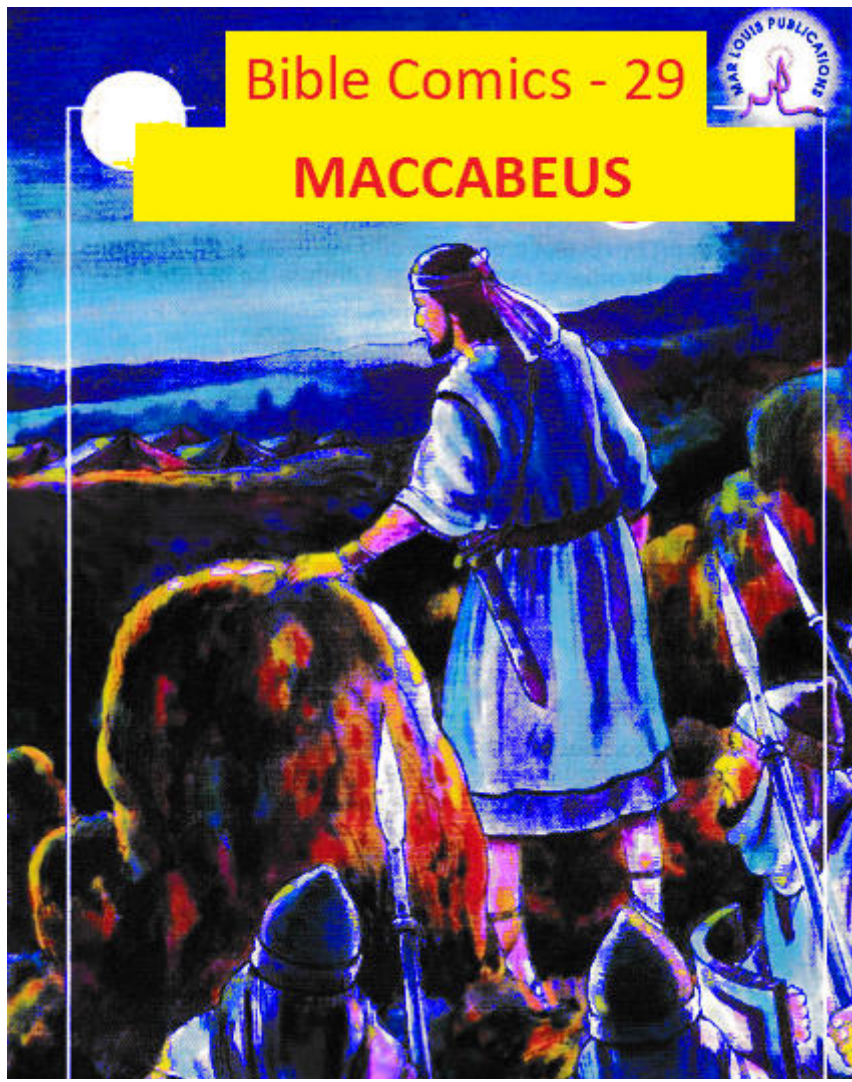


Bible Comics - 29



## MACCABEUS



# MACCABEUS

The present story depicts the epic struggle of the Jewish people against Hellenistic culture and imperialism that took place during the first half of the second century B.C. The story is based on 1+2 Maccabeus that cover a period of 40 years of Jewish history, namely, from the accession of Antiochus IV to the death of Simon, the last of the Maccabee brothers (B.C. 175-134). The Catholic Church considers these two books as part of the Bible, whereas the other Christian

denominations count them among the apocrypha.

When Antiochus IV ascended the throne, his empire was falling apart by revolutions inside and invasion of the Romans from outside. In order to strengthen the empire, he decided to unify all its peoples under the umbrella of Hellenistic culture. All other religions and cultures were banned. While the Jewish upper class welcomed and promoted this move, the

common people resisted it; a severe persecution followed.

The Jews who remained faithful to their traditions considered the Hellenistic innovations as opposed to Yahwistic religion. Accepting Hellenism was, for them, equivalent to rejecting Yahweh. Sacred books such as Daniel, Esther and Judith encouraged them to oppose Hellenism and to suffer persecution. Some of the more zealous Jews formed an association with the firm determination of obeying the Law of the Lord at



any cost. They called themselves “Chasidim” meaning “the pious ones” or “the loyalists”. Later on they came to be known as the Pharisees, meaning “the separated ones”.

However, not all the Jews were willing to suffer persecution passively. Popular anger was mounting against the foreign rulers and their Jewish supporters. In fact literature like “Judith” and the Chasidic movement were advocating violent resistance. When finally Mathathias, a priest from the town of Modein, Killed a Syrian

officer who was forcing the people to sacrifice pigs, and fled to the mountains with his five sons, the spark of revolt was lit. Judas, the third son of Matthathias, nicknamed Maccabeus, was the hero of this revolution.

The name Maccabeus derives from the Hebrew word 'Maccaba' meaning hammer. The Jews saw him as the hammer God used to crush Antiochus IV and the advance of Hellenism. Maccabeus was a man of deep faith and prayer. In every adversity he turned to Yahweh in prayer.

It was from his faith in the Lord that he drew strength and inspired confidence in his followers. He took up arms only when no other alternative was left to preserve religious freedom and national independence. Judas believed it his sacred duty to fight against the oppressor, and death in battle he considered a sacrifice offered to God. Maccabeus is a model of courage that derives from faith in Yahweh.



Bible Comics - 29

# MACCABEUS

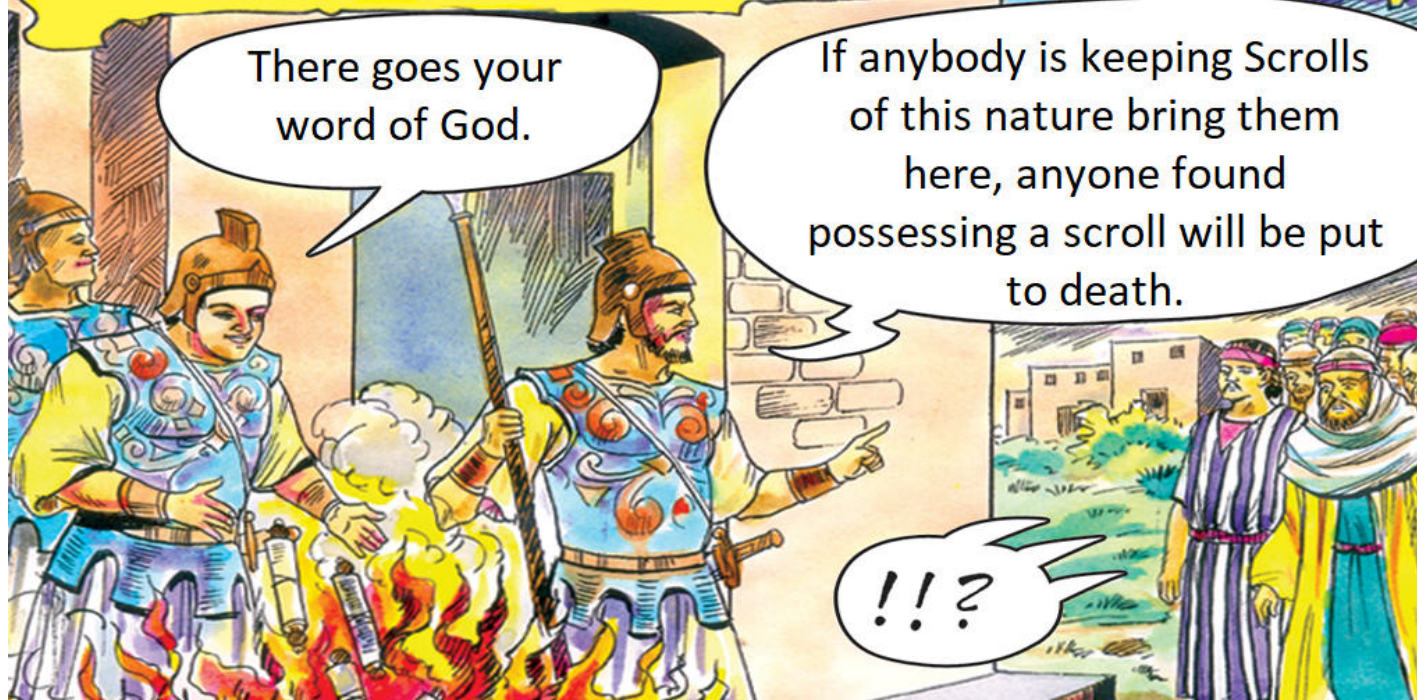
Script:

Rev. Dr. Michael Karimattam

Illustration:

Devassy & Benny

B.C. 167 Antiochus IV, king of Syria, placed a statue of Zeus in the Temple of Jerusalem and forced people to offer sacrifices for the king before it. The Jews were forbidden to practice their religion, keeping copies of the Bible was declared a crime deserving Capital punishment. Scrolls of the Bible were burned in public squares.





Some mothers circumcised their sons against the Royal command. Those boys were hanged on their mother's neck.

Kill me  
too.

All will be  
killed in the  
market place.

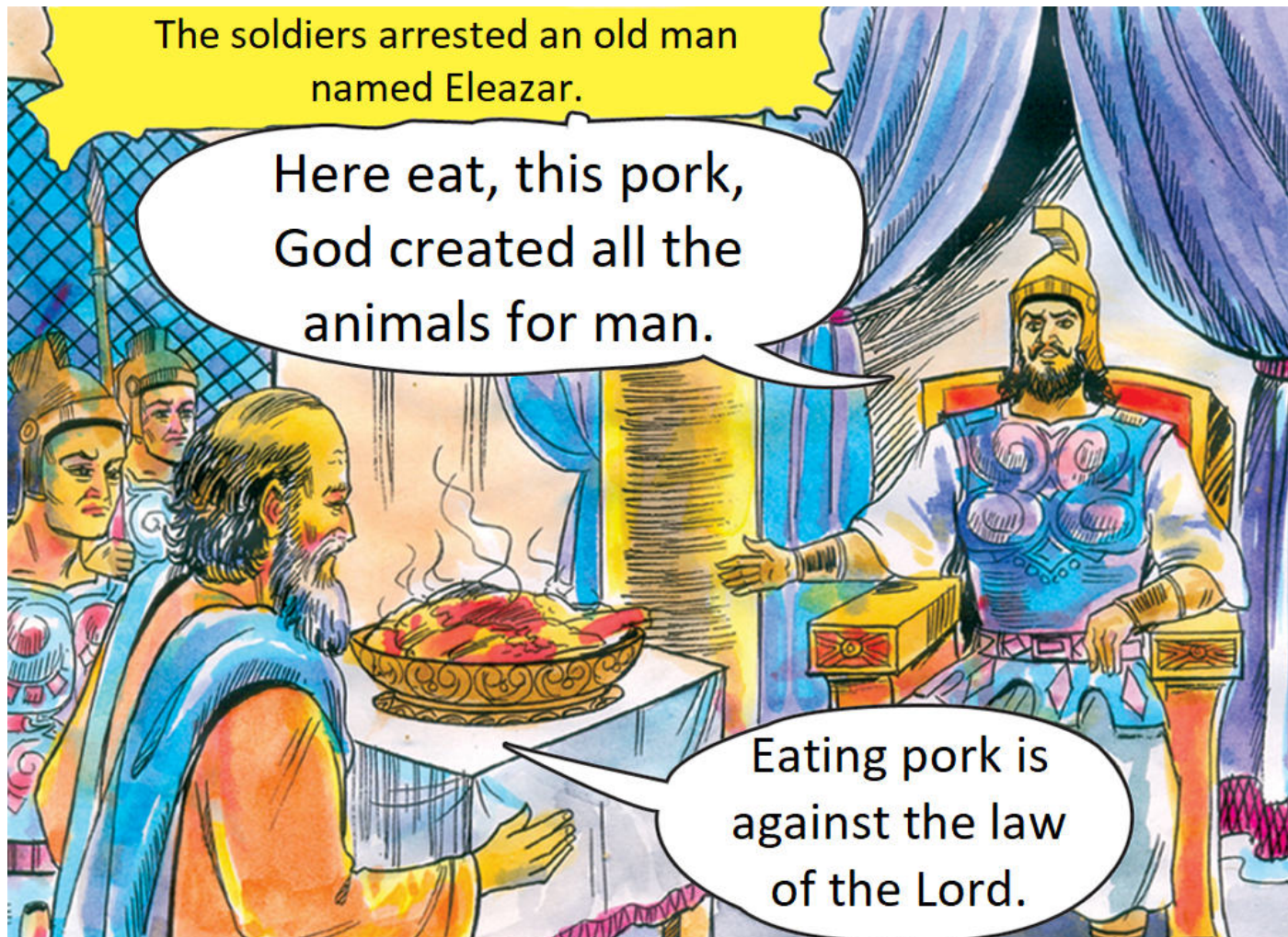




The soldiers arrested an old man  
named Eleazar.

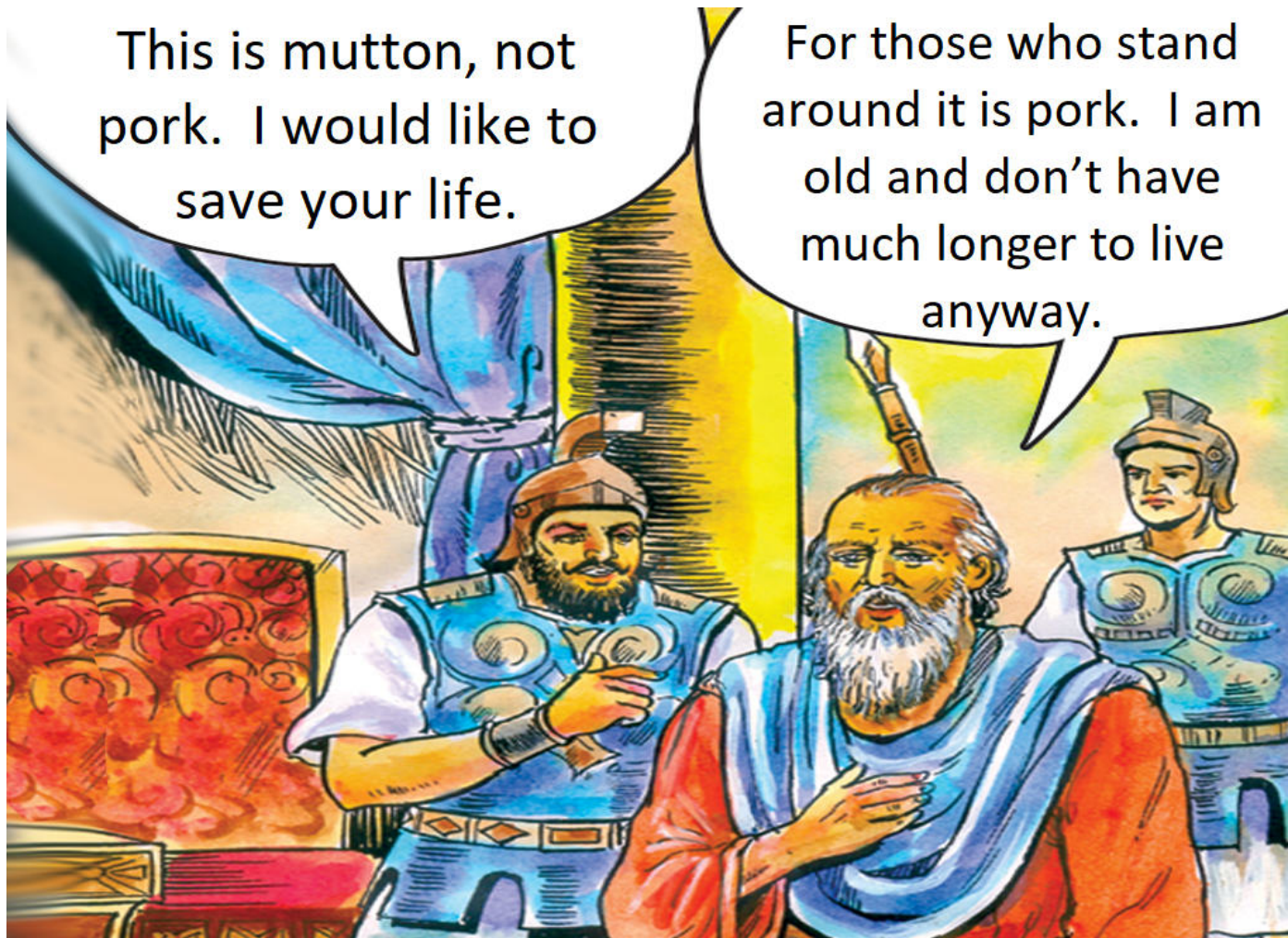
Here eat, this pork,  
God created all the  
animals for man.

Eating pork is  
against the law  
of the Lord.



This is mutton, not  
pork. I would like to  
save your life.

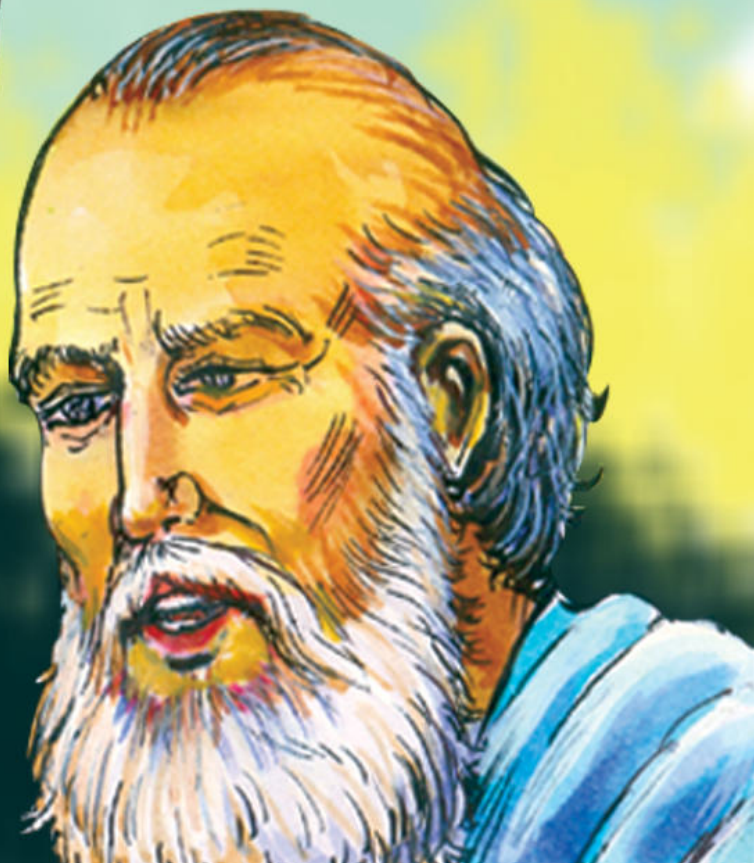
For those who stand  
around it is pork. I am  
old and don't have  
much longer to live  
anyway.



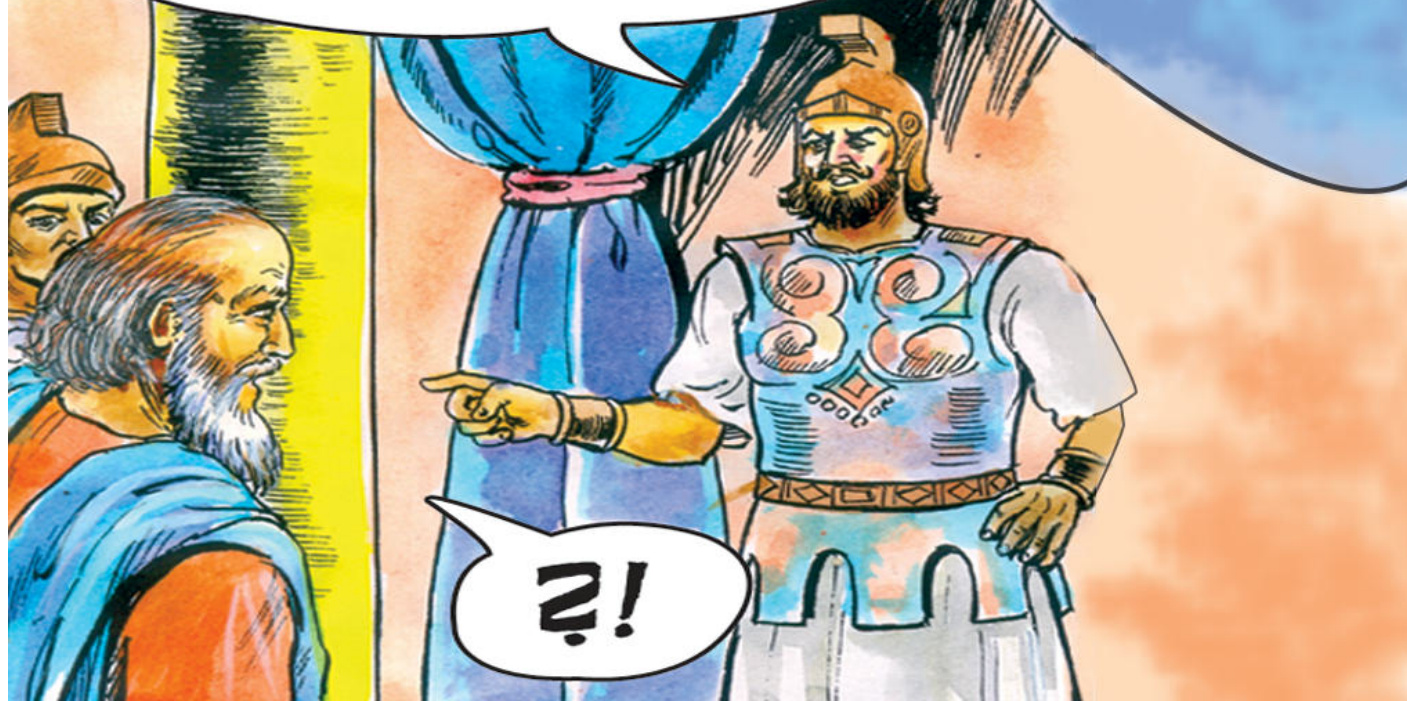


If I eat it now, it will be a scandal to the youngsters.

The law of the Lord is more precious to me than life itself.



I thought I'd respect your age... pull out his tongue. Let them all see what happens when one breaks the Royal Command.





