

MAGDALA, 2 B.C.



YOU SHOULD BE IN BED, LITTLE ONE.

I CAN'T SLEEP.

COME HERE.

ABBA?



DOES YOUR HEAD HURT AGAIN?

NO.

ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT THE BIG NEW STAR? IT'S OVER THERE NOW...

NO.



WHY CAN'T YOU SLEEP?

I'M SCARED.

HEY, WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE'RE SCARED?

WE SAY THE WORDS.



ADONAI'S WORDS, FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH...

"THUS SAYS THE LORD WHO CREATED YOU, O JACOB, AND HE WHO FORMED YOU, O ISRAEL: FEAR NOT--"

COME NOW, LET ME HEAR YOU SAY IT. I LIKE YOUR PRETTY VOICE.



"--FEAR NOT, FOR I HAVE REDEEMED YOU; I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME; YOU ARE MINE."

THAT'S RIGHT.



CITY OF CAPERNAUM,
28 YEARS LATER



HELP ME!
SHE TRIED TO
KILL ME--

AUGH!



HELP ME!
SOMEBODY,
HELP ME!

WHAT
IS GOING
--?!





WHOA.

FORGIVE ME, RABBI-- WE MUST STOP.



I CAN SEE THAT.

MAY I ASK THE MEANING OF THIS?

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SAY HELLO?



RESPECTED TEACHER, "NICODEMUS," IS IT?

I'M ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

ONLY ROMAN BUSINESS IS OFFICIAL BUSINESS.



MY NAME IS QUINTUS.

I'M THE PRAETOR OF CAPERNAUM. I SERVE THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, AND PILATE.



I SERVE ONLY GOD.



YES, YES. SO DO YOUR ENEMIES, THE SADDUCEES, THE ESSENES, THE ZEALOTS.

ROGUE PREACHERS IN THE WILDERNESS RAVING ABOUT A COMING MESSIAH...

THEY'RE ALL VYING FOR THE PEOPLE'S AFFECTION.



WHAT DO YOU WANT, QUINTUS?

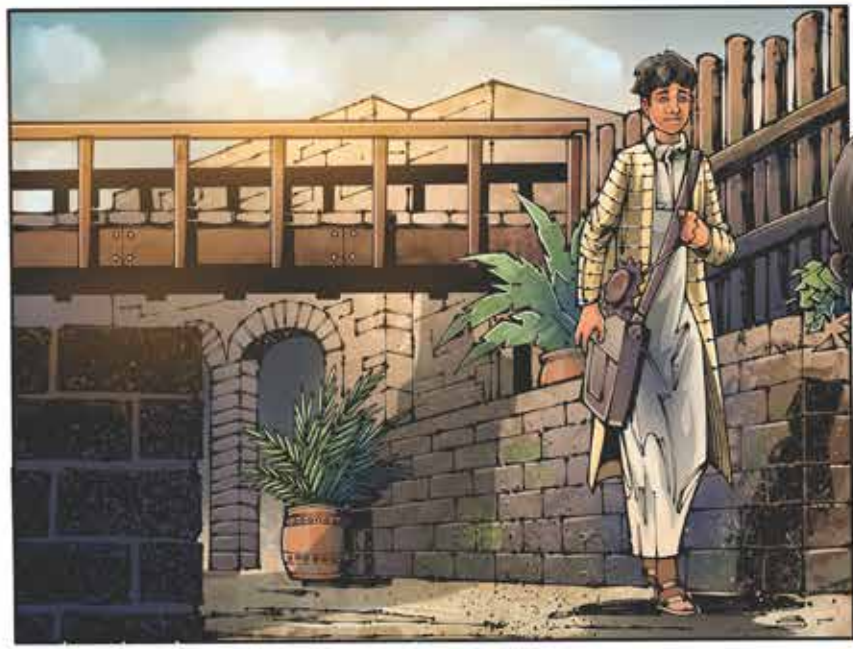
SIMPLE.

I BELIEVE TAXES ARE GOING UNPAID BY THE CITY'S FISHERMEN. IF YOU HELP ME, I WILL HELP THE PHARISEES CONTINUE TO THRIVE.





THE HOME OF MATTHEW,
THE TAX COLLECTOR



NOW I'M
READY FOR
THE DAY.



BLEECH!

PSST!



MATTHEW!

KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.

BEG PARDON, TAX MAN, BUT IT'S ME THAT DON'T WANNA BE SEEN WITH YOU, REMEMBER?

HEY! DON'T THROW THOSE SANDALS AWAY!

THEY'RE WORTH A MONTH'S WAGES FOR ALL MY SONS PUT TOGETHER!

