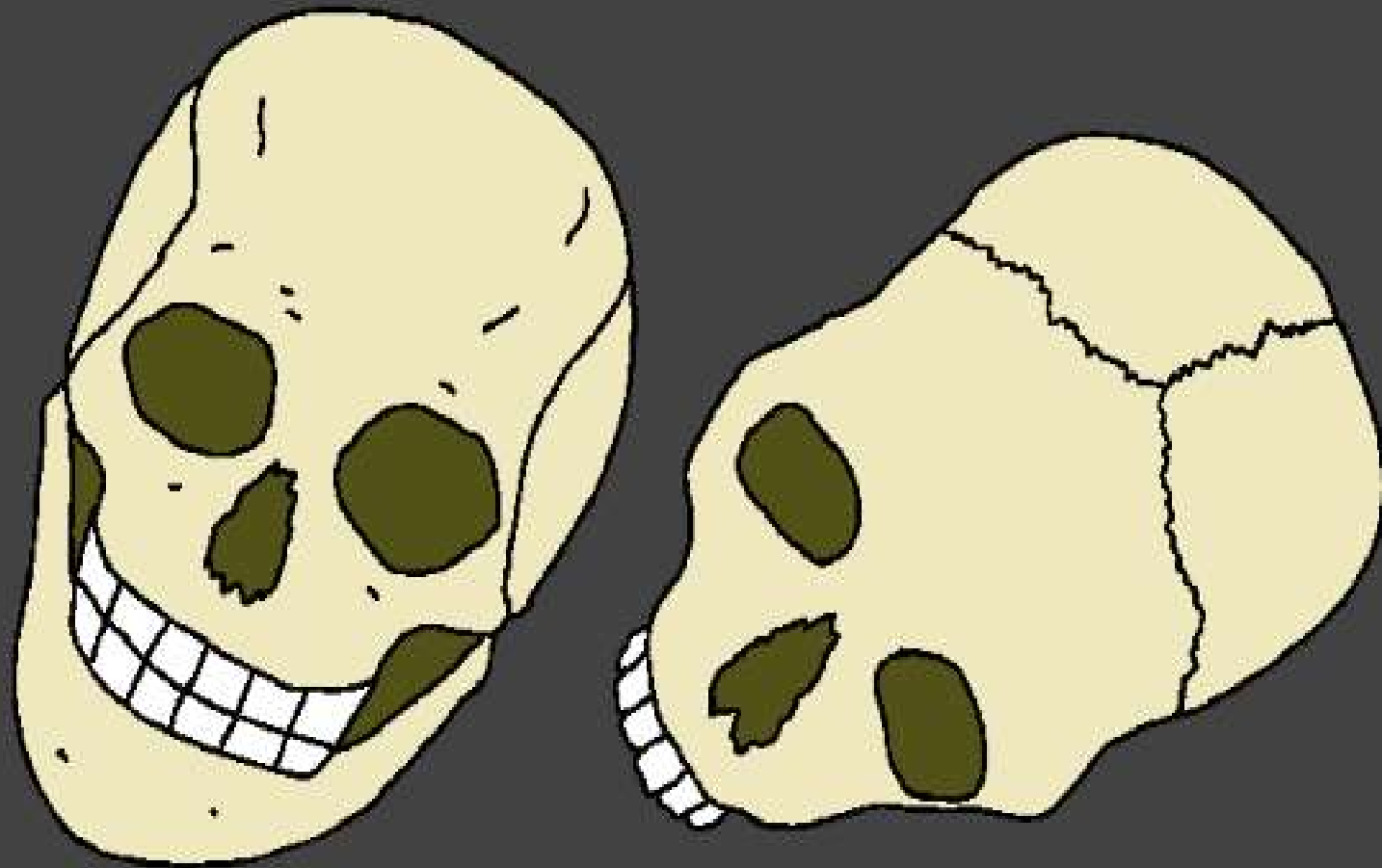
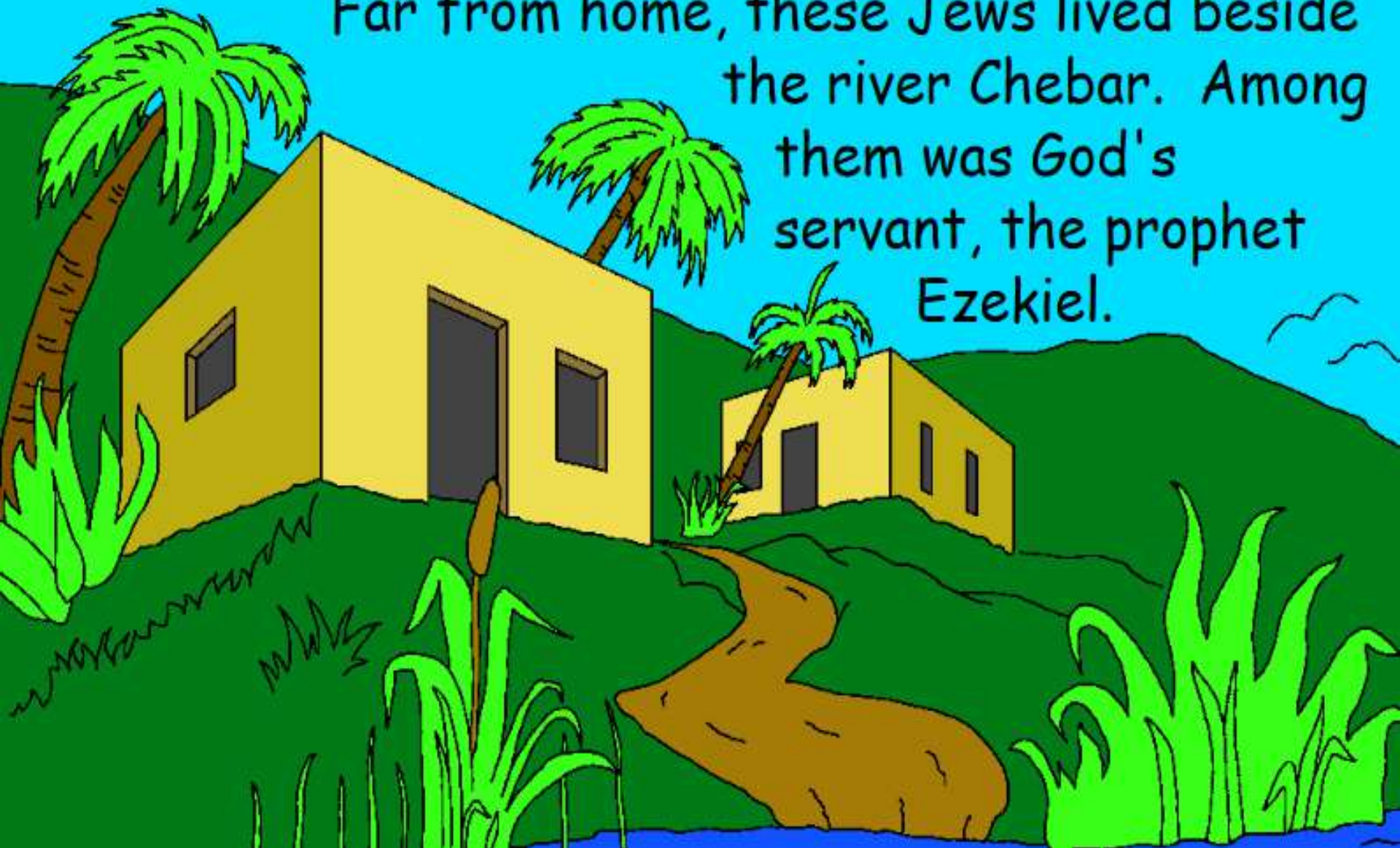


# EZEKIEL: MAN OF VISIONS



Long ago, mighty armies attacked Judah, taking many of God's people back to Babylon as captives.

