

Bible Comics – 28

# JUDITH



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The book of Judith narrates the story of a miraculous liberation of the people of Israel through the courageous intervention of a widow. This book was written during the persecution of Antiochus IV to encourage and strengthen the people to remain faithful to the Lord and His commandments.

Bible scholars consider this book as a historical novel written for edification. Apparently, the author based the story on some

historical incidents of the past and also on the story of Jael killing Sisera, found in the book of judges. While the Catholic and Orthodox churches accept this book as part of the Bible, other Christian denominations consider this as an apocrypha.

Israel's faith in Yahweh as the liberator of the oppressed, shines forth in every incident presented in the book. The declaration of Achior and prayers of Judith openly confess that the God of Israel is the Father of orphans and help of the weak. The story illustrates vividly how

Yahweh protects those who put their trust in Him.

There is only one God, Yahweh, who liberated Israel from Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar who poses himself as God and threatens to destroy the weak nations is considered as an incarnation of sin. Behind the picture of Nebuchadnezzar a careful reader can detect the image of Antiochus IV who claimed to be God and persecuted those who refused to worship him. Yahweh hates arrogance and will pull down the mighty ones from their thrones. "Judith" is a warning to all



who put their trust in military power and oppress the weak.

Judith, who lost her husband already in her youth, spent the rest of her life in severe penance and continuous prayer. When her people decided to capitulate before the enemy, she believed that God was calling her for action. It was her deep faith in Yahweh that enabled her to march into the enemy camp, risking her reputation and her very life. The name “Judith” is the feminine form of “Judah”. She is the symbol

of the Chosen people and the model of courage that derives from faith.

God works wonders not through the mighty ones but through the simple and humble people. The tradition of Israel gave little recognition to women, not to say widows. But, it was such a widow that God chose to save His people at a critical moment. The story of Judith teaches that we should never be discouraged by our weaknesses and inabilities, but should always put our trust in the Lord. It is in our weaknesses that the power of God is manifested.

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# JUDITH

Script

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration

Devassy & Benny

In his campaign against Media, King Nebuchadnezzar asked the countries west of Euphrates to help him. Only very few obliged. [The book of Judith depicts Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as the king of Assyria] after conquering Media Nebuchadnezzar gave a reception to the Generals.





All the allied nations who helped  
us in the war shall be given  
special gifts and privileges.



Those who refused to join us  
shall be destroyed.

Holofernes, our commander  
in chief, shall go before us.

Show no mercy, annihilate  
them all.



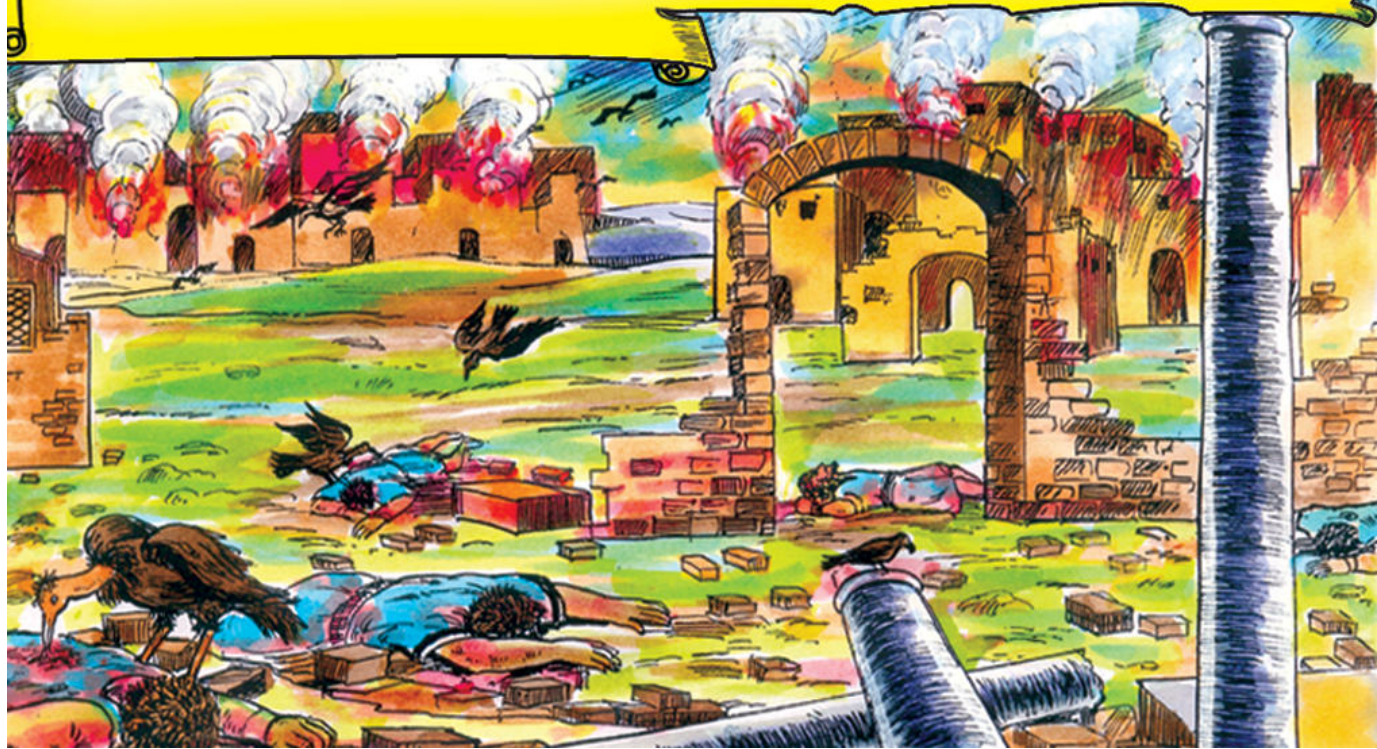


An army of 120,000 foot-soldiers and 12,000 cavalry marched out of Nineveh under the command of Holofernes.





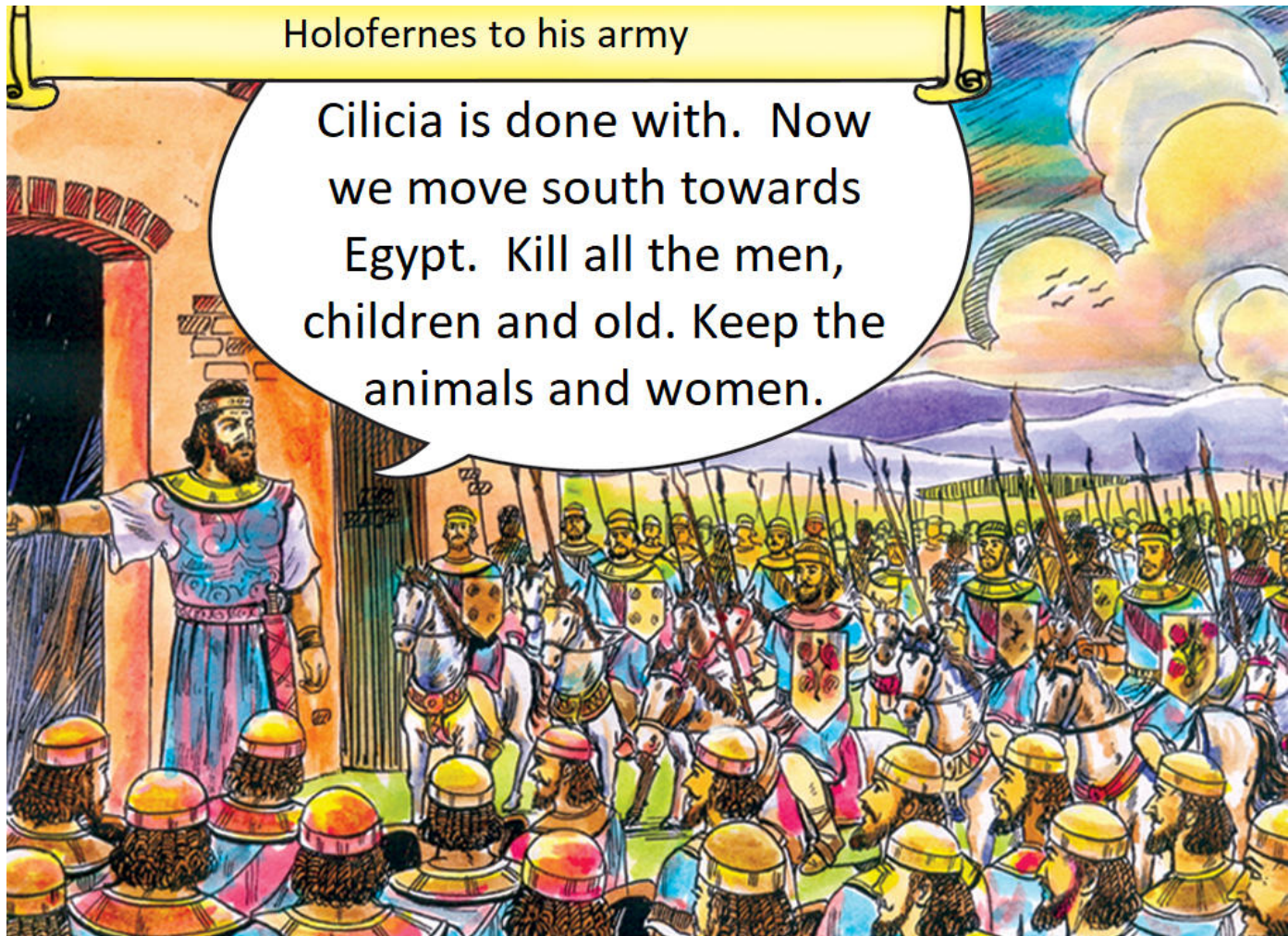
The army crossed River Euphrates and moved westward like a cloud of locusts. They captured countries, leveled fortresses and devastated the entire lands. Only smoldering cities and stinking corpses were left behind.





Holofernes to his army


Cilicia is done with. Now we move south towards Egypt. Kill all the men, children and old. Keep the animals and women.





Hearing about the cruelty of the Assyrian army, nations trembled with fear. They sent messages to Holofernes seeking peace.



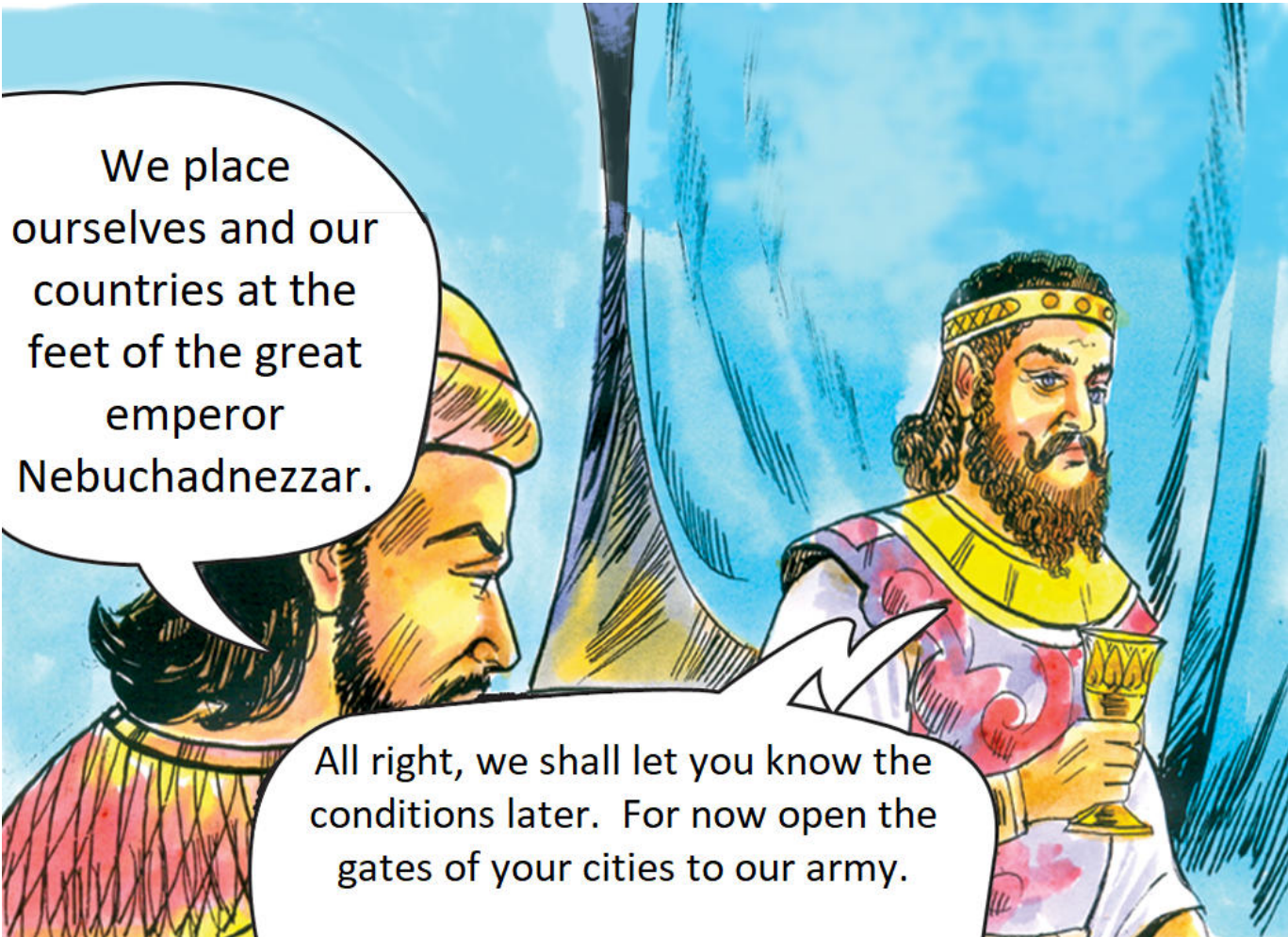


You refused to help us in the war against Media, and now dare to come asking for Peace? I'll crush you all and feed you to the birds.

??!

We are ready to accept any condition you set. Only spare our lives.





We place  
ourselves and our  
countries at the  
feet of the great  
emperor  
Nebuchadnezzar.