THESE ARE MY PROPERTY, I DO WITH THEM WHAT I WISH.

I PAY YOU TO DRIVE.

SIFT THROUGH TRASH ON YOUR OWN TIME.



DRIVING YOU'S A BIT OF BOTH NOW, ISN'T IT?

HEH. IF ANY CITIZEN *DOES* ASK ABOUT MY CARGO, I CAN TELL THE TRUTH--IT'S THE BIGGEST PILE OF DUNG IN ALL CAPERNAUM!



I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO MY ANNUAL VISIT TO CAPERNAUM, AND TO YOUR SEA OF GALILEE. IT IS TRULY THE ENVY OF THE KINGDOM.

IT BOASTS THE MOST EXQUISITE FISH.

THE ACADEMY



HOW UNFORTUNATE THAT THOSE WHO DO THE ACTUAL FISHING ARE UNHOLY...

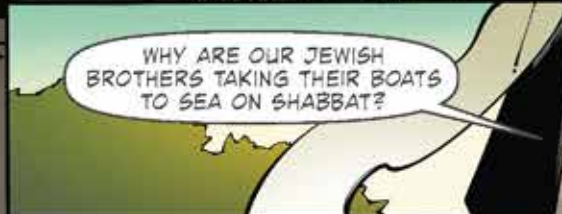
...GIVEN TO GAMBLING IN SECRET DENS, FOUL-MOULTHED...



...EVEN FISHING ON THE SABBATH.



CAN WE EAT THE CATCH WITHOUT BEING STAINED BY THE SINS OF THE CATCHER? WHAT GOES INTO THE BODY OF A MAN DEFILES HIM.



WHY ARE OUR JEWISH BROTHERS TAKING THEIR BOATS TO SEA ON SHABBAT?



I ASSURE YOU, THE MESSIAH WILL NOT COME UNTIL THIS WICKEDNESS IS PURGED FROM OUR MIDST.



**STAY
DOWN,
SIMON!!**







I DON'T WANNA DO THIS, JEHOSEPHAT.

YOU KNOW I LOVE YOUR SISTER MORE THAN ANYTHING. THAT'S WHY I MARRIED HER.

CAN WE PLEASE STOP FIGHTING EVERY WEEK?



ALL RIGHT, SIMON, I'LL STOP FIGHTING YOU.

YOU WILL?

YEAH, BUT MY BROTHER WON'T.

YOUR BROTHER?



"WINE HANDS"?

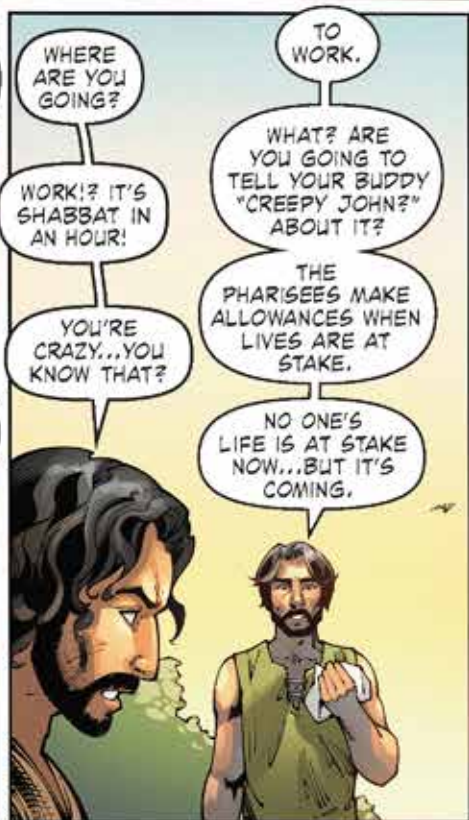
IT SOUNDED BETTER IN MY HEAD.

HOW'S A DOUBLE KNOCKOUT A PUSH IF IT'S TWO-ON-ONE?! MADE UP RULE RIGHT THERE.

I'M SO FOOLISH.

WE LOST OUR MONEY.

IT'S MY FAULT. I TALKED YOU INTO IT. TAX DAY'S COMING.



TO WORK.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

WHAT? ARE YOU GOING TO TELL YOUR BUDDY "CREEPY JOHN?" ABOUT IT?

WORK!? IT'S SHABBAT IN AN HOUR!

THE PHARISEES MAKE ALLOWANCES WHEN LIVES ARE AT STAKE.

YOU'RE CRAZY... YOU KNOW THAT?

NO ONE'S LIFE IS AT STAKE NOW... BUT IT'S COMING.

