

Hebrews 12 - Part 2



DISCIPLINE

SELF-DISCIPLINE

- ❑ In the last study we saw that trials are comparable to running a race where there is sacrifice and self-discipline required in the training and running of it.



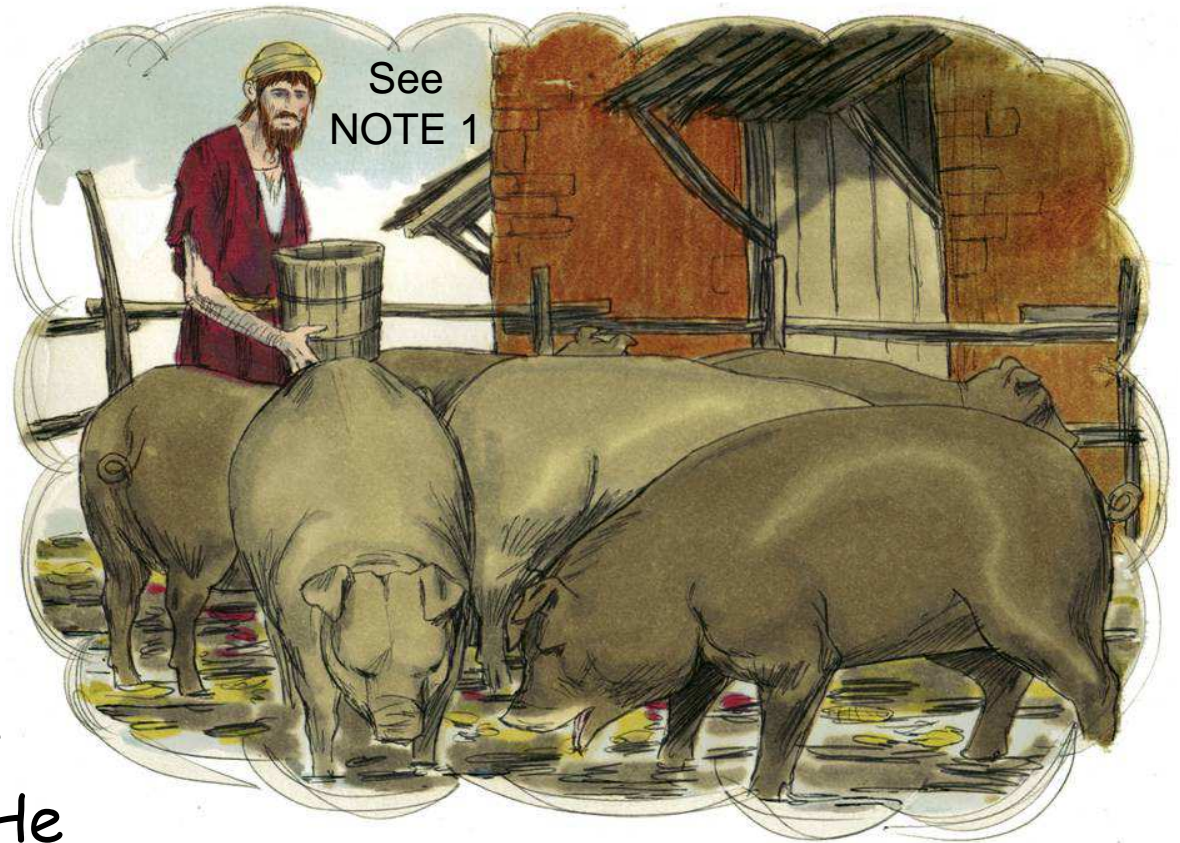
PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE

- ❑ Now, quoting Proverbs 3:11-12 the author of Hebrews shows that, contrary to what some believe, God's single desire isn't just for us to be happy.
- 1. God also wants us to be holy and will use discipline to achieve that goal!
 - Heb 12:4-6, 10 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."
... but **God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.**

PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE

2. Remember how the prodigal son returns to his father when his situation gets worse? Discipline is used by God to draw us back to himself:

- [God] is not at a loss when he moves to bring us back to himself. He can woo or whip. He can draw or drive. He can work rapidly or slowly, as he pleases. In other words, he is free to be God! And in his own way, at his own pace, he brings us back. (Tom Wells - Christian: Take Heart!)



DISCIPLINE

☐ God disciplines:

a) nations

➤ Ps 94:10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches man lack knowledge?

b) and men

➤ Ps 39:11 You rebuke and discipline men for their sin; you consume their wealth like a moth— each man is but a breath.

☐ So at times the suffering and hardship we face are because God is disciplining us. But not every hardship we face is as a result of God's discipline.

TRIALS VS DISCIPLINE

❑ Some hardships are:

1. from Satan

- A test of our integrity - like Job (Job 1:9-11)
- To sift us - like Simon (Luke 22:31)

2. from God

- To develop our character (1 Pet 1:6-7)
- To discipline us (Heb 12:7)

❑ The godly have some good in them, therefore the devil afflicts them; and some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. (Thomas Watson)

❑ We must differentiate between Satan's trials and God's discipline.

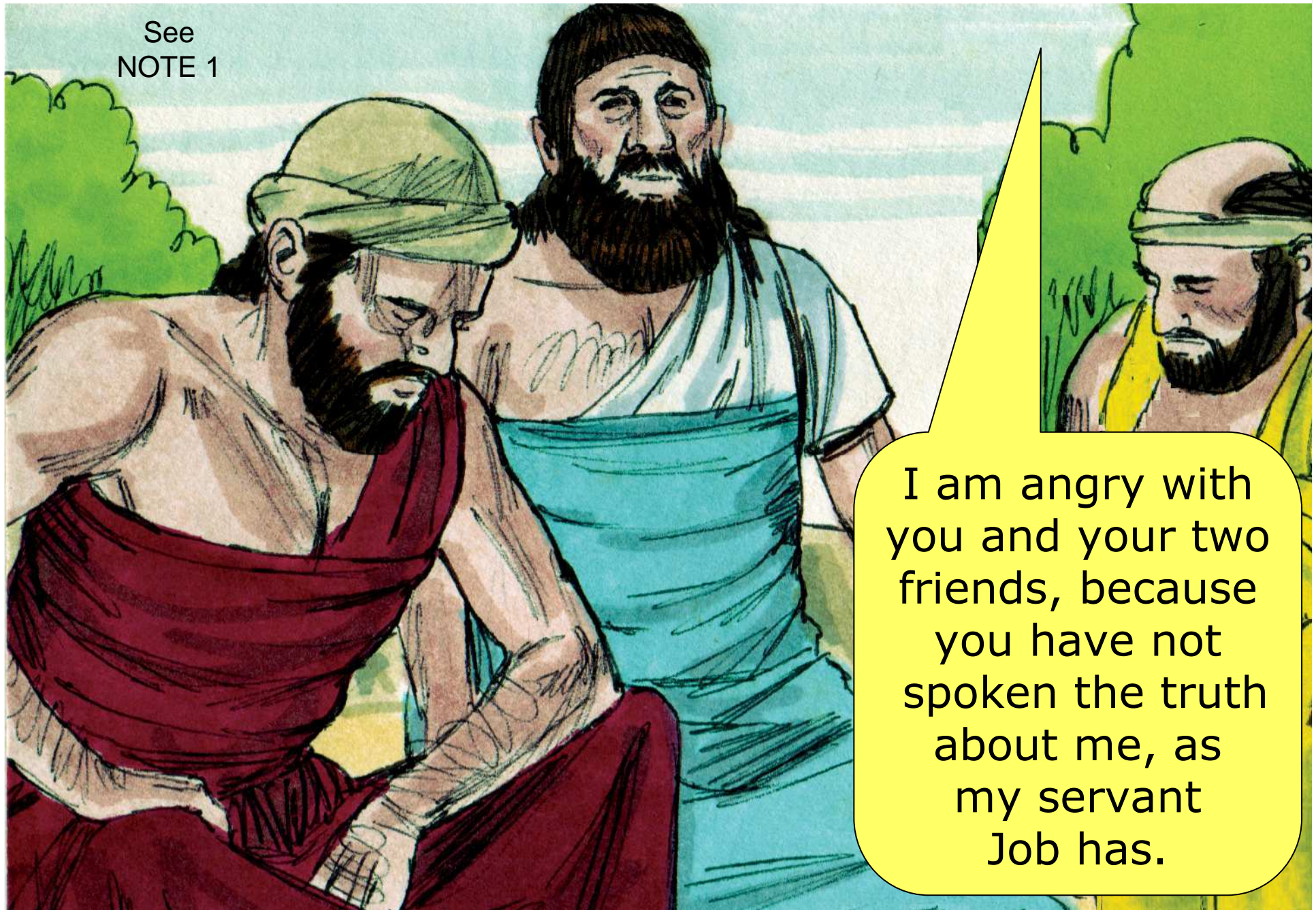
- ❑ Job's friends wrongly attributed his trials to God's discipline, when in fact they were a test of his integrity and perpetrated by Satan. And so Eliphaz chides Job:

See
NOTE 1

Consider now: who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plough evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more. (Job 4:7-9)

❑ But in the end the Lord rebukes Eliphaz (Job 42:7)

See
NOTE 1



I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.

TRIALS VS DISCIPLINE

	TRIALS	DISCIPLINE
FROM	Satan	God
RESULT OF	Serving God	Disobedience or sin
HOW TO DISCERN	Proves if our faith is genuine	The punishment fits the crime
WRONG RESPONSE	Shrinking back, bitterness	Making light of discipline, rebellion
RIGHT RESPONSE	Endurance and perseverance	Repentance
ENDS IN	Overcoming	Holiness
GOD IS SAYING	We won't be tempted beyond what we can bear	We are God's sons

SONSHIP

❑ Fathers give their children:

1. Love
2. Provision
3. Protection
4. Discipline

❑ We cherish the fact that God is our Father when

thinking of his provision, love and protection. But we forget that fathers also discipline their children!

➤ God has no pleasure in afflicting us, but he will not keep back even the most painful chastisement if he can but thereby guide his beloved child to come home and abide in the beloved Son. (Andrew Murray)



SONSHIP

- ❑ So even when hardship is as a result of discipline, remember that this is a sign of sonship:
 - Heb 12:7-8 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.
 - Deut 8:5 Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.



SONSHIP

- ❑ Just as we respected our earthly fathers when they disciplined us, we should submit to God's discipline without questioning him.
- Heb 12:9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!



SONSHIP

- ❑ Heb 12:10a Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best...
- God's discipline is better than that of our earthly fathers, who even with the best intentions could only discipline us "for a little while" and "as they thought best". But God disciplines **throughout our entire life**. And unlike an earthly father who does not have full knowledge, God is all-knowing and his **judgement is always just**. God is not subject to human limitations of lacking all the facts and not knowing the motives behind actions.



A SIGN OF LOVE

- ❑ As a child we may have questioned a parent's love when they disciplined us and sometimes we do the same with our heavenly Father.



A SIGN OF LOVE

- ❑ But God assures us that his discipline too is a sign of his love for us:
 - Prov 3:11-12 My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because **the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.**
- ❑ And Jesus tells the church:
 - Rev 3:19 **"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline"**

DISCIPLINE-PUNISHMENT

- ❑ We all have encountered undisciplined children that no one likes - except maybe the parents. God will not let his children go undisciplined.
- ❑ God's stated intent is not to destroy us, but he will not let us go undisciplined:
 - Jer 30:11b "Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, **I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you** but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished."
- ❑ Note in the above passage how God differentiates between his punitive judgement of the pagan nations and the discipline of his children. With his children God's discipline is not punitive, the intention is restoration and rehabilitation.

DISCIPLINE-PUNISHMENT

- ❑ Many people fail to make a clear distinction between punishment and discipline, and there is a very significant difference between these two concepts. Punishment is designed to execute retribution for a wrong done. Discipline, on the other hand, is to encourage the restoration of the one involved in the wrongdoing. Punishment is designed primarily to avenge a wrong and assert justice. Discipline is designed primarily as a corrective for the one who has failed to live according to the standards of the church and/or society. (Carl Laney - A Guide to Church Discipline, Bethany, 1985, p. 79)



DISCIPLINE-PUNISHMENT

- ❑ The godly do suffer and complain about it at times. But the Bible teaches plainly that their suffering, even after their conversion and reconciliation to God, is not punishment any longer, but chastening. It is not the punishment of a God who is angry with them, but the chastening of a God who is reconciled to them. (John Gerstner - The Problem of Pleasure, Soli Deo Gloria, 2002, p. 11-12)
- ❑ God never punishes his children in the sense of avenging justice. He chastens as a father does his child, but he never punishes his redeemed as a judge does a criminal. It is unjust to exact punishment from redeemed souls since Christ has been punished in their place. How shall the Lord punish twice for one offense? (C.H. Spurgeon)