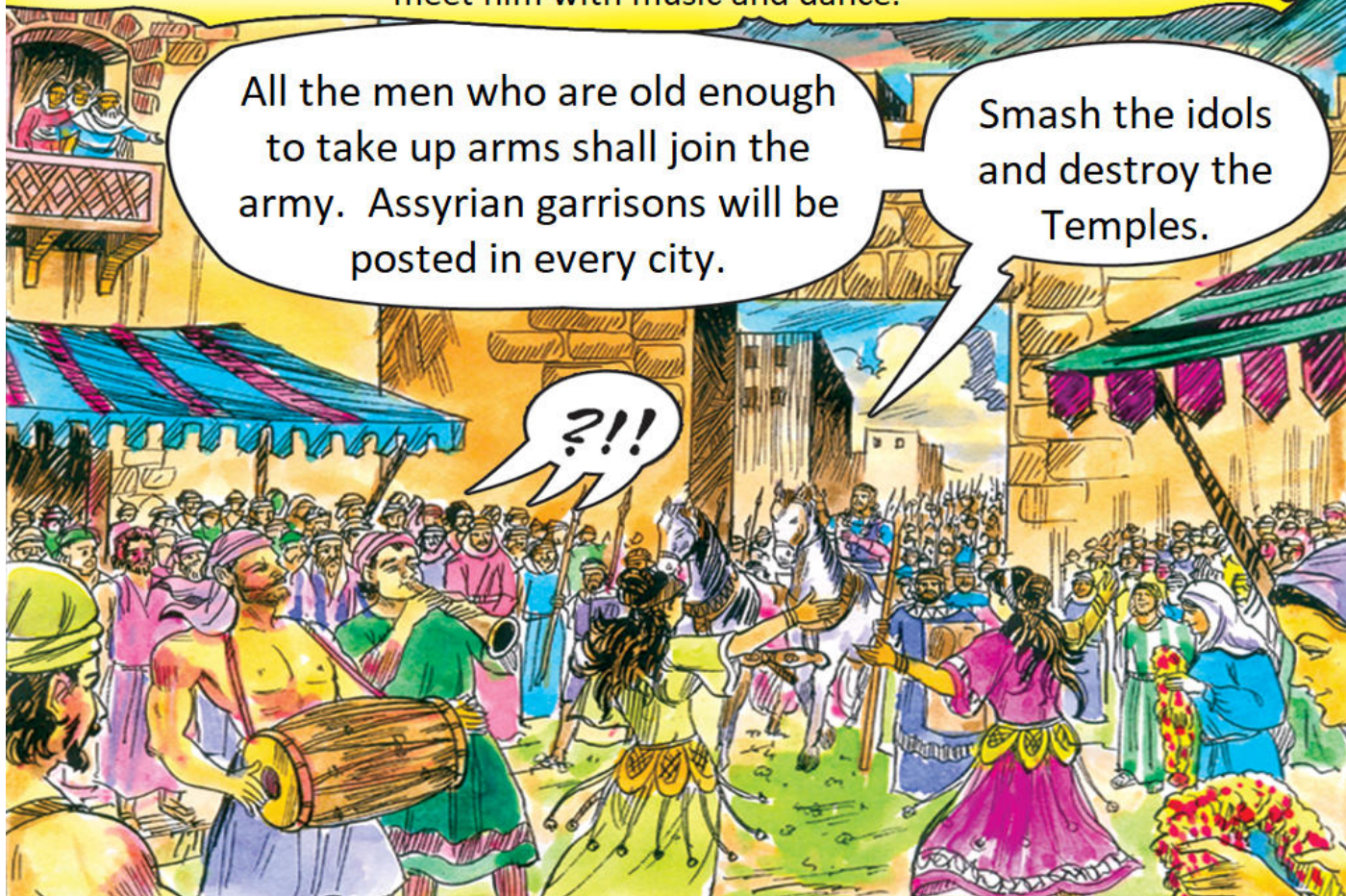
All right, we shall let you know the  
conditions later. For now open the  
gates of your cities to our army.

Holofernes was given a warm welcome in every town. People came out to meet him with music and dance.

All the men who are old enough to take up arms shall join the army. Assyrian garrisons will be posted in every city.

Smash the idols and destroy the Temples.

?!!





Lord, kindly spare  
our Temples and  
gods.

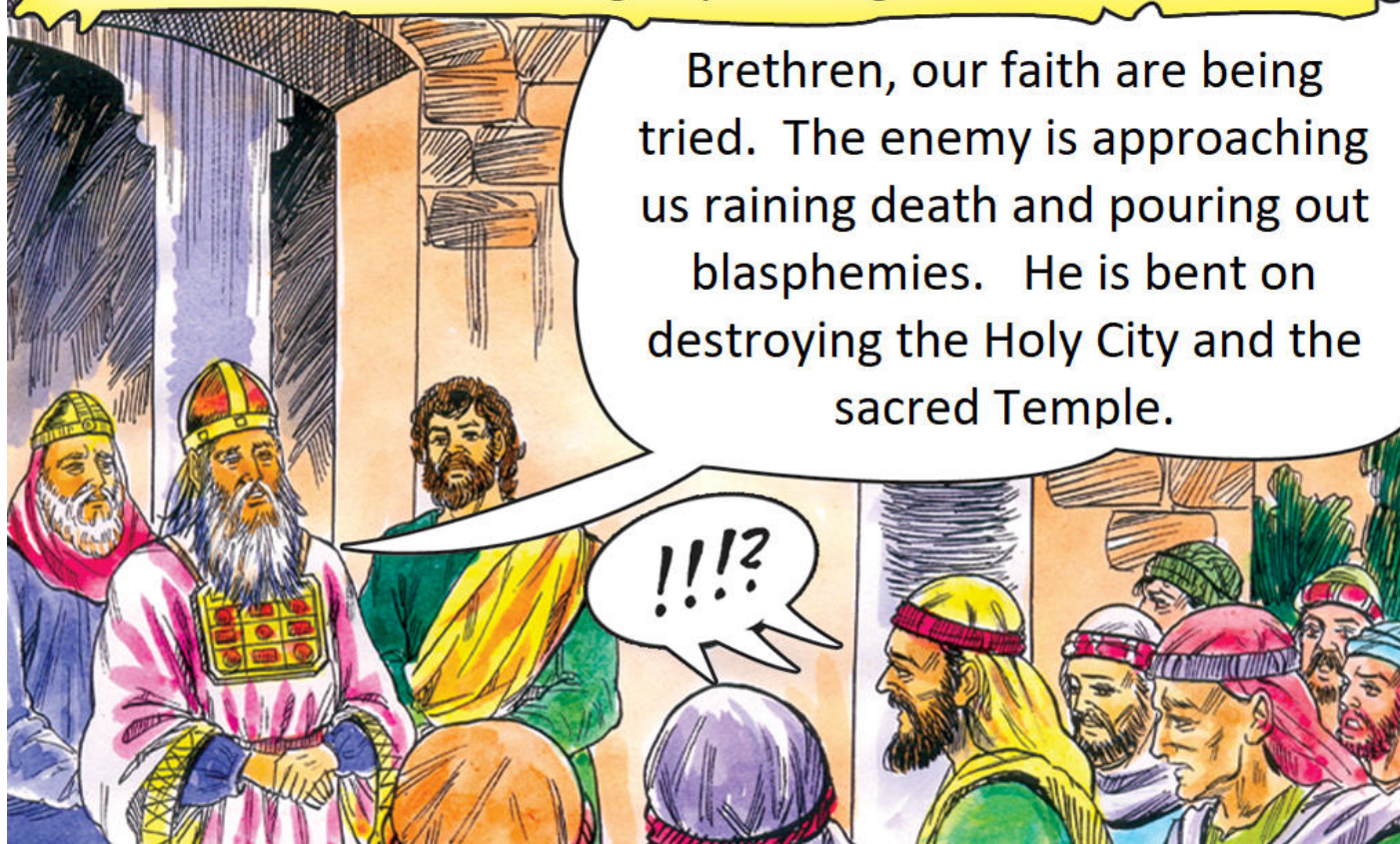
There is no other god  
but Nebuchadnezzar. If  
these are gods let them  
save themselves.





Hearing about the advance of the Assyrian army, the people of Judah panicked. Joachim, the High Priest of Jerusalem called an emergency meeting.

Brethren, our faith are being tried. The enemy is approaching us raining death and pouring out blasphemies. He is bent on destroying the Holy City and the sacred Temple.



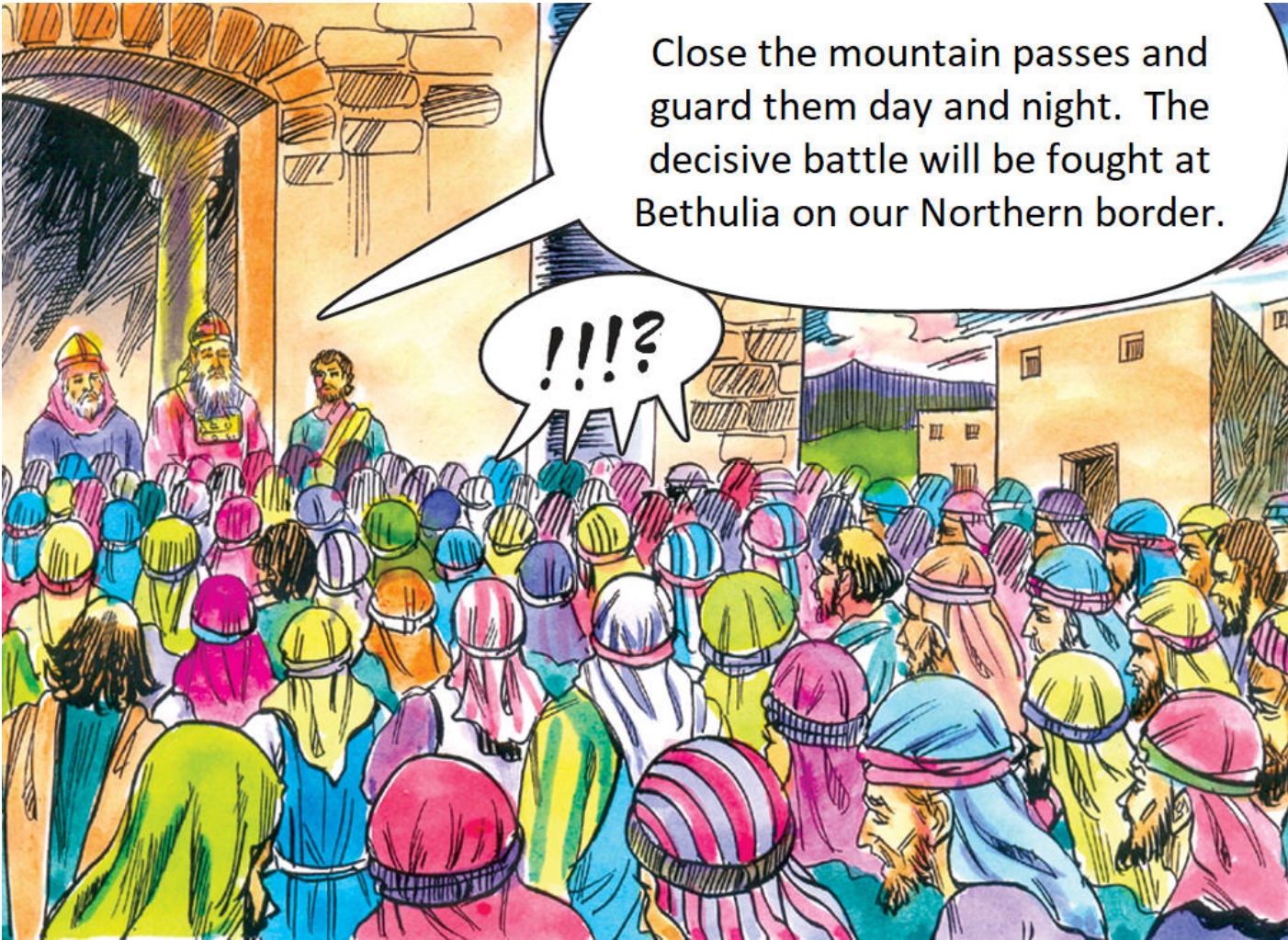
He has raised his hand against the Holy One.  
We must fast and pray that the Lord may  
destroy his arrogance. Put on sack clothes  
and ashes and cry aloud to the Lord.





The time has come to fight for  
our faith and for our lives. We  
must repair the fortresses and  
store up as much food and  
water as we can.





Close the mountain passes and guard them day and night. The decisive battle will be fought at Bethulia on our Northern border.

!!!?



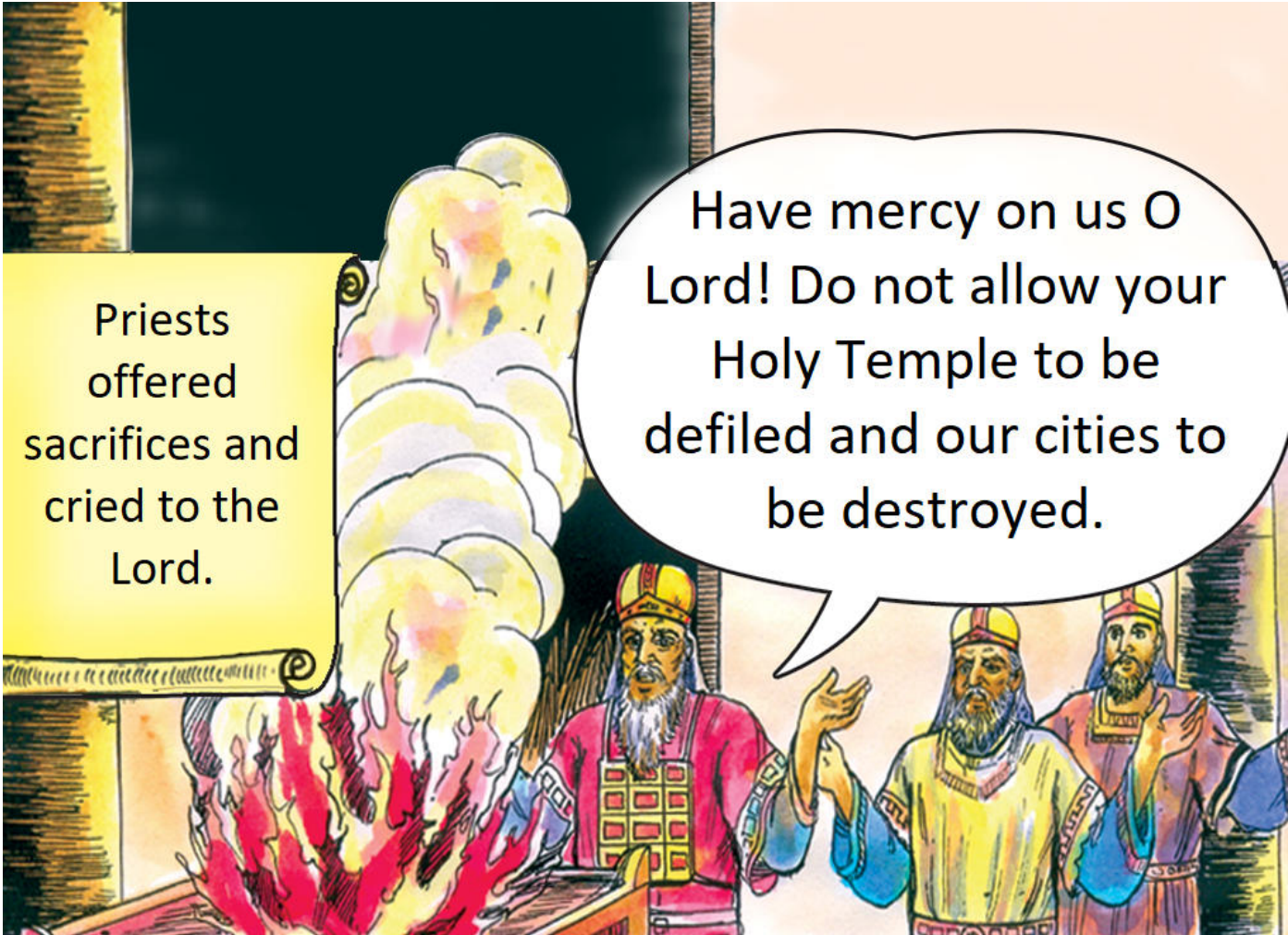
During the days that followed they got busy with preparations for the impending war. Cities and towns were fortified with walls and moats. All the men trained themselves for battle.



People covered themselves with  
ashes and prayed.



