

10.06 Jacob Leaves Haran (Genesis 31:17-55)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Again, Nancy Ganz's treatment of this story is excellent.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *hill country of Gilead*: an extensive range of hills forming the eastern boundary of Canaan (JFB in Online Bible).
- *teraphim*: images of humans used to represent God or a god; small images of human figures, used not as idols or objects of worship, but as talismans, for superstitious purposes (JFB in Online Bible).
- *covenant*: an agreement between two or more people; sometimes God makes a “unilateral” covenant in which He alone makes promises.

Scripture: (ESV)

Genesis 31:17 So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels. 18 He drove away all his livestock, all his property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.

19 Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father’s household gods. 20 And Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean, by not telling him that he intended to flee. 21 He fled with all that he had and arose and crossed the Euphrates, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

22 When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, 23 he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. 24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

25 And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead.

26 And Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? 27 Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? 28 And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. 29 It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’ 30 And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father’s house, but why did you steal my gods?”

31 Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. 32 Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it.” Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33 So Laban went into Jacob’s tent and into Leah’s tent and into the tent of the two female servants, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah’s tent and entered Rachel’s. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel’s saddle and sat on them. Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them. 35 And she said to her father, “Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is

upon me

36 Then Jacob became angry and berated Laban. Jacob said to Laban, “What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? 37 For you have felt through all my goods; what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. 38 These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. 39 What was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you. I bore the loss of it myself. From my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. 40 There I was: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes.

41 “These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. 42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.”

43 Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day for these my daughters or for their children whom they have borne?

44 “Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I. And let it be a witness between you and me.”

45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. 46 And Jacob said to his kinsmen, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. 47 Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.

48 Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” Therefore he named it Galeed, 49 and Mizpah, for he said, “The Lord watch between you and me, when we are out of one another’s sight. 50 If you oppress my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.”

51 Then Laban said to Jacob, “See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. 52 This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, to do harm. 53 The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.”

So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac 54 and Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his kinsmen to eat bread. They ate bread and spent the night in the hill country.

55 Early in the morning Laban arose and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned home.

Introduction/Review:

Jacob had been gone from home twenty years. During that entire time he had worked for his uncle/father-in-law, Laban, who was a master trickster (*cheat* might be a better word) just as Jacob had been. Laban had changed Jacob’s wages ten times, not to help Jacob, of course.

The last wages we know about were speckled and spotted goats and sheep and black lambs. Although Jacob used superstitious means to breed his animals, God blessed him anyway until Jacob became very wealthy with many servants, camels and donkeys. In a dream God told Jacob, “It’s time to go back home to your family in Canaan.”

Story:

A bit of a problem in leaving concerned Laban. He might be a hindrance, ✓might try to trick Jacob into staying in the area of Haran, might take away all that Jacob had earned, or, worst of all, might take away his wives. Also, Laban hadn’t been looking with favor on Jacob as he had before. Things were not right between them.

Jacob leaves Haran

Jacob decided it might be wise to depart without saying a word. It was sheep-shearing time. While Laban and his sons had gone and were involved with that attention-consuming work, Rachel sneaked to her father's living quarters and stole his household gods—his teraphim.* No one, not even Jacob, knew what she had done.

With Laban gone, now was Jacob's chance to "get out of Dodge." So he did. He set his sons and his wives on camels, drove all his livestock and the property he had gained and fled, crossing the Euphrates [see map below] and setting his face toward the hill country of Gilead [see map and photo below]. ✓From what happens next I would guess he must have traveled quite fast, even with flocks and family.

Laban chases Jacob

It took three days for news of Jacob's departure to reach Laban. Immediately he and his sons set out after Jacob. It took them only seven days to catch up. "[Laban,] being not encumbered, advanced rapidly; whereas Jacob, with a young family and numerous flocks, had to march [more] slowly" (JFB in Online Bible). Before Laban actually reached Jacob, God came to Laban in a dream by night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad." Oh, that was good of God! ✓Evidently, God knew Laban would do wrong; so He warned Laban to treat Jacob right.

Laban's accusations

When they met, Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword?" My, what exaggeration! ✓I think Laban was not a pleasant father-in-law.

Laban continued, "Why did you flee secretly and trick me and not tell me so that I might have sent you away with happiness and songs, with tambourine and lyre?" In other words, "We should have had a farewell party." I wonder if Laban would have thrown a farewell party even though that was the tradition in this area. Considering how Laban had been acting, it seems as if he was speaking hypocritically—saying one thing but thinking and acting differently.

He went on by asking, "Why didn't you permit me to kiss my grandsons and my daughters farewell? You have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm" (aha! we see his true intent), "but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' I can see why you want to get back to your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"

Oh, oh! Laban knows his household gods are missing! A Bible scholar comments about this: "Foolish Laban! to call those things his gods which could be stolen! Enemies may steal our goods, but not our God" (Matthew Henry at Online Bible).

Jacob answered, "I left secretly because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force." I agree with Jacob; ✓Laban seems to be the kind of person who might do something like this. In fact, Laban did not deny that possibility.

Laban's searching for his gods

"As for your gods," Jacob continued, "Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live." (Remember, Jacob did not know Rachel had stolen them.) Jacob went on, "In the presence of our kinsmen here, point out what I have that is yours, and take it."

Laban was not hesitant to start looking for those gods. He searched Jacob's tent, the tent of the two female servants, and Leah's tent, but he did not find them. Rachel had put those false gods in her camel's saddle. Then she sat on it (and them). When Laban felt all around her tent but could not find the idols, she remained sitting on the saddle and said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, but ✓I am indisposed; I have health issues."**

Jacob's accusations

After Laban had completed his unsuccessful search, Jacob became angry and gave Laban a piece of his mind [indignantly]: “What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? You have felt through all my goods, and what have you found that belongs to you? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. I bore the loss of animals torn by wild beasts and the loss of stolen animals. By day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and I lost sleep for your sake. I have been in your ✓employment these twenty years. I served fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.”

Oh, that was quite a mouthful, wasn't it? Notice one thing: Jacob spoke of the “God of Abraham and the Fear (God) of Isaac,” but he did not say that this God was his—not yet. Another thing: Jacob called God “the Fear of Isaac.”*** We often hear about loving God, but we also need to learn to fear Him. Isaiah 8:13 reads, “Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.” God is the King of kings and the Judge of all the earth; we should fear Him.

Laban answered Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day for these my daughters or for their children whom they have borne?”

Well, now, was this true? In a way. They had been Laban's, but Jacob had worked for them. They were now Jacob's. You can see how ✓Laban seemed to be seeking to cheat Jacob even at this point.