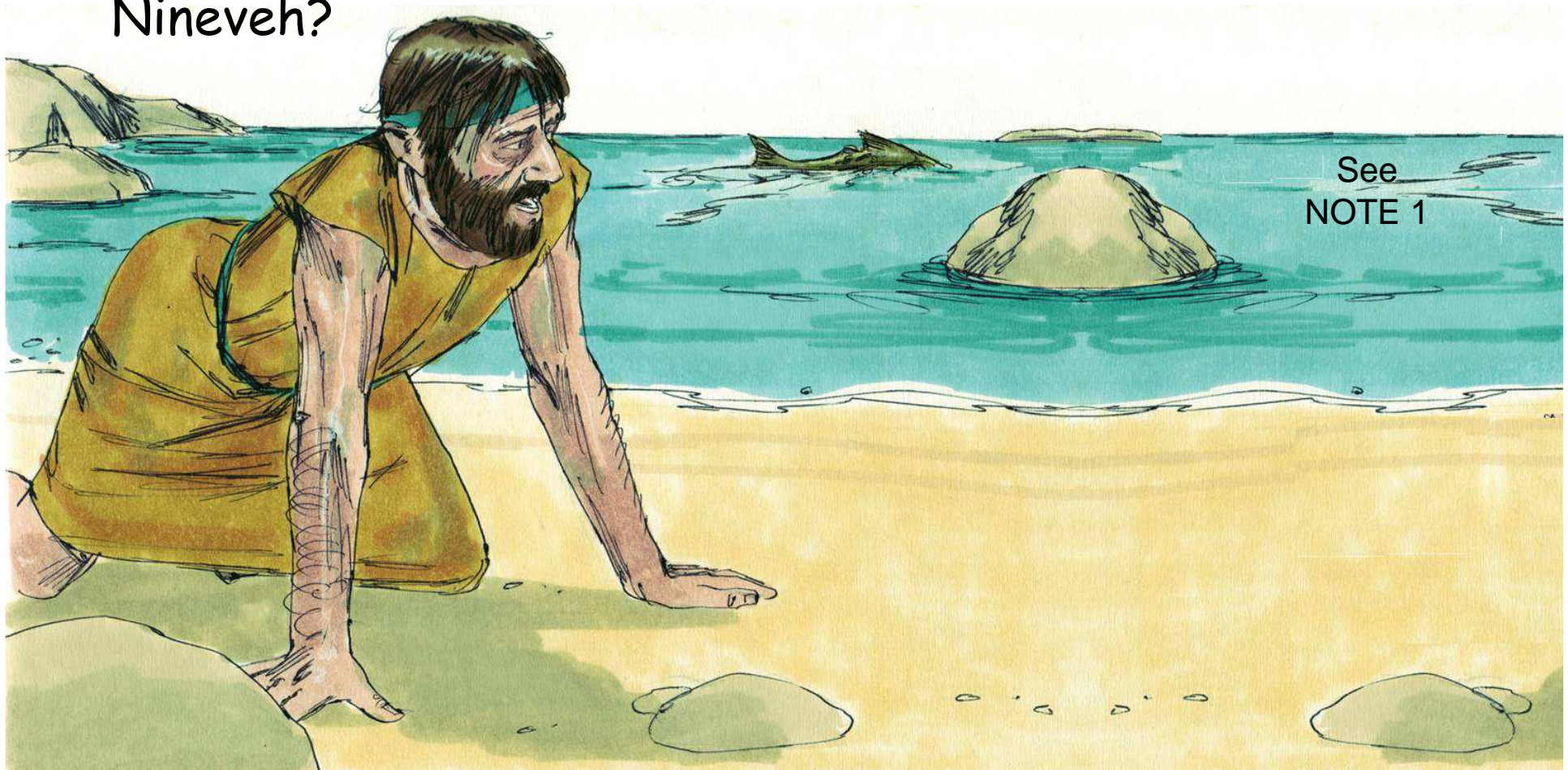
DISCIPLINE-PUNISHMENT

- ❑ "Is discipline the same as punishment?" a young woman asked me. She was troubled by the idea of God wanting to "get even." I gave her 1 Corinthians 11:32 (NEB)
"When...we do fall under the Lord's judgement, he is disciplining us, to save us from being condemned with the rest of the world." God's "punishment" of his children is never retribution, but rather correction. We know that we are indeed his beloved sons, sharing in the discipline that all sons share - for a high purpose, namely that we may some day share in his holiness, "attain life."
(Elisabeth Elliot - Discipline - The Glad Surrender, Revell, 1982, p. 153)

WHEN?

❑ Q: When does God discipline?

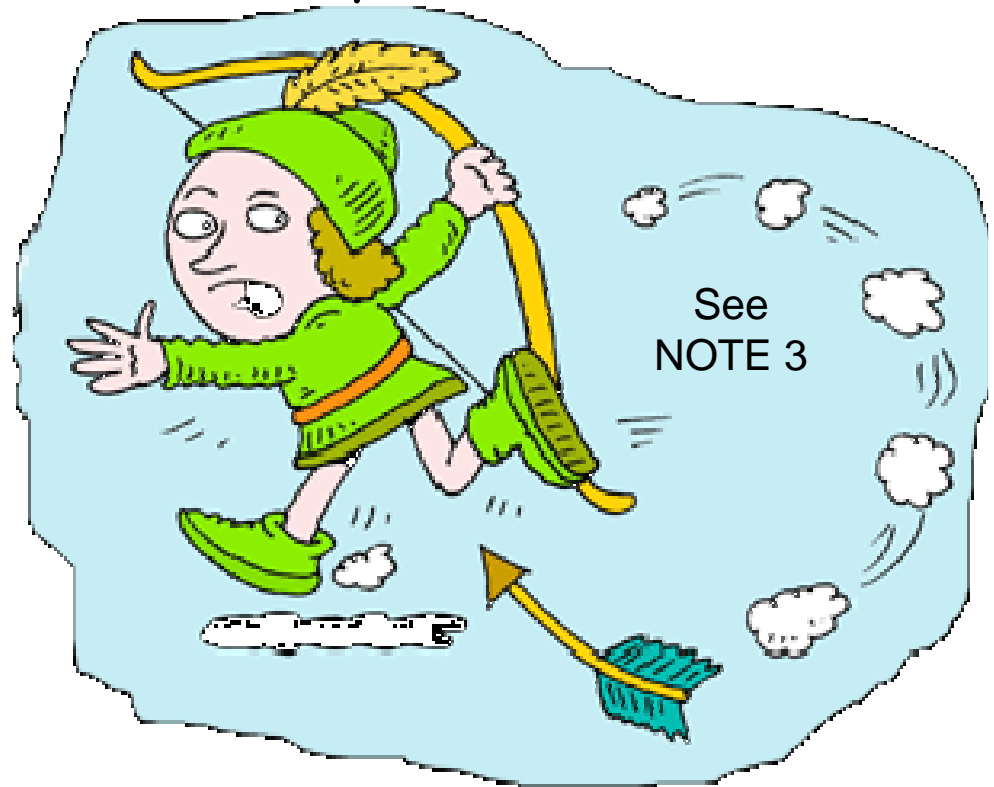
1. When we are **disobedient**. Remember what happened to Jonah when he disobeyed God's command to preach in Nineveh?



WHEN?

2. God disciplines us when we **sin**.

- Psalm 38:1-3 O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger or **discipline me** in your wrath. For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me. Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness **because of my sin**.
- Num 32:23 ... "Be **sure your sin will find you out.**"



WHEN?

- ❑ Speaking of God's discipline of the children of Israel, Paul writes:
 - 1 Cor 10:5-10 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from **setting our hearts on evil things** as they did. Do not be **idolaters**, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in **revelry**." We should not commit **sexual immorality**, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not **test Christ**, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not **grumble**, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

WHEN?

3. God disciplines us when we do not examine and judge ourselves. Paul gives an example of this:
 - 1 Cor 11:27-32 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself. **That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgement.** When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

WHEN?

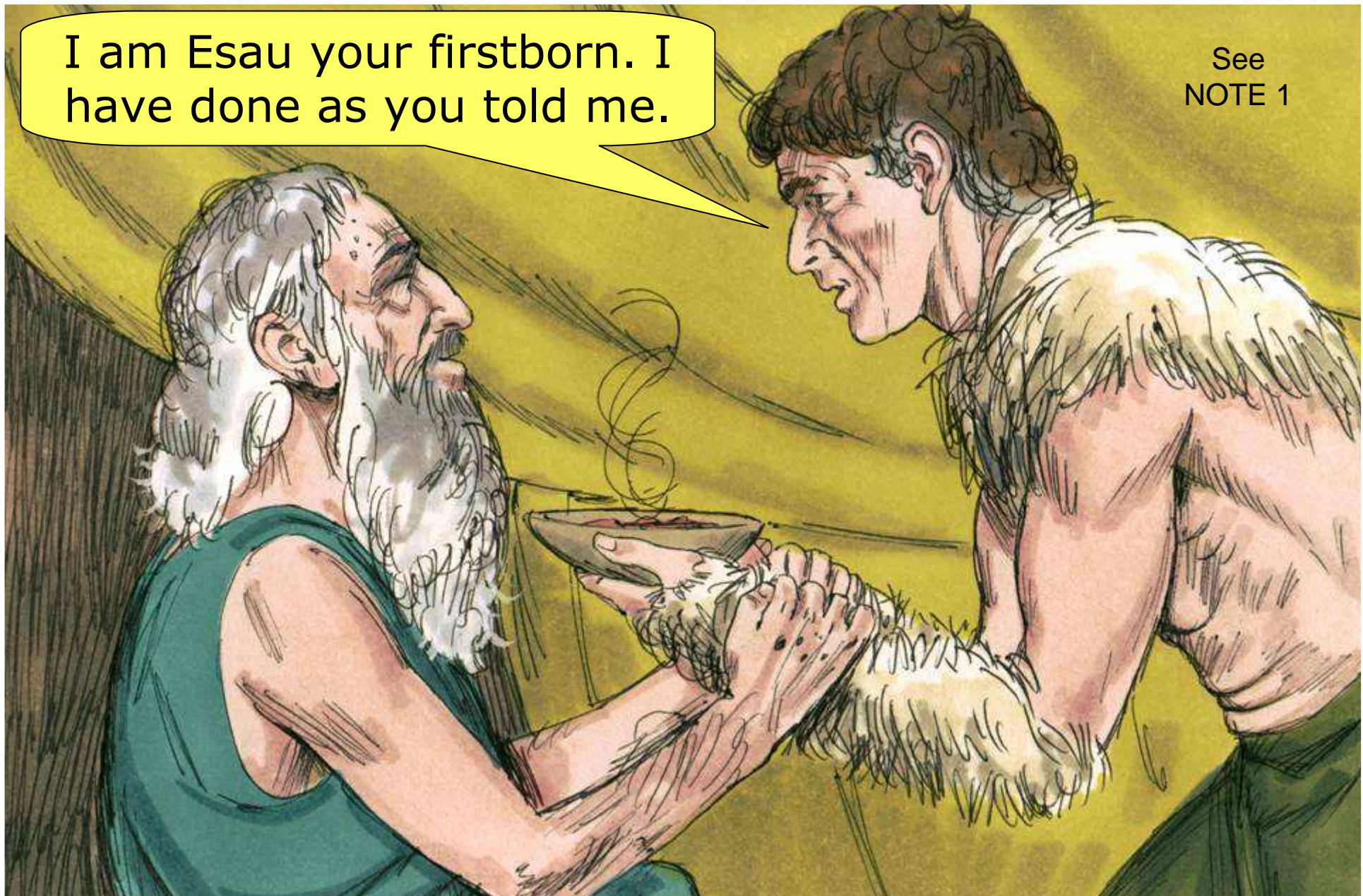
4. God disciplines us when he needs to refine our character:
 - James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be **mature and complete**, not lacking anything.
 - ❑ Not all God's discipline is related to some specific sin:
 - The issue God is dealing with in our lives is **not so much what we do, but what we are**. All of us tend to underestimate the remaining sinfulness in our hearts. We fail to see the extent of pride, fleshly self-confidence, selfish ambitions, stubbornness, self-justification, lack of love, and distrust of God that he does see. (Jerry Bridges - Trusting God, 1988, p. 150)

FITS THE CRIME

- ❑ Q: How do I know when hardship is God's discipline rather than a trial from Satan?
- ❑ A: Often God will use a punishment that fits the crime.
 - Galatians 6:7 (TLB) Don't be misled; remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it: **a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows!**
 - Rev 16:7 ... "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."
- ❑ Let's look first at the account of Jacob as an example of God's punishment fitting the crime.

I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me.

See
NOTE 1



- ❑ Jacob tricks his blind father Isaac by pretending to be his older brother Esau (Gen 27).



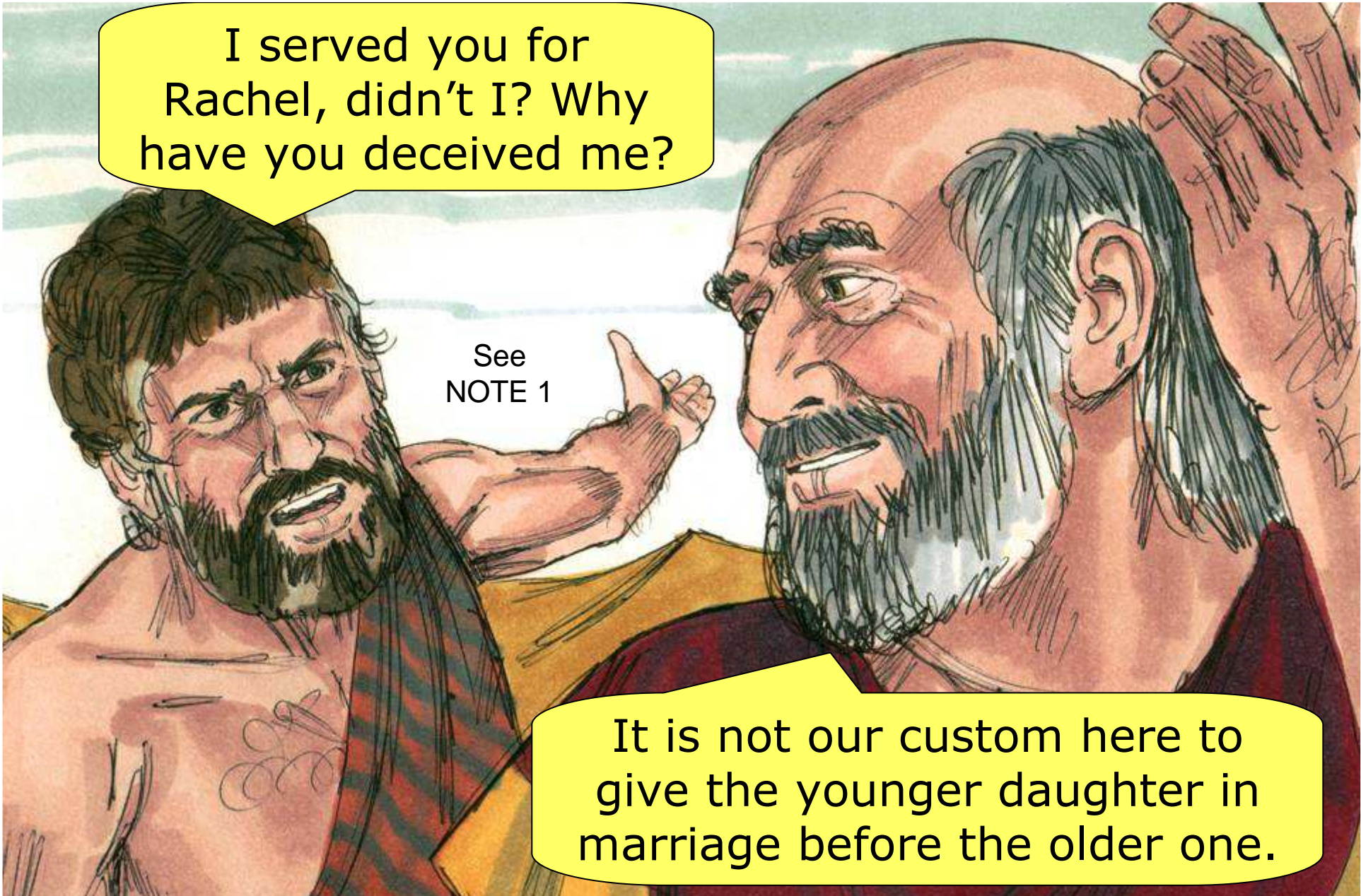
- ❑ Years later Laban tricks Jacob by substituting Rachel, his younger daughter with his elder daughter Leah (Gen 29).