Far from home, these Jews lived beside the river Chebar. Among them was God's servant, the prophet Ezekiel.

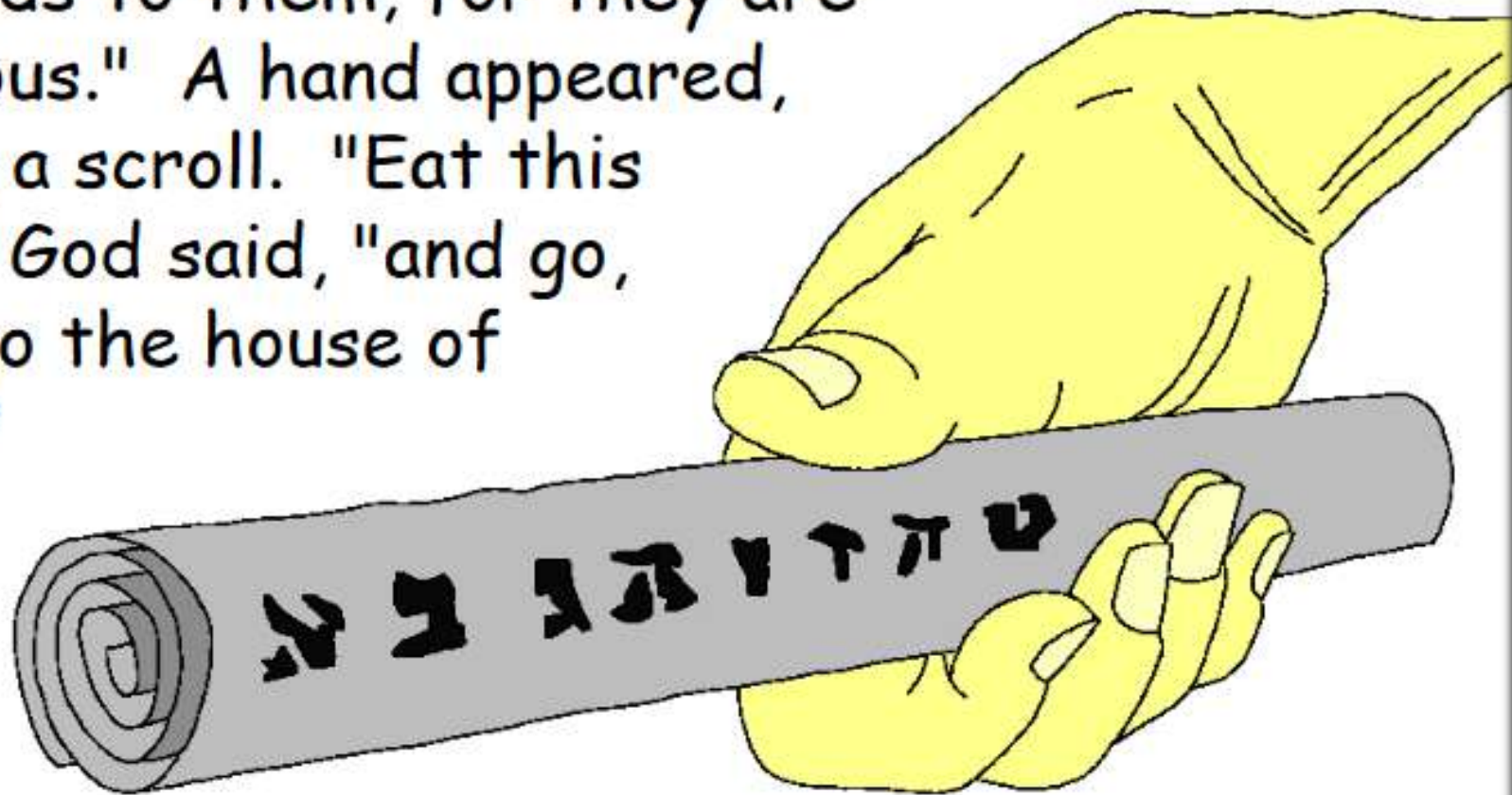




One day, God gave Ezekiel a vision. God's glory appeared as a bright light, in the form of four fiery living creatures. Each had four faces and four wings. Above them was a beautiful sapphire throne, filled with light like blazing rainbows. When Ezekiel saw it, he fell on his face.



God spoke to Ezekiel. "I am sending you to the children of Israel. Speak My words to them, for they are rebellious." A hand appeared, holding a scroll. "Eat this scroll," God said, "and go, speak to the house of Israel."

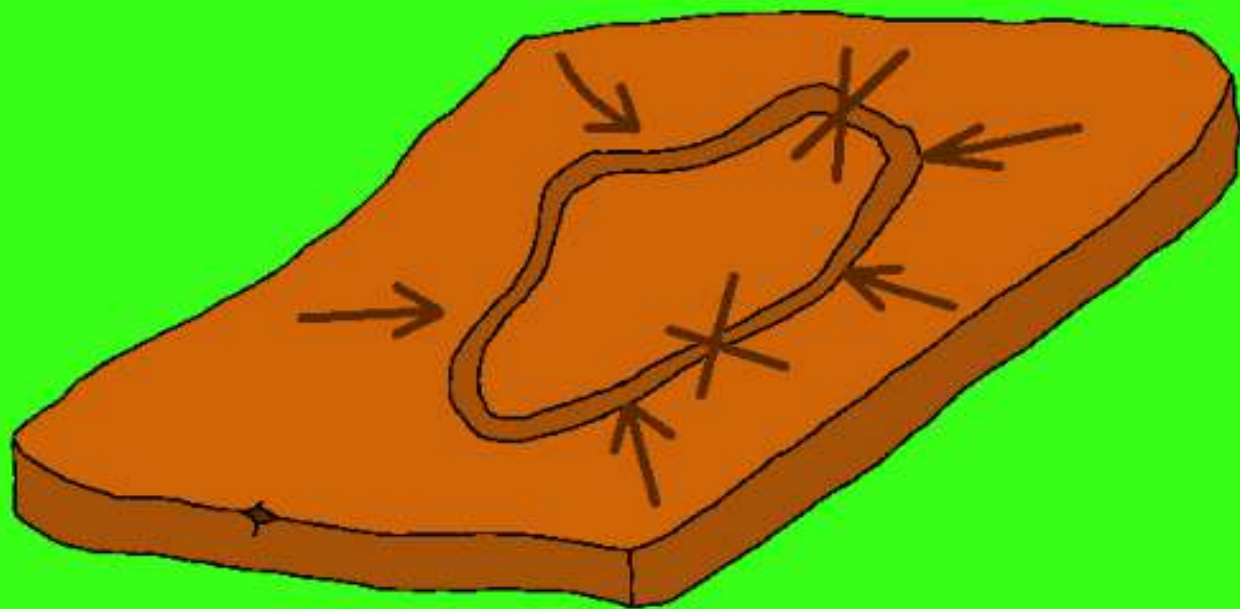


What an odd command! But Ezekiel obeyed, ate the scroll and went.



God's Spirit lifted Ezekiel and carried him away to the captive Jews living at another spot by the River Chebar. For seven days he sat where they sat, astonished by what he saw. Then God made Ezekiel a watchman. He was to warn the wicked people not to disobey God.