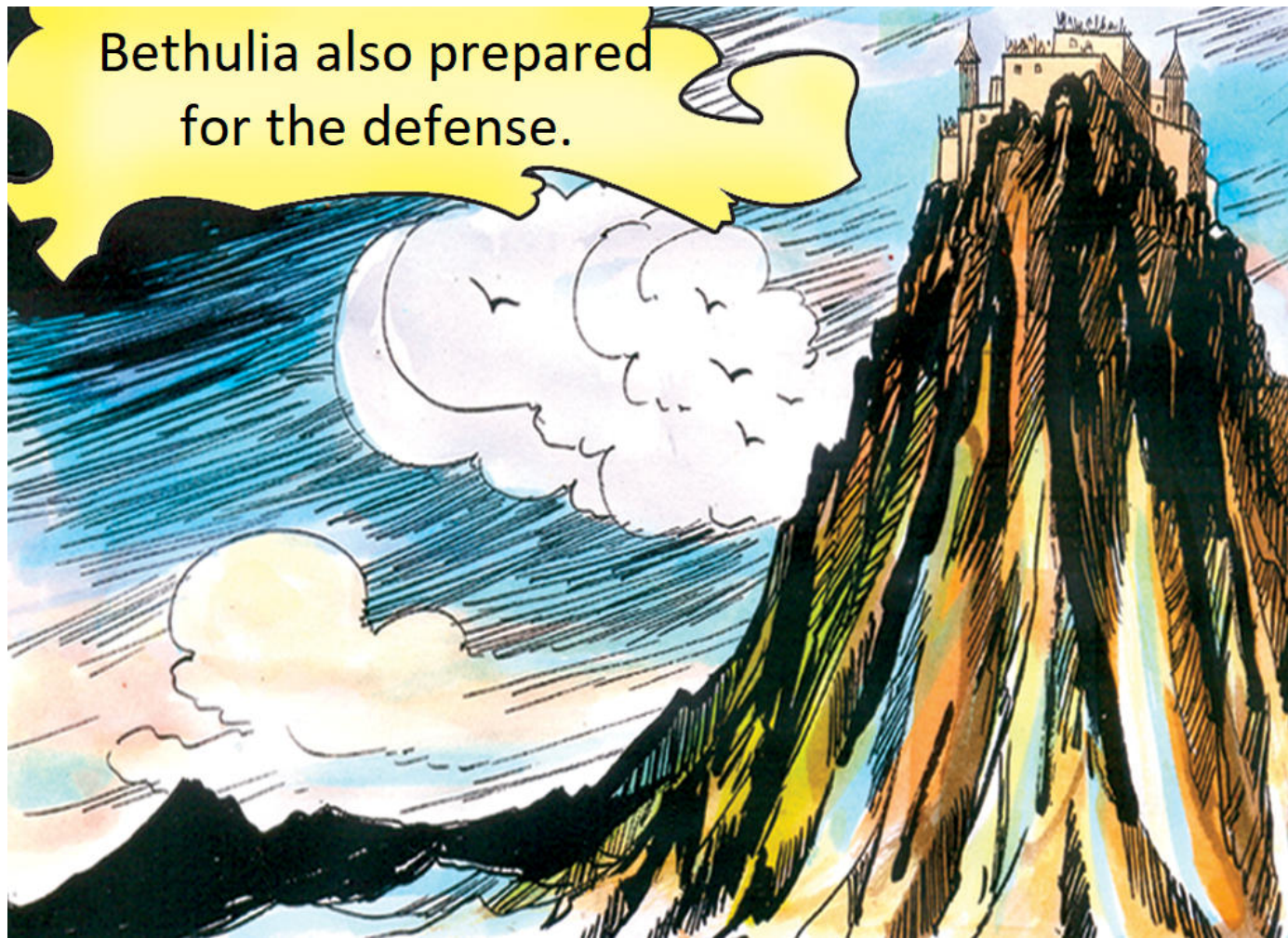




Priests  
offered  
sacrifices and  
cried to the  
Lord.

Have mercy on us O  
Lord! Do not allow your  
Holy Temple to be  
defiled and our cities to  
be destroyed.

Bethulia also prepared  
for the defense.





Uziah, the ruler of the town, addressed the assembly of the elders and the people.

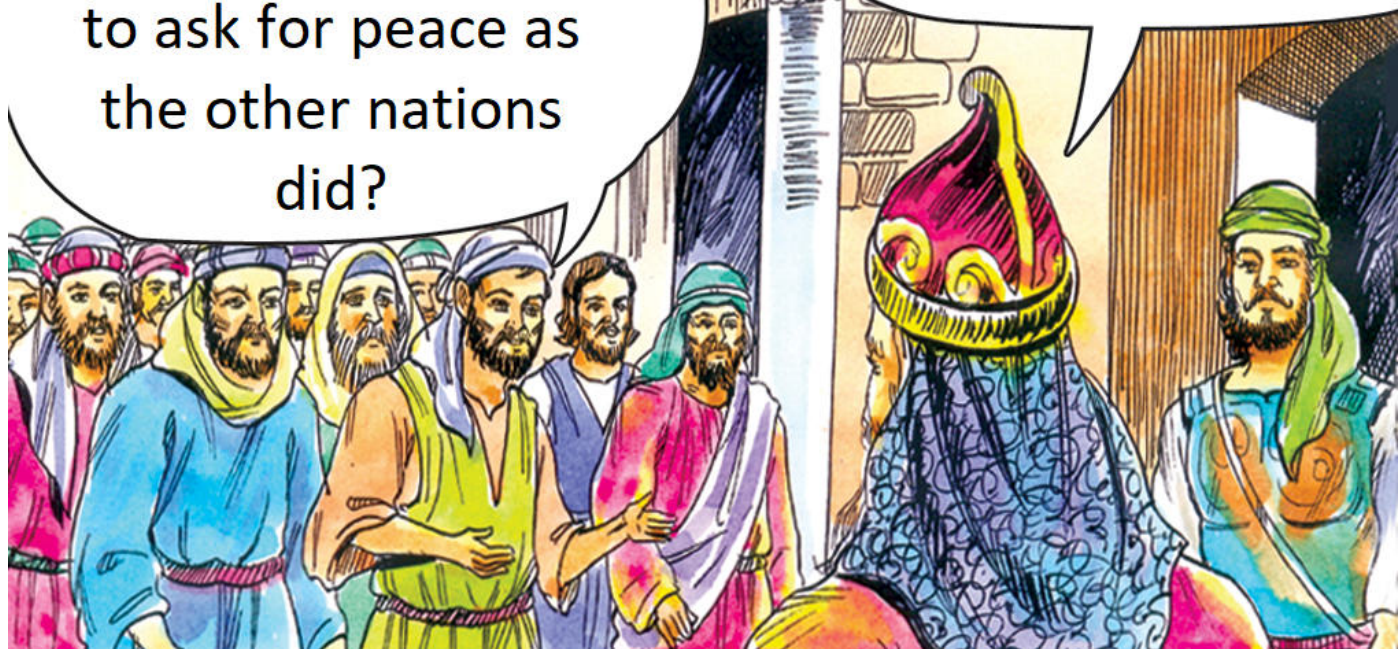
Brethren, our Bethulia is strategically the most important town in this war. If we surrender the entrance to Jerusalem, our Holy City will be wide open. So we must resist the enemy at any cost.

!!?



Is it possible for us to  
withstand the  
immense Assyrian  
army? Is it not wiser  
to ask for peace as  
the other nations  
did?

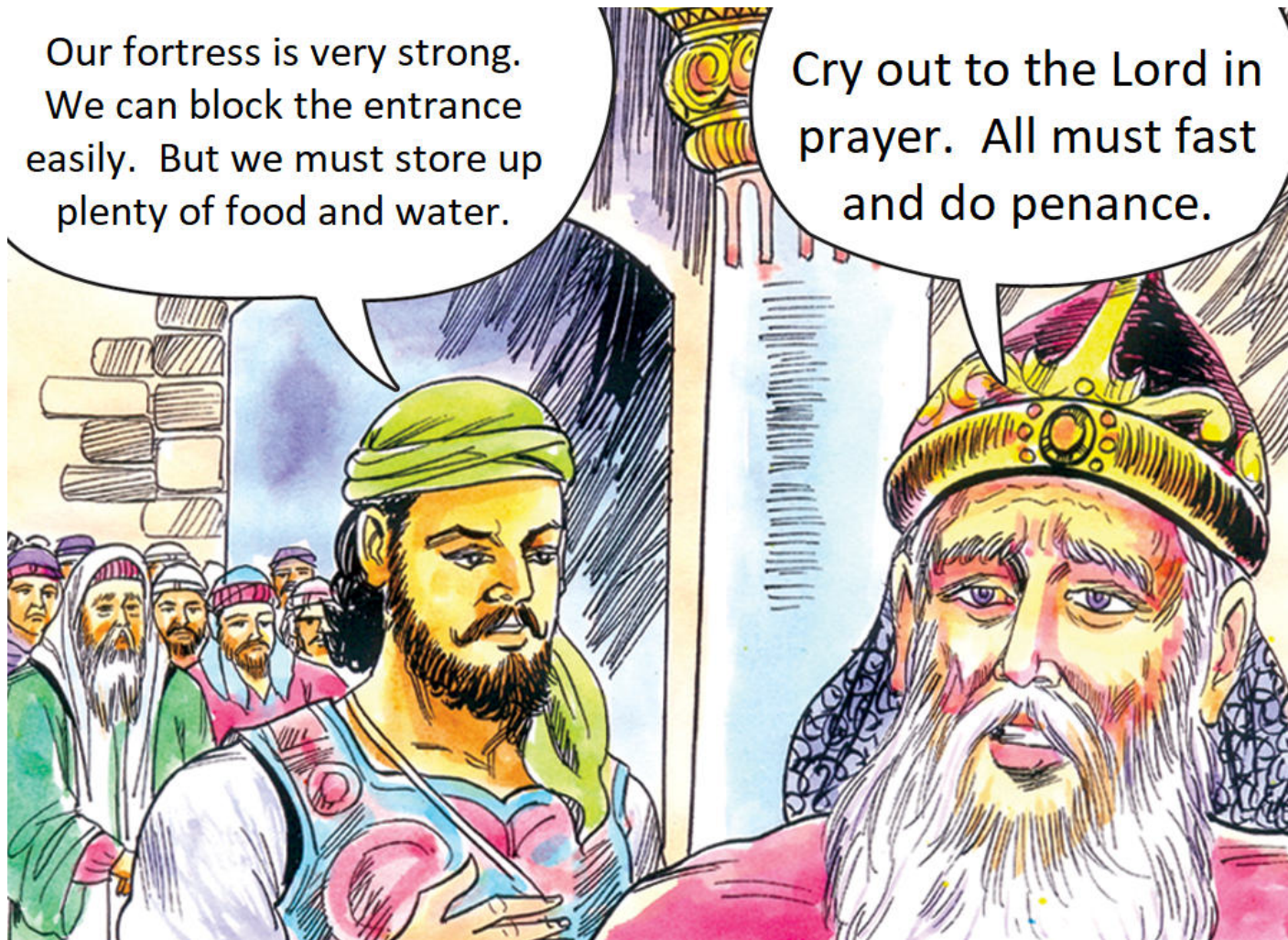
Surrendering will be  
suicidal. We know  
what they did to the  
other peoples.





Our fortress is very strong.  
We can block the entrance  
easily. But we must store up  
plenty of food and water.

Cry out to the Lord in  
prayer. All must fast  
and do penance.



Hearing about these preparations, Holofernes called the leaders of Moab and Ammon, the neighbors of Judea.

Who are these arrogant people preparing to resist us? On whom do they rely for help?





A choir the leaders of the Ammonites  
replied.

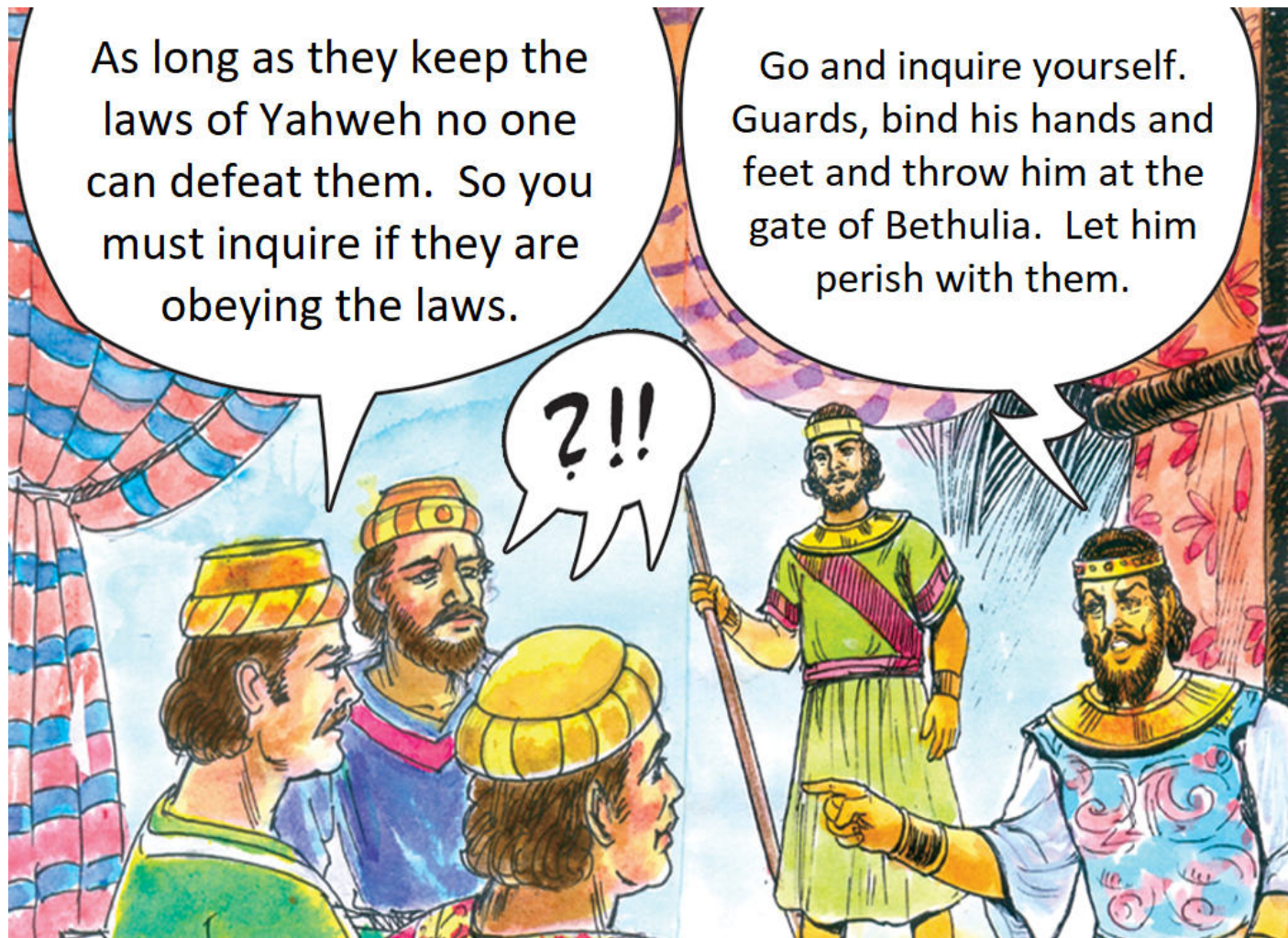
They are Hebrews. Yahweh is their  
God. Starting with the Pharaoh of  
Egypt, many powerful kings had  
been defeated by their God.



As long as they keep the laws of Yahweh no one can defeat them. So you must inquire if they are obeying the laws.

Go and inquire yourself. Guards, bind his hands and feet and throw him at the gate of Bethulia. Let him perish with them.

?!!





The Bethulians unbound Achior and took him into the town.  
He explained to them all that happened in the Assyrian camp.  
The next day Holofernes marched out against Bethulia.