Laban and Jacob's covenant

Changing the subject, Laban said, “Let's make a covenant, you and I. Let it be a witness between you and me.”

So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar and said to his kids, “Get some stones.” They took stones and made a pile of rocks***** and they ate there by the heap. Laban called the place a Syrian name, but Jacob named it with a Hebrew name, not that he didn't know Syrian but perhaps to show that he was now renouncing Syrian ways for Hebrew ways (Poole in Online Bible). Both names meant the same thing: “heap of witness.”

Another name near this place was Mizpah, which means a watch tower. “This refers to some prominent cliff from which, as a watch-tower, an extensive view might be obtained. It was in the northern half of Gilead” (Barnes in Online Bible).

Laban said, “The Lord watch between you and me, when we are out of one another's sight. If you oppress my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one is with us, see, God is witness between you and me. In addition, ”This pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this pile of rocks to you, and you will not go past this pile of rocks and this pillar to me, to do harm. The God of your grandfather Abraham and the God of his brother, my grandfather Nahor, the God of their father, Terah, judge between us.”

Just a minute. I know the true God was Abraham's God, ✓but I don't know He was Nahor's God. After all, didn't Laban himself have idols? ✓There is little evidence that Terah worshiped the true God unless he converted from the moon worship of Ur.

✓Jacob, aware of this difference of viewpoint, swore or vowed to keep the covenant by the Fear (*i.e.*, the one true God) of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his family ✓and Laban's to eat. They ate bread and spent the night in the hill country.

Early the next morning Laban got up, kissed his grandchildren and his daughters, blessed them, and then returned home. Jacob continued his journey to Canaan.

***“Rachel stole the teraphim.’ It is not the business of Scripture to acquaint us with the kinds and characteristics of false worship. Hence, we know little of the teraphim, except that they were employed by those who professed to worship the true God. Rachel had a lingering attachment to these objects of her family’s superstitious reverence, and secretly carried them away as relics of a home she was to visit no more, and as sources of safety to herself against the perils of her flight” (Online Bible). Perhaps she stole them merely for their intrinsic metal value.

**I have changed the wording from “the way of women is upon me.”

***“He calls him not Isaac’s God, but his fear, because Isaac was yet alive. . . . The Jews observe, that God is not called the God of any particular person, as of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, till after their death” (Poole at Online Bible).

****“The way in which this covenant was ratified was by a heap of stones being laid in a circular pile, to serve as seats, and in the center of this circle a large one was set up perpendicularly for an altar. It is probable that a sacrifice was first offered, and then that the feast of reconciliation was partaken of by both parties seated on the stones around it. To this day heaps of stones, which have been used as memorials, are found abundantly in the region where this transaction took place” (JFB in Online Bible).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus: He made a covenant with the Father to save people from their sins by dying for them on the cross.
- “Thou shalt not steal.” What a world of trouble Rachel would have been in had the idols been found with her.
- “Enemies may steal our goods, but not our God” (Matthew Henry).
- Love God, but fear Him too.

Activities:

- Play dough: heap of rocks; camels; camel saddle
- Snack: Cookies ‘n’ Cream Fudge Rocks (see recipe below)
- Sing all of “Isaac” found in Lesson 09.01 or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org.
- Sing first four verses of “Jacob” found in Lesson 10.01 or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org.
- Present a Camille Camel puppet skit (found below). After the skit discuss why a camel could not evolve over long periods of time; *e.g.*, it could not survive if only some of its fantastic traits were present—just wide feet without pads; having ordinary mammal mouths; having short eyelashes; other characteristics mentioned in former skits.
- Watch a dramatization of this passage as the King James Version is read at <http://childrenschapel.org/biblestories/jacob6.html>. Today’s story ends at about the middle of this video, at 11 minutes 23 seconds.
- Review questions: (Game: Get ten small rocks. Have students add one rock to a pile of rocks for each correct answer.)

1. Who stole Laban’s household gods? [Rachel.]

2. How long did it take for Laban to learn Jacob had left the country? [Three days.]
3. Who appeared to Laban in a dream? [God.]
4. What was God's message to Laban? ["Don't speak good or bad to Jacob."]
5. What was Laban's complaint against Jacob? [He had left secretly, taking his family, and his gods.]
6. Why had Jacob left without telling Laban? [Because he was afraid Laban might take away his wives.]
7. Trick question: Where did Laban find his gods? [He didn't find them.]
8. When Jacob spoke about the true God, he said he was the God of whom? [Of Abraham; of his father—"the Fear of Isaac."]
9. What did Laban and Jacob do to show they were making a covenant? [By making a pile of rocks.]
10. The heap of rocks was a boundary for Laban and Jacob not to do what? [Not to pass to harm the other.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Psalm 34:14—Seek peace, and pursue it.

