

13.05 Achan (Joshua 7:1–26)

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

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

Visuals and Tools:

- “Joshua” Flash-a-Cards by A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL, 1985, and/or 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 needed materials.

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

- *to consecrate*: to set oneself apart for God; to purify oneself for God (This word is like *sanctify*.)
- *spoil*: the things soldiers took for themselves after winning a battle
- *to devote to destruction*: totally destroying what God said to destroy

Scripture: (ESV)

Joshua 7:1 But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel.

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, “Go up and spy out the land.” And the men went up and spied out Ai. 3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few.” 4 So about three thousand men went up there from the people. And they fled before the men of Ai, 5 and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, “Alas, O Lord GOD, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would that we had been content to dwell beyond the Jordan! 8 O LORD, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?”

10 The LORD said to Joshua, “Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? 11 Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. 12 Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. 13 Get up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you. 14 In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes. And the tribe that the LORD takes by lot shall come near by clans. And the clan that the LORD takes shall come near by households. And the household that the LORD takes shall come near man by man. 15 And he who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.’”

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel near tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. 17 And he brought near the clans of Judah, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. And he brought near the clan of the Zerahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 18 And he brought near his household man by man,

and Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. 19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” 20 And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. 23 And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the LORD. 24 And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, “Why did you bring trouble on us? The LORD brings trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

Introduction/Review:

Who was the new leader of Israel? [Joshua.] How did God show the Israelites that He would be with Joshua as He had been with Moses? [By crossing the Jordan River miraculously.]

What was the closest city to the Jordan? [Jericho.] Describe Jericho. [High walls 30 feet thick; two sets of walls.] How did God defeat the city of Jericho? [The army and priests with rams’ horns and the ark of the covenant went around once a day for six days, seven times the seventh day; people shouted, walls fell down.] Which people of Jericho were saved from this destruction? [Rahab and her family who were in her house.] How was Rahab’s house identified? [By the scarlet cord hanging from her window.]

What did God prohibit (say could not be done)? [Israelites could not take anything for themselves.] What could be taken, and for whom? [Silver, gold, bronze, and iron could be put into God’s treasury.]

Story:

Battle at Ai

God had really shown Himself great in destroying Jericho, the tall-walled city. [Speak with the bravado of a soldier.] Now the people were ready to go after the other cities of the land. Israel would defeat every one of them!

The next city in line to be conquered was Ai, just a little city about three or four miles from Jericho. Spies who had gone ahead to search it out suggested, “Don’t make all the people wear themselves out on this little city. We can wipe out this place with only about 3,000 men, Joshua.”

Defeat at Ai

Joshua heeded this advice and set out to conquer Ai. But something went terribly wrong! Instead of conquering, the Israelites found themselves running away from the soldiers of Ai! Some didn’t run fast enough and were slain—about thirty-six of them! What was happening?!

“What is happening?” thought Joshua. He ripped his clothes in sorrow and threw dirt on his head. He came close to the tabernacle and threw himself on the ground with his face in the dirt. All day he stayed in that position. When evening came and he finally spoke, he sobbed, “Alas, O Lord God, why have you brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? We should have been content to live on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what can I say, when Israel has turned their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?”

Sin in the camp

[Say with some disgust.] “Get up!” God commanded. “Why have you fallen on your face?” [Now speak with more kindness.] “Israel has sinned: they have taken some of the devoted things, and they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings.”

What had happened, students? [Somebody had taken things they shouldn’t have taken from Jericho.]

God continued. “Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies because they ✓themselves have become devoted for destruction by taking things devoted to destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.”

What did God say would not happen? [The Israelites would no longer be able to defeat their enemies.]

Was there no remedy for this situation? No forgiveness? No second chance? Yes, there was a remedy.

Tribe of Judah

God said to Joshua, “Get up! Tell the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the Lord, God of Israel, There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you. In the morning therefore you shall be brought near by your tribes, and we will find out who has done this outrageous thing in Israel. When we find him who has taken the devoted things, he shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel.’”

This was serious business! So Israel prepared themselves that night and gathered in the morning. The way they were to determine who had sinned was to draw lots. ✓Perhaps they used little stones instead of paper, as we do, with names written on them. The Bible states that “the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD” (Proverbs 16:33).

First, they had to learn from which tribe the man came. God knew who the man was, and he knew he was from the tribe of Judah. When the lots were cast, Judah’s name was chosen.

Families under consideration

But the whole tribe of Judah had not sinned; only one man had. They had to narrow down the possibilities. So they cast the lots containing the names of the clans—family groups within the tribe of Judah—into the container. The lot selected was the clan of Zerah.

Still too many people. “Throw in the names of the family fathers in the clan of Zerah. Okay. Now draw the lot. ‘Zabdi!’”

“We’re narrowing it down now. How many sons does Zabdi have?”

“I don’t know.”

Man of guilt

“Well, find out. [Pause] Now write each name on a stone. Cast the stones into the lap of ✓Joshua. Don’t look! Draw out a lot. Whose name is on it?”

“Achan.”

“Achan? Come here, Achan,” said Joshua. “My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.”

Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel. This is what I did: When I saw among the spoil a beautiful coat from Babylon, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

Just a minute. Did Achan take silver and gold? To whom did the metals of Jericho belong? To God. Achan had stolen from God Himself the things that were to be dedicated to God. ✓No wonder Israel had become

devoted for destruction.