Ezekiel did many strange things to make God's word clear to people. He scratched a picture of Jerusalem on a piece of clay tile. Maybe people looked over his shoulder while he drew figures of a mighty army around Jerusalem. He was showing that God's holy city would soon be destroyed.

Israel, the northern kingdom, disobeyed God for 390 years, and Judah, the southern kingdom, for 40 years. That's why Israel had been destroyed and why Judah would soon fall. God told Ezekiel to lie on his left side for 390 days, then on his right side for 40, to remind the people of their years of sin.





Perhaps the people were beginning to think that Ezekiel was a very strange man. He did everything God told him to. One day, he shaved his hair and burnt a third of it. This was to show that one third of the people in Jerusalem would die of disease and famine when Babylon's army attacked the city.





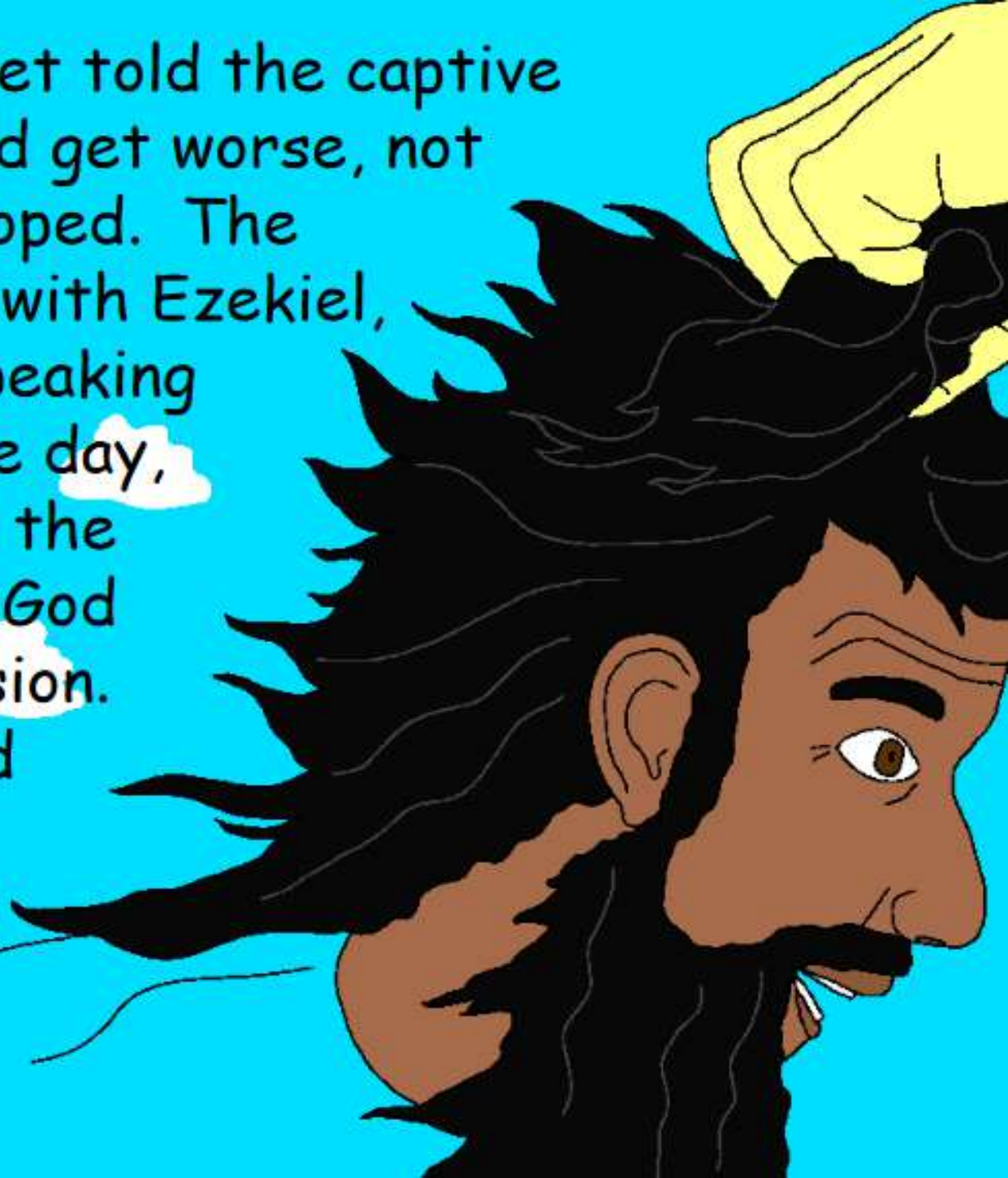
Ezekiel took another third of his hair and chopped it with a sword. This was to show that a third of the people would die by enemy swords. The last third, Ezekiel scattered to the wind. But he sewed a few hairs into the hem of his garment as a sign God would keep some of His people safe



and return them to the Promised land.

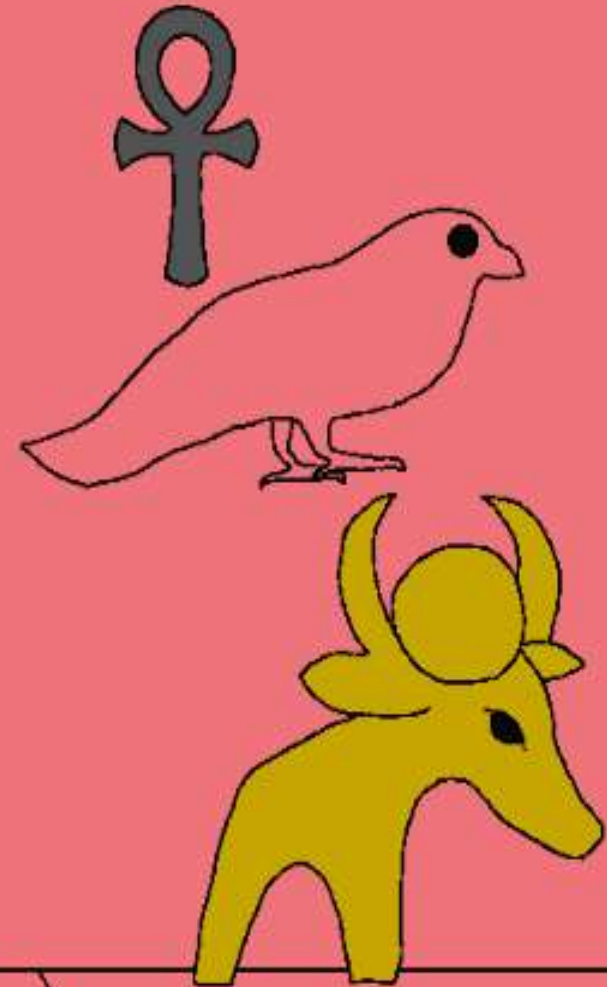
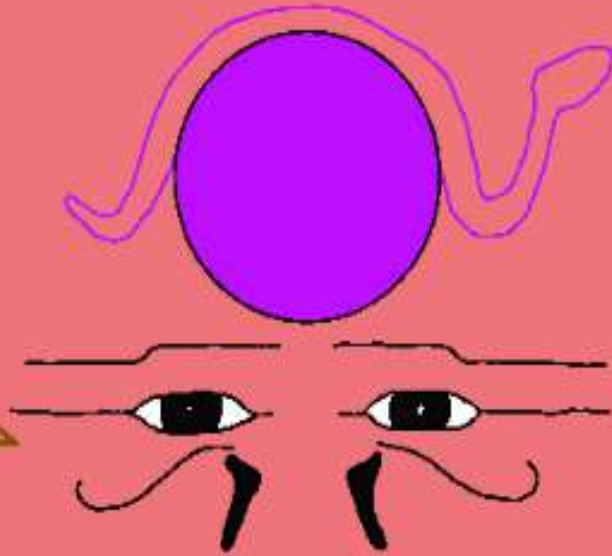
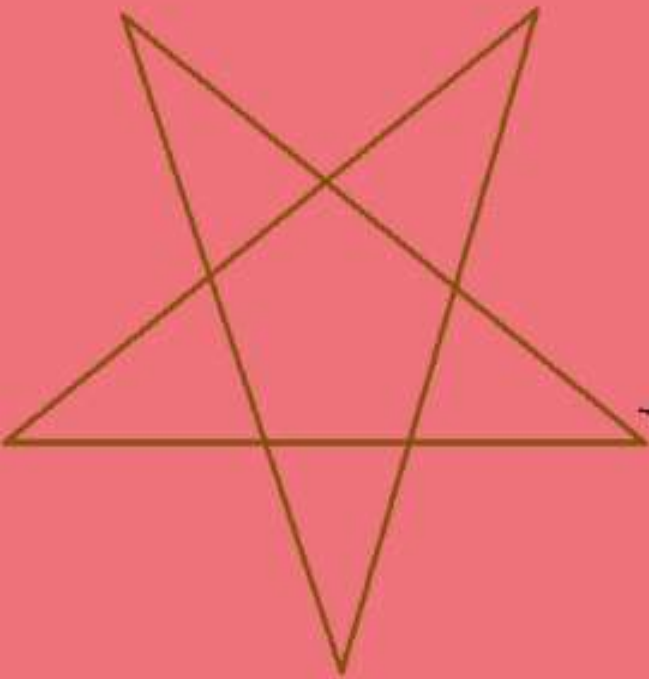


