With much reluctance and sorrow, the people took her outside the city gate to be stoned. Then God sent Daniel to them.





Oh, Israelites, how
foolish you are to
condemn an
innocent woman to
death without a
proper trial.

Return to the court. These men
have given false evidence
against her.

!!!



Daniel kept the two men apart and questioned them separately. The people listened.

Under what tree did you see them?

Under the mastic tree.



To the next judge.

Under what tree did
you see them?

Under the oak
tree.



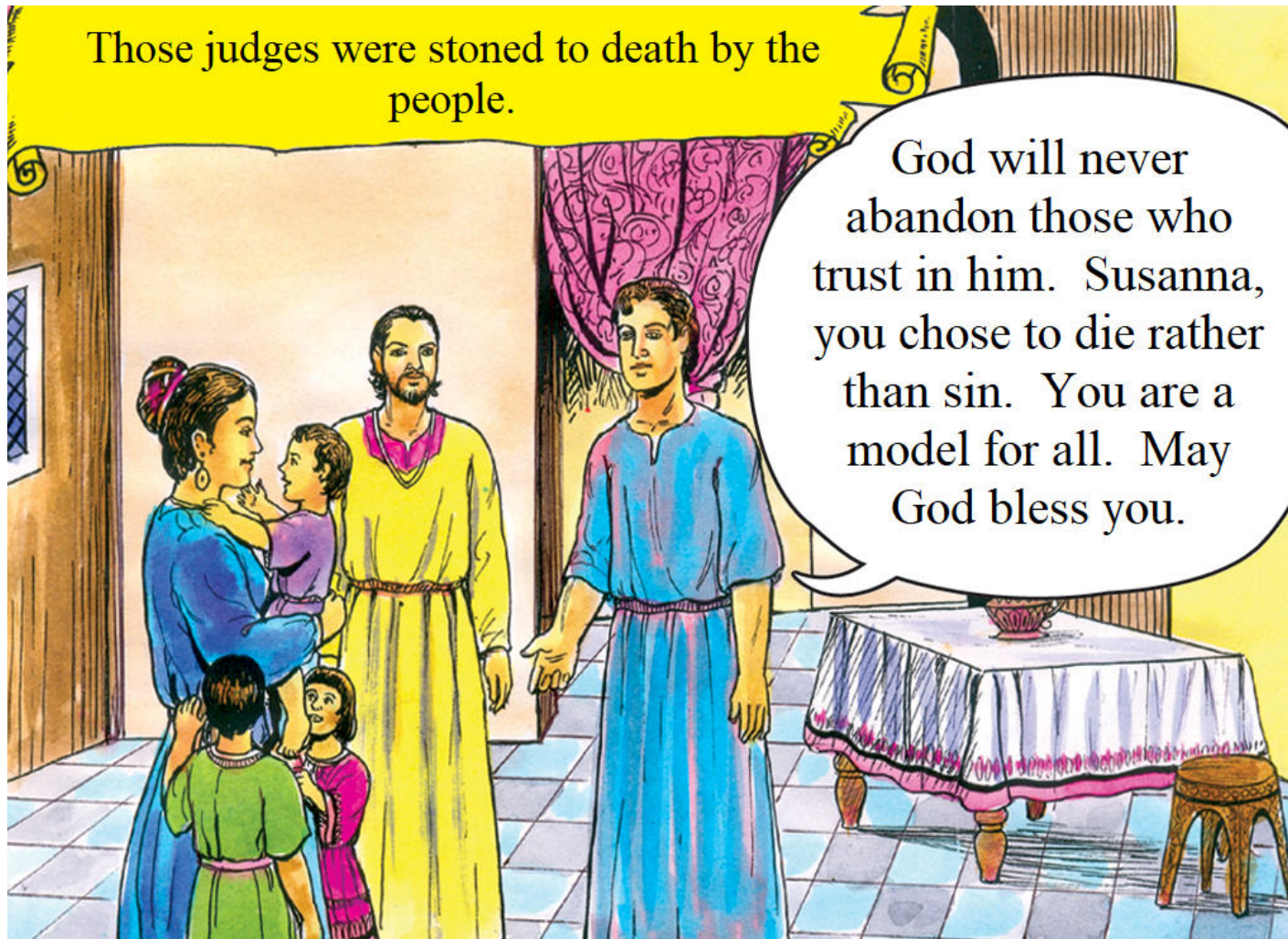
You, wicked sons of the devil, how many maidens were abused by you? When one woman resisted, you decided to kill her. Your own words have condemned you.

Liers! Wicked men!
Kill them!



Those judges were stoned to death by the people.

God will never abandon those who trust in him. Susanna, you chose to die rather than sin. You are a model for all. May God bless you.



Praise and glory to
God who heard the cry
of the innocent.

Lord, how can I thank
you! I will sing your
praises for all the days
of my life.