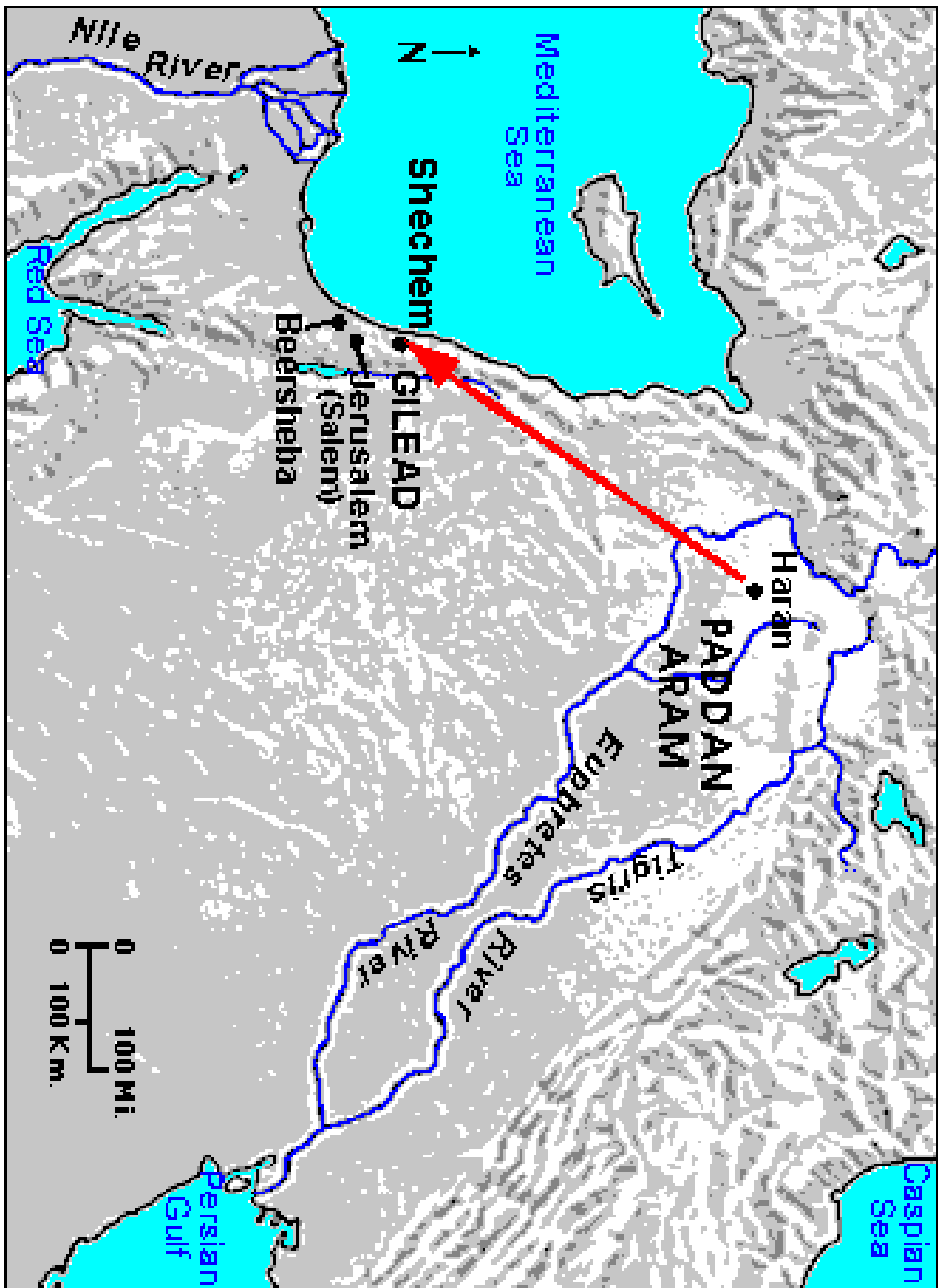
Handwork:

- Find the idol. Print both pages found below for each student. Before class, with a razor cutter, cut below the tent, Leah, Rachel, the camel and the box. Align the back page with the top page and glue together around the edge. Students may lift the flaps to find the idol. Have students color this picture. (These pages are from a now-defunct web site called Henny Penny.)

hill country of Gilead

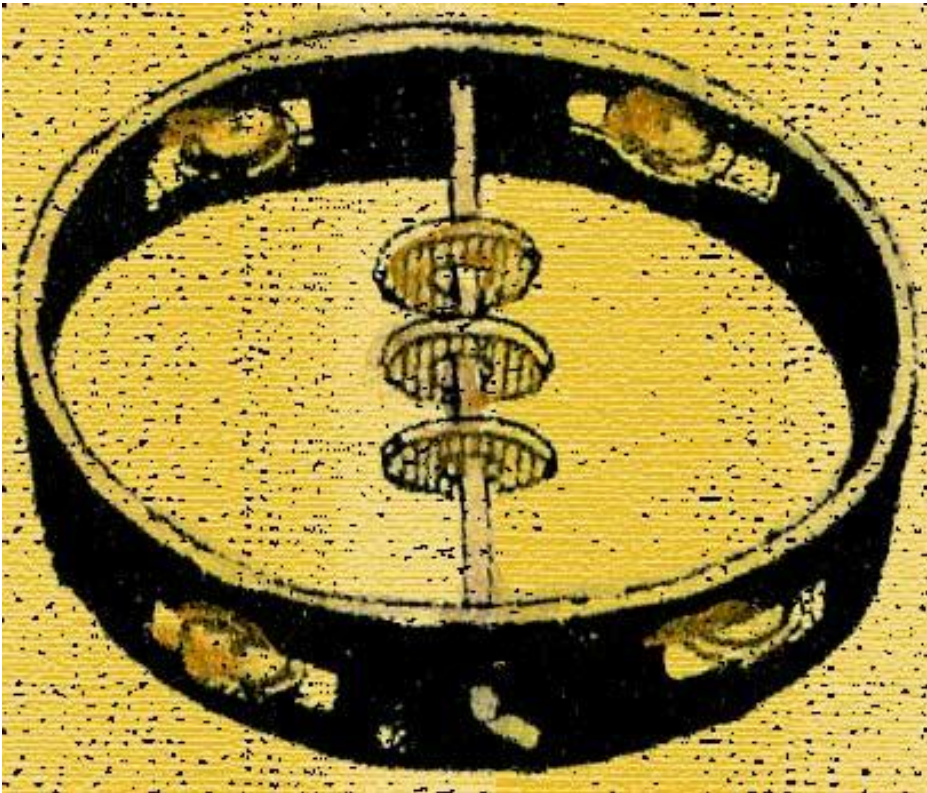
teraphim

covenant





<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilead> (Present-day hill country of Gilead)