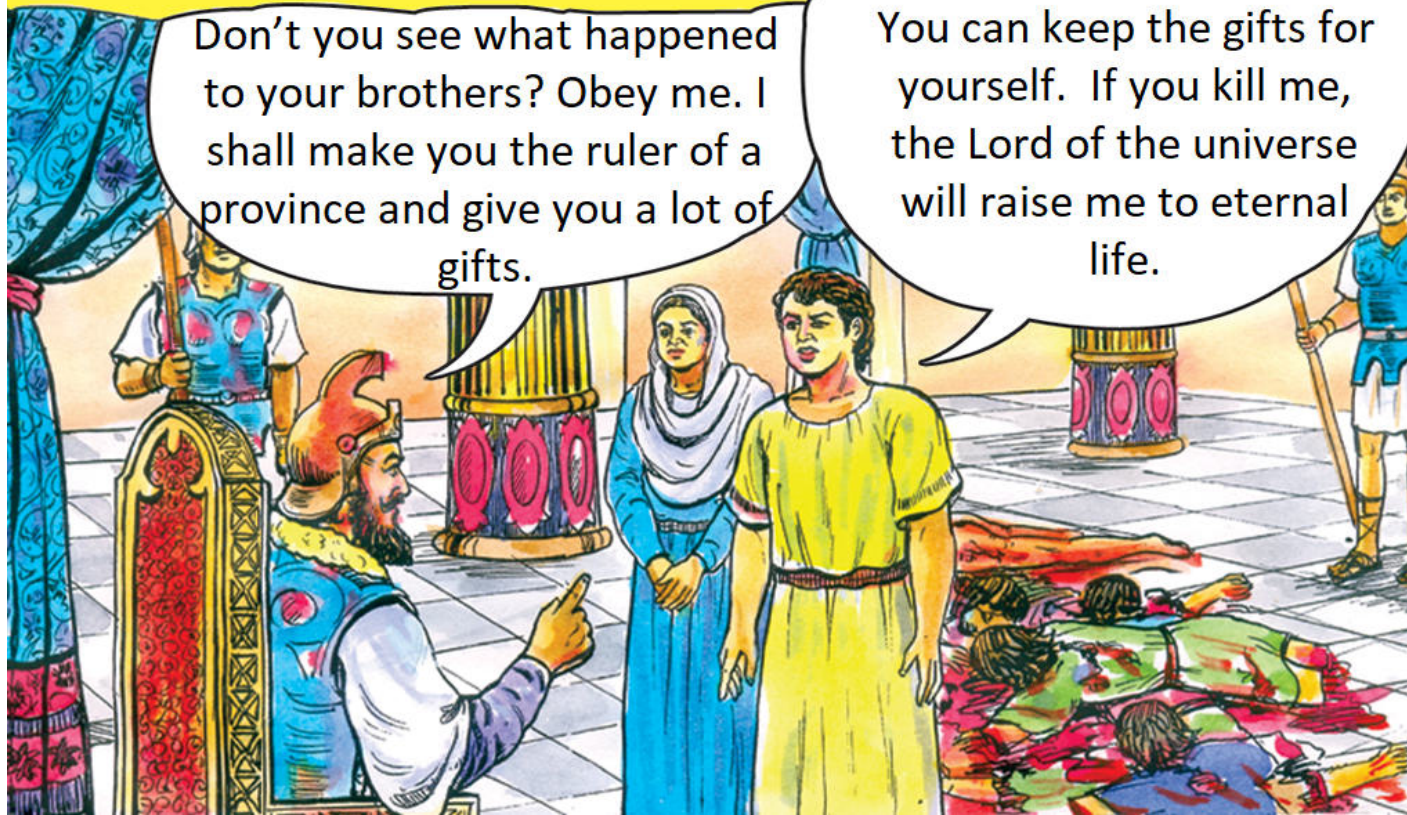




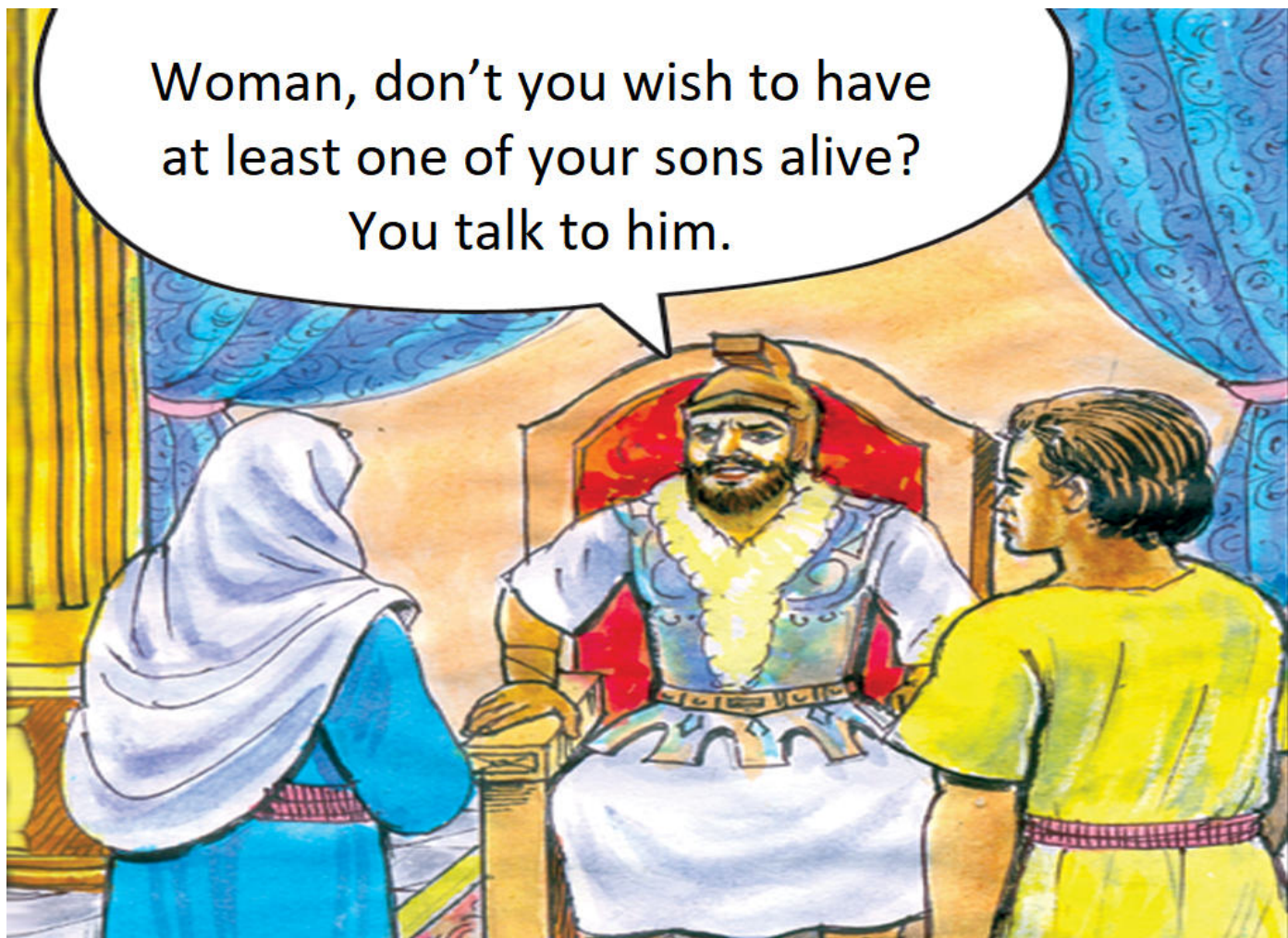
A mother and her seven sons were compelled to eat pork. As they refused to eat, each one was tortured to death. At the end the mother and youngest son were left.

Don't you see what happened to your brothers? Obey me. I shall make you the ruler of a province and give you a lot of gifts.

You can keep the gifts for yourself. If you kill me, the Lord of the universe will raise me to eternal life.



Woman, don't you wish to have  
at least one of your sons alive?  
You talk to him.





My son, remember the Lord  
who created heaven and earth.  
Be brave and welcome a heroic  
death. May I get to see you in  
heaven.



Believing in the resurrection, the youngest one  
and at last the mother also died.

There was a priest called Mattathias. He lived in Modien, a town north of Jerusalem, with his wife and five sons. He belonged to the tribe of Levi, and the house Hasmoneus.



John



Simeon



Judas Maccabeus



Eleazar



Jonathan



How long are we going to watch the massacre and do nothing?

If you die for the law, die fighting for it. If you men do not take up arms, I will as Judith did.

I was waiting for an opportunity.

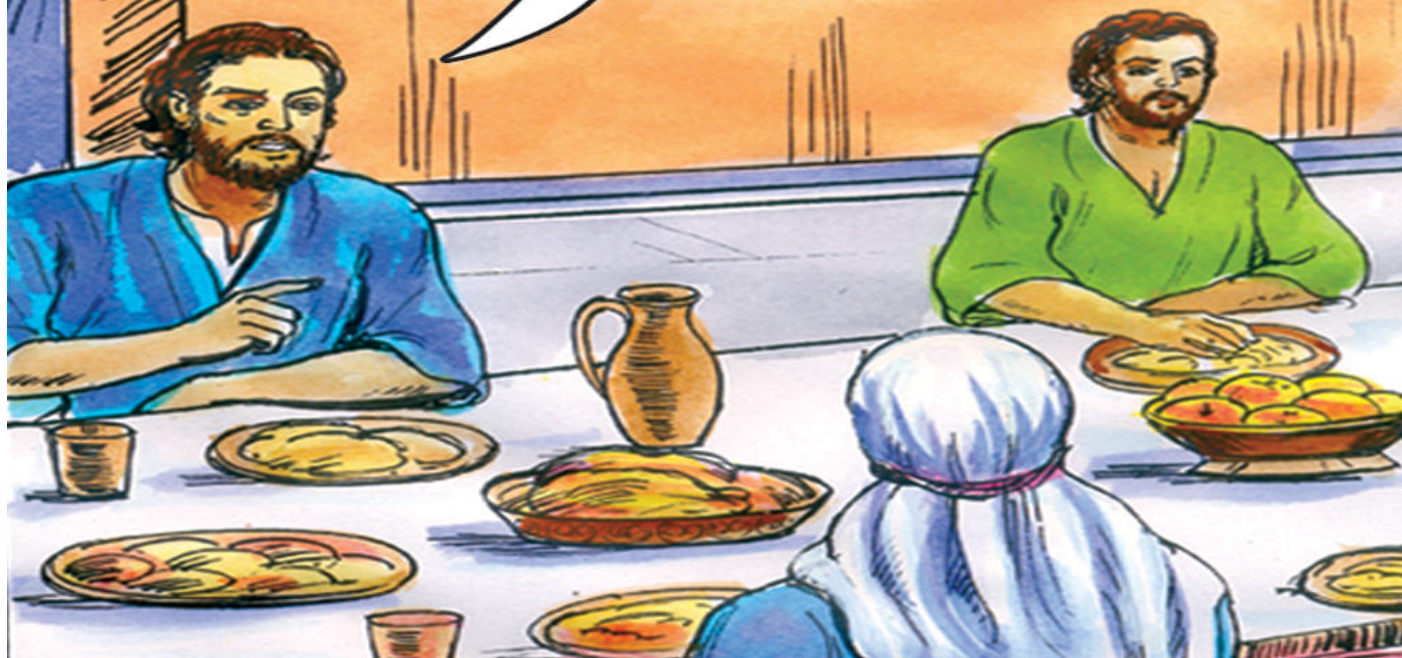




I won't just stand there  
watching like the mothers  
of seven boys slaughtered.  
If your time has not come,  
my time has.



There is no heroism in allowing ourselves to be butchered like animals. They'll just laugh at us.





We shall be together in life and death.

Today the king's officer is coming to the town.

Don't allow him to sacrifice pigs.

We shall be together in life and death.

Today the king's officer is coming to the town.

Don't allow him to sacrifice pigs.

We shall be together in life and death.

Today the king's officer is coming to the town.

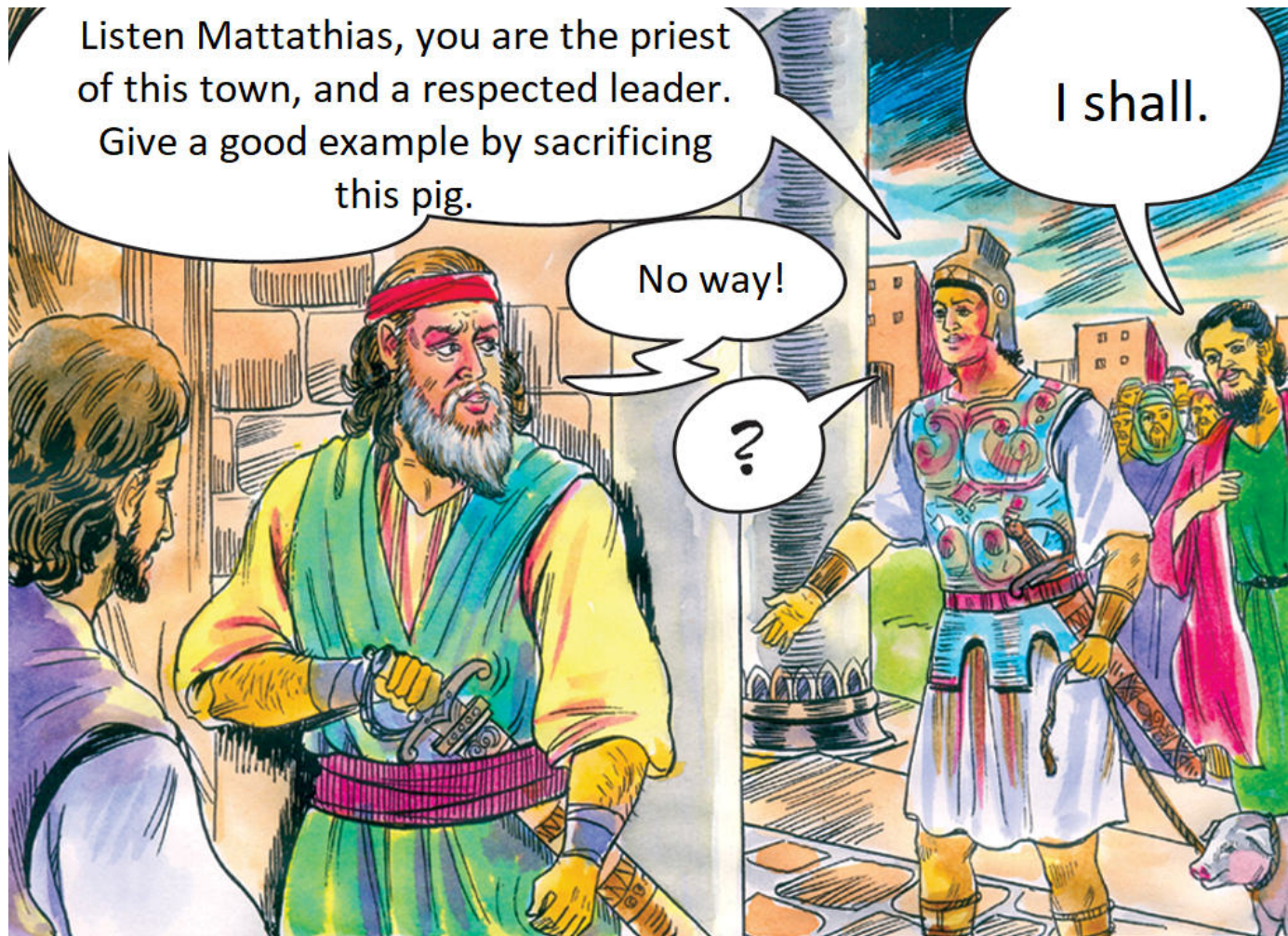
Don't allow him to sacrifice pigs.

Listen Mattathias, you are the priest of this town, and a respected leader. Give a good example by sacrificing this pig.

I shall.

No way!

?

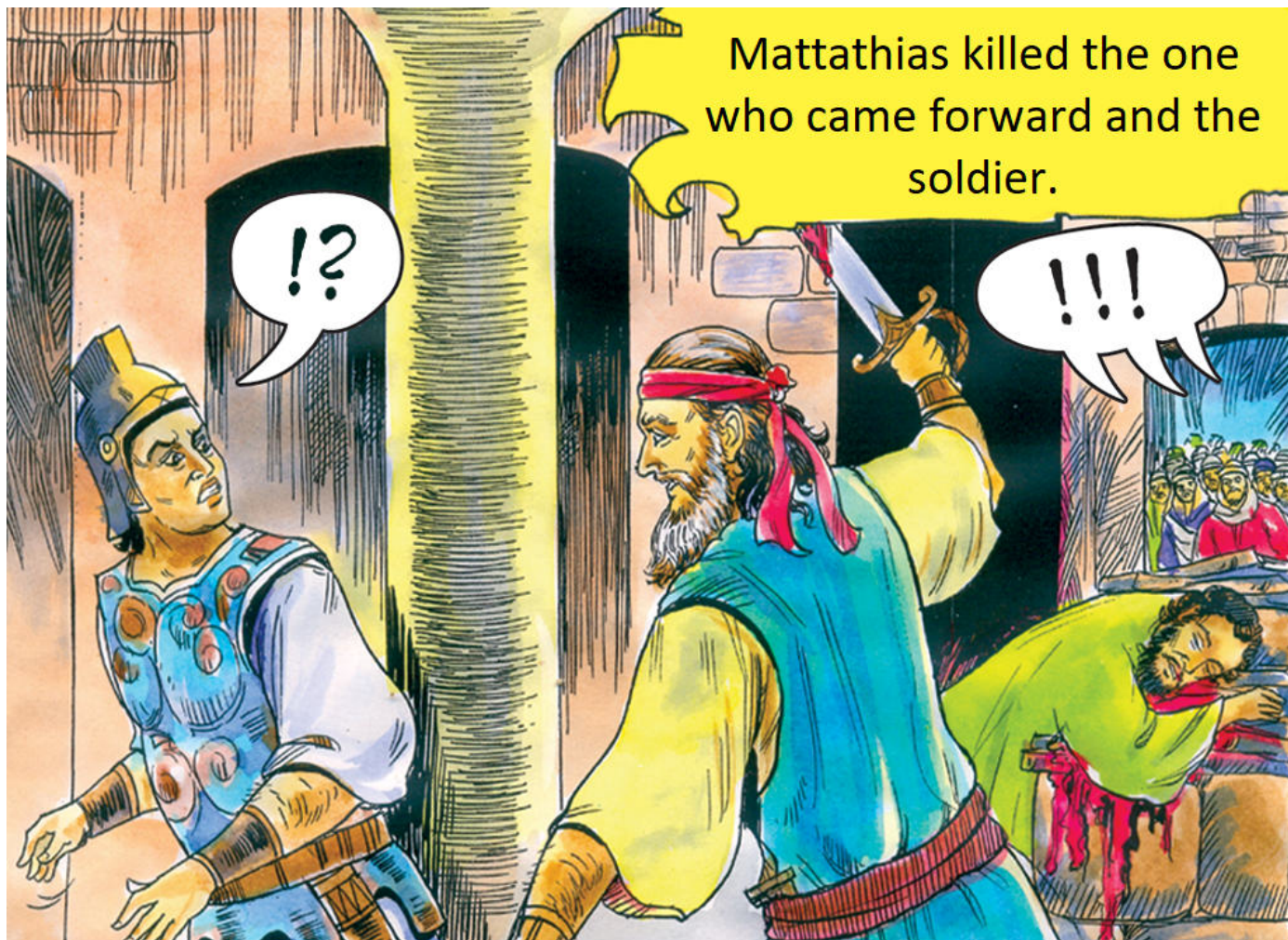




Mattathias killed the one  
who came forward and the  
soldier.

!?

!!!

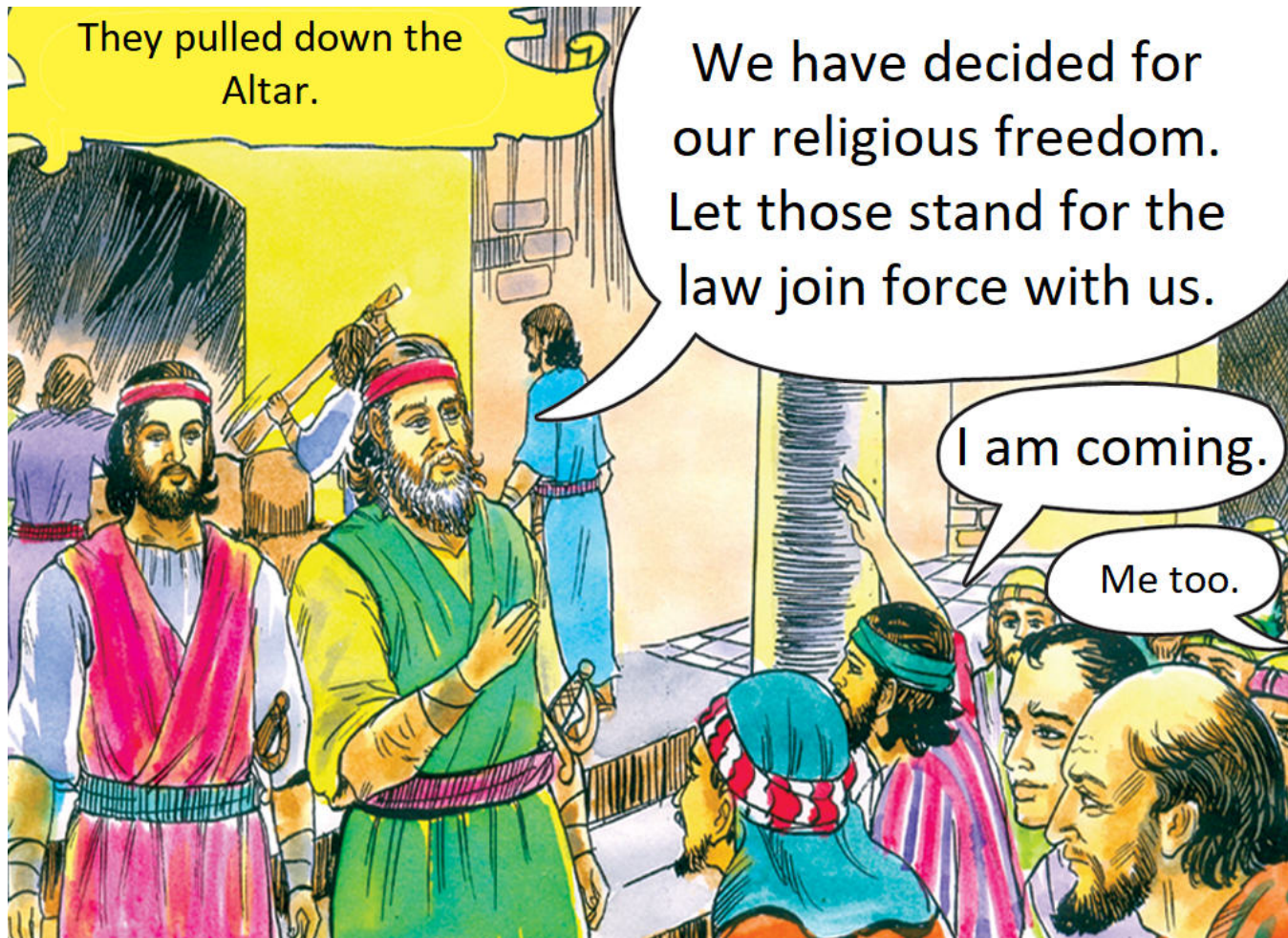


They pulled down the  
Altar.

We have decided for  
our religious freedom.  
Let those stand for the  
law join force with us.

I am coming.

Me too.





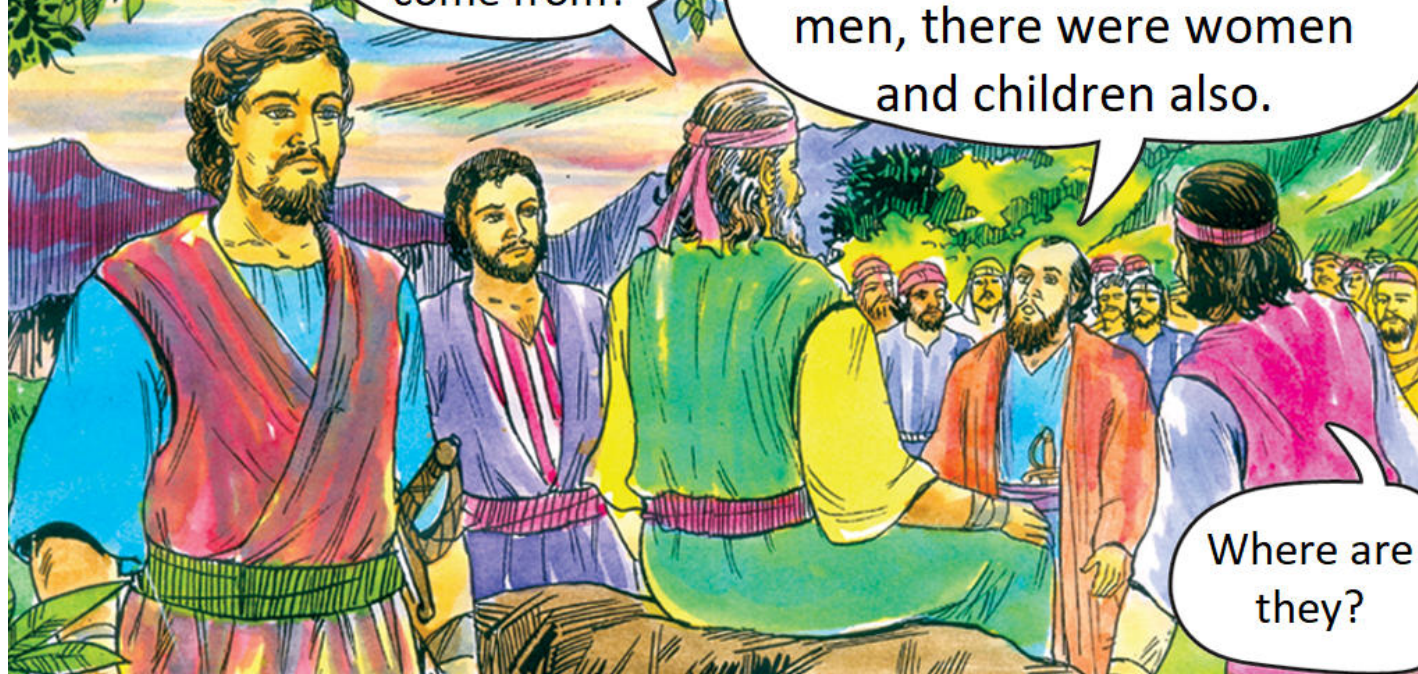
Leaving everything, they went into the forest and prepared for Guerrilla warfare. Their number increased by the day.