This brave prophet told the captive Jews things would get worse, not better as they hoped. The people got angry with Ezekiel, but he kept on speaking God's Word. One day, while he sat with the elders of Israel, God gave Ezekiel a vision. In the vision, God lifted him by his hair and carried him to the temple in Jerusalem.

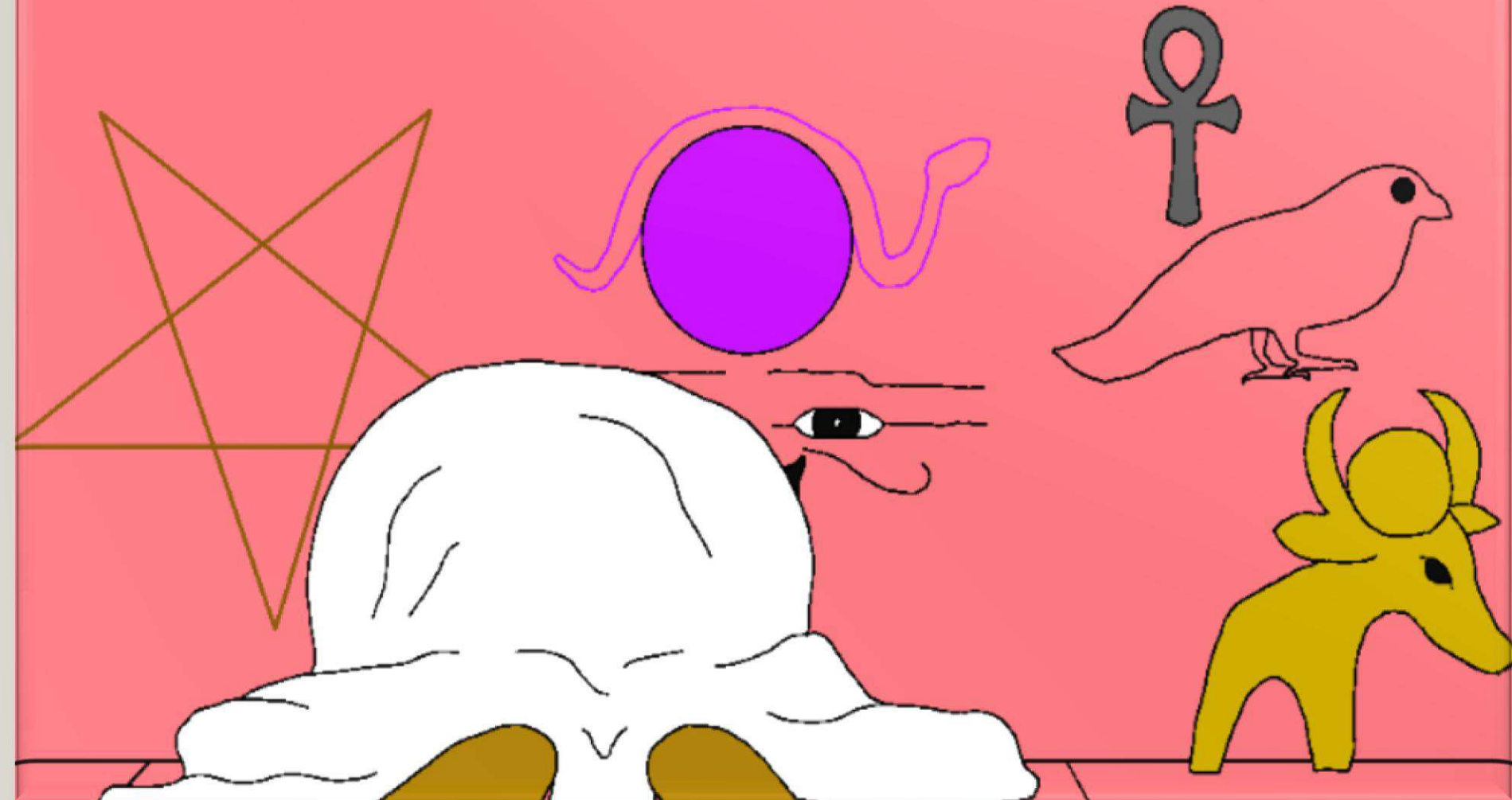




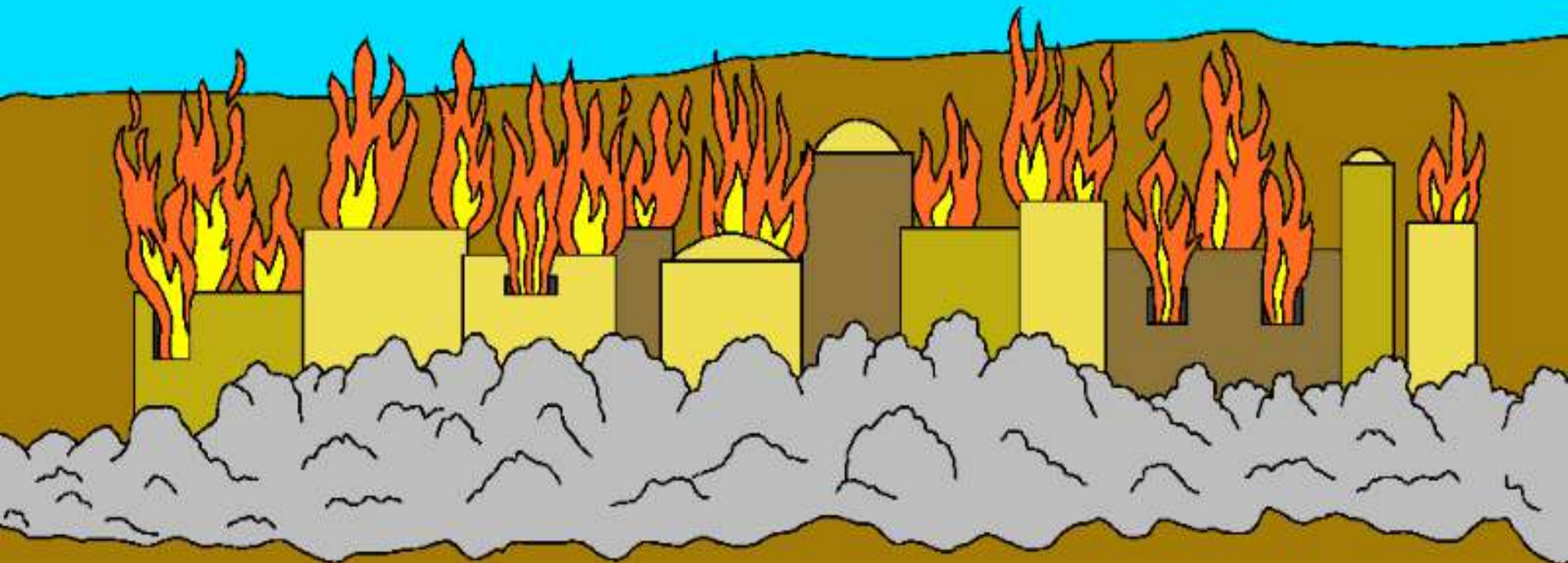
In the Temple, God showed Ezekiel creeping things, unclean beasts, and idols. These should never have been in God's Temple.



The leaders were worshiping these instead of God. God also showed Ezekiel that His Glory was leaving the Temple and it would be destroyed. When the vision was finished, Ezekiel told the Jews about it.