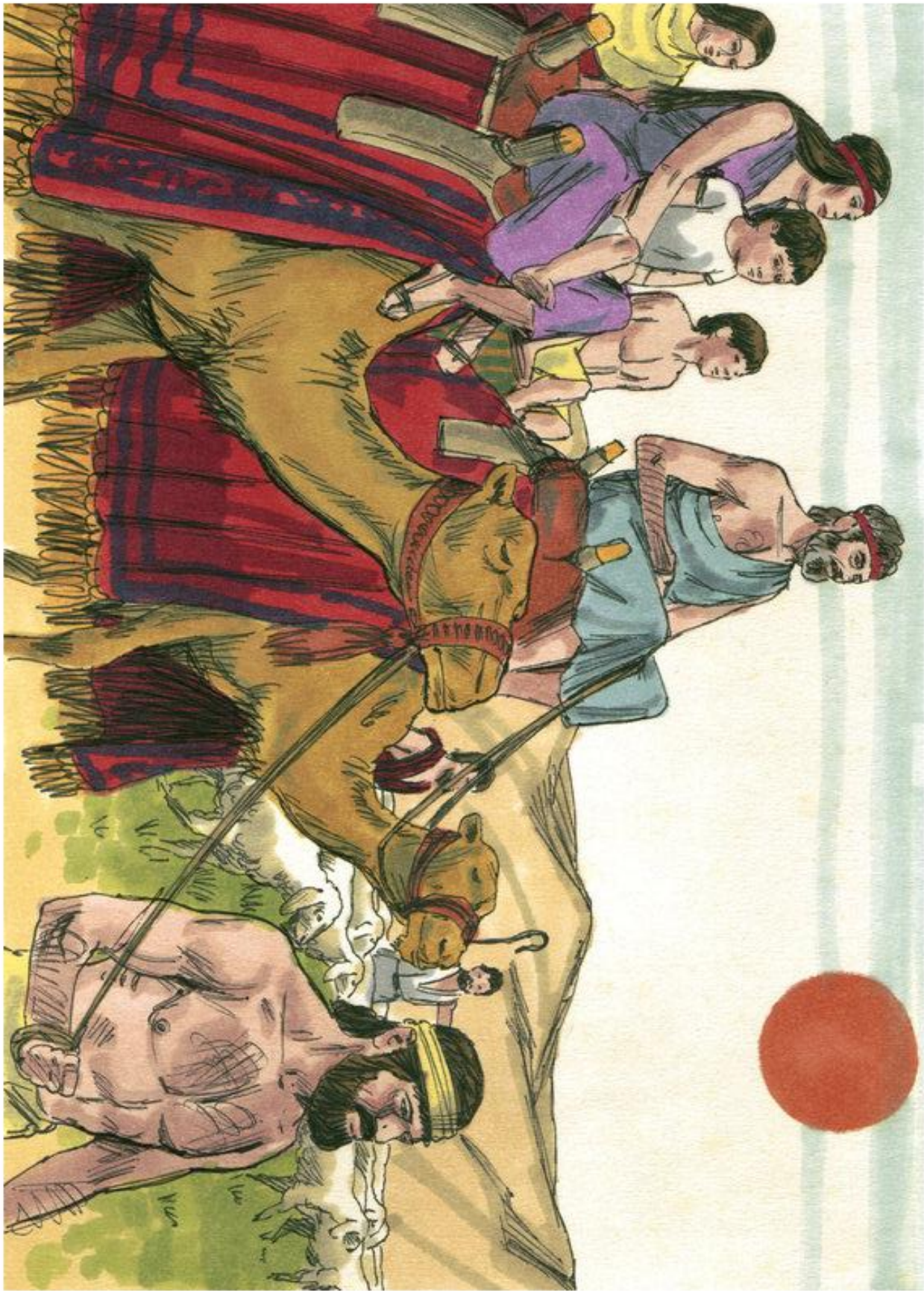
Tambourine

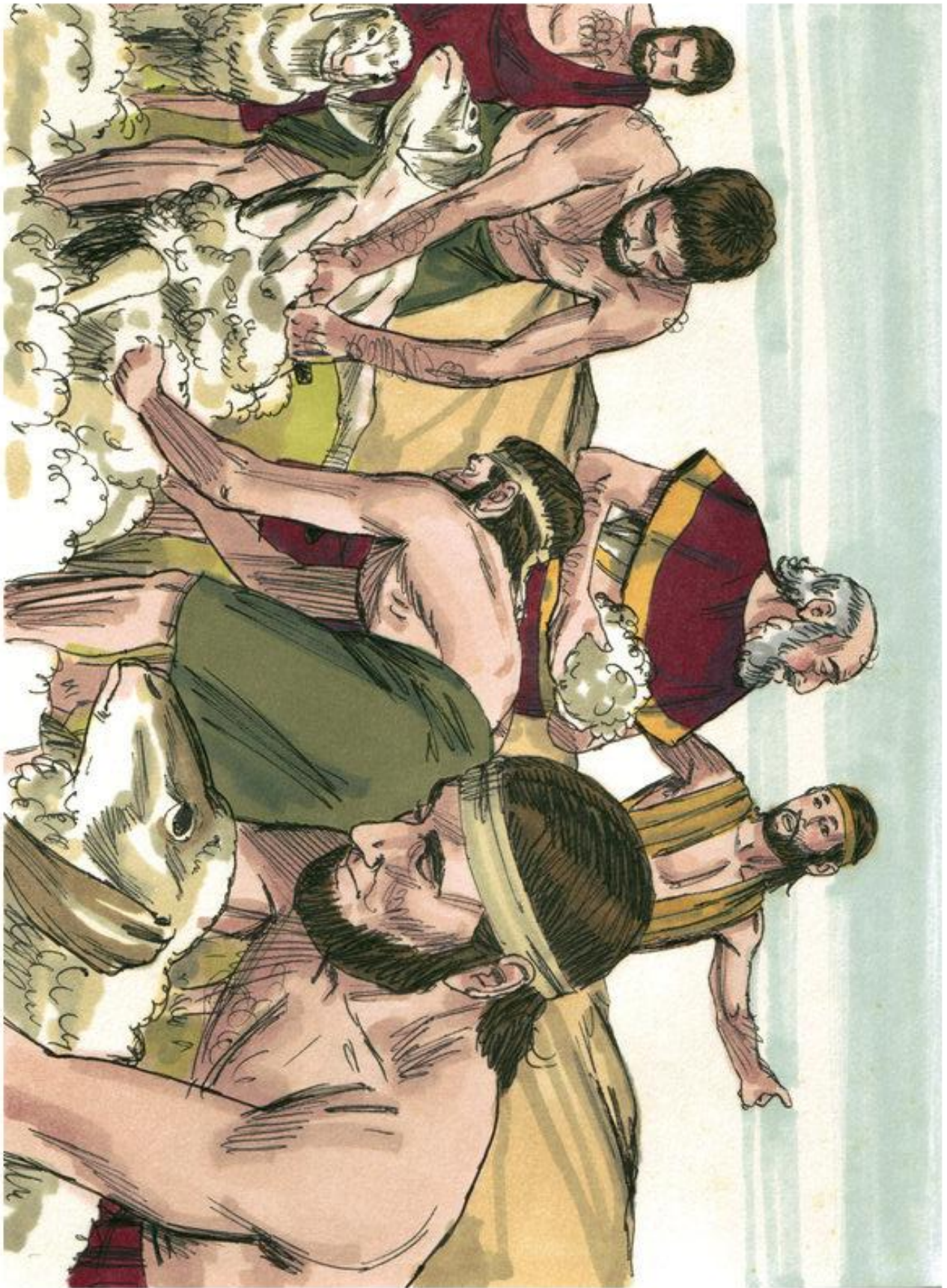
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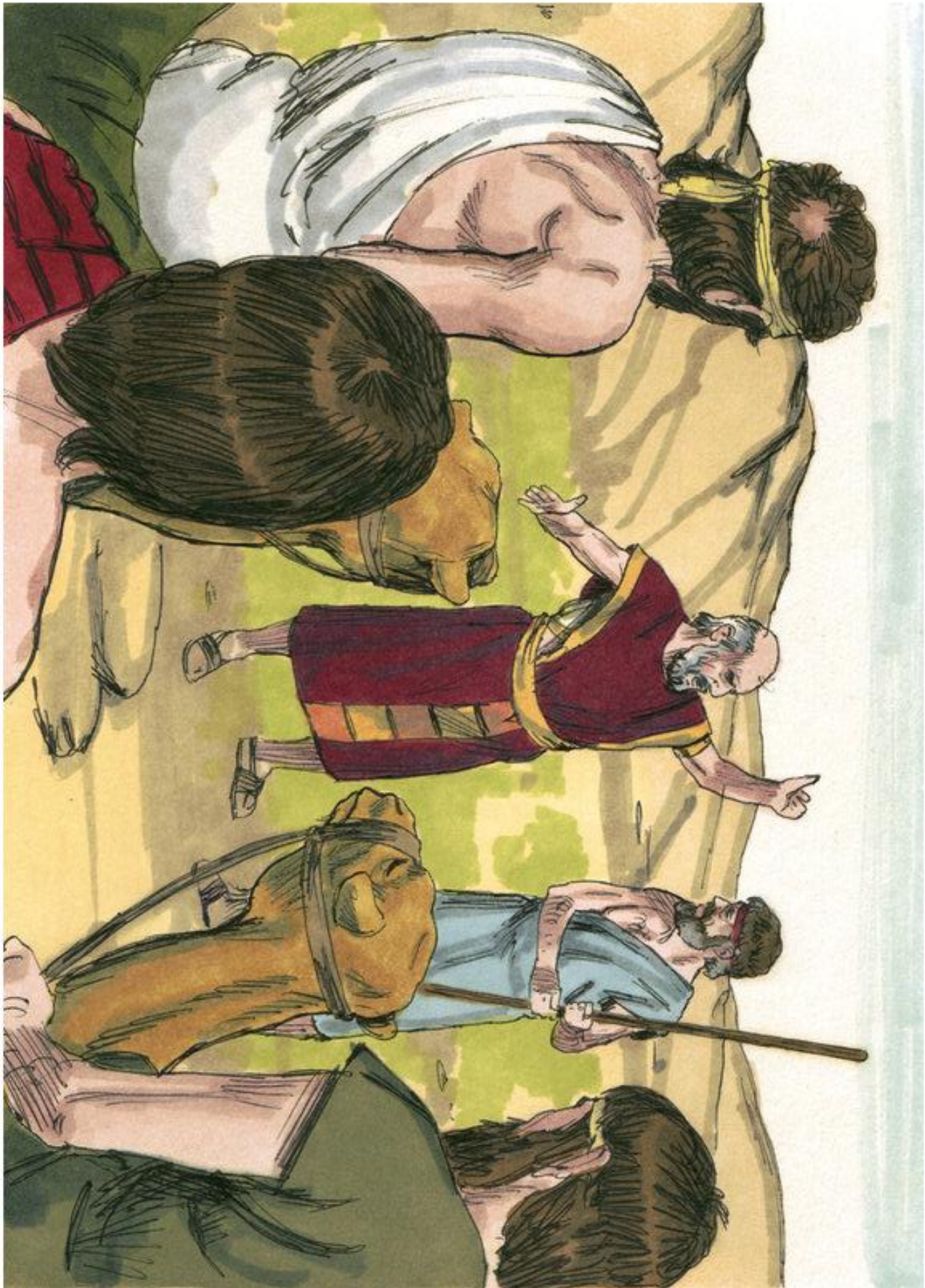