One day:

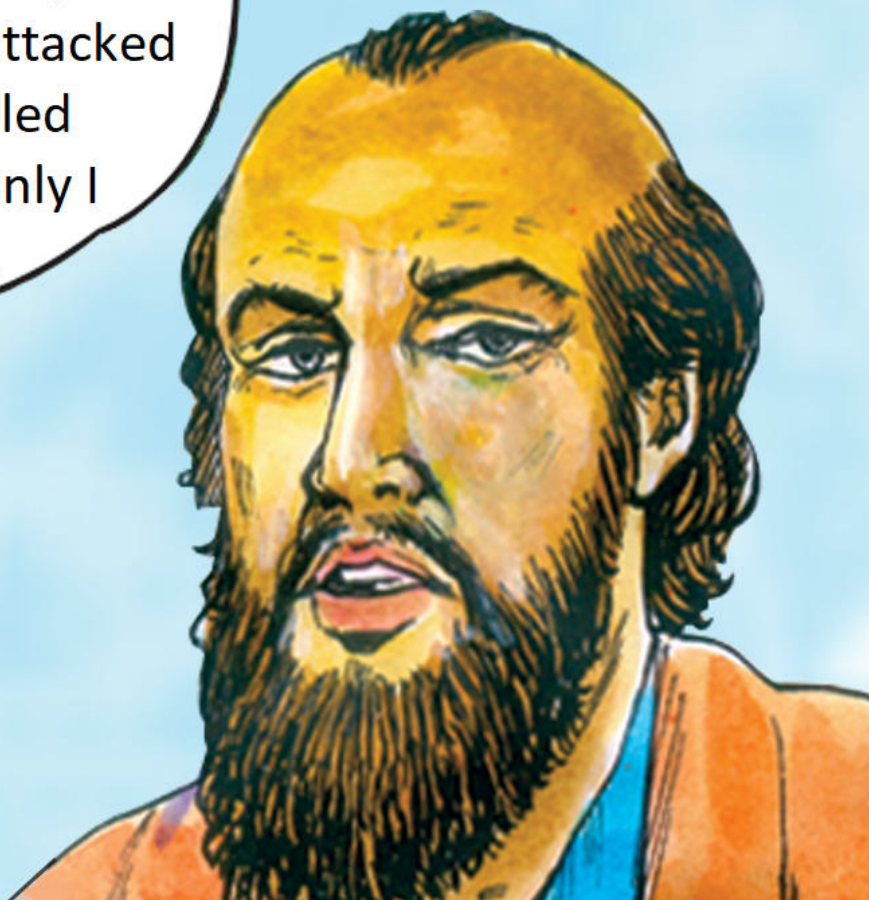
Who are you?  
Where do you  
come from?

We were coming to join  
you. A thousand armed  
men, there were women  
and children also.

Where are  
they?



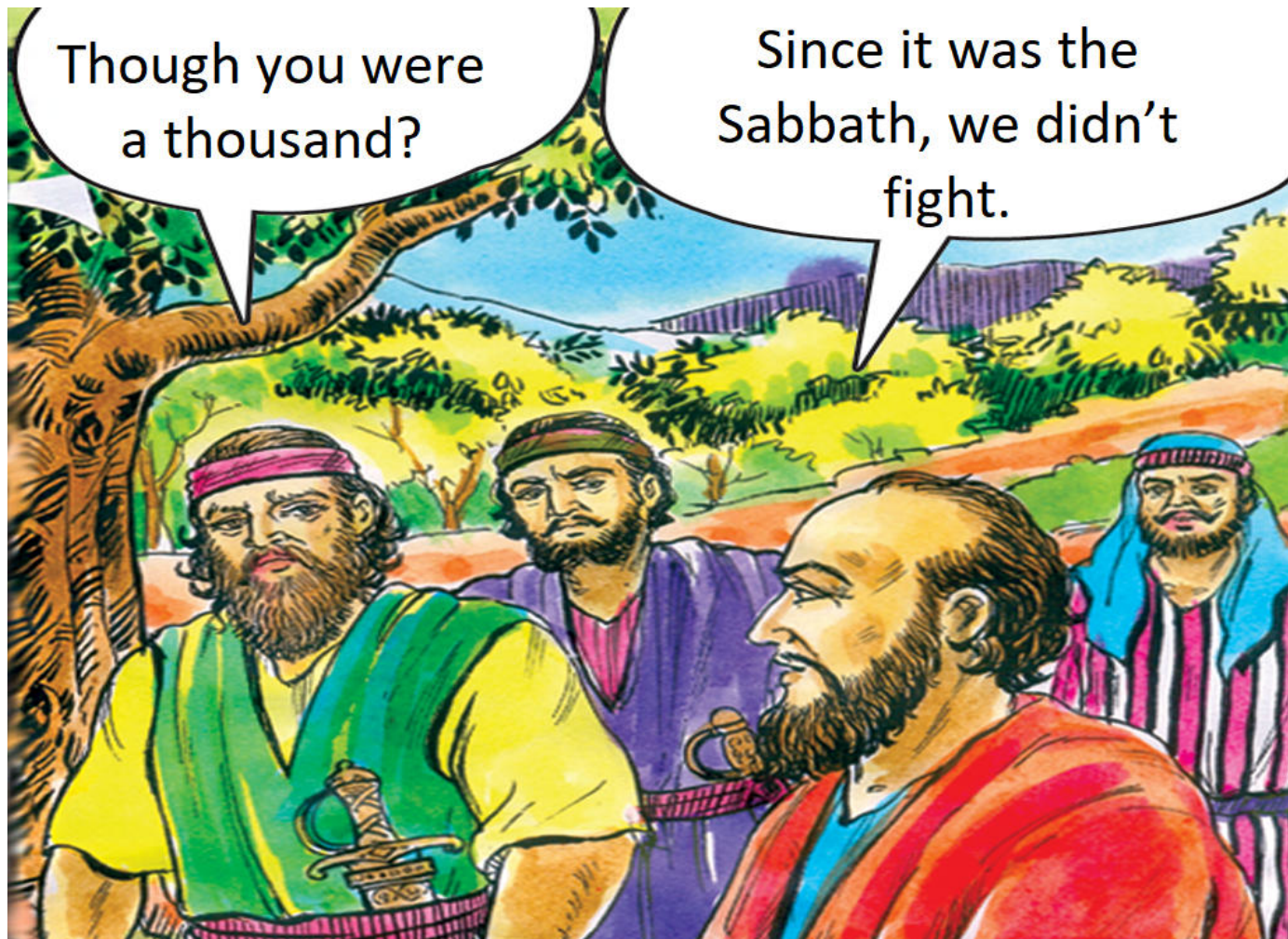
Yesterday a group of  
Syrian soldiers attacked  
us. They killed  
everybody, only I  
escaped.

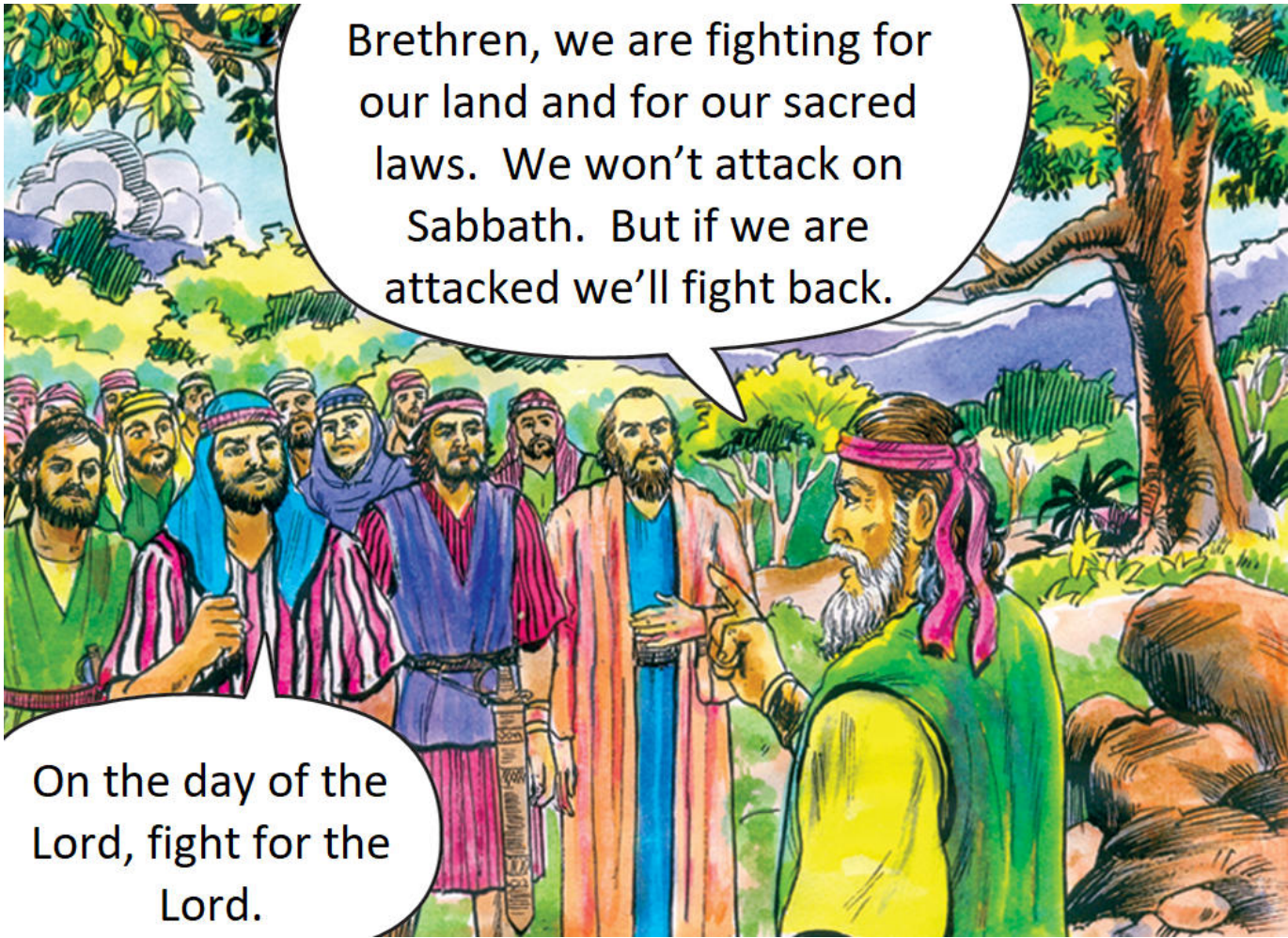




Though you were  
a thousand?

Since it was the  
Sabbath, we didn't  
fight.





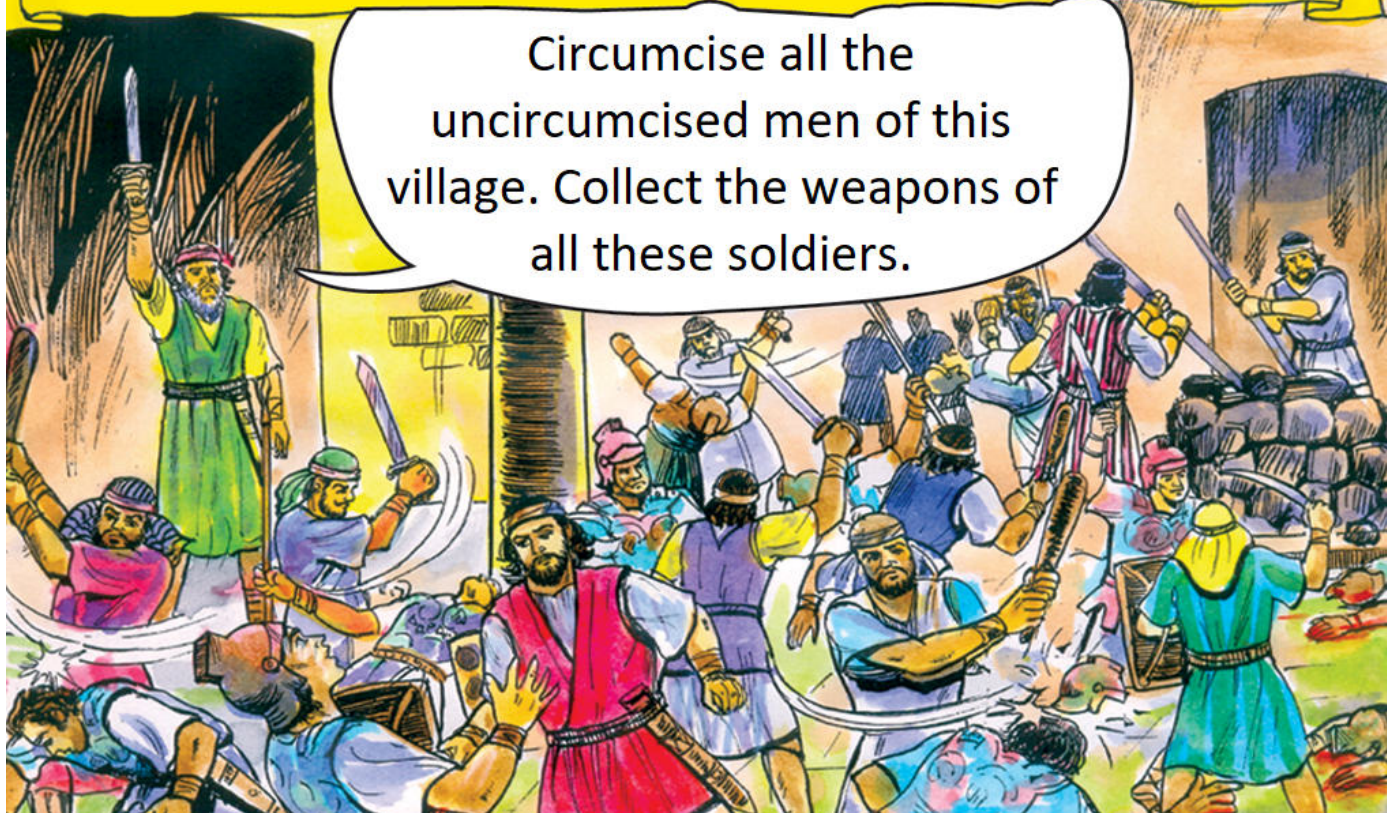
Brethren, we are fighting for  
our land and for our sacred  
laws. We won't attack on  
Sabbath. But if we are  
attacked we'll fight back.

On the day of the  
Lord, fight for the  
Lord.



More and more people joined Mattathias. They went around demolishing pagan altars. Ambushing small groups of Syrian soldiers and killing the Israelites who supported the Syrians.

Circumcise all the uncircumcised men of this village. Collect the weapons of all these soldiers.





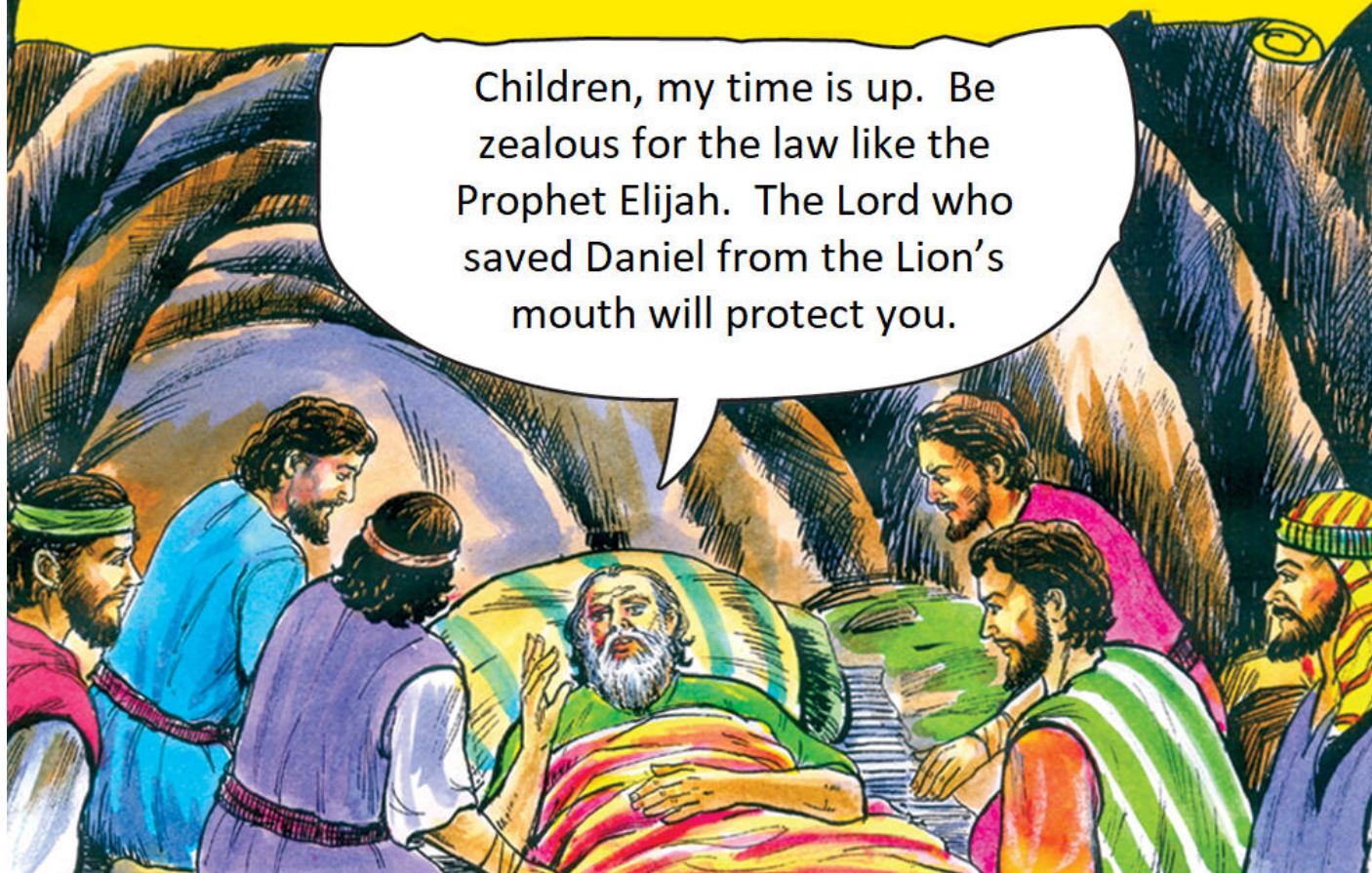
Hurry on to the next village and then to the forest before the Syrian army gets here.



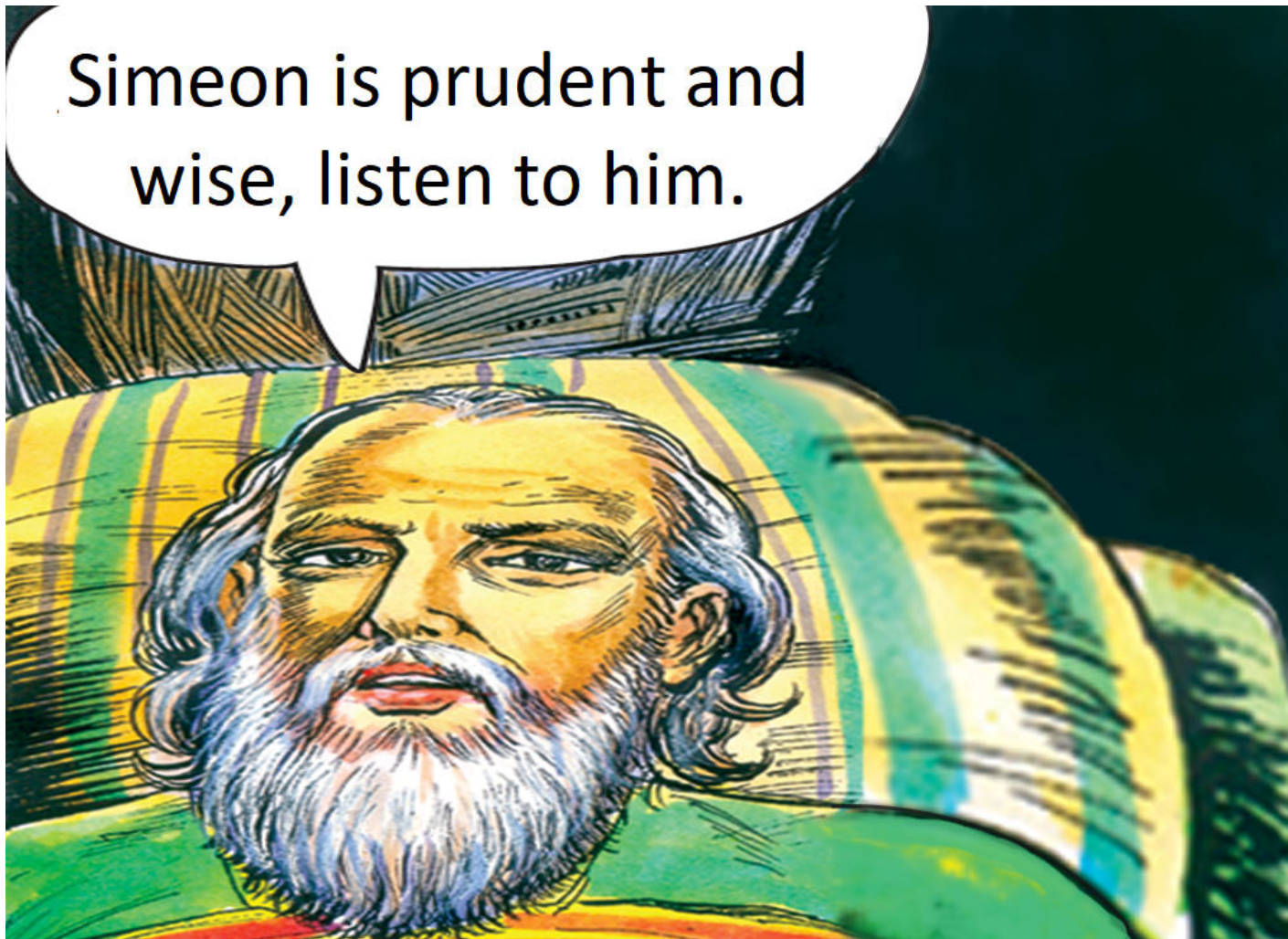


Before long Mattathias became ill. Knowing that he was nearing his end, he called his men together.

Children, my time is up. Be zealous for the law like the Prophet Elijah. The Lord who saved Daniel from the Lion's mouth will protect you.