So Joshua sent messengers who ran to Achan's tent. Sure enough! There was the garment and the gold hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. They took them out of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel, and laid them down before the Lord.

Punishment in Achor

What had God said to do with this man? [Slay him and burn him and all he had with fire.] That is what Joshua and all Israel did. They took Achan, the silver, the garment, the bar of gold, his family,* his animals, his tent, and all that he had. All of these they brought outside the camp to the Valley of Achor, which means "trouble."

Joshua condemned Achan by asking, "Why did you bring trouble on us?" Then he announced, "The Lord is bringing trouble on you today."

As God had commanded, all Israel stoned Achan with stones. They burned all that he had, raised over him a great heap of stones, and named the place Achor—"Trouble." Only then did the Lord turn from his burning anger.

*Achan's family ✓ might have known and perhaps helped with this disobedience. However, even if they didn't, the sin was great enough in God's eyes to warrant the death sentence of all of Achan's household. God said this man "transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and did an outrageous thing in Israel." (For more discussion on the fate of Achan's sons and daughters, see <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/joshua-7-24.html>.)

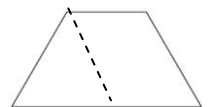
Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:
"They brought him out of the camp, in token of their putting far from them that wicked person, 1 Co. 5:13. When our Lord Jesus was made a curse for us, that by his trouble we might have peace, he suffered as an accursed thing without the gate, bearing our reproach, Heb. 13:12, Heb. 13:13" (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/joshua/7.html>).
- The sin of only one person can affect many people. How did Achan's sin affect Israel? [Thirty-six men lost their lives; thirty-six families lost a father; the people were discouraged by defeat and wondered about God's care until He showed them where the problem was.]
- Apply the four statements of Achan ("I saw; I coveted; I took; I hid") to the students' temptation to steal.

Activities:

- Play dough: garment, bar of gold, silver pieces, tent
- Snack: Sugar or gingerbread cookies made in the shape of tents. With a pizza cutter, cut trapezoid shapes of the same size. Then lightly score a line parallel to the back of the tent.
- Sing Jericho songs from Lesson 13.04 Jericho
- Sing "Jehovah Noticed" (tune: "Jesus Loves Me"; by Kim Dailey, who permits treating lyrics as public domain; found at <https://sundayschoolsources.com/lessons/OT/Judges/achan.htm>).

Achan took a wedge of gold,
Silver and a robe we're told
Buried them inside his tent
About his business then he went.



Jehovah noticed; Jehovah noticed; Jehovah noticed
That Achan stole the gold.

When we steal or disobey,
Lie or fight or fail to pray,
Someone knows just what we do,
Where we are, and why, too.

Jehovah noticed; Jehovah noticed; Jehovah noticed;
He sees all that we do.

- Make “lots” with a name of each tribe of Israel (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphthali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin) on slips of paper. (Ready-to-cut names are found below.) Place these names in an envelope or other container. See how many times it takes students to select the lot with *Judah* on it. Remind them that God caused this name and the other names to be chosen with the very first selection. “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD” (Proverbs 16:33).
- Play the Achan Game (Board may be printed from page below).

Materials: 1 die; 1 token for each player

Instructions: Each player rolls the die in order to advance his/her token on the board. Follow directions if landing on a rectangle with words. Players must roll the correct number in order to reach “Finish.” Play until all have reached “Finish.” (Copied)

- (For older students) Using a calculator, figure how much money Achan took in 2014’s market:
200 shekels of **silver** (each shekel was 10 pennyweight; a pennyweight is 0.0549 oz. avoirdupois)
200 shekels x 10 pennyweight = 2000; 2000 x 0.0549 oz. = 109.8 oz. of silver
109.8 oz. x \$20.75/oz. (value as of 7-25-2014) = **\$2278** in the year 2014
(If *Holman Bible Dictionary*’s shekel weight (0.403 oz.) is correct, this amount would be more than quadrupled to about \$9113+.)

50 shekels of **gold** (each shekel was 10 pennyweight; a pennyweight is 0.0549 oz. avoirdupois)
50 shekels x 10 pennyweight = 500; 500 x 0.0549 oz. = 27.45 oz. of gold
27.45 oz. x \$1300/oz. (value as of 7-25-2014) = **\$35,685** in the year 2014
(If *Holman Bible Dictionary*’s shekel weight (0.403 oz.) is correct, this amount would be more than quadrupled to about \$142,740.)
- Review questions: (Game: Glue pairs of moveable eyes on small pieces of cardstock, or print on cardstock and cut out the eyes found below. For each correct answer, a student places a pair of eyes in a pocket chart. “The eyes of the Lord are everywhere. . . .”
 1. Against which little city did Israel fight after conquering Jericho? [Ai.]
 2. What was the outcome of the battle? [Israel ran away from Ai; thirty-six Israelites died.]
 3. What did Joshua do after the defeat at Ai? [He tore his clothes, fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, and asked why Israel had run from Ai.]
 4. What did God say to Joshua as he was on the ground? [“Get up! Israel has sinned.”]
 5. Why had Israel become devoted to destruction themselves? [Because someone had stolen things devoted for destruction.]
 6. From what tribe was the thief? [Judah.]
 7. What was the name of the thief who broke covenant with God? [Achan.]
 8. What had Achan stolen? [200 pieces of silver; 50 shekels of gold; a garment from Babylon.]
 9. How did Achan and all his household die? [They were stoned to death and then burned.]
 10. What kind of a memorial was raised in the Valley of Achor (Trouble)? [A great heap of stones.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Proverbs 15:3: The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the evil and the good.
- Or Joshua 1:5, 7–9; 24:14, 15, 20, 24–26 (KJV), working one section at a time throughout the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth and using the song, “Keeping Covenant,” found on the “Songs” page at teachingthebibletochildren.org.