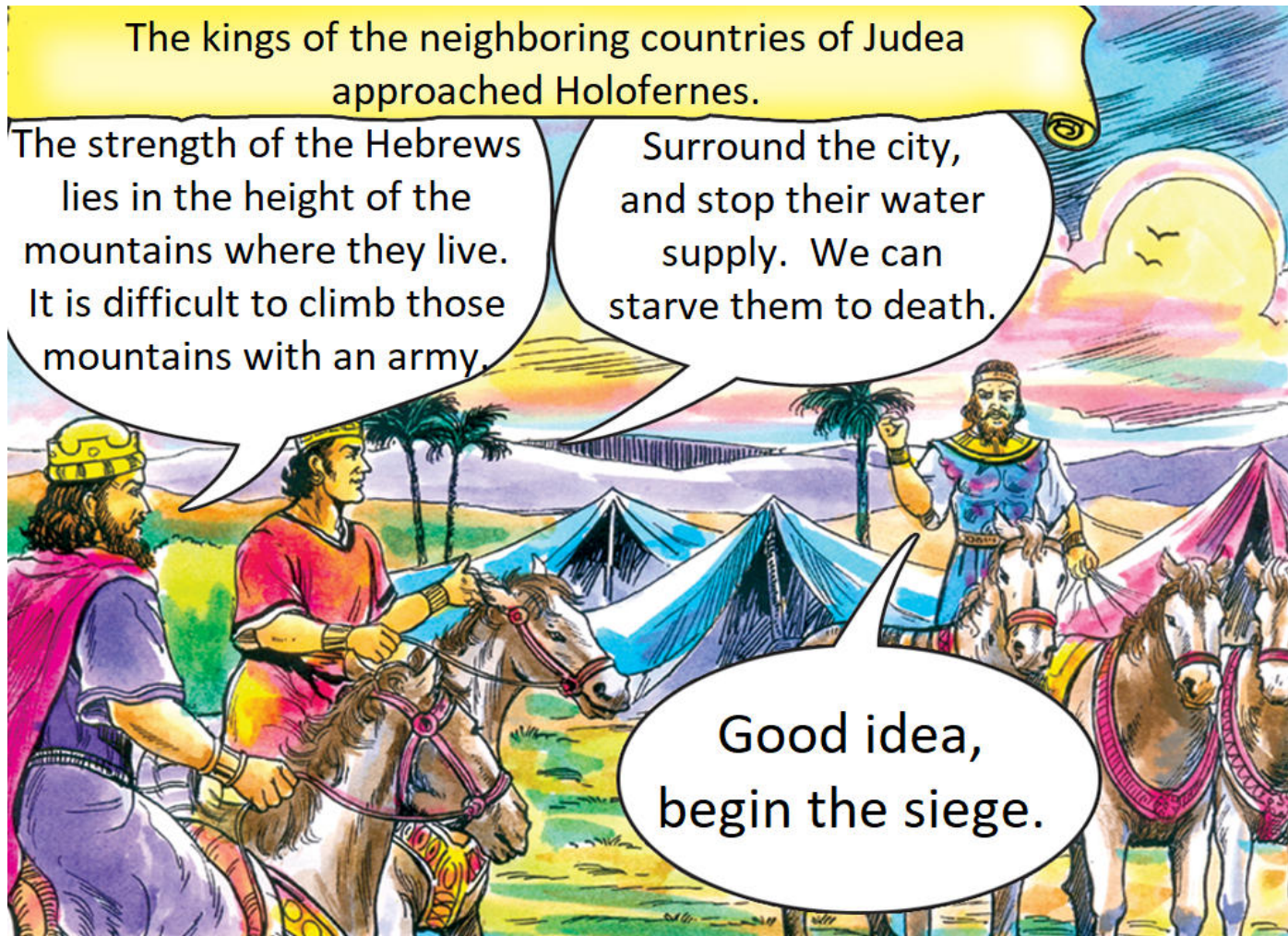


The kings of the neighboring countries of Judea approached Holofernes.

The strength of the Hebrews lies in the height of the mountains where they live. It is difficult to climb those mountains with an army.

Surround the city, and stop their water supply. We can starve them to death.

Good idea, begin the siege.



The siege continued for 34 days. The people of Bethulia began to lose heart. A meeting in the town.

We are running short of food. Not enough drinking water even for another day.

We should have made peace with the Assyrians long ago. We could have saved at least our lives.

No other way. Open the gates and surrender.

Surrender....  
Surrender...

!?





We must hold on, the Lord will save us. Ration out bread and water just enough to keep the people alive.

We have been doing that already for two weeks.





Let us hold on five more days.  
If we still don't get help, we  
shall do as you demand.



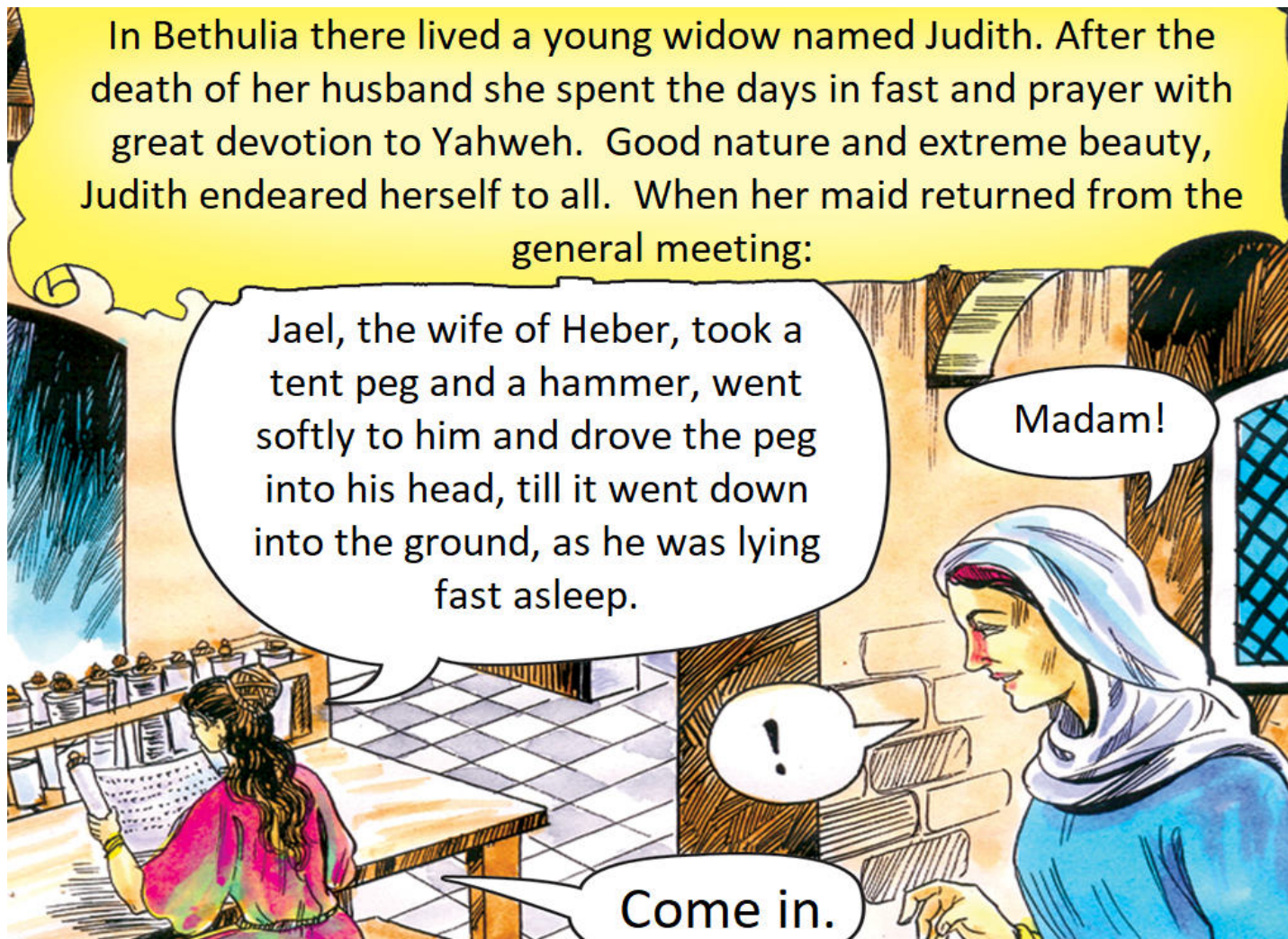
In Bethulia there lived a young widow named Judith. After the death of her husband she spent the days in fast and prayer with great devotion to Yahweh. Good nature and extreme beauty, Judith endeared herself to all. When her maid returned from the general meeting:

Jael, the wife of Heber, took a tent peg and a hammer, went softly to him and drove the peg into his head, till it went down into the ground, as he was lying fast asleep.

Madam!

!

Come in.

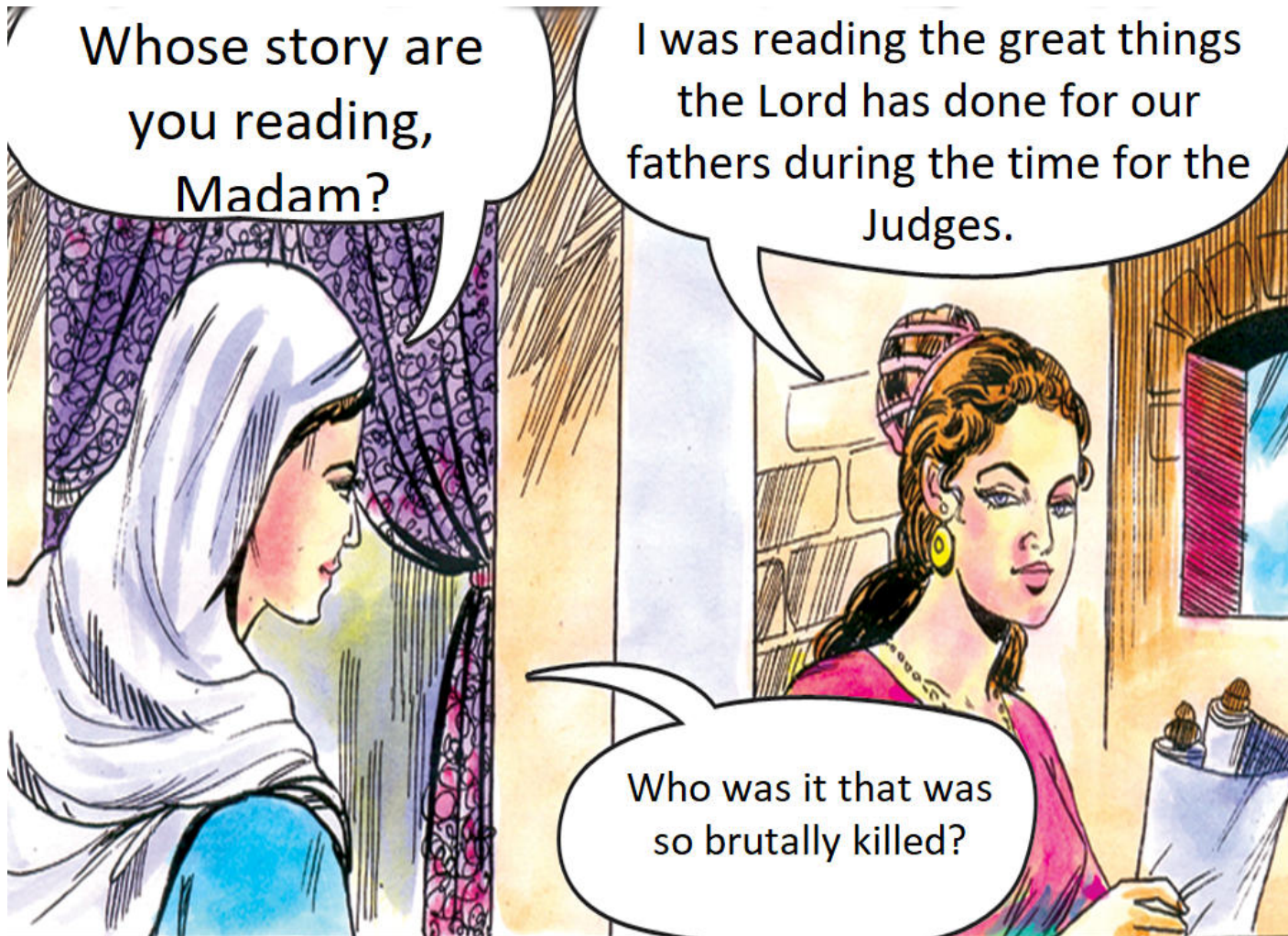




Whose story are  
you reading,  
Madam?

I was reading the great things  
the Lord has done for our  
fathers during the time for the  
Judges.

Who was it that was  
so brutally killed?



During the time Deborah, Jabin,  
the king of Canaan sent his  
commander in chief, Sisera,  
against Israel.





He had hundreds of chariots and thousands of soldiers, but was killed by a simple woman.

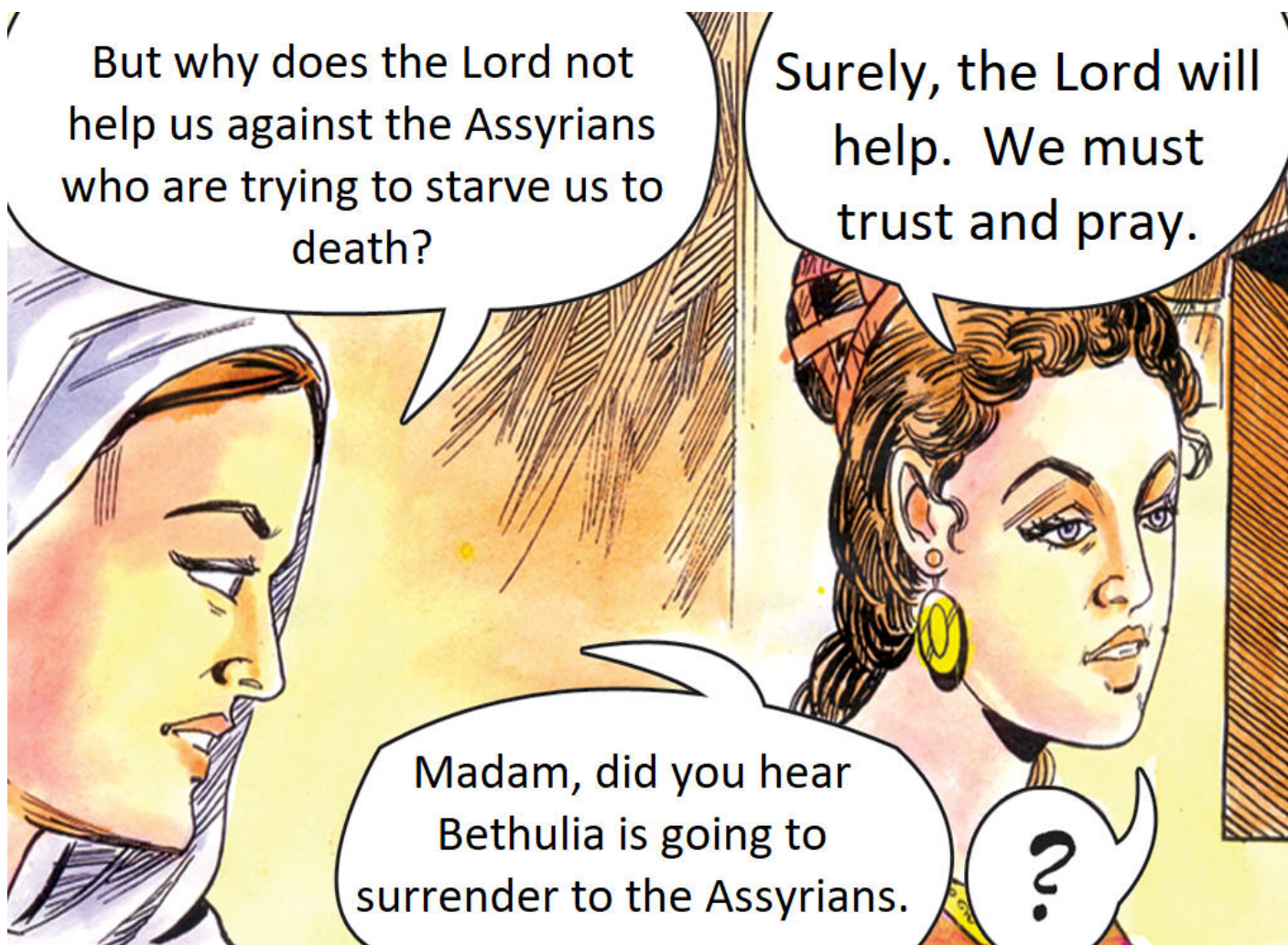


But why does the Lord not help us against the Assyrians who are trying to starve us to death?