See
NOTE 1

Quick, let me
have some of
that red stew!
I'm famished!

First sell
me your
birthright.

❑ Jacob disregards the right of the firstborn (Gen 25:29-31)



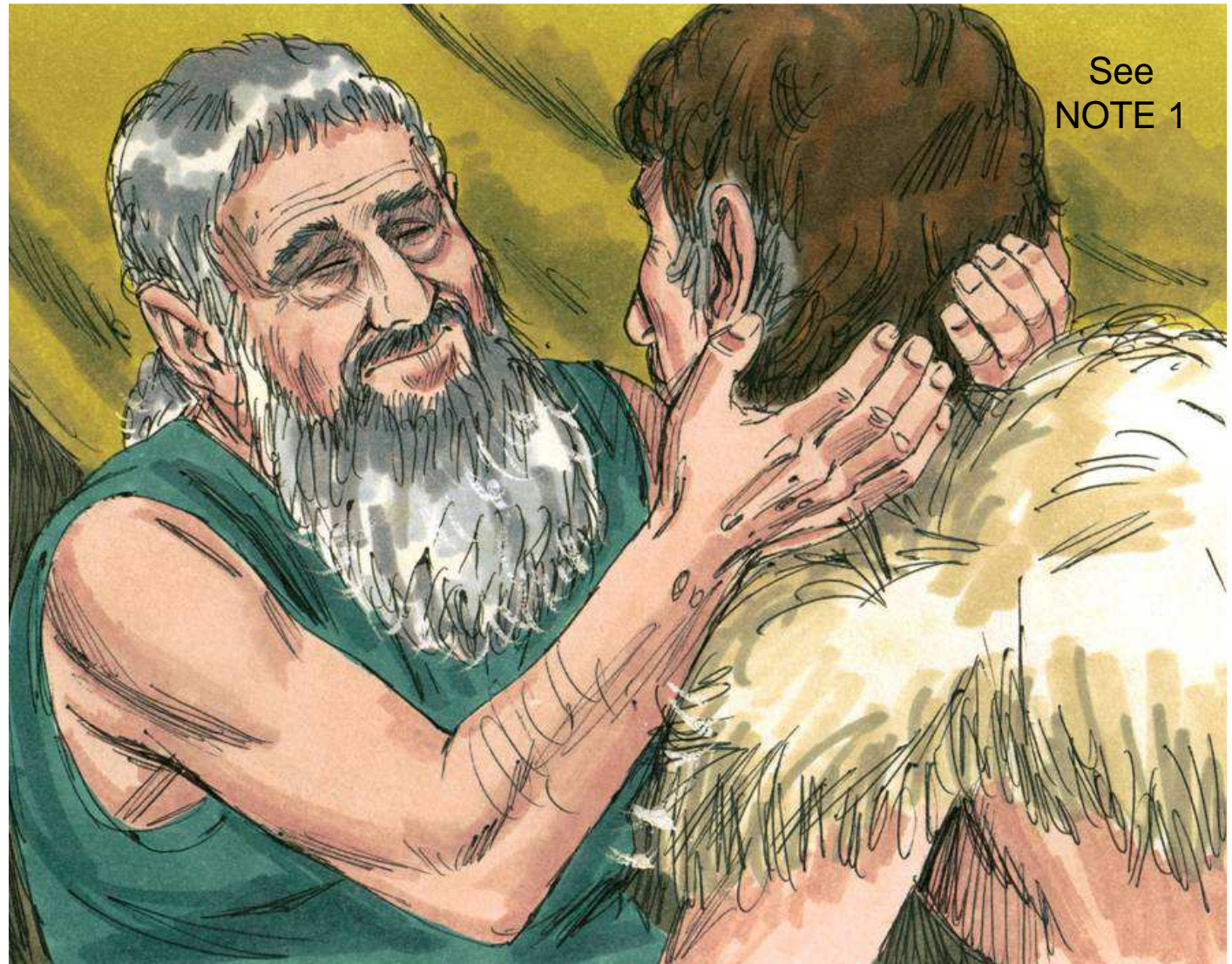
I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?

See
NOTE 1

It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.

- ❑ He learns a lesson in the right of the firstborn when Laban tricks him into marrying Leah instead of Rachel (Gen 29).

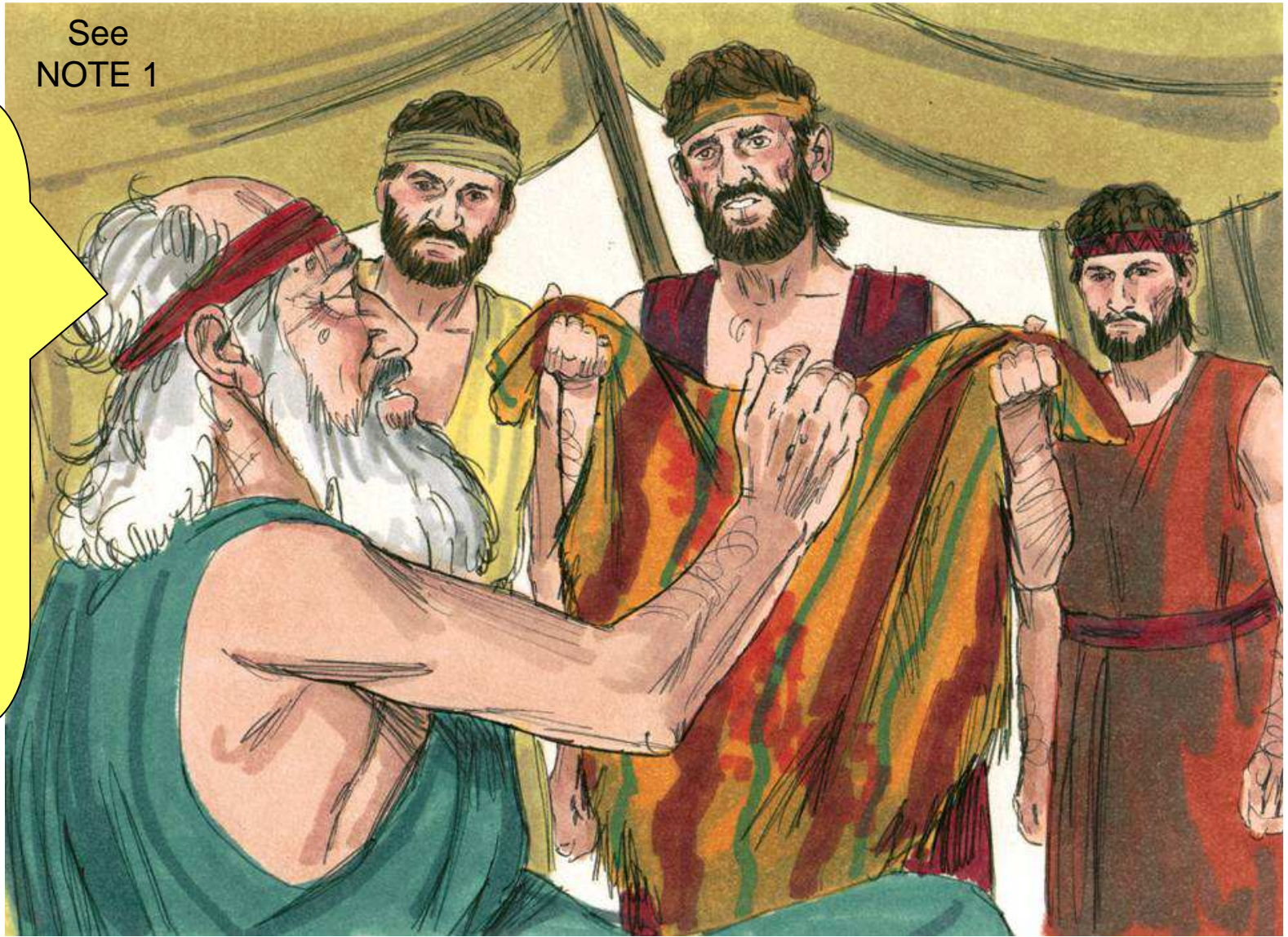
- This is one of the themes in the Bible - the one who deceives is ultimately also deceived. Jacob deceives his father using a coat and a dead goat:



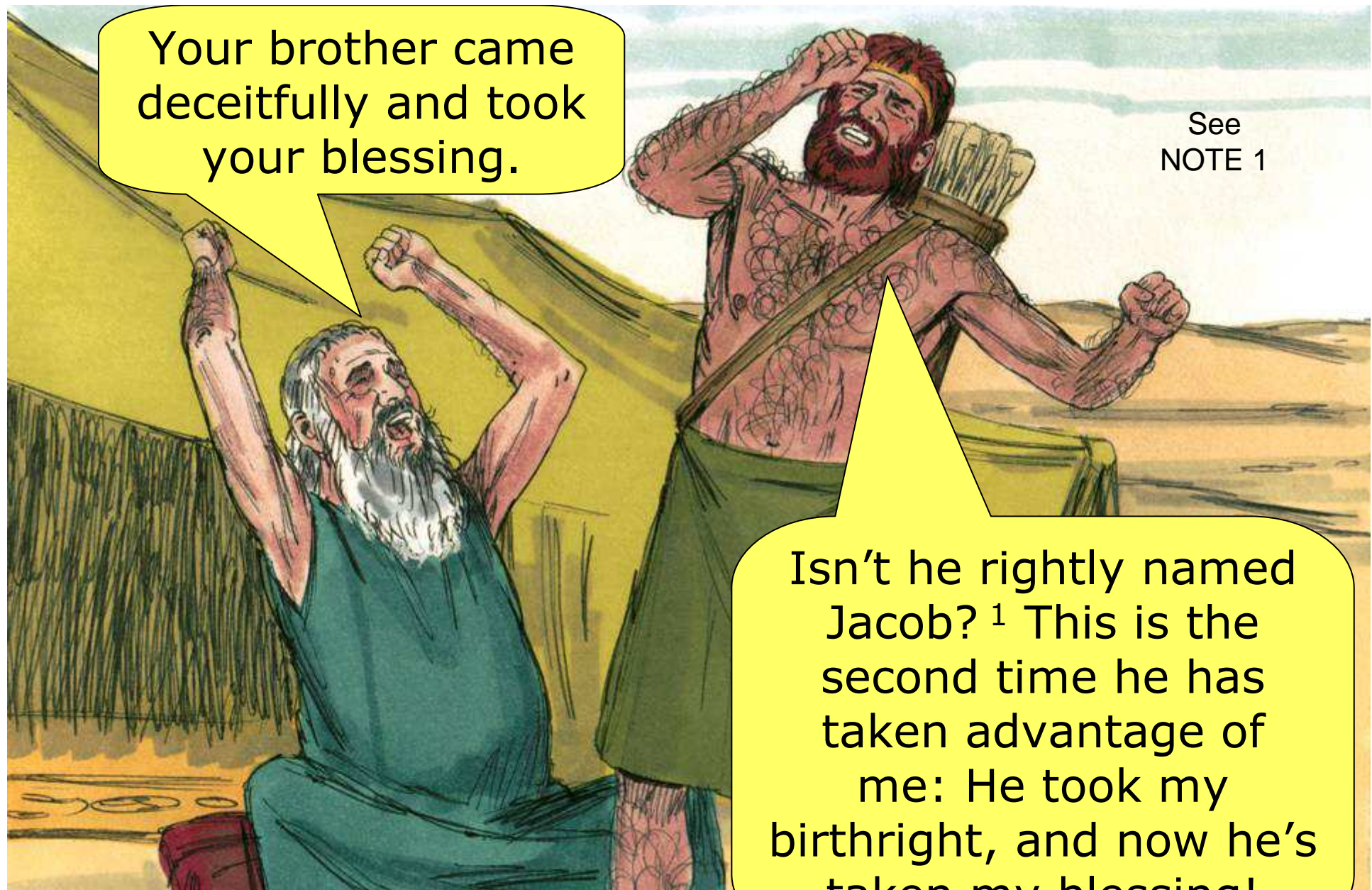
- Gen 27:15-16 Then Rebekah took the best **clothes** of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the **goatskins**.

See
NOTE 1

It is my
son's
robe!
Some
ferocious
animal
has
devoured
him.



- ❑ Jacob is deceived by his sons with a coat and a dead goat:
 - Gen 37:31-32 Then they got Joseph's **robe**, slaughtered a **goat** and dipped the robe in the blood.



Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.