Handwork:

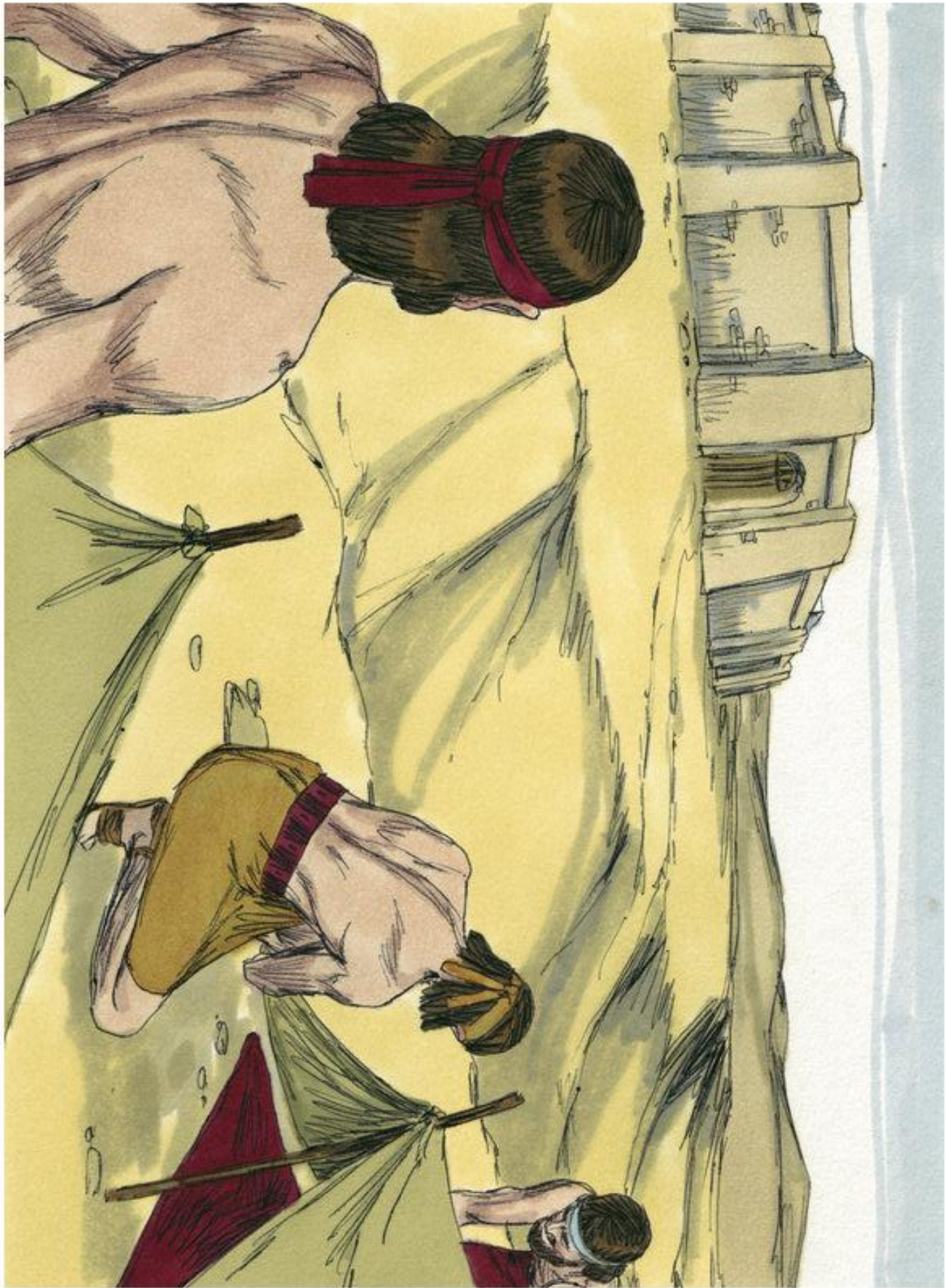
- Make a very easy origami tent from a square piece of tan paper. (See a short video for instructions at <https://scoutingmagazine.org/2018/12/scout-crafts-origami-tents/>.) Instead of gluing a photo inside the tent, glue the Joshua 7:21 scripture found below.