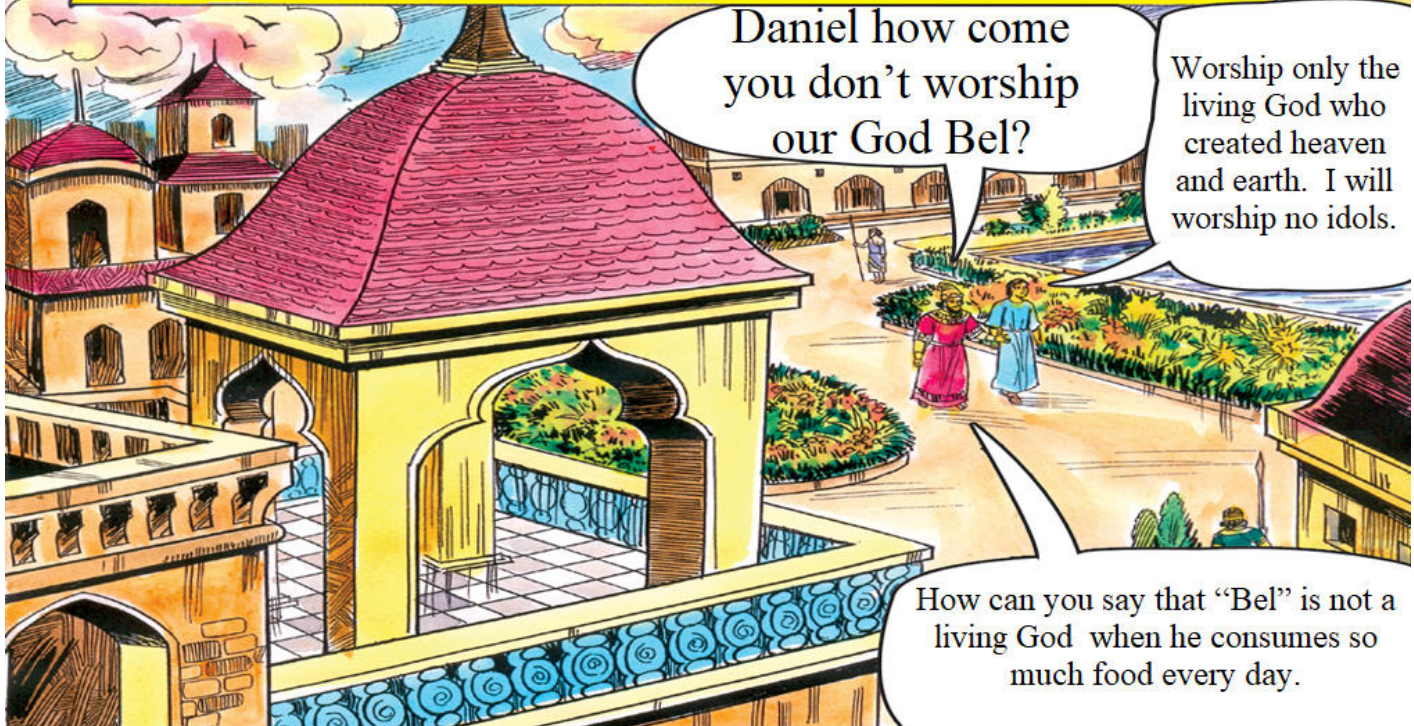
Eating Statue.

Cyrus, king of Persia used to worship an idol named "Bel". Twelve bushels of flour, forty sheep and six barrels of wine were offered to this statue every day. One day Cyrus told Daniel.

Daniel how come
you don't worship
our God Bel?

Worship only the
living God who
created heaven
and earth. I will
worship no idols.

How can you say that "Bel" is not a
living God when he consumes so
much food every day.



Your majesty, Bel is an idol made of clay and covered with brass. A statue can never eat and drink.