Surely, the Lord will help. We must trust and pray.

Madam, did you hear Bethulia is going to surrender to the Assyrians.

?

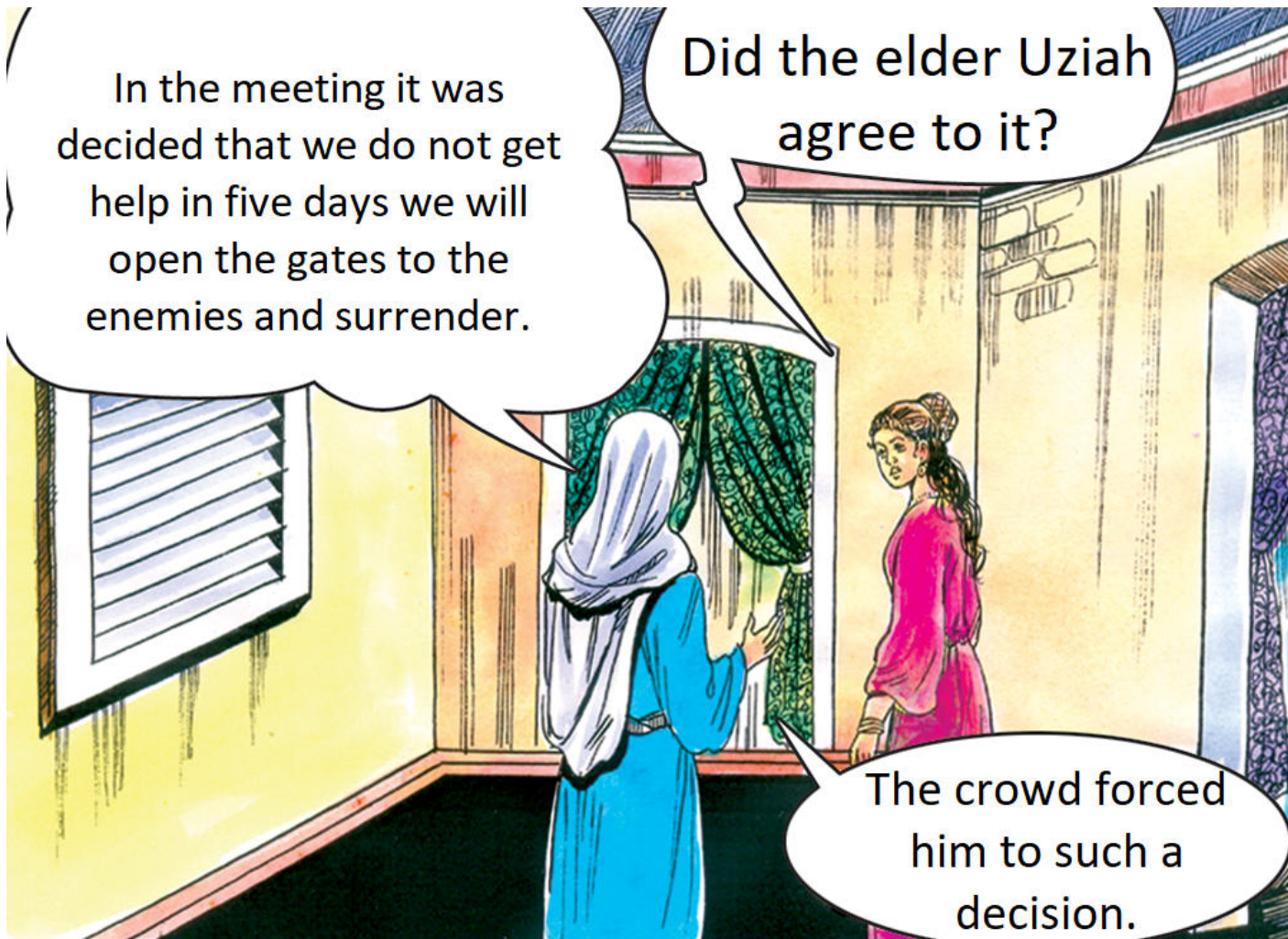





In the meeting it was decided that we do not get help in five days we will open the gates to the enemies and surrender.

Did the elder Uziah agree to it?

The crowd forced him to such a decision.





This is tempting the Lord.  
You to immediately and  
invite the elders to come  
here. We can't allow this to  
happen.

I wonder if they would  
change their mind.

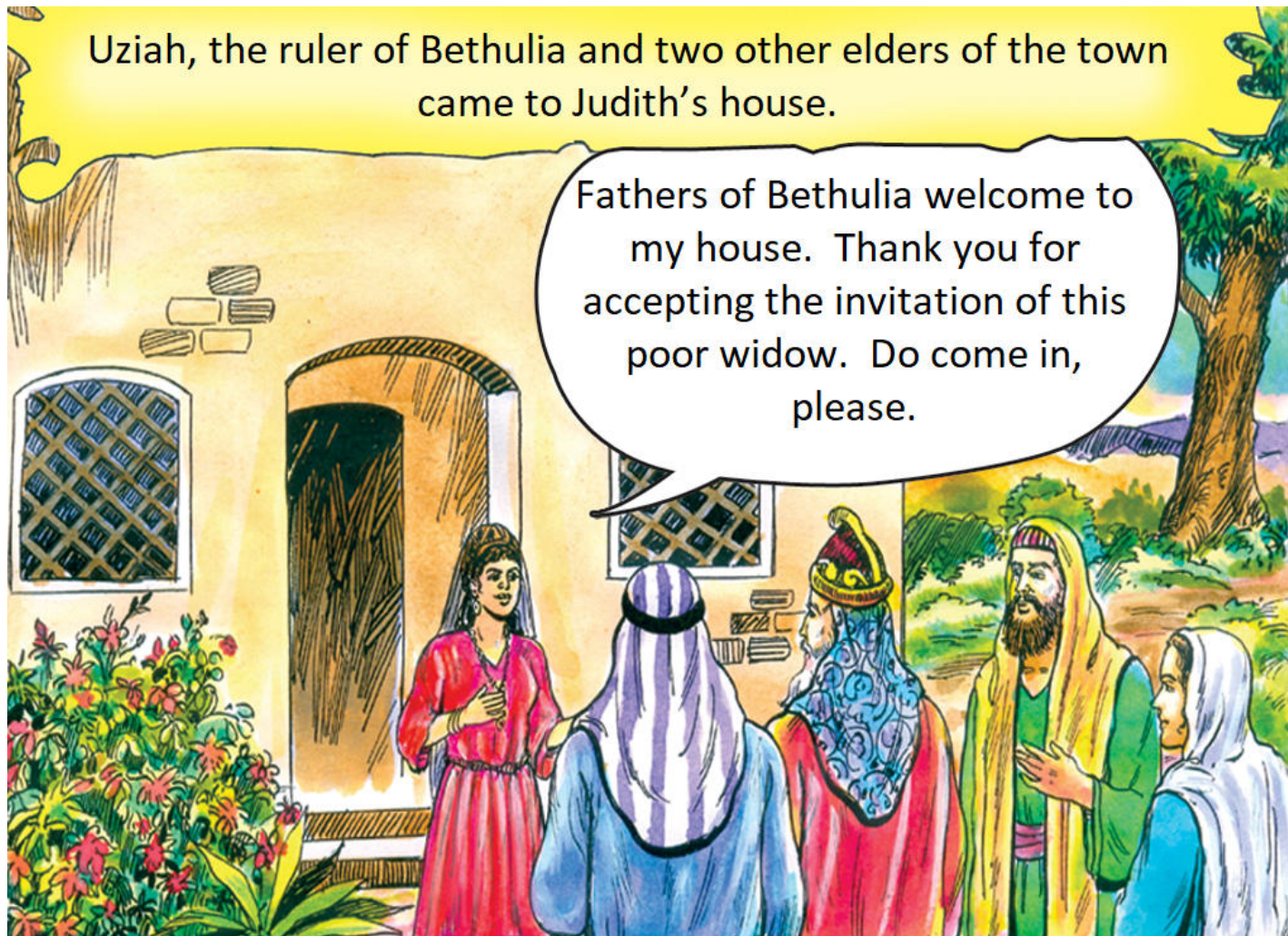


Lord God, look kindly  
upon us. Give me the  
wisdom to say the right  
things to the elders.  
Show me the way.



Uziah, the ruler of Bethulia and two other elders of the town came to Judith's house.

Fathers of Bethulia welcome to my house. Thank you for accepting the invitation of this poor widow. Do come in, please.

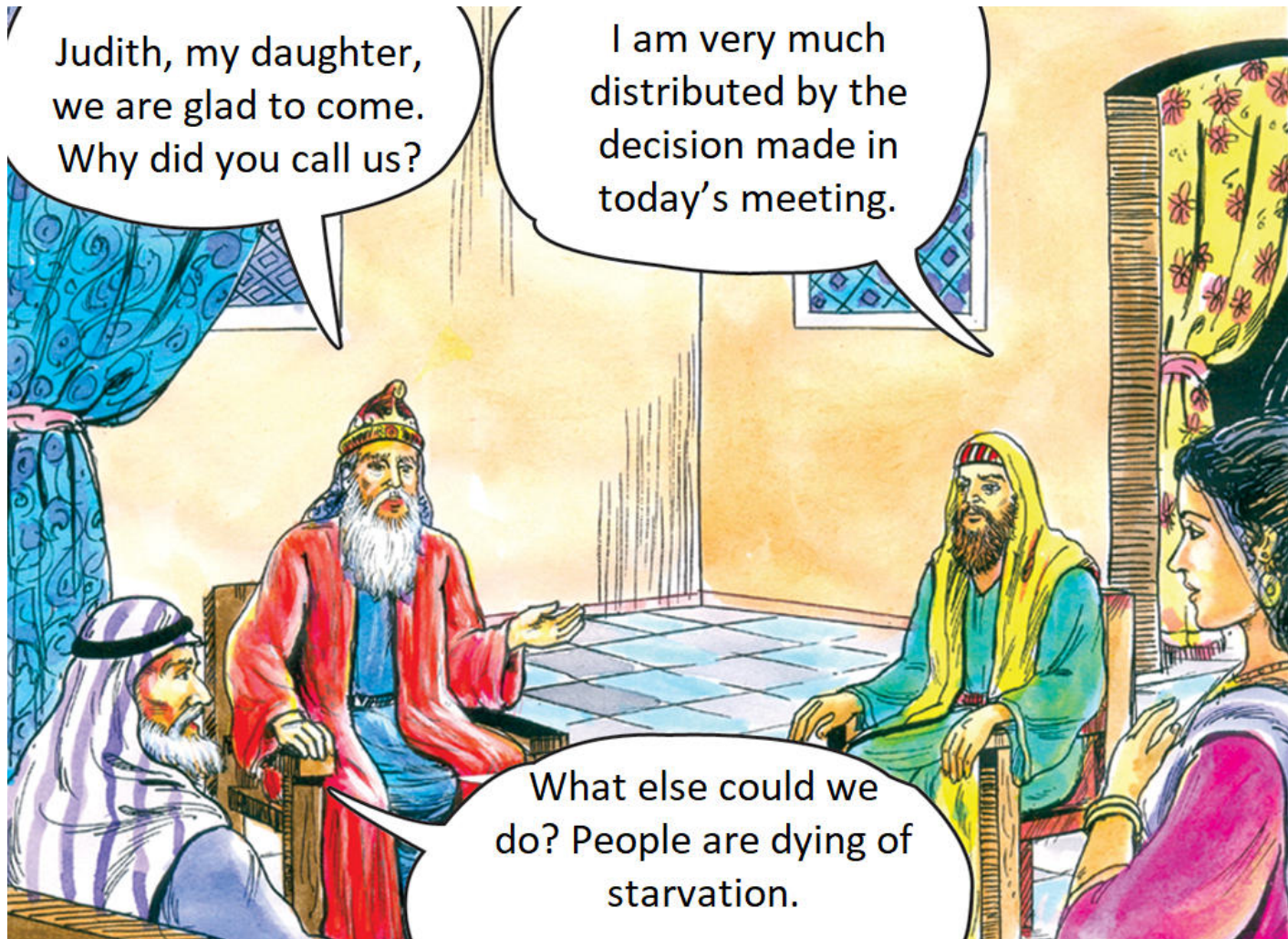




Judith, my daughter,  
we are glad to come.  
Why did you call us?

I am very much  
distributed by the  
decision made in  
today's meeting.

What else could we  
do? People are dying of  
starvation.



The decision is that we shall surrender in five days if the Lord does not send help to us. Is that right?

We had a hard time to persuade the people to hold out even five days more.





Who we are to set a  
time limit for the  
Lord? What if He  
decides to help us  
after five days?



What happened to our faith?  
Even you the elders seem to  
have forgotten the great things  
Yahweh has done for our  
Fathers.





If we surrender, the enemy will march to Jerusalem. We will be responsible for the destruction of the Holy city.



How can we save the town if we starve to death?

How do we know God's plan  
for us?

The Assyrian force is  
immense. If they just make  
one move our small  
Bethulia will collapse.





Have you forgotten what  
happened to Pharaoh  
and his mighty army in  
the Red Sea?

Not that we have  
forgotten, but  
shouldn't we use our  
heads?



We will never be able  
understand His ways  
through our reason and  
logic. He is testing our  
faith as He did to our  
Father Abraham.