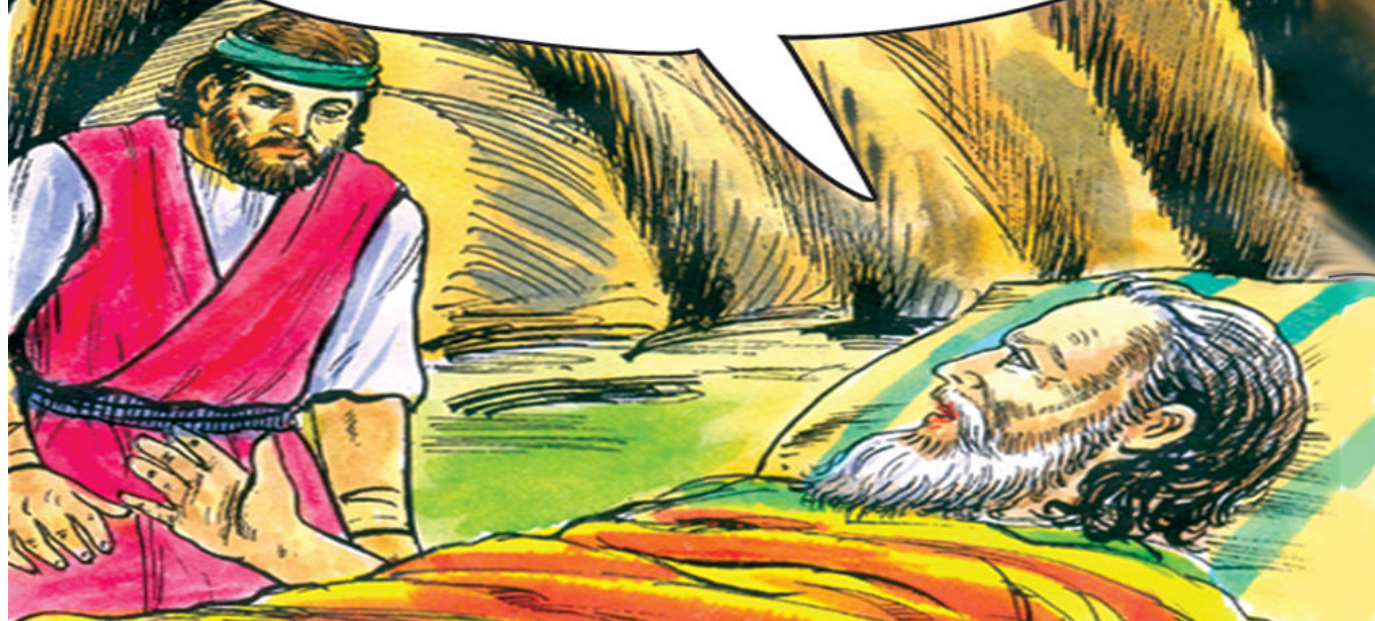


Simeon is prudent and  
wise, listen to him.





Judas Maccabeus is a great warrior. Follow him. Liberate the Temple from the pagans and consecrate it.

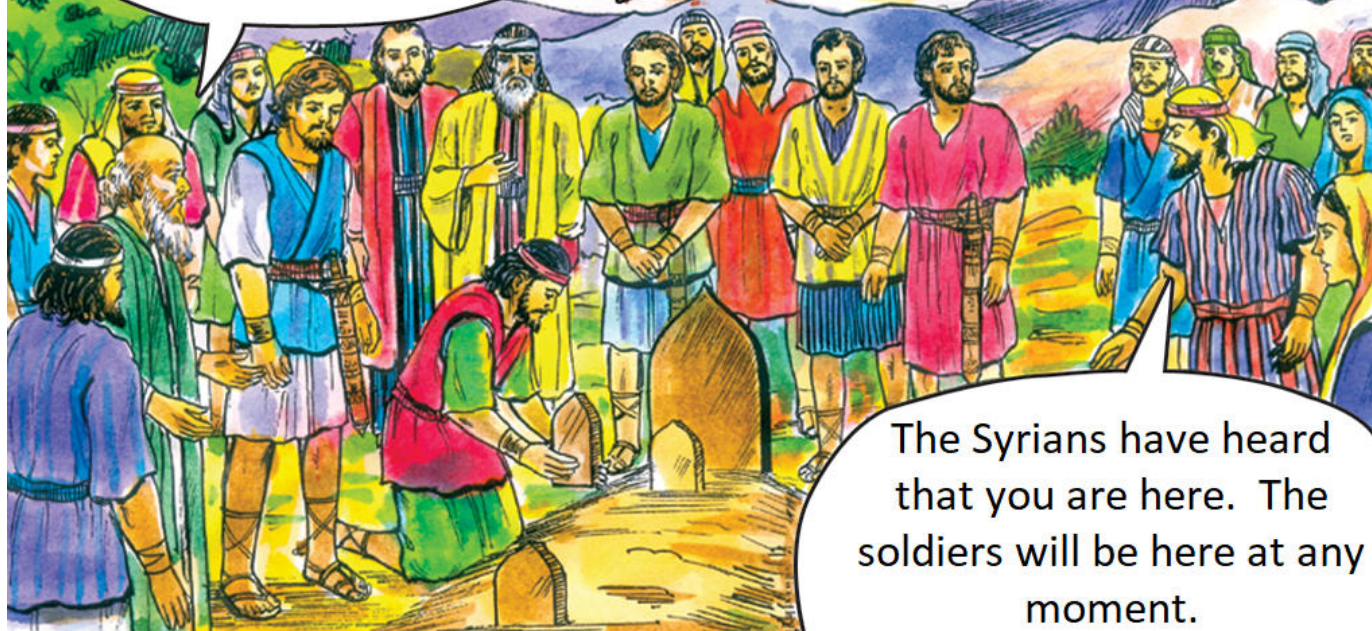


Mattathias died and was buried in their family tomb in Modein.

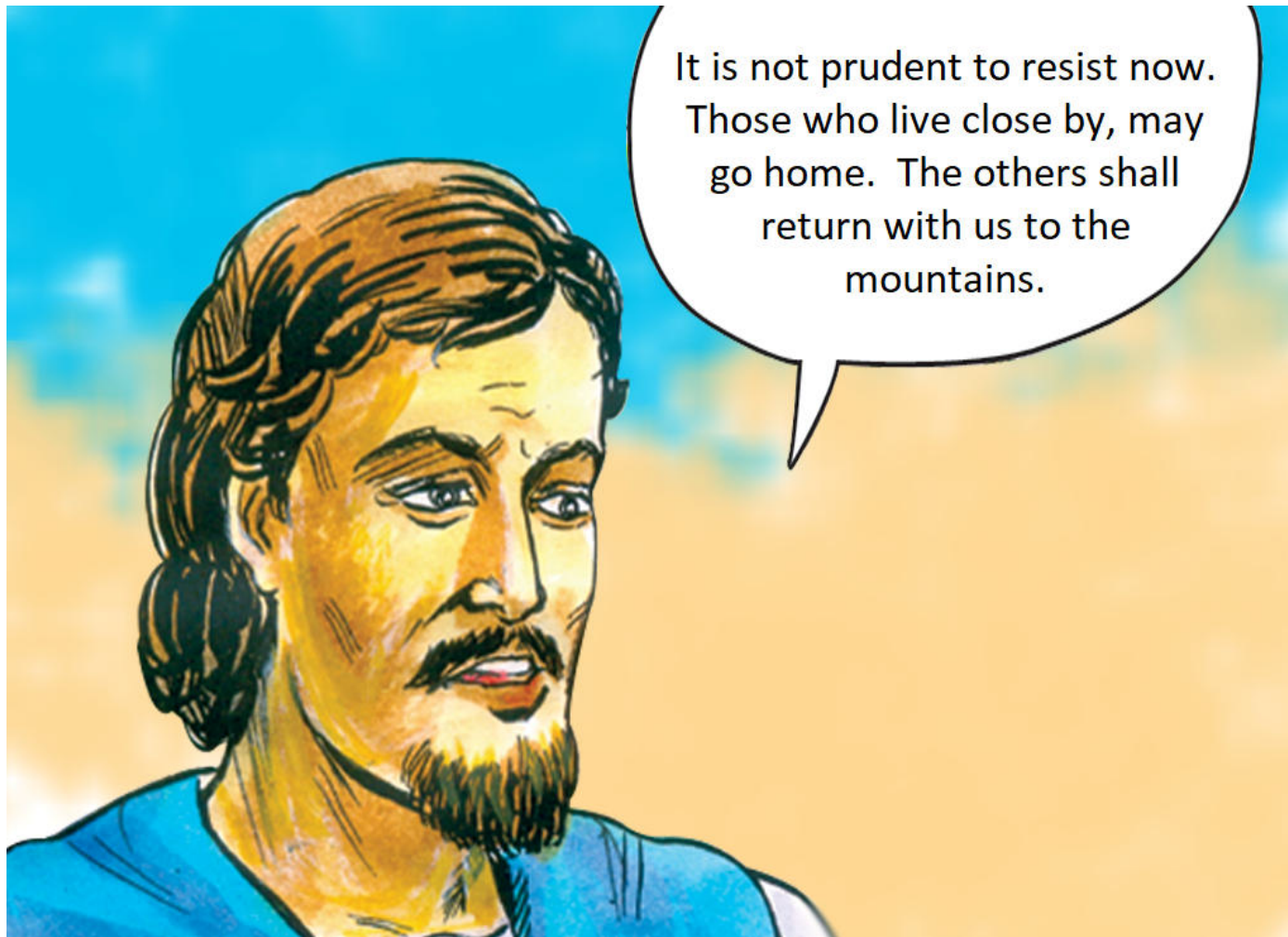
O Mattathias our beloved leader, how soon you left us.

Now who will liberate us from the Syrians?

The Syrians have heard that you are here. The soldiers will be here at any moment.

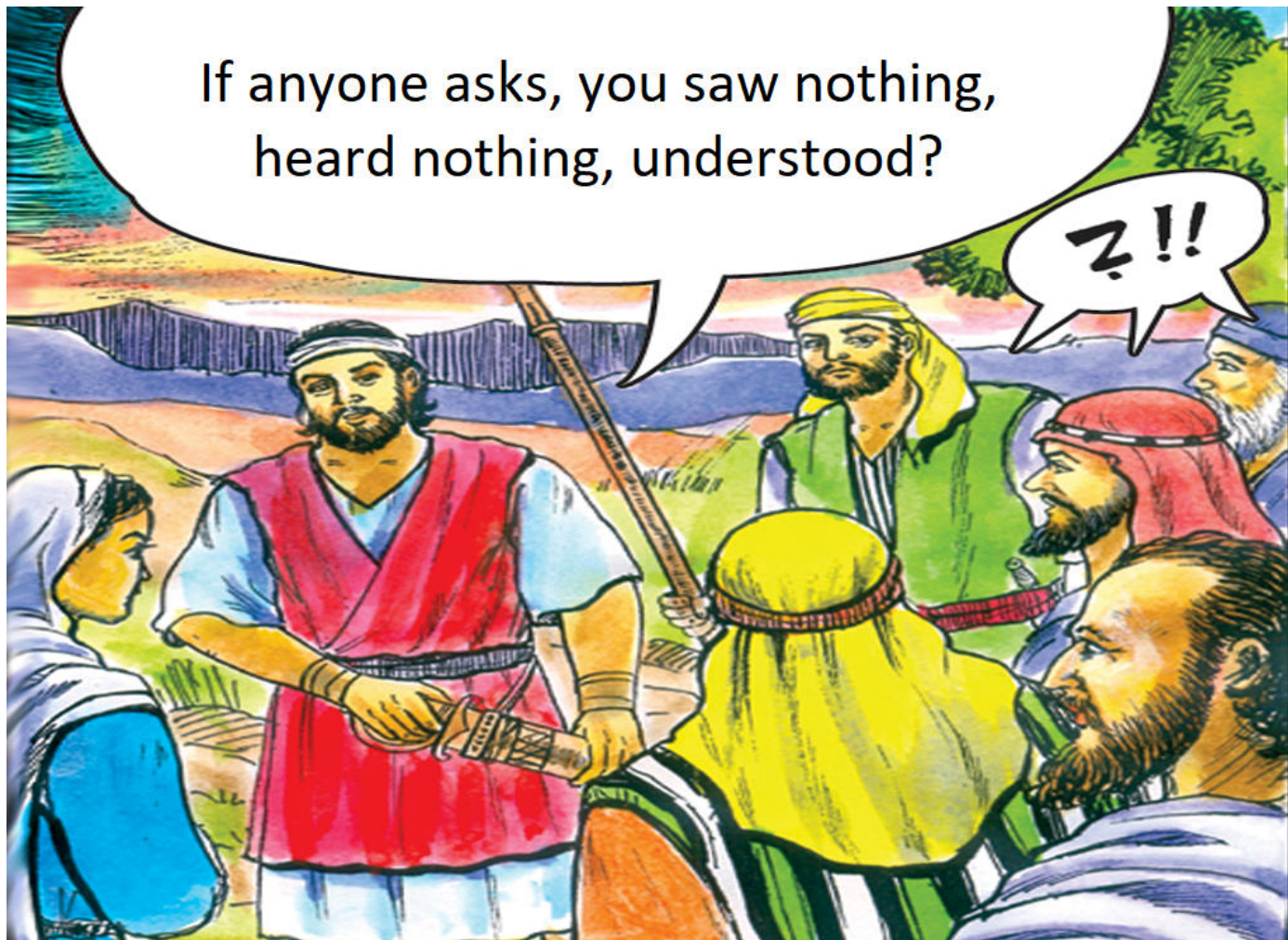






If anyone asks, you saw nothing,  
heard nothing, understood?

??!!

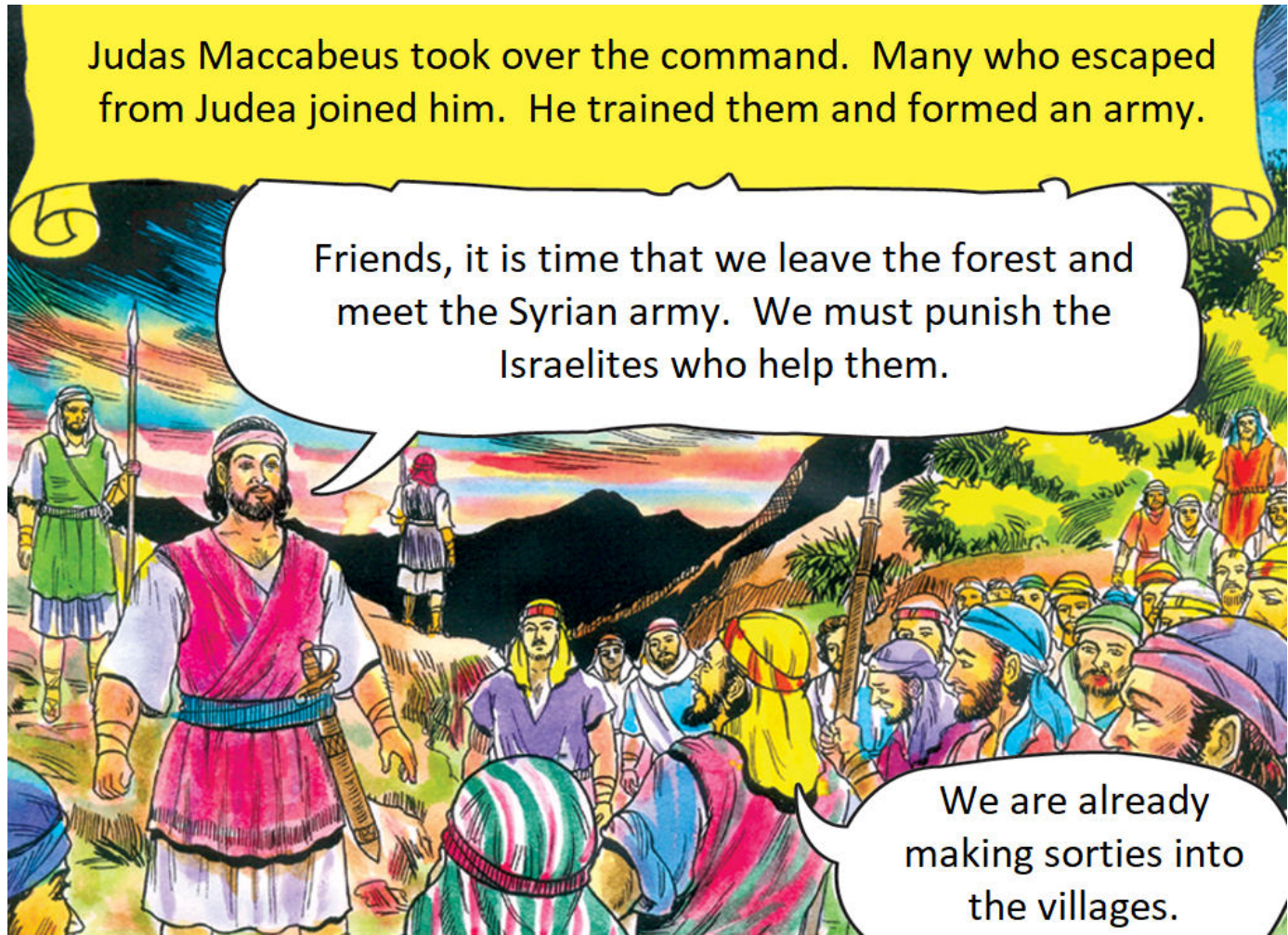




Judas Maccabeus took over the command. Many who escaped from Judea joined him. He trained them and formed an army.

Friends, it is time that we leave the forest and meet the Syrian army. We must punish the Israelites who help them.

We are already making sorties into the villages.





That is not enough.  
Apollonius, a Commander  
of the Syrian army, has  
moved south.



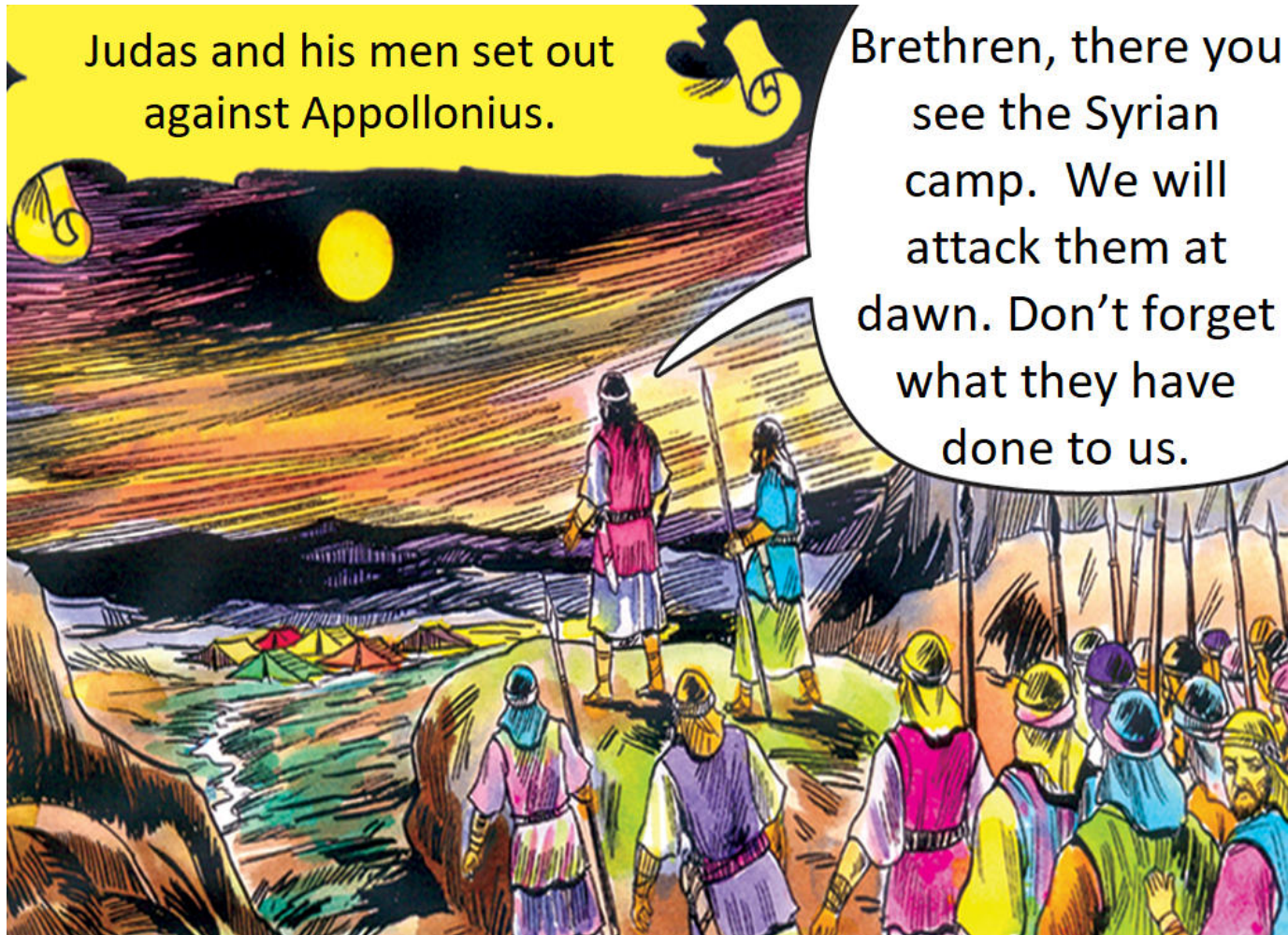
We must take them by surprise.  
This is our first open battle. Be  
brave and trust in the Lord.





Judas and his men set out  
against Appollonius.

Brethren, there you  
see the Syrian  
camp. We will  
attack them at  
dawn. Don't forget  
what they have  
done to us.





In a surprise attack the Syrians were defeated. Judas killed Appollonius and took his sword.



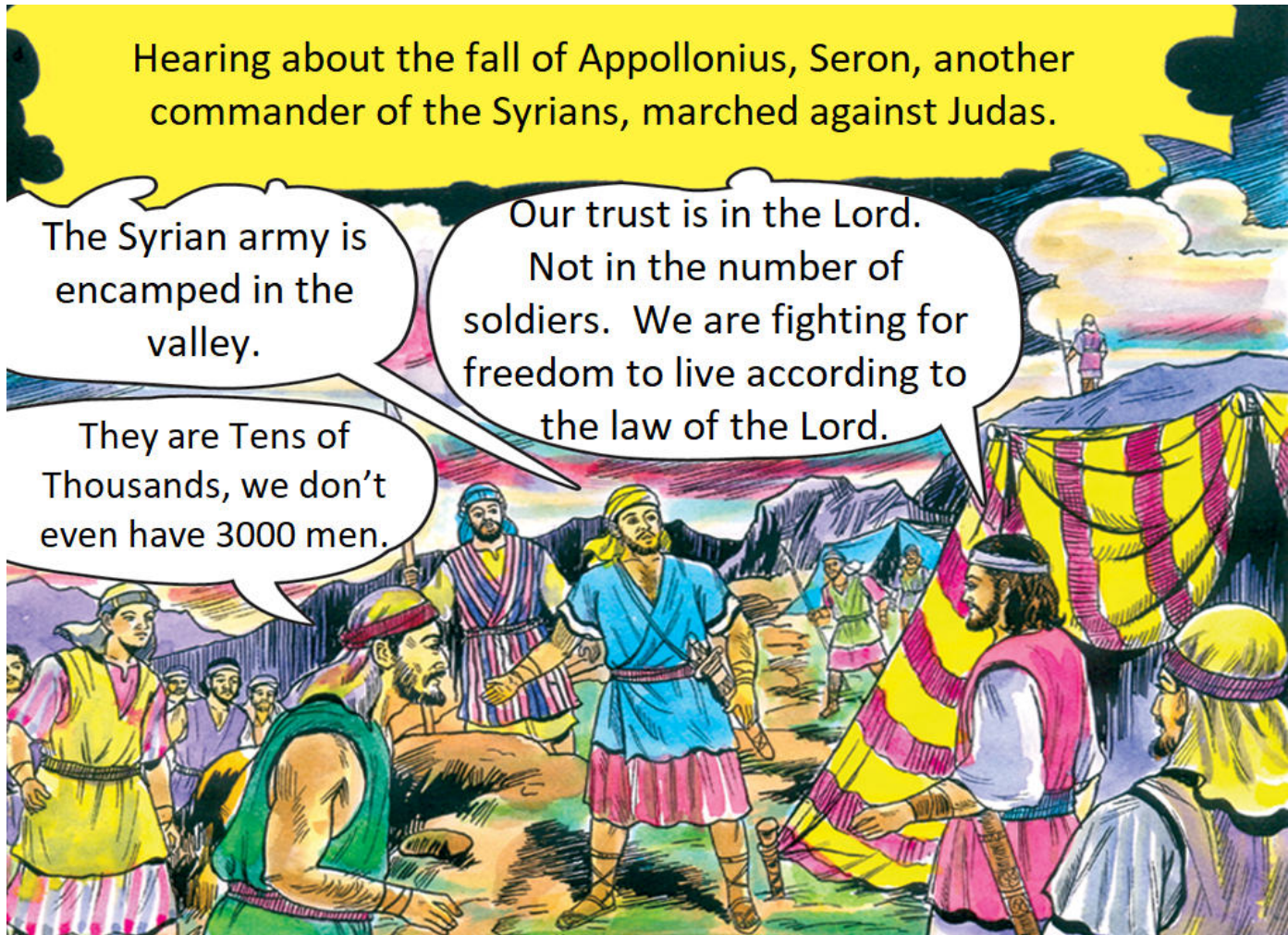


Hearing about the fall of Appollonius, Seron, another commander of the Syrians, marched against Judas.