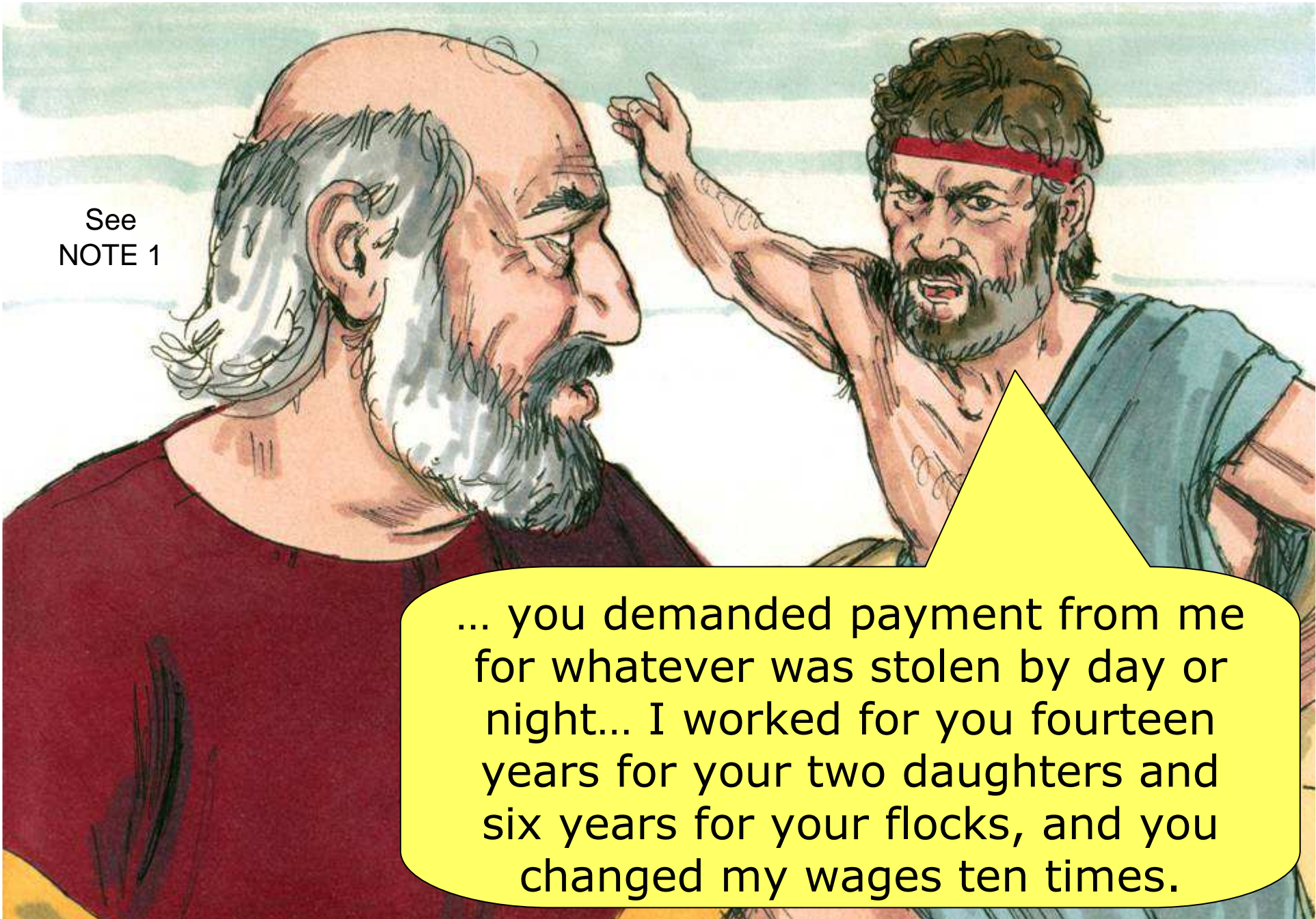
See
NOTE 1

Isn't he rightly named Jacob? ¹ This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!

❑ Jacob cheats (Gen 27:35-36).

¹ Jacob means "he grasps the heel" or figuratively "he deceives".

See
NOTE 1

An illustration depicting a scene from the Bible. On the left, an older man with a long white beard and a red tunic (Jacob) is shown in profile, looking towards the right. On the right, a younger man with a dark beard and a red headband (Laban) is shown in profile, looking back at Jacob with a stern expression. Laban's right hand is raised, with his index finger pointing towards Jacob. A large yellow speech bubble is positioned in the lower right, containing text. The background is a simple, light-colored landscape with a green horizon line.

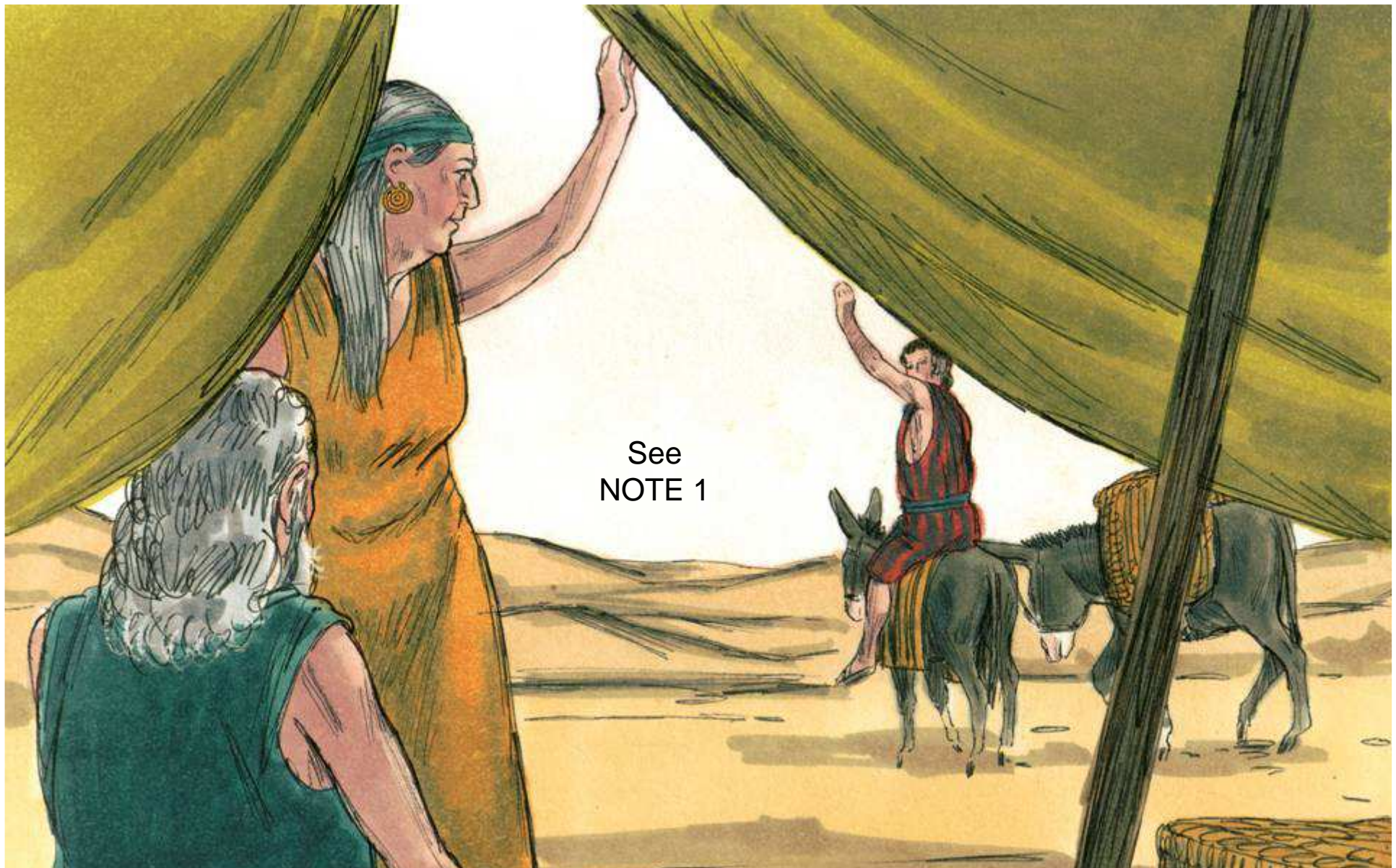
... you demanded payment from me
for whatever was stolen by day or
night... I worked for you fourteen
years for your two daughters and
six years for your flocks, and you
changed my wages ten times.

❑ He is then cheated repeatedly by Laban (Gen 31:38-42).

See
NOTE 1

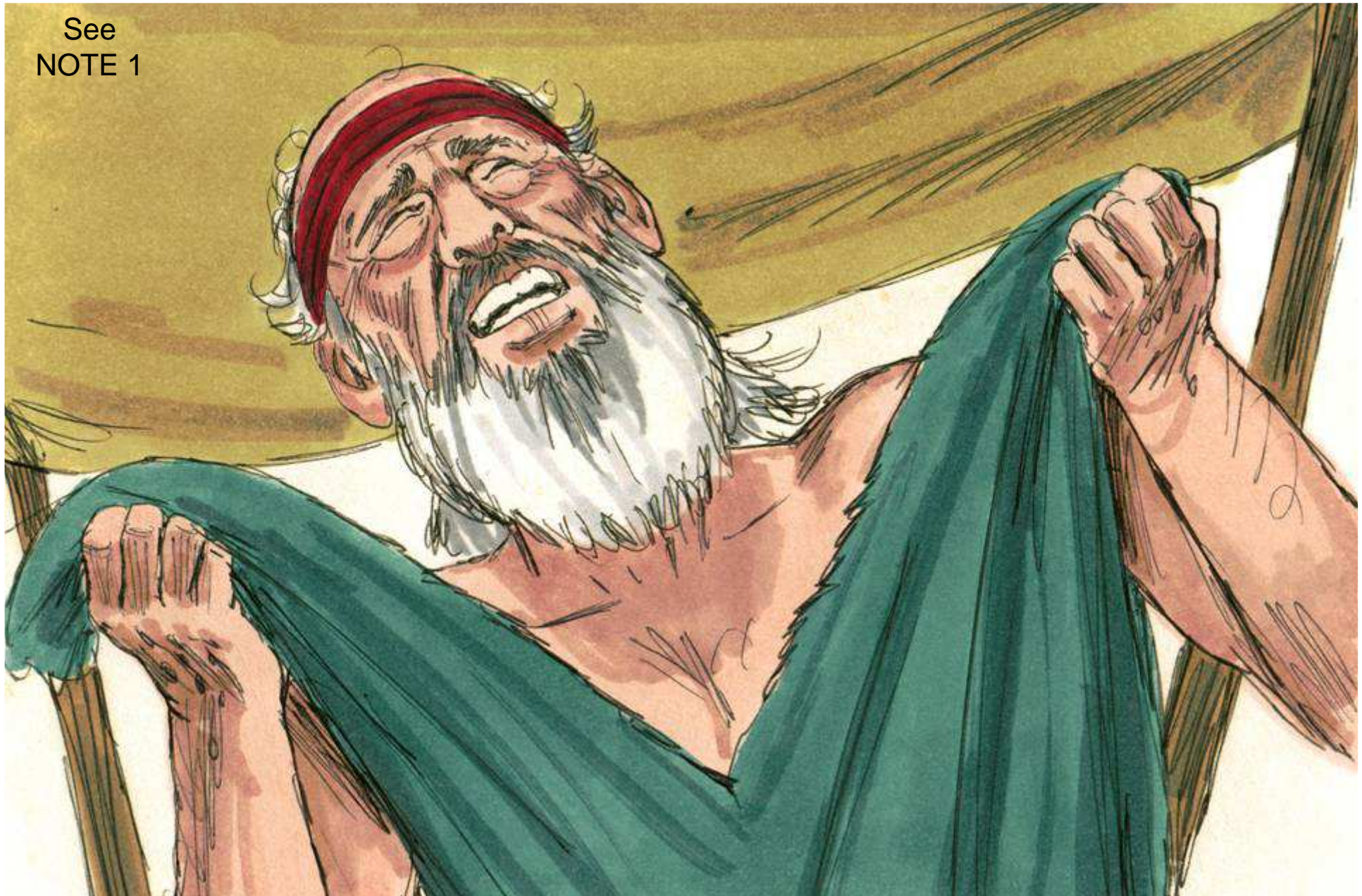


❑ Jacob conspires with his mother, Rebekah (Gen 27:15-16).

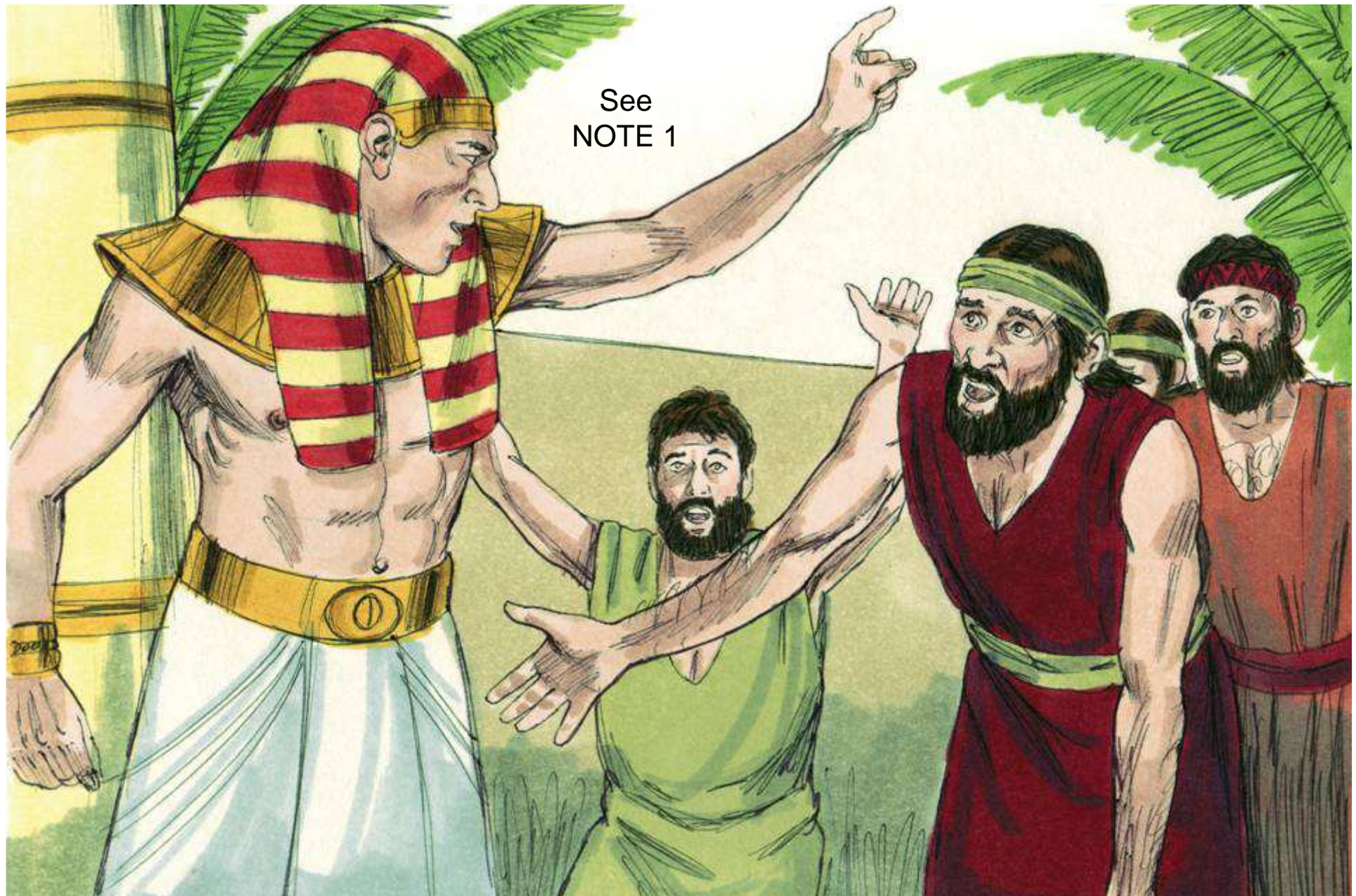


- ❑ Despite being his mother's favourite child, Jacob never sees her again after going away. Only the father Isaac that he deceived, is alive on his return (Gen 35:27).