THE RED QUARTER

THIS IS THE PLACE. DON'T WORRY, RABBI. WE TOOK OUT THE OTHER LOWLIFES TO PROTECT YOUR DELICATE SENSIBILITIES.

AAAAHHHH!!!

WHAT--
WHAT WAS THAT?

SHMUEL, I NEED MATERIALS. SULFUR, NETTLE, HYSSOP, MANDRAKES, DRIED THISTLE, WORMWOOD.

*MESSIAH WILL DESTROY THE ROMANS!

GO!

YES, TEACHER.

LISTEN... I AGREED TO QUINTUS' REQUEST BECAUSE MY DOING SO WAS NOT A VIOLATION OF MY PRACTICE. AND I WILL PERFORM THIS TASK FOR THIS POOR WOMAN'S SAKE,

BUT I WANT IT NOTED FOR YOUR SUPERIORS THAT MY BEING...USED LIKE THIS IS AN EXCEPTION, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

SO--ARE WE GOING INSIDE NOW?

YES

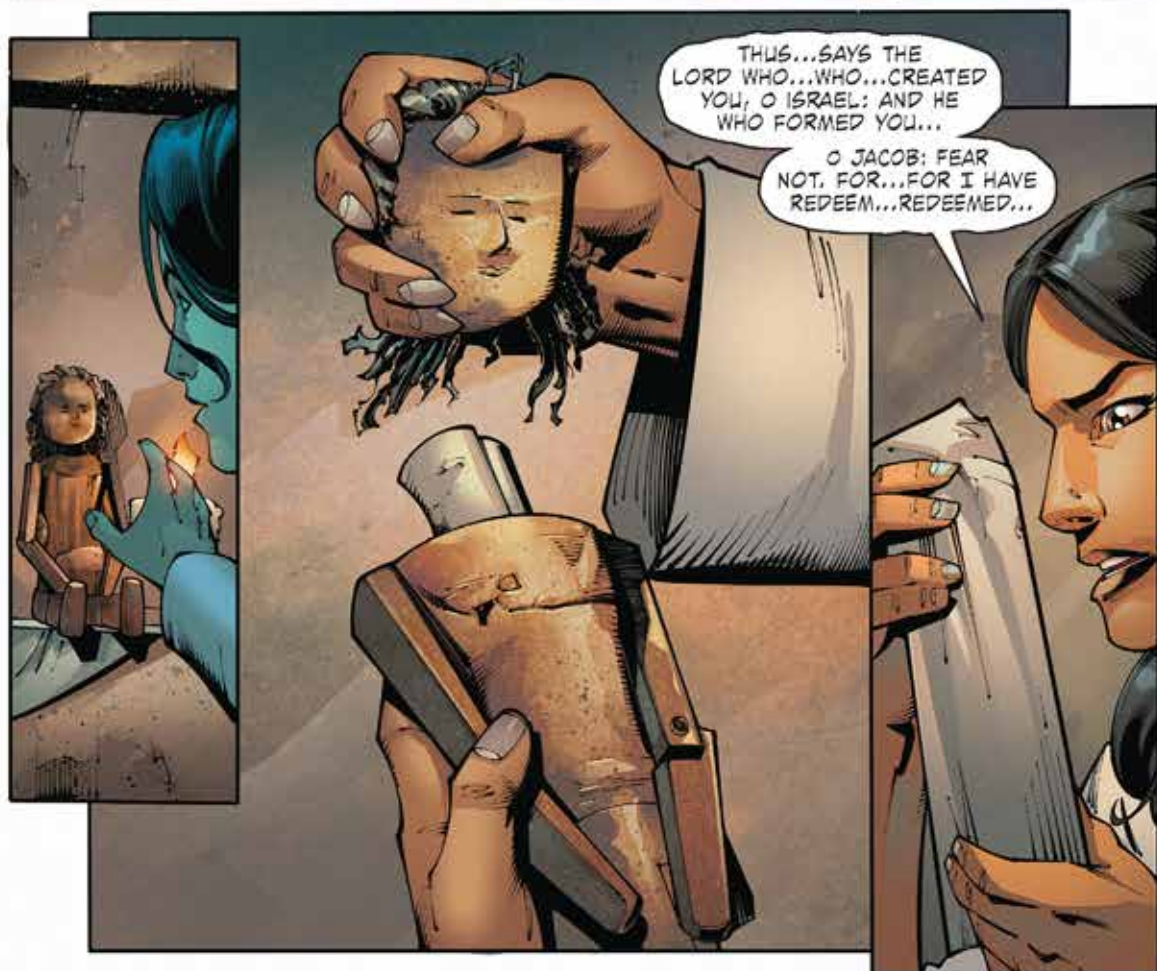




I ADJURE YOU, BY THE HOLY ANGELS MICHAEL, GABRIEL, RAFAEL, URIEL, REZIEL, BY 72 NAMES I ADJURE YOU, CURSED DRAGON AND ALL DIABOLICAL LEGIONS, COME OUT!