The Syrian army is encamped in the valley.

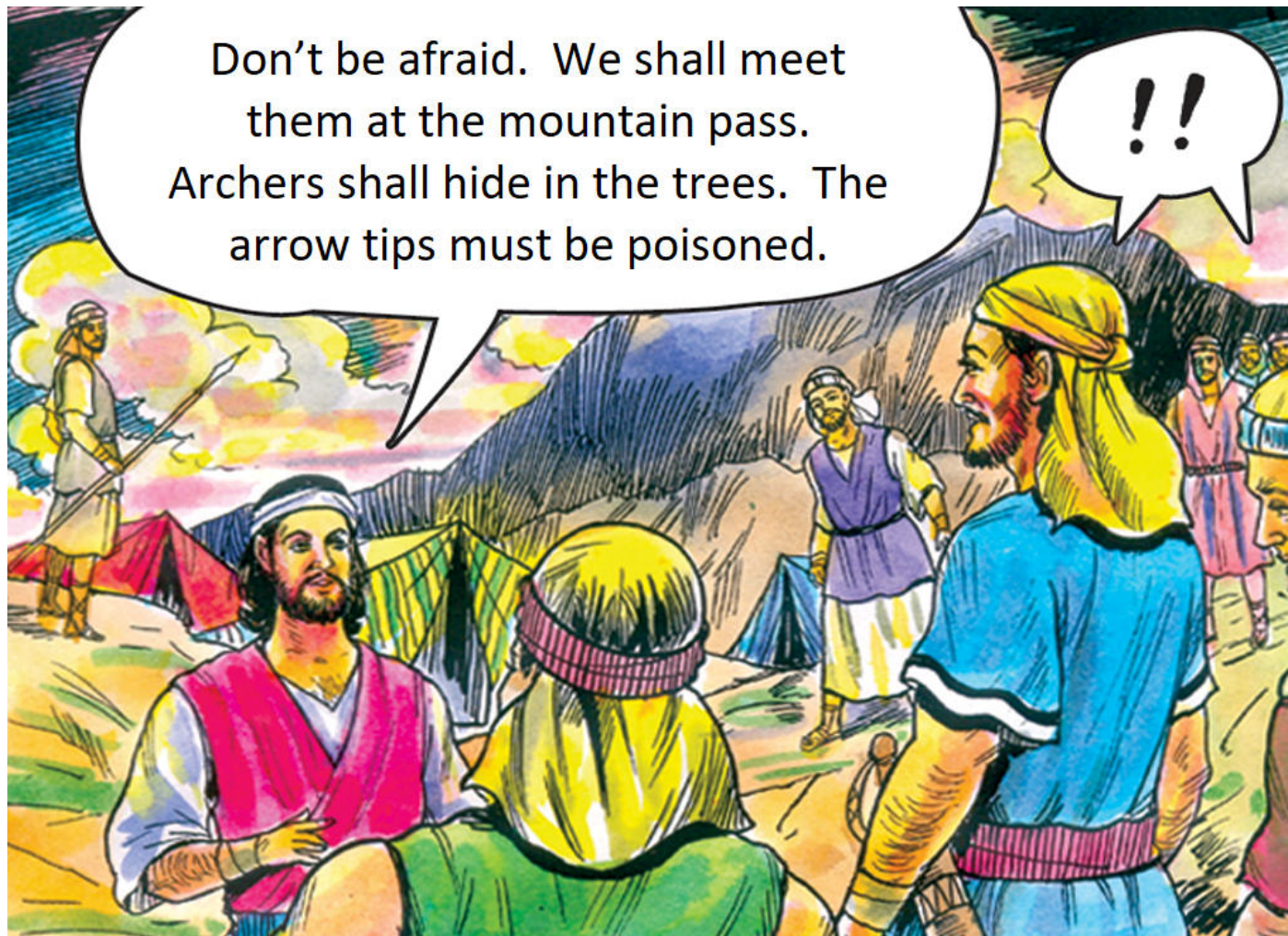
They are Tens of Thousands, we don't even have 3000 men.

Our trust is in the Lord.  
Not in the number of soldiers. We are fighting for freedom to live according to the law of the Lord.



Don't be afraid. We shall meet  
them at the mountain pass.  
Archers shall hide in the trees. The  
arrow tips must be poisoned.

!!

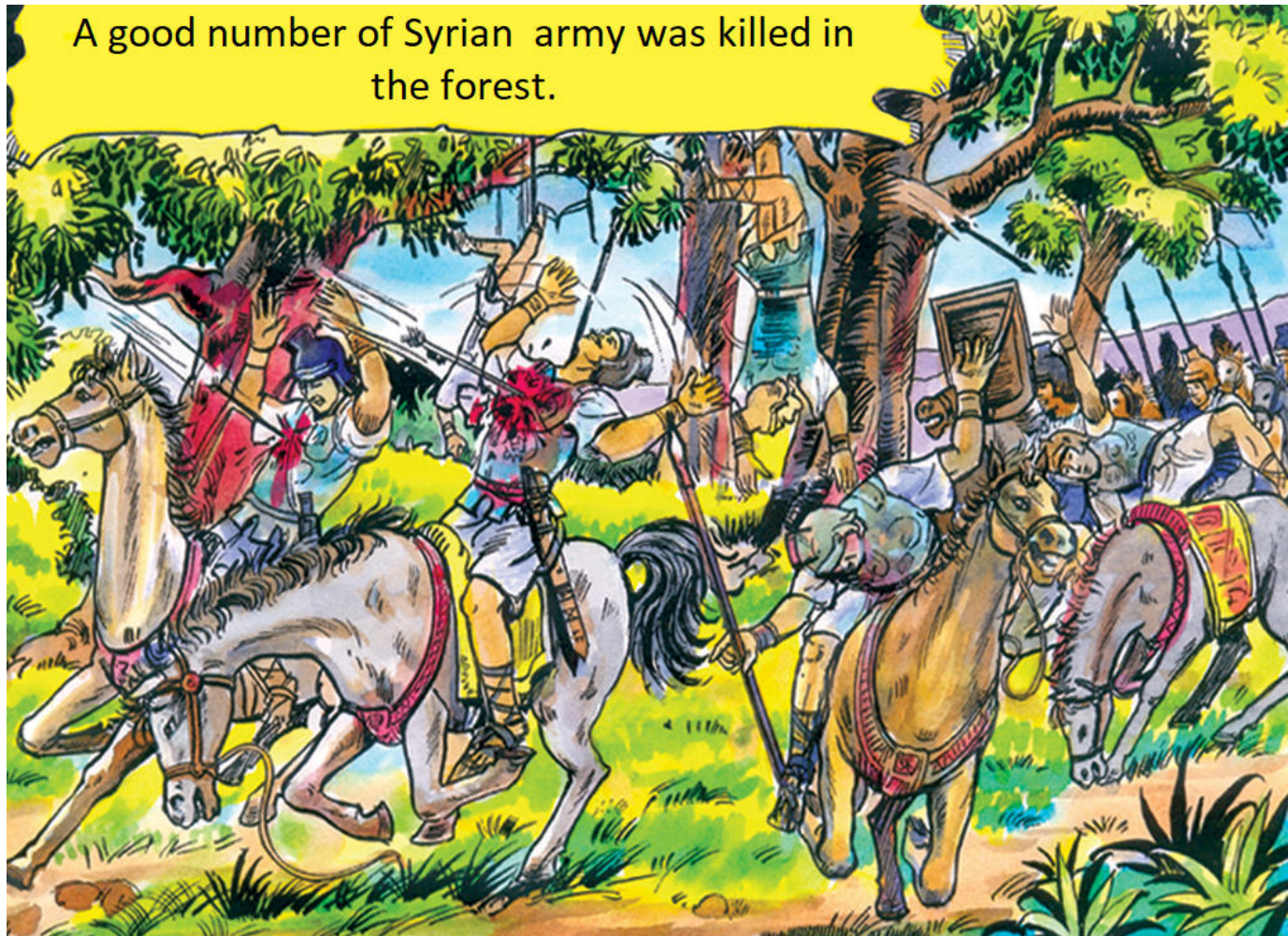




We must set traps  
all over. When I  
blow the trumpet,  
all must rush down  
into the valley.

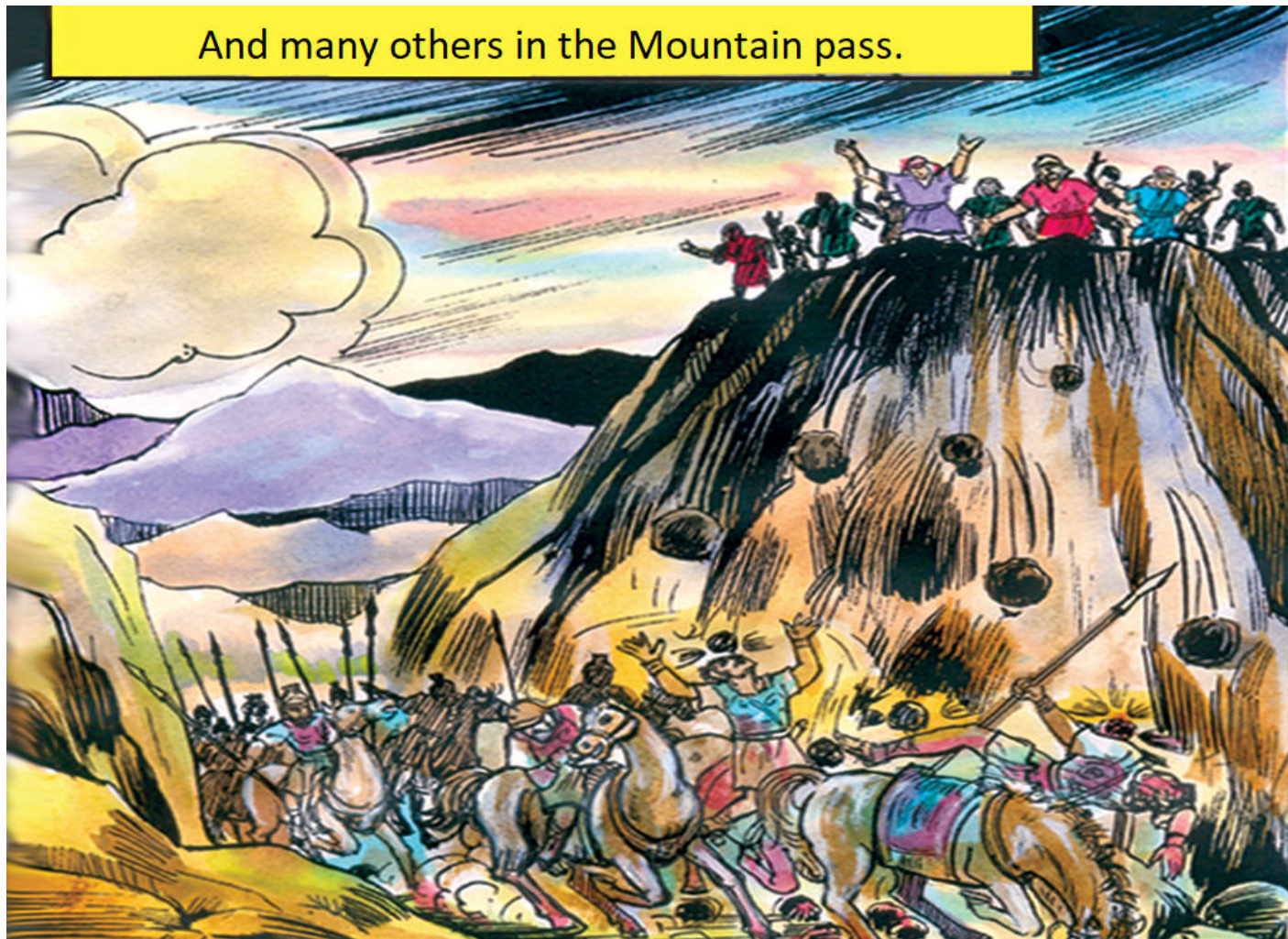


A good number of Syrian army was killed in the forest.





And many others in the Mountain pass.







The army of Seron was routed. The Jews looted their camp.

We shall take the food and weapons to our caves. Take also the horses that are not wounded.

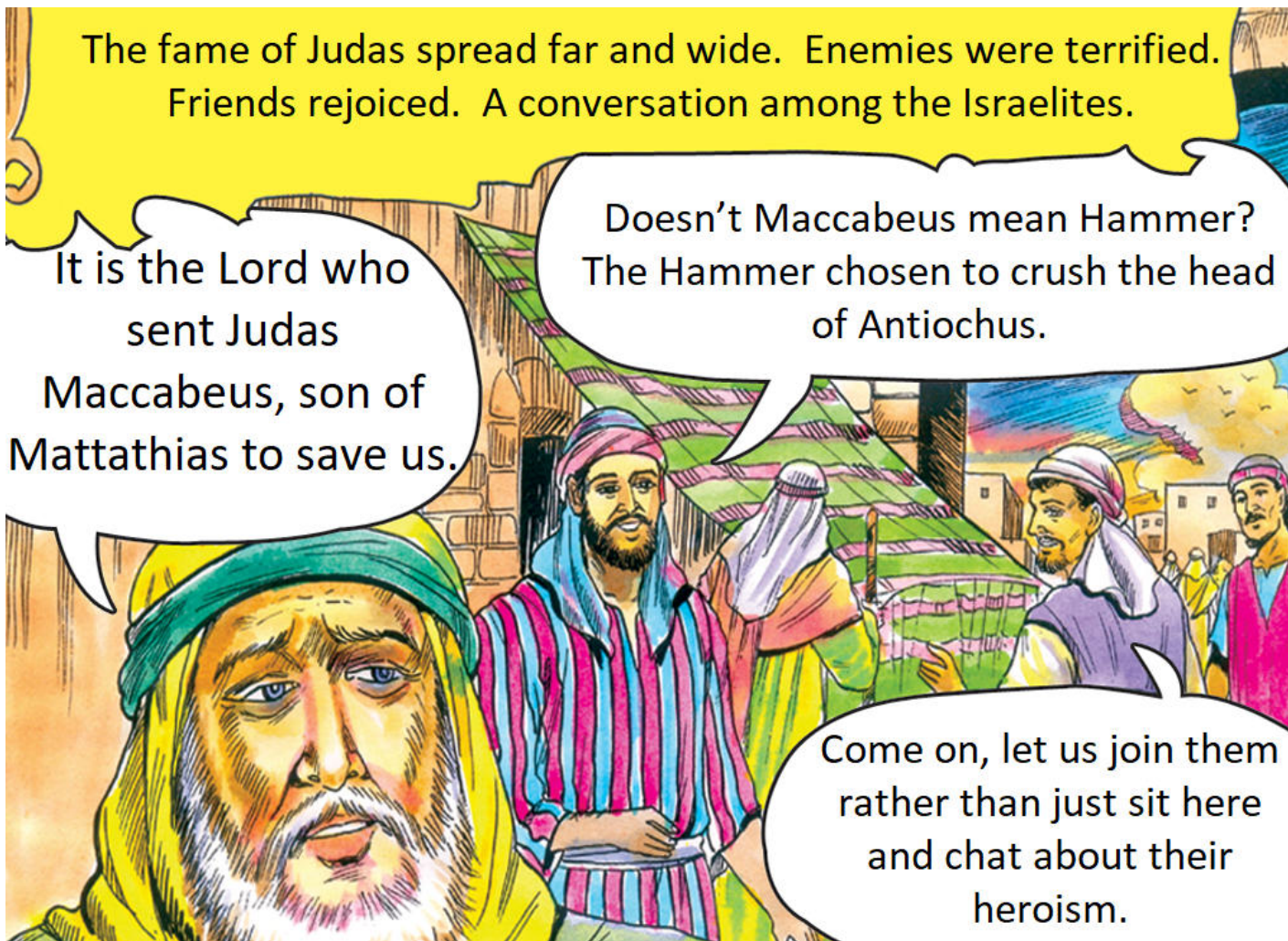


The fame of Judas spread far and wide. Enemies were terrified.  
Friends rejoiced. A conversation among the Israelites.

It is the Lord who  
sent Judas  
Maccabeus, son of  
Mattathias to save us.

Doesn't Maccabeus mean Hammer?  
The Hammer chosen to crush the head  
of Antiochus.

Come on, let us join them  
rather than just sit here  
and chat about their  
heroism.





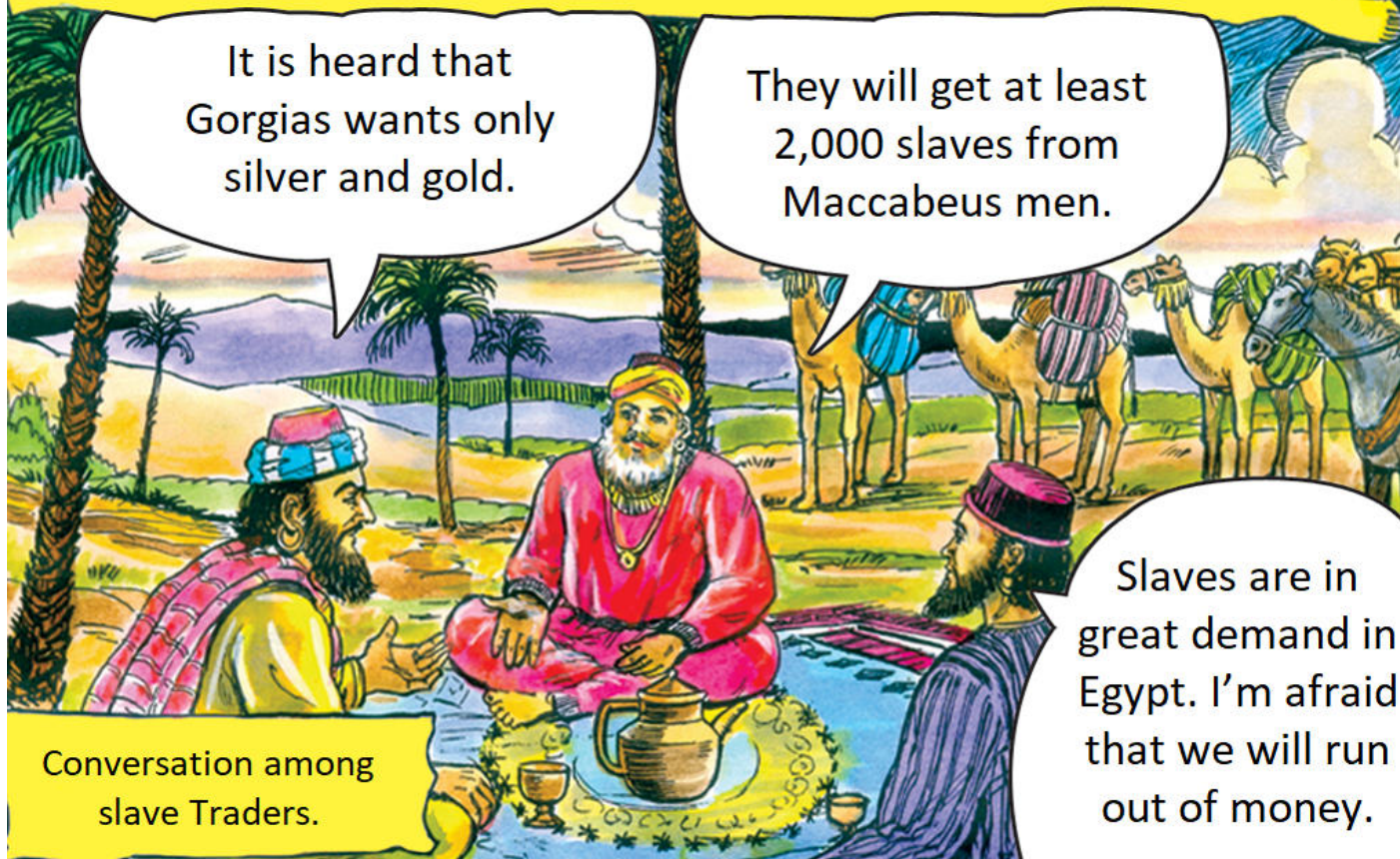
King Antiochus IV decided to destroy Israel. He sent an army of 40,000 men under the command of Gorgias of Judea.

It is heard that Gorgias wants only silver and gold.

They will get at least 2,000 slaves from Maccabeus men.

Slaves are in great demand in Egypt. I'm afraid that we will run out of money.

Conversation among slave Traders.

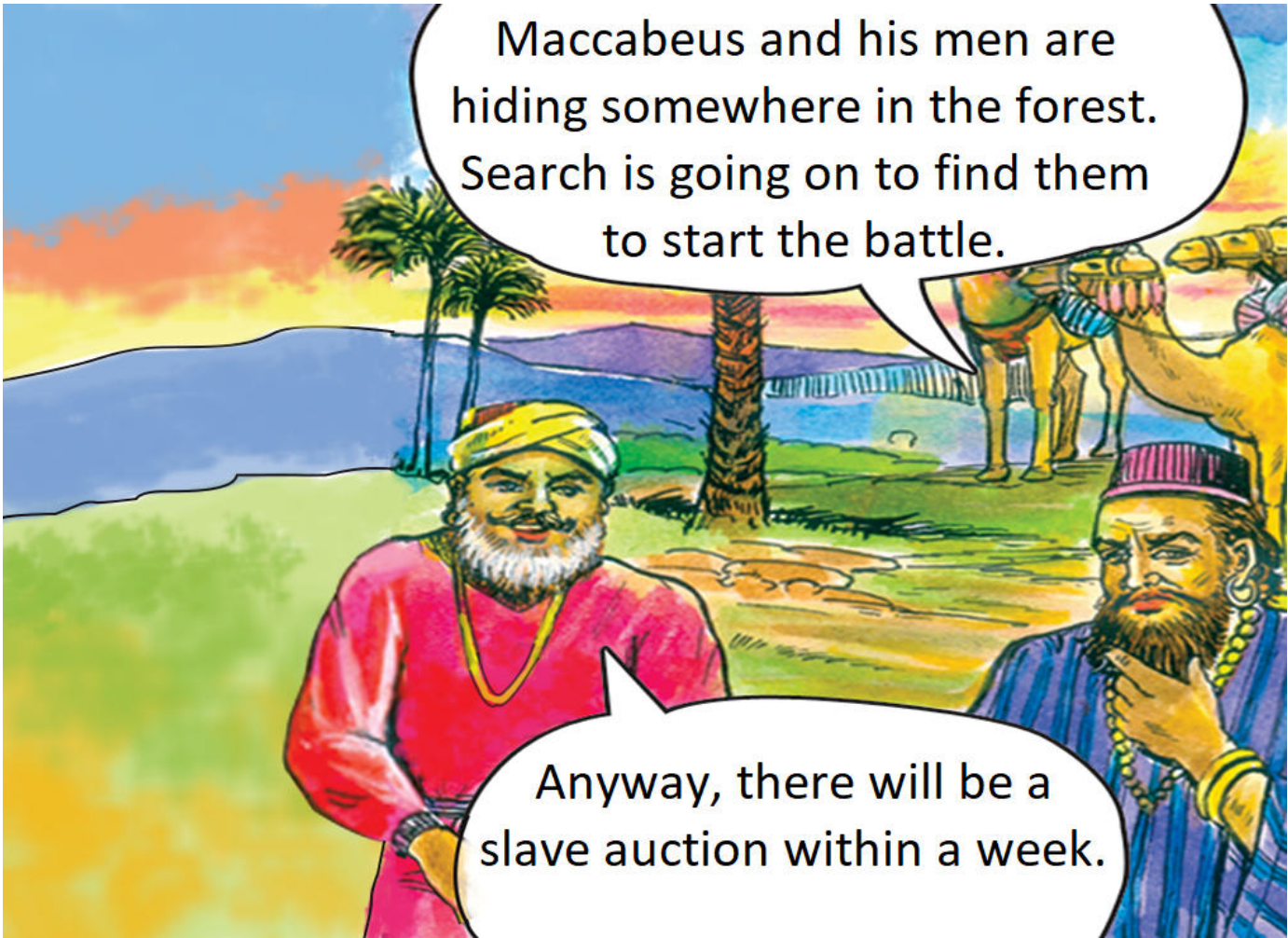


Do you know  
when the battle  
begins?

Gorgias has  
already entered  
Judea.







Maccabeus and his men are  
hiding somewhere in the forest.  
Search is going on to find them  
to start the battle.

Anyway, there will be a  
slave auction within a week.