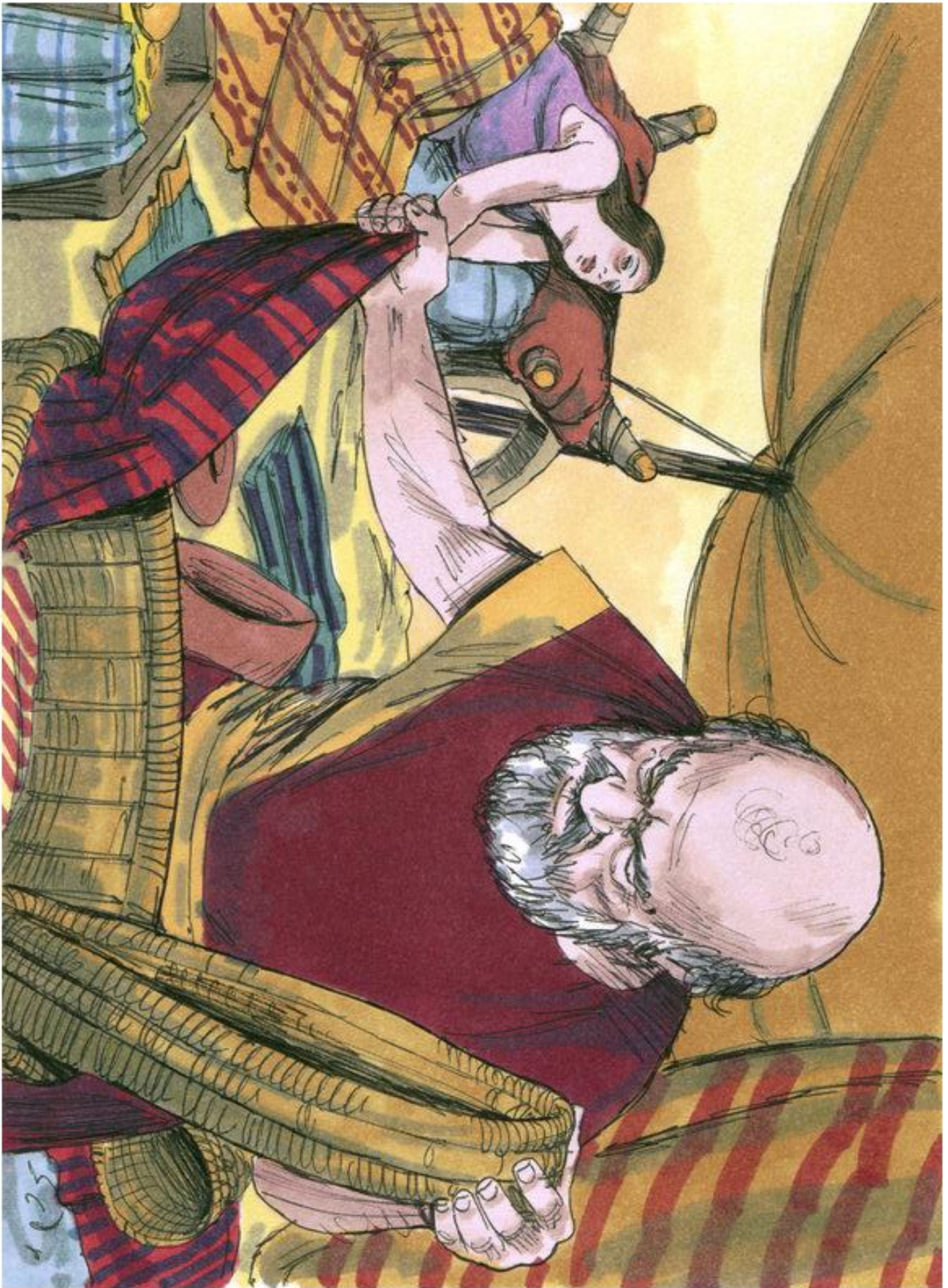
Lyre

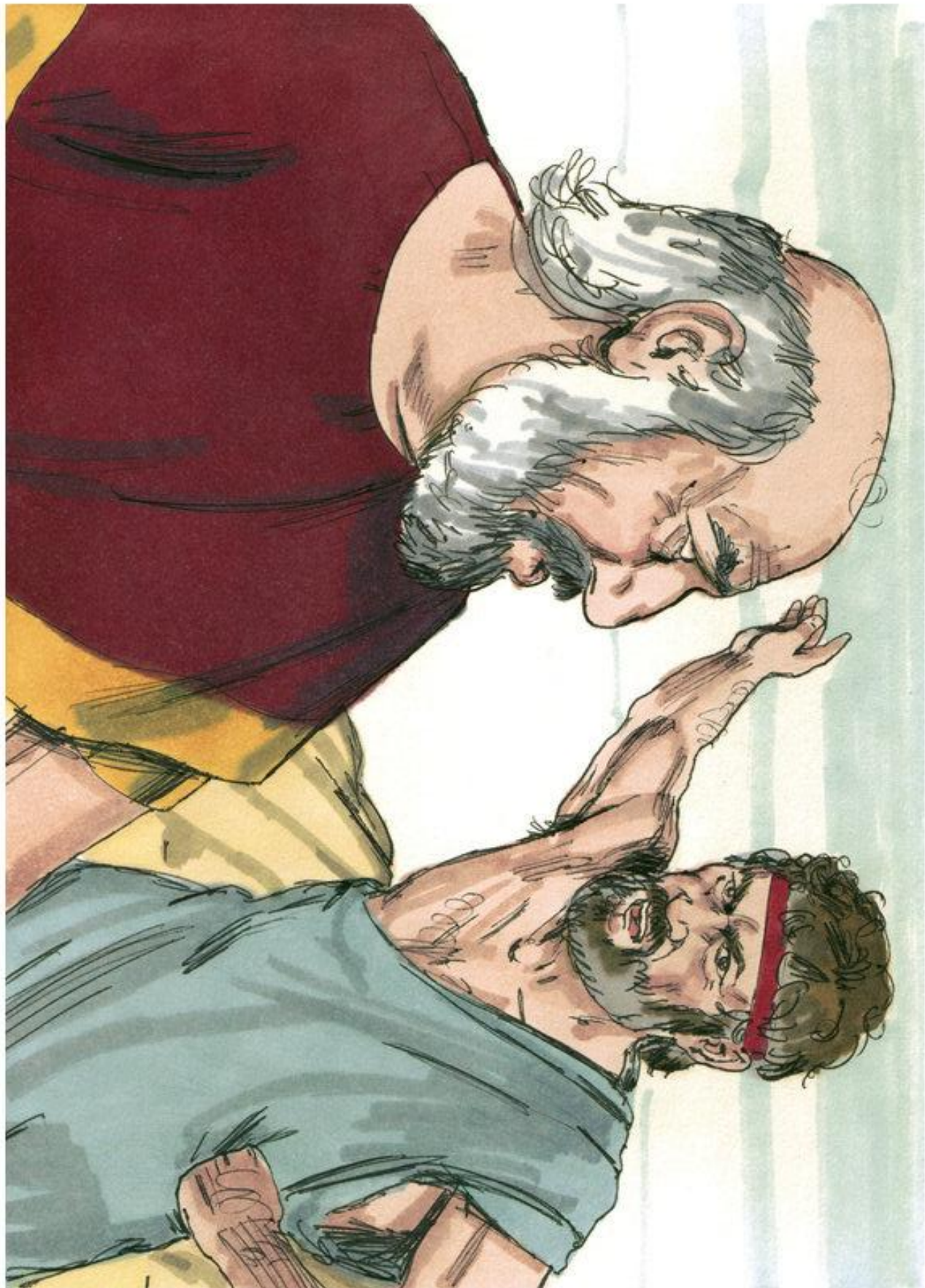