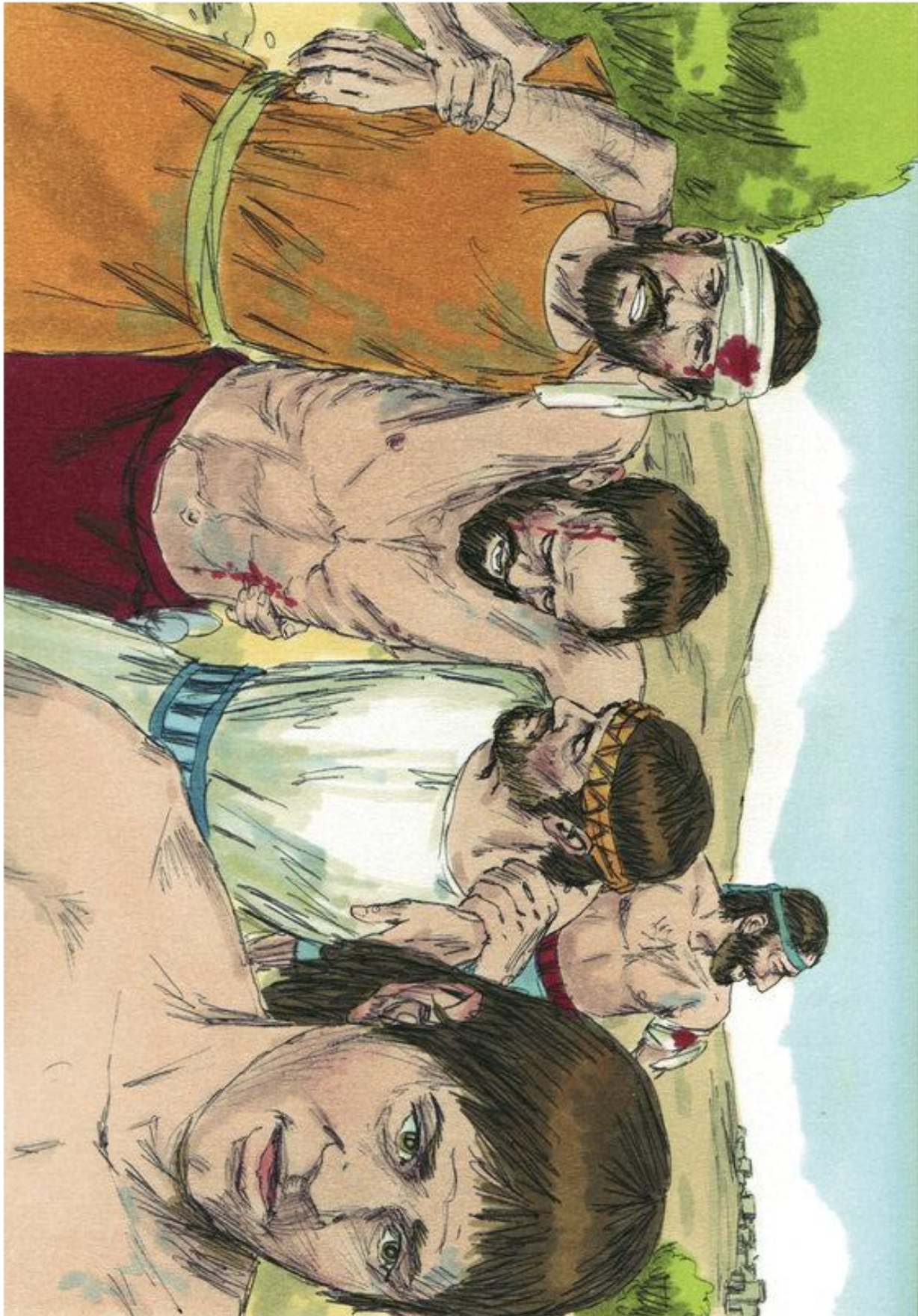
to consecrate

spoil

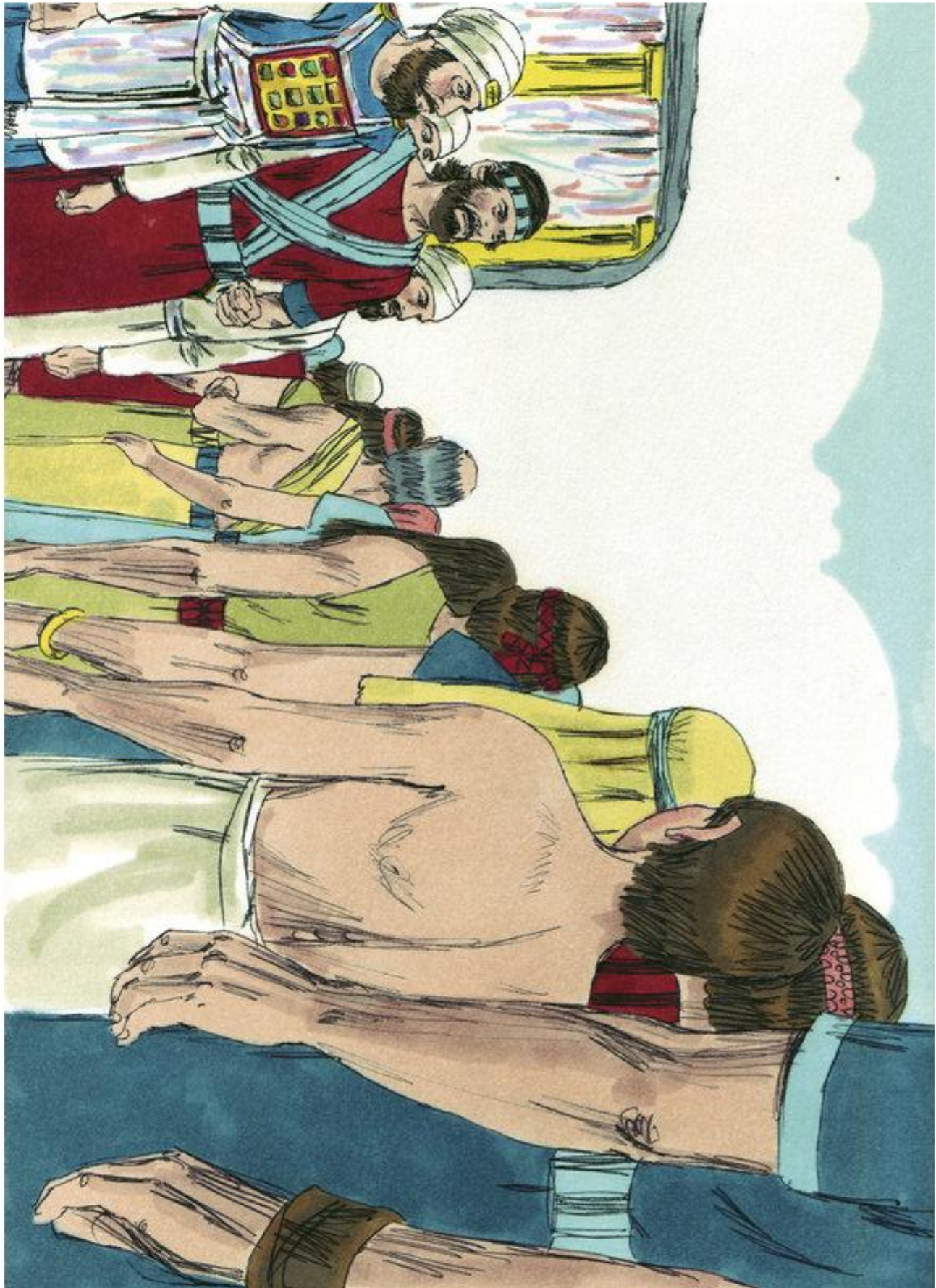
to devote to

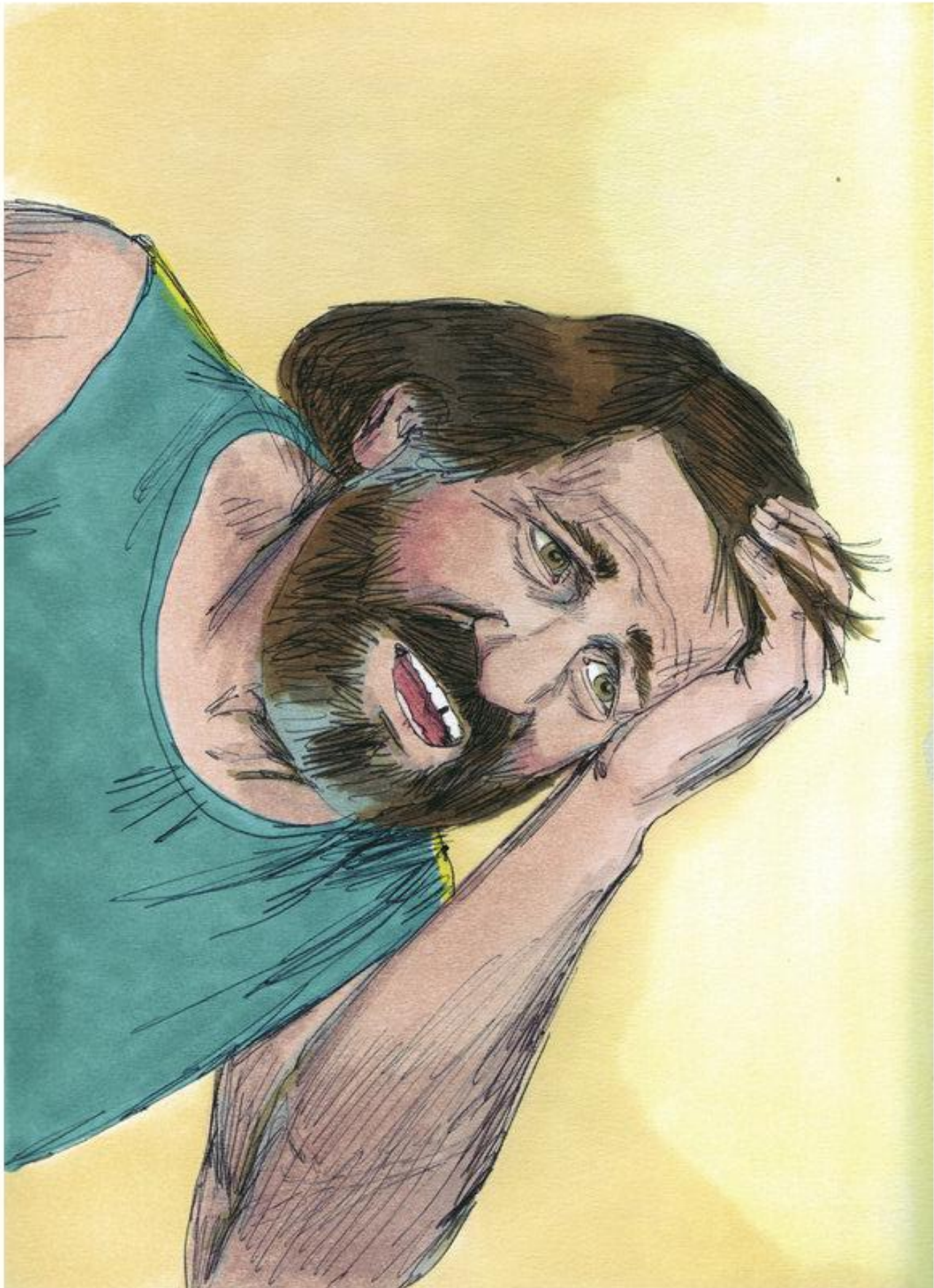