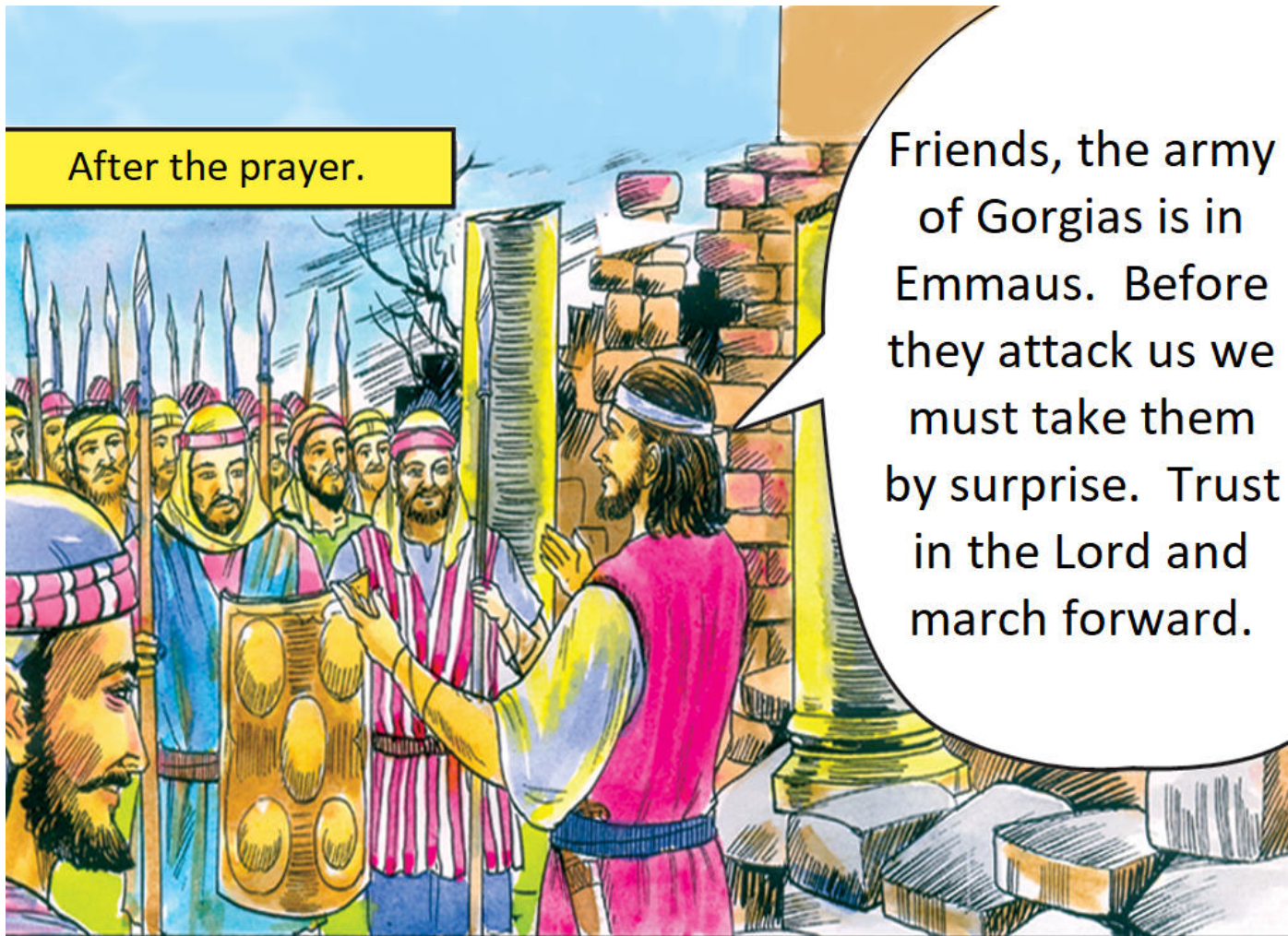
Judas gathered his men in Mispa, before the ruined Temple. It was there that Samuel had anointed Saul, the first king of Israel.





After the prayer.

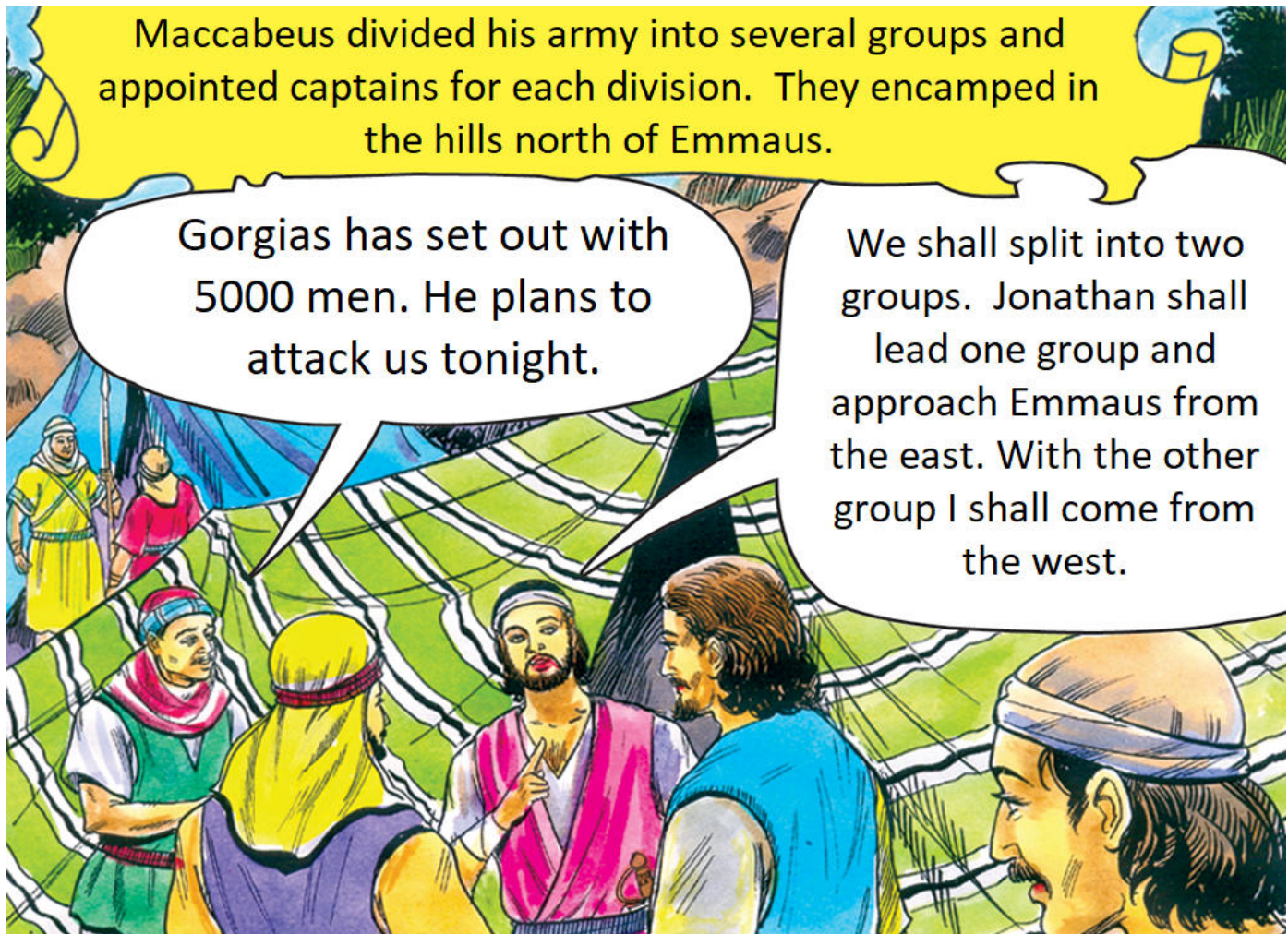
Friends, the army of Gorgias is in Emmaus. Before they attack us we must take them by surprise. Trust in the Lord and march forward.



Maccabeus divided his army into several groups and appointed captains for each division. They encamped in the hills north of Emmaus.

Gorgias has set out with 5000 men. He plans to attack us tonight.

We shall split into two groups. Jonathan shall lead one group and approach Emmaus from the east. With the other group I shall come from the west.

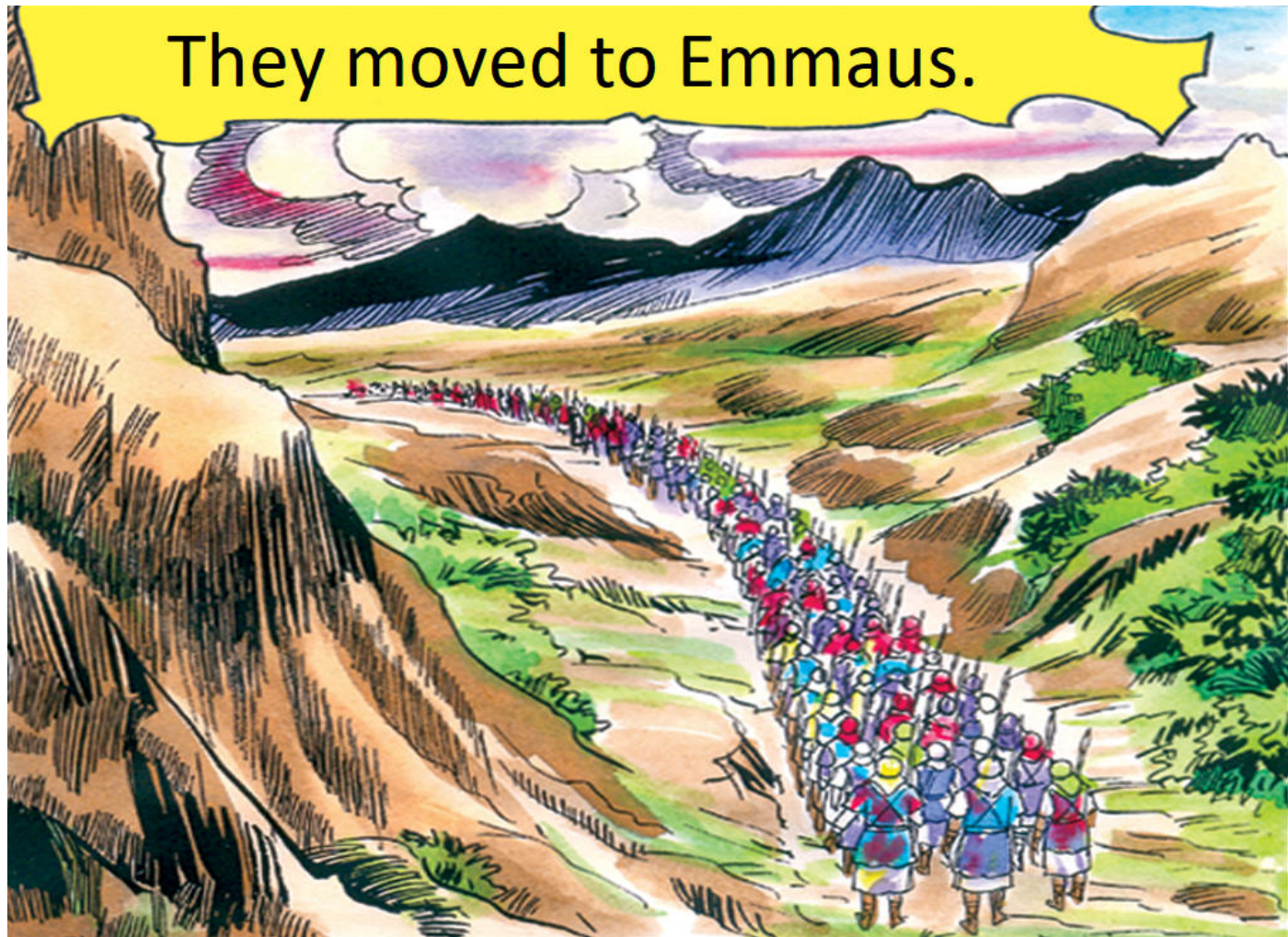






At night we will attack them from both sides at the same time. Take only what is essential. Scatter the rest on the way.

They moved to Emmaus.

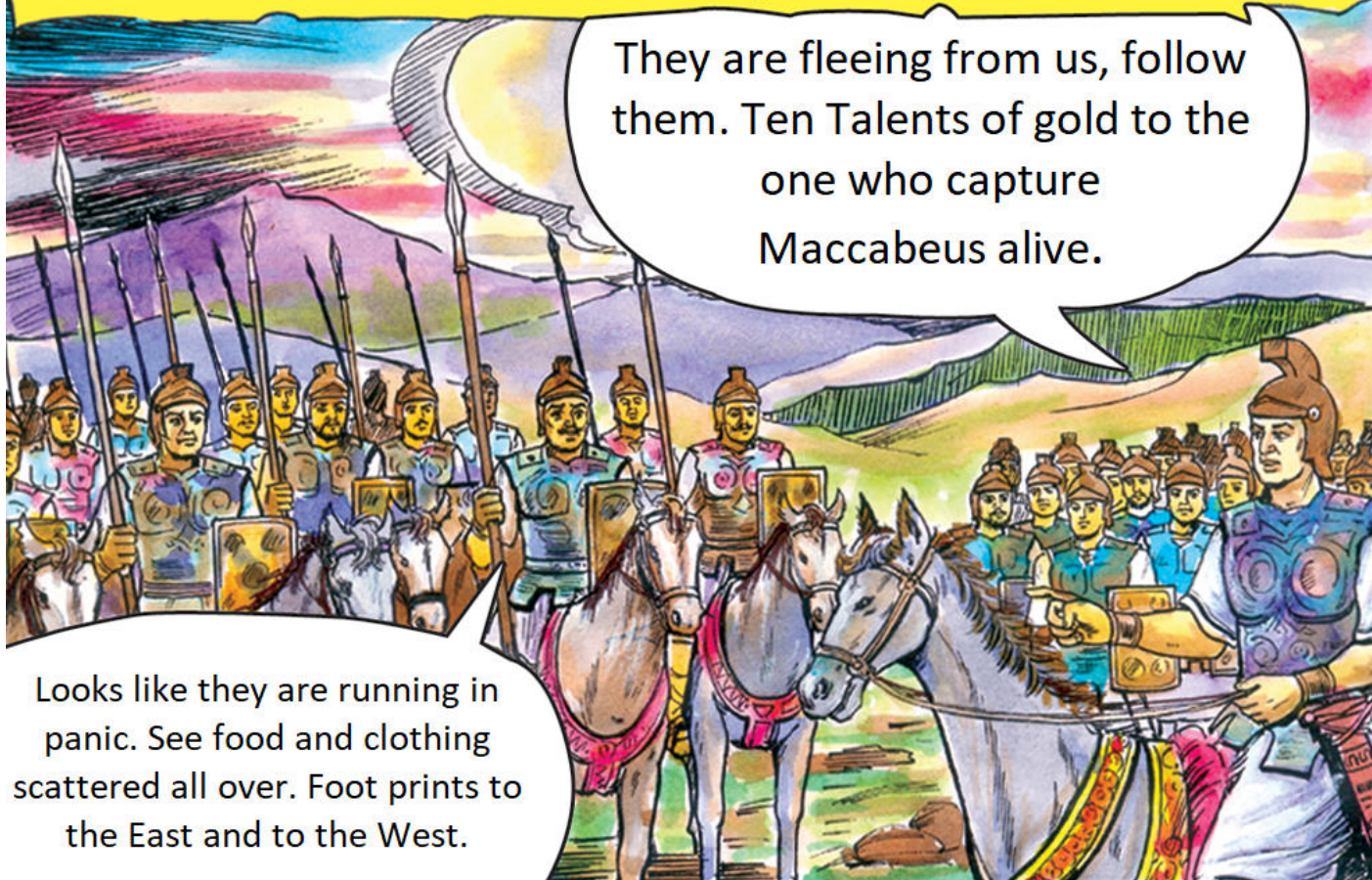




Within hours Gorgias and his army reached where Maccabeus had encamped.

They are fleeing from us, follow them. Ten Talents of gold to the one who capture Maccabeus alive.

Looks like they are running in panic. See food and clothing scattered all over. Foot prints to the East and to the West.





We'll split into two groups. I shall go with half of the army to the East and catch them in the desert. The rest of you go West.



In the morning.

There, smoke from our camp.  
An army is coming towards us.

Then that's Maccabeus, we  
can't beat them. Let us run for  
our lives.



After plundering the enemy camp, Maccabeus and men  
praised the Lord.

O praise the Lord, for He  
is good, His mercy  
endures forever.



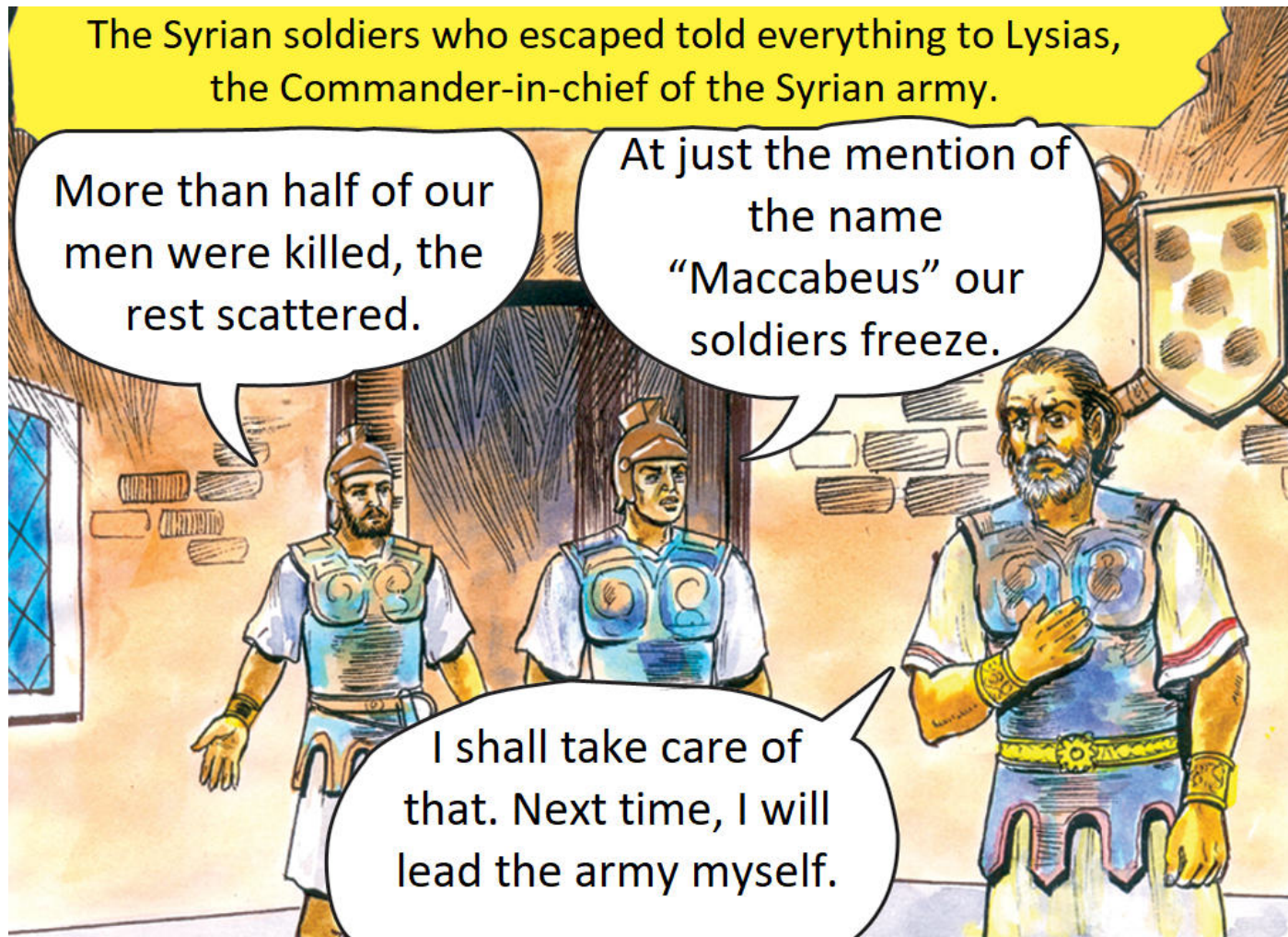


The Syrian soldiers who escaped told everything to Lysias, the Commander-in-chief of the Syrian army.

More than half of our men were killed, the rest scattered.

At just the mention of the name "Maccabeus" our soldiers freeze.

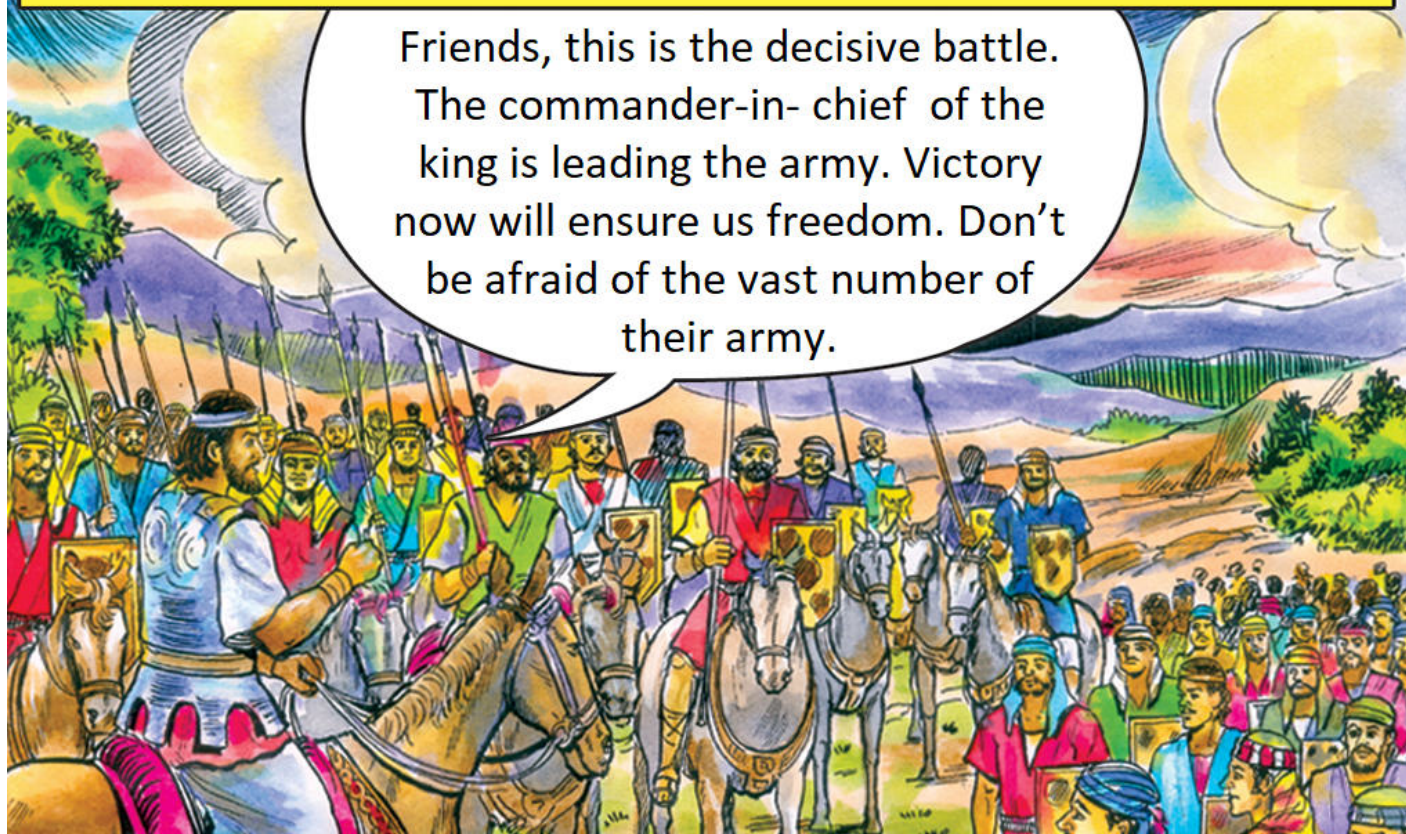
I shall take care of that. Next time, I will lead the army myself.