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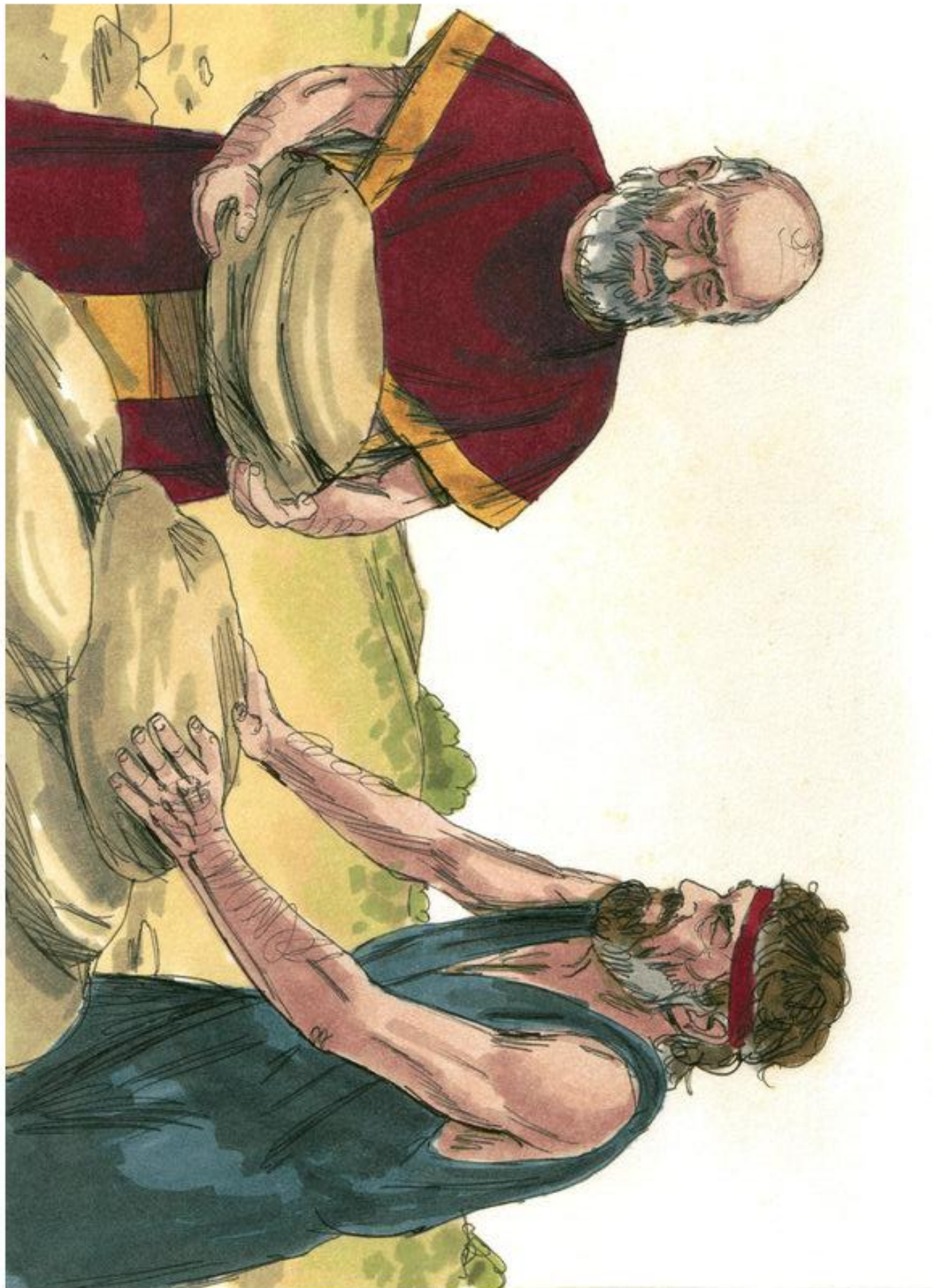