See
NOTE 1

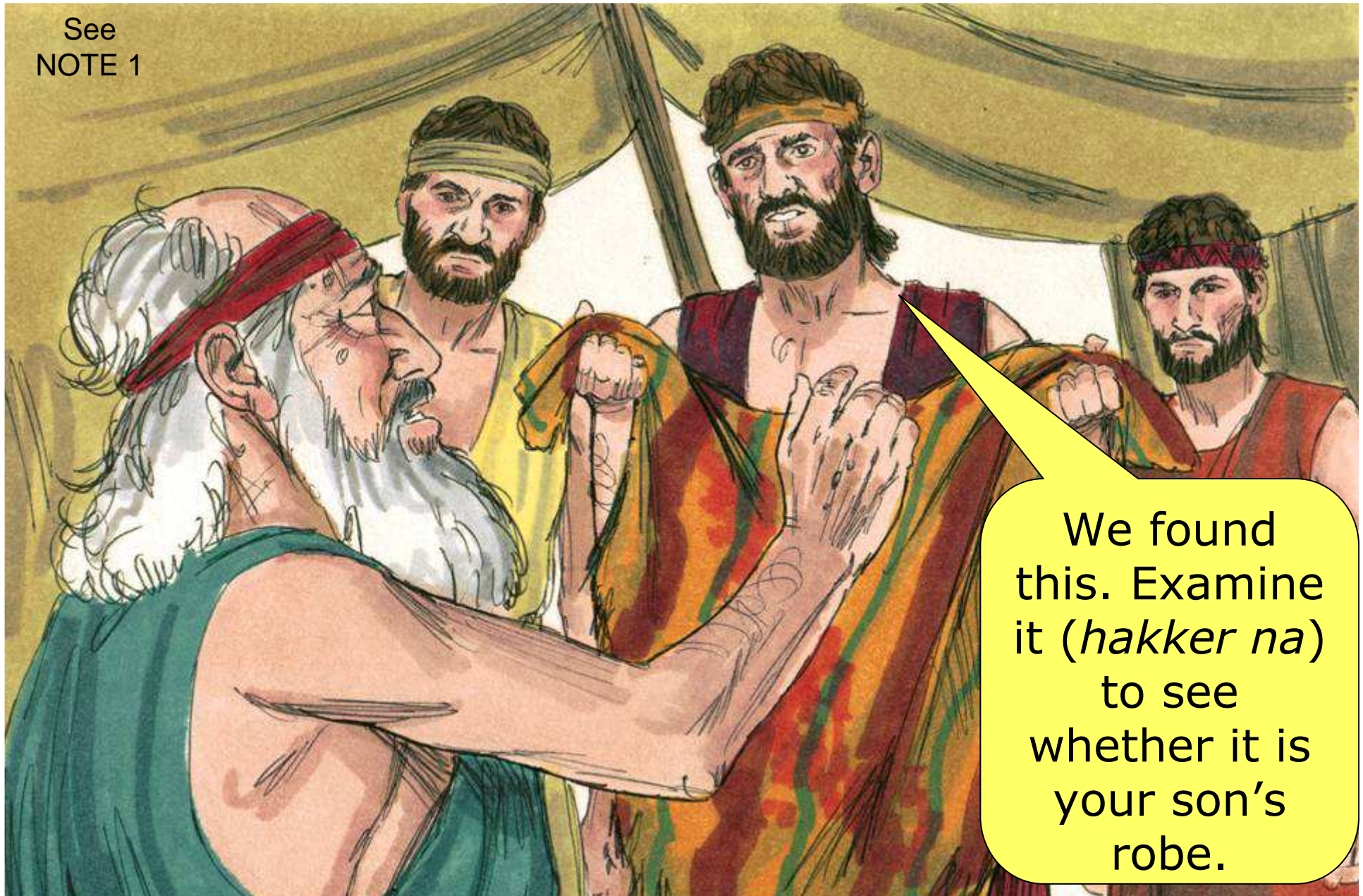


- Then we have the case of Jacob's sons. Jacob was deceived by his sons into believing that Joseph had been killed.



- ❑ Much later these same brothers are deceived by Joseph in Egypt, when as Pharaoh's deputy, they don't recognize him.

See
NOTE 1



We found
this. Examine
it (*hakker na*)
to see
whether it is
your son's
robe.

- ❑ Joseph's coat was dipped in goat's blood in order to deceive Jacob (Gen 37:31-32).



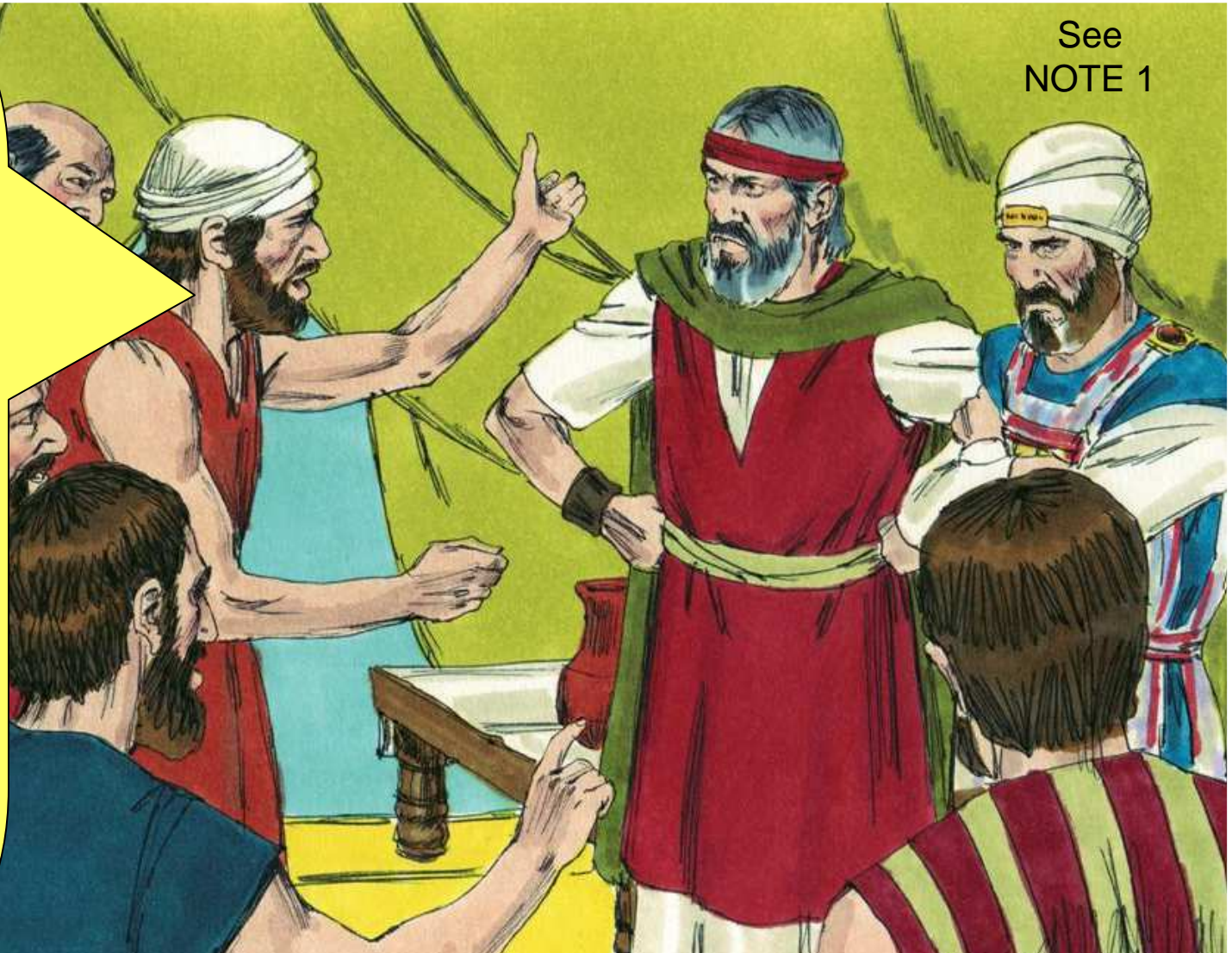
- ❑ Later Tamar deceives Judah also using a goat. "Judah sent the young goat" (Gen 38:20) to the prostitute, who was in fact his daughter-in-law Tamar in disguise.

- ❑ The Midrash (Genesis Rabbah 85:9) points out that the same wording is used in both of these stories: "hakker na" (do you recognize?)
- ❑ While Jacob was asked by Judah and his brothers whether he "recognized" (Gen 38:25) Joseph's bloody coat, Judah in turn was asked by Tamar whether he recognized his seal, cord and staff.

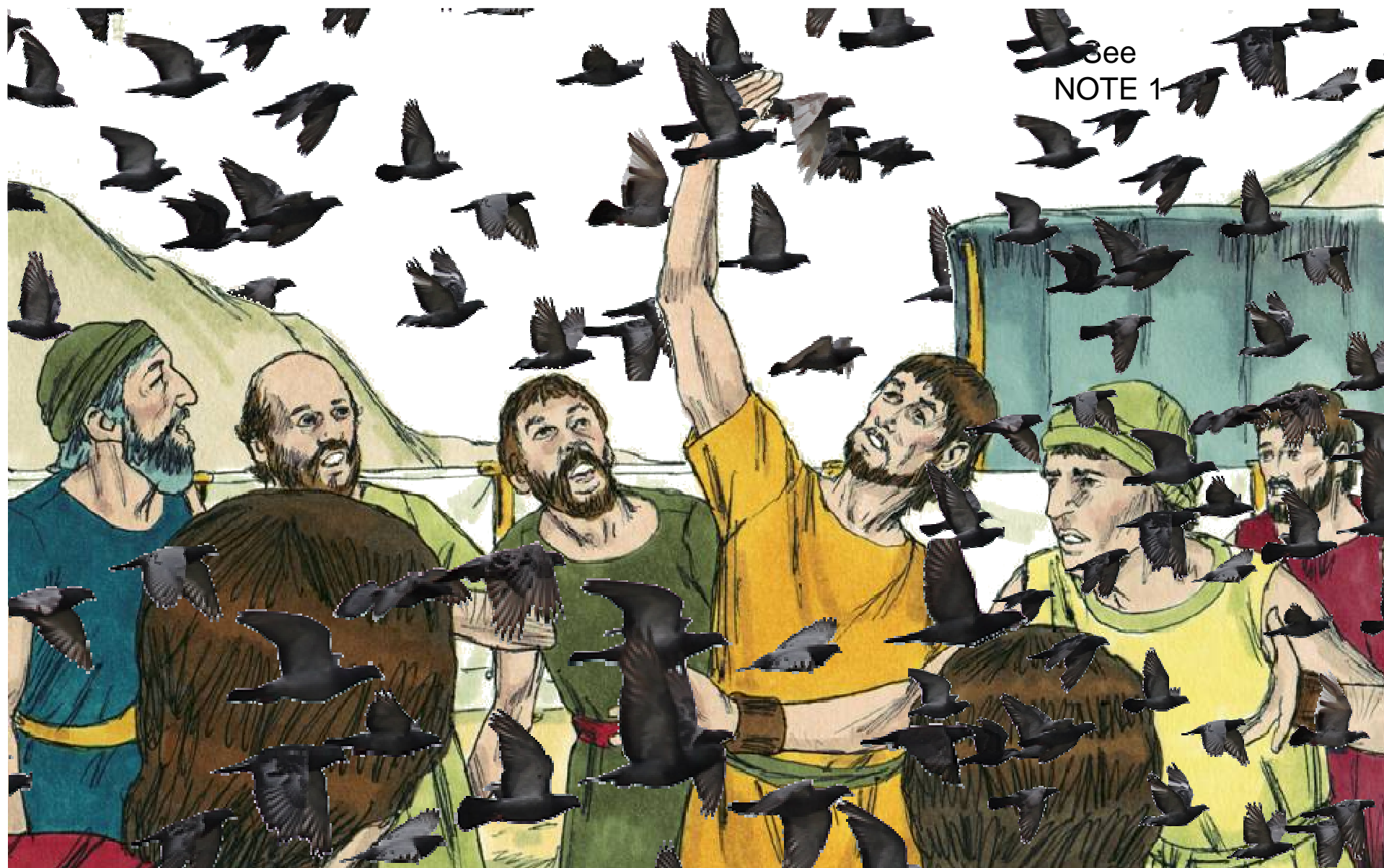


See
NOTE 1

If only we
had meat to
eat! We
remember
the fish we
ate in
Egypt... But
now we have
lost our
appetite; we
never see
anything but
this manna!



- ❑ Remember the Israelites who complained to Moses that they were tired of eating manna and who craved the meat they had in Egypt (Num 11), forgetting of course that they were slaves there?