destruction

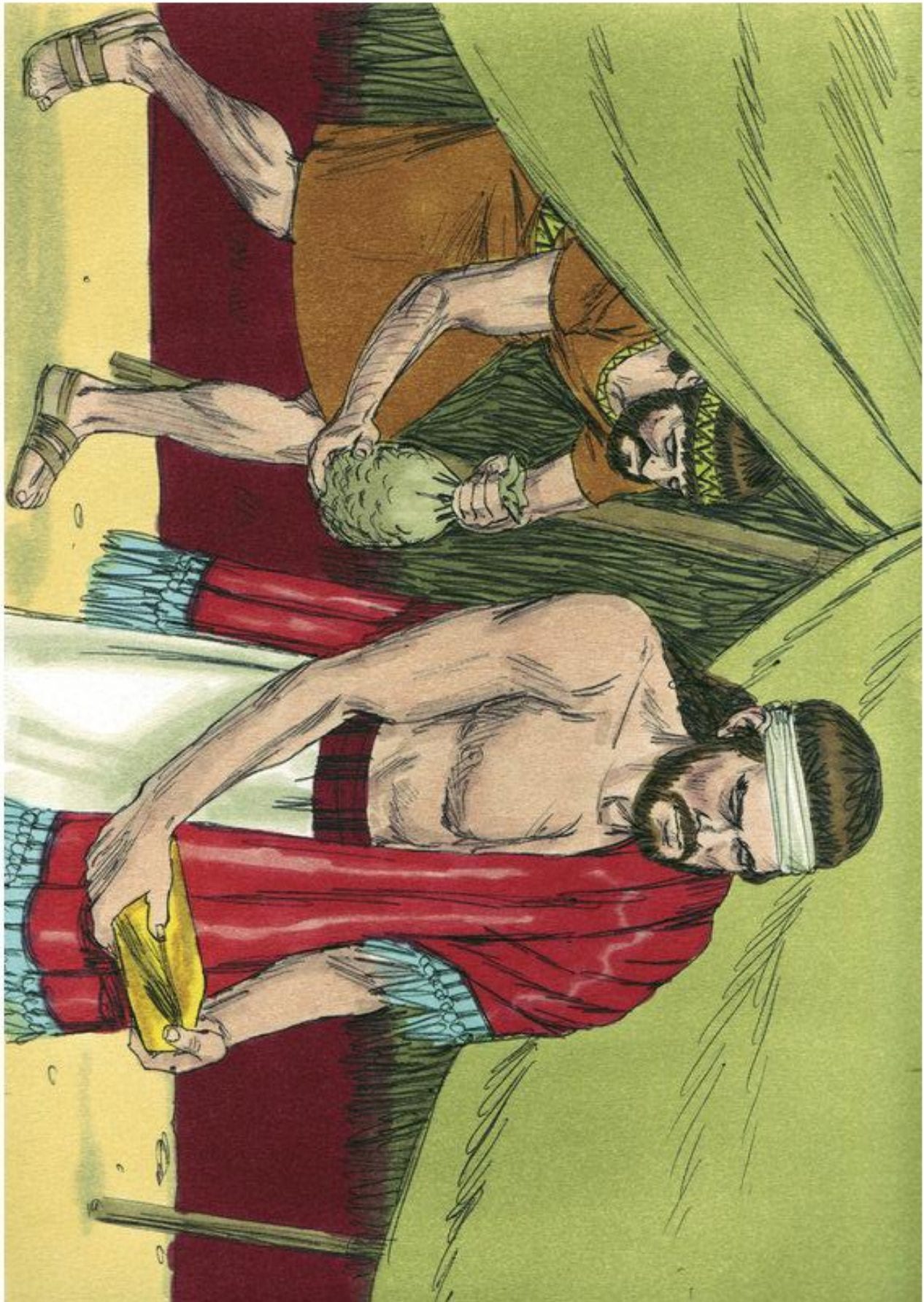


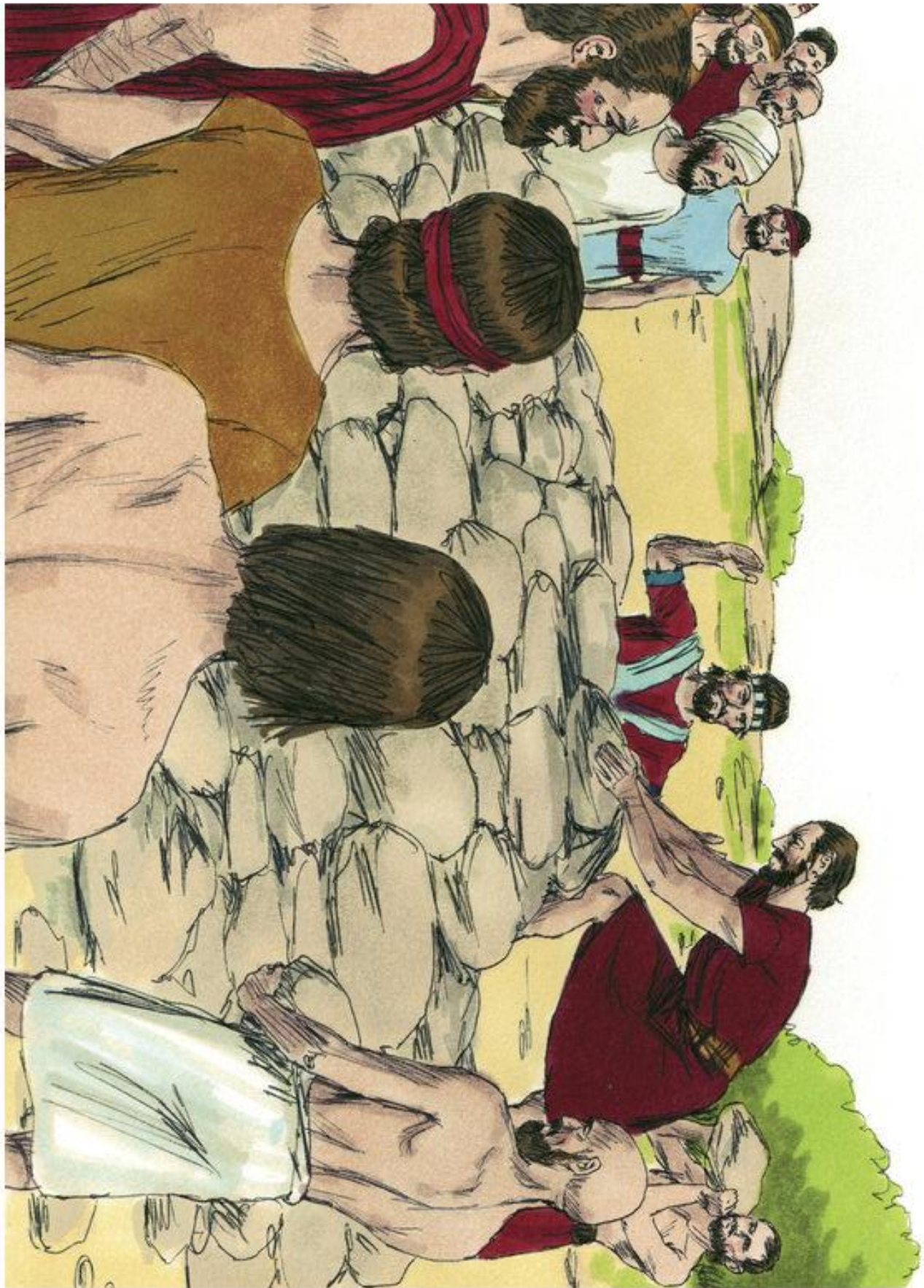




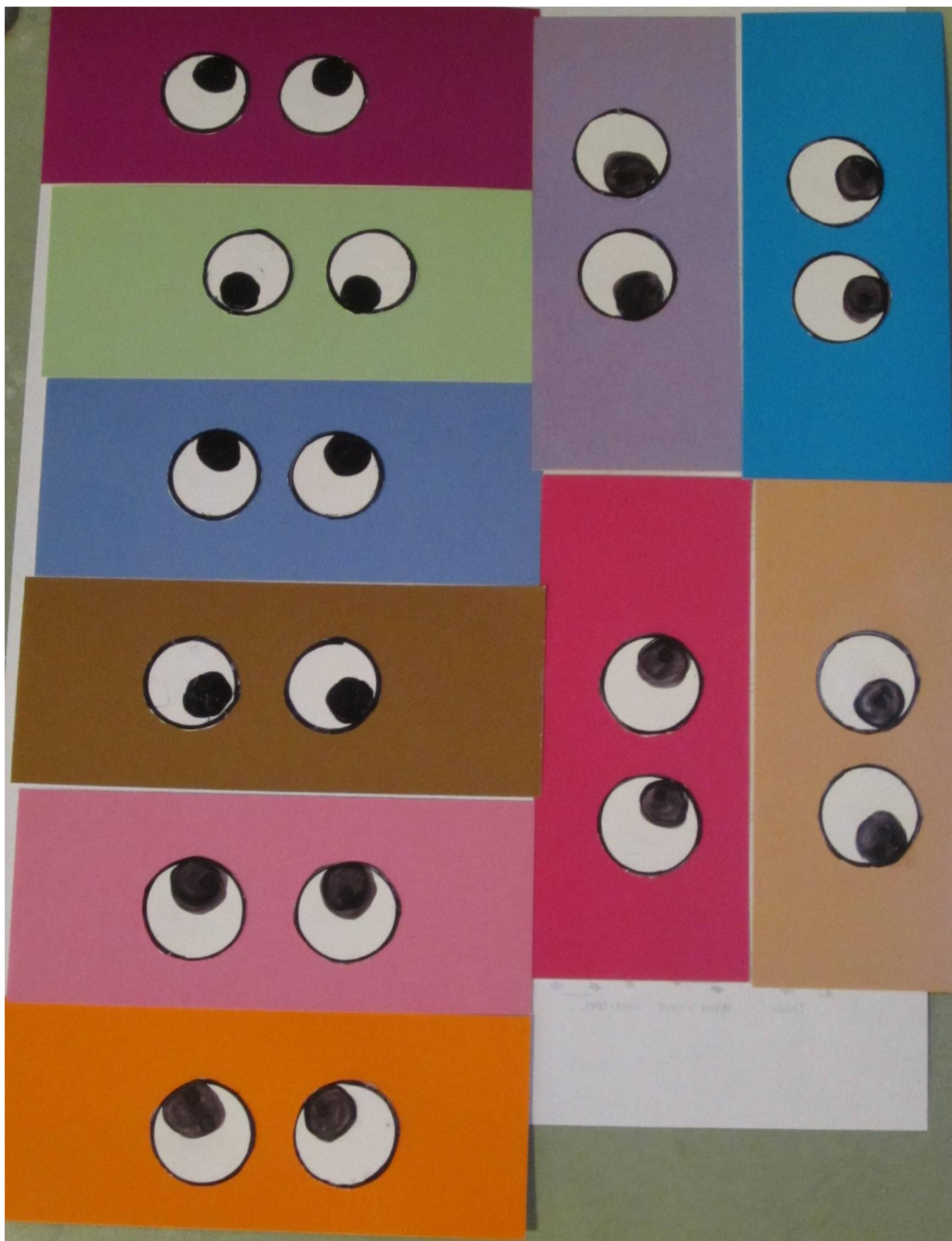