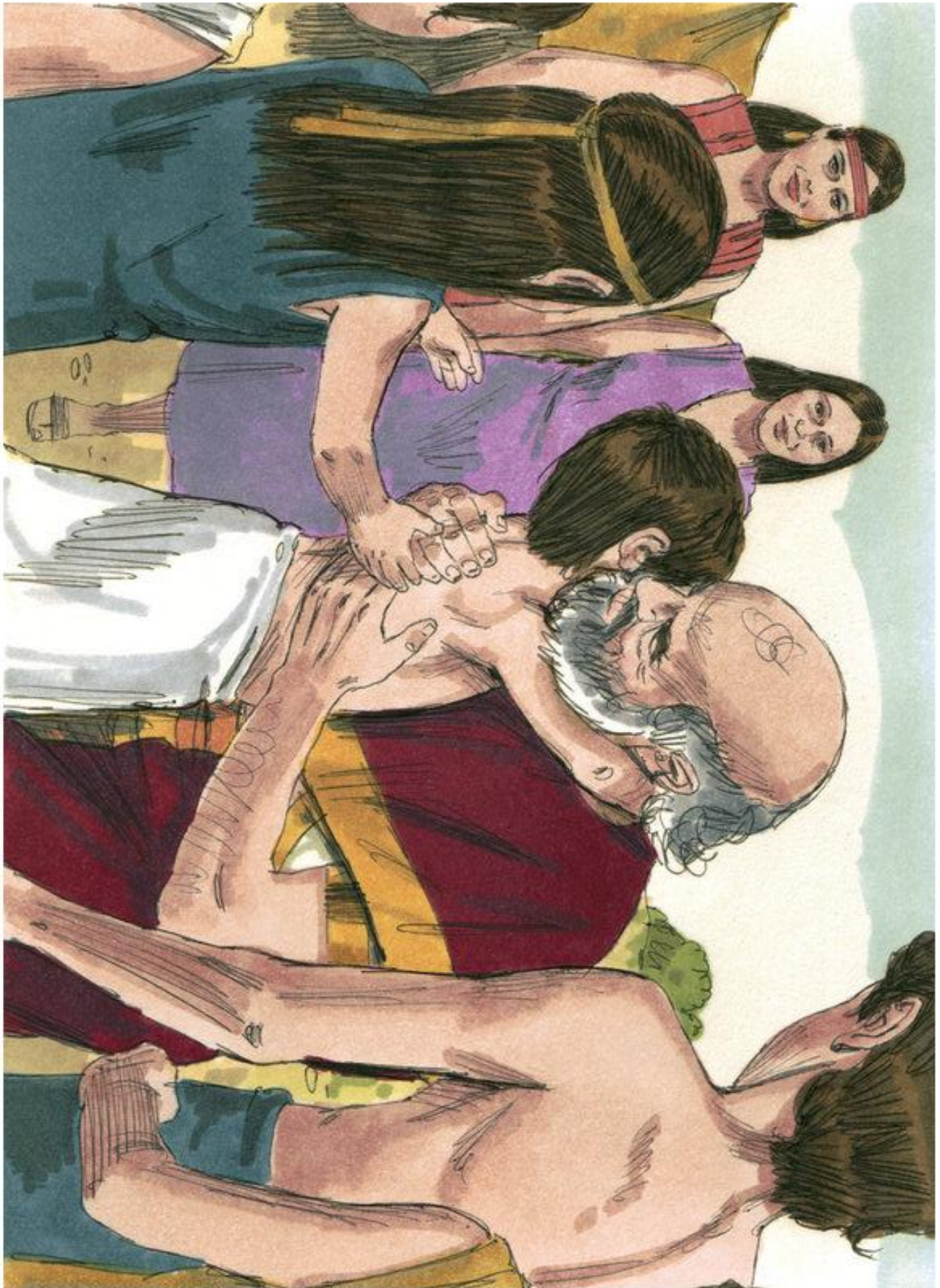












Part 3 (enlarged for easier reading)

Hello, kids. Remember me, Camille Camel? Do you remember that *camel* means “beauty.” I can understand if you have a different opinion about my outward appearance, especially the features I will tell you about today, but you need to remember that my Maker, the Lord of heaven and earth, made me perfectly suited to my environment. That makes even my unlovely parts beautiful in their use. I will tell you about five things.