A year passed. Lisias came with an army of 60,000 foot men and 5000 horsemen and encamped at Bethzur, south of Jerusalem.

Hearing this Judas said to his men:

Friends, this is the decisive battle. The commander-in- chief of the king is leading the army. Victory now will ensure us freedom. Don't be afraid of the vast number of their army.





Their soldiers are fighting  
for pay. But we are  
fighting for our faith,  
families, and our land.



March forward.





Seeing the camp of Lisias from afar, the Jewish army trembled. They cried to the Lord.

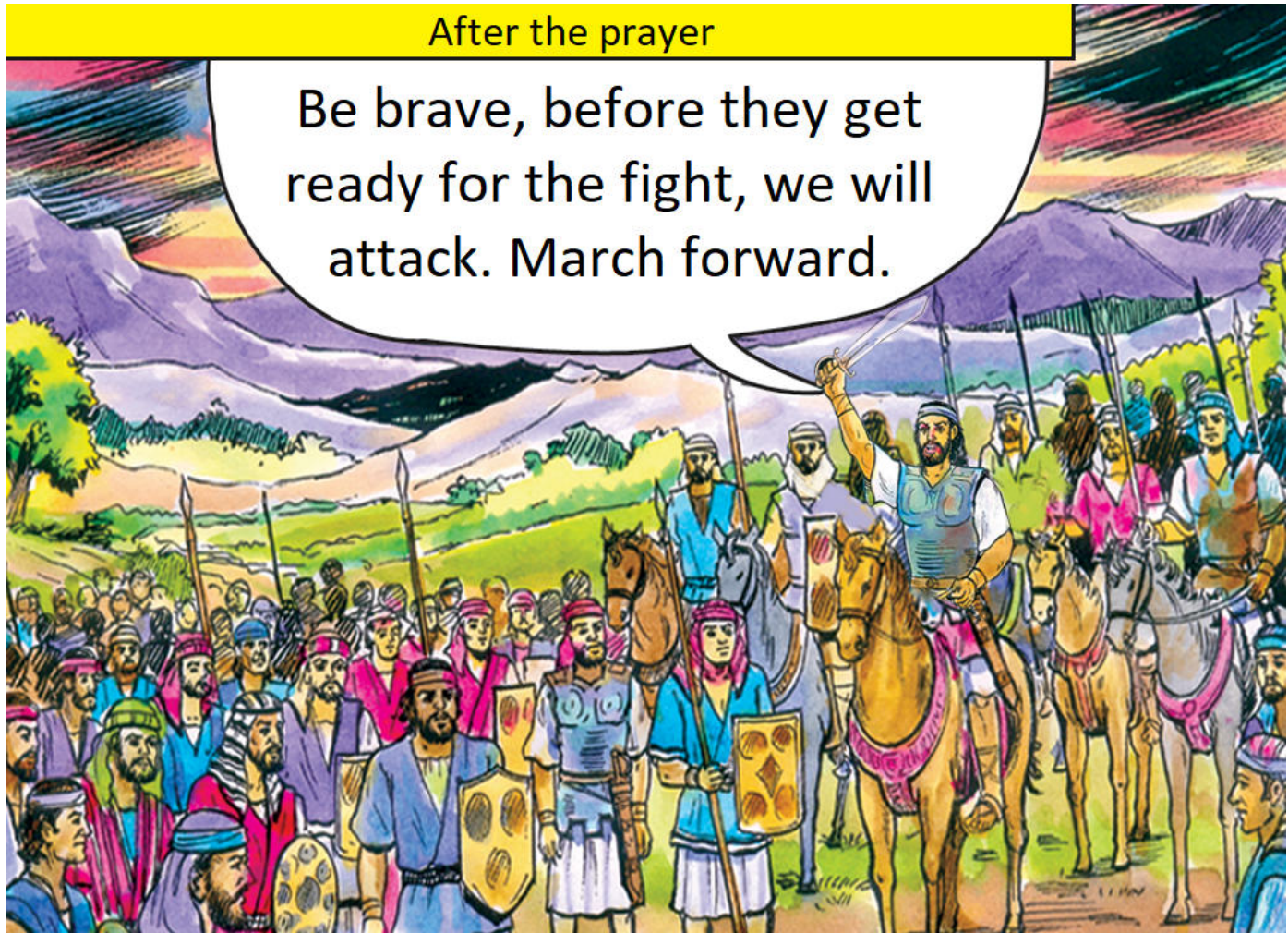
Lord, our God, you saved Israel from the hands of the Philistines by enabling the little David to kill Goliath the giant. Now, look kindly upon us and give us strength to defeat this immense army which wants to destroy us.



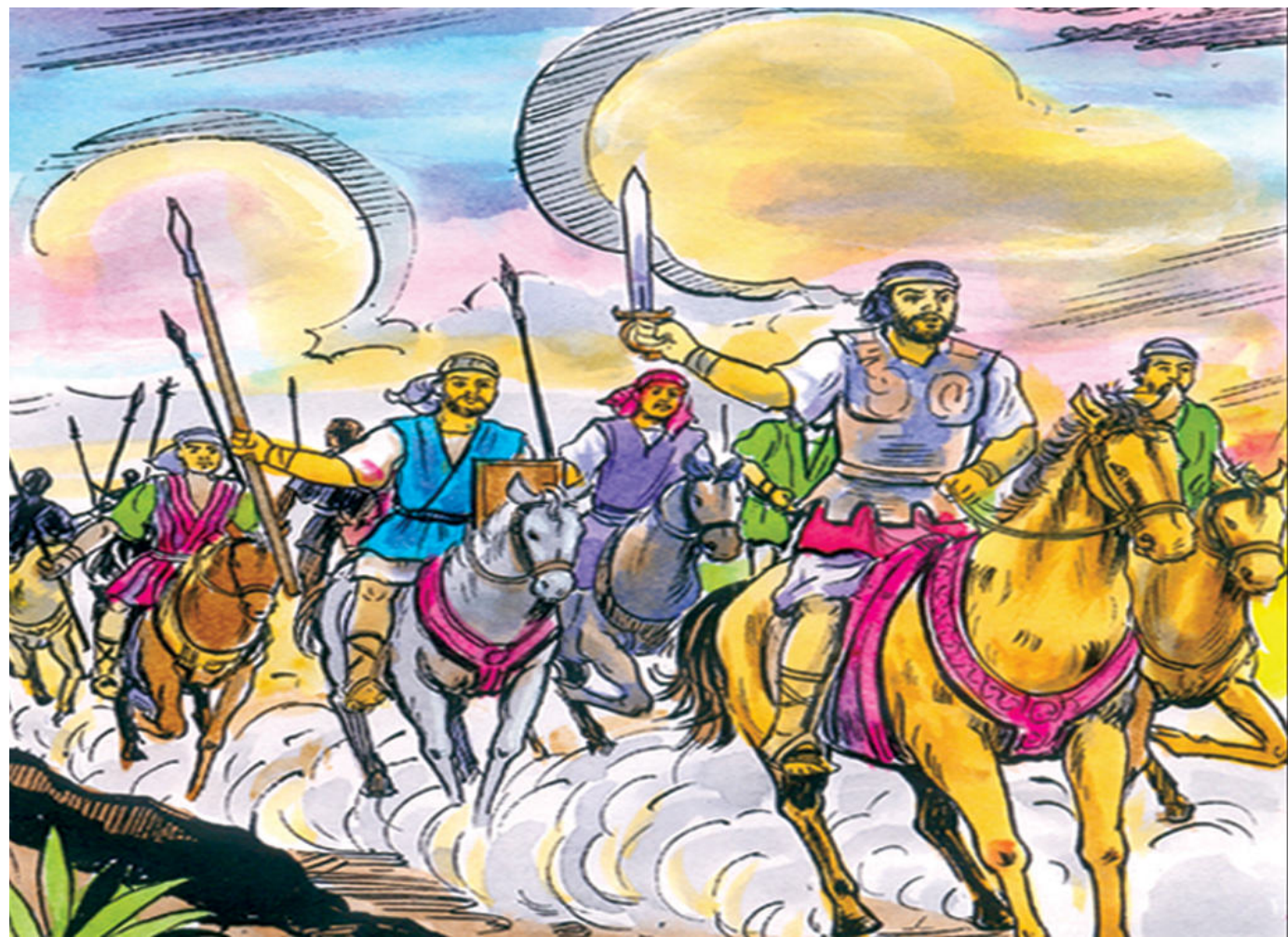


After the prayer

Be brave, before they get ready for the fight, we will attack. March forward.









A furious battle followed.

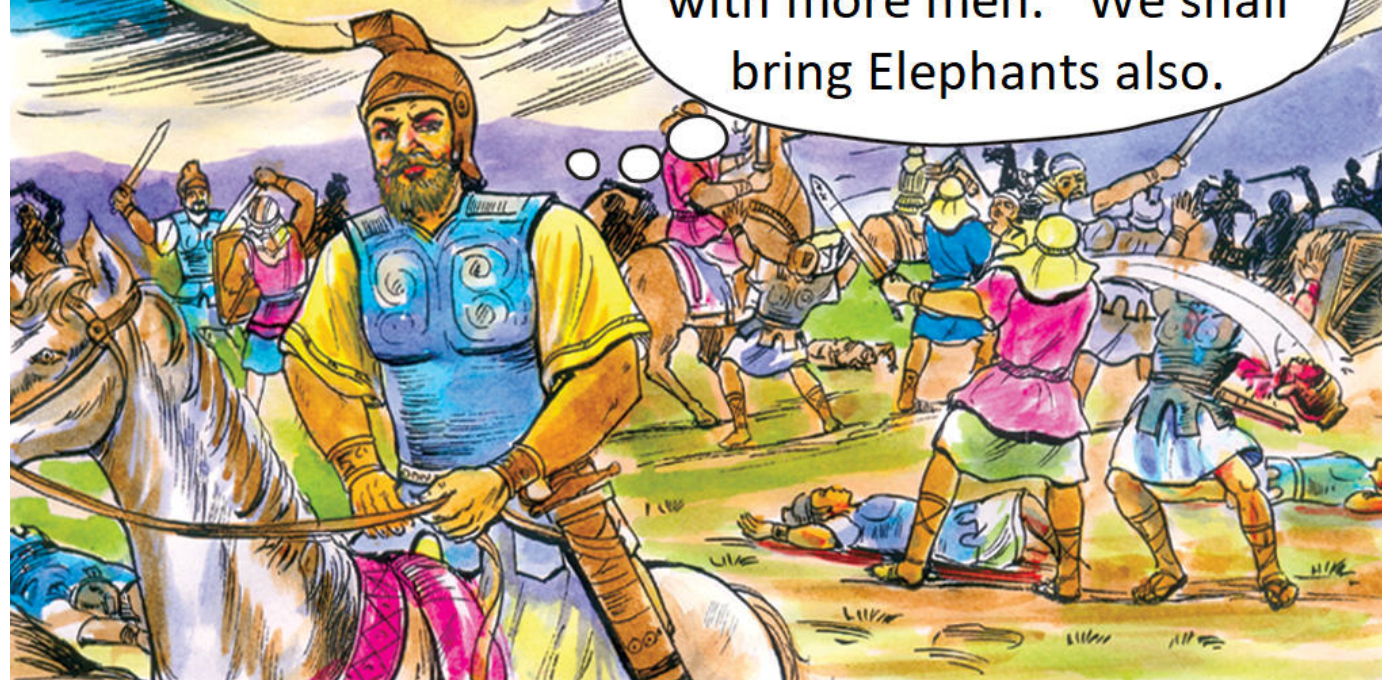
This is the Lion  
of Judah, flee.

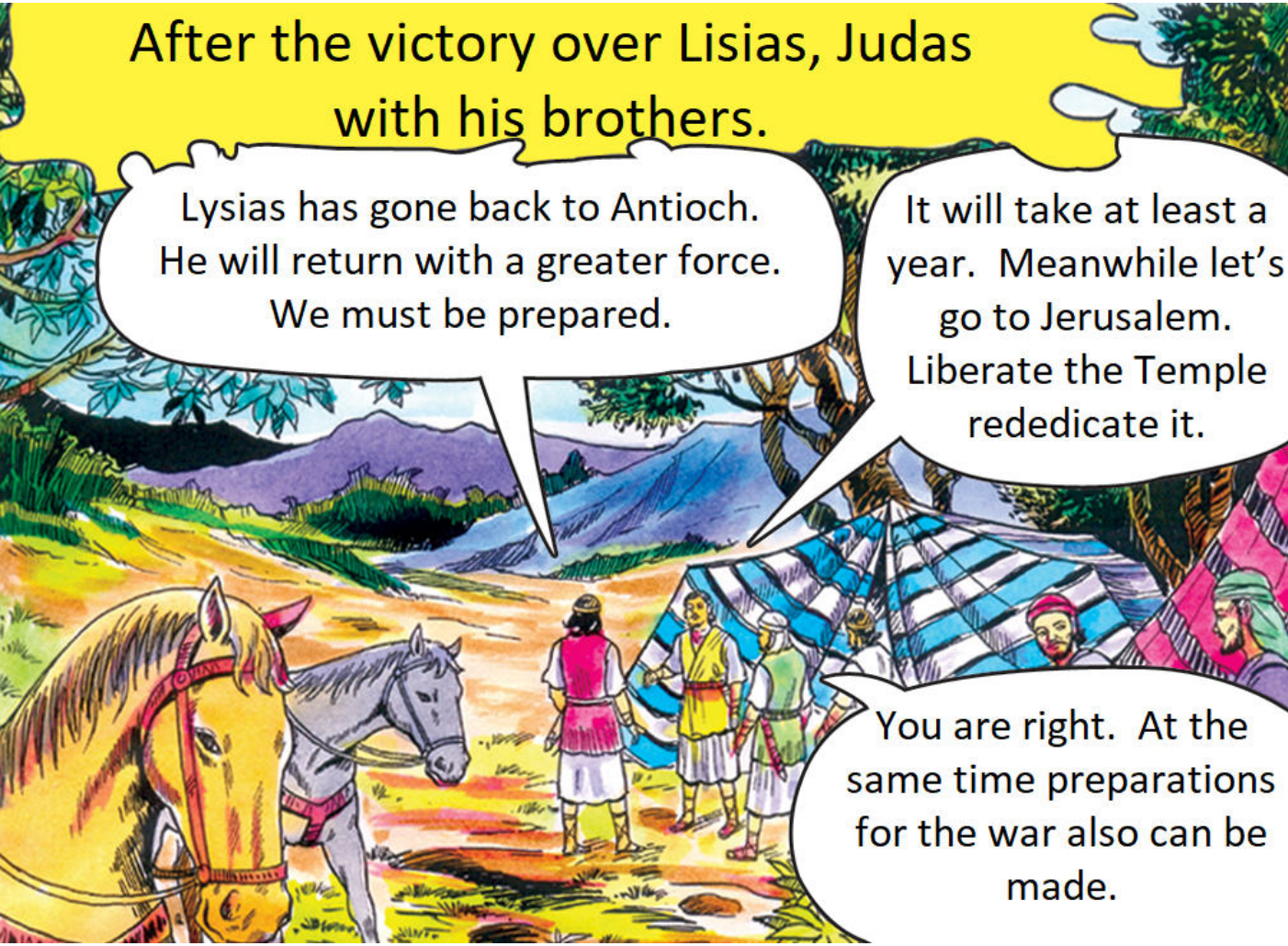




Lisias realized that he was losing the battle.

Let us retreat for now.  
Next year we will return  
with more men. We shall  
bring Elephants also.





After the victory over Lysias, Judas  
with his brothers.

Lysias has gone back to Antioch.  
He will return with a greater force.  
We must be prepared.

It will take at least a  
year. Meanwhile let's  
go to Jerusalem.  
Liberate the Temple  
rededicate it.

You are right. At the  
same time preparations  
for the war also can be  
made.

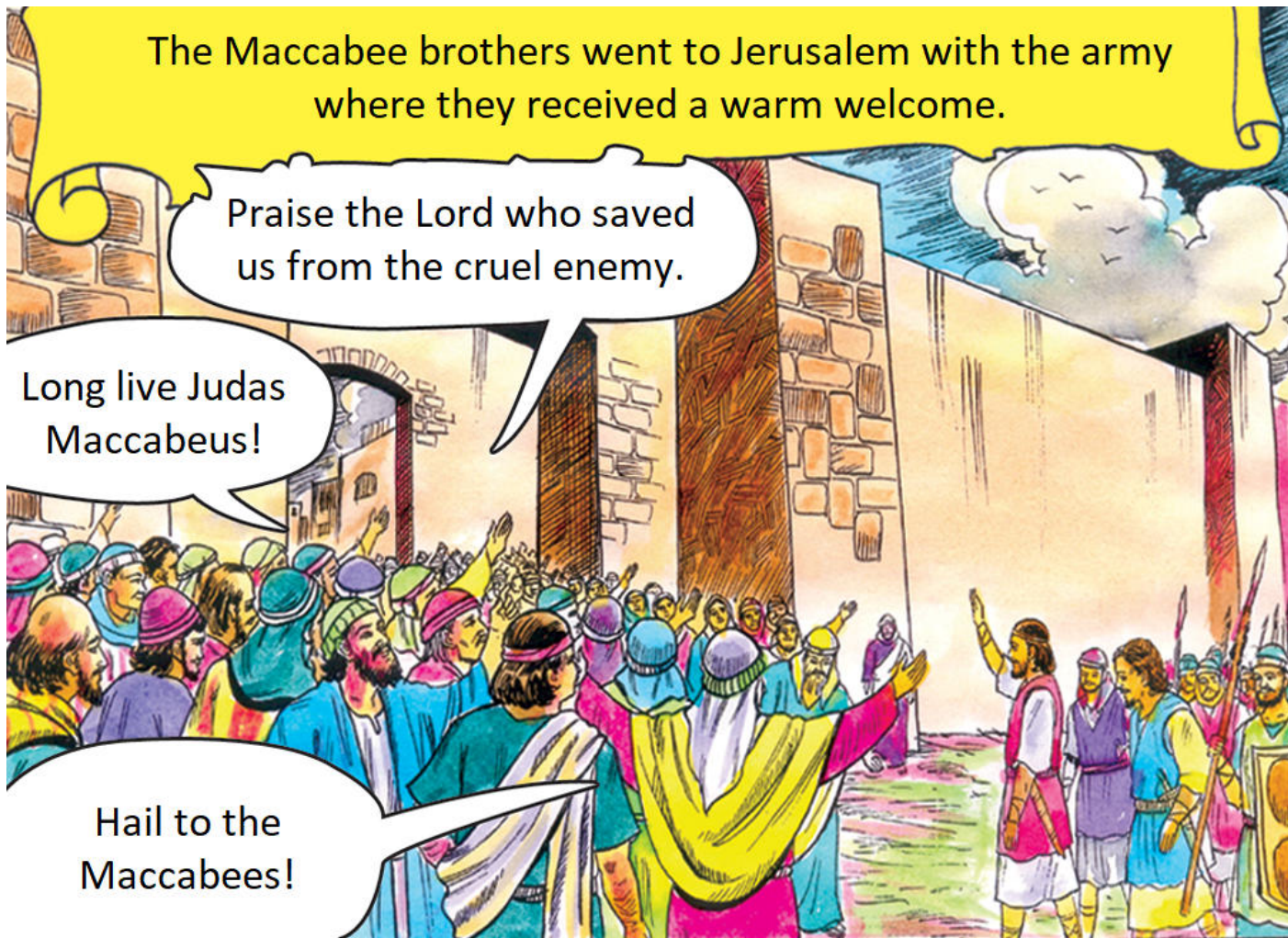


The Maccabee brothers went to Jerusalem with the army where they received a warm welcome.

Praise the Lord who saved us from the cruel enemy.

Long live Judas Maccabeus!

Hail to the Maccabees!





They reached the Temple court.



Let's waste no more time. Start immediately.

O God, is this the condition of thy Holy Temple.

A part of the Syrian army is in the fortress.



I shall block them with a thousand men.  
Let the rest work here.




We will start at the  
Altar.

Jonathan shall take  
charge of the  
construction work.  
Judas will lay siege  
to the fortress.








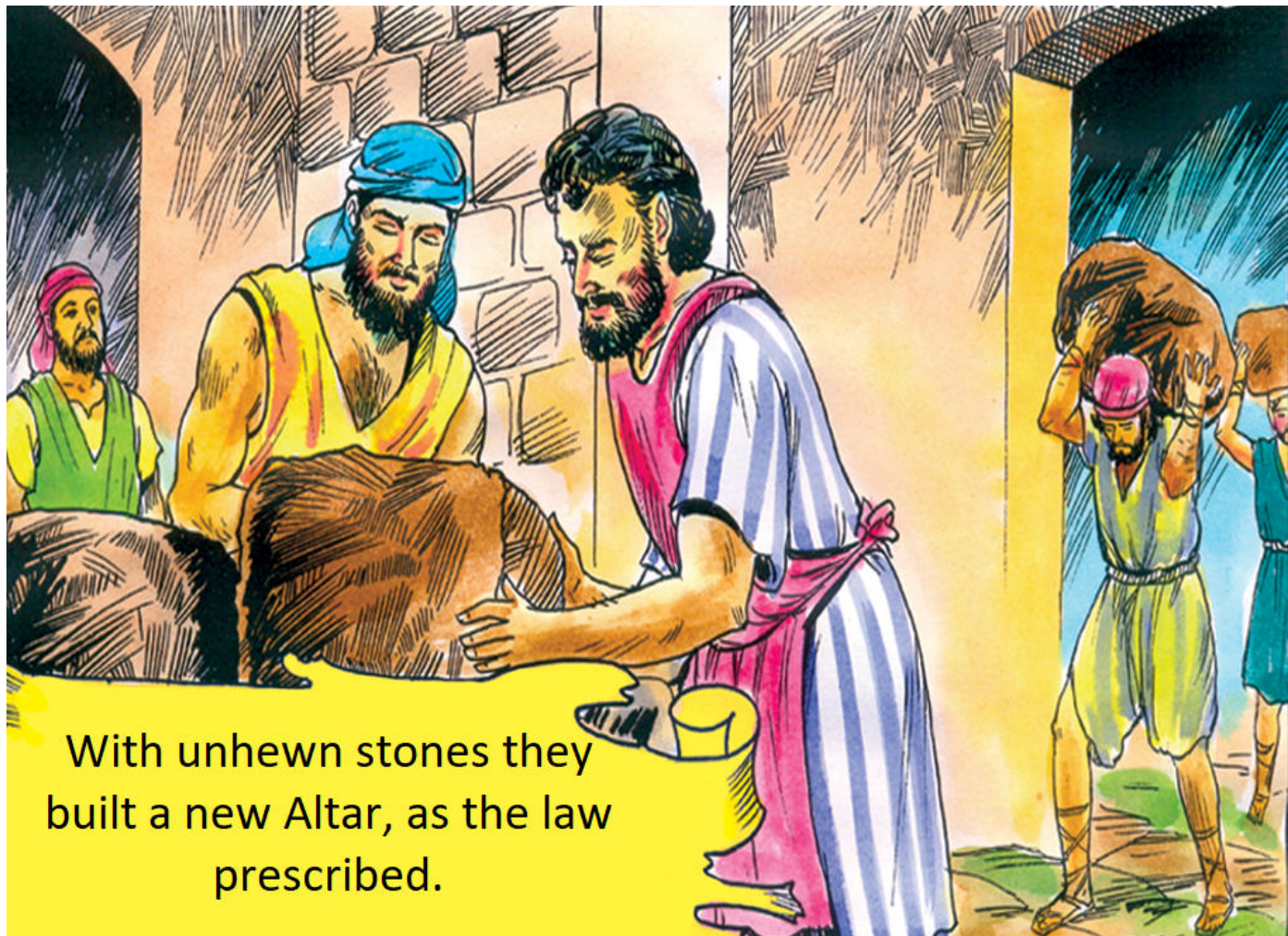
What shall we do  
with this altar?

We will take the stones  
apart and keep them in a  
place until a Prophet comes  
and tell us what to do with  
them. For now, let us build  
a new Altar.



This altar was  
consecrated to the Lord.  
But the Gentiles defiled  
it. So it is unholy. We  
cannot offer sacrifice on  
this altar but cannot  
destroy it either.