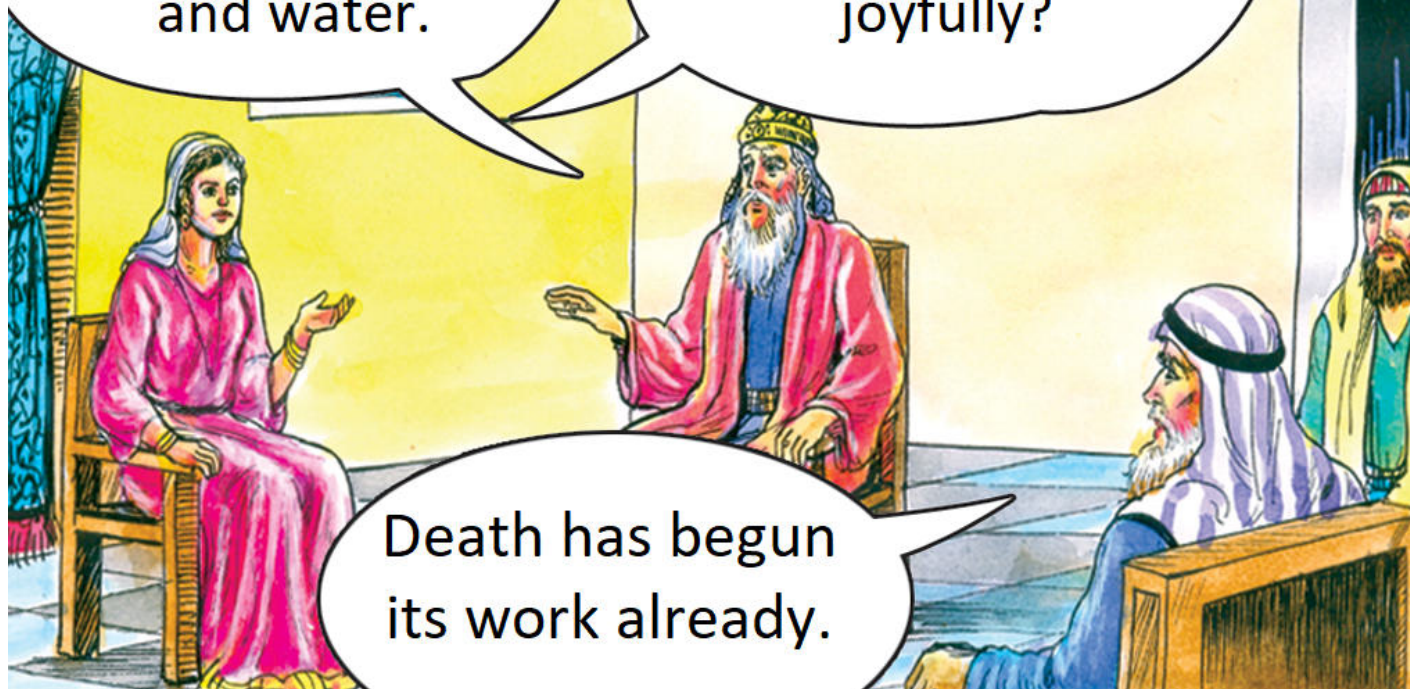





Daughter, your faith and wisdom are great. Through your prayer give us bread and water.

Again you are tempting the Lord. If He wants us to die, shouldn't we prepare even for that, joyfully?

Death has begun its work already.



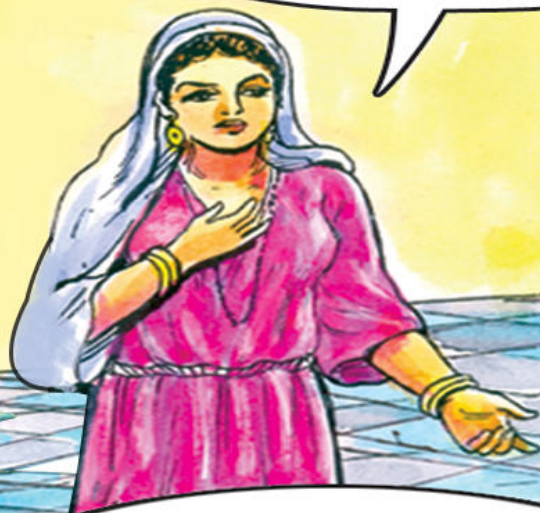
A comic book illustration featuring a man and a woman. The man, on the right, has a long white beard and wears a golden crown with red and blue jewels. He is looking towards the woman with a serious expression. The woman, on the left, has long brown hair and wears a white headscarf with a gold band and large gold earrings. She is looking back at the man. The background is a dark, stormy sky with grey clouds. Two speech bubbles are present: one from the man at the top and one from the woman in the middle.

We have promised the people. We  
can't go back in our word.

What about breaking the  
promise we made to the  
Lord through the  
Covenant?



Placing my life in the Lord's hands I am going to the enemy camp. Please open the gate for me tonight.



What are you up to?

Please don't ask me  
that now. The Lord  
will save us. Only do  
pray for me.

May the Lord, protect  
you and strengthen to  
carry out your  
mission.

May we go  
now?





When they left, Judith fell on her face and prayed.

Lord our God, you who  
liberated Israel from the hands  
of Pharaoh, hear the cry of  
your people and deliver us  
from the Assyrians.



Their arrogance is a challenge to  
your Holy Name. You are the  
protector of the weak and the  
liberator of the oppressed. Hear  
our prayer and deliver us...



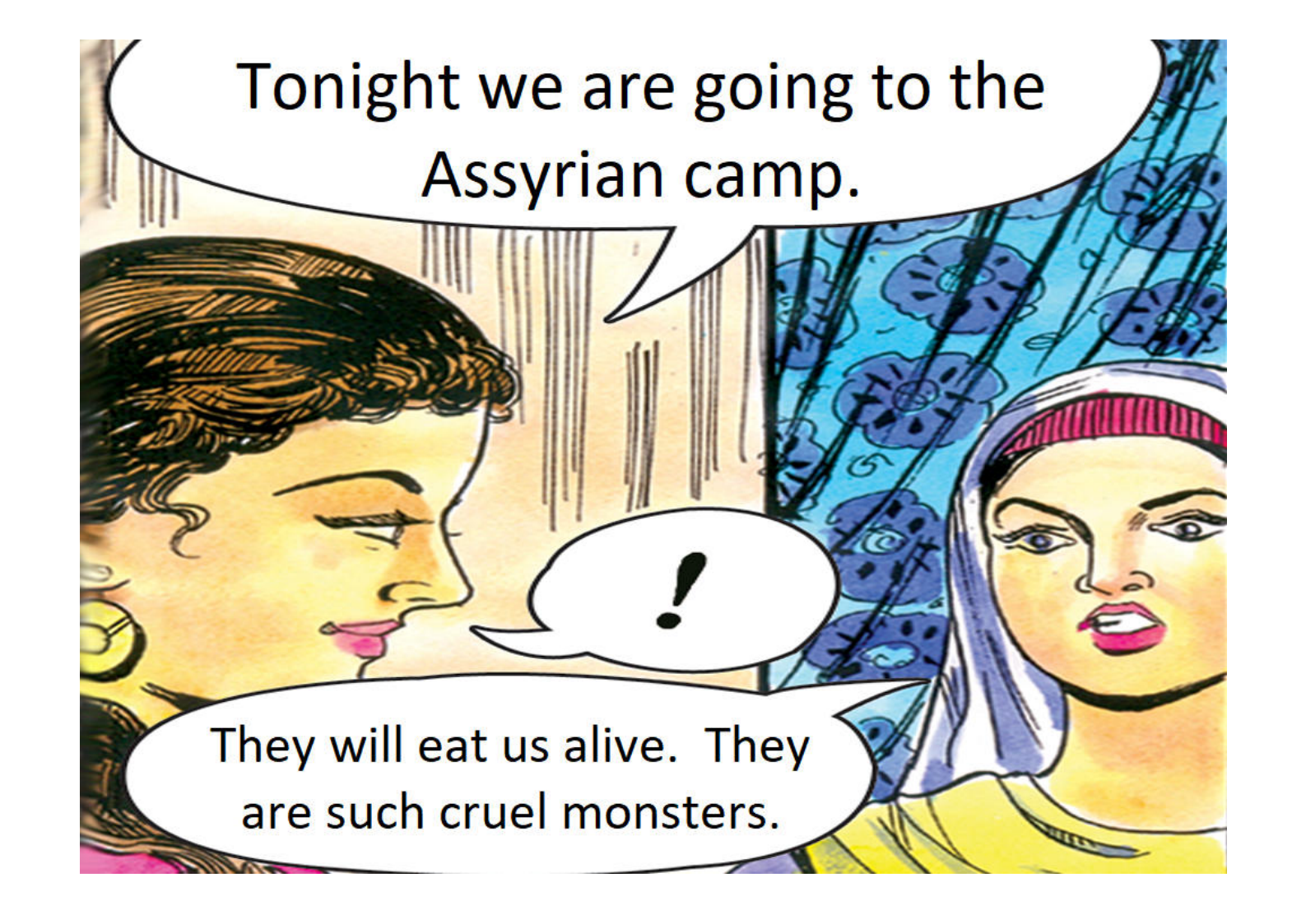


After her prayer Judith called her maid.

Prepare my bath, lay out the best clothes and then take some food in a bag.

Madam, are we going to run away?



A comic book illustration featuring two women. On the left, a woman with dark, curly hair is shown in profile, looking towards the right. On the right, a woman with a white headscarf and a red headband is looking towards the left. They are positioned in front of a blue curtain with a floral pattern. Three speech bubbles are present: a large one at the top, a small one in the middle, and a large one at the bottom.

Tonight we are going to the  
Assyrian camp.

!

They will eat us alive. They  
are such cruel monsters.



Don't be afraid. Do  
what I told you.

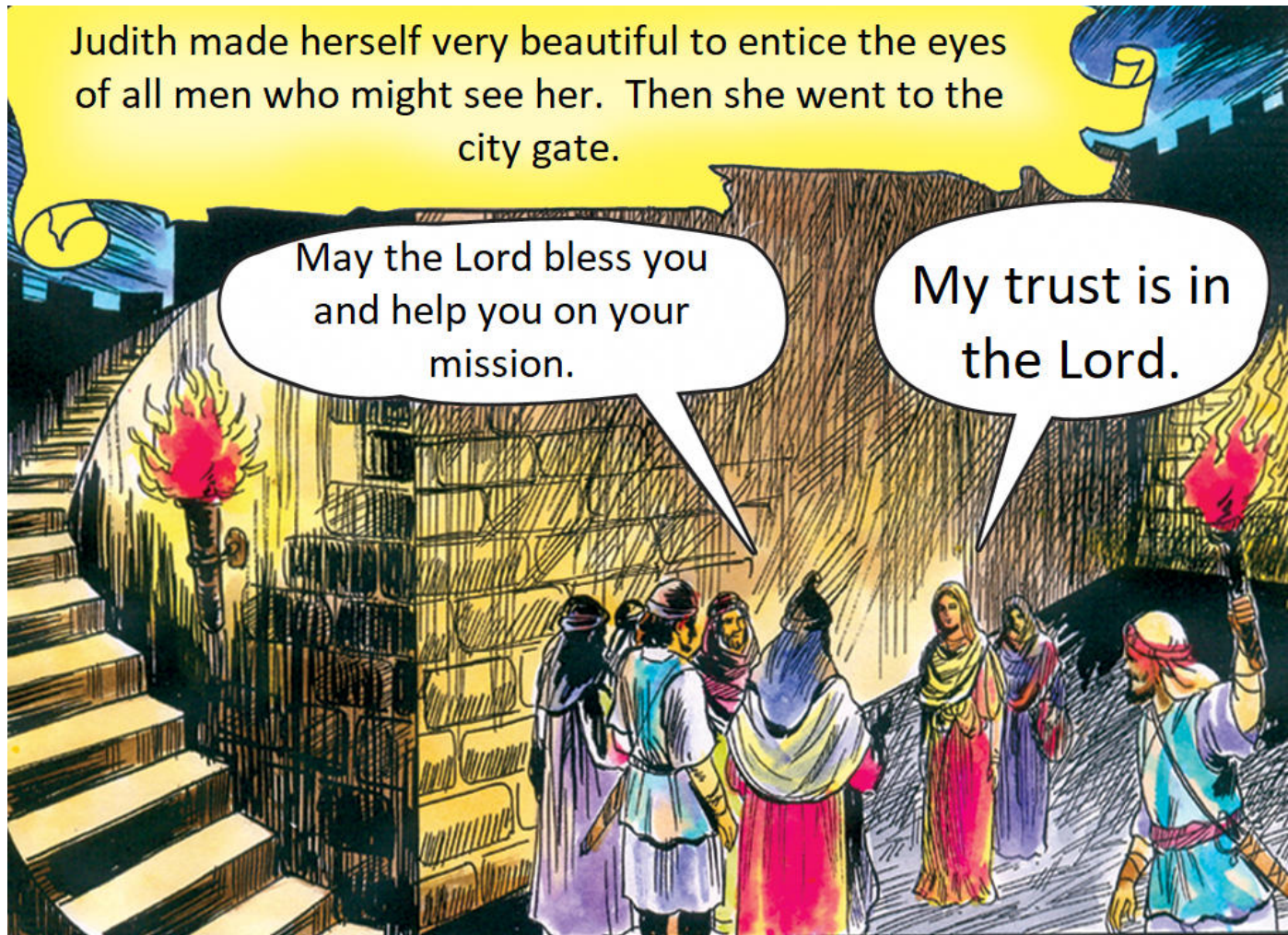
!?



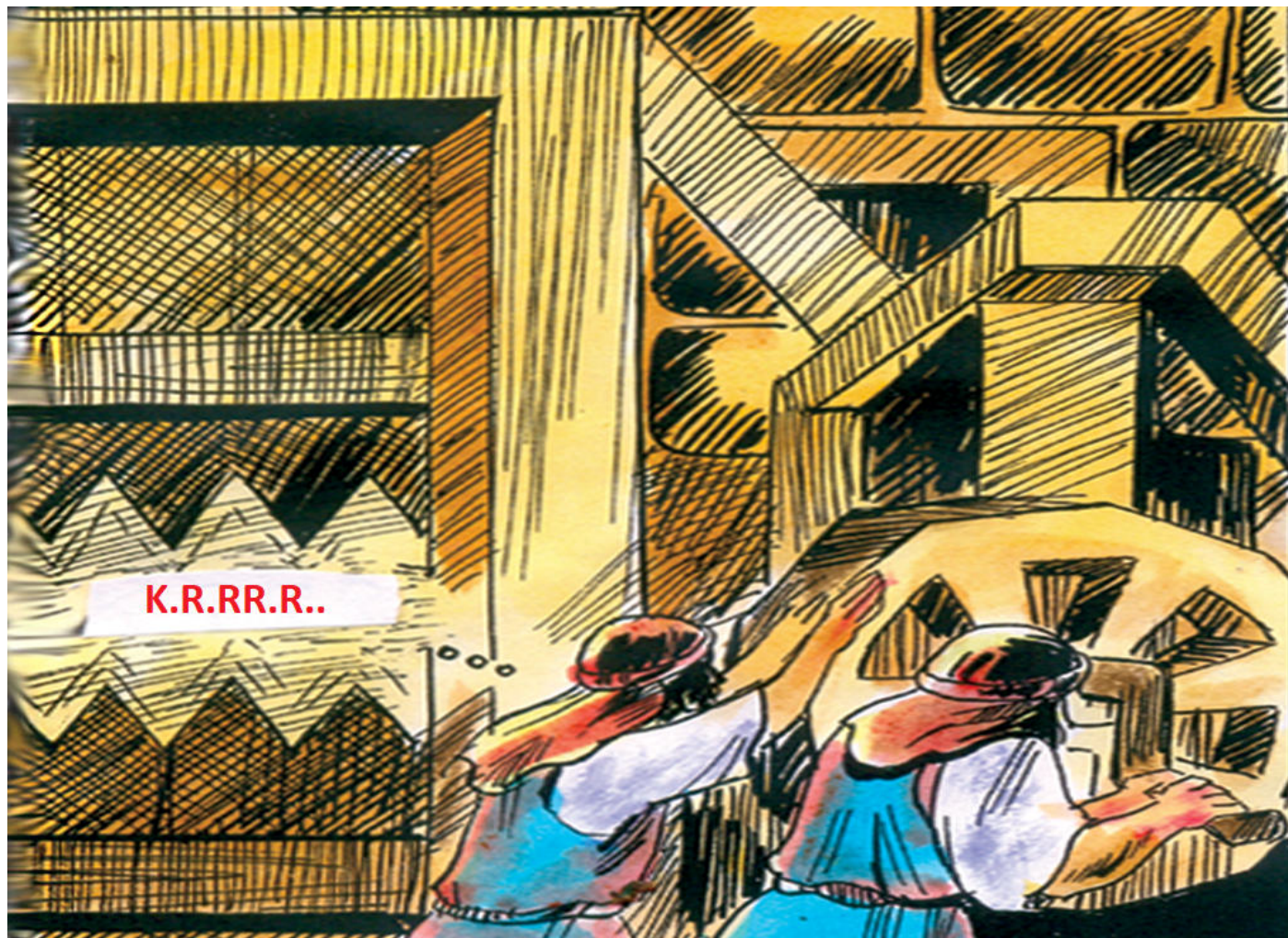
Judith made herself very beautiful to entice the eyes of all men who might see her. Then she went to the city gate.

