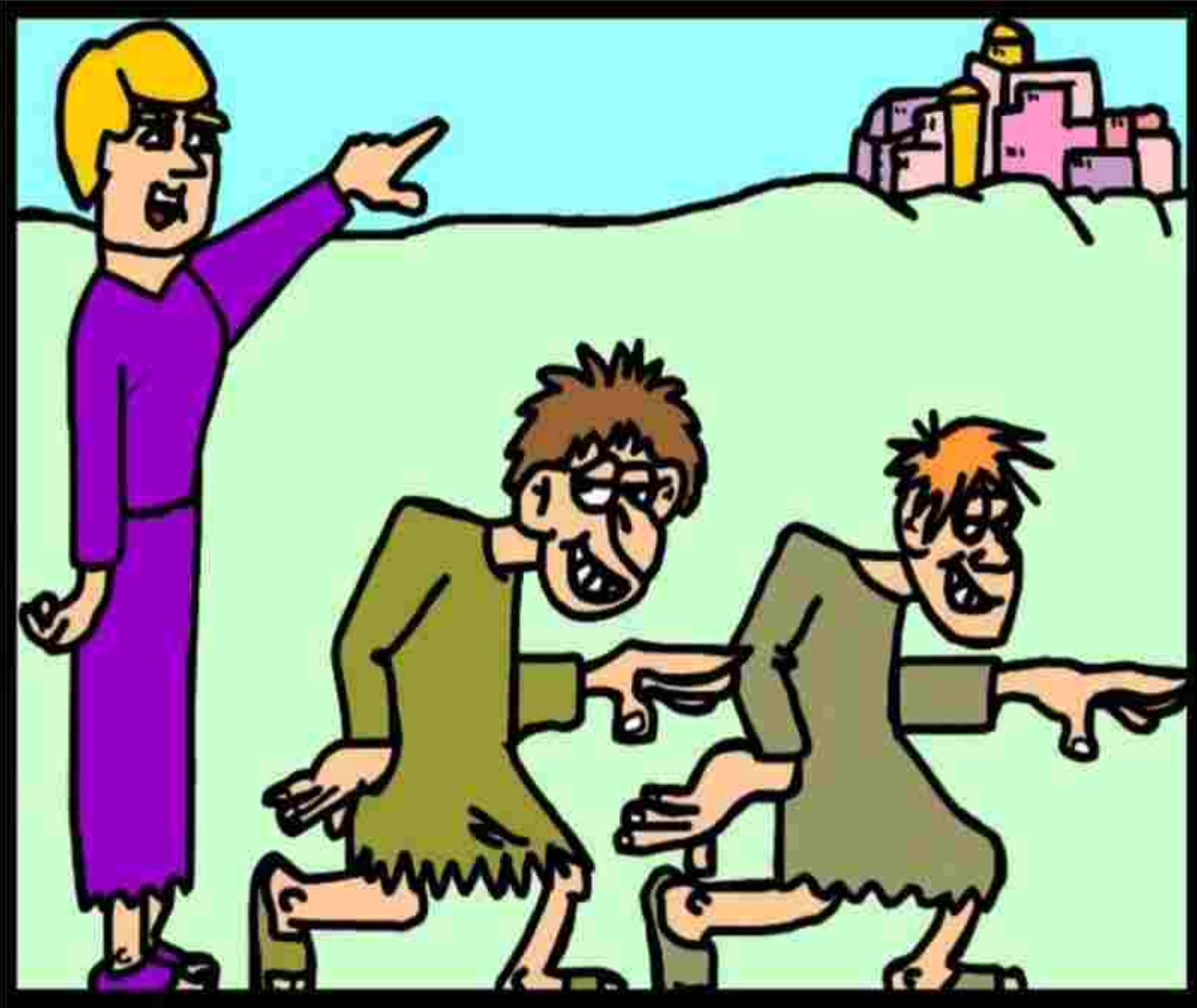


Defeat at Ai

(A story based on Joshua 6:18-19, Joshua 7)