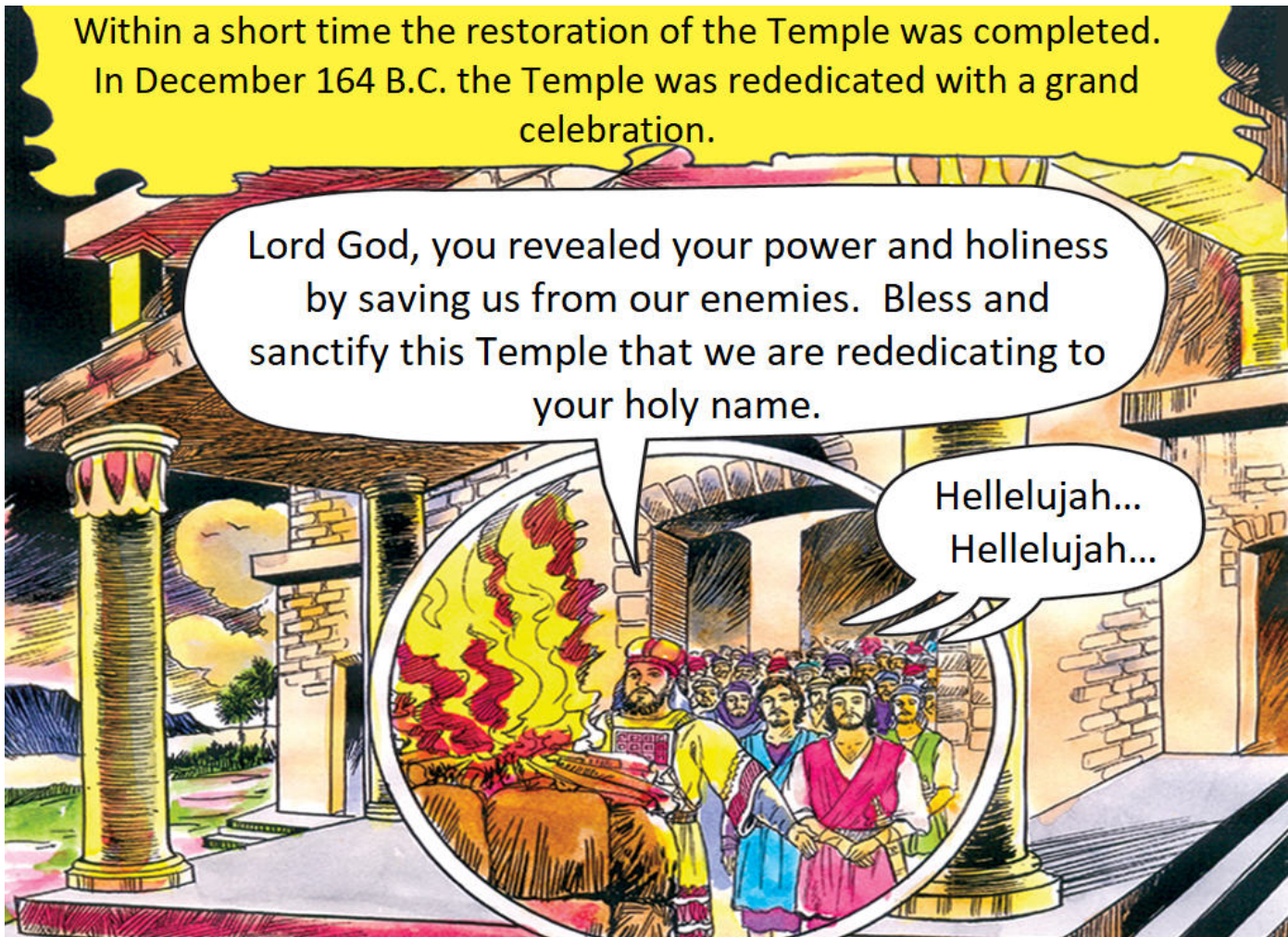
With unhewn stones they  
built a new Altar, as the law  
prescribed.



Within a short time the restoration of the Temple was completed.  
In December 164 B.C. the Temple was rededicated with a grand celebration.

Lord God, you revealed your power and holiness  
by saving us from our enemies. Bless and  
sanctify this Temple that we are rededicating to  
your holy name.

Hallelujah...  
Hallelujah...





After the ceremony.

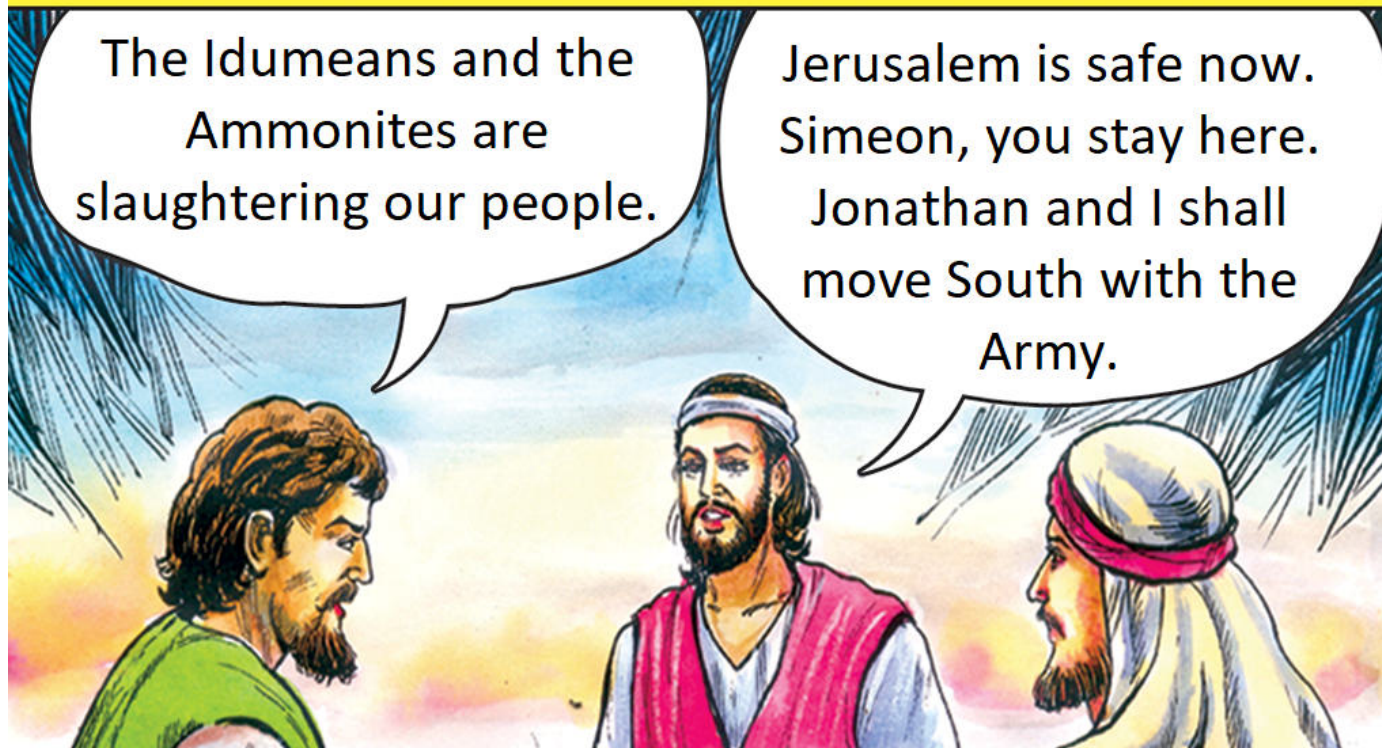
Brethren, this is a very important day in the history of Israel. We must remember this day, the day we rededicated the Temple by celebrating the Feast of Dedication every year.



After the dedication of the Temple they repaired the walls of Jerusalem and posted guards. Hearing about this the neighboring countries started to persecute the Jews living among them, many were imprisoned.

The Idumeans and the Ammonites are slaughtering our people.

Jerusalem is safe now. Simeon, you stay here. Jonathan and I shall move South with the Army.

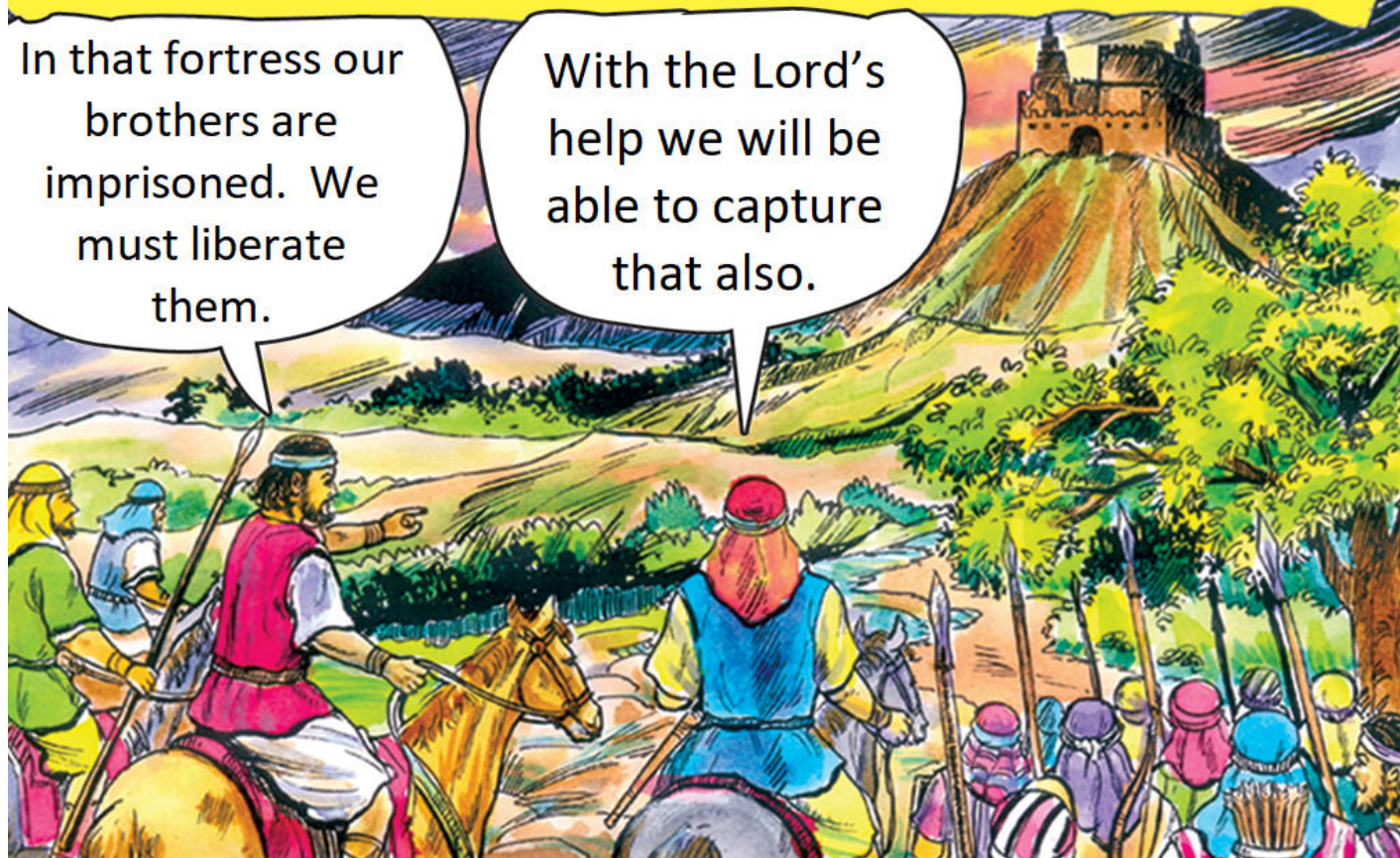




Judas attacked Idumeans and liberated the Jews imprisoned in the fortress. Then he moved to the land of the Ammonites.

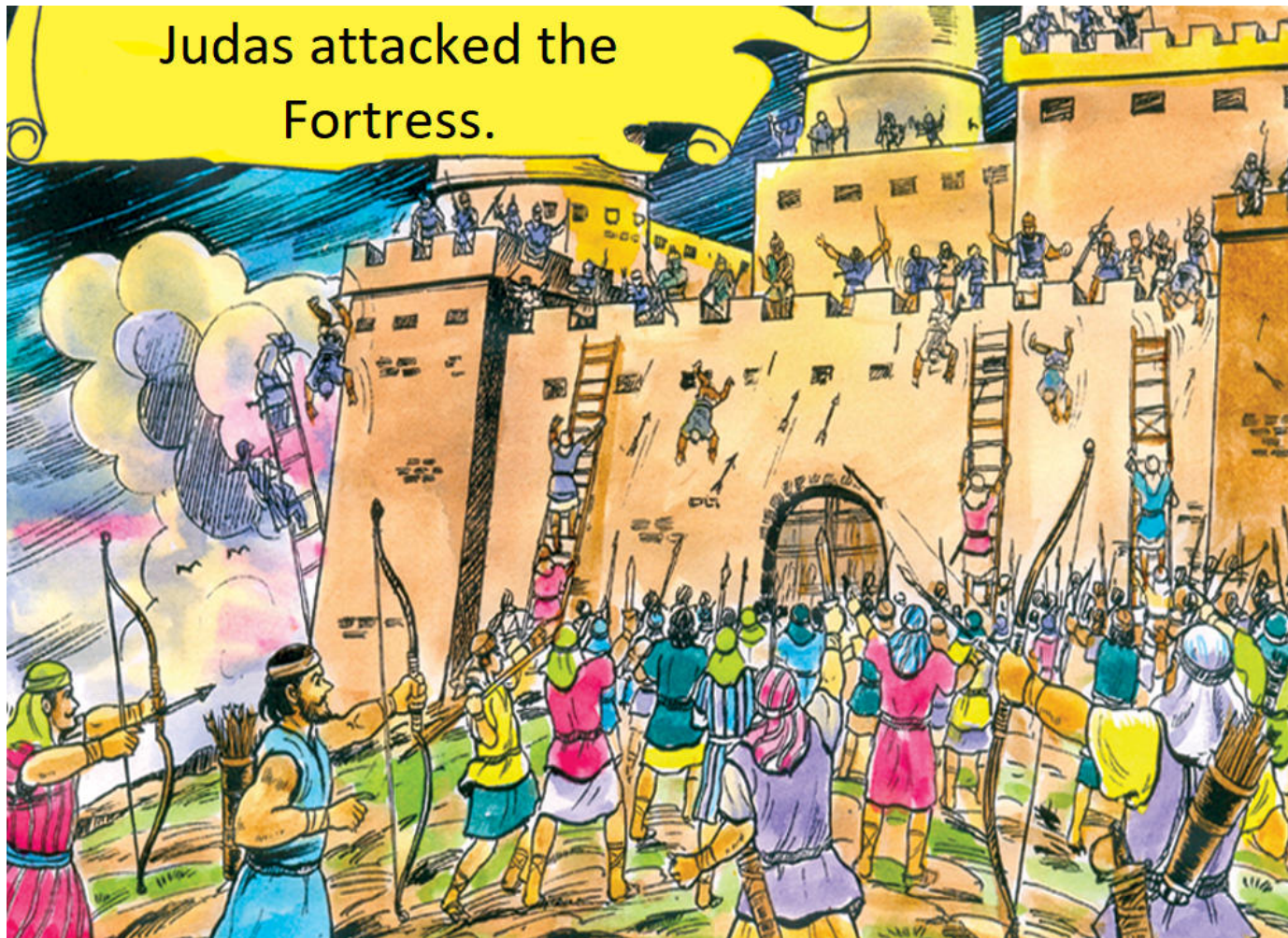
In that fortress our brothers are imprisoned. We must liberate them.

With the Lord's help we will be able to capture that also.





Judas attacked the  
Fortress.

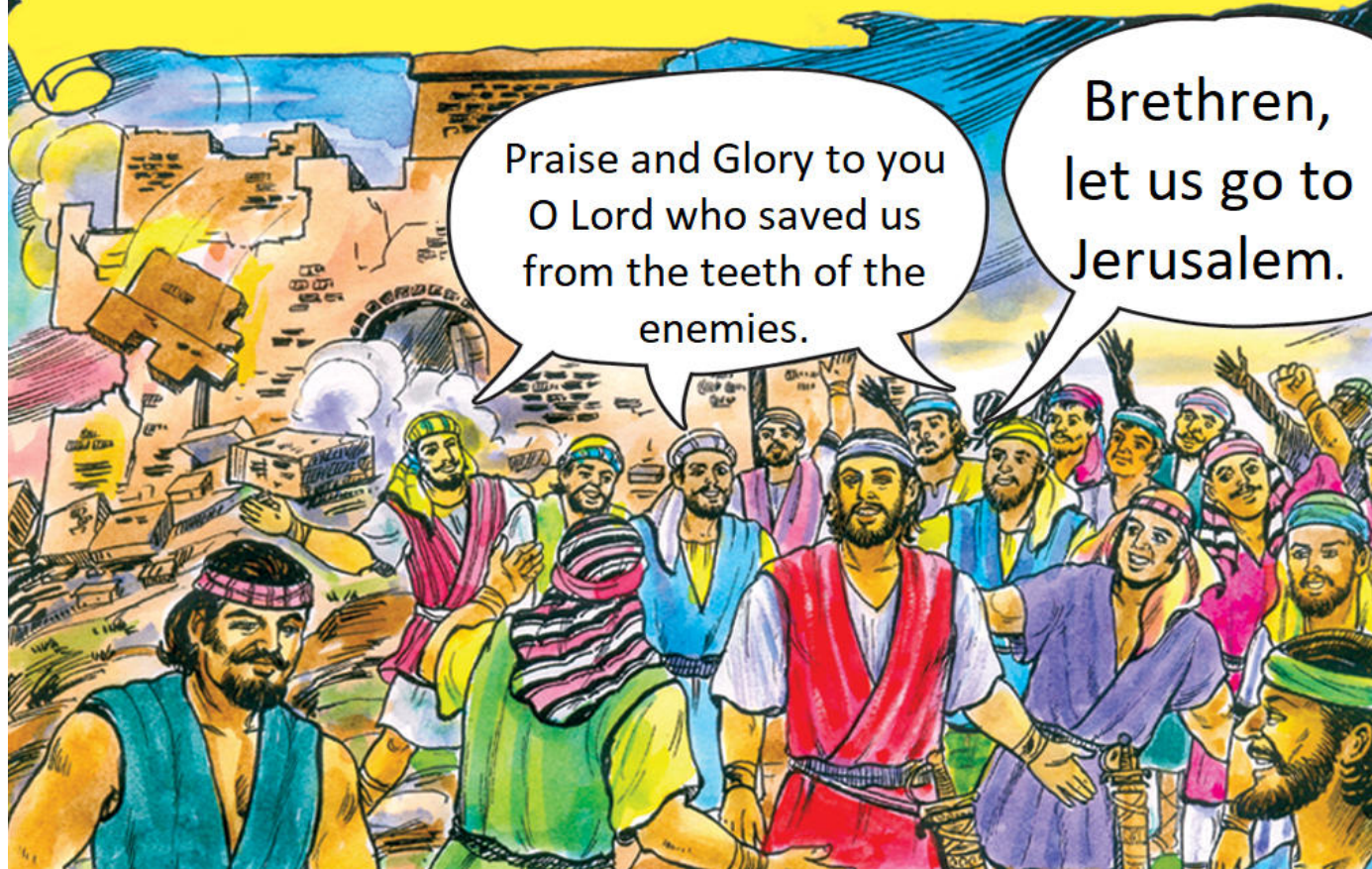




They conquered the Fortress, killed the enemies, liberated the Jews and leveled the walls.

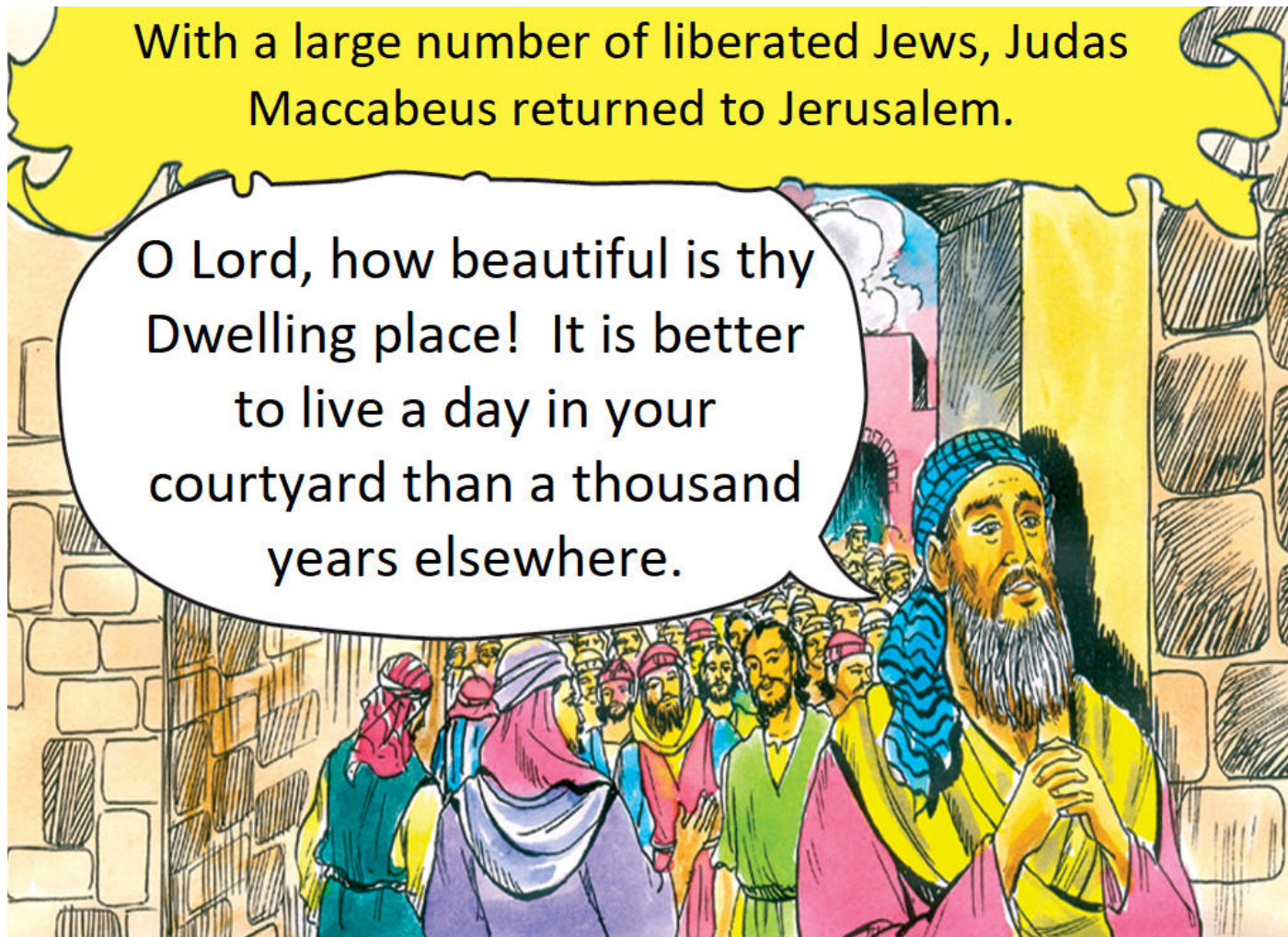
Praise and Glory to you  
O Lord who saved us  
from the teeth of the  
enemies.

Brethren,  
let us go to  
Jerusalem.




With a large number of liberated Jews, Judas Maccabeus returned to Jerusalem.

O Lord, how beautiful is thy Dwelling place! It is better to live a day in your courtyard than a thousand years elsewhere.







Brethren, we  
cannot rest yet.  
Lysias is  
coming.

We have to  
store up food and  
weapons. Enlist as  
many men as  
possible in the  
army. The situation  
is critical. Cry out  
to the Lord with all  
your might.

The battles of Maccabeus, his heroic death, the victories of Jonathan, and Simeon, and their tragic ends.

Next Story

**The Maccabees**



# Questions

1. How did the Syrian king persecute the Israelites?
2. Why did Eleazar refuse to eat mutton?
3. How did the mother encourage her seven sons to accept Martyrdom?
4. Name the town Mattathias lived?
5. Name the five sons of Mattathias.
6. What does the name Maccabeus mean?
7. Explain the origin of Pharisees.
8. Why did Maccabeus take up arms?
9. What did they decide to do with the stones of the Altar?
10. What did the feast of dedication Commemorate?

# 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