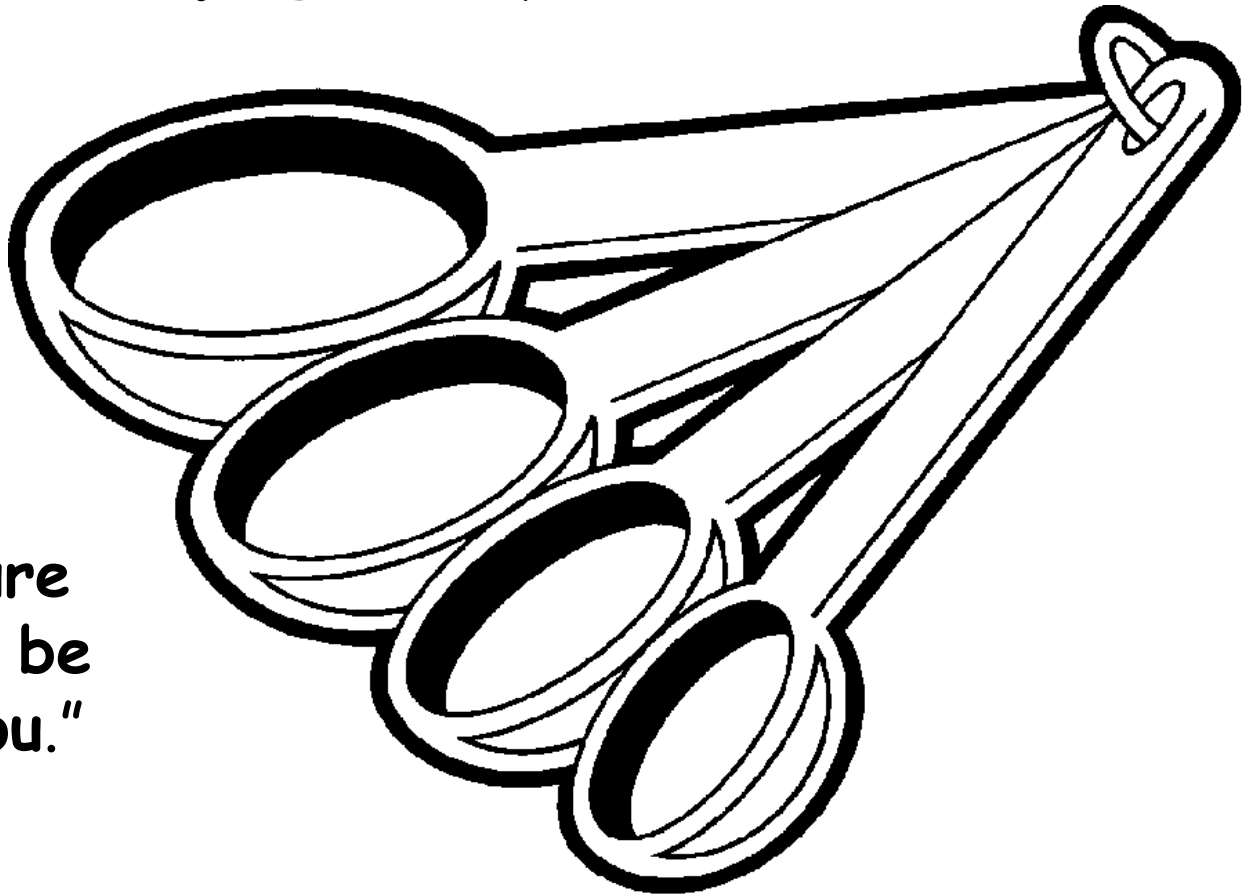


See
NOTE 1

- ❑ God's punishment was to give them meat in the form of quail "for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it" (Gen 11:20).

FITS THE CRIME

- ❑ So next time you experience some hardship, before you complain - examine your life. Maybe God is allowing you to be treated the way you have treated others.
- Luke 6:37-38 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven ... For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."



See
NOTE 1

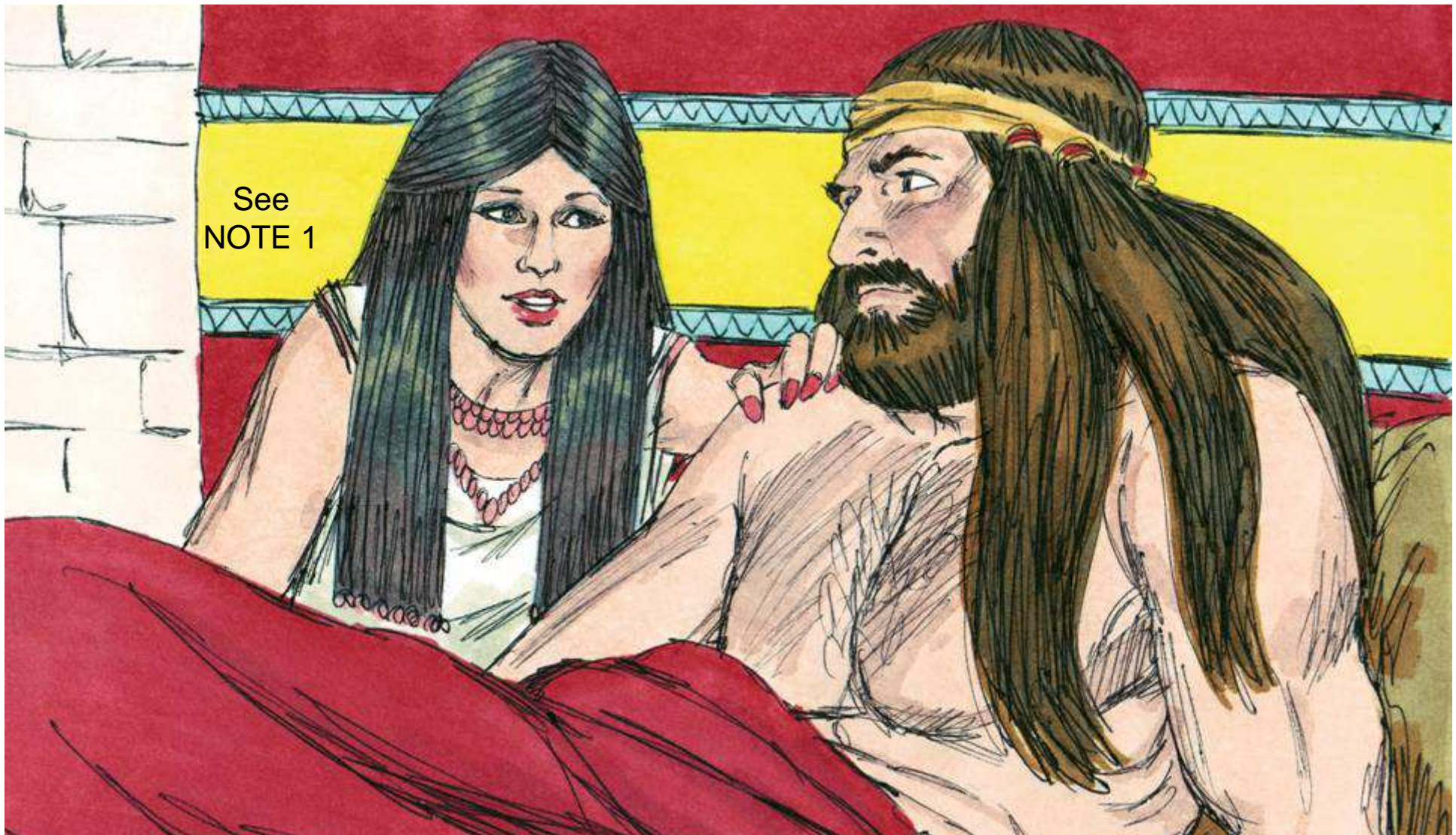


- ❑ Miriam criticised her brother Moses because of the Cushite (Ethiopian) woman he had married. The Ethiopians were of course dark-skinned.

See
NOTE 1

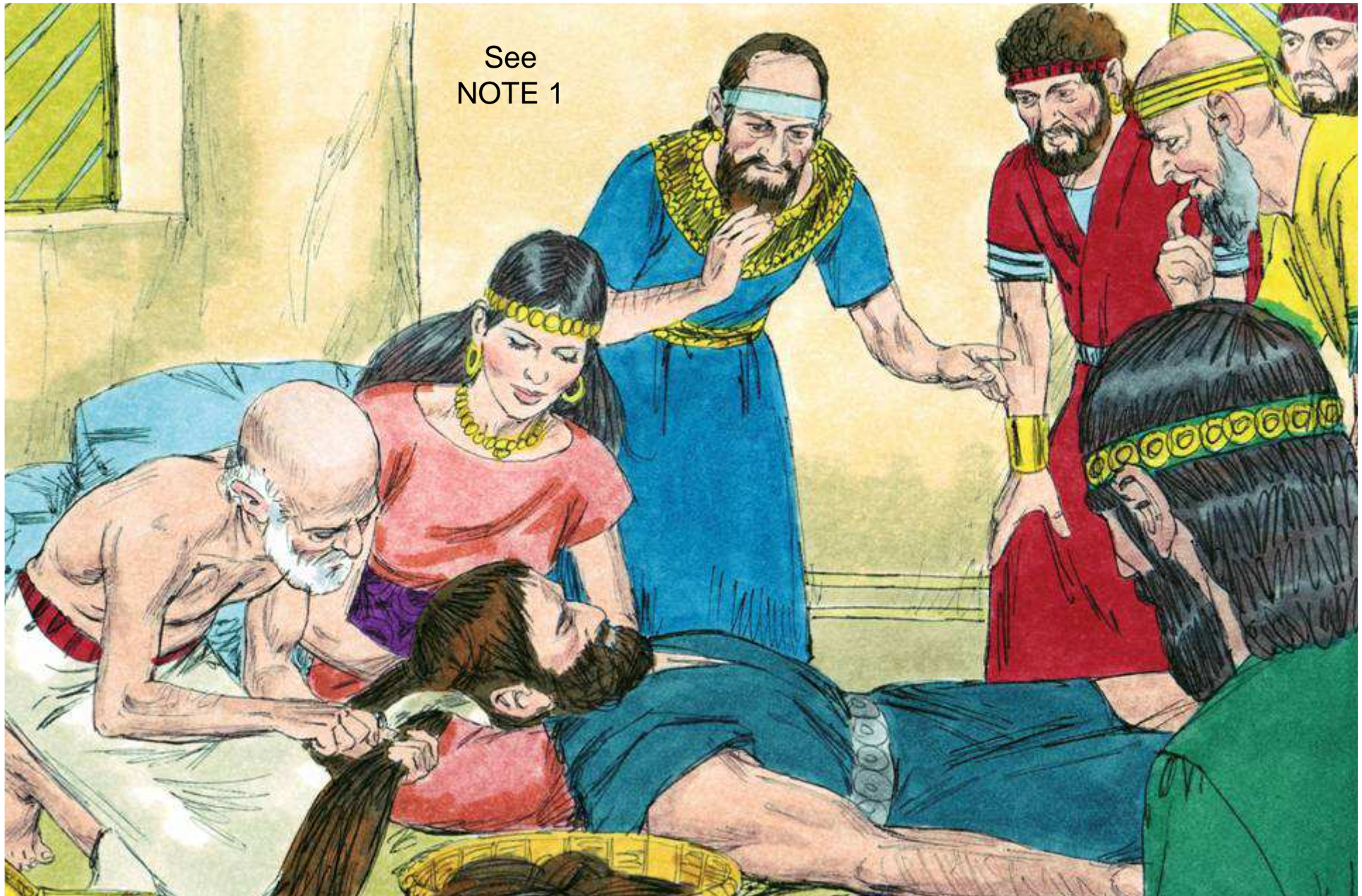


- Miriam's punishment from God was that her skin became "leprous, like snow" (Num 12:10). So Miriam became deathly white after complaining about a dark-skinned person.



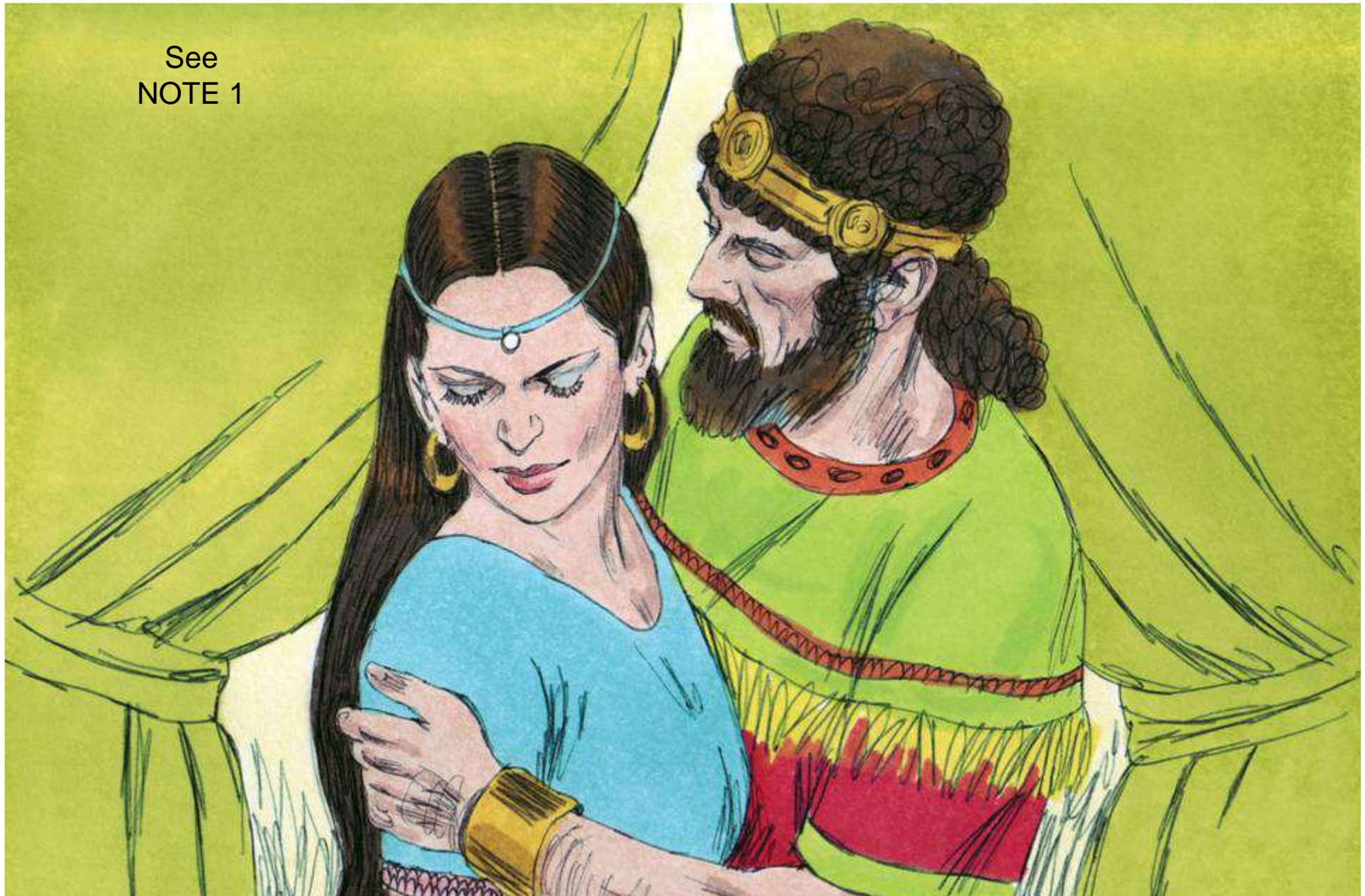
- ❑ Let's consider Samson as another example. He continually pursues pagan Philistine women (Jud 14:1) despite the advice of his parents (Jud 14:3) and God's command against this. He even goes to a Philistine prostitute (Jud 16:1).