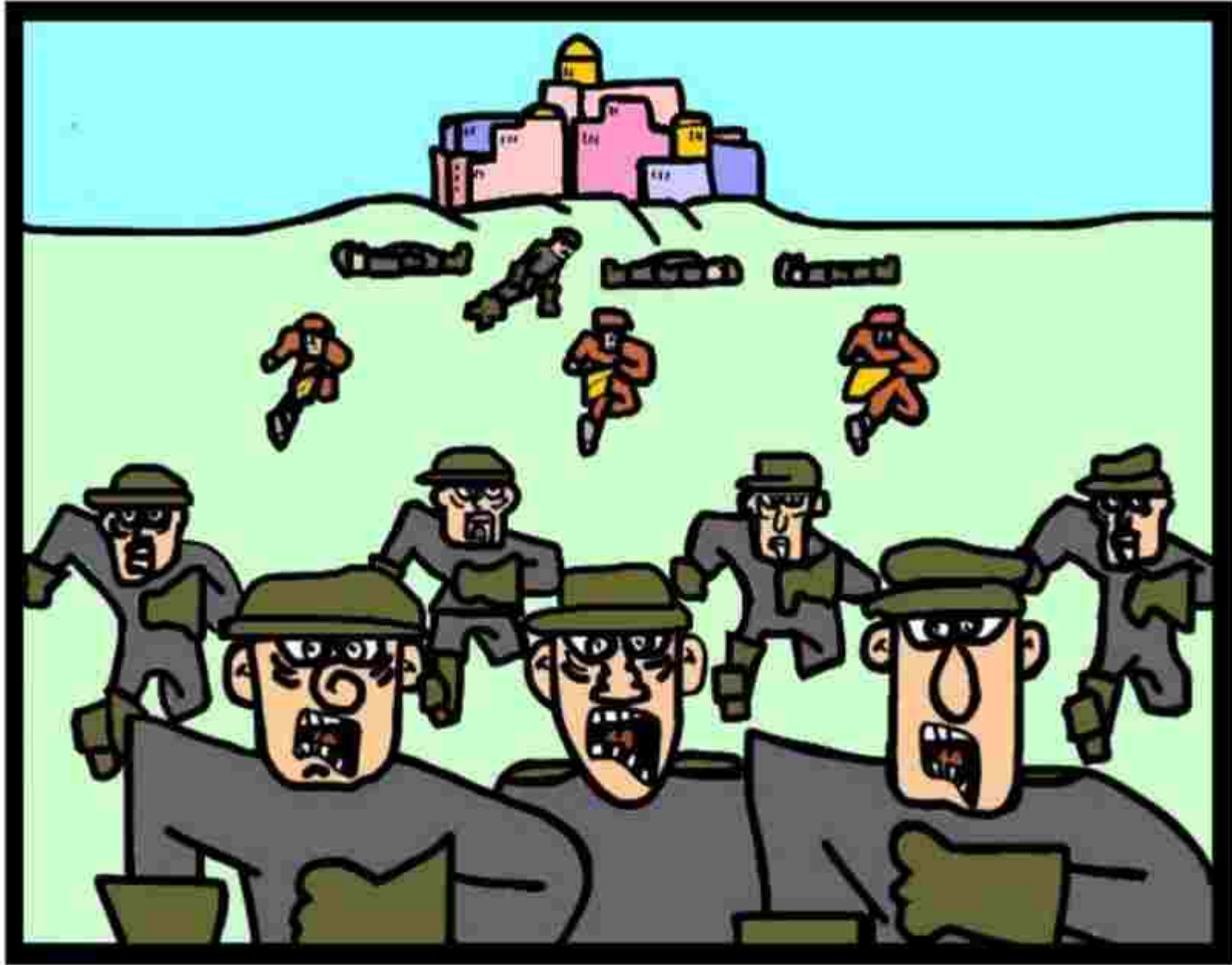
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After the victory at Jericho Joshua sent spies to the next town, a little town called Ai.



"Joshua," said the spies when they returned. "Ai is a small town. We can win with just two or three thousand men." So Joshua followed their advice and sent three thousand men to fight.



But rather than win the battle easily, Joshua's men ran for their lives and the people of Ai killed thirty-six of them. Joshua tore his clothes and he and the other leaders fell on their faces and prayed.



"Oh Lord why did you bring us here, so the enemy can kill us? Now all the people in this land will surround us and kill us!" prayed Joshua.



"Get up!" said the Lord. "Why are you lying on your face? Someone from your people has sinned. They were not to take anything from the City of Jericho for themselves, but they did. That's why they couldn't win against their enemies. I won't be with you anymore unless you get rid of the stolen stuff."



The next day all the people of Israel gathered together as the Lord had commanded. The Lord narrowed it down to the tribe of Judah and eventually a man named Achan was picked.