May the Lord bless you  
and help you on your  
mission.

My trust is in  
the Lord.





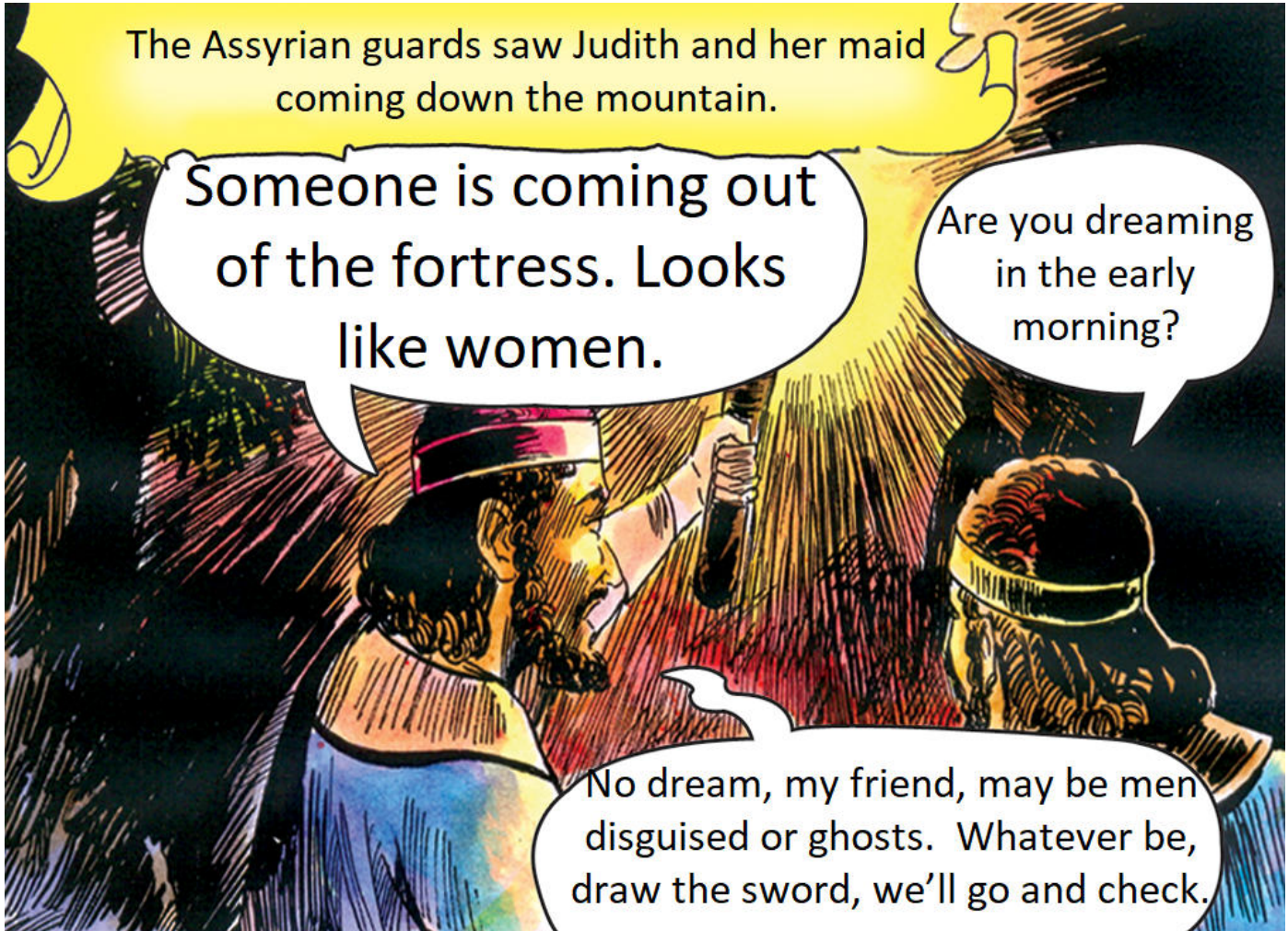


K.R.RR.R..







A comic book illustration depicting two Assyrian guards on a dark, rocky mountain at night. The guard on the left is shown in profile, wearing a blue tunic and a red headband, holding a sword. The guard on the right is seen from behind, wearing a brown tunic and a yellow headband. A bright yellow light source, possibly a full moon, is in the upper left corner, casting a glow over the scene. Three speech bubbles contain the dialogue.

The Assyrian guards saw Judith and her maid coming down the mountain.

Someone is coming out of the fortress. Looks like women.

Are you dreaming in the early morning?

No dream, my friend, may be men disguised or ghosts. Whatever be, draw the sword, we'll go and check.

Stop! Who are you? Where are you going?

Is this a woman or  
Goddess!

?

I'm a Hebrew woman.  
Bethulia is about to perish.  
We are escaping.





Take us to your  
commander Holofernes. I'll  
tell him how to capture the  
town without losing a  
single man.

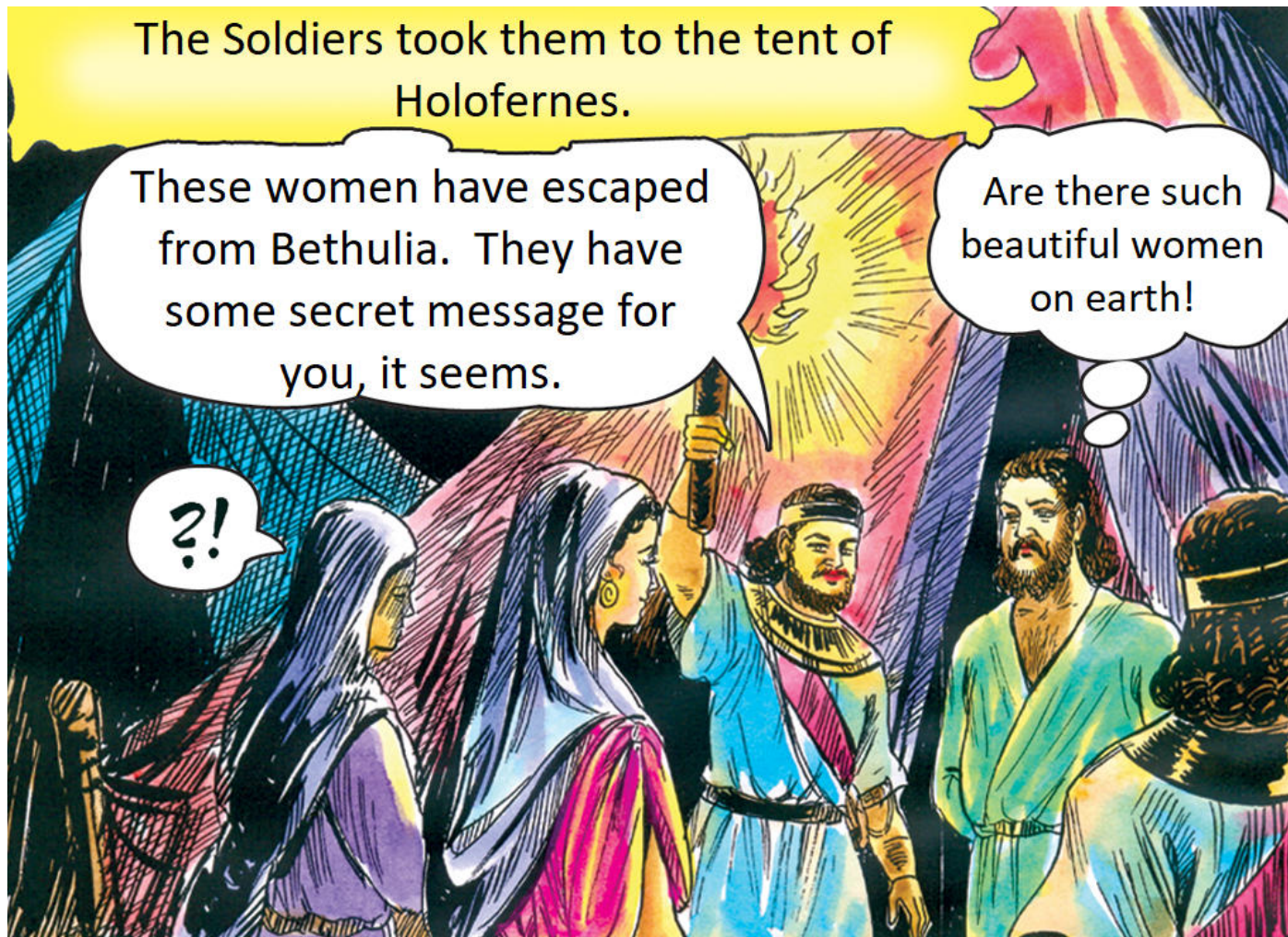


The Soldiers took them to the tent of Holofernes.

These women have escaped from Bethulia. They have some secret message for you, it seems.

Are there such beautiful women on earth!

?!



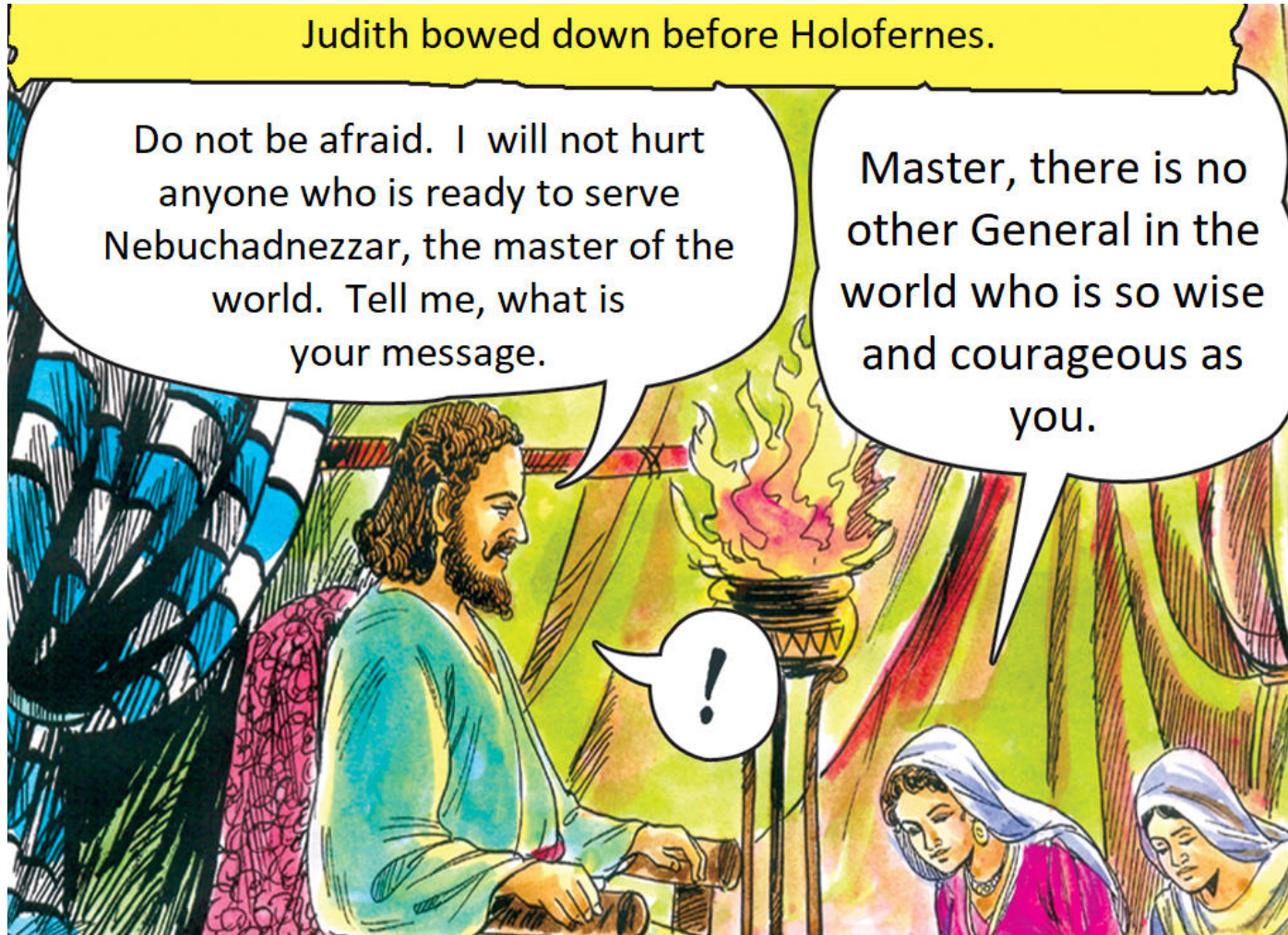


Judith bowed down before Holofernes.

Do not be afraid. I will not hurt anyone who is ready to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the master of the world. Tell me, what is your message.

Master, there is no other General in the world who is so wise and courageous as you.

!



Woman you are eloquent as well as elegant. Tell me, what is the matter?

We ran away from Bethulia. The town as well as the whole of Israel is about to be handed over to you.

!!





There is no food in Bethulia.  
They have decided to eat the  
consecrated bread, supposed  
to be eaten only by the priest.  
It is a grave sin.



I, your servant, am a devotee  
of the God of Heaven and  
earth. Every night I'll go into  
the valley to pray. When they  
have sinned, the Lord will  
reveal it to me.





I shall then inform your highness and  
you can march to Jerusalem through  
Bethulia. No one will resist you.



Right. Come in.

You can stay here. Here is  
some food and drink for you.

Please forgive me my  
Lord. We cannot eat  
that. We shall eat what  
we have brought  
with us.

!

What will you do when  
that is over?