See
NOTE 1



- ❑ But it is a Philistine woman, Delilah, who ultimately betrays him to his enemies (Jud 16).

See
NOTE 1



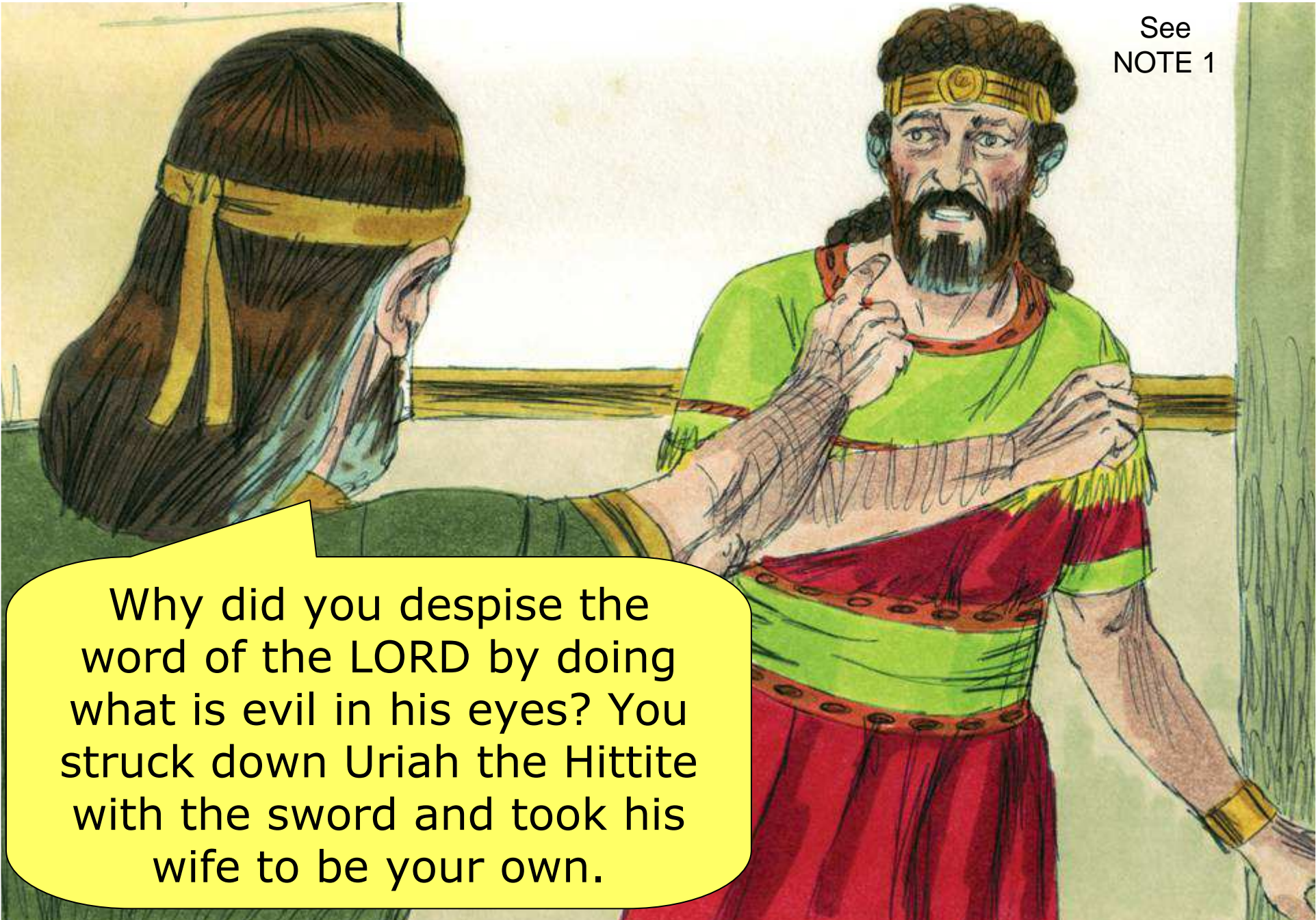
- ❑ Let's look at David as our last example. He committed adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. (2 Kings 11:4)

See
NOTE 1



- ❑ When Bathsheba falls pregnant, David gets Joab to have Uriah killed in order to cover his sin. (2 Sam 11:14-17)

See
NOTE 1



Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own.

❑ The prophet Nathan confronts David. (2 Sam 12:9-10)

See
NOTE 1

*The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, **the son born to you will die.***

(2 Sam 12:13-14)

- ❑ The child born from the act of adultery dies, despite David fasting and praying. Note also that despite God's forgiveness, David is still disciplined.

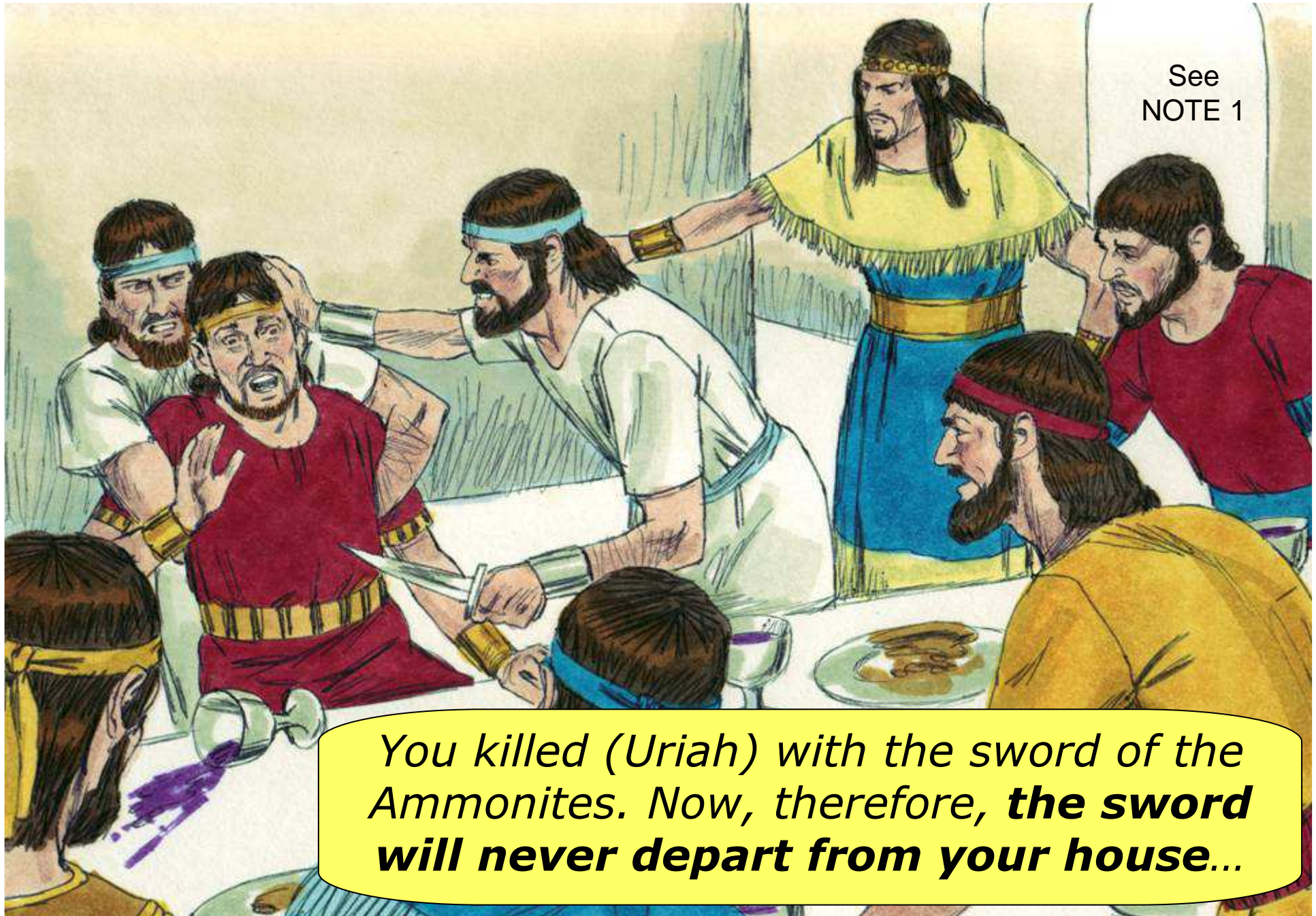
Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes **I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you**, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel. (2 Sam 12:11-12)

See
NOTE 1



- ❑ This is fulfilled by Absalom - "So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel." (2 Sam 16:22)

See
NOTE 1



*You killed (Uriah) with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, **the sword will never depart from your house...***

❑ David's son Ammon is killed by Absalom. (2 Sam 13)

See
NOTE 1



- ❑ Joab, who was instructed by David to have Uriah killed, ends up killing Absalom, David's beloved son (2 Sam 18).

See
NOTE 1

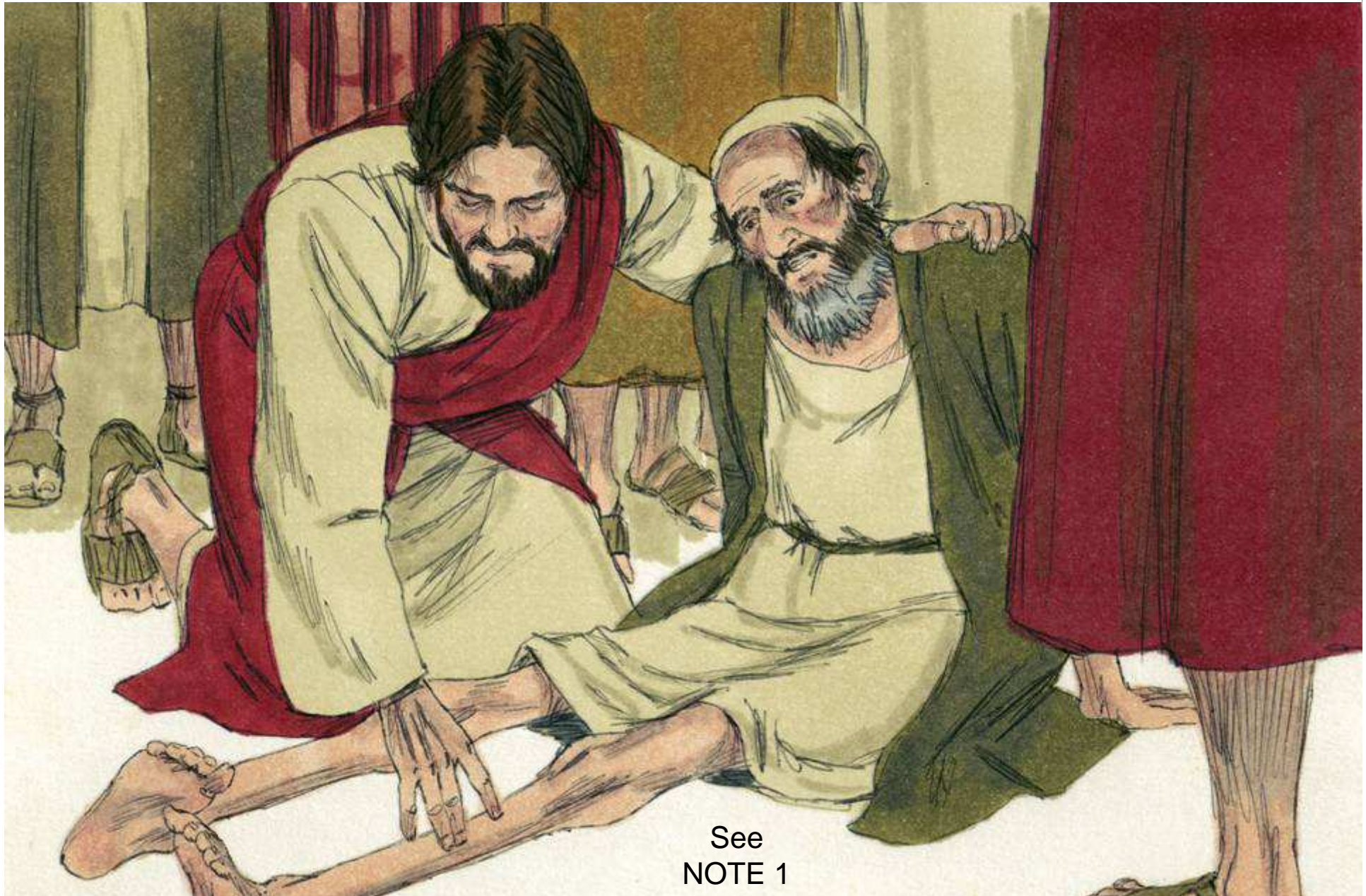


- ❑ David's son Adonijah is executed by his other son Solomon.
(1 Kings 2:25)


FITS THE CRIME

- a) Have you been cheated? Maybe you have cheated others.
- b) Is your boss treating you unfairly? Maybe you have treated others unfairly too.
- c) Are you being slandered by someone? Did you perhaps slander another person?
- d) Do you not forgive those who have wronged you? God will not forgive you then.
 - Matt 18:32-35 "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

- ❑ Remember the lame man that Jesus healed at the Pool of Bethesda? (John 5)



See
NOTE 1



Listen to what Jesus
told him (John 5:14).