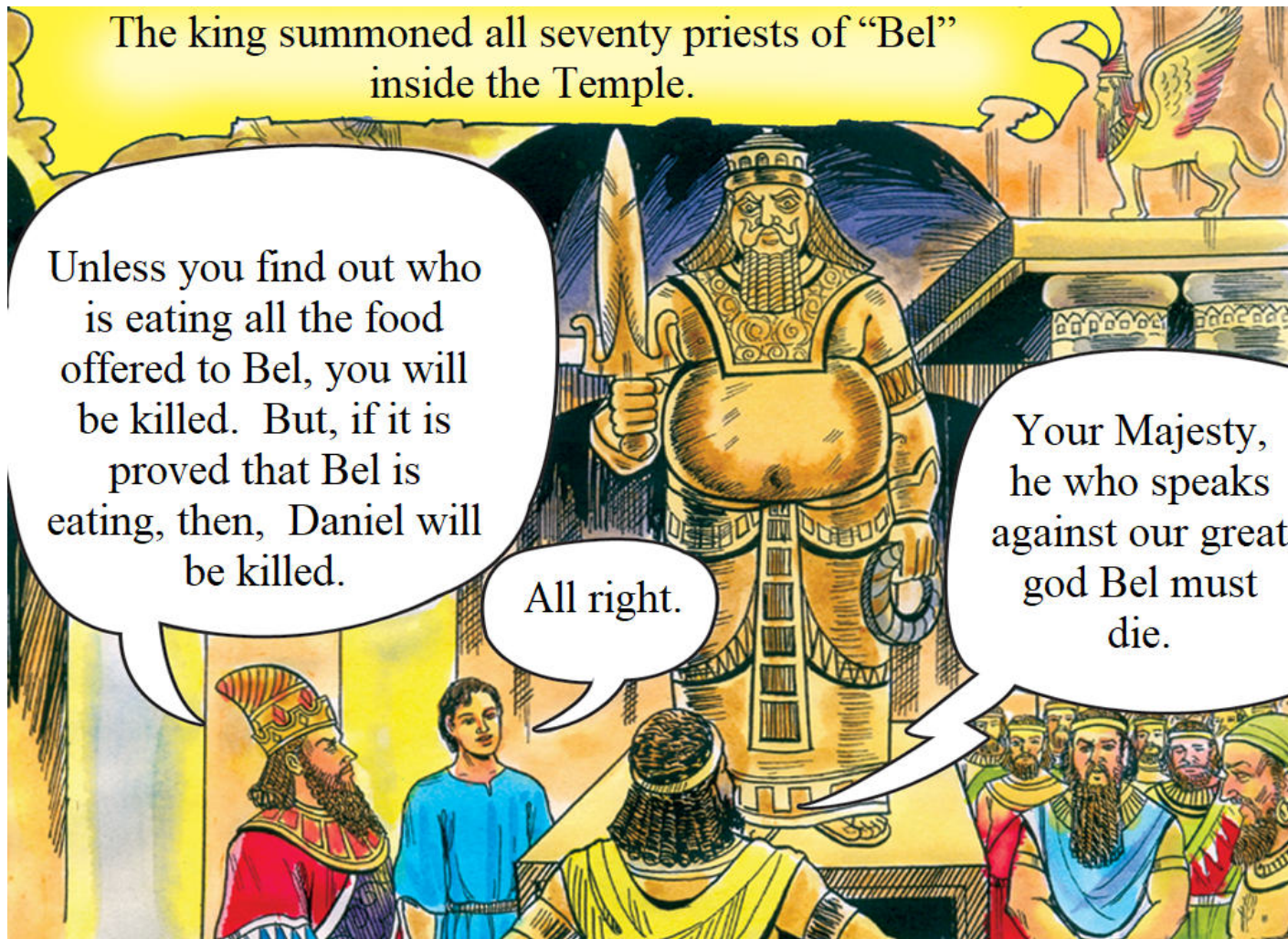


The king summoned all seventy priests of "Bel"
inside the Temple.

Unless you find out who
is eating all the food
offered to Bel, you will
be killed. But, if it is
proved that Bel is
eating, then, Daniel will
be killed.

All right.

Your Majesty,
he who speaks
against our great
god Bel must
die.



Here we are
going out. You
close the door
and seal it.

Tomorrow morning if the
food still remains there, kills
us. If it is gone, Daniel
should die.

Right.

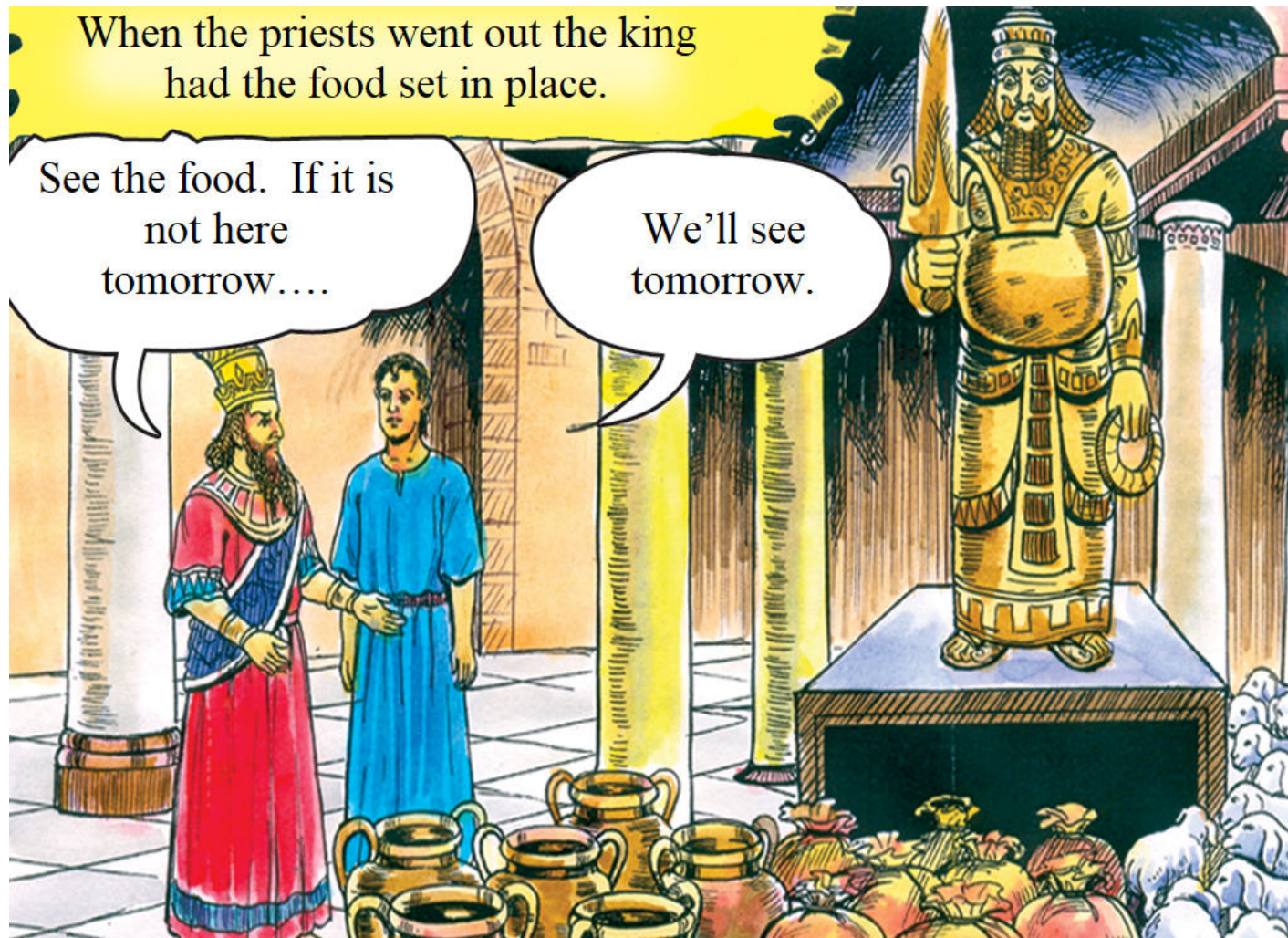
!