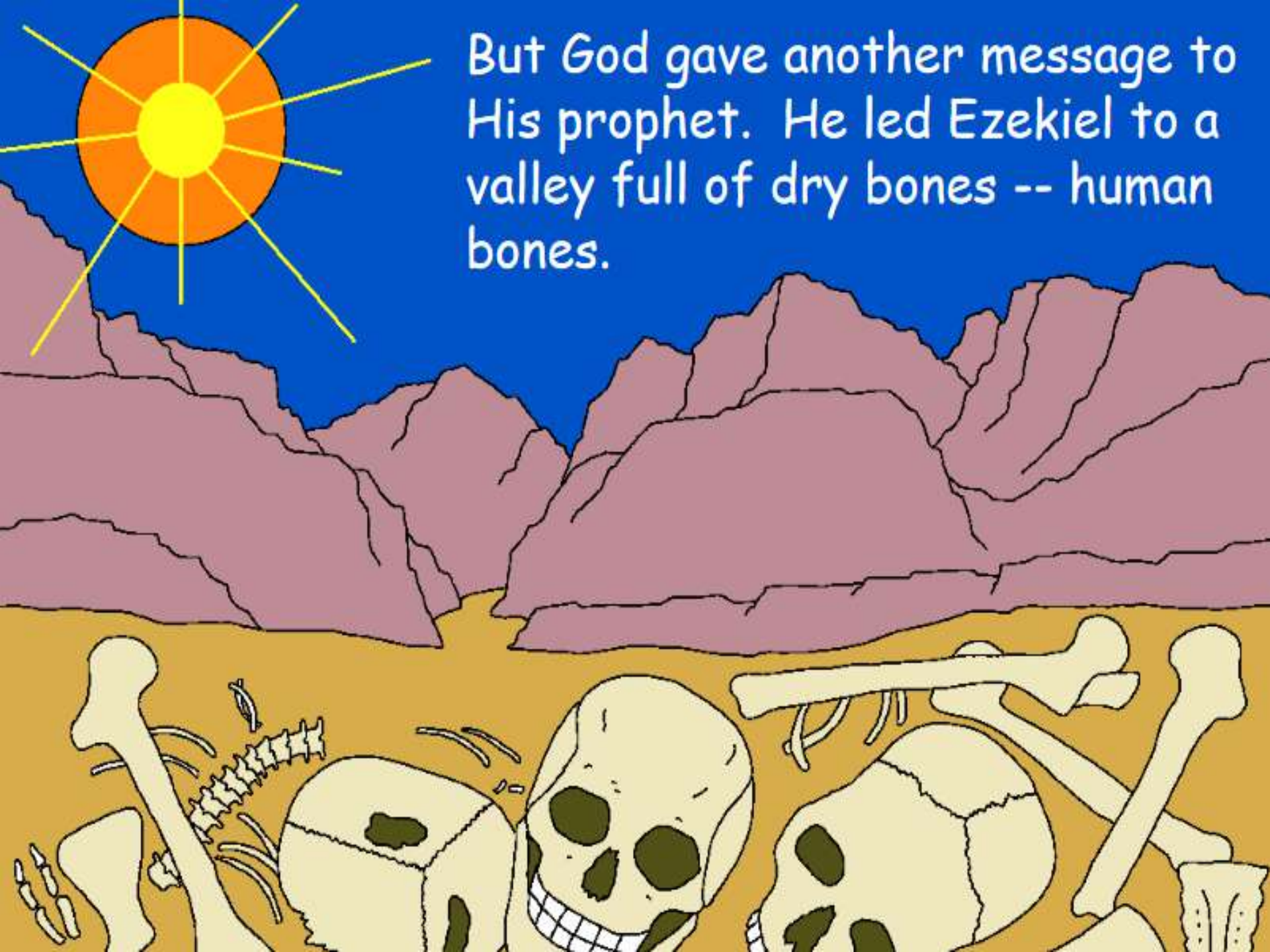






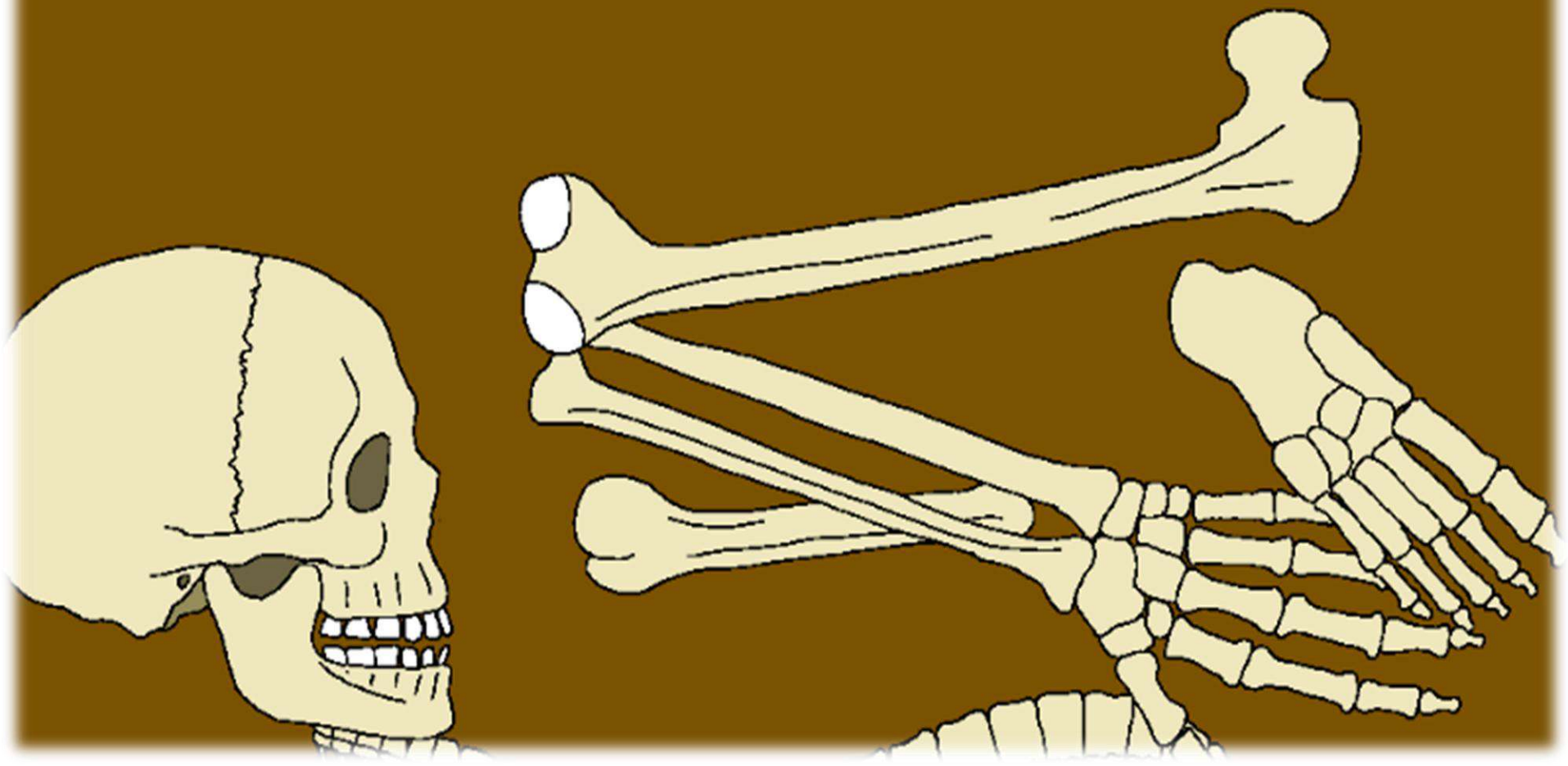
Everything God said came true. Jerusalem was destroyed. Many people perished. When the Jews who were captives in Babylon heard it, they wondered if God had given up His people forever.