I COMMAND YOU, IN COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB, MOSES, AND ALL-POWERFUL EL-SHADDAI!
BE GONE EVERY IMPURE SPIRIT!





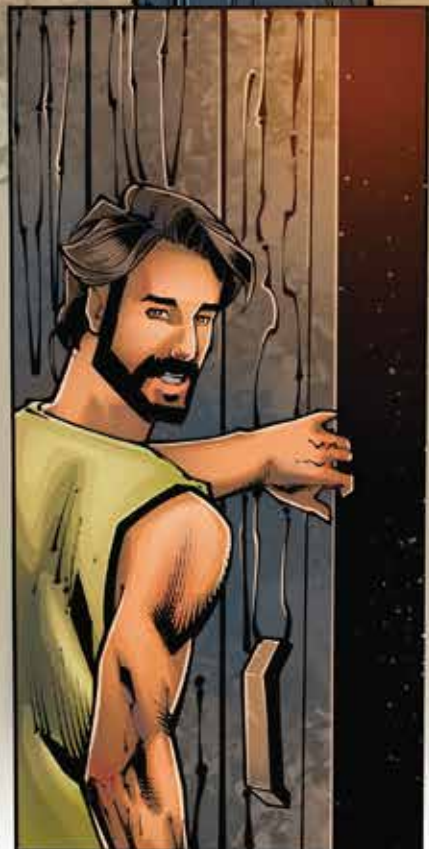
THUS...SAYS THE LORD WHO...WHO...CREATED YOU, O ISRAEL; AND HE WHO FORMED YOU...

O JACOB: FEAR NOT, FOR...FOR I HAVE REDEEMED...REDEEMED...



FEAR

MEANWHILE, IN
ANOTHER PART
OF TOWN





SIMON!

OH, HELLO, LOVE...

DON'T "HELLO, LOVE" ME! YOU--

WHY DID YOU BEAT UP JEHOSEPHAT?!



WHAT?!

MY OWN BROTHER.



HE ATTACKED ME! AGAIN!

HE NEEDS TO KNOW THE HUSBAND OF HIS SISTER IS STRONG.

OKAY? AND ANDREW HAD NO RIGHT TO JUMP ABRAHAM FROM BEHIND.



WHERE ARE YOU GETTING THIS?

HA HA! MY BROTHERS! THEY ARE SUCH FANTASTIC STORYTELLERS, NO?

THEY WENT INTO SUCH GREAT DETAIL. YOU MUST HAVE REALLY GIVEN THEM A POUNDING!





PARDON ME FOR SAYING SO, LOVE... BUT YOUR FAMILY...

DON'T! DON'T SAY WE ARE TROUBLED IN THE MIND, SIMON. WE ARE COLORFUL AND FUN!

OKAY, OKAY.

YOU ARE STOIC AND PURPOSEFUL.



STOIC, HUH?

I LIKE IT.

YOU AND ME, FIRE AND WATER.

I LIKE IT.



HOW WAS FISHING?

HUH?

YEAH, I PULLED...UH... "SOMETHING" IN. COULD BE BIG.





YOUR ACCOUNT IS DELINQUENT BY...

40 DAYS.

AT A PENALTY RATE OF TEN PERCENT WEEKLY ...

SIX WEEKS?

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE LUCKY NOT TO BE IN JAIL.



WHAT IS IT?

HE'S SAYING I OWE 60 PERCENT IN PENALTIES ALONE!

SIMON, I CAME WITH ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF WHAT I OWE! I CAN'T EVEN PAY THE...WE'RE RUINED.



THIS WILL COVER ABOUT HALF...OF THE PENALTY BALANCE.

MY RECORDS INDICATE YOU FILED FOR AN EXTENSION NOT ONCE, NOT TWICE--

HALF THE PENALTY?!



GIVE US A SECOND.

LOOK, LET ME TALK TO THE TAX MAN.



NO, YOU'RE JUST GOING TO MAKE IT WORSE.



WHAT IF I TOLD YOU I COULD SAVE THE BOAT AND PUT US BACK IN GOOD STANDING?

REALLY, SIMON? I'M NOT EXACTLY IN THE MOOD FOR JOKES RIGHT NOW.