When the priests went out the king
had the food set in place.

See the food. If it is
not here
tomorrow....

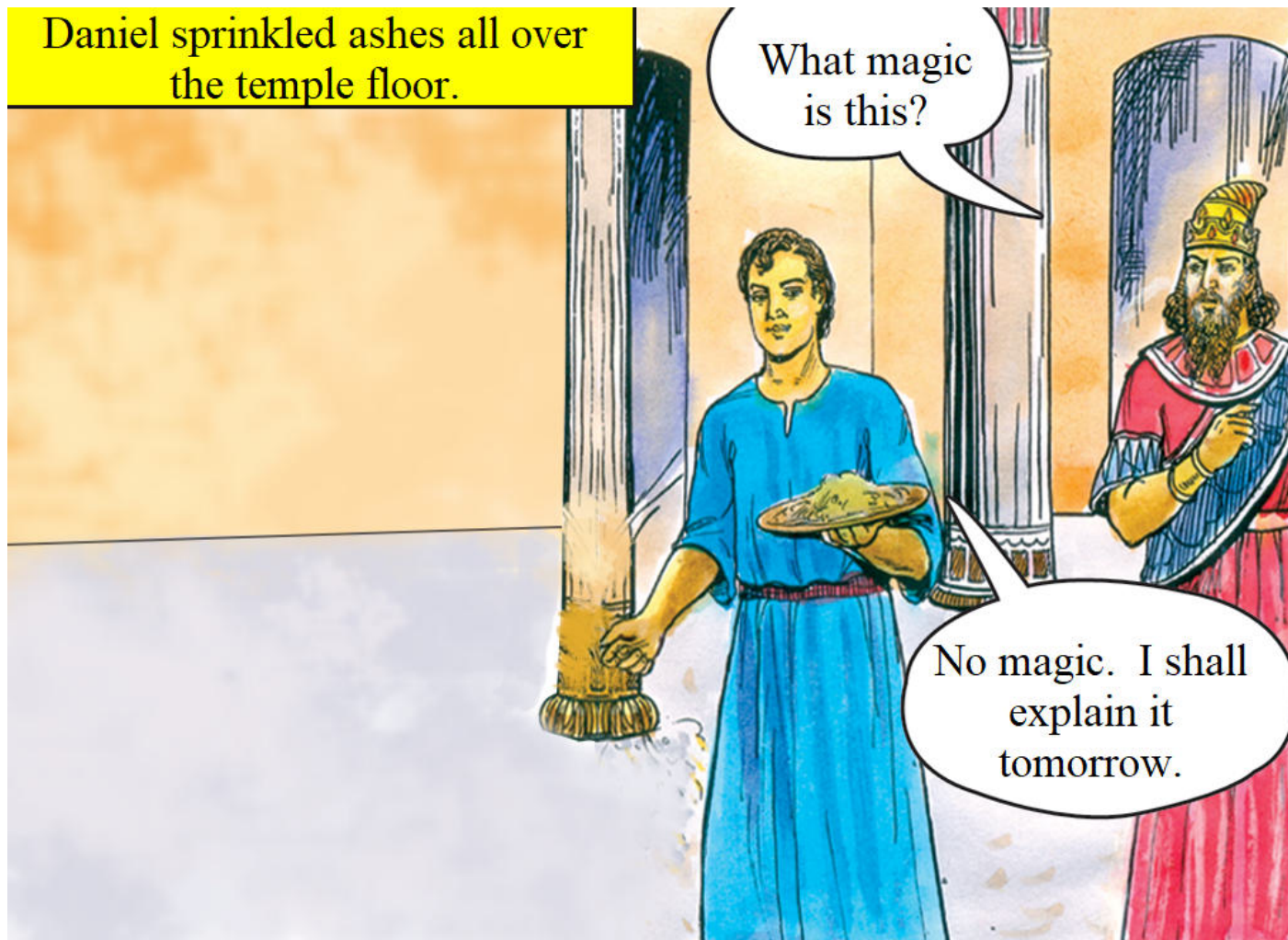
We'll see
tomorrow.



Daniel sprinkled ashes all over
the temple floor.

What magic
is this?