But God gave another message to His prophet. He led Ezekiel to a valley full of dry bones -- human bones.

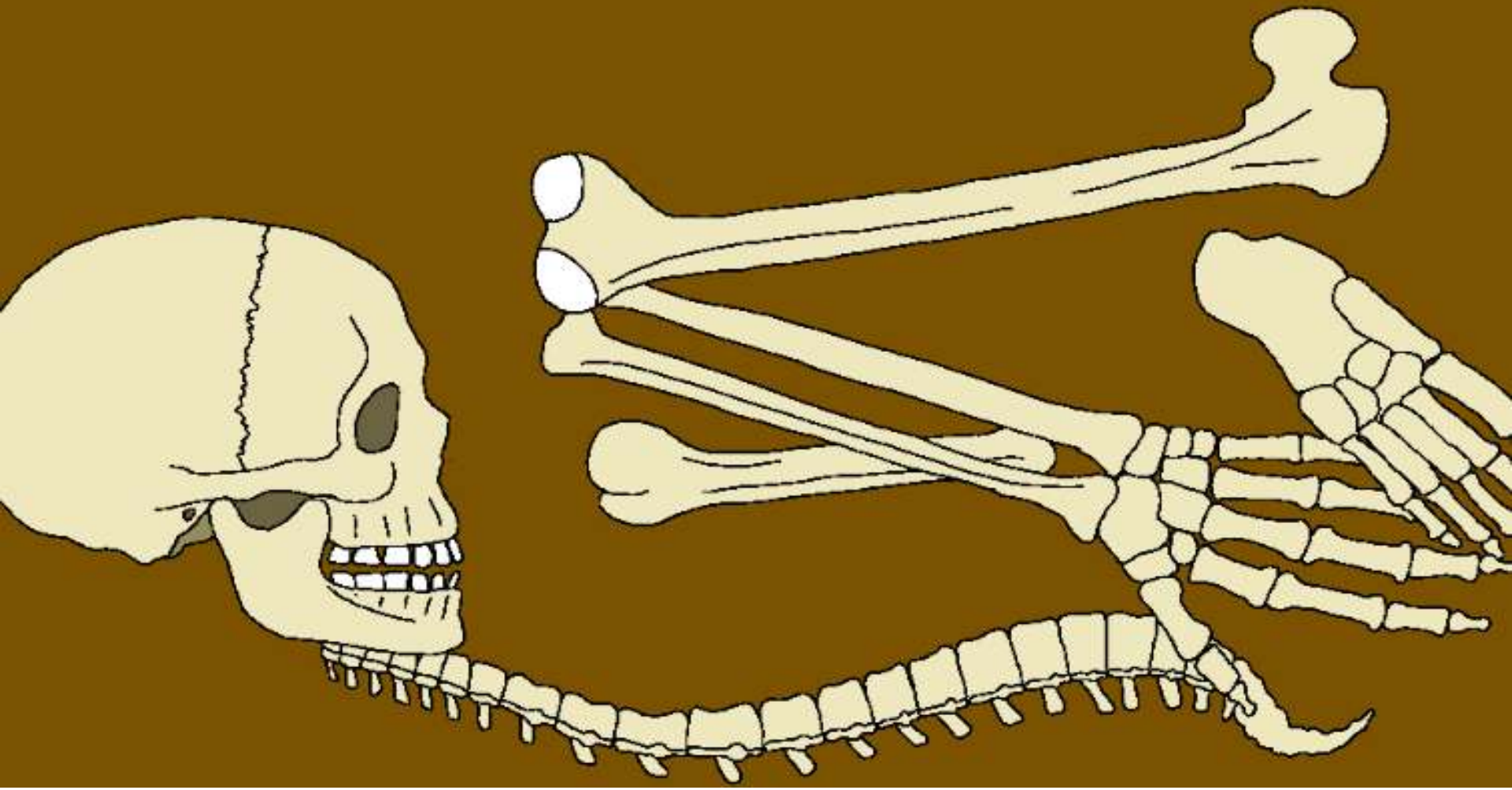




"Son of man, can these bones live?" God asked Ezekiel. "O LORD God, You know," Ezekiel answered. Of course dry bones could not live again.