1. My mouth. We camels have strong, leathery mouths and tongues that allow us to chew and digest thorny plants and cactuses as well as salty bushes that other mammals don’t want to eat.
2. My skin and fur. My fur protects my skin from the desert sun and keeps me warm during the cold desert nights. My hairless underbelly helps me cool down when I lie down on the sand.
3. My feet. [Show picture found below.] All camels have large, flat feet with two wide toes. The bottoms of our feet are covered with thick, protective pads that are tough and leathery. That keeps our feet from getting burned by hot desert sand and keep. Our flat feet keep us from sinking into the sand, and that saves valuable energy.
4. My knees. I spend most of my time on my feet. I hate to admit it, but I am a pretty heavy animal. When it is finally time to rest, my heavy-duty reinforced knees really help me just as they do when I have to be an all-terrain animal on loose sand and steep hills. All of these things would make “normal” knees take a beating.
5. One more thing—my nickname, “Ship of the Desert.” I am basically the only means of transportation across deserts. Like ships on water, I carry heavy loads of passengers and cargo. Also, I kind of look like a ship bobbing on the water because I move both legs on one side of my body, then the other legs and the other side—back and forth. [Move from side to side.]

So, do you see how very beautiful I am—how very wonderfully designed? There’s no way I could have gradually adapted to my environment over long periods of time. God, my Creator, made me instantly and perfectly suited for being a “ship of the desert.”



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/407927678720927168/?lp=true>

Cookies 'n Cream Edible Fudge Rocks

White chocolate fudge speckled with flecks of OREO Cookies formed into rocks

Prep Time: 20 mins

Cook Time: 5 mins

Total Time: 25 mins

Servings: 8

Author: Beth Jackson Klosterboer

Ingredients

- 24 ounces finely chopped white chocolate (or chips) or white confectionery coating
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2/3 cup Oreo Cookie crumbs
- (optional) 1/2 teaspoon cocoa powder
- (optional) 1 drop red food coloring

Instructions

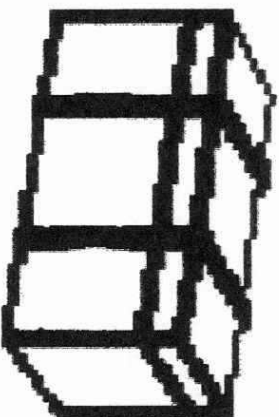
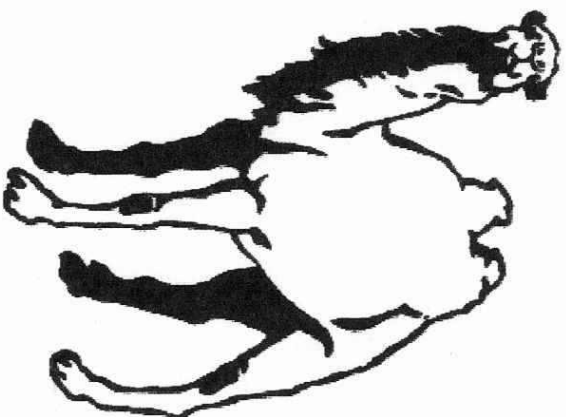
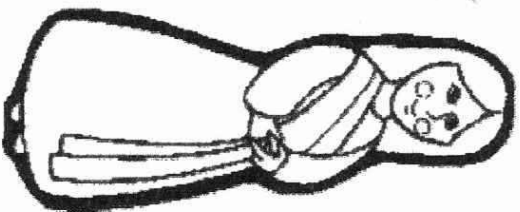
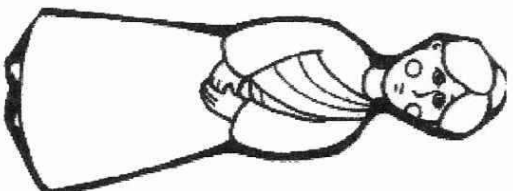
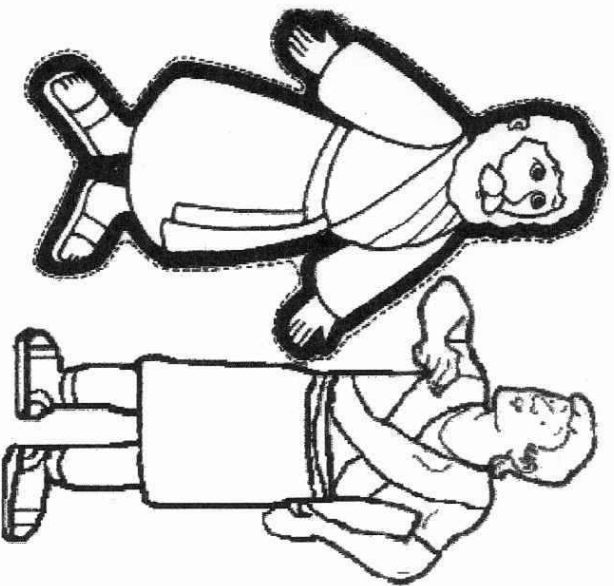
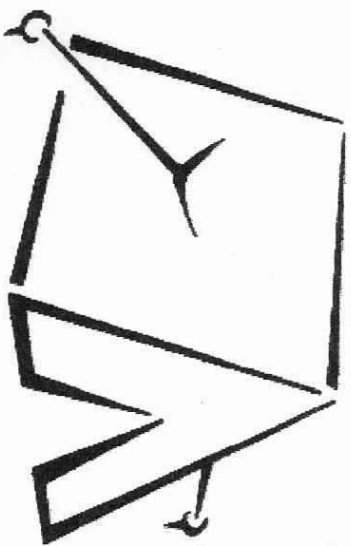
1. Heat white chocolate or white confectionery coating, sweetened condensed milk and salt in a medium saucepan set over low heat until 50% melted.
2. Remove from heat and let sit for 5 minutes.
3. Add 1/4 cup of the OREO cookie crumbs and stir until smooth.
4. Divide the fudge into 3 or 4 bowls and add varying amounts of the remaining cookie crumbs, cocoa powder, and red food coloring to achieve several different colors of fudge for your stones.
5. Press a piece of plastic wrap down onto the fudge in each bowl and allow it to sit at room temperature for about 30 minutes, until it is thick and no longer sticky.
6. Pinch off varying sizes of fudge, roll into odd shaped balls, and set aside to firm up.
7. Display in a dump truck, on a cake, or in a pile.

Recipe Notes

These edible fudge rocks will stay fresh for about 2 weeks. The exterior of the rocks may dry out a bit but the center will stay nice and soft. Store in an airtight container to keep the rocks soft inside and out.

See more details at <https://hungryhappenings.com/my-dad-rocks-edible-fudge-rocks-for/>

Someone stole Laban's idol and he could not find it. Can you? Gen. 31:22-55



Glue underneath "Someone Stole Lohan's Idol" page after cutt
around the bottom and sides of the can el, tent, Rachel, L eat,
and the trunk.