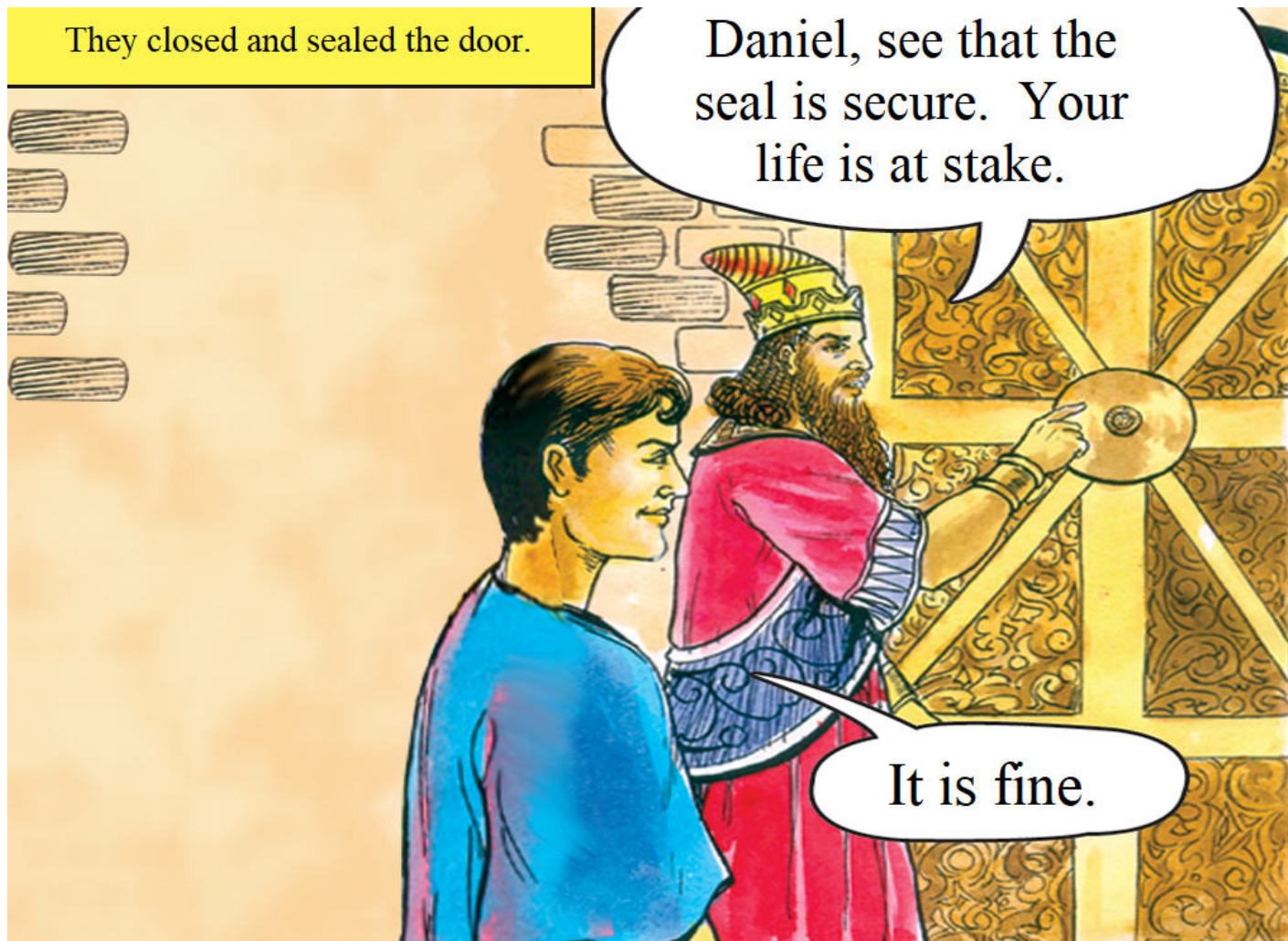
No magic. I shall
explain it
tomorrow.



They closed and sealed the door.

Daniel, see that the seal is secure. Your life is at stake.

It is fine.



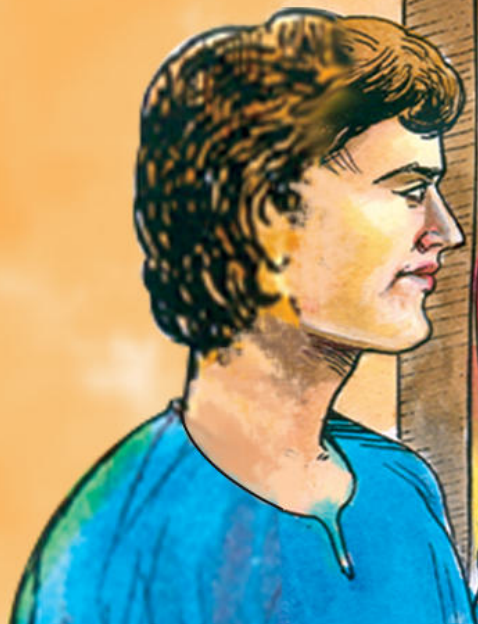
The next morning.

Daniel, is the seal
intact?

Yes, no one has
gone through this
door.