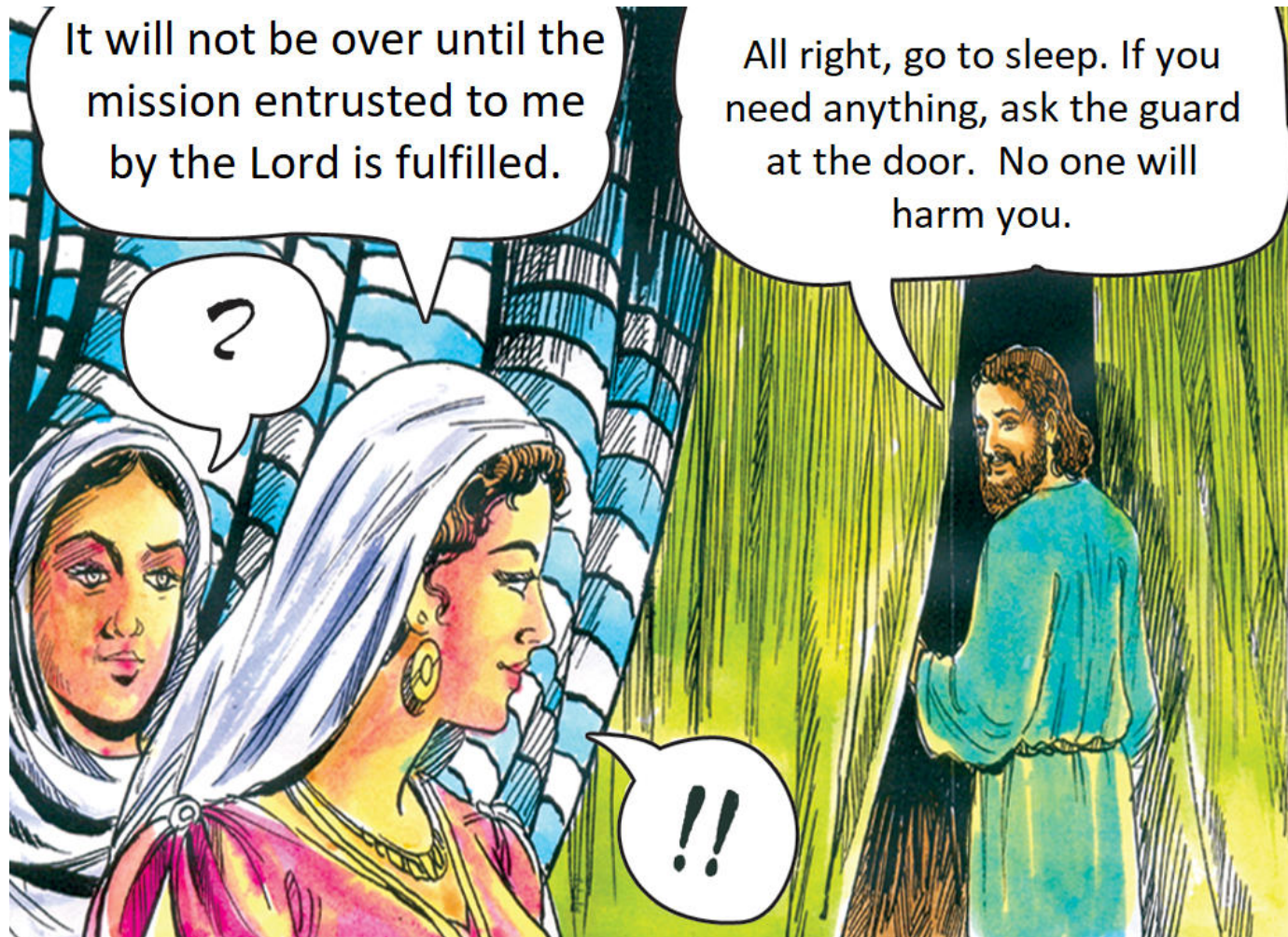


It will not be over until the mission entrusted to me by the Lord is fulfilled.

All right, go to sleep. If you need anything, ask the guard at the door. No one will harm you.

?

!!



They slept peacefully. In the early morning they woke up and sent the guard to Holofernes.

What do you want? Why did you wake me in the middle of the night?

Master, those Hebrew women want to go to pray!





Let them go if they want. Don't bother me with this anymore. I want to sleep.





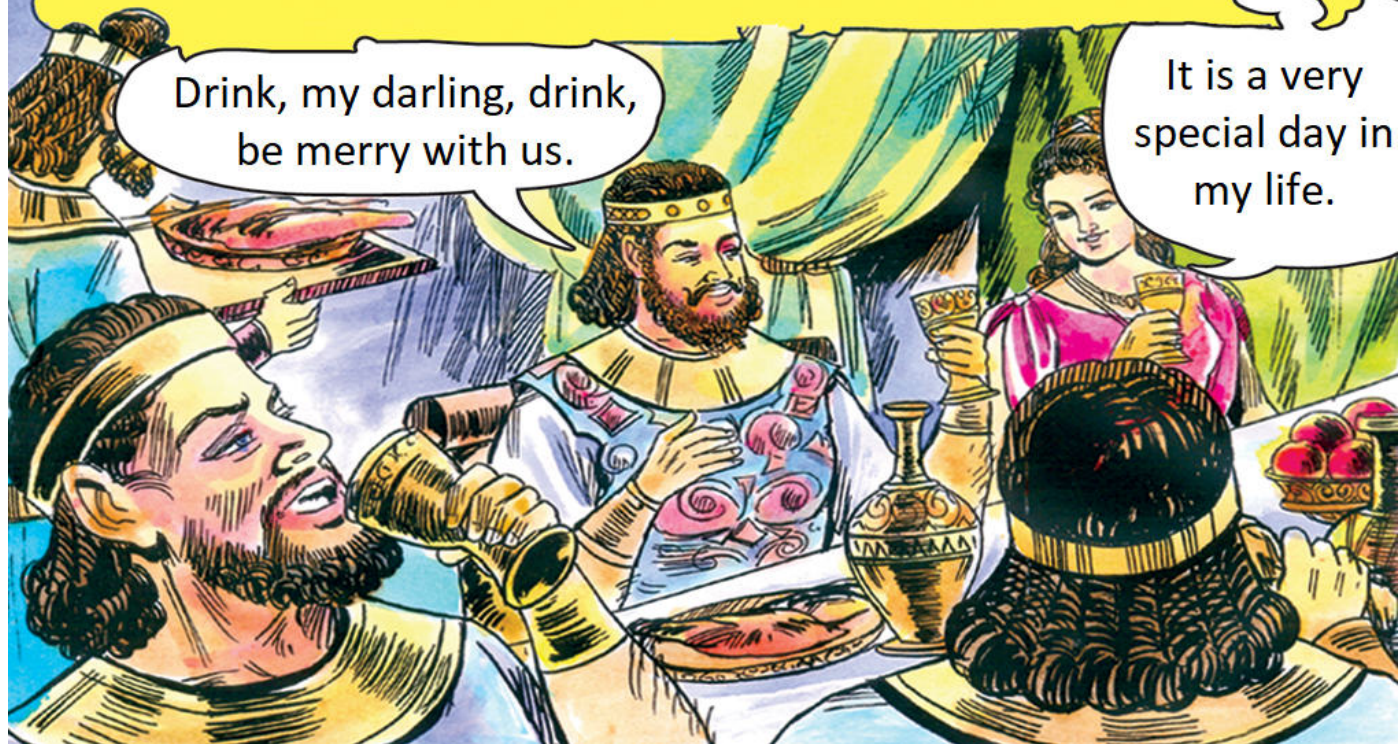




For three days they stayed in the camp. Before dawn they went for a bath and prayer. Nobody bothered them since Holofernes had ordered them to leave them alone. On the fourth day Holofernes gave a party.

Drink, my darling, drink,  
be merry with us.

It is a very  
special day in  
my life.





Late in the evening.

The party is over.  
Everybody can leave.

Judith, you and your  
maid will stay with  
me tonight.

We are  
honored.





Holofernes was fully  
drunk.

Come my  
love, come to  
me.

!?





Holofernes slept like a log.

This is the moment I  
had been waiting for.  
Lord my God,  
strengthen my arms.

Grr Gr r



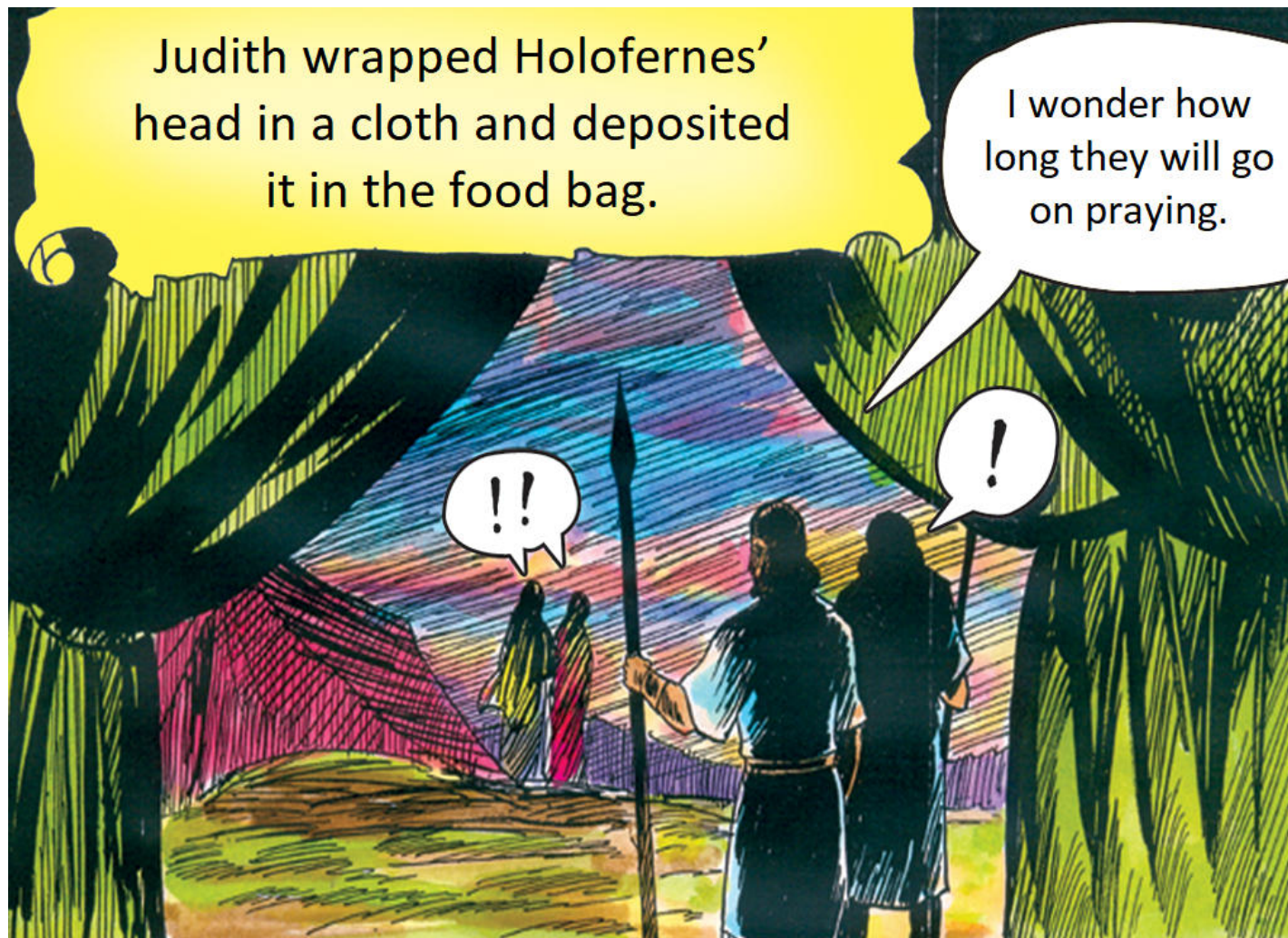






Judith wrapped Holofernes' head in a cloth and deposited it in the food bag.

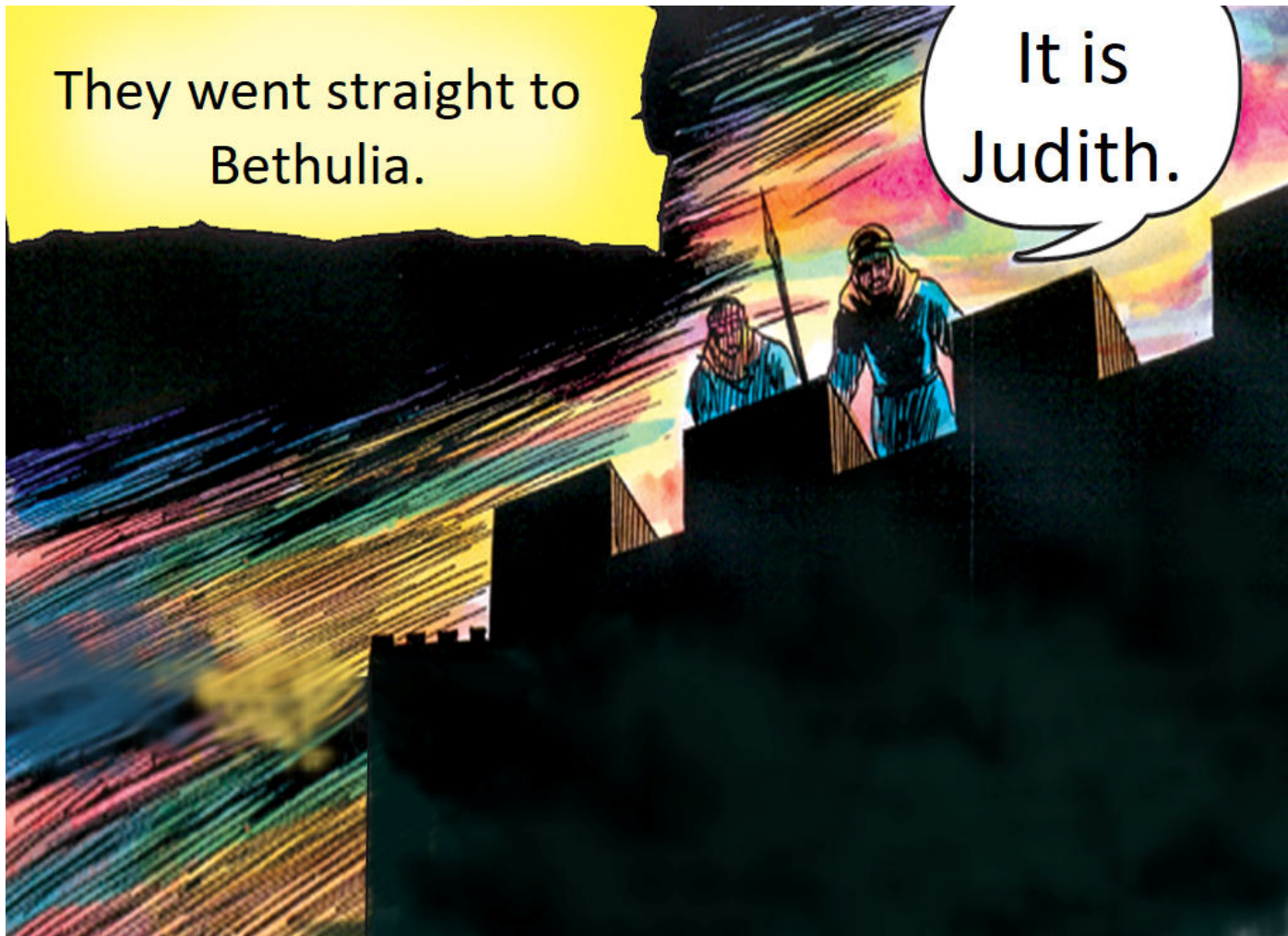
I wonder how long they will go on praying.





They went straight to  
Bethulia.

It is  
Judith.



They opened the gate for Judith. People gathered.

Praise the Lord! He has done away with the one who threatened to destroy us and dared to challenge God.

Thanks be to God daughter, your name will always be remembered in Israel.



The next morning the Bethulians attacked the Assyrian camp. Having no leader the Assyrian army was routed. Israel won the war.

## NEXT STORY

Gurilla warfare against Religious persecution.

# MACCABEUS



# QUESTIONS

1. Why did Nebuchadnezzar decide to destroy the neighbouring countries?
2. What was Bethulia's importance in the war?
3. What did Achior say about the Israelites?
4. What was the strategy Holofernes used to conquer Bethulia?
5. Explain the situation that forced Judith to go to the enemy camp.
6. How did Judith prepare herself for her mission?
7. Judith and her maid went out of the camp every night. For what?
8. Explain the circumstances under which the book of Judith was written.
9. Compare and contrast the stories of Jael and Judith.
10. What lesson did you learn from the story of Judith?

Memorize: "Yahweh is the help of the oppressed and support of the weak."

# 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