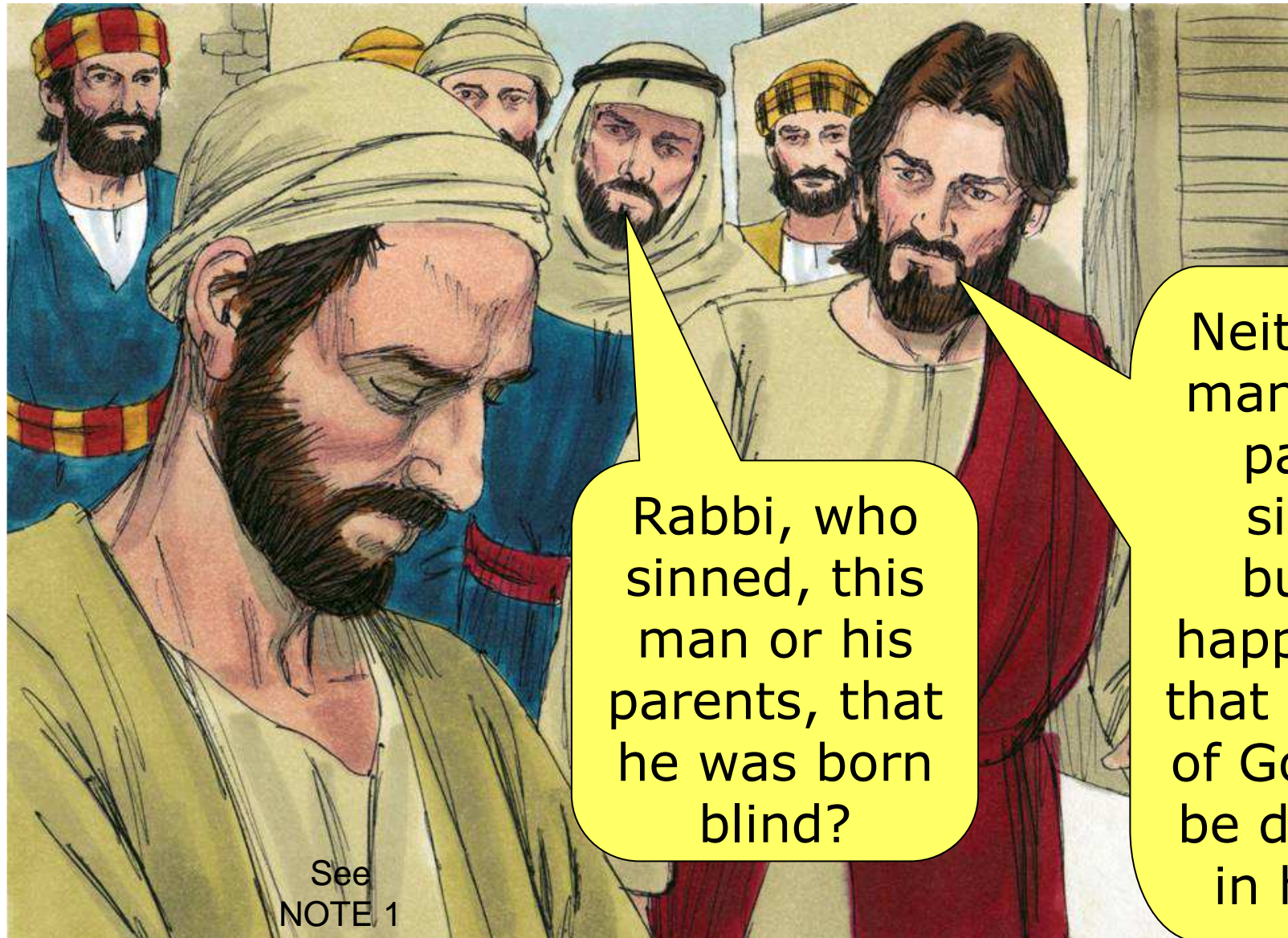
See
NOTE 1

See, you are
well again.
**Stop sinning
or something
worse may
happen
to you.**

- ❑ So Jesus implies that his previous sickness was a result of sin (i.e. a punishment by God).

- ❑ But before you go telling every sick Christian they are being punished, remember the blind man Jesus encounters later (John 9). The disciples now assume that his blindness

too is
as a
result
of sin.



Rabbi, who
sinned, this
man or his
parents, that
he was born
blind?

Neither this
man nor his
parents
sinned,
but this
happened so
that the work
of God might
be displayed
in his life.

See
NOTE 1

TRIALS VS DISCIPLINE

- ❑ So in the case of the lame man, his sickness was a punishment by God for sin. But the man born blind experienced a trial from Satan. But God would even use that to his glory later when Jesus healed the man.
- ❑ So be careful when passing judgement on whether others are experiencing discipline or trials. Rather judge yourself:
 - Rom 14:12-13 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgement on one another.

PAINFUL

- ❑ Heb 12:11a No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.
- We may think that...severity (as God leads his children) is inconsistent with what we know of God's gentleness and compassion. But that is because we do not appreciate how seriously God loves us, and how determined he is that we should have his best, even if it means pain. (Sinclair Ferguson - A Heart for God, 1987, p. 100)
- God does not afflict his children willingly. He takes no delight in seeing our tears - or hearing our groans. But he does take delight in doing us good, making us holy, conforming us to his own image, and fitting us to dwell in his own presence. (John Angell James - The Widow Directed to the Widow's God, 1841)

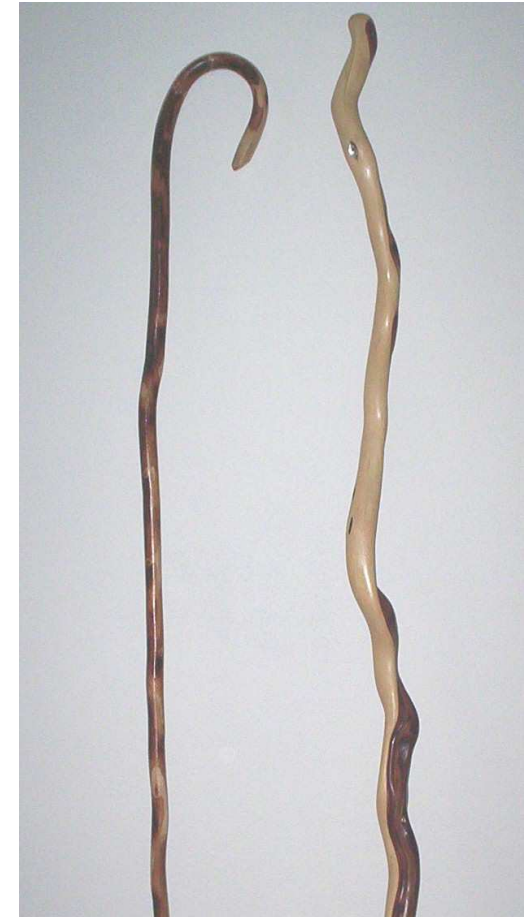
PAINFUL

- Both a surgeon and a criminal may use a knife. In both cases the cuts may hurt, but the difference is the intent. The criminal (like Satan) intends to hurt and maim us, while the surgeon (like God) uses the cuts as a means of healing a damaged area of the body or of removing a cancerous growth. When we suffer under God's discipline we know the intent is to heal, make us holier and develop our character.



PAINFUL

- ❑ So despite the pain, it is for our good.
 - God's wounds cure, sin's kisses kill. - William Gurnall
 - Prov 20:30 Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the innermost being.
- ❑ In his "Shepherd's Psalm" David says of the Lord his shepherd, "your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4).
 - The rod was for correction while the staff was to guide.
 - We often learn more of God under the rod that strikes us than under the staff that comforts us. (Stephen Charnock)



FOR OUR GOOD

- Whom God loves, the Scriptures says, he chastens. He makes all things, including pain, "work together for good for them that love God, and are called according to his purpose." That should be the consolation and strength of the saints... That affliction is actually a blessing in disguise. At other times, the pain hurts so much that they cannot, through the tears, see the disguise. Momentarily they lament the heavy hand of God upon them, but when they are thinking in their most saintly character, they praise God. His rod and staff comfort them. (John Gerstner - The Problem of Pleasure, Soli Deo Gloria, 2002, p. 11-12)

LATER ON...

- ❑ Heb 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
- ❑ The harvest it produces comes only "later on".
 - Many believers are deeply grieved, because they do not at once feel that they have been profited by their afflictions. Well, you do not expect to see apples or plums on a tree which you have planted but a week. Only little children put their seeds into their flower-garden, and then expect to see them grow into plants in an hour. (C.H. Spurgeon)

FOR OUR GOOD

- ❑ When hardships come it's hard to endure them cheerfully, but like all discipline the benefit is realised later. Hardships serve to 'train' us for righteousness.
 - 1 Cor 11:32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are **being disciplined so that we will not be condemned** with the world.
- ❑ Heb 12:10b ... but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.
 - God's discipline will result in character development and is for our good. While human discipline by our earthly fathers had temporary benefits, divine discipline by our heavenly Father has eternal benefits. As such, we should be all the more willing to endure it.

FOR OUR GOOD

- ❑ Chastisement is designed for our good, to promote our highest interests. Look beyond the rod to the All-wise hand that wields it! (A.W. Pink)
- ❑ Many Christians have to be lovingly roughed up before they will grow up. Although the heavenly Father never allows his children to suffer needlessly, sometimes he lets them experience hard knocks so they'll become mature believers. The need for "bad weather" to stimulate growth can be seen in nature. Scientists say that the seeds of some desert bushes must be damaged by a storm before they will germinate. They are covered with hard shells that keep out water. This allows them to lie dormant on the sand for several seasons until conditions are right for growth. ¹

¹ http://www.preceptaustin.org/hebrews_12_sermon_illustrations.htm

FOR OUR GOOD

- When heavy rains finally come, the little seeds are carried away in a flash flood. They are banged against sand, gravel, and rocks as they rush down the slopes. Eventually they settle in a depression where the soil has become damp to a depth of several feet. Only then do they begin to grow, for moisture is absorbed through the nicks and scratches they picked up on their downhill plunge.

Similarly, difficulties may be needed to wake up a sleeping saint. This may hurt for a while, but if we yield to the Lord we will find that life's bruises can mark the beginning of spiritual advances. We may prefer to remain 'seeds,' but he wants us to become 'fruitful trees.' (Mart De Haan)¹

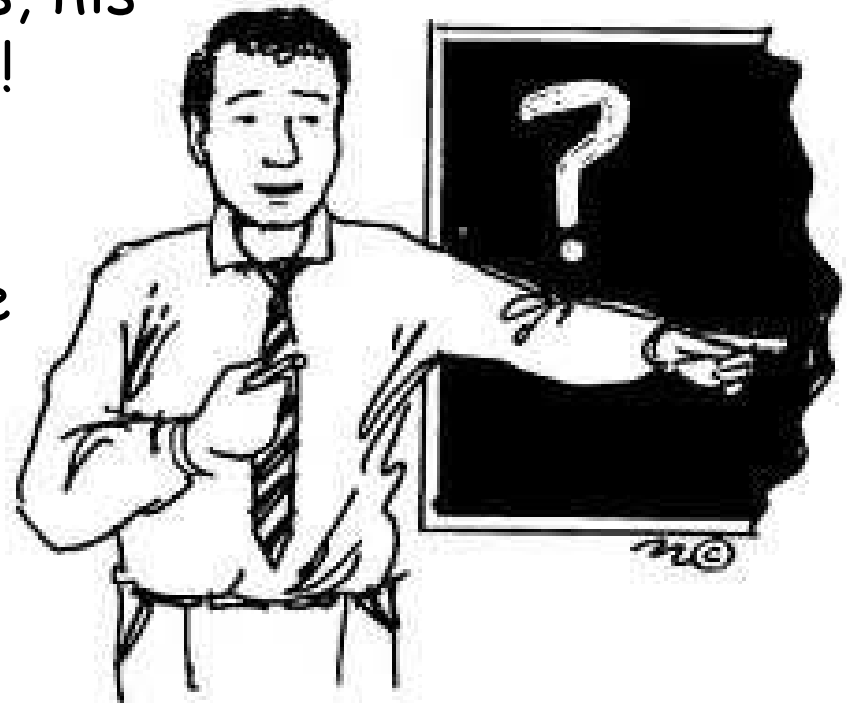
¹ Ibid

LEARN FROM PAIN

- ❑ We need to learn from the Lord's discipline:
 - Prov 15:5 A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.
 - Prov 10:17 He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.
 - Prov 12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.
 - Prov 15:10 Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die.

LEARN FROM PAIN

- ❑ In difficult times rather than complaining, ask the Lord, "What are you trying to teach me?"
 - Prov 15:32 He who ignores discipline despises himself, but **whoever heeds correction gains understanding.**
- ❑ God's corrections are instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our admonitions! And to note this, the Hebrews and Greeks both do express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, because the latter is the true end of the former. (Thomas Brooks - A Puritan Golden Treasury, compiled by I.D.E. Thomas)



LEARN FROM PAIN

❑ It is in discipline that we hear God speak:

➤ Deut 4:36 From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you.

➤ C.S. Lewis wrote: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."



LEARN FROM PAIN

- ❑ If we only knew how bad we are, we would welcome chastening because this is God's way of getting rid of sin and its habits. But chastening is resented because we cannot believe that we have done anything worthy of it. (John Sanderson - The Fruit of the Spirit, Zondervan, 1972, p. 71)
- ❑ When pain is present it is difficult to bear; but when a Christian, even in anguish, realizes that this is the heavy hand of a loving God upon him, he blesses God in his sufferings and for his suffering, which he knows is for his own good and for his everlasting blessedness. (John Gerstner - The Problem of Pleasure, Soli Deo Gloria, 2002, p. 12)

IGNORING DISCIPLINE

- ❑ Some people ignore or don't respond to God's discipline:
 - Jer 32:33 They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, **they would not listen or respond to discipline.**
- ❑ Despising discipline is the sign of a fool:
 - Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but **fools despise wisdom and discipline.**
- ❑ What will God do if we repeatedly ignore his discipline?
 - Prov 29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes **will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.**

IGNORING DISCIPLINE

- Prov 1:24-27 "But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, **since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster;** I will mock when calamity overtakes you--when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you."
- Prov 1:28-31 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; **they will look for me but will not find me.** Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, **since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke,** they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes."

ENCOURAGEMENT

- ❑ Heb 12:12-13 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.
- The author of Hebrews quotes Isaiah 35:3,6¹ and Proverbs 4:26² to encourage these Christians to be strong in the face of persecution and trouble.

¹ Isaiah 35:3,4,6 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.'... Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. ² Prov 4:26 (ASV) Make level the path of thy feet, And let all thy ways be established.



ENCOURAGEMENT

- ❑ And so - God disciplines, but he also restores those who repent:
 - Job 5:17-18 "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal."
 - Ps 94:12-13 Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law; you grant him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked.
 - Jer 31:18 "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God.'"

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