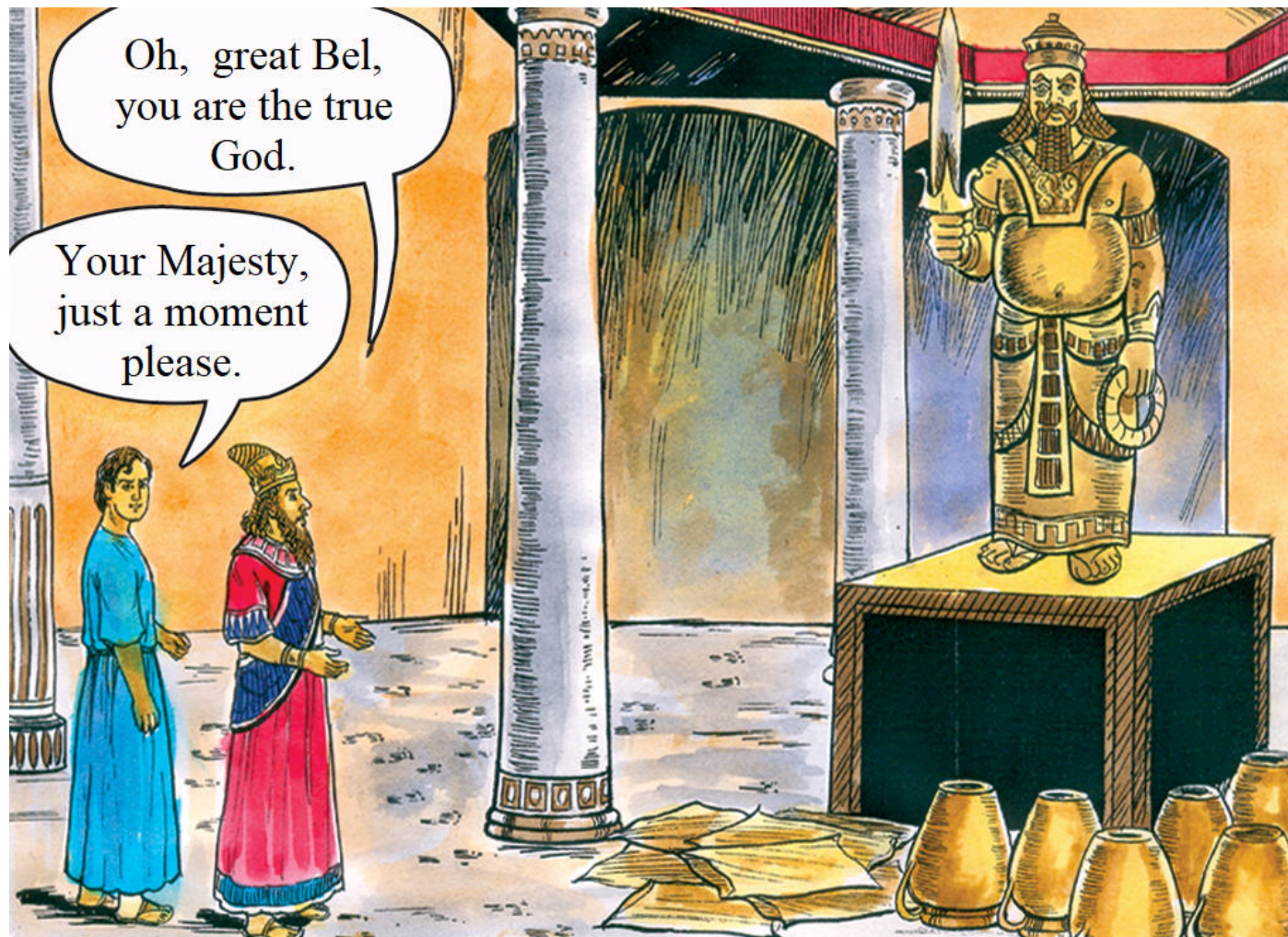


All right, let us open
the door and see.



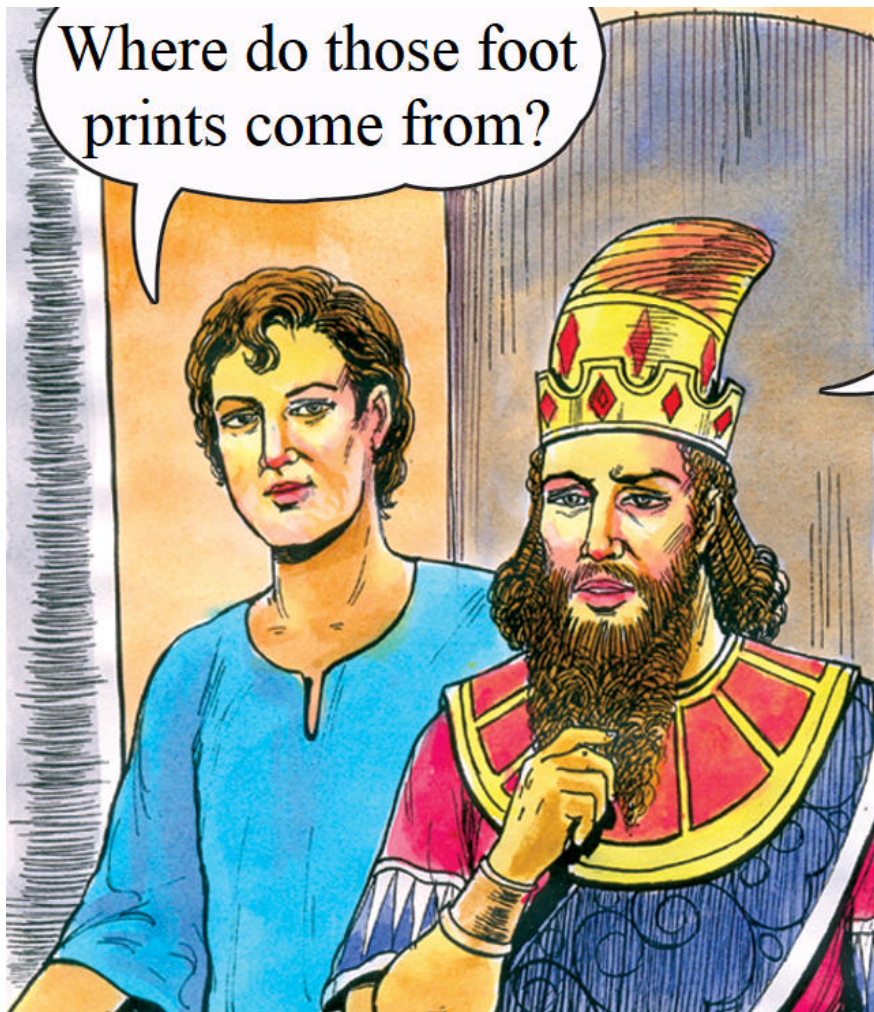
Oh, great Bel,
you are the true
God.