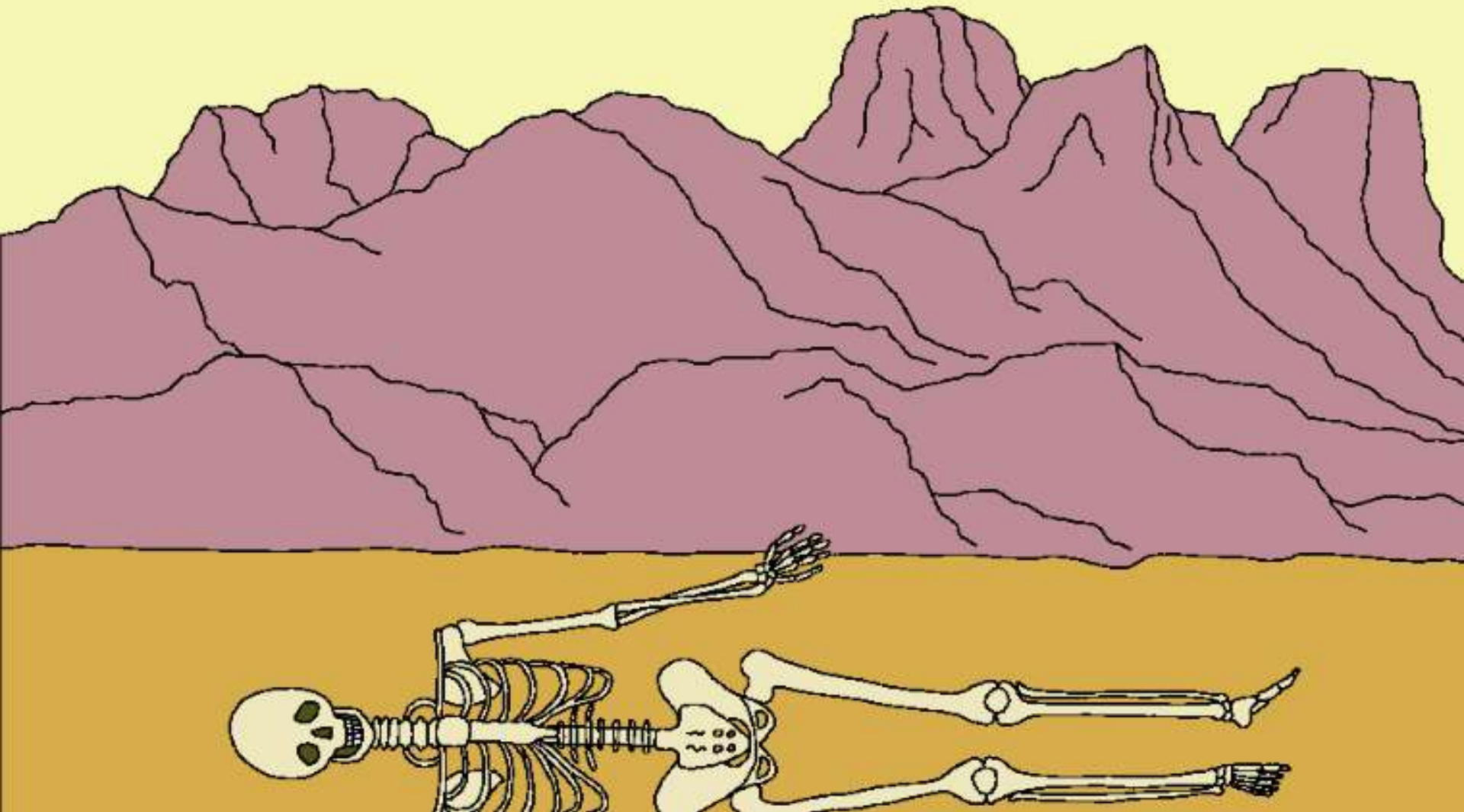


The LORD said, "Prophecy to these bones, and say 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! You shall live.'" When he obeyed, Ezekiel heard a rattling noise. What do you think caused it?

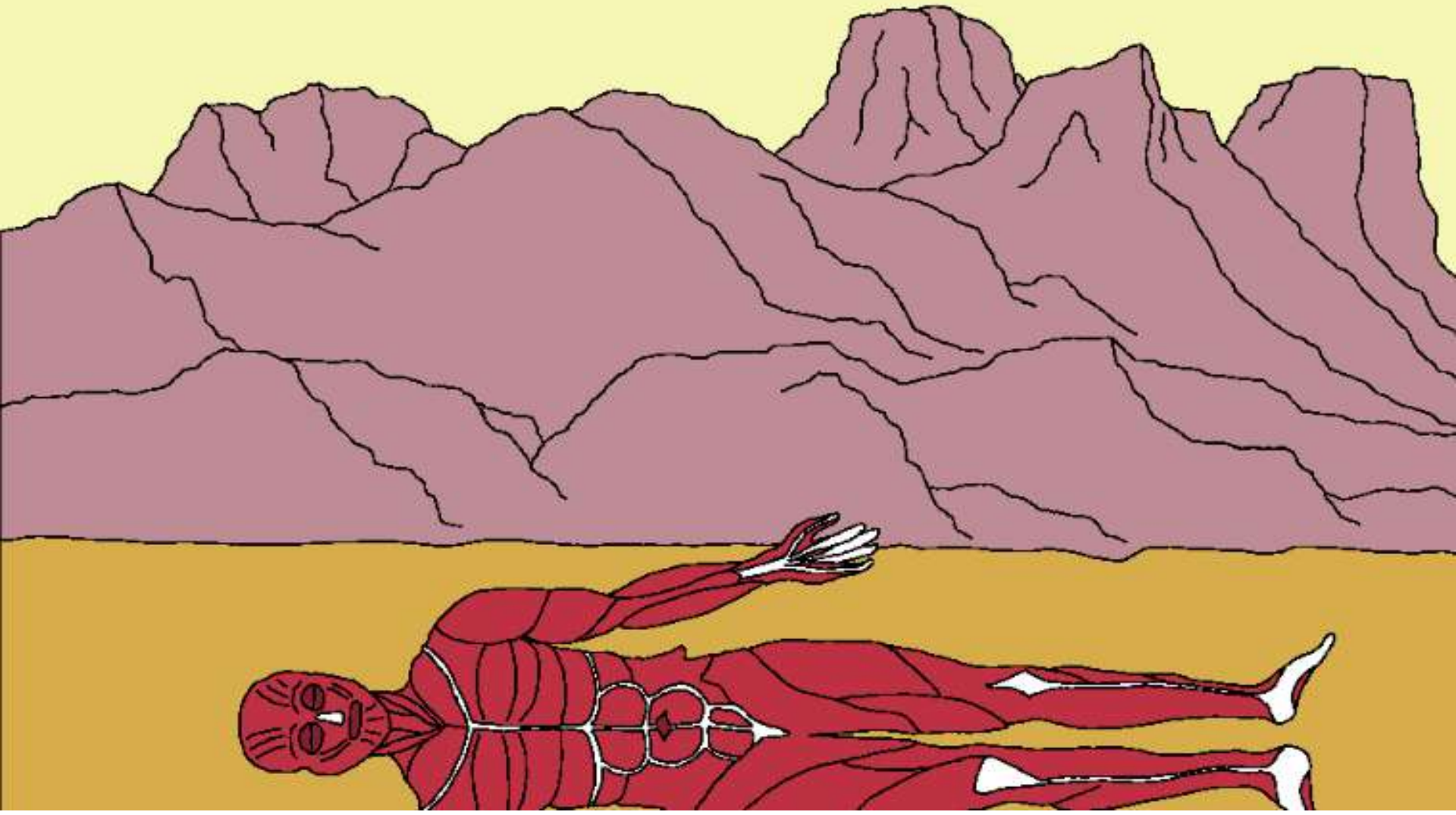




While the prophet looked on in amazement, bodies came together bone by bone.



Then, flesh came upon them.