Reuben	Simeon	Levi
Judah	Dan	Naphthali
Gad	Asher	Issachar
Zebulon	Ephraim	Manasseh
Benjamin		



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from God, he said,
“I saw, I coveted, I
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(Joshua 7:21).**



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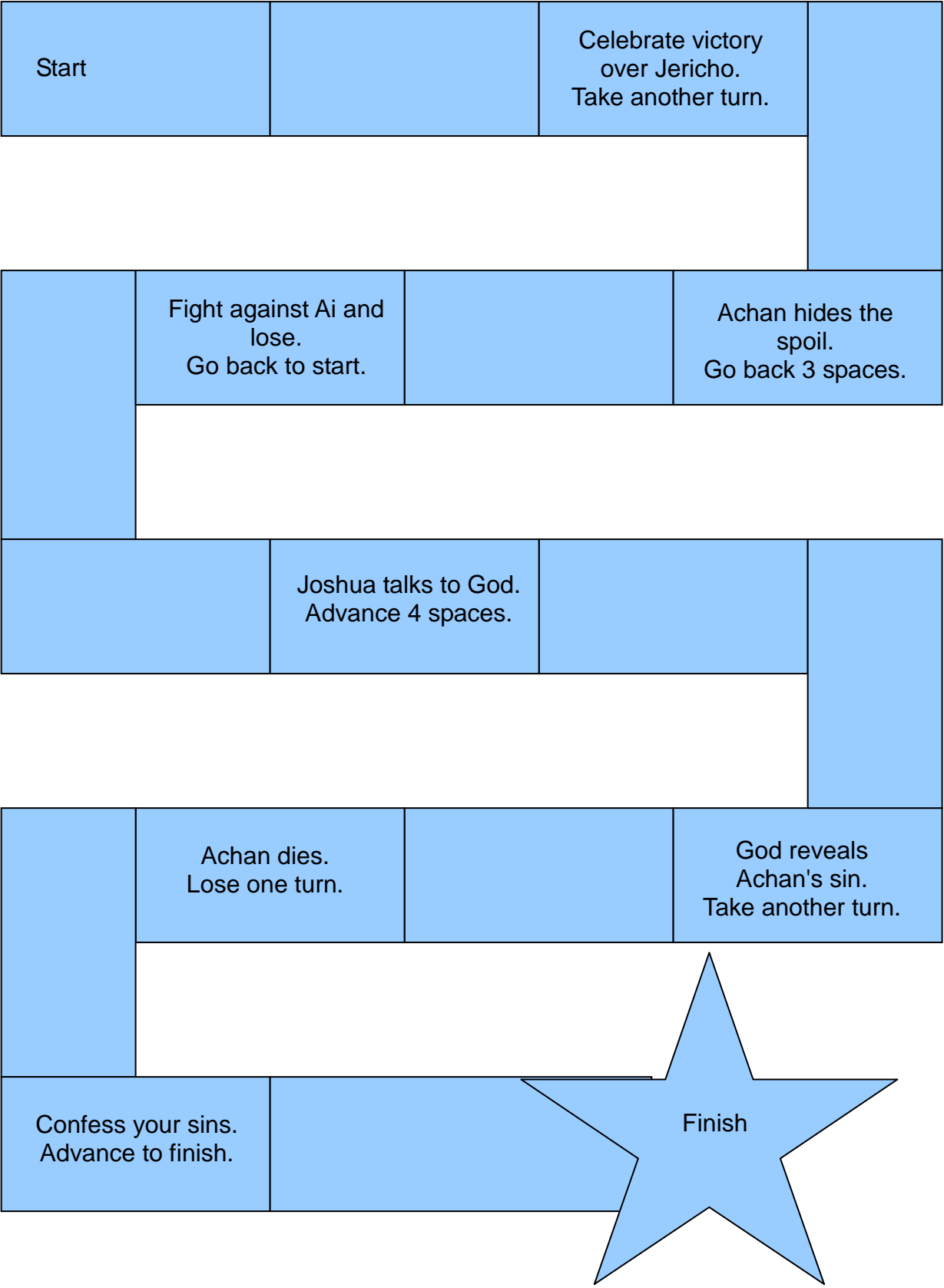


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The Achan Game