Your Majesty,
just a moment
please.



Where do those foot
prints come from?

Foot prints of
men, women,
and children!

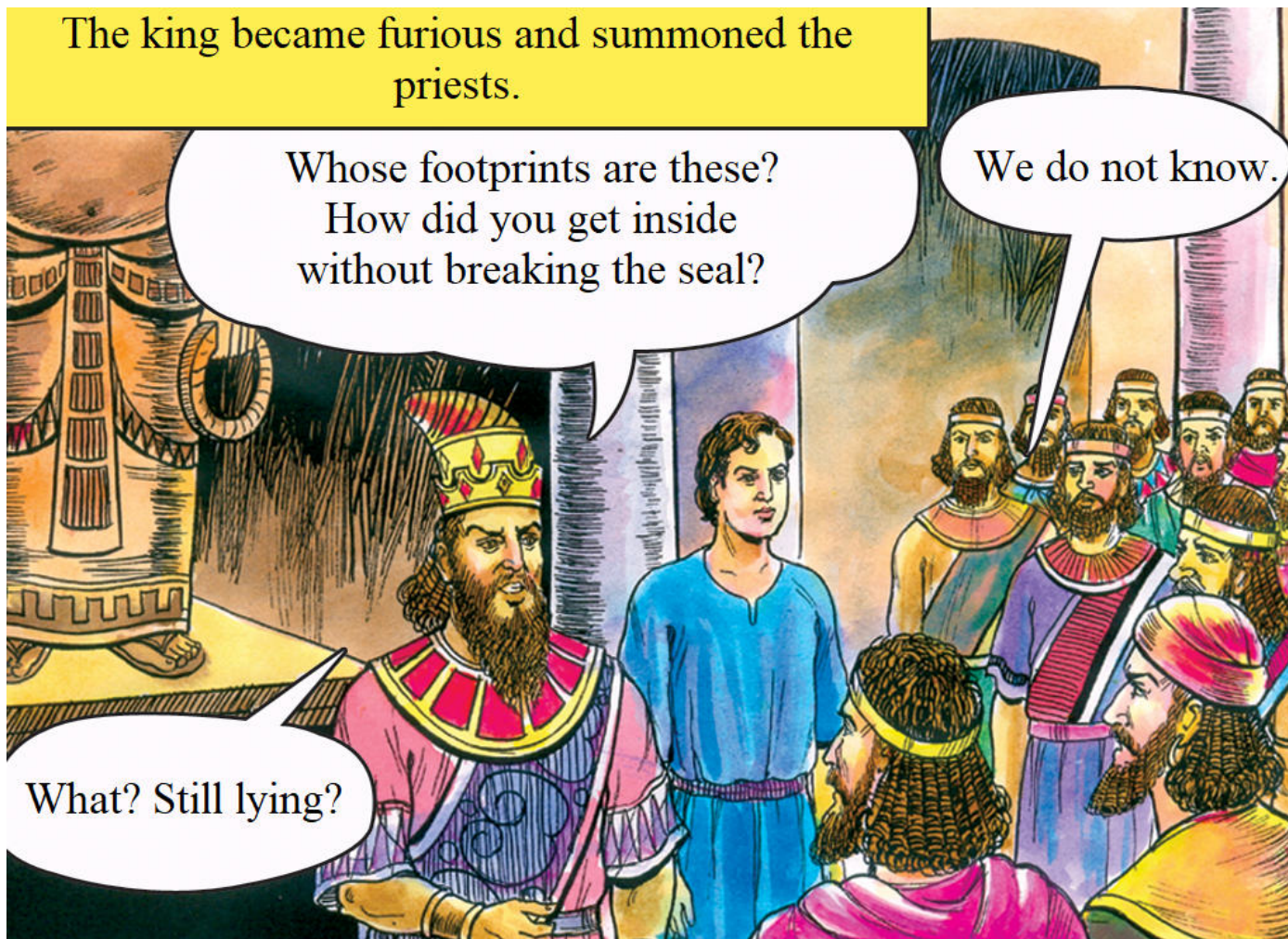


The king became furious and summoned the priests.

Whose footprints are these?
How did you get inside
without breaking the seal?

We do not know.