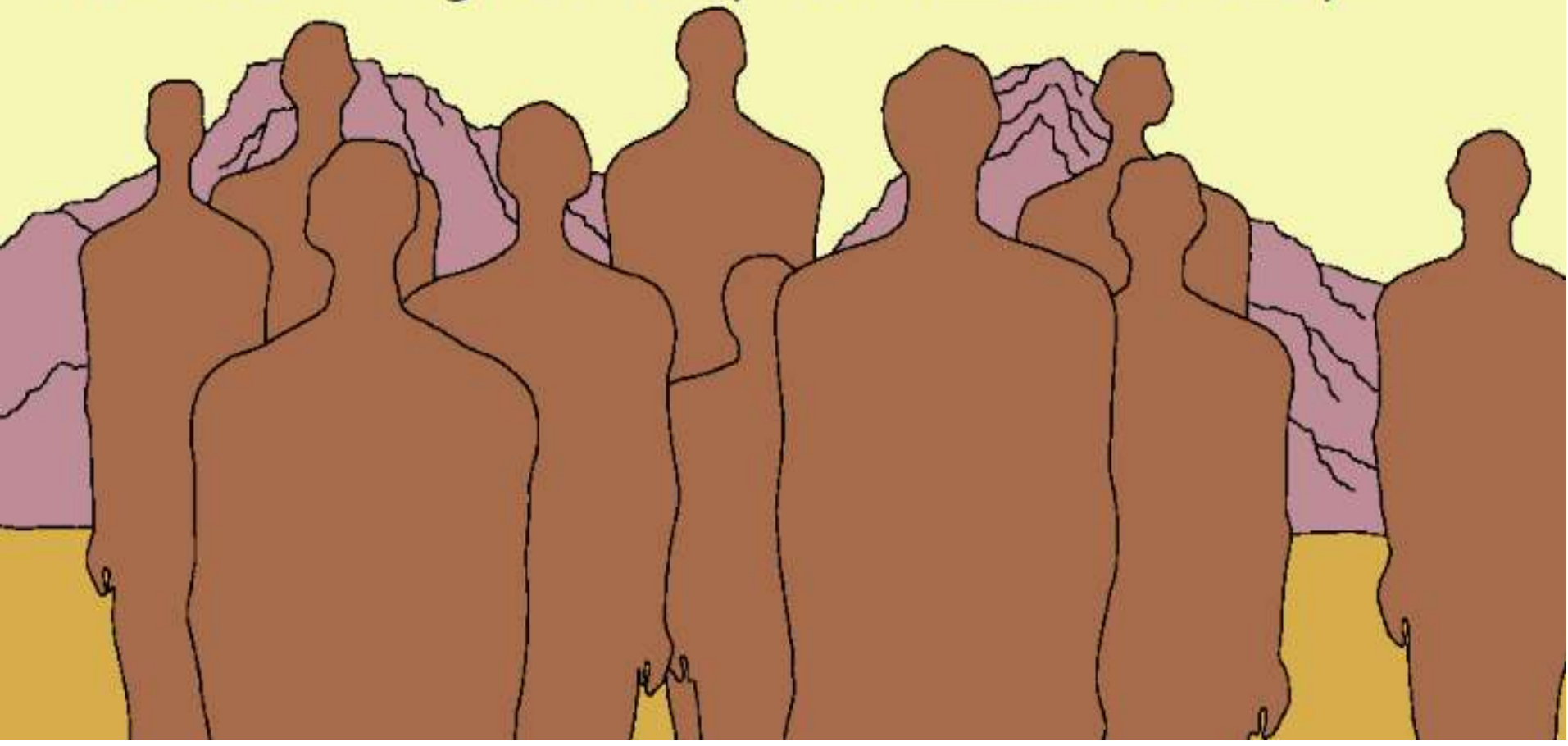




And the skin covered them over, but there was no breath in them.

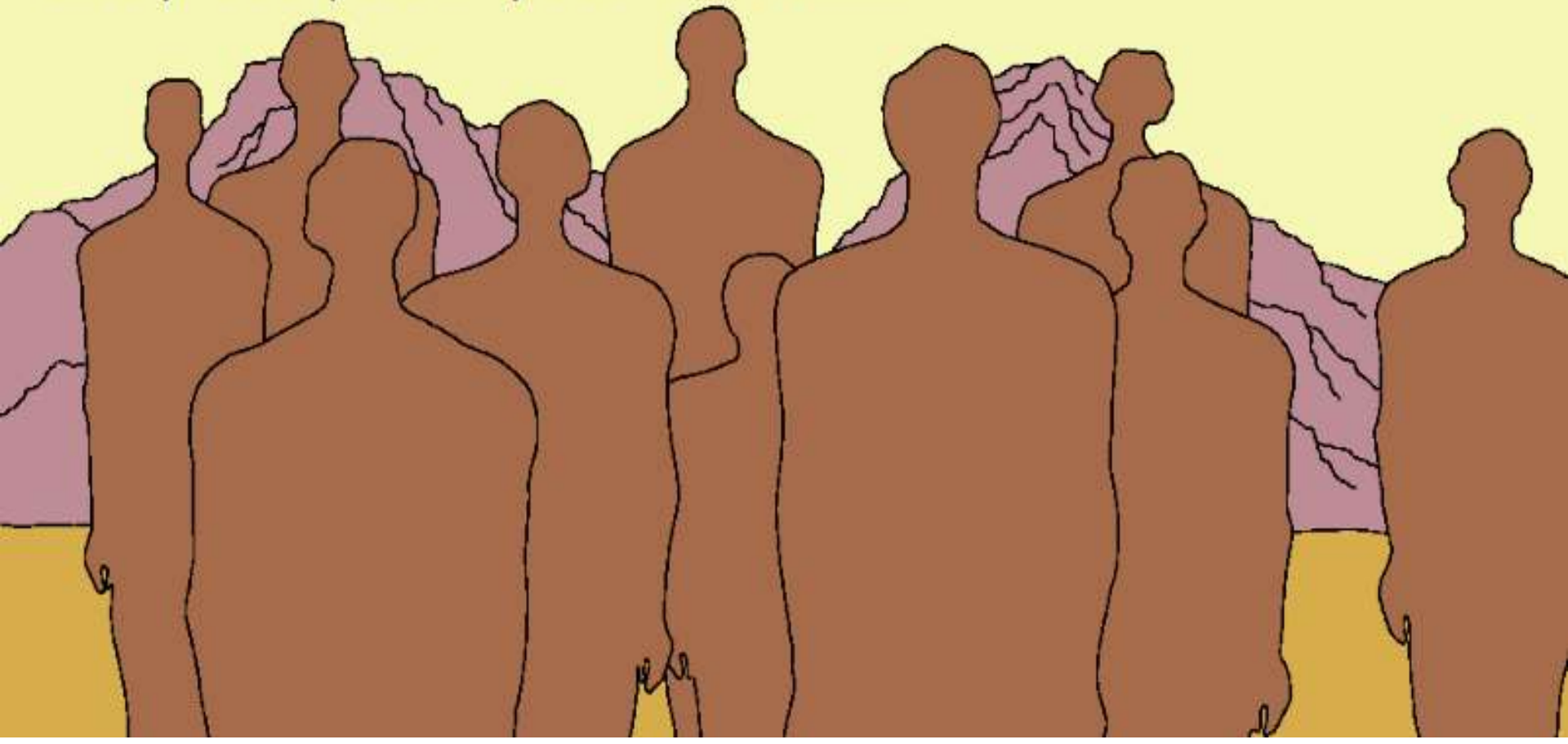


The LORD said, "Prophecy, son of man and say 'Come from the four winds, O breath. Breathe on these that they may live.'" When Ezekiel did so, breath came into them. They lived, and stood upon their feet. A great army now filled the valley.





God knew the Jews in Babylon felt hopeless when Jerusalem fell. He sent a message through Ezekiel's vision. "These bones are the whole house of Israel," God said. "I will put my Spirit in you, and place you in your own land."



What a great message of hope from God! God's promises through Ezekiel came true when the Jews later returned to their own land. They knew the LORD God had brought them home.