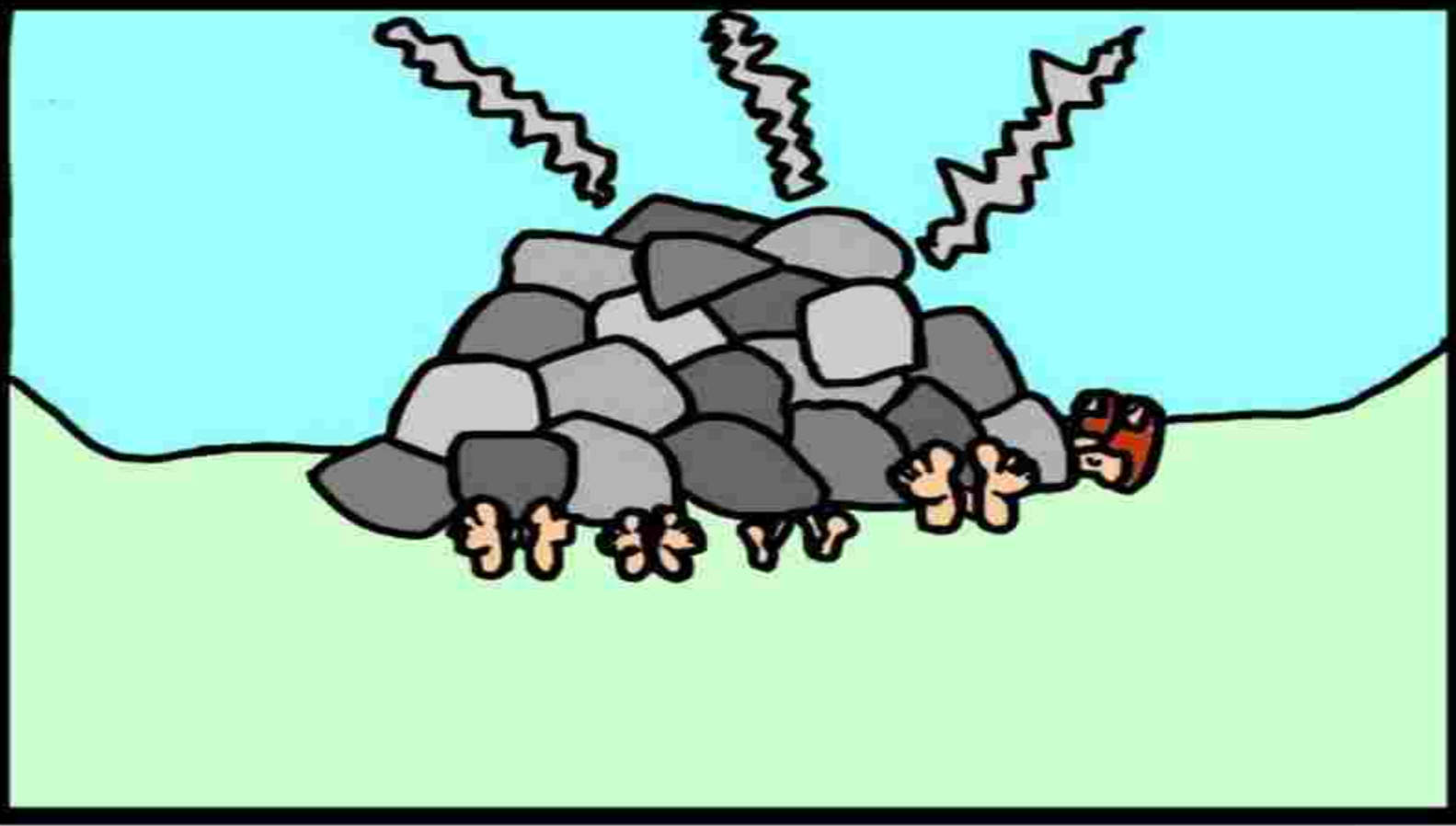
"Achan!" gasped Joshua. "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel and tell Him what you did! Tell me what you did!" Achan answered, "It's true! I sinned against the Lord and this is what I did."



When we conquered Jericho I saw a beautiful suit, two hundred pieces of silver and a big wedge of gold. I wanted them, so I took them," said Achan. "I hid them in the ground under my tent."



All the treasures from Jericho were supposed to have been collected and given to God's house. Joshua's men went and found the treasures under Achan's tent. "You caused us a lot of troubles!" said Joshua.



They put the stolen stuff, Achan, his family and all he had in a nearby valley. Then all the people threw stones at Achan and his family until they were dead. They set them on fire and put a heap of stones on top of them. After this the Lord was with the people of Israel again and they easily won the battle against the people of Ai.



Lord, help me to remember that obeying you is the most important thing and that you will give to me everything I need.