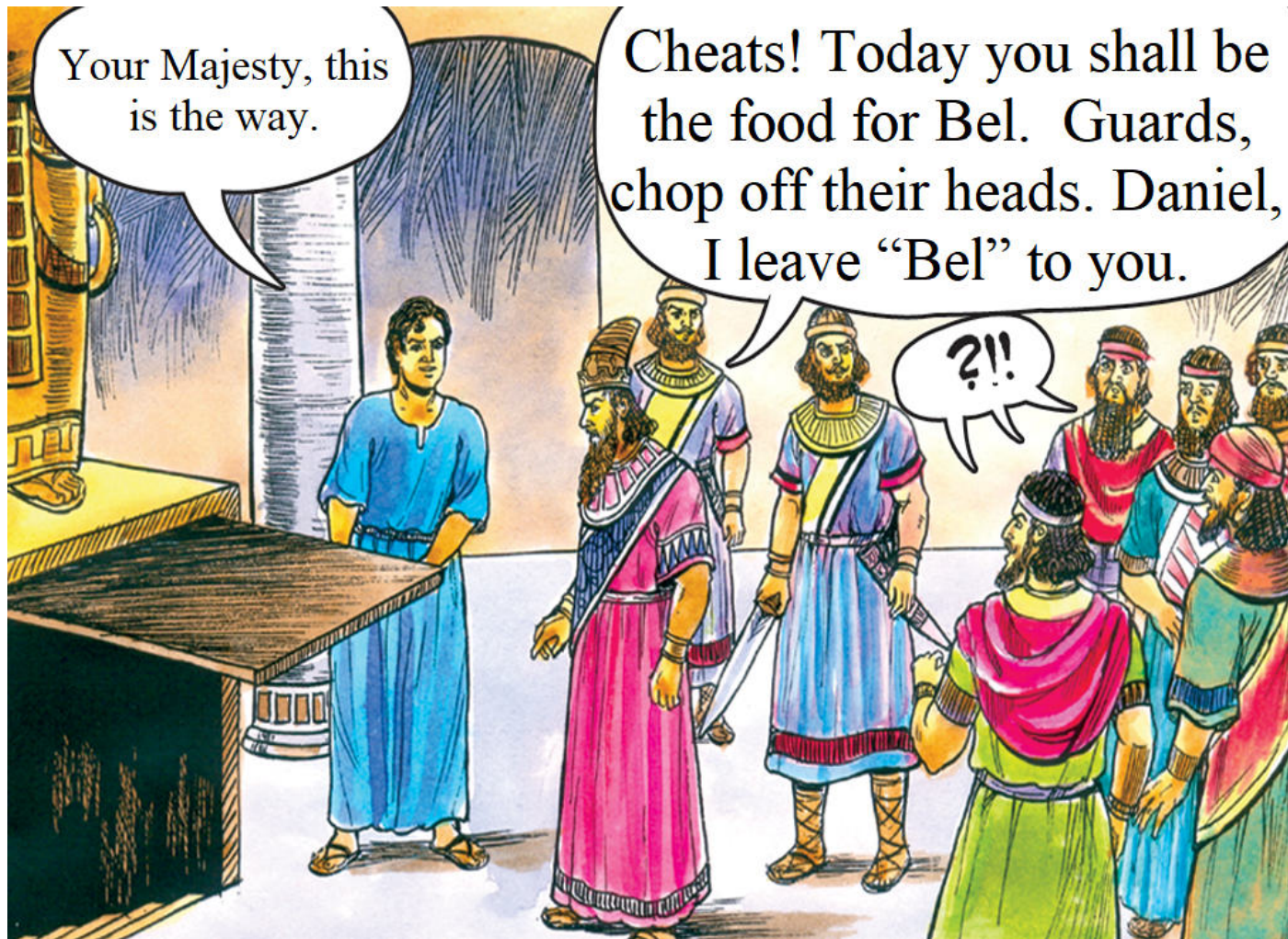
What? Still lying?



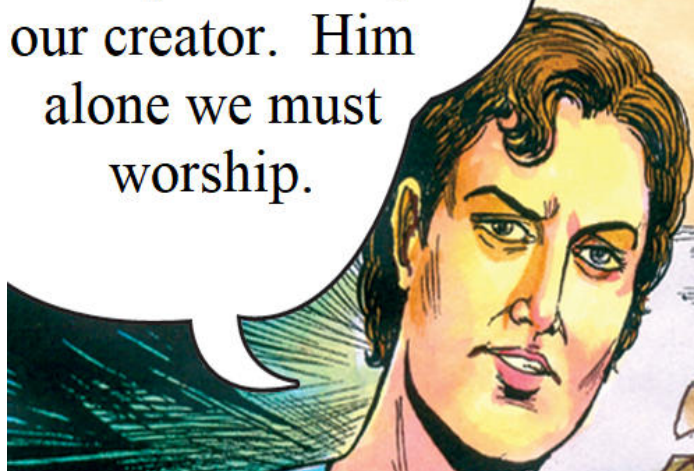
Your Majesty, this is the way.

Cheats! Today you shall be the food for Bel. Guards, chop off their heads. Daniel, I leave "Bel" to you.

?!



All the man-made idols are like this. There is only one God, our creator. Him alone we must worship.



The persecution of the Jews continued unabated. To strengthen the faith of those persecuted and to give them hope another book was written.

Liberation through a woman.

Next Story

Esther

Questions

1. What is the basis of dividing Prophets into major and minor?
2. Which year did Nebuchadnezzar destroy Jerusalem?
3. Why was he punished?
4. What lesson do we learn from the “Fall of a Tyrant”?
5. Why was Daniel thrown into the Lion’s den?
6. What does the name “Susanna” mean?
7. How did Daniel prove the guilt of the Judges?
8. What is an idol?
9. How did Daniel prove that the statue won’t eat?
10. Write down two lessons you learned from these stories.

Memorize: Break off your sins by practicing justice and your inequities by showing Mercy to the poor. (Dan. 4: 27)

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